



PROJECT MEERKAT

MASTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
2012 CAPSTONE PROJECT

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In May 2011, three Master of Community Development students at the University of Detroit Mercy began our final requirement of our educational quest. We sought and received expert guidance from our mentors, otherwise known as our Primary Faculty Advisor, MCD Co-Directors, and Advisory Committee:

Garbette M. Garraway, Ph.D. – Primary Faculty Advisor

Gloria Albrecht, Ph.D. – Co-Director

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Donzetta “Donnie” Jones

Ernie Zachary

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In closing, we acknowledge the opportunities for continued community involvement for our highly regarded alma mater – The University of Detroit Mercy.





## PREFACE

"Traditionally, universities have regarded excluded communities with an air of detached benevolence," says Dr. Paul Benneworth of the University of Twente. . . .

Currently, community engagement tends to be done "by" universities, "to" communities. Universities offer access to facilities, services and learning but there are few opportunities for community learning activities to become embedded within universities, even where there is a close fit with universities' own needs. This means universities miss out on the chance to help develop "social capital" in these communities. Social capital is the networks and relationships between groups which helps hold communities together and bind them into the rest of the country."

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a Master of Community Development Capstone Project that aims to explore the needs of the neighborhood between Marygrove College and the University of Detroit Mercy, in Detroit, Michigan. The project is designed to be community-driven in which the residents take the lead in determining their needs through the identification of the hopes and dreams for their community.

The target community is located within the Fitzgerald community. The boundaries are Six Mile (McNichols) and Puritan to the North and South, and Livernois and Greenlawn to the East and West, totaling 10 city blocks. This neighborhood existed prior to the establishment of the University of Detroit Mercy and Marygrove College. This project explores the relationship between the two institutions of higher learning and the neighborhood—past, present and future.

In the Capstone Preparation phase of the program the team developed a preliminary action plan to meet the goals and objectives of the project:

- Engage stakeholders to identify community needs and goals
- Use placemaking methods and techniques to address the needs and goals of the community

Project short term objectives:

1. Facilitate a resident-led initiative to address community safety.
2. Engage UDM and Marygrove College in local neighborhood community development. Assist community groups in planning, designing and managing meeting/social space.

Project long term objective:

1. Support and organize stakeholders in the development of a coalition to address ongoing community needs.

The project objectives remain consistent throughout the capstone project; however, the action plan to meet the goals and objectives reflect the dynamic nature of community based work. The action plan was continually updated and redeveloped to meet community expectations and needs.

After attaining a comprehensive understanding of the Placemaking concept, research was directed to achieve the following as prerequisites to forward movement:

- Research the historical background of the target area.
- Gain an understanding of the current status of the neighborhood from resources, interviews and analysis.
- Perform a community needs assessment

Driven by the team's need to present itself in a cohesive and approachable manner, reflecting the desire to learn and discover the needs of the community, the team appropriately identified itself as Project Meerkat. The team was inspired by the community driven behavior of meerkats who are social animals with a highly developed sense of community. Their ability to communicate allows them to remain secure and ready to collectively solve their challenges of daily life. The Project Meerkat team created a logo, email address, business cards, and established a voicemail account to enable multiple forms of communication.

### Placemaking as a Development Strategy

Placemaking views space as a human environment which urges economic development and sustainability while it calls for structuring community leadership and ownership. The

team researched several theories and definitions of placemaking. The Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a Chicago based space development agency, was a good reference. Placemaking according to the PPS definition is:

A multi-faceted approach to the planning, designing, and management of public spaces. Put simply, it involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover their needs and aspirations. This information is then used to create a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve quickly into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale, do-able improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being (pps.org).

"The 11 Principles of Placemaking" became our guidelines for planning the project's deeper focus. In addition, the Placemaking Diagram that PPS developed as a "tool to help communities evaluate places" assisted in developing a vision of what our project could look like. The inspiration of our "Community Driven" approach came from Placemaking Rule Number 1:

"The Community Is the Expert"

The important starting point in developing a concept for any public space is to identify the talents and assets within the community. In any community there are people who can provide a historical perspective, valuable insights into how the area functions, and an understanding of the critical issues and what is meaningful to people; tapping into this

information at the beginning of the process will help to create a sense of community ownership in the project that can be of great benefit to both the project sponsor and the community (pps.org).

This research was combined with the more relationship-focused definitions of placemaking identified by Schneekloth and Shibley, in their book *PlaceMaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities*. Their definition stressed the subjugated knowledge of a community as the foundation of expertise on how space is used or should be used. The role of placemaker is to create a space where dialogue with and within the community is taking place. The combination of the two definitions provided a framework to move forward with a placemaking based strategy.

Guided by the mantra “The Community Is the Expert” we developed a plan on how to engage a specific community using methods of placemaking. The community would drive the direction of the project and elements of human, organizational, and economic development would be integrated into a “space”. The concepts and methods of placemaking continued to influence the direction of the capstone project, but the focus and application of the ideals of placemaking shifted during the course of the project.

### Capstone Team’s Criteria

We established our personal criteria to help identify a target community. 1) We had to have a sense of feeling safe as we engaged the community. This would allow us to focus on the quality of engagement and have genuine conversations with the members of the community. To mitigate our feelings of personal safety, we created a basic guideline: Always work in teams of two or more during daytime hours; 2) The community needed to be under

represented, meaning the community's needs were not represented specifically by an organization or group; 3) Community organizations must be available to work with the community. The research focus shifted to where and what neighborhood would match our criteria.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

### Cluster Research

In our team's efforts to find the "where", we began to research the City of Detroit Clusters. In 1994, the City of Detroit under the leadership of Mayor Dennis Archer organized a land-use and reinvestment taskforce to develop a vision for the City of Detroit. The development of a community-based planning process, known as the Detroit Community Reinvestment Strategy (CRS), established ten geographic clusters within the City of Detroit. Each cluster had a board representing local residents, schools, businesses, institutions and the faith community. Their mission was to identify reinvestment opportunities. The resultant 1997 Community Reinvestment Strategy was adopted by the City Council in July 2009 and became part of the City of Detroit's Master Plan.

An analysis of Clusters one through ten led us to look closer at Cluster 9 (see fig.1). Our interest began to develop around Cluster 9 identified as the Harmony Village Neighborhood - particularly the neighborhood located between the University of Detroit Mercy and Marygrove College.





Map 5A  
 City of Detroit  
 Master Plan of  
 Policies

**Neighborhood Cluster 9**



Neighborhood Index

- Gervey/Grandmont
- Greenfield
- Harmony Village

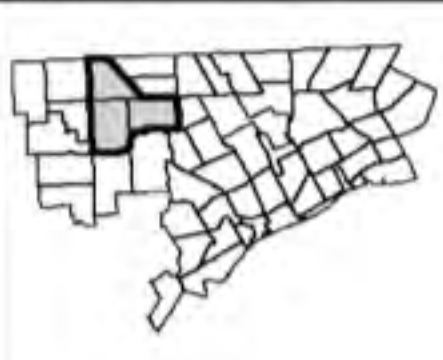


Fig. 1. City of Detroit Master Plan of Policies, 2009; [detroitmi.gov/DepartmentandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment](http://detroitmi.gov/DepartmentandAgencies/PlanningDevelopmentDepartment); Web; May 2011

The Master Plan of Policies identifies Cluster 9 as follows:

Cluster 9 is generally bounded by Eight Mile to the north, Lyndon and the Jeffries Freeway (I-96) to the south, Livernois and the Lodge Freeway (M-10) to the east, and the Southfield Freeway (M-39) to the west. The Cluster consists of three neighborhood areas: Cerveny/Grandmont, Greenfield and Harmony Village.

A significant number of Cluster 9 residents have a high school diploma. Cluster 9 lost less than one percent of its housing units during the 1990's, the smallest percentage loss in the City. The Cluster also has one of the City's lowest percent of vacant housing units and one of the highest percent of owner occupied housing units.

The Harmony Village profile specifically cites, as an asset, the close proximity to Marygrove College and The University of Detroit Mercy, especially as an influence on retail and local services and opportunities for recreation and open space for area residents. However, Harmony Village has a number of sharp contrasts from the rest of Cluster 9 in the Detroit Master Plan. Harmony Village has a much higher vacancy rate and lower educational attainment level compared to the rest of Cluster 9 (see fig. 2). At this point, the Capstone team shifted focus to find a section of Harmony Village that had a high need, but on a smaller scale which could be addressed by the team.





Fig. 3 The northeast section of the Fitzgerald Community within the Harmony Village section of Cluster 9; Googlemaps.com; Web; May 2011

### *Casual Conversations*

Two-person teams engaged in conversations with residents regarding their community. Similar themes emerged from the conversations where residents expressed their views about the safety of the community indicating there was interaction with selected members of the community, usually describing physically close neighbors who kept an eye out for one another,

and expressed a feeling of distrust for others outside of that group. Our conversation usually gravitated toward the idea of safe play space/any play space for the children of the neighborhood. Many parents would transport their children outside of the neighborhood to play. In many instances school-aged children would spend their summer attending summer school classes, which relieved the parent's concern for adequate summer-time play/recreation space. A parent indicated that her children were involved in a Wayne State Mentoring program. The abandoned and vacant homes added to the safety concerns of the residents. City garbage pick-up was reported as regular and there were no particular complaints; however, there were complaints about the quarterly bulk pick up not being often enough to keep up with the dumping that occurs in the area. City services were slow to react to complaints of dumping and in many cases complaints resulted in the complaining resident being ticketed because the debris was on their property and, therefore, their responsibility. The influence of the University of Detroit Mercy was credited by some as what keeps the neighborhood "nice"; however, no specific program or service was attributed to UDM or Marygrove College. Our preliminary engagement with the residents drove us to explore the community organizations and the relationships of UDM and Marygrove College with the community.

### *Institution and Organization Involvement*

Currently, the University of Detroit Mercy has an extensive program of Community Outreach as evidenced by UDM's website. The University of Detroit Mercy has seventeen clinics providing professional services to the underprivileged of the City of Detroit ranging from Law Clinics to the Detroit Collaborative Design Center in the School of Architecture.



Our casual conversations with the Fitzgerald Community did not reveal utilization or knowledge of these services.

For a better understanding of the role of UDM in the neighborhood, we interviewed UDM Associate Vice President of Administration, Denise Williams Mallet; UDM Associate Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations, Elizabeth Patterson; UDM Adjunct Professor, Paul Massaron; and Detroit Collaborative Design Center Executive Director, Dan Pitera. The following are the major conclusions:

It was reported that a number of former UDM students rented houses in the target neighborhood; however, that situation no longer occurs. In the past, UDM had plans for development outside the campus grounds, mainly a student center, fitness center, and a business block with dorms on the second floor. However, development has only occurred within the campus fence. UDM has been a part of past local community initiatives and in 2007 helped to establish a business initiative known as the University Commons Organization (UCO). The UCO partnered with UDM, Marygrove, Northstar Community Development Corporation, Shoppers Co-op, local business associations and community organizations. The current UDM Community Outreach website describes the UCO as an organization established to benefit the area residents and businesses. Former UDM President, Gerald Stockhausen, S.J. served as chair of the Board of Directors of University Commons. UDM had an interest in developing the local commercial areas, specifically the Livernois corridor segment from the Lodge (south) to Eight Mile Road (north). The strategy of the UCO was to develop and build the business community and enhance and integrate the campus community with the residential community which in turn would strengthen the educational institutions community presence

and attract investments to the area. The interviewees were unaware of the status of current initiatives and have fallen out of communication with the organization. The current UDM President, Dr. Antoine Garibaldi, declined a meeting with the Capstone team regarding UDM's relationship with the community. At the time of our request Dr. Garibaldi had recently taken the position as President and may not have been fully versed on the specifics of UDM's community outreach efforts. However, Dr. Garibaldi has publically expressed UDM's interest in community relations initiatives. We interviewed Will Wittig, Dean of the School of Architecture at UDM hoping that he could provide insight into UDM's past, present, and future plans of involvement with the surrounding community. Dean Wittig encouraged the team to contact several "key Livernois Avenue players" interested in the physical and economic development of the Livernois business corridor.

Our research discovered a University Commons Newsletter, dated October 1, 2007 which included a map indicating various community organization boundaries; however, it excluded the target neighborhood (see fig. 4).



Project Meerkat target area

Fig. 4. University Commons Newsletter; udmercy.edu; Web; May 2011

The Capstone team was interested in further researching the target neighborhood's omission on the University Commons map.

Marygrove College is located at the western border of the Capstone team's target neighborhood. In April 2008 Marygrove College commissioned the Neighborhood Empowerment and Enhancement Initiative (NEEI), a comprehensive environmental scan of multiple census tracts surrounding the Marygrove College area. Included was census tract 5361 which represents the target neighborhood. Compared to the average of all the census tracts in the Marygrove College area, the target neighborhood had a slightly higher population, ages zero to twenty-four; the target neighborhood was below the average population with a high school diploma or greater. There was a greater vacant housing rate; and a lower owner occupied housing unit rate. Roughly forty percent of the target community's population was



participate. The ONE project initiated an effort to redevelop a four business block demonstration area on McNichols located across the street from Marygrove College. Two UDM architecture students are serving as interns on this project. The project also serves as a tool to encourage the beautification of the entrance to the college and is believed it would contribute to the neighborhood safety.

In a recent interview, Dr. David Fike, President of Marygrove College, indicated that Marygrove College community involvement is defined by its student leadership development in addition to the programs recognized in the Neighborhood Empowerment and Enhancement Initiative (NEEI). He acknowledged the importance of the roles that UDM, Marygrove College and the Fitzgerald Community Council (FCC) play in community development. However, he also attributed the current financial limitations of Marygrove as well as a lack of neighborhood organizations as a challenge to program development in the target neighborhood.

The Fitzgerald Community Council's service area boundaries are Livernois to James Couzens and Fenkell to Six Mile (McNichols); therefore, the target community is included in the Fitzgerald organization, and yet is clearly excluded from the organization boundary map (see fig. 4). Fitzgerald Community Council recently celebrated its 50th year as a community organization. Lola Holton is the President of the Fitzgerald Community Council (FCC). She reported that the FCC is a registered non-profit organization which has received grants for initiatives within the community. During the initial engagement with the neighborhood, many of the residents expressed that they were not familiar with FCC and its role. This relationship and connection was noted for further exploration by the team.



There are highly credible institutions and organizations available near and within the boundaries of the target community. However, the community is underrepresented within a larger scale of development and needs assessment. We concluded that the team's criteria were met and the Fitzgerald neighborhood between Marygrove College and the University of Detroit Mercy was selected as the capstone target community.

### History of Fitzgerald

The Capstone team has drawn extensively from *Fitzgerald: Geography of a Revolution* by William Bunge for knowledge of the early history and historical issues in the Fitzgerald community. William Bunge has written a comprehensive history of the neighborhood and the Capstone team uses his historical context as a basis for exploring the contemporary conditions in the neighborhood.

Fitzgerald's economy evolved from hunting and gathering in the mid-1800s to mixed forestry, farming, and then berry farming through the 1920s. The economy then turned to sub-division of the land, which was quite lucrative for some landowners. Fitzgerald was annexed by the City of Detroit in 1922.

The development of Fitzgerald as a residential area for the City brought with it the establishment of two institutions of higher learning. The University of Detroit was moved from downtown to its current site at Livernois and McNichols in the 1920s. McNichols street was named after the priest who spearheaded the move of the University from Detroit to its new location. Marygrove College moved to its current location in 1927. Prior to the move and name change, from St. Mary's College, it was located in Monroe, MI.

Throughout its history, Fitzgerald's social stratification has taken two forms, that of home ownership and race, both experiencing times of stability and volatility. In the pioneer days the renters were viewed as "people who did not seem to get ahead" (Bunge 28).

Homeownership and race integrated in 1864 when Mr. James J. Kanada, a free man and former slave, entered into a land contract with a white land owner. Kanada was to pay off the land with goods and services. At the termination of the land contract the landowner refused to turn over the land to Kanada. Kanada took the landowner to court and battled landownership for four years. The land owner underestimated Kanada's ability to keep meticulous records of cash, food, labor and other services credited to his agreement. Justice was served and Kanada won his case. Kanada built his landownership from five hundred dollars to a value of two thousand dollars at the time of his death in 1885. In 1919 Ann and Perry Seymour moved into the only house on Crudder Street, present name Woodingham Street. The Seymours were reported to be fully integrated with the whites in Fitzgerald; the children of the community played together, went to school together and the Seymour's hosted quilting bees at their house. Even though there was a perceived sense of integrated living within the Fitzgerald neighborhood, no other homes were built within a five lot radius of the Seymour's. They were approached many times to sell their home. The KKK was active in the Fitzgerald community; they staged weekly marches and cross burnings. When Marygrove College began construction, the Seymours started a business providing lunches to the construction workers. When Marygrove was complete, the lunch business ended. Finally, in 1927 Perry Seymour moved his family out of the neighborhood, determining it to be the best option for his family in spite of his brave resistance to KKK threats. During the 1920s three

other black families bought homes and moved into Fitzgerald, the Pollards, the Greers and the Turners, their children attended the integrated Fitzgerald school when it opened in 1925. However, in 1930 when the school board decided to construct Post Junior High School, the homes of Pollard, Turner and Greer were condemned and the City used this condemnation to devalue the remaining homes occupied by white residents. The sub-division of the land in the 1920s brought homeownership to the Fitzgerald Community. However, during the Great Depression many homeowners lost their homes and renters began moving into Fitzgerald.

In 1960 Reverend David Mitcham moved into a house behind Marygrove College. His presence in the neighborhood was recollected as the “first colored family” in the neighborhood as though Kanada, Turner, Greer, Seymour and Pollard never existed (Bunge 69). When the Mitchams moved in they were politely invited to move out by representatives of the Marygrove Civic Association. In kind, Reverend Mitcham politely refused the invitation. There was a small group of residents who genuinely welcomed the Mitchams to the neighborhood. The Lamars followed as the “second colored family” to move in the neighborhood in 1961. They were greeted by the attorney for the Puritan Park Civic Association and were informed that they could expect violence if they stayed. Mr. Lamar was a college graduate continuing his family tradition of believing in the advantages of education. He engaged the letter of the law to stop the picketing of his house. It was a long process but eventually an injunction was served and the picketing stopped. Mr. Lamar was a man of perseverance and determination. He served as Executive Vice-President of the Community Council and President of the Post Junior High School PTA.

## Local Influence

### *Near Northwest Coordinating Council – Fitzgerald Community Council*

In 1958 Cecil Erbauch, a white resident, resigned his membership in the Puritan Park Civic Association stating that neighborhood racial segregation “violated fundamental democratic principles and the basic tenants of Christianity” (Bunge 77). An organization called the Near Northwest Coordinating Council (NNCC) was formed in 1961 as a direct result of the treatment of the Mitchams and Lamars. Its purpose was to coordinate action by the churches and other groups to promote and support racial equality. The NNCC meetings were devoted to topics such as employment, education, housing and community acceptance. The desire to continue the work of the NNCC developed into the creation of the Fitzgerald Community Council in 1962, a non-profit corporation serving as a liberal homeowners group. Cecil Erbauch led the organization until 1967.

The Fitzgerald community achieved geographic integration as new black families moved into the neighborhood following the Mitchams and the Lamars. Bunge offers the following as a successful strategy of integration:

[It is] the building of a good community. A good neighborhood, like a good man, does not depend on the percentage of white to black blood. As the percentage of Negroes in Fitzgerald has increased, so has the level of community activity. The neighborhood has improved because its community spirit, based on the needs of the Fitzgerald’s citizens, has grown, Community spirit depends not on the Racial Ratio, but on the strength of citizens organized for the betterment of the community. The citizens’ groups in Fitzgerald are racially mixed and constantly growing; they have reduced the demoralizing

pressure of block busters; they have fought with great integrity for high-quality schools; they have struggled for recreation areas and positive outlets for teenagers (Bunge 76).

The Fitzgerald Community Council meetings were community meetings where action decisions were made regarding the concerns of the community:

- School millage campaigns
- The Council sponsored pre-election debates
- The Council's recreation committee worked for more facilities and athletic activities for the youth
- The Council took on the practice of block busting by realtors, supported code enforcement
- Some Council members were active in Civil Rights movement.

In the 1960s and early 1970s Fitzgerald's struggles to achieve an integrated middle class community was realized. The Fitzgerald Community Council, developed into a true community-based organization where problems were identified and together, as a community in motion, action was taken to move to solutions. It is this level of integration that author Bunge attributes to Fitzgerald's involvement during the rebellion of 1967. The Fitzgerald community did not explode with the fury of other communities, even though it experienced some looting of stores. The Fitzgerald Community did not have the combustible desperation of other Detroit communities.

### *Marygrove College, the University of Detroit, the University of Detroit Mercy*

In the 1960s both Marygrove College and the University of Detroit made commitments of support to the community. In 1963 Sister Mary Emil, President of Marygrove College spoke at a Fitzgerald Community Council meeting identifying and pledging Marygrove's support to the level of integration the community has achieved (Bunge 164). The University of Detroit also made commitments of support and involvement in the community. Various departments



of the University made significant contributions to the community. However, Bunge describes this commitment of support lacking in the institution's ability to "foster a real town-gown alliance, which did exist when the neighborhood was both more white and more Catholic" (165). Gradually, through the late 60s, the institutions began withdrawing from their involvement with the community. Bunge describes the University of Detroit's attitude as one of "controlled panic" (165).

Bunge poses the following:

"In some cases, though, the institutions in a neighborhood are so valuable that they can't be allowed to crumble. These super institutions are more valuable than the entire surrounding neighborhood. When these institutions are threatened by [deterioration] the question is not whether they will be saved, but how: by saving the surrounding community or by destroying it?" (138).

Bunge's indictment that the institutions of higher learning all but physically moved from the community seemed to be the strategy used by UDM for economic survival in the 1980s.

In his book, *The Legacy of Excellence*, Herman Muller, S.J. chronicles U of D's efforts to meet their commitment toward the solution of Detroit's critical educational problems. In 1968 the University of Detroit established the Special Projects Office. It was responsible for developing several educational initiatives to serve the educational needs of high-risk students who possessed the potential to succeed in college (23).

In September 1984, University of Detroit President Mitchell announced that the Detroit City Council had finally approved the closing of Florence Avenue after seventeen years of debate. "The closing of Florence Avenue would provide great benefit to the University, and in

turn, the University worked to ensure that its relationship with the local community remained strong” (Muller 46). University of Detroit officials helped residents to use different routes to travel around the campus. Closing Florence Avenue had made it possible to secure the campus by fence with a public access through guarded gates.

Muller cites the Detroit Free Press April 1, 1984 article entitled: “Jesuit rigor helps renew U-D’s vigor”, written by Susan Goldberg, attributing the renewed vigor not only to U of D’s financial reforms, but also crediting the revised core curriculum and the University of Detroit’s challenge of attracting suburban students whose lack of enrollment was attributed to fear of the school’s location. Then president, Robert Mitchell, retorted that the problem is more a case of what “people think of the location” (48). This thought process justified the “beefing up” of the security patrols, more campus lighting, intrusion alarms and closed-circuit cameras. This created a fortified urban campus that gave the impression of a safe-suburban campus.

In June 1990, The University of Detroit merged with Detroit College of Mercy creating The University of Detroit Mercy. Marygrove College decided against joining this merger.

### *Regional Influence*

#### *The Detroit Works Project*

The City of Detroit’s latest efforts to redefine the city should have a positive impact on the target community. The Detroit Works Project short term planning has identified an area adjacent to Fitzgerald as one of three demonstration areas: Bagley/Golf Club/Green Acres/Palmer Woods / Sherwood Forest / University District. This area is bounded to the north by Eight Mile to the east by Woodward, to the south by McNichols and to the west by Wyoming.

In the demonstration areas, the city will engage and work closely with Community Development Corporations (CDC), nonprofits, block clubs, and churches to gain more knowledge about the markets. It will leverage foundation, state, federal, and non-profit investments and actions along with city resources in developing a service delivery model. The types of services being realigned are blight elimination, infrastructure improvements, land use, beautification, and economic development (detroitworksproject.com).

The close proximity of this regional influence should have a positive influence on the target neighborhood. The possibility of combining the support and initiatives of local organizations and institutions can influence the future of the target community.

### *Case Studies*

The following case studies represent past efforts in identifying initiatives to positively affect the target community; however, they were never fully developed and executed.

“Envisioning the Commons”

by TyShaun Bland and Elijah Kafer, 2007

University of Detroit Mercy,

Master of Community Development Capstone Project

“Envisioning the Commons” has commonality and proximity to our target community; the target area for “Envisioning the Commons” is the Avenue of Fashion, located along Livernois north of McNichols (Six Mile Rd.) to Eight Mile Rd., it had the potential to influence the Fitzgerald community economically.

In addition, Project Meerkat has identified many stakeholders who were similarly identified as stakeholders in “Envisioning the

Commons”. The 2007 Capstone Team enlisted University Commons as their community partner. This project researched and reported the benefits of local development for the residential and business community.

The goal of the Capstone was to envision growth on Livernois, characterized as the heart of the community. The revitalization of small businesses within the corridor would not only serve the needs of the community as customers, it also had the potential to provide employment opportunities to the community. A residual influence would be the resurgence of the music and social culture made famous by Baker’s Keyboard Lounge. The University Commons Organization (UCO) was chosen as the community partner because of the potential influence on the community as mandated by its creation and had the support of key community stakeholders which included the University of Detroit Mercy and Marygrove Collage as well as other business organizations. Livernois Avenue and the University Commons were recognized as a National Main Street Trust’s designation. As a Main Street designated area UCO was eligible for a number of Federal and State grants. The three focus areas of the project were: the pedestrian environment, lack of business diversity in relation to the target population, and the issue of underutilized capacity within the target area. All three of these issues and this project’s capacity to address them impact our target community. The installation of the Livernois Avenue median was considered as a threat by the community; however, the median does represent pedestrian safety when considering Livernois as a thoroughfare, a means to enter and exit the City of Detroit rather than as retail shopping traffic or traffic headed for a local destination. The issues of diversity and underutilized capacity continue to besiege this community. The development proposal was intended to be a long-

range plan for economic development and partnership to link the Livernois Avenue of Fashion to Ferndale's Avenue of Art. The plan made some assumptions of interest and involvement from UCO, and the stakeholders represented by this organization.

The capstone project was a development plan representing a multi-faceted approach that included and considered the neighboring communities. However, the development that actually occurred focused on the business corridor and had little input from the residential neighborhood and resulted in a single-asset focus rather than a community development approach, where relationship building with the community would have been an asset to the development initiative. The focus and lack of resident involvement was discussed with a capstone team member in an interview on August 11, 2011. The ideas and concepts of the 2007 capstone project formed a plan and strategy to address economic and physical development conditions which considered the human and organizational make-up of the project area.

“Reinforcement: Fitzgerald Community Development” Vincent T. Lyons 1967

University of Detroit, School of Architecture,

Bachelors of Architecture Senior Thesis Project.

In 1967, an undergraduate Architecture student conducted a comprehensive place- based analysis of the Fitzgerald neighborhood. The project investigated the “problems and aspirations” of the people in a specific area. The thesis asked several questions about roles and made recommendations for possible solutions and who would be responsible.

The first question the thesis posed: What is the role of the citizens, the community organizations, the universities, concerned individuals, architects, planners, or educators? The

question is a central issue in our project as well. As community developers, we ask what are the roles of the residents, institutions, stakeholders, as we the developers, plan. The complexity of this issue in 1967 is relevant in 2012.

The thesis explored how the Fitzgerald Community as a unit of a larger city functions. The analysis looked at how an organism like the Fitzgerald Community copes with and addresses change. The project outline looked at the physical, social, organizational, and economic conditions of the community. The analysis looked at the relationship between these conditions, identified challenges, and made proposals to address the challenges. The project presented an architectural solution based on specific geography and relationship conditions. This approach aligns with the Placemaking methods that the Capstone team researched. The thesis was conducted through analysis of existing data, surveys and extensive interviews. Vincent Lyons lived in the Fitzgerald community for over three years.

The thesis recognized that the Fitzgerald Community is tied to the larger region and its success or failure is tied to the larger community. The thesis reported on the formation of the Fitzgerald Community Council (FCC) from its beginnings to the initial goals and focus. The organizing of the FCC was around non-violent integration of black homeowners into the community. The initial statement of purpose for FCC was: To know and make known the many advantages of our neighborhood, to know its need and work to make it an even better place in which to live for every family, and to uphold the right of every family to housing of its own choosing.

The council saw increased participation and membership when it took on common issues around education, and recreation for all residents. It was noted that initiatives that



focused on integration issues were poorly received. The council was seen as a major player in addressing any future community issues.

The analysis points out that the orientation and focus of the majority of the neighborhood businesses was not designed to be beneficial to the local community. This condition still exists today. The majority of residents from the community survey said they travel into the suburbs for most shopping. The analysis of parks, green space, and social space revealed a severe lack of resources available to the community. The resident's issue with the lack of areas for children to play in 1967 remains an issue for the residents in 2012. The 1967 thesis does mention Marygrove College opened a small section of campus for children to play baseball and football. The city did look at building a park in the community after resident pressure, but the project never moved beyond the planning phase.

The physical layout of the streets provided poor accessibility and made pedestrian traffic more difficult. The residents in 2012 have made several desiring line pathways to address the lack of east-west pedestrian access in the neighborhood. The lack of social space for the youth was analyzed and attributed to the lack of understanding the youth as displaced persons. They had no sense of belonging or area to call their own. It is mentioned that U of D did provide an annual "Kids Day" for residents. This was mentioned in the 2011 community survey as an activity the community would like to see come back. One of the '67 recommendations was the lack of park space could be used as an organizing goal to get residents involved. The demographic research identified young white families as the group leaving the Fitzgerald community.

In 1967 the area also had a student population of 450 living in the community; and 125 of those lived within the first three streets from U of D. The students were seen as adding diversity to the neighborhood and students served on the FCC. Even though the Fitzgerald Community was racially split in 1967 the local schools were predominantly African American. The school Parent Teacher Association was the 3rd largest in the state. The FCC also petitioned and was able to get the Lodge exit at Greenlawn St. closed due to excessive traffic. The Fitzgerald community has shown at points in its history that community driven initiatives have been effective. In 1967 the Fitzgerald community had nine different block clubs. The area selected by the Project Meerkat team is one of the only areas in the community that currently does not have a regular block club. This provides a historical perspective on organized groups in the Project Meerkat capstone neighborhood.

The thesis analysis of organizational development notes that the University of Detroit did not fulfill its role in community involvement and development. The University had been very ineffective in preserving the surrounding community. The area was not a concern for the university up until 1959 in which the university described the area as “white, middle class, and Catholic”. The university’s plans from 1967 had a racial tone and emphasized a focus on shutting the campus off from the community at large. The project to close Florence Avenue at Livernois and the building of 1000 student housing units on the campus were identified in the thesis as causes of concern for the university and the community. The thesis made several recommendations regarding the relationship between the community and the university. It was recommended that the resources of U of D should be made available to the community, future university expansion plans should consider the impact on the community, and that the

university should be integrally related to the community in physical, financial, and programmatic terms. These recommendations still carry weight today. Residents have expressed an interest in UDM being more involved in the community. The final thesis project recommendations were to formalize a relationship between the Fitzgerald Community Council and the University of Detroit Director of Neighborhood Relations. This relationship would have aligned resources and efforts to improve the community. This would also have included a community member that would serve as a liaison at the university as well. FCC was recommended to form a separate non-profit housing organization to address the physical conditions. The university was recommended to look at developing a plan to purchase the first three streets from campus for off campus student housing, fraternity housing, support services, and open space. Other proposals included a joint FCC and U of D newsletter, kiosks in the community about available services.

The alignment of institution and neighborhood is still a major issue today in the Fitzgerald area. The major conclusion from the thesis that relates to Project Meerkat is the role of the “Community Development” professional in this case, the Project Meerkat team, is to reinforce the efforts of change and development that come from the community. The thesis written 45 years ago still serves as a blueprint for meaningful community development.

### *Demographics*

Our preliminary overview of the ten-block residential area was based on observation, research from the 2000 and 2010 US Census, Data Driven Detroit, the Marygrove College Environmental Scan, and the Project Meerkat Community Survey.

The target community is composed of primarily residential areas, with commercial corridors along the major cross streets. The median age in the census tract is 35 years old (datadrivendetroit.org). Ninety-seven percent of the population is African American. There is an average of four people living in the same household and 27% of the households are led by single mothers. The neighborhood is fairly homogenous racially, but does have a class difference among residents. The target area has a higher vacancy rate for both rentals and homeowners than the City of Detroit average. The rental vacancy rate is 27% compared to a 17% average for the City of Detroit. The homeowner vacancy rate is 4% compared to a 2% average in Detroit (datadrivendetroit.com). According to the 2010 census there were 553 vacant homes in the neighborhood; resulting in an increase of 154% from the 2000 census. The 2010 census reports the State vacancy rate at 14.6% and the National rate at 11%.

### *Human Development Conditions*

The Fitzgerald community is faced with many of the challenges present in Detroit as a whole. The loss of population has created more isolation and weakened the social connections in the neighborhoods. There are fewer neighbors to interact with or seek out for support. The lack of population also limits the people power required to address many of the city's issues. The population in the target census tract has gone from 5300 in 2000 to 3846 in 2010 (datadrivendetroit.org). This is a 27% reduction in the total population demonstrating that 1 in 4 residents have left the community. The drastic reduction in student population at Detroit Public Schools is a major risk factor. School closings and consolidations affect a neighborhood's ability to educate their youth. The performance at the schools has been rather poor. This creates challenges of a widening education gap. Access to high quality education is

the exception, not the rule in many Detroit neighborhoods. The Fitzgerald residents who have a high school diploma is 67.7% compared to 87.9% State and 85.3% National. Nine percent of the neighborhood has a Bachelor's Degree compared to 24.6% Statewide and Nationally, 27.9%. Neighborhoods around Detroit struggle with higher crime rates and reduced city services (NEEI). This lack of relative safety and missing services creates conditions much less conducive to positive human growth.

### *Organizational Development Conditions*

The Fitzgerald community has several organizations and institutions in the area. The target community is flanked on its west and east sides by higher learning institutions, Marygrove College and the University of Detroit Mercy, respectively. It is included in the boundaries of a registered, 501(c)3 organization, the Fitzgerald Community Council. However, 40% of Project Meerkat's survey respondents indicate they did not have a voice in community organizations.

### *Physical Development Conditions*

The Project Meerkat neighborhood is 0.25 square mile in area and includes 10 housing blocks with business windows on its perpendicular and parallel border streets on McNichols (North), Livernois (East) and Puritan (South). The housing condition is a mix of blighted and maintained areas. The streets and sidewalks are in very poor condition and residents have complained about the dumping of bulk garbage, and the lack of street lighting. Many residents walk in the streets due to the sidewalk quality.

Some vacant lots and backyards are overgrown, and most alleys between backyards are inaccessible and blocked by weeds, trees or heavy garbage.

## The Market and Commercial Streets:

More than 60% of the businesses in this neighborhood are closed and the majority of stores are left unattended and in bad condition. The major businesses in the neighborhood are auto repair shops, liquor shops and barbershops. There are some fast food restaurant and dollar shops on McNichols. The shops located on Livernois are in better shape than the shops on Puritan. The sidewalks in the business area are in disrepair and covered by weeds, light garbage, broken glass and debris. The survey indicates more than 33% of the interviewees believe there are no local quality shops, and if they exist, they are located outside the neighborhood. The survey further indicates more than 64% of the interviewees believe that there is no community space for entertainment and public gathering. Through our observation, we found that the residents of the neighborhood do gather on their porches and the children and young adults in the front yards.

There is no public garden or any recreational space. The only park that is near is the Lollo Tot Lot that is four blocks away from the neighborhood on Cherrylawn and Puritan. Lollo Tot Lot is very small and not well maintained. Another nearby play area is at Gesu Catholic School at McNichols east of Livernois (see fig. 6).

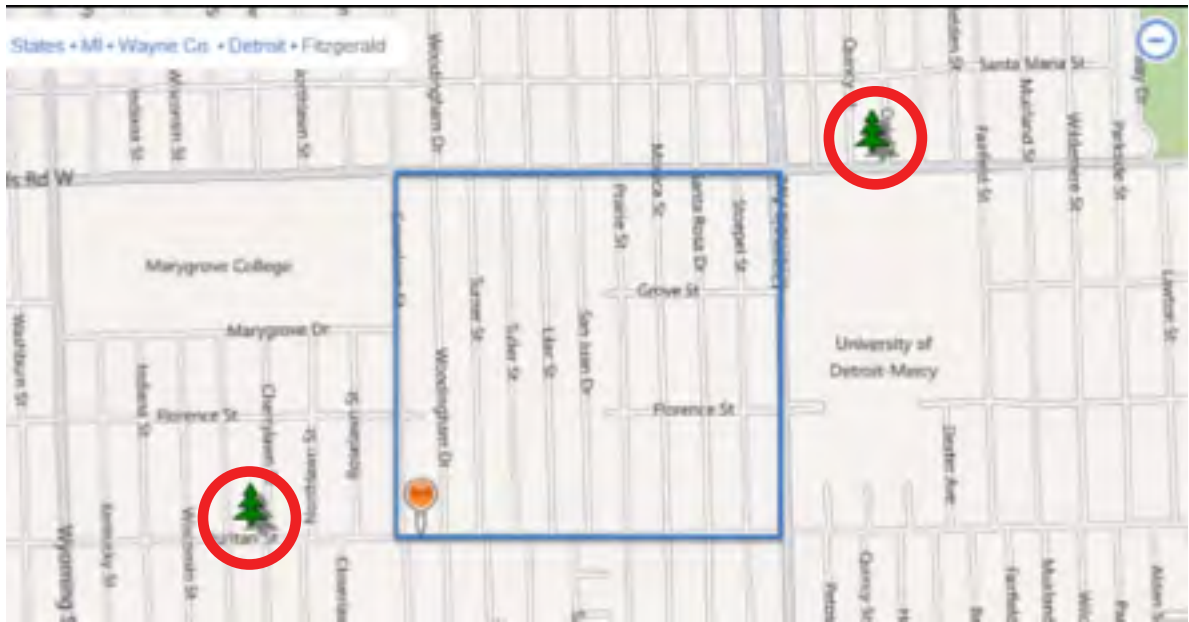


Fig. 6. Parks near the Neighborhood; googlemaps.com; Web; June 2011.

### *Economic Development Conditions*

The current national recession has made the economic conditions in the City of Detroit extremely challenging. The state unemployment rate is one of the highest in the nation. The combined effect of population loss and unemployment has created a large number of risks to community stability. The foreclosure crisis has created an even greater stress on communities and residents to maintain a sense of neighborhood cohesion. Many of the Fitzgerald neighborhood residents earn less than \$1000 per month. The poverty level is the poorest compared to the surrounding neighborhoods. With the percentage of 66% being renters with average rent of \$500 and average 4-people per household, every individual is left with an average of \$125/month. The 2010 census indicates the median household income for the Fitzgerald community is \$28,544 compared to the State's median of \$48,432 and National median household income of \$51,914.



Retired residents comprise 23% of the population, 22% of the residents are unemployed and more than 34% work more than 10 miles away from home. There are no major employers in the neighborhood and the low education level of the residents is a challenge for employment opportunities or space for entrepreneurship. The businesses' physical condition and the low income of the residents do not attract investors or make conditions ideal for encouraging business initiatives.

### *Social Justice Challenges*

It is hard to understand how a neighborhood that is bordered by large educational institutions and commercial corridors would mimic conditions in the city of neighborhoods with less than a fraction of the assets the target neighborhood has. The complexity of the available assets and unaddressed needs of the community provides a key unanswered question? Why has the positive impact on the community been so minimal in a neighborhood surrounded by so many assets? In the book *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Massey and Denton demonstrate that “racial segregation concentrates poverty. Segregation between blacks and whites builds poverty into the residential structure of the black community and guarantees that poor blacks experience a markedly less advantaged social environment than do poor whites” (125). The target neighborhood is 97% African American. There are only very small percentages of non-African American residents in the area; 2% are white, and 1% other. Historically the areas around the neighborhood have had more white residents. There has been a steady stream of white residents moving farther out from the area. There are pockets of white residents in the University District area, the adjacent neighborhood north of UDM. These pockets do not seem to have much interaction with the

target neighborhood. There is a small, but growing Hispanic neighborhood starting to form southeast of the University of Detroit Mercy. The lack of diversity has made socio-economic issues one of the biggest concerns. The lack of diversity has affected shopping and entertainment. Several residents stated in the survey that they shop out in the suburbs because of the greater variety of businesses. One resident stated that he moved his children to a different school because he felt the local schools did not have enough diversity. Both Marygrove College and UDM have a small but growing international student population. The student body, including the international students, could be engaged with the neighborhood gaining insight on the local history of Detroit. The international students could provide new perspective and ideas from cultures very different than our own.

Segregation concentrates poverty and poverty manifests itself into a less advantaged social environment where neighbors begin to break the bonds of community and deepen the effects of segregation. Massey & Denton's explanation of the creation of an underclass community associates segregation and rising poverty with the downward spiral of a community's physical decay and disinvestment to the point of becoming self-perpetuating. Structure abandonment leads to decay resulting in a community reaching the "tipping point" where 3-6% of the neighborhood's housing stock is abandoned. Reversal of this process is "impossible without major external intervention" (133). The target area is currently experiencing a 12% rate of abandoned houses.

## Community Needs Assessment

### *Survey Methodology*

Following the informal community engagement and research on historic and regional influences a survey was needed to get a deeper understanding of the conditions and assets of the community. The Project Meerkat team had several competing thoughts regarding the focus of the initial survey. The team was very interested in the methods and concepts of “placemaking”. Our early research identified the vacant space and the close proximity to higher learning institutions as potential factors that may direct the capstone towards a place- based approach. Our interest in using space to change the place was a strong influence on the early direction of the needs assessment process. This is represented by a focus on the physical assets and anchoring institutions and their relation to the target community. We discussed survey plans to obtain community feedback about the nearby Universities, the vacant lots, and the abandoned houses to get a better baseline of the physical conditions of the community. From the beginning of the survey discussion, the need for mapping the conditions of the housing stock in the community became a priority. In addition to analyzing the physical conditions and spaces, the survey was also necessary to get a better understanding of the resident’s view of the community to validate the results and to define the context within the neighborhood. Resident feedback was required to complete the research process. Residents would need to review the data and provide the input needed for Project Meerkat to move forward. The results of their responses would drive the community focus.

The initial research left gaps in the data about the current make-up of the target community. The survey would serve as the first official engagement and contact with the residents in the neighborhood. The survey would also potentially collect more demographic data on the community as a whole. The Census data available at the time was from 2000 and

did not reflect the observational data collected by the team. The survey would allow the team to create a more complete and accurate understanding of the make-up of the community.

### *Designing the Survey*

The team decided that engagement and data were equally important as tools for our first formal effort in the community. Designing a short survey would serve as a quick introduction to the project and support the critical need for action. Further action would not be possible without first starting to build a relationship with the residents. The community would help drive and define the challenges and issues from the needs assessment. The survey was used as an action research tool to create forward movement. The reflection on these actions leads to the construction of new meanings (James 63). The Project Meerkat team felt the survey was a useful, effective tool that was designed to be convenient with simple answers to each question. It was short and efficient to administer in four minutes which allowed for canvassing a large area. It required direct responses and the questions concentrated on the team's response to the limitation of time, resources, scope and scale of potential impacts. The survey did not cover every possible issue or answer that could have come up. The questions were narrow in scope to ensure that the problems identified would be actionable.

Project Meerkat's commitment to learn about and understand the needs and challenges identified by the residents was a priority interest. Previous initiatives in the area focused on the organization's and business' interest. The team believed the community was under represented and the focus should stay on understanding the causes of the disengagement and disconnect between the organizations and the neighborhood.

This methodology of building from the inside out was a reaction to the lack of participation and influence in previous and existing initiatives from members of the target neighborhood. Our theory was that sustainable initiatives will originate from within the community. The neighborhood's needs would be better served as they reach out to have their needs met rather than waiting to be extended a seat at another organization's table. The idea of community change must have a foundation in the neighborhood and its residents. The residents will define the problems and solutions.

### *Implementation*

Project Meerkat surveyed 107 homes over 7 dates in July 2011. Team members went in pairs on weekday evenings and Saturdays. Team members identified themselves to residents as "Project Meerkat" a UDM Community Development Capstone Project. Team members carried clipboards with copies of the single paged survey. The survey was read out loud and team members recorded the answers on the survey sheets. Residents were asked if they would like to participate in future focus groups and were asked for a method to contact them.

The final survey process included documenting initial conditions of the physical environment. This was a carryover from the original discussions regarding a placemaking approach, which identifying the spaces and opportunities in the community was important to a placemaking project. The initial assessment of the physical conditions was done at the same time as the survey canvassing work. The process involved coding houses that were abandoned and vacant. A house was designated as vacant if it was empty but being maintained. For example the windows and doors were boarded up. The focus on evaluating the physical conditions allowed the team to continue to address the importance of space, while engaging

residents. Placemaking is not just about the relationship of the people to their places, it also creates relationships among people in places (Placemaking 1). The Meerkat team's approach was to focus on how people and space impact each other.

### Analysis

The team used SPSS to complete the statistical analysis of the community survey. This software allowed for a quick turnaround from data collection to analysis. The use of SPSS made it possible for quick and reliable reporting of the data collected from the survey. The community needs assessment showed that the neighborhood environment was not supporting any human development initiative especially in terms of safety, leadership and community engagement.

### *Results and Interpretation*

Seventy percent of the respondents indicated that people in the neighborhood watch out for each other; they consider the houses in close proximity as their neighborhood. Fifty-five percent are proud of being part of this neighborhood. Forty-nine percent of the respondents lived in this neighborhood for more than 15 years. More than 60% believe that safety is an issue in the neighborhood and 48% consider themselves as a community but voiceless as almost 60% of the respondents said that either the community has no voice or they are not sure of the power of their voice regarding community issues. Fifty-two percent believe that the community lacks leadership.

The survey identified many more needs than the Project Meerkat team could address. The team decided to focus on the top three challenges and the top three assets. The collected results have presented some conflicting data. Nearly half of the residents would recommend living in

the neighborhood and the other half plus residents in the neighborhood would move if given the opportunity. Residents also had a positive view of both Marygrove and Detroit Mercy as institutions of higher learning. However, when asked about the institutions' role in the neighborhood, the residents responded that they were not aware of a presence by either institution. The survey confirmed the complex relationships in the target neighborhood. The next step was to conduct a focus group with the residents to get a better understanding of the needs and assets in the community.

### *Community Focus Group 1*

Completing the community needs assessment in the preparation phase of the project and analyzing the data indicated a need for a focus group to accomplish the following objectives:

- Verify the results of our survey
- Compare the results of the survey to what a sample of the community thought about it
- Establish a first step towards community building
- Explore in depth how the neighborhood residents wish/prefer to solve the needs identified in the neighborhood survey
- Measure community willingness to share their voice and participate in community development activities.

The focus group method was the best fit for our research approach, at this point, as it would add support in achieving a comprehensive approach to educate and inform residents about Project Meerkat and gain their trust to support the research process. Meeting in person



with residents on campus would help build a relationship between UDM and the residents. In addition it would help create a direct channel of communication that allows immediate data sharing and exchange. Project Meerkat would receive direct feedback on different issues and test some models that would work in this particular neighborhood. Establishing a small group of potential leaders that may participate in any future development plans in the neighborhood would also be an anticipated outcome of the focus group. An expected outcome would be achieving a better understanding of the neighborhood facts to fill some information gaps that were not covered by the community needs assessment.

### Designing the Focus Group Meeting

#### *Invitations*

The last question of the survey made it easier for us to plan and reach community residents who showed interest in participating in neighborhood research events. The residents' database including their names, address, email address, phone numbers were gathered on a contact sheet. Ten days before the meeting date Project Meerkat members delivered the invitations by hand providing an opportunity to talk with some of our invitees and encourage them to attend. Follow up calls were also made to encourage, and in some cases confirm attendance.

#### *Approval and Location*

Getting the necessary approvals from UDM was also a part of our work plan, especially with the Public Safety Department; however, we did not get a response regarding our inquiries about guests on campus. Making advance room reservations was a critical step as

we were not sure of the number of attendees and whether or not children would accompany their parents.

### *The Agenda*

To remain on task during the focus group meeting and acquire the input we were expecting from the residents and to avoid the possibility of being sidetracked by other interests, a clear agenda and sets of questions were designed. Roles were assigned among the team members:

Steve: Facilitator

Ahmad: Scribe of resident's input on the white board

Debbie: Troubleshooter among invitees

MCD program volunteers: note writer, usher, time keeper, babysitter

A hand-out was also designed which served three objectives: a name tent; an informational section for the participant to keep which included a letter of introduction about the project, the meeting agenda and Project Meerkat contact information; a tear-off section used as an Inventory of Community Interests, which residents filled out and submitted to the team at the end of the meeting.

Sharing the results of the community needs assessment was the focus of the group meeting; therefore, a number of questions were created and categorized under the titles of the three needs with an introductory question to serve as a general understanding.

### **Implementation**

On September 13, 2011, the Community focus group was held in the Peter Peirce Room at the School of Architecture. Sixteen community residents participated, even though

we confirmed that twenty-five would attend. Also in attendance were three professors and three volunteers.

Upon arrival, the residents were asked to locate their house on a large map of the community posted on one of the movable bulletin boards; they were given paper and pens for note taking, and the multipurpose hand-out. They were invited to enjoy refreshments.

The meeting started with the team introducing themselves. The community members were asked to share their names, address and the length of time they lived in the neighborhood. After a brief definition about the project objectives and its area of coverage, the facilitator shared with the attendees the results of the community needs assessment and its implications on the project. The residents gave their feedback on the three focus areas of safety, leadership, and social space. They provided input which clarified each of the areas in more detail. At the end of the meeting, participants filled out an inventory form about their interest in participating in future research events.

### Focus Group Analysis

As a result of the community focus group meeting, the residents validated the results of our needs assessment. Their input directed our research to focus on finding answers to the following questions:

- How would our research contribute to solving the raised issues?

- What are the best practices that would facilitate community engagement to enable the residents to contribute to the resolution of the agreed upon challenges?
- What are immediate actions we can take to initiate a development process?
- How can we ensure the community's voice is heard during the development process?

To answer these questions the main issues became our challenge, in which we had to spend some time brainstorming to find the best practices that would help in turning those challenges to opportunities. The team discussed the option of forming several committees to discuss the issues of community leadership, safety relating to housing conditions, and space for social activities. However, the community was very vocal in their disinterest in attending a series of meetings. They expressed a strong desire to see immediate action. Project Meerkat concluded that developing a leadership structure to solve the safety and public space issues will occur after providing the emerging leaders with the necessary resources and community partners.

### Reflection on the Community Needs Assessment Challenges

The neighborhood provided many obstacles in getting the survey completed. The high vacancy rate meant canvassing long stretches with no residents. The ten-block target neighborhood was physically a large space for a team of three to cover. The poor condition of some of the sidewalks added time to the process. The restricted window to canvas which included work schedules and length of daylight, and our own imposed rule of teams of two prevented opportunities for large scale canvassing. The canvassing of surveys had to be done in smaller clusters. The time planned and estimated to complete a survey was four minutes; however, because this was the first official engagement activity, additional time was used in introduction and friendly conversation prior to or upon conclusion of the survey. Another

unanticipated barrier was the lack of resources to complete the surveys. Copies of the surveys were made from a variety of sources; the team struggled to find clipboards to use. Office supplies were a consideration that was overlooked and created minor inconveniences.

A consideration that caused some issues was the lack of communication resources. Many of the residents did not have reliable means to be contacted for any follow up activities. The engagement portion of the research was by far the most challenging and the most critical. Additional resources in the form of trained volunteers to assist in the survey in addition to an established method of communication would have provided support and reinforcement to the assessment and communication with the residents of the neighborhood.

### *Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat Analysis*

The identified strengths of the community, in combination with the opportunities that are being developed, offer encouragement to overcome the threats and weaknesses that were identified during the community assessment process. The poor economy, in general, is a tough threat to overcome and creates challenges across the board in all communities, for most people and organizations; however this community is and has felt the effects of Massey and Denton's illustration of racial segregation on the concentration of poverty. We subscribe to their call for external intervention to reverse the decaying process taking place in the target neighborhood. Perhaps the general economic slowdown offers a time to reflect where to invest time and energy that will offer the most return on investment. The strength of the community's history and longevity of its residents enhances the ability of the residents to plan and work for improvements that reflect the positive influences of the past. The residents who willingly and

enthusiastically participated in the survey and follow-up focus group are ready to be fully involved in the process of taking on the challenges identified and reframe them as opportunities to build their community. The positive view assigned to UDM and Marygrove by the residents suggests the possibility of relationship building and the possibility of shared growth together with the City's demonstration area located in close proximity to Marygrove, UDM, and the community. The new question, will these institutional assets accept their role as the source of external intervention?

## SWOT ANALYSIS

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### Strengths

- There are small groups and/or pockets within each block that look out for one another
- Many residents have lived in the neighborhood greater than 15 years
- There is a sense of community that prevails in the neighborhood
- Most residents who participated in the survey are willing to participate in the community development process
- The current state of the community suggests that it is ready for change
- There is a sense of neighborhood pride

### Opportunities

- Some residents believe their children have access to quality schools
- Community and church groups are available
- Some city services, such as garbage pick-up, are dependable
- The residents view UDM and MGC as positive influences within the community
- The Detroit Works Project's demonstration area is adjacent to our focus community
- Development of relationships/partnerships with ImpACT Detroit, UDM, Marygrove

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### Weaknesses

- Less than half of the residents would recommend living in this neighborhood
- Given the opportunity to move, over half of the residents would move out
- Safety is a resident identified problem within the community
- The community is experiencing a lack of leadership
- The community does not feel as though their concerns about their neighborhood are being heard
- The community has experienced so much deterioration within their neighborhood it may be hard for some to believe in the idea of positive change
- Most residents are on fixed incomes
- The rent/own dichotomy

### Threats

- There are no parks and playgrounds for the children in close proximity of the neighborhood
- There are no social meeting spaces
- Limited to no access and availability of employment
- The economy in general
- Many city services are limited in their capacity to contribute to development opportunities.



# PROJECT RATIONALE

## *Identification of Needs*

The opportunity to work with the residents to address the three issues identified in the survey: safety, leadership and social spaces, is very timely in that the efforts of this community are in symphony with the larger and regional community building efforts and initiatives that have the potential to build momentum and therefore sustainability.

We engaged the residents to find out their needs and get a better idea of the effectiveness of each community organization's relationship with the residents. The residents identified the need to demolish abandoned homes, patch up streets and sidewalks, maintain the vacant lots and address issues of safety related to the physical environment. The residents expressed a desire to have space redeveloped and, where possible, avoid demolition of houses that may become usable social space for the community. The current physical conditions create safety issues. The open abandoned homes and vacant lots are unsafe for the residents especially the children of the neighborhood. The fact that there are limited play areas for the children confines them to their own yards or in the house, stifling their social interaction within the community. The physical condition of the neighborhood is the catalyst, which will create and incubate solutions to other issues identified. In the course of our engagement with the residents, we have been introduced to this community's sense of challenged pride, guarded trust, and skeptical hope for a better tomorrow. The tenured residents of the community remember better days and are willing to participate in an effort to rediscover a community that works together for the common good. Some of the younger people of the neighborhood have experienced a limited sense of community. They too have expressed an interest in redefining their community. The community members did not identify many formal leaders.

The neighborhood is in several agencies' area of service, but the lack of representation from the residents in any of the institutions or community agencies leaves the community residents feeling as if they do not have a "seat" at the table in the decision-making process of initiatives and developments in the area. This sense of under representation was a need the team felt should be further addressed by the capstone project. The problems for the neighborhood are complex, and require a long term commitment, which could potentially continue beyond the capstone time period.

### *Community Partner Proposals*

Prior to engaging with the community, we researched the involvement of Marygrove College, University of Detroit Mercy, and Fitzgerald Community Council. Our research with the established community organizations involved interviews, meetings, and reviewing the missions and objectives of each organization. The organizations had minimal contact and impact with the neighborhood further challenging the identification of a community partner.

### *Fitzgerald Community Council*

One of the early proposals came from meeting with Lola Holton, the president of the Fitzgerald Community Council. The idea was that the neighborhood could be engaged to be an active part of the council. The project would use the council's existing structure and organization to get the needs voiced from the target community. The Fitzgerald Community Council's (FCC) objective is to have a clean, safe, healthy environment, which fit well with many of the goals from the focus community. This project would use existing assets to try and address conditions in the neighborhood. The Project Meerkat team would focus on organizing

residents in the target neighborhood so that they could participate and use the resources of the FCC. The FCC would be the partner and the resident organizing would be focused on addressing neighborhood conditions through the community council.

### Marygrove College and Our Neighborhood Engaged (ONE)

ONE was identified, early in the process, as an organization that served the target community with potential resources to assist the community in addressing their three identified criteria. The team attended ONE meetings and interviewed JoAnn Cusmano, Vice President of Community Initiatives, to identify common goals. The idea was pairing Marygrove and ONE with the community to work on redevelopment in the neighborhood and opening up Marygrove resources for the community to use. ONE would make the capstone target neighborhood a demonstration area. The residents would be organized to participate and plan with ONE about how to address conditions in the neighborhood. Building a stronger connection between Marygrove and the neighborhood could be a focus of the proposal.

### University of Detroit Mercy and Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC)

The team approached Dean Wittig and Virginia Stanard of the DCDC to work as a partner in developing the community. The idea was to open up the campus to be more inclusive of the target neighborhood. The DCDC would be able to help with engaging residents and collaborating on designs to help solve the needs of the community. The Project Meerkat team could work alongside the DCDC and residents to work on a plan for redeveloping the neighborhood.

## University Commons

University Commons was considered as a possible bridge for the community to engage Marygrove and UDM. They would facilitate development and coordinate resources between the Universities and the neighborhood. Residents would be engaged by the Project Meerkat team and could participate in meeting with University Commons to build a stronger relationship with both higher learning institutions.

## No Partner

The team gave consideration to the proposal of not taking on a partner and beginning a community engagement plan to address the needs of the residents. The proposal would recruit residents to work with the team to create resources and build capacity that could be used to build collaboration with a future partner.

*Analysis of the Advantages and Disadvantages of the Proposals and the Influence of Public Policy and other External Forces.*

While it may seem that Our Neighborhood Engaged and Fitzgerald Community Council focused their attention outside of our target area, the fact is that they have strong relationships with other community organizations, businesses, and citizen groups, both local and regional, which are valuable assets to community development. We did not ignore the fact that UDM and Marygrove are influential institutions capable of making things happen. They both have mission statements that align with helping in the community. University Commons

has been working in the area and is currently collaborating with business interests in the area. All of the proposals explored had long standing relationships in the area and most had historical relationships with the neighborhood.

In the Capstone Preparation phase of our project we believed that it would be a good fit for Fitzgerald Community Council to be a Community Partner considering the history of the organization and the fact that our target community was within the physical boundaries of the FCC. Lola Holton joined our team meeting on July 13, 2011 to discuss the common goals of our project and that of the FCC. We provided a letter of interest to the Fitzgerald Community Council which Lola was to present to the Board. Simultaneously, we were conducting the neighborhood survey and became aware that many residents were unfamiliar with the FCC and its role within the community. As a result, the choice of FCC as a Community Partner was questioned and the subject of many debates within our team meetings. Our team decided to postpone making a commitment to FCC as a Community Partner. In a conversation with Lola, she expressed her disappointment in our team's seeming disinterest in the Fitzgerald Community Council as a Community Partner. The Project Meerkat team recognizes a shortcoming in respect to relationship building with Lola and the FCC. We did not have a follow up conversation with Lola regarding our decision to delay commitment to FCC as a Community Partner. The team recognizes that FCC has been in existence for a long time, but the fact remained, that many of the target neighborhood residents do not identify with the council as representing their neighborhood. FCC did some home repair, but the capacity to do neighborhood level redevelopment was a question mark by residents and the Project Meerkat team. Ultimately the decision was that the target community still needed to be organized better

and the FCC did not have the capacity in its current structure or mission to address the housing condition problem. The team is not ruling out the possibility of collaborating with the FCC again after more engagement and organization was in place in the target community.

The team had a difficult time making contact with the University Commons Organization, but decided the mission of University Commons and the identified needs of the community did not match at this time. The residential focus of the team made University Commons a less likely partner. As with FCC, University Commons may be an organization that is a better fit later in the project's evolution.

Marygrove and ONE were a part of the proposal discussion for some time due to the Neighborhood Empowerment and Enhancement Initiative (NEEI) report commissioned in 2008; however, the current focus of ONE on a demonstration area on McNichols, the current lack of large scale funding, and the lack of inclusion of the target community seemed that the timing was not right. ONE has done some work around the assessment of the community and held meetings on next step initiatives. There are some residents of the target community who attend ONE meetings, but there doesn't seem to be a direct connection between the neighborhood's immediate needs and the current focus of ONE. Marygrove College has a positive reputation as an academic institution, but the residents do not identify the role the College plays in the community. The hope is that as the demonstration areas expand with the ONE project, it would position the Fitzgerald target community to engage more directly.

The University of Detroit Mercy had a change in leadership and the new president was not yet familiar with the conditions in the surrounding community. This could be a possible option in the future, but due to the time constraints of the capstone project it would be hard to

get a university-wide commitment. The Detroit Collaborative Design Center just started work on the Detroit Works project and was unable to be a partner with the neighborhood as a whole. Like Marygrove, The University of Detroit Mercy was seen by the target community as an excellent academic university, but its role in the community was unclear.

A major external force, which heavily influences the focus area, is the economy and the results of the census data. The population loss experienced by the City of Detroit affects the revenue base, and, therefore city services available to its citizens. The loss of the manufacturing base of the area limits the opportunities for employment. The Detroit Public Schools is under the direction of an emergency manager. The education system is in transition; many public schools have been closed and/or replaced by charter schools. The uncertainty of the school system is a major impact on the families with younger children in the neighborhood. The perception of the local community schools grades K-12 is mixed. The people of the target neighborhood see themselves as a community; however, they have indicated that there is a lack of leadership, which validates their belief that their voice is not heard regarding community issues, such as safety.

A large external factor is working within the bureaucratic policies and processes of the City of Detroit. Residents complained about police and fire reaction times. These issues would be hard to fix regardless of the partner or proposal chosen in the limited time frame. The plan for the Detroit Works demonstration area is to be just outside the target community. The Fitzgerald community is not one of the Skillman Foundation Good Neighborhoods. It is also not on any of the other current initiative lists as a priority area. This may prevent opportunities in the focus neighborhood.



In a meeting with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department the Project Meerkat team shared the identified needs of the community and inquired about the level of support the City could provide. The city planners were very interested in the development of the capstone project and identified the target area as being adjacent to one of the Detroit Works Project demonstration areas; however, the City is unable to provide services specifically for the project due to budgetary and manpower constraints. The city planners indicated that they would utilize their contact resources in support of the project and offered assistance in obtaining the Sanborn maps of our target community.

### *Conclusion Leading to the Primary Project Proposal*

The primary purpose of our project proposal is to facilitate a re-engagement of the citizens of the community to:

- build resources and tools to address the identified community needs
- facilitate the creation of a more meaningful relationship between the anchoring institutions and partner agencies for the purpose of community development

The decision on the direction of the final proposal was driven by a strong urging from the residents for some form of immediate action to address conditions in the neighborhood and Project Meerkat's conclusion that the organizational capacity of the neighborhood was under developed to partner with the existing agencies. The lack of block clubs and current participation in the existing community council would have made formal partnering difficult.

The team concluded that a direct engagement activity that addressed some of the issues of safety, space, and leadership would be needed. The project would produce resources with the community that could be used by the residents to engage and collaborate with the

institutions and agencies around the Fitzgerald community. The resource would be a tangible tool that could help facilitate action with a partner agency of the community's choosing. The capstone team would develop a project along with residents to address the issues of safety and space. This project would then be sustained by the residents and other agencies that shared similar goals. The issue of building leadership capacity would be integrated into all of the engagement events. This would be accomplished with skill building as a part of the resident project experience.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### *Community Development*

The capstone project needed to address several issues simultaneously. The first issue was *Safety*, a project was needed that would produce a tangible product or tool that could be used by the residents to address the problem of blighted housing, dumping on vacant lots, and could improve safety conditions. Residents were vocal in the need to address the vacant houses to improve safety in the neighborhood.

The second requirement was to build neighborhood *Leadership* capacity with a process that would be designed to engage and develop the ability of the residents to continue the project independently. The project would focus on building residents' leadership skills and recruiting residents to scale up the engagement work. This would require looking at the individual and organization leadership needs in the community.

The third requirement was to develop the existing *Social Space*; a component to the project would begin the dialogue about how the residents would like to use their community space. Residents would look at the tools and resources created and develop their own plans for

how space would be used currently and in the future. This would require some facilitating to determine needs and priorities for spaces.

Project Meerkat looked at other community/neighborhood projects that developed within, rather than from an external partner. This approach was more in line with the current perceptions and conditions in the neighborhood. The team researched an inside-out approach and used some concepts from Sandtown, a community in Baltimore, Maryland.

### Case Study: Sandtown, Baltimore, Maryland

The neighborhood of Sandtown, located on the west side of Baltimore, was an economically depressed neighborhood with high vacancy and crime rates. The values of the homes in the neighborhood were well below surrounding areas. Generally, these are conditions not normally conducive to redevelopment. Many believe that the conditions which brought on the decline of the neighborhood rest solely on the poor choices of its residents. The case of the Sandtown neighborhood redevelopment showcases the approach of developing the neighborhood from the inside out. It sheds light on the institutional and systemic forces that excludes opportunity economically, discriminates racially, and confines residents and factors geographically. The decline of the neighborhood is not created by the character flaws of the people who live there or by the welfare system (Gornik 47). This case gives examples that despite being ignored and excluded by institutions, communities like Sandtown can work to bring about change that is driven by the residents and that redevelopment can succeed on social justice grounds not just market conditions.

The Sandtown community encompasses 72 blocks. The neighborhood has continued to lose population since its WWII high of 45,000 residents to 15,000 with a housing vacancy rate

of 25% in the 1980s (Gornik xii, xii). A main catalyst for the decline of the community was the economic hardships faced by its residents. The median income for the neighborhood is around \$15,000 (nsum.org). The job market saw a continual decline in jobs for residents. Baltimore experienced roughly a 45% reduction in manufacturing jobs and a 46% decrease in entry-level jobs not requiring a high school diploma. Challenging the residents further, was the fastest growing sector was knowledge-based jobs requiring at least a 2-year degree (Gornik 43). The harsh economic conditions created a neighborhood in crisis.

The responsibility for whom or what created the crisis will continue to be a debatable issue. Many outside the neighborhood blame the conditions of the choices of the residents who live there (Gornik 46). The idea that a community would make choices that lead to poor education, unemployment, and a lack of self-determination lacks logic. The factors leading to the decline in Sandtown had many external pressures. The city had created a road system that made it easy for white residents to leave the inner city and take the tax base and political power with it (Gornik 44). The results were a lack of employment and a reduction in wealthier residents, creating a neighborhood with poor job opportunities and concentrated poverty. The neighborhood was subjected to institutionalized racism that removed resources from the inner city and provided them to new white suburbs. These factors created a system that excluded the residents from opportunity and at the same time blamed them for the shortcomings of the neighborhood.

The conditions present in Sandtown are similar to many inner city neighborhoods where the residents are of color and concentrated poverty is prevalent. The normal development pattern is that when conditions are right, an external force would come in and bring assets to

develop the area. In Sandtown they had a Pastor who came from outside the community but lived and worked in the community and helped to start the change. The Pastor and his family bought a house in the community and worked alongside the residents to build a better neighborhood. The residents were not a token part of the redevelopment plan. They worked as equals and leaders in the effort to rebuild the housing in the neighborhood. The Pastor, the community, and Habitat for Humanity worked together to provide homes for residents. The remodeling and building of homes created jobs and brought income to the families. The residents were vested and were motivated for change. The houses were being built where the biggest need was not the biggest profit. The work was driven by the idea that people in poverty deserve to live with dignity and have quality housing. If those in poverty were given the opportunity and the tools to work out of poverty the majority would. The New Song Church led the redevelopment project that remodeled 315 houses of the 350 houses in the 15-block focus area ([sandtownhabitat.org](http://sandtownhabitat.org)). The commitment was to rid the area of all vacancies. The expectation was to have all vacant houses remodeled and not to settle for a few renovations simply because it is better than what they had. The New Song Christian Community Development Association that sprang out of the work the church and the community did together now has a staff of 80 made up mostly of people from the neighborhood ([nsum.org](http://nsum.org)). They formed partnerships with other agencies, funders, and government to address the issues that still exist in Sandtown.

The Sandtown model is relevant to the Project Meerkat neighborhood in many ways. The conditions in Sandtown and the target neighborhood have common traits. Housing vacancies, unemployment, and concentrated poverty all persist in the Meerkat neighborhood as well. The

Meerkat neighborhood has seen some of the same historical factors negatively affect the neighborhood. The pattern of white residents leaving and taking resources with them was prevalent. Job loss and the demands for a more knowledge-based work force negatively affect the neighborhood. The Meerkat neighborhood has a poverty rate that is double most of the surrounding census tract areas. With the right partner the Meerkat neighborhood could be redeveloped in the way Sandtown was. The challenge is finding an organization or institution willing to see the advantages of this paradigm shift and work with the community throughout the process. The Project Meerkat target neighborhood does not need a savior, but instead a partner to work with. Marygrove and the University of Detroit Mercy could be the type of institutions that invest resources with a social justice perspective to rebuild their neighborhood. If the focus of the institutions is helping those most in need according to their missions, then the Project Meerkat target neighborhood should be the type of investment that both fulfills the mission and strengthens the institutions by working to re-establish a healthy community.

## Walkshop

To meet the call for action by the focus group, the team developed a “Walkshop” action research project which was an opportunity for resident participation.

### *Walkshop Research*

The idea of “Walkshops” has been used in other communities to encourage resident participation in community development projects. The Inner Belt Brickbottom (IBBB) “Walkshop” in Somerville, MA used teams of residents with cameras to walk through the project area and take pictures. This was used to facilitate further discussions on the focus and

planning of the development. The agency, PlaceMatters conducted the Walkshop and used the resident input to prioritize the elements of the project ([ibbb.walkshops.us](http://ibbb.walkshops.us)).

The Walkshop concept of residents and stakeholders actively walking through a project area and taking pictures to simulate development is being used by BrightRail Planning + Design to assist in the planning of a light rail transit corridor in Oregon. Residents take photos of assets and of areas that they would like to see redeveloped ([brightrail.org](http://brightrail.org)). The idea of participatory action-based research and planning was modified for our project to include the process of physically mapping the neighborhood housing conditions. This influenced the concept of our project to address physical conditions in a participatory style with the residents.

### Focus Group 2: *Walkshop Planning*

We extended an invitation to community members to design the best approach to execute mapping the physical conditions of the neighborhood and finding the best way to engage the residents.

On October 6, 2011 two community residents participated in the second focus group to design a community event to achieve the objective of mapping the physical conditions of the neighborhood. Barbara Epps and Gaston Nash worked with the Project Meerkat team to customize the “Walkshop” to meet the physical mapping goal. Barbara Epps canvassed the neighborhood to generate interest and encourage participation among the residents. The team provided refreshments and toys to aid in stimulating the interest of the residents.

## *Walkshop Action Plan*

The Walkshop concept was a community engagement and research tool in which Project Meerkat team members requested the support of neighborhood residents to walk the neighborhood streets together and map its physical conditions and suggest what to do with the spaces in the neighborhood. Also as a part of this Walkshop, residents were encouraged to share their hopes and dreams for the neighborhood by expressing their thoughts and feelings on a “Mega Banner”. The original idea was to include painting representation of their hopes and dreams on the side of a blighted house. The concern was that this could be considered trespassing; the community may not want a permanent banner; therefore, the idea was changed to a less permanent and more mobile solution. Barbara Epps and Gaston Nash both reside on Monica Street so the first mapping event started with Monica.

### Monica Street: The First Trial

On Sunday October 16, 2011 Project Meerkat engaged in the first community walkshop. The base camp table was set up in front of Mrs. Epps’ house at the agreed upon time. A resident who wanted to help, but was not able to walk more than a short distance, volunteered to facilitate the banner. She encouraged other residents to express their thoughts about their neighborhood. At the same time, more residents volunteered to walk the neighborhood with the team members, in which each member had at least one resident walking with him/her. The accompanying resident indicated the status of different properties while talking to residents about the physical condition of their neighborhood and inviting other residents to the Hopes & Dreams banner. Two UDM Architecture students assisted in mapping. There were three mapping teams each assigned a block of Monica St.

Street maps were developed and coded so that it was possible to map the neighborhood house for house and mark vacant properties, abandoned houses, vacant houses and occupied houses as well as noting different input by the neighborhood residents.



The Project Meerkat team provided the supplies and materials for the Walkshop events. This included the cost to enlarge the Sanborn maps obtained from the City of Detroit Planning Department. Copies were made of the sign-up sheets and the street maps, apple and orange juice was purchased as well as donuts. Material for the Hopes and Dreams Banner, highlighters, pens, nametags, and markers were purchased for the Walkshop. The team used a folding table, 2 camping chairs, 2 personal cameras, and clipboards that were borrowed at no cost. A sample budget is provided for replicating the Walkshop events in other communities.

<i>Equipment:</i>	Total
Digital Cameras (2) \$69.99 each =	\$139.98
Folding table \$42.00 =	\$42.00
Camp Chairs (2) \$19.97 each =	\$39.94

<i>Supplies:</i>	
Copies & map enlargement \$45.69 =	\$45.69
Highlighters 12 pack \$7.89 =	\$ 7.89
Markers (Sharpie) 12 pack \$8.39=	\$ 8.39
Banner material 40'x100' \$17.35=	\$17.35
Clipboards (3) \$3.99 EACH =	\$11.97
Pens 12 pack black \$3.99 =	\$ 3.99
Nametags (100 count) \$3.43 =	\$ 3.43

<i>Refreshments:</i>	
Juice (2) gallon \$2.99 =	\$ 5.98

Water (case of 24) \$6.99 =	\$ 6.99	
Donuts (2) dozen \$7.99 each =	\$15.98	
Cups (24 count) \$3.79 =	\$ 3.79	
Napkins (24 count) \$1.50 =	\$1.50	
Individual Walkshop	\$354.18	Total for Project \$423.35

(Budget is designed for three walkshops with refreshments purchased for each event)

### Duplicating the First Trial

The feedback gained from the first trial allowed us to plan to effectively cover more streets in the neighborhood. The original plan was to map 3-4 streets of the neighborhood and using the results as a demonstration area; however, based on the effectiveness of the trial Walkshop we were able to complete eight streets leaving two streets for residents to complete on their own. The schedule of events changed several times. The following was the final plan for other Project Meerkat walkshops.

Walkshops Calendar:

October 23, 2011	Santa Rosa, Prairie	2:00 – 5:00 PM
October 30, 2011	Stoepel, San Juan, Lilac, Tuller and Turner	11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

The Walkshop project was designed to produce a tool that could be used by residents to address issues in the areas of physical, human, organizational, and economic development.

### Human Development Outcomes

The conditions for residents could be addressed by working on demolishing the dangerous and hazardous houses and securing those that can be saved. The residents could use the mapping of occupied houses to engage each other and create new social opportunities in

the neighborhood. The Hopes and Dreams banner would show residents that they have many things in common. This will be a starting point to dialogue about the social and economic challenges faced by the residents. Identifying the occupied houses would make it easier to determine areas of strength in the neighborhood and supporting its needs to avoid falling into the category of vacant or abandoned houses. In addition, there may be a training opportunity for de-construction projects.

### Organizational Development Outcomes

The map will be an illustration of the housing and physical differences between the institutions and the neighborhood and hopefully begin a dialogue about the potential relation of the target neighborhood and Marygrove College and the University of Detroit Mercy. Sharing the process of the Walkshop manual will provide residents with more tools to continue the development of their neighborhood. The tools and connections with the students from UDM will create future opportunities for neighborhood and University collaboration. The mapping would provide the identification of vacant lots that could later be used in determining its ownership and the best possible use of the land. The Walkshops would identify more residents interested in developing the community. The map could be used to show where the participating residents live and future neighborhood organizations could use this information to build capacity. The map could be used to engage outside agencies about partnering. The collected information about unsafe houses could be used by residents to advocate with city agencies for the redevelopment of these houses.

### *Physical Development Outcomes*

Mapping of the neighborhood would create an inventory of the physical conditions of houses and green space in the community. The map could be used to identify areas for physical redevelopment and the creation of new “social” spaces. Residents expressed a desire and a need for places that youth could play, community gardens, and community gathering space. The map will show the underutilization of green space and a lack of areas for youth and residents to engage in outdoor activity. The map could be used to look at locations of future projects. The map would also allow for analysis of where concentrations of blighted housing exist and highlight the environmental impact of the deteriorating housing and the dangers it presents to the residents. The map will provide a list of areas for city agencies to concentrate their efforts for removal and repair of blight.

### *Economic Development Outcomes*

The map and the Hopes and Dreams banner could be used to identify potential interest and locations of development in and around the neighborhood. Developers could use the identification of the open lots and vacant houses to analyze future opportunities for business or real estate investment. Residents could use the map to create business opportunities using the available space. De-construction opportunities may involve local residents and provide employment.

### *Other Impacts*

The Walkshops map highlights the environmental impact of the deteriorating housing and the dangers it presents to the residents. The banner expresses some of the concerns that residents have. This is a starting point to dialogue about the social and economic challenges

faced by the residents. The Walkshops begins the dialogue about where the target neighborhood fits in relation to the region and the institutions of Marygrove College and the University of Detroit Mercy. The map is an illustration of the housing and physical differences between the institutions and the neighborhood. The banner creates dialogue between partnering agencies and the needs and desires of the community. The tools and connections made with the students of UDM create opportunities for neighborhood and University collaboration.

### *Outputs*

The Walkshop map created consists of a set of five different maps that were compiled and accomplished using Adobe Illustrator after a comprehensive training session with Professor Virginia Stanard. Map layers designating vacant lands, vacant houses, abandoned houses, occupied houses, and neighborhood participants were created. These layers can be used individually, in combinations, or all together to display conditions in the neighborhood.

The Hopes and Dreams Mega Banner was translated to a list form to provide a voice to some of the resident's desires and dreams for their community. The banner could be used for future planning or goal setting.

A Physical Condition Photo Album was created from the photos taken during the Walkshops. The neighborhood physical condition photo album is meant to be a visual reflection of the neighborhood. Community members took some of the photos during the Walkshop event. The photo album highlights the following challenges that the neighborhood is struggling with: streets and sidewalks, alleyways and electrical poles, vacant lands, abandoned unsecured houses and vacant houses.

The Project Meerkat team developed a manual on how to code the houses and lots during future mapping events.

### *Walkshop Summary*

The walkshops were designed to map the physical conditions of the neighborhood; however, the interest it generated could not go unnoticed. Some residents joined the mapping teams as previously indicated, some residents engaged in curious conversation and other onlookers with scrutinizing stares. The casual curious conversations and the participation of residents indicated the need to disseminate information. The Project Meerkat team created a newsletter to report the progress and update the residents on resources and other engagement opportunities. The Newsletter was designed to update residents on the Walkshop progress and share the steps of research conducted so far. The newsletter provided resource information about CDC's in the neighborhood and other neighborhood organization meetings in the area. The newsletter was sent to one-hundred and seven residents that participated in the community survey and thirty-two other agencies and stakeholders.

The mapping events attracted residents that were interested in the process. The level of resident participation varied greatly from street to street. The Hopes and Dreams banner also had mixed participation. There were streets with residents assisting with mapping, photos, the sign-up sheet, and the banner. On the streets in the middle of the target community there was less activity and interest, only a few of the youth came to the base camp to enjoy the refreshments and toys. The mapping process was still productive. The residents in the neighborhood were open to the mapping. Many offered information about the status of homes that were difficult to establish occupancy. Residents offered insight on how conditions had

changed and what they hoped would happen in the future. Weather and time restrictions made extended time in the community difficult. The team did complete twelve hours of mapping in October 2011. The Walkshop process showed that pockets of the target neighborhood were stable and working to improve smaller sections of blocks. The housing vacancy problems expressed by residents were shown visually in the map and photos. The Walkshop project is a beginning tool in the process of community engagement and leadership building. The Project Meerkat team did not make or develop any plans as to how the physical space should be used. The belief is to provide the tools and allow the residents to develop the space use ideas. The team accomplished mapping the physical conditions. This did not include a plan for the next step with the map. The map by itself will have little impact, but can be an important tool to a next step. The leadership in the community is a challenge now and for future development. The neighborhood was open and receptive to community development ideas, but there is a lack of formal organization. This lack of formal leadership makes sustaining development work more difficult. There are small groups of involved residents that appeared committed to improving the conditions in the neighborhood. These residents may be able to use the tools and initial engagement from the Walkshop project to build capacity and continue the development work.

### *Assessment of Walkshop Method*

The physical mapping of the target neighborhood was measured on the percentage of streets identified on the completed map. The Meerkat team completed 80% of the target neighborhood mapping. Eight of the ten streets were mapped for housing conditions and identifying vacant lots and space. The team has provided a manual for residents to complete the mapping of the two remaining streets.

The team assessed, photographed and mapped 108 vacant homes and 139 abandoned homes. The properties will be researched to determine ownership. The team coded a street map and used photos to catalog the housing condition. The team tracked the number of residents engaged and collected contact information for future engagement. The teams used sign-up sheets and photos to document resident participation. Thirty-Seven residents participated in the community Walkshops.

## CONCLUSION

The Project Meerkat team took the long road in selecting a Capstone topic and project. The end of that road was a community not far from where the team sat and brainstormed a Capstone project. This resulted in a place-based community engagement project that focused on the needs and goals of a section of the Fitzgerald community. The goal was to create a coalition of stakeholders from the community, the surrounding organizations, and the institutions that would work together to address the needs and goals of the 10-block target neighborhood. This work has begun. The residents completed surveys, participated in focus groups, worked alongside the team in inventorying the housing conditions, and have committed to participating in the future planning of the neighborhood. Newsletters were sent out to 160 residents and community organizations updating them on the progress of the Project Meerkat capstone work. The team made contact and had dialogue with all of the major local organizations about how those organizations could work with our target area. The foundation of a group of residents along with partnering organizations has begun to form. This process



was very labor intensive. It required many meetings with many different organizations, each bringing their own goals and objectives. The Project Meerkat team became facilitators between these groups and the residents. There is a sense of opportunity that the team is hoping others will capitalize on. The area has several initiatives in process and it seems like a great time for a community-led development group to emerge. A challenge to our project was trying to get enough residents organized to continue the work after our time was finished. The team was able to provide the community with tools and resources, within the project timeline, to help identify the needs of the community, but more time is needed to continue organizing residents around the topics. There is a committed group of residents that will be looking to build capacity and to motivate other residents to address the community's needs.

Project Meerkat responded to the feedback from the community survey and the focus group that planning was great but the residents wanted to see some tangible action to address some of the issues they raised. The action oriented results were the "Walkshops" designed to work with residents in a house-by-house assessment of the conditions of the housing in the neighborhood. This process produced a map that detailed the occupied, vacant, and abandoned homes. Photos showing the conditions of each abandoned home accompanied this map. The information collected was turned over to Community Legal Resources to produce a GIS map of occupancy and ownership records. The map can be used to submit unsafe properties to the City of Detroit's Building and Safety and Engineering departments. The community has ownership of this map, which can also be used for planning and developing strategies to develop the vacant lots and houses. This work will produce a tool for community driven action in addressing the unsafe environments in the neighborhood. This will not address all the safety

issues identified by residents, but it will allow for action and progress that will hopefully continue to address the other safety issues as well. The Project Meerkat team turned over a digital toolbox containing the maps and manuals needed to continue the community work. These tools will be used by a group of residents that have started a block club within the target neighborhood. The new “College Core” Block Club is using resources and connections from Project Meerkat to create an organization that can begin to address community issues. This was the community leadership that the team was hoping would come out of the project. The College Core Block Club has participated in two initiatives that have developed to build the block club’s capacity and develop a stronger relationship with the University of Detroit Mercy. These current activities are an extension of the community engagement started with the Walkshops.

A major consideration in the Project Meerkat process was examining how Marygrove College and the University of Detroit Mercy interacted with our target community. There are two large Catholic institutions bookending a community faced with a myriad of needs and challenges. What is the role of these institutions in the neighborhood and in the surrounding community? The Project Meerkat team’s belief from the beginning was that the Universities must have an active role in the development of the surrounding neighborhoods. The team engaged both Marygrove and UDM in dialogue about their roles in this community. These conversations did not lead to a university-wide level of commitment of active engagement in the surrounding communities, but smaller departments within each university were receptive to pursuing this type of work. Marygrove ONE is open to having community residents participate in their group, and Dr. Fike, President of Marygrove, indicated the university is

developing programs in community organizing and non-traditional leadership that could be used in the community.

The University of Detroit Mercy has several connections to the community and the newly formed block club. While the Detroit Collaborative Design Center has taken an active role in the Detroit Works Long Term Project, its community development interests have been addressed through the newly formed impACT Detroit. ImpACT Detroit will be working with residents of the College Core Block Club to build capacity and leadership skills to collaboratively develop solutions to address social, economic, and environmental challenges in the neighborhood. The impACT Detroit group has facilitated several meetings with the College Core group and another neighborhood group. They have discussed challenges, opportunities, needs, and resources between the groups. Project Meerkat also assisted the College Core group, along with impACT Detroit, to arrange a space on campus for the College Core Block Club to host its first meeting. This relationship between impACT Detroit and the block club will hopefully continue to build skills and capacity and support the community members as they begin the work of community change.

In addition to the relationship with impACT Detroit, the Project Meerkat team researched an opportunity with the Leadership Institute at UDM to provide future leadership skill resources and formalize the connections between the community and the university. One step to connect the University to the neighborhood was the Ford Community Corps Partnership grant. The Project Meerkat team successfully wrote a grant proposal to connect a Masters of Community Development Social Justice class to the Fitzgerald community. This project, like the capstone, has evolved to try and best meet the needs of the community. The

class, community residents, and the Project Meerkat team have worked together to plan an Orientation and Outreach night on the campus of UDM. The idea is to connect the residents to resources and the university to the residents. This will hopefully become an ongoing annual event.

The University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture demonstrated interest in the target community. Virginia Stanard's Design Studio created design ideas for Livernois Avenue and its surrounding communities. In developing their creative designs for the surrounding physical area, the design studio students collaborated with the Project Meerkat team. The Project Meerkat team presented general information about the community's self-identified needs and participated in the review of the design studio's preliminary presentations. The design studio students were invited and encouraged to participate in the capstone project community exchange events. The collaboration of knowledge between Virginia Stanard's design studio students and the Project Meerkat team influenced the student's community-based designs and influenced the opportunity for, and belief of a renewed relationship between UDM and the community. The public exhibit of the design ideas for Livernois Avenue and its surrounding communities fostered an adjacent community's interest in the Project Meerkat target community.

The community also raised the issue of community space or social space. They recognized a desire to have more spaces for children to play, people to gather outside, and areas to have meetings. The Project Meerkat team was able to get commitments from both impACT Detroit and Marygrove to provide space in the future for community meetings. The team was not able to directly address the need for play areas for children. The Walkshop initiative will enable green space to be identified and plan for future development by the community.

The Project Meerkat Capstone work has made progress towards creating a community led coalition that is able to meet and solve the challenges they face. The future of the project depends on the continued success of resident organization efforts. The neighborhood must have more people involved to make community level change. They must work to overcome social isolation and apathy that keeps many individuals from working together to create a collective impact. The universities and other local initiatives must be engaged and motivated to take an active role in development. These challenges must be addressed and the momentum carried forward. The team realizes the limitations of the Capstone Project and views Project Meerkat as the beginning of a neighborhood redevelopment plan that will have many phases. This will hopefully be the gateway to community development in the neighborhood.

ImpACT Detroit will be working with the community residents to facilitate meetings about what the next steps will be in developing the neighborhood. Community Legal Resources, the Leadership Institute at UDM, Marygrove College, ONE and the FCC are engaged in future opportunities to work with the community on mutually beneficial solutions to the community's challenges.

### *Lessons Learned*

The Project Meerkat team has learned much from the community and the other organizations we encountered through the project. The need for more involved community engagement became a large focus of the project. How were we to help if we didn't understand and have relationships at a deeper level? This process meant that we would do the engaging

and would have to delay finding a community partner. Our community engagement focus also came from a challenge by the community to produce action and not just set up meetings to talk about it.

The lesson learned, as MCD students, is to really start to get to know a community you must be IN the community. Living in the community is not a necessary requirement, such as in the Sandtown Case Study, however, being a resident member of the community would be an asset. Applying what we learned to a professional environment, we would have identified a community member to be a liaison who would work with the team in all areas. The liaison role would not speak as the view of the community, it would serve as a connector and reminder to the people we are serving.

The team maintained the approach which valued the community's ability to define the challenges. This was not easy. It took longer, added more issues to the list, and made it difficult to select an appropriate partner to work with.

Surveys are very time and labor intensive. We would have liked to research more effective survey delivery methods. It also takes resources, and a shoestring budget made it more difficult. We recognized a need for a small budget to handle logistics and supplies needed for engagement. The choice of how to collect and analyze data is also very important. The use of SPSS was very effective. It saved time and provided much cleaner data analysis. The ability to analyze data in both statistical and geographic form is a skill set that we found to be critical to avoid extra work or costly mistakes.

The team did an effective job of keeping the active participants engaged. The use of flyers hand delivered, reminder phone calls, emails, and residents recruiting residents created a

network of information. This was hard to create on a community scale. The numerous vacant houses made it hard to identify where the residents were in the community.

We understand the need to develop community leadership skills, but ultimately the most important need is community organizing that fits the scale of the whole 10-block area. The need is for enough people to be active to create a voice for the community. The lower density of the neighborhood means that there might only be a single participant on a block, which makes progress hard. We decided for time and impact reasons to keep our focus in the residential sector. However, we recognize the need to engage the businesses and schools in the surrounding community. This could have provided a larger coalition and resources with which to work.

We received feedback about the relationship between renters and homeowners in the neighborhood. Project limitations precluded our ability to address this issue. For the long term success of the neighborhood a plan must be in place to facilitate improved relationships between these two groups.

The last lesson learned is that for community development to be done “right”, meaning authentically engaging the community in the development process, it takes time (lots of time), commitment, and resources. Time and commitment were the biggest challenges. The Project Meerkat team committed to a project that would be in its beginning stages as far as community change by the time the capstone period ended. The pace of community change does not fit neatly into semesters, especially if you are committed to a resident driven process.

## *Recommendations*

- Professional community organizers are needed to help build capacity in the neighborhood. This is a conditional recommendation. The community must increase the number of active residents doing neighborhood work. Small numbers of residents will have a much harder time with neighborhood level problems. This is why it is very important to recruit and build the number of neighbors participating. It may be necessary to have a short-term team of professional organizers to assist in building the initial resident base. The community has several committed residents that may do this independently; it may just take a little longer to get started. The anchoring institutions need to reassess their relationship with the community and consider the surrounding neighborhoods as an asset to future growth and success.
- The residents and supporting organizations must develop the Housing Inventory/Map into a tool to identify and advocate addressing the safety issues. Residents can highlight the needs in the community with data using the inventory map. This and future tools should be data driven to focus both internal and external stakeholders on where the true challenges lay.
- The institutions of higher learning, the community and the local business association must develop a strategy and long-term plan to revitalize housing for students and residents in the target neighborhood. The plan would address vacancy issues and provide stability to the population and housing stock. This plan can be mapped out by the universities or housing non-profit organizations as the lead. This plan is a win-win scenario for the neighborhood and the universities. The long term redevelopment and



sustainability of the neighborhood is tied to the two universities. The universities will have an increasingly difficult time attracting new students if the areas directly surrounding the university are allowed to deteriorate. A healthy Fitzgerald will have a direct connection to healthy and prosperous university institutions. Students and residents have both mentioned this idea during the course of the capstone project.

- The University of Detroit Mercy should research options to locate university student services, such as dental, counseling, and legal aid in the surrounding communities. Locating the services in the neighborhood will provide students with real world experience, and benefit the community as a whole. The outreach of a university should also begin at its front door. The need and the resources must connect. Having members of the local community sit on the university's community outreach teams would help this recommendation.
- The business development coalition must include the residents from the neighborhoods in the planning phase of future developments, especially along the commercial corridors. Over the course of the project we have researched multiple initiatives that have tried to do redevelopment in the Fitzgerald area. Most of the projects were economic in nature, but had only a token representation of individuals in the residential areas. These projects in the future would be better served if they included people from the community who are struggling with the economic challenges to give input on how the new initiatives may actually benefit those that need it most. The subjugated voices in the communities need a forum to share the valuable knowledge of what it is like to live in these communities.

The target neighborhood needs to formalize its voice to take advantage of the resources and opportunities that exist. The residents working with Project Meerkat and impACT Detroit have begun the process of forming a block club. This block club needs to actively engage both local universities to be active in the neighborhood, to advocate for the universities to bring back needed youth programming that was historically provided by the universities. The most important step is for this new block club to actively participate in the Fitzgerald Community Council. The neighborhood has a structure to voice issues and needs to make use of this organization. The FCC needs to focus on bringing residents, stakeholders, and organizations together to solve the larger issues in the area.

This is a challenging time for Southeastern Michigan, Detroit, and the Fitzgerald community. Economic crisis, the reduction in resources, and disinvestment in the area has led to some extremely challenging conditions. In spite of and in response to these challenges and conditions, many individuals and organizations around the City of Detroit refuse to let the negativity win. They have personally begun the work to create better communities for themselves and others to live in. Some of these hardworking people live in the Fitzgerald community and are working for a better neighborhood. Fitzgerald is not unique in Detroit. There are people in neighborhoods all over Detroit that are fighting uphill battles with limited resources and people power. Fitzgerald should be an opportunity for residents and institutions to make a community stronger. This neighborhood should be a start of the bigger work of creating a healthy region. The time is now for stakeholders to invest in building a brighter Fitzgerald community, while not losing sight that this is a first step to creating stronger neighborhoods throughout the city.

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APPENDIX I





APPENDIX II



[http://www.pps.org/articles/what\\_is\\_placemaking/](http://www.pps.org/articles/what_is_placemaking/)





## APPENDIX III

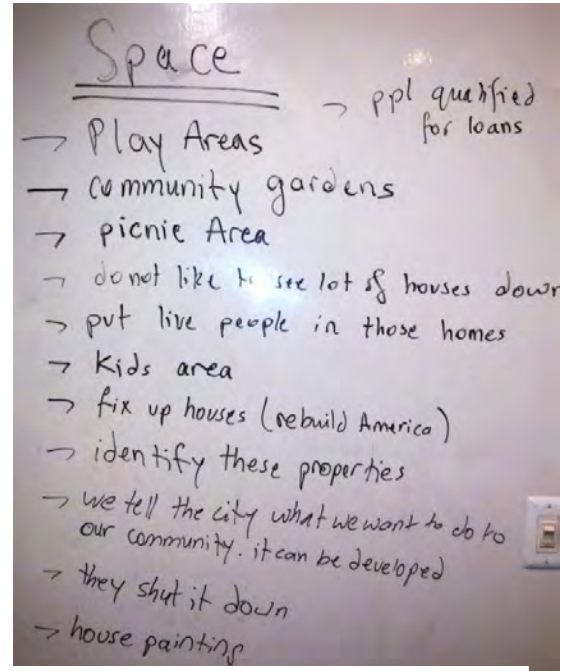
### PROJECT MEERKAT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

**Please answer the following:**

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>N/A</u>
1. Do people in this neighborhood watch out for each other?	68%	14%	12%
2. Do you rent or own your home?	<u>RENT</u>	<u>OWN</u>	
	61%	33%	
3. Number of people living in the household?	average 3.3 people		
4. Are you proud to live in this neighborhood?	55%	24%	15%
5. How many years have you lived in this community?	<u>&lt; 1 year</u>	<u>1-5 yrs</u>	<u>6-15 yrs</u> <u>&gt; 15 yrs</u>
	9%	24%	12%   49%
6. Would you recommend living in this neighborhood to others?	47%	34%	13%
7. Are there quality schools nearby?	62%	17%	14%
8. Are there parks, playgrounds, or outdoor recreation available?	43%	44%	7%
9. Do you have entertainment or social meeting spaces nearby?	30%	55%	9%
10. Do you have access to quality local shopping?	56%	33%	5%
11. Do you participate or belong to a local church or community group?	55%	38%	1%
12. Is community safety an issue in your neighborhood?	60%	30%	5%
13. Given the opportunity would you move out of the neighborhood?	57%	35%	2%



## APPENDIX IV



### **Focus Group**

**September 13, 2011**



## APPENDIX V



**Project Meerkat**  
A Masters of Community Development Project

### Call to Action

Project Meerkat needs your participation in designing and organizing two upcoming community action "walkshops."

Please join us in this call to action on **Thursday October 6, 2011** from 6 PM to 7 PM at School of Architecture - University of Detroit Mercy.

*Project Meerkat Team  
Steve, Ahmad & Debbie*

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### Bring a Neighbor

Voice mail: **734-757-6224**  
4001 W. McNichols Road - Detroit, MI  
48221 - 3038  
Email: [projectmeerkat.udm@gmail.com](mailto:projectmeerkat.udm@gmail.com)















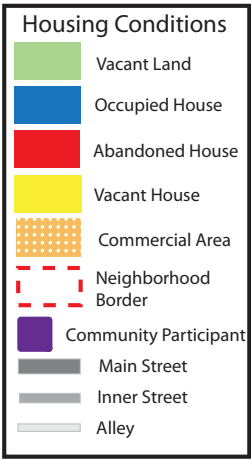
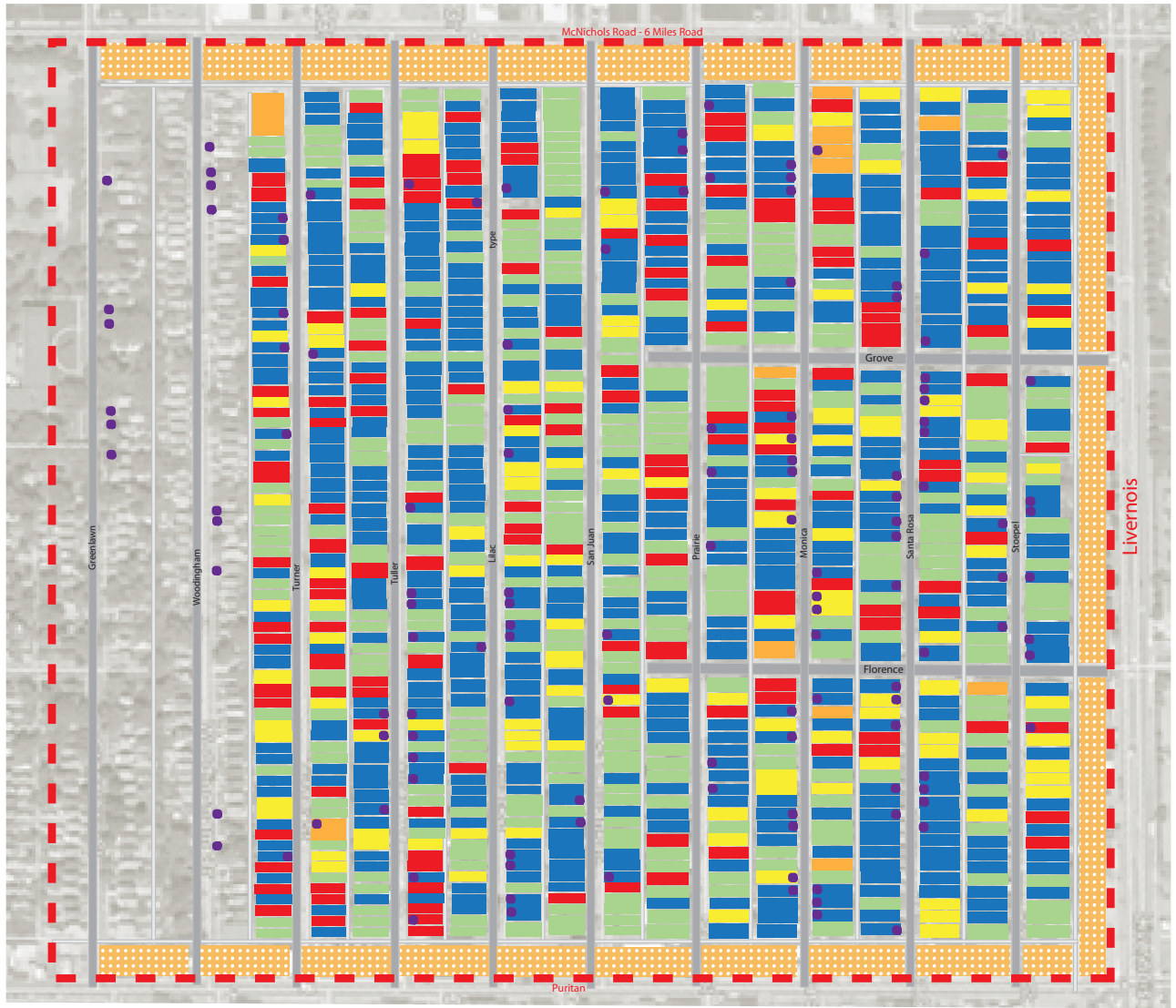


## Housing Condition Result

Street Name	Vacant Lands	%	Vacant Houses	%	Abandoned Houses	%	Occupied Houses	%	Community Participants	%	Total Number of Properties
Stoepel	32	25	19	15	12	9	53	41	11	21	128
Santa Rosa	16	12	17	13	11	9	58	45	26	45	129
Monica	24	19	23	18	15	12	42	33	24	57	128
Prairie	32	25	7	5	20	16	54	42	10	19	129
San Juan	59	40	13	9	12	8	42	29	7	17	146
Lilac	41	28	13	9	13	9	61	42	15	25	144
Tuller	37	27	7	5	25	18	52	38	14	27	138
Turner	30	21	19	13	28	19	52	36	9	17	144
Woodingham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	###	138
Geenlawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	###	95
<b>Total</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1319</b>

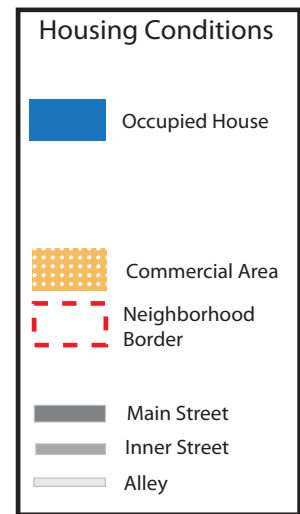
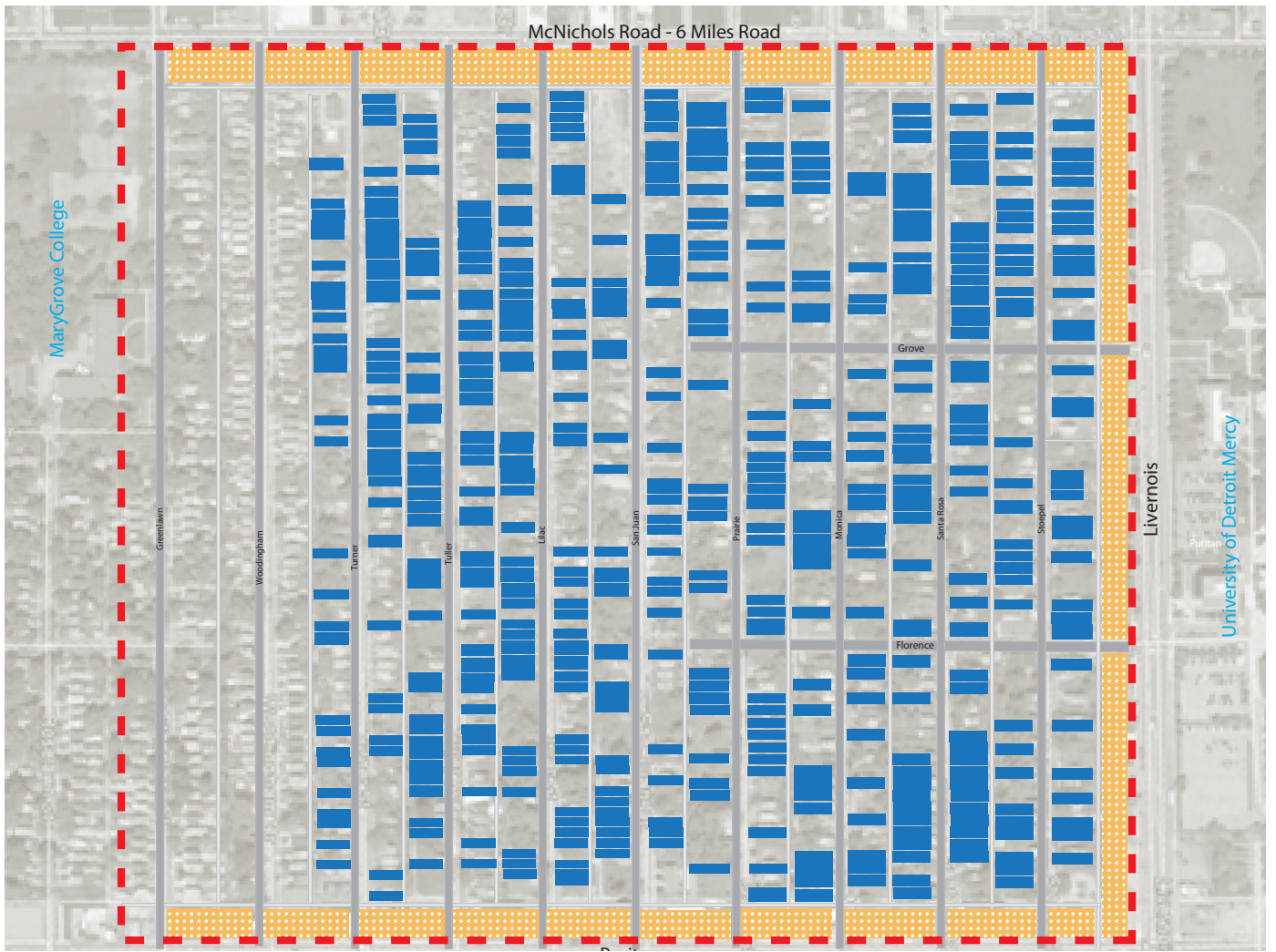


# APPENDIX VIII



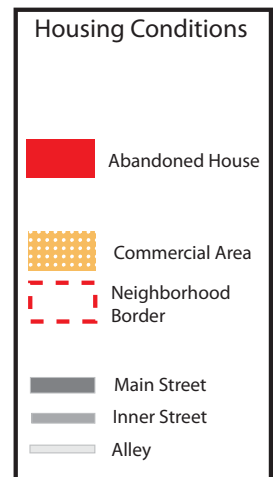
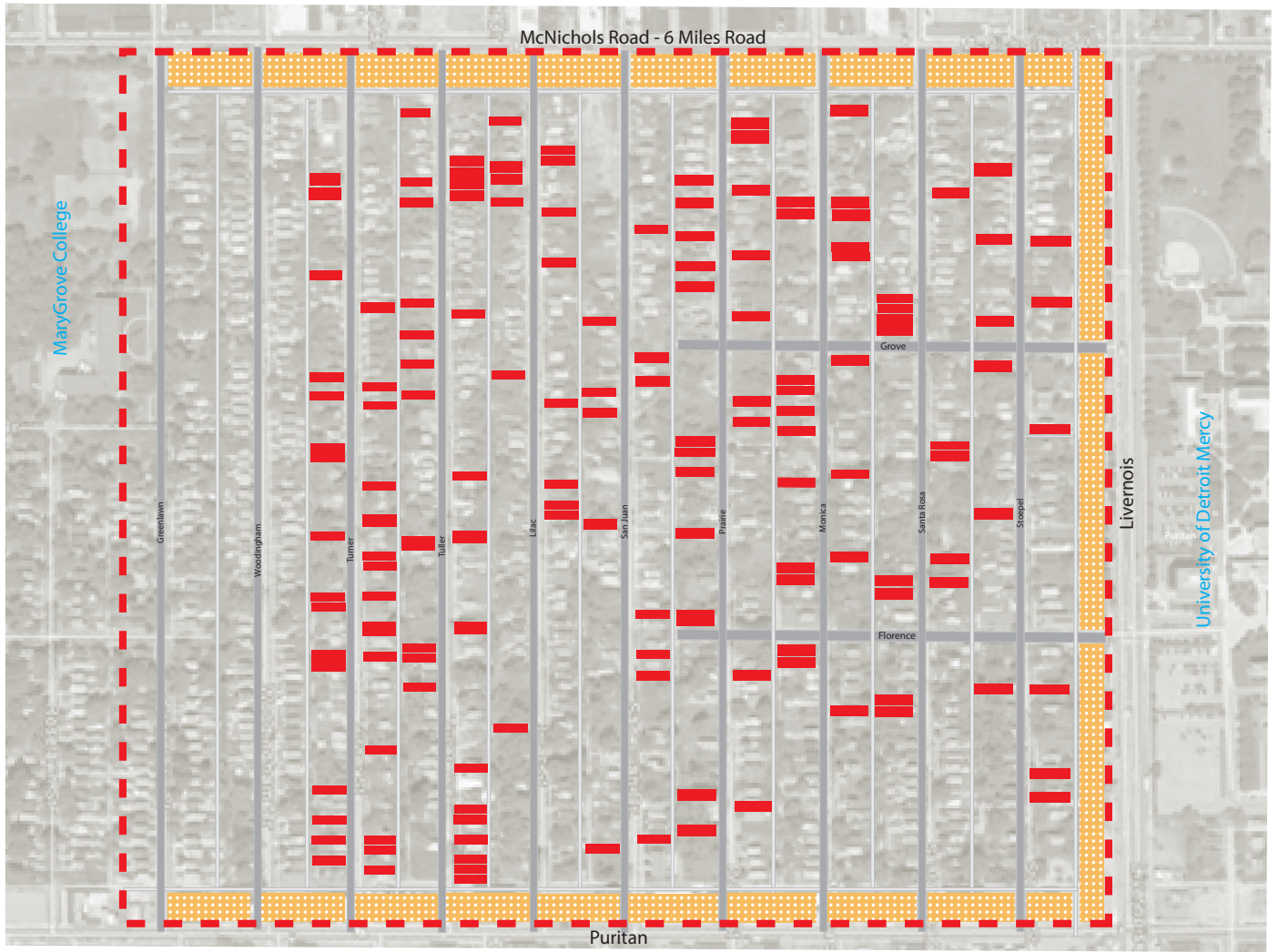




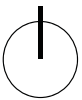
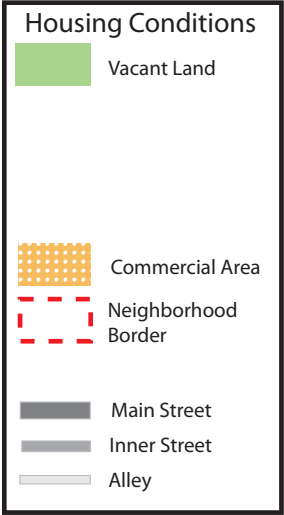




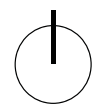
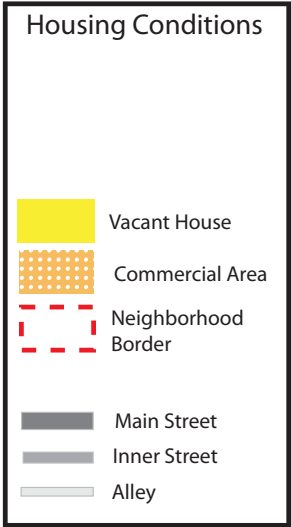






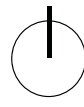
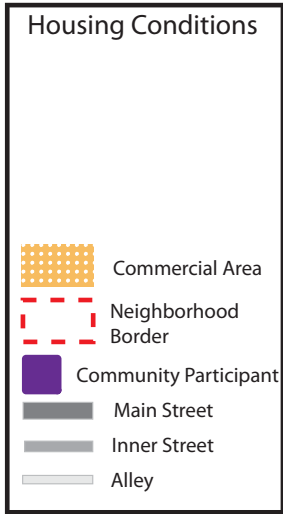








# APPENDIX IX









# Project Meerkat

**A Masters of Community Development Project**

UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY - SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
MASTERS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
DECEMBER 2011

CONTACT US: [projectmeerkat.udm@gmail.com](mailto:projectmeerkat.udm@gmail.com)

## WHAT IS PROJECT MEERKAT?

We are Steve, Ahmad and Debbie, students of the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) in the Master's program of Community Development (MCD). Currently, we are wrapping up the Capstone phase of our MCD program. The Capstone is a project developed by a team of students focusing on the Human, Organizational, Physical and Economic concerns within a community. Even though this project is an academic exercise, we hope to continue working with you to take action in realizing the HOPES AND DREAMS of your community.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

In July and August 2011, we conducted an informal survey. We went door-to-door asking 20 brief questions about your community. Approximately 100 of your neighbors participated. A majority of the participants identified three areas of concern for your neighborhood:

### **Safety - Leadership- Social Space**

On Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> a group of your neighbors met at the University of Detroit Mercy to discuss the results of the informal survey and to make a plan to address the areas of concern. In response, a plan was formed to conduct "WALKSHOPS". On October 11<sup>th</sup> the community was invited to meet and finalize the walkshop schedule.

## Join Us

**PROJECT MEERKAT PUBLIC PRESENTATION**  
**Tuesday, December 13, 2011 - 6:30 - 8:00**  
**UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MERCY**  
**SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE**



## APPENDIX XI

### FCCP service learning grant project



We want good things for you.

#### UDM & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

You Are Invited

#### NEIGHBORHOOD ORIENTATION

Thursday, April 19, 2012

6-8PM

UTM Student Center, Thomas Group

Campus Tours 6:30 & 7:30 PM

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**Come early and enjoy UDM Softball**  
Free Admission • UDM  
Final Game of the Season  
Softball Series - From  
2000 vs. Longview

**Counseling Clinic** - Social counseling -  
Individual and Group - Career assessment  
counseling - stress counseling - study counseling -  
Depression - anxiety - etc.

**Business School** - Free Tax Service - VITA -  
Program - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

**School of Law** - Legal access for a variety of needs:  
Immigration Services, consumer credits, student  
loan/criminal defense, disabled services, middle  
class degree evaluation, Veterans Project (SALUTE),  
Immigration issues, social justice legal issues

**Library** - Leading Library & Learning Center

**Dental Clinic** - Dental Service Administration -  
Dentist and Staff

**EDDC (Detroit Collaborative Design Center)**  
Tap A/CY Detroit - Working with neighborhood  
residents to create their communities

**Psychology Clinic** - Individual Psychology with:  
Children, Adolescents and Adults  
Group: Marital Therapy, Parenting Skills Training,  
Group Therapy, Emotional Concerns, Behavioral  
Problems, Child Assessment, Learning Disabilities,  
and Attention Developmental Disabilities

**School of Engineering** - Knowledge transfer  
programs

**The Institute for Leadership and Service** -  
Community Service Programs





## APPENDIX XII

# IDEAS For LIVERNOIS

design **ideas** for livernois avenue and its communities

Please join us for an exhibit of work by students from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture considering design ideas for Livernois Avenue and its surrounding communities.

Wednesday, May 2

6:00-7:30pm

University of Detroit Mercy

Warren Loranger School of Architecture

Genevieve Fisk Loranger Architecture Center, First Floor

4001 West McNichols Road

Detroit, MI 48221



APPENDIX XIII





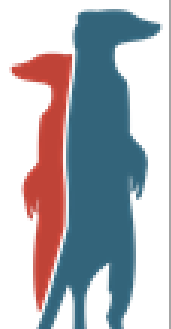


## APPENDIX IVX

# Background History and Research

	<b>Housing Vacancies</b>	<b>Median household income</b>	<b>% with high school diploma</b>	<b>% with Bachelors degree</b>
Neighborhood	27%	\$28,544	65.7%	9%
State	14.6%	\$48,432	87.9%	24.6%
National	11%	\$51,914	85.3%	27.9%

2010 US Census





APPENDIX XV



