



MiSITES

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 2 MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

32nd Annual Michigan ASLA Golf Classic

#golfclassic19

Tuesday, July 23rd 2019

9:00 am Shotgun Start

Moose Ridge Golf Club

South Lyon, MI



More information at www.michiganasla.org

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Landscape Architects and Friends!

The year is progressing; as I write this letter it is the summer solstice. The days are longer which is nice for getting projects done. Even though the temperatures haven't felt very summer-like this year, I'm sure that will come soon.

In my last letter I mentioned the advocacy events the chapter and our members have been involved with locally, statewide, and nationally. I want to reiterate the importance of landscape architects being citizen advocates. We are a small group of professionals who can make a big difference on the built environment and the spaces that people utilize daily. I encourage you to talk to people about what you do and the projects you work on. If you have any questions about advocacy please feel free to contact me.

We have a lot to celebrate here in Michigan. We have had three of our members elevated to ASLA Fellow status. Congratulations to Bob Grese, Bob Gibbs, and Ming-Han Li. I'm very proud to have these distinguished professionals as a part of our chapter and community. A special thanks to Clare Jagenow as the Chair of the Council of Fellows and the rest of the committee for helping the nominees through the application. We also have great news that Tom Mroz has been elected as President-Elect of National ASLA. The Michigan Chapter has been well represented in national leadership positions, and I'm happy to see Tom elected to this top

position. Tom has been a great chapter and national leader to date, and I'm looking forward to what will happen under his leadership going forward.

This issue of MISITES features a deeper dive into two projects that are improving the City of Detroit. I'm always happy to see these success stories for Detroit, and I think we can learn from these projects and take pieces back to the communities in which we work and live. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about these projects, and I hope you will too. I'm always proud to see the great work taking place in our state.

Our 2019 application for our chapter awards is out, so please review that information and consider projects for submission. We have a number of great events planned for the rest of the year, including our Golf Outing and the Michigan Conference on Landscape Architecture. Our committees and volunteers are working hard to provide the best content for these events, and you won't want to miss them. The best way to stay up to date on all of our happenings is to check out our website, michiganasla.org, and to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Linked-in.

Ben Baker, PLA, ASLA
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

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ON THE COVER: Penrose Farmhouse and Market Garden in Detroit, Michigan.
(image credit: Hagenbuch Weikal Landscape Architecture)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit michiganasla.org for more info or to register!

- 7/23 MiASLA Golf Classic - South Lyon
- 10/23-24 MiASLA Conference - Plymouth

STUDYING FOR THE LARE?

If you would like to sign up for LARE study groups, please email Dana at education@michiganasla.org.



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Penrose resident Janay Martin getting ready for the day at the Farmington Farmer's Market on Saturdays.
All images: Hagenbuch Weikal Landscape Architecture

THE PENROSE MARKET GARDEN

Detroit, Michigan

BETH HAGENBUCH AND KEN WEIKAL,
HAGENBUCH WEIKAL LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

"Good design—thoughtfully composed ordering systems and patterns, sensuously active materials and textures, deliberately constructed sequences of spaces—create coherent places that have a powerfully positive effect on people. Urban spaces, landscapes, and buildings—even small and modest ones—profoundly influence human lives." —Sarah Williams Goldhagen, Welcome to Your World

"Feeding cities arguably has a greater social and physical impact on us and our planet than anything else we do. Yet few of us in the West are conscious of the process." —Carolyn Steel, Hungry City

Our landscape architecture practice carried out this pro-bono pilot project over eight years to explore the challenges and potential benefits of good design and urban agriculture in supporting positive outcomes for urban communities. It is a project about big ideas—how design might really make a difference where it counts most; and a very focused practical goal—creating an entrepreneurial market garden that generates a living wage—ultimately leading us to two seasons of boots-on-the-ground market gardening to get an answer about the financial feasibility of urban agriculture projects. Through sweat equity, we learned it is in the everyday minutia of design that makes or breaks a sub-acre farm business; every bit of space and each step taken must count. Through countless encounters, we witnessed how 'coherent places' can stop traffic, draw people together and begin new relationships.

Cities like Detroit face enormous challenges as their shrinking populations are increasingly scattered over vast landscapes defined by disinvestment and abandonment; landscapes that are a physical impediment to the everyday social and economic networks that support stable and healthy neighborhoods.

In low-income neighborhoods food production assets and landscapes can begin to address real needs on several levels—access to fresh food, social cohesion, and income for some residents are the most obvious. Neighborhoods that lack public space, green space, and those that have lost legibility and connectedness due to abandonment can reorganize in cost effective ways around well-designed, successful food production, bringing the beginnings of a local economy. People working outdoors growing food offer a kind of 'eyes on the street' security to communities struggling to maintain stability.

However, current realities and perceptions of urban agriculture projects as a social good but lacking economic viability render these supposed benefits tenuous at best. Many who attempt to make a living doing this work struggle to do so. Creating ways to make urban agriculture economically viable and aesthetically empowering is an important challenge to integrating productive landscapes into cities.

The Penrose Market Garden is a half-acre market garden facility and community space at Penrose Village, a 72-unit affordable housing infill development located in a 209-acre low-income neighborhood in north Detroit. Set in a post-



CHARLESTON STREET, 2012

Before construction of the Penrose Farmhouse and Market Garden.

industrial environment of decline and neglect, 76% of the 1,298 single-family lots are vacant, and a majority of the remaining properties are either derelict or in very poor condition. This environment led our design team to focus on the following questions:

How can low-income communities thrive in the post-industrial landscape?

How can design address the failures of low-density conditions and poorly organized infill activities in neighborhoods experiencing disinvestment and abandonment?

What strategies will produce maximum impact on residents' daily lives when financial and redevelopment resources are scarce?

In partnership with the Penrose Village owners, residents and area stakeholders, our office carried out a community planning and design process resulting in a Neighborhood Framework Plan locating the new Penrose Village housing and the Penrose Market Garden project as a strategic starting point within a larger vision of redevelopment. That vision focuses on the following Design Objectives:

A VIABLE MARKET GARDEN DEMONSTRATION PROJECT with a financially independent business and design elements that define productive landscape functionality.

INFORMED URBANISM addressing structural dysfunctions in post-industrial neighborhoods through planning, with the adjacencies, urban form and civic delight crucial to resilient communities.

A NEW VISUAL AND SPATIAL VOCABULARY for sustainable urban agriculture integrated into the daily life of urban neighborhoods. The site plan addresses spatial, functional and aesthetic form, shifting urban agriculture practices from rural sensibilities and methods towards an urban-appropriate productive garden model.

CIVIC SPACE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT In a landscape of vacant space, few shared public spaces exist. Multi-functional civic spaces are designed into the Penrose Market Garden to facilitate community engagement.

BUILD AND SUPPORT FAIR FOOD SYSTEMS with affordable, convenient access to fresh produce for residents and a fair market income for the entrepreneurial market gardener.

The design employs low-budget small-scale strategies to reintroduce connections and urban form to a neighborhood disintegrating into blight and vacancy. The site includes a half-acre market garden facility, housing in the Farmhouse Community Building for a Grower-In-Residence, multiple community spaces indoors and out, and a green space network to weave together a neighborhood center for Penrose Village residents and the wider community.

Capital investments to build the facility were made by Penrose Village, MSHDA, Kresge Foundation and GrowTown. However, with no funds to staff and maintain civic space, the sustainability of these new assets requires the market business to be self-sustaining. The market garden business and intensive growing techniques are modeled on successful examples in other places, specifically, SPIN-Farming™ principles, Curtis Stone's Profitable Urban Farming techniques for sub-acre farms, and The Lean Farm by Ben Hartmann.

In 2017, the last phase of business plan development; crops were grown on half the available growing area. With average sales of \$1,500/week, total revenue for the 24-week season was \$36,000. Sales came from two suburban farmers markets, the Penrose Farmstand and a weekly CSA (community supported agriculture) subscription that delivered produce boxes to nearby offices. With a



CHARLESTON STREET, 2016

After construction of the Penrose Farmhouse and Market Garden.



Penrose residents Janay and Carolyn work at the Penrose Farmstand each week selling produce to area residents.

skilled grower, the full 22,000 s.f. under production, season extension, and expanded markets, projected revenue potential is \$90,000+ per year. This is commensurate with the best small farms we researched.

The Penrose Farmstand operated in collaboration with the Arab and American Chaldean Council WIC Program providing nutrition education and WIC coupons to area families. The farmstand accepted WIC Project Fresh coupons, SNAP/ EBT benefits and Double Up Food Bucks, making fresh produce easily accessible and affordable for area residents while maintaining market prices for the market gardener.

Although social impacts are hard to quantify, Penrose Village resident Janay Martin expressed her experience this way, “The garden project in the Penrose neighborhood was good for the community. It gave us a sense of community and allowed us to interact with our neighbors. It was also a way for a low-income community to receive fresh vegetables at a price we could afford.”



Intensive growing methods and a profitable business plan bring a small business, the beginnings of a micro-economy, and increased activity to the neighborhood.

During the years of project development over 75 children participated in summer art and garden programs with a youth CSA delivering fresh produce to family and neighbors. Area non-profits, volunteers, summer interns, the local elementary school and residents engaged with programming and one another at the Market Garden spaces providing part-time and full-time seasonal employment to over 25 people. People from all walks of life and places far and near stopped in everyday to see what was happening. We believe that good design is a fundamental tool to make productive landscapes all that we imagine they can be. •

WANT TO LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED?

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Penrose Village Resident

Janay Martin

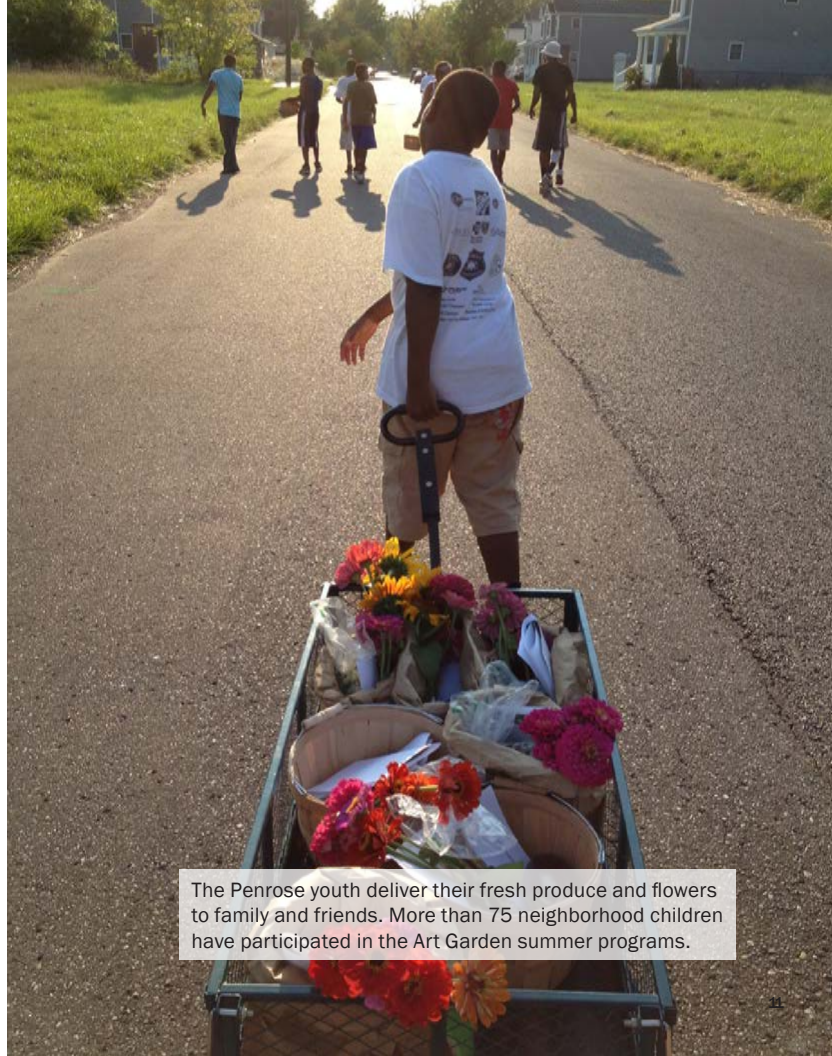
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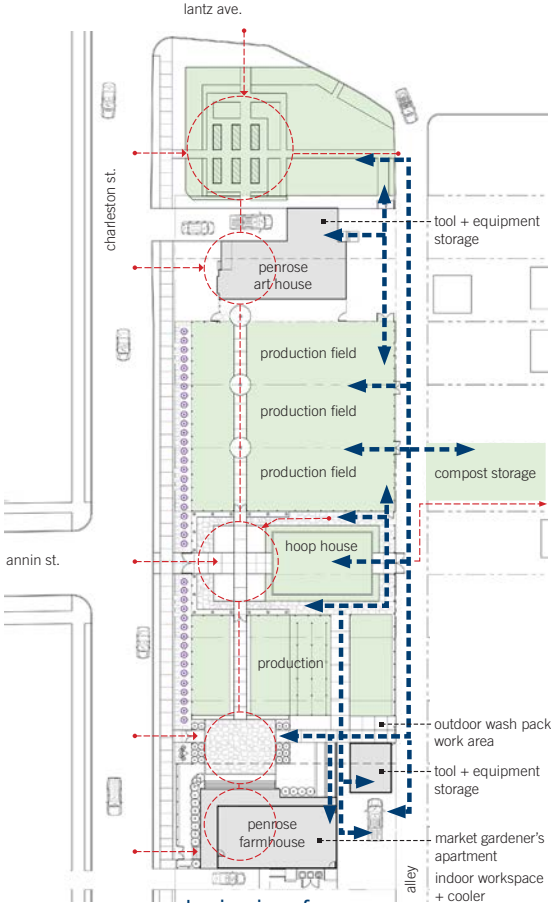
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The Penrose youth deliver their fresh produce and flowers to family and friends. More than 75 neighborhood children have participated in the Art Garden summer programs.

Integrating uses: Market Garden spaces from a series of indoor and outdoor community spaces linked along the north-south Garden Path axis. Residents enjoy the garden and diverse programming while efficient back-of-house production workflow supports the financial goals of the market garden.



front of house ← community and food production → back of house



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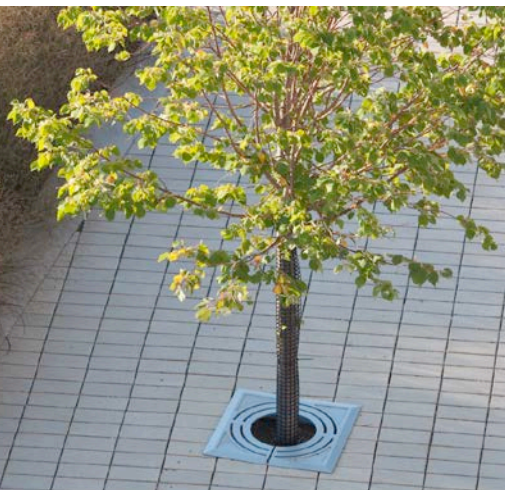


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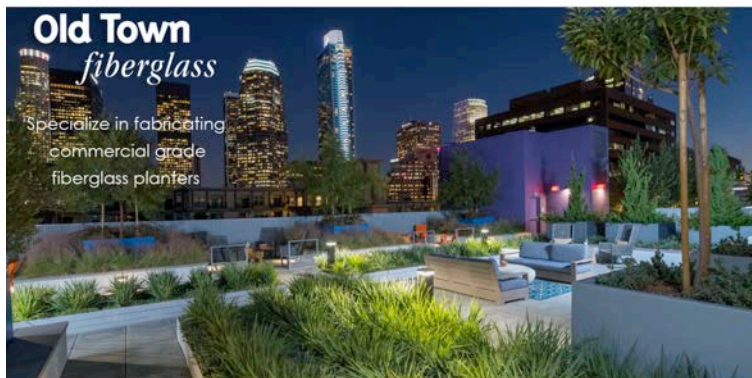
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LEADING WITH LANDSCAPE: HOW PUBLIC SPACE ANCHORS INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION IN DETROIT

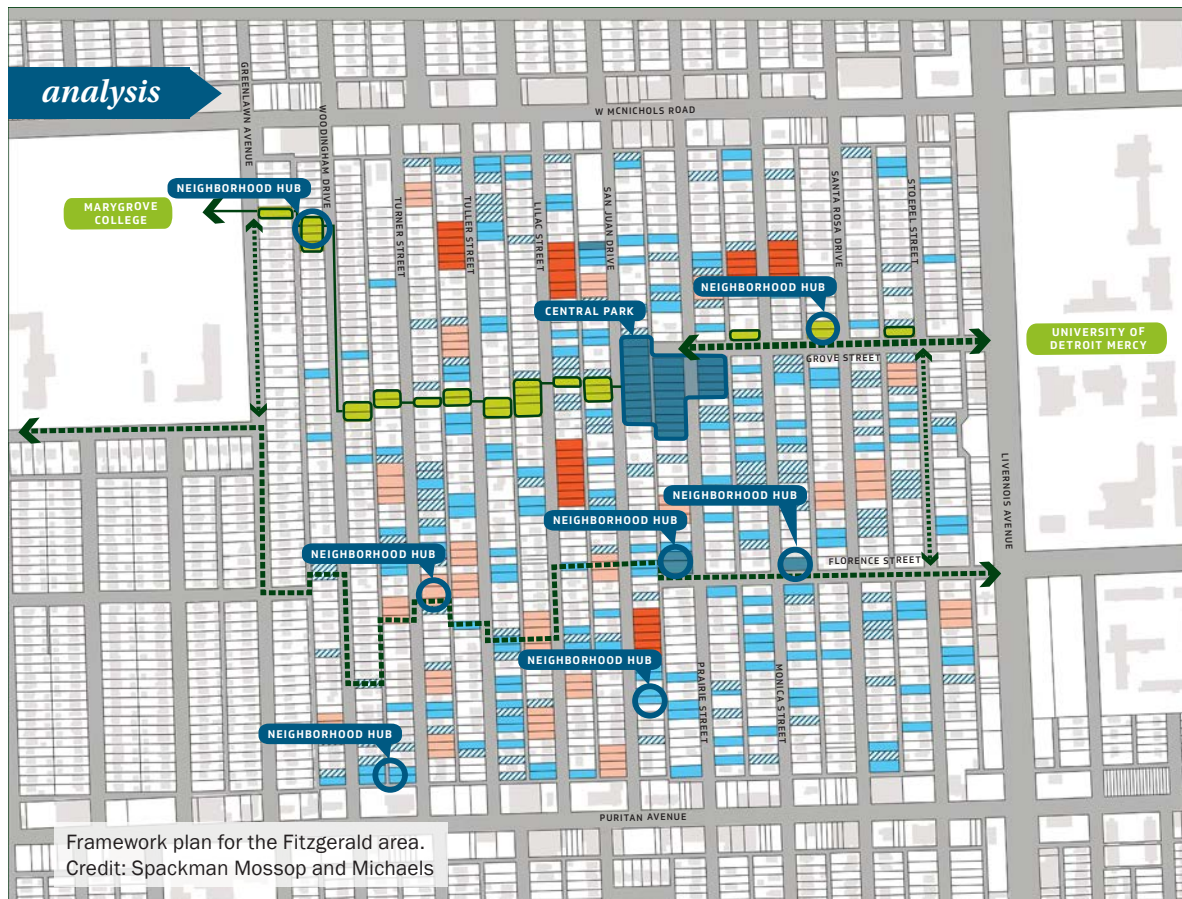
Detroit, Michigan

ALEXA BUSH, PLA, ASLA, CITY OF DETROIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Since the fall of 2015, the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department has been working with neighborhoods across Detroit to create frameworks for community reinvestment as part of the Duggan Administration's focus on expanding the city's recovery from downtown throughout its neighborhoods. The geographic focus of these framework plans has enabled a powerful collaboration that breaks down siloes across city government, but also sectors, as non-profit, philanthropic and private development partners are working together with residents to create and implement a number of targeted projects to improve quality of life and attract new investment to neighborhoods across the city.

One of the major challenges in many of these neighborhoods is the amount of vacant, often publicly-owned land. Because of many overlapping factors, such as population loss, the impacts of the Great Recession, and foreclosure, over 90,000 parcels across the city are currently publicly owned, whether by the Detroit Land Bank Authority or City of Detroit. Addressing this challenge fits squarely into the core expertise of landscape architecture: how can we turn these lots from a liability into an asset to aid in community revitalization? Our teams at the city recognize that in a weak market, with many vacant homes in need of rehab, we need new solutions for activating residential parcels than just infill housing. This land can reshape urban form in ways that benefit both

analysis



Landscape Strategy

- + A primary and secondary greenway will cross the neighborhood, offering options for accessing different community landscapes.

LEGEND

- Grove (Along Greenway)
- Crop (5-6 Lots)
- Orchard Typology (3-4 Lots)
- Meadow Typology (1-2 Lots)
- Special Use
- DLBA Owned Structure

existing residents, but also providing improved outcomes for social, economic and ecological urban systems. One of the most impactful opportunities is to use these lots to create new public spaces in neighborhoods that were originally designed as predominantly single-family subdivisions with few gathering spaces. Through careful planning, we can use this land to create the infrastructure for more vibrant civic life at the core of the community, using parks, greenways, gardens and even streets as the anchors for new investment and community resilience.

One of the first planning projects to launch was in the Livernois/McNichols area in northwest Detroit. As part of this project, one of the focus areas has been on the Fitzgerald neighborhood, a community where there was a high degree of public ownership (over 40% of residential parcels) while having lots of potential for revitalization: home to numerous active residents and strong block clubs, and adjacent to other more stable neighborhoods and two universities, the University of Detroit Mercy and Marygrove College. At this time, the City and partners had an opportunity to participate in Reimagining the Civic Commons – a three year initiative developed by four national funders, the JPB Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Kresge Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation focused on reinvesting in civic spaces as a way to improve civic engagement, environmental sustainability, socioeconomic mixing and value creation in cities across the US. It has enabled our Detroit team not only to learn from other cities, but provided flexibility to test engagement methods and programming, stretch design ideas, and collect data about the impact and outcomes of our work.

The first step in the planning process was to develop a vision with the current residents for the future of their neighborhood. We needed a framework that could work in today's market conditions, but also be flexible to the possibility of future growth. The planning team held a series of town hall meetings with residents in early 2016, but recognized that further outreach was needed to reach a wider range of the community. The team worked with residents to attend their existing block club meetings, held a series of meetings by setting up easels and grilling food on vacant lots scattered around the neighborhood, and tested ideas with residents through a series of pop-up events where we



Residents, students, and the planning team do a temporary installation of the greenway. Credit: Alexa Bush

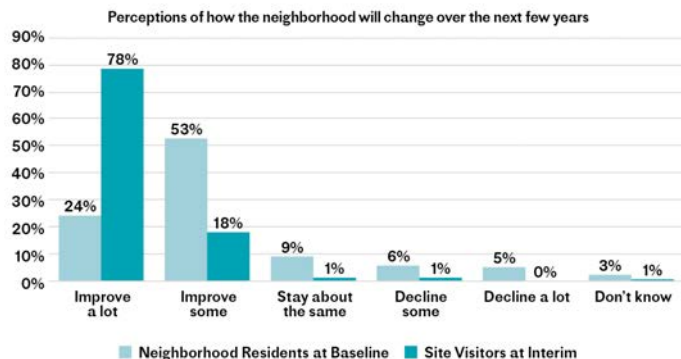
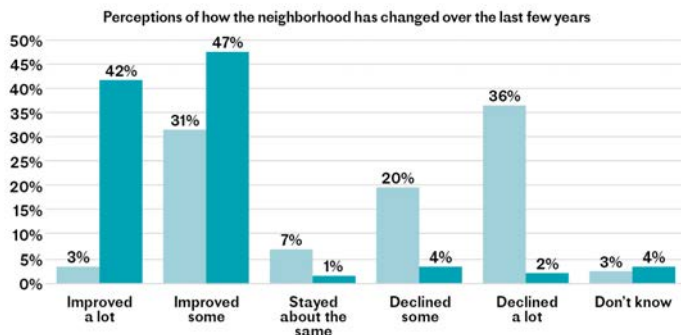


Crew members from the Greening of Detroit take down a dead tree in Fitzgerald. Credit: Alexa Bush

Perceptions of the neighborhood and its future

Comparing the perspectives of neighborhood residents at baseline and site visitors at interim on perceptions of the neighborhood and its future.

Source: Baseline figures from neighborhood survey; interim figures from intercept survey



temporarily installed ideas for new streetscapes, a neighborhood greenway, and even programming for a future park. In a community where the median income is less than \$20,000/year, we also used workforce development as a way to connect. We partnered with local non-profit, The Greening of Detroit, to recruit and train a crew of eight residents from the neighborhood to clear vacant lots as the process unfolded. Many of these individuals became some of the best ambassadors for the project, speaking to fellow neighbors and others who inquired about the work they were doing.

The result of this planning process was a framework for how to best reactivate every publicly held vacant lot and structure in the project area – over 400 properties in a quarter-square mile – to create a neighborhood that feels complete and cared for without building a single structure. Density could be increased by rehabbing and reoccupying vacant structures, and vacant lots could provide a mosaic of landscape spaces, some to become long-term public spaces like a new city park and greenway, some lots already stewarded by the community would remain as small gardens and gathering spaces, and others could become new types of landscapes, whether more passive, flowering meadows to improve storm water performance, increase access to nature and reduce long-term maintenance, to more active landscape uses such as growing crops.

Fifty of the lots became a new civic infrastructure of public space that better connected the neighborhood, 26 lots transformed into the new Ella Fitzgerald Park which opened last summer, and another 24 are currently under construction to create a greenway that will provide a new non-motorized path through the neighborhood that addresses the lack of east-west cross streets in the community. These improvements enhance walkability and bike safety, using elevated crosswalks where the greenway goes from vacant lots to crossing public streets. They have also increased access to recreation and natural spaces in a community previously lacking in these experiences, as well as increasing tree canopy and use of native plants. These civic spaces anchor additional private investment and create a new neighborhood center, strengthening the identity of the neighborhood, providing a place to reinforce

existing relationships and create new connections in the community.

One of the major lessons this work raises is the important of coordination – not only within the city but among the cross-section of sectors and partners needed to make this work happen. Having the ability to bring together Public Works, Housing, Recreation and General Services Departments are critical to creating a cohesive project, and to addressing the concerns and needs of a neighborhood, that does not draw a distinction between whether a street tree or sidewalk belongs to one department or another. While the team has been making steady progress in implementing the plan, it has also demonstrating the complexity of taking on ambitious scattered-site redevelopment projects at scale. From quieting title on hundreds of separate lots, to coordinating the requirements of different federal or philanthropic funding sources, there are many systemic obstacles that must be overcome. Finding effective ways to change or navigate bureaucracy is crucial for addressing the many needs of cities to adapt and thrive in today's market realities and in the face of a changing climate.

The most powerful part of this collaboration is seeing the impact, whether from children and families enjoying a new neighborhood park or seeing new connections and friendships be forged. Through the Civic Commons, we've been able to collect data at baseline before construction as well as periodic updates through physical mapping, door-to-door surveys and observing project sites. We are seeing increased use of public spaces and civic life where it didn't exist previously, increased engagement, stewardship and perception of the neighborhood. Interviews with park users report increased confidence in future direction of neighborhood, and even perceptions of safety, despite minimal change in underlying crime rates. Both our anecdotal observations as well as the data demonstrate that investment in public space does deliver on a number of outcomes.

While we continue work in Fitzgerald, this effort is also expanding across the city through major initiatives like the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, a public-private-philanthropic partnership for combined investment in 10 areas across Detroit. The potential for landscapes and public spaces to anchor this type of

neighborhood reinvestment provides new ways to think not only about city-building today, but the long term possibilities for cities to be more inclusive, resilient and sustainable. •

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Children at the playground in Ella Fitzgerald Park. Credit: Alexa Bush



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