

the reactive**CITY**

an architectural thesis by Jake Lyon



the reactive**CITY**

Jake Lyon

Masters of Architecture

The University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

ARCH 5100, 5110, 5200, + 5210

Thesis Advisor: Noah Resnick, Assistant Professor of Architecture

24 April 2009

This book is dedicated to

all those who have helped me along the way,

Aaron Gardinier	Eric Shell	Noah Resnick
Adam Vermeersch	Jeff Harris	Patrick Liederbach
Aimee Nally	Kaitlynn Young	Patrick Robinson
Alexis Saunders	Krista Wilson	Patrycja Sakovska
Ben Sanchez	Lauren Myrand	Paul Massaron
Brian Ellizon	Jennifer Siegel	Rashida McDuffie
Carrie Da Via	Jeremy Kozlowski	Robin Underwood
Catherine Stein	Jessica Phillips	Robyn Burgos
Dan Pifera	Jessica Harrison	Sami Al Jureidini
Dana Hart	John Mueller	Scott Hampton
David Lenz	Mark Klimkowski	Tiffany Tononi
Diamond Jenkins	Matthew Ward	Trevor Tomlinson
Donnie Jones	Melissa Detloff	Victoria Mazzola
Drew MacNamara	Michael Hawarny	Virginia Stanard
Ellie Gravelle	Nick Piotrowski	Will Wittig

to my family for their never ending love and support

and to the people of Detroit.

Thank you all.

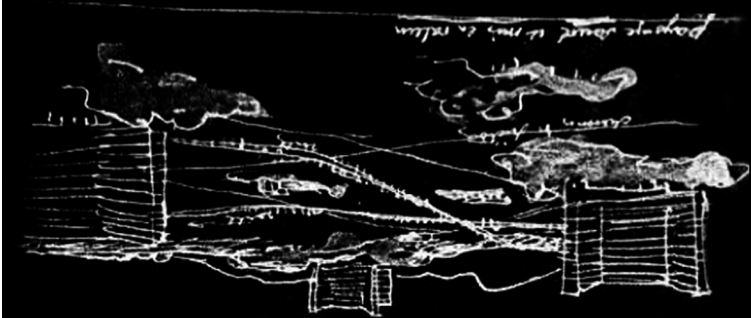
Contents

Abstract	07
Thesis Paper	08
Urban Precedent Studies	12
On Healthy Communities	16
The Community Process	22
Field in the City	34
Community Sketches	42
Design Proposal	50
Concluding Thoughts	64
Endnotes	66
Bibliography	68



**Intricate minglings of different uses in cities
are not a form of chaos.
On the contrary, they represent a complex and
highly developed form of order.**

-Jane Jacobs



There is an ulterior motive, too, in architecture,
which is always peeping out from around the corner,
the idea of creating paradise.

-Alvar Aalto

Abstract

The Reactive City investigates architecture and the impact of doing architecture at the urban scale. Individual architectural projects are, for the most part, designed with the end users in mind, but at the urban scale, there is a pattern of disinvestment in Detroit's current population in favor of encouraging new populations and businesses to move in. I explore the reconstruction of the design and policy making process as a proactive means by which the city can be more reactive to the needs of its residents. Through this more democratic process of neighborhood involvement, architecture becomes an integral part of community building, serving to both create and support more holistic and culturally appropriate urban environments.

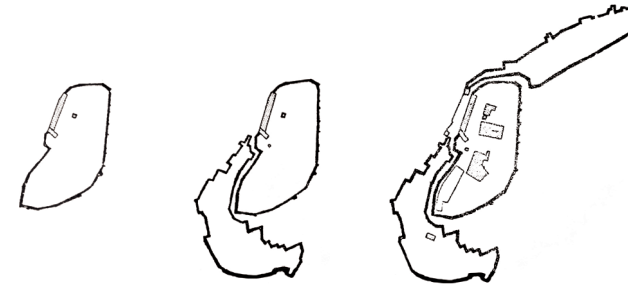
Thesis Paper

Every act of reconfiguring the physical environment is a means of meeting human needs, whether those needs be aesthetic or functional, for one or for many. Design of the physical environment is considered a professional task for product designers, urban planners and designers, and architects, but in reality, by simply rearranging the furniture, any person changes their physical environment to better meet their own needs. Installing curtains, making tents with blankets, tables, and chairs, or planting a line of trees along the edge of one's property are all modes of changing physical adjacencies to better meet immediate human needs.

At the building scale, architects provide the service of reorganizing spatial relationships to meet the human needs of clients and end users. The role of the architect is understood to be in service to clients in a way that best meets their individual aesthetic and functional needs. At the urban scale, however, there is an inadequate link between the clients (citizens) and designers (architects, developers, and city officials). In the process of development as it exists today, the capitalistic value of market demand is often used as an excuse to support

the low-density, automobile dependent sprawl found across the United States. This process, however, is itself a manipulation of market preferences toward a homogenized mode of creating human environments. In Jonathan Levine's book *Zoned Out*, the culprits of this attack on urban form are not developers (though the system does favor certain types of developers.) In a case study on Fruit Heights, Utah, Levine explains the developer's desire for an "alternative" development that is subsequently blocked by the city. Levine writes, "A passerby in Fruit Heights would observe a low-density single-family neighborhood, and might naturally assume that it arose because of market demand for housing of this type. Invisible to this observer would be the more compact and affordable neighborhood that the market would have provided for but for municipal regulatory exclusion¹." They systematic removal of market options of "alternate" (which I would call urban) developments relies on a means of thinking based in the core ideals of the segregation of uses and the decentralization of cities.

This thesis addresses the issues of zoning by rethinking the processes involved in the organization of the city. The goal is to place



control more democratically in the hands of community members, taking unchecked power away from urban planners and re-allowing the richness and complexity of controlled but natural city life. In the first part of this thesis, the underpinnings of this new concept are explored, laying the foundation for a new process of inclusive design. The second part of this thesis is an exercise in the resulting process of collaborative design.

Design Processes as a Medium for Change

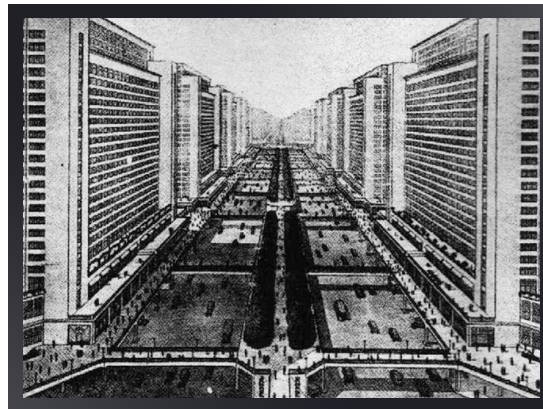
In ancient Etruscan era Italy, cities developed as independent states on the rolling hills of the central peninsula. These cities were, for the most part, self sustaining, and relied on heavy walls to provide defense. These walls paint a picture for us today of the growth of such cities. As is evident from the bird's eye view, hilltop cities were far from regular. Paths wound up the sides of hills to avoid the steep vertical to the direct top. The protective wall expands and contracts over the course of centuries, transforming the perceived limits of the city to accommodate new needs, processes, and populations. As these cities developed, social and practical reason dictated growth in a way that allowed complex interactions.

This freedom is what Jane Jacobs recognized as she studied what a city truly is. "Intricate minglings of different uses," she says, "are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order²." It is precisely this innate order that is lost in a society that has imposed a system of organizing urban space in a way that ignores specific personal choice.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Industrial Revolution changed the urban landscape with the incredible push for manufacturing technologies. The more efficient production of goods in Western industry, however, was not without its flaws, and post-industrial cities across the globe are feeling the effects of this today. As cities increased productivity and efficiency, there was a vast migration to these urban areas to support the suddenly available and relatively well paid jobs. Specialization of tasks in the assembly line approach to manufacturing allowed for cooperative efforts in making products to far exceed the capacity of those working alone or in smaller groups.

Although this re-conceptualization of labor and production would greatly benefit the

[Top] Growth of an Italian Hilltown, A New Theory of Urban Form. Christopher Alexander.



[Left] Diagram of an example Garden City, Garden Cities of Tomorrow. Ebenezer Howard.

[Right] Perspective, Le Ville Radieuse. Le Corbusier, courtesy Google Images.

economies of industrialized nations, industrial cities became hotbeds for disease, poverty, and blight. For the sake of efficiency, industry was hardly concerned with evolving health issues, and there was little consideration for social or environmental viability while those in power had such economic benefit.

While many of the ideals and principles of the modern economy rest squarely on the ideas of efficiency and profit, our political and social culture has gradually moved away from a central concern for a free market despite maintaining the emphasis on market demands. Regulation has provided a sort of specification zoning which has been used as a mechanism for exclusion and the promotion of disassociated, standardized districts. Though there is a place for standardized "districts" (historic districts, for example), the default development should not be single use with exceptions. Consider, for example, a suburban neighborhood I once worked with in Canton, Michigan. The firm I was interning in at the time was producing a concept design for a hospital to be located between residential neighborhoods. The design included generous buffer zones and a low (2 story) building, but a

few people in the neighborhood lead a loud campaign against the project. Of course they kept the "nonconforming use" from entering the residential zone, and the neighborhood was "saved".

This is where the greatest weakness of zoning can be understood. Zoning has the predisposition to single use districts over multiple uses or innovative adjacencies. What this thesis seeks is not high density, New Urbanism geared developments, but rather vibrant neighborhoods for the people and by the people. Zoning as a system of regulation for exclusion cannot meet this demand. Zoning is not evil or unnecessary. The origin of zoning embodies a step toward a higher quality of life. When urban planning and zoning first became an issue, the grime of city living was nearly unlivable. The health hazards associated with industry and new modes of building (materials and heights) required some form of regulation to maintain every resident's right to air and light, to prevent tuberculosis, and so on.

Zoning laws emerged as a response to the poor quality of city life, but it must also be understood that it took the form of an overly

simplified utopian theory. In 1898, Ebenezer Howard published his written work that would later be retitled "Garden Cities of To-morrow," which outlines an optimistic vision of slumless cities. In his diagrams, Howard's diagrammatic city separates industry and unhealthy uses from the more livable entertainment, employment, civic, living, and recreation areas. Howard also segregated all these other uses as well. This understanding of space is attractive to people, as it is easily comprehended and was soon taken out of the original garden city context of livable urban units. The application of the Garden City model to many United States cities (among other forces) resulted in a physical environment that is less dense and composed primarily of single use districts. Since the only space for this kind of development was outside central cities and since the government subsidized such expansion, suburbs grew to meet the market demand for slum alternatives. As a method of ensuring higher environmental quality, zoning has thus far been relatively successful. Unfortunately, the rigid nature of classical zoning's rules (as almost ubiquitously adopted from early New York versions) do not allow for continuing adaptation to new standards of environmental, social, and economic justice. The root of this rigidity lies in the segregation of uses and the over used concept of non-conforming uses.

Alternative Zoning

The primary question I raise about zoning, even as it encourages the decentralization of our cities, is simply, "is this the only way?" Even among supporters of zoning, flaws are recognized and sometimes addressed, but is there a more fundamental change to be made? Proponents of the Smart Growth and New Urbanist theories would have graphic design codes guide development of dense, walkable, mixed-use cities. As Jane Jacobs argued in *The Life and Death of Great American*

Cities, "[Howard's] aim was the creation of self-sufficient small towns, really very nice towns if you were docile and had no plans of your own and did not mind spending your life among others with no plans of their own. As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge³." If the critique of zoning ala Howard is the lack of freedom, the same logic must be applied to more ecologically friendly yet equally limiting contemporary urban theories.

This thesis examines the belief that people can decide (at least to some extent) the rules they need to live by. Still, which rules apply to which communities? Are there universal values to be supported? Who regulates the new zoning, and what benefits over traditional zoning can be guaranteed, and, what vision of this physical reality is the result? Over the past century, modern thinking of urban design supports the single genius, the beautifully rendered image of utopia. Healthy communities (and thereby, healthy individuals) do not develop in these preconceived snapshots of unattainable perfection. Instead, the image to strive for is understandable only as a process of inclusion and never as a definitive, singular act of design. Christopher Alexander, an urban formal theorist, once wrote, "The task of creating wholeness in a city can only be dealt with as a process. It cannot be solved by design alone, but only when the process by which the city gets its form is fundamentally changed⁴." Though the development process we currently use includes zoning, developers, and a wide variety of other factors, a different way of thinking about zoning regulations may allow for a proactive approach to generating the types of communities each community wishes it could be. Architecture serves people's need for buildings, and with this new way of thinking about the way we direct the development of cities, cities can serve their citizen's needs for healthy urban neighborhoods.

Urban Case Studies

It was apparent early on that this thesis would be exploring concepts on a scale greater than that of individual pieces of architecture. The approach to healthy community design requires some understanding of the choices when it comes to large scale developments. To explore both ends of the spectrum, Greenwich Village and Seaside, Florida were picked to represent the unplanned and the planned city.

Jane Jacobs' Greenwich Village

As one of the pre-eminent urban economists of this era, Jane Jacobs has plenty to say about the development of urban form. For her, freedom of choice is the key to successful city space, and she viewed city planning as an oversimplified attempt at utopia. Again, she said, "As in all Utopias, the right to have plans of any significance belonged only to the planners in charge⁵."

In regards to freedom and making plans for ourselves, it is beneficial to take a look at the Greenwich Village that inspired Jacobs during the early 20th century. The area just north of the original settlement on Manhattan developed first

into a high income neighborhood with supporting institutions and commercial development being during the late 1800s. As the new century approached, however, German, Irish, and Italian immigrants began to shift the character of the district to be more subversive. As the wealthy moved out of the changing neighborhood, "[o]lder residences were subdivided into cheap lodging hotels and multiple-family dwellings, or demolished for higher-density tenements. Plummeting real estate values prompted nervous retailers and genteel property owners to move uptown⁶."

By the time the First World War broke out, Greenwich Village was a bohemian center for "radicals and non-conformists." With the increase in density and the diversity of the population, the community that developed here was full of conflicting and new ideas. The density of an urban space must be appropriate to its culture, and at a certain lack of density it can be argued that these spaces become un-urban. As Jane Jacobs wrote, "There must be a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purposes they may be there⁷."

[Right] Collage of Messy Life in Greenwich Village, Jake Lyon.

This is a neighborhood defined by human need. Existing structures were repurposed, new structures were built to support a counter culture, and every change in the urban environment responds to the people that lived there. The streets are not a perfect grid, and many of the 19th century buildings remain thanks to a preservationist group's efforts. Though these features may not create the most "efficient" cityscape, they create one of the most phenomenal urban environments in the United States.

Seaside, Florida

An opposite approach to developing is well expressed in the New Urbanist resort town of Seaside, Florida. The "town" is designed almost entirely through the firm run by Andreas Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk⁸, New Urbanism's most noticed architects. Their post modern style saturates the attempt at an urban landscape

and a pre-selected color palette ensures the architecture maintains a Florida pastel as ubiquitous as the town's demographic.

In short, Seaside is one version of the utopian style designs Jane Jacobs speaks out against. Though a "good life" is attainable here, the area is overrun with people's vacation homes and significantly restricted choice. The architecture is painstakingly historically designed⁹, but fails to reflect changes in the culture of residents. This failure, ultimately born from the singular nature





of its design, dooms any architectural critic to reject any sense of authenticity and as a result understand this arguably sub-urban result as a nostalgic wonderland.

Chaos and Order

The differences between Greenwich Village, New York, New York and Seaside, Florida expose a battle for what is understood as urban environments. Though Seaside cannot be a considered a true urban form, the mode of its development helps us understand the value of order in creating environments. Certain values such as running water, access to light, and physical features that proclaim the culture of this town are all well thought out and might be lacking in built environments growing in a less restricted way. The lack of restriction, however, allows for personal expression, for true choice, and for greater diversity of populations. Urban environments would not be the innovative centers they are without these important features.

In the end, we must preserve the freedom of urban environments to reflect the culture, needs,

and character of its residents, but we cannot forget the planning necessary to ensure at least minimum access to resources and infrastructure. The chaos of freedom is a requirement for human development, but that does not mean attempts to mitigate the negative impacts of such freedom are unfounded. In the utopian cases of Seaside or La Ville Radieuse, the restriction of freedom occurs at the point of architectural intervention with a single figure or, at best, a small group. The balance between chaos and form is the opportunity for collective decision making and community inclusion.

[Right] View of the City from Greenwich Village, Oil on Canvas. John Sloan, 19XX

[Left] Seaside Florida, Photo. Image Courtesy Google Images.

[Below] Chaos and Order model, Jake Lyon with Catherine Stein



[Left] BedZED. Photo courtesy Google Images

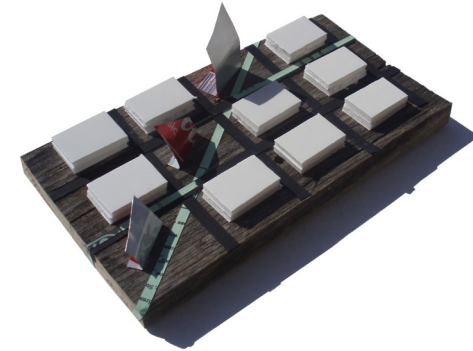
[Right Top] BedZED patios, windows and bridges. Photo courtesy Google Images.

[Right Bottom] Community Trumps Continuity model, Jake Lyon

The BedZED Community

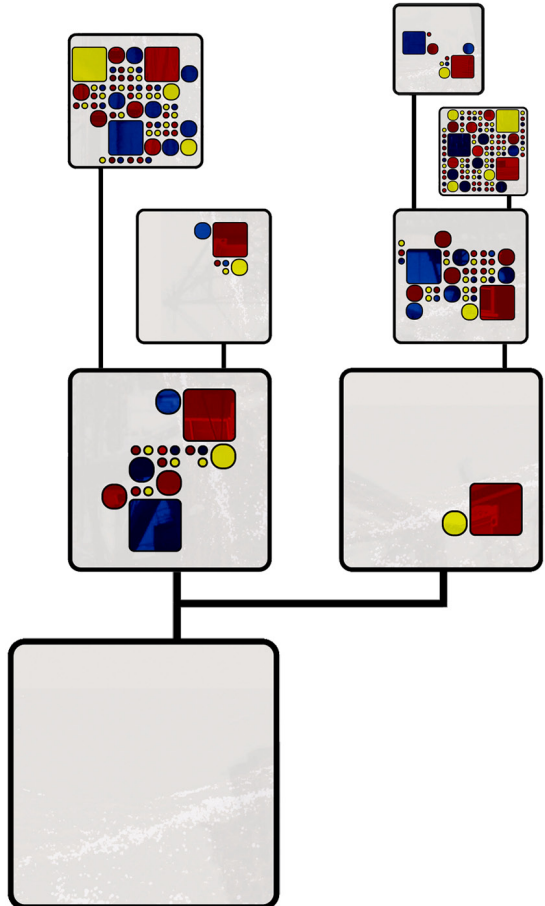
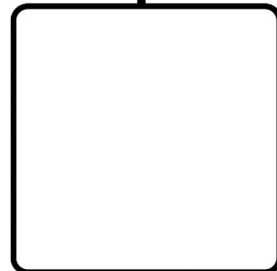
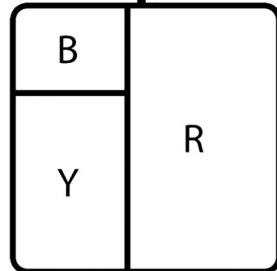
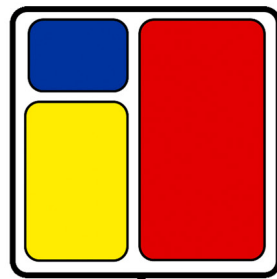
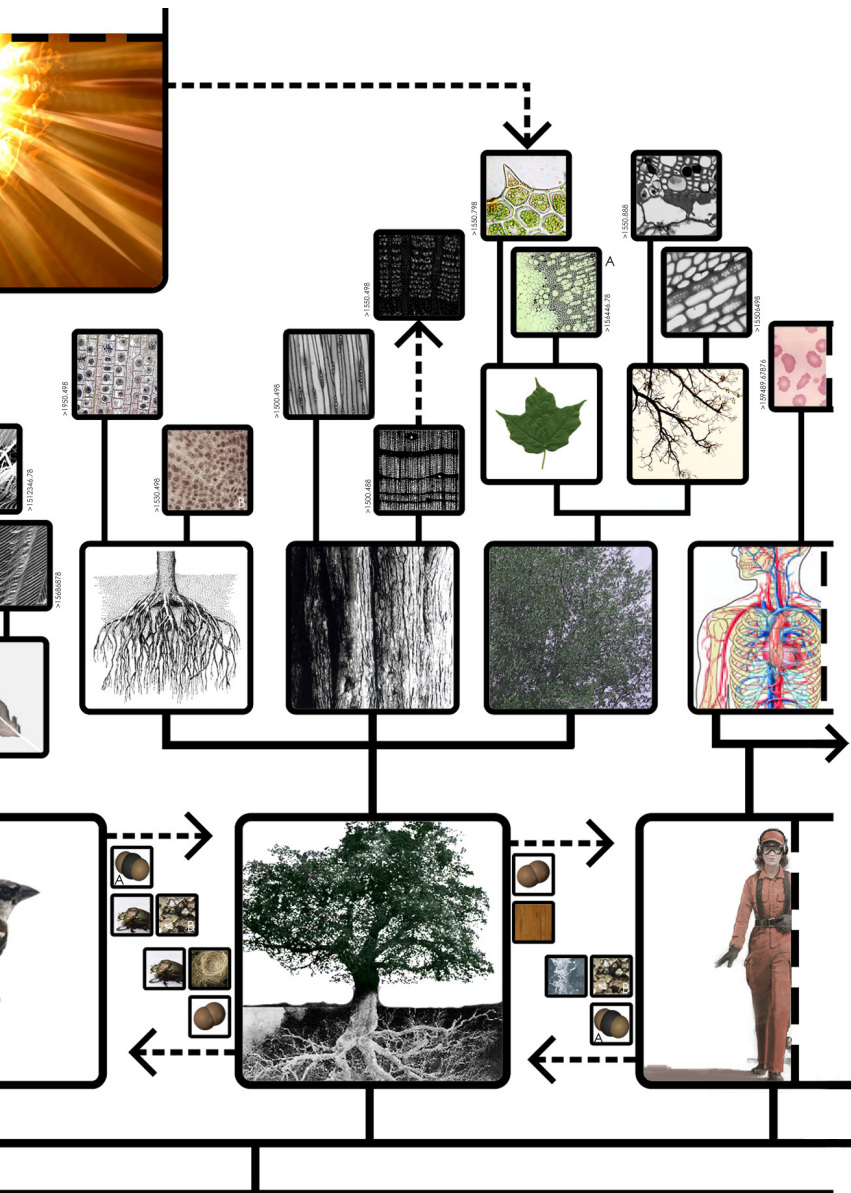
In the Sutton Borough of London, one particularly popular ecological development has raised a lot of interest in the architectural community. Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED) was created with substantial energy efficiency, energy production, and resource usage reduction infrastructure planned into the massive mixed use and mixed tenure project¹⁰. Despite some of the ecological technology failing, this group of buildings is still considered an ecological success, and I consider it a fair success in balancing order and chaos as well.

One part of the success in BedZED's continued use is tied to the process by which the project was designed. The massive row-type structures seem intrusive and seem to not match the

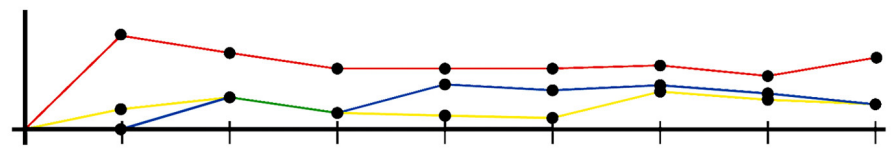


architecture of the surrounding area, but what precludes this physical reality is the input from the existing community. As a part of Bill Dunster's design process, he consulted the neighboring communities, which have subsequently integrated well¹¹.

The success of an urban design should not be measured by its working technologies, its aesthetics, or its mathematical efficiency. The success of urban and architectural design is the positive impact it has on an environment's inhabitants. BedZED offers this kind of positive impact at least partially through an inclusive design process. The challenge now becomes: what can make it better?



SHIFTING PROPORTIONS
 Piecemeal growth and shrinkage allows for readjusting to needs over time.



On Healthy Neighborhoods

Environments at the scale of the neighborhood have the potential to fulfill the social and material needs of individuals, but to accomplish this, a diverse array of experiences must be attainable within an accessible area. As in architecture, neighborhood programming is concerned with the planned uses of space and the proximities of these uses. The only significant difference here is the scale of concern. In architecture, the designer is concerned with the relationships and uses of individual rooms, but at the neighborhood scale the designer takes one step back to consider the relationships and uses of whole buildings and the spaces between buildings.

Just as a home has a variety of functions that exhibit the culture of its residents, so does a neighborhood require a certain array of functions based on its stakeholders. Presently, the general cultural norm for Detroit urban neighborhoods tends to be geared toward single-use, large scale development with little to no diversity. This kind of physical environment falls into the trap of overbearingly preconceived plans that reject both the history of a place and the needs of the people that inhabit the area.

Programming a neighborhood is not all that much different than programming a home. Communities know what they need access to. They have the local knowledge required to maximize the juxtapositions of various uses, and with the help of professionals who have experience in design and policy making, these juxtapositions can be executed in a comprehensive manner.

Professional aide in the development process is also necessary from a working standpoint. Although access is best understood from the perspective of those on the ground level, making sure everything works efficiently safely enough is a complicated task that requires some level of professional input. Important decisions must be made that affect density, diversity, productivity, security, and identity in complex, interconnected ways. Democratic processes are intended to ensure a voice for every citizen, but the action that takes place is merely directed by these voices. Action is not necessarily a direct result of the process, but it is rather the direction, goals, and nature of action is defined by the process. Since there is never just one solution to urban problems, a series of acceptable actions can be

[Left] Systems Theory and Piecemeal Growth: Interrelated Urban Theories. Jake Lyon.

defined through the collaboration of local and professional insight.

This series of acceptable actions balances the chaos and order in constant reaction to one another through collaboration, and it is within the context of collaboration that temporal issues can be addressed.

In the present post-industrial age of the American economy, sustainability has become one of the primary issues to be culturally grappled with. Detroit, being a truly post-industrial city, is not only an important place to study the context of post-industrial America; it is one of very few places to collect the intimate knowledge of marginalized populations that have been most hurt by the economic shift. Sustainability is not about owning energy efficient refrigerators, air-tight homes, or urban agriculture. These are just minor topics within a greater conversation about right-relationships. Detroit is in many ways a center for understanding the need for an authentic movement for sustainability from social, economic, and ecological perspectives and, with an incredible amount of land and human resource waiting to be activated, provides the perfect testing ground for truly sustainable practices.

Perhaps the most understood mode of sustainability is ecological sustainability. The “green movement” has been both a blessing and a distraction to moving forward with good design. On the surface, green design can be a positive, feel-good-for-helping situation. Alternative energy production, landscaping with native species, and using green roofs to insulate and help mitigate the heat island effect are all viable solutions in helping, but there is a general misunderstanding about what being “sustainable” is due to the lack of

a universally accepted definition. When the term “sustainable development” first surfaced in the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, the term meant “material improvement to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹².” The vagueness of this definition suggests good design as noted above, but ignores environmental responsibilities to the health of the present generation as well as the negative environmental impact on future generations. In Detroit, the issue of environmental justice is easily found to be present and can arguably be linked to systemic causes. Without addressing the issues of justice, the ecological relationships between environments, people, and economies cannot be set in balance.

Historically in Detroit, industrial centers drew in low skilled workers, and the unhealthy environments both within and beyond the factories they labored in were of relatively little consequence compared to Detroit’s uncommonly high wages. After much of the industry is left, however, certain people (most notably African Americans of all incomes, but others as well) have been trapped in unhealthy environments that have been tied to serious health problems including but not limited to cardiovascular disease, infant mortality, all-cause mortality, cancer, and diabetes¹³. The environmental justice due minorities in Detroit offers a view of more sustainable practices for Michigan and also for an entire nation that relies on disproportionately distributing the externalities of industrial processes¹⁴.

The cost to human health caused by this misplacement is not justified through the lower cost of land in these areas. The American consumer-oriented economy is based on patterns of growth that are simply not

maintainable, and in the attempt to keep up, the positive values (products) of the economy are snagged by the wealthy while the excess (waste) is pushed onto an economically and politically disadvantaged¹⁵. This problem is generational, as an economic disadvantage greatly restricts access to financial, educational, and social resources. If you question this in Detroit, try to get funding for a project in the city or agree to send your child to any Detroit Public School.

The issues of sustainability cannot stop with environmental relationships, but are inextricably linked to the economic impact of the distribution of natural and human capital. In a land founded on the concepts of freedom and equal opportunity, it is devastating to see the lack of opportunity afforded the 28.2 percent of working American families living below 200% poverty¹⁶. In Detroit, the situation is exasperated by the economic shift for low skill labor from manufacturing to the service sector. Service jobs pay substantially less on average and the loss of real wages only continues to hurt the nine hundred thousand left in the city.

In a city that made it big with the automotive industry, it is sad to consider the economic limitations automobile technology now place on the low-income population. The national average annual cost of car ownership is \$8,758 per consumer unit (similar to a household)¹⁷, but the annual income of 19.3 percent of Detroit's population is less than \$10,000¹⁸. The alternative use of the DDOT bus system is possible, which is hardly reliable and certainly limited in resources due to the large area and such a small constituency. The cost of transportation to the dispersed moments of the city must be rethought in a sustainable context not merely to connect these points with better transit systems, but to develop properly dense urban environments in appropriate transit oriented developments that

can support populations with more diverse and more accessible economies.

The limitation of zoning, organizing Detroit into a puzzle of single use districts, is another sustainability landmine. To bring the appropriate density back to the urban environment, mixed use developments (as Jane Jacobs vehemently encourages) are required throughout the city as well. The problems of the city are not such that can be solved with a singular development. Instead, the relationship of people to their own local economies must be allowed to develop in a way that promotes access and diversity for all economic classes to jobs, financial resources, and markets.

Finally, one of the most blatant economic barriers Detroit faces is the physical decay apparent in many of its neighborhoods. In a HUD report on neighborhood stability, it was concluded that a "tipping point" occurs when roughly 3% to 6% of residences are abandoned. It is "the point at which investment psychology becomes so depressed that reversal of the abandonment process is impossible without major external intervention¹⁹." Historically with the flight to the suburbs and recently with vast numbers of foreclosures, the 3% to 6% is not difficult to find in most areas of Detroit. The lack of investment in these abandoned homes could be avoided if communities rather than the city at large took control of the space, and the issues involved with foreclosure itself is an important aspect of the problem to address.

Just as ecological and economic issues cannot be separated, neither can they be separated from social issues. As Majora Carter put it at the TED conference in 2006, "Economic degradation begets environmental degradation, which begets social degradation. The disinvestment in

the 1960s [in the South Bronx] set the stage for the injustices that were to come. Antiquated zoning and land use regulations are still used to this day to continue putting polluting facilities in my neighborhood. Are these factors taken into consideration when land use policy is decided? What costs are associated with these decisions, and who pays? Who profits? Does anything justify what the community is going through? This was "planning" in quotes that did not have our best interests in mind. Once we realized that we decided to do our own planning²⁰." It is this grass roots mentality that supports the power of the presently unacknowledged local insight as to what current communities need. This type of thinking provides the foundation for a right-relationship, a sustainable relationship, and a just relationship between the city and its people.

The social responsibility to care for our fellow human beings is easily masked when the upper class lives a half-hour's drive away. The struggle, the work, and the blatant disregard for human needs and human rights is not visible from the outside, and it is culturally repressed on the inside as much as is possible.

Community design is not purely a physical concern; it is a full system approach to the sociology, ecology, and economy of neighborhoods. Healthy environments provide for all human needs and block all possible detriments. The physical design can support these relationships and encourage the ideology sustainability suggests, but without a process of inclusion, no such design will emerge.

The Community Process

Engaging the community is something more common in Detroit than some other urban areas. Due to its rough political and economic history, organization and tangible change for residents has gradually shifted some responsibility from the centralized government to an intricate array of small scale non-profits dispersed throughout the region.

Though non-profits are in the position to better understand the needs of neighborhoods, they are not always powerful enough to guide development decisions or meet all the needs of nearby residents. The representative government in the city of Detroit is spread thin enough that groups of the least political consequence are also the least heard. These people are often the third of Detroit's population in poverty, including 45.7% of the children under the age of eighteen²¹. Though a fully democratic system of decision making would be too burdensome to initiate, a more decentralized and responsive form of representation is possible. This process involves both city-wide governance as well as a more intimate local government.

With such a strong decentralized system of nonprofits already beginning in the city, Detroit is

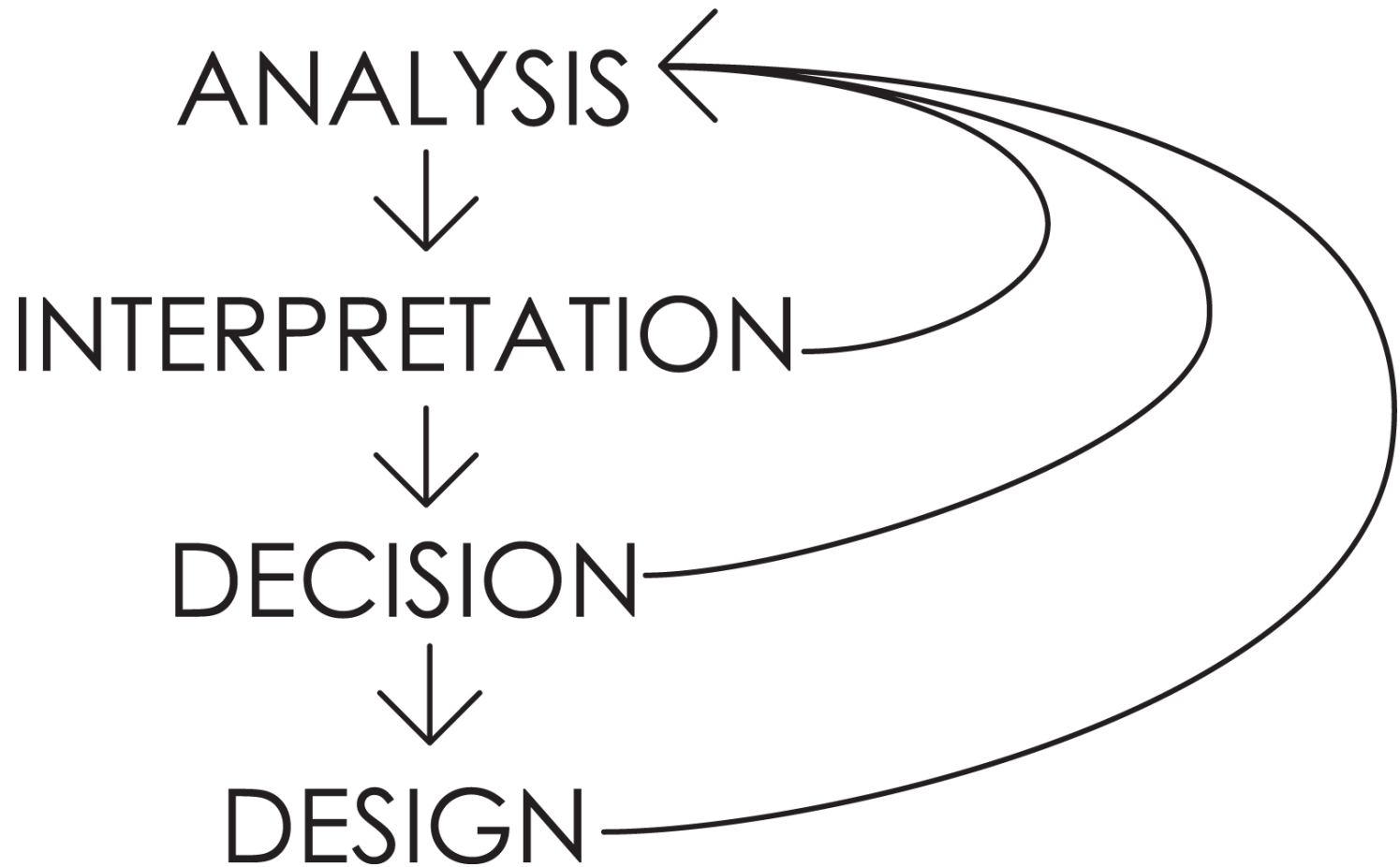
a perfect testing ground for a community based urban development process. For the sake of testing, one possible form of this type of process is examined. In this case, there are four steps and three major categories of players.

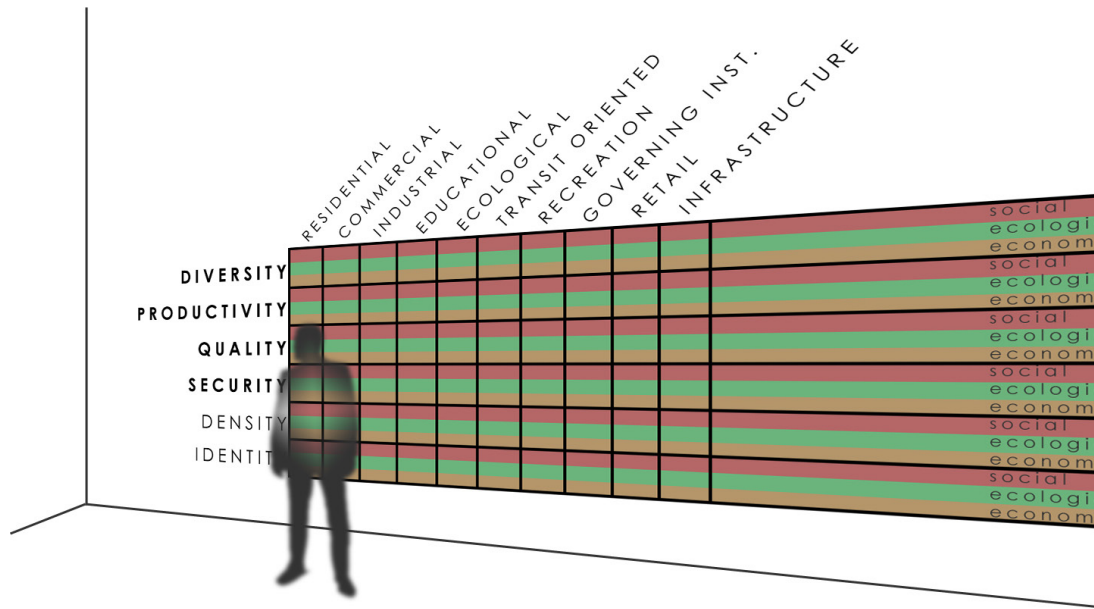
Four Steps

These steps are abstract and geared toward a generally cyclical means of understanding a community process for urban strategizing. Because the urban context is constantly in flux, every stage of this process is occurring at once, through it may be organized in the following sequence to be more manageable.

To have an understanding of what will be influencing decisions, the first step is to analyze the existing conditions of a neighborhood. Neighborhoods, as an overarching rule, have a similar organization of building types and uses, but because each culture will think about urban form and use differently, this thesis is only suggesting one of many possible means of documenting a community's present situation. Due to the nature of this research, community members themselves play an important part in collecting data. Local

[Right] Four Step Process for Community Involvement. Jake Lyon





knowledge of the neighborhood- what it is like to live there day in and day out- is hardly attainable short of experiencing the neighborhood itself. Community forums, interviews, and community involvement in the making conclusions about what the analysis means are all important ways of getting to the most accurate representation of the local condition.

In the second step, the data collected is interpreted into a series of goals and rules to help guide future development. These policies are meant to challenge standard land use and zoning, and in the case of this thesis, a new proactive zoning might have an impact on the process of development on levels beyond mere use regulation and architectural restrictions. The size of any single development, architectural character, and methods of organizing infrastructure are just a few elements that could

be examined by the community. The levels of restriction applied to these and other topics helps define the neighborhood, and most importantly are not inherently correct or incorrect. In neighborhoods like Indian Village or Boston-Edison (both well kept historic districts of Detroit), a more restrictive architectural code will likely be incorporated into community generated rules, while less dense and less maintained communities in Detroit may take a more eclectic approach to architectural expression and organization due to the lack of a definitive context.

The third step, decision making, takes place with input from every group of participants. With defined policy in place, the city must be sure it does not contradict any universal human rights or certain overarching legal requirements. Debate occurs in an open forum and feedback from the community itself is encouraged as

[Left] An early sketch of the Matrix Diagram. Jake Lyon

a means of refining policy and educating the public. When final decisions on policy are made, they are agreed upon with the understanding that as times change, so will policy. Zoning in a neighborhood that encourages urban agriculture may very well be a policy that does not last very long, and the flexibility of the process must encourage and not simply allow for change. The temporary decisions that are agreed upon are utilized in generating a general schematic design (step four) of the neighborhood that is to act as the measuring stick for policy and the design of the built environment.

New Tools for Urban Analysis

For the sake of expounding on the integral nature of urban local knowledge, two tools of analysis have been formed especially for this thesis. These tools, which allow for specific research through community inclusion, are also important as a means of more readily interpreting use and neighborhood characteristic data into a set of proactive rules of development.

The Analysis Matrix

The first of these tools is the analysis matrix. This grid lays out qualitative and quantitative assets and disinvestments of a community along two main axis: community values and community elements. These factors are to be considered within a greater context of social equity, environmental health, and economic viability. The reason for analyzing these three overarching concerns is that when these goals, commonly known as the triple bottom line, are all met, a holistically healthier community can be achieved.

Social equity ensures that every voice is heard, providing the most data, the most comfort, and

the least opportunity to unfairly suppress the needs of the 'less powerful.' Air pollution, urban blight, and any number of other physical issues contribute to a decrease in opportunity and quality of life for city populations. Understanding and combating problems in the physical reality of neighborhoods not only brings people together with a common goal, it generates a more productive and happy citizenry. Finally, economic viability must be valued to create lasting institutions and characteristic industries within the community. These centers of commerce and generation of services and products provide jobs, diversity of class interactions, and locally supportive connections.

The overarching ideals (taught and reinforced through the education of the community and professionals) are to be applied to each intersection of the matrix of values and elements. The qualities selected to evaluate neighborhoods in this culture are diversity, productivity, security, density, and identity. This list is far from totally comprehensive, but as a means of beginning to understand key elements found within a neighborhood, they more than suffice. The elements of a healthy community are simply the spaces used by community members in everyday life.

Elements of a Healthy Community

Living, working, recreating, and providing space for infrastructure are broken down into uses in this analysis. This does not mean structures are to be considered under a single use; the analysis is concerned with where these actions occur rather than any conceptual association with buildings. For this neighborhood, identified usage types (existing and culturally potential) include residential, commercial, religious, industrial, educational, recreation,

infrastructure, natural, government institutional, and transit. (Although transit technically fits into infrastructure, its importance for economic, social, and environmental systems makes it more appropriately thought of in its own right.) The various uses may appear to be blatantly apparent, but local knowledge may uncover unexpected activity that adds to the rich context of the neighborhood for future decision making.

Each element of the community is to be analyzed in combination with the various qualities of the community on the adjacent axis of the matrix. In combination, the elements and qualities are intended to expose any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats of the existing conditions of the neighborhood.

Qualities of a Healthy Community

Diversity, productivity, and security are three culturally universal qualities that apply unwaveringly to any post-industrial city. Diversity in jobs, income, ethnic heritage, age, gender, sex, industry, education, housing, commerce, and many other topics of discussion create whole systems for a community to thrive in. Take for example a wealthy neighborhood with no "lower class" population nearby. It is less probable that various lower-wage services can be offered nearby if those making lower wages have less access to reliable transportation to carry them into the wealthier zone. Also consider the need for tax cooperation. In neighborhoods with less capital at their disposal, where city services are most needed, those services tend to be less accessible. By diversifying a local population, a more complete and viable economy becomes efficient. Due to inevitable interactions in public spaces, social equity is more readily appreciated, and the universal need for environmental health for everyone is perceived.

Productivity is another major quality to focus on in postindustrial cities like Detroit. In the selected case area, roughly ninety percent of the area is vacant or abandoned, providing ample opportunity for crime and the underground economy to make a home. While much crime is not a positive attribute of a neighborhood, certain aspects of an underground economy are vital for survival in a city with 11.8% unemployment²² and relatively few opportunities for quality education or what is considered legitimate economic advancement. Socially, culturally, and economically destructive practices (casinos, drug distribution, and black-market weapons for example) do not have a part in healthy communities. Though these and other aspects of an underground economy are economically viable, they do not promote social health. There are, however, other aspects of the underground economy that serve a vital role in preserving some semblance of a quality of life in the vast impoverished population of American cities. In Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh's book *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor*, the shady dealings of one Chicago neighborhood are revealed in a complex web of morality and survival. Women in this account often clean houses or watch children for a tax-free income or in-kind services, the homeless population receives store credit for sleeping in front of area businesses as a sort of security guard, and two people share a space for cutting hair during the day and fixing cars at night²³. None of these uses is technically permissible, but they are mutually beneficial and activate otherwise unused spaces.

Activating space is a primary concern in predominantly vacant neighborhoods. Claiming space for private or community use may or may not call out a specific activity, but it is a display of ownership and care. Over time, spaces should have the fluidity of the underground economy

to quickly adjust to new uses as community needs shift. What was a vacant lot may become a community garden. Then, one day, the community garden may make way for a park for middle school children. So long as land is utilized as the valuable resource it truly is, communities are sure to benefit.

The final universal neighborhood quality identified in this mode of analysis is security. A community cannot grow strong in a state of fear or a context of instability. Security in this matrix is concerned both with safety from physical harm to individuals and the environment as well as protection from economic and social harm. Police and the fire department are of course a part of a comprehensive system of security, but banks and cultural institutions are also key factors of a secure community. Activated, productive space in itself also provides a certain level of perceived security in a community; it is important to remember that all the issues explored in this matrix are interrelated.

When formulating a list of neighborhood qualities, density and identity seemed to defy any normative definition. These qualities are variables that are not right or wrong in themselves, but are important in considering rules for development. For these localized qualities to continue cohesively into the future, it is especially important for the community to be involved in defining a strategic "good density" and "good community identity" with guidance from professionals.

Density- especially in Detroit- is an interesting topic. After losing half its population, the city is faced with two opportunities for development densities. First, the city could rebuild in a dense way, possibly even surpassing the relatively loose fabric at the peak of its history. A second and

increasingly popular option is to allow a certain amount of sprawl to be maintained throughout the city via the practice of home gardens, community gardens, and urban agriculture. Neither of these options is inherently correct, nor are they completely exclusive. It is not necessary for just one to be used for the entire city; on the contrary, it would be more beneficial for a diversity of densities to arise throughout the city. The decision to use agriculture and gardens now also does not limit the possibility of replacing those gardens with higher density development in the future. In the end, density is a consideration the community must consider as it balances available infrastructure, space, and the final quality of this analysis matrix, identity.

Identity is an impossibly vague word by which communities have the opportunity to explore who they wish to be. Questions of identity relate to the types of industry or jobs available, the general character of the architectural and landscaped environment, and even, to some degree, the types of people that would want to live in such a place. Identity, as density, is continually up to debate and adjustment.

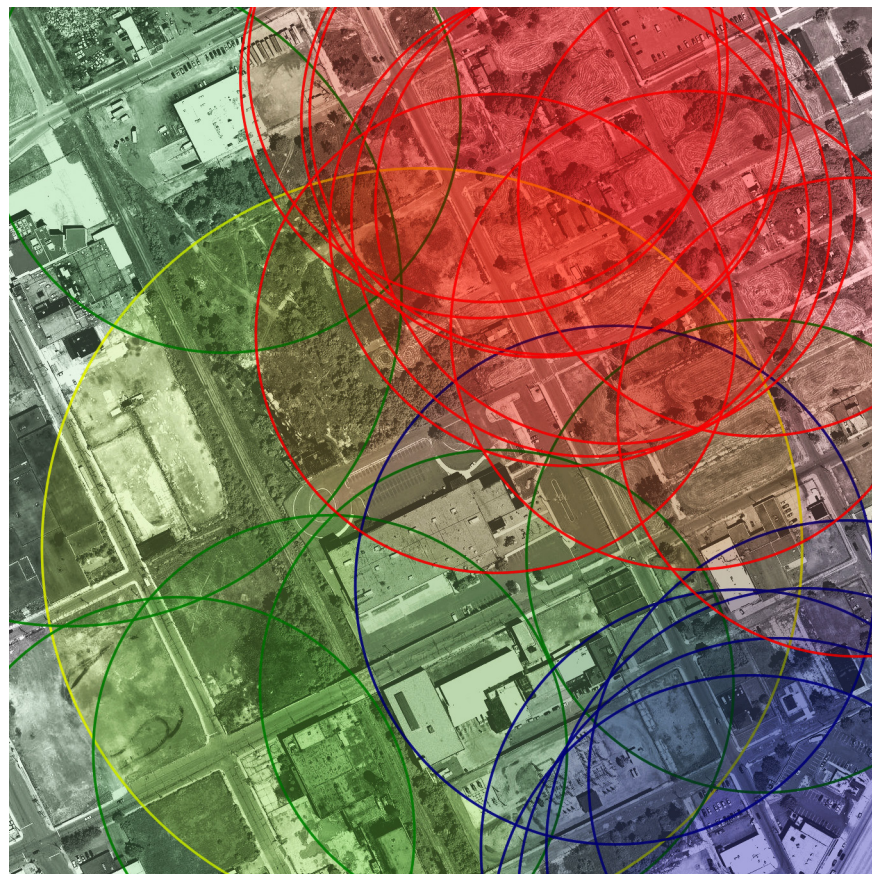
The analysis matrix, complex as it seems, is simply a tool of categorizing and collecting an array of site-specific data to be used in future decision making processes. Though one form of it has been laid out in extensive detail here, this thesis does not presume to have established a universally applicable analysis tool. The overarching goals, qualities, and elements of healthy communities are all subject to debate and alteration for different cultures, locations, and even for the site considered for this thesis project. The principle of understanding the complexities of an existing community, however, are not subject to debate. Through gathering data, communication between community members and design professionals is possible in a way that far exceeds the capacities of professionals working on their own.

It is also beneficial to note one very important aspect of this form of analysis. While culture and differing perspectives will always skew the vision of urban thinkers and inhabitants, this kind of diagramming and categorizing lays out how wonderful areas like Paradise Valley and Black Bottom must have been before they were destroyed to make way for the highway project and what would much later become Lafayette Park. The process by which decisions of such importance can be made must be one that takes into account the true nature of urban neighborhoods and the value they hold for their residents.

Proximity Maps

A second tool utilized in this project is a graphic proximity map. Rather than understand land use planning from the traditional zoning perspective, which incorporates decisions made by a few non-stakeholder professionals, proximity maps encourage an understanding based on existing conditions of use and infrastructure. In this particular method, a quarter mile radius circle, which represents a five minute walking distance, is drawn around different building types. When understood separately, these maps provide an understanding of concentrations and overlaps in the existing fabric that may encourage certain types of development to grow nearer or farther from this existing use.

Abstraction of the forces apparent in the map aids in generating neighborhood specific rules. By utilizing what become abstracted diagrams, standardized urban design principles can be challenged by new modes of organization and scale in a way that is reactive to and more appropriate for existing communities.



Three Players

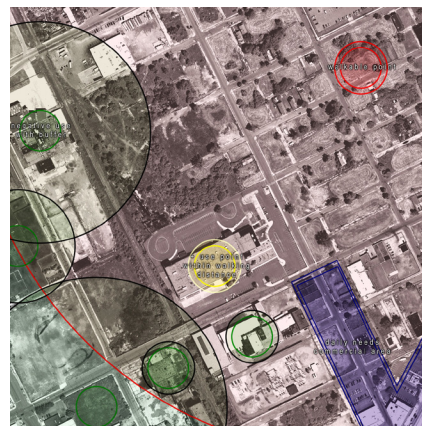
Most development decisions at this point in time are made by people outside the immediate community. Incorporating community members, then, requires critically considering the readjustment of roles in the generation of urban form and the directives for architectural projects. These relationships are best explained

[Left] Composite mode zoning sketch based on overlapping pedestrian sheds.



[Left] Simplified Shed Zoning based on joined walking sheds.

[Right] Landmark Zoning uses community landmarks as the basis for zoning.



through the responsibilities of the centralized city government; the local non-profits, professionals, and developers; and the community members and community guidance committee.

The Centralized City Government

This new process is collaborative and requires special attention to detail, which is not the City of Detroit's absolute forte. For this reason, the model for this neighborhood incorporates the city only as enforcers of universal standards (embedded in the analysis of the community) and debate regarding subsequent proactive rules, interpretations, and city-based infrastructure. In some cases, the city may have precedence over the community. For example, Gratiot is a primary "spoke" street leading from downtown to the East of town. This kind of major thoroughfare and other city-wide means of transit or infrastructure are logically to be maintained (but freely challenged) by local communities.

Non-Profits, Professional Designers, and Developers

Though each community is different, there is generally a layer of service-oriented professionals to help guide, support, and challenge the community. Non-profit community development corporations (CDCs), which are already a strong force in many Detroit communities, often serve the major organizational needs of neighborhoods, but other non-profits have similar abilities. Professional designers (urban designers, urban planners, architects, and policy makers) serve, of course, the design needs of a community, consulting and advising on a variety of details, general development tactics, and issues of urban form. Also in the professionals class are developers, who help manage the conception and realization of individual projects. Ultimately, the professional class is responsible for making the project happen. This means amplifying the opinions and concerns of residents, providing the design for architecture and policy, and pursuing

projects in league with the guidelines, principles, and proactive rules set forth by the community.

Community Members and Guidance Committees

Community members individually are an important part of the analysis and decision parts of the process. During analysis, community involvement is necessary to approach a better understanding of the environmental, social, and economic conditions of the neighborhood. This local knowledge is utilized a second time in the process when a design of policy and a strategic urban plan are presented at the end of the decision stage.

While the general community has a limited role in the overall process, a volunteer group of community members acting as a guidance committee follows the progress throughout. This committee should represent the diversity within a neighborhood and should be representative of the issues and concerns of the greater community. This group, acting as the go between, helps organize the analysis phase, gives feedback during the interpretation and debate phases, and takes on an integral role as a part of the decision making process. This is the group to which the design team of professionals is ultimately responsible to.

[Right] Complete process and community players chart.



● decision

CITY GOVERNMENT

UNIVERSAL REGULATION



PROFESSIONALS

FACILITATION, LOCAL REGULATION, DESIGN

analysis ↑ interpretation

THE PEOPLE

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, NEEDS, CHECK



Fields of the City

Detroit has a variety of neighborhood conditions, but no other is so characteristic of the Motor City as the vast tracts of solid single family shotgun style homes. The development pattern is a reaction to a series of historical factors, from the French finger farms that originally divided the land adjacent to the river to Judge Woodward's plan for a pedestrian downtown and vehicle oriented radial roads. The high wages paid out at the automobile plants (5 dollars a day at the Ford plant) brought in huge numbers of immigrants from Europe and the South. The high wages ensured Ford always had his choice of labor, and the company nearly single handedly created a new middle class. This middle class further supported the automobile industry with the ability to buy the affordable automobiles it was creating. Infrastructure built up around this new transportation technology and the single family residential unit proliferated as an urban form.

Over the course of the past fifty years, race riots, bank redlining, racial exclusion policies, and the migration of industry has left a once booming center of urban living as an expansive city with pockets of good and bad neighborhoods. Those

with resources maintain what they can, but in some cases, the policies of ownership allow too much of the neighborhood to fall through the gaps. One such neighborhood is found just outside of downtown.

The area between Gratiot, Joseph Campau, Mack, and the Dequindre Cut is not a neighborhood as defined by anyone that lives there or on any map. Just a few blocks away, the Eastern Market Corporation, the non-profit that is bringing Detroit's Eastern Market back after years of mismanagement by the city, has been looking at the area, but as of yet hasn't touched it. Most magnificent of all, this site is a field of overgrown grass. Sometimes maintained single family homes sit sporadically along the empty streets which go unplowed in the winter. The streetlights are not broken, but the city doesn't turn them on in an effort to conserve costs. The remnants of commercial corridors line Mack and Chene; the leftover spaces converted to parking lots or given over to nature like the plots where houses once stood.

This slice of the Near East Side is roughly 80% to 90% vacant and is officially home to no more

[Top] Photo Panorama. Jake Lyon.

[Bottom] Still from Awkward Position. Image courtesy Zago Architecture.



than 12 people according to the 2000 census²⁴. The majority of activity (besides through traffic) occurs early in the morning and in the mid afternoon during the rush of SUV's and nice cars to drop off and pick up children at the Detroit Edison Public School Academy- one of Detroit's Public Charter Schools. Hidden inside homes that look barely habitable are squatters, and some of these ruined homes act as centers for drug activities. Along the west side of the area is the industrial core that follows the old Dequindre Cut. Most of the buildings seem empty, though some of the food packing industry is still working. Along Gratiot some buildings are still used, and new businesses like the BP and the Burger King have moved in to reap the benefits of the arterial road's connection to suburban commuters. Their parking lots are larger than the square footage their buildings occupy.

There are a variety of levels of decay in Detroit, but this is perhaps one of the most difficult in terms of community development. With so few community stakeholders (residents as well as businesses and wanderers), there is very little to build on in a neighborhood like this. Still, the amount of space offers room for a wide variety of design solutions, and the small number of stakeholders permits a more comprehensive understanding of the community with fewer instances of interaction.

Utilizing the tools developed for analysis in the community process, I have simulated the community response through interviews, observation, and research to test new modes of gathering local knowledge.

The Analysis Matrix proved to be a very useful tool in organizing existing conditions into simple



DOWNTOWN



DOWNTOWN



ST. AUBIN



[Top] Skyscrapers and
Fields. Photo Site Collage.
Jake Lyon.

[Bottom] Cross Section
of the City. Photo Site
Collage. Jake Lyon



ST. AUBIN



8 MILE

COMPONENTS OF HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

QUALITIES OF HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

RESIDENTIAL
Physical Developments in a quality neighborhood... ASSET?
Not informed in use
DIVERSITY
GUIDING VALUES
FORMED A QUALITY SURVEY NEIGHBORHOOD
65%

GOVERNING INST.

COMMERCIAL
selling food and use
Mostly about EMV find, restaurants, more same store

INDUSTRIAL
only food a mass?
In these a health & integrated series of urban in the extended land?
Is this your road? Day Camp (not 600)

EDUCATIONAL
Diverse styles of EDU models?
Plus natural system vs human influence (auth)

NATURAL
Willow identity
2 basins

TRANSIT
Recreation vs 1/8
Lifestyles - OUTDOORS, BIKES, FINANCIAL QUALITIES

RECREATION
Social ↑ health can't a ↓ (M)
Safety can be more support productivity
Support ↑ standard of living into economic change
people don't have to walk 3/4 to bus in a good place
+ take 1/2 hour + 1/2 hour
Diverse system of walking

RETAIL
only + ?
population = 20% + 20% + 20% + 20% + 20%

INFRASTRUCTURE
Water treatment
HUMAN SERVICES
Biking

PRODUCTIVITY
Are they even? Life Done in a way Transit Department to North
Mostly about EMV find, restaurants, more same store
open spaces, but not claimed
50% cloudy, 10% sun, 40% rain
NO human interference except human presence
expand + extend

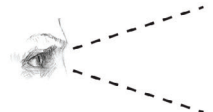
Quality neighborhoods also consider ecological health, social equality and economic viability in each of these categories

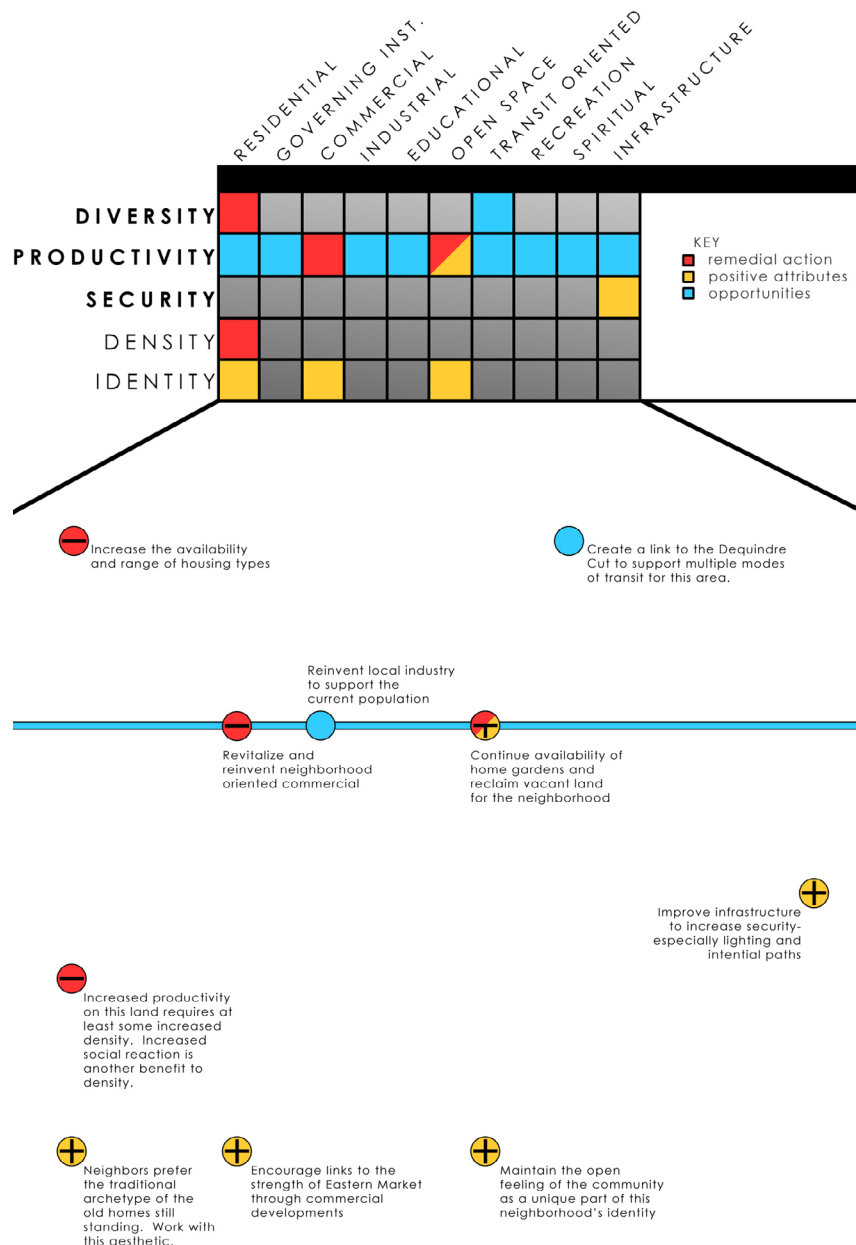
SECURITY ASB
Security
Nexus of Police Station?
How much ATM + nodes, representation
How spread through city? Even? Doesn't seem to have working a presence in this
non-dominant support fields

DENSITY
High density, not make for
How spread through city? Even? Doesn't seem to have working a presence in this
non-dominant support fields

IDENTITY
Program
Can we distance from these fields again
Emergency - disaster
What do the identities play in - surveillance...
High Density of natural growth, not development
NOT DENSE - lack of options for zoning
Diverse densities - scales required...
Dense EMV station
when the bus...
Transit...
this neighborhood...
transit...
think...
by people

ANALYSIS.matrix
FINDING PROGRAM





[Left] Applied Matrix.
Jake Lyon

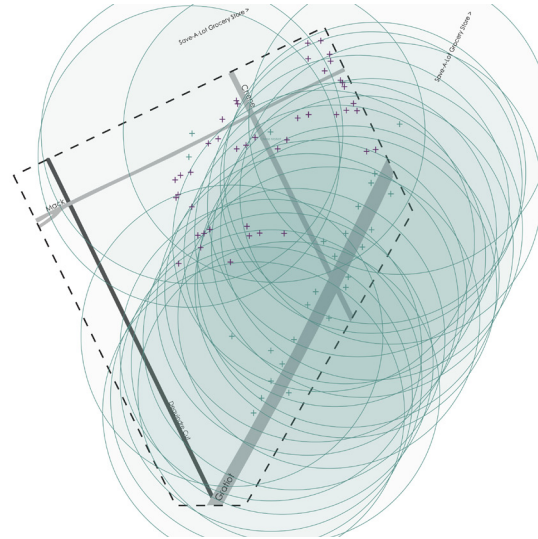
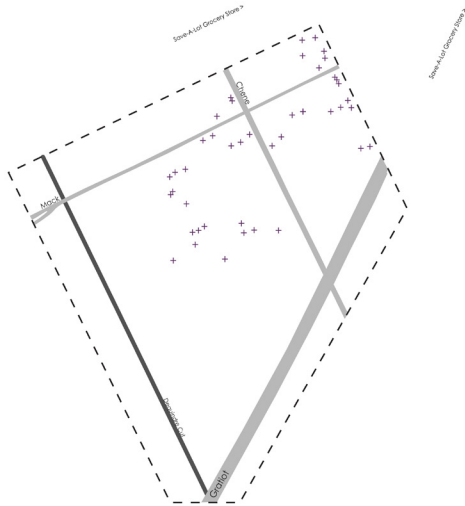
[Right] Directives from the
Matrix

but related thoughts. The image furthest to the left shows the graphic representation of the full pin up on gathered information. Photos, parts of interviews, and statistics are all placed in plain view for discussion, consideration, and, ultimately, interpretation. The graphic to the right represents the interpretation of the data collected and organized on the matrix.

In this more clean cut image, the chart is simplified into categories requiring remedial action, positive attributes, or offering opportunities. Remedial action plans for this neighborhood should include the increase in the availability and diversity of housing types, the revitalization of neighborhood oriented commercial developments, and the increase in density to better support a minimal productivity of available land. In this instance, only I am extrapolating this information, but in reality the specific actionable items identified would have to come from critical debate with community members as well as designers.

The positive attributes identified through the matrix are the existing though underutilized infrastructures, the open spaces of the community, proximity to the Detroit Eastern Market, and the architectural style of remaining residences, which current community members enjoy. These are by no means the only positive attributes of this community, but they are certainly some of the most highlighted by the community members and from a designers perspective. These qualities provide some of the building blocks from which a final design can begin to grow.

Finally, there are a few key opportunities within this area. First, there is clear opportunity along Gratiot and at the Dequindre Cut to make mass transit connections with the surrounding areas of Detroit. Along the Dequindre Cut



especially there is an opportunity to connect to the developing East Riverfront districts as the Cut is transformed from its industrial rail status to being one part of Detroit's Greenway Initiative. Another opportunity lies simply in the ability for this area to become productive again, especially in concert with new industrial jobs. The city of Detroit is filled with people ready for jobs, and innovative industry would be a perfect fit for the old Arsenal of Democracy.

The second tool, proximity maps, shows the dispersal of uses throughout the site. Primary to understanding these diagrams is the location of the residences on the site and in the neighboring areas. Though the site itself has relatively few homes compared to its zoned capacity, the central and northeastern areas do have a fairly even spread of single family residential units. The neighborhood that continues north of Mack as well as the one east of Joseph Campau tend

to be much more filled in and could provide support to this area as it develops. The location of the residences continues on each of the other proximity maps to show what is within a five minute walk.

The commercial zones predominantly serve Gratiot, but are within waking distance of some of the residences closer to the main thoroughfare. Select businesses along Mack and Chene serve the residents well, though many of the buildings along these streets are vacant. The industrial zones generally follow the Dequindre Cut and Gratiot, which puts them within range of many of the people living in the center of the neighborhood. The estimated buffer zones shown here are for representation only, and further investigation is necessary to uncover any unhealthy affects these typically light industrial uses might have and how far those affects reach into the community.

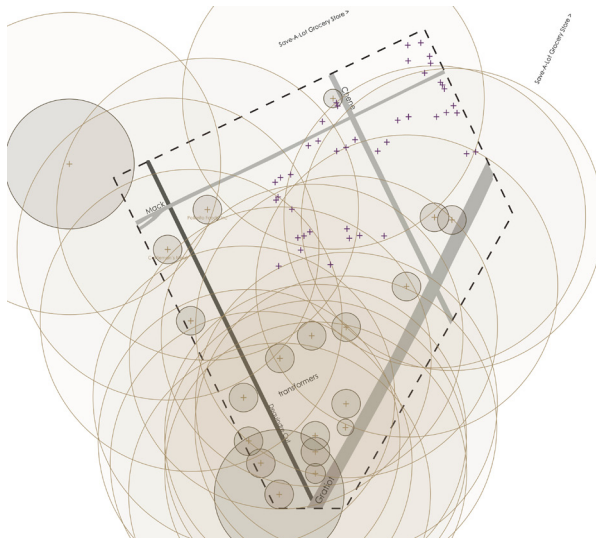
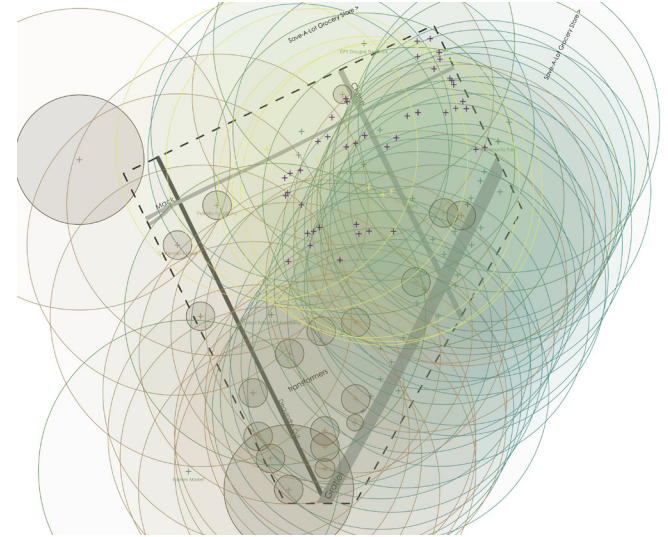
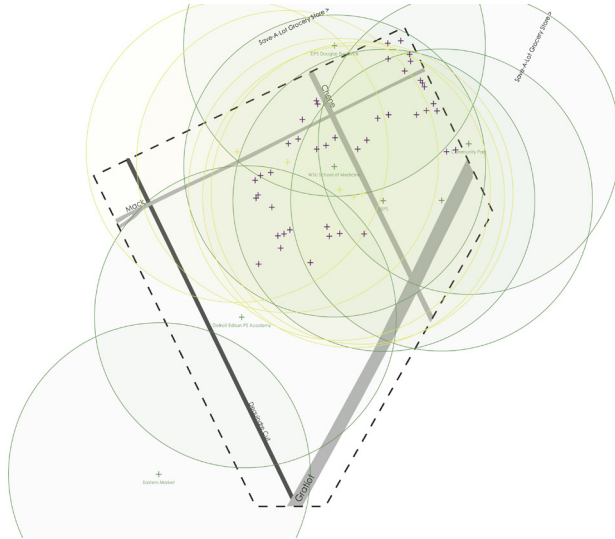
[Top Far Left] Residential Units. Jake Lyon

[Top Left] Commercial Units. Jake Lyon

[Bottom Right] Industrial Units. Jake Lyon

[Top Right] Institutional Units. Jake Lyon

[Top Far Right] Composit Zones. Jake Lyon.



Institutional space in and around the community includes a series of churches (some of which are not in use), two schools (one recently closed and sealed up), and of course Eastern Market to the southwest. These institutions are opportunities for community programming, meeting spaces, and simple community support in general. Eastern Market's proximity to this site is an important connection with its strong identity, growing influence in the area, and with the "Grown In Detroit" brand being sold every Saturday, the chance for urban agriculture and gardens to sell excess food off.

The composite zones image is understandably difficult to read, but with the knowledge of the previous maps helps one understand the complicated and interwoven influences different uses already have in this community. By layering these maps, it becomes a little bit easier to see what areas can be better served by different use-types and thus which programs might be useful in future sustainable and diverse developments.

Community Sketches

To begin exploring community processes, the first experiment of this thesis focused on a rather simple one. The project, a group painting entitled “Collaborative Utopia,” is a fun first attempt at collaborative action given only the prompt, “Ideal Urban Condition of Detroit.” Architecture students, faculty, and staff contributed to an evolving whole (and bonded a little in the process.) For a short time, the painting itself seemed blank and underdeveloped. A couple of people in, however, some of the painters were more aggressive about filling the canvas with their ideas. After a certain amount of time, I paused the process and now call this a “final product.” Another output from this process is a time lapse film of the process which can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbz11IS-168>. In this experiment with a collaborative design process, a few valuable issues were brought up.

First, that communication is vitally important. Throughout the day, the prompt was repeated for anyone new watching from above the painting site or taking part. There were a few times people did not hear the prompt or who

didn't catch all of it. In these moments, what was lacking for the participants was a clear sense of direction for their input. Facilitation, then, must be well prepared and in this case, should have included a written prompt next to the canvas.

Another important lesson learned was that regulations are required to protect the work and ideas of others. Near the end of the day, one painter in particular started with a defined area of the canvas, but then went on to paint through most of the rest of the canvas to change what had been placed there before. Also, throughout the day, it was often discussed that someone may decide to simply paint the whole of the canvas black. Though this would have been within the parameters of this experiment, I intuitively encouraged people to not succumb to such desires. The collaborative process does not need to be fully visible in the end, but moves like these that dominate the outcome restrict the impact earlier participants have in the results.

Finally and most importantly, discussions and observation lead to an understanding that stakeholderhood in a final product is required to



[Left] Collaborative Utopia. Acrylic on Canvas. Jake Lyon et al.

[Right] The Painting in Process.

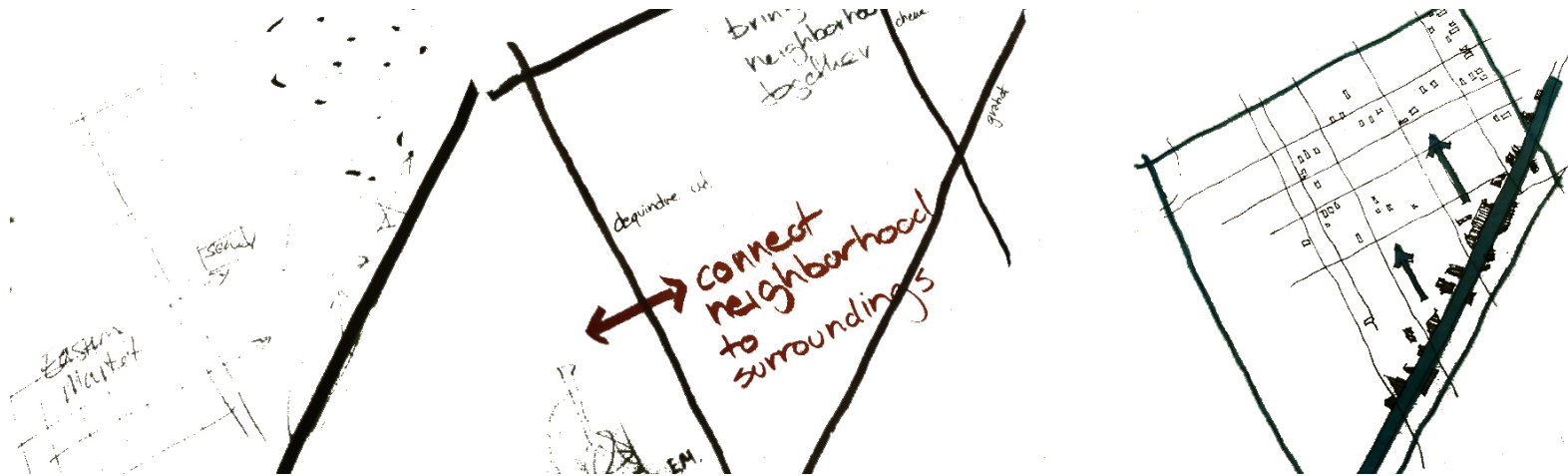


encourage positive and intentional participation. Without this stakeholdership, many of the painters did not take the task completely seriously and did not put in the effort or care they would if it were their own work. Zoning and land policy today does not generally involve stakeholdership in the forgotten neighborhoods of Detroit, and this is where the typical services of urban planning and design fail to produce appropriate physical environments for urban citizens.

An Ideas Charrette

To mimic community involvement in creating design/policy principles and priorities, an experimental “ideas charrette” was organized to bring in viewpoints different than my own. Due to the nature of this thesis, it is vital to collaboratively

design key parts of the design process such as this. There are two issues that arise, however, as a thesis on this scale (of both space and time) can only be accomplished as an academic exercise. The first issue is an ethical one pertaining to community members and the outcomes of this project. In the process as described, the community uniquely acts as a generator of knowledge and also a moderator of design. The fruit of their labor is, in the end, a neighborhood environment that continues through time to react to their changing needs. The extent of this thesis, however, is limited to hypothetical solutions and academic review. These are of no consequence to a community with real needs and thus preclude approaching the community for an extensive simulation of the process.



Despite the community itself not gaining from an academic exercise, one other group would. Students of policy, urban, and architectural design might very well gain valuable experience in collaboration and a simulation of a more responsive process of urban development. The use of students, however, raises a second issue, which is the subsequent gap between actual community and a simulated substitute.

To fill the cognitive break between students and community members, and to begin filling in the analysis as well, informal interviews conducted on site or nearby are used as a starting point to gather information. This information is then applied to a role prompt which aids students in taking on a partial perspective of various community members. To bridge the limited information from interviews, observation and media are incorporated into the prompt to flesh out a more complete perspective. Allowing students to fill in the gaps with some of their own ideas completes the simulation, and students are free to act on behalf of (but certainly not as) absent community members.





CITY GOVERNMENT

UNIVERSAL REGULATION

● debate



design

DISTRICT/CD

FACILITATION, LOCAL REGULATION

analysis

decisions



interpretation



THE PEOPLE

INPUT, PROPOSALS, VISION

[Top Left] Sketches.
Aaron Gardiner, Scott
Hampton

[Left] Simulating
Community Members.
Jake Lyon

[Right] Charette
Roles. Jake Lyon

new residential | low income residential | halfway house | solar panel manufacturing | solar panel installation and distribution | **urban agriculture** | performance shelter | parks | **pocket parks** | gardens | **greenways** | artist colony | **renewable energy** | entertainment | paths to local hot spots | experimental schools | job training | focal point | small grocery | large grocery (gratiot) | housing developer | police station | **architectural salvage warehouse**





[Above]
Collaborative Vision
for Near East Detroit.
Jake Lyon based on
the charrette process.

Of course there are flaws in this system of substitution, but it is important to remember that this is a test of a system of localized urban development. Every detail of the community is important to generate a completely appropriate design for that community. However, the process can still be significantly tested with an abstracted data set.

The charrette itself was attended by one public policy professor, community development students, and architecture students. Some community members were invited, but could not attend at the last minute. To adjust for the lack of local knowledge in the discussions, the role prompts were handed to a few participants, and after introducing the process to date, the group was divided into two teams and were given separate scenarios. These scenarios posed situations (either existing in the neighborhood or speculative) and asked the groups to consider policies that could protect the interests of community stakeholders. The schematic vision that resulted is somewhat diagrammatic, incorporating such goals as green manufacturing, urban agriculture, rehabilitation clinics and other human services, new residential units for diverse incomes, pocket parks, and deconstruction through an architectural salvage warehouse.



The charrette as a part of an inclusive process was another success in encouraging the sense of community and in collecting specific knowledge. Due to this successful test, the vision is used as a major reference point in the design phase.

[Above] Photo, Charrette Discussion. Jake Lyon.

Design Proposal

Having tested new modes of analysis, tried out two forms of community inclusion, and decided on a few elements necessary for an appropriate design in this neighborhood, the process finally brings us to the design phase of this thesis. In correlation with the foundational concepts that began this exploration, the design I am proposing is not a master plan or even much of a schematic plan. Instead, I am offering up a new concept of zoning and a schematic vision in four non-linear objectives. As a schematic vision, I am defining key elements of urban organization and architectural definition that help define the needs, desires, and culture of this community. The multiple programs within this design are understood to be influx and could even disappear for long periods.

Ultimately, the goal is to find a balance between diverse populations and uses.

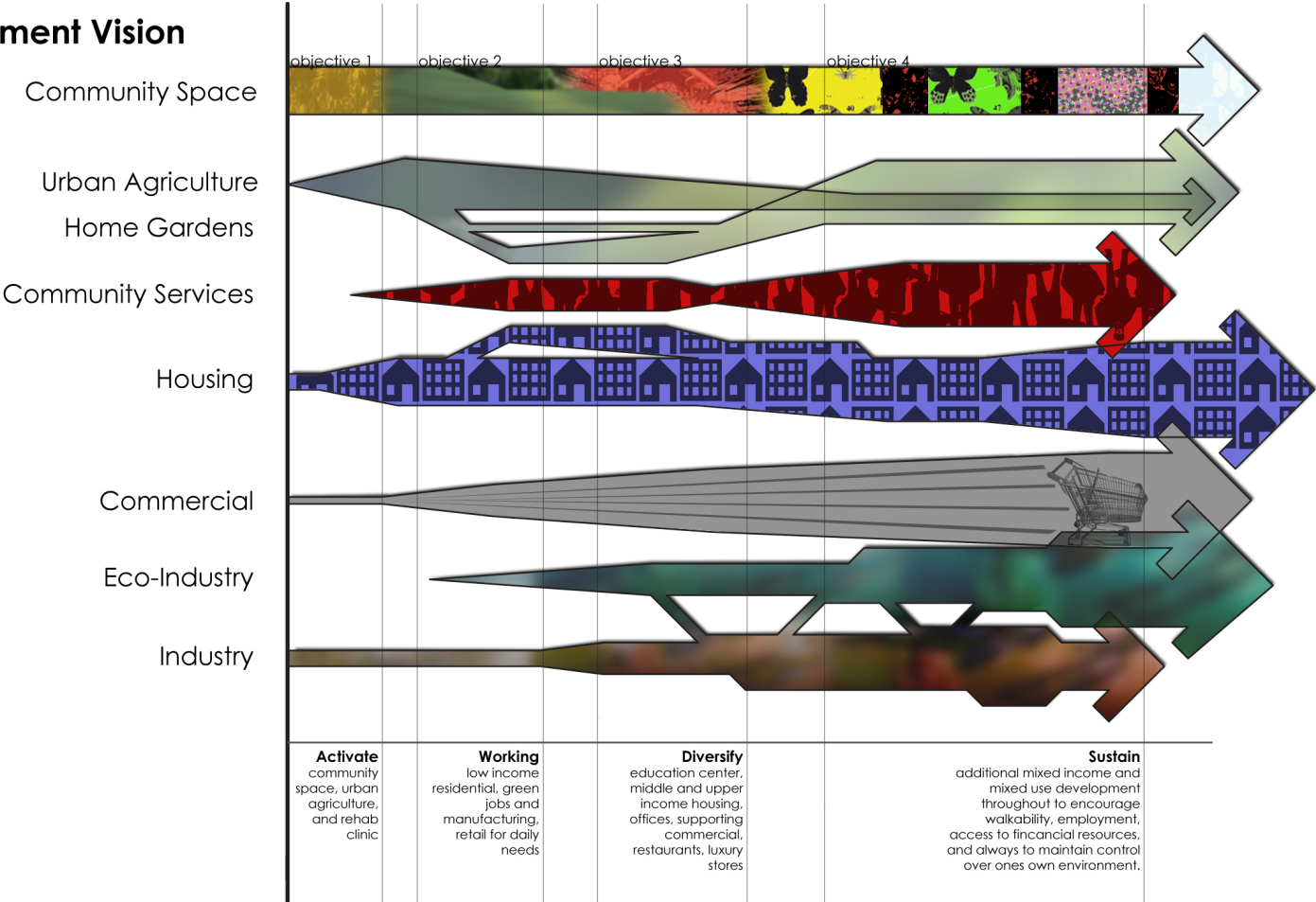
Proactive Zoning

The first order of generating healthy communities is allowing policy to accept them. In a new form of zoning, the single use district is reserved only for historic districts or other special cases. Multi-use zones are the norm in this new form of regulation, and policy is intended to further diversify neighborhoods without intruding on any truly non-conforming uses.

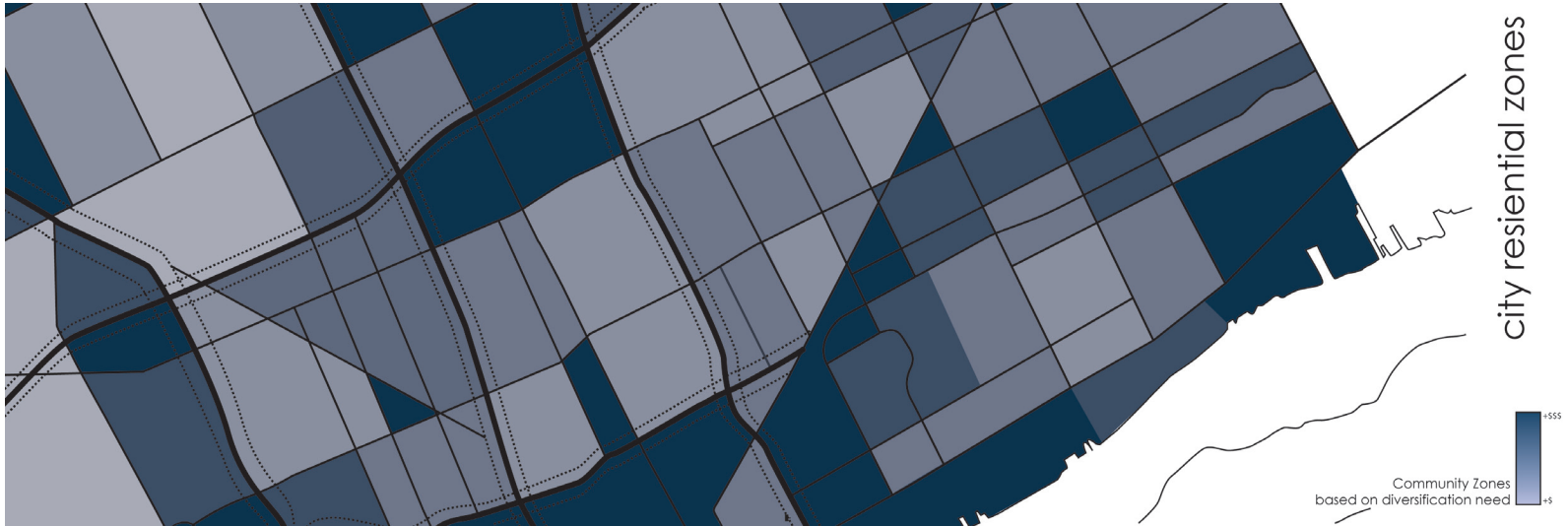
Zooming to a multi-neighborhood scale, the differing shades of the residential zoning type can

[Right] Objectives
Conceptual Progress.
Jake Lyon

Development Vision



<p>Activate community space, urban agriculture, and rehab clinic</p>	<p>Working low income residential, green jobs and manufacturing, retail for daily needs</p>	<p>Diversify education center, middle and upper income housing, offices, supporting commercial, restaurants, luxury stores</p>	<p>Sustain additional mixed income and mixed use development throughout to encourage walkability, employment, access to financial resources, and always to maintain control over ones own environment.</p>
---	--	---	---



be seen changing across the city. This represents the different needs and is to be applied to all use types. In this sketch example, dark blue requires the addition of higher income residential development and light blue requires lower income developments. Some may argue that this zoning takes too much of a stance against the market, but as was mentioned earlier in reference to Jonathan Levine's book *Zoned Out*, regulation already stands in opposition to market forces. This mode is simply using the ability to direct development in a more socially conscious way.

The ideals behind proactive forms of zoning can be explained in better detail the closer one gets to a community. For this area, the four objectives in my schematic design begin to outline some of the more tangible items driven by the collaborative process to this point.

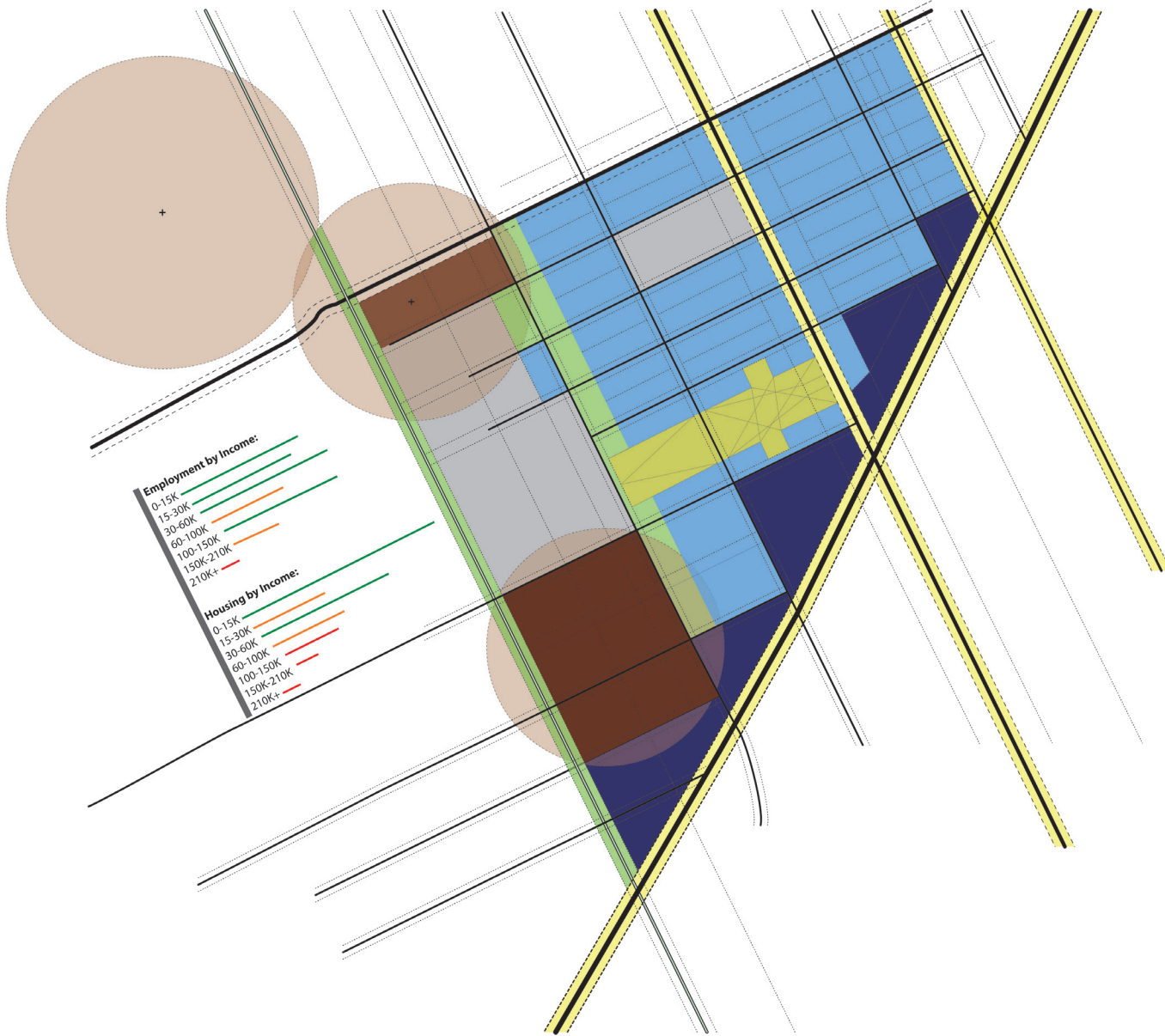
Objective 1: Activate

To begin the change this community is looking for, I am calling for an intervention in two parts. This activation stage is the most prescriptive since it takes place based on what we have directly observed while the other objectives will kick in sometime in the future. The two interventions both focus on accessing the untapped potential within this neighborhood. The first intervention is a rehabilitation clinic focused around urban agriculture as a therapeutic and productive program. One of the main problems with land use in this community is that it is presently inaccessible for use as anything other than residential. Recent Michigan State law enables residents to garden on vacant adjacent lots, but the fields available suggest a larger scale approach.

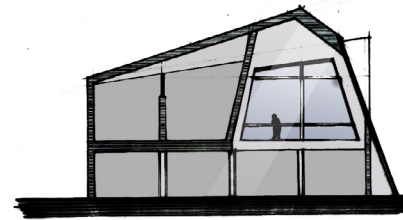
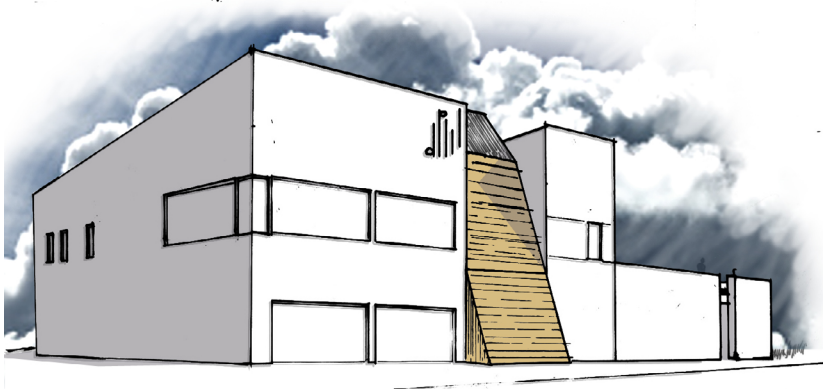
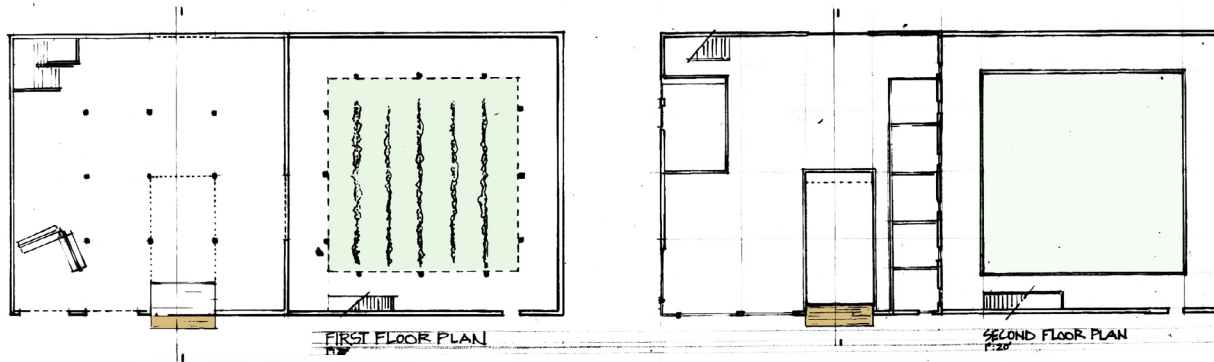
The program for urban agriculture is intended to

[Top] City Residential Zones. Jake Lyon

[Right] Redefined Zones. Jake Lyon



redefined zones



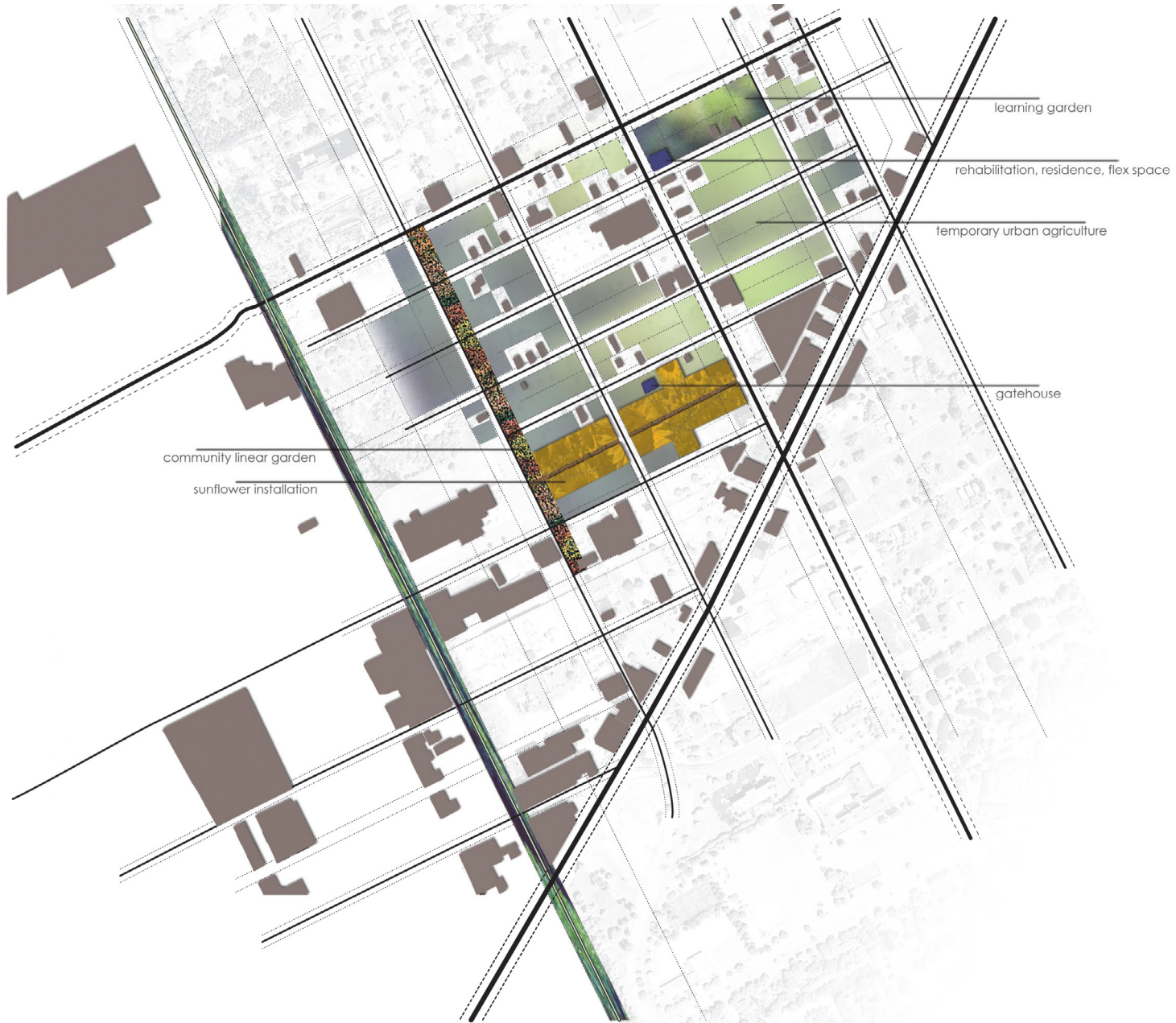
proposal: detroit rehabilitation center

spread throughout the community to most of the open spaces, giving purpose and intentionality to what was once extremely underutilized urban land. To be sure it is ironic to begin a farm just outside the central business district of the nation's eleventh largest city, but urban agriculture has also been picked for its usefulness as a program that easily disappears when need be. The second part of this program, the rehabilitation center, is sited in the northeast quadrant of the site along Chene where an old liquor store stands vacant. The opening up of the first floor provides storage for the agriculture, market space, meeting

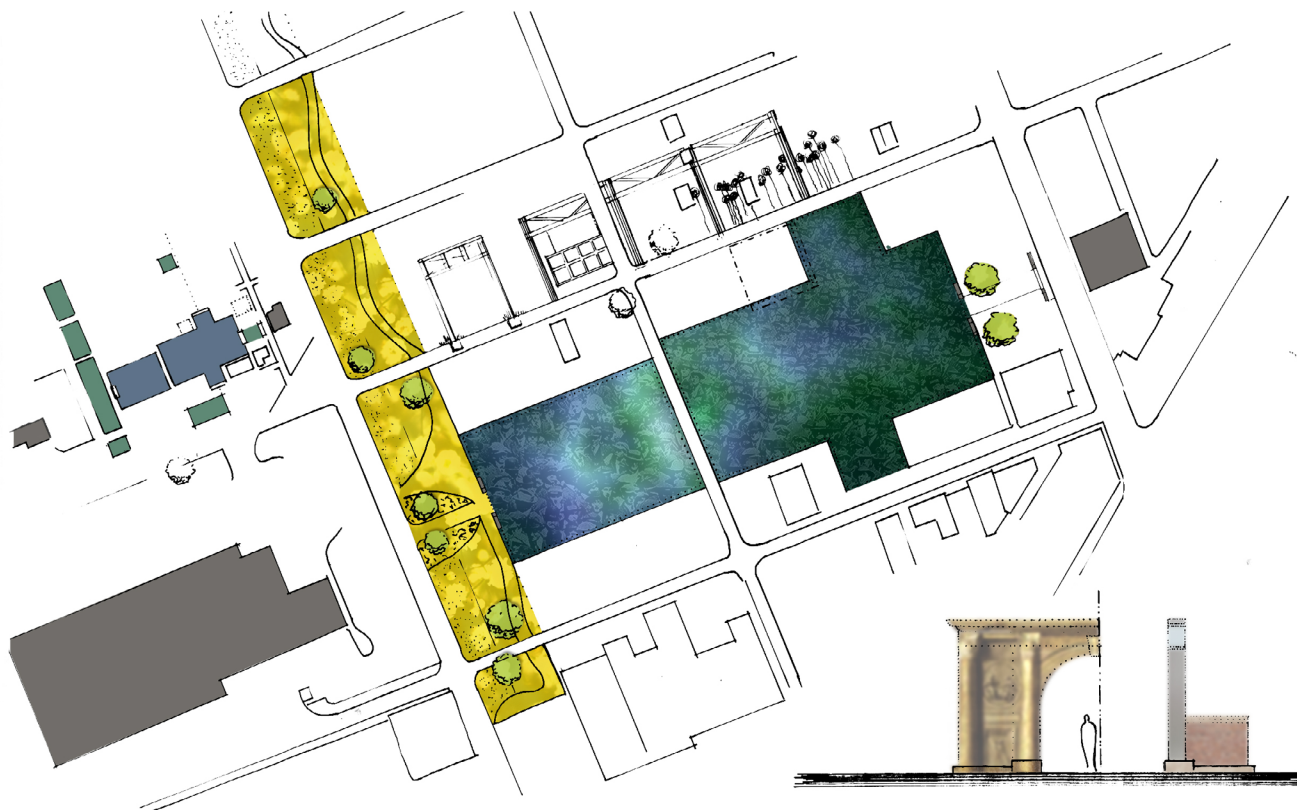
space, and flexibility for changing needs. A new second story is built to accommodate the living arrangements of the center's guests with private bedrooms and baths, and shared living, kitchen, and dining areas. The east rooms overlook a private courtyard intended for reflection and private gardening projects. A rotated section of the building creates a moment of interest and opens up the section across two bays to allow natural light to extend through the two story space into the heart of the flexible first floor. The design for this building is loosely developed with regard to the differentiation of public and private space

[Left] Detroit Rehabilitation Center: Sketch Proposal. Jake Lyon.

[Right] Objective One Plan. Jake Lyon.



objective 01 activate



proposal: community space

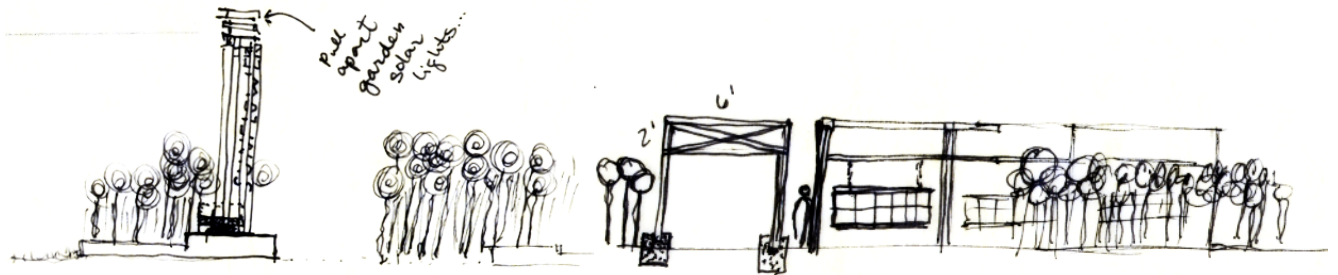
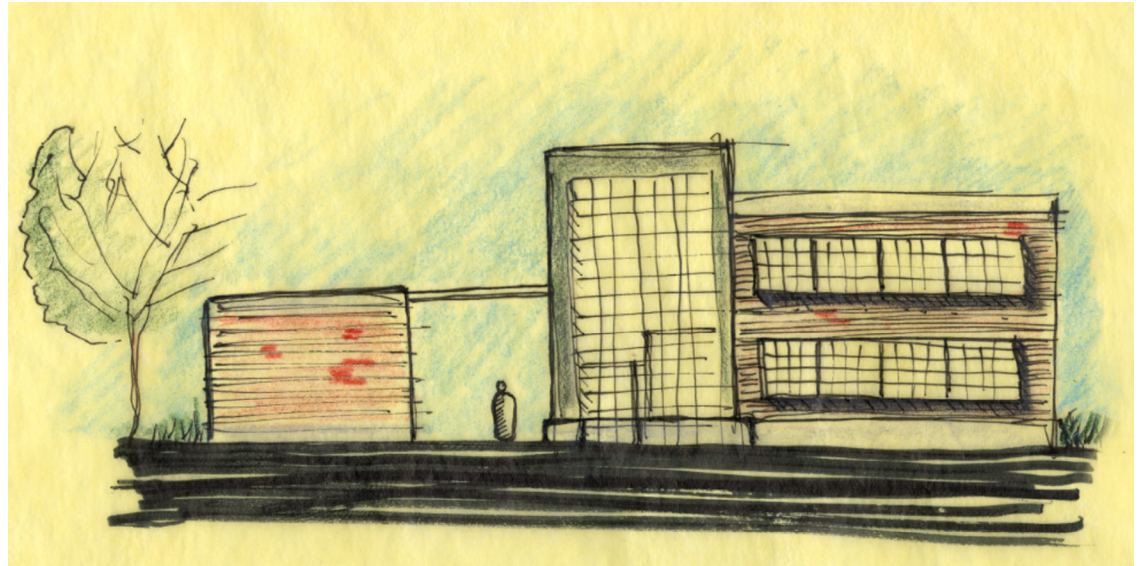
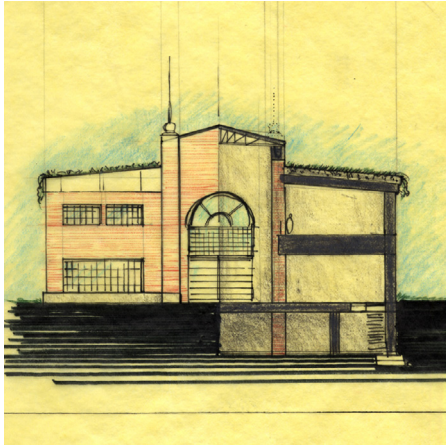
in Le Corbusier's monastic design at La Tourette in Lyons, France. The agricultural program is based on the initiatives already active in Detroit, specifically the Detroit Agriculture Network and Earth Works Gardens Detroit programs for home gardens and urban agriculture.

The second intervention intended to activate this community is an extremely open framework for a democratically run park. Since there is not a single building along the relatively short Wilkins Street, I have claimed the corridor as a means of

enabling the community to continually adjust a commons space to fit their needs. As a kickoff to this process, I am proposing a field of sunflowers, symbolic for their remediation abilities. Along the edge at four main points, the foundations for four gates are laid, setting the stage for their future development. One last installation of two by fours and old factory windows creates a conceptual gatehouse next to the north gateway. This framework of a gatehouse is designed to be hopeful while not forgetting the past and present situation.

[Left] Schematic Plan for Perpetual Community Space. Jake Lyon

[Right] Sketches for a Gatehouse. Jake Lyon.



Each year the community congregates at the park to celebrate each other and to assign a new program to the park. The program does not necessarily have to change each year, but the opportunity for change is presented. The park is split down the middle by Dubois, and along the western edge is connected to a linear park that acts as a miniature greenway between the industrial/institutional west side and the rest of the community.

Objective 2: Working

The second objective in this schematic proposal is in essence a working plan for a marginalized neighborhood. The goal here is to introduce one of the elements severely lacking at the moment: people. In Detroit, even the low-income housing developments ignore the needs of citizens that make under 15,000 a year (cite class discussion, heximer). Through providing this underserved



population with housing, there is a greater potential for community action and a greater need for jobs in the area. To maintain a certain balance of jobs and housing in this neighborhood, ecologically friendly manufacturing and the production of new “green” technologies are used to build up an employment base. Food production can still be a part of this development, though the amount of urban agriculture begins to decrease to make room for the new developments. Small, community-oriented stores are necessary for

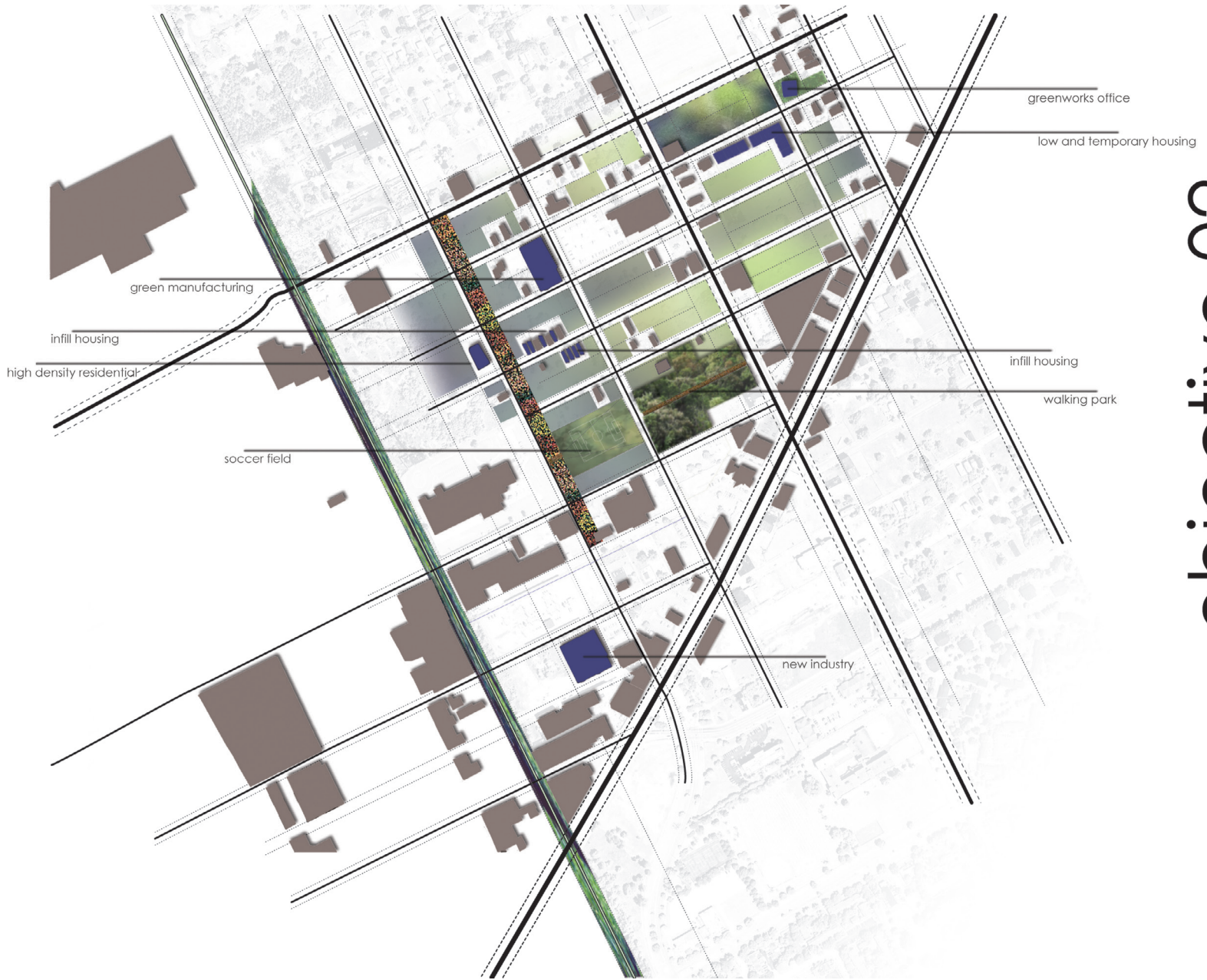
this objective; they help support a walkable community and do not require the large population base of larger stores. This objective focuses on the systems based approach to communities, establishing the necessary aspects of the neighborhood system as a first priority.

Objective 3: Diversify

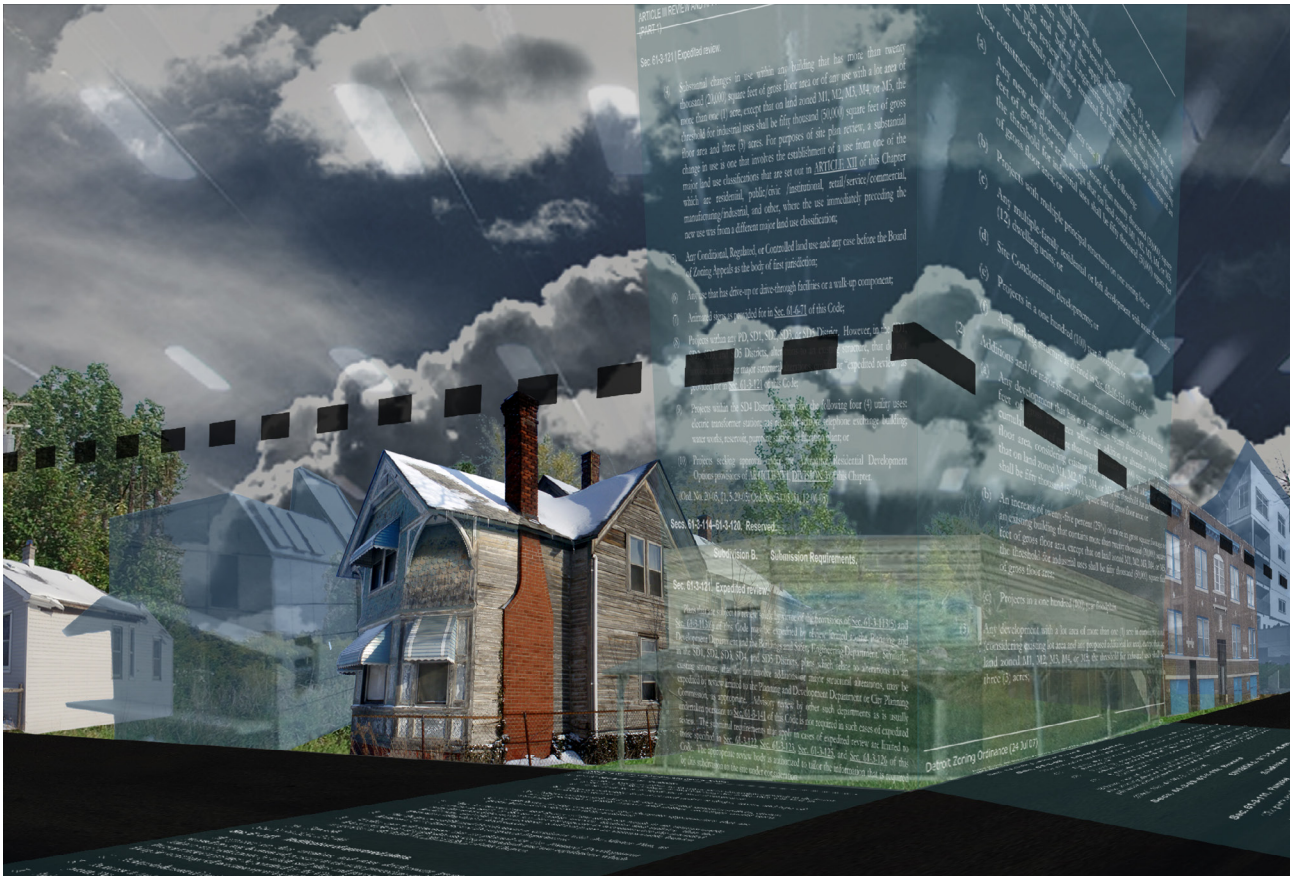
The third objective seeks to round out the neighborhood so that it is no longer simply “working,”

[Left] Working Neighborhood Model for Objective Two. Photo Collage. Jake Lyon.

[Right] Objective Two Plan. Jake Lyon.



objective 02 working



but providing a holistic human experience. This objective includes the development of middle and upper income housing, offices, additional institutional space (including the re-opening of the public school just north of Mack), and commercial that supports diverse populations. Along with the idea of diversification is a certain amount of increase in the overall density of the neighborhood to reinforce human interaction and to encourage new social connections. The expansion of the neighborhood during this phase relies heavily on changes in policy and the encouragement of positive urban environments.

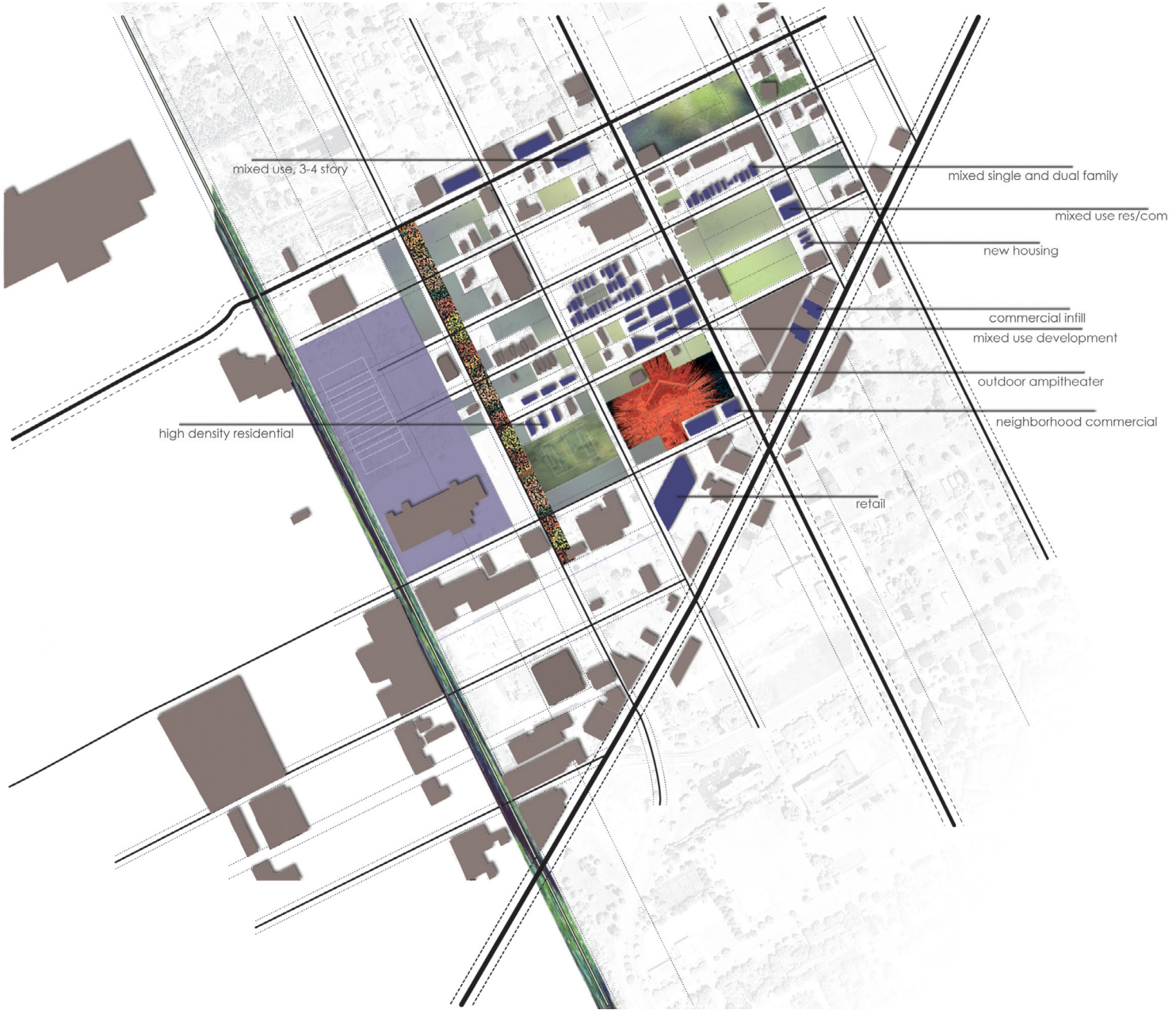
Objective 4: Sustain

The final objective of this neighborhood is to sustain. Sustaining in the case of the city does not mean keeping everything the same, though. If this project has explored anything, it is the dynamic nature of cities, so it is a regenerative and adaptive approach to sustaining that is needed. Development geared toward sustaining this area will be upper income residential, identity-based infrastructure (gateways, signs), art galleries and studios, creative-class jobs, and so forth. As the

[Left] Policy Enabled Model for Objective Three. Photo Collage. Jake Lyon.

[Right] Objective Three Plan. Jake Lyon.

objective 03 diversify





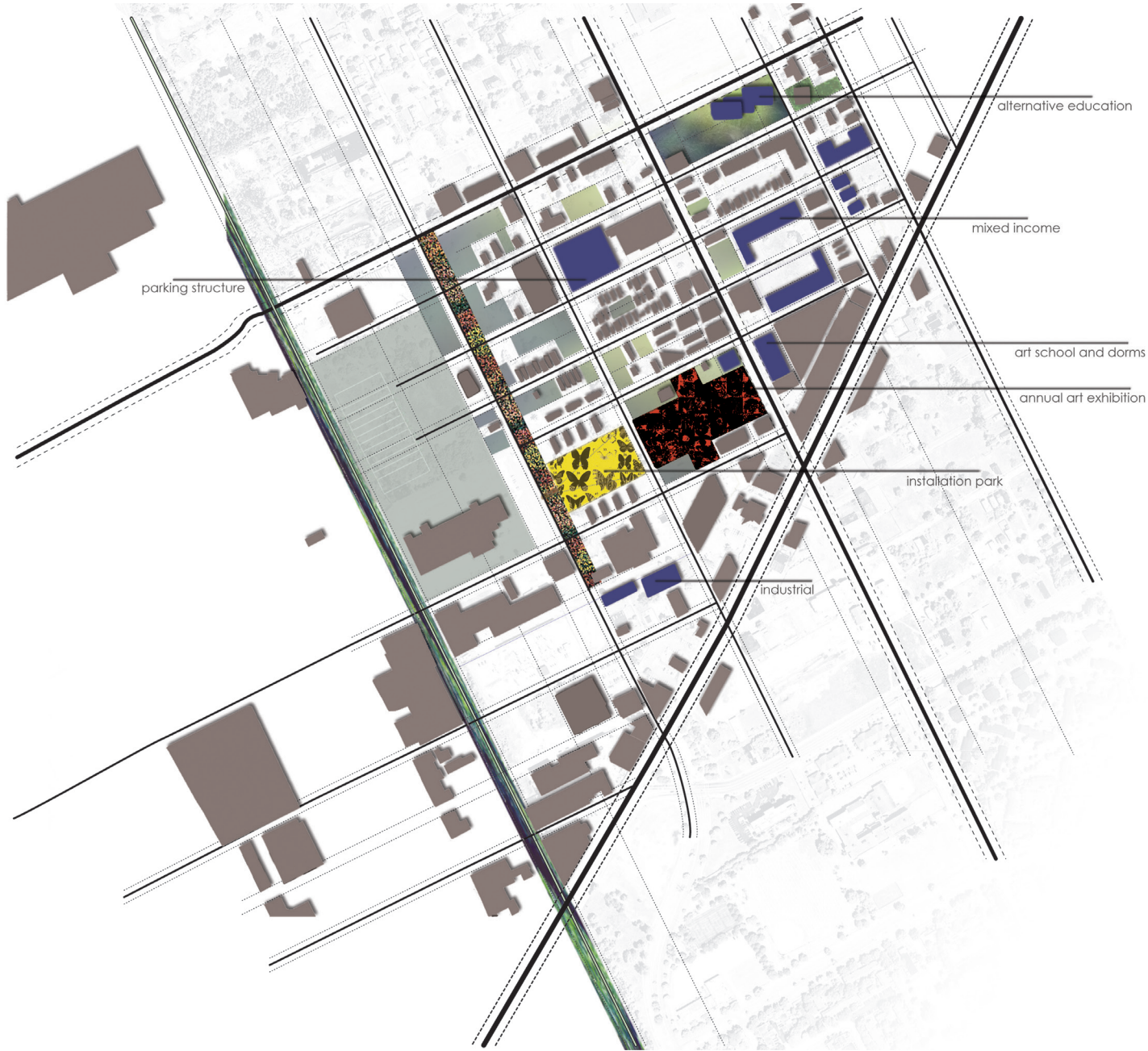
industries continue to change, it is up to the community to activate the political system in a way that permits smooth shifts. By the time this object is influencing the community, it will hopefully be one of denser developments surrounding preserved open spaces.

Though this community is not in a terrible rush to change, the direction of even this “plan” will adjust as the community develops. For this reason, I must emphasize the speculative nature

of this schematic vision in four parts. This urban scheme is representative of the diversity and general character the people of this community envision; again, it is not a master plan.

[Left] A Responsible Future: Objective 4. Photo Collage. Jake Lyon.

[Right] Objective Four Plan. Jake Lyon.



objective 04sustain

Concluding Thoughts

The Reactive City is about a design process. It is about finding the meaning of design in the people design is intended to serve. I have witnessed the disparity of government, which is supposed to serve the needs of all its residents. This and many other neighborhoods have been left behind and have in the process trapped the poor and, statistically minorities in unhealthy environments. As developments do take place in the city, they often are built on a suburban model such as the Model T Plaza in Highland Park or the Crosswinds Development on the lower east side. Policy allows the continuation of systemic repression of marginalized communities by not giving them a voice in their own physical environment. Though the limitations of academic exercise prevent me

from completing a comprehensive and specific design for the problems of this neighborhood, I have outlined the means by which to approach the issue and have found some foundational possibilities to build on. Ultimately, the design of neighborhoods must be in collaboration with the communities that design serves, and it must be a reaction to the needs, desires, and culture of those people. Architecture exists as a professional service to humanity. It is our responsibility to design environments that appropriately serve humanity, and I believe it is our responsibility to challenge current barriers in policy and in our culture that discourage and even restrict such design.

[Right] The Game.
Wood and Paint
interactive model.
Jake Lyon.



Endnotes

1. Levine, Jonathan. **Zoned out regulation, markets, and transportation-land-use choice.** Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 2005. p 12-13.
2. Jacobs, Jane. **The Death and Life of Great American Cities.** New York: Random House, 2002. p 222.
3. Jacobs, Jane. **The Death and Life of Great American Cities.** New York: Random House, 2002. p 17.
4. Alexander, Christopher, Hajo Neis, Artemis Anninou, and Ingrid King. **A New Theory of Urban Design.** New York: Oxford UP, 1987. p 3.
5. Jacobs, Jane. **The Death and Life of Great American Cities.** New York: Random House, 2002. p 17.
6. **"Village History"**. The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. 24 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.gvshp.org/history.htm>>.
7. Jacobs, Jane. **The Death and Life of Great American Cities.** New York: Random House, 2002. p151.
8. "History." **Seaside.** Ed. Sheree Williams. 2006. Seaside. 24 Apr. 2009.
9. "History." **Seaside.** Ed. Sheree Williams. 2006. Seaside. 24 Apr. 2009.
10. **"Peabody – BedZED"**. The Peabody Group. 24 Apr. 2009. <<http://www.peabody.org.uk/media-centre/factsheets/bedzed.aspx>>.
11. **"Peabody – BedZED"**. The Peabody Group. 24 Apr. 2009. <<http://www.peabody.org.uk/media-centre/factsheets/bedzed.aspx>>.
12. Montague, Peter. **"Sustainable Development - Part 1."** Rachel's Environmental and Health News 624 (11 Nov. 1998). Rachel's Newsletter. Environmental Research Foundation. 20 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.rachels.org>>.
13. Schulz, Williams, Israel, and Lempert, **"Racial and Spatial Relations as Fundamental Determinants of Health in Detroit"** The Milbank Quarterly, Vol. 80, No. 4, 2002: p 679.
14. Wenz, Peter S. **"Just Garbage."** Faces of Environmental Racism. Rowman & Littlefield, 1995. p 57.
15. Wenz, Peter S. **"Just Garbage."** Faces of Environmental Racism. Rowman & Littlefield, 1995. p 560-62.
16. **"Working Hard, Still Falling Short."** NatReport08.pdf. Working Poor Families Project. 24 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/pdfs/NatReport08.pdf>>. p 3.
17. Motavalli, Jim **"The Costs of Owning A Car – Wheels Blog – NYTimes.com"**. New York Times. March 18, 2009. <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/the-costs-of-owning-a-car/?hp> Retrieved on 2009-04-23
18. **"Detroit city, Michigan – Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007"**. American Fact Finder. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US2622000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-_sse=on>. Retrieved 2009-04-23.> Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009

19. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, **Abandoned Housing Research: A Compendium**. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973)
20. **Majora Carter: Greening the ghetto**. Majora Carter's tale of urban renewal | Video on TED.com. June 2006. 24 Apr. 2009 <http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/majora_carter_s_tale_of_urban_renewal.html>.
21. "**Detroit city, Michigan – Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007**". American Fact Finder. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US2622000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_-&-lang=en&-_sse=on>. Retrieved 2009-04-23.> Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009
22. "**Detroit city, Michigan – Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007**". American Fact Finder. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US2622000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_-&-lang=en&-_sse=on>. Retrieved 2009-04-23.> Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009
23. Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. **Off The Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor**. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England. 2006
24. "**Detroit city, Michigan – Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007**". American Fact Finder. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US2622000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_-&-lang=en&-_sse=on>. Retrieved 2009-04-23.> Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009

Bibliography

These works have influenced and challenged my thinking on the nature of architectural practice and/or the means of urban design.

Alexander, Christopher, Hajo Neis, Artemis Anninou, and Ingrid King. **A New Theory of Urban Design**. New York: Oxford UP, 1987.

Betsky, Aaron, and Erik Adigard. **Architecture Must Burn : Manifestos for the Future of Architecture**. London: Thames & Hudson, Limited, 2000.

Peter, Blake,. **Form follows fiasco why modern architecture hasn't worked**. Boston: Little, Brown, 1977.

Charter of the New Urbanism- Congress for the New Urbanism. 1997. Congress for the New Urbanism. Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009. <<http://www.cnu.org/charter>>.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), ch. 11, "**Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment**."

"**Detroit city, Michigan – Selected Economic Characteristics: 2005-2007**". American Fact Finder. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US2622000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_DP3YR3&-ds_name=ACS_2007_3YR_G00_&-_lang=en&-_sse=on>. Retrieved 2009-04-23.> Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009

Freund, David M. P. **Colored Property State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America** (Historical Studies of Urban America). New York: University Of Chicago P, 2007.

"History." **Seaside**. Ed. Sheree Williams. 2006. Seaside. 24 Apr. 2009.

Howard, Ebenezer. **Garden Cities of Tomorrow**. 2nd ed. Faber and Faber Ltd., 1965.

Jacobs, Jane. **Dark Age Ahead**. New York: Random House, Incorporated. 2004

Jacobs, Jane. **The Death and Life of Great American Cities**. New York: Random House, 2002.

Kostof, Spiro. **The City Assembled The Elements of Urban Form through History**. London: Thames & Hudson, 2005.

Kostof, Spiro. **City shaped urban patterns and meanings through history**. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1999.

Krieger, Alex. "**Arguing the "Against" Position: New Urbanism as a Means of Building and Rebuilding Our Cities**." *Seaside debates a critique of the new urbanism*. Ed. Todd W. Bressi. New York: Rizzoli, Troika, 2002.

Levine, Jonathan. **Zoned out regulation, markets, and transportation-land-use choice**. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 2005.

Majora Carter: Greening the ghetto. Majora Carter's tale of urban renewal | Video on TED.com. June 2006. 24 Apr. 2009 <http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/majora_carter_s_tale_of_urban_renewal.html>.

McDonough, William. "**The Hannover Principles**." *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural P, 1996. 408-10.

McDonough, William. "**Design, Ecology, Ethics, and the Making of Things.**" *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture*. Ed. Kate Nesbitt. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural P, 1996. 398-407.

Montague, Peter. "**Sustainable Development - Part 1.**" *Rachel's Environmental and Health News* 624 (11 Nov. 1998). *Rachel's Newsletter*. Environmental Research Foundation. 20 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.rachels.org>>.

Motavalli, Jim "**The Costs of Owning A Car – Wheels Blog – NYTimes.com**". *New York Times*. March 18, 2009. <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/the-costs-of-owning-a-car/?hp> Retrieved on 2009-04-23

"**Peabody – BedZED**". The Peabody Group. 24 Apr. 2009. <<http://www.peabody.org.uk/media-centre/factsheets/bedzed.aspx>>.

Rowe, Colin, and Fred Koetter. **Collage City**. New York: MIT P, 1984.

Schulz, Williams, Israel, and Lempert, "**Racial and Spatial Relations as Fundamental Determinants of Health in Detroit**" *The Milbank Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 4, 2002: 677-707.

"**SmartCode Central.**" SmartCode Central. Retrieved 24 Apr. 2009. <<http://smartcodecentral.com/>>.

Szold, Terry S., and Armando Carbonell, eds. **Smart Growth : Form and Consequences**. Annapolis: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2002.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, **Abandoned Housing Research: A Compendium**. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973

Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. **Off The Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor**. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England. 2006

"**Village History**". The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. 24 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.gvshp.org/history.htm>>.

Wenz, Peter S. "**Just Garbage.**" *Faces of Environmental Racism*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.

"**Working Hard, Still Falling Short.**" *NatReport08.pdf*. Working Poor Families Project. 24 Apr. 2009 <<http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/pdfs/NatReport08.pdf>>.