

BLIGHT ON THE BLOCK

A Resident's Guide to
Reducing Blight

BLIGHT ON THE BLOCK: A RESIDENT'S GUIDE TO REDUCING BLIGHT

Prepared by:

Julia Billings, Sarah Carlson, Christina Carter,
Alex DeCamp, Michelle Lam, Raquel Obumba,
Julie Schneider, Bing Zhao

Academic advisors:

Margaret Dewar, Eric Dueweke

Master of Urban Planning Program

Taubman College of Architecture and Urban
Planning

University of Michigan

April 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Pat Miller of the Technical Assistance Center and members of the Good Neighborhood blight advisory group for providing knowledge, feedback, and support: Dana Hart, Andrea Jackson, Ernestine Perkins, Cordelia Plummer, Bishop Tony Russell, Kim Sommerville, and Angie Webb.

We also thank the following individuals for contributing their time and expertise to this manual:

Christine Bell, Urban Neighborhood Initiatives
Matthew Bihun, Southwest Detroit Business Association

Helen Broughton, formerly Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative

Kenyetta Campbell, Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance

Sarah Clark, Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision

Bart Eddy, Detroit Community Schools

John George, Motor City Blight Busters

Tom Goddeeris, Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation

Stephanie Johnson-Cobb, Focus: HOPE

Sean Mann, Hubbard Farms Block Association

Cathy Marshall, Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation

Linda Rhodes, Ideal Contracting

Riet Schumack, Neighbors Building Brightmoor and Brightmoor Youth Garden

Andrew Sokoly, Summer in the City

Kathy Stott, Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision

Pam Weinstein, Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation

Terry Whitfield, Southwest Solutions

Lex Zavala, Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation

Thank you to the Skillman Foundation for funds to cover the out-of-pocket expenses of this project.

Lastly, we thank our faculty advisors, Margaret Dewar and Eric Dueweke, for providing support and expertise throughout the project.

Fig. 0.1 Mural on side of grocery store, Southwest Detroit



Source: Michelle Lam



SUMMARY

Blight on the Block contains strategies to assist residents in developing plans to prevent and reduce blight. The manual emphasizes the role of planning blight-reduction efforts to ensure efficient use of time and resources, keep residents engaged, and create lasting change. Presented in nine sections, this manual includes success stories, resource information, and strategies that can contribute to short- and long-term plans for combating blight at the scale of individual properties, blocks, neighborhoods, and, in some cases, across several neighborhoods.

A plan to address blight at the block or neighborhood level involves several steps. These include:

1. Identifying goals
2. Assessing conditions
3. Deciding where and when to focus efforts
4. Determining what actions to take
5. Identifying resources

Representatives of the Good Neighborhoods expressed three main goals for addressing blight in their neighborhoods:

- Reducing blight that threatens safety, particularly children's safety
- Improving neighborhood appearance
- Engaging residents to take action to reduce blight

After residents identify goals, an assessment of neighborhood conditions can assist residents in the next step of the planning process: deciding where and when to focus efforts. The blight conditions and assets differ among the Good Neighborhoods and differ from Detroit as a whole. Additionally, conditions vary within the Good Neighborhoods, with some areas having considerable blight and other areas having almost none. Neighborhood information such as population change, population density, housing tenancy, housing age, maps of vacant structures and lots, and lists of neighborhood assets can aid residents in determining where and when to focus blight-reduction efforts.

Residents can increase the impact of their efforts by choosing where to focus limited human and financial resources. Improvements in the places where residents choose to focus their blight-reduction efforts can have positive effects on current residents and can influence the decisions of potential residents and investors. In addition to improving the appearance of the neighborhood, these blight-reduction efforts can have additional positive spillover effects such as increasing residents' sense of safety and confidence in their neighborhood. These effects can encourage residents to continue maintaining their homes and increase their commitment to living in the neighborhood, thereby preventing vacancy.

Some possible strategies for determining where to focus efforts include:

- Focusing efforts near areas that youth and children use
- Concentrating efforts in a few blocks
- Dispersing efforts across a Good Neighborhood
- Focusing on more-blighted areas
- Focusing on less-blighted areas
- Focusing efforts near neighborhood assets such as schools, parks, and community centers
- Focusing efforts near highly-visible areas

In addition to thinking about where to focus efforts, residents should also consider the timing of volunteer and resource availability when prioritizing blight-reduction activities. Some projects require less resources and participation and can offer quick, highly-visible results. Such projects can be good first steps. Residents can identify both short- and long-term actions for reducing blight in accordance with their goals and their decisions about where to work. Long-term actions such as keeping an inventory of vacant houses may yield long lasting results, but the effects may occur gradually, while other actions such as boarding up one house near a park can produce more immediate results that can inspire people to get involved.

To address blight effectively, residents need the cooperation and support of their fellow residents. To encourage resident participation, residents can go door-to-door to identify and recruit potential volunteers, take on visible projects that encourage neighbors to come out, host social events, and connect with neighborhood institutions. Some strategies for encouraging youth participation include organizing neighborhood events such as trash pick-ups, neighborhood assessments, art projects, lot beautification, or photo exploration; creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities; recognizing and rewarding youth for their work; and designating leadership responsibility to youth.

Residents can tackle a range of blighting conditions. Using success stories to show how residents and organizations have handled various blight issues, this manual describes examples of neighborhood-level blight-reduction actions to address seven major blight issues identified by representatives of the Good Neighborhoods:

- Vacant lots

Residents can clean up vacant lots and create gardens in some of these.

- Vacant structures

Residents can keep an inventory of vacant homes in their neighborhood, make vacant homes appear occupied by planting flowers and removing snow and leaves, board up vacant structures, demolish unsafe structures, find new uses for vacant structures, identify and hold property owners

responsible for vacant houses, and report vacant homes to the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department.

- Poorly maintained, occupied houses

To improve the appearance of occupied houses, residents can educate each other about the city code's maintenance requirements, offer assistance or information about assistance programs for residents who need help maintaining their property, and, as a last resort, report code violations to the city government's Community Access Centers.

- Excessive trash and illegal dumping

To address excessive trash and dumping, residents can hold neighborhood cleanup events. To prevent repeated dumping, residents can create artwork in places prone to dumping, place "No Dumping" signs and dummy cameras, and organize a neighborhood-wide cleanup campaign.

- Graffiti

Residents can form an anti-graffiti neighborhood group; reduce the number of open, available surfaces; paint murals; encourage youth to get involved in graffiti removal; and encourage nearby businesses to form a Business Improvement District (BID) to address graffiti.

- Abandoned cars

Residents can call the city towing hotline to report abandoned vehicles. If a neighborhood tends to have many abandoned vehicles, residents can create a "neighborhood champion" program where residents agree to monitor various parts of the neighborhood.

- Illegal signs

Residents can organize a group of volunteers to remove illegal signs and report the businesses that place the signs to Detroit Police Community Services.

Resource limitations can create obstacles to addressing blight issues. To identify resources within the neighborhood, residents can ask neighbors what skills they can contribute, ask local businesses for assistance, ask for donations of supplies, and hold neighborhood-wide functions such as potlucks or can and bottle recycling collections. Residents can also seek volunteer groups from outside the neighborhood by reaching out to high schools and universities. Some possible blight-reduction funding sources include Michigan Community Resources, the Prevention Network, and Citizen Effect.

Finally, some blight-reduction efforts may be more effective at a scale larger than that of a single block or neighborhood. Residents of all six Good Neighborhoods can collaborate to address issues for which citywide action or enforcement would be more effective, such as:

- Addressing tax-forfeited and foreclosed homes

To address tax-forfeited and foreclosed homes, the Good Neighborhoods can collaborate by:

- o Holding meetings to provide resources and information to residents facing tax foreclosure
- o Advocating for banks that own many properties in the area to pay taxes and maintain their properties
- o Advocating for changes to Michigan's property tax forfeiture law

- Holding negligent property owners accountable

To hold owners of multiple properties accountable for maintenance, the Good Neighborhoods can collaborate by:

- o Compiling a list of negligent property owners in each of the neighborhoods and using their collective power to encourage city code enforcement
- o Collaborating to save money on title searches

- Advocating for demolition of unsafe structures

The Good Neighborhoods can advocate for demolitions by:

- o Submitting combined lists with detailed, up-to-date information on conditions of houses in need of demolition to the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department

To maintain effective and long-term blight-reduction efforts, residents could hold cross-neighborhood blights meetings two or more times during the year to discuss existing efforts and develop solutions to new challenges. The Skillman Foundation's Technical Assistance Center can assist with cross-neighborhood efforts by providing meeting space, educational information, and, possibly, some funding.

Blight on the Block is a tool for residents to use in creating their own blight-reduction plans specific to their neighborhood. The manual guides residents through each step of the process of creating a sustainable, long-term plan to combat blight.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
Summary.....	v
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND GOALS	1
SECTION 2: HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL	5
SECTION 3: MAKING A PLAN TO REDUCE BLIGHT	8
SECTION 4: BLIGHT IN THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS	12
SECTION 5: DETERMINING WHERE AND WHEN TO FOCUS EFFORTS	41
SECTION 6: INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS	51
SECTION 7: ISSUES AND ACTIONS FOR REDUCING BLIGHT	71
SECTION 8: BLIGHT-REDUCTION RESOURCES	133
SECTION 9: CROSS-NEIGHBORHOOD COLLABORATION	145
Appendix A: Sample Property Survey	157
Appendix B: SAFE Program Qualifications and Application Requirements	159
Appendix C: Good Neighborhoods Community Connections Grant Program Qualifications and Application Requirements	161
Appendix D: Resources List	169

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 0.1 Mural on side of grocery store, Southwest Detroit, p. iii

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

Fig. 1.0 Mural painted by children, Brightmoor, Detroit, p. 1

Fig. 1.1 Skillman Good Neighborhoods, Detroit, Michigan, p. 3

SECTION 2: HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Fig. 2.0 Volunteering at a cleanup, Southwest Detroit, p. 5

Fig. 2.1 Entrance sign at Scarcyny Garden, Southwest Detroit, p. 6

SECTION 3: MAKING A PLAN TO REDUCE BLIGHT

Fig 3.0 Residents working together to develop a blight-reduction plan, p. 9

Fig. 3.1 Steps to make a plan, p. 10

SECTION 4: BLIGHT IN THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS

Fig. 4.0 Decorated vacant apartment building, Cody Rouge, Detroit, p. 13

BRIGHTMOOR

Fig. 4.1 Population density change, 1990-2010, p. 16

Fig. 4.2 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010, p. 16

Fig. 4.3 Vacant structures as a % of all residential structures in a block, 2009, p. 18

Fig. 4.4 Vacant lots as a % of all residential parcels in a block, 2009, p. 19

CHADSEY CONDON

Fig. 4.5 Population density change, 1990-2010, p. 20

Fig. 4.6 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010, p. 20

Fig. 4.7 Vacant structures as a % of all residential structures in a block, 2009, p.22

Fig. 4.8 Vacant lots as a % of all residential parcels in a block, 2009, p. 23

CODY ROUGE

Fig. 4.9 Population density change, 1990-2010, p. 24

Fig. 4.10 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010, p. 24

Fig. 4.11 Vacant structures as a % of all residential structures in a block, 2009, p.26

Fig. 4.12 Vacant lots as a % of all residential parcels in a block, 2009, p. 27

NORTHEND CENTRAL WOODWARD

Fig. 4.13 Population density change, 1990-2010, p. 28

Fig. 4.14 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010, p. 28

Fig. 4.15 Vacant structures as a % of all residential structures in a block, 2009, p. 30

Fig. 4.16 Vacant lots as a % of all residential parcels in a block, 2009, p. 31

OSBORN

Fig. 4.17 Population density change, 1990-2010, p. 32

Fig. 4.18 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010, p. 32

Fig. 4.19 Vacant structures as a % of all residential structures in a block, 2009, p. 34

Fig. 4.20 Vacant lots as a % of all residential parcels in a block, 2009, p. 35

SOUTHWEST DETROIT

Fig. 4.21 Population density change, 1990-2010, p. 36

Fig. 4.22 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010, p. 36

Fig. 4.23 Vacant structures as a % of all residential structures in a block, 2009, p. 38

Fig. 4.24 Vacant lots as a % of all residential parcels in a block, 2009, p. 39

SECTION 5: DETERMINING WHERE AND WHEN TO FOCUS EFFORTS

Fig. 5.0 Viaduct overpass on West Grand Boulevard in Southwest Detroit, p. 41

Fig. 5.1 Playground in Southwest Detroit, p. 43

Fig. 5.2 Example of an area where residents can concentrate efforts (a main street in Brightmoor), p. 44

Fig. 5.3 Example of a minimally blighted area of a neighborhood, p. 46

Fig. 5.4 Example of a heavily blighted area of a neighborhood, p. 47

Fig. 5.5 Don Bosco Hall, an example of a neighborhood asset in Cody Rouge, p. 48

Fig. 5.6 Example of a highly visible area within a neighborhood, p. 49

Fig. 5.7 Example of a poorly maintained vacant lot, p. 50

SECTION 6: INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS

Fig. 6.0 Residents working together to create a plan to reduce blight, p. 51

Fig. 6.1 Linda Laird with Ewald “Dreams of Hope” Circle Block Club, p. 52

Fig. 6.2 Neighborhood cleanup in Southwest Detroit, p. 53

Fig. 6.3 Youth garden in Brightmoor, p. 54

Fig. 6.4 Georgia Street Community Garden garlic plants, p. 55

Fig. 6.5 Neighborhood mural in Southwest Detroit, p. 56

Fig. 6.6 Residents participating in a neighborhood cleanup, p. 57

Fig. 6.7 Joyce Dallas of Southwest Detroit volunteering in Scarcyny Garden, p. 58

Fig. 6.8 Neighborhood mural, p. 59

Fig. 6.9 Data Driven Detroit teaching youth GIS technology, p. 60

Fig. 6.10 Example of a vacant house in Cody Rouge, p. 61

Fig. 6.11 Vacant house in Brightmoor with artwork, p. 62

Fig. 6.12 Brightmoor woodworkers with one of their handcrafted signs, p. 63

Fig. 6.13 Brightmoor Gardens, p. 64

Fig. 6.14 Youth helping with trash and debris cleanup in Southwest Detroit, p. 65

Fig. 6.15 Child working to create public art in Brightmoor, p. 66

Fig. 6.16 Youth garden in Brightmoor, p. 67

Fig. 6.17 Community garden in Brightmoor, p. 68

SECTION 7: ISSUES AND ACTIONS FOR REDUCING BLIGHT

Fig. 7.0 Vacant burned house, p. 71

Fig. 7.1 Example of a vacant structure that is a source of blight, p. 72

Fig. 7.2 Blight-reduction issues and goals, p. 73

Fig. 7.3 Example of a vacant lot, p. 74

Fig. 7.4 Georgia Street Community Collective

garden, p. 75

Fig. 7.5 Vacant lot before neighbors planted the garden, p. 76

Fig. 7.6 Vacant lot after neighbors planted the garden, p. 76

Fig. 7.7 Georgia Street Community Garden, p. 79

Fig. 7.8 Example of a vacant structure, p. 82

Fig. 7.9 A boarded vacant house in Brightmoor, p. 84

Fig. 7.10 Vacant house in Brightmoor before boarding, p. 85

Fig. 7.11 Same house after volunteers painted boards and boarded the doors and windows, p. 85

Fig. 7.12 Curtis Green Pocket Park in Brightmoor, p. 86

Fig. 7.13 Community stage in Brightmoor, p. 86

Fig. 7.14 Vacant home in Southwest Detroit, p. 87

Fig. 7.15 Example of a vacant house that could be made to look occupied, p. 88

Fig. 7.16 Boarded vacant home in Brightmoor, p. 89

Fig. 7.17 Vacant garage used as public art in Brightmoor, p. 91

Fig. 7.18 Vacant dilapidated house, p. 93

Fig. 7.19 A well-maintained occupied house, p. 95

Fig. 7.20 A well-maintained occupied house, p. 96

Fig. 7.21 Door hanger informing residents of code violations, p. 98

Fig. 7.22 Example of an illegal dumping site, p. 101

Fig. 7.23 Anderson Street before cleanup, p. 102

Fig. 7.24 Anderson Street after cleanup, p. 102

Fig. 7.25 Scarcyny Park in Southwest Detroit, p. 103

Fig. 7.26 Example of homemade trashcan, p.105

Fig. 7.27 Neighborhood trash can in Brightmoor, p. 110

Fig. 7.28 Graffiti in Northend Central Woodward, p. 111

Fig. 7.29 Hubbard Farms neighborhood viaduct, p. 112

Fig. 7.30 Street scene along Vernor Avenue, p. 113

Fig. 7.31 Examples of painted boarded windows, p. 114

Fig. 7.32 Examples of painted boarded windows, p. 114

Fig. 7.33 Summer in the City mural, p. 115

Fig. 7.34 Abandoned car in Northend Central Woodward, p. 120

Fig. 7.35 Example of an illegal sign, p. 125

Fig. 7.36 Example of an illegal sign on a street corner, p. 126

Fig. 7.38 Example of an illegal sign near a vacant house, p. 127

Fig. 7.39 Example of illegal signs on a street corner, p. 128

SECTION 8: BLIGHT REDUCTION RESOURCES

Fig. 8.0 Resources residents used during a gardening project in Southwest Detroit, p. 133

Fig. 8.1 Residents of Southwest Detroit gardening in Scarcyny Park, p.134

Fig. 8.2 University of Michigan volunteers painting over graffiti on Detroit Partnership Day 2012, p. 135

Fig. 8.3 Volunteers working to create public art in Brightmoor, p. 136

Fig. 8.4 Vacant house in Southwest Detroit, p. 137

Fig. 8.5 The Skillman Foundation banner, p. 138

Fig. 8.6 Holy Cross Baptist Church, p. 140

Table 8.1 Potential Sources of Volunteers, p. 141

Fig. 8.7 Volunteer management sign, p. 142

Fig. 8.8 Tractor in Brightmoor, p. 143

SECTION 9: COLLABORATING ACROSS NEIGHBORHOODS

Fig. 9.0 Blight on the Block workshop, p.145

Fig. 9.1 Vacant house, Brightmoor, p.146

Fig. 9.2 Occupied house in Osborn, Detroit, p. 149

Fig. 9.3 Georgia Street mural, Detroit, p. 155

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

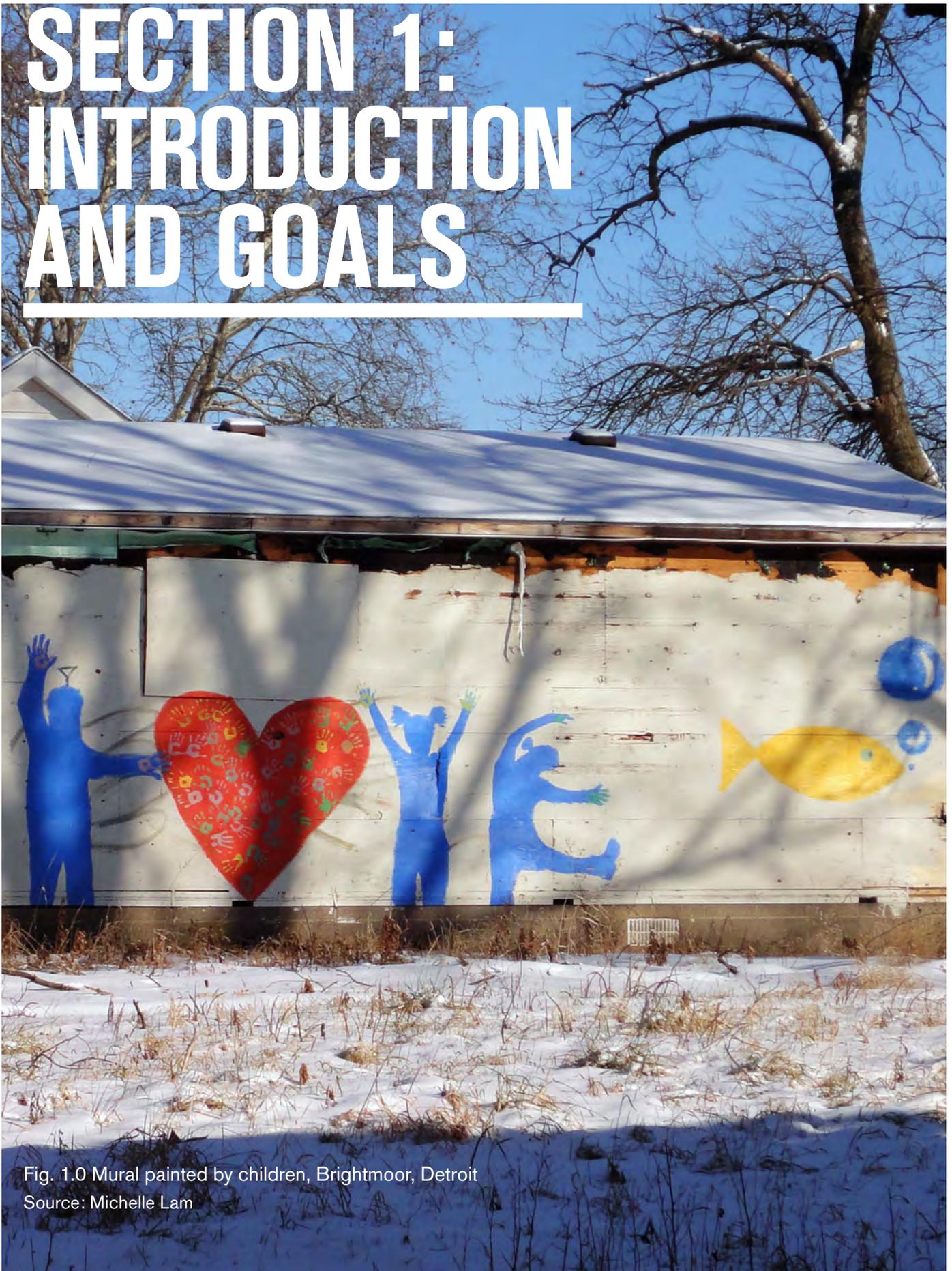


Fig. 1.0 Mural painted by children, Brightmoor, Detroit
Source: Michelle Lam

INTRODUCTION

Blight is a widespread problem in Detroit and affects all six Skillman Good Neighborhoods. While “blight is in the eye of the beholder,” this manual defines blight as deterioration in the condition of buildings and lots that negatively affect a neighborhood’s safety and appearance. Reducing blight is one of the first steps toward establishing a brighter future for neighborhood residents.

In 2006, the Skillman Foundation created a 10-year plan, the Good Neighborhoods Initiative, to improve the opportunities for children in six large areas of the city. The foundation chose these Good Neighborhoods because together they contained a youth population of over 60,000, representing 30% of Detroit’s children.¹ Figure 1.1 shows locations of the Good Neighborhoods.

Blight is a common concern of residents contacting Skillman Foundation’s Technical Assistance Center (TAC), which, in partnership with the University of Michigan School of Social Work, assists the Skillman Foundation, residents, stakeholders, and Good Neighborhoods partners in efforts supporting the Good Neighborhoods Initiative. In cross-neighborhood meetings during fall 2011, residents shared concerns about blighted conditions as well as stories of success in combating and preventing blight. TAC staff perceived the need for a platform to share residents’ knowledge and inspiration and to join individual projects with plans for longer-term visions and impacts. The TAC approached the University of Michigan Urban and Regional Planning Program to produce this manual on blight reduction. The manual

highlights blight-fighting knowledge and experience from residents across the six Good Neighborhoods. Strategies from other areas of Detroit and the nation also add to the mix of approaches residents can implement in the prevention and reduction of blight.

The purpose of this manual is to help residents develop plans to prevent and reduce blight by deciding where and when to focus their actions to ensure that their efforts have a sustained impact. This manual contains strategies ranging from the individual property level to the block level as well as cross-neighborhood initiatives. It includes success stories, resource information, and methods that feed into creating short- and long-term plans for combating blight.

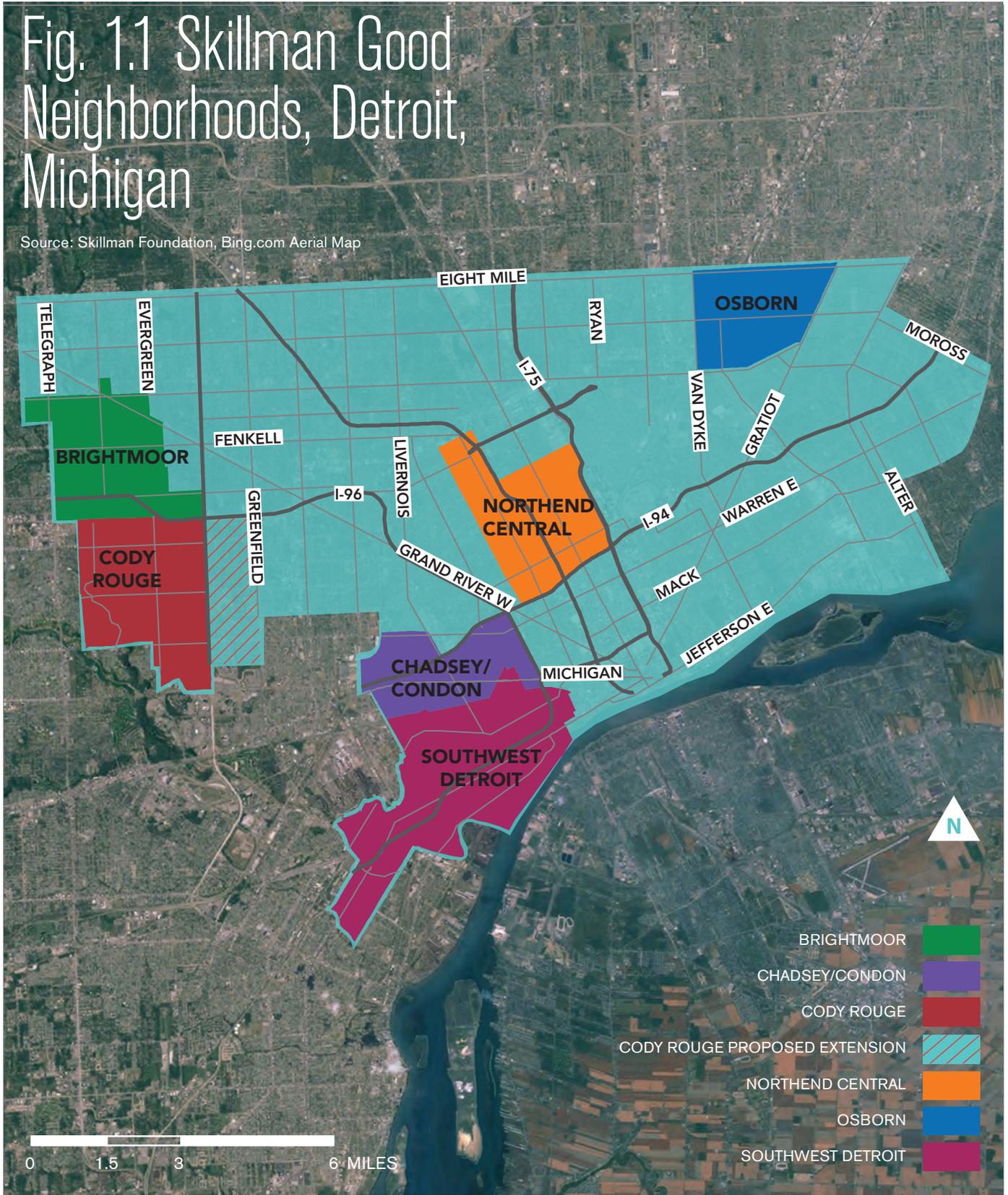
Sources:

1 Skillman Foundation, Good Neighborhoods, History. Retrieved from <http://www.skillman.org/Good-Neighborhoods>

GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS

Fig. 1.1 Skillman Good Neighborhoods, Detroit, Michigan

Source: Skillman Foundation, Bing.com Aerial Map



BLIGHT-REDUCTION GOALS

The following goals for reducing blight emerged from discussions with representatives from the Skillman Good Neighborhoods:

REDUCE BLIGHT THAT THREATENS SAFETY, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN'S SAFETY

The Skillman Foundation designated the Good Neighborhoods based on the number of children that reside in those areas of Detroit. Residents stressed the importance of reducing blight that threatens the safety of all residents in the neighborhood but emphasized children's safety.

IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOODS' APPEARANCE

Good Neighborhood representatives stressed the need to improve the look of blighted properties and lots on their blocks and throughout entire neighborhoods. Residents cited problems with vacant lots; vacant houses; abandoned vehicles; poorly maintained, occupied houses; graffiti; illegal signs; and illegal dumping, which negatively affect the appearance of their neighborhoods.

TO TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE BLIGHT

Good Neighborhood representatives expressed challenges with involving more residents in the process of improving their neighborhoods. No one person can do all of the work to reduce blight. Therefore, engaging as many residents as possible can improve the likelihood of long-term success of blight-reduction efforts.

This manual includes actions residents can take to help accomplish these goals (see Section 7: Issues and Actions for Reducing Blight). Some actions may accomplish more than one goal. With these three goals as a guide, residents can use this manual to create plans specific to the problems that concern them the most.

ENGAGE NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS

SECTION 2: HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL



Fig. 2.0 Volunteering at a clean up, Southwest Detroit
Source: Julie Schneider

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL



This manual serves as a reference for residents wanting to make and implement plans to reduce blight in their neighborhoods. It also provides a means for residents of the Skillman Good Neighborhoods and for others across Detroit to share their blight-reduction successes in the hope that their stories will inspire other residents to take action.

Each section of the manual provides residents with guidance on what to consider when developing a blight-reduction plan.

SECTION 3: MAKING A PLAN TO REDUCE BLIGHT

This section offers guidance on creating a plan to address blight-related issues at the block and neighborhood levels. Steps include deciding on a goal, assessing conditions, deciding where and when to focus efforts, determining what actions to take, and identifying resources.

SECTION 4: BLIGHT IN THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS

This section provides an overview of blight conditions and community assets in the Good Neighborhoods. Maps and data can help residents assess their neighborhoods and determine where to focus efforts.



Fig. 2.1 Entrance sign at Scarcyny Garden, Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider

SECTION 5: DETERMINING WHERE AND WHEN TO FOCUS EFFORTS

While residents may want to eliminate blight all at once, resource limitations require more focused efforts. This section provides an overview of five strategies residents can use to determine where and when to concentrate blight-fighting actions in order to achieve their goal(s).

SECTION 6: INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS

This section provides residents with strategies to increase neighbors' involvement in reducing blight. It also provides strategies to keep active neighbors enthusiastic about participating in projects and to involve youth.

SECTION 7: BLIGHT ISSUES AND ACTIONS

This section includes blight-reduction actions to address seven major issues, incorporating success stories for each issue. The issues include:

- Vacant lots
- Vacant structures
- Poorly maintained, occupied houses
- Excessive trash and illegal dumping
- Graffiti
- Abandoned cars
- Illegal signs

SECTION 8: RESOURCES

This section provides residents with techniques to identify non-financial and financial resources useful for efforts to reduce blight.

SECTION 9: CROSS-NEIGHBORHOOD EFFORTS

This section offers guidance on how residents of the six Skillman Good Neighborhoods can collaborate to address issues that affect all six neighborhoods but that require citywide action or enforcement. These issues include addressing tax forfeited and foreclosed homes, negligent property owners, and demolitions.

SECTION 3: MAKING A PLAN TO REDUCE BLIGHT

Breakout Sessions

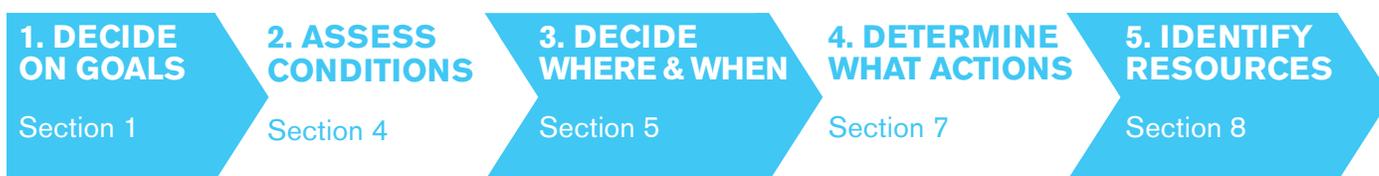


Fig. 3.0 Residents working together to develop a blight-reduction plan

Source: Margaret Dewar

MAKING A PLAN

Fig. 3.1 Steps to make a plan



A plan helps residents manage resources (time, volunteers, tools, and money), keep track of progress, and lay out an approach to address future neighborhood efforts. Having a plan becomes increasingly important with more complex and longer-term projects. Additionally, some funders require detailed plans.

The following steps can guide residents in how to create a plan:

1. DECIDE ON GOALS

Agreeing on a goal can be the first step in creating a plan. Having goals in place helps identify the specific issue(s) residents find most important.

To decide on a goal, residents can ask their neighbors what blight-related issue matters most to them. More than one goal may emerge from asking this question. Residents should agree to work first on the one or two goals that a majority of residents choose and then create a plan to address other goals at a later date.

An example of a goal is: “Improve the appearance of vacant lots.”

2. ASSESS CONDITIONS

If residents decide to focus on an area larger than their block or an area with which they are unfamiliar, an assessment will help gauge the extent of the problem within the selected area. Assessments often include surveys or observations of current conditions.

For example, if residents decide to improve the appearance of vacant lots, residents may count how many vacant lots exist within the focus area. If residents decide to focus on their block, they may already know the extent of the issue and would not need to perform an assessment of their block.

3. DECIDE WHERE AND WHEN TO FOCUS EFFORTS

Prioritizing means determining where and when to focus efforts, which becomes important when resources cannot address the full scale of the problem. Section 5 (Determining Where and When to Focus Efforts) offers examples of prioritization strategies.

Knowing when resources are available and how long the project will take to complete can help residents make a plan and direct longer-term efforts.

Decisions about where and when to focus a project help residents apply their available resources (e.g. neighbors/volunteers, tools, funding) to a specific place where they would like to see change at a time when the resources are available. If the initial goal created during the first step is specific to a particular location and time, then residents can skip this step.

An example of prioritization related to the vacant lot example is: “Improve the appearance of five vacant lots near the neighborhood park on the second Saturday in May.”

4. DETERMINE WHAT ACTION TO TAKE

Next, residents determine what actions to take to accomplish their goals. Identifying which actions to take helps residents know what they are agreeing to do. As the actions needed for reaching a goal become more complex, the need for a plan increases.

Continuing with the vacant lot example, residents could determine that they would like to pick up all trash in the selected vacant lots in order to plant community gardens.

For instance, they could agree to: “Improve the appearance of all vacant lots near a neighborhood park by picking up excessive trash on the second Saturday in May, in order to plant community gardens on the fourth Saturday in May.”

5. IDENTIFY RESOURCES

Before beginning to implement a plan, residents may need to determine what tools and equipment they need to accomplish the goal and ensure the resources are available before the project begins. Section 8 (Blight-Reduction Resources) can help guide residents in finding resources.

In the vacant lot example, residents may determine they need: “gloves, trash bags, and a dumpster for the second Saturday in May and seeds, flower pots, water buckets, and gloves for the fourth Saturday in May.”

These steps, described in more detail throughout this manual, can help guide residents in making plans for reducing blight.

While Section 1 (Introduction and Goals) provided examples of goals, Section 4 (Blight in the Good Neighborhoods) offers an overview of blight conditions in the Good Neighborhoods, which residents could use to assess conditions.

Later sections explain how to prioritize projects (Section 5: Determining Where and When to Focus Efforts), determine actions (Section 7: Issues and Actions for Reducing Blight), and identify resources (Section 8: Blight-Reduction Resources).

SECTION 4: BLIGHT IN THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS



Fig. 4.0 Decorated vacant apartment building, Cody Rouge, Detroit

Source: Michelle Lam

BLIGHT IN THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS

Introduction

Once residents determine their goals for blight reduction (Section 3: Making a Plan to Reduce Blight), they can then assess neighborhood conditions.

The following section provides an overview for each Good Neighborhood's blight conditions and community assets. This section includes three categories of information for each neighborhood: the neighborhood in numbers, neighborhood assets, and maps of blight indicators.

1. THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN NUMBERS

Levels of blight in a neighborhood relate to population change, population density, housing tenancy, housing age, and crime rates. For example, population decline means fewer residents and fewer occupied properties, leading to more vacancies and buildings at risk of blight. Whether an owner or renter occupies a house (tenancy) also affects levels of blight, as owners tend to invest more in the upkeep of their homes. Older buildings cost more to maintain and hence can be at greater risk of deterioration. Blighted areas can encourage crime, which in turn can lead to more blight as more residents leave or disinvest. These figures help paint the picture of the neighborhood's overall level of blight.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

Each neighborhood has strength - places and organizations that are worth protecting in the fight against blight. Such places serve many residents and often host community-building activities, from block clubs to neighborhood alliances. Residents

mentioned schools, recreation centers, places of worship, retail centers, parks, block clubs, and neighborhood-wide organizations as important neighborhood assets.

3. MAPS OF BLIGHT INDICATORS

Maps for each neighborhood display the concentration of two key indicators of blight: vacant structures and vacant lots. The distribution of blight across each Good Neighborhood is uneven; some heavily blighted areas are next to stable areas. The maps can help residents determine the overall conditions in their neighborhood as well as assess different areas of need.

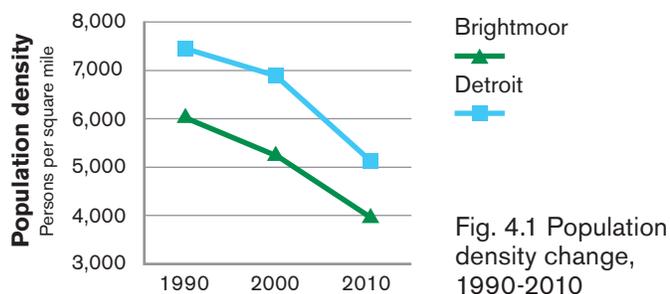
HOW CAN RESIDENTS USE THIS INFORMATION?

The aim of this section is to draw an overall picture for each neighborhood. Statistics, maps and asset lists can contribute to residents' understanding of their neighborhood. Accurate information can help provide a starting point for discussions and bring residents from different parts of the neighborhood together to discuss their blight concerns.

BRIGHTMOOR

The Neighborhood in Numbers

POPULATION¹



The population in Brightmoor declined from 36,116 in 2000 to 24,115 in 2010, a higher rate of decline than the city. Its population density was 3,968 people per square mile in 2010, a decrease of 35% since 1990. Within the neighborhood, the population density by census tract ranged from 1,850 people per square mile to 7,776.

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPANCY²

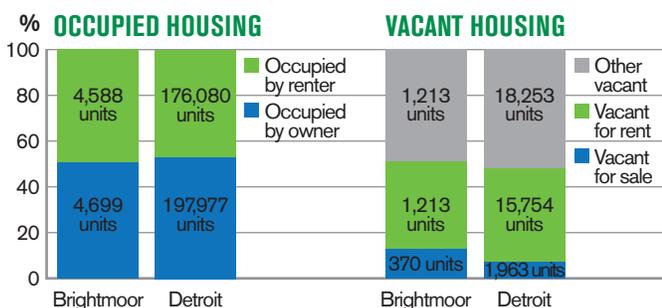


Fig. 4.2 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010

The housing occupancy rate in Brightmoor decreased from 91% in 2000 to 75% in 2010. In 2010, owner occupied housing made up roughly half of the occupied housing, and renter occupied housing accounted for the other half.

Of the vacant housing units, 39% were for rent, 12% were for sale, and 49% fell into the category of “other vacant.” These units may be recent mortgage or tax foreclosures, housing units from which owners or renters walked away, or housing units that owners did not want to sell or rent.³

As of February 2012, 8% of properties in Brightmoor were in danger of tax foreclosure. This refers to properties that are at least two years delinquent on property taxes. Although these properties have been forfeited to the Wayne County Treasurer, owners can redeem their property before the properties are auctioned for sale in September or October of each year. (See Section 9)

BUILDING AGE⁴

63
YEARS

The average age of residential properties in Brightmoor is 63 years (built in 1949). Two-thirds of Brightmoor's housing units are 55 to 70 years old, compared to the city as a whole in which two-thirds of housing units are 60 to 90 years old.

CRIME RATES⁵

CRIMES PER
1000 RESIDENTS

17
VIOLENT

53
PROPERTY

In Brightmoor, the violent crime rate was 17 per 1000 residents in 2010, lower than the city average of 19. The property crime rate decreased from 63 per 1000 residents in 2008 to 53 in 2010, which was the same as the city average.

Violent crimes include forcible rape, murder, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.⁶

Neighborhood Assets

Brightmoor contains many institutions and organizations that are neighborhood assets. The City of Detroit manages some, such as the Crowell Community Center (Detroit Recreation Department) and the Redford Branch Library (Detroit Public Library). Local organizations run others, including the St. Vincent Sarah Fisher Center and Brightmoor Community Center, both of which provide family services and programs for youth, adults, and seniors. The Thea Bowman Community Health Center and the newly reopened Brightmoor Medical Center look after the physical health of residents.

Many churches in Brightmoor are also neighborhood assets. Tabernacle of Faith Missionary Baptist, W. Outer Drive United Methodist, Rosedale Park Baptist, Pure Word Missionary Baptist, Northwest Detroit Seventh Day Adventist, Northwest Church of Christ, Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist, Genesis New Beginning, and God Land Unity are all members of the Brightmoor Alliance, the neighborhood-based coalition of nearly 50 organizations dedicated to revitalizing Brightmoor. Leland Missionary Baptist Church also hosts many community events including Brightmoor Alliance meetings, while City Covenant and Citadel of Praise serve free food weekly and monthly. St. Christine's Soup Kitchen on Fenkell also serves food to residents and provides a community meeting place.

Many businesses belong to the Brightmoor Alliance, too, including Grandy's Coney Island and Scotty Simpson's Fish and Chips on Fenkell, Jesse's Auto Repair on Schoolcraft, and the newly-established Motor City Java House on Lahser which is a project of Motor City Blight Busters, a non-profit whose mission is to stabilize and revitalize Detroit

neighborhoods.

In addition to the neighborhood's schools, organizations and programs such as Wellspring Detroit, City Mission, and the Brightmoor Youth Leadership Development provide mentoring and offer many opportunities for youth to get involved in the neighborhood.

In addition to the Brightmoor Alliance, other community organizations include numerous block clubs, and Neighbors Building Brightmoor (NBB), which spans the area bounded by Fenkell, Outer Drive, Lyndon and Eliza Howell Park. NBB (see Section 7) has been very active in transforming the neighborhood environment by turning vacant lots into small parks, playgrounds, nature trails, edible gardens, community gardens, and places for public art.

Sources:

1. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
2. Census 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
3. Census Library. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/library/2011/2011_Griffin_03.pdf
4. Detroit Assessor's data, 2011. Retrieved from <ftp://datadrivendetroit.org>
5. Data Driven Detroit Brightmoor Neighborhood Profile. Retrieved from <http://datadrivendetroit.org/projects/skillman>
6. Detroit Police Department. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimeStatistics.aspx>

BRIGHTMOOR

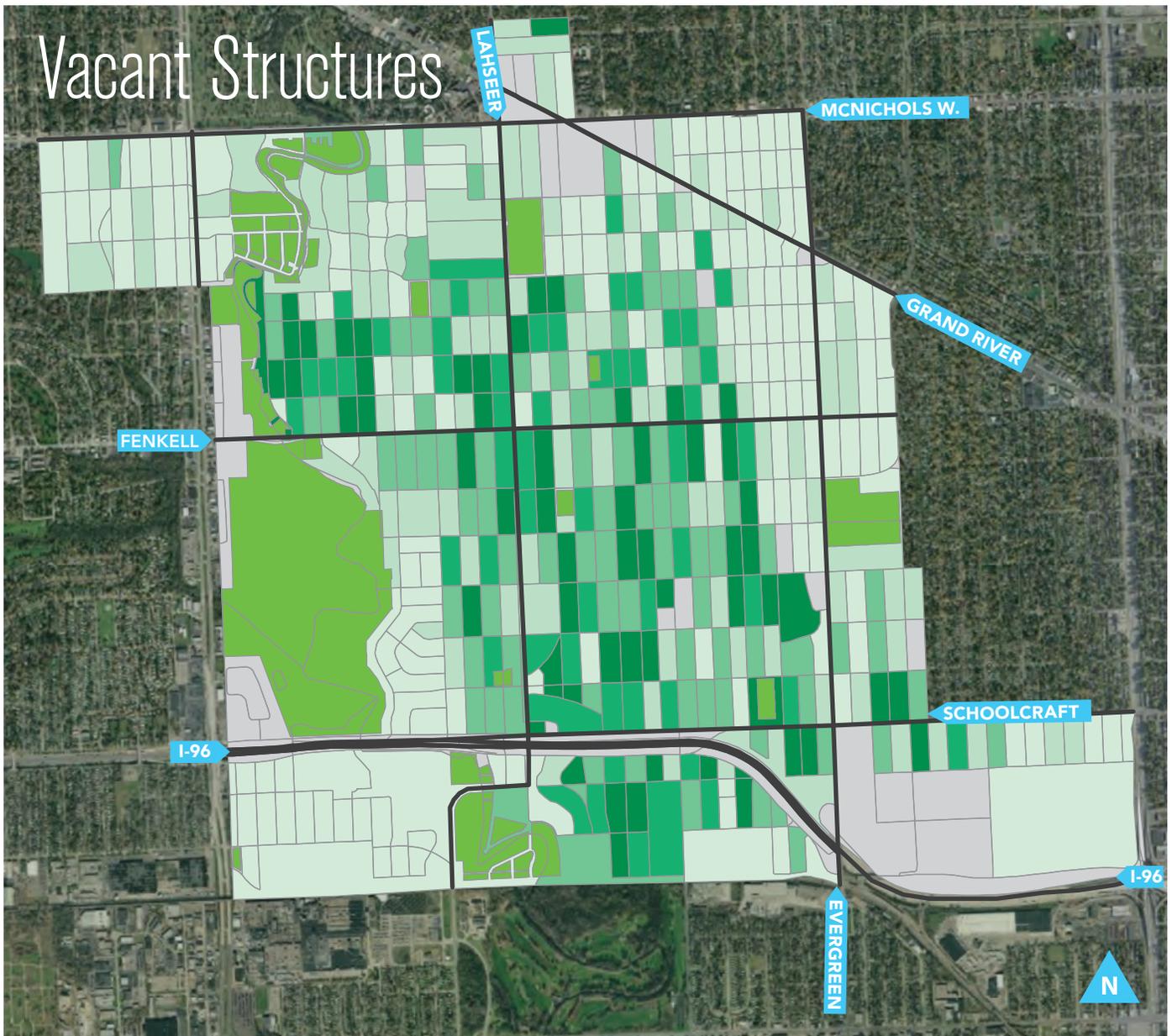
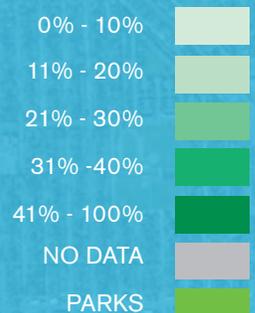


FIG. 4.3 VACANT STRUCTURES AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN A BLOCK, 2009

Brightmoor had a concentration of vacant structures in the center of the neighborhood, while areas along the border of the Good Neighborhood had a higher occupancy rate.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



MAJOR ROADS

Vacant Lots

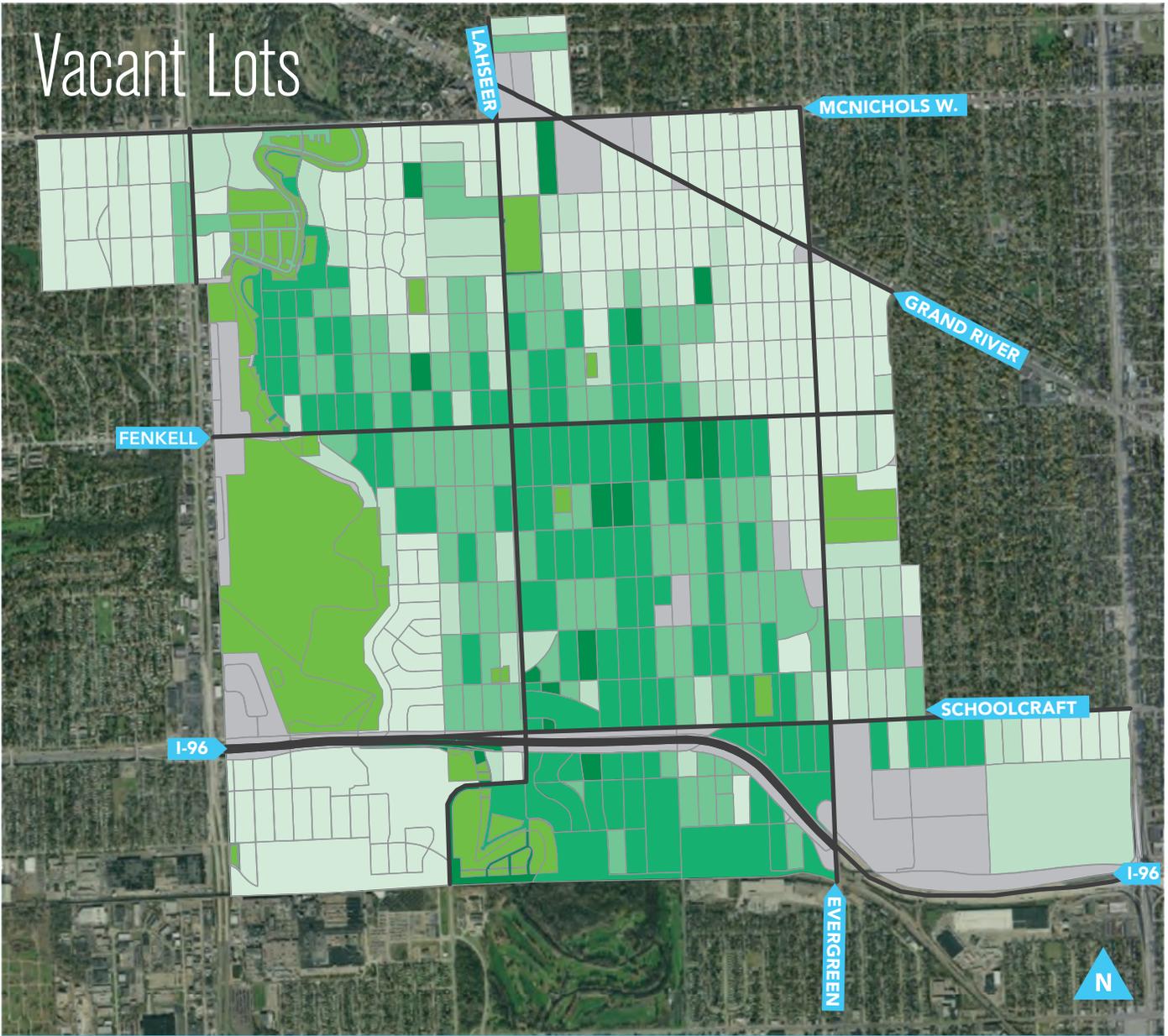
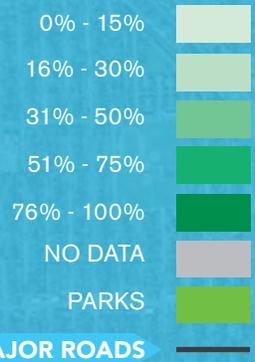


FIG. 4.4 VACANT LOTS AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL PARCELS IN A BLOCK, 2009

Brightmoor had a concentration of vacant lots in the center and south portion of the neighborhood, while the north and southwest portions had fewer vacant lots.

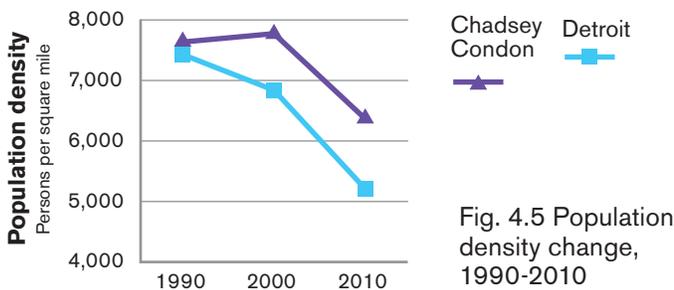
Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



CHADSEY CONDON

The Neighborhood in Numbers

POPULATION¹



The population in Chadsey Condon declined from 34,754 in 2000 to 28,261 in 2010, a lower rate of decline than the city. Its population density was 6,357 people per square mile in 2010. Within the neighborhood, the population density by census tract ranged from 2,212 people per square mile to 11,706.

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPANCY²

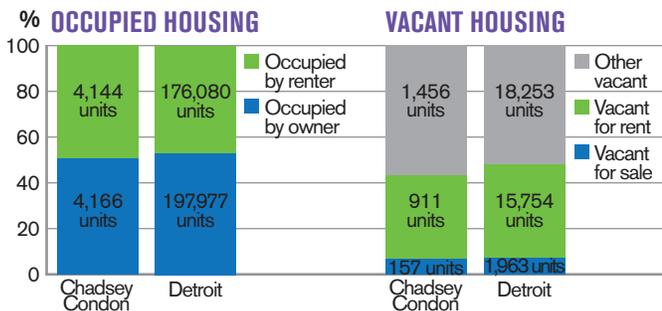


Fig. 4.6 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010

The housing occupancy rate in Chadsey Condon decreased from 87% in 2000 to 77% in 2010. In 2010, owner occupied housing made up roughly half of the occupied housing, and renter occupied housing makes up the other half.

Of the vacant housing units, 36% were for rent, 6% were for sale, and 58% fell into the category of “other vacant.” These units may be recent mortgage or tax foreclosures, housing units from which owners or renters walked away, or housing units that owners did not want to sell or rent.³

As of February 2012, 5% of properties in Chadsey Condon were in danger of tax foreclosure. This refers to properties that are at least two years delinquent on property taxes. Although these properties have been forfeited to the Wayne County Treasurer, owners can redeem their property before the properties are auctioned for sale in September or October of each year. (See Section 9)

BUILDING AGE⁴

71 YEARS The average age of residential buildings in Chadsey Condon is 71 years (built in 1941). However, two-thirds of the housing units are 75 to 110 years old, greater than the citywide 60 to 90 years old.

CRIME RATES⁵

14 CRIMES PER 1000 RESIDENTS In Chadsey Condon, the violent crime rate in 2010 was 14 per 1000 residents and the property crime rate was 41, lower than the city average 19 and 53.

41 PROPERTY Violent crimes include forcible rape, murder, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.⁶

Neighborhood Assets

Many institutions and organizations in Chadsey Condon serve as neighborhood assets. City departments manage some, such as the Conely Branch Library (Detroit Public Library), while non-profits run others, such as the Bloomer Boys and Girls Club on Livernois, renowned for its youth development programs and serving as a center for Chadsey Condon children and youth.

Several churches exist in Chadsey Condon, including St. Hedwig, First Spanish Baptist, St. Francis D'Assisi, and Tree of Life Episcopal. First Spanish Baptist serves as a food pantry and offers translation services and English language lessons to residents.

In addition to the neighborhood's many schools, organizations and programs such as SER Metro Detroit, the Westside Cultural and Athletic Club, and the Boys and Girls Club provide mentoring, organized sports, career exploration, and youth development. Think Detroit PAL, a non-profit involved in renovating the sports facilities at St. Hedwig Park, focuses on improving the recreational facilities in the neighborhood. Prevailing Community Development Corporation (PCDC) is active in Chadsey Condon and runs a popular Job Prep Training Program (although their offices are just north of the neighborhood boundary). Bridging Communities, a non-profit focused on creating caring communities for the elderly, operates a program called LINC that teaches local youth to help connect neighborhood seniors to services and resources they need.

Non-profits active in community organizing also call Chadsey Condon home, such as Southwest Solutions. With its Harriet Tubman Center, Southwest Solutions works with youth, schools, and parents to mobilize and advocate for better schools, safer

and cleaner neighborhoods, youth employment and recreational opportunities, in addition to providing family counseling, early childhood programs, and supportive housing programs. Chadsey Condon Community Organization is the Good Neighborhood community board for Chadsey Condon and is active in the health and safety of the neighborhood, providing youth programs and furthering economic opportunity, as well as working on improving the schools.

Sources:

1. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
2. Census 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
3. Census Library. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/library/2011/2011_Griffin_03.pdf
4. Detroit Assessor's data, 2011. Retrieved from <ftp://datadrivendetroit.org>
5. Data Driven Detroit Chadsey Condon Neighborhood Profile. Retrieved from <http://datadrivendetroit.org/projects/skillman>
6. Detroit Police Department. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimeStatistics.aspx>

CHADSEY CONDON

Vacant Structures

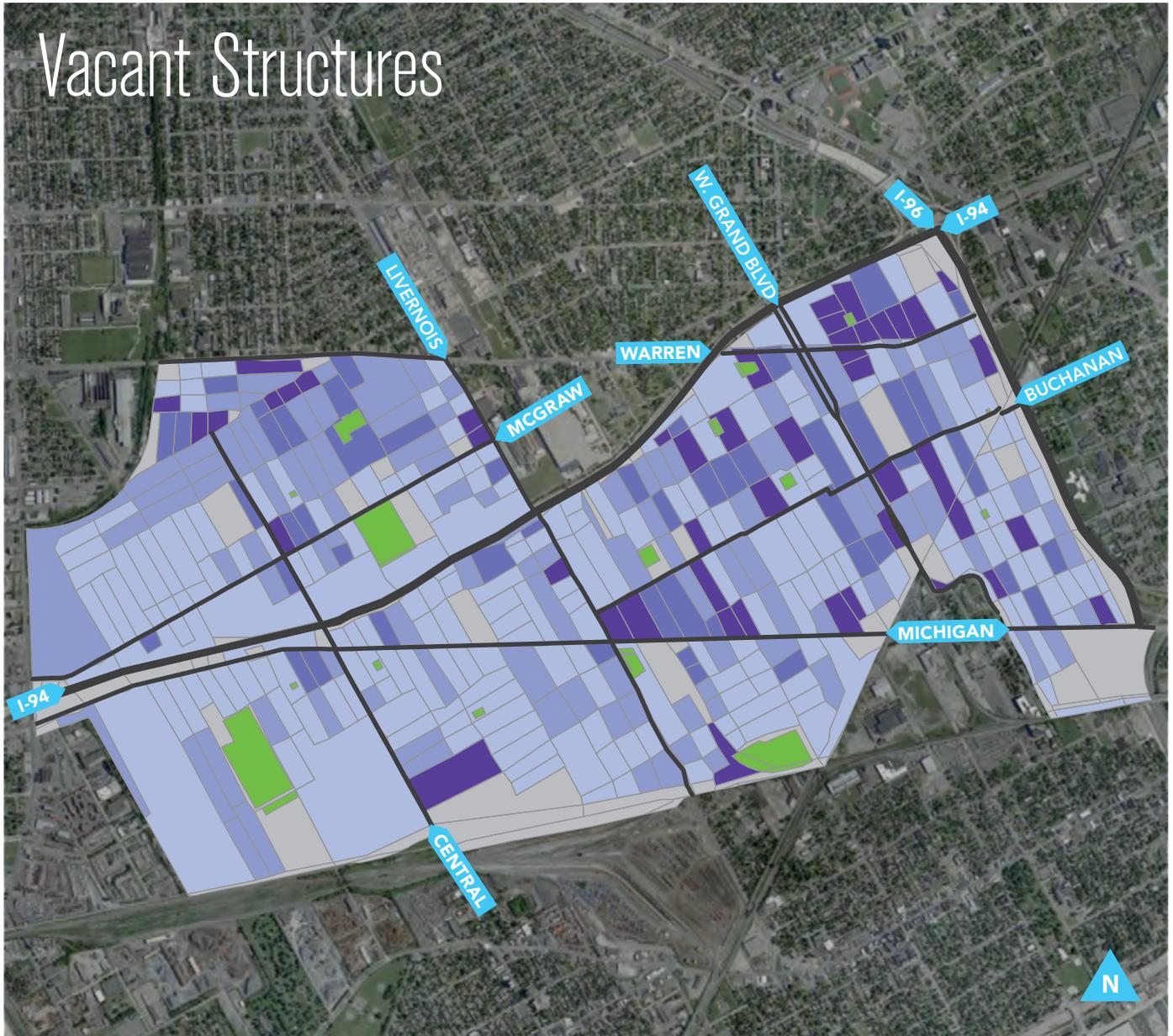


FIG. 4.7 VACANT STRUCTURES AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN A BLOCK, 2009

Chadsey Condon had a concentration of vacant structures in the north and east of the neighborhood, while occupancy was higher in the southwest.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



MAJOR ROADS

Vacant Lots

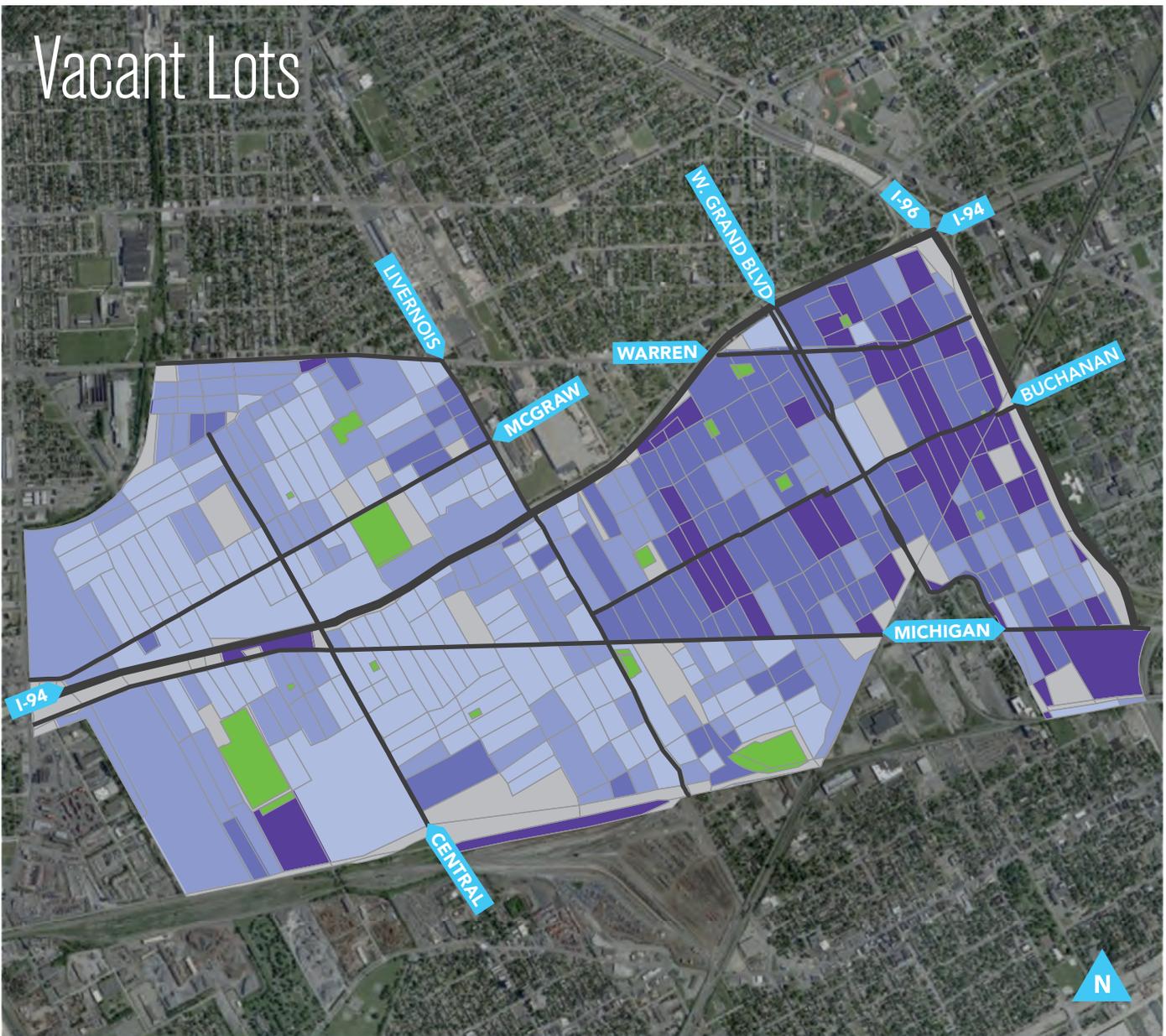
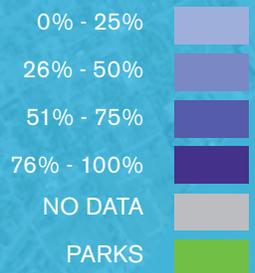


FIG. 4.8 VACANT LOTS AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL PARCELS IN A BLOCK, 2009

Chadsey Condon had a concentration of vacant lots north of Michigan Ave. and east of Livernois, and in the southwest corner south of Michigan and west of Central Ave.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



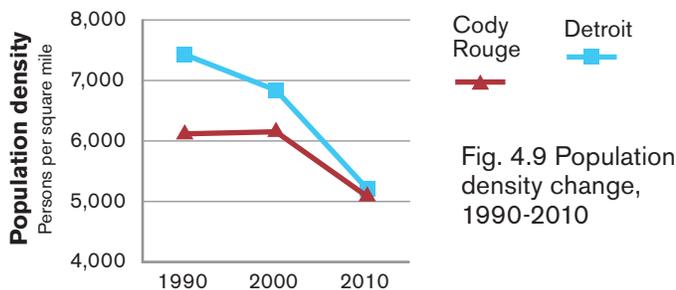
MAJOR ROADS

CODY ROUGE

The Neighborhood in Numbers

Note: This analysis uses the current boundary for Cody Rouge; the proposed extension to the east is not included.

POPULATION¹



The population in Cody Rouge declined from 44,894 in 2000 to 36,849 in 2010, a lower rate of decline than the city. Its population density was 5,078 people per square mile in 2010. Within the neighborhood, the population density by census tract ranged from 1,105 people per square mile to 9,260.

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPANCY²

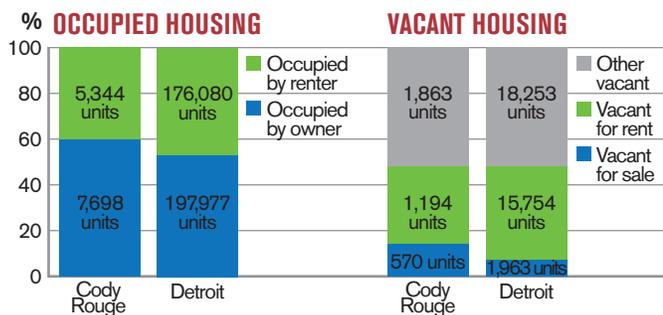


Fig. 4.10 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010

The housing occupancy rate in Cody Rouge decreased from 95% in 2000 to 78% in 2010. In 2010, owner occupied housing made up 59% of the occupied housing, and renter occupied housing made up 41%.

Of the vacant housing units, 33% were for rent, 16% were for sale, and 51% fell into the category of “other vacant.” These units may be recent mortgage or tax foreclosures, housing units from which owners or renters walked away, or housing units that owners did not want to sell or rent.³

As of February 2012, 14% of properties in Cody Rouge were in danger of tax foreclosure. This refers to properties that are at least two years delinquent on property taxes. Although these properties have been forfeited to the Wayne County Treasurer, owners can redeem their property before the properties are auctioned for sale in September or October of each year. (See Section 9)

BUILDING AGE⁴

62
YEARS

The average age of residential properties in Cody Rouge is 62 years (i.e. built in 1950). Two-thirds of the housing units are 60 to 75 years old, compared to the citywide 60 to 90 years old.

CRIME RATES⁵

CRIMES PER 1000 RESIDENTS

18
VIOLENT

54
PROPERTY

In Cody Rouge, the violent crime rate was 18 per 1000 residents in 2010, and the property crime rate was 54. These rates are similar to the citywide averages of 19 and 53.

Violent crimes include forcible rape, murder, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.⁶

Neighborhood Assets

Many institutions and organizations in Cody Rouge are neighborhood assets. These include Cody Rouge's branch of the Detroit Public Library, the Edison Branch Library on Joy Road, and Don Bosco Hall, which serves as a community center and provides family services and programs for children and youth to residents. The Juanita Reeves Free Clinic run by the Joy-Southfield Community Development Corporation (CDC) and other private clinics look after the physical health of the community.

Cody Rouge has many churches, including New Westside Central Baptist, Grace Community, St. Luke Tabernacle Community, Second Grace United Methodist, and St. Suzanne, which is home to the Don Bosco Community Resource Center that serves as a community meeting space and offers youth programs. The Faith Alliance Partnership in Cody Rouge is made up of these and other churches that come together to serve the neighborhood through initiatives such as providing food for residents and volunteering during neighborhood cleanups.

Many active community organizations and groups exist in Cody Rouge, including the Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance (a Good Neighborhood community board), the Joy-Southfield CDC, as well as numerous block clubs across the neighborhood. These groups actively improve Cody Rouge's residential blocks, public spaces, and green spaces. The Detroit Black Community Food Security Network Cody Rouge operates the D-Town Farm in Rouge Park. Rouge Park is the second largest park in Detroit (second to Belle Isle), and the community organization Friends of Rouge Park regularly organizes events and clean-ups in the park.

Sources:

1. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
2. Census 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
3. Census Library. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/library/2011/2011_Griffin_03.pdf
4. Detroit Assessor's data, 2011. Retrieved from <ftp://datadrivendetroit.org>
5. Data Driven Detroit Cody Rouge Neighborhood Profile. Retrieved from <http://datadrivendetroit.org/projects/skillman>
6. Detroit Police Department. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimeStatistics.aspx>

CODY ROUGE

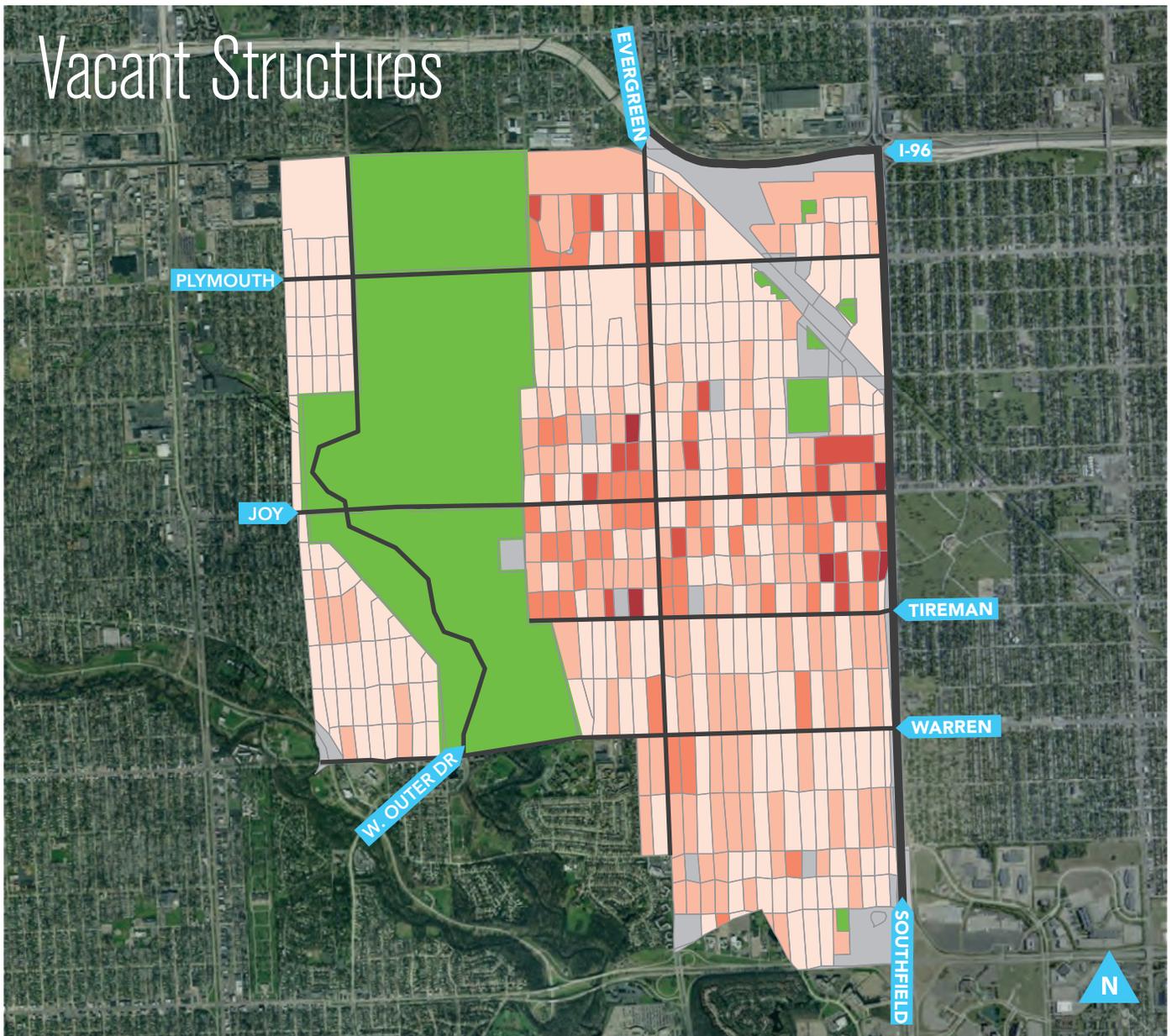
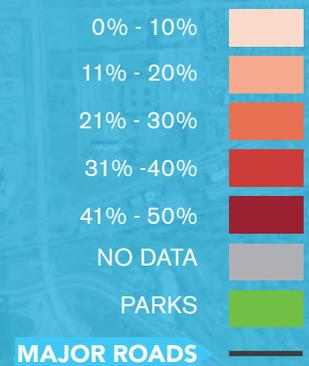


FIG. 4.11 VACANT STRUCTURES AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN A BLOCK, 2009

Cody Rouge had a concentration of vacant homes near the intersections of Joy/Southfield, Joy/Evergreen, and Evergreen/Plymouth. Many blocks, however, had very few vacant structures.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.

0 0.25 0.5 1 MILE



Vacant Lots

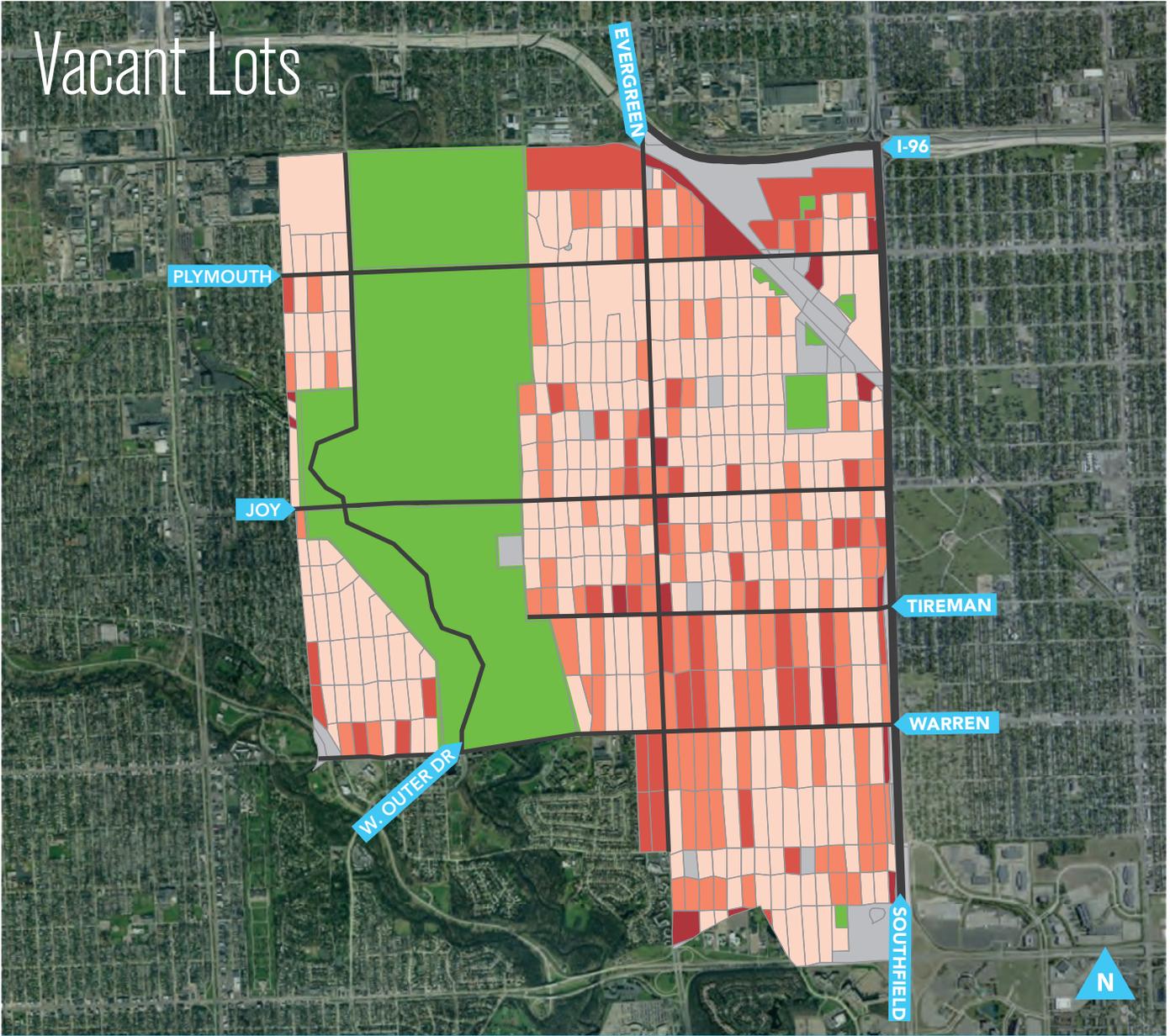
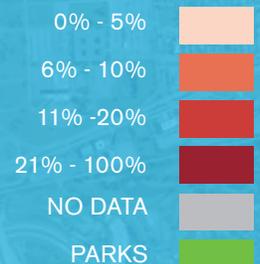


FIG. 4.12 VACANT LOTS AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL PARCELS IN A BLOCK, 2009

Cody Rouge had a concentration of vacant lots near Evergreen Avenue and Tireman Street, and in the northeast portion of the neighborhood.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.

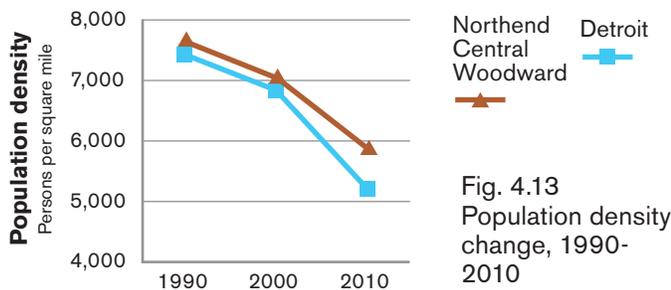


MAJOR ROADS

NORTHEND CENTRAL WOODWARD

The Neighborhood in Numbers

POPULATION¹



The population in Northend Central Woodward declined from 46,010 in 2000 to 36,340 in 2010, a slower rate of decline than the city. Its population density was 5,858 people per square mile in 2010, higher than the city average 5,144. Within the neighborhood, the population density by census tract ranged from 2,672 people per square mile to 7,747.

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPANCY²

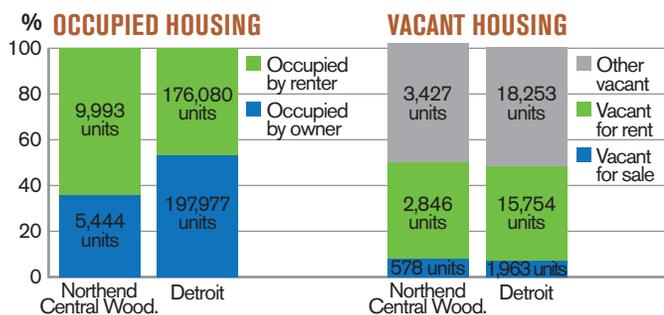


Fig. 4.14 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010

The housing occupancy rate in Northend Central Woodward decreased from 83% in 2000 to 69% in 2010. In 2010, owner occupied housing made up 35% of the occupied units, and renter occupied housing 65%, higher than other Good Neighborhoods.

Northend Central Woodward had the highest vacancy rate among the six Good Neighborhoods. Of the vacant housing units, 42% were for rent, 8% were for sale, and 50% fell into the category of “other vacant.” These units may be recent mortgage or tax foreclosures, housing units from which owners or renters walked away, or housing units that owners did not want to sell or rent.³

As of February 2012, 8% of properties in Northend Central Woodward were in danger of tax foreclosure. This refers to properties that are at least two years delinquent on property taxes. Although these properties have been forfeited to the Wayne County Treasurer, owners can redeem their property before the properties are auctioned for sale in September or October of each year. (See Section 9)

BUILDING AGE⁴

71
YEARS

The average age of residential properties in Northend Central Woodward is 71 years (built in 1941). Two-thirds of the housing units are 85 to 105 years old, older than the city average.

CRIME RATES⁵

23
CRIMES PER 1000 RESIDENTS

23
VIOLENT

Northend Central Woodward had the highest crime rate among the six neighborhoods. The violent crime rate was 23 per 1000 residents and the property crime rate was 57 in 2010, higher than the city average 19 and 53.

57
PROPERTY

Violent crimes include forcible rape, murder, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.⁶

Neighborhood Assets

Many institutions and organizations in Northend Central serve as neighborhood assets. City departments run some of these, including the Joseph Walker Williams Center (Detroit Recreation Department) and the Duffield Branch Library (Detroit Public Library). In a partnership with the city (Recreation Department), Little Rock Family Life Center runs the Considine-Historic Little Rock Family Life, Education and Recreation Center. The headquarters of the non-profit Focus: HOPE is along the northern boundary of the neighborhood at Oakman Blvd. Program offerings include food assistance, career training for adults and youths, and the HOPE Village Initiative, which works to develop a safe and nurturing neighborhood for children and their families.

Many churches exist in Northend Central, including Metro United Methodist, Little Rock Baptist, Greater New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist, St. John Christian Methodist Episcopal, and St. Matthew's & St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, which serves as the temporary home of the Storehouse for Hope, a food pantry established with eight other faith-based community organizations and the Greater Woodward Community Development Corporation.

Other community development corporations (CDCs) in Northend Central include Central Detroit Christian CDC, Vanguard CDC, and Northend Christian CDC. Central Detroit Christian and Vanguard each have their own programs ranging from economic development and education for adults and youth to employment and housing. Northend Christian CDC organizes community gardening and provides food and clothing to families in need. CDCs in Northend Central also collaborate on initiatives such as the Northend Environmental Collaborative.

Organizations and programs, such as YouthVille Detroit, provide mentoring, tutoring, youth development, and opportunities for youth to get involved in neighborhood projects. Located on Woodward Avenue, YouthVille Detroit also serves as a community center for youth from across the city.

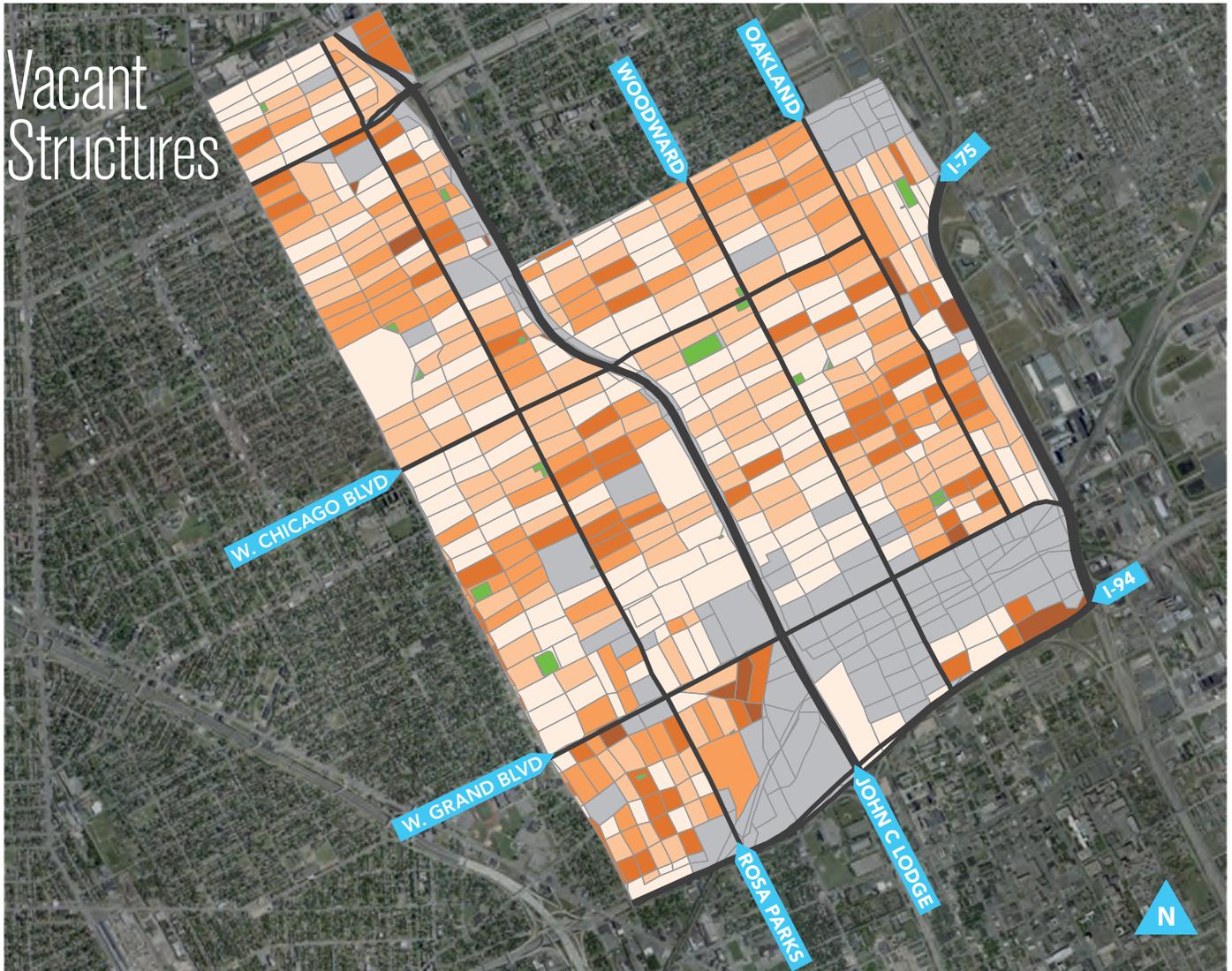
Northend Central has numerous other assets, including the historic housing in Boston-Edison and new housing developed by Vanguard and Central Detroit Christian CDCs. The New Center is also within Northend Central, with its historic office and residential buildings. Henry Ford Hospital in New Center employs many people and has planned new development south of W. Grand Blvd.

Many active community groups exist in Northend Central, including the Historic Boston-Edison Association and the Arden Park East-Boston Historic District Association, as well as numerous block clubs.

Sources:

1. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
2. Census 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
3. Census Library. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/library/2011/2011_Griffin_03.pdf
4. Detroit Assessor's data, 2011. Retrieved from <ftp://datadrivendetroit.org>
5. Data Driven Detroit Northend Central Woodward Neighborhood Profile. Retrieved from <http://datadrivendetroit.org/projects/skillman>
6. Detroit Police Department. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimeStatistics.aspx>

NORTHEND CENTRAL WOODWARD

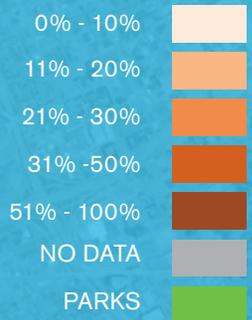


Vacant Structures

FIG. 4.15 VACANT STRUCTURES AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN A BLOCK, 2009

Northend Central Woodward had a concentration of vacant structures in the southwest, the northwest, and the central area east of Woodward. The center of the neighborhood between John C. Lodge and Woodward had fewest vacant structures.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



MAJOR ROADS

Vacant Lots

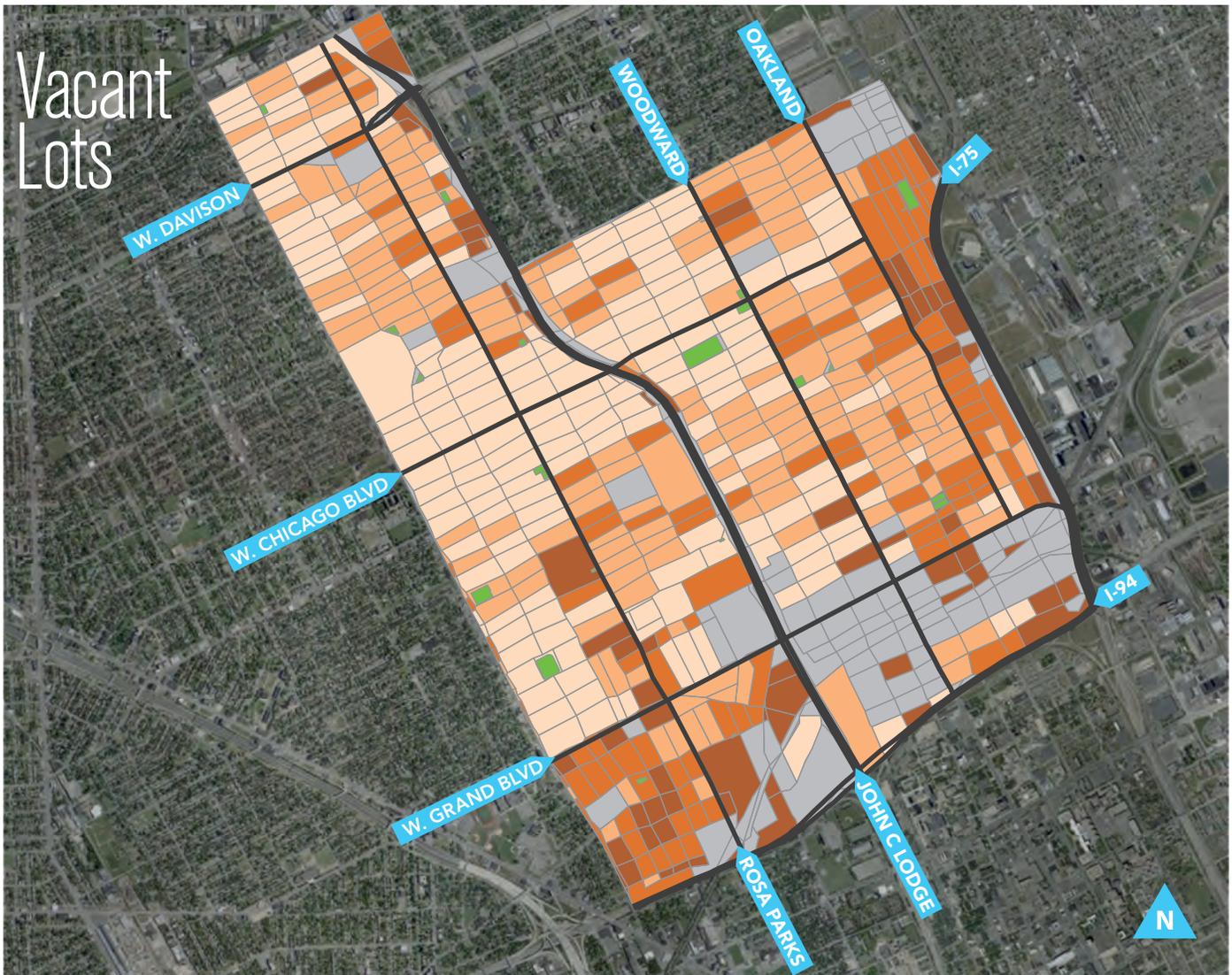
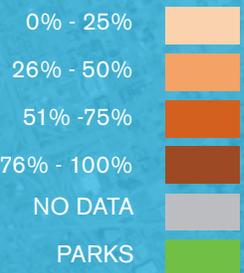


FIG. 4.16 VACANT LOTS AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL PARCELS IN A BLOCK, 2009

Northend Central Woodward had a concentration of vacant lots east of Oakland St., southwest below W. Grand Blvd and east of Rosa Parks Blvd., and along John C. Lodge.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.

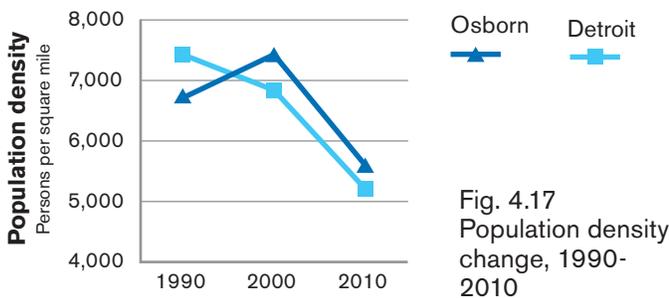


MAJOR ROADS

OSBORN

The Neighborhood in Numbers

POPULATION¹



The population in Osborn declined from 37,358 in 2000 to 27,166 in 2010, a higher rate of decline than the city. Its population density was 5,999 people per square mile in 2010, higher than the city average 5,144. Within the neighborhood, the population density by census tract ranged from 4,025 people per square mile to 8,583.

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPANCY²

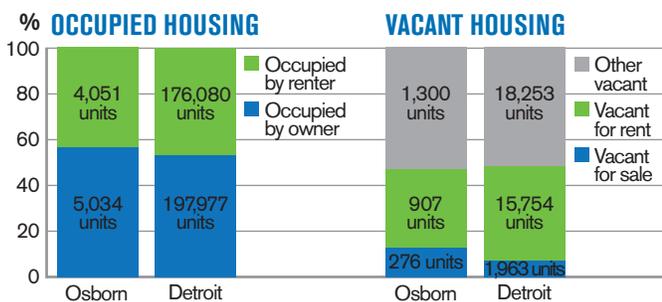


Fig. 4.18 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010
Source: Census 2010

The housing occupancy rate in Osborn decreased from 92% in 2000 to 78% in 2010. In 2010, owner occupied housing made up 55% of the occupied housing, and renter occupied housing made up 45%.

Of the vacant housing units, 37% were for rent, 11% were for sale, and 52% fell into the category of “other vacant.” These units may be recent mortgage or tax foreclosures, housing units from which owners or renters walked away, or housing units where owners determined not to sell or rent.³

As of February 2012, 15% of properties in Osborn were in danger of tax foreclosure. This refers to properties that are at least two years delinquent on property taxes. Although these properties have been forfeited to the Wayne County Treasurer, owners can redeem their property before the properties are auctioned for sale in September or October of each year. (See Section 9) Osborn had the highest tax foreclosure rate among the Good Neighborhoods.

BUILDING AGE⁴

62
YEARS

The average age of residential properties in Osborn is 62 years (built in 1950). Two-thirds of the housing units are 60 to 80 years old, compared to the citywide 60 to 90 years old.

CRIME RATES⁵

22
CRIMES PER
1000 RESIDENTS
VIOLENT

In Osborn, the violent crime rate was 22 per 1000 residents and the property crime rate was 61, higher than the city average and the other Good Neighborhoods.

61
PROPERTY

Violent crimes include forcible rape, murder, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.⁶

Neighborhood Assets

Many institutions and organizations in Osborn serve as neighborhood assets. City departments manage some, such as the Lipke Recreation Center (Detroit Recreation Department) and the Franklin Branch Library (Detroit Public Library). Non-profits run others, such as the Holden Boys and Girls Club on Schoenherr, which provides a center for residents as well as programs for children and youth. Specialty clinics such as the Kindred Hospital and Eastwood Clinic, and other health facilities like Conner Creek Village, look after the physical and mental health of neighborhood residents.

Many churches call Osborn home including Good Hope Missionary Baptist, Faith Temple Church Apostolic, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, St. Raymond's, Grace Church of the Nazarene, Highland Church, Greater St. Paul Baptist, Joshua Temple Church of God, and St. Lazarus Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, whose American Serbian Memorial Hall serves as meeting space for large community events.

Osborn's many schools are also neighborhood assets. For example, the Brenda Scott Academy for Theater Arts, a new, well maintained facility with high parent involvement, and the Nsoroma Institute, which often plants gardens in the neighborhood. Additional assets include the Conner Creek senior living centers and the Matrix Human Services Center, which provides counseling, community service opportunities, tutoring, and team-oriented recreational and cultural activities to early offender and at-risk youth.

Many active community groups and numerous block clubs exist in Osborn, including the Osborn Neighborhood Alliance, which is the Good Neighborhood's community board. Block clubs collaborate through Connecting the Blocks events and partnerships. These groups work to improve Osborn's residential blocks, public spaces, and green spaces. Notably, residents of Osborn now maintain Beland-Manning, Josefiak, Wish-Egan, and Marruso parks.

Sources:

1. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
2. Census 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
3. Census Library. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/library/2011/2011_Griffin_03.pdf
4. Detroit Assessor's data, 2011. Retrieved from <ftp://datadrivendetroit.org>
5. Data Driven Detroit Osborn Neighborhood Profile. Retrieved from <http://datadrivendetroit.org/projects/skillman>
6. Detroit Police Department. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimeStatistics.aspx>

OSBORN

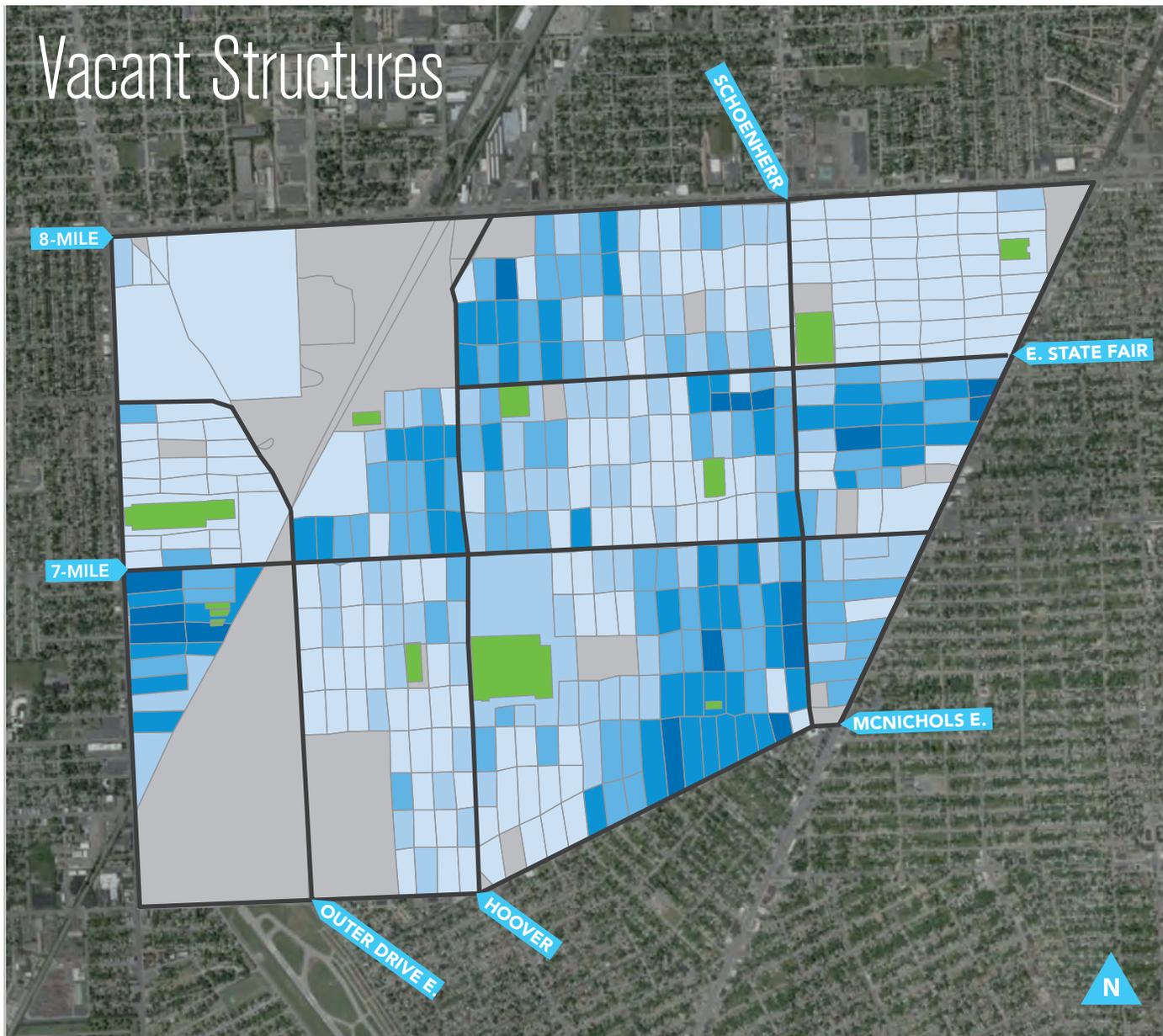
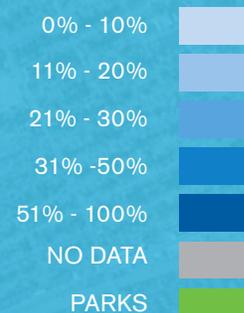


FIG. 4.19 VACANT STRUCTURES AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN A BLOCK, 2009

Osborn had a concentration of vacant structures south of the intersection of 7-Mile/Van Dyke, near State Fair/Hoover and 7-Mile/Schoenherr. However, the northeast and areas near Conner Creek Village and Mt. Olivet Cemetery had high occupancy rates.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



MAJOR ROADS

Vacant Lots

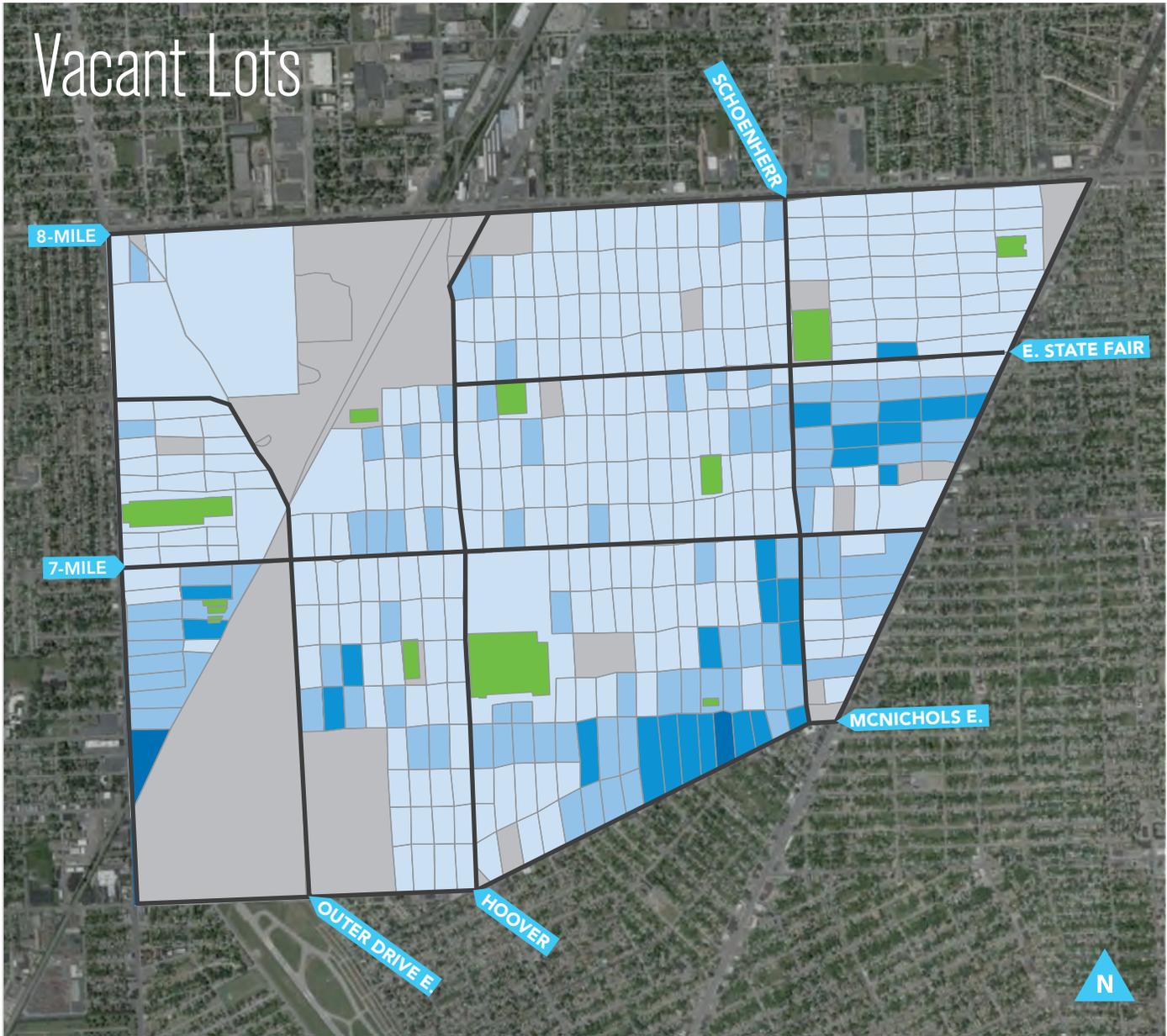


FIG. 4.20 VACANT LOTS AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL PARCELS IN A BLOCK, 2009

Osborn had a concentration of vacant lots north of East McNichols near Schoenherr and north of 7-Mile near Gratiot.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.

0 0.5 1 2 MILE

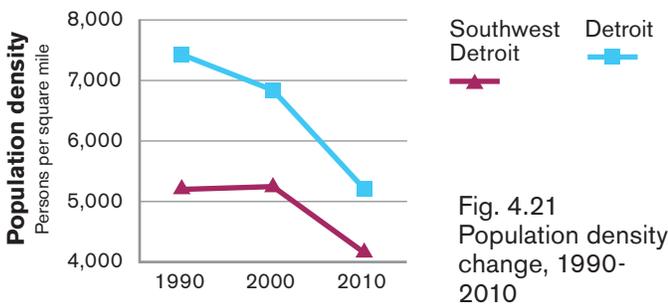
- 0% - 10%
- 11% - 25%
- 26% - 50%
- 51% - 100%
- NO DATA
- PARKS

MAJOR ROADS

SOUTHWEST DETROIT

The Neighborhood in Numbers

POPULATION¹



Southwest Detroit’s population declined from 52,991 in 2000 to 43,902 in 2010, a lower rate of decline than the city. Its population density was 4,099 people per square mile in 2010. Within the neighborhood, the population density of industrial tracts was only 722 people per square miles, compared to one tract with 14,871 people per square miles, the most dense tract in the six Good Neighborhoods.

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPANCY²

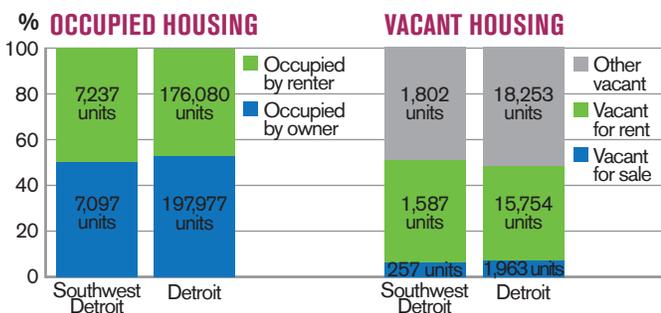


Fig. 4.22 Housing occupancy and vacancy, 2010

The housing occupancy rate in Southwest Detroit decreased from 90% in 2000 to 80% in 2010. In 2010, owner occupied housing made up roughly half of the occupied housing, and renter occupied made up the other half.

Of the vacant housing units, 43% were for rent, 7% were for sale, and 50% fell into the category of “other vacant.” These may be recent mortgage or tax foreclosures, housing units from which owners or renters walked away, or housing units where owners determined not to sell or rent.³

As of February 2012, 5% of properties in Southwest Detroit were in danger of tax foreclosure. These are properties that are at least two years delinquent on property taxes. Although forfeited to the Wayne County Treasurer, owners are able to redeem their properties before they are auctioned for sale in September or October of each year. (See Section 9) Southwest Detroit had the lowest tax foreclosure rate of the Good Neighborhoods.

BUILDING AGE⁴

72
YEARS

The average age of residential properties in Southwest Detroit is 72 years (built in 1940). Two-thirds of the housing units are 75 to 110 years old, compared to the citywide 60 to 90 years old.

CRIME RATES⁵

CRIMES PER 1000 RESIDENTS

13
VIOLENT

In Southwest Detroit, the violent crime rate was 13 per 1000 residents, and the property crime rate was 41 in 2010, much lower than the city averages of 19 and 53, respectively. Southwest Detroit had the lowest crime rate among the six Good Neighborhoods.

41
PROPERTY

Violent crimes include forcible rape, murder, aggravated assault, and robbery. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.⁶

Neighborhood Assets

Many institutions and organizations serve as neighborhood assets in Southwest Detroit. City departments manage some of these, such as the Kemeny Center and the Clemente Center (Detroit Recreation Department) and the Campbell and Bowen Branch Libraries (Detroit Public Library). Locally based organizations run others, including the All Saints Neighborhood Center, Latino Family Services and the People's Community Services Delray Neighborhood House, all of which provide a meeting place for the residents as well as family services and programs for children and youth, adults, and seniors. Looking after the physical health of the community are the Community Health and Social Services (CHASS) Southwest Center and Covenant Community Care, among others.

Southwest Detroit is home to many churches, including Holy Cross Church, Most Holy Redeemer Church, St. Anne de Detroit, Southwestern Church of God, St. Gabriel, and All Saints, which in addition serves as a community meeting space, food pantry, and soup kitchen.

The Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) is another key community asset. SDBA is a coalition of businesses and community interests working towards a stable, economically healthy Southwest Detroit. The SDBA supports various initiatives ranging from maintaining a greenway that links Detroit to Dearborn to operating the Center of Music and Performing Arts Southwest (COMPAS) on W. Vernor, which provides arts classes and training for youth and families. Numerous businesses located along W. Vernor make the street a vibrant commercial corridor.

Organizations and programs such as Young Nation, Latin Americans for Social Economic Development

(LA SED), the Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI), and the All Saints Neighborhood Center are assets. These groups provide mentoring and youth development programs, offering youth opportunities to get involved in the neighborhood. Although it is located outside of Southwest Detroit, the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation works with at-risk and gang-affiliated youth in the neighborhood. Covenant House Academy serves homeless and at-risk youth by providing shelter, food, clothing, counseling, life skills workshops, and other mentoring services, while Alternatives for Girls serves homeless and at-risk girls and young women.

Southwest Detroit also has many active community organizations including Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision (SDEV), the Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods Congress of Communities, and the Clark Park Coalition. These groups work to improve Southwest Detroit's public spaces by organizing volunteers for projects ranging from tire cleanups and mural painting to park improvements and green space maintenance.

Sources:

1. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
2. Census 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov>
3. Census Library. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/library/2011/2011_Griffin_03.pdf
4. Detroit Assessor's data, 2011. Retrieved from <ftp://datadrivendetroit.org>
5. Data Driven Detroit Northend Central Woodward Neighborhood Profile. Retrieved from <http://datadrivendetroit.org/projects/skillman>
6. Detroit Police Department. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimeStatistics.aspx>

SOUTHWEST DETROIT

Vacant Structures

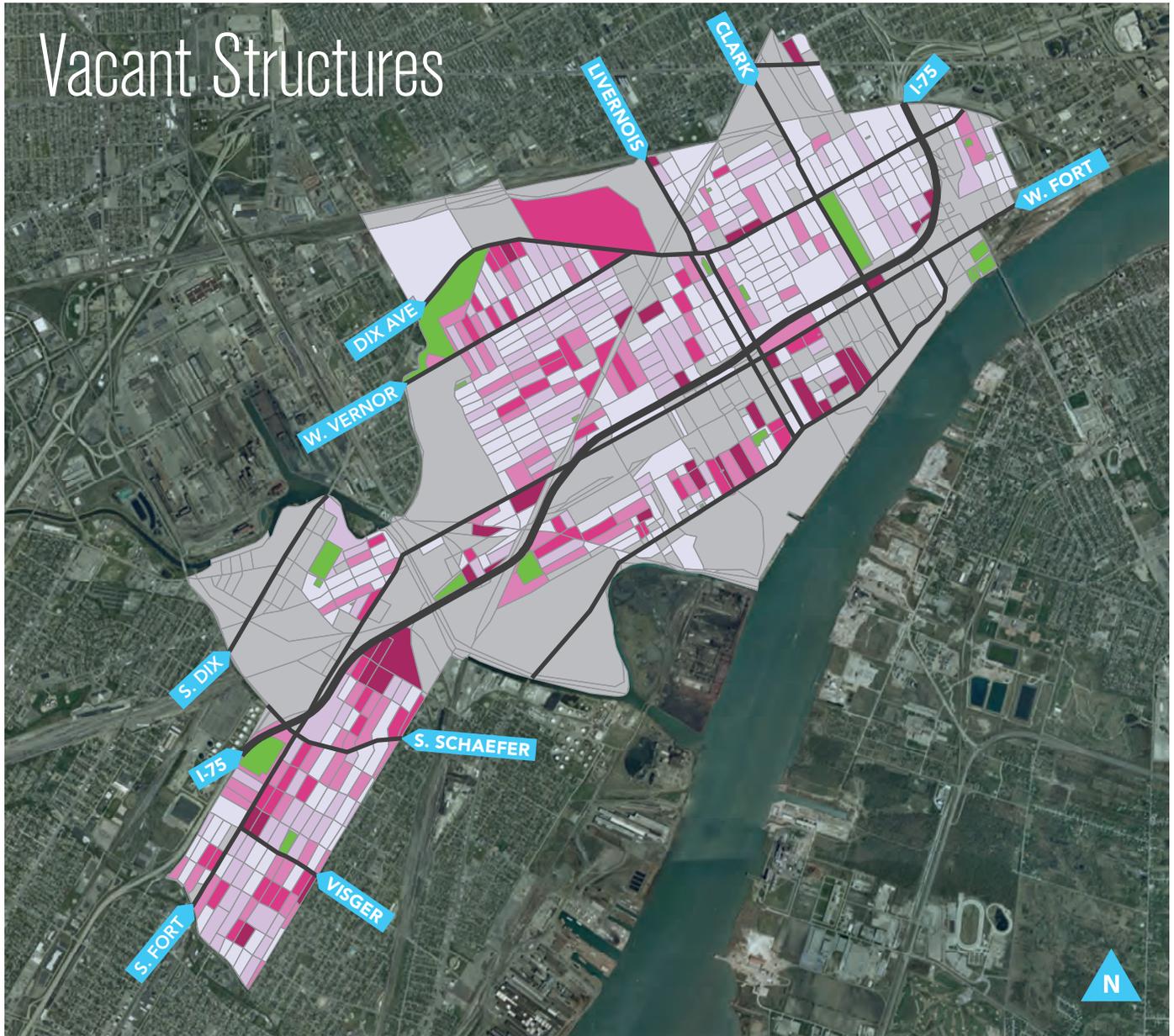


FIG. 4.23 VACANT STRUCTURES AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES IN A BLOCK, 2009

Southwest Detroit had a concentration of vacant structures south of I-75. Areas east of Livernois and north of I-75 had higher occupancy rates.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



MAJOR ROADS

Vacant Lots

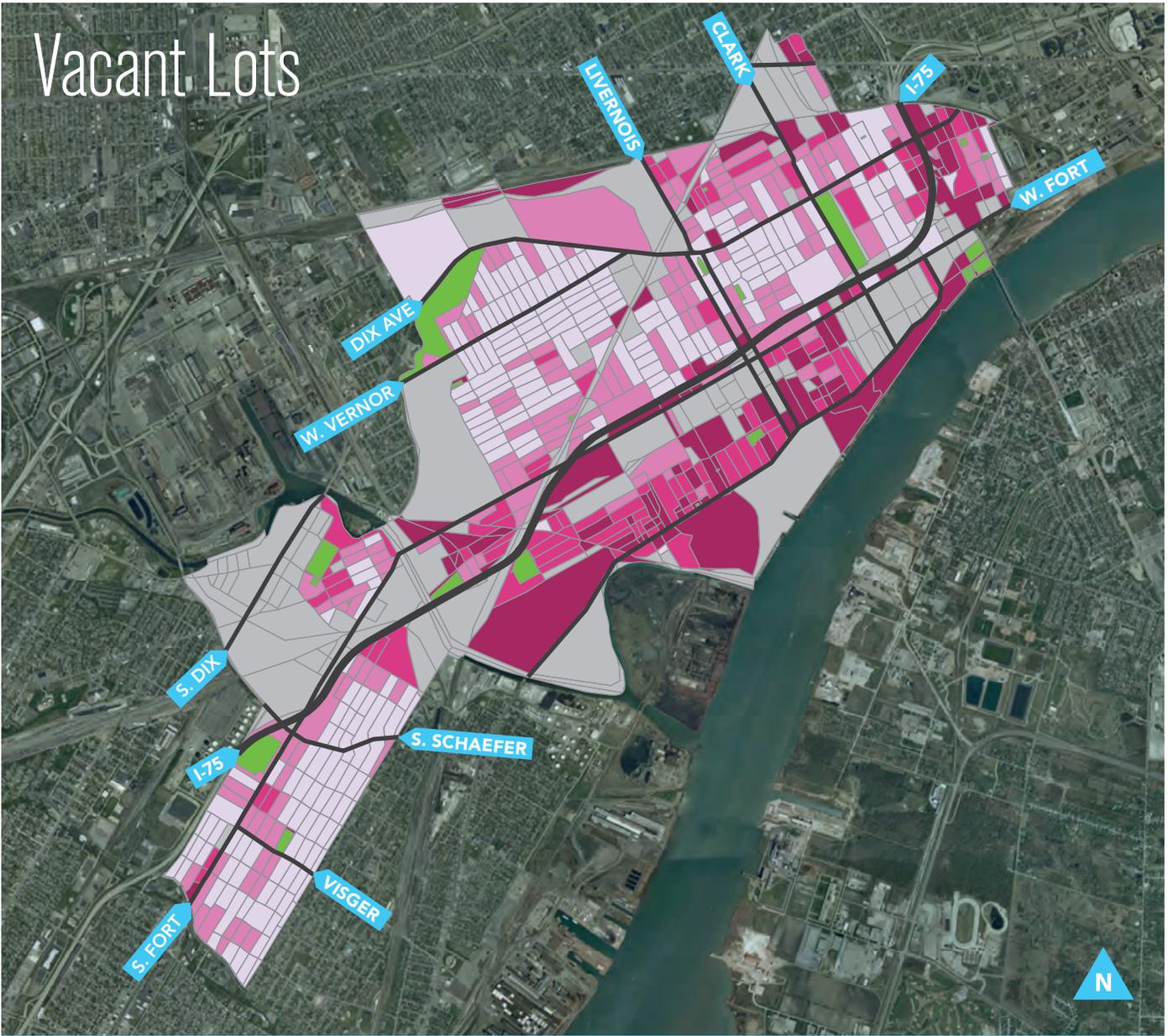
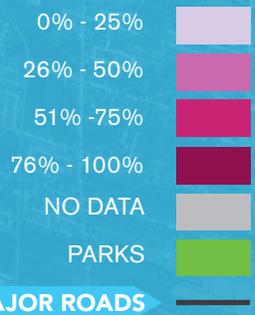


FIG. 4.24 VACANT LOTS AS A % OF ALL RESIDENTIAL PARCELS IN A BLOCK, 2009

Southwest Detroit had a concentration of vacant lots in the northeast around I-75 and Delray, southeast of Fort St.. The west and southwest portions had fewer vacant lots.

Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey. Data Driven Detroit, 2009.



SECTION 5: DETERMINING WHERE AND WHEN TO FOCUS EFFORTS



Fig. 5.0 Viaduct overpass on West Grand Boulevard in Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider

DETERMINING WHERE AND WHEN TO FOCUS EFFORTS

Introduction

Once residents have set goals (Section 3: Making a Plan to Reduce Blight) and assessed blight conditions (Section 4: Blight in the Good Neighborhoods), the next step in making a plan is prioritizing efforts. Prioritization involves decisions about where and when to focus efforts based on issues of greatest concern, availability of resources, and timing of resource availability. Improvements in the places that residents choose to focus efforts can have positive effects on residents, potential residents, and potential investors. If residents notice positive change and their sense of safety increases, their overall confidence in the future of their neighborhood may improve. Improved confidence in the future of the neighborhood can encourage residents to continue maintaining their homes and to increase their commitment to living in the neighborhood, thereby preventing vacancy.

The following strategies address the issues that the residents of the Good Neighborhoods have identified. Each strategy has the potential to produce positive spillover effects that not only affect the appearance of the neighborhood but can also affect others' confidence in the neighborhood's future and therefore their willingness to invest in their property.

These prioritization strategies include:

- Focusing efforts near areas that youth and children use
- Concentrating or dispersing efforts
- Focusing on less-blighted or more-blighted areas
- Focusing efforts near neighborhood assets
- Focusing efforts near highly visible areas

FOCUSING EFFORTS NEAR AREAS THAT YOUTH AND CHILDREN USE



Fig. 5.1 Playground in Southwest Detroit
Source: Julie Schneider

The safety and well-being of children and youth are high priorities for many residents of the Skillman Good Neighborhoods. By focusing on areas children frequent, residents can improve children's safety and security, and youth may become more involved in combating blight.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF RESIDENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON AREAS THAT YOUTH AND CHILDREN USE

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention safety, security, threats to children, or pride in the neighborhood, then this may be a practical strategy.

Advantages

- Increases children's safety
- Reduces blight that children see throughout their neighborhood
- Provides a productive and rewarding outlet for children and youth to work to reduce blight

Disadvantages

- Places frequented by children may be scattered in parks, schools, and pathways to stores throughout the neighborhood, making projects difficult to tackle all at once
- These areas may be located in heavily blighted areas, making noticeable reduction in blight more difficult with limited resources

CONCENTRATING OR DISPERSING EFFORTS

Another choice about a way to prioritize approaches is either to focus efforts on a certain area of the neighborhood or to spread efforts across different areas. The decision depends on residents' goals, the availability of resources, and the distribution of blight throughout the neighborhood or area of focus.

CONCENTRATING EFFORTS

When developing a plan to combat blight, residents may want to concentrate their efforts in one specific area. This area may have a large amount of blight or be an area that affects a large concentration

↓ Fig. 5.2 Example of an area where residents can concentrate efforts (a main street in Brightmoor)

Source: Julie Schneider

of residents. Concentrating efforts has greater effects on other people's decisions to repair and invest in their own properties. Residents will see improvements beyond the group's efforts to address blight since concentrating efforts often leads to many positive spillover effects.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF RESIDENTS SHOULD CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention desires such as having a big impact or focusing on a specific area of the neighborhood, then using a concentrated strategy may be appropriate.



Advantages

- Residents can see significant results in a focused area; these results will yield additional positive spillover effects for the surrounding area
- Residents complete large projects one at a time

Disadvantages

- Focuses on one area at a time; conditions may deteriorate in other areas before residents get to them

DISPERSING EFFORTS

Residents experience blight differently. Some may want to focus on dealing with blight in various areas of the neighborhood or areas near their homes. For example, residents could select a specific day to work on several different vacant lots throughout the neighborhood.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF THE RESIDENTS SHOULD DISPERSE EFFORTS

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention working on blight-related issues dispersed throughout the neighborhood (vacant houses, vacant lots, graffiti, illegal dumping) or working on many small projects, then using a dispersed strategy may be a viable option for that neighborhood.

Advantages

- Allows residents to tackle several spots at once
- Improves the safety of residents living next to blighted areas

Disadvantages

- Residents may not see visible results quickly
- Coordination among residents may be more difficult.
- Limited resources may hinder the ability to address blight in many areas of the neighborhood

FOCUSING ON LESS BLIGHTED OR MORE BLIGHTED AREAS

LESS BLIGHTED AREAS

Preservation of areas minimally affected by blight can help prevent blight from spreading to intact areas. In neighborhoods with limited resources and low resident participation, a focus on areas with less blight may be the most effective approach.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF RESIDENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON LESS BLIGHTED AREAS

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention producing quick results, focusing on areas with less blight, or preventing further blight in minimally blighted areas, then focusing on less blighted areas may be a practical strategy.

Advantages

- Likely to prompt greater resident participation in projects
- May improve the stability of a neighborhood
- Potential to reduce most or all blight from an area
- Greatest potential to reduce blight with smaller projects

Disadvantages

- Can ignore areas with the greatest need

Fig. 5.3 Example of a minimally blighted area of a neighborhood

Source: Julie Schneider



MORE BLIGHTED AREAS

Residents focusing on heavily blighted areas can revive neglected areas of a neighborhood. Residents can focus on areas with more blight when resource and volunteer availability is high.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF RESIDENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON MORE BLIGHTED AREAS

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention focusing on areas with a large amount of blight, areas with several types of blight, or areas that pose safety threats, then this may be a practical strategy.

Advantages

- Addresses areas with the greatest need
- Efforts may be more noticeable quickly
- May spur new activity in the area or get new residents engaged

Disadvantages

- May require long-term efforts and plans
- May have low resident participation in highly vacant areas
- May be difficult to decide where to begin since multiple issues tend to exist in more blighted areas

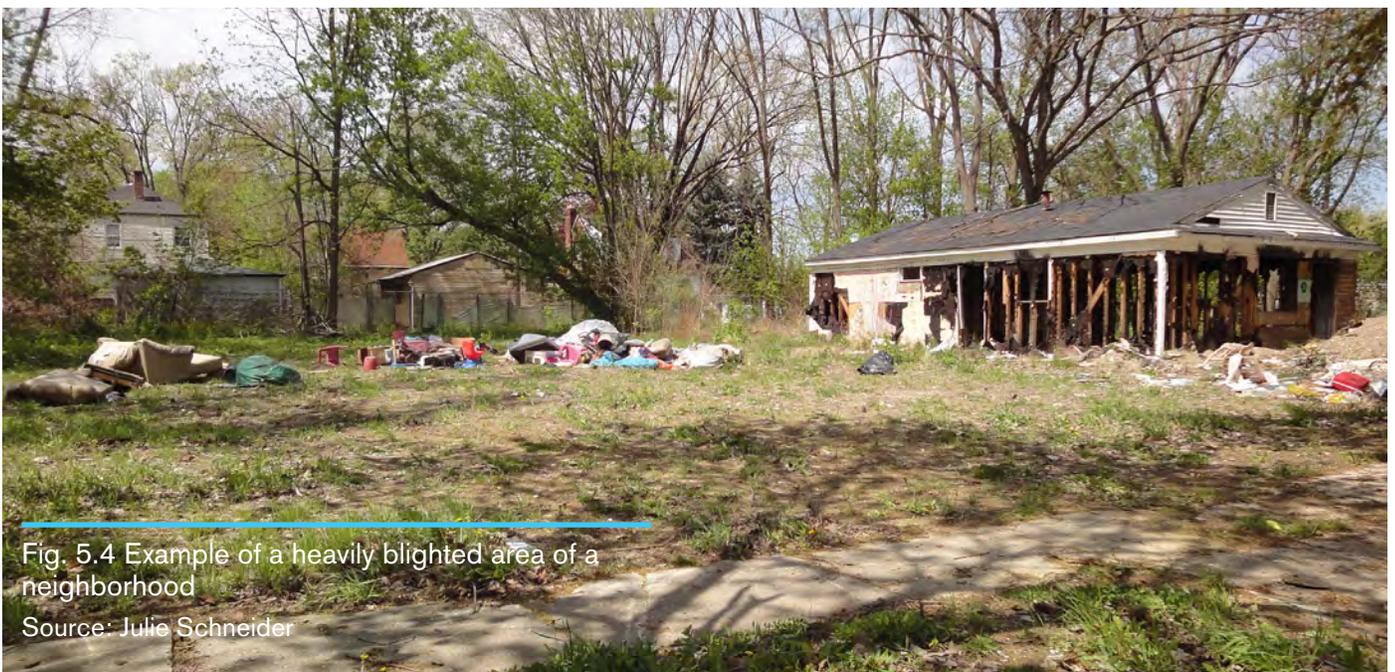


Fig. 5.4 Example of a heavily blighted area of a neighborhood

Source: Julie Schneider

FOCUSING EFFORTS NEAR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

Focusing blight-reduction work near assets is another way to prioritize efforts. Neighbors may choose this approach because assets add value to an area and may need protection from blight. Assets may include schools, parks, community centers, libraries, places of worship, retail centers, public transportation routes, and community gardens. Assets can also include people and organizations with a strong neighborhood presence, areas where block clubs and residents are active, or areas near service agencies.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF RESIDENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON AREAS NEAR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide

survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention topics such as focusing on areas near neighborhood assets such as parks, schools, places of worship, or areas with an active group of neighbors, then focusing efforts near neighborhood assets may be a suitable strategy.

Advantages

- Improves areas frequented by residents
- May create visible results quickly

Disadvantages

- Residents may want to focus on their individual areas of concern, which may not be near existing assets



Fig. 5.5 Don Bosco Hall, an example of a neighborhood asset in Cody Rouge

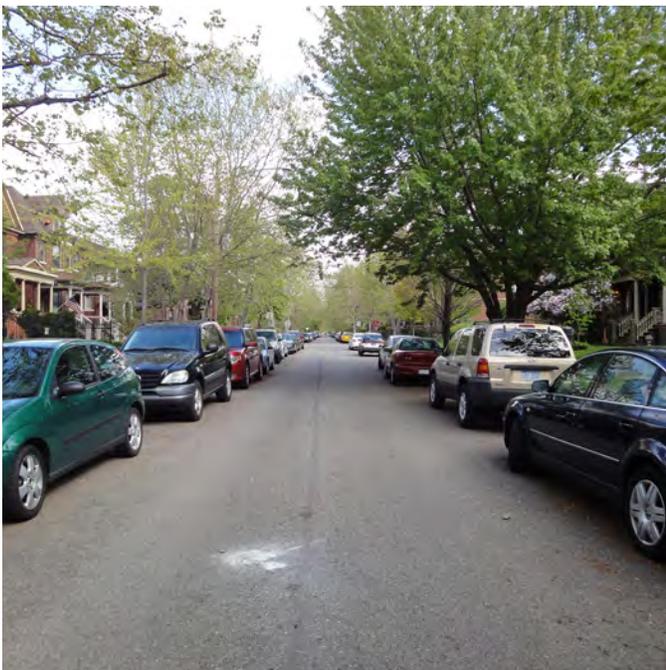
Source: Julie Schneider

FOCUSING EFFORTS NEAR HIGHLY VISIBLE AREAS

These are areas that a neighborhood resident sees most often and that a visitor sees first when entering the neighborhood. Typical high visibility areas include heavily trafficked residential streets, paths to schools and other neighborhood assets, neighborhood block entries, and bus routes.

HOW TO DETERMINE IF RESIDENTS SHOULD FOCUS EFFORTS ON HIGHLY VISIBLE AREAS

During community gatherings (for instance, block club meetings) or through a neighborhood-wide survey, residents can identify which issues related to blight concern them the most. If residents mention neighborhood image, attracting new businesses and residents, or getting citywide attention and exposure, then this may be a useful strategy.



Advantages

- Improves perception of the neighborhood
- Can spur confidence in the neighborhood's future and encourage property investment

Disadvantages

- This approach may neglect the areas that children frequent
- Residents may have difficulty determining which highly visible area to focus on if many exist
- The most visible areas may not have residential properties
- The most visible areas may serve those who do not live in the neighborhood more than neighborhood residents

← Fig. 5.6 Example of a highly visible area within a neighborhood

Source: Julie Schneider

WHEN TO UNDERTAKE EFFORTS

In addition to thinking about where to focus efforts, residents should determine when to undertake different types of activities in another step in prioritizing blight-reduction activities. Resource and volunteer availability can determine when a project can occur. Projects that require less resources and participation are ideal during times when neighborhoods lack resources and active resident volunteers. Larger projects tend to demand more resources, resident participation, and, possibly, assistance from outside volunteer groups. Therefore, residents often must wait until they can secure these elements before implementing such large-scale projects.

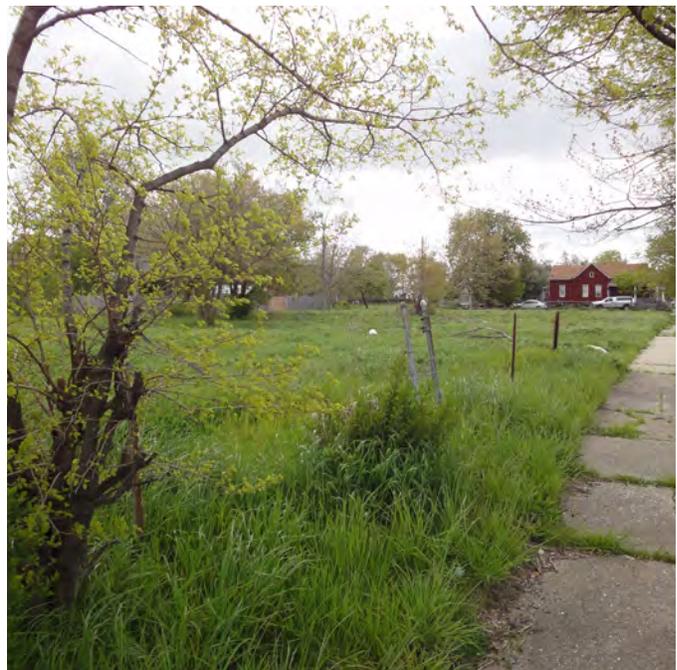
Once residents determine where and when to focus their efforts, they can then identify short- and long-term actions for reducing blight in accordance with their goals and prioritization strategies. Residents can begin with specific blight-reduction activities that would provide “quick win” results and generate visible change in the neighborhood. For example, if residents determine they would like to board up vacant structures near a park that children use, they may choose to start with the house across the street from the park. Choosing the house across the street will produce visible results and immediately improve the safety of children who play in the park.

Since residents may want to board up additional vacant homes close to the park, they can then make a longer term plan to secure these homes. The longer term plan could include boarding houses closest to the park first and then spreading out along routes that

children use to get to the park. The long-term plan will help increase the size of a safe zone around the park. Starting with the “quick win” home across the street may also generate interest from other residents who may join subsequent projects.

Fig. 5.7 Example of a poorly maintained vacant lot

Source: Julie Schneider



SECTION 6: INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS



Fig. 6.0 Residents working together to create a plan to reduce blight

Source: Margaret Dewar

SUCCESS STORIES

Ewald “Dreams of Hope” Circle Block Club in Northend Central

In order to increase resident participation, Focus: HOPE, located in the Northend Central Woodward neighborhood, created an incentive program to increase the number of block clubs. If a group of residents formed a block club by hosting a meet-'n'-greet to register their group, then Focus: HOPE would provide the supplies and volunteers for a blight-reduction project. Through this process, Focus: HOPE registered six groups. One of the

block clubs – Ewald “Dreams of Hope” Circle Block Club – is very active. Linda Laird (pictured) is the block captain, and she continues to help grow the organization by networking at Focus: HOPE events.¹

Fig. 6.1 Linda Laird of Ewald “Dreams of Hope” Circle Block Club.

Source: Stephanie Johnson-Cobb



Urban Neighborhood Initiatives in Southwest Detroit



A few years ago, staff of Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI), a Southwest Detroit non-profit focused on improving neighborhoods in the Springwells Village area, were cleaning up a vacant lot. A neighbor of the lot, Lenny Atkins, was curious about what UNI was doing so he came outside to investigate. Excited by the work, he helped by keeping watch over the lot to ensure others did not disrupt UNI's progress when the group was not there. He also stored UNI's equipment in his garage and helped to clean the lot. Now Mr. Atkins is UNI's facilities manager, and UNI recognized his and others' contributions at the organization's Heroes of the Neighborhood event. In addition to honoring individual commitments to improving the

Fig. 6.2 Neighborhood cleanup in Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider

neighborhood, this annual event raises funds for future blight-reduction efforts. This success story highlights how leading by example can encourage others to join in the neighborhood action.²

SUCCESS STORIES

Christmas Cookies in Brightmoor

When Riet Schumack moved to the Brightmoor neighborhood, she wanted to increase resident participation within the neighborhood, but did not yet know many of her neighbors. To meet people and encourage participation in neighborhood activities, Riet went door-to-door, passing out Christmas cookies. During the first year, eight out of ten people did not open their doors. During the second year, about half of the people opened their doors. Ever persistent, Riet passed out cookies a third year, and eight out of ten people opened their doors. Now Riet and her neighbors pass out 60 plates of cookies a year. Last year, passing out cookies lasted until well after dark because so many people wanted to talk with Riet. This is especially remarkable considering that, according to Riet, “Three years ago, nobody would have ever opened a door after dark.” When

asked about her success, Riet said, “It’s all about the snowball effect of the relationships. You work with the person and make them feel like there is something they can change. You ask them for help and give them some responsibility, you empower them, and before you know it, they take responsibility, and they reach out to their neighbors. Most people have enough resources, you just have to let them know that they have them and prove it to them – you can do this.”³

Effective blight-reduction efforts must involve many different people. An individual has limited power, skills, and resources, but by working together, neighbors have the capacity to make a significant difference. The following community engagement techniques offer strategies to encourage and sustain residents’ participation.



Fig. 6.3 Youth garden in Brightmoor
Source: Julie Schneider

INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS

Neighborhood and Individual Benefits of Volunteering

The previous sections detailed steps in creating a plan including first creating goals, followed by assessing blight conditions, and next determining where and when to focus efforts. However, a successful plan requires strong participation from neighborhood residents. Strong resident participation makes plans and strategies more likely to succeed. This section offers suggestions for building and maintaining resident participation in neighborhood blight-reduction projects, with a section on youth engagement.

NEIGHBORHOOD BENEFITS OF RESIDENTS' INVOLVEMENT

Blight-reduction efforts often rely on watchful residents for implementation and maintenance. Therefore, high neighborhood involvement can have a positive impact on the effectiveness and longevity of an action.

- **Using resident knowledge of the neighborhood** – Residents know their neighborhoods better than someone from outside the area. Therefore, they are at an advantage in deciding where and how to focus blight reduction. For example, they may quickly determine where the most visible or dangerous types of blight exist.
- **Increasing individual responsibility for the neighborhood** – When residents participate in blight-reduction efforts, they take more responsibility for the appearance of the neighborhood. A person who helps to clean a lot is more likely to continue maintaining that lot.⁴
- **Building relationships within the neighborhood** – When participating in blight-

reduction efforts, neighbors work together and get to know one another. Building these relationships makes the neighborhood a more pleasant place to live and can bolster motivation for future events.

INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

In addition to the overall neighborhood, individual residents can benefit from volunteering in blight-reduction efforts. Through volunteer efforts, residents can gain valuable skills as well as take



Fig. 6.4 Georgia Street Community Garden garlic plants

Source: Julie Schneider

INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS

Involving New Volunteers

part in improving the appearance and safety of the neighborhood.

- **Affecting positive change within the neighborhood** – Contributing to blight-reduction efforts is a way to care for the neighborhood. Caring residents can deter crime and create a more desirable neighborhood for current and potential residents. While setting out to reduce blight in an entire neighborhood may seem overwhelming,

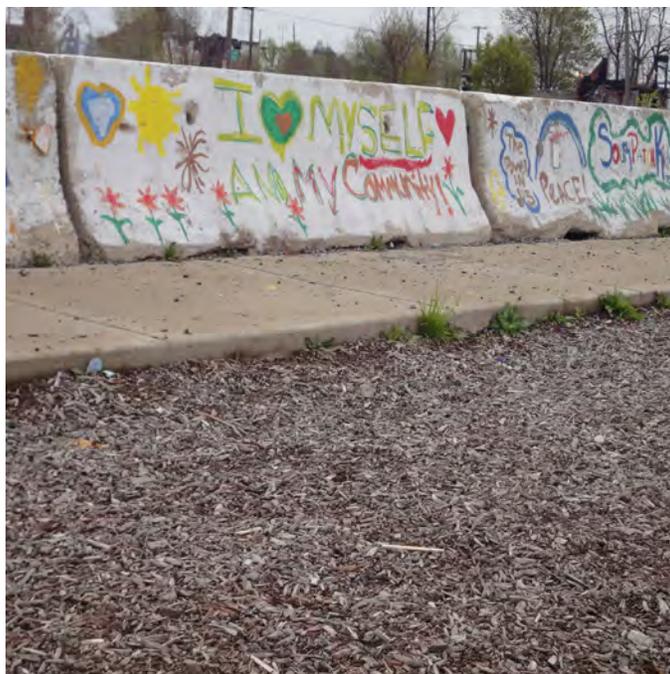


Fig. 6.5 Neighborhood mural in Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider



everyone can take small steps to help alleviate the problem.

- **Gaining skills and experience through neighborhood activities** – By participating in blight-reduction efforts, residents gain skills and experience that could prove useful not only with ongoing blight-reduction activities but also with future employment. For example, training someone to use a power washer might encourage him or her to help wash off graffiti in the future.

INVOLVING NEW VOLUNTEERS

New volunteers increase the strength of neighbors' actions by bringing additional skills and energy to continue blight-reduction activities.

- **Identifying potential volunteers** – Potential participants are all around the neighborhood. Anyone who lives or works in the neighborhood has an interest in how well that neighborhood is doing. Potential volunteers could include residents on the block, the owner of a local store, members of a religious congregation, or people associated with a community center or agency.
- **Approaching potential volunteers** - Each person participates for different reasons. A business owner has different reasons for reducing blight than someone with children. Before approaching potential volunteers, think about their priorities, as well as how they might contribute to the blight-reduction activity. People will be more likely to participate if they feel a connection to the neighborhood and its cleanup effort. For some, this may mean building a relationship with clean-up organizers before participating in a clean-up activity.

Involving New Volunteers

- **Leading by example** – People are curious about what happens in their neighborhood. If a cleanup effort occurs in a vacant lot across the street, neighbors may stop by to learn more and, in some cases, participate.
- **Knocking door-to-door** – Because residential areas in less blighted areas have numerous occupied homes, knocking door-to-door is a good way to find new participants.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Volunteer sign-up sheet
- o Information about organization or event (flier, business card)
- **Hosting a social event** – Hosting a social event in the neighborhood is a good way to meet new people and spread the word about blight-reduction efforts. Some examples of possible social events are a block party or a 3-on-3 basketball tournament.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Information about organization or event (flier, business card)
- o Volunteer sign-up sheet
- o Entertainment (music, art, games)
- o Food and drinks
- **Connecting with neighborhood institutions** – Connecting with an organization or business that residents trust can increase the credibility of the neighborhood blight-reduction strategy. The institutions will vary from place to place but

could include schools, popular restaurants, parks, community centers, and places of worship.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Information about organization or event (flier, business card)
- o Name of potential contact in organization or business

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Particularly when working with new volunteers, providing an orientation before an event can help increase site safety and communicate important information. A designated leader could explain the tasks, divide responsibilities, and show how to use the necessary tools. For example, if a project involves painting, the leader will need to clarify which surfaces need painting, what color of paint to use, where to find materials, and who to contact with questions.

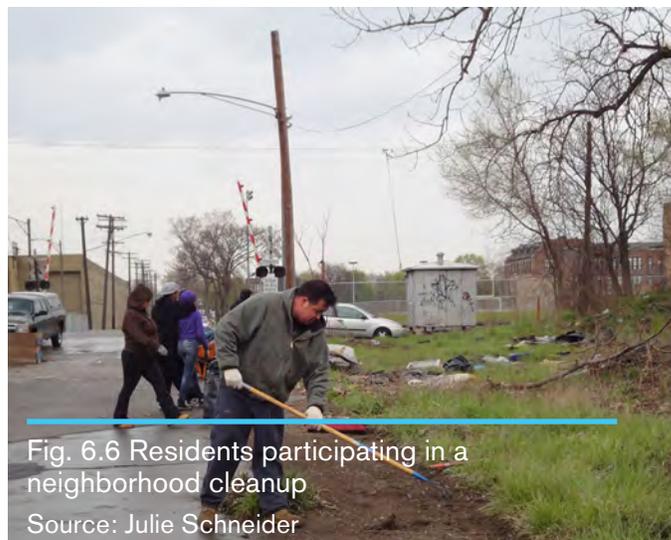


Fig. 6.6 Residents participating in a neighborhood cleanup
Source: Julie Schneider

INVOLVING THE NEIGHBORS

Recruiting Participants for a Specific Project

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS FOR A SPECIFIC PROJECT

To make blight-reduction efforts successful, many activities require volunteers. Some strategies for increasing the number of participants for an event include:

- **Providing varying levels of involvement** – Sometimes people do not participate because they think the time commitment is too large. To include these individuals, the effort should offer activities that take less time. For example, someone may not be able to attend a day long cleanup, but he or she could notify nearby residents and business owners of the event.
- **Matching residents' strengths with neighborhood needs** – Appropriately matching peoples' time and resources with neighborhood needs results in more efficient and productive actions. People are also more likely to participate if they can contribute in a way that uses their knowledge, interests, or resources. For example, someone may have access to a lawn mower but not want to talk with new people and therefore may be better suited to cleaning a lot rather than organizing the cleanup event. Encouraging a natural leader to take on more responsibility is another way to match skills with needs.
- **Giving volunteers a specific responsibility** – Clearly outlining tasks and expectations can motivate volunteers to follow through on their commitments. At Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision (SDEV), residents participating in the Clean Neighborhoods Initiative sign a pledge to adopt and care for a specific area, and SDEV found that volunteers who

signed the pledge were more likely to follow through on their commitment.⁵



Fig. 6.7 Joyce Dallas of Southwest Detroit volunteering in Scarcyny Garden

Source: Julie Schneider

- **Making the work interesting and fun** – While some blight-reduction activities are not fun, including entertaining activities in the process can help. For example, playing music or having lunch together can make the process of cleaning a vacant lot more interesting. A celebration, such as a dinner or party, at the end of a cleanup event provides a way for people to congratulate one another and build relationships.

Keeping Residents Involved

KEEPING RESIDENTS INVOLVED

People will continue participating in blight-reduction efforts if they feel their time is well spent and their accomplishments acknowledged. Below are some techniques for facilitating this process.

- **Set realistic goals** – If residents set reachable goals, the action will prove its success and build momentum for future blight-reduction efforts.⁶
- **Recognize resident contribution** – When an individual contributes her time or resources, be sure to acknowledge what that person has done. Recognition can come in the form of a thank-you card, a thanks in a local newsletter, or a ceremony or event that celebrates all participants.
- **Celebrate small victories** – Sometimes reaching the goal will take several months or years, so participants may have difficulty staying motivated. Particularly for long-term strategies, celebrating small victories can help keep people engaged.
- **Build on all connections** – Even if someone has participated only minimally during previous events, residents can try to learn more about specific that person's specific challenges as well as ways he or she might want to get more involved.
- **Rotate leadership responsibility** – If someone knows a chance exists to become a leader, then that person may accept more responsibility. Each person also has a different leadership style, which can help energize efforts and encourage a variety of blight-reduction strategies.
- **Provide varying levels of involvement** – Sometimes, people only want minimal involvement in

blight-reduction efforts, and neighborhood activities should provide them with that opportunity. While organizers often want people to be heavily involved, giving them an all-or-nothing choice can result in their doing nothing rather than something small.



Fig. 6.8 Neighborhood mural

Source: Julie Schneider



SUCCESS STORIES

Community YouthMapping in Southwest Detroit

Directed by Southwest Solutions, the Community YouthMapping was a project where Terry Whitfield along with Data Driven Detroit worked with youth to identify and map assets in the Southwest Good Neighborhood (see Figure 6.9). The project required the youth to survey business owners, government agencies, churches, non-profits, and schools in hopes to develop relationships that could lead to scholarships, internships, employment, or community service opportunities.

“Community YouthMapping enables youth to learn about their community in great detail. By walking the neighborhood, and gathering and reviewing data, youth will not only see opportunities they didn’t know about, but will also learn about gaps in services. The next step is for them to ask: What can be done about this? In this way, they are empowered to become informed advocates for change.”

- Terry Whitfield, Southwest Solutions Youth Coordinator⁷



↑ Fig. 6.9 Data Driven Detroit teaching youth GIS technology

Source: Terry Whitfield

Youth Neighborhood Assessment in Cody Rouge

In Cody Rouge, Stahelin Block Club President Andrea Jackson assembled a group of youth to mark the locations and addresses of vacant homes in their neighborhood. Over a two-day period, Jackson and her team of seven youth walked from Plymouth to Ford Road and from Southfield to Evergreen. Locating more than 250 vacant homes in the neighborhood, the youth presented their findings to City Council and traveled to the state capitol to give the information to State Representative Harvey Santana. This experience exposed them to the state government and provided them with an opportunity to express their concerns for their neighborhood to a

state representative.

“They just need strong leadership. It’s making sure the youth are paired with the right leader. You can’t go wrong.”

-Andrea Jackson, Cody Rouge Resident and Stahelin Block Club President⁸

↓ Fig. 6.10 Example of a vacant house in Cody Rouge

Source: Julie Schneider



SUCCESS STORIES

Artwork on Vacant Homes in Brightmoor

In Brightmoor, resident Riet Schumack reached out to youth who wanted to help with blight cleanup. She and Katharina Walsh worked with youth to board up vacant homes and gathered input from the residents in neighboring homes on what art designs they preferred on the houses. Painting art on the neglected properties sparked a noticeable decrease in dumping.

“When you board up a house, it’s just a boarded up house. It’s still blight.... the next step is to make a cohesive art piece of the whole house. To just look at

a house as a medium of art- now it's a whole different feel. Now you don't have this boarded up house. You have an art piece in your neighborhood.”

- Riet Schumack, Brightmoor Resident⁹

Fig. 6.11 Vacant house in Brightmoor with artwork
Source: Raquel Obumba



Woodworkers in Brightmoor

The students of Detroit Community School practice a concept that teacher Bart Eddy refers to as “curbside economics and entrepreneurship.” Using polyurethane, stencils, chisels, clamps, wood stain, mallets, and paint, students handcrafted address and garden signs and donated them to Brightmoor residents. Their work evolved into a lucrative business, and the Brightmoor Woodworkers began selling their handcrafted, painted signs to local businesses and organizations including the Brightmoor Alliance, the *Michigan Citizen* newspaper, the Massachusetts Avenue Improvement Association, and the Ford Motor Fund.

“You give them [young people] an opportunity, thread to move on, and they’re going to move on it. It takes time to get there...because most of them don’t have the work ethic yet. They have no experience, none whatsoever. So it requires a lot of patience, a lot of prodding, a lot of pushing, and a lot of working together.”

Bart Eddy, Detroit Community Schools¹⁰



↑ Fig. 6.12 Brightmoor Woodworkers with one of their handcrafted signs

Source: Bart Eddy

SUCCESS STORIES

Youth Garden in Brightmoor



Fig. 6.13 Brightmoor Gardens
Source: Michigan Land Study Team



Mark and Riet Schumack created the Brightmoor Youth Garden in 2006 for youth aged 9 to 18. At Brightmoor Youth Garden, children can learn the value of gardening, nutrition, teamwork, and earning money for their hard work. Each summer, 12 to 25 youth learn how to weed, build garden beds, plant, water, and harvest vegetables, as well as how to store vegetables properly. In 2010, the Brightmoor Youth Garden workers grew over 25 varieties of herbs and vegetables totaling over 1,500 pounds of produce. The youth sold the produce at the Northwest Detroit Farmers' Market and to local restaurants for an estimated \$3,000 in profits, which went to the kids. Because they had gained experience from working with the garden, several youth earned summer jobs at City Connect, Greening of Detroit, and Trinity CDC.¹¹

GETTING YOUTH INVOLVED

Engaging young people in blight cleanup activities presents challenges such as attracting youth and keeping youth involved. However, residents can overcome these obstacles by involving youth in activities that will help them to understand the importance of keeping their neighborhoods clean and safe. The following activities are a few examples of blight-reduction activities that can help engage the young people in the neighborhood.

ORGANIZING TRASH PICK-UPS

Combating blight may begin with easy projects that require little to no money. Organizing biweekly or monthly neighborhood walks with youth to pick up litter decreases the amount of trash buildup and affects the behavior of the young people, who tend to avoid littering in areas they helped to clean.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Small garbage bags (for trash pickup)
- o Gloves

NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Through resident surveys, youth learn how the people in their neighborhood identify blight and where they feel the areas of the greatest concern are located. Moreover, neighborhood surveys allow youth to identify resources in their neighborhood that benefit all residents and to identify possible internship or employment opportunities. In creating a survey, the youth can decide what questions they would like to include and how to conduct the survey (for instance, by phone, in-person, or by mail). Surveys of residents

have several advantages. Youth gather different perspectives on issues related to blight, explore neighborhood resources, and meet and interact with neighborhood residents and business owners who are potential participants in neighborhood blight-reduction activities.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Survey created by youth
- o Clipboards
- o Paper
- o Pen/pencil



Fig. 6.14 Youth helping with trash and debris cleanup in Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider



GETTING YOUTH INVOLVED

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENT

Neighborhood assessments work best in moderately to heavily blighted neighborhoods. Youth assess the neighborhood to locate areas with large amounts of graffiti, vacant homes and lots, trash buildup, or abandoned cars. The youth will need pens/pencils, clipboards, and possibly cameras to document locations of blight on a map and to use the information to create a database of vacant homes. Neighborhood assessments help familiarize youth with their neighborhood and pinpoint locations of blight to report to city or state officials.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Printed map of neighborhood
- o Clipboard
- o Paper
- o Pen or pencil
- o Camera (Optional)

ART AS A MEANS TO COMBAT BLIGHT

Art engages youth because it is fun and allows them to express their creativity. Painting doors and adding artwork to vacant houses, crafting art installations for vacant lots, or covering graffiti with large, colorful murals teaches younger people an artistic way to tackle blight. In moderately and heavily blighted neighborhoods with vacant homes, trash buildup, or graffiti, art can be a way to discourage others from dumping or vandalizing the neighborhood.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Paint
- o Paintbrushes
- o Wood planks
- o Paint trays

Fig. 6.15 Child working to create public art in Brightmoor



Source: Citizen Effect Website - Empty Lot Cleanup and Public Art project page



LOT BEAUTIFICATION

Transforming vacant lots into gardens or pocket parks is a way to involve youth and has numerous additional benefits. It not only encourages responsibility and entrepreneurship (through selling the produce from gardens, for instance) but also increases access to healthy, locally grown produce. Furthermore, when youth turn an overgrown vacant lot into something beautiful that all residents can enjoy, blight decreases in the neighborhood.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Gloves
- o Paper leaf bags
- o Gardening supplies (such as small shovels and spades)
- o Seeds for planting

PHOTO EXPLORATION

Photography is another tool for young people to document blight issues and create a visual database of the neighborhood. They can compile the photographs into an album accessible to all residents or host a photo exhibition at a local church, school, or recreation center so residents can view the youth's perspective on blight in the neighborhood and see options for prioritizing cleanup.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Printed map of neighborhood
- o Disposable cameras
- o Batteries (if using digital cameras)



Fig. 6.16 Youth garden in Brightmoor
Source: Neighbors Building Brightmoor



GETTING YOUTH INVOLVED

RECRUITING YOUTH FOR A SPECIFIC PROJECT/ACTION

- **Involving children of potential participants-** When speaking with potential participants about getting involved, residents can discuss their children's participation, too, and explain the importance of youth involvement and the benefits kids receive from volunteering.
- **Contacting schools-** Residents can contact school principals and counselors to find youth interested in completing the community service hours they need for graduation. Detroit Public Schools require at least 200 hours of community service hours for graduation. Residents may use this as a means to present blight cleanup as a way for students to earn community service hours and reduce blight in Detroit neighborhoods.
- **Visiting places frequented by youth-** Most neighborhoods have places such as recreational centers that youth frequent. Residents can go to these facilities and speak with youth about getting involved and what they can gain from their involvement. Additionally, residents can present the work as a fun opportunity, one that can help them to develop skills and introduce them to other like-minded youth.



Fig. 6.17 Community garden in Brightmoor
Source: Michigan Land Study Team



KEEPING YOUTH INVOLVED

Residents can develop ways to keep youth participating over the longer term. Creating paid employment and entrepreneurial opportunities are two ways residents can urge youth to participate.

- **Making blight cleanup an employment opportunity-** Changing blight cleanups into employment opportunities is one way to attract teenagers. In neighborhoods with limited job opportunities or no transportation to jobs outside the neighborhood, blight cleanup gives youth the opportunity to earn their own income, learn

responsibility, and improve their environment. Skillman is a potential resource for funding employment activities because it offers grants for programs or projects that involve youth. (See Section 8: Blight-Reduction Resources.)

- **Creating entrepreneurial opportunities for youth involvement-** Blight cleanup is also an entrepreneurial opportunity. For example, youth maintaining a garden can earn income by selling the produce to local grocery stores or neighborhood residents. Neighbors can develop creative ways where youth can earn money and make a positive impact in their neighborhood. Such opportunities help build and shape entrepreneurial skills and lay the groundwork for youth beginning their own businesses in the future.

- **Awarding prizes-** After successfully completing a blight-reduction activity, residents can reward young people with treats such as a pizza party or a trip to the movies. Residents can also reward outstanding work by giving out gift certificates and medals or by acknowledging youth in the local newsletter or other publications. By establishing a reward system, residents create a sense of accomplishment and encourage continued youth involvement.

- **Designating leadership responsibility-** Developing leadership positions among youth is a way for them to learn leadership skills and responsibility. Leadership allows youth to control their activities instead of giving adults the final say. Residents can emphasize to young people that they can add skills to their resumes, job applications, and college applications by highlighting their involvement and leadership in their neighborhood.

By encouraging strong resident participation, neighbors can successfully implement a plan that keeps people enthusiastic about improving their neighborhood's appearance in the both the short- and long-term. Additionally, resident participation is necessary in tackling blight issues in a given neighborhood, especially when the problem is too large to tackle alone. The following section explores several of the blight issues that concerned Skillman Good Neighborhood residents the most. They include vacant lots; vacant structures; poorly maintained, occupied houses; dumping; graffiti; abandoned cars; and illegal signs.

Sources:

1. Stephanie Johnson-Cobb, Personal Interview, 24 Mar. 2012.
2. Christine Bell, Personal Interview, 12 Feb. 2012.
3. Riet Schumack, Personal Interview, 18 Feb. 2012.
4. Kathy Stott, Personal Interview, 9 Mar. 2012.
5. Ibid.
6. Tom Wolff, "Quick Tips: Principles for Coalition Success." Creating and Maintaining a Coalition or Partnership. *The Community Toolbox*, n.d. http://ctb.ku.edu/en/dothework/tools_tk_content_page_140.aspx. 11 Mar. 2012.
7. Terry Whitfield, Personal Interview, 20 Feb. 2012.
8. Andrea Jackson, Personal Interview, 23 Feb. 2012.
9. Riet Schumack, Personal Interview, 18 Feb. 2012.
10. Bart Eddy, Personal Interview, 13. Mar. 2012.
11. "Brightmoor Youth Garden," Annual Report, 2010.

SECTION 7: ISSUES AND ACTIONS FOR REDUCING BLIGHT

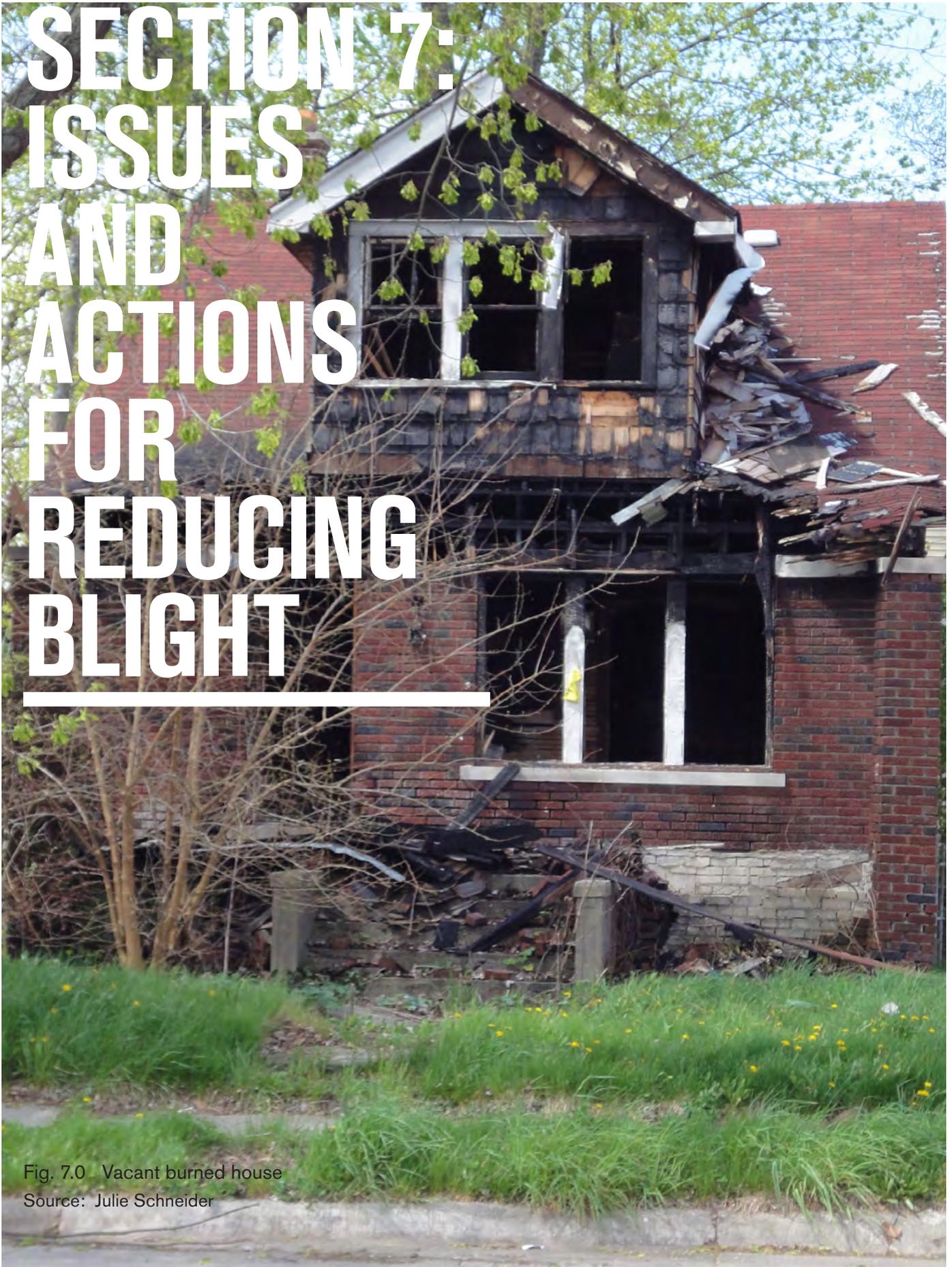


Fig. 7.0 Vacant burned house
Source: Julie Schneider

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

This section includes seven issues requiring blight-reduction actions: vacant lots; vacant structures; poorly maintained, occupied houses; dumping; graffiti; abandoned cars; and illegal signs. Based on success stories in the Good Neighborhoods and beyond, this chapter offers examples of specific actions residents and community groups can take to fight blight. Residents can incorporate these and other actions with the planning and prioritization approaches described in Section 5 (Determining Where and When to Focus Efforts) to create a long-term blight-reduction plan.

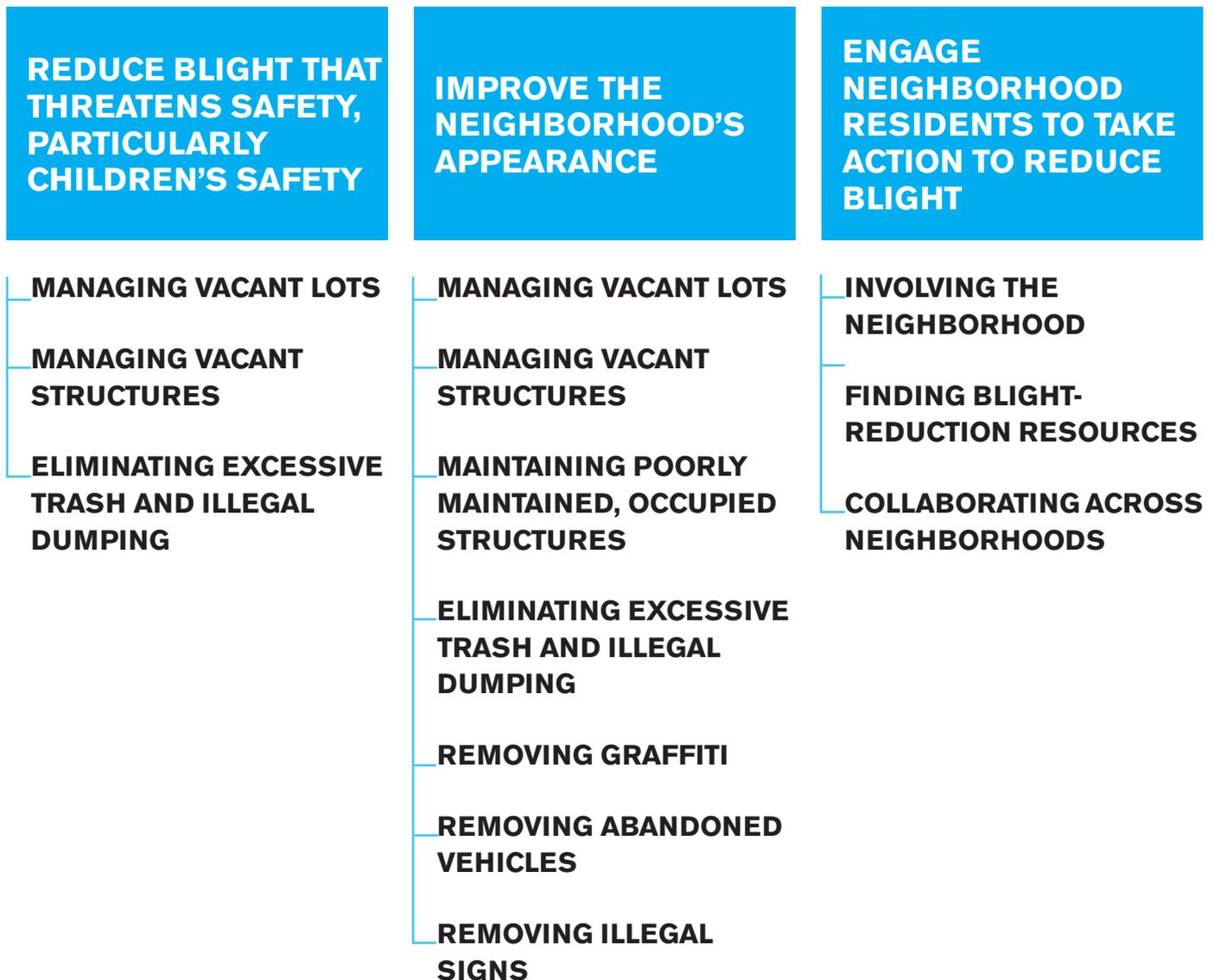
Figure 7.2 illustrates blight-reduction issues that can help residents accomplish each of the goals that representatives of the Good Neighborhoods have articulated (see Section 1: Introduction and Goals). Addressing some issues may accomplish more than one goal.

Fig. 7.1 Example of a vacant structure that is a source of blight

Source: Julie Schneider



Fig. 7.2 Blight-reduction issues and goals



VACANT LOTS

Introduction



When no one maintains vacant lots, the appearance of these lots gives the impression that no one cares about the area. Common concerns with vacant lots in residential neighborhoods include uncut grass, trash build-up, and illegal dumping. However, vacant lots can also present opportunities for residents to work together and accomplish significant improvements in neighborhood appearance with relatively little time and few resources.

Strategies for managing vacant lots vary depending on factors such as lot ownership, condition, and location. While many community groups, non-profit organizations, and neighbors mainly focus on cleaning up vacant lots, some have found that gardening on vacant lots can prevent blight and have various other benefits as well. Possible approaches range from simply planting some wild flowers in a nearby lot to organizing a larger-scale community or market garden.

ACTIONS

- Cleaning up vacant lots
- Gardening



Fig. 7.3 Example of a vacant lot
Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Cleaning Up Vacant Lots on the East Side



In 2008, Detroit resident Mark Covington started removing trash from three vacant lots near his grandmother's home near Harper and Gratiot. As the lots improved, he became inspired to do more and started a community garden. Soil tests revealed that the soil was free of lead and other contamination, and Mark obtained a permit through the city's Adopt-A-Lot permit program. The next step was to start the garden. At first, he struggled to find help, so he just did the work on his own.

Eventually people started coming out, and his effort to clean up a few lots grew into a successful community garden. One of the most promising lessons from Mark's story is that, contrary to residents' initial predictions, no one stole from the garden. Instead of erecting a fence, he opted to string a rope around the garden lot.

Starting the garden inspired Mark to do more to help improve the neighborhood. Later that same year, with the help of some friends, he started the Georgia Street Community Collective (GSCC), a non-profit organization that provides mentoring, education, and positive role models for youth.¹



Fig. 7.4 Georgia Street Community Garden
Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Gardening in Brightmoor

After completing the Urban Roots Community Gardening Training Program, Brightmoor residents Riet Schumack and Sheila Hoerauf started a community garden in a vacant lot next to a crack house. The presence of the neighbors, especially the children, reduced the level of the activity at the house almost immediately. Each day the neighbors would go out to work on the lot, and each day they would call the police to report the illegal activity they observed. Within six weeks, the police shut the house down. Within a few months, the garden was in full bloom.

This provided the neighborhood an example of how to turn a problem area into an asset in a short time period. Figures 7.5 and 7.6 show how different the lot looked before and after the neighbors planted the garden.



Fig. 7.5 Vacant lot before neighbors planted the garden

Source: Riet Schumack



Fig. 7.6 Vacant lot after neighbors planted the garden

Source: Riet Schumack



ACTIONS

Cleaning Up Vacant Lots

Residents can make a positive impact by maintaining nearby vacant lots. Usually, this includes mowing the grass and removing debris from the lot.

In recent years, the City of Detroit has lacked the funds to pay for frequent mowing services. As a result, contractors or city employees have mowed vacant lots only a couple of times per year and have not removed debris from vacant lots at all. Therefore, residents often take on these tasks themselves.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

The number of people and hours can vary widely for vacant lot maintenance, ranging from one person spending an hour or two cleaning up debris to a crew of 10 volunteers mowing, raking, and picking up debris for several hours. The number of people and hours will depend on the size and condition of the lot.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Lawn mower
- o Rakes
- o Trash bags
- o Paper bags for yard waste
- o Gloves

FOLLOW UP

Residents may want to create a schedule for future maintenance of the lot. For example, a few neighbors could take turns mowing the lot when they mow their own yards or hold monthly weekend cleanup days.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Residents may choose to try to purchase vacant lots or to take care of lots without purchasing them. They may choose to take on a vacant lot alone, make an informal agreement to share responsibility for the lot with a neighbor, or organize cleanup events involving volunteers from outside the neighborhood. Additionally, letting grass and wildflowers grow on vacant lots can be a practical option, especially in areas with high vacancy rates.

PURCHASING ADJACENT LOTS

Homeowners can purchase vacant lots adjacent to their property for \$200 if the lot and purchaser meet eligibility requirements and agree to certain conditions, which include:

- The property must be a city-owned residential lot not located in a designated project area.
- The lot must be adjacent to a residential structure owned by the applicant.
- The lot size may not exceed 45 feet of front footage.
- The purchaser must provide proof of paid property taxes and proof of adjacent ownership.
- The purchaser must landscape and maintain the vacant lots to enhance the adjacent property.
- If two adjacent homeowners are interested in the same lot, the homeowners can split the cost and the property (\$100 per half lot).

To obtain an application for the Adjacent Vacant Lot Program, residents can call (313) 224-0953 or

ACTIONS

Cleaning Up Vacant Lots

visit the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department's Welcome Information Resource Center at 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 2300, 2nd floor.²

The mayor's office recently offered residential property owners in one area of Southwest Detroit who live next to a vacant city-owned lot the option to purchase that lot by mailing back a form with a check for \$200. This program differs from the Adjacent Vacant Lot Program because it allows homeowners to obtain the lots more quickly and easily. According to Mayor Bing's 2012 State of the City Address, homeowners in other parts of the city will soon have that same opportunity.³

INFORMALLY ADOPTING VACANT LOTS

Rather than going through the process of purchasing a vacant lot, residents may choose to take care of a nearby lot they do not own. Neighbors often maintain vacant lots by cutting the grass and cleaning up debris. Additionally, homeowners sometimes put a fence around the vacant lot next door to incorporate it into their own property in order to control the maintenance and prevent dumping and other undesirable uses.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR VACANT LOTS AMONG NEIGHBORS

Neighbors sometimes choose to share the responsibility of maintaining a nearby vacant lot. For example, each neighbor can mow half the lot, or neighbors can alternate who cuts the grass.

LETTING GRASS AND WILDFLOWERS GROW ON VACANT LOTS

In some areas, mowing the grass may not be a practical or desirable solution. Instead, letting the grass grow or planting some wildflowers could improve the appearance of vacant lots without demanding substantial commitment of time or resources. Many people consider tall grasses and wild flowers more attractive than mowed lots, but residents may disagree over how to approach vacant lots, and getting everyone's support for letting the grass and wildflowers grow could be challenging. This approach is mainly applicable in heavily or moderately blighted areas.

Gardening

Fig. 7.7 Georgia Street Community Garden

Source: Julie Schneider



With effort from neighbors or community organizations, vacant lots can become assets such as flower or vegetable gardens or rain gardens that manage storm water. Flower and vegetable gardens require more ongoing maintenance than wildflower areas and rain gardens. Rain gardens vary in design but are depressions in the ground where runoff collects, planted with hardy native plants to absorb and filter rainwater.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

The number of people and hours vary for gardening projects depending on the size of the garden and the condition of the lot. A small group of neighbors can clean up a vacant lot and plant some flowers in as little as a day or weekend, depending on the condition of the lot.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Lawn mower
- o Rototiller
- o Shovels
- o Paper bags for yard waste
- o Gloves
- o Seeds
- o Top soil
- o Rakes
- o Trash bags
- o Water source

Additional supplies needed if building raised beds:

- o Boards
- o Hammer
- o Nails
- o Saw

ACTIONS

Gardening continued

FOLLOW UP

Residents may create a schedule for future work in the garden or appoint a person or team to be in charge of garden care.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

The Greening of Detroit

The Greening of Detroit is responsible for numerous greening programs throughout Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck. The organization plants on public property and will assist neighborhood groups with planning, help facilitate community outreach efforts, and provide professional assistance, tools, and plants for planting events. Neighborhood groups can submit a Community Planting Application, which is available on the Greening of Detroit's website (greeningofdetroit.com).⁴

The Greening of Detroit's Openspace programs assist residents of Brightmoor, Northend, and Corktown with planning, implementing, and maintaining vacant lot treatments such as community gardens, fruit orchards, market gardens, pocket parks, native plant gardens, and tree plantings. For more information on the Openspace programs, visit detroitagriculture.net or call (313) 285-2231.⁵

The Garden Resource Program Collaborative, founded by the Greening of Detroit, Earthworks Urban Farm, Michigan State University Extension, and the Detroit Agriculture Network, offers a variety of resources to residents interested in gardening. Participants can receive seeds and transplants and become part of a network of gardeners and urban agriculture advocates. Garden Resource Program

participants are also eligible to receive assistance with tilling; resources such as compost, flowers, woodchips, and weed fabric; help from the program's network of volunteers; and access to a tool-sharing program.⁶ The Garden Resource Program also offers a variety of classes including:

- (Urban) Farm Fresh Cooking Series: consists of hands-on cooking classes including growing, harvesting, storage, and nutrition information
- Urban Roots Community Gardening Training Program: provides training in community gardening and horticulture for community leaders in a 9-week, 45-hour course
- Keep Growing Detroit: teaches gardeners how to extend the growing season for their gardens
- Sweet on Detroit: offers hands-on beekeeping workshops
- Market Garden Training Program: supports market gardeners in developing farm and business plans for selling their produce

Course application forms are available at the Greening of Detroit.

1418 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI 48216

(313) 237-8733

<http://detroitagriculture.net/education/adult-education-programs/>

Soil Testing Centers

Due to concerns over lead and other contaminants, soil testing will help residents decide if a lot is suitable for gardening. Many universities and private companies test soil samples for about \$10 to \$20 per sample. The process usually involves filling out a form and mailing a bag of soil to the facility.

A few options for soil testing include:

- Michigan State University Extension
<http://msusoiltest.com/>
- University of Massachusetts Soil and Plant Tissue Testing Laboratory
www.umass.edu/soiltest
- Rutgers University New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station
<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab/>

WHAT TO CONSIDER

As with general vacant lot maintenance, residents may choose to try to purchase vacant lots or to take care of them without purchasing them and may choose to take on a lot alone, make an informal agreement to share responsibility for the lot with a neighbor, or organize cleanup events involving volunteers. Here is one approach to taking care of vacant lots:

Gardening Permit/Adopt-A-Lot Permit

Through Detroit's Adopt-A-Lot permit program, residents can apply for a permit to use a vacant city-owned lot for gardening. The permit is free, and the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department estimates that the time for processing requests takes about 10 days. The application form lists the regulations regarding use of the vacant lot. Some of these include using the lot only for "gardening and/or landscaping beautification and maintenance purposes," not selling anything from the lot, not erecting any structures, and not installing any water features. Applications are available at Community Access Centers and on the city's website.⁷ Applicants can submit the form by mail to City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1100, Detroit, MI 48226; in person at the Real Estate Division on the 11th Floor of Cadillac Tower Building at above street address; or via fax to (313) 224-4151.

While some residents have found this program useful for adopting lots, others have indicated that the process takes too long—much longer than 10 days—and severely limits what one can do with the lot. For example, in areas with many vacant lots, the rules associated with the permit program may be unnecessarily strict.

VACANT STRUCTURES

Introduction

Like unmaintained vacant lots, vacant structures can indicate a neighborhood in decline. While not all vacant structures cause problems, owners of some vacant structures fail to maintain their property adequately. Vacant property can invite squatters, people stripping houses for metal, and other criminal activity; and open structures present serious safety concerns.

According to the Vacant Property Registration Ordinance (9-1-46B), Detroit's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department is responsible for securing unsafe vacant structures and enforcing blight violations (fines listed in Section 9-1-20 of the Property Maintenance Code). However, residents indicate that the department does not consistently enforce the city's codes. People who

enter or work on vacant structures without the owners' permission may face legal consequences, but in some situations, neighbors may consider taking this risk in efforts to preserve neighborhood safety and appearance.

Although property owners are legally responsible for maintaining their property, tracking down owners and holding them accountable can be challenging. The list below suggests actions that residents can take to reduce blight associated with vacant structures in their neighborhoods.

ACTIONS

- Taking an inventory of vacant houses
- Making houses appear occupied
- Boarding
- Demolishing structures
- Repurposing vacant houses
- Holding property owners responsible
- Reporting vacant properties to the Buildings Safety Engineering and Environmental Department



Fig. 7.8 Example of a vacant structure
Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Keeping an Inventory of Vacant Homes in the Grandmont Rosedale Area

In 2008, a few residents of North Rosedale Park decided to do something about the growing number of vacant houses in the area. They organized a meeting with realtors, residents, and the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation (GRDC) to decide how to deal with the problem.

At first, the group focused on mortgage foreclosure prevention, but now the Vacant Property Task Force keeps track of vacant homes throughout all five of GRDC's neighborhoods. Block clubs survey their areas and record the condition and vacancy status of houses. GRDC employs student interns to maintain the database of vacant properties and lists the GRDC phone number in neighborhood newsletters, so residents know whom to call to report vacant homes.²

SUCCESS STORIES

Making Homes Appear Occupied in Brightmoor and Cody Rouge

Brightmoor resident Ernestine Perkins shares the responsibility of mowing the lawn of a nearby vacant house with a neighbor. Both residents keep an eye on the house, maintain the yard, and remove flyers from the front door in an effort to preserve the appearance of the neighborhood and prevent criminals from recognizing that the house is vacant.³ Similarly, in Cody Rouge, when two residents moved out of their homes on Stahelin, neighbors stepped up immediately and agreed to monitor and take care of the newly vacant homes.⁴

↓ Fig. 7.9 A boarded vacant house in Brightmoor
Source: Michigan Land Study Team



Boarding Homes in Brightmoor

In 2011 alone, Neighbors Building Brightmoor (NBB) boarded 18 houses. NBB founder Riet Schumack, has found that boarding a house reduces blight somewhat but that people still tend to dump trash nearby. She explains that if residents and volunteers paint the boards, less dumping takes place. She hopes that if people see an attractive art project, they will recognize that the neighbors care about the place and are aware of what is going on, so people will stop dumping there altogether.⁵

Before it became vacant in 2010, a house on Chatham Street in Brightmoor was home to a family of eight. It burned within a week of becoming vacant, and NBB boarded it up. Then it burned again, so NBB stripped the structure of all its burned vinyl and primed the walls with donated paint. Volunteers boarded the house and painted the boards with art. For houses in better condition, painting the boards a solid color can help make a house look more attractive while preserving it for future use.

↓ Fig. 7.10 Vacant house in Brightmoor before boarding

Source: Riet Schumack



↓ Fig. 7.11 Same house after volunteers painted boards and boarded the doors and windows

Source: Riet Schumack



SUCCESS STORIES

Repurposing a Dilapidated Structure in Brightmoor

In 2011 Neighbors Building Brightmoor repurposed a vacant house adjacent to Curtis Green Pocket Park into an outdoor community stage. According to NBB founder Riet Schumack, 40 volunteers worked all day to clear out 60 cubic yards of garbage and clean the lot around the house. Then a second group of volunteers stripped the outside shell of the house for a week. Next, local teens employed in the Brightmoor Youth Leadership Development Program painted the structure, which the residents now use as a stage when they have parties.⁶

↓ Fig. 7.12 Curtis Green Pocket Park in Brightmoor
Source: Julia Billings



↓ Fig. 7.13 Community stage in Brightmoor
Source: Julia Billings



ACTIONS

Taking an Inventory of Vacant Houses

Residents can survey vacant property and keep a list of addresses and their conditions. Such an inventory will give residents an overview of the vacancy status in their neighborhoods, which they could submit to the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department and use in planning a comprehensive approach to dealing with blight.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

This will depend on the size of the area, but assessment can be an ongoing activity where people record properties as they become vacant.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o A form for recording vacant houses (see Appendix A for an example of a vacant property spreadsheet)
- o Clipboards
- o Computer with spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel (optional)

FOLLOW UP

Residents should continually update their list, or database, and report vacant properties to the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department. This will likely involve appointing a person or team to receive new information and update the database.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

In late summer 2009, surveyors assessed every residential property with one to four housing units in Detroit. Findings from the survey are available in the form of maps and reports at <http://www.detroitparcelsurvey.org>. Although the survey results are useful and easily accessible, they do not reflect changes since 2009. Therefore, organizing a block or neighborhood level survey or vacant house reporting system will likely benefit residents more. Residents can find more information and learn more about the next survey by clicking on “Contact Us” at the bottom of the Detroit Residential Parcel Survey home page.

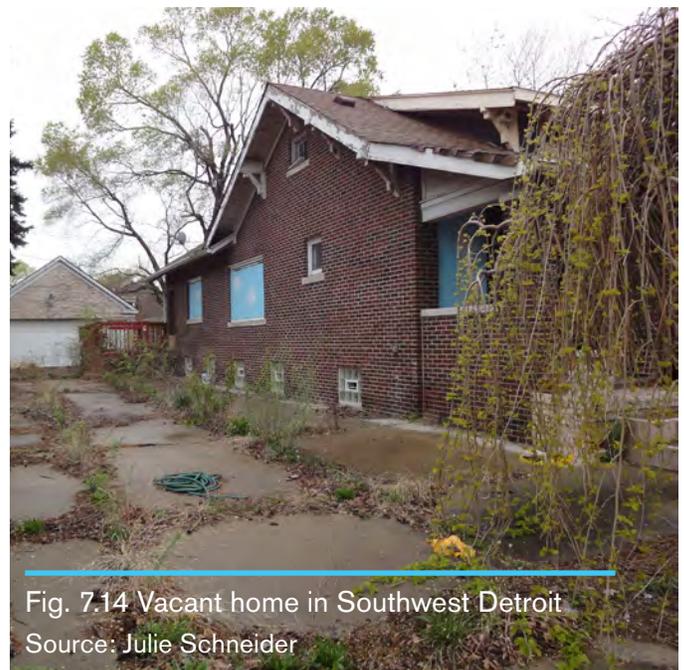


Fig. 7.14 Vacant home in Southwest Detroit
Source: Julie Schneider

ACTIONS

Making Houses Appear Occupied

Residents can make vacant houses look occupied by removing handouts from front doors and porches, removing garbage and debris, putting up holiday decorations, placing potted plants on the porch, installing solar-powered exterior lights, removing graffiti, maintaining the lawn, and removing snow, leaves, and ice.⁷

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

One or more neighbors can make a vacant property appear occupied, but this is a daily, year-round job, so sharing the responsibility will reduce the burden on any one neighbor.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Lawn mower
- o Rakes
- o Bags
- o Snow shovel
- o Holiday decorations
- o Potted plants
- o Exterior lighting supplies
- o Graffiti removal supplies

FOLLOW UP

Residents can monitor these properties and maintain them as needed.



Fig. 7.15 Example of a vacant house that could be made to look occupied

Source: Michigan Land Study Team



Boarding

Structures with broken or missing doors or windows present safety issues and should be secured quickly. Mortgage companies often hire field servicers or property preservation companies to provide boarding and maintenance services on property owned by the mortgage company.⁸ However, they often fail to fulfill these obligations, so residents often choose to board the houses on their own. While boarding secures open structures, some residents also wish to paint the boards to show that the neighbors have taken care of the property and are looking after it.

If neighbors know that a house is going to become vacant, they often ask the departing resident for a key to the house. With the key, neighbors can preemptively secure the house by jamming the doors and windows from the inside. If neighbors do not have a key, they have to board the house from the outside.⁹

Residents have devised additional strategies for dealing with houses that are awaiting demolition. For example, sometimes residents will take doors

from inside the house to use for boarding. To prevent break-ins, residents place boards on the inside to reinforce the doors and windows. In addition, some resident volunteers stuff houses with trash before boarding them. This method addresses the problem of disposal of dumped material.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

A group of 10 to 20 volunteers usually needs two to four hours to board a house and clean up the yard.¹⁰

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Most houses require about 10, 4'x 8' OSB boards (available at Home Depot for \$6-8 each).

Those wanting to paint the boards can ask neighbors if they have any extra paint or go to hardware stores and ask for the "Oops Paint," which is incorrectly mixed paint that usually costs about \$5 per gallon. The total cost of boarding a house is about \$100.



Fig. 7.16 Boarded vacant home in Bightmoor
Source: Neighbors Building Bightmoor

ACTIONS

Demolishing Structures

This manual does not recommend that people demolish structures that they do not own, which is illegal. However, in heavily blighted areas where dilapidated structures present serious safety concerns, some residents have chosen to take this course of action rather than waiting for city contractors to do it.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

Demolishing a house may require about 40 people working for two full days.¹¹

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Various building materials
- o Ladder
- o Dumpster

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Many dumpster rental businesses operate in Detroit. Rental fees range from about \$200 to \$450, depending on the size of the dumpster. A few current options are below.

Budget Dumpster Rental

- Cost: \$250-\$350 (for 14 days)
- 535 Griswold Street, Suite #111-#119, Detroit, MI 48226
- (313) 989-0320 or (866) 284-6164
- www.budgetdumpster.com

Rent-a-Dumpster

- Cost: \$200/load for 5 cubic yards; \$225/load for 10 cubic yards; \$325/load for 20 cubic yards; \$425 for 30 cubic yards; or \$275/load for 5 cubic yards of brick, dirt, blocks, rocks, sod, or concrete
- 795 Oakwood Boulevard, Detroit, MI 48217
- (313) 999-1352
- www.radumpster.com

Repurposing Vacant Houses

One solution to managing vacant houses is to use them for a new purpose, as shown in Figure 7.17.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

This approach is uncommon, so every project may require a different level of time and other investment.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Various building materials
- o Paint
- o Gloves
- o Dumpster

Fig. 7.17 Vacant garage used as public art in Brightmoor
Source: Michelle Lam



ACTIONS

Holding Owners Responsible for Property Maintenance

The owner of a property is legally responsible for keeping the property up to code whether the property is vacant or occupied, but identifying the owner can be challenging.¹² Some community organizations have attempted to hold property owners responsible for maintenance by sending them letters explaining the city's property maintenance requirements and common blight violations.¹³ Another possible approach to dealing with mortgage-foreclosed homes is to contact the field servicer or property preservation company responsible for maintaining the property after the mortgage holder owns the property.¹⁴

County Register of Deeds, and the Wayne County Tax Assessor. Additionally, Michigan Community Resources created a series of video tutorials explaining how to determine property ownership through internet research.¹⁶

WHAT TO CONSIDER

In many cases, the owner is a bank that may not have much incentive to maintain the property.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

One person can search for a property by following the steps described in Michigan Community Resources' video tutorials or the publication *Vacant Property Education Series: Finding Property Ownership with Internet Research*, but identifying the owner can be complicated and take a long time if it is possible at all.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o A computer with internet access

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Step-by-step instructions for finding property owners are available from Michigan Community Resources in a document called *Vacant Property Education Series: Finding Property Ownership with Internet Research*.¹⁵ This document shows how to look up property ownership information through the City of Detroit's online property tax information system, the Wayne

Reporting Vacant Properties to Detroit's Buildings, Safety Engineering & Environmental Department



Fig. 7.18 Vacant dilapidated house
Source: Michigan Land Study Team



Although city officials do not always respond to requests right away, residents may still want to report issues, especially those relating to safety, to the City of Detroit's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department. This department is responsible for enforcing the City of Detroit Property Maintenance Code and Official Zoning Ordinance as well as overseeing the demolition of dangerous buildings.¹⁷

Residents can report structures that are open to trespass or otherwise unsafe to the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department's Abandoned Building Hotline. The department will determine if the property needs to be demolished.

Detroit's Vacant Property Registration Ordinance requires the owner of a vacant building to register the property with the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department within thirty days of becoming vacant. The owner receives a Certificate of Registration of Vacant Property and must obtain an Exterior Certificate of Compliance from the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department. The Department will issue the Exterior Certificate of Compliance only if the property meets the department's defined maintenance conditions, which list standards for lawn care, peeling paint, debris, doors and windows, lighting, and other requirements.

ACTIONS

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

One person can report a vacant property in a few minutes, but ideally, several residents should call to follow up.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Residents can report vacant structures to the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department's Abandoned Building Hotline at (313) 224-3215 or abandonedbldg@detroitmi.gov. In the email body, residents should specify the address of the building or, if a street number is visible, give the address of the nearest building on each side.

Property owners can obtain a Vacant Property Registration form from the Property Maintenance Division of the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environment Department at Rm. 412, Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Ave., Detroit MI 48226; online at www.detroitmi.gov or <http://71.159.23.2/BSEOnline/division.action?pageld=10018>; or by calling (313)-628-2451.¹⁸

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Due to limited staff and resources and the volume of calls the department receives, city officials often respond first to the problems generating the most complaints. Therefore, several residents should call repeatedly to report vacant structures to alert city officials about blight violations, especially those that are dangerous.

Mayor Bing has stated that demolishing dangerous properties is a priority for his administration.¹⁹ However, the scale of the problem is so large that addressing all of the structures in need of demolition will take a long time. Many block clubs keep lists of houses that need demolition and submit the list every three to four months. According to one resident, if you have ten houses on the list, and the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department demolishes four of them, that is a success.²⁰

POORLY MAINTAINED, OCCUPIED HOUSES

Introduction

Lack of upkeep of houses also contributes to a physically declining neighborhood. Occupied houses can exhibit many of the same upkeep issues as vacant houses. However, for occupied houses, neighbors can encourage residents and property owners to address blight by communicating with them directly.

ACTIONS

- Educating residents about maintenance requirements
- Assisting residents who need help maintaining their property
- Reporting code violations to the city government's Community Access Centers

↓ Fig. 7.19 A well-maintained occupied house
Source: Michigan Land Study Team



SUCCESS STORIES

Enforcing the Code

Three of the five neighborhoods in Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation's service area have formed code enforcement committees. These committees send letters on official neighborhood letterhead to blight violators. This approach alerts residents to blight violations and allows them to remedy the situation before getting a ticket. It also prevents code violators from feeling that just one particular neighbor is concerned about the issue. If a violator fails to address the issue, the code enforcement committee reports the violation to local police officers who write tickets for blight violations.¹

In 2009, North Rosedale Park started a Code Enforcement Committee to address blight code violations. In 2010, the committee added 66 new complaints to its list, and by the end of the year, 49 had been resolved. Most of the cases involved long grass and weeds, trash, unlicensed vehicles, commercial uses in residential areas, parking on berms and over the sidewalk, overnight parking of commercial vehicles on residential and commercial streets, parking of trailers, and barking dogs. The committee collaborates with the neighborhood's Vacant Property Committee, Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation, Northwest District Environmental Officers, the Department of Environmental Affairs, and the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department on enforcement efforts.²

Fig. 7.20 A well-maintained, occupied house

Source: Julie Schneider



ACTIONS

Educating Residents about Maintenance Requirements

Some residents may not know that they are violating the city's code. Neighbors who are concerned about the upkeep of a nearby house may want to talk to the residents or owners directly to inform them of the city's code. Some community organizations have educated residents about property maintenance requirements by distributing flyers or door hangers with information on the legal requirements for property maintenance and the fines associated with violations.

For example, when residents in Detroit's East English Village neighborhood observed that the city was not enforcing its code consistently, they sought to improve the condition of their neighborhood by informing residents about the code. Street reps distributed door hangers (see Figure 7.21) to residents of their streets. The door hangers informed owners and renters that they "are responsible for keeping the dwelling unit in a clean, habitable, sanitary, and safe condition following city code" and placed check marks next to the applicable violations for each property on the street. Since some residents did not know they were violating the code, some fixed the blight issues right away. Others did not. The residents' next step was to issue mock tickets for the violations. These "tickets" listed the fines associated with the violations. If residents still failed to comply, the street representatives reported the violations to the relevant city department. In 2011, the neighborhood created code teams that coordinate with the street representatives, and residents are working on a database for tracking blight violations. The code team members maintain a dialogue with city officials and send quarterly updates from the database.³

The City of Detroit has ordinances that indicate how property owners must maintain the exterior of their property. City inspectors, police officers, and other city officials who investigate blight complaints can issue Blight Violation Notices to owners who fail to comply with these ordinances.

Some common code violations include:⁴

- Failure to obtain certificate of compliance or rental registration
- Failure to maintain exterior of property
- Failure to remove snow and ice
- Early or late placement or improper storage of Courville (trash) containers
- Improper removal and disposal of tenants' belongings during eviction
- Improper disposal of bulk items

ACTIONS

Dear Resident, Property Owner or Renter:

Occupants of a dwelling unit are responsible for keeping the dwelling unit or premises in a clean, habitable, sanitary, and safe condition following city code. Within a reasonable amount of time, please attend to the following item(s). This is a courtesy reminder only.

- Lawn and/or shrubs need maintenance
- Leaves or snow not cleared
- Yard waste must be in paper bags
- Trash cans out before 6pm, before pickup day
- Trash cans not in by 9pm on pickup day
- Bulk trash exceeds one cubic yard
- Street drains not cleared of debris
- Alley not cleaned/maintained
- Unlicensed or inoperable vehicle on property
- Pet waste not removed
- Accumulated debris attracts rodents
- Habitually barking dog
- Car/house alarm sounding for more than one hour
- Grilling within 10 feet of structure is fire hazard
- Basketball hoop in street
- Other _____



Go to www.next-detroit.org for a listing of property maintenance resources. Go to www.municode.com for Detroit Code of Ordinances.

313.394.1000 | WWW.NEXT-DETROIT.ORG

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

The Detroit City Code lists standards for property and the fines associated with code violations. The code is available online at municode.com. Paper copies are available at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center (2 Woodward Ave. Suite 308, Detroit, MI 48226) and at most Detroit Public Library locations.⁵

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Residents and absentee owners who fail to maintain their property pose challenges for neighbors. Therefore, working with police can sometimes be more effective than informing landlords of code violations. For example, in March 2012, neighborhood residents worked with police to get an apartment building on Second Ave. shut down due to health and safety issues. According to news reports, the tenants lived in unhealthy and unsafe conditions, with dead animals and sewage present in the basement.⁶ In this situation, the police worked closely with residents to reach a solution quickly.⁷



Fig. 7.21 Door hanger informing residents of code violations

Source: Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative

Assisting Residents Who Need Help Maintaining their Property

Some residents lack the physical or financial ability to maintain their property and therefore need assistance. In these situations, neighbors may want to help those residents with property maintenance. Offering to help neighbors maintain their property shows that neighbors care about each other and the neighborhood. Such efforts also help residents get to know each other better. If a resident offers to mow his elderly neighbor's lawn, the elderly neighbor may choose to become more involved in the neighborhood in other ways. Time banks and non-profit organizations can help residents get home repair and maintenance services without spending a lot of money.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Time Banks

Time banks are volunteer membership organizations that allow people to exchange services. This could be a way for residents who cannot afford home repairs to get these services. For example, the Unity in Our Community Time Bank is open to people who live or work in Chadsey Condon, Corktown, Hubbard Farms, Springwells Village, and surrounding neighborhoods in Southwest Detroit. More information is available at <http://www.southwestdetroittimebank.org/>.

Rebuilding Together Detroit

Rebuilding Together Detroit helps senior, disabled, and low-income homeowners with home repairs, modifications, and energy efficiency upgrades. Low-income families (consisting of two or more people and household income equal to or less than 80% of the area median income adjusted for family size as published annually by U. S. Department of

Housing and Urban Development) who own their homes can qualify for the program. More information and application forms are available at <http://www.rebuildingtogetherdetroit.com/>.

The City of Detroit's Senior Emergency Home Repair Program

The Senior Emergency Home Repair Program provides funding for low-income homeowners 65 years and over (or 55 years and over for those with a physical disability) whose homes need repair in the City of Detroit. The program offers grants of up to \$12,000 for serious code violations or emergency repairs.

Information about the Senior Emergency Home Repair Program is available at the City of Detroit's Housing Services Division located at 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1700, Detroit, Michigan 48226 or (313) 224-3461.⁸

ACTIONS

Reporting Code Violations to the City Government's Community Access Centers

Residents can report code violations to the local Community Access Centers (formerly known as Neighborhood City Halls), which exist to connect residents with city resources. The City of Detroit website states that code enforcement is a high priority but that residents need to assist by alerting city officials to code enforcement issues through their local Community Access Center location.⁹ However, many residents have had difficulty getting timely responses from city officials, so the actions previously mentioned in this section might be more practical first steps.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Community Access Center locations¹⁰

Central

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center

2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 106, 48226

Office: (313) 224-2989

Fax: (313) 224-4334

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

West

19180 Grand River, 48223

Office: (313) 870-0649

Fax: (313) 935-4433

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

East

7737 Kercheval, 48214

Office: (313) 628-2170

Fax: (313) 579-7135

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

Southwest

7744 W. Vernor, 48209

Office: (313) 628-2180

Fax: (313) 842-0993

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

EXCESSIVE TRASH AND ILLEGAL DUMPING

Introduction

In this manual, illegal dumping refers to the purposeful disposal of solid waste in an unpermitted area such as a vacant lot, roadside curb, vacant structure, or park. Excessive trash refers to highly visible, loose pieces of trash scattered through neighborhoods. Such trash collects in trees and fences and blows across yards and roadways.

Illegal dumping and excessive trash create health and safety issues and negatively affect neighborhood appearance. Dumping sites may attract rodents, contain chemicals from construction sites and household appliances, and serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Excessive trash and illegal dumping signal that residents do not care about the area. However, residents can improve the appearance and safety of a neighborhood by organizing site

cleanups and taking action to deter future dumping and littering.

The most successful projects aimed at eliminating excessive trash and illegal dumping focus on both cleanup and prevention. Making dumpers aware of the neighborhood's commitment to maintaining an area free of waste and litter can prevent dumping. Selecting which cleanup and prevention strategies are best for a neighborhood requires consideration of the scale of the problem, availability of volunteers, and access to waste removal services.

ACTIONS

- Holding a neighborhood cleanup event
- Using a “clean-up, paint-up, fix-up” approach
- Placing dumping signs and dummy cameras
- Organizing a neighborhood-wide cleanup campaign
- Putting out trashcans



Fig. 7.22 Example of an illegal dumping site
Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Volunteers Remove Trash from Delray

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision (SDEV) organized a multi-site cleanup in Delray producing four full 40-foot dumpsters. SDEV promoted the cleanup event to residents of Delray through email and yard signs placed throughout the neighborhood, rallied its members and the Southwest Pride organization, and recruited students from the University of Michigan to help. SDEV and volunteers who participated in the cleanup supplied tools for the event; the Wayne County CLEAN program provided dumpsters.

Volunteers worked through inclement weather to dispose of couches, broken electronic equipment, clothing, shingles, tires, and construction debris dumped at four major dumping sites in Delray. About 45 people spent approximately five hours accomplishing this task. At the end of the day, local chefs prepared a barbecue meal to thank the volunteers for their hard work.

↓ Fig. 7.23 Anderson Street before cleanup
Source: Julie Schneider



↓ Fig. 7.24 Anderson Street after cleanup
Source: Julie Schneider



Transforming Dumping and Graffiti Sites in Southwest Detroit

In Southwest Detroit, the Ideal Group, Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision (SDEV), Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC), Southwest Detroit Congress of Communities, Better Days Ministry, and neighborhood residents have transformed former dumping and graffiti sites near the Ideal Group into neighborhood assets.

DHDC worked with the Ideal Group and gang members to clean up illegal dumping and graffiti near the Ideal Group's facility in Southwest Detroit. The Ideal Group's owner had struggled to maintain cleanliness along the outside of his building. The area around the building had become an illegal dumping spot, and gang members had tagged an exterior wall. DHDC approached influential gang members with a plan to engage the gang in making improvements

to the area. The business owner paid the gang members to clean the area, repair a fence, and paint a mural approved by the business owner. The site has since remained clean and mostly free of gang tags.

Representatives from DHDC explain that this approach was successful mainly because gang members engaged in a neighborhood activity and felt a sense of responsibility for the site due to their direct involvement in the cleanup.¹

Since several nearby vacant lots also contained illegally dumped trash, the Ideal Group, SDEV, Southwest Detroit Congress of Communities, Better Days Ministry, and neighborhood residents worked to transform these vacant, littered lots into a garden called Scarcyny Park. The Ideal Group acquired several lots that had been illegal dumping sites and worked with the other organizations and residents to clean the lots, design the park, and construct gardens and a picnic area. In 2012 the gardeners of Scarcyny, which means 'hidden within,' will build raised vegetable beds for residents to use, and host a neighborhood carnival, concerts, and gardening events.²



← Fig. 7.25 Scarcyny Park in Southwest Detroit
Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Neighborhood Champions in Southwest Detroit

As part of the Clean Neighborhood Initiative, SDEV has recruited 75 volunteers to report, monitor, and address blight near their homes. Neighborhood Champions agree to take responsibility for organizing others to remediate issues such as illegal dumping in Southwest Detroit. SDEV conducts a three-day training program for Neighborhood Champion volunteers and provides much of the equipment used for these blight-remediation projects.

Last summer, several Neighborhood Champions in the 48217 zip code organized residents to clean up portions of three streets in their neighborhood: Ethel, Pleasant, and Schaefer. Volunteers removed 30 cubic yards of illegally dumped materials and garbage and painted over two large graffiti-covered walls. To show their appreciation, the Neighborhood Champions prepared and hosted a lunch for the volunteers. Since the cleanup, these sites have remained clean and free of illegal activity.³

Homemade Trashcans in Brightmoor

Neighbors Building Brightmoor (NBB) founder Riet Schumack has come up with a creative and effective solution for preventing trash build-up in her neighborhood: putting out trashcans. NBB volunteers get the barrels from Coca-Cola, paint them, and place them throughout the neighborhood. Since the city trash collectors are not responsible for emptying these trashcans, NBB makes arrangements with homeowners who agree to empty the trashcans as needed. When people see a trashcan nearby, they are less likely to litter, and the trashcans have cut down on littering in the neighborhood.⁴

↓ Fig. 7.26 Example of homemade trashcan
Source: Julia Billings



ACTIONS

Holding a Neighborhood Cleanup Event

Residents can improve neighborhood appearance and reduce safety concerns by removing illegally dumped materials and excessive trash. Even a small number of volunteers can carry out a cleanup event. However, cleanups may be more effective if volunteers can quickly see the impact of their work. Successful cleanups require the removal of all debris located in and around a dumping site. Such thorough cleanup work reduces the likelihood of repeat dumping.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

A group of approximately 20 volunteers held a cleanup event on a heavily dumped on property in the Delray neighborhood. Using a dumpster, the group cleaned the area in approximately two hours.⁵

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Dumpster or other place to dispose of materials legally
- o Rakes
- o Trash bags
- o Gloves

FOLLOW UP

Ongoing cleanups may be necessary if the same people use a dumping site repeatedly. Many of the other actions listed in this section describe techniques for preventing repeat dumping.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Community Access Centers

Detroit Community Access Centers offer materials such as garbage bags and gloves. Contact information for the Community Access Centers is available on page 100 of this manual.

Wayne County Commissioners

Wayne County Commissioners may assist in providing waste hauling services and dumpsters for a site cleanup.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

By taking an inventory of the items present at the dump site prior to conducting a cleanup, residents can determine the best method of disposal. The City of Detroit bulk collection services may be useful for small site cleanups. Tire recyclers can haul away and dispose of scrap tires, but hazardous materials require special care. In the case of suspected hazardous materials, residents should consult with an organization such as Wayne County, the City of Detroit, the local Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) office, or the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The EPA and MDEQ offer training sessions on how to handle hazardous materials commonly found at illegal dumping sites.

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality -
Southeast Michigan District Office

Address: 27700 Donald Court, Warren, MI 48092

Phone: (586) 753-3700

Environmental Protection Agency – Great Lakes Region

Hotline: (800) 621-8431, Monday – Friday from 9:30 AM - 5:30 PM

City bulk collection and disposal

The City of Detroit provides bulk waste collection and drop-off sites. Bulk waste may not exceed one cubic yard or 1,000 pounds per collection or use of a drop-off site. One cubic yard of bulk is about the size of a couch, stove, or refrigerator. Permitted bulk materials include furniture, mattresses, appliances, carpeting, brush, and automotive tires (4 or less). Four times each year, the City of Detroit collects bulk waste from the curb in front of a resident's home. Residents may also take up to one carload of bulk waste per day to one of five bulk drop-off locations. Residents must present a state-issued identification card with a Detroit address at bulk waste sites.

Visitors to the City of Detroit Department of Public Works website can find out their quarterly bulk collection dates and the nearest bulk drop-off location by entering their address.⁶

Drop off locations:

Davison Yard – 8221 West Davison, between Wyoming and Ewald

Southfield Yard – 12255 Southfield Service Drive, just south of I-96

5840 Anthon, between Cavalry and Campbell

State Fair Yard – 19715 John R, south of E. State Fair

J. Fons Transfer Station – 6451 East McNichols, just east of Mt. Elliott

Drop off hours:

November-March: Tuesday through Saturday from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

April-October: Tuesday through Saturday from 10:30 AM to 6:00 PM

(The J. Fons Transfer Station is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, the Southfield Yard location is open Monday-Saturday). All locations (except J. Fons Transfer Station) close from 2:30-3:30 PM

Tire recycling

Both for-profit and non-profit tire recyclers serve the Good Neighborhoods. Silver Lining Tire Recycling in Wyandotte accepts small and large loads and will provide hauling services if needed. The cost is \$1.15 per tire for pick-up (pick-up is available only at commercial, not residential, locations), or \$1 per tire if residents bring the tires to Silver Lining. For more information visit www.silverliningtirerecycling.com, or call (734) 324-4800.

Cass Community Social Services recycles tires into mud mats and sandals as part of its green industries job training and employment program. Residents can coordinate tire drop-offs or pick-ups with CCSS by calling (313) 883-2277.

ACTIONS

Using a “Clean-Up, Paint-Up, Fix-Up” Approach

Removing debris from illegal dumping sites and improving the appearance of the surrounding area can help prevent the recurrence of dumping. Site-specific factors, such as a broken fence, can make the location attractive to dumpers. The characteristics of the area around the site can guide residents in choosing an appropriate dumping prevention method. For example, if the dumping site is near a poorly maintained structure, painting a mural or applying a coat of paint that matches the building and removing weeds will make the area appear cared-for and will help deter dumpers.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

SDEV reports having cleaned a vacant lot containing a moderate amount of dumping and painting a building wall a solid color in one day with about 10 adults.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Dumpster or other place to dispose of bulk waste legally
- o Trash bags
- o Ladders
- o Paint rollers
- o Paint trays
- o Gloves
- o Paint
- o Paint brushes
- o Paint wands

FOLLOW UP

Residents can assign one person the responsibility of organizing site cleanups or contacting the organization designated to coordinate cleanups.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Wayne County CLEAN Illegal Dumping Program

The Wayne County Department of the Environment's Land Resource Management Division (LRMD) administers the CLEAN illegal dumping program. CLEAN works to clean up areas where dumping has previously occurred and to prevent further dumping by requiring improvements to the area surrounding a dumping site. A community group or faith-based group must submit an application for different types of cleanups. The group submitting the application can request that the county provide a Type A cleanup, which is a complete cleanup of an area affected by illegal dumping. Alternatively, a group may request a Type B cleanup, in which the group provides the workers for a cleanup and asks the county to provide waste containers and disposal. Applicants must make improvements to the site to reduce the likelihood of repeat dumping following a cleanup regardless of the cleanup type. LRMD will select four to five projects for each of the two application periods.

A program summary is available at http://www.co.wayne.mi.us/doi_lrm_prog_cidp.htm. Applications are available at <http://www.co.wayne.mi.us/documents/1-CLEAN-web-doc0002.pdf>.

For more information, residents can call the LRMD at (734) 326-3936.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

When working with volunteers, providing an orientation can help to get everyone on track and provide information on how to handle illegally dumped materials properly.

Placing Dumping Signs and Dummy Cameras

Signs placed near common dumping sites can deter dumping by alerting potential dumpers that dumping is illegal and that nearby residents care for their neighborhood or that potential dumpers are under surveillance. Such signs may display messages like “no dumping” or “please keep the neighborhood clean.” Dummy cameras have also deterred illegal dumping. Pairing a dumping-deterring sign with a dummy camera can improve effectiveness if the sign highlights the presence of a nearby camera.

Placing a sign on private property requires planning to avoid complications with property owners and the City of Detroit. Residents can consult with organizations that have experience working with city officials and sign manufacturers such as SDEV and Southwest Detroit Business Association to comply with local sign laws. In addition, signs should not feature an organization’s logo, and residents should place the signs away from driveways, intersections, or road signs.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

Erecting the sign will take a group of four people approximately two to three hours depending on the tools available for digging the hole for the sign pole.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o “No dumping” sign and pole
- o Digging equipment
- o Dummy camera
- o Extension ladder to install camera

- o Liability waiver for climbing ladders if applicable
- o Mounting hardware to attach camera or sign to pole

FOLLOW UP

For signs and cameras to be effective, residents must monitor dumping sites and immediately clear any newly dumped materials. Residents who live near such a site are good candidates to take on this responsibility. They can organize an emergency site cleanup or contact the organization designated to coordinate cleanups.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision (SDEV) has erected signs in Southwest Detroit and has experience working with property owners and city officials to place signs. SDEV can provide guidance on placing signs and may have tools available for rental. Contact information for SDEV is 8701 West Vernor, Detroit, MI, (313) 842-1961, <http://www.sdevweb.org>.

Southwest Detroit Business Association

Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) has experience erecting signs and working with property owners and city officials to place signs. SDBA can provide guidance on placing signs. Contact information for SDBA is 7752 West Vernor, Detroit, MI, (313) 842-0986, <http://www.southwestdetroit.com>.

Organizing a Neighborhood-Wide Cleanup Campaign

Organizing a large-scale effort to remove illegally dumped materials can address dumping throughout a neighborhood and improve response time to newly dumped material. Organizations or individuals throughout the participating area can organize volunteers and appoint site captains who agree to take responsibility for monitoring and cleaning specific sites near their homes and organizing cleanups with volunteers in their neighborhood when needed.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Gloves
- o Garbage bags
- o Dumpster or other waste disposal method
- o Waste rakes

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Organizing a committed group of leaders and volunteers is essential to successful implementation of this action (see Section 6: Involving the Neighbors).

Putting Out Trashcans

The city generally does not place trashcans in residential neighborhoods. However, trash tends to accumulate in areas without trashcans. As a result, some neighborhood groups have reduced littering and trash buildup by putting out their own trashcans.

When Neighbors Building Brightmoor put out trashcans, volunteers painted them and wrote “put trash here,” so people would know that the trashcans were intended for public use.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Large bins or barrels
- o Paint

FOLLOW UP

Residents must agree to empty each trashcan frequently. Ideally, one person agrees to empty and maintain each trashcan.



Fig. 7.27 Neighborhood trashcan in Brightmoor →
Source: Julia Billings

GRAFFITI

Introduction

Graffiti has many negative effects on a neighborhood. It damages the image of a neighborhood; encourages gang activity by representing territories, illegal actions, and threats; and may entice children into gangs. Removing graffiti enhances the appearance of a neighborhood and establishes the notion that the neighbors do not allow it. Additionally, not providing graffiti artists a canvas in the neighborhood reduces the chances of children's involvement. A graffiti removal committee functions best with strong resident involvement and a unified vision.

ACTIONS

- Forming an anti-graffiti neighborhood group
- Reducing open, available surfaces
- Encouraging youth involvement for graffiti cleanup and removal
- Encouraging nearby businesses to form a Business Improvement District (BID) to fund graffiti removal

↓ Fig. 7.28 Graffiti in Northend Central Woodward
Source: Alex DeCamp



SUCCESS STORIES

Turning a Graffiti-Covered Viaduct into a Work of Art in Southwest Detroit

Sean Mann and other residents of Hubbard Farms in Southwest Detroit were fed up with seeing graffiti on a railroad viaduct above W. Grand Blvd. Through a grant provided by Michigan Community Resources, Sean and other neighborhood residents purchased paint and brushes and headed for the overpass (see Section 8: Resources for more information on grants). Over 20 volunteers showed up that Saturday in June 2010; one even brought an electric lift. They painted the overpass with white clouds and a blue sky, a symbol for the Hubbard Farms neighborhood. Since then, the neighbors meet frequently to address issues of blight and personally fund the \$25 can of

paint for any necessary touch ups. "Meetings are because you really get to know what's happening in your neighborhood. People in a neighborhood have no connection to one another except proximity, so at group meetings they inherently talk about the neighborhood."- Sean Mann¹

↓ Fig. 7.29 Hubbard Farms neighborhood viaduct
Source: Julie Schneider



Forming a Business Improvement District in Southwest Detroit



Fig. 7.30 Street scene along Vernor Avenue
Source: Alex DeCamp

The Southwest Detroit Business Association proposed the Vernor and Springwells Business Improvement District (BID), which became the first BID in the state of Michigan. A majority of the neighborhood businesses agreed to pay a certain portion of their property value into a fund managed by a board of their peers.

Since then, the BID has commissioned crews to address litter three times a week and lawn maintenance once a week. A dedicated crew addresses graffiti. The Vernor Springwells BID is an example of neighborhood businesses working together to improve the appearance of the neighborhood for the benefit of all.²

SUCCESS STORIES

Painting Boarded Windows in Northend Central

In the south part of the Northend neighborhood, just east of Woodward, residents worked with Vanguard Community Development Corporation to paint the boards on windows and doors on vacant properties. While Vanguard provided the funds for the paint and boards, local volunteers and children provided the work force and artistic talent. Today, the houses have beautiful colors and images on the boards, making them look much nicer for the neighborhood.³

For more information, contact Vanguard Community Development Corporation at (313) 872-7831.

↓ Fig. 7.31 Examples of painted, boarded windows
Source: Alex Decamp



↓ Fig. 7.32 Examples of painted, boarded windows
Source: Alex Decamp



Murals replace and prevent graffiti in Southwest Detroit

Summer in the City is a volunteer program formed in Detroit in 2002 to address the need to organize volunteers for large projects in the city. The organization offers free paint and volunteers for large mural projects; all neighbors have to do is ask. Generally, the neighbors and volunteers take about a week to paint a mural of shapes and colors. The murals cover walls and help prevent graffiti. In 2008, Summer in the City was asked by a local school to paint large murals in the school's hallways and grounds in Southwest Detroit. Unfortunately, youth vandalized the murals with graffiti at night.

This continued until the school principal identified the vandals. Instead of punishing them, the principal asked the youth to lend their abilities to the murals. Summer in the City painted shapes and colors, while the graffiti artists added detailed images. One artist even painted a large Phoenix, the school's mascot, to represent the school. The graffiti artists not only added to the mural, but they also spread word not to tag it, and the mural has remained untouched.

For more information about Summer in the City, visit www.summerinthecity.com or call (248) 790-1000.⁴

Fig. 7.33 Summer in the City mural
Source: www.summerinthecity.com



ACTIONS

Forming an Anti-Graffiti Neighborhood Group

One of the most effective ways neighbors can help get rid of unwanted graffiti is by forming a graffiti task force. The task force could take responsibility for managing graffiti removal tools and equipment; organizing neighborhood meetings and social gatherings; creating a notification system, such as mass texts or website updates; and informing neighbors of new graffiti incidents.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

The task force should include as many residents as possible, and the group should meet at least once a month to stay current on graffiti issues. Depending on the extent of the graffiti, the group may need to dedicate more time.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Text or phone service
- o Internet connections (if available)
- o Volunteers to knock on doors and encourage membership

FOLLOW UP

The group should meet regularly, at least once month, so residents always continue to watch for new graffiti.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

If gang-related graffiti exists, residents should involve the police and address the issue immediately. The faster neighbors remove graffiti the clearer the signal to graffiti artists that residents will not tolerate the vandalism. Lastly, creating a neighborhood mural on a formerly graffiti-covered wall can show neighborhood unity.

Reducing Open, Available Surfaces

Large open walls on structures and vacant houses offer a blank canvas for graffiti. Potential ideas for reducing open surfaces are painting a pattern on the walls, allowing vines to grow up or down the walls, and removing the walls all together.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

This varies depending on which method and the surface area, but generally one person can paint a 20 x 20 foot area with a roller in about 30 minutes. Using a brush, the same area takes four hours.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Paint
- o Paint brushes
- o Paint rollers
- o Plant seeds

FOLLOW UP

A neighborhood group dedicated to removing graffiti can monitor and eliminate new graffiti in the same places.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

The Home Depot – 18700 Meyers Road, 48235, (313) 341-7750, www.homedepot.com – carries almost everything from paint to brushes to “how to” books and seeds.

Summer in the City – 1655 Clark Street, 48209, (248) 790-1000, www.summerinthecity.com – Provides volunteers and free paint and tools.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Keep extra paint in case touch ups are required. Summer in the City can leave extra buckets if requested.

ACTIONS

Encouraging Youth Involvement in Cleanup and Removal

Children also help to reduce graffiti by participating in activities that allow them to express their creativity while improving the appearance of their neighborhood. As an alternative to covering graffiti with a single color of paint or removing it with chemicals or a power washer, neighbors can allow children to paint over graffiti with murals or designs.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Paint
- o Paint brushes
- o Paint rollers

FOLLOW UP

Neighborhood residents have found that children can quickly spread the word about volunteer opportunities. As one Good Neighborhood resident stated, many children want to help.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

An adult should monitor any large-scale activities. Some free walls dedicated to neighborhood artists become staging areas for local taggers who perfect their skills on a free wall and then tag a nearby structure with speed and efficiency. Therefore, residents should monitor free walls for repetitive murals and for gang or street tagger insignia.

Encouraging Nearby Businesses To Form A Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID is a legally binding special assessment created by the businesses requiring them to pool funding for a common cause. BIDs direct money to the programs the BID members' choose. A well-established BID could help neighbors deal with large amounts of graffiti.

Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation
19800 Grand River, 48223
(313) 387-GRDC (4732)
www.grandmontrosedale.com

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on how to form a BID, contact the Southwest Detroit Business Association. The SDBA created the first BID in Michigan and can offer tips and insights into the process.

Southwest Detroit Business Association

Contact: Theresa Zajac

7752 West Vernor Highway, 48209

(313) 842-0986

www.southwestdetroit.com

WHAT TO CONSIDER

The Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation, along with other neighborhood associations, is pushing the city government to write an ordinance enabling Community Improvement Districts (CIDs). These are like BIDs, but they cover a residential neighborhood. With resident support, a CID could help fund neighborhood cleanup and anti-graffiti efforts.

ABANDONED VEHICLES

Introduction

In addition to being unsightly, abandoned vehicles can block traffic and can sometimes serve as storage for illegal purposes. The prevention and removal of abandoned vehicles helps to beautify neighborhoods and keep children safe.

ACTIONS

- Calling the city towing hotline and reporting the vehicle
- Posting “No Dumping” and “Neighborhood Watch” signs
- Creating a neighborhood champion program

↓ Fig. 7.34 Abandoned car in Northend Central Woodward

Source: Alex Decamp



SUCCESS STORIES

Neighborhood Champions Prevent Blight in Southwest Detroit

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision (SDEV), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the environmental conditions in Southwest Detroit, created a Neighborhood Champion program to reduce blight in the area.

Neighborhood Champions are volunteers who sign a pledge and commit to patrolling designated areas and reporting illegal issues.

According to Sarah Clark of SDEV, as of 2012, the Neighborhood Champions have had the most success with deterring illegal dumping and abandoned vehicles. When people know that a Neighborhood Champion is watching, they are less likely to dump in that neighborhood.¹

ACTIONS

Calling the City Towing Hotline And Reporting The Vehicle

The city government has contracts with various towing companies in the area. Residents can call the hotline and report an abandoned vehicle.

Legal definition of abandoned vehicles by the City of Detroit citing the city code:

Public property (streets, parks, parking lots, for example) - (1) The vehicle shall be abandoned when it has remained on a public street, highway, alley or public place for a period of forty-eight (48) continuous hours or more and from its condition and the surrounding circumstances, shall reasonably appear to be unclaimed, discarded, deserted or abandoned.²

Private property (yards and driveways) (2) A vehicle is deemed abandoned on private property when it has remained on the private property for a period of forty-eight (48) continuous hours or more without the consent of the owner or lessee of the property, or for a period of forty-eight (48) continuous hours or more after the consent of the owner has been revoked.³

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

One person needs to call to report the abandoned vehicle.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone Crime Reporting (T.C.R.): (313) 267-4600

WHAT TO CONSIDER

The responder will ask if the vehicle is abandoned. The caller needs to make sure the vehicle is abandoned and not just broken down. Also, towing companies will not tow a vehicle if it is inaccessible. For example, a tow truck will not try to tow a vehicle if it is in a yard with obstructions between the street and the vehicle. Residents can help to increase access by moving the vehicle to the street.

Posting “No Dumping” and “Neighborhood Watch” Signs

Residents can post signs on lampposts or building walls in areas with abandoned cars. Posting “no dumping” and “neighborhood watch” signs indicates that residents do not tolerate dumping in the neighborhood. They also show perpetrators that the neighbors care, are watching, and will report them.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Residents should place the signs high enough that they are clearly visible and out of reach to prevent theft. Police can provide information on rules and regulations regarding posting signs in specific neighborhoods.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

Putting up a sign usually requires two people, but covering a large area may require more volunteers. The amount of time depends on the size of area.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Hammers
- o Nails
- o Signs
- o Ladders

FOLLOW UP

A resident should periodically check that signs are still in place.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Community organizations such as The Detroit 300 sometimes provide free neighborhood watch signs for Detroit residents.

www.thedetroit300.org; (313) 826-2040

ACTIONS

Creating a Neighborhood Champion Program

Using the Neighborhood Champions program in Southwest Detroit as a model, residents can create a similar program, designating people as leaders for reporting instances of abandoned vehicles or other blight issues. The Champions monitor the neighborhood. They become familiar with the process of identifying and reporting blight issues and with the cars of the residents and their visitors. Champions can quickly spot anything out of the ordinary and handle the situation accordingly.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

The coverage area for each Champion should not be too large; one city block is usually a reasonable size. If the neighborhood has a person who likes to walk or jog, this person may fit the job well. Neighborhood residents should know who the Neighborhood Champion is.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

One Champion can monitor a designated area but may request assistance from others.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o A phone
- o Either a bike or car, depending on the size of the area

FOLLOW-UP

The Champion will need to continue to devote time to monitoring the neighborhood.

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone Crime Reporting (T.C.R.) (313) 267-4600

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision – 8701 W. Vernor, 48209. (313) 842-1961 www.sdevweb.org
sdevweb.info@gmail.com

ILLEGAL SIGNS

Introduction



Illegal signage, also known as “sign pollution” or “sign blight,” often harms neighborhood appearance. Local businesses place signs such as “Cash for Gold,” “We Buy Bad Houses,” and “Get Cash Fast” on utility poles, vacant homes, and street corners without the permission from the “owner, holder, occupant, lessee, agent or trustee thereof” to post the signs.¹

Residents consider these signs as eyesores, and the signs can distract motorists. Tackling sign blight requires relatively little time and few resources and can involve individual actions or larger group efforts.

ACTIONS

- Organizing residents to fight sign blight
- Reporting illegal signs



Fig. 7.35 Example of an illegal sign
Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Reporting Signs in Northend Central



In the Northend Central neighborhood, resident Dana Hart stood on top of her car to remove a “Cash for Junk Cars” sign posted on a wooden pole. She took the sign to a police community relations meeting and gave it to an officer who said he would call the number and tell the company to stop posting signs in the neighborhood without permission.

As a follow-up to the incident, the officer asked that Dana take photos of any vehicles or persons she saw posting these signs and forward them to the Central District Police Station.²



Fig. 7.36 Example of an illegal sign on a street corner

Source: Julie Schneider

ACTIONS

Organizing Residents to Fight Sign Blight

Block clubs, faith-based organizations, neighborhood organizations, and concerned residents can work together to remove illegally posted signs within their neighborhood. They can organize a sign blight cleanup for neighbors to canvass their neighborhood and remove signs that negatively affect the neighborhood's appearance.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOURS

The number of people and hours needed depends on the size of the area canvassed.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- o Hammer (to remove nails)
- o Pliers (to remove staples)
- o Trash bags for sign waste
- o Ladder or stepstool to reach signs

FOLLOW UP

Residents may want to revisit canvassed areas regularly to see if anyone has posted new signs. If the same business posts signs repeatedly, residents should report the company to the police.

Fig. 7.37 Example of an illegal sign near a vacant house

Source: Julie Schneider



ACTIONS

Reporting Illegal Signs

Residents can help maintain clean and safe neighborhoods by calling the Detroit Police Department and reporting any illegal signs in the area.

In City Ordinance 1964, § 3-1-1, the legal definition of posting of notices on public or private property states:

“Except a public officer or employee in the performance of a public duty or a private person in giving a legal notice, it shall be unlawful for any person to paste, post, paint, print, nail, glue, attach or otherwise fasten any sign, poster, advertisement or notice of any kind upon any public or private property, or cause or authorize the same to be done, without the consent, authorization or ratification in writing of the owner, holder, occupant, lessee, agent or trustee thereof, provided that this section shall not apply to the distribution of handbills, advertisements or other printed matter that is not affixed to the premises.”

RESOURCE CONTACT INFORMATION

Residents can report illegal signs to the Detroit Police Community Services at (313) 596-2520.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Residents should note the specific locations of the sign blight so the Police Department knows where to go to remove the signs.

Fig. 7.38 Example of illegal signs on a street corner

Source: Julie Schneider



SOURCES

VACANT LOTS SOURCES:

1. Michael Jackman *Metroitimes*, "Food Fighters: Taking control of our food supply from the kitchen garden to the community," 5/27/09. Retrieved from <http://www2.metrotimes.com/food/story.asp?id=13996> and <http://www.georgiastreetcc.com/about.html>
2. Summer in the City, a publication of the City of Detroit. 2011. p. 5. Retrieved from <http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Portals/0/docs/commandcreative/Summer%20in%20the%20City%202011.pdf>
3. State of the City Address 2012, 3/7/12. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/MayorsOffice/StateoftheCity2012.aspx>
4. Greening of Detroit, Community Planting Application. <http://greeningofdetroit.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Community-Planting-Application-revised-Summer-2011.pdf>
5. Greening of Detroit, Openspace Programming. Retrieved from <http://detroitagriculture.net/openspace-stories/>
6. Greening of Detroit, Garden Resource Program. Retrieved from <http://detroitagriculture.net/urban-garden-programs/garden-resource-program/>
7. City of Detroit, Gardening Permit/Adopt-A-Lot Permit. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/RealEstateDevelopment/GardenPermitAdoptALotPermit.aspx>; or <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/planning/pdf/RED/Garden-Adopt-A-Lot-Application-Permit.pdf>

VACANT STRUCTURES SOURCES:

1. Michigan Community Resources, *Vacant Property Legal Manual 1*. Stabilizing Vacant Property. p. 17-18. Retrieved from <http://clronline.org/resources/Vacant%20Property%20Legal%20Manual%201.pdf/view>
2. Cathy Marshall, personal interview. 27. Mar. 2012.
3. Ernestine Perkins, personal interview. 23. Feb. 2012.
4. Andrea Jackson, personal interview. 23. Mar. 2012.
5. Riet Schumack, personal interview. 16. Feb. 2012.
6. Ibid.
7. Michigan Community Resources. *Vacant Property Legal Manual 1*, p. 18.
8. Detroit Vacant Property Campaign and Michigan Community Resources, *Vacant Property Toolbox*. second edition. Retrieved from http://detroitvacantproperty.org/technical/vacant_property_toolbox_2nd_ed.pdf
9. Sean Mann, personal interview. 6. Mar. 2012
10. Riet Schumack, personal interview. 16. Feb. 2012.
11. Ibid.

12. Michigan Community Resources, *Vacant Property Legal Manual 1*, p. 14. Retrieved from <http://clronline.org/resources/Vacant%20Property%20Legal%20Manual%201.pdf/view>

13. Cathy Marshall, personal interview. 27. Mar. 2012.

14. Michigan Community Resources, *Vacant Property Legal Manual 1*, p. 21. Retrieved from <http://clronline.org/resources/Vacant%20Property%20Legal%20Manual%201.pdf/view>

15. Michigan Community Resources. Available at <http://clronline.org/resources> or http://clronline.org/resources/VPES_PropertyOwnershipTraining.pdf/view

16. Michigan Community Resources, online video tutorials. Retrieved from <http://clronline.org/resources/new-workshop-and-online-video-tutorials-help-take-the-mystery-out-of-property-ownership/>

17. City of Detroit, Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department. Retrieved from <http://71.159.23.2/BSEOnline/home.action>

18. City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department, Vacant Property Registration Ordinance Fact Sheet, 71.159.23.2/BSEOnline/downloadpdf.action?uid=664

19. Mayor Dave Bing, State of the City Address, 2012, 3/7/12

20. Riet Schumack, personal interview. 16. Feb. 2012.

POORLY MAINTAINED, OCCUPIED HOMES

1. Cathy Marshall, Personal Interview, 27. Mar. 2012.

2. North Rosedale Park Tattler, February 2011. Retrieved from http://www.northrosedalepark.org/uploads/2/7/2/4/2724239/lowres26_tattler_feb2011.pdf

3. Helen Broughton, personal interview. 13. Apr. 2012.

4. Department of Administrative Hearings Citizens' Guide. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/adminhearings/Dept.%20of%20Administrative%20Hearings%20Citizens%20Guide.pdf>

5. Michigan Community Resources. Neighborhood Quality of Life. Addressing nuisances, code violations, and other conditions in your community. Retrieved from www.clronline.org/resources/legal-lines/.../neighborhoodquality.pdf

6. Jonathan Oosting. Mlive.com. "Cass Park provides temporary refuge for former tenants of condemned apartment building" Retrieved from http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2012/03/cass_park_provides_temporary_r.html).

7. Dana Hart, personal interview. 22. Mar. 2012.

8. City of Detroit Planning & Development Department. Senior Emergency Home Repair Program. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/HousingServices/SeniorEmergencyHomeRepair.aspx>

9. City of Detroit website. Community Access

Centers, Identify and Report Code Violations.
Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/NeighborhoodCityHalls/IdentifyReportCodeViolations.aspx>

10. City of Detroit, Community Access Centers.
Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/Departments/NeighborhoodCityHalls/tabid/130/Default.aspx>

EXCESSIVE TRASH AND ILLEGAL DUMPING

1. Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
2. Linda Rhodes, personal interview. 14. Apr. 2012.
3. Kathy Stott, personal interview. 9. Mar. 2012./ Clean Neighborhoods Initiative Newsletter
4. Riet Schumack, personal interview. 16. Feb. 2012.
5. Personal observation, 21 April 2012.
6. Retrieved from <http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/DepartmentsandAgencies/DepartmentofPublicWorks/SolidWasteYardWaste.aspx>

GRAFFITI

1. Sean Mann, personal interview. 6. Mar. 2012.
2. Matthew Bihun, personal interview. 5. Mar. 2012.
3. Dana Hart, personal interview. 25. Feb. 2012.
4. Andrew Sokoly, personal interview. 21. Mar. 2012.

ABANDONED VEHICLES

1. Sarah Clark, personal interview. 27. Mar. 2012.
2. Retrieved from <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimePrevention/CommunityInvolvement.aspx>
3. Retrieved from (<http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PoliceDepartment/CrimePrevention/CommunityInvolvement.aspx>)

ILLEGAL SIGNS

1. City Ordinance 1964, § 3-1-1
2. Dana Hart, personal interview. 25. Feb. 2012.

SECTION 8: BLIGHT- REDUCTION RESOURCES



Fig. 8.0 Resources residents used during a gardening project in Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider

SUCCESS STORIES

Scarcyny Park in Southwest Detroit



In April 2011, residents of the Southwest Good Neighborhood began efforts to create a community garden called Scarcyny Park, located on the corner of Junction and Merritt Streets. The idea for the garden developed out of their desire to create something beautiful for both youth and adults in their neighborhood.

Residents met each Saturday throughout the summer to continue progress on creating the garden. Residents who organized the project asked neighbors to bring their own rakes and gloves with them to the site. By using the tools residents owned, residents transformed a vacant space into a garden that has become a place for children to play and adults to enjoy.¹



Fig. 8.1 Residents of Southwest Detroit gardening in Scarcyny Park

Source: Julie Schneider

Assistance from Outside Volunteer Groups

Each winter semester, a large number of University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) students participate in a day of service in Detroit called Detroit Partnership Day (DP Day). Detroit Partnership “seeks to unite the University of Michigan and Detroit through fulfilling community partnerships.”² Volunteers participate in various neighborhood beautification activities.

In March 2012, over 1,500 student volunteers participated in the 13th annual DP Day. Volunteers “cleared graffiti, cleaned up parks, planted flower

beds, boarded up vacant houses, tidied up elementary schools, and prepared vacant lots to become urban gardens.”³ Projects took place in 30 locations in the city, with a few projects in Brightmoor.

Residents interested in having students volunteer in their neighborhood for future DP Days can visit the Detroit Partnership website <http://www.thedp.org/> or email the Detroit partnership at dp.dir@umich.edu.

Fig. 8.2 University of Michigan volunteers painting over graffiti on Detroit Partnership Day 2012
Source: The Detroit Free Press



SUCCESS STORIES

Raising Funds for Blight Reduction in Brightmoor

Neighbors Building Brightmoor (NBB) used the Citizen Effect website to raise money for cleaning up vacant lots and creating public art. They set a budget of \$2,000, allowing people from across the world to donate through the website to help Brightmoor reach its goal. Also, through the website, NBB used social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, to spread the word about their fundraiser.

Citizen Effect offers a way to raise funds and share project ideas with people and groups all over the world.⁴

Residents interested in raising money from donors all over the world can visit the Citizen Effect website at <http://www.citizeneffect.org/> to learn more.

Fig. 8.3 Volunteers working to create public art in Brightmoor

Source: Citizen Effect



Painting an Overpass in Southwest Detroit

Sean Mann and members of the Hubbard Farms block club grew tired of looking at boarded up vacant homes on their block. One day they decided to paint over the boards with a neighborhood symbol, which attracted attention from their neighbors. Building on the momentum created by painting the boards, Sean and other residents wanted to take on a larger project. In 2008, residents decided they wanted to paint over graffiti on the viaduct overpass on W. Grand Blvd (see Section 7: Issues and Actions for Reducing Blight, Graffiti). This project required more funding than the residents had, so they partnered

with the Southwest Detroit Business Association (SDBA) to apply for a grant through Michigan Community Resources (formerly Community Legal Resources). The grant covered the cost of painting supplies and more boards to cover windows on other vacant homes in the neighborhood.

Through a partnership with SDBA, which served as their fiduciary, residents secured funding to accomplish a goal. The overpass continues to serve as beautiful public art in their neighborhood and has since had minimal instances of graffiti.⁵

Fig. 8.4 Vacant house in Southwest Detroit

Source: Julie Schneider



BLIGHT-REDUCTION RESOURCES

Introduction

The final step in creating a plan is identifying resources. Residents may believe that the only way to reduce blight is to secure grants, but this is far from the truth. Before applying for grant funding, residents can look within the neighborhood and surrounding area to determine if the needed human and financial resources already exist. While some residents secure grant funding for neighborhood cleanup efforts and blight reduction, others pull their own tools, skills, and money together to make projects a success.

ACTIONS

- Tapping neighborhood resources
- Tapping non-financial outside resources
- Tapping financial resources



Fig. 8.5 The Skillman Foundation banner
Source: Raquel Obumba

ACTIONS

Tapping Neighborhood Resources

Before seeking grant funding, residents can look within their blocks, neighborhoods, and social groups (including churches and businesses) to see what resources and skills already exist. Using each other's tools and skills can help save time and money on blight-reduction efforts, while not forcing residents to wait for a response from potential grant providers, which can take several months.

After determining the tools and equipment for the activity residents would like to perform, residents can ask other neighbors if they have the additional tools and equipment needed.

HOW TO FIND RESOURCES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- Residents can ask neighbors who are active in block clubs, neighborhood groups, and community centers what skills and tools they have.
- Residents can go door-to-door to ask inactive neighbors what skills and tools they have and if they would be willing to lend them for blight-reduction efforts.
- Residents can ask local businesses if they are willing to donate boards, paint, tools, or equipment. Businesses may also serve as sources of volunteers.
- If inactive residents do not have skills, tools, or the physical ability to help, residents can ask if they can provide a small financial donation toward purchasing tools and materials.
- Residents can ask their friends, church members and members of social groups that may be outside the immediate neighborhood if

they can lend their skills and tools to assist in the neighborhood's efforts.

If residents cannot secure the tools and equipment needed for the activity, residents can consider organizing a neighborhood-wide fundraiser to raise the money to purchase needed items. Raising money within the neighborhood will allow residents to gain funding faster than applying for a grant. Additionally, some fundraising methods could serve as a means to involve more residents in blight-reduction efforts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE FUNDRAISERS

Collection of bottles and cans for recycling money

- o Aluminum cans and plastic bottles can generate revenue for residents to fund some of their blight-reduction efforts that require additional tools and equipment. Residents can either collect cans and bottles as they use them in their homes or collect them from vacant lots and trash along the street.
- o Residents can inform neighbors about the can and bottle collection project and urge them to participate.
- o On a specific day, residents can collect all bottles and cans to cash them in at a local recycling facility.

ACTIONS

Tapping Neighborhood Resources (continued)

Neighborhood Potluck

- o Residents can host a neighborhood-wide party or barbeque at a resident's home or in a local park to foster neighbor interaction and provide an opportunity to ask for small donations.

- o To keep costs low, residents can ask their neighbors to bring their favorite dish, drinks, paper products (plates, cups, napkins), or plastic silverware.

- o Residents can work to keep track of how much funding a project requires. Knowing how much they need will allow residents to know how close they are to reaching the goal.

↓ Fig. 8.6 Holy Cross Baptist Church
Source: Melodi Lithouki



Tapping Non-Financial Outside Resources

Metro Detroit is home to many colleges and universities, all of which include students and professors interested in making an impact in the city. Frequently, student groups look for opportunities to volunteer by assisting residents in achieving their neighborhood's goals. In instances where student groups become available and interested in assisting the neighbors with blight-reduction efforts, residents can take advantage of the opportunity to gain a helping hand.

Residents can contact colleges and universities to find student groups who are able to assist with the neighborhood's efforts. To do this, residents can reach out to the student activities department at each of the universities and inform them that the residents are looking for volunteers to assist with a project. Table 8.1 lists the phone numbers and email addresses of the student activities departments of colleges and universities in Detroit and the surrounding area.

Table 8.1 Potential Sources of Volunteers

College or University Name	Phone Number	Email Address
Wayne State University Community Engagement@Wayne http://www.communityengagement.wayne.edu	Monita Mongo (313) 577-9216	momungo@wayne.edu
University of Detroit Mercy Institute for Leadership and Service http://www.udmercy.edu/institute	Father Tim Hipskind (313) 993-2003	theinstitute@udmercy.edu
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor Ginsberg Center http://ginsberg.umich.edu	(734) 647-7402	ginsberginfo@umich.edu
Eastern Michigan University Vision Volunteer Center http://www.emich.edu/vision	Jasmina Camo (734) 487-9611	jcamo@emich.edu
College for Creative Studies http://www.collegeforcreativestudies.edu	(313) 664-7400	
Madonna University Office of Service Learning http://www.madonna.edu/community/office-of-service-learning	(734) 432-5704	servicelearning@madonna.edu
Marygrove College Department of Student Life http://www.marygrove.edu	(313) 927-1210	ghoward@marygrove.edu

ACTIONS

Tapping Non-Financial Outside Resources (continued)

Prior to contacting a university or college, residents should develop a plan to identify what activities the volunteers will perform during the day of service. Additionally, residents can let the volunteers know if the neighbors need additional materials or tools that they can donate to assist in the efforts. The student groups often want to know the work that the residents expect of them and what they need to bring on the day of service.

The State of Michigan requires high school students to fulfill a community service requirement before graduating; therefore, high school students can be another source of volunteers to assist with the

neighborhood's efforts. Residents can reach out to high schools within or near the neighborhood to see if they have students interested in volunteering to work on blight.

While large volunteer groups can provide assistance to resident's efforts, some drawbacks exist in using them. Residents need to do a great deal of work to prepare for the volunteers' work and they may need to train the volunteers. Volunteers may not work as hard as residents expect. For example, they may want to take pictures, eat, or tour the area. In scenarios like this, residents should try to remain positive and encourage volunteers to remain engaged.⁶



Fig. 8.7 Volunteer management sign
Source: Julia Billings

Tapping Financial Resources

If residents cannot locate volunteers, tools, and money within the neighborhood, then residents may decide to look for financial assistance outside the neighborhood to fill in gaps or fund an entire project. Many grant providers require that grant recipients are non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status. If residents belong to an organization that does not have 501(c)(3) status, they can partner with an organization that has the designation to apply for a grant.

Non-profit organizations and community development corporations (CDCs) that work in neighborhoods frequently write grant proposals for programs and know how to write a “fundable” grant. Before approaching an organization to assist with securing

funding, residents can develop a clear plan for their project and provide it to the non-profit or CDC as a basis for the grant proposal. Grant providers usually require a budget explaining how the organization plans to use the money. Providing a plan including a budget can assist the organization with writing the grant proposal.

The Skillman Foundation offers non-profit organizations in the six Good Neighborhoods the opportunity to apply for grants ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 for programs that involve children and youth. This requirement should not discourage residents from seeking Skillman Foundation grant money because many blight-reduction activities can offer opportunities for youth (see Section 6: Involving the Neighbors).



Fig. 8.8 Tractor in Brightmoor
Source: Michigan Land Study Team

ACTIONS

Tapping Financial Resources (continued)

Other foundations and organizations also provide grant funding to neighborhood organizations. Following is a list of potential sources for financial assistance:

Table 8.2 Possible Funding Sources

<p>Michigan Community Resources (formerly Community Legal Resources) http://clronline.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides SAFE grants for projects focused on crime, safety, vacant property safety, and neighborhood stability. • SAFE grant funding is not available to individuals but is available to organizations with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) status. <p>See Appendix B for more information about SAFE program qualifications and application requirements.</p>
<p>Prevention Network http://www.preventionnetwork.org/gniskillman.aspx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides grants for projects focused on beautification, arts and culture, service learning and civic engagement, youth development and more. • Applicants must be nonprofit organizations operating within one of the Good Neighborhoods but do not need to have 501(c)(3) status. • Grants range from \$500 to \$5,000. <p>See Appendix C for more information about Good Neighborhoods Community Connections Grant Program qualifications and application requirements.</p>
<p>Citizen Effect http://www.citizeneffect.org/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Effect is a tool to raise money from donors across the world. • The website allows those seeking funding to provide project details and then allows people to donate to the cause. • Citizen Effects provides the raised money to the organization or project leader. • Residents can set the amount they want to raise. • What to Consider: Citizen Effect lists several projects looking for donations and a project may get overlooked.

Sources:

1. Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision – Clean Neighborhoods Initiative Newsletter (Spring/Summer 2011), contributing editors: Anne Fennema, Kim Jongsma, and Sarah Clark.

2. The Detroit Partnership. Retrieved from <http://www.thedp.org/>

3. Bill Laitner, “U-M Students, Help Chrysler

Volunteers Spruce Up Detroit Neighborhoods,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 2012.

4. Citizen Effect. Retrieved from <http://www.citizeneffect.org/>

5. Sean Mann, personal interview, 6. Mar. 2012.

6. Riet Schumack, personal interview, 25. Feb. 2012.

SECTION 9: COLLABORATING ACROSS NEIGHBORHOODS

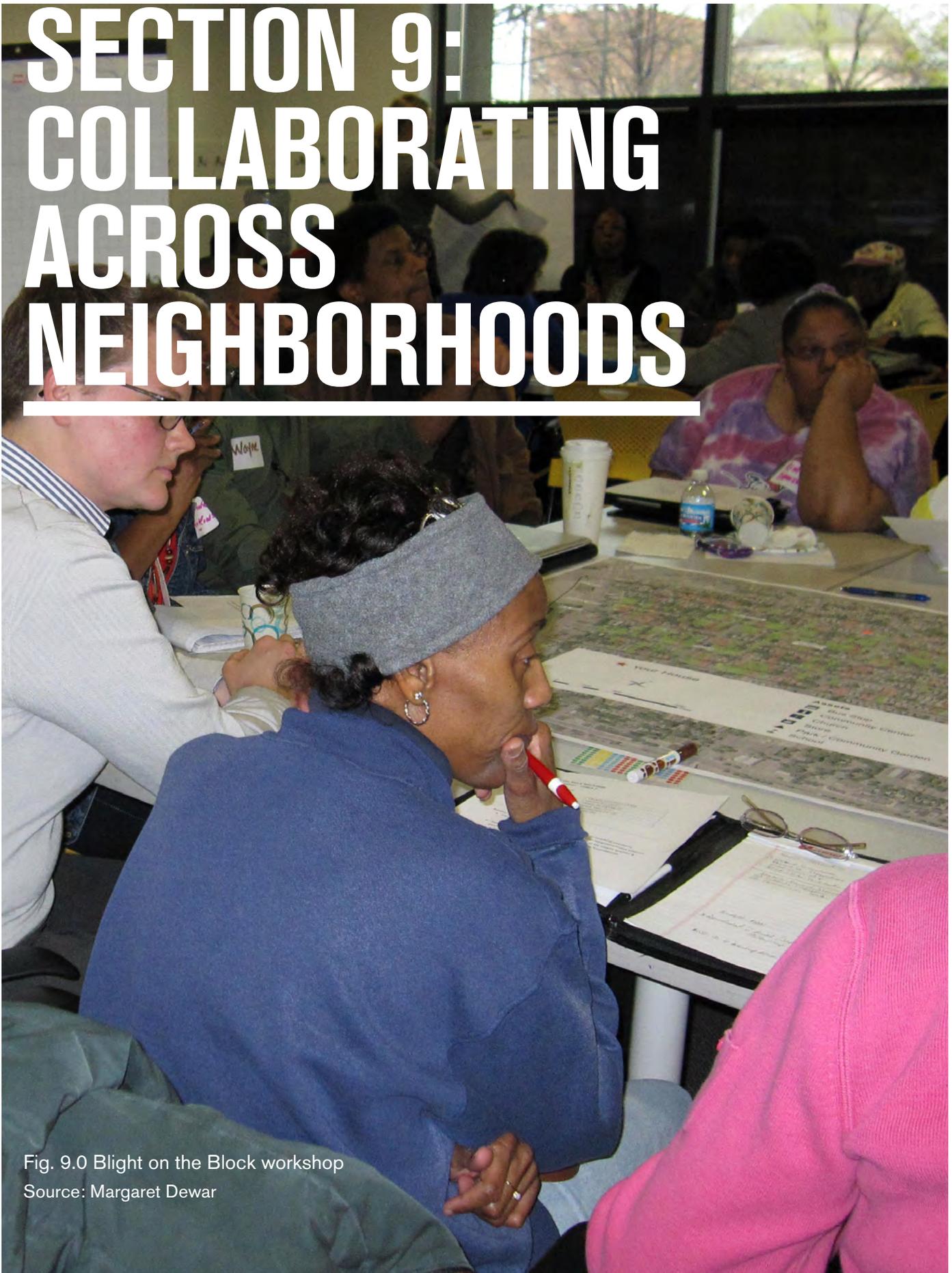


Fig. 9.0 Blight on the Block workshop
Source: Margaret Dewar

SUCCESS STORIES

Fighting Poor Property Maintenance Standards

Organizations in several different cities can collaborate to gather information and collectively voice their complaint. In mid-April 2012, the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and four local fair housing organizations worked together to file a federal housing discrimination complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) against U.S. Bancorp and U.S. Bank National Bank Association. This complaint came out of an undercover investigation of U.S. Bank's property maintenance practices in seven metropolitan areas: Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; Baltimore, Maryland; Dayton, Ohio; Miami/Ft. Lauderdale,

Florida; Oakland/Richmond/Concord, California; and Washington, D.C. Investigators found that U.S. Bank maintained and marketed its repossessed properties in white neighborhoods, while neglecting property maintenance and marketing of its properties in predominantly African-American and Latino neighborhoods. NFHA filed the complaint very recently, so HUD has yet to determine the outcome of the complaint or the consequences for U.S. Bank. However, this complaint is one of the first of its kind to scrutinize banks' property maintenance practices and is a step toward legal enforcement of real estate owned properties' maintenance, regardless of the race of the neighborhood's residents.¹

↓ Fig. 9.1 Vacant house, Brightmoor
Source: Michigan Land Study Team



REASONS FOR COLLABORATION

Residents can address some aspects of blight more effectively by involving more than one neighborhood. This section lists three issues that the six Good Neighborhoods could work on collaboratively: tax foreclosure, property maintenance, and demolition of dangerous structures. For each issue, this chapter provides a brief overview of the problem and an outline of how individual neighborhoods can prepare, followed by an explanation of how the cross-neighborhood actions could work. This is not a comprehensive list of potential cross-neighborhood efforts, but rather a starting point for the residents in the six Good Neighborhoods to think about which issues they could address most effectively by allying with other neighborhoods.

Collaboration across neighborhoods requires significant coordination and time. However, some issues merit the effort because collaboration can increase the impact of a project. Below are some considerations for determining whether to address an issue at the individual or cross-neighborhood level.

SHARED RESOURCES

Some resources, such as grants, are available only to neighborhoods or organizations working together in collaborations. Information sharing is another instance where residents could collaborate across neighborhoods. For instance, Ted Phillips from United Community Housing Coalition can provide information regarding the tax foreclosure process, but an educational event requires numerous participants – a number only reached by including multiple neighborhoods. Other actions, such as property title searches, may require a large upfront financial investment. Working together, the Good

Neighborhoods can share the initial cost as well as the resources or information purchased. Later, this section provides more information regarding how the Good Neighborhoods can use title searches for reducing blight.

INCREASED POLITICAL POWER

When a specific issue affects more than one neighborhood, collaboration may offer benefits. By working together, neighbors from across the city can present a unified voice in order to campaign for a change or an action. Having the Good Neighborhoods support and campaign for a specific policy change or enforcement can increase political awareness of and concern for the issue. For example, poorly maintained real estate owned properties is one issue the Good Neighborhoods could address together. One neighborhood may have a small number of neglected properties owned by one party. However, within the six Good Neighborhoods the number of neglected properties owned by one party could be much larger. Owners of multiple neglected properties could receive extra scrutiny from government officials if residents can persuade these officials of the negative impact the neglected properties have on neighborhoods. The National Fair Housing Alliance success story is another example of how collective action can increase political power. By working together, the National Fair Housing Alliance and other housing organizations determined U.S. Bank's property maintenance practices discriminatory and filed a federal housing discrimination complaint; the federal government will investigate the issue.

UNDERSTANDING THE TAX FORECLOSURE PROCESS

Unpaid property taxes result in many homes in Detroit neighborhoods facing tax foreclosure. Often homeowners are not aware of resources that may help them keep their homes. Additionally, renters and homeowners alike may not know how long they can continue living in the house once the foreclosure process begins. The Wayne County Treasurer provides programs to help property owners redeem their property. Taking advantage of these programs requires understanding how they work and who is eligible. Residents and organizations across the Good Neighborhoods can collaborate to inform property owners of programs that can help them pay overdue taxes or redeem their property after forfeiture to the County Treasurer by distributing information and hosting neighborhood workshops.

The following timeline outlines the property tax foreclosure process.

PROPERTY TAX FORFEITURE AND FORECLOSURE TIMELINE (2009 TAXES)²

This timeline shows the tax foreclosure process. Foreclosure occurs about one year after forfeiture, and two years after the tax payment deadline.

Foreclosure refers to when the Treasurer takes title of the property.

January 2010 - Full payment of 2009 City of Detroit property taxes due.

March 1, 2010 – Unpaid taxes considered delinquent. The City of Detroit sends them to the county Treasurer for collection.

March 1, 2011 – Property forfeited to the county Treasurer.

March 1, 2012 – Circuit Court may enter a judgment of foreclosure.

March 31, 2012 – Officially the last date a property owner may redeem his or her property by paying outstanding taxes, interest, and fees. The Wayne County Treasurer normally allows homeowners to redeem their property up to the date of auction.

April 1, 2012 – Property is eligible for foreclosure. When this happens, property owners lose all rights to the property, and the property's title passes to the Wayne County Treasurer.

September & October 2012 – Property offered for sale at auction.

INFORMATION GATHERING

The Good Neighborhoods can gather information about tax-foreclosed properties and those in danger of tax foreclosure in their area. The Wayne County Treasurer publishes a list of forfeited properties that face foreclosure in the current year. This information is available through the Wayne County Treasurer's website: www.co.wayne.mi.us/treasurer.³ To check this list:

- Go to the site and select the “delinquent property” dropdown button
- Select “forfeited property list with interested parties”
- Open a file containing the addresses and property owners for all properties likely to be foreclosed in the current year
- This information is organized by Township and file numbers. To find a specific property address press “ctrl +f” on the computer keyboard which will open up a “find” box. Type the property address in the “find” box, and the computer will locate the property.

Fig. 9.2 Occupied house in Osborn, Detroit

Source: Urban Planning Students, Filling in the Gaps, http://www.tcaup.umich.edu/planning/students/student_work/project_galleries/filling_gaps_plan_vacant_properties_osborn/



In addition to searching through the Wayne County Treasurer's Office, the Good Neighborhoods can ask the Technical Assistance Center (TAC) or Ted Phillips to request a list of all forfeited properties that face foreclosure in the current year.

Tax delinquency information is also available prior to the year the property goes into foreclosure. To check which properties are delinquent:

- Go to the Wayne County Treasurers website
- Click on the “delinquent property” dropdown button
- Select “tax listing inquiry/pay taxes”
- Scroll to the bottom of the page after reading the information and click the “enter site” button
- Read the disclaimer regarding accessing delinquent tax information and click the “accept disclaimer” button
- From there enter a property address and select Detroit from the municipality identification dropdown menu
- This information is in an Adobe PDF which does not allow for data manipulation. The information is available in an Excel file, but the County Treasurer's Office will not give that to an individual. A possible solution is working with either the TAC or United Community Housing Coalition to obtain the data in an

TAX FORECLOSURE (CONTINUED)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION

Protecting owner occupants from losing homes due to tax foreclosure may involve informing those people who have not paid their property taxes about available resources, working with the Wayne County Treasurer's office, and with community organizations experienced with this issue. The Good Neighborhoods can hold meetings, facilitated by the TAC, to provide a place for those facing a tax foreclosure to learn about options available to them. Homeowners and renters can be encouraged to stay in their homes, as they are able to do so through the end of the tax foreclosure process. Representatives from non-profit organizations, such as Ted Phillips from United Community Housing Coalition and representatives of other housing-focused and legal aid organizations, could provide useful information to property owners and renters at these meetings.

Potential Topics for Political Advocacy

- Push those banks that own large numbers of properties in tax foreclosure to pay taxes and maintain properties.
- Advocate for changes to Michigan property tax foreclosure law including reducing interest rates and fees assessed to delinquent payments for all or for those owner-occupants who can prove hardship.

EXAMPLES OF AVAILABLE OPTIONS FOR DELINQUENT PROPERTY OWNER-OCCUPANTS⁴

The following resources provide the property owner-occupant with possible resources available for assistance in paying taxes and maintaining ownership. These resources are available only to occupants whose property ownership is legally recognized. Informing homeowners of the resources available to them is critical. Good Neighborhoods could work together as well as with such organizations as United Community Housing Coalition to inform homeowners and direct them to resources.

To be eligible for these resources the applicant's name must be on the property title. Problems sometimes arise when home occupants inherit the property from a deceased relative, but because division of the property did not go through probate, the law does not recognize the homeowner as such. If the homeowner is the person who would inherit the house under state law, then going through probate court may resolve this issue. The TAC, Sugar Hill Law Center, Michigan Legal Services, and United Community Housing Coalition can provide more information and assistance with the probate process.

A legally recognized owner-occupant is eligible for the following assistance:

- **Wayne County Taxpayer Assistance Department** – The office is interested in working with property owners to help them keep their homes and can help property owners through such processes as payment plans, deferments, and hardship exemptions. Call (313) 224-6105.

- **Partial payment plans** – The Wayne County Treasurer's Office is eager to work with those people delinquent on their property taxes in setting up payment plans that allow property holders to redeem their homes. For more information, contact the Tax Assistance Program at (313)-224-6105.

- **Substantial Financial Hardship Extension (Wayne County)** – This presents an opportunity to have property withheld from a foreclosure petition for reasons of substantial hardship. Property owners must apply for this extension through the Treasurer's Office. This hardship extension is only available to owners for one year.

- **Summer Property Tax Deferment (City of Detroit)** – Senior citizens, disabled people, veterans, and farmers may apply with the city treasurer to delay paying summer taxes until the winter tax bill is due. The City of Detroit will not charge penalties or additional interest during this deferment period.

- **Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit** – This is a program through which eligible taxpayers may be granted a tax credit for an amount of their property tax that exceeds a specific proportion of their income. To apply, the homeowner must complete the Michigan Homestead Property Tax Credit Claim MI-1040CR and deliver it to the Michigan Department of Treasury. Household income must be less than \$82,650 to qualify.

- **State of Michigan Emergency Relief Program** – The Michigan Department of Human Services administers this program, which will assist in paying back taxes for those demonstrating need. Homeowners may contact

the Michigan DHS toll-free for more information about the program and to determine eligibility at (855)-275-6424, or the Wayne County DHS at (313)-456-1000.

- **Poverty exemption (City of Detroit)** – Poverty exemption status will suspend the homeowner's property taxes for as long as they have poverty exemption status. A poverty exemption will not assist with paying delinquent taxes but may grant relief from current taxes so the homeowner can pay his or her back taxes. Homeowners file the application with the City of Detroit Assessment Division (6th floor, of Coleman A. Young Municipal Center), and applicants must present several documents in addition to the application. Call the Assessment Division for more details at (313)-224-3011. The process to obtain poverty exemption can be challenging; therefore, residents could seek assistance from United Community Housing Coalition.

In addition to the resources above, anyone has the opportunity to purchase a property at auction or after the auction period. For properties not sold in the first auction where the minimum bid is the sum of taxes owed, fees, and interest, the former owner may purchase at the second auction, starting at the minimum bid of \$500. Additionally, in the past couple of years the Wayne County Treasurer has given the occupants of those homes not sold at auction – who may be former homeowners if they never vacated property – the chance to purchase the home for \$500.

HOLDING OWNERS OF MULTIPLE PROPERTIES ACCOUNTABLE

Detroit has some of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation, and banks and other investors who repossessed property are now responsible for maintenance of that property.⁵ Some owners neglect their property maintenance duties, and the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department has so far been unable to keep up with code enforcement. Residents could determine the owners of several of the most neglected properties in areas across the Good Neighborhoods, then with a unified voice bring them to the attention of the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Before collaborating with the other Good Neighborhoods, residents in each individual neighborhood can compile a list of all poorly maintained vacant properties. Signs of poor maintenance could be broken windows, excessive trash, graffiti, or an overgrown lawn. After compiling a list, residents can look up the ownership details of the property and submit the information to the TAC who will then look to see if there is a pattern of neglect within the neighborhoods. For example, one property owner could be responsible for neglected properties in several different areas or own several properties concentrated within a neighborhood.

To determine ownership of property:

- Go to <http://www.detroitmi.gov/>.
- Click the "online services" tab, then click the "property tax" located near the top of the list.

- The next page is a general disclaimer. After reading, scroll down and click the "accept" button.
- Create a user account. Creating a user account is useful if you wish to look up information on your own property.
- In the middle of the page is a sentence that reads, "**There are several ways to find property. Click here to:**" Click on the word "here," and it will direct you to the search page.
- There are three options on the search page: looking up by owner name, by address, and by parcel identification number.
- Choose the address option and type in the address of the blighted property.
- The results show all properties at or near that address, along with the name of the owner or taxpayer of record.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

Please note that this site only shows the taxpayer of record for the property. There is a \$2 fee if you wish to look at the tax information as well. For the purposes of this cross-neighborhood action, only the property owner, not the tax information, is necessary. Another consideration is that this information may be out of date. The city assessor keeps the tax information current, but ownership information can change and take a year or two to update. Therefore, even if the database shows a private owner, the property may now be bank-owned.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION

After each neighborhood gathers information on neglectful property owners, they can then compile lists from all six Good Neighborhoods. If owners are responsible for multiple neglected properties, then the Good Neighborhoods, in coordination with the TAC and the Skillman Foundation, can use their collective power to encourage city code enforcement. However, residents should be aware that no pattern of neglect may exist, and therefore no collective action may be available.

The Good Neighborhoods could also collaborate on obtaining more up-to-date property ownership information. Ownership records from the tax website may be out of date, but title companies can perform a professional title search of documents in the Wayne County Register of Deeds. Title companies can look up properties by either parcel number or address, which allows residents to investigate the owners of particularly neglected properties. They charge a fee, generally between \$125 and \$150 per search. However, title companies offer discount rates for bulk searches. A title examiner at Crossroads Title mentioned that his company has in the past arranged for reduced rates for bulk searches. Title companies with experience in Wayne County that could perform title searches include:

Crossroads Title

(810)-232-3833

<http://www.crossroadstitle.com>

Title Source

(888)-848-5355

<http://www.titlesource.com>

Greco Title

(248)-594-3839

<https://www.grecotitle.com>

Vanguard Title

(586)-799-4400

<https://www.vgtitle.com>

LaMont Title

(313)-963-9221

<http://www.lamonttitle.com>

DEMOLITION OF DANGEROUS STRUCTURES

With tens of thousands of properties on the city's demolition list, the process of clearing all these structures will take years. Each of the six Good Neighborhoods is home to some of these properties, but their exact order of demolition is unknown to residents. However, the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department prioritize demolition for properties that are structurally unsound or burned, as well as properties that attract significant crime. In addition to these criteria, a property is more likely to be demolished if located near a park, on a school route, or near other places that children frequent.

Given the large number of properties on the demolition list, the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department may not have up-to-date information regarding property conditions. Therefore, with the help of the TAC and the Skillman Foundation, residents are in a position to highlight to city officials which properties in their neighborhoods require demolition as soon as possible.

INFORMATION GATHERING

Each of the six Good Neighborhoods will first need to assess properties in need of demolition. Be sure to check the ownership status of each property, as only vacant homes may be on the demolition list. While the city's Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department requires only the property's address, additional information could increase the chances of demolition. The assessment could also include information about the condition of the property, such as whether the property is burnt-out or structurally unsound. Other information could include its location near children or the amount

and types of crime the structure attracts. Residents identifying the most dangerous structures on their block could also gather information regarding specific property conditions.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION

Once each neighborhood creates a list of the properties most in need of demolition, the six Good Neighborhoods can compile them into one list. In coordination with the TAC and the Skillman Foundation, residents could submit the list to the city Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department. Because the city receives a limited amount of federal funds for demolition, the city cannot demolish every property listed. However, regularly updating the list will increase the chances of demolition for some of the most dangerous properties.

SUSTAINING BLIGHT-REDUCTION EFFORTS

To maintain effective and long-term blight-reduction efforts, residents could continue to meet in TAC-organized cross-neighborhood blight meetings. In addition to continuing existing efforts, residents and the TAC can develop solutions to new challenges. These meetings could occur two or more times during the year and serve as an opportunity for residents to share their successes as well as challenges. Additionally, these meetings may offer an arena for developing cross-neighborhood strategies. The Skillman Foundation along with the TAC will continue to support resident efforts by providing meeting space, educational information, and some funding.



Sources:

1. National Fair Housing Alliance. Fair Housing Organizations File Discrimination Complaint Against U.S. Bank (Washington, D.C.: NFHA), 17 Apr. 2012.
2. *Detroit Vacant Property Campaign Toolkit*. Retrieved from <http://detroitvacantproperty.org/technical/toolbox.pdf>; Catherine Coenen, et al, *From Revenue to Reuse: Managing Tax-Reverted Properties in Detroit*, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning - University of Michigan, April 2011.
4. 2012 List of Forfeited Property Subject to Foreclosure, Wayne County Treasurer, retrieved from www.co.wayne.mi/us/treasurer_dp_fplwip.htm, retrieved on April 2, 2012.
5. *Detroit Vacant Property Campaign Toolkit*. Retrieved from <http://detroitvacantproperty.org/technical/toolbox.pdf>
6. Michigan Foreclosure Data, Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Retrieved from: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/Data_230191_7.pdf



Fig. 9.3 Georgia Street Mural, Detroit
Source: Julie Schneider

APPENDICES



Fig. 10.0 Murals on an abandoned house, Brightmoor
Source: Michelle Lam

APPENDIX B

SAFE PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS



615 Griswold Suite 1805, Detroit, MI 48226
T: 313 962 3171 | F: 313 962 0797
info@mi-community.org
www.mi-community.org

SECURITY ALTERNATIVE FUNDING & EMPOWERMENT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Michigan Community Resources seeks proposals, under a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, for the use of Security Alternative Funding and Empowerment (SAFE) program funds.

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY AND PROPERTY PRESERVATION PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATIONS

Program Purpose

SAFE is designed to empower Detroit residents to organize, plan for, and create a better quality of life in their neighborhoods. **Focused on crime and safety activities, SAFE provides supplemental financial assistance to community-based organizations for resident-initiated vacant property maintenance and neighborhood security efforts.**

We fund projects that:

- Serve Detroit neighborhoods and communities.
- Preserve neighborhood property values and enhances community safety through vacant property maintenance and neighborhood security initiatives.
- Achieve improvements to neighborhood stability and quality of life

We DO NOT fund projects that:

- Fund operating or administrative activities
- Require unauthorized entry into vacant structures
- Encourage vigilante activities

We give priority to projects that:

- Focus in concentrated areas to increase the impact of maintenance activities
- Build on preexisting vacant property inventories, planning, and activities
- Employ a comprehensive, strategic approach to vacant property management
- Embody an innovative framework for addressing the factors that affect neighborhood security
- Leverage funds from additional sources such as private, foundation, or city sources
- Reflect meaningful collaboration among community groups, faith-based institutions, and/or governmental entities

THE GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible Requests

We support projects directly benefiting Detroit's neighborhoods by nonprofit, community-based organizations. **We will not award grants to individuals.**

Applicant organizations must meet the following criteria:

- A 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) nonprofit with proof of tax-exempt status;
- A minimum of three years of experience in community-based work;
- A minimum yearly operating budget of \$2,000



THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

If your organization does not meet the conditions above, you may still submit a proposal as long as your organization submits a proposal with a co-applicant who does satisfy all of the eligible criteria. For example, a resident organization without 501(c)(3) status may partner with a local faith-based institution or community development corporation that meets the applicant criteria. In that case, the eligible organization would sign the proposal as a co-applicant and would act as a fiduciary for the grant money to the resident organization.

THE GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

Application Procedures

Please submit an application containing the completed application form and all of the required attachments. We will contact you if we have questions or require additional information. **We will acknowledge your application within 2 business days of receipt.**

After submission, the applications are reviewed by an external committee comprised of community, business and non-profit leaders from your respective community. Each application will be assessed on the quality of the proposal; the capacity to implement proposed strategies; and the impact on the quality of life in Detroit neighborhoods. Upon completion of the review process, your organization will be notified about the status of your application.

Application Timeline

March 7 th , 2012	RFP Announcement
March 14 th , 2012	SAFE Application Release
March 20 th , 2012	SAFE Informational & Orientation @ Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan 2131 Beaufait Detroit, MI 48207
April 11 th , 2012	Application submission deadline
Beginning May 2 nd , 2012	Award announcements

Additional Funding Opportunity through Detroit4Detroit.

This year SAFE applicants will have an additional opportunity for funding through Detroit4Detroit, a project of Citizen Effect. Detroit4Detroit is designed to connect citizens to projects happening right in their own backyard. Working with local nonprofits, Detroit4Detroit will identify approximately 150 community projects in Detroit. Lead fundraisers (or Citizen Philanthropists) will then select projects that they want to lead the fundraising for.

SAFE projects that have not been selected to receive a grant will be submitted to Detroit4Detroit. If your project meets their criteria, it will be placed on the Detroit4Detroit website and may be selected by a Citizen Philanthropist. You will be informed at each step of the process. This partnership with Detroit4Detroit does not require any additional work on the part of SAFE applicants. It's just another way to try to fund great projects to benefit our City.



THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

APPENDIX C GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS GRANT PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS



Good Neighborhoods Community Connections Grant Program

Community Connections is a collaboration between Prevention Network and The Skillman Foundation as part of their Good Neighborhoods program.



Michigan's network to support and expand community substance abuse prevention.

Guidelines

Community Connections small grants are designed to empower residents, youth, and families in six Detroit neighborhoods to reach their community goal and create safe, caring communities on behalf of children.

Projects must impact the stated goal for a specific Good Neighborhood community and benefit youth.

Projects may include activities designed for:

- Beautification of outdoor spaces
- Mentoring, tutoring, and other positive youth programs
- Increased and improved community interaction
- Intergenerational experiences
- Youth development, building youth leadership
- Building a community organization's leadership and capacity
- Building alliances between grassroots groups and established youth and family serving agencies
- Arts and culture, including public art such as murals, street performances, etc.
- Developing money management, employment, education financing, and other knowledge/skills for career development
- Service learning and civic engagement

Grants will not support the following:

- Capital campaigns
- Endowment funds
- Government agencies or departments
- Lobbying efforts
- Political groups
- Projects or activities carried out for religious purposes
- Fundraising
- Purchase of property (land and buildings)
- Supplanting funds for existing programs

YOU ARE ADVISED to read all pages of the guidelines and the application form before starting to apply for a Community Connections Grant.

IF YOU NEED HELP filling out the application, contact Prevention Network at 800-968-4968, or Coordinator Lisa Leverette at 313-770-7057.

**Mail applications to: Prevention Network, POB 4458, East Lansing, MI 48826-0994
If necessary to meet deadline, fax applications to: 517-393-6931**

ELIGIBILITY, REQUIREMENTS, AND GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

- Applicants must be an organization. Grants will not be awarded to individuals.
- Applicants must be not-for-profit organizations. But they do not need to have federal tax exempt status (501C3) or incorporation papers, financial reports, or any particular level of income or annual budget.
- Youth as well as adults may apply on behalf of their organizations. To receive grant funds, an organization must have adults (for example, a board) who are responsible for funds.
- Organizations which have a bank or some other account for depositing funds and paying bills may handle their own grant money. They are not required to have a fiduciary.
- Examples of organizations which can apply: schools and school groups (preference given to projects initiated by parents or students), faith based organizations, neighborhood block clubs, youth councils, advisory committees, work sites, social and civic organizations, etc.
- Organizations may apply for only one grant at a time. If funded, they must complete their project and submit the Final Report before being eligible to apply again.
- Within a one year time period, a group is eligible for a maximum of two grants (see requirement above) and a maximum total of \$10,000.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDED PROJECTS

- Grants will be awarded in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$5000.
- The maximum grant award is \$5000.
- Only one grant (maximum \$5000) will be awarded for any one project.
- Grants will fund only projects which support the purpose for the Good Neighborhoods program and will meet a specific neighborhood's goal (see page *i* and Glossary on page *iv*).
- Projects must be designed to achieve at least one of the purposes listed in the guidelines (see page *i*).
- Projects must be designed by and for the residents of a Good Neighborhoods community, and take place within that community (except for trips, etc.).
- Projects must take place within a year (12 months) from the date a grant is awarded.
- Grant funds will not be awarded for project activity which begins (takes place) before the date a grant is awarded for that project.
- Grant applicants must provide support letters from: (1) The principal of a school where a project will be carried out, or students will be involved in the project during school time; (2) Spokesperson for a church, community center, etc. where a project will be carried out; (3) Spokesperson for any "partner organization" whose involvement is essential for carrying out a project.

- Grant awardees must submit a Final Report of the funded project. A form for this report is provided with the grant check.

GRANT AWARD PROCESS

- Applications are reviewed and funding decisions made on a monthly basis.
- Applications must be received by the final day of any month for consideration the following month. [Example: received August 31 and reviewed September 13.] An address and fax number for submitting applications are on the application form.
- Applications will be considered ONLY IF pages 1, 4, and 5 are submitted on the application form or a photocopy. [Pages 2 and 3 may be computer generated or some other form.]
- Applications are reviewed by a Resident Panel from the Good Neighborhoods neighborhoods. Their funding recommendations are approved by Prevention Network's board of directors.
- Funding decisions are made by the second Wednesday of each month. Applicants will be notified in writing about funding decisions (whether funded or not).
- Grant checks are mailed to recipients within 2-4 weeks of the date a grant is awarded. They are sent to the address specified on the application. They are sent by certified mail (signature from someone at the address is required).
- Occasionally the review panel has questions about a proposed project or wants evidence that critical pieces are in place. Getting this information from the applicant could delay the grant decision process. Applicants should allow enough time for this review process before their project is scheduled to start.
- Applications are confidential. They will not be returned, nor will information in regard to an application be shared with anyone except the contact person named on the application. Names of organizations receiving grants and a brief description of their project will, however, become public information.

ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS AT ANY STAGE FROM BRAINSTORMING IDEAS, PROJECT PLANNING, APPLYING FOR A GRANT, TO PROJECT COMPLETION. WHEN APPROPRIATE, ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED FOR UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS TO RE-APPLY.
CALL 800-968-4968 or 313-770-7057.

GOALS FOR NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

Southwest Goal: All youth have positive development opportunities in their homes, in school, and in their neighborhoods.

Brightmoor Goal: All Brightmoor youth will have access to and participate in a range of year-round programs during non-school hours that encourage academic growth and positive social development.

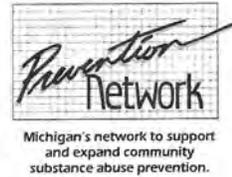
Osborn Goal: Families have all of the resources and support necessary to make their children successful in life.

Central/Northend Goal: Northend is a proactive community organized to provide a high quality education and resources to meet the needs of our children and their families.

Cody Rouge Goal: All children live in a village where they are safe, educated and have access to unlimited resources.



Good Neighborhoods Community Connections Grant Application



NOTE: Pages 1, 4, and 5 of this application must be submitted on this application form (or a photocopy). Only the information on pages 2 and 3 may be computer generated or submitted in some alternate form. If you need help filling out the application, contact Prevention Network at 800-968-4968, or Coordinator Lisa Leverette at 313-770-7057.

Date of application _____ Good Neighborhoods neighborhood _____

Organization applying _____

Address _____

_____ ZIP _____

Contact Person (person who can answer questions about the proposed project)

Name _____ **1** Mr. **1** Ms. **1** Mrs. **1** Other _____

Phone _____ FAX _____ E-mail _____

Address if different from above _____ ZIP _____

Name of proposed project _____

Grant amount requested _____ Project date(s) _____

Number of expected participants _____ Participant ages _____

Location(s) for project activities _____

Purpose of proposed project

- Beautification
- Mentoring/tutoring/youth program
- Community interaction
- Intergenerational
- Youth development/leadership
- Building organization leadership/capacity
- Building community alliances
- Arts and culture
- Skills for career development
- Service learning and civic engagement

State the GN goal for your neighborhood [see Guidelines for wording]: _____

Who in the neighborhood will participate in the proposed project? Where in the neighborhood will they be from? _____

NOTE: Information requested on pages 2 and 3 may be computer generated or submitted in some other form. Attach additional pages as needed.

A. Proposed project/activity: Write a description of the project that “paints a picture”— showing what will happen when, where, and how many times over what time span. Include resources that will be needed, if any, and where they will come from. Include any final products, specific events, or milestones that are part of the project.

B. Who will get involved?

C. Describe your capacity to do this work. List persons responsible for implementing activities and their experience with similar projects.

D. What are the goals for this specific project/activity?

E. How will you know you reached your specific project goals?

F. How will this activity/program/project help to reach your community's goal?

Community Connections Project Activities Budget

Budget must balance. Income and expenses must total the same amount.

Income Items

List here all the expected sources of money for your project.

Amount requested from Community Connections Grant	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
Total income for project	\$	

Expense Items

List here all the expected costs of your project.

		\$		
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
Total expense for project			\$	

Note:

- Any money available for the project (grants, donations, participant fees, etc.) should be listed as income.
- Attach budget detail if specifics will not be obvious from costs as listed above.
- No more than \$250 in grant money will be awarded for T-shirts.

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Examples: Staff time; volunteer time; use of a facility without charge; contributions of food, materials, handouts, professional services; presentations at no charge; transportation; setup and cleanup; prizes; giveaways; and so on. Donations of money should be listed as income in the budget (see above), not as in-kind.

Source

Contribution

Note:

- Budget expenses should be explained by your project description (pages 2 and 3).
- If funded, you must submit receipts with your Final Report (form sent to you with grant check).
- Grant recipients should contact Prevention Network for approval of project or budget changes, if needed, after funds are awarded.
- Grant money left over after a funded project is completed must be returned to Prevention Network.

TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDS, APPLICANT MUST FILL OUT AND SIGN THIS PAGE

G Grant check should be made out to the applicant organization named on page one.

G Grant check should be made out to the fiduciary (school, church, agency, etc.):

Name _____

Address _____

_____ ZIP _____ Phone # _____

Does the fiduciary require an administrative 5% of the grant awarded): _____ yes _____ no

NOTE: **Grant checks will be made out to the applicant organization or to the fiduciary organization.** No grant check will be made out to an individual. **Grant checks will be mailed to the address on page one or to the fiduciary (address above).** Checks are sent by certified mail (requiring signature). For any other arrangement, contact Prevention Network at 800-968-4968.

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE WITH YOUR APPLICATION

- G Cover sheet (on original page 1 of application or a photocopy **only**, NOT computer generated).
- G Answers to questions A through F (on pages 2 and 3; may be computer generated or some other alternative to original).
- G Budget (on original page 4 of application or a photocopy **only**), and budget detail if needed.
- G Check offs and signature (on original page 5 of application or a photocopy **only**).
- G Names/addresses of Board of Directors for the applicant organization (or list of persons responsible for project activity and for handling grant funds).
- G Names/addresses of Board of Directors for fiduciary (if you are using one).
- G Letter of support [if relevant] from principal of a school, or from a spokesperson for a church or other location where you will conduct your project.
- G Letter of support from the spokesperson(s) for any partner organization necessary to carrying out your project.
- G Names/addresses of media you would like notified of your grant award.

I/We understand if the proposed project receives a Community Connections Grant:

1. Grant monies will be used as specified in the application budget, or
2. I/we will receive approval from Prevention Network to revise the budget and/or project plan if necessary.
3. Project activities must take place within a year from date of grant award.
4. I/we will submit a Final Report (using form provided) within four weeks from end of the project.
5. Unused grant funds must be returned to Prevention Network with the report.
6. We will not be eligible for any further grants from Prevention Network until reporting requirements are met.
7. We will submit receipts for expenses paid for with grant funds.
8. We will hold Prevention Network harmless for any potential liabilities that may occur in association with our grant funded project.

Signature of contact person named on page one

Date

Signature of person responsible for project if different from above.

Date

Fiduciary signature/title, if a fiduciary will be use

Date

Applications must be received at Prevention Network by the last day of any month for review in the following month.
Send applications to Prevention Network, P.O. Box 4458, East Lansing, Michigan 48826.
To meet deadlines, applications may be faxed to 517-393-6931, but original must also be mailed.

APPENDIX D

RESOURCE LIST

ADJACENT VACANT LOT PROGRAM, CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Website: www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Portals/0/docs/commandcreative/Summer%20in%20the%20City%202011.pdf

Phone: (313) 224-0953

Address: 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 2300, 2nd floor, Detroit MI

ADOPT-A-LOT PERMIT PROGRAM

Website: www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/RealEstateDevelopment/GardenPermitAdoptALotPermit.aspx

www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/planning/pdf/RED/Garden-Adopt-A-Lot-Application-Permit.pdf

Address: 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1100, Detroit, MI 48226

Fax: (313) 224-4151

BUDGET DUMPSTER RENTAL (DUMPSTER RENTAL)

Website: www.budgetdumpster.com

Phone: (313) 989-0320 or (866) 284-6164

Address: 535 Griswold Street, Suite #111-119, Detroit MI 48226

BUILDINGS, SAFETY ENGINEERING & ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT

Website: <http://71.159.23.2/BSEOnline/home.action>

Phone: (313) 224 - 3215 (Abandoned Building Hotline)

Email: abandonedbldg@detroitmi.gov (for reporting vacant structures)

CASS COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES

Website: www.casscommunity.org

Contact Person: Ed Hingelberg

Phone: (313) 883-2277

CITIZEN EFFECT

Website: www.citizeneffect.org

Phone: (313) 577-9216

Email: momungo@wayne.edu

COMMUNITY ACCESS CENTERS

Website: www.detroitmi.gov/Departments/NeighborhoodCityHalls/tabid/130/Default.aspx

Central

Address: Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 106, 48226

Phone: (313) 224-2989

Fax: (313) 224-4334

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

West

Address: 19180 Grand River, 48223

Phone: (313) 870-0649

Fax: (313) 224-4334

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

East

Address: 7737 Kercheval, 48214

Phone: (313) 628-2170

Fax: (313) 579-7135

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

Southwest

Address: 7744 W. Vernor, 48209

Phone: (313) 628-2180

Fax: (313) 842-0993

TTY: 311 or (313) 224-INFO

COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES

Website: www.collegeforcreativestudies.edu

Phone: (313) 664-7400

CROSSROADS TITLE

Website: www.crossroadstitle.com

Phone: (810) 232-3811

DATA DRIVEN DETROIT

Website: www.datadrivendetroit.org

Address: 440 Burroughs #164, Detroit, MI 48202

DETROIT PARCEL SURVEY

Website: www.detroitparcelsurvey.org

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, VISION VOLUNTEER CENTER

Website: www.emich.edu/vision

Contact Person: Jasmina Camo

Phone: (734) 487-9611

Email: jcamo@emich.edu

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY - GREAT LAKES REGION

Website: www.epa.gov/aboutepa/region5

Phone: (800) 621-8431

GRECO TITLE

Website: www.grecotitle.com

Phone: (248) 594-3839

GREENING OF DETROIT, EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Website: www.detroitagriculture.net/education/adult-education-programs

Phone: (313) 237-8733

Address: 1418 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI 48216

GREENING OF DETROIT, GARDEN RESOURCE PROGRAM

Website: www.detroitagriculture.net/urban-garden-programs/garden-resource-program

Phone: (313) 237-8733

Address: 1418 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, MI 48216

GREENING OF DETROIT, OPENSACE PROGRAMS

Website: www.greeningofdetroit.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Community-Planting-Application-revised-Summer-2011.pdf

Phone: (313) 285-2231

MADONNA UNIVERSITY, OFFICE OF SERVICE LEARNING

Website: www.madonna.edu/community/office-of-service-learning

Phone: (734) 432-5704

Email: servicelearning@madonna.edu

MARYGROVE COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT LIFE

Website: www.marygrove.edu

Phone: (313) 927-1210

Email: ghoward@marygrove.edu

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION (SOIL TESTING)**

Website: www.msusoiltest.com

MICHIGAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Website: www.clronline.org

Contact Person: Shamyle Nesfield

Phone: (313) 969-7128

Email: snesfield@mi-community.org

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY - SOUTHEAST
MICHIGAN DISTRICT OFFICE**

Website: www.michigan.gov/deq

Phone: (586) 753-3700

Address: 27700 Donald Court, Warren, MI 48092

MINOR HOME REPAIR PROGRAM

Website: www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/HousingServices/MinorHomeRepair.aspx

Phone: (313) 224-3461

Address: 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1700, Detroit, Michigan 48226

PREVENTION NETWORK

Website: www.preventionnetwork.org/gniskillman.aspx

Contact Person: Lisa Leverette

REBUILDING TOGETHER DETROIT

Website: www.rebuildingtogetherdetroit.com

RENT-A-DUMPSTER (DUMPSTER RENTAL)

Website: www.radumpster.com

Phone: (313) 999-1352

Address: 795 Oakwood Blvd, Detroit, MI, 48217

**RUTGERS, NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL
EXPERIMENT STATION (SOIL TESTING)**

Website: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab>

SILVER LINING TIRE RECYCLING

Website: www.silverliningtirerecycling.com

Phone: (734) 324-4800

Address: 3776 11th Street Wyandotte, MI 48192

**SOUTHWEST DETROIT ENVIRONMENTAL
VISION**

Website: www.sdevweb.org

Contact Person: Kathy Stott

Phone: (313) 842-1961

Email: kathy_swdev@flash.net

Address: 8701 W. Vernor, Detroit, MI 48209

**STATE OF MICHIGAN EMERGENCY
RELIEF PROGRAM - MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Phone: 855-275-6424 (Michigan toll-free); 313-456-1000 (Detroit)

TITLE SOURCE

Website: www.titlesource.com/

Phone: 888-848-5355

**UNITED COMMUNITY HOUSING
COALITION**

Website: <http://www.uchcdetroit.org/>

Contact Person: Ted Phillips

Phone: (313) 963-3310

Email: uchc123@sbcglobal.net

UNITY IN OUR COMMUNITY TIME BANK

Website: www.southwestdetroittimebank.org

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, SOIL AND PLANT TISSUE TESTING LABORATORY (SOIL TESTING)

Website: www.umass.edu/soiltest

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY, INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Website: www.udmercy.edu/institute

Contact Person: Father Tim Hipskind

Phone: (313) 993-2003

Email: theinstitute@udmercy.edu

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN - ANN ARBOR, GINSBERG CENTER

Website: www.ginsberg.umich.edu

Phone: (734) 647-7402

Email: ginsberginfo@umich.edu

VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION FORM, SAFETY ENGINEERING & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Website: <http://71.159.23.2/BSEOnline/division.action?pageld=10018>

Phone: (313) 628-2451

Address: Rm. 412, Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Ave., Detroit MI 48226

VANGUARD TITLE

Website: www.vgtitle.com

Phone: (586) 799-4400

WAYNE COUNTY CLEAN PROGRAM

Website: www.co.wayne.mi.us/dae_lrm_prog_cidp.htm

Phone: (734) 326-3936

WAYNE COUNTY TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT

Phone: (313) 224-6105

WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE

Website: www.co.wayne.mi.us/treasurer

Contact Person: Raymond J. Wojtowicz

Phone: (313) 224-5990