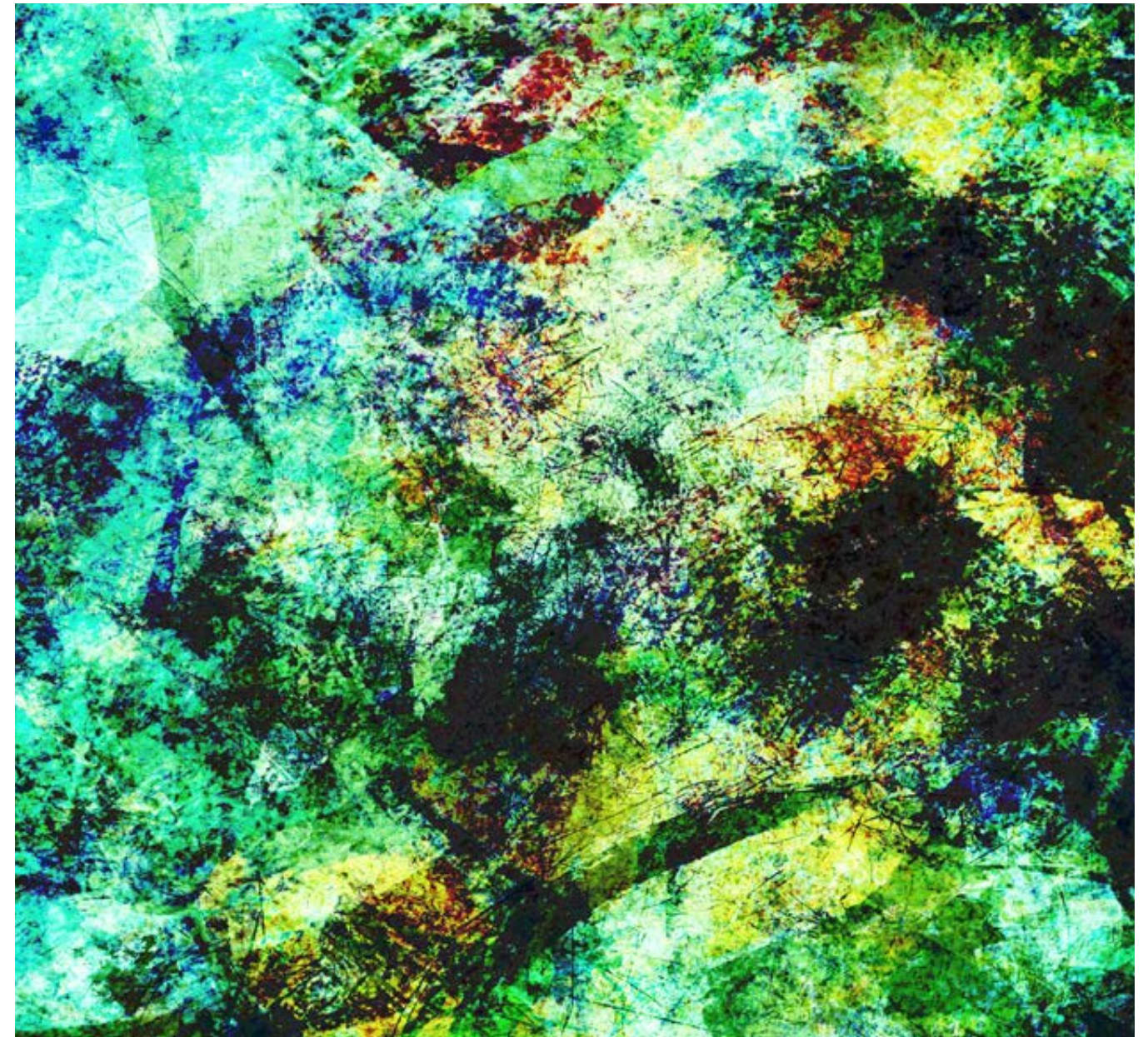


# A TILL OF INFRASTRUCTURE

PLACEMAKING THROUGH CONTEXT-LED DESIGN WITHIN THE DETROIT NORTH CENTRAL URBAN CORRIDORS



Thaddeus Stawiarski  
Architectural Master Thesis  
University of Detroit Mercy

2019-2020

till  
noun - \ˈtɪl\ - unstratified glacial drift consisting of clay, sand, gravel, and boulders intermingled  
till  
verb - \ˈtɪl\ - to work by plowing, sowing, and raising crops : cultivate  
(Merriam Webster)

The title of the book suggests two usages of the word "till". The first form is a noun. It is relative to the hard materials found in the earth's crust, of which are taking on the powerful forces from the impacts of glaciers. This results in what is called a till. Our society harnesses this same rugged earth to build up its world. As the definition suggests, the earth is left "intermingled", similarly there is a drastic contention between harsh infrastructure and the physical condition of communities. The second definition suggests a probable solution to such a condition. To cultivate what exists. To propagate resources. To sow something for its anticipated growth.



THADDEUS STAWIARSKI

# A TILL OF INFRASTRUCTURE

## Placemaking Through Context-Led Design of the Detroit North Central Urban Corridors

Thaddeus Stawiarski  
The School of Architecture, University of Detroit Mercy

## credits

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External Advisor: Charles Cross

## acknowledgments

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Thanks to Charles Cross for inspiring me by his work. His enthusiasm and knowledge was extremely supportive to the development of my research.

Thanks to my family, Mom, Dad, and Celeste. I'm very grateful for a family that is so supportive and loving. They are always there for me.

Thanks to my roommates, Alek and David, for all the memories we shared on Normandy Street.

## abstract

These design methods propose a potential future for growing Detroit communities. Detroit exists in a very complex state of urbanity. The centrality on industry during the development of the automotive boom structured the cultural attitude and the physical infrastructure of the city. It is evident by its vastness of tangled highways and lack of intention toward public transportation. In this case, the highway infrastructure severs the fabric of a once connected community. This study examines the toll of the "top-down" urban development and responds with approaches of placemaking strategies for community amenities. This form of community development will attempt to re-establish placemaking in the context of the focus area. It is done by using placemaking as a tool to create an infrastructure of networks throughout urban blight and creating remediation for renewal of community development. There are several typologies which designers can use in these neighborhoods despite the limitations that are given. They act as ways to re-enforce existing communities' groups in their neighborhoods as a response to the many policies that prevent community self-governance.

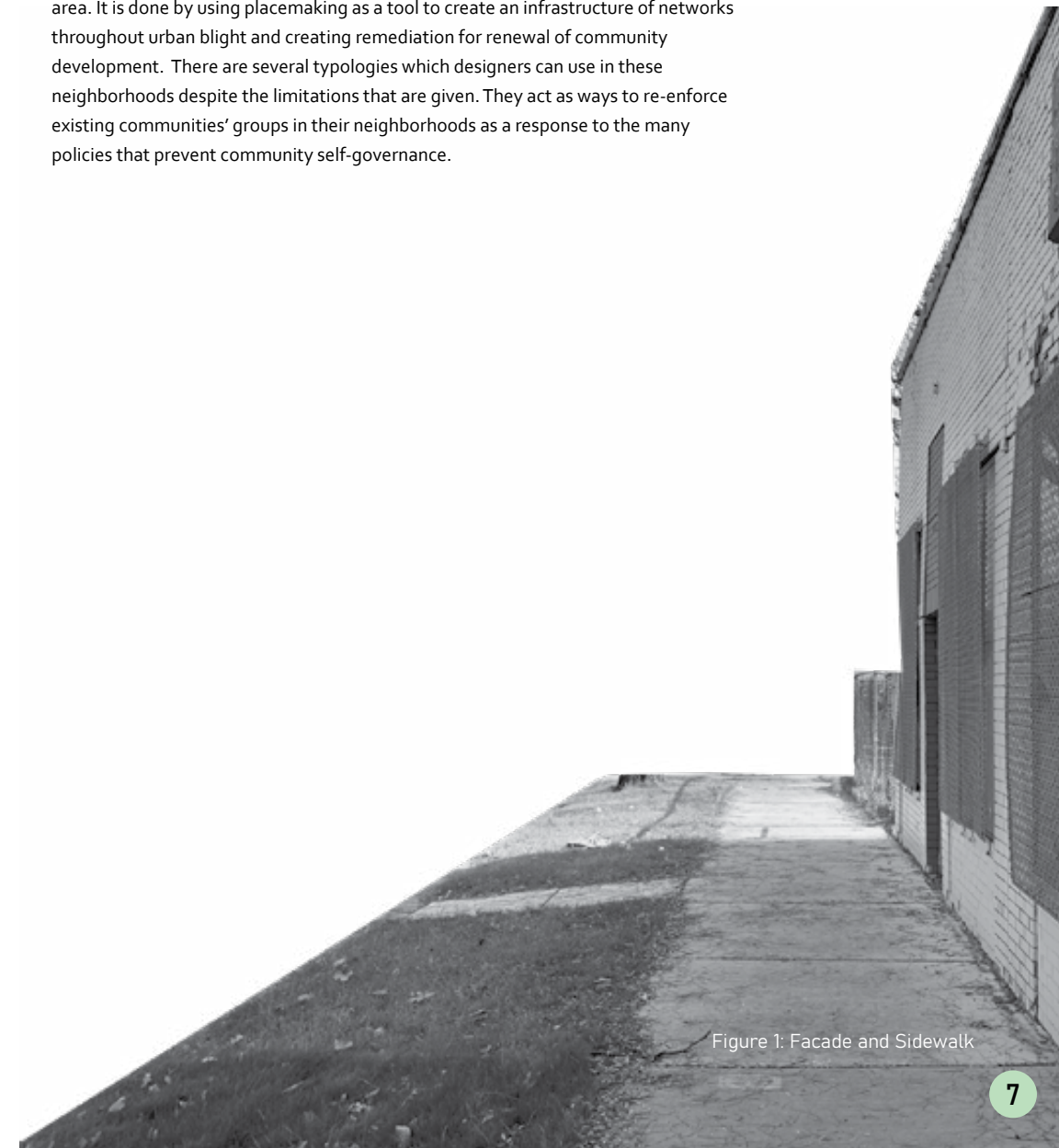


Figure 1: Facade and Sidewalk

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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

*to begin a new environment demands on understanding of both the existing and the past. It is a multidimensional understanding made up of the social, personal, political, economic, and physical.*

Lars Lerup



PHYSICAL



SOCIAL



POLICY

## Theory

till

noun - \ˈtɪl\ - unstratified glacial drift consisting of clay, sand, gravel, and boulders intermingled

till

verb - \ˈtɪl\ - to work by plowing, sowing, and raising crops  
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The title of the book suggests two usages of the word “till”. The first form is a noun. It is relative to the hard materials found in the earth’s crust, which is taking on powerful forces from the impact of glaciers. This results in what is called a till. Our society harnesses this same rugged earth to build up its world. As the definition suggests, the earth is left “intermingled”. Similarly, there is a drastic contention between harsh infrastructure and the physical condition of communities. The second definition suggests a probable solution of such a condition. To cultivate what exists. To propagate resources. To sow something for its anticipated growth.

A new conceptualization of utilizing infrastructure as a system of placemaking and mobility can set the guidelines for the future development of Martin Park and Pilgrim Village. With infrastructure’s apparent and visual presence, a development of a supportive small-scale infrastructure can become a tactical tool that sutures communities together after suffering periods of economic decline due to industry leaving the area and along with the involvement of other socioeconomic factors. This attempts to achieve what defines placemaking, “More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.” (Project For Public Spaces). It is the role of the designer to enhance existing qualities of these neighborhoods, while also investigating methods that will enhance the existing elements for these neighborhoods.

This thesis will research the extent of strategic land-use typologies for this context of light residential neighborhoods within District 2 of Detroit. District 2 is a region of the north central corridor. This is a contextual analysis and study which takes place specifically in the neighborhoods of Martin Park and Pilgrim Village.

These ideas are borrowed from a range of urban theories that focus on social, infrastructural, and economic policy. This includes the underlining social issues from the emergence of redlining developed in the twentieth century, and other indications of “red-tape” that continue on today.

New opportunities for adaptation and remediation can create “breathable” environments for existing community members and families. Community spaces can emerge to serve block club members and organizations that work on the future development of these communities. Ecological systems can also be introduced into the infrastructure, especially in the sense of water retention. Concepts of ecological environments, such as alleyway catch basins and bio-swales, are methods that reduce the runoff of storm water from surges into the existing combined sewer system. This reduces property damage and creates a system for healthier environments. These are examples of tactics that are contextually driven to provide quality environments to communities recovering from periods of neglect due to ongoing economic and sociological circumstances. It establishes the idea of “right to space”, whereas an environment set to a quality of standard is considered as a right to all classes and communities regardless of income level. Some other influences of ideas are carved by Jane Jacobs and Walter Hood. Jane Jacobs introduces the idea of focusing on small detailed qualities of neighborhoods that strive to achieve its own successes in social structures. Additionally, Walter Hood’s projects also demonstrate ways to develop a narrative into a landscape by researching parts of the context that can be celebrated through design. Framework of design interventions in the community must enhance the activities and functions that are already successfully occurring. Another aspect of framework of design is to introduce the landscape of having flexibility of performance. This allows a response to the multitude of requirements projected onto a landscape. This can be done through typologies that demonstrate tactics responding to these conditions at a scale that has the capacity to implement intimate responses for specific obstacles and goals.

# Focus Area

The social aspect of infrastructure is understanding the reaction from the urban planning methods of highway construction during the redlining tactics that occurred in the mid-20th century. In this project, it specifically investigates the Lodge Freeway. A segment severs Pilgrim Village, where neighborhood roads and farms were removed for its construction. Today the only connections are the overpasses of Linwood and Livernois, which lead into the neighborhoods of Martin Park and Hope Village (Wyoming-Dexter). The apparent nature of landbank conglomerations along this segment of the highway is a true indicator of an urban issue. Distribution of median income levels has also revealed a polarization of wealth. It is evidently due to the lack of connection between hubs and neighborhoods offset from the more immediate neighborhoods along business corridors. Realizations from this has led to an indication that commercial development is not the only practical means of sustaining a consistent urban fabric within a constricting urban setting.

## Thesis Question:

This project will analyze the following question of placemaking interventions in this context.

1. What are indicators in the physical environment of the current obstacles?
2. What tactics can be made to address these obstacles?
3. How does it contribute to the social aspects of infrastructure?

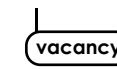
Within the District 2 is the focus area containing Martin Park, Pilgrim Village, and Hope Village (formally known as Dexter-Fenkell/Wyoming).

The area is analysed in three scales. The first and most intimate scale is on site observations. Desire pathways are demonstrated by the circulation paths designated by passerby. And an interaction between students and the residence creates anticipated warrants of social interaction.

The second scale examined is the proximity within Martin Park, Pilgrim Village, and north adjacent Hope Village. This analyses the neighborhood context in between the extents of 6 Mile to Fenkell, and Woodward to Livernois. Areas next to them are the villages of Fitzgerald, University District, Highland Park, Oakman Boulevard, and Palmer Woods.

The third outermost scale is in a larger context that shows the corridors of 8 mile to 96, and Woodward to Greenfield. It allows further examination of amenities in the urban context, such as larger hubs containing markets and sense of walkability.

## Obstacles:



**Landbank Vacancies** - There exist a conglomeration of landbank properties along the Lodge Freeway. How can these properties adapt to serve itself as an amenity to immediate communities?



**Maintenance** - The neglected overgrowth. Outdated fixtures. Underutilized alleyways. Uneveled concrete lots. These are the first steps of community development improvement. It is much more complicated to solve than to simply discuss them. This is evident by issues found and lacking in policy.



**Flooding** - A combined sewer system collects all water and distributed into one cleaning facility. During stormy seasons such as the spring and fall, flooding conditions inundates the streets (See Figures 7-10). Along with occurrences of overflow, the combined sewer system leaks sewage into the Detroit River. Treating the landscape ecologically can reduce the run-off created from concrete surfaces and flat terrain that characterizes Detroit.



**Safety** - This relates to the perception of safety. Businesses, institutions, and home owners have established their own means of security, which visually creates a sense of on-going crime.



**Disconnection** - The sense of distance between main corridors and the lack of identity of the neighborhood relative to its context.

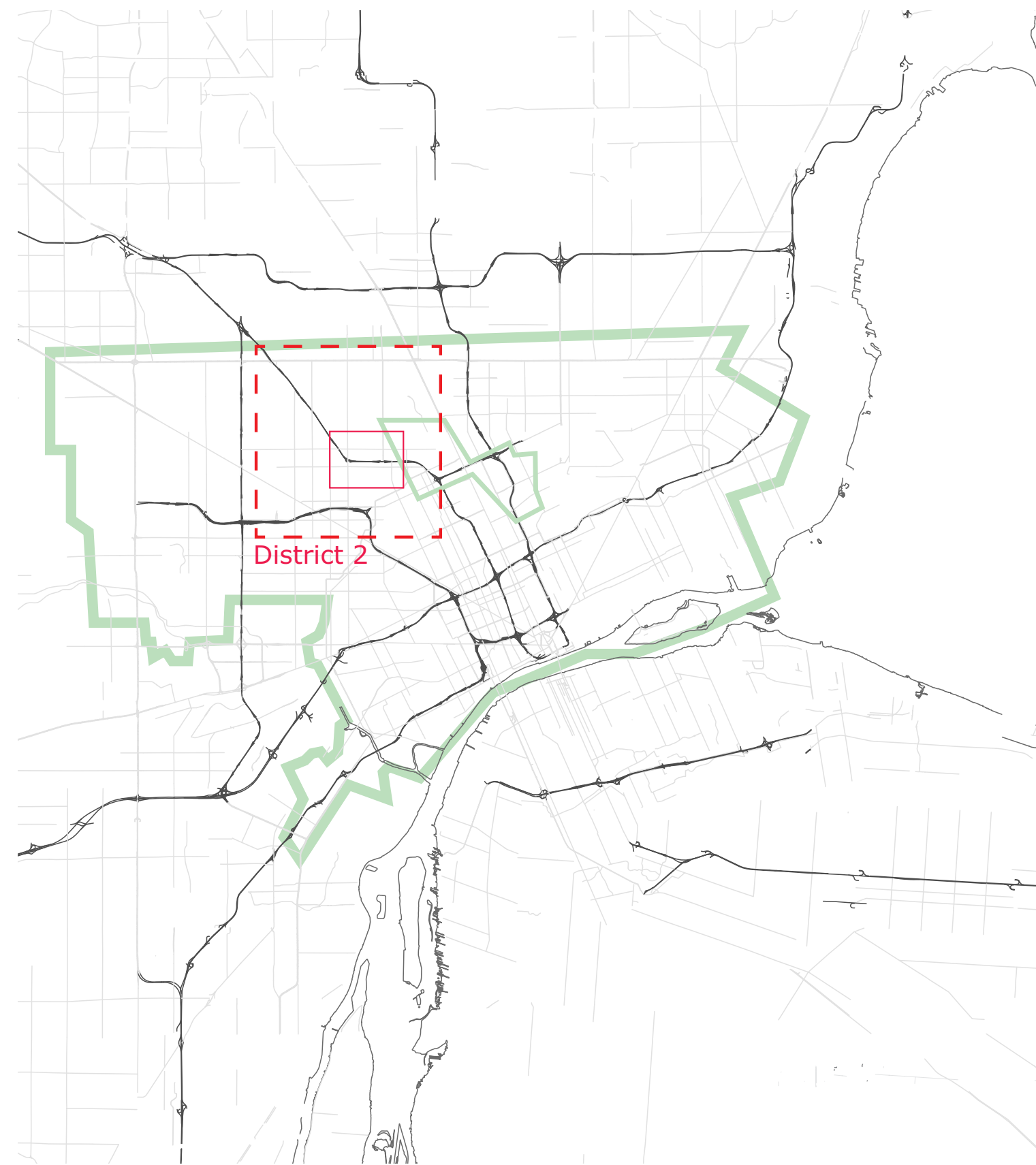
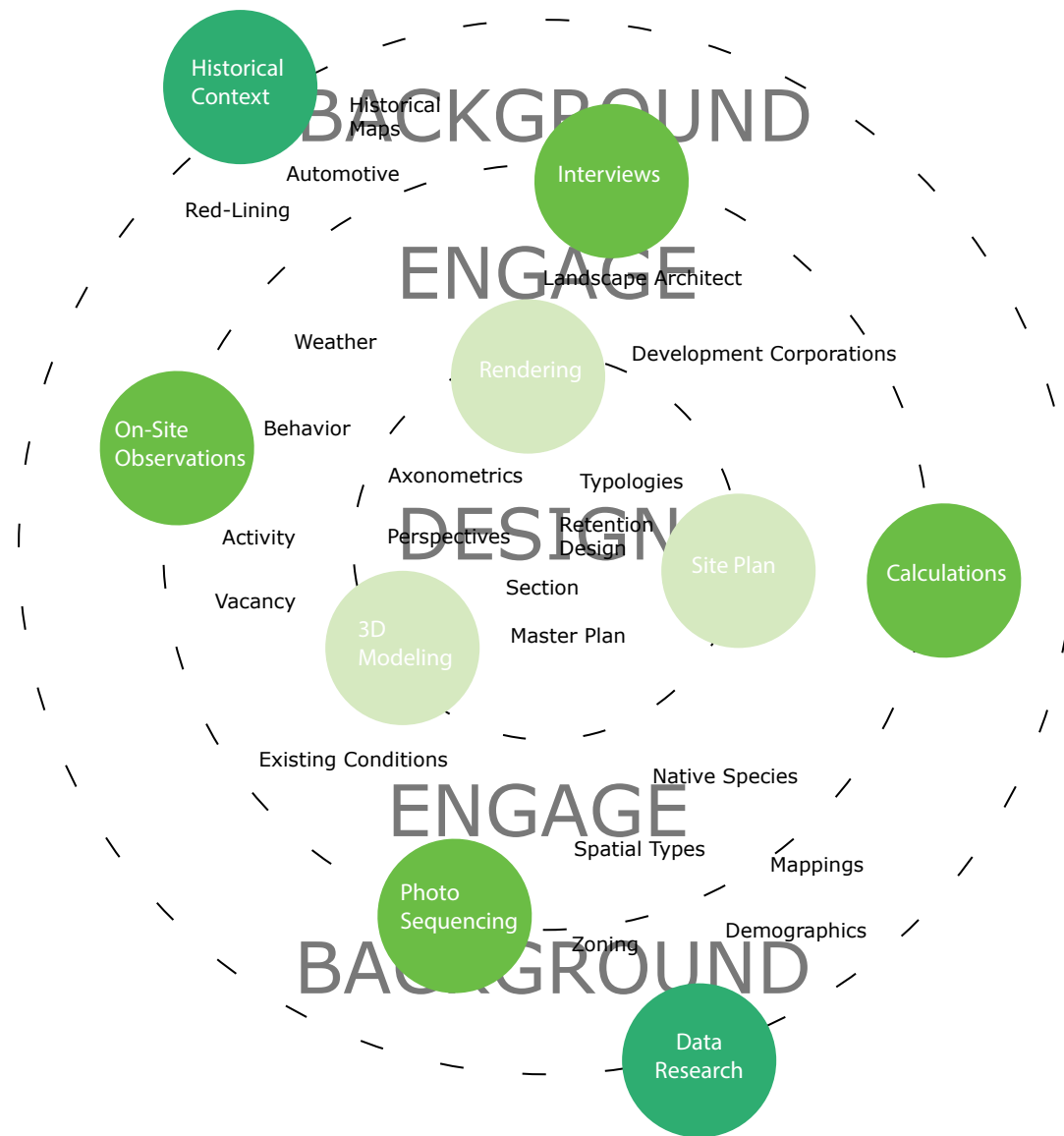


Figure 2: Map of Detroit

# Methodological Approach



The examination of this environment began with a large horizon of a complex background. A foundation of historical context and is made before engagement. As the foundation is settled and engagement begins, connections can be made between observations and the inventory of background information. As further development of connections are developed, these lead to design decisions that are relevant to the context.

# Goals

## Goals:

**Highway Buffering** – The environment of the Lodge Freeway has an abrupt embeddedness to the neighborhoods it passes through. Design methods in landscape offers barriers in sight and sound, as well as ecological functions. This softens the edge of harsh infrastructure and residential life.

**Creating Connections** – The suturing of the urban fabric is in need. Pedestrian routes and bridging are conceptualized to demonstrate the potentials in public funding for placemaking projects coordinated with networks in mobility.

**Retention** – The communities are to be empowered with their own infrastructure that will take initiative in protecting the environment from river overflow. Ecological landscape can act as a small-scale infrastructure, in this case, to retain rain runoff from overflowing the combined sewer system.

# Principles

## Infrastructure in Urbanism

- Definition of Infrastructure Urbanism - Structure of cities due to the emergence of an interconnected and globally capitalistic society.
- Infrastructure networks consist of complex architectures that work to bring heterogeneous places, peoples, buildings and urban elements into dynamic relationships and exchanges.
- A series of “sociotechnical processes” that develop the life and flux of the city. Infrastructure networks are thus involved in sustaining what we might call “sociotechnical geometries of power” (Splintering Urbanism, 11, Graham, Stephen, and Marvin. 2001)

New development in American policy has been promoted in the outskirts of cities. This has led to gaps in the urban fabric. Post-Urbanism has acknowledged this reality as a condition the city does not have the ability to escape. This attitude toward the urban environment reserves “the short-straw” given to marginalized communities. The adjustment of this attitude is in need for the further progression of Detroit neighborhoods, with the foundational idea of inelastic environments. For example, water is a resource built in the urban infrastructure that is provided to consumers scattered across the entire metropolis of cities. The quality of water is maintained regardless of income level, as an obvious priority of humane governmental bodies. However, an aspect of standardizing the quality of services to the public is overlooked. Similarly, the quality of the built environment provided should have a minimum standard of quality for every local proprietor, regardless of income level and class. This is especially true and important when dealing with marginalized communities found within a governmental system that is strictly set on a foundation of basic human rights.

“A landscape is not a natural feature of the environment but a synthetic space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land, functioning and evolving not according to natural laws but to serve a community - for the collective character of the landscape is one thing that all generations and all points of view have agreed upon – John Brickerhoff Jackson”

(Splintering Urbanism, 149)

The communities of Martin Park and Pilgrim Village need an ecological infrastructure to supplement the combined sewer system. These neighborhoods are then serving their own geometries of power in for self-infrastructure and self-sustainability.

#### Watchfulness

Jane Jacobs is known as a public figure who emerged into the politics of urban planning during the late nineteen fifties. In her essential piece of work entitled, *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, she examined the complexity of social aspects toward orthodox methods of urban planning. She points out directly addressing Detroit, "Thus researchers hunting the secrets of the social structure in a dull gray-area district of Detroit came to the unexpected conclusion there was no social structure." (*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs, 68, 1961)

There are qualities she identifies as contributors to social successes of neighborhoods.

"Children in cities need a variety of places in which to play and learn. They need, among other things, opportunities for all kinds of sports and exercise and physical skills..." (Jacobs, 81)

Nonetheless, this is an expected justification for public spaces such as parks. However, on a more mundane level of experiences, she points out the following observation: "The social structure of sidewalk life hangs partly on...self-appointed public characters... His main qualification is that he is public. that he talks to a lot of different people: In this way, news travels that is of sidewalk interest" (Jacobs, 68) These characters can be found in local businesses, such as the barber shop, butcher, and florist. However, this extends to neighbors, people develop a familiarity and relationship within their community of dwellings. Communication amongst the neighborhood is an aspect that creates social successes.

#### Competition for Everyday Use

Walter Hood advanced many of Jane Jacobs ideas as an urban designer. He introduced the novel idea of the urban mini-park.

"The formula for the urban minipark is set within guidelines and standards. Its form and context attempt to predetermine events and uses. Thus, although the minipark serves some children and teens, it leaves other segments of society without a sense of legitimate right to use the space. Social injustices are created when certain uses are ignored or not provided for in the park." (*Urban Diaries*, Hood, 10, 1997)

Walter Hood's work also embodies a social component to his public spaces. Ways in which he designs is for inclusiveness.

"The Garden, I never see more than one or two gardeners in the garden at any time, but the plentiful bounty reveals their labor and dedication...Neighborhood kids have turned the storage shed into a playhouse. When the gardeners leave, the children play tag and hide-and-seek amongst the vegetable beds" (Hood, 13)

Here he envisions how a mundane area has the potential qualities of providing a space for two different audiences in common. In regards to commercial spaces commonly developed in Detroit, they tend to only address the audience that is limited to their own traffic. This seems to be serving as the primary determining factor of public space and is a reoccurring mistake of city development. This is something overlooked for a number of years. This is due to the flawed current capitalistic system of development in policy present in the city of Detroit. When its capitalistic system of development is enhanced to empower the immediate communities that take ownership within these neighborhoods, then achievement within the city's social structure will become evident.



Figure 4: Population Change of Detroit Provided by Detroit Future City



## A. BACKGROUND

This section creates an understanding of the area through the physical, social, and political environments.

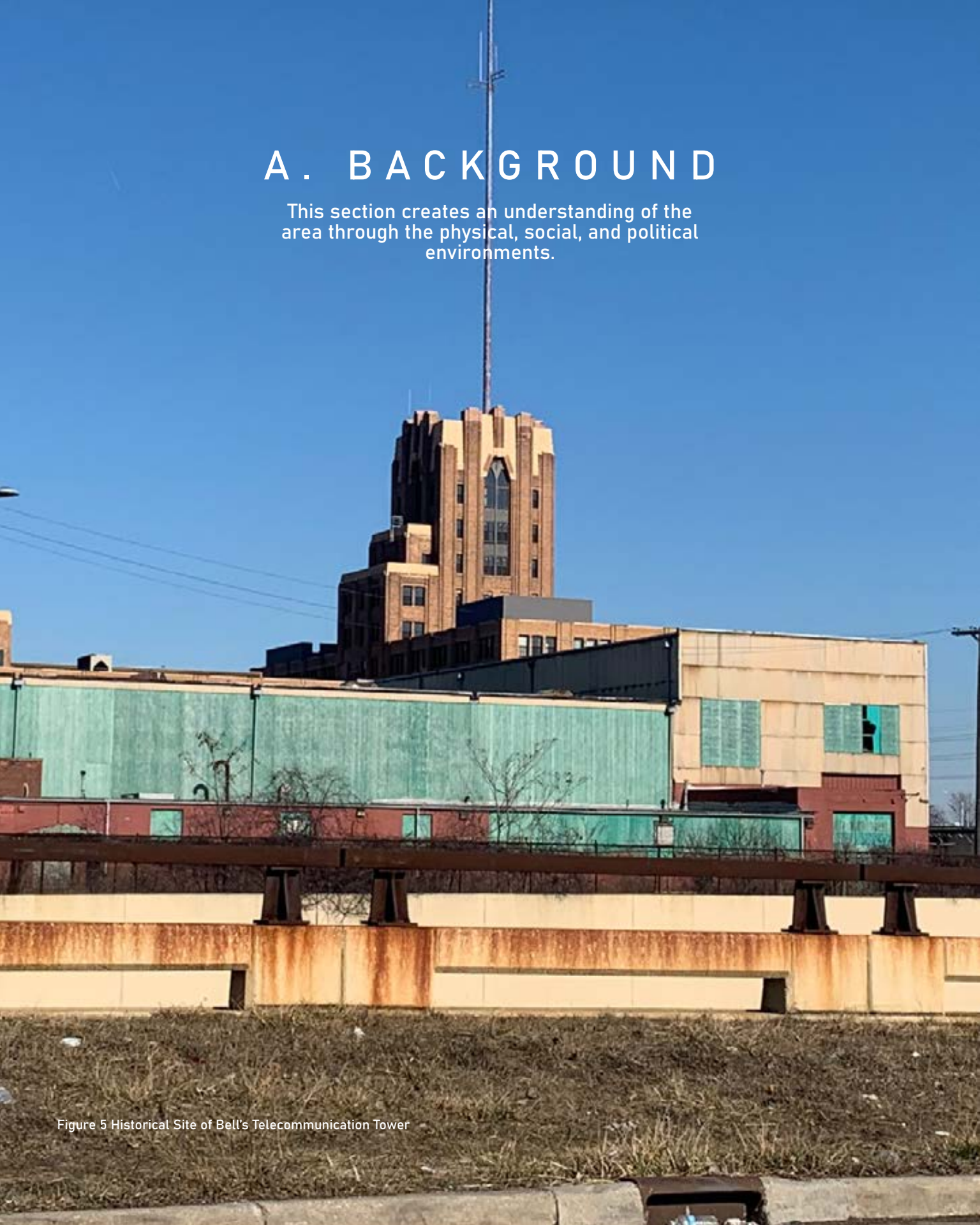


Figure 5 Historical Site of Bell's Telecommunication Tower

# 2

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

This chapter looks into the background of the site. It includes the historical and demographics.

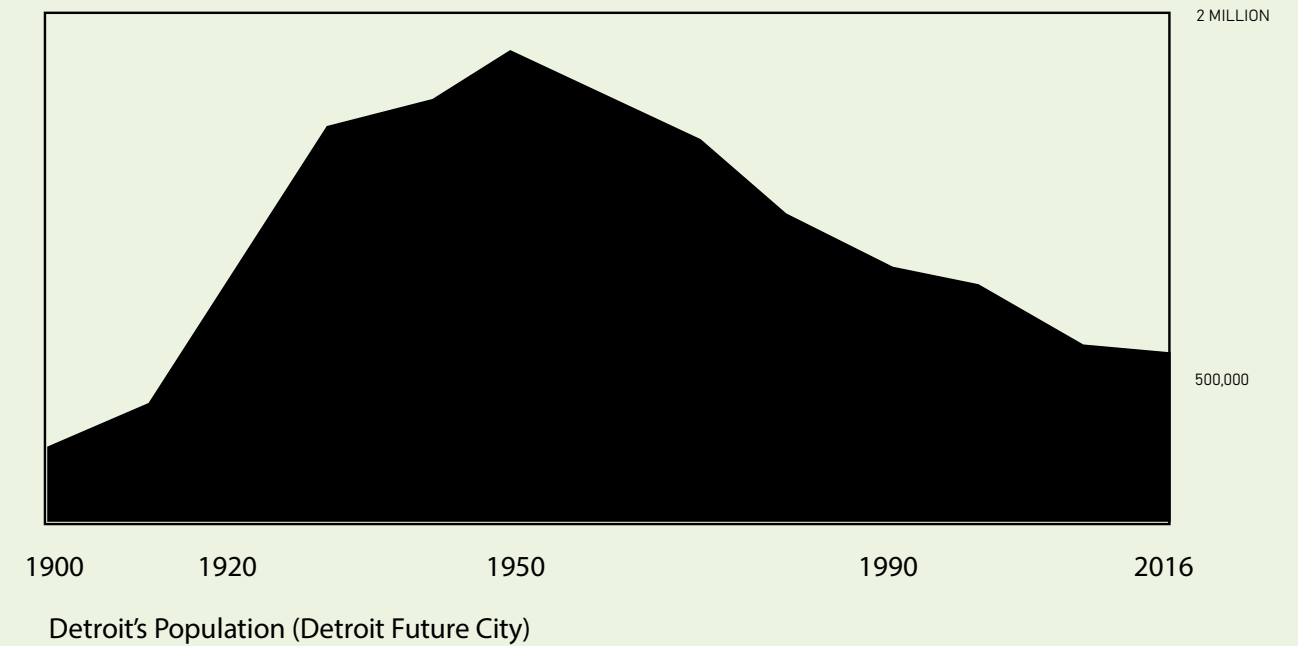


Figure 6: Population Change of Detroit Provided by Detroit Future City

# Site Vignettes

## A Perception of the Physical Environment

These vignettes establish an understanding of the environment of the community. These pictures were taken over between the fall of 2019 and the spring of 2020 in Martin Park and adjacent proximities. (Highland Park, Hope Village, and Pilgrim Village.)

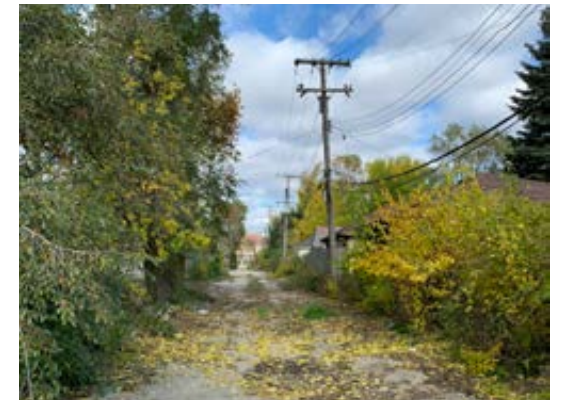


Figure 7: Collage of Martin Park (1)

Figure 8 Collage of Martin Park (2)

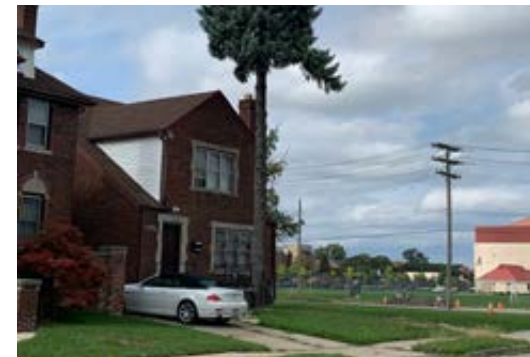


Figure 9: Collage of Martin Park (3)

Figure 10 Collage of Martin Park (4)

# Michigan Department of Transportation

The city of Detroit is recognized as the "Motor City", because it has achieved great milestones in infrastructure to accommodate the vehicles it produced. The automotive industry is a "geometry of power" that influenced the development of the city. For example, Woodward was the first rural highway to be paved in America, connecting Detroit to Pontiac. It also achieved the first international water tunnel between Detroit and Windsor, Canada. It was a prioritization for the city to be representational of a system perfectly synchronizing automobiles with the human condition.

Perhaps if the automotive industry had never been a prioritization for Detroit, the cityscape would not have emerged such an urban obstacle. Jan Gehl describes a key factor in the differences between most American cities and European cities,

"The organic growth of medieval cities encompassed a building tradition based on generations of experience in how to create cities with well-functioning interaction between life and space. This knowledge was lost somewhere in the process of industrialization and modernization, which led to dysfunctional city environments for the important and yet ignored segment of city life on foot. Of course, society has changed since the Middle Ages." (How to Study Public Life, Gehl and Svarre, 2013)

As infrastructure has developed through time, the geometries of power shift investment to districts on the outer rims of cities. This nature being known as the suburban sprawl

"Starting in the 1950's and ending in the 1980's , we have diverted system maintenance funding to capitalize a new infrastructure at the outer limits of urban centers at the expense of our networks in our existing city. We've stretched our resources to such an extent that gaps have begun to appear in the fabric of not only our inner cities, but our first and second ring communities, as well." (Graham, Stephen, and Marvin, 156)

Detroit is the center focus of an urbanism to answer the question for many other American rustbelt cities. How can we solve the many implications of urban constriction? For that, it is a complicated answer. We can begin by accessing some sociological factors.

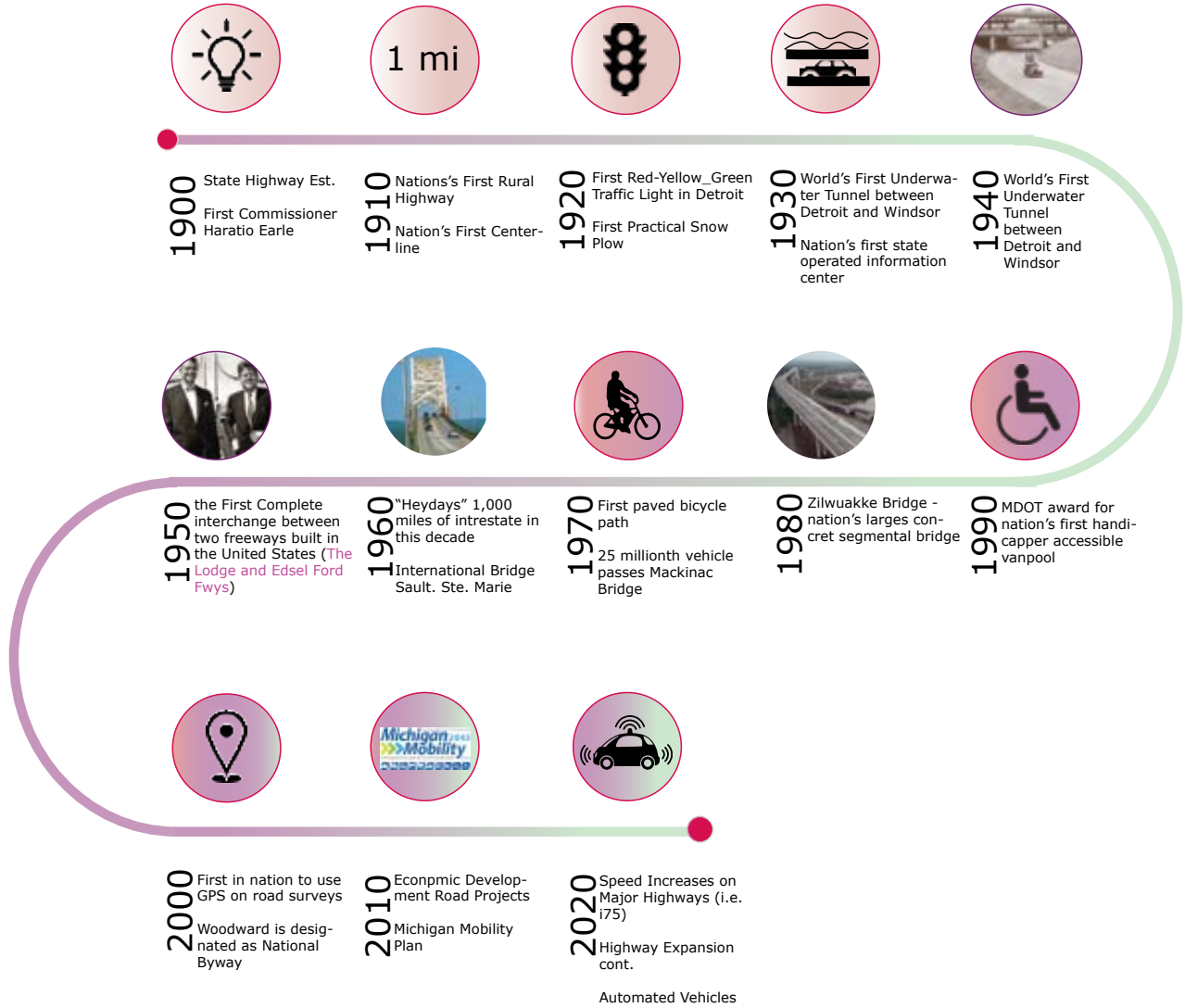


Figure 11: Transportation Development Timeline, MDOT

# Redlining

## Understanding Segregation and Inequality

When recognizing Detroit as a city that historically influence the modernization of America, we have to also recognize the implication of policy it had set forth. As a great cause of concern, Jane Jacobs has brought up to public view highway development methods implemented by Robert Moses in New York. Detroit in a similar manner, practiced the same "redlining" tactics when developing highway systems throughout the mid-twentieth century. Here, a property appraisal map demonstrates the value of these neighbourhoods according to real estate in the 1930's. As shown, most of the area is a "Grade C", as well as a good portion aligning Woodward as "Grade D". In most circumstances, areas targeted with these grades were historically African American communities.

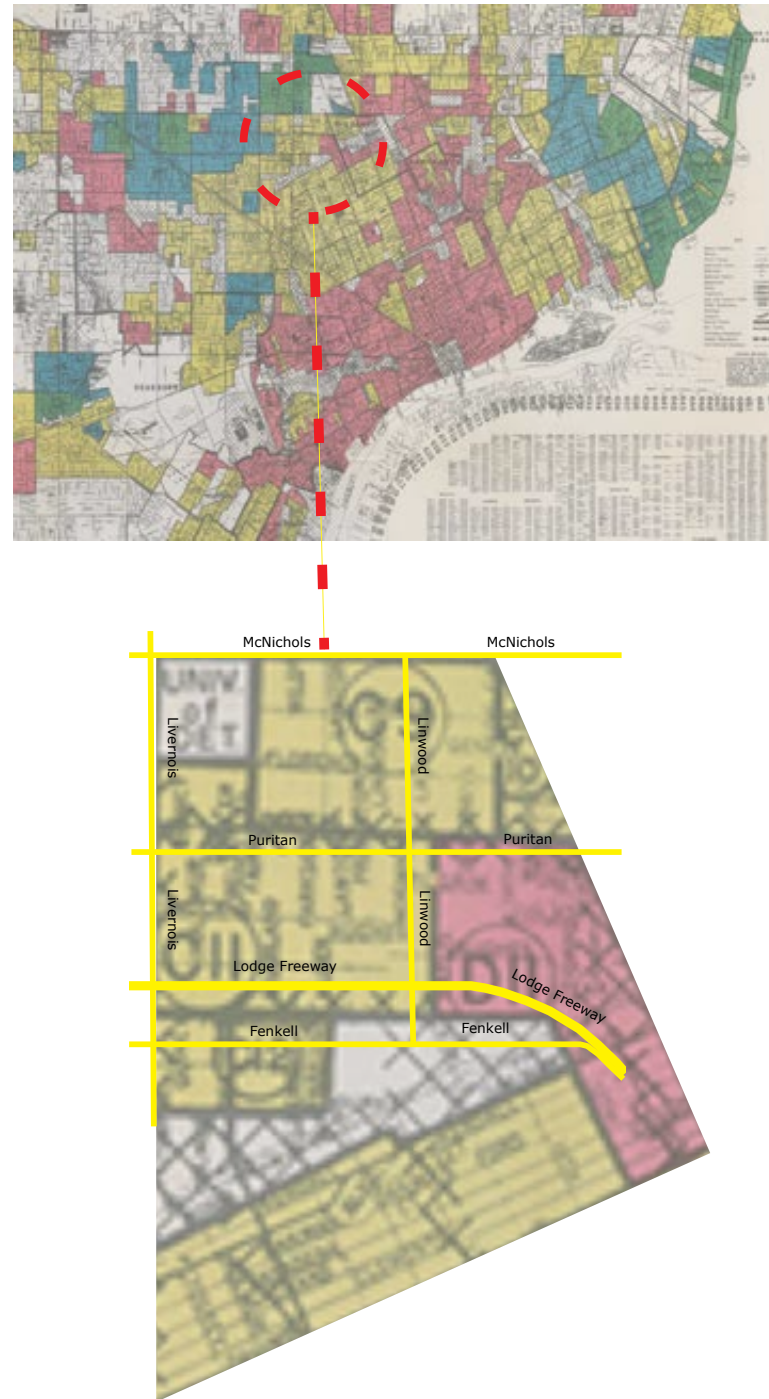
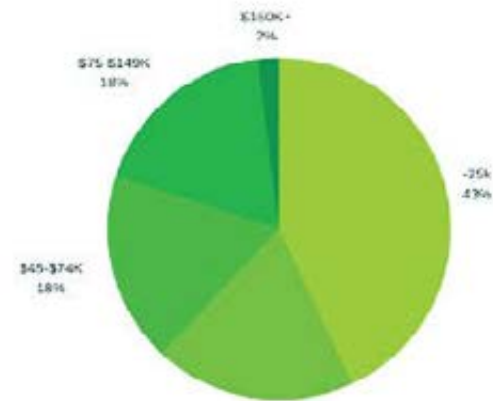


Figure 12 Real Estate Appraisal Map 1930's SEMCOG



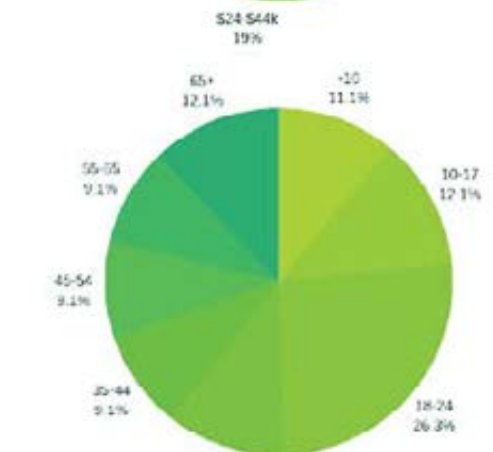
### Median Income:

The median income maintains below the poverty line for many families, although there is a portion of the community that is considerably well off



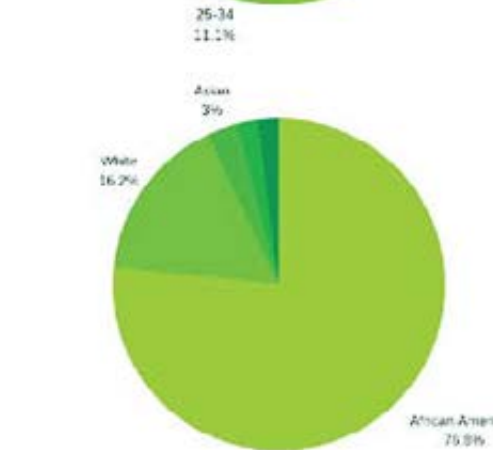
### Age Groups:

The University gravitates many young persons to the area, however not as long term citizens. Many of the actually home owners are long term residences who have spent their whole life living in the area.



### Diversity:

As consistent with the rest of Detroit. African Americans represent the majority of the community. Their cultural impact stems from the musical influence in Motown and Jazz. Martin Park was the place of residence for Eddie Kendrick and David Ruffin, members of the Temptations. In proximity is also Baker's Keyboard Lounge, one of the oldest Jazz Clubs in the world. This is an important aspect of identity that can be celebrated in design.



# Community

## Understanding Social Demographics

### Income

The median income level for Martin Park is below 25k annually for household residents. In proximity to them are the neighborhoods of Palmer Park and Sherwood Forest, which maintains a median income level of 110k for household residents. (Income Map Source) These neighborhoods are closer in proximity to the "Livernois Avenue of Fashion", a hub to District 2. Martin Park and Hope Village represent Neighborhoods displaced slightly further from beneficial neighborhood hubs than others receiving more immediate benefits. However, they also resemble communities where schools and park systems reside within them. Essentially, a need is to connect institutions which can receive a social benefit to the gravitation of existing hubs. (Mapping the Motor City, Loveland)

### Age Group

The age variety is vast in these neighborhoods, although, there is an influx of college students in the area provided by the community of Detroit Mercy. Upon graduation, it is not likely for students to remain in the area, as most of the housing in Martin Park and Pilgrim Village are for longer term older residences above the age of 65. "I have lived here most of my life since the 80's, most of the abandoned buildings here are from residences who passed away" (Resident of Normandy, June 2019)

### Diversity

African Americans represent the majority of the population in these communities. Detroit attracted a large portion of its population during the automotive boom. This specifically brought African Americans from the south to the north, looking for new opportunities. The music world also has a connection to this neighborhood, as once being the home to David Ruffin and Eddie Kendricks, members of the Temptations. Baker's Keyboard lounge is also a historical jazz club located on Livernois, which hosted many talented African American musicians.

Figure 13: Demographics of Martin Park

# 3 MAPPINGS

less economically viable cities are also impacted, because the rapidly growing volume of motorized traffic and related infrastructure provides obstacles for pedestrians and produces noise and air pollution for many people in their daily lives.

Jan Gehl

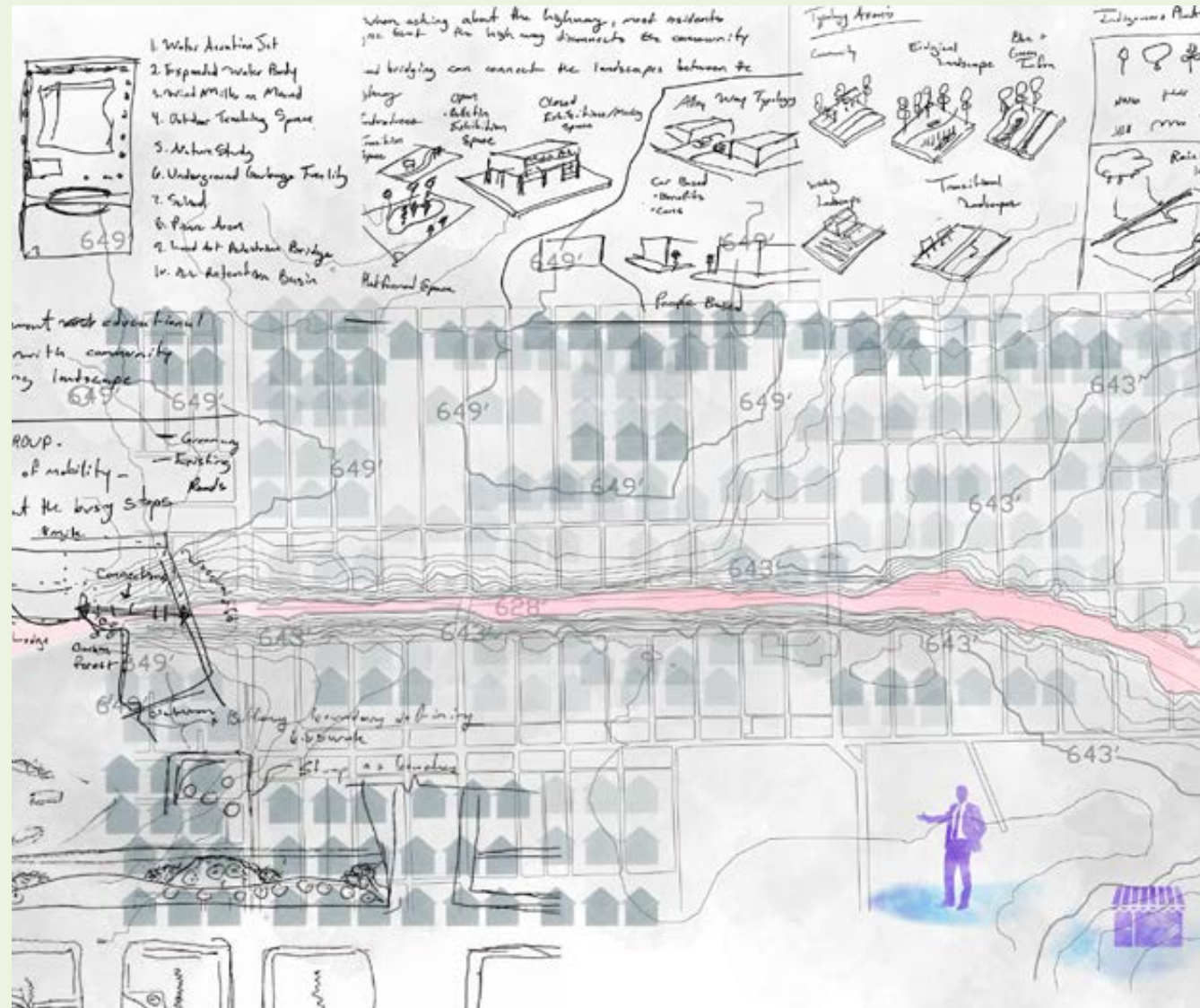
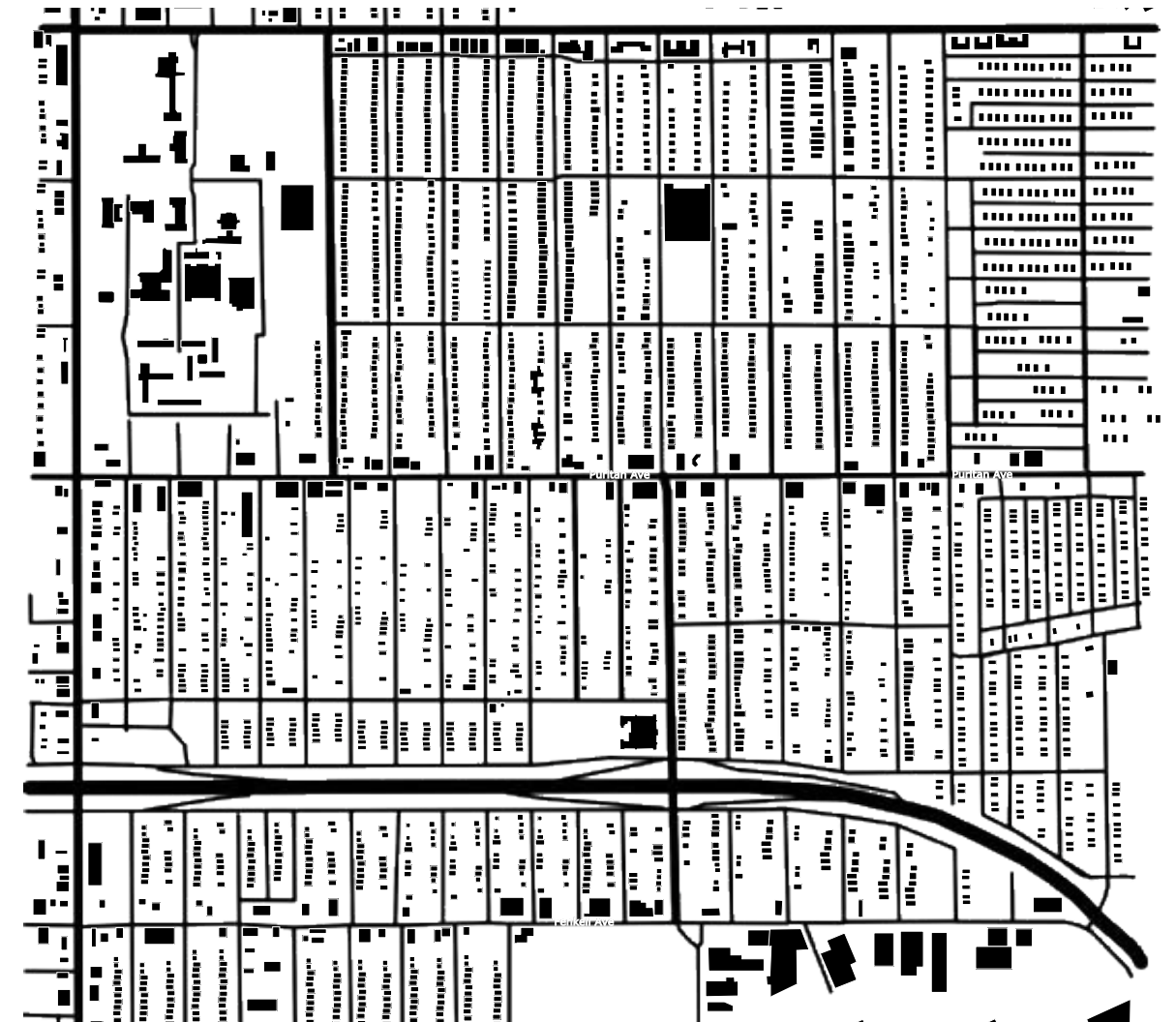


Figure 14: (SEMCOG, Detroit Land Bank) Quote: (Gehl, How to Study Public Space, 4)

## Figure Ground

The Profile in Plan (Left)



This figure ground reveals the densities between the buildings. As it can be seen, their form is revealed by spatial orientation. The main patterns that stand out are the blocks of neighborhoods and the corridors that line between them.

Figure 15: (SEMCOG, Detroit Land Bank)

# Historical Property

Resisting 1915



A historical survey from the 1915's describes the condition of these neighborhoods before the freeway. It indicates a dense grid of parcels, where parts of the university exists today. The main portion of the school exists where John Morkey's farm resided. Additionally, parcels that seem to be organized as a neighborhood housing stock are allocated as part of the university as well (i.e. Pioneer Sub).

Figure 16: Property Survey, Baist Survey

# Building Age

Revealing Era of Development



The majority of the housing stock was constructed between the time period of 1920 and 1930. Although, in the 1930's, the area was graded with a "C" in the lower spectrum of property appraisals (as shown in "Redlining" of Chapter 2). There was an organized layout for dense housing development, although this area was determined with lower appraisals afterward. There are repetitions of similar housing types. The sidewalk is also a single width of concrete, with no means of variability throughout the plan. This suggests there were economic development methods attempting to develop a large quantity of a housing stock with affordable means.

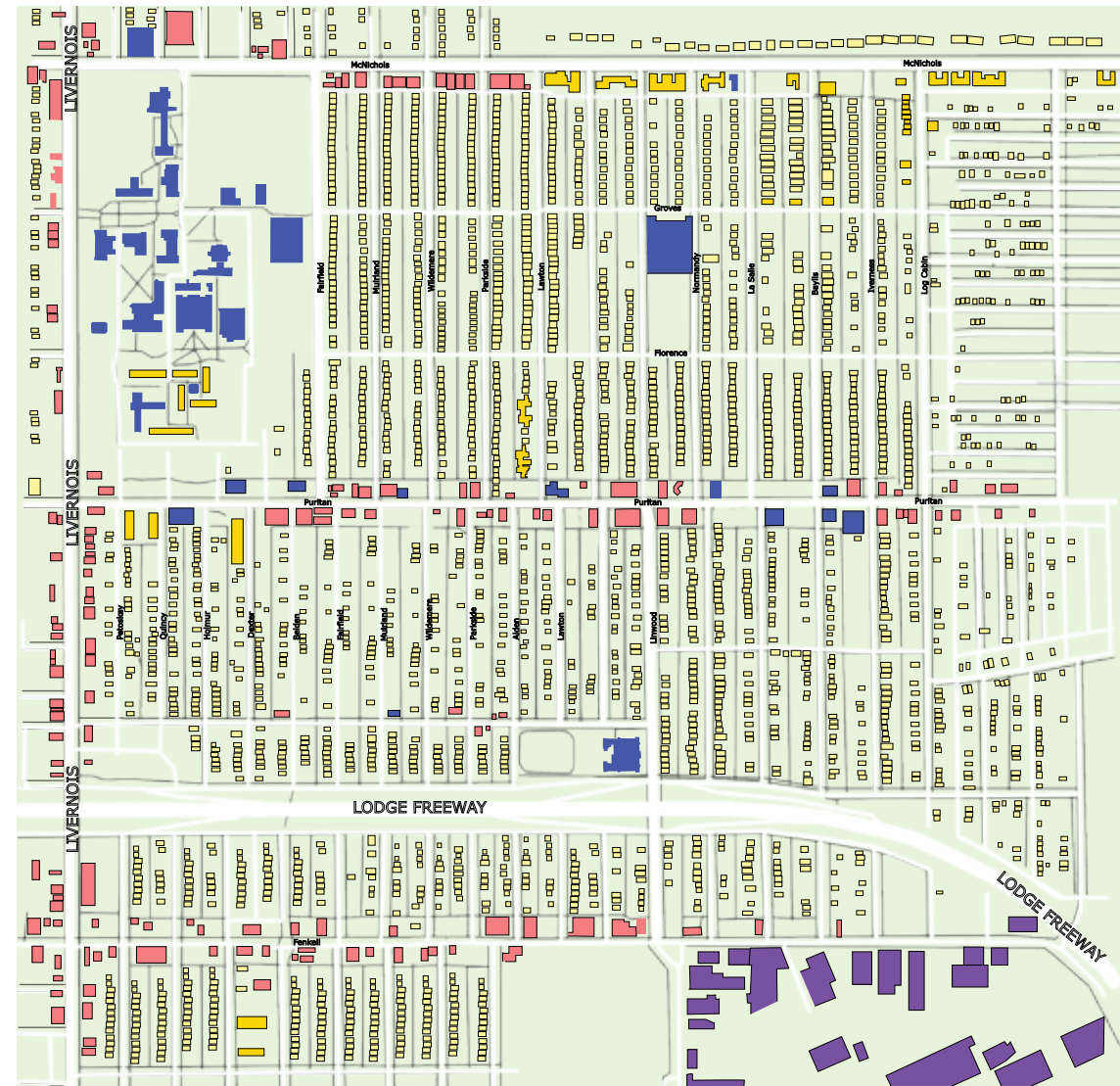
Especially, the condition of the physical layout suggests an eager anticipation of population density. Today, this is no longer the case. (Southeast Michigan Buildings, SEMCOG)

Figure 17: Southeast Michigan Buildings, SEMCOG



# Land Use

## Organization of the Community



The land use map categorizes commercial, institutional, high residential, and low residential zones. On the west side of the map is the vertical corridor of Livernois, known as the Avenue of Fashion. It is the largest African American owned corridor in America. There are three east-to-west running corridors shown. The freeway also runs east to west, then veers toward the south-eastern direction.

Although walkability is a current issue in Detroit, the development of mixed commerce in terms of a “20 Minute Neighborhood” is plausible.

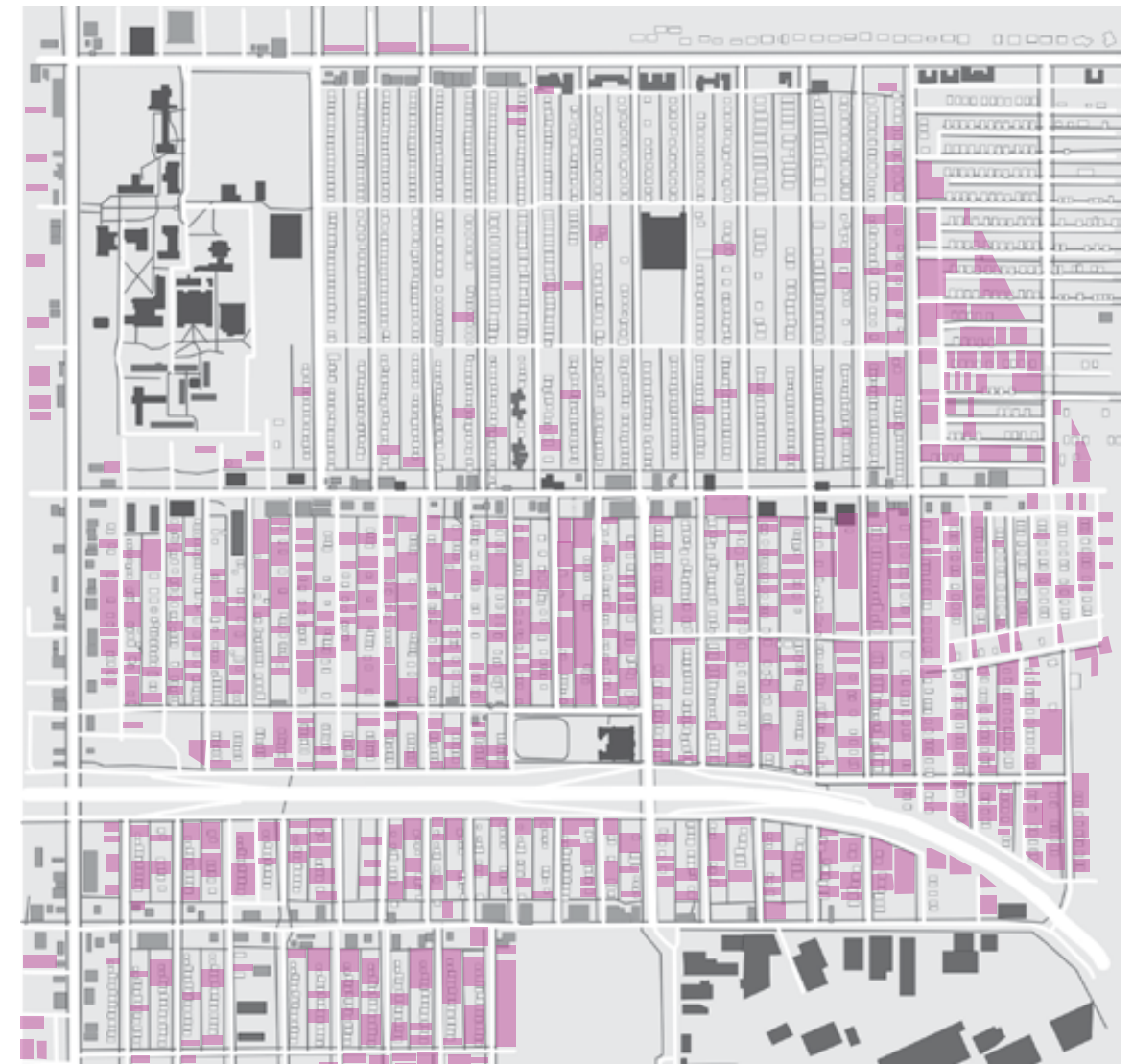
The grid of neighborhoods in accordance to corridors is inherently efficient, with the exception of the disruption caused by the freeway.



Figure 18: Land Use Map

# Landbank

## Properties Foreclosed or Vacant



Land banks are quasi-governmental entities created by counties or municipalities to effectively manage and repurpose an inventory of underused, abandoned, or foreclosed property. As examined here, there is a conglomeration of landbank properties aligning the highway. The area of research, including Hope Village, is considered an Opportunity area according to SEMCOG Arch GIS Mappings. This means that these areas can be reassessed and developed into new projects with the potential of public funding.

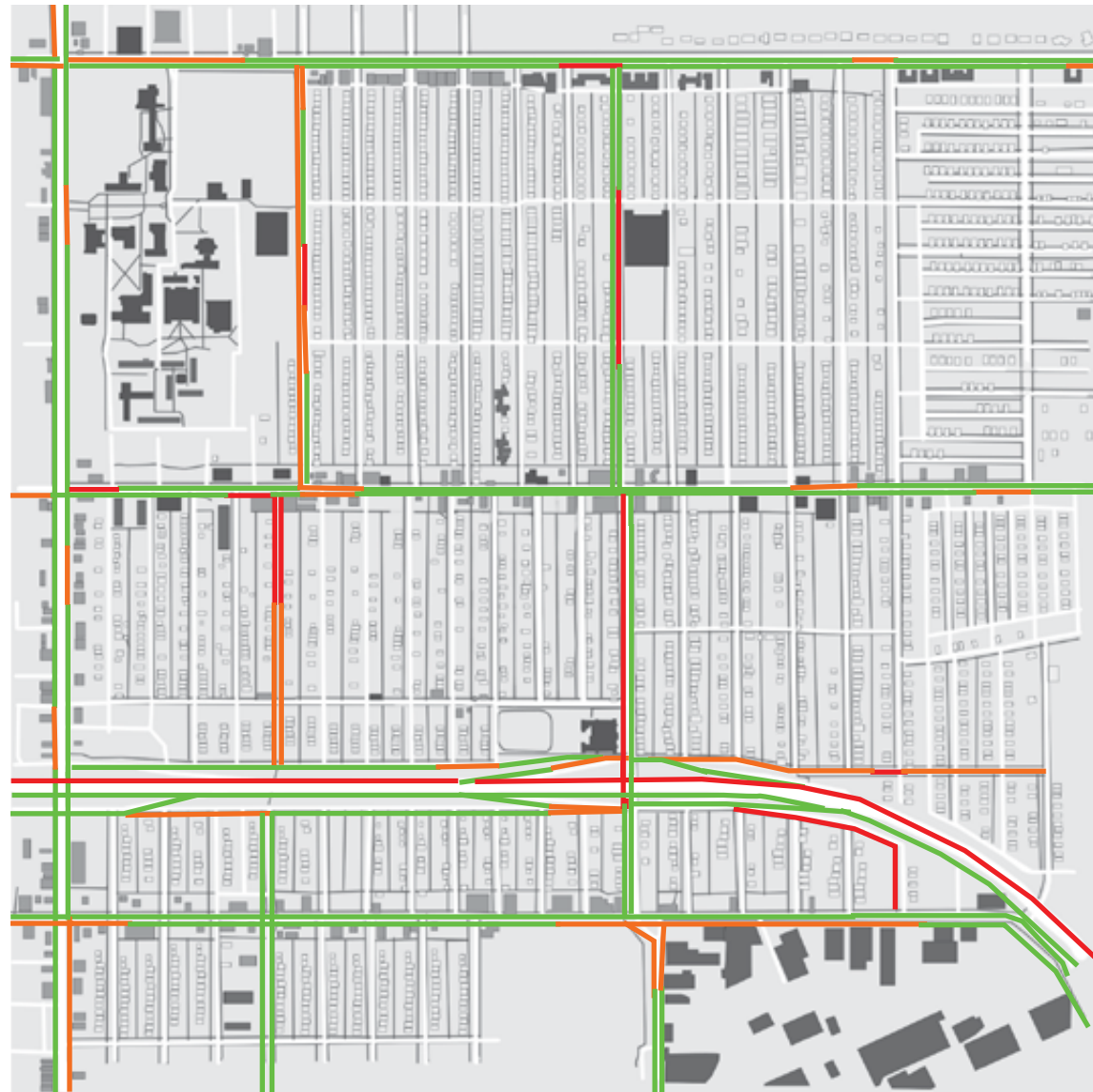


The SmartGrowth sets guidelines for areas like these in Detroit. One concept is the addition of urban parks to promote healthy living and diversity in the urban environment. A potential spot for a mini park is on the corridor of Linwood by the intersection of Puritan. There was an old vinyl record manufacturing building that burned down. Today the lot remains empty, awaiting for its next utilization along with many lots. Until then, it remains as a bleak visual wound to the area. In this map, density is greatest by the highway, a finding that suggests several things. Appraisal of properties by the highway tend to have little value.

Figure 19: Land Bank Map )

# Congestion

## Issues in Urban Positioning



This map indicates places of congestion at the time of 4pm during the week of October 31st, 2019. Stop-and-go traffic is persistent within the neighborhood blocks. This was the pickup time for the middle school in Martin Park, where congestion is routinely evident. This is continually impeding traffic from 6 Mile to the Lodge freeway, and creating chaotic conditions where children are present.

- Stopping
- Slow
- Free Flow

Figure 20: Traffic Congestion Map

# Road Speeds

## The Flow of Corridors



The highest speed allowed on the Lodge freeway is 55 mph as its speed limit. However, it can be observed that vehicles travel typically much faster up to 75-80mph. Then, it is expected of highway drivers to decelerate immediately into 35 mph zones lined with schools and residential houses. It can be challenged what is the prioritization, pedestrian safety or the implementation of the highway.

Figure 21: Traffic Speed Map

# B . E N G A G E

This section disuses the interaction of the physical environment and community.



Figure 22: Lodge Pedestrian Bridge Into Oilgrim Village

# 4

## ON SITE OBSERVATION

*In general, observing with the eye and training you to do so can lead you to return home with many more senses than just an electronic tool*

Jan Gehl



Figure 23: Observation Map

# Desired Pathways

## Understanding Social Demographics

# A



Figure 24: D-Town Liquor

People have demonstrated their true use of space as they tend to their daily activities. The designer can collect information of spatial relationships, circulation paths and desired pathways carved by the user.

### Observation A Desired Pathways:

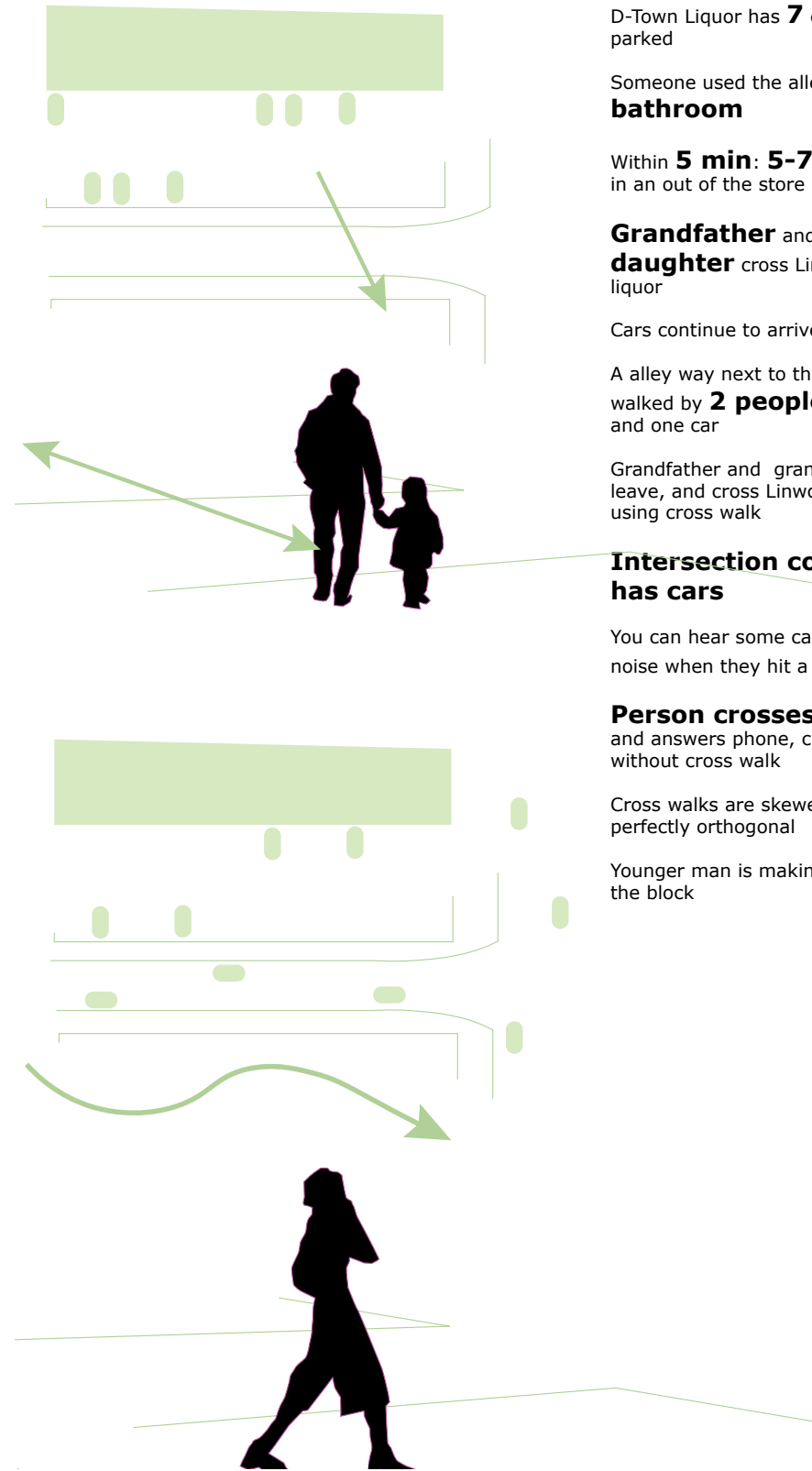
Here we can observe a case of individuals demonstrating paths outside the boundaries of suggested passageways. A grandfather and his granddaughter were crossing the street of Linwood. As they approach the corner of the cross signal, the grandfather tugged the little girl away further down the sidewalk toward the alleyway. At which point did they then cross, determining their own sense of safety. The usage of alleyways are in question, is it possible for them to serve this circumstance? A passage way that is offset from the road behind the commercial buildings already exist, however they are not activate. These areas have the potential to become pedestrian corridors with safer street crossing behind buildings.

In another case, a woman having a stroll and talking on the cell phone. She was observed approaching the newly flattened lot. This lot was recently the site of a demolished structure of a manufacturing facility, that suffered a fire over a year ago. She immediately crossed diagonally across the site, instead of following the sidewalk.

This misuse of suggested historical pathways has already affected the capabilities of the passerby to choose their own route. Even the most mundane aspect of circulation, such as cutting through a corner property, can give the sense of versatility in the urban layout. It is the experience of choice in which the pedestrian determines. A multitude of passage ways is something a pedestrian has yet to appreciate in these community environments, or better put, to be created. This entire area can offer an interesting landscape, buffering a quiet microcosm from the bustling intersection. This creates the cusp between the motorized world and a more humane world. The setting could provide an opportunity for public vendors as well. There was a circumstance of vendors observed at a community park across the street of a similar site. This park, however, lacked streetscape elements, and contained tactical items like lawn chairs and bags tied to posts as trash reciprocals (Seen in Frame of Figure # Chapter 6). These are amenities that can be emphasized for the community, to provide to the user's sense of dwelling within the neighborhood.



Figure 25: Local Vendor



D-Town Liquor has **7** cars currently parked

Someone used the alley way as a **bathroom**

Within **5 min: 5-7** people walked in an out of the store

**Grandfather and grand daughter** cross Linwood to liquor

Cars continue to arrive and leave

A alley way next to the liquor is walked by **2 people** to the store and one car

Grandfather and grand daughter leave, and cross Linwood without using cross walk

**Intersection constantly has cars**

You can hear some cars make a noise when they hit a **pot hole**

**Person crosses open site** and answers phone, crossed puritan without cross walk

Cross walks are skewed, not perfectly orthogonal

Younger man is making loops around the block

Figure 26: Illustration of Desired Pathway

# Cross Communication

## Understanding Social Demographics

# B



Figure 27: Paul Robenson Malcolm X Academey

### Observation B Cross Communication:

The school nested in the center of a neighborhood block characterizes a certain social interaction. Upon observation during school dismissal, an inundation of cars collected on the intersection of Groves and Linwood. Between the time of 3:55 pm – 4:30 pm on most weekdays during the school year, Linwood is congested, although it serves as a neighborhood bypass to Exit 8 of the Lodge Freeway. This is an exit that many commuters to the university use to access the highway of 175. It is a high potential for pedestrian and automobile accidents.

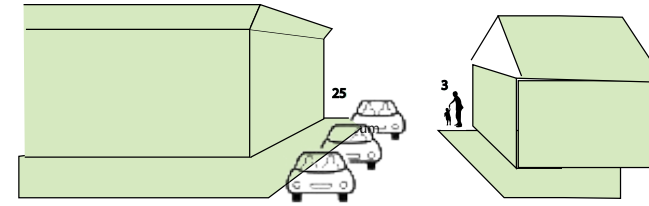
Student wait on the side of the school. There is a situation where young boys were using uncivil language and were caught by one of the local residences. The resident decided to take it upon herself to discipline the boys, and scorned them, interjecting spontaneous community Morales. This goes in line with Jane Jacobs ideas of “eyes on the street”. Whereas, the urban environment can benefit with open view to promote civility amongst the public. As a school is positioned this way within a neighborhood, it can promote a mix of interactions across the community. This is an example of a social success of interaction, something a city planner can emphasize in further development for successful neighborhood communities, which is the pocketed neighborhood school.



Figure 28: Typical Martin Park Home



Figure 29: Typical Martin Park Home



**Cars** are parked on **all sides**

The intersection is **congested** of parents picking up children

Roughly **19-25** cars are present

**Children wait** on the **curb** wearing their jackets and holding umbrellas

Students are using their phones

Some are enjoying conversations

**3 Parents** were walking with their children home

There is a sign that indicated **No Standing** everyone ignores it

**NEIGHBORS** to the school are seen interacting with the students

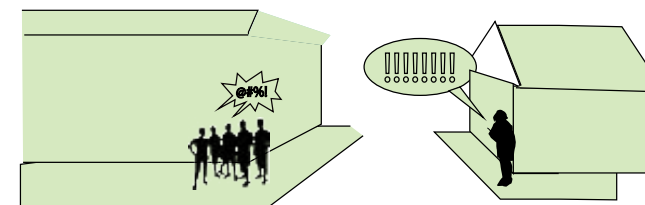
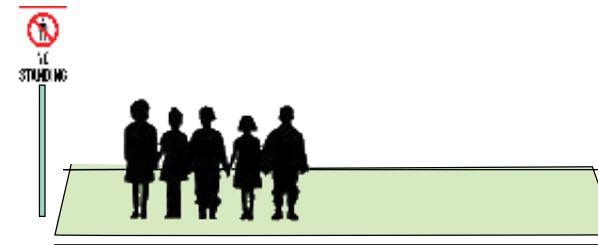


Figure 29: Illustration of Cross Communication

# 5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*'I have found that to do business in the city of Detroit as a block club is really, really difficult,' she says. Red tape can get in the way of residents being able to take direct action on block-level issues ... 'You don't need all these obstacles to do good for your community.'*

**Cheryl Kearney**



Figure 31: District 2 Roundtable Meeting

## What Did the Community Say?

### Informal Interviews

This chapter develops correspondence with community members to access information on usership within the neighborhoods. As much as the conversation was directed toward physical improvement, it was impossible to not discuss the implications of policies at hand.

#### Resident on Baylis:

***What would be a beneficial way to improve the environment for the neighborhoods?***

"Children need a place to learn, play, and be themselves. Now a days, kids are stuck at home playing videogames. Their parents are working multiple jobs, and no one is around to watch them" November 2019

#### Pedestrian on Livernois:

***What are somethings that are beneficial from streetscape improvements on Livernois?***

"Everything seems a lot safer because of that, and especially with the community from the University." January 2020

## Funding for Community Development

### Funding Sources:

This includes the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, and the Affordable Housing Leverage Fund, which are tools being used to create new development in these neighborhoods. The areas of the Strategic Neighborhood Fund are located in Livernois-McNichols, Southwest-Vernor, and Islandview Villages. The areas were expanded to Northwest Grand River, Warrendale-Cody Rouge, Campau-Banglatown, Russell Woods-Nardin Park, Gratiot-7 Mile, East Warren-Cadieux, and Jefferson Chalmers. An investment of \$172,000,000 will be made in these neighborhoods by the city of Detroit. The goals are improving streetscapes, helping start-up businesses, and preserving affordable housing. Some of the funding for these neighborhood placemaking methods can be supplement by these programs.

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) are stepping in and replacing the roles of banks. There are alternatives that focus on housing as well, such as the Affordable Housing Leverage Fund.

The biggest problem that is facing neighborhoods, is the fact that there are roughly around 30,000 properties that are land bank owned. Philanthropic grants focus money in developing into these areas. One for example is the Community Revitalization program. This consists of architects, planners, and developers who conduct community discussions. (Invest Detroit)

**SNF** - Stategic Neighborhood Funds

**CDFI** - Community Development Financial Institution

**AHLF** - Affordable Housing Leverage Fund

### Organizations:

Block Clubs

Invest Detroit

East Warren Development Corp,

Other similar organizations

# From the Mayor's Office

## Understanding Social Demographics

Matt Walter is a gentleman who is involved with development in many of Detroit's neighborhoods by the Mayor's Office. His discussion involved many points about how policies control the outcome of development. One important aspect, as explained by Mr. Walter, is the idea of preserving the black community identity, which is very much needed. These are areas where the African American community reside, therefore it is adequate to have the local government represent them. A glance at the City of Detroit, reveals it is very diverse. Neighborhood hubs of ethnic groups surprisingly is a successful aspect of the city. Examples are, the Bangladesh in Banglatown, Mexicans in Mexican Town, Somalians in Hammtramck, and the omnipresence of the African American community. This shows a multi-faceted representation of the backgrounds found in the city.

The city of Detroit is presently reviewing where other cities made mistakes in their investments, and it is crucial that Detroit executes effectively. We are currently behind in certain aspects, especially in the realm of transportation. Mr. Walter suggested how envious he can be at times where his colleagues work in cities with transit, and he has the misfortune of only driving through congested traffic. This can be a hard way of experiencing the city.

What the city needs to do is to project at how it will be in ten years. These buildings will soon develop an identity of their own through time. Although, the city itself is riddled with demolition efforts. Innately, the city cannot realize their problems in infrastructure, and fix them on their own. There has to be lobbying for funding in order to do that. What has to happen is a change in policy, and one example is through how properties are taxed. Currently there is a tax change happening at a state level in Michigan. It is occurring at the Constitution level for the State of Michigan. The State, as said by Walter, has the second highest residential tax rate, and the commercial tax rate is just as high. This makes it difficult for the lender to approach the table and offer a deal in development.

Walter proposes that what Detroit adopts should be a tax system similar to Pittsburg. The municipality taxes properties based on land without improvement to realty. This avoids taxing development improvements within the city. This becomes attractive to developers because they will want to develop buildings in order to be taxed less, rather than holding onto land.

On the other side of the spectrum, low income families are being taxed at a high rate in the city of Detroit with the least amount of benefits coming their way. That being said, what will come out of the money invested in these areas? One question that was brought to the discussion was, is there a way to connect all these neighborhoods together. It is one thing to create stability within the neighborhoods itself, but will it not bring more stability if there was an active network to connect these neighborhoods together. There needs to be discussion on how this funding will be used. It is also important for locals to attain a critical mass of public ownership. This leads to potentially of self-sustaining local businesses. For example, there is around 35,000 minority businesses in the area. If every owner hired one person, employment will increase by fourteen percent.

# East Warren Development Corp.

## Case Study for Community Development

Rashid is involved with the proximity of East Warren located on the eastern side of Detroit. The history of East Warren has a very active past in the city of Detroit. The neighborhood is famous for its major annual parades. The last time a parade was held was in 1998. With the effects of the housing crisis, many people began to default on their homes. This led to the prioritization of foreclosure prevention.

Rashid works and lives in this area and started the development corporation around the year 2015. Community involvement is something he has been doing for fifteen years. One focus is that he tries to do economic development differently than other neighborhoods.

Out the proximity of East Warren with the largest square footage is Morning Side on the west section. This area contains 22 streets and around 25,700 people. This means there is potentially over 21 million in spending power, and it is important to focus on ways to prevent money flowing out of the neighborhood. With the idea of promoting ownership in the corridor, locals in theory will have the responsibility to buy property. Currently, residences own 80,000 square feet on the commercial corridor. Joe said "You can't curve gentrification, but you can offset it with community ownership".

In order to establish a business on the Corridor of East Warren the requirements are:

- 1 Residency
- 2 Minority
- 3 Community Involved

One business that was prevalent in the area was a hardware store, although, a burden that went with it was liability issues. Still however, there is a need for these resources in the area by the community. A "tool library" was an idea to help provide hardware needs to people on a loan. This disregards the need for responsibility on the tools over a long period of time. This represents the importance of choosing a proper program. to decide to develop.

Providing a service that will thrive because there is a need for that service is something that will always leverage an economy. Block clubs are another necessity to the flourishing of these neighborhoods. They provide a sense of self governance and control for the residences. This also helps the neighbors to congregate and to communicate with each other. This can create a network of communication so that the residences can have tools in development to maintain ownership.

"Yes, certain aspects are not happening, but you have to understand that you have ten people doing the work of fifty, if you look at tax foreclosure, if you look all these mechanisms, who are they hitting the hardest? They are hitting the low income areas..." (Rashid)

Rashid suggests that resources in work force and talent are what needs to be allocated with improvements. In his case, many projects of improvement start from practical means that are limited by financial capabilities. This begins with examples of block clubs and unanimous efforts to maintaining overgrown vegetation.

This was transitioned into the idea of a non profit "IOB", this was a way to teach people how to crowd fund. By crowd funding, people develop a new way of creating their own financial means. For example, the locally owned businesses on Livernois can use crowd funding to pay of the collective utility bills for the businesses down the street. These are primarily methods used to push for one hundred percent occupancy by 2022.

# Implications of Policies

## Discussions with a Neighborhood Representative

Within District 2 are several boundaries of neighborhoods that have coordinated block clubs involving the residences. Stephanie Harbin is a block leader of the San Juan neighborhoods, who also manages committee meetings with the various leaders in Block 2. The neighborhoods represented are Bagley, College Core, Palmer Woods, San Juan, Princeton Street, Fitzgerald, and various other organizations. On February 18th of 2020, a research flier was provided as an item on the meeting's agenda. This was where further community correspondence was initiated.

### 501(c)(3)

A block club was recognized with their new representative. Organizations must achieve a 501(c)(3) status to become a block club in District 2. This allows non-profit organizations from certain tax exemptions and allows joint property ownership of properties.

This is seen as an obstacle for many block club organizations, as described by the article the Guardians of Martin Park in February of 2017.

"I have found that to do business in the city of Detroit as a block club is really, really difficult," she says. Red tape can get in the way of residents being able to take direct action on block-level issues, like needing a 501(c)(3) and community partner to purchase land in a specific neighborhood if one doesn't own an adjacent property. "You don't need all these obstacles to do good for your community." Cheryl Kearney

(Terry Hall, The guardians of Martin Park: Two women work to revive their neighborhood in two different ways, February 07 2017, Model D)

There are many policies community members must go through to deal with the issues themselves, especially as an organization.

### Commercial Carpenter

After the District Roundtable, I met with a member of the college core neighborhood block within District 2. His experience involves commercial design with a Master's in Carpentry. He is someone developing buildings for commercial development within parts of Detroit. "People do not want parks" this was something his perspective of re-utilizing landbank properties, which is a significant issue and has created a sense of awareness in this area. It was evident that some of his primary concerns are the misplacements of funds from known financial mechanisms such as the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, CDC's (community Development Commission), and CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution Fund). These are funds designated to improved blighted and marginalized areas, however, Alex brought to view that these funds are filter into developments known as "block busting" tactics. This involves the implementation of projects such as Luxury Apartments and high end commercial stores that are targeted for a larger median income demographic than the ones that are prevalent in the area. Many of the stores down Livernois that are African American owned were targeted, in his view, with increase to renting space and taxes due to the new construction.

He also agreed that the traffic issue had increased. Simply put, a park would be consistent with these block busting tactics. Adding parks to the focus area seems to be falling in line with the block busting tactics because they do not contribute to the immediate needs of the area. Many of the topics discussed were primarily about policy. What this indicates to me is that common development tactics focus on the business corridors target high advantage areas known to be best for return on investment.

When developers with a large financial backing purchase property and initiate commercial projects, the community has an obstacle to oppose evasive planning. The inherent need for economic turnaround and re-densifying creates decisions to create immediate and short-term commercial investments by investors outside of the community bubble. With the wide footprint of Detroit, this creates speculates the map with isolated hubs, with the apparent nature of no urban planning intended to connect any of them.

# District 2 Roundtable

## Discovering Community Leaders

## RESEARCH REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK!

### RESEARCH ABOUT NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENTS IN DISTRICT 2

Hello, my name is Thaddeus Stawiarski. I am an Architectural Master's student currently at the University of Detroit Mercy. I am reaching out to you to develop feedback on community experiences within District 2. This information will be used to be provided for the academic community of Detroit Mercy.

### TOPICS IN INTEREST:

What are some historical influences that your neighbourhood identifies with?

What are places in the neighbourhood that you feel connected with?

What are some things you would like to happen in the future for the community?

Do you think your neighbourhood is accessible to resources throughout the city?

Do you find streetscape beneficial?

### Correspondence:

Feel free to send me an email, any type of feedback is appreciated.

### What is this for?

The information you provide will help develop a framework of neighborhood recovery dealing with:

-Areas Where the Infrastructure Can Improve

-A Strategy for Establishing/Maintaining/Updating Identity

-Re-mediation of Properties

### What is the Goal?

-Development of Community Input

-Methods for establishing a collective memory through landscape and streetscape.

### Contact Information:

E-mail: thaddeusts@gmail.com

Phone Number: (248) 392.8127

Thaddeus Stawiarski  
B.Arch Detroit Mercy



Figure 31: Research Flier



# 6 SEQUENCE STUDIES

In order to obtain a better understanding of the physical environment, two sequence studies were conducted on the corridors of Puritan Street and Linwood Street.



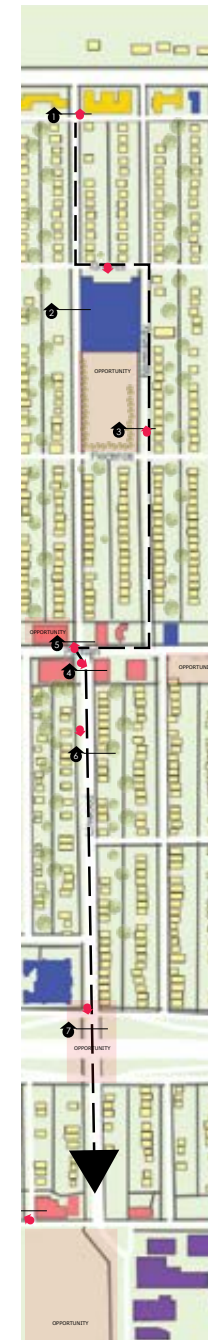
Figure 33: Martin Park Housing

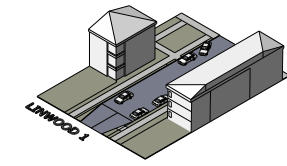
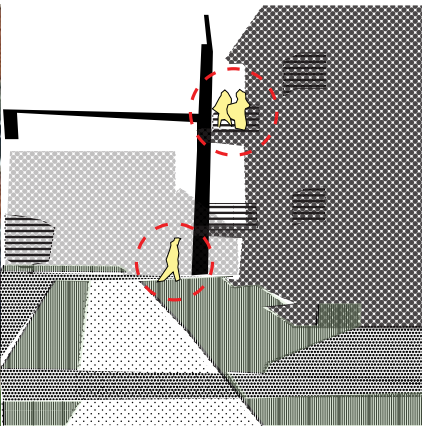
## Linwood and Puritan Revealing the Layers

Another approach in the thesis process that was supplemented were studies in sequence in human perspective, similar to Bosselman's mappings in his book Representation of Places.

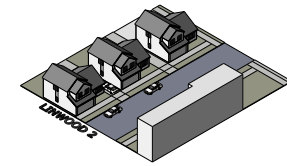
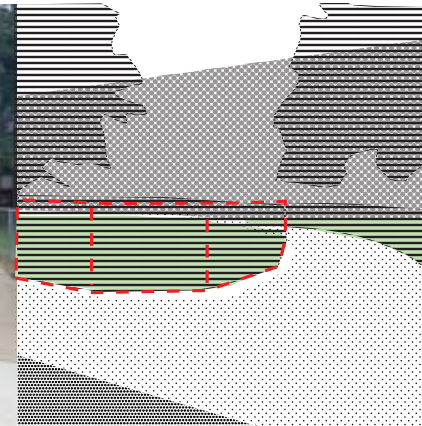
**Linwood Street** is a corridor that transfers from different land use typologies as one travels through it. Where the road terminates into 6 Mile road is an area of high residential buildings. Going south, it enters in a more neighborhood condition which then eventually leads into a school condition. The majority of the neighborhood are segments of light residential buildings. As Linwood crosses Puritan, it is an intersection of commercial use, where Linwood also widens as it approaches the Lodge Freeway. The sequence then enters into an overpass condition with the school of Thurgood Marshall adjacent to the on-ramp, and ends on the corridor of Fenkel. In this proximity are government services such as FOCUS Hope (social services) and the post office

**Puritan Street** is a corridor the divides Pilgrim Village from Martin Park. The buildings that align this corridor are primarily for commercial use. 16 small religious institutions currently line these neighborhoods within a stretch of only 2 miles from Livernois to Woodward on the street of Puritan.

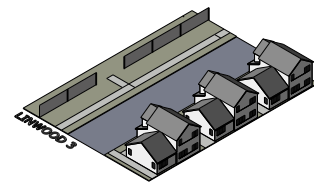
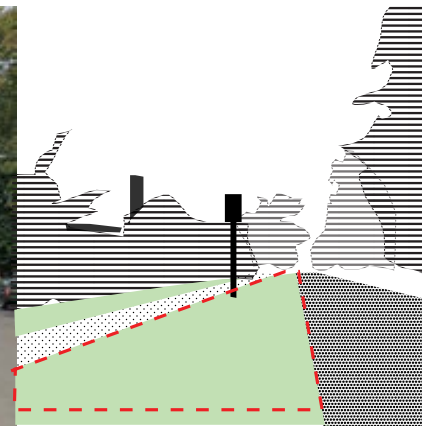




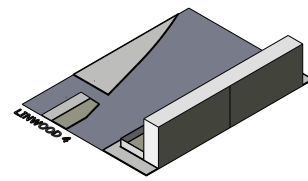
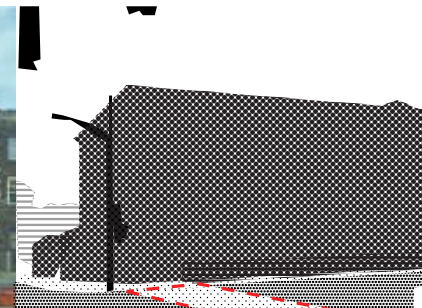
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4

# Linwood

**Views on the Street.** Captured in this frame are two tenants overlooking the street. Here is the only portion of Linwood with balconies.

**Rigid Barrier.** Malcolm X Paul Robenson Academy sits in adjacency with many residential homes. There is plenty of open green space offered, although the majority of it is fenced off from public use.

**Anonymous Promenade.** The play field of the school has the potential of being space that interacts with the neighborhood. Instead, it sets up a visual barrier and distances itself with a margin of grass. The overgrown trees block the façade of buildings.

**Widening Corridors.** The intersection of Linwood and Puritan offer many brick type buildings, which offers a historical distinction to the city. The pedestrian cross is widened partially within the intersection, and is awkward to use.

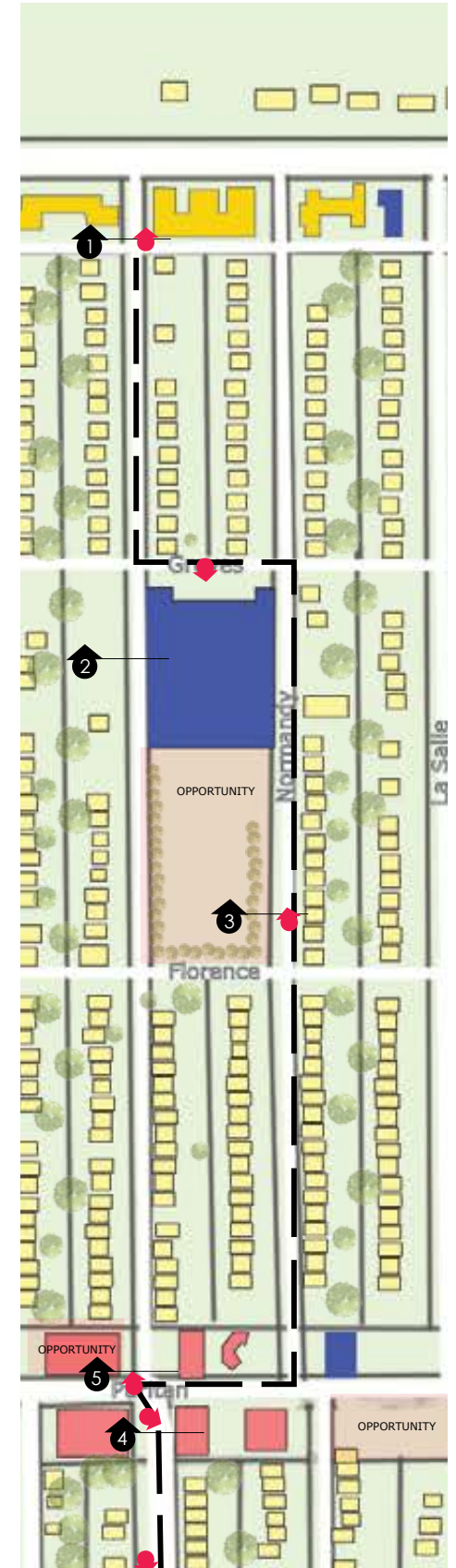
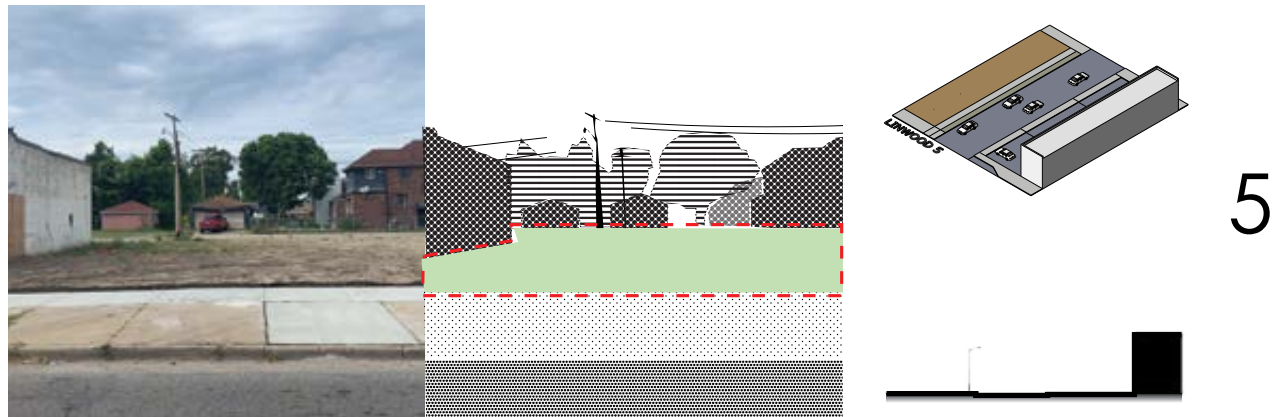


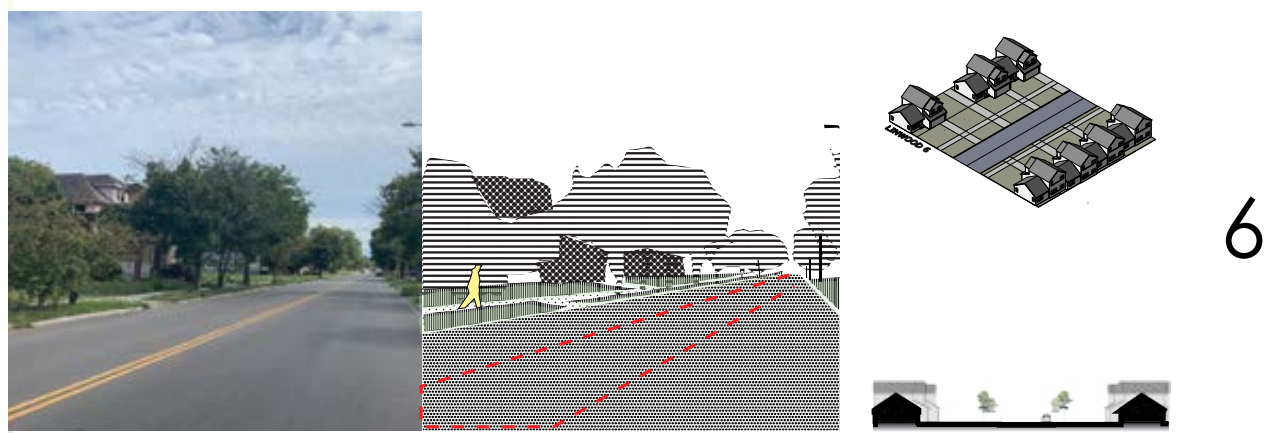
Figure 36: Linwood Sequence Map

Figure 34: Linwood Sequence Study



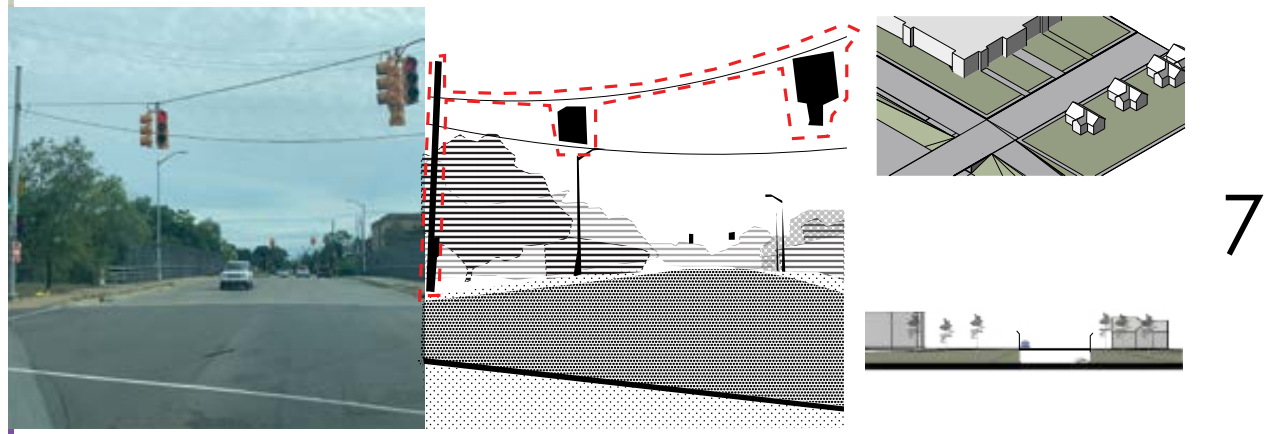
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**Open Parcel Space.** Previously, a vinyl manufacturing facility existed in this proximity. An electrical fire burned down the structure, offering an open space to the intersection.



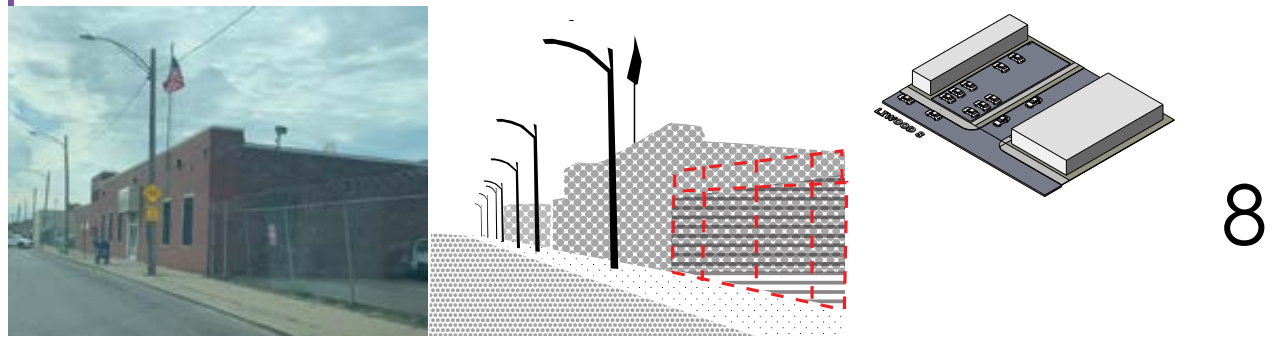
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**Ambiguous Lanes.** As Linwood widens as a corridor, the scale of pedestrian experience changes.



7

**Proximity to Heavy Infrastructure.** The overpass condition is an intense urbanscape of concrete and civil wires. In an odd circumstance, an elementary school sits on the edge of a service drive. It is not for certain where safe bus loading for school children is designated.



8

**Aggressive Barriers.** The post office on Fenkel takes aggressive defensive measure for security.



Figure 36: Linwood Sequence Map

Figure 34: Linwood Sequence Study

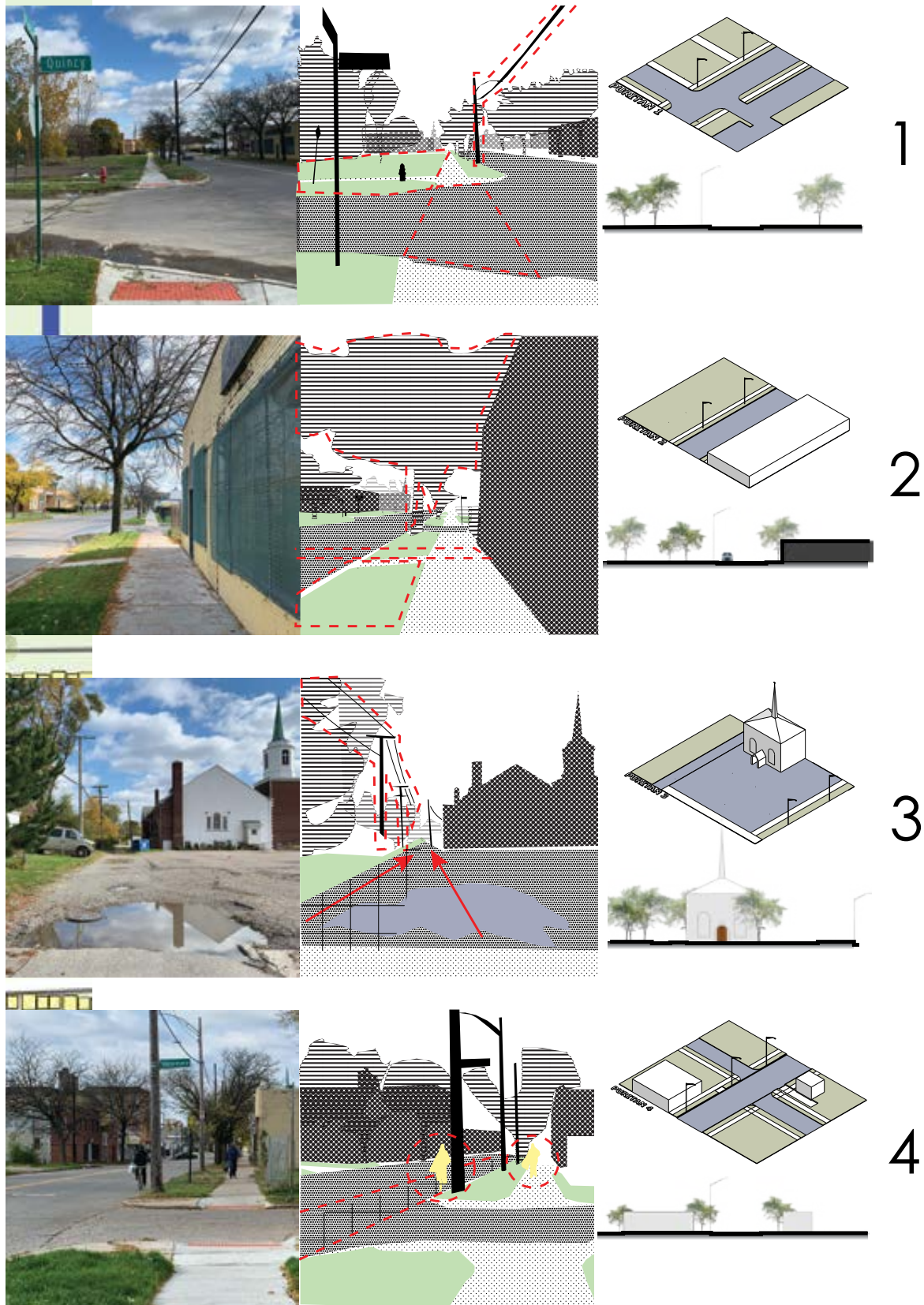


Figure 35: Puritan Sequence Study

# Puritan

**Visible Infrastructure.** Telephone lines are the most visible elements of physical structures in this frame. Perhaps it is beneficial to challenge their positioning in regard to their presence on the street.

**Shallow Pedestrian Space.** The intention for pedestrian interaction between building and the street is limited to the shallow dimensions offered to the sidewalk.

**Underused Alleyway.** These alleyways should be seen as an element of necessity. Infrastructure can be reallocated or interchangeably with pedestrian circulation routes. Here is an opportunity an urban designer can create unique bike and pedestrian routes.

**Shallow Pedestrian Space.** Capture in this frame is a moment where the sidewalk has displayed its inadequacy. As a walking pedestrian used the sidewalk, the bicyclist decided to go around the pedestrian on the road.

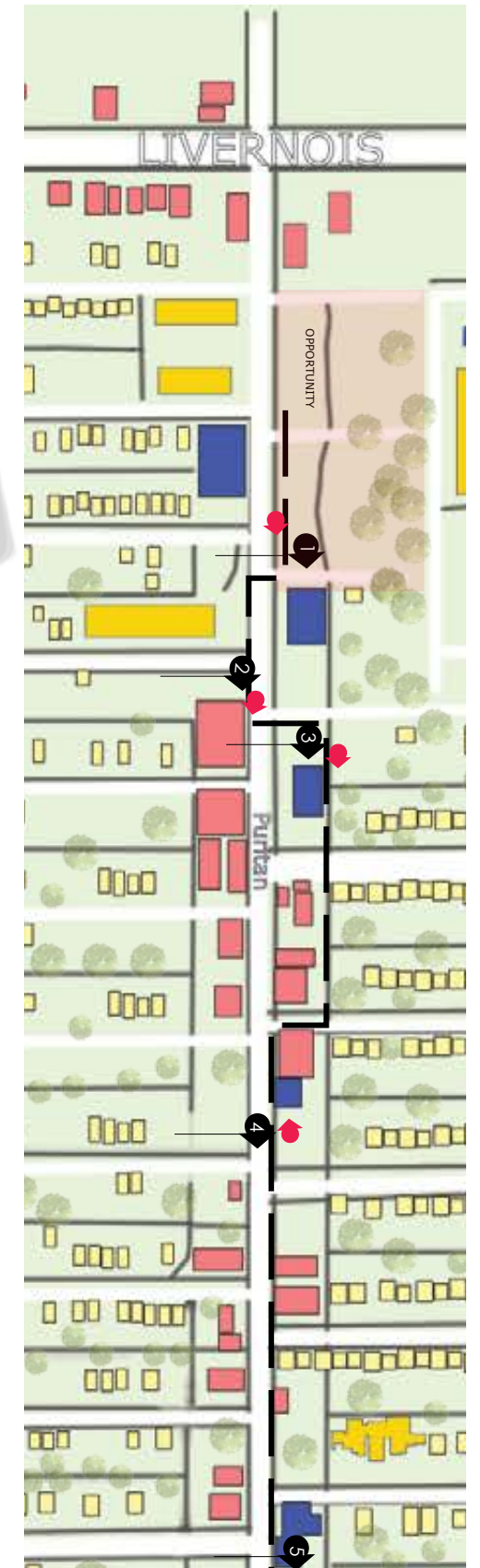


Figure 37: Puritan Sequence Map

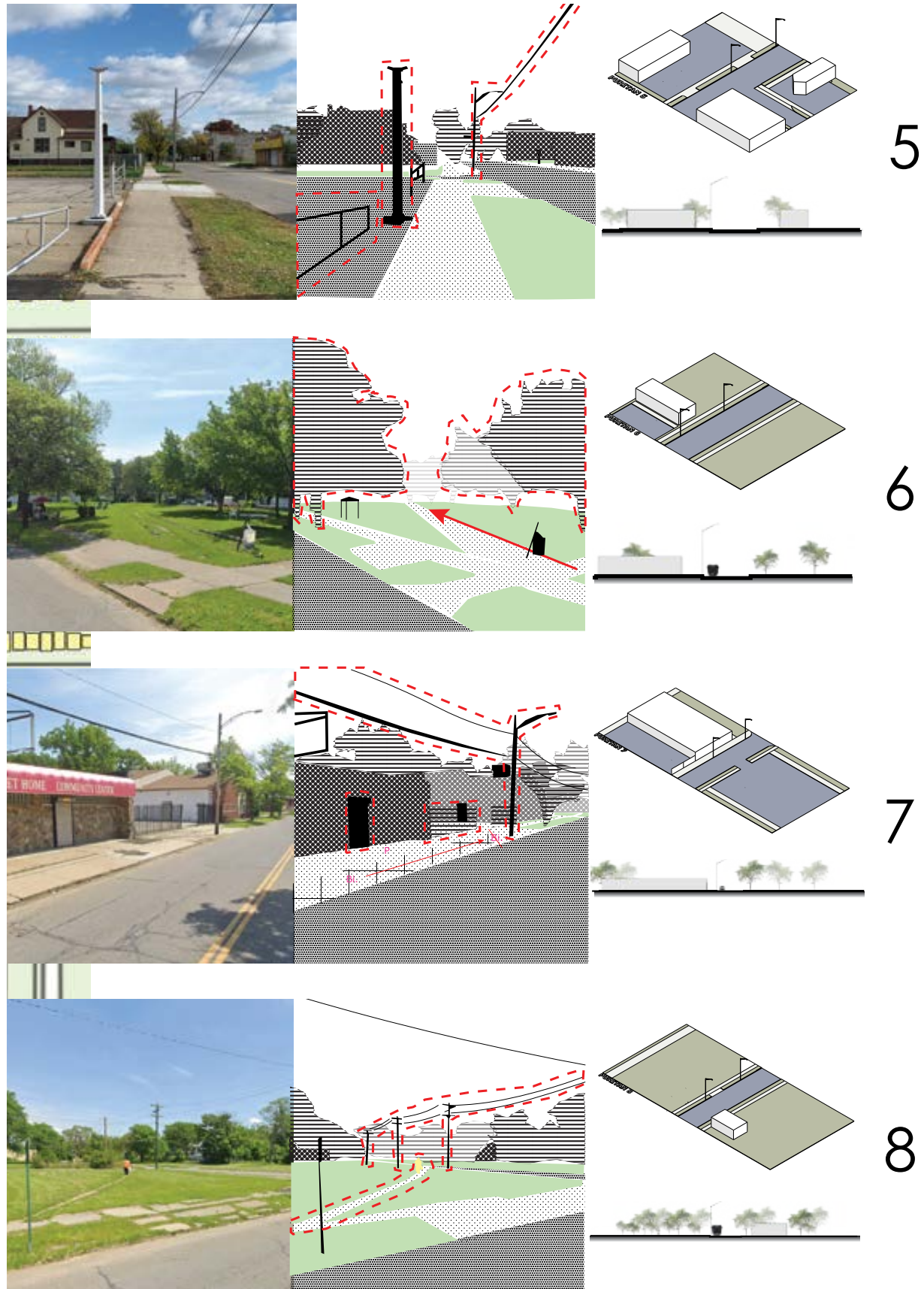


Figure 35: Puritan Sequence Study

**Outdated Fixtures.** As many businesses remain inactive in the area, their outdated fixtures for gates and signage are a visual indication of blight.

**Desire Footpaths.** With many lot open on the corridor, footpaths are carved into the lots where pedestrians have chosen their path.

**Infrastructural Overhang.** These are the most prevalent elements from street view. Infrastructure tends to be thought of successful when it is unnoticed.

**Desired Footpaths.** Here is demonstrated more desired footpaths by pedestrians.

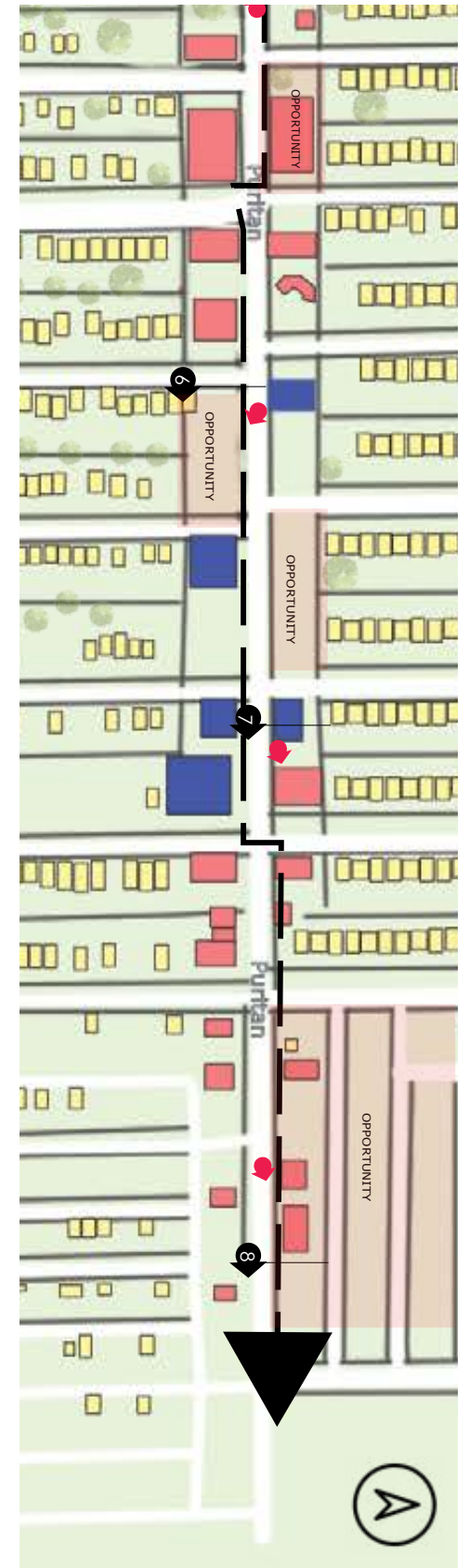


Figure 37: Puritan Sequence Map

# 7

## CONNECTING TO HUBS

*The organic growth of medieval cities encompassed a building tradition based on generations of experience in how to create cities with well-functioning interaction between life and space. But this knowledge was lost somewhere in the process of industrialization and modernization.*

Jan Gehl

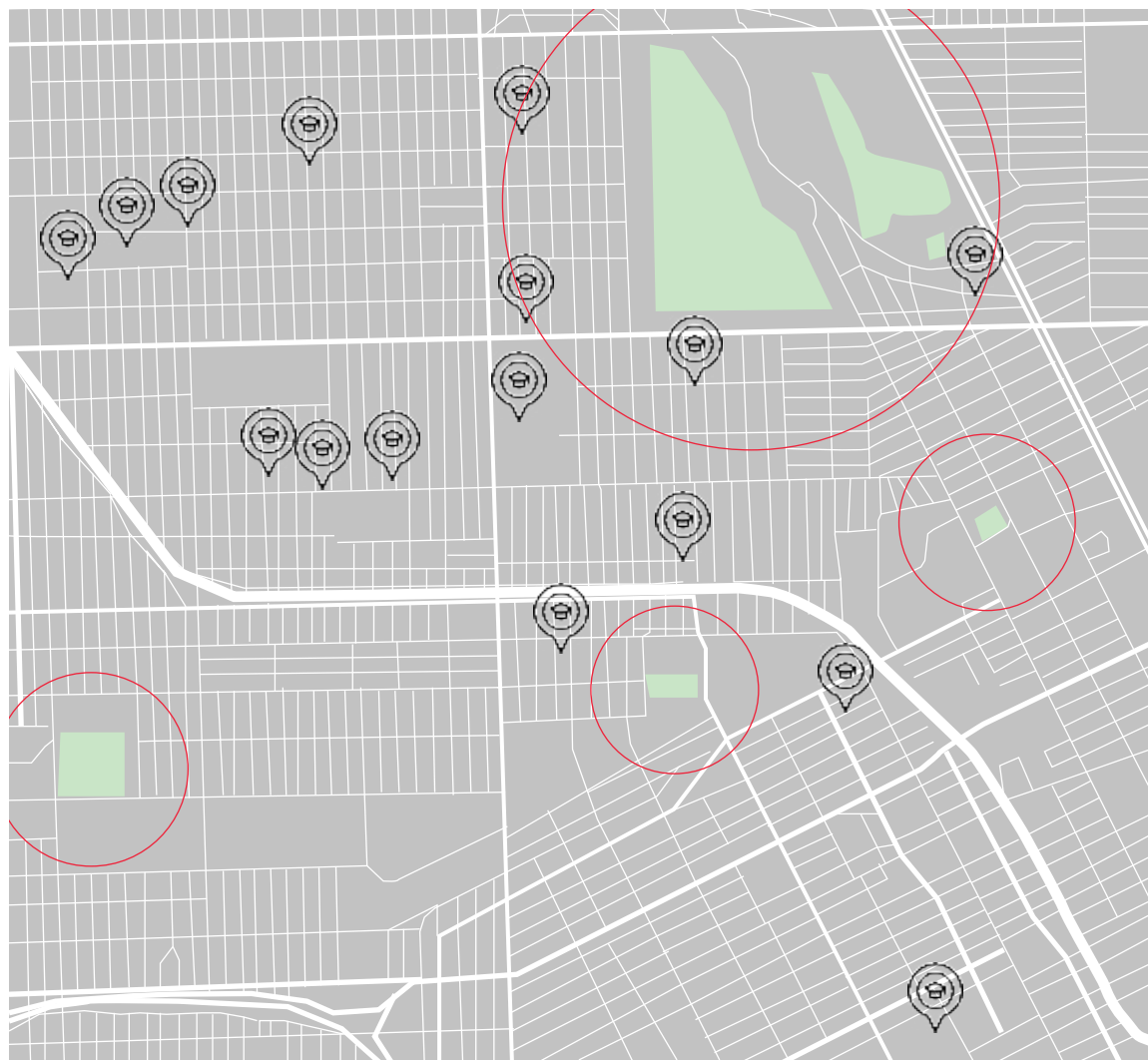


Figure 38: Diagram of Parks and Schools

## Walkability

One expected result of walkability is an increase in college graduates in the area, which may keep alumni from Detroit Mercy or attract this demographic. This will provide a larger inventory of talent that can contribute to the resources needed to maintain these communities. Students in general make financial sacrifices in order to pursue higher education, but there does not seem to be as many incentives in the community by the local university upon graduation.

Currently, there are a middle school and elementary school that are active in the area. Correlating a network of education systematically can be supported by a physical emphasis in community design.

### What Implicated Walkability?

Walk ability is an important perspective of urban planning, but rather than a modern realization, it is an antiquated reminder that this is how cities are intended to be. The urban planner has been forgetting about walkability, because the compulsion of Garden City and Utopian ideals justified an anticipated sprawl. The long range connection was of focused because historically it had not been this capable before. As we created milestones in technology, we have focused our inclination of development as far reaching networks. This was a trait projected onto urban development by the interdiction of the car. The infrastructure for the automobile is a characteristic of Detroit, because it is what it resembles as a city.

We have neglected the intimacy we once enjoyed within our cities. This means basic services and amenities are contained in close proximities this was the only way of the town condition at one time, it is what it asked for before the invention of the automobile.

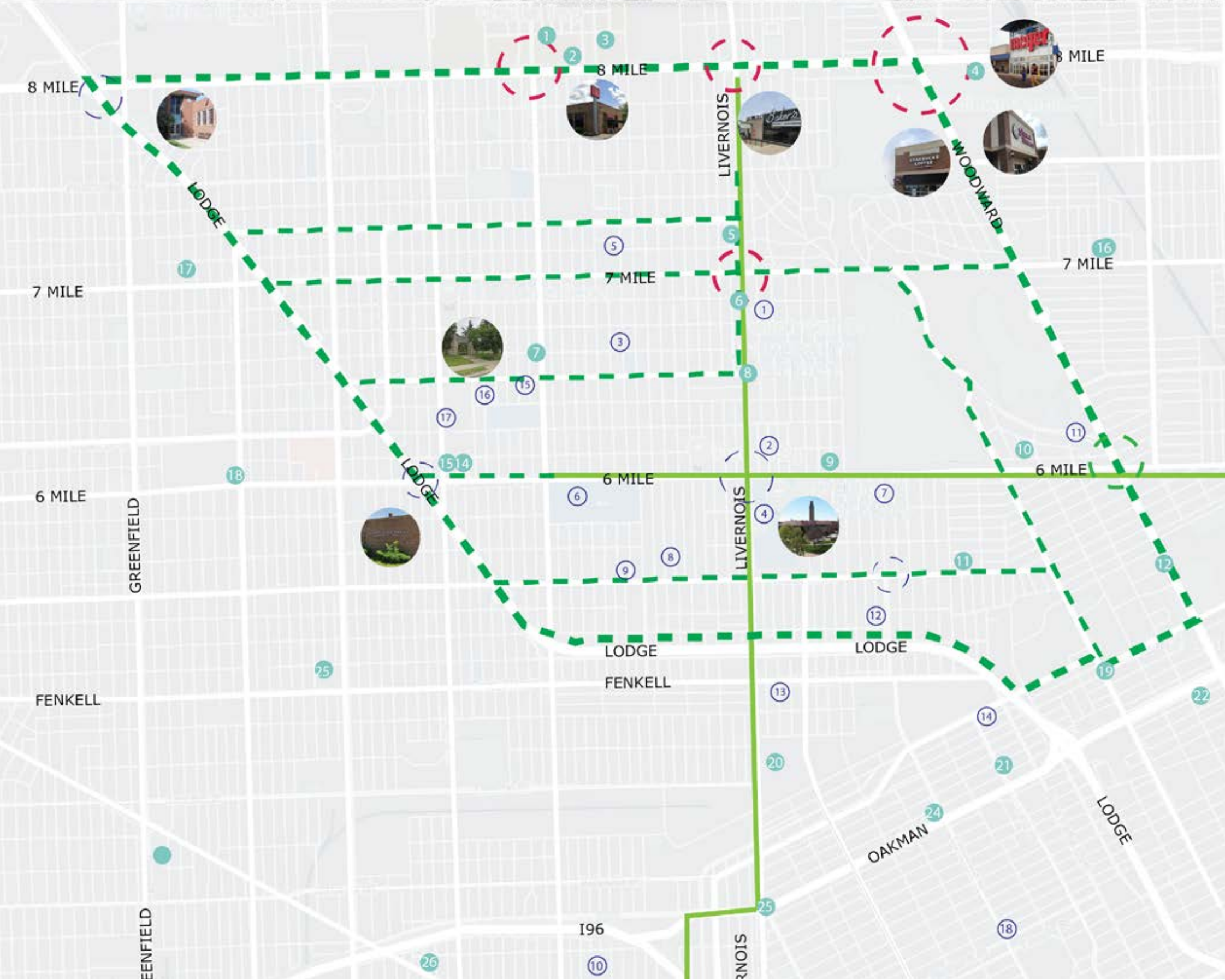
Walkability is a condition created by successful town planning from the very beginning of its origins. It is realigning the designer to what was erased by this phase of modernization, especially during the age Detroit's economic peak of the 1950's. Jan Gehl has acknowledge this when discussing the problems urbanism face today, "The organic growth of medieval cities encompassed a building tradition based on generations of experience in how to create cities with well-functioning interaction between life and space.

But this knowledge was lost somewhere in the process of industrialization and modernization, which led to dysfunctional city environments for the important and yet ignored segment of city life on foot. Of course, society has changed since the Middle Ages. The solution is not to recreate pre-modern cities, but to develop contemporary tools that can be applied analytically to once again forge an alliance between life and space in cities" (pg 3, How to Study Public Life)

This inspires the organic forms and curves in plan found in Chapter 11: Low Density Intervention.



Figure 39: Fence and Sidewalk



# North Central Greenway

## Threading A Circuit of Mobility

This scale examines the corridors from 8 Mile north to south, and Woodward to greenfield Rd east to west. These are identities that can directly benefit from mobility intervention, and a means of local empowerment can help connect them through a greenway system. As this is done, available parcels that line the greenway can be introduced with parcel typologies (as discussed in the next section).

The expected construction of the Joe Louis Greenway is expected to line the corridors of Livernois and McNichols (6 Mile). These roads can be enhanced with green networks that further connections to neighborhoods outside the twenty minute walkable distance. Greenways and pedestrian roads can serve as connections to public spaces. The "North Central Greenway" is an extension to this plan that connects typologies to a network throughout the neighborhoods themselves and into areas further away from the business corridors.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>JOE LOUIS GREENWAY</b>      |  |
| <b>NORTH CENTRAL</b>           |  |
| <b>EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION</b> |  |
| <b>FOOD SOURCE</b>             |  |
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Palmer Academy                               | 10. Noble Elementary School             |
| 2. Gesu Catholic School                         | 11. Charlotte Mason Community School    |
| 3. Bagley Elementary School                     | 12. Thurgood Marshall Elementary School |
| 4. University of Detroit Mercy                  | 13. Joy Preparatory Academy             |
| 5. U of D Jesuit High School and Academy        | 14. New Paradigm Glazer Loving Academy  |
| 6. Mary Grove College                           | 15. Mumford Academy                     |
| 7. Malcolm X Paul Robeson Academy               | 16. Mumford High School                 |
| 8. Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary-Middle School | 17. Schulze Elementary School           |
| 9. Starting Point Montessori School             | 18. Central High School                 |
| 10. Caesar's Palace Liquor Store                | 12. ALDI                                |
| 13. Captain Jay's Fish and Chicken              | 14. Liberty Food Center                 |
| 15. 4 & Lodge Liquor                            | 16. Seven Mile Meat Market              |
| 17. Savon Foods Super Market                    | 18. Mini Mart Grocery Store             |



Figure 40: North Central Corridor and Hubs



# Access of Parks and Markets to Bus Stops

Indicating the Holes

This map is layered to show the general sense of walkability. The green indicates parks, while the dotted hatch resembles their twenty minute walking distances. The blue shows the twenty minute walk to markets. In areas left primarily in background grey is an indications of "holes" in walkability. The current DDOT transportation system can be supplemented with other modes of mobility that can be provided by a greenway. This can connect typologies that are community effective create more meaningful destinations for current bus routes. Also long term investments in alternative modes of transit, such as a central line, can draw more connections between the city.



Figure 41: Access to Parks and Markets  
A TILL OF INFRASTRUCTURE



### C. DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

Proposals of Placemaking Strategies



Figure 42: Intervention Location Map

#### COMMUNITY

- A1** structured
- A2** open space
- A3** landscaped
- A4** market / vendor / tool bank
- A5** bridge
- A6** paved pedestrian way

#### ECOLOGICAL

- B1** dense vegetation
- B2** buffer landscape
- B3** pedestrain trail
- B4** retention

#### TRANSITION

- C1** productive places
- C2** remediation meadow
- C3** remedation trails



#### Community Open Spaces

Within every category is a set of functions that can be assigned to every typologies. These functions can be layered to create hybridity, while also crossing into other categories as well. (i.e. community and ecological hybrid). Community spaces has the potential of providing structures, open spaces, public landscapes, markets, bridges, and paved pedestrian circulation paths. Mobility can also be enhanced with the introduction of intended bike routes and creating intended space for bus stops. Existing alley with overgrowth can easily be activated as an alternative route of mobility. The way the physical environment is engaged effects many dimensions that effect the performance of these built streetscape environments.

#### Ecological Infrastructures

These are more naturally driven landscape made to enhance the inactive housing developments and commercial properties. This includes retention landscapes, buffering, carbon forests, trails, and bio-swales.

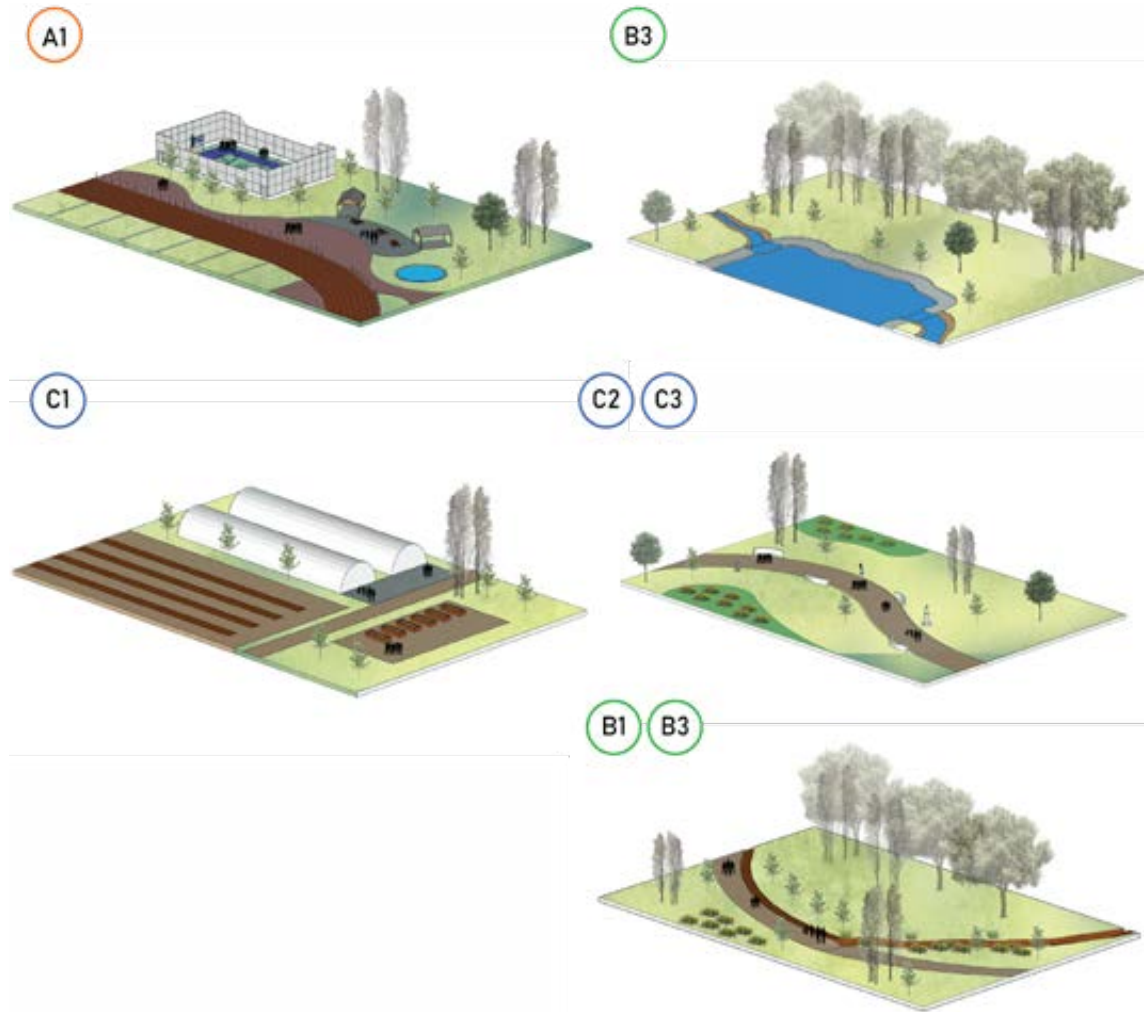
#### Transition Spaces:

These spaces are treated with these typologies primarily to reserve these spaces for future community use or development. Many of these functions involve landscape that create recovery for landscape, with occasional spatial activation. For example, a remediation meadow would succumb a vacant property to nature, and to allow natural process of native plant to replenish the landscape. With proper design, a landscape that blends low activated spaces with neighborhood conditions can be achieved with low maintenance. These landscapes also act as placeholders for when housing density returns to these communities. This prevents high residential housing developments, which is an attempt for preservation of the existing housing stock.

Figure 43: Diagram of Typologies

# Neighborhood Segment Clusters

Understanding Social Demographics

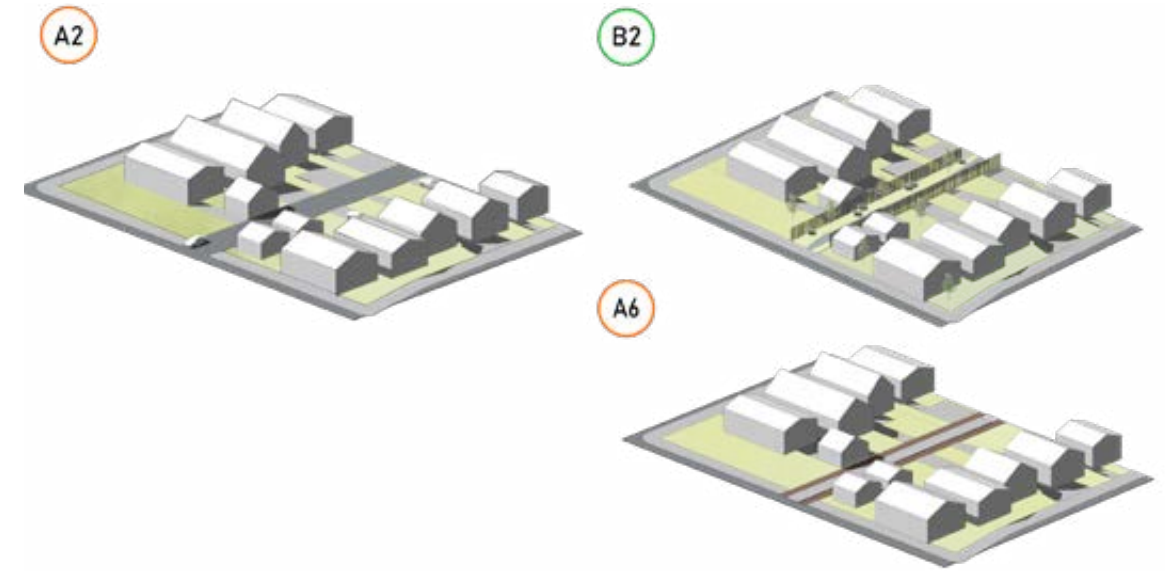


These are properties found within the portion of neighborhoods containing residential homes. These properties are lined with alleyways dividing two columns of properties between each residential road.

Figure 44: Neighborhood Segment Cluster Typologies

# Alleyways

Understanding Social Demographics

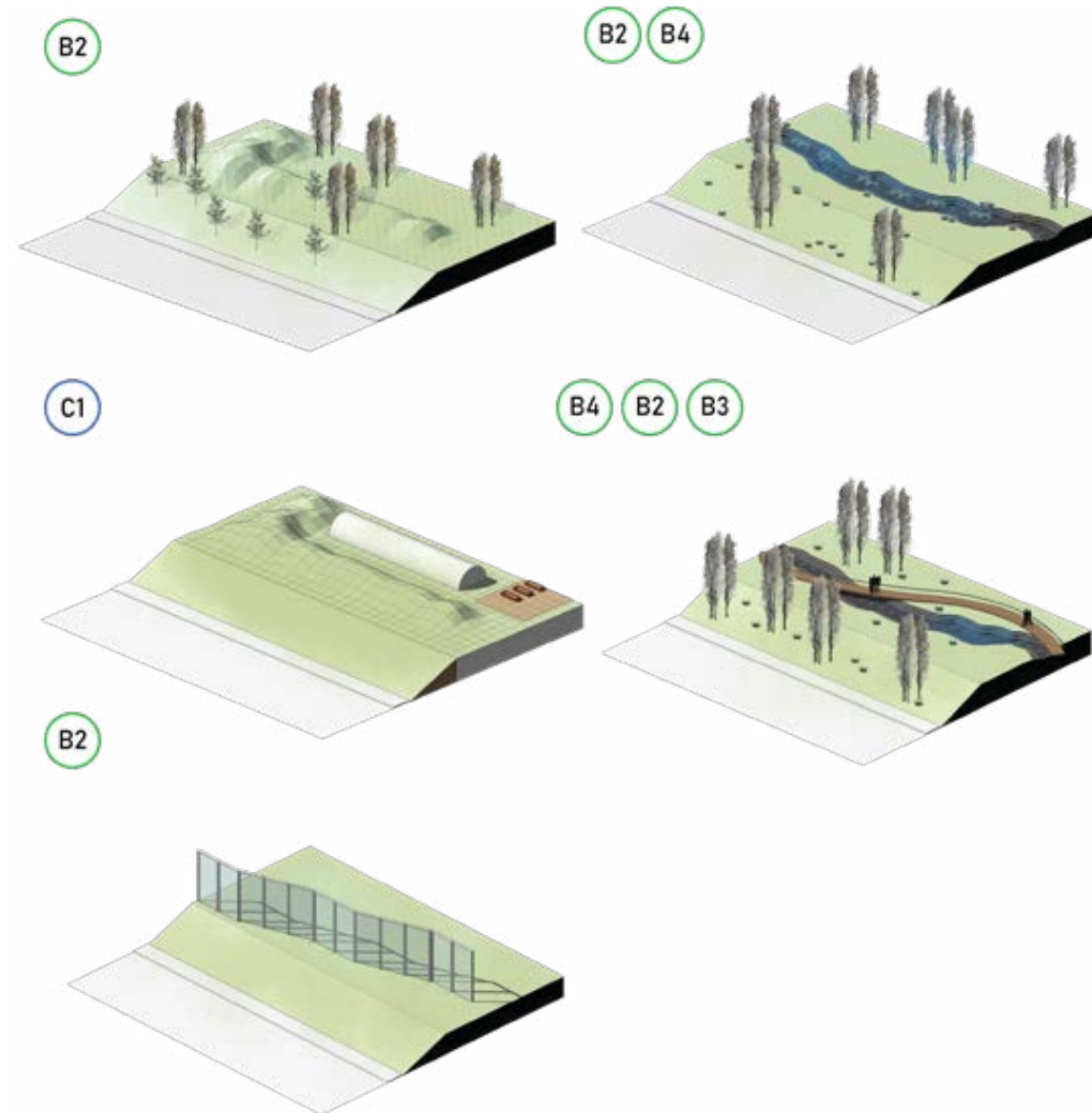


There exist planned alleyways, a tactical component to the threading of neighborhood blocks. These spaces are similar actors to the layout of this proximity as connective tissue does to the human body. They are spontaneous environments left over to the locals at the mercy of their needs. Their condition is overgrown and forgotten, suggesting an impractical expectation from their initial design.

Figure 45: Alley Way Typologies Diagram

# Highway Buffer

Understanding Social Demographics



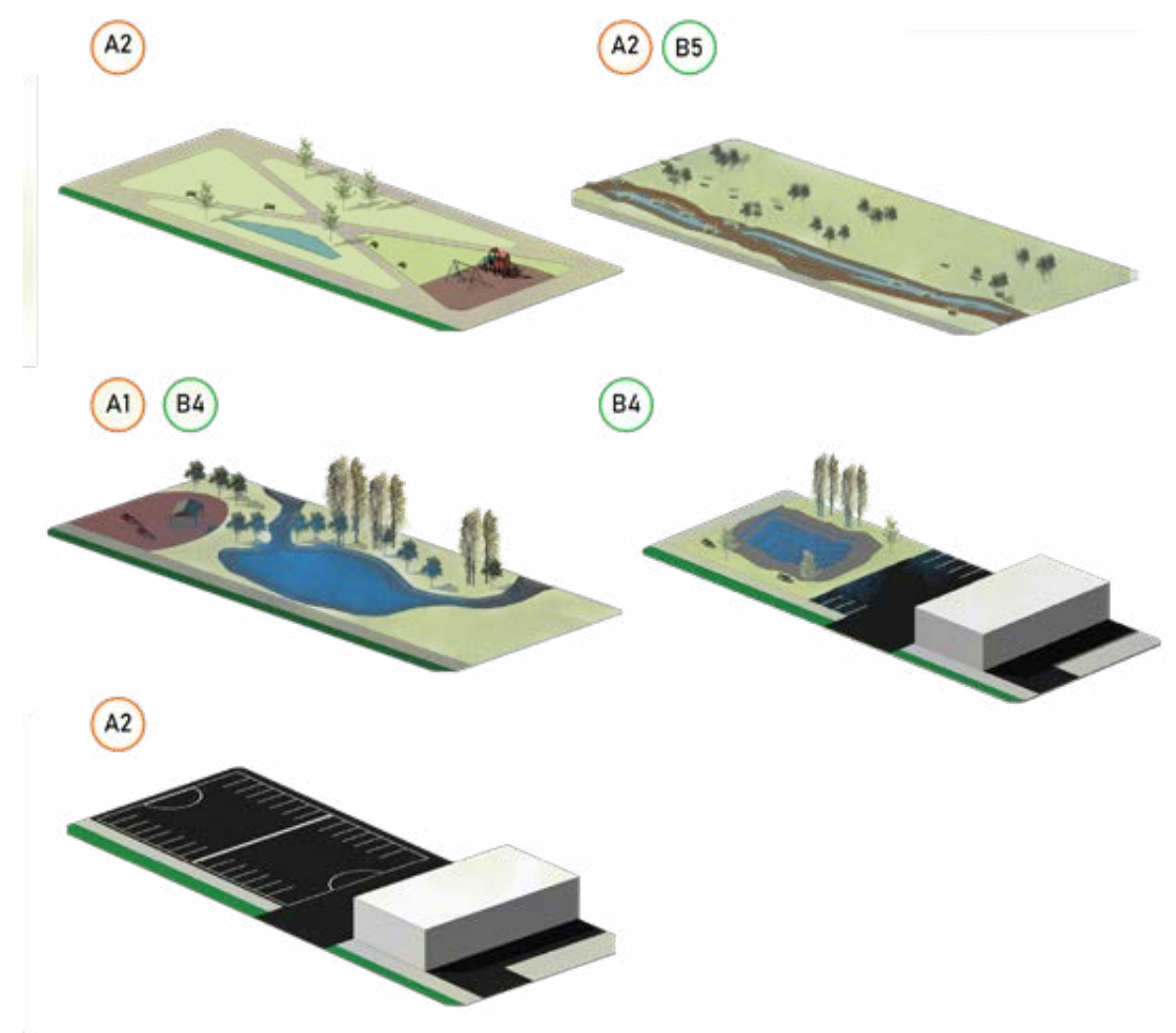
These properties are found along the corridor of the highway. It is crucial to define methods of terminating the neighborhood condition into the heavy infrastructural environment created by a highway. These tactics demonstrate barriers for sight and sound, to dampen the presence of the highway.

Ecological methods, such as a carbon forest, will achieve healthier environments for the well beings of these neighborhoods.

Figure 46: Highway Buffer Typologies Diagram

# Commercial Parcel

Understanding Social Demographics



These typologies are designated to the neighborhood corridors of 6 Mile (McNichols), Puritan, and Fenkell. Their forms have prioritization in areas of high density, especially along commercial corridors. Although, it is important to allocate as many serving ecological types as well, which are also found in lower density interventions.

Figure 47: Commercial Parcel

# Retention

## Supplementing the Existing Infrastructure

This section illustrates the run-off methods for supplementing the existing infrastructure of the combined sewer system. Catch basins located in the alleys between residential houses will receive the initial run-off from storm surges. As the catch basin is raised with a lip grate, retention is created as it is contained in a swell of gravel. As this alley way swell saturates with the initial runoff, it is then emptied in a main retention pond found throughout cluster of acquired parcels. This serves as the second stage of runoff retention. In the case capacity of the surge reaches a maximum level, the runoff is then released into the existing infrastructure.



Figure 48: Retention Section

# 9

## 1 | BRIDGING

*But this knowledge was lost somewhere in the process of industrialization and modernization, which led to dysfunctional city environments for the important and yet ignored segment of city life on foot*

**Jan Gehl**

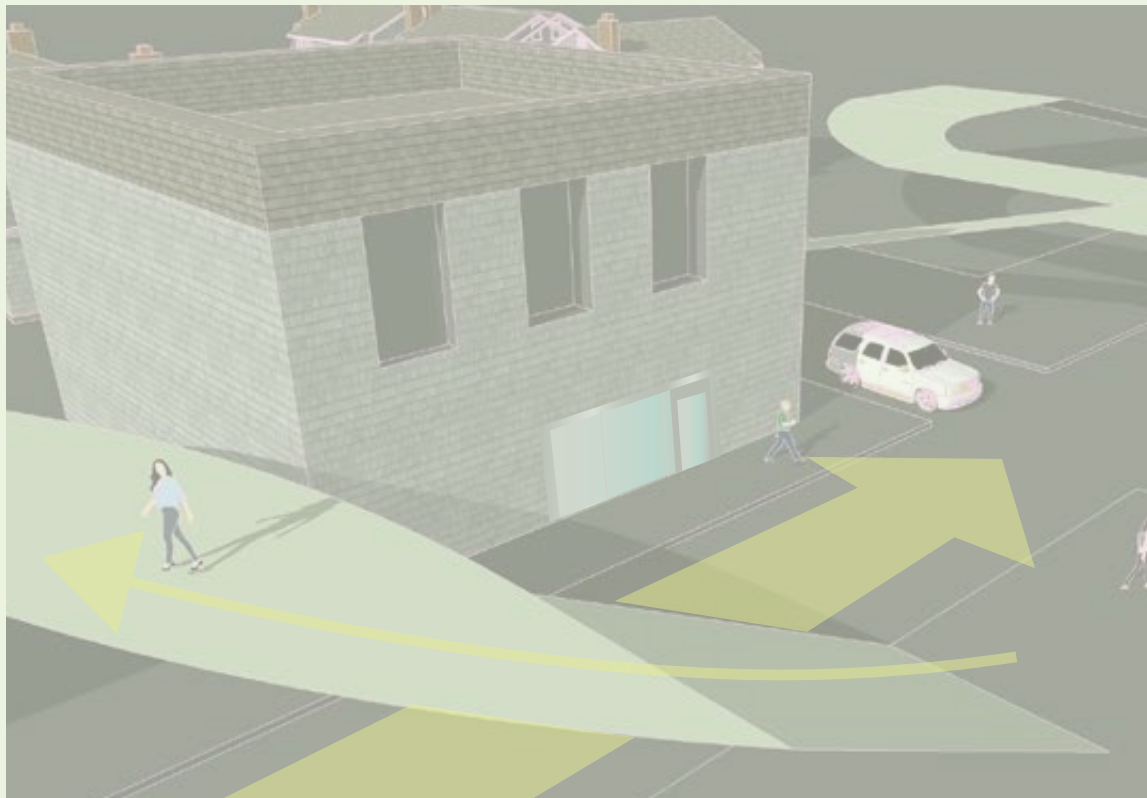


Figure 49: Bridge Preliminary Concept

## Cirkelbroen

**Olafur Eliasson**

Bridging is a concept that can help create connections over infrastructural layouts. This allows flexibility in planning, and maintains connections in close proximities. This can contribute more spontaneous neighborhood structures and landscapes that blend the connections of neighborhoods to business corridor. As street density is common in Detroit's corridors, bridging is an option to create leaps into spaces for the pedestrian. One precedent is the Olafur Eliasson designed bridge in Copenhagen, called Cirkelbroen. This bridge is a moving bridge that opens and closes a boating port to the local residences on the Christianhavns Kanal. Not only does it serve a function, but it is an unique experiential installation, and gives a characteristic to the area.

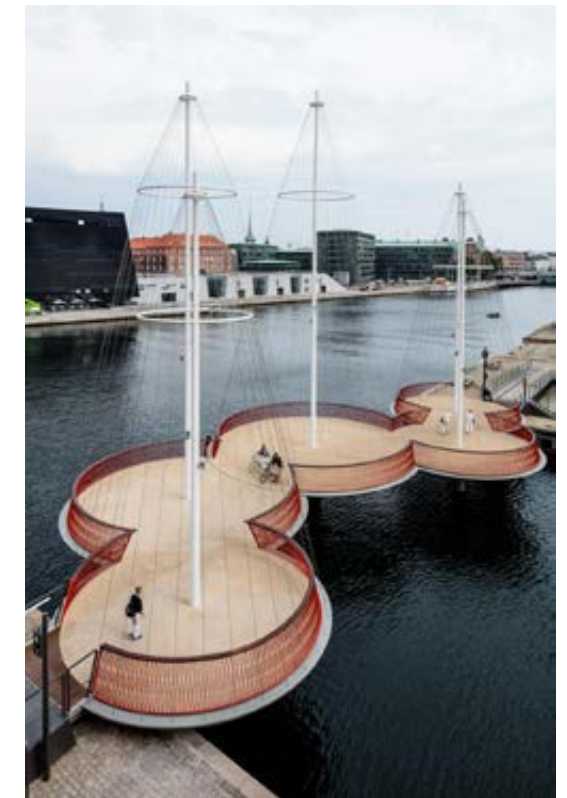


Figure 50: Cirkelbroen Bridge, Olafur Eliasson

# David Ruffin Pedestrian Bridge

## Establishing a Community Presence

This visualization incorporates components of terracing and multiple routes to entice connections across the Lodge Freeway. A Pre-stressed concrete structure can be additionally constructed along the overpass, where the route between Pilgrim Village and Wyoming-Dexter use to exist. Parkside Ave was renamed to "David Ruffin Ave" by the city of Detroit in the summer of 2019.

Naming the pedestrian bridge after him would extend his dedication and promote the historical identity of these neighborhoods.

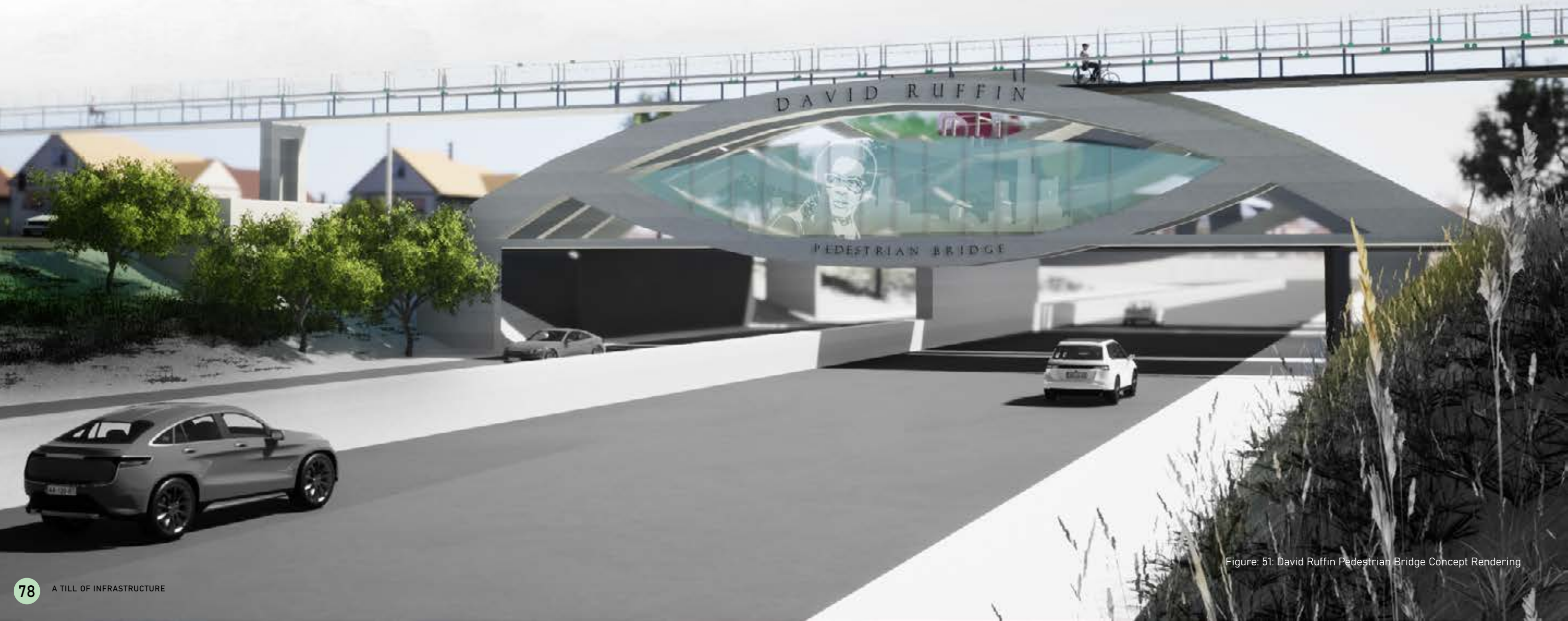


Figure 51: David Ruffin Pedestrian Bridge Concept Rendering



Figure 52: Bridge Section

**Terracing:**

Terracing can provide spaces to view neighborhoods over the canopy of the trees. As the Lodge veers toward the south, a view of high rise buildings can be seen from the distance towards downtown Detroit. This placemaking method emphasizes a new experience of views for the neighborhood

**Multiple Routes:**

These routes give an option for local proprietors, while an arch allows bicyclist to bypass walking pedestrians below. A separation of pedestrian routes from the overpass creates a safer environment.



Figure 53: Bridge Axonometric



Figure 54: Bike Bridge Cross Rendering



Figure 56: Thurgood Marshall Bridge Corner



Figure 55: Pedestrian Bridge Terrae Spaces



Figure 57: Bike Bridge View



# 10

## 2 | HIGH DENSITY

Additional elements can be proposed to the current streetscape of these higher dense areas of communities, especially those of which are further down the block from business corridors.



Figure 58: Future Tram Stop Concept Rendering

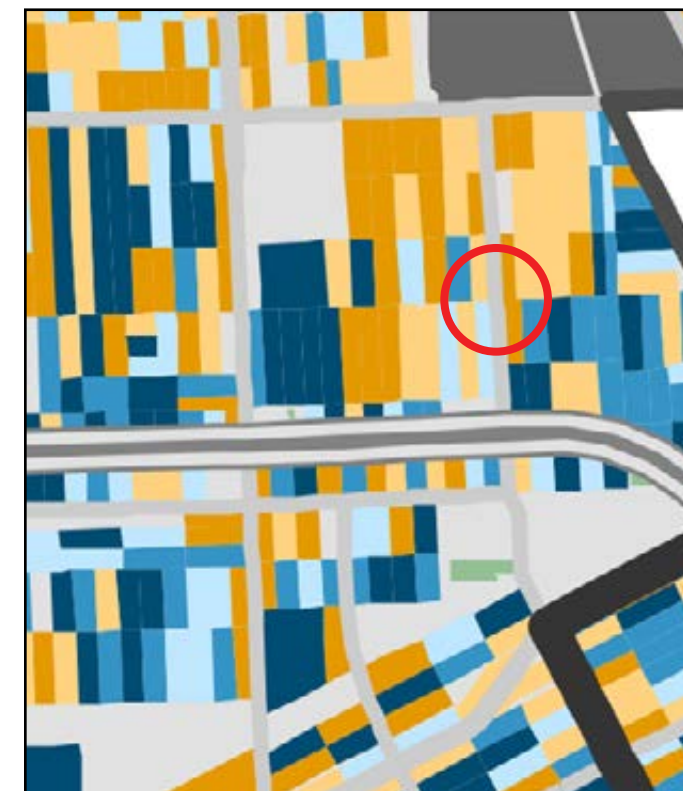
# High Social Advantage

## Most Likely of Neighborhood Turnover

These methods are honed for the commercial and higher density portions of communities such as Martin Park.

According to Data Drive Detroit, there are areas defined as high social advantage and low social advantage. Areas of high social advantage are defined as, according to the study, areas of most highly anticipate "neighborhood turnover". This has the connotation of location with investment value in commercial development. However, it also indicates areas where re-population is most likely to occur. As shown here, a considerable amount of Martin Park is considered as high social advantage.

The pocket parks and streetscape elements provide spaces that promote the local businesses, vendors, and use of the current public transit. The alleyways also create different modes of landscapes and pedestrian paths, which can compliment the use of the current existing public transit. Additional elements can be proposed to the current streetscape of these higher dense areas of communities, especially those of which are further down the block from business corridors.



- Highest likelihood
- High likelihood
- Moderate likelihood
- Low likelihood
- Lowest likelihood

Figure 59: High Density Location, Data Driven Detroit



Figure 60: High Density Intersection Existing Plan

### Existing Plan

- ① Shallow Widths Of Pedestrian Walk Ways On Business Corridors
- ② Underutilized Alleys Behind **Business** Corridor
- ③ Underutilized Alleys Behind **Residential** Corridors
- ④ Heavy Congestion on Residential Corridor with Shallow Dimension Due To Bypassing Towards Lodge Freeway via McNichols Rd
- ⑤ Desired Footpaths
- ⑥ Demolished Structure

There are aspects of tactical spaces, like the commercial and residential alleyways, that exist underutilized. These were spaces initially designed to supplement people's lives, and today they are unused. The corridor of Linwood, serving as a neighborhood by-pass to Exit 8 of the Lodge freeway, needs to be widened to handle the flux of traffic.

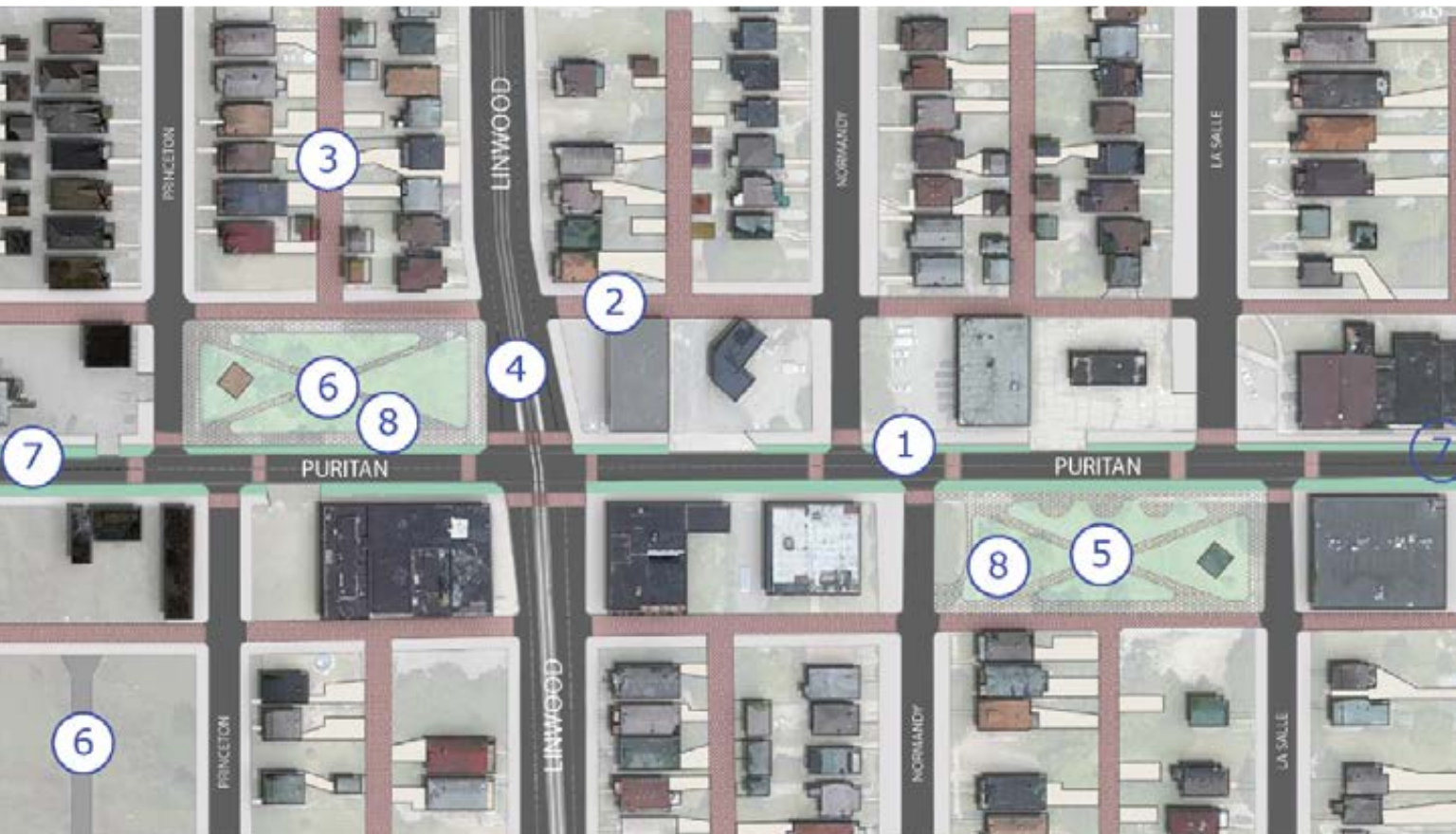


Figure 61: High Density Intersection Proposed Plan

### Concept Plan

- ① Pedestrian **Walkway Widening** and **Bicycle Lane** Introduction
- ② Texturized **Business** Alleyways with Parking
- ③ Texturized **Residential** Alleyways with Parking
- ④ Linwood Widening with **Tram Line** Concept
- ⑤ Pocket Park Type 1 for **Vendor's Market**
- ⑥ Pocket Park Type 2 for **Recreation**
- ⑦ Bus Stop Shelters with GPS Digital Scheduling
- ⑧ Bio Swales and Retention Ponds

The underused alleyways are paved to give a tactile indication of spatial proximities between pedestrian and automobile. It also distinguishes between residential private spaces and public commercial spaces. Desired pathways can also be emphasized with pavers, as desired pathways direct their location.



Figure 62: Pocket Park Concept Rendering

# Elements for Spatial Legibility

## Influences from Abroad

The pocket parks and streetscape elements provide spaces that promote the local businesses, vendors, and use of the current public transit. The alleyways also create different modes of landscapes and pedestrian paths, which can compliment the use of the current existing public transit. Additional elements can be proposed to the current streetscape of these higher dense areas of communities, especially those of which are further down the block from business corridors. (Neighborhood Turnover, Date Driven Detroit)



### **Tram**

Detroit is in need of an alternate mobility option than buses. Tram lines help create diverse streetscapes and are more practical for commuting purposes. This reduces the need for automobiles.



### **Stops with Utility**

Bus stops and tram stops need a larger shelter area. Providing lights for visibility and safety. Digitization can provide wait times to make them more reliable and reduce anticipation. Information and advertisements can be provided as an alternate to billboards.



### **Designated Pathways**

The sidewalk is more than a 5' width of cement. There are separate planes that develop the cohesion of entry and mobility. It is important to make designations in pathways for a more intended environment.



### **Texturing**

Texturing different pathways helps visualize their purpose. It organizes passageways, and also creates aesthetics. Pedestrians will know where they are allowed and where they are not. This is used to introduce the alleyways back into the urban plan.



### **Bollards**

Bollards give visibility of pedestrian ways to vehicles. It creates safety by inducing a barrier from oncoming traffic. It also provides more legibility in the environment.



### **Pocket Parks**

Children have a space for them to grow and learn physicality and cognitive skills. These areas also can serve vendors, a natural entrepreneurial inclination on Puritan Rd. Here is also an opportunity for retention ponds.

Figure 63: Streetscape Elements Diagram, Sluzewiec Warsaw Poland 29 December 2019

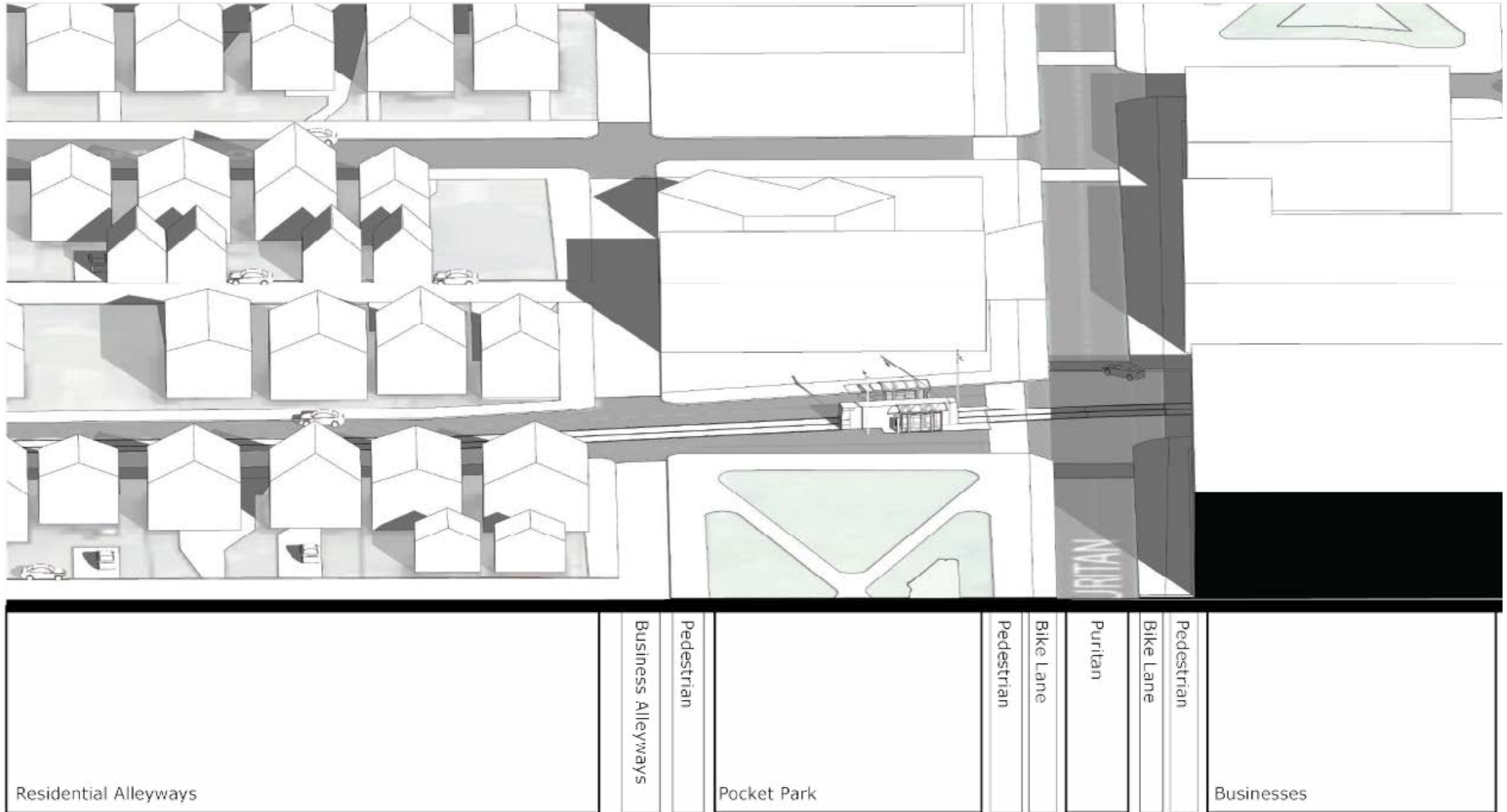


Figure 64: High Density Section Diagram

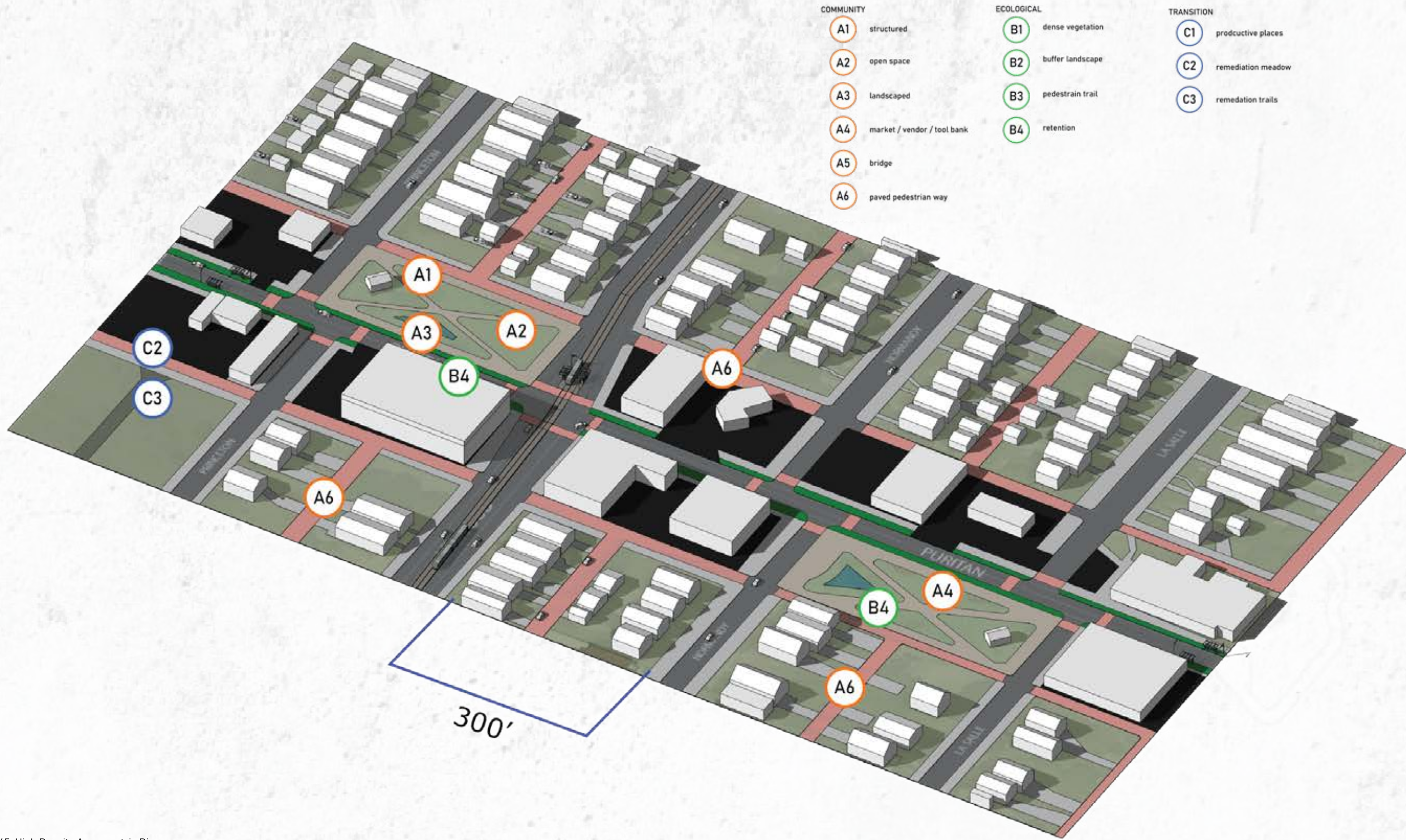


Figure 65: High Density Axonometric Diagram

# 11

## 3 | LOW DENSITY

They act as “sutures” to the landscape divided by the freeway. Throughout the density of these existing blocks, fluidity of mobility between neighborhoods and community space is the main concept.



Figure 66: Preliminary Low Density Concept Rendering

## Highway Buffer

### Creating Fluidity and Microcosms

According to the same study by data driven Detroit, areas of low social advantage are locations where neighborhood turnover is not likely to occur. Although, there are strategies to cultivate a sustainable system that acknowledges the communities that still exist there. This is from the methods of creating an ecological infrastructure that manages rain runoff from typical flat terrain in Detroit, and methods to reserve land for natural recovery and future development of communities for which is anticipated from the eventual repopulation of Detroit.

Ecological networks such as this can introduce healthier environments into blighted areas through time of phases. As landbank properties are acquired through time, the implementation of more typologies are capable. It also serves as an alternative to typical streetscape design elements recognized in commercial corridors and takes on a more intimate form of placemaking for self-sustaining communities. Community spaces act as civic centers and pop-up shops for markets and block club meetings. Space is reserved for re-density by land use remediation typologies for land for landscape development and filtration. A system of water retention can supplement plumping for residences and create their own positioning in the water infrastructure within the city grid. This creates positive economic pressures with existing infrastructures for improvements created by alternative sources.

In this concept, routes create diagonal connections across parcels to create pedestrian fluidity across the neighborhood. This area will be mainly landscaped, with areas of previous streets to be transformed into eco-paved pedestrian ways. Catch basins that drain from high density areas of neighborhood ultimately drain into low density retention typologies. This is also a valuable space for productive typologies, which can have utility for urban farms and university research. Bridge crossing are incorporated from intervention 1 (previously in Chapter 9). They act as “sutures” to the landscape divided by the freeway. Throughout the density of these existing blocks, fluidity of mobility between neighborhoods and community space is the main concept.

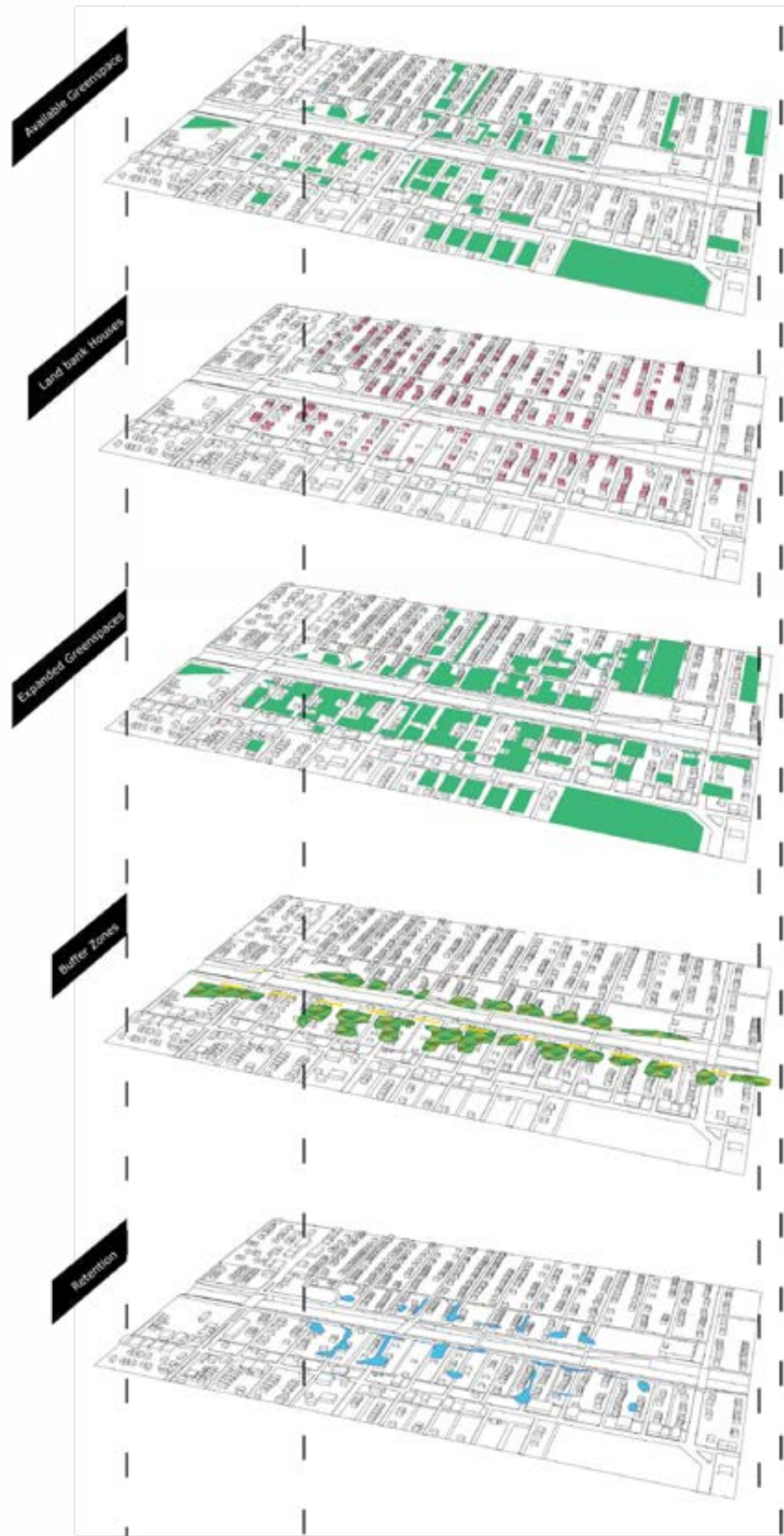
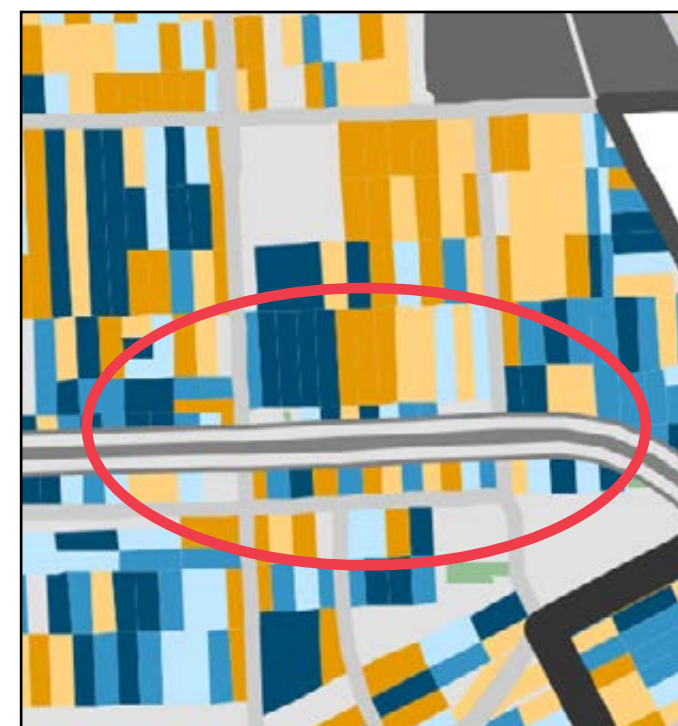


Figure 67: Highway Buffering Strategy Axonometric Diagram



Figure 68: Highway Axonometric



- Highest likelihood
- High likelihood
- Moderate likelihood
- Low likelihood
- Lowest likelihood

Figure 69: Low Density Location, Turning the Corner Data Driven Detroit



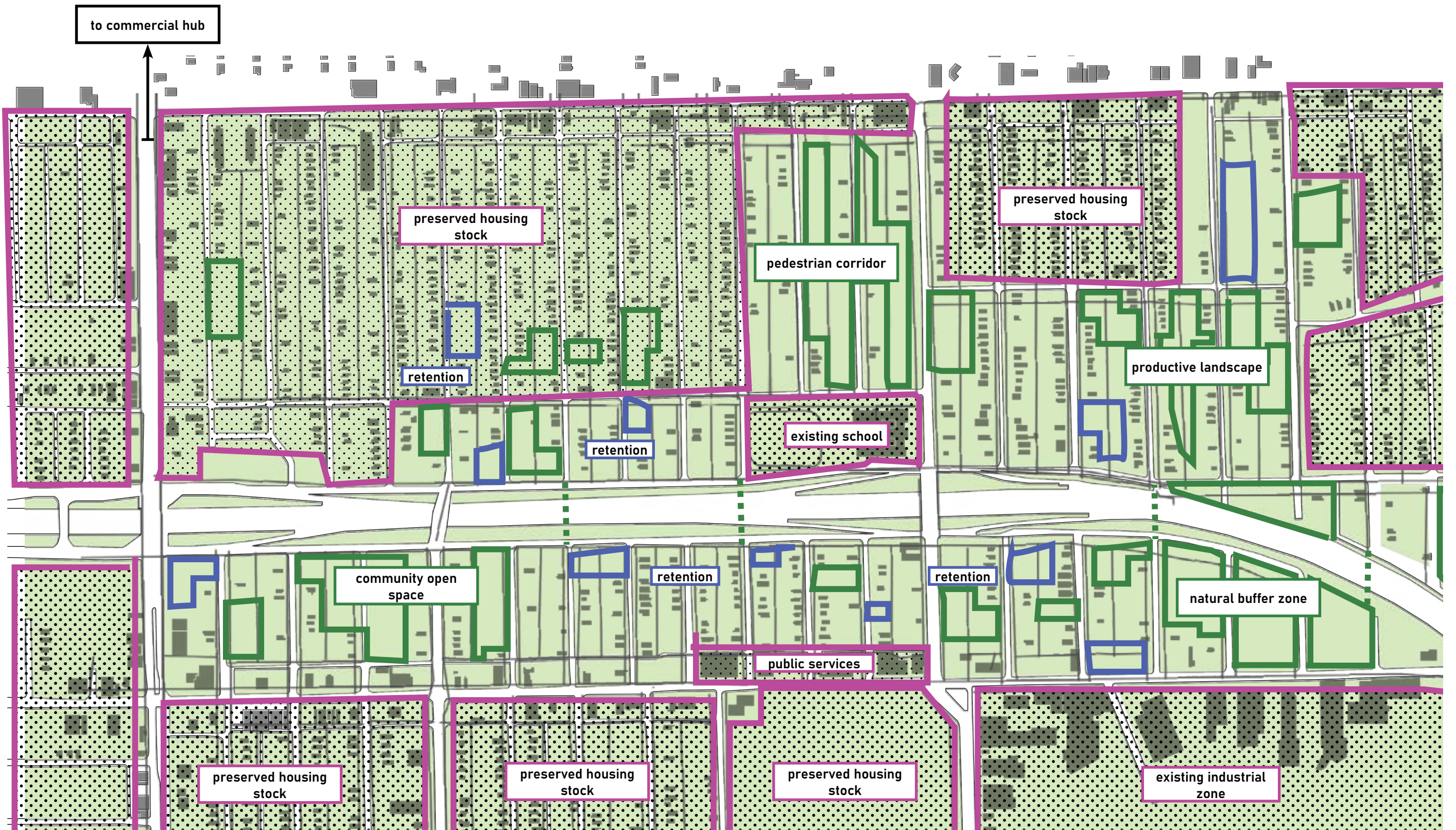


Figure 70: Asset Map Diagram



Figure 71: Low Density Master Plan Concept

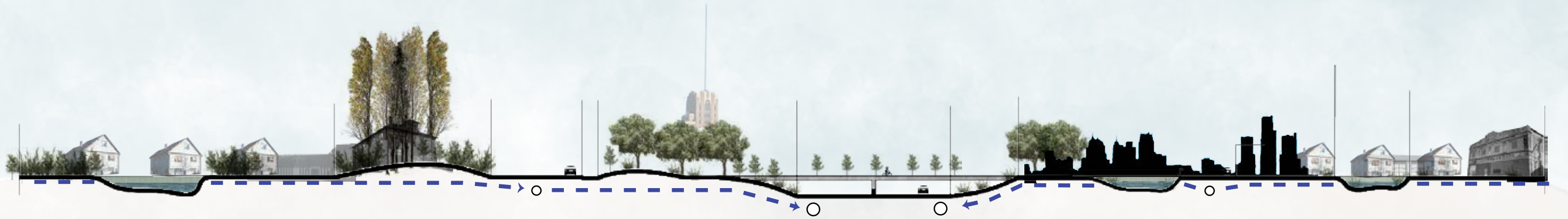


Figure 72: Low Density Transect Diagram

# 12

## CONCLUSION

*A contextually involved community-based planning is the optimal means of solving neighborhood issues.*



Figure 73: Abandoned Commercial Lot

## Why Does It Matter?

### Determining a Future for Communities

Designing networks and their subsequent architectures is a synthesis having sociological ramifications. It is imperative to understand that ecological systems can provide the main driver for design justification. This is because it ensures the fundamentals of a healthy environment. An additional component to social improvement involves the means of education because it guarantees improved success of long term residency of the families and community members. This is particularly important as families search for opportunities of safety and security for their children. This local benefit, of networks and improved infrastructure, will ensure a sustainable neighborhood system, rather than succumbing to the pressures of competitive real estate tactics.

These typologies represent land use tactics that emphasize the community's current uses and can be used to promote re-density back into Detroit neighborhoods. They are intended to dampen their effects of gentrification. They focus on neighborhood strengthening as an alternative proposition to "block-busting" commercial streetscape tactics used by competitive developers.

They create reservation for tactical and intimate uses within the neighborhood, while also creating re-mediation for further future development expected by gradual economic recovery. As being contextually driven, these environments are examined to re-emphasize forces within these urban environments that need stronger connections. The intention of these visualization of these strategies is to envision methods of creating enriched environments immediately within neighborhoods rather than explicitly commercial corridors. The policies are behind many public funds such as SNF's and CDFI's. Policies for the allocations of these funds can have additional terms that focus on 501c3 tax identities, which is required for block clubs to attain, in order to purchase and utilize land.

These are ideas set from the principles relative to the social, infrastructural, and political dimensions. A contextually involved community-based planning is the optimal means of solving neighborhood issues. It is the responsibility of the designer to use these methods to enhance the existing elements found within these environments. Placemaking can be used to create healthier environment, mend connections of mobility, and create a community sense of self governance.

There are other means of streetscape development in Detroit outside the realm of commercial corridors that need to be addressed. This has demonstrated the options of routes community development can pursue for a flourishing future.

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## list of abbreviations

ARCGIS – Aeronautical Reconnaissance Coverage Geographic Information System

AHF – Affordable Housing Fund

CDFI – Community Development Financial Institution

DDOT – Detroit Department of Transportation

MDOT – Michigan Department of Transportation

SEMCOG – Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

SNF – Strategic Neighborhood Fund

## list of definitions

### 501(c)(3)

-A business identity recognized as a non-profit that allows property ownership and tax exemptions for religious and other social groups.

### Inelastic Environments

- The idea that resources like water are set to an inelastic standard regardless of income level it is provided too. This applies to community environments as well.

### Economic Captivity

- This strategy focuses the purchasing momentum to remain in areas of strategic renewal. Its development can reduce financial outflow from these designated areas.

### Ecological Networks

-An interconnecting plan of an ecological infrastructure that provides healthy environments to the neighborhoods.

### Right to Place

-Maintain quality environments regardless of income level or backgrounds

### Placemaking

-is the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play, and learn in. It also promotes health and well-being.



