The Midwest Neighborhood

Neighborhood Revitalization Framework Plan

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This report was designed with interdisciplinary approaches that encompass a wide range of planning methods, studies, and recommendations. These recommendations are outlined in a way that allows the community members to achieve short-term and long-term goals that are sustainable and achievable. The report aims to empower the residents of the community to achieve their desired goals for the community.

It is crucial to appreciate that every goal, objective, and recommendation can be implemented incrementally. Some goals will be easier to attain and others will take longer to achieve. These goals, improvements, and initiatives are all flexible to shift with any potential new changes that occur in the neighborhood that may render priority of one goal over another. Future projects should follow the same mentality as they should acknowledge and amend to any progression.

This report can be used as a valuable tool in bringing the community together, by utilizing the tools and resources offered below. The overall goal of this report is to encourage cohesiveness and assist with building the neighborhood from the ground up. This can make a positive impact as there has not been a significant amount of planning practices or development in this area in recent years.

The neighborhood's history, culture, important landmarks, and existing conditions were all highly emphasized when designing this report. A complete inventory that highlights land use, mobility and transportation, environmental conditions, and economic potential was created to help with centering that focus.

The four main topics of this report are community development, economic development, transportation, and environment. Community Development's prioritized areas are: improving community engagement, revitalizing the parks, and offer methods on how to begin the process of developing a community center. Economic Development prioritized areas are the following: establish business nodes at key corridors, stabilize blocks throughout the neighborhood, encourage entrepreneurship and small business development. Transportation prioritizes the following items: bicycle lane additions, improvements, bus stops, condition improvements, sidewalk rehabilitation, speed reduction technique, and implementation of a mobility hub. The prioritized areas for environmental are: reuse of vacant land, reduce pollution, and stormwater management.

Midwest Neighborhood is situated 4.5 miles from Downtown Detroit and within 3 miles of notable neighborhoods including Midtown and Corktown that are close to downtown Detroit and have seen massive new investments in real estate development, business openings, and increased regional and tourist traffic.

Midwest is bounded by I-96 to the north and east, Warren Avenue and I-94 to the south, and the right-of-way of the old Conrail rail-line, site of the new Joe Louis Greenway, to the west. The neighborhood is in Council District 6 currently represented by Raquel Castañeda-López. Census Tracts 5222, 5265, 5272, 5273, 5335, 5336, 5337, 5345, 5346, and 9850 were used to study this area's census information.

Comprising 1,997 acres of land, Midwest is bifurcated by a large industrial zone surrounded by residential uses.

Midwest is in the middle belt of Detroit, not quite within the boundaries of the oldest neighborhoods, and not in the newer, more suburban outer sections of Detroit and is considered a West Side neighborhood.

The neighborhood's history is tied to the Detroit Terminal Railroad and the Union Belt Rail Line northwest of Downtown Detroit during the beginning of the 20th century. These rail lines serviced Ford Motor Company's Highland Park Plant and many smaller manufacturing firms that were suppliers of the auto companies.

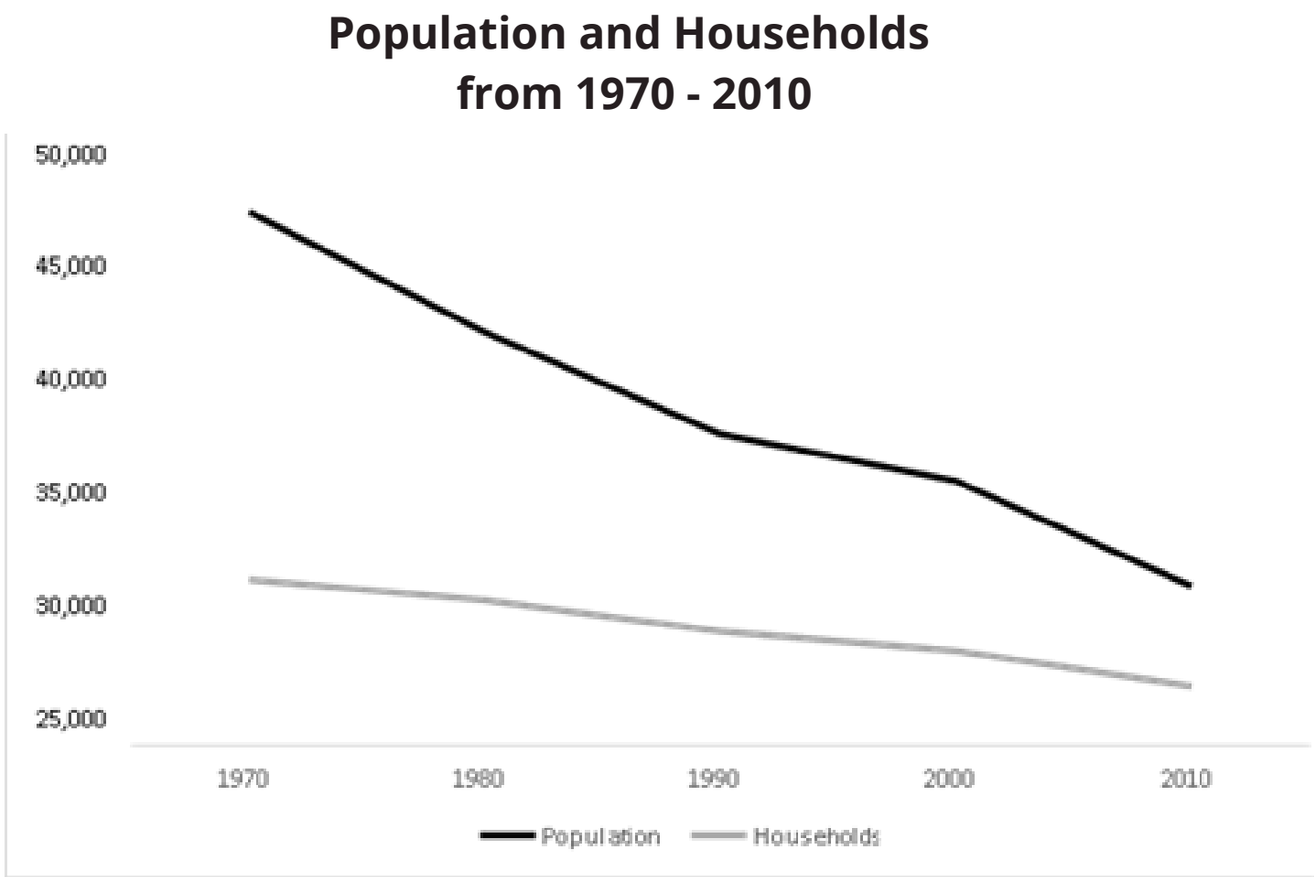
This rail is still functioning as part of CSX's rail system and services the existing industries in the neighborhood. Some of these industrial sites are vacant and some are considered brownfields by the State of Michigan.

The neighborhood was one of the early neighborhoods where Jewish and Black residents could rent and purchase homes in the early 1900s. Despite the neighborhood's middle-class character, the community was designated a "Grade D" neighborhood during the depression.

The average household size in the country and in Detroit has been shrinking over the last 50 years. This change in household size can explain
a portion of population loss, so it is important to note how households are changing as households are the main users of housing. If households
decline, then demand for housing will decline. Communities that experienced population loss do not always see increased vacancy and abandonment.
Only the household composition has changed, not the demand for housing. In Midwest, both population and households have decreased considerably since 1970.

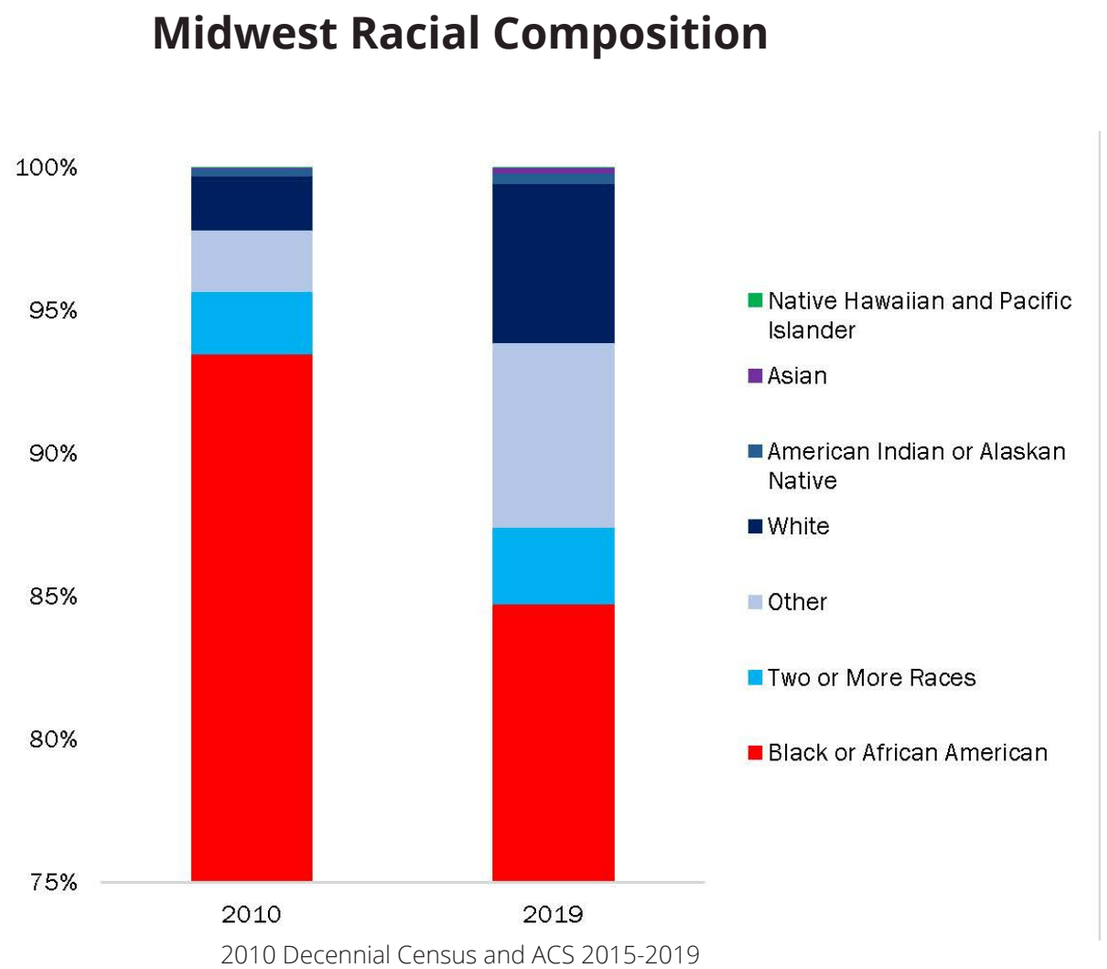
The racial composition of the neighborhood has changed slightly in the last 10 years. The neighborhood is still largely African-American, but there has been some growth of other races. This may be due to sampling errors in the American Community Survey. The larger share of white racial identities may be a result of a growing Hispanic population, mainly on the west side of the neighborhood.

Between 2010 and 2019, the Hispanic population grew from 3.8% to 11.8%. This should be seen as a positive as it may demonstrate that as Southwest Detroit (a Hispanic majority community) continues to grow, households may look to the Midwest neighborhood to live, helping to stabilize the population and household loss in the neighborhood.



LTDB Database Decennial Census 1970 - 2010

Figure 1. Population Households from 1970-2010



2010 Decennial Census and ACS 2015-2019

Figure 2. Midwest Racial Composition

Historical Maps

Figure 3. New York Central Railroad Annual Report in 1916 showing the Detroit Terminal Railroad

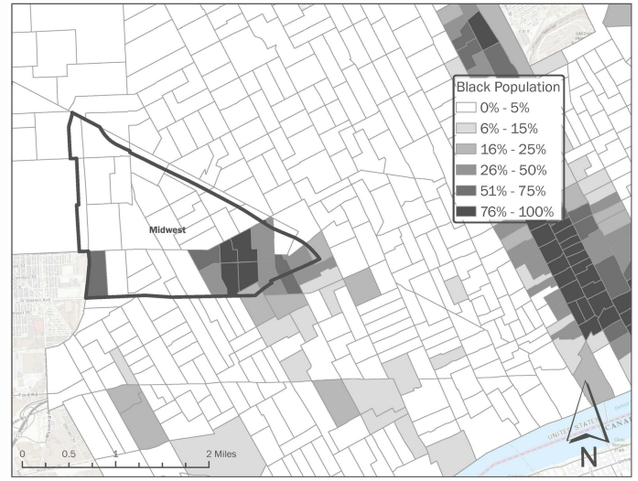


Figure 4. 1930 Percent African American

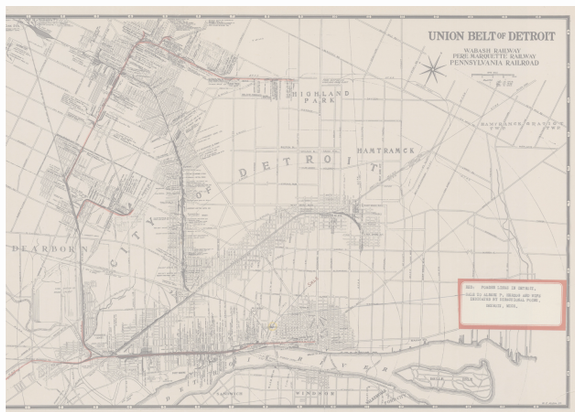


Figure 5. Union Belt of Detroit Rail Map

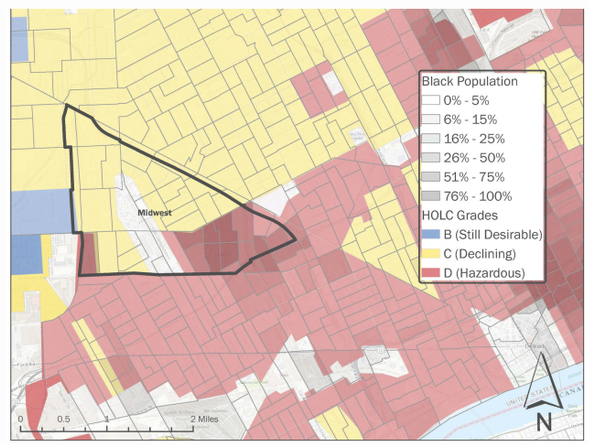


Figure 6. 1930 Percent African American and HOLC Redlining Map

The existing land use map uses the following categories:

- **Commercial**
- **Multi-Family Housing**
- **Single-Family Housing**
- **Industrial**
- **Institutional**
- **Parks**
- **Vacant**

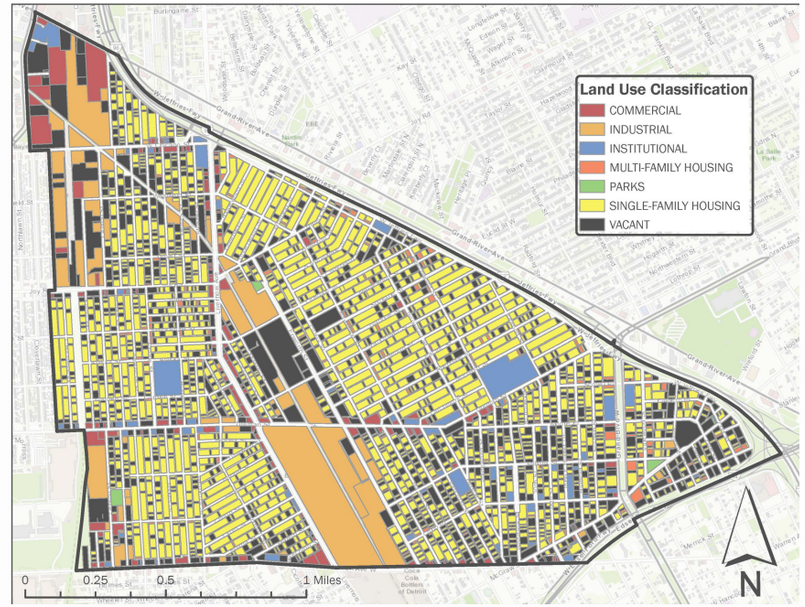


Figure 7. Land Use Classification. Source: SEMCOG Land use Data

Commercial use shows where retail, office, or entertainment activity may occur. In Midwest, there are multiple commercial corridors as well as interspersed neighborhood commercial activity.

Multi-Family and **single-family** housing are separated when possible demonstrating low residential building diversity. These residential uses dominate the neighborhood, however many structures are vacant and in poor shape.

Industrial is an important land use to Midwest as almost 200 acres are dedicated to industrial activity. More was once in this neighborhood based on vacant land adjacent to these areas. Industrial activity is mainly clustered along a rail line that likely predates the residential area.

Institutional uses are churches and schools, institutions that support the neighborhood through education and services, building human and social capital in the neighborhood. The neighborhood has a large number of church institutions for the population and is an important asset to note.

Park uses are city-owned and maintained parks. In Midwest, there are few places for neighbors to gather and play together.

Vacant Land has its own category as it is both a large challenge and an opportunity for the neighborhood. This category only includes vacant land, not vacant structures. Without structures, this land is poised for quick reuse if it is deemed necessary. Structures represent a different kind of challenge and opportunity that is addressed in a separate map showing Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) owned structures and land in the neighborhood.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Community Development is both an outcome and a process by which community stakeholders come together to take collective action based on their priorities and values, and neighborhood residents are centered in the planning of their community. The Community Development section of this report encompasses a variety of recommendations, both short and long-term, to support the building of a cohesive, healthy, and vibrant neighborhood, where residents can fully and fairly participate in social, political, and economic activities. The following recommendations prioritize expanding community engagement, connectivity, and visibility; expanding the capacity of community organizations; and investing in and building upon community assets to create strong community spaces for youth and adults in the neighborhood.

Figure 8. Sampson Elementary School

PRIORITY AREAS AND GOALS

Community Engagement and Connectivity

- Increase Visibility of Community Website and Social Media
- Update Existing Branding
- Establish a Resource Network
- Attain 501c3 Status
- Fundraising for Community Efforts

Parks

- The Importance of Parks
- Activate Existing Parks
- Establish a New Park/Greenspace: Vacant Lot on 8401-8449 Northfield Street
- Integrate the Joe Louis Greenway
- Enhance Park Infrastructure and Programming

Community Center

- Establish Short-term Community Gathering Space
- Work Toward a Full-scale Community Center

Case Study: Durfee Innovation Society

Figure 9. Community Park Example

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

Although an active network of community members exists in this neighborhood, and they organize and take action to improve conditions, the online presence of these groups is minimal. This lack of visibility could be squandering the ability to grow a network of agencies or individuals that could help with their capacity to fund projects, share useful information, volunteer, and strengthen their political presence. At first look, only one active Facebook page can be found representing this neighborhood, called Midwest Civic Council of Block Clubs. They share information, conduct outreach, and showcasing volunteer opportunities.

Because this geography is known under a few vastly different names - Midwest, The Old Westside, Historic Westside, and North of Warren Community - there is no concise way to look up information about what is happening here. For this community to unite and seek improvements, the name and visibility must become a priority as a preliminary step to any of the following suggestions.

In comparison to neighboring communities like Southwest, Nardin Park, or Corktown, there are very few active Community Development Organizations. As far as existing non-profits in the neighborhood, there are a few organizations: Renaissance Head Start, Men of Vision Mentoring, SHAR, Detroit Community Health, and Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. They handle a variety of outreach programs in and around the community ranging from healthcare, childcare, mentoring programs, and more. See Appendix B for existing community groups.

Figure 10.Community Connectivity.

Increase Visibility of Community Website and Social Media (Now)

A no-cost option to increase Community Capacity is to create social media accounts that represent the community and share triumphs, tribulations, and goals for the community. This is an effective first step to creating a bountiful resource network. These pages should be updated frequently, use high-quality photos and writing, and maintain a cohesive brand.

A schedule for posting could be established between a group of community stakeholders that want to take on this responsibility, or, if funding is available, someone can be hired to create branding and content that represents the community and its goals. A community website would be an extension of this, bringing on some potential additional costs and requiring additional expertise.

Implementation:

Wix is a website builder offering several plans for organizations to maintain their online presence. It is relatively low cost and easy to use. Business Unlimited or Business Basic plans could provide the tools the neighborhood would need with 24/7 professional support for approximately $23-$27 per month. They offer templates that have easy to edit fields for information and photos.

Conveniently, they even offer one specifically for community groups. The site even offers a Logo Maker tool. A built-in event calendar can inform residents of upcoming community subgroup meetings, neighborhood social events, rec leagues, and more. Both plans offer online stores and payment processing which would be useful for future fundraising. The future Midwest neighborhood organization can improve branding and neighborhood cohesion using this type of service.

Update Existing Branding (Now)

There is a lack of consistency in the name of the community. In order to move the neighborhood forward in its ability to be recognized and considered for things like funding, programming, and services, there needs to be a targeted effort to update any information that exists about this neighborhood. Currently, the City of Detroit has this neighborhood represented as “Midwest” throughout their data portals and interactive maps, the DIA put out the video “The Old Westside” of this same geography, and District 6 City Council and representatives call this community “North of Warren,” as it is the only distinct community under their representation that is North of Warren Road.

Consistent branding that is characteristic and easy to identify will be an essential component of the neighborhood’s ability to unify its residents and reach people outside of the neighborhood. The naming and branding of the neighborhood should come from and appeal to existing residents. Through a strong community engagement plan, the city can ensure that representative and cohesive branding is used to promote the neighborhood and reflects the priorities of the North of Warren community.

Neighborhood information can also be distributed through existing City of Detroit channels, including the City’s social media and neighborhoods.org website. A coordinated and ongoing effort between neighborhood representatives and the City’s Department of Neighborhoods can be established to ensure that this existing resource is leveraged to its full potential.

A page with links to community websites, social media, active nonprofits that serve this area, maps, and a short overview of the area should exist on https://www.theneighborhoods.org/ as a dedicated webpage for “Midwest.” This should be consistent with branding and help to uplift the community by exposing all the good that the area has to offer, it should share accurate information, and paint a picture of a lively, cohesive community that is unified in its effort for positive, lasting change.

Establish a Resource Network (Now)

Resource sharing between nonprofits and community development organizations could be streamlined. The first step is creating a running list of organizations that exist within the neighborhood or that serve this geography. See Appendix A for a list of organizations that serve the community.

This is important for multiple reasons; connecting with nonprofits, community development organizations, block groups, and neighborhood associations can be fundamental in increasing the community's capacity to connect to resources outside of the neighborhood. Having these connections is also a step to being recognized and considered for programming and funding in the future.

Figure 11. Connectivity.

Attain 501c3 Status (Now/Near)

The formation of a 501c3 non-profit organization could be a vital step in the community's ability to achieve long-term goals and funding. This would create opportunities for charitable solicitation, and many grant programs require 501c3 status before they fund a project or program. 501c3 status would also provide limited liability, tax exemption, and allow the community to maximize any funds to further neighborhood goals. See Appendix B for the 501c3 checklist.

Fundraising for Community Efforts (Now & Near)

With a 501c entity established for the neighborhood or association, the proper foundation is in place for future fundraising efforts. The 501c neighborhood entity may register with the state of Michigan which will enable it to open a bank account with a few nominated officers as signers. Funds can be utilized for operational costs, neighborhood clean-up efforts, neighborhood block groups, and future large-scale improvements. Grant writing classes are offered at local community colleges and through other organizations often, gaining some experience will drastically better the chances of the 501c3 having their projects (or infrastructure) considered for funding.

The North Rosedale Park Civic Association uses a membership model for some of its operational and fundraising needs. The cost of basic membership is $75 per year with options to increase for additional benefits. This is a key strategy in which money from the community stays within the community purely to improve it. In North Rosedale Park funds are used for social recreation clubs, neighborhood clean-up, code enforcement, neighborhood safety, park upkeep, farmers markets, and more. The neighborhood website or social media account would allow Midwest to be transparent about how funds are utilized and take recurring payments for membership.

PARKS

There are currently six parks in the Midwest neighborhood as identified by the City of Detroit Park Finder: Ames, Sirotkin, Dover, Wiley, Dinning, and Laker. Of the six parks, only Laker Park currently has any suitable park or playground amenities. The other parks are either fully vacant lots or may have benches remaining.

The 2017 Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan identified that Sirotkin, Dinning, and Wiley Parks should be relocated. Detroit's opinion was that the parks were located too close to industry or rail. The recommendation at that time was to close the three parks. The report advised the next step would be to consolidate into the Sherrill Elementary greenspace and build a new playground with additional amenities at a cost of $550,000 (Parks + Rec Improvement Plan, 2017). For the purposes of this report, specific emphasis will be placed on Laker and Ames Parks, and two new proposed locations as those that can further be activated and emphasized as community assets.

The Importance of Parks

Economic Value

- Parks can increase property values by improving the local tax base.
- The American Forests, a national conservation organization, estimates that trees in cities save $400 billion in stormwater retention facility costs.
- Parks and recreation generate revenue for the local neighborhood.

Health and Environmental Benefits

- Parks and recreation facilities are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit. There are significant correlations to reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.
- Parks have also been proven to significantly improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife.

Figure 12. Dequindre Cut. Source: Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

The Importance of Parks

Social Importance

- Parks improve the livability of communities and strengthen community identity for citizens, improving the overall quality of life for residents.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups.
- Parks promote public pride and cohesion in communities.

Figure 13. Dequindre Cut Playground.
Source: Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.

Activating Existing Parks (Now & Near)

Laker Park

Address: 7520 Central Avenue
General location and surroundings: SW corner of the neighborhood; corner of Central Avenue and Roy Avenue.
Size: 1.501 ac
Current amenities: According to the City of Detroit Park Finder, available amenities include basketball, soccer, horseshoes, a picnic area, and a play area. Playground equipment, including a slide, climbing structure, and swings, are available. Laker has adequate signage and a mural building that contributes to the park's aesthetics. Edge posts and boulders are in place to prevent illegal dumping.

Figure 14. Laker Park. Source: Google Maps.

Park opportunities: With the park featuring a fair number of amenities for the neighborhood, a community center could be considered within the vacant building that sits directly on the land along with a fence that borders the industrial side of the park for safety concerns. Adding more inclusive structures such as ground-level ones, creating a stimulating play environment, areas for people to rest or eat a snack, and possible water stations. Promoting Laker Park within the community website and social media will encourage the use and further safety and programming.

Figure 15. Laker Park. Source: Google Maps.

Activating Existing Parks

Ames Park

Address: 3716 McGraw Street
General location and surroundings: east side of the neighborhood; bordered by Milford Street, Vinewood Street, and McGraw Avenue.
Size: 0.99 ac
Current amenities: Available amenities at the park according to the City of Detroit Park Finder include a picnic area and play area. There are just a few benches present.
Park opportunities: This Park could be outfitted with children's playground equipment, benches and other seating. It could follow the Parks and Rec Department's mini-park prototype strategy for best optimization. Other options include a small community garden, picnic tables, grills, or games like horseshoes.

Dover Park

Address: 6620 Diversey Street
General Location and Surroundings: Southwestern portion of the neighborhood; bordered by Eagle Street, Rangoon Street, and Diversey Street; residential uses border the park on all sides
Size: 0.117 ac
Current amenities: none
Park opportunities: Due to its small size and isolated nature, a few small structures such as picnic tables may be suitable for the space.

Activating Existing Parks

Sirotkin Park

Address: 8741 Epworth Street
General location and surroundings: centrally located in the neighborhood; between Joy Road and Linsdale Street; adjacent to the Green Polymeric Materials parking lot and the Detroit Bus Company
Size: 0.627 ac
Current amenities: none

Wiley Park

Address: 9039 Stoepel Street
General location and surroundings: Northwestern part of the neighborhood; corner of Dover Avenue and Stoepel Street; railroad crossing is located on the same street between Dover Avenue and Westfield Avenue
Size: 0.681 ac
Current amenities: none

Dinning Park

Address: 9354 Prairie Street
General location and surroundings: Northwest corner of the neighborhood; Prairie Street and Westfield Avenue; bordered by primarily by vacant lots as well as some residential lots
Size: 0.537
Current amenities: none

Activating Existing Parks

Recommendations for Sirotkin, Wiley, and Dinning Park:

The City of Detroit has identified Sirotkin, Wiley, and Dinning Parks as candidates for closure and relocation. This likely indicates that funding and maintenance will not continue. Their recommendation is that the parks be consolidated into the Sherrill School Site, a site worth activating. If Midwest would like these parks to be part of their community going forward, it is likely that a community advocacy group will need to be formed. Possible neighborhood organizing for mowing and park maintenance could be necessary. Detroit's parks visioning sessions have been conducted in 2021, and an updated plan will be released next year.

Establish a New Park/Greenspace: Vacant Lot on 8401-8449 Northfield Street (Near)

The neighborhood is currently utilizing vacant space on the eastern side of the neighborhood bordered by Northfield Street, Maplewood Avenue, Spokane Avenue, and Colfax Avenue. Due to the existing interest in using this space, we propose better activating this site specifically for youth. Benches, painting lines for sports fields, flowers, walking paths, signage, and a pavilion or park center would be appropriate investments to this community asset.

Figure 16. Northfield Prospective Lot.

Integrate the Joe Louis Greenway (Near)

The Joe Louis Greenway (JLG) is a 27.5-mile shared-use path paying tribute to a Detroit legend while setting aside underutilized land for public use and recreation. According to the Detroit Greenways Coalition, "When completed, it will provide a place for people of all abilities to safely walk, bike, and run while connecting neighborhoods, parks, schools, jobs, historic sites, commercial corridors and public transit" (2021).

The JLG project is underway and is expected to play a large role in improving non-motorized transportation throughout the city. A phase 1 development section of the greenway will be running through the Midwest neighborhood. The greenway will include on-street and off-street pathways, stormwater management features, picnic areas, and other open green spaces. The Midwest's section of the greenway broke ground on May 17th, 2021 (Ramirez, 2021). When completed, this greenway will provide space for residents in the neighborhood to be active and safe outdoors, improve health, and increase community value. Phase 1 is expected to be completed in 2023.

Figure 17. Map of planned JLG route. Source: ModelD Media.

Integrate the Joe Louis Greenway (Near)

The JLG project is underway and is expected to play a large role in improving non-motorized transportation throughout the city. A phase 1 development section of the greenway will be running through the Midwest neighborhood. The greenway will include on-street and off-street pathways, stormwater management features, picnic areas, and other open green spaces. The Midwest's section of the greenway broke ground on May 17th, 2021 (Ramirez, 2021). When completed, this greenway will provide space for residents in the neighborhood to be active and safe outdoors, improve health, and increase community value. Phase 1 is expected to be completed in 2023.

Figure 18. Example of Joe Louis Greenway Trail.
Source: Joe Louis Greenway Framework Plan

Integrate the Joe Louis Greenway

Updated Plans for Warren Trailhead

Greenway officials plan for a major access trailhead on Warren by Central and McDonald by the rail line. The full Phase 1 construction cost will be $30 million (Joe Louis Greenway Phase 1, 2021). Funding has been put in place through several sources. Money for the project will come from $22 million in bond funds, $2.5 million from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation for design and construction plans, and $4.5 million from the Michigan Department of Transportation and Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the acquisition of the railway (Ramirez, 2021).

The Warren trailhead is envisioned to be a full park and community space. Current site plans include a playground and adult fitness equipment with onsite parking for trail users and residents. The current plan includes a pavilion and event space with a covered plaza. When developed this new park will provide a safe space for kids to play and the neighborhood to gather for community events.

This is a large-scale public works catalyst project. Delays and cost overruns can lead to amended plans. While the project is currently not complete, it is positive that Midwest is in the first phase of the project with some funding in place.

Integrate the Joe Louis Greenway

Figure 19. Warren Trailhead Area Currently.
Source: Joe Louis Greenway Phase 1 Construction Update Presentation

Figure 20. Warren Trailhead Area Park Site Plan.
Source: Joe Louis Greenway Phase 1 Construction Update Presentation.

Enhance Park Infrastructure and Programming (Now & Near)

Sit on It Detroit

Provides reclaimed wooden benches throughout the City of Detroit. So far, this social enterprise has placed over 18 bus stops in Detroit and has also started to expand production to provide benches for parks and public spaces. These benches come with a detailed, unique design that has been attractive to many residents and tourists.

Email: info@soidetroit.com
Phone number: 313-680-5733
Website: http://www.de-tread.com/site/

Figure 21. An example of a Sit on It Detroit project. Source: Build Institute.

Enhance Park Infrastructure and Programming

Kids Work it Out

A non-profit that is a team of health experts that includes yoga teachers, researchers, and community activists. They advocate a 12-lesson model that is guided by state and national education, physical activity, and nutrition. Offering programming through yoga practice, mindfulness, social and emotional learning, and trauma coping.

Email: kidsworkitout@wayne.edu

Figure 22. Exercise Programs Source: Kids Work It Out

Co.act Detroit

A hub that accelerates nonprofit organizations and community organizations in Detroit. Co.act Detroit offers cross-sector resources, events, learning opportunities, and world-class programming. This organization focuses on collaboration, knowledge, networking, and offers a safe working space for innovation.

Phone Number: 313-499-9865
Location: 6558 Woodward Avenue
Website: www.coactdetroit.org

co.act DETROIT

Accelerating collaborative action in Southeast Michigan's nonprofit community

Figure 23. Co.act Detroit logo. Source: Co.act Detroit.

Enhance Park Infrastructure and Programming

The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative

The goal of the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative is to empower urban communities by offering a sustainable agricultural platform while simultaneously reducing socioeconomic disparity.

Website: www.miufi.org

Pedal to Porch

An opportunity for residents of the Midwest neighborhood to be able to share their stories. A neighborhood bike ride that includes stops that connect neighbors and visitors to learn about different communities throughout Detroit.

Website: www.pedaltoporch.org

Detroit Future City Working with Lots Program

Detroit Future City is aiming to accelerate vacant land revitalization in Detroit using the Field Guide to Working with Lots. It also encourages Detroiters to install one of the 38 lot designs to activate community spaces, beautify neighborhoods and address increased rainfall through green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). This program includes an annual grant program, workshop series, and maintenance program. Providing step-by-step instruction for 38 landscape design options that range from installation by beginning gardeners to professional contractors.

Website: www.detroitfuturecity.com/our-programs/wwl-2020

DETROIT FUTURE CITY

Figure 24. Detroit Future City logo. Source: Detroit Future City.

COMMUNITY CENTER

The Midwest neighborhood is without a community gathering space or physical community center. Community centers offer residents a defined gathering space for neighborhood meetings, recreation, and entertainment. These spaces also provide a safe space for kids to learn and play. Midwest residents have expressed the desire to utilize one of the shuttered school sites in the neighborhood for conversion to a community center.

A robust outreach effort should be established to support the success of new and renovated community spaces. A combination of methods, including website & social media, pushes, going door to door, and speaking at relevant meetings, can all be part of a larger outreach plan to encourage people from every part of the neighborhood to participate.

Establish Short-term Community Gathering Space (Now & Near)

Midwest can activate one of their existing or prospective green spaces or parks to create a short-term community gathering space. Online polling (using the new website) can be utilized to get a consensus on what area would be best suited to meet neighborhood goals. This short-term solution would be cost-effective but weather-dependent until a physical structure could be secured.

The former Sherill elementary school has 3-4 acres of green space that could be utilized as a community gathering space. Industrial intensity is low in this area. A neighborhood volunteer schedule could be used to mow parts of the lot and other maintenance in-between city mowing. Congregating for outreach, volunteer opportunities, meetings, and block parties, etc. could occur here. Covered picnic shelters should be added to Laker or Ames Parks if they are preferable for smaller community or family events.

Figure 25. Sherrill School Site back lot greenspace. Source: Google Maps.

Work Toward a Full-scale Community Center (Next)

The Midwest neighborhood can implement a long-term strategy for a full-scale community center once revenue streams are in place. Funding for community centers in other Detroit neighborhoods has come from multiple stakeholders, community association revenue, and corporate sponsors. Grants or financing from the city, state, and federal sources are often utilized. Building the necessary amount of human and monetary capital for this project will require prior foundational steps in the neighborhood (501c3 status).

This plan recommends the use of the former Sherill Elementary property (7300 Garden St.) as a suitable prospect for future conversion. Its approximately 7-acre property size presents the most opportunity for redevelopment. The school site also provides connectivity to other nearby community recreation sites like Laker Park and the future Joe Louis Greenway path. Public transit is available within a 5-minute walk via the 30 Livernois and 47 Tireman bus lines.

Figure 26. Sherrill School Site.

Work Toward a Full-scale Community Center

The Sherill School site's current condition is likely to require substantial redevelopment. The existing structure is over 73,000 square feet and has been closed since 2012. A visual exterior review of the building shows that it is partially boarded up but not secured. Interior examination was not possible at the time of this report. Motor City Mapping reports list the current condition as "poor" (7300 Garden St, 2021). Nearly a decade of vacancy could mean the existing school structure is not salvageable. Future renovation and remediation may not be possible, and demolition would have to be considered.

A 2015 report by Landgrid on the state of Detroit's public schools estimated that "some larger high schools cost upwards of $1M to $3M to abate and demolish, while smaller elementary schools cost around $300,000" (Grover & van der Velde, 2016). The following is an examination of the nearby Durfee Innovation Society, provided as a case study to help explain how a full redevelopment of such a large vacant site could take place.

Figure 27. Planning for the Future.

Case Study: Durfee Innovation Society

The Durfee Innovation Society was presented by resident representatives as a model for what the Midwest neighborhood would want out of a community center during stakeholder interviews. Founded in 2017, Durfee is a relatively new initiative that was a partnership between nonprofit organization Life Remodeled and the Detroit Public School System.

The site is over 140,000 square feet and offers programming for children and adults. It is located within Detroit's Dexter Linwood neighborhood and shares a site with the consolidated Durfee Elementary-Middle School and Central High School. Spaces include a cafeteria, game room, basketball gym, theater space, laundry, classroom, and more (Durfee Innovation Society).

Figure 28. Durfee Innovation Society front entrance.
Source: Durfee Innovation Society Website

Case Study: Durfee Innovation Society

Programming/Tenants

The core focuses of the existing 27 tenants are education, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and human services. Rather than creating and piloting their own programs, Durfee partnered with existing non-profits and other companies to lease space in their facility. This created a synergy that allowed residents to have more services of choice and for tenants to better reach their target audience. Examples of tenants include

- Detroit at Work – skilled trades training and job placement
- Family Medical Center of Michigan – comprehensive behavioral health services (insurance non required)
- Motown Motivated – provides the opportunity to get production and voice recording training
- Metro Detroit Youth Clubs – afterschool youth opportunities
- GreenPath Financial Wellness – financial literacy (Durfee Innovation Society)

Financing Structure and Costs

The approximate cost for this project was $4.8 million (Welch, 2019). The renovation work was costly and expansive despite the immediate handoff from DPS to Life Remodeled was and the building therefore never experiencing vacancy. Work on the site and around the neighborhood was partially taken on by volunteers. Life Remodeled's core initiatives prior to opening the center were massive annual neighborhood repair and clean-up efforts, which typically featured a few corporate sponsors. They have experience attracting "in-kind" work (donations from companies who will work pro bono) for contracting, architectural, and grant review services.

Going forward, some of the costs for operation and implementation will be funded by the center itself. A review of Life Remodeled's 2019 tax returns shows that Durfee is collecting $447,304 in tenant rental income to fund the operations of the building. Spaces within the building will also be rentable by the community and others for events to provide other revenue streams.

Case Study: Durfee Innovation Society

Figure 29. Durfee Innovation Society before and after.
Source: Durfee Innovation Society.

Takeaways

Durfee's early success has required a vast collaborative effort from current residents, volunteers, corporate sponsors, and government programs. It hosts a wide array of recreational, entrepreneurial, and community-centered amenities. It benefits from the proximity to the active Durfee/Central school and its location near the border of Dexter-Linwood & Boston Edison neighborhoods.

A similar but consolidated model could be achieved for the Sherrill Site, which has half of Durfee's square footage. If the site is not salvageable, the neighborhood may also consider converting a smaller former commercial or industrial building, which is more abundant in Midwest, for this purpose. While the purchase price may be higher, the total conversion cost might be reduced. Further neighborhood visioning can help determine which aspects of space (recreational, education, office, entrepreneurship, or human services) should be prioritized.

Case Study: Durfee Innovation Society

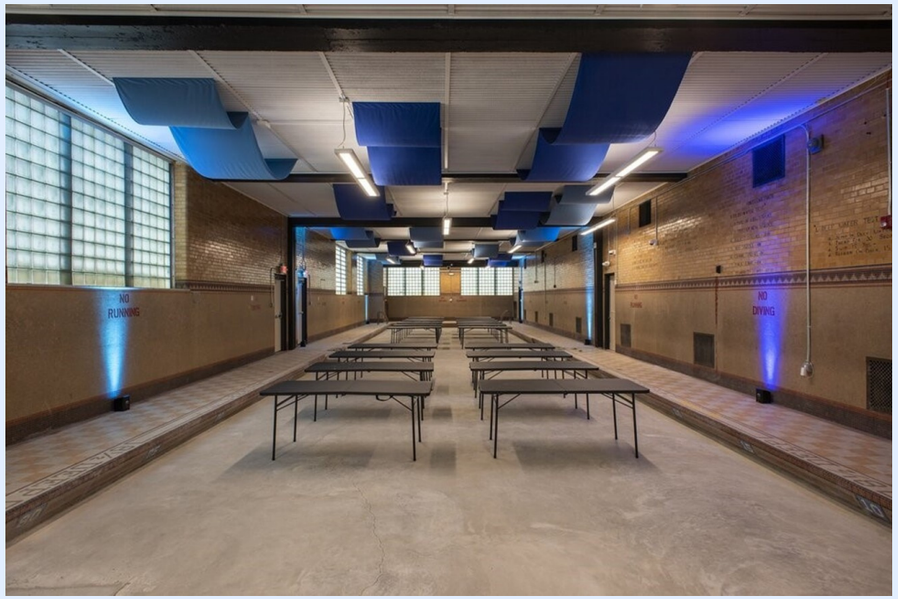


Figure 30. Durfee Innovation Society event space.
Source: Durfee Innovation Society.

Figure 31. Durfee Innovation Society workspace.
Source: Durfee Innovation Society.

Case Study: Durfee Innovation Society

Figure 32. Durfee Innovation Society gym.
Source: Durfee Innovation Society.

Figure 33. Durfee Innovation Society event room.
Source: Durfee Innovation Society.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

After facing decades of continual population loss, the Midwest neighborhood, much like the city overall, has economic struggles. According to census data, 34% of Midwest families face poverty. The annual median household income is $25,000 (2019 ACS 5-year estimate). These economic challenges have also been reflected in housing stability and cohesion of blocks. Housing in Midwest was built around the late 1930s in diverse blocks, with a mixture of sizes and styles; compacted on single blocks were apartments, mixed-use commercial properties, and single-family homes.

Midwest was a walkable community with jobs from the railways and small businesses. Today, the neighborhood consists of an abundance of vacant homes, in-tact single-family houses, multifamily dwellings, warehouses, vacant lots, and auto repair dominant commercial properties. However, the Midwest community members' resilience has helped create a promising new chapter for the beloved neighborhood, which is evident by the commercial and community-based investments occurring in and around this area. Ford Motor company is renovating the Michigan Cetntral Station is located in Corktown, which could have a positive spillover effect for Midwest. Also, Henry Ford Hospital recently opened its state-of-the-art cancer center a couple of miles away on West Grand Boulevard and will expand health care options and employment opportunities for the residents of Midwest. The development of the previously mentioned Joe Louis Greenway will eventually connect the neighborhood to the Detroit River, opening up the community to non-motorized commuters. There are also historical preservation efforts underway to bring back businesses like the Blue Bird Inn on Tireman Avenue.

PRIORITY AREAS AND GOALS

Establish Business Nodes at Key Corridors

- Development of Commercial Node on 5000 and 5100 blocks of Tireman Avenue
- Development of Commercial Node at 7569 Tireman Avenue and 7774 Bryden Street
- Activate Placemaking Spaces for Food Trucks and Pop-up Events

Stabilize Blocks

- Make neighborhood's environment clean by preventing & enforcing illegal dumping
- Improve the Air Quality in the neighborhood
- Decrease the noise pollution (in hotspot areas) and keep the noise level in a comfortable zone for the residents
- Adopt appropriate development and planning strategies/objectives for the neighborhood considering the soil quality

Encourage Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development

- Establish a Monthly Farmers' Market
- Establish permanent makers and coworking space within the community

ESTABLISH BUSINESS NODES AT KEY CORRIDORS

The makeup of firms in Midwest neighborhood are anchored by the DTE Warren Service Center (located at the Northeast corner of Livernois Avenue and Warren Avenue), and auto-focused service shops. Of the 157 different firms in Midwest, almost 50% are auto-service shops. Despite the cluster of auto-related businesses, a high percentage of Industrial and Commercial zoned parcels in the neighborhood are not in use.

Figure 34. Mobil Gas Station.
Source: Burton Historical Collection

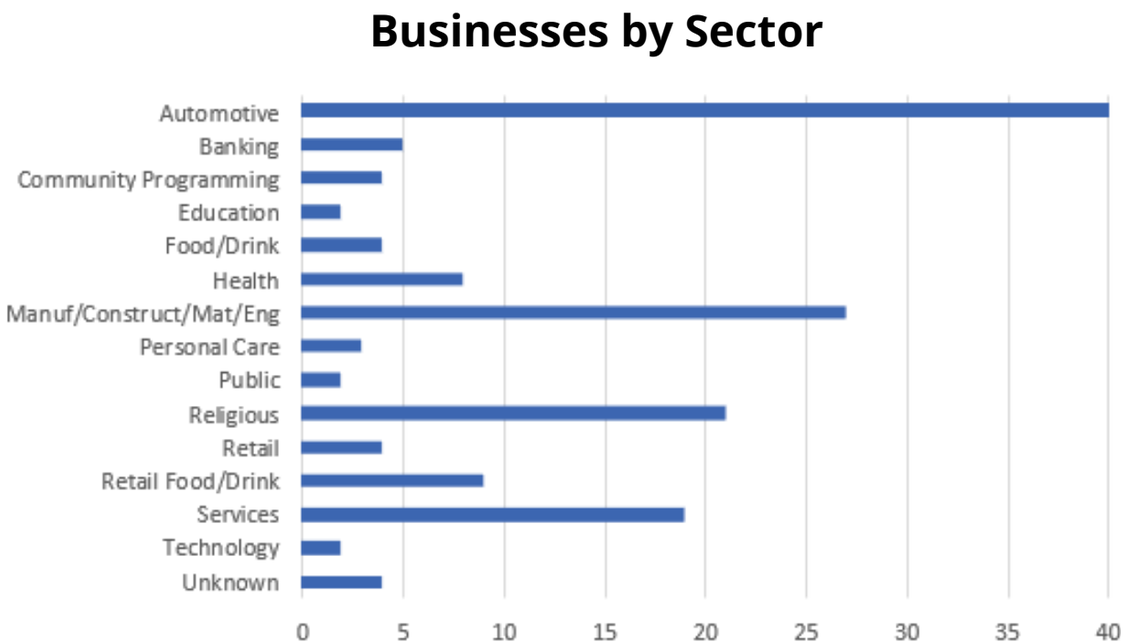


Figure 35: Business establishments by type.
Source: SEMCOG.

Development of Commercial Node on 5000 and 5100 blocks of Tireman Avenue (Near)

This site has been identified as a viable commercial node for redevelopment due to its intact vacant structures, proximity to density in the community, and accessibility along Tireman Avenue. The property on these blocks are currently owned by a few private parties. These blocks could be redeveloped through the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation's Motor City Match program. Motor City Match services include providing pre-development resources, technical assistance, grant funding support for building improvements, and alternative funding support and options. This section of Tireman Avenue could provide a meaningful community anchor and hub for retail activity. Further investment from the Detroit Sound Conservancy to rehabilitate and reopen the historic Blue Bird Inn on the 5000 block will also enhance the desirability of this node.

Implementation

- Improvement of Tireman bike lanes, bus stops, sidewalks
- Determine property ownership status for vacant properties
- Identify best uses for small retail spaces and larger warehouse spaces
- Seek public and private funding
- Work with DEGC and local CDCs to match property owners with new tenants and provide white box spaces of development on these blocks

Figure 36. 5100 Tireman Avenue. Source: Google Earth

Development of Commercial Node on 5000 and 5100 blocks of Tireman Avenue (Near)

Implementation

- Improvement of Tireman bike lanes, bus stops, sidewalks
- Determine property ownership status for vacant properties
- Identify best uses for small retail spaces and larger warehouse spaces
- Seek public and private funding
- Work with DEGC and local CDCs to match property owners with new tenants and provide white box spaces of development on these blocks

Figure 37. 5100 Tireman Avenue.

Development of Commercial Node at 7569 Tireman Avenue and 7774 Bryden Street (Near)

McDonald, Central, and Bryden Streets between Tireman Avenue and Warren Avenue have been recently rezoned to stimulate mixed-use development adjacent to the Joe Louis Greenway. These two privately-owned parcels at the corner of Tireman Avenue and Bryden Street provide opportunities for development that would serve the community as well as visitors to the greenway.

A white box strategy to secure the properties and make them desirable to local businesses is another project that Detroit Economic Growth Corporation could facilitate through its Motor City Match Program. As an access point to the greenway, motorized and non-motorized traffic will increase along Tireman Avenue at this point, increasing the desirability of commercial spaces along it.

Figure 38. 7569 Tireman Avenue. Source:Google Maps

Activate Placemaking Spaces for Food Trucks and Pop-up Events (Now)

The Midwest neighborhood is an area of the city that has varying forms of activity throughout the weekdays and weekends. Commercial businesses, namely auto-related, are operating during normal business hours Monday through Saturday. There is opportunity to draw visitors and workers of neighborhood businesses to different spaces for food and entertainment. Activating a vacant lot or parking area as a food truck location will draw visitors and residents to areas of the neighborhood beyond the intersections along Livernois and Warren.

Figure 39. 7252 McDonald Street. Source: Google Earth.

Outside of normal business hours, recreation and entertainment spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy are limited. Over the past year, different churches in the neighborhood have transformed their parking lots into spaces to congregate. The resulting activity has displayed the potential of alternative uses for parking and vacant lots in the neighborhood. The weekends have proven to be high traffic times on Livernois Avenue, Tireman Avenue, and Warren Avenue as well. Below are vacant spaces that show potential for hosting community events, a farmers' market, a community garden, or other placemaking opportunities.

Activate Placemaking Spaces for Food Trucks and Pop-up Events

Vacant, publicly owned land is the most viable option for new placemaking opportunities in the neighborhood. Publicly owned land by the Detroit Land Bank or the City of Detroit can reduce financial barriers to activating a space.

Figure 40. Ruthruff School - 6311 West Chicago. Source: Google Earth.

Implementation:

- Coordinate with the city for appropriate permits and permission to utilize publicly owned spaces
- Organize volunteer initiatives and private funding to clear lots
- Identify food trucks, local community groups, and businesses for events

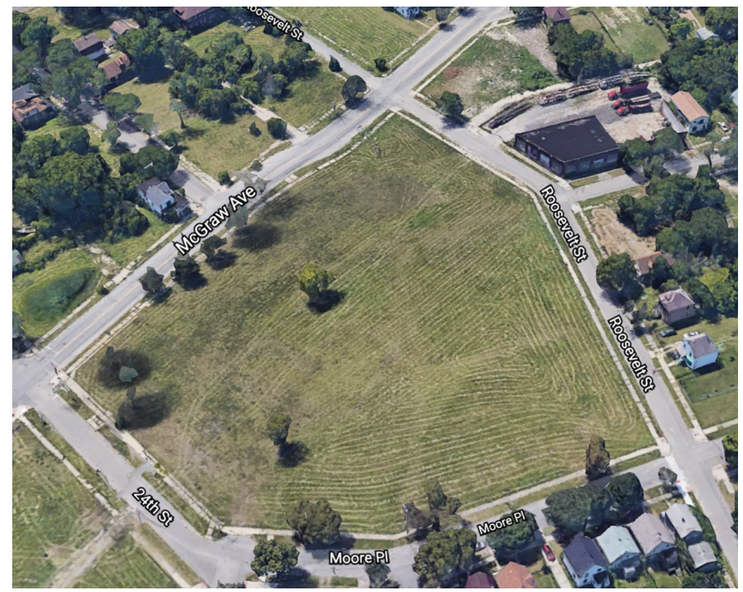


Figure 41. 3500 McGraw Avenue. Source: Google Earth.

STABILIZE BLOCKS

The Midwest neighborhood has roughly 1,378 acres of mixed zoning. The housing in this area is primarily two-family residential housing with sections of low to medium-density apartment complexes. CSX Transportation intersects the community and the middle of the neighborhood is industrial.

Redevelopment and neighborhood stabilization are necessary due to the aging housing stock and historic disinvestment. Stabilization will not happen overnight and is directly affected with community, economic, and environmental factors discussed in this report.

In the long-term, with a focus on the quality of life, it will be crucial to concentrate on new development near schools, parks, and other amenities.

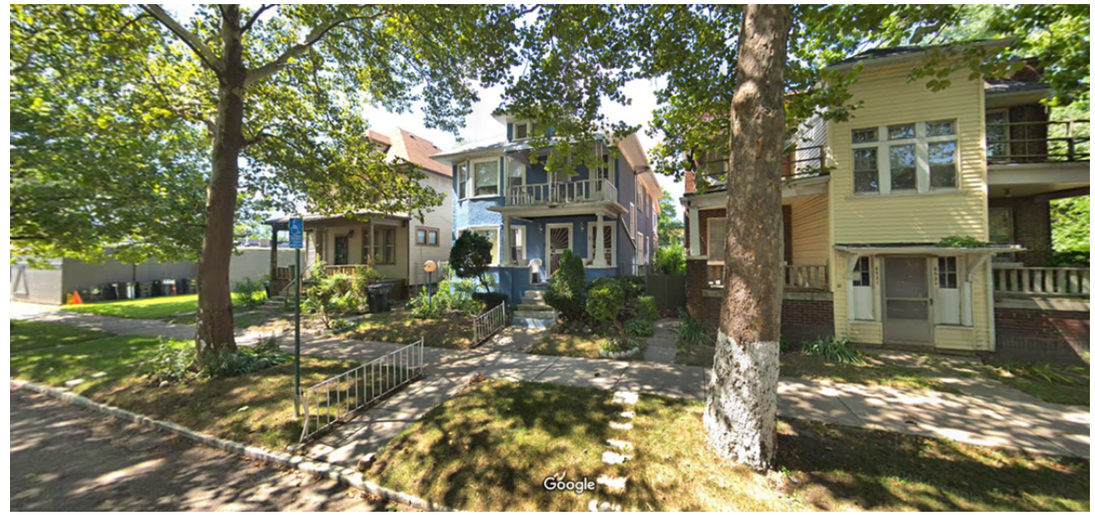


Figure 42. Moore Place and Firwood Street. Source: Google Maps

In the short term, Midwest can benefit as a whole from streetscaping and beautification efforts, improvements to housing infrastructure, upgrading existing occupied housing. Some of these projects can be implemented immediately with the help of volunteers, nonprofits, or citywide initiatives. Though it will take much time and effort to bring these improvements to the neighborhood in it's entirety.

Subdivide the Neighborhood into 3 Target Areas (Now)

Midwest is a large neighborhood encompassing several census tracts. The area is slow to attract development and physical improvements are few and far between. In order to implement improvement strategies here when it comes to block stabilization, sectioning the neighborhood into 3 target areas split by characteristics and proximity is a reasonable approach since strategies may be different from area to area and to think of the neighborhood as a physical "whole" may be overwhelming.

Section 1 will be the northern half of Tireman Street. Section 2 will be the southwestern portion of Tireman Street and Livernois Avenue. Section 3 will be the southeastern portion of Epworth Street. and Tireman Street. (SEE FIGURES)

Figure 43. 5100 Ivanhoe in 2009, 2013, & 2019. Source: Google Maps

Create a Plan for Each Subsection (Next)

A thorough plan for each neighborhood subsection will need to be developed as interest in the neighborhood increases. These plans may be unique to one another or very similar, depending on how the next several years affect Midwest. Existing conditions for each section are provided below along with suggestions for future consideration.

The section 1 boundaries are Livernois Avenue, Jeffries Freeway, and Joy Road, it is one of the more stable blocks north of Tireman Street. Besides Epworth Street and Joy Road, they have access to 11 Clairmount Street and 27 Joy Road bus routes and the entrance ramps to the Jeffries Freeway. Proximity to transportation options here makes this section of Midwest desirable and increases livability.

Figure 44. Community Section 1 Map. Source: City of Detroit Open Data Portal

Create a Plan for Each Subsection

Community Section 2 includes Central Street along Warren Avenue and Tireman Avenue which are where the Joe Louis Greenway will intersect Midwest. Central Street and Bryden Street are a mix of commercial businesses, industrial production, and residential housing. Central Street and Bryden Street are being rezoned with consideration for the Joe Louis Greenway.

Bryden Street would be appropriate as a buffer from the industrial district. Any new development would fit nicely around American Street & Warren Avenue. Housing solutions modeled off the Cass Community Social Services Tiny homes could be used for infilling blocks where demolitions have taken place but there is still residential density.

Figure 45. Community Section 2 Map. Source: City of Detroit Open Data Portal

Create a Plan for Each Subsection

In Community Section 3 on West Grand Boulevard near the demolished Detroit Public School on McGraw Avenue and Roosevelt Street are the locations of an abundance of Detroit Land Bank Authority lots. This location could be ideal for subdivision development or townhomes and median density apartment complexes. West Grand Boulevard crosses Jeffries Freeway and Edsel Ford Freeway. There are also the 27 Joy and 47 Tireman bus routes along W. Grand Boulevard. Residents in this area can take West Grand Blvd to Midtown in 8 minutes by car or 25 minutes by bus.

Gardenview Estates in Aviation Subdivision and Smith's Homes in Brightmoor are examples of low-income and senior developments that have been successful. Due to this location near Midtown, the ability to attract developers for mix-income housing is possible. These types of developments could provide both low-income and at-market units for rent and purchase, increasing the tax base and bringing investment into the neighborhood.

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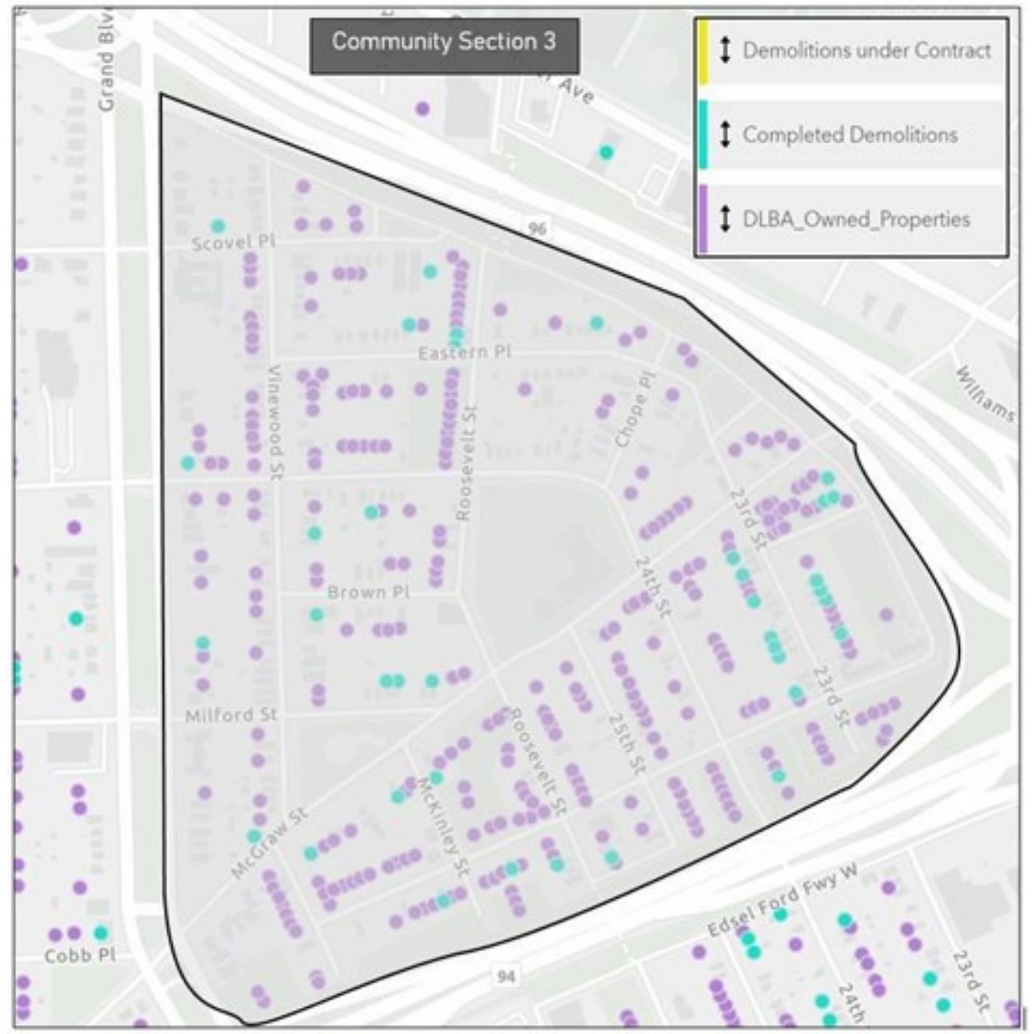

Figure 46. Community Section 3 Map. Source: City of Detroit Open Data Portal

Target Density Within the Neighborhood (Next)

While the area has a large share of vacancies, it is known that as the area becomes more desirable, new development could be a way to attract more residents.

In sections of the neighborhood where residents live in clusters, it is important to narrow in on the vacancies that exist in these more densely populated blocks of the neighborhood. Can the vacant homes be salvaged and re-modeled? Is there interest in more housing in this area? What could be utilized as an attractive feature to target development nearby?

Necessary rezoning or demolition may be appropriate in certain areas of the neighborhood. In any case, build-ready sites near other residents, parks, schools, and community services will be more attractive to developers than the current site offering.

Implementation:

- Coordinate with the city and the Land Bank to decide which blocks have lots that may be a reasonable target.
- Organize volunteer initiatives and private funding to make lots "build-ready".
- Infill housing would be appropriate here if the neighborhood does witness increasing residential interest or if current residents wish to relocate to denser blocks within the community.

Figure 47. Majestic Street. Source: Google Maps

ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Midwest Detroit is strategically positioning itself to take advantage of the many economic development opportunities that are coming to the community, there is also a strong need to engage with and reinvigorate the small business and entrepreneurial sectors of this neighborhood. Within the Midwest community, auto-related firms are the biggest cluster of aggregate business type, closely followed by religious institutions, with 24 and 20 different firms, respectively.

No other business type has more than 5 different firms. There is a clear opportunity in Midwest, to engage and encourage entrepreneurs so that the neighborhood can be a one-stop shop for a living and working. Suggested below are cost-efficient strategies to help engage entrepreneurs and further cultivate the existing network.

Figure 48. Business Development.

Establish a Bi-Weekly Farmers' Market (Now)

Implementation:

- ·Build off the Northwest Detroit Farmers market model by targeting central community space for location; ideal location would be in the middle of a neighborhood with stabilized blocks to encourage walking but also enough parking around to be attainable for all in the community.
- ·A newly created market will need to target current/former employees at other established markets who are prime candidates to run the new market. Talent search should begin at Eastern Market.
- ·Farmers Market is a cost-efficient way to match vendors with customers, while also building community morale.
- ·Market products will include produce, meat, baked goods, plants/flowers, ready to eat food, bread, arts/crafts, t-shirts, and other nonfood products

Figure 49. Northwest Detroit Farmers' Market.
Source: Local Harvest

Establish a Permanent Makers and Coworking Space (Near)

Implementation:

- ·Requires the purchase and renovation of a warehouse/ or similar type of building.
- ·Space will include an internet café, collaboration rooms with whiteboard and screen, art/crafts/ and wood making space, and other small-scale intricacies that will be of use to entrepreneurs, students, and community members.
- ·Durfee Innovation Center is the inspiration for this project

Figure 50. Coworking.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

INTRODUCTION

A crucial part of the planning process is to assess the current state of the neighborhood and gather community input. (Please note that this plan only focuses on major, non-residential roads in the neighborhood). To understand the transportation needs of the neighborhood, research was done to collect information about planned projects at the local level as well as a site visit. The initial task was to see if there were any planned road projects that are "on the books". After searching through SEMCOG's TIP it was discovered that the only planned projects near the neighborhood were bridge repairs on I-96 (to be done in 2022). The City of Detroit's 2021 road resurfacing program was also analyzed, and the only non-residential road being resurfaced this year is Beechwood from Linsdale to Tireman. After looking through this data it was determined that there is not any significant road work planned. Site visits were conducted to gather condition data about the major roads and infrastructure. Aerial photos were taken to show the full scope of an overhead view of what parts of the neighborhood look like.

Figure 51. Bike lane barrier on Potomac Avenue in Arlington, Virginia
Source: BeyondDC

INTRODUCTION

Collector for ArcGIS was used to collect spatial data of bicycle lanes, bus stops, sidewalks, and crosswalk conditions. The group made 69 notations in total ranging from overgrown sidewalks to deteriorating bike lane paint and more. Many improvements to the current transportation network in the neighborhood are recommended to be made. Many of the roads in the neighborhood are objectively poor in quality and this issue must be addressed soon for maintenance and repair. One of the essential main roads in the community, Livernois, has a rating of "good" among parts of Tireman and Joy Road to the west. The roads were rated using the PASER system that helps with classifying the condition that the pavement is in. The system rates the roads through observable flaws such as erosion, cracks, sub-base exposure, rutting, and overall structure. Livernois, for example, is rated as "good" due to minimal issues with the qualities listed above.

There are 2 key routes located within the area, 2 ConnectTen routes, and multiple neighborhood routes. The two key routes include the Livernois Avenue route and the Joy Road route, both of which run 7 days a week. The ConnectTen routes are the Warren Avenue route and Grand River Boulevard route. None of these routes connect to the adjacent I-94 and I-96 freeways but offer great mobility within the city as the Grand River Boulevard route connects directly to the central business district in Detroit, and the Warren Avenue route connects to Wayne State University.

Community members were asked what the transportation needs of the neighborhood are. In relation to transportation, community members identified that they wanted solutions to bus stop conditions, bicycle lanes, and speeding on roadways. After walking through the neighborhood and gathering information from community members, five areas of focus were identified: bicycle lane additions and improvements, bus stop condition improvements, sidewalk rehabilitation, speed reduction techniques, and the implementation of a mobility hub.

INTRODUCTION

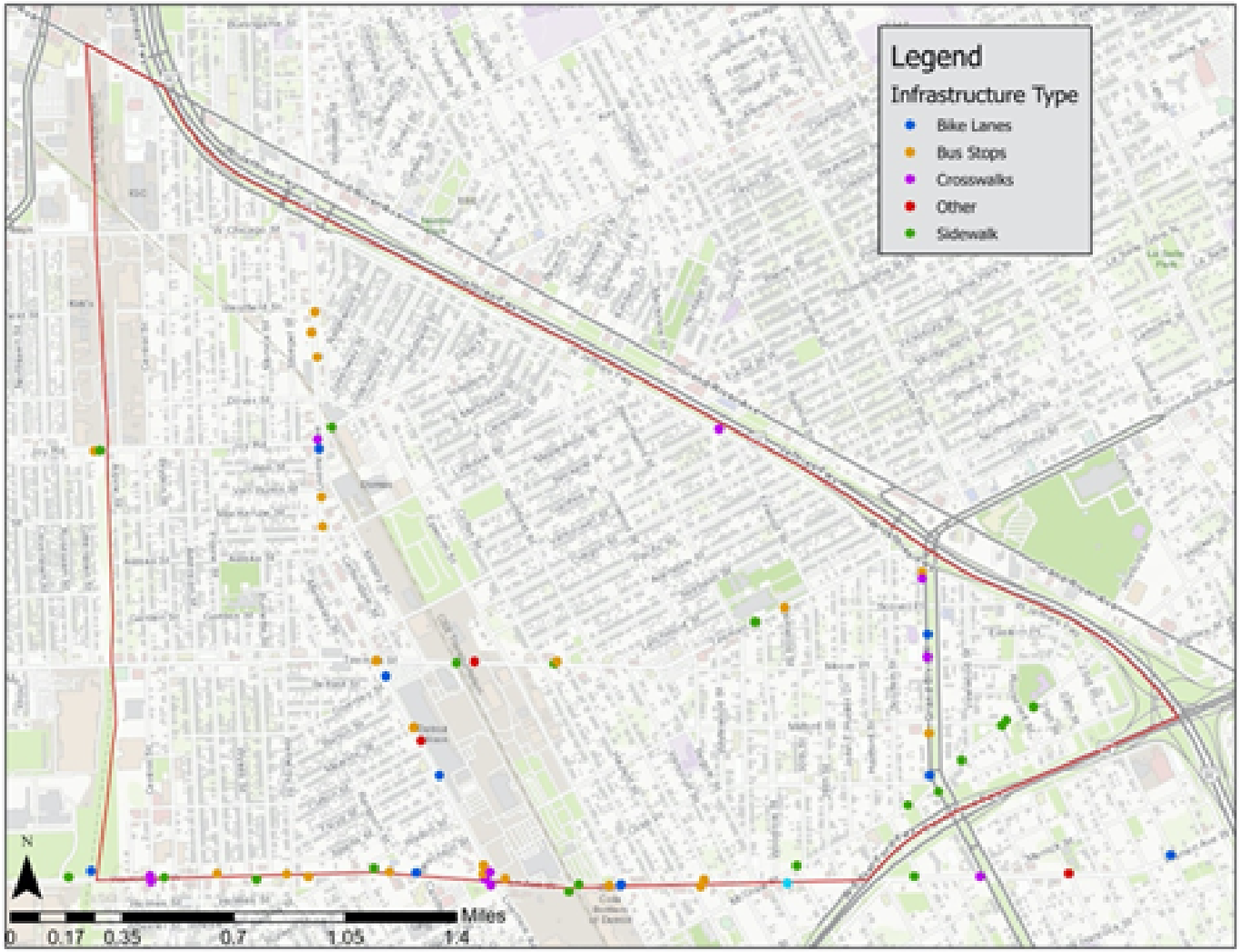

Figure 52. Map of data collected in the field, noting the condition of different infrastructure types such as bike lanes, bus stops, crosswalks, and sidewalks.

PRIORITY AREAS AND GOALS

Non-motorized Mobility Improvements

- Bicycle lane additions/improvements
- Clear heavily overgrown sidewalks for pedestrian use

Public Transportation Infrastructure Enhancements

- Improve the quality of bus stops
- Connect existing transportation networks
- Implement a mobility hub

Case Study: Improve Bus Stop Locations

Case Study: Mobility Hub Implementation

Case Study: Improving Aesthetics and Accessibility of Bus Stops

Safety Prioritization

- Reduce the amount of speeding traffic
- Enforce parking and zoning regulations

Bike Tool Stations (NEAR)

here are bike lanes currently on Livernois Avenue and Warren Avenue. Warren Avenue is a shared lane situation, while Livernois Avenue has a dedicated space for cyclists. There are landscaping and paving issues that overlap with the pedestrian and transit safety as well as faded signage and the risks of shared lanes.

One of the main goals to improve non-motorized mobility includes establishing bike tool stations and water fountains at the Grand River and Warren Avenue intersection as well as the Livernois and Warren Intersection. (NOW)

Figure 53. Bike Tool Station in Madison, Wisconsin Source: WDOT

Implementation:

This is a tool station located at the Rouge Greenway in Dearborn. There are tool stations scattered throughout the city of Detroit. This station was financed by the League of Michigan Cyclists, Mayor O'Rielly, and Dearborn Brewing. It has everything necessary to complete assembly and repair for any machine (Bike Dearborn). The estimated cost of these upgrades is around $1500 per station, depending on the design and amenities of the stations. Private funding through cycling-related non-profit organizations or local cycling shops are possibilities.

Green Bike Lane and Barriers (NEXT)

The next goal includes establishing a barrier and green bike lane on both sides of Warren Avenue. It is important to create a distinguishable barrier between traffic, parking, and bike lanes. The barrier could be any number of materials. Currently, the city uses a mostly plastic barrier on streets such as East Jefferson Avenue and Cass Avenue or concrete curbs with landscaping on portions of Livernois Avenues.

Implementation:

- The Department of Public Works will be responsible for this bike lane development
- Some sources for funding include the US and Michigan Departments of Transportation, SEMCOG, private donation, or a TIF district
- The next goal will produce some additional income which could also help fund this project
- The total budget for this project is calculated at around $150,000 a mile

Clear Sidewalks and Bike Lanes (NOW)

There are hundreds of bicycle accidents annually in Detroit from falling into holes, losing traction, and running over obstacles between intersections. In addition to personal injury, maintenance issues can cause expensive repairs or flat tires. The city of Detroit is one the most dangerous cycling cities in the country, with an average of about 50 deaths annually (City of Detroit). Bicycle popularity has increased following lockdowns during the pandemic, and the neighborhood is estimated to experience more cycling activity due to its proximity to the Joe Louis Greenway. Clearing public areas of debris will also allow a more safe pedestrian experience in the neighborhood on top of generally making the area more pedestrian-friendly.

Implementation:

- Establish realistic maintenance schedules for bike lanes and sidewalks
- Ongoing maintenance should be done at the minimum of a monthly schedule
- There are numerous non-profit organizations operating in the city and metro area, that organize neighborhood and alley cleanups

Improve Bus Stop Locations (NEAR)

Installing shelters, seating, and trash receptacles are some basic improvements that can be made to existing bus stops. Observations from the neighborhood indicate that many bus stops are in disrepair and do not have the ideal infrastructure needed to make riders feel safe and comfortable. In fact, out of 116 bus stops within the neighborhood boundary, none of them have seating or shelters and only two (Livernois/Joy and Livernois/Chicago) have trash receptacles2. Without shelters, riders are exposed to the outside elements and make waiting for a bus very undesirable. For some people, the bus is their main source of transportation, and to feel uncomfortable while doing so is a disservice to DDOT's riders.

Figure 54. Bus stop on Livernois between Tireman and Warren

Figure 55. Map showing DDOT bus stops and routes in the neighborhood. Source: City of Detroit

Case Study: Improve Bus Stop Locations

So why should DDOT make improvements to bus stops? Firstly, installing infrastructures such as seating and shelters is a lower-cost, high-impact way to make network improvements3. Studies show that bus stop improvements result in increased ridership, which in turn results in increased fare generation. In 2014-2016, the Utah Transit Agency made improvements to 30 of their 2,251 bus stops within their system. Types of improvements included installing shelters, benches, trashcans, ADA compliant concrete pads, and improved signage. They found that ridership increased 141% on the routes where these improvements were made4! Improving bus stops not only promotes new ridership but also makes riding more comfortable for current bus users.

Figure 56. Before and After of UTA's improvements on bus line #41 in Salt Lake County. Source: Transportation Research Part A

Improve Bus Stop Locations

Implementation & Funding

- Rank bus stop locations from highest priority to lowest priority. Examples of high-priority stops would be locations where ridership is the highest, where accessibility needs to be improved the most, or at major intersections.
- Create a timeframe to identify when and what bus stops are being upgraded.
- Secure funding from state and federal resources for improvements.

An average bus shelter such as this one can cost anywhere between $4,500 and $7,000+ depending on size and material. With an estimated cost of $6,500 (shelter, bench, trash, and signage) per stop (please note that this is a rough estimate and cost will need to be determined by DDOT), it would take a little over $750,000 to make physical improvements to all 116 bus stops (this excludes labor).

Figure 57. Bus stop on Livernois

Improve Aesthetics and Accessibility of Bus Stops (NOW)

Removing overgrowth barriers at the stops and surrounding the stops are an essential part of improving transportation infrastructure by making the stops more accessible.

Two of the main tenants to good public transportation are safety and accessibility. When people think about accessibility to bus stops, they tend to think about the spacing between stops, is there a sidewalk to get to the stops, are the stops are in convenient locations, etc. But what is also important is at the stop itself. When stops are in locations where the sidewalk is overgrown, cracked, and broken, that reduces people's ability to physically stand where they need to in order to catch the bus. Not only is this a barrier for all people (especially people with disabilities) but is also a safety issue. People can trip, fall, and hurt themselves getting to and at the bus stop. Also, overgrowth, like the kind seen below, does not contribute to a sense of safety in a person's surroundings. It makes it hard to see clearly and harder to be aware of your surroundings. When people do not feel safe they tend to opt-out of public transportation and take another mode of transportation if it is available.

Figure 58.Bus stop in disrepair on West Grand Blvd.

Case Study: Improving Aesthetics and Accessibility of Bus Stops

Improving pedestrian infrastructure around bus stops is key to increasing ridership (Transportation Research Board). In Portland, Oregon, TriMet (Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon) underwent sidewalk and bus station improvements on one of their busiest routes. Some of their larger improvements included redesigning, installing, and rehabbing sidewalks surrounding bus stops. After improvements, they found that weekday ridership increased (both regular ridership and lift/ramp boardings) and ADA paratransit ridership decreased (Transportation Research Board).

Figure 59. Adjacent area to bus stop on West Grand Blvd.

Mobility Hub Implementation (NEXT)

The Broward MPO defines mobility hubs as "...transit access points with frequent transit service, high development potential and a critical point for a trip generation or transfers within the transit system" (Mobility Hubs, 2019). Mobility hubs include the key elements of public transit, a bike-share program, carshare parking, and bike parking (Mobility Hub Principles, 2018). Mobility hubs are a different form of public transportation that offers a bit more freedom from traditional fixed-route services, and may even prove to be more effective at providing access to jobs than traditional fixed-route.

Objectives for this project:

- The recommendation is to analyze potential sites for mobility hubs that will optimize connections to the existing transportation network by adding different modes of mobility.
- Implement a mobility hub in the neighborhood center or the commercial corridor where the main points of interest are, and where the greatest daytime population exists.
- The main objective for the implementation of this infrastructure is to increase overall mobility as well as increasing the connection to employment centers, community colleges, and shopping centers/ grocery stores.

Case Study: Mobility Hub Implementation

The RTA of Michigan has developed a Mobility Oriented Development/Transportation Oriented Design study that focuses on enhancing connectivity and accessibility throughout the southeastern Michigan region. The best practices they discussed include something such as mobility hub, which places emphasis on “extending the transit footprint to key destinations that lie beyond walking distance” (MOD/TOD Best Practices, 2019). A case study from LA county referenced by the Michigan RTA found that integrating mobility hubs is particularly important for low-income residents needing to commute to major employment centers, job training sites, and community colleges. Metrolinx of the greater Toronto area, also referenced by the RTA, has created many works in regards to these mobility hubs, and detailed planning/implementation are part of these published works.

Metrolinx's guidelines help showcase the potential of different, yet functional mobility hubs. Two recognizably different approaches include the “seamless mobility” approach and the “placemaking” approach (MOD/TOD Best Practices, 2019). The seamless mobility approach includes feeder transit, local scheduled or on-demand shuttles, ped-bike connectivity, and accessible services that are seamlessly connected to the rail or bus rapid transit platforms (MOD/TOD Best Practices, 2019). The placemaking approach follows mixed-use TOD/MOD of appropriate density that is built into the primary zone adjoining the station as well as its larger walkshed, taking advantage of all the intersecting modes (MOD/TOD Best Practices, 2019).

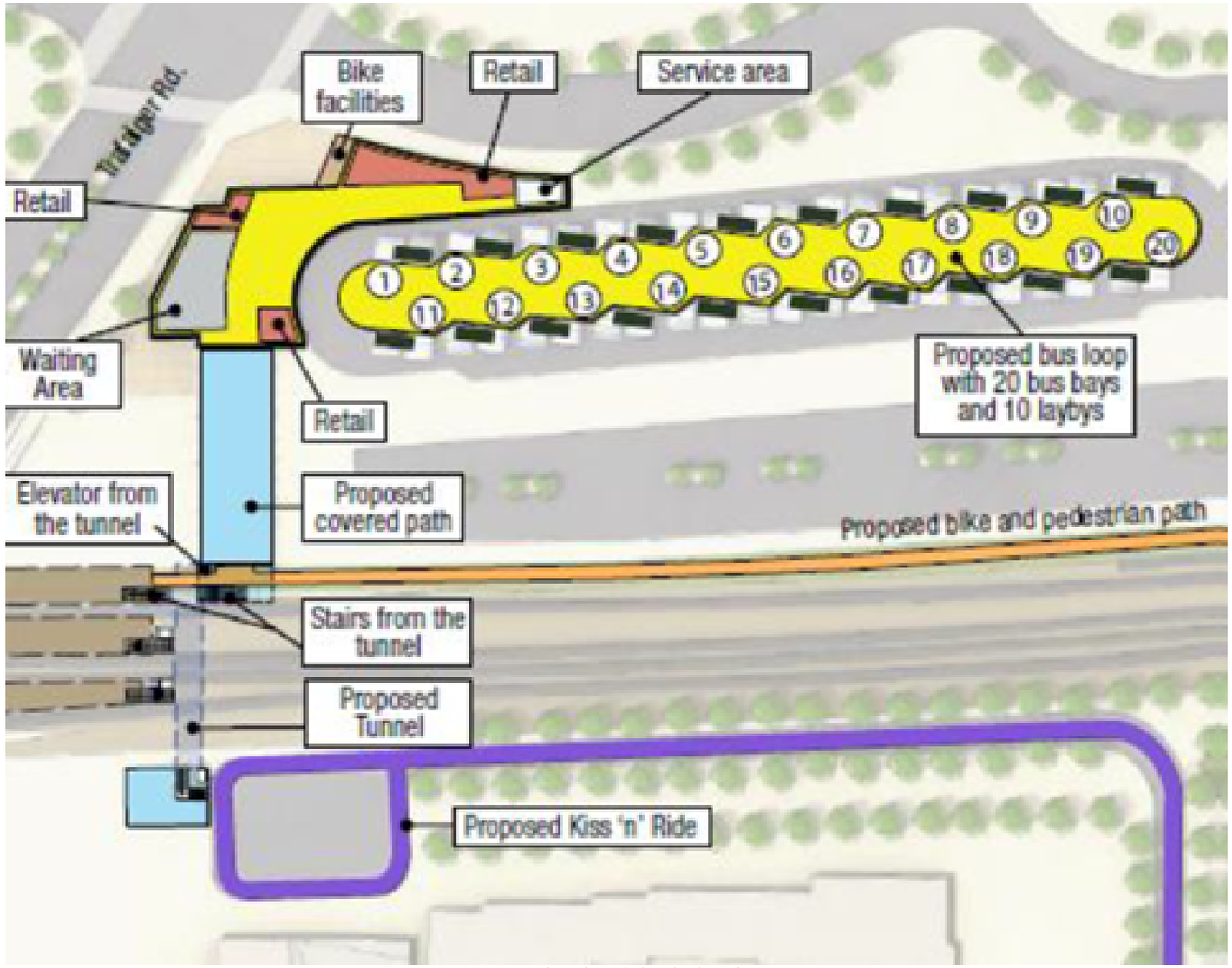

Figure 60. Example of mobility hub infrastructure
Source: Metrolinx

Mobility Hub: Securing Funding

- The responsibility for this project will fall on three agencies. The agencies include DDOT, MDOT, and SEMCOG.

Funding for transportation infrastructure like this mainly comes from the state government, more specifically, MDOT programs that focus on multi-modality.

- The **Transportation Alternatives Program** from MDOT allows municipalities to apply for small-scale transportation projects that support non-automobile forms of transportation.

- The **Transportation Economic Development Fund** creates the opportunity for the creation of transportation projects that support economic development. The mobility hub project falls under class A for application purposes.

Implementation Steps

- Site analysis: This step includes compiling potential sites that may be available and compatible with a mobility hub.
- Initial site selection: For site selection, coordination with the city will need to happen in order to align each potential site with the zoning type, and then select 3 or 4 potential sites
- Public involvement: The public will be presented with the potential sites that were initially selected to be chosen from, and will give input based on where they believe it will be the most useful
- Site Design: Decide which amenities may be included in the site, and begin surveying the finalized area
- Construction: Seek out a contractor that will help with implementing the project

ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Midwest neighborhood formally hosted a variety of land uses those present legacy challenges to the environment for residents. Dense housing made up the residential sections of the neighborhood dominated by both single and small, multi-family unit buildings. Industrial uses dominated along the rail lines near Epworth and Alpine streets. Commercial activity lined major thoroughfares and smaller neighborhood-focused streets. These diverse uses have experienced significant decline leaving degraded soil and impervious structural remains. These vacant lots are often the sites of illegal dumping and questionable soil condition making reuse difficult without proper remediation and clean-up of old foundations and discarded materials. Current industrial uses within the neighborhood are auto-oriented, either repair shops, junkyards, and medium manufacturing or refining. These uses are often mixed in with old commercial corridors and are adjacent to residential areas. These uses are a nuisance to neighbors and continue to pollute the air and the ground near residents.

Figure 61. Example of Illegal dumping along Epworth Street.

INTRODUCTION

The current stormwater issues in the neighborhood are distributed throughout. There is no centralized area that is prone to stormwater problems. Stormwater issues were identified through the Improve Detroit software application, the First Street Foundation Flood Factor Map, and resident input. The Improve Detroit app is an app that can be downloaded to one's phone to report neighborhood problems to City Hall. The app uses one's location while also allowing the user to upload photos of the various issues they come across. The recent problems that have been reported were based primarily on blocked catch basins. The catch basins are designed to drain excess water but can sometimes become clogged by dirt and debris. Other neighborhood issues that have been reported, considering stormwater, were service leaks and water main breaks. Individual properties at risk for floods were determined by the First Street Flood Factor Map. The flood factor calculates property risks over time. Through the map, properties are filtered by risk factors from minimal to extreme. Also, considering the neighborhood has a strong industrial presence, issues regarding Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) that stem from industrial sources could potentially pass through wastewater plants and into surrounding bodies of water, if the system overflows after a failed checkup. Monitoring for PFAS should be of great importance in order to provide a sustainable future for the neighborhood. Continued community outreach to work towards an overall stormwater management vision through GSI will ensure long-term sustainability.

Despite these large environmental challenges, the neighborhood has a large opportunity to reuse and reimagine new amenities and experiences for residents that come from a large amount of vacant land. Based on overall conditions mentioned and considering the community inputs regarding the environmental issues and demands in the neighborhood, the issues and associated priority areas and related goals listed below will provide a framework for the environment of the neighborhood.

PRIORITY AREAS AND GOALS

Reuse of Vacant Land

- Make Vacant Land Accessible to Residents
- Transform and Remediate Former Industrial Land

Reducing Pollution

- Prevent & Enforce Illegal Dumping
- Improve Air Quality
- Remediate Polluted Soil Conditions
- Decrease Noise Pollution

Stormwater Management

- Catch basin cleaning
- Target GSI practices to properties that are at an elevated risk for flood
- Reduce stormwater runoff into streets, greenways, parking lots, parks, and vacant land by incorporating GSI practices
- Downspout disconnection
- Low Impact Development (LID) to manage stormwater

REUSE OF VACANT LAND

The neighborhood has 43% vacant parcels. This will only increase in the coming years as the City of Detroit Demolition department Proposal N bond money to demolish homes in neighborhoods that were not included in the previous demolition program funded by Federal Hardest Hit funds. The increasing inventory of vacant land is an opportunity for the neighborhood to handle the large environmental challenges it faces through flooding, soil contamination, lack of access to safe open spaces, and urban heat island effects. Vacant land poses its own challenges to the neighborhood. Vacant lots that are not cared for are often the site of illegal dumping and discarded remains of the previous land uses. The current inventory of vacant land is made up of many small, formerly residential properties that make up about 30% of the vacant properties in the neighborhood.

Large parcels of land that were formally industrial are in desperate need of environmental remediation. These sites will take more than single or even groups of residents to handle. These sites will have to be remediated using State and Federal funding to clear out the remains of these uses and cleaning the soil of contaminates. The reuse of these sites is important to the community because of their size and centrality to the neighborhood. They provide a large opportunity to build a destination that brings visitors from across the city to new spaces transformed. These spaces could be large urban forests, parks, or wildlife habitats that increase the amount of natural open space available to residents and to migrating birds and other wildlife. New tree canopies could help absorb rainwater and provide cooling from the urban heat island effect as climate change continues to bring heatwaves to Detroit.

REUSE OF VACANT LAND

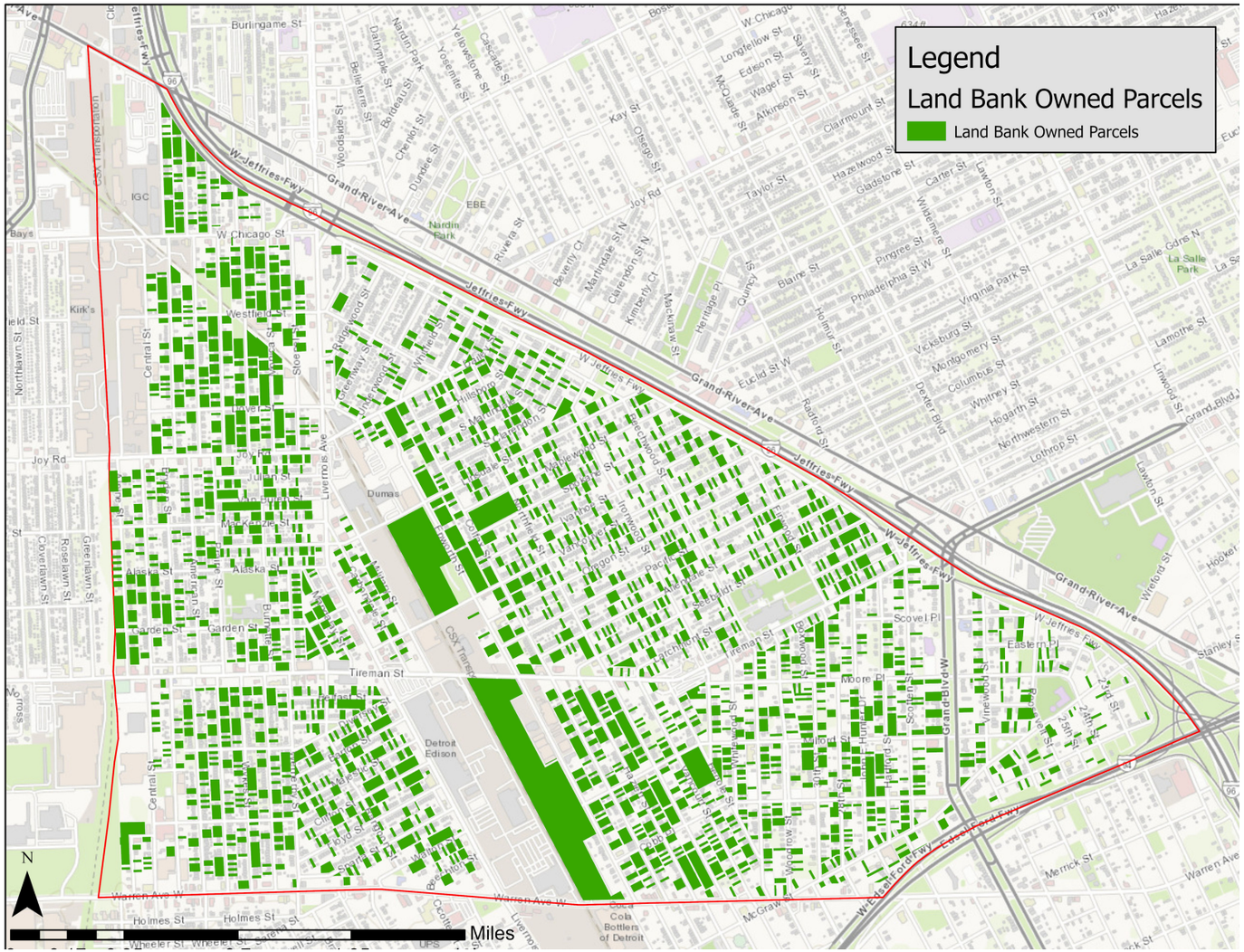

Figure 62. The DLBA owns many parcels throughout the entire neighborhood Source: City of Detroit Parcel Data

REUSE OF VACANT LAND

These spaces could be large urban forests, parks, or wildlife habitats that increase the amount of natural open space available to residents and to migrating birds and other wildlife. New tree canopies could help absorb rainwater and provide cooling from the urban heat island effect as climate change continues to bring heatwaves to Detroit. Former land uses will dictate what type of new possible uses should be pursued. This is due to the different lot sizes and potential levels of contamination are left behind. Each type is described with different considerations and prescriptions.

Residential: Former residential lots are the most common former land use type in the neighborhood. They are smaller, often 105’ x 30’ for a total of 3,150 square feet (about the area of a tennis court). These are sometimes adjacent to other vacant lots or scattered amongst vacant and occupied structures. Due to their smaller size, they are more manageable for residents and neighborhood groups to manage, however, their size also limits what types of projects are possible. Through the DLBA Side-Lot and Neighborhood-Lot programs, these lots are often more accessible to residents of the neighborhood.

Commercial: Commercial sites may be the easiest to develop into new commercial or mixed-use due to their size and potential street appeal on prominent locations throughout the neighborhood. See the Economic Development section for possible ideas and sites. Former commercial sites may also be desirable for urban agriculture efforts or parks but will likely need environmental remediation before it is safe to produce food on the land.

Industrial: Former Industrial parcels in the neighborhood need intensive remediation to ensure that the soil quality and debris from past uses will not interfere with the new life of these parcels. Farming will likely not be a near-term option for these parcels. The industrial sites in the neighborhood may have a longer journey to reactivation because of their scale and the intense former use leaving materials and unsafe soil conditions. A long-term approach to the reuse of these lands is more appropriate moving the land from low activation to higher activation as funding becomes available.

Make Vacant Land Accessible to Residents

The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) owns about 43% of parcels in the neighborhood. Some are vacant and some have structures on them. The structures that can be salvaged will go up for sale and will hopefully find new owners; structures that are not salvageable will be demolished using Proposal N funds with the City of Detroit Demolition Department. Currently, vacant parcels, or parcels with a recent demolition will be put through the DLBA's side-lot program. This program allows residents who own an adjacent parcel to a DLBA vacant parcel the option to purchase for $100. The newest DLBA program allows side-lots that have been listed for six months to transition into the Neighborhood Lot program, this expands the range of residents near 500' of a DLBA vacant lot the option to purchase, for $250 and approval by a neighborhood endorser. This expansion of the program intends to allow more residents to own and care for the vacant parcels throughout the neighborhood. With the start of this new program, the DLBA should aim to sell 80% of its current inventory back into private resident ownership. This may involve strategic bundling and marketing of parcels at specific sites for more intensive land use projects such as urban agriculture.

Recent plans in Detroit in neighborhoods with similar amounts of vacant land have strategized on how to make vacant land an asset to neighbors. Plans like the FitzForward Plan and the Rosa Parks – Clairmount plan both illustrate landscape design solutions that may be used to transform the lots and encourage resident ownership and stewardship of these assets. These plans do not account for the capital restrictions experienced by residents. The popular Side-lot program helps keep side-lot ownership affordable by providing lots for sale at $100 however residents may still need help investing in these lots. A complete vacant land strategy will not only make the ownership of lots accessible but provide investment in the transformation of these lots. By providing upfront capital and distributing the ownership and maintenance, these lots have a stronger chance of providing long-term amenities and benefits to the neighborhood. Capital funds and partnerships with organizations such as Keep Growing Detroit and Detroit Future City will help residents convert vacant lots into new assets such as gardens, GSI, pocket parks, etc.

Make Vacant Land Accessible to Residents

Implementation

- Hold partnership meetings in the neighborhood to educate residents on Neighborhood Lots program and strategies for reactivating land (Near, DLBA, Detroit Future City))
- Engage residents in charettes to collectively understand what residents would like to see done with vacant land in the neighborhood (Near, DLBA, Department of Neighborhoods, City Council Office)
- Graduate Side-Lots to Neighborhood-Lots (Now, DLBA)
- Partner with community organizations to adopt vacant parcels (Now, DLBA)
- Develop a fund that may be used for small 0% interest loans or grants for residents to use in transforming their vacant land (Next, City of Detroit Parks)

Figure 63. Residents reusing vacant land for organized sports at 8411 Northfield.

Transform and Remediate Former Industrial Land

The first sites to remediate should be large, central, and already owned by the public. The below site offers this opportunity.

Figure 64. Large former industrial sites along Epworth Street offer an opportunity for new urban forests to clean the air, absorb rainwater and noise pollution. Source: Google Earth

Transforming these parcels may come in stages, from low intervention and activation to high intervention and activation as funding is available. Soil remediation, planting of trees and habitat restoration should be priority with low activation for residents. This strategy is like other parks throughout the City of Detroit. In the plan for Belle Isle Park, areas are left wilder with less intervention and programming, while other parts of the park have areas for barbeques, family gatherings, and amenities Similarly, Riverfront – Lakewood East Park and Alfred Brush Ford Park in the Jefferson Chalmer's neighborhood are planned and activated differently with A. B. Ford programmed with amenities for active use by residents and Riverfront – Lakewood East left as a natural wildlife area that residents may explore. Funding for the remediation and planting of trees will likely be a combined effort of federal Department of Agriculture urban forestry funds, State of Michigan Funding, Detroit Parks Department, and philanthropic dollars. These sites should be managed by the Detroit Parks Department, however, if connections to the Joe Louis Greenway are made, the management of the new parks could fall to the greenway in a similar fashion to the Dequindre Cut's management by the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy. The state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) could also step in and create a new state park with this land if the city is unable to manage the new park in the long term.

Transform and Remediate Former Industrial Land

After the transformation of these parcels, other former industrial areas should be considered for remediation and reused for more environmentally beneficial purposes. The new Joe Louis Greenway demonstrates the potential of former railroads that when obsolete may become connectors for neighborhoods, adding to the quality of life for residents.

The active rail that bisects the neighborhood is currently operated by CSX Transportation. This spur may soon reach an obsolete status as fewer industries are along the rail line to utilize its original purpose. When obsolete, this right of way would make a natural connection from the Joe Louis Greenway to the new park/urban forest in the center of the neighborhood.

Figure 65. The CSX rail line may be retired and used to connect the neighborhood to the JLG.. Source: Google Earth

Implementation:

- Remediate soil condition, haul out concrete, metal, and other left-over materials.
- Consider building green stormwater retention areas in parts of the parcel. (Near, General Services Department, EGLE)
- Plant minimal maintenance trees that retain the maximum amount of rainwater. (Near, Parks and Recreation Department)
- Plant other plant life to restore the natural habitat for migrating birds and pollinators. (Near, Parks and Recreation Department, General Services Department)
- Consider paths through the parcel for residents to walk and hike on, provide educational signage about bioretention of stormwater, urban heat island effects, and wildlife habitat restoration. (Next, Parks and Recreation Department, General Services Department)
- Add programming and more active spaces for sports, agriculture, or playgrounds to provide more central amenities (Next, Parks and Recreation)

REDUCING POLLUTION

The concept of urban pollution refers to the presence or introduction of toxic or harmful substances in any urban area. Urban pollution can be visible (like urban waste) and invisible (like noise and air) danger for the residents of a neighborhood. These pollutants may come from natural sources, but the most detrimental are those related to human activities. The human-caused sources of pollution, such as factories, industries, transportation, and so on, are typically intensified in cities due to the local concentration of humans and human activities.

Weaknesses in city management and facilities, a number of vacant lands, blight, and poverty created lots of pollution-related issues in the Midwest/North of warren neighborhood. Considering the community input, field observations, and related documents, the pollution-related problems can be divided into illegal dumping and air, noise, and soil pollution. The goals in this priority area are set to best address these issues.

Prevent & Enforce Illegal Dumping

Due to the high number of vacant properties in the neighborhood illegal dumping (also known as fly dumping," "midnight dumping," and "wildcat dumping") is one of the major environmental problems in the neighborhood and is a major concern to the community members. In addition to environmental issues, illegal dumping raises lots of concerns related to public health and safety, property values, and quality of life in the neighborhood. The health issues related to illegal dumping differ from exposing the most vulnerable residents (like children) to the chemicals and hazards from wastes to attracting vermin like rodents and insects to the neighborhood. The range of the dumping is from industrial or construction trash dump in the area which leads to release lots of toxic and chemicals materials to the soil, to unused furniture and belongings, including an old boat, which is not only an eyesore but also a serious hazard for the safety of the children playing around in the neighborhood.

Figure 66. Tireman Avenue and Military Street

For investigating the existing conditions regarding illegal dumping, GIS data from the City of Detroit GIS open data portal (cases from 5/1/2004 to 6/10/2019) have been used besides "Improve Detroit App". Based on these data and the help of ARC GIS-Pro geographic data have been visualized to show areas where a higher density or cluster of activity occurs. This hot spot analysis uses statistical analysis to define areas of high occurrence versus areas of low occurrence. Since hot spot areas are statistically significant, the end visualization is less subjective. The designation of an area as being a hot spot is therefore expressed in terms of statistical confidence.

Prevent & Enforce Illegal Dumping

Due to the high number of vacant properties in the neighborhood illegal dumping (also known as fly dumping," "midnight dumping," and "wildcat dumping") is one of the major environmental problems in the neighborhood, which mentioned by the community members several times. In addition to environmental issues, illegal dumping raises lots of concerns related to public health and safety, property values, and quality of life in the neighborhood. The health issues related to illegal dumping differ from exposing the most vulnerable residents (like children) to the chemicals and hazards from wastes to attracting vermin like rodents and insects to the neighborhood. The range of the dumping is from industrial or construction trash dump in the area which leads to release lots of toxic and chemicals materials to the soil, to unused and devastating furniture/belongings like an old boat which is not only an eyesore but also a serious hazard for the safety of the children playing around in the neighborhood.

GIS data from the City of Detroit GIS open data portal shows cases of example dumping from 5/1/2004 to 6/10/2019. This data is shown with residents' complaints from the "Improve Detroit App." The maps below show areas where a higher density or cluster of illegal dumping has occurred. This hot spot analysis uses statistical analysis to define areas of high occurrence versus areas of low occurrence. Since hot spot areas are statistically significant, the end visualization is less subjective. The designation of an area as being a hot spot is therefore expressed in terms of statistical confidence.
The results of the maps and observations made show that the concentration of the blight violations (Hot Spot Area) is on the west side of the neighborhood. The Cold Spot area in the middle of the neighborhood overlaps with the big vacant (former) industrial area which is owned by the DLBA.

Prevent & Enforce Illegal Dumping

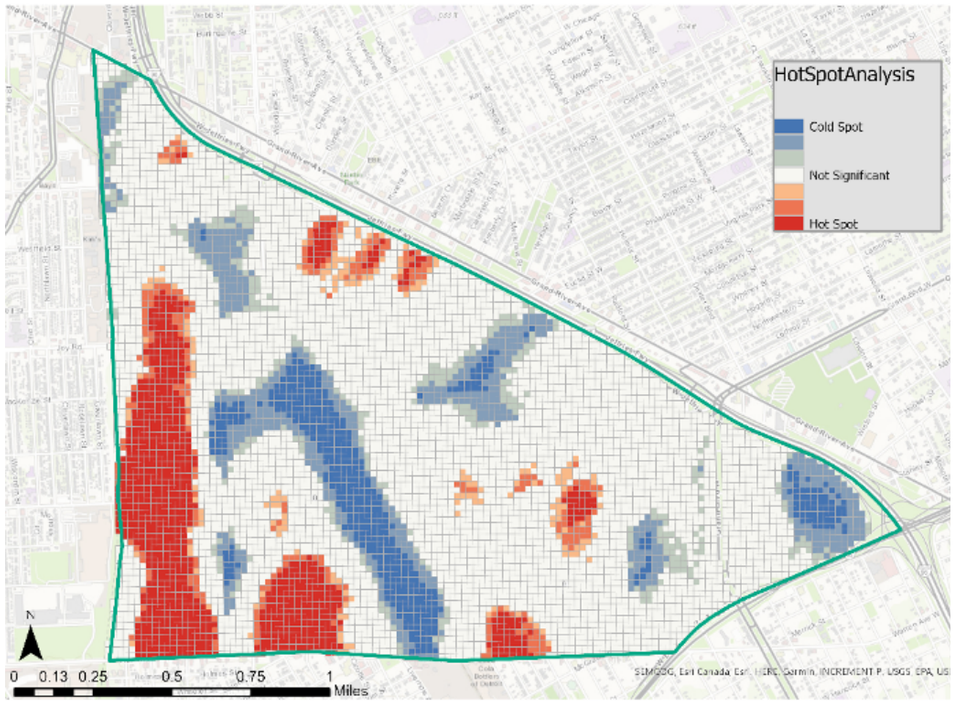

Figure 67. Blight Violation Hotspot Map

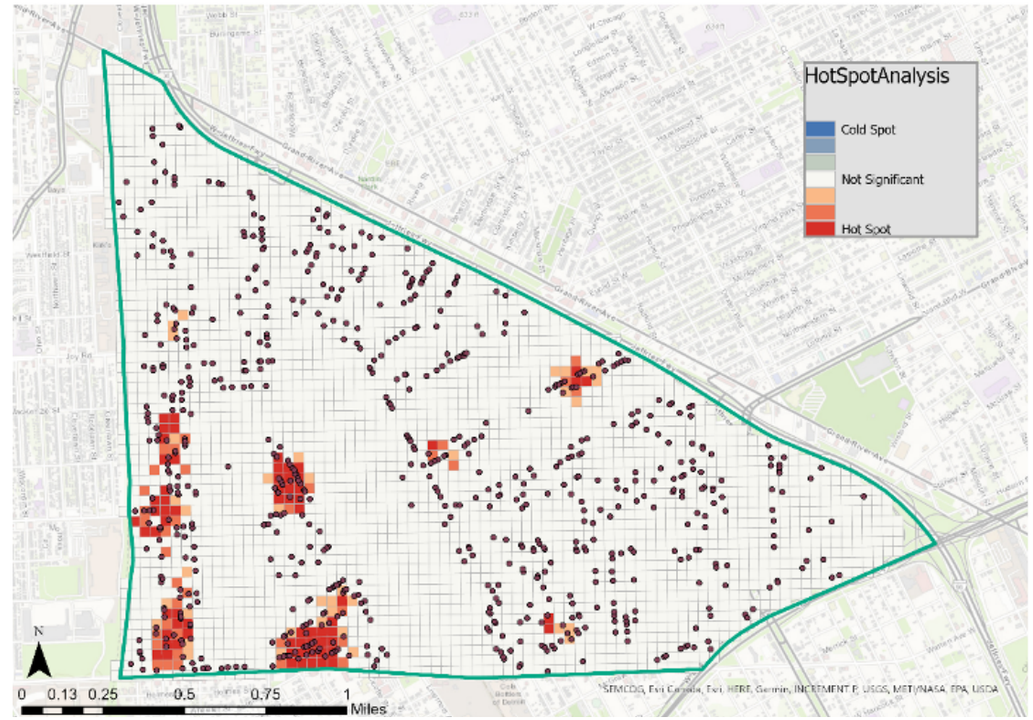

Figure 68. Illegal Dumping Hotspot Map

Implementation:

Management, control, and support by local officials such as the city of Detroit, especially District 7, and the city's police, health, environment, public work, and sanitation departments is particularly important to achieve the goal of reducing illegal dumping. Below are a few implementation steps to consider mitigating the illegal dumping incidents in the neighborhood:

- Build awareness of illegal dumping. The community should raise awareness of the problem of illegal dumping, through education and using social media platforms (now)
- Place appropriate warning signs in high-incidence areas (near)

Prevent & Enforce Illegal Dumping

- Improve the lighting in the designated areas to increase public monitoring (near)
- Place cameras in high-incidence areas to help deter dumping before it happens (next)
- Use of barriers like fences, berms, concrete barriers, and boulders to block access for dumping (near, next)
- Landscaping and beautification of the designated areas community gardens, orchards, pocket parks for smaller areas, and native planting or wildflower gardens (near, next)

There are several funding resources to start and accelerate the program and below are a few of them:

- "Illegal Disposal Site Abatement Grant Program," which provides financial assistance in the form of reimbursement grants up to $500,000 to help public entities accelerate the pace of cleanup, restore sites
- "The Environmental Education (EE) Sub-Grants," which provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques
- "CLEAN Illegal Dumping Program," which is conducted in two phases, a cleanup phase and a security phase, and the applicant should provide labor and the program will provide collecting boxes and instruments and would carry out hauling and disposal process. This program would best happen with the help of the community.

Improve Air Quality

The hot spots areas for air pollution in the neighborhood are Central Street (Warren Avenue to Tireman Avenue), Livernois Avenue (Warren Avenue to Jeffries Freeway), and Tireman Avenue (closer to Livernois Avenue). The main causes for this issue are truck traffic, auto-related shops, and industrial lots. Our main goal to address this issue is to improve the air quality by adopting and mitigation strategies.

Figure 69. Central Street

Implementation

Developing a partnership with local universities to conduct air quality monitoring in the neighborhood with the cooperation of the local government would provide a benchmark to measure progress on improving the air quality of the neighborhood. Cooperation between city departments such as the Office of Sustainability, Parks, and Recreation, and Transportation would accelerate the process of implementation. Below are few implementation steps to improve air quality in the neighborhood:

- Regulate speed limit (30 miles/hour) for hot spot zones and roadways (now and near)
- Regulate vehicle and tire quality standards (now and near)
- Improve and maintain the tree canopy in the neighborhood (now, near, and next)
- Plant high-density trees and bushes alongside major thoroughfares, Livernois Ave, and Tireman Ave (near and next)

One of the funding resources to start and accelerate the program and achieving our goal is “MPCA,” which offers $130,000 for projects that will reduce air emissions within an identified area of concern for environmental justice.

Decrease Noise Pollution

The hot spots areas for air pollution in the neighborhood are Central Street (Warren Avenue to Tireman Avenue), Livernois Avenue (Warren Avenue to Jeffries Freeway), and Tireman Avenue (closer to Livernois Avenue). The main causes for this issue are truck traffic, auto-related shops, and industrial lots. Our main goal to address this issue is to improve the air quality by adopting and mitigation strategies.

Implementation

Programing steps to address our goal regarding decreasing noise pollutions are like improving air quality programing

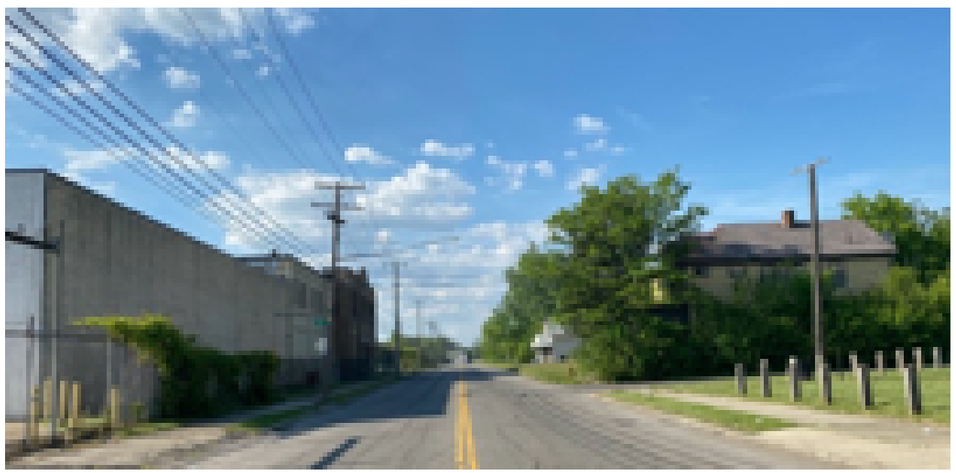

Figure 70. Central Street - Before Implementation

Implementation

Programing steps to address our goal regarding decreasing noise pollutions are like improving air quality programing steps. Below are few implementation steps to decrease noise pollution in the neighborhood:

- Regulate speed limit (30mph) for hot spot zones and roadways (now and near)
- Regulate vehicle and tire quality standards (now and near)
- Improve and maintain the tree canopy (now, near)
- Plant high-density trees and bushes along major thoroughfares (near and next)

Figure 71. Central Street - After Implementation (rendering)

Remediate Polluted Soil Conditions

Most urban soils are formed from different parent materials than natural soils and need different considerations for use and management. The main causes for urban soil pollutions are former industrial sites, leakage of lead from demolished residential properties, and illegal dumping. The main goal to address this issue in the neighborhood is to adopt the development and planning for the neighborhood considering the soil quality and hazards of different lots. As shown in the below map and based on the "Detroit Garden Soil" sample tests between 2004 to 2016 there are three major spots in the neighborhood that the total lead level of the soil is more than 320 which makes the soil hazardous to do gardening and growing seeds.

Investigating and studying the soil quality and soil contaminations in urban areas and especially in the urban plans (for future developments) is important because of two main reasons. The first reason is to avoid the exposure of the residents (especially youth) to the contaminated areas. The second reason is to consider the soil quality in the neighborhood to adopt appropriate strategies for the development of the neighborhood.

The "Dorchester lead-safe yard project" is a pilot program to address this issue in the inner city of Boston which considered a few low-cost techniques to reduce the exposure to lead-contaminated urban soils.

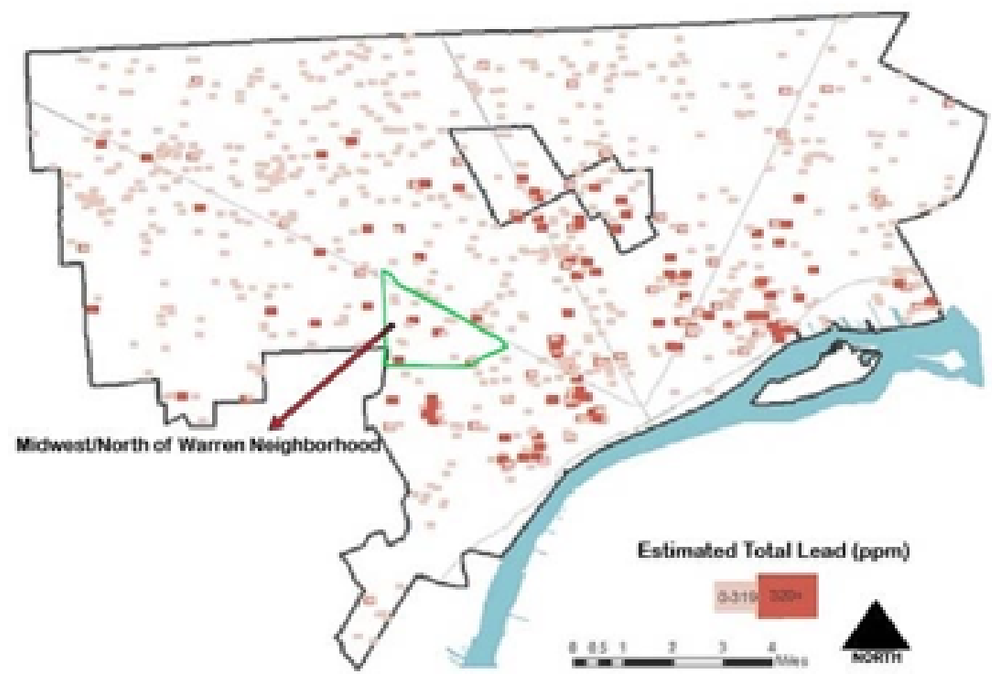

Figure 72. Detroit Garden Soil Sample Tests 2004-2016. Source: https://detroitography.com/2017/03/13/map-detroit-garden-soil-sample-tests-2004-2016/

Decrease Noise Pollution

Implementation

The especially crucial step in implementing this goal is to consider the role of the "Keep Growing Detroit" organization in both processes of measuring the soil contamination levels and educating residents and providing resources directly to conduct planting projects in the neighborhood. Below are few implementation steps to address this goal:

- Educate neighbors and residents about the hazards of the lead-based paintings (now, near, and next)
- Consider especial regulations on designated areas in the neighborhood such as using mulches and groundcover to reduce exposure to leaded soil in the residential yards and using stone or brick for paths which are important EPA-recommended lead abatement strategies (now, near, and next)
- Produce a concise map of the hazardous areas (in which soil lead level is more than 320) (near and next)

Funding opportunities to implement the recommendations in this regard are at the federal and local levels. Federal funding opportunities are as below and the eligibility to get them differs from the state, county, city, township, special district, and Native American governments to Private sector, non-profit and for-profit organizations.

- The Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant
- Healthy Homes Technical Studies
- Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration Program
- The Operation Lead Elimination Action Program
- The Lead Technical Studies Grant Program

"Detroit Lead Safe Housing" is a local funding opportunity.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater in Detroit flows from impermeable surfaces such as streets and sidewalks into a combined sewer system. Combined sewer systems transport both runoffs from stormwater and sanitary sewage. If a combined sewer system receives too much precipitation, it can result in flooding and polluted wastewater could end up in the Detroit River, Rouge River, and eventually Lake Erie. On wet days when the volume of flow exceeds that of a dry day, the stormwater and untreated sewage overflow into our surrounding waters, this is called a combined sewer overflow (CSO). As of 2016, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) was restructured to include the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). DWSD oversees the sewer systems and water within Detroit and GLWA provides wastewater treatment services and drinking water for the surrounding region. GLWA is responsible for preventing untreated CSO's and DWSD for reducing the amount as well as improving the quality of stormwater in the city. Therefore, both are responsible to meet Michigan's zero waste elimination standard for untreated sewer system discharges under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The reason for the system is to manage pollutants entering our waters through set limitations.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) is a stormwater management feature that reduces runoff while treating the water at the source. GSI is cost-efficient and provides environmental as well as social benefits. In an urban environment, GSI can be patched in to not only help reduce flooding but filter water and provide cleaner air. GSI methods promote renewable energy while also consume less energy.

Figure 73. Types of GSI Practices. Source: Detroit Future City

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

In 2013, DWSD was issued a permit by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) that required them to implement a GSI plan. This permit required DWSD to reduce 2.8 million gallons (MG) of stormwater with an investment of $15 million between 2013-2017. By 2029 DWSD will invest $50 million. GSI has been implemented throughout the Upper Rouge Tributary permit area. State regulation requires DWSD to rid millions of gallons of more stormwater flow from CSO's or invest in "gray" infrastructure. Gray infrastructure features include gutters, curbs, drains, piping, and collection systems. To meet the regulation, DWSD has been working with nonprofits and businesses to make Detroit one of the "greenest" cities in the United States. In order to eliminate CSO's, DWSD negotiated to include GSI.

The ensuing goals are based on addressing the neighborhood's stormwater management needs. Implementing these goals would help the neighborhood meet the NPDES permit requirements, the MDEQ GSI requirements, and further contribute to making Detroit one of the greenest cities in the United States.

Figure 74. Westfield Avenue.

Catch Basin Cleaning

Blocked catch basins have been identified as one of the principal reasons for flooding in the neighborhood. According to the Improve Detroit data, blocked catch basins are a common contributor to flooding issues. At the time the data was collected for this project, the areas mapped as densely associated with blocked catch basins were found to be in the middle of the neighborhood on the northeast side, adjacent to the W. Jeffries Freeway and between Joy Road and Dover Avenue on the west edge. Based on resident responses, they noted flooding issues on Joy Road and Alpine Street, Central Avenue, and Bryden Street also.

Figure 75. Debris in Catch Basin on Bryden Street.

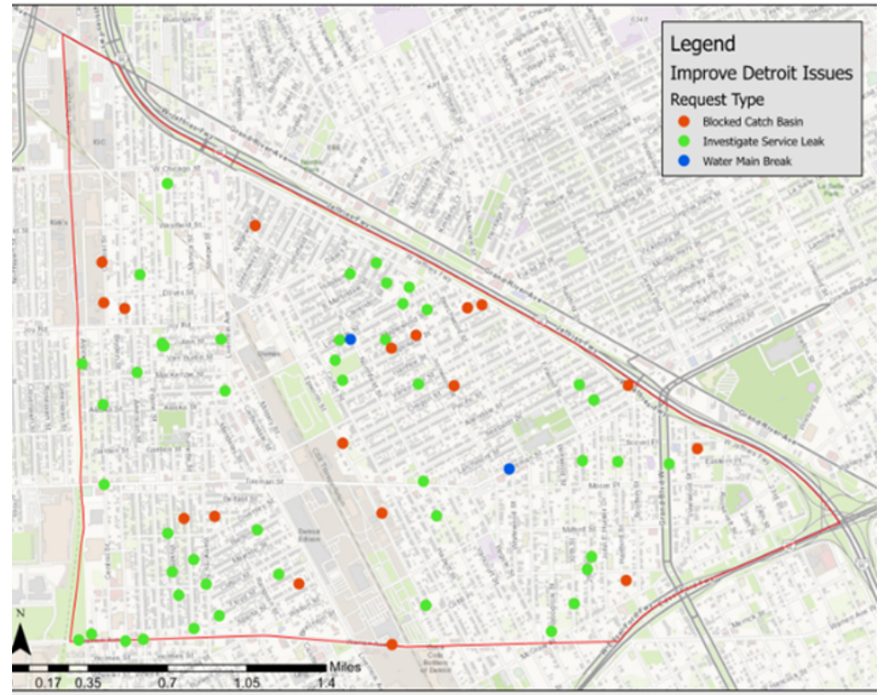

Figure 76. Map of Improve Detroit Problems. Source: Improve Detroit Data

Catch Basin Cleaning

Implementation:

- Remediate soil condition, haul out concrete, metal, and other left-over materials.
- Consider building green stormwater retention areas in parts of the parcel. (Near, General Services Department, EGLE)
- Plant minimal maintenance trees that retain the maximum amount of rainwater. (Near, Parks and Recreation Department)
- Plant other plant life to restore the natural habitat for migrating birds and pollinators. (Near, Parks and Recreation Department, General Services Department)
- Consider paths through the parcel for residents to walk and hike on, provide educational signage about bioretention of stormwater, urban heat island effects, and wildlife habitat restoration. (Next, Parks and Recreation Department, General Services Department)
- Add programming and more active spaces for sports, agriculture, or playgrounds to provide more central amenities (Next, Parks and Recreation)

Target GSI Practices to Properties at Elevated Risk for Flooding

Various GSI practices could be used to address individual properties that are at risk based on the First Street flood map. The most recent map shows that the number of properties at risk resided within a moderate to major category. According to the map, properties at a severe risk were located off Tireman Avenue and Epworth Street, Tireman Avenue and Alpine Street, and Tireman Avenue and Central Avenue.

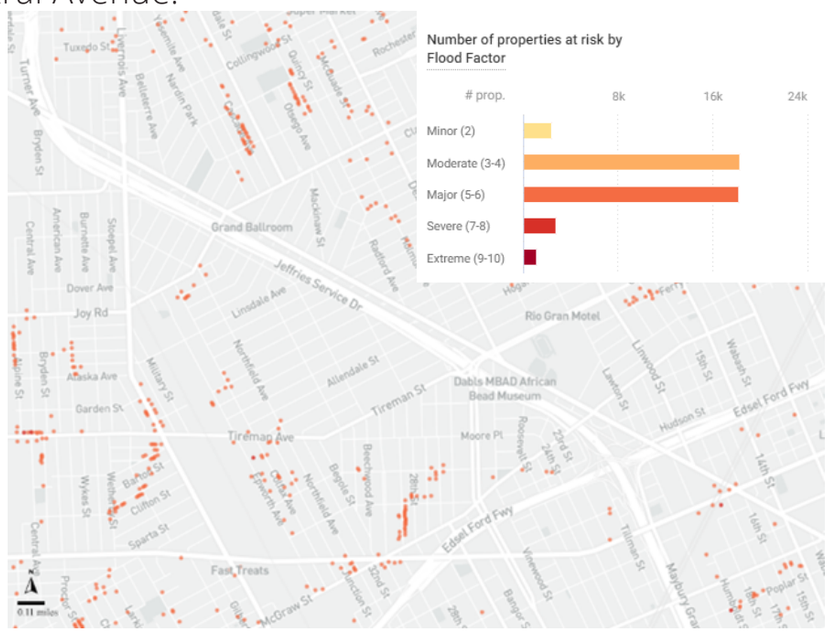

Figure 77. Number of Properties at Risk by Flood Factor. Source: First Street.

Implementation:

- Prioritize properties (Now and near, DWSD)
  - Regard properties that are listed as severe risk as more important than those listed at a lesser risk according to Flood Factor.
- Aim GSI options (Now and near, DWSD)
  - Discuss the use of GSI practices that properly align with current needs.

Reduce Stormwater Runoff into Streets, Greenways, Parking Lots, Parks, and Vacant Land by Incorporating GSI Practices

GSI can accompany non-motorized transportation activities along neighborhood streets. It can also be used to recharge groundwater and reduce the impact of stormwater flooding on the surrounding area. Bioswales are commonly integrated along sidewalks and roadways to provide a way for excess stormwater to drain. GSI can also beautify an area and improve the health of residents by creating a sense of place. Greening streets allows for the capture (infiltration and retention) of rainwater right where it falls and controls the transport of pollutants. GSI can include soil, vegetation, and permeable pavement along streets and sidewalks. Also, GSI methods can reduce the heat that radiates from impervious surfaces. Various approaches can be used to help ease speeding traffic when used in parking lots. The city-owned parcel north of W. Grand River Avenue (currently being used for vehicle impounds by the Detroit Police Department) has already been considered for GSI opportunities in the Joe Louis Greenway framework plan. According to the Detroit Stormwater Hub, there has been one GSI project in the neighborhood. This project was a bioretention at 7720 W. Chicago Street and it was privately, industrial owned on 1.72 acres. Annually, this bioretention manages .75 million gallons. The owner received a drainage credit under the DWSD drainage charge program, where customers can receive credit for implementing stormwater features. Not only could neighborhood GSI continue to be incorporated into the JLG plan, but throughout neighborhood properties, vacant and occupied.

Implementation:

- Decide on materials (Now and near, DWSD)
  - Use local and recycled resources, when possible, throughout the design.
  - Pursue opportunities to utilize native vegetation.
- Evaluate (Now and near, DWSD)
  - Assess and identify where to implement various GSI practices.
  - Calculate the possible flood reduction the use of GSI would contribute to.

Reduce Stormwater Runoff into Streets, Greenways, Parking Lots, Parks, and Vacant Land by Incorporating GSI Practices

Implementation:

- Decide on materials (Now and near, DWSD)
  - Use local and recycled resources, when possible, throughout the design.
  - Pursue opportunities to utilize native vegetation.
- Evaluate (Now and near, DWSD)
  - Assess and identify where to implement various GSI practices.
  - Calculate the possible flood reduction the use of GSI would contribute to.

Figure 78. Spokane Avenue and Jeffries Freeway – Before (top) & After (bottom) Implementation

Downspout Disconnection

Disconnecting downspouts is a simple process that could help address stormwater issues more quickly. The process of downspout disconnection involves removing the downspout from the combined sewer system and redirecting it towards a permeable surface. The downspout should aim away from building foundations and must not cause a nuisance to one's property or adjacent properties. According to state law, Michigan residents must disconnect downspouts that lead to the combined sewer system. The redirection reduces runoff, and the water can be utilized for things like rain gardens or harvested for reuse. Depending on the size of the area, the city offers credits for downspout disconnection and other disconnected impervious surfaces.

Figure 79. Drainage Credit Project, 7780 Majestic. Source: Detroit Stormwater Hub.

Implementation:

- Adhere to regulations (Now, Resident)
  - Minimum flow path: 15 feet from the end of the downspout to impervious surface or property line.
  - Minimum distance from structure: 5 feet from structure to discharge, sloped away from the structure.
  - Slope: Less than a 1-foot drop over 20 feet.
  - Infiltration rate: 0.1 inch per hour is considered standard.
  - The existing external downspout should be cut above ground.
- Other steps to take (Now, Resident)
  - Add an elbow or extension.
  - Cap abandoned drainpipe.
  - If necessary, attach a splash pad to the end of the extension to prevent erosion and help direct flow.
  - For tips, supplies, maintenance: Downspout Disconnection Guide
  - For non-residents: Contact the Building Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) for permits.

Low Impact Development (LID) to Manage Stormwater

LID manages rainfall upon landing. LID is set out to act as pre-settlement hydrology. This is done through design techniques that filter, store, infiltrate, evaporate, and detain runoff. LID designs can adhere to local regulations, constraints, and resource protection requirements. The management is usually more cost-efficient than traditional methods and can be joined into existing infrastructure.

Implementation:

- Assess area (Near and next, DWSD)
  - Evaluate existing development for ways in which GSI could be implemented.
  - Consider the local economy when weighing the prospects for development.
  - Encourage partnerships to minimize negative impacts on the neighborhood through denser development that coincides with stormwater management.

APPENDIX A

Existing Community Groups

Midwest Civic Council of Block Clubs

- Instagram: Midwestccbc
- Facebook: Midwest Civic Council

Community organization group that is active for the 48204 & 48210 zip codes with important information pertaining to the residents such as information on Neighborhood Enterprising Zones, Covid Relief efforts, North of Warren monthly neighborhood call, food distribution efforts, and many more.

Warren-Junction Community Council

Facebook: Warren Junction Community Council

Group of neighbors in the West Warren and Junction focusing on building community through providing the neighborhood with means for democracy.

United Block Club Council

APPENDIX B

501c3 Checklist

Development Phase

The goal is to work backward here and establish what the purpose and mission are for the organization, what are the long-term goals, and what could the mission statement talk about that would encompass these goals? Establish a mission statement and be able to explain in full, what the organization seeks to create or maintain. Give the organization a name that is distinct and fits Michigan naming requirements.

The organization has a couple of options for formation, either the "do it yourself" route, or hire a professional to complete the legal requirements in the following steps:

1. Appoint a registered agent: this should be someone that can handle the legal papers and file necessary reports.
2. Establish a board of directors: a group of stakeholders in the community, or even outside the community that will follow an agreed-upon system of governance, prioritize the organization's mission, and meets regularly to make decisions on behalf of the organization.
3. Develop bylaws and conflict of Interest documents: this step should also be an exercise in prioritizing organization goals. There are templates online for bylaws and COI Documents. You can also research other similar 501c's to see what they have included in these documents.
4. Establish the certificate of formation and articles of Incorporation
5. Create a system for record-keeping: this would include meeting minutes, agendas, and bookkeeping (see TechSoup for discounted QuickBooks for nonprofits).
6. Apply for EIN and 501c tax exemption
7. Apply for charitable solicitation: This is to avoid scammers targeting the public; you can apply at the Secretary of State.

APPENDIX C

Engagement and Public Consultation Methods

Clear Zoning

Giffels Webster's online GIS public participation program offers Zoning information in a more user-friend and accessible for communities. Visit https://www.giffelswebster.com/ for more information.

Picture This!

Another online user-friendly tool from Giffels Webster that allows community members and stakeholders to voice their opinion, ideas, and take part in the planning process. The public can submit photos, examples, of creative ways to improve the community. Visit https://www.giffelswebster.com/ for more information.

Cycling Tours

A method that encourages social distancing and it is a safe way to tour the neighborhood. This can help spark interest, attract businesses, and start the planning conversation.

Virtual Public Tours and Public Forums

There are many online tools and resources such as Zoom, which allow the public to view, and part takes in public meetings.

APPENDIX D

Grant and Funding Opportunities

Pro Playgrounds

A playground equipment network that assists in customers accessing equipment manufacturers, that include swing sets, merry-go-rounds, and spring riders. They offer an innovative online quoting system that allows customers to gather quotes.

Detroit Neighborhood Opportunity Funding

This program awards grants in the areas that focus on education, senior citizens, recreation, health, and public safety. This provides funds for public services to improve the quality of life to nonprofits and neighborhood service organizations through the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) program. The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund was awarded over $2.4 million dollars in the 2019-2020 fiscal year (City of Detroit).

Community Investment Grants:
Old National Bank Foundation - www.OldNational.com
Deadline: January, March, June.
Award Amount: $7,500

This program gives grants to 501 (c)(3) or 509(a) organizations designated in good standing by the IRS. The funding will be awarded to organizations within close vicinity to an Old National location, that is fiscally sound, mission-driven, with strong leadership and a diverse board of directors. This money is intended to support organizations that have yet not received funding from the foundation prior.

Detroit Lions Foundation - www.detroitlions.com/community/charities
Deadline: Available in October and ends in December. Award Amount: Varies

Organizations that focus on health, wellness, and fitness are granted priority.

APPENDIX D

Grant and Funding Opportunities

Community Investment Grants:
Just Energy - https://www.justenergyfoundation.com/
Just Energy Foundation.
Deadline: Rolling.
Award Amount: Varies

Applicants will have to prepare an overview of the program or project. The number of youths served will also have to be mentioned, as well as outcomes must be tracked and measured after being awarded.

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