LEAP FORWARD

ADVANCING LEAP'S LAND USE GOALS

Urban and Regional Planning Program
Taubman College of Architecture + Urban Planning
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
May 2013

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Contents

List of Figures & Tables

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER 9

Summary

LEAP Forward aims to inform residents, leaders of community organizations, city officials, and other stakeholders about ways to monitor property ownership and to steward publicly owned land in order to stabilize neighborhoods and repurpose vacant land. _LEAP Forward_ builds on the _Lower Eastside Action Plan's_ (LEAP) community-generated vision for the lower eastside of Detroit.

This plan has three guiding principles:

- Enable the achievement of LEAP's goals of stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land in Detroit's lower eastside
- Empower residents and community development organizations of the lower eastside through land ownership monitoring and stewarding of publicly owned land
- Engage LEAP participants and lower eastside stakeholders to build networks and collaborate

In addition to LEAP, a number of other plans cover portions of the lower eastside, ranging from neighborhood plans like the Neighborhood Stabilization Plans for Jefferson-Chalmers and the Villages, to the Detroit Future City plan, which covers the entire City of Detroit. Numerous stakeholder organizations also work on the lower eastside. Some, like Creekside Community Development Corporation, are neighborhood-based community development organizations. Others are faith-based organizations, like the Detroit Catholic Pastoral Alliance. Government agencies such as the Detroit Planning and Development Department and Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority also play a role in the lower eastside.

The LEAP area lost 44% of its population between 2000 and 2010,[1] and the area had an overall 45% vacancy rate of residential structures and lots in 2009.[2] Public entities own over one third of the area's properties, while a few large private landowners own more than 3% of total properties in the lower eastside.[3] At the end of March 2013, the Wayne County Treasurer foreclosed on 1,621 properties, 8% of the total properties in the lower eastside. While some of these might sell at auction, the majority are likely to become publicly owned.[4] Additionally, the over 2,700 structures awaiting demolition

and discrepancies between *Detroit Future City* and LEAP land use plans could complicate LEAP implementation.

This summary of overall characteristics masks considerable variation across the lower eastside. LEAP grouped blocks into typologies to describe the aspirations for the future. Traditional Residential areas, for instance, have fewer vacant lots and vacant structures and include more stable neighborhoods. Naturescapes and Urban Homestead typologies, however, have extensive vacant land and many pending demolitions. Public entities own a large proportion of the land in these areas.

Collectively, the recommendations in *LEAP Forward* provide ways for LEAP participants and residents to monitor changes in land ownership, stabilize neighborhoods, and repurpose publicly owned vacant land. By participating in this process, residents and organizations can play a pivotal role in making LEAP's visions a reality.

Monitoring Land Ownership Changes

Monitoring changes in land ownership enables residents and organizations to understand those changes and enables them to intervene when problems arise or to ensure proposed projects strategically align with the LEAP framework.

LEAP Forward's recommendations for monitoring land ownership propose that LEAP participants:

- Prioritize monitoring of land ownership based on purpose to know where to assign capacity
- Identify owners of multiple blighted properties to target them for community action
- Understand and track changes in land ownership due to tax foreclosure to track the largest way properties move into public ownership and intervene at strategic points in the process
- Track changes in land ownership due to mortgage foreclosure to track new vacancies or owners to prevent the deterioration of vacant property or contact new owners about maintenance problems
- Contract with Data Driven Detroit to develop an accessible parcel ownership database for the lower eastside to make monitoring land ownership simpler
- Monitor the marketing and notifications of public land sales and potential real estate developments to encourage compliance with LEAP during the process
- Monitor websites aimed at selling properties in Detroit, including Detroit Property Exchange, Craigslist, and eBay to monitor private sales
- Build on resident-led programs to monitor changes in land ownership (i.e. Walking Against Blight)
- Use new crowdsourcing web platforms, such as Ushahidi or Textizen, that allow residents to report and map street-level data with mobile phones to help monitor ownership

Stewarding Publicly Owned Land to Stabilize Neighborhoods

Stewarding publicly owned land to stabilize neighborhoods involves encouraging residents and lower eastside organizations to buy, lease, and manage publicly owned property. *LEAP Forward's* recommendations highlight existing programs and suggest additional programs and strategies that can help the lower eastside achieve its goals.

Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE) and other LEAP participants could:

- Encourage and promote tax foreclosure prevention and education programs to help keep residents in their homes
- Coordinate the acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of houses in good condition with the Detroit Land Bank in areas with a high concentration of owner-occupied homes to stabilize neighborhoods
- Advocate for targeting denser residential areas for demolition and deconstruction of blighted publicly owned properties to most efficiently use scarce resources
- Facilitate residents' purchase of publicly owned lots to increase land stewardship
- Work with the Detroit Land Bank to offer a program similar to the Michigan Land Bank's property conveyance program to ease the transfer of property to residents
- Work with the Planning and Development Department, the Michigan Land Bank, and the Detroit Land Bank to create sweat equity purchase programs that reward residents who steward publicly owned land with ownership of that land

Repurposing Publicly Owned Vacant Land

Managing and stewarding larger areas of vacant public land requires participation from and partnerships among public agencies, community organizations, and residents. *LEAP Forward* outlines recommendations for public land management and stewardship that enable residents and organizations in the lower eastside to repurpose vacant public land into an asset.

The recommendations for high-vacancy areas suggest that DNPE and other LEAP participants could:

- Collaborate with major public landowners to advocate for the coordination of decisions with LEAP's long-term land use goals
- Help landowners and community organizations lease vacant properties for community garden or beautification projects as a more economical means for organizations to assist in managing large areas of public land
- Form a community land trust, cooperative, or conservancy to acquire or lease properties in less dense areas to assist with the large-scale repurposing of vacant land owned by public entities
- Work with partner organizations to apply green infrastructure treatments to return vacant publicly owned lots to productive use

Applying Recommendations

LEAP Forward provides two case studies on how to apply these recommendations in lower eastside neighborhoods in Chapters 7 and 8.

Detroit's Creekside neighborhood, a primarily residential area bordering the Detroit River and Grosse Pointe Park, has higher housing density than much of the lower eastside. Creekside has active resident involvement and neighborhood-based organizations which give the neighborhood more capacity than other LEAP areas to implement recommendations to stabilize the residential areas and repurpose the smaller areas of vacant land to avoid the spread of blight.

To stabilize areas like Creekside, a series of recommendations are proposed for the dense residential areas including tax foreclosure prevention education, deconstruction, and rehab and resale of houses in good condition. In these same areas, the sale or transfer of side lots and other publicly owned lots to resident that own their homes can return 12% of properties in Creekside's neighborhoods to taxpaying and productive use.

In contrast, the area around the Packard Plant is sparsely populated and exhibits high levels of vacant land, almost half of which is publicly owned. Due to the lack of neighborhood-based organizations, implementing recommendations will be difficult without assistance from organizations such as DNPE. However, with assistance to repurpose vacant land, the area around the Packard Plant could become more attractive and productive.

Repurposing vacant land in the Packard Plant Area will require public landowners' collaboration, prioritizing demolitions with non-profit organizations (i.e. Detroit Blight Authority), attracting for-profit industries committed to environmental stewardship, and facilitating the establishment of urban homesteads through a resident-driven land trust. DNPE can advocate for a city sweat-equity program that would incentivize resident stewardship and acquisition of publicly owned land by offering monetary credit for maintenance of city-owned land. Through these recommendations, up to 400 publicly owned properties in the Packard Plant Area (45% of total properties), can be put back into productive use and onto the property tax roll.

Implementation

In order to assist community organizations in executing these recommendations, *LEAP Forward* provides ideas about priorities, scheduling, and funding. Implementation of some monitoring projects can begin almost immediately at little cost, while other recommendations will require additional costs, staff, and relationship building. An implementation phasing table lists each recommendation, describes the actions and partners needed, then offers a timeline for preparing and implementing the recommendation, along with a scale of the costs, collaboration, and staffing needed for each. Numerous grant opportunities from corporate and philanthropic organizations range in value from hundreds to hundreds of thousands of dollars and cover a broad range of *LEAP Forward* recommendations. A funding resource table shows grant op-

portunities for nonprofits and for which LEAP area groups each grant is available.

Recommendations that could start right away include:

MONITORING LAND

Contracting with Data Driven Detroit to develop an accessible property ownership database for the lower eastside – The software for this tool already exists, so the database would be quickly available for neighborhood organizations.

STABILIZING NEIGHBORHOODS

Working with the Detroit Land Bank to offer a program similar to the Michigan Land Bank's property conveyance program – Discussions could start right away to create a simpler property conveyance process that also prevents abuse by speculators.

Facilitating residents' purchase of publicly owned lots – Programs already exist to allow residents to purchase publicly owned side lots; neighborhood organizations could immediately start connecting residents with these programs

REPURPOSING VACANT PUBLICLY OWNED LAND

Collaborating with major public landowners to advocate for coordination of LEAP's long-term land use goals – Starting these talks as soon as possible allows for a greater shared understanding of land use goals when the next major public land project comes to the LEAP area.

Other recommendations, such as starting a lower eastside community land trust, will take longer to implement, but will make the most progress towards reaching LEAP's and *LEAP Forward's* goals.

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[1] US Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1: Total Population, http://factfinder2.census.gov (accessed April 29,2013). US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1: Total Population, http://factfinder2.census.gov (accessed April 29, 2013).

[2] Data Driven Detroit, *Detroit Residential Parcel Survey* data file, 2009.

[3] City of Detroit Assessor, *City Assessor's* data file, 2012; City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, *Detroit Property Inventory* data file, 2012; Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, *Michigan Land Bank Parcels* data file, 2013.

[4] Wayne County Auction, 2012; WhyDontWeOwnThis.com, *Tax Delinquency Data*, extracted from website, 2013.

CHAPTER 1

A Plan for Monitoring Land Ownership and Stewarding Publicly Owned Land

In early 2009, the Wayne County Land Bank Corporation held at least 341 properties in Detroit's lower eastside.[1] By the end of 2012, 321 of these properties ended up under the ownership of the New Far East Side Development Company, one of several firms involved in a failed $285 million plan to revitalize a 1,200 acre site bordering Grosse Pointe Park.[2]

This planned development envisioned a site with more than 3,000 homes, commercial districts, and big-box retailers, but the financial crisis of the late 2000s prevented most of the development from beginning.[3] The New Far East Side Development Company left the land untouched. It has since turned into an overgrown wasteland littered with trash.[4]

How did a company with a history of failed development and acres of vacant properties gain ownership of even more public land in mid-2012? Moreover, did anyone notice when this happened? An online search turned up a single result that mentions the transaction. A 2011 Wayne County Legislative Auditor's report found that the Wayne County Land Bank's "…transfer of land to certain developers…" was "problematic," citing the example of, "…more than 580 lots of land transferred to the New Far East Side Development Co., LLC at no cost..," but the report offered no other explanation.[5] Although the lack of information may suggest otherwise, this land transfer has significant implications for the implementation of community-generated planning efforts such as the *Lower Eastside Action Plan* (LEAP).

LEAP presents a vision for the land that presently sits dormant and under-utilized. LEAP did not imagine new homes and strip malls but instead a natural area flourishing with flora and fauna. In order for residents of the lower eastside to see

FIG 1.1

New Far East Side Property
Photo by: Benjamin Crumm

community planning efforts come to fruition, community organizations, land banks, the City government, and residents must take an active role in monitoring, acquiring, and stewarding land.

Individuals and organizations must take a more active role in these areas. For example, in 2012, Detroit's Planning and Development Department contacted homeowners in the Hantz Woodlands project area in the lower eastside to offer them the chance to purchase adjacent lots before selling to Hantz Woodlands. Despite these outreach efforts, as of February 2013, many residents had failed to respond. As a result, homeowners faced the prospect of losing access to properties they had long cared for. In this instance, LEAP stakeholders have an opportunity to intervene to ensure that residents can purchase the land they have cared for. Greater capacity to monitor prospective changes in ownership will help organizations and residents advance LEAP's goals, and prevent incompatible outcomes such as a homeowner's loss of stewarded land.

LEAP Forward strives to detail how monitoring and influencing land transfers of all sizes can facilitate the achievement of LEAP's goals. It aims to inform residents, leaders of community organizations, city officials, and others about strategies to monitor property ownership and to steward publicly owned land in order to stabilize neighborhoods and repurpose vacant land. Specifically, the plan aims to advance the goals of the residents of the lower eastside, Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East, and other LEAP stakeholders.

FIG 1.2

A house with an adjacent cared-for lot that faced prospect of Hantz purchase in February 2013. Google Images, 2013.

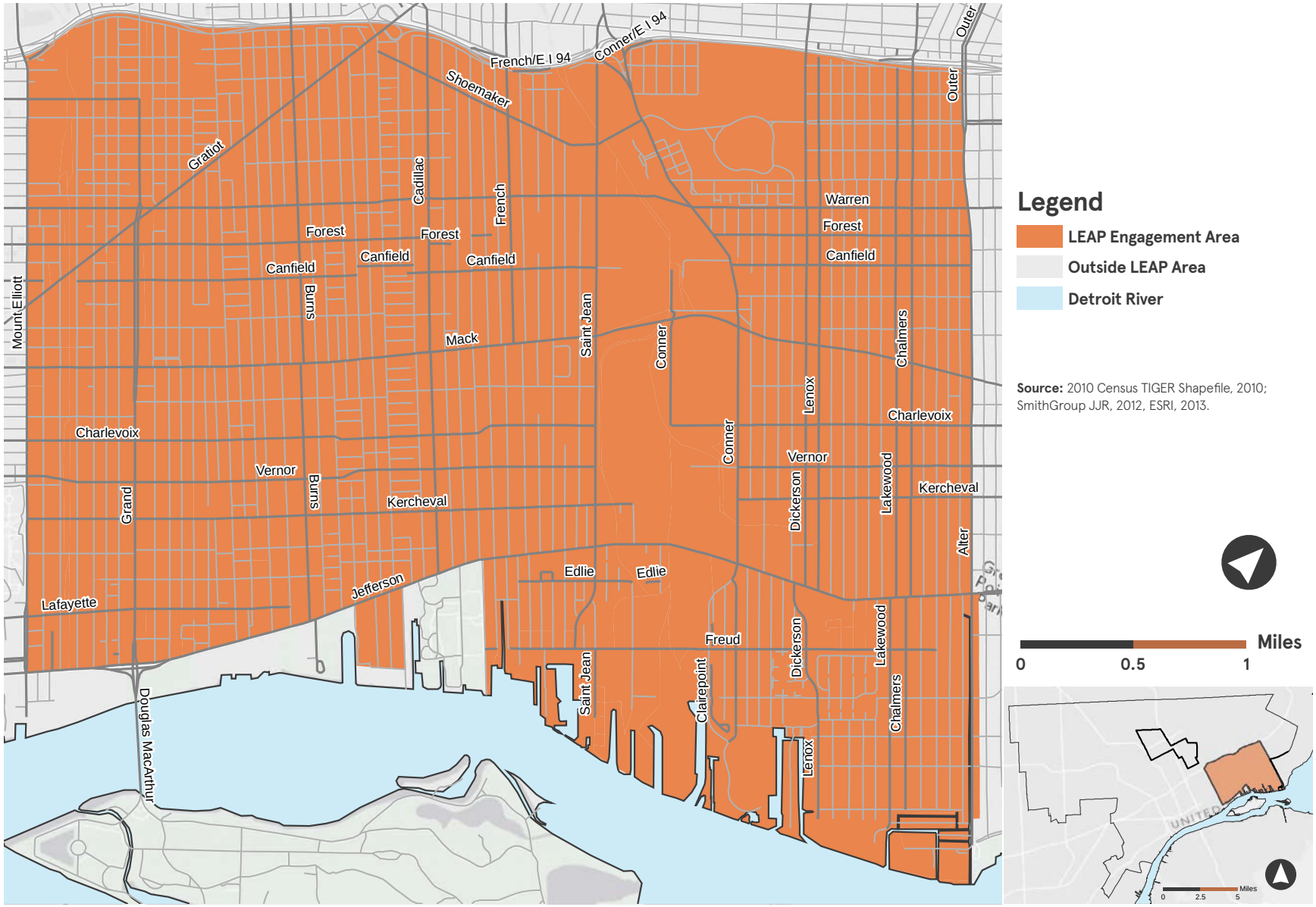
What is LEAP?

The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP), coordinated by the Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE), is an ongoing collaborative community engagement process. LEAP lays out strategies to overcome the challenges of decline, to stabilize active residential and commercial districts, and to repurpose vacant land. This extensive process preceded planning efforts conducted for the *Detroit Future City* plan.

The planned area spans from Alter Road on the east to Mt. Elliott Street on the west and from the Detroit River north to Interstate 94. From 2000 to 2010, the population decreased by 44%, leaving less than 51,000 people in this area

FIG. 1.3

Lower Eastside Action Plan Engagement Area



of 15 square miles.[6] LEAP recommends strategies to prevent further decline, such as: increasing control of land ownership; repurposing approximately 20,000 vacant parcels and structures to restore value; and encouraging neighborhood organizations and residents to engage in improving their quality of life and neighborhoods.[7]

LEAP Forward

DNPE invited urban planning students from the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning to develop strategies for reaching the goals of stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land. The team of students analyzed existing conditions and developed recommendations for ways to monitor changes in land ownership and steward publicly owned land to support LEAP's implementation process.

Through monitoring land ownership, neighborhood organizations and residents can become aware of significant changes in ownership that will affect their neighborhood and implementation of LEAP. By knowing where major landowners' properties are located within the LEAP area, neighborhood organizations can work with those landowners to steward and repurpose vacant land. *LEAP Forward* provides LEAP stakeholders with recommendations and insights on ways to monitor land ownership information from both neighborhood organizations' and individual residents' perspectives, as well as ways to cooperate with public agencies to help residents gain ownership of land and track blight violations. Additionally, the plan proposes strategies for stewarding publicly owned land in two distinct areas: those proposed in LEAP for stabilizing neighborhoods and those for repurposing vacant land. In developing strategies, the plan relied on the following guiding principles:

ENABLE IMPLEMENTATION

To implement LEAP's goal of stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land in Detroit's lower eastside, the plan provides recommendations to LEAP participants on land monitoring and stewardship of publicly owned land.

EMPOWER RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Residents and community development organizations (CDOs) of the lower eastside can gain greater control over land use through land monitoring, stewarding, and acquisition. This plan encourages residents and CDOs to control new development and land use in their neighborhoods by transferring ownership or management from public entities to community residents and organizations

ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS

Community development organizations, major landowners, public agencies, and individual landowners

are all stakeholders in the lower eastside area. This plan encourages these parties to engage within the lower eastside and build working networks.

Plan Overview

Relying on the guiding principles, Chapter 2 of *LEAP Forward* looks at major stakeholders from neighborhood organizations and public agencies and highlights the *Detroit Future City Framework* and other community-based plans in the lower eastside. Chapter 3 analyzes the existing conditions and the implications of those conditions by the different types of land use identified in the LEAP framework.

Chapters 4 through 6 detail recommendations that work toward achieving LEAP's goals, specifically related to monitoring land ownership and stewarding publicly owned land in order to stabilize neighborhoods or repurpose vacant land. Chapter 4 addresses strategies associated with monitoring land ownership, accessing information, and tracking land ownership changes. Chapter 5 details strategies for stabilizing residential neighborhoods, looking at programs that help residents and community organizations acquire, lease, and manage public properties. Chapter 6 proposes strategies for stewarding public land in very vacant areas, looking at both existing approaches and best practices from other cities that can help to manage and repurpose publicly owned land.

Next, Chapters 7 and 8 illustrate the application of *LEAP Forward* recommendations in two areas, the Creekside neighborhood and the Packard Plant Area. Finally, Chapter 9 provides a suggested timeframe for implementation of *LEAP Forward's* recommendations as well as a list of potential funding sources and key partners.

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[1] City of Detroit Assessor, *City Assessor's* datafile, 2009.

[2] City of Detroit Assessor, *City Assessor's* datafile, 2012; Irven Corley, "Master Development Agreement for the New Town #1 (Fox Creek) Project," Detroit: Fiscal Analysis Division, 2005;

[3] Associated Press, "Six years later, site of proposed $258M Detroit housing project is a dumping ground," MLive, April 14, 2011. http://www. mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2011/04/six_years_later_site_of_ propos.html (accessed February 2012).

[4] Ibid.

[5] County of Wayne Office of Legislative General, "Operational Assessment Review Report of the Wayne County Land Bank Corporation, Operational Assessment Review," Detroit: County of Wayne, MI Office of Legislative General, 2011, http://www.waynecountytreasurermi.com/documents/commission_docs/DAP_2010-57-850.pdf (accessed May 8, 2013), 13.

[6] US Census Bureau, 2010 Census Summary File 1: Total Population, http://factfinder2.census.gov (accessed April 29,2013); US Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1: Total Population, http://factfinder2.census.gov (accessed April 29, 2013); Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE), Reinventing Detroit's Lower Eastside: A Summary Report of the Lower Eastside Action Plan – Phase I, DNPE, January 2012, 2.

[7] Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE), Reinventing Detroit's Lower Eastside: A Summary Report of the Lower Eastside Action Plan – Phase I, DNPE, January 2012, 22.

CHAPTER 2

Current Conditions: Planning Efforts and Stakeholders

Knowing the various stakeholders in the LEAP area and understanding the relationships among them can assist in implementing the recommendations in this plan. This chapter outlines community-based plans that address the lower eastside and the major stakeholder organizations operating in the LEAP area.

Major Planning Efforts

The lower eastside has been an important part of multiple neighborhood planning efforts, including LEAP. This section outlines the primary planning efforts in the area. The plans' focus areas vary from all of Detroit to single neighborhoods. The differing detail and subject matter suggest these plans can be complementary rather than conflicting.

THE LOWER EASTSIDE ACTION PLAN (LEAP) is the result of a two-year community planning process started in 2010. The LEAP process combined residents' knowledge and vision with technical expertise to decide future directions for land use across the lower eastside, based on the *2009 Community Development Advocates of Detroit Neighborhood Framework*.[1]

The different land use typologies used in LEAP originated in that framework and address the differing conditions of land use across the city (see Appendix B). Acknowledging the realities affecting Detroit's lower eastside, the plan focuses on stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land.[2] The *LEAP Forward* plan aims to advance the implementation of LEAP.

DETROIT FUTURE CITY (DFC) is a citywide planning framework that resulted from the Detroit Works Project. Started by Mayor Dave Bing in 2009, the project proposes strategies for the city to stabilize its population and boost its economy. It also serves as a framework for future planning efforts aimed at reinventing and revitalizing Detroit. DFC's recommendations do not have as much neighborhood detail

as do the LEAP plan and other neighborhood-level plans. While many goals and future land-use designations of DFC complement the LEAP framework, some important discrepancies exist (see Chapter 3).

THE NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PLAN FOR JEFFERSON-CHALMERS focuses on Jefferson-Chalmers, a neighborhood in the southeast corner of the LEAP area. Started in November 2011 and facilitated by Michigan Community Resources, this plan resulted from a response to Mayor Dave Bing's request for priority projects that could use City assistance. It uses a data-driven approach to identify projects that local organizations could undertake to enhance assets, make the neighborhood safer and cleaner, and encourage investment. While the plan did not incorporate the LEAP framework, the typology approach offered in LEAP can apply to the Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative (NSI) strategies for neighborhood stabilization to help community organizations set priorities, (Chapter 7 incorporates NSI findings).[3]

THE VILLAGES COMMUNITIES NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PLAN focuses on several neighborhoods in the southwest area of LEAP known as The Villages. Calling for coordination of previously disparate local organizations' efforts, the neighborhood stabilization plan focuses on short-term, realistic, actionable projects that can have a longer term impact on neighborhood stability. Projects aim to beautify and populate neighborhoods, build green assets, and strengthen commercial areas. The Villages plan does not use the same land use designations as LEAP but does have equivalents of LEAP's Traditional Residential, Spacious Residential, and Village Hub typologies (for more details about LEAP typologies, see Chapter 3).[4] The Villages plan's land use designations are similar to LEAP's, making the two plans complementary.

THE CITY OF DETROIT MASTER PLAN also mapped out future land uses across Detroit. Unlike other plans on this list, the Master Plan is an official City of Detroit document and carries legal weight. The plan demarcates high and low density neighborhoods across the LEAP area but lacks some LEAP designations, such as Urban Homestead and Green Venture. Because the Master Plan is the City of Detroit's officially adopted plan, inconsistencies between LEAP and the Master Plan could impede LEAP's implementation.[5]

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR JEFFERSON-CHALMERS NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT is an urban renewal area plan that uses the City Master Plan as a requisite basis for specific development strategies and guidelines for the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood.[6] Any project involving public land in this area should consult the *Jefferson-Chalmers Development Plan* since the development guidelines established in the plan have legal standing.

Stakeholders have also developed other plans within the LEAP area. Such plans include a *Greenway Master Plan and the Jefferson East Business District Streetscape Plan* among others.[7]

Major Stakeholder Organizations

The LEAP area includes concerned residents, community development organizations (CDOs), local nonprofits, and religious groups. Their combined efforts, as well as their commitment to their blocks and neighborhoods, represent the greatest assets of the LEAP area. Their participation in the LEAP process is crucial to meeting the goals of neighborhood stabilization and turning vacant land into assets.

For example, community organizations make efforts to protect their neighborhood from blight. Some have organized sizable groups of volunteers to clean up trash on vacant lots, board up vacant houses, and create community gardens. Residents and CDOs work together in the LEAP area to improve safety and to stabilize their neighborhoods. This work improves the residents' living conditions and makes the LEAP area more attractive in the future. The residents who continue to live here feel the largest impact of the area conditions.

Implementing the recommendations in *LEAP Forward* requires the combined efforts and cooperation from numerous organizations that operate in the lower eastside. The entities described here will likely be major partners in the process of monitoring land ownership and stewarding public land. Their cooperation is critical to achieving LEAP's goals. While this is not an exhaustive list, it highlights those most likely to carry out the recommendations in *LEAP Forward* based on interviews, research, and advisory committee feedback.

Neighborhood Associations and Block Clubs

Residents seeking to improve the area where they live have created block clubs and neighborhood associations throughout the LEAP area. The capacity of these organizations is limited, but they generally have the closest connection to residents, due to their small area of focus. Examples of block clubs and neighborhood associations in the LEAP area include the Southeast Waterfront Neighborhood Association, the West Village Association, the Chandler Park Neighborhood Association, and the Seminole and Iroquois Block Club.

Community Development Organizations Focused on the Lower Eastside

DETROIT NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP EAST (DNPE) leads implementation of LEAP. DNPE operates as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Warren/Conner Development Coalition (see Chapter 1).

CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S mission is to "promote our southeastern Detroit neighborhood as a diverse and healthy community of choice by: preserving and building affordable and high quality housing, protecting and enhancing our parks, waterways and other

natural resources, encouraging resident engagement in sustaining a clean, safe and beautiful community, safeguarding and enhancing all of its current assets." Creekside CDC is a volunteer-driven organization that "has an established history of utilizing the tremendous amount of activism in the neighborhood."[8]

DETROIT CATHOLIC PASTORAL ALLIANCE (DCPA) seeks to "strengthen the quality of life in its communities by engaging members in the social, moral, political, and economic issues of the Metropolitan-Detroit Area."[9] In the Gratiot Woods area of the lower eastside, DCPA focuses on affordable housing, economic and commercial development, and neighborhood beautification, traffic and safety.

FELLOWSHIP NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION is an affiliate of Greater Christ Baptist Church on the eastside of Detroit. One of their priorities is to increase affordable housing for low-income families and senior citizens.[10]

GENESISHOPE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION "seeks to meet the needs of people and communities on the lower eastside of Detroit to eliminate poverty and powerlessness."[11]

JEFFERSON EAST BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (JEBA) fosters "economic development on Detroit's lower east side by creating an environment conducive to business and residential growth and development."[12] They provide business development and support services, physical planning and real estate development facilitation, public infrastructure improvements, corridor management services, and other marketing related services. JEBA plays a critical role in maintaining and revitalizing the commercial and residential areas along Jefferson Avenue in the LEAP area.

MACK ALIVE is a community center whose mission is to "enhance the growth and development of the east side of Detroit through comprehensive programs and services that educate, empower and elevate the entire community."[13]

CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH HOUSING CORPORATION'S mission is to "engage in housing, community and economic development activities to improve the quality of life in the lower eastside of Detroit."[14] Their "main focus is to stabilize the neighborhood through the rehabilitation and operational management of multi-unit apartment buildings and the construction of single family homes, rental townhouses, and apartment buildings."[15]

THE VILLAGES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION "is dedicated to accelerating economic development in the Villages of Detroit…. Through business attraction, community advocacy and organizing, and urban design and planning, the Villages CDC seeks to strengthen and preserve the social and economic fabric of one of the most diverse and longstanding communities in Detroit..."[16]

Community Development Organizations Working Across the City

THE GREENING OF DETROIT strives to "inspire sustainable growth of a healthy urban community through trees, green spaces, food, education, training and job opportunities." [17] They design and implement strategic landscapes, urban agriculture and open space, while providing hands-on learning and workforce development.

MICHIGAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES (MCR) mission is "to support and empower nonprofit community organizations in Michigan that serve low-income individuals and communities, with an emphasis on community economic development, by providing pro bono legal services and technical assistance."[18]

Government

The mission of the **DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (P&DD)** is to "strengthen and revitalize the city of Detroit's neighborhoods and communities and to stabilize and transform [Detroit's] physical, social and economic environment."[19] P&DD serves as the main overseer of the City of Detroit's publicly held property. Their services include surplus property sales, acquisition of property, property management, relocation services, and HUD grant funding administration.

The office of the **WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER** is "responsible to the people of Wayne County for the effective and efficient administration of the Property Tax Collection, and … responsible for receipt, custody, investment and disbursement of all County funds."[20] Each year, the Wayne County Treasurer is responsible for foreclosing on Detroit tax-delinquent properties. The office holds auctions of all tax foreclosed properties.

Land Banks

The **DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY (DLBA)** is "dedicated to returning Detroit's vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed property to productive use." DLBA has the ability to acquire, "own, manage, and sell property, assemble properties, hold land tax-free, recapture 50% of *ad valorem* taxes for five years on properties sold, leverage development incentives, [and] expedite property title clearance."[21]

The **MICHIGAN LAND BANK FAST TRACK AUTHORITY'S** mission is "to promote economic growth in this state through the acquisition, assembly and disposal of public property, including tax reverted property, in a coordinated manner to foster the development of that property, and to promote and support land bank operations at the county and local levels."[22]

This chapter has outlined a number of important plans and stakeholders operating in the LEAP area. More plans and stakeholders exist in the area than mentioned here; these show the dynamic nature of work to improve the lower eastside. Chapter 3 outlines the land use conditions in the LEAP area overall, then assesses land use conditions for each LEAP typology.

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[1] Lower Eastside Action Plan, "Reinventing Detroit's Lower Eastside: A Summary Report of the Lower Eastside Action Plan-Phase II," Lower Eastside Action Plan, October, 2012, https://sites.google.com/site/leapdetroit/documents (accessed April 29, 2013), 9.

[2] "Reinventing Detroit's Lower Eastside: A Summary Report of the Lower Eastside Action Plan-Phase II," 2009

[3] Michigan Community Resources, Neighborhood Stabilization Plan: Jefferson – Chalmers, Michigan Community Resources, Detroit, MI, 2013.

[4] Michigan Community Resources, Neighborhood Stabilization Plan: The Villages Communities, Michigan Community Resources, Detroit, MI, 2013.

[5] City of Detroit, "Master Plan of Policies," City of Detroit, July, 2009.

[6] City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, "Modified Development Plan for Jefferson-Chalmers Neighborhood Development Project Michigan A-4-1," City of Detroit, 2001.

[7] Jefferson East Business Association, "Jefferson East Business District Streetscape Plan," Jefferson East Business Association, 2012; The Villages Community Development Corporation, "A Vision of Greenways For the Greater Riverfront East District of Detroit," January, 2012, http://cfsem.org/sites/cfsem.org/files/5d-detroit-greenwaysplan_east_detroit-2012.pdf (accessed April 29, 2013).

[8] Creekside Community Development Corporation, "About Us," Creekside CDC Blog, http://creeksidedetroit.wordpress.com/about/ (accessed April 29, 2013).

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[10] Greater Christ Baptist Church, "Community Outreach," Greater Christ Baptist Church, http://greaterchristchurch.org/group/community-outreach/ (accessed April 29, 2013).

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[15] Ibid.

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CHAPTER 3

Land Conditions

The lower eastside has numerous assets, including beautiful historic districts, riverfront access, and major employers such as Chrysler and DTE Energy. However, the area also experiences challenges including vacancy. According to the *2009 Detroit Residential Property Survey*, over 20,000 vacant lots and structures, half of them owned by public agencies, lie in the LEAP area.

This land includes vast contiguous open spaces, pockets of vacancy amidst dense residential neighborhoods, and vacant areas close to the Detroit River. By recognizing vacant land as an asset, LEAP participants are poised to reinvent how neighborhoods with underused land function, feel, and thrive.[1]

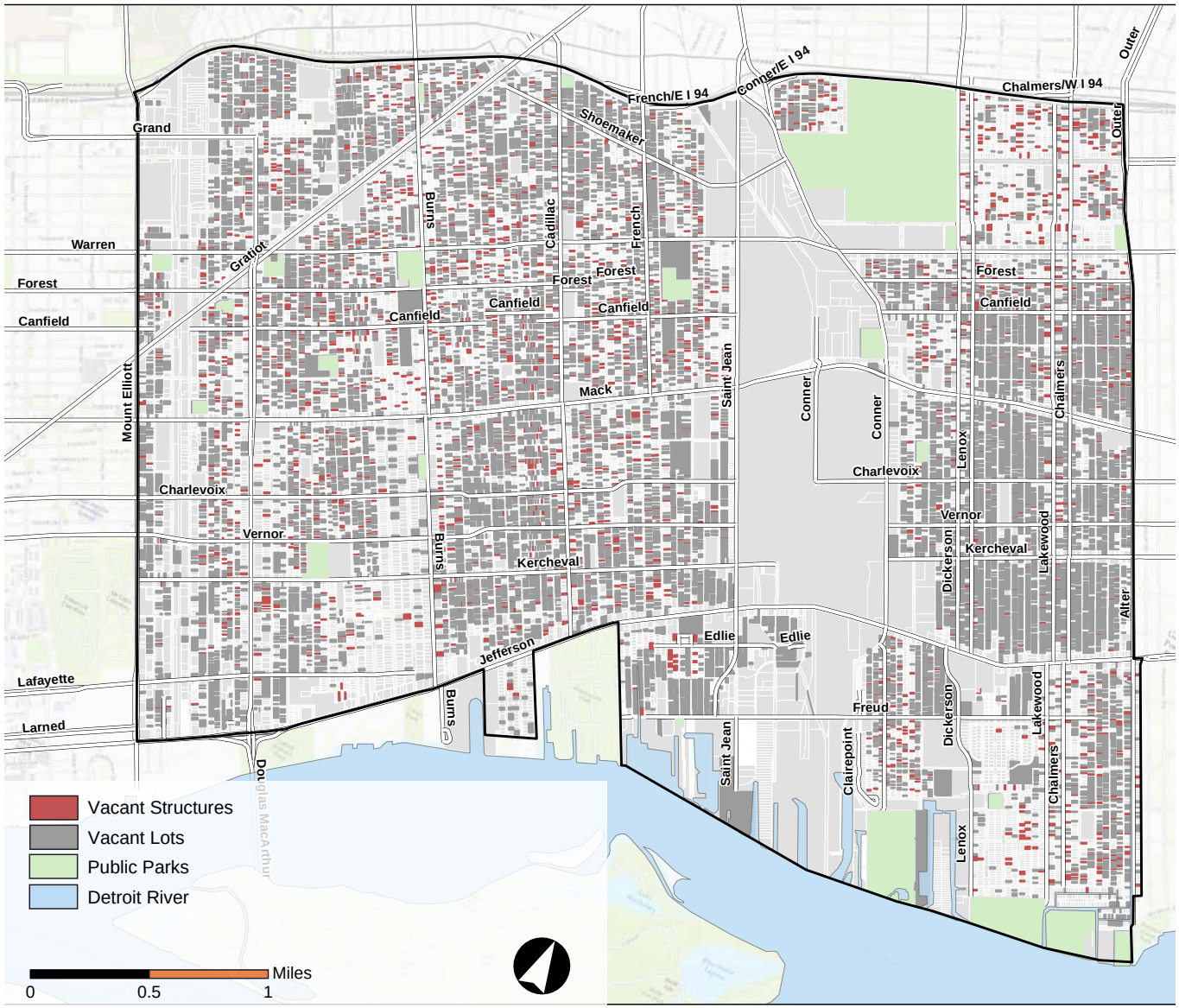
Assessing the conditions of properties in the lower eastside can assist in determining the appropriate course of action to stabilize neighborhoods and in repurposing vacant land as an asset. The following sections illustrate the existing land use characteristics of the lower eastside. These characteristics provide a basis for developing recommendations to advance LEAP's goals through monitoring land ownership and stewarding publicly owned land, outlined in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Overall Conditions

Like much of Detroit, lower eastside neighborhoods suffered the aftermath of the economic downturn. The LEAP area lost 44% of its population between 2000 and 2010,[2] and the area had an overall 45% residential properties vacancy rate of structures and lots in 2009.[3] Additionally, as of 2010, owner-occupied housing units make up less than half of the total occupied housing units in the lower eastside.[4] Public entities own over 33% of the area's properties, while a few large private landowners own more than 3% of total properties in the lower eastside.[5] The following sections provide more information about these conditions to illustrate the importance of stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land in reaching LEAP's vision.

FIG. 3.1

Vacant Lots And Structures In Detroit's Lower Eastside



Vacancies

Based on the 2009 Detroit Residential Parcel Survey and City demolition permits through the third quarter of 2012, 17,670 vacant lots and about 2,415 vacant structures exist in the LEAP area. **THIS MEANS THAT MORE THAN HALF OF THE PROPERTIES IN THE AREA ARE READY FOR REPURPOSING.** Until that happens, blighted and unmaintained vacant lots have potential to become liabilities for the surrounding area.

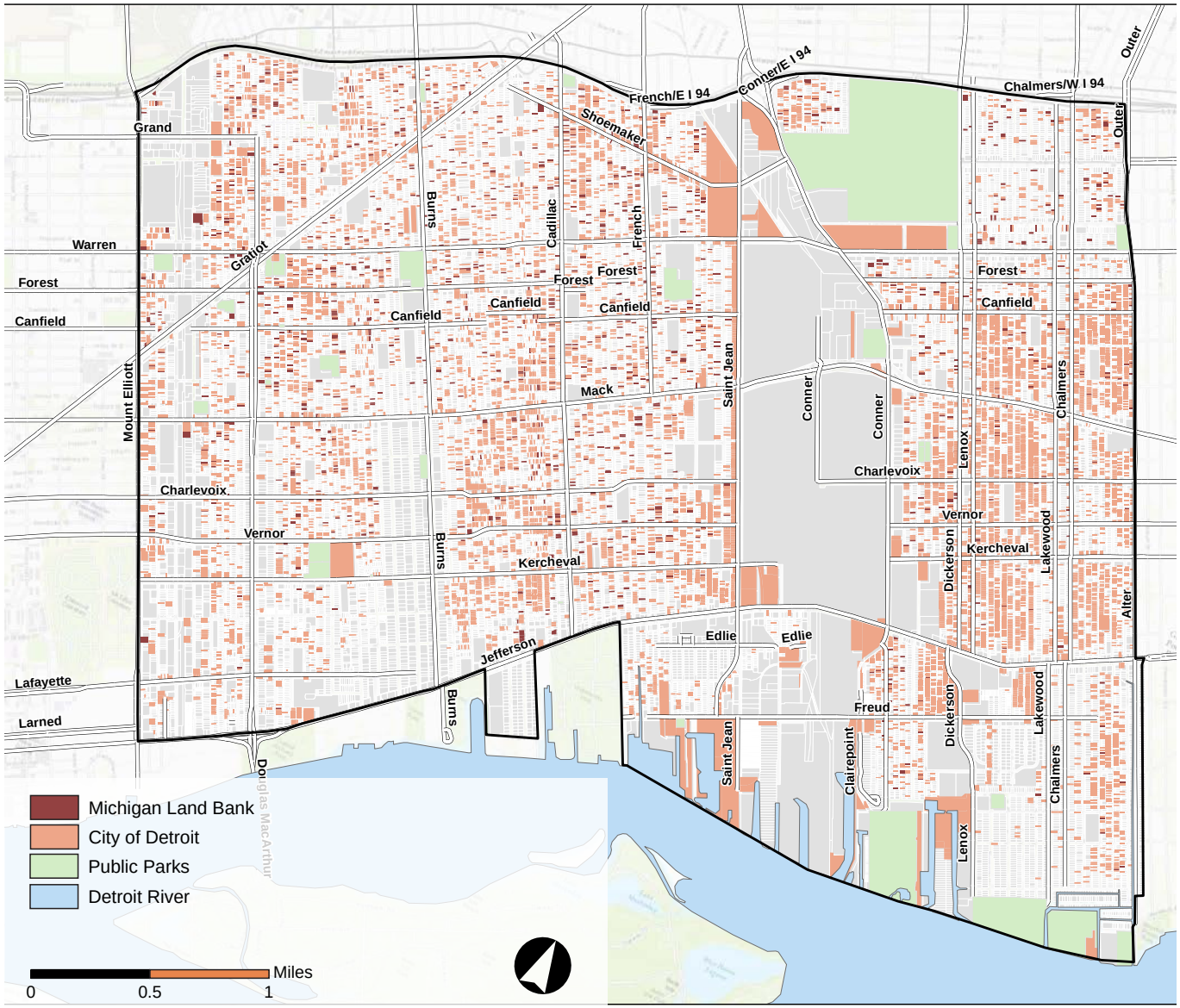
Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Land Ownership

As of January 2013, the City of Detroit owned 37,995 properties (30%) and the Michigan Land Bank owned 3% of properties in the LEAP area.[6] **PUBLIC ENTITIES OWN HALF OF THE VACANT LOTS AND STRUCTURES.** However, they lack the capacity to maintain the properties, creating opportunities for residents and community organizations in the lower eastside to steward publicly owned land.

FIG. 3.2

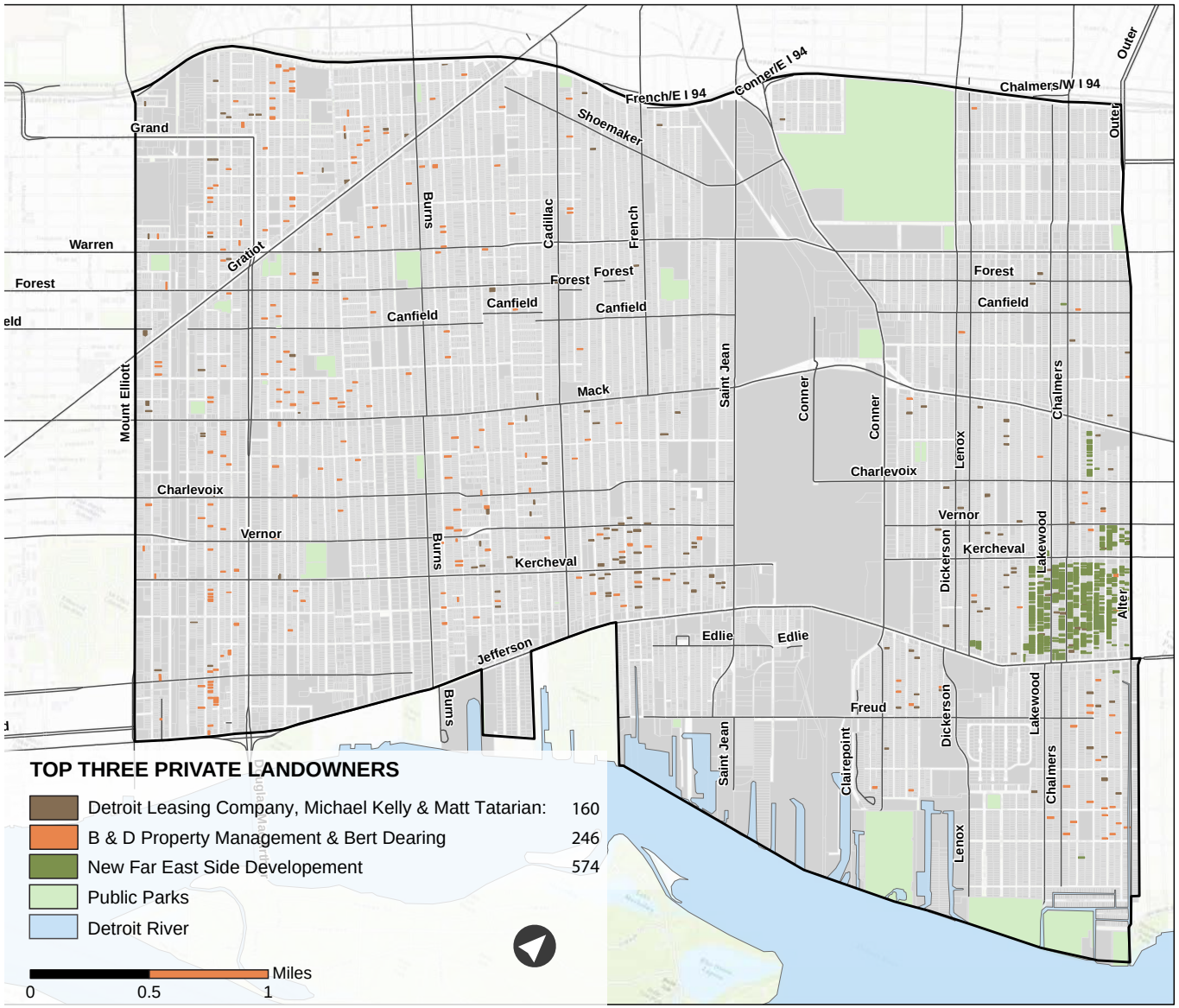
Publicly Owned Parcels in Detroit's Lower Eastside



Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 3.3

Major Private Landowners in the Lower Eastside



The owners of the other other 70% are nonprofit organizations, religious groups, private developers, and individual residents. Importantly, about 17 private entities each own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. This concentration of property ownership could be an asset or a challenge for LEAP participants, depending on how well these owners maintain their properties and how willing they are to work with residents and community organizations.

Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013; Realcomp, 2013.

Top 7 Private or Nonprofit Landowners (2012)

NEW FAR EASTSIDE DEVELOPMENT
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 574

The New Far Eastside Development Company cooperated with the City of Detroit in 2005 on a project located along Grosse Pointe's border. Melvin Washington, a Detroit developer, worked on the project with homebuilder Kimball Hill, and nonprofit U-SNAP-BAC.[7]

DETROIT LEASING COMPANY, MICHAEL KELLY, AND MATTHEW TATARIAN
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 160

Michael Kelly and his partner Matthew Tatarian are associated with five firms: Bimini Properties II, Woodlawn Properties, Cherokee Land, Belmont Properties and the Detroit Leasing Company. Michael Kelly and his companies bought land often from tax foreclosure sales in the lower eastside. [9]

MORGAN WATERFRONT HOMES, LLC
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 113

Morgan Waterfront Homes is a private housing development company formed by Jerome Morgan in 2005 that built luxury waterfront condominiums near the Detroit River. In 2013, the company lost 23 properties in the lower eastside to tax foreclosure.[11]

B&D PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND BERT DEARING
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 246

Bert Dearing is the president of Bert's on Broadway and Bert's Market Place near Eastern Market. B&D Property Management is a real estate company owned by Bert Dearing which buys many vacant lots in the Wayne County tax auction.[8]

DETROIT CATHOLIC PASTORAL ALLIANCE (DCPA)
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 128

DCPA is a nonprofit housing developer in the Gratiot Woods neighborhood. The organization has apartments for lease and senior cooperative units in the lower eastside.[10]

OPEN HANDS COMMUNITY LDHA
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 103

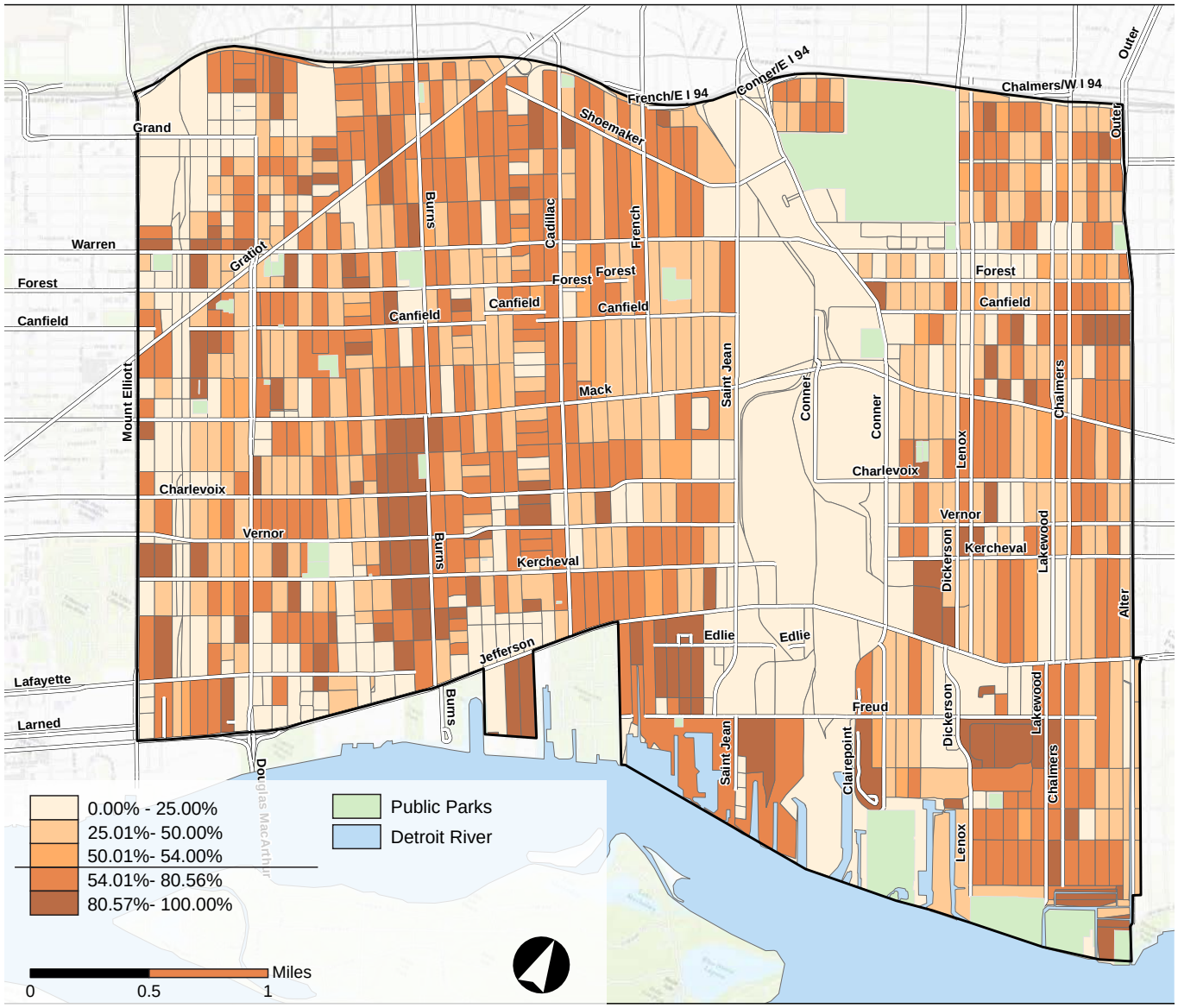
Open Hands is a private housing developer using Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) for the Daystar Estates project in the lower eastside. These units are in the neighborhood southeast of Chandler Park.[12]

PHOENIX REAL ESTATE COMPANY
PROPERTIES IN LOWER EASTSIDE: 75

Phoenix is a private real estate company founded by Melvin Washington.[13]

FIG. 3.4

Homeownership Rates in Detroit's Lower Eastside



Homeownership

As of the 2010 Census, the owner occupancy rate in the LEAP area was 46%. Several neighborhoods experienced owner occupancy rates higher than the City average rate of 54%, including the Marina District, and the Villages. Neighborhoods with high homeownership rates may have an easier time organizing and carrying out projects to stabilize neighborhoods because of homeowners' investment in their property and commitment to their neighborhoods.[14]

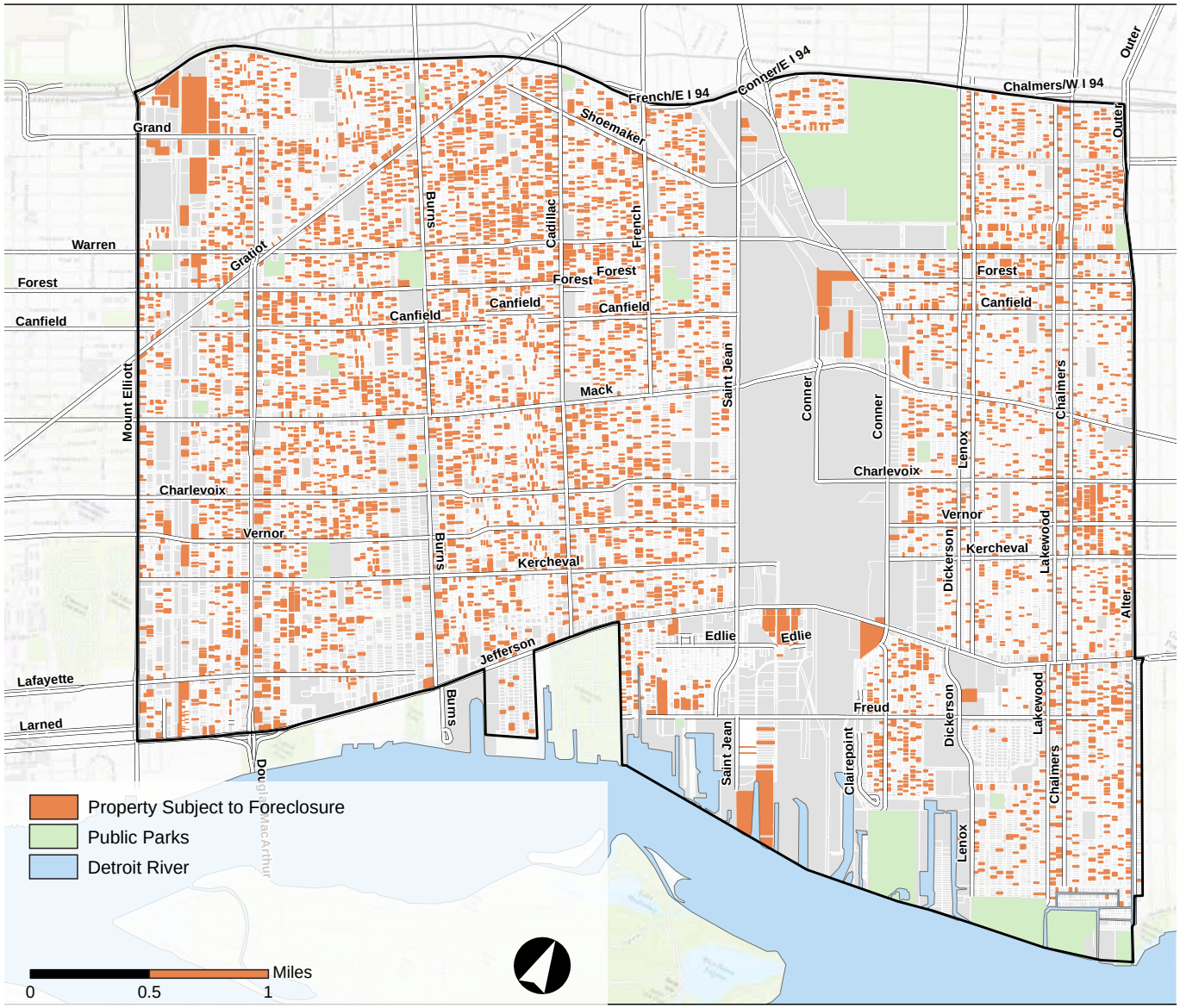
Source: U.S Census Bureau, 2010; 2010 Census TIGER Shapefile, 2010; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Future Conditions

Tax foreclosures, demolition, and the implementation of the *Detroit Future City* plan could potentially change the landscape of the lower eastside.

FIG. 3.5

Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in Detroit's Lower Eastside (January 2013)



Tax Foreclosure Process

As of January 2013, the Wayne County Treasurer listed 20% of properties in the lower eastside as subject to foreclosure in March 2013. At the end of March 2013, the Treasurer foreclosed on 1,621 properties, 8% of the properties in the lower eastside.[15] Moreover, in the 2012 Wayne County Tax Auction only 52 of 1,995 properties in the LEAP area sold. Unsold tax foreclosed properties usually become city owned, increasing public ownership rates across the lower eastside.[16]

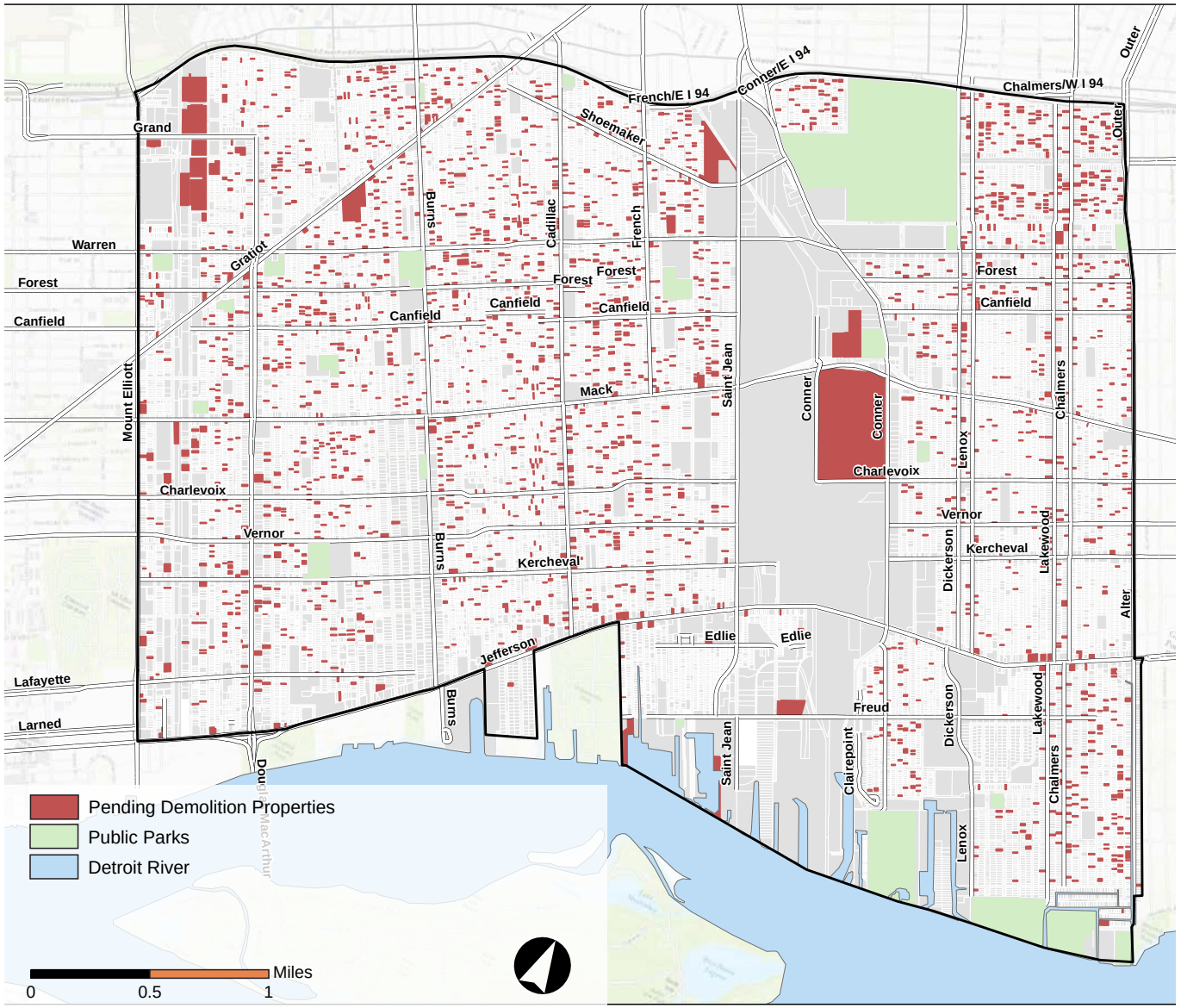
Source: WhyDontWeOwnThis, January 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Demolition Process

As of February 2013, 2,772 properties on the City's demolition list were in the LEAP area.[17] These structures were in very poor condition and were located in both high and low vacancy areas. Many buildings that have deteriorated to the point of needing demolition are not yet on the list. This vast number of properties in need of demolition will eventually lead to more vacant lots in the LEAP area, creating opportunities for repurposing land.

FIG. 3.6

Pending Demolitions



Source: Building Permits, 2012; Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 3.7

Detroit Future City (DFC) and LEAP conflicts

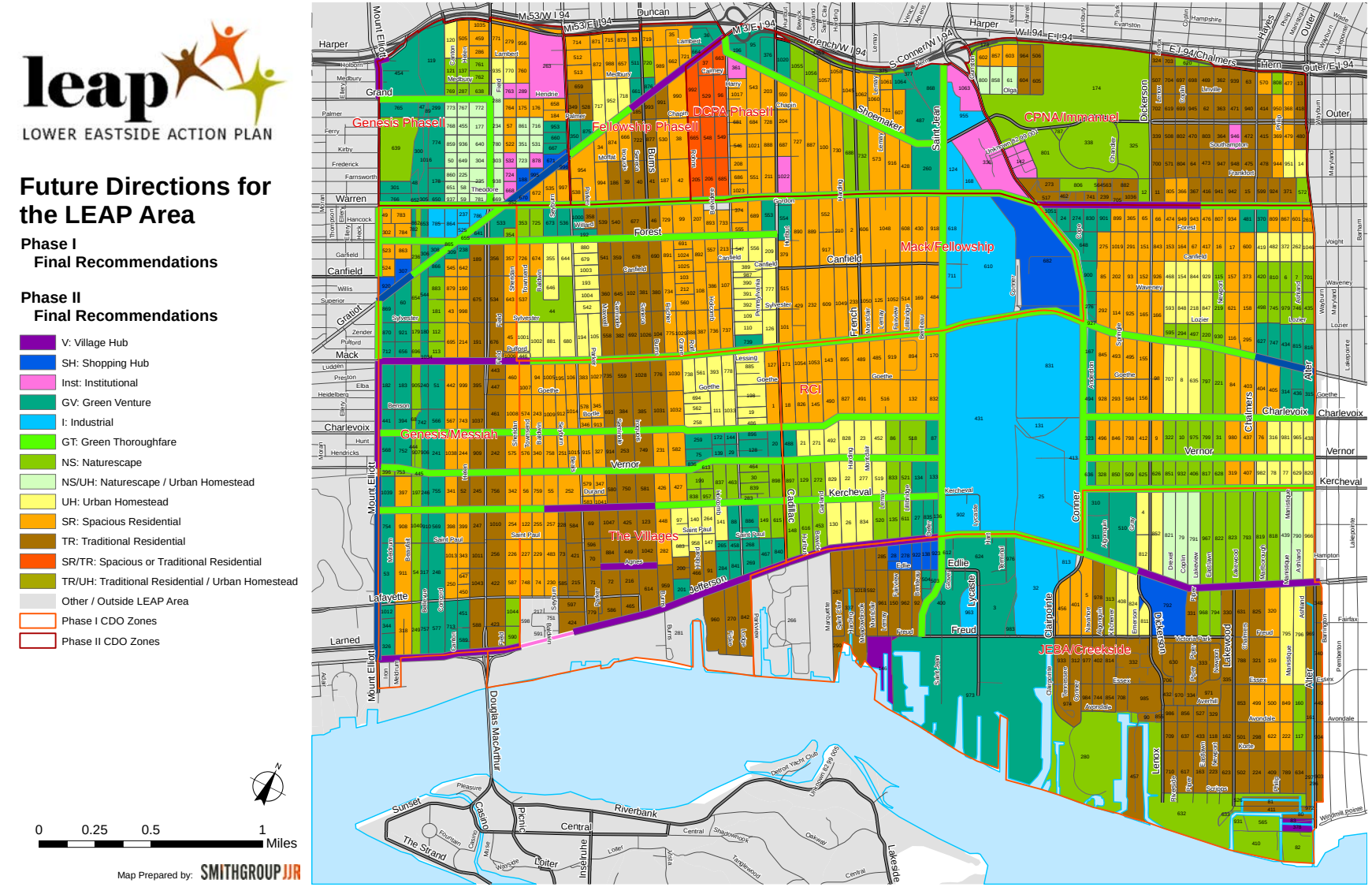
Source: *Detroit Future City* 50-Year Land Use Plan, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Discrepancies between LEAP's Vision and the *Detroit Future City* Plan

In addition to high foreclosure rates, properties in need of demolition, and low population, discrepancies between the *Detroit Future City* (DFC) framework plan and LEAP's vision may pose a challenge. For example, several areas proposed as residential uses in LEAP are envisioned as commercial or industrial uses in DFC. If these discrepancies are left unresolved, they could cause differences in support of projects in the LEAP area between different stakeholders. Figure 3.7 highlights areas in dark red that represent DFC non-residential areas conflicting with LEAP residential areas.

FIG. 3.8

Future Directions for the LEAP Area



Source: Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE), *Reinventing Detroit's Lower Eastside: A Summary Report of the Lower Eastside Action Plan – Phase II,* DNPE. 2012, 23.

Moving Forward

The previous analysis outlined conditions related to stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land in the overall LEAP area. The remainder of Chapter 3 provides data and analysis as a resource to inform LEAP participants of the conditions the entire area is presently facing as well as what those conditions will be in the near future. The next section of this chapter takes the analysis to a higher level of detail by analyzing LEAP land use typologies.

Conditions By Land Use Typology

LEAP segmented the lower eastside into land use typologies with varying characteristics that require different interventions. Figure 3.8 reflects LEAP participants' vision for the future of the lower eastside by types of land uses also referred to as "future directions." See Appendix B for a more detailed description of the LEAP land use typologies. *LEAP Forward* combines the Traditional Residential/Spacious Residential and Spacious Residential typologies as simply "Spacious Residential" for purposes of analysis due to the similarities of these typologies. For the same reason, this plan combines the Traditional Residential/Urban Homestead and Naturescape/Urban Homestead typologies into the Urban Homestead typology.

This section groups LEAP typologies with similar intervention needs into three different categories and analyzes the implications of current land use characteristics for the typologies' future directions. Understanding the existing conditions within different typologies can assist in developing appropriate strategies to support transition to these future directions as well as help LEAP participants focus on the different challenges facing each typology.

Categories:

Stabilization

Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential

These typologies require intervention strategies that focus on stabilizing residential neighborhoods (see Chapter 5).

Repurposing

Urban Homestead, Naturescape, and Green Venture

Typologies in the repurposing category require intervention strategies aimed at repurposing publicly owned vacant land (see Chapter 6).

Other

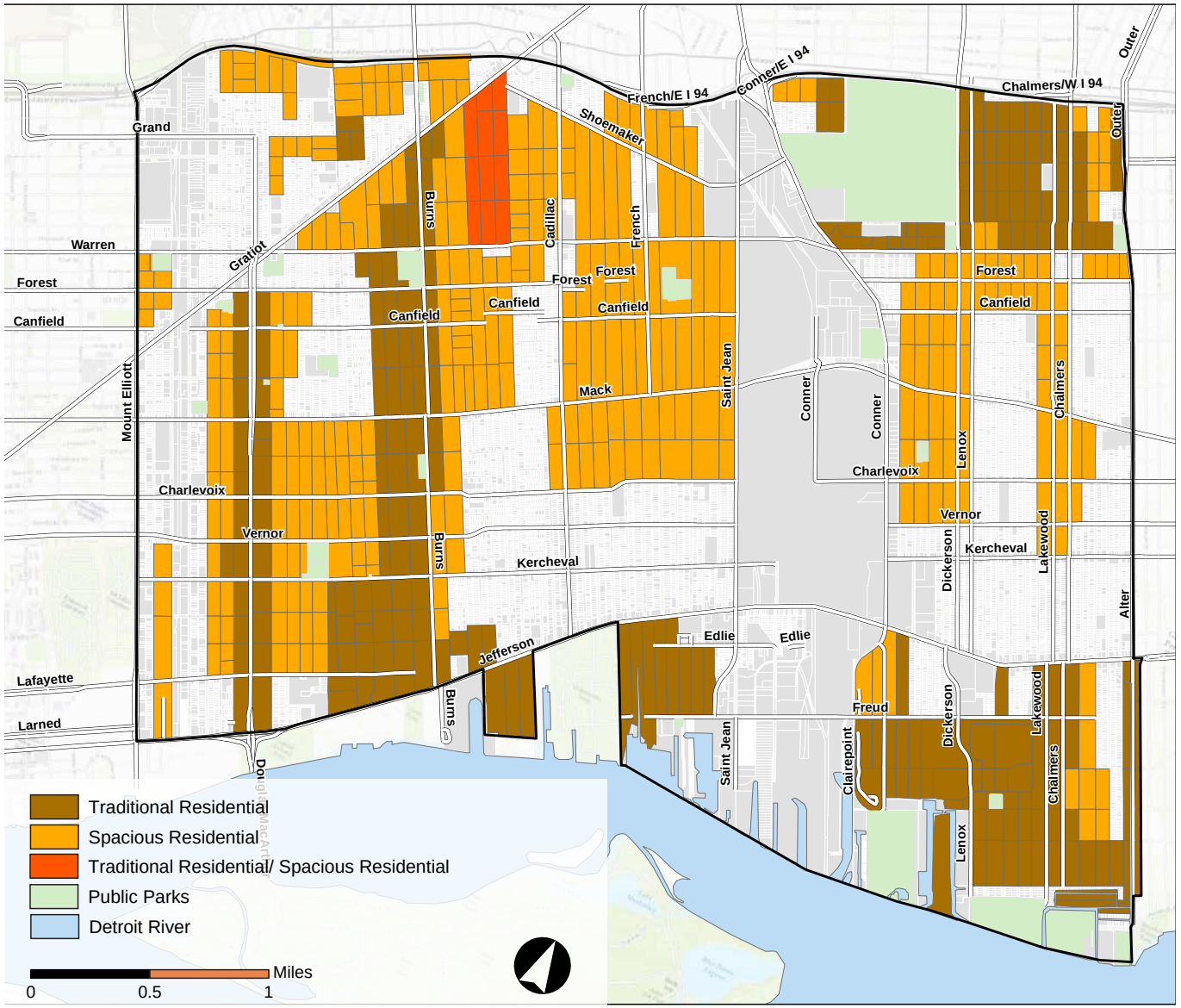
Village Hub, Shopping Hub, Industrial, and Institutional

These typologies require a mix of stabilization and repurposing strategies depending on their proximity to the other categories. The larger scale of buildings in these typologies, their non-residential nature, and LEAP's desire that these areas stay developed require public land stewardship plans in these areas on a case-by-case basis. *LEAP Forward* does not make recom-

mendations for the range of ways to address such sites. However, LEAP participants working in these areas may still find some *LEAP Forward* recommendations useful in these areas (see Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8).

FIG. 3.9

Stabilization Typologies



SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Traditional Residential

"Higher density single-family homes along with some duplexes and quadplexes. Yards can range from 30 ft. lots to 60 ft. They serve as a transition from a Village or City Hub to either a Country Living Area, Commerce Corridor or Green Venture typology."[18]

Implications of Conditions

Traditional Residential areas cover two square miles or 19% of the LEAP area. The 31% vacancy rate (residential vacant lots and structures as percent of all residential properties) presents a challenge to reaching the typology's ideal of having neighbors on every lot. Blight and crime often accompany unoccupied structures, discouraging residents from remaining in the neighborhood and thus further increasing the vacancy rate. Another challenge in this typology is the

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

TABLE 3.1

Conditions in Traditional Residential Areas

Characteristic	Traditional Residential Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	19%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	18,333	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	45%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	24%	46%
Structures	7%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	2%	2%
City	11%	30%
State	2%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	19%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	30	52
Unsold Properties	553	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	32	655
Privately Owned Properties	140	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	8%	7%
Total Properties	7,343	38,468

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

discrepancy between the LEAP typologies and categories in the *Detroit Future City* (DFC) plan. For example, LEAP designates much of the Villages as Traditional Residential. While a portion of the Villages are "low-density" residential in the DFC plan, the Traditional Residential areas north of Mack Avenue and west of Parker are in the DFC's "Innovation Productive" category. "Innovation Productive" is not compatible with residential uses, according to the DFC plan.[19]

Additionally, the high number of properties that are subject to tax foreclosure indicates that government ownership will likely increase in the near future. Properties that were subject to foreclosure at the end of March 2013 are eligible for auction if owners do not work out a payment plan with the Wayne County Treasurer. If residents and community development organizations are unable to purchase the properties, non-stewarding investors may purchase them, or, more likely, the amount of publicly owned land in these areas will further increase.

Spacious Residential

"Low and medium-density single family homes along with some duplexes and quadplexes. Yards can range from [sic] to even a quarter acre. In five years, the neighborhood is reassessed to determine whether it is moving in the direction of 'Traditional Residential' sector, or 'Country Living' sector. New housing development is restricted or prohibited."[20]

Implications of Conditions

Spacious Residential blocks cover 27% of the LEAP area or 3.4 square miles. The overall balance of vacant land and occupied housing structures makes achieving the physical landscape less difficult than in Traditional Residential areas. A quarter of the area's properties were subject to tax foreclosure in 2013, meaning property ownership in these areas could change dramatically. While potential residents and investors will purchase some of these properties for reuse, many properties may become vacant and fall into disrepair. Additionally, in order to mitigate blight, the City or an appropriate organization must deal with the large number of structures on the demolition list, as well as the structures that are not yet on the list that are also in need of demolition or deconstruction.

Many of the Spacious Residential properties are located in the "Innovation Ecological" and "Innovation Productive" categories of the DFC plan, which are non-residential (See Appendix B).[21]

TABLE 3.2

Conditions in Spacious Residential Areas

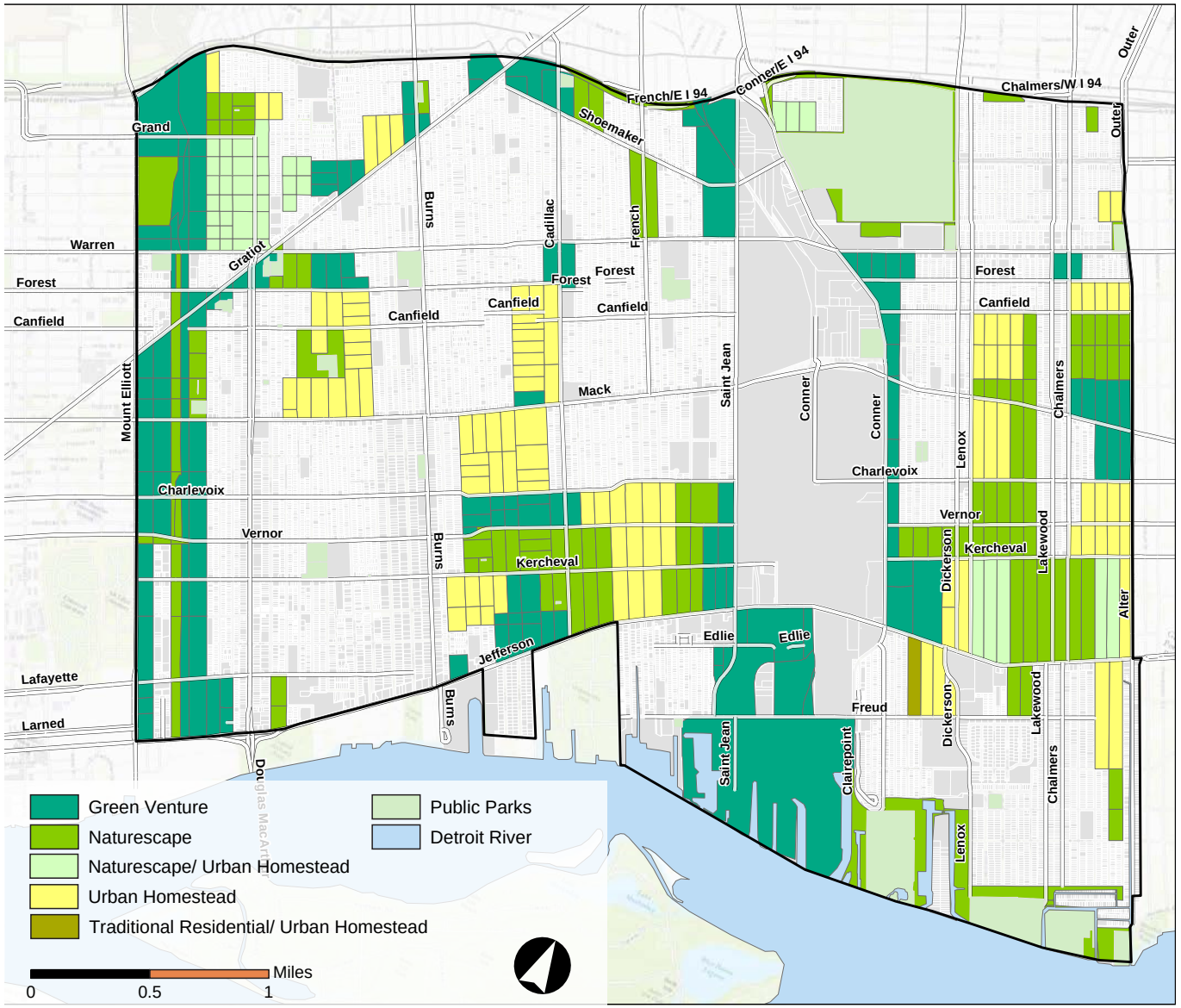
Characteristic	Spacious Residential Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	28%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	20,316	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	48%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	46%	46%
Structures	8%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	2%	2%
City	28%	30%
State	4%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	25%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	18	52
Unsold Properties	951	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	438	655
Privately Owned Properties	298	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	9%	7%
Total Properties	15,266	38,468

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

FIG. 3.10

Repurposing Typologies



SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Urban Homestead

"Low and extremely low density. Lots can be as large as an acre or more. Low-impact agricultural activities can be allowed in the zoning. This area is adjacent to Spacious Residential Sector, Naturescapes and Green Job Areas."[22]

Implications of Conditions

Urban Homestead areas, in total, cover one square mile or 8% of the LEAP area. With 43% of vacant properties in Urban Homestead blocks already under public ownership, opportunities exist to establish the large-lot, country-style living envisioned for the Urban Homestead typology. Additionally, the 2013 tax auction may place another 15% of Urban Homestead area properties into public ownership. The largest issue facing the implementation of Urban Homestead living is finding a way to manage and

TABLE 3.3

Conditions in Urban Homestead Areas

Characteristic	Urban Homestead Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	11%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	4,761	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	52%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	64%	46%
Structures	6%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	1%	2%
City	45%	30%
State	3%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	20%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	3	52
Unsold Properties	265	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	41	655
Privately Owned Properties	255	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	6%	7%
Total Properties	6,441	38,468

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

repurpose the vacant two-thirds of the properties for the long term. Several of Urban Homestead areas are incompatible with the DFC plan, which designates them for non-residential uses.[23]

Green Venture

"*These are manufacturing areas with minimal negative externalities (pollutants either through the air, water, or noise). Manufacturing uses developed from vacant land and buildings producing flowers, fish, food and wood. These Green Job Areas act as buffers between Country Living Areas and Commerce Corridors or Traditional Industrial Areas."*[24]

Implications of Conditions

The City of Detroit owns a high proportion of land in areas LEAP designated as Green Venture, which, in total, cover nearly two square miles or 15% of the LEAP area. High concentration of public ownership in these areas allows for easier land assembly and repurposing. However, private stakeholders who own 20 or more properties in the LEAP area own 20% of LEAP's Green Venture properties. Their private plans may interfere with the implementation of Green Venture zones. Given that as many as 18% of Green Venture properties were subject to foreclosure in 2013 (as of January 2013), speculators may buy properties at the tax auction so that they can profit from interfering with a green venture's land assembly.

The zoning requirements of green ventures differ depending on the type of venture. LEAP participants will need to consider the zoning needs associated with the possible projects in this new land use category, since the needs will likely be different from previous land uses or existing zoning (many of the blocks are zoned residential).[25] Some green ventures are now legal uses of land, based on the recent passage of Detroit's Urban Agriculture Ordinance; however uses not listed in the ordinance might still require City approval.[26]

These areas are in general compatible with the uses in the DFC plan, as they fall into the "Innovation Productive" and "Innovation Ecological" categories. However, some of the Green Venture properties are located in residential areas in the DFC plan, such as parts of the Green Venture area north of the intersection of McClellan St. and Jefferson.

TABLE 3.4

Conditions in Green Venture Areas

Characteristic	Green Venture Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	15%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	2,964	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	35%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	48%	46%
Structures	4%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	1%	2%
City	33%	30%
State	2%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	18%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	3	52
Unsold Properties	120	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	86	655
Privately Owned Properties	254	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	8%	7%
Total Properties	4,069	38,468

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

Naturescape

"Recreational uses and passive aesthetic uses. Re-zoning into parks and passive 'meadows' that are connected to the rest of the city's transit system via bus stops. These Naturescapes are focused in areas that have extremely low density, and that are most ecologically important."[27]

Implications of Conditions

Properties in the Naturescape area cover, in total, about 1.8 square miles or nearly 15% of the LEAP area. Maintenance of land in these areas presents the largest barrier to implementing the Naturescape typology. The ownership of parks and other passive landscapes that may eventually occupy these areas requires special attention in order to ensure continued maintenance.

TABLE 3.5

Conditions in Naturescape Homestead Areas

Characteristic	Naturescape Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	15%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	3,972	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	43%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	66%	46%
Structures	4%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	1%	2%
City	47%	30%
State	2%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	15%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	2	52
Unsold Properties	130	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	22	655
Privately Owned Properties	228	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	6%	7%
Total Properties	4,568	38,468

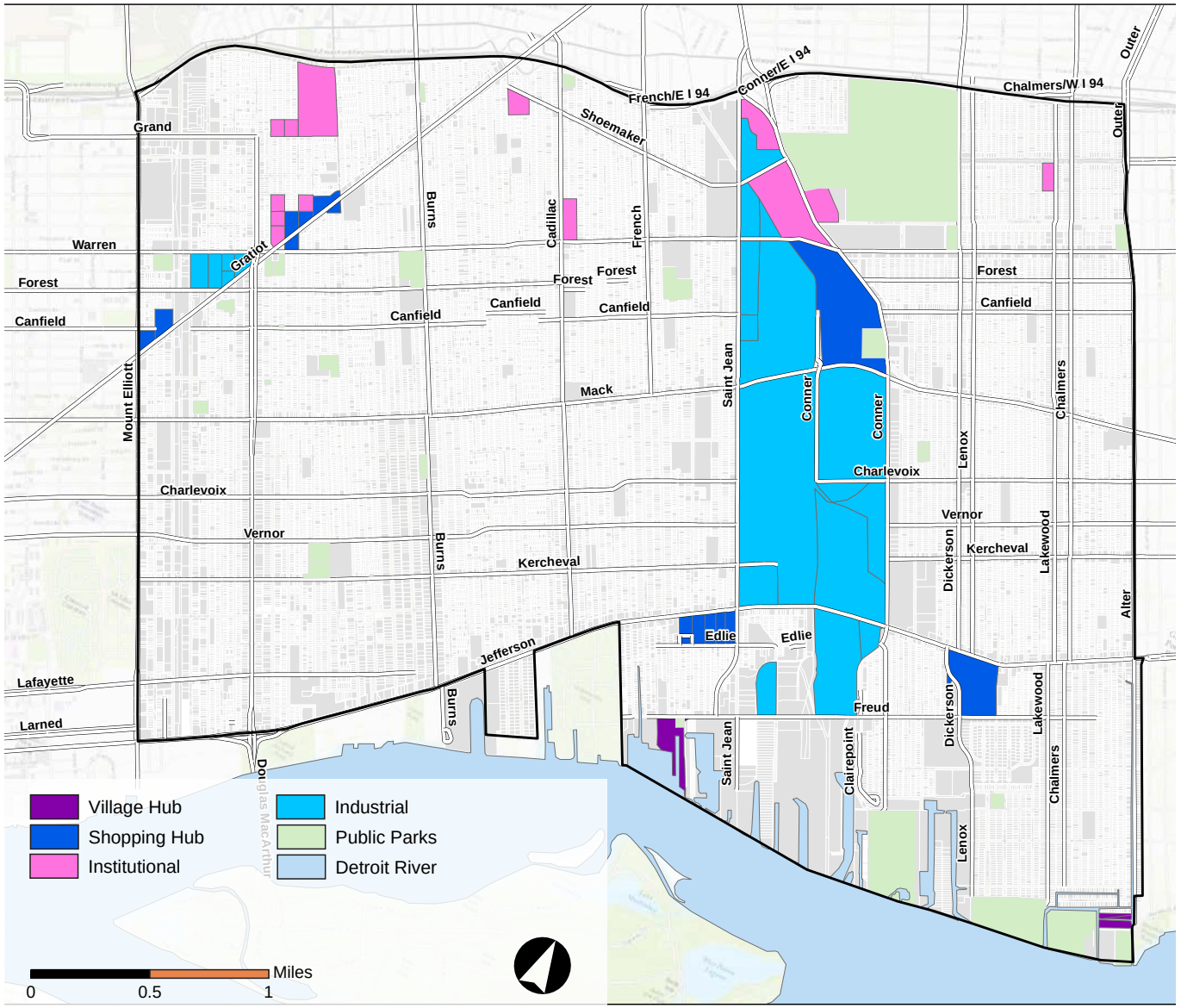
Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

The Naturescape typology is least vulnerable to non-compliance by private landowners. For example, a resident living in a house in this typology does not prevent LEAP participants from creating a Naturescape around that property. The City of Detroit already owns nearly half of Naturescape-designated properties, making land assembly a simpler process. Several of the Naturescape properties fall into residential categories in the DFC plan, such as those between Kercheval and Jefferson and east of Conner, which may present a challenge if DNPE wants to prevent development from happening there.[28]

FIG. 3.11

Other Typologies



SmithGroup JJR, 2012;
Data Driven Detroit, 2012;
ESRI, 2013.

Shopping Hub

"Focused along existing major surface commercial corridors and inter-state thruways, these are low commercial density, low-rise shopping sectors. Mainly car-oriented, these are areas that allow big-box retail stores, comparison shopping, and tall signposts."[29]

TABLE 3.6

Conditions in Shopping Hub Areas

Characteristic	Shopping Hub Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	2%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	564	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	32%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	33%	46%
Structures	3%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	1%	2%
City	14%	30%
State	3%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	10%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	0	52
Unsold Properties	2	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	0	655
Privately Owned Properties	5	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	7%	7%
Total Properties	202	38,468

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

Volunteers worked with Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East to identify blighted commercial properties throughout Detroit's lower eastside. Seventy-two out of 202 total properties in the Shopping Hub typology were included in this study. Table 3.7 highlights some of the findings.[30]

Implications of Conditions

Properties in the Shopping Hub typology make up 2% of the total LEAP area. Important considerations for successful implementation of this typology are the reduction of blight to attract new businesses and the preservation of existing businesses. Another consideration for the success of the Shopping Hub is the need for a sufficient population and income to support the existing businesses.

In addition, LEAP's Shopping Hub areas are mostly incompatible with the DFC categories. For example, one large Shopping Hub area near the north end of the Chrysler plant is in the "Innovation Ecological" non-residential category, and another near Creekside is in the "Traditional Medium Density" residential category.[31]

TABLE 3.7

Commercial Property Conditions in Shopping Hub Areas*

Characteristic	Shopping Hub Areas
Occupied and Vacant Properties	
Occupied Structures	12
Vacant Structures	1
Vacant Lots	16
Unknown	43
Property Condition	
Good	17
Fair	19
Poor	18
Needs Demolishing	2
Unknown	16
Use	
Retail	7
Service	3
Restaurant	2
Religious	1
Office	1
Industrial	0
Unknown	58

*of properties surveyed during Walking Against Blight Mobile Mapping Project
Source: Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East, Walking Against Blight Mobile Mapping Project, 2012.

Village Hub

"Medium to high density with mid and low-rise buildings connected at narrower, walkable 'main street' commercial districts occupied primarily by locally owned businesses providing retail and service amenities to surrounding residents." [32]

TABLE 3.8

Conditions in Village Hub Areas

Characteristic	Village Hub Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	<1%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	56	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	55%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	54%	46%
Structures	0%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	0%	2%
City	0%	30%
State	0%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	0%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	0	52
Unsold Properties	0	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	0	655
Privately Owned Properties	0	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	2%	7%
Total Properties	41	38,468

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

Implications of Conditions

Village Hub areas make up less than 1% of the LEAP area. In order for this typology to be feasible, nearby neighborhoods must have dense, occupied housing. The Village Hub properties fall into the Green Mixed Rise category in DFC, which includes commercial uses.[34] Much like the Shopping Hub, important considerations for successful implementation of this typology are the reduction of blight in surrounding areas and the preservation of existing businesses.

TABLE 3.9

Commercial Property Conditions in Village Hub Areas*

Characteristic	Village Hub Areas
Occupied and Vacant Properties	
Occupied Structures	3
Vacant Structures	1
Vacant Lots	0
Unknown	9
Property Condition	
Good	3
Fair	1
Poor	0
Needs Demolishing	0
Unknown	9
Use	
Retail	0
Service	7
Restaurant	0
Religious	0
Office	0
Industrial	1
Unknown	5

*of properties surveyed during Walking Against Blight Mobile Mapping Project
Source: Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East, Walking Against Blight Mobile Mapping Project, 2012.

Institutional

"Schools, medical facilities and a church" [35]

Implications of Conditions

Institutional areas cover 2% of the total LEAP area. Because this typology is defined by its institutions, LEAP participants have less influence over land use and development. However, because several of these properties are sizable, the closing of a school or similar institution could massively affect land conditions. Another important consideration is that some of the Institutional areas in LEAP fall into potentially incompatible categories in the DFC plan, such as Innovation Productive and Innovation Ecological.[36]

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

TABLE 3.10

Conditions in Institutional Areas

Characteristic	Institutional Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	2%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	333	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	7%	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	25%	46%
Structures	2%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	0%	2%
City	9%	30%
State	<1%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	8%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	0	52
Unsold Properties	2	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	36	655
Privately Owned Properties	2	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	1%	7%
Total Properties	242	38,468

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

Industrial

"These industrial uses are adjacent to and buffered from either green job areas or Naturescapes, which act as buffers between these zones and the Resident Living Sectors." [37]

Implications of Conditions

Industrial areas cover 8% of the total LEAP area. Half of this can be attributed to the Chrysler plants, which lie between St. Jean and Conner to the west and east and Warren and Jefferson to the north and south. These areas appear to have more stable ownership than other typologies, based on the low rates of tax foreclosure and tax delinquency. These properties are in need of private economic redevelopment strategies and measures to prevent dumping, which are outside the scope of this plan. Additionally, many of the properties, including the Chrysler plant,

Source: (a) 2010 Census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; (b) Data Driven Detroit, 2009; (c) City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; (d) Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; (e) Michigan Land Bank, 2013; (f) WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013; (g) Wayne County Treasurer, 2012; (h) Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012.

TABLE 3.11

Conditions in Industrial Areas

Characteristic	Industrial Areas	LEAP Area Overall
Proportion of LEAP Area	8%	n/a
Population (2010) (a)	136	54,048
Owner Occupancy Rate (2010) (a)	n/a	46%
Vacant Residential Properties (2009) (b)		
Lots	15%	46%
Structures	3%	6%
Property Ownership (2012) (c,d,e)		
REO	<1%	2%
City	14%	30%
State	1%	3%
Properties Subject to Tax Foreclosure in March 2013 (as of January 2013) (f)	13%	20%
Tax Foreclosure Auction (2012) (g)		
Sold Properties	0	52
Unsold Properties	0	1,943
Major Landowners (2012) (c,d)*		
Nonprofit Owned Properties	1	655
Privately Owned Properties	5	1,221
Properties with Structures Pending Demolition (2012) (h)	5%	7%
Total Properties	296	38,468

***"Major Landowners" own 20 or more properties within the LEAP area. Figures listed specify the number of properties in the corresponding typologies owned by these major landowners.**

are well developed and in use. Most of the industrial uses are compatible with the future land scenarios in DFC.

Chapter 3 has laid out the land use conditions in the LEAP area and breaks conditions down by the typologies that LEAP envisioned for the future. The data demonstrate a need for stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land in order to make LEAP a reality. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will outline *LEAP Forward's* recommendations for attaining these goals.

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[36] *Detroit Future City: Detroit Strategic Framework Plan*, 2012, 119

[37] *Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Framework Neighborhood Typology*, 2011, 8

Monitoring Stewarding, & Repurposing

To help achieve LEAP's goals of stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 delve into specific recommendations for LEAP participants and residents.

Chapter 4: Monitoring Land Ownership

Chapter 4 provides recommendations that encourage residents' and organizations' participation in identifying owners of specific properties and monitoring changes in land ownership.

Chapter 5: Stewarding Publicly Owned Land to Stabilize Neighborhoods

Chapter 5 details recommendations that emphasize buying, leasing, and managing publicly owned property in order to stabilize neighborhoods.

Chapter 6: Repurposing Publicly Owned Vacant Land

Chapter 6 recommends ways that organizations or residents can contribute to repurposing vacant land through stewarding publicly owned land.

Collectively, the recommendations in these three chapters provide ways for LEAP participants and residents to monitor changes in land ownership, stabilize neighborhoods via publicly owned land, and repurpose publicly owned vacant land. By participating in this process, residents and organizations can play a pivotal role in making LEAP's visions a reality.

CHAPTER 4

Monitoring Land Ownership

This chapter addresses a number of ways that LEAP participants and residents can become more active in monitoring changes in land ownership.

Why is Monitoring Land Ownership Important?

Monitoring changes in land ownership enables residents and organizations to understand what is going on in their neighborhoods. Whether residents and organizations would like to know who owns the building next door or find information about the largest property owner in the neighborhood, monitoring land ownership enables them to intervene when problems arise. Residents and organizations tracking land ownership can:

- Identify who owns vacant land
- Identify which property owners chronically violate the law and neglect maintenance of their property
- Distinguish which properties are most vulnerable to changing ownership
- Track property values within a neighborhood
- Identify large areas of public ownership
- Identify which residential areas are most vulnerable to tax or mortgage foreclosure
- Alert neighbors and community-based organizations to major changes about to occur in land ownership

Additionally, residents and organizations that track land ownership can identify speculators within their neighborhood. Speculators purchase properties – sometimes hundreds of parcels – within neighborhoods with the intent of making a profit off the few that they sell. They often neglect their properties and the property taxes they accrue, allowing the structures to fall into disrepair and land to become unkempt dumping grounds.

Michael Kelly, for instance, a well-known speculator in Detroit, buys hundreds of properties in opportune locations throughout the city. Michael Kelly and his associated LLCs own at least 160 properties in the lower eastside, along with other notable speculators like investor Matt Tatarian and Am-

bassador Bridge owner Matty Moroun.[1] Figure 4.1 illustrates Kelly's strategy within the Hantz Woodlands area. In this particular area, the City of Detroit and businessman John Hantz had been discussing a potential purchase of multiple publicly owned parcels for years. Michael Kelly owns a cluster of properties in this area that could interfere with possible land assembly, which an early Hantz proposal for agriculture would have required.

Residents need to understand who might be purchasing land around them so they can appropriately respond and hold them accountable. Moreover, monitoring changes in land ownership allows LEAP participants and residents to implement LEAP's vision for the lower eastside. If LEAP participants understand who owns property in each typology, they will understand the challenges associated with implementation in those typologies.

> "Knowing who owns the vacant land and property surrounding both residential and commercial lots could potentially help community stakeholders, organizations and governing agencies a) develop strategies to hold negligent property owners accountable for care and maintenance and b) help community stakeholders, organizations and governing agencies work collaboratively and efficiently to develop more comprehensive vacant land remediation strategies."
>
> — DETROIT NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP EAST, LEAP PHASE I SUMMARY REPORT, 31.

Recommendations

The following recommendations provide ways for residents and organizations to monitor changes in land ownership in the lower eastside and to improve access to ownership information. Recommendation for monitoring land proposes that Detroit Partnership East (DNPE) and other LEAP participants:

- Prioritize monitoring of land ownership based on purpose
- Identify owners of multiple blighted properties
- Understand and track changes in land ownership due to tax foreclosure
- Track changes in land ownership due to mortgage foreclosure
- Contract with Data Driven Detroit to develop an accessible parcel ownership database for the lower eastside
- Monitor the marketing and notifications of public land sales and potential real estate developments
- Monitor websites selling properties in Detroit, including Detroit Property Exchange, Craigslist, and eBay
- Build on resident-led programs to monitor changes in land ownership (*e.g.* Walking Against Blight, mobile applications)
- Use new crowdsourcing web platforms, such as Ushahidi or Textizen, that allow residents to report and map street-level data with mobile phones to help monitor ownership

FIG. 4.1

Mike Kelly Properties in Hantz Woodlands Area

Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI, 2013; P&DD, 2013.

Recommendation: Prioritize monitoring of land ownership based on purpose.

Changes in land ownership happen all the time, making tracking thousands of lower eastside properties difficult. In order to use their time most efficiently, LEAP participants will need to prioritize their monitoring. Once priorities are established, information resources provided by the government and nonprofits can help residents and organizations understand what might be happening in their neighborhoods. The appropriateness of a resource depends on the purpose of the ownership search. To help residents and organizations determine the most applicable resource, the following section illustrates scenarios in which residents or organizations might find themselves and suggests appropriate resources for monitoring land ownership. See Figure 4.2 for a more complete description of the resources, including pros and cons for each.

SCENARIO 1

"I'm just wondering who owns the property across the street."

Residents or organizations might be interested in knowing who owns a single property. For example, they might want to know if a property is publicly owned or privately owned. Alternatively, an individual might want to know if the City of Detroit owns the vacant lot next door, which might be eligible for the City's side lot acquisition program (see Chapter 5).

Several data resources provide this information to varying degrees of detail. If individuals simply want to see the name of the owner, they can use the **CITY OF DETROIT OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR** information online, which provides general information for free about ownership searchable by address or parcel number. Similarly, the **WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER'S PROPERTY TAX LISTING** shows ownership and tax information if the user has the address or parcel number. Finally, Loveland Technologies created an interactive mapping tool, **WHY DON'T WE OWN THIS**, that allows users to look up ownership and tax information online. Why Don't We Own This displays data from both City of Detroit and Wayne County resources.

Users of these resources should be aware that all of the above sources contain errors. Data are not updated continuously, and they exclude up-to-date changes in land ownership. For example, when property is tax foreclosed and does not sell at the auction, the City of Detroit Assessor often fails to update the record and displays the previous owner, sometimes even years later. For another example, Why Don't We Own This uses Detroit Assessor data, so errors in those data also exist on Why Don't We Own This.

If individuals want up-to-date information about ownership, they can use the **WAYNE COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS**, which has two ways of viewing accurate property ownership data. First, the County's Register of Deeds has terminals in their offices at 400 Monroe St. available for free in-person searches. Also, the Register of Deeds has a fee-based online database, which allows users to view relevant deed documents for the property. The Register of Deeds charges $5.00 for each successful search and $1.00 for each document image page

viewed.

SCENARIO 2

"I'd like to contact the person who owns the property across the street."

A resident or organization may want to contact a property owner in his or her neighborhood for various reasons. For example, if the property is vacant and harbors undesirable activity, an individual may want to notify the owner. Furthermore, if the property is neglected and contributes to blight in the neighborhood, the individual may want to contact the owner about maintaining the property. Finally, if ownership of a property is unclear or if a property is vacant, an individual or an organization may wish to facilitate the sale of the property to ensure its reuse.

For more than just a property owner's name, contact information is difficult to obtain. The best option for obtaining contact information is to use the **CITY OF DETROIT OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR** online portal. While the website offers free ownership information for each address, a $2.00 charge per record allows users to view more detailed information, including the owner's mailing address. Acquiring a phone number for the owner may require additional online research using a search engine or the White Pages. If the owner of the property is a business registered with the state, the user can search the **STATE OF MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS** business entity database. If the property is publicly owned, the search will likely reveal the entity or the City department that owns the property. Contact information for public entities or for specific City departments can be gleaned from their websites. As stated, however, the Assessor's data contain errors.

SCENARIO 3:

"I'd like to understand the overall land ownership trends in my neighborhood and how they might affect LEAP implementation."

An individual or organization may want to look at overall trends of ownership in a neighborhood to understand their effect on LEAP's implementation. For example, a resident or organization may want to look at how tax foreclosure and mortgage foreclosure affect the neighborhood, as high foreclosure rates could make stabilizing a neighborhood harder. Additionally, LEAP participants may want to know if any known speculators own property nearby, as these properties could become obstacles to implementing LEAP's typologies.

For these questions about larger areas, a few resources exist. **WHY DON'T WE OWN THIS** offers an interactive mapping tool that charts the most recent tax foreclosure risk, as well as information on property tax assessments across the City. For historical information, Foreclosure Detroit teamed up with Social Compact and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation to offer information on their website through an online mapping tool called **CITYDNA**.[2] CityDNA does not offer ownership information, but it allows users to see varied information at the city, zip code, census tract, and Master Plan neighborhood level, including mortgage foreclosure data through 2010. Users also have the ability to create a defined

FIG. 4.2

Resources Available to Track Ownership

A variety of reasons exist to track and monitor land ownership. There are also a number of ways to do it. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses. For the best results, use multiple sources of information.

THE CITY OF DETROIT OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR has an online interface that allows individuals to search by owner name, address, or parcel number.

http://tinyurl.com/detparcel

PROS

- Provides simple ownership information for free.

CONS

- Charges $2.00 per record to view more detailed information about each record, unless you own the property.
- The data contain significant errors.
- The data are not updated continuously, so they exclude recent changes in land ownership.
- Anyone looking for specific parcel information needs to cross reference with other sources.

THE WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER'S PROPERTY TAX LISTING is an online interface that allows an individual to search property information by property address or parcel ID for free.

http://tinyurl.com/wayne-ptl

PROS

- For each property, the website displays the owner of the property, the amount of tax due for a specific tax year, and the property's tax status for free.
- The website also has a payment function, which allows the taxpayer to make a whole or partial payment towards his or her outstanding taxes due.

CONS

- Though the Property Tax Listing has detailed information for each property, it contains errors.

THE WAYNE COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS has **two ways** that an individual can view property ownership data; online or in person.

The Register of Deeds has a Real Estate Index online.

http://www.waynecountylandrecords.com/

PROS

- For basic information, the service is free.

CONS

- Cannot search by address or by parcel ID.
- Only shows one document at a time.
- Limited to 200 records
- Advanced search capability is available for a fee as an On-Demand user ($5.00 for each successful search and $1.00 image page viewed.)

An individual can go in person to the Register of Deeds office, located downtown at 400 Monroe on the fifth floor. The office has computer terminals where an individual can search property information.

PROS

- The best source for free, up-to-date ownership information.

CONS

- Requires time and energy
- Limited office hours
- No option to print results

Loveland Technologies created two online interfaces to handle property ownership data: **WHY DON'T WE OWN THIS** and **SITE CONTROL.**

Why Don't We Own This (WDWOT) displays parcel-level information with an interactive map.

http://www.whydontweownthis.com

PROS

- WDWOT is free and easy to use.
- Very accessible

CONS

- Data are gathered from both the City of Detroit and Wayne County, so it has similar errors.

SITE CONTROL is a web and mobile tool that allows neighborhood organizations and other groups to view public data specific to their neighborhood.

http://sitecontrol.us

PROS

- Organizations that do not have the capacity to analyze the data themselves can have access to this online tool.
- Displays demographic information, land ownership information, and so on.
- Technical support from Site Control staff

CONS

- The website costs $1,000 per group.
- Same accuracy issues as WDWOT.

shape within the map, and the data will calculate based on the specified area. For example, within the LEAP area, CityDNA shows that there were 2,154 Real Estate Owned (REO) sales in 2010 at an average price of $14,150.[3] However, CityDNA only offers data up to 2010, and has no plans to include updated information.

Recommendation: Identify owners of multiple blighted properties.

Residents and community organizations can use the City of Detroit's Blight Violation Notice database to identify property owners in the lower eastside who have multiple citations.[4] This website allows users to search for blight violation notices by the last name of a property owner or by address. However, the database only displays six results per page and does not provide an option to download or export the data, making analysis tedious and time-consuming (see Fig. 4.3.1-4.3.4). Despite these drawbacks, the database can help residents and community organizations prioritize reporting blight violations to the city by targeting repeat offenders.

For example, a resident who learns the name of the person who owns the blighted property across the street from his house can use the database to determine whether the owner has any existing violations, along with the locations of those properties. The top three private land owners in the LEAP area (see Fig. 4.4), for instance, have received several blight violations.[5] If the database turns up multiple results, a community organization might want to prioritize reporting that property over a property whose owner has no prior blight violations. They can also check to see whether the owner has received a blight violation notice for that property by searching by address.

Additionally, after community organizations identify problem owners, they can use the ownership information in the Wayne County Register of Deeds to locate other properties these individuals or companies own across the lower eastside. Residents and community organizations can also use the owner address information available in the Detroit assessor's data to place additional pressure on problem owners by contacting them directly.

FIG. 4.3

Using The Blight Violation Database

1. **Visit the City of Detroit's Blight Violation Notice website.**

   http://tinyurl.com/blight-det

2. **Search by last name to see if owners have multiple violations.**

   You may have to click through several pages to get to the correct owner. For example, searching for "Kelly" requires clicking through 20 pages before you find Michael Kelly. See Fig. 4.3.1. for a screenshot of this problem.

   Once you find the owner, you can click "Get Similar" to retrieve a list of all the properties the person or business owns that have blight violations, along with the amount they owe to the City. See Fig. 4.3.2. for a sample of these results.

FIG. 4.3.1

Search by last name

FIG. 4.3.2

Get similar

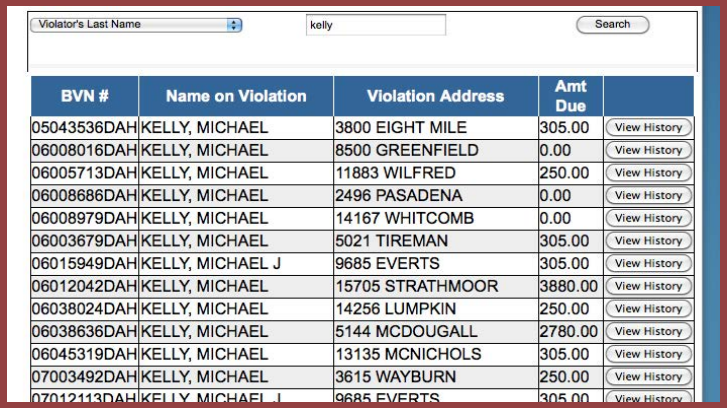
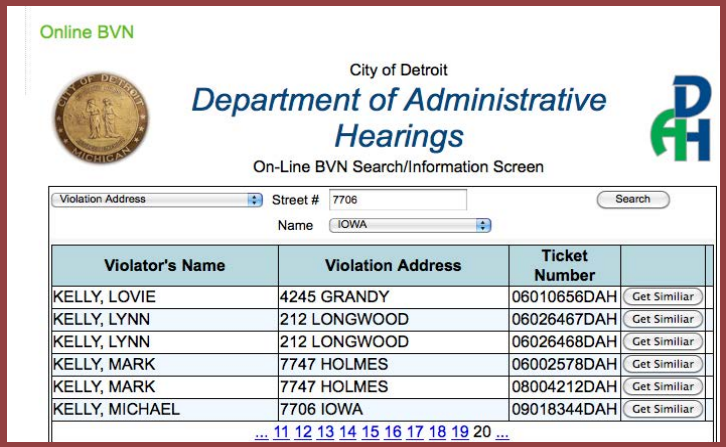


FIG. 4.3.3

Search by address

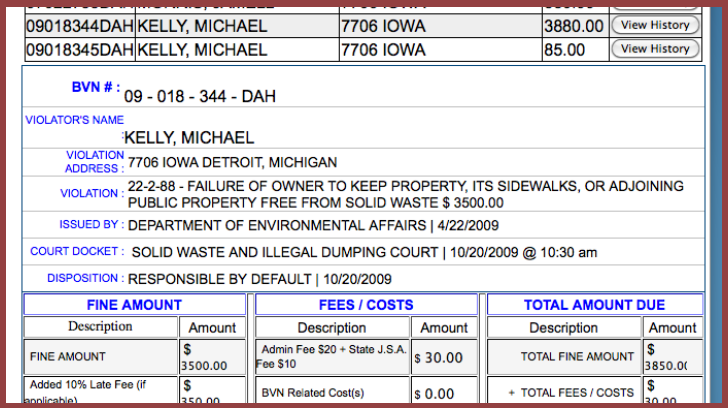


Violator's Name	Violation Address	Ticket Number	
KELLY, LOVIE	4245 GRANDY	06010656DAH	Get Similiar
KELLY, LYNN	212 LONGWOOD	06026467DAH	Get Similiar
KELLY, LYNN	212 LONGWOOD	06026468DAH	Get Similiar
KELLY, MARK	7747 HOLMES	06002578DAH	Get Similiar
KELLY, MARK	7747 HOLMES	08004212DAH	Get Similiar
KELLY, MICHAEL	7706 IOWA	09018344DAH	Get Similiar

... 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 ...

FIG. 4.3.4

View history



09018344DAH	KELLY, MICHAEL	7706 IOWA	3880.00	View History
09018345DAH	KELLY, MICHAEL	7706 IOWA	85.00	View History

BVN # : 09 - 018 - 344 - DAH

VIOLATOR'S NAME : KELLY, MICHAEL

VIOLATION ADDRESS : 7706 IOWA DETROIT, MICHIGAN

VIOLATION : 22-2-88 - FAILURE OF OWNER TO KEEP PROPERTY, ITS SIDEWALKS, OR ADJOINING PUBLIC PROPERTY FREE FROM SOLID WASTE $ 3500.00

ISSUED BY : DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS | 4/22/2009

COURT DOCKET : SOLID WASTE AND ILLEGAL DUMPING COURT | 10/20/2009 @ 10:30 am

DISPOSITION : RESPONSIBLE BY DEFAULT | 10/20/2009

FINE AMOUNT		FEES / COSTS		TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	
Description	Amount	Description	Amount	Description	Amount
FINE AMOUNT	$ 3500.00	Admin Fee $20 + State J.S.A. Fee $10	$ 30.00	TOTAL FINE AMOUNT	$ 3850.0(
Added 10% Late Fee (if applicable)	$ 350.00	BVN Related Cost(s)	$ 0.00	+ TOTAL FEES / COSTS	$ 30.00

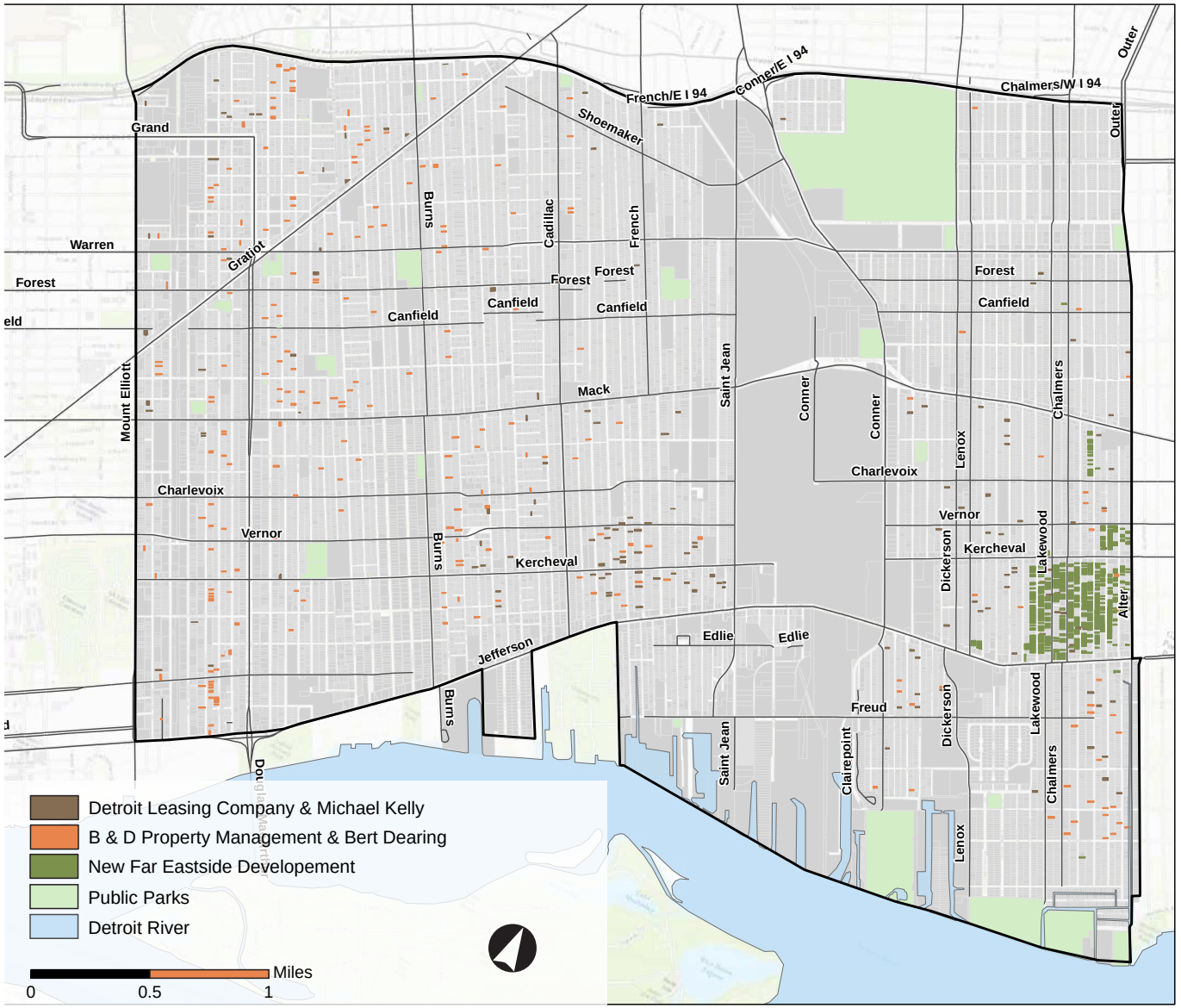
3. Search by address to see if a property owner has received blight violations for a particular property. You need to know both the street number and name.

The database will return a list of all blight violation notices associated with that property, including the name of the owner at the time the City issued the notice and amount due. See Fig. 4.3.3. for the results screen.

4. For both search methods, click on "View History" to see the complete blight violation notice, including the citation date, fine amount, and information about the violation. See Fig. 4.3.4 for an example.

FIG. 4.4

Top Three Private Landowners in the LEAP Area (2012)



Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013; Realcomp, 2013.

Recommendation: Understand and track changes in land ownership due to tax foreclosure.

LEAP participants and residents may want to understand the changes in ownership of many properties that have an impact on neighborhood stabilization. The tax foreclosure process, for example, changes the ownership landscape across the lower eastside. Well over a thousand properties move through this process each year, increasing the amount of publicly owned land.

For example, in January 2013, 7,828 properties in the lower eastside faced tax foreclosure by the end of March.[6] By understanding the tax foreclosure process, LEAP participants can see which neighborhoods may be more vulnerable to land ownership change, while also seeing which properties may soon be publicly owned. Figure 4.5 explains the tax foreclosure process to enable LEAP participants to respond better when they find opportunities to do so.

FIG. 4.5

WAYS THAT NEIGHBORS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN GET INFORMATION ON PROPERTIES TO BE FORECLOSED OR PROPERTIES TO BE AUCTIONED.

In the second year after property taxes become delinquent, the Wayne County Treasurer subjects properties to forfeiture, on March 1. These properties will undergo foreclosure after another year if the owner does not pay taxes, interest, and fees.

- The Treasurer posts yellow bags with foreclosure information on each forfeited property. Neighbors can readily notice these signs (see Figure 4.6).
- The Treasurer publishes a notice in the newspaper of all forfeited properties with lists of all entities thought to have an interest in each property, usually in mid-November.
- The Treasurer posts a PDF of the newspaper notice on his website. For 2013, see http://tinyurl.com/2013-fp
- Why Don't We Own This provides an online interactive map of tax delinquent properties and properties subject to foreclosure. In early 2013, this map showed details of properties to be foreclosed by March 30. Residents and organizations can visit this website to see if any properties in their neighborhoods face foreclosure.

(Continued on next page)

(4.5 continued)

In the third year after property taxes become delinquent, the Wayne County Treasurer forecloses on properties no later than March 30.

- Residents and organization staff can check the tax status of a property through the Wayne County Assessor's website.
- Why Don't We Own This provides an interactive map showing details of foreclosed properties. In April 2013, this map showed properties that had been foreclosed at the end of March. Residents and organizations can visit this website to see if the Treasurer foreclosed on properties in their neighborhoods.
- By July city, state, and county governments can exercise a right to purchase properties ahead of the auctions. Community development organizations need to act to request such purchases by the governmental entity if they have ways to handle the properties.
- In the second half of the summer, the Treasurer posts the list of properties to be offered at a first auction in September on his website. Residents and organizations can usually download this information in Excel sheet format.
- After the first auction the Treasurer posts a list of remaining properties for sale at the second, October, auction on his website.
- Anyone can monitor the progress of the online auction to see which properties are selling. However, the website does not list the names of successful bidders. See the Wayne County Treasurer's website for details.
- The Treasurer transfers all property not sold at auction to the City of Detroit, unless city officials refuse it, by December 31. When city officials refuse properties, the Treasurer has sought to sell houses to occupants, offered properties at an auction the following July, and transferred properties to the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority. [7]

FIG. 4.6

Tax Foreclosure Notice

Photo by: Wonwoo Lee

Recommendation: Track changes in land ownership due to mortgage foreclosure.

LEAP participants can anticipate changes in ownership by keeping track of mortgage foreclosures. Following mortgage foreclosure, potential homeowners and responsible landlords can purchase mortgage-foreclosed properties – but so can speculators and slumlords. When a mortgage-foreclosed property does not sell at auction, it becomes the property of the mortgage holder (REO) or the mortgage insurer (often the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). These entities may lack the capacity to maintain their assets, putting the property they own at risk of becoming blighted.

Individuals or organizations can check local newspapers, which publish public mortgage foreclosure notices, to monitor mortgage foreclosures in their neighborhood. **LEGAL NEWS**, for example, which operates the *Detroit Legal News* and similar publications in Michigan, offers an online database for public notices, searchable by city, zip code or ID number.[8] Much of the information is free; however, a subscription to the *Legal News* allows access to further information, including an option to download data.

When a lender initiates the mortgage foreclosure process, the holder or servicer may publish the information in a local newspaper such as the *Detroit Legal News* at any time.[9] However, Michigan state law only requires lenders to publish public notices under the following circumstances:

FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT

Most mortgage contracts allow lenders to auction property at a sheriff's sale if a borrower fails to contact the lender about correcting payment 90 days after receiving notice of default.[10] The lender must publish public notice of the pending sale in a local newspaper once a week for four weeks before auctioning the property.[11]

FORECLOSURE BY JUDICIAL ACTION

If the mortgage contract does not permit foreclosure by advertisement, the lender must file a complaint with the local circuit court and obtain a judgment allowing them to auction property at a sheriff's sale. The lender cannot file a complaint unless the borrower fails to contact the lender about correcting payment 90 days after receiving notice of default. Lenders cannot auction property until six months after filing the initial complaint.[12]

Residents and community organizations can monitor these public notices for properties pending auction in order to be in a position to prevent the deterioration of vacant property or contact new owners about maintenance problems.

Recommendation: Contract with Data Driven Detroit to develop an accessible parcel ownership database for the lower eastside.

Data Driven Detroit (D3) partnered with the Woodward Corridor Initiative (WCI) to construct interactive neighborhood parcel maps to support planning and development in the Midtown, North End, New Center, and Woodbridge neighborhoods. These tools combine multiple public data sources into one interface, greatly reducing the time needed to research parcel-level information.[13]

These interactive parcel maps have a few limitations. According to Gregory Parrish of D3, the maps capture a snapshot of information on a specific date, meaning that data are not regularly updated as change happens.[14] Additionally, an interactive map for the lower eastside would cost around $5,000.[15] The WCI neighborhood parcel maps had substantial grant funding that covered a three-year period. DNPE could seek grant funding to contract Data Driven Detroit to construct similar interactive parcel maps for the LEAP area.

Recommendation: Monitor the marketing land notification of public land sales and potential real estate developments.

Several different departments and entities in the City of Detroit conduct marketing and notification of public land sales and proposed city-initiated real estate development projects. These departments and entities include: Planning and Development Department, General Services Department, City Council, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, the Detroit Land Bank Authority, and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority. The following describes the ways that the each office markets and notifies the public of land sales.

Planning and Development Department

The Planning and Development Department's (P&DD) Real Estate Development Division handles the surplus of public land sales, disposition sales and the acquisition of property. P&DD also handles all development land sale requests for City property from potential business owners, real estate developers, and investors. P&DD has the most accurate and up-to-date information on public land sales. P&DD also provides notifications on their website of auctions of their property, but these notifications are infrequent.[16] The most effective way to monitor public land sales and potential real estate developments is to establish a relationship with P&DD staff and frequently contact them for updates that do not appear in other sources.

General Services Department

The City of Detroit's General Services Department (GSD) manages most of the City's property, including their parks. GSD works with brokers and P&DD to market larger properties – both land and structures, with GSD coordinating the appraisal process and P&DD posting Requests for Proposals (RFP) online. Again, online notifications of park sales or other property sales are infrequent and unpredictable. Monitoring these changes requires an ongoing relationship and dialogue with the department.[17]

City Council

Weekly City Council agendas provide information on the sale of City-owned property, real estate development projects in process, infrastructure improvements, and building demolitions. The City Clerk provides access to City Council agendas via the Council Calendar Events prior to the meetings.[18] Reviewing City Council's agendas could be tedious and confusing for those unfamiliar with the subject matter. Additionally, once an item has appeared on the council agenda, a project or a sale is already far along in the approval process. Regardless, reviewing these agendas can give insight into the movement of property and real estate development projects throughout the city.

Detroit Economic Growth Corporation

The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) manages redevelopment of City-controlled properties throughout Detroit in addition to marketing some City-controlled properties.[19] The DEGC also issues RFPs and issues contracts for real estate and capital improvement projects throughout Detroit.[20] Reviewing the DEGC website provides a way to learn of major development projects potentially happening in the LEAP area before the projects begin. However, by the time an RFP is issued, there may be little to no intervention should the project not align with LEAP's long-term goals. Tracking these changes requires an ongoing dialogue with the department.

Detroit Land Bank Authority

The Detroit Land Bank Authority's Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a federally-funded program that seeks to "eliminate blight in targeted Detroit neighborhoods by putting families into newly renovated houses that were formerly foreclosed and vacant. These targeted neighborhoods are located within census tracts that have been approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development."[21] The Land Bank did not handle lower eastside properties in the first few years of its existence. However, the City of Detroit now transfers properties that do not sell at the Wayne County tax auction to the Land Bank, so the Land Bank will soon market lower eastside properties. The Land Bank has an online inventory guide listing the current available homes for sale. Monitoring the Land Bank inventory guide shows the available homes for sale in the LEAP area.

Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority
http://tinyurl.com/mlb-prop

The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority offers an online database of all their property for sale. Interested parties can search the database, which provides search filters on street, city, neighborhood, or zip code, to locate all properties for sale.[22] If the purchaser desires, he or she may create a profile online, and begin the application process for purchasing the property. LEAP participants can periodically search the Michigan Land Bank website for properties for sale in the LEAP area.

Recommendation: Monitor websites selling properties in Detroit, including Detroit Property Exchange, Craigslist, and eBay.

Residents and LEAP participants can monitor websites that advertise privately owned property for sale in the lower eastside. Monitoring websites that sell real estate may provide more immediate information on which properties are changing owners. Additionally, many properties purchased through the Wayne County Auction are flipped through these websites. These flipped properties may be more at risk of neglect. The following websites list some, but not all, privately owned property for sale in Detroit.

Detroit Property Exchange
http://detroitpropertyexchange.com

Detroit Property Exchange lists some, but not all, commercial and residential properties for sale in the Detroit Metropolitan Area. Property owners interested in selling can list their properties, while purchasers can search the inventory based on geography. Driven primarily by property owners, this website differs from the Multiple Listing Service of real estate properties. Detroit Property Exchange also offers online property auctions.[23] Residential properties are listed for a bid period of 14 days. Commercial units are listed for a bid period of 21 days.

Craigslist | eBay | Flip Detroit
http://detroit.craigslist.org/rea/ |
http://ebay.com | http://www.flipdetroit.com

LEAP participants can search Craigslist, eBay, and Flip Detroit to find out which properties may be in transition in their neighborhood. Craigslist and eBay are likely to show properties being sold by owners, as well as realtors. New owners, often from out of town, who purchased from bulk flippers, often advertise their properties on these sites. A Craigslist search conducted on April 14, 2013, for real estate by zip code 48214 listed 6 properties for sale.

Recommendation: Build on resident-led programs to monitor changes in land ownership (e.g. Walking Against Blight, other mobile applications).

While many of the strategies mentioned require a detailed knowledge of the processes involved in land ownership change, changes in properties are often perceptible on the ground. For example, signs of vacant houses include neglected yard maintenance and bulk trash in front of a house, lack of activity, and so on. LEAP participants can build on resident-led programs already working in the neighborhoods to combat blight and also take note of these perceptible changes in property management.

Walking Against Blight & LocalData

Sponsored by the Warren/Conner Development Coalition, DNPE, and the Detroit Food & Fitness Collaborative, Walking Against Blight is designed to get residents moving and tracking changes within their neighborhoods. Residents walk their blocks, and record information about vacant properties, abandoned cars, and any other suspicious or alarming activity on the streets.

To conduct the surveys, Walking Against Blight participants use a free, open-source surveying tool called LocalData, created by Code for America and funded by the "John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Knight News Challenge."[24] Using smartphones and paper-based surveys (which can be scanned), the tool allows residents to record and geographically reference anything in their neighborhoods. Wayne State University is currently using the data to build a user-friendly, interactive database of neighborhood conditions.[25]

Recommendation: Use new crowdsourcing web platforms, such as Ushahidi or Textizen, that allow residents to report and map street-level data with mobile phones to help monitor ownership.

Monitoring land ownership will benefit from the eyes and voices of many residents. While some of the tools previously mentioned have been useful to document and share street-level change, they have limitations. By requiring citizens to use smartphones or tablets they exclude potential participants. However, a number of platforms exist that democratize self-reporting.

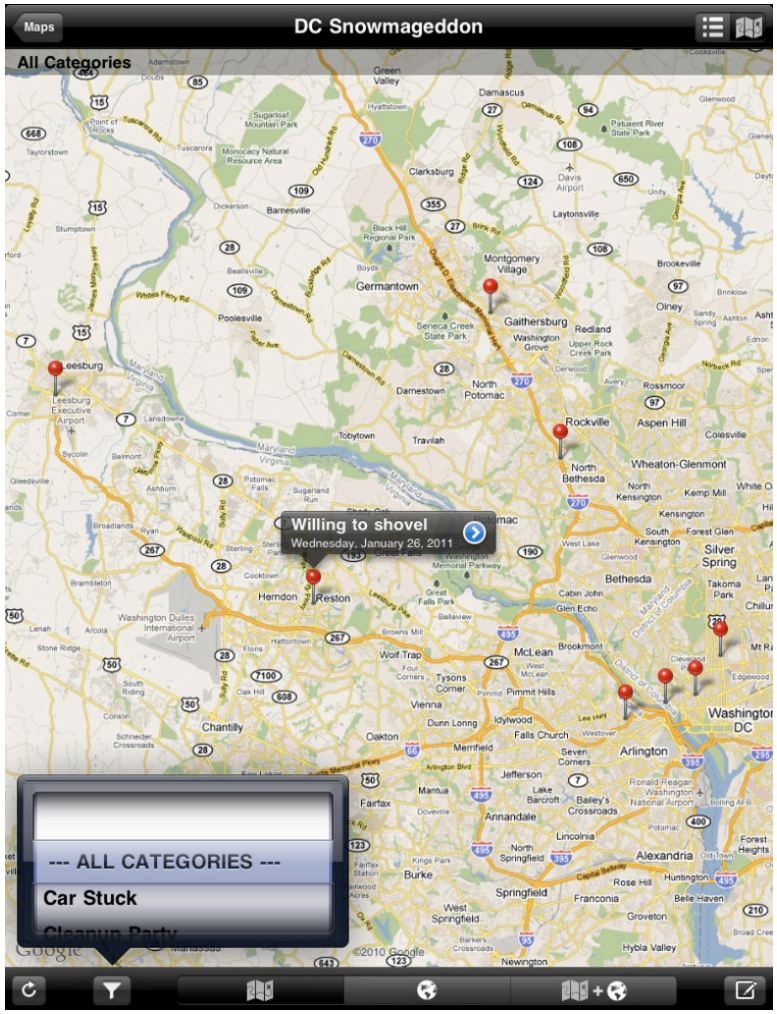
Ushahidi

http://www.ushahidi.com

Ushahidi is a free crowdsourcing tool originally developed during political turmoil in Kenya. The Ushahidi Platform allows citizens to send reports and data with text messages, email, Twitter and web-forms. This means anyone with a mobile phone or computer can participate. Ushahidi requires a group or resident to host the platform online, but this could cost as little as $10 a month and would require minimal maintenance to fix any potential errors and adjust settings.[26]

FIG. 4.7

Ushahidi



Washington D.C. used Ushahidi during a blizzard in 2011
http://www.snowmageddoncleanup.com/
Source: iFreeware, http://www.ifreeware.net/download-ushahidi-ios.html

Textizen

http://www.textizen.com/

Textizen allows city officials, community leaders, and local organizations to collect feedback from citizens using text messages. Questions are posted online or in physical locations, and then citizens text their responses, allowing for broader community participation. Instead of sitting through meetings, discussing the merits of a decision, residents can give their input anytime from anywhere.

Requiring people to text answers to questions may limit discussion and the participation of non-tech-savvy residents if

FIG. 4.8

Textizen

An example of a Textizen-driven community input campaign in Philadelphia, PA.

Source: http://philadelphi-aplaneto.com/spotlight-on-the-districts-lower-northeast-district-plan-draft/

municipalities use it in lieu of other approaches to community engagement. Although Textizen can cost municipalities from $3,500 to $10,000 to implement,[27] community organizations could reduce this cost to $500 by partnering with students to receive an educational discount.[28]

Monitoring changes in land ownership provides residents and organizations with a greater understanding of what is happening in and around their neighborhoods. It also helps them make informed decisions about strategies and steps they can take to strengthen their neighborhoods and encourages repurposing of vacant land as consistent with the typologies in the LEAP framework. The next chapter provides recommendations for stewarding publicly owned land to stabilize neighborhoods and Chapter 6 goes on to demonstrate strategies for repurposing publicly owned vacant land.

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[1] Christine MacDonald and Mike Wilkinson, "Interactive map: Who owns the most private property in Detroit?" Detroit New, February 3, 2011, http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20110203/SPECIAL01/110202002 (accessed April 29, 2013); Christine MacDonald and Mike Wilkinson, "Private landowners complicate reshaping of Detroit," Detroit News, February 3, 2011, http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20110203/METRO01/102030395 (accessed April 29, 2013).

[2] CityDNA, "City DNA neighborhood analytics," Social Compact, http://socialcompact.org/dd/cityDNA.php (accessed May 3, 2013).

[3] Ibid.

[4] City of Detroit Department of Administrative Hearings, Blight Violation Notice Database, 2013, http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/DepartmentofAdministrativeHearings/TicketSearch.aspx (accessed April 29, 2013).

[5] Ibid.

[6] WhyDontWeOwnThis, "2013 Foreclosure Risk," WhyDontWeOwnThis, http://whydontweownthis.com/2013#11/42.3525/-83.0992 (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[7] Coenen et al., "From Revenue to Reuse: Managing Tax-Reverted Properties in Detroit," Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, April 2011.

[8] Detroit Legal News, "Public Notices Search," Detroit Legal News Publishing LLC, http://www.legalnews.com/publicnotices/ (accessed April 24, 2013).

[9] Washtenaw County Housing Partners, FACTS About Michigan's Current Mortgage Foreclosure Law, Washtenaw County, MI, 2013, http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/treasurer/MFP/michigans-new-foreclosure-laws (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[10] Ibid.

[11] State Bar of Michigan, Mortgage Foreclosure, State Bar of Michigan, 2009 (accessed April 29th, 2013) http://www.michbar.org/Realproperty/probono_brochures/Foreclosure.pdf

[12] Ibid.

[13] Data Driven Detroit, "Parcel Explorer," Data Driven Detroit, http://datadrivendetroit.org/WCIParcels/#body, (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[14] Gregory Parrish of Data Driven Detroit, Interview by Cory Weaver and Catherine Chammout, in person interview, Detroit, MI, April 3, 2013.

[15] Ibid.

[16] City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, "Real Estate Development," City of Detroit, 2013. http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/DepartmentsandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment/RealEstateDevelopment.aspx (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[17] City of Detroit, "General Services Department," City of Detroit, http://www.

ci.detroit.mi.us/DepartmentsandAgencies/GeneralServices.aspx (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[18] City of Detroit, "City Council Calendar," City of Detroit, http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/CityClerk/CityCouncilCalendar.aspx (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[19] Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, "Development Opportunities," Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, http://www.degc.org/development-opportunities.aspx (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[20] Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, "New Project RFP's," Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, http://www.degc.org/new-project-rfps.aspx (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[21] Detroit Land Bank Authority, "Inventory Guide," Detroit Land Bank Authority, http://www.detroitlandbank.org (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[22] Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, "Purchasing Property at the Michigan Land Bank," Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, http://www.michigan.gov/landbank (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[23] Detroit Property Exchange, "Detroit Property Exchange Auction," Flip Detroit Auctions, http://www.flipdetroitauctions.com/index.cfm (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[24] LocalData, "Frequently Asked Questions," LocalData, http://localdata.com/faq.html (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[25] Ibid

[26] Win Host, http://www.winhost.com/

[27] iFreeware, http://www.ifreeware.net/download-ushahidi-ios.html (accessed April 29th, 2013).

[28] Alex Yule, Textizen CEO, e-mail message to Cory Weaver, April 25, 2013.

[29] Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

Stewarding Publicly Owned Land to Stabilize Neighborhoods

This chapter details recommendations that encourage buying, leasing, and managing publicly owned property in order to strengthen neighborhoods. The recommendations highlight existing programs and tools designed for residents and organizations to manage publicly owned land in Detroit and suggest additional programs and strategies that can help the lower eastside achieve its goals.

The recommendations within this chapter primarily apply to the Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies (highlighted in Figure 5.1), but they can also apply to the Village Hub typology. Chapter 7 details the application of these recommendations in the Creekside case study area, an area the *Lower Eastside Action Plan* (LEAP) designates as primarily Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies.

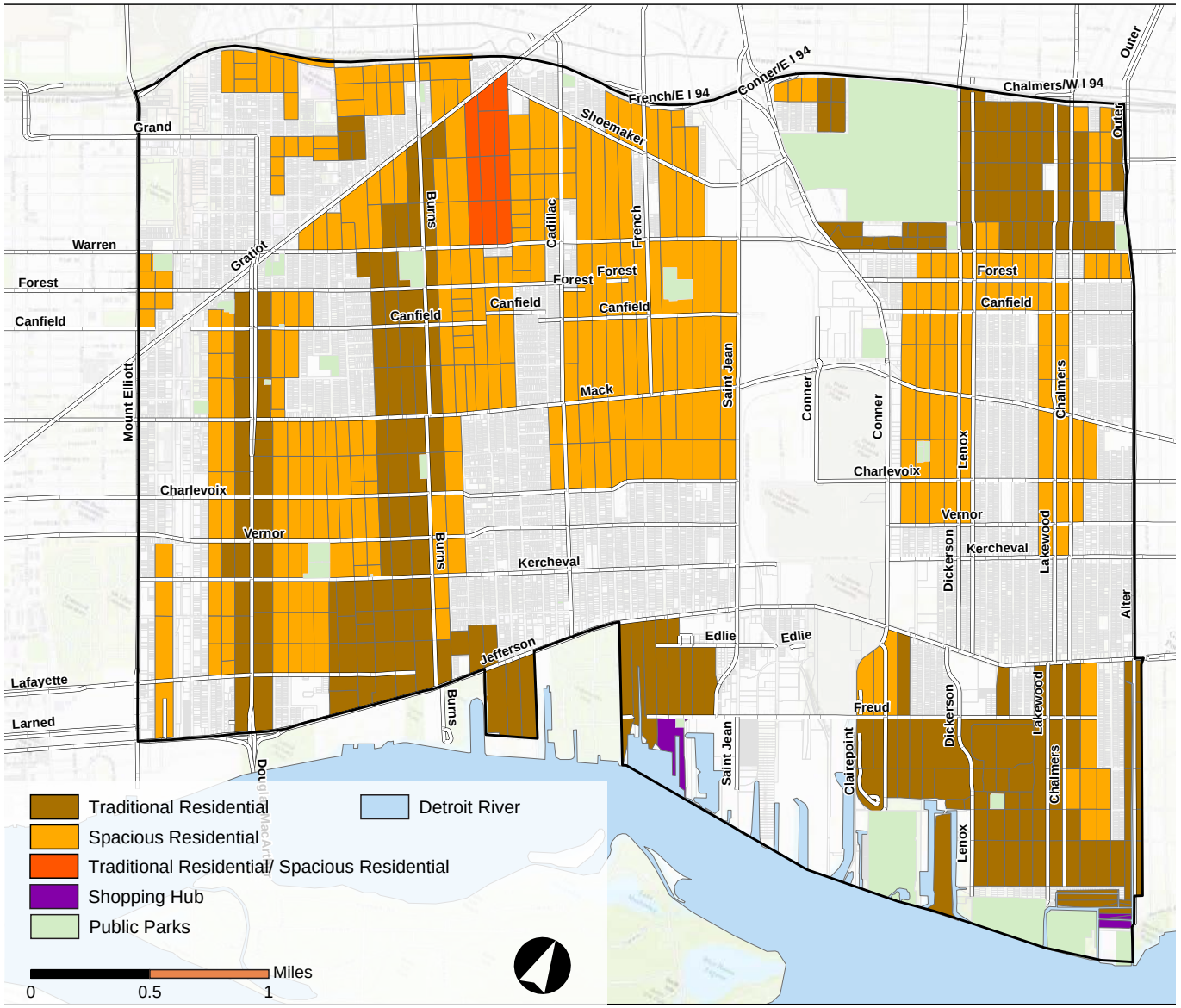
The recommendations for these typologies propose that Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE) and other LEAP participants:

- Encourage and promote tax foreclosure prevention and education programs to help keep residents in their homes
- Coordinate the acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of houses in good condition with the Detroit Land Bank in areas with a high concentration of owner-occupied homes
- Advocate for targeting Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies for demolition and deconstruction of blighted publicly owned properties

- Facilitate residents' purchase of publicly owned lots
- Work with the Detroit Land Bank to offer a program similar to the Michigan Land Bank's property conveyance program
- Work with the Planning and Development Department, the Michigan Land Bank, and the Detroit Land Bank to create sweat equity purchase programs.

FIG. 5.1

Stabilization Area



Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Vacancy Prevention Programs

This section highlights vacancy prevention programs offered by public landowners and recommends additional programs that DNPE or other community organizations could promote. Preventing property from becoming vacant and publicly owned lots is essential for stabilizing neighborhoods.

Recommendation: Encourage and promote tax foreclosure prevention and education programs to help keep residents in their homes.

Protecting homeowners from tax foreclosure can help stabilize neighborhoods by limiting the number of properties that end up in the Wayne County property auction and by limiting the amount of time a property is vacant. DNPE and community organizations could ensure that homeowners facing hardship have access to information on tax foreclosure relief programs to help avoid unnecessary foreclosure. Homeowners facing tax foreclosure hardship may not know of such prevention services and educational programs available to assist them in keeping their homes.

Neighborhood organizations or community development organizations operating in predominatly Traditional Residential or Spacious Residential neighborhoods could monitor tax foreclosures in their neighborhoods, using the recommendations in Chapter 4 as a guide. With the County foreclosing on about 8% of lower eastside properties,[1] community organizations should prioritize the Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential areas with the highest concentration of owner-occupancy. Focusing resources in stronger neighborhoods will have the largest impact on neighborhood stabilization.

Two approaches exist for implementing this recommendation. First, DNPE or a community development organization could work with United Community Housing Coalition (UCHC)[2] to contact all owner-occupied homeowners who have gone into tax foreclosure. UCHC conducts targeted mailings, phone calls and door knocking campaigns, explaining the tax foreclosure prevention services and educational programs they provide.[3]

Second, neighborhood associations or community development organizations could determine where a higher number of tax-foreclosed homes exist and then target the entire block with handbills promoting tax foreclosure assistance programs and educational materials. Using this method, if a group cannot contact the homeowner directly, they may be able to inform a helpful neighbor who is in contact with the foreclosed homeowner. Michigan Community Resources offers programs that train neighborhood organizations in this type of outreach.[4]

Recommendation: Coordinate the acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of houses in good condition with the Detroit Land Bank in areas with a high concentration of owner-occupied homes.

The Detroit Land Bank Authority offers a program that rehabilitates and resells homes, using federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds in designated areas throughout Detroit. Though this program has been successful, it only includes a handful of houses in the lower eastside, specifically in Indian Village. Aundra Wallace, Executive Director of the Detroit Land Bank, in a recent interview, shared that "the Detroit Land Bank is expanding their services to the whole of Detroit and is no longer solely focusing on the Neighborhood Stabilization Areas."[5]

DNPE or other community organizations could identify tax-foreclosed houses located within the LEAP area that failed to sell at the Wayne County property auction or other homes owned by the City. DNPE or other community organizations could then coordinate with the Detroit Land Bank to acquire those homes if needed, rehabilitate them, and then market the homes via their website. The potential increase in owner-occupied homes would help stabilize neighborhoods through the commitment and investment of new homeowners. Since the Detroit Land Bank relies on limited grant subsidies and market sales to recoup renovation costs, DNPE or other organizations should focus on homes in good condition, within Traditional Residential areas, and with a high concentration of owner-occupancy.

Recommendation: Advocate for targeting Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies for demolition and deconstruction of blighted publicly owned properties.

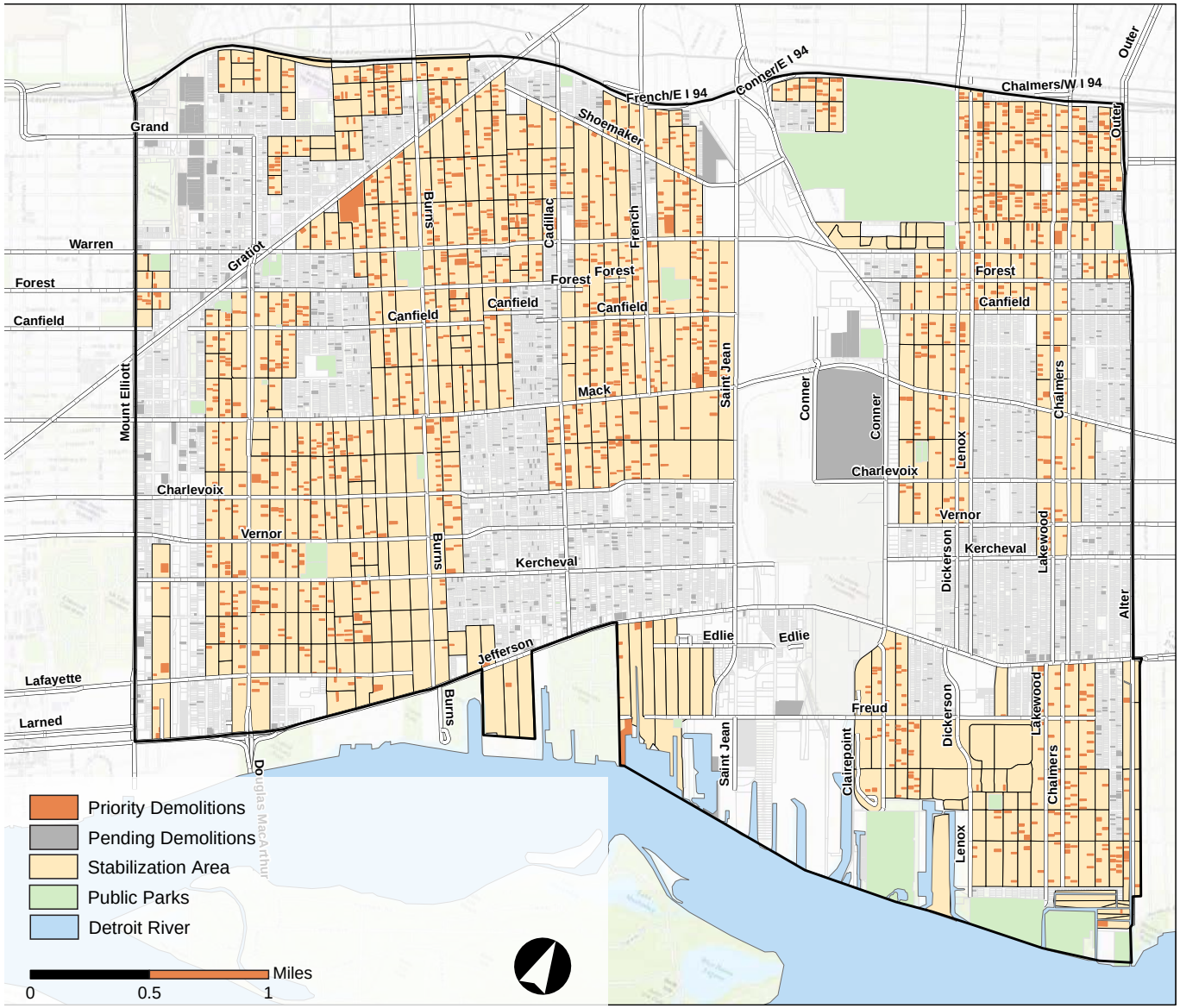
In the past, neighborhood organizations such as Creekside CDC have drafted lists of buildings they want the City to prioritize for demolition. Organizations base their prioritization on the condition of the building, rather than neighborhood character. The City of Detroit similar prioritizes demolition by the condition of the building.

Community development organizations in dense neighborhoods could advocate for City officials to prioritize demolition and deconstruction in Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies. Although demolishing any blighted, open and dangerous property can be beneficial, targeting scarce funds toward more stable neighborhoods can yield greater benefits. Removing blighted structures, which can be havens for undesirable activities, can improve the appearance, stability, safety, and property values of a neighborhood. Demolishing and deconstructing derelict structures in areas that experience higher levels of vacancy may not have the same kind of market impact. Figure 5.2 highlights properties on the demolition list that are in *LEAP Forward*'s prioritized areas.

City officials have been somewhat unresponsive to community organizations and their demolition needs because of a lack of resources available to demolish all derelict properties. However, the City now has new partnerships with the Detroit Blight Authority and the State of Michigan that may of-

FIG. 5.2

Prioritized Demolitions



Source: Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

fer opportunities to change strategies surrounding demolition and deconstruction in Detroit.[6] In addition, partnerships with groups such as the WARM Training Center and NextEnergy can assist in developing a deconstruction program to salvage building materials and architectural details.[7]

FIG. 5.3

Site of a recent demolition in a Naturescape/Urban Homestead area. This area is already quite vacant, so the benefits of this demolition are limited. Photo by: Al Wolschleger

FIG. 5.4

A house in poor condition due to fire damage in a Traditional Residential area. Demolition of this house could help prevent damage to the neighboring houses. Photo by: Al Wolschleger

Public Property Purchasing Programs

This section highlights property purchasing programs offered by public landowners and recommends additional programs that DNPE or other community organizations could promote.

Increasing the amount of property owned by those who are committed to maintaining their property and investing in their neighborhoods is one of the strongest and longest lasting ways to stabilize neighborhoods.

Facilitate Existing Programs

A variety of programs exist to assist owners in purchasing publicly owned land as outlined below:

Recommendation: Facilitate residents' purchase of publicly owned lots.

DNPE could promote existing programs that encourage the sale of publicly owned property and facilitate the purchase process to work towards achieving the LEAP goal of neighborhood stabilization. These programs are especially beneficial to the Traditional Residential, Spacious Residential, and Village Hub typology areas, because they enable property owners to purchase publicly owned lots at low cost. The purchase of the lots increases the probability of it being maintained and contributing to Detroit's tax revenue while also giving residents control over the land.

The City of Detroit Planning and Development Department (P&DD) manages the Adjacent Vacant Lot Program, which allows homeowners and businesses to purchase an adjacent City-owned lot for as low as $218. In order to purchase the adjacent property, the purchaser must show proof of ownership for their property, be current on all taxes due, and show proof of identity.[8] See the side lot acquisition handout in Appendix C for details.

STEPS TO BUY A SIDE LOT FROM THE CITY

Through the City of Detroit's Adjacent Vacant Lot Program, a landowner may be able to purchase up to two City-owned lots that are adjacent to the landowner's property. (Property cannot extend across an alley, unless the alley has been vacated). The lot and the landowner must meet certain eligibility requirements, including:

1. The landowner must first be up to date on taxes, prove that they own their property, and prove their identity.

2. The landowner must fill out an application form.

3. The City will assess the potential development of the lot and look for neighbors. If there are neighbors, the City will contact them to see if the neighbors are interested in splitting the lot with the landowner 50/50.

4. If the lot is considered to be a small lot (under 45 feet wide along the street) and is located in a residential area, the City will sell the lot to the landowner for $218 (including an administrative fee). If the lot is wider than 45 feet, the City will sell it for $10 per frontage foot. Note: If the City determines that the lot is in a valuable area (for example, if it is located along a commercial corridor), P&DD may increase the price of the lot.

After about two months, if the landowner and the lot meet the stated requirements, the City will send the deed to the landowner for the side lot.[9]

The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority manages the-Side Lot Conveyance Program, which allows homeowners adjacent to a vacant residential lot owned by the Michigan Land Bank to purchase the lot for $135. Anyone in the State of Michigan can be a part of the program as long as the applicant's property taxes are up-to-date and they can prove ownership of the property.[10]

Purchasing an adjacent property can protect investments and improvements made to a property. This type of purchase also increases the amount of land maintenance for the property owner, as well as the tax responsibility. Further research could be done to understand the tax implications for residents and help develop tax relief programs if needed. P&DD estimates that average property taxes for a side lot without a building on it (like a garage) would be between $20 to $60 annually.[11] If the purchase price or tax implications are too much of a burden for an owner, and the owner is not concerned about controlling the use of that land in the future, he or she may choose to use the Adopt-a-Lot program offered by the City of Detroit. This program offers owners use of a City-owned lot for free (see Chapter 6 for more on the Adopt-a-Lot Program).[12]

MICHIGAN LAND BANK PROPERTY CONVEYANCE PROGRAM

An applicant interested in purchasing property from the Michigan Land Bank must show proof of paid property taxes, proof of identity, and an itemized budget for proposed plans for the site, as well as proof of sufficient funds to complete the proposed plans.[13]

Michigan Land Bank Property Conveyance Program

The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority offers a property conveyance program that allows residents to purchase property owned by the land bank. The program has a user-friendly online application, which details the eligibility requirements and necessary steps to acquire land.[14] Offering accessible property conveyance programs like the Michigan Land Bank's allows citizens to take over the management and maintenance of vacant homes and lots in their neighborhood, a key step in repurposing vacant land and stabilizing neighborhoods.

Advocate for New Programs

New programs could be created to accelerate the purchase of publicly owned land by residents and local businesses:

Recommendation: Work with the Detroit Land Bank to offer a program similar to the Michigan Land Bank's Property Conveyance Program.

As previously explained, the Detroit Land Bank Authority is expanding their services to cover the whole of Detroit and not only NSP areas. DNPE or a similar organization representing the lower eastside could work with the Detroit Land Bank to expand the type of services they offer and create a property conveyance program that facilitates the sale of vacant lots from the land bank, especially in the densest Traditional Residential areas with the strongest concentrations of

homeownership. A property conveyance program would also allow residents to purchase land bank owned lots around their homes and achieve the larger lot size suggested in the Spacious Residential and Urban Homestead typologies. Due to the Land Bank's limited capacity, DNPE may need to volunteer time and services to the Detroit Land Bank in order to develop and implement this recommendation in the lower eastside.

Recommendation: Work with the Planning and Development Department, the Michigan Land Bank, and the Detroit Land Bank to create sweat equity purchase programs.

Sweat equity programs provide a way for property owners to acquire credit towards purchasing neighboring property by mowing and maintaining the lot. Cities can grant ownership of their land to neighboring or nearby property owners who maintain the property for one year, under the condition that the new owner continues to maintain the property. As the tax base for the City of Detroit continues to decrease, making City services more difficult to maintain, such sweat equity programs could benefit the maintenance of publicly owned vacant property and stabilize neighborhoods through blight reduction. Additionally, the City will benefit from additional property taxes once the City transfer the property to a private owner.

Sweat Equity Programs in Other Cities

The City of Columbus, OH, offers the "Mow-to-Own" program for adjacent property owners, property owners within the same block or within 400 feet of a vacant land bank property, and nonprofit organizations. In addition to the mandatory application and $50 registration fee, the purchaser must have "no delinquent real estate or personal property taxes, no history of property maintenance, nuisance, building, and/or zoning code violations, and no delinquent utility accounts."[15] Once approved by land bank staff, the purchaser must pay a $175 fee, and then the purchaser can receive a $25 credit for each maintenance "session" up to fifteen times a year. A session might include mowing or the removal of trash and debris on the vacant lot, as long as the activity is compliant with City codes. Such a program transfers "ownership of vacant and abandoned parcels acquired by the Land Bank back to adjacent property owners and nonprofit neighborhood stakeholders," repurposing those vacant lots into "productive community assets."[16]

Buying and managing publicly owned land can help stabilize neighborhoods by increasing the number of maintained properties in the LEAP area. Chapter 6 details recommendations for repurposing publicly owned vacant land in the Urban Homestead, Naturescape, and Green Venture Zone typologies. Repurposing larger areas of publicly owned land is a more complex challenge. While most of the recommendations apply to larger swaths of land, the strategies for repurposing public vacant land as community gardens and the application

of green infrastructure treatments are applicable for stabilizing neighborhoods as well.

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[1] WhyDontWeOwnThis, "2013 Tax Foreclosure" [Interactive Map], WhyDontWeOwnThis,2013, http://whydontweownthis.com (accessed April 30, 2013).

[2] United Community Housing Coalition, "Thirty Years of Affordable Housing Advocacy in Detroit," United Community Housing Coaltion, http://www.uchcdetroit.org/home.html (accessed April 30, 2013).

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[5] Aundra Wallace, Interview by Catherine Chammout and Al Wolschleger, in person interview, Detroit, MI, April 15, 2013 .

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[7] John Gallagher, "Detroit deconstruction plan has its share of obstacles," Detroit Free Press, March 25, 2013, http://www.freep.com/article/20130325/BUSINESS06/303250070/Detroit-deconstruction-plan-has-its-share-of-obstacles (accessed April 30, 2013).

[8] Greg Holman of City of Detroit Planning & Development Department, e-mail message to Benjamin Crumm, January 29, 2013.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, "Property Conveyance Application," State of Michigan, May 1, 2012, http://www.michigan.gov/documents/landbank/Property_Conveyance_Application_385928_7.pdf (accessed April 30, 2013).

[11] Greg Holman of City of Detroit Planning & Development Department, e-mail message to Benjamin Crumm, May 2, 2013.

[12] City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, "Guidelines for Garden Permit/Adopt-A-Lot Permit," City of Detroit, 2013, http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/planning/realestate/AdoptALot/2013%20%20Adopt-A-Lot%20Guidelines%20-%20with%20Logo_2.pdf (accessed April 30, 2013).

[13] "Property Conveyance Application," 2012.

[14] Ibid.

[15] City of Columbus Department of Development, "Application for Yard Expansion and Vacant Lot Purchase," The City of Columbus, http://development.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Development/Application_for_lot_sale_mow_to_own.pdf (accessed April 30, 2013).

[16] Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

Repurposing Publicly Owned Vacant Land

Residents and community organizations across Detroit's lower eastside have turned many vacant lots into yards and gardens, demonstrating how abandoned vacant land can become a neighborhood asset. Managing and stewarding larger areas of vacant public land are more complex challenges that call for participation from and partnerships among public agencies, community organizations, and residents.

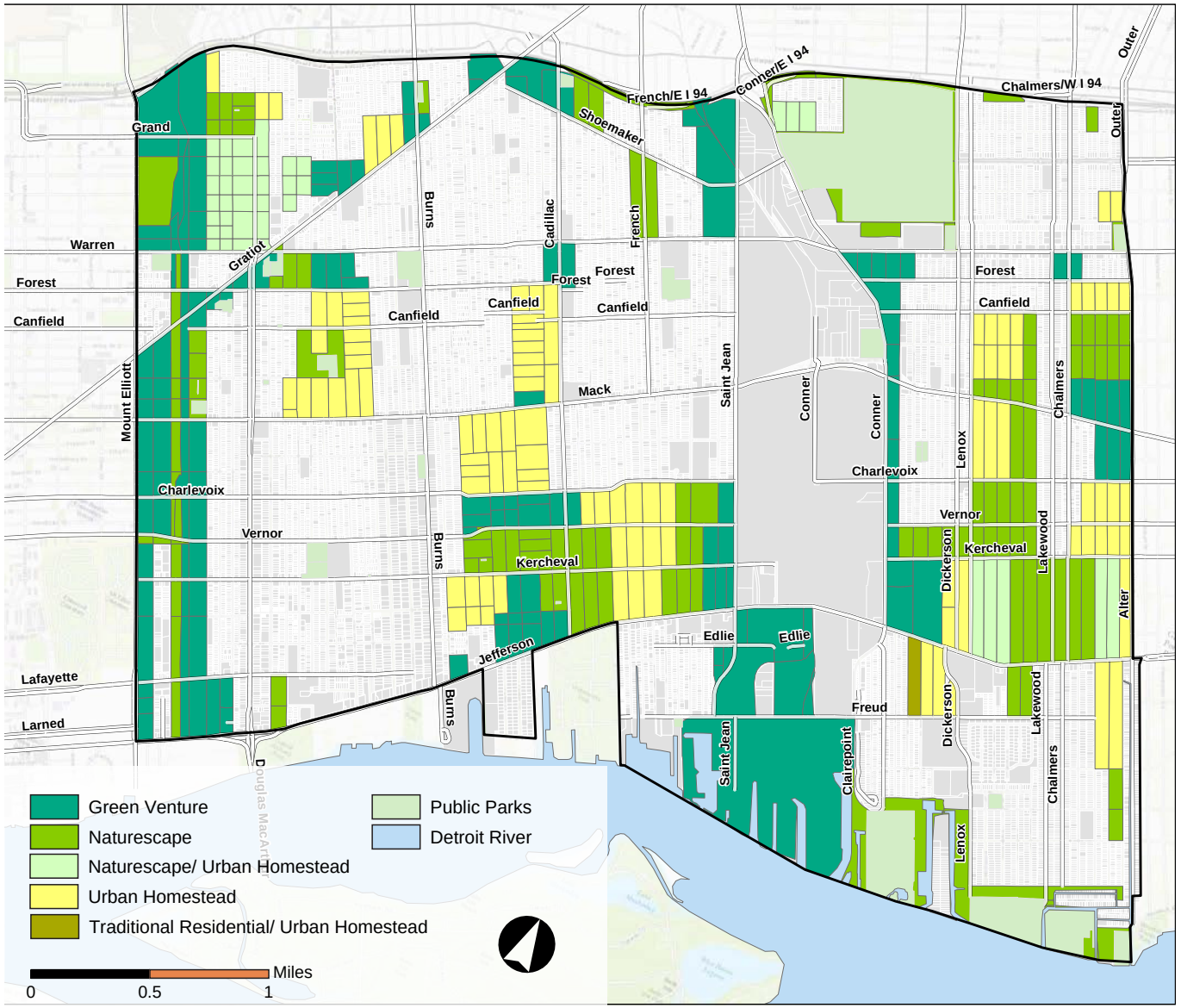
This chapter outlines recommendations for public land management and stewardship that enable residents and organizations in the lower eastside to repurpose vacant public land into an asset. These strategies are most appropriate for properties throughout the Urban Homestead, Naturescape, Green Venture, and Green Thoroughfare typologies in LEAP (see Figure 6.1); however, some can also be applied on a smaller, lot-by-lot scale. The LEAP analysis identifies these areas as appropriate for strategies that repurpose vacant property, as opposed to strategies that stabilize a dense, intact area (see Chapter 5).

The recommendations for these typologies propose that Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East (DNPE) and other LEAP participants:

- Collaborate with major public landowners to advocate for the coordination of decisions with LEAP's long-term land use goals
- Help landowners and community organizations lease properties that are well suited for community gardens or beautification projects

FIG. 6.1

Areas to Repurpose: Urban Homestead, Naturescape, & Green Venture



Source: SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI 2013.

- Form a community land trust, cooperative, or conservancy to acquire or lease properties in Green Thoroughfare, Green Venture, Urban Homestead, and Naturescape areas
- Work with partner organizations to apply green infrastructure treatments to vacant lots

Recommendation: Collaborate with major public landowners to advocate for the coordination of decisions with LEAP's long-term land use goals.

Thirty-three percent of properties in the lower eastside are publicly owned.[1] The percent of properties that are publicly owned is even higher when considering repurposing typologies. Forty-nine percent of Naturescape, 49% of Urban Homestead, and 35% of Green Venture Zone properties are publicly owned.[2] DNPE or another LEAP stakeholder should continue to build strong partnerships with public landholders to keep LEAP's goals at the forefront of the landholders' thinking while they make land disposition decisions. Their participation in the coordination of public land sales, assembly, and disposition can help achieve LEAP's long-term land use goals.

The public landholders of the lower eastside have the ability to assemble, sell, and hold land in ways that affect LEAP. In 2011, seven public land entities started meeting regularly to discuss their land use goals and the challenges they face in stewarding so much vacant property.[3]

The public entities include:

- City of Detroit
- Detroit Land Bank Authority
- Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority
- Wayne County Treasurer
- Detroit Housing Commission
- Detroit Public Schools
- Detroit Economic Growth Corporation

These entities worked collectively to inform the land use section of the *Detroit Future City* framework. For example, one of *Detroit Future City*'s recommendations is to create "a coordinated, strategic system for managing public assets." The system includes specific strategies to implement property acquisition and assembly, property disposition and reuse, property holdings and demolitions.[4]

DNPE or another LEAP area representative could continue to work with these public land entities to help coordinate the decisions surrounding opportunities within the LEAP area in support of both LEAP and DFC. Once the representative is identified, he or she could request to participate in key meetings, discussions, or decisions surrounding public land issues on the lower eastside of Detroit. The representative could also consider bringing a variety of topics before the public landholders, as requested by LEAP Participants:

- Marketing large areas of vacant public land in the Green Venture Zone typology to potential investors and devel-

opers interested in developing or expanding their companies in ways consistent with LEAP's goals for the land
- Advocating for zoning and ordinance changes critical to establishing the Green Venture Zone, Urban Homestead, and Naturescape typologies
- Supporting a revision of land valuation practices to reflect the true value of publicly owned vacant lots
- Leasing public property to community organizations
- Advocating for a streamlined process for title clearance
- Presenting LEAP projects that are underway to garner support and gather feedback

Engaging the public landholders with thoughtful solutions and projects will help advance LEAP's land use goals. Olga Stella of the DEGC suggested that DNPE or another LEAP representative engage the public landholders with specific plans detailing the desired outcomes for its land use projects.[5] She explained that the public landholders are more likely to respond to specific requests that are well thought-out and that have the necessary resources to execute the project. Though building and maintaining strong working relationships requires a considerable amount of time, coordinating among the public land entities that have the ability to assist in the execution of those plans will help achieve LEAP's goals.

DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY

DNPE or another LEAP area community organization could partner with the Detroit Land Bank Authority to coordinate land use. The Detroit Land Bank Authority can receive, own, manage, and sell property in Detroit according to the Land Bank Fast Track Act of 2003 and State of Michigan Public Act 258.[6] They can also assemble properties and hold land tax-free. DNPE or another LEAP representative could work with the Detroit Land Bank to request areas designated as Green Venture or Naturescape to be held for reuse proposals that match LEAP's long-term land use recommendations. They would then collaborate with the land bank to market those properties for appropriate green business ventures or green uses. The same process could apply to the Urban Homestead typology. The land bank could hold land in specific areas designated as Urban Homestead, and DNPE and community-based organizations could encourage homeowners to buy land bank-owned lots.

Recommendation: Help landowners and community organizations lease properties that are well-suited for community gardens or beautification projects.

Chapter 5 outlines several recommendations for purchasing publicly owned properties that can also be applied to repurposing areas, especially Urban Homestead typologies. However, due to the scale of the repurposing areas, purchasing land may not be financially feasible. In that case, leasing land from public entities may be an appropriate option. Opportunities for leasing publicly owned vacant land at little or no cost to

create community gardens and beautification projects exist in several US cities, including Detroit. Given that the City and State together own one-third of the properties in the lower eastside, leasing land to residents and community organizations has the potential to transform the area's landscape.

Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority's Garden for Growth program, for example, allows nonprofit organizations and individuals to lease a land bank property to cultivate for $25 for a one-year lease or $75 for a three-year lease. The lessee can renew the lease at the end of the term. As the land bank website states, "The opportunity to lease and not own gives you the control to utilize vacant lots in your neighborhood without paying taxes or other financial burdens that come with ownership."[7]

Detroit's Planning and Development Department (P&DD) offers a similar program called "Adopt-A-Lot." Any Detroit resident can apply for the program, which grants them the right to cultivate and maintain a city-owned vacant lot for a year at no cost and with unlimited ability to renew.[8] Residents can can simply mow the grass, use the land for gardens, or even build raised beds and small hoop houses.[9] However, this program does not currently permit participation by organizations because it is geared towards small-scale projects. It also offers no security for the lessees who have cared for the lot if someone else wants to buy it.

DNPE can educate residents and community organizations about these opportunities and advocate for the expansion of P&DD's program to nonprofit organizations, enabling larger scale projects. These programs could be particularly useful in the Urban Homestead typology as a way to prevent illegal dumping and turn vacant land into an asset. DNPE could also advocate for improving the existing program to address certain concerns, such as the lack of security for community groups that lease lots. The Cuyahoga Land Bank, for example, provides longer-term leases of vacant lots for community groups and gives priority to open space projects.[10]

Community gardens and beautification projects are a low-cost opportunity to prevent vacant land from becoming a dumping ground. However, some residents and community organizations in Detroit already garden lots that they do not own, and they may not be interested in applying or paying a fee to do it legally.

Recommendation: Form a community land trust, cooperative, or conservancy to acquire or lease properties in Green Thoroughfare, Green Venture, Urban Homestead, and Naturescape areas.

The recommendations in Chapter 5 and thus far in Chapter 6 concerning acquisition and leasing of publicly owned land have detailed lot-by-lot strategies that function on a small scale. However, when a project area involves many parcels at a large scale and land control is necessary, a different model for land ownership is needed. This section offers three alternative approaches – a community land trust, cooperative, or conservancy model – for controlling larger areas of land.

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS – A NONPROFIT MODEL

A community land trust (CLT) is a community-based organization that acquires property within a designated geographic area and retains ownership while allowing residents to use the land, including any structure or home on the land. A CLT can be resident-driven, with residents of the affected area sitting on the Board of Directors along with other stakeholders, such as local business owners and representatives of government agencies.[11]

Contemporary CLTs often manage vacant land and repurpose it as community gardens and public spaces. For example, in Philadelphia, the Neighborhood Gardens Association (NGA) operates a community land trust for conserving community gardens and green space in Philadelphia. Funded primarily by regionally-focused foundations and local businesses, NGA offers technical assistance for residents to help them gain title for their property.[12] NGA retains ownership of about 30 properties, paying the insurance and taxes for the property.[13]

The Neighborhood Gardens Association also provides technical assistance to organizations across the country that want to start an urban land trust (see Appendix D for a step-by-step description on how to start a land trust). A land trust is similar to any nonprofit or charitable organization; however, a land trust requires that organization staff and board members pay particular attention to potential liabilities.

FIG. 6.2

Example of Neighborhood Farm: Aspen Farm

Source: Philadelphia Neighborhood Garden Association, https://www.facebook.com/PaHortSociety

In the LEAP area, a CLT could acquire properties for green space in the Naturescape, Green Thoroughfare, and Urban Homestead typologies. The structure of a CLT could take alternative directions, either serving the entire LEAP area or individual neighborhoods. The leadership of an existing community organization such as LAND, Inc. could consider expanding or modifying the current structure to become a CLT, or a new organization could be created.

NEIGHBORSPACE COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

NeighborSpace in Chicago is a successful community land trust. Its mission "is to acquire and preserve the community-based management of small parks, gardens, natural areas, river edges, and scenic landscapes for preservation, conservation, and educational public open space purposes."[14] NeighborSpace provides insurance, access to water, and general support for the residents who use the land, mostly for community gardens.[15] NeighborSpace depends on donations from foundations and individuals, most of whom focus their philanthropy in the Chicago region.[16]

COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS – A COOPERATIVE MODEL

Community land trusts can be managed as cooperatives, which gives cooperative members control of the management of land. Cooperatives generally open their membership to anyone with an interest in joining but can place limits on membership such as residency requirements, depending on the cooperative's mission. Some cooperatives, such as the Community Land Cooperative of Cincinnati, have open membership, giving each member one vote. Members pay for shares in the organization (which is usually a one-time fee but can be periodic), attend regular membership meetings, and elect a board to govern the affairs of the cooperative.[17]

The main difference between cooperative land trusts and community land trusts is that members of the cooperative pay for equal shares in the organization and thus collectively own and manage the land. In most instances, cooperatives are unable to seek grant funding. Because of the nature of cooperatives, the management structure takes longer to set up and is not always attractive to the leaders of community development organi-

GROUNDWORK TRUSTS

Groundwork USA is a national organization that manages a network of 20 different land trusts across the country, working to transform blighted spaces into natural and active landscapes. Unlike many CLTs that acquire and assemble land, Groundwork Trusts work with private and public landowners to "assess the site's contamination, examine its green potential and then engage neighborhood residents and community/civic groups to devise a feasible reuse plan and long-term ownership and maintenance strategy."[18] In Detroit, the challenge would be to coordinate among the many landowners across multiple typologies. However, Groundwork Trusts may serve as an interesting model for coordination among landowners to achieve green space.

zations who are already strapped for time.[19] This is because cooperatives have to determine how a member legally enters and exits the organization (i.e. becomes an owner and rescinds ownership), and establish a legally binding contract to clarify these procedures.[20]

Keeping track of membership in a cooperative can be a time-intensive and costly process. Processing cooperative ownership and management requires more staff time to coordinate and maintain memberships. For example, members of worker cooperatives exit the cooperative and receive their shares upon resignation or termination. Similarly, members of housing cooperatives receive payment for their shares and lose ownership upon moving out. A land cooperative would have to decide upon an appropriate system for entering and exiting the organization. The member management structure of a cooperative provides ownership to its members.

CONSERVATION LAND TRUSTS

Community organizations can use conservation land trusts to acquire and steward land to preserve open space and ecological resources.[21] Conservation land trusts differ from community land trusts because they focus primarily on the environmental needs of the land instead of the people using the land. For example, the Barrington Land Trust in Rhode Island protects "the remaining natural resources of Barrington, Rhode Island, and adjacent areas including water resources, streams, ponds, marshlands, woodlands, and scenic and natural sites, as well as the plant and animal life."[22]

Conservation land trusts preserve land by obtaining easements, legal agreements between a landowner and a land trust to permanently limit use of the land.[23] Land trusts can purchase easements, but landowners often donate them to the organization. A common use of easements is to restrict land to agricultural uses; easements can also prohibit any further development of land.[24] The Detroit RiverFront Conservancy is a prime example of how conservancies can use easements to preserve public space in Detroit. The Riverfront Conservancy obtained easements from the private and public landowners on the riverfront to "build, operate, maintain and program the Detroit International Riverfront."[25]

Although easements are flexible in their potential for a variety of applications, their permanence could create conflicts if residents' visions for land use eventually change. A conservation land trust may be most appropriate for properties in the Naturescape typology. A conservation land trust could also work to establish Urban Homesteads preserving larger lots of land for agricultural purposes.

Conservation land trusts could give residents and community organizations more direct control over the potential development of specific areas of the lower eastside by acquiring and managing the land. The acquisition and management of land is both labor and cost intensive, requiring significant coordination among residents and community organizations.

Recommendation: Work with partner organizations to apply green infrastructure treatments to vacant lots.

Green infrastructure generally refers to an "interconnected network of open spaces and natural areas, such as greenways, wetlands, parks, forest preserves and native plant vegetation, that naturally manages stormwater, reduces flooding risk and improves water quality."[26] The *Detroit Future City* plan proposes blue/green infrastructure as one landscape in a lower density residential area. Blue/green infrastructure aims to improve residents' living conditions, reuse vacant land and corridors, and function as a natural filtration system for storm water.[27]

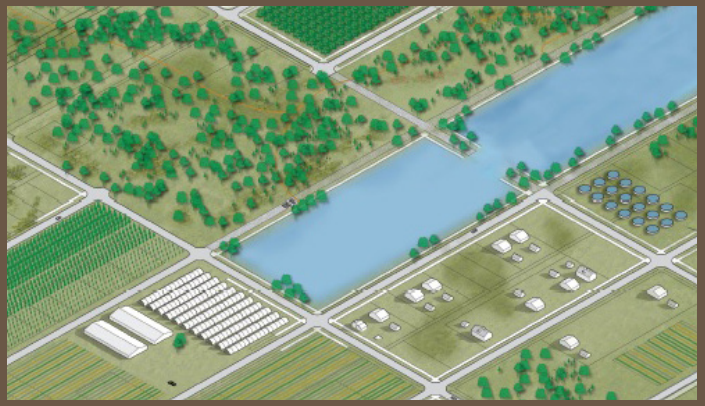
Applying green infrastructure treatments to vacant lots can turn neglected land into an asset that manages stormwater and creates a pleasant landscape. Residents and community organizations in the lower eastside can continue to work with the following organizations to establish a network of green infrastructure:

- Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative[28]
- Detroit Greenways Coalition[29]
- Detroit Water and Sewerage Department[30]
- Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice[31]
- Greening of Detroit[32]
- Green Task Force of the Detroit City Council[33]
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments[34]

Establishing and applying green infrastructure in highly vacant areas could reduce blight and improve the quality of neighborhoods and surrounding areas. The treatments could also facilitate Green Venture Zones. Community organizations could begin the land clearing process and then market the land to attract potential innovative agricultural and other green developers. Common green infrastructure treatments

FIG. 6.3

BLUE /GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN *DETROIT FUTURE CITY*



DFC Repurposing Vacant Land

Source: Detroit Future City Strategic Framework 2012, p130

"Blue Infrastructure—water-based landscapes such as swales, retention ponds, and lakes that capture and clean stormwater—provide an active use for vacant land and oversized roads. Green infrastructure—forest landscapes that improve air quality by capturing airborne pollutants—can buffer industrial areas and high-traffic roadways from neighboring districts; can help connect different parts of the city through greenways; and offer attractive amenities for residents, employers and visitors."[35]

and potential Green Venture Zone treatments that lower eastside residents and organizations could use include:

RAIN GARDENS — Landscaped depressions that collect rain to reduce risk of flooding and recharge groundwater by allowing soil to slowly absorb water.[36]

TREES — Rooted trees in vacant lots that create a pleasing landscape, absorb air pollutants and stormwater, reduce flood risk, and potentially improve residents' health.[37]

SWALES — Depressed channels in land that function as a natural storm sewer, often along the sides of roads in neighborhoods or in parking lots. Like rain gardens, swales contain stormwater runoff and recharge groundwater.[38]

NATIVE LANDSCAPING — Low-to-no maintenance gardens that improve biodiversity and absorb stormwater.[39]

BIOFUEL CROPS — "Renewable biofuel is produced through planting and processing sugar crops, corn crops, wood, wood byproducts, and other crops commonly found throughout the United States."[40]

CASH CROPS — The planting of rye, hops, and hay which then could be sold.

EVERGREEN TREES — The planting, care, and maintenance of evergreen trees costs only $5 to $10 total per tree. Trees grown over 5 to 10 years may be cut down and sold to the local market as Christmas trees.[41]

GREENWAYS — Landscaped pathways to connect people to the environment as well as activities such as walking and biking. Greenways can reuse vacant land or utilize existing public rights-of-way.[42]

GREEN BUFFERS – Green buffers located around industrial areas are typically made up of trees and shrubs, which block residential areas from the unpleasant sights and sounds of an industrial land use. Buffers also serve to repurpose the vacant land that can be found around industrial areas.[43]

In Buffalo, NY, a city that faces similar challenges to Detroit due to its high land vacancy,[44] the Green Jobs for Buffalo program repurposes vacant land by "growing community gar-

FIG. 6.4

Urban Tree Farm
Source: http://blog.thedetroithub.com/2012/09/11/greening-of-detroit-creates-green-infrastructure-in-motor-city/

FIG. 6.5

Rain Water Barrels
Source: http://comohomestead.com/2010/08/where-to-find-rain-barrels-in-columbia/

dens, planting tree farms, and constructing rain gardens."[45] This program aims "to preserve the environment, improve residents' health, and increase property values; it also hopes to provide job training, green job opportunities, and green business incubation for low-income residents. The community-based organization PUSH Buffalo (People United for Sustainable Housing) runs the Green Jobs for Buffalo program."[46] The Green Jobs program is an initiative to call for workers participating in the Green Development Zone. This program is a collaboration between local lending institutions and community-based organizations such as PUSH Buffalo. LEAP participants could look to PUSH Buffalo as a model for how to implement green infrastructure treatments in the lower eastside and to integrate green workforce development programming in order to employ residents.

Though areas of the lower eastside experience high vacancy, residents and organizations can repurpose the land and transform it into a community asset. In the following two chapters, the recommendations in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will be applied to two areas – the Creekside neighborhood and the area around the Packard Plant. Recommendations from Chapter 5 will be applied to the Creekside neighborhood in order to illustrate how these strategies can work to stabilize a neighborhood. The strategies present in Chapter 6 will be applied to the Packard Plant Area, illustrating how these strategies can be used to repurpose and steward publicly owned vacant land.

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CHAPTER 7

Creekside: A Case Study for Stabilizing Neighborhoods by Monitoring Land Ownership and Stewarding Public Land

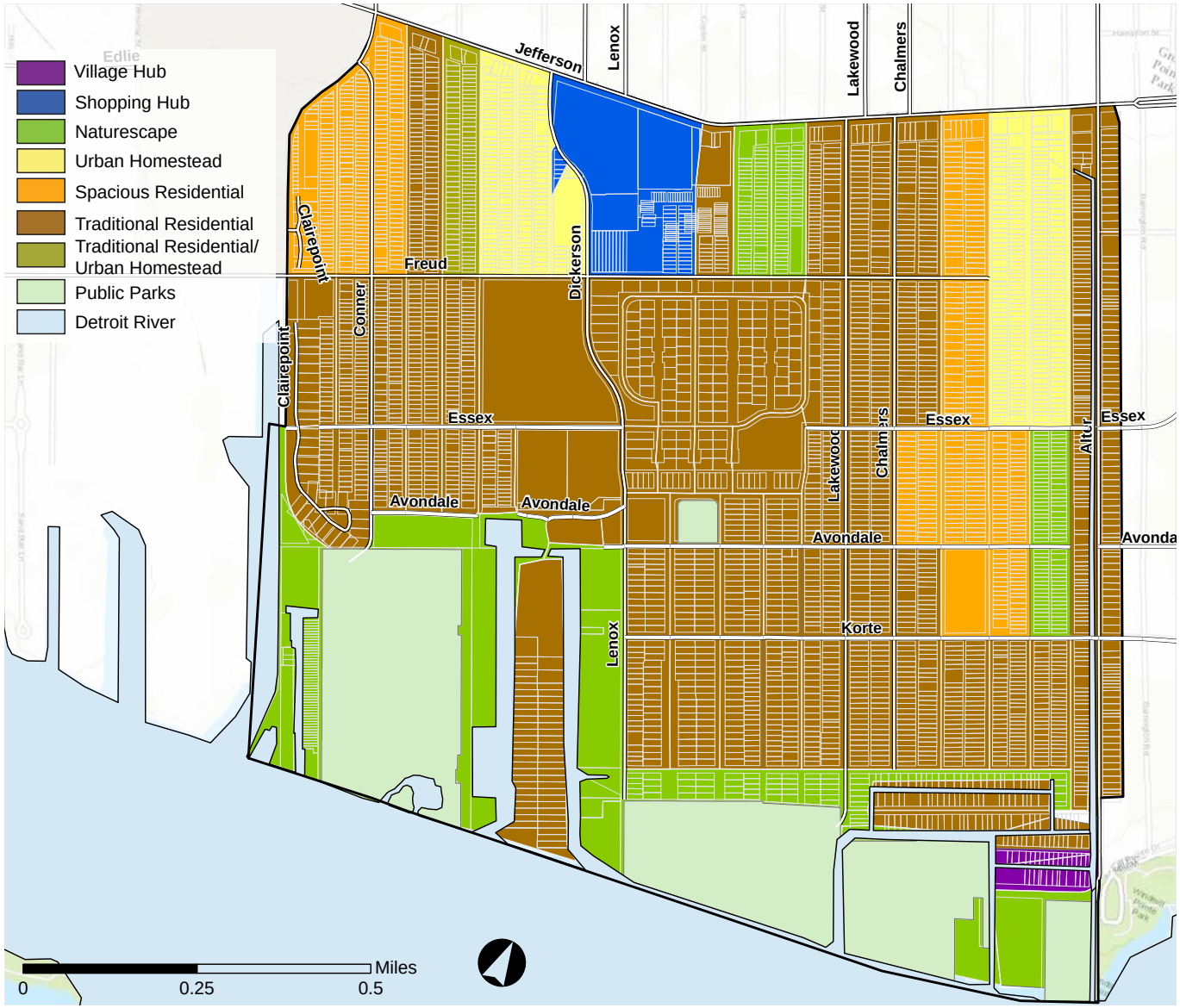
Within Creekside, in the southeast corner of the LEAP area, one block may have tree-lined streets, well-maintained houses, and landscaping, while nearby, vacant lots and heavily deteriorated houses show blight and decline that damage the neighborhood. With a variety of interventions, the more intact and dense areas can stabilize; however, without these areas, the neighborhood could further decline.

In a city with limited resources, using LEAP as a framework for identifying where to implement various strategies can help organizations use scarce resources wisely. Residents and community organizations, primarily the Creekside Community Development Corporation and the Jefferson East Business Association (JEBA), have joined the LEAP effort to stabilize residential neighborhoods and repurpose vacant land in Creekside, also known as Jefferson-Chalmers.

This chapter applies the recommendations found in previous chapters that encourage monitoring land ownership and stewarding publicly owned land to Creekside. Creekside is made up primarily of the Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies in LEAP. Here Creekside serves as a case study to illustrate how these approaches can help stabilize neighborhoods in the lower eastside. First, this chapter describes the current situation in Creekside. Second, it pro-

FIG. 7.1

Creekside Boundary by LEAP Typology



Source: SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

vides recommendations specific to stabilization areas; and third, it outlines strategies for repurposing publicly owned land in the more vacant areas.

Introduction to Creekside

LEAP Forward's Creekside Area is located south of East Jefferson Avenue to the Detroit River, and from the city border on the east to Conner/Clairepoint on the west. Three miles of canals lie across the southern part of the area, and over 120 acres of waterfront parks offer views of the Detroit River and Canada. Creekside is home to many early 20th century homes, including Arts and Crafts style bungalows, Tudor Revival homes, and small cottages.[1] According to the 2010 U.S. Census, about 6,600 people live in Creekside, with a median household income of $40,000 a year.[2]

LEAP envisions this area as a strong and generally densely populated neighborhood in the future, as shown with the predominance of Traditional and Spacious Residential typologies in Figure 7.1. However, Creekside has recently faced increased building and land vacancies as well as tax and mortgage foreclosures. The area's strong neighborhood organizations and active resident population can apply *LEAP Forward*'s recommendations in Creekside to overcome these challenges.

JEFFERSON AVENUE

LEAP designated Jefferson east of Dickerson as a Village Hub, and the block southeast of that intersection with Dickerson as a Shopping Hub. This section of Jefferson is commercial in nature, with many active businesses. Properties along this stretch are larger than average, and LEAP envisions Jefferson to be a vibrant commercial area into the future, which may require site-specific plans. The level of analysis required to create effective plans of that detail for this part of Jefferson is outside of the scope of this plan. However, groups working along East Jefferson Avenue may still find several recommendations in this chapter applicable along this corridor.

Major Stakeholder Organizations

For over forty years, residents have formally come together in the Creekside Area under the umbrella of one organization or another to strengthen and improve the neighborhood through planning efforts and extensive programs. The following organizations currently play roles in strengthening the Creekside Area, and can work independently or collaboratively along with residents to implement *LEAP Forward*'s recommendations.

BLOCK CLUBS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

A number of block clubs operate throughout the Creekside Area with varying capacity but with a close connection to residents. These groups could be a useful source of volunteers to implement *LEAP Forward*'s recommendations, especially for those requiring maintenance of property or monitoring of land ownership. The Southeast Waterfront Neighborhood Association seeks " to unite the many block-clubs within the Jefferson-Chalmers community. Its principle *[sic]* activities include fostering and supporting new block-clubs, maintaining vacant land and properties, as well as providing a forum for citizens to express their needs."[3]

CREEKSIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Since 1992, the Creekside CDC has grown into a positive force in its area. It remains a volunteer-driven organization with no paid staff, yet it is able to accomplish much through community engagement.[4]

Creekside CDC's main goals and programming are: environmental preservation, community engagement, and housing.[4] "Creekside's housing plans call for the stabilization of existing stock, the development of single-family residential infill and higher density, multi-family residential along the Jefferson frontage and along Dickerson."[5] Since its inception, Creekside has repaired existing housing, preserved historic mixed-use apartment buildings, and provided affordable housing for low-income families.

HOPE COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT (HCOD)

HOPE Community Outreach and Development is a community development organization located on Jefferson in the Creekside Area. HOPE is associated with Hope Community Church. HOPE puts on educational programs for children and organizes volunteers for local projects. They are also a partner in JEBA's Jefferson East Community Patrol program.[6]

JEFFERSON-CHALMERS CITIZENS' DISTRICT COUNCIL

The City created the Jefferson-Chalmers Citizens District Council in 1971 "to empower and assist the community affected by urban renewal."[7] Their focus is now on stabilizing the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood, which includes the Creekside Area as well as properties bordering the north side of Jefferson from Continental to Alter roads. The council, made up of area residents, makes recommendations that carry great weight with City Council on whether to approve new developments in the neighborhood.

JEFFERSON EAST BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Jefferson East Business Association (JEBA), formally organized in 1994, focuses on the commercial corridor on Jefferson from St. Jean to Alter Road.[8] JEBA has paid staff, as well as a working relationship with many stakeholders in the area, especially businesses.

JEBA's two main program areas are economic development services and economic stabilization services. Programs include:[9]

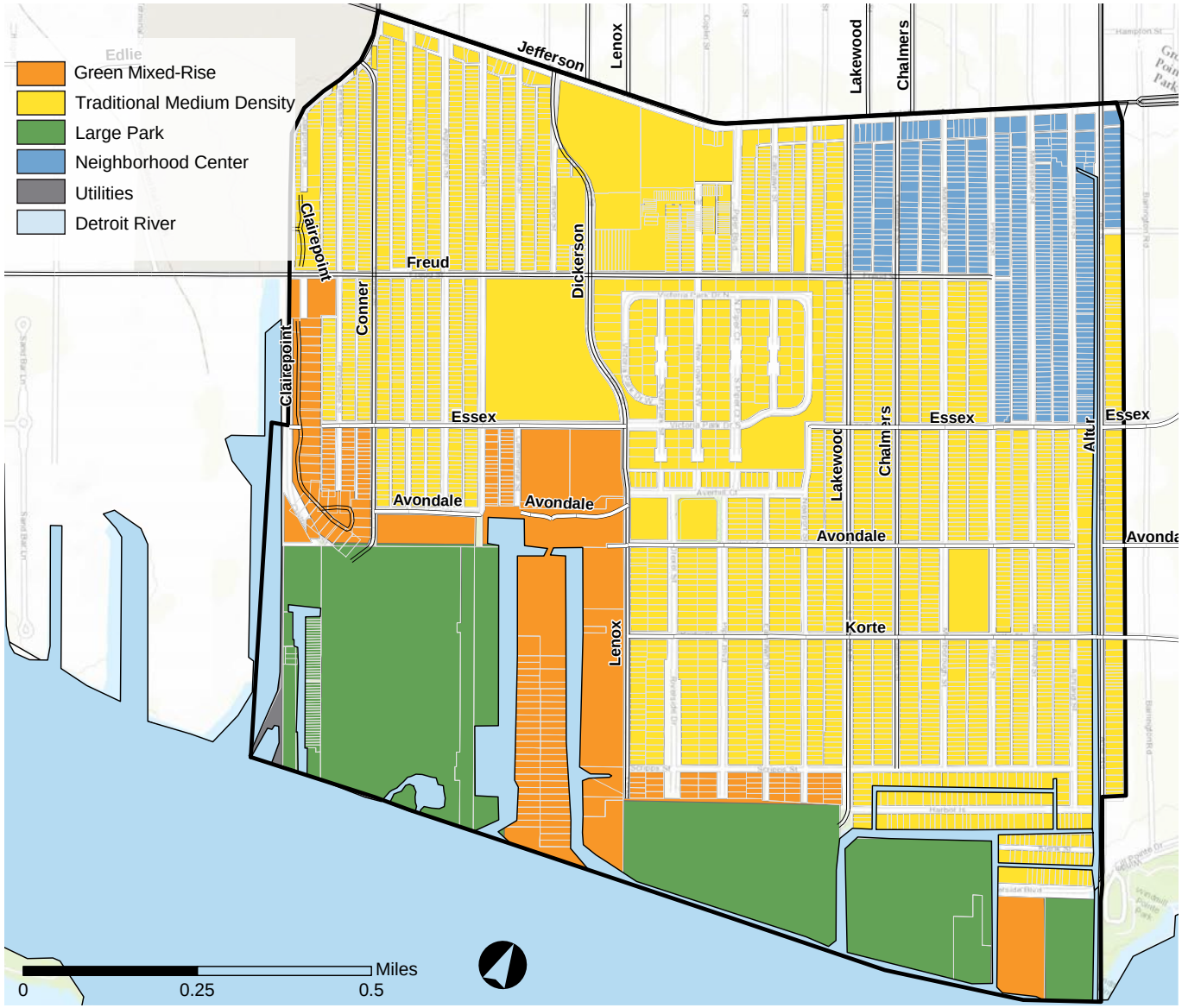
- Façade, tenant improvement, and pre-development grants
- Economic development, land use, and community planning
- Streetscape enhancement planning and implementation
- Jazzin' on Jefferson – a Jazz centered cultural event
- Jefferson East Community Patrol – residents patrol the area to report crime and other issues

FIG. 7.2

Community Art on Jefferson Ave
Photo by: Margaret Dewar

FIG. 7.3

Detroit Future City 50-Year Land Use Plan – Creekside Area



Source: *Detroit Future City* 50-Year Land Use Plan, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

MAJOR PLANNING EFFORTS

Creekside has been part of multiple neighborhood planning efforts, including LEAP. This section outlines recent residential planning efforts in the area.

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PLAN JEFFERSON – CHALMERS

In 2013, the principal community development organizations in the area came together to create a neighborhood stabilization plan with the help of Michigan Community Resources.[10] The plan lists strategies to improve the neighborhood's quality of life in an attempt to limit further vacancy (see Chapter 2).

DETROIT FUTURE CITY

Detroit Future City (DFC) marked most of the Creekside Area as residential in its proposed 50-year land use scenario.[11] DFC designated the northeast corner as a "Neighborhood Center" (a mixed use commercial and residential type), much of the southwest corner around Maheras-Gentry Park as "Green Mixed Rise" (a dense residential type), the three parks in the south as parks, and the rest of the area as "Traditional Medium Density" (residential). DFC listed enough range in possible densities and uses for these land use designations that they should be compatible with at least LEAP's residential designations in Creekside. (see Figure 7.3 for DFC's vision for the Creekside Area.)

DFC references the Creekside Area in other sections of the plan as well. For instance, DFC marks Jefferson Ave from Dickerson to Alter Road as a "Commercial Corridor in 2030" with a "traditional strip" designation, as well as a "traditional node" designation on the eastern part of that strip.[12] DFC designates Creekside as a "Blue Infrastructure Priority Area,"[13] which is compatible with *LEAP Forward's* recommendation to apply green infrastructure treatments to the area.

Existing Conditions and Challenges

Like the rest of the lower eastside, Creekside faces challenges of vacancy, tax foreclosure, high public ownership and blight. This section explains how these challenges apply specifically to Creekside. Understanding these challenges provides a basis for the rest of this chapter to illustrate how applying LEAP Forward's recommendations for stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land can implement LEAP's vision.

FIG. 7.4

Residential Property Vacancy

Residential Vacancy Rate

According to the 2013 Jefferson-Chalmers Neighborhood Stabilization Plan, the area has a 43% property vacancy rate, including an 8% rate for vacant structures.[14] The northwest corner of Creekside and the three blocks west of Alter Road contain the majority of vacant lots.

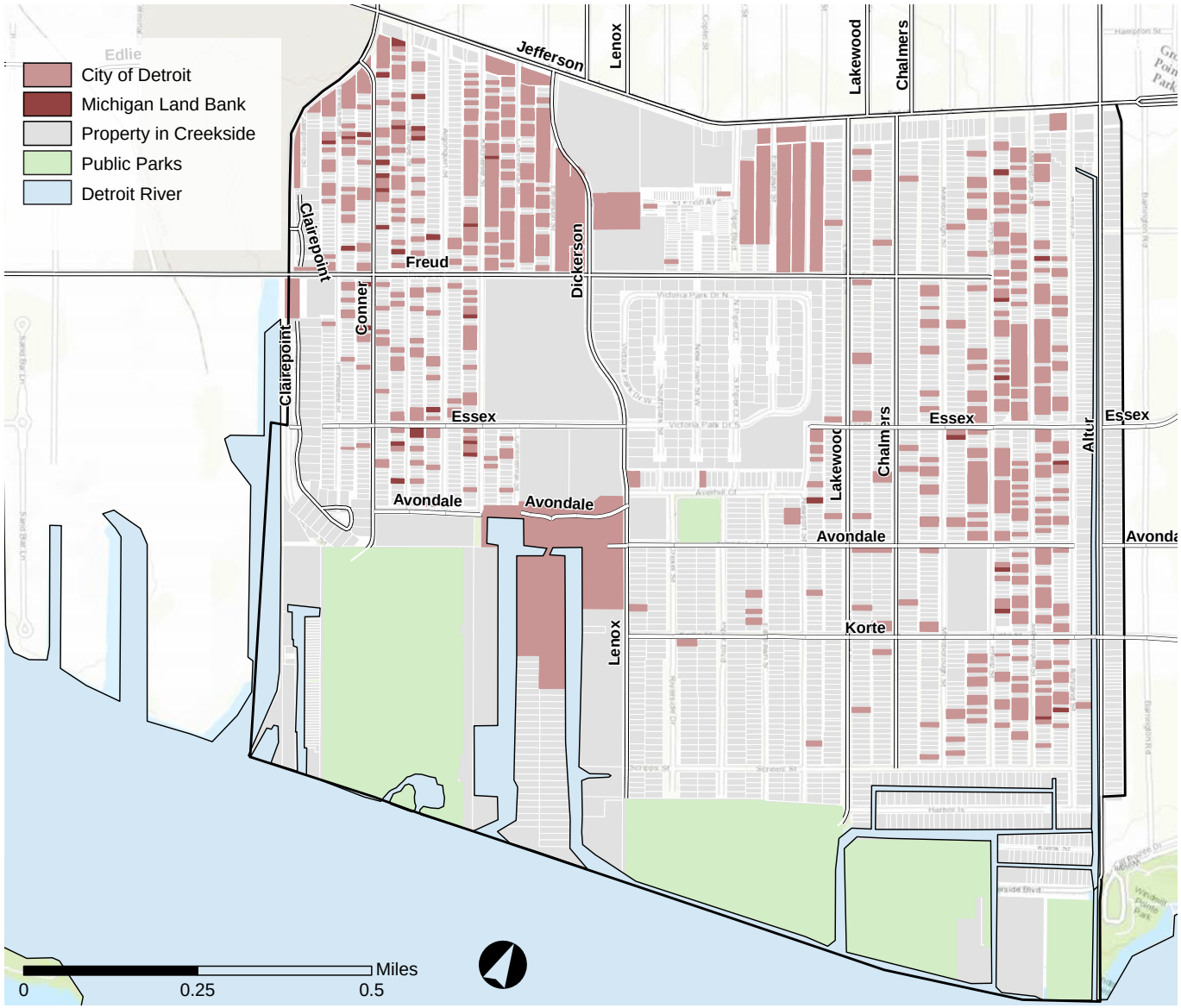
Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; MCR/NSI, 2013; SmithGroup JJR, 2012, ESRI, 2013.

Publicly Owned Properties

The City and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority own 24% and 2% of properties in the Creekside Area, respectively. Publicly owned properties appear in clusters in two areas: in the northwest corner and a block west of Creekside's eastern boundary. Fig 7.5 shows the publicly owned property in Creekside. More than 90% of publicly owned parcels in Creekside are vacant lots, most of which exist in areas that LEAP envisions as Spacious Residential, Urban Homestead, and Naturescape.[17]

FIG. 7.5

Publicly Owned Property in Creekside (2013)



Source: Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 7.6

Properties Pending Demolition in Creekside (2013)

Pending Demolitions

Over 200 properties in the Creekside Area were on the City of Detroit's demolition list in February 2013 as shown in Fig 7.6, most of which are located in highly vacant areas.[15] When these properties, which make up 6% of the properties in Creekside, are demolished, Creekside will have more vacant lots in this highly vacant area. Properties catalogued for demolition and presented to the Mayor's Office by Creekside CDC in 2012 all appear on the demolition list.[16] As of early May 2013, these properties have not been demolished.

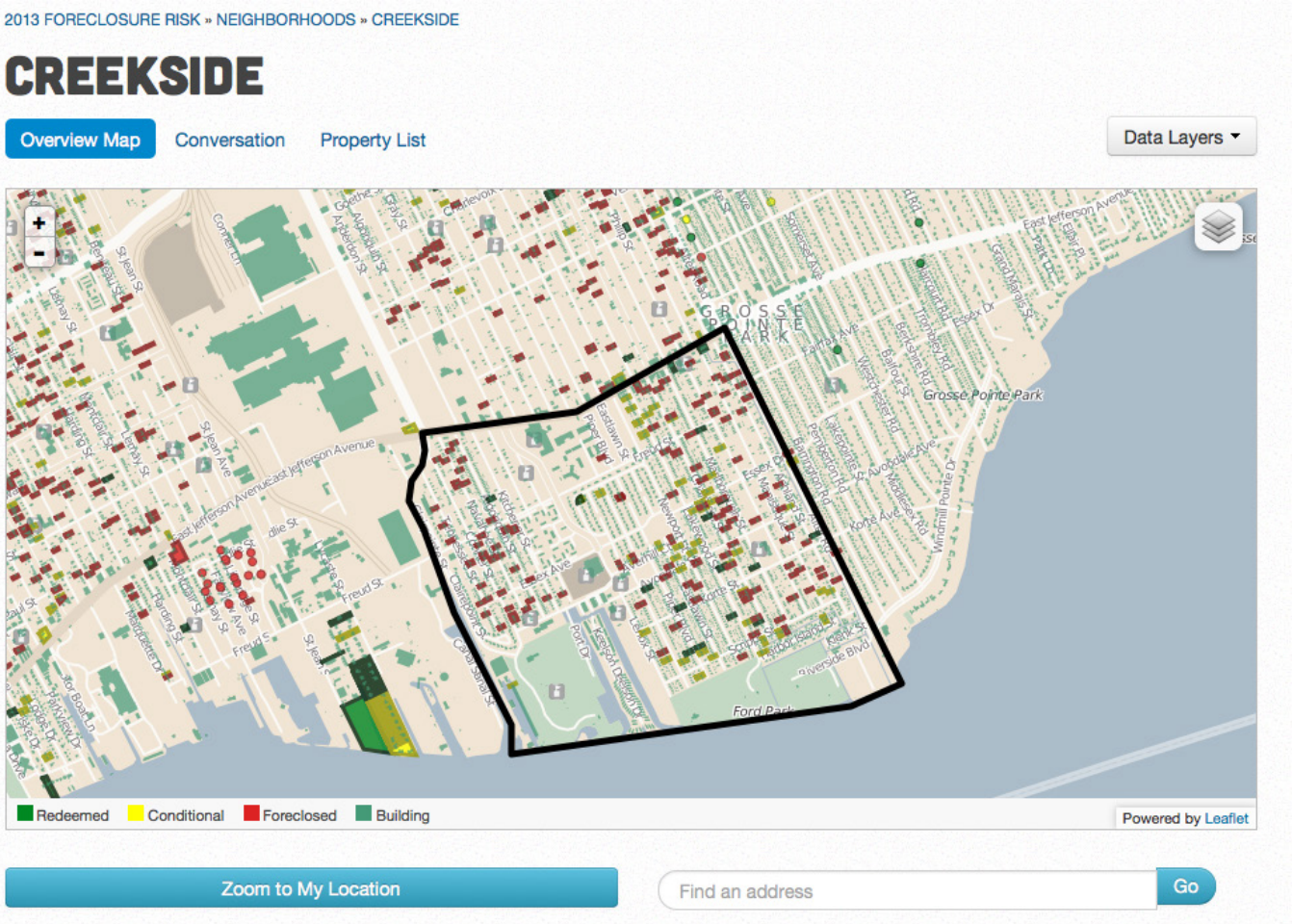
Source: Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Tax Foreclosure Properties

The Wayne County Treasurer foreclosed on 127 properties in Creekside at the end of March 2013. These properties, primarily in the Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies, will be offered in the Wayne County tax foreclosure auction unless their owners pay back taxes, fees, and interest or a public entity purchases them using right of refusal. At the auction, the fate of the foreclosed properties is uncertain. Future homeowners, responsible landlords, or speculators may purchase these properties, or in the event that they go unsold, the properties may revert to public ownership.

FIG. 7.7

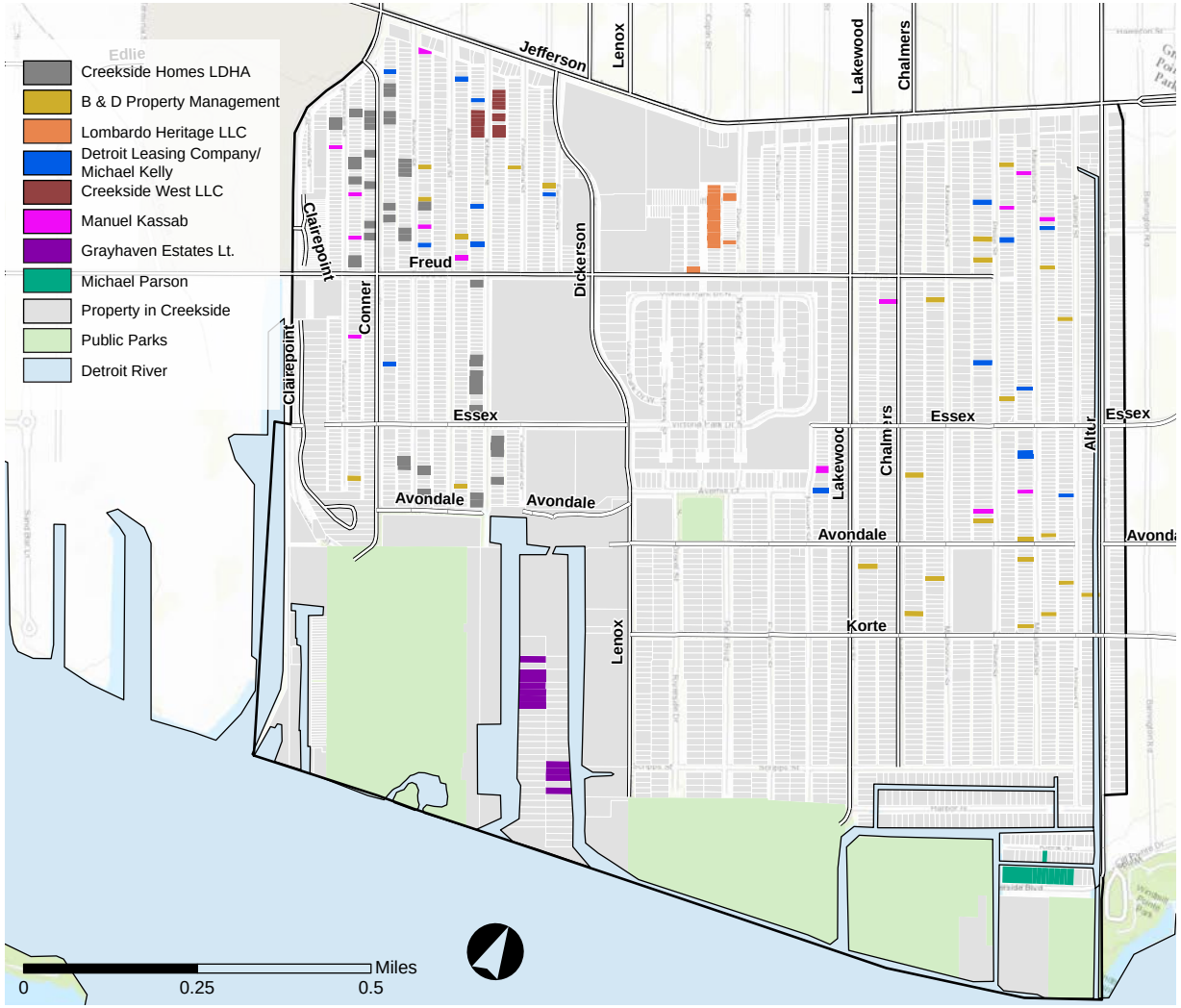
Screenshot of Tax Foreclosed Property in Creekside (April 2013)



Source: WhyDontWeOwnThis, 2013.

FIG. 7.8

Major Private Owners (2012)



Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Major Landowners

Several private landowners own multiple properties in the Creekside Area. Fig 7.8 shows eight large landowners who had more than ten properties each in 2012. Some of them are real estate developers, such as Creekside West and Grayhaven Estates. Their properties are located in the west and east of Creekside. Creekside Homes LDHA is a partnership between a private developer and Creekside CDC, managing about 50 Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) units primarily in northwest Creekside.

Some of these landowners have thousands of properties in the City of Detroit, such as Bert Dearing and Michael Kelly. Several private landowners own multiple properties in Creekside, such as Michael Parson, who has eleven properties clustered near the riverfront.

Failed Projects

Creekside's riverfront location and strong neighborhoods make it a more attractive development market than other areas in the lower eastside. However, several proposed development projects have failed, leaving large areas of unmaintained vacant land. For example, in 2008, the General Retirement System trustees approved a $5 million investment from the city's public pension fund in Melvin Washington's residential project, "The Pointe at Belle Harbor," in the lower east corner of Creekside.[18] This project never materialized, and the seven-acre property's current owners aim to sell the vacant, unmaintained site for $3.9 million.[19] Fig. 7.9 shows the 2013 conditions of the site.

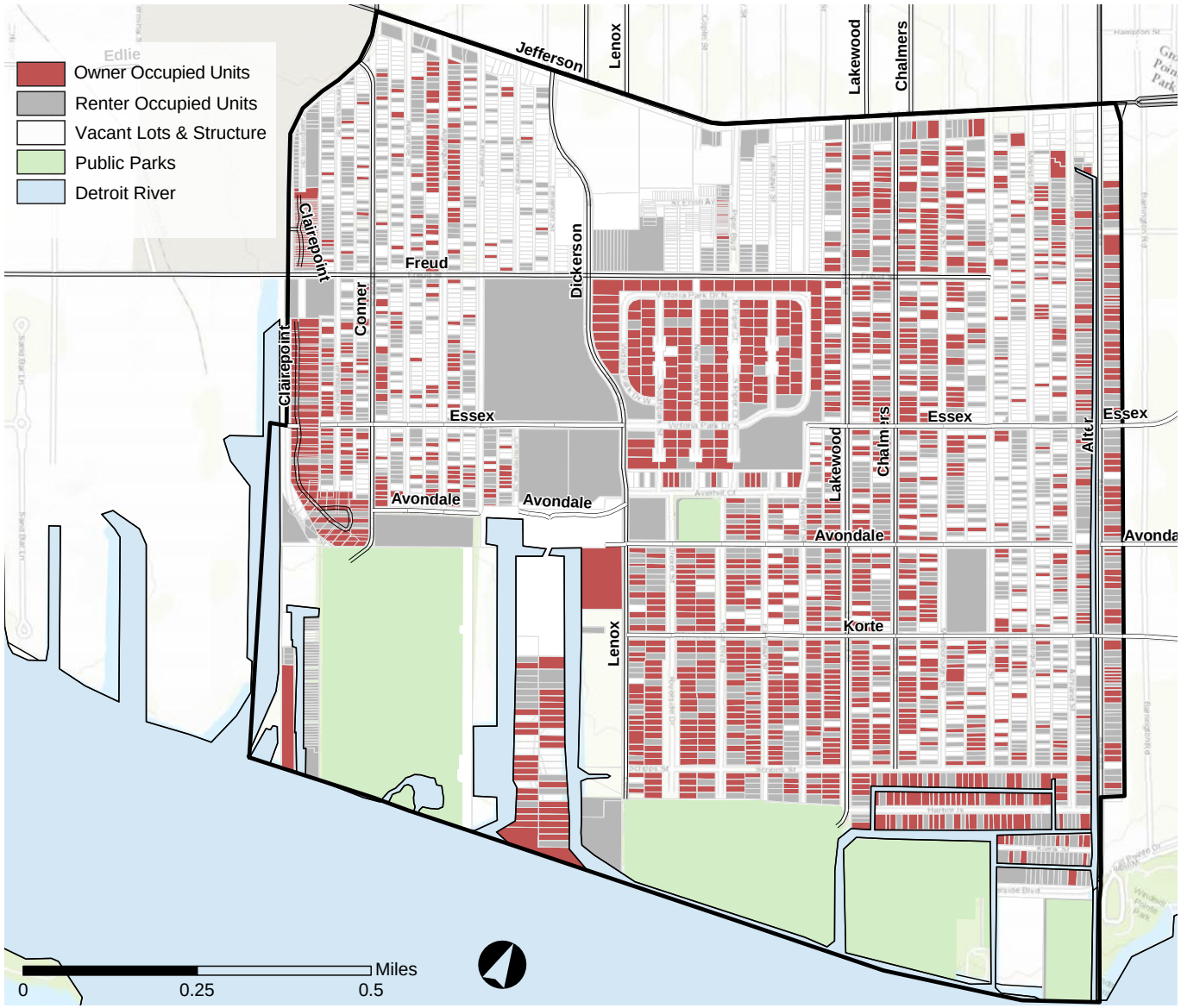
FIG. 7.9

Pointe at Belle Harbor Site, As Indicated By Orange Boundary

Source: Bing Maps, 2013; Belle Harbour: http://youtu.be/lqlBbexlgXM, 2008.

FIG. 7.10

Homeownership in Creekside (2013)



Homeownership

A high homeownership rate can contribute to stable neighborhoods, as more occupied housing means more eyes on the street to be aware of and intervene in potentially undesirable activities in the neighborhood. Fig 7.10 shows the owner-occupied structures and renter-occupied structures based on the taxpayer's address. Owner-occupied structures were determined by crosschecking the property address and the taxpayer's address. In Creekside, several areas have high homeownership rates, such as Victoria Park and the blocks around the western half of Korte, Scripps and Harbor streets.

Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Data Driven Detroit , 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

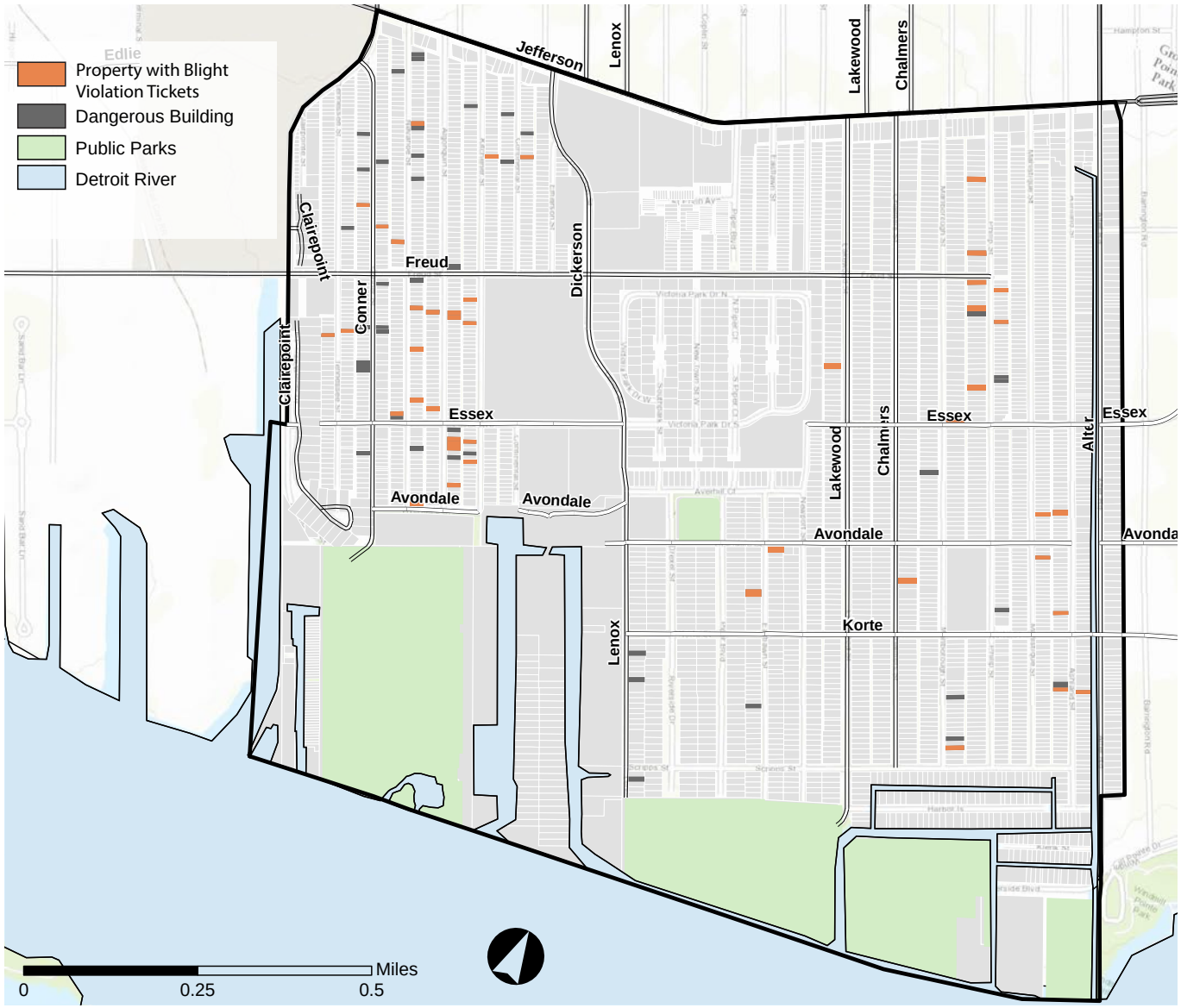
Blight Violations

According to the Detroit Residential Parcel Survey in 2009, over 80 properties were in poor condition in the Creekside Area. As of April 2013, the City Department of Administrative Hearings had sent blight violation tickets to more than half of these properties. Most of these properties are in the northwest corner of the Creekside Area.[20] Figure 7.11 shows properties on the City of Detroit's demolition list, properties on Creekside's demolition ranking list, and properties in Creekside with outstanding blight violation notices.

Source: Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Detroit Blight Violation Database, 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 7.11

Blight Violations and Properties Slated for Demolition in Creekside (2013)



Establishing these existing conditions provides a basis for applying the recommendations in Chapters 4 through 6 to Creekside. The next part of this chapter describes how residents and community organizations in the Creekside Area can implement these recommendations to further LEAP's goals of stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land.

Stabilization Strategies in the Traditional Residential, Spacious Residential, and Village Hub Typologies

LEAP designates about two-thirds of Creekside as Traditional Residential, Spacious Residential, or Village Hub. This plan groups these typologies into the Stabilization Area, given LEAP's goal to stabilize dense, strong neighborhoods characteristic of those typologies (see Figure 7.12). This section applies the recommendations in Chapter 5 for stabilizing neighborhoods to the Creekside Area, potentially impacting 12% of the total properties in Creekside.

About a third of the properties in Creekside's Stabilization Area are vacant lots. The City owns only 17% of total lots, not including parks (compared to a 48% City ownership rate in Creekside's Repurposing Area). However, current trends indicate that public ownership and vacancy in Creekside could increase. For example, the Wayne County Treasurer foreclosed on 100 properties in March 2013, a slight decrease from the 116 properties the Treasurer foreclosed on in 2012.[21] Residents and community organizations in Creekside can address issues relating to increased public ownership by following the recommendations below.

Recommendations

Prioritize monitoring in Traditional Residential areas

Chapter 4 outlined a number of strategies for LEAP area residents and community organizations to monitor land ownership. Monitoring ownership of a neighborhood the size of Creekside is time-consuming, but area organizations, smaller block clubs, and neighborhood associations can prioritize monitoring in order to achieve certain goals and partner with DNPE to

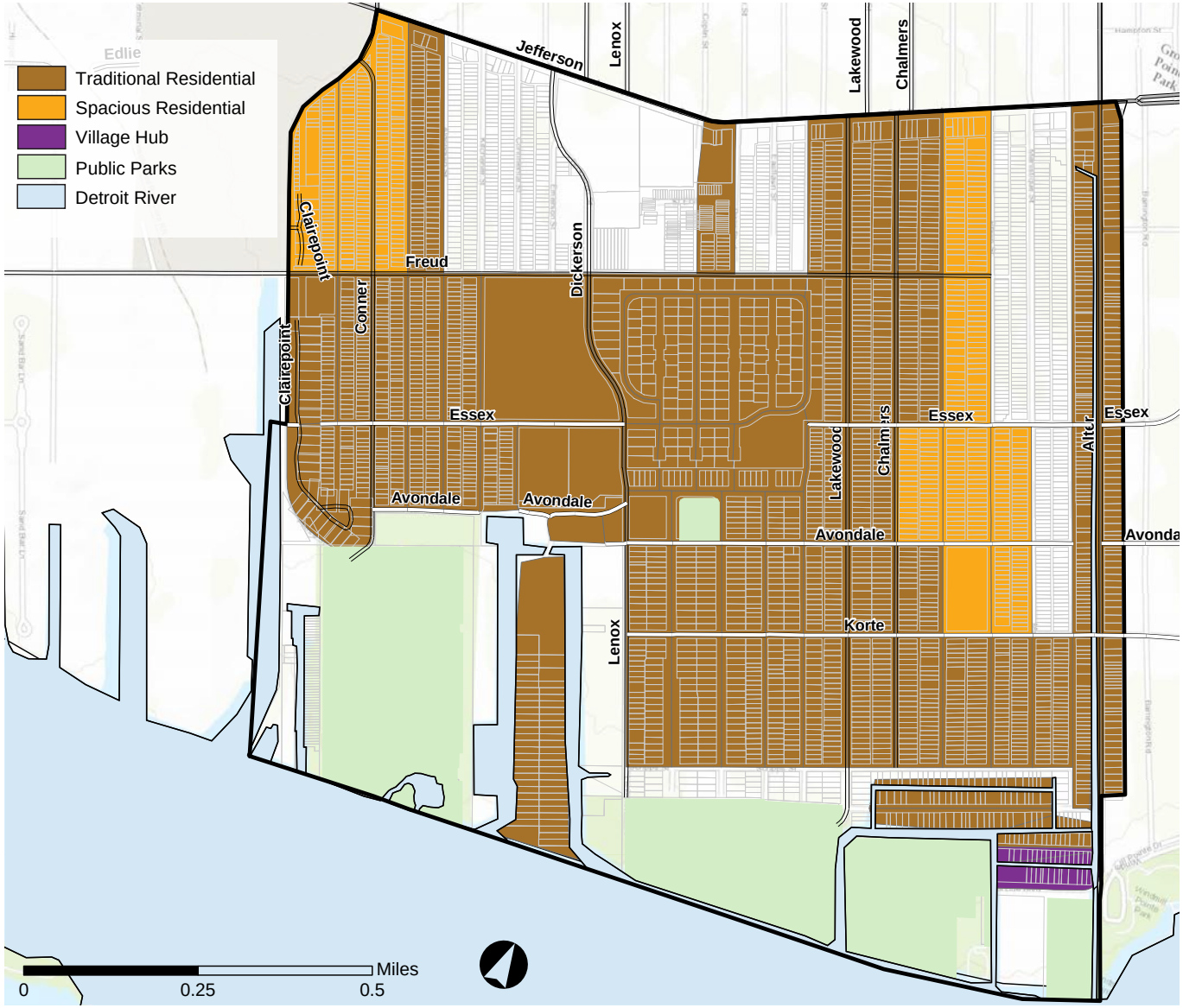
LEAP Forward recommends prioritizing monitoring land ownership in the Traditional Residential properties in Creekside. Changes in ownership in Traditional Residential areas have a greater effect on residents because of the population and housing density of those blocks.

Monitoring property ownership changes is most useful during the tax foreclosure process and the County's annual tax auction. If monitored early enough in the process, neighborhood organizations can ensure that all property owners facing foreclosure are aware of their options. Organizations can inform owners of the County's payment plans and other programs in place to keep residents in their homes. Monitoring properties at the auction is important in order to see which properties in the neighborhood went unsold, thus becoming City

owned. These properties may then be eligible for purchase as side lots or for use as green infrastructure. The County foreclosed on almost 100 properties in Traditional Residential blocks in the Creekside Area in early 2013.[22] Due to this high number of properties, *LEAP Forward* recommends that a neighborhood-wide organization such as Creekside CDC work with block clubs and neighborhood associations to break up the list into smaller areas for easier monitoring.

Prioritizing monitoring in Traditional Residential areas also makes monitoring property owners who continual-

FIG. 7.12
Stabilization Area



Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

ly accrue blight violations in Creekside easier. Bert Dearing's company, B&D Property Management, for example, has two blight violations in Creekside as of early 2013.[23] While these owners also own blighted properties outside of Traditional Residential areas, targeting repeat offenders only in Traditional Residential blocks is more useful for stabilizing the neighborhood (see Chapter 5). Appendix E contains a list of owners with blight violation notices in the Creekside Area.

Monitor the marketing and notifications of public land sales, as well as websites aimed at selling properties in Detroit to private owners, including Detroit Property Exchange, Craigslist, and eBay.

Jefferson-Chalmers Citizens District Council can monitor marketing and notifications of public land sales, private land sales, and potential real estate developments to keep current on potential development in the Creekside neighborhood. Because the Citizens District Council is mandated to provide recommendations to the City on development involving public land, being aware of project details can provide more time for citizen input and prevent unwanted projects that conflict with LEAP's vision. Additionally, Jefferson-Chalmers Citizen District Council can work with Creekside CDC to share this information with other organizations and residents in the area.

Adapt new crowdsourcing web platforms, such as Ushahidi or Textizen, as participatory tools to gather property information.

Creekside community organizations can partners with block clubs to use Ushahidi (see Chapter 4) to notify area residents of major changes to vacant land or structures in the area. For example, if a house recently caught fire and is open to the elements or if squatters move in, a neighbor could send a text to the Ushahidi system (running on a server hosted by DNPE) that alerts Creekside block groups or individuals who want to intervene. Creekside is particularly well suited to this system, because the higher density in this neighborhood means more eyes looking for changes.

Similarly, Textizen would provide Creekside groups an opportunity to receive input outside of community meetings via text messages. A simple example would be surveying residents' opinions on a change to the hours of Mariner Park. Creekside CDC or JEBA could also use this system to collect feedback on divisive issues to expedite decision-making.

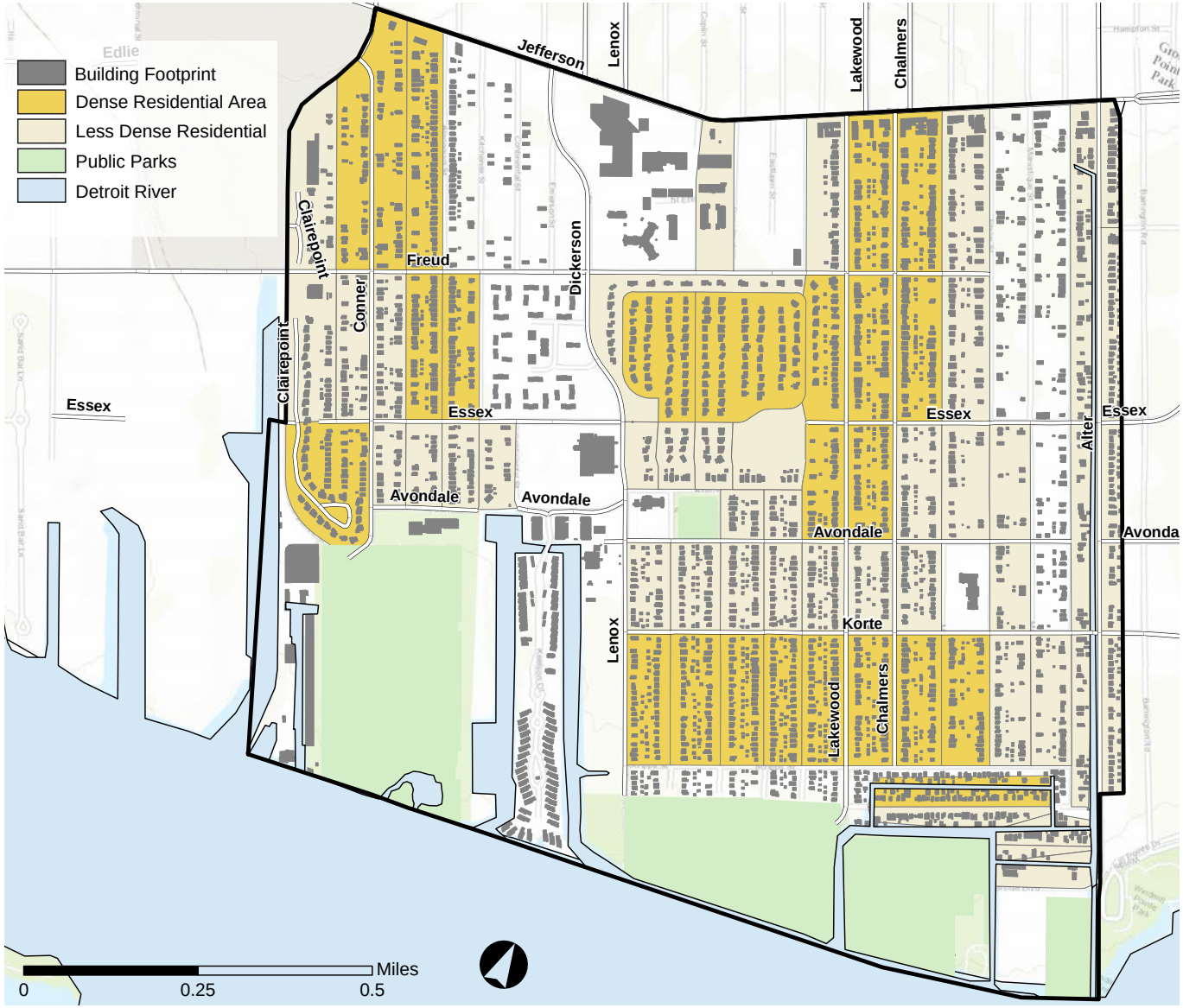
Target tax foreclosure prevention and education programs in areas with a high concentration of owner-occupied residences.

In order to help prevent homeowners from losing their homes through the tax foreclosure process, community organizations and residents can assist those at risk through education. Preserving owner occupancy can help neighborhoods remain stable.

FIG. 7.13

Density in Traditional Residential Blocks

Fig. 7.13 highlights the densest Traditional Residential blocks in Creekside, where blocks are most intact. These blocks contained 988 owner-occupied homes in 2009. Hope Community Outreach and Development and the Southeast Waterfront Neighborhood Association, organizations tasked with identifying foreclosure prevention resources in the NSI plan, can work with block groups to help residents understand the tax foreclosure process (see Chapter 4).[24]



Source: SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Data Driven Detroit 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2013; ESRI, 2013.

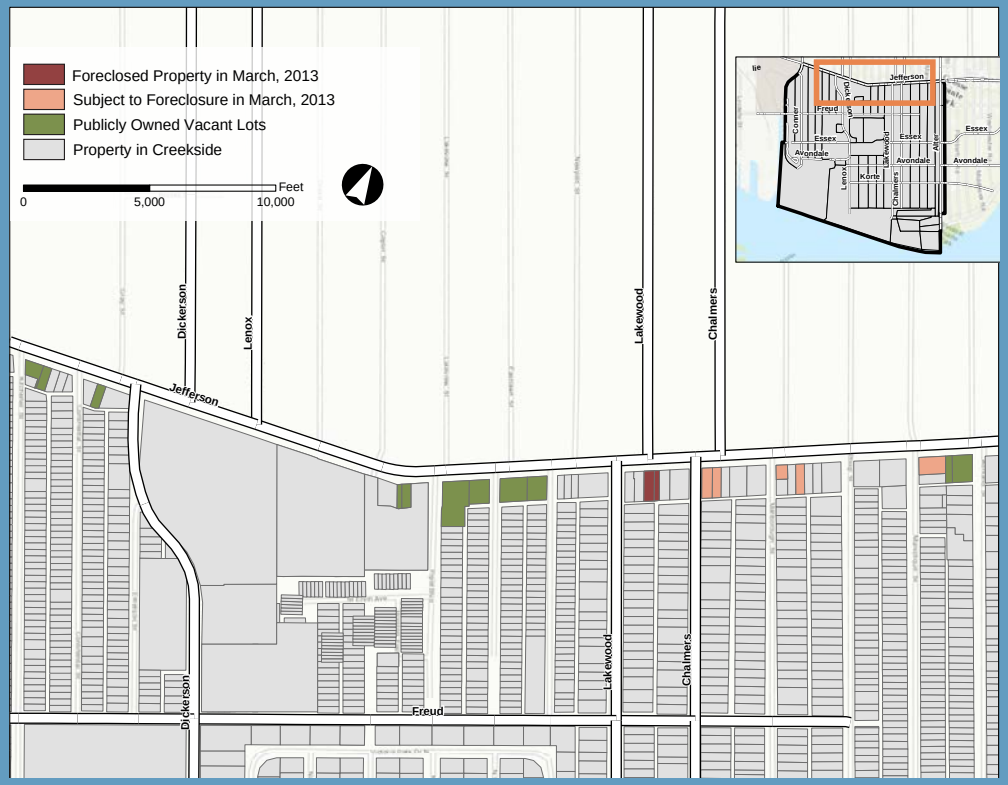
SIDE LOTS IN THE JEFFERSON COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Jefferson East Business Association could encourage the purchase of publicly owned properties by adjacent property owners in good standing (see Chapter 5). Figure 7.14 shows Jefferson's publicly owned vacant properties in green and properties subject to foreclosure in 2013 in red. JEBA could educate adjacent owners of the publicly owned vacant lots as to the City's property conveyance program outlined in Chapter 5. Because the property is zoned for commercial use on a major thoroughfare, the City would likely charge more than the typical $10 per frontage foot that is used to calculate vacant residential lots. JEBA could also inform nearby property owners about Jefferson's tax-foreclosed properties, in case one of those owners is interested in bidding on the property in the coming tax auction.

Source: WhyDontWeOwnThis, January 2013; WhyDontWeOwnThis, April 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 7.14

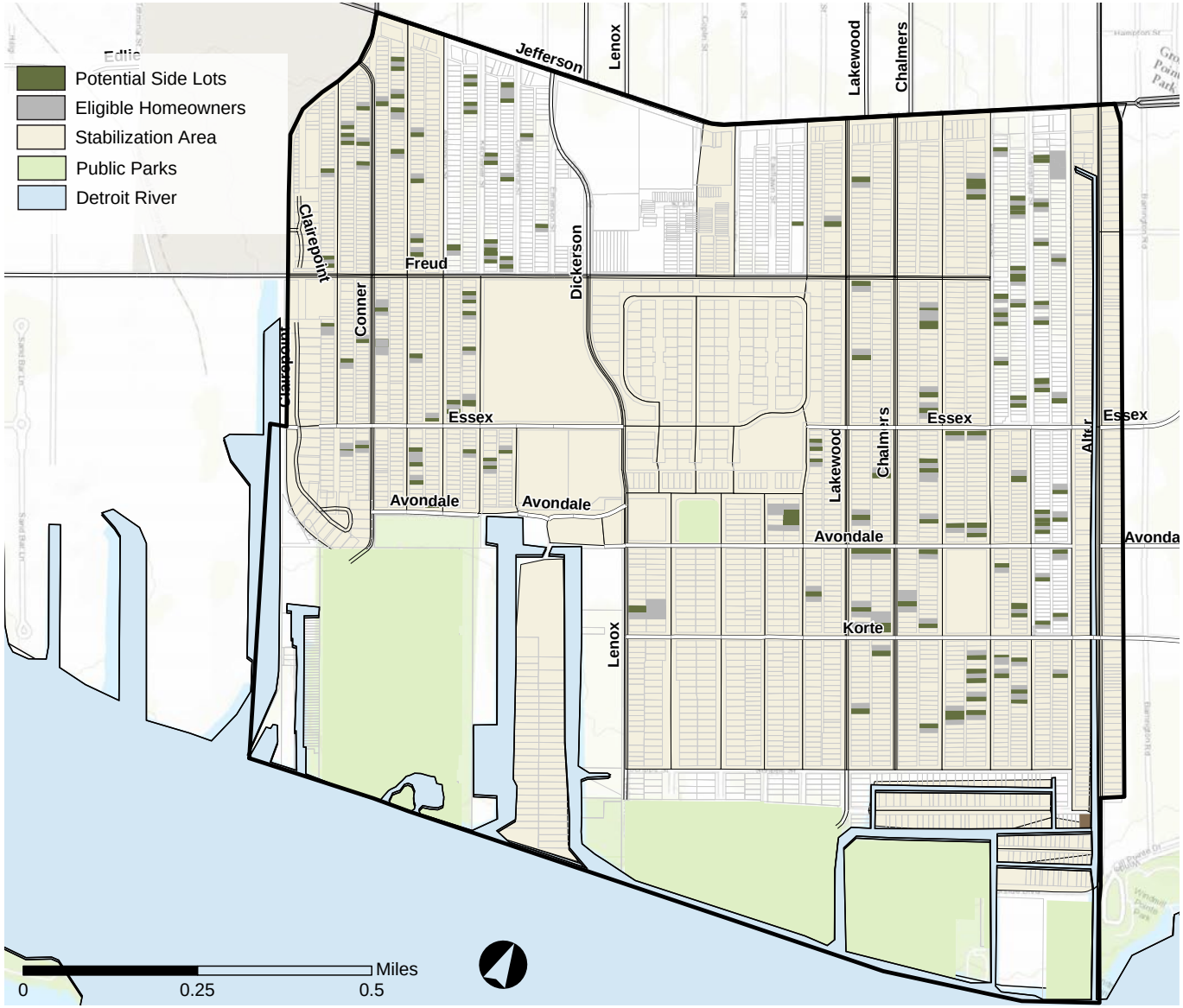
VACANT LOTS AND TAX FORECLOSURES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF JEFFERSON AVE



Michigan Community Resources and United Community Housing Coalition also have resources and programming available to help neighborhood organizations implement foreclosure prevention education programs, including the Tax Foreclosure Prevention Project, which offers legal help to keep homeowners in their homes.[25]

FIG. 7.15

Potential Side Lots in Creekside



Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013; WhyDontWeOwnThis, January 2013.

Facilitate residents' purchase of publicly owned side lots.

Fig. 7.15 shows over 100 potential side lot properties in the Creekside Area. These potential side lots are publicly owned vacant properties adjacent to eligible homeowners who have no delinquent taxes with any property in the LEAP area. Putting these properties into the hands of responsible owners can improve stewardship of lots.

Creekside CDC, Southeast Waterfront Neighborhood Association, and Hope Community Outreach and Development can educate residents near these properties about the process for purchasing side lots from the City and land banks (see Appendix C for a handout detailing the process to purchase a side lot from the City). Because so many potential side lot properties exist in this area, community organizations could prioritize those in the dense Traditional Residential areas first. In addition, *LEAP Forward* recommends working with the City's Planning and Development Department to lower the cost and ease the process of purchasing a side lot in order to increase participation in the program. Turning these lots into maintained, taxable properties will ultimately benefit the City.

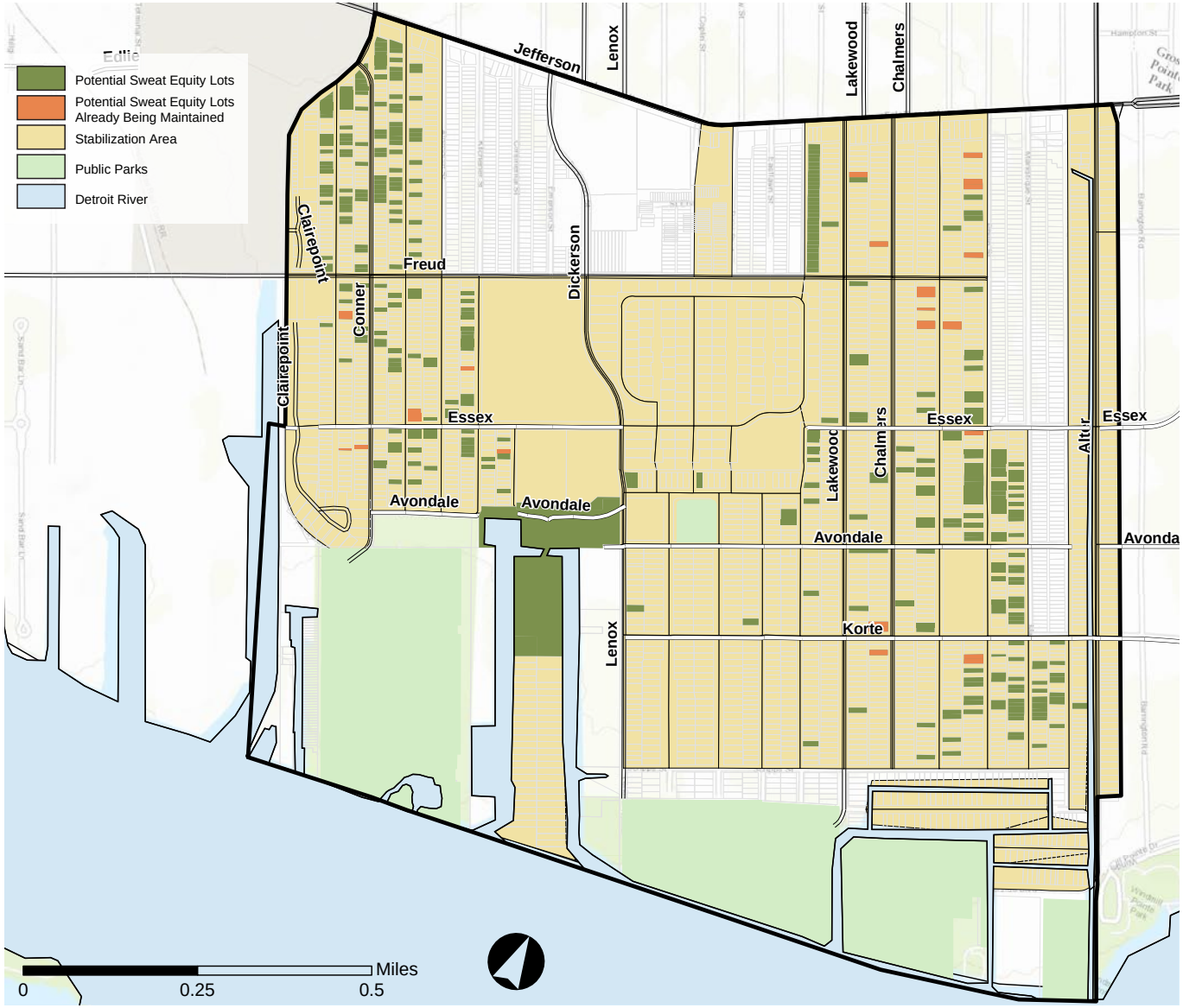
Work with public entities to offer property conveyance and sweat equity programs.

With a sweat equity program, residents in Creekside could gain credit toward the purchase of neighborhood property if they can maintain these lots for at least a year. As the tax base for the City of Detroit continues to decrease, making city services more difficult to sustain, such sweat equity programs could maintain publicly owned vacant property and stabilize Creekside through blight reduction.

Fig. 7.16 shows 452 potential sweat-equity lots in the Creekside Area. These lots are all vacant and publicly owned. Some of these vacant lots are adjacent to the eligible homeowners as described before, so these lots can be treated either as side lots or sweat-equity lots. At present, some residents have already been taking care of publicly owned lots in Creekside based on field observations, as in orange in the figure. These lots could also be eligible for a property conveyance program, but residents in Creekside may prefer a sweat equity program as a low-cost alternative, particularly if the resident has been maintaining the lot for some time.

FIG. 7.16

Potential Sweat Equity Lots in Creekside (2013)



Source: Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 7.17

Potential Rehab and Resale Properties in Creekside's Stabilization Zone

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Partner with the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority and Detroit Land Bank Authority to rehabilitate and resell vacant homes in good condition.

Land banks can rehab and resell homes themselves or partner with affordable housing developers to renovate houses and sell or rent them. The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority awards properties at no cost to nonprofits that develop affordable housing.[26] Habitat for Humanity, for example, has rehabilitated houses in Detroit, including in the Creekside Area. The Michigan Land Bank then sells them at low cost to families in need.[27] The Detroit Land Bank also offers properties to affordable housing developers, although at a higher cost.

As Figure 7.17 illustrates, Creekside has ten vacant publicly owned structures, based on a driving survey, that an affordable housing developer could rehabilitate and resell through this kind of program. For rehabilitation and resale to be effective, community organizations in Creekside should focus on properties located in areas with higher property values such as those around Chalmers, Lakewood, and Scripps. In areas with the highest property values, Creekside CDOs could partner with the Detroit Land Bank to rehab and resell these properties at or near market rate. Areas with lower property values would require subsidies and partnership with an organization eligible for receiving such subsidies, such as Creekside CDC or Habitat for Humanity.

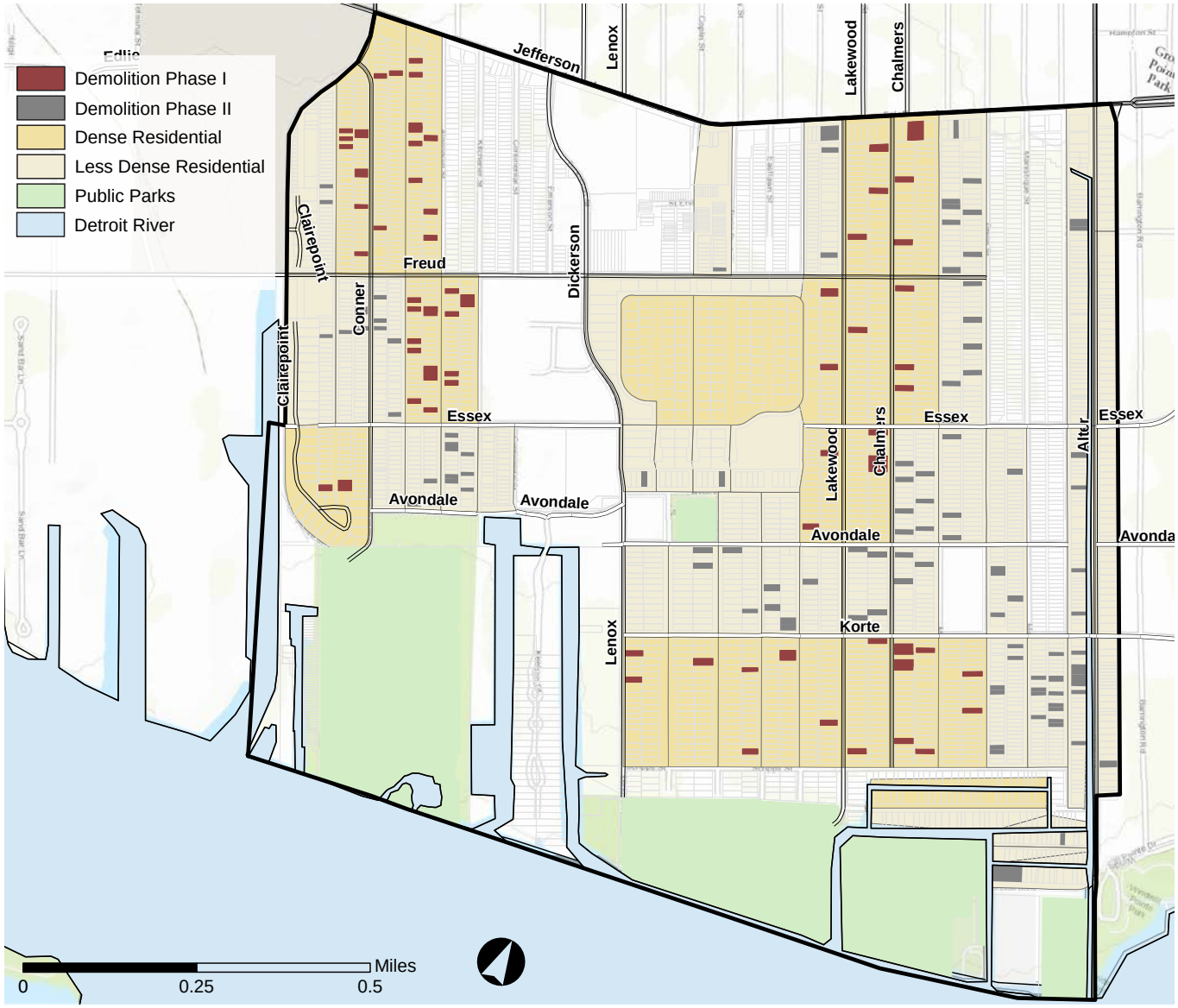
Advocate with City officials for targeting Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies for the demolition and deconstruction of vacant buildings.

The City of Detroit has limited resources to tear down abandoned and dilapidated buildings. Community organizations such as Creekside CDC have provided the City with input on which buildings are the most troublesome and in greater need of demolition. Creekside CDC can heighten the effectiveness of these lists by prioritizing properties in need of demolition and deconstruction by typology and housing density. The most important demolitions and deconstructions are in dense residential areas, where removing blighted structures, which can be havens for undesirable activities, can improve the appearance, stability, safety, and property values of a neighborhood.

Fig. 7.5 shows the 182 properties slated for demolition by the City of Detroit in the Creekside Area. As of late 2012, these properties had yet to be demolished. Figure 7.18 prioritizes this list of demolitions according to typology and housing density. The areas marked as “Demolition Phase I” are the densest Traditional Residential blocks. The “Demolition Phase II” are areas LEAP designated as Traditional or Spacious Residential in the future but are currently less dense than Phase I blocks.

FIG. 7.18

Prioritizing Demolitions/Deconstructions in Creekside's Stabilization Zone

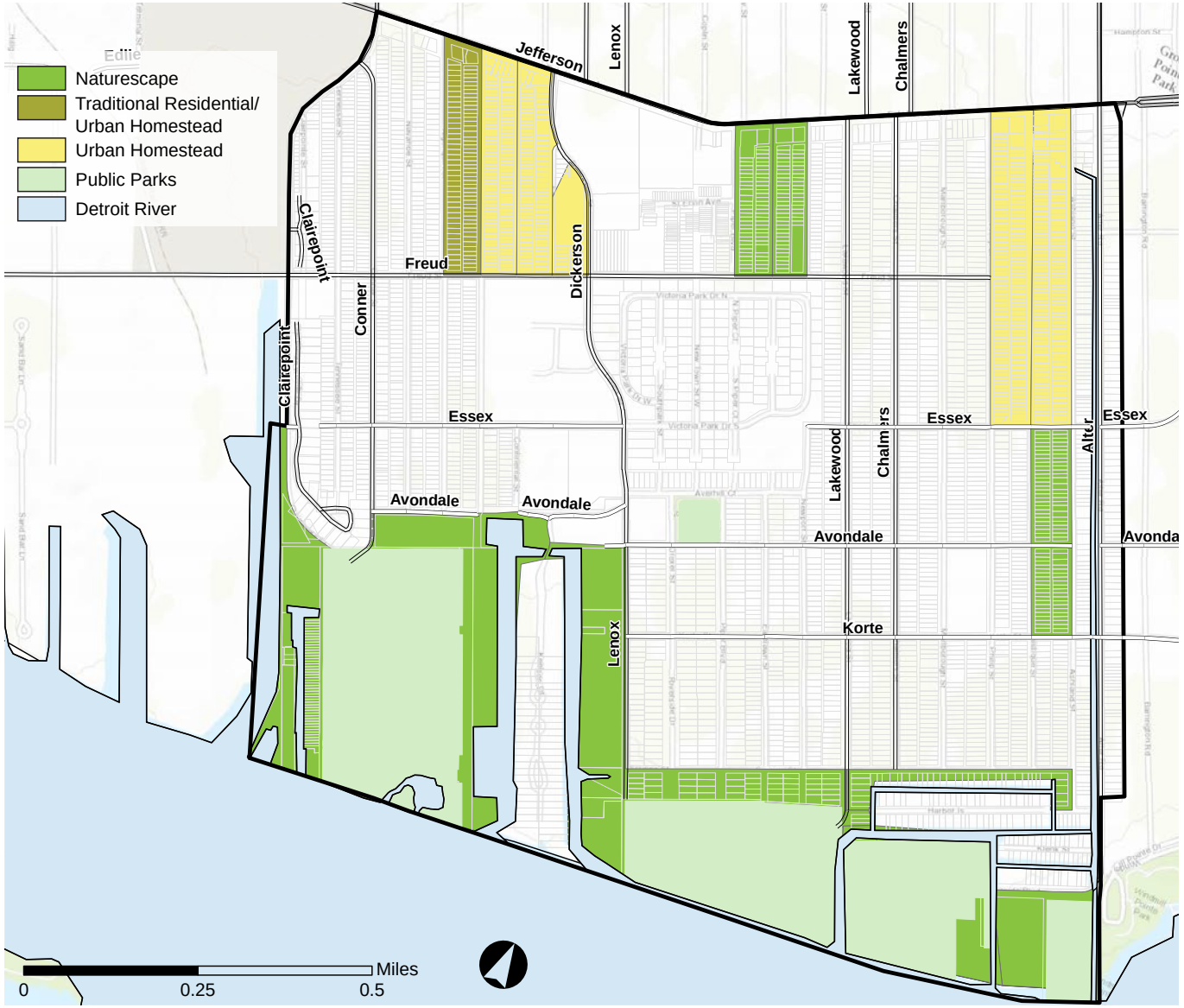


Appendix E provides a list of all "Demolition Phase I" properties. Creekside CDC can collaborate with area block groups to verify property condition on the ground and submit this newly prioritized list to the City, updating as needed using *LEAP Forward*'s suggested approach to prioritization. Creekside CDC could also partner with organizations advocating for deconstruction such as the WARM Training Center in order to determine which properties are good candidates for deconstruction.[28]

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Building Permits, 2012; Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 7.19

Repurposing Area



Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Repurposing Vacant Land Strategies in the Urban Homestead and Naturescape Typologies

LEAP has designated almost 30% of the Creekside neighborhood as Urban Homestead or Naturescape areas, typologies that fall into this plan's repurposing area category. These typologies contain more open space and fewer people, with 120 acres of parkland and a 63% vacancy rate. With the high vacancy of the repurposing area comes a greater level of public land ownership: the City owns half of the properties (excluding public parks) or 75% of the total repurposing area. This number may increase in the near future due to tax foreclosure. This high level of emptiness presents both a challenge for the Creekside neighborhood and an opportunity for the positive repurposing of land. The following section outlines strategies that community organizations can adopt to shape the future of vacant, publicly owned land, potentially repurposing 21% of Creekside's properties from vacant land into community assets.

Recommendations

Apply green infrastructure treatments.

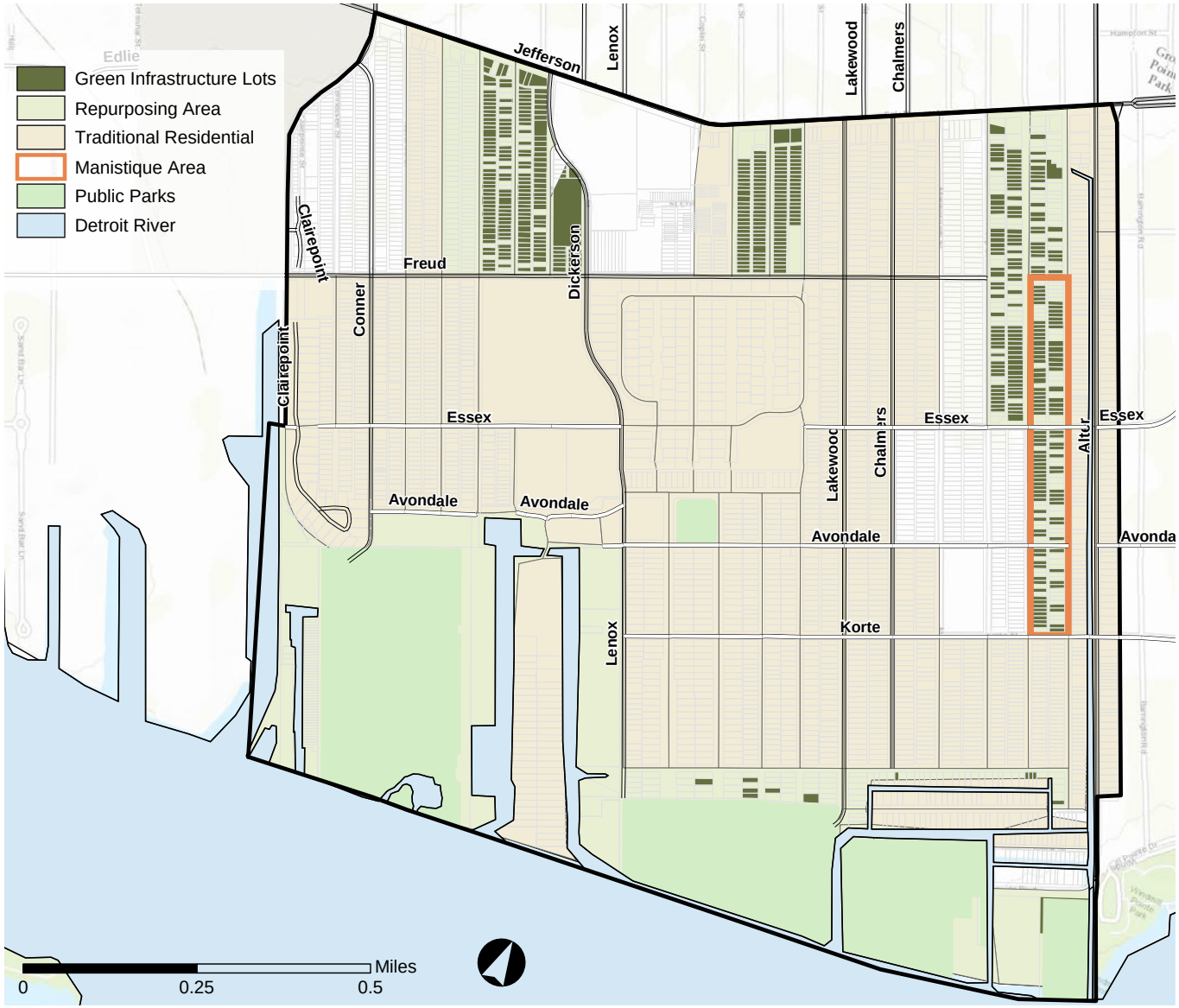
For the areas in Creekside that experience higher vacancies, green infrastructure treatments might be a particularly applicable strategy that could turn unmaintained vacant land into a space that serves a public purpose. Creekside could work with such organizations as the Greening of Detroit, which implements low-cost, low-maintenance green infrastructure treatments and can offer advice as to which treatments are appropriate where.[29]

Several green infrastructure treatments are meant for stormwater management; however, they have the added benefit of putting vacant blocks to use. In Creekside, where vacant blocks are next to dense blocks, such treatments can create a buffer between the two areas. They may not be applicable to all of Creekside's vacant land, but they can fill highly visible corner lots and other larger lots next to residencies. Additionally, because a majority of properties in the Creekside Area are within the 100-year floodplain, green infrastructure treatments can mitigate the potential for a flood by naturally managing stormwater runoff.[30] Moreover, Greening of Detroit receives funds from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department because of its efforts to mitigate stormwater runoff, so Creekside's location in the floodplain could make the area a prime candidate for a funded project. Manistique between Freud and Scripps serves as a perfect example of an area where green infrastructure improvements are appropriate. This stretch of properties suffers from high vacancy, is a flood prone area, and borders dense residential areas. This area should therefore be considered for green infrastructure improvements.

Figure 7.21 shows both publicly and privately owned vacant lots within the 100-year floodplain. Since these lots are already vacant, residents and community organizations in Creekside could begin applying green infrastructure treatments immediately. Many of these properties are contiguous, so larger-scale treatments such as tree plantings may be used. Although these

FIG. 7.20

Green Infrastructure Lots in 100-Year Flood Plain



treatments are easier to maintain than traditional landscaping, they will require the neighbors to pick up trash and periodically mow around the landscaping.

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; SEMCOG, 2009; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013; Michigan Land Bank, 2013.

FIG. 7.21

Potential Community Land Trust Lots

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013; Michigan Land Bank, 2013.

Participate in a Community Land Trust

Community organizations in Creekside listed park preservation as a priority in the Jefferson-Chalmers Neighborhood Stabilization Plan, with Creekside CDC taking the lead on determining feasibility of forming a community land trust (CLT) for such an endeavor.[31] Given this goal, publicly owned parks are prime candidates for a Creekside Area CLT. Including properties in the Naturescape typology could expand the CLT's reach. These properties, envisioned as "passive aesthetic meadows," would not require as much maintenance as traditional parks.[32] Additionally, if community organizations in the Creekside Area experience success with a park and Naturescape-focused community land trust, they could consider adding green infrastructure properties to the portfolio. See Fig. 7.21 for a map of public parks and Naturescape properties in the Creekside Area, and refer back to Fig. 7.20 to see the green infrastructure parcels.

Used in combination with green infrastructure treatments, managing land through a trust can turn vacant lots in the Creekside Area into an asset for residents, however as shown in Chapter 9 CLTs are more time, staff, and resource intensive. Specifically, 661 properties in this repurposing area or 21% of Creekside's total area could be turned into assets. Taking this into consideration with the 12% of stabilization area properties that could turn into an asset, implementing *LEAP Forward*'s recommendations could have a positive effect on Creekside's landscape.

Conclusion

In dense areas like Creekside, residents and organizations can monitor land ownership and steward publicly owned vacant land to stabilize and improve their neighborhoods. These programs work by decreasing blight and increasing resident control of the areas. Through the implementation of these recommendations, Creekside can stay a Traditional Residential neighborhood. Chapter 8 applies *LEAP Forward*'s recommendations to the a more vacant neighborhood: the Packard Plant Area.

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[12] *Detroit Future City: Detroit Strategic Framework Plan*, 2012, 143

[13] *Detroit Future City: Detroit Strategic Framework Plan*, 2012, 296

[14] *Neighborhood Stabilization Plan: Jefferson – Chalmers*, 2013

[15] City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, Dangerous Buildings Demolition List datafile, 2012.

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[22] WhyDontWeOwnThis.com, Tax Delinquency Data extracted from website, April 2013.

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[27] Ibid.

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CHAPTER 8

Packard Plant Area: A Case Study for Repurposing Vacant Land through Monitoring Land Ownership and Stewarding Public Land

The area surrounding the former Packard Automotive Plant, a blighted relic of Detroit's early industrial affluence, is emblematic of the type of challenges LEAP participants will face when implementing the plan in areas of high vacancy.

The nearby residential area has declined considerably in the last few decades, with increasing numbers of blighted structures and vacant lots. Approximately 450 residents remain, mostly in a four-block area designated by LEAP as Spacious Residential. This case study area differs from the Creekside case study area in residential density and land use and thus requires different strategies. LEAP designated the majority of the Packard Plant Area as Green Venture, Naturescape, Green Thoroughfare, and Urban Homestead areas. The implementation of these typologies requires the repurposing of vacant land. Accordingly, this chapter focuses on strategies to monitor changes in ownership, along with strategies that repurpose vacant, publicly owned land into community assets.

Introduction to the Packard Plant Area

The Packard Plant Area is located in the northwest corner of the LEAP area; south of I-94 to Warren, and from Mt. Elliott to the west to Frontenac/East Grand Boulevard on the east (see Figure 8.1). The Packard Plant occupies much of the area, along with a cemetery and sparse pockets of residential

housing to the north and east. The area is adjacent to a more densely populated residential area east of Grand Boulevard, and nearby Gratiot Avenue is an auto-oriented commercial corridor. Approximately 45% of the properties are publicly owned. In early 2013, the County foreclosed on 9% of properties in the area.[1] If those do not sell at auction, they will also become publicly owned properties.

No known community development organizations operate in the Packard Plant Area. The lack of a neighborhood organization dedicated to this area indicates a lack of organizing and advocacy capacity. Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East and other community development organizations (CDOs) are left to take a more active role in community outreach to ensure engagement between Packard Plant Area residents and non-profit entrepreneurial ventures such as RecoveryPark.

RECOVERYPARK

One example of an entrepreneurial venture that could turn vacant land to productive ends is RecoveryPark. "RecoveryPark is a projected 10-year, multimillion dollar planned community redevelopment project on the east side of Detroit."[2] While final site selections have not yet been made, RecoveryPark's founder, Gary Wozniak, is considering City-owned properties in an area bounded by I-94, Jefferson, St. Aubin (east), and Van Dyke (west). Once established, RecoveryPark aims to "re-envision the city along multiple components – education, agriculture, urban farming, community development, food production, commercial and housing development, to name a few – in order to help residents who are recovering from addiction, those returning to the community from prison, and others through personal and economic empowerment."[3]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; Data Driven Detroit, 2009; City of Detroit Assessor's Data, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; WhyDontWeOwnThis, April 2013.

Packard Area at a Glance	Population (2010)	Total Number of Properties	Vacant Lots (2009)	Vacant Residential Structures (2009)	Properties Owned by the Michigan Land Bank	Properties Owned by the City of Detroit	Properties Tax Foreclosed in 2013
	450	888	491	40	52	348	78

MAJOR PLANNING EFFORTS

DETROIT FUTURE CITY

The majority of the Packard Plant Area falls within *Detroit Future City's* (DFC's) "innovative productive" land use typology. DFC "recommends a gradual depopulation of these areas, but recognizes that there will be residents still living in these areas for years, if not decades, to come."[4] DFC states that alternative land uses such as "agriculture, aquaculture, energy fields/forests and research plots" will create job opportunities for residents.[5] The 42 properties of the Packard Plant will likely remain industrial. However, DFC recognizes the attachment of some residents to their homes, thus "it is imperative to ensure that their basic levels of service are met, including provisions for safety and security."[6]

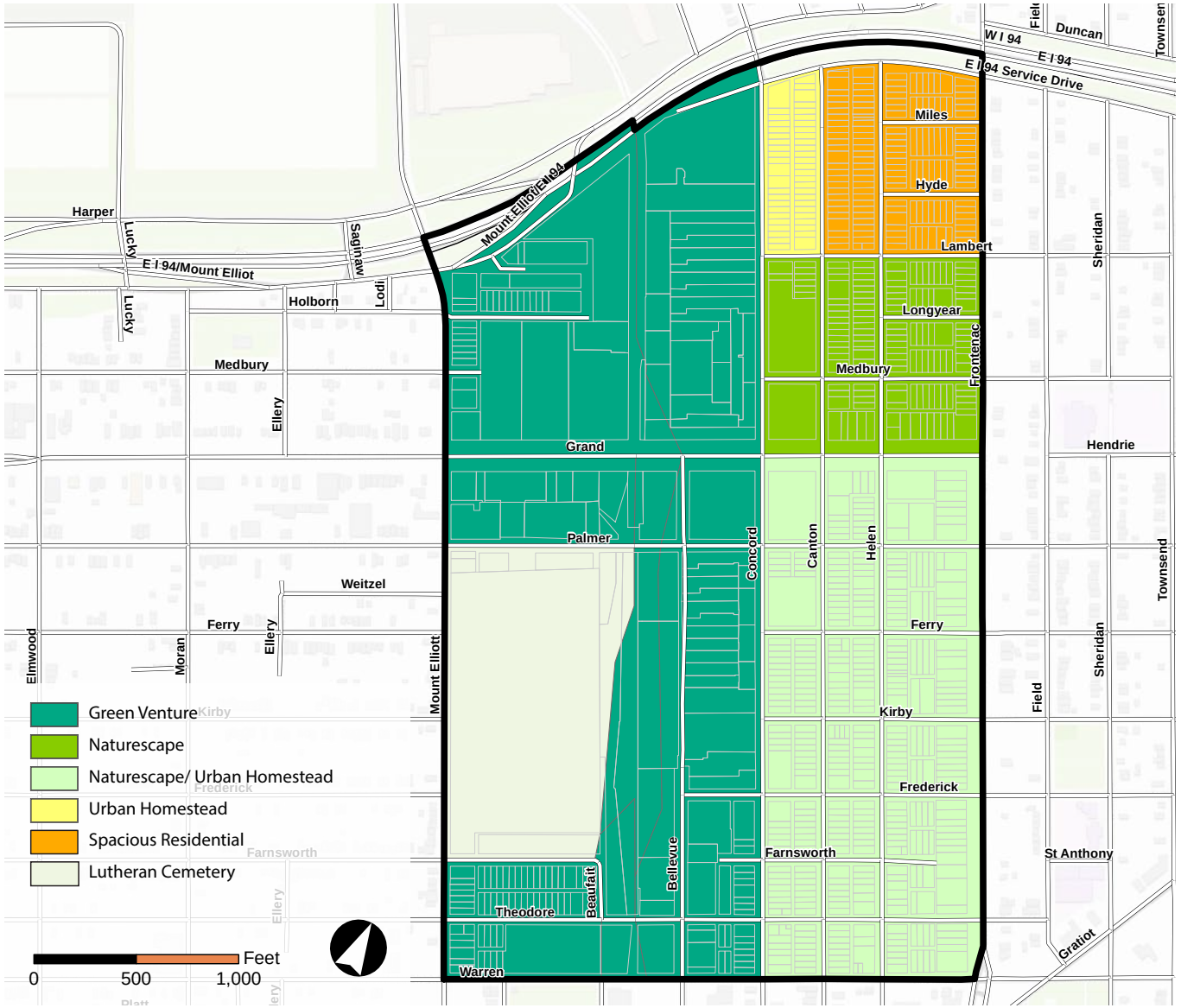
DFC's decision-making matrix for reuse of land, when applied to the Packard Plant Area, recommends that neighborhood properties should follow "reuse/disposition options" where the "preferred option is to use the parcel for an interim green use while holding for redevelopment."[7] Strategic property holding by the City in the area can create a "significantly more marketable or buildable property."[8] Directly to the north of the Packard Plant Area, DFC proposes "creating a modern industrial and intermodal freight district."[9] DFC also notes the infrastructure advantages for industrial use; the area is close to the freight rail line, the Detroit North Rail Yard, I-94, and the Coleman A. Young International Airport.
DFC and LEAP's visions for the Packard Plant Area are similar in their vision of entrepreneurial, productive, and green use of vacant land. The two plans do not necessarily conflict but also do not automatically align. This chapter's recommendation section details partnering with organizations designing and installing blue and green infrastructure treatments, and also identifying and attracting environmentally-friendly, for-profit enterprises.

Existing Conditions and Challenges

The Packard Plant Area faces high public ownership, vacancy, and blight. This section explains how these challenges apply specifically to the Packard Plant Area. Understanding the magnitude of these challenges provides context for how *LEAP Forward's* recommendations for repurposing publicly owned land can advance LEAP implementation.

FIG. 8.1

Packard Plant Area Boundary by LEAP Typology



Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 8.2

Residential Vacancy Rate

Approximately 60% of residential properties in the study area boundaries are vacant lots and structures (55% and 5%, respectively).[10] Figure 8.2 shows that vacant residential lots and the few remaining vacant houses are fairly dense in the eastern half of the Packard Plant Area. These vacant lots represent potential for assembling contiguous pieces of land for naturescapes and urban homesteads.

Residential Vacant Lots and Structures in the Packard Plant Area

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ; ESRI, 2013.

Publicly Owned Properties

The City of Detroit owned approximately 39% of the properties in the Packard Plant Area in 2013 (348 properties).[11] The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority owned another 6% (52 properties).[12] As shown in Figure 8.3, these properties are heavily concentrated in the eastern portions of the Packard Plant Area, which are Urban Homestead, Naturescape, and Spacious Residential typologies. As stated earlier, the County foreclosed on additional properties in early 2013, which makes property conveyance, side lot acquisition, and the creation of an urban homestead land trust, discussed later in the chapter, important tools for stewarding publicly owned land.

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 8.3

Public Land Ownership in the Packard Plant Area

The Packard Plant

In 2013, the Wayne County Treasurer foreclosed on the Packard Plant.[13] Its 42 parcels were formerly owned by Bioresource, Inc. The plant itself makes up approximately 10% of the acreage of the case study area and is the largest share of the Green Venture area.[14] For LEAP stakeholders and participants, monitoring the ownership of the Packard Plant will be important given the implications of its size and presence in the neighborhood.

If the site reverts to public ownership after the auction, the City likely cannot afford to demolish and remediate the site in the near future. Demolition companies estimate costs at approximately $10 million, with an additional $10 million in costs for removing environmental contaminants.[15] Given such costs and the City's financial circumstances, short-term strategies should assume the Plant's continued presence in the neighborhood.

Though the Packard Plant looms in this neighborhood as a sign of blight, it offers opportunity in the long run. If demolished, the Packard Plant parcels would be one of the largest available contiguous plots in the lower eastside, amenable to large-scale green entrepreneurial ventures or other green infrastructure treatment projects. Going forward, LEAP participants must monitor ownership and plans for the Packard Plant, both in the short- and long-term, to assure that future projects related to the site are compatible with LEAP.

FIG. 8.4

View of Packard Plant From Concord Street at Frederick Street
Photo by: Wonwoo Lee

Pending Demolition

While vacant lots outnumber vacant structures, 87 structures await demolition.[16] Thirty-five of these form the remnants of the Packard Plant. Of the remaining 52 structures, the City of Detroit owns 17.[17] Aside from the Packard Plant, several other structures pending demolition remain in the Green Venture area. The others are scattered throughout the eastern portion of the Packard Plant Area in Urban Homestead, Naturescape, and Spacious Residential areas. Although these 52 structures are unsightly and potentially dangerous, the work of repurposing vacant land for urban homesteads and naturescapes can begin even with buildings still standing.

FIG. 8.5

Pending Demolitions in the Packard Plant Area

Source: Dangerous Buildings Demolition List, 2012; Building Permits, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 8.6

Tax Foreclosed Properties in the Packard Plant Area (2013)

Source: WhyDontWeOwnThis, April 2013; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013.

Tax Foreclosure Properties

Shown in Fig. 8.6, Wayne County foreclosed on 78 of the 888 properties in the Packard Plant Area for nonpayment of property taxes in 2013. In 2012, the County only foreclosed on 10 properties in the Packard Plant Area, of which two sold in their auction. Seven went unsold, transferring into public ownership, and one was withdrawn from auction.[18] The majority of the 2013 tax foreclosures are within the Green Venture area, which includes the Packard Plant properties. Of the remaining tax foreclosed properties, 22 are in Urban Homestead areas, three are in Naturescape, and six are in Spacious Residential.[19] Implementing any large projects in the Green Venture and Naturescape typologies will require coordinated efforts by both private and public sector entities as these properties move through the auction process and beyond.

Major Land Owners

The top two landowners in the Packard Plant Area in 2012 were the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority.[20] However, private owners owned numerous properties in the area and could strategically interfere with projects or land assembly. Cortez Hill owned 31 properties in the area. An entity called 520 Group LLC owned 12 properties. Michael Kelly and Matthew Tatarian also jointly owned 7 properties in the area; Bert Dearing and B&D Property Management owned 12.[21] Those wishing to repurpose land in this area should monitor property speculators to avoid obstructions to strategic land assembly.

FIG. 8.7

Major Private Land Owners in the Packard Plant Area (2012)

* These properties were foreclosed in April 2013.

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2012; City of Detroit Assessor, 2012

Repurposing Vacant Land Strategies in the Urban Homestead, Naturescape, Green Venture, and Green Thoroughfare Typologies

LEAP designates all but four blocks of the Packard Plant Area as Urban Homestead, Naturescape, Green Venture, and Green Thoroughfare areas. These typologies generally represent areas with considerable vacancy. Such vacancy can become an asset for neighborhood residents and entrepreneurial ventures, due to simpler strategic land assembly (due to a smaller number of owners), meaning simpler repurposing. This section details recommendations for repurposing and stewarding vacant land (see Chapter 6) in the Packard Plant Area.

Recommendations

Prioritize land ownership monitoring by purpose.

Given the small number of residences and the large amount of publicly owned land throughout the Packard Plant Area, monitoring land ownership changes for potential reuse projects and other large property transfers is critical. While not located within the Packard Plant Area, Hantz Woodlands is an example of a project involving a large transfer of publicly owned properties in an area with high vacancy rates. Monitoring development proposals, pending property disposition from the City, and proposals for the Packard Plant properties will be necessary to ensure LEAP participants can effectively advocate for proposed developments that are in line with the LEAP framework.

Accordingly, methods for monitoring in the Packard Plant Area differ from the Creekside neighborhood and other denser neighborhood areas. Watching the media –the *Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*, *Crain's Detroit Business*, television news broadcasts from local stations, and blogs dedicated to Detroit issues – can alert LEAP stakeholders to proposed projects, major ownership transfers, and City actions of major interest. While the media do not report all proposals and developments, they do typically cover major and controversial projects as well as proposals related to notorious structures like the Packard Plant.

Monitoring City Council agendas can alert LEAP stakeholders to proposed developments. Property transfers from the City to other entities, whether they are private developers or the Detroit Land Bank Authority, require approval by City Council. City Council also approved a 2011 request to demolish the Packard Plant, although that never occured.[22]

In addition, DNPE or other LEAP stakeholders could monitor Requests for Proposal (RFPs) from the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) and notices of public land sales from the Detroit Planning and Development Department (P&DD). New RFPs, development opportunities, and current projects can all be found on the DEGC's website. Likewise, as the City's agency that owns most of the City's properties, P&DD's notices of public land sales are a useful information source for LEAP participants.

Partner with public landowners.

Because nearly half the properties in the Packard Plant Area are publicly owned, communication and reliable relationships with each of the public land-holding entities will be critical to repurposing vacant land in the Packard Plant Area. Lack of support from any one of the public landowners could disrupt LEAP implementation for these areas.

While support from and cooperation of public landowners will be valuable in all typologies across the LEAP area, it will be especially important in the Packard Plant Area. Naturescape areas, for example, will likely require land bank or City assistance. Due to lack of income potential in this typology, private entities may shy away from gaining ownership and sustaining the costs of maintenance.

With the high number of publicly owned properties in Urban Homestead areas, garnering support from public entities for urban homesteading and the LEAP plan will make land assembly considerably easier for potential urban homesteaders. Green Thoroughfares, with their blend of Naturescape and Green Venture elements, will also benefit from public support. A public landowner could use a well-crafted property conveyance program to screen potential purchasers and lessees to ensure that their plans comport with LEAP.

Invite the Detroit Blight Authority to perform wider scale demolitions and deconstruction in higher vacancy areas.

While the approach discussed earlier in this plan of targeting demolition and deconstruction in denser areas is more efficient and can help to stabilize neighborhoods, a different approach is appropriate for the more vacant areas like the Packard Plant Area. DNPE could work with the Mayor's Office and the Detroit Blight Authority (DBA) to invite them to conduct a wide-scale clearing of blighted structures and overgrowth in the Packard Plant Area. In early 2013, the non-profit Detroit Blight Authority conducted a test project near Eastern Market, outside of the LEAP area. Over a two-week period, the DBA cleared a 10-block area of vacant structures, overgrown brush, and trash. demonstrating their ability to conduct wide-scale demolition in largely vacant areas.[23]

This wide-area demolition could focus on Urban Homestead, Naturescape, Green Venture, and Green Thoroughfare typologies, facilitating the repurposing of vacant land. While the aims of each typology are different, the challenges created by blighted structures, trash-strewn lots, and overgrowth hamper the repurposing of properties in any of the typologies. Demolishing or deconstructing derelict residential structures would prepare the land for urban homesteads, naturescapes, and portions of green ventures.

Partner with organizations designing and installing blue and green infrastructure treatments.

Organizations such as the Greening of Detroit, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, and others are designing and installing blue and green infrastructure treatments.[24] Green infrastructure naturally mitigates stormwater, improves air quality, and provides landscaping for vacant lots.[25] Partners like Greening of Detroit and University of Michigan Landscape Architecture Program are working with DNPE and other LEAP participants to demonstrate these in the lower eastside. DNPE and others could work to expand these installations into the Packard Plant Area. With numerous contiguous vacant publicly owned properties in the eastern parts of the Packard Plant Area, especially in the Naturescape area between Lambert Street and Grand Boulevard, opportunities exist to install larger scale swales, woodlands, and native grasses.

Encourage for-profit enterprises specializing in environmentally friendly industries.

In addition to partnering with non-profit organizations installing blue and green infrastructure, DNPE and other LEAP participants could expand their work encouraging for-profit enterprises to locate in Green Venture and Green Throughfare parts of the Packard Plant Area. Unlike the natural grasses and woodland treatments that the City or nonprofits might create in a Naturescape area, a for-profit enterprise might plant switchgrasses, sunflowers, or other crops. Companies could harvest these and transform them into biofuels or other organic products.[26] Such harvesting could also ensure maintenance of the Green Venture and Green Thoroughfare typologies where these for-profit enterprises could locate. DNPE and other LEAP participants could leverage their connections with public landowners to offer inexpensive land to start-up ventures. They could also work to garner community support for projects, support that could convince City leadership to also support those projects.

Facilitate the formation of Urban Homesteads through property purchase programs and land trusts or cooperatives.

Areas that experience high vacancy in the lower eastside face a challenge when considering future reuse – the lack of control over the land. Speculators may purchase lots in the way of proposed projects or a developer may purchase contiguous lots with the intent of reusing it in a way that is contrary to LEAP's vision. Such uncertainties threaten implementation of LEAP, particularly in the Urban Homestead typology where homeowners aim to steward contiguous plots of land.

Two approaches can help create and maintain Urban Homestead areas. First, homesteaders can purchase contiguous lots using property conveyance and sweat equity programs through the City of Detroit, Detroit Land Bank, and the Michigan Land Bank. Second, DNPE or another LEAP participant can create an Urban Homestead Land Trust or Cooperative that facilitates acquisition and stewardship of land specifically for residents interested in creating urban homesteads.

Using Property Conveyance and Sweat Equity Programs to Create Urban Homesteads

Urban homesteaders can use a number of existing programs to acquire the lots surrounding their properties. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Michigan Land Bank offers a Property Conveyance Program for individuals interested in purchasing land owned by the Land Bank. P&DD also manages a side lot program that could be useful for assembling an urban homestead. DNPE or a similar organization could advocate for more streamlined property conveyance programs offered through the Detroit Land Bank as well, which would further ease land assembly for urban homesteaders.

Fig. 8.8 shows potential urban homesteads and publicly owned properties onto which homesteaders could expand. Potential homesteads are based on owner-occupied residences that have no outstanding property taxes.[27] While other houses could become excellent urban homesteads in the future, owner-occupied residences with no outstanding taxes are eligible for existing City and State property acquisition programs and are the most likely to be in habitable condition. Eligible properties are publicly owned, generally contiguous, and often adjacent to owner-occupied residences. Fig. 8.8 illustrates 169 properties for potential urban homesteading available through property conveyance or side lot programs. This indicates that up to 19% of properties in the Packard Plant Area (169 out of 888) could be put back into productive use and onto the City tax rolls through property conveyance and urban homesteading efforts.

DNPE or a similar organization could advocate for public landowners to create sweat equity programs that allow urban homesteaders to purchase publicly owned properties that they already steward. Providing credit for property owners who mow and take care of nearby publicly owned properties could encourage public lot purchases and expand urban homesteads. Figure 8.9 shows the properties not adjacent to an eligible urban homestead owned by the City that would be eligible for sweat equity credit programs, if P&DD, the Michigan Land Bank, and community development organizations established such a program in Detroit. This program would reward residents already maintaining one of these lots and also encourage the maintenance of those lots that are unmaintained. A sweat equity program could potentially affect 231 properties in this area, putting 26% of the land in this area into private ownership.

FIG. 8.8

Potential Urban Homestead Properties

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; WhyDontWeOwnThis, January 2013; ESRI, 2013.

FIG. 8.9

Potential Sweat Equity Lots

Source: Data Driven Detroit, 2009; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Detroit Property Inventory, 2012; City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Michigan Land Bank, 2013; SmithGroup JJR, 2012; ESRI, 2013; WhyDontWeOwnThis, January, 2013.

An Example of an Urban Homestead Arrangement Using Property Conveyance Programs and Collaboration with Public Entities

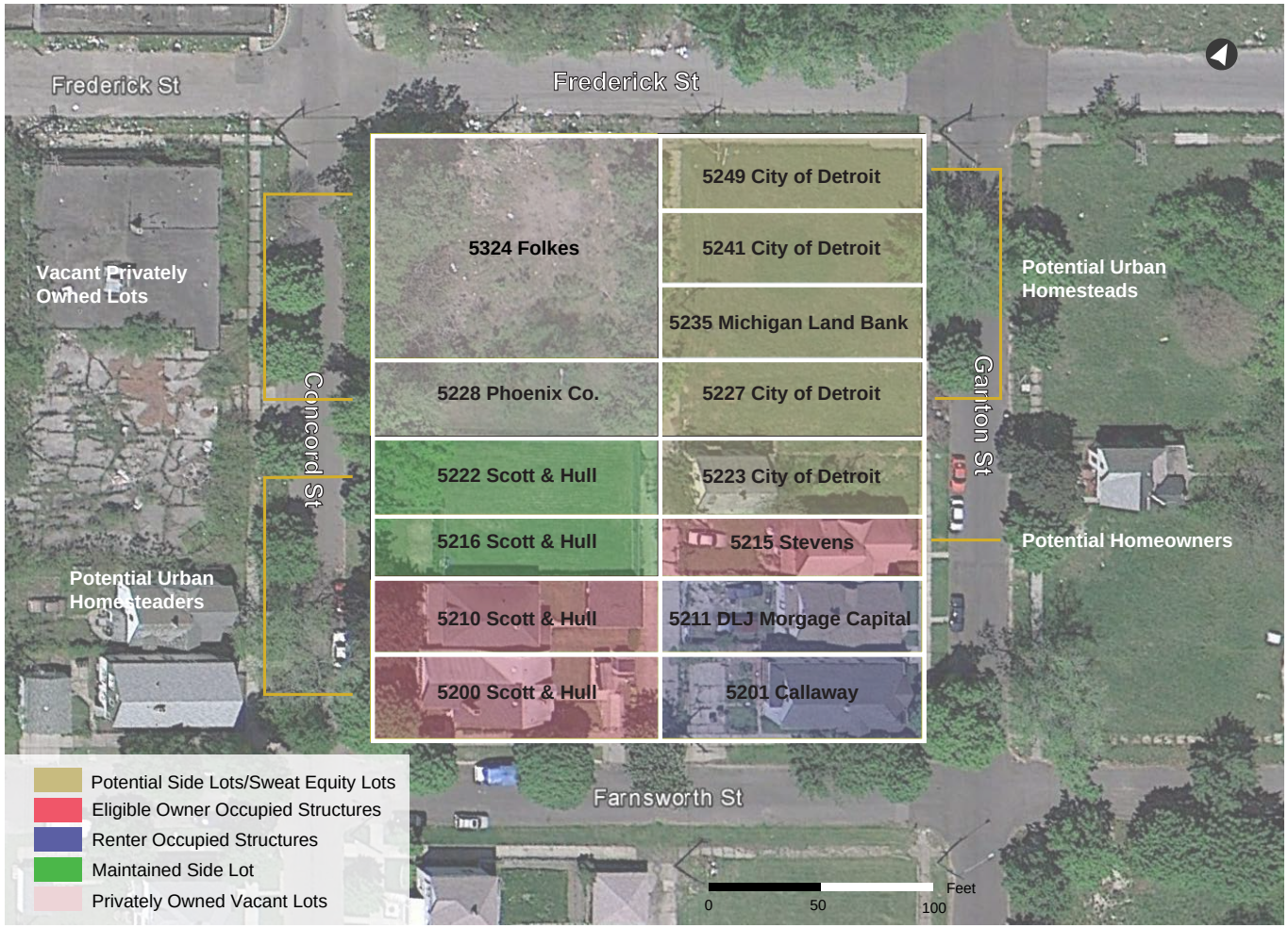
Figure 8.10 illustrates a block located between Concord, Canton, Frederick, and Farnsworth streets that demonstrates how urban homesteaders could use relationships with public entities to assemble land. Several homes remain on this block, and homeowners on Concord (Chauncey Scott and Ellen Hull) have purchased and maintained the structures and improved two adjacent lots in the southwestern corner of the block, creating a mini homestead. The northwestern properties, currently owned by private owners, are also suitable for Scott and Hull if they cared to expand their property. Purchasing those two properties would involve a conventional transaction between private parties. The residence at 5215 Canton, owned by Mary Stevens, could also expand into an urban homestead. The City of Detroit and the Michigan Land Bank own the next five properties in the northeast corner of the block, which would make a large contiguous site appropriate for an urban homestead.

Alternatively, if the future owner-occupants of 5223 Canton were interested in pursuing an urban homestead, they could purchase the lot owned by the Michigan Land Bank through its Property Conveyance Program. The lot immediately adjacent to the property could be purchased through the Planning and Development Department's side lot program. Future collaboration among the major public landowners and LEAP to identify priorities such as urban homesteading projects could open opportunities for potential urban homesteaders to purchase the remaining properties. For example, if the future owner-occupants of 5223 Canton already stewarded the City of Detroit lots, a sweat equity program could help them to earn credits on the property for their work and ultimately own the lots.

By implementing the Urban Homestead concept and having DNPE assist owners in purchasing public land, this specific block could go from seven owners, four of whom are private owners that appear to be absent, to two owner-occupied residences whose owners could better steward the lots. This would increase the percentage of properties on the tax rolls from 64% to 100%.

FIG. 8.10

Example of an Urban Homestead Block



Source: City of Detroit Assessor, 2012; Data Driven Detroit, 2012; Google Maps, 2013.

Using an Urban Homestead Land Trust or Cooperative

Rather than assembling urban homesteads lot by lot, LEAP participants could create a land trust or cooperative that would assemble and hold land for the purpose of developing urban homesteads. A land trust or cooperative would preclude new development on urban homestead lands, preserving and protecting them into the future. The land trust or cooperative could choose to engage homeowners in Urban Homestead areas who wish to create homesteads themselves, as well as engage residents in other typologies who wish to create farms that would occupy multiple parcels. Furthermore, a land trust or cooperative could engage community organizations or neighborhood associations interested in using land for community gardens and direct their energy into the Urban Homestead areas.

Other benefits exist for treating urban homesteads on an organizational level rather than on an individual ownership level. An organization, which has greater capacity than an individual homeowner, may be able to better steward, mow, and clean up a concentration of lots that are not yet used by homesteaders. Furthermore, if Urban Homestead areas are meant for agriculture, the lots should be tested for chemicals in the soil before any work is done. An organization may be better equipped than an individual to partner with an organization like Greening of Detroit to ensure that the lots assembled for urban homesteads are tested and prepared for planting.

Though individual homeowners would not own the lots used for homesteads, they would be part of an organization in order to use the land, either through leasing from the land trust or through acquiring shares in a land trust cooperative. In either case, the organization can ensure the future use of the land aligns with LEAP's vision. By assembling and taking ownership of the land at an organizational level, the land trust or cooperative could make certain that land in these areas is stewarded and used properly.

Conclusion

In areas of higher vacancy like the Packard Plant Area, residents and organizations can repurpose vacant land into community assets like green spaces, urban homesteads, and natural landscapes. The Packard Plant Area has the potential to become a more attractive, productive neighborhood. Chapter 9 discusses implementation considerations for the recommendations in the previous chapters.

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Detroit Works Project Long-Term Planning Steering Committee, *Detroit Future City: Detroit Strategic Framework Plan*, Detroit Works Project, 2012 http://detroitworksproject.com/the-framework/, 257.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 279.

[8] Ibid., 277.

[9] Ibid., 63.

[10] Data Driven Detroit, Detroit Residential Parcel Survey, 2009.

[11] City of Detroit Assessor, City Assessor's data file, 2012.

[12] Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, "Michigan Land Bank Parcels" data file, 2013.

[13] WhyDontWeOwnThis.com, *2013 Foreclosure Risk* extracted from website, 2013.

[14] City Assessor's data file, 2012.

[15] Jennifer Dixon, "Asbestos, reinforced concrete would make demolishing Packard Plant expensive, lengthy," The Detroit Free Press, December 2, 2012, http://www.freep.com/article/20121202/NEWS01/312020154/Hazardous-materials-fortified-building-demolishing-Packard-expensive-lengthy (accessed May 7, 2013).

[16] City of Detroit Planning & Development Department, Dangerous Buildings Demolition List data file, 2012.

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[20] City of Detroit Assessor data file, 2012; Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, *Michigan Land Bank Parcels* datafile, 2013; City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, *Detroit Property Inventory* datafile, 2012.

[21] City of Detroit Assessor data file, 2012.

[22] Jennifer Dixon, "The Packard Plant: Big. Ugly. Dangerous.," The Detroit Free Press, December 2, 2012, http://www.freep.com/article/20121202/NEWS01/312020186/Big-Ugly-Dangerous-The-region-must-work-together-to-get-rid-of-the-Packard-Plant (accessed May 8, 2013).

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[26] Agra Biofuels, "Renewable Biofuels," Agra Biofuels, http://www.agrabiofuels.com/renewablebiofuels.html (accessed May 6, 2013).

[27] Owner-occupancy was established using the 2012 City of Detroit Assessor's Data, which lists the property address, property owner's name, and property owner's address. Property owners' addresses that matched property addresses indicated owner-occupancy; WhyDontWeOwnThis.com, *Tax Delinquency Data* extracted from website, January 2013.

CHAPTER 9

Implementation

The preceding chapters provide recommendations for stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing vacant land in Detroit's lower eastside through monitoring changes in land ownership and stewarding publicly owned land. To assist community organizations in executing these recommendations, This chapter suggests potential partners, timing, special considerations, and funding sources.

Implementation Phasing

Table 9.1 lists each recommendation, describes the actions and partners needed, and then offers a timeline for preparing and implementing the recommendation, along with a scale of the costs, collaboration, and staffing needed for each.

The schedule is divided into three phases:

PHASE I (6 – 12 MONTHS): DNPE or a similar stakeholder could begin to implement these recommendations immediately. Recommendations that begin in Phase I require minimal preparation and have fewer barriers to implementation. Recommendations placed in this category may be either short-term (occurring only once or for a brief period) or long-term (occurring on an ongoing basis).

PHASE II (1 – 2 YEARS): Recommendations in this category may require additional preparation for implementation. This may include addressing barriers to implementation such as cost, the need for additional staff, or coordination with governmental agencies.

PHASE III (3 YEARS+): Recommendations in this category require more substantial support and could be carried out over the long term.

The light gray bars indicate a need for preparation prior to implementation. The dark gray bars indicate that an organization or resident could implement a recommendation with little preparation within a particular time period.

Additionally, Table 9.1 rates considerations such as the capacity needs and scale of impact for each recommendation from low to high. For example, recommendations with a

higher capacity need will require more funding or collaboration between organizations. Similarly, recommendations with a larger scale of impact affect the entire lower eastside, whereas recommendations with a lower scale of impact may just impact a particular block or neighborhood.

Table 9.1 also illustrates whether residents or organizations can implement a recommendation or if it will have to happen on a larger scale across the lower eastside, facilitated by DNPE. For example, a resident could use the Blight Violation Notice database to identify owners of multiple blighted properties in their own neighborhood, but they would not have the resources or capacity to form a community land trust for the lower eastside.

TABLE 9.1

Implementation Partners and Phasing for *LEAP Forward* Recommendations

			Considerations		Level of Implementation			Implementation Schedule		
Recommendation	**Action Needed**	**Potential Partners**	**Capacity Needs**	**Scale of Impact**	**Resident**	**CDC**	**DNPE**	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
Monitoring Changes in Land Ownership										
1. Prioritize monitoring of land ownership based on purpose.	DNPE can serve as a resource for other organizations and residents who wish to monitor land ownership by providing information and organizing workshops that train residents how to monitor based on certain priorities. These efforts could be incorporated into their existing outreach.	LEAP Participants	Low	Low-Medium	✓	✓	✓			
2. Identify owners of multiple blighted properties.	DNPE can serve as a resource for other organizations and residents and raise awareness about this tool, helping residents and organizations understand how this tool can be used to hold problem owners accountable.	LEAP Participants	Low	Low-Medium	✓	✓	✓			
3. Understand and track changes in land ownership due to tax foreclosure.	DNPE can serve as a resource for other organizations and residents who wish to understand how tax foreclosure affects the lower eastside by providing information and organizing workshops that explain the tax foreclosure process and how to monitor the process.	LEAP Participants	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	✓	✓	✓			
4. Track changes in land ownership due to mortgage foreclosure.	DNPE can serve as a resource for other organizations and residents who wish to understand how mortgage foreclosure affects the lower eastside by providing information and organizing workshops that explain the nortgage foreclosure process and how to monitor the process.	LEAP Participants	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	✓	✓	✓			

TABLE 9.1 (CONTINUED)

			Considerations		Level of Implementation			Implementation Schedule		
Recommendation	**Action Needed**	**Potential Partners**	**Capacity Needs**	**Scale of Impact**	**Resident**	**CDC**	**DNPE**	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
5. Contract with Data Driven Detroit to develop an accessible parcel ownership database for the lower eastside.	DNPE can enter into the contract with Data Driven Detroit on behalf of the lower eastside and create agreements with participating CDOs to access the data.	Data Driven Detroit	Medium	Medium			✓			
6. Monitor the marketing and notifications of public land sales and potential real estate developments.	A rigorous examination of public land sales will either require funding for a dedicated staff person or additional training for local neighborhood organizations that might be interested in this level of detail. DNPE can serve as a resource by organizing trainings, or sponsoring a staff person who monitors land, and creating a sytem to share information with LEAP Participants.	Detroit City Council members and staff, Planning & Development Department, DEGC, LEAP Participants	Medium	Low		✓	✓			
7. Monitor websites aimed at selling properties in Detroit, including Detroit Property Exchange, Craigslist, and eBay.	Again, keeping abreast of these resources will either require funding for a dedicated staff person or additional training for local neighborhood organizations that might be interested in this level of detail. DNPE can serve as a resource by organizing training or sponsoring a staff person who monitors land.	LEAP Participants	Medium	Low	✓	✓	✓			
8. Build on resident-led programs to monitor changes in land ownership (e.g. Walking Against Blight, mobile applications).	The Warren/Conner Development Coalition and DNPE could organize a program that builds off of the Walking Against Blight model to monitor changes in ownership. The partners involved would need to create a mechanism to gather the data and a plan for the data once it has been gathered.	LocalData, Walking Against Blight, Detroit Food and Fitness Collaborative, Warren/Conner Development Coalition	Medium-High	Medium-High		✓	✓			

TABLE 9.1 (CONTINUED)

			Considerations		Level of Implementation			Implementation Schedule		
Recommendation	**Action Needed**	**Potential Partners**	**Capacity Needs**	**Scale of Impact**	**Resident**	**CDC**	**DNPE**	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
9. Use new crowdsourcing web platforms, such as 'Ushahidi' or 'Textizen', that allow residents to report and map street-level data with mobile phones to help monitor ownership.	DNPE can serve as the lead, working with data partners to create a structure to gather residents' data and a plan for the data once it has been gathered. An agreement could be created with local CDOs to utilize the system. This project may take additional funds and staff.	LocalData, Warren/Conner Development Coalition	Medium-High	Medium-High		✓	✓			
Stabilizing Neighborhoods										
1. Encourage and promote tax foreclosure prevention and education programs to help keep residents in their homes.	DNPE or neighborhood organizations can build relationships with organizations already involved in tax foreclosure prevention and target programming in Traditional Residential and Spacious Residential typologies.	LEAP Participants, United Community Housing Coalition, Michigan Community Resources	Medium	Medium		✓	✓			
2. Coordinate the acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of houses in good condition with the Detroit Land Bank in areas with a high concentration of owner-occupant residents.	DNPE or neighborhood organizations could build a relationship with the Detroit Land Bank to identify homes heading to the Wayne County tax auction that could be refurbished and sold. DNPE could serve as a liaison between the land bank and the neighborhood organizations to prioritize rehabilitation based on LEAP goals.	LEAP Participants, Detroit Land Bank Authority	Medium-High	Medium-High		✓	✓			
3. Advocate for targeting Traditional Residential typologies for demolition and deconstruction of blighted publicly owned properties.	DNPE can advocate for the City to prioritize demolition lists in dense, traditional areas where demolition has the potential for large impact.	LEAP Participants, City of Detroit, Detroit Blight Authority	High	High		✓	✓			

TABLE 9.1 (CONTINUED)

			Considerations		Level of Implementation			Implementation Schedule		
Recommendation	**Action Needed**	**Potential Partners**	**Capacity Needs**	**Scale of Impact**	**Resident**	**CDC**	**DNPE**	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
4. Facilitate residents' purchase of publicly owned lots	DNPE and similar community organizations should facilitate residents' purchase of side lots through the P&DD program and assist any homeowners looking to gain ownership to an adjacent lot owned by the City.	Planning & Development Department, General Services Department	Low	High		✓	✓			
5. Work with the Detroit Land Bank to offer a program similar to the Michigan Land Bank's property conveyance program.	DNPE should advocate for a user-friendly application online that details the eligibility requirements and steps to acquiring land from the Detroit Land Bank. Additionally, DNPE should advocate that DLB integrate LEAP typologies when evaluating applicants' property use plans in order to ensure that the proposed land use aligns with LEAP.	Detroit Land Bank Authority	Medium	Medium-High			✓			
6. Work with the Planning & Development Department, the Michigan Land Bank, and the Detroit Land Bank to create sweat equity purcahse programs.	DNPE and relevant community organizations should advocate for the recognition of labor and sweat equity that residents have put into their neighboring yards and work with public land owners to develop and implement sweat equity programs.	Planning & Development Department, Michigan Land Bank, Detroit Land Bank Authority, General Services Department.	Medium	Medium-High			✓			

TABLE 9.1 (CONTINUED)

			Considerations		Level of Implementation			Implementation Schedule		
Recommendation	**Action Needed**	**Potential Partners**	**Capacity Needs**	**Scale of Impact**	**Resident**	**CDC**	**DNPE**	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
Repurposing Neighborhoods										
1. Collaborate with major public landowners to advocate for coordination of LEAP's long-term land use goals.	DNPE can engage public landowners with specific plans detailing desired outcomes for land use projects. Building and maintaining these relationships may require considerable time.	City of Detroit, Detroit Land Bank Authority, Michigan Land Bank, Wayne County Treasurer, DEGC, Detroit Public Schools, Detroit Housing Commission	High	High			✓			
2. Help landowners and community organizations lease properties that are well-suited for community garden or beautification projects.	DNPE can educate residents and community organizations about these opportunities, and advocate for the expansion of the City's program to nonprofit organizations, enabling for larger-scale applications.	Michigan Land Bank, Detroit Planning & Development Department	Medium	Medium-High		✓	✓			
3. Form a community land trust, cooperative, or conservancy to acquire and/or lease properties in Green Thoroughfare, Green Venture, Urban Homestead and Naturescape areas.	DNPE or a similar neighborhood organization must first decide the scope of the CLT, cooperative, or conservancy. For example, should the functions of the CLT be absorbed by an existing organization or should a new organization be created? Should the CLT serve the LEAP area as a whole, should it serve specific typologies, or should it serve specific neighborhoods within the LEAP area?	LEAP Participants Detroit Land Bank Authority, Michigan Land Bank, Detroit Planning and Development Department	High	High						

TABLE 9.1 (CONTINUED)

			Considerations		Level of Implementation			Implementation Schedule		
Recommendation	**Action Needed**	**Potential Partners**	**Capacity Needs**	**Scale of Impact**	**Resident**	**CDC**	**DNPE**	**Phase I**	**Phase II**	**Phase III**
4. Work with partner organizations to apply green infrastructure treatments to vacant lots.	DNPE can help residents and community organizations in the lower eastside continue to work with SNRE students and faculty as well as the Greening of Detroit to apply such treatments to individual lots and larger areas of vacant land. A network of green infrastructure in highly vacant areas could reduce blight and improve the quality of neighborhoods.	DWSD, LEAP stakeholders, Greening of Detroit, University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and the Environment.	High	High			✓			

KEY	
Implementation	
Preparation	

Funding Resources

Financial support for *LEAP Forward*'s recommendations are available. The grant opportunities listed in Table 9.2 are available to 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations or through city governments. This list is not exhaustive, and further research is encouraged to identify additional grants and foundation support. Figure 9.2 lists the possible grant sources and the groups of *LEAP Forward* recommendations these grants might support.

TABLE 9.2

Possible Funding Sources for *LEAP Forward* Recommendations

Grant Name | Funding Source	Appropriate for LEAP Forward Recommendation	Application Period or Deadline	Typical Grant Size	Grant Description	Website
Bank of America | Community Grants	All recommendations	Community Development: April 15 – May 10	Unstated	Community revitalization programs, neighborhood stabilization, housing development and retention	http://tinyurl.com/c8w8j6a
Carl's Foundation Fund	Repurposing	July 1st for September Review	$5,000-50,000	Youth activities and preservation of natural or historic areas	http://www.carlsfdn.org/
Charter One Foundation | Champion in Action	All recommendations	Unstated	$35,000 in unrestricted funds	Nonprofit organizations that "deserve recognition" for their contribution to a neighborhood or city	http://tinyurl.com/cfebh6k
Charter One Foundation | Charitable Grants	All recommendations	Year round	Varies based on need	Affordable housing, community redevelopment, and economic development	http://tinyurl.com/cutay2b
Comerica Charitable Foundation	All recommendations	Quarterly	Varies	"Neighborhood revitalization including affordable housing and neighborhood business development"	http://tinyurl.com/735w5xa
CVS Caremark | Community Grant to Children	Repurposing	January 1 – October 31	Up to $5,000	"Physical activities or play opportunities for children"	http://tinyurl.com/mjbtdd
**Department of Housing and Urban Development	All recommendations	May 23, 2013	Varies	1) SHOP Grant: innovative housing solutions, land acquisition, infrastructure improvements, and reasonable and necessary planning, administration and management costs (not to exceed 20%)	1) http://tinyurl.com/d8f3r3q
**Department of Housing and Urban Development	All recommendations	May 22, 2013	$125,000	2) Sustainable Communities Research Grant Program (SCRGP): "Cutting edge research in quality, equitable affordable housing development and preservation; transportation and infrastructure planning; and "green," energy-efficient practices"	2) http://tinyurl.com/cvv7zry
**Department of Housing and Urban Development	All recommendations	May 28, 2013	$500,000	3) The Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants Comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans related to housing, education, and neighborhood revitalization	3) http://tinyurl.com/ch55zgm

TABLE 9.2 (CONTINUED)

Grant Name | Funding Source	Appropriate for LEAP Forward Recommendation	Application Period or Deadline	Typical Grant Size	Grant Description	Website
Department of Natural Resources, Michigan (DNR) | Community Forestry Grants	Repurposing	Application released June-July	$20,000	Community forestry activities	http://tinyurl.com/bobmwbg
**Department of Natural Resources, Michigan (DNR) | Recreation Passport Grants	Repurposing	April 1	$7,500-45,000	Renovating and establishing parks	http://tinyurl.com/cl34or4
Department of Natural Resources Recreational Trails Program Grants	Repurposing	June 15, 2013	No limit	"Maintenance and development of recreational trails and related facilities"	http://tinyurl.com/bpthnuo
DTE Energy | Signature Programs: Environment	Repurposing	July 26, 2013	$500 and up	Education about environmental stewardship and sustainable development	http://tinyurl.com/478yf98
DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grant	Repurposing	Application announced November-December, due annually each fall	$3,000	Tree planting	http://tinyurl.com/bovjg4m
Erb Foundation | Green Infrastructure & Areas of Concern (AOC) Grants	Repurposing	2-5 months from submission date	$300,000	Green infrastructure	http://tinyurl.com/cz7owdl
Ford Foundation | Community Foundations	All recommendations	Varies	Varies	Economic and community development	http://tinyurl.com/36rfasp
Helen G., Henry F., & Louise Tuechter Dornette Foundation, 5/3 Bank	Repurposing	Unstated	Varies	Environment and children	http://tinyurl.com/cxdpgdg
Home Depot | Community Impact Grants	Stabilize, repurposing	February 1 - August 13, 2013	Up to $5,000 in Home Depot Gift Cards	"Using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community"	http://tinyurl.com/bqnolzx
JP Morgan Chase & Co | Community Grants	All recommendations	Reviewed throughout the year	Unstated	Affordable housing, economic development, financial empowerment, and workforce readiness	http://tinyurl.com/3hr5cn5
Knight Foundation | Engaged Communities	Monitoring	8 weeks after submission	Varies	Increasing community development engagement through increased access to relevant information via technology	http://tinyurl.com/c8xasen

TABLE 9.2 (CONTINUED)

Grant Name | Funding Source	Appropriate for LEAP Forward Recommendation	Application Period or Deadline	Typical Grant Size	Grant Description	Website
Kresge Foundation | Detroit	All recommendations	120 days from starting application	Varies	Grants are awarded in several 'Detroit' divisions including complete neighborhoods, community health partnerships, city land use, healthy environments, healthy homes, transportation, and human services. Substantial funding will go to implementing *Detroit Future City*.	http://tinyurl.com/cpavz5q
Michigan Magnet Fund | New Market Tax Credits	Repurposing	Unstated	$3M - $10M	Investment Underwriting Fund invests in real estate projects and operating or start up businesses that create job opportunities for residents of low-income communities, located in distressed areas, needed to support low-income neighborhood initiatives such as MSHDA, and several other criteria.	http://tinyurl.com/bqg39l9
National Garden Association & Home Depot Youth Garden Grant	Repurposing	Begin application in July 1, 2013 thru June 30, 2014	Up to $1,000 ($500 in Home Depot gift cards, $500 gift card to Gardening with Kids catalog	Child-centered garden program for community organizations	http://tinyurl.com/c6lkuwc
Scotts Miracle-Gro | Gro1000 | Grassroots Grants	Repurposing	Annual Program through 2018	Up to $1,500	Gardens and public green spaces	http://tinyurl.com/c6sa6kd

** Grant is available to govermental agency only

Conclusion

Residents and community organizations in the lower eastside envision a vibrant future in the *Lower Eastside Action Plan* (LEAP). Continuing resident engagement and collaboration among community organizations and government entities will continue to play a crucial role during LEAP's implementation. *LEAP Forward* outlines recommendations for monitoring land ownership and repurposing publicly owned vacant land. Stabilizing neighborhoods and repurposing publicly owned vacant lands requires careful land monitoring, adaptive stewardship, and unconventional partnerships between public and private sectors. By emphasizing continued civic engagement and efficacious community organization, the LEAP process may very well redefine approaches to stabilizing neighborhoods.

Appendix A / Map Data

Sources

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Appendix B / Typologies

I. CDAD Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Framework Overview

II. *Detroit Future City* 50-Year Land Use

III. Images from *Detroit Future City: Strategic Framework*

I. CDAD Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Framework Overview

DATA
Analyze Current Condition
Neighborhood stakeholders use mapped data to validate residential, commercial, and industrial current conditions block-by-block.

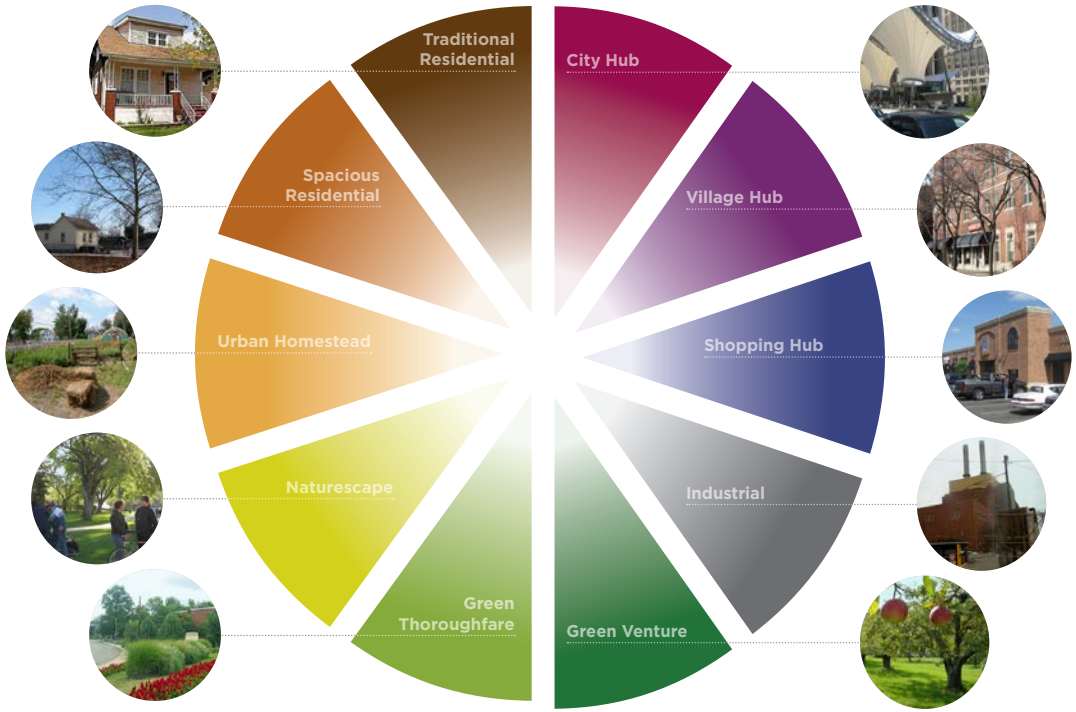
DELIBERATE
Agree on Future Direction
Based on current condition, neighborhood stakeholders come to agreement on the best, most cost-effective future direction for various groups of blocks in the neighborhood.

DECIDE
Develop Strategic Priorities
Neighborhood stakeholders define short and long-term priorities based on the agreed-upon future direction.

DO
Implement Revitalization Plan
Neighborhood stakeholders work to find the resources and direct them to the short and long-term priorities and projects outlined in the plan.

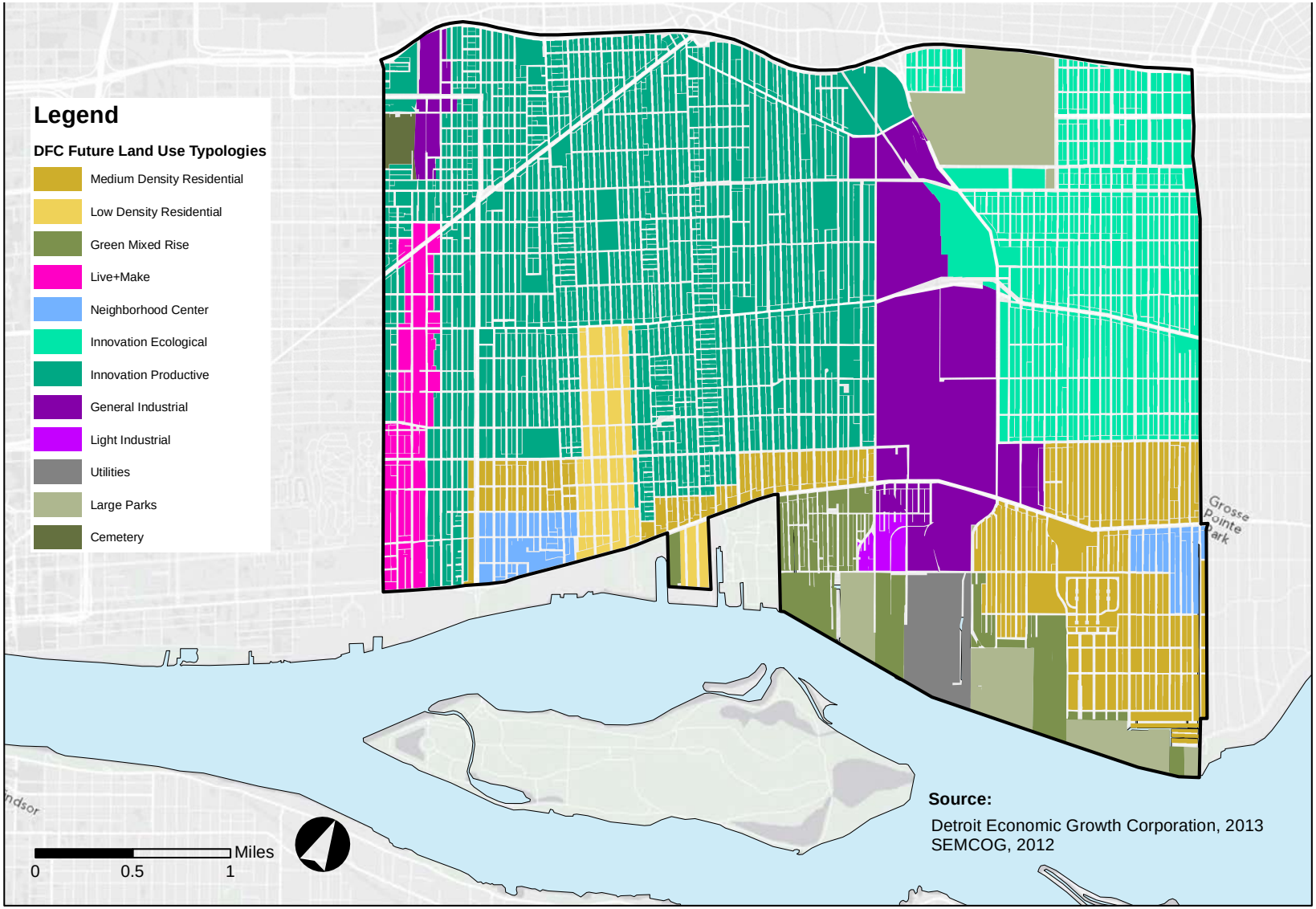
OVERVIEW
Both a process and a neighborhood typology, the CDAD Strategic Framework is a tool to help residents envision the future of their neighborhood, describe that vision, and achieve it. Residents must take the lead in creating bold and innovative plans for revitalization. These neighborhood plans must be based on data, realistic, and community-driven. Together, these plans can create a comprehensive vision for every neighborhood across the city.

A sustainable Detroit requires different investment strategies for every neighborhood and the CDAD Strategic Framework is a toolkit designed to be flexible. It allows every neighborhood to be unique and provides for a variety of uses within a single neighborhood.



NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGY
The CDAD Strategic Framework uses a set of descriptive typologies to help residents visualize the future that they want for their neighborhood. Once goals are identified, residents can chart a course from a neighborhood's *current condition* to its *future direction.*

The **residential** typologies reflect a range of density. The **greenscape** typologies range from natural areas to working landscapes. The **industrial** typology encompasses all industrial uses. The **commercial** typologies describe both pedestrian and auto-oriented uses. Community stakeholders will decide how their neighborhood is aligned with the ten typologies. Each typology has suggested strategies to help residents turn their vision into reality.


Legend
DFC Future Land Use Typologies
Medium Density Residential
Low Density Residential
Green Mixed Rise
Live+Make
Neighborhood Center
Innovation Ecological
Innovation Productive
General Industrial
Light Industrial
Utilities
Large Parks
Cemetery
Grosse Pointe Park
Miles
0
0.5
1
Source:
Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, 2013
SEMCOG, 2012

GREEN RESIDENTIAL areas illustrate one of the more profound ways in which Detroit may become a leader in sustainable land use, responding to neighborhood disinvestment and population loss by creating a new urban identity integrated with landscape. The Green Residential typology proposes transformed, landscape-based neighborhoods that transform Detroit's vacant and underutilized land into a canvas of green, supporting single- and multi-family residential along with community-maintained recreational spaces, productive landscapes, and blue/green infrastructure.

GREEN RESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONAL use shares the same set of strategic interventions as the Green Residential typology, but defers city systems renewal decisions until residential densities have achieved long-term stability.

TRADITIONAL LOW-DENSITY defines several of Detroit's historic districts. The predominant housing type in these areas is the detached single-family house on a 45-foot-wide (or larger) parcel, placed within a range of urban grids or lower-density meandering suburban streets. A limited mix of commercial retail types may be located at the periphery. Public space is provided by neighborhood parks, schools, or recreation centers. Future development of a similar size and scale should be reviewed carefully to confirm sustainable densities, and suitable cost/revenue ratio to provide services. Traditional Low-Density neighborhoods rely upon relatively better market strength compared with other Detroit neighborhoods, and have correspondingly higher taxable valuable and revenues to sustain cost-effective delivery of services.

III. Images from *Detroit Future City: Strategic Framework*

TRADITIONAL MEDIUM-DENSITY areas are primarily residential, with peripheral retail and other commercial uses. Traditional medium-density areas typify the dominant residential pattern throughout the city. The predominant housing type is the detached single-family house on a 30- to 45-footwide parcel within a conventional urban street grid, but may also include attached duplex and townhouse structures. A mix of retail types is located in commercial strips or nodes at the periphery of these neighborhoods. Public space is provided by neighborhood parks, schools, or recreation centers. At full density, Traditional Medium-Density Residential neighborhoods maintain a sustainable cost to provide services.

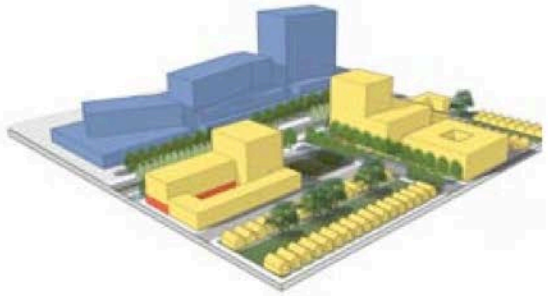
GREEN MIXED-RISE presents an innovative new residential neighborhood that combines medium- and high-density multi-family housing (both low- and high-rise) within a landscape setting. This landscape context can favor more productive characteristics (such as community gardens and forests), or more ecological characteristics (such as blue and green infrastructures and new urban habitats). Commercial retail and employment may be interspersed within the development area or at the periphery along corridors. Green Mixed-Rise neighborhoods demonstrate a unique way for Detroit to incorporate and attract greater density by capitalizing on existing physical assets– such as the east riverfront, and especially areas susceptible to flooding—while fostering a more symbiotic relationship with the natural environment. The relatively high density of the Green Mixed-Rise neighborhood achieves a low cost to provide services.

NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE TYPOLOGIES: MIXED USE

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS are vibrant mixed-use environments that are hubs for commercial, community, and recreational activities for adjacent residential areas. These neighborhoods incorporate a limited mix of commercial employment and retail uses, and support a diverse range of residential housing types from multi-family to townhouse to detached single-family. Neighborhood retail is integrated into the residential fabric in nodes or along commercial strips. Public spaces include neighborhood parks or squares, as well as integrated landscapes. Schools, recreation centers, libraries, cultural centers, or places of worship provide institutional anchors.

LAND USE COLOR CODE

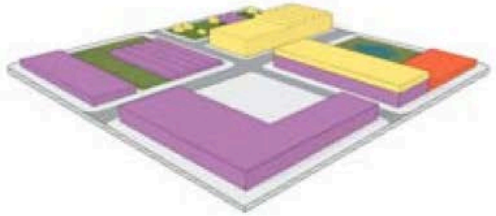
OFFICE RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONAL RETAIL INDUSTRIAL



DISTRICT CENTERS are active, medium-to-high density, mixed-use areas that provide an even split of residential and employment uses. They are typically anchored by a major commercial or institutional employer such as a university or medical center. Residential areas incorporate a mix of housing types from multi-family to townhouse to detached single-family. Multiple medium-density residential neighborhoods typically surround a District Center. District and neighborhood center retail types cater to resident and employee populations. Major civic cultural institutions and public spaces provide regional and neighborhood destinations.

III. Images from *Detroit Future City: Strategic Framework*

CITY CENTER is a dynamic mixed-use environment that functions as the city and region's core for commercial and service employment. The typology supports dense multi-family apartment and loft residential to maintain a 24/7 mixed-use environment. A mix of retail types caters to its diverse employee, resident, and visitor populations. Major civic public spaces provide regional destinations for events and recreation.



LIVE+MAKE presents another opportunity for Detroit to become a change leader in innovative urban design. Repurposed historic industrial structures and land that fosters a blend of smaller scale, low-impact production activity is combined with a diversity of other land uses. This typology provides a framework for true live-work in Detroit by allowing artisanal and small manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, and workshop uses compatible with housing and retail. The scale of industrial use is relatively fine grained, with a range of overall forms, including occupying multi-story, former industrial structures as well the development of new building types. Any adaptive reuse or new construction should be encouraged to have space set aside for productive activities.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE TYPOLOGIES

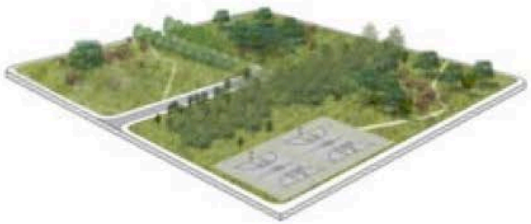
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL areas incorporate modern, light industrial uses that provide attractive environments for jobs and are compatible with nearby neighborhoods. They accommodate light industrial business and technology parks, food processing and wholesaling, advanced manufacturing, and research and development facilities on high-value urban land in an attractive, low-impact environment. Design guidelines, performance standards, and a percentage of by-right office uses would provide for an environment competitive with suburban business and technology parks, with the added advantage of proximity to educational and health assets located in the city. Low-impact light industrial users– fabricators, wholesalers, and small distributors—would be typical of the market for this typology, which features higher building coverages, urban street patterns, and small or subdivided lots.

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL areas incorporate the bulk of Detroit's non-infrastructural industrial lands. They provide job centers to accommodate a wide range of production and distribution activities, buffered from other uses with blue/green infrastructure. The impact of the activities located here is lower than those found in heavy industrial areas, and many general industrial zones already abut residential neighborhoods. Higher building coverages, large lots, and building footprints and truck circulation areas are found in this zone, which comprises the most appropriate territory for retention and growth of modern industrial facilities. Urban design standards should be employed to achieve the quality business environment required to make these sites more competitive and marketable. Manufacturing, processing, wholesale, and distribution uses with moderate noise, vibration, odor, and traffic impacts would be typical in this zone.

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL districts accommodate high-impact industrial activity isolated from other residential and commercial uses. Low building coverage– often lacking enclosed activity—accommodates industrial activity like storage tanks, pipelines, and material yards in this zone. Heavy industrial zones are more permissive of high impacts such as noise, vibration, odor, traffic, and activity in order to provide for functional and secure space in the city required by petrochemical tank farms, refineries, gasification plants, asphalt, and concrete plants. Additional areas for community-serving heavy industrial activities– including scrap yards, salvage yards, recycling, waste transfer and heavy equipment maintenance or repair—may be designated within existing industrial districts via a community planning process where necessary.

III. Images from *Detroit Future City: Strategic Framework*

LANDSCAPE LAND USE TYPOLOGIES



LARGE PARKS are traditional large open spaces across the city that provide recreational opportunities and environmental benefits locally and regionally. This typology includes parks, cemeteries, golf courses, and any other traditional landscapes 4 acres or greater in size. These public spaces are typically managed by the Detroit Recreation Department, but other organizations may contribute to programming and maintenance.

LAND USE COLOR CODE

OFFICE RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONAL RETAIL INDUSTRIAL

INNOVATION PRODUCTIVE areas are landscapes of innovation where productive development types predominate. These landscapes put vacant land to productive, active uses: growing food and productive forests, reducing maintenance costs, cleaning soil, generating new knowledge, and reshaping public perceptions of vacant land. These innovative landscapes primarily include flowering fields that clean contaminated soils, research plots to test ideas, urban farms with greenhouses or cultivated forests (silviculture), and aquaculture and algae-culture facilities. A portion of these areas is devoted to blue infrastructures to manage stormwater, and ecological landscapes are also found here as a tertiary use of innovation, where working+productive development types predominate. The minimum size would be 2 acres, with some large-scale commercial sites being potentially much larger.

III. Images from Detroit Future City: Strategic Framework

INNOVATION ECOLOGICAL areas are landscapes of innovation, where ecological development types predominate. Here forests, meadows, and other landscapes develop gradually over time and cost very little (or nothing!) to "construct" and maintain. Flowering meadows gradually give way to forests, and the changing landscape supports a variety of plant and animal life, including birds like pheasants. These landscapes can develop on their own, or can be guided to different types of desirable landscapes, which may be especially suitable for a particular species, or more appropriate for stormwater management, or a quick-growing forest that shades out tall grasses and prevents them from growing, improving visibility and eliminating need for mowing. A portion of these areas is devoted to blue infrastructures to manage stormwater, and working+productive landscape development types are also found here as a tertiary use, occupying no more than 10% of the land area not allocated to blue infrastructure.

Appendix C / Residential Handouts

I. Resources Available to Track Ownership

II. Buying a Side Lot from the City Of Detroit or the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority

III. Resources For Tracking Public Land Sales and Real Estate Proposals

THE CITY OF DETROIT OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR has an online interface that allows individuals to search by owner name, address, or parcel number.

http://tinyurl.com/detparcel

PROS

- Provides simple ownership information for free.

CONS

- Charges $2.00 per record to view more detailed information about each record, unless you own the property.
- The data contain significant errors.
- The data are not updated continuously, so they exclude recent changes in land ownership.
- Anyone looking for specific parcel information needs to cross reference with other sources.

THE WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER'S PROPERTY TAX LISTING is an online interface that allows an individual to search property information by property address or parcel ID for free.

http://tinyurl.com/wayne-ptl

PROS

- For each property, the website displays the owner of the property, the amount of tax due for a specific tax year, and the property's tax status for free.
- The website also has a payment function, which allows the taxpayer to make a whole or partial payment towards his or her outstanding taxes due.

CONS

- Though the Property Tax Listing has detailed information for each property, it contains errors.

Resources Available to Track Ownership

A variety of reasons exist to track and monitor land ownership. There are also a number of ways to do it. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses. For the best results, use multiple sources of information.

THE WAYNE COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS has **two ways** that an individual can view property ownership data; online or in person.

The Register of Deeds has a Real Estate Index online.

http://www.waynecountylandrecords.com/

PROS

- For basic information, the service is free.

CONS

- Cannot search by address or by parcel ID.
- Only shows one document at a time.
- Limited to 200 records
- Advanced search capability is available for a fee as an On-Demand user ($5.00 for each successful search and $1.00 image page viewed.)

An individual can go in person to the Register of Deeds office, located downtown at 400 Monroe on the fifth floor. The office has computer terminals where an individual can search property information.

PROS

- The best source for free, up-to-date ownership information.

CONS

- Requires time and energy
- Limited office hours
- No option to print results

Loveland Technologies created two online interfaces to handle property ownership data: **WHY DON'T WE OWN THIS** and **SITE CONTROL.**

Why Don't We Own This (WDWOT) displays parcel-level information with an interactive map.

http://www.whydontweownthis.com

PROS

- WDWOT is free and easy to use.
- Very accessible

CONS

- Data are gathered from both the City of Detroit and Wayne County, so it has similar errors.

SITE CONTROL is a web and mobile tool that allows neighborhood organizations and other groups to view public data specific to their neighborhood.

http://sitecontrol.us

PROS

- Organizations that do not have the capacity to analyze the data themselves can have access to this online tool.
- Displays demographic information, land ownership information, and so on.
- Technical support from Site Control staff

CONS

- The website costs $1,000 per group.
- Same accuracy issues as WDWOT.

BUYING A SIDE LOT FROM THE CITY OF DETROIT OR THE MICHIGAN LAND BANK FAST TRACK AUTHORITY

If you own your property and live next door to a vacant, publicly-owned property, you may have an opportunity to buy it for $135 - $218.

WHY SHOULD I BUY A SIDE LOT?

Not only will you have extra space for a garden, garage, or place to call your own, you'll also be helping your neighborhood. If you don't take ownership of the property, someone else will. Most likely that will be the City who can't afford to maintain it or a speculator not invested in your neighborhood.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to acquire a vacant property through the City of Detroit's Side Lot program, or the Michigan Land Bank's program, you will need the following:

- **Proof that you own your property(a recorded deed, or copy of mortgage papers)**
- **Proof that you have paid your taxes (copies of current paid city and county tax bills)**
- **Proof of identity (copy of valid state driver's license or other official photo ID)**

If you are able to provide ownership information, then the next step is figuring out who currently owns the next door property. To look up ownership information, use the *Resources For Tracking Public Land Sales and Real Estate Proposals* handout, at:
http://tinyurl.com/trackingpublicland

The City of Detroit allows you to purchase up to two lots on either side of you but not through an alley (unless the alley is vacated).

If you have further questions, call the City of Detroit's Real Estate Division of the City of Detroit: 313-224-4032, or the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority: 517-335-8212

THE PROCESS

How you acquire the property depends on who owns it:

THE CITY OF DETROIT

Fill out this form: tinyurl.com/sidelotapp, and mail it to:

City Of Detroit City Owned Vacant Lot Program
Planning And Development Department
Real Estate Division, Suite 2000
65 Cadillac Square
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Or, contact the Real Estate Division: 313-224-4032

Next it will be reviewed by Detroit's Planning Division. If the City has no reason to keep the property, they will send a letter to the other adjacent neighbor (if there is one). If the neighbor is also interested, the lot will be split 50/50. If not, the City can sell it for $218 (including an administrative fee), unless the property is deemed to be of a higher value. If the lot is wider than 45 feet, the City can sell it for $10 per frontage foot. The process should take 2-3 months.

MICHIGAN LAND BANK FAST TRACK AUTHORITY

Fill out this application: tinyurl.com/MI-SideLot, and mail it to:

State Of Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority
300 N. Washington Square
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Send it in and wait around 30 days. If the Land Bank accepts your application, they will send you an acceptance letter, invoice for payment, and forms to process the deed and property transfer. After you've paid them $100 plus a $35 processing

Resources For Tracking Public Land Sales and Real Estate Proposals

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Planning and Development Department's (P&DD) Real Estate Development Division handles the surplus of public land sales, disposition sales and the acquisition of property. The Division also handles all development land sale requests for City property from business owners, real estate developers, and investors. P&DD has the most accurate and information on public land sales. P&DD's Real Estate Division also provides notifications on their website of auctions of their property, but these notifications are infrequent.The most effective way to monitor public land sales and proposed real estate developments is to establish a relationship with P&DD staff and frequently contact them for updates that do not appear in other sources.

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The City of Detroit's General Services Department (GSD) manages most of the City's property, including their parks. Often large-scale properties are marketed for sale with GSD's coordination. Similar to P&DD, GSD sometimes puts notifications of large-scale properties and park sales on their website. Online notifications of park sales or other property sales are infrequent and unpredictable. Monitoring these changes requires an ongoing relationship and dialogue with department staff.

CITY COUNCIL

Weekly City Council agendas provide information on the sale of City-owned property, real estate development projects in process, infrastructure improvements, and building demolitions. The City Clerk provides access to City Council agendas via the Council Calendar Events prior to the meetings. Once an item has appeared on the council agenda, a project or a sale is far along in the approval process. Regardless, reviewing these agendas can give insight into the movement of property and real estate development projects throughout the city.

DETROIT ECONOMIC GROWTH CORPORATION

The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) manages redevelopment of City-controlled properties throughout Detroit18 in addition to marketing some City-controlled properties. The DEGC also issues Requests for Proposals and issues contracts for real estate and capital improvement projects throughout Detroit. Reviewing the DEGC website provides a way to learn of major development projects potentially happening in the LEAP area before the projects begin. However, by the time an RFP is issued, little opportunity for intervention may exist. Tracking these changes requires an ongoing dialogue with the department staff.

DETROIT LAND BANK AUTHORITY

The Detroit Land Bank Authority's Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a federally-funded program that seeks to "eliminate blight in targeted Detroit neighborhoods by putting families into newly renovated houses that were formerly foreclosed and vacant. The Detroit Land Bank has an online inventory guide listing the homes for sale.

MICHIGAN LAND BANK FAST TRACK AUTHORITY

The Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority offers an online database of all their property for sale. Interested parties can search their database, by street, city, neighborhood or zip code, to locate properties for sale. If the purchaser desires, he or she may create a profile online, and begin the application process for purchasing the property. LEAP participants can periodically search the website for properties for sale in the LEAP area.

Appendix D / How to Start a Community Land Trust

Instructions provided by National Garden Association, A Philadelphia Land Trust.[1]

How to Start a Community Land Trust

1. Background Research

Assess whether a neighborhood or city can nurture a community land trust by identifying organizations that have the capacity to handle land reuse. Once capacity is established, conduct community meetings to educate and garner support from residents.

2. Board of Directors

Identify residents and/or local business owners who can represent the neighborhood to serve as members of the Board of Directors. As the first item of business, the board should work to establish a mission statement and by-laws for the organization.

3. Incorporation and 501(c)3 Status

Once the organization has a name, a mission, and at least four incorporators, the group can apply for tax-exempt 501(c)3 status from the IRS. The organization also has to complete the Articles of Incorporation (Nonprofit) with the State of Michigan's Bureau of Commercial Services, Corporation Division.[2]

4. Registration Statement for Charitable Organizations

After achieving 501(c)3 status, the organization can register with the Charitable Trust Section of the Michigan Department of the Attorney General for a License to Solicit Charitable Contributions.[3]

5. Tax Exemption

The organization can then apply for a tax exemption for either real or personal property from the City of Detroit Assessments Division.[4] The organization can gain exemption from state sales tax by filling out a Michigan Sales and Use Tax Certificate of Exemption.[5]

6. Insurance Coverage

The board should pursue two types of insurance – one to protect its members and one for property liability.

7. Land Preservation Strategies

The organization should then decide on criteria for acquisition of properties. Which properties will the land trust purchase? Will the properties be restricted to a geographic area, the condition of the land or structure? The organization should also consider the restrictions on each property. Is it in an urban renewal zone? Is it historically designated?

8. Technical Assistance

The board should clarify the role of the organization in providing assistance. A land trust often assists individuals and organizations in purchasing property, either from the land trust itself or through other means. The organization can provide advice, but its responsibilities should be clear.

9. Annual Budget

The board should project revenue and operating costs until additional staff are hired to prepare the budget.

10. Fundraising

The board members should take a role in fundraising for the organization, either by donating personally to the organization or garnering support within their networks. The expectations of board members should be clearly defined.

11. Public Relations

The organization should create a strategy to spread their message to residents, politicians, and businesses.

[1] Neighborhood Garden Association, A Philadelphia Land Trust, "Getting Started," Neighborhood Gardens Association, http://www.philadelphialandtrust.org/trust.html (assessed March 17, 2013).

[2] State of Michigan, LARA, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, "Domestic Nonprofit Corporation," State of Michigan, http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-35299_61343_35413_35426-120068,00.html (accessed May 11, 2013).

[3] State of Michigan, Attorney General, "Registering a Charitable Trust," State of Michigan, http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-17337_18095_18101-45037--,00.html (assessed May 11, 2013).

[4] City of Detroit, Finance Department, "Assessment Division," City of Detroit, http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/Finance/AssessmentDivision.aspx (assessed May 11, 2013).

[5] State of Michigan, "Sales & Use Tax Exemption," State of Michigan, http://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0,1607,7-238-43529-154427--,00.html#4 (assessed May 11, 2013).

Appendix E / Creekside Blight Violation Property List and Priority Demolition List

This appendix provides information about property owners with blight violations in Creekside and priority demolitions in Creekside (see Chapter 7).

I. Creekside Blight Violation Property List

II. Priority Demolition List

Property Owners with Blight Violations in Creekside (2013)

According to the Detroit Residential Parcel Survey, 82 properties in Creekside were in poor condition in 2009. Searching for those 82 properties on the Blight Violation online Database revealed that 43 of them received Blight Violation tickets in the past. Table E.1 shows the addresses of the properties associated with those violations, along with the names of the owners.

TABLE E.1

Property Address	Owner
739 Navahoe	Edison, Savannah
870 Kitchener	Nealis, Ann
356 Chalmers	Peters, Robert & Victoria
649 Philip	B & D Property Management
674 Philip	Thomas, Emma
632 Philip	Shasta Properties Llc
420 Manistique	Erby, Catherine
421 Ashland	Scott, William
382 Manistique	Wilson, Marsha C
600 Navahoe	Brown, Gustavia
651 Algonquin	Warmack, Bonnie M
656 Navahoe	Wayne County Inventory
621 Tennessee	Rump, Donald Alan
626 Tennessee	Moore, Michael
801 Conner	Turner, Ruby M
920 Navahoe	Wells, Herbert C
764 Conner	The Power Of Llc
515 Algonquin	Mortgage Electronic Reg Sys Inc
633 Kitchener	Mason, Richard Sr
428 Navahoe	Moreasun, Lawrence
486 Algonquin	Shealy, Lynwood
528 Navahoe	Steven Properties
667 Kitchener	Jones, Nicole
478 Algonquin	Adams, Dianne
485 Kitchener	Williams, Iola
446 Algonquin	B & D Property Management
469 Kitchener	Williams, Mary A
256 Ashland	Bimini Properties Ii
319 Ashland	Metro Building Group
577 Lakewood	Conner, Vicky
345 Eastlawn	U S Bank National Association
394 Eastlawn	Butts, Stanley K
212 Marlborough	Moceri, Dominic
259 Ashland	Wells Fargo Bank
685 Philip	Williams, Leonard Michael
504 Marlborough	Hamilton, Keith E
545 Philip	Us Bank National Association
841 Philip	Reed, Sandra K
729 Philip	Ivory, R
509 Navahoe	Williams, Helen
650 Algonquin	Smith, Carolyn A
644 Algonquin	Marshall, Q
868 Continental	Anderson, William L

Source: City of Detroit Department of Administrative Hearings, Detroit Blight Violation Database, 2013. https://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/DepartmentofAdministrativeHearings/TicketSearch.aspx.

Priority Demolitions in Creekside (2012)

Table E.2 provides addresses of properties on the City of Detroit's Dangerous Buildings Demolition List located within dense Traditional Residential blocks in Creekside. This analysis of housing density based on the 2009 Detroit Residential Parcel Survey defined denser blocks as those with more than 20 occupied housing units.

TABLE E.2

Property Address	Owner
668 Navahoe	Rebek, Karen
441 Tennessee	Sims, Patricia
656 Navahoe	Wayne County Inventory
446 Tennessee	Evans, A Z
614 Navahoe	Saliim, Khalil Abdul
657 Algonquin	Smith, William H
442 Tennessee	Griffin, Derrick D
651 Algonquin	Warmack, Bonnie M
600 Navahoe	Brown, Gustavia
680 Algonquin	Smith, Willie M
650 Algonquin	Smith, Carolyn A
528 Navahoe	Steven Properties
577 Algonquin	Cox, Alesia J & Boyd L
673 Kitchener	Hall, Donnie
571 Algonquin	Easter, Edy K
667 Kitchener	Jones, Nicole
563 Algonquin	Shealy, Sallie M
661 Kitchener	Steven Properties Inc
515 Algonquin	Mortgage Electronic Reg Sys Inc
570 Algonquin	Redmond, Oliver L & Kelvin
554 Algonquin	Hughlett, Lula
912 Tennessee	Cook, Fleming
900 Tennessee	Lasenby, Daisy L
888 Tennessee	Whitley, John
996 Conner	Campbell, Leonora
913 Conner	Sesi, Hansee
907 Conner	Carter, Denise L
997 Navahoe	Smith, Barbara B
853 Conner	Smith, Lula
1018 Navahoe	Wells Fargo Bank Na
847 Conner	Edison, Savannah
998 Navahoe	Dixon, Robert
801 Conner	Turner, Ruby M
920 Navahoe	Wells, Herbert C
912 Navahoe	Ward, Vannice
727 Conner	Cred & Tqm
892 Navahoe	Steele, Dorothy L
12716 E Jefferson	San Diego Party Store Inc
764 Conner	The Power Of Llc
905 Algonquin	Thomas, Shane & Terrestial
836 Navahoe	Ford, Valarie
791 Algonquin	Michigan Wholesale Properties Llc
753 Algonquin	Jobe, Bonnie R
767 Kitchener	Gilmore, Cordelia
889 Chalmers	Edwards, Eugene
825 Chalmers	Mcivor, Joan
750 Lakewood	Calhoun, Andrew R
14420 E Jefferson	T & T Investors Inc
14436 E Jefferson	City Of Detroit-P&Dd
840 Chalmers	Grihm, Charles L
744 Chalmers	Roberts, Shanday
681 Lakewood	Smith, Shelia
577 Lakewood	Conner, Vicky
686 Chalmers	Atlanta Developing Llc

Property Address	Owner
628 Lakewood	Chapman, Robert M & Michelle S
477 Lakewood	Hud
410 Newport	Smith, John H
576 Chalmers	Pitts, James
495 Chalmers	Sps Llc
548 Chalmers	Federal National Mortgage Assoc
473 Chalmers	Blackman, Ernest
467 Chalmers	Blackman, Ernest
463 Chalmers	Saxon Mortgage Services Inc
284 Lenox	Ford, Delores
264 Lenox	Detroit Temple Of Iskcon
279 Piper	Progressive Property Investments Llc
273 Eastlawn	Bolden, Anthony D
287 Newport	Harris, Evelyn M
281 Newport	Taxpayer
209 Eastlawn	Walker, Samuel Jr
231 Lakewood	Baber, Deborah A
295 Chalmers	Onomake, Ovieh D
290 Chalmers	Canty, William
286 Chalmers	Heritage Home Finance Llc
208 Lakewood	Williams, Webster W Jr
278 Chalmers	Iverson, Ulyssia & Austin, Lamark
274 Chalmers	Alexander, Joelle
287 Marlborough	Demonbreun, Charlene
218 Chalmers	Hud
211 Marlborough	King, Debra
271 Philip	Third Baptist Church
241 Philip	City Of Detroit-P&Dd

Source: City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, Dangerous Buildings Demolition List datafile, 2012 and Data Driven Detroit, Detroit Residential Parcel Survey, 2009.