

DETROIT DESIGN 139

DD139

MIX-TAPE ZONING

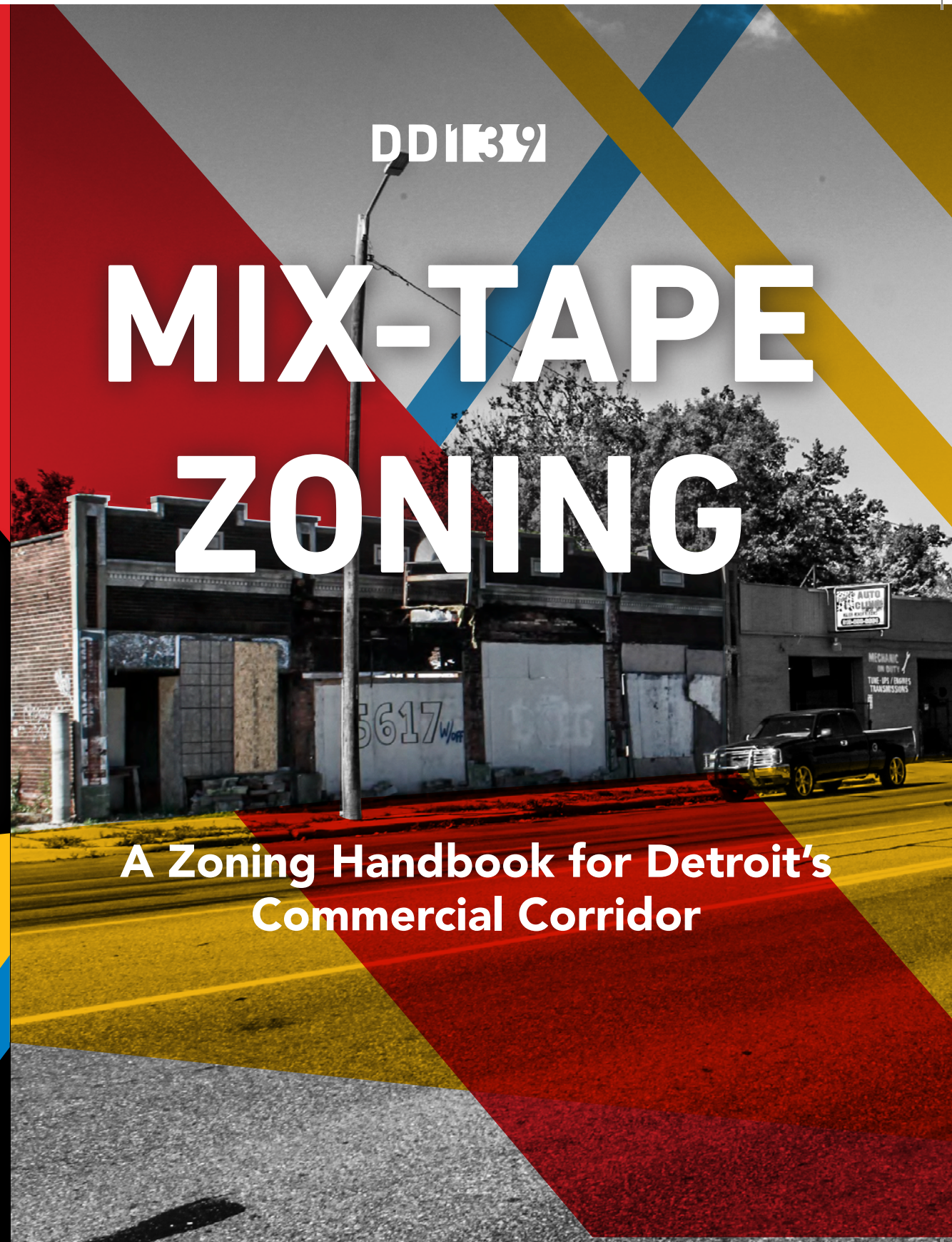
Detroit Design 139 is a group of design advocates led by Bedrock, the City of Detroit, Design Core and others. The group organizes, hosts and produces design initiatives including exhibitions, events, lectures, conversations and publications. Its premiere event is a biennial exhibition that showcases projects representing a future Detroit — one that honors the city's design legacy while pushing toward becoming a leader in world-class design excellence.

Established in 2017, Detroit Design 139 formed when advocates from across the city came together to demand a higher design standard for all future projects within the city's 139 square miles. In pursuit of that ideal, these advocates curated the inaugural Detroit Design 139 exhibition around 10 guiding design principles. The inaugural exhibition in 2017, "Detroit Shapes Design," showcased 41 projects that represented a future Detroit, populated with thoughtful projects that centered on the city's built and natural environments with regards to innovative land-use planning, green infrastructure and architectural design excellence. The exhibition provided a platform for designers in Detroit and other UNESCO Cities of Design to highlight the transformative design work they do in their respective communities in an open, inviting, collaborative space for this collection of design initiatives.

DD139

MIX-TAPE ZONING

A Zoning Handbook for Detroit's Commercial Corridor



DETROIT

MAURICE COX

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, CITY OF DETROIT

At the height of its economic prowess, Detroit was a beautiful city of monumental buildings, grand tree-lined radial boulevards and formal downtown plazas. Often referred to as the "Paris of the West," the city reaped the benefits of a booming automotive industry, expanding rapidly between 1910 and 1950. It was in this city that the American Dream was born, where the single-family home with a garage and front lawn was the norm rather than the exception. These densely populated, mostly middle-class neighborhoods connected residents on foot, bicycle, or public transport to the dynamic streets of small business and retail establishments, comprising the city's commercial corridors.

In a city that reaches eight miles from its riverfront along the straightest routes to the edges of its jurisdiction, these commercial corridors formed the scaffold of Detroit's entrepreneurial and social activity, punctuated by nodes that were the smaller commercial and social hubs of individual neighborhoods, each with their own identity. Long-time residents remember with great fondness the "good old days" of neighborhood retail and commerce; they now mourn their loss. Beginning in the 1950s, local industry declined, leaving a shrinking economy and dwindling population. The once-vibrant businesses on the commercial corridors struggled to attract customers,

and entrepreneurs were discouraged from starting new ventures. Vast numbers of businesses moved out of Detroit altogether, while others succumbed to bankruptcy. The abandoned buildings fell into disrepair and eventual vacancy.

During the years of disinvestment and lack of municipal direction, Detroit's citizens grew adept at fostering a culture of self-sufficiency and inventiveness, demonstrating a resilience and relentless determination not to succumb to failure. They nurtured produce out of vacant lots, repurposed abandoned buildings into new forms, and created cultural expressions within the urban landscape. Such placemaking dynamics have made Detroit a unique city, garnering international press, stimulating residential demand, and fueling the city's economic recovery. This particular approach to urbanism must be respected and carefully nurtured. In recent years, small businesses have returned to the commercial corridors, creating florists, barbershops, restaurants, and bakeries that bring new life to neighborhood thoroughfares. The City of Detroit is committed to supporting this trend. We recognize the vital role the corridors will play in securing the future of Detroit's neighborhoods, and strongly encourage the provision of medium-density "missing-middle" housing options as well as small, local business opportunities in these areas.

The time is now ripe to encourage redesign and further redevelopment of the commercial corridors, by adopting a "lean urbanism" that emphasizes small-scale, affordable, and incremental development.

Overcoming inefficient, outdated ordinances that have tended to thwart the most creative placemaking projects, the City will adopt a "Pink Zoning" approach in which the red tape of overly bureaucratic processes is reduced, and review and permitting is expedited. A "Pink Zone" would enable the City of Detroit to redesign its regulatory policies along particular corridors, smoothing the path for those who seek to bring commercial vitality through new uses that encourage diversity and innovation. To explore this idea and design a specifically Detroit approach to new zoning regulations, while also considering the importance of design elements in transforming land use and improving the commercial corridors for society's changing needs, the City of Detroit put out a Request for Qualifications. We are grateful to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for funding this important project.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2016, Maurice Cox, Director of Planning and Development, and his Zoning staff invited three ambitious, multidisciplinary planning and design teams – Farr Associates, Laavu, and SmithGroup JJR – to examine the City of Detroit’s land use regulations and reimagine them as a means to reactivating commercial corridors and promoting economic development and design excellence.

A historical perspective on the issues at stake provides the context within which the teams sought to execute their scope of work.

CHALLENGES AND PROMISES FOR DETROIT’S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Neighborhood commercial corridors are the scaffold along which social and economic activities create the lifeblood of any city. This was once gloriously true of Detroit, and is showing signs of being true again – if design and development

regulations can be realigned to keep pace with growing demand for mixed-use, innovative development. To realize this promise, Detroit must confront and correct the limitations in its current zoning. Then and only then can the buildings and spaces along Detroit’s commercial corridors be reborn as irreplaceable strategic assets central to the health and character of our civic enterprise.

Like most industrial cities, Detroit draws its zoning framework from early zoning ordinances that were typically Euclidean, driven by considerations of use instead of the forms of buildings or design of streets and landscapes. These zoning ordinances identify areas in which various types of activity can occur, and prohibit the types of structures, uses, and development that fail to meet these constraints. Especially in a city of heavy industry such as Detroit, Euclidean zoning was once seen as an important safeguard of public health.

After the collapse of much of Detroit’s early industry, capital disinvestment and economic disaster ate away at the city’s entrepreneurial spirit, leaving gaps in what were once vibrant commercial corridors. The largely single-use

permitting regulations obstructed the redevelopment of these corridors along the patterns that were once so common, prohibiting many types of mixed-use development and the design of places to encourage foot traffic.

Detroit's current zoning for commercial corridors has not significantly changed since it was inscribed into regulation in 1969. Worse, Detroit's zoning map, which designates 79 percent of the approximately 290 miles of commercially zoned streets as "B4 (General Commercial)" dates largely from the original city zoning ordinance of 1940. The B4 district allows 162 uses on a by-right or conditional basis, ranging from town house to used auto sales to warehouse. The resulting system relies heavily on single-use zoning frameworks. This means that much of the new mixed-use development that Detroit so sorely needs to enrich and enliven its commercial corridors can only be approved at best after one or two hearings or with changes to the ordinance, both a lengthy and cumbersome process. The zoning regulations in effect deter both short- and long-term redevelopment.

To address these outdated regulations, Detroit has begun to tackle a revision of its zoning code, a multi year process.

Challenging and central as they are, functional zoning changes alone will not be enough to secure new life for Detroit's commercial corridors. A focus on excellence in design for all elements of the urban fabric is crucial to establishing dynamic places that support a diverse and vibrant community life.

**DETROIT'S ZONING MAPS,
WHICH DESIGNATE**

79%

OF THE APPROXIMATELY

**290
MILES**

**OF COMMERCIALLY ZONED STREETS AS
"B4," DATES LARGELY FROM THE ORIGINAL
CITY ZONING ORDINANCE OF 1940.**

TOWARD A PINK ZONE APPROACH FOR DETROIT

In 2015, the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department began researching the ideas of Andrés Duany, an architect, urban planner, and founding member of the Congress for New Urbanism. Duany railed against the cumbersome character of contemporary North American zoning regulations. These ideas were already beginning to influence urban planning conversations elsewhere - such as the 'pink planning' movement in the United Kingdom - and Maurice Cox believed that they could also benefit the City of Detroit's planning approach.

A Request for Qualifications identified three planning and design teams that combined local talent and national professional expertise with the courage to envision bold new approaches to land use regulation and design.

Three sites were chosen that represented the challenges and ingrained zoning ordinances that impeded swift, inexpensive redevelopment, yet still demonstrated strong potential for commercial corridors that could anchor and stabilize neighborhoods. Each team then contributed their findings to this report. The teams introduce themselves as follows:



FARR ASSOCIATES

Farr Associates is a firm of optimistic architects and planners passionate about cities, sustainability, and leadership. We operate with an intent to innovate, tracking opportunities to achieve local, regional, or even global "firsts." Our planners and architects work in integrated design teams to create award-winning designs that provide the most client benefit for the least cost. Our best work results from close collaboration with clients on projects that aspire to attain social, economic, and environmental goals, often at the crossroads of urbanism and architecture.



LAAVU

Laavu is a Detroit-based design practice, rooted in city-building. We believe the quality of life for people is grounded in building culturally based neighborhoods with strong identities, respect for the past, and innovative ideas for the future. We are inspired by the resilience, passion, and history of the people of Detroit, and understand that quality design is aspirational, yet must be grounded in the context of the local market.

Our master planning and architectural projects are supported by the strong relationships we engender with the people who will finance, engineer, build, and, most importantly, use the places we create.



SMITHGROUP JJR

SmithGroupJJR is an innovative, multifaceted design firm driven to yield transformative impact through architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, and environmental science. Our project teams deliver thoughtful, dynamic, and resilient places and buildings designed to address critical needs, transcend convention, and realize the aspirations of our clients.

We seek to create a legacy of inspiring places that enhance the environment and enrich the human spirit.

DEVELOPING THE PROJECT VISION

To begin, the teams were given a visioning task that sought to do two things:

1. stress test for regulatory barriers to redevelopment; and
2. add long-term value by imagining a Detroit of the future. Embedded within this part of the visioning task was an understanding of Detroit's values, lifestyle, and the role of its commercial corridors in the economic vitality of the city

The team sites were located throughout the city: one on the east side, one on the west, and one near the central core. Each site had its own community character, particular set of challenges, and constraints.

CREATING A UNIQUELY DETROIT PINK ZONE APPROACH TO REGULATORY REFORM

Because spontaneous, creative, and incremental development has already kept Detroit going through its toughest times, the Pink Zoning approach was given a name that would truly reflect this city of creativity, resourcefulness, and ingenuity.





The name "Mix Tape" was chosen, as it references the do-it-yourself and individualistic spirit of compiling favorite pieces of music, typically by different artists, onto a cassette tape or other medium.

Such activities are central to this city of blues, jazz, Motown, and more recently house and techno music, where improvisation is key. This notion of improvisation, call and response, an incremental give and take that builds on something already started, is inherent in the role of the DJ, who selects individual tracks tied to a particular theme, building according to the energy of the crowd, and creating a new and unique identity comprised of different parts.

Such a practice is intrinsic to African American creative processes. In the case of zoning for diverse mixed-use urban application, the city planner performs the function of the DJ, selecting appropriate uses from a regulatory system and applying them to create new and dynamic character-filled spaces.

A MIX TAPE IMAGINING OF THE CORRIDORS OF THE FUTURE

Detroit's entire history is a story of design innovation. The Woodward Plan, the assembly line, and the open-plan construction space all attest to this history of bold, effective design in the city. So this newly imagined regulatory code should allow for innovation and creativity through design and planning.

As the three teams were tasked to compile a visual mix tape of visionary practices, they divided the work into two phases:

First Phase: To imagine a future day in the life on Detroit's commercial corridors.

Second Phase: To develop visions of the types of places in which that life would unfold within the context of three vastly different locations in the city.

FUTURE CITY LIVING: THEMES OF DAILY LIFE

In the future, a high quality of urban life will be made possible by mixed-use places that are easy to access and are also linked to nearby multi-use open space.

To keep pace with an accelerating rate of social and technological change, the regulatory approval process will anticipate and promote innovation rather than react to it.

- Mixed-Use Places
- Ease of Access
- Multi-Use Open Space
- Anticipatory Regulations

REDEVELOPMENT VISIONS

While representing only a tiny fraction of the land area of the city, the three imagined redevelopment plans begin to suggest a startlingly fresh vision for all of Detroit.

The site located in the central region of Detroit on Gratiot Street, the arterial corridor that feeds into Eastern Market, is a large vacant parcel with commercial potential that could connect to the market. This site proved ideal to test a resilient and incremental approach to the roller-coaster retail industry of the 21st Century in a vision the team called "Big Box Done Right."

On the east side of the city, the East Warren site, located in a historic district anchored by the Alger Theater, the team imagined fully occupied storefronts and infill housing in "A Live + Work Village."

On the west side of the city on West Warren Street, a gap-toothed, auto-dominated patch, the team imagined a snug urban commercial node transitioning to agricultural re-commercialization.

Not surprisingly, some of the development practices embedded in these three visions of the future are in direct conflict with the

rules on the books. This study recommends short- and long-term reforms to spur both immediate and lasting impact. Each of the teams' innovative and provocative designs revealed insights and recommendations about the city's current commercial zoning (and other codes and practices). They are organized here into three actionable recommendations:

- Tweak or cut the B4 regulations that make good development harder to do;
- Create a Pink Zone/Mix Tape pilot to apply and test key policy and regulatory innovations; and
- Develop a long-term framework for a more comprehensive rethinking of the commercial corridor zoning.

REFORM OF THE B4 DISTRICT

The B4 zoning that governs more than 79 percent of all of Detroit's commercial corridors should be transformed in certain areas to permit specifics such as reductions in off-street parking, permits for upper-story residential development, and the requirement for basic elements of urban form, such as windows and doors on the street and parking to the side or the rear of the building.

PINK (REGULATORY INNOVATION) ZONE PILOT

To test regulatory innovation, this study recommends the creation of a Mix Tape (Regulatory Innovation) Zone Pilot, inspired by and acknowledging the organic, and often extra-legal, redevelopment projects that have occurred in Detroit over the last several decades. An area with dramatically reduced regulations – for possibilities such as subdivision, zoning, and building – may attract innovative investments and social structures. Given the amount of vacant land available for development in Detroit, this approach is certainly worth a try.

LONG-TERM ZONING FRAMEWORK

This study recommends Detroit embrace a form-based code approach to zoning. This place-based approach will rely on a detailed future land use plan reflecting the city's current and future policies, including walkable neighborhoods, live-work centers, and agricultural re-commercialization zones, among others.

IMMEDIATE CHANGES

A Mix Tape zoning ordinance amendment is currently in process that will codify the most immediately implementable changes recommended by our consultant teams. The ordinance will apply an overlay to focused portions of commercial corridors where development is beginning to occur and where the City is encouraging development through financial incentives.

Together, these amendments will make it easier to open the desired small-scale, mixed-use businesses and create more residential developments without having to spend time in conditional land-use hearings and in seeking parking variances from the Board of Zoning Appeals. Ultimately, these proposed changes will pave the way for the return of development projects that make many areas desirable.

The full descriptions of the ordinance changes can be found on pages 125 – 134.

These changes to the ordinance will result in the following improvements:





FRAMING THE PROBLEM

CURRENT ZONING

Detroit's commercial corridors once formed the scaffold of the city's entrepreneurial and social activity, punctuated by active commercial hubs in individual neighborhoods, each with their own identity. Since the mid-20th century, over 75 percent of the approximately 290 miles of commercial streets have been zoned as "B4," sometimes requiring a special land use hearing and or variances from the Board of Zoning Appeals and sometimes a rezoning, making new mixed-use development lengthy and cumbersome.

DEFINING THE CORRIDOR

The growth and stabilization of Detroit's neighborhoods are greatly affected by the health and development of the commercial corridors, which often connect, separate, or form the vital core of these communities. While these corridors serve the neighborhoods with retail, services, and employment sources, the neighborhoods in turn provide cultural identity, and unique characteristics that can attract development.

Walkability and small-scale, incremental development are key to maintaining a healthy relationship between the community and corridor, engendering shared economic benefits for the city, developers, and residents. Zoning and regulatory reform must focus on supporting small-scale development that takes place over time and focuses on encouraging local foot traffic.

For the purposes of the Mix Tape initiative, commercial corridors are understood to be localized sections of certain radial, major, and secondary thoroughfares, which have historically contained a density of commercial and retail establishments.

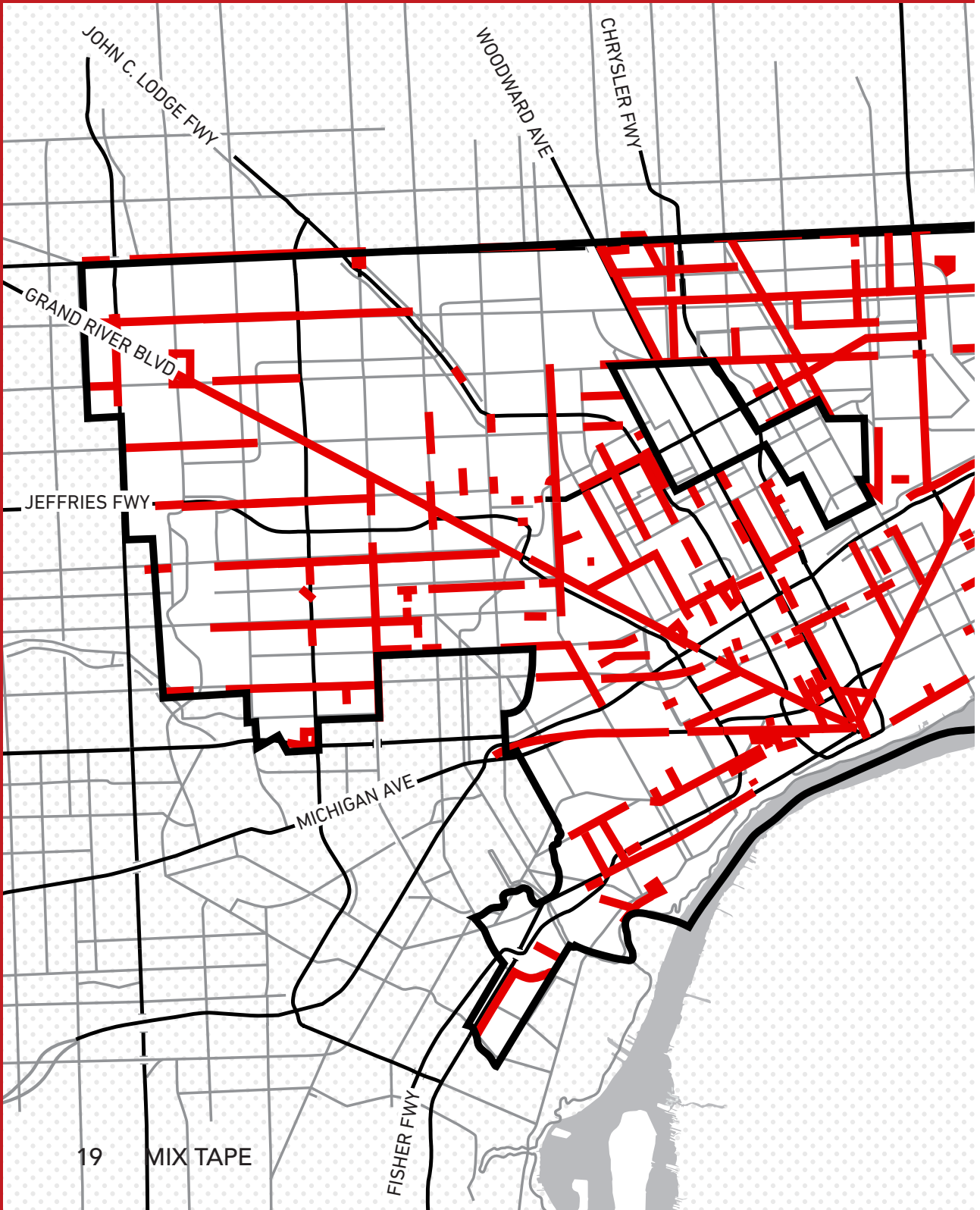




CORKTOWN DETROIT

As Detroit's oldest neighborhood, Corktown has gained international attention for its creative entrepreneurial spirit and culinary culture, with new restaurants and retail spaces opening regularly to rave reviews.






EXISTING ZONING CONDITIONS

The current zoning of commercial corridors in Detroit produces a number of conditions that unintentionally inhibit small incremental development. Requiring a hearing for residential units above commercial uses, antiquated and strict parking minimums, and a general lack of support for walkability are all symptoms of an out-of-date bulk zoning ordinance.

Current zoning along thoroughfares is overwhelmingly homogeneous despite the considerable differences in neighborhood character



The map displays a network of streets in Detroit. Major thoroughfares are highlighted with thick red lines, while other streets are shown in thin grey lines. A thick black line outlines a specific area of interest. Labels for 'VAN DYKE', 'E EDEL FORD FWY', and 'JEFFERSON AVE' are visible. The map also shows a grey area representing a body of water at the bottom right.

As this map shows, the vast majority of Detroit's radial, major and secondary thoroughfares – along which all of the commercial corridors exist – are identified as one single zoning classification: B4.

Detroit's code does specify six commercial/retail-oriented zoning classifications intended to allow for appropriate types of development in the many automotive-dominated areas of the city. The possibility also exists to create a special zoning overlay district. While the six business zoning classifications address the quantitative outcomes for the commercial corridors (density, building scale, parking, etc.), the district overlays attempt to accommodate the qualitative aspects of the individual neighborhood conditions (walkability, historic assets, aesthetics, etc.).

Special Zoning Districts (SD1, SD2, etc.) can also be applied to achieve mixed-use development and promote walkability. However, while the SD codes adequately address many of the concerns for small-scale incremental development, they require a site to undergo the often-onerous process of rezoning.

Despite the availability of these options, the vast majority of the commercial corridors are zoned B4. This one category on its own lacks sufficient flexibility to address the myriad conditions found along these corridors, and stifles mixed-use development by not allowing any kind of residential use. As a result, current zoning along thoroughfares is overwhelmingly homogeneous despite the considerable differences in neighborhood character.

QUANTITATIVE BUSINESS DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION

RESTRICTED BUSINESS DISTRICT (B1)*
Building height 1-2 floors max



LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT + RESIDENTIAL



SHOPPING DISTRICT (B3)**



GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (B4) *
Building height 3 floors max



MAJOR BUSINESS DISTRICT (B5)



GENERAL SERVICE DISTRICT (B6)*



SPECIAL ZONING DISTRICTS

Could be considered the city's most underutilized strategic physical asset



SD1

LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT + RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

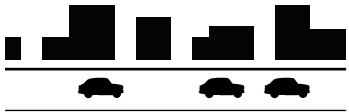


TIAL DISTRICT (B2) *



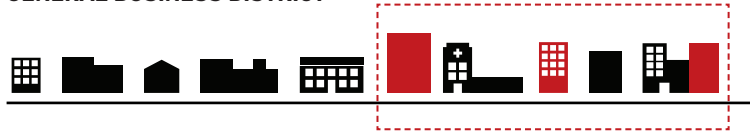
SD2

GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



QUALITATIVE (OVERLAYS)

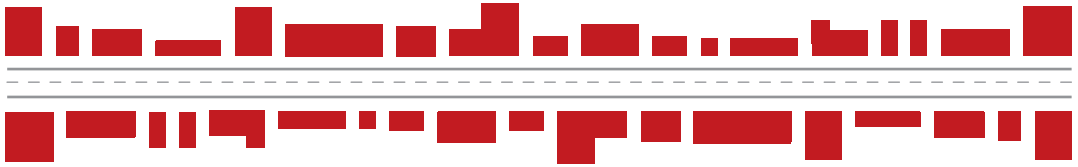
GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



* RESIDENTIAL NOT ALLOWED BY RIGHT
 ** AUTO-ORIENTED SHOPPING MALLS ONLY

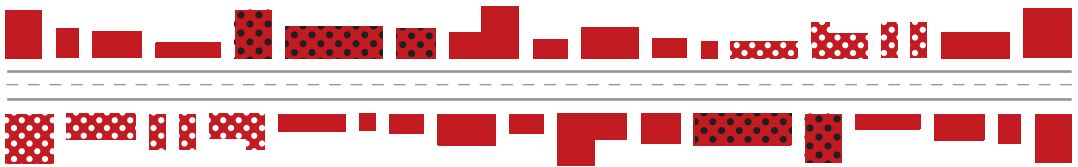
CURRENT ZONING

Thoroughfare that has same zoning regardless of residents' needs



STEP 1 : APPLY OVERLAY

Apply Mix Tape Overlay to better accommodate the quantitative outcomes for the commercial corridor



STEP 2 : MIX TAPE ZONING

Thoroughfare that has multiple zoning types B1-B6 within each corridor



MIX TAPE : A SOLUTION

A regulatory strategy that is more accommodating and dynamic can yield shared economic benefits for the city, developers, and residents alike. Mix Tape can be initiated in two phases: first, introduce the zoning overlay with quickly implementable changes, then introduce mix tape zoning that takes advantage of the full array of the six business district types along a thoroughfare.

Although the SD classification is currently used in specific development initiatives, a more efficient short-term strategy for improving on Detroit's commercial corridors on a larger scale would be to modify the existing B4 categories and overlay districts to incorporate the successful elements of Special Development zones SD1 and SD2.

While B4 can be modified to better accommodate the quantitative outcomes for the commercial corridors (density,

building scale, parking, etc.), a more selective use of district overlays can also be deployed to improve the qualitative aspects of the individual neighborhood conditions (walkability, historic character, aesthetics, etc.).

This would allow the Planning and Development Department to achieve the desired results of Special Development zones without the need to rezone vast areas of the city, and can serve as an immediate and substantive first step to achieving meaningful growth along the commercial corridors.

The second, longer-term strategy for modifying Detroit's zoning and promoting walkability will be to break down this homogeneous blanket of B4 designations by implementing a mix of improved B classifications and overlays along the corridors.





HISTORIC ASSET EAST WARREN

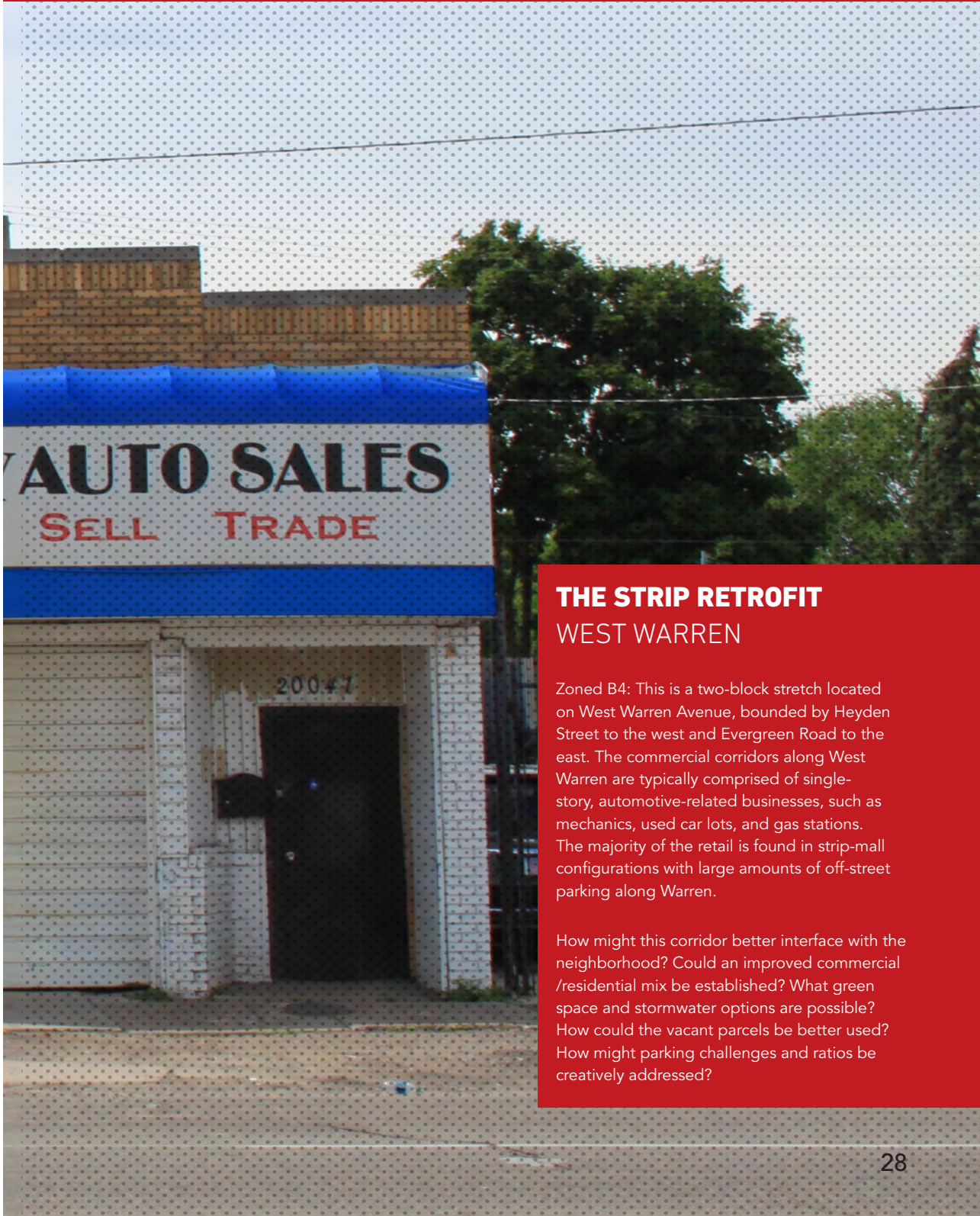
Zoned B4: The East Warren site is a two-block stretch on Detroit's outer east side, at the intersection with East Outer Drive. The historic Alger Theater and a public library anchor the intersection, giving way to underused, zero-lot line commercial building stock, west to Audubon Road and east to Kensington Avenue. Much of East Warren's historic fabric is intact. The commercial corridors along this stretch provide two-story retail and services addressing the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.

How could this historic asset help to activate the strip as a whole? How might the historic theater support a mixed-use, residential addition, or support other forms of entertainment? Can the single-story buildings support additional stories above the first floor? How might adjacent rights-of-way, alleyways, medians, and the thoroughfare itself help to foster the intersection's sense of place?









THE STRIP RETROFIT WEST WARREN

Zoned B4: This is a two-block stretch located on West Warren Avenue, bounded by Heyden Street to the west and Evergreen Road to the east. The commercial corridors along West Warren are typically comprised of single-story, automotive-related businesses, such as mechanics, used car lots, and gas stations. The majority of the retail is found in strip-mall configurations with large amounts of off-street parking along Warren.

How might this corridor better interface with the neighborhood? Could an improved commercial/residential mix be established? What green space and stormwater options are possible? How could the vacant parcels be better used? How might parking challenges and ratios be creatively addressed?



THE PRIME PARCEL

GRATIOT

Zoned B4, B2 and R3: As one of the principal radial streets in Detroit, Gratiot has a nearly continuous stretch of commercial corridor broken up by sporadic patches of vacant land. Development on the corridor is of a larger scale, comprising multistory retail and commercial buildings.

How could the huge potential of this site be best realized? How might a pedestrian-scale street network be reintroduced? What would the best possible mixed-use, residential development look like? How could it innovate in the fulfillment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design, and other federal regulations that aspire to provide equal access to all?





IMAGINING THE FUTURE

USING INNOVATIVE DESIGN TO ACTIVATE COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Many of Detroit's African American residents have remained in Detroit through its toughest times, improvising to create new uses out of old and build an urban life in the face of abandonment. Inspired by this example of ingenuity and resilience, the City of Detroit can adopt new approaches to design and planning that bring dynamic, innovative activity to the city's streets.

THEMES + INNOVATIONS

In order to respond to a mandate to create more diverse, walkable corridors that comprise a mix of:

- residential uses;
- commercial uses;
- employment opportunities; and
- connections to open space.

The teams explored the restrictions that current regulations placed on such development, and compared what Mix Tape zoning might offer. They imagined potential new life for their sites through the application of a variety of possibilities that embrace diversity of use.

MIXED USE

OPEN SPACE

MOBILITY

PROCESS



LIVE + WORK

BIG-BOX DONE RIGHT

DECOMMERCIALIZING
RETAIL STRIPS



PRODUCTIVE LAND

INNOVATIVE
LANDSCAPE

COMMUNITY SPACE



STREETSCAPE +
PARKING

RE-IMAGINING
THE ALLEY

DE-EMPHASIZING
THE AUTOMOBILE



CLEAR +
TRANSPARENT

INNOVATIVE
+ ADAPTIVE

CAPACITY + DRIVE

APPLYING MIX TAPE: RESIDENTIAL

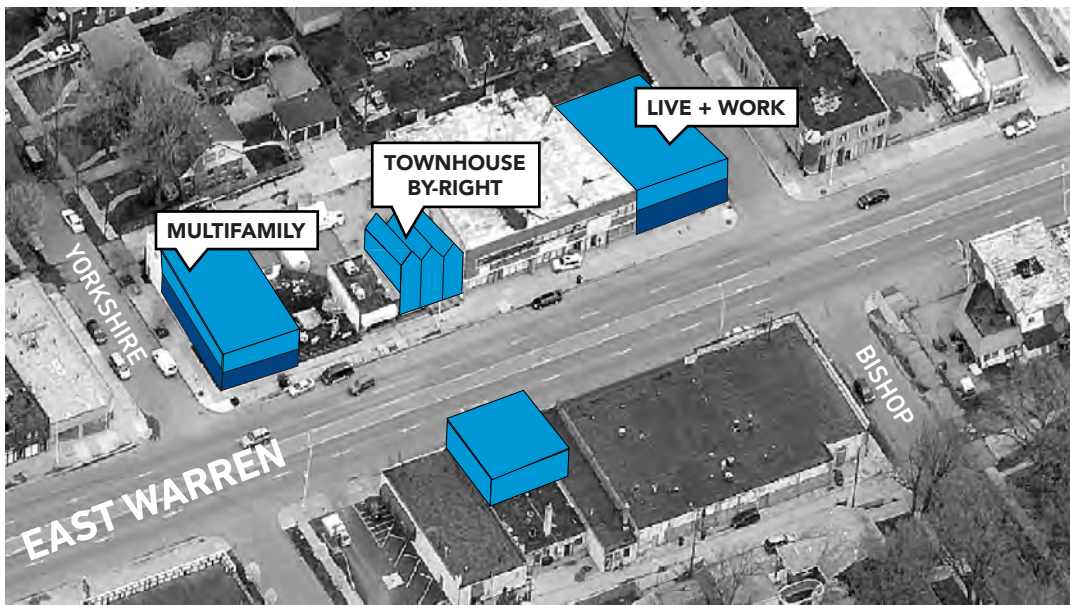
CURRENT ZONING

- Limited residential by-right uses, loft/multifamily only conditional uses (except in main street overlay areas). Sec. 61-9-74. By-right residential uses
- 20' setbacks from front and 35' setback in rear. Sec. 61-13-25. B4 Setbacks



MIX TAPE

- By-right – Add [1] loft. [2] multi-family above first floor commercial
- Revised front and back setbacks



MIXED USE



Detroit’s zoning code draws rigid lines between many uses, including residential and commercial. As cities adapt to new futures, a growing appreciation for the fundamental benefits of innovative exchanges is driving an increased demand for a mix of uses, not just in central business districts, but also in our neighborhoods. This new mixed use must be adaptive, flexible, and inclusive, and must consider diverse uses, forms, people, and ambitions.

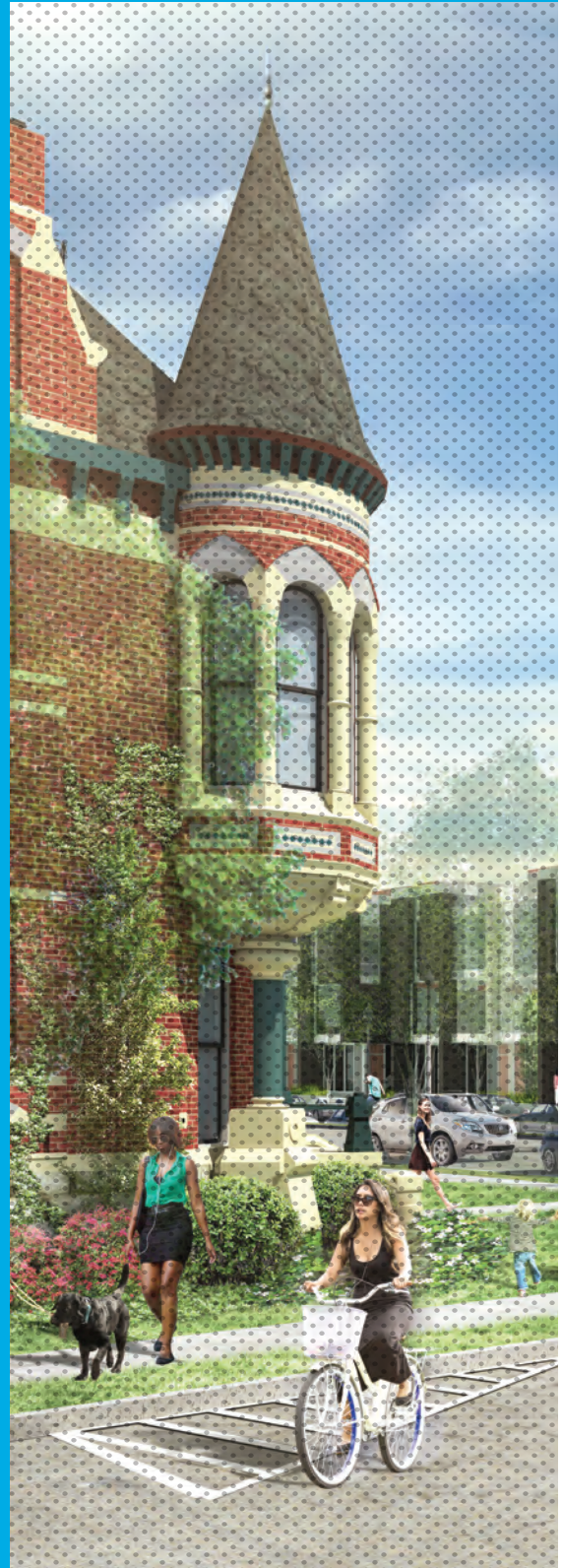
The most significant and impactful change in uses to Detroit’s corridors can be made through truly innovative live/work solutions, the application of a uniquely Detroit big box model, and appropriate considerations for decommercialized corridors that are unlikely to have retail return.



LIVE + WORK

Live/work is not a new concept, but Detroit can lead the way in defining and implementing forward-looking applications that are unique benefits to this city. In the future, Detroit's commercial corridors must:

- encourage by-right mid-rise “missing middle” residential uses that provide a variety of housing choices (two-family, multi-family, lofts, etc.) in more zones;
- accommodate contemporary changing uses, such as maker spaces, and co-working locations; and
- provide incentives and provisions for live/work that incorporate an inherent flexibility for making such facilities naturally adaptable to changing trends in work patterns, and experience-based retail.





CITY MODERN BRUSH PARK, DETROIT

Located in Midtown Detroit, Brush Park is an iconic historic neighborhood. It currently has extreme vacancy but with strong potential for redevelopment. It is the site of City Modern, Detroit's first modern-style housing to be built in 50 years, designed to sympathetically reflect the walkability of the neighborhood, and employs the essential missing-middle housing option. In anticipation of future development, the city is exploring the use of form-based code to regulate scale and massing as a means of honoring the historic character of the neighborhood.



DOWNTOWN WALGREEN CHICAGO

On the bustling corner of State Street and Madison Street in Downtown Chicago, this Walgreen sits perfectly in the ornately designed ground-floor retail space. Situated below seventeen stories of office, this modern Walgreen is deftly integrated into a building that was built in 1905. In addition, this everyday retailer is an excellent addition to the retail schematic of Chicago, bordering niche retailers as well as the downtown Target.



BIG-BOX DONE RIGHT

While not necessarily representative of the small-scale incremental development that the Mix Tape initiative is intended to support, big box retail outlets are a major form of retail that is missing from Detroit's commercial landscape. Many community members have been vocal about their desire to add this type of retail choice to their local options, and capture the millions of dollars of expendable income that would otherwise be spent in the adjacent suburbs. To do the big box model 'right', it should embrace the potential for a mixed-use development, complementing diverse retail needs within the local economy. A collaborative investment model should be encouraged to partner large companies with smaller developers, to engage their varied expertise and local knowledge base. Structured parking above the big box stores eliminates the need for large surface lots, making way instead for publicly accessible green space.

APPLYING MIX TAPE : COMMERCIAL

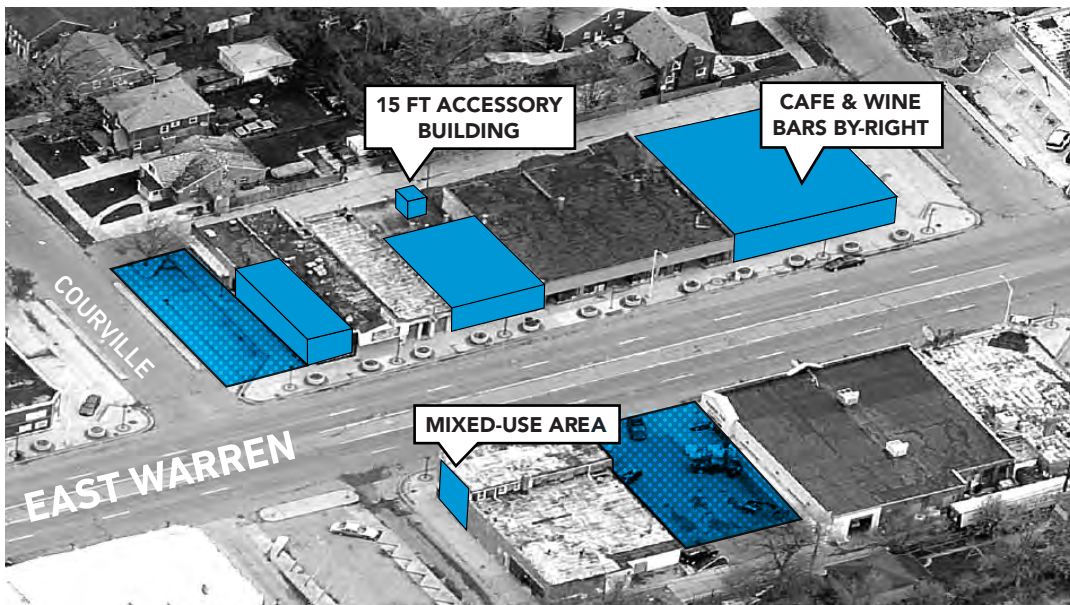
CURRENT ZONING

- Light manufacturing such as jewelry, lithography, and apparel are conditional uses only. Sec. 61-9-83. Conditional manufacturing and industrial uses
- Parking structures and parking lots are a by-right use. Sec. 61-9-76. By-right retail, service, and commercial uses



MIX TAPE

- By-right light industrial (e.g., maker's space, art and artisan studios, light manufacturing)
- Remove parking lots
- Revise setbacks





MAXIMUM HEIGHT

In order to preserve human scale, the height limit should be 45 feet for non-mixed use, 60 feet for mixed use, not to exceed five stories. Where a lot fronts on a right-of-way that is more than 60 feet wide and where the outermost point of the proposed building is at least 40 feet from all R1, R2, and R3 Districts, the maximum height may be increased one foot for each foot of right-of-way width greater than 60 feet.



DECOMMERCIALIZING RETAIL STRIP

Detroit's substantial depopulation, coupled with the general decline of brick-and-mortar retail, requires repurposing once-commercialized corridors. While such repurposing may seem to be a demonstration of failure, it can initiate a new era of innovation, resilience, restoration of ecosystems, introduction of new paths to local self-reliance and community collaboration, and productive landscapes (recreation, agriculture, wetlands restoration, forestry) in places that have been dormant and blighted for decades. Successful transitional and open space uses must consider:

- appropriate short-term and long-term balance of uses that render community and citywide benefit;
- social, economic, and ecological factors that define the line between commercialization and decommercialization; and
- enduring financial sources for capital implementation, ongoing maintenance, and programming





PARKING DAY DETROIT

Parking Day is an annual worldwide event that attempts to advance the dialogue of urban space, specifically in commercial and retail corridors. The main objective is to temporarily transform a parking space into an exploration of urban context, using the imagination to devise unique solutions to diverse issues. The larger goal of Parking Day and the creation of "parklets" is to help community residents and planners see paved parking in a new light, as a potential asset that can be repurposed to green community space.

APPLYING MIX TAPE : OPEN SPACE

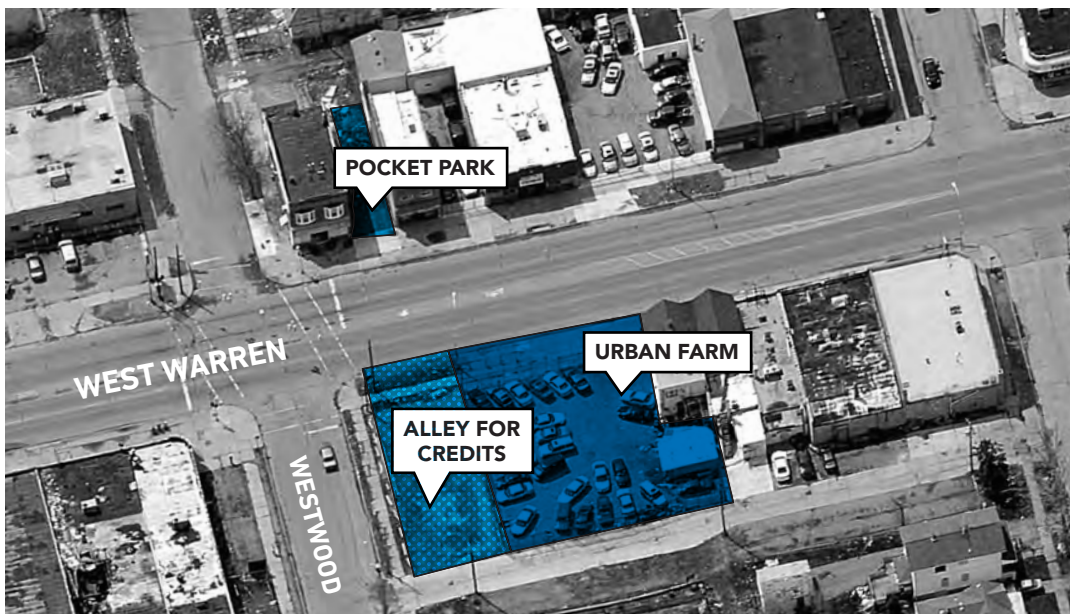
CURRENT ZONING

- Farmers markets, greenhouses, hoop-houses, urban farms, and urban gardens are a by-right use. Sec. 61-9-78. By-right other uses
- Pervious pavers are prohibited in areas of off-street parking, loading, circulation, and vehicle display unless granted by multiple departments. Sec. 61-14-150



MIX TAPE

- On-street pocket parks conditional, no fences
- Alleys used for stormwater credits
- Urban farm conditional use



OPEN SPACE



We must reconsider our open spaces as significant productive assets that can contribute to community street life.

Our open spaces can be adapted to serve stormwater, wastewater, energy, transportation, and waste infrastructure systems in ways that are less expensive to construct and maintain than conventional systems.

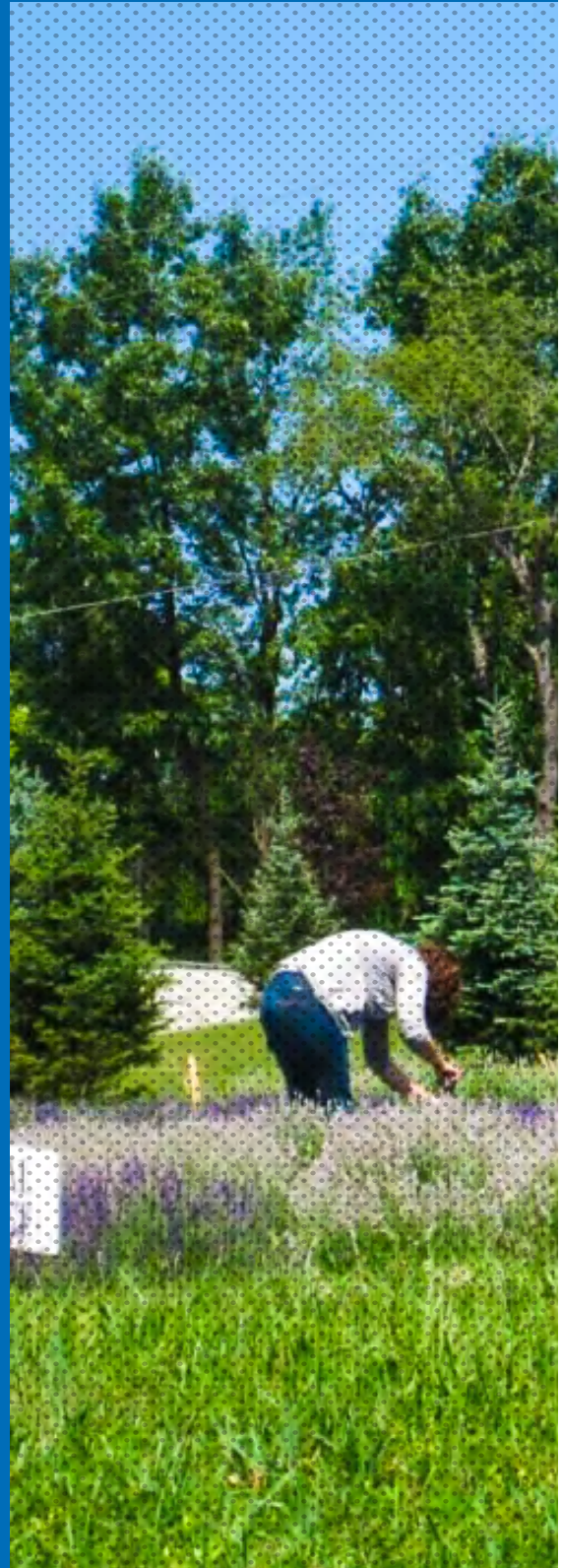
Many cities are ahead of Detroit in these efforts, but due to the quantities and location of available open space in the city, Detroit can provide environmental, economic, social, and physical character benefits at a transformational scale. Such an approach can be a model for other post-industrial cities.



PRODUCTIVE LAND

Open spaces and landscapes are multi-dimensional and must perform on many levels as part of a connected, healthy ecosystem in the city. Our landscapes will contribute to health and well-being, carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change, urban agriculture, resilience and risk management, biodiversity, social equity, water management, active living, and much more. Our productive landscapes will become:

- anchors for neighborhood stabilization, revitalization, and growth;
- transformative areas for energy and food production;
- sources of gainful and sustainable employment; and
- centers for differentiating innovation and research.

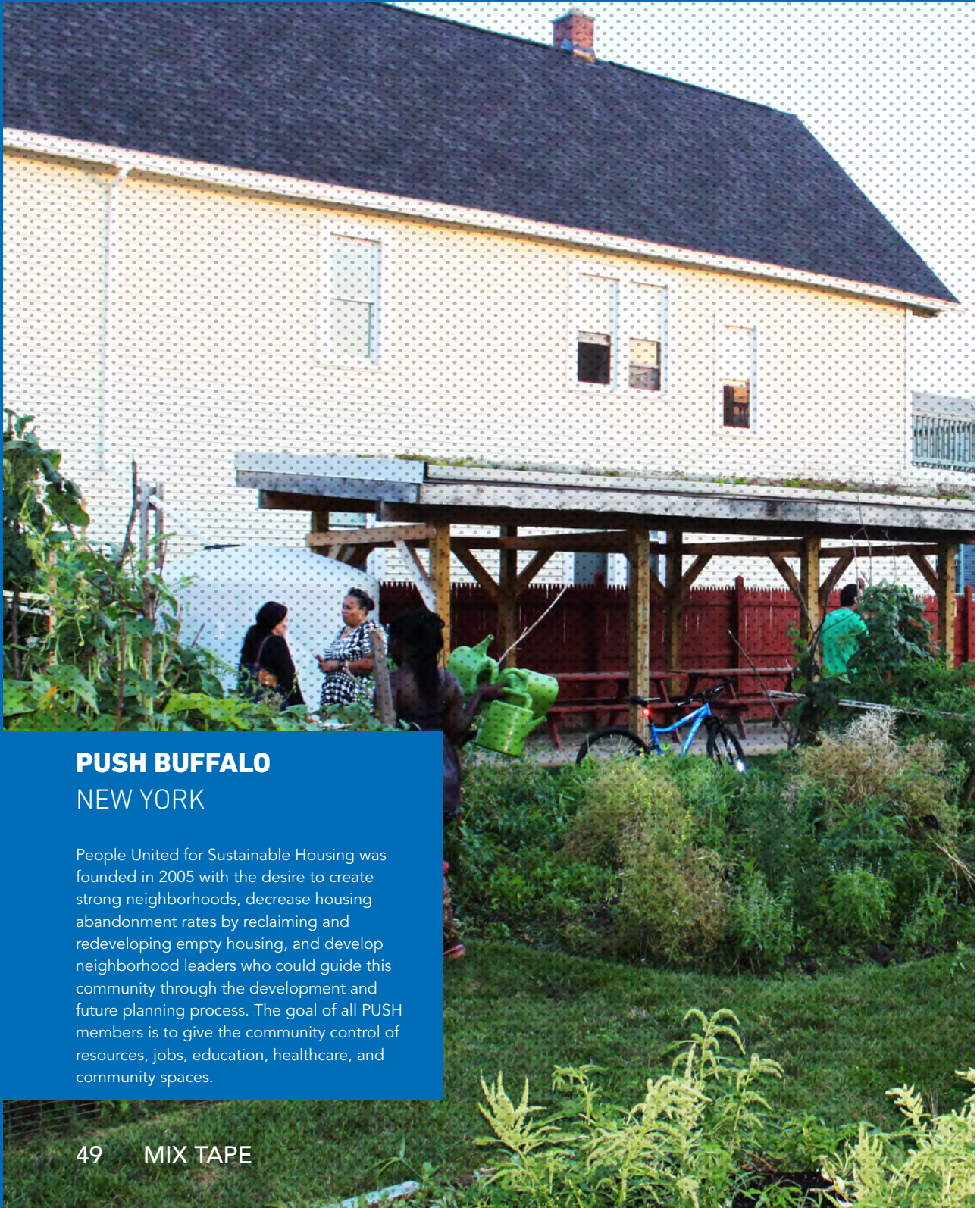




YULE LOVE IT LAVENDER FARM DETROIT

Starting in 2005, Iris Lee Underwood planted a one-acre piece of land with 1,000 lavender plants. The first year, she held the Michigan Lavender Festival, creating jobs for many of her neighbors and also drawing many volunteers. She has now expanded her farm such that it has an indoor and outdoor event space. This farm has not only revitalized land, but also cultivated a community.

Image Credit: Yule Love It Lavender Farm-
Julie Margo. 26 June 2010, CC BY 2.0



PUSH BUFFALO NEW YORK

People United for Sustainable Housing was founded in 2005 with the desire to create strong neighborhoods, decrease housing abandonment rates by reclaiming and redeveloping empty housing, and develop neighborhood leaders who could guide this community through the development and future planning process. The goal of all PUSH members is to give the community control of resources, jobs, education, healthcare, and community spaces.

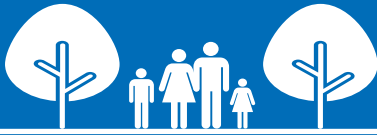


INNOVATIVE LANDSCAPES

Detroit sits at the center of 84 percent of North America's fresh surface water supply. In 2011, Detroit had 36 direct combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharges, 31 more than the EPA limit. In the future, we must overcome deficiencies in man-made infrastructure by utilizing and integrating available land in the context of natural and man-made watersheds to avoid significant infrastructure projects. We will:

- incentivize green infrastructure and integrated stormwater management at the parcel scale;
- require that citywide stormwater goals are met at the neighborhood and/or man-made watershed scale;
- allow for large-scale stormwater management swaps and trading of stormwater credits across the city, establishing a market-based and beneficial system; and
- encourage the use of former housing basement/foundations (partial) depressions to support block/site stormwater management.





COMMUNITY SPACE

Central to considerations for zoning change is the foregrounding of community understanding, engagement, and respect. Future open and community spaces must be created with a sensitivity for existing corridor and neighborhood uses; Detroit's Planning and Development Department should provide easy-to-understand and transparent ideas required for appropriate land use regulation. We believe residents should be introduced to the process and enabled to participate so that community spaces are:

- unique and reflective of the neighborhood's needs;
- active and spatially appropriate; and
- flexible to manage seasonal and event-based changes.





SOUTH CONGRESS STREET AUSTIN, TEXAS

SoCo, as locals know it, is a neighborhood of Austin known for its eclectic small retail establishments, food truck rallies, and pop-up markets. Located on a main thoroughfare, the area was rehabilitated within the last decade and now touts itself as a funky, fun, and highly frequented section of town. With a vintage vibe and constant live music, this commercial corridor now feels like a downtown district.

APPLYING MIX TAPE : MOBILITY

CURRENT ZONING

- One 12' x 35' parking space minimum for commercial building from 1,600 sq. ft. to 10,000 sq. ft. Sec. 61-14-84 Parking for commercial spaces
- Gas stations are a conditional use. Sec. 61-9-82 Conditional retail, service, and commercial uses for B4



MIX TAPE

- Shift parking minimums to parking maximums
- Limit gas stations to one per intersection, restricted in overlay Gas Station Design Guidelines.
- Add bike lanes and conditional use parking
- Reduced parking requirements
- Make single-loaded parking slips conditional, restricted in overlays



MOBILITY



The way we move around our cities is changing rapidly. Detroit, where the American automobile industry was born, can lead a new mobility revolution because our expansive freeway and roadway system, manifested in the mid-20th century through poorly considered federal policy, now provides opportunities to leverage this overbuilt infrastructure to sustain greater centers of density, improved character, and reconfigured parking that favors the pedestrian.

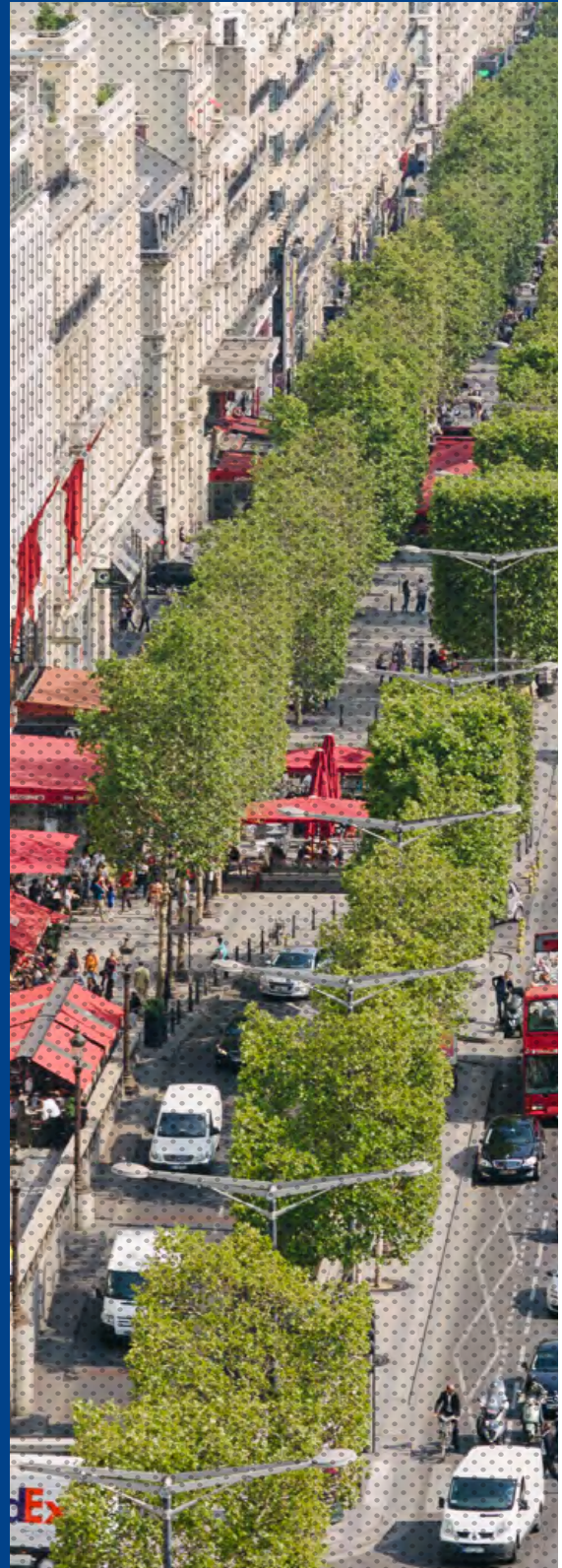
In Detroit, autonomous vehicles, in conjunction with creative urban design solutions, may be a necessary catalytic agent for shared mobility in a city that has never truly embraced public transit. The impact on individuals' quality of life also cannot be overstated, as 84 percent of city residents commute via personal automobile, yet one in five adults does not have access to a car.

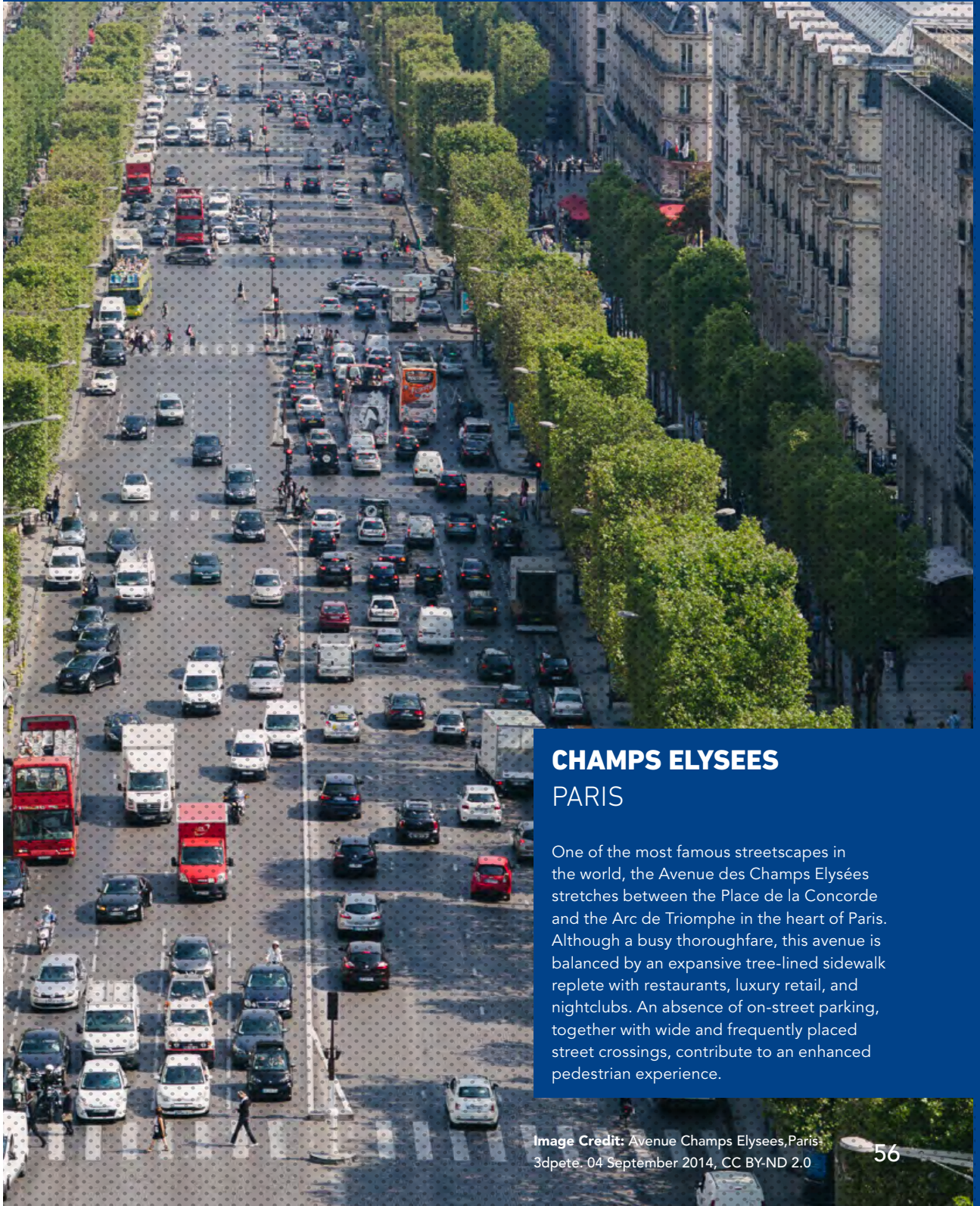


STREET + PARKING

As the foundation for the future of new connectivity models in Detroit, we propose mobility-oriented changes to the zoning code:

- All streets are designed for pedestrians first, with the flexibility to accommodate rapidly changing transportation modes
- A street's success is measurable; data can be collected to assess its performance
- Targeted wireless mesh networks should be placed within neighborhood corridors as part of the public realm
- Design should support local power generation and application to the grid, including solar, biodigestion, and other forms of energy
- Conventional off-street parking minimum requirements should be removed
- Revenue sharing from parking meters would be localized and redistributed to support future local development and corridor maintenance





CHAMPS ELYSEES PARIS

One of the most famous streetscapes in the world, the Avenue des Champs Élysées stretches between the Place de la Concorde and the Arc de Triomphe in the heart of Paris. Although a busy thoroughfare, this avenue is balanced by an expansive tree-lined sidewalk replete with restaurants, luxury retail, and nightclubs. An absence of on-street parking, together with wide and frequently placed street crossings, contribute to an enhanced pedestrian experience.

Image Credit: Avenue Champs Elysees, Paris
3dpete. 04 September 2014, CC BY-ND 2.0



THE BELT DETROIT

The Belt is a culturally defined alley whose driving force is public art installations, both local and international. The alley's design and programming encourage walkability in what would have previously been considered an undesirable liminal space. This unique and slightly mysterious destination has greatly contributed to the design narrative of the city.



REIMAGINING THE ALLEY

Detroit's alleys represent a significant component of the urban landscape. The adaptive reuse of alleyways throughout the city can provide meaningful productive uses, social connection, and mobility, and serve as part of a holistic circulation network.

Streetwall-to-alley transects and profiles will vary by urban context and unique location in the city, but generally support improved walkability, consolidated retail, and appropriate productive, parking, and working areas.

Rethinking the alley must also consider flexible regulation in the context of decommercializing strips, where future urban frontage may serve as productive landscape and new infill structures that front the alley can become sentinel houses with new "eyes on the street" in our neighborhoods.



DE-EMPHASIZING THE AUTOMOBILE

The automobile currently dominates the public realm along thoroughfares across the city. This is particularly exemplified on East Warren, West Warren, and Gratiot, the sites we chose to pilot.

The way we use automobiles is changing rapidly, and changes to our current automobile-dominated zoning code could yield exponential improvements in short, medium, and long-term time frames. These changes could include right-of-way reductions, street width and use adjustments, adjacent building activation, and gas station retrofitting.

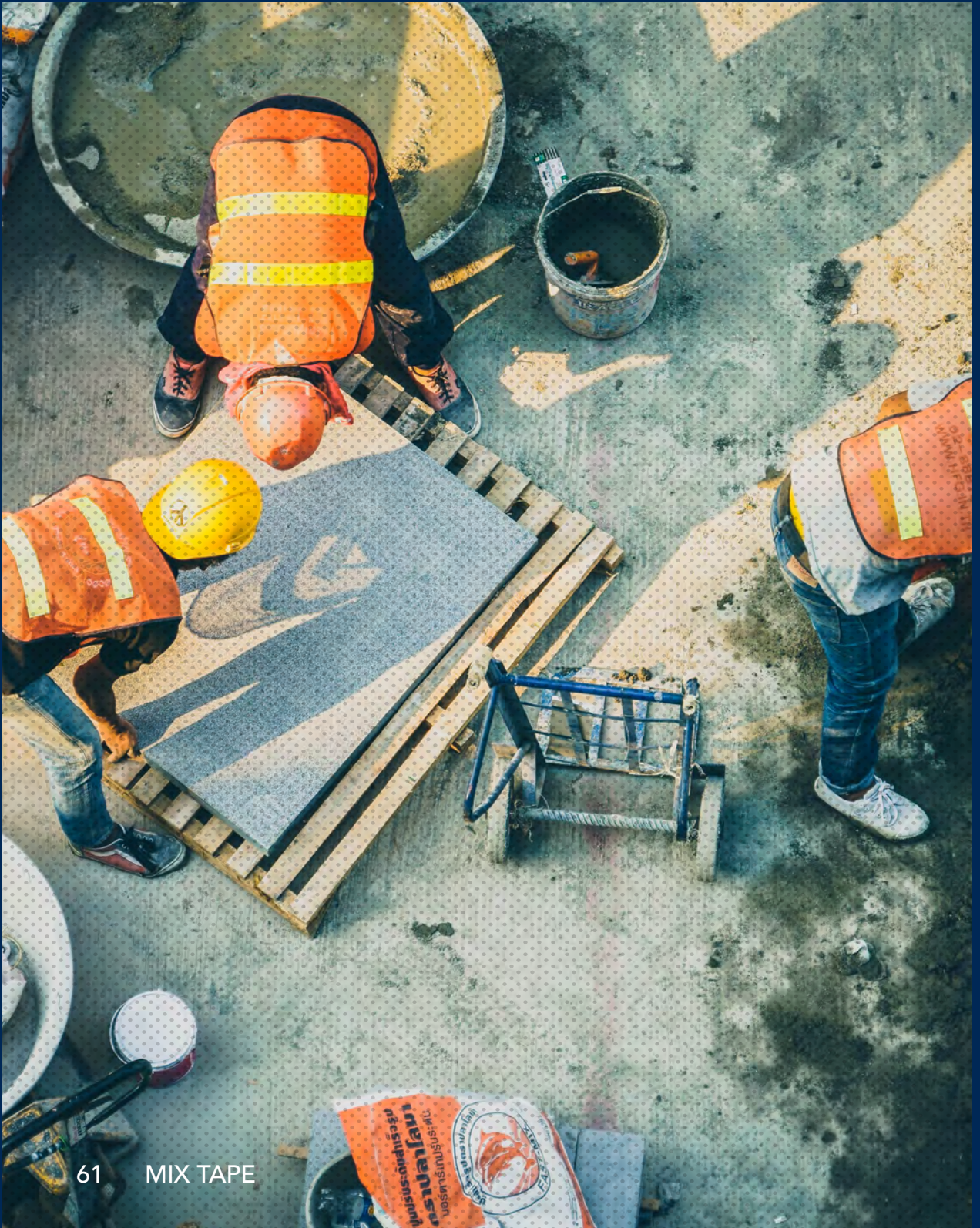
The resulting solutions should yield more human-centric solutions, improved (and/or reduced) on-street parking at key commercial nodes, activated medians, productive landscapes, improved bike and pedestrian space, and the repurposing of vacant and underutilized off-street parking for infill housing and development or productive landscapes along our corridors.





SLOW ROLL DETROIT

Slow Roll is an education-oriented, all-inclusive cycling event that promotes non-vehicular traffic as well as exploration of the city. This long-established and highly popular program has encouraged improvements to bike and pedestrian space, increasing human safety and engaging local Detroit businesses in support of bicyclists. Some special programs highlight different areas of the city to encourage activation, familiarity, and greater comfort within the city limits.



PROCESS



CLEAR +
TRANSPARENT



INNOVATIVE
+ ADAPTIVE



CAPACITY + DRIVE

Where urban development processes were once the select domain of a few, contemporary urban recovery requires a more nimble and transparent set of processes to accommodate broad authorship, clarity, adaptability, and the motivating elements necessary to improve Detroit's regulatory system.

Currently, small developers must navigate a complex and burdensome regulatory process, struggling to obtain vacant parcels from the city, and witness sometimes poor enforcement of the zoning code for bad actors within the neighborhoods. This must change if Detroit is to gain trust, encourage small development as part of a wide range of development types, and promote innovation throughout the city.

Detroit's initial engagement with future developments occurs in the Site Plan Review process. Site Plan review is conducted primarily by the Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) to ensure that the proposal is in accordance with all applicable zoning, fire, and building codes.

In order to encourage and establish successful small-scale incremental investments on Detroit's existing commercial corridors, Detroit must engender a strong connection to the adjacent neighborhoods in support of these areas. This can be achieved by a process that supports a culture of walkability for residents who typically patronize nearby commercial establishments.

Working with the Department of Neighborhoods, the City can develop short-term strategies for activating existing corridors with community events such as street fairs and makers markets, to help stimulate the local economy and attract future developments. The City can appoint a Walkability Liaison to assist local community development organizations with a simplified permitting process. This liaison can connect larger-scale policy initiatives from the Planning and Development Department with grassroots efforts of neighborhood groups to promote and celebrate entrepreneurship, health and safety, and general community improvement.

CITY OF DETROIT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

SITE PLAN REVIEW

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS
& PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (PDD)



SITE PLAN REVIEW

Review compliance with zoning and stormwater ordinances

PDD is responsible for reviewing proposed developments for their appropriateness within the context of relevant Historic District, Overlays, and Neighborhood plans



IF NEEDED, BZA/SLU HEARINGS

CODE REVIEW

BUILDING SAFETY ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENTS (BSEED)



STRUCTURAL



TRADES



ZONING



FIRE

BSEED ensures that the proposal is in accordance with all applicable zoning, fire, building codes...



APPROVALS

PERMIT



CONSTRUCTION

Inspections occur during and after construction, with a certificate of occupancy issued after all inspections are passed.



CLEAR + TRANSPARENT

Realizing more informed, flexible, and accommodating regulatory measures is critical for Detroit's continued recovery, but none of these measures can have adequate impact without a clear and transparent process that is accessible and accountable to resident stakeholders, developers, and investors working to improve Detroit.

Regulatory systems, such as zoning, that govern so much of our physical, social, and economic environment, have historically remained within a complex bureaucratic system.

To advance more nimble, incremental, and inclusive design and development processes, this system must be reevaluated and made more practical and usable to a wider array of contributors.





DETROIT COMMUNITY

Detroit is a city with a unique and significant history that is still being shaped today. The wealth of diversity here can realize its full potential through clear and transparent processes that ensure equal access and accommodation for all.



NATURALICIOUS PONYRIDE, DETROIT

Naturalicious, an all-natural hair and beauty firm, established a manufacturing office in shared space provided by Ponyride. The mission of Ponyride is to act as a catalyst for deploying social capital to a diverse group of artists, creative entrepreneurs, and makers committed to creating sustainable communities in Detroit.



INNOVATIVE + ADAPTIVE

Just as cities adapt and change over time, reflecting the complex array of social, economic, and physical facets at work in the urban environment, so too must the regulatory processes that manage these changes. Systems that were formed to accommodate relatively defined and one-dimensional financing, program, and construction techniques now must be adapted to engage far more complex, sophisticated, and incremental development processes that incorporate a range of authors, financing methods, and design outcomes.

From project genesis to completion, the city's regulatory process must match and engage the shifting methods by which projects are conceived and delivered to achieve the best possible outcomes.

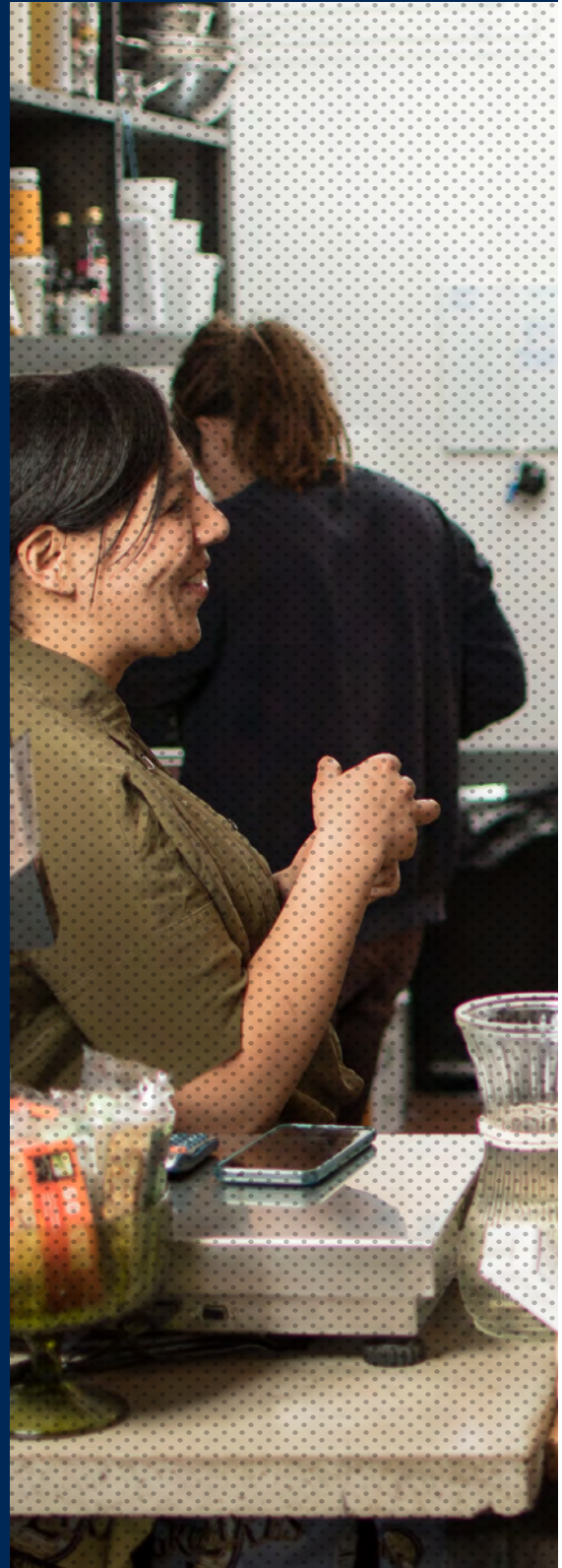


CAPACITY + DRIVE

Whether a dedicated community development organization, city regulator, developer, or resident, each has a vital role to play within the city's continued development process.

To ensure resulting development meets the needs of surrounding communities, each must have the capacity and motivation to realize the most dynamic, equitable, and durable benefits.

In development environments of increased complexity, especially within highly iterative and incremental change, accessible programs must be developed to support the continued capacity of all contributors.





FARMERS HAND CORKTOWN, DETROIT

Co-owners Kiki Louya and Rohani Foulkes came together in 2016 to bring their vision of an entirely locally sourced market to life. This market now works with over 100 small food businesses to stock their shelves with all Michigan made products. With this vision, they have brought together a multitude of fresh foods, specialty products, and handmade goods under one roof, strengthening the relationships between local consumers and the Detroit food industry.



SPURRING DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT DYNAMIC ACTIVITY ON DETROIT'S COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Having identified the issues that impede mixed-use, diverse development opportunities, the teams then proposed strategies for remedying the regulations, and identified specific solutions for each site and theme presented. Each strategy responds to a specific theme identified as essential to creating a more streamlined regulatory process, reducing bureaucratic obstacles, while allowing for a more inclusive and diverse set of uses. The four themes – Mixed Use, Open Space, Mobility, and Process – represent a framework against which to test strategies, applicable to issues inherent in the existing conditions of each site.

APPLYING THEMES TO STRATEGIES

Immediate and long-term changes to Detroit's zoning code must emphasize innovative thinking in four primary themes: Mixed Use, Open Space, Mobility, and Process.

These themes permeate the design team's proposed interventions at East Warren, West Warren, and Gratiot Avenue, and are linked to contemporary strategies occurring in major cities across the globe.

The following pages emphasize overarching goals and specific innovative applications relatively unique to Detroit, while also retaining broader applicability to other cities.

The four themes also serve as a framework for organizing the most easily and rapidly implementable changes to the existing zoning code, primarily within existing B2 (Local Business + Residential District) and B4 (General Business District) designations.



**ZONING
CODE**

**IMPLEMEN-
TATION**

**DESIGN
PROCESS**



JOHN C. LODGE FWY

WOODWARD AVE

CHRYSLER FWY

GRAND RIVER BLVD

JEFFRIES FWY

WEST WARREN

2

3

MICHIGAN AVE

FISHER FWY

75 MIX TAPE



CASE STUDIES

Sites were identified as typifying distinct development challenges in the city of Detroit.

Each multi-disciplinary design and planning team conducted studies that were informed by site visits and local stakeholder engagement.

The following pages highlight designed explorations of each site's potential, emphasizing small-scale, affordable, and incremental opportunities, and the zoning, building code, and procedural changes required to enable such changes.

The focus of each study was reducing red tape, and developing innovative design, regulatory, and program applications to create dynamic, durable, and inclusive neighborhood-based development.

The three case studies are:

- 1. East Warren (Historic Asset)**
- 2. West Warren (The Strip Retrofit)**
- 3. Gratiot (The Prime Parcel)**

Reval
Auto Clinic
COMPLETE
AUTO REPAIR
313.9...4800

COMP
ERIZED
WHEEL
ALIGNMENT

BEV
ERY
FOOD-PIZZA

WILL

BASKET

LIQUOR
LOTTERY
BEER-WINE

HOT FOOD - PIZZA

ONE WAY
NO TURN





HISTORIC ASSET EAST WARREN

The first site is a neighborhood-oriented retail corridor on East Warren Avenue near Outer Drive. Situated between the city's Morningside and East English Village neighborhoods on the east side, it is anchored by the historic Alger Theater and the Jefferson Branch Public Library and defined by an underused but mostly intact zero-lot line commercial building stock. Key considerations include the ability for an historic asset to activate and support new mixed use and residential uses, and an improved sense of place along the corridor.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EAST WARREN

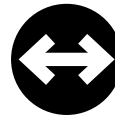
The East Warren Avenue corridor holds powerful capacity for positive transformation.

The area between Audubon Road and Kensington Avenue and including the intersection with East Outer Drive are defined by existing vacancies and outdated zoning codes that threaten a street wall that has survived longer than most in Detroit, but is starting to dissolve.

The 110' wide corridor is dominated by five oversized lanes that support an average daily traffic (11,600 cars) typical of a two-lane road. The Alger Theater and Jefferson Branch Public Library occupy a significant intersection and still provide hope as potential anchors for the corridor and neighborhood.

CHALLENGES

FOR THE CORRIDOR INCLUDE:



The corridor is too wide and dormant



Public space is all about the car



The corridor is disconnected from the neighborhood

E. EISENHOWER FWY (I-94)

LINVILLE AVE

CHANDLER PARK DR

SOUTHAMPTON ST

FRANKFORT ST

EAST ENGLISH VILLAGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

MORNINGSIDE

ALGER THEATER

JEFFERSON LIBRARY

HISTORIC ASSET AREA

CORNWALL ST

EAST WARREN AVE

CADIEUX RD

EAST ENGLISH VILLAGE

OUTER DR

MUNICH ST

WAVENEY ST

CLARK, JE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

3 MILE DR

COURVILLE ST

AUDUBON RD

KENSINGTON AVE

YORKSHIRE RD

EXISTING CONDITIONS

EAST WARREN

Images of existing conditions along East Warren Avenue corridor spanning the Morningside and East English Village neighborhoods.





COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

EAST WARREN

The design team hosted a community workshop at the Jefferson Library in January 2017 to walk the corridor, brainstorm current issues and challenges, consider recent changes, and discuss obstacles and hopes for the future. The small group workshop consisted of neighbors, property owners, and business owners, including Helen Broughton, Alger Theater; Joe Rashid, IOBY; Robert Patto, Cellular HQ; Danny Yono, Wine Basket/Auto Pros; Monique Tate, Clever Connections; and Latisha Johnson, Mecca Development. The dialogue focused on “making it happen” in East Warren, including additional stakeholders, mechanisms, and priorities. From our neighbors, we heard:

CONCERNS

Residents identified the following zoning-related concerns with the corridor:

- Zoning, licensing, and permitting obstacles to opening new businesses
- A general culture of ticketing as the primary interaction with zoning
- A lack of transparency, and mystery regarding zoning and its chain of command
- Absence of a database of businesses, building condition, and occupancy

VISION FOR FUTURE

Residents’ 10-Year Vision for the corridor:

- The storefronts are 100% occupied
- Businesses are diverse and relate to resident needs
- East Warren Avenue is narrower and cleaner, with off-street parking lots minimized and used for other things
- The Alger Theater is open and a regional draw
- A neighborhood Wi-Fi and mesh network is operational
- Zoning enforces auto-oriented commercial differently than pedestrian-oriented commercial



CORRIDOR STRATEGIES

EAST WARREN

East Warren is representative of an inactive Detroit commercial corridor. The trend of retail consolidation into large-scale and online shopping, compounded with decades of disinvestment and depopulation, have left the corridor significantly hollowed out, but with the building fabric still relatively intact.

Adaptive reuse and activation of the corridor can demonstrate how useful the street can be while also triggering opportunities for adjacent spaces to become dynamic venues that may differentiate the corridor and engender local identity and character. Three primary strategies were developed and tested by the design team to address these topics. These strategies ultimately permeated through the short-term and long-term design ideas for the corridor.



TRANSFORM LEFTOVERS

Residual spaces and infrastructures can become unique and transcendent spaces. Parking lots, alleys, and loading areas represent relatively large dimensions of our urban spatial form, yet they're rarely considered for temporary or permanent conversion into programmed spaces.

On East Warren, small parking lots near the intersection of residential streets and the corridor, or alley spaces between major anchors such as the Alger Theater and the Jefferson Library, can become dynamic centers for temporary event-based programming, helping reclaim these underused spaces while demonstrating a new and unique dimension of vitality.



CREATE GREAT STREETS

Well-designed and memorable streets must emphasize social interaction, safety, local culture, and unique characteristics, the right mix of adjacent uses, pedestrian scale and multimodal transportation, sustainability and maintainability.

While design and construction of these commercial corridor environments could be multi-year efforts, the operational changes required to accomplish similar goals have a much shorter lead time, and can be quite effective. Programs in major cities, including Open Streets Detroit, have demonstrated the power of temporal change, frontage activation, and programming that connects to the community as catalytic agents for change. Short-term ephemeral activation of the East Warren corridor could pay significant dividends towards permanent change.



MEET THE NEED

In order to survive, brick-and-mortar retail must convey a differentiating value proposition to key populations in the city. A vital strategy on the East Warren corridor is to more directly meet the unique needs of the neighborhood's population, reclaim lost spending, and establish an identity for certain services, amenities, and resources. Such an approach does not deny the larger trends in retail, but instead seeks to create enduring value for residents by providing convenient retail within a walkable, accessible, and dynamic street.

Uses can be identified through direct resident and stakeholder engagement to garner supportive physical tenants and potential funding to address the current \$22 million demand for additional sales on the East Warren corridor alone.

JEFFERSON LIBRARY

OUTDOOR MARKET + ACTIVATED ALLEY

PROGRAMMED OPEN SPACE

ON-STREET PARKING

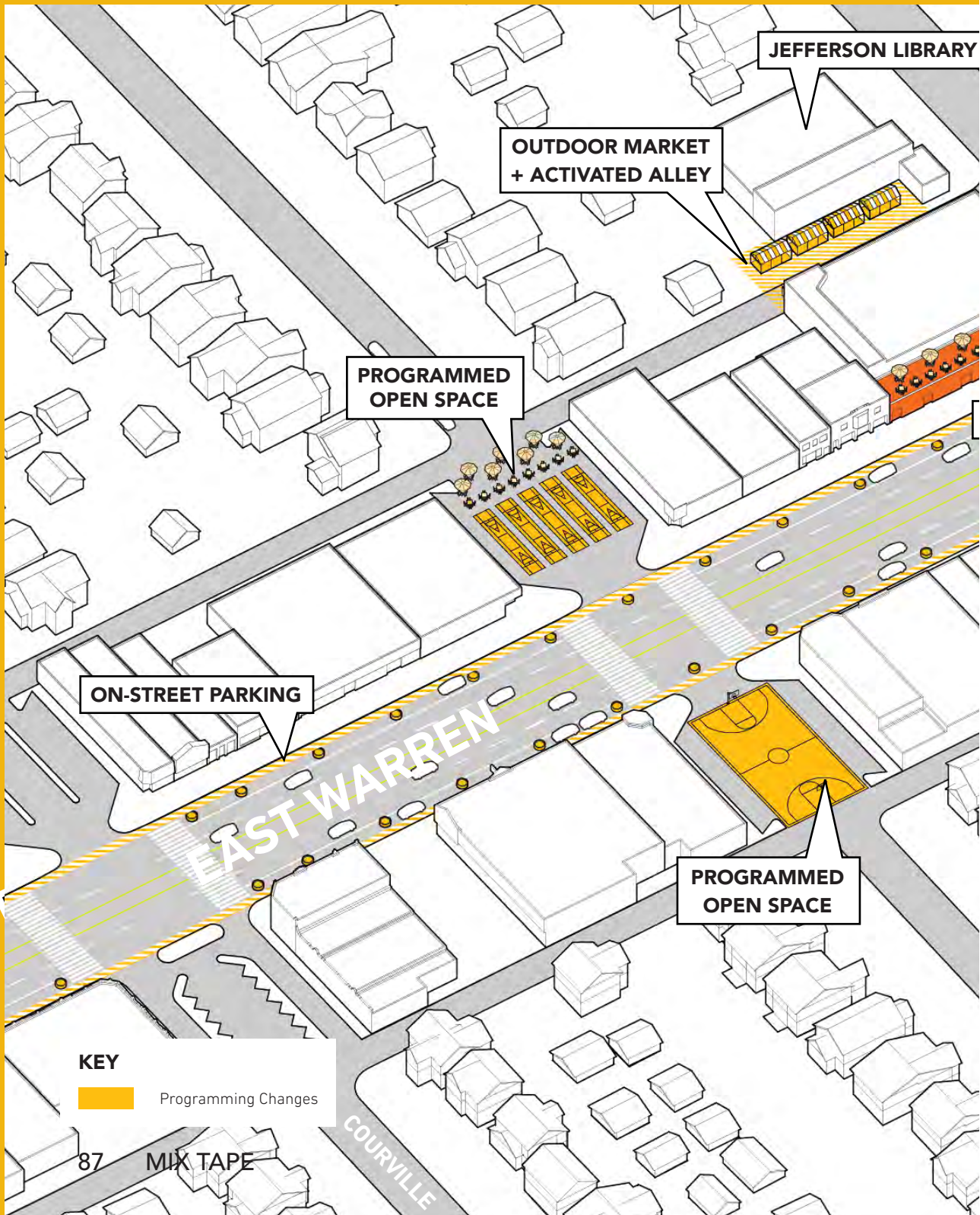
EAST WARREN

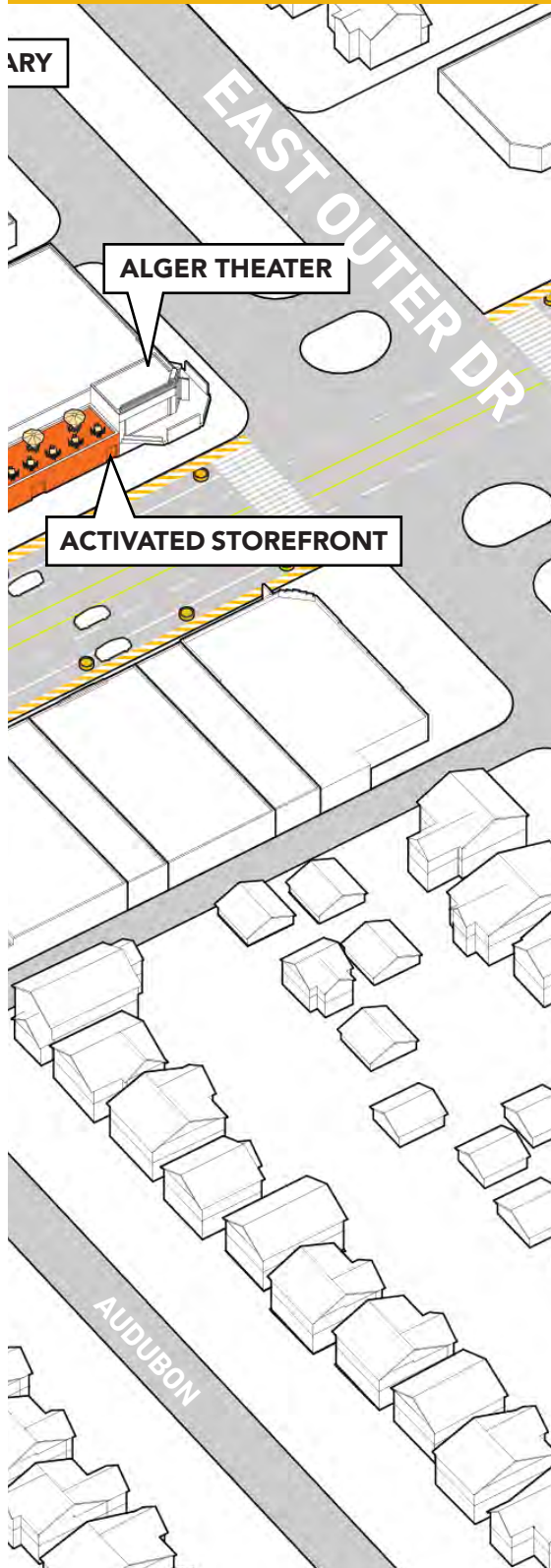
PROGRAMMED OPEN SPACE

KEY

Programming Changes

COURVILLE





SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

EAST WARREN

The design strategy emphasizes low-cost streetscape enhancements to catalyze and attract new uses that can serve to redefine the future of the neighborhood corridor.

The primary objective is to compel residents to use their corridor and become excited about what it can become while also demonstrating future value to entrepreneurs, business owners, developers, and innovative funding sources, including philanthropy, community development financial institutions, and small business support networks. It is important to leverage what the site has to offer to demonstrate its intrinsic value through a range of uses, and use unique funding instruments such as the Kresge Innovative Projects Fund. The deployment of temporary uses may require multiple and uncommon regulatory agency approvals and interrupt conventional regulations for city and state DOT corridor performance.

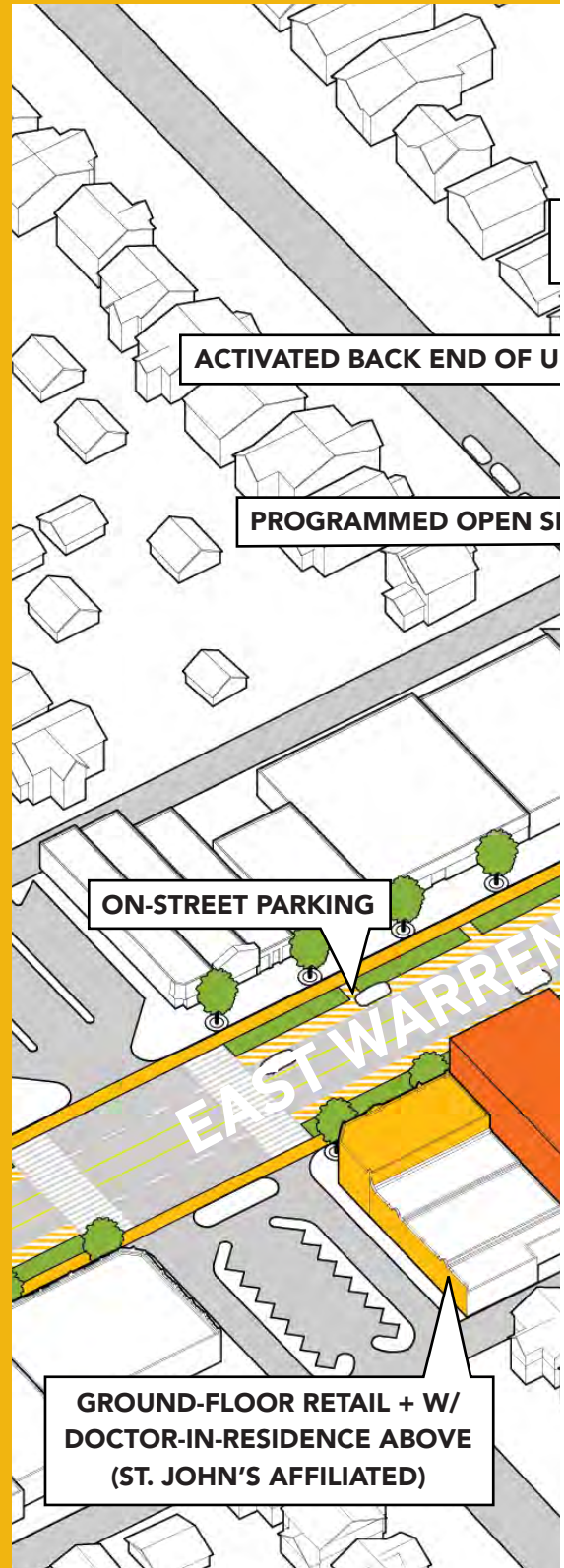
LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

EAST WARREN

A vision for the future of East Warren includes productive streetscape with flexible live-work environments and new typologies of integrated-use buildings.

The long-term goal establishes and maintains a dynamic, relevant, and attractive corridor that better serves its community and recaptures lost spending while recognizing a reduced physical presence for conventional retail. This begins by using the common roadbed as integrated landscape and public spaces for a range of uses that create a sense of place. Long-term opportunities include:

- incorporating residential, artisanal, and innovative manufacturing uses in spaces previously used for commercial retail;
- targeting catalytic funding through Motor City Match, ArtPlace, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, and other innovative sources;
- creating open spaces adjacent to the street and buildings while using vacant lots and alleys for other productive functions; and



JEFFERSON LIBRARY

OUTDOOR MARKET / ACTIVATED ALLEY

LIVE-WORK SPACE WITH ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE ABOVE

ALGER THEATER




OF UNDERUTILIZED RETAIL

N SPACE

EAST OUTER DR

MULTI-FAMILY MIXED USE CONSTRUCTION

KEY

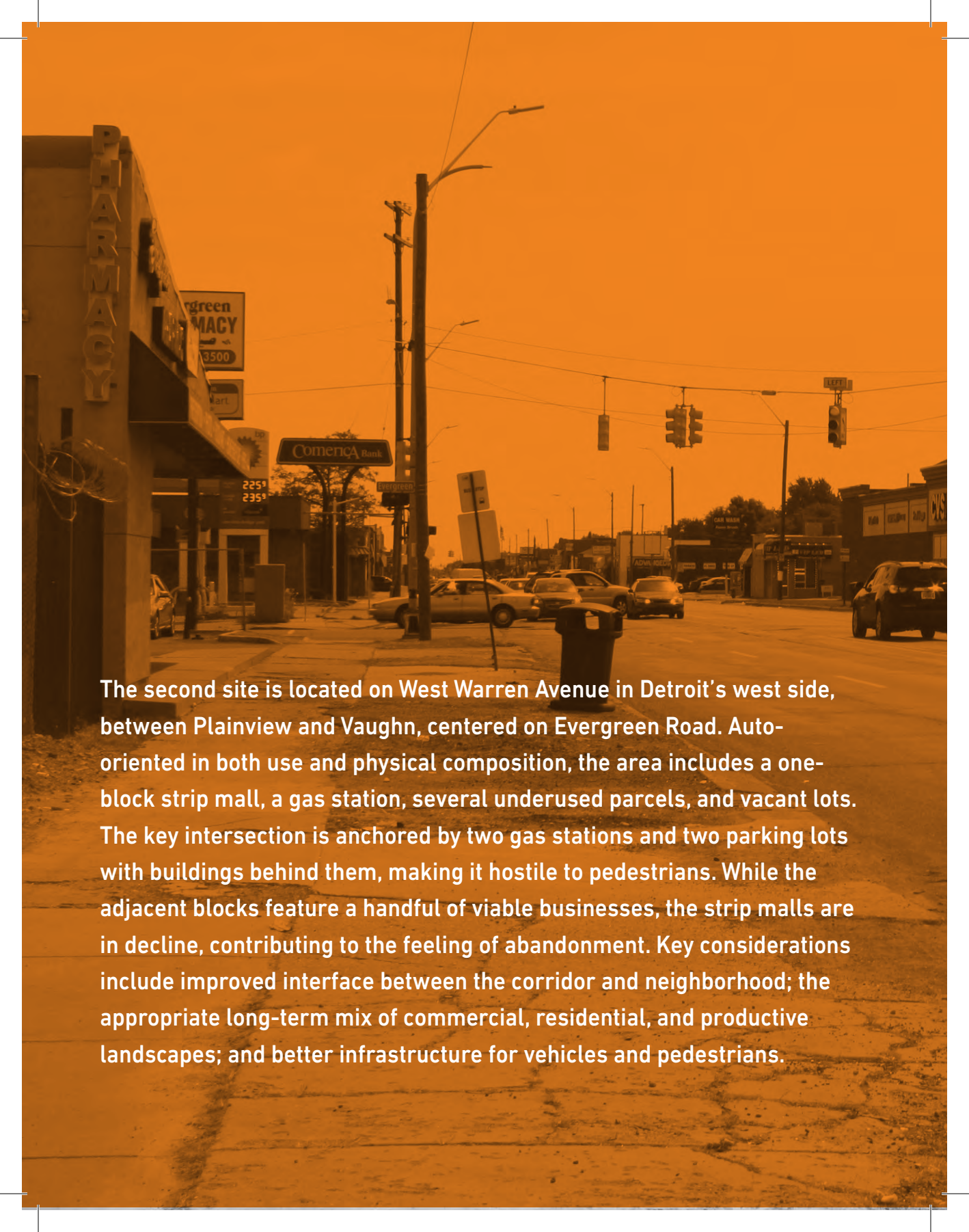
-  Green Infrastructure
-  Programming Changes
-  New Building

REDEFINING THE FUTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR

EAST WARREN







The second site is located on West Warren Avenue in Detroit's west side, between Plainview and Vaughn, centered on Evergreen Road. Auto-oriented in both use and physical composition, the area includes a one-block strip mall, a gas station, several underused parcels, and vacant lots. The key intersection is anchored by two gas stations and two parking lots with buildings behind them, making it hostile to pedestrians. While the adjacent blocks feature a handful of viable businesses, the strip malls are in decline, contributing to the feeling of abandonment. Key considerations include improved interface between the corridor and neighborhood; the appropriate long-term mix of commercial, residential, and productive landscapes; and better infrastructure for vehicles and pedestrians.



THE STRIP RETROFIT WEST WARREN

The underused auto-oriented buildings in the stretch of West Warren near Greenfield Road reflect the long-term decline in the viability of some of Detroit's commercial corridors. This context provides an opportunity to envision how a decommercialized corridor might develop in the future.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WEST WARREN

The 110'-wide West Warren right-of-way features five highway-width lanes of traffic designed for cars to travel at high speeds.

- Warren-Evergreen is the natural node for a neighborhood center, yet no pedestrian amenities exist (e.g., trees for shade, crosswalk bump-outs to shorten crossing distances, pedestrian refuge islands), maximizing pedestrian-vehicle conflicts
- There are currently no eyes on the street because most businesses lack windows (of eleven full-time employees in four corner businesses, none can see the street from their building)
- Gas stations located at two corners as mandated by the zoning ordinance "to be located on a corner lot at the intersection of two or more major thoroughfares." This is considered unsympathetic to pedestrians
- Excessive off-street parking is provided, none of which is used to anywhere near capacity

CHALLENGES

FOR THE CORRIDOR INCLUDE:



The community is disengaged and not invested in the commercial corridor



The corridor is designed around the use of the car and is hostile to pedestrians



The spread out businesses are the wrong format to capitalize on the market demand to support a neighborhood center



The mix of public and private land ownership complicates implementing any land use transformation



VAUGHN

EVERGREEN

PLANVIEW

AUBURN

BUS STOP

THE STRIP
RETROFIT AREA

WEST WARREN AVE

BUS STOP

4-BLOCK
COMMERCIAL
NODE

WARRENDALE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

WEST WARREN

Images of existing conditions along the West Warren Avenue corridor spanning the Warrendale neighborhood.





COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

WEST WARREN

The West Warren site is within the boundaries of two well-established CDC's: Joy/Southfield and Cody/Rouge. In January 2017, the consultant teams met with these community leaders at Tijuana's Mexican Kitchen. While the ability of these CDCs to provide services to their entire service area is limited by scarce resources, this meeting provided key insights on the effect of city policies on declining commercial corridors.

Community leaders had a resigned attitude toward the reliability of city services captured in the phrase: "If you want it done, do it yourself." City regulations and enforcement were seen as problematic, with most people sharing horror stories about permits and inspections. On one hand, regulations, especially those pertaining to signage, were seen as burdensome on business and almost solely focused on generating revenue. On the other hand, there is a lack of enforcement for owners who do not follow the rules for facade maintenance, trash pickup, landscape maintenance, and the like.

The project team learned that the site is recently burdened by absentee-owned businesses such as cell phone stores, convenience marts, and dispensaries that take no responsibility for their immediate surroundings or the neighborhoods. A particularly galling example illustrates the point: one mini-mart operator on the site refused to donate trash bags or water bottles to the volunteers who were cleaning up the trash on his lot. The negative perception of these businesses is sometimes enabled by the city through a lack of enforcement of the zoning and blight laws.

To focus the conversation, the consultant team described a plan for a strengthened commercial node. The leaders embraced the idea that the businesses in the West Warren site needed to work together to make the place successful. The group agreed that the successful approach taken toward commercial redevelopment could work at West Warren. However the lack of a strong community leader or delegate agency to lead the charge was seen as a potentially crippling factor.

CONCERNS

Residents identified the following zoning-related concerns with the corridor:

- A desire to eliminate off-street parking minimums in favor of maximums
- A need for street-facing doors and windows
- Need for a build-to zone for the front of a building within 10 feet of the sidewalk
- The need to re-orient parking to provide rear parking accessed from the alley; a call for no new driveways, and amortize existing driveways

VISION FOR FUTURE

Residents' 10-Year Vision for the corridor:

- A neighborhood center anchored by pedestrian-oriented retail and services
- A maximum of two blocks for commercial (four blocks may be viable in other parts of the city)
- Gateway electronic signboards to promote neighborhood business to passing drivers

CORRIDOR STRATEGIES

EAST WARREN

At their peak, Detroit's commercial streets were filled with a continuous street wall of businesses. Big box stores and online commerce have greatly changed the conditions for storefront commercial enterprises, resulting in ever-decreasing demand for brick-and-mortar storefronts. Yet these underused parcels remain.

The West Warren site is a case study for how Detroit might address its many miles of underused commercial corridors, especially those in areas with depopulating neighborhoods. This section proposes a long-term, three-strategy plan to accomplish just that.

However, in order to set the stage for private economic development, the City of Detroit first needs to redevelop West Warren into a complete street that changes along its length to support the adjacent redevelopment strategies. For instance, in the neighborhood center, the emphasis is on a retail-supportive, pedestrian-dominant environment: wide shaded sidewalks, on-street parking, reduced curb cuts, and median pedestrian refuges.

DEVELOP MISSING-MIDDLE HOUSING ON BLOCKS NEXT TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

A 2004 land use study of Chicago's legacy neighborhood retail streets identified nearby multi-family housing as a significant indicator of their longevity. The premise behind this finding is that the dense nearby housing serves as a natural market for walk-to goods and services. This is further reinforced by the relatively lower car ownership rates of multi-family renters versus single-family owners.

The team recommended renovating or developing housing in the blocks flanking the main street. These should take the form of so-called "missing middle" housing; the spectrum of building types between the single-family home and the garden apartment, which populated the older sections of Detroit. These housing types include duplex, triplex, and courtyard buildings as well as more contemporary types such as townhomes and live-work units.

Recent innovations in development and finance make these easier to construct. For instance, an incremental development strategy allows owner-occupied four-unit mixed-use buildings to qualify for Federal Housing Administration financing and to be built with no elevator and only one stairway.



PROMOTE THE TRANSITION OF SOME STREETS CAPES TO PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES.

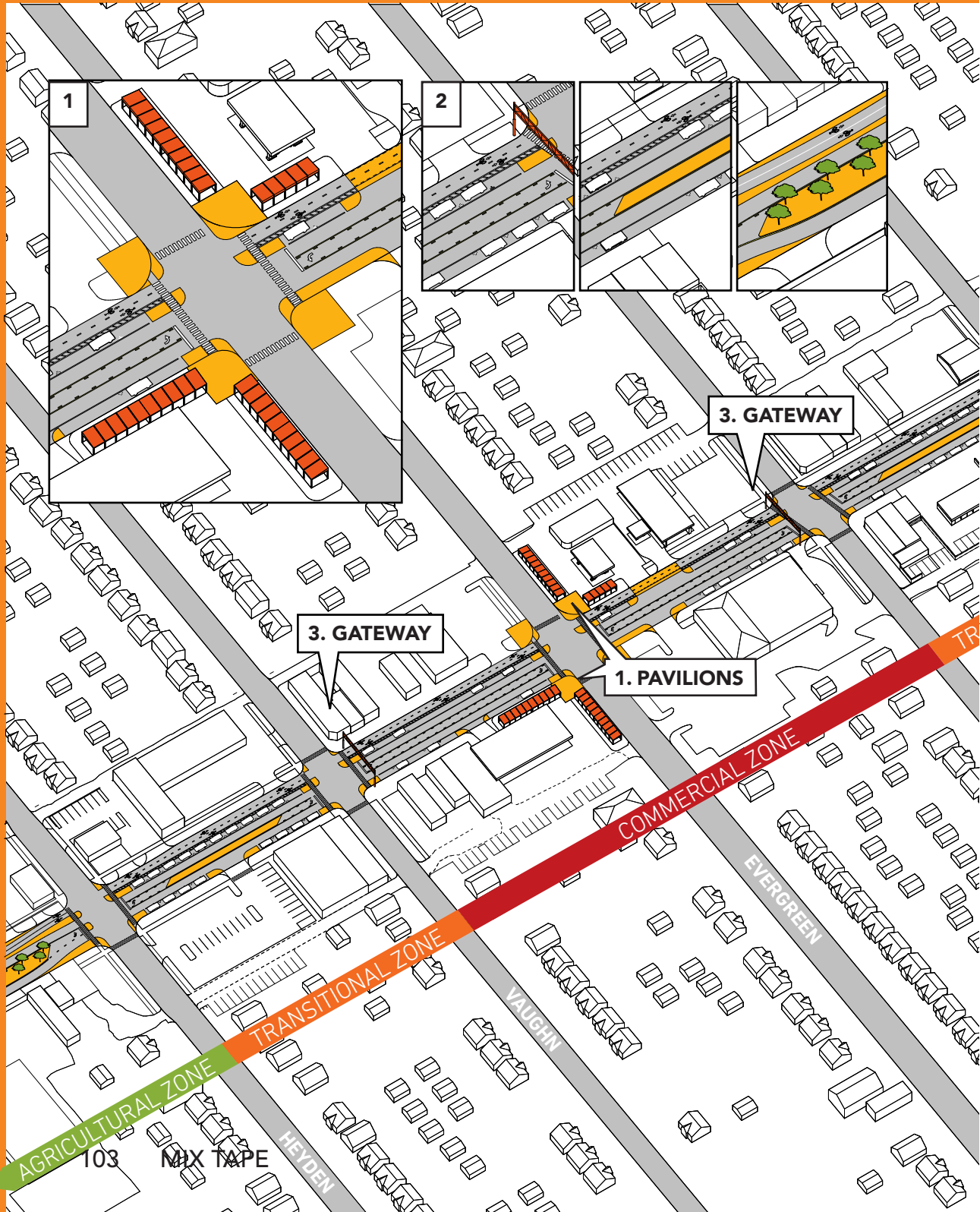
This strategy is to use regulations and incentives to incrementally shift these transitional zones from a checkerboard of buildings to a continuous productive landscape.

Occupied buildings would be permitted, starting across the alley. Sentinel houses occupying the corners would provide stability: eyes and ears on the productive landscapes.

ENCOURAGE A DIVERSE SET OF NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING BUSINESSES AND TENANTS

Zoning and building regulations should be used in combination with business incentives to concentrate a diverse set of neighborhood-serving businesses and tenants into a tight, walkable geography.

This process is expected to take several years and will require extensive community engagement and active management.



SHORT TERM STRATEGIES

WEST WARREN

In the last few years, an accelerated approach to implementing plans has emerged, called tactical or lean development. This approach focuses on low-cost, high-impact, fast-to-market strategies that build momentum for longer-term implementation.

Proposed strategies that anticipate the longer-term vision for the corridor include:

1. pop-up pavilions that provide spatial definition and programming opportunities at primary intersections;
2. "road diet" reconfigurations specifically tailored for each zone to reduce higher-speed automobile through-travel and catalyze development;
3. electronic billboard gateways marking the points of entry to the two-block commercial node.



2. ROAD DIET

The image is an aerial-style architectural rendering of a street corridor in West Warren. The main road is labeled 'AUBURN'. To its left, a secondary road is labeled 'PLAINVIEW'. The corridor is divided into two zones: an orange 'TRANSITIONAL ZONE' and a green 'AGRICULTURAL' zone. A callout box labeled '2. ROAD DIET' points to a specific section of the road. An inset box labeled '3' shows a detailed view of a street intersection with a red double-headed arrow indicating a road diet configuration.

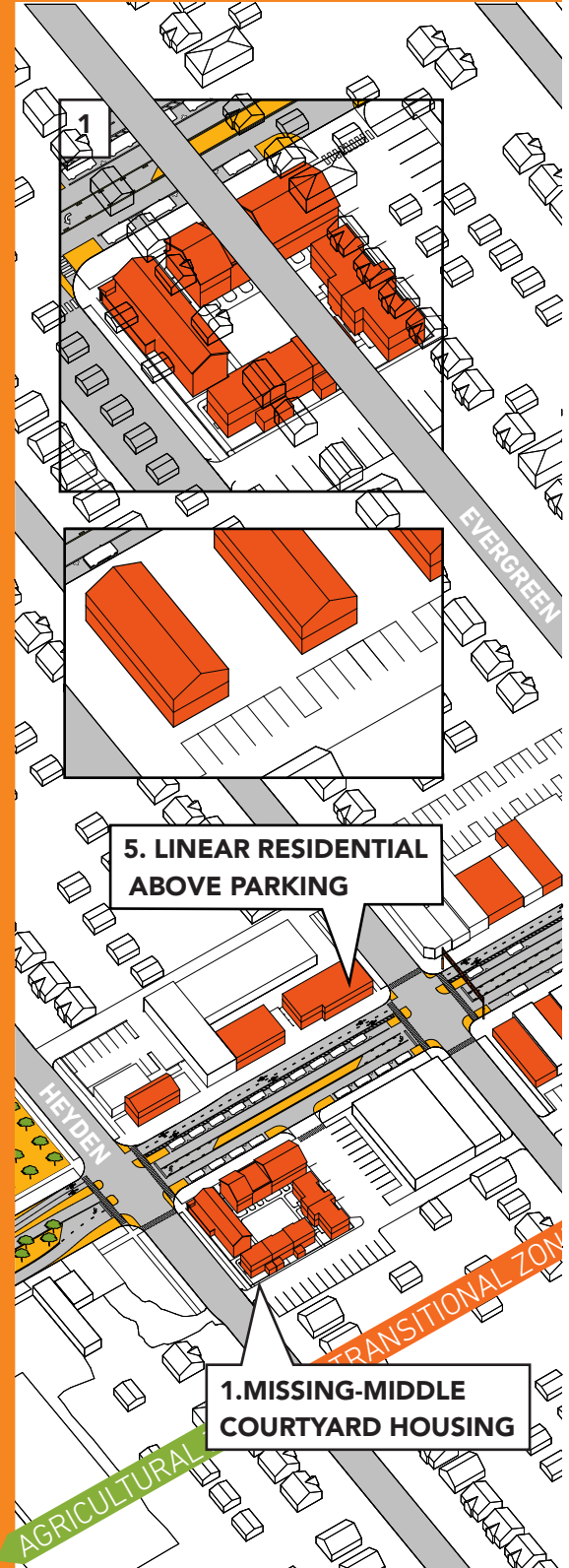
LONG TERM STRATEGIES

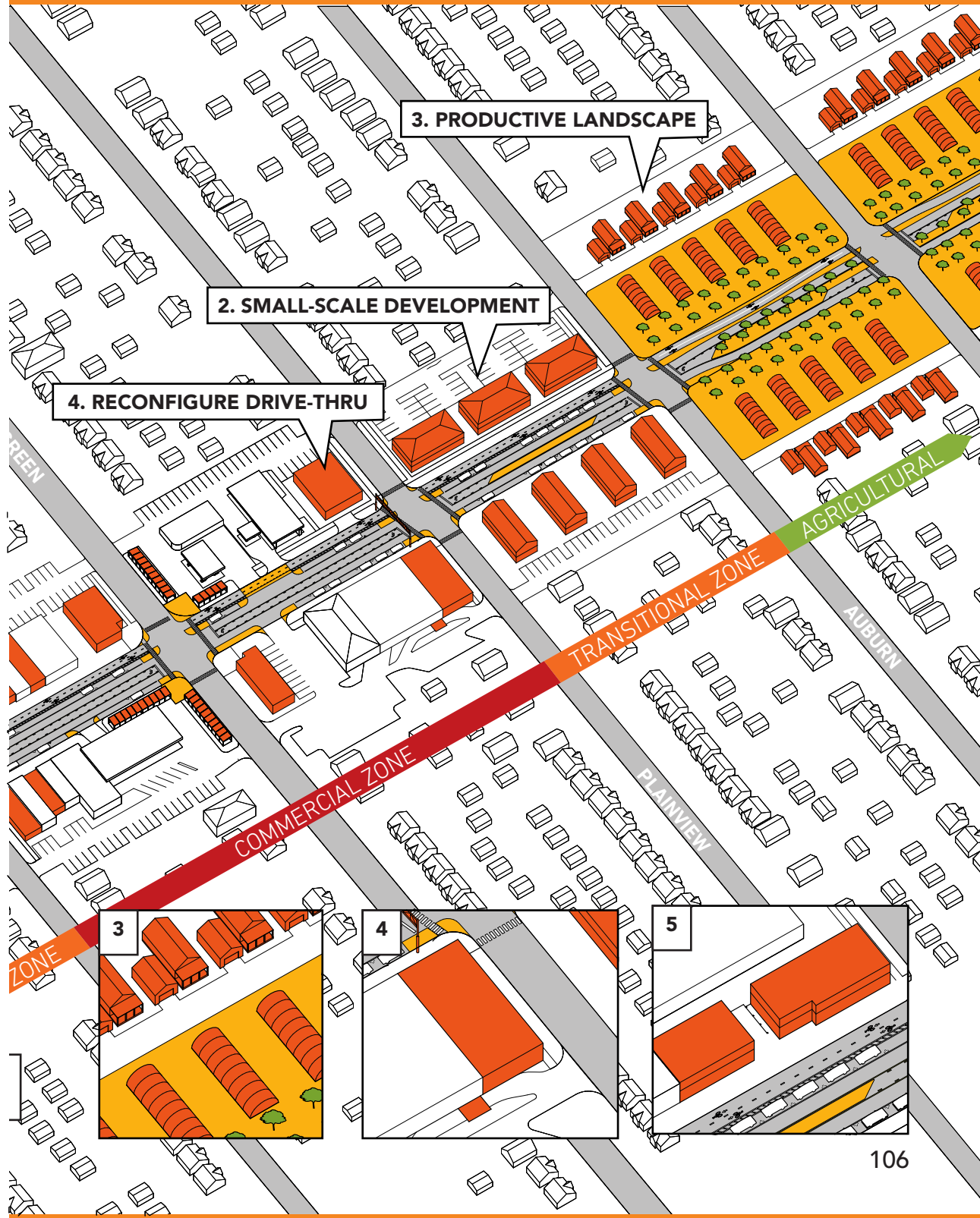
WEST WARREN

Long-term land use changes can take a decade or more to achieve.

The one proven way to increase the speed and certainty of implementation is to make a clear and compelling plan. In keeping with the words of America's first modern planner, the architect Daniel Burnham, "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood..." this plan calls for the following future-oriented visionary changes to West Warren:

1. missing middle courtyard housing;
2. small-scale developer fourplex housing;
3. reprogrammed block ends with productive landscape uses, with alleys becoming frontage roads lined with lean residential components;
4. reconfigured drive-through to allow for new building at corner; and
5. residential built in front of and above parking





3. PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE

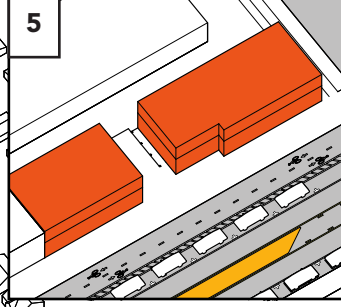
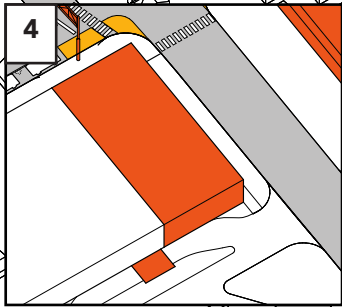
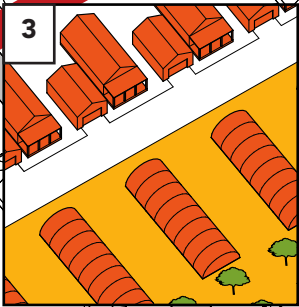
2. SMALL-SCALE DEVELOPMENT

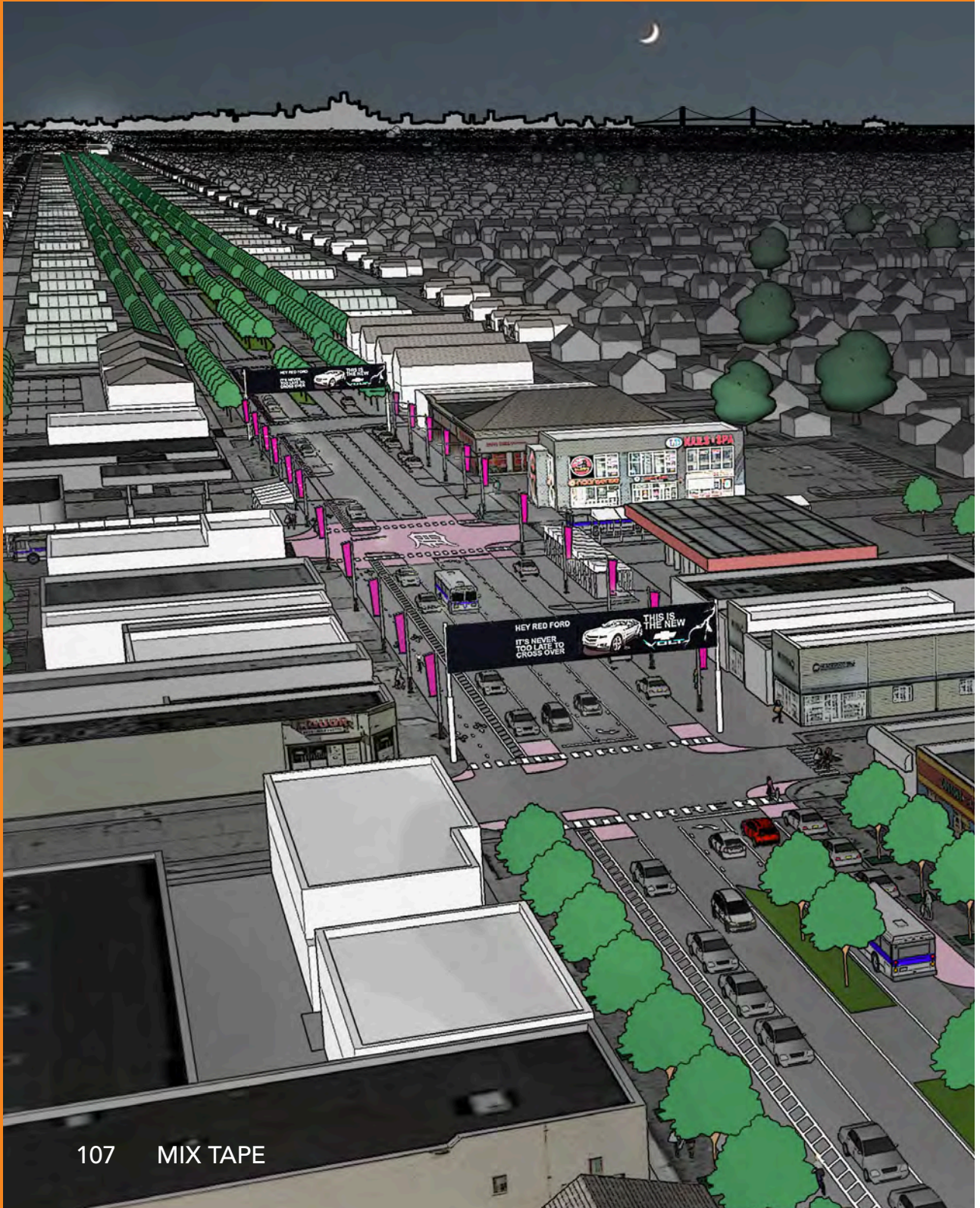
4. RECONFIGURE DRIVE-THRU

COMMERCIAL ZONE

TRANSITIONAL ZONE

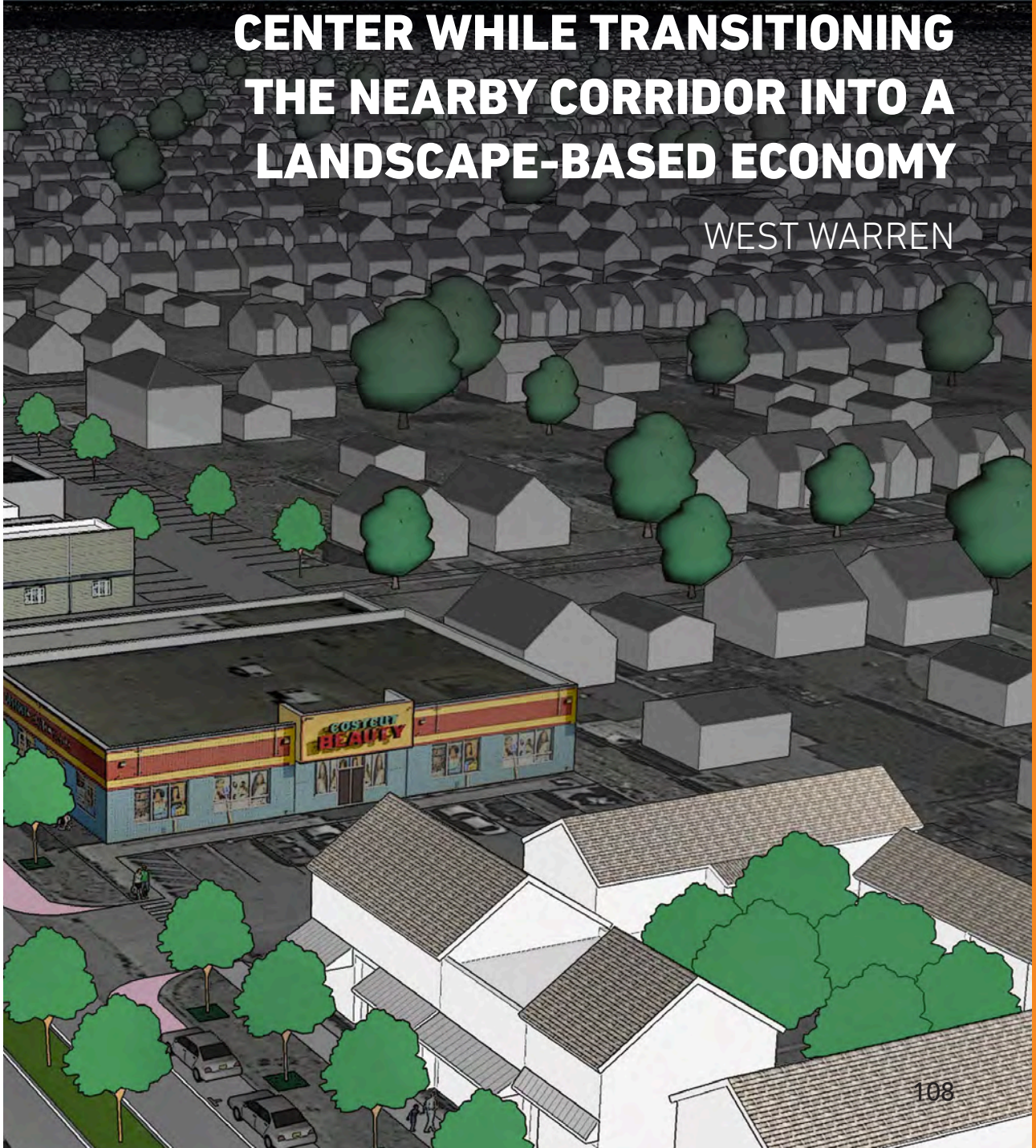
AGRICULTURAL ZONE





STRENGTHEN A NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER WHILE TRANSITIONING THE NEARBY CORRIDOR INTO A LANDSCAPE-BASED ECONOMY

WEST WARREN







THE PRIME PARCEL

GRATIOT

The third site is a unique, multi-acre vacant parcel at a strategic location along Gratiot Avenue, between the Dequindre Cut, East Vernor Highway and St. Aubin Street; adjacent to Detroit's famous Eastern Market and the Lafayette Park neighborhood. Key considerations include realization of the site's huge potential for mixed-use residential development and destination retail, and the reintroduction of a connected multimodal and pedestrian-scale network.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

GRATIOT

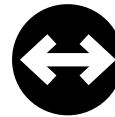
The Prime Parcel site is a multi-acre vacant tract at a strategic location, where Gratiot Avenue, a major corridor, intersects with the Dequindre Cut, a prominent recreational thoroughfare, popular with pedestrians and cyclists. Detroit's famous Eastern Market and the Lafayette Park neighborhood lie adjacent.

Development opportunities include:

- a large contiguous site;
- next to Eastern Market, the Dequindre Cut, and the Lafayette Park neighborhood;
- near downtown;
- multimodal access;
- parking availability can be used as an economic generator;
- potential to connect with the area's strong cultural identity and emerging Maker economy.

CHALLENGES

FOR THE CORRIDOR INCLUDE:



Streets, both Gratiot and St. Aubin, are oversized and hostile to pedestrians



Lack of mixed-use developments, where housing is fully integrated



New developments are disconnected from Detroit's rich culture and history



Parking issues with any development for current residents

DEQUINDRE CUT

ALFRED ST

DIVISION ST

ORLEANS

GRATIOT AVE

EVERNOR HWY

VERNOR HWY

ADELAIDE

THE PRIME
PARCEL

DUES
PLAYFIELDS

**EASTERN
MARKET**

FISHER FWY

ANTIETAM AVE

ST AUBIN

EXISTING CONDITIONS

GRATIOT

Images of existing conditions of vacant
Prime Parcel and along Gratiot near
Eastern Market.





COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

GRATIOT

The design team hosted a focus group workshop at Eastern Market Corporation in January 2017 to discuss the current opportunities and challenges in the neighborhood, and identify obstacles and hopes for the future. The workshop attendees consisted of Terry Campbell, Elmwood Park; Marsha Philpot, Lafayette Park; Harriet Saperstein, Lafayette Park; delegates on behalf of Ritchie Harrison, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy; Jela Ellefson, Eastern Market; Dave Tobar, Eastern Market Corporation; Dan Kinkead, SmithGroupJJR; Michael Johnson, SmithGroupJJR; Kofi Boone, SmithGroupJJR; Noah Resnick, Laavu; Kaija Wuollet, Laavu.

The dialogue focused on the desire for a mix of retail, office, and housing options; including big box retail, local neighborhood services, a range of office spaces, and the need for additional green space and recreation.

CONCERNS

Residents identified the following zoning-related concerns with the corridor:

- oversized streets - both Gratiot and St. Aubin;
- lack of mixed-use developments with fully integrated housing;
- disconnect of new developments from Detroit's rich culture and history;
- the need to do something, even temporary, to activate large vacant space; and
- parking issues with any development for current residents.



NEED FOR SERVICES



UNDERUSED ADJACENT PARK



DESIRE FOR BIG BOX

VISION FOR FUTURE

Residents' 10-Year Vision for the corridor:

- Streets are slower and safer to cross
- Parking is integrated into development, with no surface lots
- Local neighborhood services are available to residents (e.g., dentist, dry cleaners, etc.)
- The area is anchored by a big box type store (e.g., Target.) where families can purchase basics (currently forced to drive to suburbs)
- A higher-density, mixed-use corridor with connection to the Dequindre Cut greenway, the food and maker culture in Eastern Market, and an extension of public space
- Programmed green space for neighborhood families, including connection to the underused city park across St. Aubin
- Preservation of "big sky" views unique to Detroit within the development
- Smaller-scale walkable environment away from busy Gratiot

CORRIDOR STRATEGIES

GRATIOT

The Prime Parcel site located on Gratiot Avenue and St. Aubin provides the opportunity to satisfy the existing market demands for a larger-scale national retailer without sacrificing the cultural identity of the unique neighborhoods on either side of this important commercial corridor.

By modifying the current zoning to allow for a true mixed-use development, this site can accommodate the community's vocal desire for a big box type store, as well as provide for office space close to downtown, production / retail venues for local makers, and a much-needed density of multi-family housing, all in a walkable neighborhood. In order to test some of the proposed zoning modifications, three strategies were applied to a multi-phased development proposal: Innovation in Infrastructure; The Big Box Done Right; and Residential Balance.

INNOVATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Development on the Prime Parcel should seek ways to transform infrastructural elements into economic generators and community amenities while promoting walkability.

A central feature of this scheme is the Dequindre Plaza, which extends the Dequindre Cut greenway as an open space that can support seasonal markets, collect stormwater and provide a buffer between residential and commercial programming. It will also be activated with cultural events that support a night economy.

In addition to programmable open space, parking is used for economic development through its management as a transportation resource using a supply/demand approach. This includes initiating parking maximums in the zoning code, establishing a shared parking community or district parking, and placing meters along St. Aubin to generate income for landscape maintenance. St. Aubin has also been redesigned to take advantage of the underused boulevard, providing bike lanes, parklets, greenway connections to the existing city park, and integrated on-street parking.



BIG-BOX DONE RIGHT

The scale and contiguous nature of the Gratiot site, along with its proximity to downtown and major transportation routes, make it an attractive parcel for a developer interested in satisfying the community's desire for a national big box retail outlet.

To do the 'Big Box Right,' it should embrace the potential for a mixed-use development, complementing diverse retail needs with the locally based maker economy, a diverse mix of office spaces providing co-working facilities and small offices for entrepreneurs and start-ups, and residential units above. A collaborative investment model should be encouraged to partner large companies with smaller developers to engage in their diverse expertise and local knowledge base. Structured parking above the big box retailer will allow for a publicly accessible open space, accommodating a variety of outdoor programming, including markets and nighttime events.

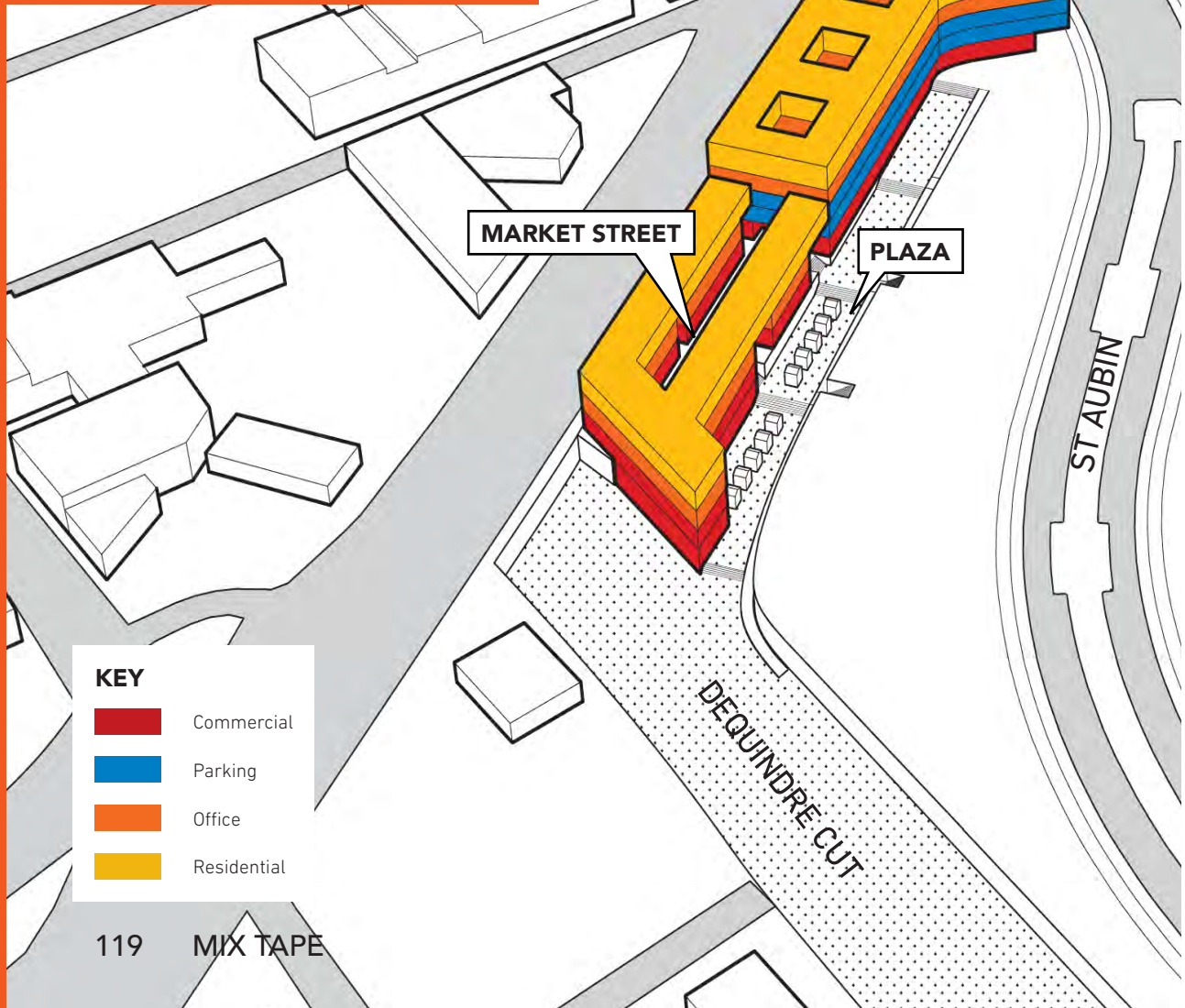
RESIDENTIAL BALANCE

A successful mixed-use development on a prime site near the city center should be built around a core of diverse housing opportunities.

The zoning must encourage a balance of commercial / retail space and an appropriate density of residential units that allow the existing neighborhoods to transition into the commercial zones of the city. A robust, walkable community will be engendered through a mix of housing types from micro lofts above the commercial spaces on Gratiot, to mid-rise apartments along the Dequindre Cut, to low-rise 2-4 bedroom courtyard-style townhouses on St. Aubin that provide a transition to the co-op housing development of Lafayette Park to the south. This housing will be supported by neighborhood-based retail along St. Aubin, including amenities such as a drugstore, bodega, daycare center, and clinic. Conversely, denser retail will support the retail market.



MAKER STREET SURROUNDED BY MIXED-USE



KEY

- Commercial
- Parking
- Office
- Residential

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

GRATIOT

Initiate the mixed-use development with the big-box anchor.

Modifications to the B4 zoning classification will allow for the first phase of the Gratiot development to directly address the major commercial corridor with a big box retail building that has parking, office space, and residential units above. The remainder of the Gratiot frontage will be filled in with complementary small-scale retail that supports the local maker economy, also with office and residential above.



LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

GRATIOT

Development of the “Dequindre Plaza, which acts as an extension of the Dequindre Cut Greenway, connecting Lafayette Park and the riverfront to Eastern Market, as well as providing stormwater management infrastructure for the entire site.

While the Plaza can host seasonal or sporadic retail markets, the adjacent internal maker street provides a daily shopping experience in an intimate bazaar-type setting, sheltered from the traffic of Gratiot Ave.

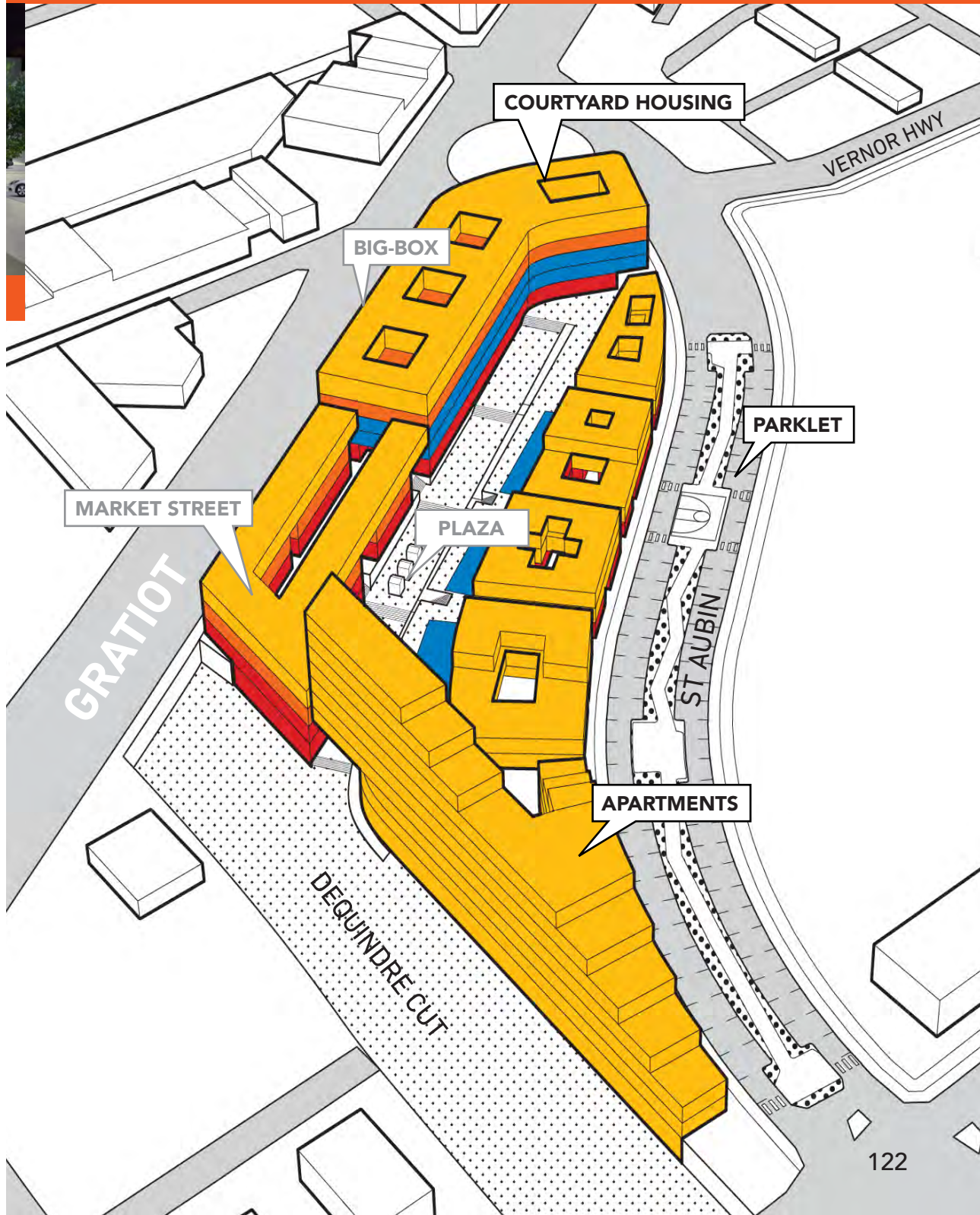
Phase 2 will also address parking and infrastructure demands in the area as they increase due to market forces.

St. Aubin will be reconfigured to take advantage of the underutilized underused boulevard, providing bike lanes, parklets, greenway connections to the existing city park, and integrated on-street parking to generate income for landscape maintenance.



NIGHT ECONOMY





COURTYARD HOUSING

BIG-BOX

MARKET STREET

PLAZA

PARKLET

GRATIOT

ST AUBIN

APARTMENTS

DEQUINDRE CUT

VERNOR HWY

LARGE-SCALE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WITHIN WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

GRATIOT







IMMEDIATE CHANGES

The Mix Tape project investigated the existing constraints that zoning regulations place on potential new development in Detroit, and envisioned possibilities for a more fluid process suitable for creating vibrant, attractive, and functioning commercial corridors. Simplifying the system and facilitating a diversity of options honors the inherent innovative urban creativity and experience of Detroit's residents and businesses. The Mix Tape teams provided precedents and made concrete suggestions for specific change, envisioning a dynamic and achievable future for Detroit's commercial corridors that can contribute to overall economic success.





PLANNING PROJECT AREAS

Traditional Main Street Overlay (TMSO) areas were designated almost 15 years ago as a way to implement robust design standards for commercial corridors identified as being, or having the potential to be, high quality, pedestrian-scale, walkable areas with a traditional urban atmosphere. Because many of the existing TMSO areas were identified as ideal candidates for the Mix Tape overlay and to reduce the inherent confusion of overlapping zoning overlays, Mix Tape is being implemented via revising the current TMSO standards and designating additional areas as TMSO. The robust design standards are reduced in the newly designated areas to the minimums for good design. 21.5 miles of corridors are designated as TMSO, and almost 4 additional miles are proposed.

To avoid overlap, Mix Tape provisions will be implemented in the 21.5 miles of existing TMSO corridors and almost 4 miles of newly designated corridors.

KEY

-  Current TMSO Areas
-  New TMSO Areas

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

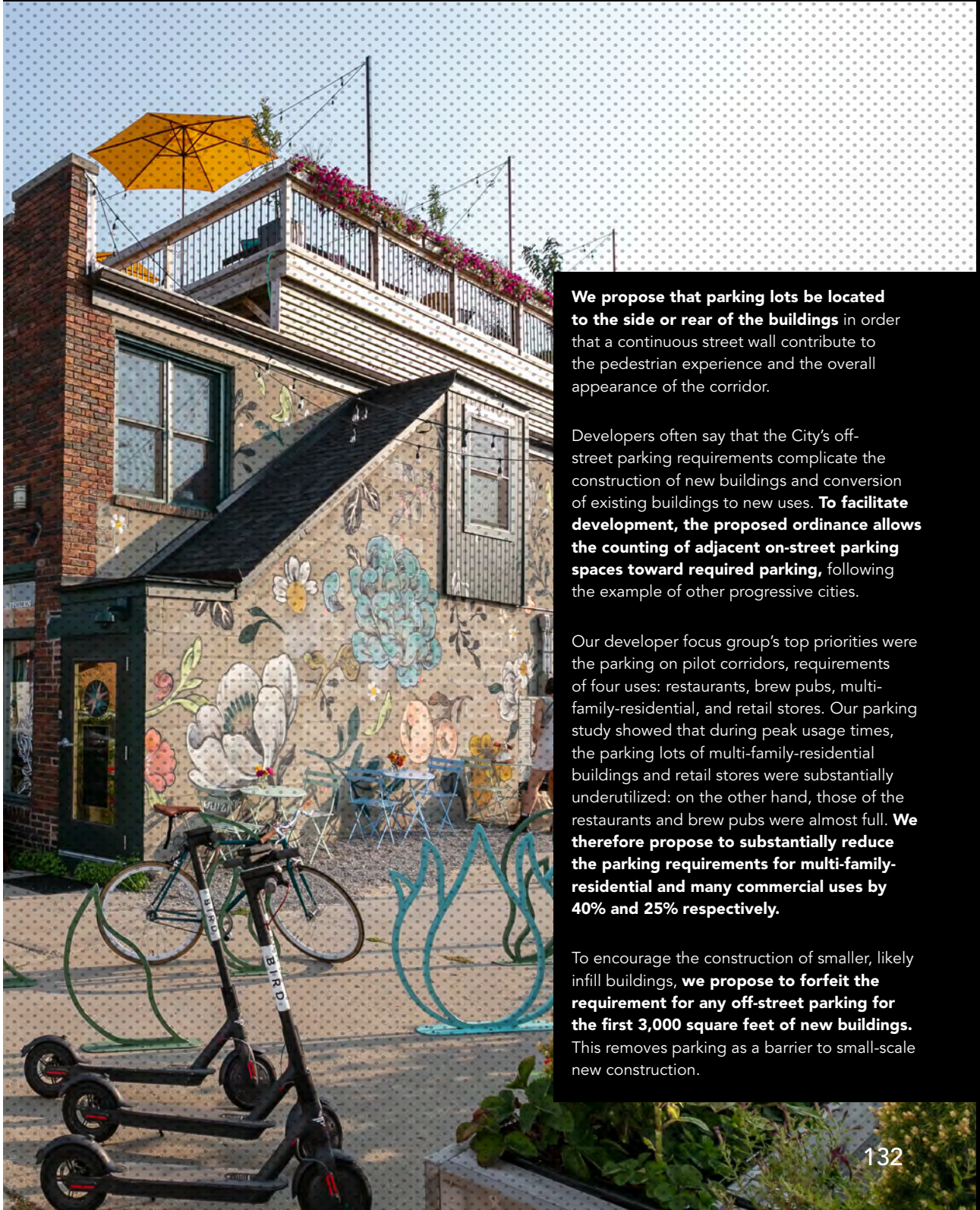
A Mix Tape zoning ordinance amendment is currently in process that will codify the most immediately implementable changes recommended by our consultant teams via amending the current Traditional Main Street Overlay (TMSO) Area provisions. The TMSO is already applied to many portions of commercial corridors where development is beginning to occur and where the City of Detroit is encouraging development through financial incentives. Significant city-led road and streetscape improvements in portions of these corridors underscore the importance of quality private property development as the public realm is improved.



To improve walkability, add pedestrian activity, and increase street-level attraction, **we propose that new buildings as well as those undergoing significant façade improvements, have an entrance on the commercial corridor (and may have other entrances).**

Furthermore, we propose a requirement that **transparent windows and doors comprise 50 percent of the first-floor façade between the third and eighth foot of building height on the commercial corridor.** Windows allow passers-by to look into the building, adding interest and security.





We propose that parking lots be located to the side or rear of the buildings in order that a continuous street wall contribute to the pedestrian experience and the overall appearance of the corridor.

Developers often say that the City's off-street parking requirements complicate the construction of new buildings and conversion of existing buildings to new uses. **To facilitate development, the proposed ordinance allows the counting of adjacent on-street parking spaces toward required parking**, following the example of other progressive cities.

Our developer focus group's top priorities were the parking on pilot corridors, requirements of four uses: restaurants, brew pubs, multi-family-residential, and retail stores. Our parking study showed that during peak usage times, the parking lots of multi-family-residential buildings and retail stores were substantially underutilized: on the other hand, those of the restaurants and brew pubs were almost full. **We therefore propose to substantially reduce the parking requirements for multi-family-residential and many commercial uses by 40% and 25% respectively.**

To encourage the construction of smaller, likely infill buildings, **we propose to forfeit the requirement for any off-street parking for the first 3,000 square feet of new buildings.** This removes parking as a barrier to small-scale new construction.



To facilitate adding residential uses to the upper stories of buildings, we propose to make these uses a matter of right when combined with permitted commercial uses. In most commercial districts, such uses are currently conditional, putting up a barrier to the developments we want to encourage. We also propose allowing, at a minimum, three stories of residential above first-floor commercial development.

To further improve the mixture of uses on our target commercial corridors, we propose adding 24 small-scale (up to 4,000 square feet) manufacturing uses on a by-right basis, when the product being manufactured is sold on the premises. This adds opportunities for entrepreneurs to have a retail front to sell what they make while avoiding windowless, uninviting manufacturing-type buildings. Such uses include glass blowing; food product; clothing; clock, jewelry or watch manufacturing; and carpentry and furniture repair shops.

Together, these changes will make it easier to open the desired small-scale, mixed-use businesses and create more residential developments without having to spend time in conditional land use hearings and in seeking parking variances from the Board of Zoning Appeals. These proposed changes allow the selected areas to return to the type of developments on which many desirable areas are founded.

APPENDIX + GLOSSARY

APPENDIX

Regulations to be Tweaked/Cut and Regulatory Gaps (low-hanging fruit). The three consultant teams recommend the following immediate tweaks (2-4 months) to the B4 zone district:

PERMIT

1. Waive off-street parking requirements for projects generally under 3,000 square feet.
2. Count adjacent on-street spaces toward meeting parking minimums on pilot corridors.
3. Allow small-scale maker uses with associated retail as of right.
4. Permit upper-story housing as of right.

REQUIRE

1. New commercial buildings to be located between 0' and 10' from the back of sidewalk.
2. New commercial buildings to have street-facing doors and minimum 50 percent transparency between 3 and 8 feet above sidewalk grade.
3. New commercial buildings to locate parking on the side or rear.

GLOSSARY

Euclidean zoning, also called single-use zoning, is a form of zoning that became dominant during the mid-20th century.

Missing middle, also sometimes called “gentle density housing,” refers to low- or mid-rise residential uses that provide a variety of housing choices (two-family, multi-family, lofts, etc.) in more zones;

Transect, refers to the continuum of land use types between rural countryside and intensive urban development.

THANK YOU.

PLANNING + DEVELOPMENT

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