

A person is riding a bicycle across a wooden bridge. The scene is silhouetted against a vibrant sunset sky with orange, pink, and purple hues. The bridge has a railing with vertical posts. The person is in the center of the frame, moving from left to right.

MiSITES

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 3 MICHIGAN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow landscape architects! I hope this letter finds you well and budding with excitement about the coming spring blooms.

I'd like to take a moment and thank our executive committee (Excom) for their hard work and unwavering dedication to our chapter, and the above-and-beyond effort and energy they consistently bring to ensure that our chapter is a success. Our Excom members volunteer their own time to advocate for our chapter and our members, and we owe them a great debt of gratitude for their efforts. From planning great events such as the golf outing, and annual meeting, to defending our license against de-licensure attacks, to making sure our membership is informed and aware of important issues, our Excom is continuously working to make our chapter strong, unified, and a leader among State chapters. Our officers are listed in the back of this issue, so please make sure you're familiar with who they are and thank them for their efforts when you see them at a Michigan ASLA event.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new MiSITES Editorial Committee, Meghan Diecchio and Kelly Burks, who are bringing a fresh perspective and energy to MiSITES! They have worked over the past few months to transition into the editorial role and I know they are going to do great things for this publication. We're always looking for exciting articles for MiSITES, so please email Meghan and Kelly at SITESpublications@michiganasla.org if you have a topic, trend, or project you'd be interested in writing about.

We have a lot of great events and programs planned for

ON THE COVER: *Sunset at Millennium Park.*
Image courtesy of VIRIDIS Design Group.

2018 so please get involved with Michigan ASLA and get your co-workers involved, too! We want to continue to grow our chapter, and make Michigan a strong, tightly-knit community of landscape architects, and we need your help! Will you be an advocate for Michigan ASLA in your own office? Will you encourage your co-workers to sign up for social events and participate in ASLA functions? The more our members engage with the chapter the stronger our chapter will become, and the stronger our profession will become in the state and across the country.

We're always looking for the next group of professionals who want to give back to the Michigan landscape architecture community and seek out a position with the excom, or volunteer to participate in one of our committees or other volunteer option. If you've ever considered a leadership position with Michigan ASLA, I strongly encourage you to reach out to one of our Excom members to see what it's all about. Our members are what drives this chapter, and the Excom needs you, as much as you need it.

I hope you enjoy this great issue of MiSITES and as always, if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me. ■

Ben Baker, ASLA
President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

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UPCOMING EVENTS

31st Annual MiASLA Golf Classic
Grande Golf Club, Jackson, MI
July 24th, 2018

MiASLA Annual Meeting & Expo
Radisson, Kalamazoo, MI
October 3-4, 2018

If you would like to contribute to MiSITES or have a topic of interest, please email: SITESpublications@michiganasla.org

MILLENNIUM PARK MEADOW

Trevor Bosworth, ASLA
VIRIDIS Design Group

SUCCESSFUL BEGINNINGS

:
When you think of a community legacy, you may think of significant contributions toward civic institutions or hospitals, or maybe a local hero's lifetime of volunteer achievements. In the parks field, legacies mean land and recreational opportunities, and Millennium Park is a new benchmark. The concept of the park took off in 1997, thanks to an ambitious vision, principled fund allocations, generous land donations, and robust fundraising efforts. Today, Millennium is one of the nation's largest urban parks with portions in Grand Rapids, Walker, Grandville and Wyoming. With 1,400 acres of rolling terrain and six miles of frontage on the Grand River, the park is rich in natural resources, featuring unique habitats and large natural areas for wildlife to thrive. Facilities within the park include a six-acre beach and splashpad, boat rental facilities, nearly 18 miles of non-motorized trails, and other diverse opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

GROWING PAINS:

By 2012, seven major phases of expansion and development had created an immensely popular park, yet additional needs were becoming apparent. The park needed a large, flexible outdoor space to host a diverse range of programmed events. Even though the parks department had been utilizing seasonally available open space and existing shelters at Millennium, the size and demand of new event programming, parking, and staging were far surpassing the capacity of available areas within the park. Some events like Warrior Dash, Color Run, and other triathlons had as many as 10,000 participants. With almost half of the park located within the 100 year flood plain of the Grand River, the Kent County Parks Department turned to a 75 acre piece of upland property across from the popular Recreational Core as the study area for the proposed Millennium Park Meadow.

DESIGN CHALLENGES:

Prior to the County acquiring the property, the site was used for sand and gravel mining, leaving in its wake decades of construction debris, compacted soils, and unconsolidated fill. Outside of its proximity to the Recreation Core and being above the 100 year floodplain, the site offered little ecological and social benefit. "The Meadow project offered us the opportunity to transform this former mining site to meet the need for large events while restoring natural areas to their highest potential," said Roger Sabine, Director of Kent County Parks.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

Kent County Parks leadership and the design team spent the next several years focusing efforts on planning options and funding models. The design team followed principles established with the first project back in 2002. Also known as the "Millennium Standard" these included the following:

- Recognize the interdependence of people and the environment.
- Restore ecological health and biodiversity.
- Create a place that is equitable, socially just, and accessible to all.
- Provide an inspirational setting for a range of recreational enjoyment.
- Develop and utilize multi-benefit and multi-purpose, green infrastructure elements.

In 2015, the project was issued for bids with ground-breaking in the fall of the same year. One of the signature pieces of the project is the 400-person custom pavilion, with architectural detailing to fit in with the design vocabulary of other structures in Millennium Park. Plazas on the front and back of the pavilion provide ample space for casual receptions, break out areas, and stunning views of the adjacent lake and native landscapes. Access for staging, catering, and other back-of-house services were incorporated into the design as well as a restroom facility, bike parking, and donor recognition and park interpretive areas.



MILLENNIUM PARK MEADOW (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

*Meadow project under construction.
Image courtesy of Katerberg Verhage Inc.*

‘In the parks field, legacies mean land and recreational opportunities, and Millennium Park is a new benchmark’

Non-motorized elevated boardwalk connection allows users to connect to the Fred Millennium Trail Network as well as take in the beauty of the surrounding lakes and constructed wetlands. Image courtesy of VIRIDIS Design Group.



MILLENNIUM PARK MEADOW (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)



Based on the mining and construction fill history of the site, special attention was given to restoration of soil health; increasing organic content and infiltration rates, while reducing compaction and runoff rates. Stormwater management systems were designed by utilizing bio-swales, filter strips, and rain gardens to collect, filter, and cleanse stormwater prior to entering the adjacent wetland and lake system.

This was especially important due to the need for both permanent and overflow parking to accommodate large events held on-site. The landscape pallet consists of acres of low-profile & wet-to-mesic prairie, and wetland edge seed mixes along with over 500 native trees and 6,000 individual grass, sedge and forb plantings. The non-motorized circulation of the project was designed as a connector hub and trail head for the recently completed Fred Meijer Millennium Trail network. One of the more dramatic non-motorized connections designed within the Meadow project is an elevated boardwalk that soars 20' above the water, providing picturesque views of the lakes, constructed wetland, upland prairie, and nature trails below.

A flexible and centralized green space capable of handling large crowds with a stage for music and announcements, and space for food trucks and other vendors was critical for the Meadows. A four acre lawn amphitheater surrounded by upland prairie and native tree grove was constructed. The amphitheater space was designed to be flexible enough for small community groups as well as accommodating large festivals that may have several thousand in attendance.

Thanks to the continuity and vision of the Kent County Parks Department and the context-sensitive and innovative approach by the design team, the newest Millennium Park project, The Meadow, was seamlessly integrated into the park fabric, and opened to the public in the summer of 2016. Summarizing the efforts of the design team, Sabine added "The Meadows not only restores an eyesore, but provides the type of flexible programming space that Millennium Park needed. While it is well known in the community as THE place to hold 5k fundraisers and large events, it is just as comfortable hosting a nice wedding or sit down dinner for 400. The story of the Meadow matches the entire story of Millennium Park." ■

Owner: Kent County Parks Department - Roger Sabine, ASLA, Brian Mulligan, ASLA

Landscape Architect / Project Lead: VIRIDIS Design Group -Trevor Bosworth, ASLA, SuLin Kotowicz, ASLA

Subconsultants: Tower Pinkster, Williams & Works, Bazen Electric
General Contractor: Katerberg VerHage Inc.

Project Donors: Peter F. Secchia, Universal Forest Products, Meijer Foundation, Bill and Bea Idema Foundation, William G. Currie Foundation, Kent County Parks Foundation

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OPPOSITE TOP: Arrival sequence character study.

OPPOSITE LEFT: Meadow pavilion at sunset.

**OPPOSITE RIGHT: Meadow pavilion and plaza during a summer night event.
Images courtesy of VIRIDIS Design Group.**

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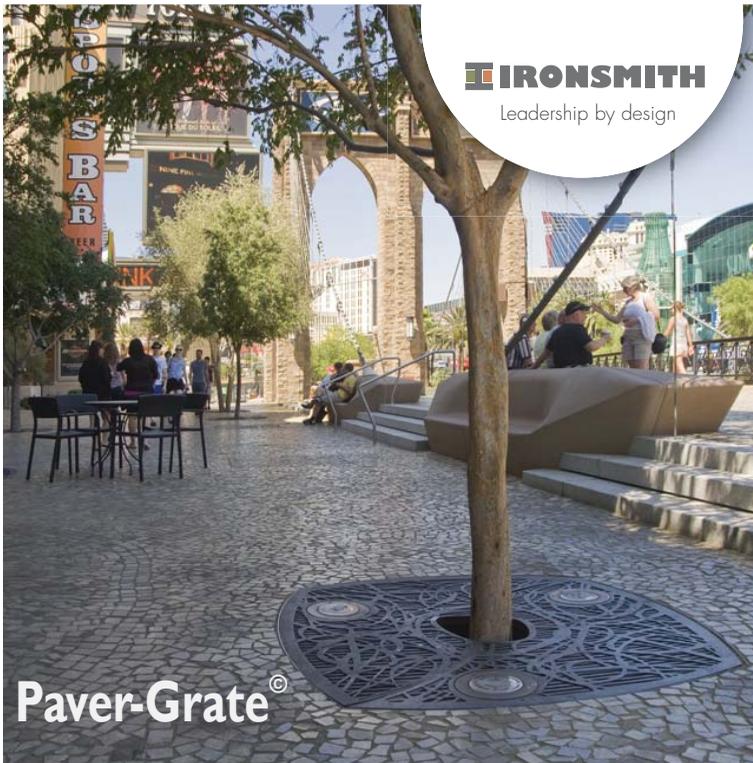
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PLANNING IN DETROIT'S LOWER EAST SIDE

Alicia Adams, ASLA
SmithGroupJJR

The City of Detroit has seen a seemingly-endless stream of headlines, blog entries and media fads that have boasted to the country and the world one strong message, “Detroit is Back, and We’re Cool.”

With the 2008 recession still fresh in the minds of many Americans, Detroit’s iconic “by the bootstraps” narrative strikes a chord and inspires hope. And while many of these trending articles reflect a shifting culture in the City of Detroit, their attention rarely ventures beyond the City’s Downtown and Midtown areas. The 7.2 square miles at Detroit’s core have been the focus for a number of projects, ranging from the QLine, a 3.3-mile rail line on Woodward Avenue to the Little Caesar’s Arena District and future home to the Detroit Pistons and an ever-growing list of mixed-use development projects breaking ground.

Meanwhile, Detroit’s remaining 130 square miles have received considerably less air time; amidst this surge of investment in the City’s core, long-term residents have continued to face daily challenges ranging from closing schools and unsafe pedestrian routes to continued blight and high unemployment rates. And with over 600,000 residents, nearly 95% of Detroit’s population, living outside of the 7.2 square miles, the impact of these issues is not insignificant.

In late 2016, under the direction of newly-appointed Planning Director, Maurice Cox, a revamped and re-energized Detroit Planning Department undertook four neighborhood planning studies. Each study area was strategically selected to expand the sphere of development beyond the core of the City and to identify and address the ongoing struggles of Detroit’s long-term and future residents.

ISLANDVIEW & GREATER VILLAGES NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

In January 2017, The Islandview & Greater Villages Neighborhood Plan and Beltline Greenway kicked off a six-month planning study of nearly three square

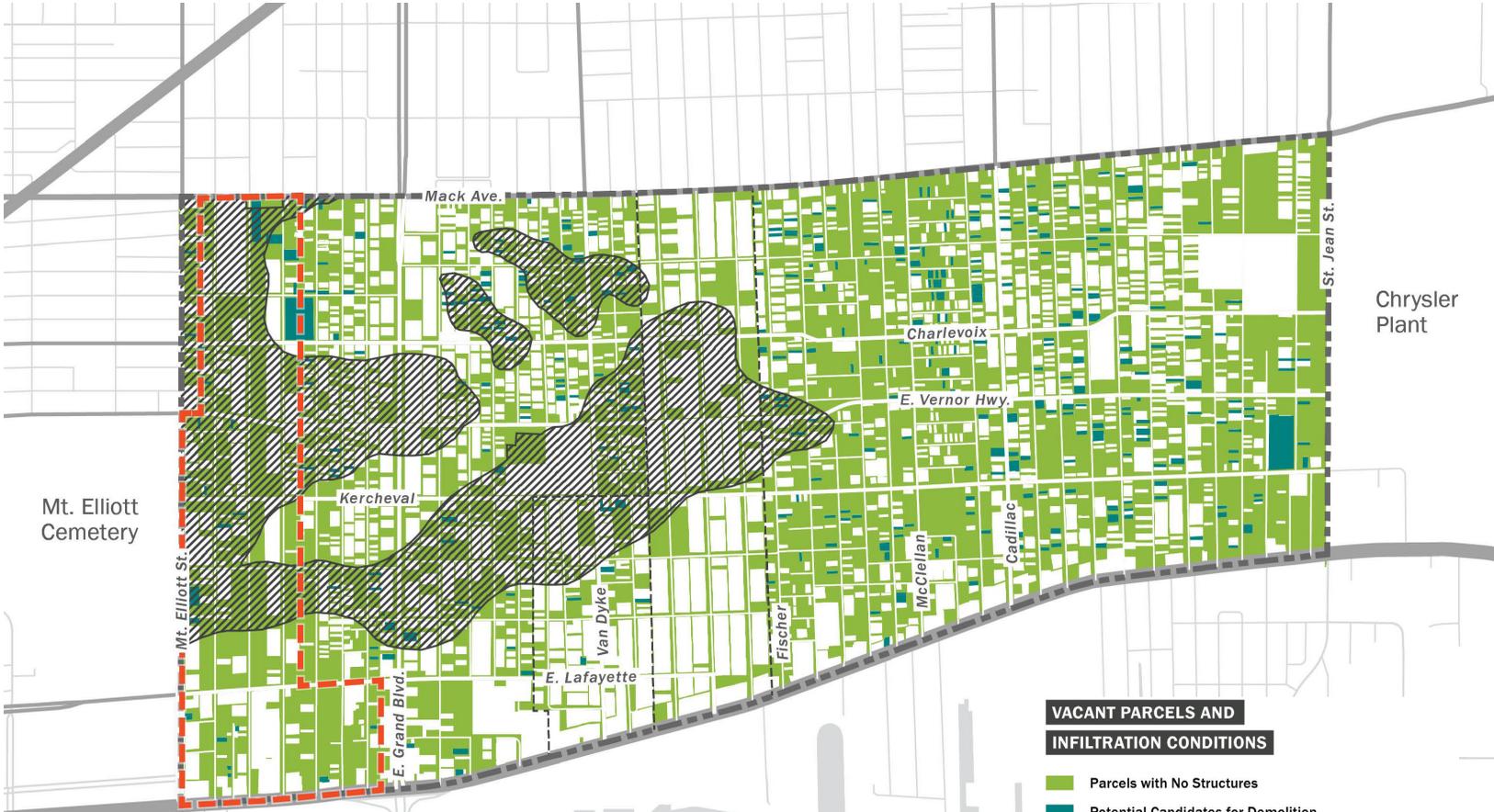
miles in Detroit’s Lower East Side. The area’s proximity to Downtown Detroit, as well as its alignment along the Jefferson Avenue Corridor and the Detroit Riverfront, established these neighborhoods as a next step in the City’s planning process.

SmithGroupJJR is the lead design consultant supporting the City of Detroit Planning Department to develop the Neighborhood Plan and Beltline Greenway. Both initiatives aim to build upon existing momentum in the neighborhood to increase the quality of life for existing residents and establish a framework for future development. The scale and type of development across the site vary considerably, as the study area is comprised of four neighborhoods with very distinctive identities:

Islandview: While Islandview is still suffering from the same blight as the rest of Detroit, the area has seen reinvestment in recent years and has the highest population of the planning area’s four neighborhoods. The depleted industrial corridor of the Islandview neighborhood once included the operation of the historic Beltline railway. Today, with the railway no longer in service, many of the remaining industrial structures have found new life in community programs such as Gleaner’s Food Bank and the Downtown Detroit Boxing Gym. The abandoned rail corridor is being re-designed as a north-south off-street greenway providing a key connection from the neighborhood down to the Detroit RiverWalk – providing access to recreation, open space, and connections to regional destinations.

Indian Village: With its stately residences and low vacancy rates, Indian Village has remained largely intact throughout the years. Additionally, Indian Village has a significantly higher Median Household Income (\$70k) when compared to the rest of the Islandview & Greater Villages Study Area (\$24k) and the City of Detroit overall (\$28k).

West Village: Nestled in alongside Indian Village and the Jefferson Corridor, West Village is an ideal location for redevelopment. The neighborhood’s historic character and diverse housing options ranging from mixed-use mid-rise buildings to duplexes and single family homes have attracted new residents. Additionally, the neighborhood has been a prime target for investment in local businesses through innovative financing programs such as Invest Detroit and Motor City Match.



Mt. Elliott Cemetery

Chrysler Plant

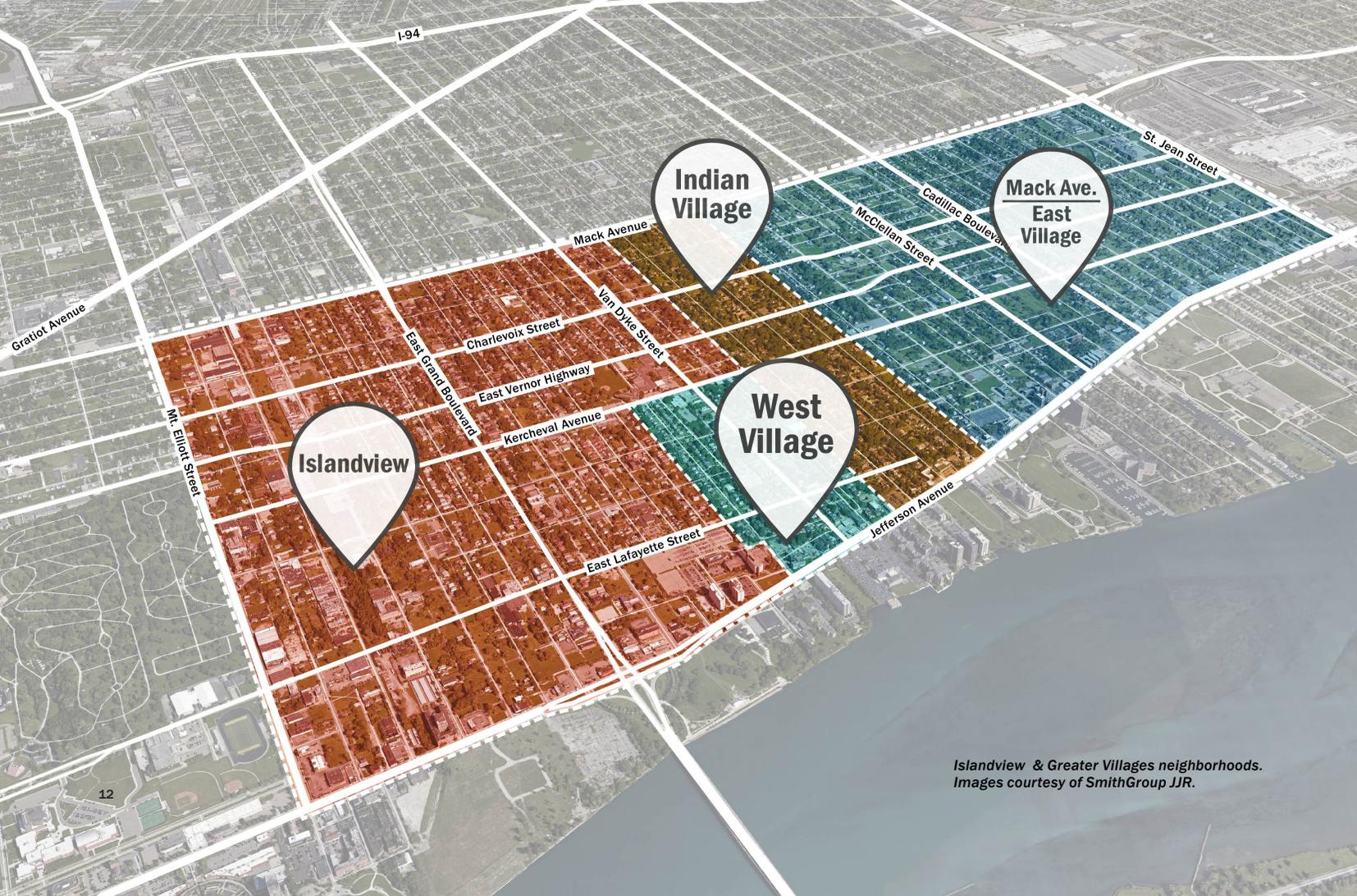
VACANT PARCELS AND INFILTRATION CONDITIONS

- Parcels with No Structures
- Potential Candidates for Demolition
- Hydrologic Soil Group A (High Infiltration Rates)
- Industrial Zoning (High Potential for Contamination)

Source: 2017 DLBA: Unoccupied and Maybe Occupied Structures in Poor and Suggested Demolition Condition; 2017 DLBA Parcels with No Structures; NRCS DWSO Detroit City Limits Hydrologic Soil Group Assessment

Islandview & Greater Villages Open Space Study. Images courtesy of SmithGroup JJR.

Detroit River



Islandview

Indian Village

West Village

**Mack Ave.
East Village**

*Islandview & Greater Villages neighborhoods.
Images courtesy of SmithGroup JJR.*

PLANNING ON DETROIT'S LOWER EAST SIDE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

East Village/Mack Avenue: The East Village/Mack Avenue neighborhood comprises nearly half of the study area, and maintains a total land vacancy at 65%. With 25% of its remaining structures unoccupied as of 2017, it also has a significantly higher rate of structural vacancy than that of the planning area's overall (16%). In recent years, much of this vacant land has been purchased and maintained by Hantz Farms, transforming longstanding blight into productive tree farms.

PLANNING FOCUS AND GOALS

The diverse needs and values of the four neighborhoods within the Islandview & Greater Villages planning area contribute to the need for a multi-faceted approach to identify and address those needs which are at the core of the community. The City of Detroit's desire to initiate comprehensive revitalization for the neighborhoods is a complex undertaking. This mission will be accomplished by focusing on key neighborhood components: Housing, Historic Preservation, Open Space, Green Infrastructure, Zoning and Public Policy, Mobility and Community Engagement. The objective of the planning is to support the City in creating a transformative, durable, and motivating planning framework, and a range of implementation strategies that can have an immediate positive impact for the community.

The challenges and blight that the district's residents have had to endure require an insightful and engaging outreach program. The residents are concerned over the vitality and health of their neighborhoods and need to be at the core of the process in deciding how their neighborhoods improve and transition into the future. A public participation process that is not only inclusive, but also timely and meaningful, has been tailored to outline the neighborhood's development opportunities and address residents' intrinsic need.

The conclusion of the six-month planning project will be far from the end of this process for the Islandview & Greater Villages study area. It's really the beginning. The neighborhood plan will identify several immediate opportunities and corridors that will act to catalyze reinvestment in the area. Additionally, the framework plan will provide a guide and resources for existing and future initiatives in the Islandview & Greater Villages neighborhoods. ■



Islandview & Greater Villages beltline engagement activities. Images courtesy of SmithGroupJJR.

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