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Recommended Citation

Oliff, Hailey, "More than Gates: The Physical and Invisible Barriers to Gated Communities and Their Consequences on the Broader Community" (2017). *Spring 2017*. 87.

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MORE THAN GATES:
THE PHYSICAL AND INVISIBLE BARRIERS
TO GATED COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES
ON THE BROADER COMMUNITY

Hailey Oliff

Mentor: Carol Camp Yeakey

Gated communities are residential areas that have walls, gates, and guards that work to regulate the movement of people and vehicles into and out of the area. The creation of these gates is largely founded on fear of crime, street traffic, and outsiders. Gated communities are a controversial form of residential developments because they work to physically and symbolically exclude individuals from elite communities. This thesis will address the following questions: what are the physical and invisible barriers to gated communities; what are the implications of these junctures in the urban landscape; and what are alternatives to gated communities? These questions will first be answered by addressing when and how gated communities become a touchstone of American urban design and how they have evolved since. A case study of three elite gated communities in New Tampa, Florida highlight the physical and invisible blockades to entering these secluded communities. Further, I will analyze the special, political, economic, and social consequences resulting from gated communities and their effects on the broader community. Finally, gated communities are challenged by way of a comparison to the New Urbanism design practice. New Urbanism is considerably different to the retreatist method of gated communities and offers an alternative urban design to the physical and invisible barriers present in modern cities.