

# ELEVATING VOICES THROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD STORYTELLING

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Stephine Harbin, Fitzgerald Resident, Participating in a storytelling activity, Fall 2021





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Examining the history of Detroit, one sees how narrative, and story, have had a dramatic effect on where development happens, who can do the developing, and who the development is for. Who gets to tell the stories about what happened during the conflicts of 1943 or 1967? What narrative is typically presented when discussing Ossian Sweet or the Birwood Wall? When only certain sides of the story are presented, or entire narratives and experiences are left out of the conversation, all that remains is propaganda.

In centering on the Marygrove campus and the neighboring area, it becomes apparent that there have been issues surrounding population loss and economic disinvestment in the (recent updates notwithstanding). In many ways, the plight of Marygrove College, abandoning its undergraduate and graduate degree programs and closing its doors as an institute of higher learning, becomes a microcosm of what has happened in the area. Yet as new development begins to occur in the area, the question must be asked: Did anyone get any input from those who have stayed? From those who have been long-time residents of the neighborhood?

As the research process continued, the team took to the task of mapping area assets, places of significance to residents' current and historic. These assets center around the University of Detroit Mercy's HOPE model of community development with HOPE standing for Human, Organizational, Physical, and Economic development. Some of this research took the team just outside the neighborhood of Marygrove, but with assets important to its residents nonetheless. These assets include churches, bakeries, clothing stores, and community hubs among other assets. Yet again, the question came back to

the team: What is the story surrounding these businesses or organizations? Why have they survived and others have not?

One main thread became abundantly clear in analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the community. This thread, which had woven itself through much of the information and feedback the team had received, indicated that what was missing most from the development efforts happening in and around the community was holistic and authentic engagement with community members. The community has a wealth of knowledge, with many long-term residents and families able to provide insight into the neighborhood and its history, and stable institutions to build around including the University of Detroit Mercy and the Marygrove Conservancy being the bookends of the area. Yet oftentimes it seems as though these groups are, at best, patronized and worst of all completely ignored. This can lead to mistrust between residents and developers or government, making any new developments or projects much less impactful than they could be.

This conclusion led the team to develop a toolkit for community engagement based on the activity of storytelling. The thought behind this was that it would allow for a more inclusive experience for residents while also providing deeper insights into the community, its residents, and the current assets and needs existing within that neighborhood. The team believes that when this type of engagement occurs, the benefit to all of the pillars of the

HOPE model are strengthened and that community connectivity and continuity are reinforced in ways that are more impactful than traditional engagement methods.

At the core of the storytelling toolkit is the STORY process. Within this process are the following, crucial steps:

- S - Share your social location
- T - Trust (establish trust with participants)
- O - Observe and Organize feedback
- R - Reflect and Re-engage
- Y - Your turn

When combined with well-thought-out prompts or activities, these steps can lead to deeper engagement between residents and organizations or developers. By building connections between those two sides, residents and developers, the goal is to move relationships from mistrustful and adversarial to more collaborative. As those relationships build, the health and strength of the community also grows as residents have more of a say in what is happening in and to their community.

This capstone project takes a comprehensive and in-depth look at all of these items, providing more detail around the findings of the team and the possibilities of implementing this type of community engagement might be.





LIVERNOIS AVE

ROBERT ST  
SANTA ROSA DR  
MONTE ST  
PRAIRIE ST  
SAN JUAN DR  
WACO ST  
TULLER ST  
TURNER ST  
WOODINGHAM DR  
GREENLAWN AVE

M-10

PURITAN ST

ROSELAWN ST

NORTHLAWN ST

CHERRYLAWN ST

OLIVE ST

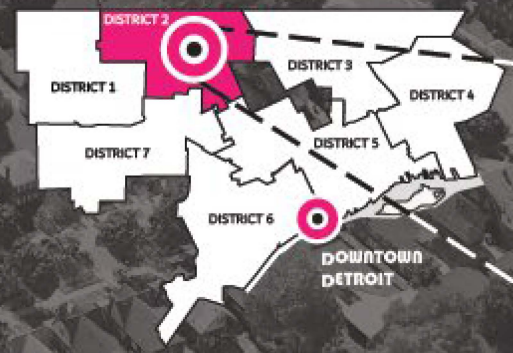
WISCONSIN ST

INDIANA AVE

KENTUCKY ST

W MICHIGAN ST

WYOMING ST



■ BAGLEY NEIGHBORHOOD  
■ FITZGERALD NEIGHBORHOOD ■ MARYGROVE CAMPUS



T H I E

P O W E R

F F

S T O R I E S





Stories play a vital role in the establishment and preservation of a community's identity, and storytelling is a core principle of community development. Yet this process takes time, with identity taking years to build. The result is neighborhoods with unique characteristics and history. It is important to note that storytelling is not limited to a verbal performance or the written word, instead playing a role in all aspects of life as both artistic expression and cultural praxis. The influence of storytelling is present in everything, from a mural project honoring a local activist to a live poetry reading or choir concert. Stories shape the landscape of a neighborhood. As a result, it is vital that neighborhoods are accessible and equitable, allowing anyone to share their experience and create opportunities for dialogue.

This capstone project's research opened dialogue between neighbors and community partners. Our written case studies identify a pattern of ineffective and incomplete engagement, specifically with the residents of the Fitzgerald neighborhood. As an anchoring institution within the neighborhood, the Marygrove Conservancy is looking to connect with Fitzgerald residents in meaningful and sustainable ways. The team goal is to create a toolkit that uses storytelling to engage, connect, and strengthen relationships between neighbors and community partners.

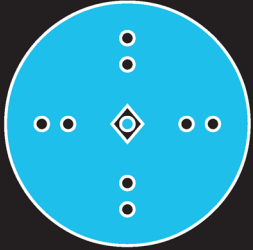
The purpose of bringing storytelling into community engagement is to encourage honest dialogue between community members while also connecting local organizations more closely to the people they serve. This allows residents and organizations to explore experiences to build community, utilizing holistic storytelling as an engagement strategy through place-based, residential implementation. This was completed through the implementation of the Storytelling Toolkit during selected community meetings in the fall of 2021, which is explored in more detail throughout this capstone project. The team examined data, such

as the number of participants in meetings, and compared this to information previously obtained from earlier research methodology, including online research, interviews with residents and local organizations, participation in community events, and multiple self-guided walking tours of the area. The team utilized research to determine the effectiveness of storytelling as a method of sustainable community engagement and collaboration. This project serves as the culmination of the Masters of Community Development (MCD) Program at the University of Detroit Mercy and the result is for this work to have a tangible long-term impact. The storytelling praxis will be accomplished by working with an established community partner, listening to and collaborating with community members, and openly sharing the results of the project with the community. The community partner for this project is the Marygrove Conservancy, a Non-Profit organization dedicated to activating and preserving the former Marygrove College campus as both a school and community hub (Allen). Based on this partnership, Bagley and Fitzgerald Neighborhoods were selected as the study area. By creating and supporting storytelling programming, this project will encourage sustainable growth through highlighting the history and culture of the Bagley and Fitzgerald communities.

As this project is embedded in development initiatives, these efforts can be expanded through community engagement work, case study analysis, and further academic research. The basis for this research aligns with the principals of the integrated approach to development at the core of the MCD program. The impact of storytelling connects all aspects of community development, human, organizational, physical, and economic, known as the HOPE model.



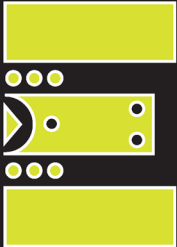
Human development fundamentally aims to build human capacity through equal access to quality education, housing, neighborhood environment, and other essential resources. Equally important is access to transportation, employment opportunities, health care, and public health systems.



Organizational development is an important pillar for community development because it encompasses continuous analysis, planning, implementing, and evaluating. This process bridges the past to the future, transferring the knowledge and skills necessary for change. Within this pillar, the community is served through the collaborative process of inclusion, equity, empowerment, and social justice.



Physical development intersects with service, social justice, and sustainability through analyzing the built environment. It emphasizes the human-made environment and its impact on the natural world, seen through the concept of designing for ecological sustainability. Development can meet the needs of the community with a specific consciousness to promote the health of the earth while limiting the adverse impact on human health.



Economic development is the lens through which community development focuses on improving community economic health through issues of employment, affordable housing, and essential retail, like grocery stores and pharmacies. As communities drive this process, with the purpose of overall revitalization of neighborhoods and services and increasing home values, communities are engaging in the economic development process to attract sustainable investments that create jobs and builds wealth.

Community development is the belief that building sustainable communities based on service and justice can only be done through community participation and civic transparency. At its best, community development is an inclusive process that provides an opportunity for everyone to participate. The goal for community development anchors is to establish mutual respect between ordinary people and people in positions of power; to establish accountability, remove barriers, and resolve the issues that affect the lives of the people from the community.

The art of storytelling is the contextualization of historical archives, helping communities understand the richness of the past. These are the stories of beginnings, struggles, and resilience; narratives that must be passed on with authentic accuracy, designed to promote equitable and sustainable progress for future generations.





Top: Mural on Livernois in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Artist: Phillip Simpson  
Middle: Mural on Livernois in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Artist: The Fel'le Gallery  
Bottom: Mural on Livernois in the Avenue of Fashion, Artist, Michael Owens





Analyzing case studies helps to expand knowledge and is a useful tool for comparing information. Case study examples are woven throughout several sections and used as a reference and provide examples of how other organizations have implemented initiatives and programming that build a storytelling component into community development. These diverse examples inevitably make the difference between creating a platform for a sustainable implementation and simply completing the requirements for the capstone project.

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# STUDIES



Mural located near the Brilliant Detroit Fitzgerald House, Fall 2021





## THE GENERATIONAL NARRATIVE

Throughout African culture and history there have been griots (pronounced gree-oh), those that hold on to and tell the valuable stories that future generations need to hear. A griot is a member of a class of traveling poets and musicians who keep a tradition of oral history in parts of West Africa, with performances including tribal histories and genealogies. More broadly, a griot is a storyteller. Griots, both past and modern-day, share knowledge and narratives that help others remain connected to their roots. Abdul-Fattah, states “in the western Sahel, legendary tales are shared and passed down through different forms of expression, but especially spoken word.”

Griots told epic stories that people can refer back to, especially stories passed down from family members. These stories are comprised of 6 key factors and details are uncovered by asking the 5-W's (Who, What, Where, When, Why), and 1-H, (How). For example, who was a part of the story? When did it happen? Where did it take place? How did the storyteller learn the story? Is the story in a book, or a movie? Were stories passed down, shared at bedtime or over dinner? Each question is used for every story and has proven to be effective in obtaining information to connect the past with the present. Stories continue to grow with impact as each person adds details related to their life and the lives of their audiences. If the crucial details are the same, the integrity of the story remains intact regardless of additions or retracted details. Stories remain relevant across generations and cultures regardless of how they are told. Information passed down provides evidence for what people need to do to enhance the future. Regardless of how it's delivered, written or shared through performance, the story is being told and shared.

A sage, or professional storyteller offers great experiences through their gifted storytelling. Narratives and stories shared generally include components like lessons learned, details about culture, or an opportunity to simply admire the ancestral art of storytelling. Learning stories from griots and other storytellers allows the listener to give honor and respect to elders and ancestors. Stories and legendary tales are shared and passed down through many forms of expression (Abdul-Fattah). Griots help people make sense of the world and use the art of storytelling to teach important aspects of culture (All Good Tales). Abdul-Fattah says that griots commonly share stories through spoken word. Narrators of oral traditions are born into their highly respected position, griots play a vital role not only as storytellers, but as poets, historians, genealogists, and musicians. Traditional griots often accompany their stories and songs with music from instruments like the kora (a stringed instrument similar to a harp) or balafon (a kind of xylophone) (Abdul-Fattah).

# THE GRIOT



Collage of imagery documenting and depicting griots from various source.

Abdul-Fattah presents this challenge to people: “Think about a favorite story and determine how to recount it to a younger sibling, a teacher, or maybe a friend from a different country. What details would you add from your own personal experiences to make the story your own? What would you emphasize? How does the story represent your family life, cultural traditions, or morals?” These questions can create substantial stories that will remain for generations. Traditionally, griots were a social caste, dedicated to preserving the memory of society and while the exact role of a griot is multi-faceted, the work is a service, particularly to the richer members of the community and for those who are considered to be nobility. Tying the history to the present, it is possible to see how listening to elders tell stories helps with understanding one’s current, individual placement in society.





Detroit history photos from the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University







Interior and exterior photographs of the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, Google photograph, Stephanie Gervais- Ducouret and Rikhit Arora, 2019

In an effort to provide an accurate assessment of an area, historical context must be taken very seriously. Every neighborhood, every community has a story, unveiling layers of history that bridge past inequities to present conditions. Furthermore, no community is able to fully shield itself from outside forces, providing a link to the broader context of cultural events. This section addresses the historical context of the Livernois-McNichols Corridor and the Avenue of Fashion.

It is important to acknowledge that this land is the ancestral home to Native Americans. Michigan is currently home to twelve tribes, with a population of over 30,000 Native Americans living in the Detroit metro area, and was a heavily populated area for thousands of years (Ryerson). The Anishinaabe or “Three Fires” people; a nation comprised of, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Botawatomi were the primary group in the region when Europeans arrived in the 1600’s (Herberg). The banks of the Detroit River also served as a common meeting place, hunting ground, and burial mound site for several other Native American groups including Wyandot, Iroquois, Fox (Meskwaki), Miami and Sauk tribes (Herberg). In the years following European arrival in the region the land was systematically claimed and resettled through deceit and violent action (Lyons). By acknowledging the story of this region’s original inhabitants, we hope to continue the dialogue around equity for all people.

Historical archives dating back to the nineteenth century record Detroit as a city of resilience. Having remarkable success in its physical development and economic growth, from fur trade to agriculture, Detroit seemed to have a unique ability to discover and capitalize on natural resources. In 1805, when the city lost all but one of the town’s 300 buildings in a fire believed to have started in a barn, residents demonstrated how community has always been a part of Detroit’s DNA. The community formed a line leading to the Detroit River, passing buckets of water to one another in an effort to douse the fire and save their property. Coined the “bucket brigade”, the residents were ultimately unable to save the town, but no lives were lost. The following September the territorial government passed an act incorporating Detroit as a city, and after the rebuilding of the city, Detroit became a thriving community with over 45,000 residents and a major manufacturer of cast-iron stoves.

Known as the “City of making” even before the rise of the automobile industry, the twentieth century saw Detroit’s population rise to nearly two million people and almost three million manufacturing jobs (Vogel). The automobile industry dominated the economic growth in Detroit, earning it the nickname of “Motor City.” Olds Motor Works was the first factory to manufacture automobiles, operating a 100,000 square foot building located on the south side of East Jefferson, including space for sales of-





Ford Mack Avenue Plant, 1929 photograph, Macs Motor City, *The Real Story of the Ford Mack Avenue Plant*

fices and a showroom. The complex caught fire shortly after construction and operations were halted, with Olds ultimately relocating to Lansing and selling the property on East Jefferson. Henry Ford also built manufacturing plants in the city with the original Ford manufacturing sites on Piquette and Mack Avenue. Henry Ford hired more than 52,000 workers, initially offering meager wages and long hours in order for the auto manufacturer to keep up with the demand for a lower priced automobile. Soon, however, Ford began to advertise jobs for almost double the wage. The \$5 per day wage not only guaranteed a reduction in workforce turnover, but it also influenced Detroit's population growth. By the mid-1920s, with the combination of the auto industry and immigration booming, Detroit became a world-class industrial powerhouse and the fourth-largest city in the United States, a title it would retain through much of the twentieth century.

However, the twentieth century would see Detroit experience a series of events that marked

the beginning of a slow decline. First, the auto plants began closing and moving out of the city with the closing of the Packard factory noted as being the most devastating. The iconic plant, opened in the early 1900s, was 3.5 million square feet and spanned across 45 buildings. Employing more than 40,000 skilled workers, the plant closing led to the elimination of thousands of jobs. The restructuring of the industrial economy and the troubled auto industry led not only to a dramatic decline in jobs but also a reduction in the city's population.

Next, the 1956 Highway Act caused a mass decline in Detroit's population and destroyed more than 300 Black owned businesses. The construction and development of Interstate 375, while a part of the largest public works project in American history, brought the destruction of the Detroit neighborhoods known as Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. This historic cultural hub was home to many Detroiters who arrived during the Great Migration,





1932 Aerial Photograph of study area, Detroit News Photograph Collection, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

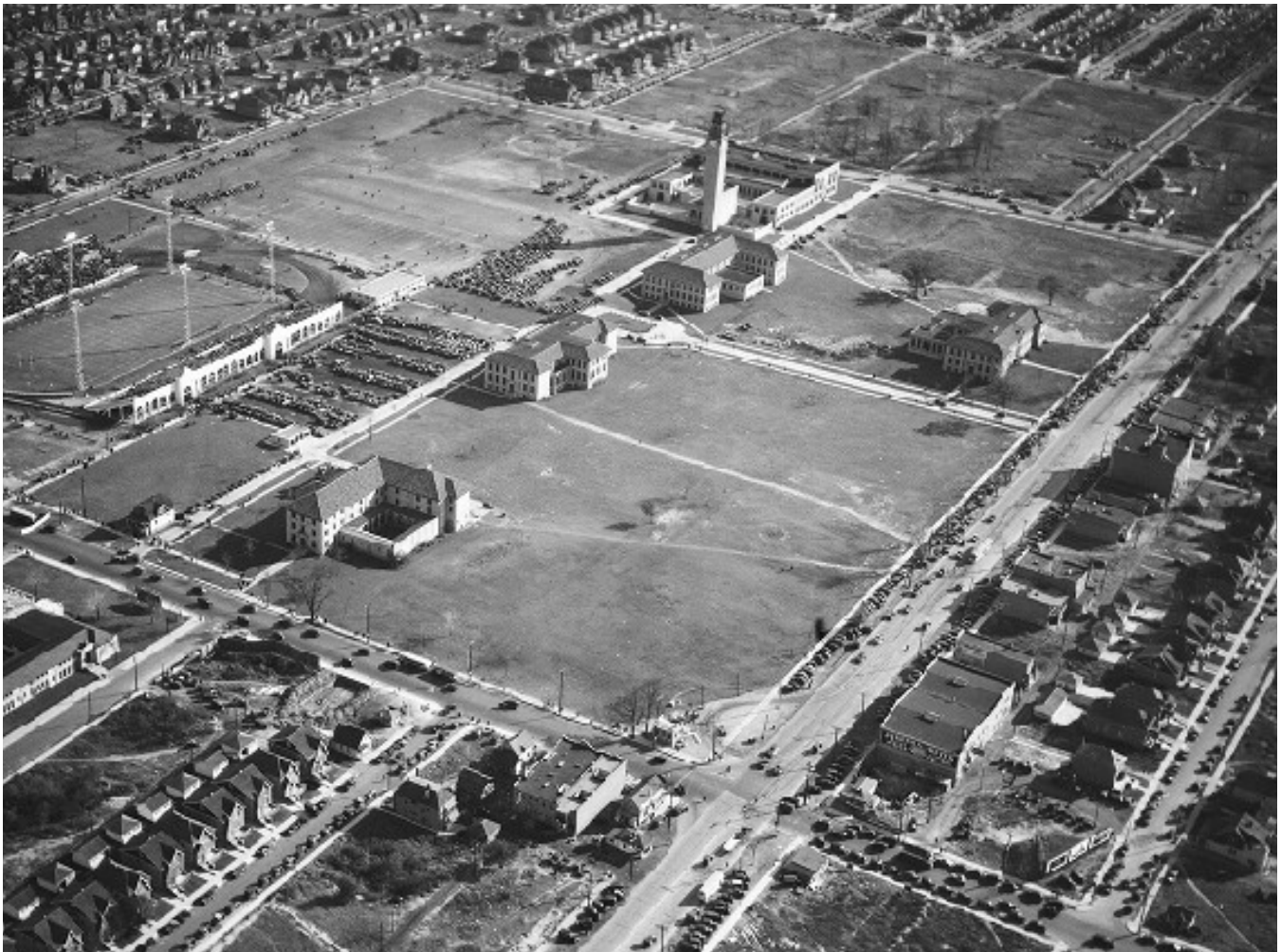
largely drawn to Detroit by the wages offered by the auto industry, and quickly became one of Detroit's most lively black neighborhoods. With the loss of income and the destruction of community, many (predominately white) families felt compelled to relocate to the outer suburbs, leaving their neighbors to experience the backlash of economic decline.

By the mid twentieth century, Detroit began to experience heightened social unrest, eventually resulting in a mass rebellion. Factors leading to the rebellion were anchored in injustice, inequality, and racial segregation. Residential segregation, or redlining, is perhaps the most notable cause of escalating racial tensions at the time. For example, in the areas of the city with a high population of African Americans, only 8%, on average, were able to become homeowners. Even with a desire to live peacefully in integrated neighborhoods, African American residents were restricted to live in certain neighborhoods, facing unfair lending practices by banks which made it difficult to secure a home loan.

Next, the rebellion of the 1960s devastated the city through violence, resulting in loss of life and destroying many local businesses. Finally, drug and gang wars brought another violent era of devastation, resulting in more loss of life, landscape, and the neighborhood. These normative, history-graded influences rocked Detroit to a level of vulnerability that had rippling effects, including extensive decline and disinvestment in multiple neighboring communities. Whites largely abandoned the inner city between the 1970s and 1980s, with more than 310,000 White residents moving to the suburbs. The percentage of African American residents rose from 43% to 67%. While at its population peak of the early 1950s, Detroit was close to 1.8 million, the city is currently hovering around 670,000 residents, according to 2020 US Census data. Large declines in population over several decades have impacted the city structure, inhibiting positive economic outcomes for city residents.

The following section will examine the historical context of the Livernois-McNichols corridor and the Avenue of Fashion neighborhood.





1937 Aerial Photograph of the University of Detroit Campus, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

The Marygrove campus, located on Detroit's north side for nearly 100 years, is part of the city council district known as District 2. The historic context provides additional insight into the community and how it was impacted by the broader influences described in the previous section. Many of the factors shaping the surrounding community continue to have an impact, influencing positive and negative effects and illuminating the current social dynamics. Work done by residents, businesses, and anchor institutions over the years has played a critical role in the development, largely impacting the surrounding neighborhood and community. The area was sparsely populated prior to 1920, but as Detroit's population grew, homes were quickly built to meet demand (Sherwood). Housing data shows that homes were initially built in the area near Grand River Avenue, but quickly expanded north (Allen).

This can be seen in the above figure, which consists of an aerial photo from 1937 showing the study area prior to many of the area's residential districts being built. Several neighborhoods that still exist in the area were parceled and sold during this time, including Sherwood Forest, University District, and Green Acres (American). These communities were established and flourished over time with most unused land in the area quickly being divided into parcels for housing.

Marygrove College, originally a small catholic academy for women in Monroe, Michigan, moved to the area in 1927 to secure more space for their growing student body (Allen, Racheal). The college established its more than fifty-acre campus in the community as homes continued to be constructed in the vicinity (History of Marygrove). During that





Top: Photo from the cornerstone laying ceremony for the Gesu school, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University  
Bottom: 1931 Photo of the University of Detroit Playfield, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University





1937 Aerial Photograph of the Marygrove Campus, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

same time, University of Detroit also moved to the area from downtown, looking to expand space and reach the growing community (University of Detroit Mercy). The new campus was located on Palmer Boulevard and Livernois Avenue, with Palmer Boulevard eventually being renamed after the university's president, Father John McNichols (About Us - UDCA).

Soon Marygrove began making changes to their faculty and student body to better meet the needs of the community. In 1937, the first female president was appointed to lead the college and in 1938 the first African American student enrolled (History of Marygrove). In the years following, Marygrove made several attempts to develop and foster a strong relationship with the surrounding community, including working towards desegregation as part of the Fitzgerald community council in the 1960s (History of Marygrove). The college campus also played host to arts programming and youth enrichment classes for community members throughout its history (Allen, Racheal). Both campuses have served as an-

chor institutions for the district, having a major impact on the community and development of the area.

As these neighborhoods formed, discriminatory housing policies generally meant that communities were segregated, and opportunities were limited by race. Redlining divided the area, limiting the ability of potential African American homeowners to move into the desired community of their choosing. Neighborhoods south of Seven Mile Road remained white because home purchases were restricted, and loan availability was limited. Perhaps the most prominent example of segregated communities was the 1941 construction of the Birwood Wall, built to physically separate the existing Eight Mile/Wyoming neighborhood from a new development that planned to use Federal Housing Authority funds (Rothstein). While initially denied by governing agencies due to the proximity of an existing Black neighborhood, the development was later approved based on the construction of the half mile long wall along Birwood Street (Rothstein). This





1936 Photo of students entering the Marygrove Campus, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

still standing wall acts as a visible reminder of these policies and the impact they had, and still have, on the community development. Urban renewal programs, block busting, and White flight lead to the majority of White residents leaving the area by 1970. This demographic shift reduced the population of the district, with new residents moving in at a slower rate than those moving out (Racial Regional Divide). This was not uncommon throughout the city, and though the community remained largely untouched by the freeway projects which targeted other Black neighborhoods, the impact of unfavorable racist policies played a major role in the community development over the years.

Residential growth in the area also drove business development on Livernois and other major thoroughfares throughout the 1930's, 40's, and 50's. Retail and restaurants made for a

thriving community with less traffic than more densely populated downtown shopping areas (American). The Avenue of Fashion, a section of smaller boutique fashion stores north of Seven Mile Road on Livernois, became a major draw for shoppers looking for a different experience than the larger retail stores could provide (American). This unique cultural asset was a defining feature of the community, making the district walkable for residents. Yet the development of suburban shopping malls, like Northland Center, saw the retail district begin struggling in the 1950s (American). Additionally, housing and urban renewal policies worked against businesses by reducing neighborhood density and undermining the area's walkability. Despite these challenges, the Avenue of Fashion has persisted as a center for Black owned businesses and is still an important part of the community's identity.



While many historical changes have shaped the neighborhoods throughout District 2, the Avenue of Fashion signifies the most notable change. Beginning in June 2011, this area began to show positive change. Grandison, writer for model D media group, says there is a, “process of reshaping the Avenue of Fashion’s image to appeal to a new generation of Detroiters who may not know about the quality shops that populate the area.” Reshaping this community has led to improvements like public lighting, streetscapes that cater to pedestrians and bikers, and parking for current and potential businesses in the area.

Reshaping of the Avenue of Fashion has been influenced by Detroit Future City’s (DFC) Strategic Framework Plan released in 2012. The Strategic Framework for this community included a revitalized McNichols Road corridor to serve as home to small business, retail, and supporting services (DFC). The Strategic Framework also showed plans for targeted investments, strengthening existing retail along Livernois Avenue and new programs to support housing and neighborhood stabilization around the district. Ultimately this framework was set in motion in 2013, when construction

began on the Avenue of Fashion and McNichols Road. Surrounding neighborhoods, like Bagley, University District, Sherwood Forest, and Green Acres, have also benefited from the investments and have become some of the premier neighborhoods in Detroit with a high priority on mixed use development.

Neighborhoods need central places to hold meetings and various Block Clubs. Established in 2013 to host immediate pop-up action or art installations, the Livernois Storefront fills this need for the surrounding community. Stephanie Harbin, President of the San Juan Block Club, said that the Livernois Community Storefront was a place of brainstorming when the City of Detroit filed Chapter 9 Bankruptcy. Detroit’s \$18 billion bankruptcy is the biggest in U.S. history and Harbin states that she was worried about the state of the city, much like a majority of the residents (Kurtzleban). Shortly after the bankruptcy, Mike Duggan was elected Mayor in 2013, primed to be a catalyst for Detroit as it emerged from bankruptcy.

Since Mayor Duggan’s mayoral win, quite a few notable changes have been made to the city’s civic programming. One example, The Detroit



Marygrove Campus entrance, Fall 2021





Park on Livernois Ave. in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Fall 2021

Land Bank Authority (DLBA) whose mission is to restore the city's blighted and vacant properties to productive use, offered home rehabilitation and repair resources to homeowners in the city with the hope of revitalizing many Detroit homes. The city began to offer resources like the 0% interest loans to residents needing home repairs. Another change was establishing the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), providing a link between the City of Detroit and block clubs, community groups, business owners, faith and school leaders, and residents. With a 14-member team that includes a district manager and deputy district manager in each City Council district, DON's top responsibility is fighting blight and rebuilding and strengthening the fabric of the neighborhoods. Pertinent changes in the system have proven to help with the uptick in development across the city, but especially in areas near a strategic neighborhood like Livernois and McNichols.

In District 2, one of the educational assets, Marygrove College, abruptly closed their undergrad programs in 2017 and graduate programs in 2019. Marygrove College, an anchor-

ing institution in the community, established The Marygrove Conservancy in 2018 to help maintain that standing. The campus space has been repurposed, providing diverse programming and ensuring that the campus can remain an anchoring institution and not become an abandoned detriment, reinforcing its role as a community hub. Educational programs, like the P-20 Cradle-to-Career, focus on educational development from prenatal care through adulthood and offer services for families. Arts and culture programming has centered around the relocation of the City of Detroit's Office of Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship to the campus. In addition, Marygrove seeks to serve as a community impact incubator, providing space for other non-profits and creating a Community Tech Trust Program (About the Conservancy).

In 2018, the Livernois Streetscape began, dampening some of the economic development of the businesses in the area. Many Black-owned businesses, like Kuzzo's Chicken and Waffles, closed until construction was completed. City developers and politicians hoped that the Livernois Streetscape would





McNichols Streetscape improvements in progress, Summer 2021

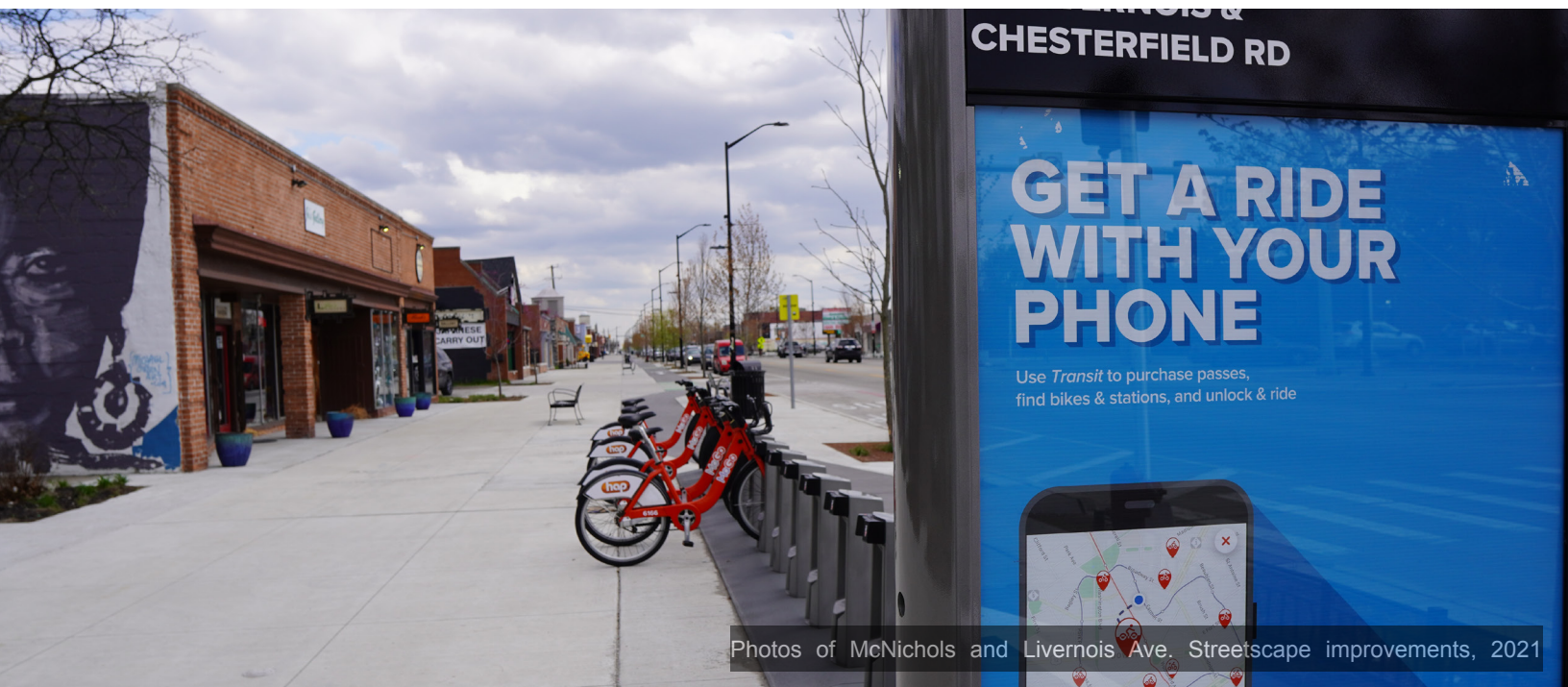
boost retail in the area (DeVito). Now, in 2021, the Livernois Streetscape is doing what the city officials hoped, with the Avenue of Fashion thriving and adding more businesses to the area. Another point of renewal in the area is the Hubert Massey mural at Ella Fitzgerald Park. Harbin was excited to point out this piece of culture signifying “New beginnings” in the Fitzgerald Community. In a Detroit Free Press article, Mayor Duggan stated, “Part of that strategy is working with the families that live in the Fitzgerald neighborhood, and coming up with solutions to improve the neighborhood together.”

In 2019, Neighborhood HomeBase began a new era for the Livernois-McNichols area. HomeBase is located on McNichols, nestled between University of Detroit Mercy and the Marygrove Campus. HomeBase is the operating space for Live6 Alliance, a non-profit organization and Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC), a teaching center for the School of Architecture at the University of Detroit Mercy. The community is also able to use HomeBase, much like The Livernois Storefront, as a community meeting place to build

capacity and help plan events, while also acting as a showcase for local art (Mondry).

This vibrant business community and its residents were no match for what 2020 would bring. Citizens were ill-equipped to deal with the coronavirus, which took a toll on businesses throughout Detroit. Stitt, a Detroit Free Press reporter said, “Businesses were already struggling before the coronavirus hit. Construction on Livernois of a new streetscape had slowed the flow of customers to shops. Add the coronavirus pandemic, and many businesses are fighting to stay afloat.” In addition, Harbin believes that Proposal N, a city project to sell neighborhood improvement bonds, is important for the city and for this community at this time, becoming another way that neighborhoods can improve. Proposal N’s goal is to help the city demolish 8,000 Detroit homes and secure another 6,000 from deterioration. The City of Detroit voters approved, allowing Proposal N to establish community involvement through community organizations and rehab secured homes, and sell homes to Detroiters (Frank).





Photos of McNichols and Livernois Ave. Streetscape improvements, 2021



## FULL CITIZEN CONTROL

Detroit artist, Mitch Cope said, Detroit neighborhoods have been neglected for so long, that to survive, neighbors must take actions into their own hands (Community Houses). A community-led revitalization initiative in Detroit's Banglatown neighborhood, exposes ways that full citizen control can spur sustainable development, by creating a network of local change agents, to transform their own built environment, from a bottom-up framework, elevating the importance of cultural place keeping. In 2008, Power House Productions, a non-profit organization was developed when two Banglatown residents made a purchase of a single vacant structure in the amount of \$500.

Mitch Cope and Gina Reichert, founders of Power House explain its two functions. First, as the power creator, the house produces its own electricity from solar and wind sources, which helps to expand a localized power grid, symbolizing a form of physical independence of outside power resources (UIX Detroit). Second, Cope and Reichert feel that this term Power House implies taking control by becoming an example of self-resilience, sustainability, and creative problem solving through education, communication, and increased diversification. (UIX Detroit). The Power House space serves as a platform for communal dialogue around sustainable land use and a residential housing model of innovation and out-of-the-box transformative freedom with the neighborhood's-built environment.

As a collaborative response to this unraveling of chronic vacancy within their community, other neighbors, family, and friends participated in the acquisition of eight more houses and three empty lots within a four-block radius (UIX Detroit). Five additional vacant spaces were activated and programmed by the community. They include the Sound House, Squash House, Play House, and the Jar House (Power House).

The Play House is a two-unit apartment house, activated as a creative performance space for the Hinterlands ensemble (Forecast). The Hinterlands group is inspired by physical theater, serving the need for flexible creative placemaking through forms of artistic expression (Forecast). The Play House creates a platform of collaborative opportunities for the Bangla School of Music to conduct music, language, and orchestrated practice sessions immersed in South Asian music. Seasonal concerts are held 2-3 times per year to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Banglatown (Forecast). Events that include dance, puppets, experimental film, and folk music, elevate the beauty of the neighborhood's diverse storytelling styles (Forecast). The audiences include the neighborhood, members from local







Top: Power House, Middle: Play House utilized for community performance, Bottom: Play House, <https://forecastpublicart.org/>



# DETROIT BANGTOWN

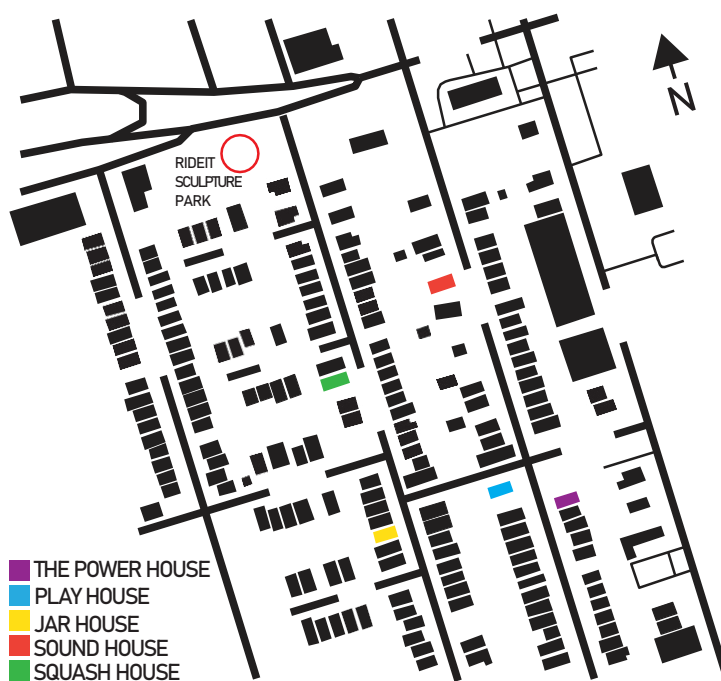
and regional arts communities, and national networks.

The Sound House is an innovative spatial experience involving the installation of sound artworks, through an archive of sensory experiments, and a musical instrument library (Forecast). Artists use the house as a studio space in exchange for public presentations that continue to expand this creative exploration of sound (Forecast).

The Squash House was created by Detroit artist, Graem Whyte, who developed a vision that integrates the sport of squash and the cultural significance of the squash vegetable, commonly found in Bangladeshi cuisine. The front part of the house has been transformed into a squash court where locals can play, and the rear space functioning as a greenhouse to promote a local ethnic connection to gardening. (Forecast).

The Jar House is a culturally inspired space for informational exchange, where visitors read, research, and explore work about the neighborhood and contemporary art happenings that are rooted in social practice and community-engaged creative expression.

According to UX Detroit, the spaces are used to break down barriers by providing space for people to express themselves and have shared cultural experiences together (UX Detroit). Power House Productions has purchased and sold more than 40 properties in the Banglatown area. However, the core five collaboratively revitalized houses leverage community power, democracy, and social capital, by allowing for arts, culture, and storytelling to naturally enhance the unique character of Banglatown.



Powerhouse project map





Top: Sound House, Middle: Sound House gathering, Bottom: Squash House, <https://forecastpublicart.org/>



# ASSET MAPPING





Detroit is Michigan's largest city and well-known as a diverse cultural hub highlighting music, the arts, and architecture. Detroit also leads the region's historic economic roots centered on industry, specifically automotive. Though the boom-and-bust cycles of the automotive industry have left Detroit economically vulnerable at times, it has also provided opportunities for other trades and businesses to be successful. This is the story of the Avenue of Fashion.

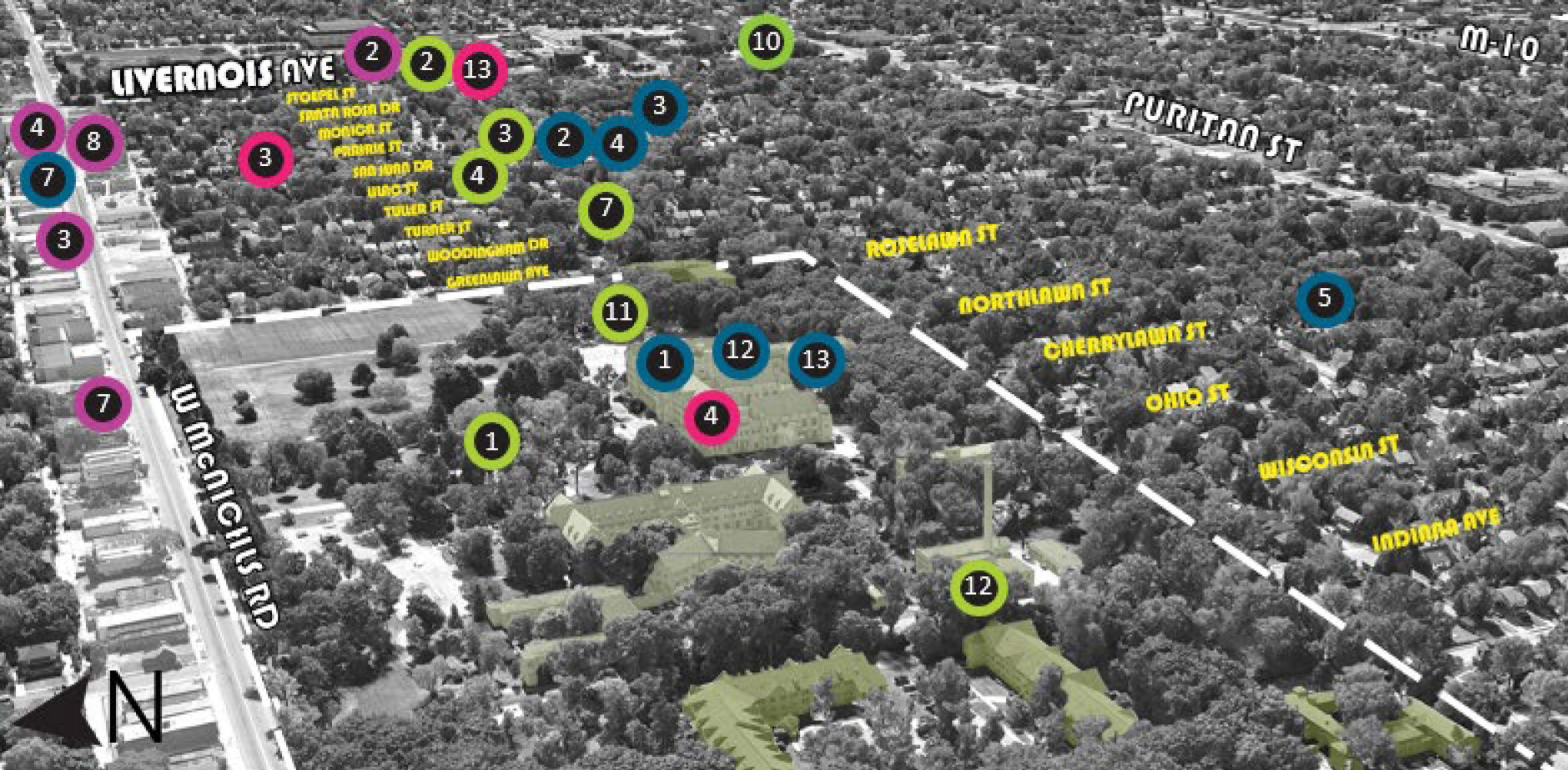
The area of Livernois between McNichols and Eight Mile Road, referred to as the Avenue of Fashion, has been a mainstay for fashion, arts, and music for nearly 100 years. One of the main drivers of development was when Father John McNichols, then president of University of Detroit, decided to relocate the campus from downtown to Livernois and Six Mile (now McNichols) (Larsen). This led to the creation of a new business district, and stores like B.Siegel, Louis the Hatter, and S.S. Kresge broke ground to create the Avenue of Fashion (Larsen). An iconic anchor in the neighborhood is Baker's Keyboard Lounge. Bakers opened in 1933, making it the longest operating jazz club in the United States. However, not even the fashion, arts, and music hub were spared the upheaval of the 1960s. The area suffered the impacts of decline driven by a combination of "white flight" to the suburbs and the popularization of the shopping malls. This reduced foot traffic and started forcing businesses to vacate their spaces or close completely (Larsen). Most recently a renewed sense of interest brought life back to this historic corridor. Following Detroit's bankruptcy, the leaders of University of Detroit Mercy, Marygrove, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, and the Kresge Foundation discussed what it might look like to revitalize the corridor, keeping in mind the challenges and connotations that can often be associated with the word "revitalize." (Larsen). The collaborative discussions led to the forming of Live6 Alliance, a neighborhood organization with the goal of cultivating rela-

tionships between the area's neighborhoods, businesses, and anchor institutions (Larsen). More recently, the Avenue of Fashion has undergone a dramatic streetscape transformation, expanding the width of the sidewalks to make them more walkable and providing room for more street parking (Peeples). While construction and the coronavirus pandemic have been disruptive to business, there is a growing sense of optimism around the future of this area.

The Avenue of Fashion is centrally located from east to west, surrounded by the Bagley, Fitzgerald, Sherwood Forest, and University District neighborhoods. The area is part of Detroit's District 2. As of 2014, the area's population was at 105,931, of which is 94% African American, 3% White, and 3% "Other" (Williams). The area is currently represented by city council Roy McCalister Jr. and Kim Tandy serves as the District Manager.

The asset map examines area organizations and businesses through the lens of the HOPE model. The information was shared by residents, business employees, and community leaders through interviews in addition to research from articles, websites, and walking tours of the area.





## HUMAN

1. RESIDENTIAL ADVISORY BOARD
2. BARBER COLLEGE
3. **SHIRAZAT DETROIT**
4. YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL
5. DPH ORADIE TO CAREER CAMPS
6. DETROIT NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS PROJECT
7. JOURN; HOUSE OF TECHNOLOGY
8. **BBB PROSPECT BAPTIST CHURCH**
9. SOOHLI TEAM
10. TERON 513 EDUCATION INITIATIVE
11. **GOOD OAKES AND BAKES!**
12. **TERRY'S PLACE**
13. LIVERNOIS BIKE SHOP

## ORGANIZATIONAL

1. **MARYGROVE OBSERVATORY**
2. SAN JUAN BOOK CLUB
3. PRAIRIE BOOK CLUB
4. COLLEGE CORE BOOK CLUB
5. MARYGROVE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
6. STOEPEL QUINCY 7 MILE BOOK CLUB
7. **LIVES**
8. CENTER FOR URBAN YOUTH AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
9. STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PARTNERS
10. UP FROM THE WORLD MINISTRIES
11. BAGLEY BOOK CLUB ASSOCIATION
12. MARYGROVE OBSERVATORY DEPARTMENT FOR ARTS AND CULTURE
13. STARFISH FAMILY SERVICES

## PHYSICAL

1. MARYGROVE CAMPU
2. DETROIT COLLABORATIVE DESIGN CENTER
3. **EVA FITZGERALD PARK**
4. **FITZGERALD NEIGHBORHOOD GREENBAY**
5. HOMEBAE
6. SOP COMMUNITY CENTER
7. BRIDGING DETROIT
8. DERA REHABED AND READY PROGRAM
9. UNIVERSITY OF DETROIT MEROT
10. UP FROM THE WORLD MINISTRY PROPERTIES
11. **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER**
12. **THE POWERHOUSE PROJECT**

## ECONOMIC

1. INVEST DETROIT
2. UDM'S CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
3. DETROIT PIZZA BAR
4. DETROIT SIP
5. W. MICHIGAN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
6. MOTOR CITY BAYON PROGRAM
7. LOU'S DELI
8. UPOKI'S CHEESECAKES
9. **THE RED DOOR**
10. AVENUE OF FASHION STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
11. **JIMPLY ORIGINAL**
12. **KUZZO'S ONION RAB WHIFFLES**



# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church, Spring 2021

Assets that contribute to the human development, do so through a process of enlarging opportunities through trust, identity, and improving well-being.

## New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church

Located at the northeast corner of Livernois and Pembroke, New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church is a Faith based organization whose history dates back to 1924. After several name and leadership changes, New Prospect purchased their current building located at 6330 Pembroke. The church made an historical leadership decision in 1999, hiring their first female pastor, Reverend Dr. Wilma R. Johnson, to lead the congregation. Under Pastor Johnson's leadership, the church building expanded to include a new 1,000 seat sanctuary, room for multipurpose gathering, and administrative offices for staff. The multi-

purpose space, known as the Light Center, is a 36,000 square foot conference center used for ministerial work. The space includes a chapel, nursery, music, and art facilities, and 13 additional multipurpose rooms. The mission of the Light Center is to promote fellowship, outreach, and growth for the congregation and service of the wider community.

Through acts of love and unity, New Prospect builds strength in membership for the purpose of promoting fellowship and spiritual growth throughout the community. To contribute to the Human Development of the community through initiatives focused on the building up of families, with the goal of building one heart and one mind.



## Terry's Place

Located at the northeast corner of Livernois and Seven Mile is Terry's Place, a well-known family-owned beauty salon and wig shop. Terry's Place is committed to providing an individualized salon experience that brings out the hidden beauty of all who visit. Ms. Terry (as she is fondly called), started her business 46 years ago in response to a community concern. Women in the neighborhood expressed a desire to have a local wig shop that catered to the needs of the African American community. Ms. Terry responded, creating a full service,

family-owned salon on the Avenue of Fashion. Over time, the salon has become a neighborhood niche with a long-standing status of resilience amid several phases of Avenue reconstruction. Recent Livernois street renovations, followed by the pandemic, forced many of the minority owned businesses to close. Yet styling hair, arching eyebrows, and applying eyelash extensions is only half of what makes the salon successful and sustainable. Listening to the community and providing a space for residents to share life together is the other half of what makes this such a successful and long-running business.



Terry's Place Storefront Livernois Ave. Spring 2021



## Good Cakes and Bakes

On the east side of Livernois, just south of Outer Drive, is Good Cakes and Bakes, a fresh organic bakery. Their mission is to provide quality, organic baked goods and to provide an environment that is positive, creative, educational, and friendly to employees and the community. Incorporated in 2013, Good Cakes and Bakes was founded by native Detroiters, April and Michelle Anderson, who established a physical space on the Avenue of Fashion in September of that year. April, the pastry chef, was educated in Detroit public schools, obtained a Bachelor of Science from Spelman College, a historically black college in Atlanta GA, and earned a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Michigan. Service, justice, and sustainability are embedded into the business model of this organic bakery.

## Marygrove's Early Childhood Education

In the fall of 2021, an innovatively designed cradle-to-career experience including a state-of-the-art early childhood education facility and involving a collaborative partnership of operation between Starfish Family Services and leading scholars at University of Michigan, launched on the Marygrove campus. The academic programming comprises of full-day culturally responsive curriculum, focusing on equity, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and social studies (Starfish). In addition, youth have access to an interactive outdoor learning atmosphere that allows enrollees to develop a connection with nature through outdoor gardening, play-scapes, and creative exploration.



Good Cakes and Bakes Livernois Ave. Spring 2021





Photos of the Marygrove early education facility taken during a walking tour, Summer 2021



### Brilliant Fitzgerald House (Brilliant Detroit)

There are a total of seven completed youth-centric community hubs in various Detroit neighborhoods and the Brilliant Fitzgerald House serves as one of the first catalytic projects designed around the city's need for quality youth development programs. This project included reactivating vacant property, a house located a few blocks from McNichols and Ella Fitzgerald Park. Brilliant Detroit's project mission is unique and innovative because the organization structures their programming for each space based on feedback collected through grassroots community outreach and canvassing efforts. This influential process, known as the listening phase of programmatic development, helps to identify the strong as-

sets, priorities, and cherished cultural identity that can breathe new life into an inactive space (Odom). Rakisha Odom, a lead Community Outreach Coordinator at Brilliant Detroit, provided insight into the process of the neighborhood revitalization mission, emphasizing the value of collaboration in her outreach experience. Working alongside leading community organizations, neighborhood block clubs, and families remains vital to a project outcome that is built to last. Rakisha remains fully immersed in community engagement driven by an asset-based community development focus, identifying the existing strengths, priorities, needs, and interests of residents to shape a programmatic framework strategy that is uniquely and vibrantly Fitzgerald (Odom).



Brilliant Detroit interior space, <https://www.thehubdetroit.com/>



From the initial planning phases to finalized construction and program offerings, Fitzgerald's Brilliant House has holistically evolved with the support of local leadership. The president of the Fitzgerald Community Council, Lola Holton, views this project as a strong neighborhood asset, describing the early learning and family center as a welcome destination for youth in the community, offering a space that allows kids to be kids (David). Prior to this project's completion, Holton expressed her excitement in how neighborhood youth now have access to a community-driven resource that offers them a quality, safe space to receive one-on-one tutoring or to play (David). She also emphasizes the importance in laying a foundation, providing spaces that help children grow, acquiring the tools and experiences necessary to become healthy adults (David). The Fitzgerald

House programming model is intergenerational, with classes expanding to assist with parenting, child literacy, infant massage, cooking and nutrition, yoga, and Zumba (David). Darnetta Banks, a neighborhood resident and manager at Brilliant House, expressed that "This is a vision we had on our own and we are very, very ecstatic about it opening in the Fitzgerald community" (David). Brilliant Detroit's Fitzgerald House speaks volumes to the level of neighborhood collaboration and engagement, with residents passionate about their cultural identity and the importance of carrying on that cherished neighborhood legacy for future generations.



Brilliant Detroit Fitzgerald location, Fall 2021



# ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Live6 Alliance Neighborhood Homebase, Spring 2021

## Live 6 Alliance

The Live6 Alliance is a non-profit development organization located on McNichols in the Bagley Neighborhood, currently operating out of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) Neighborhood HomeBase building. Founded in 2015, the goal was to create stronger partnerships between existing organizations on the Livernois and McNichols business corridors (Who We Are). The Kresge Foundation, University of Detroit Mercy, and Marygrove College were instrumental in the organization's creation and played a significant role in its early efforts (Reindl). Current services provided by the organization include leading community information sessions, operating an outdoor summer market and concert series, providing furniture for outdoor seating to businesses during the pandemic, and scheduling programming at the recently developed Ella Fitzgerald Park.

Live6 also coordinates several programs aimed at encouraging and supporting investment in the community with an emphasis on arts and culture. The recognition of the important role arts and culture programming can play in building a strong community identity has led to an expansion of these efforts in recent years (Murphy). The inclusion of arts programming at HomeBase prior to the pandemic was a welcome addition, drawing new residents to this excellent resource (Murphy). Live6 has also worked with other organizations to develop mural projects and created a toolkit for public art creation. In 2020, the organization received its first National Endowment for The Arts Grant for a project specifically tied to art, culture, and storytelling in their community (Detroit Mercy).





Top: Detroit Sip and Neighborhood Homebase, Fall 2021  
Bottom: McNichols Streetscape opening event, Fall 2021



## Marygrove Conservancy

The Marygrove Conservancy is a non-profit organization formed in 2018 to oversee and maintain the former Marygrove College campus. The campus is located South of McNichols and spans approximately 50 Acres in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood (About). The organization is primarily focused on supporting the new P20 initiative, helping build an innovative education hub and acting as an important community resource (New).

In addition to the school, the Conservancy launched several community focused initiatives, including a community technology library and community project incubator program. While these programs were new, the focus on creating agency for residents shows the Conservancy's great commitment to sustainable development. The Conservancy also hosts an arts and culture department, that pro-

vides opportunities for the community to make and view art. The department's programming includes a wide variety of activities, from art classes to concerts, and its broad appeal seeks to draw diverse participants and create new community connections. Additionally, programs specifically targeting youth provide capacity building and encourage long-term interest in art and culture in the area. The campus itself also features several arts focused spaces including a 350-seat theatre and large, flexible gallery space.

## Strategic Fitzgerald Co-working Space

Westbound McNichols is a space where collaborative community partnerships occur through a holistically engaged community vision that understands the value of human capacity building through local outreach. Strategic Community Partners aims to attain a level of equity in a region of Detroit where



Marygrove Campus entrance with construction signage, Fall 2021



socio-economic growth remains a widespread challenge for residents. According to Chanel Hampton, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Strategic Community Partners, “When strategy pairs with community and cultural frameworks, beautiful things can happen” (Smith). Hampton went on to say, “change-making visionaries, and local organizations need a meeting place that costs them nothing or a brick-and-mortar spot where they can organize and really start to do great things” (Smith). The 2,000-square-foot building offers workspace hubs, conference rooms, and programming areas for local businesses and organizations (Smith). Space for nonprofits and community initiatives are provided at no cost, given the recognized value and need for local grassroots change makers. In addition, there is a teacher resource center offering free space, resources, and supplies for Detroit teachers who are part of the non-profit, Teach 313 (Smith).

The commercial culture along McNichols and Livernois Avenue is rooted in the power of Black entrepreneurship and this space, constructed in 2019, continues that legacy. Hampton says it was important to create a “Sustainable funding structure, based on funding Black-owned spaces with Black dollars” (Smith). Establishing a space that is owned by the community and for the community remains at the core of this project’s mission. In response to the inequitable representation in Detroit’s real estate development trends, available spaces commonly leave non-profits and community-based organizations with limited affordable and neighborhood-based options to choose from when considering work and meeting space (Walker). The Fitzgerald co-working space transcends this narrative for organizations seeking to make a lasting, positive impact in their communities, by opening their doors and giving local leaders an opportunity to collaborate with each other and make a difference.



Strategic Community Partners building on McNichols, Spring 2021





Photos from a Fitzgerald Neighborhood lot cleanup event hosted by neighborhood block clubs, Summer 2021



## College Core Block Club

The College Core Block Club (CCBC) is an umbrella organization that aims to connect several existing block clubs in the Fitzgerald neighborhood (College).

Membership is loosely defined but does feature many of the more visible neighborhood organizations, like San Juan Block Club, Santa Rosa Block Club, and Prairie Block Club (Harbin). This organizing effort provides additional opportunities for community organizations to share resources as they work to build community connection in their neighborhoods. The organization also hosts meetings, welcoming the public to further expand engagement and organizing efforts (College).

The development done by the CCBC is exemplary, supporting the importance of establishing strong networks in organizational development. It creates an environment where the leaders of the smaller organizations can share information openly and the collaboration encourages community members to get involved with events taking place throughout the neighborhoods. New programs or grant opportunities can be effectively shared using this networking. By providing an opportunity to meet with several block club presidents, CCBC demonstrates a more unified approach when communicating to city officials (Harbin). The collective voice of the CCBC can also gain more attention from city officials as the organization's membership is much larger collectively, than the block clubs individually.



San Juan Block club sign and previously completed improvement project, Spring 2021



# PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

An ongoing initiative, Reimagining the Civic Commons has taken root in a culturally significant pocket of northwest Detroit. The collaborative process involving local stakeholders, committed to inclusive, equitable, and transparent capacity building, remains at the forefront of this grassroots physical development. This vision seeks to dismantle the systemic barriers of oppression, transcending the chronic signs of disinvestment and depleted infrastructure in Detroit's culturally diverse and historically rich Fitzgerald neighborhood. Studying the values and integrity of the physical conditions within the analysis area, it is apparent how the physical conditions blend into innovative ideas that redefine the term infrastructure. Infrastructure, as defined, are the basic equipment and structures (such as roads and bridges) that are needed for a country, region, or organization to function properly (Infrastructure). Through the lens of community building, the notion of reimagining

the civic commons uplifts the importance and need for quality civic infrastructure (Reimagining). This idea has been holistically integrated into the framework for the Fitzgerald neighborhood revitalization efforts. Shaping civic infrastructure in a unique way by responding to the expressed needs of residents directly affected by changes within their surrounding built environment, these assets have been identified through a culturally based exploration of community assets in Detroit's District Two. These identified assets emphasize a community-built infrastructure comprised of spaces that allow people to thrive, including parks, trails, main streets, and other public spaces (Detroit). Cultural assets identified through the lens of physical development expound on these core values by investing in the community through their own unique and innovative approach to sustainability.

In exploring the strong physical assets that



Wooden pavilion stage located in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Summer 2021



contribute to the cultural narrative of this region of Detroit, four prime examples support this need for civic infrastructure and have been identified as catalysts for social, environmental, and youth development within the community. A community hub, built by Brilliant Detroit in 2018, sought to create kid success neighborhoods (David). Operating out of a revitalized house in the Fitzgerald neighborhood, Brilliant Detroit offers a community driven program to create an engaging atmosphere for youth to learn and grow. The second physical development project is located along the commercial corridor of McNichols, and focuses on the need to provide collaborative spaces to strengthen inclusive partnerships, contributing to a unified vision and a commitment to holistic urban revitalization. Lastly, a 20-minute neighborhood concept has been integrated into many development plans throughout the city of Detroit, with northwest Detroit being included as a primary area of focus. This ensures the city's urban revitalization solutions prioritize the need for walkable access to essen-

tial goods and services, promoting residential health and fitness. Access to well-maintained, quality public green spaces is just one facet of this broad vision. Locating these spaces in accessible residential areas, meaning within a 20-minute walk from their homes, remains a core focus for achieving improvements that are sustainably integrated and built to thrive within the community (Murphy). Ella Fitzgerald Park satisfies this need of accessibility and quality, existing as a centrally located public green space created with community input and local workforce involvement, resulting in a vibrant and cherished space for residents and visitors to enjoy. Further emphasizing the importance of connectivity and accessibility, the Fitzgerald neighborhood continues to respond to this need with the development of a green thoroughfare spanning half a mile in length (David). This neighborhood greenway stretches between east of Livernois Avenue to west of Greenlawn, featuring on-street and off-street sections which include Ella Fitzgerald Park (David).



Ella Fitzgerald Park play area, Summer 2021



## Ella Fitzgerald Park

Ella Fitzgerald Park reveals the transformation of 26 city lots that were in disarray due to vacancy and blight (Murphy). The clearance and redevelopment of the green space project was achieved through a green-collar job training process led by The Greening of Detroit, a local non-profit organization (Murphy). According to Greening of Detroit, the process involved the recruitment, training, and employment of twenty residents from the community to be a part of the revitalization project, and a part of history (Murphy). In addition, Greening of Detroit emphasized the importance of observing the level of involvement of residents who stayed engaged throughout all phases of the project, putting their hands in the dirt to be part of the community's rebirth (Murphy). The space, once impacted by the effects of physical disinvestment and systemic forms of oppression, was transformed into a beautiful 2.5-acre public park that breathes new life

and a sense of hope for residents. Amenities include a large-scale wooden ropes course, event pavilion, vibrantly painted basketball court, streetscape mural, and a beautiful mosaic art installation.

In response to the discriminatory conditions that led to disinvestment in this area, it is apparent how strong, artistic expressions can be used to offset the emotional strain of blight. These forms of artistic expression tell community stories through large-scale murals, mosaics, and temporary and permanent art installations created by nationally and internationally recognized artists throughout the region. One notices the area's artistic legacy, how the neighborhood's streets are immersed in culturally creative storytelling. The commercial strip of McNichols, referred to as the Charles McGhee corridor after the artist whose career has reached international acclaim, shows a deep artistic legacy along the streets of Fitzgerald, impacting other Detroit-based artists who are actively transforming spaces into



Ella Fitzgerald Park basketball court and mural wall, Summer 2021





Ella Fitzgerald Park play area and pavilion, Summer 2021



culturally vibrant landmarks (Devito). One of his former students, Hubert Massey, worked with Fitzgerald residents to design and build a colorful mosaic retaining wall spanning 100 feet, showcasing the cultural significance of the Ella Fitzgerald Park and the cultural narrative and historic identity of the community (David). Hubert Massey learned and grew as an artist under the guidance and teachings of McGhee as a student of the Charles McGhee School of Art in the 1960s, located on McNichols, with an all-Black faculty, and Gallery 7, which provided a showroom for Black artists (Devito). The historic site is located several blocks from Ella Fitzgerald Park.

### Fitzgerald Greenway Project

Urban greenways create complex human narratives around how people from various walks of life perceive public open space. These linear spaces often fall short in offering an inviting place that feels socially, economically, and culturally inclusive. Alternatively, Detroit's ongoing and expansive greenway initiative looks to create a network of linear parks that extend beyond downtown, connecting neighborhoods through accessible and open public space design strategies. This component of the Rei-

imagining the Civic Commons revitalization process in the neighborhood influenced the development of the greenway, connecting Fitzgerald with Marygrove and the University of Detroit Mercy campus (David). The Fitzgerald Greenway uses vacant parcels to weave a pedestrian and bicycle route through the neighborhood, integrating an urban forestry initiative to create an outdoor space that allows residents to connect with their natural surroundings. By creating a safe and secure thoroughfare to connect residents to their neighbors and local resources, it offers a new form of interaction that had remained absent from Fitzgerald's built environment. Community interaction and connectivity are deeply woven into the neighborhood's cherished culture, and this outdoor public green space offers an innovative way for residents to come together. Harbin views the Ella Fitzgerald Greenway as a "Welcome addition to the neighborhood" (David). She sees it as a basic human need that "Beautifies the neighborhood and is adding more to make the community more sociable" (David). The meandering pathways come to an abrupt stop at the enclosed borders of both the Marygrove campus and the University of Detroit Mercy campus, creating a sense of disconnection with these two anchoring in-



Ella Fitzgerald Park bike station and greenway, Spring 2021





Ella Fitzgerald Greenway walking tour, Summer 2021



stitutions.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“The mantra of the Avenue of Fashion is shop, dine, walk, and explore” says Algernon Bartell, a retail owner describing the progression of new economic opportunities during an interview with local news station, WDIV, “The best is yet to come” (Women’s Fashion on the Ave). The development of the streetscape and extending sidewalks to 24 feet, fully supports the retail accessibility on the Avenue of Fashion.

With a variety of opportunities to patronize local, small businesses on the Avenue of Fashion, Harbin believes it is in the best interest of everyone to come and experience the economic development happening, especially at the following establishments: The Red Door, Simply Casual Clothing Store, and Kuzzo’s Chicken & Waffles.



Detroit Sip on McNichols reopening day event, Fall 2021





The Red Door storefront Livernois Ave. Spring 2021

## The Red Door

Located at 19330 Livernois, The Red Door serves as a hub for women's shoes and accessories on the Avenue of Fashion and provides a shopping experience for all women to compliment a variety of appeal. The customer service is remarkably warm and friendly with Stacey and Rick French managing the day-to-day operations of The Red Door and working with each customer to pick out the perfect pair of shoes. For shoppers looking for women's shoes and accessories, this is the place to be. Stacey said, The Red Door is, "a lady's shoes store with a variety of shoes styles for any shoe lover: short heels, tall heels, boots, sandals, and gym shoes."

Algernon Bartell, owner of The Red Door, has added multiple retail establishments to the Avenue of Fashion over time, operating 4 sister stores selling garments, providing custom tailoring, and of course, shoes. The cultural engagement and style provided by the stores is a focal point for the area, and those currently unaware of The Red Door would be wise to explore the retailer. As Stacey puts it, "the people who shop at the other stores make the best customers," indicating that shopping at

The Red Door is like finding a hidden gem.

The Red Door promotes diversity within the community as part of the Avenue of Fashion's rich history of music, food, and style. The Red Door allows money spent in the community to be reinvested in the community, adding variety to the selection of stores located on Livernois between McNichols and Eight Mile Road. In addition, The Red Door shows just how much effort and resilience small businesses must harness to be successful. Opened just before the COVID-19 pandemic on February 23, 2020, the shop temporarily closed on March 16, 2020 to cope with the new realities it faced. The Red Door offers a space to build self-confidence and for discovering style that will last a lifetime. The store is open to all people and is a catalyst for interactions between customers, and opportunities to learn more about the owner and the other businesses surrounding the shop. The Red Door employs Detroiters, introducing them to business models with the goal of preparing employees to branch off and start their own businesses. Bartell's retail shops are a staple in the community making The Red Door a part of the family of stores growing like its sister stores, The Shoe Box, Time Square, Simply Casual, and 42nd Street.



## Simply Casual Clothing Store

Located at 19400 Livernois, Simply Casual Clothing Store has been called “Detroit’s Hottest Boutique.” According to their website, Simply Casual is “one of the design-conscious city’s most long-standing, recognized, and shopped retail fashion destinations” (Shop Simply Casual). Since 1995, the store has been a popular place to shop for distinctive apparel and fashion merchandise and a nationally recognized retail destination for Detroit tourism and the local community. When entering the store, you are greeted by the Simply Casual bar, serving complimentary drinks to shoppers to add to the shopping experience and creating an elevated retail atmosphere.

Robert Hawkins has been the business manager at Simply Casual since 2004. Hawkins shared that Simply Casual has been in business for 20 years and that the business is Black-Owned and managed by family with Algernon’s brother, Rufus Bartell, owning Sim-

ply Casual. Hawkins is a Detroit resident who is passionate about fashion and community, which is why he enjoys his position at Simply Casual. With fashion and community as driving forces in this area, Hawkins mentions that the key demographics of Simply Casual customers are people that want to work hard, play hard, and travel.

Fashion and community are further embodied within the store motto of “Live Love Serve.” This motto fits well with the resurgence of the Avenue of Fashion and the way that the business district serves the surrounding community, recirculating dollars back into the local economy and providing a sense of ownership to all who shop at the store. Hawkins considers the retail outlet a little department store with a goal of growing the community’s economic core and encouraging residents to support small local businesses, reducing their commute and spending in the neighboring suburbs.



Simply Casual storefront Livernois Ave. Spring 2021



### Kuzzo's Chicken & Waffles:

Kuzzo's Chicken & Waffles located at 19345 Livernois, has become an iconic restaurant on the Avenue of Fashion. The restaurant, owned by former Detroit Lion's player Ron Bartell, opened in 2015, recently celebrating 6 years of business. Bartell also has a \$4.6 million investment plan for the Avenue of Fashion, an extension of the customer service and work ethic that shapes the Kuzzo's business model.

Kuzzo's, a term of endearment, conveys one who is a friend or family member; someone who has a cousin-like relationship with another person, regardless of blood relation. Kuzzo's motto is Celebrating Food, Family, and Friends, proclaiming that engagement and collaboration should be celebrated and respected. Bartell appreciates the social aspects of working and living near the Avenue of Fashion. Kuzzo's Chicken & Waffles is a restaurant tourists hear about and is at the top of

the list of recommended places to dine. There are always local residents and visitors alike dining together inside, including Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan who has enjoyed the food and called it fabulous. Kuzzo's Chicken & Waffles' warmth and hospitable atmosphere attracts people from diverse backgrounds and cultures to come in and enjoy the delicious, Southern-inspired menu offerings, like shrimp and grits, sweet tea, and peach cobbler. The level of public interaction at a restaurant like Kuzzo's allows people to learn more about the community and creates the environment to shop, dine, walk, and explore.

Kuzzo's continues the history of the Avenue of Fashion and its dedication of the areas music, food, and style, helping with the growth of the Avenue of Fashion, by doing its part to protect and preserve the traditions and resources within the community. In addition, Detroiters are hired at this establishment, creating economic stability for the residents of the immediate area and surrounding communities.



Kuzzo's Chicken and Waffles storefront Livernois Ave. Spring 2021



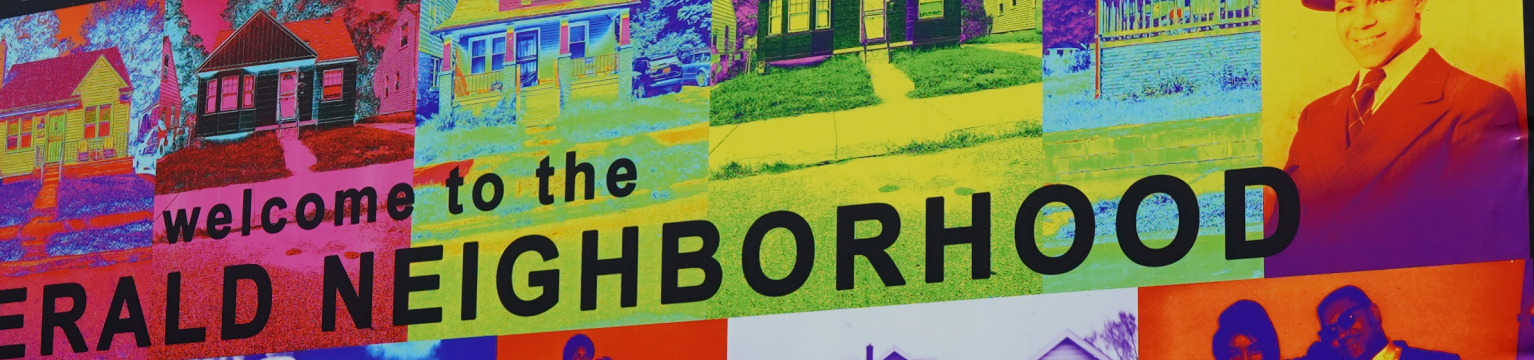
## CONCLUSION ASSET MAPPING

The asset map within the capstone study area is divided into two clusters. The first cluster, is on Livernois between 7 Mile and 8 Mile Roads. With the exception of New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church, this is the more traditional retail area known as the Avenue of Fashion. The second cluster is along McNichols, between Livernois and Wyoming and tends to be majority community organizations and community spaces. This demonstrates how organizations can connect to similar organizations and become a sustaining source of increased capacity, fulfilling important roles in the community.

It is important to pause and reflect, observing where many of these organizations overlap and how they collaborate with each other. Perhaps the organization that does this more than any other is Live6 Alliance, by creating connections with residents, block clubs, businesses, and other institutions. Live6 Alliance functions like a web, weaving programming and community engagement together to improve the quality of life for residents. This type of connectivity opens opportunities for a more holistic community development experience. If more bridges and connections can be formed and sustained, the web of resources for residents and businesses can grow and support sustainable growth within the community.







welcome to the  
**EMERALD NEIGHBORHOOD**



THE EMERALD  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
WAS ESTABLISHED  
IN 1920



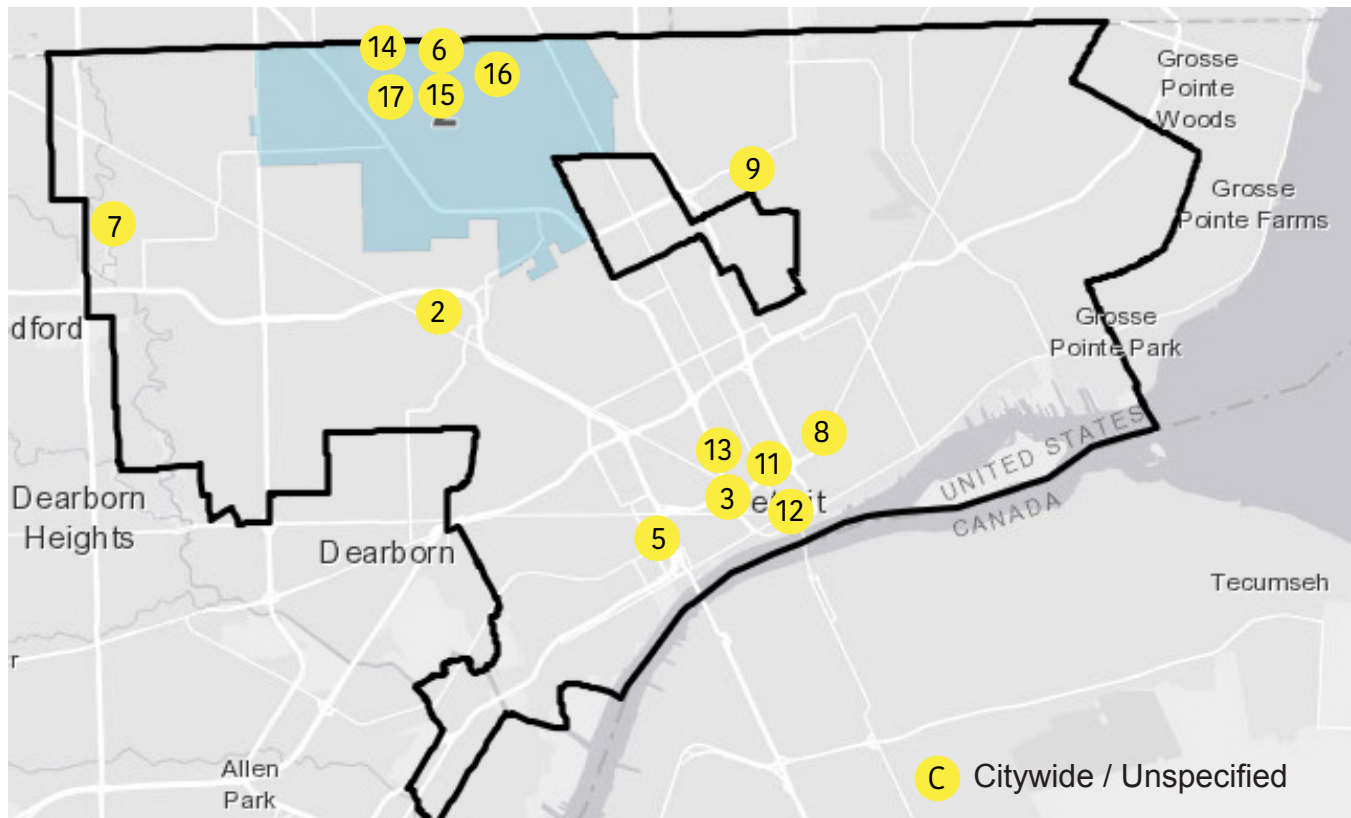
## DETROIT STORYTELLING ASSET MAP

An extension of the location-based asset mapping is the capstone team's research of existing storytelling projects and organizations in Detroit. These storytelling resources build on the process of traditional asset mapping and connect this project to existing work being done in the storytelling space. Although the storytelling assets are not specifically location based or within the study area boundaries, this existing work helps to inform baselines for this project and expands the team's research for a more informed selection and examples of several case studies. The storytelling asset map includes the following organizations:

- C **Broadside Lotus Press:** Publisher of African American poetry and literature. This group coordinates local events and workshops focused on writing poetry.
- C **Detroit Association of Black Storytellers:** The Detroit Association of Black Storytellers is a collective group founded in 1991. Focusing on educational programming, the group organizes performances and publish stories on YouTube. They also host concerts and provide storytelling workshops.
- 3 **Detroit Narrative Agency:** The Detroit Narrative Agency is a project hosted by the Allied Media Project, highlighting stories around Detroit to shift the unfavorable perception of the city. They create content using projects developed by local artists and promote the work on social media and other platforms including public viewings.
- C **Extra Mile Playwrights:** This playwrighting group coordinates readings of scripts created by Detroit playwrights. They host public performances at various locations around the city.
- 5 **Host of People:** A Host of People is an arts ensemble theatre group founded in 2012. Located in the southwest Detroit area, they create work in the community and invite audiences to watch, react, and give feedback to inform the direction of their work.
- 6 **Jane's Walk:** This is an international organization utilizing organized walking tours to encourage and promote storytelling. Volunteers lead events while building connections that help others understand a community. In 2013, Jane's Walk hosted an event in district 2.







- 7 Sidewalk Festival Detroit: Sidewalk Festival Detroit is an outdoor arts and culture event launched in 2012, hosting outdoor performances and classes on the west side of Detroit. They have a larger, annual event in addition to smaller concerts and classes throughout the year. Many of their projects have a cultural focus created by residents.
- 8 The Heidelberg Project: Detroit's outdoor art experience, The Heidelberg Project incorporates elements of education and development through a lens of inequities. The project offerings include space for youth storytelling and digital content production.
- 9 The Hinterlands: The Hinterlands is a place-based performance group creating collaborative art in Detroit. They work with Powerhouse Productions to use and curate events in their spaces. Their work is created in collaboration with community members.
- C The Neighborhoods: The Neighborhoods is a website and social media platform available through the City of Detroit. The social media platform documents resident stories and shares information about Detroit's neighborhoods.
- 11 The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers: Executive Director Satori Shakoor founded The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers, a nonprofit organization, in 2012. The organization hosts monthly Storytelling events at the Charles H. Wright Museum, however, during the COVID-19 pandemic they expanded to hosting virtual events through podcasts. The organization also offers workshops in storytelling development.
- 12 Y Arts: Detroit's YMCA arts programming classes for youth include learning how to create digital content through Y Media Works.



## DETROIT STORYTELLING ASSET MAP

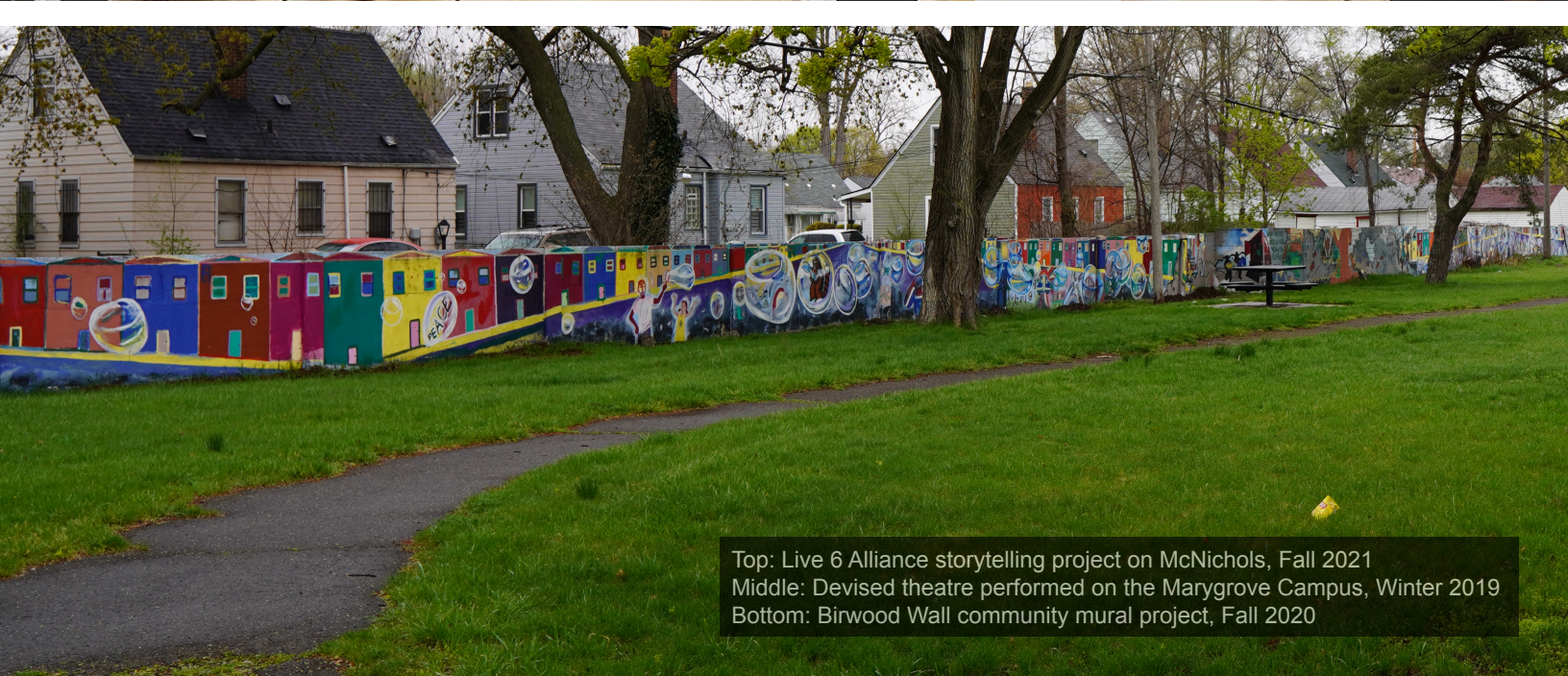
This section chronicles Detroit projects with an intersection of storytelling and community development. The organizations and storytelling projects below provide a strong example of the work done throughout the city. These examples substantiate how the stories of residents are being told in a way that encourages community growth, while providing an excellent case study of best practices as the team continues to develop its project proposal.

- 13 2006 - Birwood Wall Mural Project: Project to paint Murals honoring civil rights icons and local organizers at the Birwood Wall site in District 2.
- 14 2016 - Detroit 67 Project: Detroit Historical Society project collecting stories from the 1967 rebellion. While most stories were collected in 2016, the Detroit Historical Society’s website is still accepting entries.
- 15 2018 – 2019 - American Privilege: A theatre production created by students at the University of Detroit Mercy and performed in the Fitzgerald neighborhood.
- 16 2020 – COVID–19 Story and Artifact Collection: A project coordinated by the State of Michigan to work with various museums, collecting stories and artifacts from the pandemic.
- 17 2020 – Live-6 Alliance and DCDC: A grant-funded project seeking to collect stories about the history of the DCDC Home Base building on McNichols.



Public stage space on Livernois Ave. in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Fall 2021





Top: Live 6 Alliance storytelling project on McNichols, Fall 2021  
Middle: Devised theatre performed on the Marygrove Campus, Winter 2019  
Bottom: Birwood Wall community mural project, Fall 2020





# NEEDS ASSESSMENT





Assessing the needs of a community is an important part of a developer's role. The project assessment phase plays a vital role in understanding the day-to-day lived experience through the lens of those who live within the boundaries of the neighborhood and larger community. A story or narrative cannot be authentic unless shared by those neighborhood and community residents. The needs assessment analysis here synthesizes the research gathered for other sections of the total research, prioritizing opportunities to engage with the residents of the neighborhood and the community stakeholders. Statistical analysis and 2020 United States Census data can be incredibly useful, but it cannot span the capacity to capture the full scope of a community's story.

Paired with the whole of quantitative and qualitative research completed, the team found that there are many valuable resident stories in the Fitzgerald Community. We recognize that The Fitzgerald residents are the experts, and they help to inform the way we have operated during our community engagement. The engagement efforts have also led to great opportunities that have helped to inform the development of the Storytelling Toolkit. During these engagement opportunities, we seek to reframe the interactions among communities, professionals, and institutions to operate within a "truly participatory" space of engagement remains an ongoing area of exploration in Detroit's Fitzgerald neighborhood.

Generating a positive residential response to social and physically sustainable transformative change requires an iterative lens of collaborative understanding and practice that is fragile, as the pitfalls of pre-conceived external interpretations and decision making around how to best address "wicked problems" within Fitzgerald's neighborhood can quickly amount to a breach in collaborative trust that is difficult to repair. Currently, Fitzgerald residents find themselves searching for promising op-

portunities that will allow for various stakeholders to take housing revitalization and land use matters into their own hands. There is a need for greater public/private transparency and inclusivity. The recent departure of the Fitz Forward project has only further elevated this out-of-touch narrative that Fitzgerald residents have grown tired of, as many have lived through decades of severe trauma, disinvestment, neglect, and broken promises.

Amid the Strategic Neighborhood Fund (McNichols corridor revitalization) and other institutional (Marygrove's P-20 Academic Initiative) changes that are bringing in new proposals of urban revitalization, there is certainly clear resident skepticism pertaining to any form of developmental intervention that may disrupt the social and communal fabric of Fitzgerald's tight-knit identity. However, it is also clear that there is a desire for improved housing infrastructure along neighborhood streets and an increase in locally run businesses along the McNichols corridor. The need is to figure out how to use the existing fabric to enhance an already strong communal network, instead of drawing in an entirely new one. Allowing local stakeholders to be included in this transformative process from start to finish remains poorly integrated. Through ongoing neighborhood interaction, it's apparent that residents want streets that enrich the vibrancy of its people and currently the vast vacant housing stock poses as a threat toward being able to achieve a physical neighborhood image that feels as resilient as the people who live there. The community partnership that can come from collaborating with Marygrove Conservancy and the Fitzgerald community block clubs can show the engagement that this community needs to thrive.

To show that engagement is possible and that narratives can be shared especially when one put forth the effort, here is a list of community engagement opportunities that the Storytelling Team has had with The Fitzgerald Community:

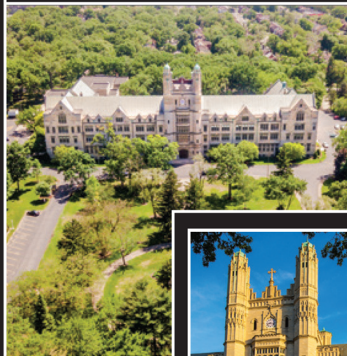


**APRIL:**

San Juan Block Club meeting  
District 2 Community Meeting  
Neighborhood Survey Tour

**JUNE:**

Live6 Alliance Community Meeting  
Neighborhood Survey Tour  
Juneteenth Community Conversation  
Discussion with Neighborhood Association Presidents  
Stephanie Harbin, President San Juan Block Club and Alex  
Schultz-Spradin, President College Core Association  
Discussion with Live6 Alliance, Catlin Murphy



**MAY:**

Meeting with Marygrove Conservancy  
Marygrove Conservancy Powerhouse Summit

**JULY:**

District 2 Community Meeting  
Discussion with Stephanie Harbin  
Neighborhood Survey Tour – San Juan Block  
San Juan block Community Clean-up



## AUGUST:

District 2 Community Meeting

Live6 Alliance Community Meeting

Marygrove Conservancy: Detroit Free Press Dinner with Chef Phil Jones of Pharmacy Food

Short Film Storytelling: Hosted by Detroit Narrative Agency on the Marygrove Campus

## OCTOBER:

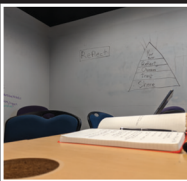
Grand opening of the new streetscape sponsored by City of Detroit and LIVE6

District 2 Community Meeting

Discussion with Stephanie Harbin and Darnetta Banks at LIVE6 Homebase location

Discussion with Marygrove Conservancy

Fitzgerald Neighborhood Trunk or Treat event



## SEPTEMBER:

Live6 Alliance Community Meeting

Discussion with Eric Thomas, Storyteller for City of Detroit

District 2 Community Meeting

## NOVEMBER:

District 2 Community Meeting

Discussion with Marygrove Conservancy



The team learned, that block Clubs serve as the heartbeat of the Fitzgerald community and the residents rely on them as the first source resource. Residents and block club leaders talk frequently and keep one another informed about happenings in and around the area. Next, residents have been working to maintain their homes and neighborhood, long before organizations and developers came in to insert their version of change. Eric Thomas, Chief Storyteller for the City of Detroit says, "Residents are the experts." These experts have formed block clubs and neighborhood organizations that are a huge part of their community. Our team observed the strength in neighborhood organizing and how it influences a powerful sense of community. Other areas like the Highland District Council emphasize that organizing a block club makes it easier to collaborate on solving problems and sharing interests and that block clubs provide an opportunity for residents to become involved in a range of community-wide activities (Highland District).

The team learned that Fitzgerald leaders frequently attend community-wide activities like attending District 2 community meetings with District 2 Manager, Kim Tandy. The community meetings provide a platform for public and private collaboration, and exploring personal and neighborhood narratives that keeps the neighborhood, district, and city in the know of what is happening within the city's district. Things we heard in District 2 meetings include: the McNichols Streetscape development happened to reduce the driving speeds. In a conversation with Kim Tandy, she expressed concern that the street still observes the high speeds, but they remain hopeful and the residents have mixed reviews. The Ella Fitzgerald Park is a physical improvement in the community.

One of the engagement opportunities focused on how the Marygrove Conservancy could better connect with the residents. During an April conversation with Harbin, the team learned that the need for the community to connect with anchoring institutions is all about mean-



Marygrove Powerhouse Summit, Spring 2021

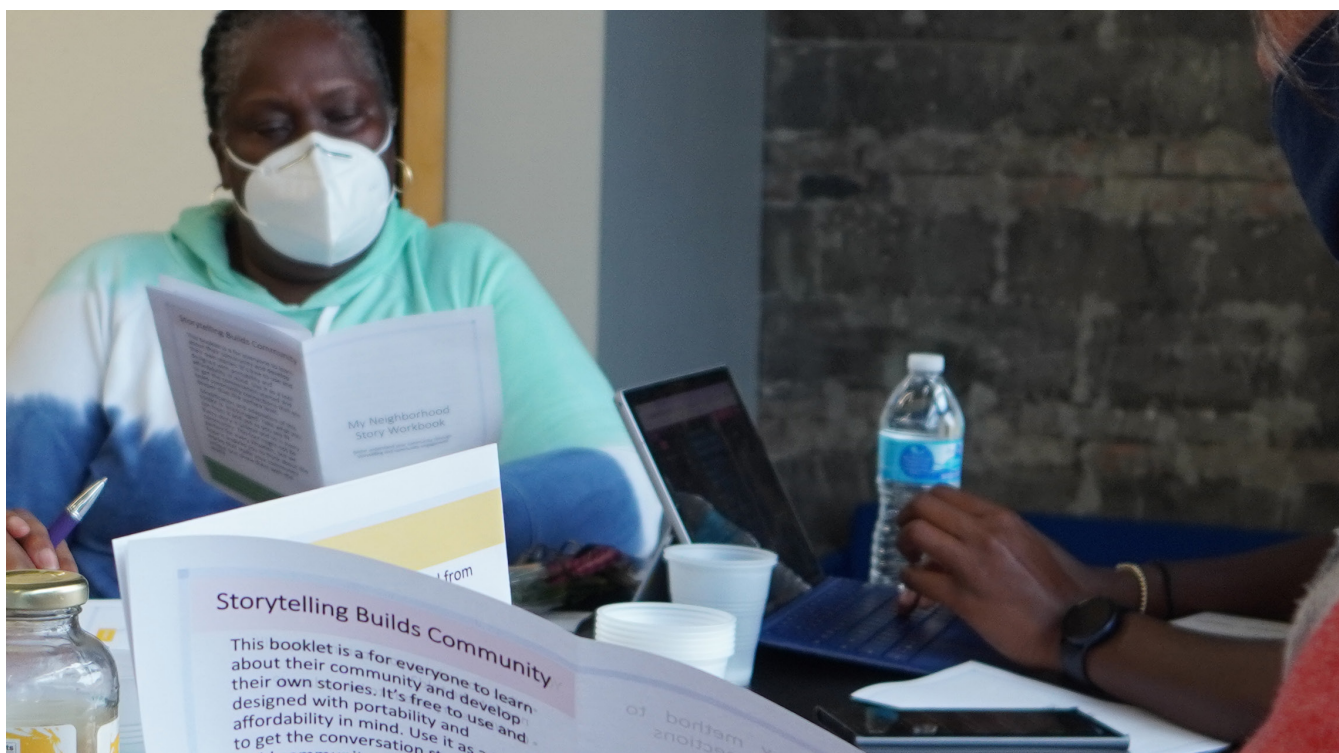




Top: Fitzgerald Trunk or Treat youth engagement opportunity, Fall 2021

Bottom: Trunk or Treat youth engagement results, Fall 2021





Seeking feedback on Storytelling Toolkit from residents at Neighborhood Homebase, Fall 2021

ingful dialogue to keep everyone informed. The team shared this with Racheal Allen, the Chief Operating Officer of the Marygrove Conservancy. Allan agreed that the connection was limited with the residents however, collaborative dialogue and partnerships with other organizations like LIVE6, University of Detroit Mercy, City of Detroit's Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship, and, The Neighborhoods Department happen more often.

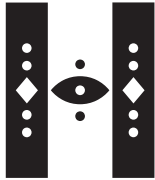
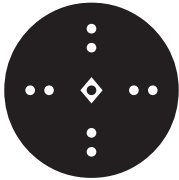

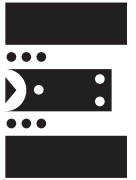


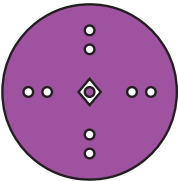

The team attended several events on the Marygrove campus to hear and learn more about the Conservancy. The Marygrove Conservancy has plans to build capacity in the community. First, the historic college campus will continue to be an educational anchor in the heart of northwest Detroit (Allen). Next, the Conservancy is working diligently to provide operating space for local entrepreneurs and non-profits, this, translates to access to valuable resources for the community. The Conservancy is also introducing entrepreneurship accelerator information sessions. The sessions specifically cater to an audience of event-based businesses that want to be vendor partners but historically have been

excluded from the selection process. This opportunity directly links to an equitable purchasing and procurement initiative, to support local and minority-owned businesses with receiving education, opportunity, and access to capital (Allen). The Marygrove Conservancy understands the value of engaging with the residents and welcomes the opportunity to explore ways for closing the gap.

Whether the team attended a clean-up initiative, engaged in impromptu conversations, attend short film storytelling event, experience the LIVE 6 Grand Re-opening, or engage with the youth during a Trunk or Treat event, each event allowed our team to connect with everyone. We became a part of the conversations, and the residents welcomed the opportunity to share their narratives. Each engagement experience took us deeper to intimate spaces of candid conversations about a wonderful area that desires to remain close, informed, and vibrant. The engagement opportunities allowed us to build trust and foster respect, but more importantly, they informed the development of the storytelling toolkit.



SWOT ANALYSIS - A strategic planning technique useful in helping community organizers and developers identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to community development or project planning.

	 <p><b>HUMAN DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	 <p><b>ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	 <p><b>PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	 <p><b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p>
 <p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p>	<p>RESIDENTIAL LONGEVITY</p> <p>LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS</p> <p>NEIGHBORHOOD NARRATIVES</p>	<p>BLOCK CLUBS</p> <p>ANCHORING INSTITUTIONS</p> <p>LOCAL NON-PROFITS</p>	<p>VACANT LAND &amp; HOUSING</p> <p>GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY</p> <p>STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS</p>	<p>EXTERNAL INTEREST : CITY DEVELOPERS ORGANIZATIONS</p> <p>INTERNAL ASSETS: RESIDENTS</p>
 <p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP BUILDING</p> <p>RESIDENT INCLUSIVITY</p> <p>AUTHENTIC DIALOGUE</p>	<p>PUBLIC &amp; PRIVATE COLLABORATIVE CULTURE</p>	<p>CITY &amp; NEIGHBORHOOD VACANT HOUSING TENSIONS</p> <p>WALKABILITY TO ESSENTIAL RETAIL</p>	<p>DETROIT LAND BANK WIDESPREAD POSSESSION OF VACANT PROPERTIES</p>
 <p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p>	<p>EXPLORING LOCAL NARRATIVES</p> <p>NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIVITY</p>	<p>MARYGROVE CONSERVANCY RESIDENTIAL ADVISORY BOARD</p>	<p>VACANT HOUSING: COMMUNITY-DRIVEN REVITALIZATION EFFORTS</p>	<p>THE NEIGHBORHOODS DEPARTMENT STORYTELLING PLATFORM FOR DISTRICT TWO</p>
 <p><b>THREATS</b></p>	<p>INAUTHENTIC PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DYNAMICS</p> <p>THE LACK OF PERSONAL AND NEIGHBORHOOD NARRATIVES BEING EXPLORED</p>	<p>HISTORY OF POOR INCLUSIVITY AND COLLABORATIVE TRANSPARENCY</p>	<p>THE FRACTURED NARRATIVE OF THE FITZ FORWARD REVITALIZATION PROCESS</p>	<p>SHALLOW PARTNERSHIPS</p> <p>BREACH IN TRUST</p> <p>PROJECT SCOPES</p>



## STRENGTHS

When assessing the needs of a community, often the best place to start is with the area's strengths. Similar to asset mapping, the goal expands beyond understanding what assets exist to how they can be coordinated to provide a comprehensive display of the community's stability. While there are many community strengths to focus on, this project focuses on the longevity of anchor institutions (University of Detroit Mercy and Marygrove), the commitment of long-term residents, the high level of involvement of block clubs, and the rising interest in this area by outside influences (developers, city government, and other organizations).

Marygrove and University of Detroit Mercy have been a part of the Fitzgerald neighborhood for nearly 100 years (History of Marygrove, University of Detroit Mercy). These institutions have educated thousands of alumni, provided hundreds of hours of community education, and served as defining cornerstones of the neighborhood. Having just one of these institutions would be an excellent source of strength for a community, having two of them presents a unique opportunity to expand possibilities. These institutions provide a fluid group of people moving in and around the neighborhood, eating at restaurants, shopping at local stores, and potentially becoming permanent residents. These long-term anchor institutions also provide stability and brand recognition for the neighborhood.

Another important strength of the neighborhood is the number of long-term residents who have persevered to maintain their homes and other neighborhood property through the many changes in the area. Many residents, like Ms. Stephanie Harbin, have lived in the community for over 50 years, showing resilience and a commitment to their home and neighborhood and providing a strong foundation to build upon. Long-term residents are the

foundation of future development and growth because they have lived through the experience of failed development plans and understand, from a historical context, what the area needs and wants.

The Fitzgerald neighborhood also has several, active block clubs, like San Juan Block Club and College Core Block Club. The block clubs have been at the forefront of the discussion of new development opportunities, representing the collective voice of the residents when talking with developers, the city, and other groups. Through the efforts of the block clubs, projects like the Ella Fitzgerald Park and wooden community pavilion have been completed, providing new gathering spaces for residents and a safe play space for the children. The continued petitioning and activity of these block clubs contribute immensely to the improvement of the neighborhood.

Another strength of this neighborhood also includes challenges, and that is of interest from outside groups. Whether it's the city of Detroit, with a plan to revitalize the neighborhood on a massive scale, or organizations like the Kresge Foundation looking to make a social impact in the neighborhood, investors and investment opportunities in the neighborhood have the potential to increase property values and attract new assets, like business and retail, to operate and invest in the neighborhood.

Though many strengths are found within the Fitzgerald neighborhood, the capstone team has specifically emphasized residential longevity. Highlighting these strengths is vital to approaching this process with honesty and openness to the area's weaknesses. Residents provide important consideration and vital feedback, ensuring that current assets continue to be community strengths for years to come.





Top / Middle: photos of the Ella Fitzgerald Park and Greenway, Fall 2021  
Bottom: Mosaic located in the Ella Fitzgerald Park, Artist: Hubert Massey



## WEAKNESSES

Community development is the idea of participation and transparency centered on building sustainable communities based on service and justice. Ideally it is an inclusive process that provides an opportunity for everyone to participate, requiring a holistic approach integrating the HOPE model. That goal must be anchored in establishing mutual respect between ordinary people and people in positions of power, to create accountability, remove barriers, and resolve the issues that affect the lives of residents. When any of the aforementioned elements are missing, outcomes can manifest in ways that have unfavorable impacts on community development and create identifiable weaknesses.

Several topics of concern discussed with the team's District 2 community partners lead the capstone team to pin-point certain ground-work flaws existing within the city's community development planning strategy. Property vacancy, abandonment, and a lack of communication with residents was repeatedly identified as a concern connected to driving what the team identified as a weakness for the Fitzgerald community. A large amount of vacant and

abandoned properties were observed during the team's walking tours within the Fitzgerald neighborhood with residents expressing deep concerns over the lack of conversation and communication with city government officials regarding next step ownership or development plans. The resident's perception is that the city makes decisions about vacant properties and their development without seeking resident input. For example, there are at least eight city-owned vacant properties within the 16000 block of San Juan, presenting concerns of neglect and other possible harms. First, the properties are not consistently manicured or maintained, which is an eyesore to the community, while the overgrown brush becomes a known breeding ground for rodents. In addition, unwanted wildlife has the potential to contaminate outdoor play spaces, becoming an environmental health and safety concern.

Lack of engagement and communication between the Marygrove Conservancy and the San Juan Block Club, as well as other block clubs, is also identified as a weakness. Some events happening on the Marygrove campus can strengthen the relationship between the Conservancy and the residents. Yet this will not happen if the block clubs are not in the



Unoccupied homes in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Summer 2021



know. During the period of capstone research, several events were hosted on the campus that the neighboring community was unaware of. Historically, Marygrove has worked to develop and foster strong relationships with the surrounding community, dating back to the 1960s and the Fitzgerald community council (History of Marygrove). Organizations like the Marygrove Conservancy typically have resources available and the potential to build community capacity. However, without continued conversations with the community, organizations like the Conservancy are at a disadvantage to gain full awareness of all the information necessary to develop and deliver sustainable community solutions.

Novice community developers are encouraged to engage the community on issues that influence and impact their day-to-day lived experience. Engagement requires having a genuine curiosity to understand what resources are needed to address community issues and concerns. However, community engagement void of the element of historical accuracy (the story) becomes another exercise in marketing pre-determined solutions. Media articles about the Ella Fitzgerald Park and Greenway are an example of this, stating that “Some residents feel that the communication with the neighbors needs to be stronger, and that the city could do more to help existing homeowners” (Doumar).



Marygrove Powerhouse, Summer 2021



## OPPORTUNITIES

Looking at the current strengths and weaknesses of a community provides valuable insights into opportunities that can be built upon to promote HOPE-based development in the area. Opportunities to share stories allows for a holistic approach to the theory and practice of community development with a foundation rooted in service, social justice, and sustainability (MCD).

One major opportunity in the neighborhood comes by improving resident connections with non-profit organizations like the Marygrove Conservancy and Live6 Alliance. Doing so presents the chance for these organizations to hear narratives directly from the community. The collection of narratives can potentially create a larger reach and start a process of disseminating information through storytelling. Collaboration between these sectors can build

community capacity through an economic and human development lens, where storytelling leads to city-wide events focusing on the growth within the Fitzgerald community. Organizing the narratives builds human capacity and strengthens trust among the residents, bridging historical context to current relevance and into future growth and development. The sharing of these narratives with stakeholders' bridges trust and creates deeper understanding, creating different approaches and diverse ways to share stories.

An additional, noteworthy opportunity includes Detroit's Arts, Culture, & Entrepreneurship department occupying workspace on the campus of the Marygrove Conservancy. Having direct access to city resources increases awareness of the community's continuous efforts, possibly playing a vital role in the community's development for years to come. Further, establishing a connection with the Department of Neighborhoods is also ideal as they work to



Walking tour of Marygrove Campus, Summer 2021





Storefront redevelopment in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Fall 2021

compile a collection of oral histories from community members. This partnership can lead to more activities and programming centered on families in the area, with communities presenting organizational cohesiveness and having an upper hand in attracting businesses into their community. New businesses have a powerful impact on a community's economic core by creating jobs for residents, keeping dollars circulating in the area, and establishing neighborhood niches for people to meet, network, and potentially share stories.

A significant opportunity currently being developed in the area, and highlighted during a walking tour with Harbin, is the ongoing negotiations between The Detroit Land Bank Authority and The San Juan Block Club, with the latter expressing interest in purchasing vacant homes for programming geared towards helping the Fitzgerald Community. There are several homes on San Juan that can be repaired and used for neighborhood hubs, including space for a community tool house, space for engagement and storytelling, and a place for neighbors with skilled trades to volunteer,

sharing their knowledge and expertise with other neighbors. A storytelling hub could work to build capacity for more people to become storytellers and share narratives to pass on to future generations. These potential plans and ideas would help with growing human connections, inspiring entrepreneurship to build economic opportunities, training future contractors and other trades-people, and rebuilding the physical assets within the neighborhood.

Another opportunity is the development and implementation of a storytelling framework designed to better engage with the community. There is so much to learn by listening to the residents and taking the necessary steps towards creating needed spaces. Developing positive communication and connections with District 2 organizations is an inclusive and comprehensive process for all involved and the key to authentic dialogue for storytelling, arts, and culture, serving as a catalyst for continued community growth. Harnessing these opportunities is a vital step in overcoming and avoiding potential threats to the neighborhood.



## THREATS

Reframing the interactions among communities, professionals, and institutions to operate within a truly participatory space of engagement, remains an ongoing area of exploration for the Fitzgerald neighborhood. The primary threat is the lack of trust between neighborhood residents and those seeking to develop areas within the community, including outside organizers and the city of Detroit. Generating a positive residential response to social and physically sustainable transformative change requires an iterative lens of collaborative understanding and practice. The pitfalls of pre-conceived interpretations of internal issues and the decisions around how to best address wicked problems can quickly amount to a breach in collaborative trust that is difficult to repair. Residents search for promising opportunities that allow outside stakeholders to take

the lead for revitalization projects, but these new opportunities should consider existing threats in the community.

The failure of the Fitz Forward project is a threat that undermines the remaining trust between the city and residents, continuing a negative narrative that Fitzgerald residents have grown tired of. Community members have lived through decades of trauma, brought on by disinvestment, neglect, and broken promises, making them understandably skeptical about development effort decisions. Prior to the Fitzgerald Revitalization Project breaking ground in 2017, the project vision seemed unattainable from the resident perspective, with many expressing doubts that 115 vacant houses and 200 blighted lots could be rehabilitated within two years of the start of construction. With private and philanthropic financial support of nearly \$15 million at the beginning, the project's goal was never com-



Unoccupied home in the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Fall 2021





Walking tour of Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Summer 2021

pleted, and the future remains uncertain. This leaves residents with a sense of urgency to keep pushing forward with their own community driven plan for redeveloping the remaining 102 houses. Moving forward, any alternative solutions brought forth by the city, unfortunately, can only be perceived as a threat, because the relationship between residents and city officials remains fractured. Changes like the McNichols corridor revitalization and Marygrove's P-20 Academic initiative bring new proposals of urban revitalization and improvements, but residents remain skeptical about any form of developmental intervention. They fear proposals that may disrupt the existing community structure.

It is clear that residents desire improved housing and an increase in local businesses. However, without engaging the community, the new development work is viewed as a method of gentrification, making it a threat. Allowing community stakeholders, a seat at the table from the start could help mitigate this threat

and build trust. Based on the voice from residents, clearly there is a desire for development that enriches the vibrancy of its people. Yet the current conditions of housing stock pose the threat of not achieving this goal.

This SWOT analysis outlines several of the key factors affecting the Fitzgerald neighborhood and how those factors interact in both positive and negative ways. The inclusion of community input, first-hand experience, and academic research helps to ensure this assessment is inclusive and useful for the continued development of this project. While it does not serve as an all-inclusive list, it does give valuable insight into the areas where further research can benefit from additional assessments. These analytical observations are based on conversations with community members across multiple spaces of interaction. The intent of the analysis represents opportunity to strengthen the community while highlighting key negative factors that impede sustainable development for the Fitzgerald residents.



## NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION

In looking at all of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the Fitzgerald community, two needs shift into sharp focus. The first is the issue with vacant housing, both the fact that there is a lot of it in the neighborhood and the fact that much of it is being held by speculators or by the land bank with little regard to what the neighborhood needs. This issue comes into view when discussing the problems with the proposed Fitz Forward project and in the team's discussion with neighborhood residents who would like to see something happen with the vacant homes in the neighborhood.

The second issue ties into the first and that is the issue of inadequate community engagement on an authentic level. While many developers, city entities, and other institutions have promised to engage with the community, the reality of the engagement has fallen short of what is needed to accurately reflect the will, and the needs, of the people. Again, the team's discussions with community residents and review of articles regarding projects that have happened in the neighborhood, leave the impression that there are more voices to be heard and heeded, and more stories to be told.







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DETROIT - MI



2020 PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT





## *PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*

A Master's thesis by David A. Riley, looks at some of the scholarships available surrounding storytelling, community development, and engagement activities, culminating in storytelling workshops and a collaborative narrative. Riley offers critiques regarding how stories are traditionally used in development as a tool of persuasion, or to simply pull the knowledge out of a community, but also suggests a third option. This third option focuses on how storytelling, can be a catalyst for building social capital among community members. It is the process of community storytelling that becomes the focal point, seeking to elicit feelings of compassion or empathy among community members to create a sense of belonging.

To test his thesis, Riley invites participants of recent community events to participate in a storytelling event to gauge the differences in their participation in both settings. This participation happens in 2 ways. First, the participants were interviewed in groups of 6 to 10 participants, using a restorative circle practice to ensure that each contributor had ample time to communicate their thoughts without interruption. The facilitator gave the prompts, encouraged generative listening, and did not require participants to respond to a prompt if they chose not to. Responses were audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis. In addition, participants were offered the opportunity to review and edit the final narrative produced after the event. This offered a more collaborative effort between community members and the planner. Participants had an option to remain anonymous in their feedback regarding the narrative portion of the process.

The analysis of the storytelling event, as compared with the traditional charrette, showed mixed results. There was a lot of information that overlapped between the two types of events, especially when it came to identifying community assets. There were also a lot of similarities to how participants saw the future and possibilities for development. One of the big differences, however, was the understanding of why an asset was considered important and how it might be able to be better used. This provided a more holistic approach to development that was rooted in a deep understanding of the personal reasons why a place or asset was important. Furthermore, what constituted a "community asset" began to branch out in its definition; identifying activists, politicians, and other active community members as assets in a way that was more comprehensive than the charrette event was able to.





Top: Organized walking tour of the Fitzgerald Neighborhood, Fall 2021  
Middle: Interview with District 2 Manager, Kim Tandy, Fall 2021  
Bottom: Film screening hosted on the Marygrove Campus, Summer 2021

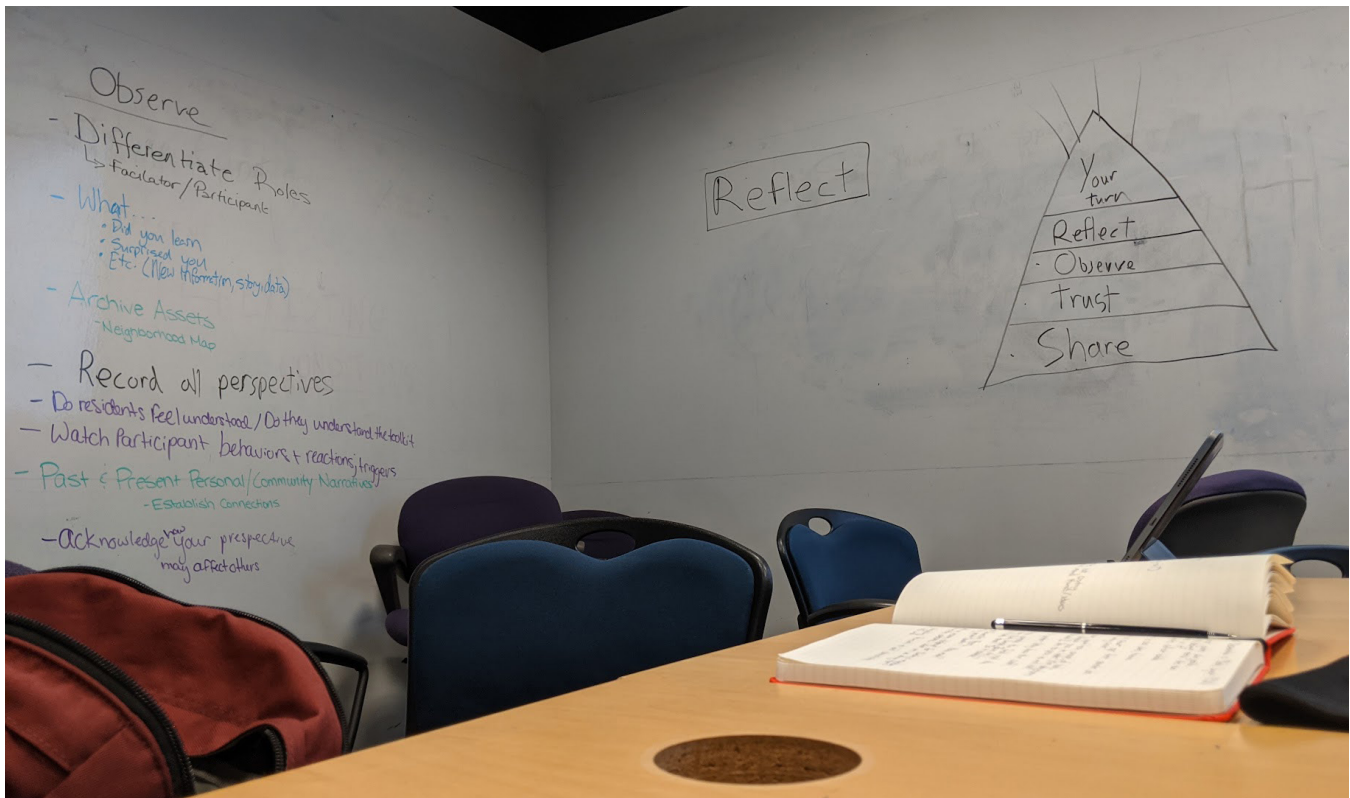




PROJECT

PROPOSAL





Notes from Storytelling Team working session, Fall 2021

The Arts, Culture, & Storytelling Team has chosen to become an external communicator for the Fitzgerald Community. In this capacity, the team will assist with sharing the community's narratives, serve as an advocate, and prepare the city and local leaders for the stories. After meeting with the Fitzgerald Community leaders and organizations, the team discovered that disseminating the narratives is necessary input, and useful for development planning. The residents have valuable narratives that need to be heard and shared with organizations. This will give organizations, clear insight into what the community needs.

Goals were established after extensive engagements with leaders from the private and public sector in District 2, and align with fostering collaborative connections between residents and any organization seeking to bring new development to the neighborhood. The team will develop best practices for implementing a compilation of stories through a resident-curated storytelling process. Phases of the process are inclusive of, collecting narratives,

about what residents believe, how they feel, and what they experience when interacting with organizations working in their community. The team seeks to better understand how storytelling and sharing narratives work to improve family economical mobility and discover the ways the residents can communicate this through storytelling while expressing appreciation to the organizations or developers assigned to serve and shape the community. The team will continue to seek guidance from Stephanie Harbin and Alex Schultz-Sparadin, because of their commitment to engage with all matters of building up the Fitzgerald neighborhood.

Efforts focused on building a sustainable and resident-centered community will include engaging organizations like Live6 and The Marygrove Conservancy. The team aims to be a catalyst to bolster this level of community engagement. Doing so will not only be important for highlighting stories for the residents, it will be equally important for the organizations to do the same. This phase builds



on principles of trust and provides the space for everyone to be heard. These collaborative engagements should create transparency between the community and the community's resources.

The team proposes a framework for a storytelling space, to be located in a vacant home owned by The San Juan Block Club. The purpose of inviting organizations and potential funders into this specific space will help level-set ideas and conversations to a common goal of redeveloping and rehabbing vacant homes. The plan would be to turn the storytelling house into the neighborhood hub. This could be a catalyst for change in the Fitzgerald community. It would lead residents and community organizers to collaborate specifically on place-keeping efforts for preserving the neighborhood culture. Creating this phase of a storytelling process for partners to utilize while gathering stories, will support the residents in delivering narratives and concerns to community developers and organizers, focused on creating the change Fitzgerald residents desire to see. With storytelling spaces like this, developers and organizers may capture the

essence of community and experience the authenticity that lives within the space.

More storytelling homes in other Detroit neighborhoods would raise neighborhood voices and, Harbin said, "It will hold leaders accountable." The homes will provide opportunities to build trust with the community and Harbin further stated, "It's important because we deserve to live in nice clean, safe communities, we deserve it!" Creating these storytelling spaces extends through future generations, with benefits of education that continue conversations with the same importance as it was at the start. Storytelling homes can provide a sense of accountability and accurate documentation of history. This is what Schultz-Sparadin calls a "Self-sustaining neighborhood, equipped with the knowledge and physical being to be equipped." We want to fully examine the roles that storytelling plays in creating an equitable and just community. We believe this promotes cultural integrity and establishes a place worth keeping. In the storytelling home, we plan to do what Orlando Bailey, engagement director for Bridge Detroit, coined in an Urban Consulate conference, "Honor the expertise of those in the community."



Fitzgerald Neighborhood walking tour, Summer 2021





Top: Home targeted by Fitzgerald Block Clubs for redevelopment, Summer 2021  
Bottom: Fitzgerald Neighborhood walking tour, Summer 2021





## *BLACKSPACE URBANIST COLLECTIVE*

A disconnect commonly coincides with the shallow narrative of public and private partnerships. Practitioners must push to challenge the hierarchical tendencies of development. Human-centered perceptions open doors for magic moments to take shape, allowing for a community narrative to unfold organically through authentic trust building and mutual respect. This is where people can feel comfortable and openly share their personal stories, social locations, and expressions of what gives a place meaning.

The BlackSpace Urbanist Collective Organization, is committed to upending the linear patterns of what community engagement commonly encompasses within the mainstream world of urban neighborhood development. Blackspace has created a “Manifesto for Change”, that outlines a series of fourteen human-centered principles, intended to spur authenticity and originality when working in marginalized communities. BlackSpace believes that creating circles, and not lines, demonstrates that the human-conscious mindset expands the opportunity for dialogue, inclusion, and empowerment. Therefore, their toolkit for change is designed to move at the speed of trust, and be adaptable and comprehensive, for outcomes that can be collectively celebrated and built to thrive.

BlackSpace prioritized the need to protect and strengthen culture through the co-creation of Griots, resulting in the evolution of a local writer’s workshop anthology. The workshop was organized into three benchmark periods, to where the first stretch was dedicated to the importance of learning as an active listener. During this interview phase, it was critical to map heritage sites alongside residents. As a result, the collaborative interactions had transcended a series of guiding principles and standards for community activation. This phase required an inclusive and transparent process with residents to authentically document the various forms of engagement that were unfolding, which contributed to the strengthening of collaborative trust around a project vision of relevance that was being expressed within the community.

The reflect and co-develop phase, focuses on the need to review and synthesize these engaged learnings, formulate the learnings into a toolkit action plan, brainstorm next steps alongside residents, while collectively transitioning into the planning and implementation of two community-driven events aimed at enhancing the level of public ownership during the project’s development. The final phase focuses on the co-creation of a Heritage Playbook with residents to ensure that the happenings of the engagement process are a manifestation of the relationships being developed, in addition to the existing cultural infrastructure being preserved.



## CREATE CIRCLES, NOT LINES

Create less hierarchy and more dialogue, inclusion, and empowerment.



## CHOOSE CRITICAL CONNECTIONS OVER CRITICAL MASS

Quality over quantity. Focus on creating critical and authentic relationships to support mutual adaptation and evolution over time.\*



## MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST

Grow trust and move together with fluidity at whatever speed is necessary.\*

## BE HUMBLE LEARNERS WHO PRACTICE DEEP LISTENING

Listen deeply and approach the work with an attitude towards learning, without assumptions and predetermined solutions. Take criticism without dispute.



## CELEBRATE, CATALYZE, & AMPLIFY BLACK JOY

Black joy is a radical act. Give due space to joy, laughter, humor, and gratitude.



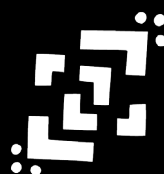
## PLAN WITH, DESIGN WITH

Walk with people as they imagine and realize their own futures. Be connectors, conveners, and collaborators—not representatives.



## CENTER LIVED EXPERIENCE

Lived experience is an important expertise; center it so it can be a guide and touchstone of all work.



## SEEK PEOPLE AT THE MARGINS

Acknowledge the structures that create, maintain and uphold inequity. Learn and practice new ways of intentionally making space for marginalized voices, stories, and bodies.

## RECKON WITH THE PAST TO BUILD THE FUTURE

Meaningfully acknowledge the histories, injustice, innovations, and victories of spaces and places before new work begins. Reckon with the past as a means of healing, building trust, and deepening understanding of self and others.



## PROTECT & STRENGTHEN CULTURE

Make visible and strengthen Black cultures and spaces to honor their sacredness and prevent their erasure. Amplify and support Black assets of all forms—from leaders, institutions, and businesses to arts, culture, and histories.



## CULTIVATE WEALTH

Cultivate a wealth of time, talent, and treasure that provide the freedom to risk, fail, learn, and grow.



## FOSTER PERSONAL & COMMUNAL EVOLUTION

Make opportunities to expand leadership and capacity.





# ACTION PLAN

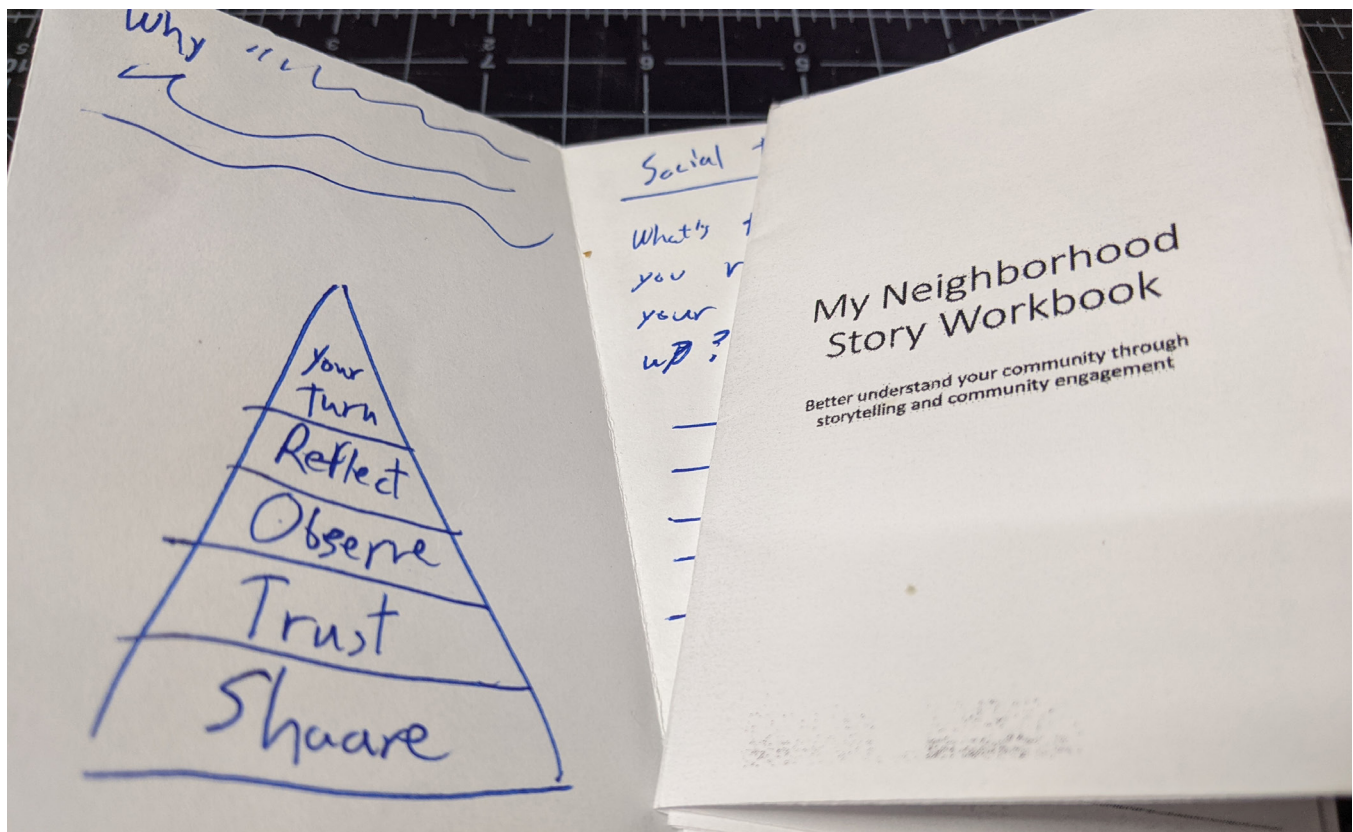


The purpose of embedding the storytelling element into community engagement is to encourage honest dialogue between community members while connecting local organizations more closely to the people they serve. Interviewing residents will help to gain knowledge of what is distinct to The Fitzgerald Community and learning more about the residents will help the team gain a personal story that acknowledges the history and amplifies the beauty of the community. Personal stories inform community stories and help communities plan their next steps for the development of any kind. To ensure that the team establishes respect and fosters trust with the community, the group has implemented a community development storytelling toolkit. This toolkit will go through evaluation by community leaders residing in our focused area, residents who are doing the work, and active in the community. This toolkit utilizes storytelling as a method of engagement and connection, strengthening relationships through communication between

residents and organizations.

After receiving feedback from Fitzgerald neighborhood leaders, Darnetta Banks & Stephanie Harbin, the team plans to coordinate and implement the storytelling toolkit at The San Juan Trunk-N-Treat community event on October 30, 2021. Specifically, this event will allow the team to get the perspectives of community children, teenagers, and their families. With input from community leaders on the toolkit, the team will assess the effectiveness of current questions and change prompts based on the feedback provided by our neighborhood leaders. Along with the knowledge gained, the group will require our capstone committee's feedback as well. These steps will ensure that accountability and engagement are preserved.

The team will gather all the shared narratives, creating a library that catalogs our toolkit methods and outcomes. The plan is to preserve

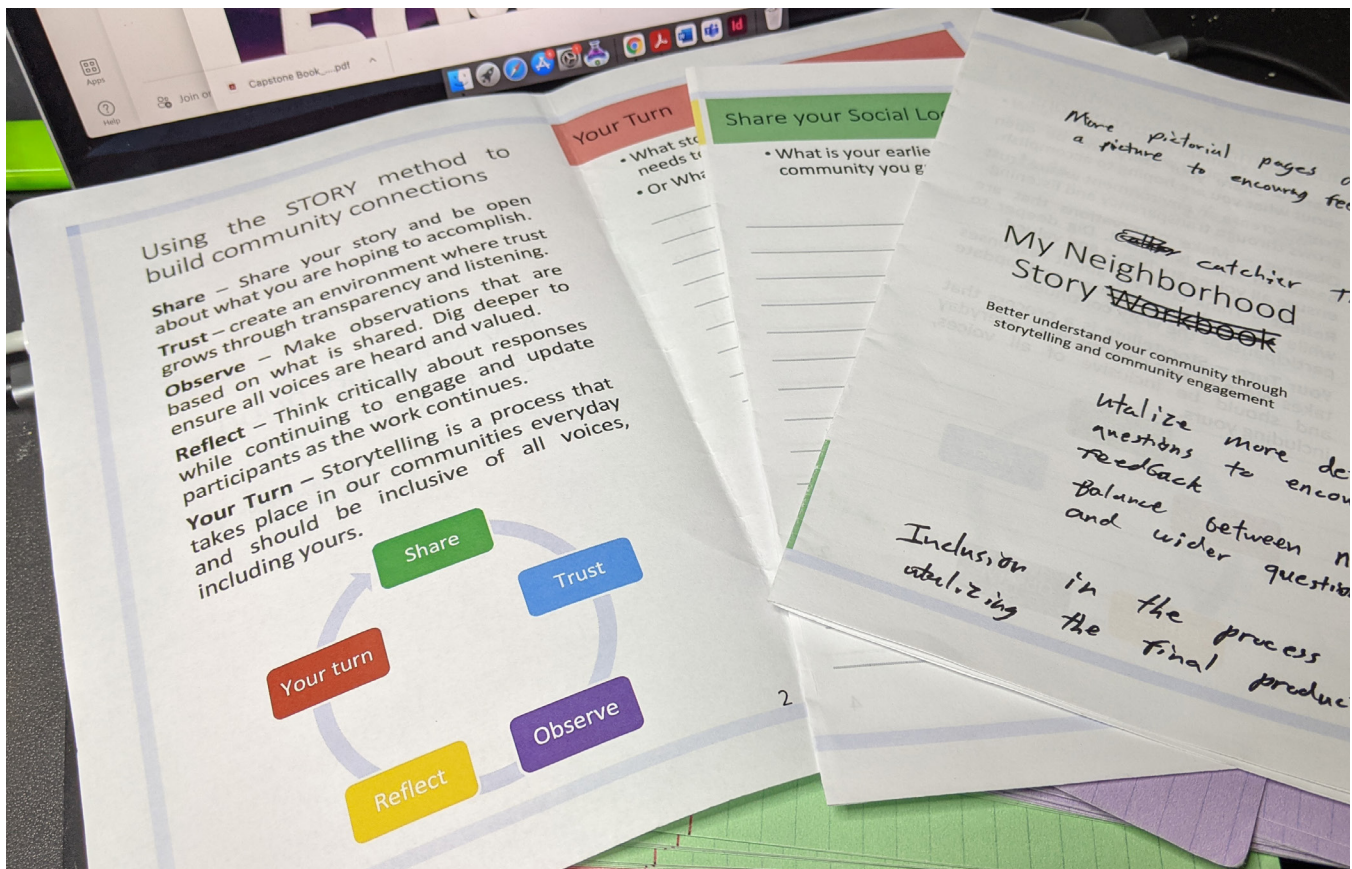


Storytelling Toolkit workbook early draft, Fall 2021









Storytelling Toolkit workbook examples with notes from community members, Fall 2021

understanding of current strengths and new strengths that can be created. There is an opportunity to rebuild trust among the residents and local government, potentially expanding into neighboring communities. Connecting neighboring communities can create dialogue, and the use of our STORY Toolkit will help to increase conversations between block clubs and anchoring institutions, continually creating opportunities to engage and collaborate towards improved capacity building.

Discovering opportunities, like sharing stories and rebuilding trust through engagement and collaboration, will combat threats that may surface. There could be opportunities to address threats like COVID-19 which has exacerbated disparities and created a shift for many people on multiple levels. Ideally, COVID-19 has presented a worst-case scenario, creating a heightened idea of trends that community leaders and organizations may be able to identify in the future. Gentrification in The Fitzgerald Community has risen, historically

posing a threat through the displacing of generational and low-income residents. Another threat is whether or not residents will ever benefit from true power-sharing, increasing resident capacity building, and the potential to create meaningful and continual change within their communities.

To learn more about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in The Fitzgerald Community, the group must engage in and encourage honest dialogue. STORY will help the team, and other teams, participate in equitable community engagement while strengthening connections and fostering collaboration between residents and organizations. The toolkit pillars actively engage participants in sharing their STORY: Share, Trust, Observe, Reflect, & Your Turn.



## *Share Social Location:*

This denotes the process of interviewing residents. Interviews ensure clarity, understanding of engagement prompts, and desired outcomes while acknowledging intersections. This fosters transparency and raises the facilitator's awareness to engage everyone by sharing the purpose of engagement and answering questions about the process and goals for community residents and organizations alike. Sharing a narrative creates space for self-awareness and allows for those involved to acknowledge the differences within themselves and creates awareness of the differences and nuances that affect others.

**SHARE**



**STORYTELLING**



## *Establish Trust with Participants:*

Based on feedback from community leaders and residents, the team can modify activities and prompts, to promote open dialogue among participants during the engagement process. Prompts can alternate at meetings, to encourage participants to actively listen, and share beyond surface-level interactions. For this pillar, the team acknowledges the vital community work that has already taken place. Organizations can create pathways and provide resources to expound on existing community work with the residents taking the lead. This pillar establishes cultural integrity and promotes agency for the residents. To garner trust, residents must have a voice in determining what happens in their community.



**TRUST**

WORKBOOK



## *Organize & Observe:*

This pillar creates space for deeper sharing. The observations gleaned from the previous pillars' activities will help inform the next steps in organizing. Once strength-based components are determined, residents can continue to share their stories. Narrative themes will be identified and linked, informing the toolkit and other happenings to the existing relationships and cultural infrastructure. This helps prepare for the next steps while fostering continued trust and encouraging future participation.

# OBSERVE



# STORYTELLING







## YOUR TURN:

The team is aware of its role and makes sure that role is to uplift engagement. The group would like residents to challenge community builders and organizations to implement these prompts and activities based on feedback and engagement. These prompts can be created to be more specific to any community that decides to utilize the toolkit. Organizations can use feedback to improve outreach and engagement or address any gap that is discovered. Residents, organizations, partners, and practitioners can refine prompts and activities in several ways to ensure the most beneficial community engagement which will cultivate a collaborative and co-creating community that is sustainable throughout generations.

Potential funders would ideally help make opportunities to expand leadership, capacity, and participation within The Fitzgerald Community. Good efforts for collaborative community funders are as follows: Kresge Foundation, which provided funding to The Marygrove Conservancy. The Marygrove Conservancy, an anchoring institution, needs outreach improvement, it would be ideal for Kresge to assist in connecting The Marygrove Campus back into a relationship with the community, especially since it is an anchoring institution. PNC Bank could be a potential funder due to the team's work with Dr. Bryan Kieler and his banking expertise which has helped foster strategic partnerships that have led to transformational changes. This type of approach would be beneficial in The Fitzgerald Community. The University of Detroit Mercy is another anchoring institution that would benefit from connecting with the community and its contributions would provide space and potential funds to increase community engagement. Funding participation can exemplify the "Your Turn" pillar for all organizations involved.



# STORYTELLING





**S**HARE

**T**RUST

**O**BSERVE

**R**EFLECT

**Y**OUR TURN

WORLD BOOM!





## *DIGITAL INNOVATION*

The use of digital storytelling brings an element of innovation to community engagement. As a community development strategy, digital stories can span the diverse generations through the lens of education, historical preservation, and outreach.

Through the lens of education, the Teach-Boston digital storytelling project was a year-long project for a select group of Boston Public School teachers and students with the goal of motivating students to become educators. The first phase of the program taught students the art of creating their own digital stories, while during the second phase the students taught what they learned to new students. The stories were framed around teachers' professional experiences and the students' summer work as teaching assistants at the local elementary school.

Participants worked through several intense phases, deciding what story to tell, group sharing of the story, providing and receiving feedback, and reworking the story by integrating feedback was considered the planning phase. Next, the implementation phase happened when students were recorded as they read aloud, giving students exposure and experience with public speaking. Finally, students were asked to bring photos that were used in conjunction with sound effects to enhance the overall digital storytelling experience. The project empowered the participants to teach others and therefore inspired other students to get involved. The project has been highlighted and shared throughout the Boston Public School District.

In Roxbury Massachusetts, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is an example of storytelling preserving a community's legacy. The Roxbury HUD department announced their intention to foreclose and auction off a 136-unit residential complex known as Camfield Estates, displacing the residents. The residents organized and were successful in getting HUD to reverse that decision and a city inspection of the building determined that new development was the safe option. During a 2-year period, the resident organization helped former residents relocate throughout the city during construction until finally, and 8 years later, residents began to move back into the newly developed Camfield Estates. The ordeal inspired this community to create a digital story of the journey and now all incoming Camfield residents are asked to watch this story. Leaders within the Massachusetts Housing Agency share that the stories bridge a generational gap, setting a tone of respect. While media can too often highlight stories of violence and crime, this digital archive creates an intentional narrative for how this community worked together to conquer their struggle.



Another story highlighting neighborhood outreach came from Springfield, Massachusetts', North End Outreach Network (NEON). NEON's health advocates regularly canvas the neighborhood to ensure that every resident is receiving quality health care and other essential resources in an at-risk community struggling with drug addiction, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy, along with high instances of AIDS, asthma, and diabetes. NEON worked with MIT to create digital stories to highlight some of the day-to-day challenges the community experiences, hoping the stories would be used to both console and inspire. For those who may feel alone in their experience, the stories can help reduce the feeling of isolation, providing insight for possible solutions. For organizations and agencies that have resources, the stories express the urgent need for support in community that is often over-

looked, including the stories of a:

- Single mother struggle with depression
- Single father reflects on strength of his mother
- Teacher shares about the influence of jazz in African American culture
- Community member while creating story is inspired to change career paths

These personal stories were shown in common places like drop-in centers, clinics, classrooms, and community centers. "In digital storytelling, these communities found an innovative way to voice their values by harnessing the power of digital media. Their successes filled computer hard drives with a digital library of the sights, sounds, and voices of communities in action" (Marcuss).



Digital storytelling workshop hosted by Y Arts Detroit, YMCAdetroit.org`





# PROJECTED OUTCOMES



Moving the action plan forward, it is incumbent upon the team to think about outcomes post-implementation. Analyzing the outcomes begins with reviewing all feedback, negative or positive, from the engagement exercise. Even if it is difficult to review, feedback is a necessary step in the storytelling toolkit process.

An efficient method for looking at the projected outcomes is to walk through the STORY process, albeit briefly, with each pillar of the HOPE model, to see how the process can be modified to fit any type of project. This section of the paper will do just that, summarizing the possible impact for each segment of the HOPE model. Finally, some of the constraints, limitations, and other impacts of the toolkit will be addressed on a broad level.

As previously mentioned, the first step in the storytelling toolkit process is to Share Your Social Location. When working within a human development setting, a prompt example to start the conversation may be something like, “What do you like best about your neighborhood?” A prompt for organizational develop-

ment might be, “Describe a leader in one or two words.” A prompt for physical development may ask participants, “Where is your favorite place to spend time (outside of your home) in your neighborhood?” A question for a meeting focused on economic development may be something as simple as “What was your first job?” or “What has been your favorite job?”

Once these initial questions have been asked to break the ice, then begins the opportunity to build trust and establish transparency. Facilitators are cautioned to lead and keep in mind the purpose of the meeting, to be genuine with the participants, and to stimulate a meaningful dialogue. Prompts here should be focused on understanding the outcomes of previous projects, and the impacts they had on the participant, individually. In other words, solicit their viewpoint of how past projects impacted (favorable/unfavorable) the community. The goal is not to determine a “right” or “wrong” view, but to keep developing the story as a group and continuing to unearth thoughts, feelings, and opinions that were not previously shared. When trust is ramping, people will be more will-



Storytelling team working session at the School of Architecture and Community Development, Fall 2021





Storytelling team outing to Detroit Sip on McNichols, Fall 2021

ing to express themselves on a deeper level.

The next step in the process is Observe. This opportunity is for both facilitator and participants, to share perspectives and observations with the group. Everyone should be encouraged to talk about what they have heard in the discussion up to this point. Based on the flow of the discussion, this could be an opportunity to look for common ground among everyone who has shared their experiences. This is beneficial in weaving together the stories about past projects and future projects that the community might have in scope. In addition, this gives participants space to build connections with others, and discover that others may have similar experiences or opinions. Furthermore, it offers an opportunity to analyze the viewpoints of others in a meaningful way. Simply stated, this step guides everyone to focus on what they have in common.

The Reflection stage is the opportunity for the group to look back on what was accomplished during the storytelling activity. Questions here begin to center around inclusion and improvement. Questions like, who was missing from the activity? Could there have been different questions asked? In addition, there is an opportunity to reflect on what the group learned during the activity. For example, was there

something learned that was unexpected? It is also important to recognize the work and the contributions the community has already made. What story is being told about the community and how does it differ from the story uncovered during the process? In addition, the Your Turn section sends participants back to their communities and spaces with the tools and stories necessary to make storytelling a regular part of their engagement process.

This process has various implications for each pillar of the HOPE model. Storytelling is not a new concept but a timeless art form, dating back to ancient beginnings. This specific art form for obtaining information and knowledge will allow community residents and organizations to collaborate and connect. Organizations can use resident stories and history to make informed decisions about supporting the community and help them better understand their own organizational story. Organizations must bridge, connect, and correct the gaps that exist between them and the community they serve.

Utilizing storytelling for physical development allows residents to have a truly valued voice and input into the decisions regarding the development of physical space in their community. This human-centered process benefits



developers by ensuring they gain buy-in from the community before they commence with the planning of new projects in those spaces. Storytelling has benefits that align with aspects of economic development. For example, a comprehensive inventory of all the skill sets of residents could be reflected in the businesses of the community, as residents would have the first opportunities to live and work within their familiar and comfortable space. This is called thriving.

While the focus so far has been on individual communities, there is also the opportunity for this process to have an impact regionally. When communities connect to collaborate on projects and span beyond neighborhood borders this broadens the opportunity for neighboring communities to connect and to begin the dialogue for creating the stories of increasing growth and development. Additionally, this process hopes to contribute to the exposure of stories shared by diverse and traditionally underrepresented people in other communities. The goal of this would be to make for more equitable development where all community voices are heard and regarded.

As with any process, constraints and limitations can be disrupters. For example, COVID-19 has presented several challenges, and opportunities, which can potentially affect this process. First, a lack of face-to-face interactions and activities can present challenges for a deeper level of engagement among neighborhood residents. Limited face-to-face can also interrupt the personal interaction during collaboration sessions between residents and the organizations that serve them. Technology is viewed as a challenge and opportunity. For the technically savvy resident, a virtual platform is ideal and is a cost and time savings. On the other hand, residents who do not have access to the internet or are not well versed with navigating the technological landscape, feel excluded and cut off from participating in meetings or events.

The process of building trust requires time and commitment for all participants. It may be difficult to quantify the results of the activities, and impossible to get genuine input from everyone. While this is a common issue among community development work, it is still important to try to lessen the impact of these constraints.



Storytelling team working session at the School of Architecture and Community Development, Fall 2021



# ASSESSMENT METHODS

DETROIT  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ARTS DISTRICT  
GRANT TO LARRY FOSTER - 2016

THE  
*Felle*  
GALLERY  
(313) 415-6308  
WWW.THEFELLE.GALLERY





To determine the project's success, the group decided on two different criteria for assessing whether the project is delivering the intended outcomes. The first is centered on the type of impact that might be visible if Marygrove Conservancy were to implement the storytelling toolkit, as a form of engagement, with the neighboring community residents. This will align with the research and observations the team previously completed from this engagement. The second area of impact takes a broader approach, examining what it might look like if the storytelling toolkit was utilized by other anchoring institutions, as a method of engaging with their surrounding communities.

Through extensive interactions with active members of the Fitzgerald community, local block club organizations, and the Marygrove Conservancy, each has transcended and shaped a unique narrative, impacting how the toolkit can illuminate stories at diverse scales of engagement. As documentarians, this exploration of collected narratives must include opportunities to reflect on these lived experiences both personally and collaboratively.

Based on interactions with the residents, the team learned that the residents want a solid

connection and an easy way to communicate, with the Marygrove Conservancy. The residents want to know what happens on campus, and they want the conservancy to know what is happening in the neighborhoods. For example, while Marygrove Conservancy hosts events on the campus, their public announcements are broad and less targeted to the neighboring community. To this point, team members have attended multiple events on the Marygrove Campus throughout the process of engagement, and noticeably absent from many of those events were the leaders of the community to which the group works with. This further emphasized the community engagement gap on behalf of the Marygrove Conservancy and the campus event organizers. We questioned, whether the community members' lack of attendance was based on a lack of knowledge or lack of interest. Either way, the team believes that the storytelling toolkit, when implemented correctly, would begin a process to resolve this issue of communication and help the Marygrove Conservancy connect with the neighborhood leaders and residents. Successful implementation of the storytelling toolkit could result in increased community involvement for on-campus activities, increased number of community or-



Fitzgerald Neighborhood walking tour, Summer 2021





Film screening hosted on the Marygrove Campus, Summer 2021

ganizations or businesses with campus office space, regular meetings between the Marygrove Conservancy and neighborhood block clubs, and a general improvement in the mood of residents regarding the Marygrove Conservancy and programming.

When residents are allowed to contribute their voice as neighborhood griots, exploration of the HOPE development is better understood. At the core of this toolkit, it encourages a level of authentic engagement that is built on how stories can enhance public and private relationships. The application of this framework moves at the speed of trust to offer an honest dialogue that values people's social locations, shaped by the past and present. This process is essential to elevating and understanding needs, strengths, and opportunities that unearth a more sustainable future between neighborhood communities and the collaborative dynamic with the organization that serves them.

Although the Capstone project took a specific focus on District 2, the development of the Storytelling Toolkit is based on a universal principles design framework whereas it can be modified and used interchangeably for other development projects.

Storytelling evokes a level of purpose, remembrance, emotion, and attachment in people. This toolkit thoroughly reveals these qualities, as each pillar contributes to a form of holistic engagement, authentically elevating residential interaction and understanding of neighborhood identity. Neighborhood identity can be gathered by documenting memories, identifying cultural assets, heritage values, in spaces created for conservation, and collaborating (BlackSpace). External forces, with their perceived notion of being community experts, will sometimes seek to reinvent the wheel. This is the antithesis of what the toolkit framework represents. STORY allows for a custom engagement experience, that defies linearity, to activate stories of self and community.



The STORY framework is a collaborative design respectful of each team member's narrative and based on our journey throughout the Capstone process. Each pillar is uniquely developed to acknowledge all voices, consider social location, and was shaped by extensive interviews, neighborhood walks, clean-up events, surveying, active listening, and reflection. STORY sets a baseline framework for collaboration between the Marygrove Conservancy and the Fitzgerald residents. However, the Storytelling toolkit has a universal design and can be useful for any community engagement session. We hope to learn that other communities use this toolkit to:

Narratives deserve to be shared. The use of the toolkit can connect anchoring institutions to the communities they serve through establishing trust. When organizations build trust with the residents, great engagement and resident-driven change can take place after observations and feedback are provided. Preservation of neighborhood heritage comes through reflection and this can only happen when there are legacy residents and advocates, sharing the work and cultural greatness of their neighborhood. All of this comes together with the sharing and hearing of everyone's, (your turn) story.

- S – Share Social Location
- T – Establishing Trust with Participants
- O – Organize and Observe Feedback
- R – Reflect
- Y – Your Turn



Fitzgerald Trunk or Treat youth engagement opportunity, Fall 2021



# MONTELIBERTON





The challenge of authentic community engagement between residents and the City of Detroit is an ongoing concern. However, the capstone team is hopeful that a new normal can be achieved, connecting neighbors to each other and to the organizations that serve the neighborhood. This is the heart of the storytelling toolkit.

With the team's research and community engagement efforts, it became clear that residents of the Fitzgerald neighborhood often feel overlooked when it comes to the development planning in their community. In addition, as the Marygrove Conservancy embarks on a new journey as a cradle-to-career campus, the input of community members can help to ensure sustainable relationship building. In utilizing the storytelling toolkit, everyone can share openly, about topics of needs, wants, and hopes both individually and as a growing thriving community. As stories are shared, the social fabric of the community grows stronger, and development

can therefore be tailored to meet the needs of residents and organizations alike.

When this type of collaboration happens, the results will show in the strength of the neighborhood's HOPE. This prevents duplication of services or businesses; housing development becomes affordable and builds the neighborhood on the strength and perseverance of long-term residents. To continue moving forward without residents' input only encourages the status quo and eventually leads to unintended consequences like gentrification and alienation. When residents and community organizations open up and share their visions for future growth, the potential holistic and lasting outcomes grow dramatically. A new story for community development is there to be written, page by page and chapter by chapter.




Stephine Harbin, Fitzgerald Resident, Participating in a storytelling activity, Fall 2021



# HEAR STORIES HERE EVENT

Hear Stories Here was presented publicly on December 9th 2021 on the Marygrove Campus. The event included an introduction by Tom Lewand, Chief Executive Officer of the Marygrove Conservancy, a brief overview of the capstone project, and an engagement activity organized using the storytelling process. This section includes photos from the event as well as the initial response to the engagement activity.



**Thursday, December 9, 2021**  
Marygrove Campus  
Madame Cadillac Building  
Brownstone Community Room

## HEAR STORIES HERE

### SHARE YOUR STORY

Join us for this free & family friendly event exploring the role stories play in building community

Doors open at **5:30 PM**  
Program begins at **6:00 PM**  
**Refreshments provided**

**RSVP:** <https://hear-stories-here-public-event.eventbrite.com>

University of Detroit Mercy  
Masters of Community Development  
Capstone Public Presentation









What brings people together?

- ✓ FOOD, ✓ FAMILY, ✓ MUSIC, ✓ HOLIDAYS, ✓ WORK, ✓ SCHOOL, ✓ CHURCH / WORSHIP, ✓ END OF COVID CELEBRATIONS
- ✓ Food, Funerals, Weddings, Social Issues
- ✓ Worship, Music, ✓ Sports, Current Events, Birthdays

Food, social gatherings, common similar background/experiences

OPPRESSION

- emergencies
- ✓ proximity
- ✓ farmers markets / festivals, concerts
- ✓ OUTSIDE GATHERINGS
- ✓ Protests / Marches \*
  - Arts
  - Storytelling!
  - Special events
  - Common Interests / shared values
- Bad weather
- Illness
- play / friendships - kids who are close in age

Where is your favorite place to spend time in your neighborhood? (Outside of your home)

- Coffee Shop
  - Narrow way (x2)
  - Bigby (Wigandotte)
  - The Gathering Coffee Co (Grand Blvd)
- the park
  - Downtown Berkeley
  - Shopping, Clarke's
  - Ice cream
- REC CENTER, DOG PARK, COOKOUT, PARK, BASKETBALL COURT, LIBRARY, GRANDPARENTS / EXT FAMILY HOUSE, PORCHES (SEASONAL)
- Riverwalk, Park, Library, Restaurant, Church, Salvation Army (Gym), College Campus
- Pool: Lakes
- ✓ RIVERWALK, Downtown ARCH
  - Dog walks + Dog park
  - Farmers market
  - ✓ PARK El Club Friends Houses
  - Clark Park The Bar Restaurants ✓
- Small shops, Salons, Resale shops
- Bike path
- Walk/kiss Community Center

What does a community leader look like? What do they do?

- Good Listener \* \*
- Facilitate
- Committed
- Public Servant
- Lives in Community
- Integrity
- Respects Others
- Bridges people together \*
- BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, MAKE PHONE CALLS, PERSONAL CALLS/OUTREACH, ORGANIZE COMM GARDENS, LOOKS LIKE THE COMM - REPRESENT, ORGANIZE EASTER EGG HUNTS, ETC, NIGHT - FUN DRAWS.

They look like the communities they serve!

Do Justice

Love Mercy

Everyday people like us! They lead, serve and make connections. Overall Love Listen, suggest, offer solutions.

- ✓ SERVAANT LEADER
- EMPATHETIC
- ACTIVE LISTENER
- RESULTS ORIENTED
- empathetic
- Resourceful
- Willingness to go above & beyond
- Not Ego DRIVEN
- Motivated
- Brings new ideas

How do you learn about community happenings?

- News ✓ - local sites ✓
- Social Media ✓ ✓ ✓ \*
- Flyers
- Posters
- Local (community association) - Block Clubs
- Email ✓
- Word of mouth ✓ ✓ ✓
- Reading ✓
- From work / school ✓ ✓
- List serv
- Community newsletters ✓ ✓ ✓
- Church
- Organizations (Social) ✓
- Sigmasc / Boards
- Community info LEAP Alert
- Sibbs
- Local TV (Public)
- TEXT MESSAGES
- STORYTELLING
- RADIO
- MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS
- DISCORD SERVER

- Delegate
- Trustworthy
- Supportive
- Heavy lifting
- Encourage gifts of others
- Take a gift



What makes a complete neighborhood?

Walkable green space third space  
 Amenities  
 Multi-generational  
 Longevity  
 Rely on neighbors  
 Community feeling  
 Well kept homes  
 Common Areas  
 Good transit

Friendship  
 STORE  
 SCHOOL  
 SAFETY  
 Housing - Affordable  
 PLAYGROUND, PARKS etc.  
 SERVICES  
 space for change + advancement

SPORTS AREAS - SOCCER, BASKETBALL, ETC.  
 AFFORDABLE HOUSING, ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE,  
 FOOD SECURITY - HEALTHY SHOPS/OPTIONS, HOUSES OF  
 WORSHIP, SAFE PLACES FOR KIDS TO GATHER,  
 MULTI-GENERATIONAL REPRESENTATION, GOOD LEGISLATIVE URB.  
 MULTICULTURAL

Connectivity, Resources, Brotherly Love  
 Sustainability, Safety, Rules  
 Upkeep!

ACCOMODATING  
 ASSISTS VARIOUS  
 AGE GROUPS

be a place that brings  
 community together

laughter &  
 fun

services &  
 resources

provides resources  
 people can also take  
 home -> i.e. training,  
 skill bldg,  
 food, batteries,  
 etc

What does a good community resource center do?

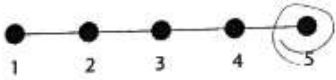
- SUPPORT
  - GATHER
  - CONSISTENT
  - CONNECTOR OF RESOURCES
  - ENGAGE
  - FOCUS EFFORTS ON THE MOST 'VULNERABLE'
  - WELCOMING
  - ANCHOR / STABILITY
  - ACCESSIBLE & WELCOMING
  - PROVIDE CREATIVE OUTLETS
  - LISTEN
  - SAFE HAVEN
  - SERVE EVERYONE
- Provides meeting space  
 Brings people together  
 Link to larger community  
 Inclusivity +  
 serves all ages.
- Partner with schools/  
 education systems  
 Provide a sense of  
 belonging
- INVITING, MAINTAINS COMM.  
 SPACES, BRINGS COMM. TOGETHER,  
 ORG. SAFE SPACE,  
 help address community  
 issues



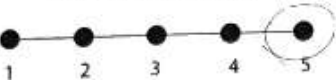




Marygrove becoming a campus for the community

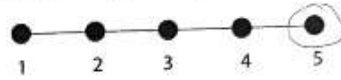


More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community

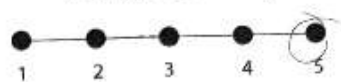


Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community

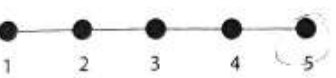


More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community



Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community

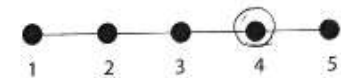


More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community

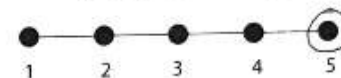


Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community



More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community



Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community

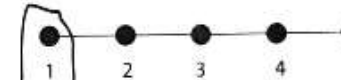


More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community

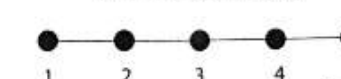


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Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community



More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community

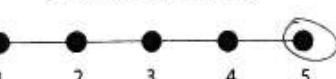


Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community



More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community



Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!

Marygrove becoming a campus for the community



More youth activities / opportunities that Marygrove can offer the community



Please share your ideas on the back.  
Thank You!



- Making your booklet
- Fold this page along the lines
  - Partially Unfold and cut the seem with the dotted line
  - Refold and create the booklet so the front cover is visible

The back of the booklet could be designed to include a poster promoting the event or designated as additional writing or activity space depending on the needs of your project



Horizontal lines for writing.

Horizontal lines for writing.

Horizontal lines for writing.

Horizontal lines for writing.

Describe a frustrating situation you have experienced in your neighborhood?

Describe someone in your community who you think of as a storyteller?

What is something you learned from a neighbor that you will take away from this storytelling project?

What story about your community still needs to be told?  
Or What story needs to be updated?

and Transparency

Observe

Reflect

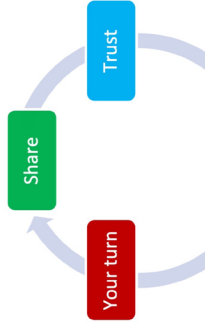
Your Turn

Share your Social Location

What is your earliest memory of the community you grew up in?

Using the STORY method to build community connections

- Share** – Share your story and be open about what you are hoping to accomplish.
- Trust** – create an environment where trust grows through transparency and listening.
- Observe** – Make observations that are based on what is shared. Dig deeper to ensure all voices are heard and valued.
- Reflect** – Think critically about responses while continuing to engage and update participants as the work continues.
- Your Turn** – Storytelling is a process that takes place in our communities everyday and should be inclusive of all voices, including yours.



My Neighborhood Story Workbook

Better understand your community through storytelling and community engagement

Storytelling Builds Community

This booklet is a for everyone to learn about their community and develop their own stories. It's free to use and designed with portability and affordability in mind. Use it as a tool to get the conversation started and build community connections that are deeper than the surface level.

Modification and adaptation of this toolkit is encouraged. Take what you can from it and use as you see fit.

Every story is unique and so is every community. This tool might not be perfect for every situation, but we hope it inspires you to think about the stories that make your community unique and share them with the world.

For additional information about this project or to



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