

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF URBAN DECAY AND RENEWAL IN THE CITIES
OF DETROIT AND PITTSBURGH, POSTWAR TO PRESENT: AN INTRODUCTORY
SURVEY**

**A thesis submitted to
The Honors Program at UDM
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for Graduation with Honors**

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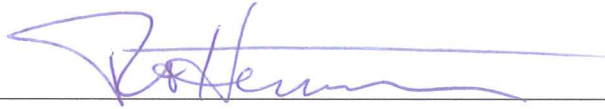
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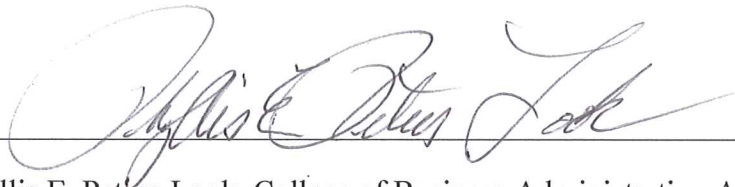
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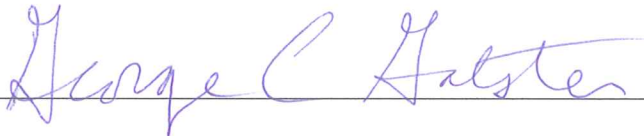
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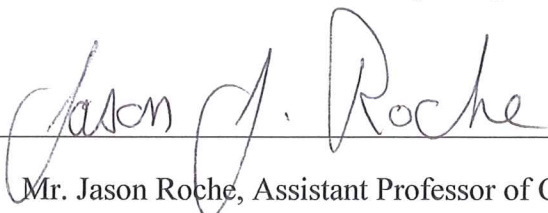
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PREFACE

This thesis was written under the graduation requirement of the Honors Program at the University of Detroit Mercy and with the guidance of the thesis committee consisting of Dr. Robert Hutchinson, Associate Professor of Accounting at the University of Detroit Mercy, Mrs. Phyllis Peters-Look, former Director of Professional Standards, Deloitte & Touche, and Dr. George Galster, Distinguished Professor of Urban Studies & Planning, Wayne State University. The thesis report represents the results of comparing and analyzing the social and economic circumstances of Detroit and Pittsburgh over the last seventy years in the effort to demonstrate that Detroit might be comparable to Pittsburgh, thus opening the possibility for Detroit to model urban redevelopment programs after Pittsburgh, which has been generally known for success in that area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to my thesis committee members, my family, and my friends, whose encouragement, advice, and guidance made this undertaking possible. I would also like to thank the library staff of the University of Detroit Mercy and Wayne State University, who assisted me in finding “hard-to-find” publications and reports, and did not cease in attempting to locate certain pieces of data, even when it seemed near impossible.

Dedicated to the citizens of and the Cities of Detroit and Pittsburgh:

Speramus Meliora; Resurget Cineribus
(We hope for better things; It shall rise from the ashes)

Benigno Numine
(By the favor of Heaven)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years, a multitude of names described the City of Detroit; the Arsenal of Democracy, the City of Champions, the Paris of the West, and of course, the Motor City. Mayor David Bing described Detroit as "...a city of great faith and resolve" in his State of the City Speech in 2011. Detroit gave rise to the mass-produced automobile, beginning when Henry Ford built his first automobile in a rented workshop on Mack Avenue. The same industry would make Detroit an industrial and union powerhouse and trendsetter as early as 1914 (when Henry Ford announced an unprecedented wage of \$5 per day). The Renaissance City would host the first Van Gogh painting in the United States in the Detroit Institute of Arts. So prominent was the city that the Detroit Institute of Arts was run as more of a city department than a separate museum at one point in time. The city itself bought masterpieces to adorn the gallery walls in the museum. Detroit was the site of the first highways in the United States and a center of culture, giving birth to the influential R&B style of music known as Motown and modern techno, and influencing music genres as diverse as rock and roll to hip-hop. Yet, Detroit for decades has been mired in a myriad of urban problems, corruption, and poor management that on January 9, 2012, earned Detroit the unfortunate award of second worst run city in the United States of America from "The Bottom Line" on MSNBC. The "award" criteria included the fact that "[of] the 100 largest cities, Detroit has the highest home vacancy rate, the highest unemployment rate, the highest poverty rate, the worst violent crime rate and the lowest median household income" (Sauter, Stockdale, and Allen). Unfortunately, bleak evidence of this assessment can be found

driving through some of the once vital and thriving communities of the city. This author has deep roots in the City of Detroit. Much of my immediate and extended family emigrated directly from Europe to the various neighborhoods of Detroit and Hamtramck. My father was born and raised in Detroit, and lived for many years on the East Side near City Airport on Elgin Avenue and Blackmoor Street. Likewise, my mother was born and raised in Hamtramck on McDougall. A great aunt lived on Newbern Street. Another great-great uncle lived on Moran Street. Countless friends and co-workers lived in these neighborhoods. Little remains of some of these neighborhoods immediately to the north of Hamtramck: the decayed remnants of Newbern and Moran can be seen driving east on McNichols from the University of Detroit Mercy to Buddy's Pizza at Conant. The tightly packed bungalows and two-family homes on Elgin Avenue were numerous; today, roughly ten remain standing, clustered primarily near Van Dyke Avenue. The remainder of the two blocks of Elgin that stretch from Van Dyke to French Road bordering city airport are empty and nature has begun the process of forming what is sometimes called "the urban prairie:" the sidewalks are all but gone, and the street has narrowed on account of the encroaching growth. In what was a bustling neighborhood filled with the sounds of a thriving community, only the wind can be heard blowing across the neighborhood, impeded only by the trees that once stood on the lawns of homes on adjacent streets, along with the occasional siren. Looking from north to south on Elgin, one can see the parallel east-west streets, something that would have been impossible during my father's time.

The goal of this undertaking is to explore the possibility that amongst the older cities of America, Detroit is not alone in its current plight. More specifically, this thesis seeks to explore and examine the assertions that the situation of post-war Detroit with regards to urban decay and renewal is comparable to the situation of post-war Pittsburgh, and that, as a result, current and past efforts within Pittsburgh can be applied to renewal efforts and social problems within Detroit as an effective system of solutions. Pittsburgh was selected for this thesis for several primary reasons. Firstly, on January 6, 2011, Detroit 2010 (an initiative of WXYZ) ran an article entitled “Learning from Pittsburgh.” The article suggested that Detroit could learn a few lessons on revitalization from Pittsburgh, an “amazing” revitalization that involved economic diversification aided by local universities and one that already attracted the interest of city leadership. Thus, the first reason is to analyze and test the assertion that the two cities are comparable from a local media outlet; how similar is Pittsburgh to Detroit? The second reason is that Pittsburgh provides an effective benchmark in comparing the two cities. That is to say, the story of Pittsburgh post-1980s revitalization is well-known, studied, and generally accepted as a success, which is beneficial to the comparison. Lastly, the third reason for utilizing Pittsburgh in this thesis is that both cities have the same context and the same roots. Both cities are industrial, Rust Belt cities with their origins in a single, large industry. Both have or are struggling with post-industrial changes in their economies. Therefore, the cities are more similar in their economic context than say, a city in the Sun Belt.

The thesis intends to provide detailed analysis of a number of the primary sources, features, and symptoms of urban decay within both cities to determine the status of the claim that both cities are comparable in their respective urban decay and social situations. The thesis seeks to also examine whether or not both cities are comparable in terms of size, population, and financial status. It is intended that from this analysis, a determination can be made whether or not renewal efforts in both cities stem from the same root causes or from similar contexts, and therefore, successful efforts by the City of Pittsburgh, and other organizations such as the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the Allegheny Conference, and others are applicable as a corrective method (and effective supplement to current Detroit renewal programs) to urban decay and its symptoms within Detroit. Detailed research was conducted from primary and secondary sources from Detroit and Pittsburgh to substantiate the following analysis and conclusion of the comparability of both cities' urban situations, and to support the final assertion of the adaptability and applicability of renewal efforts in Pittsburgh to Detroit.

The thesis seeks not to prove the causes of urban decay in the cities, but simply to compare the two within the parameters of urban decay causes and manifestations to judge the comparability and applicability of solutions applied in Pittsburgh. Indeed, it would require a thesis for Detroit and then Pittsburgh to delve into great detail and explore the causes of urban decay in both cities. Volumes of information have been published to present the case for one of two causes of urban decay in each of the cities; to attempt to present the case for all of the potential causes (and then manifestations) of urban decay for both Detroit and Pittsburgh, and then to compare the two cities would be an enormous

undertaking and is out of scope for this project. As a result, a few assumptions must occur, namely, defining what is meant by urban decay and outlining commonly-accepted causes and manifestations of urban decay. With these assumptions made, standards can be created by which the situation of both cities can be adequately compared and analyzed. For the purposes of this thesis, urban decay is defined as the process by which a functioning portion or whole city falls into disuse, disrepair, and thus, loses vitality. An assumption will be made that the major causes of urban decay are, amongst potential others, changing demographics, deindustrialization, economic restructuring, political disenfranchisement, poor urban planning, racial discrimination and tension, redlining, socio-familial issues, and suburbanization. Further, the major manifestations of urban decay will be assumed to be: abandonment of buildings (blight), depopulation, desolate-looking landscapes, high crime and high unemployment rates.

One final issue must be addressed. Discussing the current situation of Detroit can be an emotional and divisive topic of discussion. Often, it appears that opinions on the matter are split between two sides of a coin: an extremely pessimistic outlook regarding the city, a view that is often driven by emotional underpinnings regarding the Detroit of the past. On the other side, there are those who hold an extremely optimistic outlook regarding the city, almost to the point of selectively ignoring certain facts and developments regarding the city. The adherents to this viewpoint lash out against any negative presentation of the city, even if there is truth in the negativity. The purpose of this thesis is not to incite either of the extremes, or to justify any one viewpoint in

between, but rather, to attempt to objectively and adequately compare the cities in terms of both urban decay and renewal.

In summary, this thesis intends to explore the question: Can the urban decay and renewal attempts of the City of Detroit be accurately and adequately compared to the City of Pittsburgh, and is it therefore possible for successful renewal efforts from the City of Pittsburgh to be adapted to the City of Detroit?

CHAPTER 2: DENSITY, POPULATION, AND SIZE

The conversation about the comparability between Detroit and Pittsburgh begins with the statistical – and foundational - building blocks of a comparison between municipalities, and indeed, the building blocks whose manifestations in published data sets are often discussed without a great deal of second thought in the media, around the watercooler, or in the personal sphere. That is, this thesis begins with a discussion about the deeply interwoven subjects of population, size in land area, and the population density of the two cities. The issues are so interwoven, in fact, that when one describes a city with terms such as ‘large’ or ‘big,’ the individual may be referring to the population of the city, the physical size of the city, or perhaps even the density of the city. After all, some of the characteristics of a “big city:” skyscrapers and apartment buildings can be signals of not simply the population or size of a city, but the relationship between the two, known as density. However, before any sort of analysis of comparability between the two cities can be made on more complex socio-economic issues, Detroit and Pittsburgh must be examined, in relation to one another, on the most essential nuts-and-bolts factors that do or do not differentiate a city from its peers: density, denizens, and dimensions.

Population

| Year | Detroit | Pittsburgh |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 1900 | 285,704 | 321,616 |
| 1910 | 465,766 | 533,905 |
| 1920 | 993,078 | 588,343 |
| 1930 | 1,568,662 | 669,817 |
| 1940 | 1,623,452 | 671,659 |
| 1950 | 1,849,568 | 676,806 |
| 1960 | 1,670,144 | 604,332 |
| 1970 | 1,511,482 | 520,117 |
| 1980 | 1,203,339 | 423,938 |
| 1990 | 1,027,974 | 369,879 |
| 2000 | 951,270 | 334,563 |
| 2010 | 713,777 | 305,704 |

Table 2-1: The population of Detroit and Pittsburgh, 1900-2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The casual observer will note that, while both cities are undeniably very populous urban centers, the cities appear to be quite dissimilar in relation to one another on the basis of absolute population. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Pittsburgh averaged roughly 1.14 times larger than Detroit. Steel production in Pittsburgh began as early as the mid-nineteenth century; these steel mills would attract increased immigration, swelling the population of the city. The influx of immigrants would help make Pittsburgh the 8th most populous city at the 1910 census. During that decade, Pittsburgh would supply between one third and one half of the nation's steel and these same steel mills operated night and day to produce the necessary steel for WWI in 1915 (Lorant). Thus, in the early twentieth century, Pittsburgh would remain more populous than Detroit. However, the burgeoning automotive industry in Detroit would begin to grow between 1900 and 1930. With the growth of the Ford Motor Company, the formation of the

General Motors Corporation out of individual auto-makers like Cadillac, Chevrolet, and Oldsmobile, and the creation and expansion of Chrysler from Maxwell Motors and the acquisition of Dodge, DeSoto, and Plymouth, the City of Detroit would explode in population. Indeed, at the 1950 U.S. Census, when both cities would peak in population, Detroit was approximately 2.73 times more populous than Pittsburgh. Over the course of the twelve decades surveyed, Detroit averaged 2.28 times more populous than Pittsburgh. At the 1970 U.S. Census, Detroit was almost 3 times more populous than Pittsburgh. Accordingly, the population rank of Detroit, based on U.S. Census figures, rapidly overtook Pittsburgh in the early twentieth century. Detroit would rise from the thirteenth most populous city, neck and neck in the rankings with Pittsburgh at the opening of the century, to the fourth largest city in the United States. Between the decades of 1920-1940, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York City were the only three cities that exceeded Detroit in population. While there are fairly significant and obvious differences in absolute population between the two cities, differences that would make the cities appear dissimilar in relation to one another (especially when considering that the population of Detroit in 2010 – 713,777, the lowest it has been since 1950, exceeds the peak 1950 population of Pittsburgh – 676,806), an examination of the population trends at the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty-first century reveal an entirely different picture.

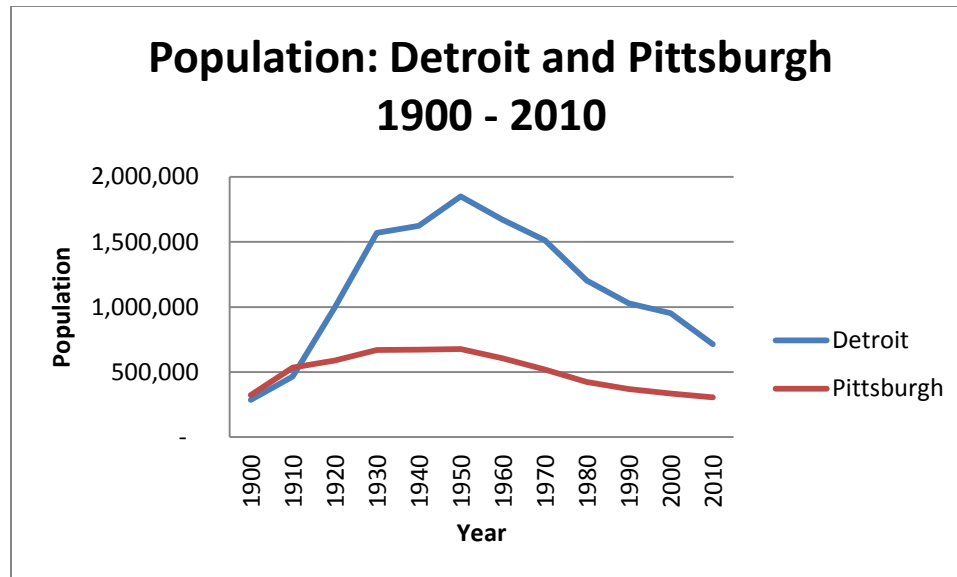


Figure 2-1: The population of Detroit and Pittsburgh, 1900-2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

| Year | Detroit | Pittsburgh |
|------|---------|------------|
| 1900 | 13 | 11 |
| 1910 | 9 | 8 |
| 1920 | 4 | 9 |
| 1930 | 4 | 10 |
| 1940 | 4 | 10 |
| 1950 | 5 | 12 |
| 1960 | 5 | 16 |
| 1970 | 5 | 24 |
| 1980 | 6 | 30 |
| 1990 | 7 | 40 |
| 2000 | 10 | 52 |
| 2010 | 18 | 59 |

Table 2-2: The population rank of Detroit and Pittsburgh, 1900-2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Ranked out of the 100 most populous cities from 1900-1990, ranked out of cities of 100,000 or more in population from 2000-2010.

What is definitively comparable, and indeed notable, is the similarity in the levels of population loss between the two cities. Examine the two figures below.

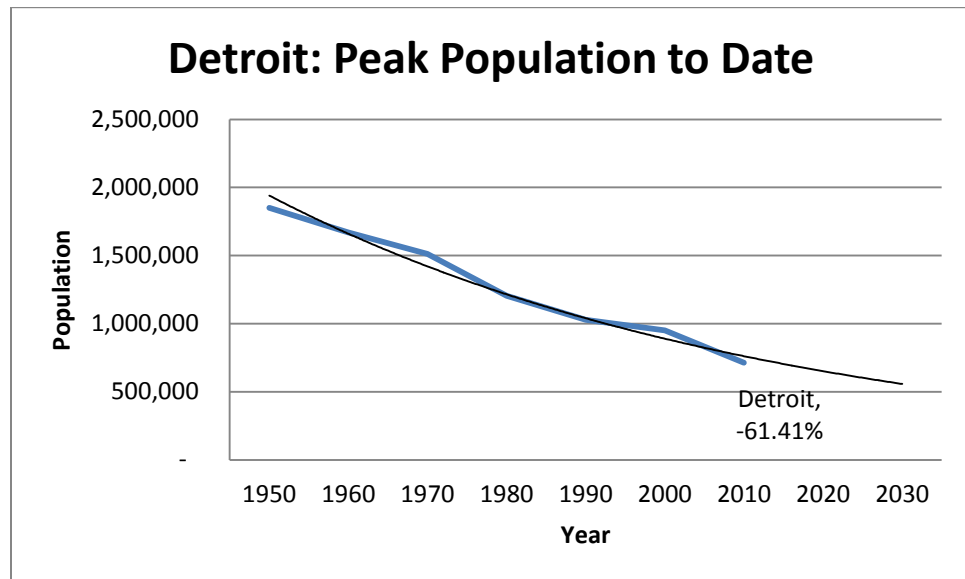


Figure 2-2: The population of Detroit, 1950-2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

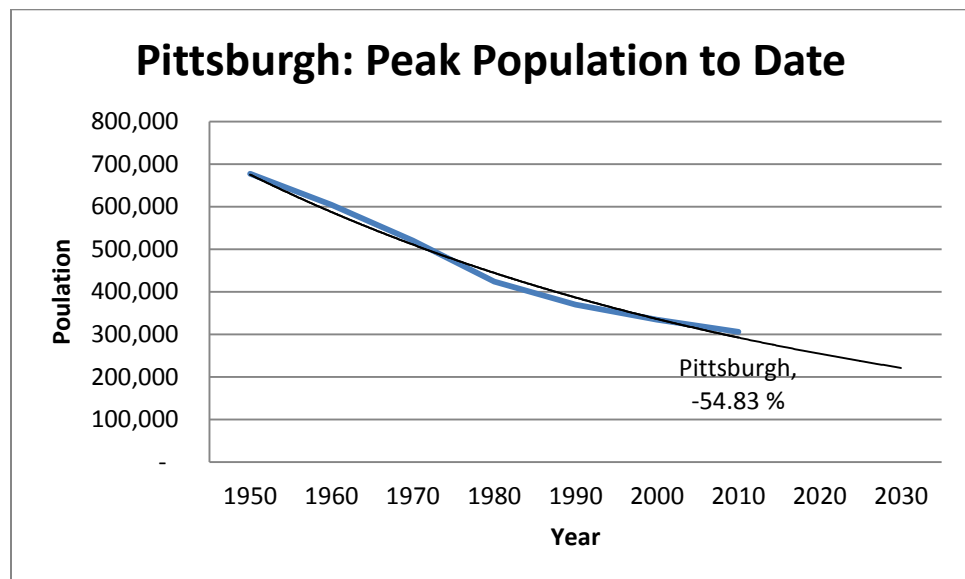


Figure 2-3: The population of Pittsburgh, 1950-2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Simply put, both cities endured similar, and equally staggering, population loss from the peak population decennial year, which for both Detroit and Pittsburgh was 1950. Pittsburgh experienced slightly milder population loss over the previous 60 years, losing 54.83% of its population. The population loss that occurred in Detroit was similarly steep and marginally worse: the city lost 61.41% of its population since 1950. The decade-by-decade percent population loss figures reveal important information about both cities. The assertion is often made that the July 1967 riot in Detroit caused the immediate mass exodus of people out of the city. While the racial flight aspect of the population decline in the mid-twentieth century, and its ties to the 1967 riots, will be examined later, the rate of population decline did not accelerate during the years following the riots, in fact, it slowed slightly. Population decline in Detroit began after 1950, with Detroit losing 9.70% of its population by 1960. By 1970, three years after the riots, the population for the decade was down 9.50%. The riots simply did not precipitate the immediate mass exodus out of the city that is often suggested. With the exception of the population decline spike in 1980 (20.39% since 1970), the city did not experience severe or out of the ordinary rates of population decline from 1980 to 1990 and from 1990 to 2000. In fact, the single greatest decrease in population experienced by Detroit in its recent history was last decade, when the city shrunk by nearly 25% from 2000 to 2010. Indeed, this population decrease cannot be attributed to white flight or the race riots. Put simply, the racial demographics of the city did not significantly change between the two decades. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Detroit was 82.7% African-American/10.6% white in 2010, a slight change from the 81.6% African-American/12.3% white in 2000. The

implication is this: the population decline of Detroit can defy conventional wisdom and thought about the population status of post-war Detroit. The population decline across the 60 years cannot be fully attributed to a singular cause, such as white flight or the riots, although, as will be examined, such causes definitely can factor into the population equation, especially in the mid-twentieth century. Without delving too deeply into the subject at this point, the white/African-American make-up of Detroit, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, shifted from 70.8% white/28.9% black in 1960 to 55.6% white/43.7% African-American in 1970, certainly seems to indicate the population decline in the 1960s included white flight. However, what must be considered is that in 1950, the demographics were 83.6%/16.2% white to African-American. The white population of the city decreased by 12.8% in 1960 and by 15.2% in 1970 (with a corresponding 12.7% and 14.8% increase in the African-American population in 1960 and 1970 respectively). What this suggests is that white flight actually may have begun as early as 1950, and was not wholly precipitated by the 1967 riots. Further, as can be seen, the population decline cannot be attributed to traditional “starting-points,” such as the 1967 riots or the tenure of Mayor Coleman A. Young in the late 1970s and the 1980s. The population decrease in Pittsburgh, while comparably similar, was significantly smoother over the past 60 years.

Figures 2-2 and 2-3 contain the exponential two period (twenty years) trend projections based upon the previous seven decennial Census population figures. The population data for both cities exhibit strong downward (almost perfectly linear) trends and using this information, the potential population for the two cities in twenty years was

predicted. The projection was modeled in an exponential framework, the reason based in the inherent asymptotic nature of the population of a city. This is to say, it is unlikely that either city will continue to bleed residents until the populations of the city reach zero. Further, as the population continues to decline, the actual number of people leaving the cities in each period will reduce. For example, even if Detroit continued to lose population at a rate of 25% per period, the 25% reduction remains based on the population of the city at the conclusion of the previous period. Essentially, the population decline would most likely level off at some point in time, rather than continue until the population of the city reaches zero. Of course, past historical data is not necessarily a predictor of future events. The projections merely demonstrate the strong negative correlation in the two cities' population data over the last sixty years, as well as one possible population scenario for each of the cities, given all other factors remain the same. Cities are amazingly complex entities with a whole host of variables that can influence population. Policy changes in both cities could reverse the current downward population trends, exacerbate the current downward population trends, or have little to no effect on population.

While there are parallels between Detroit and Pittsburgh in population and population trends, the physical size of the two cities is significantly different. Simply stated, Detroit currently is a far larger city than Pittsburgh with a land area in square miles between two to three times larger than Pittsburgh. Additionally, except for the early twentieth century, when both cities were roughly the same size, Detroit has always been much larger than the Steel City. Actually, Pittsburgh is one of the tiniest of the major

cities in the United States when it comes to land area. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette argued in a 2012 article that:

“Most big cities have at least twice the land area that Pittsburgh does...In cities with more land area, many people who moved "to the suburbs" stayed within the corporate limits of the central city. But in Pittsburgh, the suburbs are different municipalities, and suburbanization meant population loss for the city” (Miller).

The article continues to argue that despite population loss and small physical size, Pittsburgh has maintained a high level of “job density” within the city limits (one out of every four jobs in the Pittsburgh metro area is located within the city limits). Density will be discussed at greater lengths in a moment. However, the fact that Detroit is physically larger does not necessarily preclude the comparability of the two cities or impede the potential application of Pittsburgh urban revitalization programs to Detroit. It must be understood, however, that problems in Detroit are much larger in scale and the application of programs in Detroit must be done on a much larger scale than ever implemented in Pittsburgh. Examine the table below (and note that some of rapid land area expansion is due to neighboring city and township annexation):

| Year | Detroit | Pittsburgh |
|------|---------|------------|
| 1900 | 40.80 | 41.40 |
| 1910 | 40.80 | 41.40 |
| 1920 | 77.90 | 39.90 |
| 1930 | 137.90 | 51.30 |
| 1940 | 137.90 | 52.10 |
| 1950 | 139.60 | 54.20 |
| 1960 | 139.60 | 54.10 |
| 1970 | 138.00 | 55.20 |
| 1980 | 135.60 | 55.40 |
| 1990 | 138.70 | 55.60 |
| 2000 | 138.80 | 55.60 |
| 2010 | 138.80 | 55.40 |

Table 2-3: The land area (in square miles) of Detroit and Pittsburgh, 1900-2010. Note – 1900 is assumed equivalent to 1910. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Density represents the number of people per square mile of land area. As a measurement, it unites population and land area to depict a portrait of a city dissimilar from the views presented by examining population or land area alone. Both Detroit and Pittsburgh are similar in citywide population density over the last one hundred years. The densities of both cities peaked at 1950 or earlier, expanding to the increase in population tied to the expansion of the dominant industries in the respective areas. This explains that while Pittsburgh peaked in density much earlier than Detroit (1920); the steel industry in 1920 was already fairly well established, while the rise of the modern automotive industry in Detroit was just beginning in 1920. At this time, Pittsburgh was actually a denser city than Detroit. From 1950 to 2000, Detroit remained the denser city, if only by a tiny margin. As of the most recent Census, Pittsburgh once again became the denser city. While the cities have had similar population densities over the last century,

the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Detroit derives from the fact that for a city of its population and size, it is not extremely dense, and indeed, has never been an extremely dense city:

“The city’s skyline was unassuming, for outside of downtown with its Art Deco skyscrapers and the industrial areas with their multistory factories and belching smokestacks, Detroit had virtually no tall buildings. Unlike its east coast counterparts, Detroit lacked both tenements and high-rise apartments. Only 1.3 percent [in the 1940s] of the city’s residential structures were apartment buildings. A quintessential twentieth-century city in its amorphous sprawl, Detroit lacked the density of older cities in large part because of the vast amount of open land available within the city’s boundaries as late as the mid-twentieth century. In most parts of the city, the highest visible buildings were the church steeples, most of them monuments to the religious fervor and diligence of Catholic immigrants” (Sugrue 21-22).

Indeed, even as late as 1942, African-American residents of the city and Southern emigrants, seeking the “independence and security of homeownership” and the ability to move out of the then overcrowded and deteriorating traditional African-American neighborhoods like the West Side (at Tireman and Grand Boulevard) or the Lower East Side, moved to the undeveloped Eight Mile-Wyoming section of the city and constructed their own homes (Sugrue 40). Examine the figures below:

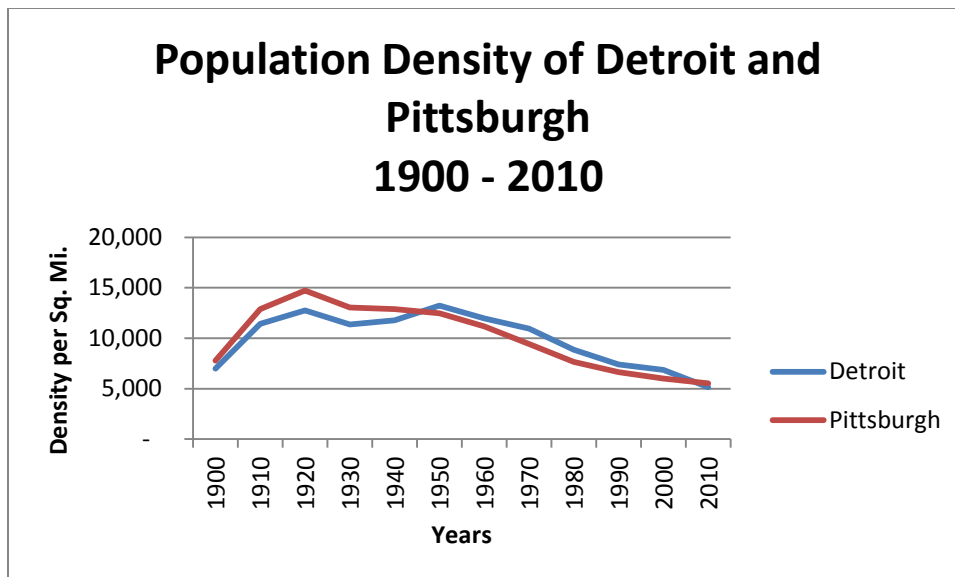


Figure 2-4: The densities of Detroit and Pittsburgh, 1900-2010. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

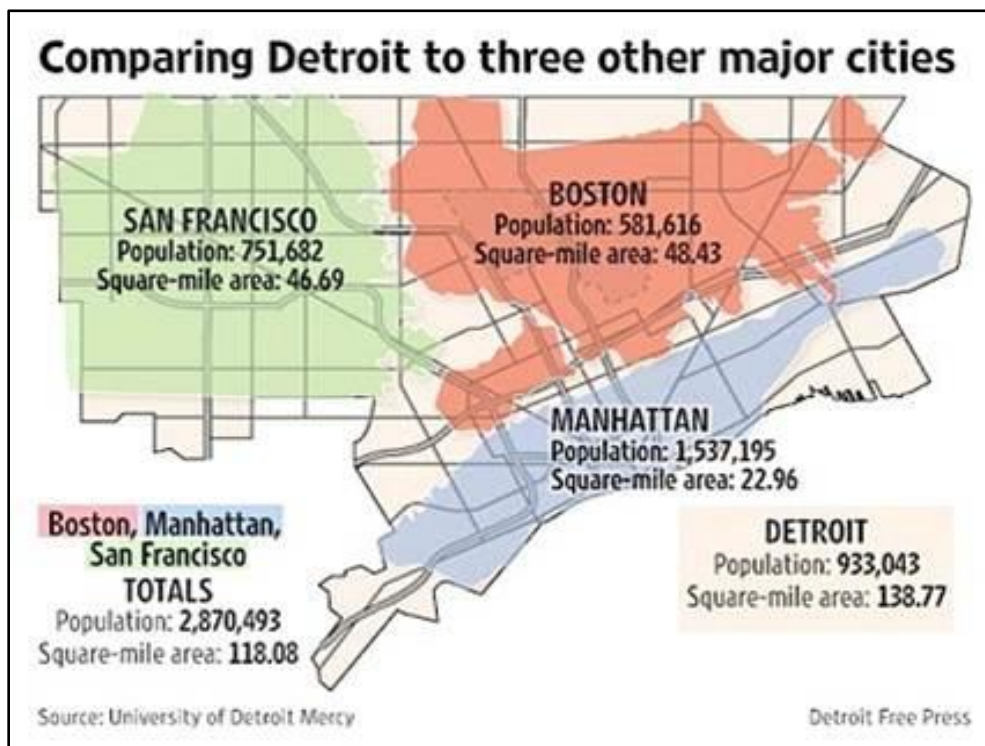


Figure 2-5: Comparing Detroit to three other cities.

Source: University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit Free Press

Population density, however, remains a thorny and potentially problematic statistic when used in describing a city or performing a comparison of two cities. One must first grapple with the fact that density statistics often address the city as a whole, and not on a smaller scale. The average can smooth out, to an extent, extremely dense and populous downtowns from largely vacant and deteriorating residential neighborhoods. A second issue arises out of the interpretation of the density of a city: is high density a positive or a negative element in a city? The ideals of the grassy, white-picket fenced suburbia developed out of the supposed evils of urban density. However, Jane Jacobs argues in her 1961 book *"The Death and Life of Great American Cities"* that high levels of density are critical "to generate exuberant diversity in a city's streets and districts" (Jacobs 150), along with a diversity of uses within a city district, short city blocks, and a mixture of buildings of various ages and conditions within a district. Indeed, Jacobs argues against the idea of "orthodox planning and housing theory" (Jacobs 202) that high densities are correlated with "trouble" or "slums" by describing the dense North Beach-Telegraph Hill, Rittenhouse Square, and the North End neighborhoods of San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Boston respectively as examples of city vitality within dense neighborhoods, in conjunction with her other three critical elements of city liveliness. Jacobs explains that districts and neighborhoods with the most pressing and serious urban problems lack density. To substantiate her point, Jacobs cites Detroit as an example. Jacobs unequivocally states that most areas of Detroit lack the necessary components of urban diversity to stimulate vitality:

“...consider the even more deplorable fact that it is possible for whole cities to exist, whole metropolitan areas, with pitifully little city diversity and choice.

Virtually all of urban Detroit is as weak on vitality and diversity as the Bronx. It is ring superimposed upon ring of failed grey belts. Even Detroit’s downtown itself cannot produce a respectable amount of diversity. It is dispirited and dull, and almost deserted by seven o’clock of an evening” (Jacobs 150).”

More specifically (and even more frankly stated than her previous discussions of the city), Jacobs addresses the density component of city diversity with regards to Detroit:

“Detroit is largely composed, today, of seemingly endless square miles of low-density failure” (Jacobs 204).”

Keep in mind, Jacobs wrote this about the city just over fifty years ago, however, at the time, the city was more populous and denser than it stands today. The third issue delves into the fact that the terms low or high conjure images of vacant urban density or overcrowding as all-to-frequent synonyms. Rooted in the issue of the interpretation of the effects of low or high density, judgments of the emptiness or the degree of overpopulation of a city are passed based solely on the basis of a single statistic.

Fundamentally, low density cannot equate to vacancy or emptiness in a city, and high density cannot equate to overcrowding in a city. Indeed, just such an argument has been raised against the implications of the depiction in figure 2-5. The argument states that by showing three cities of similar or directly comparable populations but with much smaller land areas when compared to the large city in vivid comparison, the figure issues a less-than-subtle implication that the larger city with the obviously lower average population

density is empty, rather than being simply low density. While those familiar with the City of Detroit may argue that the supposed implication generated by the figure is nevertheless correct in this situation, the argument can serve to demonstrate that low density cannot be equated with emptiness or vacancy, the simplicity in misunderstanding density statistics, and why density is truly a thorny point of comparison. Indeed, according to Jacobs, a city district or neighborhood deficient in density lacks one of the four necessary characteristics for city diversity and vitality. While “all four in combination are necessary to generate city diversity” and “...the absence of any one of the four frustrates a district’s potential” (Jacobs 151), it stands to reason that a barren, empty district of a city lacking in all four components of generating city diversity (except perhaps for short city blocks, if the city infrastructure exists in such a manner) has a greater, if not impossible, struggle to reach vitality than a district or neighborhood lacking only in density. In any event, it goes to show that lacking in density (a component of city diversity for Jacobs) is simply not equivalent to emptiness (which Jacobs may consider an area that would lack all the characteristics of city diversity). Additionally, the inherent urban design and underpinnings of suburban regions encourages low density, but are certainly not barren of residential, commercial, or industrial development. In much the same way, high density is often misinterpreted into equating high density with overcrowding, and this misunderstanding is one focal point of Jacobs’ discussion on urban density. Firstly, Jacobs concedes that overcrowding is “almost always a symptom of poverty or of being discriminated against” (Jacobs 208), but defines overcrowding as “too many people within individual dwellings” (Jacobs 206) and not “many dwelling

units on the land” (Jacobs 206). She attributes confusion between density and overcrowding to the observations of Garden City urban planners who examined slums of the time and found that they contained both high densities and high levels of overcrowding. Garden City urban planning theory, initiated by Sir Ebenezer Howard in the late nineteenth century in England is a school of planning that influenced the traditional urban planning at the time of Jacobs’ writings. Garden City urban planning attempts to create planned, low density communities surrounded by parks with equal proportions of agricultural, residential, and industrial uses. Jacobs argues that overcrowding can occur in low density neighborhoods, and further, that nobody would actually overcrowd by choice, whereas people often do live in high density areas by choice. At the time of writing, Jacobs lays out a general framework to gauge how dense a neighborhood must be to generate vitality (assuming the presence of the other three conditions of city diversity): six or fewer dwellings per net acre is a suburb, and ten to twenty dwellings per net acre constitutes a “semi suburb” (Jacobs 209) . Such areas, even if they work on their own as independent entities, spell problems for cities if such low density areas ring or are engulfed by a city. As Jacobs states: “they will not generate city liveliness or public – their populations are too thin – nor will they help maintain city sidewalk safety” (Jacobs 209). Such areas run the risk of becoming dull grey areas, subject to potential decay and desertion. For a neighborhood or district of a city to truly flourish in diversity and vitality, she argues that density of a least one hundred dwelling units per net acre is needed. However, there is a point where density can become so high that it stifles city vitality. This point, for Jacobs, has nothing to do with concerns of

overcrowding, but with standardization of buildings. Recall that one of Jacobs' four elements of city diversity includes a mix of structures. Jacobs believes that at some point, for a city neighborhood to continue increasing in density, buildings must become standardized to accommodate the people, thus losing any sort of building diversity of style, age, and type. The increase in density destroys another element of city diversity, which can open the area up to a failure in vitality. Even before the present day, Detroit was low density and did not meet such density-vitality requirements, setting the stage for Jacobs to make the observations about the city previously discussed in this chapter. As one can see, density can be a quite a multifaceted point of comparison. Further, one can see that simply examining density and using the data as a point of comparison between cities can be misleading, allowing people to come to the potentially false conclusion that a low-density city is empty and a high-density city is overcrowded and slum-like. However, when examining Detroit, one can observe that much of the drop in the already low density is the result of increased vacancy and desertion across the city. Examine the figures below, taken from Data Driven Detroit:

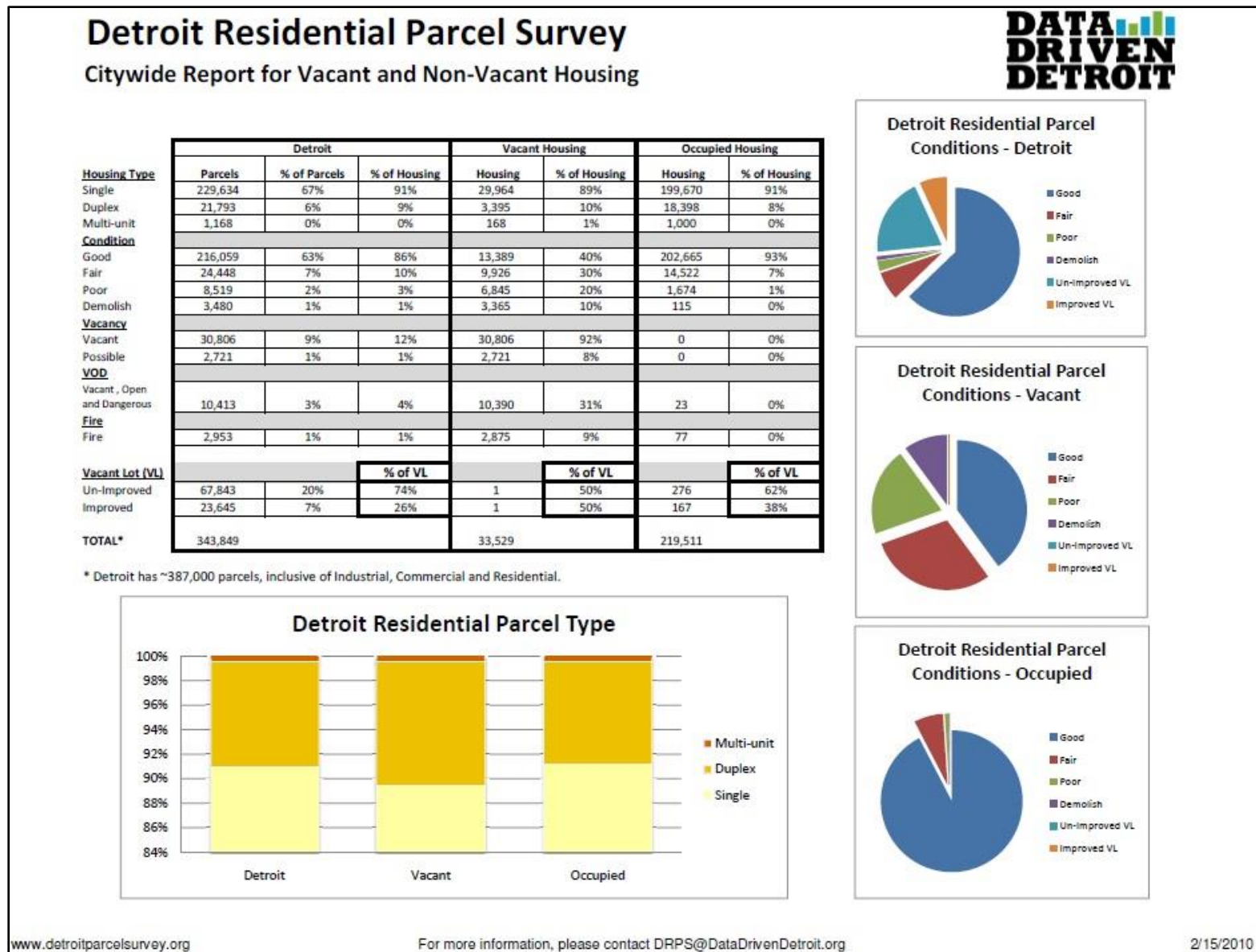


Figure 2-6: Dashboard Summary of the Detroit Residential Parcel Summary. Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey, Data Driven Detroit, 2010

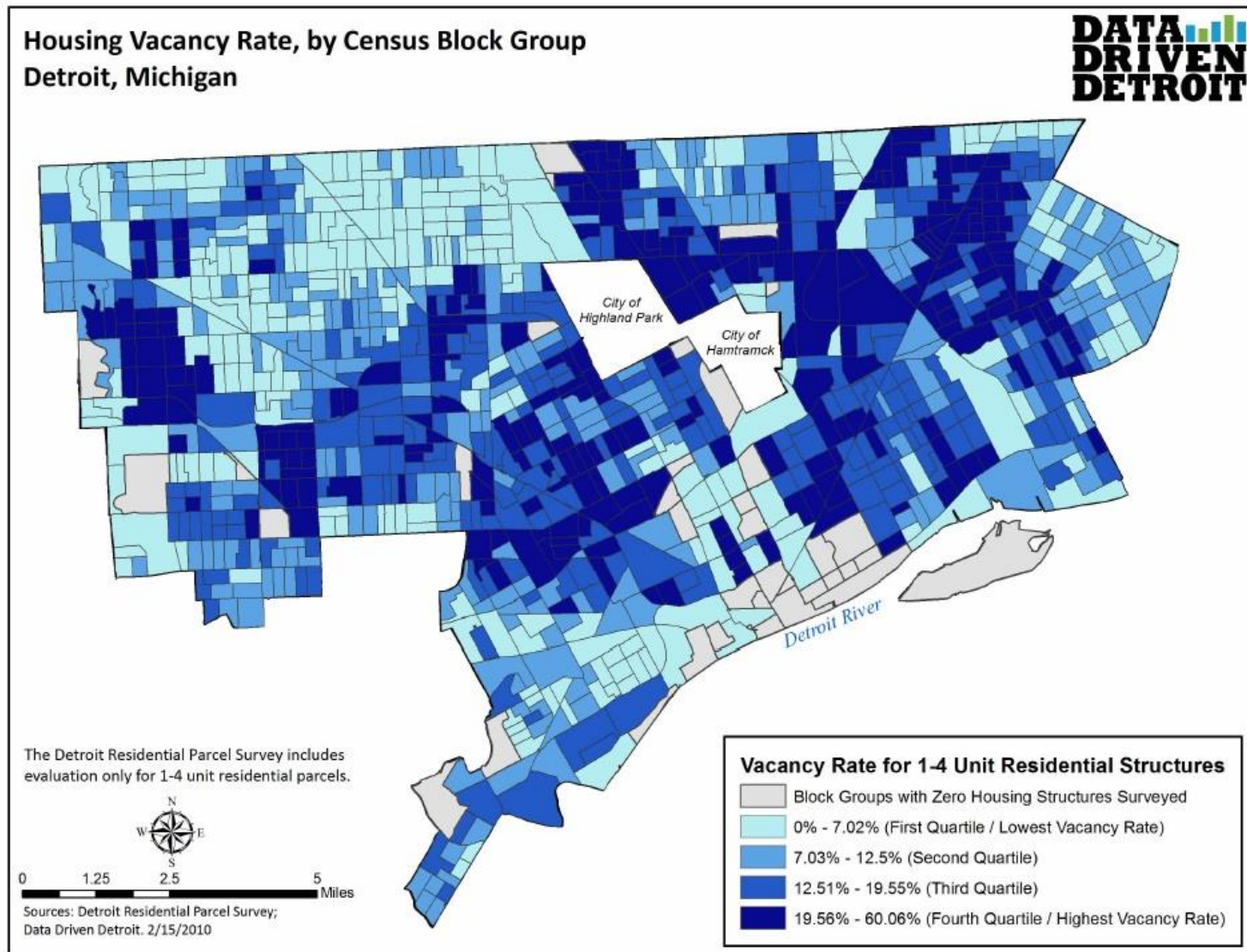


Figure 2-7: Housing Vacancy Rates in Detroit. Source: Detroit Residential Parcel Survey, Data Driven Detroit, 2010

Unfortunately, Pittsburgh has struggled with vacancy problems as well during its attempts to conduct urban revitalization in the mid-twentieth century and right-sizing at the turn of the new century through the present. Tony Dokoupil, a writer for *Newsweek* magazine and *The Daily Beast* wrote about Pittsburgh in the 2009 *Daily Beast* article “Cutting Down to Size:”

“By 2009, even as the eyes of the globe fixed on Pittsburgh as host of the G20 conference, almost 20 percent of the city lay vacant or abandoned, according to the mayor's office. That's similar to estimates in the nation's most economically desperate cities, including Detroit and Flint, Mich. Vacant properties are more than just an eyesore: exposed metals and building materials can poison neighboring children and pets, while abandoned houses serve as a host for mice, rats, and crime” (Dokoupil).

The article also indicates that the city has roughly 28,000 abandoned parcels; Detroit has over 33,000 vacant buildings-homes deemed dangerous (Tanner), and 91,000 vacant residential lots (Newsmax/AP). Further in the 2009 article from *Mlive* “Detroit has more vacant land than any other city in nation except post-Katrina New Orleans,” it is reported that, via the Detroit Free Press (the “Freep”):

“Detroit's Office of Foreclosure Prevention told the Freep that 17.3 percent of Detroit residents had gone through foreclosure through the end of 2008, and more this year. It's estimated that 40 of the city's 139-square miles are vacant. That vacant land is nearly the size of San Francisco (47-square miles) or Boston (48-

square miles). According to U.S. Postal Service data, as of June about 17 percent of Detroit addresses appear vacant” (Oosting).

While the forty square miles of vacant land has been challenged by Michigan Radio’s Kate Davidson and members of the blogosphere who believe the figure is closer to twenty or twenty-five square miles (Block), Pittsburgh may be comparable to Detroit in the same way it is comparable in population loss. Detroit has suffered the same problems plaguing Rust Belt legacy cities on a larger scale, so much so that while nearly twenty percent of Pittsburgh remained vacant in 2009, almost the entire city of Pittsburgh could have fit within the vacant land within Detroit.

Both Detroit and Pittsburgh have grappled with the problems of population loss and density (as it connects to vacancy and property abandonment). In reality, the experiences of both cities are almost identical from the perspective of these two statistics: both cities have lost more than 50% of their populations, both cities have hovered around the same levels of population density, and both cities experienced an increase in abandonment and vacancy in connection with the population loss (where in these cases, the lower population densities signal greater levels of abandonment and vacancy). The main concern relates to the actual size of the problems, not the proportional comparability of the statistical data between the two cities. Detroit is a much physically larger city, and when the Motor City underwent population loss comparable to Pittsburgh (in terms of percent of population lost), it lost over 1,000,000 residents (in comparison to roughly 300,000 lost in Pittsburgh) – enough to knock the city out of the top ten most populous cities in the nation. This is a situation that very likely is unique to Detroit. Likewise,

while Pittsburgh has struggled with the vacancy problems, other Rust Belts cities like Detroit or Flint are used as the backdrop to which Pittsburgh's vacancy concerns are compared. While as the earlier evidence suggests that nearly 20% of Pittsburgh was vacant or abandoned in 2009, the vacancy or abandonment rate in Detroit could be as high as 29% or greater, depending on the number of square miles of land vacant used in the calculation. The simple fact remains that the scale element of Detroit dictates the primary differences between these two cities when comparable along the population, size, or density framework. Additionally, as mentioned before, these elements have been shown to have individual limitations: density can be misinterpreted into suggesting falsely that a city, neighborhood, or district is overcrowded or vacant and population and population decline does not inherently signal urban woe. After all, Pittsburgh has seen its lowest population in 2010 since 1950, and it was ranked as the number one "most livable city" by Forbes magazine in 2010 (Levy), a fact that the article readily recognizes. Further, the ranking factors in issues like crime, job availability, and city culture, definitely suggesting other facets that can and do differentiate cities of similar population growth-loss status, large and small physical size, and vacancy problems. For these reasons, this thesis will now seek to examine these other facets – through the lenses of the roots and manifestations of urban decay in both cities - in conjunction with the issues discussed in this chapter to more fully demonstrate whether or not the two cities are comparable and whether or not programs implemented in Pittsburgh can be applied in Detroit.

CHAPTER 3: TRADITIONAL ROOTS OF URBAN DECAY

Cities cannot merely be reduced to an assemblage of variables like population, physical size, or density. Cities are dynamic, multifaceted collective entities that have developed, grown, evolved, and in some cases, declined as the result of the forces of a multitude of social issues. If the efforts of a city are to be used as a model for another on a complex issue like urban revitalization or renewal, the cities must be compared not only on population and size, but also on the public concerns that drove such cities into implementing urban revitalization programs in the first place. Much like the average consumer who will not just examine the shape, length and width, and seating capacity of different automobiles prior to making a purchase decision, cities must also be examined through the lenses of their respective social problems that created the path for contemporary adverse urban problems (the common manifestations of urban decay, the lens through which Detroit and Pittsburgh will be compared in the following chapter), and not solely through and by the cities' dimensions, denizens, and density. This chapter seeks to examine deeper issues of comparability beyond the square miles and Census population figures by looking at the social forces that necessitated urban renewal programs (or at least discussion) in both Detroit and Pittsburgh. As previously mentioned, this thesis (this chapter) does not seek to present a case as to exactly what forces created urban problems faced by both cities. A deluge of information exists that suggests and promotes various theories on the roots of urban decay, especially with regards to Detroit. Newspaper articles, books, and documentaries assert many ideas, and while such ideas often revolve around the same core set of issues (i.e. race relations and

industrial decline), the sources often disagree as to what issue or issues were the most critical in precipitating the current crises. Thus, attempting to make a case for the causes and roots of urban decay in either Detroit or Pittsburgh would be a massive undertaking in and of itself. Here, the objective is to examine the cities in the context of a few relatively well-agreed upon, abundantly discussed probable foundational issues that can or do cause urban decay. For these purposes, these issues will be changing demographics, deindustrialization and economic restructuring, political disenfranchisement, poor urban planning, racial discrimination (i.e. housing, redlining, employment) and tensions, socio-familial issues, and suburbanization.

The story and emergence of these issues for both Detroit and Pittsburgh begin in the first half of the twentieth century. Perhaps one of the most dynamic contrasts between the cities of Detroit and Pittsburgh relates to the turbulent, often divisive issue of twentieth century race relations in urban America. The tale begins in the early twentieth century. As the automotive industry developed and evolved into the dominant industry in the city, driving the city to its “industrial zenith” in the early 1940s (Sugrue 19), the African-American population was rapidly growing with the population in general. The African-American population of Detroit jumped from 1.2% in 1910 to 9.2% by 1940 (Sugrue 23). While the city was swelling with immigrants to the United States seeking economic opportunities, African-Americans, along with other migrants from the Southern United States, were also attracted to Detroit’s “...reputation as a city of unsurpassed economic opportunity” (Sugrue 23). African-Americans were also attracted by the hope (and to a certain extent, the fact) that the Motor City would be free of Jim

Crow era segregation and racial intolerance that was the status quo in the South at the time, earning Detroit the title “the northernmost southern city” or “the largest southern city in the United States” (Sugrue 23). Black American coined the term New Canaan to describe the city. It is true that while the city was largely free of some of the harshest examples of racial segregations (quasi-legal voting restrictions, separate drinking fountains and restrooms, and so on), African-Americans did find that housing and employment discrimination existed in the city. As such, the origins of racial tensions that emerged in the years following can be confidently said to have been rooted as early as the Great Migration of African-Americans from the South to Detroit from 1916-1929 (Sugrue 23). This period is an interesting time in the history of race relations in the City of Detroit. Prior to this period, the ethnic identity of the city was defined between white and immigrant ethnic clusters and neighborhoods, but by the 1920s, with the influx of African-American migrants, the city became increasingly defined as black and white (Sugrue 22). By this period, only Hamtramck and the Delray neighborhood continued to exhibit a strong white immigrant ethnic identity: Polish and Hungarian, respectively (Sugrue 22). Post-WWI African-American migrants found themselves confined to certain traditional African-American neighborhoods in the city, such as Black Bottom and Paradise Valley on the Lower East Side, by a complex web of social and economic barriers. With a burgeoning Black population during this period, and especially with returning African-American soldiers after WWII, these neighborhoods become very dense and overcrowded. As Sugrue states: “Detroit blacks were entrapped in the city’s worst housing stock, half of it substandard, most of it overcrowded” (Sugrue 33). With

veterans returning home from the war and the continued expansion of the population of the city, Detroit, as with many other cities, found that its housing starts could not keep up with the expansion of the population. Sugrue argues that African-Americans bore a disproportionate burden of the housing shortage in the late 1940s to early 1950s because of the various socio-racial issues that supported housing discrimination. In 1947, 545,000 housing units were available in Detroit, but only 47,000 were available to African-Americans (Sugrue 43). A variety of factors would contribute to this figure. Cost was one factor. African-Americans, often discriminated against in the workplace, earned less money than white counterparts. Edward Conner, the director of Detroit's Citizens Housing and Planning Council noted in 1947 that most new housing cost "...\$7,500 to \$8,000, while the greatest unanswered demand was for housing under \$6,000" (Sugrue 43). Sugrue contends that builders preferred to construct housing for well-off citizens. Thus, if white Detroiters experienced a housing shortage because houses were simply too costly, African-Americans would find it impossible to afford such housing. The expanding African-American population, concentrated primarily in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, had few options to move anywhere. There were a few more "well-to-do" African-American neighborhoods like the West Side near Grand River and Tireman and Conant Gardens that housed the few African-American professionals at the time. Additionally, there was the relatively empty and poor Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood (up until the 1940s-1950s), which contained makeshift homes of Black Detroiters that wanted a greater sense of homeownership and independence than what existed in the traditional Black neighborhoods in Detroit. Beyond this, however, African-

Americans had little ability to live elsewhere, and thus were forced to live in overcrowded homes and apartments, makeshift structures that housed multiple families, or illegal “jerry-rigged” apartments owned by slumlords who cared little about housing condition, safety, or health conditions. Further, Sugrue argues that cost was not the only factor contributing to housing discrimination in Detroit; federal housing policy at the time often directly contributed to housing discrimination. As Sugrue states:

“Federal housing policy gave official sanction to discriminatory real estate sales and housing practices. The primary sources used by brokers and lenders to determine the eligibility for mortgages and home loans were the Residential Security Maps and Surveys, developed by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board officials in collaboration with local real estate brokers and lenders. The maps carefully subdivided the entire Detroit metropolitan area into sections ranked from A (green) to D (red), based on a survey of the age of buildings, their condition, and the amenities and infrastructure in the neighborhood. Most important in determining a neighborhood’s classification was the level of racial, ethnic, and economic homogeneity...” (Sugrue 43-44).

Neighborhoods that had African-American populations or were transitioning to African-American populations would receive a “D” rating from the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) maps. Such a rating meant residents would have an extremely difficult time getting mortgages and home loans; builders would not be able to get financial backing for construction projects (Sugrue 44). One can obviously see the end conclusion that Sugrue describes: “Black buyers faced large down payments, difficulties

in financing, and high-interest land contracts, as well as the expensive maintenance cost of old houses, all of which added to their housing expenditures” (Sugrue 43). Such a practice maintained and perpetuated housing discrimination. One final social convention that supported housing discrimination in Detroit was the practice of implementing restrictive neighborhood covenants. Covenants were statements built into property deeds that outlined certain requirements and conditions of living in a neighborhood. Such requirements included maintaining architectural homogeneity, prohibitions against constructing commercial structures, constructing apartments (often in terms of forbidding the creation of multi-family residences by partitioning homes), and, in the early 1940s, explicit requirements that the property owner not be African-American. As Sugrue states, “...whereas no land developed before 1910 was restricted, deeds in every subdivision developed between 1940 and 1947 specified the exclusion of Blacks” (Sugrue 44). Homeowners’ organizations enforced covenants and even when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the legality of explicit racially restrictive covenants in the 1948 *Shelly v. Kraemer* decisions, such organization continued to protect racial homogeneity. Financial institutions (other than small African-American institutions) did not change redlining occurring in the lending process and realtors did not go out of their way to sell homes in white neighborhoods to African-Americans for the same general reasons: 1) they still asserted that dealing with African-American neighborhoods or African-Americans was a risky venture from a business perspective; and 2) they did not wish to endanger their business by infuriating white homeowners and depositors; boycotting and violence were not unheard of in this period of the history of Detroit. Further, even when explicit racial

covenants could not be legally enforced, white homeowners could legally enforce other covenant clauses like architectural standards, lot sizes, the prohibition of taking on boarders or partitioning of homes into apartments. African-Americans often could not afford to keep such standards and the majority could not afford to buy or rent a whole house in general. Thus, by preventing the creation of apartments or taking on renters to help defray the costs of renting or buying the whole home effectively kept Blacks out of a neighborhood and enforced the racial homogeneity of the area. (Sugrue 45-47). Keep in mind that by this time, the late 1940s, Detroit had experienced one race riot already. Rising tensions over wartime employment discrimination in the numerous factories across the city (which will be discussed later) and the housing shortage that began during WWII, flare ups of racial violence across the city, and hate strikes led to a deadly riot in June 1943. Violence that broke out on Belle Isle and continued through Black Paradise Valley and Black Bottom resulted in 34 deaths, 675 serious injuries, and 1,893 arrested before troops arrived to pacify the riot. Sugrue asserts that the police force openly sided with white rioters during the turbulent month (Sugrue 29). The housing problem continued into the 1950s and was perpetuated through the issues of mid-twentieth century urban renewal and the relatively new idea of housing projects. Urban revitalization at this time in Detroit meant “slum clearance” and the removal of blight, which on face sounds like a capital idea. However, Sugrue argues that such slum clearance and blight removal meant removing and leveling Black neighborhoods; the construction of the contemporary highway system in Detroit then served as “a handy device for razing slums” (Sugrue 47). Indeed, the construction of the freeways that would become the I-75

Chrysler freeway and the M-10 Lodge freeway were erected right through traditional African-American neighborhoods – like the Lower West Side (Lodge) and Black Bottom and Paradise Valley (Chrysler). Other areas were razed to build what Jacobs might called Radiant City-type apartment or living complexes, with the supposed ideal of increasing tax revenue, increasing vitality, and improving the living conditions of the poor through such “blight” destruction (Sugrue 49). Housing projects also factored into the complex racial equation in Detroit. Following the Depression, the implementation of liberal ideals and policies of the New Deal were dictated by local municipalities like Detroit and relevant municipal organizations, like the Detroit Housing Commission. Detroit would struggle between two seemingly opposing goals of the New Deal: the liberal ideals of public housing and increased homeownership often backed by conservatives (Sugrue 61). But in Detroit, where by the 1940s, private homeownership was fused into the culture of the city, “...public housing advocates were repeatedly stymied by homeowners who asserted their own interpretation of New Deal social policy. They demanded that the government privilege the stability of their homeownership, over and above its support for public housing” (Sugrue 59). Thus, it is not surprising that public housing projects were fiercely resisted in Detroit, much more so than in other large cities. Public housing, which quickly became associated with housing for African-Americans (although initially not entirely the case), was a controversial issue facing grassroots white opposition in nearly every location proposed. The construction of the Sojourner Truth projects in the Seven Mile-Fenelon neighborhood the early 1940s met resistance; small riots broke out in 1942 when Blacks were permitted to move into the newly constructed housing. Proposed

projects in the Oakwood neighborhood in the Southwest side and in Dearborn were defeated. Eventually, the city became skittish of the project proposals because of the very real possibility of violence. Indeed, Alfred Cobo, a white staunch conservative won the race for Mayor against a Democratic candidate backed by the UAW in 1949 on a platform of anti-public housing, no small feat. Sugrue argues that Cobo "...quickly dismantled Detroit's housing program" (Sugrue 85), which would essentially die in the 1950s and 1960s. But housing issues were only one piece of the race puzzle in Detroit; employment discrimination also created issues that would influence this important social issue. The culmination of such social issues resulted in a phenomenon Sugrue describes as neighborhood defense and "ghettoization," and it is at that point which one can then turn to examine racial relations in Pittsburgh. Sugrue makes the argument, in general, that throughout this period in Detroit's history African-Americans were routinely the subjects of discrimination. This could be in several forms; African-Americans might have difficulty in simply getting the chance to complete a job application, African-Americans might end up in the "dirtiest and meanest" (Sugrue 91) with the smallest chances of gaining seniority, such as the paint department of an automotive plant, and African-Americans might face resistance to promotion or opportunities to white-collar positions. It is noted that in some situations, manufacturers would go out of their way to find a white individual to hire into a skilled position (albeit that the white was an unskilled laborer) instead of hiring a skilled African-American worker. As for the potential reasoning for these general practices, Sugrue states that employers "...basing their decisions on racial stereotypes, believed that black workers would be unproductive, prone

to high absenteeism, and unreliable” (Sugrue 93). Further, hiring managers may have been reluctant to mix races because hate strikes and riots had occurred in the past, as managers recalled the summer of 1943. Such patterns of discrimination (or lack of African-American employees) could be founded in the automotive industry, the machining and parts manufacturing industries (especially smaller shops), building trades, chemicals, and in brewing. Often times, with smaller enterprises and in industries like brewing, employers sought candidates through personal connections, which did not include Blacks. Blacks, however, did have better success in Detroit’s steel industry and in municipal positions. African-Americans did find employment in the casual labor market or the temporary labor market. Such employment, Sugrue argues, continued to entrap African-Americans in poverty (such jobs were cyclical, offered little job security or stability, and paid low. Further, they inadvertently enforced patterns of racial discrimination. To illustrate the last point, consider Sugrue example of the informal temporary labor market at the intersection of Eight Mile and Wyoming from the 1940s through the 1960s. African-American men often gathered here, looking to be picked up by contractors needing laborers to work jobs in developing suburbs. However, to observers passing by on the large boulevard, it appeared that “gangs” of men were “loitering,” engaging in all manner of wickedness, like gambling, drinking, and harassing passersby, “...an embodiment of the stereotypes [including those of potential employers] that they held about black men” (Sugrue 121). Such employment patterns would eventually create chronic unemployment problems among African-Americans, the perfect opportunity for the underground economy to evolve into a primary employer in the inner

city. Indeed, DeForce, a 2010 documentary produced by Detroit Documentary Productions asserts that the lack of jobs in the inner city has created a “criminal capitalism” situation where drug dealing has become the most reliable trade in the city and where in 2006, 1.3 to 2.5 billion dollars of drugs were trafficked through the city. Both factors, Sugrue argues, systematic employment discrimination and housing discrimination perpetuate ghettoization and raise racial tensions. The general explanation is that the process is a vicious cycle: African-Americans, stymied by stereotypes that feed employment discrimination cannot secure well-paying or secure positions; this in turn fuels poverty and underground economic activity, as does housing discrimination, which confines African-Americans to the oldest, poorest housing stock and the most overcrowded neighborhoods. Physical decay of properties follows in turn, as does loitering (the result of chronic unemployment or underemployment). Such physical manifestations feed and drive the stereotypes: African-Americans are feckless, slothful, indifferent, and inattentive to the needs of their properties, which in turn perpetuate employment discrimination and white resistance to racially integrated neighborhoods. The culmination of said process is a phenomenon, one that differentiates Detroit from a city like Pittsburgh. While Pittsburgh, like any large city, experienced racial concerns, it did not experience the intensity of what Sugrue calls “defended neighborhoods,” far more prevalent in larger cities like Chicago. As African-Americans gained greater mobility as a result of the overall Civil Rights Movement, local civil rights organizations, the Open Housing Movement, as well as with modest gains in the employment realm, African-Americans began moving into traditionally white neighborhoods creating “racially

transitioning neighborhoods.” In parts of Detroit, such movement was fiercely resisted, as whites believed that their neighborhoods would soon experience blight, crime (which was on the rise in the 1950s and 1960s) decreasing property values, and difficulty in obtaining various forms of financing from financial institutions. Sugrue offers the opinion of a Catholic white woman living in a transitioning neighborhood: “...[Blacks] just destroy the whole neighborhood...they neglect everything. Their way of life is so different from ours” (Sugrue 217). The term “defended neighborhoods” referred to areas of the city that fiercely resisted African-American movement, often through quasi-legal techniques, arson, vandalism, and violence, often because, Sugrue argues, the residents had difficulty “fleeing” from incoming African-American residents as their counterparts in undefended neighborhood. Sugrue argues that these social practices hastened white flight, even more so as defended neighborhoods eventually “faltered.” Further, Sugrue contends that the “...results of housing segregation, in combination with persistent workplace discrimination and deindustrialization, were explosive” (Sugrue 258). Sugrue is of course referring to the infamous Detroit Riots of July 1967, which not only distinguish Detroit from Pittsburgh in terms of race relations, but also distinguishes Detroit from many other cities in the United States on the same issue. In July of 1967, the arrest of all of the patrons of an illegal bar on 12th Street exploded into what Sugrue describes as “...one of the most brutal riots in American history...” (Sugrue 259), claiming lives, resulting in over 7,000 arrests, the destruction of 2,509 buildings due to arson or looting, and \$36 million in lost insured property (Sugrue 259). Sugrue argues that the patterns and effects of housing and employment discrimination from as early as the 1940s (and patterns that

continued despite an expanding Black population) would eventually spur the riot, after all, the statistic presented indicates that at the time of the riot, between 25-30% of young African-American men (18 – 24 year olds) were unemployed (Sugrue 261). While Sugrue would argue that these eventually probably had some degree of influence of the continued population loss (particularly white) during the 1970s and 1980s, Sugrue says:

“It is a commonplace observation that Detroit’s urban crises began with the riot of 1967 and worsened with the inauguration of Coleman A. Young as Detroit’s first black mayor in 1974...What has become of Detroit, however, is not the product of post-riot panic or the alleged misrule of Coleman A. Young. By the time Young was inaugurated, the forces of economic decay and racial animosity were far too powerful for a single elected official to stem. Efforts to revitalize the city over the last two decades have floundered on the shoals of inadequate finances: industrial and population flight have drained the city of resources necessary to maintain infrastructure, and the federal government, especially since the Reagan administration, had drastically cut urban spending” (Sugrue 270).

The author continues to assert that private-public partnerships (which factor somewhat prominently in Pittsburgh’s renewal efforts) have generally failed to increase the employment base and increase the coffers of the city, but continues to argue that racial problems of the early post-war period largely influenced the situation of contemporary Detroit, especially through the 1970s and 1980s. He concludes:

“But the rehabilitation of Detroit and other major American cities will require a more vigorous attempt to grapple with the enduring effects of the post war

transformation of the city, and creative responses, piece by piece, to the interconnected forces of race, residence, discrimination, and industrial decline, the consequences of a troubled and still unresolved past” (Sugrue 271).

Indeed, Sugrue is essentially arguing that not all of Detroit’s problems can be pinned solely on race, the riots, or other factors, but are a complex, interwoven web of social dysfunction that has manifested itself across various urban centers. However, the purpose of these lengthy discussions on race in Detroit is meant to draw attention to this significant difference between the two cities. A lengthy discussion on race in Detroit barely scratches the surface of the issue in the Motor City (as seen, Thomas Sugrue wrote a book about the entire issue); the major Pittsburgh experience with riots in the twentieth century, dubbed “the Pittsburgh riots,” occurred primarily in the Hill District and Homewood in April 1968 after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Haynes). However, smaller riots occurred in Detroit (and additionally in other major cities) in 1968 as well over the assassination, not making this riot particularly unique to Pittsburgh (Haynes). Stephen Lorant, author of the acclaimed *Pittsburgh – The Story of an American City*, explains that while Pittsburgh would experience the same types of racial problems as with any major city, the city did not measure up in terms of the intensity of the tension and its subsequent releases to cities like Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York. Lorant writes:

“Through the situation in Pittsburgh was less explosive, the grievances of black Americans were basically the same: lack of training and educational opportunities, poor housing conditions, lower salary levels than whites, higher

unemployment and the pre-judgment that many were ‘unemployable’” (Lorant 505).

Indeed, Lorant describes a Pittsburgh where industrial and corporate leaders witnessing the chaos that erupted in Detroit and other larger cities literally sat down and met with African-American community leaders in 1968 to work out some kind of plan that would alleviate any racial tension that could erupt into a full-fledged riot (Lorant 506). Plans that were developed and executed revolved around improvement in three major areas: education, employment, and housing. Neighborhoods and activist organizations such as the Urban Youth Action Program bonded together to raise funds to send students to school, the Minority Entrepreneur Program made a total of \$15,700,000 in loans to African-American to help start business from 1968 through the mid-1970s, and 1,500 companies were approached to pledge to reserve 10% of all available jobs for African-Americans, resulting in over 25,000 people obtaining work since 1968 (Lorant 506-511). This is not to say that Detroit did not have concerted efforts during the same time period and earlier, it certainly did. Organizations like the Detroit Urban League labored to end employment discrimination, housing discrimination and counseled African-Americans on job placement. It was the Urban League in 1952 that stopped the practice by Ford, Chevrolet, and Chrysler to send discriminatory job orders to employment agencies like the MESC – the Michigan Employment Security Commission (Sugrue 100). The Civic Rights Committee pushed for greater African-American representation in municipal positions in the 1930s and 1940s (Sugrue 110). The local NAACP chapter, the Mayor’s Interracial Committee, religious and religious-trade groups, along with more racial leftist-

Communist organizations like the Civil Rights Congress and the National Negro Labor Council strived for greater employment equality, even if they often battled one another (Sugrue 171). Nonetheless, racial tensions persisted and two riots did occur; Pittsburgh did not have the same experience. Interestingly, it may have been the United Auto Workers (UAW), arguably the most powerful union in the city that hampered progress on the employment discrimination front. While the UAW nationally was in favor of the Civil Rights Movement (it had a Fair Practices Department as early as 1946 and worked with the NAACP), the application of employment egalitarianism on the shop floor was varied. Sugrue states:

“Ultimately, faced with strike deadlines, the UAW did not press hard on the issue, probably because union leaders knew that antidiscrimination policies did not have widespread support among the white rank and file. As a matter of principle, the UAW also placed economic issue that affected the bulk of the rank and file ahead of race-specific issues...Ultimately, it was this rationale that prevented the UAW in the postwar decades from using its organization clout to force employers to hire and upgrade black workers without discrimination” (Sugrue 102).

While this same attitude should apply to Pittsburgh, because Sugrue asserts that the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) also had a gap between local practice and national rhetoric (Sugrue 106), the fact that the powerful UAW, a union that could sink a politician candidates career and potentially influence auto makers to decentralize in order to break its power, locally impeded employment equality at times would certainly not help alleviate racial tension in the city. Keep in mind that the UAW could be curbed in

terms of racial issues, after all, a Democratic and UAW-backed candidate lost to Alfred Cobo, a conservative, on the issue of race and public housing. In a personal interview on July 8, 2011 with Mr. Bill Flanagan, the Executive Vice President of the Allegheny Conference, Mr. Flanagan suggested that race was not as much of an issue in Pittsburgh simply because there were and are statistically less African-Americans in the city, which is not to suggest that African-Americans are the sources of tension, but again rather, Pittsburgh never received the level of fierce intensity of racial tension in “Great Migration” Detroit’s neighborhoods and factory floors where interracial contact became much more common. Realistically, political disenfranchisement and socio-familial issues became wrapped up into the issues of racial tensions and racial discrimination as well.

With regards to deindustrialization (described by Sugrue as “the closing, downsizing, and relocation of plants and sometimes whole industries” [Sugrue 127]) in Detroit, a common explanation includes discussion of the “bailout” of the American automotive industry in 2008, the questions about the ability of certain manufacturers to continue as a going concern in the wake of the recent global financial crisis, and the earlier crises faced by the industry following recessions. This includes the federal “bailout” received by Chrysler in 1980 after a recent recession and energy crisis and the losses experienced by General Motors after the recession in the early 1990s. An important distinction must be made: while the collapse of a dominant industry can result in a rapid deindustrialization of a city (and often is the main focal point of examining the economic health of a city), deindustrialization is also the product of additional prolonged, historical forces (and not necessarily cataclysmic industry crises like the potential for the

bankruptcy of a multinational automotive manufacturer) present since the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, such cataclysmic events may primarily speak not to deindustrialization as much as the events speak to poor internal management: lack of vision, lack of market understanding, inability to properly control cash flow, and so on. The point is that deindustrialization simply does not necessarily equate to the destruction of an industry or is even harmful to the industry undergoing it, although that certainly can be the case. Sugrue argues that deindustrialization in the City of Detroit began far earlier in the 1950s and such deterioration of the industrial base of the city stunted the labor market and imperiled private homeownership and made homeowner possession of homes (especially African-American homeowners) “more precarious” (Sugrue 149). Sugrue further argues that such “flight of industry” rooted in the 1950s had repercussions felt today. That is to say, while most people would not point to the 1950s as a critical period for industry in Detroit (in fact, one would assume that most people would suggest that the 1950s was the industrial heyday of Detroit compared to the present day), it certainly had an impact on the current industrial plight of the city, contributed to the (primarily white) population flight from the city as a devastating social force that coupled with the entrenched forces of racial discrimination. As Sugrue writes:

“The process of industrial decline had other far-reaching consequences. It imperiled Detroit’s fiscal base. As jobs left the city, so too did white workers with the means to move to suburbs or small towns where factories relocated. Wealthier whites also followed investments outward. As a result, Detroit’s population began an unbroken downward fall in the 1950s. As Detroit’s population shrank, it also

grew poorer and blacker. Increasingly, the city became the home for the disposed, those marginalized in the housing market, in the greater peril of unemployment, must subject to the vagaries of a troubled economy” (Sugrue 149).

Sugrue does aptly indicate that consistent layoffs and plant closings occurred in Detroit in the 1950s in a city which experienced four recessions from 1949 to 1960 (Sugrue 126).

Indeed, Murray Auto Body, Packard, and Studebaker shut down between 1953 and 1957, Dodge Main (the second largest plant in the city) laid off several thousand in the late 1950s, and the Mack, Briggs, Hudson, and Motor Products plants closed on the East Side of Detroit (Sugrue 125-26). Such closings often occurred through decentralizing mergers which resulting in thousands of jobs lost or relocated out of the city. The unique aspect of the 1950s in the industrial history was the fact that, as Sugrue states, “...auto manufacturers and suppliers permanently reduced their Detroit-area workforces, closed plants and relocated to other parts of the country” (Sugrue 126). A social worker in the city described the economic situation in 1952 by saying “Detroit is in the doldrums” (Sugrue 126) – a fairly accurate appraisal of the situation, as Detroit lost 134,000 industrial jobs between 1947 and 1963 (Sugrue 126). Sugrue identifies several forces causing or exacerbating deindustrialization in the city, resulting in either lost jobs or jobs relocated out of the city to the suburbs or other parts of the country. These factors are decentralization (deconcentrating plants from a single point, resulting in plants being constructed outside of the city in the suburbs or outside of the state in general), lack of available land or rail frontage for expansion in the city (a commonly cited concern of the auto manufacturers themselves), automation (the increasing introduction of automatic

processes into various manufacturing processes), tax rates, and the use of overtime. The automotive industry typically argued that such factors often improved output and efficiency of production (i.e. automation) or were a necessary condition of expansion (i.e. factories needed greater land space and rail frontage to expand than was available in the city or that Detroit tax rates were less attractive than other communities). However, others, including Sugrue, have argued that cutting labor costs were main elements promoting the forces of deindustrialization: by decentralizing out of a city with very powerful, entrenched unions (potentially by using taxation or space concerns as an excuse), through cutting the labor forces through automation, or by using overtime as a way of avoiding hiring new employees. Indeed, with regards to automation, Henry Ford II himself said in 1955 that “obsolesce is the very hallmark of progress” and that “the faster we obsolete products, machines, and antiquated, costly means of working, the faster we raise our living standards and our national wealth” (Sugrue 133-34). Regardless of the causes, what is certain is that industry began to move out of the city in the 1950s: between 1947 and 1958, “...the Big Three built twenty-five new plants in the metropolitan Detroit area, all of them in suburban communities, most more than fifteen miles from the center city” (Sugrue 128) and further, the total amount of automotive employment in the United States concentrated in Michigan fell to about 40% in 1960 from 56% in 1950 (Sugrue 128). Data from the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) corroborates this point; in the June 2002 publication *Historical Population and Employment by Minor Civil Division, Southeast Michigan*, the report includes a map (figure 3) describing peak growth period by community over the last

century (1900-2000). The period from 1950 to 1970 is describes as “suburbanization and post war boom” and likewise the period from 1970 to 1990 is described as “suburbanization spreads out” (SEMCOG). As might be expected through the analysis presented by Sugrue regarding the period from 1950 to 1970, Detroit (and other traditional centers of population like Pontiac, Mt. Clemens, and Port Huron) did not experience growth, but rather, inner-ring suburbs (excluding Dearborn and parts of Downriver) experienced peak growth, including cities like Livonia, Southfield, Redford, Taylor, Trenton, and Warren (SEMCOG). The report summary really captures the entire process and the effects of the factors of deindustrialization:

“The growth of employment in the City of Farmington Hills [22,649 in 1980 to 78,835 in 2000] hints at a pattern repeated throughout the region — the decentralization of employment. The top 10 employment centers held about 65 percent of the region’s employment in 1970, a number which dropped to about 47 percent by 2000. Detroit was still the leading employment center in 2000, but its share of the region’s employment dropped from 38 percent in 1970 to 13 percent in 2000, while six other cities exceeded the 100,000 job mark (Troy, Southfield, Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Livonia, and Warren)” (SEMCOG).

As might be expected from the analysis Sugrue presents, he continues on to argue that the deindustrialization had a greater impact on the African-American community, with African-American unemployment consistently higher than white counterparts during the time period – manufacturing jobs (especially entry-level jobs) in manufacturing were falling as the population of working-age African-Americans continued to rise (Sugrue

146). Indeed, Sugrue indicates that contemporary sources and observers by the 1960s already had identified chronically unemployed or long-term unemployed African-Americans as an emerged trend (Sugrue 144). As before, Sugrue suggests that such economic forces combined with racial discrimination led to the explosion of tensions in the 1960s.

The industrial decline in Pittsburgh (and those of other American cities) could very well be described as comparable to situation in Detroit during the 1950s. Sugrue agrees:

“In the 1950s, the flight of industry and the loss of jobs reconfigured the landscape of the most prominent industrial cities across the region that came to be known as the Rust Belt. Detroit, Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Trenton, Boston, Buffalo, and St. Louis all lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs beginning in the 1950s, as firms reduced employment in center-city plants, replaced workers with new automated technology, and constructed new facilities in suburban and semirural areas, in medium-sized cities, often in less industrialized states or regions, and even in other countries” (Sugrue 127-28).

While “[d]eindustrialization in Pittsburgh was a protracted and painful experience” (Streitfeld), most of the discussion on deindustrialization in Pittsburgh focuses on the major industrial crash and transitions in the 1980s. Stefan Lorant describes the “great transition in the eighties:”

“The crash came not with a bang, but with a whimper. Dark clouds covered the economic horizon. In the early years of the eighties the heavy metal industry collapsed, and with that, the optimism of the seventies receded into the past...Steel works after steel works cut back their production, laying off thousands of workers. In 1981 the Jones & Laughlin mill, for 122 years a landmark of the city, stopped making steel altogether. By 1983 the Pittsburgh area was in a severe recession. Between 1981 and 1983 Pittsburgh and its surrounding area lost over 100,000 manufacturing jobs. Employment of steelworkers in the mills, once 140,000, dropped to 14,000. Unemployment rose to 16%” (Lorant 593).

Lorant continues to say that a city called the “steel capital of the world” and the “forge of the universe” made not a single ton of heavy steel by 1987 within the Pittsburgh city limits, and that steel production in the area dropped to only five million tons in 1987, down from forty million tons in World War II, where Pittsburgh steel production output was greater than Germany and Japan combined in the same period (Lorant 593). While data from the City and County Data books from the U.S. Census Bureau suggests that manufacturing in Pittsburgh may have weathered the factors of deindustrialization like decentralization similar to Detroit (see the table below), as evidenced by declining manufacturing establishments since the 1950s and up until the 1980s Pittsburgh steel crisis, local contemporary lawyer William Pietragallo II summarized the steel decline as the result of a more acute economic and business climate in five points. These points are, in summary: 1) the reluctance of steel companies to update old technologies and pieces

of equipment, 2) a high cost of labor, 3) the dumping of cheaper foreign steel on U.S. markets, 4) higher profits in divisions of steel companies dealing with unrelated areas of business, and 5) falling demand for steel (Lorant 596-97).

The article by David Streitfeld in the New York Times compares the flashpoint of industrial crisis in the 1980s and the situation in Detroit today: “In the early 1980s, the city [Pittsburgh] was being talked about the way Detroit is now. Its very survival was in question” (Streitfeld). This might suggest that the opportunity for Detroit to combat industrial decline is now (assuming that the 1980s and 1990s were not a flashpoint of industrial decline for Detroit, which given the troubles faced by Chrysler and General Motors, is debatable – the trouble faced by Chrysler could arguably be linked to automation and decentralization efforts by the other two Big Three, as Chrysler, the smallest of the three, could not afford to move or automate, ironically leading it to become one of the largest employers in Detroit during the 1960s), as Pittsburgh actively began transitioning its economic base. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, deindustrialization cannot be reduced to these flashpoints, and what it could also suggest is that Detroit has had an extra thirty or so years to languish industrially – a situation which is no longer comparable to Pittsburgh. Therefore, an economic transformation for Detroit might pose greater challenges. Consult the table below; both cities experience a relatively consistent decline in the number of manufacturing establishments up until the aforementioned flashpoint periods:

| Year | Detroit | % Change | Pittsburgh | % Change |
|------|---------|----------|------------|----------|
| 1939 | 2,335 | n/a% | 1,063 | n/a% |
| 1947 | 3,272 | 40.13% | 1,083 | 1.88% |
| 1954 | 3,453 | 5.53% | 1,078 | -0.46% |
| 1958 | 3,363 | -2.61% | 1,009 | -6.40% |
| 1963 | 3,370 | 0.21% | 1,037 | 2.78% |
| 1967 | 2,947 | -12.55% | 932 | -10.13% |
| 1972 | 2,398 | -18.63% | 749 | -19.64% |
| 1977 | 1,954 | -18.52% | 719 | -4.01% |
| 1982 | 1,518 | -22.31% | 671 | -6.68% |

Table 3-1: Number of manufacturing establishments for select years. Source: U.S. Census Bureau City and County Data Books, 1944-1983 editions, University of Virginia Library

Focusing on critical crises periods in the histories of both of the cities through the lens of deindustrialization, but not on the earlier signals of the process, which began decades earlier for both cities through decentralization or through potential racial issues, might not reflect the whole story or depth of the deindustrialization. It must be emphasized that the issues are largely comparable between the two cities, with both cities being highly dependent on one industry.

Despite the issues faced by Pittsburgh in the 1980s, Renaissance II, whose principal aims were to expand the core of the city and improve and revalue neighborhoods (Lorant 562) raged on in Pittsburgh (an transformation that lead to the construction of a half-billion dollar modern subway system), leading to an economic transformation in the 1980s described as “miraculous” (Lorant 601). While the Renaissance periods of Pittsburgh will be described in greater detail later, the city began shifting from steel mills to high tech companies (Lorant 601). By 2009, unemployment was at 5.5%, below the national average, housing prices rose, and foreclosures were relatively uncommon. “If people are looking for hope, it’s here,” said Sabina Deitrick, an

urban studies expert at the University of Pittsburgh. “You can have a decent economy over a long period of restructuring” (Streitfeld). Streitfeld suggests that Pittsburgh eventually came to terms with the fact that the steel era was over (although Bill Flanagan suggests that Pittsburgh certainly did not abandon its traditional industries during its transformation) and that:

“Pittsburgh had the luxury of reshaping itself while the rest of the United States economy was relatively strong. Unemployed steel workers could leave for the booming Sun Belt, helping the city and region shrink to a more manageable size. The metropolitan area of about 2.4 million has 200,000 fewer residents than in 1980” (Streitfeld).

However, it can overall be said that Pittsburgh had not fared too badly; that is a critical difference between Detroit, which is continuously struggling as what WXYZ-Ch. 7 calls “a city in crisis,” and Pittsburgh today. The following chapter will compare the two cities along the lines of traditionally accepted effects of urban decay, which can stem from the issues presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4: MANIFESTATIONS OF URBAN DECAY

The social and economic forces can unfold into several types of manifestations, the most prominent (and in some cases, the most visible) of which include: urban blight, crime, depopulation, and unemployment. The discussion following compares common sources of urban decay between Detroit and Pittsburgh, this chapter seeks to examine and compare the consequences of urban decay between the two cities.

Blight, physical deterioration of an urban area, is perhaps the most outwardly visible manifestation of urban decay. The term can refer to vacant properties, but often can refer to just the physical deterioration of structures regardless if the structure is actually abandoned. Since vacant structures are often physically deteriorated, the term blight often refers to both characteristics interchangeably. Statistical representations of blight typically focus on vacancy rates, however, as seen in the discussion from chapter two, statistics pertaining to physical condition of structures exist as well. This discourse is an expansion of the points regarding population and vacancy discussed in chapter two. Pittsburgh, along with most American cities, is not a stranger to blight. A manifestation of issues described previously and unemployment coupled with aging housing stock, failing schools and other service related problems, Pittsburgh has not escaped such a common urban problem, despite the efforts of Renaissance I and II and the “miraculous recovery” of economic transformation beginning in the 1980s described by Lorant. An article from the fall of 2011 in the Pittsburgh Quarterly suggests that the collapse of the steel industry in the 1980s (and more recently, the economic recession) have contributed to the problem of blight in Pittsburgh. The article highlights that blight and vacancy has

affected Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh metropolitan statistical area, along with the fact that rates are lower than in the Detroit metropolitan statistical area:

“With 9 percent of its available housing vacant, the seven-county Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area is below the national vacancy rate and lower than the rates of some of the older industrial areas with which it is often compared, such as the Cleveland MSA, where 10.6 percent of housing is vacant, and the Detroit MSA, which has a vacant housing rate of 10.8 percent. The rates are higher in cities. Nearly 13 percent of the housing found in Pittsburgh is vacant” (Fraser).

The neighborhood of Homewood, located about six miles from the city core in Pittsburgh, notoriously boasts a 44% land vacancy rate and a 30% vacancy rate, as studied by the University of Pittsburgh Center for Urban and Social Research (Fraser). Further, the article continues that blight has seriously affected communities directly south of Pittsburgh in the previously heavily steel invested Monongahela Valley:

“One striking example is the region’s Monongahela River valley. The collapse of the steel industry some three decades ago and the exodus that followed have littered its communities with empty houses and lots. More than 24 percent of the housing in Braddock is vacant, as is nearly 22 percent of Homestead’s, 21 percent of Duquesne’s, 20 percent of Clairton’s housing and 23 percent of Donora’s. To put the numbers in perspective, the 2010 census reports that, in the wake of the recent recession, 11 percent of the available housing throughout America stands vacant” (Fraser).

Such examples of blight point to the fact that Pittsburgh has had its share of trouble in combating this ever-present urban problem, a problem that extends far beyond the aesthetic appeal of a neighborhood. Blight directly effects nearby property values, deters prospective homeowners from purchasing property (beyond the obvious reason, the fact that an abandoned property has years of back taxes the buyer must assume is not a selling point), withholds property tax revenue from cities (in legacy cities like Detroit and Pittsburgh, this can create a vicious cycle that prevents a city from raising the necessary funds to maintain high-quality city services), and waste city resources. Philadelphia did a study of the cost of blight in 2010: vacant property reduced overall city-wide property values by 6.5% (up to 20% in areas with greater numbers of vacant properties), ensures that the city cannot collect \$2 million in property taxes, and that the city must spend \$20 million in services on the properties, including \$8 million in code enforcement, maintenance, boarding up, and demolition (Fraser). It would be no surprise that other cities like Detroit and Pittsburgh would share similar costs of blight. Detroit, however, is distinct from other Rust Belt cities on the issue of blight. Many people contend, and rightly so, that blight is a problem that affects all major cities in the United States. Moreover, many people contend that Detroit, in that respect, is similar to other major American cities in the fact that the city struggles with blight. The distinction between Detroit and Pittsburgh on blight is not solely that Detroit has more vacant property, blight, or deteriorated properties because the city is physically larger or more populous, but because blight is more widespread in Detroit. Daniel Orkent, writer of the article “Detroit: The Death — and Possible Life — of a Great City” that appeared in *TIME*

magazine on September 24, 2009 under the very visible cover page titled “The Tragedy of Detroit,” describes blight in his native town.

“The neighborhood where I lived as a child, where for decades orderly rows of sturdy brick homes lined each block, is now the urban equivalent of a boxer's mouth, more gaps than teeth. Some of the surviving houses look as if the wrecker's ball is the only thing that could relieve their pain. On the adjacent business streets, commercial activity is so palpably absent you'd think a neutron bomb had been detonated — except the burned-out storefronts and bricked-over windows suggest that something physically destructive happened as well. Similar scenes are draped across most of the city's 138 sq. mi., yielding a landscape that bears a closer relation to a postapocalyptic nightmare than to the prosperous and muscular place I remember” (Orkent).

DeForce, a renowned 2010 documentary about urban problems in Detroit, presents a stark affirmation of this point; in Detroit, the film describes, blight is not just a problem or an occasional occurrence, but “the defining topographical characteristic of the city.” Further, the film continues that the large sections of deindustrialized and deserted land posed unchecked hazards to the city and that only modest progress has been made in checking the very visible problem. The difference includes the handling of blighted properties in the two cities. While not to get into an extremely detailed comparison on solutions implemented by both cities on the blight issue at this point, the cities seem to be taking dissimilar approaches to handling the problem. Detroit has focused on demolition of blight, with Mayor Dave Bing announcing a very public goal of the demolition of

10,000 homes in a 2010 “right-sizing” plan with the help of federal funding (Kellogg), a plan which runs into paperwork and cost troubles, according to the Detroit 2020 initiative of WXYZ. In a May 2012 article entitled “*Why Does It Take So Long to Demolish an Abandoned Building?*” a Detroit building inspector has indicated that the process can cost around \$10,000 per structure and must follow a thirty-six step process, which is undeniably time consuming. While Detroit has experimented with alternative land uses, like community gardens and urban farming, it has only recently unveiled an experimental plan in March 2012 to bring more properties back onto property tax rolls. This plan involves allowing individuals to purchase vacant city-owned land adjacent to their properties for as little as \$200 with the goal of also cutting down the bureaucracy in purchasing the land (Stoll). Pittsburgh has not only been involved in greening of vacant property, but also in land recycling since 2010 and is seen as the site of the most promising positive blight control initiatives:

“Many of the most promising efforts in the region to seize those opportunities are found in Pittsburgh. The city itself takes control of some 300 vacant, tax-delinquent properties each year through treasurer’s sales and bears the burden and cost of clearing the titles before selling the parcels at a reasonable price to residents, community development corporations, and others with bona fide plans for turning them into neighborhood assets. Its year-old Land Recycling Task Force is investigating ways to tackle vacancy and blight on a larger scale. And one program, Green Up Pittsburgh, has helped community groups and residents

turn hundreds of empty lots into neighborhood green spaces and side yards”

(Fraser).

Pittsburgh has also been flirting with the idea of a land bank as a comprehensive blight-addressing program, an idea actually developed by Michigan’s own Dan Kildee in Genesee County. In general, a land bank is a mechanism to allow a county to more quickly take control of vacant properties through tax foreclosure and then ensure the property is used for community improvement (rather than switching owners many times via auctions): either through selling, renting, (through maintenance and rehabilitation of properties) or demolishing property structures. In Genesee County, a brownfield redevelopment strategy was implemented for the property placed into the land banks. Additionally, land banks often recapture much of the cost of their activities by managing incoming revenues on such properties – the land bank can collect back taxes, delinquent taxes, and interest owed with the power wielded by the threat of foreclosure (Fraser). However, whether or not Pittsburgh can implement a land bank is largely dependent on deliberations and debates currently ongoing at the Pennsylvania state capital in Harrisburg (Fraser). Again, without delving into great detail on the comparison between Detroit and Pittsburgh blight-combat plans, the distinction between the two cities is that the City of Detroit currently has demolition solidly in the forefront of the cities blight-busting goals.

Interestingly, blight can be related to the next potential manifestation of the forces of urban decay: crime. Indeed, areas with higher levels of blight seem to also have higher levels of crime. Larimer, a poorer, blighted neighborhood in the East End of Pittsburgh,

where over 42% of properties stand vacant and abandoned, has crime rates 30-50% higher than citywide averages (Fraser). While relationships between blight and crime are not crystal clear, theories attempt to explain possible connections between the two elements, including the “broken window theory.” The “broken window theory, first argued in 1982 by two social scientist called James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, “...suggests that a broken window left unrepaired leads to others being broken and sends the signal that nobody cares” (Fraser). Fraser continues by saying (echoing Jane Jacob-like sentiment regarding the safety of city sidewalks and streets and the role denizens play in fostering that safety):

“Of course, it wasn’t only broken windows, but also abandoned cars, graffiti, blighted houses and other visible signs of neglect they were talking about. In such environments, the theory goes, community controls break down, leaving a neighborhood wide open to crime” (Fraser).

Nevertheless, the discussion about the manifestations of urban decay and neighborhood revitalization cannot solely focus on this singular issue. Sabina Deitrick, co-director of the Urban and Regional Analysis Program at the University of Pittsburgh’s University Center for Social and Urban Research, cautions on solely focusing on the issue of blight in terms of revitalization or the cause of inner city crime: “Don’t think of it as a linear process—that if we do this, this will happen...It’s not going to be that way. Things have to happen simultaneously” (Fraser). However, crime is a topic that must be discussed in comparing the two cities and unfortunately, it is an issue that frequently permeates perceptions and opinions about cities and in particular, the City of Detroit.

Crime manifests itself through people of all walks of life, through legal entities and organizations, often victimizes the most vulnerable in society and has always been a concern of municipal leaders and public safety officials. Crime is measured by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in two major categories: violent and property crime, and by using both actual numbers of crimes and crime rates, measured commonly as the number of crimes per 100,000 people. In recent FBI Uniform Crime Reports, violent crime is comprised of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault; property crime consists of burglary, larceny and theft, and motor vehicle theft. Unfortunately, when compared to other industrialized nations in Western Europe, the United States experiences greater levels of crime. According to Claude Fischer, professor of sociology at the University of California Berkley, speaks to the issue. He suggests that the homicide rate is the most reliable measure of violent crime in the United States. According to Fischer:

“Americans kill one another at a much higher rate – double, quadruple, or more – than do residents of comparable western European nations. This gap persists despite a roughly 40 percent drop in our homicide rate in the last 15 years or so. Americans have been notably more violent than western Europeans since about the mid- or late 19th century” (Fischer).

Fischer indicates that the homicide rate per 100,000 people (as well as other forms of violent crime) spiked in the 1920s and 1930s and dropped to a low point in and around the 1950s. However, the period from 1960 to 1990 witnessed a rapid upswing in violent crime, peaking sometime around the 1970s. From this point, which the violent crime

levels have been declining (Fischer). While Fischer suggests that these trends are puzzling and have not been satisfactorily explained by modern scholars, who suggest a multitude of ideas – from short-term bloody escalations caused by alcoholic smuggling and crack cocaine dealing gangsters to other governmental, economic, and culture reasons (Fischer). This thesis will not endeavor to explain the trends in crime in the United States in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, it is against this backdrop that the thesis will examine the cities of Detroit and Pittsburgh. The DeForce documentary stated that in the first seven months of 2009, there were more than 700 shootings in the City of Detroit; during the same period, 517 soldiers were wounded in Iraq, an active war zone. Further, in the first six months of 2004, 100 U.S. soldiers were wounded in Afghanistan while during the same period, around 800 people were shot in Detroit, with about 65% of those shootings being drug related. It is certainly an issue that merits comparison and open discussion. Presented below is a table comparison of the two cities along violent crime rates, property crime rates, and non-negligent manslaughter and homicide rates from 1985 to 2010, based on data from reporting agencies with 100,000 or more in population (which averages about 401 agencies). A word of caution is necessary, however. This table, which includes numerical rankings, is not intended to strictly rank the Detroit and Pittsburgh among similar cities, but to show the significant difference in crime levels between the two cities. While ranking cities on crime rates is a common practice in the media, the Federal Bureau of Investigation frowns upon the practice: “UCR data are sometimes used to compile rankings of individual jurisdictions and institutions of higher learning. These incomplete analyses have often created misleading

perceptions which adversely affect geographic entities and their residents. For this reason, the FBI has a long-standing policy against ranking participating law enforcement agencies on the basis of crime data alone. Despite repeated warnings against these practices, some data users continue to challenge and misunderstand this position” (FBI). The FBI continues to indicate that other factors, like population density, economic conditions, and perceptions of crime, affect the level of type of crime. While this thesis does or will address some of these factors that can influence crime, the thesis does not seek to rank jurisdictions on crime, but simply highlight differences between the two cities on the critical issue of crime.

| CRIME IN DETROIT & PITTSBURGH: 1985-2010 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|------|------------|------|--|------|------------|------|--------------------|------|------------|------|---------------------|------|------------|------|----------|
| REPORTING CITY AND COUNTY AGENCIES OVER 100,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter Total | | | | Murder and Nonnegligent Manslaughter Rate | | | | Violent Crime Rate | | | | Property Crime Rate | | | | |
| Year | Detroit | Rank | Pittsburgh | Rank | Detroit | Rank | Pittsburgh | Rank | Detroit | Rank | Pittsburgh | Rank | Detroit | Rank | Pittsburgh | Rank | Agencies |
| 1985 | 635 | 4 | 34 | 63 | 58.2 | 1 | 8.5 | 124 | 2,375.2 | 8 | 1,085.6 | 65 | 11,374.7 | 11 | 6,129.7 | 161 | 407 |
| 1986 | 648 | 4 | 47 | 51 | 59.1 | 1 | 11.7 | 99 | 2,486.6 | 8 | 1,170.3 | 69 | 10,496.2 | 27 | 6,787.8 | 147 | 408 |
| 1987 | 686 | 4 | 37 | 60 | 62.8 | 1 | 9.5 | 115 | 2,544.9 | 9 | 1,110.0 | 71 | 10,135.7 | 37 | 6,816.7 | 141 | 408 |
| 1988 | 629 | 4 | 19 | 103 | 57.9 | 2 | 4.9 | 170 | 2,374.6 | 6 | 1,063.6 | 70 | 9,710.8 | 38 | 7,138.6 | 118 | 361 |
| 1989 | 624 | 4 | 31 | 87 | 60 | 2 | 8.2 | 121 | 2,400.5 | 9 | 1,216.5 | 75 | 9,689.4 | 54 | 7,658.6 | 108 | 404 |
| 1990 | 582 | 4 | 35 | 77 | 56.6 | 4 | 9.5 | 117 | 2,699.2 | 13 | 1,356.4 | 68 | 9,492.3 | 52 | 7,433.0 | 110 | 405 |
| 1991 | 615 | 4 | 36 | 84 | 59.3 | 5 | 9.7 | 128 | 2,727.3 | 10 | 1,153.2 | 99 | 9,536.2 | 47 | 7,065.7 | 124 | 404 |
| 1992 | 595 | 4 | 44 | 69 | 57 | 3 | 11.8 | 100 | 2,532.9 | 16 | 1,202.4 | 93 | 8,696.2 | 66 | 7,008.0 | 120 | 406 |
| 1993 | 579 | 4 | 80 | 42 | 56.8 | 5 | 21.7 | 51 | 2,663.5 | 19 | 1,215.6 | 89 | 9,212.3 | 47 | 6,549.7 | 119 | 402 |
| 1994 | 541 | 4 | 64 | 49 | 52.9 | 6 | 17.4 | 74 | 2,687.2 | 10 | 1,113.7 | 102 | 9,229.9 | 38 | 6,035.1 | 146 | 402 |
| 1995 | 475 | 4 | 58 | 49 | 47.6 | 6 | 16.3 | 63 | 2,407.6 | 11 | 979.2 | 111 | 9,531.2 | 38 | 5,150.8 | 179 | 396 |
| 1996 | 428 | 4 | 47 | 54 | 42.7 | 7 | 13.3 | 71 | 2,318.6 | 9 | 804.4 | 129 | 9,672.7 | 23 | 4,492.1 | 187 | 373 |
| 1997 | 469 | 4 | 50 | 49 | 45.9 | 4 | 14.2 | 57 | 2,151.5 | 11 | 786.4 | 129 | 9,517.6 | 23 | 5,031.3 | 163 | 398 |
| 1998 | 430 | 3 | 36 | 57 | 43 | 5 | 10.2 | 80 | 2,442.8 | 7 | 891.0 | 92 | 9,348.6 | 18 | 5,176.3 | 135 | 394 |
| 1999 | 415 | 4 | 49 | 39 | 42.6 | 2 | 14.1 | 39 | 2,253.9 | 4 | 877.6 | 82 | 8,162.4 | 31 | 5,245.9 | 120 | 398 |
| 2000 | 396 | 4 | 37 | 53 | 41.6 | 3 | 10.8 | 67 | 2,324.5 | 3 | 957.4 | 67 | 7,742.2 | 25 | 4,744.1 | 137 | 401 |
| 2001 | 395 | 4 | 55 | 38 | 41.3 | 3 | 16.1 | 39 | 2,190.5 | 4 | 868.2 | 80 | 7,241.2 | 45 | 4,904.3 | 131 | 402 |
| 2002 | 402 | 4 | 47 | 45 | 41.8 | 3 | 13.7 | 49 | 2,072.8 | 3 | 1,107.6 | 43 | 6,766.7 | 56 | 4,654.5 | 145 | 403 |
| 2003 | 366 | 4 | 67 | 35 | 39.4 | 5 | 20 | 26 | 2,018.2 | 2 | 1,061.4 | 41 | 6,985.5 | 46 | 4,901.6 | 137 | 405 |
| 2004 | 385 | 4 | 46 | 52 | 42.1 | 4 | 13.8 | 42 | 1,740.4 | 7 | 1,118.7 | 36 | 6,279.3 | 66 | 4,571.1 | 142 | 404 |
| 2005 | 356 | 5 | 63 | 37 | 39.5 | 5 | 19 | 33 | 2,358.1 | 2 | 1,023.3 | 48 | 5,992.8 | 77 | 4,724.6 | 129 | 405 |
| 2006 | 421 | 4 | 56 | 46 | 47.6 | 1 | 17.3 | 36 | 2,418.5 | 3 | 1,069.9 | 49 | 7,052.3 | 24 | 4,693.7 | 123 | 411 |
| 2007 | 392 | 4 | 52 | 47 | 45.5 | 3 | 16.7 | 36 | 2,287.0 | 2 | 1,106.7 | 43 | 6,755.3 | 24 | 4,463.1 | 121 | 410 |
| 2008 | 323 | 5 | 72 | 33 | 35.7 | 6 | 23.2 | 15 | 1,985.2 | 3 | 1,084.1 | 40 | 5,968.0 | 43 | 4,075.8 | 135 | 409 |
| 2009 | 365 | 3 | 39 | 53 | 40.2 | 4 | 12.5 | 48 | 1,966.9 | 3 | 988.7 | 45 | 5,567.6 | 50 | 3,771.2 | 134 | 408 |
| 2010 | 310 | 3 | 55 | 38 | 43.4 | 4 | 17.9 | 25 | 2,377.9 | 1 | 913.4 | 50 | 6,698.0 | 11 | 3,668.0 | 136 | 411 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 401 |
| FBI Notes: Variations in population coverage and reporting practices may cause differences in reporting from year to year. (See definitions) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh Pennsylvania 1991 - 1991 aggravated assault figures are not comparable to prior years due to a change in reporting procedures. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detroit Police Dept Michigan 2003 - Due to changes in reporting practices, annexations, and/or incomplete data, 2003 figures are not comparable to previous years' data. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detroit Police Dept Michigan 2004 - Because of changes in reporting practices, annexations, and/or incomplete data, 2004 figures are not comparable to previous years' data. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Detroit Police Dept Michigan 2005 - Because of changes in the agency's reporting practices, 2005 figures are not comparable to previous years' data. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Table Notes: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| [1]: In Pittsburgh, the city rank often ties with another jurisdiction in the area of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. The position of Pittsburgh was left as determined by the original spreadsheet sorting function to avoid tainting the data. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| [2]: 1993 Detroit violent crime rate - calculated without forcible rape | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 4-1: Crime in Detroit & Pittsburgh, 1985-2010. Source: FBI Universal Crime Reports (UCR) data

Detroit and Pittsburgh do not have a very significant change in the rates of violent crimes, but both cities show declines in property crimes over the past 25 years. In Detroit, the rate of violent crimes is virtually identical to the number that occurred in 1985 (despite an increase in the rate in the early 1990s), although there was a large drop in the previous few years, which may be attributable to reporting changes, annexations, and/or incomplete data the FBI noted for Detroit from 2003-2005. Pittsburgh saw a material decrease in its violent crime rate, down approximately 16% from 1985 figures, although there was a slight uptick in the violent crime rate in the late 1980s. Property crime in both cities consistently decreased over the past twenty five years in both cities, down approximately 41% in Detroit and down approximately 40% in Pittsburgh. Murder in Detroit has been down since 1985, both in terms of crime rates and total crime, with the city nearly eliminating one half of its murders at 310 in 2010, down from 685 in 1985 and a peak of 714 in 1974 (see Appendix B for historical crime levels and rates from Detroit and Pittsburgh from 1940 to the present). The murder rate in Detroit is down approximately 25% since 1985, while the murder actually have been increasing in Pittsburgh – a 111% increase since 1985, although in total numbers, this signifies the fact that the rate change from 8.5 in 1985 to 17.9 in 2010, with an additional 21 murders occurring in Pittsburgh in 2010 than the number that occurred in 1985. Except for the current uptick in the murder rate and murder totals in Pittsburgh, both cities have experienced a decrease in the crime rates (property and violent, murder for Detroit only) over the last twenty five years. Since the crime rates would increase if the total number of crimes remained the same or increased when coupled with declining population, this

might suggest that the violent and property crime situation in both cities has at least remained unchanged or improved over the last twenty five years. Nevertheless, Detroit simply has more crimes, which would be expected of a larger city, but moreover, especially in violent crime, Detroit has been consistently in the top of the table with larger cities such as New York, Los Angeles, or Chicago in terms of the total number of murders, the murder rate, and the violent crime rate, something that contrasts greatly with Pittsburgh. The population in Detroit continues to decrease, but the city continues to have the problems with crime that might plague a larger or more populous city. Consult the graphs below, derived from the table:

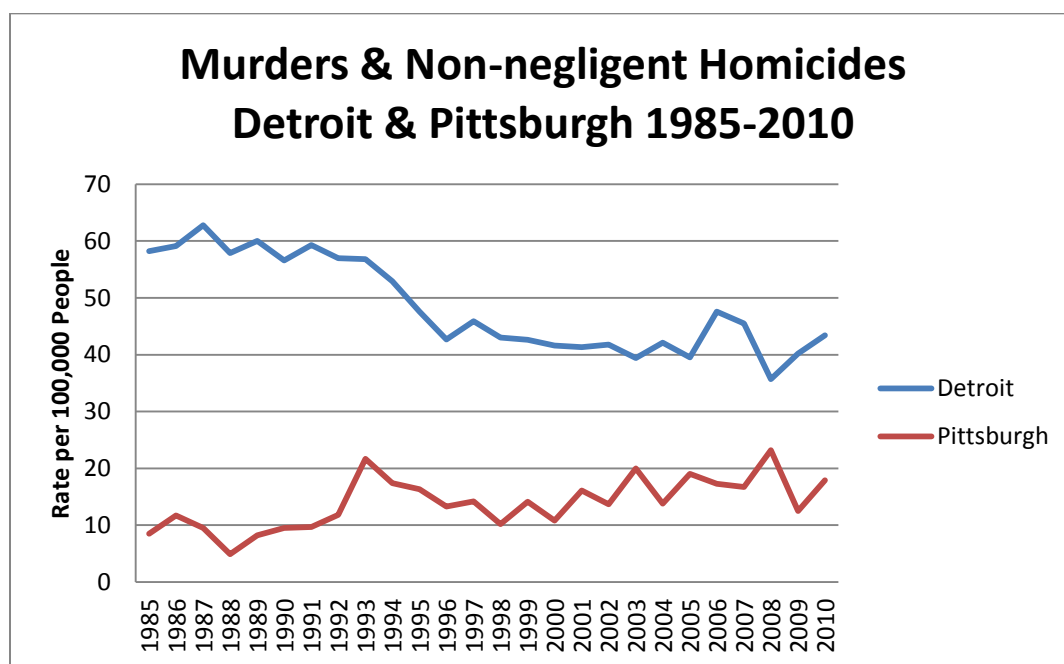


Figure 4-1: Murder & Non-negligent Homicide Rates in Detroit & Pittsburgh, 1985-2010. Source:
FBI Universal Crime Reports (UCR) data

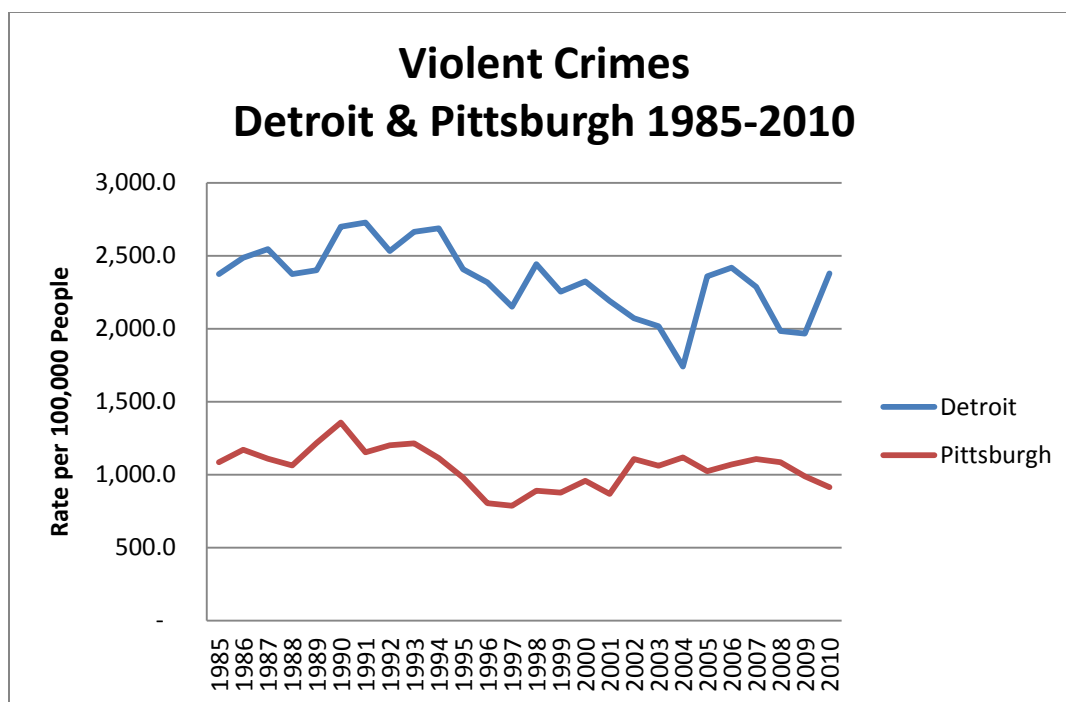


Figure 4-2: Violent Crime Rates in Detroit & Pittsburgh, 1985-2010. Source: FBI Universal Crime Reports (UCR) data

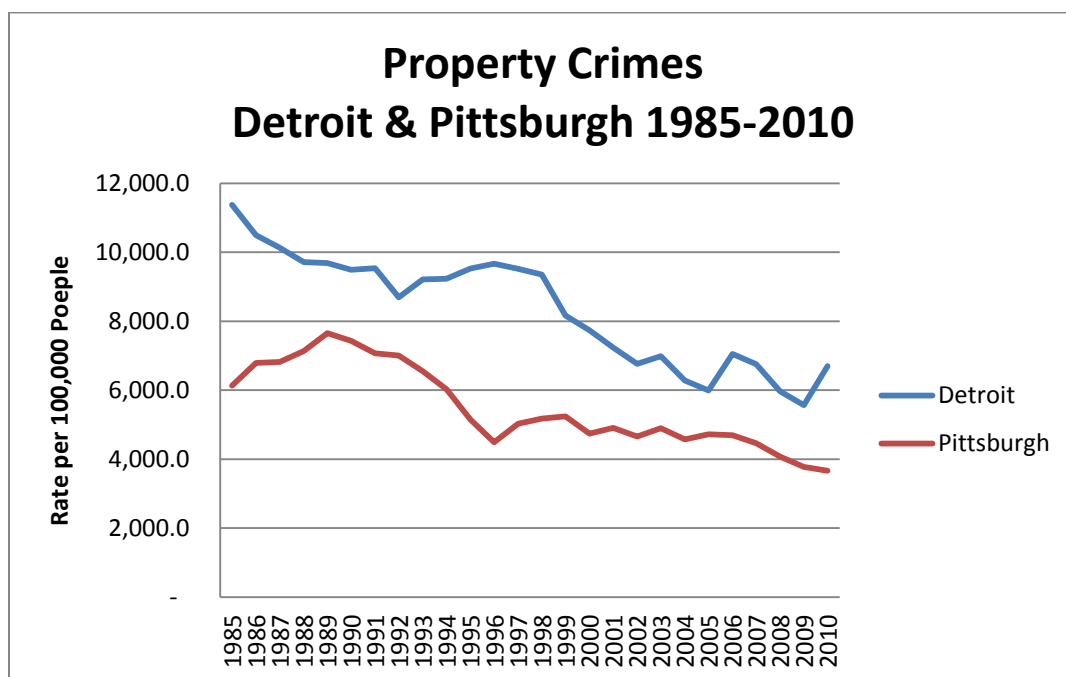


Figure 4-3: Property Crime Rates in Detroit & Pittsburgh, 1985-2010. Source: FBI Universal Crime Reports (UCR) data

The problem that Detroit also faces relates to the perception of crime. Detroit has long been known in popular culture as the “murder capital” of the United States, and it is an image that persists today, especially in hip-hop music. Consult the following excerpts from hip-hop music which touch on the issue of crime in the City of Detroit; the first example is from *Amityville*, a track from Detroit hip-hop mogul Eminem, and the second is from a fellow Detroit hip-hop artist by the name of Obie Trice (and collaborator Trick Trick):

“That's why the city is filled with a bunch of f---ing idiots still (still)/ That's why the first mother----er poppin' some s--- he gets killed (killed)/ That's why we don't call it Detroit, we call it Amityville ('Ville)/ You can get capped after just having a cavity filled (filled)/ Ahahahaha, that's why we're crowned the murder capital still (still)/ This ain't Detroit, this is mother----ing Hamburger Hill! (Hill!)/ We don't do drivebys, we park in front of houses and shoot/ and when the police come we f---ing shoot it out with them too!/ That's the mentality here (here) that's the reality here (here)/ Did I just hear somebody say they wanna challenge me here?? (huh?)/ While I'm holding a pistol with this many calibers here?? (here??)/ Got some registration and just made this s--- valid this year? (year?)” (Eminem).

“Here we go mother----ers/ This the mother----ing back acha Trick/ Don't even dream of f---ing up in Detroit, b----/ This is where the real killers at/ Detroit

mother----er!/ Ain't never no difficulty smashing no b---- a-- n-----/ Matter of fact, bring your b---- a-- to Detroit n----/ We got something for your a--/ [Gun shots are heard as the track fades out]” (Trick Trick).

The purpose is not to suggest that these artists harm the city with lyrics such as the ones quoted above; the purpose is also not to suggest that these artists do not support the city or even that these lyrics represent the entirety of their opinions regarding the perception of crime in the City of Detroit. It is very likely that they do not. However, these are lyrics, and those of other songs, that are widely available on songs and albums that are readily available in any major national retailer or online music store and certainly can factor into the perception of crime in Detroit. Crime, in conclusion, both in terms of the statistics and the perception distinguishes Detroit from Pittsburgh.

One final comparison that must be made between the two cities relates to the fiscal crises faced by older, “legacy” cities and the connection with declining city services. In a report entitled *Long-Term Stress and Systemic Failure: Taking Seriously the Fiscal Crisis of America’s Older Cities* from the Center of Community Progress in 2011, the writers indicate that “legacy cities,” older cities in America that have lost much of their population and job base (which would include cities like Detroit and Pittsburgh) face severe fiscal crises manifested through a vicious cycle of decline. Part of these vicious cycles takes form in the shape of structural deficits. These structural deficits are numerous: stagnant and declining property values, large numbers of vacant and non-taxpaying properties, disproportionately low income populations (at the time the report was written, roughly 13% of households were below the poverty level, roughly 30% of

Detroit households fell under that level), high health benefit and pension costs, and cut services and continual infrastructural problems (Mallach and Scorsone 10-14). Consider the following excerpt from the report:

“Faced with a shrinking tax base, older cities’ squeeze their operating budgets in an effort to provide a steadily declining quality of service to a smaller population, while their capital and infrastructure budgets provide less and less of either new investment or maintenance of the existing capital stock. As long as the tax base continues to shrink and costs continue to rise, these cities face a structural budget deficit.

Legacy cities are caught in a difficult bind on both the spending and revenue sides of the equation. On the revenue side, despite tax rates that are typically higher – particularly with respect to property taxes – than their suburban neighbors, tax revenues continue to decline” Mallach and Scorsone 8).

The paper argues against the use of “short-term accounting solutions” such as improved fiscal management, the elimination of waste, and increasing efficiency in municipal operations as they do not ultimately correct long-term fiscal and structural problems – in fact, the authors argue the situation could be made worse. Increasing taxes (usually already high) and reducing public service (usually already inadequate), among other actions, can exacerbate the vicious cycle of decline, the authors contend. “Long-term structural problems demand long-term structural solutions,” the authors assert (Mallach and Scorsone 16). The authors argue that short-term cash flow cannot be the sole solution to the problem, although the paper does not explicitly disagree with the

importance of cash flows for a municipality. The report suggests that cities must look to increasing revenues through other means, including restructuring public service delivery (which might include privatization or partnerships with non-profits and community-based groups):

“...it is clear that the quality of municipal services in many older cities has already deteriorated to the point where they are below reasonable levels, and that inadequate public services are acting as a deterrent to resident and business investment. Cities clearly lack the resources to increase spending on service delivery to adequate levels, while further cuts, in many cases, will only make the city’s long-term prospects worse” (Mallach and Scorsone 17).

Further, the white paper indicates, taking control of land inventory (focusing on efficient tax foreclosure systems, land banking, and targeted demolition strategies), and more big-picture changes must be made to bring legacy cities on the road to social, economic, and physical health (Mallach and Scorsone 18). While this paper does not delve into what the solution to the problem of ailing legacy cities might be, it will discuss the issue of ailing city services that the report aptly describes. Being legacy cities, both Detroit and Pittsburgh, face these problems. Overall, Detroit seems to face these problems with greater severity. Speaking with people who live, work, or go to school in Detroit or by viewing local media reports, one can get a sense of the problem across a multitude of city services. DeForce discusses the issue as borderline unreal. Trash pickup and snow removal can be irregular, street lights are often not lit, police and EMS service take exceedingly long to respond to calls, if at all. Unfortunately, such examples of poor city

service are commonly present and nationally visible through local media outlets. The *Detroit Free Press* on July 19, 2012 reported that EMS failed to arrive when a nine-year committed suicide in Detroit:

“Because no EMS truck arrived at the scene, the boy was taken to the hospital in a police squad car, bystanders said. State Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Detroit, confirmed that Wednesday night. ‘It’s just unbelievable. Can you imagine the family of that child -- not seeing any ambulance come?’ Tlaib said. She blamed city budget cuts for what she said was an unprecedented shortage of EMS trucks in Detroit. On July 7, a father whose 14-year-old son was fatally shot in southwest Detroit had to drive his son to the hospital because no EMS truck was available, Tlaib said. She notified state officials Wednesday of both incidents and requested an investigation. Both incidents occurred in Tlaib’s 12th state House District, which covers the south end of Detroit and once was patrolled by five EMS trucks. ‘As of today (Wednesday), we have none. They have to dispatch one from the east side now,’ she said” (Laitner).

In July 2012, WXYZ-TV reported that the city was planning on halting yard waste collection for at least two weeks, to give waste crews more time to handle increased amount of bulk trash sent out during the month (WXYZ). Fox News Detroit reporter Charlie LeDuff, on July 24, 2012, reported that a burglary on the East Side of Detroit had a four hour response time from the Detroit Police Department (LeDuff). *The Daily* reports on February 5, 2012 that justifiable homicide has skyrocketed in the city, as citizens begin to defend themselves against crime under the assumption that Detroit

Police will not adequately protect the citizens of the city, especially when, over the course of the past decade, the number of Detroit Police officers has dropped to 3,000 from 5,000 earlier in the decade (Gay).

“Justifiable homicide in the city shot up 79 percent in 2011 from the previous year, as citizens in the long-suffering city armed themselves and took matters into their own hands. The local rate of self-defense killings now stands 2,200 percent above the national average. Residents, unable to rely on a dwindling police force to keep them safe, are fighting back against the criminal scourge on their own. And they’re offering no apologies” (Gay).

The article further affirms the statements that response times for the Detroit Police Department are “distressingly high” (Gay), with Detroit response times well above the national average:

“Average police response time for priority calls in the city, according to the latest data available, is 24 minutes. In comparable cities across the country, it is well under 10 minutes” (Gay).

The Detroit Police Department, *The Daily* writes, acknowledges the fact that response times are high and moreover, neighborhoods, like Palmer Woods, turn to paramilitary security companies to provide adequate neighborhood protection. As the article quotes the experience of a resident (and victim of crime) in the Rosedale Park neighborhood on the West Side of the city: “Where else do the police come to your house after you’ve been robbed and ask you, ‘Why did you call us?’ ” (Gay). City services problems in Detroit are not confined to police, EMS, or waste collection, but even in street lighting.

Bloomberg on May 24, 2012 reported that the city is considering eliminating approximately half of its city streetlights to attempt to save money in a city that is continuously facing fiscal challenges:

“...40 percent of the 88,000 streetlights are broken and the city, whose finances are to be overseen by an appointed board, can’t afford to fix them. Mayor Dave Bing’s plan would create an authority to borrow \$160 million to upgrade and reduce the number of streetlights to 46,000. Maintenance would be contracted out, saving the city \$10 million a year” (Christoff).

Indeed, this is but a small sampling of the news articles and stories written about city service problems. Remember that the single largest one-decade drop in the population of Detroit (approximately 25%) occurred between 2000 and 2010 with no material change in the racial demographics of the city. Clearly, this is not because of white flight. But when one considers the issues with blight, crime, and city service problems, coupled with the fact that Detroit has consistently had one of the worst unemployment rates out of the largest cities in the United States (rank 50 in 2007 – 14.1%, 2008 – 15.9%, 2009 – 24.9%, 2010 – 23.1%, 2011 – 19.9%) according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In fact, at the recent 2009 peak, Detroit was a full nine percentage points higher than the city in position forty-nine, Oakland, California (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). In comparison, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that Pittsburgh never exceeded 9% unemployment during that same five year period. The U.S. Census Bureau further indicates that from 2006-2010, the average median income for Detroiters was \$28,357, with 34.5% of the population living below the poverty level. Indeed, that statistic

indicates that more than one-third of the population of Detroit from 2006-2010 would be considered to live below the poverty line. Pittsburgh fared far better; for the same period, 2006-2010, the median income in Pittsburgh was \$36,019 while the percentage of persons living under the poverty line was only 21.9%. In the end, one can see potential issues that would drive citizens out of the City of Detroit, and issues that would certainly distinguish Detroit and Pittsburgh. While it is true that both cities have and do experience manifestations of urban decay, such as the elements described above, Detroit would appear to experience these urban problems at a greater degree of magnitude than Pittsburgh, uniquely, when compared to Pittsburgh, or even both. Given the inherent uniqueness of something as large and multifaceted as a city, it would not be a surprise to suggest that for every point of similarity between Detroit and Pittsburgh, there is a point of dissimilarity and contrast between the two cities.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE COMPARISON

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, both cities have aspects that are similar to one another as well as different from one another across a wide variety of sociopolitical and economic issues. In summary, Detroit and Pittsburgh display similarities in deindustrialization and population loss as Rust Belt legacy cities primarily dependent upon a single industry. While both cities have unique stories and could never be said to be identical in scenario to one another, both cities developed as industrial powerhouses in the early twentieth century (although steel production in Pittsburgh began earlier than automotive production did in Detroit) dominating industrial production in their respective industries so much so that Detroit earned the title of “The Motor City,” and Pittsburgh came to be known as the “The Steel City.” Nevertheless, both cities would experience deindustrialization (both in terms of decentralization and decline in the industry itself, which is tied to a multitude of causes in each case) and population loss. Since the population peak in the 1950s, both cities lost one-half of their population, and Detroit, once the fourth largest city in terms of population, sank below one million residents as of the 2000 Census, falling off the list of the top ten most populous cities in the United States. Of course, major differences distinguish the cities from one another as well. Both cities continue to face common urban issues like blight, but as the previous chapters have shown, Detroit often faces these problems on a much larger scale, and not necessarily because the city is physically larger or more populous.

While Pittsburgh did face racial tensions like other large cities in the United States and indeed became one of the most segregated large cities in the nation during the

1960s-era Renaissance I (Fitzpatrick), Detroit faced enormous racial strife that erupted in the shocking and deadly 1967 riot. With the population loss that occurred in the following decades, Detroit and its suburbs would become heavily racially segregated. Even in 2002, upon the election of a new mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick, Professor George Galster of Wayne State University indicated in an *ABC News* article by Peter Jennings that “Detroit has the dubious distinction of being the most racially segregated metro area in the United States” (Jennings). Indeed, today the racial makeup of the City of Detroit is 10.6% white and 82.7% African-American, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, while the respective white to African-American racial makeup of the tri-counties is 54.3%/40.3% for Wayne County, 77.7%/14.1% for Oakland County, and 85.2%/9.3% for Macomb County. Pittsburgh, however, as of the 2010 U.S. Census is 66.0% white and 26.1% African-American. While the racial makeup of the counties comprising Greater Pittsburgh (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland) is predominately white, the City of Pittsburgh itself does not contrast as heavily with its neighboring counties and communities as much as Detroit does with its metro area. Detroit contrasts also with Pittsburgh in that it currently is in a very tough struggle with unemployment, having some of the worst (if not the worst) levels of unemployment within the city in recent years. This is not to say unemployment has not created a struggle in other major cities across the nation during this economic crisis, but rather that Detroit has seen some of the worst of the effects. Further, Detroit has had to grapple with serious urban issues like crime and blight on a larger scale. While both cities, as do all cities, must contend with these issues, blight has been defined as the

greatest topographical characteristic of Detroit and while the perception of crime in Detroit (particularly that Detroit is one of the most, if not the most, dangerous cities in the United States) is tied to crime statistics, it poses a greater problem for a renewal of Detroit than the actual levels of crime or the crime rates in Detroit. Indeed, the levels of murders and non-negligent homicides and property crimes have been declining since the 1980s. Indeed, what always must be considered in comparing the two cities and the applicability of any renewal programs is that Detroit not only faces unique urban problems, but also common urban problems on a much wider scale than the City of Pittsburgh does.

Another key difference is in the current financial position of the two cities in the last two years. Detroit, frankly put, is in a precarious financial position and any attempt to model Pittsburgh in renewal efforts will be first tempered by financial position. Especially when time is a factor in renewal (i.e. developing and capitalizing on new industries to re-developed the industrial base of the city), having the funds necessary to meet the quick time frames is necessary. The ability for Detroit to renew and reinvent itself may be more dependent on how and when it corrects its fiscal issues than how applicable the programs implemented by Pittsburgh are to the city. However, the financial crisis Detroit finds itself in (and the corresponding corruption) could be the subject of another thesis. Consider the following selected financial data derived from the 2010 and 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports of both Detroit and Pittsburgh:

| | | | | | Detroit 30-Jun-11 | Detroit 30-Jun-10 | Pittsburgh 31-Dec-11 | Pittsburgh 31-Dec-10 |
|---|--|--|--|--|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Moody's-Based Statistics: | | | | | | | | |
| Total General Fund Revenues | | | | | \$ 1,220,258,093 | \$ 1,187,977,093 | \$ 489,316,547 | \$ 434,833,849 |
| General Fund Balance as % of Revenues | | | | | -12.13% | -7.67% | 14.16% | 11.25% |
| Unassigned General Fund Balance as % of Revenues | | | | | -16.11% | -13.11% | 11.95% | 9.80% |
| Public Protection Expenditure (Per Capita, 2010 Pop.) | | | | | \$ 974.33 | \$ 845.83 | \$ 816.10 | \$ 920.88 |
| General Fund Cash Position at End of Reporting Period | | | | | \$ 12,362,630 | \$ 1,915,522 | \$ 55,627,990 | \$ 39,335,880 |
| Property and Income Taxes as % of Total Revenues | | | | | 33.68% | 30.26% | 41.21% | 45.16% |
| Total accounts and contracts receivable net of allowance for doubtful accounts as % of total accounts and contracts receivable (general fund) | | | | | 3.30% | 6.31% | 46.82% | 67.35% |

Table 5-1: Selected Financial Statistics for the Cities of Detroit and Pittsburgh, 2010 and 2011.

Source: 2010 and 2010 Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, Detroit and Pittsburgh.

For the past two years, the general fund balance in Detroit has been negative. Since governmental funds, and in this particular case, the general fund where much of the Detroit's day-to-day financial transactions occur, do not have "equity accounts," the fund balance reflects the difference between assets and liabilities. As liabilities often reflect cash going out, the city is not on a sustainable financial path. The other statistics clarify that position: the city, when compared to Pittsburgh draws far less of its revenue from property and income taxes (in theory, one of the largest sources of revenue for a city), and collects an astonishing low amount of its accounts receivable (or money owed to the city through property taxes and other avenues). In the past two years, the city expected to collect no more than approximately 6% of its outstanding accounts receivable, a figure that would have likely put any company without taxation authority out of business years ago. Moreover, Detroit has very little liquid cash on hand in the general fund (cash that would likely be used for operations); Pittsburgh, the far smaller city with fewer overall

revenues (around \$500 million less) as a result, had far more cash on hand in the general fund over the last two years (around \$20 million more). While this is certainly not a complete financial picture of the two cities, the data here asserts the financial crisis that Detroit finds itself in and calls into question whether the city can even afford to implement renewal programs in the near future. Consider the following figures, relating to the accounts and contract receivable allowance for doubtful accounts in the general fund and the overall general fund balances of the two cities over the last few years:

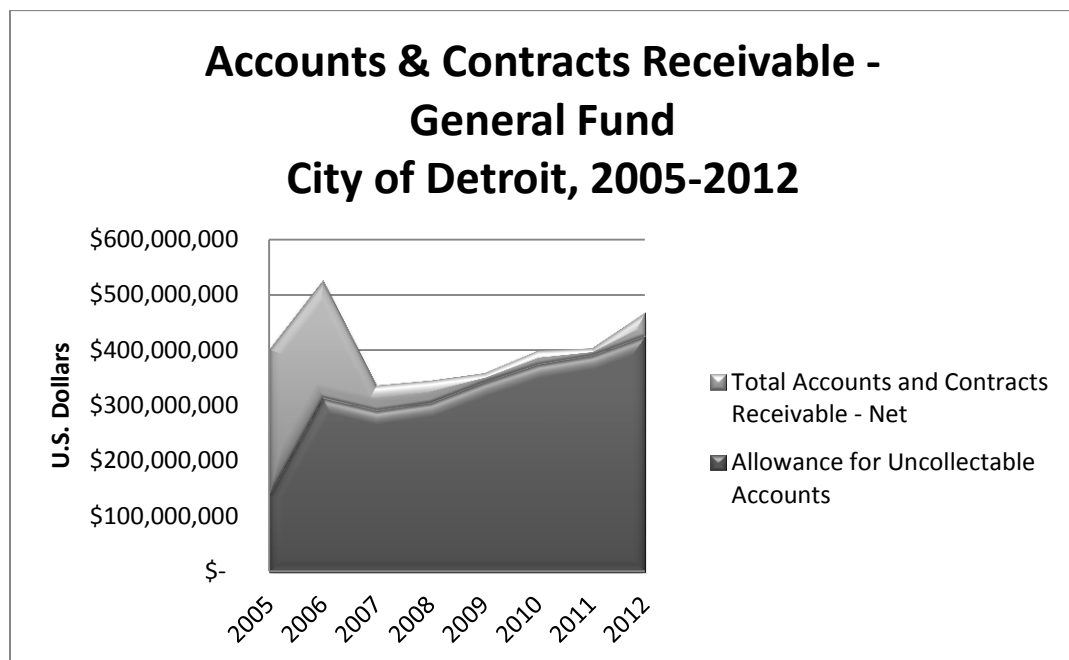


Figure 5-1: Accounts & Contracts Receivable – General Fund, City of Detroit, 2005-2012. Source:

City of Detroit CAFRs 2005-2012

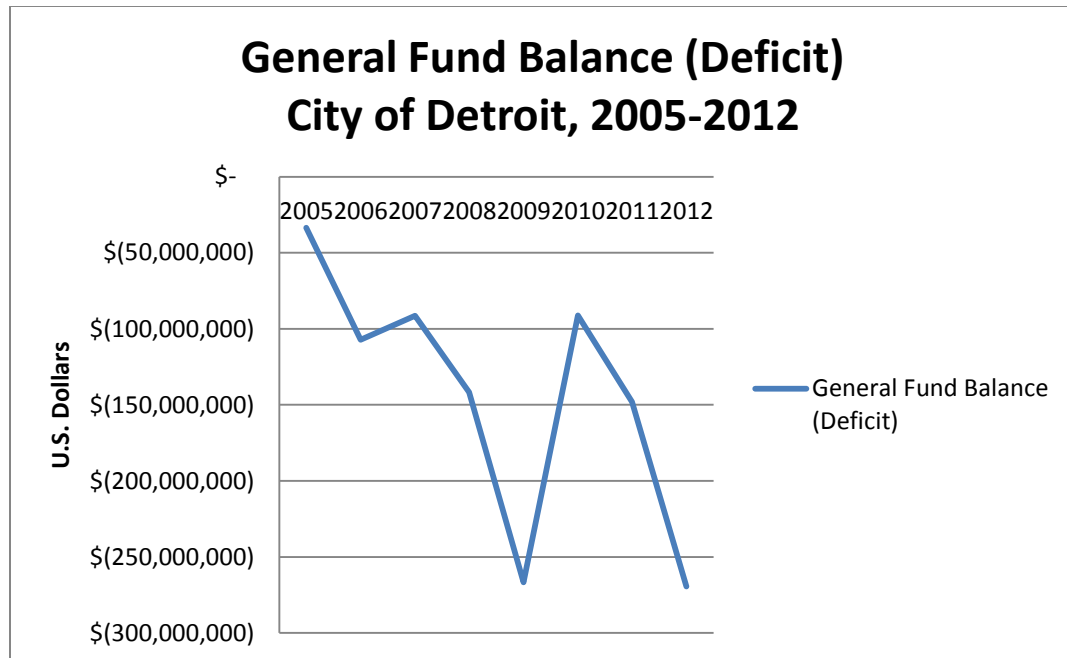


Figure 5-2: General Fund Balance, City of Detroit, 2005-2012. Source: City of Detroit CAFRs 2005-2012

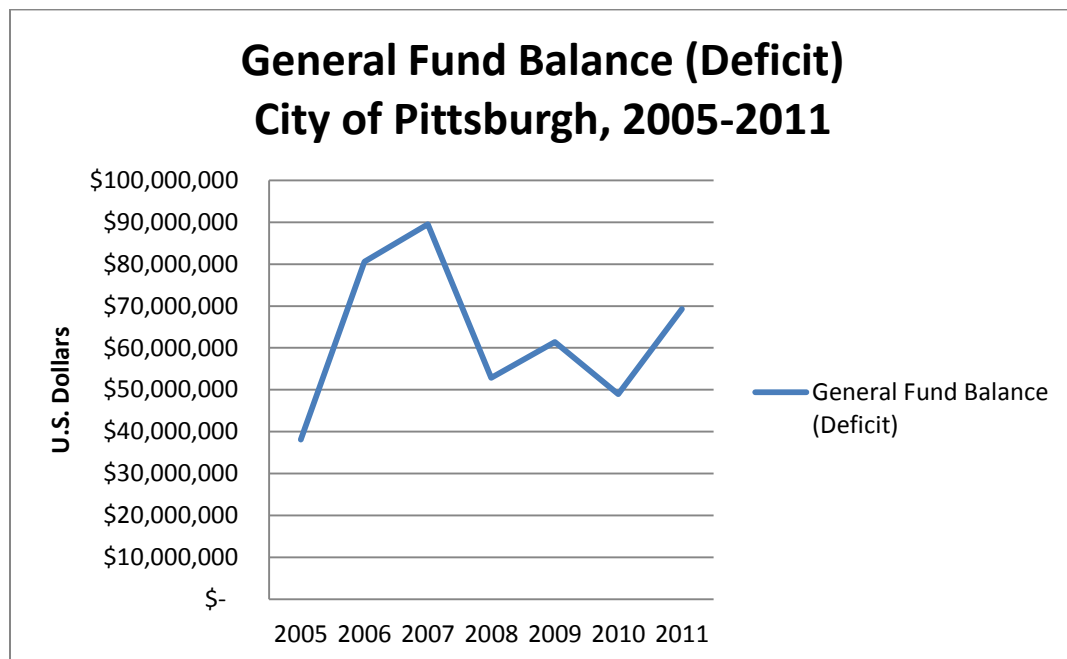


Figure 5-3: General Fund Balance, City of Pittsburgh, 2005-2011. Source: City of Pittsburgh CAFRs 2005-2011

Moreover, when comparing both municipalities on the simple cash and cash equivalent balance over the same time period, one can see that the City of Pittsburgh has a relatively more stable (and higher) cash level in the general fund. This is critical, since many basic financial obligations of municipalities are met with general fund liquid assets: for example, payroll.

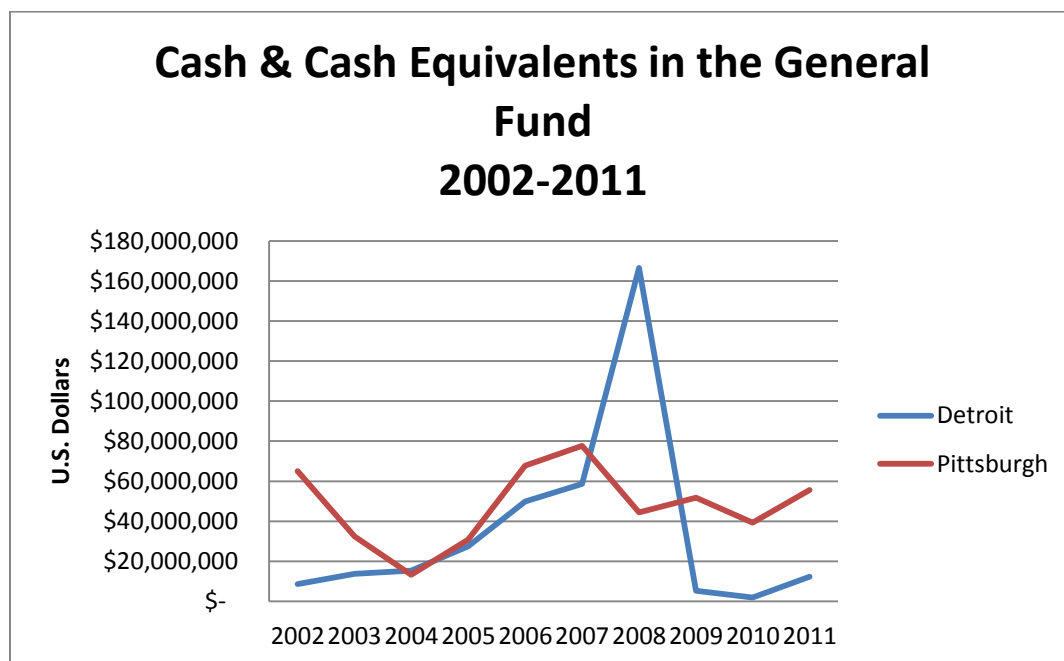


Figure 5-4: Cash & Cash Equivalents in the General Fund, 2002-2011. Source: City of Detroit and City of Pittsburgh CAFRs 2002-2011

Perhaps even more startling are statistics provided by the Pew Charitable Trust about how much general fund budget is spent on administrative expenses. In 2010, Detroit, as seen before, with its negative general fund balance had its city council consume 1.01% of the general fund spending, more than any other city studied by the

report (Pew Charitable Trust). Examine the table on the following page; one can see not only that Detroit has an expensive city government, but also one of the largest per-council member budgets out of the cities selected (and the cities with larger per-council member budgets are more populous cities than Detroit) and is one of the few cities that provides a car to councilmembers at city expense.

| CITY | | | | | Baltimore | Boston | Chicago | Dallas | Detroit | Houston | Los Angeles | New York City |
|---|--|--|--|--|--------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| Annual average salary of elected members | | | | | \$ 63,178 | \$ 87,500 | \$ 109,261 | \$ 37,500 | \$ 73,595 | \$ 55,770 | \$ 178,789 | \$ 121,725 |
| Budget per council seat | | | | | \$ 360,845 | \$ 454,168 | \$ 607,386 | \$ 244,837 | \$ 1,470,244 | \$ 390,965 | \$ 1,690,039 | \$ 1,264,351 |
| Council budget as percentage of total city budget | | | | | 0.41% | 0.25% | 0.93% | 0.38% | 1.01% | 0.29% | 0.58% | 0.10% |
| City offers councilmember car at city expense | | | | | no | no | no | no | yes | no | yes | no |
| 2010 Population | | | | | 620,961 | 617,594 | 2,695,598 | 1,197,816 | 713,777 | 2,099,451 | 3,792,621 | 8,175,133 |
| As of Dec. 31, 2010 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CITY | | | | | Philadelphia | Phoenix | Pittsburgh | San Antonio | San Diego | San Jose | Washington, D.C. | |
| Annual average salary of elected members | | | | | \$ 121,107 | \$ 61,600 | \$ 57,815 | \$ 1,400 | \$ 75,096 | \$ 89,710 | \$ 130,538 | |
| Budget per council seat | | | | | \$ 1,108,061 | \$ 418,000 | \$ 225,828 | \$ 421,496 | \$ 1,304,319 | \$ 823,459 | \$ 1,494,923 | |
| Council budget as percentage of total city budget | | | | | 0.50% | 0.33% | 0.46% | 0.52% | 0.95% | 0.86% | 0.32% | |
| City offers councilmember car at city expense | | | | | yes | no | no | no | no | no | no | |
| 2010 Population | | | | | 1,526,006 | 1,445,632 | 305,704 | 1,327,407 | 1,301,617 | 945,942 | 601,723 | |
| As of Dec. 31, 2010 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 5-2: Selected City Council Financial Data. Source: *City Councils in Philadelphia and Other Major Cities: Who Holds Office, How Long They Serve, and How Much It All Costs*, Pew Charitable Trust, Feb. 2, 2011

Given the presentation during the previous chapters, while both cities are unique, it is likely that Detroit can be compared to Pittsburgh, at least in part, and that the city can gain some benefit from studying Pittsburgh. While Detroit renewal efforts have been grassroots driven, reinvestment driven by companies choosing to relocate to the city, and cultural and residential redevelopment efforts (i.e. Riverfront development efforts), along with mayoral initiatives focused on demolition, violence prevention, and a general transformation driven by improved public services, an expansion of Cobo Hall, demolition, and the reduction in the size of city government, Pittsburgh has had a storied history with redevelopment. Pittsburgh enacted policies of urban renewal in two major phases, Renaissance I (roughly after WWII through 1965) and Renaissance II (largely during the 1980s). Both periods took vastly different approaches to renewing the city, and the lessons learned in both periods should be examined for use with the City of Detroit. Renaissance I largely focused on two major elements: pollution control (along with environmental projects and transportation) and urban redevelopment. In this period in time, urban redevelopment focused on demolishing “slums,” and building new civic centers and similar-purposed districts. When the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, a nonprofit public leadership organization dedicated to economic development and improvements in the quality of life in Pittsburgh and the surrounding region, was founded in 1943 (Lorant 383), it was primarily involved with landmark pollution control efforts for the region. The organization, and its allies like Mayor Lawrence and the Mellon Family, was successful. While ordinances on smoke control had already been in place as early as 1946 (Lorant 386), the Conference, along with

newly-elected Mayor David Lawrence, pushed for wider pollution control on a county-wide level, given that pollution did not respect city limits. A bill introduced in Harrisburg in 1947 (Lorant 390) would eventually (it ran into opposition from railroads who were eventually muscled into acceptance by the Mellons, as the Mellon enterprises often provided most of the business to these railroads) pass through the bicameral legislature and be signed into law to provide county-wide smoke control regulation. While the conference would become more involved in improving area transportation and flood control during the 1950s and 1960s, the Conference and others in the public and private sector had set the stage for the massive level of redevelopment projects across the city with its efforts in pollution control, including the redevelopment of Downtown Pittsburgh and the Gateway Center and Point State Park. This period is summed up by Lorant:

“The city welcomed tomorrow, because yesterday was hard and unlovely. Pittsburgh erected buildings that glistened with stainless steel and aluminum; it had little time for the niceties of architectural criticism. It counted the gains and shrugged off the losses, not worshipping or even respecting landmarks. The town took pleasure in the swing of the headache ball and the crash of falling brick. It tore down bridges without a second thought, and it regarded a tunnel through a mountain as the most natural kind of highway in the world” (Lorant 373).

Indeed, the Renaissance informally began with the 1950 demolition of a warehouse on Penn Avenue, one of 133 buildings that would be demolished on The Point to facilitate the creation of Point State Park (Fitzpatrick). Earlier in the 1940s, the Mellon family lobbied the state to create the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), which

gave Pittsburgh powerful eminent domain powers and authority (Fitzpatrick). The URA used its authority and political connections with Mayor Lawrence and the Mellon family that formed a powerful private-public juggernaut that helped in the construction of Point State Park (and the prior demolition of the area), the Gateway Center (Fitzpatrick), to clear the Hill of 1,600 families living in a residential “slum” to create the Civic Auditorium (Lorant 422), and the Lower Hill District as well (Fitzpatrick). At the time, the projects were praised for eliminating urban blight in favor of modern, redeveloped districts. At the same time, Pittsburgh pushed the development of the Parkway East and I-79, to provide easy routes to the new international airport and the new Pennsylvania Turnpike (Fitzpatrick). This action would not alleviate city congestion and make the city more attractive, but lead to the explosive growth in the suburbs of Pittsburgh (Fitzpatrick). The North Side was partially demolished by the URA in favor of the construction of the Allegheny Center shopping mall (Fitzpatrick). While praised at its time, the efforts of Renaissance I lost some of its glow by the late 1960s (Fitzpatrick). As a 1968 editorial in *The Pittsburgh Press* read “The men of the Renaissance have been unable to produce anything but a crop of weeds on 9.2 acres of prime public land next to the Civic Arena” (Fitzpatrick).

The critique of Renaissance I has been mixed both in contemporary sources and today. While the movement, which stemmed from a successful and surprisingly progressive environmental movement for its time, physically transformed Pittsburgh from a grimy mill town to the modern city it physically is today, the “Radiant City” planning efforts of Pittsburgh, the URA, the Allegheny Conference, and others has been met with

wide criticism. The “Radiant City” approach, pioneered by French modernist Le Corbusier, suggested that cities should be a “set of tall apartment and office towers surrounding by parks and superhighways” (Fitzpatrick). Renaissance I Pittsburgh during the 1950s and 1960s pioneered this style of renewal (Fitzpatrick). Contemporary critic, preservationist Jane Jacobs, panned Pittsburgh on its Radiant City redevelopment efforts. While she praised the pollution control efforts, “Downtown Pittsburgh in those days was not, in any case, an attractive place for such establishments because it was unrelievedly grim, smoky and sooty. Now, however, downtown Pittsburgh is potentially attractive for leisure use, thanks to the massive clean up led by the businessmen’s Allegheny Conference” (Jacobs 170-71). However, she saw the potential for failure with the widespread cleaning and redevelopment due to parks, highways, and parking lots:

“...the downtown’s one-shift unbalance should be soon partly remedied by a civic auditorium and the later addition of a symphony hall and apartments, all immediately joining downtown. But the spirit of the dairy farm and of culture decontaminated from the city still reigns. Every device – arterial highways, belts of park, parking lots-severs these projects from the working downtown, insures that their juncture will remain an abstraction on maps instead of a living economic reality of people appearing at different times on the same streets” (Jacobs 171).

Jacobs sees the creation of new superhighways and parking lots (i.e. for the Civic Auditorium) as eroding the core of a city and “eating themselves away” (Jacobs 355), as cities give into the attrition of automobiles. Jacobs further called the Gateway Center as “uninviting” (Fitzpatrick) and in her second book *The Economy of Cities*, blasted the

redevelopment efforts of the period as immensely expensive and doing nothing to improve the economy of the city. Jacobs argues that the vitality of a city is not developed through Radiant City redevelopment efforts, but by encouraging four conditions for city diversity: mixed primary uses, small blocks, aged buildings, and concentration (density). Radiant City approaches, Jacobs argues, contribute to the dullness and decay of a city. She argues that these factors help to contribute to use of sidewalks, which encourage safety as “a well-used city street is apt to be a safe street” (Jacobs 34), among other elements about “the peculiar nature of cities” (Jacobs). Jacobs argued against traditional (and to some extent, still held concepts) that parks, superhighways, and increasing room for cars are automatically beneficial to cities. Other contemporary critics of Renaissance I existed in Pittsburgh, and today, the criticisms still exist. In East Liberty, where the URA demolished 1,200 homes in an effort to make the district a residential and shopping complex (Fitzpatrick), the neighborhood decayed and illustrated “...how sprawling urban renewal programs rarely lived up to their promises and how delicate the line is that separates good intentions from unintended consequences” (Fitzpatrick). In the end, the neighborhood lost more than 4,500 people since the Renaissance (Fitzpatrick). When Fitzpatrick wrote this about East Liberty in 2000, the neighborhood was in poor condition, however, in more recent years, the neighborhood has experienced a renewal, with economic development and reinvestment making the neighborhood “vibrant” (Jones). In the Lower Hill neighborhood, the population dropped from 17,334 in 1950 to 2,459 in 1990; the relocation of the people in the neighborhood that would hold the Cultural Center and Civic Auditorium would mean that people moved into neighborhood

of their own race, increased segregation within the city (Fitzpatrick). The lessons here that should be heeded are that redevelopment in the sense of a physical re-transformation of an area through demolition and reconstruction, as well as planned districts and new highways, can have mixed results. Jacobs would argue that such efforts are detrimental and totally ineffectively. While in a situation like Detroit (where entire neighborhoods are blighted and vacant), the effects of extensive demolition use and planned reconstruction is unclear, it provides evidence that traditional 1950s and 1960s-era redevelopment may not be a panacea for urban decay. However, much of the focus on Pittsburgh as a model for urban renewal is not on Renaissance I, but on the later Renaissance II period.

Renaissance II more closely resembles what one today sees as urban redevelopment and renewal; programs are focused on developing vitality, renovation, expanding new industry, and fostering culture and regional connections rather than demolition and reconstruction. Renaissance II reflected those elements in the wake of the collapse in the steel industry. Mr. Bill Flanagan explained the secret of the Pittsburgh comeback beginning in Renaissance II. The Pittsburgh region did not give up on traditional industry, namely steel, which after the 1980s, became a smaller percentage of the economy. The regional focus centered on the redirection of wealth created in these traditional industries and directing it into training and development in new economy jobs. Thus, wealth being created in those traditional industries was directed into the major universities in the Greater Pittsburgh area, which invested and helped create new jobs in the IT, health care, and life sciences industries. The three economic strengths of Pittsburgh no longer solely focused on one industry, but rather on a blend of traditional

and new industry, fostered through economic development and investment; these three strengths are manufacturing (i.e. steel), finance, and energy. Flanagan continued that while today finance is the number one sector in the Pittsburgh region, manufacturing is number two, and energy is number three, the traditional industries did not disappear, but that the efforts of the Allegheny Conference and others starting in Renaissance II curbed the job loss from these industries during the 1980s and promoted the offset of the loss of these jobs through the creation of new jobs in these newer industries. This, combined with the increased investment in the quality of life, pollution control, arts and culture, and green technology (much of which came from the Allegheny Conference and universities like the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University), who were and are heavily involved in brownfield development), was a part of the reinvention and revitalization of the Pittsburgh region since the 1980s. Indeed, the largest obstacles at the time to redevelopment were brownfield reuse regulations. The overcoming of these obstacles and the recent investment by local and larger companies took between ten and fifteen years to occur (since the initial efforts in the 1980s), but the investment did eventually occur, proving the success of such programs, Flanagan explained. Lorant reiterates the point that Renaissance II was more than brick-and-mortar redevelopment of troubled neighborhoods (although, this time around, Pittsburgh focused on neighborhood rehabilitation, whereby the focus is not solely based on new construction and demolition, but renovation of existing structures and promotion of low-interest loans for renovation), but a more comprehensive approach to urban renewal. As Lorant indicates:

“But Renaissance II is more than brick and mortar; it goes well beyond buildings. It is a comprehensive philosophical concept. It is a program for a new kind of environment. Building, construction and renovation are only one phase of it. The other is the preservation and beautification of the area’s natural features” (Lorant 564).

Beyond that, the Renaissance focused on architectural quality, missing from Renaissance I, and transforming the idea that Pittsburgh was a city of steel, of corporations, of Heinzs, and of Mellons to an idea that Pittsburgh is also a city of culture, art, music, as well as a city of universities, and a center for vital nationwide research. Contemporarily, Lorant confidently sated that Renaissance II “...offered Pittsburgh a golden opportunity to improve upon its economic stability in the eighties” (Lorant 586). While the period left something to be desired in improving regional transformation and the contemporary unemployment rate. Renaissance II, along with the regional pull of the Allegheny Conference, allowed for the unified revitalization effort over the past twenty years. During the economic chaos of the 1980s, the “Strategy,” employed by city and county governments, along with the major universities and the Allegheny Conference, an economic transformation plan that sought to reshape the economy and bring 36,000 jobs to the area by 2000 (Lorant 618). By 1987, unemployment dropped to 6% (down from 16% in the early 1980s), Pittsburgh positioned itself as a research leader with 25,000 scientists and technicians doing research at 170 locations in the area, and the plan managed to revitalize various neighborhoods (Lorant 618-22), the Mayor Caliguiri indicated in a 1988 interview. Universities played a role in confronting urban fiscal

problems during the era as well: the heads of the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon formed business-municipal coalitions to confront such problems (Lorant 622) as they pushed research and development and stress on IT in the region through the use of federal grants, tax credits, and moneys from foundations (Lorant 628-29). Moreover, the continued partnership between the public and private sector and the continued private contributions assisted with the comeback over the last twenty years:

“The partnership of public and private sector, launched during the original renaissance, has also continued. There has been important, continuous and far-sighted support from Pittsburgh’s foundation community. The contributions to colleges and universities, medical research, technology, housing, the arts and economic development have been crucial to the stabilization and growth of the Pittsburgh area during the 1980’s and the 1990’s” (Lorant 641-42).

Throughout the comeback of Pittsburgh, the contributions of foundations and trusts, along with long standing philanthropic support has been cited as a factor in the recovery and vitality of the city. Lorant cites Gregory D. Curtis in the 1990s, who at the time of writing was the President and CEO of Greycourt & Co., Inc. and former President of Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania:

“Pittsburgh survived the demise of its industrial base far better than many other cities, due in no small part to the constructive role played by the city’s many charitable foundations. On a *per capita* basis, Pittsburgh’s foundation assets rank second among American cities. The intelligent concern and creative grantmaking of these foundations helped guide Pittsburgh from its role as the most heavily

industrialized city in America to the modern, post-industrial city it has become in the 1990's" (Lorant 642).

Indeed, Lorant cites examples of hundreds of millions in contributions from endowments, trusts, foundations, and partnerships that (in conjunction with local governments and organizations like the Allegheny Conference) have resulted in sizable investment in the arts, culture, and neighborhood revitalization. Lorant cites the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust (itself a partnership of the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, the Allegheny Conference, and the Howard Heinz Endowment) as the "grandest" example in the 1990s, when the Trust redeveloped 14 square blocks in Downtown Pittsburgh, turning what was a "red light district" in a vibrant cultural district, attracting 1.1 million visitors a year, as of the time of writing. When this occurred in the 1990s, the Trust was half-way into a ten-year plan, \$500 million dollar investment plan for Pittsburgh, which was expected to lead nearly \$400 million in additional commercial investment (Lorant 644). Reinforcing the view of Mr. Flanagan, Lorant cites the continued involvement of the universities of the Pittsburgh region (in particular, the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon, and Duquesne) in fostering new industry growth (in conjunction with contributions from these trusts and foundations to the universities) and research in the 1990s (Lorant 648-52), and the fact that companies began to reinvest in the region: "But in 1990s, Pittsburgh's homegrown entrepreneurs have stayed home and many of those who had left returned" (Lorant 652). In short, from Renaissance II onward, the Pittsburgh region has been focused on revitalization and

redevelopment in the region through new industry and cultural development, supported by local foundations and universities.

The two cities are certainly unique, however, comparing Detroit and Pittsburgh is a merited comparison. Detroit needs to learn the lessons from Renaissance I, namely in understanding the potential difficulties and outcomes of mid-twentieth century approaches to urban redevelopment – especially as it applies to twenty-first century urban revitalization, but also to understand what approaches from Renaissance II and onward can be applied for a positive effect in the local area. These approaches are:

- 1) Timeliness
- 2) Encourage greater regional cooperation for economic development
- 3) Focus on industrial and commercial diversification

While contemporaries in Pittsburgh would not consider, for instance, the pollution control measures to be timely, in retrospect, one would say air quality initiative taken as early as the 1940s or efforts to diversify industry as early as the 1980s while the dominant industry is collapsing would indeed be timely, and almost radically progressive. The current financial crisis Detroit finds itself in can hamper any timely responses to urban problems; given the fact that simply meeting basic service requirements for residents is a challenge for the city currently, the implementation of wide-scale redevelopment programs will be limited in the near future, unless a more regional approach is taken toward Detroit revitalization. As described below, while this is an approach from Pittsburgh that Metro Detroit should consider, there are barriers to that concept.

Large Pittsburgh initiatives were collaborative, in terms of private and public partnerships, as well as cooperative across city and county lines, and timely and in the midst of an economic crisis overcame the conception that Pittsburgh was always the steel city and focused on economic redevelopment. The lack of large-scale regional cooperation is a challenge to Detroit in applying the revitalization efforts from Pittsburgh. While Metro Detroit to some extent has regional collaboration (i.e. Automation Alley, etc.), the Metro Detroit area generally lacks regional collaborative power, especially on the level of an Allegheny Conference-type organization, and faces resistance between city, counties, and suburbs. A history of racial tension and animosity between various governmental leaders in the Metro region solidified that resistance. While early on in its history, Flanagan indicates, the Allegheny Conference focused on just Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, it now focuses on the ten country Southwest Pennsylvania region in improving economic development and quality of life, working on issues like regional population levels, transportation, and governmental fragmentation in the region (i.e. a multitude of municipalities and governments and no clear political leader). Further, the organization has been in existence for roughly seventy years, helping to solidify public and private relationships and collaborative mindsets. The uniqueness of the Alleghany Conference and its unifying position helps the region develop economically. Lastly, fragmentation (in government and identity – the latter largely being created by geography) creates unique neighborhood identities that inspire residents with the desire their communities (and Pittsburgh and its organizations have the capacity to help)

through regional cooperation. The lack of large scale regional cooperation and less neighborhood identity within Detroit and the region does not foster this type of situation. There are also challenges to Detroit being able to diversify commercially and industrially. While to some extent this is occurring, Flanagan identifies several challenges that Detroit will likely face when compared to Pittsburgh. Remember that Pittsburgh redevelopment occurred in large part with the financial backing of foundations, trusts, and endowments, along with local universities. Flanagan states that Pittsburgh has two tier-one major research universities in Pittsburgh and eight more in Allegheny County. These universities can innovate and invest (and do), but there are simply no big public universities (on the scale of Pittsburgh) in Detroit. Further, given that the universities that contributed to the development of new industries in the region often received funding and grants from foundations, the fact that Detroit does not have as many as Pittsburgh could be detrimental. As Flanagan stated, Pittsburgh has a lot of foundations and philanthropies (second in number only to Seattle), and these foundations must (due to their bi-laws) invest in the region. While these organizations did not play a very large role in Renaissance I, they certainly played a big role in Renaissance II and the comeback.

The ultimate conclusion of this thesis is that the Cities of Detroit and Pittsburgh are indeed comparable, although special consideration must be taken in the fact that both cities are unique and will require equally unique solutions. Thus, the applicability of the programs implemented by Pittsburgh cannot be judged on a micro level, but on a macro level. The specifics of various revitalization programs are less relevant when compared to larger frameworks that surround the solutions. That is to say, Detroit and the entire Metro

Detroit region must examine how Pittsburgh accomplished urban renewal through the broader concepts of timeliness, diversification, and regional cooperation in connection with the history of Detroit and the Metro Detroit region before the area can hope to implement or apply any such programs. The region must also be prepared for radical change and failure. The efforts of Pittsburgh were not always successful (see the criticisms of Renaissance I) and involved a fundamental reconsideration of the core culture of the city. Pittsburgh had to move beyond the idea of “The Steel City” to reinvent itself; however it certainly did not abandon the traditionally dominant industry. In the consideration of any of the ideas born out of Pittsburgh, Detroit and the entire region must consider the challenges, and it may have to consider the fact that the necessary structural changes will run contrary to the automotive culture of the city. It is likely that the redevelopment of Detroit will require hard choices and tough decisions, yet if the city can be restored to its former prominent position, it will benefit the citizenry and indeed the entire state for years to come.

This thesis leaves a few areas that merit continued investigation and research in the near future. Among such issues would be the issues surrounding race, which significantly differ between Detroit and Pittsburgh, as well as the condition of racial politics in the city following the 1967 Detroit Riots through the present. The issue, particularly in its influence on city politics and its ability to inhibit regional collaboration between Detroit and its metro area is significant and largely dissimilar from Pittsburgh. In Renaissance I, Pittsburgh managed to reface itself in the course of twenty years, which included the de facto demolition and reconstruction of downtown (coupled with the

construction of prominent Pittsburgh features, like Point State Park and the Gateway Center), highway construction, pollution control measures (city and county-wide), and other redevelopment programs (for example, the construction of the Civic Auditorium). Whether from a planning perspective one agrees with all of these ideas (recall that Jacobs was largely critical of “Radiant City” approaches to urban renewal) is somewhat unimportant here; what is crucial is that the city and county governments, business leaders (so called “captains of industry”), and the newly-formed Allegheny Conference, with a predominantly white racial makeup, were able to push through such sweeping programs. Indeed, there was much unity in action in Greater Pittsburgh during the programs of Renaissance II as well. Dr. George Galster, Distinguished Professor of Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, would argue that a similar top-down approach, if attempted in Detroit, would not be successful, due to the nature of racial politics in the city.

“...this difference renders much of the “top-down / white-power structure planning” regime of Pittsburgh inapplicable to the metro Detroit scene. The “captains of industry” cannot impose such a plan on Detroit because it will fall prey to racial politics (witness the recent Belle Isle fiasco)” (Galster).

Moreover, revitalization and planning efforts of Detroit (and the relationship to race in Detroit) from the riots through the late twentieth century warrants further investigation. Indeed, much of this time period includes the tenure of Mayor Coleman A. Young, a controversial figure in the history of Detroit. The contemporary media and opponents

(and indeed today as well) largely portrayed Mayor Young unfavorably in his role as Mayor:

“...his critics saw him as a man who was crude, sometimes profane, and rarely apologetic for his actions” (Harp), and implicated him in promoting racial tension in the region.

Consider the article *Detroit: The Death — and Possible Life — of a Great City*, found in TIME’s “The Tragedy of Detroit” issue in 2009, which spoke critical of the administration of Young:

“For more than two decades, the insensate auto companies and their union partners and the elected officials who served at their pleasure continued to gun their engines while foreign competitors siphoned away their market share. When this played out against the city's legacy of white racism and the corrosive two-decade rule of a black politician who cared more about retribution than about resurrection, you can begin to see why Detroit careened off the road” (Okrent).

Okrent continues to sum up the tenure of Young with the expression “Now it's our turn” (Okrent), indicating that the mayor was initially effective, but blaming the former mayor for alienating the remaining white residents of the city in the 1980s, largely engaging in the “politics of revenge” (Okrent), insulting suburban political leaders, and presiding over the decline the school system, increase in violent crime, and shuttering of many city businesses (Okrent). In short:

“Detroit was dying, and its mayor chose to preside over the funeral rather than find a way to work with the suburban and state officials who now detested him every bit as much as he had demonized them” (Okrent).

However, the role of Mayor Young in racial politics and urban planning in Detroit is likely more complex. In *Coleman A. Young: Social and Political Powerbroker*, published by Andrea Harp from the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Wayne State University in 2001 (which draws many crucial points from the 1989 work of Wilbur C. Rich *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics: From Social Activist to Power Broker*), argues against some of the negative light cast on Mayor Young. Indeed, Young enjoyed some degree of economic and planning success:

“His early successes were the integration of the police department and the promotion of black officers into administrative positions, the creation of a business and labor coalition for the preservation of the industries remaining in the city, and a tax adjustment plan to attract new businesses to the area (Gale Group 2). He brought the city from the brink of bankruptcy and revitalized the city’s riverfront. During Young’s twenty years in office, he was credited with many accomplishments including completion of the RenCen complex, the building of Joe Louis Arena, the PeopleMover, and Poletown” (Harp).

Further, in a quote by the former mayor, the fact that Detroit was in a state of decline, rooted in economic dilemmas and racial tensions was recognized: "No other city in America, no other city in the Western world, has lost the population at that rate. And what's at the root of that loss? Economics and race. Or should I say, race and economics” (Harp). This would appear to indicate that, contrary to common conception, Mayor Young was largely aware that the City of Detroit was in economic decline and mired in racial issues by the 1980s. While Mayor Young was implicated in numerous political

upheavals (involving the head of the Water Board and Chief of Police), the Vista Sludge and Magnum Scandals, and in other forms of corruption (Harp), his role in shaping Detroit from the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s is unquestionable, both positively and negatively. Thus, the challenges of race, planning, and redevelopment, especially from the 1970s through the 1990s, warrant future and continued research.

Other differences between the Cities of Detroit and Pittsburgh, in addition to race and planning, which warrant future research include the geography of the two cities and relative scale and urgency of the industrial decline within Detroit and Pittsburgh. The geography in Pittsburgh (with its hills and valleys that act as nature and distinct dividing lines between areas) was noted by Mr. Flanagan as contributing to the neighborhood culture and the loyalty to the area by residents. This status results in two effects: first, neighborhood residents are invested in an area, and thus are more enthusiastic about helping the area, and second (as a consequence), the creation of potential political gridlock in the area. However, Dr. Galster further points out that the flat terrain of Detroit (when compared to the Greater Pittsburgh area) makes it easier and cheaper to build the suburban fringes of the area. As he indicates: “The region has for 60 years produced 10,000 more dwellings annually than there were households to fill them. This forces the abandonment of housing in the core of Detroit. Pittsburgh has not had to deal with a similar situation” (Galster). Lastly, there are differences in the scope and location of deindustrialization between the two cities, not fully explored in this thesis. The collapse of the steel industry in Pittsburgh during the 1980s was far more sudden and dramatic than the crises with the automotive industry. Thus, Pittsburgh has a greater level of overall

urgency for economic redevelopment, which is not present in Detroit. While the automotive industry has experienced strategic problems since the 1980s, with Chrysler undergoing public hardships in the 1980s, only to be acquired by Daimler (in the late 1990s), go private as an acquisition of Cerberus Capital Management, declare bankruptcy and receive a loan from the federal government, and finally be acquired by Fiat in the mid to late 2000s, and GM undergoing a very public “bailout” and restructuring process in the late 2000s, the automotive industry survived and was able to “limp” along. With the automotive industry still having a large presence in the region, Metro Detroit does not feel the same sense of urgency Greater Pittsburgh did in the 1980s. Moreover, the historical tax base from the steel industry was often outside of Pittsburgh, and in the Monongahela Valley (suburban) communities. Detroit had to experience manufacturing establishments move out of the city (as mentioned previously, as early as the 1950s), thus creating a greater financial burden on the city itself. This brings up a basic issue of the scope of comparison; city-to-city versus regional. While this thesis does grapple with the regional element of the recovery of Pittsburgh, the implications it poses for the comparisons of the deindustrialization of both cities merit future examination.

APPENDIX A:
POPULATION DENSITY OF DETROIT
1950-2000

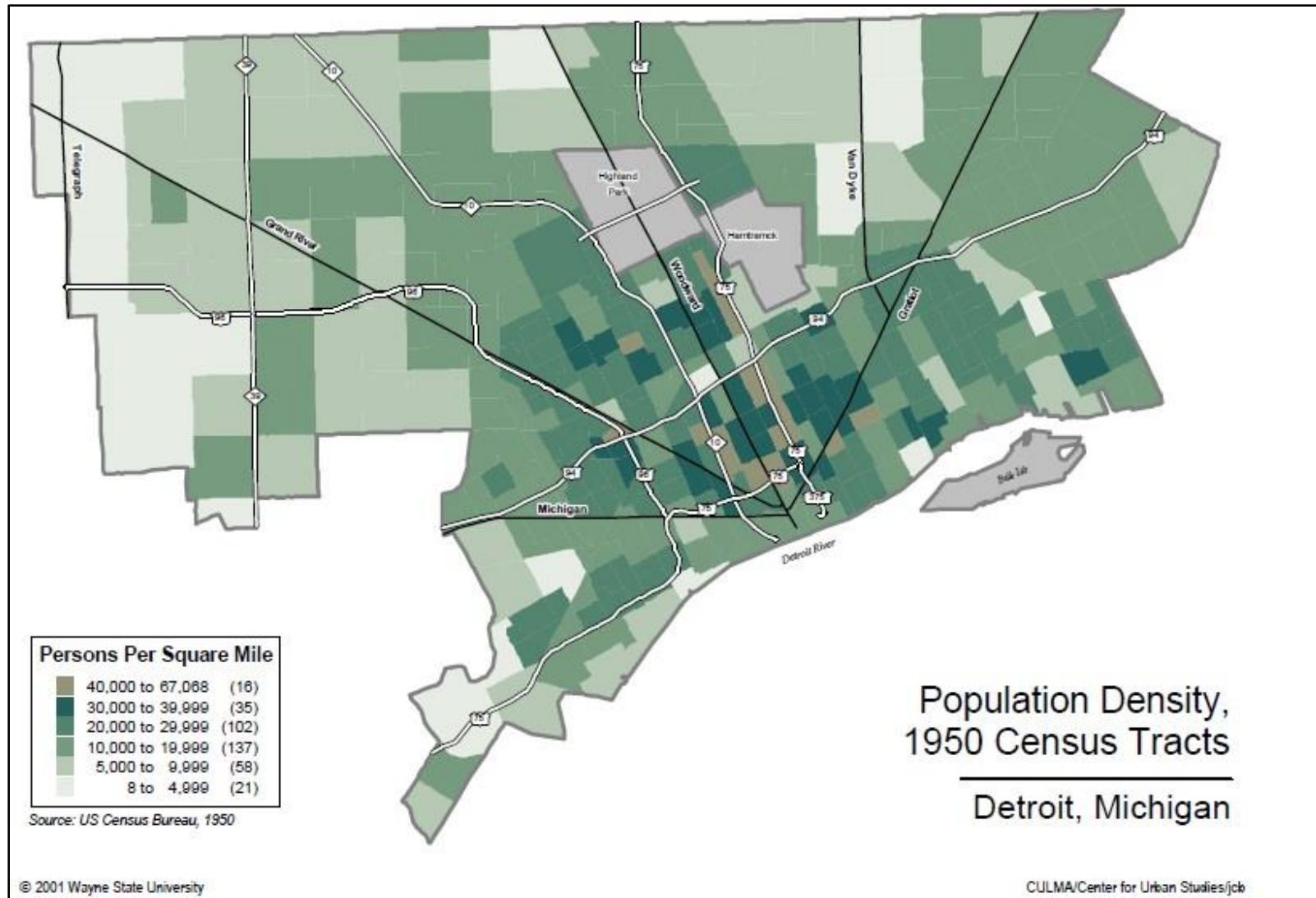


Figure A1-1: Detroit Population Density in 1950. Source: "Detroit Population Density 1950-2000." Census Connection. The Center for Urban Studies at WSU, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center, 2001

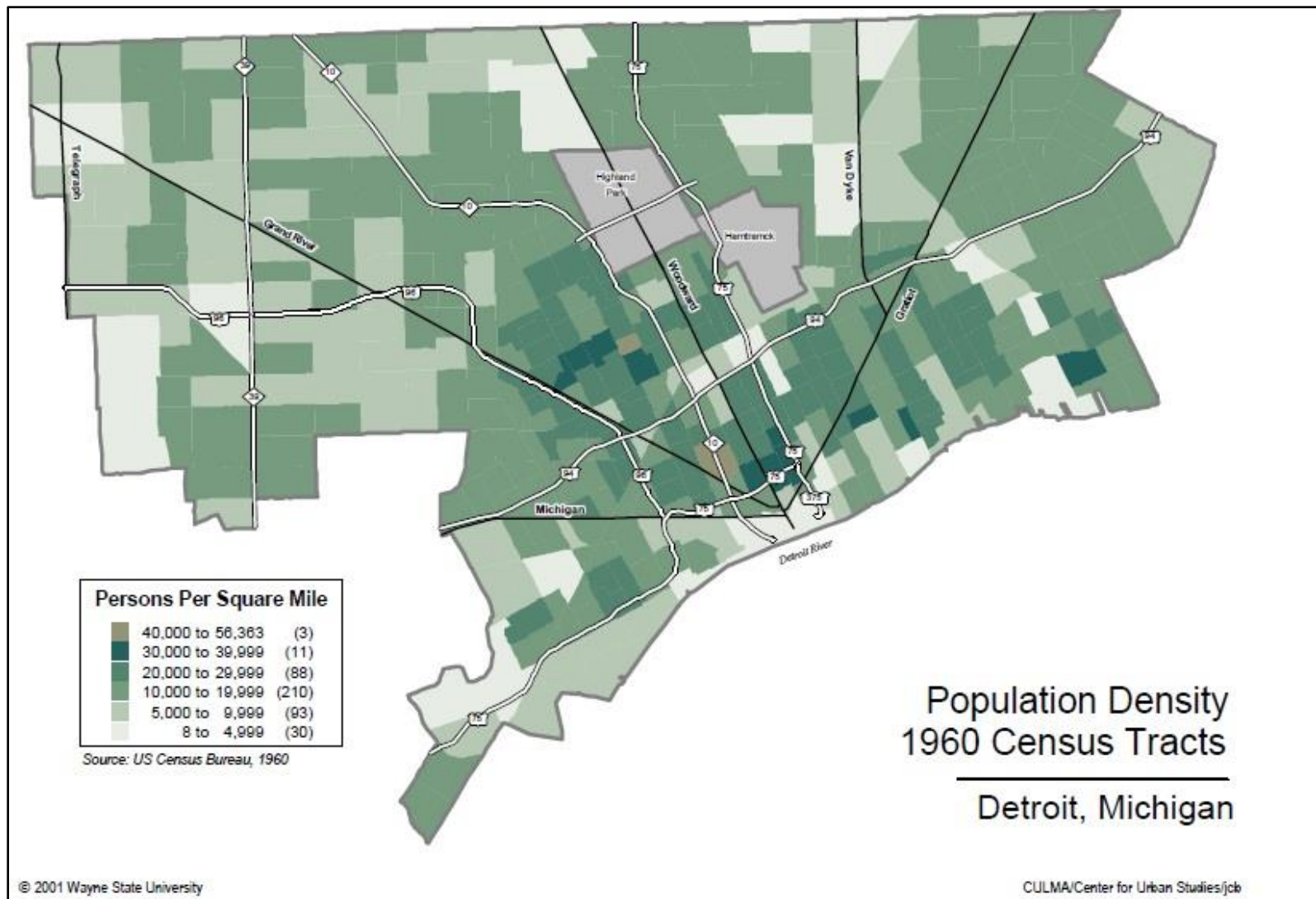


Figure A1-2: Detroit Population Density in 1960. Source: "Detroit Population Density 1950-2000." Census Connection. The Center for Urban Studies at WSU, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center, 2001

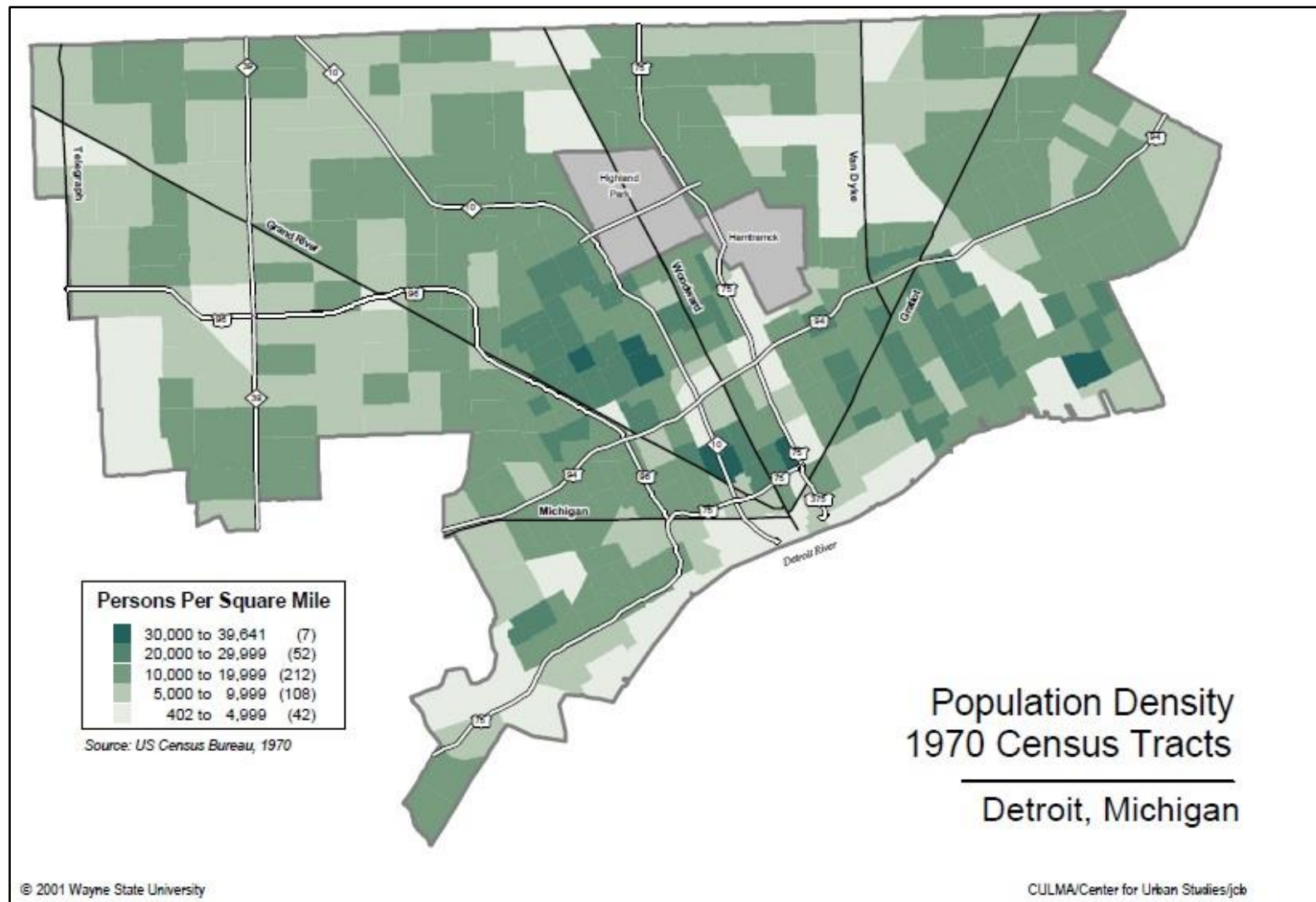


Figure A1-3: Detroit Population Density in 1970. Source: "Detroit Population Density 1950-2000." Census Connection. The Center for Urban Studies at WSU, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center, 2001

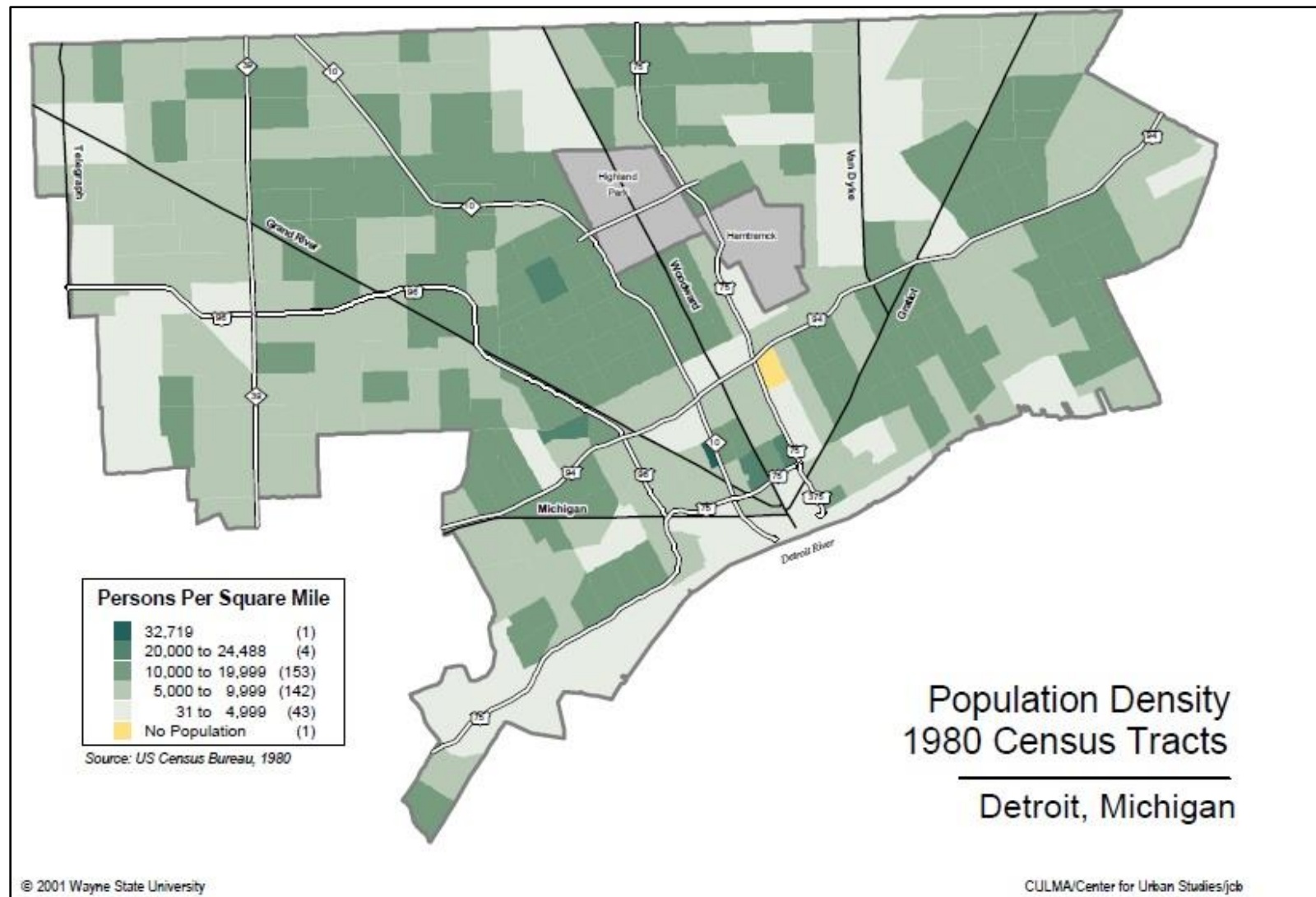


Figure A1-4: Detroit Population Density in 1980. Source: "Detroit Population Density 1950-2000." Census Connection. The Center for Urban Studies at WSU, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center, 2001

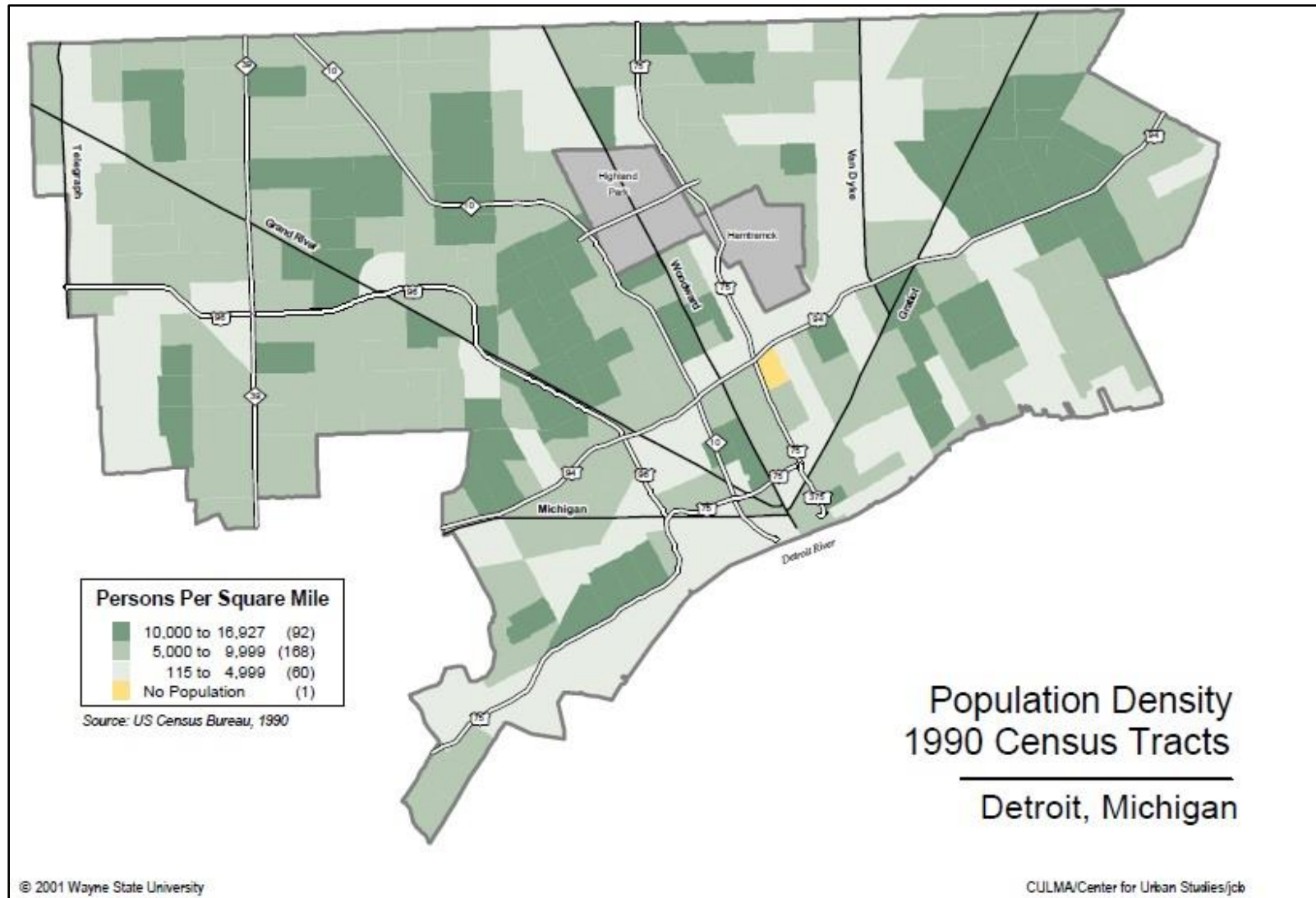


Figure A1-5: Detroit Population Density in 1950. Source: "Detroit Population Density 1950-2000." Census Connection. The Center for Urban Studies at WSU, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center, 2001

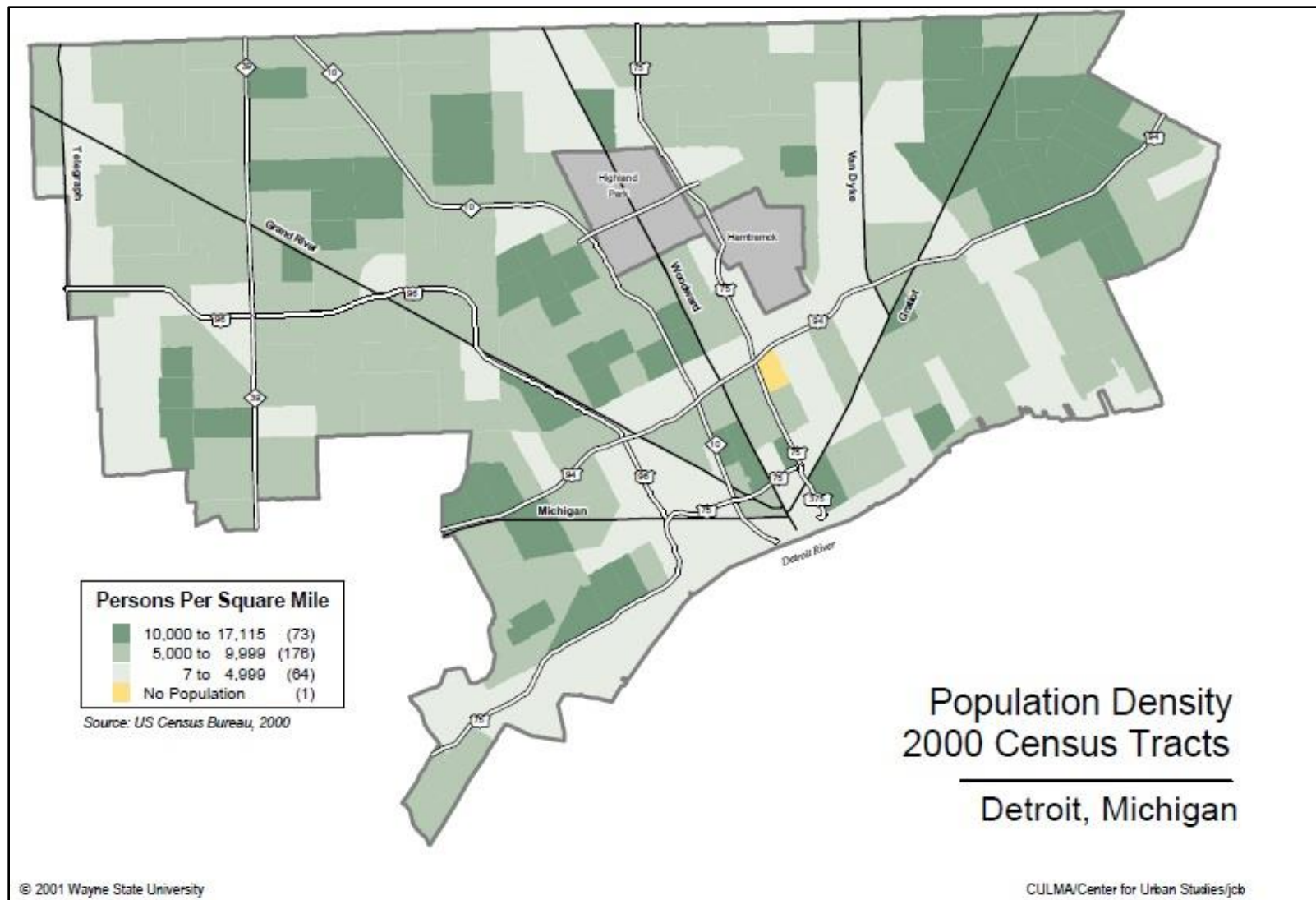


Figure A1-6: Detroit Population Density in 2000. Source: "Detroit Population Density 1950-2000." Census Connection. The Center for Urban Studies at WSU, Michigan Metropolitan Information Center, 2001

APPENDIX B:
CRIME DATA TABLES
PITTSBURGH & DETROIT
(FBI UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS)

| PITTSBURGH (RATES PER 100,000 PEOPLE) | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Year | Violent Crimes Reported | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Property Crimes Reported | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Violent Crime Rate | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Property Crime Rate | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | |
| 1940 | 898 | 0.00% | 7,688 | 0.00% | | | | | |
| 1941 | 979 | 9.02% | 9,182 | 19.43% | | | | | |
| 1942 | 1,125 | 14.91% | 7,280 | -20.71% | | | | | |
| 1943 | 666 | -40.80% | 4,844 | -33.46% | | | | | |
| 1944 | 503 | -24.47% | 4,400 | -9.17% | | | | | |
| 1945 | 629 | 25.05% | 5,776 | 31.27% | | | | | |
| 1946 | 915 | 45.47% | 6,182 | 7.03% | | | | | |
| 1947 | 977 | 6.78% | 5,294 | -14.36% | | | | | |
| 1948 | 917 | -6.14% | 5,641 | 6.55% | | | | | |
| 1949 | 932 | 1.64% | 6,054 | 7.32% | | | | | |
| 1950 | 864 | -7.30% | 4,874 | -19.49% | | | | | |
| 1951 | 733 | -15.16% | 5,090 | 4.43% | | | | | |
| 1952 | 807 | 10.10% | 5,541 | 8.86% | | | | | |
| 1953 | 747 | -7.43% | 6,549 | 18.19% | | | | | |
| 1954 | 914 | 22.36% | 7,368 | 12.51% | | | | | |
| 1955 | 1,191 | 30.31% | 9,352 | 26.93% | | | | | |
| 1956 | 1,349 | 13.27% | 10,813 | 15.62% | | | | | |
| 1957 | 1,472 | 9.12% | 12,045 | 11.39% | | | | | |
| 1958 | 1,733 | 17.73% | 13,200 | 9.59% | | | | | |
| 1959 | 1,491 | -13.96% | 13,804 | 4.58% | | | | | |
| 1960 | 1,547 | 3.76% | 14,753 | 6.87% | | | | | |
| 1961 | 1,497 | -3.23% | 14,366 | -2.62% | | | | | |
| 1962 | 1,748 | 16.77% | 15,532 | 8.12% | | | | | |
| 1963 | 1,694 | -3.09% | 17,528 | 12.85% | | | | | |
| 1964 | 2,098 | 23.85% | 19,175 | 9.40% | | | | | |
| 1965 | 2,714 | 29.36% | 19,991 | 4.26% | | | | | |
| 1966 | 2,553 | -5.93% | 19,215 | -3.88% | | | | | |
| 1967 | 3,050 | 19.47% | 24,630 | 28.18% | | | | | |
| 1968 | 4,510 | 47.87% | 32,773 | 33.06% | | | | | |
| 1969 | 4,895 | 8.54% | 31,927 | -2.58% | | | | | |
| 1970 | 4,686 | -4.27% | 28,098 | -11.99% | | | | | |
| 1971 | 4,830 | 3.07% | 26,892 | -4.29% | | | | | |
| 1972 | 4,844 | 0.29% | 23,366 | -13.11% | | | | | |
| 1973 | 4,835 | -0.19% | 21,408 | -8.38% | | | | | |
| 1974 | 4,483 | -7.28% | 24,797 | 15.83% | | | | | |
| 1975 | 4,992 | 11.35% | 27,038 | 9.04% | | | | | |
| 1976 | 4,630 | -7.25% | 27,363 | 1.20% | | | | | |
| 1977 | 4,572 | -1.25% | 22,204 | -18.85% | | | | | |
| 1978 | 4,818 | 5.38% | 21,958 | -1.11% | | | | | |
| 1979 | 4,649 | -3.51% | 23,309 | 6.15% | 1,058.02 | | 5,304.65 | | |

| | PITTSBURGH (RATES PER 100,000 PEOPLE) | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Year | Violent Crimes Reported | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Property Crimes Reported | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Violent Crime Rate | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Property Crime Rate | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | | |
| 1980 | 5,120 | 10.13% | 25,279 | 8.45% | 1,206.96 | 14.08% | 5,959.15 | 12.34% | | |
| 1981 | 5,983 | 16.86% | 25,401 | 0.48% | 1,405.67 | 16.46% | 5,967.83 | 0.15% | | |
| 1982 | 5,391 | -9.89% | 24,522 | -3.46% | 1,266.05 | -9.93% | 5,758.85 | -3.50% | | |
| 1983 | 5,605 | 3.97% | 25,237 | 2.92% | 1,312.98 | 3.71% | 5,911.83 | 2.66% | | |
| 1984 | 4,564 | -18.57% | 26,881 | 6.51% | 1,098.50 | -16.34% | 6,469.94 | 9.44% | | |
| 1985 | 4,353 | -4.62% | 24,578 | -8.57% | 1,085.62 | -1.17% | 6,129.65 | -5.26% | | |
| 1986 | 4,707 | 8.13% | 27,301 | 11.08% | 1,170.30 | 7.80% | 6,787.85 | 10.74% | | |
| 1987 | 4,318 | -8.26% | 26,518 | -2.87% | 1,109.98 | -5.15% | 6,816.70 | 0.43% | | |
| 1988 | 4,118 | -4.63% | 27,640 | 4.23% | 1,063.56 | -4.18% | 7,138.61 | 4.72% | | |
| 1989 | 4,579 | 11.19% | 28,828 | 4.30% | 1,216.49 | 14.38% | 7,658.63 | 7.28% | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1990 | 5,017 | 9.57% | 27,493 | -4.63% | 1,356.39 | 11.50% | 7,432.97 | -2.95% | | |
| 1991 | 4,294 | -14.41% | 26,309 | -4.31% | 1,153.22 | -14.98% | 7,065.68 | -4.94% | | |
| 1992 | 4,495 | 4.68% | 26,199 | -0.42% | 1,202.38 | 4.26% | 7,008.04 | -0.82% | | |
| 1993 | 4,479 | -0.36% | 24,134 | -7.88% | 1,215.56 | 1.10% | 6,549.73 | -6.54% | | |
| 1994 | 4,105 | -8.35% | 22,245 | -7.83% | 1,113.69 | -8.38% | 6,035.10 | -7.86% | | |
| 1995 | 3,474 | -15.37% | 18,274 | -17.85% | 979.20 | -12.08% | 5,150.80 | -14.65% | | |
| 1996 | 2,850 | -17.96% | 15,916 | -12.90% | 804.38 | -17.85% | 4,492.14 | -12.79% | | |
| 1997 | 2,778 | -2.53% | 17,773 | 11.67% | 786.42 | -2.23% | 5,031.31 | 12.00% | | |
| 1998 | 3,156 | 13.61% | 18,336 | 3.17% | 890.95 | 13.29% | 5,176.33 | 2.88% | | |
| 1999 | 3,046 | -3.49% | 18,207 | -0.70% | 877.63 | -1.50% | 5,245.89 | 1.34% | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 | 3,267 | 7.26% | 16,189 | -11.08% | 957.37 | 9.09% | 4,744.07 | -9.57% | | |
| 2001 | 2,964 | -9.27% | 16,744 | 3.43% | 868.15 | -9.32% | 4,904.31 | 3.38% | | |
| 2002 | 3,794 | 28.00% | 15,943 | -4.78% | 1,107.64 | 27.59% | 4,654.50 | -5.09% | | |
| 2003 | 3,559 | -6.19% | 16,435 | 3.09% | 1,061.43 | -4.17% | 4,901.55 | 5.31% | | |
| 2004 | 3,739 | 5.06% | 15,278 | -7.04% | 1,118.69 | 5.39% | 4,571.09 | -6.74% | | |
| 2005 | 3,385 | -9.47% | 15,628 | 2.29% | 1,023.34 | -8.52% | 4,724.59 | 3.36% | | |
| 2006 | 3,473 | 2.60% | 15,236 | -2.51% | 1,069.92 | 4.55% | 4,693.72 | -0.65% | | |
| 2007 | 3,455 | -0.52% | 13,933 | -8.55% | 1,106.74 | 3.44% | 4,463.14 | -4.91% | | |
| 2008 | 3,358 | -2.81% | 12,625 | -9.39% | 1,084.08 | -2.05% | 4,075.78 | -8.68% | | |
| 2009 | 3,087 | -8.07% | 11,775 | -6.73% | 988.69 | -8.80% | 3,771.23 | -7.47% | | |
| 2010 | 2,810 | -8.97% | 11,284 | -4.17% | 913.43 | -7.61% | 3,668.04 | -2.74% | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|------------|--|-----------------|------------|--|----------------|------------|--|-----------------|------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | DETROIT (RATES PER 100,000 PEOPLE) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year | Violent | % Change | | Property | % Change | | Violent | % Change | | Property | % Change |
| | Crimes | Over Prev. | | Crimes | Over Prev. | | Crime | Over Prev. | | Crime | Over Prev. |
| | Reported | Yr. | | Reported | Yr. | | Rate | Yr. | | Rate | Yr. |
| 1940 | 3,007 | 0.00% | | 36,764 | 0.00% | | | | | | |
| 1941 | 3,736 | 24.24% | | 37,900 | 3.09% | | | | | | |
| 1942 | 3,832 | 2.57% | | 29,081 | -23.27% | | | | | | |
| 1943 | 4,090 | 6.73% | | 26,402 | -9.21% | | | | | | |
| 1944 | 3,775 | -7.70% | | 27,814 | 5.35% | | | | | | |
| 1945 | 4,313 | 14.25% | | 31,400 | 12.89% | | | | | | |
| 1946 | 5,230 | 21.26% | | 32,849 | 4.61% | | | | | | |
| 1947 | 5,509 | 5.33% | | 33,288 | 1.34% | | | | | | |
| 1948 | 5,839 | 5.99% | | 34,115 | 2.48% | | | | | | |
| 1949 | 6,636 | 13.65% | | 39,974 | 17.17% | | | | | | |
| 1950 | 6,073 | -8.48% | | 39,619 | -0.89% | | | | | | |
| 1951 | 6,228 | 2.55% | | 44,333 | 11.90% | | | | | | |
| 1952 | 5,976 | -4.05% | | 39,885 | -10.03% | | | | | | |
| 1953 | 6,841 | 14.47% | | 42,206 | 5.82% | | | | | | |
| 1954 | 7,408 | 8.29% | | 47,579 | 12.73% | | | | | | |
| 1955 | 7,056 | -4.75% | | 43,511 | -8.55% | | | | | | |
| 1956 | 7,525 | 6.65% | | 46,831 | 7.63% | | | | | | |
| 1957 | 7,244 | -3.73% | | 47,301 | 1.00% | | | | | | |
| 1958 | 7,901 | 9.07% | | 53,374 | 12.84% | | | | | | |
| 1959 | 8,314 | 5.23% | | 52,468 | -1.70% | | | | | | |
| 1960 | 9,504 | 14.31% | | 58,976 | 12.40% | | | | | | |
| 1961 | 8,922 | -6.12% | | 55,801 | -5.38% | | | | | | |
| 1962 | 9,835 | 10.23% | | 62,918 | 12.75% | | | | | | |
| 1963 | 9,655 | -1.83% | | 65,191 | 3.61% | | | | | | |
| 1964 | 9,164 | -5.09% | | 61,824 | -5.16% | | | | | | |
| 1965 | 10,095 | 10.16% | | 63,620 | 2.91% | | | | | | |
| 1966 | 13,680 | 35.51% | | 84,175 | 32.31% | | | | | | |
| 1967 | 17,656 | 29.06% | | 97,048 | 15.29% | | | | | | |
| 1968 | 19,732 | 11.76% | | 99,025 | 2.04% | | | | | | |
| 1969 | 23,743 | 20.33% | | 111,908 | 13.01% | | | | | | |
| 1970 | 29,255 | 23.22% | | 128,453 | 14.78% | | | | | | |
| 1971 | 27,629 | -5.56% | | 125,501 | -2.30% | | | | | | |
| 1972 | 24,759 | -10.39% | | 101,790 | -18.89% | | | | | | |
| 1973 | 24,724 | -0.14% | | 93,474 | -8.17% | | | | | | |
| 1974 | 29,169 | 17.98% | | 110,187 | 17.88% | | | | | | |
| 1975 | 30,449 | 4.39% | | 125,314 | 13.73% | | | | | | |
| 1976 | 29,732 | -2.35% | | 123,889 | -1.14% | | | | | | |
| 1977 | 24,071 | -19.04% | | 99,677 | -19.54% | | | | | | |
| 1978 | 21,602 | -10.26% | | 88,909 | -10.80% | | | | | | |
| 1979 | 21,021 | -2.69% | | 89,704 | 0.89% | | 1,669.76 | | | 7,125.45 | |

| DETROIT (RATES PER 100,000 PEOPLE) | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Year | Violent Crimes Reported | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Property Crimes Reported | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Violent Crime Rate | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | Property Crime Rate | % Change Over Prev. Yr. | |
| 1980 | 23,288 | 10.78% | 104,132 | 16.08% | 1,945.00 | 16.48% | 8,697.05 | 22.06% | |
| 1981 | 23,176 | -0.48% | 119,931 | 15.17% | 1,941.36 | -0.19% | 10,046.11 | 15.51% | |
| 1982 | 23,746 | 2.46% | 129,216 | 7.74% | 2,009.19 | 3.49% | 10,933.20 | 8.83% | |
| 1983 | 25,527 | 7.50% | 126,305 | -2.25% | 2,168.88 | 7.95% | 10,731.39 | -1.85% | |
| 1984 | 26,567 | 4.07% | 135,019 | 6.90% | 2,343.50 | 8.05% | 11,910.14 | 10.98% | |
| 1985 | 25,904 | -2.50% | 124,050 | -8.12% | 2,375.25 | 1.35% | 11,374.67 | -4.50% | |
| 1986 | 27,277 | 5.30% | 115,138 | -7.18% | 2,486.63 | 4.69% | 10,496.22 | -7.72% | |
| 1987 | 27,778 | 1.84% | 110,633 | -3.91% | 2,544.88 | 2.34% | 10,135.65 | -3.44% | |
| 1988 | 25,805 | -7.10% | 105,529 | -4.61% | 2,374.59 | -6.69% | 9,710.83 | -4.19% | |
| 1989 | 24,956 | -3.29% | 100,731 | -4.55% | 2,400.54 | 1.09% | 9,689.41 | -0.22% | |
| 1990 | 27,747 | 11.18% | 97,578 | -3.13% | 2,699.19 | 12.44% | 9,492.26 | -2.03% | |
| 1991 | 28,262 | 1.86% | 98,818 | 1.27% | 2,727.34 | 1.04% | 9,536.15 | 0.46% | |
| 1992 | 26,447 | -6.42% | 90,799 | -8.11% | 2,532.93 | -7.13% | 8,696.16 | -8.81% | |
| 1993 | 27,169 | 2.73% | 93,971 | 3.49% | 2,663.47 | 5.15% | 9,212.28 | 5.94% | |
| 1994 | 27,471 | 1.11% | 94,356 | 0.41% | 2,687.22 | 0.89% | 9,229.93 | 0.19% | |
| 1995 | 24,011 | -12.60% | 95,054 | 0.74% | 2,407.61 | -10.41% | 9,531.16 | 3.26% | |
| 1996 | 23,239 | -3.22% | 96,949 | 1.99% | 2,318.57 | -3.70% | 9,672.66 | 1.48% | |
| 1997 | 21,976 | -5.43% | 97,214 | 0.27% | 2,151.53 | -7.20% | 9,517.61 | -1.60% | |
| 1998 | 24,427 | 11.15% | 93,484 | -3.84% | 2,442.76 | 13.54% | 9,348.62 | -1.78% | |
| 1999 | 21,976 | -10.03% | 79,585 | -14.87% | 2,253.90 | -7.73% | 8,162.40 | -12.69% | |
| 2000 | 22,112 | 0.62% | 73,649 | -7.46% | 2,324.47 | 3.13% | 7,742.18 | -5.15% | |
| 2001 | 20,947 | -5.27% | 69,246 | -5.98% | 2,190.46 | -5.77% | 7,241.16 | -6.47% | |
| 2002 | 19,940 | -4.81% | 65,095 | -5.99% | 2,072.79 | -5.37% | 6,766.72 | -6.55% | |
| 2003 | 18,724 | -6.10% | 64,809 | -0.44% | 2,018.18 | -2.63% | 6,985.49 | 3.23% | |
| 2004 | 15,913 | -15.01% | 57,415 | -11.41% | 1,740.36 | -13.77% | 6,279.30 | -10.11% | |
| 2005 | 21,245 | 33.51% | 53,991 | -5.96% | 2,358.11 | 35.50% | 5,992.79 | -4.56% | |
| 2006 | 21,391 | 0.69% | 62,375 | 15.53% | 2,418.53 | 2.56% | 7,052.31 | 17.68% | |
| 2007 | 19,690 | -7.95% | 58,161 | -6.76% | 2,286.95 | -5.44% | 6,755.28 | -4.21% | |
| 2008 | 17,982 | -8.67% | 54,057 | -7.06% | 1,985.24 | -13.19% | 5,967.99 | -11.65% | |
| 2009 | 17,868 | -0.63% | 50,578 | -6.44% | 1,966.89 | -0.92% | 5,567.56 | -6.71% | |
| 2010 | 16,973 | -5.01% | 47,809 | -5.47% | 2,377.91 | 20.90% | 6,698.03 | 20.30% | |

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