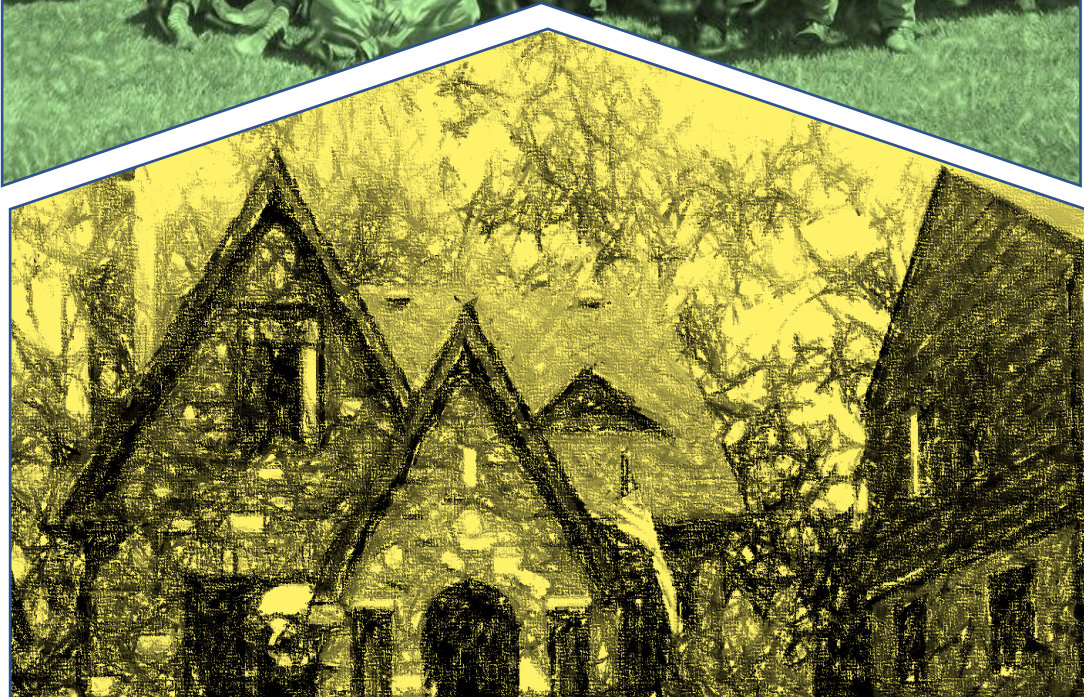
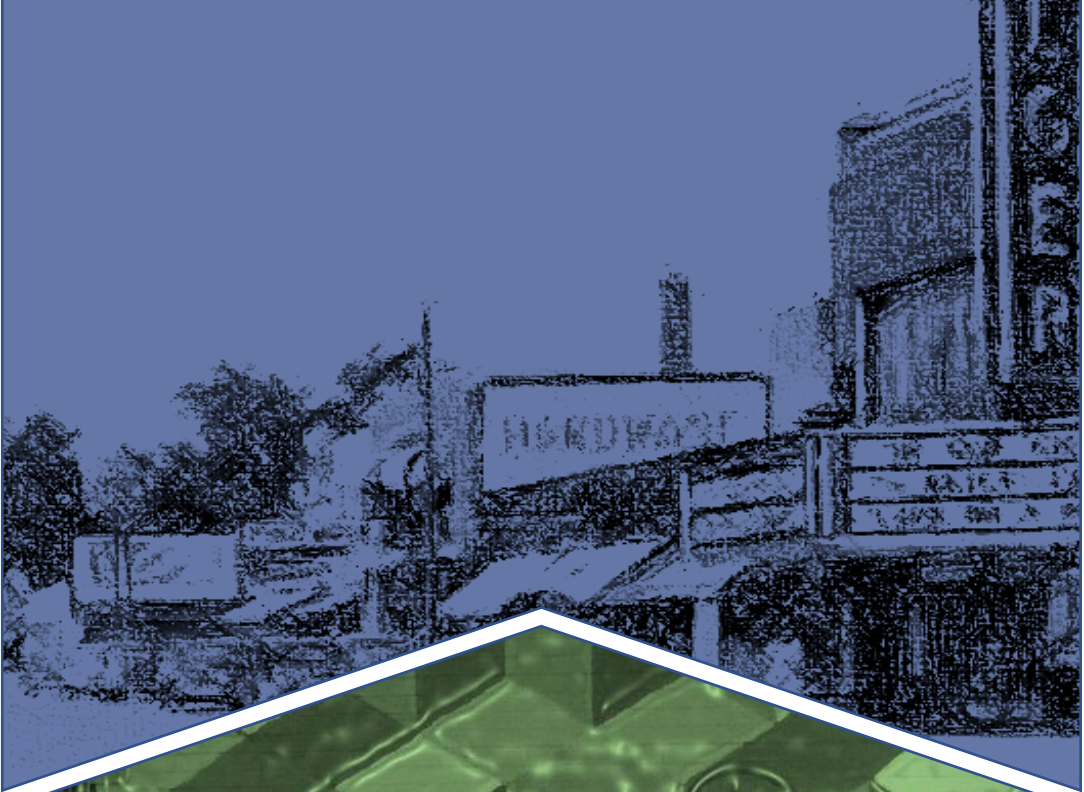


# EAST SIDE STORY:

Creating Neighborhoods of Choice on Detroit's East Side



Urban Land  
Institute  
Michigan

# EAST SIDE STORY:

## Creating Neighborhoods of Choice on Detroit's East Side

June 2017

A Robert C. Larson Center for Leadership Study

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# ABOUT ULI

## ABOUT THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to:

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs.
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership, through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving.
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital information, and sustainable development.
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments.
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media.
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 36,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and more.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's more respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

## ABOUT THE LARSON CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP

Named for the late Robert C. Larson—a nationally recognized and respected Michigan real estate professional, trustee of the Urban Land Institute, and former chair of the ULI Foundation—the Robert C. Larson Center for Leadership (also known as the Larson Center for Leadership) is a curriculum-based program designed to train and mentor the next generation of real estate and land use leaders in Michigan. The Center operates under ULI's Larson Leadership Initiative, which has successfully implemented leadership-based initiatives at a national level, and within other District Councils, throughout the past several years.

The mission of the Larson Center for Leadership is to cultivate leadership development by informing a select group of future leaders of the evolving dynamics currently emerging within Michigan's real estate and land use industries, and facilitating their engagement in this transformative process. The nine-month program comprises eight day-long program days, each with a specific topic of focus, such as infrastructure, regionalism, or the role of government. Participants are required to complete the Center's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) component—modeled after the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Program process—an integral component of leadership development in the Larson Center for Leadership. As part of the TAP, participants are presented with a “land-use challenge” and throughout the program they research and analyze the area of focus, conduct due diligence, seek additional input from stakeholders and/or industry experts, summarize their findings, and develop final recommendations to be compiled into the final report.

Participants of the program are mid-career, Michigan-based professionals who work either directly or indirectly with the real estate or land-use sectors, and have a strong commitment to the mission of the Urban Land Institute: to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

Participants consist of professionals from both the public and private sectors with diverse backgrounds in various fields related to real estate and land use, including but not limited to finance, law, development, planning, architecture, engineering, and economic and community development.







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The east side is made up of three neighborhoods; MorningSide, East English Village, and Cornerstone Village. The MorningSide neighborhood is bounded by Harper Avenue to the north, Mack Avenue to the south, Alter Road to the west, and East Outer Drive/Whittier Road on the east. East English Village shares MorningSide's East Outer Drive/Whittier Road border to the west, and is bounded to the east by Cadieux Road, south by Mack Avenue, and north by Harper Avenue. Cornerstone Village is located the farthest east and includes the borders of Moross Road to the east, Cadieux to the west, Harper Avenue to the north, and Mack Avenue to the south. Running parallel to Harper Avenue on the north, I-94 provides direct interstate access to the community.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

Detroit's far east side began like much of Detroit, as a French settlement in the 1700s. Land was divided into ribbon farms; long, narrow strips of land that stretched from the waterfront to deep inland. The design provided settlers with access to waterways for drinking water, fishing and transportation and to land for timber, farming, and game.

Ribbon farms in this area were collectively part of Grosse Pointe Township until Detroit annexed large portions near the end of the nineteenth century. With the rise in manufacturing, jobs were plentiful, working wages supported middle class mobility, and Detroit's population was growing. Ribbon farms were eventually redeveloped into housing subdivisions we now know as neighborhoods.

Today, Detroit's far east side neighborhoods including Cornerstone Village, East English Village, and MorningSide are bedroom communities with the solid, diverse housing stock, commercial corridor framework, recreation facilities, and infrastructure assets to support a vibrant, livable, tight knit community.

Yet, these neighborhoods are not without challenges.

The Great Recession hit Detroit neighborhoods particularly hard; three of the top ten hardest hit zip codes for foreclosures were in Detroit. One of those zip codes was 48224, encompassing MorningSide and East English Village. Even now, some areas struggle with high residential vacancies, sporadic abandonment, and illegal dumping. Commercial corridors suffer from high rates of vacancy, requiring residents to travel to other communities for basic needs.



PHOTO | Friends of Alger



## RESIDENTIAL | HOUSING

Just as the history of ribbon farms is still evident in Detroit's neighborhoods, the Detroit's rich immigration history is evident in the unique characteristics of the homes. By 1925, most of the area had been subdivided into residential parcels and homes were built during the construction boom of the 1920s to 1930s. The new auto industry attracted workers from all over the world, many of whom were also skilled, creative craftsmen. When they became homeowners, they custom designed and built their own homes.

These early residents were much like current day residents. Racially and ethnically diverse, covering many professions and vocations from doctors and lawyers to civil servants, police officers and small business owners. Some residents have lived their entire lives in the community and eventually retired in homes that their parents originally built. And because homes are well maintained and passed down, many homes have only changed hands two or three times. A thick canopy of mature trees line

street after street of gorgeous Tudors, brick bungalows, colonials and Cape Cods, many with the original artistic brick and stonework. In addition to the older homes, Morningside has several new townhomes and single-family homes built as infill housing. The houses include rentals, subsidized homes and new homes going at market rate.

## COMMERCIAL RETAIL CORRIDORS

Mack, Warren, and Harper Avenues are old downtown style commercial corridors that bisect and border the neighborhoods. With high vacancy rates, businesses are sparse in stretches and grow denser the further east as they approach and eventually run into the Grosse Pointes. Small mom-and-pop shops offer warm, personal customer service with specialty items such as books, bikes and antiques in welcoming storefronts. Modern strip mall developments with supermarkets and chain stores sit on the neighborhoods' western side at major intersections.



PHOTO | Michelle and Chris Gerard

"It's a very rich architectural mix of houses and they're very well taken care of."

Bill Barlage



While numerous businesses have come and gone, the eastside still offers ample opportunity for people looking start a business or build housing or retail development. Particularly, the far east side is ripe for entrepreneurs with an original business idea or those who can serve a basic need of the community such as bakery, barber shop, hardware store, or corner grocery store.

Mack Alter Square, the new commercial development at the intersection of Mack and Alter combined 80 parcels, demolished structures, and completed environmental remediation on the site before building 60,000 square feet of commercial space. Both franchise and locally owned small businesses turned blight into a state of the art suburban style shopping center anchored by a pharmacy, supermarket, and gas station.

“We thought the area was ripe for redevelopment and needed redevelopment very badly. “

Mike Curis, developer

## ASSETS


- Residents exhibit community spirit, take pride in knowing their neighbors and take time to talk over the fence. A positive atmosphere, residents take active roles to improve their neighborhood including adamantly supporting local businesses.
- Residents can drive to downtown, Belle Isle, hospitals, schools, parks and the Pointes in 20 minutes or less
- Residents come in all ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations and social backgrounds including both white and blue collar, civil servants, a variety of professions and retirees.
- MEC Patrol is the volunteer, non profit neighborhood patrol program, observing and reporting all suspicious activities in the community.
- Proximity to the Pointes and other east side suburbs allows for retail, shopping, restaurants, and night life. The proximity goes both ways. Revitalized retail corridors in the far east side neighborhoods could draw consumers with ample disposable income.
- The historic Alger Theater is owned by the Friends of the Alger Theater and has great potential to anchor an entertainment and dining hub.
- Balduck Park has upgraded athletic fields and a popular sledding hill.
- Chandler Park Family Aquatic Center
- Chandler Park Golf Course
- St. John Hospital
- Cadieux Café, a former speakeasy is well known for steamed mussels and feather bowling.
- Big box retail is located in nearby Harper Woods with Target, Home Depot, Lowe's and Macy's.

## THE CLIENT

The City of Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department is systematically conducting Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plans in targeted areas across the city. Over the next two years, the city will issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the far east side neighborhoods of Cornerstone Village, East English Village, and MorningSide. The scope will cover strategies that improve quality of life for residents, strengthen economic development, support new housing choices and elevate neighborhood vibrancy.

**In preparation for the RFP process, the City asked the Larson Center for Leadership to engage community members, conduct research, and prepare recommendations to shape the scope of work for the RFP. This report details the TAP's recommendations, focused around five questions on the future of Detroit's eastside neighborhoods:**

1. What design/development opportunities exist to activate the two vacant archdiocese school sites that will fill a need in the community?
2. What innovative opportunities exist to utilize the open space created by significant blight removal in the neighborhood that will benefit the community?
3. What strategies exist to educate prospective homeowners on the true costs of re-habbing, landlord and tenant rights, and marketing to fill the vacant housing in the neighborhood?
4. What design/development opportunities exist to activate the East Warren corridor as the hub for a 20-minute neighborhood?
5. What opportunities exist to improve and expand the transportation and mobility in the neighborhood?



**“It’s a diverse community of dedicated Detroiters who enjoy city living and are willing to keep the neighborhood a place that values diversity and community. “**

Colin Hubbell, resident

# CHARETTE

To begin the process and gain an understanding of the target neighborhoods, the Larson Leaders met with several residents and leadership from the community organizations at [MASH Detroit](#), including Cornerstone Village, East English Village Association, MorningSide Association and MECCA.

Conversations were conducted in the [World Café](#) method; a simple, effective format for hosting large group dialogue. After introductions and overview, stakeholders were divided into five groups. Each of the five teams sat down with a group of stakeholders to cover their individual questions. After thirty minutes, each team rotated to another group of stakeholders. And after five rounds, each team had met with every stakeholder to collect information and input regarding all topics.





[Cornerstone Village](#) formally established as Organized Neighbors East in 1977 for the purpose of maintaining and improving the neighborhood. A few years ago we changed our name to Cornerstone Village to reflect that we are the easternmost corner of Detroit's east side. We have had great success in the past, protecting our park and other key areas from undesirable development.

[East English Village](#) has an active homeowners' organization known as the East English Village Association. This organization consists of an Executive Board and volunteers on various committees and positions. Each volunteer is valued and our existence as an association relies on the participation of our residents.

[MorningSide](#), established in 1977, is a non-profit community organization where the elected board works with community members to make MorningSide a better place. Through the mechanisms of block clubs and monthly meetings they keep residents informed and connected. They promote community involvement in dealing with issues such as clean-up efforts, energy saving and keeping the community safe.

MorningSide, East English Village, Cornerstone Village Community Advocates Development Corporation ("[MECCA](#)") is a diverse, non-profit coalition of neighborhoods, endeavoring for an improved quality of life for Detroit's Far East Side residents.



# VACANT SCHOOLS

## What design/development opportunities exist to activate the two vacant archdiocese school sites that will fill a need in the community?

The [Archdiocese of Detroit](#) has been a presence in Detroit since 1701, leading the Catholic community within the city as well as the six-county surrounding area. Across southeast Michigan, the Archdiocese administers all Roman Catholic parishes and schools as well as specialized ministries, events and community assistance.

With Detroit's population decline – *61 percent since the 1950s* – the enduring fiscal crisis, and the departure of students from both public and parochial schools, many school buildings across the city sit vacant and boarded. In some cases, the facilities have been vandalized and left open to the elements, inflating the cost of renovations.

Currently, the Archdiocese has 34 properties for sale or lease, including schools, rectories, convents, churches, offices, parish halls and vacant land. The properties range in size, age and condition. Our team was asked to focus on two specific Archdiocese properties within our target neighborhoods.

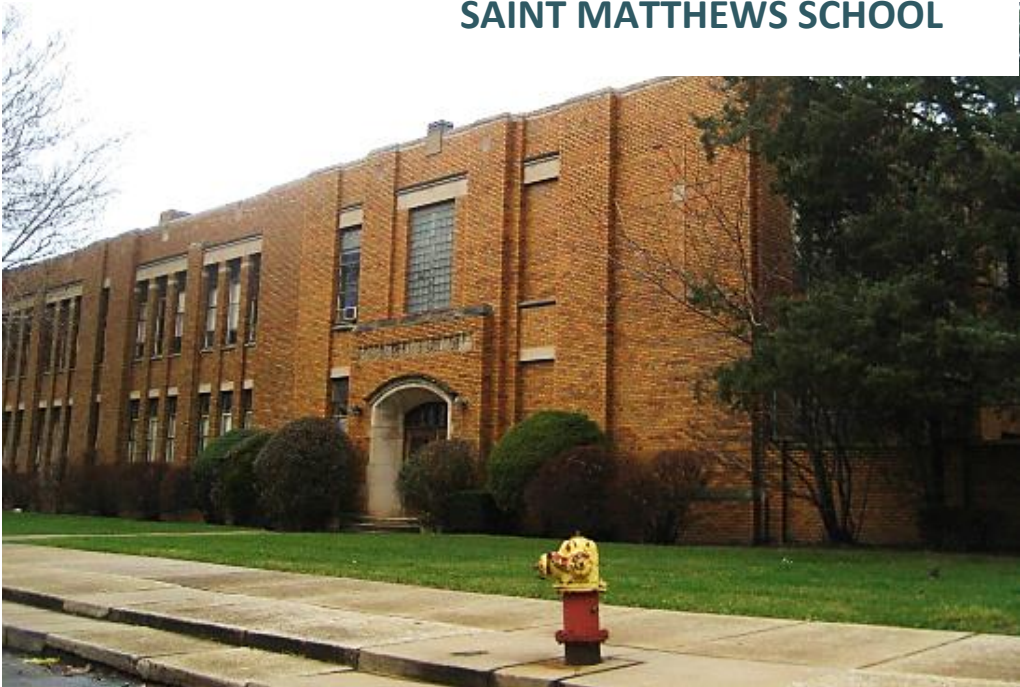


“Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.”

Jane Jacobs



- 2 story, 48,000 sf school
- 21 classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium
- 15,000 sf activity center w/16 classrooms
- Site: 0.81 acre with shared parking
- Zoning: R1 - Residential
- Walkscore: 67
- Adjacent commercial corridor and edge of residential neighborhood
- Good condition, exterior and interior
- Recently renovated gymnasium
- New roof above gymnasium
- Needs life safety upgrades (fire protection)
- Needs accessibility upgrades (ADA)



**SAINT MATTHEWS SCHOOL**

- 2 story, 7,475 sf school
- 10 small classrooms, 2 offices, chapel
- Site: 0.31 acre with street parking
- Zoning: R1 - Residential
- Walkscore: 54
- Predominately residential area and in walking distance of commercial corridor
- Average condition, exterior and interior
- Possible life safety upgrades (fire protection)
- Needs accessibility upgrades (ADA)
- Potential interior repairs



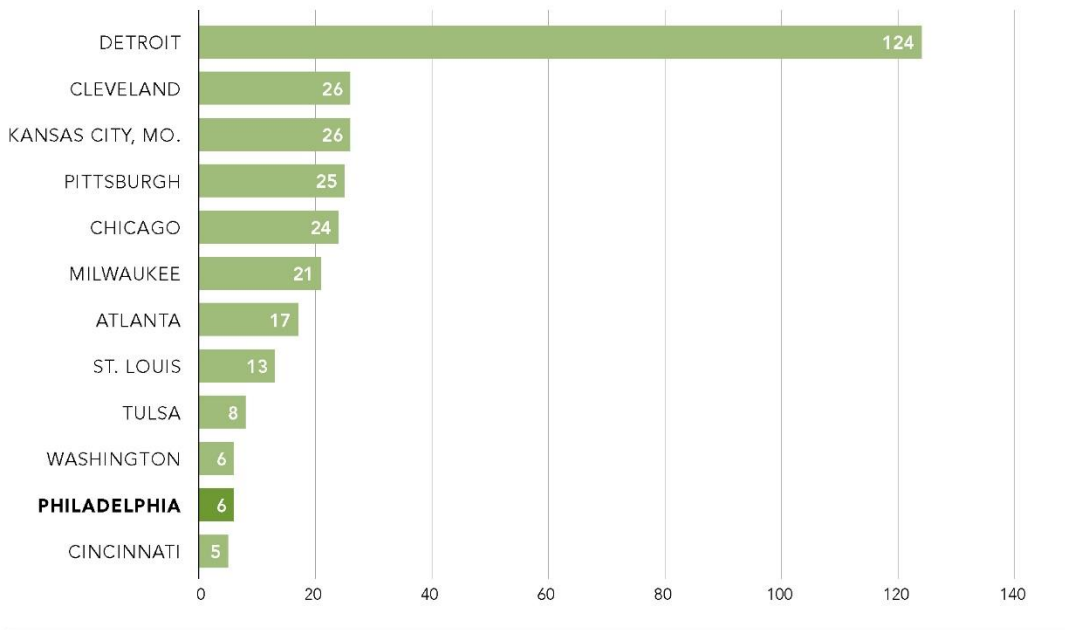
**SAINT PHILOMENA SCHOOL**



FIGURE 2

**SCHOOL DISTRICT PROPERTIES ON THE MARKET: END OF 2012**

*In some cases, these properties have stood empty for a decade or more. Others were declared surplus only in the last few years.*



SOURCES: Individual school districts.

Since 2011, [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#) has been studying the phenomenon of large scale public school closures that have become a fact of life in so many American cities. They have looked at what happens to the students, what happens to the buildings themselves and finally, finding new uses for the decommissioned buildings or the property on which they sit. They looked at 12 cities that have been experiencing both declining school-age populations and declining enrollments in district-run schools. In total, these 12 cities have sold, transferred or reused 267 properties between 2005 and 2012. Sale prices ranged from \$200,000 and \$1 million, often far below initial estimates.

“In Detroit, the sheer magnitude of the inventory, resulting from population decline, places the city in a category by itself. The district has disposed of more sites in the last seven years than any of the districts studied, yet the number of properties available there is still far and away the highest.”

[Shuttered Public Schools](#): The Struggle to Bring Old Buildings New Life

## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the citizen charrette, neighborhood residents provided several ideas for the vacant Archdiocese properties based on the needs of community members, including:

- Assisted living
- Childcare and eldercare
- Recreation center
- Community meeting space (support groups, programming)
- GED classes
- Job/vocational training (auto, culinary, computer)
- Financial literacy training
- Farmers market
- Makers space
- Tool library
- After school programs/youth development
- Medical clinic/urgent care
- Social services



PHOTO | Trisha White



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**SAINT MATTHEWS SCHOOL** Despite the many assets of Saint Matthews, the estimated purchase price and initial construction costs would be a difficult undertaking for most community-based user or operators. Rather than managing a multi-tenant operation, the church is seeking a single entity buyer. But with 48,000 square feet, the sheer scale of the facility will require multiple tenants with shared space and programming.

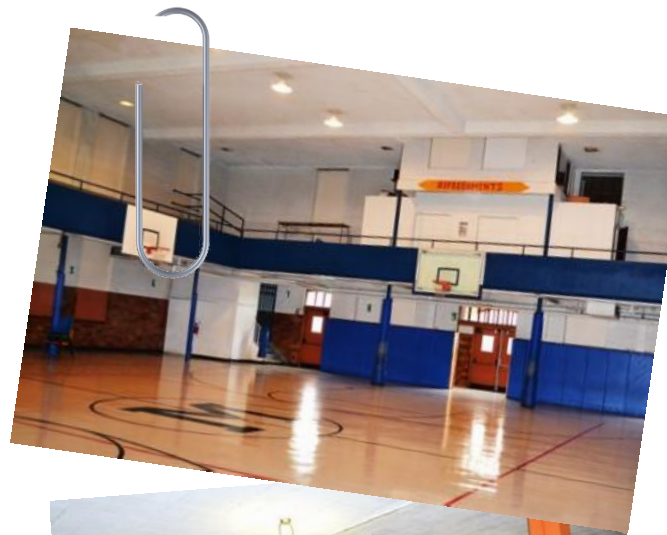
Our team suggested the highest and best use of the facility would be a charter school, which would fit the need for a single buyer/tenant and take advantage of the existing amenities. Also, a charter school could easily share the electrical utilities and parking lot with the church. During the TAP process, the Archdiocese entered into negotiations with a charter school. If successful, the purchase agreement for the Saint Matthews property would anticipate occupancy in 2018 following life safety upgrades.

**SAINT PHILOMENA SCHOOL** As a much smaller facility, the Saint Philomena is a much more manageable scale and would be a lower initial investment for a potential buyer. With a fenced rear yard in a residential setting, it would make an ideal setting for daycare, elder care, urgent care clinic, early childhood education, assisted living, or youth programs.

With a few simple modifications such as building a dedicated parking and drop-off locations, the facility could easily be adaptable as a multi-use facility, meeting more than one need for the community. For instance, a community nonprofit could operate a daycare or elder care business during daytime hours and host adult education or workforce training in the evenings.

Potential buyers include:

- The IFF ([Illinois Financial Institute](#)) is currently working with the Early Childhood Education (ECE) collaboration group and the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) to assess opportunities in the Detroit area for ECE facilities.
- [Hope Starts Here](#) – a community driven partnership to strengthen and grow Detroit’s early childhood services (co-chaired by W.K. Kellogg Foundation & Kresge Foundation)





## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the location, scale of the project, and proposed uses, our team recommended the following funding sources:

[MEDC Community Revitalization Program \(CRP\)](#) is designed to promote community revitalization. The grant is not to exceed 25% of the total eligible investment, with a cap of \$1.5 million.



The [Kresge Foundation](#) provides grant funding in Detroit for various subject areas, including early childhood development and enhanced civic capacity.



[Motor City Match](#) awards up to \$100,000 for building renovations. Building owners who have a tenant secured for their space and are ready for build-out are eligible.

[Patronocity](#) is a civic crowdfunding and crowd granting platform, bringing together local citizens and sponsors to support community initiatives.



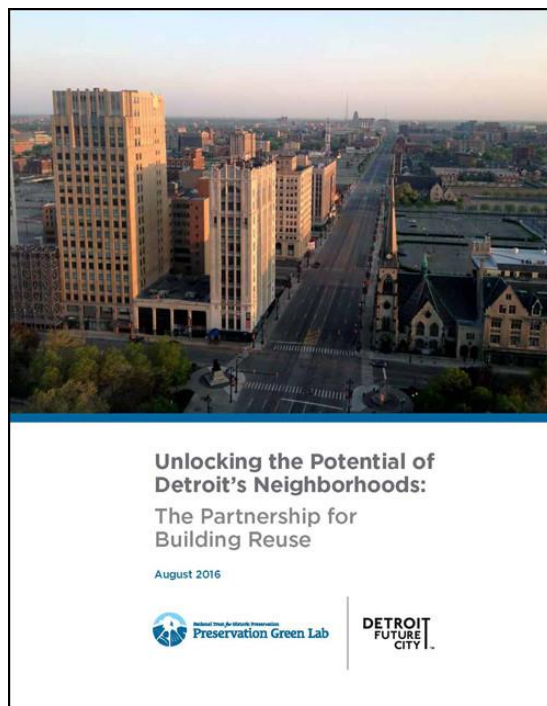
## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A Community [Guide](#) to Repurposing Vacant and Underutilized Historic Buildings

Unlocking the [Potential](#) of Detroit's Neighborhoods: The Partnership for Building Reuse

[Shuttered Public Schools](#): The Struggle to Bring Old Buildings New Life  
The Pew Charitable Trusts, February 2013

Old Schools, New Uses: Property Developers [Conference](#), March 2014



Developers with the inclination and means to repurpose former school facilities may be deterred by the additional time and money needed to pursue rezoning ordinances for non-school uses.

To attract developers, Detroit passed a **School Building Adaptive Reuse Ordinance** in 2012 that would cut the red tape and promote the preservation of historic school buildings. For those buildings not listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the ordinance contains provisions for limited alterations and allows for 19 conditional uses for school buildings.





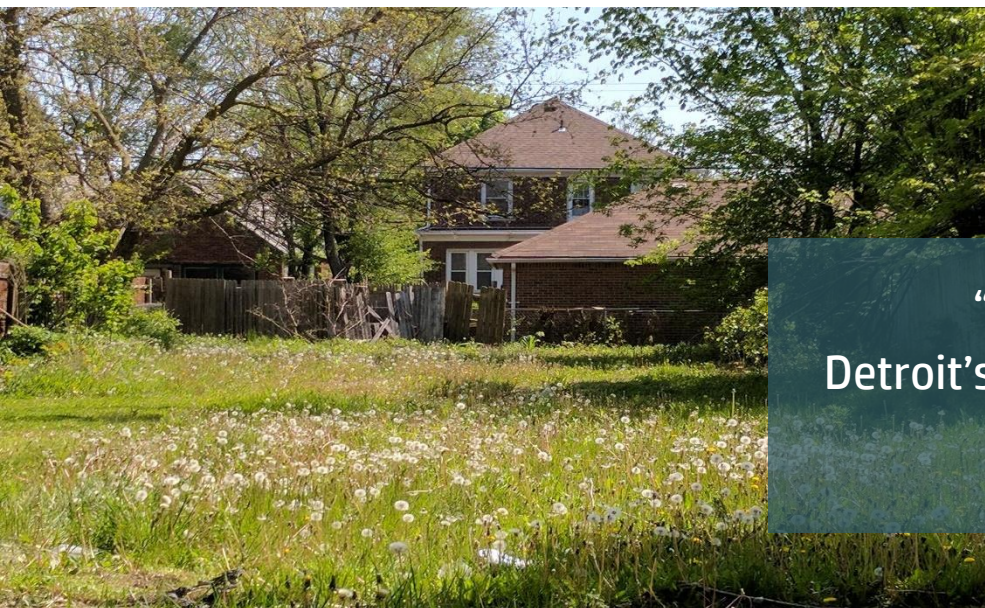
# OPEN SPACE

**What innovative opportunities exist to utilize the open space created by significant blight removal in the neighborhood that will benefit the community?**

**Open space is defined as** structure free land that is intentionally being utilized by citizens for productive, natural or recreational uses. Cities are generally characterized by dense development where undeveloped land is a premium or already set aside for priceless park and recreation space.

Following decades of economic downturn, population loss, and large-scale abandonment, Detroit has a substantial cache of vacant land – more than 100,000 vacant lots or **23 square miles**. Sadly, the scale and poor condition of the vacant land makes it more of a liability than an asset. Given its fiscal constraints, Detroit struggles with open space development, improvement and maintenance.

Could Detroit rise to the challenge and transform this liability into an asset? A multifaceted open space system would include a portfolio of community open spaces, ecological areas, and working productive landscapes for residents. Intentional green areas could provide both environmental and economic benefits, producing revenue as well as cost savings.



**“People and land are two of Detroit’s most precious resources.”**

DFC Field Guide to Working with Lots

**200** PARCELS  
**ACRES** WITH NO  
STRUCTURES

**90** PARKS AND  
**ACRES** LANDMARKS

**266** IN THE DLBA  
**HOMES** DEMO PIPELINE

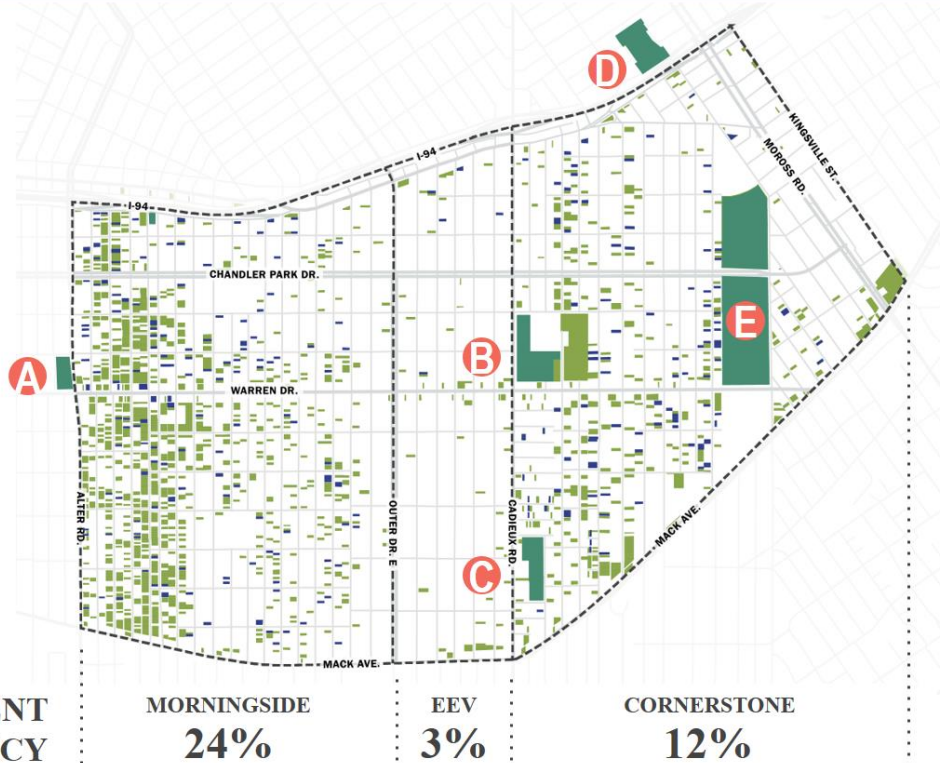
- A** Corrigan Playground
- B** Cannon Recreation Center
- C** Messmer Park
- D** Sasser Playground
- E** Balduck Park
- Parcels with No Structures**
- Parks and Landmarks**
- Demo Pipeline**

**PERCENT  
VACANCY**

**MORNINGSIDE  
24%**

**EEV  
3%**

**CORNERSTONE  
12%**



In these three neighborhoods, there are currently **200 acres** of underutilized residential and commercial parcels with no structures. There is an additional 90 acres of current park space. Broken down by neighborhood, MorningSide consists of 24% vacant parcels, Cornerstone Village 12% vacant parcels, EEV only 3% vacant parcels. These percentages include the anticipated 266 homes planned for demolition, providing future additional open space.

The 2012 Detroit Future City Strategic [Framework](#) created a comprehensive, 50-year vision and outline for addressing the city's economic and redevelopment challenges and opportunities. In order to support

a city that could attract and retain a wide range of businesses and residents, the Framework outlines the need for increased diversity of land use and density. A significant portion of the city's vacant land can be transformed into open space amenities including "Innovation Productive" and "Innovation Ecological." These long-term open space areas would support a wide range of landscape uses to create a new green and sustainable city unlike any other in the world.





## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the citizen charrette, neighborhood residents provided several ideas for the open space based on the needs of community members, including:

- Improved relationship with DLBA and the city
- Outdoor recreation
- Dog park/run
- Community garden
- Food production
- Neighbor interaction, social cohesion
- Clean up junk from illegal dumping and prevent future dumping
- Vocational training
- Youth engagement
- Increase safety
- Create an initiative that will benefit the community but be self-sustaining

## CASE STUDY      The Barham Greenway and Farmway

Barham Street, a narrow, single-sided street in the MorningSide neighborhood has endured extensive illegal dumping, blight and demolitions, leaving behind a strip of vacant, overgrown properties. U-Snap-Bac received a Kresge planning grant in 2016 to develop a vision and roadmap to clean up the property, stop illegal dumping, and transform Barham Street into an asset for the neighborhood and the city overall. Working with the Detroit Future City Framework and support from Michigan Community Resources, Living Labs and JP Morgan Chase Service Corps, the team created a vision:

- Clear the land and prevent future illegal dumping
- Acquire land within the study area
- Close Barham to vehicle traffic, narrow it to a public walkway
- Improve infrastructure to activate adjacent property
- Attract and support growers/green venture businesses
- Structure lease-to-own arrangements

The team identified a vacant parcel on the E. Warren commercial corridor that sits nicely at the entry point to the future Barham Greenway. Because the parcel is publicly owned, it could present an opportunity for shorter term activation of the site - potentially building it into the Barham Greenway effort in the future. Taking advantage of the commercial corridor location, it can be made into a marketplace to sell products produced by growers in the [Barham Greenway](#).

EASTSIDE STORY





## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

Ample vacant land creates opportunities for residents to create productive landscapes, intentionally cultivated to produce food, energy, and other harvestable products. Urban agriculture can play multiple roles in a community, delivering social and environmental benefits such as enhancing food security, improving nutrition and health, creating job opportunities, generating income, and facilitating social inclusion.

Productive landscapes can come in many forms, including:

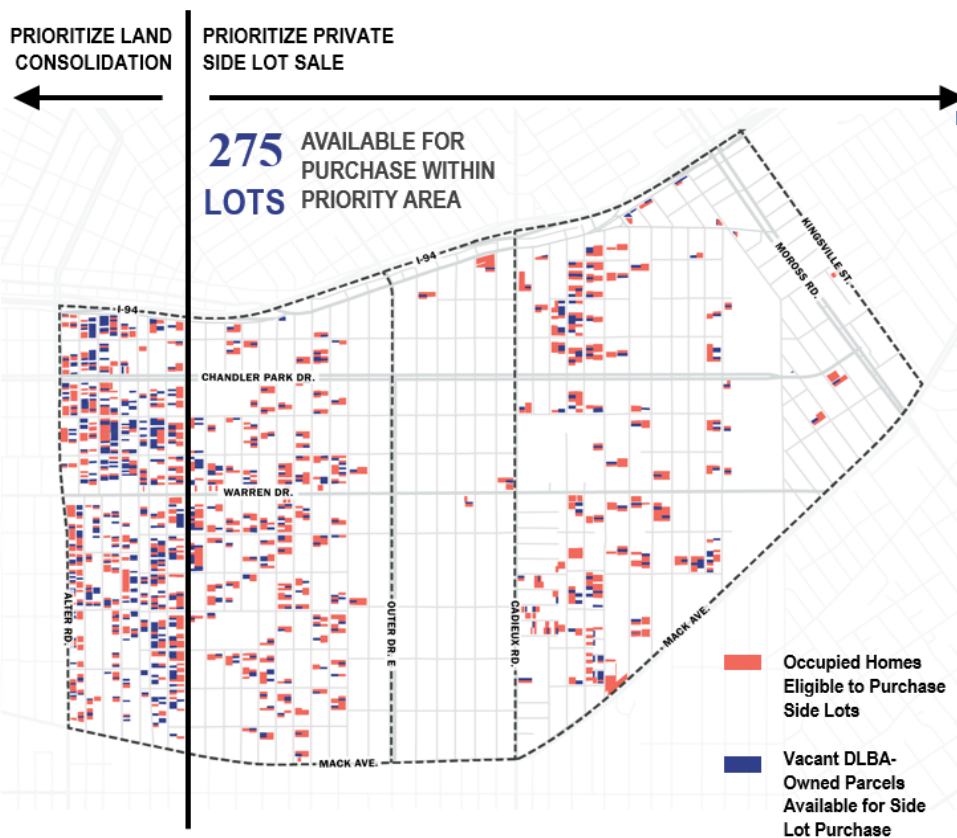
- Food crops
- Non-food crops (flowers, landscaping products, tree and sod farming)
- Fuel (biofuel, switchgrass)
- Small livestock (chickens, rabbits, goats)
- Beekeeping, honey production and products

Unfortunately, the lack of contiguity of the vacant land presents a challenge to productive landscapes. Instead of many small plots, efficient productive landscapes require large contiguous tracts. Without resources and support, the community itself will have difficulty navigating the inefficient and costly land acquisition process to acquiring the privately held vacant land to complete the puzzle. Additionally, small neighborhood level nonprofit organizations will take on burdensome legal and financial liability for the operation and land ownership.



## 2. RESIDENTIAL SIDE LOTS

The [Detroit Land Bank Authority's](#) mission is to return the city's vacant, abandoned and foreclosed property to productive use. One of the simplest and most efficient ways to do so is by putting that land into the hands of residents. Starting in 2015, the DLBA began offering residents the opportunity to purchase their side lots for just [\\$100](#), either online or at side lot fairs. Side lots are sold as-is on a first come, first serve basis with preference given to the neighbor that has historically maintained the lot. The applicant must own the house or property adjacent to the side lot, be current on taxes, and agree to maintain the property into the future. To date, residents have purchased more than 6,000 side lots, using them for gardens, expansions, garages, or simply a place to relax.



While the city made it easier for residents to acquire lots, [Detroit Future City \(DFC\) created the Field Guide to Working with Lots](#) as a user-friendly tool to help Detroit residents, businesses, and institutions gain the necessary land stewardship skills to improve and maintain side lots. Residents learn how to assess their land and choose from 34 different lot designs including rain gardens, butterfly meadows, and ground pollution remediation. Available online and in print, the guide offers step-by-step instructions, worksheets, guidance, and resources to help users transform vacant land into a variety of landscapes.





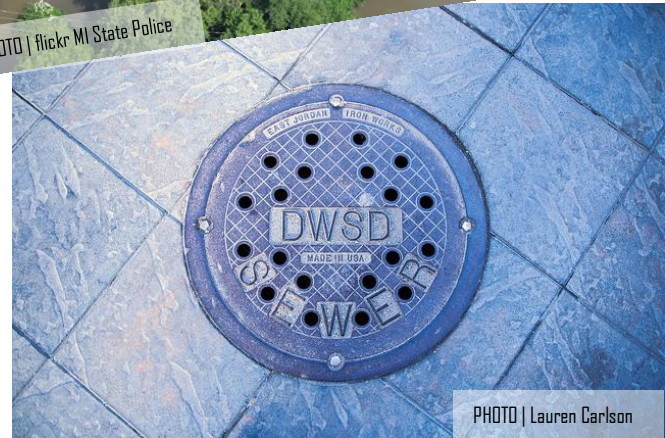
### 3. GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Urban Land Institute defines [green infrastructure](#) as mechanisms that enable natural systems to capture stormwater runoff, enhance water and air quality, and create green space. By using materials from the earth, either naturally occurring or intentionally placed, to filter, capture, and/or participate in the processing of stormwater is how green infrastructure techniques are integrated into development and how urbanized environments can build resilience.

Like all legacy cities, Detroit is in the trifecta of stormwater vulnerability: an abundance of impervious surface, antiquated infrastructure with insufficient funds to replace or repair said infrastructure, and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

Adding insult to injury, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD) recently assessed a drainage fee for both residential and commercial customers to cover rising costs and debt for recent improvements. At \$750 per month per impervious acre, many Detroiters will be unable to pay increases in already high utility bills. However, DWSD offers reductions or [“credits”](#) for green infrastructure projects that reduce the burden on the system, including downspout disconnection, rain gardens, permeable pavement and bioswales. The most ambitious projects can reduce a customer’s fee by as much as 80 percent.

Currently, the criteria for offsetting drainage fees does not allow for adjacent or common stormwater management solutions, but if DWSD eventually makes those allowances, eastside residents can use their ample open space for shared stormwater management. By using common vacant land to manage stormwater, they can eventually offset runoff from residential and commercial lots and earn DWSD drainage fee credits.





## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DETROIT

To effectively assist eastside residents – and all Detroiters – in taking advantage of open space, the city of Detroit government should do the following:

### 1. PLAN AND PRIORITIZE

- Identify clear vacant land reuse priorities
- Develop plan and guidelines for uses appropriate to specific geographies, impact of different uses on local residents, standards for design and ongoing maintenance, disposition strategies (long-term lease vs. sale), sustainable management and corresponding regulatory capacity
- Develop Master Plan or Zoning Ordinance modifications that would encourage community open space land uses in areas typified by large concentrations of vacant lots. The master plan or zoning modifications should include a type of ‘Green Zone’ or open space area with reduced regulatory barriers to expedite and lower the cost burden to implement vacant land reuse strategies
- Prioritize side lot sales on eastern end of MorningSide, EEV, and Cornerstone where there is already more structure density
- Develop guidelines and standards for evaluating off-site and shared stormwater management solutions, including:
  - Adjacent parcels, such as those available through the side lot purchase program
  - Green alleys or common parcels as shared stormwater management solutions for two or more properties
  - Increase accessibility of drainage credits through clarification and education of process, including documentation, calculations and application

### 2. CONSOLIDATE

- Prioritize land consolidation now, particularly on the west end of MorningSide, to help facilitate faster, more cost-effective implementation
- Max out low to no cost mechanisms for public acquisition (i.e. use City’s “right of first refusal” to acquire property that contributes to contiguity in priority areas; use owner of last resort functions of City and DLBA to continue to assemble vacant lots)
- Provide a clear path for acquiring contiguous and developable tracts of land to help facilitate projects like the Barham Greenway

### 3. INCENTIVIZE

- Incentivize productive landowners through a streamlined and transparent land acquisition process, by minimizing pre-development costs and by connecting productive landowners to business development resources.
- Consider expansion of Motor City Match to include land-based businesses: Identify specific sites consisting of 4+ publicly owned adjacent parcels with minimal adjacent residential occupancy and proximity to similar uses; provide technical assistance services; prepare opportunity sites for development (including proactive resolution of title defects using DLBA’s expedited quiet title powers)
- Identify funding sources for green infrastructure projects



## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Michigan Community Resources / ULI Michigan Green Infrastructure Mini Grants  
MCR and ULI Michigan grant \$5000 for materials and construction and an additional \$2000 for signage, education, and maintenance. ULI also provides pro bono technical assistance from the network of civil engineers and landscape architects.

DFC Side Lot Mini Grants  
DFC awards grants of \$5000 toward lot design and implementation. Applicants must be community groups that own the land or have permission to use it, and must demonstrate use of the field guide.

The [Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program](#) (CFP) awards grants to eligible nonprofits to promote self-sufficiency and provide community-based solutions in low income communities.

The [Value Added Producer Grant](#) (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of new products.

The [Captain Planet Foundation](#) makes grants from \$500-2500 to schools and organizations for youth-based projects that provide hands-on environmental stewardship opportunities.

The [Whole Kids Foundation](#) (Whole Foods) offers a variety of grants to improve the nutrition and general wellness of children, including the Extended Learning Garden Grant, Honey Bee Grant, and Healthy Kids Innovation Grant.

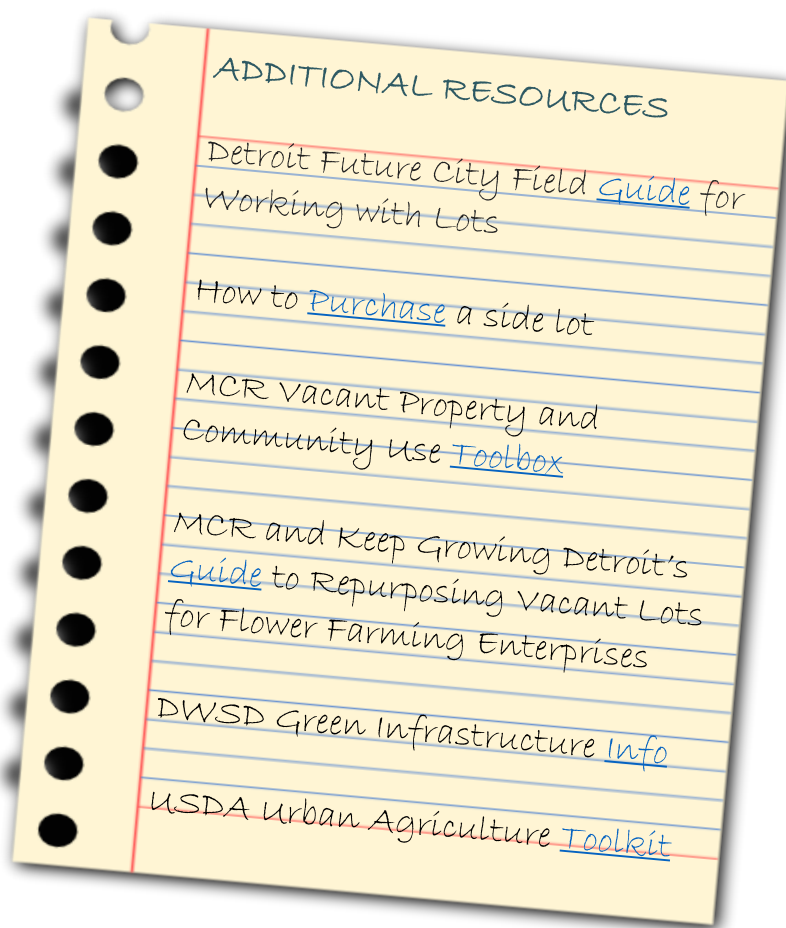
[Greening America's Communities](#) is an EPA program to help cities and towns develop an implementable vision of environmentally friendly neighborhoods that incorporate innovative green infrastructure.

[Local Foods, Local Places](#) supports community-driven efforts to preserve open space and farmland, boost economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses and improve access to healthy local food.

[Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities](#) provides quick, targeted technical assistance to selected communities using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application.

MCR's Vacant Property Coalition offers a list of grant opportunities for neighborhood improvement  
<https://mi-community.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Vacant-Property-Coalition-Stretching-Dollars-for-Neighborhood-Improvement.pdf>

Garden ABCs maintains a list of grant opportunities for school and community garden projects  
<https://www.gardenabcs.com/grants.html>





# VACANT HOUSING

**What are the strategies to responsibly market, educate prospective developers on the true costs of rehabbing, and educate on landlord and tenant rights to fill the vacant housing in the neighborhood?**

Detroit, like other Rust Belt cities, suffered waves of economic downturn following deindustrialization. High unemployment rates then led to rampant tax and mortgage foreclosures, weakened property values, and a citywide population exodus. Vacant buildings fall into disrepair, inviting arson and other crime in areas where police and fire services are already spread thin.

The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) controls 30,000 vacant houses and 90,000 abandoned parcels – nearly one quarter of all the property in the city of Detroit. The houses with the greatest potential are auctioned online for as little as \$1000 and those that are beyond repair are listed for demolition. Detroit has received over \$250 million in federal Hardest Hit anti-blight funding and demolished more than 10,000 structures.

Eastside neighborhoods have their share of vacancies, but most are generally in good condition. Neighbors keep the lawns mowed and the windows boarded up, and a strong presence of neighborhood associations keeps vandalism to a minimum. However, due to the anemic real estate market and depressed property values, the costs of renovations often exceed the value of the homes.

In order to attract buyers and fill these vacant homes with families, the eastside neighborhoods need to market themselves as neighborhoods of choice and address the prohibitive costs of renovations that remain a barrier to homeownership for the typical Detroit resident.

PHOTO | Wiki Candice Williams



“We are going to have  
a city where anybody  
can live everywhere.”

Mayor Duggan



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the citizen charrette, neighborhood residents provided valuable input regarding vacant homes. Our team organized the input into a SWOT analysis, detailing the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

### STRENGTHS

- Strong homeowners association in EEV
- U-SNAP-BAC housing development expertise
- Strong community anchors (e.g. Alger)
- Great housing stock from Three Mile to Cadieux
- EEV and Bagley are already testing strategies for landlord organizing in partnership with BSEED

### WEAKNESSES

- Neighborhoods have struggled to market as a unit
- Tension and lack of dialogue between renters and owners
- Need to implement clean and safe strategies, especially as it relates to DLBA-owned property
- Scale of vacancy can be overwhelming

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Three neighborhoods can work together on specific projects
- Focus on Warren Ave as a focal point
- Designate a convening org (e.g. Mecca)
- Prioritize owner-occupancy through local purchasing of land bank homes
- Identify and work with key landlords
- Encouraging residents to become landlords
- Educating people about what it takes (\$\$) to renovate so they don't get in over their heads
- Focus geographically, e.g. Mack, near schools
- Allowing residents to purchase >1 side lot
- Code enforcement, nuisance abatement

### THREATS

- Issues re: DLBA property often seem beyond community control
- DLBA focus is on long-term infill, while neighborhoods need short-term stabilization
- Contractors' bids surpass homeowners' expectations when rehabbing properties
- Lack of quality schools re: attracting young families



U-SNAP-BAC provides a host of services, including homebuyer classes, home repair, home ownership training, gut rehabilitation of vacant properties, new home development, affordable rentals, infrastructure improvements, and demolition of unsafe structures. Since 1987, U-SNAP-BAC has completed over 500 home repairs, 17 vacant structures rehabbed, constructed 131 units of affordable rental and single-family homes for low and moderate income families.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Create a brand and marketing campaign to market and sell neighborhood homes to prospective buyers.** The Eastside neighborhoods need to set themselves apart and market themselves as neighborhoods of choice.

- Designate the community organization best suited to develop and execute a marketing campaign or organize a formal collaborative effort across all three neighborhoods
- Host a forum and tour for local real estate agents
- Develop a portfolio of the most attractive available homes; post online and distribute flyers, video
- Host home tour weekends similar to DLBA home tours and showings
- Develop a short term (six months to one year) marketing goal

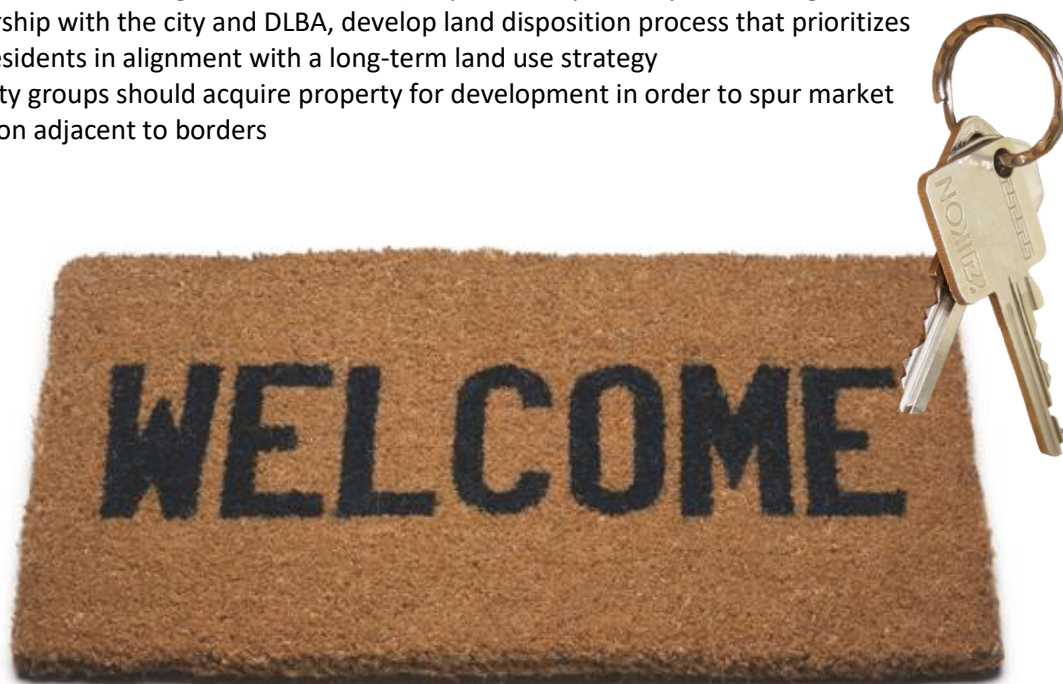


**2. Educate residents on landlord and tenant rights**

- Analyze current landlord pilot conducted by EEV, Bagley and BSEED; build on successes
- Use existing list of landlords as potential starting point
- Track new [rental ordinance](#) through council
- In partnership with the city and DLBA, collaborate to develop incentives, best practices and resources for landlords

**3. Address other single-family housing issues in the neighborhood**

- Implement targeted code enforcement and nuisance abatement tracking and reporting strategies (e.g. distribute door-hangers with code info) as partnership activity across neighborhoods
- In partnership with the city and DLBA, develop land disposition process that prioritizes current residents in alignment with a long-term land use strategy
- Community groups should acquire property for development in order to spur market stabilization adjacent to borders



#### 4. Educate prospective developers on the true costs of rehabbing

Overall, the renovation of single family homes throughout the subject area will require a significant level of subsidy between \$5000 and \$20,000. Buyers may seek an operating subsidy (e.g. real estate tax abatement), a home improvement grant, or a forgivable gap financing mechanism. Community organizations can encourage informed buyers by providing guidance.

- Host information sessions on housing resources for existing owners and potential buyers, including financing and home improvement
- Start a database of neighborhood rehabs to better understand the \$\$ of rehabs locally
- Maintain a list of trusted contractors
- Invite Brick and Beam Detroit to collaborate

The team created three scenarios, including Single-Family Rental with Heavy Renovation, Single-Family Rental with Light Renovation, and five Single-Family homes with Light Renovation:

#### Home Renovation Resources Model Scenario Analysis Summary

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
	Single-Family Heavy Renovation	Single-Family Light Renovation	5 Homes Single-Family Light Renovation
<b>Program Overview</b>			
Neighborhood Focus	Morningside	Morningside	Morningside
Number of Homes	1	1	5
Total Development Budget	\$102,859	\$54,830	\$235,514
Required Gap Financing / Grant	\$35,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Average Rental Rate (Per Square Foot)	\$1.00	\$0.85	\$0.84
Average Sale Price (Whole Dollar Amount)	\$12,500	\$15,500	\$0.00
<b>Go / No-Go Decision</b>			
Return on Equity is < 8%	No Go	Go	Go
Internal Rate of Return is < 13.5%	No Go	Go	Go
Equity Multiple < 2.0	Go	Go	Go
<b>Go / No Go</b>	<b>Do not do the Deal</b>	<b>Do the Deal</b>	<b>Do the Deal</b>
<b>Sources and Uses</b>			
<b>Sources</b>			
Debt	\$80,751	\$49,231	\$250,960
Home Repair Resources Grant	\$35,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Equity	\$2,876	\$13,722	\$103,311
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$118,627</b>	<b>\$72,953</b>	<b>\$374,270</b>
<b>Uses</b>			
Acquisition	\$12,500	\$15,500	\$123,000
Hard Costs	\$76,591	\$36,741	\$183,706
Soft Costs	\$28,386	\$20,161	\$64,809
Developer Fee	\$1,149	\$551	\$2,756
Acquisition Fee	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Uses</b>	<b>\$118,627</b>	<b>\$72,953</b>	<b>\$374,270</b>
<b>Return Summary</b>			
Return on Cost (10-Yr. Avg.)	5.05%	7.10%	7.75%
Return on Equity (10-Yr. Avg.)	5.39%	8.40%	8.42%
Leveraged Internal Rate of Return	9.35%	14.89%	14.24%
Equity Multiple	10.93	3.48	2.84



## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



The [Detroit Home Mortgage](#) program offers first mortgages for owner-occupants to purchase under-valued properties in Detroit. Qualified borrowers can get a mortgage for up to \$75,000 above the appraised value to buy a move-in ready home or a fixer upper home to renovate.



### 0% INTEREST HOME REPAIR LOANS

The [Detroit 0% Interest Home Repair Loan](#) program provides loans from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to Detroit homeowners looking to complete health and safety home repairs or improvements. Homeowners have ten years to pay back the loan and at zero interest, they only pay back what they borrow.



[Come Home to Detroit](#) is a collaboration led by Michigan Lending Solutions and supported by Detroit neighborhoods, community development corporations, realtors and lending partners. They assist prospective homeowners with financing to enhance qualifications and defeat the obstacles that leave many Detroit home buyers out of the market.



[MSHDA's Homeownership division](#) provides a variety of programs and products for both homebuyers and homeowners. They offer several mortgage products as well as forgivable loans for distressed homeowners and home improvement loans for income qualified homeowners.



[FHA's 203\(k\) program](#) enables homebuyers and homeowners to finance both the purchase (or refinancing) of a house and the cost of its rehabilitation through a single mortgage or to finance the rehabilitation of their existing home.



[Southwest Solutions](#) provides a wide variety of programs to help families and individuals find, buy, repair and keep their homes, including homebuyer services, financial coaching and foreclosure prevention.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

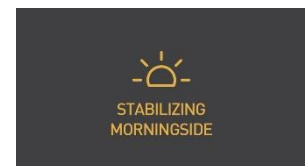
[Brick + Beam Detroit](#) is a community for property owners, tradespeople, and building rehabbers of all levels. We support rehabilitation and reinvestment in Detroit by sharing knowledge, building talent, and providing access to the resources needed to keep projects moving forward. Brick + Beam's forum connects people interested in rehabbing and reinvesting in Detroit's buildings with hands-on skills, local tradespeople, resources, advice, and overall moral support needed to get repair projects started -- and to keep them going.

**BRICK+  
BEAM  
DETROIT**

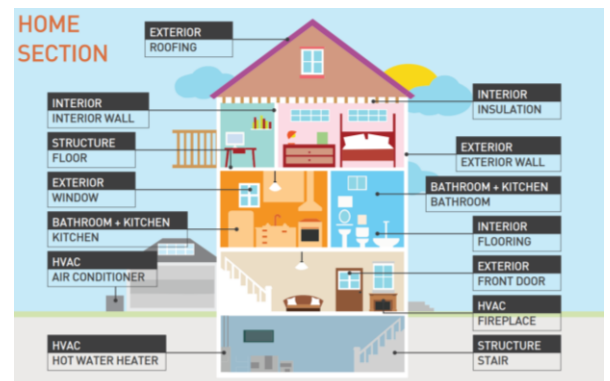
[Michigan Community Resources](#) (MCR) offers several resources including the Vacant Property Toolbox and Land Forum Series.



[Stabilizing Morningside](#) is a collaborative effort between the University of Michigan Urban and Regional Planning Program, U-SNAP-BAC, the MorningSide neighborhood association, Detroit Future City, Habitat for Humanity Detroit, Michigan Community Resources and the Mayor's Office. The strategy provides tools to residents and local organizations as well as city, county and state officials.



As their capstone project, students at Taubman College also created a [Housing Renovation Guide](#) to educate prospective and existing homeowners on costs of repairs and financial resources.



### CASE STUDY | AFTER THE STORM

Established in 2006 to address the Broadmoor neighborhood's housing needs following Hurricane Katrina, Broadmoor Development Corporation (BDC) rehabilitates owner-occupied properties, renovates and sells vacant properties, constructs new homes, and stabilizes blighted lots. Through its work, BDC has spurred the recovery of 87 percent of all Broadmoor residential properties, an area where all properties suffered between 6 and 10 feet of flooding.



# RETAIL CORRIDOR

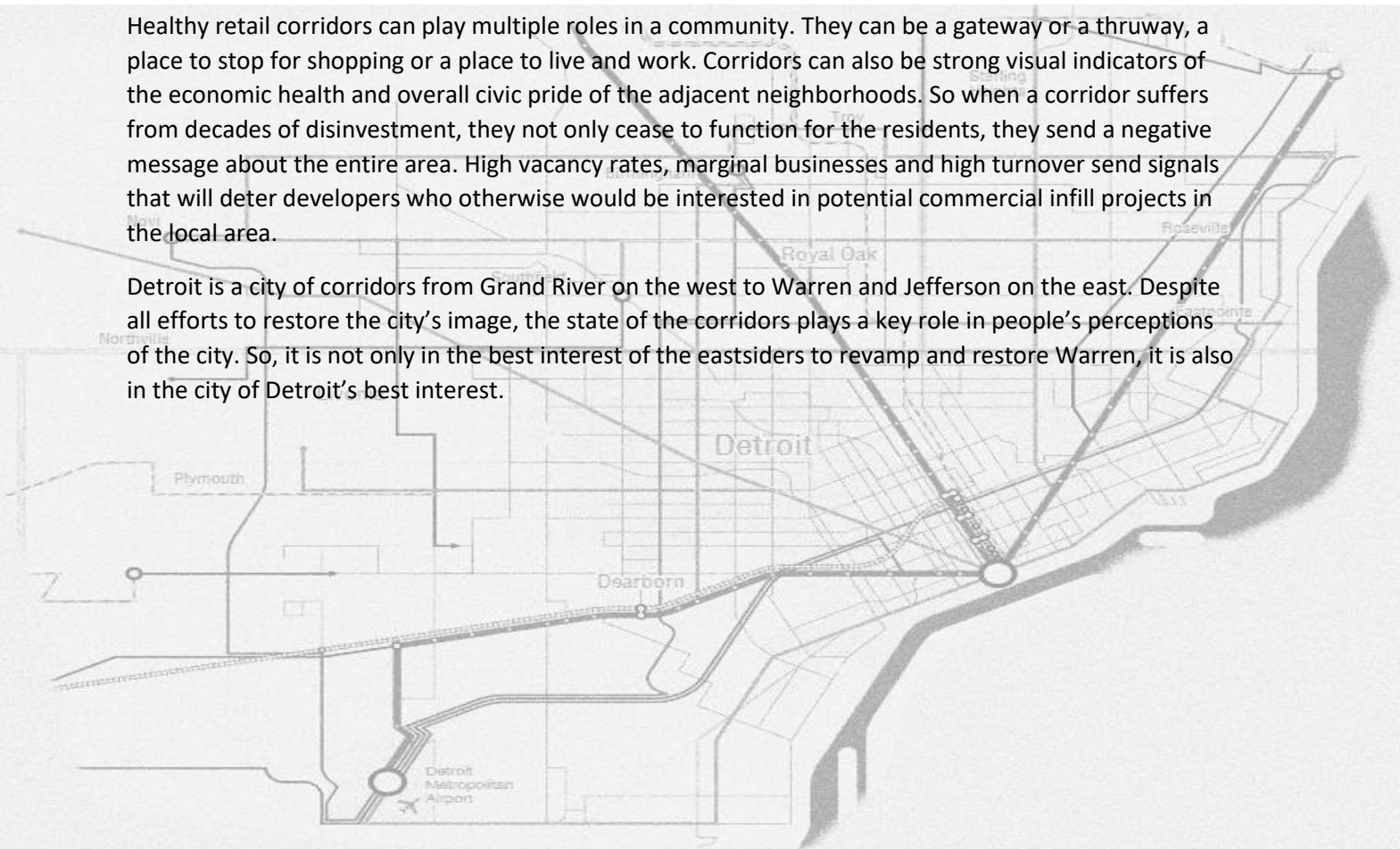
## What design/development opportunities exist to activate the E. Warren corridor?

*“On Detroit’s Far East side lie three neighborhoods, each with their own distinct challenges. East Warren Avenue is the main commercial thoroughfare that ties all three neighborhoods together. Through the years the commercial corridor has experienced disinvestment and businesses have evaporated leaving the corridor roughly 60 percent vacant according to the windshield survey of businesses. What is left is a mix of long time businesses such as dry cleaners and a hardware store to poverty perpetuating businesses such as liquor stores, and low-end cell phone stores. What is unique about the East Warren in Detroit’s commercial landscape is that the majority of the corridor is still intact, but in need of serious improvements to become a viable commercial corridor once again.”*

[Restorin’ East Warren](#): A Study of East Warren Avenue and Making a Case for Community Ownership, Joseph Rashid

Healthy retail corridors can play multiple roles in a community. They can be a gateway or a thruway, a place to stop for shopping or a place to live and work. Corridors can also be strong visual indicators of the economic health and overall civic pride of the adjacent neighborhoods. So when a corridor suffers from decades of disinvestment, they not only cease to function for the residents, they send a negative message about the entire area. High vacancy rates, marginal businesses and high turnover send signals that will deter developers who otherwise would be interested in potential commercial infill projects in the local area.

Detroit is a city of corridors from Grand River on the west to Warren and Jefferson on the east. Despite all efforts to restore the city’s image, the state of the corridors plays a key role in people’s perceptions of the city. So, it is not only in the best interest of the eastsiders to revamp and restore Warren, it is also in the city of Detroit’s best interest.



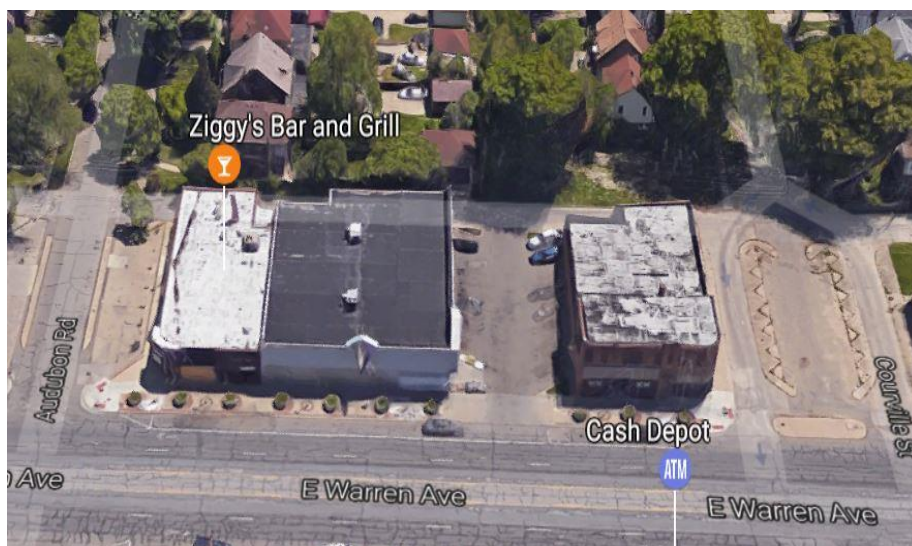


## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the citizen charrette, neighborhood residents provided several ideas for the Warren corridor based on the needs of community members, including:

- Warren offers a lack of local options for access to fresh food, grocery, restaurants, communal and casual spaces.
- Adding appropriate businesses to Warren can reduce the need for residents to travel outside the area for consumer needs. Keeping money circulating in the neighborhood benefits everyone.
- Activate Warren as a walkable, vibrant corridor at the street level
- Improve aesthetics, create neighborhood uniformity of existing buildings with façade improvements
- Host pop-up retail business, providing opportunities and lowering the barrier to entry for local artisans and entrepreneurs.

As is, the corridor does not serve the community, let alone the city. Residents need to travel elsewhere for their needs and funding and bureaucratic barriers dissuade potential developers. To restore East Warren to its former glory, a concerted effort must be made to increase occupancy with diverse businesses that will not only serve residents but draw visitors to a destination.



*Because of the sheer scale of the Warren corridor, our team focused on a particular block between Audubon and Courville that shows a lot of promise. In addition to interesting architecture, this block has two existing long-standing businesses (Hammertime True Value Hardware store and Ziggy's Bar and Grill), and some initial attempts at streetscaping. Also, the block is in close proximity to neighborhood gems, Alger Theater and Jefferson Library.*

According to a 2016 retail market study by Gibbs Planning Group, Inc., East Warren has 80,500 square feet of supportable retail, including 20,900 sf of grocery, 7,600 sf of hardware, 5,200 sf of dining and 1,200 of breweries and pubs. If the vacancies were filled, these businesses could generate up to \$22 million annually.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**PLAZA** Re-purpose existing parking areas as multi-purpose public use plazas

**PARKING** Utilize existing parallel parking and vacant lot for parking

**POP UPS** Host popup events to reactivate vacant storefronts

**STREETSCAPE** Refresh and expand existing streetscape amenities and repair hardscape, pots

**FACADES** Refresh existing building facades, storefronts and signage

**MARKET** Launch branding and marketing campaign for the corridor, establishing an identity and focus on making the corridor a destination. Use the [Detroit Retail Opportunity Study](#) to inform the business mix, including restaurants and other food service.

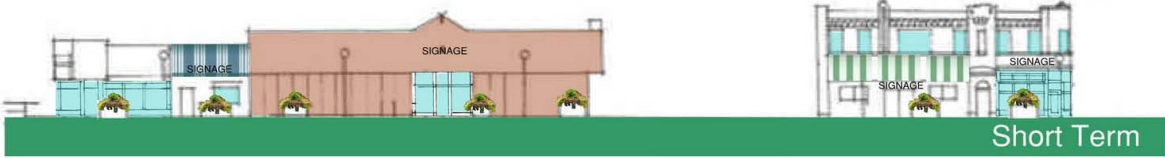
**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE** Implement green roof and rooftop rain water cistern water collection system for outdoor watering uses

**MULTI-USE** Existing building(s) to be retrofitted for multi-tenanting/ community uses w/ upper level apartments, new mixed-use infill opportunity

**FUNDING** Leverage existing development opportunities (Motor City Match, Small Change) to purchase commercial property and co-locate uses to densify activity









## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



[Motor City Match](#) connects new and expanding businesses with Detroit's quality real estate opportunities, providing them with funding and tools to fuel the city's entrepreneurial revolution.

[Motor City Re-Store](#) awards up to \$500,000 in competitive matching grants to improve storefronts and upgrade commercial corridors in Detroit's neighborhoods.

[Michigan Community Revitalization Program](#) (MCRP) promotes community revitalization, accelerating private investment in areas of historical disinvestment, with the ability to provide grants, loans, or other economic assistance for eligible investment projects in Michigan.



[Invest Detroit](#) offers several financing products to support community and economic development in the city of Detroit, including predevelopment, real estate, and neighborhood retail loans.

[Detroit Brownfield Redevelopment Authority](#) (DBRA) promotes the revitalization of environmentally distressed and blighted areas for redevelopment including residential, mixed-use, retail, office and commercial uses.

## Small Change

[Small Change](#) is a socially responsible investment platform, featuring real estate projects that we believe can transform cities for the better. Developers list their projects – which we have vetted in advance – and investors can choose among them.

[ioby](#) helps neighbors grow and implement great ideas one block at a time. Our crowd-resourcing platform connects leaders with funding and support to make our neighborhoods safer, greener, more livable and more fun.

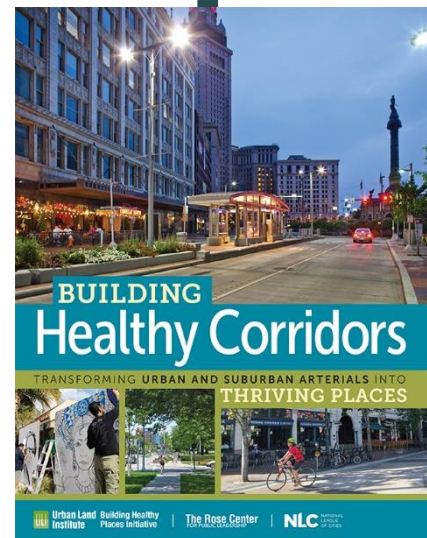
The healthy corridors approach considers how the corridor contributes to the overall health of the surrounding community, including supplying opportunities to be physically active. It also considers safety, housing affordability, transportation options, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion, as well as modifications that would link residents to the corridor and improve connections to jobs and other parts of the community.

Building Healthy Corridors, ULI

## [Building Healthy Corridors: Transforming Urban and Suburban Arterials into Thriving Places](#)

By [Sara Hammerschmidt](#)

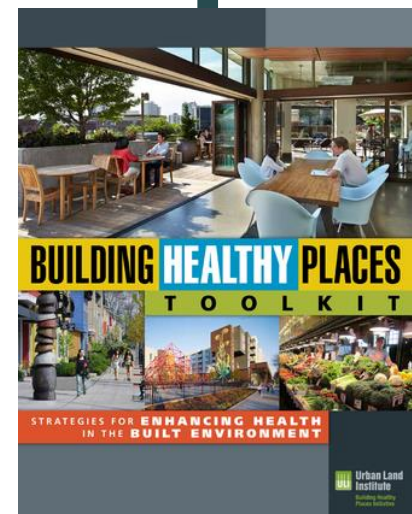
Building Healthy Corridors: Transforming Urban and Suburban Arterials into Thriving Places takes a comprehensive view and considers how the corridor contributes to the overall health of the surrounding community, including community members' opportunities to be physically active. It also considers safety, housing affordability, transportation options, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion as well as modifications that would link residents to the corridor and improve connections to jobs and adjacent parts of the community.



## [Building Healthy Places Toolkit](#)

### [Strategies for Enhancing Health in the Built Environment](#)

The Building Healthy Places Toolkit outlines evidence-supported opportunities to enhance health through changes in approaches to buildings and projects. Developers, owners, property managers, designers, investors, and others involved in real estate decision making can use the strategies described in this report to create places that contribute to healthier people and communities, and enhance and preserve value by meeting the growing desire for health-promoting places.

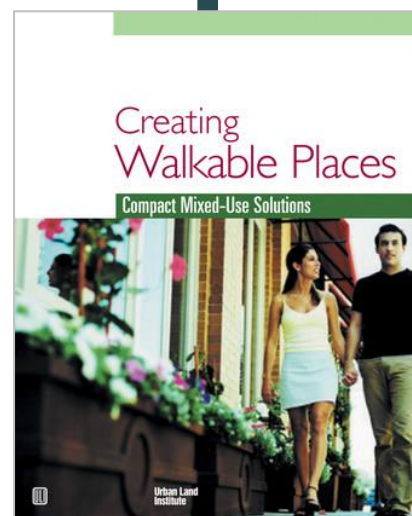


## [Creating Walkable Places](#)

### [Compact Mixed-Use Solutions](#)

By [Adrienne Schmitz](#), By [Jason Scully](#)

Richly illustrated with color photographs, site plans, and diagrams, this book explains how to design and develop pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use developments.








# MOBILITY

## What opportunities exist to improve and expand the transportation and mobility in the neighborhood?

It's no surprise that the Motor City was built for cars. Like many cities developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Detroit is **car centric**. Instead of a dense, walkable mixed-use landscape with public transportation, much of Detroit's neighborhoods are dominated by wide, fast streets, parking, and single-family homes on large lots. Multi-modal mobility is key to the urban form. Car centric cities leave residents with limited options for getting around, also known as **transport poverty**. If residents cannot afford to move about their own neighborhood or travel to city centers of business, markets, health and education institutions, they are deprived of the full benefits of urbanization.

Mobility is also a social equity issue. Car centric cities limit access to amenities and employment, thereby isolating those residents without access to a car. Communities with several modes of transportation available can serve more people, across socio-economic strata and throughout all phases of life from young to old, single to family, and able bodied to special needs.

Multi-modal transportation systems aren't just for affluent cities. Despite financial challenges, Detroit can leapfrog over outdated transit paradigms by adopting urban planning, innovative technologies, and adaptive models. Eastside neighborhoods can take advantage of this planning opportunity to correct the sins of the past and embrace a multi-modal future that facilitates journeys combining walking, cars, buses, bikes and rideshare/shared transportation services.



“One’s destination is never a place,  
but rather a new way of looking at things.”

Henry Miller



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

During the citizen charrette, residents provided input regarding improving transportation and mobility based on the needs of community members, including:

- Residents are currently traveling via bike, bus, Uber, personal vehicle and on foot
- Destinations include Balduck Park, LA Fitness, McDonald's, St. Johns Hospital, Cadieux Café, Jefferson Library, Corrigan Park, Mesmer Park, after school activities, churches and gas stations
- Safety improvement successes have been realized through Project Green Light and organized citizen engagement efforts such as a walking club and volunteer sidewalk survey
- Traffic issues range from severely congested during school dropoff and pickup times to speeding drivers on residential streets
- Residents expressed concerns about damaged sidewalks, vacant buildings, roaming dogs, lack of police presence, lack of parking enforcement and the perception of crime along Harper
- Residents expressed a desire for more parking, signage for pedestrians, micro transit for seniors, safe routes to school and expanded bus service to Chandler Park, sports facilities, community centers and quality grocery stores

MODE	DURATION	COST - DIRECT	TIME - DIRECT
Car	30	\$3.00	\$6.26
Ride Share	17	\$14.40	\$3.56
Bus(es)	47	\$1.50	\$25.04
Bike	48	0	\$9.98
On Foot	3H	0	\$37.56

## THE EXPERIMENT:

To better understand the Eastside mobility landscape, the team conducted an experiment. Each team member used a different mode of transportation – car, rideshare, bus, bike – to get from the Fox Theater downtown to the Alger Theater on the east side. They discovered that the shortcomings of public transportation (unreliable service, delays between transfers, ghost buses) are more than an inconvenience but an actual cost in time and money.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. CONDUCT A MOBILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Using digital and hardcopy, survey residents to collect information for the city's planning process. In ten questions or less, ask residents how they are currently traveling, where they are going and what improvements they seek in the future. Surveys can be distributed via existing community meetings, block clubs and email groups.

### 2. UTILIZE WAYFINDING

How residents perceive the built environment can determine how they navigate from place to place. Wayfinding is simply the information system that guides people through their physical environment. We are accustomed to signs and symbols showing us the way when we are behind the wheel, but we don't have the same visual cues when we are on foot or on a bike. Adding wayfinding signs will boost walkability in the eastside neighborhoods, inviting residents and visitors to explore all they have to offer.

### 3. IMPLEMENT SELF-GUIDED TOURS

Whether you are a lifetime resident or a weekend visitor, one of the best ways to explore a neighborhood is on foot. Self-guided tours invite people to visit a series of locations (historic sites, restaurants, locally owned shops, parks) and provide comprehensive information and history on each point of interest along the way. Tours can be conducted by hardcopy maps and notes or a smart phone app so participants can discover hidden gems and explore at their own pace.



## BENEFITS OF MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION

- ✓ Reduced traffic congestion
- ✓ Improved public safety
- ✓ Less pollution
- ✓ Shorter trip times
- ✓ Access to jobs
- ✓ Cost savings
- ✓ Sense of personal freedom

#### 4. INSTALL PARK TO PATH

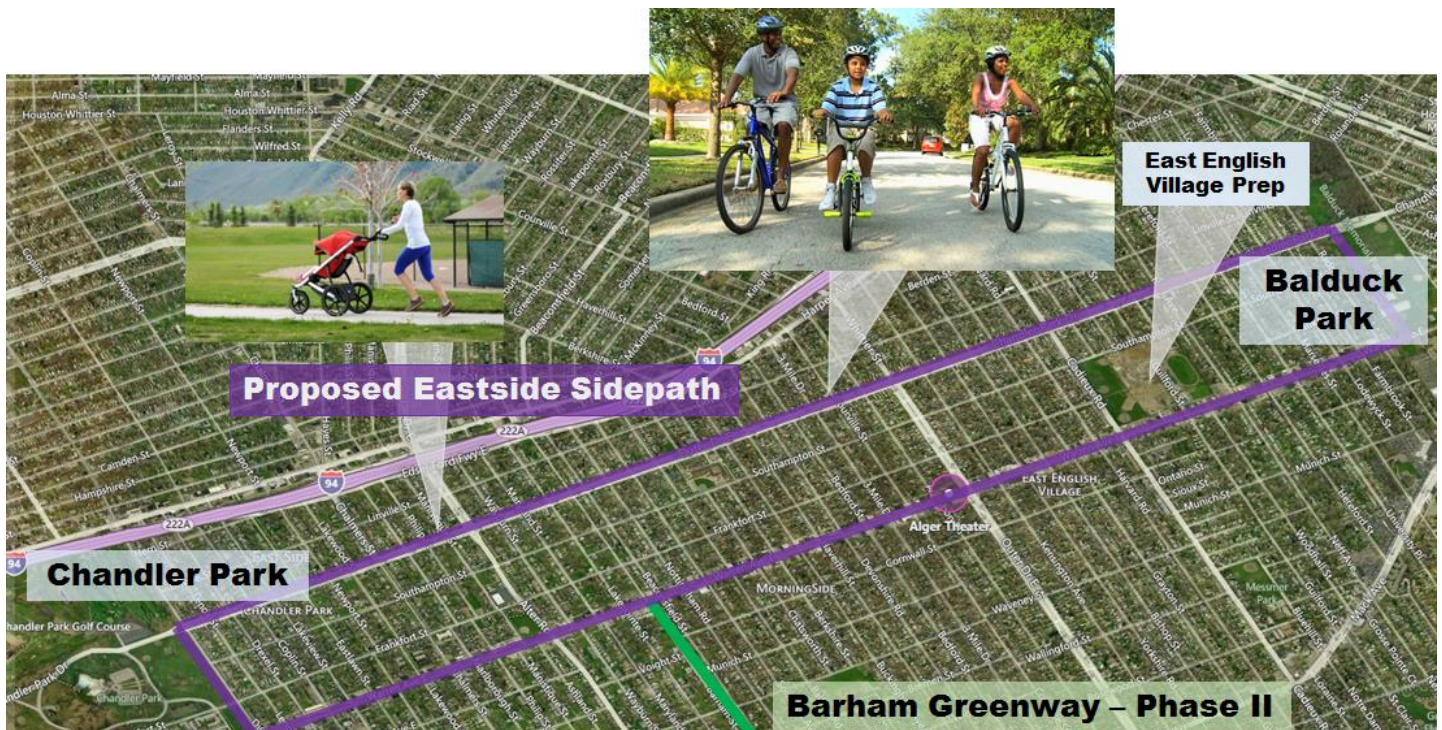
For a long term, big picture solution, the team zeroed in on a project that would leverage strong neighborhood anchors to implement healthy placemaking principles and improve mobility infrastructure. The result is an amenity that serves the needs of existing and future eastside residents as well as attracting visitors to spend time and money in their neighborhoods.

A sidepath is a two-way, shared use, paved pathway built adjacent and parallel to an existing street. Bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities can enjoy a low-stress experience on network routes that might otherwise be inhospitable to walking and biking due to high speed, high volume traffic.

An Eastside Sidepath would connect key anchors Balduck and Chandler Parks via Warren Avenue and Chandler Park Drive with the ability to expand to connect into the Dequindre Cut and St John's Providence in Grosse Pointe. The path would be designed for multi-modal use, for bikes, roller-blading, pedestrians and other, non-motorized modes of transportation.

The team determined that at an average cost per mile for multi-use path of \$481,140, a 6.3-mile path would cost a total of just over \$3 million. Suggested funding sources include:

- Safe Routes to School \$200,000
- Foundation grant \$1,000,000
- Corporate sponsorship \$250,000
- Transportation Alternatives Program \$1,200,000
- Local fundraising \$250,000 (20% matching required for TAP)
- Crowdfunding: \$131,182





## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



The [Transportation Alternatives Program](#) (TAP) is a competitive grant program that uses federal transportation funds designated by Congress for specific activities that enhance the intermodal transportation system and provide safe alternative transportation options.



[Safe Routes to School](#) is a federal transportation program to support infrastructure and initiatives to get more children walking and bicycling to schools across America.



[Ford's Go Detroit Challenge](#) is a contest for entrepreneurs to come up with innovative solutions to some of the mobility challenges faced by Detroiters.

wayfinding 101

What is a sidepath?

Additional resources:

Building Healthy Places Toolkit

National Complete Streets Coalition

National Street Service

Rails to Trails Conservancy

American Public Transportation Assn

Transportation for America's  
Creative Placemaking Guide

Throughout the TAP process, it was evident that Detroit's far east side has the solid housing stock, commercial corridor framework, recreation facilities, and infrastructure assets to support a vibrant, livable, tight knit community. ULI Michigan and the Larson Center for Leadership was honored to be part of Detroit's Comprehensive Neighborhood Planning process for these valued neighborhoods.

1. Vacant schools can be repurposed to meet several needs. Many are best suited for single tenant, multi-use facilities. With a few simple modifications such as parking and drop-off locations, these facilities can easily be adaptable as multi-use facilities, meeting more than one need for the community. For instance, a community nonprofit could operate a daycare or elder care business during daytime hours and host adult education or workforce training in the evenings.
2. Eastside neighborhoods have a plethora of open space. City leadership can help transform this land from a liability to an asset with intentional planning, consolidation and incentivizing. Develop a master plan and modify zoning ordinance to encourage community open space land uses in areas typified by large concentrations of vacant lots. The master plan or zoning modifications should include a type of 'Green Zone' or open space area with reduced regulatory barriers to expedite and lower the cost burden to implement vacant land reuse strategies.
3. Community associations can make great strides in filling vacant housing via a branding and marketing campaign. However, residents need continued assistance with landlord/tenant relations and many expressed concerns about the volume and condition of DLBA properties.
4. In order to realize the full potential of East Warren Avenue as a bustling retail corridor, the road needs a diet. The infrastructure and streetscape need significant updates and parking needs to be reimaged to maximize convenience for potential customers.
5. Eastside neighborhoods can act as a testbed for forward thinking urban planning, innovative technologies, and adaptive models. Begin this planning process with a mobility needs assessment to inform infrastructure improvements and embrace a multi-modal future that facilitates journeys combining walking, cars, buses, bikes and rideshare/shared transportation services.



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MANY DEDICATED  
EASTSIDE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS  
WHO GENEROUSLY SHARED THEIR TIME AND  
WISDOM IN CREATING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS



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