Bringing the Neighbor Back to the 'Hood
A Creative Re-Appropriation of Vacant Land on Detroit's Eastside

Lauren E. Rock

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Architecture

University of Washington
2012

Committee:
Sharon E. Sutton
Brian McLaren
Brad Khouri

Program authorized to offer degree:
Architecture

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Sharon E. Sutton, Brian McLaren, and Brad Khouri for your advice and motivation.

Thank you to David Miller and Nicole Huber for your guidance early in the thesis development and to Lee Copeland for your input through the design phase.

Above all, thank you to my family and to Dave for your continued patience, support, and encouragement throughout the entire thesis process.

Table of Contents

List of Figures vii

Abstract xiii

I. Introduction 1

II. Theorizing the Terrain Vague as an Opportunity for Placemaking 11

Case Studies 26

III. Methods of Placemaking 43

IV. Designing a Framework for Spontaneous Urbanism 69

V. Conclusion 113

Selected Bibliography 117

Appendix 121

List of Figures

Figure 1| Lincoln Street Art Park. 1

Figure 2| Detroit's flag. 2

Figure 3| Freeway interchange, 1970. 3

Figure 4| Rooftop skyline. 3

Figure 6| Population expansion. 4

Figure 7| Vacant land. 4

Figure 8| Tyree Guyton working on the Heidelberg Project. 5

Figure 9| An informal community gathering in a vacant lot. 5

Figure 10| Garden for Growth Program in an abandoned building on Chene Street. 5

Figure 11| An art garden in Detroit. 7

Figure 12| Detroit's terrain vague. 11

Figure 13| Assembly line and Model T. 13

Figure 14| Ford Highland Park Plant. 13

Figure 15| The abandoned Packard Plant. 13

Figure 16| A timeline showing Detroit's population change. 15

Figure 17| The Imagination Station. 16

Figure 18| A house near the Dequindre Cut painted by Object Orange. 16

Figure 19| Brightmoor Farmway edible playscape. 17

Figure 20| The Detroit Market Garden. 17

Figure 21| Detroit Summer. 18

Figure 22| Jimmy and Grace Lee Boggs. 18

Figure 23| 1825 map of Detroit. 21

Figure 24| A house reclaimed by nature. 21

Figure 25| Pathways of desire. 21

Figure 26| Dequindre Cut: before. 22
Figure 27| Dequindre Cut: after. 22
Figure 28| Dequindre Cut in use. 22
Figure 29| Map of vacant land and dangerous structures. 25
Figure 30| Green Guerillas, 1970. 27
Figure 31| Plans for Hunt's Point. 28
Figure 32| The POINT Riverside garden. 28
Figure 33| A workshop at the ReBuilding Exchange. 29
Figure 34| ReBuilding Exchange warehouse. 29
Figure 35| A neighborhood bus shelter made by the Bainbridge Island Community Woodshop. 30
Figure 36| SCCC workshop. 30
Figure 37| Growing Power's Will Allen leading a microgreens workshop. 31
Figure 38| Growing Power headquarters. 31
Figure 39| Strawberry Creek, the first daylighting project in the United States. 32
Figure 40| Strawberry Creek Park is now a popular public park. 32
Figure 41| Tire planters at the Brightmoor Farmway. 33
Figure 42| An abandoned house transformed at the Brightmoor Farmway. 33
Figure 43| Brightmoor Youth Garden. 33
Figure 44| A DSNI brainstorming meeting. 34
Figure 45| DSNI cleaning up a vacant lot. 34
Figure 46| Building greenhouses on a vacant lot. 34
Figure 47| Detroit vicinity map. 43
Figure 48| Less than 20% of the build structures remain. 44
Figure 49| Vacant land map. 44
Figure 50| Diagram viewing vacant land as open space. 45
Figure 51| An abandoned residential alley. 45

Figure 52| A large vacant lot. 45
Figure 53| A burned and abandoned house. 45
Figure 54| Land use and zoning map. 46
Figure 55| A two-family residential house. 47
Figure 56| A commercial building. 47
Figure 57| An industrial building. 47
Figure 58| A psychogeographic map illustrating the formal urban fabric of Poletown. 48
Figure 59| A psychogeographic map illustrating the informal fabric of Poletown. 49
Figure 60| 1961 map of Poletown. 50
Figure 61| 1997 map showing the GM Plant. 50
Figure 62| Poletown before the GM Plant was built. 50
Figure 63| Community members protest the GM Plant. 51
Figure 64| The site of Northeastern High School. 2012. 52
Figure 65| Perrien Park, 2012. 52
Figure 66| Northeastern High School. Date unknown. 53
Figure 67| Northeastern High School shortly before demolition. 53
Figure 68| A historic image of the Bloody Run Creek. 54
Figure 69| A current image of the Bloody Run Creek reentering a pipe in Elmwood Cemetery. 54
Figure 70| Historic creek map. 54
Figure 71| A landsat image of Detroit. 55
Figure 72| 19th Century map of Detroit's creeks. 55
Figure 73| An abandoned house. 56
Figure 74| A typical-style two-family house. 56
Figure 75| A diagram of Interboro's identified "new suburbanism" process. 57
Figure 76| People volunteering with The Greening of Detroit. 58
Figure 77| Detroit children. 58

Figure 78| The Heidelberg Project's polka dot house. 59
Figure 79| The Heidelberg Project. 59
Figure 80| A cooking class at the Capuchin soup kitchen. 60
Figure 81| Earthworks community garden an hoop house. 60
Figure 82| Caroline Leadley and Jack Van Dyke of Rising Peasant Farms. 61
Figure 83| Farnsworth Farms. 61
Figure 84| The audience for a performance at John's Carpet House. 62
Figure 85| Playing the blues at John's Carpet House. 62
Figure 86| Location map of the four existing examples of spontaneous urbanism. 63
Figure 87| A brainstorming session at the Detroit Works Project Community Conversation. 64
Figure 88| A round table discussion at the Detroit Works Project Community Conversation. 64
Figure 89| A networked vision for the Eastside as a workshop for spontaneous urbanism. 69
Figure 90| A diagram of the proposed local economy. 70
Figure 91| Capacity-building diagram. 71
Figure 92| Typologies of spontaneous urbanism. 73
Figure 93| Proposed location of creek and greenway. 74
Figure 95| Typical creek section. 75
Figure 94| Daylighting diagram. 75
Figure 96| Recreation and productive landscapes along greenway. 77
Figure 97| Existing. 79
Figure 98| Creek. 79
Figure 99| Center. 79
Figure 100| Nodes. 79
Figure 101| Satellite nodes. 79
Figure 102| Expansion. 79
Figure 103| Toolbox diagram. 81

Figure 104| Urban principles diagram. 82
Figure 105| Performance criteria diagram. 83
Figure 106| Kit of parts diagram. 84
Figure 107| Locations of the center and nodes along the greenway. 85
Figure 108| Spatialized program for the Creative Commons. 86
Figure 109| Overgrown path in Perrien Park. 87
Figure 110| View towards Chene St. from Perrien Park. 87
Figure 111| The one occupied house within the site boundary. 87
Figure 112| Northeastern High School lot. 87
Figure 113| Cattails in the Northeastern High School lot. 87
Figure 114| 1949 aerial photo. 88
Figure 115| 1967 aerial photo. 88
Figure 116| 1999 aerial photo. 89
Figure 117| 1967 aerial photo. 89
Figure 118| 2021 site plan showing the creek and greenway. 90
Figure 119| 2031 site plan showing the Creative Commons and landscape. 91
Figure 120| Creative Commons ground floor plan. 92
Figure 121| A view from across the water towards the gathering space. 93
Figure 122| A view of the main gathering space, 94
Figure 123| A view of a smaller scale gathering space. 95
Figure 124| Vicinity photo - Vacant land on proposed site. 96
Figure 125| Vicinity photo - existing house. 96
Figure 126| Vicinity photo - existing house with people on the front porch. 96
Figure 127| Existing site plan. 96
Figure 128| Sequence envisioning the future of the sustainable residential neighborhood. 97
Figure 129| Plan diagram of the exchange intervention. 98

Figure 130| A view of the exchange space. 99
Figure 131| Vicinity photo - An overgrown abandoned driveway. 100
Figure 132| Vicinity photo - Urban prairie. 100
Figure 133| Vicinity photo - Vacant land. 100
Figure 134| Existing site plan. 100
Figure 135| Sequence envisioning the future of the productive landscape neighborhood. 101
Figure 136| Plan diagram of the learn intervention. 102
Figure 137| A view of the learn space and urban farm beyond. 103
Figure 138| Vicinity photo - Existing abandoned market structure. 104
Figure 139| Vicinity photo - An informal garage sale across the street. 104
Figure 140| Vicinity photo - View of proposed site and market structure beyond. 104
Figure 141| Existing site plan. 104
Figure 142| Sequence envisioning the future of the innovative workspace neighborhood. 105
Figure 143| Plan diagram of make intervention. 106
Figure 144| A view of the collaborative workshop with the market structure shown beyond. 107
Figure 145| A map envisioning the future of the network, center, and nodes. 109
Figure 146| A new grassroots economy for the Eastside. 113

Abstract

The loss of place and devastation of a community is an all-too-common reality in many post-industrial cities like Detroit. While other American cities have experienced similar declines in population and industry, few have witnessed it on such a vast scale. As a city that was built for almost two million people, and has less than forty percent of its peak population remaining today, Detroit has been left with thirty percent of its land vacant. The attempts of numerous top-down development projects have been largely unsuccessful in addressing the existing population or enlivening the vast amount of vacant property in neighborhoods throughout the city. Still these leftover, oftentimes abandoned spaces, what contemporary theorists refer to as the "terrain vague," offer opportunities for the reclamation of the city by informal placemaking activities of community members. This thesis will explore one proposal for the future of Detroit's terrain vague inspired by the city's urban pioneers and their individual acts of creative spatial re-appropriation, referred to in this thesis as "spontaneous urbanism."

Positing that the future of Detroit's neighborhoods lies in strengthening and connecting community members' hands-on placemaking efforts, this thesis envisions Detroit's Eastside as a living workshop that can serve as an incubator for a new grassroots economy. Specifically, this thesis will propose a design intervention at three scales: network, center, and node to envision an alternative future for the Eastside. First it will encourage a network for spontaneous urbanism by daylighting a historic creek and designing an associated greenway, thereby creating a new ecological infrastructure for the network. Second, it will then identify four different urban conditions along the network and suggest re-appropriation strategies that might occur at these nodes. Ultimately, it will focus on designing one of these nodes as a Creative Commons with an intergenerational training center intended to connect, highlight, and inspire grassroots placemaking efforts. The Commons will serve as a pilot project and a catalyst for spontaneous urbanism within the network and throughout Detroit's Eastside. Through such efforts, this thesis speculates that an alternative future for the city will emerge after almost a half century of loss.


SUEDE

I. Introduction

Barn's burnt down – now I can see the moon.
~Masahide

As the Japanese poet Masahide alluded, the devastation of a place often leads to a newly heightened awareness. The loss of place and devastation of a community is an all-too-common reality in many post-industrial cities. Detroit, Cleveland, Youngstown, and Pittsburgh were at one time synonymous with the prosperity of America during the Industrial Age with its boom in communications, transportation, education, and urbanization.[1] In the past few decades, economic and social factors have drained these and other post-industrial cities of many of their residents and businesses. Along with their diminishing populations, these cities are facing shrinking urban fabrics and the erasure of place. They are now left with large expanses of vacant residential, commercial, and industrial land. With acres of open land and vacant buildings, these cities, once industrial pioneers, have the potential to reinvent themselves as they reshape their urban fabrics to embrace their smaller populations and new urban forms. While other American cities have experienced similar declines in population and industry, few have witnessed it on such a vast scale as Detroit.

Figure 1| Lincoln Street Art Park.
Underground Detroit.

Detroit has a history of optimism in the face of failure. Its motto, adopted in 1826, shortly after a fire destroyed the city in 1805 reads: "Speramus Meliora and Resurget Cineribus," which translates to "We Shall Rise Again from the Ashes / We Hope for Better Things."[2] A century later a flag was designed for Detroit that portrays two females; one female is weeping, representing Detroit at the time of the fire, and the other female is comforting her, representing the hope and future of Detroit. The background image illustrates the city in flames and the foreground illustrates its bright future.[3] The flag, adopted by the city just after World War II, portrays the paradox of rebirth; loss is necessary for something new to be created.

In its advertising campaigns, Chrysler acknowledges the optimism and resiliency characteristic of the city with actor Clint Eastwood saying, "that's what we do, we find a way through tough times and if we can't find a way we'll make one."[4] This thesis sets out to capture the creative, resilient spirit of the people of Detroit to find a way though the tough times created by almost a half century of loss.

The Loss

During the Industrial Age, Detroit was synonymous with prosperity in America due to its automotive boom. Peaking at a population of 1.85 million in 1950,[5] Detroit was America's fourth largest city. Birthed by Henry Ford's entrepreneurial spirit and creation of automotive industrial mass production, the Motor City's thriving economy epitomized the nation's desires for the prosperity and stability. A single-industry economy, dependent on the mass production of the automobile, provided thousands of jobs for Detroit's largely uneducated population and allowed for the American Dream of upward social mobility through hard work to become a reality for the middle class. Eventually, this single-industry reliance combined with anti-urban federal policies, political corruption, persistent racist sentiments, and blacks impatient with the slow progress in addressing those sentiments produced Detroit's decline, draining the city of over half of its residents and many of its businesses. "White flight," the large-scale migration of white people

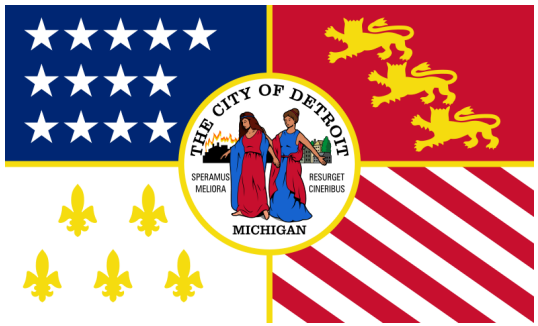


Figure 2| Detroit's flag.

from the urban core to the suburbs, transformed the population of Detroit from 16 percent black in 1950, to 82 percent black in 2010.[6] This demographic shift and economic exodus left behind an urban fabric comprised of large expanses of city-owned vacant land and abandoned buildings, and a population characterized by high percentages of poverty and unemployment and low levels of education.

In his 2012 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama applauded the recent growth of Detroit's auto industry.[7] However, it would seem that this form of top-down growth, supported by national government bailout money, is precisely the approach that brought about the city's spiraling losses. Detroit has been powered by the stronghold of automobile industry since the mid-1900s, and it was the reliance on a single-industry economy that, among many other factors, ultimately contributed to the decline of the city. Numerous large-scale private development projects like the Renaissance Center, built in 1977, tried to retain the city's middle-class residents who were fleeing to the suburbs, but this project, and others like it, has been largely unsuccessful in attracting residents to Detroit or in reinvigorating the economy. More recently, efforts to reverse the decay and bring new residents to the city have included stadium and casino projects, as well as a surge in the adaptive reuse of abandoned warehouses as new residential units by private developers. These top-down development examples were not only unsuccessful in reversing Detroit's decay, but they pushed out small businesses and disrupted the existing community and urban fabric. While these efforts have brought young, mostly white, professionals back to the city, mainly to the Midtown neighborhood surrounding the cultural and collegiate institutions, they are failing to address the existing aging black population or the vast amount of vacant property in neighborhoods throughout the city. These projects have ultimately acted as gentrification schemes that displace rather than serve the "people of Detroit." They are not only unsuccessful in improving the lot of Detroit's heavily low-income, minority population, but they have not been able to enliven the vast expanse of Detroit's deteriorated and abandoned community and urban fabric.

Figure 3| Freeway interchange, 1970.

Figure 4| Rooftop skyline.
Forgotten Detroit

Figure 5| Vacant lot and Renaissance Center skyline.
Carlos Osorio, AP

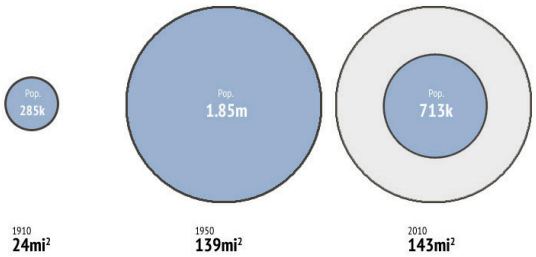


Figure 6| Population expansion.
Detroiturbex.com

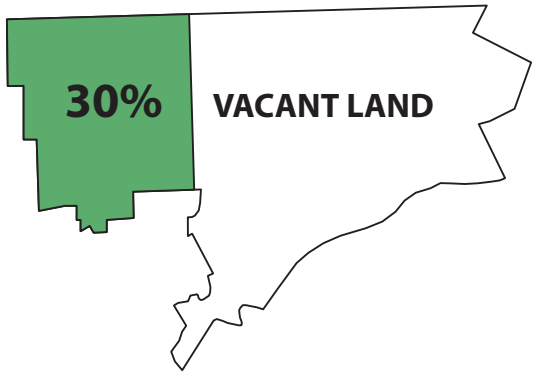


Figure 7| Vacant land.
Detroiturbex,com

The Opportunity

Detroit's vast amount of deteriorated urban fabric constitutes a literal architectural ruin. In rethinking this depleted fabric not as a sign of Detroit's failure, but as an opportunity for its rebirth, this thesis argues that with its disintegrating city economy, lack of governmental oversight, large expanses of open land, and joblessness, Detroit, a city that was once an industrial pioneer, is ready to reinvent itself through a new urban strategy. As a post-industrial city, Detroit bears the scars of its former industrial era; with vacant land, empty buildings, discarded building materials, abandoned rail lines, and paved-over creeks. With 30 percent of the city's 139 square miles of land vacant,[8] ten abandoned railroad corridors,[9] and over 70,000 abandoned buildings, nature has inevitably begun to reclaim the city.[10] Houses completely overgrown with vegetation, trees sprouting from abandoned warehouses, and open prairie-land are common sights throughout many of Detroit's neighborhoods.

Nor has the opportunity presented by this post-industrial wasteland been lost on the long-time residents of Detroit. In a city marred by devastation, a new grassroots vitality is brewing. With Detroit's local government on the brink of bankruptcy, struggling to provide necessary services for a land area much larger than its current population and tax base can support, the prevailing top-down strategies aimed at gentrifying the city are neither feasible nor adequate for the rebirth of the city. On the positive side, the lack of governmental oversight to manage the everyday activities of its people seems to be encouraging an informal, self-organizing spirit to surface. In studying the people remaining in Detroit's neighborhoods, it becomes clear that a subculture of activism prevails, with many "urban pioneers" taking matters into their own hands and re-appropriating spaces in the city to create places such as art alleys, informal music performance spaces, and urban farms.

These individual acts of creative re-appropriation of space suggest that the remedy for shrinking post-industrial cities like Detroit could stem from the informal placemaking practices of community activists. Such ad hoc placemaking practices can capture the entrepreneurial spirit

of the people of Detroit and allow for the emergence of new synergies through a community-generated, self-organizing, bottom-up approach to urbanism. As Detroit architect and urban designer, Steve Vogel suggests, "the conditions of the city have created a population that is hardy, creative, practical, risk-taking, self-reliant, and entrepreneurial."[11] In a city where the fallout from the industrial era, the top-down redevelopment efforts, and the inaction of the local government have all contributed to the erasure of place, the resilience of the remaining residents stands as a testament that a place-consciousness and sense of pride remains amongst the communities, as does a desire to breathe new life into the city.

The new urban frontier "has brought to the city or caused to stay in the city men and women who are carving out a 'brave new world' that is on the one hand preindustrial and on the other hand portends a new future."[12] Exhibiting a self-reliance born of necessity, community members are seizing the opportunities that Detroit's post-industrial climate has brought about and are reusing vacant space for community gardens, art installations, community gathering spaces, and startup businesses. This creative re-appropriation of space can be thought of as "spontaneous urbanism," the ad hoc acts of community members repurposing underutilized land and buildings in their community for the betterment of their neighborhood. Many examples of spontaneous urbanism exist throughout Detroit, but these interventions are often isolated from one another. Such isolation can prevent activists from sharing knowledge, experience, and resources; additionally, surrounding residents are unable to perceive a larger infrastructure of appropriation. The opportunity for rebirth would seem to lie in connecting and building upon the existing interventions to generate a network of re-appropriated sites.

Figure 8| Tyree Guyton working on the Heidelberg Project.
MLive.com

Figure 9| An informal community gathering in a vacant lot.
Andrew Moore

Figure 10| Garden for Growth Program in an abandoned building on Chene Street.
Andy McGlashen


LOVE

The Thesis Approach

Focusing on the idea of countering loss through the optimism of creative enterprise, this thesis posits that the future of Detroit's neighborhoods lies in empowering individual community members with the training and resources needed for them to reclaim control over their neighborhoods. This thesis proposes to strengthen and connect activists' hands-on placemaking efforts by creating a network of re-appropriated sites on underutilized land on Detroit's Eastside. Taking a capacity-building approach, the thesis will capitalize on the creative assets of the community as integral components to Detroit's existing subculture of activism, while ultimately seeking to provide a catalyst for the transformation of Detroit's Eastside.

Figure 11| An art garden in Detroit.
Model D Media

Endnotes

1 Bledstein, Burton J. *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1976.

2 Detroit Historical Society, "Detroit's Official Symbols." Web. <http://www.detroithistorical.org> (Accessed 21 Feb. 2012).

3 Moon, Whitney. "Reclaiming the Ruin: Detroit's Second Coming?" *Places 21.1,* College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley, 2009.

4 Chrysler, Super Bowl commercial, February 5, 2012.

5 CNN, "Detroit loses a staggering 25% of its population in a decade." Web. <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-03-22/us/michigan.detroit.population_1_census-figures-mayor-dave-bing-undercounting?_s=PM:US> (Accessed 21 Feb. 2012).

6 United States 2010 Census.

7 Obama, Barack. *State of the Union Address*, Jan 24, 2012.

8 Pitera, Dan. *Detroit Free Press*.

9 "Greenways Initiative: Planning for Detroit's Rail-Trails." Rails-To-Trails Conservancy for the Greenways Initiative, Oct. 2002. Web.

10 Vogel, Steve. "Detroit (Re)Turns to Nature," France, R L. *Handbook of Regenerative Landscape Design.* Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2008.

11 Vogel, 199.

12 Vogel, 189.

II. Theorizing the Terrain Vague as an Opportunity for Placemaking

A French term, "terrain vague," is often used to describe the leftover, oftentimes abandoned, spaces in the post-industrial city. The word *terrain* connotes a more urban quality than the English word *land*, and *vague* descends from the Latin word *vacuus* meaning *vacant, empty, unoccupied*, but also *free* and *available*. Architectural theorist, Ignasi de Solà-Morales introduced the term in referring to "void and absence, yet also promise, the space of the possible, of expectation" and said that they are "strange places" that "exist outside the city's effective circuits and productive structures."[1] Similarly, Gil Doron used the term "landscapes of transgression" to refer to "this unpopulated landscape" that "does not look 'natural' – [but] it is an eccentric and charming entertaining combination of a ruined or deserted city and wild nature."[2] However, it is Luc Lévesque's ideas about terrain vague that this thesis is based upon:

> *The terrain vague offers a counterpoint to the way order and consumption hold sway over the city. Offering room for spontaneous, creative appropriation and informal uses that would otherwise have trouble finding a place in public spaces subjected increasingly to the demands of commerce, that the "terrain vague" is the ideal place for a certain resistance to emerge, a place potentially open to alternative ways of experiencing the city.*[3]

Figure 12| Detroit's terrain vague.
March and Meffre

The definitions of terrain vague that are offered by the three authors allude to these spaces as being dynamic spaces of possibility. In light of this possibility, and considering the acts of informal urbanism and activism already occurring in Detroit, this thesis will explore the terrain vague as an opportunity for placemaking.

By treating property as a commodity as opposed to as a place where people enact their lives, many places in Detroit, as well as in other post-industrial cities, have been erased through redevelopment efforts, land banking, vandalism, and decay. Additionally, the local identity has been threatened by the overlay of anonymous buildings such as fast food restaurants, strip malls, and chain stores. Detroit has gone from the "national and international symbol of the miracle of industrialization to the national and international symbol of the devastation of deindustrialization."[4]

Sharon E. Sutton and Susan Kemp advocated for re-appropriation as a community development strategy in a low-income community, such as Detroit's Eastside. They quoted Roberta Feldman and Susan Stall in saying that "appropriation of space not only provides a material resource necessary to meet needs for everyday life—a place [people] can call their own—but also is a potential source of both individual and collective empowerment."[5] At the core of critical placemaking is Henri Lefebvre's claim that citizens have a "right to the city." He identified the right to participate and the right to appropriate as two important practices of empowerment and hands-on engagement. In reimagining the city of Detroit and envisioning a new urban strategy, this thesis begins with the conviction that "for marginalized populations, [placemaking's] characteristics—local activism, cooperative effort, and the struggle for place—comprise essential components of citizenship and community building."[6] Accordingly it will consider the value of placemaking, by studying the assets that can guide a unique, place-based design intervention made possible by the terrain vague.

This thesis begins with two assumptions: one is that Detroit's opportunity lies in the ever-increasing amount of vacant land and abandoned buildings. The other is that the city's

assets of history, people, ecology, and vacant land serve as resources and opportunities for it to reinvent itself into a new typology. Reviewing case studies as well as literature, this chapter uses the concept of terrain vague to explore a theoretical framework of history, people, ecology, and land as unique characteristics of an informal, place-based urban strategy, referred to in this thesis as spontaneous urbanism.

History: A Tradition of Making and Innovation

Doron suggests that the terrain vague is perpetually "occupied by the history of the industrial revolution."[7] This section will consider how the industrial history of Detroit's economy has impacted its people. In studying Detroit's assets, it is important to understand the strong history of making and the industry of production in order to recognize the creative, hardworking, innovative spirit of Detroit's residents.

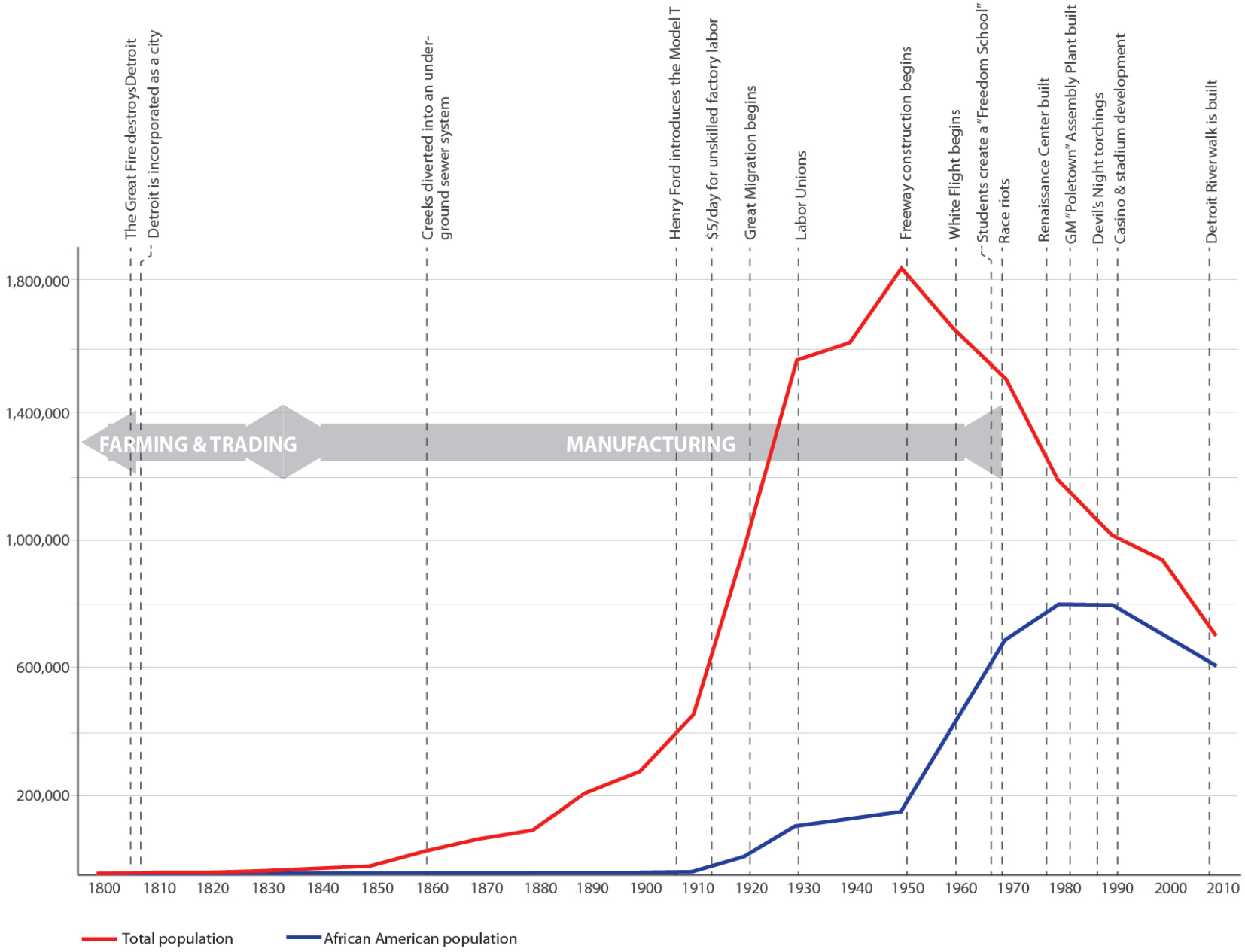
Initially serving as a French port city and center for trading and commerce in the early eighteenth-century, Detroit's industrial roots stem back to its maritime manufacturing industry. During the mid- to late-nineteenth century, it evolved from a farming and fur trade town to the beginning of an industrial center. As an important stop along the Great Lakes trade routes, Detroit was home to many factories that built parts for and serviced ships. It then evolved into a thriving carriage production center that made Detroit into a capital for workers skilled in the trades of manufacturing and production. It became a center for making and fabrication, by both hand and machine. Thus, in 1903, Henry Ford located his first automotive factory on Detroit's Eastside. Detroit, a fertile environment for the expanding automotive industry, supported a growing number of resources that the industrial giants required: factories and machine shops that milled tools and metal automobile parts. A flat topography and access via the Detroit River increased its desirability for industry. Detroit quickly grew to not only the most influential American manufacturing center, but the largest site of industrial production in the world.[8]

In envisioning Detroit's future, many planners, economists, and politicians have

Figure 13| Assembly line and Model T.
Detroit Bureau

Figure 14| Ford Highland Park Plant.
The Detroit Bureau

Figure 15| The abandoned Packard Plant.
Detroiturbex.com


The Great Fire destroysDetroit
Detroit is incorporated as a city
Creeks diverted into an under-ground sewer system
Henry Ford introduces the Model T
$5/day for unskilled factory labor
Great Migration begins
Labor Unions
Freeway construction begins
White Flight begins
Students create a "Freedom School"
Race riots
Renaissance Center built
GM "Poletown" Assembly Plant built
Devil's Night torchings
Casino & stadium development
Detroit Riverwalk is built
1,800,000
1,400,000
1,000,000
600,000
200,000
FARMING & TRADING
MANUFACTURING
1800
1810
1820
1830
1840
1850
1860
1870
1880
1890
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
Total population
African American population

focused on shifting Detroit's single-industry economy away from its production roots in favor of a technology-based economy, embracing Silicon Valley's model of an incubator space for creative and highly educated young people to develop start-up companies. Charles Landry began developing the concept of the "creative city" in the late 1980s to emphasize that a city needs to unleash its creative potential, resources, and assets. He focused on the contribution of the arts and creative industries to suggest that a climate needs to be established for people to think, plan, and act with imagination in harnessing opportunities or addressing seemingly intractable urban problems.[9] In 2002, Richard Florida built upon the movement, arguing that the "creative class" is a key driving force for economic development in post-industrial cities and that cities which attract and retain creative residents prosper, while those that do not stagnate. Florida defines the creative class as people such as scientists, researchers, engineers, entrepreneurs, and healthcare professionals, generally people who "engage in complex problem solving that involves a great deal of independent judgment and requires high levels of education" and who on average earn nearly twice as much as members of the working and service classes.[10]

This thesis does not attempt to discredit these economic ideas, but instead focuses on the existing assets of Detroit's communities as an emergent community-based "creative industry" that is fueled by the skills of its surviving residents. Economists such as Landry and Florida have assumed that creativity is the province of highly educated people; however, this thesis suggests that creativity is also rooted in the existing community, and that it can be used as a catalyst for an alternative economy. This thesis sets out to help strengthen this emergent industry by developing a new urban strategy that connects people through spaces for the training and creative exploration of hands-on production skills. Economists may consider the decline of the automobile industry as a way in which the city has failed its citizens, but instead, this thesis proposes the idea that this decline could ultimately inspire the emergence of a new creative industry in Detroit—an informal economy unique to Detroit's history and based on its skills, material resources, and land.

Figure 16| A timeline showing Detroit's population change.

Figure 17| The Imagination Station.
Marvin Shaouni

Figure 18| A house near the Dequindre Cut painted by Object Orange.
Art Etc.

People: Detroit's Urban Pioneers

As Lévesque suggested in his discussion of the terrain vague, this chapter will consider the cultural assets of the city, focusing on the people currently living in the city as, Detroit's strongest asset. As Thomas Stull similarly argued, "Detroit did not become great through centrally planned visions; Detroit became great through the millions of spontaneous, very personal, and not always beautiful visions of its people."[11] Their culture, entrepreneurial spirit, and bottom-up activism represent hope for the reinvention of communities at a grassroots level.

Detroit has a history of activism and grassroots organizing that continues today. Dating back to the creation of the high profile labor unions in the 1930s and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Detroit has had a long-standing history of activism and bottom-up community organizing. This section will look at three examples of informal activist activities that are occurring in Detroit today, including urban art, urban farming, and community activism.

The following is a discussion of the bottom-up strategies, including guerilla art, urban farming, and community activism through which people have re-appropriated the terrain vague.

Guerilla Art: Art as Awareness

The public face of Detroit's failures, its vacant land and abandoned buildings, became a popular canvas for a new relationship between art and architecture in which art is used as a catalyst to raise awareness about the city's failures and opportunities. This is often referred to as guerilla art: art created by anonymous artists or community members in vacant lots, alleys or on abandoned buildings. Whitney Moon wrote, "the result is a new relationship between art and architecture, where art utilizes architecture's public façade as a canvas for announcing failure through constructive practice."[12] She went on to say that these "unsanctioned acts are early signs of life in the aftermath" because they are immediately visible and "not only attract but also refocus attention."[13] While many of these guerilla art projects are intended to raise awareness of the blighted condition of the city, some also net results. An anonymous group of

artists calling themselves Object Orange carried out a guerilla art installation in 2006, entitled Detroit Demolition Disneyland (DDD), in which they painted a number of dangerous, abandoned houses a vibrant "Tiggeriffic Orange." By highlighting Detroit's ruins, Object Orange sought to build awareness of the neglect and encourage residents to also engage in direct discourse with the blighted conditions. Their art resulted in action by the city who subsequently demolished the orange houses. As they say, "the dialogue is going…his brings awareness. And as we have already seen, awareness brings action."[14]

Urban Farming: An Emerging Local Economy

Urban agriculture has been a popular discussion topic among urban planners and activists in Detroit over the past few years. It merges culture, nature, and economy to provide healthy local food choices, create jobs, beautify vacant lots, increase the value of neighborhoods, increase sustainability, and rebuild social capital; as such, urban agriculture could have a significant impact on Detroit's future. While planners and city officials are caught up in debates on codes, regulations, and implementation issues, urban gardening is occurring across the city at the individual and community scales. Urban farming is not a new phenomenon to Detroit. Even during Detroit's days as an industrial powerhouse, many families kept small urban gardens in their yards. Today's urban gardens and community farms represent a growing desire for people and communities to become self-sustaining. With fast-food chains and liquor stores as the primary locations for people to purchase fresh produce, Detroit has many neighborhoods that are classified as "food deserts." It is estimated that the city has over 1,000 community and household gardens and the Detroit Agricultural Network estimates that 330,000 pounds of food were produced in 2009. Growers typically either consume the food themselves or give it away to neighbors. It is estimated that this current production level could theoretically equate to a market value of around $500,000.[15] The abundance of open land, coupled with high rates of unemployment and lack of access to fresh produce have fostered this new economy of necessity

Figure 19| Brightmoor Farmway edible playscape. *Digging Detroit*


Figure 20| The Detroit Market Garden.

in which individuals and small community groups are transforming Detroit's failures into assets to fuel their new economies.

Boggs Center: Community Activism

> *Detroit's deindustrialization, devastation, and depopulation had turned the city into a wasteland, but it had also created the space and place where there was not only the necessity but also the possibility of creating a city based not on expanding production but on new values of sustainability and community… In its dying, Detroit could be the birthplace of a new kind of city.*
> *~Grace Lee Boggs*[16]

Figure 21| Detroit Summer.
PBS.org

Figure 22| Jimmy and Grace Lee Boggs.
Teeksa Photography

Grace Lee Boggs, a prominent activist and resident of Detroit for over 55 years, has worked with her late husband Jimmy Boggs to lead many of the strongest grassroots movements in Detroit. Her legacy of community activism is forged in a belief of strength and resilience of the human spirit and a hope for a cultural revolution at the grassroots level. She believes that "you cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belonging to it and responsible for changing it."[17]

In 1988, Jimmy Boggs advocated for "creating communities" and advocated for his vision of a new kind of city "whose foundation would be citizens living in communities who take responsibility for decisions about their city instead of leaving these to politicians…and who create small enterprises that emphasize the preservation of skills and produce goods and services for the local community."[18] His vision was rooted in the concept of "placemaking," or "the ongoing work of transforming the places we find ourselves into places in which we can truly dwell as individuals and communities of people."[19] Detroit Summer is one example of the programs that the Boggs have started. Established in 1992, it is a multi-racial, multi-generational community movement that brings together diverse groups of people to rebuild, redefine, and respirit Detroit through activities, including planting community gardens in vacant lots, painting

huge murals on the sides of buildings, and renovating blight-ridden houses.

The Boggs Center was founded in 1995 by friends and associates of James (1919-1993) and Grace (1915-) to help grassroots activists become leaders in creating productive, sustainable, ecologically responsible, and just communities. The Boggs Center, which still operates out of Grace and Jimmy's home on Field Street on Detroit's Eastside, hosts a wide range of activities, training sessions, and events for Detroit's activists. It is currently one of the few places in where the many disparate grassroots organizations are linked together, but they still function largely separate from one another, despite their oftentimes similar goals and objectives.

A New Urban Strategy

Phillip Cooley, a prominent, young, Detroit entrepreneur said of his fellow Detroiters, "we are good at working together because we have fewer resources than other places. Because of that, when you give people space, amazing things happen."[20] The Eastside has many assets that present prime opportunities for the community to reinvent itself, including the examples listed in the previous section. It has many grassroots community organizations, as well as many urban pioneers—individuals who are transforming their community through guerilla art, urban farming, community activism, and other types of informal spatial re-appropriation one lot at a time. The "creative appropriation and informal uses" that Lévesque discussed can be seen in the spontaneous interventions occurring in Detroit. In response to Detroit's depopulation and disinvestment, city homeowners are establishing a new urban pattern for the city of Detroit. With property lines invisible and unenforced, "de facto ownership develops" [21] as open spaces are re-appropriated for barbeques, gatherings, gardening, artwork, workshops, or parked cars. As Andrew Zago wrote: "often added space is claimed by cutting its grass. The lawnmower becomes a property maker."[22] New social strategies begin to emerge in these informal, re-appropriated spaces where neighbors, once separated by swaths of vacant, unclaimed land, come together to create social landscapes in unexpected patterns.

In 2012, the city of Detroit owned approximately 66,000 vacant lots[23] and sold them for as little as $300 each, but much of this creative re-appropriation occurs without any involvement of the city. This informal restructuring of the city would not have been possible in the same self-organizing pattern if it had been a planned reconfiguration. The re-appropriation of space is made successful by the urban pioneers who seem to have realized an opportunity to prevent further decline in their neighborhood and thus have taken it upon themselves to impart change. While wedded to the reality of Detroit's ultimate demise, this re-appropriation of vacant land would seem to offer evidence of a rebirth of the city based on unsanctioned, individual acts of spatial pioneering that address the reality of a depopulated city with excess land.

As Phillis Judkins, a community member and attendee of a Detroit Works Long Term Planning meeting said, "we are in this situation because we have been waiting too long for the government to do something. *We* need to take care of our community. *We* need to protect our neighborhoods."[24] Echoing the sentiments of Ms. Judkins, this thesis proposes to provide the space for community members to acquire the skills and resources to reinvent their neighborhoods and improve the conditions of their communities. These efforts show how "appropriation of space not only provides a material resource necessary to meet needs for everyday life—a place [people] can call their own—but also is a potential source of both individual and collective empowerment." [25] This thesis will explore the potential of the vacant land to create productive spaces for acts of spontaneous urbanism rooted in urban art, urban farming, and community activism.

Ecology: Landscape of Abandonment

This section will address the unique spatial characteristics that help define Detroit as a place, focusing on the ecological and infrastructural assets of the city as well as the current reclamation by nature that Doron mentioned in his discussion of the terrain vague and that Lévesque refers to as "an urban resurgence of the wild."[26] In studying the history of Detroit as

a unique place along the Detroit River, a series of three distinct periods emerge: first, humans working with nature for their own benefit, second, humans dominating nature for their own benefit, and third, nature re-asserting itself in a human-made landscape. The recognition of these three conditions suggests the possibility of a fourth period: humans working *with* nature towards a productive outcome for *both*. As John Gallagher wrote, "the movement from a natural environment to an asphalt-and-concrete cityscape doesn't have to go only in one direction. The progression can happen in reverse, too."[27]

In Detroit's early days, nature was considered an important asset, and people worked with the ecological conditions of the area to establish their settlement. Detroit's prominent location along the Detroit River helped situate it as a significant port city. When the French first arrived at Detroit in 1701, they were greeted with fertile land and an abundance of freshwater streams. By 1752, Detroit was a thriving farming community with long, narrow "ribbon farms" oriented perpendicular to the Detroit River. The river and its tributary streams served as the primary means of irrigation, transportation, communication, and defense for the French.

By the time of the Civil War, Detroit's riverfront had been industrialized, with a burgeoning railroad system to service the many manufacturing and fabrication shops. With industrialization came urban expansion and as the city grew, humans began to dominate nature. Beginning in the late 1800s, as Detroit's population and density grew, the Detroit River lost 95 percent of its original habitat through urban and industrial development.[28]

Today, nature in the form of flora and fauna is rapidly reclaiming its primal position and is erasing evidence of a built environment in many of Detroit's neighborhoods. Nature is filling the physical voids of the city with a mystical environment that "is neither urban nor suburban nor even rural."[29] It seems that just as quickly as Detroit's automotive boom caused humans to dominate nature, nature is as rapidly seizing vacant land, abandoned buildings, and former railroad corridors. On some blocks in the city, not a single occupied building is in sight and grass and weeds have grown taller than the height of a child. In some cases, vines engulf entire houses

Figure 23| 1825 map of Detroit.
Burton Historical Library


Figure 24| A house reclaimed by nature.
Andrew Moore


Figure 25| Pathways of desire.
Sweet Juniper

Figure 26| Dequindre Cut: before.
Atlas Obscura

Figure 27| Dequindre Cut: after.
Tell Us Detroit

Figure 28| Dequindre Cut in use.
Detroit Riverfront

and trees sprout between floor boards. A large number of ring-necked pheasants, peregrine falcons, raccoons, opossums, and feral dogs have taken up residence in this urban prairie. With swaths of open land and sidewalks that are unused and many times even dangerous, "pathways of desire," or paths that are not designated as such, but which develop over time as people find the shortest distance between places, have become an integral, yet unintended part of the city's infrastructure.[30] These pathways are examples of how "Detroiters have taken it upon themselves to create new paths, in their own small way working to create a city that better suits their needs."[31]

The Dequindre Cut: A New Type of Urban Infrastructure

Just as the residents of Detroit have begun to create their own pathways of desire in response to the reclamation of nature, new types of urban landscapes are beginning to be reconfigured as productive landscapes that layer both human and ecological functions. The Dequindre Cut is an example of an industrial ruin that has been reinvented into a recreational, community amenity and productive infrastructure. It is a 1.35-mile bicycle and pedestrian greenway, built at the location of a sub-grade, decommissioned railroad right-of-way that was used in the early nineteenth-century to connect manufacturing plants. From the 1980s when it was decommissioned, through 2009 when the greenway was constructed, it was one of the most unsafe spaces in Detroit, and thus a prized location for graffiti artists to tag. While rails-to-trails, urban greenspace, and bike lanes are not new ideas, the Dequindre Cut felt almost revolutionary in a city characterized by four-lane arterials and super-highways.

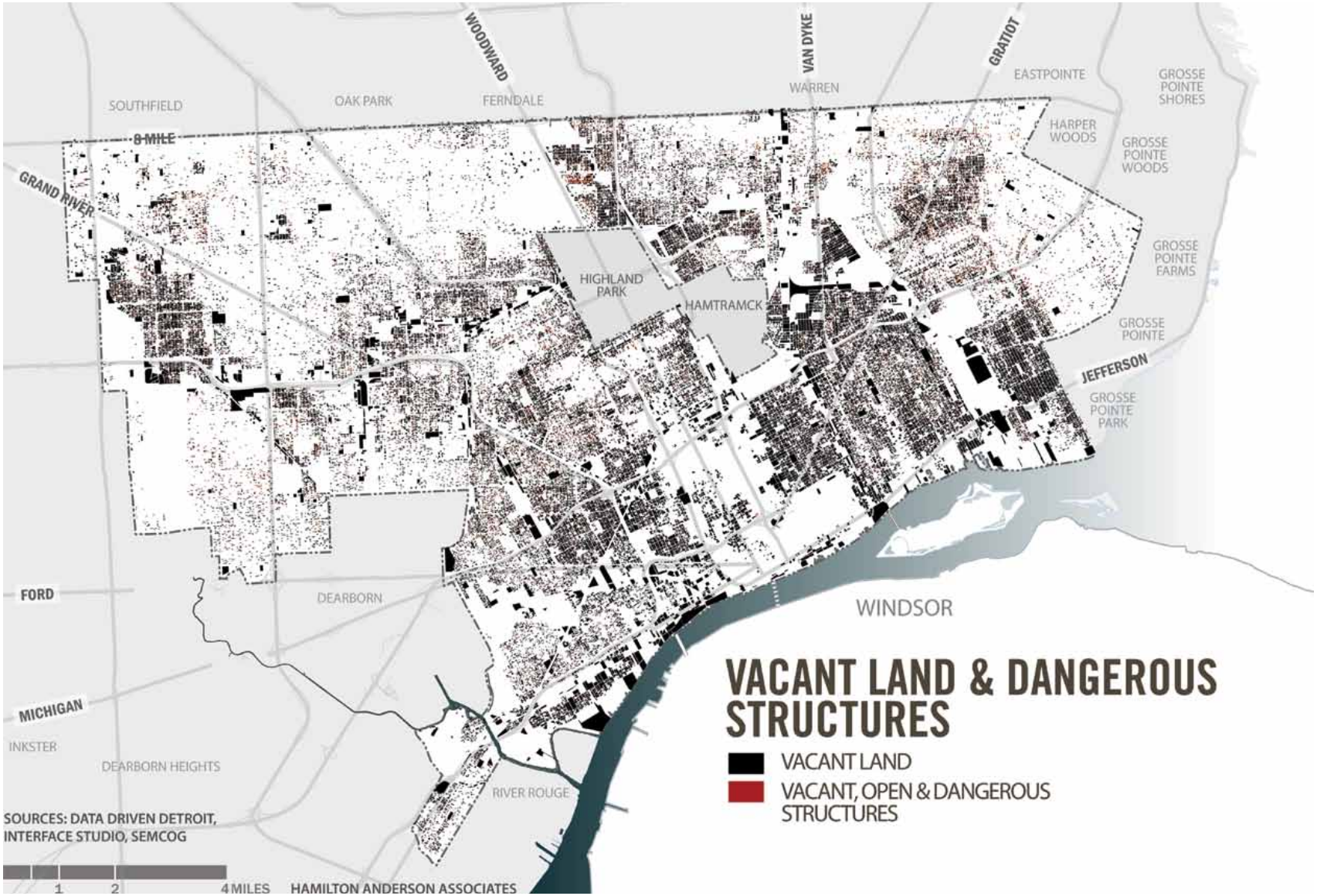
Today, the Dequindre Cut links Eastern Market, a weekend farmers market, and the Detroit Riverwalk, a paved path along the Detroit River, serving as a safe urban bike and walking trail through the Lafayette Park neighborhood on Detroit's near Eastside. It also functions as an informal urban art gallery, exposing the long-hidden overpass walls and arches, now covered in brilliant colors and eye-catching productions by some of the city's most talented

graffiti artists. Funding for the $3.4 million greenway comes from multiple government sources, including the transportation enhancement pool of MDOT's ISTEA funding which was matched by the Community Foundation. In addition to laying the pavement, clearing the overgrowth, and shoring up retaining walls, the project also added street lighting, benches, emergency phone boxes, frequently-mowed lawn, and security guards.[32] While it is a positive asset for the Eastside community, it runs through the relatively affluent Lafayette Park neighborhood and is disconnected with the low-income Poletown portion of the Eastside that this thesis is focused on, thus establishing a precedent as well as an opportunity for the extension of a larger network of similar productive infrastructures. Plans to extend the Dequindre Cut along the rail lines that extend to the north of Eastern Market have recently received grant funding and are in the design phase.

This thesis will use the principles of layering productive functions as established by the Dequindre Cut to continue to explore the possibilities of creating a community amenity while working within Detroit's ecological history to establish a new type of infrastructure that can become an asset to both the community and the environment.

Vacant Land and Abandoned Buildings: Sites of Opportunity

Forty square miles of empty land, 70,000 abandoned buildings, and ten decommissioned railroad corridors comprise Detroit's terrain vague. The numbers are staggering, and the reality is even more startling. Large expanses of vacant land and abandoned, blighted buildings engulf neighborhoods, in many locations, leaving only several houses remaining on a block and provoking an unnerving feeling of vacancy. Of the roughly 150,000 vacant parcels that exist, the city of Detroit has taken ownership of approximately 65,000 once-privately-held parcels of land, mostly vacant lots, empty houses, and old factories.[33] In addition, Detroit Public Schools (DPS), owns a large amount of land, some vacant and some with school buildings remaining. According


WOODWARD
VAN DYKE
GRATIOT
SOUTHFIELD
OAK PARK
FERNDALE
WARREN
EASTPOINTE
GROSSE POINTE SHORES
HARPER WOODS
GROSSE POINTE WOODS
8 MILE
GRAND RIVER
HIGHLAND PARK
HAMTRAMCK
GROSSE POINTE FARMS
GROSSE POINTE
JEFFERSON
GROSSE POINTE PARK
FORD
DEARBORN
WINDSOR
MICHIGAN
INKSTER
DEARBORN HEIGHTS
RIVER ROUGE
VACANT LAND & DANGEROUS STRUCTURES
VACANT LAND
VACANT, OPEN & DANGEROUS STRUCTURES
SOURCES: DATA DRIVEN DETROIT, INTERFACE STUDIO, SEMCOG
1
2
4 MILES
HAMILTON ANDERSON ASSOCIATES

to the 2012 property list, DPS was in ownership of 134 parcels of land that it was looking to sell.[34]

The expansion and decline of the Detroit Public School system correlates with the auto industry. When Henry Ford announced his five-dollars-a-day wage for factory workers in 1914, the city was flooded with working class-African Americans and European immigrants hoping for a factory job and a chance at the American Dream. The urban fabric of the city, as well as the public school system, quickly expanded to accommodate the rapid population increase. As the auto industry began to decline, jobs dried up for the working class, who became increasingly disenfranchised; at the same time, many in the middle class were lured to the suburbs by low-cost home loans and a newly built interstate highway system. As people took their children and moved out of Detroit, primary and secondary schools were left with fewer and poorer students.

Today, with an ever-decreasing student enrollment, due to the depressed economy and huge population loss of the city, the Detroit Public School (DPS) system is experiencing a multi-million-dollar budget deficit and is under the control of an emergency manager. In order to stop the hemorrhaging of the school system, many of the schools have been shut down or assigned to charter operators. In early 2012, DPS had 85 vacant school buildings, compared with 120 occupied buildings. The schools that have been shut down offer an opportunity to reuse valuable land. They are typically located on large parcels of land in the middle of neighborhoods, giving them a prominent position in the community with the possibility of redevelopment. Together, land owned by the City of Detroit and the DPS offer a substantial amount of terrain vague that is, arguably, an asset ripe to be repurposed.

Figure 29| Map of vacant land and dangerous structures.
Detroit Works Project & Hamilton Anderson

Case Studies

In light of this theoretical discussion for placemaking strategies of the terrain vague, this section will provide a pragmatic rationale for some of the issues discussed. Four examples of community development and placemaking strategies for low-income neighborhoods across the country will be presented. These include reclaiming vacant land and buildings, forming community workshops, reclaiming nature as a productive community asset, and creating a local economy. Each case study will include a general discussion of a particular strategy and then detail two examples of its successful implementations.

Reclaiming Vacant Land and Buildings

Much discussion has been generated over the past two decades about what to do with vacant land and abandoned buildings, particularly in post-industrial, shrinking cities in the Rust Belt. In some cases, the local government is supporting large-scale urban housing projects, in others, underutilized land is paved over and converted to large expanses of surface parking lots, in many cases, the land sits idle, collecting weeds, trash, and serving as a breeding ground for drugs, crime, and prostitution. In considering Detroit's expanses of post-industrial sites as opportunities for re-appropriation, two examples of community efforts to repurpose industrial sites and vacant land for community use offer a grassroots alternative. In both case studies, the organizations began out of a community member's frustration with the status quo and desire to make a difference in her neighborhood by repurposing underutilized land into productive land. New York City's Green Guerillas is an organization that began by one woman's desire to create community gardens in vacant land during the city's 1970s fiscal crisis. It continues today to support grassroots groups looking to start their own community gardens. Similarly, THE POINT began with a group of community members working to strengthen their South

Bronx neighborhood and repurpose underutilized land through arts, environmental, and business oriented services. Both organizations continue to support other emerging grassroots organizations in their community.

Green Guerillas - Lower East Side, New York City

Green Guerillas is a nonprofit organization in New York City that "use[s] a unique mix of education, organizing, and advocacy to help people cultivate community gardens, sustain grassroots groups and coalitions, engage youth, paint murals, and address issues critical to the future of their gardens."[35] Members believe in the transformation of neighborhoods through community gardening. Their roots, so to speak, date back to the fiscal crisis on the early 1970s when large sections of New York City were abandoned by landlords and city officials. In the wake of urban riots, entire blocks were vacated. With the government on the cusp of bankruptcy, police and fire stations were closed down in the most deserted neighborhoods. In 1973, Liz Christy, a young artist living on the Lower East Side, took interest in an unsightly, dangerous vacant lot littered with garbage in her neighborhood. She enlisted a group of like-minded friends and rented the land for a dollar a month from the city's Housing Preservation and Development office. Over the course of three months, they transformed the blighted land into a community gardens, creating what is known today as Bowery Houston Community Farm and Garden.

Referring to themselves as the Green Guerillas, they created a vibrant community that sparked the modern community gardening movement in New York City. They undertook a variety of different projects including throwing "seed grenades," water balloons packed with seeds, compost and water that scattered their contents when they burst, over fences and into vacant lots. They also helped other community members transform city-owned vacant lots into community gardens that became pocket parks and urban farms as expressions of art, ecology, and culture. Today, the small group of friends that created their first garden on Houston Street has grown into a nonprofit organization of over 800 volunteers who have been responsible

Figure 30| Green Guerillas, 1970.
Green Guerillas

for over 60 community gardens in the city. The virtually non-existent economic climate and decaying physical characteristics of New York City's Lower East Side neighborhood at the time when Green Guerillas got its start are similar to the conditions in Detroit, though admittedly much less drastic. The success of Green Guerillas suggests the community organizing potential of an urban garden intervention, which has also been effective in other places such as Cuba, Philadelphia and Chicago.

Figure 31| Plans for Hunt's Point.
Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance

Figure 32| The POINT Riverside garden.
The POINT

The POINT's Riverside Campus for Arts and the Environment - South Bronx, New York City

THE POINT Community Development Corporation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx of New York City. The Hunt's Point community is characterized by its poverty, high crime rate, poor performing schools, substandard housing, high risk area for youth, and its predominantly Latino/a and African American population. Based on the principles of asset-based community development, THE POINT's environmental and social justice-based arts and service learning programs "embrace [the] belief that the residents of the South Bronx, especially the young people, have the inherent vision and ability to transform their neighborhoods."[36] The first stop along the South Bronx Greenway, THE POINT's Riverside Campus for Arts and The Environment is an example of how the organization is enhancing the community's access to the Bronx River while creating new opportunities for the arts and the environment. Made possible primarily by federal grant money, the Riverside Campus project has created a variety of interior and exterior spaces for creative and ecological activities, including Rocking the Boat, an organization that empowers young adults from low socio-economic backgrounds to build wooden boats, learn to row and sail, and restore local urban waterways, Urban Farming Home Garden, Brick House Gallery, and Container Gallery.

Forming Community Workshops

In the 1960s, community arts and crafts workshops began as a way for people with limited economic resources to share equipment and skills, with volunteer labor often being an essential aspect to the operations. Today, there many of these similar community workshops that connect individuals interested in making, inventing, and building to each other, while fostering the exchange of skills and resources within an under-served community. Additionally, many of these workshops provide classes and programs to help people utilize their skills to give back to their communities. The ReBuilding Exchange in Chicago is focused on creating a market for reclaimed building materials. It trains and employs hard-to-employ people with a variety of skills and backgrounds in the fields of deconstruction, warehousing, retail, and carpentry. The Bainbridge Island Community Workshop in Seattle brings woodworkers together to share a workshop, tools, and knowledge, by providing a collaborative workspace that offers training classes and outreach projects.

Figure 33| A workshop at the ReBuilding Exchange.
ReBuilding Exchange

ReBuilding Exchange - Chicago, Illinois

The mission of the ReBuilding Exchange is to create a market for reclaimed building materials by diverting materials from landfills and making them accessible to the public for reuse, while promoting sustainable deconstruction practices, providing job training programs, and creating innovative models for sustainable reuse. Deconstruction is the process of taking apart a building one piece at a time with the goal of salvaging as much of the material for reuse as possible. It is a manual process, as opposed to demolition which is usually done by a bulldozer or wrecking ball. Begun in 2009, the ReBuilding Exchange has diverted over 5,000 tons of building material from landfills and made them accessible for reuse by the public. Additionally, it offers training programs and employment opportunities for people with a range of skill sets and backgrounds.[37] The ReBuilding Exchange also supports innovative models for sustainability and material reuse by hosting design competitions to foster the creative reuse of more challenging materials.

Figure 34| ReBuilding Exchange warehouse.
ReBuilding Exchange

Bainbridge Island Community Woodshop - Seattle, Washington

The Bainbridge Island Community Woodshop is dedicated to promoting the craft of woodworking in the community through classes, service projects, and special programs. It brings woodworkers together to learn from and share skills with each other through community service, while also attracting new woodworkers of all ages. Many of their projects include constructing community amenities such as a bus shelter for a nearby affordable housing development. The group is currently in the process of constructing a community woodshop of 4,000 square feet with the goal of owning and operating a shop together in order to assemble a wide variety of tools, and establish a strong knowledge-base from which to teach and learn from one another. In order to gather ideas for the design of their own shop, members have studied community woodshops throughout the country, including shops in Arizona and at the Seattle Central Community College. Some common characteristics of these workshops include workbenches of different heights to allow members to work at the height most suitable for the particular task, lockable storage cabinets for personal hand tools, and a combination of natural and artificial light sources. The woodshop at Seattle Central Community College includes design features that the Bainbridge group hopes to also incorporate into their space, including a raised plywood floor to make working more comfortable and high ceilings to provide space for a mezzanine with additional workbench space outside of the large woodshop.

Figure 35| A neighborhood bus shelter made by members of the Bainbridge Island Community Woodshop.

Figure 36| SCCC workshop.
Bainbridge Island Community Woodshop

Reclaiming Nature as a Productive Community Asset

In cities throughout the United States, there are many examples of projects aimed at reclaiming nature. Arguably, the most successful of these projects also function as productive community assets. These strategies include urban farming, community gardens, cleaning up waterways, creating ecological habitats, and daylighting streams. This section will consider two examples of projects that are reclaiming nature and creating community assets.

Urban farming is an increasingly popular practice in many cities. It has many forms, including a city-wide network of urban gardens in Havana, a city-supported system of community gardens called P-Patches in Seattle, and non-profit-run community farms. One such community farm, Growing Power, is an example of a project that reclaims nature for a productive means, benefiting both the land and the local community. It is an urban farm that serves as a job and skills training facility, as well as a sustainable method of fresh food production to an underprivileged urban community.

Over the past thirty years, the daylighting of creeks and streams has become an increasingly popular method to improve storm water management and water quality. As many cities developed, they paved over their creeks and diverted them into combined sewage pipes. Creek daylighting means uncovering them from culverts and paved channels and separating them from the sewer system, by restoring them to a more natural, above ground state. In addition to removing pollutants from the water, creek daylighting projects can also expand wildlife habitat, create corridors, and add the aesthetic quality of greenery. One community-initiated creek daylighting project in Berkeley, California offers the first US example of nature functioning as a productive element in the community, but many others have come into being, especially in environmentally-conscious Seattle.

Figure 37| Growing Power's Will Allen leading a microgreens workshop.
Growing Power

Growing Power - Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In Milwaukee, former professional basketball player, Will Allen, started Growing Power in 1993. At that time, his north-side neighborhood's lack of supermarkets and fresh food made it a "food desert" state, similar to many neighborhoods in Detroit. No grocery stores existed within a five-mile radius and most residents lacked transportation to access them. Allen bought the last farm in the city and created Growing Power, a food advocacy and educational nonprofit dedicated to making fresh, locally grown food available in the neighborhood.[38] He began by recruiting local teenagers with the goal of giving inner-city youth life skills by teaching them

Figure 38| Growing Power headquarters.
Organic Nation

how to grow and sell organic produce.[39] Since its establishment, Growing Power has blossomed into what Allen refers to as a "community food center" and "idea factory."[40] On its two acres of land, Growing Power maintains 25,000 containers of plants and 14 greenhouses, raises fish, chickens, and goats, and keeps bees. It produces 3,000 new farmers each year through training and demonstrations, and regularly employs 35 local residents with well-paying jobs in an area of high unemployment.[41] Growing Power has seen such success in Milwaukee that branches have been established in several Chicago locations. More than just growing healthy food, Growing Power's most important element is its vital sense of community. Through its youth outreach programs, educational training programs, community food store, donations to local food banks, and involvement with other nonprofit agencies, Growing Power is deeply invested in improving the health and quality of life for Milwaukee residents.

Figure 39| Strawberry Creek, the first daylighting project in the United States.
Ecocity Builders

Figure 40| Strawberry Creek Park is now a popular public park.
Ecocity Builders

Strawberry Creek Park - Berkeley, California

Strawberry Creek Park is an example of a community-initiated creek daylighting project that not only benefited the environment through improved storm water management and water quality, but that also transformed a highly unsafe part of the city into a dynamic community center, playground, and recreation space.

In 1984 the Strawberry Creek daylighting project in Berkeley, California set the standard for urban-creek daylighting in America. It is an example of a community-initiated project that transformed its neighborhood. Prior to the project, the abandoned rail yard was Berkeley's most blighted and dangerous area. With extensive citizen input, landscape architects Doug Wolfe and Greg Mason advocated for, designed, and implemented the project, transforming the four-acre parcel into a vital neighborhood park and community center centered on the creek. In addition to the creek, the park provides desperately needed active recreation courts, play and picnic areas, passive sitting spots, and green space.[42] In an effort to save money and conserve materials, the demolished yard's paving was used as riprap along the creek's banks and recycled materials

were used on the playground. The creek revitalization also inspired new uses along its corridor, including senior housing, day care, a bakery, an adult school, and an employment center where disadvantaged youths are trained to maintain the park.[43] The Strawberry Creek Park project demonstrates the positive impact of community activism and ecological values in revitalizing a neighborhood.

Creating a Local Economy

With the recent rise of interest and awareness of issues concerning sustainability, communities are striving to support local businesses and source local food, labor, and building materials. The concept of establishing a local economy within a globalized nation is being experimented with to varying degrees across the country. The Brightmoor Farmway on Detroit's northwest side is one such example of a community working to create a local economy within a larger city. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, in one of Boston's poorest neighborhoods, is an example of a community economic development effort and a community land trust in which the community retains control over its vacant land for the greater collective benefit.

Brightmoor Farmway - Detroit, Michigan

The Brightmoor Farmway comprises 15 blocks of Detroit's northwest Brightmoor neighborhood. Begun in 2006 by neighbors Sheila Hoerauf and Riet Schumack as a strategy to fight blight, drug trafficking and prostitution and to provide a healthy space for local children, the Farmway has evolved into a neighborhood-run organization called Neighbors Building Brightmoor (NBB) whose self-proclaimed mission is to "equip one another, empower one another and help one another to make this a better place for us and our children."[44] NBB consists of about 40 families who are helping to maintain the parks, gardens, and empty lots in the area. Schumack says "I would eventually like to see this neighborhood turn into a real local economy"[45] and it is clear that with the support she has generated since the Farmway's inception in 2006,

Figure 41| Tire planters at the Brightmoor Farmway.
Detroit Unspun

Figure 42| An abandoned house transformed at the Brightmoor Farmway.
Urban Vignettes

Figure 43| Brightmoor Youth Garden.
Neighbors Building Brightmoor

Figure 44| A DSNI brainstorming meeting.
Travis Watson


Figure 45| DSNI cleaning up a vacant lot.
Boston.com


Figure 46| Building greenhouses on a vacant lot.
DSNI

this could soon be a reality. There are now over 40 gardens in the neighborhood, some run by youth, many serviced by rain catches and drip-style irrigation, and some, like the market gardens, help residents generate income by selling produce at the Northwest Farmers Market. The NBB has also built a youth market garden and an Edible Playscape in addition to hosting art enrichment and youth development programs, arranging housing revitalization projects, and running a shared tool bank. The Farmway also features a play house and a bonfire pit which attract neighbors in summer evenings. These activities are connected by a one-mile nature trail that runs along the Rouge River. Most of the Farmway was built by the neighborhood and required little to no funding. The minimal amounts of funding that were needed were provided through small grants from external entities, including the Skillman and Fisher Foundations, as well as partnerships with local universities and soup kitchens. Notably, this community that has transformed itself over the past six years was developed solely on social capital and goes largely unrecognized by officials and organizations. Much of the Farmway was "borne from the lack of civic representation and services for the neighborhood."[46] Schumack said "this bottom up approach might take a little longer, but is much more effective in not only providing funding where it is really needed but in the process really empowering and demonstrating trust in people on the ground…One of the best aspects of the community building in the neighborhood has been the real exchange of knowledge and skill at the intergenerational level."[47] The Brightmoor Farmway project is an example of a successful, community-initiated, grassroots project that established a local economy based on social capital.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative - Boston, Massachusetts

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is an example of a comprehensive community economic development strategy. Formed in 1984 by a group of Dudley Street residents who came together with a desire to revive their neighborhood, it has grown into a collaborative effort that involves over 3,000 residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations,

and religious institutions. Primarily, it serves as a community land trust, a local merchants' organization, an urban agriculture project, and an institute that hosts economic workshops for the Dudley area of Roxbury/North Dorchester.[48] As the only community-based organization in the country which has been granted eminent domain authority over abandoned land within its boundaries, the DSNI has transformed over half of the community's 1,300 abandoned parcels into affordable housing, community centers, schools, community greenhouses, parks, playgrounds, gardens, orchards, and the Dudley Town Common.[49] It is an example of an innovative, community change effort in which community has taken collective ownership of its vacant property in order to generate a greater local benefit.

Conclusions: Spontaneous Urbanism as a Place-making Tool

This thesis has explored the concept of terrain vague to focus upon not only a current state of abandoned but "free and available" land but to also consider the historical evolution of the city. In Detroit, that history is evidence of how the industrial era both made Detroit great, and subsequently destroyed it. The literature review suggests the possibility for the waste leftover from the industrial era to serve now as a catalyst for future urban transformation. Regardless of the presence or absence of the automotive giants, the underlying spirit of hard work and innovation remain engrained in the people of Detroit. While at first glance, a purely statistical study of Detroit's remaining demographic suggests a desperate population with few resources and little hope, an in-depth study of Detroit's people reveals an underlying culture of creativity, entrepreneurialism, and resilience. This chapter described only a few examples of the many innovative ways in which community members are taking the situation into their own hands and re-appropriating vacant land as they see fit for their everyday needs, while generally flying under the radar of any governmental oversight. The people of Detroit and their actions provide the underlying inspiration for this thesis. They comprise an emerging community-based, creative industry and can ultimately be responsible for reinventing their communities. This

chapter described four distinct strategies for community-based redevelopment that will guide this thesis: the reinvention of industrial and vacant sites, the nurturing of creative industries, the reclamation of nature and the creation of a local economy.

In looking back in Detroit's history, starting before the industrial revolution, a rich ecological evolution is clearly evident. The three-part process outlined in this chapter including the current situation of nature reclaiming the city is a reminder that nature is an important urban force, and that a future fourth step is on the horizon in which humans exist in balance with the natural ecology. Finally, the large expanses of vacant land comprising Detroit's terrain vague serve as the sites of opportunity for this spontaneous place-making linking history, people, and ecology. As Lévesque wrote "the terrain vague cannot be dissociated from the forces that produced it."[50] Accordingly, this thesis proposes to capitalize on the assets that are interwoven with the city fabric and culture in order to act as a catalyst for transformation.

Detroit's large amount of city- and DPS-owned vacant land suggests the possibility that a network of vacant lots could be created that would tie together this emerging culture of spontaneous urbanism. In doing so, it is important to increase the visibility of the informal efforts of activists already working in the community in order to engage others and build capacity, while also strengthening their influence by physically connecting them with a productive green infrastructure. Frank Nobert and Jean-Francois Prost wrote that "ritualizing the destruction of torched houses and clearing and cleaning their lots gives meaning to, and allows the community to reestablish control over these daily events and creates a sense of solidarity among those who remain and resist."[51] The future of Detroit's neighborhoods could lie in providing individual community members with the skills and resources needed to reclaim control over their neighborhoods by considering the neighborhood as a living workshop for placemaking activities.

Thesis Objectives

This thesis will explore one proposal for the future of Detroit's terrain vague, inspired by Detroit's urban pioneers and their individual acts of spontaneous urbanism. Considering the lessons learned from the literature and case studies, this thesis proposes to stimulate individual and community development by using the abundance of vacant land that exists on the Eastside of Detroit through the strengthening and connecting of activists' informal, hands-on placemaking efforts. In doing so, it will facilitate and support creative expression, applied job training, and productivity of land while fostering community youth development. Using a capacity-building approach, this project will capitalize on the assets of history, people, ecology, and vacant land in order to strengthen and connect the spontaneous urbanism subculture of Detroit. This thesis posits that the future of Detroit's neighborhoods lies in empowering individual community members with the training needed for them to reclaim control over their neighborhoods by considering the neighborhood as a living workshop for activities of creative re-appropriation of vacant land.

Endnotes

1 Solà-Morales, Ignasi. "Terrain Vague." *Anyplace*. Ed. Cynthia Davidson. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995. 118-123.

2 Doron, Gil. "The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression." *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action 4.2* (2000): 255.

3 Lévesque, Luc. "The Terrain Vague as Material – Some Observations." Web. <http://www.amarrages.com/textes_terrain.html> (Accessed 8 May 2012).

4 Boggs, Grace Lee, with Scott Kurashige. *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century.* UC Press, 2012. (105)

5 Sutton, Sharon E., and Susan P. Kemp. "A Site of Individual and Collective Transformation," *The Paradox of Urban Space: Inequality and Transformation in Marginalized Communities.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 116.

6 Sutton and Kemp, 113.

7 Doron, 251.

8 Kerr, Joe. "Trouble in Motor City." *Shrinking Cities.* Ed. Philip Oswalt. Ostfildern-Ruit. Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2005. 64.

9 Landry, Charles. *The Creative City,* London: Earthscan, 2008.

10 Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class.* New York: Basic Books, 2002. 8-9.

11 Stull, Thomas. "Is Saving Detroit Ruins Truly Absurd?" *The Detroit News,* 24. 1995.

12 Moon, 37.

13 *Ibid.*

14 "Detroit. Demolition. Disneyland." *The Detroiter.* Web. <http://www.thedetroiter.com/nov05/disneydemolition.php > (Accessed 7 Dec. 2012).

15 Gallagher, John. *Reimagining Detroit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010, 51.

16 Boggs and Kurashige, 110.

17 <http://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/pgs/portraits/grace_lee_boggs.php> (Accessed 26 Apr. 2012).

18 Boggs and Kurashige, 111.

19 Lynda H. Schneekloth and Robert G. Shibley as quoted in Sutton and Kemp. 113.

20 "A Creative Incubator Community." An online interview with Phillip Cooley.

21 Zago, Andrew, "Terminal City," in: *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*, ed. Park, Kyong. Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers, 2005, 30.

22 *Ibid.*

23 The author attended the Detroit Works Long Term Planning Meeting for the Central/ Near East District on May 5, 2012. Statistics are from a presentation by Dan Kincead.

24 Judkins, Phillis. Detroit Works Long Term Planning Meeting.

25 Feldman, Roberta and Susan Stall, *The Dignity of Resistance: Women Residents' Activism in Chicago Public Housing.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 185.

26 Lévesque.

27 Gallagher, John, "Detroit: Land of Opportunity: Acres of Barren Blocks Offer Chance to Reinvent City," *Detroit Free Press,* Dec. 15, 2008. 87.

28 "Detroit." *Junior Worldmark Encyclopedia of World Cities.* 2000. Web. < http://www.encyclopedia.com > (Accessed 12 May 2012).

29 Vogel, Steve.

30 Sweet Juniper, "Streets with No Name," 23 June 2009. <http://www.sweet-juniper.com/2009/06/streets-with-no-name.html> (Accessed 5 May 2012).

31 *Ibid.*

32 <http://cfsem.org/media-center/articles/focus-between-transite-dequindre-cute> (Accessed 14 July 2012).

33 Gallagher, John, "Vacant land auction called mistake." *Detroit Free Press*, Sept. 16, 2012.

34 Detroit Public Schools Office of Real Estate. Web. <http://detroitk12.org/admin/ppo/plant/real_estate/> (Accessed 4 May 2012).

35 Green Guerillas. Web. <http://www.greenguerillas.org> (Accessed 7 June 2012).

36 The Point. Web. <http://thepoint.org/mission.php> (Accessed July 15, 2012).

37 ReBuilding Exchange. Web. <http://rebuildingexchange.org/index.html> (Accessed 17 Sept. 2012).

38 "Growing Power." *Organic Gardening,* 56.6 (2009): 44-45.

39 Gallagher, 2008. 48.

40 Growing Power. Web.

41 Bybee, Roger, "Growing Power in an Urban Food Desert." *Yes! Magazine,* Spring 2009.

42 "Strawberry Creek Park." *Landscape Architecture*, Nov. 1995. 46-49.

43 *Ibid.*

44 Bianchi, Achille, "Brightmoor Farmway: A Lush Combination of Gardens and Community." *Mode Shift.* Web. <http://www.wearemodeshift.org/brightmoor-farmway-lush-combination-gardens-and-community> (Accessed December 7, 2012).

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*

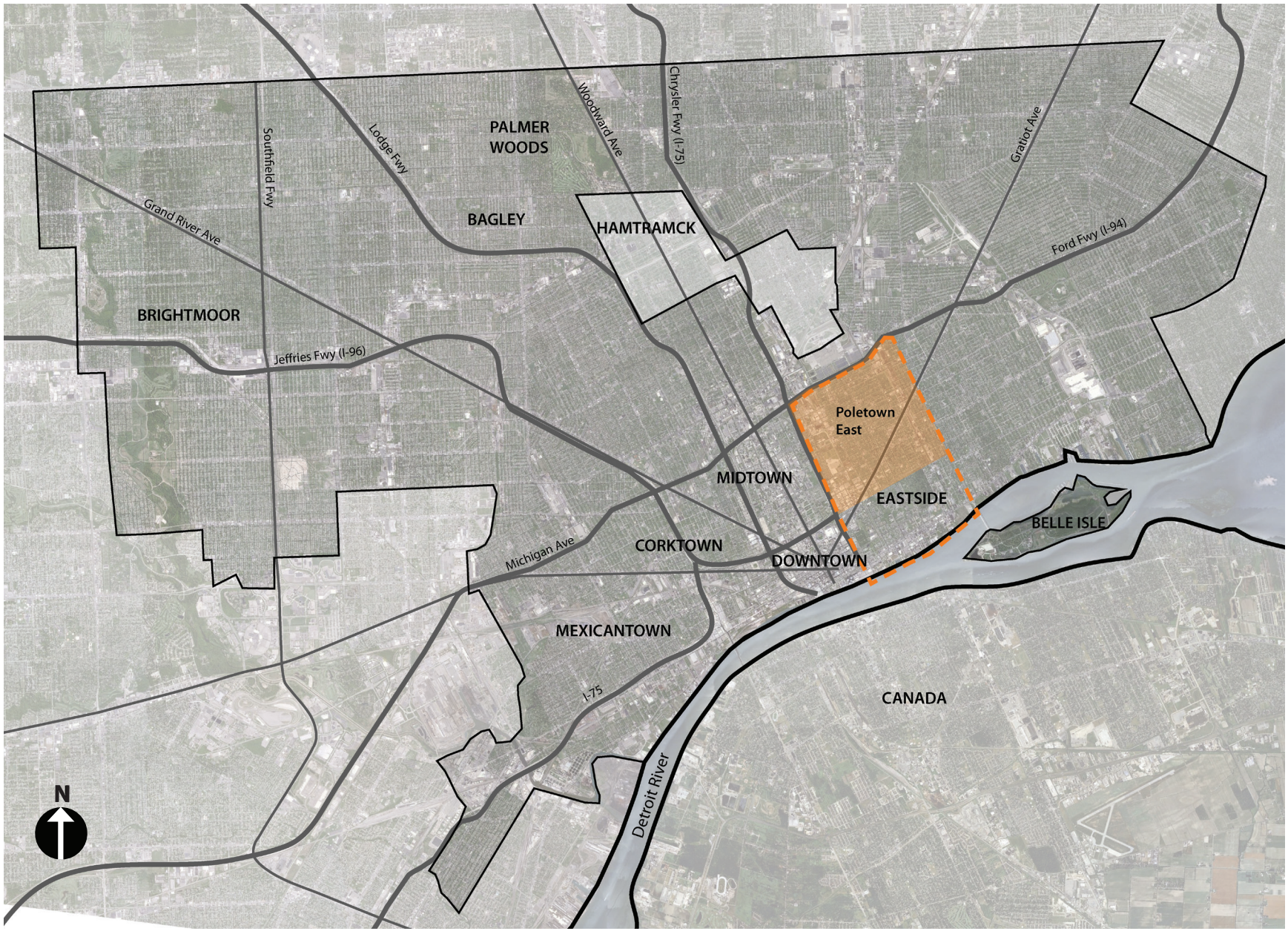
47 *Ibid.*

48 Sutton, and Kemp, 127.

49 Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. Web. < http://www.dsni.org/> (Accessed 8 Dec. 2012).

50 Lévesque.

51 Nobert, Frank and Jean-Francois Prost. "Detroit Ville Résiliente," *Esse Arts + Opinions,* 2005. Web. < http://www.amarrages.com/textes_detroit.html> (Accessed 21 May 2012).


PALMER WOODS
BAGLEY
HAMTRAMCK
BRIGHTMOOR
Poletown East
MIDTOWN
EASTSIDE
BELLE ISLE
CORKTOWN
DOWNTOWN
MEXICANTOWN
CANADA
Grand River Ave
Southfield Fwy
Lodge Fwy
Woodward Ave
Chrysler Fwy (I-75)
Gratiot Ave
Ford Fwy (I-94)
Jeffries Fwy (I-96)
Michigan Ave
I-75
Detroit River
N

III. Methods of Placemaking

> *The power of place—the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens' public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory.*[1]
> *~Dolores Hayden*

This chapter will include an investigation into the sense of place on Detroit's Eastside. It will first study the urban form of the neighborhood, then present two psychogeographical maps that illustrate two different perceptions of the Eastside, then discuss a historical analysis focusing on the impact of the automotive industry, and lastly, conduct a physical site analysis motivated by a consideration of the assets specific to that neighborhood. Finally, capacity-building methods of implementing a community-based urban design project will be carried out in order to inform the direction of this thesis.

Figure 47| Detroit vicinity map.

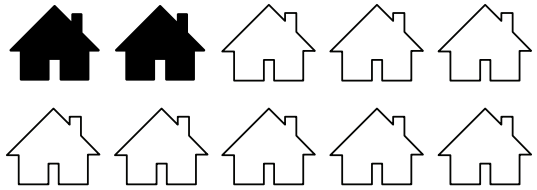


Figure 48| Less than 20% of the build structures remain.

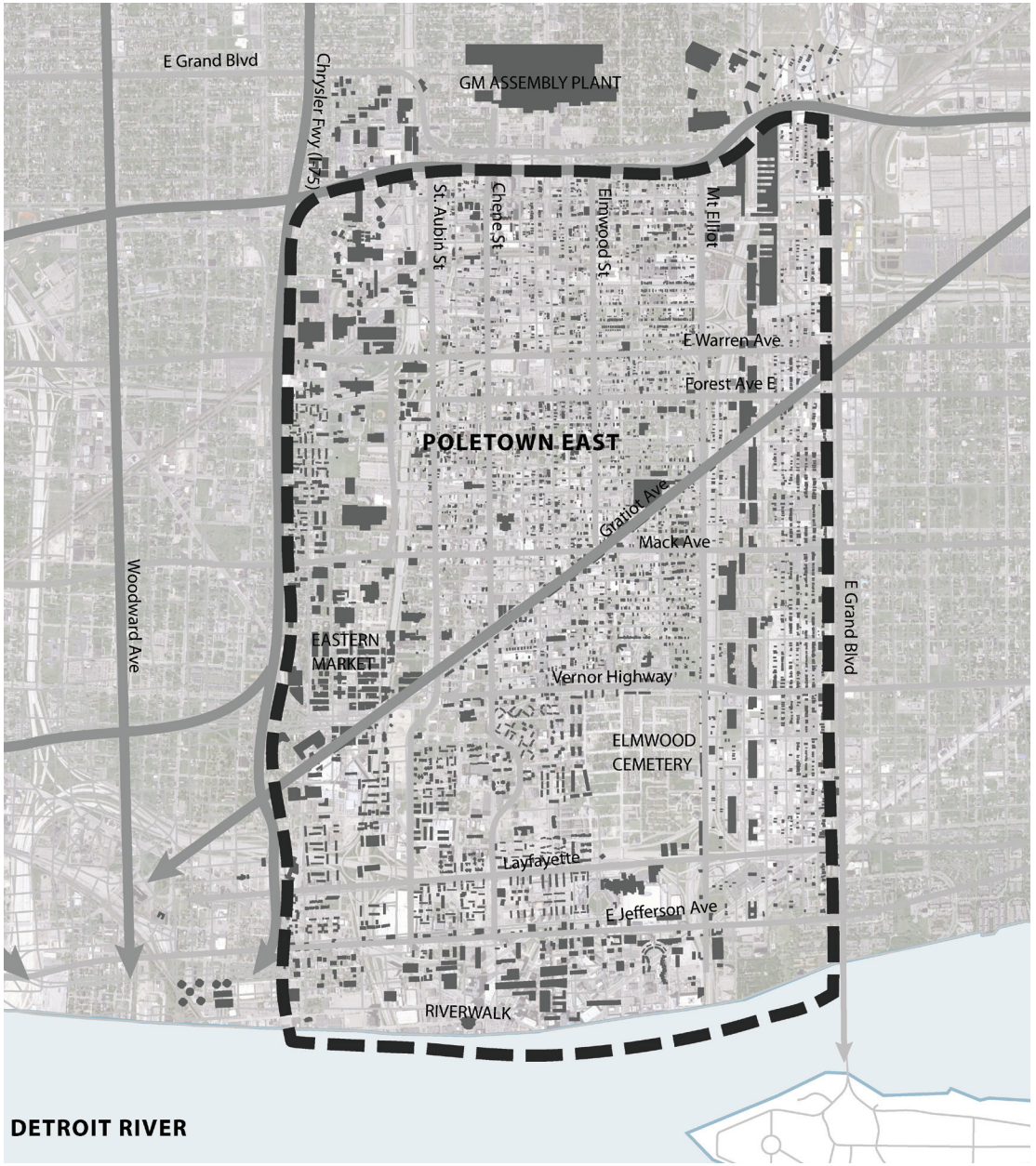


Figure 49| Vacant land map.

Vacant Land

Due to its high density of vacant lots and city-owned property in addition to its history deeply rooted in both the automobile industry and activism, Detroit's Eastside neighborhood was selected for this thesis project. For the purposes of this thesis, the site boundaries of the neighborhood are the Chrysler Freeway to East Grand Boulevard and the Detroit River to I-94. Working within the established framework of vacancy equating opportunity, the Eastside is a prime location for opportunity. According to the 2009 Detroit Parcel Survey, the near-Eastside had less than 20 percent of its built structures remaining, half of which were empty or burned. Due, in part to a large number of foreclosures, approximately 65 percent of the land is owned by DPS, the city, the county, or the state. Additionally, the Eastside has a strong community base with many community organizations that could help support a community-based program.

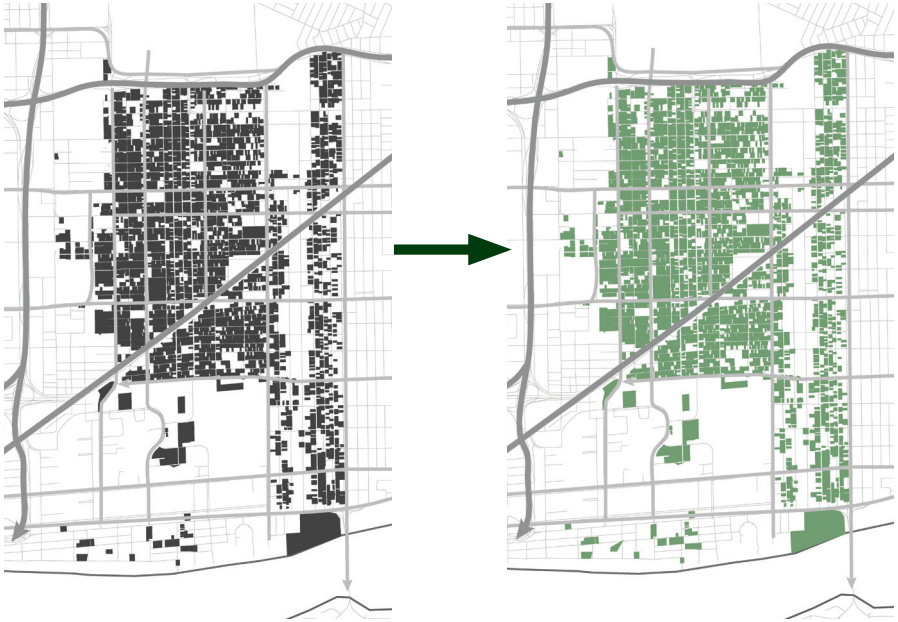


Figure 50| Diagram viewing vacant land as open space.

Figure 51| An abandoned residential alley.

Figure 52| A large vacant lot.

Figure 53| A burned and abandoned house.

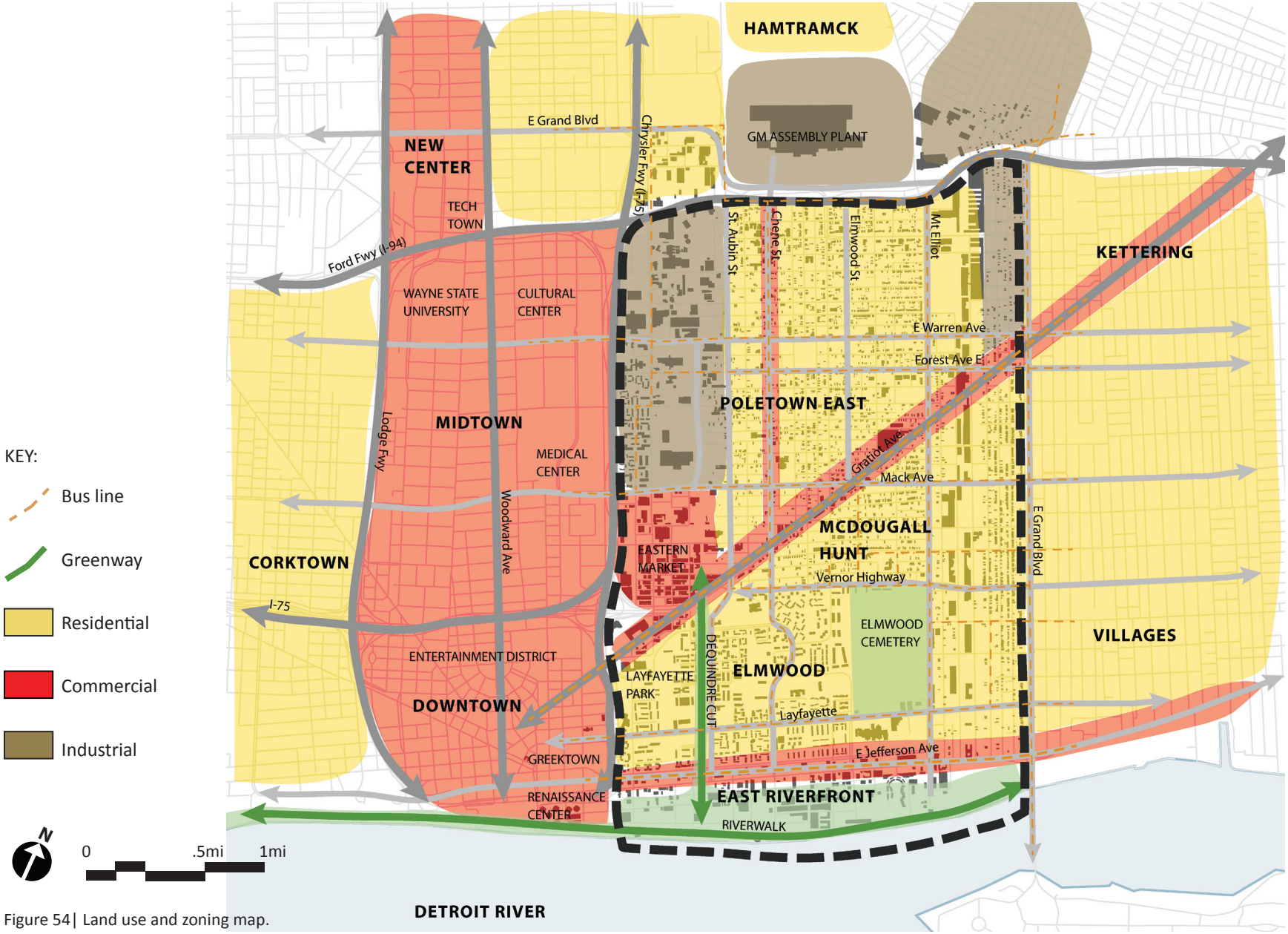


Figure 54| Land use and zoning map.

Land Use

The Eastside is primarily a residential neighborhood, with the exception of commercial corridors along Chene Street, Gratiot Avenue and East Jefferson Avenue. It is bordered to the east and west by historic railway right-of-ways and manufacturing corridors. However, it is worth noting that especially along Chene Street, not many businesses or structures remain.

This area contains five distinct neighborhoods, Poletown East and McDougall-Hunt located north of Vernor Highway and Lafayette Park and Elmwood Park located south of Vernor Highway, and East Riverfront located south of Jefferson along the river. The blighted conditions and feeling of vacancy in the neighborhoods north of Vernor Highway contrast with the denser, generally more well-kept housing stock of Lafayette Park. These conditions can be traced to two urban renewal projects in the late 1900s: the Lafayette Park urban renewal project, 1950-1960, and the construction of the General Motors Assembly Plant in 1981. Lafayette Park was built on the site of the former Black Bottom community in an effort to counter the flight of middle- and upper-income families to the suburbs by attempting to attract residents of diverse backgrounds. The collaboration of Herbert Greenwald, Mies van der Rohe, and Ludwig Hilberseimer designed the 78-acre residential community which included a park, townhouses, and apartment buildings. Today, Lafayette Park is regarded as one of the most successful urban renewal projects in the United States because it has been able to retain its inhabitants and relatively high property values amidst a city in which vacancy and foreclosures are rampant. Because the Poletown and Lafayette neighborhoods are so different socioeconomically and spatially, and are roughly separated by Vernor Highway, they have little interaction with one another. This thesis will look generally at the near Eastside, but will focus more specifically on the Poletown East and McDougall-Hunt neighborhoods within the Eastside due to their high levels of vacancy and post-industrial abandonment, as well as their history of activism.

Figure 55| A two-family residential house.

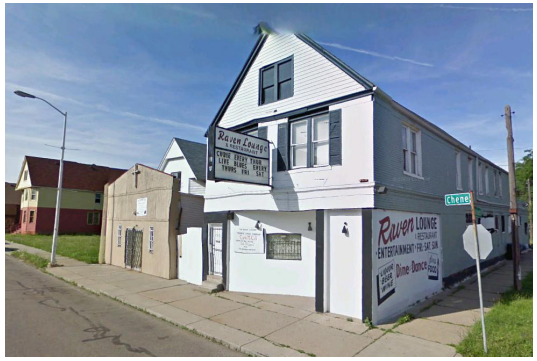


Figure 56| A commercial building.

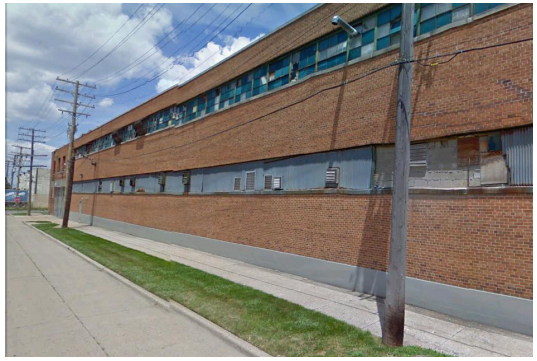


Figure 57| An industrial building.

Psychogeographic Maps

Figure 58| A psychogeographic map illustrating the formal urban fabric of Poletown as commonly perceived by the media and by outsiders.

Figure 59| A psychogeographic map illustrating the informal fabric of Poletown.

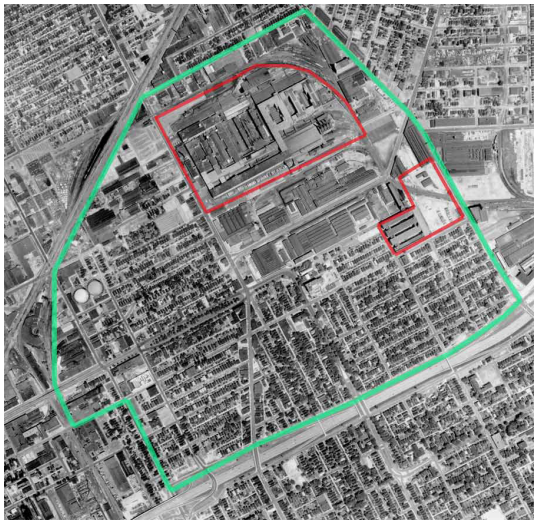


Figure 60| 1961 map of Poletown with a green outline around the portion of the neighborhood that was demolished for the construction of the GM Plant.
Mercer University

Figure 61| 1997 map showing the GM Plant.
Mercer University

Figure 62| Poletown before the GM Plant was built.
Mercer University

Poletown East History

Detroit's near-Eastside between Gratiot and I-94 is often referred to as "Poletown East" after its Polish immigrant settlers who came to the area in the 1870s. Poletown experienced its greatest growth between the 1920s and the 1930s when thousands of Polish immigrants came to Detroit for jobs in auto plants in the area, and then experienced a near-annihilation in 1980 when its northern half was seized by eminent domain for the construction of the General Motors (GM) Plant. Following is an analysis of the large impact of the auto industry on the Poletown East neighborhood.

By the turn of the century, 48,000 Polish immigrants had settled in Poletown. At that time, it was characterized by farmland bordered by two rail lines to the east and west. The farmland gave way to an industrial corridor to the north. Men found work in nearby heavy metal factories; women, in local cigar and match factories. The Dodge Main Plant, built in 1910

in Hamtramck, a small city immediately north of Poletown, employed most of the workers from the neighborhood, and additional auto-parts and assembly plants subsequently located in the area as well. Chene Street is a north-south artery that connected Poletown with Hamtramck. It had a street-car line that brought people to the bakeries, meat markets, and clothing stores lining Chene Street. Poletown suffered in the 1950s when I-94 was built, ripping through the neighborhood and diminishing foot traffic along the commercial strip on Chene Street. It suffered again in 1967 when it witnessed Detroit's infamous race riot. The neighborhood continued to depopulate, but up until 1980, it was known for its substantial housing stock, low rents, good access to shops and services, and ethnic and religious tolerance. In those hard times, there was a strong sense of community amongst Poletown residents and many watched out for each other, often forming teams to guard the neighborhood businesses from rioters.[2]

Poletown underwent another detrimental transformation in 1981 when the northern portion of the neighborhood was seized by, arguably unconstitutional, eminent domain under Mayor Coleman Young who claimed that the potential for job creation brought in by a new GM plant outweighed the benefits of keeping the community intact. The construction of the new auto plant was a desperate attempt to save an already-faltering auto industry, but it forced 4,200 people out of their homes, schools, churches, and businesses, producing less than half of the 6,000 jobs it promised. GM's so-called "Poletown Plant," which occupies only one-sixth of the seized land, crippled the Poletown neighborhood, essentially finishing the neighborhood off. The once vibrant Chene Street commercial area ceased to exist due to abandonment and isolation from the thriving Polish community in Hamtramck.

As Ralph Nader, a powerful opponent to the Poletown Plant wrote, "it becomes a metaphor for the politics of abandonment, where the rule of power in an economic recession rides roughshed over the rule of law…. It becomes a metaphor for institutionalized deceit."[3] The actions of the city of Detroit and its industry partner General Motors stand as a testament to how top-down, big business strategies have failed the people of Detroit.

Figure 63| Community members protest the GM Plant. *Detroit News*

The construction of the Poletown Plant brought forward a strong activist movement of community versus corporation. In her controversial book "Poletown: Community Betrayed," Jeanie Wylie personalized the events, writing "many people assumed that these people would not have the resources or the know-how to fight back"[4] but "in four short months Poletown residents had banded together in a way that demonstrated a clear neighborhood unity."[5] Betrayed by their government, employer, labor union, and Catholic Archdiocese, community members united in an effort to protect their neighborhood. At the time, the Poletown neighborhood was comprised of a very tight-knit and racially diverse population in an otherwise highly segregated city. There were elderly, first and second generation Polish Americans, African Americans, poor whites, and recent immigrants who joined together in a grassroots activist movement under the banner, "Poletown Lives!" Although the community was unsuccessful in saving its neighborhood from demolition, a similar spirit of grassroots organizing exists today in the remaining portion of Poletown.

Today, the former Northeastern High School site and Perrien Park are adjacent lots located at Warren Avenue and Chene Street that sit vacant in the heart of Poletown.[6] The school was built in 1915 to accommodate the Eastside's rapidly growing working class population, but was closed in 1982, not-coincidentally, shortly after the Poletown community was devastated by the construction of the GM Assembly Plant. The building was demolished sometime afterwards and today the expansive lot, the size of four city blocks, stands vacant. Pockets of cattails grow near the center of the site, a sign of rich, non-contaminated soil. The vacant site of the high school is over 25 acres and is located adjacent to Perrien Park, a 4.5 acre site that has a long history of activism. As the center of the southern portion of Poletown, Perrien Park was one of the most notable sites of many rallies, assemblies, parades and community organizing meetings for early Poletown. Today, the site is home to dozens of pheasants, falcons, and other animals, vegetation is reclaiming the concrete paths, and the park is transforming itself into an urban prairie.[7]

Figure 64| The site of Northeastern High School. 2012.

Figure 65| Perrien Park, 2012.

Figure 66| Northeastern High School. Date unknown.
Janice Tarver

Figure 67| Northeastern High School shortly before demolition.
Yes Detroit

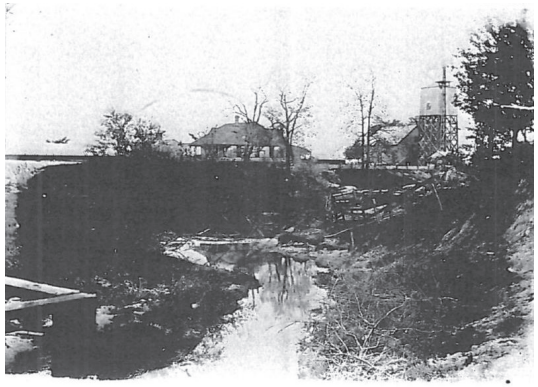


Figure 68| A historic image of the Bloody Run Creek.
Burton Historical Library

Figure 69| A current image of the Bloody Run Creek reentering a pipe in Elmwood Cemetery.

Figure 70| Historic creek map.

Ecological Assets

As discussed in the previous chapter, Detroit originated as a French settlement due to its prominent location along the Detroit River. The river, the Great Lakes Region, the fertile soil, and the native wildlife are some of Detroit's most significant ecological assets. The Detroit River is one of the world's busiest waterways, serving as an important transportation route that connects the Great Lakes to the St. Lawrence Seaway. As the city underwent rapid industrialization, the river was heavily polluted; however, there have been recent restoration efforts, including incorporating the southern portion into the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and today, the water quality is improving and many species of native wildlife are returning to the area.

Before it was developed, Detroit had many creeks and streams running through it and draining into the Detroit River. This made for very fertile soil for the early French farmers. The Bloody Run Creek, formerly known as *Rivieres Parent* by the French, is one of the many creeks that used to flow through Detroit before it was buried and concreted over. Its name derives from a battle in 1763 when Chief Pontiac and his Native American troops defeated 250 British troops at Fort Detroit. The creek, or "run," ran red with the blood of the dead and wounded British soldiers, subsequently leading to its name, Bloody Run. The creek originally flowed through the Eastside, roughly from the current I-94 southeast to its outlet in the Detroit River near what is now Mt. Elliott Street. As the city of Detroit grew in the second half of the nineteenth century, people threw their garbage and waste into the streams that fed into the Detroit River, which became essentially open sewers and served as the breeding grounds for epidemic diseases such as cholera. In order to combat this health hazard, Detroit diverted many of its streams into 5-foot diameter pipes in a new underground sewer system that carried both sanitary and storm runoff from the city directly into the Detroit River. This combined sewer system is still in place today. The Bloody Run Creek was completely covered over by the twentieth century with the exception of a small section running through Elmwood Cemetery. After flowing through a retention pond and a short stretch of creek-bed, it re-enters four pipes ranging in diameter from approximately

Figure 71| A landsat image of Detroit showing its position on the Detroit River and its proximity to Lake St. Clair to the north and Lake Erie to the south.

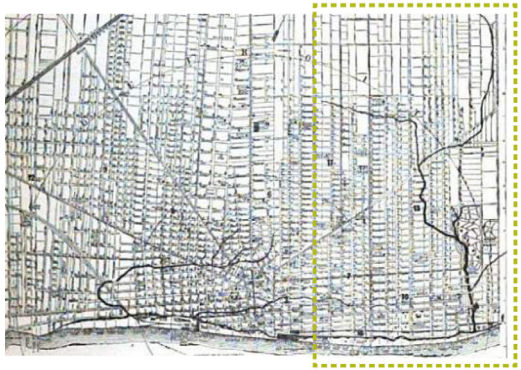


Figure 72| 19th Century map of Detroit's creeks. *Burton Historical Library*

Figure 73| An abandoned house.

Figure 74| A typical-style two-family house.

10" to 24." Detroit Free Press writer, John Gallagher, is hopeful about the possibility of restoring the original landscape today: "now, with so much of Detroit empty and going back to nature, it is feasible."[8]

Neighborhood Fabric

A study of Poletown and McDougall-Hunt from aerial maps reveals a gridded street system, a definitive lack of built structures, and an abundance of green space. The street grid that was built rapidly during the population spurts in the early 1900s now appears unnecessary because it connects to, what are at-times, entire blocks of vacant land. It is ironic that a city which was made by the rise of mobility and automotive infrastructure now contains many useless roads. In some cases, multi-lane arterial roads stand empty, running alongside burned and abandoned buildings and acres of vacant land. Despite the automotive history and abundance of roads, many of the people who remain in the city are without cars and only those with no other choice use the dysfunctional bus system. Amongst the expanses of vacant land and partially collapsed buildings there are also pockets of vibrant communities. Clusters of well-kept houses and tidy yards filled with children's bikes can be found seemingly randomly throughout the neighborhood. Other places, it is difficult to distinguish an abandoned home from an occupied home because many people lack the funds or resources to repair sagging porches or collapsing roofs, and where repairs have been made, they have a unique appearance consisting of mismatched, found materials.

Notable is an interesting pattern of pockets of several occupied, well-maintained houses grouped together on a street. They are separated by several of these green, vacant lots. In many cases, the vacant lots adjacent to occupied property have been claimed by the residents. The re-appropriation of space in the form of what Andrew Zago has termed an "urban blot,"[9] the process of Detroit homeowners expanding their property by claiming adjacent abandoned lots, either through purchase or informal adoption. It is a form of self-initiated, spontaneous urbanism that

is occurring citywide in a grassroots response to Detroit's vacancy issues. Interboro Partners, a New York-based planning firm, used the term "new suburbanism" to refer to "the process through which entrepreneurial homeowners take, borrow, or buy adjacent vacant lots."[10] This process results in the creation of an urban fabric with an almost suburban scale. In response to Detroit's depopulation and disinvestment, city homeowners are establishing a new urban pattern for the city of Detroit. Interboro Partners proposed that perhaps this new type of approach could be the future of the city:

> *The careful scrutiny of the DeCerteauian practices of citizens should be the starting point for public policy. Here we ask: might the best way forward for Detroit be a phenomenon that is being acted out every day by thousands of self-interested homeowners who are merely making do?*
> *~Interboro Partners*[11]

While wedded to a vision of Detroit's ultimate demise, new suburbanism is evidence of a rebirth of the city based on unsanctioned, individual acts of spatial pioneering that address the reality of a depopulated city with excess land. Interboro viewed this as having a "cumulative effect [that] will be a gradual rewriting of the City's genetic code."[12] The new type of urban strategies that Interboro Partners have observed could suggest a method for a neighborhood to restructure itself through spontaneous urbanism.

In addition to the residential neighborhoods, evidence of a once-thriving commercial and manufacturing corridor still exists. Chene Street used to be a main commercial thoroughfare. Today, aside from several churches, bars, and party stores, little of this activity remains. Chene Street was at one time a busy transportation corridor for horse-drawn carriage and then rail. Now an infrequent, unreliable bus line runs along it.

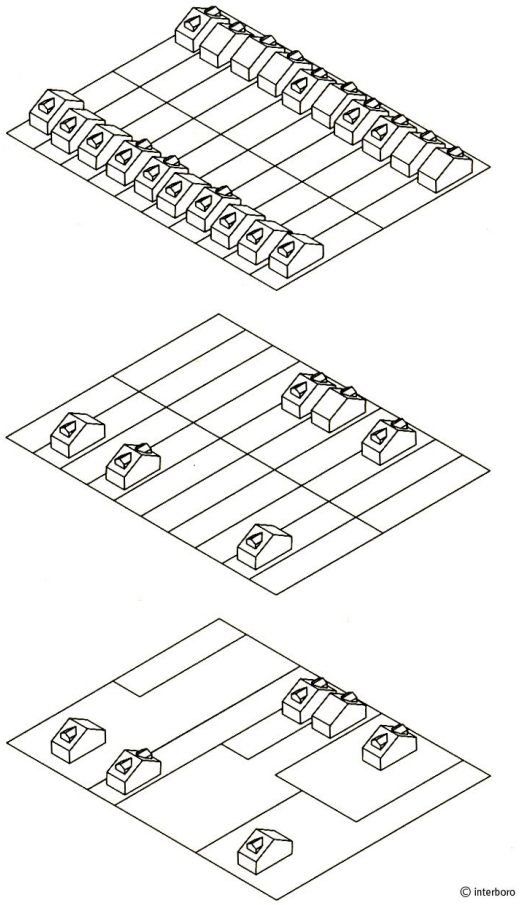


Figure 75| A diagram of Interboro's identified "new suburbanism" process.
Interboro Partners

People

Considering a diminishing population, lower-than-city-average education levels, high poverty levels, and low mobility, the people of the Eastside have fewer resources than other

Figure 76| People volunteering with The Greening of Detroit, an organization that engages the community through urban gardening projects.
Detroit Agriculture

Figure 77| Detroit children.
Voice of Detroit

places: between 2000 and 2010, 44 percent of its predominantly African American population left the city, 50 percent of adults 25 and above are functionally illiterate with only 52 percent holding high school diplomas, 68 percent of households have an annual income of less than $25,000 and 37 percent have an annual income of less than $10,000, and 35 percent of households do not own a car.[13] Due to the unstable nature of the neighborhood, it is difficult to get an accurate population statistic for Poletown, but the 2000 Census estimates approximately 9,000 residents. While this number may have dropped over the past twelve years, it represents a sizeable population to enact this thesis. Considering the high vacancy rates in the neighborhood, a surprisingly large amount of people are walking, biking, or loitering around the neighborhood on any given day. For many without access to a car, walking or biking are the most efficient methods of transportation. Additionally, with such high unemployment rates estimated at close to 16%, many people are around their house or neighborhood during the day. During decent weather, many people can be seen sitting on their front porches or gathering on empty lots and street corners.

Despite these demographics, this thesis views Detroit's residents as one of its greatest assets. The statistics illustrate that the status quo is not sufficiently serving the existing population, suggesting that an alternative strategy may be necessary. The history of activism, presence of community members in the neighborhood, and fragmentary nature of the urban fabric suggest that Poletown could support and grow a community-based program.

Capacity-building Methods

John Kretzmann and John McKnight established the asset-based community development movement that "considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development."[14] This model builds on the skills of local residents, associations, institutions to empower the community to bring about positive change and bases solutions on the community's capacities rather than its needs. The traditional needs-based model

emphasizes what the community lacks and can effectively disable a community with residents thinking of themselves and their neighbors as "fundamentally deficient, victims incapable of taking charge of their lives and of their community's future."[15] Their method includes the mapping of the skills of the residents, compiling an inventory of the citizens' associations, and identifying the institutions located within the community. This section will employ Kretzmann and McKnight's methods to explore place-based characteristics as well as concerns identified by community members in a neighborhood planning meeting to help generate the program proposed by this thesis.

Mapping the Assets

Kretzmann and McKnight's first method of capacity-building involves mapping the capacities of the community. A close reading of the Poletown East neighborhood reveals four visible examples of successful spontaneous urbanism that begin to establish the existing assets and possible catalysts for future interventions that this thesis will build upon. Following is a discussion of four local case studies illustrating some of the ways in which people have re-appropriated the terrain vague through a bottom-up means.

The Heidelberg Project

> *The system was broken. No one was going to go out there and fix it. And I saw where the people needed to do it for themselves... My neighbors needed to know that it was ok to stop waiting on the city government. That it was ok to go out there and make a difference.*[16]
> ~Tyree Guyton

The Heidelberg Project, located on a block of Heidelberg Street on Detroit's Eastside is one of the nation's most famous installations of guerilla art. In 1986, Tyree Guyton, an artist living on Detroit's Eastside, became dismayed by the abandoned houses on Heidelberg Street where he had grown up and the threat that they posed to his neighborhood. So he began

Figure 78| The Heidelberg Project's polka dot house.

Figure 79| The Heidelberg Project.

transforming the vacant homes on his street into assemblages of found objects in an effort to raise awareness of the deteriorating condition of the city's neighborhood fabric.[17] Since 1986, Guyton has transformed two blocks along Heidelberg Street into vehicles through which he creates a dialogue about the revitalization of the neighborhood. As he said of the project, it represents how we can "recycle things; recycle our lives and our city. Breathe new life into them."[18] The *Baby Doll House* was one of his first installations. From it emerged two themes central to Guyton's work. First, he explored social issues, in this case, the tainted innocence of children growing up on the turbulent streets of Detroit shown through a collection of dolls. Second, he included neighborhood residents in his work in an attempt to leverage community involvement and participation.[19]

The strength of the Heidelberg Project lies not only in the social statements of Guyton's artwork, but also in its experimental nature and its call to action on the part of the city and the local community. In 1991, the Department of Public Works demolished four of Guyton's houses, raising the question of why the city was more concerned with eliminating public artwork than with the nearby crack houses, which it left intact. His artwork has cultivated the public's understanding of the terrain vague and the importance of spontaneous urbanism, something that top-down planning proposals have failed to do.

Figure 80| A cooking class at the Capuchin soup kitchen.
Capuchin Soup Kitchen

Figure 81| Earthworks community garden an hoop house.
Earthworks

Earthworks Community Farm

One successful community-scale project is the Earthworks Urban Farm, a nonprofit farm located on Meldrum Street, near Elmwood Cemetery. Run by the local Capuchins, a religious community of friars, it is a network of once-vacant parcels on Detroit's Eastside that seeks to restore the connection between the environment and the community through an educational and inspirational food system that fosters community development. It grows a complex rotation of crops in greenhouses, hoop houses, community gardens and traditional beds to supply the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, runs a Growing Healthy Kids Program, manages a neighborhood composting program, and produces vegetable seedlings for gardens across the city. Of the

eighteen lots that Earthworks tends to, they only actually own three. As Program Manager Patrick Crouch explained, "there are three classifications of land use regulation in Detroit: legal, illegal, and not allowed."[20] In the case of Earthworks, as with most other urban gardens in the city, its gardening of the vacant lots is neither legal nor illegal, but also not necessarily allowed, just typically overlooked by city officials. Crouch noted that the strength of Earthworks lies in its training and volunteer programs that expose community members to not only urban gardening and the concept of "seed to plate," food preparation but also to critical thinking and systems understanding.

Farnsworth Farms

German architect and theorist Philipp Oswalt suggested that "residents of shrinking cities develop social strategies to survive"[21] and urban pioneer, Paul Weertz exemplifies such strategies. He lives on Farnsworth Street and has preserved it as one of the few residential blocks on Detroit's near-Eastside, where most of the homes are still standing, occupied, and well-maintained. At low purchase prices, he buys houses that people leave behind and fixes them to rent or sell to those willing to build a new community with him.[22] In the alley behind these houses, he grows alfalfa, a crop that helps clean contaminated soil, and raises chickens in a garage-turned-barn. Weertz's neighborhood, affectionately called "Farnsworth Farms" is attracting new residents and young families eager to join his urban farming community. For example, Rising Peasant Farms is located on Farnsworth Street and is run by Caroline Leadley and her husband, with the help of their 3-year old son. They maintain the small farm themselves and transport their produce via bikes and six-foot cargo trailers to sell at their own roadside stand as well as to Eastern Market.

Figure 82| Caroline Leadley and Jack Van Dyke, run Rising Peasant Farms in the Farnsworth Farms neighborhood.
Dave Lewinski

Figure 83| Farnsworth Farms.

John's Carpet House of Blues

Informal gathering spaces comprise a large amount of the spontaneous urbanism in Detroit. For example, John's Carpet House of Blues is an ad hoc music performance event that occurs on an abandoned lot on the near Eastside. Every Sunday from May through September,

local residents and blues fans gather together near the corner of Frederick and St. Aubin to play the blues. Detroit blues musician, John Estes, passed away seven years ago, but his friends still gather where his house once stood. It is a striking image, as their web forum proclaims, "with pheasants running in the nearby empty lots and the old Detroit auto plants hulking in the distance, it is the perfect setting for a long running weekly outdoor blues festival that could only happen in Detroit."[23] John's Carpet House is really not a house at all. The house that once stood on that corner has since burned and the charred debris still remains as evidence. But the attendees don't seem to mind. As its name implies, this ad hoc jam session occurs on carpet swaths that are rolled out every Sunday afternoon. "Big Time Pete" coordinates the event and hauls in a gas-powered generator and porta-potty, funds permitting, and coordinates for people to pick up trash and cut the grass. A sign at the Carpet House is representative of the laid back, straight-forward atmosphere: "Johns Carpet House Live Blues / if you don't like blues / don't go away mad, / just go away. No drugs no time."

Figure 84| The audience for a performance at John's Carpet House.
John's House of Blues

Figure 85| Playing the blues at John's Carpet House.
John's House of Blues

The mapping of these four examples of spontaneous urbanism reveals that they are physically and programmatically disconnected. This thesis will consider how a productive ecological infrastructure could be established to strengthen and connect these interventions and to inspire others.

Community Participation

According to Kretzmann and McKnight's capacity-building methods, people are one of the greatest assets of a community, making them necessarily instrumental in developing any community-based project. Eastside residents are currently involved in such efforts through what the city calls "The Long-Term Planning process," which engages community members in brainstorming ways to transform their neighborhoods. For a neighborhood with such high rates of vacancy, the Eastside, particularly the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood, has a very large group of engaged community members in addition to many community organizations including

Figure 86| Location map of the four existing examples of spontaneous urbanism.

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) and Detroit Works, an initiative to reinvent the physical, social, and economic landscape of the city. Recognizing the importance of local participation in developing this thesis proposal but constrained by the limits of the academic process, the author's interactions with residents at a Detroit Works Long Term Planning "community conversation" in April 2012 are offered as a stand-in for community participation.

At the meeting, Eastside residents identified assets in their community to be: the Riverwalk, a 5.5-mile promenade that runs from downtown Detroit east along the river; Eastern Market, a six-block public, open-air, weekend market; and various community amenities and community organizations. In breakout sessions, the residents shared creative, ambitious ideas of re-appropriating vacant land into community farms and reusing abandoned buildings to house entrepreneurial business incubators. They also discussed ideas of closed-loop economies within these re-appropriated lots where entrepreneurial services could be shared amongst community members. Residents then identified their concerns about the lack of safe neighborhoods, lack of children, and poor education. They hoped to find a solution that would bring stability and safety back to the neighborhood, thereby retaining the local children.

Their concerns of safety are validated by a study conducted by the Detroit Free Press in April 2012, which highlighted the dangerous conditions that children encounter everyday on their way to and from school. Children often walk in the dark to school, past vacant lots and abandoned buildings where rates of assaults and sex crimes are high. Additionally, the poor bus service, with an on-time record of less than 50 percent, means children are forced to wait longer at bus stops, often located on gang territory. Because of these realities, the study concluded that many families with children who have the means to do so, move out of the neighborhood. Due to a decrease in students and a similar decrease in per-pupil funding, many public schools have been forced to close. According to the DPS 2012 property list, eight properties within the Eastside site were for sale. At the meeting, residents additionally identified their concerns about an aging population and the lack of healthy living and recreating environments for seniors. The concerns of the

Figure 87| A brainstorming session at the Detroit Works Project Community Conversation.
Detroit Works Project

Figure 88| A round table discussion at the Detroit Works Project Community Conversation.
Detroit Works Project

community coupled with the availability of DPS land will help drive the site selection and program development of this thesis.

The feedback from the community meeting shows that people value their children and safety, and are not interested in much involvement by the city government. They also have no interest in leaving their neighborhood, despite its blighted conditions, nor are they concerned with attracting many new residents to increase the density. Generally, they have a sense of community pride and seem to be excited by the opportunities presented by the new urban form of vacancy and abandonment. Taking into account the sentiments of the community members, this thesis will create a proposal that focuses on establishing mutually beneficial intergenerational relationships within the community, which could foster an exchange of skills, allowing for new closed-loop economies within the community to emerge.

Limits and Delimits

Deeply rooted in the assets of the community and based on facts, case studies, observations, and interviews, this thesis strives to suggest a direction of community transformation that is both place- and people-appropriate. An extensive study was conducted of the local community in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context. However, the reality is that the thesis is an academic exercise that will be produced without actual community involvement. The limits of a community-based project in the absence of the actual community members must be understood. Additionally, the premise of this thesis is based on incremental change over time. Ultimately, it sets out to merely *suggest* one direction in which bottom-up urbanism could transform the city and does not at all attempt to prescribe what *should* happen. Just as it would have been impossible for Detroit's automotive giants of the 1950s to foresee the future conditions of their city, it is also impossible to foretell how this proposal will affect change in the future. Thus, this thesis presents one proposal for the future of the city, suggesting a creative framework and a toolbox to speculate one direction for future placemaking activities.

Endnotes

1 Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place.* The MIT Press, Cambridge: 1997. 9.

2 Wylie, Jeanie. *Poletown: Community Betrayed*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

3 Wylie, *xi.*

4 Wylie, 58.

5 Wylie, 67.

6 The former Northeastern High School property is zoned as R-5: medium density residential with certain non-residential uses permitted. The properties adjacent to it are zoned as R-2: two-family residential. The adjacent properties north and south along Chene Street are zoned as B-4: General Business District,

7 Urban prairie is a term used to describe vacant urban land that has reverted to unmaintained green space.

8 Gallagher, John, "Detroit: Land of Opportunity: Acres of Barren Blocks Offer Chance to Reinvent City," *Detroit Free Press,* Dec. 15, 2008. 96.

9 Zago, Andrew, "Terminal City," in: Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond, ed. Park, Kyong. Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers, 2005, 30.

10 Interboro Partners. "Improve Your Lot!" 2006. Web. <http://www.interboropartners.net/2008/improve-your-lot/> (Accessed 19 Feb. 2012).

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 "The Story of Recovery Park," SHAR Foundation.

14 The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University. <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/> (Accessed April 26, 2012)

15 Kretzmann, John P, and John McKnight. *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.* Evanston, Ill: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Neighborhood Innovations Network, Northwestern University, 1993.

16 Guyton, Tyree. "Art From the Ashes: Detroit's Heidelberg Project," Tilapia Film. Web.

17 Daskalakis, Georgia, and Charles Waldheim, and Jason Young, eds. *Stalking Detroit*. Barcelona: Actar. 126.

18 Tyree Guyton. Web. <www.tyreeguyton.com> (Accessed 19 Feb. 2012).

19 *Stalking Detroit.* 126.

20 Author's interview with Patrick Crouch, Detroit, MI. September 18, 2012.

21 Oswalt, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities*: v. 1. Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2005. 28.

22 Park, Kyong. *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond,* 7.

23 John's Carpet House and Pete's Place. 2012. Web. <http://www.johnscarpethouse.com/portal/index.php?page=10> (Accessed 20 Sept. 2012).

IV. Designing a Framework for Spontaneous Urbanism

Focusing on the idea of countering loss through the optimism of creative enterprise, this thesis suggests using a framework to facilitate the emergence of an economy of necessity generated by linking the assets of history, people, ecology, and land. Inspired by the entrepreneurial subculture of the neighborhood, this economy of necessity will focus on creating an alternative economy in the face of unreliable exterior forces. It will be self-generated and self-sustained through creative acts of spatial re-appropriation by local community members. The overarching goal of the program is to facilitate community interaction, build capacity and generate a network for spontaneous urbanism. This process has already begun with the existing acts of creative re-appropriation; however, these acts are currently disconnected. Leveraging the fragmentary nature of the neighborhood, this thesis will propose an incremental intervention at three scales: network, center, and node, to envision an alternative future for the city. First it will encourage a network for spontaneous urbanism by establishing a new ecological infrastructure. Second it will design a central node, the Creative Commons, to serve as the pilot project and a catalyst for future interventions. The Creative Commons will serve to connect, highlight, and strengthen the existing grassroots placemaking efforts. Third, it will identify four different urban conditions along the new infrastructure and suggest re-appropriation strategies that might

Figure 89| A networked vision for the Eastside as a workshop for spontaneous urbanism.

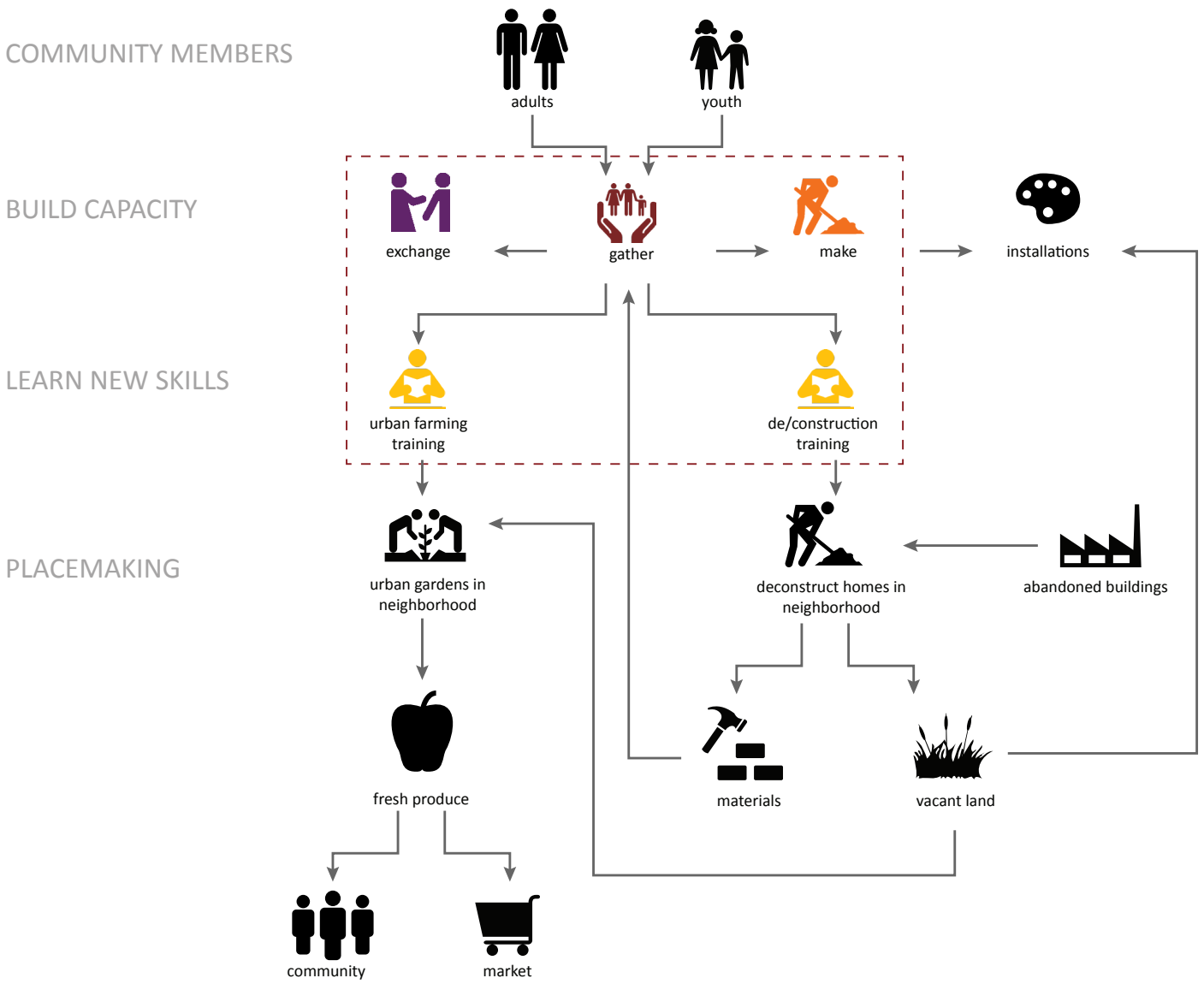


Figure 90| A diagram of the proposed local economy with the role of the Creative Commons highlighted in the dashed box.

occur at these satellite nodes as instigated by the Creative Commons. Through a design proposal for the Creative Commons and a hypothesis of how it could build capacity and expand to three nodes along the network, the design portion of this thesis will explore how architecture can act as a facilitator for spontaneous urbanism with an incremental growth of place shaped over time through community efforts.

Consistent with the idea of spontaneous urbanism being unplanned, and generated by the community, this thesis will not attempt to specify what activities should happen and where they should happen, but will offer a suggestion of what and where activities could happen. These are, intentionally, loosely defined spaces programmed by their general performance requirements, rather than specific uses and associated square footages, so that they are flexible to a variety of different uses by the community.

Program

The program of this project ultimately involves creating a new ecological infrastructure along which to facilitate community interaction at three different scales: the network, center, and the node. In order to suggest what types of activities could be fostered by this network, the existing examples of spontaneous urbanism across Detroit are categorized into four general typologies: spaces to gather, exchange, learn, and make. Additionally, an existing Eastside community group is identified for each typology as a possible community partner. As the pilot project, the Creative Commons is designed to include each of the four types of spaces: gather, learn, exchange, and make, with the strategy that, as people and activities build capacity through the Creative Commons, learn new skills and form relationships, they can branch out within the network and create their own satellite nodes associated with one of these typologies.

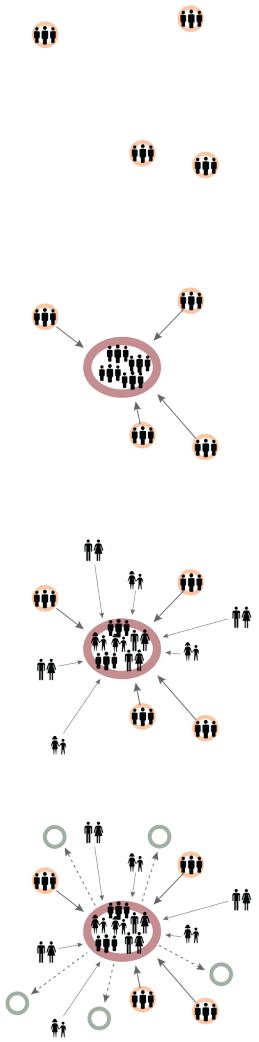


Figure 91| Capacity-building diagram.

GATHER




EXCHANGE



LEARN




MAKE



The ***gather*** spaces ultimately serve to bring people together to build capacity. They could include activities such as community dinners, exhibitions, and music performances. John's Carpet House of Blues is an example of an informal community gathering space that has a strong following.

The ***exchange*** spaces allow for activities such as the exchange of material goods in a farmers market, flea market, or art market, or the exchange of intellectual goods such as in a gallery exhibition or open artist studios. These spaces would accommodate the exchange and storage of resources, furthering the economic independence and self-sufficiency of the community. The residents involved with Farnsworth Farms have the social capital and material goods to support an exchange space.

The ***learn*** spaces contain activities such as activist meetings, computer training classes, urban gardening training, farm-to-table workshops, or cooking classes. The learning could occur in a variety of different circumstances, including hands-on workshops and round-table discussions between intergenerational groups of community members. The Earthworks Community Farm, which already runs some of its own training programs and workshops, is an example of a community organization that could help create more learn spaces.

The ***make*** spaces capitalize off Detroit's history of innovation and hands-on production, its entrepreneurial subculture, and its material resources could include activities such as deconstruction training, collaborative workshops, flexible studios, and storage for salvaged materials. The Heidelberg Project is an example of a project that could be categorized under the make typology and could inspire future interventions.

Figure 92| Typologies of spontaneous urbanism.

Figure 93| Proposed location of creek and greenway.

Network

The ecological infrastructure that will serve as a network for these spontaneous urbanism typologies will be established by daylighting the historic Bloody Run Creek. The idea of daylighting the Bloody Run Creek is not original. Detroit architect and former director of the University of Detroit Mercy's Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC), Steve Vogel, first wrote about a vision for daylighting the creek in the 1970s.[1] Although there have been several studies conducted recently, the idea has yet to come to fruition. Taking inspiration from Vogel's vision, this thesis proposes daylighting a portion of the creek between the existing GM retention ponds and the Detroit River in order to create a new ecological infrastructure which will serve as the framework for a network for spontaneous urbanism within the Eastside community, offering a system of non-motorized transportation that can connect the separate interventions described. The creek and new greenway will be located along path similar to its historic route which was also at the heart of Poletown's historic commercial and infrastructural corridor. It will allow pedestrians and bikers to navigate the community in a safe, beautiful, green space.

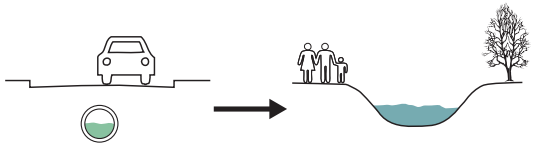


Figure 94| Daylighting diagram.

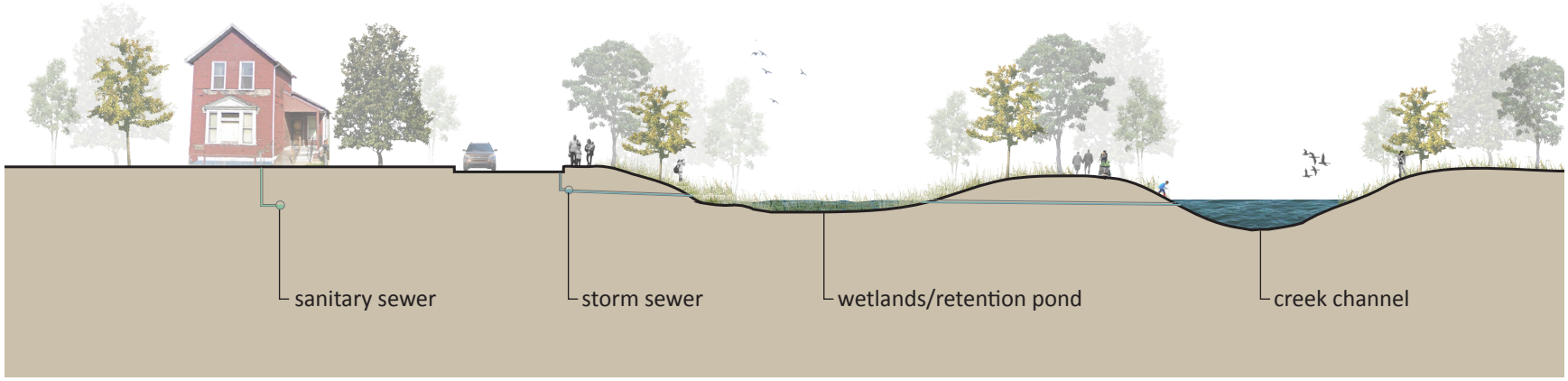


Figure 95| Typical creek section showing a storm sewer separate from the sanitary sewer and carrying water to a retention pond and then into the creek.

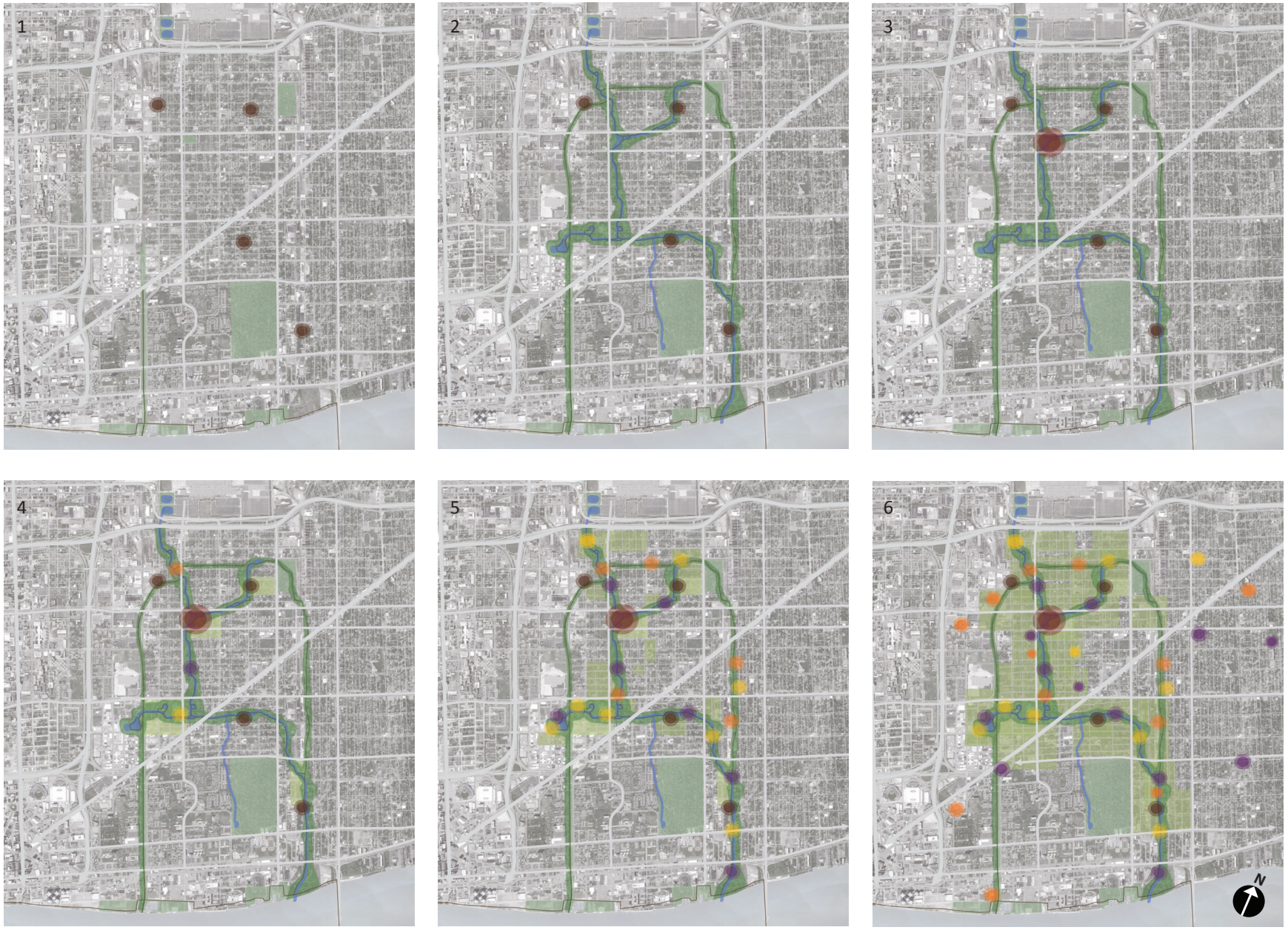
In addition to serving as a greenway and recreational asset for the local community, the Bloody Run Creek will function as a productive landscape with social, cultural, economic, and ecological benefits. Uncovering the Bloody Run Creek will reduce the strain on the sewer system through a reduction in runoff collection and transportation to the City of Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant by approximately 3 billion gallons per year. By exposing the water to air, sunlight, and vegetation, the water quality can be improved through natural filtration of pollutants. Designed to accommodate Detroit's annual precipitation of 33.41" and annual snowfall of 43.7" over a watershed of approximately 3,000 acres, this dynamic system will establish a framework for spontaneous urbanism.

The large amount of vacant land on the Eastside will allow the creek to be daylighted along a path similar to its original without displacing any existing homes or businesses. It will begin in the two existing retention ponds at the GM Assembly Plant and flow three miles southeast over a drop of 40 feet in elevation to the Detroit River. The nature of the creek will vary over the course of the year; on average, it will have a rough width of 10-15', however, during dry seasons, it will function more as a wetland than a flowing creek. For this reason, retention ponds will be constructed along its route to store water from heavy storms and then release it into the creek during dry seasons.

Bioremediation processes of the creek, including constructed wetlands, rain gardens, and retention ponds, will serve as the framework for organizing the greenway and its associated spontaneous urbanism features. The greenway will incorporate native vegetation and wildlife, while providing a safe, well-lit greenway for bikers and walkers along. In addition to engaging passersby in a restored wetland habitat, interpretive creekscape elements will serve as a productive, educational environment by linking re-appropriated sites and inspiring placemaking activities.

Daylighting the Bloody Run Creek will undoubtedly require considerable economic resources, which this thesis argues can be obtained without resulting to the top-down

Figure 96| Recreation and productive landscapes along greenway.

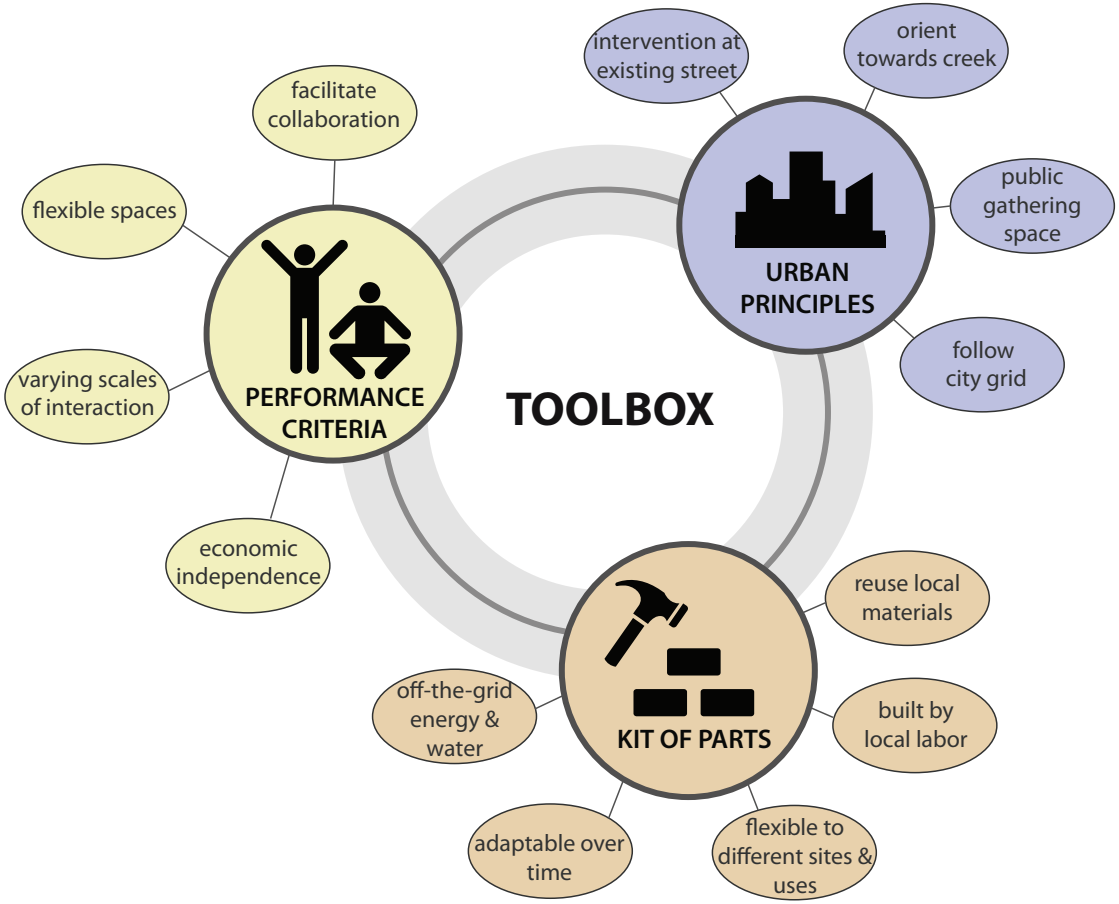

1
2
3
4
5
6
N

development approach that has been criticized herein. Specific suggestions for undertaking this infrastructure intervention bottom-up through grassroots organizing of resources will be offered at the end of the thesis.

Center and Nodes: Design Goals and Strategies

Taking the stance that the sustainability and regeneration of the neighborhood lies in the hands of its residents, the design goal of the network, nodes, and center is to create flexible community spaces that celebrate the spontaneous urbanism, entrepreneurial subculture, and bottom-up activity in the community. Suggesting that the future of Detroit's neighborhoods lies in strengthening and connecting community members' hands-on placemaking efforts, this thesis envisions Detroit's Eastside as a living workshop, one that can serve as an incubator for a new self-sustaining grassroots economy. This alternative economy would start with the existing community members, connect them through the network, use the Creative Commons to build capacity and learn new skills which would then allow them to enact their own grassroots placemaking strategies through the creation of the nodes, or interventions.

Figure 97| Existing.
Figure 98| Creek.
Figure 99| Center.
Figure 100| Nodes.
Figure 101| Satellite nodes.
Figure 102| Expansion.


TOOLBOX
PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
facilitate collaboration
flexible spaces
varying scales of interaction
economic independence
URBAN PRINCIPLES
intervention at existing street
orient towards creek
public gathering space
follow city grid
KIT OF PARTS
reuse local materials
built by local labor
flexible to different sites & uses
adaptable over time
off-the-grid energy & water

Toolbox

A toolbox consisting of urban principles, performance criteria, and a kit of parts is developed to guide the design of the Creative Commons and the nodes.

The urban principles are based on the idea that a node, or a future intervention, could be located anywhere in the city. They emphasize that, to facilitate community interaction and strengthen the greater network, the intervention should include an outdoor public gathering space that is oriented towards the greenway.

The performance criteria were established as a loose programming of the spaces, inspired by the four typologies of gather, exchange, learn, and make. Flexible spaces are designed to facilitate collaboration and to accommodate varying scales of interaction. Additionally, the performance criteria emphasizes the economic independence and self-sufficiency of the overall network by allowing for a variety of types of spaces that can be adapted over time for different uses as necessary.

The kit of parts seeks to capitalize on the large amount of dangerous, abandoned structures and high percentage of unemployed workers by utilizing local materials and local labor. Establishing a culture of deconstruction and material reuse, the kit of parts makes use of reclaimed wood from houses for cladding, recycled wood pallets for an interactive ground plane, and broken concrete from decommissioned roads for permeable paving. Consistent with the idea of a establishing a self-sufficient economy, the kit of parts also includes solar panels and an underground rainwater collection system that allow it to exist entirely off the grid.

Figure 103| Toolbox diagram.

Kit of Parts

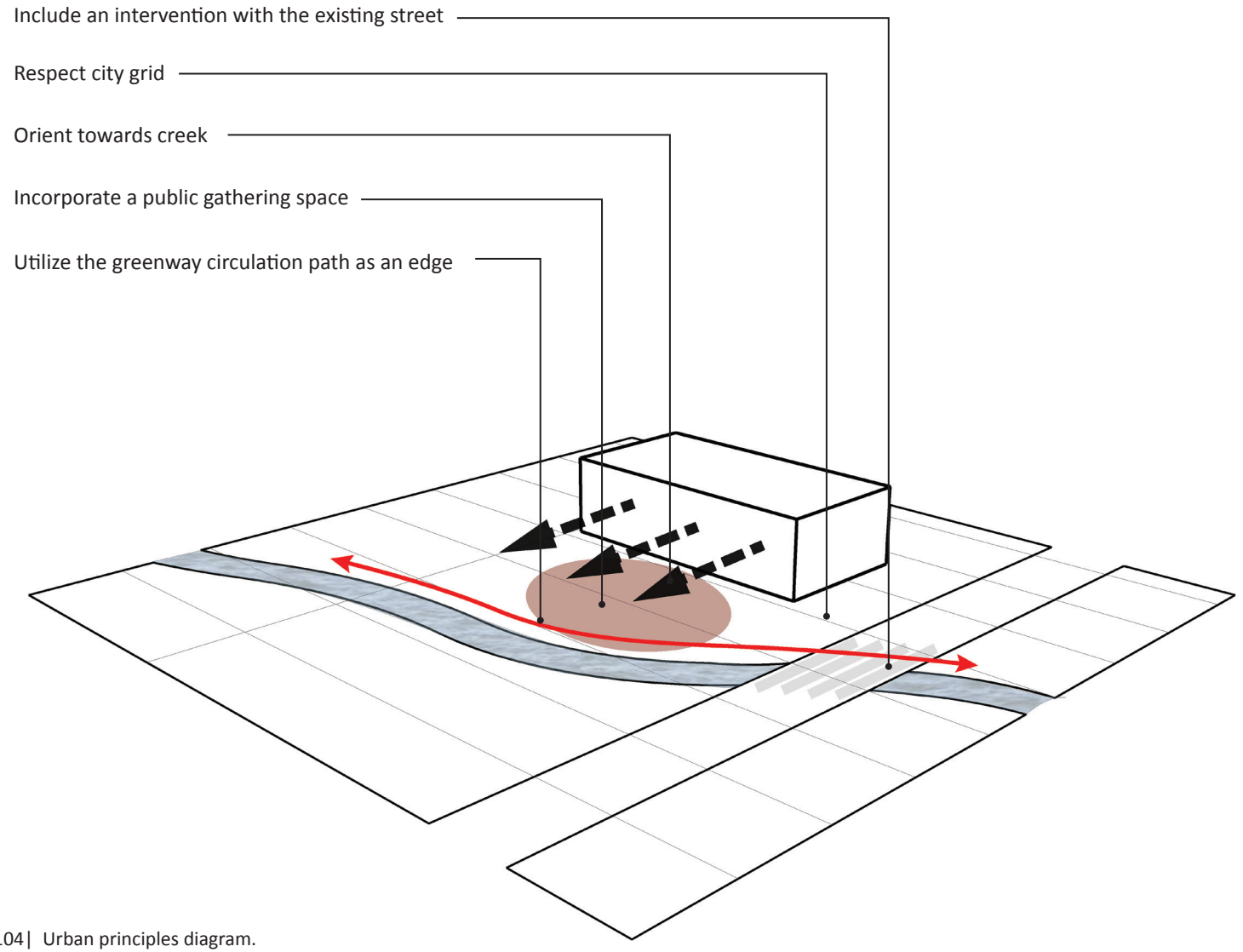


Figure 104| Urban principles diagram.

Performance Criteria

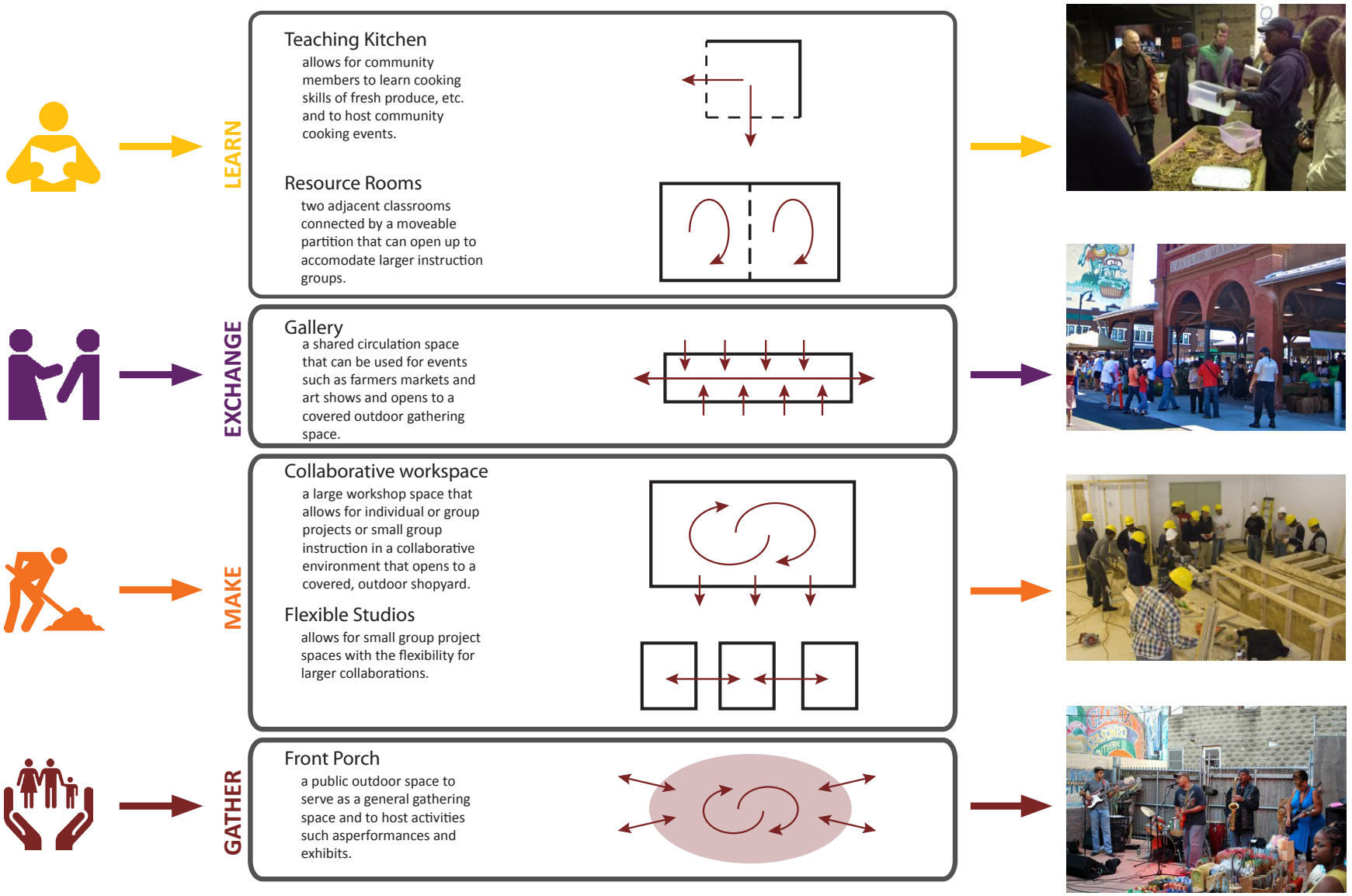
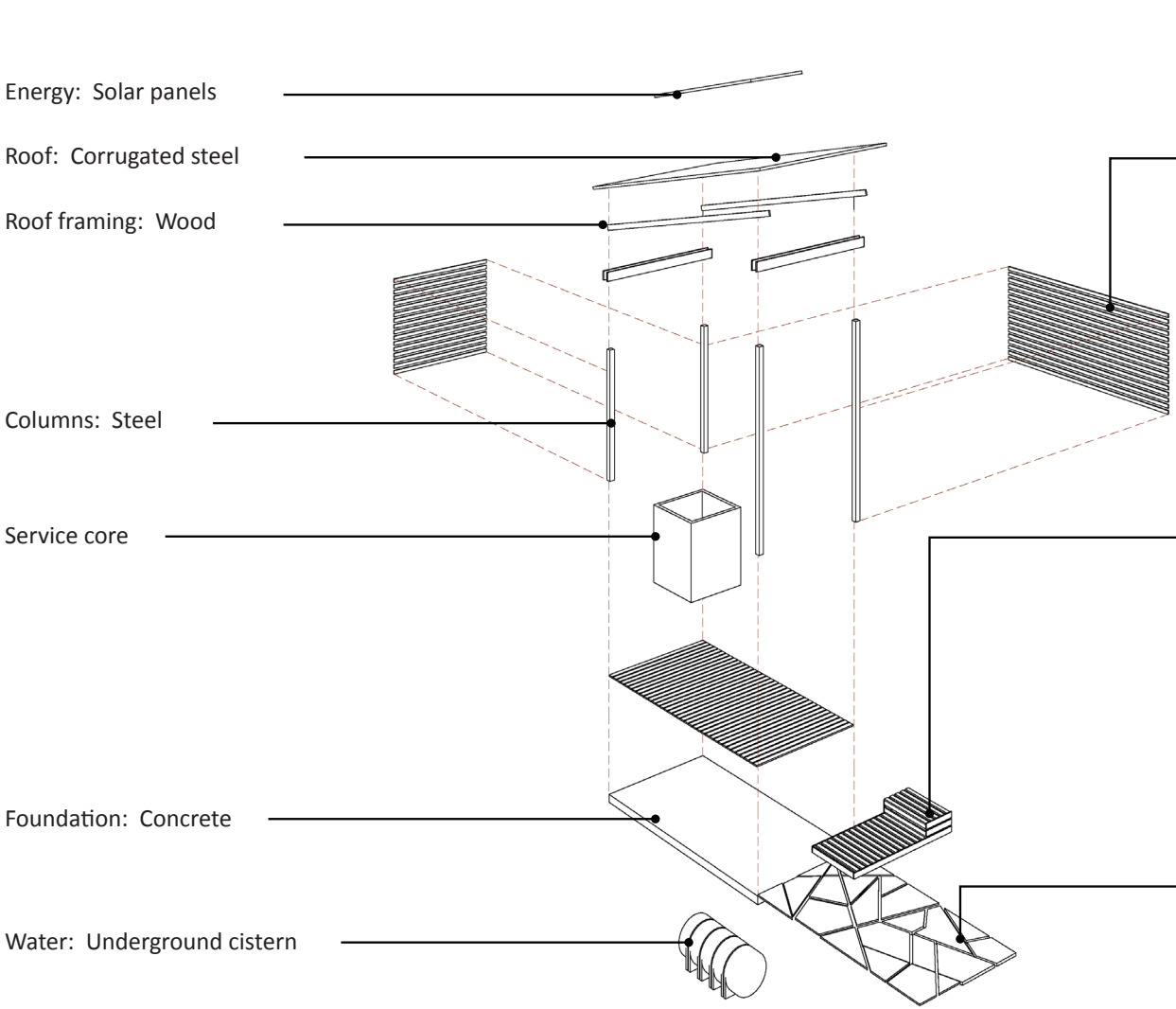


Figure 105| Performance criteria diagram.

KIT OF PARTS



Cladding: Reclaimed wood

Ground plane: Recycled wood pallets

Permeable paving: Broken concrete

Figure 106| Kit of parts diagram.

Interventions in the Urban Fabric

Four different urban conditions were selected along the greenway as locations for the Creative Commons and the three nodes. The following are descriptions of the history, people, ecology, and land uses that guided the selection of the sites and adaptation of the toolbox for the Creative Commons and the satellite nodes. Each of the three satellite nodes corresponds to one of the spontaneous urbanism typologies, based on an evaluation of the existing conditions in the neighborhood fabric. For each urban condition, a possible future is explored, as made possible by the interventions.

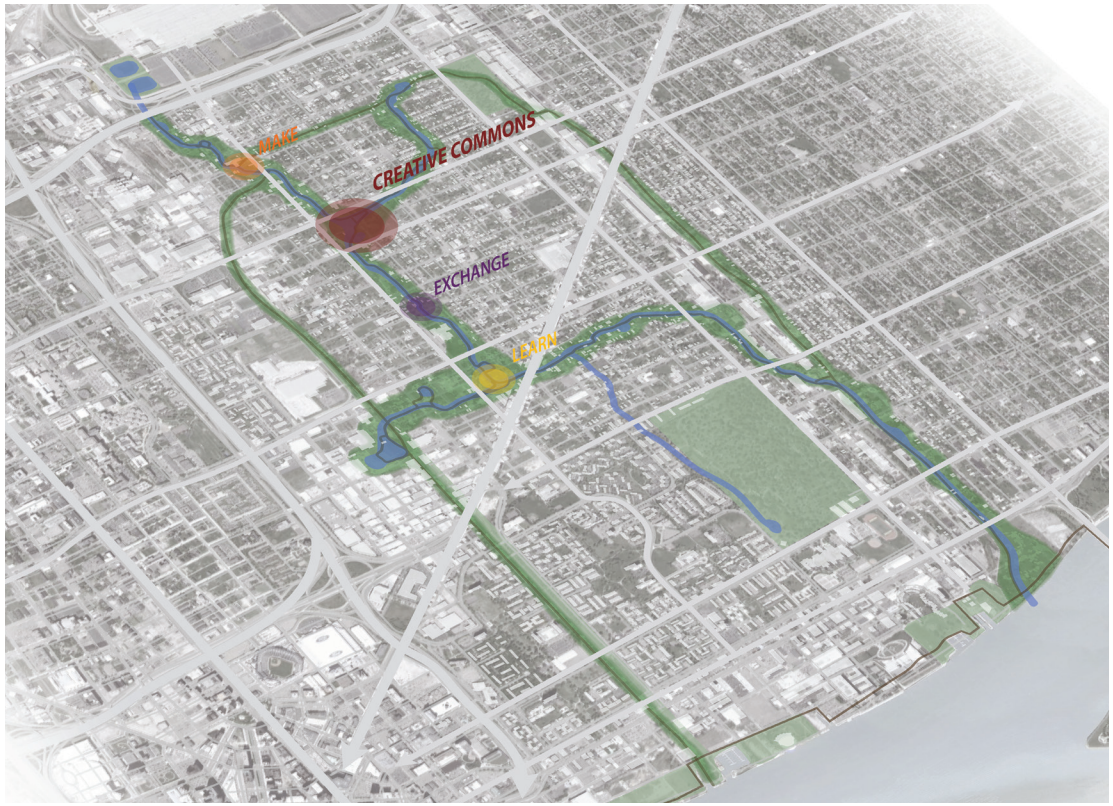


Figure 107| Locations of the center and nodes along the greenway.

Gather: Creative Commons

The site for the Creative Commons was chosen due to its large size and its central location within the network and the community as well as its history as a site of activism. Consisting of Perrien Park, which is on city-owned land, and the site of the former Northeastern High School, which is on DPS-owned land, the combined 30-acre vacant site is on one of the largest publicly-owned swaths of vacant land on the Eastside. Additionally, it is located adjacent to Chene Street, inviting a reinterpretation for the once-thriving commercial and infrastructural corridor.

The Creative Commons is built as a collaboration by Eastside community organizations and community activists. Several unnecessary roads are decommissioned to form a contiguous site. As the heart of activity within the network, the Creative Commons site will include a variety of productive landscape features, including an ecological park, an urban farm, greenhouses, basketball courts, and an artscape, in addition to a large public gathering space and a building. Taking inspiration from the four typologies of spontaneous urbanism, the Creative Commons includes spaces to exchange, learn, make, and, most significantly, to gather.

It is designed in an L-shape, with a central gathering space that is oriented towards the creek and receives southern exposure. The interactive ground plane made from recycled wood pallets and the extension of the steel and wood structure creates an adaptable outdoor gathering space for different scales and types of activities. Recycled broken concrete paving from the decommissioned street gives the gathering space a permeable groundcover and also forms steps that allow access to the water. The exchange space is located along the decommissioned street and is covered by a wood trellis. The make space opens directly onto the exchange space via recycled garage doors, which allows for an outdoor workspace or accommodates events such as an open studio night. The learn space contains a training kitchen and moveable partition wall to accommodate different size groups. It opens to the exterior gathering space.

Figure 108| Spatialized program for the Creative Commons.

Clockwise from top left:
Figure 109| Overgrown path in Perrien Park.
Figure 110| View towards Chene St. from Perrien Park.
Figure 111| The one occupied house within the site boundary.
Figure 112| Northeastern High School lot.
Figure 113| Cattails in the Northeastern High School lot.

Figure 114| 1949 aerial photo.
DTE Aerial Photo Collection, Wayne State

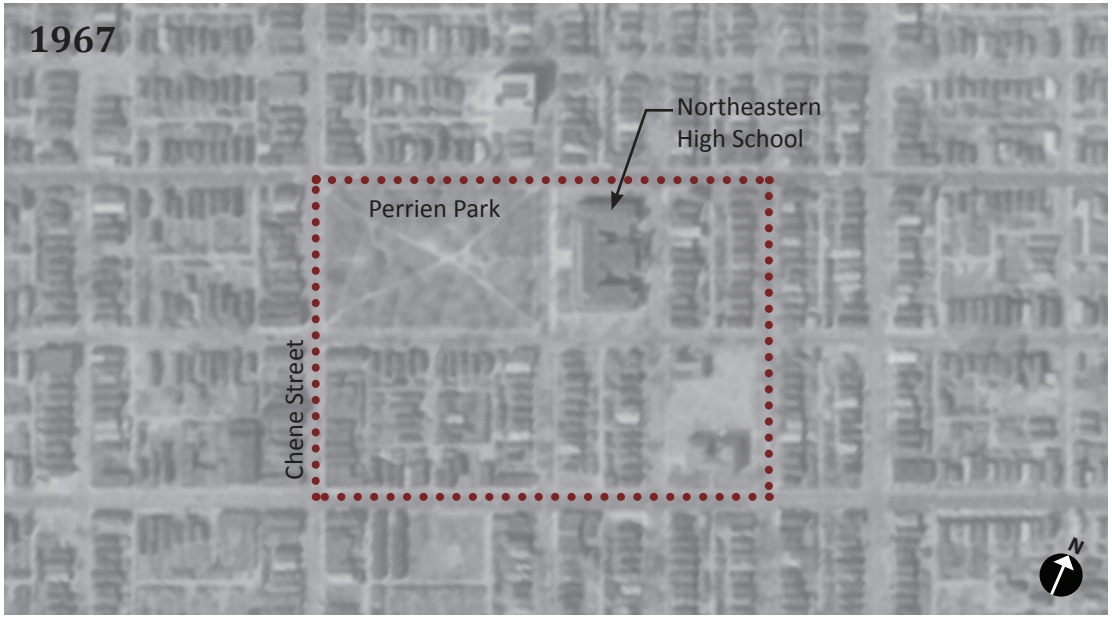


Figure 115| 1967 aerial photo.
DTE Aerial Photo Collection, Wayne State

Figure 116| 1999 aerial photo.
Google Earth

Figure 117| 1967 aerial photo.
Google Earth

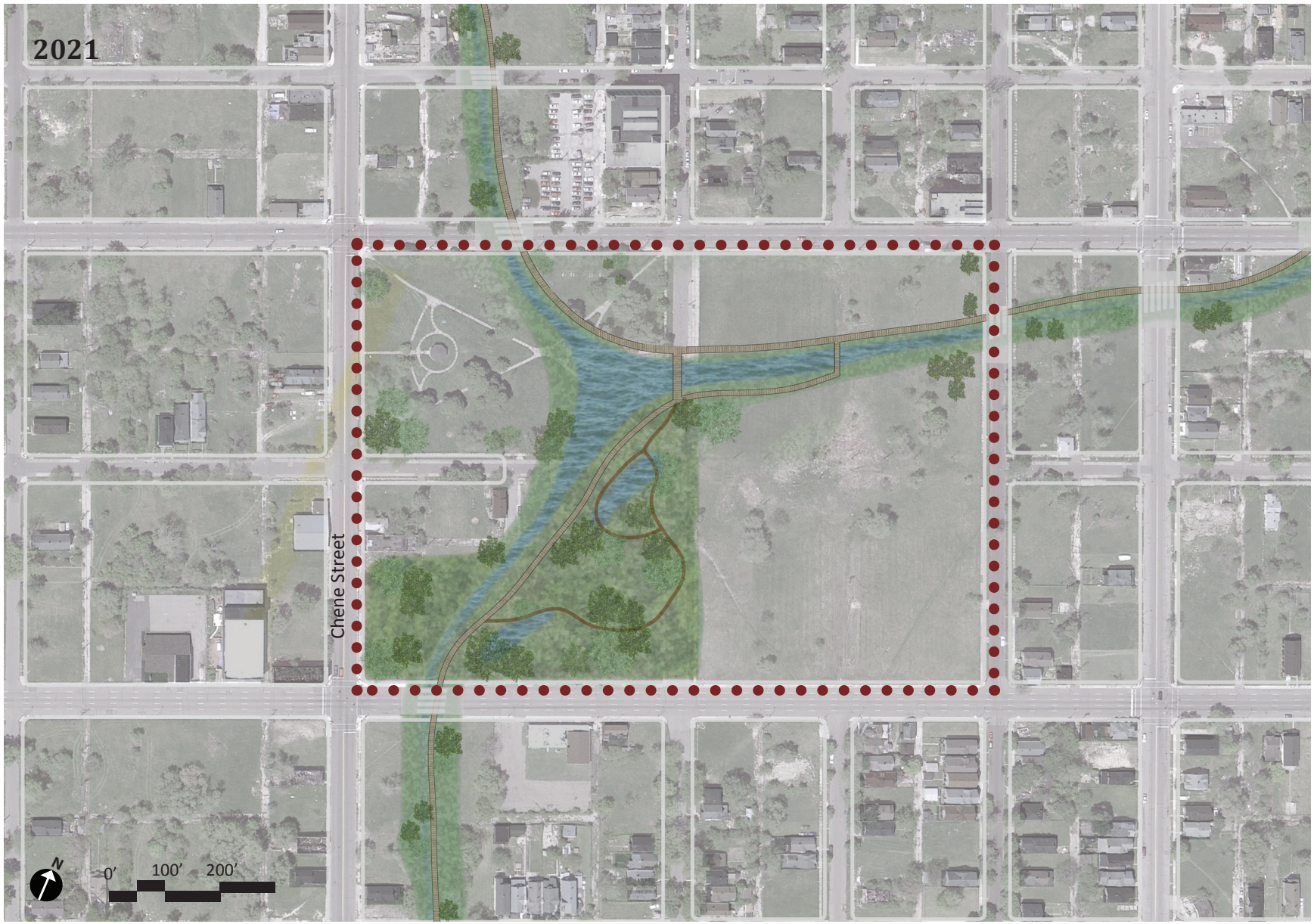


Figure 118| 2021 site plan showing the creek and greenway.

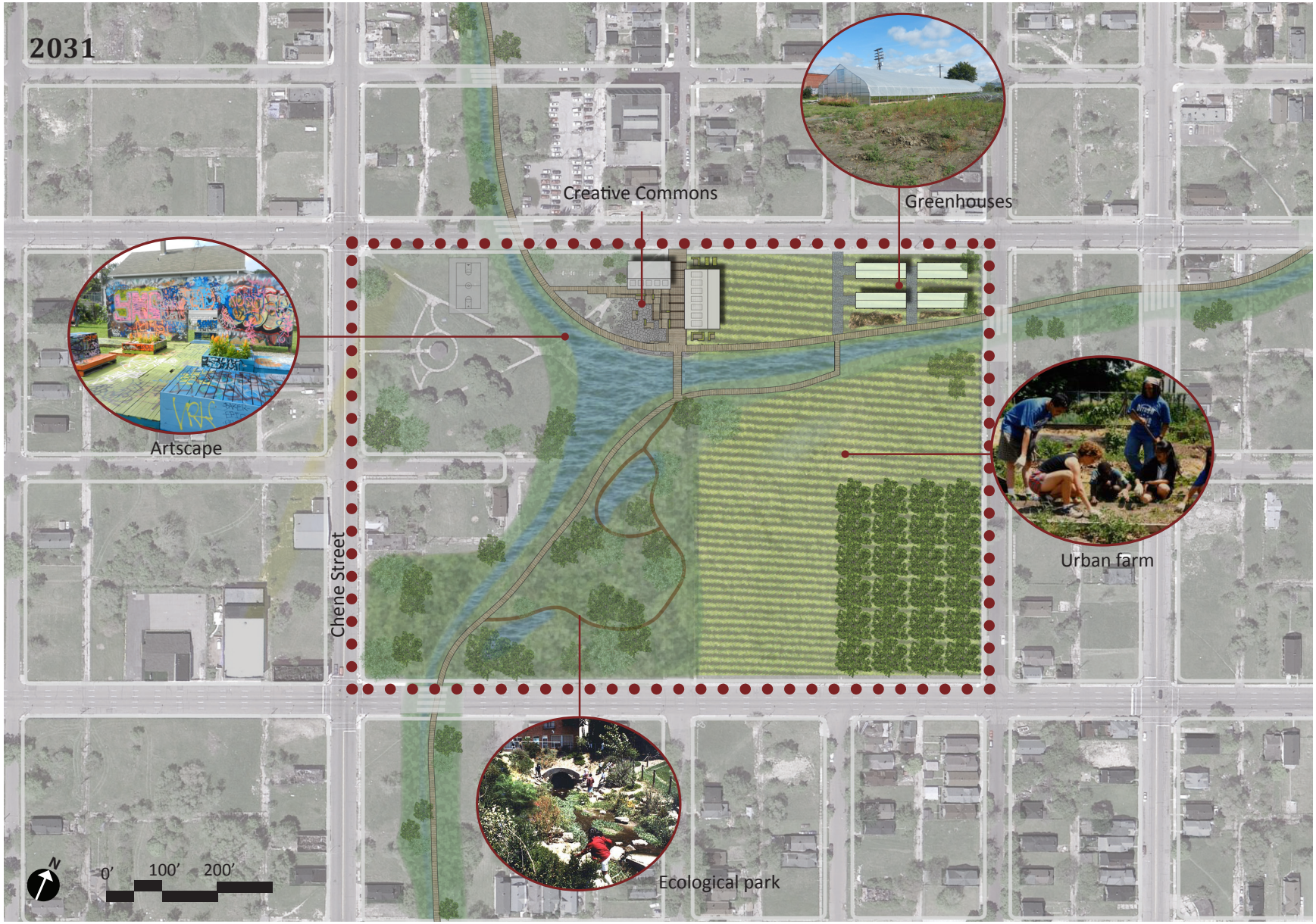


Figure 119| 2031 site plan showing the Creative Commons and landscape.

Figure 120| Creative Commons ground floor plan.

Figure 121| A view from across the water towards the gathering space.

Figure 122| A view of the main gathering space showing how the ground plane and structure can frame activities.

Figure 123| A view of a smaller scale gathering space.

Figure 124| Vicinity photo - Vacant land on proposed site.

Figure 125| Vicinity photo - existing house.

Figure 126| Vicinity photo - existing house with people on the front porch.

Sustainable Residential: Exchange Node

The exchange node reinforces a sustainable residential area that has mid-low vacancy and an active resident base. This type of neighborhood has the social capital to support an exchange space. The following series of images speculates how the intervention of the exchange node could transform the neighborhood.

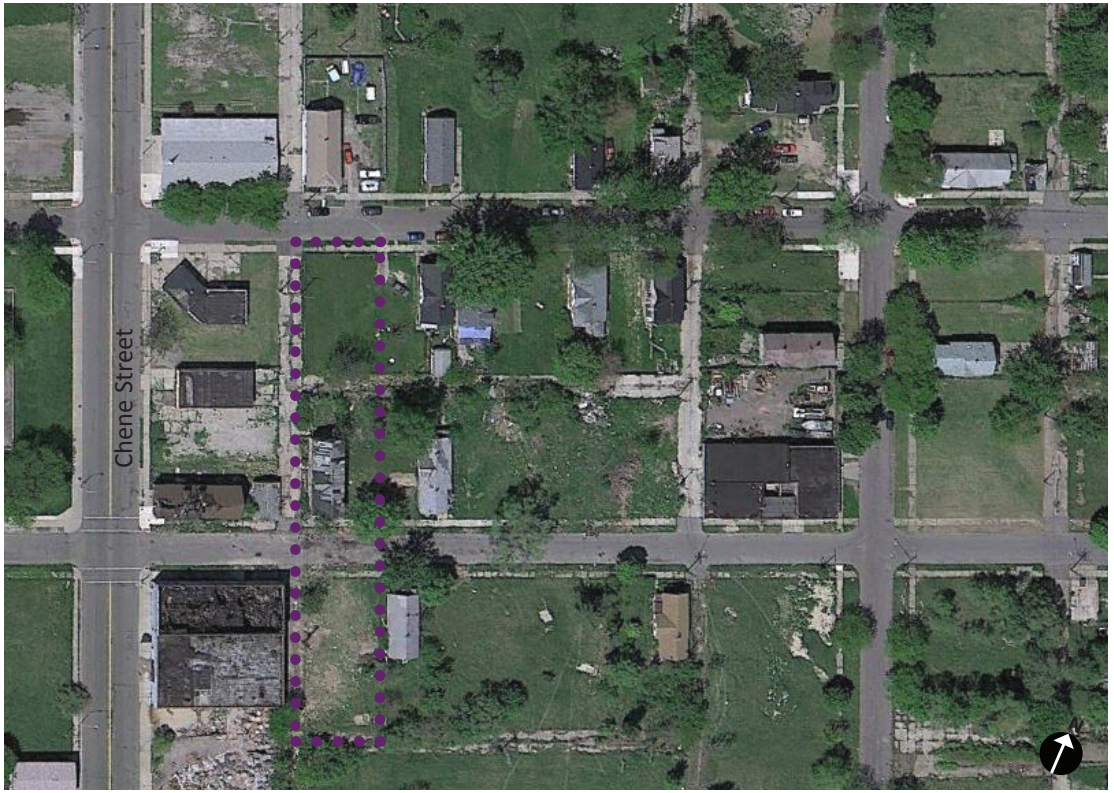
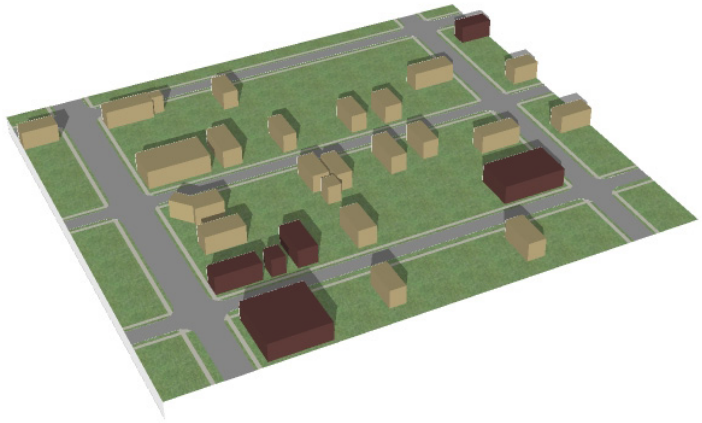
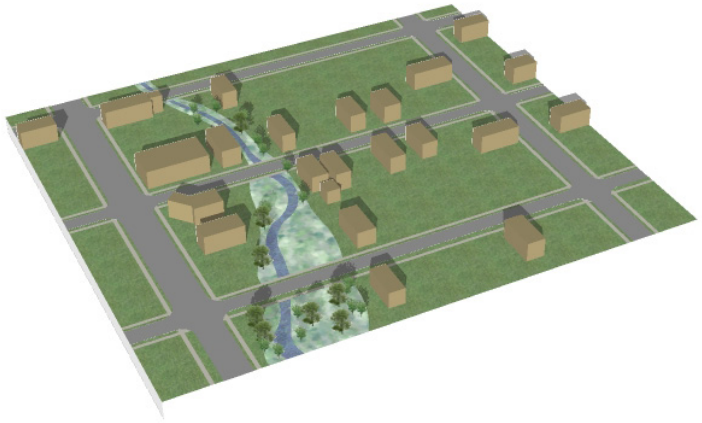


Figure 127| Existing site plan.

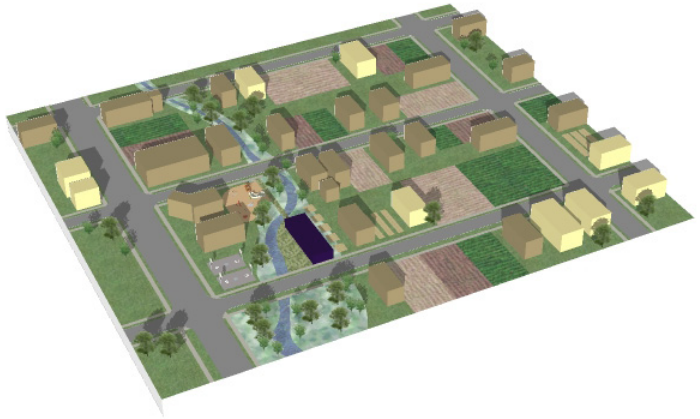


1| Occupied homes are interspersed with vacant land and vacant houses.



2| Vacant structures are deconstructed.
The creek and greenway are established.

3| The *exchange* node is built.
Individual and community gardens are created.



4| The *exchange* node expands to include larger public open spaces.
Some low-density development occurs.
The urban gardens expand.

Figure 128| Sequence envisioning the future of the sustainable residential neighborhood.

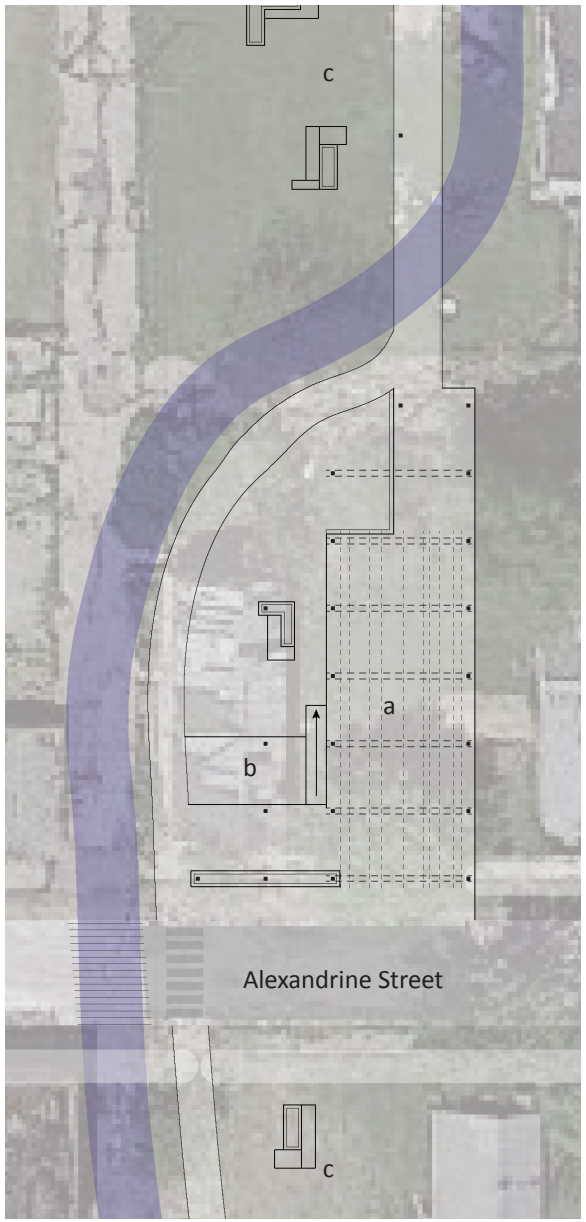


Figure 129| Plan diagram of the exchange intervention.

The exchange intervention consists of a linear wood and steel trellis structure connecting two public playspaces. The trellis structure opens laterally onto a more intimate gathering space adjacent to the creek. Electricity to the trellis and gathering space, which is provided by solar panels mounted on steel columns, allows for the space to be lighted and used at night. Additionally, the trellis, which is shown in the following image covered in vegetation, can also be used to hang signs or covering material.

a. trellis
b. gathering
c. playspace

Figure 130| A view of the exchange space.

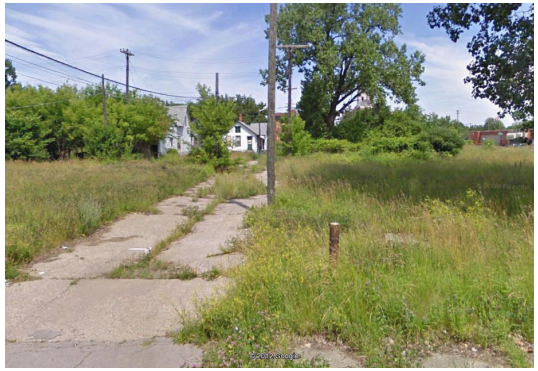


Figure 131| Vicinity photo - An overgrown abandoned driveway.

Figure 132| Vicinity photo - Urban prairie.

Figure 133| Vicinity photo - Vacant land.

Productive Landscape: Learn Node

The learn node establishes a cultivated landscape in an area of high vacancy with a close proximity to Eastern Market. The learn node is located between Chene Street and the greenway in an effort to attract more people. The following series of images speculates how the intervention of the learn node could transform the neighborhood.

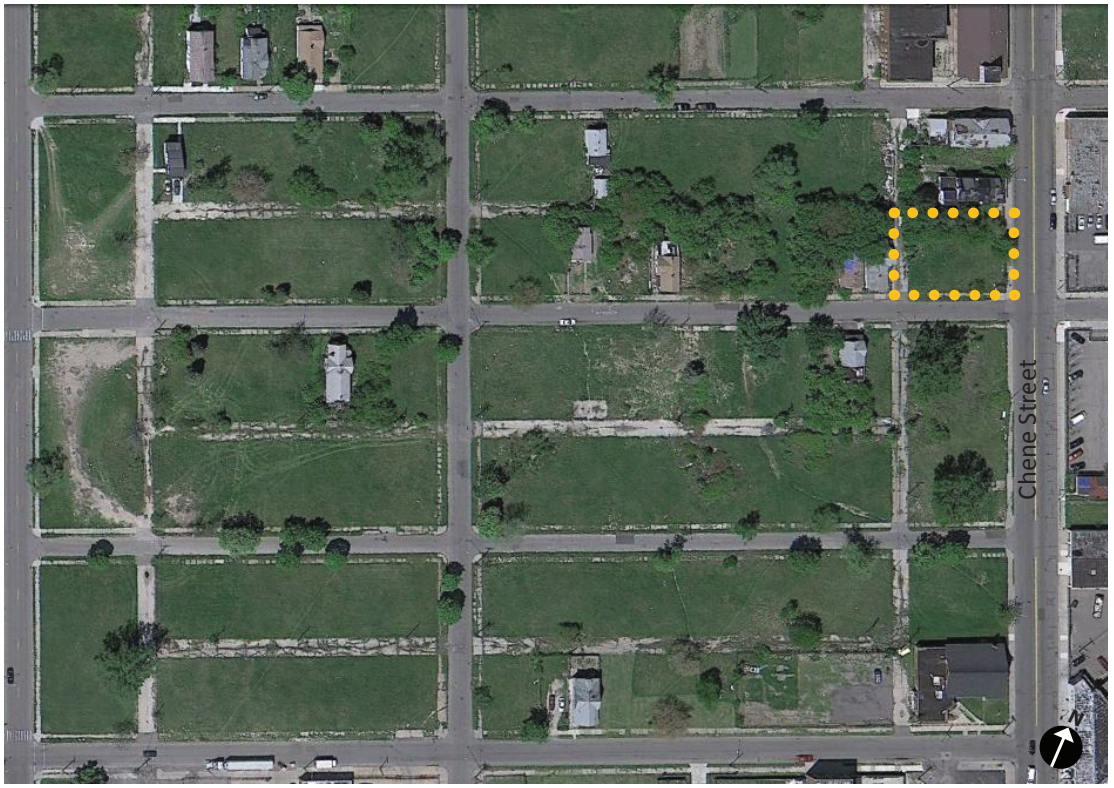
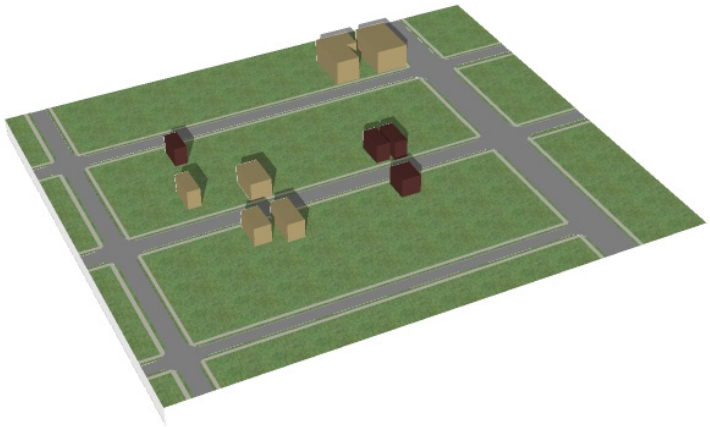


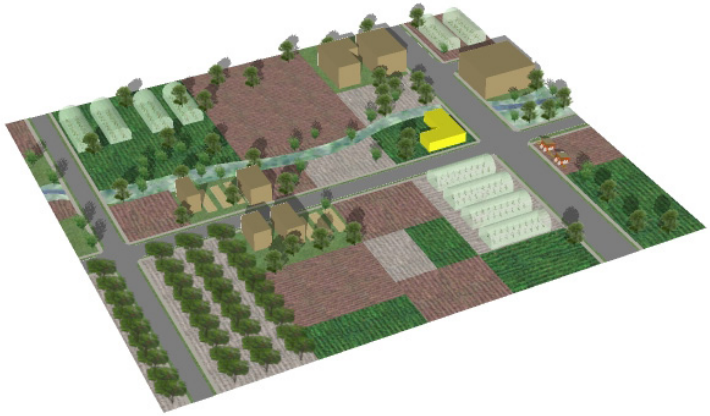
Figure 134| Existing site plan.



1| There are few structures.
The majority of the vacant land is un-maintained.
There are some unused residential streets.

2| Vacant structures are deconstructed.
The creek and greenway are established.

3| The learn node is established.
Community farms and orchards are created.

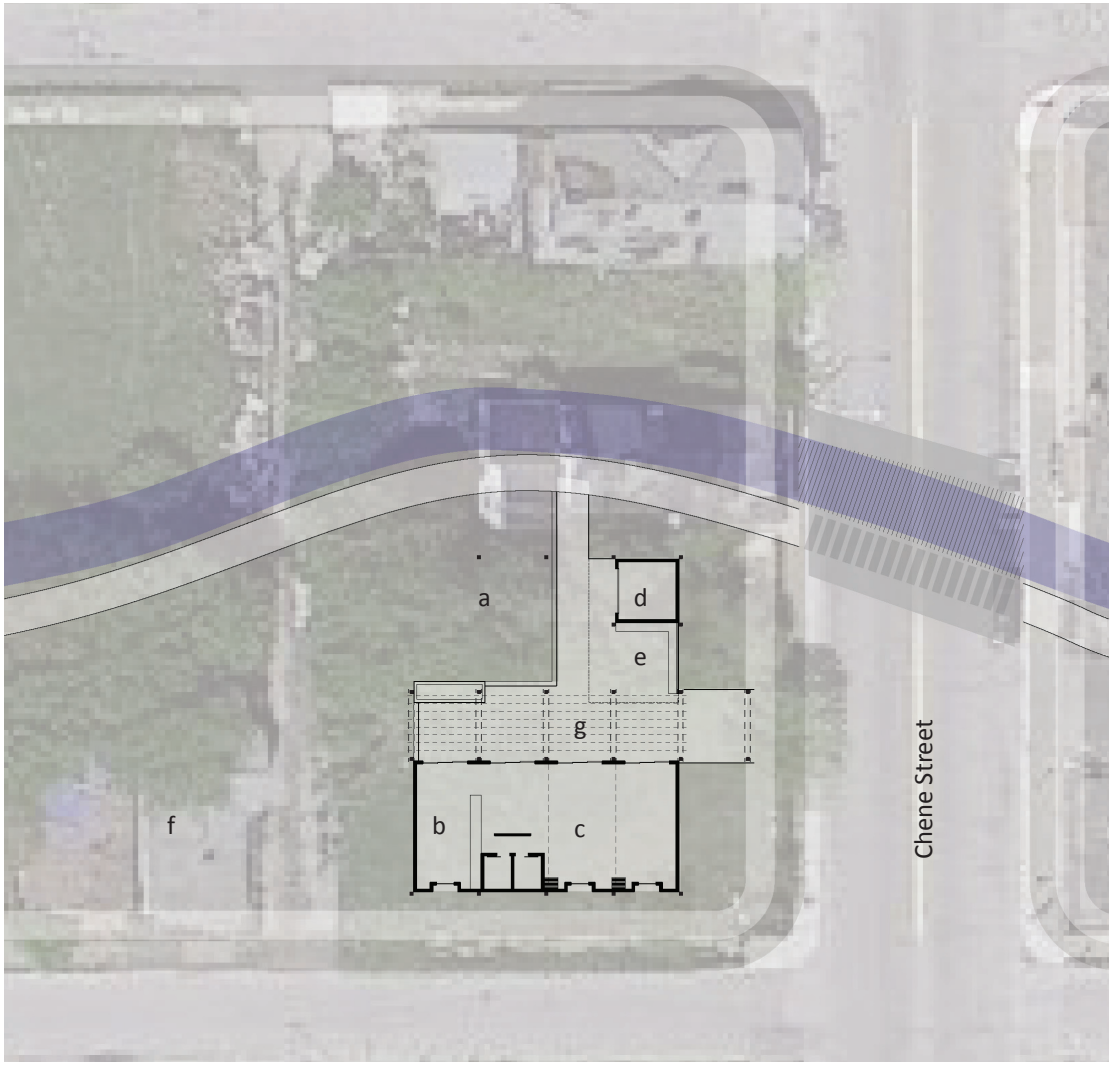


4| Community farms expand.
Greenhouses are built.
Unused roads are decomissioned.

Intervention Vacant Occupied New Greenhouse

Figure 135| Sequence envisioning the future of the productive landscape neighborhood.

The learn space consists of a simple wood and steel structure containing a training kitchen and indoor learning spaces, as well as a toolshed and covered outdoor learning spaces. The L-shape frames a teaching garden that opens towards the greenway, urban farm, and greenhouses beyond.



a. teaching garden
b. training kitchen
c. indoor learning
d. tool shed
e. outdoor learning nook
f. urban farm
g. trellis

Figure 136| Plan diagram of the learn intervention.

Figure 137| A view of the learn space and urban farm beyond.

Figure 138| Vicinity photo - Existing abandoned market structure.

Figure 139| Vicinity photo - An informal garage sale across the street.

Figure 140| Vicinity photo - View of proposed site and market structure beyond.

Collaborative Workspace: Make Node

The make node creates an innovative workspace in an area of mid-high vacancy that is located adjacent to a former market structure.[2] The following series of images speculates how the intervention of the make node could transform the neighborhood.

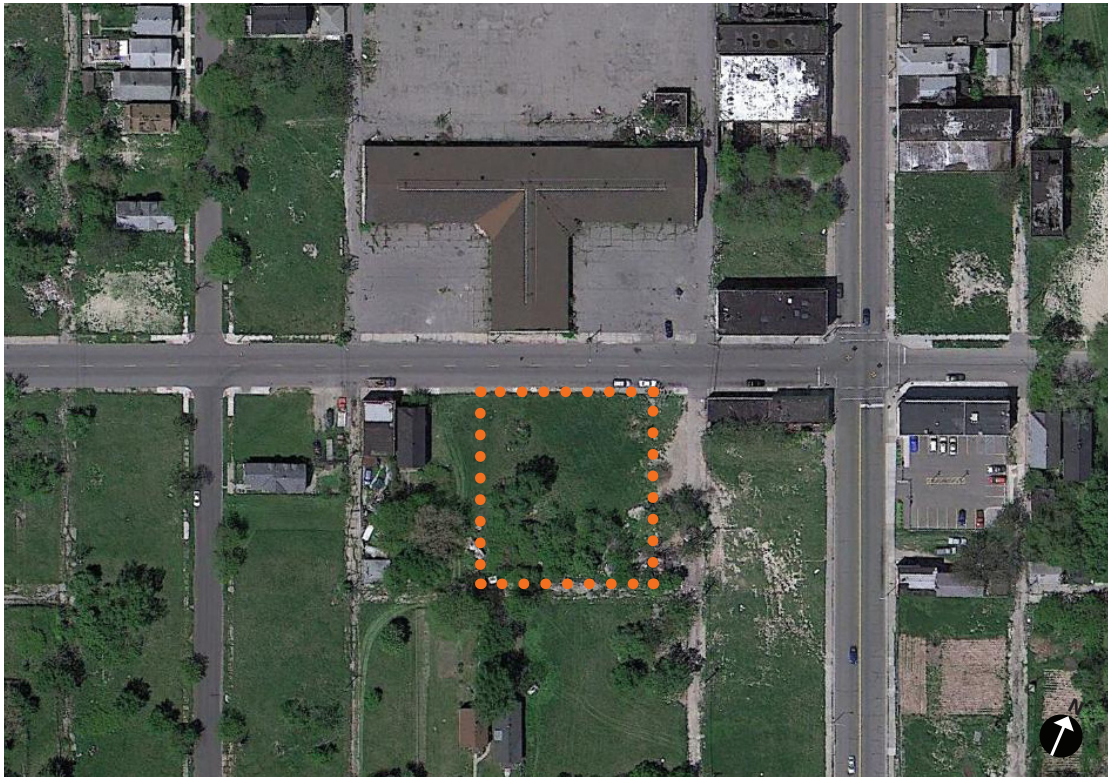
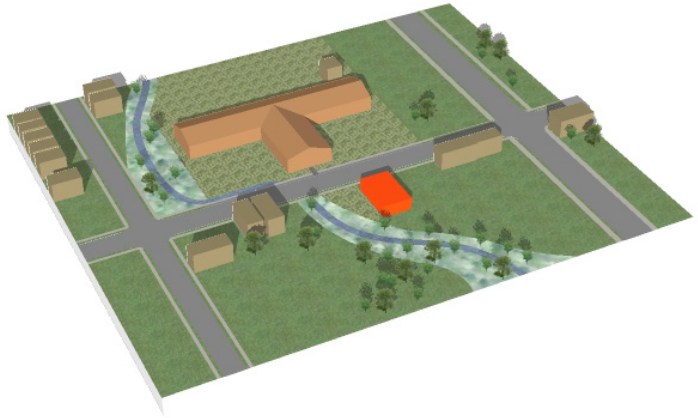


Figure 141| Existing site plan.

1| The neighborhood consists of a mixture of vacant and occupied buildings.
The former abandoned market structure stands vacant.
There are large areas of open space.

2| The vacant buildings are deconstructed.
The creek and greenway are established.



3| The make node is built.
The market structure is activated.

4| Productive landscapes are created.
The market structure is repurposed.
The make program expands to new buildings.

Intervention Vacant Occupied New Market Structure

Figure 142| Sequence envisioning the future of the innovative workspace neighborhood.

The make node establishes a workshop space across the street from the market structure and connected by the greenway. The make structure consists of a large collaborative workspace and two smaller studio spaces, all of which open to a covered outdoor workspace along the creek. By linking the make space with the old market structure, the intention is to re-activate the market structure by creating an adjacent work and storage space.

a. collaborative workshop
b. studios
c. covered workspace
d. market structure
e. gathering space

Figure 143| Plan diagram of make intervention.

Figure 144| A view of the collaborative workshop with the market structure shown beyond.

Implementation

In hypothesizing the conceivable architectural futures that Detroit's terrain vague could support and their possible design realization, a potential strategy of implementation needs consideration. Daylighting the creek in order to establish the ecological infrastructure for the network is proposed as the first step towards creating this new economy. If the term "spontaneous" means "impulsive" or "unplanned," then daylighting a creek is in no way "spontaneous." However, if the term means "free" of dependence on government and top-down development, then the infrastructural project can be carried out at a grassroots level in the spirit of the other interventions described in this thesis. Daylighting the creek may well be the kind of creative, ambitious idea that community members seemed motivated by at the Detroit Works Long-Term Planning meeting in April. In particular, it would address their concerns about safety and a nonfunctional bus system.

The possibility of having a non-motorized system of transportation in a community that is so lacking in viable transportation and that poses such dangers to children and elders would seem to provide a compelling impetus to collaborate on seeking support outside city hall. For example, the Conner Creek Greenway on Detroit's far Eastside, funded by foundation grants, was created as a collaboration among the 20 community organizations in the Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative (DECC). It offers pedestrian and bike paths that connect people and place through an ecological infrastructure similar to the one proposed here. The organizations most likely to be attracted to a collaborative effort to daylight the Bloody Run Creek would be those nearest to the creek, including LEAP and the Detroit Works Project. In addition, given Stephen Vogel's long-term interest in restoring a stretch of the creek and his connection to the DCDC, he is already helping to oversee studies and initial planning and design efforts for a future daylighting project.[3] If such community and academic resources are brought together as this thesis proposes, they could collectively apply for grant money and make the first step of the project a reality. With a success underway, other aspects of the proposal could begin taking shape.

Figure 145| A map envisioning the future of the network, center, and nodes.

Endnotes

1 Vogel, Steve.

2 The Chene Ferry Market is located at Chene and Ferry and was one of several open-air markets established in the 1850s. Located along one of Poletown's main commercial intersections, it functioned as Poletown's version of Eastern Market. When the north end of Poletown was razed for the Cadillac Plant and the area fell into decay, the market followed in suit. It was shut down in 1990 and has remained vacant ever since. Although heavily looted and burned several times, the structure still remains and often functions as an informal gathering space for local residents.

3 This thesis references and gains inspiration and technical information from an executive summary by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center entitled "The Bloody Run Creek Greenway Redevelopment Project," July 29, 2011 but ultimately finds different inspiration and implementation strategies.


Image © 2012 TerraMetrics

V. Conclusion

In cities like Detroit, we know we need a new approach. Abandoned by global corporations, community people are struggling to build more self-reliant, localized economies, growing our own food, and restoring the neighbor to the 'hood.[1]
~Grace Lee Boggs

As Grace Lee Boggs emphasized, the failure of numerous top-down strategies to address the existing population or enliven the vast amount of vacant property in neighborhoods throughout post-industrial cities such as Detroit invites the possibility of an alternative future based on reconnecting community members and establishing local economies. In the case of Detroit, discussions of "rightsizing" the city by consolidating sparse neighborhoods would essentially eliminate current residents; however, as explored in this thesis, these community members have demonstrated that they have the ability to placemake and creatively re-appropriate their urban fabric, demonstrating a resilience.

This thesis set out to envision a new networked future for the Eastside's terrain vague and evolved into an informal, community-based placemaking strategy to create a self-sustaining economy on a 3,000-acre site. The attitude taken by this thesis was to accept the terrain vague as it exists and work to leverage the bottom-up community successes towards a place- and people-

1 Boggs and Kurashige, *xvii*.

Figure 146| A new grassroots economy for the Eastside.

appropriate strategy demonstrating an understanding of Detroit's complex situation and the challenges it presents. The proposal put forth by this thesis capitalizes on the powerful spirit of the community as well as its assets of history, people, ecology and land, to create a synergy and suggest a catalyst for future activity. It provided an incremental, bottom-up process by which this could be implemented by proposing a network, center, and nodes as the framework for spontaneous urbanism. Rooted in this proposal is the need for community participation, which is difficult to articulate in an academic thesis. Ultimately, this thesis took the approach of suggesting an idea inspired by the current community activity. The toolbox was introduced as the method to establish a loose design framework to envision a possible architectural future and guide a potential design realization. The many examples of spontaneous urbanism across the city, including the few that have been discussed herein, are a clear indication that these grassroots, community-initiated activities can and do work and that a network for spontaneous urbanism, as established by the creek and Creative Commons catalysts, can facilitate the emergence of an alternative future for the Eastside community, rooted in Grace Lee Boggs' vision of "bringing the neighbor back to the 'hood" one site at a time.

Selected Bibliography

Boggs, Grace Lee, with Scott Kurashige. *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century.* UC Press, 2012.

Crouch, Patrick. Earthworks Program Manager. Personal interview. Detroit, 18 Sept. 2012.

Daskalakis, Georgia, and Charles Waldheim, and Jason Young, eds. *Stalking Detroit.* Barcelona: Actar, 2001.

Data-Driven Detroit. < http://datadrivendetroit.org/>

Detroit Collaborative Design Center. "The Bloody Run Creek Greenway Redevelopment Project," July 29, 2011.

Detroit Works Long Term Planning Meeting for the Central/Near East Community, Detroit, MI. 5 May 2012.

Doron, Gil. "The Dead Zone and the Architecture of Transgression." *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action 4.2.* 2000.

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative: History." Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Inc. 2012. http://www.dsni.org/ (Accessed 8 Dec. 2012).

Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class.* New York: Basic Books, 2002.

Gallagher, John, "Detroit: Land of Opportunity: Acres of Barren Blocks Offer Chance to Reinvent City," *Detroit Free Press*, Dec. 15, 2008.

Gallagher, John. *Reimagining Detroit.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010.

Green Guerillas. <http://www.greenguerillas.org> (Accessed 7 June 2012)

Greenways Initiative: Planning for Detroit's Rail-Trails." Rails-To-Trails Conservancy for the Greenways Initiative, Oct. 2002.

Growing Power. < http://growingpower.org/>

Guyton, Tyree. <www.heidelberg.org/>

Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place.* The MIT Press, Cambridge: 1997.

Heximer, Christina. Associate Director DCDC. Personal interview. Detroit. 4 May 2012.

Interboro Partners, "Improve Your Lot!" 2006. <http://www.interboropartners.net/2008/improve-your-lot/> (Accessed 19 Feb. 2012).

John's Carpet House and Pete's Place. 2012. <http://www.johnscarpethouse.com/portal/index.php?page=10> (Accessed 20 Sept. 2012)

Kretzmann, John P, and John McKnight. *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.* Evanston, Ill: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Neighborhood Innovations Network, Northwestern University, 1993.

Landry, Charles. *The Creative City.* London: Earthscan, 2008.

Lévesque, Luc. "The Terrain Vague as Material – Some Observations." 2002. <http://www.amarrages.com/textes_terrain.html> (Accessed 8 May 2012).

Moon, Whitney. "Reclaiming the Ruin: Detroit's Second Coming?" *Places 21.1,* College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley, 2009.

Neighbors Building Brightmoor. <http://neighborsbuildingbrightmoor.org/>

Nobert, Frank and Jean-Francois Prost. "Detroit Ville Résiliente," *Esse Arts + Opinions,* 2005. http://www.amarrages.com/textes_detroit.html (Accessed 21 May 2012).

O'Leary, Ceara. Enterprise Rose Fellow for the DCDC. Personal interview. Detroit, 14 Sept. 2012.

Oswalt, Philipp. *Shrinking Cities*: v. 1. Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2005.

Park, Kyong ed. U*rban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*, Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers, 2005.

Schneekloth, Lynda H., and Robert G. Shibley. Placemaking: The Art and Practices of Building Communities. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.

Solà-Morales, Ignasi. "Terrain Vague." *Anyplace*. Ed. Cynthia Davidson. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit.* Princeton University Press, 1998.

Sutton, Sharon E., and Susan P. Kemp eds. *The Paradox of Urban Space: Inequality and Transformation in Marginalized Communities.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

The Point. <http://thepoint.org/mission.php> (Accessed July 15, 2012).

"The Story of Recovery Park," SHAR Foundation, Inc. <http://recoverypark.org/>

Vogel, Steve. "Detroit (Re)Turns to Nature," France, R L. *Handbook of Regenerative Landscape Design.* Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2008.

Vogel, Steve. Former Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Detroit Mercy and co-founder of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center. Personal interview. Detroit, 18 Sept. 2012.

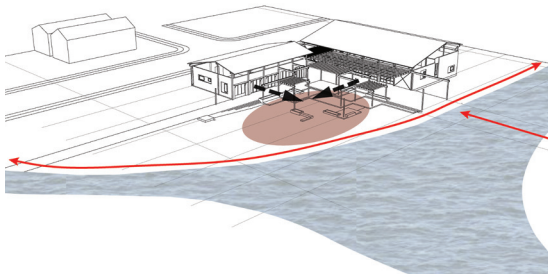
Wylie, Jeanie. *Poletown: Community Betrayed.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

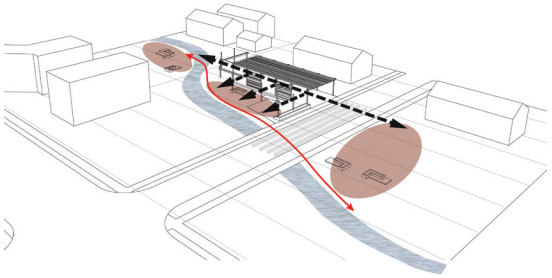
Appendix

The appendix includes diagrams illustrating how the toolbox and its urban principles, performance criteria, and kit of parts guided the design of the Creative Commons and three nodes.

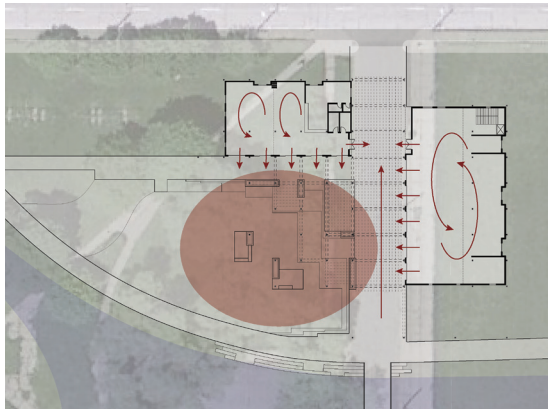
Creative Commons

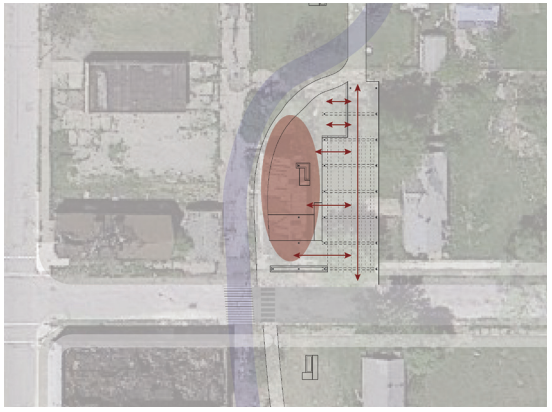
Exchange



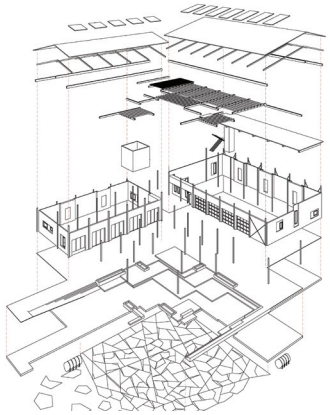


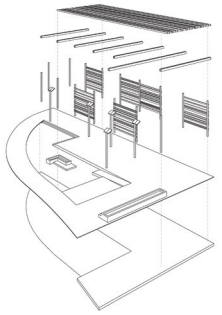
Urban principles diagrams.





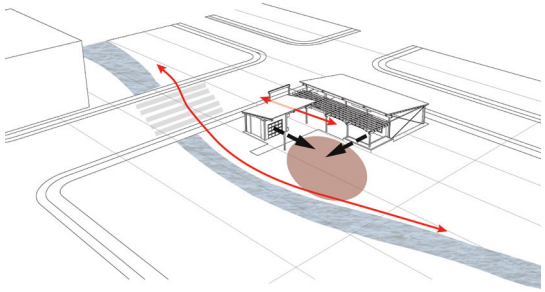
Performance criteria diagrams.

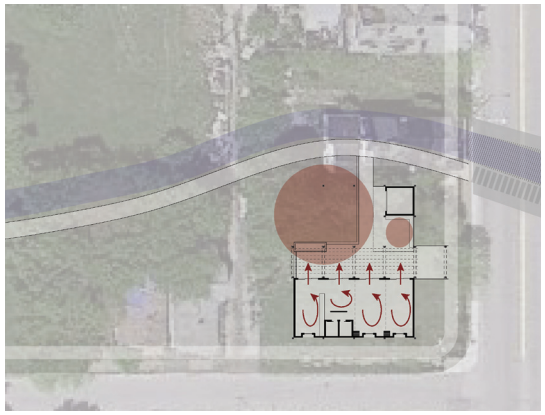


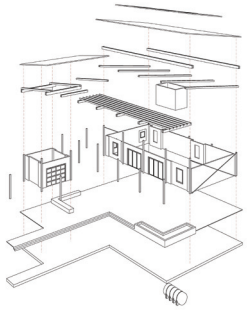


Kit of parts diagrams.

Learn







Make