

FILLING IN THE GAPS

A Plan for Vacant Properties in Osborn



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University of Michigan Ann Arbor, February 2009

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Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our community partners for their input and advice: Danielle Bober and Malika Heath, Detroit Vacant Property Campaign; Pat Bosch, Nortown CDC/We Care About Van Dyke - 7 Mile; Quincy Jones, Skillman Good Neighborhoods Initiative; Mike Fisher, Kyra Coleman and Tracy Coley, Detroit Community Initiative/Northeast Village CDC; and Bishop Anthony Russell and Marcell Copeland, The MAN Network.

Many other people and organizations also contributed knowledge, advice and facilities essential to this project. They include: Matrix Center, Black Family Development, Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation, WOW Church and Life Center, Fleming Elementary School, and especially, the participants in our three community meetings.

We thank Gregory Parrish (Detroit Planning and Development Department), James Bickley (Wayne County Treasurer's Office), Carrie Lewand-Monroe (Michigan Fast Track Land Bank Authority), and especially the Detroit Community Initiative's Youth GIS Mapping program for data used in this project.

The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign provided funding to cover the expenses of this project.

Further thanks to Professor Margaret Dewar and Eric Dueweke for their constant support and guidance throughout the completion of the plan.

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Executive Summary

Filling in the Gaps: A Plan for Addressing Vacant Properties in Osborn provides residents, community organizations, and other potential partners actions to address vacant houses and lots in the Osborn area of northeast Detroit.

PLAN BACKGROUND

Over 37,000 people live in Osborn, a four-square mile area of northeast Detroit. Osborn has many assets. Housing vacancy rates are lower than in the surrounding area, and the homeownership rate is over 60 percent. The area has many parks, schools, and churches along with community centers and some retail, including grocery stores. Many nonprofit, community organizations work in Osborn, including the Detroit Community Initiative (DCI), Nortown CDC, We Care About Van Dyke-7 Mile, the MAN Network, the Matrix Center, WOW Church and Life Center, and Black Family Development. Several citywide organizations and funders also have interests in Osborn, including Detroit Vacant Property Campaign, Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative, the Skillman Good Neighborhoods Initiative, ShoreBank Enterprise, and the Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The large number of organizations committed to the Osborn area increases the possibilities for collaboration to address vacant properties.

Today, housing stability in Osborn is at risk due to an increase in mortgage foreclosures and disinvestment. In the summer of 2008, more than 1500 houses and 700 lots were vacant in Osborn. Osborn is at risk of many more mortgage foreclosures. By dealing with vacant houses and lots, residents and community organizations can improve their neighborhoods and control the effects of mortgage foreclosures and abandonment.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a guide for how community organizations, citywide organizations, and residents can address the vacant property issue and strengthen Osborn.

APPROACH AND BACKGROUND

A few main principles and goals guided the creation of the vacant property plan. These principles include:

- Targeting certain areas for immediate action
- Focusing specific actions in different types of areas
- Targeting areas to build upon existing assets
- Developing actions residents and community organizations can implement if the city is unable to deal with vacant property.

Community leaders and residents established goals to guide vacant property actions in Osborn. This plan's recommendations are based on these community-established goals.

Improve Safety: Residents desire a neighborhood where they feel safe and secure.

Improve the Environment for Children: Residents desire safe areas for children to play, attend school and travel.

Retain Residents: Residents can collaborate with community organizations to build upon neighborhood assets so Osborn continues to be a place where current residents want to live.

Reinforce Identity: Improving and marketing the area can help create a common identity for the neighborhood.

ACTIONS

Residents and community organizations can engage in numerous actions to address vacant properties in Osborn, including:

- Securing vacant houses
- Increasing code enforcement
- Getting vacant houses reoccupied
- Rehabilitating vacant houses
- Repairing homes
- Helping residents to prevent foreclosure
- Demolishing vacant houses
- Obtaining control of vacant lots
- Maintaining vacant lots
- Reusing vacant lots

Some of these actions apply across the entire Osborn area, while others are more useful on specific blocks. Additional actions that can reinforce assets throughout Osborn are organizing residents and improving parks.

ACTION PLAN

A major argument of this plan is that residents and community organizations cannot deal with all vacant houses and vacant lots simultaneously. Focusing resources and actions in certain areas will have a greater impact than trying to tackle all issues in Osborn at once. The plan identifies three

types of areas in Osborn—Retain, Reinforce and Restructure—based on their vacancy levels and housing conditions.

- **Retain Areas:** are mostly intact with the least number of vacant lots and houses and strong housing conditions
- **Reinforce Areas:** have moderately strong housing conditions but face increased levels of residential vacancy
- **Restructure Areas:** have high concentrations of vacant land and houses and many blocks with weak housing conditions

Priority zones are clusters of blocks where actions should occur first in each type of area, because of their proximity to assets. Different sets of actions mitigate the effects of vacancy and meet community goals in different kinds of priority zones. Within each type of area priority zones are identified, along with recommended actions for each priority zone. Given the different characteristics of the Retain, Reinforce, and Restructure areas different actions are appropriate for priority zones within the different areas.

For example, the Retain areas primarily recommend:

- Organizing block clubs
- Offering foreclosure prevention assistance

These actions could reduce the number of foreclosures and retain the housing stock in these areas.

The Reinforce areas still have some strong housing conditions, but are facing an increase of foreclosures and vacant properties. Some of the actions to deal with these characteristics include:

- Organize block clubs
- Offer foreclosure prevention assistance
- Secure and maintain vacant houses

The Restructure areas are suffering from more vacant houses and lots than the Retain and Reinforce areas, and this requires different actions. Actions for the Restructure areas include:

- Demolishing vacant houses
- Securing vacant houses
- Maintaining vacant lots
- Landscaping vacant lots

These actions will deal with the dangerous conditions of the vacant houses and lots, and improve the appearance of the Restructure areas. Due to the conditions of the Restructure areas the plan does not recommend building new houses within the areas.

Since not all actions can occur simultaneously, this plan categorizes actions into three phases: short-term, intermediate, and long-term. Short-term actions help prevent a situation from getting worse. Intermediate actions build on the work done earlier and reinforce assets. If long-term actions are necessary, these actions continue to reinforce actions in the previous phases and strengthen assets.

Creating partnerships among community-based organizations, other nonprofit organizations, residents, city officials, and other stakeholders will focus actions and resources in areas that will make the biggest difference. The collaborative effort to address vacant property could help to accomplish the goals of the plan.



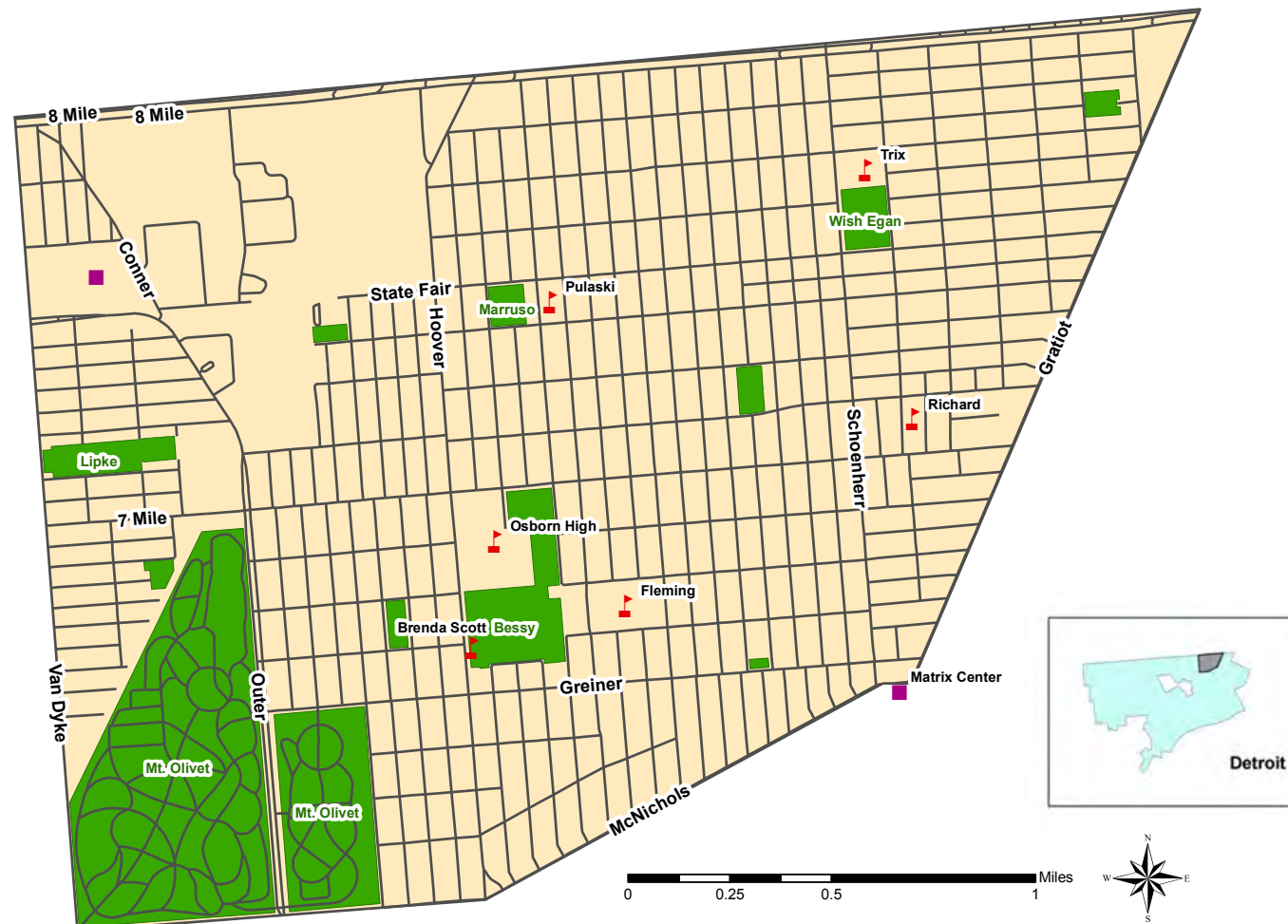
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A Plan for Addressing Vacant Properties in Osborn

This plan focuses on how residents and community organizations can collaborate to address vacant properties in Osborn. Taking into consideration existing vacancy rates, assets, challenges, and residents' opinions, this plan divides the Osborn neighborhood into three types of areas and suggests priority zones and actions for dealing with residential vacancy in each.

Osborn is a four square mile area of northeast Detroit (Figure 1.1), where vacant houses and lots are raising significant concerns about area blight and safety. Moreover, the high rate of mortgage foreclosure is expected to continue and is likely to result in more vacant properties. Nearly 700 vacant lots and more than 1,500 vacant houses existed in Osborn as of summer 2008. This constitutes 19% of total residential properties in the area.¹

Figure 1.1: The Osborn Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel file, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Osborn possesses considerable strengths. First, the housing vacancy rates are lower than in the surrounding neighborhoods. Second, homeownership is nearly 67%; traditionally, homeowners are more invested in their neighborhoods and more likely to contribute time and effort towards improving the neighborhood. Also, Osborn possesses a strong asset in its children, who make up 38% of the population and keep the neighborhood's concentration of schools filled.

A variety of city programs, community organizations and foundations are investing their resources to build on these strengths. The City of Detroit has selected Osborn as one of eight areas to receive Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to address vacant properties. The Mayor's Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative has focused on Osborn for the last couple of years with a particular emphasis on improving city services. Also, Osborn is one of six areas to receive a portion of the Skillman Foundation's \$100 million "Good Neighborhoods Initiative" funding to create safe, healthy and vibrant neighborhoods for children and provide them with resources, opportunities and assets.² The Detroit Community Initiative and Nortown Community Development Corporation work in Osborn, have put money into building new houses and improving the present housing conditions, and are eligible to receive grant funding for further programs in Osborn. Meanwhile, other nonprofit organizations such as Matrix Human Services focus on offering educational and vocational services to area residents. The MAN Network helps to make sure children make it to school safely and We Care about Van Dyke-7 Mile works on addressing challenges and improving neighborhoods around Van Dyke and Seven Mile.³

With the support of these organizations and area residents,

Osborn has the opportunity to improve residents' quality of life over the next few years and to mitigate the challenges vacant houses and lots present. However, no plan exists for dealing with vacant properties overall. A plan could help to clarify opportunities and priorities and thus ensure the best use of the limited resources available for tackling the vacant housing issue. Therefore, the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign asked a team of urban planning graduate students from the University of Michigan to work with representatives of organizations and with residents to develop this plan to show what efforts might have the greatest benefit in addressing vacant properties in Osborn. Organizations already working on addressing vacant property issues collaborated with the students on this plan. They are:

Detroit Community Initiative/Northeast Village CDC

Detroit Vacant Property Campaign

MAN Network

Nortown CDC/We Care about Van Dyke-7 Mile

Skillman Good Neighborhoods Initiative

The following chapter describes the Osborn area in further detail and provides a basis for the goals of this plan. Chapter 3 states the goals this plan aims to achieve. Chapter 4 summarizes actions that can be taken to address vacant houses and residential lots across the Osborn area. Chapter 5 addresses enhancing two Osborn-wide assets: organized residents and parks. Chapters 6 through 8 explain the characteristics of the three types of areas—Retain, Reinforce and Restructure—and the identification of priority zones that build on assets in each. The chapters also provide examples to show how actions could be implemented to transform small areas. Chapter 9 describes when to implement the actions mentioned in Chapters 6 through 8 and provides a list of potential partners that could contribute to the implementation.

Notes

¹ Morris, Lisa. Data file created on vacant lots in Osborn. Michigan: Technical Assistance Center, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, August 2008.

Detroit Community Initiative. Field survey conducted summer 2008.

² The Skillman Foundation. Good Neighborhoods Initiative- Backgrounds and Goals. 2008. 24 December 2008
<<http://www.skillman.org/good-neighborhoods/background-and-goals/>>.

³ Matrix Human Services. Matrix Human Services-Our Programs. 2009. 24 December 2008
<http://www.matrixhumanservices.org/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=94>.



2

Osborn Vacant Properties Overview

While the previous chapter gives a broad overview of Osborn, the vacant properties issue, and the need for a plan for vacant houses and lots, this chapter describes the Osborn area today in greater detail. The focus of this chapter is on residential vacancy, the characteristics of Osborn's residents and housing, and the area's assets and challenges. This chapter lays the foundation for the goals and approach of this plan.

VACANCY

Vacant houses have become a serious problem in the Osborn area. Figure 2.1 shows the locations of vacant houses and lots in Osborn. Approximately 700 vacant lots and 1,500 vacant houses existed in Osborn as of summer 2008. The distribution of vacant properties is not consistent within Osborn. Some areas, such as the southeastern corner of Osborn, have a much higher number of vacant houses and lots, while areas like the northwest and northeast have a low number of vacancies. Vacant lots are primarily located along the eastern section of Osborn, south of State Fair. The difference in vacancy levels means that different types of areas exist within Osborn that will require different strategies for handling vacant properties. This section explains the current vacancy situation in Osborn.

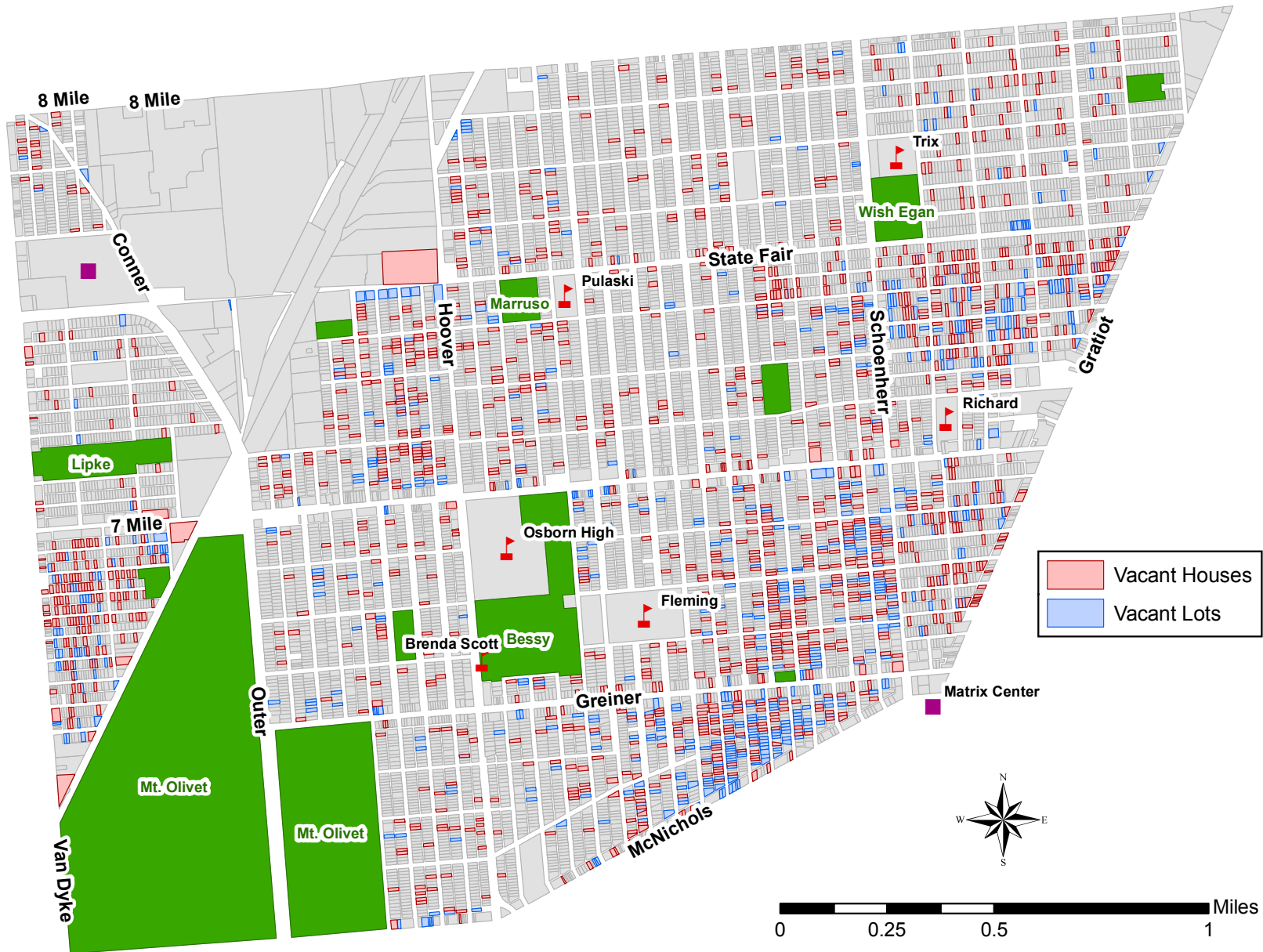
Figures 2.2 and 2.3 compare vacant addresses between 2005 and 2008. In the last three years, the percentage of vacant addresses has increased city-wide, including in Osborn. Over this period four census tracts in Os-

born shifted from having between 10% and 20% vacant addresses to having between 20% and 30% vacant addresses.¹

Two factors help to explain the increase in vacancy in recent years: mortgage foreclosure and disinvestment. Mortgage foreclosure has become more prevalent in Osborn as some homeowners struggle to pay increasing mortgage payments. Homeowners received mortgages they could not afford, and mortgage companies unable to collect on these loans are forcing many residents to leave their homes. The vacant houses left behind after mortgage foreclosures are vulnerable to theft and damage, which can reduce area property values. Figure 2.4 shows some of the real estate owned houses, including vacant and occupied houses, in the Osborn area.² Real estate owned houses are owned by lending institutions, which is usually a sign of mortgage foreclosure. Figure 2.4 shows that as of summer 2008, 320 out of 589 recorded REO houses were vacant. The condition of these REO owned houses, vacant and occupied, may quickly deteriorate, because mortgage companies do not generally own or maintain houses.

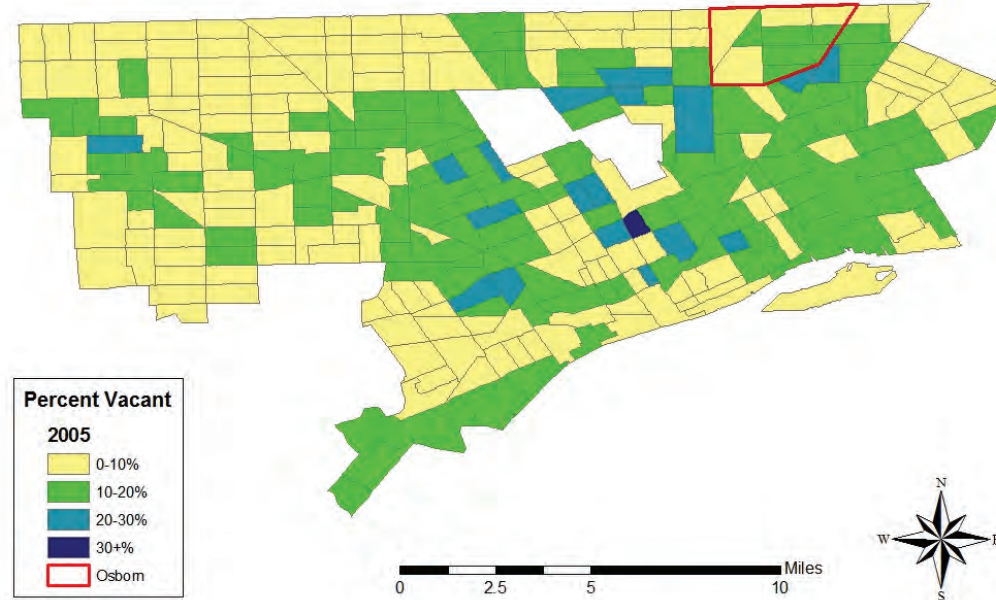
REO properties indicate where foreclosures have likely occurred within Osborn. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) ranks Osborn zip codes among the highest risk areas in the country for future mortgage foreclosures.³ The high risk designation is related to the number of adjustable-rate and subprime mortgages with payment problems.⁴ This high risk score indicates that foreclosure will be an ongoing issue for the Osborn area in the next few years.

Figure 2.1: Vacant Houses and Lots in Osborn



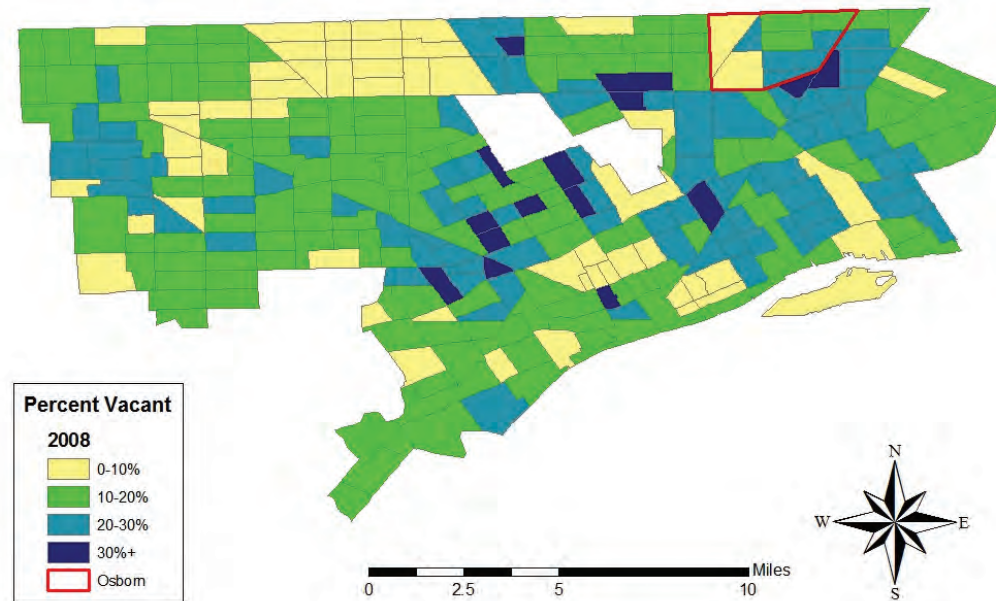
Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel file, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Figure 2.2: Vacant Addresses, Detroit 2005⁵



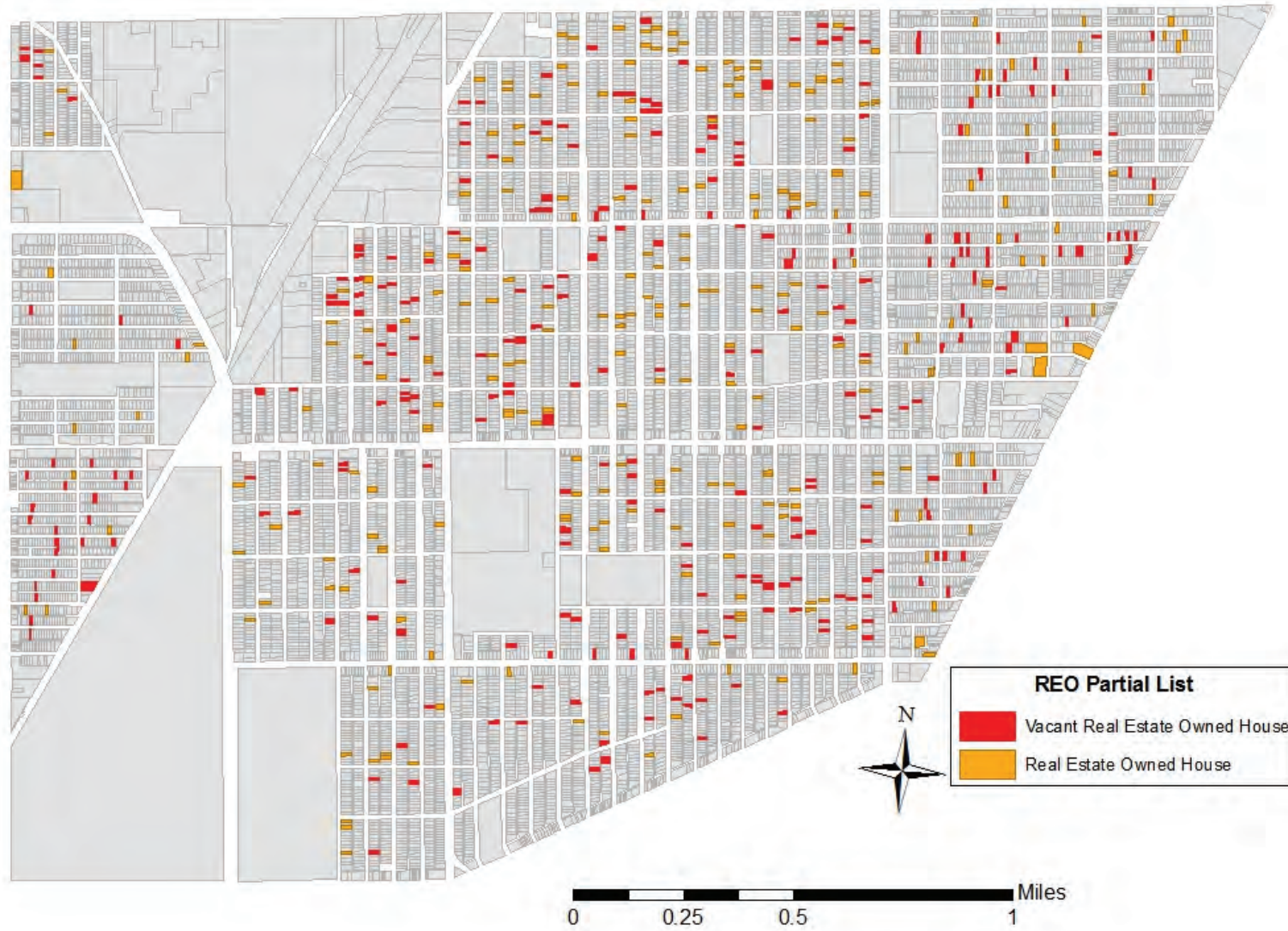
Source: ESRI Tiger Data, USPS as provided by HUD (2005)

Figure 2.3: Vacant Addresses 2008⁶



Source: ESRI Tiger Data, USPS as provided by HUD (2008)

Figure 2.4: Some of the Real Estate Owned Houses in Osborn⁷



Source: City of Detroit Planning and Development Dept. parcel base map & assessor's data, DCI, Fannie Mae

The second major contributor to vacant houses and vacant lots is disinvestment. Disinvestment occurs when home owners stop maintaining their properties. After a period of disinvestment, the owner abandons the property. Eventually, the abandoned house becomes completely uninhabitable and needs to be demolished, leading to an increase in vacant lots. Figure 2.5 shows government owned vacant lots in Os-

born. Government-owned vacant lots are an indicator of where disinvestment has occurred because owners stop paying property taxes when they abandon property, and the tax foreclosure process leads to government ownership for many properties. The map shows that disinvestment is concentrated in the southeast section of Osborn and in the area south of Lipke Park.

Figure 2.5: Publicly Owned Vacant Lots

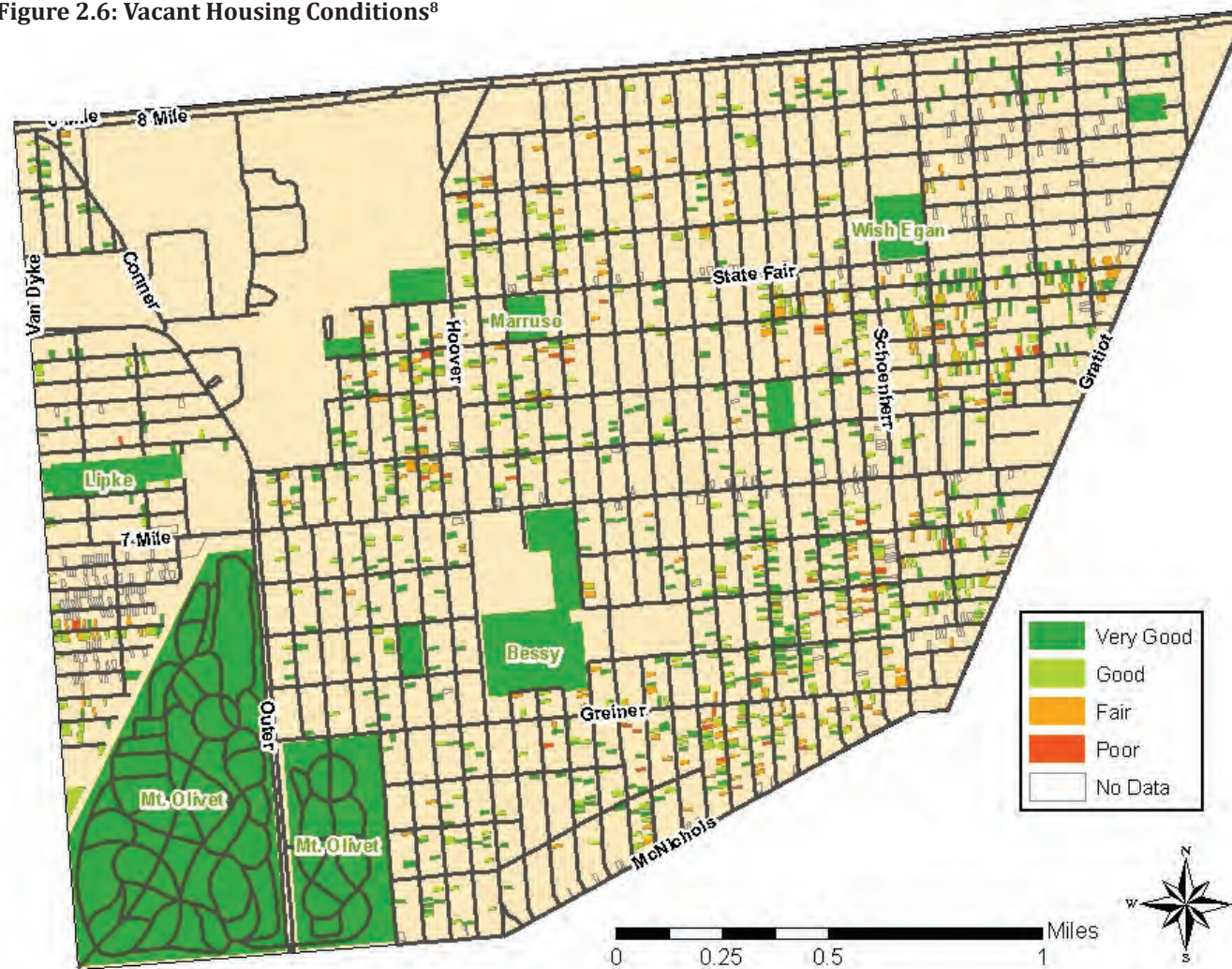


Source: City of Detroit Planning and Development Dept. parcel base map, Lisa Morris, DCI, Wayne County, SEMCOG

Disinvestment and the presence of vacant lots lead to further disinvestment. A comparison between Figures 2.5 and 2.6 shows that areas with a higher concentration of govern-

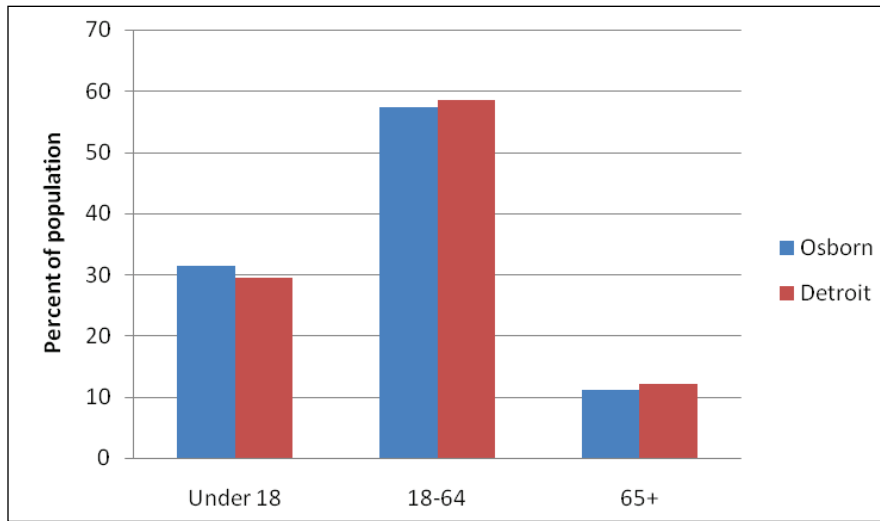
ment owned vacant lots generally feature more vacant houses in poor condition.

Figure 2.6: Vacant Housing Conditions⁸



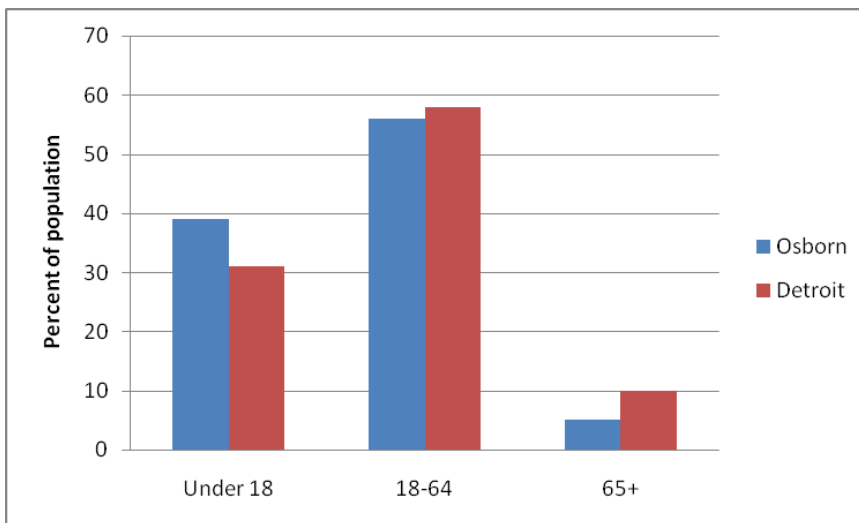
Source: DCI, City of Detroit Planning and Development Dept. parcel base map, SEMCOG,

Figure 2.7 Percent of population by age in 1990



Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990

Figure 2.8 Percent of population by age in 2000



Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000

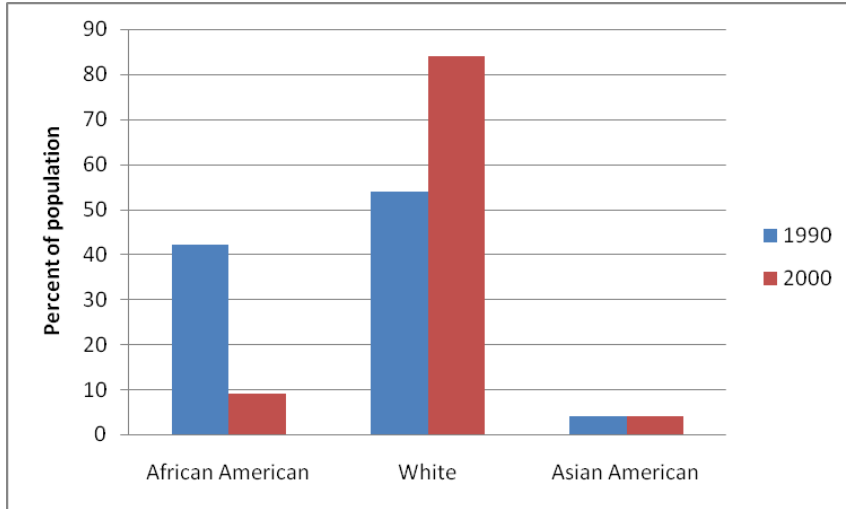
POPULATION

Several characteristics of Osborn’s population make it stand out from other areas in Detroit. Osborn is one of the few places in the city that showed positive population growth from 1990 to 2000. Population grew from about 31,000 in 1990 to about 37,418 in 2000.⁹ The large number of youth in Osborn is also different from other parts of Detroit. While the percentages of youth were similar between Osborn and Detroit in 1990, Osborn experienced a large shift in age distribution from 1990 to 2000. Figure 2.7 shows the share of youth in the Osborn area in 1990. By 2000, the percentage of youth in Osborn was much higher (see Figure 2.8), and the percentage of residents over the age of 65 was lower than in the rest of Detroit.

Other characteristics of Osborn changed significantly between 1990 and 2000, including racial distribution, median income, and poverty rate. Figure 2.9 shows the racial change in Osborn. Over the 10- year period from 1990 to 2000 the white population decreased from 42% of the Osborn population.

The generational and racial shift coincided with an economic shift. Between 1990 and 2000 the share of households in the lowest earning category decreased, and the area saw an increase in the share of households in the highest earning category, as depicted in Figure 2.10. In 2000, 54% of residents earned \$40,000 or more compared to 27% in 1990. Figure 2.11 shows that Osborn had a higher percentage of households earning between \$40,000 and \$74,999 than the city of Detroit as a whole (29% in Osborn; 24% in Detroit). Osborn also had 4% fewer households earning less than \$10,000 than the rest of the city. Although Osborn’s average household income increased from 1990 to 2000, its percent of population below the poverty line remained about the same.¹⁰

Figure 2.9 Osborn Racial Change from 1990-2000



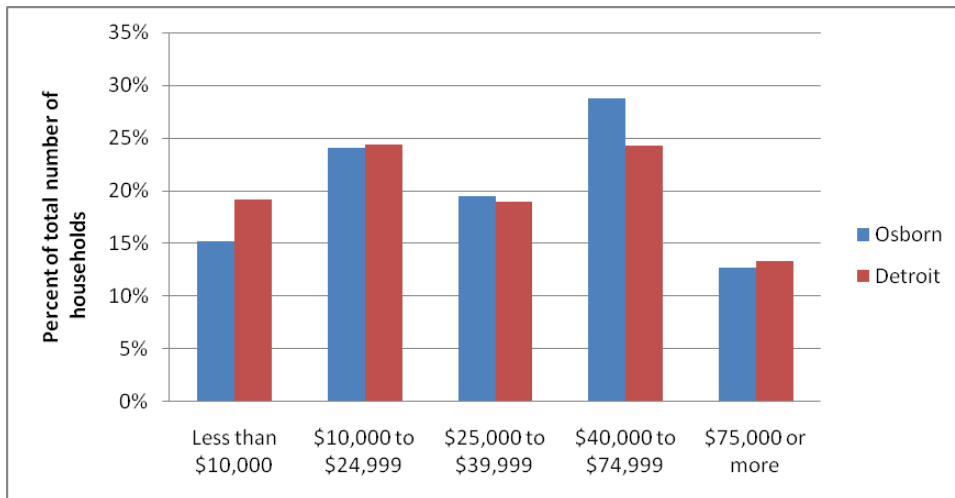
Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000

Figure 2.10 Percent of Osborn Households by Household Income, 1990 and 2000



Source: US Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000

Figure 2.11: Household Income Distribution Detroit and Osborn, 2000



Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000

HOUSING

The number of occupied houses and owner occupied houses in Osborn remained about the same between 1990 and 2000. Table 2.1 shows this stability in housing occupancy from 1990 to 2000. However, since 2000, disinvestment and mortgage foreclosure have led to an increase in vacant houses and vacant lots.

Table 2.2 shows that Osborn saw almost no change in the percentage of owner-occupied houses between 1990 and 2000. Osborn continues to have much higher home ownership than the city of Detroit as a whole. In 2000, 66% of the houses in Osborn were owner occupied, while only 49% of houses in Detroit were .

The percentage of owner-occupied houses, however, is not evenly distributed across Osborn. Figure 2.12 shows the distribution of owner-occupied houses in Osborn. Figure 2.12 also shows that more than half of Osborn has a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing than the city of Detroit (44%).

Median home values also varied significantly across Osborn in 2000. Figure 2.13 shows the variation in housing values. Median home values ranged from less than \$40,000 to more than \$70,000 in different sections of Osborn. The median housing value for the City of Detroit in 2000 was \$63,600, showing that a majority of houses in Osborn have lower values than many areas of the city.

Table 2.1: Occupied Houses

Detroit		Percent Change	Osborn		Percent Change
1990	2000		1990	2000	
374,057	336,428	-10%	11,967	11,363	-5%

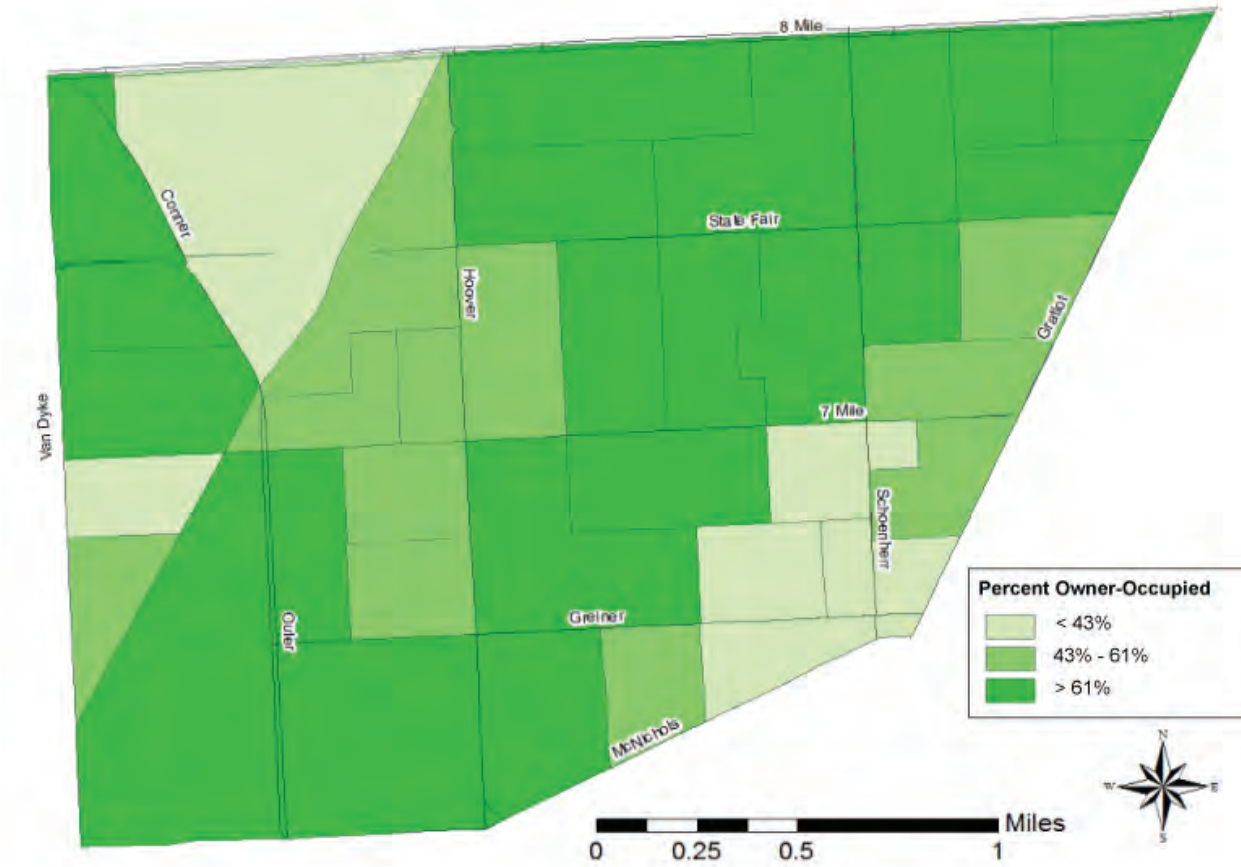
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing 1990 and 2000

Table 2.2: Percent Owner-Occupied Houses in Detroit

Detroit		Osborn	
1990	2000	1990	2000
53%	49%	67%	66%

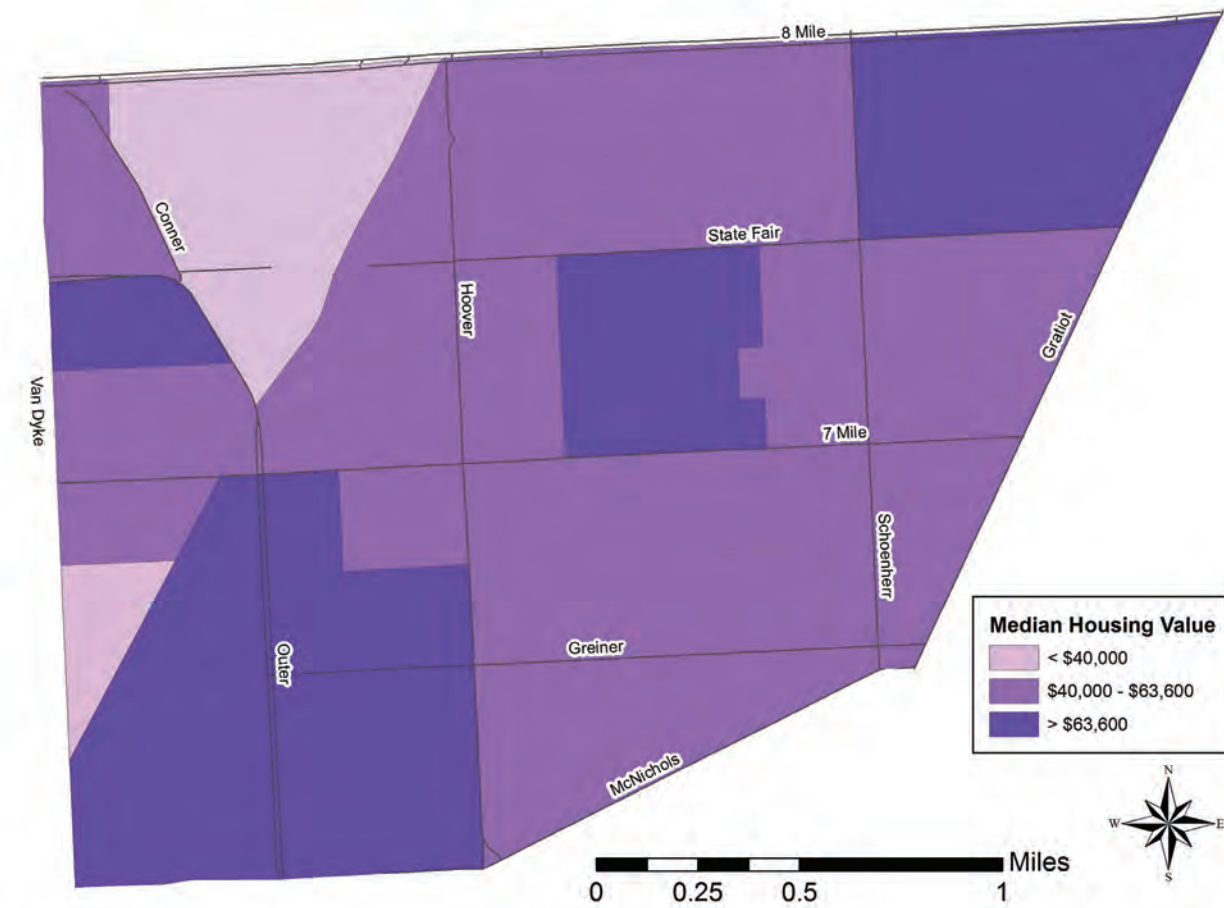
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing 1990 and 2000

Figure 2.12: Percent Owner-Occupied Housing in Osborn



Source: US Census Bureau 2000, SEMCOG

Figure 2.13: Osborn Median Housing Values 2000



Source: US Census Bureau 2000, SEMCOG

ASSETS

Figure 2.14 shows some of the physical assets in the Osborn area.

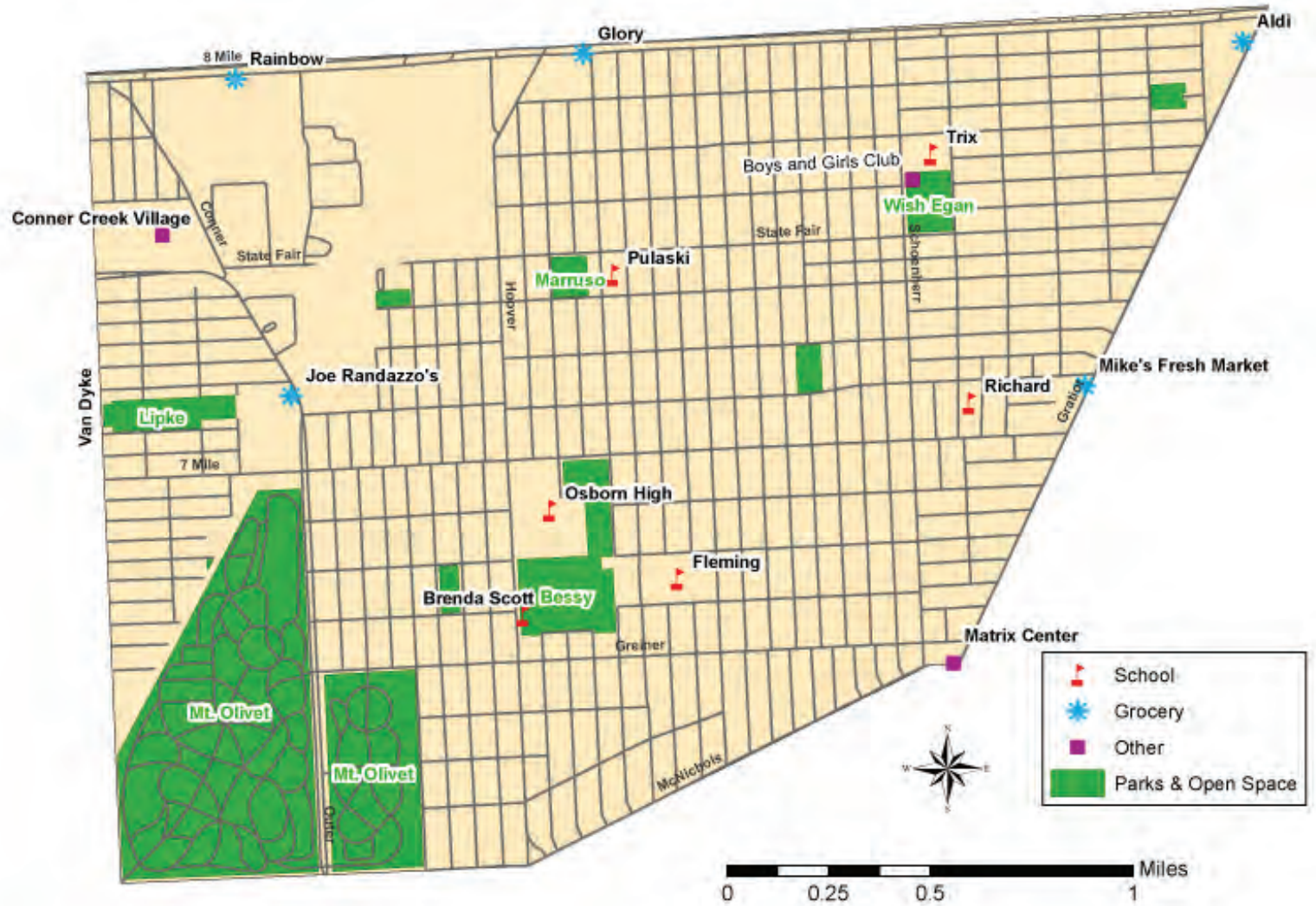
Schools¹¹

- **Brenda Scott Middle School:** Brenda Scott is a new building and benefits neighborhood children by offering state-of-the-art learning facilities. Currently, about 530 students are enrolled at the school.¹²
- **Osborn High School:** Osborn High has approximately 1,450 students. It offers college and career preparatory programs. While state grades show that this school is struggling, Michigan School Report Cards also show that the school is improving.¹³
- **Pulaski Elementary School:** Pulaski currently has an enrollment of around 680 students. It features after-school programs and was awarded a Skillman Aspiring Schools grant for the 2004-2005 school year.
- **Trix Elementary School:** Located at Bringard and Reno, Trix has approximately 340 students. It has a variety of resources and programs available to students and is adjacent to the Wish Egan Playfield and the Boys & Girls Club.
- **Fleming Elementary School:** Located at Waltham and Linnhurst, Fleming has approximately 650 students. It offers an after school program, and has maintained its enrollment despite competition from private and charter schools.¹⁴

Community Centers

- **Conner Creek Village:** Conner Creek Village is part of the St. John Health System. It contains senior housing and Triumph Hospital (a long term care facility). It is scheduled to be sold in early 2009 to a new nonprofit formed by Detroit Community Initiative. DCI plans to convert part of this facility into a community resource center, by upgrading the existing facilities and building additional senior housing.¹⁵
- **Matrix Center:** The Matrix Center is an activity center for the Osborn area, holding writing and GED classes, University of Phoenix courses, and accounting workshops. It is also home to several health organizations and numerous community organizations.
- **Lipke Recreation Center:** The recreation center in Lipke Park offers several activities for area residents. It has a gym, swimming pool, and programs that cater to a variety of age groups. League sports and tutoring are also available. The center was completely renovated in 2002.¹⁶
- **Churches:** Churches can provide resources such as social services to area residents. Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, for example, hosts numerous events that benefit residents.
- **Boys & Girls Club:** This relatively new facility provides programs to build leadership, scholarship and athleticism in a nurturing environment.¹⁷ Having this institution so close to Trix Elementary provides children with local mentoring resources and a space for school activities.

Figure 2.14: Some Assets of the Osborn Area



Source: City of Detroit Planning and Development Dept. parcel base map, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Businesses

- Supermarkets: Groceries and fresh produce are hard to find in many parts of Detroit. Osborn features five supermarkets offering fresh fruit, vegetables, and other groceries within walking distance and accessible by public transit: Joe Randazzo’s Fruit & Vegetable Market, Aldi, Mike’s Fresh Market, Rainbow, and Glory Market.

Parks and Open Space

- **Mt. Olivet Cemetery:** Mt. Olivet is one of the largest cemeteries in the city, covering more than 320 acres. The grounds are well maintained, and the cemetery is open for neighborhood residents to walk through.

Marruso Playground: This 1.5-acre park contains newer playground equipment, several basketball courts, and an open grass area with a backstop for baseball.

Wish Egan Playfield: This playfield hosts youth-league programs and is home to the Detroit Hurricanes Youth Athletic & Enrichment program. It offers children in the area an opportunity to get involved in sports. Additionally, the Detroit Recreation Department has renovated the playfield with a new walking track, trees, and playground equipment.¹⁸

Conner Creek Greenway: This partially completed greenway runs from 8 Mile to the Detroit River and includes Outer Drive in the Osborn area. It will provide a link to nearby recreation facilities and provide a path for biking, walking and other non-motorized transportation.

Public Transportation

- Several Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) bus lines serve the Osborn area, including 13/17 on Eight Mile, 48 on Van Dyke, 32 on Outer Dr./McNichols, 34 on Gratiot, 9 on Schoenherr, 45 on Seven Mile and 13 on Hoover.¹⁹

Housing

- One of Osborn’s assets is its strong housing. The area features single family, one- to two-story, post-World War II housing with a mix of brick and siding. Field surveys of the area show brick homes have less structural damage than those homes with vinyl or wood siding

Youth

- The high number of youth in the area is also an asset to Osborn. This characteristic of Osborn creates an identity for the area to build upon. The number of children in the area is higher than in many other areas of Detroit. This led the Skillman Good Schools Initiative to invest in the schools in the area.

CHALLENGES

While Osborn features many assets, the area faces ongoing challenges including:

- **Busy streets:** The major streets in Osborn, such as Seven Mile and State Fair, are challenging to pedestrians and create internal barriers that divide the area. On streets like Gratiot, Van Dyke and 8-Mile heavy commercial traffic, speeding, and wide street widths create an unfriendly environment for pedestrians.
- **Commercial corridors:** When the buildings in old commercial corridors become vacant, residents consider them unappealing. Vacant houses are concentrated near streets such as East McNichols and East 7 Mile Road in some parts of Osborn.
- **Crime:** Crime is prevalent in the Osborn area. The primary forms of crime are theft and illicit drug sale. Vacant houses are stripped. Vacant properties are also used as drug houses to distribute and manufacture drugs. Stripping is most common in areas with high mortgage foreclosure, and drug houses are most common in areas with high vacant home concentration
- **Gang graffiti:** Residents mentioned gang graffiti as a hindrance to allowing children access to certain areas. One example is the graffiti behind Brenda Scott Middle School where graffiti is painted on the street.
- **Illegal dumping:** Illegal dumping decreases the quality of life of neighbors. Garbage on streets, in alleys and on vacant properties lowers property values of adjacent houses and makes a bad impression on visitors and residents. The accumulation of trash is hazardous to neighboring residents and attracts rodents.
- **Industrial areas:** Industrial areas are undesirable neighbors because they produce noise, traffic, and pollution. These sites are also prime locations for illegal dumping and vandalism if they are vacant.
- **Poor landscaping:** Unkempt lawns makes areas appear less safe and can entice criminal activity. Common signs of poor landscaping are uncut grass and overgrown shrubs or bushes.
- **Vacant, open, and dangerous houses:** Vacant houses pose a number of challenges. First, their presence on a street can reduce the property values of neighboring houses. Second, they attract material scrappers and other illicit activities. Finally, they offer an enticing but unsafe place for Osborn's children to explore.

This chapter provided an overview of current conditions in the Osborn area including vacant housing and lots, the characteristics of residents and housing, assets and challenges. The next chapter outlines goals and approaches that will guide the plan in addressing the issue of vacant houses and vacant lots.

Notes

- ¹ Census Tracts are defined as geographic regions found within counties and are used to organize and present census data. Osborn consists of nine census tracts. Census tracts are divided into smaller geographic units, block groups and census blocks. The full definition can be found at <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/en/epss/glossary_c.html>
- ² Real estate owned houses are owned by banks and mortgage companies.
- ³ Highest risk tracts are those in the top quartiles of all US metropolitan area census tracts in both number of high cost loans per 1,000 occupied housing units and high cost loans as a percent of mortgage loans.
- ³ Adjustable rate mortgage interest rates change periodically; this can cause payments to go up or down, and can increase the risk of mortgage foreclosure. These loans may either be prime or subprime. U.S. Federal Reserve Board, Consumer Handbook on Adjustable-Rate Mortgages. <http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/arms/arms_english.htm> January 6, 2009.
- ⁴ Walker, Chris. Some National Patterns of Residential Loan Performance across Jurisdictions and Neighborhoods. Presentation to the Global Urban Symposium, University of Michigan, October 10, 2008.
- ⁵ Vacant is defined as an address where no one has picked up the mail for 90 days.
- ⁶ Vacant is defined in endnote 5.
- ⁷ This map uses 2008 data from the City of Detroit Assessor's office, and defines a real-estate-owned house as a house owned by a major mortgage company or bank. These data are not comprehensive, but give an idea of how many bank owned properties exist across the Osborn area. The map also includes data on Fannie Mae houses from November 2008.
- ⁸ These conditions were assessed by going through Detroit Community Initiative photos of vacant houses as of summer 2008 and assigning each vacant house a condition rating. (See Appendix B.)
- ⁹ DataPlace. Area Overview-Osborn. 2009. 11 January 2009 <http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview/index.html?place=p26.99:490>.
- ¹⁰ U.S.Census Bureau. U.S.Census 2000- Summary File 1(SF 1). 15 September 2008 <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/sumfile1.html>>.
- ¹¹ Detroit Public Schools. 2009. 22 December 2008 <<http://www.detroit.k12.mi.us/>>.
- ¹² Detroit Public Schools. 2009. 22 December 2008 <<http://www.detroit.k12.mi.us/>>.

Notes Continued

- ¹³ Michigan Department of Education. Michigan School Report Card. 2009. 22 December 2008 <<https://oeaa.state.mi.us/ayp/>>.
- ¹⁴ Ronnie Sims, Principal. Fleming Elementary School, 30 September 2008.
- ¹⁵ Mike Fisher, President and CEO. Detroit Community Initiative, November 2008.
- ¹⁶ City of Detroit, Recreation Department. Lipke Recreation Center. 2008. 22 December 2008 <<http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Departments/RecreationDepartment/RecreationCenters/LipkeCenter/tabid/1115/Default.aspx>>.
- ¹⁷ Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan. 2008. 31 December 2008 <<http://www.bgcsm.org/ClubSites/>>.
- ¹⁸ City of Detroit, Recreation Department. Recreation Centers, Athletics. 2008. 31 December 2008 <<http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Departments/RecreationDepartment/tabid/144/Default.aspx>>.
- ¹⁹ Detroit Transit History. DDOT- System Map 2006. 2008. 22 December 2008 <<http://detroittransithistory.info/DDOT-SystemMap2006.jpg>>.

3

Goals and Approach

The previous chapter described the current conditions in the Osborn area, including the challenge of vacant houses and lots that Osborn faces. This chapter outlines the goals community leaders and residents identified as ways to address vacant properties on their streets. This chapter also describes the approach this plan will take to decide the actions necessary to meet the goals listed below.

GOALS FOR HANDLING VACANT PROPERTIES

In community meetings (see Appendix C), Osborn residents and community leaders identified five goals when sharing their concerns about and hopes for the Osborn area. These goals, reflected below and in the plan to follow, focus on what residents and community leaders want to achieve when dealing with vacant properties.

Improve Safety. Residents want a neighborhood where they feel safe and secure. Vacant buildings are unsafe for children, attract dangerous activities, and lower the value of neighboring homes. Steps for addressing vacant properties in Osborn that improve safety will help to retain residents and make the area more attractive, strengthening the demand for housing.

Improve the Environment for Children. Over 38% of Osborn’s population consists of children under the age of eighteen.¹ Improving the environment for them, by securing vacant houses, enhancing parks and schools, making streets safer, and taking other approaches, will make the area more attractive to current and future residents.

Retain Residents. Osborn has many intact properties and dedicated residents can maintain this. Residents and community organizations can take steps to organize, prevent

vacancies, and build upon assets so that Osborn continues to be a place where current residents want to remain.

Reinforce Identity. Osborn has many assets and attributes that give it identity: its concentration of children; its Hmong population; its residents who are committed to maintaining and improving the area; its parks and schools. Reinforcing and marketing Osborn’s identity will help to attract new residents and reoccupy vacant houses.

Community leaders articulated the following goal, but residents’ feedback did not confirm its importance in subsequent meetings, as reflected in the table below. However, if Osborn’s leaders find an organization that provides housing for residents in need of assistance, this goal could be an important way to reoccupy vacant houses and strengthen the area.

House Residents In Need. Osborn’s vacant houses offer an opportunity to provide housing for individuals in need of assistance. They include individuals and families who have suffered financial difficulties, those struggling to find decent housing, and those who have returned to the area after an incarceration or rehabilitation. Housing these individuals and families not only fills vacant houses, but also encourages these people to get involved and make Osborn a permanent place to live.

Table 3.1: Residents’ Ranking of Goals

Goal	Votes
Improve Safety	20
Improve the environment for children	18
Retain residents	18
Reinforce identity	8
House residents in need	4

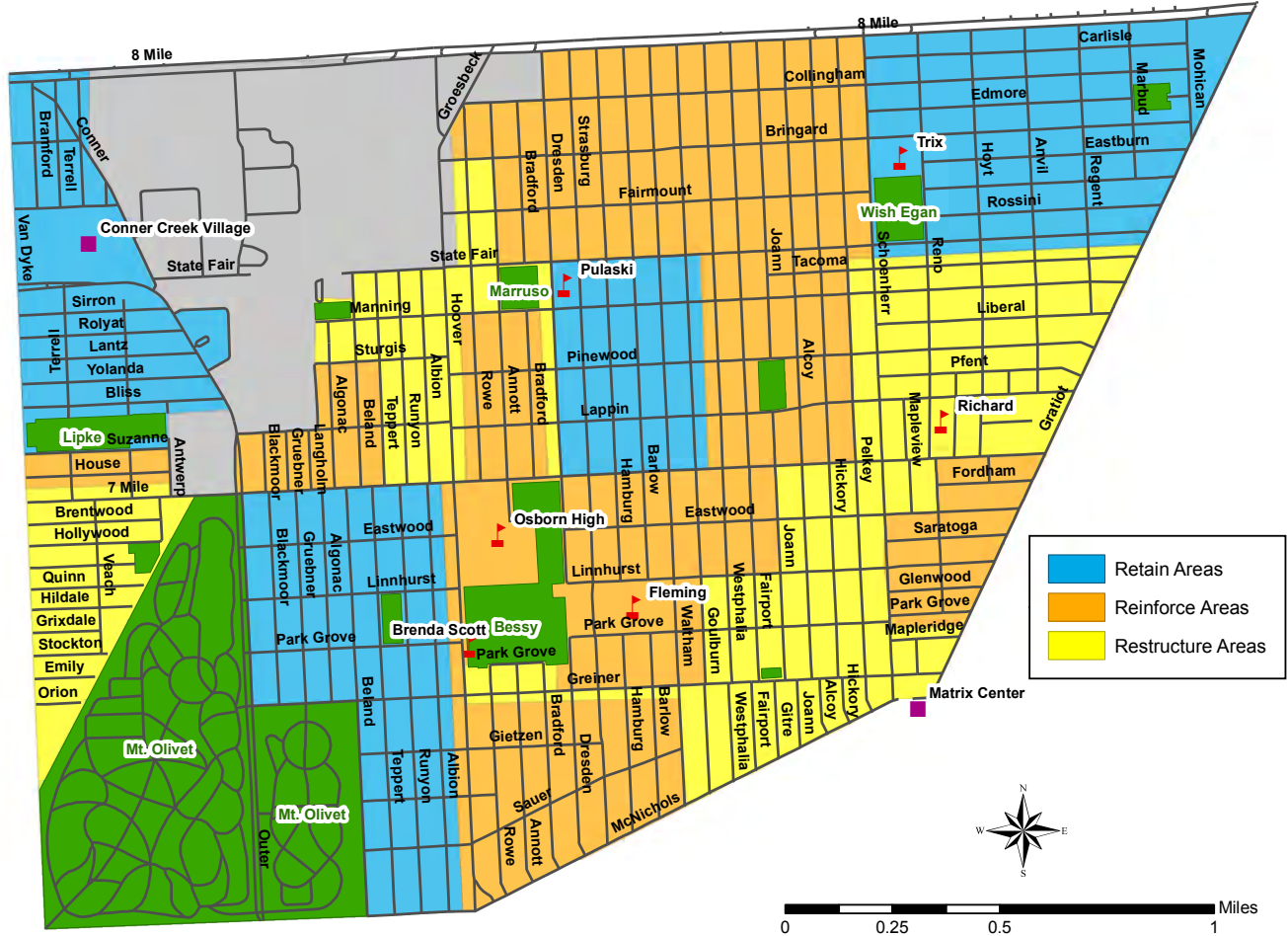
From October 7, 2008, community meeting

APPROACH OF THE PLAN

The appropriate actions for achieving the goals in addressing vacant properties will differ depending on an areas' conditions. For example, an area with lots of vacant land will require a different approach than an area with only one or two vacant lots. An area with high levels of home ownership may require foreclosure prevention assistance whereas an

area that is mostly renter occupied may not. Since an area's conditions are important in determining what types of actions residents and community organizations can take, this plan divides Osborn into three types of areas, primarily based on the concentration of vacant properties and on current housing conditions. Appendix A includes a flow chart that depicts the overall approach of this plan and more details on the methods for determining the types of areas are available in Appendix B.

Figure 3.1: Types of Areas in Osborn



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept parcel based file., DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Figure 3.1 shows the three types of areas in Osborn.

- The **Retain** areas have the fewest vacancies and strong housing. “Retain” refers to the desire to retain current residents and maintain strong housing. Chapter 6 will discuss steps residents and community organizations can take to address vacant properties and keep these areas strong by building on assets and strong resident participation.
- The **Reinforce** areas face significant vacancy and have moderately strong housing. “Reinforce” comes from the need to protect at-risk properties by managing future vacancies in these areas. Chapter 7 looks at steps to address vacant properties that build on assets within the Reinforce areas.
- The **Restructure** areas have a high concentration of vacant houses and land. “Restructure” refers to the opportunity to rethink these areas by restructuring them for different uses. Chapter 8 will explore vacant land as an asset and ways to plan for areas with high housing vacancy.

The action plans outlined in Chapters 6 through 8 are area-specific and are designed to work on a small scale—a block or a street—because every vacant house and lot has an effect on neighboring properties. As mentioned in the Challenges section of Chapter 2, just one vacant house on a block can lower the values of neighboring houses; just one unmaintained lot can affect people’s perceptions of the street. Concerted efforts at the street level can result in improvements across Osborn as a whole. Moreover, since different areas in Osborn have different characters, assets and challenges, the most effective plan will target these areas with solutions that differ from place to place. For example, in areas with high numbers of vacant lots, this plan explores how residents

and community organizations can use vacant land in creative ways. Establishing a community garden may be a more effective way of addressing vacant lots than large-scale building of infill housing in an area where people may not want to live.

Finally, this plan offers ways for residents and community organizations to take ownership of their streets. When the city government is unable or unwilling to act, the residents of Osborn can organize and take the lead by taking actions themselves. Strong block clubs and vigilant neighborhood watches are key to implementing the action plans to follow and achieving the goals listed above. In addition, resident involvement means that the final outcome of any action is more likely to be one that everyone wants. For example, while a city agency may prefer to demolish every potentially dangerous vacant house, a better solution for residents might be to secure and maintain some for future rehabilitation.

Chapter 4 discusses actions aimed at addressing vacant houses and lots, and Chapter 5 focuses on ways to enhance two Osborn-wide assets: parks and organized residents. Chapters 6 through 8 explain how actions can be applied to the three types of areas to address vacant properties, and Chapter 9 offers an overall implementation strategy for Osborn.

Notes

¹The Skillman Foundation Good Neighborhoods Initiative. "A Basic Community Profile: Osborn." Detroit, 2008.



4

Dealing With Vacant Houses and Lots

The previous chapter described this plan's division of Osborn into three types of areas. This chapter looks at strategies to address vacancy across all three types of areas, focusing only on vacant houses and residential lots. While Osborn residents identified vacant commercial buildings as a major concern, they are beyond the scope of the plan. This chapter provides background needed for Chapters 6, 7 and 8, which recommend places to implement these actions within Osborn.

Many of the strategies described here were adapted from the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign's "Vacant Property Toolbox."¹ This chapter addresses some approaches for dealing with vacant houses and lots. For a more complete list, the toolbox summary is available online at: <http://officemanager.law.officelive.com/technical/toolbox-sum.pdf> or in a printed copy through Community Legal Resources at (313) 962-3171.

VACANT HOUSING STRATEGIES

Different areas within Osborn face different housing vacancy challenges. While these differences may influence what can happen first in a particular area, the actions discussed below are applicable throughout Osborn. Several of these strategies may be implemented through new funding that will be available in 2009 through the City of Detroit's Neighborhood Stabilization Program, which targets nine areas in the city-- including Osborn--for securing, purchasing, rehabilitating, and demolishing vacant houses.²

Secure Vacant Houses

Vacant houses destabilize a block or neighborhood by heightening security concerns and lowering housing values. Secured houses show that people are watching and discourage trespass and vandalism to vacant houses. Here are several ways that residents and community organizations can work to secure vacant houses:

- Monitor vacant houses:
 - Form a code enforcement patrol to report code violations to the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department
 - Create a volunteer security patrol
 - Install motion detectors
- Make houses look occupied:
 - Hang curtains
 - Plant flowers
 - Mow lawns and clear snow
 - Clear mail, handbills and garbage from the lawn and porch
- Compile a list of contacts to call if undesirable activity is happening in a vacant house
- Board up houses if necessary

The City of Detroit's Neighborhood Stabilization Plan allocates approximately \$4 million for securing vacant properties in nine areas of Detroit including Osborn.³

Increase Code Enforcement

Many vacant houses in Osborn have code violations that make them dangerous to the surrounding area. Wayne County's Nuisance Abatement Program offers residents a way of taking control of vacant houses. Under this program, the county will sue a property owner to bring a house up to code; if the owner does not respond, the county can take ownership and demolish the house or sell it to someone who will repair it.⁴

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority's Office of Community Development offers funding (up to \$60,000) for advocacy for code enforcement through the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative. For more information, refer to Appendix D.

Get Vacant Houses Reoccupied

Many vacant houses remain in good condition but are vacant because of lack of demand for housing in the area. To get people interested in purchasing houses in Osborn, community organizations and block clubs may:

- Work with a local realtor to highlight houses in the Osborn area
- Create a neighborhood marketing campaign
- Host tours of houses in the Osborn area (for more information refer to Chapter 6, Figure 6.5)

The Michigan Office of Community Development offers funding through the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative for creating a neighborhood marketing campaign. See Appendix D.

Rehabilitate Vacant Houses

As the demand for new housing slows, community development corporations (CDCs) and nonprofit housing corporations such as Detroit Community Initiative can refocus their resources on rehabilitating or repairing existing vacant houses in good condition. Building partnerships among CDCs, financial institutions, other nonprofit organizations, real estate investors and neighbors is the first step for a successful vacant house rehabilitation program. Obtaining control of vacant properties is the next step. Once an organization owns a property, the property can be restored and offered for sale. For resources on how to gain ownership of a vacant house refer to the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign's toolbox.⁵

Figure 4.1: Potential property for rehabilitation



The City of Detroit's Neighborhood Stabilization Plan proposes spending about \$14 million in eight targeted areas across the City of Detroit including Osborn on rehabilitation. ShoreBank Enterprise and the WOW Church have both expressed interest in rehabilitating houses in the Osborn area.⁶

Repair Homes

Many occupied houses in the Osborn area are in good condition but need simple repairs. A home repair program can strengthen well maintained houses by providing funding for a new roof, a new porch, paint or other small repairs. The City of Detroit offers two home repair programs: a Minor Home Repair Program and a Senior Home Repair Program for persons 65 years and older. More information about these programs is available in Appendix D.

Foreclosure Prevention Assistance

Foreclosure prevention assistance in Osborn can assist people currently facing mortgage foreclosure and help prevent future vacancies. Educating homeowners about ways to avoid foreclosure will help stabilize the wave of foreclosures in Osborn.

The City of Detroit's Neighborhood Stabilization Plan proposes spending \$500,000 on counseling and foreclosure prevention assistance in nine targeted neighborhoods across the City of Detroit, including Osborn. The Michigan Office of Community Development also offers funding for homeowner education and foreclosure intervention through the Neighborhood Preservation Initiative. For more information refer to Appendix D. Also, Southwest Housing Solutions (313) 841-9641 and United Community Housing Coalition (313) 963-3310 are two city-wide resources for foreclosure prevention assistance.

Demolish Vacant Houses

Severely damaged houses create a dangerous environment and decrease neighboring home values. If a house features structural damage, missing windows or doors, or fire damage, then report the property to a city official by calling 311 or the City of Detroit Building and Safety Engineering Department at (313) 224-3215 for demolition.

The City of Detroit's Neighborhood Stabilization Plan proposes spending \$14million in nine targeted neighborhoods across the City of Detroit, including Osborn, on demolition from 2009 to 2010.⁷

Figure 4.2: Home in great disrepair



VACANT LOT STRATEGIES

The three types of areas in Osborn contain different amounts of vacant land. Vacant lots present an opportunity to reuse land in many different ways. This plan does not advocate using vacant lots in Osborn for new housing construction.

Figure 4.3: Potential vacant lot for transfer



Transfer Side Lots to Adjacent Homeowners

Homeowners with an adjacent vacant lot can buy the lot and make it part of their property. The Detroit Planning and Development Department will sell vacant city-owned lots to property owners for \$300-\$500 plus fees. The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority sells state-owned vacant lots for \$250 plus fees. Both programs offer a chance for homeowners to assume control of neighboring vacant lots. Buying privately owned vacant lots is also a possibility, but it comes with greater risks such as paying back taxes on the land and tracking down the owner.⁸

Below are two websites to look up property ownership information to see if a lot is city, county or state owned:

- City of Detroit Tax Information: (Registration required)
<https://is.bsasoftware.com/bsa.is/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fbsa.is%2fdefault.aspx>
- Wayne County Treasurer Tax information:
<http://www.waynecounty.com/pta/Disclaimer.asp>

Maintain Vacant Lots

Not all of the nearly 700 vacant lots in Osborn can be transformed into new uses in the short term. Coordinating actions on vacant lots takes time and effort, but block clubs, community organizations and neighbors can take immediate action by maintaining vacant lots. The Genesee County Land Bank in Flint, Michigan, and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, offer two ways to maintain vacant lots:

- **Adopt-a-Lot.** Neighborhood organizations and block clubs can initiate adopt-a-lot programs as a sustainable way to maintain vacant lots. Neighbors or community groups can volunteer to cut the grass, plant flowers, or pick up trash. Keeping a vacant lot clean does not require ownership, but more permanent uses (like a raised flower bed) may.⁹
- **Land Management.** The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's "Philadelphia Green" program offers simple steps for vacant lot management:
 1. Clean it
 2. Add topsoil
 3. Grade it (move soil so water can drain more efficiently)
 4. Plant grass and trees
 5. Surround with a post and rail fence

This is a cost effective way of making a vacant lot attractive and shows that people care about the space. This strategy is most effective on a smaller scale, rather than for large concentrations of vacant lots.¹⁰

Reuse Vacant Lots

- **Community Gardens.** Vacant lots can provide spaces for community gardens. A block club may act as the coordinating body for a community garden by first gauging residents' interest. Once residents are committed to a garden, a block club or community organization could partner with a neighborhood school to organize volunteers and tend to a garden.¹¹
- **Native Landscaping.** Native plants offer a cost-effective way of beautifying vacant lots because they require little care in this climate. Community organizations can plant a mixture of grasses, trees, shrubs and perennials on vacant lots to create a native landscaping area that is easy to maintain.¹²
- **Stormwater Management.** Heavy rain causes problems for Detroit's infrastructure, and vacant lots offer an opportunity to alleviate flooding caused by storms. Community organizations may grade vacant lots to act as a natural drainage system, taking pressure off Detroit's system, while putting vacant land to use.

See cost information in Appendix E.

Osborn faces significant challenges in dealing with vacant houses and lots, but the actions examined in this chapter offer ways of addressing them and improving the Osborn area. The next chapter looks at assets across Osborn: parks and organized residents, some of the challenges facing them, and how they can be enhanced to create a safer, more livable environment for Osborn's residents.

Notes

- ¹Detroit Vacant Property Campaign. “Vacant Property Toolbox.” 2008. Detroit Vacant Property Campaign- Technical Assistance. 22 December 2008 <<http://officemanager.law.officelive.com/technical/toolbox.pdf>>.
- ²Diggs, Douglass J and Marja M Winters. “Neighborhood Stabilization Program Plan.” December 2008. City of Detroit- Planning & Development Department. December 2008 <<http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Portals/0/docs/planning/pdf/NSP/NSP%20Substantial%20Amendment%20Submission.pdf>>.
- ³Ibid.
- ⁴Bober, Danielle et al. Putting Back the Welcome Mat: A Neighborhood Guide for Turning Houses into Homes. Michigan: Urban & Regional Planning Program, University of Michigan, December 2007.
- ⁵Detroit Vacant Property Campaign. “Vacant Property Toolbox - Executive Summary.” December 2008. Detroit Vacant Property Campaign-Technical Assistance. 22 December 2008 <<http://officemanager.law.officelive.com/technical/toolboxsum.pdf>>.
- ⁶Diggs, Douglass J and Marja M Winters. “Neighborhood Stabilization Program Plan.” December 2008. City of Detroit- Planning & Development Department. December 2008 <<http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Portals/0/docs/planning/pdf/NSP/NSP%20Substantial%20Amendment%20Submission.pdf>>.
- ⁷Ibid.
- ⁸Doherty, Kimiko, et al. A Land Use Plan for Brightmoor. Michigan: Urban & Regional Planning Program, University of Michigan, April 2008.
- ⁹Genesee County Land Bank. Adopt-a-Lot. 2008. 05 December 2008 <<http://www.thelandbank.org/programs.asp#one>>.
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- ¹²Schwarz, Terry et al., “Pattern Book: Vacant Land Strategies.” September 2008. Kent State University- Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative. 22 December 2008 <http://www.cudc.kent.edu/shrink/Images/patternbookFINAL_lo-res.pdf>.

5

Enhancing Assets

The previous chapter described strategies that can work across all areas of Osborn. This chapter addresses enhancing Osborn’s major assets: its parks and organized residents. Other assets are also important: Osborn’s schools are an example. The Skillman Foundation is already working to improve the quality of schools and provide activities for children outside of school; therefore, this plan does not discuss strengthening schools as an asset.

Residents and community organizations can enhance assets to reinforce the area and help in address vacant houses and lots. First, many streets in Osborn already have block clubs and extending these will help in implementing actions to address vacant properties. Second, Osborn has a number of parks and green spaces, and maintaining and improving

them can improve the quality of life for residents living near them.

The next sections describe the current conditions of these two assets and offer some ways that residents and community organizations could improve upon them.

ORGANIZING RESIDENTS

Black Family Development has been working in Osborn to organize block clubs. The Skillman Foundation has provided funding for this and recognizes the importance of block clubs in enhancing the neighborhood. Figure 5.1 shows the results of Black Family Development’s efforts to get block clubs started on streets in Osborn.

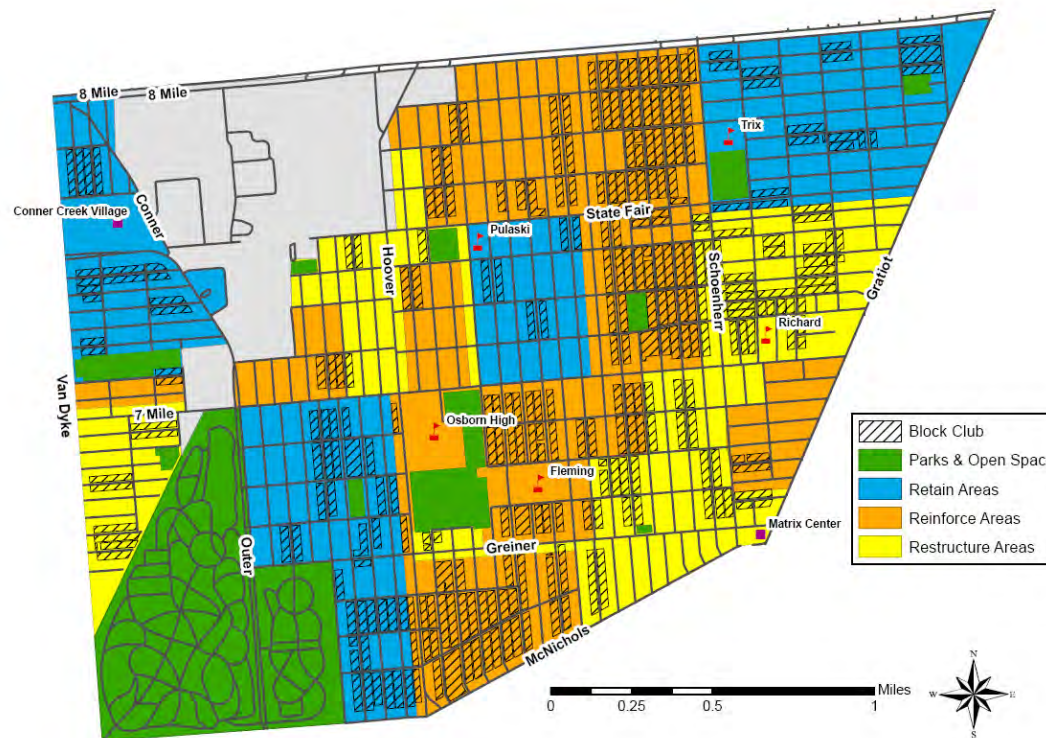


Figure 5.1: Block Clubs in Osborn

Source: Black Family Development; Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map; DCI; Field Investigation; SEMCOG

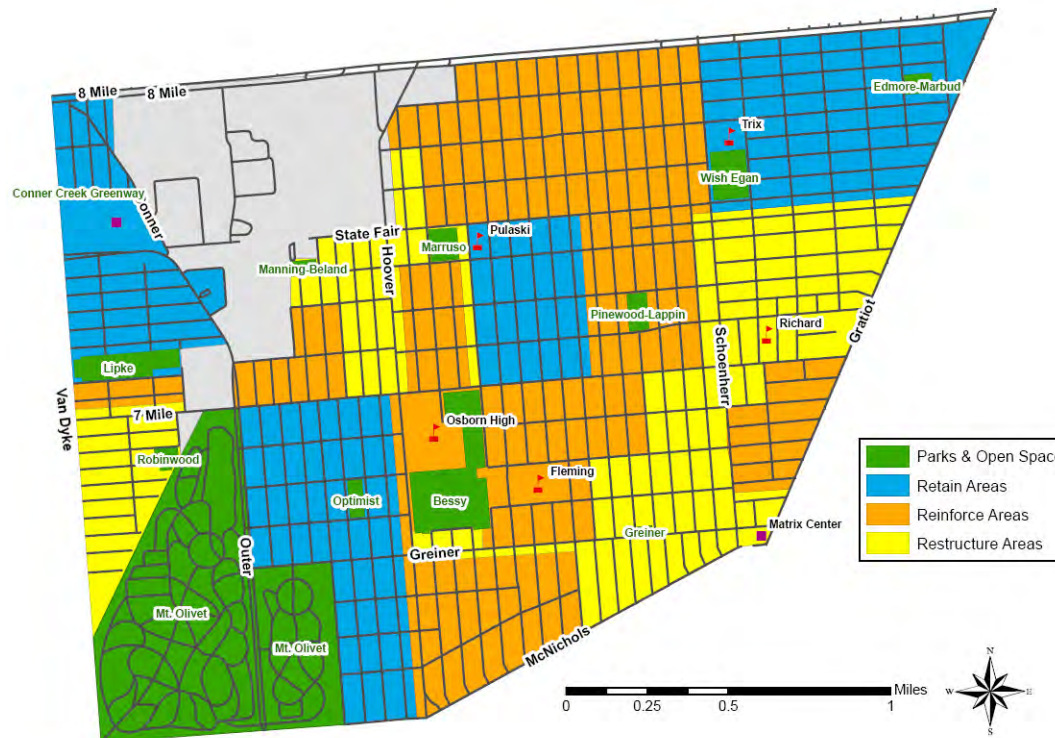
Community organizing is the first step in an effort to address vacant properties in Osborn. Many blocks have block clubs, but more are needed. Osborn has many dedicated residents; once organized, they could implement neighborhood watch programs to prevent crime, work to clean up trash along streets and secure houses. Block clubs can also help enforce codes by reporting violations (and in many cases reporting them again) to the city departments that are responsible for addressing them. Block clubs can also make sure that residents are kept informed of issues in the neighborhood so that these issues may be addressed more promptly. The recent increase in vacant houses in Osborn provides a strong motivation for residents to form block clubs so that they can address the negative effects of this increase by implementing actions like those described in Chapters 6 through 8 of this plan.

IMPROVING PARKS

Osborn benefits from having several large parks that provide spaces for recreation activities for residents of all ages. Some of them, like the Wish Egan Playfield, Marruso Playground, Bessy Playground, and the Lipke Recreation Center, have playground and sports equipment that encourage safe environments for children.

To initiate improvements, block clubs or local nonprofits can plan and schedule meetings and projects for park improvements. Such improvements can range from planting trees to installing new playground and athletic equipment to keeping parks clean of trash. Not only can park improvement events produce positive change in the parks, they

Figure 5.2: Parks in Osborn



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map; DCI, Field Investigation; SEMCOG

can also bring residents together to work on other neighborhood improvements. For example, in the fall of 2008, the Detroit Community Initiative brought together Osborn residents to construct the Josefiak Playlot on a vacant lot on Greiner Street. Similar efforts could be used to create new parks and playgrounds on vacant lots, as well as to maintain and improve existing parks in Osborn.

In 2007, the Detroit Recreation Department announced a plan to sell 92 parks citywide in an effort to reduce maintenance costs and generate revenue by selling them to developers. Among the parks to be sold were the Manning-Beland and Edmore-Marbud playgrounds in Osborn. Although taking ownership of these parks would be a huge expense for a block club or community organization, these organizations could work with the Recreation Department to take over maintenance of these parks in exchange for some reimbursement of expenses.

Table 5.1: Condition of Playgrounds in Osborn¹

Park / Playground	Facilities
Bessy	Tennis courts; tracks; basketball courts; baseball fields
Edmore-Marbud	No equipment
Lipke	New athletic fields; playground equipment; exercise equipment; pool
Manning-Beland	No equipment
Marruso	Playground equipment; basketball courts; baseball fields
Optimist	No equipment
Pinewood-Lappin	No equipment
Robinwood	No equipment
Wish Egan	New athletic fields; new playground equipment

The Edmore-Marbud playground is a green space on the northeast side of Osborn, surrounded by houses. Despite its proximity to Gratiot, it is unsuitable for commercial development. The best use of this land is for park space, and neighbors, block clubs and community organizations could improve the park by maintaining it and installing equipment for residents to enjoy the space.

The Manning-Beland playground, on the other hand, is adjacent to industrial buildings; and the neighborhoods near it have many vacant houses. Currently the park is underused, and it makes the most sense for it to be used as a buffer between residential and industrial areas. Residents and community organizations could preserve the green space and plant trees and shrubs to act as a buffer to the industrial properties across the park.

A longer term aim might be to connect parks and green spaces in Osborn to each other with greenways constructed on vacant lots in the neighborhood and bike trails along streets between parks. Currently, however, the location of vacant lots in the neighborhood does not allow for greenways that connect the parks.

This chapter has suggested ways to improve two Osborn-wide assets. The next chapter discusses the first type of areas in Osborn—the Retain areas—and how residents and community organizations can build upon assets like parks, schools and organized residents to address vacant properties in Osborn and pursue the goals outlined in Chapter 3.

Figure 5.3: Osborn Volunteers and Residents Building Josefiak Playlot



Source: Detroit Community Initiative

Notes

¹ Based on visits to these parks and playgrounds in fall 2008.



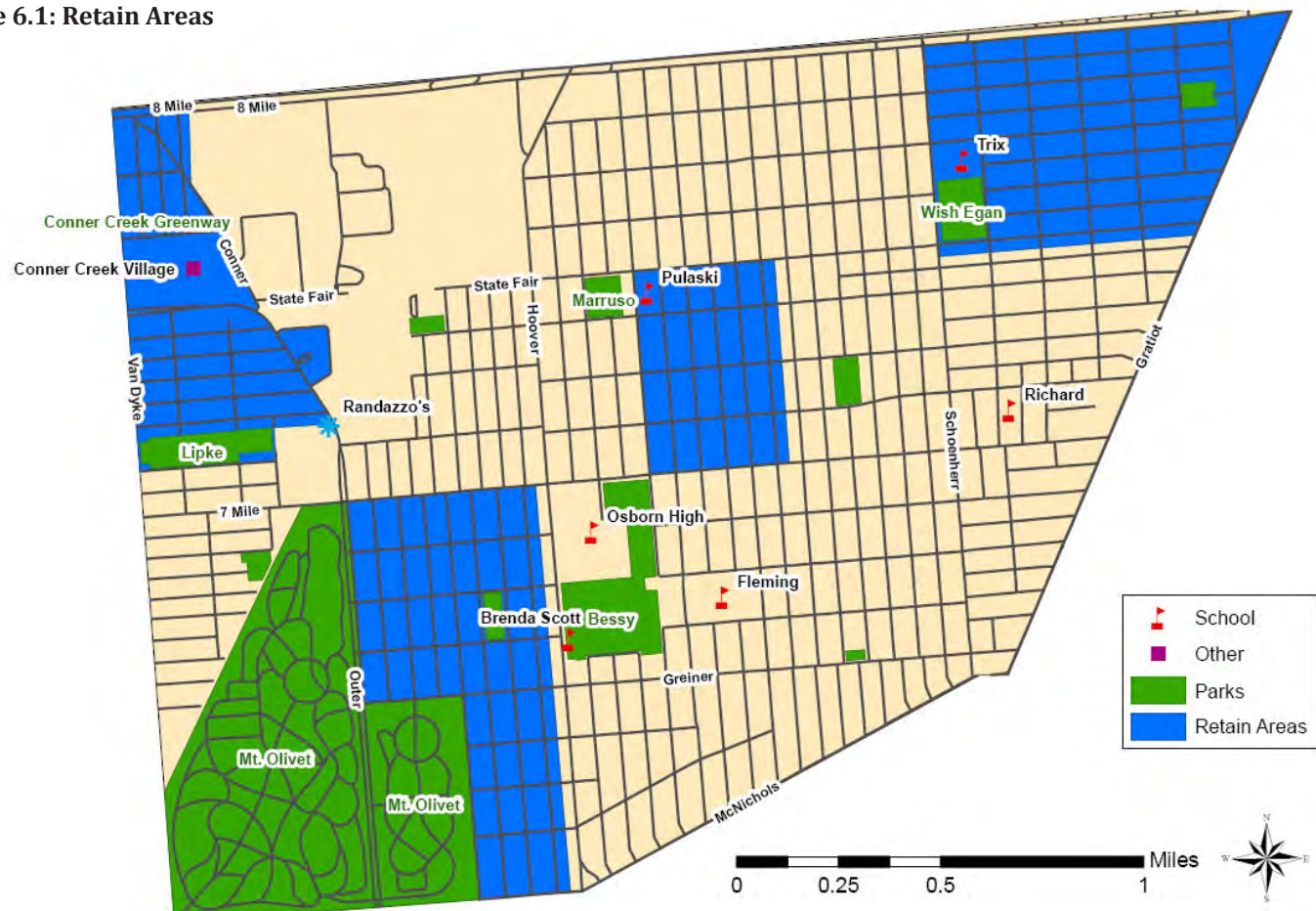
6

Improving Retain Areas

The previous chapter discussed ways that Osborn residents can enhance assets such as schools, parks and block clubs. This chapter looks more closely at how residents and community organizations can build upon these assets and others to address vacant properties in the Retain areas. The Retain areas have the fewest vacant houses and lots, and good housing conditions. Since these areas already have a number of well-established assets, building upon them

can be particularly effective for pursuing the goals outlined in Chapter 3. This chapter describes the Retain areas (shown in Figure 6.1), presents a set of criteria for residents and community organizations to use to decide where to focus their efforts, and lists specific actions that will help preserve the quality and character of the Retain areas. The chapter concludes with two examples that show how to take action in the Retain areas.

Figure 6.1: Retain Areas



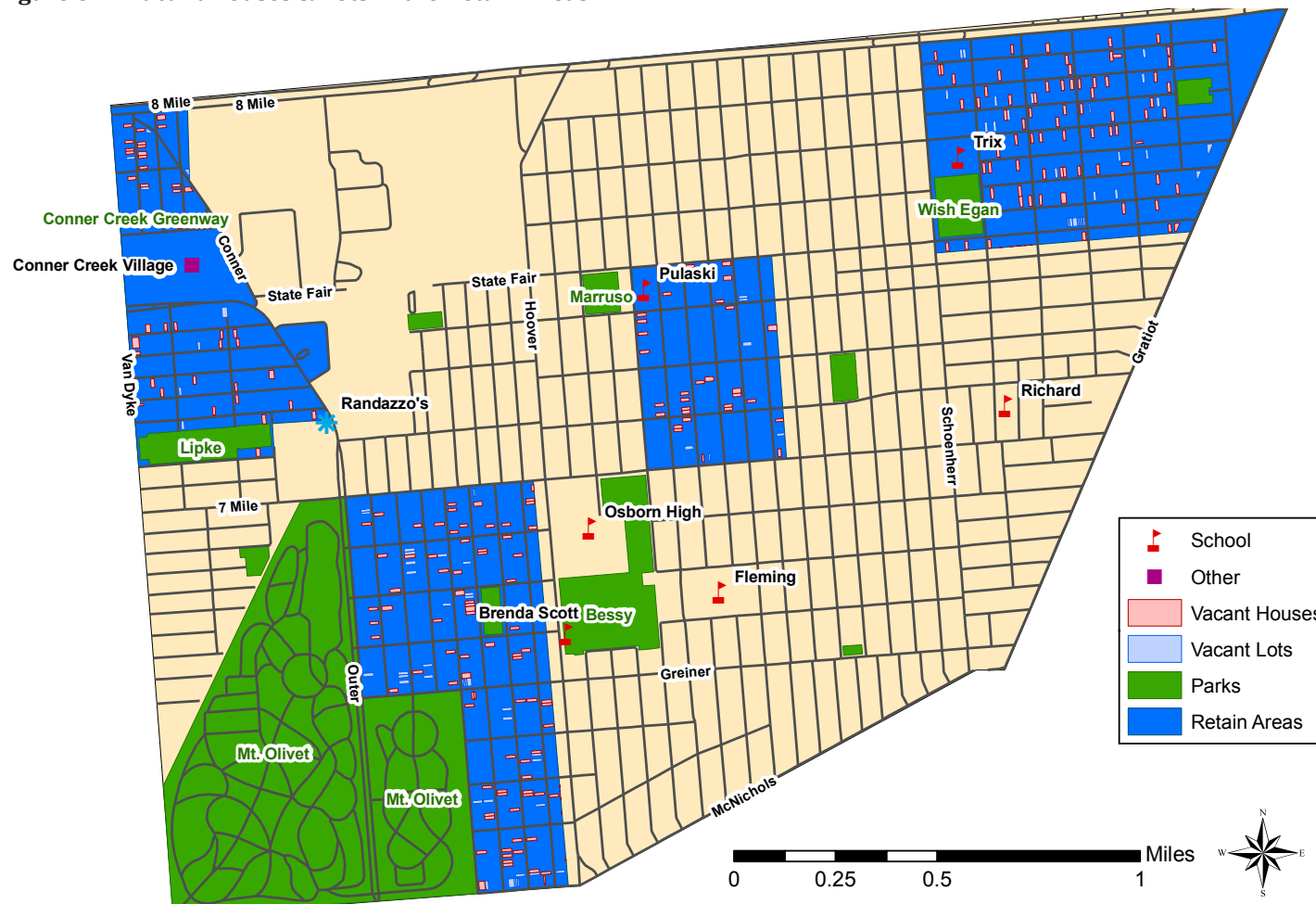
Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RETAIN AREAS

The Retain areas in Osborn have few vacant lots and houses, and the occupied houses tend to be in good or very good condition. In 2000, the Retain areas had a population of about 11,000 residents, 34% of whom were children under the age of eighteen. Median household income ranged from \$31,100 to

\$53,300 in different sections of the Retain areas. The poverty rate was 17 percent. The median home value ranged from \$57,000 to \$82,900. In contrast, median household incomes in other sections of Osborn ranged from \$20,400 to \$40,600, the poverty rate was around 32 percent, and the median home value ranged from \$23,500 to \$66,700.¹

Figure 6.2: Vacant Houses & Lots in the Retain Areas



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

In the Retain areas, 236 or 6.3% of all houses were unoccupied as of summer 2008, and 2.3% of all residential properties were vacant lots. Figure 6.2 shows the locations of vacant houses and lots in these areas. Nearly every block has at least one vacant house or lot. The Retain areas include about 34% of all residential lots in Osborn, less than 18% of total vacant houses, and about 12% of total vacant residential lots. In other words, while the Retain areas contain roughly one-third of total Osborn residential properties, they have a much smaller proportion of vacant properties. In many cases, vacant houses in the Retain areas are not immediately identifiable because neighbors are vigilant in maintaining these properties and keeping them secure.

GOALS IN THE RETAIN AREA

Chapter 3 outlined five goals to achieve in dealing with vacant houses and vacant lots in the Osborn area. Residents of the Retain areas chose three of these as most important for addressing vacant properties. This chapter will detail criteria to use and steps to take that will help residents in the Retain areas achieve these goals.

Improve the Environment for Children. Osborn has a high percentage of children; nearly 34% of those living in the Retain areas are under the age of eighteen.² One of the most important factors parents consider when deciding to live in a neighborhood is whether it is child-friendly and close to good schools.³ Actions aimed at improving the environment for children will help improve the quality of life for everyone.

Improve Safety. People want to live in and move to safe neighborhoods. In order to improve the quality of life and make the neighborhood more attractive, Osborn residents can take steps to address safety by dealing with open and

dangerous vacant houses, by cleaning up trash on lots and in alleys, and by keeping eyes on the street.

Retain Residents. The Retain areas are mostly intact, and residents and community organizations can take steps to make their neighborhoods more attractive, stem housing vacancies, and assist those in danger of foreclosure.

ACTION PLAN

The Retain areas have two types of sub-areas: those blocks located near an asset, and those blocks not located near an asset. While every block in Osborn is important, building upon assets can be more successful in the short-run. This action plan focuses first on implementing strategies within Retain areas that are near assets. These areas are called “priority zones.” Focusing on assets is important because positive action in strong areas can have a greater effect than in other parts of the neighborhood, and because residents and community organizations cannot immediately do everything everywhere.

Table 6.1 offers specific steps that community organizations and residents can take in priority zones to achieve goals. It shows how to choose where and when to implement possible actions. The short-term and intermediate stages focus only on areas located in priority zones—those areas that are within two blocks of an asset. The first section of the table describes actions to take in priority zones now (0 – 1 year) and the second section describes middle-range or intermediate steps (to undertake in 1 – 3 years). The third section offers long-term ideas to continue to strengthen priority zones and extends action steps from the first two stages to Retain areas that are located outside of priority zones. These actions can be implemented in three or more years from now. Each phase is meant to build upon accomplishments in previous phases.

Table 6.1: How to Choose Priority Zones and Possible Actions

Short Term	Where to Focus	Possible Actions
	<p>If an area is located within 2 blocks of an asset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Boys & Girls Club + Conner Creek Village + parks and recreation + schools <p>And in that area there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a block with 3 or more vacant houses + a vacant house in poor condition + an unmaintained vacant lot 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage neighbors; organize block clubs and neighborhood watches; identify leaders 2. Demolish vacant houses that are open and dangerous 3. Offer foreclosure prevention assistance 4. Organize clean-ups for unkempt lots
Intermediate	Where to Focus	Possible Actions
	<p>If an area is located within 2 blocks of an asset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Boys & Girls Club + Conner Creek Village + parks and recreation + schools <p>And in that area there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a block with 3 or more vacant houses + a vacant lot is owned by the city, county, or state 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure and maintain vacant houses that are in good or very good condition 2. Rehabilitate houses that are in fair condition or demolish if appropriate 3. Encourage homeowners adjacent to vacant lots to purchase them if possible
Long Term	Where to Focus	Possible Actions
	<p>Anywhere within a priority zone</p> <p><u>OR</u></p> <p>If the area is not within a priority zone:</p> <p>But in that area there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a block with 3 or more vacant houses + a vacant house in poor condition + an unmaintained vacant lot 	<p>Within priority zones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create community gardens on some vacant lots 2. Showcase rehabilitated streets <p>Outside of priority zones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue actions outlined in short-term and intermediate stages

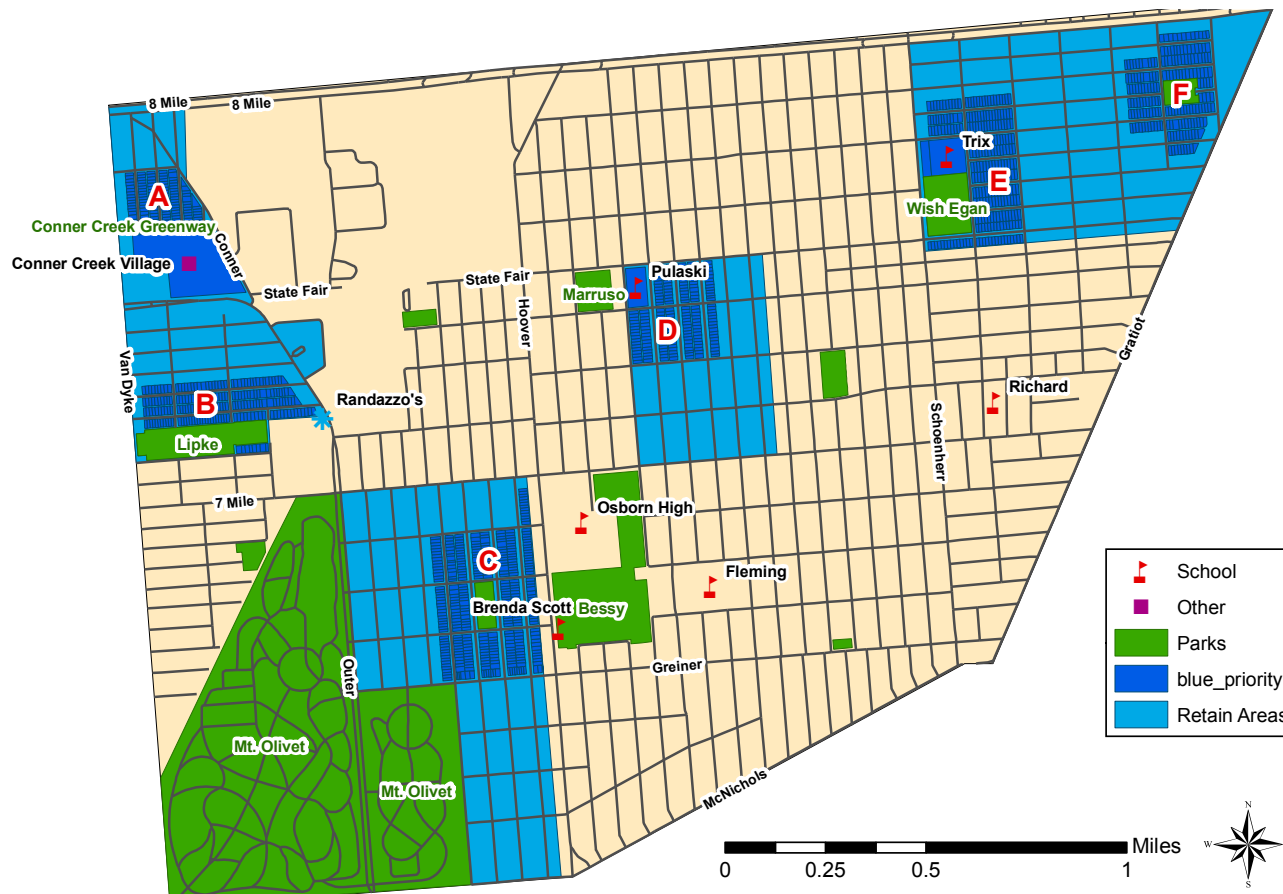
Priority Zones in the Retain Area

Priority zones were identified by selecting houses that are within two blocks of an area asset, such as Conner Creek Village, the Boys & Girls Club, an Osborn school, or a park or open space. Figure 6.3 shows the location of priority zones in the Retain areas. Recommended actions apply to vacant houses and lots within these zones. Table 6.2 describes the six priority zones identified by using the criteria in

Table 6.1. Short-term and intermediate actions happen in these zones first.

Chapter 5 discussed the Edmore-Marbud Playground in the northeast corner of Osborn and the importance of maintaining this area as a park. Taking the actions to maintain and improve this park and the streets around it, as outlined in Table 6.1 and in Chapter 5, will help to meet the goals outlined for the Retain areas in this priority zone.

Figure 6.3: Priority Zones in the Retain Areas



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Table 6.2: Priority Zone Descriptions

Zone	Description	Potential Actions
A	Includes Conner Creek Village and the Conner Creek Greenway.	Organize block clubs; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; create side lots; showcase properties.
B	Includes the Lipke Recreation Center and is near Joe Randazzo's Fruit and Vegetable Market; primarily brick houses are in good condition.	Organize block clubs; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; create side lots; showcase properties.
C	Includes the Optimist Playground and is near Osborn High and Brenda Scott Middle Schools.	Organize block clubs; demolish unsafe houses; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; create side lots.
D	Near Pulaski Elementary School and the Marruso Playground.	Organize block clubs; demolish unsafe houses; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; create side lots.
E	Near Trix Elementary School, the Wish Egan Playfield, and the Boys & Girls Club.	Organize block clubs; demolish unsafe houses; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; create side lots.
F	Surrounds the Edmore-Marbud Playground and is near an active commercial center at Gratiot and Eight Mile.	Organize block clubs; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; create side lots; showcase properties.

TAKING ACTION IN THE RETAIN AREAS

This section describes how residents, with the aid of community organizations, can work on their streets to implement an action plan like the one above. These two examples show what might be done to address vacant houses and lots in a specific small area. They can serve as a guide to residents in these areas, as well as those in other Retain areas.

Example Area 1: Reno & Fairmount

Example Area 1 is near the intersection of Reno and Fairmount (see Figure 6.4) and is part of priority zone E. It was selected for its proximity to Trix Elementary School, the Wish Egan Playfield and the Boys & Girls Club. For simplicity, this example focuses on a small section of the priority zone, but the actions described apply to the entire

priority zone. In general, the houses in this neighborhood are in good condition, but a few vacant houses need to be secured and rehabilitated, and a few lots could be transferred to neighbors as side lots. A block club or CDC could offer information to residents at risk of mortgage foreclo-

sure in this neighborhood. Eventually, block clubs or a community organization could organize property showcases to encourage new residents to move in. Table 6.3 describes the actions residents can take to address vacant properties near Reno and Fairmount.

Figure 6.4: Conditions of Vacant Houses in Example Area 1⁴



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Short-Term Actions

Actions in Example Area 1 begin with organizing residents into block clubs to maintain neighborhood safety and appearance. Figure 5.1 shows that some block clubs already exist on State Fair and near Example Area 1. By extending block club coverage on Eastburn and creating new block clubs on Rossini and Fairmount, residents can deter crime and maintain a safer environment for children who attend Trix Elementary School.

Foreclosure prevention assistance benefits everyone in the neighborhood, so CDCs and other organizations could offer counseling to all residents who live in this area. Counseling can help residents keep their homes and prevent future vacancies. This may be especially important around Trix Elementary where vacant houses could become dangerous to children if neglected.

While securing vacant houses is an intermediate action to allow time for residents to organize block clubs and deal with vacant houses that are an immediate danger to neighbors and children, waiting to secure other vacant houses puts them at risk of further deterioration. Block clubs around Reno and Fairmount may choose to begin securing and maintaining these houses in the short-term if they have the resources to do so.

Table 6.3: Short-Term Actions for Reno & Fairmount

Phase 1		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Organize residents	Eastburn; Rossini; Fairmount	Address crime; maintain neighborhood appearance
Offer foreclosure prevention assistance	All areas	Prevent future vacancies

Intermediate Actions

After residents organize and community organizations offer counseling to homeowners to prevent mortgage foreclosures, block clubs can address vacant properties. The Reno & Fairmount area does not have any dangerous houses requiring demolition. Securing windows and doors will be the primary method for protecting vacant houses. Security is most important for houses close to the areas where children play and go to school. Six vacant houses are close to Trix Elementary and the Wish Egan Playfield. If these houses become open, they present a risk to curious children or may attract crime that would make sidewalks around the school and playfield unsafe.

Several vacant houses in Example Area 1 are candidates for rehabilitation. As listed in Table 6.4, Bringard has three of these houses near each other. Residents may be able to get these houses rehabilitated at once by attracting an investor to do so. Success would depend on finding a developer or CDC interested in acquiring and rehabilitating the houses. Five vacant houses are owned either by a real estate company or by Wayne County: 13843 and 13892 Eastburn are real estate owned; 13871 Bringard, 13892 Fairmount, and 13620 E. State Fair are county owned. The other vacant houses are privately owned and may be difficult for a devel-

oper or CDC to purchase and rehabilitate. For these homes, block clubs can work with the city to enforce codes. The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign has a list of resources for code enforcement and for determining ownership in its “Vacant Property Toolbox.”⁵

Example Area 1 has two vacant lots. 13819 Bringard is city owned and the residents on either side are homeowners; this means that one of them could purchase it as a side lot to extend their property. The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign’s “Vacant Property Toolbox” has contact information for residents interested in purchasing city-owned lots. The other vacant lot (13841 Bringard) is privately owned, but

residents can maintain this property if it becomes overgrown or garbage-filled. The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign also can assist residents in locating the owner of this lot in order to ensure the owner maintains it.

If owners adjacent to a vacant lot are not interested in purchasing it, residents or a block club could maintain the lot. The presence of school children in this area means that vacant lots should be safe and clear of hazards. If there are a number of vacant lots adjacent to each other—such as at the corner of State Fair and Anvil just outside of this Example Area—community gardens are also an option.

Table 6.4: Intermediate Actions for Reno & Fairmount

Phase 2		
Action	Street Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Secure	Bringard: 13800, 13810, 13892 Eastburn: 13800, 13843, 13892 Fairmount: 13820, 13892 Rossini: 13917 State Fair: 13620, 13672	Protect houses from unauthorized entry Maintain condition to encourage resale
Rehabilitate	Bringard: 13849, 13871, 13893 Eastburn: 13820 Rossini: 13893 State Fair: 13800	Preserve neighborhood character Encourage new residents
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Transfer property	Bringard: 13819	Side lots address unmaintained lots
Maintain	Bringard: 13841	Unkempt lots can be maintained even if privately owned

Long-Term Actions

In the long-term stage, block clubs and residents that organized in the first stage can continue to clean up streets and maintain vacant properties. Clean-up efforts can also supplement vacant lot maintenance described in the intermediate stage. When all streets are in presentable condition, a CDC could organize a property showcase on streets near Trix Elementary

to highlight the positive efforts of residents, and encourage new residents to purchase featured homes. Property showcases could also be used to attract potential developers to rehabilitate houses secured and maintained in the intermediate stage. The Grandmont/Rosedale neighborhood on Detroit's west side took a similar action in their neighborhood to showcase strong properties, as explained in Figure 6.5.⁶

Table 6.5: Long-Term Actions for Reno & Fairmount

Phase 3		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Property Showcases	All streets in priority zone	Showcase strong streets after improvements are made
Actions from First Two Stages	Areas outside of priority zone	Build off success in priority zone to improve surrounding neighborhoods

Figure 6.5 Property Showcase

Grandmont/Rosedale Development Corp., Detroit

The “property showcase” concept was inspired by similar community initiatives. Several showcases were held in the Grandmont/Rosedale area of northwest Detroit. The showcases involved conducting a guided or a self-guided tour with potential buyers and real estate agents to visit vacant, ready-to-use spaces. Initially, this idea was focused on commercial vacant properties; however, a similar concept could be used in residential areas as well. The property showcase was designed for potential developers and entrepreneurs who used the opportunity to identify vacant buildings related to their interest. The interested stakeholders would meet at a selected location and were given information regarding the list of properties and tour route. At the end of the tour, the visitors are invited to meet with city officials and local business owners to generate more discussions on property sales.⁷

Figure 6.6 Example of a strong street



Figure 6.7 Example of a strong street



Figure 6.8 Possible candidate for rehabilitation



Source: DCI

Figure 6.9 Candidate for demolition



Source: DCI

Figure 6.10 Trix Elementary



Figure 6.11 Wish Egan Playfield



Figure 6.12 Fairmount Street



Figure 6.13 Pulaski Elementary



Figure 6.14 maps the locations of some of the actions in the first two stages to address vacant properties in Example Area 1.

Example Area 2: Strasburg & Manning

Example Area 2 is near the intersection of Strasburg and Manning. Like Example Area 1, this example focuses on a

small section of a priority zone, but the actions described apply to the entire priority zone. Nearby assets are Pulaski Elementary School and the Marruso Playground. This priority zone has a few houses that are in poor condition and in need of demolition, and some houses need to be secured and maintained. Foreclosure prevention assistance could help prevent some future vacancies. Figure 6.15 shows the current condition of vacant houses in Example Area 2.

Figure 6.14: Actions in Example Area 1



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Figure 6.15: Conditions of Vacant Houses in Example Area 2⁸



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Short-Term Actions

Organizing is the first step in Example Area 2. A block club may exist on Strasburg, but it may not cover the entire priority zone. In this stage, residents can focus first on extending the block club on Strasburg and establishing block clubs on Dresden, Hamburg and Barlow. Establishing block clubs on the streets near Pulaski Elementary may help to keep children safe and can also address crime and organize residents to maintain vacant properties.

As shown in Table 6.6, three houses are in poor condition and pose a danger to neighboring home values, residents' quality of life, and to children who may be enticed to explore the houses. Block clubs can work with the City of Detroit through the Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative to have these houses prioritized for demolition so that they no longer pose a threat. Figure 6.15 shows in red the houses that are in poor condition and require demolition.

As discussed in Example Area 1, a foreclosure prevention program offered through a community organization, such as the Detroit Community Initiative, can offer foreclosure prevention assistance on blocks that have been weakened by previous vacancies. Helping homeowners deal with foreclosure risk will help retain residents and prevent vacancies.

Block clubs around Strasburg and Manning could choose to begin securing and maintaining vacant houses in the short-term, but these are listed as intermediate actions to give residents the time they may need to organize.

Intermediate Actions

In the intermediate stage, block clubs and residents can build upon the work done in the first stage by securing and maintaining houses in good condition. A developer could be encouraged to rehabilitate houses in fair condition that new residents could later reoccupy. Two of the vacant lots created by the demolition of houses in poor condition could be transferred to neighboring homeowners as side lots. A third vacant lot at 19503 Strasburg is next to a vacant house but could be maintained by a block club. Table 6.7 lists the houses that can be secured and rehabilitated; four of these are owned by Wayne County or a real estate company: 19634, 19536 and 19616 Dresden, 19800 Hamburg, and 19734 Strasburg. A developer or CDC can purchase and rehabilitate these properties, but the remaining houses are privately owned and may be more difficult to acquire. Code enforcement can be used to force the owners of these houses to maintain and secure them. The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign has a list of resources for determining ownership in its Vacant Property Toolbox.

Long-Term Actions

Figure 6.16 shows the locations of actions from the first two stages. Then in the long-term stage, property showcases can feature attractive and well-maintained streets, as described in Example Area 1. Residents and block clubs can also extend actions in the first two stages into areas outside of the priority zone.

The next chapter describes the second type of areas in Osborn, the Reinforce areas, and how residents and community organizations in those areas can address vacant properties in a slightly different way.

Table 6.6: Short-Term Actions for Strasburg & Manning

Phase 1		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Organize residents	Dresden; Hamburg; Barlow	Address crime; maintain neighborhood appearance
Demolish houses in poor condition	Dresden: 19586 Strasburg: 19503 Hamburg: 19775	Preserve property values Remove dangers to children Remove places for illicit activity
Offer foreclosure prevention assistance	All areas	Prevent future vacancies

Table 6.7: Intermediate Actions for Strasburg & Manning

Phase 2		
Action	Street Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Secure	Dresden: 19634, 19536 Hamburg: 19800	Protect houses from unauthorized entry Maintain condition to encourage resale
Rehabilitate	Dresden: 19816 Strasburg: 19786, 19734, 19710	Preserve neighborhood character Encourage new residents

Table 6.8: Long-Term Actions for Strasburg & Manning

Phase 3		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Property Showcases	All streets in priority zone	Showcase strong streets after improvements are made
Actions from First Two Stages	Areas outside of priority zone	Build off success in priority zone to improve surrounding neighborhoods

Figure 6.16: Actions in Example Area 2



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Notes

¹U.S.Census Bureau. U.S.Census 2000- Summary File 1(SF 1). 15 September 2008
<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/sumfile1.html>>.

²U.S.Census Bureau. U.S.Census 2000- Summary File 1(SF 1). 15 September 2008
<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/sumfile1.html>>.

³Foreclosed Homes. How to Find a Good Neighborhood. 2008. 12 December 2008
<<http://www.foreclosedhomes.com/real-estate-information/how-do-you-find-a-good-neighborhood.aspx>>.

⁴Conditions are based on a windshield survey conducted on December 12,2008.
See Appendix B for methods for assessing conditions. 2008.

⁵Detroit Vacant Property Campaign. “Vacant Property Toolbox.” 2008. Detroit Vacant Property Campaign- Technical Assistance.
22 December 2008 <<http://officemanager.law.officelive.com/technical/toolbox.pdf>>.

⁶Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation. Housing Development. 2008. 03 January 2009
<<http://www.grdc.org/id2.html>>.

⁷Metromode. Ferndale Property Showcase. 04 September 2008. 12 December 2008
<<http://www.metromodemedia.com/devnews/ferndalepropertyshowcase0083.aspx>>.

⁸Conditions are based on a windshield survey conducted on December 12, 2008. See Appendix B for methods for assessing conditions.

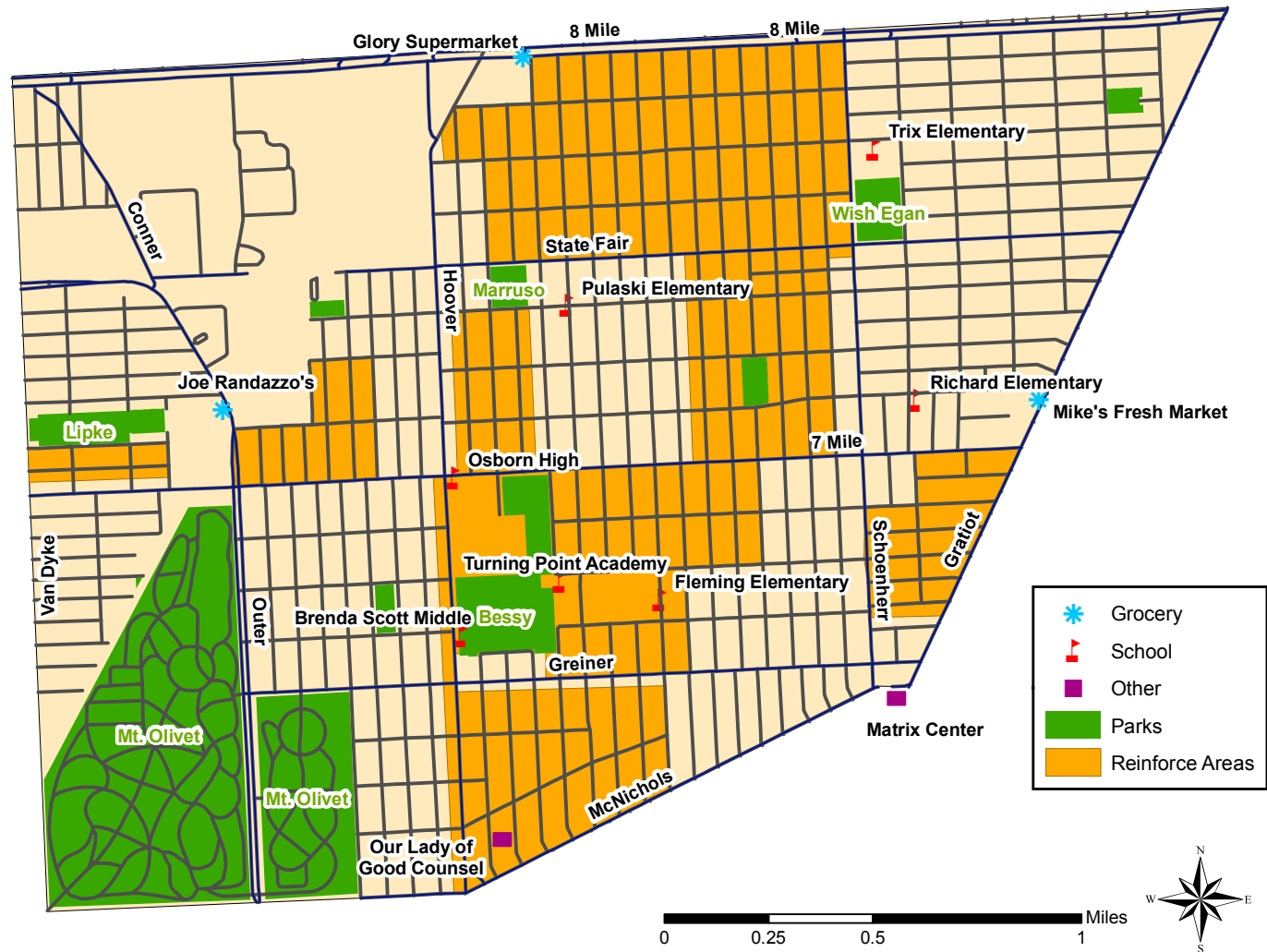
7

Improving Reinforce Areas

The previous chapter discussed actions for building upon assets such as schools, parks and block clubs in the Retain areas. This chapter will highlight actions for building upon those assets and others in the Reinforce areas. This chapter describes the Reinforce areas, presents a set of criteria

that residents and community organizations to use to decide where to focus their efforts, and lists specific actions that will help enhance the quality and character of the Reinforce areas. This chapter concludes with two examples that show how to take action in the Reinforce areas.

Figure 7.1: Reinforce Areas with Assets



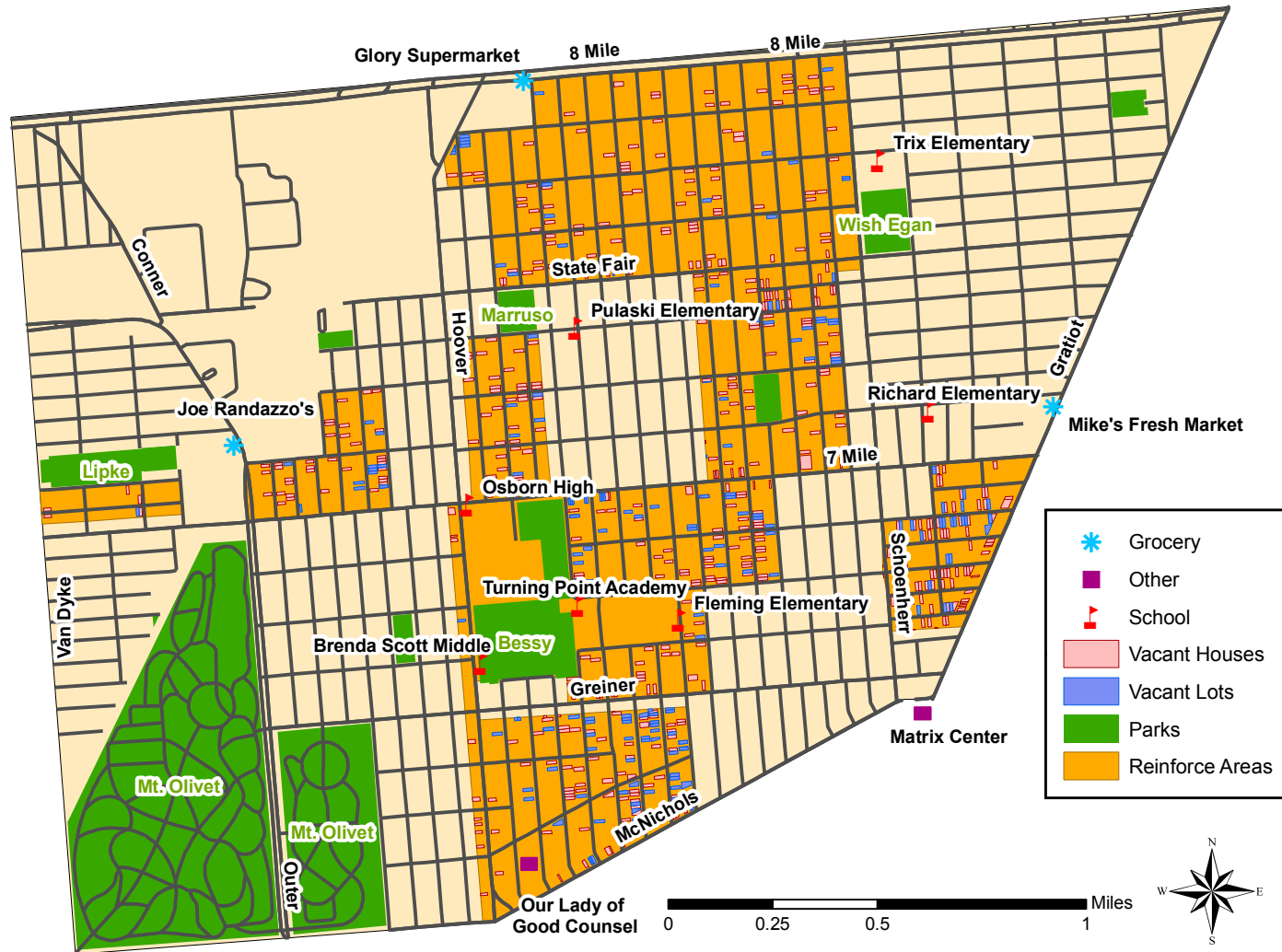
Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REINFORCE AREAS

The Reinforce areas make up about 40% of Osborn. Characteristics of these areas include well-maintained houses and lots, little evidence of illegal dumping and good access to parks and

schools. The vacancy levels average one to two houses or lots per block (see Figure 7.2). Figure 7.1 shows the Reinforce areas in Osborn along with important assets like schools and parks.

Figure 7.2: Vacancies in Reinforce Areas



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Lisa Morris, SEMCOG

In 2000, the Reinforce areas had a population of about 17,000 residents, about 36% of whom were children under the age of eighteen. The median household income ranged from \$20,265 to \$53,333 across different sections of the area, and the poverty rate was 29 percent. The median year of construction for the homes ranges between 1946 and 1967 across sections of the Reinforce areas. The median value for the homes in various sections of the area was between \$42,100 and \$69,400.¹

In the Reinforce areas, 436 or about 9.5% of all houses were vacant, and close to 4% of all residential properties were vacant lots. The Reinforce areas include about 40% of Osborn's residential lots, but only 35% of its vacant homes and about 27% of its vacant lots. Reinforce areas may experience further vacancies in the near future. For more detailed information on the likelihood of future mortgage foreclosures, refer to Chapter 2.

GOALS IN THE REINFORCE AREA

Chapter 3 describes five goals in reference to vacant houses and vacant lots in the Osborn area. Residents selected three that they believed were the most important for addressing vacant properties in the Reinforce areas. This chapter will outline criteria to use and action steps to take, which will assist residents in the Reinforce areas achieve these goals.

Improve Safety. The desire to live in and move to a safe neighborhood is a key goal for the residents of Osborn. In order to achieve this goal, Reinforce residents can take measures such as securing open and dangerous structures and promoting neighborhood watch activities.

Improve the Environment for Children. A large percentage of Osborn's population is school-age children. Because of the large population and subsequent concentration of schools with-

in walking distance of homes, the safety of children around their homes and between their residences and schools is a great concern of Osborn residents. Efforts directed at improving child safety in the neighborhood will help improve quality of life and attract more residents to the area.

Retain Residents. Although the Reinforce areas experience moderate levels of property vacancy, the majority of blocks are mostly intact. Residents and community organizations can take steps to beautify the neighborhood, prevent further housing vacancies, and provide resources to those in danger of foreclosure.

ACTION PLAN

The Reinforce areas contain regions with blocks that are located near Osborn assets and those that are not located near assets. This plan recommends building on assets through short-term and long-term actions. To accomplish the goals in the Reinforce areas, the first task is to determine the location and timing of action steps. First, this plan recommends focusing on the implementation of strategies in areas near assets. Taking action in areas near assets can have greater positive effect because immediate action cannot be initiated everywhere. These primary areas of focus are called "priority zones."

Table 7.1 outlines the actions that community organizations and residents can implement in priority zones to achieve goals. Table 7.1 also shows how to choose priority zones, where to choose priority zones, and when to implement the strategies and possible actions. The first two sections of the table show short-term and intermediate actions that focus on strategies that can be employed in the priority zones--those areas highlighted in Figure 7.3 and within one block of an asset. The first section of the table outlines possible actions that can take place

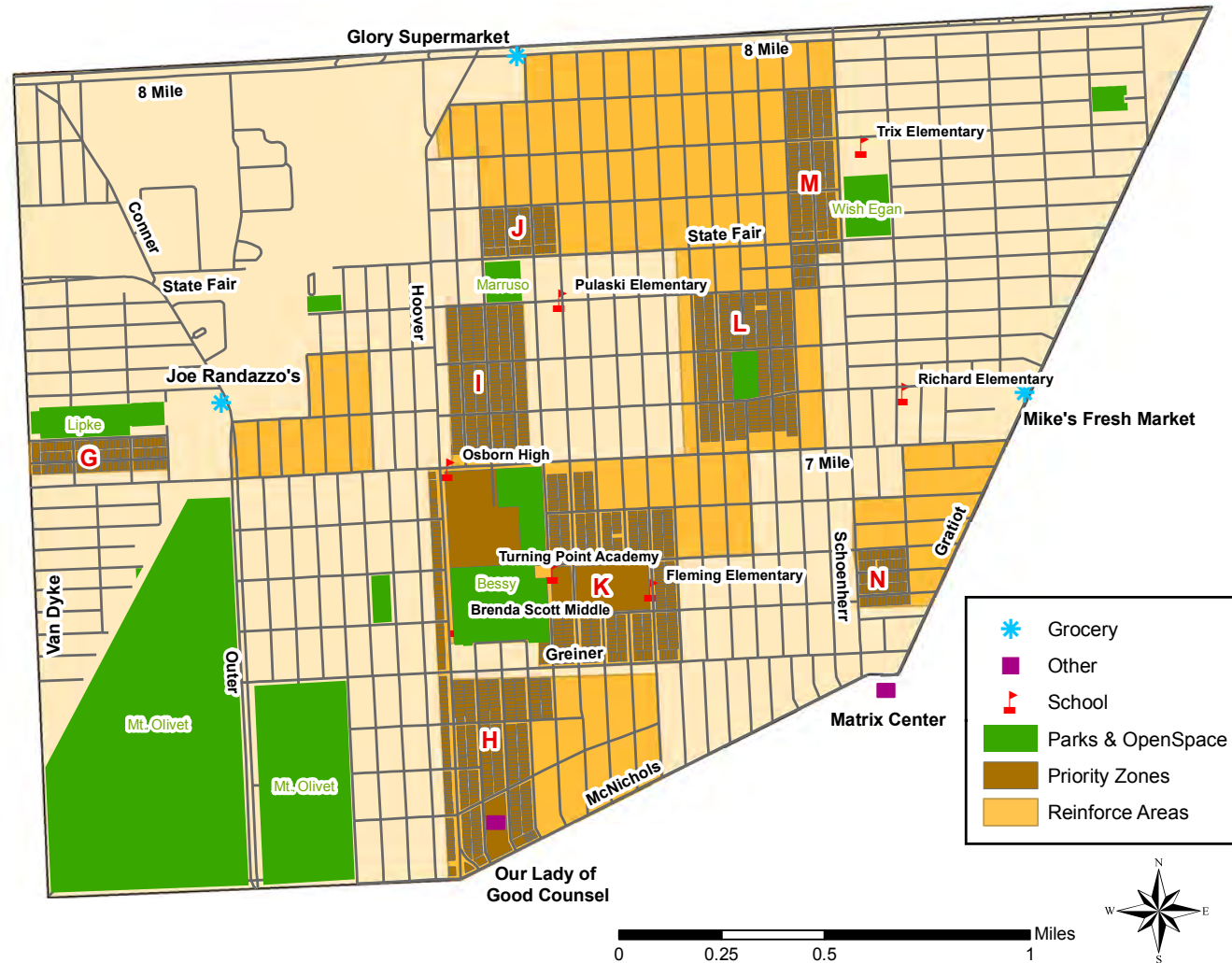
Table 7.1: How to Choose Priority Zones and Possible Actions

Short Term	<p>Where to Focus</p> <p>If an area is located within 1 block of an asset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Cemetery + Church + Parks and recreation + Retain area <p>And in that area there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a block with 2 or more vacant houses + a vacant house in fair condition or better + an unmaintained vacant lot 	<p>Possible Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize block clubs 2. Demolish vacant houses that are open and dangerous 3. Offer foreclosure prevention assistance 4. Organize clean-ups for unkempt lots 5. Secure vacant houses
Intermediate	<p>Where to Focus</p> <p>If an area is located within 1 block of an asset:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Cemetery + Church + Parks and recreation + Retain area <p>And in that area there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a block with 2 or more vacant houses + a vacant lot is owned by the city, county, or state 	<p>Possible Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehabilitate houses that are in fair condition or demolish if appropriate 2. Repair houses in good condition 3. Reinforce parks through landscaping, maintaining, and providing equipment 4. Encourage homeowners adjacent to vacant lots to purchase them if possible
Long Term	<p>Where to Focus</p> <p>Anywhere within a priority zone</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If the area is not within a priority zone:</p> <p>But in that area there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + a block with 2 or more vacant houses + a vacant house in fair condition or better + an unmaintained vacant lot 	<p>Possible Actions</p> <p>Within priority zones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Showcase rehabilitated streets <p>Outside of priority zones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue actions outlined in short-term and intermediate stages

within a priority zone now (0 – 1 year.) The second section illustrates intermediate actions to undertake in the near future (1 – 3 years.) The third section offers ideas to reinforce priority zones in the long term. Long-term actions and

strategies extend short-term and intermediate action steps beyond the priority zones into adjoining parts of the Reinforce areas, and can be implemented in three or more years from now. Each phase builds upon the previous one.

Figure 7.3: Reinforce Priority Zones



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Table 7.2: Priority Zones in the Reinforce Areas

Zone	Description	Potential Actions
G	Borders retail along Seven Mile Road to the south, Lipke Park to the north and Van Dyke, a commercially active street to the west. The zone is northwest of Mt. Olivet Cemetery and is located between both Retain and Restructure areas.	Offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; showcase properties; organize block clubs; reinforce parks.
H	Zone is between Greiner to the north and McNichols to the south. Borders a Retain area and surrounds Our Lady of Good Counsel Church.	Offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; repair homes; transfer property; showcase properties; organize block clubs; reinforce parks.
I	Zone is south of Marruso Playground, north of Osborn High School and west of Pulaski Elementary School.	Demolish unsafe structures; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; reinforce parks; secure and maintain vacant houses; showcase properties; organize block clubs
J	Zone is north of Marruso Playground and a block north of Pulaski Elementary School.	Offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; showcase properties; organize block clubs; reinforce parks.
K	Surrounds Fleming Elementary School, and is one block away from Fleming Elementary School, Turning Point Academy, Brenda Scott Middle School and Bessy Playground.	Offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; repair homes; transfer property; showcase properties; organize block clubs; reinforce parks.
L	Surrounds a large park and is next to a Retain area. It is within five blocks of two schools.	Demolish unsafe structures; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; reinforce parks; secure and maintain vacant houses; showcase properties; organize block clubs
M	Zone is one block west of Wish Egan Playfield and Trix Elementary School.	Demolish unsafe structures; offer foreclosure prevention assistance; reinforce parks; secure and maintain vacant houses; showcase properties; organize block clubs
N	Zone is close to Gratiot retail and within walking distance of grocery stores. It has a strong block club.	Offer foreclosure prevention assistance; secure and maintain vacant houses; showcase properties.

Priority Zones in the Reinforce Areas

Priority zones were identified by selecting houses that are within one block of an area asset, such as Our Lady of Good Counsel, Fleming Elementary School, or a park or open space. Figure 7.3 shows the location of priority zones in the Reinforce areas. Recommended actions apply to vacant houses and lots within these zones.

TAKING ACTION IN REINFORCE AREAS

The steps listed in this section illustrate how to apply the suggested actions at the block level to address vacant houses and lots. The following two examples illustrate what may be done in a specific small area, and can serve as a guide to residents in these areas as well as to others working in the Reinforce areas.

Example Area 1: Hoover, Rowe, Annett

Example Area 1 includes the three streets of Hoover, Rowe, and Annett located between Gietzen and McNichols. The area is part of priority zone H, which was selected for its proximity to Brenda Scott Middle School, the Bessy Playfield and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. This example focuses on a small section of the priority zone, but the ac-

tions described apply to the entire priority zone. The houses in this example area are in good condition; however, four vacant houses need to be secured and repaired. Two vacant lots could be transferred to neighbors to expand their property. Example Area 1 contains Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, which could take the lead, along with block clubs and CDCs, in offering mortgage foreclosure prevention information and organizing efforts to maintain vacant homes and lots.

Figure 7.4: Conditions of Vacant Houses in Hoover, Rowe, and Annett Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Table 7.3 Short-Term Actions for Hoover, Rowe, Annott Area

Phase 1		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Organize residents	Hoover between Gietzen and McNichols	Address crime; maintain neighborhood appearance
Offer foreclosure prevention assistance	All areas	Prevent future vacancies
Secure vacant houses	Hoover: 17616, 17346, 17200	Prevent houses from damage as well as unauthorized entry

Eventually, the church and block clubs could organize property showcases in the neighborhood to encourage new residents to move in. The church can host block club meetings and perhaps initiate security patrols using church members as well as residents. Table 7.2 describes the actions residents can take to address vacant properties in priority zone H near Hoover, Rowe, and Annott, while Figure 7.4 shows the current condition of vacant houses in Example Area 1.

Short-Term Actions

Priorities in Example Area 1 begin with organizing residents in the already existing block clubs (as shown in Figure 5.1) to work on neighborhood safety and appearance. Our Lady of Good Counsel Church could serve as a location for neighborhood block clubs to organize and meet. By strengthening block clubs on Hoover, Rowe, and Annott, residents can deter crime and maintain a safer environment for children who attend Brenda Scott Middle School and use Bessy Playfield for recreation.

Preventing foreclosure in the neighborhood is a benefit realized by all its residents. Our Lady of Good Counsel Church could sponsor and offer space to foreclosure prevention counselors who would serve the neighborhood. This assistance can help prevent future vacancies by keeping residents in their homes and may be especially important around the church where vacant homes may become safety hazards if neglected.

Securing vacant houses is an action Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and block clubs can take to improve neighborhood safety in the short-term. Open houses are dangerous to neighbors and children and are at risk for further deterioration if left unsecured. Example Area 1 includes four vacant houses within two blocks of Brenda Scott Middle School and Bessy Playfield. The church can organize block clubs and additional maintenance teams to begin securing vacant houses in the short-term, should resources be available. Table 7.3 identifies the areas for these short-term actions.

Intermediate Actions

Several vacant houses in Example Area 1 are candidates for repair. Figure 7.5 illustrates the three houses on Hoover and one located on Annott that are candidates for this type of intervention. 17459 Annott is owned by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), so residents may be able to get this house repaired at once by attracting an investor or CDC to do so. 17616, 17346, and 17200 located on Hoover are privately owned, which means acquisition and repair may be more difficult. Residents can access the Detroit Vacant Property Campaign's Vacant Property Toolbox to assist them in determining ownership of these vacant houses. In cases where acquisition is not possible, residents may appeal to agencies such

as the Detroit Department of Public Works, Building Safety and Engineering Department, or the Wayne County Nuisance Abatement Program to hold owners accountable for their property’s condition through code enforcement.

Bessy Playfield is located two blocks north of this priority zone and provides an attractive and useful green space for the neighborhood. Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, block clubs, CDCs, and residents can organize to maintain this park through landscaping, tree planting, and the addition of play equipment, which can offer a safe place for children to play as well as improve the appearance of the area.

This example area contains two vacant lots on Annott. 17371 Annott is privately owned, but residents can still maintain this lot through landscaping and garbage collection if it becomes overgrown or filled with litter. The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign can assist residents in locating the owner of this lot to ensure it is properly maintained. 17395 Annott is owned by Wayne County with homeowners on either side; therefore, adjacent homeowners can purchase this lot and extend their property if they want.²

If adjacent homeowners are not interested in a land purchase, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, residents, or block clubs can continue to maintain the property. Given the proximity to Brenda Scott Middle School, keeping vacant lots clean and free of hazards is a priority. Table 7.4 shows the street addresses where actions can be applied.

Long Term Actions

In the long-term stage, block clubs that were organized or strengthened in the first stage can continue to implement the actions from both the short-term and intermediate stages. Once blocks have been improved, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church and block clubs could organize a property showcase that features repaired vacant houses for sale. The property showcase could market the neighborhood around the church and attract new residents to purchase homes and developers to repair or rehabilitate additional vacant houses. Repaired or rehabilitated vacant houses for sale could be promoted to parents of current and future Brenda Scott Middle School students. Table 7.5 shows the areas where action can be applied.

Table 7.4 Intermediate Actions for Hoover, Rowe, Annott Area

Phase 2		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Repair	Hoover: 17616, 17346, 17200 Annott: 17459	Preserve neighborhood character Encourage new residents
Reinforce parks	Bessy Playfield	Provide open space asset
Transfer property	Annott: 17395	Side lots address unmaintained lots
Maintain	Annott: 17371	Unkempt lots can be maintained even if privately owned

Figure 7.5: Actions for Hoover, Rowe, Annett Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor’s data, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Table 7.5 Long-Term Actions for Hoover, Rowe, Annett Area

Phase 3		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Showcase properties	All streets in priority zone	Showcase strong streets after improvements are made
Actions from first two stages	All areas outside of priority zone	Build off success in priority zone to improve surrounding neighborhoods

Example Area 2: Fleming Elementary School Area

Example Area 2 includes the blocks surrounding Fleming Elementary School. It was selected for its proximity to Fleming Elementary School, the Turning Point Academy, Osborn High School, and Bessy Playfield.

Bessy Playfield and the concentration of block clubs shown in Figure 5.1. This area will receive over \$400,000 worth of infrastructure improvements as part of the Safe Routes to Schools Program. Houses in this area are generally in good condition. Securing, repairing and rehabilitating some vacant houses could make the routes to the schools safer. Side lots can be created by transferring ownership of a few vacant lots

Figure 7.6: Conditions of Vacant Houses in the Fleming Elementary School Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

to neighbors. A block club or CDC could offer help to residents to prevent additional mortgage foreclosure in this neighborhood. Block clubs could develop teams to maintain vacant homes and lots. Property showcases could also entice new owners after the condition of vacant properties improves. Black Family Development could help the existing block clubs to expand to include Waltham between Eastwood and Greiner just east of Fleming Elementary School. Table 7.6 describes the actions residents can take to address vacant properties near Fleming Elementary School, and Figure 7.6 shows the current condition of vacant houses in the area.

Figure 7.7: Block Clubs near Fleming Elementary School Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Short-Term Actions

Short-term actions in Example Area 2 focus on neighborhood organizing. Figure 5.1 shows that block clubs already exist between Seven Mile and Greiner on Strasburg, Hamburg, and Barlow. Block club organizing could focus on Waltham. Developing a neighborhood identity as a safer place could begin with organizing the existing block clubs around Fleming Elementary School shown in Figure 7.7. These block clubs could work together to develop neighborhood watch, patrols and maintenance teams. These teams can work in conjunction with the

Figure 7.8: Short-Term Actions for Fleming Elementary School Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Maintaining A Neighborhood (MAN) Network. The MAN Network patrols near Fleming Elementary School on school days before and after school. The MAN Network endeavors to mobilize 300 men in the Osborn area. The Fleming Elementary School parent community can continue to organize around the safety of the youth. Creating and strengthening block clubs near Fleming could allow residents to deter crime and maintain a safer environment for children who attend Fleming Elementary.

Chapter 2 discussed the risk of mortgage foreclosure in Osborn, which will likely continue in the near term. Local CDCs or churches can initiate foreclosure prevention assistance pro-

grams. These programs and counseling could help stabilize the neighborhood and limit the number of future foreclosures.

Securing vacant houses is a short term action block clubs and CDCs can undertake to keep children safe. Figure 7.8 highlights locations where short-term actions could address vacant houses. Houses on streets with block clubs are the priority for securing to protect them from stripping and squatting.

Figure 7.9: Intermediate Actions for Fleming Elementary School Area



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Intermediate Actions

Intermediate actions center on protecting and maintaining the housing in good condition. No homes in this area require demolition. After block clubs have been organized on Waltham vacant properties could be secured and monitored. Securing windows and doors of the vacant homes is the highest priority for intermediate actions. The proximity to Fleming and Turning Point make security paramount. Unsecured homes may entice children for use as “hangout spots” or places to engage in illicit activities. Six vacant homes and four vacant lots are within a block of Turning Point Academy. Fourteen vacant homes and two vacant lots are within one block of Fleming Elementary School. These homes can become dangerous to students as they walk to and from school.

Five vacant houses in Example Area 2 are candidates for repair (18644 Dresden, 18114, 18096 Barlow, and 18638, 18030 Waltham). These houses need repair because they are in good condition as shown in Figure 7.6. 18644 Dresden, 18114 Barlow, and 18030 Waltham are all REO properties.³ A CDC or a developer can acquire these

Table 7.6 Short-Term Actions for Fleming Elementary School Area

Phase 1		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Organize residents	Waltham between Seven Mile and Greiner	Address crime; maintain neighborhood appearance
Secure vacant houses	Dresden: 18650, 18644, 18630, 18622, 18108 Strasburg: 18095	Protect houses from unauthorized entry
	Hamburg: 18080, 18054, 18040, 18038 Barlow: 18717, 18680, 18630, 18020, 18115 18114, 18096	Maintain condition to encourage resale
Offer foreclosure prevention assistance	All areas	Prevent future vacancies

Table 7.7 Intermediate Actions for Fleming Elementary School Area

Phase 2		
Action	Street Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Repair	Dresden: 18644 Barlow: 18114, 18096 Waltham: 18638, 18030	Preserve neighborhood character Encourage new residents
Rehabilitate	Dresden: 18650, 18630, 18622, 18103 Hamburg: 18080, 18046, 18038 Waltham: 18638	Preserve neighborhood character Encourage new residents
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Transfer property	Hamburg: 18039	Side lots address unmaintained lots
Maintain lots	Dresden: 18700, 18680 Strasburg: 18719, 18633	Unkempt lots can be maintained, even if privately owned

Table 7.8 Long-Term Actions for Fleming Elementary School Area

Phase 3		
Action	Street Address	Reason
Property showcases	All streets in priority zone	Showcase strong streets after improvements are made
Actions from first two stages	Areas outside of priority zone	Build off success in priority zone to improve surrounding neighborhoods

homes. Houses in good condition do not require major structural changes. The houses have good structural elements (roof, frame, siding, etc.). All remaining homes in good condition are privately owned.

Several vacant houses in Example Area 2 are candidates for rehabilitation. As listed in Table 7.7, three of these houses are close to each other on Dresden (18650, 18630 and 18622). These houses are all privately owned. Once acquired, the three vacant houses could be rehabilitated by a CDC or developer as one project. 18636 Dresden is county owned and could be acquired with the other vacant houses. Additionally, 18644 Dresden is owned by US Bank National Association. These five homes could all be acquired together. Similar strategies could be employed on Hamburg (18080, 18046, and 18038).

Example Area 2 has five vacant lots. 18039 Hamburg is owned by the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority,⁴ which means a homeowner adjacent to the lot could purchase this lot and use it as a side lot, an extension of their property. All remaining lots are privately owned. If adjacent owners are not interested in purchasing the land, block clubs could develop maintenance teams to adopt these lots. The Detroit Vacant Property Campaign can assist residents in locating the owners of these lots. Residents can then work with property owners and CDCs to ensure a lot is properly maintained. The presence of school children in this area makes securing vacant lots and clearing them of hazards a priority.

Long Term Actions

Block clubs could develop an annual property showcase that highlights vacant properties in good condition that are for sale (see Chapter 6). The showcase tour could be co-sponsored by the developer or CDC that performed the rehabilitation on the Dresden and Hamburg properties. Fleming Elementary School could also be a partner because Principal Sims and his staff want to see vacant houses occupied by families of students who attend Fleming. Sims mentioned four families that moved into the area to attend Fleming.⁵ The rehabilitated homes could be marketed to parents of current and future Fleming Elementary School students.

The next chapter describes the third type of areas, the Re-structure areas, and how residents and community organizations in those areas can address vacant properties and achieve the goals they identified as important in community meetings.

Notes

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Census 2000- Summary File 1(SF 1). 15 September 2008
<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/sumfile1.html>>.

² Assessor's Data. Detroit: Detroit Planning and Development Department, August 2008.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth. Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority. 2008. 21 December 2008
<<http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mlbfta/>>.

⁵ Ronnie Sims, Principal. Fleming Elementary School, 30 September 2008.



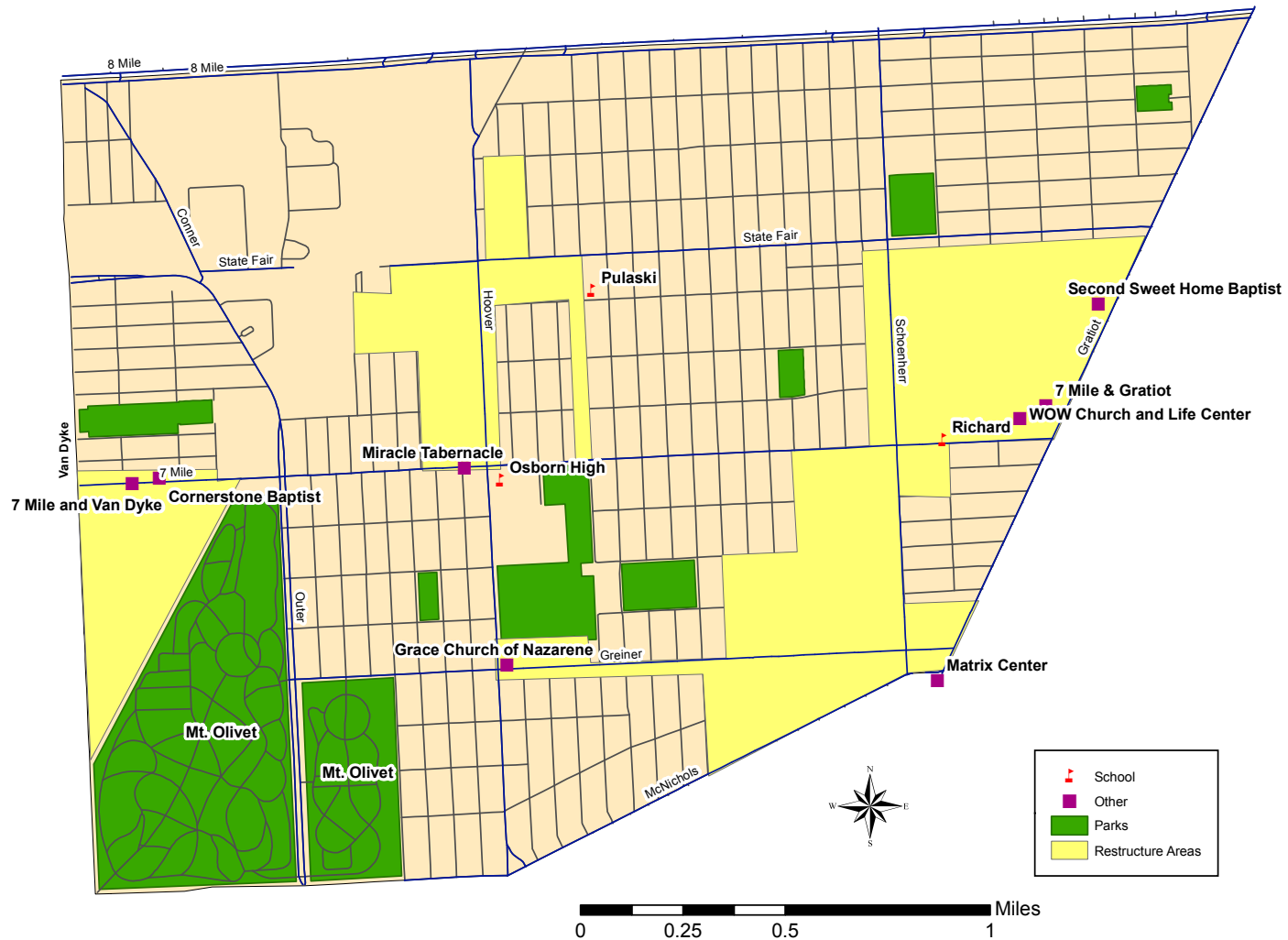
8

Improving Restructure Areas

This chapter will describe the third type of area in Osborn, the Restructure areas. Unlike the Retain and Reinforce areas, Restructure areas have a large proportion of vacant houses and vacant lots, and more residents in poverty than the other two areas.

This section will outline the characteristics of the Restructure areas, describe how to focus within the areas, and highlight potential actions for vacant houses and lots. The restructuring of these areas will decrease the number of vacant houses, make use of vacant lots, increase safety in the area, and improve the environment for children.

Figure 8.1: Restructure Areas and Assets



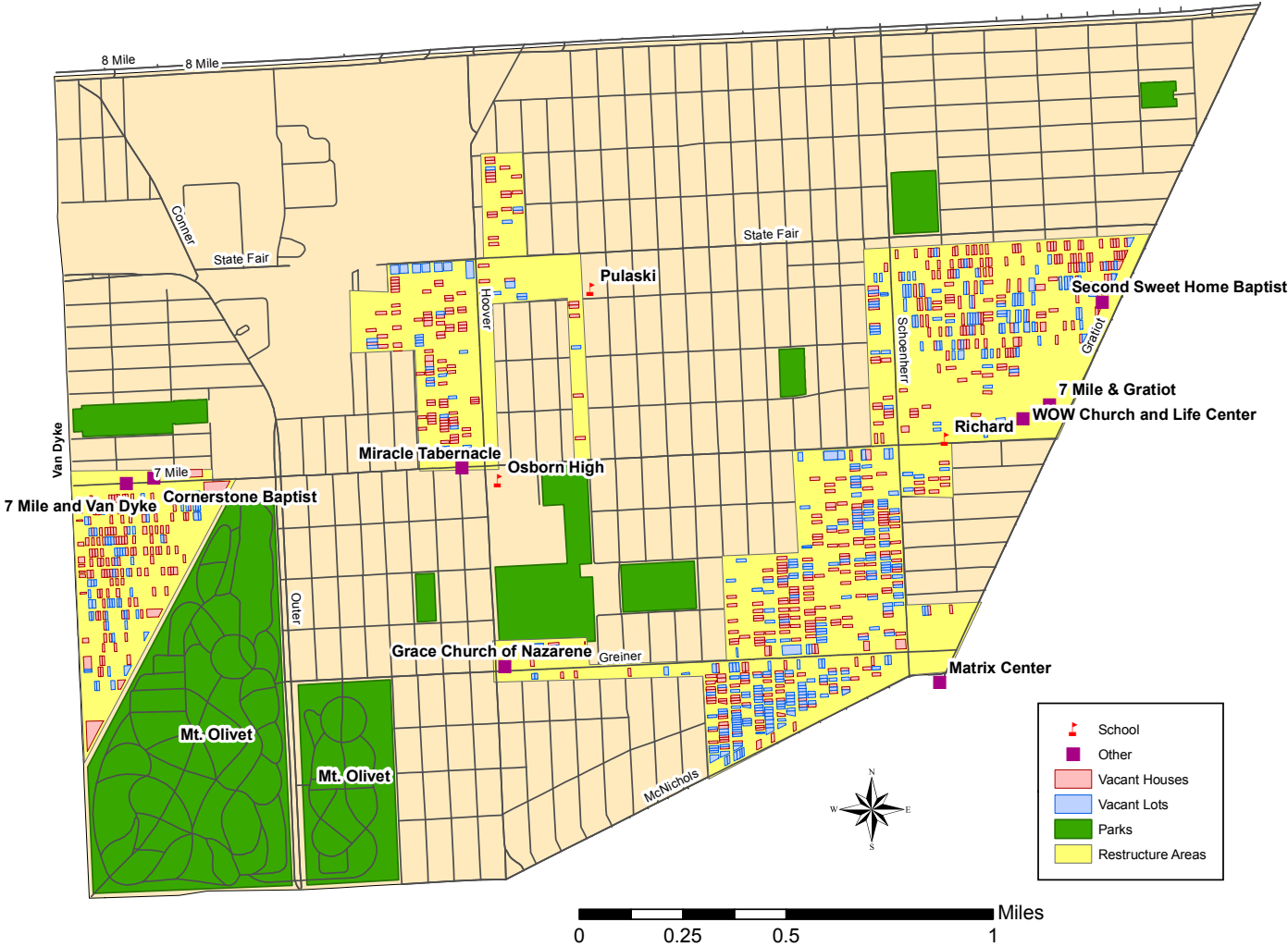
Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESTRUCTURE AREAS

Figure 8.1 shows the Restructure areas within the Osborn boundaries. The Restructure areas are characterized by a high number of vacant lots, and vacant houses in poor condi-

tion. However, a significant number of people still reside in these areas. In 2000, the Restructure areas' population was 10,655, making up 29% of the total Osborn population. Median incomes in these areas ranged from around \$20,000 to \$37,000 in 2000. Thirty-seven percent of households were in poverty. Most of the homes were built

Figure 8.2: Vacancies in Restructure Areas



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

in the early 1950s, and in 2000 median home values ranged from \$23,000 to \$67,000 in different sections of the Restructure areas. About 40% of the residents were under the age of 18, and approximately 52% of houses were occupied by renters.¹

Figure 8.2 shows the location of vacant houses and lots within the Restructure areas. On average, 19% of the houses and 14% of lots are vacant.² Compared to the rest of Osborn the Restructure areas have almost twice as many vacancies. Vacant lots in the Restructure areas make up 89% of the vacant lots in Osborn. A greater amount of illegal dumping also occurs in these areas.

State, county and city owned properties only account for 4% of the Restructure areas.³ The high percentage of property owned by private owners makes lot transfers and acquisition of vacant houses more difficult.

GOALS IN THE RESTRUCTURE AREAS

Chapter 3 outlines five goals for handling vacant houses and lots in the Osborn area. Restructure area residents and community organizations identified three goals as priorities.

Improve Safety. With the highest concentration of vacant houses in Osborn, safety is a major concern in the Restructure areas. The large amount of unsupervised space creates safety issues for residents.

Improve the Environment for Children. Nearly half of the residents in the Restructure areas are children under the age

of eighteen. Ensuring their ability to walk to school safely and have safe spaces to play is important for the Restructure areas. The large numbers of open vacant properties create dangerous situations for children.

Retain Residents. The Restructure areas have already lost many residents, so ensuring that the remaining residents stay in the areas is essential to restoring the areas' quality of life.

ACTION PLAN

In order to accomplish the desired goals, community organizations and residents can determine where and when actions may take place. Focusing on specific areas will allow for greater improvement because limited resources can go to blocks where they will have the most impact. Table 8.1 outlines criteria for determining areas of focus within the Restructure areas. The table shows three types of areas for focus:⁴

Priority: Strongest areas ready for immediate action

Intermediate: Areas where actions can occur in 1 – 3 years

Long-Term: Weakest areas where actions can occur in 3 – 10 years. These areas have more vacant lots than vacant houses, and actions focus more on dealing with vacant lots than Priority and Intermediate areas.

The table also lists potential actions for each type of area. For instance, in priority zones on blocks with one to three houses in poor condition, potential actions for vacant houses include demolishing, securing and rehabilitating.

Table 8.1: How to Choose Priority Zones and Possible Actions

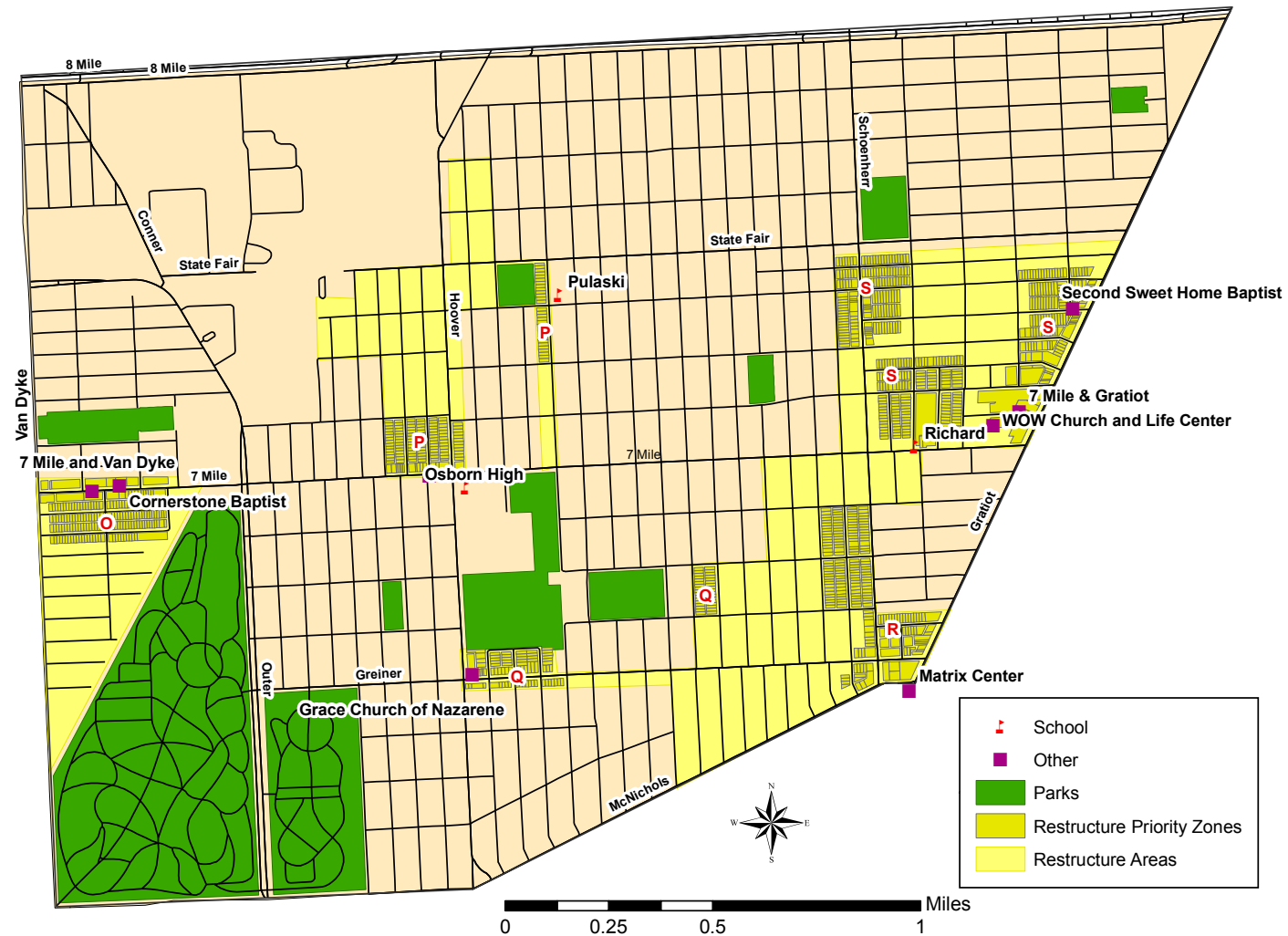
	Criteria	Actions	
Priority	<p>Located within one block of an asset:</p> <p>Vacant houses: 1-3 houses on a block in poor condition</p> <p>Condition of vacant houses: Majority of vacant houses are in good condition</p> <p>Vacant lots: Block has more occupied homes and lots</p>	<p><i>Vacant Houses</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demolish vacant houses in poor condition Secure vacant houses in fair or good condition Identify developers to rehabilitate some vacant houses Work with homeowners to repair their homes <p><i>Vacant Lots</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain vacant lots Create community gardens on land next to school Encourage homeowners next to vacant lots to determine ownership and purchase side lots 	
	Intermediate	<p>Located within one block of an asset:</p> <p>Vacant houses: 4-8 houses on a block in poor condition</p> <p>Condition of vacant houses: Majority of vacant houses are in fair or poor condition</p> <p>Vacant lots: Block has an even mix of vacant lots and houses</p>	<p><i>Vacant Houses</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demolish vacant houses in poor condition Secure vacant houses in fair or good condition Identify developers to rehabilitate some vacant houses <p><i>Vacant Lots</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain non-adjacent vacant lots Encourage homeowners next to vacant lots to determine ownership and purchase side lots
		Long Term	<p>Located further than one block from an asset:</p> <p>Vacant houses: Majority of houses on a block are vacant</p> <p>Condition of vacant houses: Majority of vacant houses are in poor condition</p> <p>Vacant lots: Majority of a block is made up of vacant lots</p>

Priority Zones in the Restructure Areas

The previous section outlines criteria for choosing priority zones within the Restructure areas. Figure 8.3 highlights priority zones for immediate focus, based on the criteria in Table 8.1. This process led to the selection of five priority

zones to focus actions within. Table 8.2 describes each zone and the actions that could occur in each. Factors such as distance to assets, number of vacant houses and lots, and conditions of vacant houses helped determine actions for each zone. For a detailed description of the actions, see Chapter 4.

Figure 8.3: Restructure Areas' Priority Zones



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, DCI, Field Investigation, SEMCOG

Table 8.2: Restructure Areas' Priority Zones

Zone	Description	Potential
O	Next to Mt. Olivet Cemetery to the east, and borders Reinforce and Retain areas.	Secure vacant houses; maintain vacant lots; landscape vacant lots
P	Near Osborn High School and bordered by Reinforce and Retain areas.	Demolish vacant houses; secure vacant houses; maintain vacant lots; create community gardens; create side lots; identify developres for rehabilitation; work with homeowners to repair homes
Q	Next to Brenda Scott Middle School; has few vacant houses and a good housing stock	Create community gardens; repair occupied homes
R	Near the Matrix Center and active retail	Demolish vacant houses; rehabilitate vacant houses; secure vacant houses; create community gardens
S	Has retail on the corner of Seven Mile Road and Gratiot Avenue, as well as on Schoenherr Street	Demolish vacant houses; secure vacant houses; work with homeowners to repair homes

Figure 8.4: Albion and Hoover Housing Conditions



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

TAKING ACTION IN RESTRUCTURE AREAS

The previous section identified five priority zones within the Restructure areas and suggested actions to take place within the next year for each zone. While these zones are places for immediate action, this section illustrates suggested actions for any blocks within the Restructure areas. This section looks at two example areas, one from a priority zone and one from a long-term zone, and shows how to apply actions at a block level. In each example area actions are divided into phases for implementation. As a result of the different structure of these areas, this is different than the approaches taken in chapter 6 and 7.

Example Area 1: Albion and Hoover

Albion and Hoover, between Seven Mile and Lappin, provides an example of how to work within a priority zone in the Restructure areas. Actions on these blocks, including demolishing and securing vacant houses, can improve the environment for children and increase safety around Osborn High School. These two streets have few vacant lots, but each faces different challenges in addressing housing vacancy. Albion features a large number of vacant houses, but a majority of occupied homes are in good or fair condition. Hoover features a large number of occupied homes in good condition, and few vacant houses. Figure 8.4 shows the condition of vacant and occupied houses, as well as vacant lots in the area.

Table 8.3: Phase 1 Actions for Albion and Hoover

Phase 1		
Action	Street Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Demolish	Albion: 19222, 19208, 19194, 19151, 19171, 19172, 19186, 19134 Hoover: 19148	House is in poor condition; House is next to an owner-occupied home
Secure	Albion: 18172, 19134, 19157, 19165, 19201, 19211, 19217, 19225 Hoover: 19159, 19134, 19168, 19176, 19190	House is in fair or poor condition not being demolished
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Transfer properties	Albion: 19150 Albion: 19195, 19135, 19126	Vacant lot located next to an owner-occupied house in good condition
Maintain vacant lots	Hoover: 19129, 19126	Remaining vacant lots

Actions for vacant houses and vacant lots depend on ownership. Residents and community organizations can more easily gain control of vacant houses and lots if they are owned by city, state or county agencies. This example area only features one such property, the vacant lot at 19150 Albion.

Phase 1

The large number of vacant houses on Albion creates safety issues for residents and for children going to school in the area. Demolishing or securing vacant houses are two short-term actions to use in this area. Table 8.3 details recommended houses to demolish or secure.

In this phase, vacant houses located next to occupied houses are targeted for demolition. Another immediate action for this area is securing houses, which can prevent crime and improve safety in the area. This phase addresses vacant lots by recommending the transfer of one city-owned property to an owner next door, and maintaining the other vacant lots.

Targeted demolition on Albion and Hoover will improve safety for occupied homes in the area. Demolition of the only vacant house in poor condition on Hoover will immediately

improve safety on the block. Phase 1 demolitions on Albion attempt to make a better environment for residents by focusing on vacant houses next to occupied homes. Not all vacant houses can be demolished at once, so demolishing vacant houses adjacent to occupied homes is a top priority. Figure 8.8 shows an example of a house recommended for demolition.

Not all vacant houses are demolished in the first phase, so securing the remaining vacant houses is a priority. Chapter 4 describes methods that community organizations and neighbors can take to secure vacant houses. Figure 8.9 shows an example of a house to secure.

Two actions for vacant lots in Phase 1 on Albion and Hoover are transferring property and maintaining vacant lots. The vacant lot at 19150 Albion is the only government owned property in the example area next to an occupied home. Either 19158 or 19142 Albion, both owner occupied houses, may purchase this lot from the city for use as a side lot. This transfer of property gives residents control over the land.

Demolition of properties on Albion and Hoover will add to the amount of vacant land. To maintain these lots, residents in

Table 8.4: Phase 2 Actions for Albion and Hoover

Phase 2		
Action	Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Identify developers to rehabilitate houses	Hoover: 19190, 19176, 19166, 19134, 19159	Vacant house is in fair condition
Demolish	Albion: 19217, 19211, 19201, 19165, 19157	House is in poor condition
Work with homeowners to repair homes	Hoover: 19231, 19214, 19206, 19200, 19165, 19150	Owner occupied home is in fair or poor condition
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Maintain vacant lots	Albion: 19222, 19208, 19194, 19151, 19171, 19172, 19186, 19134 Hoover: 19148	Remaining vacant lots

the area can start a block club or maintenance team to pick up trash and mow the grass. Maintaining vacant lots shows investment and ownership of the lots, preventing further illegal dumping or crime. Figure 8.5 shows the implementation of Phase 1 on Albion and Hoover.

Phase 2

The next phase focuses on more demolitions on Albion, and identifying houses for rehabilitation and home repairs on Hoover. This phase recommends continuing maintenance of vacant lots created by demolition in Phase 1. Table 8.4 lists houses recommended for demolition, rehabilitation and repair in Phase 2. The objective in this phase is to stabilize the vacant properties on Albion, while strengthening the vacant and occupied housing on Hoover. According to the Wayne County Treasurer's Office, all of the vacant houses in this case study area are privately owned.⁵ This complicates the process of rehabilitating houses because a developer or community organization must first find the owner, and purchase the property.

Demolition of remaining vacant houses in poor condition on Albion will improve safety for residents and children in the area. Rehabilitation or repair of homes on Albion is not rec-

ommended in Phase 2, because of the high number of vacant houses on the street.

While Albion faces significant vacancy, Phase 2 recommends repair and rehabilitation of houses on Hoover. This area's proximity to Osborn High School and number of houses in good condition make Hoover a recommended area for rehabilitation. Community organizations can partner with real estate investors to rehabilitate vacant houses on Hoover. If a vacant house is in good condition, such as 19168 Hoover, rehabilitation means finding an organization who will buy and sell the vacant house. Purchasing houses for rehabilitation depends on ownership; Chapter 4 discusses Code Enforcement as another method for acquiring houses for rehabilitation. Figure 8.10 shows a house recommended for rehabilitation, because rehabilitation improves safety of the area by making minor repairs

and working to get the houses reoccupied. At the same time, community organizations can strengthen occupied houses by offering information on available home repair loans or grants. Figure 8.11 shows a house recommended for repair. Chapter 4 gives more details and lists possible partners for rehabilitating houses in the Osborn area. Figure 8.6 illustrates Phase 2 of this example area.

Figure 8.5: Phase 1 Albion and Hoover



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Figure 8.6: Phase 2 Albion and Hoover



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Table 8.5: Phase 3 Actions for Albion and Hoover

Phase 3		
Action	Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Identify developers to rehabilitate houses	Albion: 19225	Vacant house is in fair condition
Work with homeowners to repair homes	Albion: 19129, 19142, 19156, 19166, 19180, 19181, 19189	Owner occupied home is in fair or poor condition
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Maintain vacant lots	Albion: 19217, 19211, 19201, 19165, 19157 Hoover: 19126	Demolition of vacant houses in Phase 2 left vacant lots
Organize community garden	Hoover: 19126	Near Osborn High School and lot is city owned

Figure 8.8: 19222 Albion - Demolish



Figure 8.9: 19225 Albion- Secure



Figure 8.10: 19168 Hoover - Rehabilitate



Figure 8.11: 19214 Hoover - Repair



Figure 8.12: 17234 Fairport - Demolish



Figure 8.13: 17266 Fairport - Secure in phase 1



Figure 8.14: 17176 to 17192 Gitre - Landscape



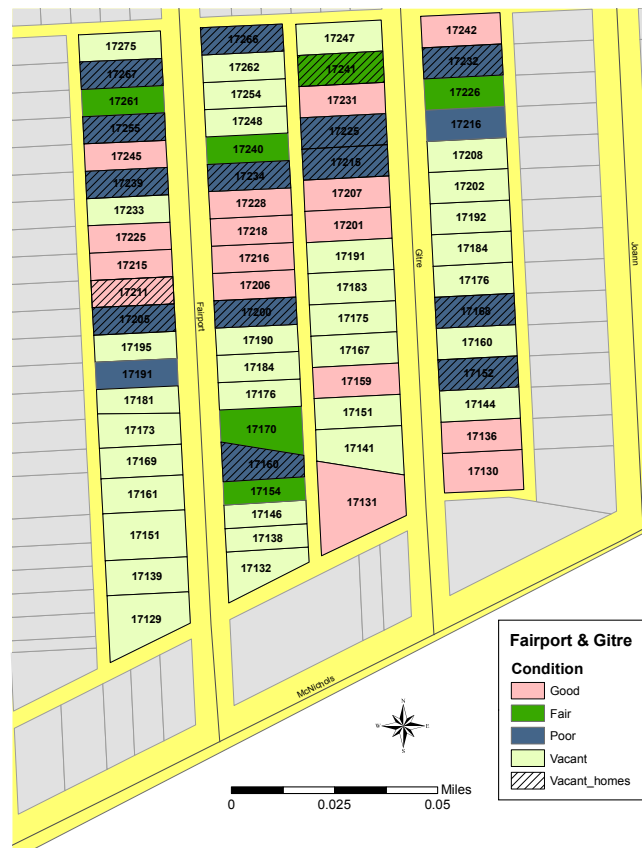
Figure 8.15: 17241 Gitre - Rehabilitate



Figure 8.16: 17240 Fairport - Repair



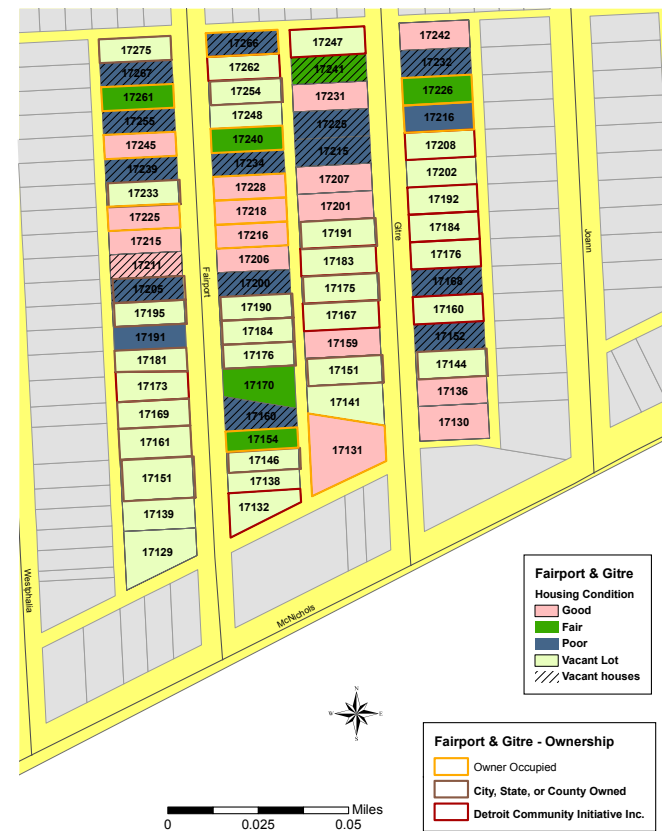
Figure 8.17: Fairport and Gitre Housing Conditions



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

implement actions in this area, residents and community organizations should know which strategies are most relevant. An area with so much vacancy requires a different set of actions than the stronger blocks within the Restructure areas. According to Table 8.2, this area would fall into one of long-term zones, which focus mostly on demolition, securing vacant property, landscaping and maintaining vacant land. By looking at the blocks of Fairport and Gitre, between Greiner and McNichols, this section provides an example of how to work in these areas where challenges outweigh the assets. Figure 8.17

Figure 8.18: Vacant Houses and Lots on Fairport and Gitre



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, Detroit Property Inventory, SEMCOG, Field Investigation, Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, Wayne County

shows the condition of vacant and occupied houses and the location of vacant lots in this area.⁷

Ownership is an important factor when determining which actions to implement in this area. Residents and community organizations are more likely to obtain control of vacant houses and lots owned by the city, state, or county. Figure 8.18 shows the ownership of houses and lots in the area.

Phase 1

One of the main goals for the Restructure areas is to improve safety. The large number of vacant houses in poor condition on Fairport and Gitre create many safety issues for residents. Securing some vacant houses and demolishing others are two strategies for the short-term. Table 8.6 shows recommended houses to demolish or secure in the first phase. Houses in need of demolition include those in poor condition and next to an owner-occupied home, or in the middle of several adjacent vacant lots. A vacant lot next to an owner-occupied home could be transferred to the owner next door if it is city, county, or state owned. Demolishing houses surrounded by vacant lots will create clusters of vacant lots available for landscaping and remediation in a later phase. Figure 8.12 shows a house recommended for demolition. Not all vacant houses in poor condition are demolished in this phase because they do not pose the most immediate challenges. Securing the remaining vacant houses will prevent crime from taking place inside, squatters from settling in them, and fires from being started. Figure 8.13 is an example of a house recommended for securing.

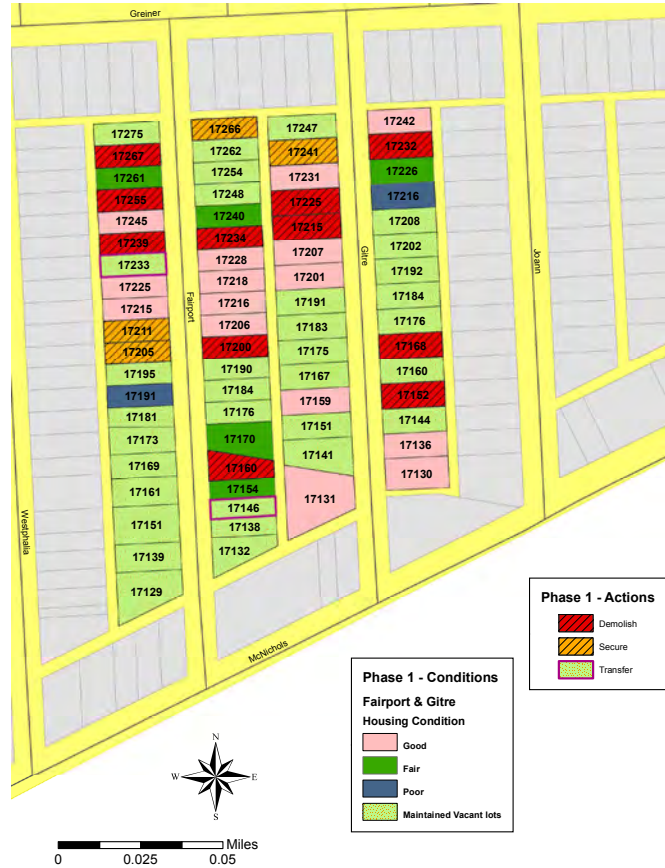
In Phase 1, the two main strategies for vacant lots include the transfer of properties and maintenance. Transferring property to homeowners for use as side lots is a way area residents can obtain control over vacant lots and ensure they stay maintained. Residents will have more success obtaining lots, like the ones at 17146 and 17233 Fairport,⁸ owned by the city, county, or state.

Maintaining the remaining vacant land will improve the overall appearance of the block. Given that the majority of occupied homes are in good or fair condition, the residents of these blocks have an interest in maintaining the appearance of the area. The City of Detroit Department of Public Works, the agency responsible for mowing vacant lots, might not have the resources to maintain these lots. Therefore, residents on the blocks could organize maintenance teams to cut the grass and have regular trash pickups. Actions that residents and community organizations can quickly implement will have a large impact on vacant land. Forming a block club could help organize residents. In the short term, the combination of demolition and maintenance will help improve the appearance of these blocks on Fairport and Gitre.

Table 8.6: Phase 1 Fairport and Gitre

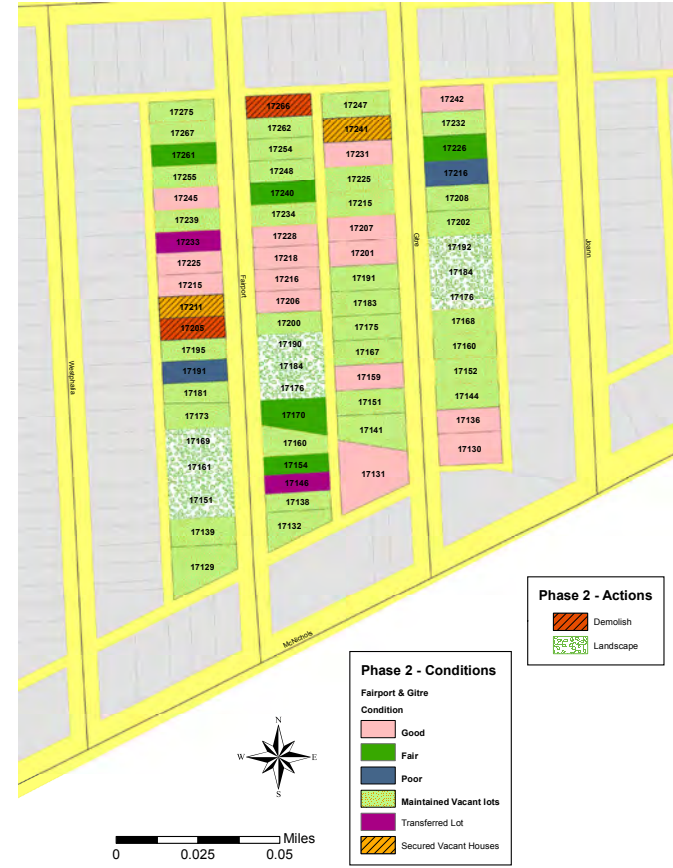
Phase 1		
Action	Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Demolish	Fairport: 17267, 17255, 17239, 17234, 17200, 17160 Gitre: 17225, 17215, 17152, 17168, 17232	House is in poor condition House is in the middle of several vacant lots House is next to an owner occupied home
Secure	Fairport: 17211, 17205, 17266 Gitre: 17241	House is in fair or poor condition and not being demolished
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Transfer property	Fairport: 17233, 17146	Vacant lot located next to an owner occupied home in good condition
Maintain lots	Fairport: 17275, 17195, 17129, 17181, 17132-17146, 17176-17190, 17248-17262 Gitre: 17144, 17151, 17160, 17167-17191, 17176-17208, 17247	Remaining vacant lots

Figure 8.19: Phase 1 Actions for Fairport and Gitre



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Figure 8.20: Phase 2 Actions for Fairport and Gitre



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Table 8.7: Phase 2 Fairport and Gitre

Phase 2		
Action	Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Demolish	Fairport: 17266, 17205 Gitre: 17241	House is in poor condition
<i>Vacant Lots</i>		
Landscape	Fairport: 17169-17151, 17190-17176 Gitre: 17192-17176	Obtain control of 3 or more adjacent lots with common owners
Maintain vacant lots	Fairport: 17267, 17255, 17239, 17234, 17200, 17160 Gitre: 17225, 17215, 17152, 17168, 17232	Demolition of vacant houses in Phase 1 left vacant lots

Figure 8.19 shows the implementation of these actions in Phase 1 on Fairport and Gitre.

Phase 2

In the next phase of restructuring of Fairport and Gitre, block clubs and community organizations can continue to pursue demolition of the remaining vacant houses in poor condition. Table 8.7 lists the houses recommended for demolition in Phase 2.

While almost half the lots on Fairport and Gitre are vacant, most of them are clustered in groups of two or more. The clustering of these lots presents an advantage for reuse. Landscaping can maintain and control the land until new development is appropriate. The landscaping can include natural landscaping and storm water management. In the first phase of landscaping, starting with three or more adjacent lots with common owners can make this process easier to implement. For instance, 17192, 17174 and 17176 Gitre have a common owner and could be landscaped. Figure 8.14 shows an example of vacant lots recommended for landscaping.

The last action for this phase is to maintain vacant lots. In Phase 1 the demolition of vacant houses left more vacant lots. Taking control of these vacant lots will help to maintain the appearance of the area. Figure 8.20 shows the implementation of these actions.

Table 8.8: Phase 3 Fairport and Gitre

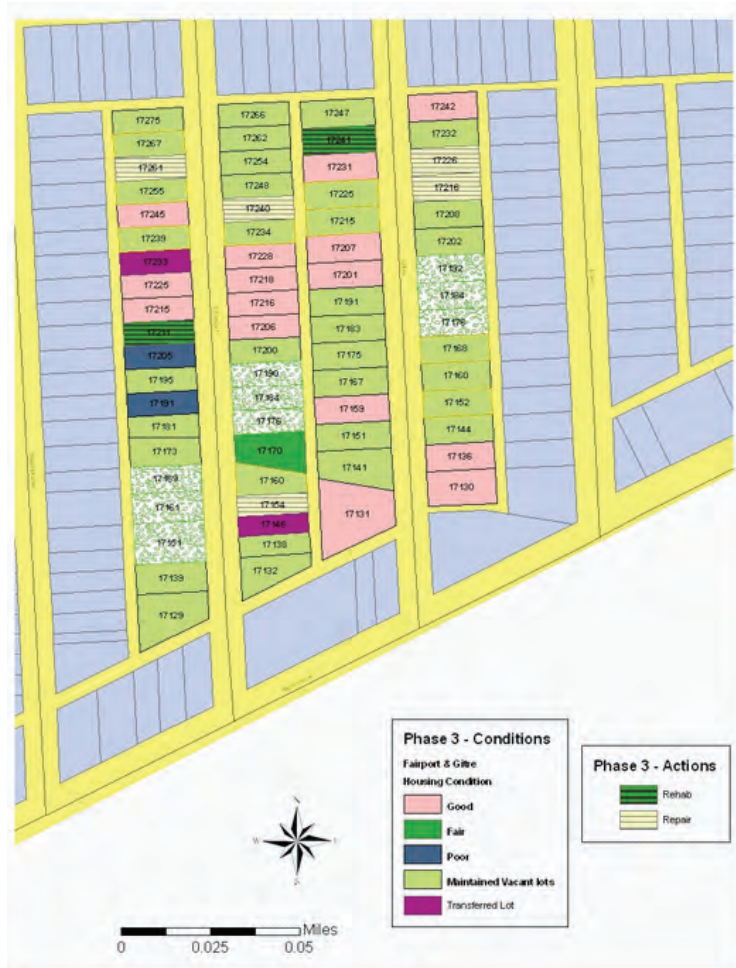
Phase 3		
Action	Address	Reason
<i>Vacant Houses</i>		
Work with homeowners to repair homes	Fairport: 17261, 17240, 17154 Gitre: 17226	Owner occupied home is in fair or poor condition

Phase 3

While most vacant houses in this area are in poor condition, some are in fair or good condition. For these houses, demolition is not the most appropriate action. Rehabilitation could address houses in fair or good condition. However, the two vacant houses in fair or good condition, 17211 Fairport and 17241 Gitre, are owned by private individuals. This makes gaining control of the houses difficult. Instead code enforcement is an option to ensure the houses are rehabilitated.⁹ Figure 8.19 shows a house where code enforcement can improve the condition of the house. Community organizations can also work with homeowners to repair occupied homes in fair or poor condition. Figure 8.16 shows a house recommended for repair. Table 8.8 shows vacant houses with potential for rehabilitation, and owner occupied homes in need of repair. Figure 8.21 illustrates this phase of the plan.

The blocks of Fairport and Gitre, between McNichols and Greiner, provide an example of how restructuring an area with large amounts of vacant land and houses can reach the goals identified for the Restructure areas and manage the challenges vacancies present. The following chapter will combine priority zones and actions for an overall implementation strategy.

Figure 8.21: Phase 3 Fairport and Gitre



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, assessor's data SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Notes

¹U.S.Census Bureau. U.S.Census 2000- Summary File 1(SF 1). 15 September 2008
<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/sumfile1.html>>.

² Detroit Community Initiative. Field survey conducted summer 2008.

Morris, Lisa. Data file created on vacant lots in Osborn. Michigan: Technical Assistance Center, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, August 2008.

³Morris, Lisa. Data file created on vacant lots in Osborn. Michigan: Technical Assistance Center, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, August 2008.

⁴The explanation and description of types of areas in the Restructure areas are different than the similar sections in chapters 6 and 7 due to the different characteristics of the Restructure areas.

⁵Wayne County Treasurer Website. Property Tax Listing System. 06 January 2009 <<http://www.co.wayne.mi.us/pta/>>

⁶For a description of natural landscaping and storm water management refer to Chapter 4, “Reuse Vacant Lots.”

⁷ Conditions are based on a windshield survey conducted on November 2, 2008. See Appendix B for methods for assessing conditions. 2008.

⁸Assessor’s Data. Detroit: Detroit Planning and Development Department, August 2008.

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth. Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority. 2008. 21 December 2008
<<http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mlbfta/>>.

⁹For more information on code enforcement refer to Chapter 4. “Code Enforcement.”

9

Implementation

The previous three chapters introduced three types of areas, priority zones in those areas, and potential actions for each type of area. This chapter will combine the information from previous chapters to create an overall implementation plan for Osborn.

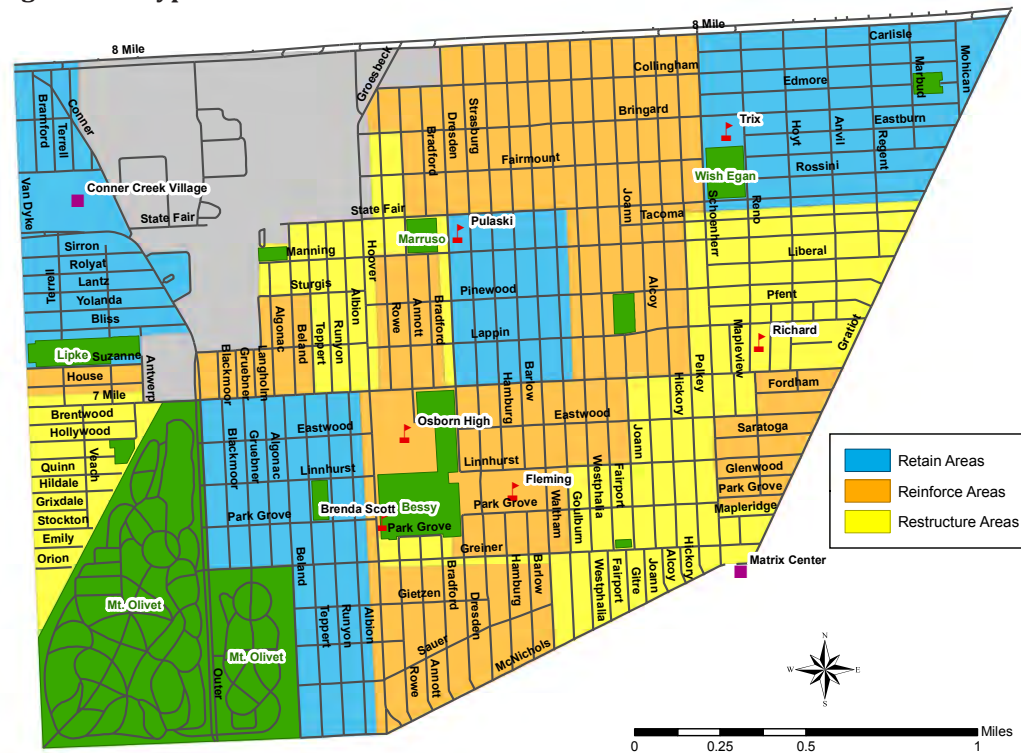
PRIORITIZING OSBORN

To address vacant houses and lots in Osborn successfully, efforts should focus in certain places. However, the vacancy situation is not uniform throughout Osborn. In order to take into account these differences, the plan divides Osborn into three types of areas – Retain, Reinforce, and Restructure. Figure 9.1 shows the locations of the three types of areas. Given

the different characteristics of these areas not all actions apply everywhere. Furthermore, no one has the resources to tackle all vacant property challenges everywhere at once. Recognizing the actions that will have the most impact, and where and when they should occur, is a key aspect of this plan.

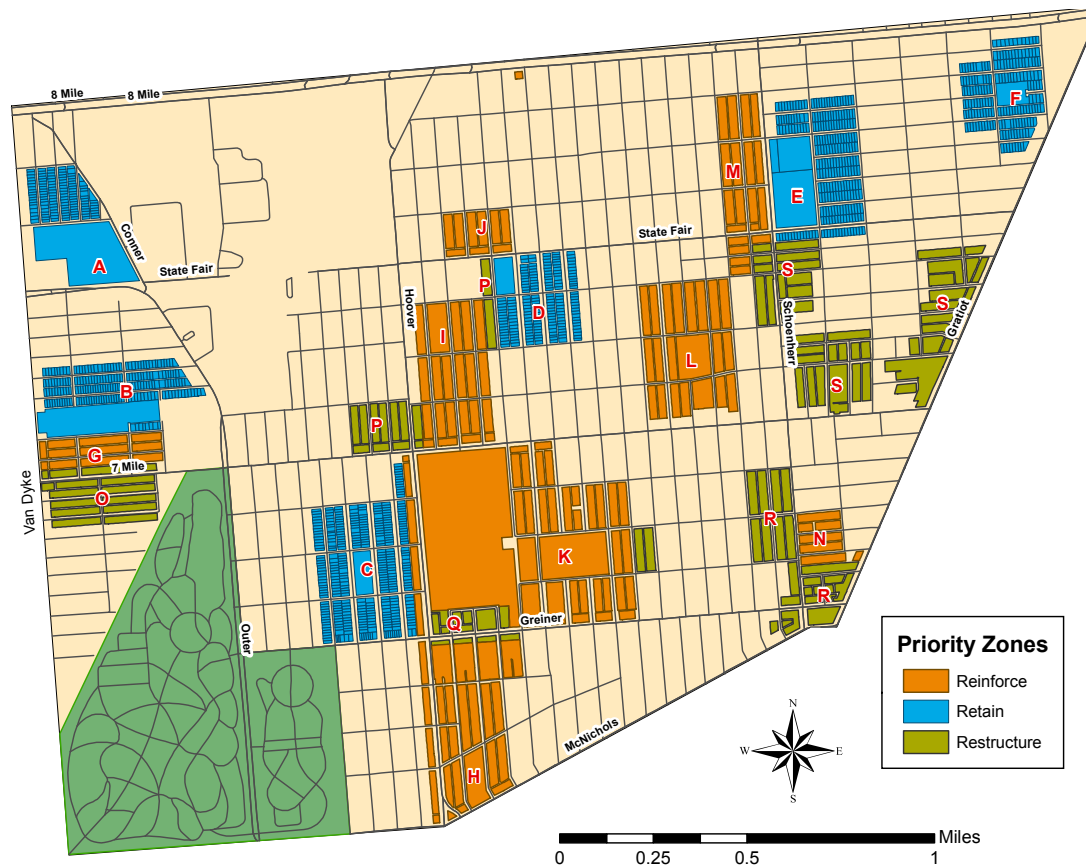
To focus actions the plan designates priority zones within each type of area where actions can occur first. The previous three chapters focused on identifying priority zones where immediate actions could occur and where they would have the most impact. This means focusing initially on areas close to assets and with fewer challenges. Figure 9.2 and Table 9.1 show the selected priority zones for each type of area.

Figure 9.1: Types of Areas in Osborn



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Figure 9.2: Priority Zones for Action Implementation



Source: Detroit Planning & Development Dept. parcel base map, SEMCOG, Field Investigation

Table 9.1: Priority Zones in each Type of Area

Type of Area	Retain	Reinforce	Restructure
Priority Zones	A, B, C, D, E and F	G, H, I, J, K, L, M and N	O, P, Q, R and S

PHASING OF ACTIONS

Due to limited resources, not all actions can occur simultaneously. Through examples, Chapters 6 through 8 demonstrate how to implement actions in phases (see Figure 9.3). The phasing of actions allows residents and community organizations to focus resources on actions that will most effectively deal with vacant houses and lots. This section provides a guide for how to phase actions.

Short-Term Actions. Actions that occur in the first phase prevent a situation from getting worse and eliminate severe challenges.

Intermediate Actions. These actions occur next to build on the work done earlier and reinforce the assets in an area.

Long-Term Actions. Some areas might not require a final phase. If necessary, these actions continue to build on previous phases and strengthen the assets in an area.

PHASING OF ACTIONS

Partnerships and collaborations among Osborn's community based organizations, other nonprofit organizations, residents, city officials, and other stakeholders will increase the resources available for implementing the proposed actions. The collaborative effort to address vacant houses and vacant lots could help to accomplish the goals of the plan – improve safety, improve the environment for children, retain residents, reinforce identity, retain residents, reinforce identity, and house residents in need. Potential partners for this effort include:

- Detroit Vacant Property Campaign
- Skillman Good Neighborhoods Initiative
- Detroit Community Initiative/ Northeast Village CDC
- The MAN Network
- Nortown CDC
- We Care About Van Dyke-7 Mile
- Matrix Center
- WOW Church and Life Center
- ShoreBank Enterprise
- Black Family Development
- The Greening of Detroit
- Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative
- Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- Michigan Safe Routes to Schools
- Block clubs – existing and yet to be formed
- Local elementary, middle and high schools
- Osborn churches and faith-based organizations
- Real estate developers interested in doing housing rehabilitation
- Office of Foreclosure Prevention and Response

This is a sample of potential partners identified so far; other partners not listed might exist. Furthermore, due to increased public attention on mortgage foreclosures, resources such as Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds might be available for further actions aimed at preventing and addressing vacancies.

IMPLEMENTATION

Table 9.2 combines the priority zones, actions, and potential partners to develop an overall implementation plan for each type of area. For the location of the priority zones refer to Figure 9.2.

IMPLEMENTATION

This vacant properties plan can serve as a guide for focused actions in the Osborn area. The Retain, Reinforce, and Restructure chapters emphasized how residents and community organizations can address vacant houses and lots in different types of areas within Osborn. These chapters also identified priority

zones where actions could occur first to achieve the goals for addressing vacant properties. This chapter summarized actions to take in each priority zone immediately, within three years, and in the longer term. It has also identified potential partners for implementation. The implementation of these actions, by residents, community organizations, and others, could begin to fill in the gaps left by vacant properties in Osborn.

Figure 9.3. Actions Timeline

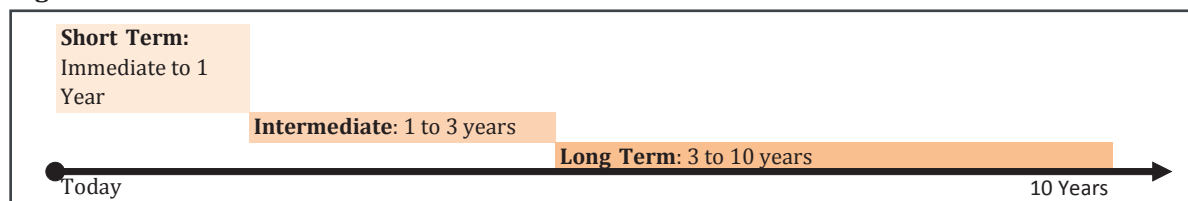


Table 9.2: Implementation Plan

Action	Relevant Priority Zones	Action Phase	Potential Partners
Provide foreclosure prevention assistance	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M and N	Short-Term	Office of Foreclosure Prevention and Response, block clubs, DCI
Demolish vacant houses	C, D, E, I, L, M, P, Q, R and S	Short-Term	Block clubs, residents, and nonprofit organizations ask for action from Detroit Buildings and Safety Engineering, Wayne County Nuisance Abatement Program, and Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative
Organize block clubs	A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, K and N	Short-Term	Black Family Development
Reinforce parks	G, H, I, J, K, L and M	Intermediate	Detroit Recreation Department DCI, block clubs
Landscape vacant lots	J, O and R	Intermediate	Greening of Detroit, University of Michigan Landscape Architecture Program, residents, block clubs
Conduct property showcases	A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M and N	Long-Term	Nortown CDC, block clubs, We Care about Van Dyke-7 Mile, DCI
Secure and maintain vacant houses	G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, R and S	Short-Term	Residents, block clubs, We Care About Van Dyke - 7 Mile, DCI, WOW Church, MAN Network
	A, B, C, D, E and F	Intermediate	
Create side lots	P	Short-Term	Homeowners adjacent to the vacant lots, block clubs
	A, B, C, D, E, F, H and K	Intermediate	
Maintain vacant land	O and P	Short-Term	Residents, block clubs, DCI, MAN Network, Osborn churches
	E, H and K	Intermediate	
Create community gardens	Q and R	Intermediate	Pulaski Elementary, Osborn High School, Greening of Detroit, Detroit Agriculture Network, residents, block clubs
	E, P	Long-Term	
Identify developers for rehabilitation	D, E, K and P	Intermediate	Private investors with funding from LISC or NSP, ShoreBank, WOW Church, DCI
	G, I, J, Q and R	Long-Term	
Work with homeowners to repair homes	H, K, and L	Intermediate	Homeowners, DCI, WOW Church
	P, S and Q	Long-Term	

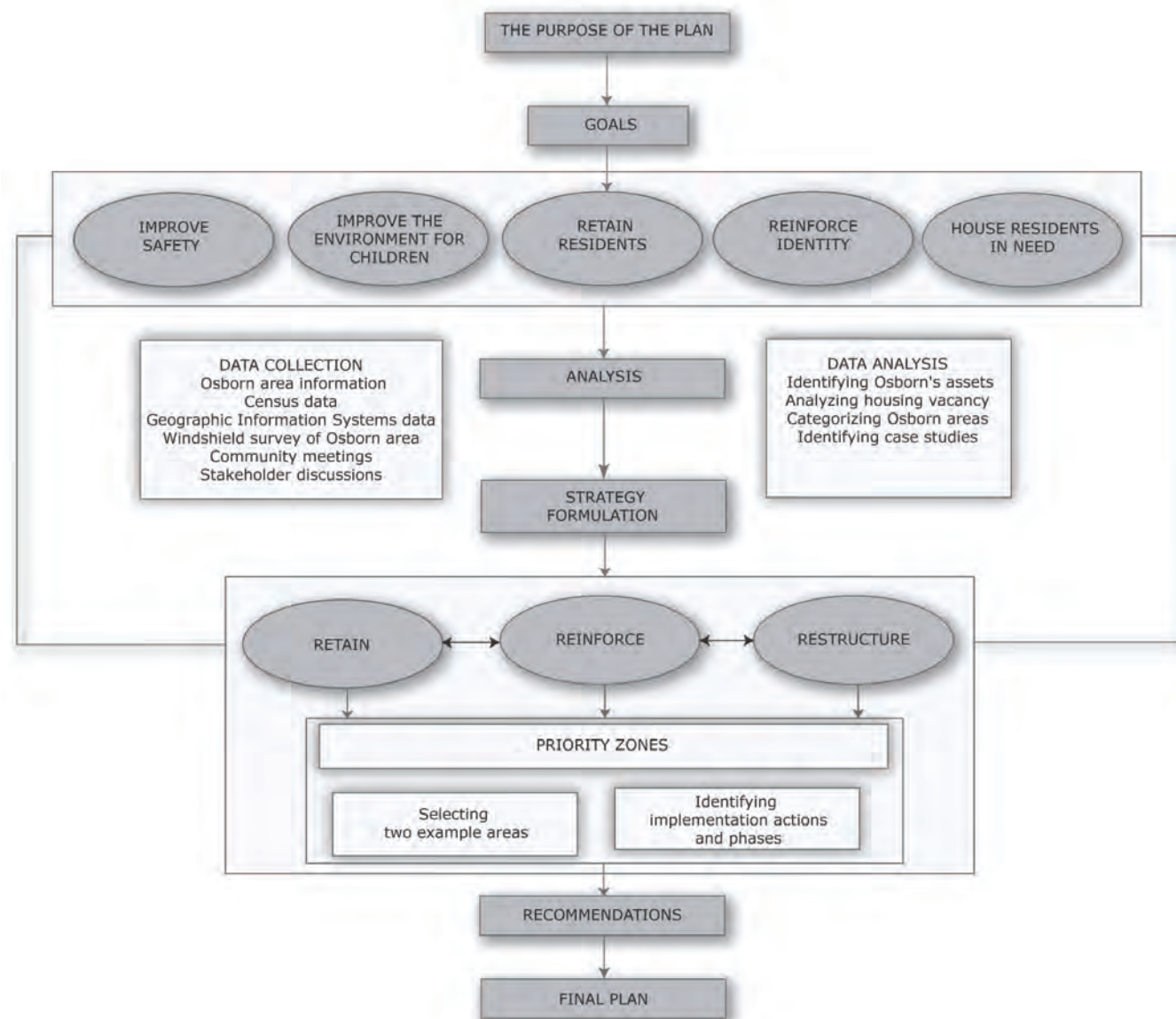
A large, bold, black letter 'A' is centered on the page. The background features a light gray grid pattern of various rectangular shapes, some with horizontal lines, resembling a stylized cityscape or architectural plan. The right side of the page is a solid light gray gradient.

APPENDIX
Steps in Developing This Plan

The following figure illustrates the steps in developing this plan. The figure highlights the steps of identifying the goals, analyzing data and defining strategies to implement actions for Osborn.

Community partners, other community leaders and residents were involved in defining the goals, brainstorming directions for action, and articulating assets and challenges (see also Appendix C).

Table A.1: Process Flowchart





B

APPENDIX Methods

DIVIDING OSBORN INTO THREE TYPES OF AREAS

We categorized Osborn into three types of areas to develop strategies—Retain, Reinforce, and Restructure. The following explains how we derived the three types of areas.

We mapped data from the 2000 census by census block groups. Block groups are a cluster of census blocks whose numbers begin with the same digit in a given census tract. A census block is the smallest geographic area used to collect decennial census data and is bounded by streets, roads, railroads, streams, water bodies and other visible physical and cultural features.¹

The mapped data included median household income, percentage of persons in poverty, and median housing value.

We also mapped Detroit Community Initiative data on vacant buildings and Lisa Morris's data on vacant lots.

We knew that census block groups did not necessarily define the boundaries of similar areas; hence we drove through all the streets of Osborn and identified areas that were similar or different based on the general housing condition and vacancy. We used the assessment form in Table B.1.

On the basis of these observations, we drew boundaries around similar types of areas.

We returned to Osborn to recheck the boundaries and revised the boundaries again. We defined Retain areas as having the lowest level of vacancy and the Restructure areas as having the highest level of vacancy. The Reinforce areas are areas with medium level of vacancy.

Table B.1: Osborn Area Survey

OSBORN AREA Observation & Survey Form

Name _____ Date _____ Block group (census tract) no: _____

Partners _____

Time _____

QUESTION	SPECIFY STREET NAME									
NAME OF STREET										
1. Based on street-level frontage, how is the land used along the block group?										
1) Residential										
2) Commercial/Business										
3) Industrial/Warehouse/Manufacturing										
4) Institutional										
5) Recreational Facilities,Parks/Playgrounds										
6) Vacant Lots										
2. What type of Residential Housing is prominent along the block group?										
1) Detached Single family house										
2) Two family house/duplex										
3) Rowhouse/Townhouse										
4) Low-rise apartment building (less than 6 stories)										
5) Housing units over commercial storefronts										
3. What type of building materials are used in the facade most of the Residential Housing along the block group?										
1) Brick										
2) Wood										
3) Aluminum siding										
4) Combination of two or more										
4. In general, how would you rate the condition of most of the residential units along the block group?										
1) Very good condition										
2) Moderately good condition (need paint,some repair)										
3) Fair condition (need repair)										
4) Poor/Bad deteriorated condition										

Table B.1: Osborn Area Survey (continued)

QUESTION	SPECIFY STREET NAME									
NAME OF STREET										
5. Visually, how many abandoned/vacant buildings do you see along the block group?										
1) 25%										
2) 50%										
3) 75%										
4) 100%										
5) None										
6. Visually, how many vacant lots do you see along the block group?										
1) 25%										
2) 50%										
3) 75%										
4) 100%										
5) None										
7. Other than residential housing, which of the following do you see along the block group?										
1) Churches/Religious Centers										
2) Commercial										
3) Institutional										
4) Recreational										
8. What kind of recreational facilities are along the block group?										
1) Park										
2) Playground										
3) Sports/Playing fields/courts										
4) Sports Equipments (goal posts, basketball nets)										

Table B.1: Osborn Area Survey (continued)

QUESTION	SPECIFY STREET NAME									
NAME OF STREET										
9. Which of the following do you observe on the streets, on the sidewalks along the blocks?										
1) Abandoned cars										
2) Garbage,litter, broken glass,discarded liquor containers										
3) Graffiti										
4) Signs of Drug-use										
5) All of the above										
6) Specify other observations:										
10. Are there trees lining the streets of the blocks?										
1) Mostly regularly spaced										
2) Irregularly spaced										
3) Sparcely										
4) None										
11. Are there streetlights along the blocks?										
1) Yes										
2) No										
12. How is the street condition?										
1) Poor (cracked pavement, considerable no.of potholes)										
2) Moderately Good (lesser potholes, need repair)										
3) Very Good (good condition)										
13. How is the sidewalk condition?										
1) No Sidewalk										
2) Poor (unusable)										
3) Moderately good (usable, need repair)										
4) Very Good (walkable and in good condition)										

Derived from the Block Assessment form in Bober, Danielle. Putting Back the Welcome Mat: A Neighborhood Guide for Turning Houses into Homes. Michigan: Urban and Regional Planning Program, University of Michigan, December 2007.

ASSESSMENT OF VACANT HOUSE AND LOT CONDITIONS IN OSBORN

- Vacant house conditions and vacant lot conditions were assessed in the Restructure and the Retain example areas using the following survey forms. See Tables B.2 and B.3.
- The Restructure area used the form in Table B.4 to assess the vacant lot conditions.
- The Reinforce area assessed building conditions from the Detroit Community Initiative (DCI) survey photos for their example areas. This was also the approach for rating housing conditions for Figure 2.6.

Their definition of conditions was the following:

- o Very good: no apparent damage
- o Good: needs fresh paint or some minor repairs
- o Fair: needs significant repair
- o Poor: burned, partially demolished, and appears structurally unsound

Because they did not use a standard system of rating a range of characteristics, their assessments are not comparable to those in the other types of areas, and another rater might rate the same houses differently.

Table B.2: Housing Conditions Survey

Housing Conditions Survey form

Property number

Building address

Type of Building (circle one) Single family 2-4 units 5+ units mixed use

Occupancy (circle one) Occupied Vacant

Property Condition
(for each component, place a check in the appropriate column)

Building Components	Sound	Minor Defects	Major Defects	Critical Defects	Unable to tell
Roof, gutters, and chimney					
Porches, stairs and fences					
Doors and windows					
Exterior surfaces					
Foundation					
Yard(weeds, debris)					

Overall building condition Good Fair Bad

Key:

Good: No more than two minor defects

Fair: No more than than four minor defects or one major defect

Bad: Five or more minor defects; OR two or more major defects; OR one critical defect

Source: City of San Leandro. "Housing Survey Form." 2008. [City of San Leandro, California](http://www.ci.san-leandro.ca.us/develop/housingappb.pdf). 04 January 2009 <<http://www.ci.san-leandro.ca.us/develop/housingappb.pdf>>.

Table B.3: Housing Survey Definitions

Building Component	Sound	Minor Defects	Major Defects	Critical Defects
Roof, gutters and chimney	No visible flaws	Deterioration of some or all components, but still functional	Some components need replacement or maintenance (e.g., roof sagging or missing shingles)	All components are not functioning (e.g., roof collapsed)
Porches, stairs and fences	No visible flaws	Deterioration of some or all components, but still functional	Some components need replacement or maintenance (e.g., sagging porch, missing fencing or stairs)	All components are not functioning (e.g., porch collapsed; stairs missing)
Doors and windows	No visible flaws	Need some rehab work (e.g., painting)	Some broken or missing windows	Most or all windows missing or broken; door open
Exterior surfaces	No visible flaws	Minimal rehab work needed (e.g., paint chipping)	Pieces of exterior missing (e.g., missing siding or bricks)	Visible fire damage; collapsing walls
Foundation	No visible flaws	N/A	N/A	Foundation crumbling
Yard	No visible flaws	Grass uncut a few weeds	Litter, unkempt lawn	Grass overgrown; visible evidence of illegal dumping

Table B.4: Vacant Lot Conditions Survey**Vacant lot conditions survey form**

1) Parcel ID _____ Street address _____
 Owner address _____ Date sold _____

2) Current use

Evidence of use by side lot property owner?

- 1: Yes
 2: No

- a. Residential
 b. Yard
 c. Garden
 d. Private play equipment
 e. Vacant lot
 f. Commercial-/Business What type? _____
 g. Public playground/park/sports field
 h. Dump(formal)
 i. Parking lot
 j. Pathway
 k. Storage
 l. Pets/livestock
 m. Art/adornment
 n. Other _____

If multiple uses, primary use:

3) Presence of trash

- 1: No trash(does not include maintenace such as downed branches)
 2: Limited trash(scattered litter)
 3: Significant trash(piles of trash)
 4: Dumping/debris

4) Screening (On street frontage)

a) Is there screening?

- 1: Yes
 2: No

b) Screening location

- 1: At sidewalk (within a foot of the sidewalk)
 2: Setback from sidewalk (beyond one foot from sidewalk)

c) Screening materials

- a. Chain link
 b. Wood
 c. Iron
 d. Hedge
 e. Barbed wire
 f. Other _____

d) Screening condition

- 1: Good condition
 2: Leaning or bent, minor repairs necessary, rust or paint needed
 3: Sections missing, needs significant repairs, major rust
 4: Not functional, needs complete replacement

e) Screening height

- 1: Below 4'
 2: 4' or greater

f) Screening opacity

- 1: Less than 50% opaque
 2: Greater than 50% opaque

g) Screening integrated with adjacent property

- 1: Yes
 2: No

5) Side lot maintenance

a) Condition

- 1: Mowed and/or landscaped (Grass below 8")
 2: Unmowed, weedy, branches down (Grass taller than 8")
 3: Partially overgrown or partially gravelled (Brush, shrubbery, or grass over 24" covering less than 50% of the lot)
 4: Significantly overgrown or completely graveled (Greater than 50% of the lot covered with extensive brush, shrubbery, and/or grass over 24")

b) Remnants of previous structure


- 1: None/not visible
 2: Rubble covered with grass, limited paving
 3: Signifant, exposed rubble, extensive paving
 4: Open, remaining foundation

Notes:

Source: Professor Margaret Dewar, Vacant Lot Assessment Form, Urban and Regional Planning Program, University of Michigan, June 2005.

Notes

¹American Factfinder. "Census Blocks and Block Groups." 2008. American Factfinder Biz. 30 December 2008
<<http://www.americanfactfinder.biz/geo/www/GARM/Ch11GARM.pdf>>.



C

APPENDIX **Community Meetings and Resident Feedback**

The following are the community meetings where community partners and residents in Osborn provided input to the plan for handling vacant properties.

Preliminary Community Meeting

Date: Sep 5th, 2008
Time: 2: 30 pm to 4: 30 pm
Location: Matrix Center

AGENDA

1. Meet with community partners
 - Introduce the team to the community partners
 - Community partners briefly describe their activities with respect to the vacant properties in Osborn as well as their expectations for the plan
2. Tour of Osborn
 - Go on a tour of Osborn with Quincy Jones from Skillman Foundation to learn about the neighborhoods

Hmong Festival Event

Date: Sep 30th, 2008
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Location: Fleming Elementary School

We interviewed residents with a short set of questions.

First Community Meeting

Date: Oct 7th, 2008
Time: 7: 00 pm to 8: 00 pm
Location: Conner Creek Village, 4777 East Outer Drive

AGENDA

1. Introduction
 - Explain background of the project
 - Explain the division of areas briefly
2. Group Discussion
 - Self-introduction of everyone
 - Explain the goals to the residents and ask for feedback
 - Residents vote to identify the most important goals
 - Brainstorm possible actions to achieve the most important goals
3. Announcement of the next community meeting

North east Village Community Development Corporation Meeting

Date: Oct 14th, 2008

Time: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

Location: Conner Creek Village

We explained the vacant properties project and distributed a survey to collect opinions on residential vacant properties.

MAN Network Breakfast

Date: Oct 18th, 2008

Time: 8:00 am to 10:30 am

We explained the vacant properties project to the residents, asked what residents want to see in Osborn neighborhoods, and listened to the presentations from various churches to learn about the current challenges, successes, and initiatives in working in Osborn neighborhoods.

Second Community Meeting

Date: Nov 7th, 2008

Time: 6: 30 pm to 7: 30 pm

Location: WOW Church & Life Center, 14111 East 7 Mile

AGENDA

1. Introduction
 - Brief review of the last two months
2. Group Discussion
 - Self-introduction of everyone
 - Identify the assets for the Osborn area on the map
 - Identify challenged areas with respect to vacant properties in Osborn on the map
 - Brainstorm possible actions to make the best use of assets to address vacant properties
 - Vote to prioritize the actions favored by the residents
3. Announcement of the meeting for the final presentation



D

APPENDIX **Funding Sources**

The following sources could be used to fund the proposed actions and strategies in the plan. The possible funding sources support homeownership opportunities, neighborhood improvements, home repairs, youth development, human ser-

vices, parks development and community development. The funding sources are divided into federal, state, city and foundation funding sources for ease of use.

Table D1: Federal Funding Sources

State agency	Name of the funding program	Description	Eligibility requirements	Contact information	Source of information
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Rehabilitation Mortgage Insurance	Mortgage insurance to help families repair or improve, purchase and improve, or refinance and improve existing residential structures more than 1 year old	Individual purchasers	Phone: (800) CALLFHA (800-225-5342), Email: hud@custhelp.com. For state-specific single family housing contact information, go to http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hoc/hsghocscfm	Homes and Communities-U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Updated 30 April 2002. Accessed 15 December 2008. < http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/203k/203k--df.cfm >.
Department of Housing and Urban Development	HUD Homes	To sell the inventory of HUD-acquired properties in a manner that expands home ownership opportunities, strengthens neighborhoods and communities	Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street S.W., Washington, DC 20410, Telephone: (202) 708-1112 TTY: (202) 708-1455, 800-767-7468.	Homes and Communities-U.S. Department of Urban and Housing Department. Updated 02 May 2008. Accessed 18 December 2008 < http://www.hud.gov/homes/ >.

Table D2: State Funding Sources

State agency	Name of the funding program	Description	Eligibility requirements	Contact information	Source of information
Michigan State Housing Development Authority	Property Improvement Program (PIP) -Homeowner loan	Program provides low interest homeowner loans to single family homeowners with low-to-moderate income. Funding activities include permanent home improvement such as installing insulation, ramps, handicap accessible bathrooms, lifts, replacing heating systems, adding new siding, painting, replacing the roof, new installations, remodeling and adding new rooms, upgrading electric wiring and finishing an attic or basement	First time homebuyers, senior citizens, disabled individuals, and working middle class families	Contact a participating lender http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/mshda_PIP_Lender_List_by_County_2008_254599_7.pdf Contact a community agent http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/mshda_PIP_Community_Agent_List_2008_254597_7.pdf	Michigan State Housing Development Authority . Accessed 05 January 2009 < http://www.michigan.gov/mshda/0,1607,7-141-49317_49323-187374--,00.html >

Table D2: State Funding Sources, continued

State agency	Name of the funding program	Description	Eligibility requirements	Contact information	Source of information
Michigan State Housing Development Authority	Property Improvement Program (PIP) –Landlord loan	Program provides loans to landlords who are interested in improving their investment properties within the state of Michigan. Funding activities include permanent home improvement such as installing insulation, ramps, handicap accessible bathrooms, lifts, replacing heating systems, adding new siding, painting, replacing the roof, new installations, remodeling and adding new rooms, upgrading electric wiring and finishing an attic or basement	Property Owners, Homebuyers	Contact a participating lender http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/mshda_PIP_Lender_List_by_County_2008_254599_7.pdf Contact a community agent http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mshda/mshda_PIP_Community_Agent_List_2008_254597_7.pdf	Michigan State Housing Development Authority . 2008. Accessed 05 January 2009 < http://www.michigan.gov/mshda/0,1607,7-141-49317_49323-187374--,00.html >

Table D3: City Funding Sources

City Agency	Program Name	Description	Eligibility Requirements	Contact Information	Source of Information
Detroit Planning & Development Department	Senior Emergency Home Repair Program	Grants for emergency-related health and safety home repair assistance for low-income homeowners 65 years of age or older.	Applicant must: be at least 65 years of age and/or physically disabled and 55 years of age or older; be very low income; own and occupy the home; not have received a prior rehab/repair grant from city programs.	Housing Services Division, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1700, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 224-3461	City of Detroit Planning & Development Department. 2008. Accessed 28 December 2008. < http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Departments/PlanningDevelopmentDepartments/HousingServices/SeniorEmergencyHomeRepair/tabid/1950/Default.aspx >.
Detroit Planning & Development Department	Minor Home Repair Program	Grants to assist minor housing rehabilitation repairs in Detroit neighborhoods. The program aims to improve health and safety conditions and to eliminate lead-based paint hazards in residential properties.	Eligible properties include single-family dwellings located within targeted boundaries of a sponsorship community organization, and should be structurally and economically feasible for repair. Eligible improvements include repairs to roofs, furnaces, plumbing, electrical, structural, porches and lead hazard remediation. Eligible applicants are non-profit community organizations.	Housing Services Division, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1700, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 224-3461	City of Detroit Planning & Development Department. 2008. Accessed 28 December 2008. < http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Departments/PlanningDevelopmentDepartments/HousingServices/MinorHomeRepair/tabid/1951/Default.aspx >.
Detroit Planning & Development Department	Neighborhood Stabilization Program	Provides funds to assist in acquisition, demolition, disposition, housing counseling, new construction, public improvements, and rehabilitation of foreclosed and abandoned properties.	Non-profit organizations; community organizations.	Douglass J. Diggs, 65 Cadillac Square, Suites 1700, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 224-3461	City of Detroit Planning & Development Department. 2008. Accessed 28 December 2008. < http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Portals/0/docs/planning/pdf/NSP/NSP%20Substantial%20Amendment%20Submission.pdf >.

Table D3: City Funding Sources, continued

City Agency	Program Name	Description	Eligibility Requirements	Contact Information	Source of Information
Detroit Planning & Development Department	Investor Loan Program	Provides funds to assist in the rehabilitation of substandard rental housing units to meet HUD Section 8 housing quality standards or construction of rental housing for low income persons.	Real estate developers; non-profit organizations.	Housing Services Division, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1900, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 224-3461	City of Detroit Planning & Development Department. 2008. Accessed 5 January 2009. < http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Departments/PlanningDevelopmentDepartments/HousingServices/InvestorLoanProgram/tabid/1956/Default.aspx >.
Detroit Planning & Development Department	Multi-family Investor, Homebuyer, Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) Program	Provides funds to assist in new construction or rehabilitation of multi-family rental housing with 20 or more units, and for-sale housing with 10 or more units.	Real estate developers; non-profit organizations; home buyers.	Darwin Heard, City of Detroit Planning & Development Department, 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1900, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 224-3461	City of Detroit Planning & Development Department. 2008. Accessed 28 December 2008. < http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/Departments/PlanningDevelopmentDepartments/HousingServices/MultiFamilyHomebuyersandCHDOSPrograms/tabid/2192/Default.aspx >.

Table D4: Foundation Sources

Foundation	Description	Eligibility Requirements	Contact Information	Source of Information
The Carls Foundation	Supports children and youth services; education; environment and natural resources; health care; historic preservation; hospitals (general); recreation; speech/hearing centers.	Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.	333 Fort Street, Suite 1940, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 965-0990	Council of Michigan Foundations. Michigan Foundation Directory. Lansing, Michigan: Council of Michigan Foundations, 2006.
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan	Supports art, education, higher education, environment, health care, economic development, civil rights, race and intergroup relations, government and public administration, leadership development, public affairs.	Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.	333 Fort Street, Suite 1940, Detroit, MI 48226 (313) 961-6675	Council of Michigan Foundations. Michigan Foundation Directory. Lansing, Michigan: Council of Michigan Foundations, 2006.
The Kresge Foundation	Promotes a robust regional economy through development of knowledge-based, accessible jobs, increased educational attainment and business innovation.	Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.	3215 W. Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084 (248) 643-9630	Council of Michigan Foundations. Michigan Foundation Directory. Lansing, Michigan: Council of Michigan Foundations, 2006.
Skillman Foundation	The Good Neighborhoods program aims at developing safe, healthy and vibrant neighborhoods for children. The Good Schools program aims at identifying, supporting and creating high-quality schools. The Good Opportunities program helps advance the work of the above two programs.	Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.	100 Talon Centre Dr., Suite 100, Detroit, MI 48207 (313) 393-1185	Council of Michigan Foundations. Michigan Foundation Directory. Lansing, Michigan: Council of Michigan Foundations, 2006.



E

APPENDIX **Selected Costs for Vacant Land Strategies**

The following figures show selected costs for vacant land strategies discussed in Chapter 4. These cost estimates are from the Kent State University’s Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative’s Pattern Book: Vacant Land Strategies (avail-

able online at <http://www.cudc.kent.edu/shrink/index.html>). These costs give an idea of how much vacant lot strategies cost, but for more information about plants, trees and materials, contact The Greening of Detroit at (313)237-8733

Table E.1: Costs for Community Garden Materials

Community Garden Materials	
Materials	Cost
Site demolition / grading	\$20 per cubic yard
Landscape Materials	
Planting mixture	\$45 per cubic yard
Mulch	\$40 per cubic yard
Plant Materials	
Low mow seed	\$0.12 per square foot
Fencing	
6' wood frame / wire with gate	\$40 per square foot

Table E.3: Costs for Housing Demolition

Housing Demolition
Cost / Grading
\$20 per cubic yard

Table E.2: Costs for Landscaping Materials

Native Landscaping	
Materials	Cost
Site demolition / grading	\$20 per cubic yard
Sheet mulch	\$600
Native plants	\$500
Labor for site preparation	\$2,000
Trees (5 minimum)	\$250 per tree



F

APPENDIX Map Sources

Table F.1: Sources of Data for Maps

Map Source	Data
Black Family Development	Lists of addresses of residents involved in block clubs (Nov. 2008).
Detroit Community Initiative (DCI)	Addresses and photos of vacant houses and commercial buildings and a few vacant lots (summer 2008).
Detroit Planning & Development Department	Parcel base map, assessor's data, Detroit Property inventory of Osborn (Aug. 2008).
ESRI	Census block groups and Census tract shapefiles.
Fannie Mae (FNMA)	FNMA owned houses (Dec. 2008).
Field Investigation	Determination of types of areas; assessment of conditions of vacant houses and lots (Oct. - Dec. 2008).
Lisa Morris	Data file on privately owned vacant lots in Osborn (created for University of Michigan School of Social Work Technical Assistance Center, Aug. 2008).
Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority	Lists of properties owned by the state (Aug. 2008).
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)	Roads shapefile, land use, ortho satellite imagery (downloaded Sep. 2008).
U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990, 2000	Characteristics of population and housing by Census tracts and block groups (1990, 2000).
U.S. Postal Service data provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Total vacant addresses for 2005 and 2008 (Nov. 2008).
Wayne County Treasurer's Office (Wayne County)	List of tax-foreclosed properties offered at auction (Sep. 2008), and list of properties owned by the Treasurer's office (Aug. 2008).



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