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May 2017
THE RIOTS AND THE SLUMS

Comparing Public and Private Sector-Led Redevelopment in Washington, D.C.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Washington, D.C., the nation’s capital, and dozens of other American cities were hit by riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King in April of 1968. Large parts of Washington, D.C. were looted and burned. The Fourteenth Street corridor from Thomas Circle in the south to Columbia Heights approximately two miles to the north was one of the areas most adversely affected. For the next thirty years or so, much of it was populated by burned-out and boarded-up buildings and plagued by drug-dealing, prostitution and other crimes. That changed only when developers in the late 1990s saw opportunities for private sector redevelopment dictated by a market that had not previously existed.

Almost twenty years before, another part of the District of Columbia was devastated too, but not by rioters. The government instead wielded the wrecking ball. In the first significant federally-funded urban renewal project in country, the government in the early 1950s acquired almost all existing properties in the southwest quadrant of the city, some 521 acres in all, bulldozed its existing properties in the southwest quadrant of the city, some 521 acres in all, bulldozed its

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5Id.


slums and forced virtually all who lived there to move elsewhere. It did so largely through the 
exercise of eminent domain, a process by which the government forcibly takes private property 
for public purposes constrained only by the constitutional requirement to pay just compensation.
The redevelopment that ensued was largely a product of government planning supported by 
government subsidy.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the essentially public sector-led 
redevelopment of Southwest and the essentially private sector-led redevelopment of the 
Fourteenth Street corridor several decades later had significantly different social and economic 
consequences and, if not, why not. To this end, we reviewed information from a variety of 
different sources, both primary and secondary, to get as close as possible to a complete and 
accurate picture of the consequences and their causes.

Our research indicates that the government’s principal interest in the case of Southwest was to 
rid the area of its slums, re-populate the area with middle- and upper-income residents, increase 
the city’s tax base and otherwise deal with attendant concerns. The poor, as a consequence, were 
moved out and not expected to return. The outcomes were the intentional result of government 
policy.

Our research also indicates that the District of Columbia government was simply incapable until 
the early 2000s of doing anything significant to shape fundamentally the way in which the 
Fourteenth Street corridor was transformed. This was due in part to the loss of almost a third of 
the city’s population in the fifty years between 1950 and 2000, a lack of financial resources due 
to overspending and the erosion of the city’s tax base, governance by a non-elected, 
congressionally-appointed financial control board whose principal mandate was to restore the 
city’s financial viability, the imprisonment of the city’s mayor for criminal offenses and the 
city’s overall inability to fully manage its affairs. Redevelopment was, thus, largely left to the 
private sector and attendant market forces.

For purposes of discerning outcomes, we reviewed data pertaining to changes in population, 
racial composition, average family incomes, owner-occupied residential property values, 
educational attainment, participation in the workforce, household types and age. What we found 
is that the social and economic outcomes of redevelopment in the two areas, while different in 
degree, were similar to each other despite being led by the public sector in one instance and the

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9Id; United States Constitution, Amendment Five.
10Id.
11Id.
12Id.
private sector in the other and that both differed for the most part from what was occurring in the city as a whole during comparable periods. The outcomes are somewhat surprising because one might have expected government-led redevelopment to have produced significantly different outcomes given a possibly different mixture of motivations from those propelling private sector initiatives alone.

In each instance, for example, whites and other races or ethnic groups replaced blacks; families with higher incomes replaced those with lower incomes; property values increased dramatically over what they were before; residents with higher educational attainments replaced those with lower educational attainments; the percentage of those who were part of the labor force increased to a significant degree; unmarried heads of households replaced married heads of households; and younger residents replaced older residents.\(^{14}\)

It is unclear whether different outcomes would have been pursued in the case of Southwest had the D.C. government rather than the federal government been the prime mover. It is also unclear whether the D.C. government would have made efforts to affect in a significant way the private sector’s redevelopment of the Fourteenth Street corridor had it been capable of doing so.

Whether the result of explicit policy in the case of Southwest or implicit policy in the case of the Fourteenth Street corridor, however, the city has enjoyed the benefits of an increase in the tax base and an influx of middle- and upper-income residents to previously unattractive neighborhoods. The resulting gentrification is something about which there are understandably different points of view.\(^{15}\)

Further research on the process by which the city explicitly or implicitly adopted policies that shaped the transformation of Southwest and the Fourteenth Street corridor, respectively, should be of interest to historians, political scientists, economists and those seeking lessons for the future. Our hope is that our research on what eventuated in these two very different circumstances in the District of Columbia will serve as a useful starting point. It should, in any event, prompt questions about choices that can be made and what is required politically and financially to achieve them.

The material in this paper that follows describes our research design and the literature we reviewed, provides background information about the history and character of the areas we studied, describes elements of the political environment that drove and ultimately affected how those areas were transformed, analyzes the available data depicting the socio-economic outcomes

\(^{14}\)We use the term “replaced” with reference to demographics only in the sense of what the changes in the data indicate, not in the sense of one demographic forcing changes on another.

of their transformation, identifies the conclusions that can be drawn from what transpired and contains suggestions for further research.
2. **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The analysis on which this article is based is the product of extensive data analysis and documentary review as well as in-depth interviews and consultations with knowledgeable individuals as follows:

- First, we consulted the following United States Census Bureau data for each of the two geographical areas under review: total population; racial composition; average family income; residential property values; educational attainment; employment status; types of households; and age.

Given the variation in available data collected in different census years during the period of our study and the need to find comparable data points, we consulted the “Decennial Census of Population and Housing” to obtain data for the years 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010. Because this survey takes place only every 10 years, we complemented it by consulting the “American Community Survey” (five-year estimates) to obtain annually estimated data from 2010 onwards.

**Appendices A and B** identify all the census tracts for which we gathered Decennial Census or American Community Survey data. For each area and year, we selected the census tracts necessary to cover each of the two geographical areas we reviewed. The “Social Explorer” tool was used to explore and analyze the data.

- Second, due to limited available online resources given the periods we studied, we went to the United States National Archives and Records Administration, the District of Columbia Office of Public Records, the U.S. Department of Transportation library and the D.C. Public Library to review the primary sources available for historical and political information. Consultation with the National Archives was essential because many records relating to the District of Columbia before the District of Columbia Home Rule Act in 1973 are stored at the National Archives. We did not, however, unearth all possibly relevant materials because doing so would have been impossible given the time available and the limitations of relevant cataloguing systems in identifying relevant materials.

- Third, we reviewed more than 5,000 pages of books, academic journals, newspapers, magazines, websites and other research materials pertinent to the general subject of urban renewal and the renewal activities that took place in the areas under review. (For more information, see our list of References.)

- Fourth, we consulted all official maps and documents approved by the District of Columbia Zoning Commission from 1950 until the present, including major changes in 1958; 1966; 1973; 1975; 1977; 1983; 1984; 1987; 1996; 2002; and 2016. (For more information, see our list of References.)

- Finally, between July of 2015 and June of 2016, we interviewed or consulted with thirty-three individuals who were involved in or otherwise knowledgeable about the matters under review or were otherwise sources of pertinent information. Those interviewed were
chosen so as to give us a range of perspectives and experiences relating to the transformation of the Fourteenth Street corridor or Southwest. They included major real estate developers, local business owners and leaders in non-profits and social service organizations who have long-served the D.C. area. A list of those interviewed or consulted appears in Appendix C.

Studies like this are, of course, imperfect. Geographical boundaries can be drawn differently from the way we have drawn them here. Doing so, could produce a somewhat different picture, although we have no reason at present to think it would.\textsuperscript{16} Available data, moreover, are imperfect because they offer snapshots every five to ten years and do not illuminate year-by-year differences. We have worked with what we have, nonetheless, and invite others to suggest refinement.

Despite inherent limitations like these, our analysis of extensive data sources, our review of relevant documents and other primary and secondary information sources and our interviews of and consultations with knowledgeable individuals give us a high degree of confidence that the material presented in this paper conveys a reasonably accurate picture of the situation and can be useful in understanding not only what actually transpired in the areas under review but also generalized and transferred to other settings where urban transformation is on the horizon.

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3. THE AREAS UNDER REVIEW

The map immediately below depicts how the areas under review relate to each other. The areas under review are geographically close to each other but worlds apart.\(^\text{17}\)

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3.1.1 The Fourteenth Street Corridor

The Fourteenth Street corridor for purposes of this study encompasses the entire area depicted in the map immediately below.\(^\text{18}\) It begins at Thomas Circle in the south and runs for a distance of approximately two miles to Columbia Heights in the north. It is bounded on the west by


Fifteenth Street; on the east by Thirteenth Street; on the south by Massachusetts Avenue; and on the north by Irving Street at Columbia Heights. Fourteenth Street is its spine.

The area encompasses roughly 304 acres (0.48 square miles) of land and 52 city blocks and is covered by the U.S. Census Tracts set forth in Appendix A.
3.1.2 Southwest

For the purposes of this study, Southwest encompasses the entire area depicted in the map below.\textsuperscript{19} It is bounded in the north by Independence Avenue between Twelfth Street and Washington Avenue (formerly Canal Street); on the northeast by Washington Avenue between Independence Avenue and D Street; on the east by South Capitol Street between D and M streets; on the southeast by Canal Street between M and P streets; on the south by P Street between Canal Street and Maine Avenue; on the southwest by Maine Avenue and the Washington Channel between P and Fourteenth streets; on the west by Fourteenth Street between D and F streets; on the northwest by D Street between Fourteenth and Twelfth streets; and Twelfth Street, between D Street and Independence Avenue.

The area encompasses 521.40 acres (0.81 square miles) of land and 59 city blocks and is covered by the U.S. Census Tracts set forth in Appendix B.
4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban governance, as a theory and research field in urban politics, can be defined simply as the formulation and pursuit of collective goals at the local level. G. Stoker (1998), for example, argues that “governance refers to the development of governance styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred.” “The essence of governance,” he contends, “is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on the recourse to the authority and sanctions of government.” In this sense, one might expect political institutions and elected office-holders to play a leading, if not dominant, role in urban governance by defining goals, ensuring the provision of financial resources and establishing organizational mechanisms for the pursuit of those goals.

Urban governance is different from national governance in that political institutions and their leaders at the local level often tend to be less dominant than at the national level. City governments, to a much greater degree than national governments, are deeply embedded in a web of institutional, economic and political constraints that are said to create a set of complex contingencies that profoundly affect the process of governing. The pursuit of city objectives involves a wide variety of actors among which public actors are but one.

The core research issues in urban governance, as a consequence, tend to relate to the differing roles of the public as compared to private sectors in effecting or affecting urban transformation. The urban governance debate, in fact has proven quite fruitful in contributing to an understanding of the transformation of cities, particularly to understanding new modes of governance and contrasting different models of transformation. There is, as a consequence,

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something of a shift in the debate from government to governance as a key conceptual difference.²⁶

In this context, Ian Cook (2009) identifies the private sector and its business elites as the most actively welcomed outsiders to the new governance structures and identifies five frequently used ways in which local government and its partners have sought to involve the private sector, namely: contracting for public services; the privatization of public services and assets; the provision of private financing for public and public–private services and other activities; the use of private auditors, financial advisors and consultants; and the development of public-private partnerships of various kinds. He points out that thinking about who governs, delivers and finances public services has led to a blurring of the lines between the public and private sectors with a substantial grey zone emerging where, as Flinders (2006) says, the public–private distinction becomes opaque and the established framework for ensuring legitimacy, accountability and control becomes less clear.²⁷

It, therefore, makes sense to analyze the roles that have been and should be played by the public and private sectors in the urban transformation process and how these roles affect the legitimacy, efficacy, efficiency and consequences of redevelopment. Dahl (1974) was a pioneering student of these dynamics under the umbrella of two key concepts: power and influence.²⁸

Trends in mobility and neighborhood segregation should be reviewed, he argues, before analyzing two of the most important issues currently linked to urban transformation, namely, gentrification and diversity and the role that intentions play in the resulting outcomes. Zuk et al. (2015) emphasize how slow neighborhoods are to change, highlighting the fact that, “over individual decades, the change that researchers are discussing amounts to a few percentage points; neighborhood transformation takes decades to complete.”²⁹ Along the same lines, Wei and Knox (2014) contend that neighborhoods are surprisingly stable.³⁰ So a key question is what role exogenous factors play in actions deliberately aimed at achieving the transformation of any given urban area.

Following decades of public and private initiatives to regenerate the inner city, scholars are increasingly paying attention to the causes and consequences of a neighborhood’s upward


trajectory, also known as neighborhood ascent or upgrading. In this sense, the most frequently studied form of neighborhood ascent is gentrification and involves the racial and economic transformation of low-income neighborhoods. The phenomenon is also described as “the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential or commercial use.”

The vast majority of the gentrification literature has focused on private actors in a market context and how gentrification is experienced by local residents. The public sector, however, also plays an important role in neighborhood transformation. In fact, government investment in neighborhood infrastructure and services (public housing, schools, parks, highways and the like) can have a significant impact on property values and neighborhood change. Government investment can make a real difference in the establishment of transformational tipping points.

Diversity has become something of a new orthodoxy in city planning. As Fainstein (2005) explains, the term has multiple definitions (a varied physical design, a mixture of uses, an expanded public realm and multiple social groups exercising what they might call their “right to the city”). The impetus for emphasizing diversity as a value, according to Fainstein, lies in the postmodernist/poststructuralist critique of modernism’s master narratives and more specifically in reactions to the urban landscape created by segregation, urban renewal, massive housing projects and highway building programs. There is no a clear consensus in the literature, however, about the trade-offs between or among equity, diversity, growth and sustainability.

Public-private partnerships are another new orthodoxy in city planning. Public organizations are shifting from a hierarchical, top–down command-and-control approach to shared authority across

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horizontal network arrangements—from government to governance. Some of this is a consequence of limited public resources. Some is a consequence of the ability of the private sector to influence resource-starved governments.

In this context, public–private partnerships and the networks in which they operate are said to be crucial to urban entrepreneurialism. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are the most common and well-known public–private partnerships for promoting the redevelopment needs of a designated business area. BIDs may represent the most formal and localized public–private partnerships to emerge in the twentieth century as a reaction to the social and economic fragmentation caused by suburbanization and the consequent neglect of America’s downtowns.

On the issue of sectoral leadership in urban renewal, several authors examine the consequences of a public-sector top-down approach and distinguish it from a more interactive bottom-up approach. The majority of authors who have examined this issue agree that the top-down approach presents limitations because it may alienate the local community and fail to capture locally significant factors that can affect the outcome and, ultimately, success.

A number of authors also examine the difference in concept between urban development led by the public sector versus development led by the private sector. In this sense, some of them study

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the transition from public sector-led development to more private sector-led urban development while others examine the differences between public sector leadership styles.\textsuperscript{44}

A few authors tackle this question by differentiating between public and private leadership in urban development. Some of these authors study this as a transition issue, while others examine it as an issue relating to how different public leadership styles affect subsequent urban development policies.\textsuperscript{45}

Still other authors analyze how public tools can be used to influence the market when development is led by the private sector.\textsuperscript{46} They conclude, in general, that public sector tools can be used consciously and strategically to secure important public objectives. To do so, however, they conclude that it is vital to create congenial conditions for effective private sector behavior and that that requires flexibility and certainty.\textsuperscript{47}

There seems, however, to be a gap in the research on whether there is necessarily a difference in outcomes when urban development is led by the public versus the private sector. The case study presented in this paper suggests that there is no inherent reason why that should be so and illustrates by two different examples in the city of Washington, D.C. that the explicit or implicit goals being pursued and the political and economic environment in which they are pursued are more important than which sector is actually pursuing them. The practical and operational may, thus, overwhelm the theoretical as this paper suggests.


\textsuperscript{45}Id.


5. PERSPECTIVES

5.1 The Fourteenth Street Corridor

5.1.1 Current Characteristics

The Fourteenth Street corridor as we have defined it embraces a mix of residential and commercial uses. Fourteenth Street itself, while also residential, is the area’s commercial core. The east-west streets are largely although not exclusively residential.

Lower Fourteenth Street, starting at Thomas Circle and running for approximately a mile north to Florida Avenue, was primarily commercial and industrial prior to the riots in 1968.\(^\text{48}\) There were few, if any, high-rise residential buildings. Automobile dealerships and automobile repair shops were a significant presence, as were small grocery, liquor and other stores serving the needs of the residents on the east-west streets.\(^\text{49}\)

The automobile dealership and repair shops were housed in large industrial-type buildings with wide, uncluttered spaces, making them ideal for stage theaters like Studio Theatre and Wholly Mammoth when they came to Fourteenth Street in the 1970s and the automobile dealership and repair shops were then largely gone. The large open spaces that the automobile shops created meant that much less work was required to make them usable for stage productions and audience seating than would otherwise have been the case.\(^\text{50}\)

Fourteenth Street today would be unrecognizable to those who lived and worked there or came there for other reasons in the sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties. Gone are the auto dealerships and mom and pop stores. Upscale grocery stores, luxurious apartments and high-end retail outlets, restaurants and bars now predominate. The Central Union Mission, a large homeless shelter at the corner of Fourteenth and R streets has been converted into luxury apartments for upper-income households and is now ironically named just “The Mission.”\(^\text{51}\) Studio Theatre, known for producing thought-provoking new plays, is often cited by developers and realtors as a reason to locate in the Fourteenth Street corridor.\(^\text{52}\)

\(^{48}\)14th Street Project Area Committee, Inc. (Undated). Facts You Should Know, Retrieved in 2016 from the D.C. Archives.

\(^{49}\)Id.


The area above Florida Avenue on Fourteenth Street running approximately a mile to Columbia Heights in the north was and still is primarily residential until Columbia Heights itself is reached. Columbia Heights is primarily commercial and is the site of a heavily used subway stop. Otherwise, Fourteenth Street north of Florida Avenue is characterized by stately older apartment buildings, new upper-income high-rise apartments and a number of public and subsidized housing units. There are subsidized and public housing units on lower Fourteenth Street as well, but they are a somewhat lesser fixture of the landscape.

At Columbia Heights in the northern-most part of the Fourteenth Street corridor, the landscape changes once again. For a short distance north, it contains a number of restaurants, bars and retail establishments often on the ground floor of two and three story residential buildings. Fourteenth Street then becomes even more residential with a number of single-family homes sheltered by a substantial tree canopy. The area north of Columbia Heights was to a large extent unaffected by the riots.

Fourteenth Street is intersected by east-west streets that, except for P and U streets, are largely residential. Many of the residences on the east-west streets in the area south of Florida Avenue consist of elegant row houses from the Victoria era and earlier periods. They provide significant radial support for the Fourteenth Street spine. Many of the residences on the east-west streets north of Florida Avenue consist of large apartment building that are, for the most part of, high quality and date from the early twentieth century. They, too, support the spine of the corridor.

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56Id.

57Id.
The restoration of the Fourteenth Street corridor’s high quality residential bones by gays is part of the story of the Fourteenth Street’s eventual transformation after the riots because the gay population provided some of the spending power that helped fuel the corridor’s revival. Their work in restoring the buildings also played a role in the willingness of developers to invest in the construction of new residential high-rises along Fourteenth Street itself.58

5.1.2 Before the Riots: From White to Black, From Middle-Class to Poor

Before 1950, the Fourteenth corridor was mainly a white neighborhood. During the 1950s, however, things began to change. Whites began leaving for the suburbs, and blacks moved in. At the start of the decade, blacks accounted for approximately 45 percent of the city’s population as a whole and 50 percent of the population of the Fourteenth Street corridor. By 1960, they accounted for 71 percent of the city’s total population and 84 percent of the Fourteenth Street corridor’s population.59

In the 1950s and 1960s, in addition, the Fourteenth Street corridor was an important center of black culture and commerce and home to one of America’s largest African-American urban communities, a sort of a "city within a city" for D.C.’s black middle class.60 The area around the intersection of Fourteenth and U streets was known as "Black Broadway," filled with theaters, jazz clubs and restaurants, as well as a variety of other businesses.61 Unlike those in many other parts of the city, many of the clubs and businesses were owned and operated by blacks.62

In a 1988 article in The Washington Post Magazine section of the Post’s Sunday newspaper, Juan Williams, a reporter, wrote that “there was a time when just being there meant being somebody in black Washington, a time when U Street itself was known as ‘the colored man’s Connecticut Avenue.’” “There was a time,” he wrote, “when gangsters and president’s wives and

61 Id.
soul singers could be seen in the same nightclub at the same time.” Pearl Bailey, a famous black jazz and blues singer, is reported to have considered it home.⁶³

By the late sixties, however, tensions began to mount in black neighborhoods throughout the District of Columbia. They revolved around issues of poverty, housing and education. Roughly 92 percent of public school students in the city at this time were black. Black community leaders expressed considerable concern about the quality of the schools in particular.⁶⁴

Black community leaders were also increasingly vocal about poor living conditions in general throughout the city, including vastly different rates of unemployment between blacks and whites, segregated and dangerous housing and discrimination in law enforcement. About 80 percent of the police force was white.⁶⁵ By early 1968, the city was something of a cauldron rapidly approaching a boiling point.

The situation was compounded ironically by desegregation. Once blacks were allowed to shop at major department stores downtown or purchase groceries at supermarkets in parts of the city that had previously been off-limits to them, many black-owned businesses lost a significant portion of their clientele. Businesses along the Fourteenth Street corridor began to fail. Their failure was accompanied by a gradual erosion of the black middle class as many of its members moved to suburbs that had previously been inaccessible.⁶⁶

5.1.3 The 1968 Riots

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. That evening, riots broke out in cities across the country. Many occurred in cities with large, impoverished black populations.⁶⁷ The District of Columbia probably suffered the most.⁶⁸

The rioting in D.C. began in the heart of “Black Broadway” at the corner of 14th and U streets, with a brick thrown through the window of a People’s Drug Store. The area became the center of

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rioting during the four days that followed and experienced among the worst of the city’s resulting violence and destruction.

In just a few days, 4,000 homes and structures housing 270 businesses in the Fourteenth Street corridor were destroyed. The destroyed businesses represented over 80 percent of the businesses that had previously operated along 14th Street between Thomas Circle and Columbia Heights.  

5.1.4 A City Constrained

5.1.4.1 The Loss of Population

Even before the riots, the city had begun to experience a steady decline. Its population, which stood at a little over 800,000 in 1950, fell by 38,000 to 764,000, in the ten years between 1950 and 1960. The decline continued for the next forty years. By 2000, D.C.’s population had fallen to 572,000, an almost 30% decline in the space of fifty years.

The population decline is attributed in varying degrees to, among other things, the end of the World War II economy; the growth of the suburbs; white flight following desegregation; inferior public schools; an epidemic of drug use and crime; the city’s management and financial problems; and, especially in the 1970s, the 1968 riots. The 14th Street corridor quickly became known as an epicenter of drug trafficking, prostitution and violent crime, rather than one of culture and vibrant economic activity. Its population shrank from nearly 47,000 in 1960 to 33,000, or nearly 30%, by 1990 as those who could afford to leave the area did so as quickly as possible following the devastation of the Martin Luther King riots.

Washington, D.C., of course, was not alone in its decline over the last half of the 20th century. Other U.S. cities experienced similar declines. The federal highway program, the home mortgage interest deduction and the Supreme Court’s decision in Brown vs. Board of Education forcing school desegregation led many to leave America’s cities and seek life in the suburbs. But the 1968 riots played a major role in accelerating D.C.’s economic decline, as they did in many cities across the country.

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5.1.4.2 The District’s Awareness of Its Challenges

A 1976 report issued by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) at the request of a Senate Subcommittee on the District of Columbia attempted to assess what could be done by the District to deal with the aftermath of the riots and other problems associated with abandoned and damaged properties. Among other things, it noted that there was a critical need for improvements in the city’s property management systems to deal with these issues and recommended that the city create a system for identifying buildings for demolition in the riot-torn areas of the city, tracking tenants of problem properties and improving the rate at which new housing units were constructed and existing units rehabilitated.75

In 1976, the city also released various plans for revitalizing several neighborhoods, including the 14th Street corridor. Like the GAO report, the plans concentrated on issues relating to property management, planning for the demolition of vacant and dilapidated properties and the rehabilitation of existing properties. Changes were made to what the D.C. Department of Planning called the Urban Renewal Plan for the 14th Street Urban Renewal Area at various times in the 1980s and 1990s.76 All these plans essentially did, however, was to express a series of aspirations and guidelines for redevelopment that would be generated by the private sector when and if market conditions made redevelopment attractive.

In the early 1980s, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry made attempts to use what levers he had to spark improvements along the Fourteenth Street corridor. He engineered the creation of the Franklyn D. Reeves Center of Municipal Affairs, referred to locally as the Reeves Center, at 14th Street and U streets in 1986 to house a variety of municipal functions. Around this time, a Metro subway also opened nearby at 13th and U streets.

Mayor Barry also began encouraging nonprofit organizations providing services to the poor to locate in the neighborhood, perhaps with the hope this would increase the workforce in the area and that the influx of workers would in turn attract businesses. His efforts, however, proved ineffective because Reeves Center employees were too few and the staff of the non-profits in the area, too small to attract a significant business community. Few of the Reeves Center employees, moreover, are believed to have lived in the Fourteenth Street corridor.77


5.1.4.3 A Fiscal Crisis

By the early 1990s, the city began to face a fiscal and financial crisis due to declining tax revenues and overspending. According to a 1994 GAO report, the city borrowed over $330 million in 1991 in order to meet a cash shortfall, but the city’s cash position had, nonetheless, continued to decline. The city, according to the GAO, would be unable in coming years to meet a number of existing financial obligations and had no plans to do so. Its access to the financial markets for assistance by way of short-term borrowing, said the GAO, was not likely to be favorably received. 78

At that point, Congress stepped in and created a financial control board to manage the city’s finances and generally oversee its affairs. 79 As reported by The New York Times at the time, “the five member financial control panel … would have vast authority over municipal spending, financial planning, borrowing, hiring and contracts.” 80 The financial control board, headed at first by Andrew Brimmer and then by Alice Rivlin, was in existence from 1995 through most of 2001 and held a tight reign over the city’s expenditures and other financial affairs. 81

5.1.4.4 An Ineffective Government Unable to Step In

The District of Columbia Home Rule Act enacted in 1973 gave the District of Columbia a modicum of self-government for the first time in its history. The creation of the financial control board largely took that away. Again, as reported by The New York Times at the time, the authority given to the financial control board “to overrule decisions of [the mayor] and the City Council” gave “unelected officials the largest influence over the District since limited home rule was granted by Congress more than 20 years ago.” 82

Compounding the problem, were the corruption and scandals that plagued the city for most of the eighties and nineties under Mayor Marion Barry. He was first elected Mayor in 1978, was arrested and convicted while Mayor on drug charges in 1990, subsequently spent six months in prison and was reelected as Mayor for another four-year term in 1994. 83 The D.C. Planning Office was essentially non-existent under Mayor Barry. 84


82 Id.


5.1.5 The Private Sector Steps In

5.1.5.1 Early Positioning by Developers

The city’s fiscal and financial crisis, its inability to manage its own affairs, its corresponding inability to deal with the aftermath of the riots and the crime, poverty and other issues that plagued the city, coupled with a dramatic decline in the city’s overall population, meant that the government could do little to bring about or shape the renewal of the Fourteenth Street corridor even if it had wanted to.85

Developers and speculators, in the meanwhile, saw opportunities that might evolve in time. Developers, like SJG Properties and JBG properties, which would become central to the transformation that eventually took place in the Fourteenth Street corridor, began acquiring properties in the corridor as early as 1977. Prices were low due to the high crime rates and the dilapidated nature of many buildings in the area, but speculators guessed, with the corridor's location so near downtown and the White House, that it was only a matter of time before things would begin to change.86 While many did not expect that change would take nearly thirty years before it began to take hold, many were willing to wait.87

In 1985, People’s Drug later to become CVS, began working with JBG Properties to re-enter the neighborhood after the 1968 riots destroyed its 14th & U streets location.88 JBG, which had acquired properties in the area in the late seventies and early eighties while prices were low, then developed a stretch of shops on a block-long site on 14th Street between T Street and Wallace Place that eventually housed the People’s Drug Store as well as a laundromat, post office, Chinese food restaurant and other businesses to provide basic services to the neighborhood.89

SJG Properties, another major property owner in the neighborhood, also began exploring opportunities.90

A major development in the late eighties was the relocation in 1987 of the Whitman-Walker Clinic (now Whitman-Walker Health) from the Dupont Circle area along Connecticut Avenue several blocks to the west of the Fourteenth Street corridor to the corner of 14th and S streets when the HIV/AIDS crisis in the gay community was reaching a peak. Other non-profit and cultural organizations serving the gay and lesbian communities followed suit. The influx of gays and lesbians into the neighborhood accelerated. Many purchased historic homes on the cross-

88Id.
streets and spent considerable sums on their rehabilitation. Many had the wherewithal to do so in part because they lived in two-earner households without the need to meet the expenses that schools and other aspects of family life with children entail.

5.1.5.2 The Beginning of the End

By the early 1990s, the larger business community began to take notice of the spending power of the area’s gay community, enhanced as it was by two-earner childless couples and the physical and aesthetic improvements to the neighborhood they brought about. As early as 1991, for example, two major grocery store chains expressed an interest in opening stores on or near the corridor.

One, Shopper’s Food Warehouse, considered opening a store at 14th and Belmont streets in the northern end of the corridor, while another, Safeway, explored possibilities at the historic Tivoli Theatre site at 14th Street and Park Road, also at the northern end of the corridor. At the time, the Deputy Mayor of Economic Development, Austin Penny, also indicated in public statements that the administration of then-Mayor Sharon Pratt-Dixon was committed to working with these stores in helping them to advance their plans.

While these developments never came to fruition, partly due to opposition from historical preservation interests in the case of the Tivoli Theatre site, they were an early indication, albeit more than twenty years after the riots, that things were happening in the area that might be attractive to business interests.

Beginning in the early 1990s, nightclubs also started to reenter the corridor, drawn in part by cheap rents and the presence of stage theaters like Studio Theater, Woolly Mammoth and the Source Theater. Howard Kitrosser, a co-owner of The Eleventh Hour, a nightclub that came to the neighborhood during this period, referred to the area’s bohemian, “artsy” feel as a source of appeal. While he acknowledged the risk in establishing a business in the area, he guessed that the corridor might be poised to “take off.” The take-off, however, was still some distance away. It was not until the late 1990s that things really began to stir in a significant way.

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93Id.


5.1.6 The Turning Point

The turning point is often seen as occurring when another major grocery chain, Fresh Fields, later to become Whole Foods, began in the 1990s to explore the possibility of locating a store within the Fourteenth Street corridor. It did so in part at the urging of the Q Street Association, a local group of community residents which had itself been purchasing and revitalizing homes along the corridor. The site Whole Foods eventually chose was on the south side of the P Street block between 14th and 15th streets on a parcel owned by SJG Properties, encouraged in part by redevelopment of the north side of the block and the planned redevelopment of adjacent blocks into middle to upper income apartments. Those blocks had previously been the scene of violent drug-trafficking activity. Nearby at the corner of Fourteenth and P streets, was the cultural attraction of Studio Theatre, the site of well-regarded theatrical stage productions.

Whole Foods may have been a turning point, but it was not altruistic. It came because others had laid a foundation. It was, nonetheless, a symbol that things were on the upswing and undoubtedly encouraged others to believe that the Fourteenth Street corridor was not as it used to be.

The five years between 2000 and 2005 marked significant increases in the number of major residential developments under way in the corridor. Harrison Square Townhomes, for example opened to new residents in 2002, the Ellington apartments in 2004 and Union Row in 2005. The number of building permits issued for projects in the corridor increased more than sevenfold from 2003 to 2004. That period can easily be identified as the point when the transformation of the Fourteenth Street corridor really began to take hold. Since then, redevelopment has only accelerated. In their own organic way, market forces piggy-backed on each other and changed the equation for risk-takers.

5.1.7 The Fourteenth Street Corridor Today

The Fourteenth Street corridor today is nothing like its former self. It has been completely transformed. It is now dominated by elegantly refurbished Victorian-era townhouses and new middle and upper-income, high-rise residential housing units and high-end restaurants, bars, food


stores and other retail establishments although some effort has been made to recall the area’s African American history. One of the best examples of this is Busboys and Poets, a combination bookstore-café, featuring book readings and poetry recitations that opened in 2003 and whose name recalls Langston Hughes, an African-American poet who began writing poetry while working as a busboy and living in the neighborhood.

Accompanying these physical changes were dramatic changes in demographics. The area had been 84 percent black in 1970, for example, but was just 28 percent black in 2010 and 26 percent black in 2014. By 2010, 52 percent were white, and 20 percent consisted of other races or ethnic groups, including Hispanic/Latino and Asian, a demographic that had traditionally comprised a very small minority of the area’s population. By 2014, just four years later, 59 percent were white. Average family incomes in the Fourteenth Street corridor in 1970 in 2013 dollars were $44,000, $24,000 below average family incomes at that time for the city as a whole. By 2014, they were on a par with the city as a whole at approximately $128,000.

The Fourteenth Street Corridor has come a long way.

5.2 Southwest D.C.

5.2.1 Current Characteristics

Southwest D.C. is much less complex than the Fourteenth Street corridor. It occupies the entire southwest quadrant of the city and is bounded on its west side by the Washington Channel, which is part of the Potomac River.

Throughout its history, Southwest was physically, socially and demographically somewhat distant from the rest of the city. It remains somewhat physically isolated today because it is cut off from the rest of the city along its northern boundary by an eight to ten lane freeway. South Capitol Street on its eastern boundary is essentially a six-lane highway. The Washington Channel completes the surround.

The area contains a mixture of newly built high-rises and townhouses, a handful of historic structures and a number of pre-existing public housing units. Many of the newly built high rises are in or resemble the Brutalist style. The well-known Arena Stage Company is located in Southwest, as are a number of federal government office buildings. Apart from a super market

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and a handful of restaurants, there is little in the way of other retail establishments. There is correspondingly, little in the way of street life.

Unlike the Fourteenth Street corridor, moreover, Southwest’s physical character is lacking in significant architectural diversity. There are exceptions in the case of the handful of historically significant structures that were preserved against the onslaught of urban renewal in the 1950s. But no Victorian-era townhouses and the like or other intricate residential streetscapes from the past add character or diversity to the area in ways like those that are provided by the east-west streets of the Fourteenth Street corridor.

Uniformity in appearance may not have been what the urban renewal planners had in mind when they bulldozed the old Southwest and made plans for its reconstruction. Indeed, the government staged a series of significant competitions among well-known architects to encourage innovative designs before awarding development rights. But uniformity in look and feel is largely what emerged. Current private-sector efforts to renew Southwest along its waterfront may change that, but the redevelopers are working around the edges of what government-led urban renewal in the 1950s brought about.

5.2.2 Before Urban Renewal: Poor, Black and Overcrowded

Prior to the arrival of urban renewal, Southwest was predominantly poor and overcrowded. Sixty-four percent of its population in 1950 was black; 36 percent of its population was white. The area contained approximately 6,000 dwelling units for a population of 25,000, or 4.2 persons per dwelling unit as compared to 3.5 persons per dwelling unit for the city as a whole at that time. Southwest’s housing was largely of poor quality and often lacked basic amenities such as indoor plumbing and toilets and sometimes even electricity. Many of its residents worked as domestics or in fishing and a variety of other relatively low-paying jobs. Many were former slaves or children of slaves. Many came from the deep South.

It was a city within a city, much like the Fourteenth Street corridor, and significantly isolated. Unlike the Fourteenth Street corridor, however, there were no nightclubs, theatres, other cultural attractions or businesses that enticed people from other parts of the city to visit. No celebrities,

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105Id.
president’s wives, entertainers or soul singers had reason to go there. It was widely and correctly regarded as a slum. Those who lived in Southwest lived within an enclave.\textsuperscript{110} It was a swampy, low-lying area, adjacent to and often invaded by the Tiber River which traversed the area on its way to the Potomac.

\subsection*{5.2.3 Urban Renewal: No Riots, but Destroyed Nonetheless}

Southwest was destroyed in the 1950s, some fifteen years before the riots in the Fourteenth Street corridor, but not by rioters. The federal government was the moving force. Southwest was a slum that the federal government, which largely ran the city at that time, could eliminate under federal urban renewal programs with little effective local opposition.\textsuperscript{111}

Unlike the mindless destruction that occurred along the Fourteenth Street corridor during the riots, those in charge of Southwest’s transformation knew what they were doing. Southwest was a poor but stable community. There were no drug wars or other overwhelming incidents of crime so far as available information suggests. But because Southwest was undeniably a slum at the doorsteps of the Capitol building, federal government officials felt it could not be ignored.\textsuperscript{112}

When destruction came, therefore, it was at the hands of the urban renewal wrecking ball.\textsuperscript{113} The federal government believed that the best way to eliminate the slums was to remove the poor from the area and start all over again. The welfare of existing inhabitants and the preservation of their communities were not priorities. The top priorities were getting rid of eyesores and substandard living conditions and improving the tax-base.\textsuperscript{114} The government gave those who were displaced a small sum to help them relocate.\textsuperscript{115} Almost the entire area was razed to make way for new buildings and an almost entirely new array of inhabitants.

\textsuperscript{110}Id.


\textsuperscript{112}Id.

\textsuperscript{113}Id.


5.2.4  A Federal Government in Control and Able to Act

The District of Columbia had not yet begun its steep decline when urban renewal first came to Southwest. The 1949 Urban Renewal Act, which Congress enacted in order to deal with decline in a number of American cities, provided the funding. Eradicating the slums of Southwest was an inviting first-project because the slums were so obviously visible to tourists visiting the Nation’s capital and often appeared in the foreground of photographs of the Capitol building itself.¹¹⁶

Little political groundwork needed to be laid for the federal government’s plans for Southwest because the District of Columbia had no home rule. The city, moreover, had and still has, no representative in Congress with voting rights. The consequence was that the federal government was able to proceed in the eradication of Southwest’s slums without serious worry politically about the effect on its existing residents and businesses or their possible opposition.

The government thus proceeded to acquire properties largely via eminent domain and priced the land by and large in ways that made private-sector development appealing without regard to evolving market forces.¹¹⁷ There was no need, as there was years later in the Fourteenth Street corridor, to wait for external factors like market demand to cover the government’s acquisition costs. The government resold or leased the land it had acquired at prices designed to attract demand that an unsubsidized market would not support.¹¹⁸

5.2.5  Southwest Today

Southwest today, of course, is nothing like it was in 1950. High-rises, neatly-ordered dwellings, government office buildings and the absence of mom and pop grocery and convenience stores bespeak its fundamental transformation. Many critics regard Southwest as sterile.¹¹⁹ Unlike the Fourteenth Street corridor, it does not bustle with street life or present the eye with much in the way of architectural diversity. But the eradication of slums through government planning was seen at the time as the paramount objective. The diversity that organic development might bring about was not a high priority and, in any event, would have taken more time than wholesale reconstruction starting from scratch could achieve. It remains to be seen whether the redevelopment currently occurring along the Southwest waterfront will eventually make a significant difference.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶Id.

¹¹⁷Id.


6. COMPARING OUTCOMES

Despite the significantly different roles played by the public sector in the two situations, the socio-economic consequences as suggested are similar and differ from what was occurring in the city as a whole over parallel periods. It seems not to have made a difference whether transformation was led by the public sector in the case of Southwest or led by the private sector in the case of the Fourteenth Street corridor when looked at from the standpoint of changes in population, race, family income, residential property values, educational attainment, participation in the workforce or types of households, although the transformation of Southwest occurred over a considerably shorter period, from the mid-1950s to 1980, as compared to the period from 1968 to 2014 for the Fourteenth Street corridor.

Making comparisons between renewal taking place in calendar periods that do not overlap is, of course, difficult because the comparisons involve different starting and ending points. The comparisons also involve different economic, social and governing situations during the periods being compared. Comparing what occurred in each situation with what was occurring at the same time in the city as a whole, however, helps. It makes it possible to determine whether the outcomes were unique or simply reflective of what occurring in the larger picture.

We have taken 1950 as the starting point in the case of Southwest because that is the latest date for which Census data are available before the government began clearing out Southwest’s slums. We have taken 1970 as the starting point for the Fourteenth Street corridor because that is the earliest date following the riots for which Census data are available. Both are the points at which the old order was being swept away.

We use two ending points in the case of Southwest. One is 1980 because that is the date by which there seems to be a consensus that the renewal of Southwest in accordance with government plans was largely complete. The other ending point we use in the case of Southwest is 2014 in order to see whether the trends that appeared in the 1950-1980 period continued to the present day. 2014 is latest date for which the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey data are available.

For the Fourteenth Street corridor, there is no completely satisfactory ending point because the transformation of the Fourteenth Street corridor is still on-going. We have, thus, used 2014 as an ending point in the case of the Fourteenth Street corridor and compared the socio-economic consequences of its on-going transformation with those that occurred in Southwest over the 1950-1980 and 1950-2014 periods. Because of renewed developer activities in Southwest, the area, too, is in the process of further transformation.

In all cases, we have examined what happened in the city as a whole during the 1950-1980, 1950-2014 and 1970-2014 periods in order to see whether what occurred during those periods in Southwest and the Fourteenth Street corridor, respectively, was similar or different from what occurred in the city as a whole.

A final note: As mentioned in the research design section above, Census data impose limitations on analysis because they come in decennial segments except for the annual and other periodic data estimates generated by the American Community Survey. We are, thus, constrained by lumpy data whose snapshot pictures could mask significant details. All such data should, therefore, be seen as indicators of trends and direction and not necessarily as definitive reflections of reality at any given point.
7. RESULTS

7.1 Population

The population of the Fourteenth Street corridor in 1970 just after the riots was 42,000. It declined to 33,000 ten years later but reversed itself by 2014. According to Census Survey data, the population in the Fourteenth Street corridor in 2014 stood at 42,000, the level it was at just after the riots. So, nothing had changed as measured by the data though there was a dramatic decline in the forty-four-year interim.

The population of Southwest prior to the start of urban renewal in 1950 was 25,000. It declined dramatically to 9,000 by 1980 as a consequence of deliberate government policy but experienced no further declines over the period from 1980 to 2014. It is, of course, not surprising that there was a population decline because vast tracts of high-density residential dwellings were torn down.

Like Southwest, the city as a whole experienced significant population declines over the period from 1950 to 1980, going from 802,000 in 1950 to 638,000 in 1980, a decline of 20 percent. Unlike Southwest, however, the decline in population over that period for the city as a whole was unintended. Unlike the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, moreover, the city’s population decline continued into 2014 when the population stood at 634,000, a decline of another 4,000 from what it was in 1980.

The picture is, thus, one in which in 2014 the population of the Fourteenth Street corridor was at a level that was essentially the same as it was in 1970, the population of Southwest in 2014 was at level that was a little bit higher than it was in 1980 and the population of the city as a whole in 2014 was smaller than it was in 1970 and 1980. Renewal in Southwest and the Fourteenth Street corridor, thus, bucked the trend for the city as a whole once renewal had taken hold.

The bar graphs and charts immediately below illustrate these data on a comparative basis using the renewal periods described above. The line graph depicts these data on a strictly calendar basis in order to show trends.

\[12^{2}\] We round the numbers that appear in the text in accordance with standard rounding conventions text in order to make them easier to absorb. The actual, unrounded numbers appear in the charts and graphs.
In the Fourteenth Street Corridor, 84 percent of the population was black in 1970. Fourteen percent of the population was white, and only 1 percent was of another race. By 2014, only 26 percent of the population was black, a reduction of 58 percentage points from 1970; 59 percent was white, an increase of 45 percentage points from 1970; and 15 percent was of another race, an increase of 14 percentage points from 1970. The area, thus, became considerably whiter over the period starting with the riots.
In Southwest, 64 percent out of a total population of 25,000 was black in 1950 immediately before urban renewal began; 36 percent of the population was white; and less than 1 percent was of another race. By 1980, only 48 percent of the population was black, 49 percent of the population was white and 3 percent of the population was of another race. By 2014, the percentage of the Southwest population that was black had declined by another 10 percentage points, to 38 percent out of a total population of 9,000, a decline of 26 percentage points from 1950; 52 percent of the population was white, an increase of 15 percentage points over 1950; and 11 percent was of another race, an increase of 10 percentage points over 1950. The change in Southwest, thus, moved in the same direction as the changes in the Fourteenth Street corridor although somewhat less dramatically.

For the city as a whole, 35 percent of the total population was black in 1950. It jumped to 54 percent in 1960, a 19 percentage-point increase. By 1970, it had climbed to 71 percent, a 36 percentage-point increase over 1950. By 2014, 51 percent of the city’s total population was black, an increase of 15 percentage points over 1950.

The racial composition of the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest thus ran counter to what was happening in the District as a whole. The Fourteenth Street corridor was 45 percentage points whiter than it was in 1970. Southwest was 13 percentage points whiter in 1980 compared to 1950 and 15 percentage points whiter in 2014 in comparison to 1950.

The white percentage of the population in D.C., meanwhile, declined. It was 37 percentage points lower in 1970 than it was in 1950, 38 percentage points lower in 1980 than it was in 1950 and 25 percentage points lower in 2014 than it was in 1950. The population of the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, thus, became whiter while the District as a whole became blacker.

The charts and the graph immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street Corridor, Southwest and the city as a whole.

**Figure 6.2.1: Racial Composition**

**Fourteenth Street Corridor**
Figure 6.2.2: Percentage of Population that is Black/African American
### 7.3 Family Income

In the Fourteenth Street Corridor, average family income in 1970, the first year for which Census data on family income are available, was approximately $44,000 in 2013 dollars.\textsuperscript{123} By 2014, average family income in the Fourteenth Street corridor in 2013 dollars had grown to $128,000, an increase of a little over 290%.

We do not have family income data for Southwest in 1950, just before urban renewal began, but in 1970, average family income in Southwest was approximately $106,000. In 2014, it had grown to $143,000, an increase of 74 percent.

Over the same period, average family income in D.C. grew from $68,000 to $129,000, an increase of 46 percent.

The growth in family incomes in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, respectively, over the period from 1970 to 2014 thus outpaced the growth of family incomes across the city even though there was a significant difference in degree between the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest: 290 percent in the Fourteenth Street corridor and 74 percent in Southwest compared with 46 percent for the District as a whole.

The graphs immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street Corridor, Southwest and the city as a whole.

\textsuperscript{123}The term “Family Income” is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as “[t]he sum of the income of all family members 15 years and older living in the household. Families are groups of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family”. The term “Household Income” is defined by the Census Bureau as “[t]he sum of the income of all people 15 years and older living in the household. A household includes related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit, is also counted as a household.” We use “Family Income” data to analyze changes in income over time because data on Household Income for the Census tracts under review are not available for all time periods studied.
Accompanying these changes were significant changes in property values and other indicators of social and economic well-being.

The median value of owner-occupied housing in the Fourteenth Street Corridor in 2013 dollars, for example, was approximately $97,000 in 1970, just after the riots in 1968. By 2014, it had risen to approximately $535,000, or more than five and half times what it was in 1970.

The median value of owner-occupied housing in Southwest in 2013 dollars in 1950 before urban renewal began was approximately $63,000. By 1980, it had risen to $296,000, a 470 percent increase. By 2014, it had risen another $21,000 to approximately $317,000, an increase of almost 500 percent over 1950.

For the city as a whole, the median value of owner-occupied housing in 1970 was $143,000 in 2013 dollars. In 2014, it was $449,000, an increase of 313 percent over 1970. In 1950, the
median value of owner-occupied housing for the city as a whole was $121,000. In 2014, it was $449,000, an increase of almost 371 percent over 1950.

The 550% increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing in the Fourteenth Street corridor in the period from 1970 to 2014 thus outpaced the 313 percent increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing over the same period throughout the District. The almost 500 percent increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing in Southwest from 1950 to 2014 equally outpaced the 373 percent increase in the value of owner-occupied housing for the District as a whole over the same period.

The charts and graph immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street Corridor, Southwest and the city overall.

**Figure 6.4: Median House Value for All Owner-Occupied Housing Units, in 2013 Dollars**

Changes in educational attainment were equally dramatic. In 1970, approximately 17 percent of those over 25 years of age in the Fourteenth Street Corridor had attended college. By 2014, that number had risen to 67 percent or 50 percentage points higher than what it was just after the riots.
In 1950, before the start of urban renewal, only 3 percent of those over 25 years of age in Southwest had attended college. By 1980, over 79 percent had attended college, an increase of 76 percentage points over 1950. By 2014, that number had declined somewhat to a little over 75 percent, but still 72 percentage points higher than it was before urban renewal began.

For the city as a whole, only 13 percent of those over the age of 25 had attended college in 1950. By 1980, that number had risen to 42 percent, a 29 percentage-point increase. By 2014, the number of those over 25 years of age who had attended college rose to 70 percent, a 57 percentage-point increase over 1950. In the period from 1970 to 2014, the percentage of the population over 25 years of age who had attended college rose from 29 percent to 70 percent, a 41 percentage-point increase.

The percentage of those over 25 years of age in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, respectively, who had attended college, thus, grew faster than it did for the District as a whole. For the Fourteenth Street corridor, the increase was 50 percentage points over the period from 1970 to 2014, compared to an increase of 41 percentage points for the city as a whole over the same period. In Southwest, the 72 percentage-point increase from 1950 to 2014 in those who had attended college compares with the 57 percentage-point increase for the District as a whole over the same period.

The charts and graph immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street Corridor, Southwest and the city as a whole.

**Figure 6.5.1: Cumulative Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over**

**Fourteenth Street Corridor**
Southwest

1950

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

High School
College Or More

1980

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

High School
College Or More

2014

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

High School
College Or More

44
Figure 6.5.2: Percentage of Population with College or More Education
7.6 Employment Status

Not quite as dramatic but still significant were changes in employment status. In 1970, only 65 percent of those over sixteen years of age in the Fourteenth Street Corridor were in the labor force. By 2014, that figure had risen to 83 percent, an 18-percentage point increase.

In 1950, only 59 percent of those over sixteen year of age in Southwest were in the workforce. By 1980, that number had risen to 82 percent, a 23 percentage-point increase. By 2014, 79 percent of those over sixteen years of age were in the workforce in Southwest, only slightly lower than in 1970 but still a 20 percentage-point increase over 1950.

For the city as a whole, 62 percent of those over sixteen years of age were in the workforce in 1950. By 1970, that number had risen to 64 percent, a 2 percentage-point increase. By 1980, that number had declined by a percentage point to 63 percent. By 2014, that number had improved to 69 percent, a 7 percentage-point increase over 1950 and a 5 percentage-point increase over 1970.

The increases in workforce participation by those over sixteen years of age in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, thus, exceeded the increases for the city as whole. In the Fourteenth Street corridor, the 18 percentage-point increase over the 1970 to 2014 period compares with the 5 percentage-point increase for the city as a whole over the same period. For Southwest, the 20 percentage-point increase from 1950 to 2014 compares with 7 percentage point increase for the city as a whole over the same period.

The pie charts and graph immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street Corridor, Southwest and the city as a whole.

Figure 6.6.1: Labor Force Participation for Population 16 Years and Over

Fourteenth Street Corridor
Figure 6.6.2: Labor Force Participation for Population 16 Years and Over, 1940-2014
7.7 Types of Households

In 1970, just after the riots in 1968 and the first year for which Census data on household types are available, approximately 47 percent of those living in the Fourteenth Street Corridor were part of a family, defined as consisting of married couples, male heads of households and female heads of households. By 2014, that number had declined to 27 percent, a 20 percentage-point decline.

We do not have data on household types for 1950 for those living in Southwest, but, in 1970, 41 percent of those living in Southwest were living in a family household. By 2014, that number had declined to 29 percent, a 12 percentage-point decline.

For the District as a whole, 62 percent were part of a family in 1970. By 2014, that number had declined to 43 percent, a 19 percentage-point decline.

While the percentage point decline in family households in the case of the Fourteenth Street corridor was on a par with the District as a whole and the percentage point decline in the case of Southwest was smaller than for the District as a whole, in each case the percent of family households in 2014 in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, respectively, was substantially smaller—27 percent and 29 percent, respectively—than for the City as a whole (43 percent). Put another way, 73 percent of the households in the Fourteenth Street corridor and 71 percent of the households in Southwest were headed by unmarried couples or single male or female heads of households compared with only 56 percent for the District as a whole.

The charts and graph immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street corridor, Southwest and the city as a whole.

**Figure 6.7.1: Types of Households**

**Fourteenth Street Corridor**
7.8 Age

In 1970, approximately 65 percent of the population in the Fourteenth Street corridor was between 18 and 65 years of age. The rest, approximately 35 percent were either under 18 or over 64 years of age.

By 2014, the percentage of those living in the Fourteenth Street corridor who were between 18 and 65 years of age had risen to almost 83 percent, an increase of 18 percentage points over 1970, and the percentage of those living in the area who were either under 18 or over 64 years of age had declined from 35 percent to 17 percent, an 18 percentage-point decline.

In 1950, just before urban renewal began, approximately 59 percent of those living in Southwest were between 18 and 64 years of age. The rest, approximately 41 percent, were either under 18 or over 64 years of age. By 1980, the number of those living in Southwest who were between 18 and 65 years of age had risen to approximately 81 percent, a 22 percentage-point increase. By 2014, the percentage of those living in Southwest who were between 18 and 64 years of age remained at approximately 77 percent, an 18 percentage-point increase over 1950. The rest, approximately 23 percent, were either under 18 or over 64 years of age.

For the city as a whole, a little over 67 percent of the total population was between 18 and 65 years of age in 1950. That number had fallen to approximately 61 percent by 1970. By 2014, the percentage of the total population that was between 18 and 65 years of age in the city overall had risen to approximately 72 percent, a 5 percentage-point increase over 1950, and a 11 percentage-point increase over 1970. The remainder, or 28 percent, was either under 18 or over 65 years of age.

The increases in the proportion of the population in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest, respectively, who were between 18 and 65 years of age were, thus identical and outpaced the increases for the District as a whole during the periods under review. This suggests...
that the population in each of these areas based on age differed in possibly significant but hard to define ways from those living in other parts of the city.

The charts and graph immediately below depict these data for the Fourteenth Street Corridor, Southwest and the city as a whole.

**Figure 6.8.1: Age Distribution**

**Fourteenth Street Corridor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 18 years</th>
<th>18 to 64 years</th>
<th>65 and over</th>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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**Southwest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Under 18 years</th>
<th>18 to 64 years</th>
<th>65 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</table>
Figure 6.8.2: Percentage of Population Between 18 - 64 Years of Age
8. CONCLUSIONS

Private sector-led redevelopment as compared to public sector-led redevelopment might be expected to produce significantly different socio-economic outcomes at least in some circumstances given inherent differences in objectives and constraints, political and otherwise. Our analysis indicates that they did not in the case of the private-sector-led redevelopment of the Fourteenth Street corridor in Washington, D.C. following the riots in 1968 as compared to the government-led redevelopment of D.C.’s Southwest quadrant starting in the 1950s. The socio-economic indicators we examined exhibit a striking similarity in trends and direction despite the difference in redevelopment led by the private versus public sectors. It is in many ways, however, not surprising that the outcomes were similar given the similarity of animating interests and objectives and the constraints under with the city labored in the period following the riots.

The private sector in the case of the Fourteenth Street corridor was responding to market forces. It was not significantly constrained by a city that had to contend with the loss of almost a third of its population from 1950 to 2000, suffered from a financial crisis during the most of the 1990s because of overspending and declining tax revenues and was subject to rule from 1995 through most of 2001 by a congressionally appointed, unelected financial control board.

Nor was the private sector significantly constrained by a city plagued by corruption and scandal for most of the 1980s and 90s during the administration of Mayor Marion Barry, who was first elected in 1978, arrested and convicted while mayor on drug charges in 1990, subsequently spent six months in prison and was reelected mayor for another four-year term in 1994 despite his previous record.

It is little wonder under the circumstances that the D.C. government was not in a position to stimulate, control or shape significantly the transformation of the Fourteenth Street corridor even if it had desired different outcomes. It is also little wonder under the circumstances that redevelopment took so long.

Eradication of the slums, removal of the poor, resettling the area with middle to upper income residents and improving the area’s tax base, moreover, were the federal government’s principal goals in its urban renewal program for Southwest. Goals like these, desirable in and of themselves, inevitably produce consequences that are similar to unconstrained redevelopment by the private sector.

Southwest’s urban renewal program was, in addition, conceived and executed before the District of Columbia gained what little home rule it was accorded by Congress in 1973. As was the case in the Fourteenth Street corridor, the city, as a consequence, was not really in a position to control or shape the transformation of Southwest even if had desired different outcomes.

Among the more profound issues these examples of redevelopment in Washington, D.C. raise is whether city governments can reasonably be expected to seek or are realistically capable of producing outcomes that are any different from those the private sector would produce and, if so, how the financial resources to produce different outcomes can be mustered.

Kay Hymowitz argues in “The New Brooklyn, What It Takes to Bring a City Back” that there is, in the words of a “New York Times” reviewer, a whiff of hypocrisy” in how cities think about
redevelopment. “Ask mayors what they wish for in their city centers,” says the reviewer, “and they will give you similar answers – safe streets, bustling sidewalks, busy stores and restaurants, and a healthy and growing residential population with plenty of money in its pocket.” He goes on to observe that “mayors and city planners spend much of their time maneuvering to create these things, but with one inevitable disclaimer: They don’t want it to lead to gentrification.” “What they choose not to admit,” he observes, “is that the change they are seeking and the change they claim to fear are exactly the same.” The word “hypocrisy” is jarring because it implies a sinister motive. But something different may often be involved.

Those who live in cities wish them to be beautiful, attractive and crime-free. They wish them to provide high-quality and effective schools, transportation, garbage collection and other services. They wish the city to have a tax base that will support objectives like these. Achievement of these goals, however, may be in conflict and sometimes incompatible with a city’s need to deal with poverty and the issues they present. Ignoring persistent, underlying social and economic ills may merely shift the problems they present to others. To know that is not necessarily to desire that. It is merely to recognize what is actually happening.

It is a mistake to believe that market forces will produce in the course of renewal or otherwise socio-economic outcomes other than those exhibited in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest D.C. unless regulatory forces and financial resources can be mustered in the service of different outcomes. Doing so is no easy task, however, because it inevitably involves a reduction in the financial and other benefits that might otherwise accrue.

The reality is that overall property values and resulting tax revenues will be lower than they would otherwise be if the transformed neighborhood contains low income residents or low income housing and the city needs to expend resources to support social service facilities for the poor or disadvantaged. An attempt to deal with issues like these and generate different outcomes from what we have seen in the Fourteenth Street corridor and Southwest D.C. would also likely require an increase in tax revenues from other sources in order to provide subsidies for or otherwise fund low-income housing and the construction and staffing of social service facilities. Lower tax revenues and the need for increased expenditures are thus on something of a collision course.

Factors like these in and of themselves present political and financial obstacles to producing outcomes that are different from those resulting from redevelopment driven by private-sector or private-sector-like interests. More importantly, factors like these require city officials, planners and citizens to face up to the fact there is an inherent tension between wanting to transform slums and undesirable neighborhoods and the ability to attract desired residents and business to

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those areas. Diversity versus gentrification are enduring issues along the Fourteenth Street corridor, in Southwest D.C. and elsewhere.\(^2\)

As at least one developer observed in an interview, there are tipping points that have a powerful effect on the redevelopment process.\(^3\) Until prospective residents and business are convinced that the characteristics they desire will predominate in previously undesirable neighborhoods, they will not come. The corollary is that residents and businesses a city wishes to have will leave if characteristics they do not want begin to predominate. Tipping points are hard to recognize, however, and are often not obvious until after they have occurred.\(^4\)

This suggests at least six important areas for further research:

When do a city’s efforts to achieve social and economic diversity in a neighborhood defeat the goal of attracting to the neighborhood the residents and businesses needed for the neighborhood’s revival?

When do those who say social and economic diversity is desirable feel threatened by diversity when diversity reaches a tipping point sufficient to make them want to leave? Put another way, what are the tipping points?

Is there a sound analytical framework for identifying and measuring tipping points of this kind? Or must city planners and others simply wait to see what the market is telling them? A related question is whether it will be too late at that point to keep the point from tipping?

How can a city persuade those not concerned about diversity to incur the financial burdens required to achieve diversity? Put another way, will residents of D.C.’s posh Northwest agree to property and other tax increases to achieve diversity in an area alien or unfamiliar to them and to which they may never go? Recent adverse neighborhood reactions to D.C.’s efforts to spread homeless shelters around the city are not encouraging.\(^5\)


Are the two situations analyzed in this study so different in time and circumstances as to invalidate any attempt to develop generalizable principles that might be useful in other circumstances?

What are the mechanisms by which the public, private and non-profit sectors can reconcile differences to achieve a common objective in the transformation of urban environments in need of or undergoing transformation?

These are important issues because, unless a way is found to balance competing interests, gentrification and resulting homogeneous neighborhoods may be the only outcomes that are realistically possible. The result would be the continued migration of a neighborhood’s social and economic ills, such as poverty, poor housing, unemployment, low educational attainment and the like, from one neighborhood to another or from one jurisdiction to another and the continued segregation of a city’s population by race, class and experience. “Beggar thy neighbor” concepts whereby the solution to a problem comes at the expense of others readily come to mind.131

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9. REFERENCES

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Maps


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Milloy, C. (2015, Jul. 21). Yes, 14th Street may be better these days, but something vital is missing. *The Washington Post*, Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/yes-14th-street-may-be-better-these-days-but-something-vital-is-m.


APPENDIX A: U.S. Census Tracts for Fourteenth Street Corridor

Decennial Census of Population and Housing (1940-2010):

- 1940: 28; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52
- 1950: 28; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52
- 1960: 28; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52.10
- 1970: 28; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52.10
- 1980: 28; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52.10
- 1990: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52.10
- 2000: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52.10
- 2010: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50.01; 50.02; 52.10

American Community Survey (five-year estimates):

- Census 2010: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50; 52.10
- Census 2011: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50.01; 50.02; 52.10
- Census 2012: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50.01; 50.02; 52.10
- Census 2013: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50.01; 50.02; 52.10
- Census 2014: 28.02; 30; 36; 37; 43; 44; 50.01; 50.02; 52.10
APPENDIX B: U.S. Census Tracts for Southwest

Decennial Census of Population and Housing (1940-2010):

- Census 1940: Census tracks: 60; 61; 62; 63
- Census 1950: Census tracks: 60; 61; 62; 63
- Census 1960: Census tracks: 60; 61; 62; 63
- Census 1970: Census tracks: 60.01; 60.20; 61; 62; 63.01
- Census 1980: Census tracks: 60.01; 60.20; 61; 62; 63.01
- Census 1990: Census tracks: 60.01; 60.20; 61; 62; 63.01
- Census 2000: Census tracks: 60.01; 60.20; 61; 62; 63.01
- Census 2010: Census tracks: 102; 105; 110

American Community Survey (five-year estimates):

- Census 2010: Census tracks: 102; 105; 110
- Census 2011: Census tracks: 102; 105; 110
- Census 2012: Census tracks: 102; 105; 110
- Census 2013: Census tracks: 102; 105; 110
- Census 2014 Census tracks: 102; 105; 110
## APPENDIX C: Personal Interviews and Consultations

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<tr>
<td>07/07/15</td>
<td>Otto J. Hetzel</td>
<td>Former Assistant General Counsel, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/09/15</td>
<td>David Muse</td>
<td>Artistic Director, Studio Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meridith Burkus</td>
<td>Managing Director, Studio Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/14/15</td>
<td>James Nozar</td>
<td>Developer with the JBG Companies, one of the largest developers in Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>07/30/15</td>
<td>Edward Ryan</td>
<td>Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Marriott International Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/03/15</td>
<td>Joy Zinoman</td>
<td>Founder of the Studio Theatre now located at the corner of Fourteenth and P Streets in Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/11/15</td>
<td>Alice Rivlin</td>
<td>Senior Fellow, the Brookings Institution. Previously Director, the Congressional Budget Office, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and Chair of the D.C. Financial Control Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>09/02/15</td>
<td>Gene Sofer</td>
<td>Partner in the Susquehanna Group, a public policy consulting firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/24/15</td>
<td>Jane Thompson</td>
<td>Designer and Urban Planner, Co-Founder of Design Research, involved in numerous well-known revitalization projects with her architect husband, Benjamin Thompson. Included are those involving Faneuil Hall in Boston, the Grand Central District in New York, the South Street Seaport in New York City, the Navy Pier in Chicago, Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and Union Station in Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/13/15</td>
<td>Perry Pockros</td>
<td>Facilis LLC, a D.C. management consulting firm</td>
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<td>12/21/15</td>
<td>Marvin Jawer</td>
<td>Washington D.C. real estate investor and lawyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/11/16</td>
<td>Tamara Smith</td>
<td>CEO, YWCA for the National Capital Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/11/16</td>
<td>Ashley Wiltshire</td>
<td>Principal, SJG Properties</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jon Gerstenfeld</td>
<td>Founder, SJG Properties</td>
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<td>01/11/16</td>
<td>Donald Blanchon</td>
<td>Executive Director of the Whitman-Walker Clinic</td>
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<td>01/13/16</td>
<td>Lori Kaplan</td>
<td>CEO and President of the Latin American Youth Center in Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/21/16</td>
<td>Andrew Altman</td>
<td>The head of the D.C. City Planning Office after Mayor Marion Barry</td>
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<tr>
<td>01/21/16</td>
<td>Rolph Pendall</td>
<td>Center Director, the Urban Institute</td>
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<td>Peter Tatian</td>
<td>Senior Fellow, the Urban Institute</td>
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<td>02/17/16</td>
<td>Colin Tarbert</td>
<td>Deputy Mayor, City of Baltimore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Leon Pinkett, III</td>
<td>Assistant Deputy Mayor</td>
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<td>Julie Day</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner, Land Resources</td>
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<td>02/19/16</td>
<td>John Fanning</td>
<td>D.C. Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner</td>
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<td>03/03/16</td>
<td>Terence Fitzgerald</td>
<td>Former attorney and developer for the Mills Corporation, Tishman and other developers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/09/16</td>
<td>Eric Shaw, Joshua Silver, Stephen Cochran</td>
<td>Director, D.C. Office of Planning</td>
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<td>Ward 1 Neighborhood Planner, D.C. Office of Planning</td>
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<td>Zoning &amp; Special Projects Planner, District of Columbia Office of Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>05/27/15</td>
<td>Geoffrey Griffis</td>
<td>City Partners, a design and development firm in D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>06/01/16</td>
<td>Andre Byers</td>
<td>President and CEO of the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/16/16</td>
<td>Rebecca Katz</td>
<td>Administrator, D.C. Office of Public Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/17/16</td>
<td>Andy Shallal</td>
<td>Owner of Busboys and Poets in the District of Columbia, a bistro and gathering place in D.C. with locations on Fourteenth Street and elsewhere in D.C.; Recent candidate for mayor of D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06/29/16</td>
<td>William Creech</td>
<td>Archivist, The National Archives</td>
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