



Thank you.

I dedicate this Graduate Thesis Book first and foremost to God. These studies have been made possible through all the blessings you have bestowed upon me.

My parents, Jesus and Lilia Ibarra, you guys are truly my rock. I would not be in the position I am in without for all that you have done for me.

Gracias por todo su apoyo y amor. Nunca podre repagarles por todo lo que me dieron, pero dedicare mi carrera para ustedes y son mi inspiración.

To my sister, Maria, you have been amazing in helping me be sane with your humor and support. Best of luck in your upcoming graduate studies. Know I will be here to support you in every way I can.

To Stephanie, the last six years have been amazing and you are an instrumental piece to the completion of this thesis. Thank you for all, and I look forward to spending more years and reaching many more milestones together.

To all my friends that gave support and wisdom, may God repay you tenfold.

Noah and Wladek, thank you for assisting in the development of this thesis.

Southwest Detroit, the place I call home. This thesis, is for you.

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All work by the author unless otherwise noted.

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001

23 Years in the Making

“If you can’t fix it, feature it.”

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

23 Years in the Making



What is driving this Thesis?

The underlining for this thesis has been in the making for the past 23 years. Growing up in Southwest Detroit (SWD) I noticed a condition that our culture was not necessarily addressing. More often than not students would spend the latter half of their day just wondering around on the streets. For some, they managed to survive. But others did not have the same luck. Through association, they joined gangs and began a downward spiral of poor choices.

In my neighborhood there were numerous signs of violence. But which city does not have that. Our local bakery on the corner of Tarnow and Wagner Street was robbed on a weekly basis. This carried on until they could no longer afford to stay in business due to all the losses. That bakery was the first sign of blight in our neighborhood. However, that was not directly affecting our family.

It was when I was about 12 years old that I first had an encounter with gangs. Through some new turf establishment, a gang moved into our block. It was then when my parents made one of the most important decisions of our lives. They relocated us to Dearborn, only 15 minutes away. But it was a night and day difference.

I can attribute that decision to where I am today. But many people are not able to move their kids out of the gang infested neighborhoods. Nor is it ideal. We cannot all move. Running from the problem does not address it. It was then where I began formulating thoughts about how designers and architects can open the conversation about these issues.

As designers we are burdened with more than just plans and elevations. Our vision must transcend into a design that address more than spatial problems. An intervention that does not respond to the entire spectrum of gang problems in Southwest Detroit might as well not even be there at all. In this stage of my academic career I knew that I wanted to dedicate my thesis to studying this intriguing urban issue. It might seem as if the decision to focus in on Southwest Detroit was decided on quickly.

But the ideas and visual analysis that will guide the rest of this thesis have been simmering for over a decade, long before I knew I wanted to be an architect. With that decision and commitment to SWD, I turned to research to begin this thesis.



002

Abstract

“There is no ‘them’ and ‘us.’ There is only us.”

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

Initial Thoughts

1



2



Architect's Training

Architects are trained to understand that no two urban conditions are the same. It is the complexity of issues that make design such a challenging yet rewarding career. In the case of SWD, there are high crime rates and many gangs. The way the built environment impacts social relations was a starting point for this thesis investigation. The ability of design to promote or prevent crime or criminal activity has been studied since the 1960s. The idea of defensible space by Oscar Newman laid the groundwork for more sophisticated research in that field. It led to a design convention known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, or CPTED, which began to annotate how design can provide safer communities.

CPTED

CPTED poses the multidisciplinary principles that in order to reduce crime in our communities; design should be guided by four basic premises. Design should include natural surveillance, create a sense of territoriality, build communities instead of dividing them, and protect high targeted areas¹. This framework was developed in the

1970s by criminologist C. Ray Jeffrey and it shed some light into why some communities may be cultures for criminal activity. If the built environment is not promoting a sense of territoriality, few will feel as if the community is theirs. That lack of ownership leaves a community fragmented and forgotten. We do not protect what is not ours. Consequently target areas are not protected nor is much thought given in providing natural surveillance. The architecture primarily employs a fortress like design. The urban fabric is then segmented opening the opportunities for crime.¹

Broken Window Theory

The Broken Window Theory also facilitated a way of understanding how neighborhoods were filled with gangs and crime. Applying the CPTED principles with the Broken Window Theory are an outline for how crime develops in the environment was derived. If we do not care for our communities, there begins to be small scale vandalism. This leads to urban and/or environmental decay and can ultimately trigger larger crimes. While providing a framework as to how the built environment in crime-filled cities is in theory, the broken window theory fails to address the perpetrator.



3



The individuals who are committing crimes are not carefully analyzed nor is the theory specific in addressing different types of crimes. The differentiation between different crimes and examining the subjects is vital in providing a way to fix it. ²

Taking a Stance

In order to be able to understand this urban issue, this thesis looks to not employ the theories nor analyze them further. It is clear that by understanding why youth join gangs and the gang structure, design can be tailored to more adequately address the issue.

The thesis is not looking to solve all the problems of Detroit, but rather open up the conversation as to how design can be instrumental in altering the lives of disadvantaged people.

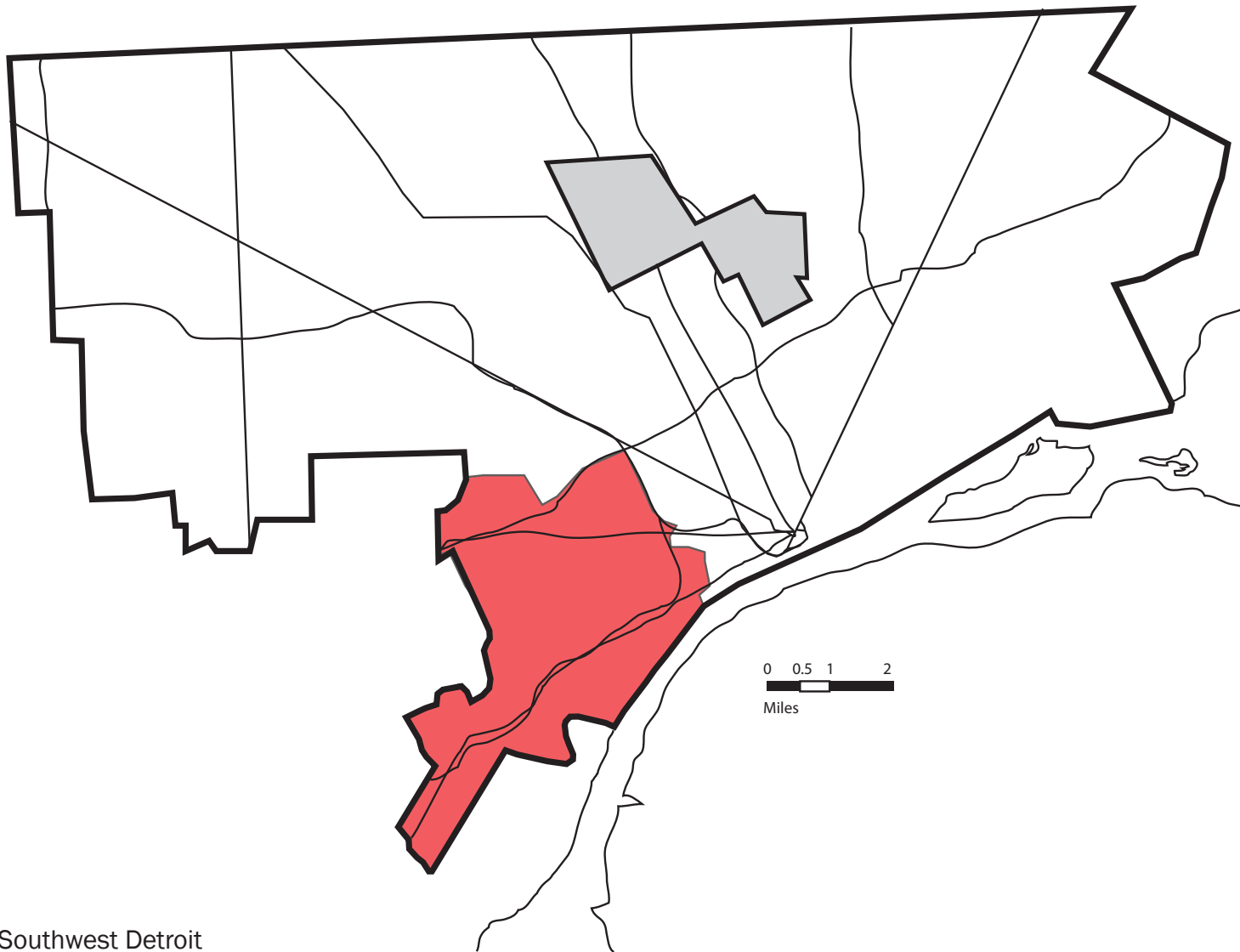
With that foundation set, this thesis begins.

003

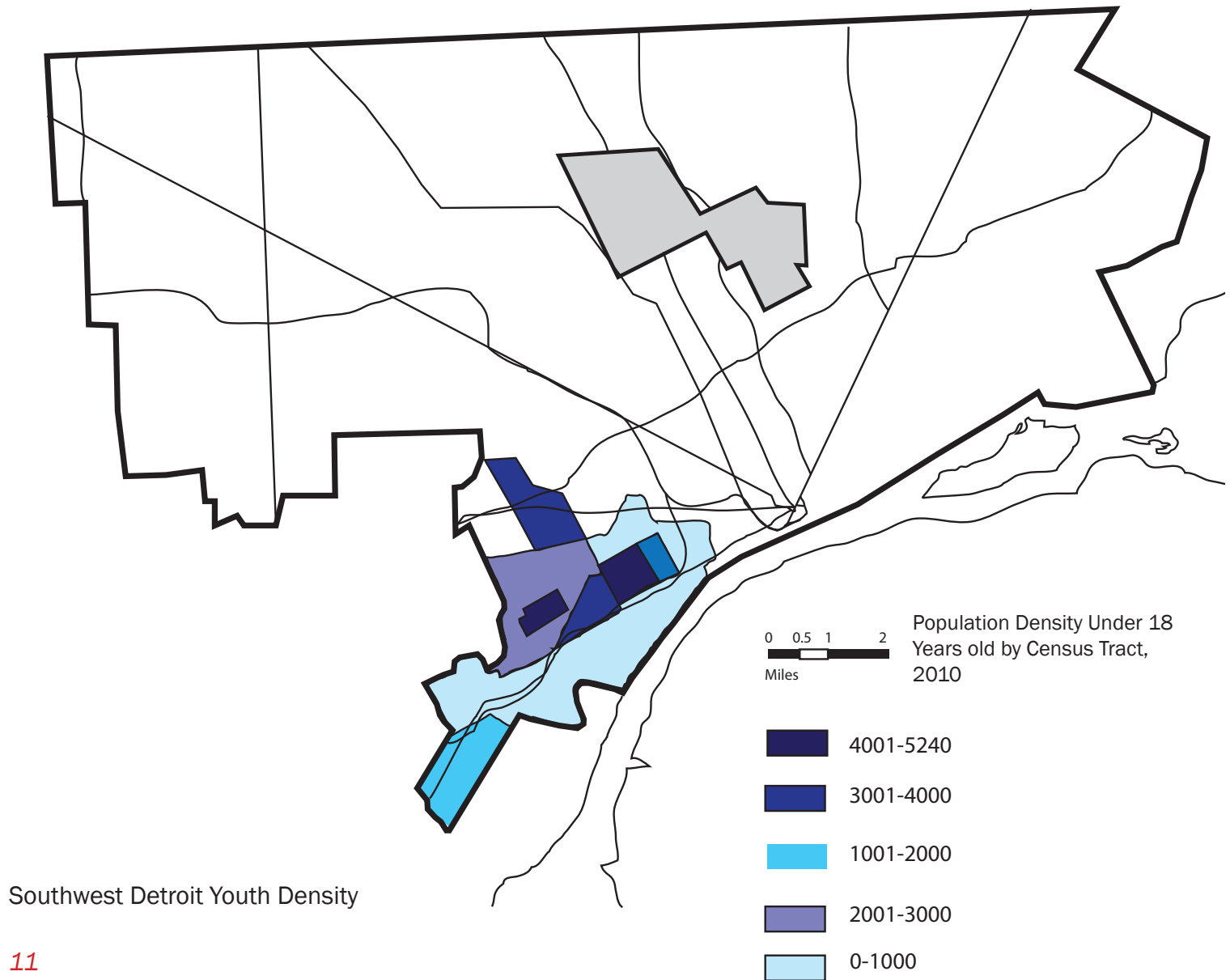
Gang Studies

“Nothing stops a bullet like a job”

-Greg Boyle



Southwest Detroit



Understanding



at-risk-youth
anyone whose future is less than
optimal

At-Risk Youth

In order for this thesis to reach its full potential and address the observed problems, designers need to understand the subjects whom they are designing for. The at-risk-youth are not just the tattoo-covered gangsters, but anyone whose future is less than the expected outcomes. They are the thousands of urban youth who find little comfort in their communities. The individuals who fall victim to criminal paths because they are not prepared to succeed in the world. That is who this thesis is targeting.

In order to find the youth, an analysis of Southwest Detroit was done in order to determine where the density for youth under 18 years of age was. That was essential in order to target the largest amount of youth and to assess where the existing youth centers are in relation to that density. The mapping analysis showed that in relation to the high density of Southwest Detroit, there are really no youth centers. The closest is the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, and that is on the outskirts of SWD.

5 Recidivism among youthful offenders is extremely high: 2/3 will be re-arrested.



Up to 1/3 re-incarcerated within a few years after release



We have learned in that time that jobs are probably about 80% of what these folks need to redirect their lives. The other 20% is a mixture of therapeutic and support services. So, in addition to paying men and women to receive job training, we also require that they spend part of their working day here working on themselves.

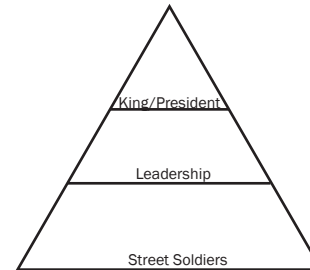


Gang Structure

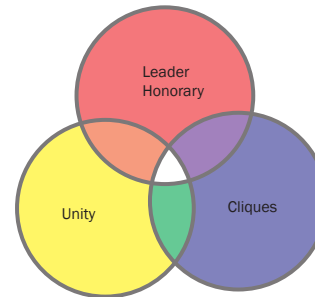
As a result of the high density of SWD, there are more chances for conflicts to develop between rival gangs. As opposed to other gang structures in large cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, Detroit's gang structure is highly unorganized. The gangs in SWD are typically composed of small neighborhood based gangs with loose ties to national based gangs. The other cities mentioned earlier, are just the opposite. They rely on their organization to keep a low profile.

It has become much harder to control them because they work around the police. Their organizational network dictates the roles of the members and keeps a tight leash on their activities. In SWD, that is just the opposite. The density of the area causes rival gangs to clash. Due to the lack of structure in their members, they resort to violence that can escalate to murder.

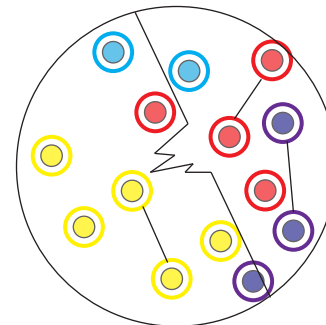
Because of the way in which the gangs of SWD disrupt the urban fabrics health, the community members are the ones who feel at risk. Studies show that out of all the gang types, neighborhood, national, motorcycle, and prison gangs, neighborhood based are the most feared.



Chicago,
New York.
Top down structure.
Very organized.



Los Angeles
Democratic Structure
Very organized



Detroit
Unorganized gang
units.
Neighborhood based

Diagramming gang structure of cities
throughout the country
source: ojdp.gov

In addition, most gangs are targeting the youth that are as young as 12 years of age. That is when children are at most risk of becoming lured into the gang life.³

Gang Cycle

But why do youth join gangs? There must be a reason for this. Joining gangs is not a trend or new phenomena. There must be a cycle to explain how it is that generation after generation gangs continue to linger. An investigation began in how funds are currently being distributed in our community programs.

Reference the graph to the right, where the gang cycle was diagrammed. It is difficult to pinpoint where the cycle begins, but for the sake of the argument let us begin with how there is low government investment in basic services. The resulting opportunities for youth are not there because there are less and less funds to maintain government facilities. As a response to finding rare enrichment after school hours, there is an increased appeal for gangs. Gangs are recruitment masters by luring young boys and girls with promises of being “cool” and a sense of family. After being recruited to the gang, the realm for conducting illegal activities increases.



source: ojdp.gov

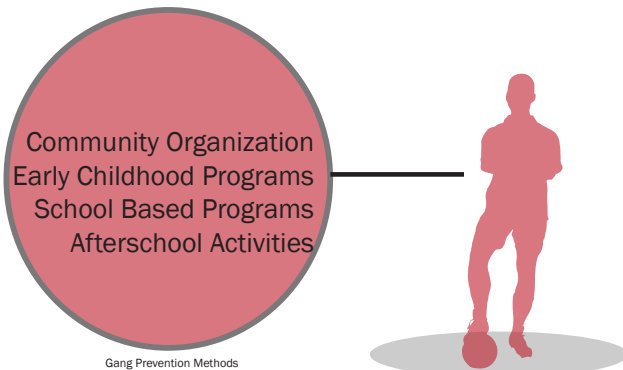
Detroit's Case

In Detroit's case, assault, and other forms of violent crime become quite common as they clash with rival gangs. If arrested, which is only a matter of time, results in more overpopulated and violent prisons. The overpopulated prisons are overstressing a judicial system that seeks to solve the problem by allocating more funds to security and less into basic government services. That along with the easy availability of drugs and weapons, gangs being glorified in media and culture, and politicians doing little to solve the issue results in a never ending cycle. ⁴

Gang Prevention

This cycle can be stopped. But the traditional methods such as community organization, early childhood programs, and after school activities are currently underfunded. In the case of Southwest Detroit, there are none within walking distance. And if no prevention/rehabilitation programs are provided, the residence rates are 66%. ⁵

All the data then lead to an investigation of gang prevention program case studies. Programs that specialize in providing enrichment and life skills training for urban youth

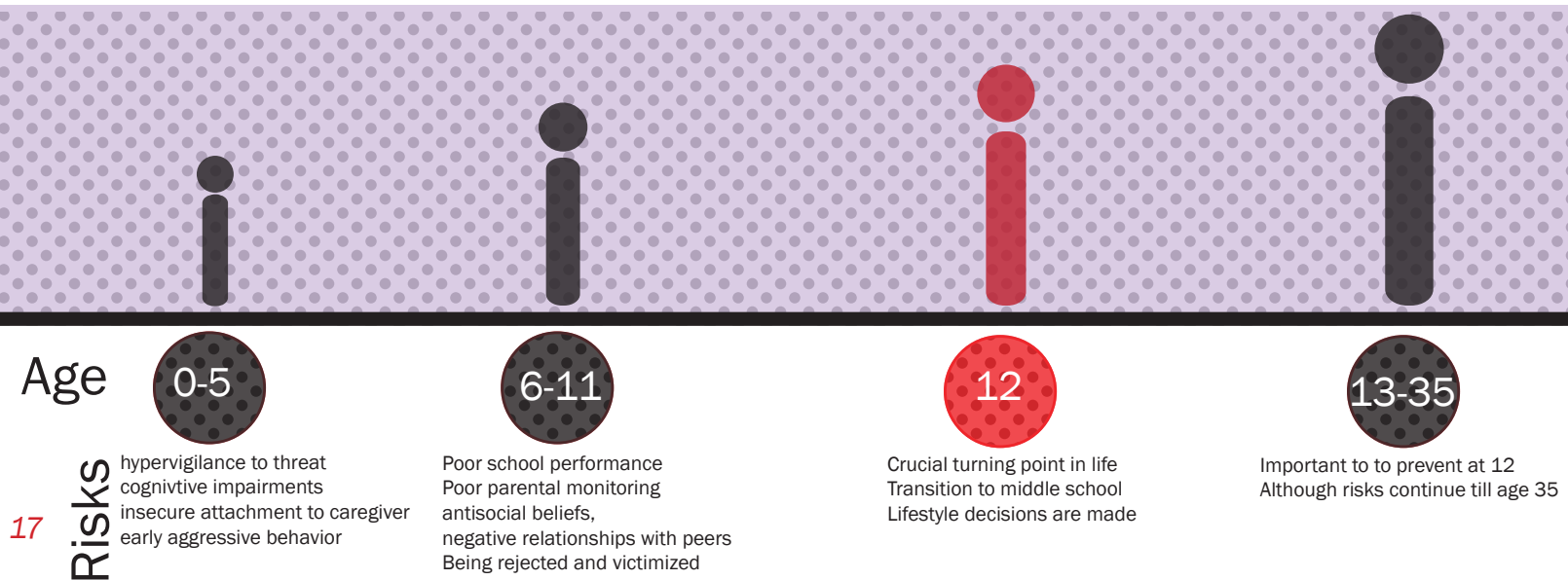


such as Homeboys Industries in Los Angeles California, and Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation in Detroit.

Gang prevention is an issue that cannot be addressed with police enforcement or other forms of harsh reinforcement. Some cities like Melvindale, Lincoln Park, and Allen Park have adopted a form of gang prevention called Gang Squad. These are a group of specially trained police officers who are hired to supervise public events and quietly escort gang members out of public events. The next step in this thesis was to not analyze those methods, but the more proactive approaches.⁶

Diagram depicting gang risk factors per age group

source: ojdp.gov



Addressing the problem

In order for this thesis to be successful, it needs to pick up on the work that has been established in the field. The work and data that has been compiled to address the gang issues in different cities became a starting point for better determining how as a designer fits in the picture.

The program studies looked beyond the architectonics or urban planning issues of the case studies. At this point the research was more interested in finding the manner in which to address the gang culture.

It became clear that although gangs are a nationwide problem, only certain cities have allocated city services for addressing gang problems. But those programs do little to truly make an impact. It is the smaller, privately funded institutions that have redefined the way in which to impose change in the lives of many.

Like many projects, there is an unspoken rule to learn from the attempts of others in the field of study. That is why the program studies became such an important part of this thesis.





Southwest McGraw
Hometown of the author

004

Program Studies

“The strategy of Jesus is not centered in taking the right stand on issues, but rather in standing in the right place—with the outcast and those relegated to the margins.”

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

6



“Nothing stops a bullet like a job.”

-Father Boyle

Homeboys Industries | Los Angeles, California

Homeboys Industries was founded by a Jesuit Priest named Father Gregg Boyle in 1991. They focus their program on a model of 80% life-skills programs, or things which they will utilize in the real world, and 20% rehabilitation. That mixture has been instrumental to their success. They not only provide ex-gang members an opportunity to quit the gang life, but a place where they can work. Father G, as he is called in his center, sees his center as the only place where some of the convicted individuals will be given an opportunity to work.⁷

The center provides a broad range of recreational activities while maintaining a busy work schedule. Seeing as there is a high demand to be employed there, Father Boyle forces rival gang members to either work in peace and unity or leave. This creates a feeling of kinship between people who on the streets would kill each other. The primary reason in forcing rival gang members to work together is to break a barrier of demonizing rival gangs. No human being can demonize nor hate someone whom you are intimately acquainted with. Homeboys Industries teaches kinship (sharing of characteristics or origins), hope, and love.⁸

7



“Nobody ever found a hopeful kid who joined a gang. Never found a hopeful kid who joined gangs. Has never happened. No exceptions.”

“Lethal absence of hope”

“No kid is seeking anything when joining a gang. They are fleeing from something. Gangs do not pull you in.”

“Why do people join gangs? They lie about the reason as to why they join the gangs. You have to come to terms as to why you join the gang.”

8



“Profile of a gang member: severely and deeply despondent. Mentally ill, and or absolutely traumatized. Kids aren’t hopeful enough.”

“Because Hope, is Universal”

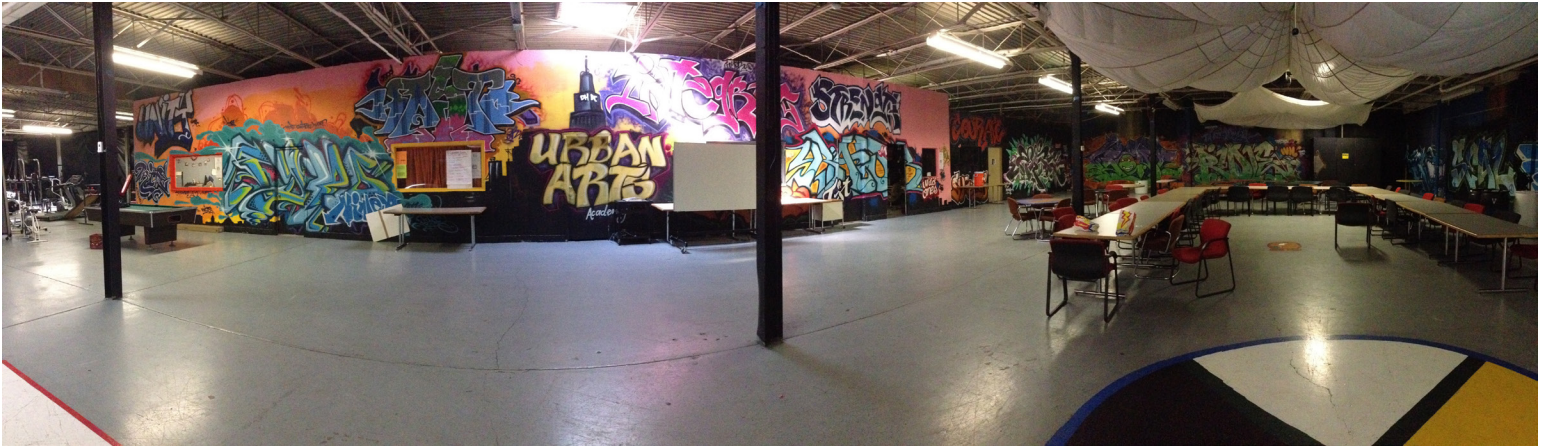
-Father Greg Boyle



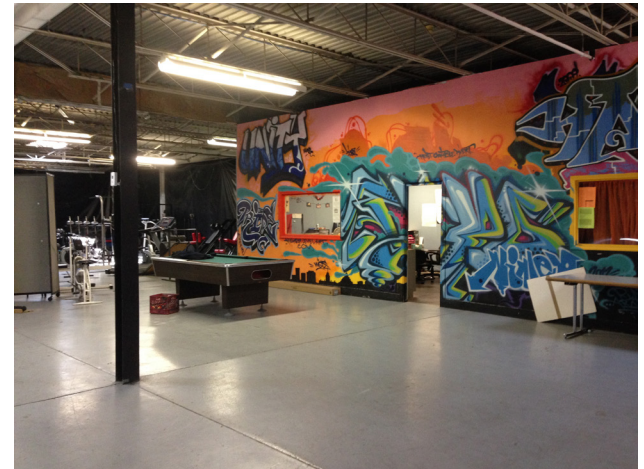
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation Detroit, Michigan

The Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation or DHDC is located on the north-east border of SWD. It is a multi-use facility that promotes a similar program as Homeboys Industries. The only major difference between the two programs is their locations. While Homeboys Industries is located in the heart of rival territory to have a greater impact, DHDC is in neutral gang territory. This in theory limits the accessibility to many youth who do not own cars. However the facility has narrowed down a model for which to help at-risk-youth.⁸

This model, like Homeboy's, relies on a conceptual framework which reminds the youth that we all belong together. The relation to one another has been fragmented by gang beliefs. A rival gang member is no longer seen as another human being, but a target. That way of seeing another life is the motive as to why this thesis is tackling this inner city issue.⁹ As architects we must open the conversation for others in order for this issue to be resolved. Through the use of Jane Jacobs' criteria of eyes on the streets and diversity of use can begin to provide a framework for architects.



Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation flex space area. The artwork is changed every year as a community event workshop





9

The Alley Project (TAP) Detroit, Michigan

TAP Project

Erik Howard is the founder of this project and it provides the opportunity for creative youth to express themselves in a legal manner. There is a demand for youth to have a place to practice art. The TAP Project understands that, and aims for allowing it.

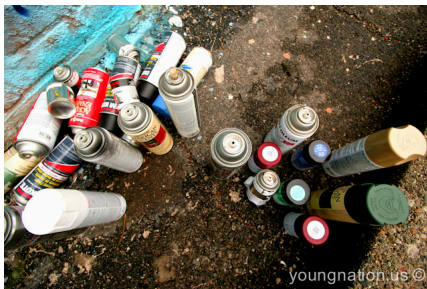
The project facilitates creative youth with a way to express themselves freely, in a context that would otherwise have criminal implications.¹⁰



10



13



youngnation.us ©

11



youngnation.us ©

12

Merging the Program Studies

14



15



above image: Homeboys Industries
and DHDC
Sharp contrast in architectonic expression

How do architects intervene?

Merging the program studies into a cohesive design intervention relies on taking aspects from each case study. Homeboys Industries effectively establishes an image for themselves through a bold architectonic presence. The facility recognizes that the gang culture is highly dominant in the Los Angeles streets, and in order to provide help, the solution must be in the heart of the problem.¹¹

Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation on the other hand, keeps a very subtle presence. Located outside the boundaries of SWD, the Programs are housed in neutral gang territory.¹² Through meeting with the coordinators of the facility, it was told that in order to avoid gang problems the location for the center was carefully chosen outside out SWD. However, this creates issues with youth accessing the facility. For many youth in the area, a reliable source of transportation is not available. This automatically reduces the accessibility of the program functions as public transportation is inadequate outside of Downtown Detroit. Without a presence in the gang infested areas, there is no alternative enrichment for the youth in those affected areas.

A combination of those two models capitalizes on the place making aspects of Homeboys Industries, but incorporating a subtle marketing to the design intervention.

005

Market Analysis

“If you aren’t offering these kids concrete help, Jesus doesn’t care about your prayer meeting.”

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

Economic Incentive

Southwest Detroit *per ULI Report*

As highlighted and preached by the Homeboys Model, there is a clear connection the youth that lead a life of crime and those that do not have jobs. Something as simple as having a 9-5 job goes far in shaping the future of individuals. The character building process that undergoes when responsibilities and duties are entrusted onto someone outweighs the results of any therapeutic program. As human beings, it is secondhand nature to want to feel needed and worthy. Since a young age, people look to feel included and important. A job, regardless of what it is, helps to create a sense of self-worth. The life skills that are developed in the working environment go beyond what parents and the education system teach to many youth.

The reality is that many teens are not equipped with the necessary tools to neither succeed nor feel engaged in their environments. There are limited opportunities for the individuals to engage, and there are even less for the ones that have fallen through the cracks. In today's society image takes precedence over everything. The youth who became part of the gang culture are judged and instantly given second hand treatment. An aura of crime haunts

them and makes it more difficult to obtain employment. A tattoo across the face instantly eliminates any chances to alter their path, and become a functioning member of society.

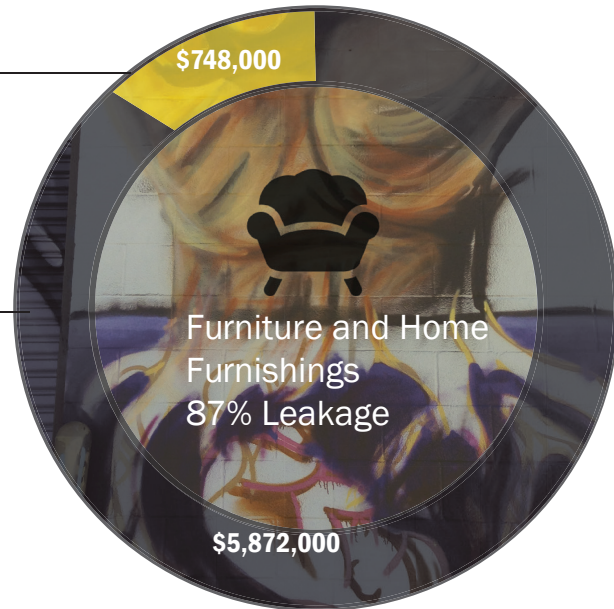
In order to address this issue and allow a place where individuals can be reintegrated into society, where younger people can find support to be steered away from the gang culture, the Market Economy of SWD was analyzed to bridge a design intervention with a proven model of youth development.

A Market Analysis of SWD narrowed down the area of interest. There is a large economic gap in the sale of soft goods, and almost 106 million dollars are leaked into the suburbs because of the lack of supply. The demand is there, and the economy supports the sale of these goods, but there is no place in SWD where the residents can obtain these goods. Following the doctrine of Homeboys Industries, a center of employment was a way to begin thinking about the design intervention. After all, this thesis is interested in holistically improving the state of life to all SWD residents. Not to be construed as a purely developer intervention, the design looks to blend the role of architect, developer, and humanitarian. Three very distinct interests, one complex and rich intervention.

Home Living

Current Retail Sales of Furniture
and home furnishings

Retail Potential | Demand

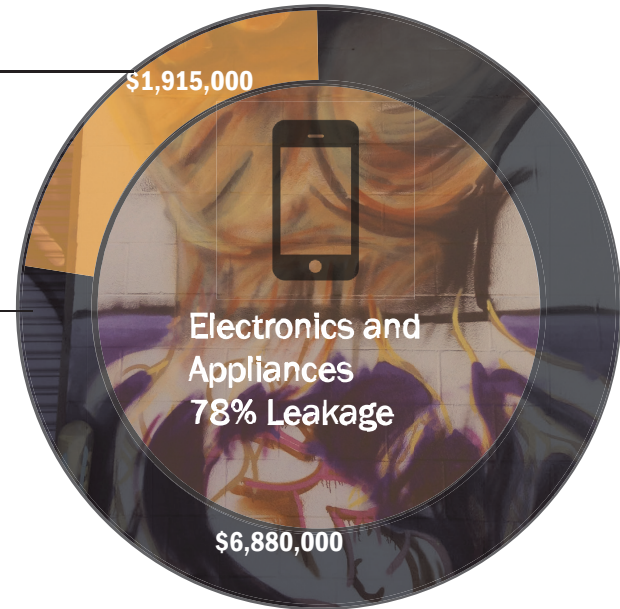


Source: ULI Report

Electronics

Current Retail Sales of Electronics and appliances

Retail Potential | Demand



Clothing

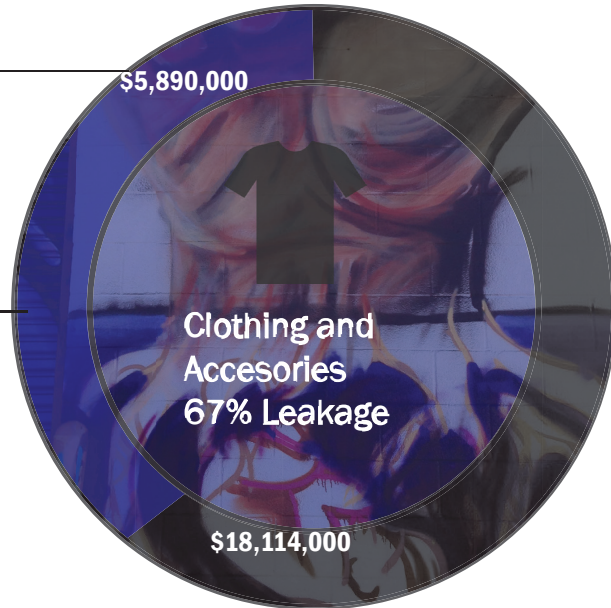
Current Retail Sales of Clothing

\$5,890,000

Retail Potential | Demand

Clothing and
Accessories
67% Leakage

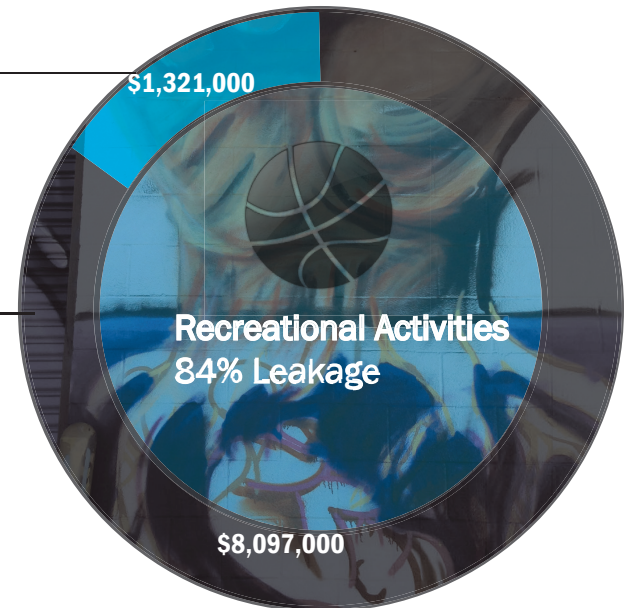
\$18,114,000



Sporting

Current Retail Sales of Sporting goods, hobby, books, and music

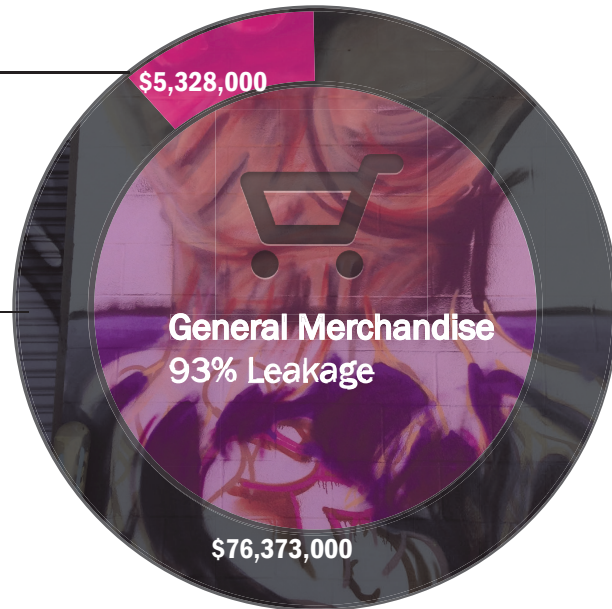
Retail Potential | Demand



General

Current Retail Sales of General Merchandise

Retail Potential | Demand



Miscellaneous

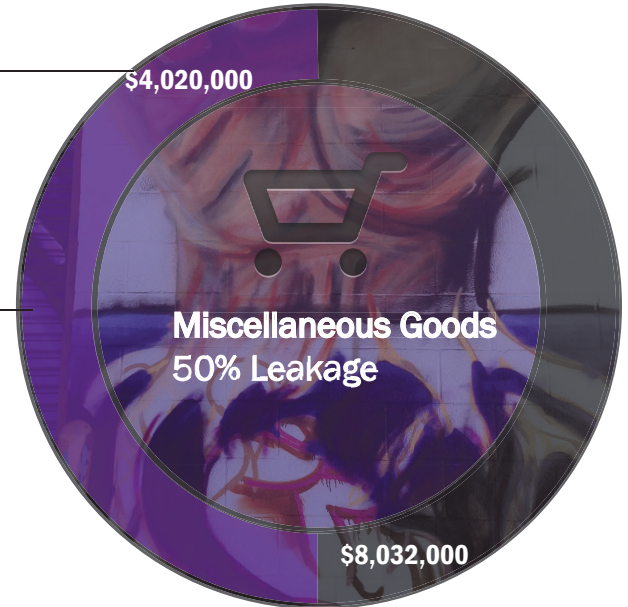
Current Retail Sales of
Miscellaneous Goods

\$4,020,000

Retail Potential | Demand

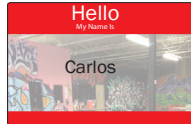
Miscellaneous Goods
50% Leakage

\$8,032,000



Criteria

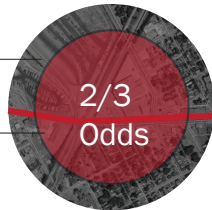
Nothing stops a bullet like a job...



Numbers Do Not Lie

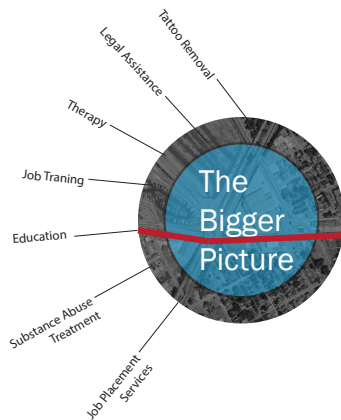
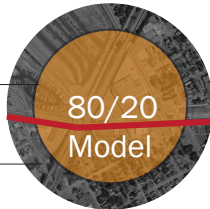
66% Chance of repeated offense if no enrichment activities are sought

Day in prison costs \$79 dollars on average.
Day in Probation costs \$3.42



80% of time spent in jobs.

20% of time mixture of therapeutic and support



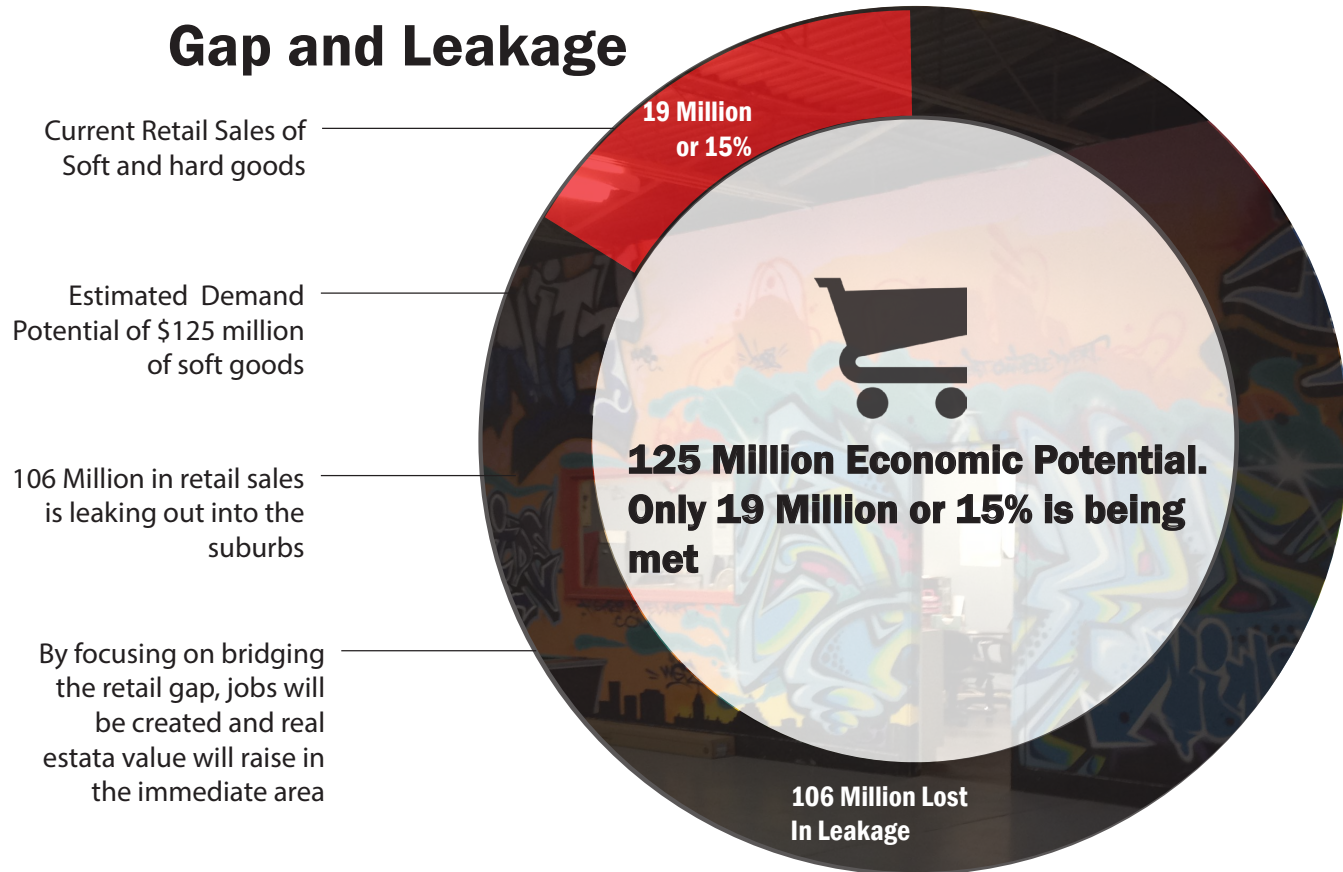
Market Analysis Implementation

Understanding the soft goods retail gap in SWD opened a gateway for the design intervention to take place. With more than 106 million leaking into the suburbs, the program parameters began to be set. The solution incorporated a model that offers employment and after school activities for at-risk-youth bridges the economic gap while stimulating the economy. By addressing the larger issues.

The issue can be addressed by not acknowledging it all. This does not mean that we are not addressing the problem. We are addressing it indirectly. To label the youth does not only dehumanize them but encourages them to think about “gang life.” Helping them find hope in the society in which they live in is more successful. It is the method that Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation employs. They do not encourage the members to quit, but they do encourage them to find peace within themselves and to treat each other with kinship.

Soft Goods Economic Gap and Leakage

***“Nothing stops a bullet like a job”
Father Gregg Boyle***



Source: ULI Report

006

Kinship, Hope + Site Selection

“There must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to insure the safety of both residents and strangers, must be oriented to the street. They cannot turn their backs or blank sides on it and leave it blind.

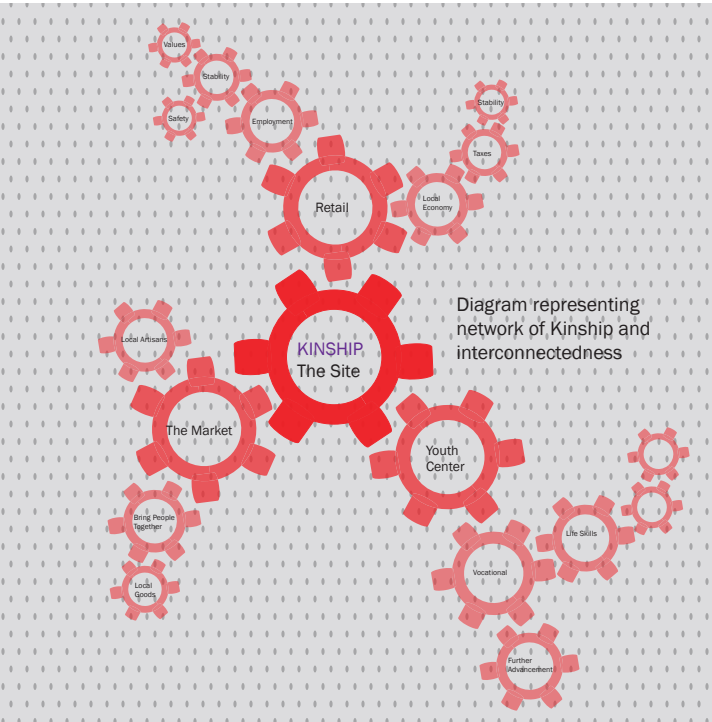
-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

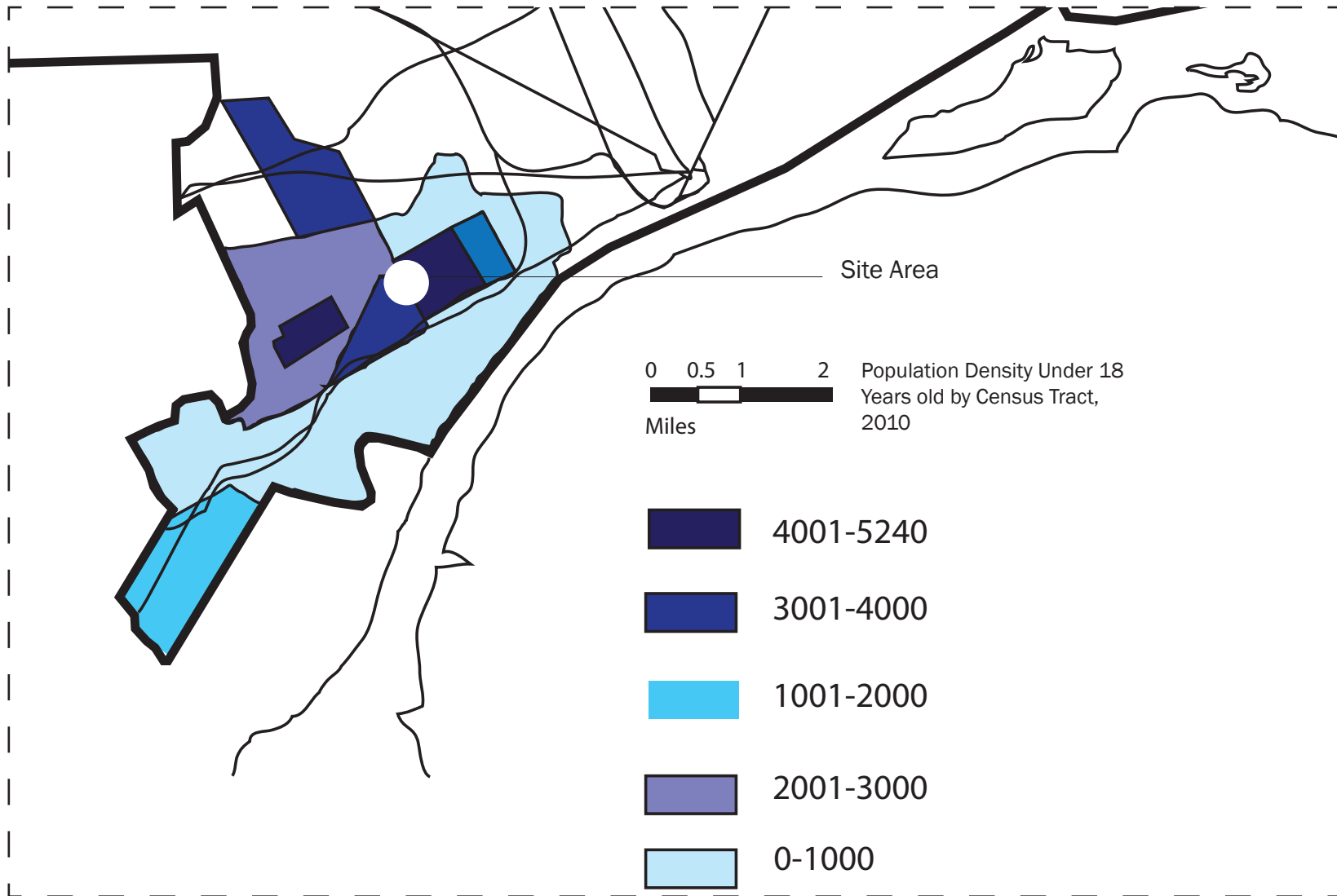
Kinship

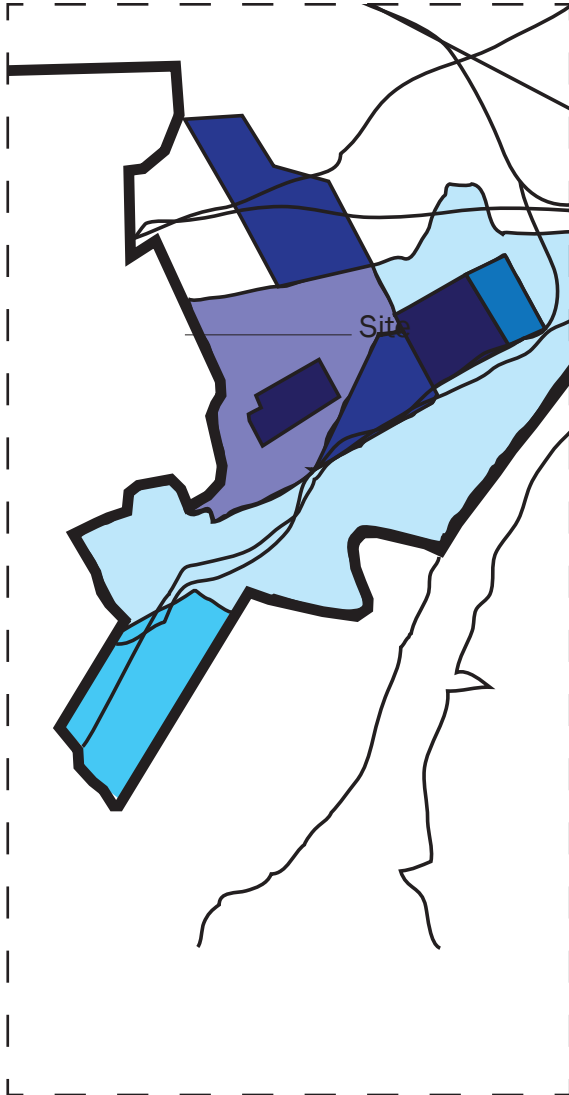
Based from the research on gangs and studying how Homeboys Industries is working on preventing gang involvement, a plan of action for Southwest Detroit began to be developed. This plan needed to incorporate principles from CPTED, Jane Jacobs, and Father Boyle's notion of kinship. The intervention needed to interact with the built environment and provide a means for the youth to envision an alternate lifestyle.

Jane Jacobs

A criterion for selecting a site was guided largely by Jacob's principles. The site needed to already employ a diverse range of programs and be in a strategic location. There should be sound economic health with the ability to expand in size and density. The congestion of cities is our precious economic asset, and the design must respond to that.⁴







Site Selection

As set indicated by the market analysis, over 100 million in retail sales are going to the suburbs. A lack of youth activities in the SWD neighborhood offers little to no enrichment past school hours.

The site needed to be large enough to accommodate that amount of program, but at the same time be in large and diverse neighborhood.

Utilizing the youth population density map, the economic breakdown, and the program studies (for implementation), the site selection process began.

Parameters were then established for ensuring that the most appropriate site was chosen.

Programmatic Breakdown

45,000 SF Youth Center Facility

30,000 SF Soft Goods Retail

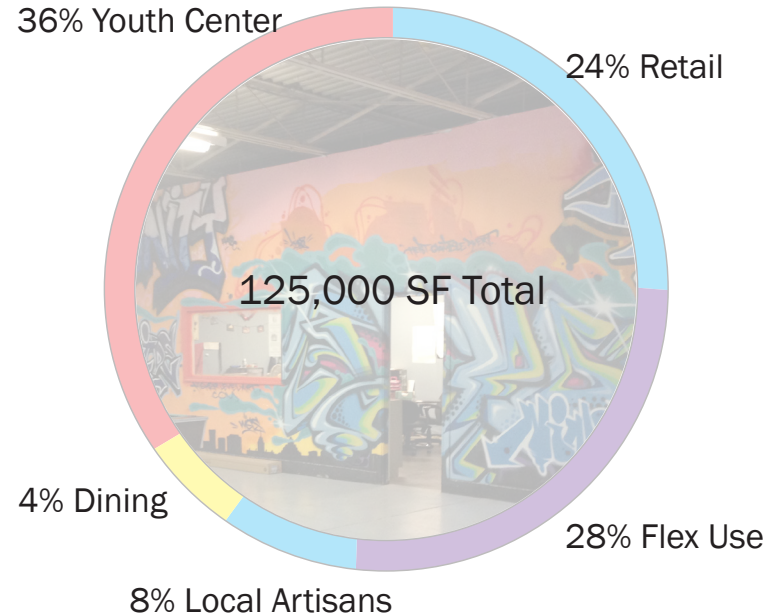
5,000 SF Dining

10,000 SF Local Artisans + Outdoor Market

35,000 Flex-Mixed Use (Closed Market)

80,000 New Development
45,000 Adaptive Reuse

125,000 Total SF



Source: ULI Report



Kinship
Reutilization
Redevelopment

Junction + Clark Intersections with Railroad



Site 1

Junction + Toledo

Lack of pedestrian traffic.

Segmented, difficult to move through area

Viaducts highly sever site

Good in size, but does not meet other criteria. high blight

In the analyzing of this site, the diagrams show how it is segmented and fractured.

Inadequate selection



Base Image Google

Site 2

McGraw + Tarnow

In a diverse area

Smaller scale implementation

Site not appropriate for the parameters set by the research

Inadequate selection





Base Image Google



Site 3

Livernois + Vernor

Ideal location, connects East and West Vernor Business Corridors.

Vacant site, large enough to accomodate

High youth density

Gang territory

Site provides many chances for interaction

Best meets criteria defined by the research



007

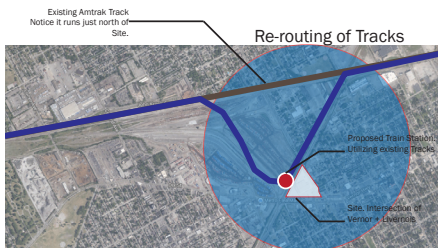
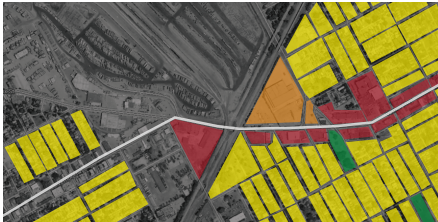
Design Intervention Selection

“Terror melting into wonder, then slipping into peace.”

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

Proposal

Base
Image
Google



Programs

The intervention was a three part proposal to a high priority Site. The Site is of Livernois and Vernor and is currently a vacant. It is in predominantly gang territory to the gang known as the Latin Counts, and if you west, you will begin to note presence of another gang called Folks.

The site is off an active railway. This sparked some interest in the potential to propose a Train Station in the site. A feasibility study was done to verify it is possible, and it was. There are train tracks that can be re-routed to accommodate for Amtrak services. But with further analysis and critique, the Station did not have much research to support the implementation. In response, it was only analyzed as a conceptual option and could be implemented in the future if funding is secured.

The site currently is used as an outdoor Flea Market due the initial building that housed the interior market was burned down in 2006. Due to the importance of the market, the design needed to incorporate a program for an interior Market. Exterior sheds were also designed to take advantage of the nice summer months in Detroit. It also extends the opportunity for local street vendors to

set up stands during Sunday Flea Market events.

Second a Youth Center needed to be established, as from original mapping studies, there is none within walking distance for the youth, many whom do not own cars.

The Center is important because it will provide enrichment to the youth within walking distance. Vocational programs can also be taught at the Center and allow for the advancement of life skills in a safe and comforting environment.

Third, adapting key areas of the site to be used as retail nodes will allow the employment of the youth. This will not only help build the working sector of SWD, but capitalize on over 100 million that is lost to the suburbs. Retail will provide a kinship program similar to that of Homeboys Industries. While the youth who are hired will be given an opportunity that other places will not, a harsh evaluation will be used to ensure that only those who truly want to change are given the opportunity.

Market + Youth Center + Retail

Concern of gangs in schools, families transfer their children to other Wayne County districts, particularly Downriver Districts, or Change residence

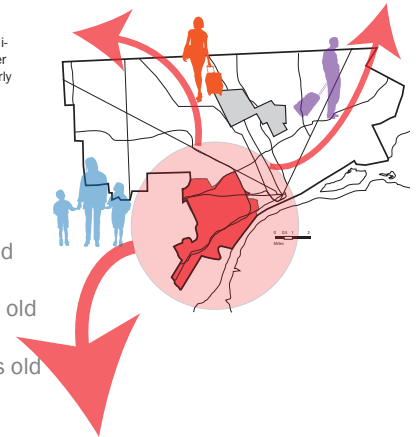
Population Change

-9.4% 0-4 years old

-21.6% 5-9 years old

-17.5% 10-14 years old

-29.4% 20-24 years old



Basic Demographics

43,902 Residents

17.2% Decrease in Population from 2000

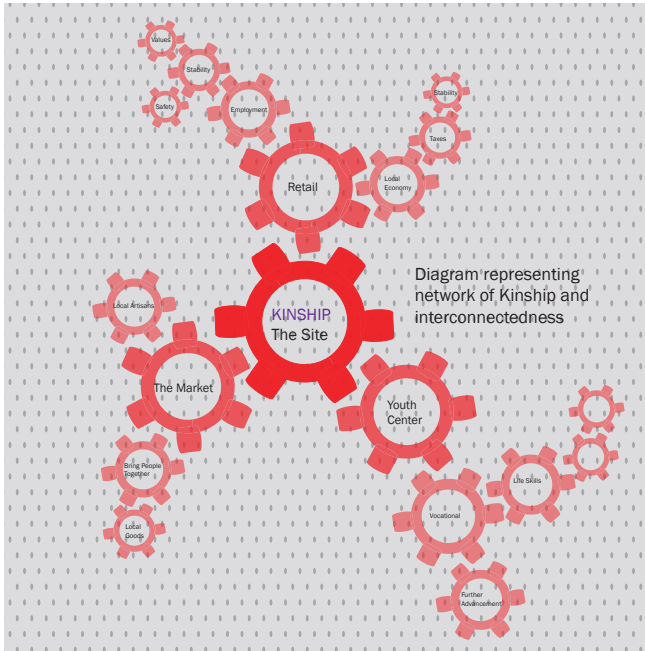
14,509 Youth under 18 Years of Age

30.6% earn less than \$15,000

57.2% Latino Population

30.7% Hold H.S Diploma/Equivalent

Source: US Census

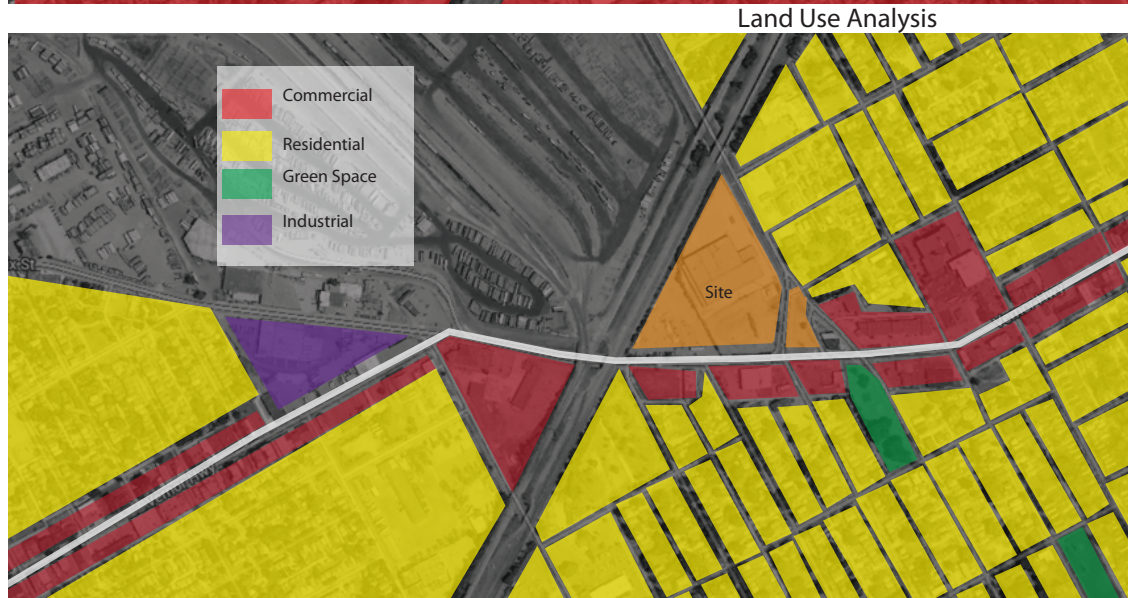


Unifying the Program

This created a network of interdependence on the Site, which will become a center for communal interaction that will also provide an urban park for nearby businesses. The interconnectedness of the programs may at first seem unrelated. How can a train station function next to a Youth Center, or how can a Market possibly benefit from a Youth Center. The answer is simple. The programs are not meant to function individually but as a composition. They rely on each other to bring a place-making essence to the site. In relation to Homeboy's approach, the proposed design will capitalize on producing goods at the Center which can then be sold to commuters on the Station and Market.

This approach is about establishing an image for the city while providing jobs and skills for troubled youth. The reality is that without a place like this, many gang members will not be given an opportunity elsewhere. They will be judged by their appearance, and not by their effort and commitment to rebranding themselves.

Once the programs have been established, a closer look at the site conditions underwent.



Base Image Google

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Precedence Study

“It’s my first day teaching,” I say to her, “Give me some advice.”

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

Precedence Study

12

Advisory Panel - SW Detroit, Michigan - October 6 - 11, 2013

Vernor Square



Source: Urban Land Report

Urban Land Institute

The proposal grew from research and analysis on the site. A proposal by the Urban Land Institute for this site was looked at as well. Its importance as a target area has also been identified by Detroit Future City. They are an organization that has established a 50 year framework plan for the development of Detroit in a fight against blight and low income areas.

They proposed a largely retail scheme to counterbalance the low supply of soft goods in SWD. A retail center would not have the same place-making capabilities, but does hold value. A proposed Market would allow the capacity for the economy in the area to grow, while providing life-skills for youth and the community.

Their design for the site was commercially oriented. That was to address a retail gap in the supply of soft goods in the area. It was suggested to explore taking up their scheme and designing with architectural detail, as it is just conceptual at that stage.



Source: Urban Land Report

009

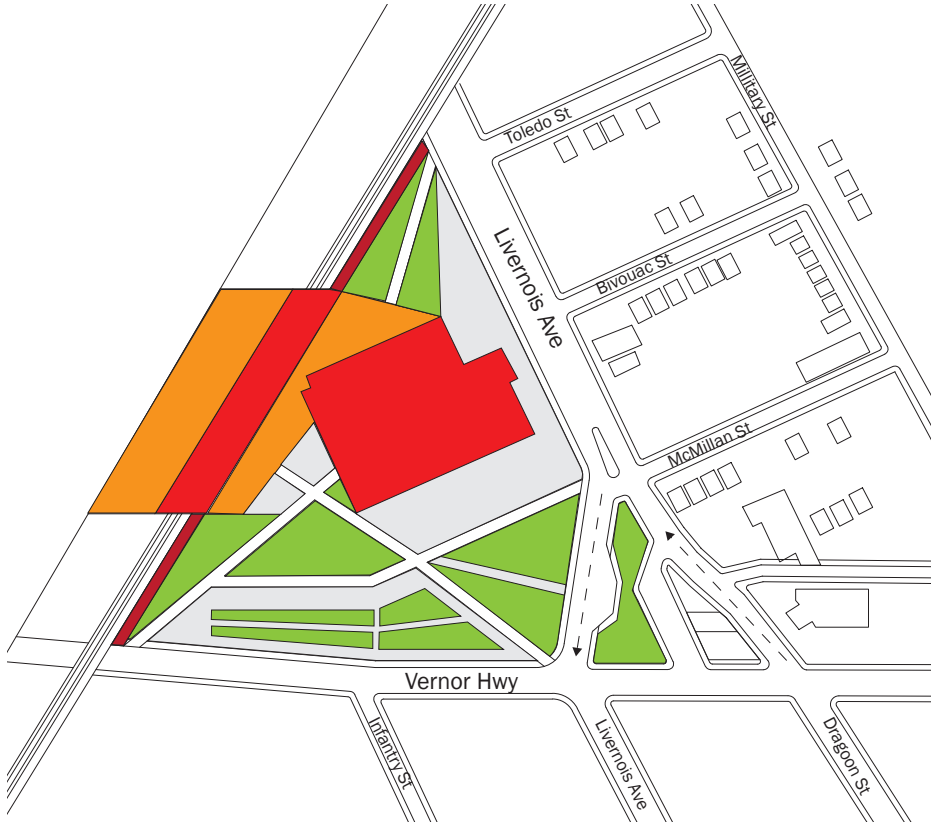
Sketch Problems

“There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.”

— Jane Jacobs

Sketch Problem 1

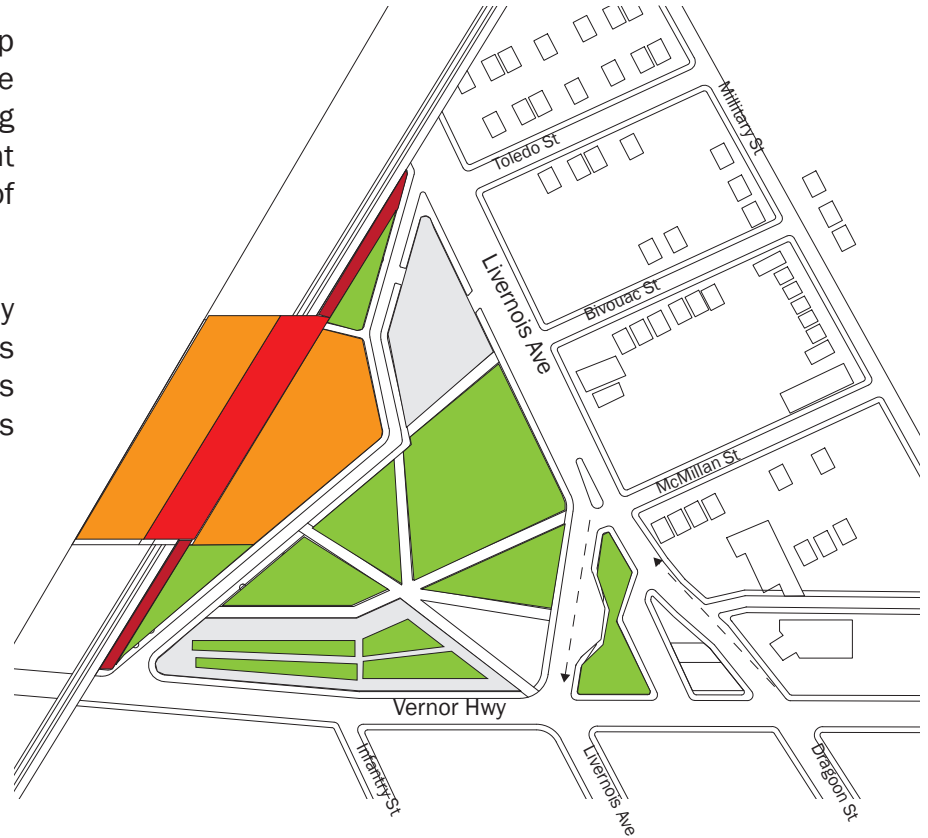
This Sketch problem began to develop a design for the site incorporating the Center, Market, and Train into the existing warehouse on the site.



Sketch Problem 2

This Sketch problem began to develop a design for the site incorporating the Center, Market, and Train by eliminating the warehouse on the site. Much thought has gone into the use or elimination of the vacant structure.

Through conversation it was recently elected to be removed, as it poses spatial problems on the site. It holds little architectural value to the site or its history.



010

Design Trials

“Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it.”

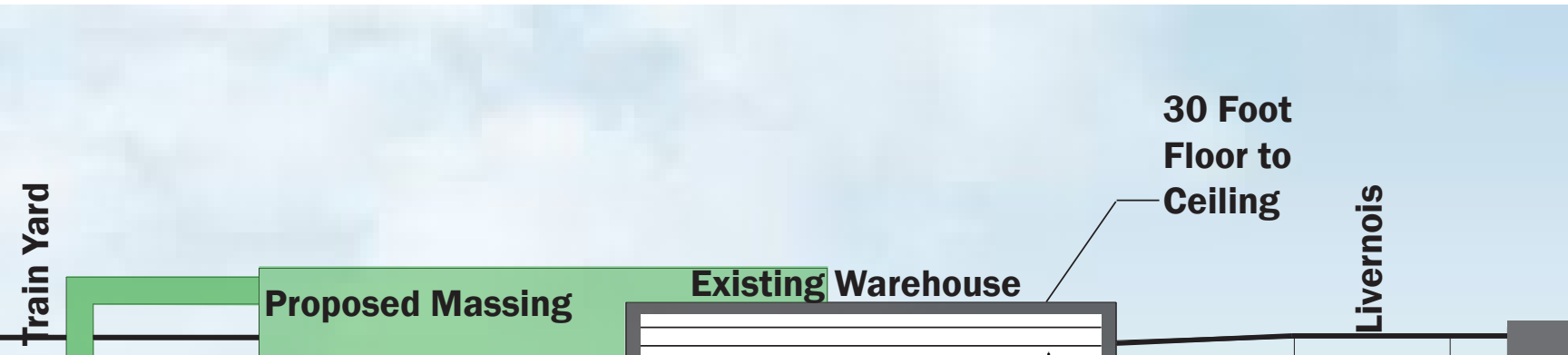
— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

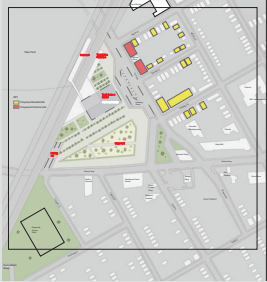
Urban Plan

Design Attempt 1

The Urban Plan rendition was not successful in establishing a connection with Vernor Hwy. For that reason, the decision to keep the warehouse will be eliminated. But due to its placing that creates too far a presence from Vernor.

It is more of an urban solution to break up the program into smaller facilities and even consider more functions to the site. Through further research and analysis that will be determined.





Train Yard

KEY

- Proposed Residential
- Proposed Commercial

Platform B

Train Station
Platform A

Youth Center +
Market
40,000 sq ft facility

Urban Park

Parking
Lot

Farm Market

Toledo St

Vacant
Shop

Liverios

Loading
Zone

Bivouac St

Military St

McMillan St

Arandas
Headquarters

Church

Strip Mall

Arandas Shop

Vernor Hwy

Gas
Station

Auto Zone

Burger
King

Boyer Playfield

Dragon St

Jerry's
Barber
Shop

Taqueria
Arandas

Southwest Food
Center

Dollar
General

Infantry St

Vernor Hwy

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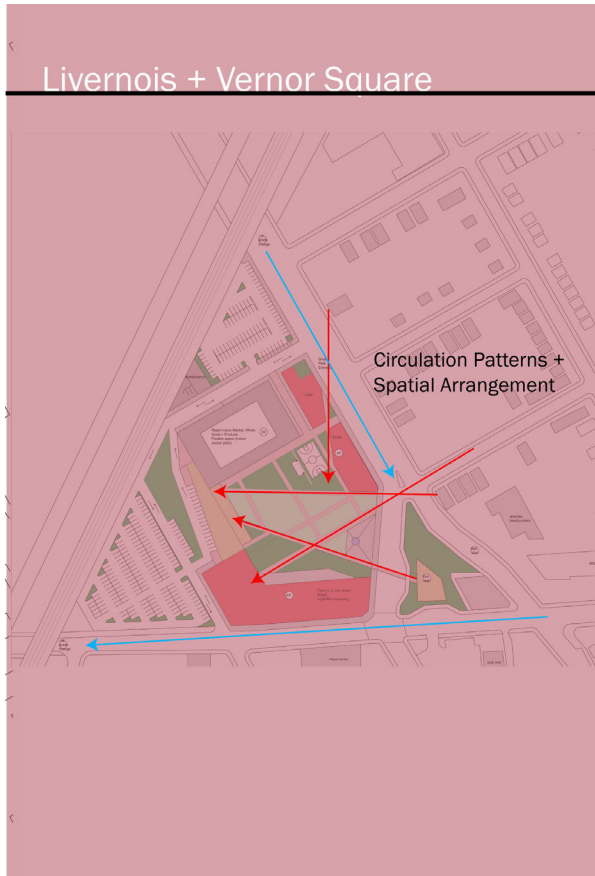
Casgrain St

Master Plan Attempt 2

The second attempt at the master plan for the site focused on retaining the existing warehouse but establishing an architectonic presence along the Vernor Corridor. It is crucial to establish an identity with the design. The first step is to place the youth center along Vernor to eliminate the vacancy of the lot. Retail is also proposed along Livernois in hopes of creating more pedestrian traffic in the area.

In order for this intervention to have a significant impact, the design needs to be establishing a strong presence. A simple strip mall will not suffice in creating a successful image for the center. In addition, with the development of the vacant land, there are hopes for rising the real estate values of the area and encourage additional investment in nearby housing.





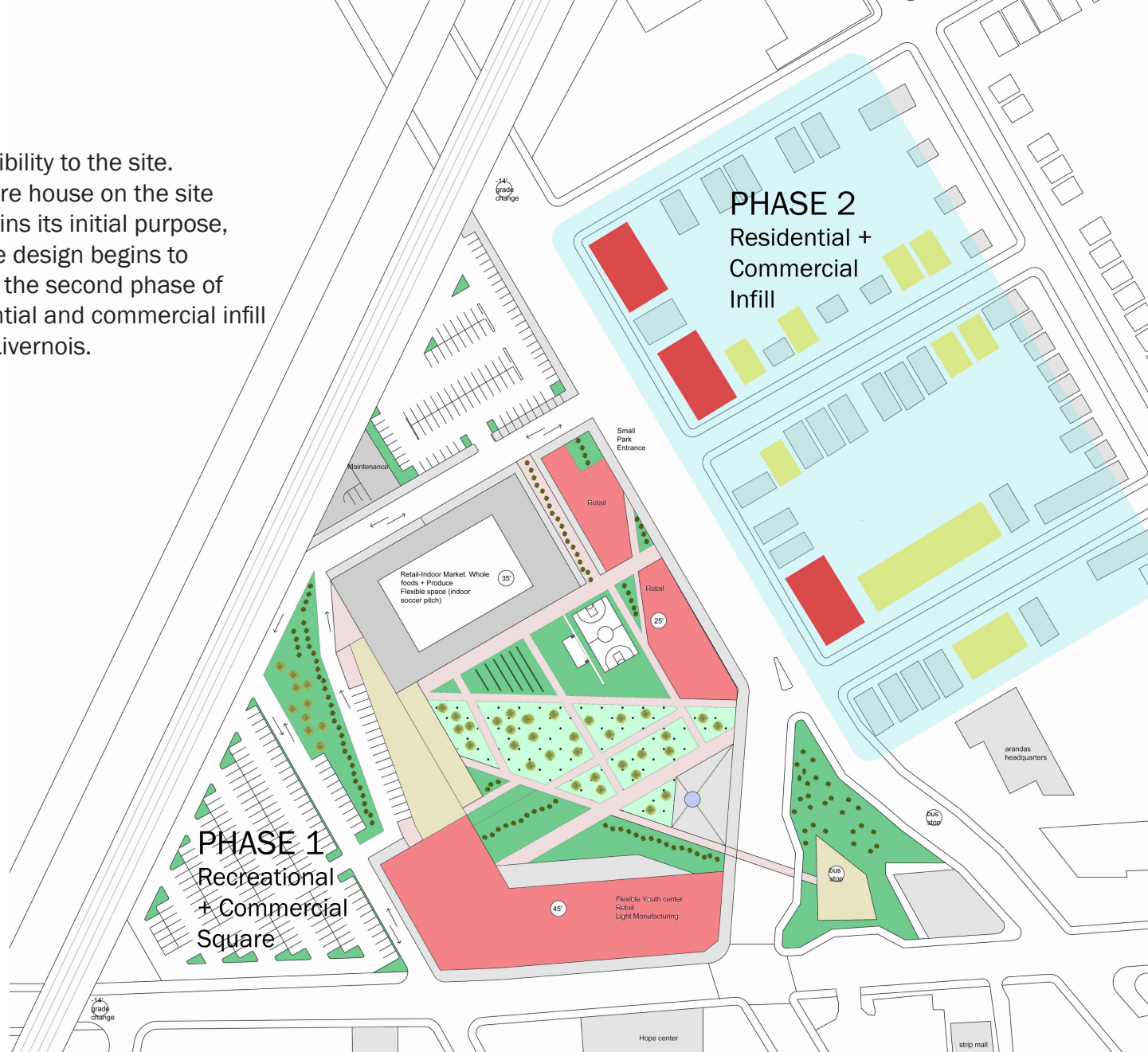
Master Plan Attempt 3

The third attempt for the site development looked to redefine the initial massing proposed by the earlier plan. By taking a closer look at how the landscape connected the architectural programs, the design looked to establish a better connection between the street front and the proposed plaza. Since the flea market that is on the site is seen as a vital asset, it is carefully implemented into the design. The programs maintained on the same areas, with the youth center placed along Vernor and retail on Livernois. The way in which vehicular traffic circulated through the development was also carefully designed to ensure efficient flow of service traffic.

The parking for visitors and users was handled to ensure that its visibility is limited from by passers. The parking lots, while necessary, can be eye sores. There is nothing attractive about a bay of parked cars; hence they were placed where they cannot be easily seen from Vernor or Livernois.

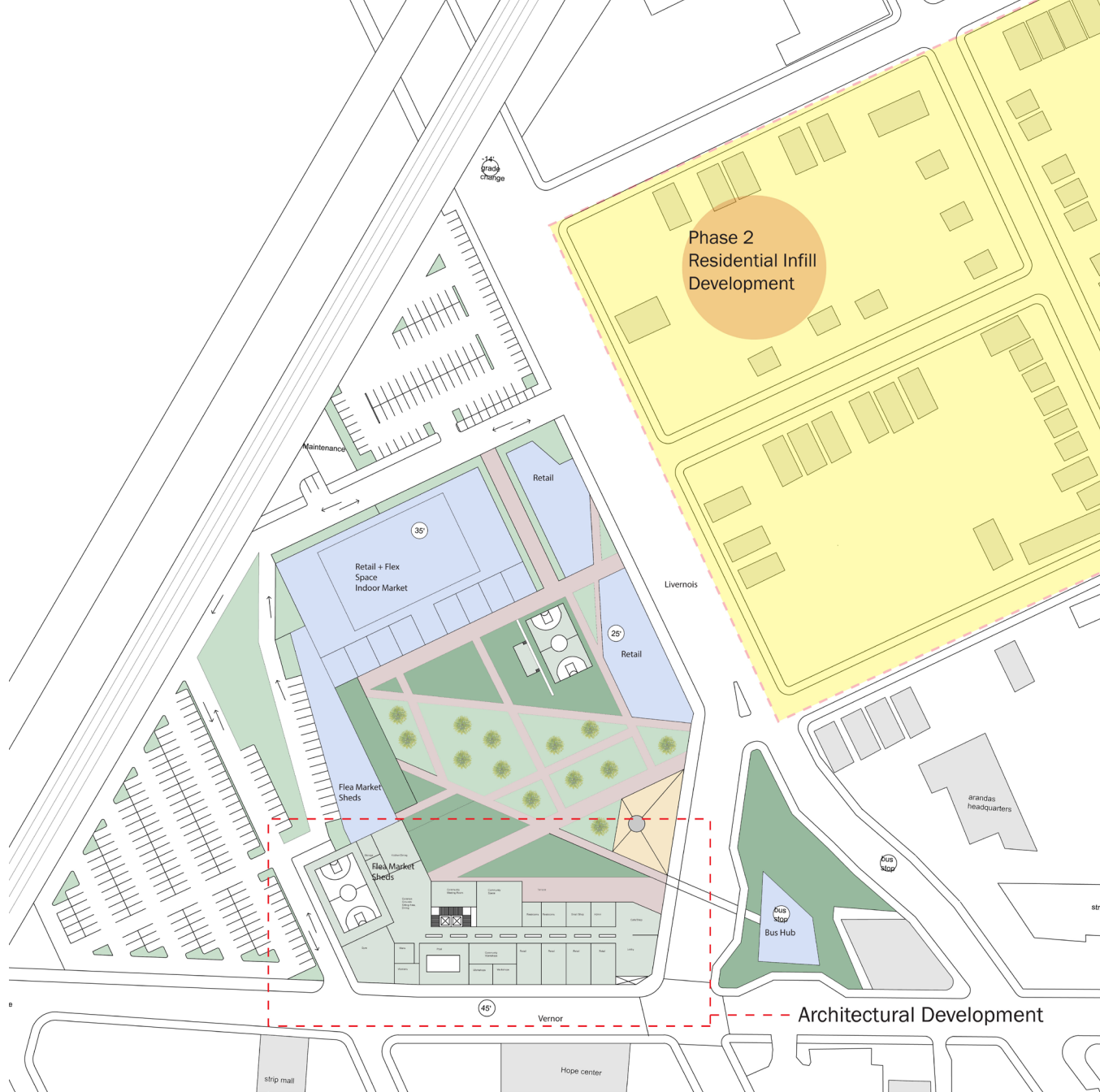
At this point in the design, the possibility of a bus hub is also indicated but only to a conceptual level. While not important to the direct parameters and objectives of the Thesis, it is an indirect necessity to providing

accessibility to the site.
The ware house on the site maintains its initial purpose, and the design begins to outline the second phase of residential and commercial infill along Livernois.



Master Plan Attempt 4

With further refinement of the master plan, certain aspects of the design were chosen to be further developed. Because of the importance of the Youth Center to the design, it was chosen for further analysis and development.



011

Final Design

People have to see that there is a high degree of complexity about belonging to a gang. It's a symptom, not a problem.

— Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

Design Development

Final Solution

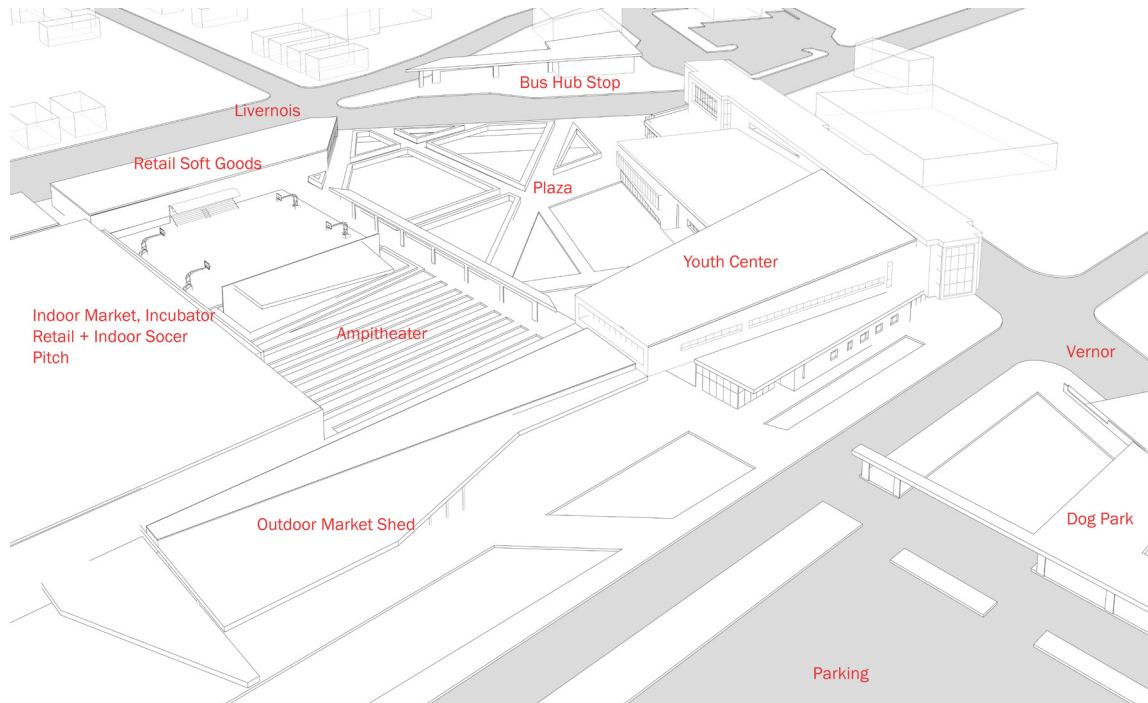


The final master plan is the culmination of careful site analysis, planning, and process. The difficult process of redesigning a plan that accentuates the existing assets, while helping to establish a new image is the result. The resulting design is not to be mistaken as glorified design, nor are the intentions to reconcile all the problems that pertain to Southwest Detroit. The initial goal of this thesis was to define a framework for how architects and designers can bridge the gap between at-risk-youth and design.

The goal of the project resulted in defining the role of architects as developers, designers, and humanitarians. The results proved that urban youth can be helped while jump starting the economy and the area.

While the initial goal was to find a solution to a very complex problem, it was not expected to find the impact that a job has in guiding youth towards a safe and healthy life.





Hidden Line three-dimensional view of the design

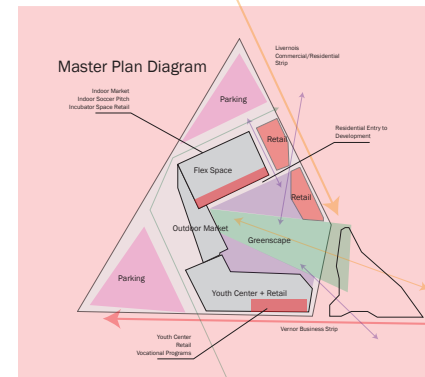
Existing Fruit Wholesale Market.

North East Connection to Remainder of SWD

Primary Gang Affiliated Street

Area targetted for Residential infill.

Livernois Access to Development



Service Drive

Established Node

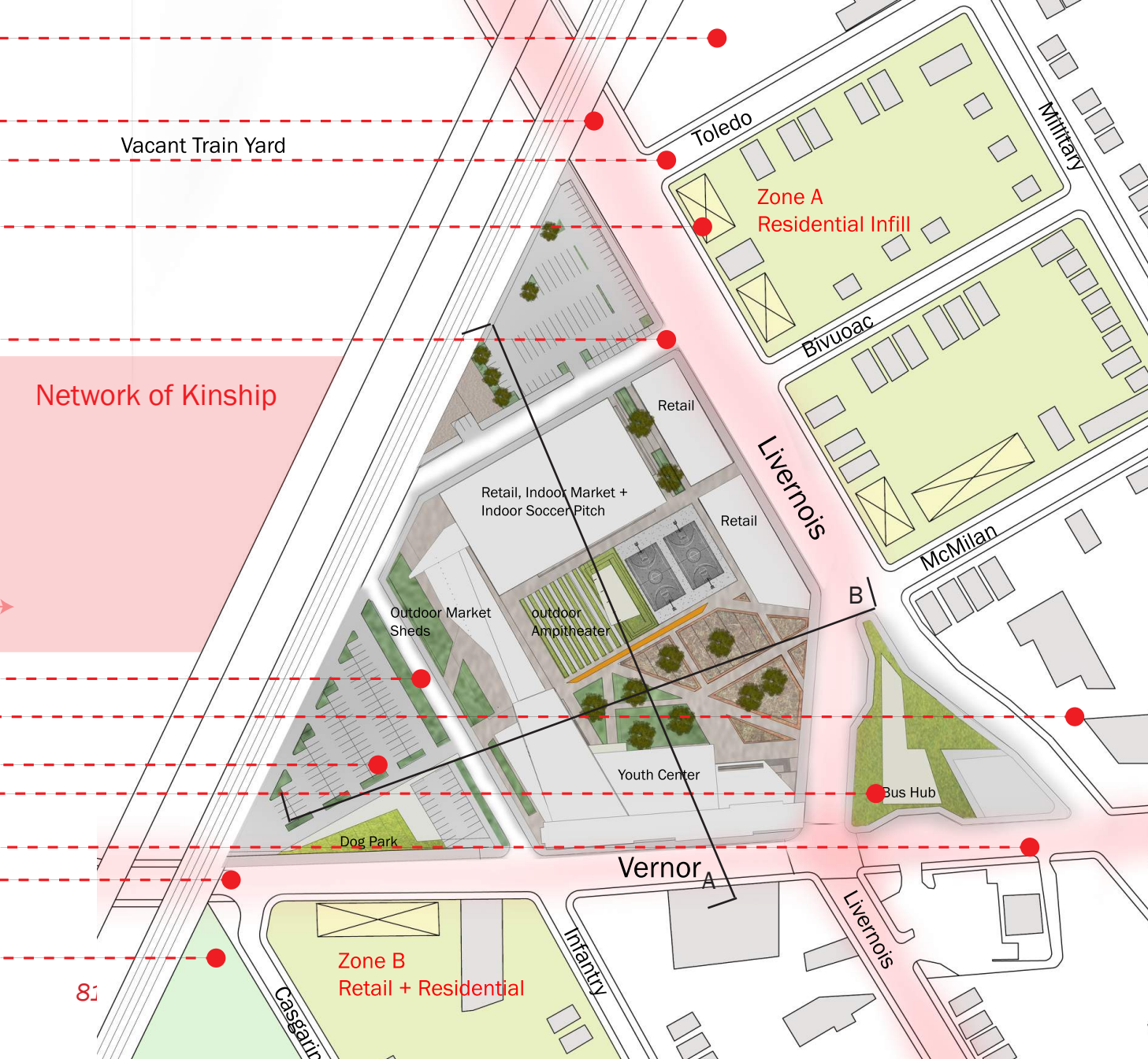
Parking

Proposed Bus Hub.

Existing Business Corridor

Primary Link to Suburbs and South-Southwest

Future Development





Indoor Market, Incubator
Retail + Indoor Soccer Pitch

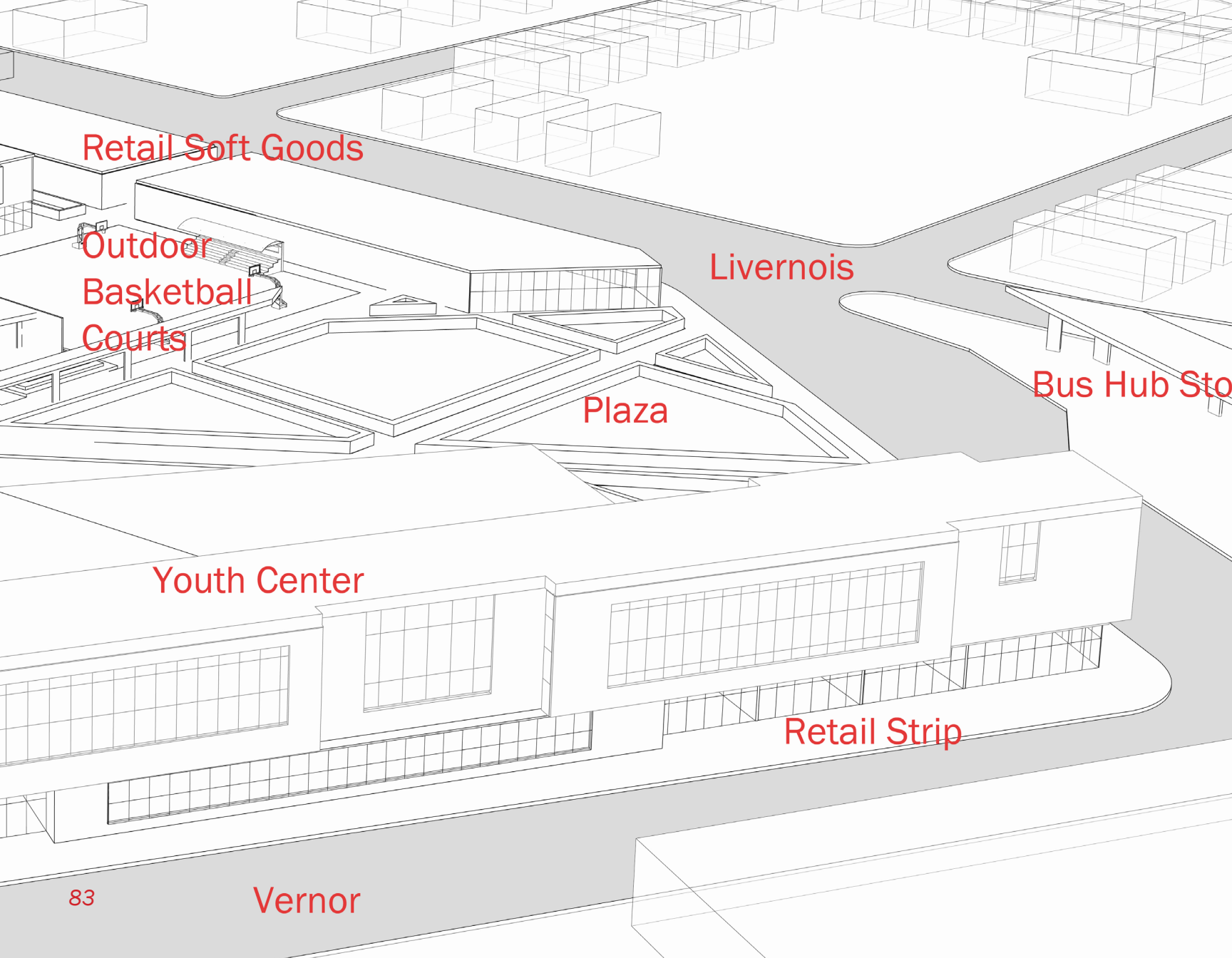
This architectural line drawing depicts a modern building complex. The main building is a large, multi-story structure with a flat roof and a series of long, narrow windows. To the right of the main building is a smaller, two-story structure with a gabled roof and a series of windows. In the foreground, there is a large, open area with a series of parallel lines, possibly representing a parking lot or a plaza. To the left of the main building is a smaller, rectangular structure with a flat roof. The drawing is rendered in a clean, minimalist style with black lines on a white background.

Outdoor Market Shed

This architectural line drawing depicts a modern building complex. The main building is a large, multi-story structure with a flat roof and a series of long, narrow windows. To the right of the main building is a smaller, two-story structure with a gabled roof and a series of windows. In the foreground, there is a large, open area with a series of parallel lines, possibly representing a parking lot or a plaza. To the left of the main building is a smaller, rectangular structure with a flat roof. The drawing is rendered in a clean, minimalist style with black lines on a white background.

Dog Park

This architectural line drawing depicts a modern building complex. The main building is a large, multi-story structure with a flat roof and a series of long, narrow windows. To the right of the main building is a smaller, two-story structure with a gabled roof and a series of windows. In the foreground, there is a large, open area with a series of parallel lines, possibly representing a parking lot or a plaza. To the left of the main building is a smaller, rectangular structure with a flat roof. The drawing is rendered in a clean, minimalist style with black lines on a white background.



Retail Soft Goods

Outdoor
Basketball
Courts

Livernois

Plaza

Bus Hub Stop

Youth Center

Retail Strip

83

Vernor



View Along Vernor Looking SouthWest







Inside Plaza View



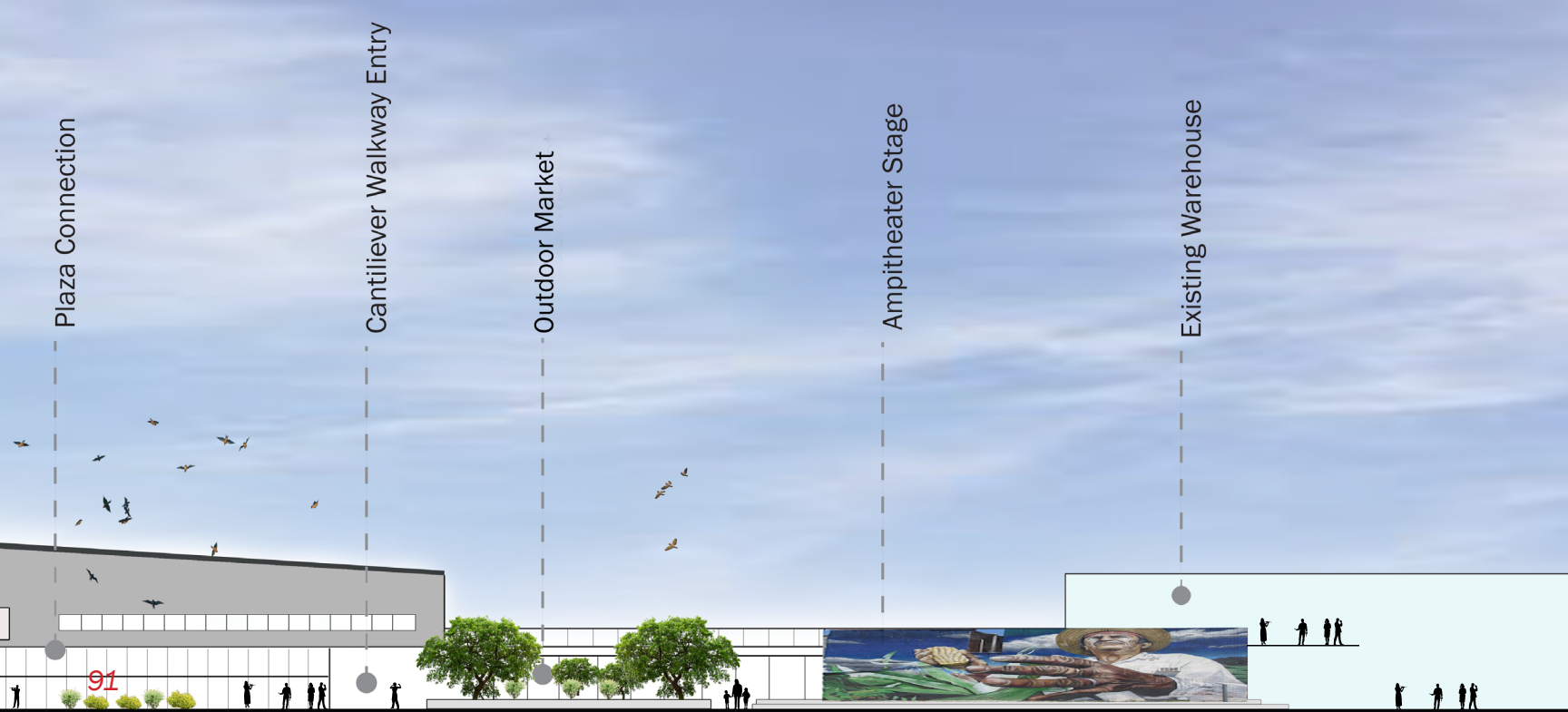
View Along Livernois Looking SouthWest



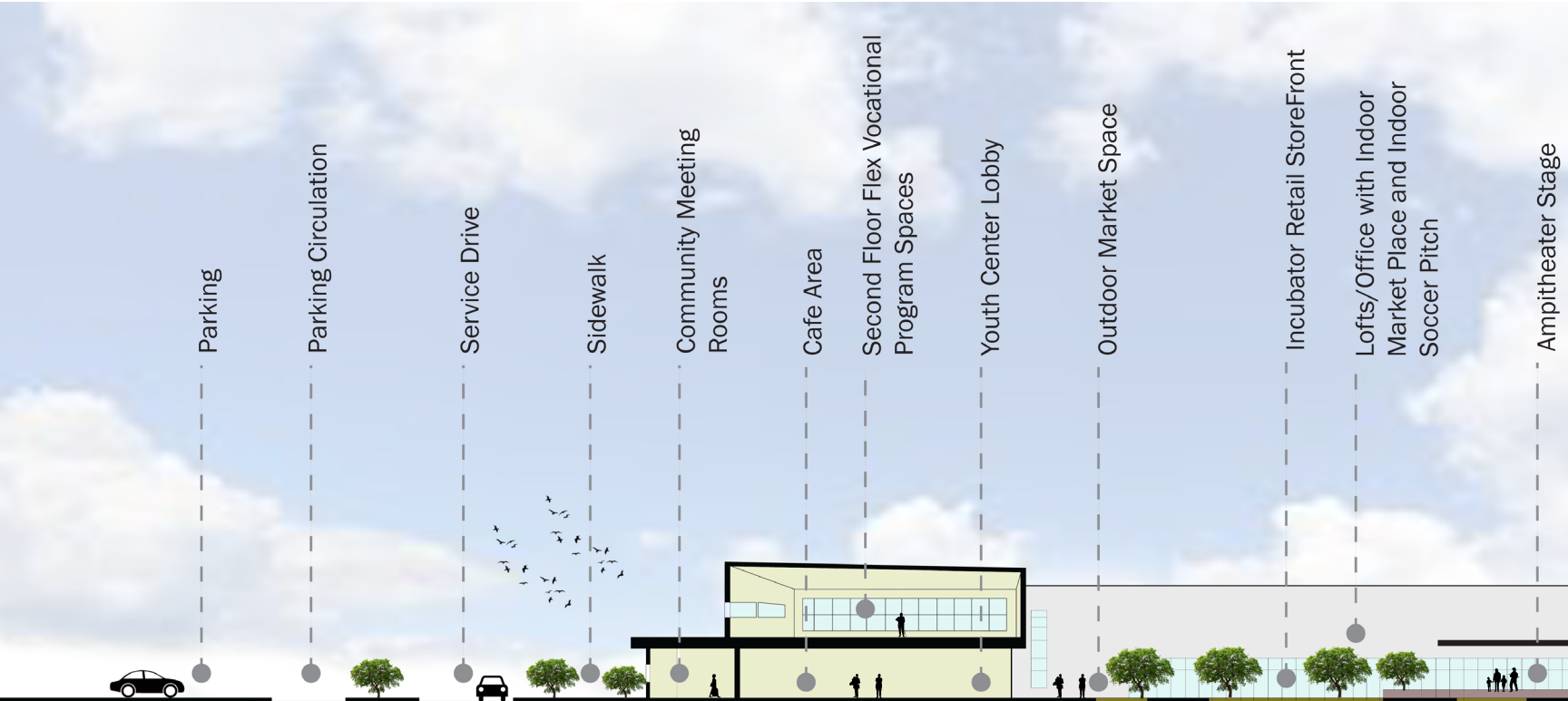
View Along Vernor Looking North

Section A





Section B



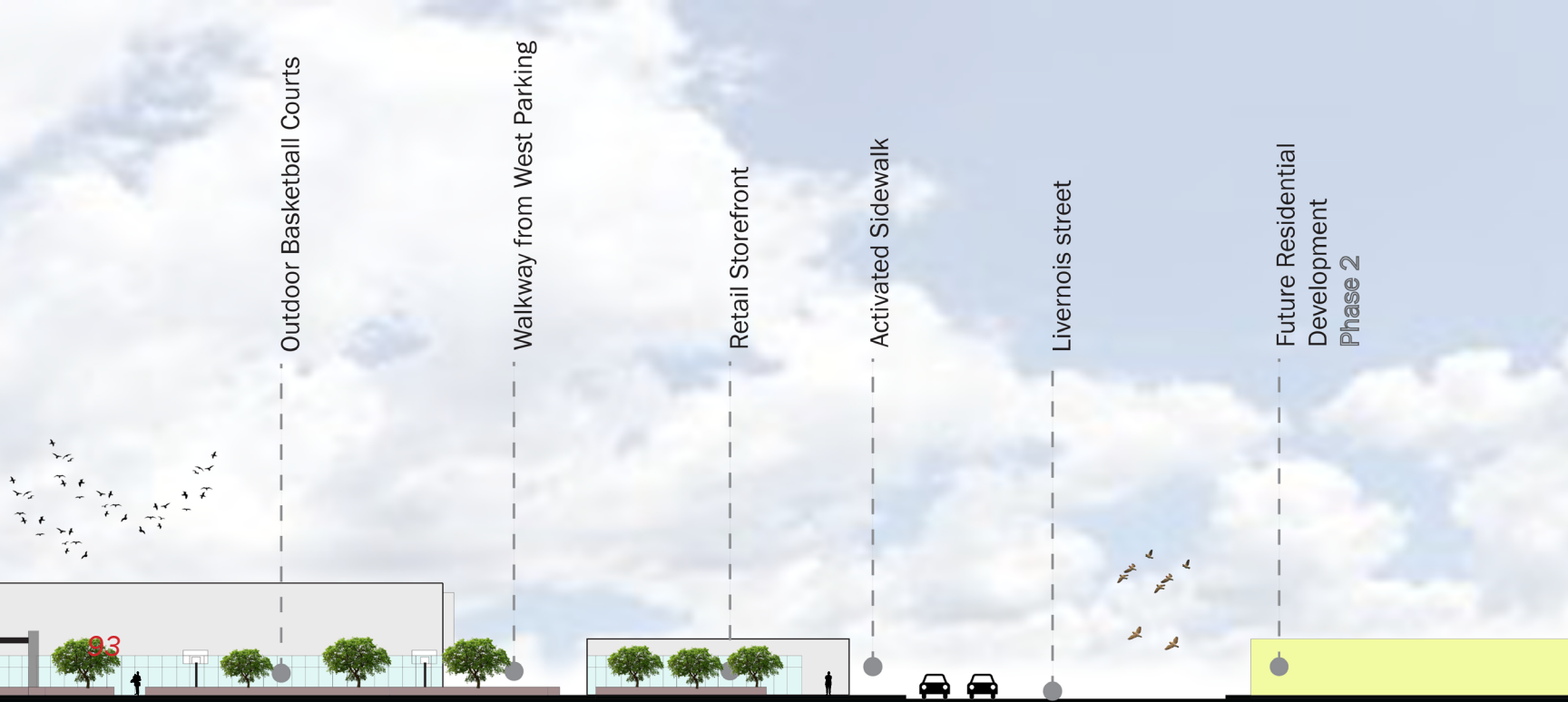


Image Credits

- 1 <http://seed-global-investment.com/news-updates-single/500>
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Urban Land Institute Report

<http://www.southwestdetroit.com/Community-Planning/Urban-Land-Institute-Panel-80.html>

Gregory Boyle, Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion

US Census Data

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 - 3 ojjda.gov
 - 4 Selected content from Personal Interview with Erik Howard, and Graig Donelly
 - 5 www.homeboyindustries.org
 - 6 Selected content from Personal Interview with Erik Howard
 - 7 www.homeboyindustries.org
 - 8,9 Selected Content from Personal Interview with Esperanza Felicidad Cantu, Director of Development and Marketing at DHDC
Interview with James Phillips, Coordinator of Services
 - 10 Selected content from Personal Interview with Erik Howard
 - 11 www.homeboyindustries.org
 - 12 Selected Content from Personal Interview with Esperanza Felicidad Cantu, Director of Development and Marketing at DHDC
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