Let’s Get Technical About Involving Residents
Community Development Summit
Pittsburgh, PA | May 2015

Demi Kolke
Operation Better Block
Cluster Planning Process

Amy Elliott Bragg
Preservation Detroit
Detroit Historic Resource Survey

Emilie Evans
PlaceEconomics
Relocal
Operation Better Block, Inc.
Data-Driven Services

- Resident and Property Surveys
- Homeowner Stabilization
- Neighborhood Revitalization
Homewood Percent of Parcels Vacant (Land or Structure) by Block, 2014

Source: Operation Better Block Parcel Survey
Cluster Planning Process

Cluster 8-9 Draft Consensus Plan

Proposed Land Use Types:

Housing
- Renovate Existing
- Rehab/Refurb Existing
- New Residential

Open Space
- Urban Agriculture
- Ecological
- Natural/Food Space
- Urban Meadow

Mixed Use
- Small-Scale Live/Make
- New Large Scale Employment
- Mixed Use - Large-Scale Employment
- Mixed Use - Renovated Live/Make
- Mixed Use - New Live/Make
- Mixed Use - Renovated Live/Make
THE DETROIT HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY:
How unlikely partnerships and volunteer firepower brought preservation into Detroit’s blight battle
HARDEST HIT FUNDS COME TO MICHIGAN

• In 2013, U.S. Treasury approved $100M in Hardest Hit Funds for blight elimination programs in Michigan cities

• $52M of those funds were allocated to the Detroit Land Bank Authority to target blight elimination in six target areas

• No Section 106 review was required for use of Hardest Hit Funds
“TEAR IT ALL DOWN”

“To get the neighborhoods going, we’ve got to take town the 78,000 or so—we don’t even know the exact number of structures that need to be taken down, mostly houses. Once we can get that done, you will have open pieces of land, and you’re going to have, more importantly, hope and optimism.

… You get these structures down and, I mean, all of them, not most of them, all of them.”

—Dan Gilbert, September 2013. Source.
“There is no question that blight in Detroit neighborhoods is an issue that needs our urgent attention. Dangerous, unsound structures threaten the safety and vitality of Detroit’s communities. We believe that blight mitigation is crucial for the future of the city.

But a one-size-fits-all approach to blight mitigation — where the only solution is a bulldozer — is the wrong decision for Detroit, and it flies in the face of the creative and industrious spirit this city is known for.”

Preservation Detroit Board of Directors, Sept. 30, 2013
MOTOR CITY MAPPING

• The Blight Task Force is formed to make a strategic plan for eliminating blight in Detroit neighborhoods. Central to the Task Force’s plan is **Motor City Mapping**, a crazy-ambitious effort to map every single parcel in the City of Detroit.

• MCM project surveyors used four categorizations to identify the condition of every building in Detroit: **Good, Fair, Poor, Suggest Demolition**

• … but there was no **preservation data layer**
UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIPS ARE BORN …

• Data Driven Detroit
• Loveland Technologies (the team behind Motor City Mapping)
• Detroit Blight Task Force (the decision makers)
• Detroit Land Bank Authority
• Michigan Historic Preservation Network
• Preservation Detroit
• LocalData
AND SO, WITH AN IMPOSSIBLE DEADLINE, DURING THE SNOWIEST WINTER EVER …
WE LAUNCHED THE DETROIT HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY.

• Designed to add a preservation data layer in six eligible historic districts
• Assessed preservation priorities through an “HP score”
• Integrated with Motor City Mapping data
IN TWO WEEKS, 55+ VOLUNTEERS SURVEYED 18,000 PROPERTIES IN ELIGIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICTS.
GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Eligible Historic Districts and Structures in Initial Hardest-Hit Fund Areas, Detroit, MI
HP SCORE

1. What is the architectural integrity of this property?
2. How much is this building in keeping with neighborhood character?
3. How intact is this block (as defined by one side of the street)?
4. Does this building warrant further research?*

Architectural integrity + Neighborhood Character + Block Intactness = HP Score
(Very Important; Important; Less Important; Not Historic)
PRESERVATION DETROIT

• Founded in 1975 – Detroit’s oldest historic preservation advocacy organization
• Formerly Preservation Wayne, we began as a student organization on the campus of Wayne State University
• **Our mission:** To preserve, protect and promote Detroit’s architectural and cultural heritage, through advocacy, education, and research.
• At the time of the survey, we were an all-volunteer nonprofit organization
THE MACKENZIE HOUSE

An 1896 Queen Anne and the former home of Wayne State University founder David Mackenzie
To find skilled volunteers with experience in historic preservation and architectural history, we recruited volunteers from:

- Preservation Detroit & MHPN volunteer and membership lists
- Education partners (Eastern Michigan University, Lawrence Technological University, Wayne State University)
- Call to action shared widely through social and traditional media
- Badgering our personal networks

 preservationdetroit.org/2014/01/08/cal...
VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

We asked interested volunteers to answer a few questions about themselves:

• Do you have a background in historic preservation or architectural history? (Y/N, if Y please describe)

• Do you have a car? (Y/N, if Y, are you willing to drive? Remember, it’s January.)

• Do you have a smartphone, and/or a tablet with access to a data network?

• At dispatch, we also asked volunteers if they had a preference of survey neighborhood – many had personal stakes in particular areas
VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Detroit Historic Resource Survey
THE “COMMAND CENTER”

LocalData

Detroit Historic Resource Survey

15,905 responses collected

Check for new results
THE “COMMAND CENTER”

BLUE is the boundary of the historic district
GREEN parcels have been surveyed
THE “COMMAND CENTER”

Update from mission control: over 700 parcels surveyed in less than an hour! Full steam ahead! pic.twitter.com/yrdayPJ3tI
THE “COMMAND CENTER”
IN THE FIELD
MEDIA COVERAGE

Detroit Unspun, Jan. 24, 2014

CHANGE AGENTS, CITY TRANSFORMATION

Shocker: Blight Busters and Detroit preservationists collaborating on demo decisions

Posted on January 24, 2014 by Karen Dybis

Generally, “unprecedented” is not a word to throw around lightly. But the partnerships around the preservation of historic Detroit neighborhoods and the “blight busters” rightly could be described that way.
MEDIA COVERAGE

The Craig Fahle Show – 101.9 WDET FM

Detroit Historic Home Survey

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Photo Courtesy Of: Barista
Why Preservationists Are Mapping Detroit’s Historic Layer

BY NANCY SCOLA | NEXT CITY | FEBRUARY 26, 2014
MEDIA COVERAGE

Preservation Leadership Forum, Mar. 11, 2014

Smartphone Survey Contributes to Detroit’s Rightsizing Conversation

Posted on: March 11th, 2014 by Emilie Evans | 3 Comments

Two weeks, 50 volunteer surveyors, and nearly 18,000 historic properties. Not exactly your typical historic resource survey. With $52 million in demolition funding earmarked for Detroit, however, swift action was necessary. In January, faced with the very real possibility that National Register-eligible properties could fall to bulldozers, preservationists quickly took action. The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN), in conjunction with Preservation Detroit, coordinated a massive survey across six neighborhoods that set precedents with the partnerships it forged and the speed of data collection. The survey results
SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

• The Detroit Land Bank Authority has our data layer and is using it to inform decisions – and our partnership with DLBA has continued to grow.

• We’ve used our experience and some of our data to build relationships within city government and to advocate for maintaining neighborhood integrity.

• We have continued to engage with many of the volunteers who worked on the survey in other advocacy projects at Preservation Detroit.
MORE INFORMATION

PreservationDetroit.org

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Relocal

an overview of the tool
Destroying Detroit (in Order to Save It)

It took over 300 years to build this city. It’ll take about four to knock it down. Howie Kahn rides shotgun with the men who are demolishing the abandoned, godforsaken homes of Detroit—all 70,000 of them—and paving the way for one last shot at the future.

Report: Cincinnati’s five-year outlook for building demolitions may approach 8,000
BY JOHN YUNG — DECEMBER 12, 2012

How a Community Demolished Its Way Out of a Crisis

ECONOMY & POLICY
Bulldoze: The New Way to Foreclose
By Stephen Gandel @stephengandel | Aug. 01, 2011 | Add a Comment

How Saginaw plans to demolish 413 blighted homes in 6 months flat

City to raze hundreds of vacant houses in stepped-up plan
Vacants to Value programs gets an infusion of cash
DATA!
Relocal
Neighborhood Sustainability

Fiscal Responsibility  Economic Opportunity  Engagement  Real Estate

Neighborhood Character  Environment  Stability  Walkability
Relocal
Neighborhood Sustainability
Relocal
Neighborhood Sustainability
Relocal Field Survey

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

- Architectural character
- Local historic district
- National Register historic district
- Quality of building stock
- Condition of building stock
- Design guidelines
- Maintenance of public spaces
- Public art
- Graffiti
Relocal Field Survey

Architectural character
Quality of the building stock
Condition of the building stock
Block context
Condition of sidewalks
Graffiti, public art, or public space
Vacant lots – use and condition
what’s important to you?

- Engagement
- Economic Opportunity
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Walkability
- Neighorhood Character
- Stability
- Real Estate
- Environment
Relocal
Community Priority Survey
Unique buildings

High rates of homeownership

Proximity to banks, schools, parks

Street trees
Relocal
Community Priority Survey

Neighborhood priorities
How important are certain characteristics to you for the neighborhood where you live? On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important, please rate the following characteristics. These questions are not intended to measure Walnut Hills specifically, but how important you feel each characteristic is.

7. Close to goods and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close to shops and restaurants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close to schools</td>
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<td>Close to parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close to jobs</td>
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<td>Close to banks</td>
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<td>Close to the river</td>
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<td>Close to jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close to banks</td>
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<td>Close to health care and pharmacy services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy to walk places</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good access to public transportation</td>
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8. Neighborhood fabric

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streets with character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interesting or unique buildings</td>
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<td>Street trees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good views</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not many vacant lots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not many vacant buildings</td>
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9. Real estate

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<tr>
<td>Stable property values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not high resident turnover</td>
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<td>High level of homeownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing property values</td>
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<td>Affordable housing for seniors</td>
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Relocal
Community Priority Survey

Proximity to schools
Good views

Walkability
Economic stability
Relocal
Unexpected Partnerships
Relocal Recommendations
Relocal Recommendations

Neighborhood > Parcel

Transition from residential use
- Urban agriculture
- Natural habitat
- Alternative energy production

Stabilize neighborhood
- Rehabilitation
- Side lot
- Community gardens

Redensify
- Rehabilitation
- Infill development
Vacant Building Recommendations

- Rehab and reuse
- Stabilize and mothball
- Defer decision
- Raze and recycle
Vacant Lot Recommendations

- Infill
- Contributing reuse
- Environmental reuse
- Defer decision
Thank you

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