

THE F.R.E.E. PROJECT

Framework and Resources For Empowering Environments

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Table of Contents

Prologue	4
Chapter 1: Group Lens	5-11
HOPE Model.....	5-7
Three S's.....	7-9
Methodology.....	9-11
Chapter 2: The McDougall-Hunt Community.....	11-30
Historical Conditions.....	11-16
Human Conditions.....	16-19
Organizational Conditions.....	20-23
Physical Conditions.....	23-25
Economic Conditions.....	25-30
Chapter 3: The Community of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE).....	30-35
Chapter 4: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).....	36-39
Chapter 5: Project Framework	39-42
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations	42-46
Creating Ownership.....	42-43
Recommendations.....	44-46
Appendices	47-52
Appendix A: Social Location of the Authors.....	47-48
Appendix B: Additional Photographs.....	49-50
Appendix C: Additional Maps.....	50
Appendix D: Student Designs.....	51-52

Prologue

A Capstone Project in the University of Detroit Mercy's Master of Community Development (MCD) Program is a final way of testing what students have learned from their experiences in the program while challenging them to work in a community to the fullest of their capabilities. This is a dive into the practice of doing real community development. A Capstone allows students to work with residents in a community to address a challenge through the design of a community led solution. Capstone groups immerse themselves in community engagement, leading to problem identification, project design and community-based development.

For this capstone, the Capstone Team engaged with the McDougall-Hunt community on the east side of Detroit. This engagement resulted in the identification of a problem and a community partner attempting to address the problem. The Bailey Park Project, a 501c3 organization, aimed to restore the blighted lots in the neighborhood but lacked the large equipment needed to do so. The intent of the Capstone is to use the "HOPE Model" of community development to highlight the McDougall-Hunt community. The Capstone initially focused on a small lot in the southern portion of McDougall-Hunt as a pilot project. The affiliated community organizations hosted neighborhood workshops for local residents and school children to design the pilot.

As the dimensions of the problem became clearer, the Capstone Team also recognized the need to engage with a second community: the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and private contractors in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) community. The DBE Program is a community of contractors who possess the ability to help The Bailey Park Project place local vacant lots into a sustainable position. The Bailey Park Project is in a similar position to help DBEs through providing an environment in which the DBE earns valuable work experience. With this project it is hoped that the DBE contractors develop the tools to work more effectively, making them competitive on a state-contract level. As a result, this project has many different players with different goals. The Capstone team's role was to bring these players together.

This project leverages existing assets, utilizes existing programs, and encourages community collaboration between organizations, all the while creating environments conducive to sustainable and socially equitable development. This is a story of a team of students, residents, organizations, and businesses working collaboratively to design a framework that combines resources used to empower environments, i.e., The FREE Project. This story also shows a design and implementation of a multi-beneficial and sustainable community development project. All the aspects of this project, including the name, have grown organically from the community through the MCD Capstone Team's methods and practices. This book will explain these potential uses and benefits while offering action-oriented suggestions to all of the various stakeholders.

Chapter 1: Group Lens

A group lens is the viewpoint from which the capstone team processes the information it receives. A group lens is a combination of academic research, life experience, and social location. Social location is the collection of internal and external forces that influence the growth and perception of an individual throughout their lives (See Appendix A). This book considers academic research to be the collection of information, the methods of gathering information and the learned methods of processing information. When these three elements are combined the group lens explains how and why the capstone team interacts with influences and information (See Figure 1).

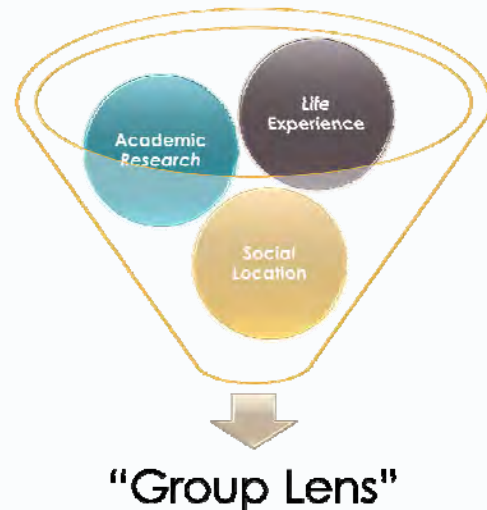


Figure 1: Group Lens

While conducting its research, the Capstone team began to work with community residents, organizations and stakeholders of the McDougall-Hunt community in the design of a sustainable community development project that aims to address certain injustices created by existing structures. The aim of this book is for the reader to be able to understand the project developed by the community and Capstone team. A secondary aim is for the reader to identify potential benefits and detriments of the project and its implementation. The Capstone Team works from a social justice perspective that supports connecting a community to the resources it needs in order to identify and overcome challenges and to empower community environments.

The HOPE Model

The HOPE Model is a pillar of the MCD Program and stands for Human, Organizational, Physical, and Economic Development. This model is designed to show that no one focus of development can happen without the others and that truly beneficial development occurs when these various elements occur together. For example, a business or an organizational structure may strongly focus on the economic development aspects of a project. The economic aspects of a new development project are determined by the physical layout of the new development and the customer (human) acceptance of the design. When human needs (health, employment, education) or physical layout are overlooked in pursuit of marginal changes in perceived economic benefits (monetary return on investment), the economic plans are flawed and often fail to achieve projected results (cost benefit analysis). The plans

inevitably fall apart and cannot be considered successful or beneficial to a community or an organization.

A successful development plan incorporates all the aspects of the HOPE Model to paint a more realistic and holistic picture of what the development will actually become. The HOPE Model is a dynamic system relationship and a form of comparative analysis that accounts for measurable variables attributing to (or preventing) the sustainable development of communities. This relies on intense research projects and the development of critical thinking

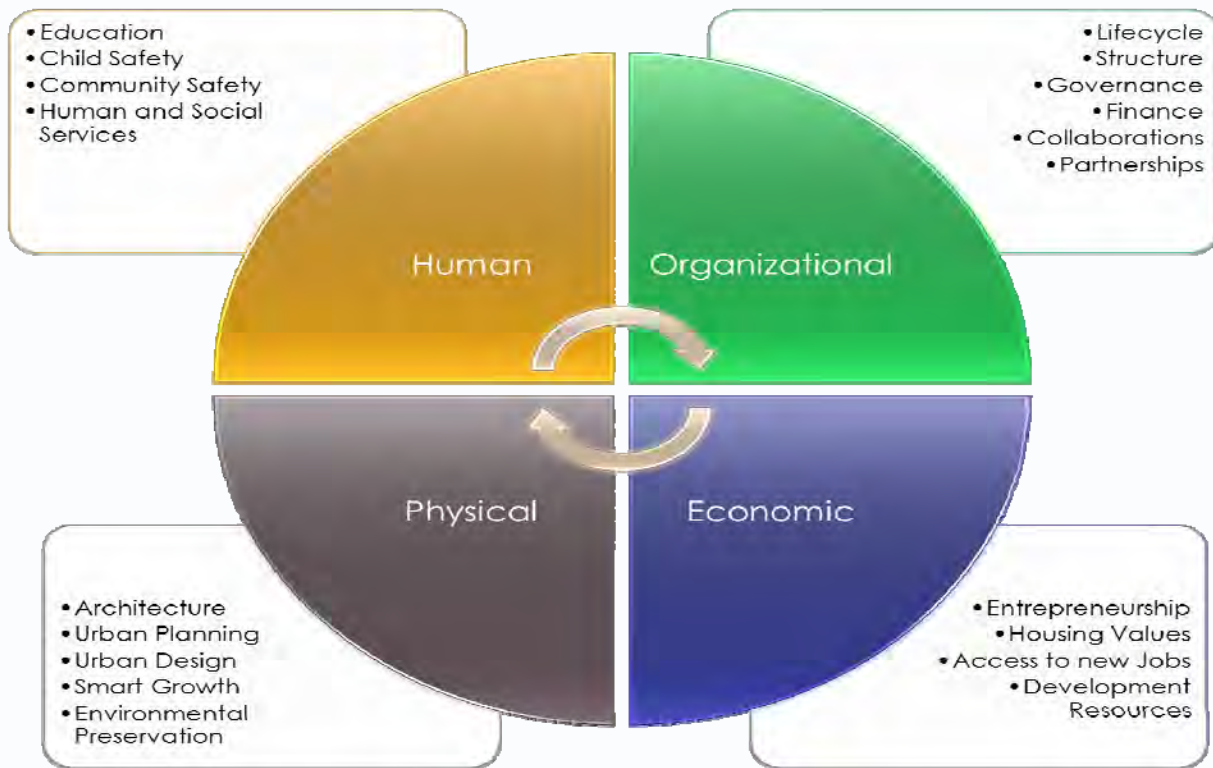


Figure 2: Hope Model

skills. In order to better understand the symbiotic relationship of the HOPE Model the reader should understand the contexts of the various individual aspects of HOPE. The following section will begin to explain human, organizational, physical, and economic development schemata (See Figure 2). This will provide a brief introduction of the policies and practices of these forms of development observed in society and, more importantly, what is considered in the formation or creation of the Capstone Team’s knowledge base as it relates to the “FREE Project.”

Human Development may be understood simply as the provision of the most basic human needs and opportunities for development through the entirety of one’s lifecycle. Lifecycle may be understood as a chronological progression of human life through various developmental stages, including birth to infancy, through adolescence, to adulthood, into our elderly stages and inevitable passing. Simply put, human development practices aim to make sure that everyone has what he or she needs in order to develop their human capabilities in the context of a safe and healthy life.

Organizational Development addresses issues oriented to the interworking of groups, agencies, organizations, corporations, and institutions. Organizational development efforts aim to stabilize or improve the production levels of a particular group. Various aspects of a group are researched in the study of Organizational Development. The successful operation and positive growth of a non-profit organization is heavily reliant on seven arenas: finance, governance, marketing, staff, leadership, administrative systems, and products and services (Simon, 11). Studying the interworking of organizations includes searching for best team practices, client results, and measurable environmental impacts. Within the MCD Program's definition of organizational development, the organizations' interworking and exterior deliverables are measured by their influence on matters of economic, physical, and human development.

Physical Development is very much oriented to design and development of communities. Beyond appearance and function, design has strong implications for the everyday action of humans. For example, the way in which our roads or public transportation systems are designed has direct impact on not only how far or how fast people travel, but also where people choose to live and spend time. Often this is a subconscious variable considered in the decision to live, work, or play in a physical space. As the MCD program is housed in UDM's School of Architecture, strong importance is placed on urban planning, urban design, architecture, and engineering because it is in these educational arenas that consideration is given to the physical layout of a space as it directly and indirectly impacts the actions of human beings and their daily lives.

Economic development is a process that should serve to provide the basic and intrinsic necessities of human development. Economic Development is a process by which goods and services are produced, distributed, utilized, and retained in the hopeful creation of profit and financial growth. Holistic economic development occurs through healthy organizational development, and encourages the protection, preservation, and sustainable development of the surrounding physical areas. Areas and communities may provide more versatile and stable employment opportunities where economic development efforts are successful. Moreover, these successful arenas of economic development will also house a diverse human population, a vast stretch of assets, amenities, and prominent businesses. Increases in economic activity, employment, population, and entertainment will subsequently lead to an increase in the available tax-base which governmental bodies can use to improve public goods and services.

The Three S's

The Three S's are Service, Sustainability, and Social Justice. These values comprise the foundational ideology of the MCD Program, the ideology which shapes what the students learn and experience as they develop comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of community development. These pillars are also interconnected in their application in community development (See Figure 3).

Service

Service is not about charity. The aspect of service utilized by the Capstone team is about an integrative and reflexive learning process. This is to say that when individuals are deeply involved in service opportunities, the individuals will be placed into an environment in which the server learns from the served and vice versa. Too often it is easy to look at service as one group giving to another group. Even the common saying, “give a man a fish he eats for a day, but teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime,” has an intrinsic meaning that within this arena of service we find a teacher and a learner. This is not what happens in community development.

Service, in regards to community development, uses shared knowledge to create environments conducive to holistic forms of development and empowers people to connect to or create resources that allow for these environments to exist. Service aims to improve relations between involved parties and even blur the lines between server and served, teacher and learner. As a major goal of this Capstone Project, service is a mutual learning process that should be conducted with a constant curiosity and a mutual respect for one another.



Figure 3: Three s's

Sustainability

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) describes sustainability as follows, “Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations” (United States Environmental Protection Agency). This definition correlates to the ideology of the MCD Program, as sustainability may refer to the long-term, effective, and efficient operation of a closed-loop system. Sustainability certainly holds implications for the development of local communities; indeed sustainability should be encouraged through dense, mixed-use walkable communities that minimize waste and energy-dependencies. Sustainability is not just a catch phrase used to describe green environments, but is an encompassing term that deals with the question of how an organization, project, or community may develop, operate and change over time, to meet the on-going needs of people.

Social Justice

The definition of social justice used in this book incorporates research and analysis into the structural forces that create issues of unequal access, opportunity, distribution of wealth, employment and safety in a community. In a city like Detroit, the focus of Social Justice raises questions about the current state of inner city communities. Different socio-economic structures impacting the City of Detroit have created considerable amounts of poverty and

vacancy in many communities, while wealth remains concentrated elsewhere. The unequal distribution of resources and revenues has created an increasingly widened gap of haves and have-nots. The concentration of poverty to particular neighborhoods throughout Detroit creates a general barrier to interconnectedness, equal opportunity and effective participation in society.

This concept has been developed through the views of many black feminist thinkers, such as Patricia Hill Collins, who explain that there are several forms of oppression that have led to the impoverishment of black women. These include racial oppression, gender oppression, and class oppression (Collins, 4). These multiple forms of oppression have led to the marginalization of African American women, not only in participation in society as a whole, but in the intellectual pursuit of justice and equality. The effective suppression of black women's thought was a means to protect the white elite males and uphold social inequalities that maintain the status quo (Collins, 5). This multifaceted form of suppression has created a vital analytical foundation for a distinctive standpoint amongst African American women regarding self, community, and society (Collins, 3). Collins explains African American women experience economic, political and ideological forms of oppression (Collins, 4-8). Economic oppression occurs in the form of ghettoization of African American women laborers in free labor, cheap labor, or exploitation (Collins, 4). Political oppression occurs in the form of a lack of rights for African American women, suppression of voting throughout history, the lack of African American women in political or governmental office, lower qualities of available education, and the practices within the criminal justice system (Collins, 4). Finally, the ideological oppression of African American women occurs throughout portrayals of African American women in the media using negative stereotypes such as lacking intelligence, morals, work ethic, self-determination, or self-control (Collins, 5). Most importantly, these three forms of oppression (economic, political, and Ideological) occur within institutions, and institutional oppression is a prominent aspect of structural injustices within the USA. Together, these forms of *continuous* institutional oppression have led to cyclical poverty and the perpetual subordination of African American women throughout the centuries. This book makes an effort to address issues regarding the politics of knowledge in a community. Efforts in social justice, like the examples that will be revealed in this book, address and promote repressed or "subjugated" knowledge while creating access to institutionalized knowledge for marginalized groups.

Methodology

The methodology of a Capstone is not a linear process. It is a constant stream of different parts of the project coming together and intermingling. Much like the interdisciplinary academic foundations of the MCD program, the Capstone would inherently evolve from a system relationship, fluidly adapting to changing environments and informational awareness. The Capstone Team started with a Community-Based Needs Assessment but quickly branched from that needs assessment into all of the different aspects of the project. Physical assessments led to a revision in the findings and suggestions based on

the original needs assessment which led to more collaboration with various new groups. Each new group led to a reconfiguration of the understanding of the FREE Project which came back into a revisited needs assessment. Every new change caused a reflection on how much the Capstone Team learned from previous case studies. Often the Team found that they needed



new case studies in order to apply new information, inevitably changing their knowledge base regarding the community. After the initial phases of research and analysis were conducted, a project design was laid out and shared with the involved parties and stakeholders. All the collaboration started over again with the utilization and incorporation of new information and feedback for the proposed plan. The process starts over while simultaneously progressing forward. The Capstone may be considered an organism that needs all the parts to communicate, interact, and cooperate at the same time in order to be successful. When the pieces move together it is an unbelievably productive method for achieving a rich and complex community project. The aforementioned methodology seen in Figure 4 consisted of in person interviews, phone

Figure 4: Methodology

interviews, culturally based needs assessments, asset mapping, vacancy mapping, multiple and continued site visits, desk research, census data and interpretation, along with case study analyses that all revolved in a constant cycle of information.

Secondary Community Engagement

It seems obvious that residents of a community can most accurately portray the conditions of their community. In a city like Detroit it is imperative that a researcher understands community engagement projects that have previously been conducted in a community. Detroit has multiple research groups acting in and around communities. These groups investigate conditions that may have been previously researched. Over time, this can

seem like oversampling to the residents. It is the responsibility of all researchers entering a community to find out what they can about previously conducted community research so that residents are not asked to continuously repeat the information they have already shared. It is therefore imperative when entering a community that researchers make a sustained and determined effort to find out who has been sharing information, who has been researching the community, and what information has already been obtained. Above all, as a matter of respect to the people who live in a community, always note that you are an outsider and a guest. One should have the courtesy to find information that may be available before entering a community, while remaining constantly curious and open to new information upon entering the community. Informed questions are better received than basic questions being asked for the nth time.

Chapter 2: The McDougall-Hunt Community

The McDougall-Hunt community shown in Figure 5 is located in Southeast Detroit with a northern and western border of Gratiot Avenue, an eastern border of Mt. Elliot Boulevard and a southern border of Vernor Highway. This community was selected for a number of reasons. The Capstone team saw the potential physical advantages that this location has and wanted to investigate more.

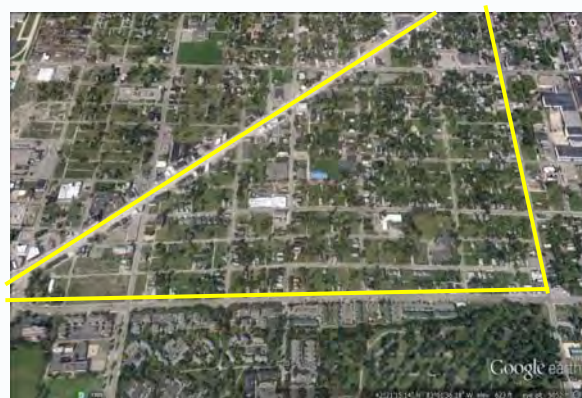


Figure 5: McDougall-Hunt Community VIA Google

Historical Conditions

Historically, the area was part of the Ribbon Farms during the 1700's and is in the area through which Bloody Run Creek flowed. This place offered a dark "black bottom" of nutrient-rich soil and plenty of access to fresh water. This area was annexed by the City of Detroit in 1857 (Wayne County, 245). The map shown in Figure 6 is from 1873, showing limited development in the western portions of this community (Robinson). Local resident Willie Watkins shared his early understandings of the diversity in the neighborhood by acknowledging the different cultural identities and explaining that by the early 1900's the area was predominantly German, Polish and Italian with a growing African American population. Watkins noted that the neighborhood was growing rapidly in light of the upswing in the auto industry yet remained a mixed-race and mixed-income neighborhood. The area known today as McDougall-Hunt was not only a flourishing residential community home to influential Detroit citizens, it was a community sharing in the larger context of Detroit's metropolitan growth. This increase in population and housing is evident in historical records regarding the regional and metropolitan growth of Detroit as a city. During the 1920's and 1930's,



Figure 6: 1873 Development map constructed by Eugene Robinson

prominent members of this community continued to build connections and influence as schools, libraries, and public services became increasingly available to the east side neighborhoods.

Notable local historian Frank Bury Woodford (1903-1967) has carefully documented important figures and events throughout Detroit's history and is considered one of the city's greatest historians. His work *Parnassus on Main Street: A History of the Detroit Public Library* meticulously documents the developmental history of Detroit Public Libraries.

On March 1, 1903, following a recommendation from Library Commissioner George Osius, the second branch library in the history of Detroit was moved from the Harris School to a rented store on Gratiot Ave. near McDougall St. for \$20 a month. The George S Hosmer Branch Public Library in present day McDougall-Hunt was designed by famous architect Louis Kamper and erected between 1910 and 1911. This library is located on the corner of Gratiot Avenue and Pulford Street. This branch closed in 1932 amidst the Great Depression (and ironically amidst some of the strongest years in Detroit Public Library's existence) and the building was gifted to the Detroit Board of Health. Today the building lies vacant and in a significant state of disrepair (see Figure 7). While not historically designated, this structure is certainly historically significant. There are six other locally designated historic buildings in and around the McDougall-Hunt Community. This includes the 3rd District Police Station (Gratiot Ave and Hunt St.), Engine House No. 11 (Gratiot Ave. and Grandy St.), Engine House No. 18 (Mt. Elliot St.), and Harmony Church (Mt. Elliot St. and Hendricks St.). The Miller School (Chene St. and Waterloo Rd.) and the Sibley Lumber Company Office Building (Kercheval St.



Figure 7: George S. Hosmer Branch Library on Gratiot in 2013 (left) and 1914 (right, courtesy of Detroit Public Library publication and Beaufait St.) both lie just outside of McDougall-Hunt. The current states of these buildings vary in terms of physical status and occupancy.

In the early 1900s, many African Americans migrated north to Detroit seeking employment in the city's growing industries. Racially discriminatory housing covenants forced most of them to settle in Black Bottom. This in turn shifted the connotation of the name from a reference to the nutrient rich soil to a racial identifier. According to the Detroit Historical Society, Black Bottom was bound by Gratiot Ave., Brush St., Vernor Hwy. and the Grand Trunk Railroad Tracks (Da Via). As thousands of blacks streamed into Black Bottom, the community swelled with vibrant cultural, educational and social amenities. The district reached its social, cultural and political peak in 1920. Blacks owned 350 businesses in Detroit, most within Black Bottom. Black Bottom additionally boasted "17 physicians, 22 lawyers, 22 barbershops, 13 dentists, 12 cartage agencies, 11 tailors, 10 restaurants, 10 real estate dealers, 8 grocers, 6 drugstores, 5 undertakers, 4 employment agencies" (Da Via). However, discriminatory housing covenants and segregation legislation continued to force blacks into singular neighborhoods. This created an environment in which multiple forms of oppression would occur, namely exploitation and marginalization.

Confined to tight spaces, residents of the Black Bottom community were forced to pay high rents and live in increasingly squalid conditions in order to have access to the employment opportunities. Growth within the black communities of Detroit led to physical expansions that grew increasingly closer to existing white communities, one of which was the current McDougall-Hunt Community. This was in turn matched by federal housing laws and projects aimed to inhibit the expansion of black families into other communities of Detroit. Racial tensions rose as the black population grew from just over 40,000 in 1920 to nearly 150,000 in 1930, and over 224,000 by 1940 (Da Via).

In 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet became one of the first African Americans to move into the predominantly white neighborhood of McDougall-Hunt. He and his family were well aware of racial tensions throughout the city. When his family moved in some residents from the neighborhood gathered in front of his house in protest. The mob began to advance on the

house and Dr. Sweet opened fire into the crowd (Linder). Sweet was arrested and tried for attempted murder but was found innocent.

Despite the obviously rough conditions, black neighborhoods and their residents thrived with self-sustaining small businesses, a mix of employment and employment

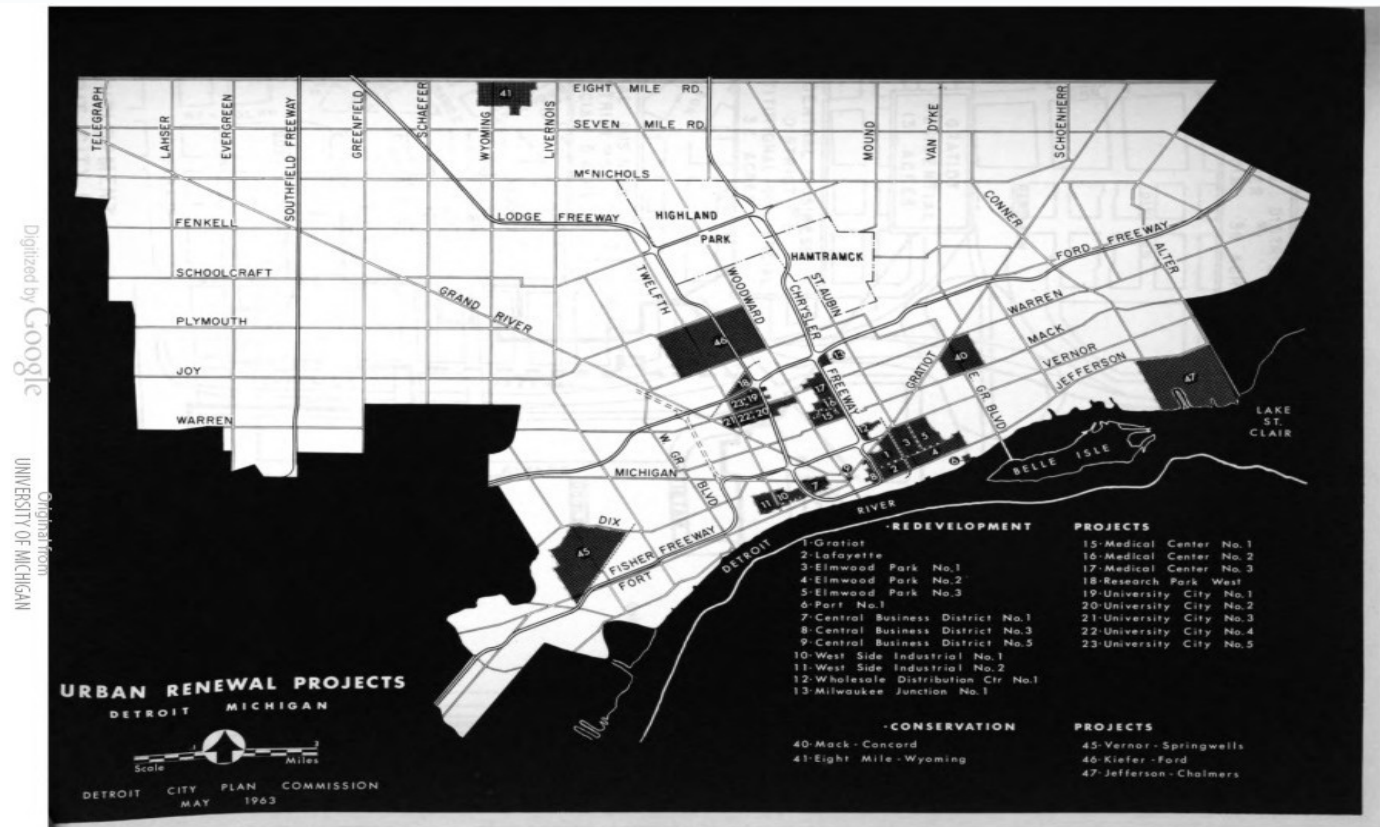


Figure 8: Urban Renewal Map from of Umich.edu (Area's in black are Urban Renewal Projects)

opportunities. The 1929 crash of the stock market saw life in Black Bottom deteriorate. World War II and the New Deal Initiatives of President Roosevelt introduced new, albeit meager, housing projects and employment opportunities for blacks living in Detroit. Economic prosperity was certainly reoccurring throughout Detroit, evident in the sky scrapers, mansions, and manufacturing plants popping up throughout the region. But black communities were not benefitting, and, in fact, were deliberately ostracized from the economic boom of wartime progress. High demand for labor continued the surge of southern blacks into Detroit, but the housing market was racially restrictive and thus forced blacks into tight living conditions. This, along with the negative stereotypical representation of blacks throughout the oppressive, white, euro-centric market, made Black Bottom and Paradise Valley look like a slum. The overall context of black communities was misunderstood and marginalized by the institutional power structures. These communities were misrepresented and portrayed as communities of squalor. Certainly, conditions were questionable and poverty was evident, but the community was intact, developed, and home to many.

In the early 1950's, the federal government embarked on a highly controversial initiative known as the urban renewal programs. It is widely understood that these programs

were a direct attempt to raze and clear-out slums. Dominant knowledge within the economic and housing institutions would conclude that Black Bottom was not a thriving middle-class black community, filled with working families, established businesses, and civically engaged residents. Instead, the federal government saw a deteriorating community and deplorable conditions. By 1954, all of Black Bottom had been destroyed by the federal government under the Jeffries Plan (Da Via). Much of the political clout and economic power within this area was destroyed. There was no corresponding public relocation program, simply the imminent domain of buildings and parcels, the eviction of residences, and the demolition of the neighborhood. Meanwhile, there were also forces acting outside of the city limits that strongly affected the conditions of the inner city and neighborhoods like McDougall-Hunt. McDougall-Hunt is a primarily residential community so the economic vitality of the community is based on the surrounding economy. Figure 8 shows that the areas around McDougall-Hunt were destroyed through the Urban Renewal Programs which drastically affected the physical commercial corridors that had existed. The loss of these businesses and shops in turn greatly affected the residents within McDougall-Hunt who depended on those goods and services.

In 1956 the Interstate Highway Act sparked the largest megaproject in United States history through the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highway systems (Fishman, 201). This included the early construction of I-75 in 1958, the seventh longest interstate highway in the country (Bessert). What was justified as a matter of post-war national security in turn supplemented the outward growth of housing and industry away from city-centers. Rural land made more accessible by interstates and peripheral highways provided cheap yet prime real estate for suburban housing developments, shopping malls, and industrial parks. Where Detroit had once benefitted from booming industry and innovation, the city was now experiencing a rapid loss of manufacturing companies and employment opportunities. Manufacturing facilities were now moving to wide-open rural areas that provided space for high-tech, single-story facilities that overshadowed the obsolete multi-story facilities located in the city (Fishman, 203). With new jobs and new roads came the rapid construction of new homes and new infrastructure. This entirely different form of living would in-turn change the fabric of American communities.

The Federal Housing Administration was initiating new housing programs for returning veterans looking for a new life at home. Low down payment, long-term, fixed-rate mortgages on new houses were exclusively offered in neighborhoods that prohibited residence of people-of-color. "FHA-insured mortgages in the two decades after World War II were limited to race-restricted housing on the suburban fringe; the FHA refused to insure mortgages on older homes in urban neighborhoods" (Fishman 202). For communities like McDougall-Hunt, housing may have been made generally more available as the white population left, but these houses were generally older and only eligible for higher rate mortgages. Not only did housing incentives remove people from inner city neighborhoods, they dis-incentivized people from moving into inner city neighborhoods. Increasing vacancy, the lack of employers & employment opportunities, and poor housing choices led to a steady decline in the standard

of living for the remaining residents. As these factors and forces were based largely on racial prejudice, racial tensions that had already existed in urban communities exponentially increased.

The uprising of 1967 was a direct response to the very real and very obvious discrepancies between black and white communities. Not only were African Americans prevented from participating in the economic growth and development of suburban America, they were prevented from utilizing the social assets and amenities of these new places. Not only were black communities prevented access and opportunities to work and fair housing, they were burdened with maintaining an older community and infrastructure, and diminishing public services.

In 1969, the State of Michigan created Citizen District Councils (CDC). According to the City of Detroit, a CDC serves as “a council mandated by law to provide citizen participation in planning and development issues for City-designated redevelopment and district areas (City of Detroit Planning and Development). These organizations are integral in facilitating requests for third party developments within CDC jurisdiction. Nonetheless, through the 1980’s and 1990’s inner city communities continued to experience degradation and decline. Detroit, like many urban cities throughout the Rust Belt, continued to experience a declining population and increases in vacancy. Not only have a declining population and rises in vacancy harmed the quality of life for residents in communities like McDougall-Hunt, but these issues have created environments in which violence and crime are more likely to occur. These challenges are evident through researching the current human, organizational, physical, and economic conditions of McDougall-Hunt.

Human Conditions

Human Development may be understood as attempting to serve the basic and intrinsic needs of human beings. This may include non-traditional means of providing health and wellness, happiness, and freedom. Nobel laureate and philosopher Amartya Sen helps explain human development theory. In his 1999 book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen empirically analyzes five “instrumental freedoms” that contribute to the well-being of humans living in any society. These five freedoms include political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security (Sen, 10).

Sen’s considers “included and excluded informational bases” as they influence “procedures devised to guarantee rights” (Sen, 63).

Careful analysis of the community and its residents will reveal information that is included in the Capstone Project and considered through the design of the FREE Project. However, there is information or data that exists regarding the community and its residents which may be excluded, or unfound. Unfound information may be the unintended consequences of well-



Figure 9: Census Tract Courtesy of City of Detroit

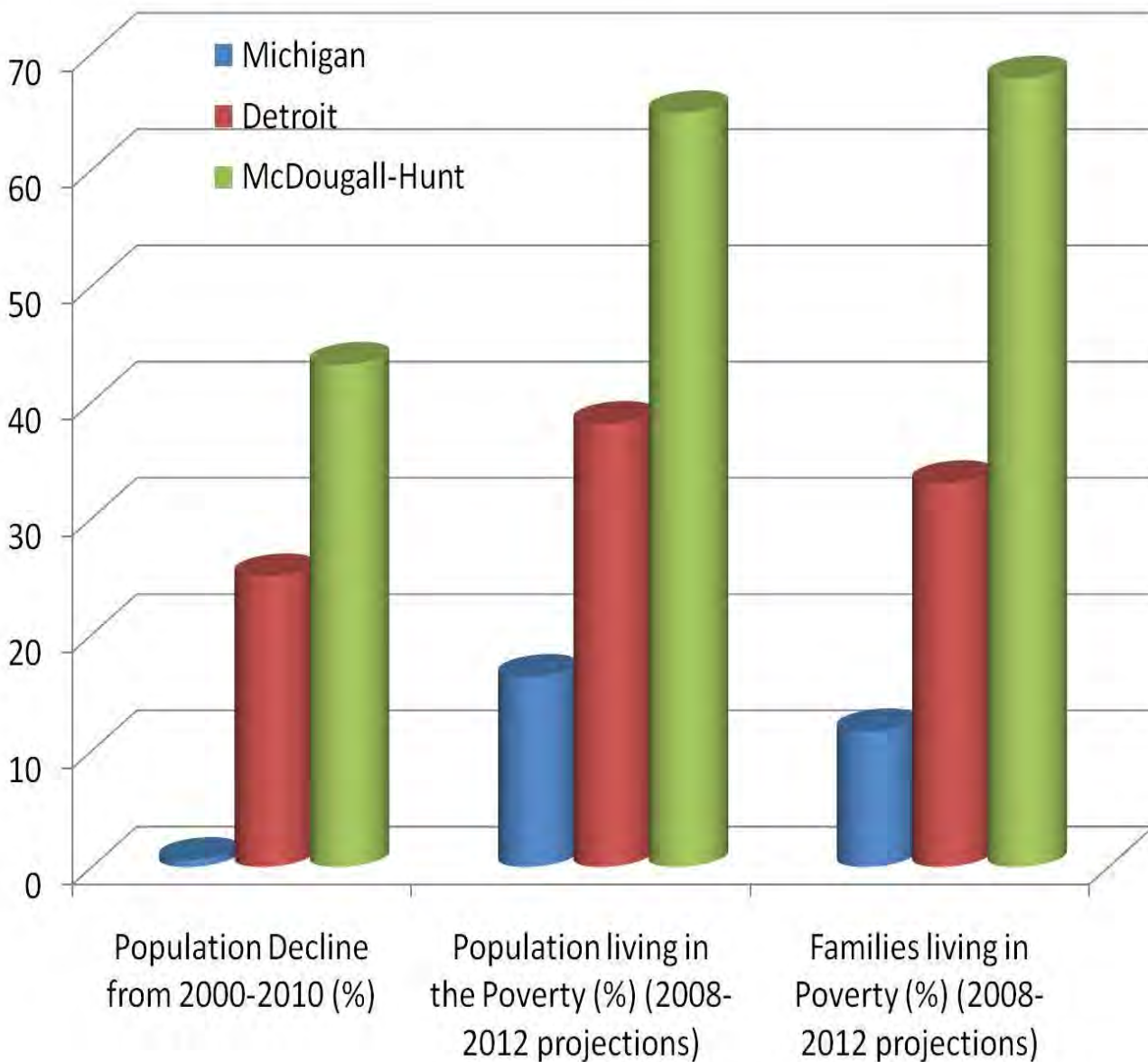


Figure 10: Population Decline and Poverty in McDougall-Hunt According to USA.com

intentioned actions. It is important to acknowledge the existence of these unintended consequences on an academic and social justice level.

According to information compiled by the 2010 United States Census Report (USA.com) the portion of the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood in which the study has primarily focused is made up of Michigan Census Tract MI163516800 (or 5168) and has a total population of 1,041. Figure 9 shows the census tract that coincides with the area in which the study has focused.

McDougall-Hunt has been experiencing a steady decline in population. From 2000 to 2010 the population decreased by 43.2%, compared to a 25% decline in Detroit's population, and a 0.6% decline in Michigan's population as seen in Figure 10. The total number of families

has declined by 44.7% from 360 to 199 households, while the total number of households (family and non-family) has decreased by 32.5% from 600 to 405 as seen in Figure 13. There are relatively the same number of family households (199) and non-family households (206). In the past decade, 1-person households have not declined nearly as much as 2-or-more-family households, decreasing 10.9% as opposed to 25.5%.

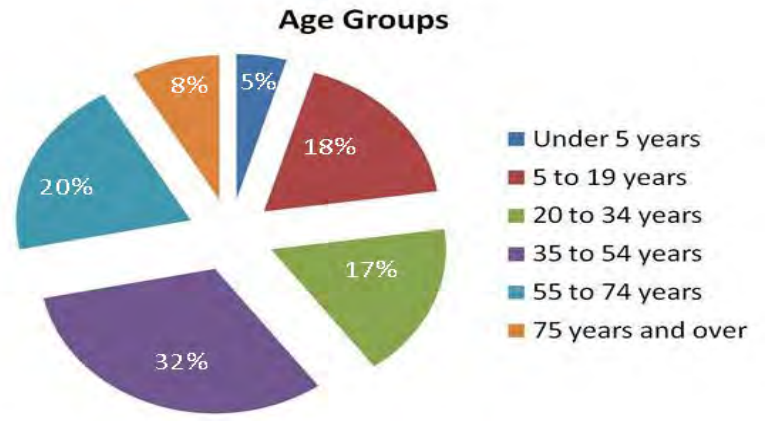


Figure 11: Age Group Distribution According to USA.com

Meanwhile, the McDougall– Hunt community experiences high poverty rates. Over three fifths of the families are in poverty. With a family poverty rate of 67%, McDougall– Hunt’s poverty rate is six times higher than the state average and is the 8th highest impoverished census tract in Michigan out of 2,672 Tracts (USA.com)

Blacks comprise the majority of the community’s racial identity at 92.5% or 963 residents. Whites comprise 3.36% of the neighborhood’s racial identity at 35 residents, people of two or more races comprise 2.69% of the population at 28 residents, Hispanics make up 1.44% or 15 residents in the community, Native (American Indian, Alaska Native,

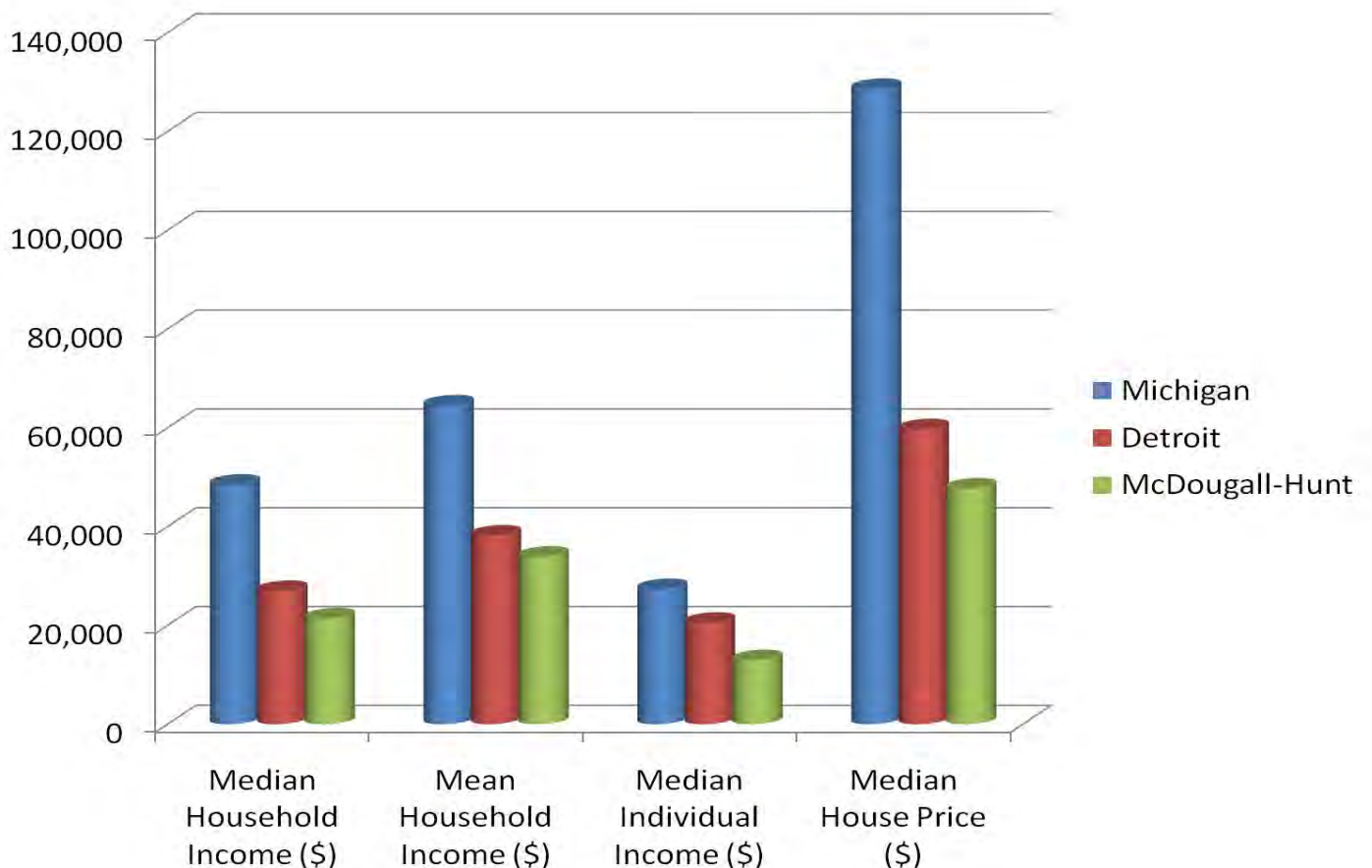


Figure 12: Household and individual Income compared with housing price According to USA.com

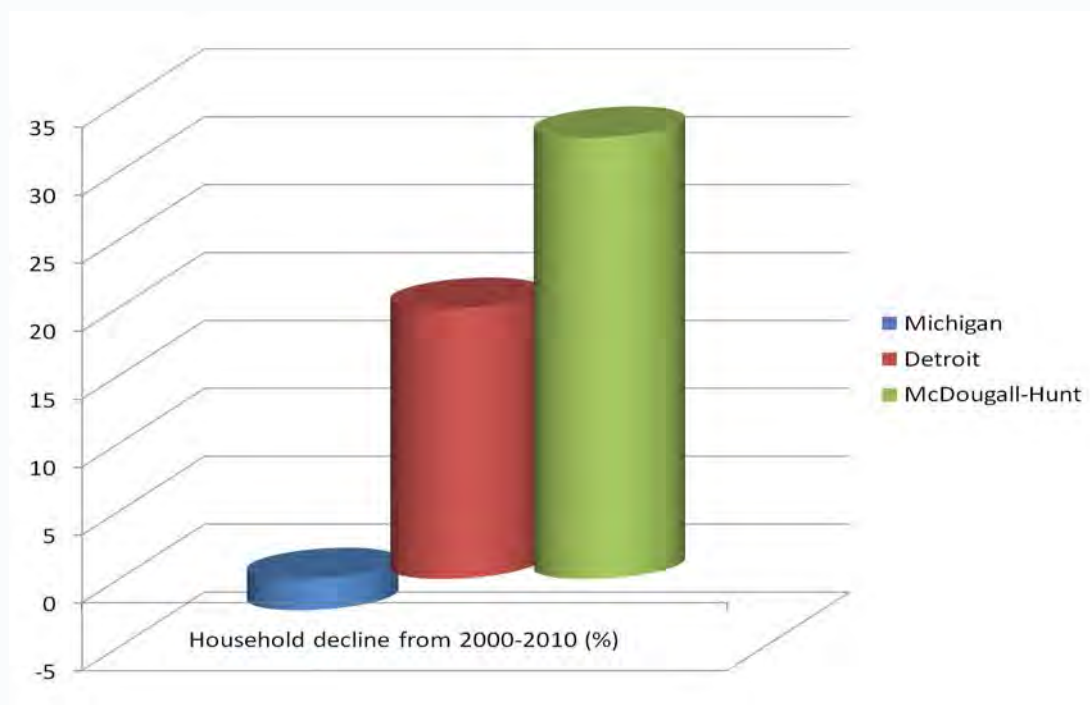


Figure 13: Household Decline According to USA.com

Hawaiian Native etc.) peoples make up 12 residents at 1.15% of the community’s population, and only three residents at 0.29% of the community’s population are listed as “Other.” No community residents responded to the census claiming Asian identity. This community includes 561 males and 480 females, 53.89% versus 46.11%. Males in the community have a median age of 41.3 years while females have a median age of 43.7 years. It is a common perception amongst neighborhood residents that the majority of residents are older and aging. This may be a misunderstanding when the youth population is taken into account. In comparison to the entire country and the state of Michigan, the age and gender distributions of the neighborhood are not notably different. However, Detroit’s median age (35 years) is eight years less than that of McDougall-Hunt (43 years) (USA.com). Nonetheless there are several notable implications of the age distribution within the neighborhood, identified through the Capstone Team’s culturally-based needs assessment.

Perhaps most notable about the community’s age distribution is the large percentage of residents that could be considered within the designated age of the work force (See Figure 11). The total population of residents aged 16 years and older is 824, which is approximately 80% of the McDougall-Hunt’s total population (1,041 people). Of the population of residents aged 16 years and older, 53% (436 people) are considered to be eligible for the work force. The unemployment rate for those residents in the labor force is 39%. This income levels for this community are shown in Figures 12.

Organizational Conditions

For this Capstone project, the Team has contacted, interviewed, and visited a number of different organizations whose mission, vision, and values are oriented to the development and well-being of McDougall-Hunt's residents, assets, and amenities. In addition, the Capstone Team also worked closely with organizations who are dedicated to the effective implementation of transportation and regional development initiatives. MCD Capstone Teams have a mandatory requirement to partner with an organization when designing a community development project. Partnerships with organizations with a similar understanding of collaborative design practices provided an opportunity for ethical organizational structuring. As the team-building efforts progressed, relationships between partners improved. Mutual learning occurred and understanding grew regarding organizational structure, governance, projects, and missions of these organizations and how they supplement the development of humans, their environments, and their economies. In doing so, the groups became better prepared to address, account for, and incorporate one another's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The project evolved to include interrelated (and individual) community development efforts. Previously designed community development plans and existing data sets regarding the community or surrounding communities were gathered and compiled. These development plans are briefly introduced and analyzed for community relevance.

Considering the current and recent design plans and aspirations of McDougall-Hunt, the Project Partners strived to deliver a project that recognized and built off of these desires. This is a prominent example of the FREE Project's utilization of existing information and existing resources. Moreover, utilizing this existing information allowed for the partners to develop working relationships based on a mutual understanding of community development. Adopting existing goals of the community-led designs as goals of the FREE Project was a display of pragmatic coactivity.

Citizens District Council

McDougall-Hunt Citizens District Council (MHCDC) serves as a source of guidance, direction, and recommendation for city planning and development in McDougall-Hunt. MHCDC was organized by the City of Detroit in 1978 as a liaison between the McDougall-Hunt community and the City of Detroit so that the Planning and Development Department would be able to gain local input regarding local development plans and projects. This relationship exists in accordance with the Blighted Area Rehabilitation Public Act 344 of 1945 and the Urban Renewal programs of the 1950's and 1960's. The citizens of a community deserve a say in the projects that occur in their community and the Citizens District Councils (CDC) were set up as a way of returning that voice to the people. With a CDC in place new developments, like the FREE Project, go through the CDC and gain approval before the city considers the project. The CDC's are made up of elected and appointed members of the community and were originally part of the "Model Cities Program." With the introduction of the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in the mid 1970's, the role of the CDC shifted to a

consultant role on issues of land use decisions and financing of proposed development projects in the CDC's area (2nd Modified McDougall-Hunt Rehabilitation Plan). The McDougall-Hunt CDC was brought into the planning process of the FREE Project for their input and to ensure that the FREE project did not become another example of outsiders thinking they know best. McDougall-Hunt CDC helped guide the outreach effort and came up with the idea for student based site design. The McDougall-Hunt Citizens District Council was called "one of the strongest in the city [of Detroit]" (Davis).

Bailey Park Project

The Bailey Park Project is a nonprofit organization whose mission involves cleaning and maintaining the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood. Specifically, the Bailey Park Project aims to clean and maintain vacant lots of land that are often ignored and neglected to the point of blight. The organization was founded by Katrina Watkins, a resident of the McDougall-Hunt



Figure 14: Baily Park area of Concern (Katrina Watkins)

community, who sees the danger created by the current physical environment within her community. Bailey Park Project is a small operation and currently has a small scope. The Bailey Park Project is an offshoot of Gratiot McDougall United Community Development Corporation, whose Executive Director is Jennifer Hatchett. The Capstone Team was introduced to challenges associated with the physical environment in McDougall-Hunt

through early discussions with Katrina Watkins and the Bailey Park Project. Through acknowledging already identified challenges and existing opportunities, the Capstone Team was able to exert energy towards helping the Bailey Park Project realize their mission and vision.

Gratiot McDougall United Community Development Corporation

Gratiot McDougall United Community Development Corporation is an affordable housing and development non-profit in McDougall-Hunt. This group entered into a building contract with a private developer and a for-profit financial institution to build houses in 2008 and was stalled due to the housing market crash. The original development plan called for the construction of 50 new homes, designated to be owner-occupied. Not all of the homes have been built and tenants have primarily been renters rather than homeowners. This is currently causing problems for the organization. Nonetheless, Gratiot McDougall does have thirty successfully constructed homes in the area with(Hatchett). Every year Gratiot McDougall



Figure 15: Gratiot Splash Logo (gratiotsplash.org)

assists with putting on the “Gratiot Splash” an event that is designed to bring the youth and the community together.

Ross Hill Academy

Ross Hill Academy serves kindergarten thru 8th grade students. The academy is located directly in the McDougall-Hunt community and is moving facilities to the corner of Hendricks and Ellery Street, the former home of Bunche Elementary. The new location is next to the overgrown lot that is the focus of Katrina Watkins’ and the Bailey Park Project’s initial project goals. This in turn became the focus of the partnering groups and the prospective pilot for the FREE Project. The school officials are excited about the prospect of cleaning the neighborhood and have been more than helpful with the Capstone Team’s requests for assistance. Ross Hill agreed to let the Capstone Team host a design project with the 7th and 8th grade students that led to a basic design of what the project should entail. The design project also opened up the opportunity for community ownership of a project by the people who are at the project site itself and who ought to be direct and immediate beneficiaries of the space. In this respect Ross Hill Elementary is most certainly a group of stakeholders in the community and project.



Figure 16: Ross Hill Academy (Author Photo)

People’s Housing and Community Development Organization

People’s Housing and Community Development Organization is a 501(C)2 organization founded by the People’s Missionary Baptist Church (501(c)3) located in the McDougall-Hunt community. Some of the Capstone Team’s earliest visits throughout the community were in collaboration with the officials of this organization. Meetings with the executive director offered information in regard to the past and present conditions of the neighborhood as well as the work being done by People’s Housing and Community Development. Several programs housed in this organization are offered to the families and children of the McDougall-Hunt neighborhood as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. These programs include child day care, after school recreational events, community social gatherings, and a partner in the “Meet up and Eat up” campaign (Horne).

Franklin Wright Settlement

Franklin Wright Settlement (FWS) is located on Charlevoix Ave and serves as a community center within McDougall-Hunt. It is the oldest settlement house in the state of Michigan, founded in 1881 (Franklin Wright Settlement). This location and the organizations that exist within FWS reveal many human development practices serving the needs of the

residing population. There is a basketball arena, after-school and summer enrichment activities for students, early childhood development programs, and senior outreach programs, while rooms within the settlement serve as a meeting place for community meetings. The McDougall-Hunt CDC uses this building for their monthly meetings.

Physical Conditions

McDougall-Hunt is a small neighborhood bordering Downtown Detroit, due east of the Eastern Market and Lafayette Park. McDougall-Hunt is comprised of one single census tract measuring 0.38 square miles, bounded by Vernor Highway, Gratiot Avenue and Mt. Elliot. The area has a great deal of vacant lots and abandoned houses. The vacant lots with overgrown trees present a real problem to the safety of the area as they create a haven for illegal activities. These issues were identified by community residents and mentioned over and over again in many different community interactions including Gratiot McDougall United Community Development Meetings and Citizen District Council Meetings. Other meetings previously hosted by the Self Help Addiction Rehabilitation (SHAR) House and Recovery Park teams also revealed multiple physical issues and associated challenges identified by community residents. There are several stretches of overgrown lots as well as vacant storefronts that could provide an outlet for creative community design projects utilized by neighborhood residents (See Figure 17).

According to the 2010 Census, McDougall-Hunt has 532 housing structures at a 76.13% occupancy rate. 84.7% of these structures were built in 1959 or earlier. According to the 2010 Census, zero homes were built between 1960 and 1990. 12.8% of the existing homes in this community were built between 2000 and 2010, the majority of which were built by Gratiot-McDougall-United Community Development Corporation. In an attempt to gain better understanding of the physical space of McDougall-Hunt, a map was created to better identify physical conditions.



Figure 17 : Recovery Park Survey Map

The map in Figure 18 identifies various occupied and vacant physical structures as well as vacant land. The map also identifies the designated uses for occupied structures including businesses, occupied houses, places of worship, and anchoring institutions. In this case, “anchoring institutions” are the places where cultural, educational, and social

Housing Structures

- Occupied: 405
- Vacant: 127
- Vacancy: 23.87%

Map Legend



Figure 18: Interactive map created by Authors

activities of our communities are focused” (Morrish and Brown 67). This would include schools, libraries, and day care facilities.

The map is unique in comparison with other maps identifying physical conditions of McDougall-Hunt for several reasons. While other maps codify neighborhoods on a parcel-by-parcel level, this map identifies physical spaces, as they exist together. For example, instead of distinguishing individual vacant lots, contiguous stretches of vacant land have been codified under a single colored block. In addition, while some maps may codify physical structures in a neighborhood by ownership and occupancy, this map attempts to identify and highlight stewardship. For example, if a lot was presumably under the maintenance or stewardship of an adjacent resident or business, then these too have been codified under a single colored block.

This map was created through a combination of walking tours, driving tours, and a comparative satellite image analysis from 2009 and 2012. The initial tours were taken during the afternoons and early evenings of the summer months. Plenty of natural sunlight allowed for a clear understanding of the physical makeup of this community. Findings were initially inconsistent with the views of neighborhood residents, business owners, and stakeholders. Admittedly, the tours were limited in scale and scope, lacking in any long and intensive stays. Therefore, the map is reflexive and reliant on community input for

authenticity and accuracy. This map is meant to be a real-life and live-updated tool for the community to understand and take ownership of the knowledge of the physical spaces of their community. The map has been constructed using free software that operates on a user-friendly system with a very low learning curve. Thus, the map is designed to be shared and adjusted by the community residents and stakeholders as needed.

According to Data Driven Detroit, the McDougall-Hunt community resides within several designated planned development areas. McDougall-Hunt is located within Cluster 4 of the Detroit Planning Clusters and within the Lower East Central Neighborhood of Detroit’s Master Planning Neighborhoods. It is also located within the Kettering Section of the 1st Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP1) and the Chene Subcommunity of United Way. It is not included in any of the five Local Initiatives Support Corporation’s (LISC) Strategic Investment Areas. It is also absent from the Woodward Corridor Initiative area and the Skillman Good Neighborhoods Initiative area.

A large public art installation known as the Heidelberg Project exists in the neighborhood. This has garnered national and international recognition and has made one sector of the neighborhood a busy tourist destination. But the Heidelberg Project also garners negative emotions amongst some neighborhood residents who often cite the Project as “an illegal dumping ground.”

Economic Conditions

Gratiot Avenue is most certainly the strongest and most active commercial corridor for McDougall-Hunt. The proximity of McDougall-Hunt to downtown makes it a convenient location for housing and commercial structures. Moreover, this community is a historic location, providing economic value through its historic integrity. Gardella Furniture is one such business that has existed for over 75 years along Gratiot Ave. in present-day McDougall-Hunt. “Gardella carries more than 200 manufacturers of furniture, rugs, lighting, and other accessories. Contemporary, traditional, and transitional styles are represented” (Hour Detroit, 203). Many credit the long history and success of Gardella in Detroit to the personal touch and family-oriented nuance that accompanies the business. Also located in McDougall-Hunt are Faygo’s Headquarters and manufacturing facilities, which have stood on Gratiot Ave since 1935. Accordingly to the Detroit Historical Society, after the founding family sold Faygo to National Beverage Company in 1987, both the facilities and majority of the employees were retained. Most workers have worked with Faygo for over thirty years



Figure 19: Gardella Furniture on Gratiot Ave. (Authors)

(Faygo). According to Data Driven Detroit and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, as of 2013 there were approximately 10 liquor licenses located within the neighborhood, all of which were located on the three bordering road (Data Driven Detroit).

46% of the 392 occupied housing units in the community have access to at least one vehicle, while 45% of the occupied housing units do not have access to any vehicle. Comparatively, only 7.6% of occupied housing units in Michigan and 9% of occupied housing units in the United States are without access to a vehicle. This means that nearly half the residents of McDougall–Hunt rely on public transportation as their only means of transportation. Gratiot does serve as a primary avenue by which public transportation vehicles regularly travel,. However, the reliability of the public transportation system is not conducive for individuals trying to sustain employment or individuals who are less physically capable. The Capstone Team gained an early introduction to the community while conducting an in-depth transportation study. Within this study, public transportation bus routes were utilized while visiting neighborhoods throughout Detroit not exclusively located along main thoroughfares and commercial corridors. This in turn involved a great deal of waiting and walking in between stops which led to the understanding that it is generally difficult to rely solely on public transportation within the McDougall-Hunt community.

McDougall-Hunt does exist in a location that provides the option or the opportunity for residents to walk to the Central Business District of Downtown. For example, it is approximately thirty minutes walking time (approximately 1.5 miles walking distance) from the southernmost corner of McDougall-Hunt (Gratiot and Vernor) to Campus Martius Park. However, general walkability quickly diminishes for those residents living deeper in the community. For example, it is approximately a one hour walk (approximately 3 miles) from the northernmost corner of McDougall-Hunt (Gratiot and Mt. Elliot) to Campus Martius Park. Conditions promoting walkability as well as evidence of frequent walkers throughout McDougall-Hunt has been revealed in the onsite and comparative satellite imagery physical assessments of the Capstone project.

Natural walking paths have occurred overtime due to the repeated foot traffic that has crisscrossed through vacant stretches of land in McDougall-Hunt. These pathways typically run perpendicular or parallel to the main commercial corridor of Gratiot Ave. suggesting that path users are travelling to and from Gratiot Ave. These pathways are clearly visible from satellite images and have also been identified by other physical assessments. One such physical assessment that has also identified these natural walking paths is the SHAR House Recovery Park map seen in Figure 20. Increasing employment and entertainment opportunities in the downtown area of Detroit may



Figure 20: Recovery Park/ SHAR house map

create more biking and walking opportunities for proximal community residents like those of McDougall-Hunt.

Development Projects, Programs, and Plans

McDougall-Hunt has been included within the boundaries of numerous different development programs. These programs have varied in terms of scale, scope, and direction. These plans have also varied in terms of who is organizing and conducting such programs. The Capstone Team has considered the following projects, programs, and plans while considering the direction of the FREE Project. Certain elements and goals of the following programs were important to consider when designing the FREE Project because of the implications that these programs have for the McDougall-Hunt residents, the businesses, and the physical spaces throughout the community. More importantly, in an attempt to be coactive and cooperative, the Capstone Team would pay extra attention to the previously identified goals of existing organizations and their respective development plans.

2nd Modified McDougall-Hunt Rehabilitation Plan

McDougall-Hunt boasts a community development plan that demonstrates an existing case in which numerous community stakeholders and investigators were able to collaboratively develop a Rehabilitation Plan in McDougall-Hunt. Prior to the 2nd Modified McDougall-Hunt Rehabilitation Plan, the original development plan was approved on May 25, 1983. Those who were included in its passing in September 2003 and its subsequent approval in the following October were the Planning and Development Department of the City of Detroit and the Citizens District Council of McDougall-Hunt.

This plan has many implications for the physical and economic make-up of the area. The 2nd Modified McDougall-Hunt Rehabilitation program is in fact the community development plan most often cited by the Citizen's District Council as a backdrop for any new development plans in the neighborhood. The first listed point in the Executive Summary of the 2nd Modified McDougall-Hunt Rehabilitation Plan aims to restore McDougall-Hunt as a residential community. This is followed by priorities to expand supportive services, upgrade public facilities, provide jobs and income opportunities for local residents, improve and preserve existing housing, remove dangerous buildings, identify environmental hazards and nuisances, develop neighborhood organizational community capacity to participate in the development of the neighborhood, attract investment and guide development with sound planning decisions, expand affordable housing for low and moderate income households and existing residents, preserve the historic character of the neighborhood, and preserve and expand natural open spaces and park facilities. This list of issues addressed by the 2nd Modified McDougall-Hunt Rehabilitation Plan was taken from the Introduction of the Executive Summary. The Executive Summary favors the development of new, affordable, and traditional housing. Special attention is paid to affordability, social equity of housing development strategies, effective partnerships, and the utilization of existing resources or programs.

Being that the plan focuses primarily on new housing development it is important to update this plan. The housing market has changed drastically since 2003 and this plan should be updated to reflect the changing circumstances. The plan in its updated form should note that the success of a housing market in McDougall-Hunt is dependent on the surrounding economy of Detroit, Eastern market and the Gratiot Business corridor.

Detroit Future City Strategic Framework 2012

This lengthy document published by Detroit Future City (DFC) and their broad group of participants offers a comprehensive framework for future development opportunities throughout Detroit, Michigan. The City of Detroit, the Mayor’s Advisory Task Force, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, and other residential communities, governmental agencies, non-profit and for-profit businesses, civic, philanthropic, and faith-based institutions throughout Detroit participated in various groups and committees working on the strategic



Figure 21: DFC Cover

framework design. Short-term strategy teams, long-term strategy teams, steering committees and inter-agency work groups participated in designing a comprehensive framework for future development opportunities throughout Detroit, Michigan. The five planning elements included in the Future City Strategic Framework include (i) Economic Growth, (ii) Land Use, (iii) City Systems, (iv) Neighborhood, and (v) Land and Buildings Assets Elements (Detroit Future City, 18-19). Each planning element has implications for inner city Detroit neighborhoods like McDougall-Hunt. Firstly, DFC identifies McDougall-Hunt to be a

neighborhood of High Vacancy (Detroit Future City, 109). High Vacancy is a term used to identify neighborhoods that have lost their residential character while experiencing large portions of vacancy housing and vacant land. Isolated pockets of housing exist within high vacancy communities, while illegal dumping and significant neglect plagues much of the area. In this document the section of McDougall– Hunt from Mt. Elliot to McDougall street is proposed as “Live and Make” which according to DFC means “repurposed historical and industrial structures, and land that fosters a blend of smaller scale low-impact production activity is combined with the Diversity of other Land uses” (Detroit Future City, 115). The remainder of the area is listed in this plan as “Innovation Productive” which means that this area has the potential to experience activities such as food production and remediation as an attempt to change public perception of vacancy and creative repurposing of land. Also present in the Innovation Productive areas are storm water management installations and blue-green infrastructure (Detroit Future City, 116)

The Detroit Future city plan is contradictory to the McDougall-Hunt rehabilitation plan that the residents follow. Moreover, the DFC plan does not coincide with residential sentiments of redevelopment and neighborhood progress. This may be problematic as the Citizens District Council has right of refusal on all developments in the area. While Live and Make planning may be a practical and palatable approach, Innovation Productive planning seems to be a poor use of the assets of McDougall-Hunt. The proposed land use elements for

the McDougall-Hunt community according to DFC do not mesh with the area as a potential major transportation and commercial corridor.

Neighborhood Stabilization Plan and the Empowerment Zones

As noted by the City of Detroit, NSP1 was designed to work alongside other existing development projects or plans, including areas experiencing significant private and public market revitalization projects or economic development initiatives. This was aimed to maximize the benefits of federal, state, and local development initiatives by supplementing or relying on the supplementation of proximal development project results. McDougall-Hunt is also located within a Detroit Empowerment Zone.



Figure 22 : NSP 1 Area with McDougall-Hunt outlined

According to section 2301(c)(2) of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, it is required that “funds be distributed to the areas of greatest need, including those with the greatest percentage of home foreclosures, with the highest percentage of homes financed by subprime mortgage related loan, and identified by the grantee as likely to face a significant rise in the rate of foreclosures” (City of Detroit). The City of Detroit’s website asserts that Detroit had the highest amount of foreclosures (over 67,000) amongst all major metropolitan areas of the United States and would be granted a \$47 million allocation. NSP1 would be strategic in assisting neighborhoods in the demolition, rehabilitation, renovation, or improvement of houses throughout the city. NSP1 in Detroit addressed nine different target areas, one of which was an area known as Kettering, which includes McDougall-Hunt (Figure 22). NSP1 was responsible for the demolition of five homes and the performing of minor repairs of two homes in McDougall-Hunt while there were no rehabilitation or redevelopment projects in the neighborhood (See Appendix C).

The results of NSP1 help explain why there is a significant amount of vacant property in McDougall-Hunt. Assessing the Neighborhood Stabilization Plan’s impact on McDougall-Hunt reveals an important aspect of community development that must be considered in all plans moving forward: creative repurposing and redevelopment of demolition sites should be a priority on the agendas of those participating in structural blight removal.

The Detroit Blight Removal Task Force Plan May 2014

The Detroit Blight Removal Task Force Plan was released in May 2014. This comprehensive guide to blight removal offers resources and strategies for residents to improve the physical conditions of their communities. The Detroit Blight Task Force is comprised of three persons: Glenda Price, President of the Detroit Public Schools Foundation; Dan Gilbert, Founder and Chairman of Rock Ventures and Quicken Loans; Linda Smith, Executive Director of U-SNAP-BAC. Together these three individuals have utilized \$300 million in federal donations to tackle the vast challenges associated with blighted properties and

structures throughout the city, particularly in neighborhoods.

The Detroit Blight Task Force's recommendations and strategies for blight removal offered in this book include identification, organization, intervention, legal action, and implementation. Implementation strategies are included to address the different types of structural and physical blight removal processes. The book also offers guidance on the costs of performing different methods of removal and remediation. The McDougall-Hunt community, the Bailey Park Project, and the FREE Project could benefit most from the section dedicated to clearing and maintaining vacant lots (Detroit Blight Task Force, 173-181).

This book explains that there are currently 6,135 blighted vacant lots that have been identified by the Blight Task Force's Motor City Mapping Initiative (Detroit Blight Task Force, 172). Moreover, estimated costs for clearing a single vacant lot are \$900, totaling \$5.5 million for all 6,135 lots (Detroit Blight Task Force, 172). Within this vacant lot clearing and maintenance portion of the plan, recommendations are offered to the reader that help develop a step-by-step process for residents to complete the desired task of vacant blighted lot clearance and maintenance. The multiple recommendations will point residents in the direction of the City of Detroit Department of Neighborhoods as well as other civic and social organizations directly involved in this fight against blight. Prominent groups involved in this undertaking are the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) and Michigan Community Resources (MCR). The report also stresses components of maintenance and job creation within blight removal projects- two essential elements of sustainable community empowerment and environmental empowerment.

The Capstone Team would strongly benefit from partnering and collaborating with these aforementioned entities to better understand blight and the potential existing structures or resources available. This report offers a fresh and unparalleled attempt to identify and neutralize blight throughout the city.

Chapter 3: The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Community

The State of Michigan and the Federal Government have what is known as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, or the DBE program. The DBE program was started on a federal level on October 13, 1971 when it was signed into law by President Nixon. According to the law, "Each federal department or agency shall, within constraints of law and appropriations therefore, continue all current efforts to foster and promote minority business enterprises and to support the program herein" (United States

Department of Transportation). In response, state governments followed suit and there is now an established Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program within the Michigan state government's Department of Transportation.

The community of disadvantaged businesses is a uniquely diverse community; it can be challenging to define and compose a unified goal or vision for the community to move forward. This is a community of contractors as opposed to a typical community of residents. While the DBE community is diverse, the program is comprised of similar contractors who have similar backgrounds. Disadvantaged contractors are not only disadvantaged due to their race and gender, they are disadvantaged in experience because this program was established in the early 1970's but the major expansion of the American freeway system began in the mid 1950's. This timing created a gap in potential experience earned by contractors through the major developmental period in American road building history. This gap in knowledge and experience is still an issue for DBE contractors. By 1975 setting goals on a percentage of projects for how much work should go to disadvantaged businesses became law, and by 1979 women owned businesses were also eligible for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise contracts. By 1982 a goal of 10% of contracts was allocated for DBE Contractors.

Current Michigan Department of Transportation projects have between a 10 and 15 percent DBE goal attached to them. By way of an example, if a total job is \$100 million then the DBE goal would usually be from \$10 million to \$15 million worth of work. The DBE process is a very complex process and doing even \$10 million worth of work can be a monumental task. Often times the DBE contractors are younger startup businesses and do not understand the full implications of large amounts of work. At times younger businesses may not understand all the paperwork associated with the project. Moreover, many DBEs have miscalculated or overestimated their working capabilities. This has led to companies folding and going bankrupt in the middle of jobs. On a typical MDOT project there is no time in the "progress schedule"¹ for delays. A company going out of business is a massive delay. Every delay in a construction project creates added costs. The most notable on the triple bottom line method are "User Delay costs." The concept of "User Delay costs" recognizes that people would rather be at home with their family than stuck in a traffic jam. For every extra day a project takes to complete there are social costs involved. Also important to consider are the seasonal limitations in that there are only specific times of year when things like landscaping and paving can be done. The bigger the job the more likely it is for a project schedule to be tight enough where delays can push planned paving and planned landscaping out of the seasonal window. If this happens then the user delays in an unfinished road will be extended throughout the winter months when no work can be done but drivers are still forced to deal with delays.



Figure 23: DBE Logo
(Michigan.gov)

¹ A progress schedule is a list of times and events that must take place by certain dates so the next task can be performed. The progress schedule takes into account seasonal limitations and critical parts of the project that must be completed.

State contracts often have monetary penalties associated with missing deadlines laid out in a progress schedule. These penalties are linked to a calculated value for how much delay is associated per day with the project. There are also bonding companies that assure money for construction projects. These companies guarantee money to MDOT for successful completion of a project. The bonding companies act somewhat like insurance companies and only have a set amount of risk they are willing to take. Bonding companies will not guarantee money on a new project if a company has yet to complete work on a previous project. This means if a company is caught up in a delay, it directly affects their ability to bid on future work. Every contractor has a bonding capacity and the amount of loans they have withstanding affects how much work they are able to complete in a year. In short and simplified terms, the closer to its full bonding capacity a contractor is, the closer to the planned progress schedule they need to remain.

This has caused problems in the State of Michigan in the past. In the past small contractors like DBE's have misunderstood the work and paperwork involved and attempted work they did not understand. This has led to companies folding while they were still obligated to do work. When this happened the state of Michigan was forced to grant extensions of time to account for a reasonable amount of time for the Prime Contractor² to find a replacement company. The Prime Contractor then is legally responsible for work they never planned on doing. The delay in the contract affects the Prime Contractor's ability to get more work as well as forcing the Prime Contractor to pay whatever price a new contractor offers. This leads to a financial disadvantage. When there is a new price negotiated, the prime contractor will often file a claim for more money with the State of Michigan. In the end, the effect of a smaller contractor going out of business costs every party money, from the company that goes out of business to the people who use the project on a daily basis.

Starting a business and attempting to work on MDOT jobs is like jumping from little league to professional baseball. There is a stark difference between small jobs requiring a few yards of concrete to patch a parking lot and paving twenty miles of an eight-lane interstate. Beyond physical labor and construction, the contracts, documentation, and specifications for MDOT jobs are extremely complex and can be very difficult to read and understand. Above all else, the coordination and timing of projects are of utmost importance as they carry the largest impacts. Most DBE's currently face these challenges while gaining experience on the job. Cedric Dargin of MDOT has noted that "these [DBE training methods] have not been the most effective method of training," (Dargin) so many new options for solutions are explored and discussed at large scale gatherings.

Every year the DBE community has a large meeting of DBE contractors from the entire State of Michigan to talk about current and arising issues within contracting. At this DBE Conference (2014) the Capstone Team was privileged to gain a forum for getting feedback from various DBE contractors while also discussing their involvement with the physical

² A "Prime Contractor" is a term to designate a contractor responsible for a whole job. The contractor then has the right to sub-out a maximum of 60% of the contract.

communities from which they originate. While addressing organizational challenges, we heard from almost every contractor that they come to this conference looking for more work, contacts, and resources for business development. There is a strong desire for DBEs to gain more institutional knowledge that makes them more competitive. The difference in the approach to finding work for DBEs is that many of the contractors and their businesses are still in the early stages of an organizational life cycle. Most DBE's we spoke to are owner operated companies. Few have a well-established body of clients or contacts useful in a business setting. In turn, the DBE Conference gives contractors the chance to make these connections while learning more about the complexities of the DBE program.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plays a key role in the training and implementation of the DBE program. MDOT facilitates the DBE conference as well as manages the contracts from which DBE goals are taken. MDOT is a state agency that operates to serve its customers; it is different from a business in that it collects tax revenue and is charged with the care and maintenance of the state's transportation infrastructure. In this process MDOT needs to look for ways to maximize the dollars they receive as well as keep in mind those who are paying the tax and how to serve them. It is from this that the State of Michigan has a strong customer focus. The State has a large variety of customers: the contracting community that preforms the work MDOT desires, which includes the DBE community, community residents, State of Michigan residents, and organizations throughout the state who need infrastructure to accomplish their business. With this focus MDOT needs to find ways to make contractors, including DBE's, more efficient when they preform work on MDOT roadways. It is therefore imperative to properly educate the companies working on state right-of-ways to minimize the time that roads are closed.

In talking with MDOT personnel at the conference MDOT's goal is to create a large pool of qualified and capable DBE contractors. This larger pool does two things: it increases the amount of work that MDOT is able to contract while it also increases competition within the industry. An increased pool of DBE contractors helps large contractors by adding to their ability to find sub-contractors at a reasonable price while increasing confidence in getting the job done correctly and on time. The Capstone team also found that one of the biggest reservations voiced by larger contractors addresses a general lack of experience amongst some DBE's. Prime Contractors concerns are that if and when DBE's are brought onto a project their expertise level may be lower than required to finish the job effectively and on time.

Finding a solution to these problems that promotes the growth and development of the Disadvantaged Business



Figure 24: DBE Presentation, (Courtesy of MDOT)

Enterprise (DBE) program would benefit everyone. The solution seems to be a simple one. The State of Michigan and contractor community needs to be able to have DBE's enter into a contract and perform at a level that can complete the project effectively and on time. The "FREE Project" aims to change the method of training for the DBE contractors. As it stands most of the efforts are caught on the "Back End" of the project. This is a way of saying that mishandling of paperwork often leads to delays. These mishandled documents slow down file reviews and audits. This is not surprising as there is a large amount of paperwork involved with being a road contractor. Paperwork requires understanding multiple elements of a project.

- Construction Plans
- The standard specifications book (a 1000 page book whose rules apply to every project)
- The proposal (a document that supports the plan set)
- Standard plans (typically included in proposal that show approved methods of construction)
- Special provisions (additions and amendments to the Standard Specification book typically new items)
- How to accurately determine and record how workers are paid (Required rates change per job)
- Federal guidelines
- State safety regulations

Most of this paperwork is explained through a series of educational PowerPoints throughout the year and an attempt to show overviews of the requirements that contractors seem to have the most problems with. Needless to say understanding all of this is a long process that takes practice to get it right. In depth knowledge comes from doing, not just listening.

Concepts of the FREE Project

The FREE Project aims to change the way of learning for DBE contractors. The premise is to provide DBE's with practical, hands-on experience conducting manual labor. The FREE Project gets contractors performing the tasks required to compete at a state level. If this method of training is to be adopted, the question becomes where to do this training. Roads, though the most effective place to train, are not a good option because they have active traffic and when a contractor is working they create user delays which create a social cost, as well as incur delay penalties.

The FREE Project is a solution that ties together two identified challenges: (1) a need for training for a group of contractors that were at a social disadvantage, and (2) a need for blight removal in a community that faces challenges of finding equipment to handle their landscaping problems. As you will recall from the discussion on Social Justice, the team working on the FREE Project is concerned with using existing structures and shaping them to

enable stakeholders to help each other. Enabling systems to work together for a mutual benefit is a sustainable way of addressing larger issues. This means that in the context of the FREE Project the method that is utilized cannot simply address one abandoned lot and one landscape contractor, but needs to be a method that can be duplicated over time throughout multiple communities. With that in mind there needs to be an effective pilot area to demonstrate the power of bringing resources together to empower different groups to change their environment to better reflect the values of their community. In a chosen pilot area, there needs to be a project that can clean up blight as identified by the community while training the contractors who do the work so that they can better perform their everyday tasks that make them money.

Reactions to the FREE Project

At the DBE conference the FREE Project concept was presented to the assembly of DBE contractors, Union representatives, and MDOT personnel all the way up to the COO of MDOT operations. The FREE Project was presented in a breakout session to a group of around forty people from various backgrounds. The responses to this line of thinking presented at the DBE conference were positive yet skeptical.

MDOT personnel were impressed with the comprehensive look given towards the implications and solutions for all their customers. MDOT offered resources and advice on implementation and further partnerships, while inquiring about the future implementation steps. Union Representatives involved in skills training programs saw ways in which they could tie the FREE Project into their existing program. This would further help get people from the City of Detroit, specifically the McDougall-Hunt community, involved and working toward a career in the unions. The DBE contractors that were at the conference wanted to know when the project was starting and how to become involved. The training and networking aspect of the FREE Project revealed a large incentive for DBEs to become involved but most of the skepticism was based on the proposed financial model. The DBE contractors stressed the importance of balancing the cost of the project to ensure the training is worth the investment of time and capital. They want to see more details on the finance model but most DBE's are willing to test the concept. This feedback and testimony provided by the contractors and organizational representatives is crucial to the success of the FREE Project.

Chapter 4: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a design principle that focuses on quality of life in a community. Strategies attempt to reduce the rate and occurrence of crime, while also reducing the appearance or perception that a crime will occur. This is all done through the strategic design of a physical space as well as the organizational development of groups or committees who serve the cause. The four main principles of CPTED are (1) natural access control, (2) natural surveillance, (3) territorial reinforcement, and (4) maintenance (National Crime Prevention Council, 1). These four principles and their various attributes are prevalent throughout the FREE Project and its design process.

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a private, non-profit organization focusing on keeping communities safe for families and residents through CPTED principles. Between 2007 and 2011 the NCPC served four primary goals: (1) protecting women and children, (2) partnering with government and law enforcement to prevent crime, (3) promoting crime prevention, and (4) responding to emerging crime trends. Also within this time, the NCPC sponsored ten Weed and Seed programs in communities throughout the United States (National Crime Prevention Council).

Weed & Seed programs implement CPTED principles in neighborhoods suffering from challenges associated with vacancy, blight, and criminal activity. Weed and Seed programs have relied on the creative partnering of private and public organizations collaborating for community development projects founded on CPTED principles. Weeding out challenges to safety and security is done through seeding restorative solutions in the form of human, organizational, physical and economic development plans. Tracking the changes over time and identifying results of these programs reveals both progress and challenges of CPTED projects.

Dallas, Texas

The Ferguson Road-Two Points Weed and Seed site experienced challenges associated with deep-rooted drug and criminal gang activity, burglary, and poor physical conditions (roadways, sidewalks, property, structures). Volunteer groups were organized to enhance community involvement in the projects in order to ensure the effective reporting and enforcement of neighborhood regulations. Regulations were put in place to enhance the safety within the neighborhood including more opportunities for police training. While none of the projects for this Weed and Seed site directly involved blight removal, strong attention was paid towards enhancing resident safety with improved street lighting and traffic systems. These CPTED Efforts led to increased community involvement in maintaining the curb appeal of lots and homes (National Crime Prevention Council, 5).

Manchester, NH

The Downtown/Millyard Weed and Seed project focused on the rehabilitation and maintenance of the Adam D. Curtis Skate Park that experienced challenges associated with vandalism, substance abuse, and drug trading. A variety of groups participated in additional programs that addressed the communication of and education about CPTED strategies in the community in an effort to gain buy-in and support from community stakeholders. Indeed, the CPTED ad-hoc committee collectively agreed “CPTED principles would provide a foundation to improve the quality of life in all the domains of the community for all of its inhabitants” (National Crime Prevention Council, 7).

Montgomery, AL

The team of groups collaborating on the Cleveland Court Weed and Seed project found the overgrown lots and abandoned properties to provide an environment extremely conducive to criminal activity. Whereas overgrown vacant lots created low visibility throughout the neighborhood they also provided spaces and places through which perpetrators could evade consequences. In addition to crime, vacancy created more unsightly conditions in the neighborhood, as illegal dumping became increasingly prevalent. Increased collaboration between the Mayor’s office and various bodies of government led to more comprehensive responses to nuisance complaints, and the subsequent removal of problem properties (National Crime Prevention Council, 11).

Cleveland, OH - Healthline

Another example of the use of CPTED can be explained through the use of camera’s and coordination along transit lines. This example follows the same principles used in the Weed and Seed programs and has many similarities but is unique in its focus on the street and not vegetation.

Cleveland, Ohio adopted the principles of CPTED in the redesign of their Euclid Avenue corridor. Cleveland looked at a new type of transportation system called Bus Rapid Transit or BRT. An interview with the CEO of Cleveland’s Regional Transit authority, Joseph Calabrese revealed that CPTED was a pillar of the design layout of the streets and transit system. In the initial construction Cleveland received 25 million dollars to place cameras along the corridor and 12 cameras per bus on the system (Calabrese). These cameras were not only visible to riders but integrated with local police. If an incident occurs on a bus, a live feed of activities on busses can be shown to approaching officers who can assess the situation before entering a potentially hazardous confrontation. This coordination not only serves to catch criminal acts but it plays a major role in the perceived chance of success of a crime and acts to deter crime from occurring in the first place.

Implications for McDougall-Hunt Pilot Project

Before measuring the anticipated impact of implementing the principles of CPTED it is important to note the physical layout of the community. This physical assessment can identify opportunities to improve CPTED and examples of areas that are perceived safer. The housing stock, the vacancy (See Figure 18), and the walking paths used by the community (See Figure 20) all play a role in the perception of safety and the perceived ability to succeed with

criminal activity. In a Gratiot McDougall United meeting the Capstone team heard testimony that the pilot area that has been selected is an area that harbors criminal activity. One community resident said that there have been problems with drugs, stripping cars, and prostitution in the area due the natural cover provided from the overgrown lots. This testimony and physical assessment makes the principles of CPTED a tool to reference when development occurs within the community.



Figure 25: Author Photo

High percentages of structural and land vacancy have nearly compromised the physical integrity of the community and have provided an arena for heightened criminal activity. Gang activity, drug trafficking, prostitution, robbery, arson, and illegal dumping have all been reported throughout the community. The community must focus attention on issues of safety and security. In addition, the community would benefit from focusing attention towards issues of accessibility and amenability.

Since the McDougall-Hunt residents and organizations have identified challenges similar to those identified by residents throughout Weed and Seed sites across the country, the community could benefit from implementing similar strategies, while addressing the unique conditions and circumstances of McDougall-Hunt. CPTED Principles can serve the community and provide sustainable outcomes in the form of a physical and economic development plan. Efficient and long-term impacts of a CPTED-based community development project can be achieved through diligent teams serving together to attain mutually beneficial goals. The McDougall-Hunt Community and its residents, organizations,



Figure 26: Pilot Lot, Author Photo

and businesses would benefit from increased city, fire, police, and planning and development presence in the community.

The principles of CPTED have been shown to be a positive movement toward safety and security within communities. A different way to approach CPTED is to compare the principles of CPTED to those that drive business corridors and effective business practices. As a business owner, one may be interested in highly trafficked areas which are well lit with open vistas so that shop and window displays are made visible to as many potential customers as possible. Business growth and CPTED are complimentary. Not only does CPTED make business safer but it also attracts people to a corridor and increases business flow.

CPTED is a holistic model that involves the entire community and works to stabilize neighborhoods. These efforts can be simple and many can be implemented easily. Evidence shows that residential involvement in CPTED practices has proven to be strongly effective. This means CPTED creates and maintains ownership not only making a safe environment but creating an empowered environment.

Chapter 5: Project Framework

The members of the Capstone Team are outsiders to this community. One of the earliest and most influential introductions to the community was facilitated by Jennifer Hatchett, Executive Director of the Gratiot McDougall United Community Development Corporation (GMUCDC). As Ms. Hatchett is a community stakeholder and her organization specializes in affordable housing development in McDougall-Hunt, the Capstone Team was privileged to meet her, gain insight, and attempt to learn from her experiences. She provided the Capstone Team with vital information regarding the conditions of her organization, including its projects, opportunities, and challenges. Ms. Hatchett introduced the Capstone Team to one of GMUCDC's program participants. It was in this meeting that the idea for the "FREE" project came to be. Ms. Hatchett organized an interview with Willie Watkins in which a conversation was started with his daughter, Katrina Watkins. Katrina was interested in the Capstone Team as she herself was starting a 501(c)3 to provide long-term maintenance to lots in the neighborhood. At first, from an outsider perspective, this seemed to be a simple solution. This did not turn out to be true. The Capstone team realized there were other issues at play and maintenance of lots shifted to become the major focus of the capstone. One of the most obvious challenges was that the identified vacant lot was in a strong state of disrepair thus calling for the need of experienced specialized labor and heavy machinery. The heavy machinery needed to do the work properly is generally very expensive and out-of-reach for a new 501(c)3. This then becomes an issue of access for the community organizations. Issues of access and opportunity are distinctly different from issues of capacity. Access and opportunity may be considered alongside aspects of knowledge and power in

that community organizations may be marginalized to the point that they are removed from the networks that provide resources for their projects.

Funding

The first question asked then is most often “how do you pay for it.” This is often the major hang-up on projects as economic development is a major cog in the development wheel. There are many things that would be nice if they cost no money, but the fact is that every business needs to see a financial benefit in order to do a project. This is where creativity comes into play. There needs to be an effective, sustainable way that exists that can be utilized within the term of a project to pay for a self-sustaining model of development. This is not by any means an easy task. There are people that work in the non-profit world that spend all of their time attempting to corral new ways of paying for projects. So how do you get funding? The community may be asked to help but often these projects are very expensive and communities have many other concerns that they may see as more important on limited budgets and grant availability. CPTED (See pg 36) is still a new concept and newer unproven methods of development are harder to sell than more established ones. So pulling the money from the community is an option but not a sustainable one or a quick one.

The Department of Transportation has a vested interest in training contractors to do work on their projects but the money that the Department of Transportation has comes with very strict guidelines as to how it can be spent. Those guidelines do not lend themselves to donating projects to some communities over other communities. The Department of Transportation could spend some money to train but only on parts that directly relate to their projects. For example they cannot spend money on materials for a job within the community that is not associated with one of their other projects. This leads to an investigation into how to leverage assets within the community to gain funding.

The key is to identify a 501c3 in the community which has a tax exempt status. This means that monies donated to these organizations come directly off of the donor’s tax liability. If, for example, a contractor were to donate a lot of landscaping, the fair market value of that work can be considered as an in-kind donation to a non-profit organization and the cost of the work would then come off of that company’s tax liability. This type of development model to pay for projects is similar to building construction funding like Energy Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits. Tax incentives are used to fund projects for developers. This would mean that if a contractor that needed training came to do work for an established 501c3, they would be able to value the work at its fair market value.⁵ The contractor would have the ability to write off the work as a donation and the financial burden would be removed. Added to the value to the company that comes from learning to do work at a higher level, this process becomes financially viable.

Implications of Tax Credits

Historic and Energy tax credits can be used as an example for tax based development. In building developments, most often historic and energy credits are not used by the

developer. Developments may take years to complete and even longer to make money on. A company only owes taxes if they make money over the course of the year. It does not make sense for a developer to lose the first 2 years worth of tax credits because they do not owe taxes. So the solution is that most of the time the developers will sell the tax credits to a bank. The bank can buy the tax credits for ninety cents on the dollar and because they have a large tax liability they will use the full credits. So on a \$10,000,000 project, the bank would buy tax credits for \$9,000,000. The bank receives \$1,000,000 in savings on their taxes and the developer gains \$9,000,000 in capital that they can spend up front to build the development. In the context of the “FREE Project” this means that there is an opportunity laid out for more established contractors to become involved. By way of example, if you are frequently a “Prime Contractor” and you do not want to lose business, it is in your best interest to have relationships with experienced DBE’s. Most contractors that are frequently “Prime Contractors” have a large tax liability and can use a tax break. It is a possibility that a more established contractor could use the model of buying tax credits and in the process gain a business partner that they can rely on in the future.

How Partnering Tax Credits Work

In the event that a DBE and more established contractor choose to do business together and use the “FREE” method of community development, the logistics are as follows. The more established contractor that wants the tax benefits of the project will have to be the “designated originator” of work. This means that the agreement to do the work with the community needs to be between the more established contractor and the sponsoring 501c3 non-profit. The non-profit will need temporary site control of the land the project is on and have the authority to improve the land. Once site control is in place, the 501c3 will “hire” the

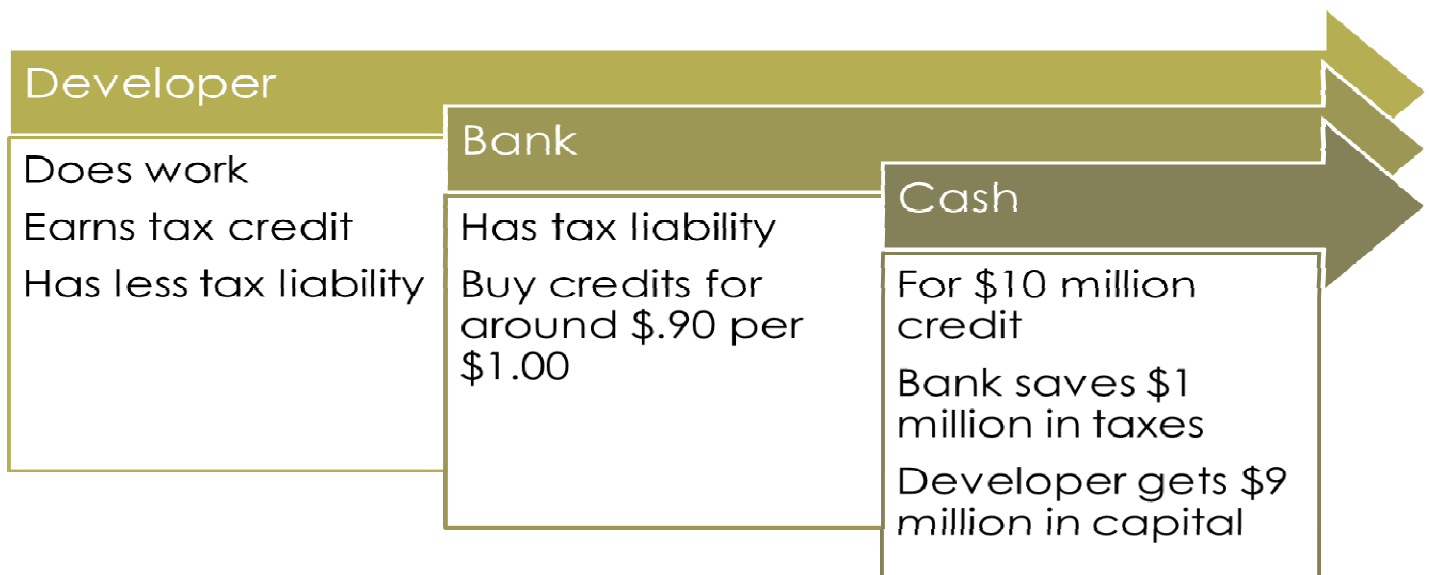


Figure 27: Historic Tax Credit Model

⁵ MDOT has “average unit prices” which are statewide accepted average costs of work. These are used to calculate the fair market value of work by multiplying the average unit price by the amount of work done per item of work..

established contractor to do whatever work the “FREE Project” is trying to get done. The established contractor that is attempting to get a tax write-off will then sub-contract a DBE that has agreed to the training process. All the logistics of which DBE is working on the project and what training is to be done should be worked out before hand, but the DBE receiving training in this scenario is technically working for a larger more established contractor. If in the case of the developer tax credit model the developer sells the credits to the bank for 90 cents on the dollar, then in the “FREE” method the DBE would be paid time and materials. The value added to the process would be part of the additional tax incentive for the established contractor. The established contractor is donating work, not money, to the non-profit. When money is donated the amount of tax write off is the exact amount of money that is spent. In the scenario of the “FREE Project,” the donation is an in kind donation. This means a fair market value is used to determine how much was donated to the 501c3 non-profit. The final donation credit is higher than the amount of money spent by whoever donates the work. The donation value on a balance sheet is the same as donating cash for the value of the work. The fluff in the value between the subcontracted materials and labor cost and the fair market value is an incentive for the established contractors or partner to join the process. Much like in the development model with bank involvement in energy credits, there is a benefit to both parties.

Chapter 6: Outreach Outcomes

Creating Ownership

A major problem for those attempting to do “Community Development” is the idea that they “need to do something.” It is important to remember that the people of the community know more about it than any developer as an outsider could understand in years of working there. This is a long history of memory and information about how things interact within the community and how the community got to the point it is at now. This means that community development needs to be a collaboration with members of the community in order to “bring in the experts.” The results of involvement are staggering. People become excited about their own environment, a new level of sustainability can be reached. The residents were there before the Capstone Team formed and will be there long after the Capstone team dissolves. For the Capstone team moving forward to a sustainable project means that the community needs to participate in identifying a need, want the project to succeed, have a vested interest in the project, and most importantly, have a role in the development of the project.

In the FREE Pilot Project various community groups contributed to the identification and planning process and this engagement continues not just to critique the work that had

been done but to suggest what should be done with the pilot area. Perhaps the best example of this attempt to build ownership is the student design project that was held in collaboration with Ross Hill Elementary and the Bailey Park Project. 7th and 8th graders of Ross Hill Elementary participated in a design class where they laid out their ideas as to what their community would look like that would represent them. The process was simple. Each student said a word that they wanted to represent their community and then a site plan was given to each student. Toward the end of the design exercise students came up and explained their design to the rest of the class for prizes. This process got students thinking and designing in a way that would make their community more beautiful and safe. Without ever having studied the concepts of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design they followed the principles and laid out the vision of a safer community that followed CPTED principles. The next step in the process was to take the plan drawings, categorize them, and place them onto a set of official work plans. Those work plans will be the plans used for DBE training purposes. During the construction phase of this project, it is important for the Capstone team to revisit Ross Hill and encourage the students who are interested to come out to the construction site, to go over the plans with them that their ideas have created, and to explain to them the workings of the construction world. This engagement does many things. Working on a construction project gets kids entering high school interested in trades like engineering and architecture as well as construction opportunities. More importantly, it shows the process from concept to completion. If at a community meeting a plan is revealed to a community without input from the members of that community and then implemented, the community has a hard time seeing their voice in the project. When community members, including the youth of the community, see the project as their project then maintenance becomes easier. Pride creates a sense of responsibility. When people participate in the process they take better care of the final product.



Figure 28: Ross Hill Design Project, Courtesy of Katrina Watkins

Recommendations

The “FREE Project” is an attempt to tie communities together by accessing existing resources. In this book the steps and benefits of this project have been explained and laid out. To sustain this project, the Capstone Team makes the following recommendations.

McDougall-Hunt Community Residents are encouraged to do the following:

1. Remain integrally involved in the processes by which the FREE Project is designed and implemented by participating in various community meetings and workshops held by partnering organizations
2. Spread the word about community development projects taking place in McDougall Hunt by introducing family and friends to the opportunities for involvement, employment, or participation through word-of-mouth tactics.
3. Continue to reduce the scale and scope of vacancy and overgrowth, using Bailey Park Project for strategic guidance and assistance, as well as help identify locations for potential projects that involve blight removal.
4. Remain vigilant, along with existing Neighborhood Watch Groups and community residents serving as Watch Dogs, by observing, reporting, and preventing criminal activity.
5. Become more informed and educated in the field of CPTED and community-based safety solutions. Outreach campaigns and other informational programs will increase community awareness of the initiatives.

Citizens District Council is encouraged to do the following:

1. Help lead a community-led research coalition or community-based research initiatives using written and spoken word techniques to reveal authentic information from the hearts and minds of the residents.
2. Share, update, and enhance an interactive mapping project as an opportunity to more accurately and more often track the conditions of the physical spaces throughout the neighborhood.
3. Investigate options for updating the 2nd Revised McDougall-Hunt Revitalization Plan from 2003 in consideration of recent development trends.

Gratiot McDougall United Community Development Corporation/ Bailey Park Project are encouraged to do the following:

1. Use their current role in the community to share opportunities that exist within the FREE Project. Many residents who work with GMUCDC or benefit from their services often face challenges associated with property maintenance and blight issues

throughout their neighborhood. Raising awareness of blight removal options will improve curb appeal, housing value, and community ownership.

2. Assist the Bailey Park Project in its continued organizational development phases and lifecycle. Relationships can improve through continued teamwork, communication, and collaboration.

Bailey Park Project is encouraged to do the following:

1. Provide sustainable lasting maintenance on the identified lot within the community after completion of the FREE Project pilot. Maintaining this area will help enforce ownership over the space, and also presents the Bailey Park Project with a strong opportunity to become a stabilizing force in the community.
2. Organize and facilitate a subcommittee that will oversee and manage the pilot project and future blight removal efforts. The subcommittee should include community residents, stakeholders, law enforcement officials, partnering organization representatives, contractors, and other members involved in the pilot project.
3. Pursue working relationship with organizations like the Detroit Land Bank Authority, Michigan Community Resources, and the Department of Neighborhoods with the City of Detroit to develop blight removal projects throughout McDougall-Hunt and eventually the city of Detroit.

Ross Hill Academy is encouraged to do the following:

1. Use FREE Project as an example to students that their voices are being heard and that their input is being utilized in the design process.
2. Provide continued outreach and engagement with aforementioned organizations in order to increase student ownership of the physical space. Direct input should serve the necessities of lot maintenance, programming, and academic/professional experience.
3. Encourage and enable students to utilize the physical space upon completion of the FREE Project pilot.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Community is encouraged to do the following:

1. Take advantage of the benefits that accompany high level training and public-private partnerships with community organizations, while creating community benefits through their training efforts.
2. Utilize the FREE Project as an opportunity to address areas of concern in the neighborhoods of DBE's.

Michigan Department of Transportation is encouraged to do the following:

1. Maintain the emphasis on training within the DBE program and look toward accepting new and innovative ways of encouraging competitive business development.
2. Participate in effective business training methods and work with small and disadvantaged businesses to ensure those businesses understand state government regulations.
3. Help coordinate resources used within the FREE Project where possible, using their human capital and expertise in guiding the training program to insure the most efficient results are gained.

City of Detroit Department of Neighborhoods is encouraged to do the following:

1. Partner with organizations like those involved in the FREE project to design and develop community-led creative repurposing of empty spaces as the Blight Task Force Removal strategy emphasizes lot maintenance upon blight removal completion.
2. Uphold the vision of communities through adopting community-led design strategies throughout the implementation of the FREE Project.

Future FREE Project Coordinators are encouraged to do the following:

1. Ensure that extensive community and resident coordination accompanies research and assessment of the physical space and precedes any physical development.
2. Understand the correlation of methodologies and strategies, as opposed to singling out any one aspect of the FREE Project. Success of the FREE Project stems from its comprehensive approach to design and development.

Appendices

Appendix A: Authors' Social Locations

Scott Douglas Social Location

Scott Douglas was born in Jackson, Michigan in 1983. He was raised in a Scotch-Irish American middle class family. His parents were both born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie Michigan. Scott spent most of his childhood between Sault Ste. Marie and Blackman Township, a predominantly farm area just north of Jackson, MI. Scott played many sports as a child. He also battles with Dyslexia and ended up attending the University of Detroit Mercy on both a Cross Country and Academic scholarship. His first interactions with the city of Detroit were through his experiences at the University. He then graduated with a degree in civil engineering and got a job with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). After five years Scott returned to University of Detroit Mercy to pursue an opportunity in creating a reliable public transportation system in the Southeast Michigan Region. This led him to enter the Master of Community Development (MCD) Program while at the same time he was working with the University's College of Engineering on a study of "Factors that Enable and Inhibit Effective Regional Transit." The combination of working on this Transportation Study while learning about community development helped shape his educational path. Scott found he had much in common with the foundational ideology of the MCD Program particularly as it relates to the pursuance of social justice.

When Scott's transit focus was combined with a focus on the "Economic, Environmental, and Social Justice" course that is part of the MCD curriculum, it shaped the way Scott viewed how a city runs, operates, interacts and connects. Part of the social justice curriculum included an assignment known as the "D-Tour." This assignment was designed to be a tour of Detroit by car to visit different places of significance throughout the city, all the while investigating different aspects of Detroit's past and present as a way to get students to better understand and think about real issues and social structures creating challenges within the city. The ability to tie together various pieces of different puzzles plays a massive role in Scott's definition of social justice. He believes that there are existing systems in place that are underutilized or in many situations unknown by the community. Awareness of the existing structures is paramount. Sometimes simple connections can make a huge difference in the lives of people. There are existing structures that can be tied together in new ways to make a city, state, nation, and world function more efficiently.

Joe Gruber Social Location

Joe was born in Ohio in 1989. He was raised on the East Side of Cleveland in the suburbs of University Heights, Shaker Heights, and Cleveland Heights. He was born the third

of six children to James and Jean Gruber, both of whom were raised in the same neighborhoods of Cleveland. Throughout his education, he has studied under primarily Jesuit and some Marianist Catholic educational curriculums. Social Justice, critical thinking, and problem solving have been primary focuses of his education. In 2011 Gruber graduated from the University of Dayton with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Rights. This interdisciplinary research-based program focuses on international law, international organizations, sociology, philosophy, politics and government. Moreover, strong attention was paid to the organization and management of non-profit or non-governmental organizations, many of which are involved in social practices aiming to address international human rights issues. This includes but is not limited to poverty, political conflict & violence, violence against women & children, human trafficking, environmental degradation, war crimes, prisoners of consciousness, refugee and asylee protection. Throughout the program, he was drawn to the evolutionary nature of humans through globalization, technological advances, and the availability of information. These aspects of the planet earth have important implications for human rights, international development, and civil society. Joseph has strived to make connections between the evolutionary nature of humanity and technology as they supplement or relate to socially just economic theories. Naturally, Joseph was drawn to a focus on the development of people and places in the face of adversity and conflict. A profound connection to his hometown and fellow residents persisted in his being and thus drew his focus more from an international scope to more national and local scopes.

In an attempt to localize the policy and social practice of human rights, Joseph found a natural fit in the MCD Program in University of Detroit Mercy's School of Architecture. The academic foundations of service, social justice, and sustainability were already part of Joseph's existing knowledge base. The MCD's multifaceted approach to comprehensive and holistic knowledge of community development programs was a method of thinking he aimed to achieve. Upon moving to Detroit, a fellow post industrial, Midwest, Great Lakes, rust belt metropolis, Joseph inherently felt a sense of relation to this otherwise unfamiliar place. Conducting numerous research projects and being thrust into various Detroit communities, he quickly became oriented to the history, development, and conditions of Detroit's many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Gruber now lives in Grosse Ile, Michigan with his wife Christina Gruber. He has a strong desire to become deeply involved in the continued revitalization and rehabilitation of Detroit as well as the surrounding communities of the Metropolitan Detroit Area. Upon the culmination of his journey through the MCD program Joseph found himself paired with a student with whom he had worked several other projects inside and outside of the MCD Program. Notably, Scott brought Joseph into the Public Transportation Research Group for which Scott had been diligently working. Coming from Cleveland, a model city for public transportation in the American Metropolis and a case-study focus of the Research Group, Joe was very familiar with what an effective public transportation system can do for a city and the surrounding metropolitan area. The experiences of growing up with a transit system has created an influence on how he addresses the issues of living, working, or playing in a city without effective transit.

Appendix B: Additional Photographs

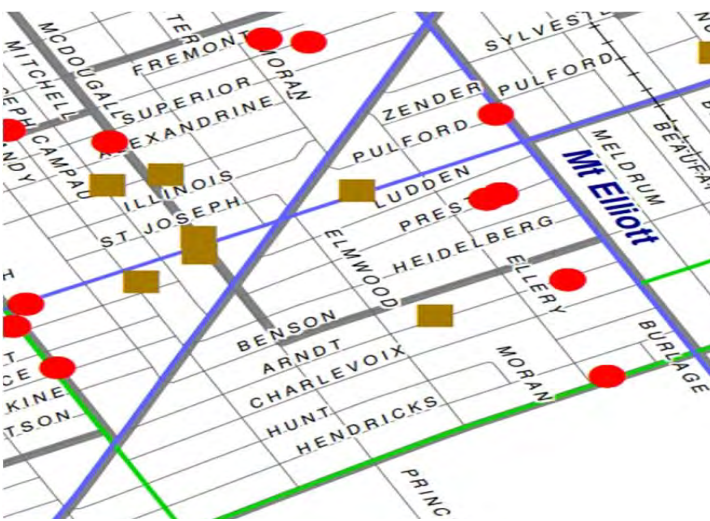


Housing Stock. Photographs taken by Authors

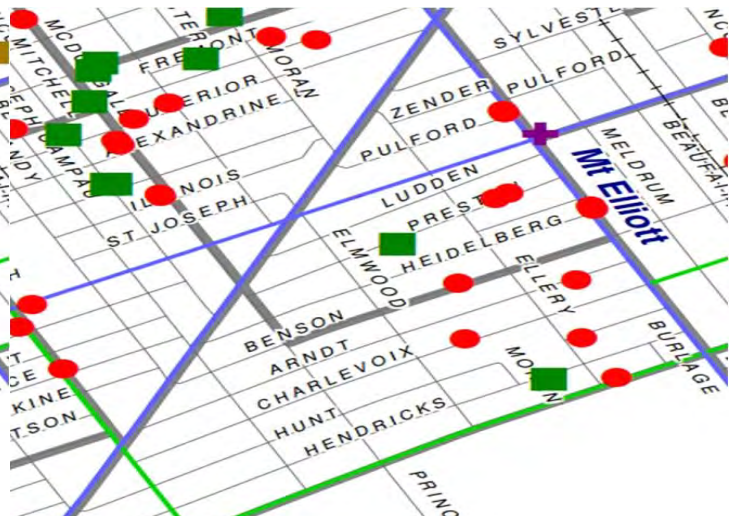


Vacant Lots in McDougall-Hunt. Photographs taken by Authors.

Appendix C: Additional Maps



Section 106 Review from 2006. Red points represent demolitions and brown squares represent minor home repairs. (Source: DPDD August, 2010. Taken from NSP1 PDF)



Section 106 Review from 2007. Red points represent demolitions, green squares represent minor home repairs, and purple crosses represent rehabilitation. (Source: DPDD August, 2010. Taken from NSP1 PDF)

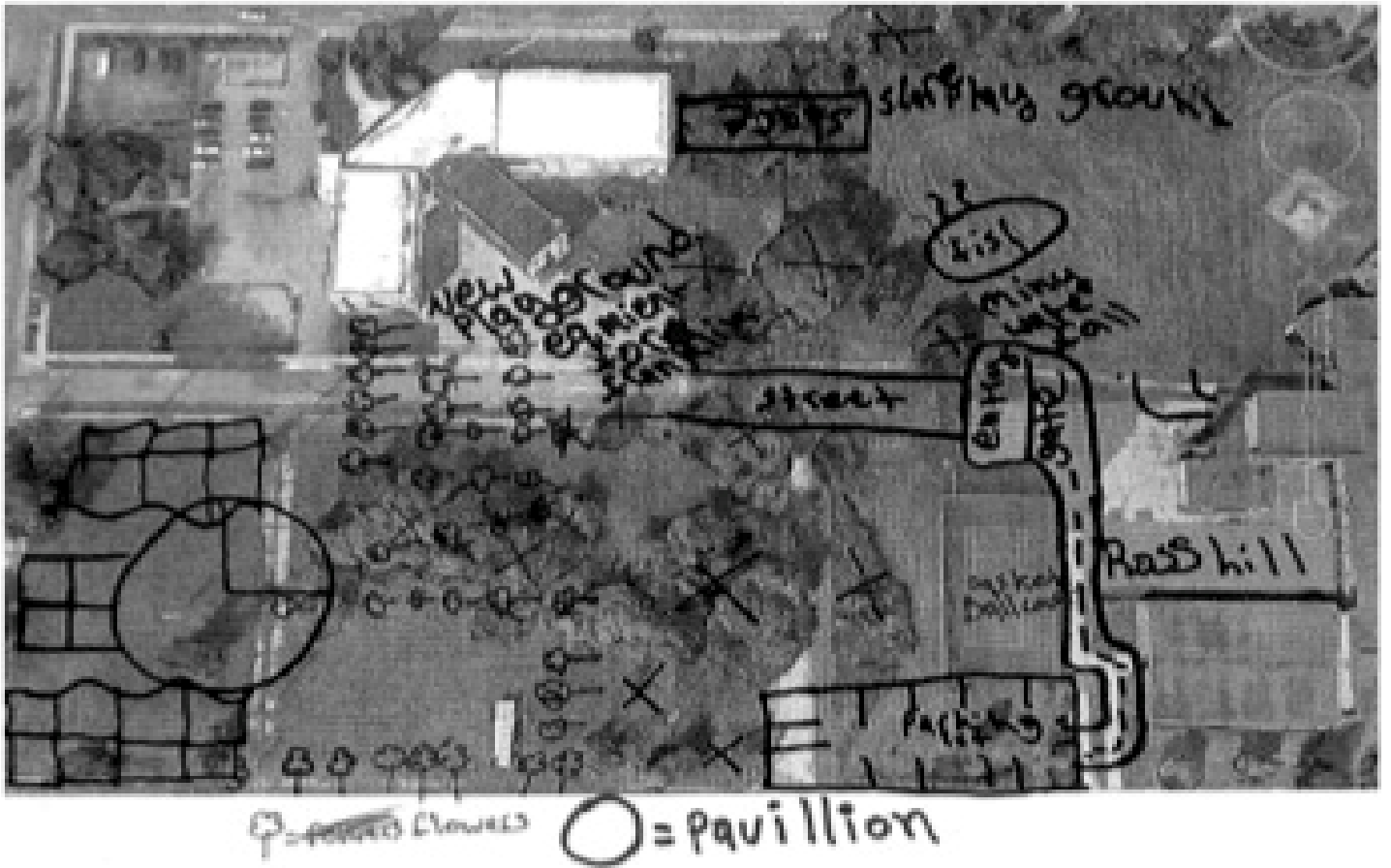


Wayne County Tax Foreclosures 2006 (Source: DPDD August, 2010. Taken from NSP1 PDF)



Wayne County Tax Foreclosures 2007 (Source: DPDD, August, 2010. Taken from NSP1 PDF)

Appendix D: Student Designs



Examples of Ross Hill Design Project



Examples of the Ross Hill Design Project

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