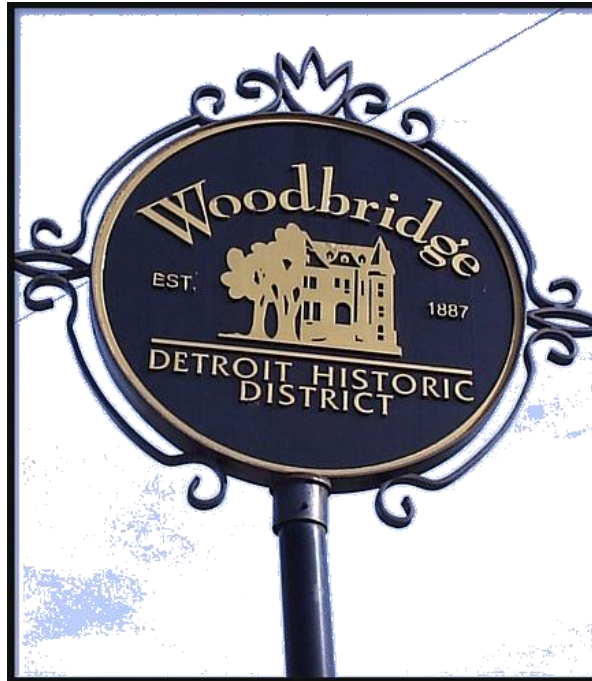


August 2011

Wayne State University
Department of Urban Studies and
Planning

Capstone Team - Summer 2011



CONCEPTUALIZING WOODBRIDGE

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S MASTER OF URBAN PLANNING PROGRAM – SUMMER 2011 CAPSTONE PROJECT

Summer 2011 Capstone Team

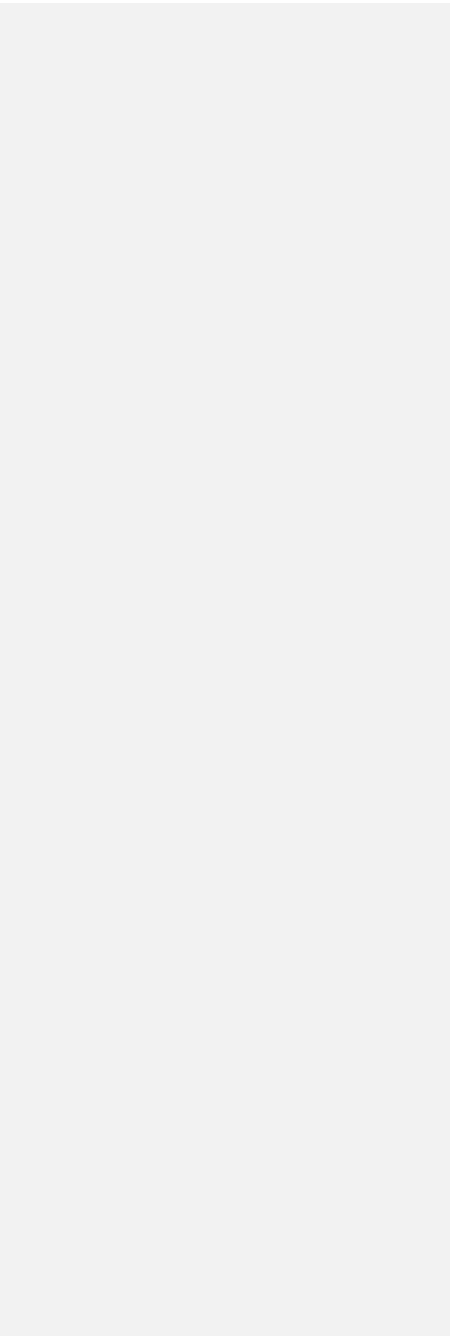
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Woodbridge Citizens District Council (WCDC)
Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation (WNDC)
Woodbridge Pub**

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PLAN GOAL

This plan recommends a multi-tiered approach that encourages a targeted neighborhood development strategy, fostering and creating certain assets that further Woodbridge's image as a unique place within Detroit, and to help create lasting and collaborative connections within Woodbridge and with surrounding anchor institutions.

The Woodbridge Context

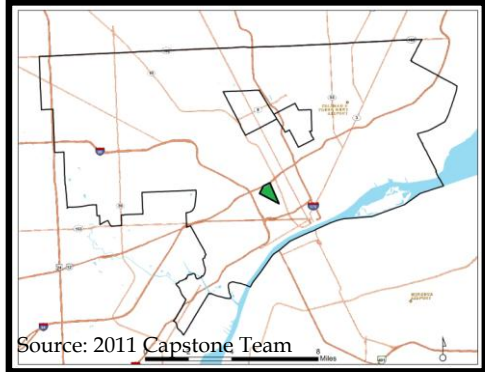
Understanding the uniqueness of a vibrant urban neighborhood



A Neighborhood of Its Own Kind

Recently, Shaun Donovan, the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), visited Detroit to announce a new federal initiative entitled “Strong Cities, Strong Communities.” Under this initiative, the federal government shall provide funding and HUD staff to six landmark American cities, including Detroit. In a speech to the Detroit Economic Club regarding this federal support, Mr. Donovan discussed four pillars that help form strong

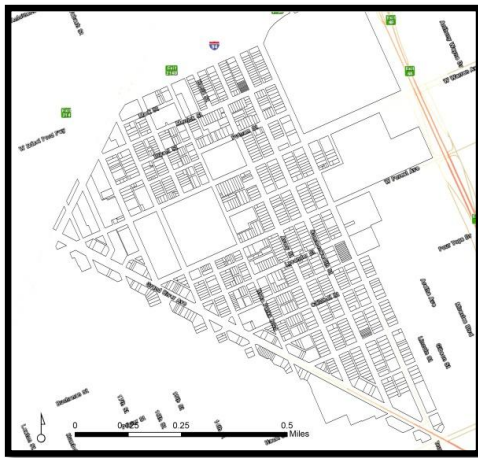
Woodbridge Target Area Within Detroit



cities: 1) people; 2) places; 3) strong regulation; and 4) support of local leaders and the city’s vital institutions. Mr. Donovan stated that the backbone of strong cities is strong communities. Across the board, individuals, institutions, local leaders, and government officials recognize Woodbridge as a strong community and one of Detroit’s anchor neighborhoods.

Woodbridge possesses most of the core principals cited by Mr. Donovan. More than anything, neighborhood residents want others to recognize the unique and diverse nature of its people. People are the core of the Woodbridge neighborhood. Woodbridge also has the foundation to be deemed an exceptional place, evidenced by the Victorian architecture that lines its streets. The neighborhood is also home to City leaders and employees of the pivotal anchor institutions integrally involved in an ever-evolving Detroit. Midtown, Inc., Wayne State University, Henry Ford Hospital, the City of Detroit, and others have noted the vitality and importance of Woodbridge. Echoing these sentiments, in prepared statements to the press about strong communities, Mr. Donovan said, “[w]e’ve put people back to work building bridges and roads, provided Mayor Bing with the resources he’s needed to invest in and around successful stable neighborhoods like Corktown, Midtown, Woodbridge and Indian Village...” Above all, Woodbridge is a successful and stable neighborhood, and the following plan attempts to build upon this tenet.

Woodbridge Target Area



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

located in Detroit, MI, just south of I-94 and west of the Lodge Freeway. The neighborhood is also bordered by Henry Ford Hospital, New Center Wayne State University, Midtown, and Motor City Casino. The target area encompasses the geographic jurisdiction of the WCDC, as set forth in its bylaws.

This plan was prepared for and in collaboration with the Woodbridge's Citizens District Council ("WCDC"). It should be noted that a citizens' district council is somewhat of a unique legal entity established by Michigan Statutes and City of Detroit Ordinances. As noted by a scholar, "Citizens' district councils were consulted about design elements, land use decisions, and the financing of proposed development projects. As a result, citizens' district councils have been institutionalized as a mechanism to augment citizen participation in the City of Detroit for over three decades."¹ On paper, citizens' district councils offer an active voice in local government to distressed urban neighborhoods. As noted below, at certain times over the last 40 years, the WCDC has been an important advocate for Woodbridge residents. The proposals set forth in this document were made with the legal considerations that bind the Woodbridge Citizens' District Council.

This plan is part of a Capstone Project for Wayne State University students working toward their Masters of Urban Planning. The plan aims to encapsulate the WCDC's work in the Woodbridge community, which is

¹ Silverman, Robert Mark. 2003. *Citizens District Councils in Detroit: The Promise and Limits of Using Planning Advisory Boards to Promote Citizen Participation*. National Civic Review. Available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ncr.26/pdf>.

REVISED CITY CHARTER

Under Michigan law and Detroit ordinances, established citizens' district councils shall be consulted prior to any redevelopment plan for its respective area. Moreover, it is recognized that this entity has legal standing to propose changes in the Woodbridge community. For instance, the WCDC has the ability to propose rezoning changes to entire blocks, even though it may not own any of the parcels.

Importantly, it should be noted a Revised Charter Commission has been working to modify the current City Charter. The Revised Charter, which has been sent to Lansing for approval, calls for the creation of Community Advisory Councils. These new councils would cover a broader physical area, have a broader purpose, and have direct access to the City Council, while Citizens' District Councils' powers are much more limited with no access to City Council. Pursuant to the Revised Charter, it is possible that an Advisory Council and a Citizens' District Council could both address the same matters, such as a redevelopment plan for Woodbridge. With that understanding, the WCDC must be aware of that they may become marginalized as the new Advisory Councils will seemingly have more power and more direct access to the City. The Revised Charter will likely come before the voters of Detroit in 2011. Thus, the Woodbridge Citizens' District Council must ascertain whether it will support the Revised Charter and the creation of Community Advisory Boards, and, if the Revised Charter is approved, how it will work with the City Departments and Advisory Board moving forward.

The Plan

Prior to the formulation of this plan, at the request of residents, the Capstone Team, in conjunction with the WCDC, held a public forum to help ascertain the neighborhood's assets and vulnerabilities. This forum provided us with invaluable information to our understanding about the physical and social conditions of the target area. The plan aims to be supportive and address the concerns of the Woodbridge residents. The plan also incorporates data obtained by the Capstone Team through research and field surveys. The plan and its proposals also take into account the current economic conditions of the region, state, and nation.

The plan devotes a particular focus on strengthening and building upon the neighborhood's assets addressing certain barriers that plague many Detroit communities. Based on this premise, the plan recommends a multi-tier approach that encourages a targeted business development strategy, fostering and creating certain assets that further Woodbridge's image as a unique place in Detroit, and to help make lasting and collaborative connections with anchor institutions in the surrounding area. To help ensure further investment in Woodbridge, the team has recommended initial implementation strategies to forward the goals of this plan and increase the capacity of the WCDC. This plan and its accompanying presentation will be available online at <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=1827>.

Woodbridge remains such a stark and remarkable neighborhood in Detroit partly due to its ability to recognize its history and preserve the past. The Woodbridge area was originally a farm owned by William Woodbridge, former governor of Michigan. The area remained as farmland with a few simple residences until the death of William Woodbridge in 1861. Thereafter, the land was divided into smaller parcels. In 1871, the Hodges Brothers undertook the first major development, constructing homes along Lincoln Street. At this time, most of the historic, large and prominent homes were built. Development continued at a slow pace, spurred by individual homeowners and small-scale developers. As the population's mobility increased with the rise of the automobile, people began leaving Detroit's core urban neighborhoods for the outer edges of the City and the suburbs. The construction of freeways and public housing in the 1950s also isolated different parts of the neighborhood.

The onset of Urban Renewal posed another threat to the neighborhood. As a result of modifications to the Federal Housing Act of 1959, funding could now be provided for land acquisition and clearance. Collectively, Wayne State University and the City of Detroit planned to capture 300 acres west of Wayne State's campus in Woodbridge. In 1970, Michigan enacted legislation that created Citizens' District Councils. Shortly thereafter, the neighborhood residents formed the Woodbridge Citizens District Council, and the organization became the neighborhood's advocate in the fight against the proposed expansion and redevelopment by Wayne State. While the WCDC and neighborhood lost some property to the Wayne State expansion, the WCDC stopped most of the proposed development. For many years, the Citizens' District Council remained the main advocate for neighborhood residents. In 1980, a large portion of the neighborhood was designated as a State and National Historic District in order to further protect it from further government actions.

During the 1980s, Woodbridge, like the entire City, experienced a decline in population and physical conditions. It was a bleak time for Woodbridge, Detroit and urban centers throughout the Midwest. However, as Wayne State evolved,

Understanding The Numbers

Considering population size, density and diversity are noted factors in providing a strong foundation to urban communities. Also, understanding demographics is an important component in the planning process as it helps to better identify the needs of the community to effectively establish both short- and long-term goals. Furthermore, this understanding will provide clarity of the human capital available within the community. Human capital is a valuable resource for any community to comprehend as it allows a more targeted approach to address its issues. In addition, the knowledge of available resources within the community population will help provide its leaders with efficient and effective clarity to help move the community forward

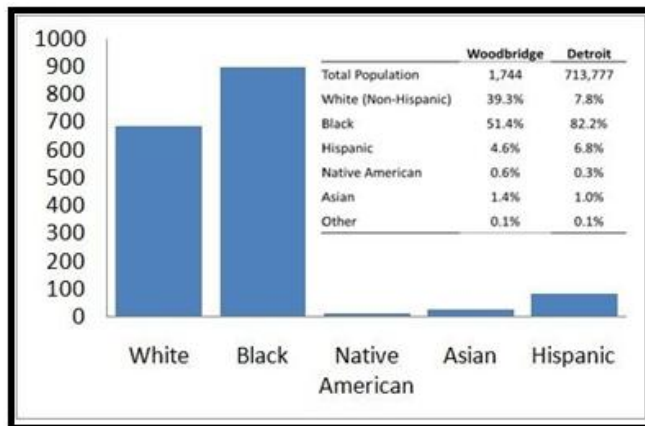
many of its students and professors became enamored with the character and charm of Woodbridge. The influx of these individuals into the neighborhood resulted in rising home prices and reinvestment in Woodbridge. Woodbridge's slow resurrection continues. Because of residents' efforts, the neighborhood escaped the redevelopment efforts that effectively destroyed other similar historic neighborhoods in the City. Woodbridge is one of the rare survivors of these drastic changes.

Demographics in Woodbridge

A common thought from residents in the Woodbridge community is that much of its strength is derived from its diversity. The belief is easy to embrace when taking a close look at the neighborhood and getting a clear understanding of its dynamics. Even though it is a relatively small area in comparison to other Detroit communities, Woodbridge is dense given its size. In fact, according to the 2010 United States Census, it is one of the few Detroit communities that realized a population increase over the 2000 Census count.

According to the 2010 Census, the Woodbridge population is very diverse in relation to the City of Detroit. While Detroit has majority black population at 82.2% of 713,777 residents, the percentage of Woodbridge's black population is significantly less, at 51.4% of the area's 1,744 residents. The 2010 Census reports Detroit's white (non-Hispanic) population at 7.8% but, in Woodbridge, this number rises to 39.3% of the population (See chart below).

Ethnic/Racial Makeup

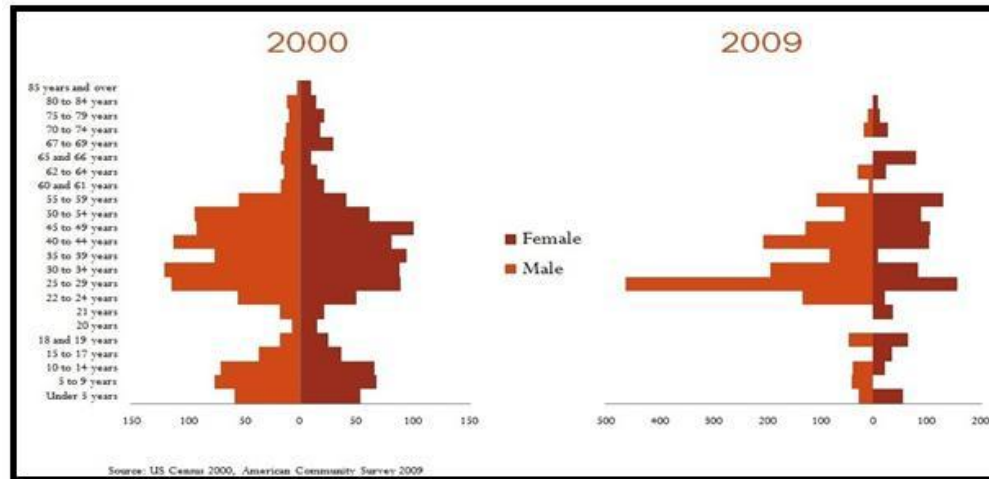


Source: US Census 2010 Redistricting File

Population Demographics

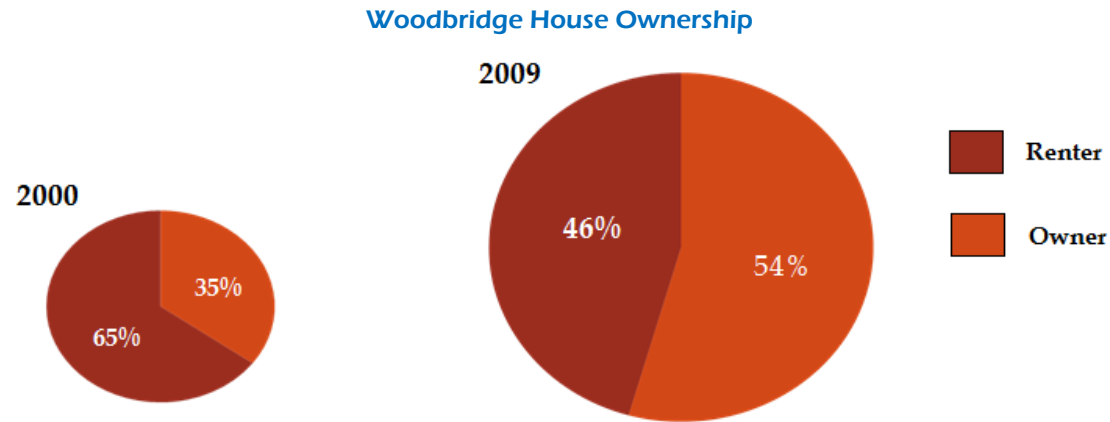
Building upon the understanding that Woodbridge is racially diverse, the evolution of age ranges in the neighborhood between 2000 and 2009 shows another dynamic worthy of consideration. The largest population demographic consists of 461 males aged 25 – 29 years old, followed by 204 males aged 40 – 44, and 191 males aged 30 – 34 years old. The largest female population is 156 in the 25 – 29 year old age group, followed by 129 in the 55 – 59 year old age group (See charts below).

Age Demographics



Housing Demographics

Given that the historic nature of the Woodbridge community plays such an important role in helping define its character, it is important to understand its housing trends. Census data reveals there is nearly an even split between owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units with a respective 54% to 46% breakdown. Also, there is a vast difference between occupied (82%) and unoccupied (18%) housing showing stability within the neighborhood. The median value for a single family home is \$29,625 and the median rent for a 2 to 3 bedroom unit is \$800 to \$900.



Source: US Census 2000, American Community Survey 2009

The presence of a strong rental population in Woodbridge can be connected to several points related to the community. Although first, it is important to understand why people rent instead of purchasing a home. Renting provides greater flexibility, greater convenience, and have lower costs than purchasing a home making it a more attractive option for certain households, including young people, singles, relocating families, immigrants, and low-

income households. A study by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University reveals that 80% of households age 25 or under are renters and two-thirds of households age 25-29 are renters.² Since this age cohort for males represents the largest population in Woodbridge and is the largest female population, the data supports the notion that Woodbridge would have a strong rental community. So, moving forward with any community plan must give consideration to the transient nature of the rental community and ways to positively build upon this attribute.

Housing Demographics

Housing Type	Number of Parcels	Percent of Housing
Single Family	302	72.30%
Duplex	103	24.60%
Multi Family	13	3.10%

Source: <http://www.detroitparcelsurvey.org>

Also, there is a vast difference between occupied (82%) and unoccupied (18%) housing, showing stability within the neighborhood. The dedicated student renter population from Wayne State helps stabilize the occupancy of numerous housing units. In addition, the median value for a single family home is \$29,625 and the median rent for a 2 to 3 bedroom unit is \$800 to \$900. The housing types vary between single family, multi family, and duplexes all intermingled amongst one another.

² Joint Center for Housing Studies. Harvard University. 2011. *America's Rental Housing: Meeting Challenges Building on Opportunities*.. Available at http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/rental/rh11_americas_rental_housing/index.html.

Existing Physical Conditions: Land Use

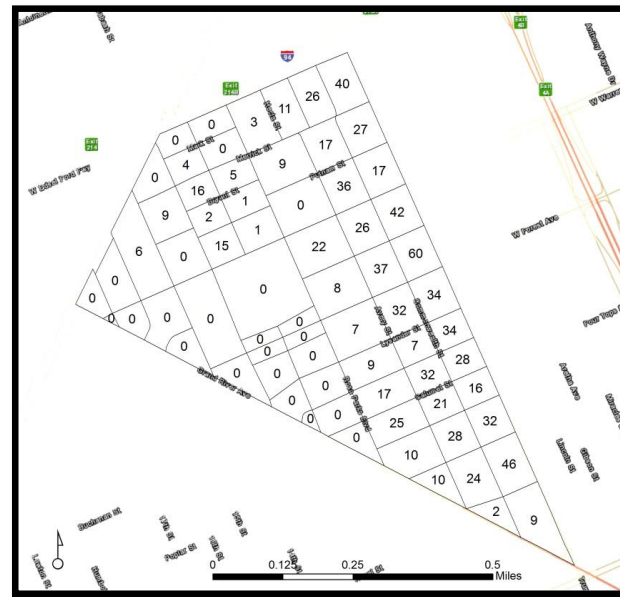
The Woodbridge neighborhood's dominating existing land use is residential housing. Pursuant to 2010 U.S. Census housing data, the vast majority of reported housing units are located in the east part of Woodbridge, particularly in the area adjacent to the Wayne State University Campus. According to 2010 U.S. Census Data, there are approximately 863 housing units within the target area. In this area, 707 of the housing units or approximately 82% of the housing units were occupied while 156 units, or approximately 18%, were vacant.

The breakdown of vacancies by percentage for each census block in the target area is set forth in the map below. That compares very favorably when compared to the City of Detroit as a whole, where 23% of the housing units remain vacant.

Commercial land uses in the area include restaurants/bars, gas stations, and liquor stores. The majority of the commercial land uses are located on the perimeter of the study area, particularly on Trumbull, in the area adjacent to Wayne State, and on Grand River. There are other commercial land uses on other major thoroughfares, including Warren.

There are several institutional land uses in the study area. The Boy Scouts of America Detroit Council building is located at the northeast corner of the Warren and Rosa Parks intersection. A public secondary school, the Douglass Academy for Young Men, is located at the southwest corner of the

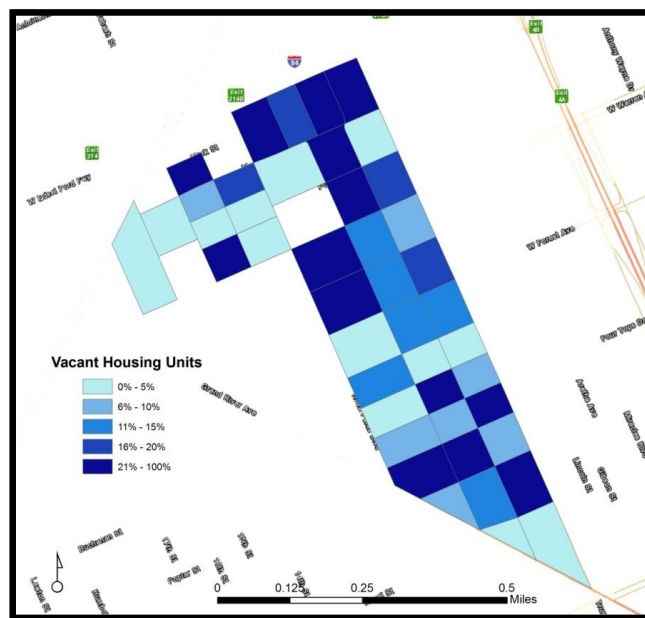
Location of Housing Units



Source: US Census 2010 Redistricting File

Warren and Rosa Parks intersection. In addition, the Fredrick Douglass branch of the Detroit Public Library is located at the southern end of Commonwealth Avenue. Most of the other institutional land uses noted above are located south of Warren and west of Rosa Parks. Scripps Park is the only formal park in Woodbridge. It is located at the southern end of the neighborhood at the Trumbull and Grand River intersection.

Vacant Housing Units



Source: US Census 2010 Redistricting File

Current Land Use



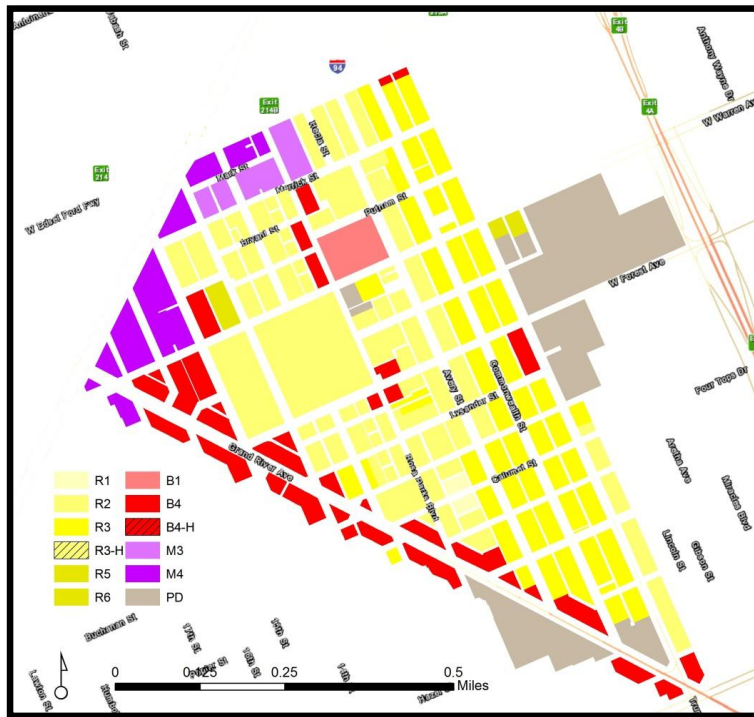
Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Zoning in Woodbridge

The vast majority of Woodbridge is zoned as Two-Family and Low Density Residential Housing. Much of the occupied residential housing is located in the area designated as Low Density Residential District. The portion of Grand River Avenue that runs through the target area is zoned as a General Business District, which “provides for business and commercial uses of a thoroughfare -oriented nature.”³ There are other parcels scattered throughout Woodbridge that are zoned General Business, such as parcels located at Rosa Parks and Forest and a parcel on Trumbull north of Merrick. The northwest area of Woodbridge is zoned Intensive Industrial. There is one contiguous parcel (which is actually made up of smaller residential parcels) located west of Rosa Parks and south of Forest that is zoned as institutional. This large parcel is owned by the Detroit Public Schools. There are also businesses, such as the Woodbridge Pub, whose parcel is zoned as Low Density Residential, that operate as nonconforming uses in the study area. The zoning map can be found on the next page.

³ Detroit City Code, Zoning Ordinance Section 61-9-71.

Existing Zoning in Woodbridge



KEY

R2 - Two-Family Residential District
 R3 - Low Density Residential District
 B4 - General Business District

Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Community Entryways and Anchor Institutions

The Woodbridge community has several important anchors that should be considered building blocks for the neighborhood. In addition, it has three major entryways that bring significant volumes of traffic through and on the border of the community. Woodbridge sits on the western end of Midtown, adjacent to Wayne State University and in close proximity to Henry Ford Hospital. The University Cultural Center Association (UCCA) identified Woodbridge as a viable neighborhood as part of its Live Midtown initiative. This initiative allows these anchor institutions to give their employees financial incentives to move into designated neighborhoods in Detroit, including Woodbridge. Live Downtown, a similar initiative established by prominent downtown businesses, also recognized Woodbridge as a viable area. In addition, approximately one mile southwest of Woodbridge is Motor City Casino. It is important for the Woodbridge community to identify resources to assist in developing stronger connections with these nearby institutions and organizations.

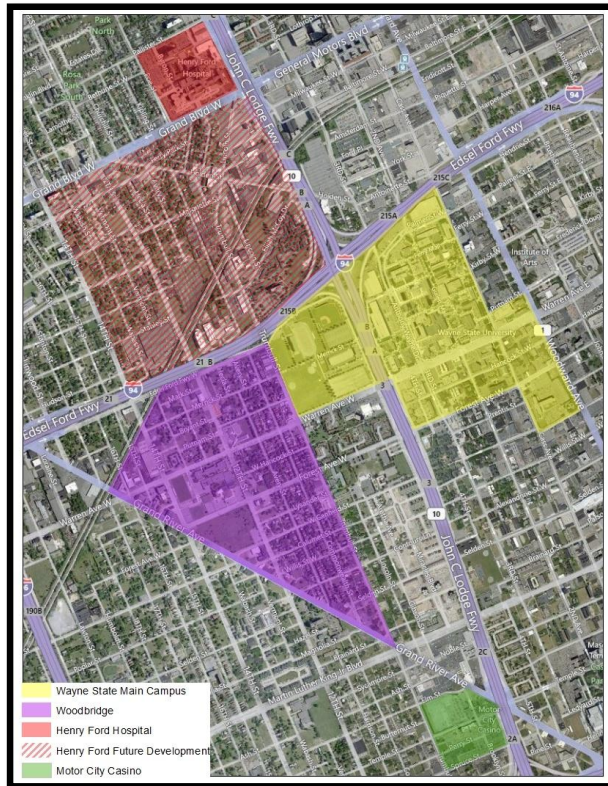
In communities across the country, libraries have served an important part in providing quality of life for residents. Woodbridge is fortunate to have the Detroit Public Library's Frederick Douglass branch conveniently located at the south end of the community. It is within walking distance for the whole community. This branch location offers very unique services, providing library access for disabled neighborhood and City residents.

Scripps Park, adjacent to the Douglass Library, represents a gateway for Woodbridge. The park is located on two major thoroughfares that border the community and is highly visible to approximately 12,900 – 16,000 vehicles per day. This intersection provides an important connectivity to the community. The brick pillars and wrought iron fencing are historic features that give unique character to Scripps Park. However, the Park is in severe disrepair and not an attractive gateway into Woodbridge.

The Warren and Trumbull entryway is a highly visible intersection that serves as a symbolic middle point for the community even though its location is slightly north of the actual midpoint. This location has the potential to provide

another major entryway into Woodbridge as approximately 12,300 vehicles approach this intersection every day. Warren, along with Forest, serves as Woodbridge's street connections to Wayne State and Midtown.

Surrounding Anchors



Source: 2011 Capstone Team, Google Maps

The I-94 – Trumbull exit provides another important opportunity to capitalize on a high-traffic area. Three major entryways from the expressways bring significant volumes of traffic through and around the borders of the community. This high-volume *location presents an opportunity to showcase the location* of the historic community to a larger audience. With this amount of traffic approaching the Trumbull overpass, this location provides favorable circumstances for Woodbridge to create an entryway with a distinguishing community identifier. (Please see Appendix B for maps of the target area's Traffic Flow and Traffic Count). For visitors traveling on I-94 to Wayne State and Henry Ford, this is the recommended exit. Currently, the properties adjacent to the exit are in disrepair and an eye sore. Further, the liquor store on the corner is a source for illicit drug trafficking. Thus, for the last three years, Wayne State devoted attention and concern to the entryway shared by Woodbridge and the University.

Another location with the potential to serve as a neighborhood anchor is the Detroit Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. This location serves as the headquarters for the organization's metropolitan Detroit operation and maintains

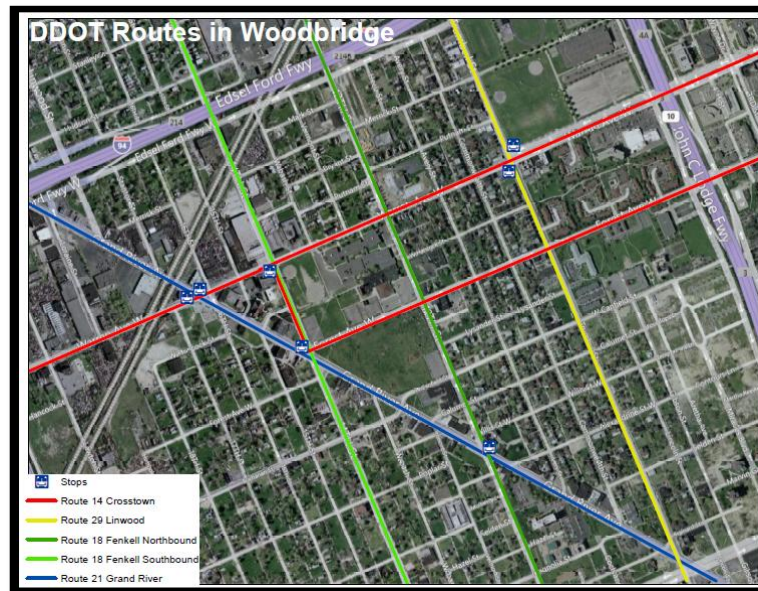
a large footprint within the community. The Boy Scouts of America occupies an entire block of centrally located and easily accessible land.

Existing Conditions: Transportation

The north boundary line of Woodbridge is I-94, an interstate highway that runs east into midtown Detroit and west towards suburbs and the Detroit Metro Airport. Just west of the neighborhood is the John C. Lodge Freeway, M-10, that runs north from the suburb of Southfield and south into the heart of Downtown Detroit at the intersection of Jefferson and Woodward Avenue. The two-way main arterials in and out of Woodbridge are Grand River and Trumbull. As noted previously, the one-way streets that connect Wayne State and Midtown to Woodbridge are Warren and Forest. There are also numerous small, neighborhood streets, which represent the core of the residential area.

Public Transportation

The Detroit Department of Transportation's bus system is the only form of public transportation system available in the target area. The bus routes run north and south along Trumbull, Rosa Parks and 14th Street, and east and west along Warren and Forest, and Grand River.



Source: Capstone Team 2011, Google Maps

Wayne State University and Henry Ford Hospital provide shuttle services around their prospective campuses. While Henry Ford and Wayne State note the importance of Woodbridge, neither institution's shuttle service extends into Woodbridge.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Many Woodbridge residents use other forms of transportation besides cars. Residents can be seen riding bicycles throughout the day. In its Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, the City recognizes Woodbridge as a neighborhood destination⁴. Further, there are sidewalks that run along Warren and Forest, which connect Woodbridge to Wayne State University and Midtown. There are pedestrian walkways at Merrick and Canfield that allows individuals to cross over the Lodge Freeway.

⁴ City of Detroit. 2006. *Non-Motorized Urban Transportation Master Plan*. Available at http://www.detroitmi.gov/Portals/0/docs/planning/planning/nonmotor/Nonmotorized_Urban_Transportation_Master_Plan.pdf.

Findings:

Woodbridge Parcel Survey

Understanding the physical condition of Woodbridge



Residential Parcel Survey Results

Compared to other neighborhoods in Detroit, many of the residential structures remain intact and occupied. This is especially true for structures located along the streets of Trumbull, Commonwealth and Avery. This represents the core of the neighborhood. Moreover, most of the residential units, whether they are single-family or multi-family dwellings located on east side of the target area are older, historically significant housing stock. As previously noted, Woodbridge is not a new development. In fact, the National Register of Historic Places deemed the neighborhood a historic district in 1980.⁵ This historic district was expanded in 1997 and 2008. Many of the homes are structures that have stood since the Victorian era. These significant structures lend unique character and charm to this community. These are distinct assets in Woodbridge that should be considered in furthering certain nodes and plans within the community. For instance, potential benefits associated with a historic designation include, but are not limited to: (1) Federal and State Tax Credits for structural rehab; (2) Enhanced property values; (3) More tourism; (4) Mechanisms to protect the neighborhood's historic character; and (5) Encouragement of private investment.



⁵ National Register Information System". *National Register of Historic Places*. National Park Service. 2008-04-15, available at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/> (last visited on July 18, 2011).

Commercial Survey Results

The number of known operating businesses in the target area is small and there is no concentrated area of commercial activity. The Capstone Team's parcel survey revealed a total of 64 existing commercial structures. As of June 2011, we only identified 12 buildings that house for-profit businesses:

- Forest Market
- Marathon Station
- Detroit Windows and Doors
- Mobile Station
- Perry Funeral Home
- Trumbull Market
- Woodbridge Pub
- Checker Collision
- Architectural Salvage
- U.S. Auto Supply
- Patterson Dog and Cat Hospital
- Value Dollar

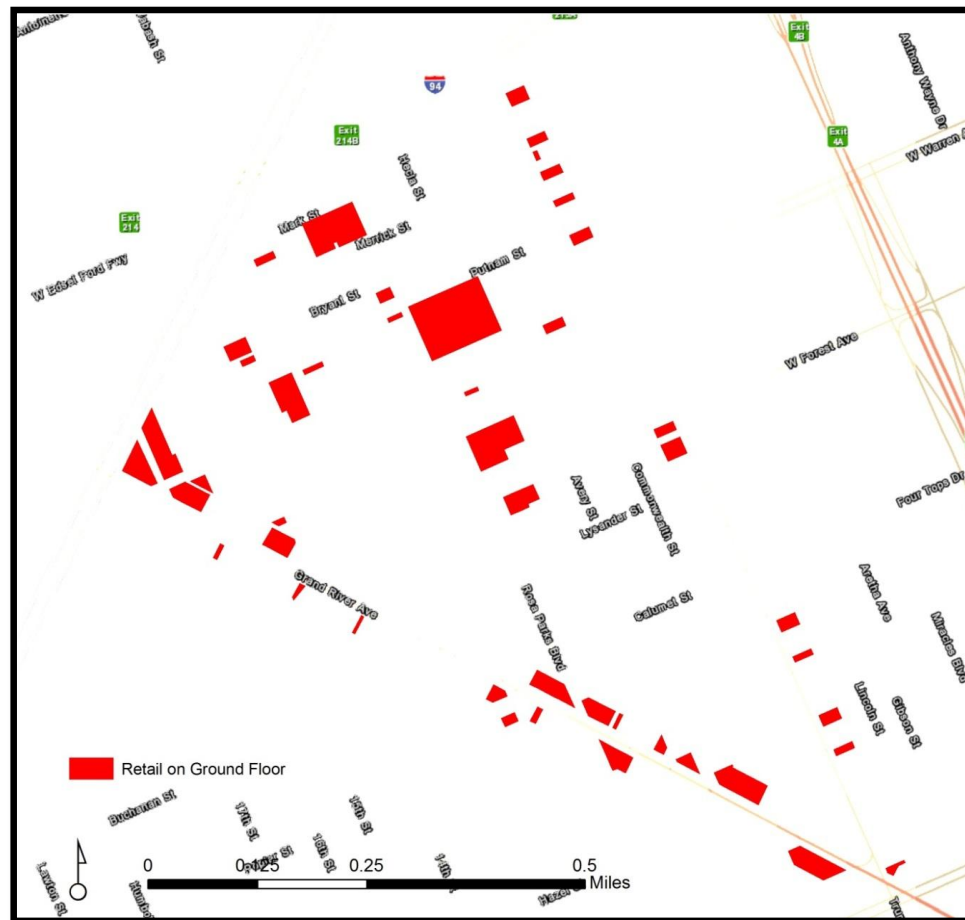
Our survey revealed that 63 structures within the area have potential for ground floor retail. Further, we identified 29 structures that could accommodate mixed uses (commercial and residential uses). The vast majority of these structures that show potential for retail or mixed use are also located on Trumbull and Grand River within the target area.

Potential Structures for Mixed Use



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Potential Structures for Ground Floor Retail



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Open Space and Vacant Parcels with No Structures

There is a dearth of planned open space in the study area. The vast majority of open space consists of vacant parcels with no structures. As of June 2011 there were 213 maintained vacant parcels of land in the survey and 335 unmaintained parcels of land. A maintained parcel of land is a piece of vacant land that may be fenced in, or, at the very least, the parcel's grass has been mowed. While conducting the survey, we observed the demolition of blighted properties, meaning the number of vacant parcels in the

target area will increase. The map below illustrates the location and type of vacant land parcel at the time of the survey. Scripps Park is only one formal park in the target area. While Scripps Park could serve as a natural gathering point for residents, including families; the park is in such a state of disrepair that it now serves as a focal point for undesirable activity. Many of these vacant parcels are city owned, meaning that the WCDC can utilize various resources, in collaboration with the City, to help turn these vacant spaces into vibrant places.

Vacant Land in Woodbridge



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Map of the downtown area of St. Louis, Missouri, showing the locations of city-owned properties. The map includes major streets such as Market St, Franklin St, and Grand River Ave, and features a legend indicating that red dots represent city-owned properties. A scale bar at the bottom shows distances up to 0.5 miles.

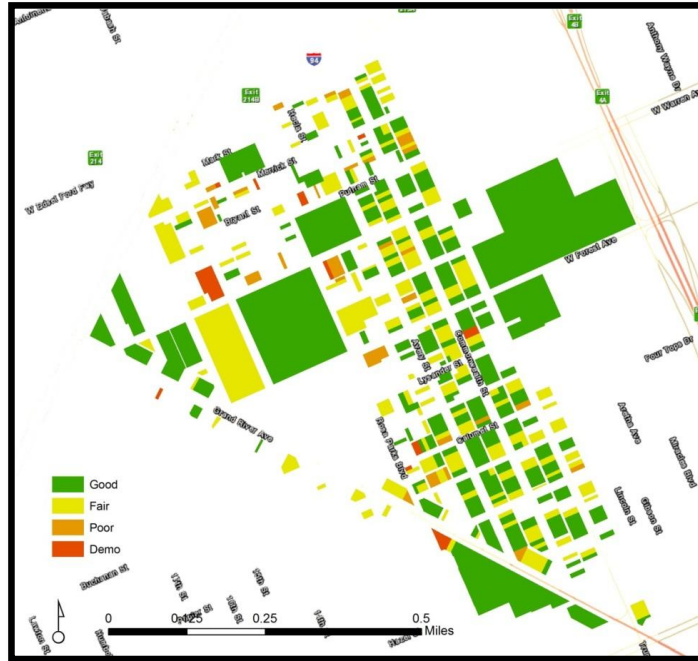
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PHYSICAL CONDITIONS SURVEY RESULTS

Compared to other areas in Detroit, our parcel survey results demonstrated 280 of the structures in the area to be in good condition, 203 structures in fair condition, and 43 structures to be in poor condition. The survey recommended that only 14 structures be scheduled for demolition. The areas with the structures in the best condition are along Commonwealth and Avery, the neighborhood's core. A significant cluster of buildings in fair and poor condition is

Physical Parcel Conditions

located in the northwest section of the target area.



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

PHYSICAL CONDITION SURVEY DEFINITIONS

Good – The structure is in good condition and well maintained.

Fair – The structure has some issues. These would generally be cosmetic, peeling paint, etc. No structural damage is visible.

Poor – There are major structural issues, such as problems with the foundation.

Demolish – Not structurally sound

Findings:

Community Engagement

Consulting the residents and organizations in Woodbridge



“Town Hall Meeting” and Neighborhood Canvassing

At the Capstone’s initial meeting with the WCDC on May 12, 2011, at least one member of the CDC requested that the Capstone group hold a “Town Hall” to assess the community’s views about Woodbridge. The Capstone Team underwent a two-pronged approach to engage community members in which we: 1) canvassed the neighborhood, interviewing any residents willing to reply to a series of questions approved by select members of the WCDC; and 2) hosted a “Town Hall Meeting” to ascertain residents views and feelings about their neighborhood.

During the neighborhood canvassing, the Capstone Team knocked on approximately 250 doors. We spoke to residents about why they live in Woodbridge, their positive and negative experiences in the community, and their suggestions for improving the neighborhood and working with the WCDC. Among Woodbridge’s assets, residents noted the neighborhood’s residential feel, the low housing prices and the proximity to Midtown. Despite these assets, residents pointed to certain negatives, including, but not limited to, poor city services, a lack of street lighting, and blight. There was an overall concern regarding safety. In addition, we dispersed fliers throughout the community, inviting residents to the Town Hall Meeting to further voice their concerns.

Shortly after the canvassing, on June 5th, 2011, the Capstone Team and the WCDC hosted the Town Hall Meeting at the Fredrick Douglass Branch of the Detroit Public Library. We anticipated a turnout of 15 to 20 residents. The 29 residents who attended exceeded our target and expectations. During the meeting, Capstone students facilitated small group discussions about the neighborhood’s strengths and weaknesses, services and businesses that would be valued and needed by the community, and issues residents may address via an initiative or organization. The groups noted a lack of lighting, safety and blighted property as areas of concern. They also commented on the lack of connection with Wayne State. Residents said the community would benefit from local businesses that could also serve as a neighborhood gathering place, such as a coffee shop. The groups stated they would support targeted initiatives that focused on specific areas instead of the neighborhood as a whole.

This information obtained through the canvassing and Town Hall Meeting was invaluable to our understanding of the community. It assisted us in identifying community goals and objectives. These processes helped form and guide this plan for the WCDC.

Meeting with Professor Lyke Thompson and Safe-in-Woodbridge

During the early stages of this plan's development, the Capstone Team met with Professor Lyke Thompson, director of Wayne State's Center for Urban Studies. Dr. Thompson discussed his work in Woodbridge. In particular, he referenced the targeted crime prevention being conducted by the Wayne State University Police, Detroit Police, AmeriCorps Midtown Urban Safety Project, and Safe in Woodbridge. While Woodbridge is comparatively safer to other Detroit neighborhoods, it is certainly not immune to the numerous safety issues that plague the City.

Community members created Safe in Woodbridge to educate its residents on various crime prevention techniques that can be implemented to make the neighborhood a safer place. The organization emphasizes community watch/eyes on the street and resident information sharing initiatives to thwart potential criminal activity. In collaboration with AmeriCorps workers dedicated to improving the security of neighborhood residents, Safe in Woodbridge helped establish and organize block clubs throughout the neighborhood. These block clubs will help residents get to know one another and develop social relationships, address common concerns, promote communications, and improve safety. For these reasons, safety is not the central focus of this plan. We advise the neighborhood engage further with Safe in Woodbridge and the AmeriCorps workers to strengthen the block clubs and, ultimately, crime prevention efforts.

Meeting with the Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation

Members of the Capstone Team also met with the leaders of the Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation. The WNDC is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) dedicated to creating a diverse residential and commercial urban environment. The organization also wishes to address blight and the rehabilitation of housing units in the area. The

WNDC is also the primary avenue for other public service agencies in the target area, including the WCDC, to obtain grants and other capital through collaborative partnerships. In the past, the WCDC and WNDC partnered on small projects, but, as of this date, the organizations have not collaborated on any large-scale endeavors.

It should be noted that in 2008 the WNDC, in conjunction with the University of Detroit Mercy's Detroit Collaborative Design Center, created a development strategy and design plan for the neighborhood. The plan puts a particular emphasis on eco-friendly homes that would be energy efficient, affordably maintained, and architecturally sound. At our meeting, the WNDC stated it also focuses on infill, or the redevelopment, of standing vacant structures versus demolition. The WNDC's rationale is that it is more feasible to redevelop a vacant structure in good to fair condition than demolishing a structure and rebuilding on that site. Infill development for housing should consider environmentally

Proposed Infill Development



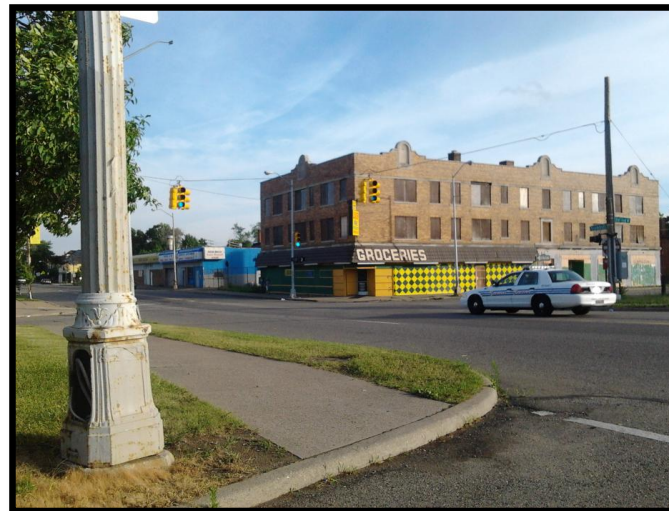
Source: WNDC and DCDC Plan, 2008

friendly options and affordability. We agree with the WNDC plan that infill developments are optimal in the northwestern area and center of the target area, as outlined in the map below. While the housing development set forth in the WNDC plan is hindered by current economic conditions, we believe it provides a good base for future housing development in the target area and we advise the WCDC to endorse and work to further the housing plans proposed by the WNDC.

Findings:

Market Survey

Examining the reach of potential businesses in Woodbridge



Defining the Problem

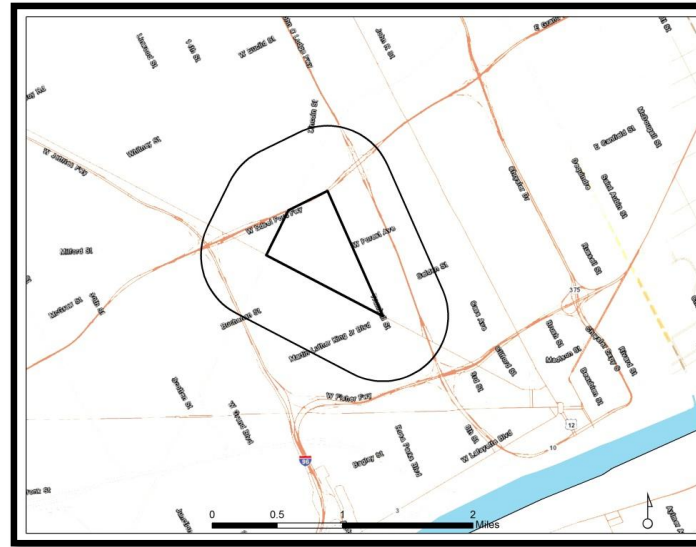
Although Woodbridge once had busy storefronts along Grand River Avenue, the area is now sparse and desolate. A strategy needs to be put in place to help revive economic development in this area, as well as build up economic strengths in the Warren and Trumbull area. What is being marketed will help to determine the mindset of the entrepreneurs who will be taking advantage of the proposed zoning changes. Because of that, we can only analyze for a potential consumer market for goods and services, as opposed to one for a specific economic sector.

Analysis of the Current Economic Situation

Detroit's economic downturn has hit many parts of the city. Fortunately, the Woodbridge community stayed strong. Within a half-mile of Woodbridge there are more than 11,000 people in over 5,000 households that will be the target market for any and all new economic activity operating in Woodbridge.

Like most of the city, there has been little economic development in the neighborhood. When we look at the types of businesses existing in the neighborhood, it becomes apparent there is room for growth 1) Gas Stations; 2) Liquor Stores; 3) A Pub; 4) A Salvage Warehouse; 4) Veterinary Medicine; and a 5) A Funeral

Population Within One-Half Mile



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Home. While the existing businesses entities serve a specific role and fill a vacancy, there are many community needs that do not come close to being met.

Location, Location, Location

The area of focus for where economic activity should be encouraged is the area to the west of Trumbull and north of Warren. The proposed re-zoning for this area will allow for greater expansion for a wide array of potential commercial ventures. As noted previously, this is a primary neighborhood gateway for people traveling to and from the Wayne State area. Motor vehicle and non-motorized transportation methods are both utilized heavily in this area, which will allow for all kinds of customers to take advantage of their services.

Along Grand River, the area is a shadow of its former self, featuring unutilized buildings and a stretch of road that is unfriendly to walk. With little business activity and the majority of residents living on the east side of the neighborhood, there is very little bicycle and foot traffic. Compared with other multi-lane roads (3+ lanes each way) via a visual observation, we could also infer that motor vehicle traffic along Grand River is low as well.

This presents a host of challenges for development along the Grand River corridor. Many of the buildings that exist would require serious renovation or a complete tear down and new site plan to become economically viable in this environment. The area is unfriendly to pedestrians and hasn't been home to strong economic activity in decades. When you look at a map, it is obvious that a commercial corridor down Grand River makes the most sense, but not without major changes. We encourage development starting from the Northwest corner of the neighborhood and going south. Start near the existing Architectural Salvage Warehouse and go from there, hopefully being able to work with property owners as well as the city to attract some attention to an area that badly needs any kind of life possible injected into it. Development on Grand River may take years, and as such immediate efforts should be focused on the Warren and Trumbull area.

The Consumers

One of the strengths of Woodbridge is the diversity of its residents. They range greatly in age, race, culture and education, from younger college students to residents who have lived in the neighborhood for over half a century. From conversation and neighborhood canvassing, we learned that a great deal of these residents use non-motorized transportation on a regular basis. For some people, it was to get to and from Wayne State University, and for others it was just part of their daily or leisurely commute. This provides for a built in clientele for businesses that feel that they can convince the passers-by to stop in.

During neighborhood canvassing and at the town hall meeting, the residents expressed the desire to see certain types of businesses in their community, such as a Café/Sandwich Shop, Coffee Shop, Ice Cream Parlor, Senior Activity Center, Small, Independent Grocers, Farmers Market, and other suitable small shops and boutiques.

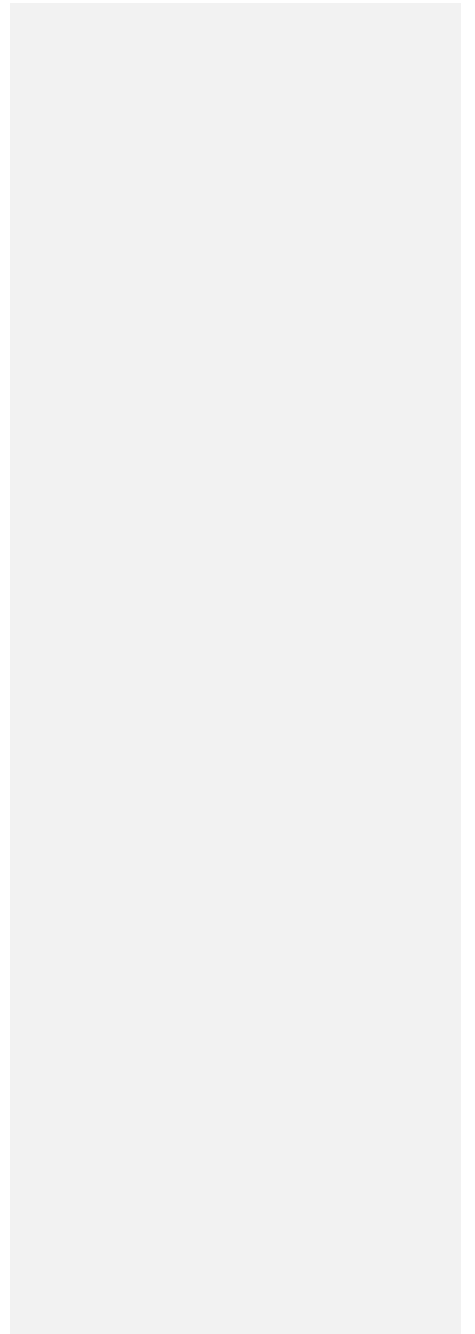
Market Summary

The market should dictate any and all economic activity within the neighborhood. The proposed re-zoning and potential clientele should be the driving force for entrepreneurs developing new businesses in the target area. Walk-in traffic will likely help supply business early on and assuming the venture is successful, outside traffic via motorized transportation should follow. The close-knit community also gives businesses the ability to establish a strong connection with residents and offer community events or other local outreach efforts in order to make the business feel like a part of the community. Suggestions from residents should be taken into account, as should all features that could make for a successful neighborhood business. The Capstone Team recommends that the proposed economic development focus on Trumbull, north of Warren, with options open for Grand River should the right opportunity arise.



Key Issues

Realization of Capstone Plan



Woodbridge is a successful and stable neighborhood. It is an area that is home to a diverse group of people that represent the neighborhood's strongest social asset, yet the neighborhood still faces many barriers. Disinvestment and a lack of operating neighborhood businesses are evident in the target area. Nevertheless, much of the existing structures within the target area, whether occupied or vacant, remain in good to fair condition. Further, despite the neighborhood's proximity to important institutions in Detroit, there is a lack of physical and social connections to these anchors, particularly Wayne State University. Because of these, and other, factors, Woodbridge and its unique characteristics – the diversity of the residents, its cultural and creative elements, and the Victorian era structures that line the streets– remain somewhat veiled from the Detroit Metro population. After conducting field surveys and relevant research, the Capstone Team split into three groups and proposed the following concepts to address these issues.

- A targeted business development strategy ;
- Fostering and creating certain assets that further Woodbridge's image as a unique place in Detroit; and
- Encourage lasting and collaborative connections within Woodbridge and with the surrounding anchor institutions.
- These ideas represent the crux of this plan.

Business Development

In order to determine where in Woodbridge we should propose new business development, we conducted the above-noted market analysis of the area. From that analysis and resident comments, we determined the narrow area for targeted business development is the blocks on the west side of Trumbull, located North of Warren. This proposal coincides with residents who are already working to rezone these parcels on Trumbull. Currently, these parcels are not zoned for businesses. Members of the Capstone Team attended a meeting with Rory Bulger, Deputy Director of the City Planning Commission, and requested that this plan include an analysis of rezoning these noted blocks on Trumbull.

In addition, during our research, we learned that the proposed Revised City Charter may minimize the effect and power of Citizens' District Councils. In lieu of the Revised Charter being approved by the voters of Detroit, we reviewed whether it would be advantageous for the WCDC to reorganize to a separate legal entity. The intent of this proposal is to maintain and enhance the influence of this group of residents and to give them greater access to grants and funding. The plan also discusses various types of funding and ways to leverage the private sector, as well as local, state and the federal government to invest in Woodbridge.

Imaging and Place-Making

Woodbridge is Detroit's hidden gem. Other than those who stumble into the neighborhood or reside within its borders, Woodbridge is generally not known to people in the Detroit Metro area. Despite the lack of exposure, Woodbridge boasts historic housing, diverse people, vibrant streets and unique culture. Residents and members of the WCDC requested we provide proposals to make the neighborhood more visible and accessible to individuals not readily familiar with the neighborhood. The group provided numerous ideas, concrete and abstract, that may enhance Woodbridge as a "place" and build upon the neighborhood's existing assets. The ideas proposed by the group noted in this plan include:

- Branding Woodbridge – "A Small-Town Canvass in Big City";
- Signage and Gateway Improvements – Notifying and welcoming people to this unique place;
- Improved lighting, streetscaping, parks and alleys– Encouraging people, residents and others, to explore, and gather in the neighborhood; and
- Improved Parking and Thoroughfares – Improve walking conditions for pedestrians, reduce crime and vehicles that race to get out of Detroit, Midtown, and, ultimately, Woodbridge.

Connections to Anchors

As Shaun Donovan noted, establishing long-term relationships with anchor institutions will be vital to crafting and driving sustainable change. Woodbridge is surrounded by anchor institutions, and, undoubtedly, these institutions, due to their physical proximity to the neighborhood, image will be boosted by a thriving Woodbridge. Despite these factors, residents noted the lack of connection between Woodbridge and these institutions. Thus, this group focused on ideas that enhance the natural synergies between these institutions and the neighborhood. In particular, the group proposed more direct connections with Wayne State, including the following:

- A Woodbridge OneCard, which gives Woodbridge residents access to amenities provided by the University;
- Extend Wayne State's shuttle into Woodbridge; and
- Partner with Wayne State faculty and students to further community-based projects.

Short-Term and Long-Term Objectives

The Capstone Team recognizes that plans require patience and time. Considering the current economic landscape, a vision, such as this, is best accomplished incrementally. Thus, in the subsequent portion of this guiding document, we classified certain of the above noted proposals as short-term strategies and tactics and other proposals as long-term approaches. Initially, the undertaking and accomplishment of short-term goals will create momentum and belief in the plan, increasing the social and financial investment in the plan and the Woodbridge community and allowing the WCDC and others to focus on long-term solutions.

Recommendations:

Short Term Strategies and Tactics

Recommendations for short-term goals for which Woodbridge should strive



1. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Our initial recommendations put into practice elements of *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED). CPTED is a strategy designed to use the built environment to deter criminal activity. This strategy to deter crime contains a range of principles that can be implemented throughout the community.

Natural Surveillance:

Natural surveillance methods are way to keep properties visible from all angles without the use of cameras. The WCDC should suggest that landscaping allows clear views of exposed doors and windows from the street and other properties. When landscaping blocks the view of doors and windows from the street, it opens the opportunity for criminals to hide in those areas.

Territoriality:

Using physical designs such as fences, pavement treatments, and landscaping allows a user of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship over it. Clearly distinguished properties deter potential trespassers from entry. The WCDC would simply aid in making vacant properties appear cared for by organizing volunteers to rake leaves, mow grass and shovel snow.

Image/Maintenance:

When a property is well maintained, it shows that the owners cares for it and will defend the property against crime. Trimming trees and shrubs back from windows, doors and walkways; ensuring that exterior lights are illuminated; and picking up litter and trash in yards aid in deterring criminal activity. The near-term recommendations in this section that fall within the range of CPTED principles include lighting the streets, maintained alleys and improved streetscapes.

A) Light Up Woodbridge

The WCDC should organize a grass roots campaign to promote the use of outdoor lighting to enhance safety. Similar campaigns have produced results in other neighborhoods with minimal financial resources. The WCDC, in connection with the newly established block clubs, should conduct a canvassing activity to encourage residents to turn on their exterior lights between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am. While a long-term solution to Woodbridge's lack of lighting is needed, the additional lighting will enhance safety and walkability after dark.



As an incentive for participation, residents would receive a sticker that can be placed in their window to show that they're contributing to the improvement of the neighborhood. Although production of the stickers will require financial resources, canvassers should ask for donations to keep the campaign going. Furthermore, outside funding can be solicited from local businesses in exchange for displaying their logo on the stickers. Initially, Light Up Woodbridge, could be promoted for three to four evenings per week. As participants increase and more stickers become visible in the community, the program can be expanded. Keeping track of participant locations could also allow the WCDC to keep track of where "dark spots" are in the neighborhood.

B) Woodbridge Alleys

Alleys remain an important part of the physical layout of the Woodbridge neighborhood. In the past, vendors used neighborhood alleys to sell products to residents, and the City of Detroit used them for trash collection. Today, however, trash collection is conducted on the street in front of properties and alleys have transformed into social gathering places and hotbeds of creative activity. The alleys are one of Woodbridge's key assets and the WCDC should strive to preserve their character and enhance their appeal.

While many residential alleys have transformed, others remain in a state of disrepair. Trash, building materials and standing water provide a haven for mosquitoes and rodents. Furthermore, over grown vegetation and a lack of lighting contribute to insecurity by restricting sightlines. The WCDC should address these issues by implementing a grass roots awareness campaign, collaborating with local organizations and connecting residents with available resources. The following map of Woodbridge identifies specific alleys that should be targeted. The area marked in red is the alley site of most of the murals pictured here between Warren and Putnam. The blue and yellow lines are blocks where this same idea should be encouraged.

Enhanced Alleys in Woodbridge



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

Alley Clean Up Campaign

An effort to clean the alleys is central to the success of this project. There must be a designated day for debris removal including overgrown bushes and trees that extend into the alleys. The effort can be coordinated with the City of Detroit by contacting the Manager for the NW Community Access Center for Grand River to arrange for dumpster delivery. Contact information is provided in Appendix A.

Clearing alleys of debris and brush would require one to two months of preparation to coordinate with the City of Detroit for dumpsters, circulate notices through the block clubs and solicit buy-in from residents and property owners. Contact Ramona Rodriguez-Washington at Wayne State University's Center for Urban Studies for information regarding established block club participants.

Alley Beautification Committee

To build upon the cleanup campaign's progress, a committee of individual homeowners should be established to orchestrate a block-by-block competition for alleyway beautification or a block party in order to view individual horticultural expressions. Plantings and beautification of the fence line would take coordination with gardeners and designers in the community through a series of planning sessions for strategies about how to interest residents and shape a program. Planning could begin immediately with execution for the next spring. This could also include winter holiday themes when plants are not in season for year round interest.

Increase Alley Lighting

In addition to addressing alley clean up, the WDCD should create a grass roots campaign to increase lighting in alleys. Currently, several buildings have floodlights illuminating the back yards and this practice should be encouraged throughout the neighborhood. Furthermore, the WDCD should encourage additional lighting in front yards as well. By coordinating with local businesses such as Lowes or Home Depot, discount opportunities may exist that would make

lighting enhancements cost effective for residents. Combined with the *Light Up Woodbridge* campaign, these grass roots efforts would provide additional security and enhance walkability in the neighborhood without relying on City services or funding.

Green Alleys

The pavement in many of Woodbridge's alleys is in poor condition, but their condition does present an opportunity to recreate selected alleys in a manner that is more consistent with Woodbridge's character. The WCDC should approach businesses and landlords along Trumbull north of Warren in order to develop these into green alleys similar to those completed by Motor City Brewing Works and The Green Garage in Midtown at Canfield and Second. These two businesses collaborated with the University Cultural Center Association (UCCA) of Wayne State University transforming the alley into a beautiful asset at approximately the same cost as repaving and maintenance over a period of years. The before and after shots on the website of that alleyway is striking. Similar initiatives have been instituted in Chicago.

The Detroit precedent has already been set in Midtown and should be aggressively pursued by the WCDC. This local example took approximately three years to accomplish. The Chicago Green Alleys initiative and the Detroit pilot on Canfield illustrates the idea that alleys are being used as functional and purposeful space for many reasons including environmental considerations. A Woodbridge green alley project much like the one in midtown, The Midtown Green Alley Demonstration Project, should take approximately three years with first a calling together of businesses on Trumbull and consultation with UCCA to develop a plan.



Public Art

Many first think of large sculptures or fountains when discussing public art; however, artistic energy in Woodbridge is on display in many of the neighborhood's alleys. By walking through the alleyways of Commonwealth and Trumbull from Warren to Putnam, pedestrians discover the community's artistic and eclectic charm. The WCDC needs to preserve this character and encourage additional displays of public art in the neighborhood's alleys.

The City of Montreal, Canada uses their alleys in creative artistic ways and actually provides tours to visitors. While originally designed for functionality alone, Montréal's alleys now act as dynamic open spaces able to ensure the presence and development of tree growth in dense urban environments. Their model is informal, contains block specific themes and is driven by residents. Support from the WCDC to take things to the next step involving more residents would benefit the whole community. Volunteer participation is crucial. Artistic interest is apparent in Woodbridge. Community driven campaigns will be successful if key community leaders within each block are approached.



Next Steps

The WCDC should be in touch with the philanthropic community. The natural anchor for Woodbridge to collaborate with in implementing this idea is Wayne State University. It is vital that committees be set up to accomplish these tasks so that groups of people are working simultaneously on these projects with information flowing through the WCDC for coordination. Further, the WCDC should be in contact with homeowners, landlords, and businesses whose property abuts an alley to accomplish the recommendations outlined above.

C) Improved Streetscape

Woodbridge, with its narrow streets, lush lawns and mature trees, holds an allure many neighborhoods struggle to duplicate. The beauty of the neighborhood is among the most cited strengths by those who live there. One walk through Woodbridge on a summer evening makes it easy to understand why. The sidewalks streets are good condition in most places. However, the lighting on both the main and residential streets is a matter of concern. Scattered about the neighborhood are early 20th century-style lamp poles (shown to the right) and many are either severely worn or broken. A long-term plan to repair or replace street lighting is detailed later in this document; however, a near-term solution to improve the appearance of these historic lights exists. Resident artists in Woodbridge could adopt the derelict light poles, as well as various other deteriorating (functionally or aesthetically) utility fixtures, and use them as canvasses for public art. Similar projects have been seen in several other neighborhoods around the country – most typically with fire hydrants. Not only would this improve the streetscape, it would provide an additional opportunity to engage residents, and allow them to take ownership of their community.

Despite the walkable nature of Woodbridge, the neighborhood does not have much in the realm of amenities for pedestrians. Public benches and trash receptacles are sparse in the neighborhood. Woodbridge could begin streetscape improvements of this type by installing benches, permanent trash receptacles, and distinctive landscaping at its busiest bus stops, like the cross-town DDOT stop at Warren and Trumbull. In the end, Woodbridge should be equipped with several strategically placed, permanent trash receptacles – at select intersections, mid-block on busier streets like Trumbull, and in any parks in the neighborhood.



Next Steps

Woodbridge is home to a wealth of artistic and creative know-how; therefore gateway signage could be built by residents with reclaimed materials. This strategy will reduce costs and provide consistency with the neighborhoods unique character. Funding for materials can be furnished through donations, gifts in-kind from the local business community or even a small donation for entering a competition for the best signage or gateway design. The Woodbridge Citizens District Council and Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation should work together to administer these gateway improvements.

For larger undertakings, funding would inevitably need to come from outside of the neighborhood. The WCDC should build relationships Wayne State University's Community Outreach division and other anchor institutions. Not only are these institutions possible funding sources, they also provide opportunities for volunteer engagement. Additionally, many corporate bodies, such as Lowe's and Home Depot, host regular outreach and philanthropic undertakings. For example, Lowe's, in 2010 and 2011, was involved in supplying both material and labor to Old Redford to create and maintain pocket parks and community gardens. Appealing to management at these types of business could bring in great support from around metro Detroit.

Federal Programs, such as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), support streetscape improvement; however, typically only states, cities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are eligible for ISTEA funding. While the funding is available, the WCDC must lobby the City of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) for these, and other federal grants.

The city of Detroit is also home to several philanthropic organizations and foundations with the health and future of Detroit as their sole priority. Midtown, Inc. is a great resource for attracting, as well as educating interested parties in grants and similar support available throughout Midtown Detroit. Unfortunately, however, Woodbridge is not eligible for most of the grant funds that flow through the UCCA, because it is not within the borders of its jurisdiction.

Neighborhood leadership should pursue a movement to become a part of this organization as Midtown's only truly residential district.

2. Parks and Gathering Places

When asked where they most frequently gather and socialize, surveyed respondents in the neighborhood replied with “front porches” or “The Woodbridge Pub.” Formal parks and gathering spaces are severely lacking. Though there are a handful of privately owned gathering places, such as the Trumbullplex and “The Hole” (shown on the right), most residents tend to congregate on vacant lots turned into makeshift parks. The only actual park in the neighborhood’s populated area is Scripps Park. As discussed earlier, the park is in severe disrepair. However, a group has been formed to address the issues of the park. We recommend that the WCDC work in collaboration with WNDC and Friends of Scripps Park to oversee improvements and conservancy efforts.

Even if Scripps Park were in good repair, it is located on the southern tip of the neighborhood. Residents have stated that they would prefer to have a smaller park, more centrally located in the neighborhood. This plan suggests creating two pocket parks, to be placed on city-owned lots. These parks could be equipped with picnic tables, permanent fixed charcoal grills, and some form of recreation like horseshoe pits or volleyball courts. Alternatively, these small parks could be used for unique functions, such as a dog park.



There are two city-owned tracts of land (multiple contiguous parcels for one of them) which this plan recommends using as parks. One is at the corner of Commonwealth and Putnam, and is already being used as a picnic area/park by residents in the area, and the other is on Avery between Forest and Hancock.



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

later used as parks or pocket parks, should be at least maintained to the point of acceptability. Lots with overgrowth attract crime, rodents, and dumping, while also serving to deteriorate the property values of adjacent parcels. Wayne State University, with over 30,000 students and a plethora of student organizations could serve as a resource in building a volunteer base for the WDCD.

The WDCD should work in conjunction with the Detroit Land Bank Authority and The Planning and Development Department to ensure that any land to be used as a permanent park is deeded to a non-profit body (i.e. WDCD or another 501(c)(3)) which can care for the property. Other vacant parcels which are city-owned should be properly maintained or used lightly for public purposes until the market improves in the neighborhood and the properties can be sold for productive use again. This and other methods are already being used by land banks in the state of Michigan, such as the Genesee County Land Bank in Flint.

Over the next 18 months, the WDCD should work to build capacity for volunteering in vacant-lot management. These parcels, which could be

Lowe's, Home Depot and similar corporations are excellent resources for volunteer and material support, because many corporate entities regularly donate to neighborhoods in the city of Detroit. The leadership in Woodbridge should build relationships with management at relevant corporations with philanthropic capacity as a means of securing funding/sponsorship and recruiting volunteers. Additional support could come from many sources; therefore, the WCDC should build and strengthen relationships with relevant nonprofit organizations in the area, such as The Greening of Detroit.

Next Steps

Neighborhood leadership should work with the three land bank authorities in the area: Detroit Land Bank Authority, Wayne County Land Bank, and The Michigan Land Bank to determine ownership and clear the titles. Any parcels desired to be permanent parks should be deeded to a qualified nonprofit body, such as the WNDC or another entity legally able to hold land. This land could be used for both permanent and interim parks, which would allow for vacant parcels to be put to productive use while they're waiting for an upturn in the market. Larger parks will require more collaboration and more money. The anchors in the area should be approached for help with these types of projects. The large piece of land on the eastern half of the Boy Scouts lot would be a good place for a park, but talks would need to begin with the Boy Scouts of America leadership before anything can be placed on their property. Wayne State University, the largest neighbor of Woodbridge, along with the UCCA, DMC, and HFHS all has a vested interest in keeping Midtown attractive. The Live-Midtown incentive is documented proof of this. These anchors should be working with Woodbridge to help improve and maintain vacant parcels. Additionally, Woodbridge leadership should encourage WSU to transform adjacent university-owned parcels into more than just mowed fields.



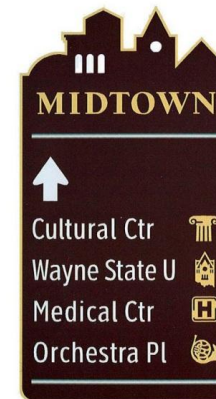
3. Signage and Gateway Improvements

Woodbridge, though it does have signage, is poorly identified. One unfamiliar with the neighborhood is hard-pressed to know where the neighborhood begins and ends. Because Woodbridge does not directly fall under the jurisdiction of Midtown Inc., their signage in adjacent areas (shown at right) does not acknowledge or give directions to Woodbridge. As a means of increasing visibility to the adjacent neighborhoods, the WCDC should spearhead efforts to gain a place on more way-finding signs throughout Midtown and nearby neighborhoods such as Briggs and Corktown.

Currently, the major gateways into Woodbridge, shown at the end of this section, are I-94 at Trumbull, Warren at Trumbull, Grand River at Trumbull, and

Forest at Grand River. Various thoroughfare changes are discussed further in the plan, will address ways to create new gateways. Improved signage and streetscaping at these gateways would help to create a stronger first impression of the neighborhood, as well as inform pedestrians and motorists of the existence of the neighborhood. Current gateways make little, if not poor first impressions to those entering the district. Signage, like the one shown to the left, is easy to pass without noticing. Introduction of larger gateway signage will serve as a form of advertisement for the area and act as a beacon to let those passing through know that they are entering a distinct neighborhood.

Signage from other cities, such as the one shown on the previous page, in Plymouth, Michigan's Old Village, can be constructed inexpensively, and adorned with plants to create a more impactful



experience for those entering the neighborhood. Signage stating “Welcome to Historic Woodbridge” and “Now Leaving Historic Woodbridge” on the reverse side could achieve this goal.

4. Targeted Rezoning for Business Development

To encourage development, a rezoning of the three blocks on the west side of Trumbull between Warren Ave and the Edsel Ford Freeway is recommended. This will create an environment that will ease the introduction of business into this corridor, lay the foundation for the strengthening this corridor and solidify it as a community asset. Twenty five parcels would be directly affected by this change. Currently, there are several existing businesses; however, only one parcel is zoned B-4. The remainder of the parcels, which include the Woodbridge Pub, Perry Funeral Home, the Mobile station and two automotive repair shops, are zoned R-3. Of the area that is recommended for rezoning, only five of the 25 parcels are currently residential. These five parcels would shift from being an as of right use to a conditional use if they were zoned B-4. The change in zoning would allow for a wide range of uses in this area but the actual uses may be limited by the nature of the existing structures.

Current Zoning (map shown at the end of this section)

In general, R-3 is a low-density residential district. According to the City of Detroit's zoning ordinance, “The regulations are designed to promote and encourage town and terrace house development, courts, and garden apartments. It is intended that this district be used primarily on local thoroughfares thereby encouraging a suitable environment for family life. Among others, uses permitted by right include single and two-family dwellings, town houses, multi-family dwellings, and community facilities necessary to serve a residential district.” As to be expected, the by right uses are primarily residential with some intuitional uses allowed. The only allowable commercial uses are bed and breakfast inns or parking lots, and both uses are considered conditional uses. However, Sec 61-15-18 of the zoning ordinance allows for the reestablishment of a food and beverage service into an existing abandoned commercial structure, which the Trumbull

corridor contains several. There are limitations to this, because a business will still need to apply for an annual zoning waiver. Furthermore, bars will have limitations on their ability to host live music and dancing.

Proposed Zoning (map shown at the end of this section)

A Change in zoning to B-4 would allow for a wider range of activities. The Zoning ordinance generally describes the B-4 General Business district as “The B-4 General Business District provides for business and commercial uses of a thoroughfare-oriented nature. In addition to these uses, other businesses, which may benefit by drawing part of their clientele from passing traffic, are permitted. Additional uses, which may be successfully blended with permitted by-right uses, are conditional.” This zoning designation allows for 37 as of right retail and commercial uses and 46 additional conditional uses. These can be found in sections 61-9-76 (by right) and 61-9-82 (conditional). In this zoning designation the current residential uses would shift from a by right to conditional use (61-9-80). Most of the retail space in the Trumbull corridor would be covered by section 61-14-7. The zoning code states:

“No additional off-street parking, beyond that already provided, shall be required for structures erected prior to April 9, 1998 which have three thousand (3,000) or fewer square feet of gross floor area where occupied by any use first permitted in a B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5 or W1 District (See Sec. 61-7-9 for hierarchy of zoning district intensity), or by any public, civic, or institutional use other than religious institutions;”

Next Steps

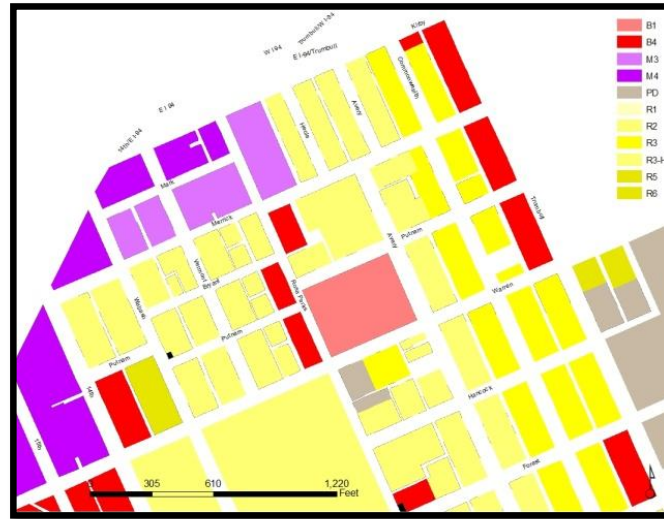
The WCDC should continue dialogue with Rory Bulger of the City Planning Commission. In the future, the WCDC will need to prepare a petition for zoning change and conduct a public meeting for residents of the immediate area. If further legal advice is needed, the WCDC should contact Wayne State University’s Nonprofit Law Clinic or Community Legal Resources.

CURRENT ZONING



Source: City of Detroit

PROPOSED ZONING



Source: City of Detroit

Recommendations

Long Term Strategies and Tactics

Recommendations for long-range changes in Woodbridge



1. Anchor Institutions

While the short-term plan will achieve immediate results, the WCDC must look farther in to the future by establishing long-term relationships with anchor institutions, city government and the business community in addition to solidifying its name recognition within the metropolitan area. Over 1700 people reside in Woodbridge. Not tapping into the nearby anchor institutions – Wayne State University (WSU) and Henry Ford Hospital (HFH) – puts Woodbridge in potential risk of not meeting one or more of their basic needs. Woodbridge has been established since the late 1800s and over the years has redefined the meaning of “community”. This is a diverse and creative community - a diamond in the rough so to speak. In the past the neighborhood had established relationships with WSU along with other stakeholder groups that moved the WCDC and the community forward. More recently, however, these relationships have been stagnating and at the request of the WCDC and residents, those relationships need to be re-established so they can become the lifeline for the community. Below are two tactics that the WCDC should implement to move the community forward by leveraging local resources: Woodbridge One Card and Woodbridge Shuttle System.



A) WSU- One Card

In the past Woodbridge neighbors were able to make use of spaces and places in and outside of the University. However, other than the outside access to WSU, the campus is no longer useful to Woodbridge residents or the WCDC. WSU students and faculty are issued One Cards that can be used to pay for on campus services such as parking and meals. Individuals deposit funds in accounts online or at kiosks throughout campus. The WCDC should collaborate with WSU to create a Woodbridge One Card (WOC) specifically geared towards the residents of Woodbridge and their needs. The WOC would possibly allow residents of Woodbridge access to the following:

- Facility use for CDC meetings, neighborhood meetings, hosting of events, parties, and forums;
- Recreation Center use to endorse living a healthy life style and
- Lifetime learning access by allowing those with a WOC the ability to take advantage of workshops, speakers, and events held by WSU.

An application fee of \$25.00 and an annual fee of \$10.00 thereafter would produce a win-win situation for the University and Woodbridge residents. For example if, 20% of the 1700 Woodbridge residents sign-up for the WOC, approximately \$8500.00 the first year and \$3400.00 annually in additional unrestricted revenue would be generated for the University. What may seem small to a University can have a huge impact on an already existing and thriving neighboring community such as Woodbridge.

B) Woodbridge Shuttle System

Three shuttle services are currently operated in the area. WSU operates two shuttle routes: one services the main campus and the other services the University Medical Center. The DMC operates a shuttle for its campus and HFH operates a shuttle that connects the New Center area with the hospital. All three systems connect to each other at designated transfer points; however, none of them service the Woodbridge neighborhood.

HFH is currently acquiring property north of Woodbridge along Trumbull St. for hospital and residential development. WSU is currently searching for additional student housing; however, funding for additional dorm construction is scarce. As a result, WSU will become increasingly reliant on off-campus housing in the years to come. With increasing numbers of WSU students and faculty along with future HFH development, an opportunity exists for the WCDC to request that both institutions expand service to Woodbridge with a stop at the corner of Trumbull and Warren.

Although the service is free to WSU faculty and staff, the University could include shuttle fares in the Woodbridge One Card application fee.

2. Parking and Thoroughfare Improvements

As illustrated throughout this document, Woodbridge is a vibrant, walkable community. Tree lined streets with quality sidewalks provide a degree of safety for pedestrians and contribute to neighborhood's street life. Particularly on Commonwealth and Avery Streets, automobile traffic is slowed by the existence of on-street parking and single car width lanes. This on-street parking provides a buffer for pedestrians and requires opposing traffic to pull to the side in order to let other vehicles pass. These attributes are known as traffic calming measures and they have been proven to enhance walkability. The existence of these attributes and the corresponding environment created by their existence is one of the characteristics that make Woodbridge a special neighborhood. Furthermore, these attributes should be applied to other areas within Woodbridge to preserve its character and enhance its appeal.

A) Warren and Forest Reconfiguration

Two opportunities exist where these principles may be applied in Woodbridge: Forest Avenue between Trumbull and the Lodge Freeway and Warren Avenue between 14th Street and Trumbull Street. Both road sections should be converted to two-way traffic with shared bike lanes and on-street parking. During our group's study of the Woodbridge neighborhood, we made several observations where converting these streets would improve the community.

Need for increased on-street parking:

During our study, several residents complained about the lack of on-street parking within the neighborhood. While individuals with mobility challenges may apply for dedicated handicap spaces with the City of Detroit, ineligible

individuals and visitors may still find the parking supply inadequate. Parking is currently allowed along Forest and Warren; however, the lane is not dedicated to parking and times are restricted.

Traffic calming:

The speed limits on Warren and Forest are 25mph and 30mph respectively; however, the likelihood that the limits are adhered to on a consistent basis is slim considering they are four lane, one-way roads. The very purpose of one-way roads is to move as much traffic from point A to point B as fast as possible. This strategy is effective from a traffic engineer's

standpoint but it is counterproductive to creating walkable neighborhoods designed for people and pedestrians.

Tearing down barriers:

The construction of the Lodge Freeway and I-94 created barriers for the Woodbridge neighborhood. Despite these barriers, Woodbridge remains a close community. However, the existence of 2 four-lane roads intersecting the neighborhood serves as micro barriers in the community.



Source: 2011 Capstone Team, Google Maps

Decrease traffic in neighborhoods:

Contrary to traditional thought, researchers have recently discovered that the existence of one-way streets actually leads to increased traffic on a neighborhood level (Walker, Kulash & McHugh, 1999). One-way streets increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by forcing automobiles to make several turns in order to change direction. In Woodbridge, the result of the one way street design is that cars are forced to travel down side streets such as Avery and Commonwealth in order to change direction.

Crime reduction:

As documented by Dr. John Gilderbloom of the University of Louisville, one-way streets provide quick getaways for those committing crimes in neighborhoods. Criminals are enticed by quick getaways, and if they do not exist, the area becomes less attractive for would-be car thieves and drug dealers. Gilderbloom has spearheaded an effort to convert many Louisville streets into the two-way travel pattern. Notably, many of these streets are located in similarly situated neighborhoods as Woodbridge.

Increased bicycle access to Wayne State University:

Although our group observed a number of individuals riding against traffic on Forest and Warren, this practice increases the potential for car-bike accidents. Moreover, the practice is simply illegal. One-way streets encourage bicyclists to ride against the flow of traffic as people will take the shortest route to their destination. Michigan's extreme temperature and weather fluctuations further exacerbate the problem. By converting to two-way streets, cyclists will have convenient access to Wayne State's main campus along Warren Ave. and Midtown along Forest Ave. The addition of bike lanes will encourage individuals to bike instead of drive due to enhanced safety and convenience. As noted previously, the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan recognizes Woodbridge as a targeted destination.

Next Steps:

The process to implement these improvements is the key drawback to converting Warren and Forest; however, its difficulty should not discourage residents from considering it as a long-term goal. Citizens have routinely lobbied municipal governments for changes in transportation policy. Furthermore, federally funded projects rely heavily on citizen input, and a project of this nature will require a federal grant.

While federal transportation grants come in many forms, grant recipients are only cities or metropolitan planning organizations (MPO). For Southeast Michigan, the designated MPO is the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program provides \$20-\$25 million annually for projects in the state of Michigan. Eligible projects typically improve non-motorized transportation options, enhance streetscapes and preserve historic transportation assets. Therefore, the TE may be a viable source of funding for this project. Both Warren and Forest are eligible for federal funding, and improving multi-modal access is included in SEMCOG's long-range transportation plan (LRTP). In short, the funding may be available and desire to improve multi modal access exists. The areas around Midtown and Wayne State are receiving attention from city leaders and anchor institutions. The opportunity exists to let local leaders know that Woodbridge needs to be included in Detroit's long-range transportation plans.

3. Updating Detroit Public Lighting Department (PLD) Street Lighting

The Woodbridge neighborhood area's lighting is furnished by the City of Detroit's Public Lighting Department (PLD). At this time, PLD's response time to reports of broken street light can take many weeks or even months. PLD makes no effort to repair lights unless a complaint is received simply because the system is overloaded. Residents who felt lighting was a concern during the neighborhood canvassing and town hall also expressed that they did not feel they could rely on the city as a means for fixing the problem. While Woodbridge cannot rely solely on PLD, there are a number of options the area should research.

A Means of Reference and Emulation



To understand the effect increased lighting can have on an area, the WCDC should familiarize themselves with University City in Philadelphia. The target neighborhood, University City, was adjacent to large anchor institutions, such as University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. University City was once also familiar with criminal activity, similar to crimes happening in Woodbridge – largely non-violent crimes such as house/car break-ins. University City developed the UC Brite initiative, in which anchor institutions provided matching funds to reimburse property owners for the purchase and installation of pole lights or other exterior lighting.⁶ Through this initiative, street lighting was increased in targeted areas by 25 percent. These areas saw a significant change, including increased property values, increased demand to live in the area and a 36 percent decrease in overall crime. Lighting upgrades were done along with planting trees, increased police presence and neighborhood

safety ambassadors. Woodbridge, due to its rising residency rates and proximity to anchor institutions holds a very unique position to begin the development of a program such as UC Brite.

Light up Woodbridge with Energy Optimization Program incentive

As described, the Light up Woodbridge campaign would be completely grass roots and funded by the citizens themselves. In conjunction to encouraging citizens to turn on their front porch lights, incentives should be offered in this

⁶ University City District. 2005. Light Master Plan. Available at www.university.org/_files/pdfs/LightMasterPlan.pdf

endeavor. DTE currently offers an Energy Optimization Program, which offers citizen credits for energy efficient lighting upgrades. Education on the DTE program should be dispersed so residents may take advantage of the credits offered.

CLR SAFE (Security Alternative Funding and Education) Grants:

The Hubbard Farms Security Patrol, located in Southwest Detroit, recently procured SAFE Grants through CLR Detroit. The Hubbard Farms Security Patrol partnered with Southwest Housing Solutions to apply for and receive the grant funding. They received \$5,000, which they plan to use for installing motion lights in alleys and beacon lights for their security patrol. The WCDC should partner with an eligible 501c3 to research and apply for such SAFE grants offered through CLR, as there is still plenty of funding available. The WCDC should focus efforts on lighting alleys or other troublesome areas which may contribute to crime.

PLD/NextEnergy initiative:

PLD, partnering with NextEnergy in TechTown, plans to replace all of the lights in the city as funds become available. There are plans to replace 3,000 lights within the immediate downtown area (Woodbridge excluded) during fall 2011. After the initial 3,000 are replaced, precedence will be placed on areas which are able to contribute funds to the effort. Eric McDonald from NextEnergy explained that if an anchor institution near Woodbridge donated funds to upgrade the area's lighting, upgrades in the area would be completed sooner than the 5-7 years the city is projecting. The residents of Woodbridge should not miss out on this opportunity as it is in everyone's best interest to have upgraded street lighting. As lighting was a major concern raised by citizens during the town hall and canvassing efforts, the WCDC should approach any and all anchor institutions about this opportunity.

4. Branding, Imaging and Gateways

Though Woodbridge is one of the most stable neighborhoods in Detroit, the citizens and WCDC have made it clear that there is opportunity for improvement. The neighborhood's residents have requested ideas for ways to make the neighborhood more visible, and ways to make Woodbridge more accessible and memorable to those outside the neighborhood. Some ideas are discussed below:

Branding Woodbridge: A Small-Town Canvass in the Big City

Of the many strengths the neighborhood exhibits, perhaps one of Woodbridge's greatest is found within the robust diversity of its residents. Few places in Michigan have such a wide range of citizens; there is a wide array of ages, races, incomes, educational backgrounds, etc. The cohesiveness and strong sense of community can be seen on any summer night where its citizens can be found socializing on porches, makeshift parks, and in backyards, and in other organized community events – it is truly a small town nestled comfortably in the big city.

The neighborhood is home to several artists and art-based facilities. The Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit, 555 Gallery, Woodbridge Gallery, and the world's first and only light and multimedia-based art, The Kunsthalle Detroit Museum of Light-Based Arts are all found within the borders of Woodbridge. The neighborhood is also surrounded by the arts – MOCAD, DIA, Detroit Artists Market, and several others, as well as a cadre of museums and performing arts theaters in close proximity. The ubiquity of the arts as well as the small-town ambiance could lend to a solidified identity for the neighborhood.

Making It Happen

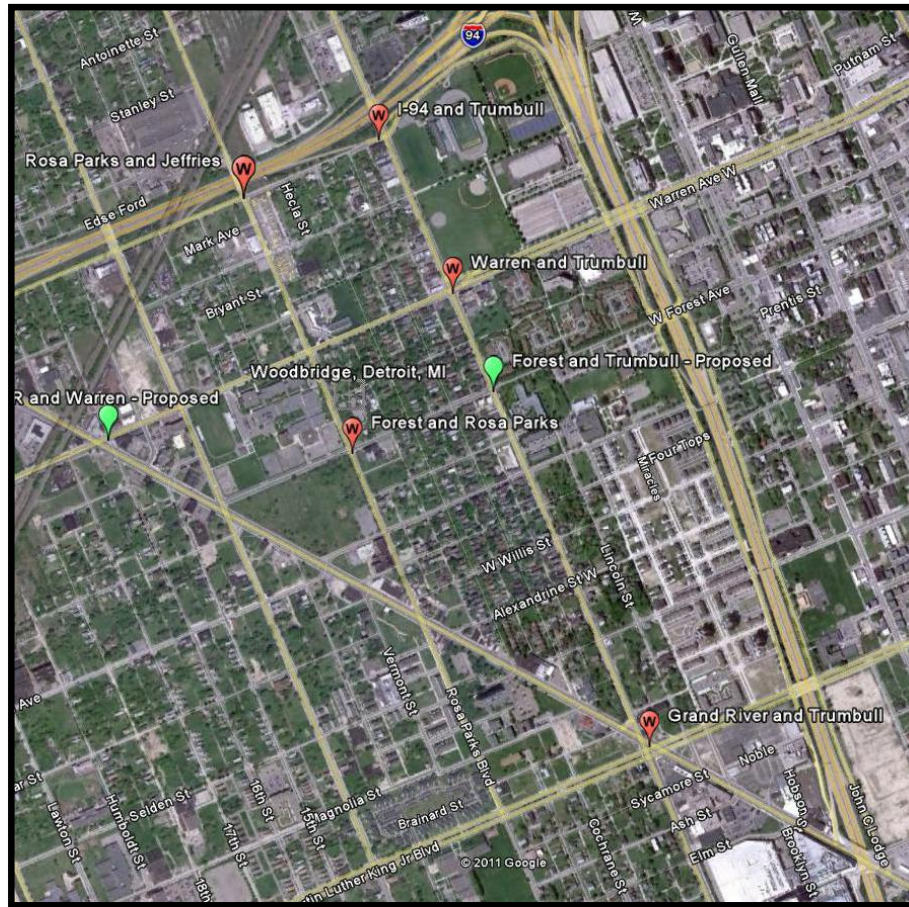
Giving the neighborhood an identity with which it can work is step one. Within the next three to six months, the residents of Woodbridge, with its various representative organizations (WCDC, WNDC Safe-In-Woodbridge, Block Clubs, etc.) should begin to choose a brand/identity with which the neighborhood can market itself to potential

investment and new residents. This could be done, for instance, by holding a competition among the neighborhood's residents for things like creating a new sign or logo for the neighborhood, and creating a slogan for Woodbridge. This type of activity would not require any financing, and could be a catalyst for garnering increased resident participation in neighborhood activities and improvement efforts.

5. Gateway Improvements

While Woodbridge, one of Detroit's most stable neighborhoods, is directly adjacent to some of the busiest intersections in the city of Detroit, many people passing by are not familiar with its existence. Community leadership should make efforts to focus on improving the entrances to Woodbridge as a means of increasing not only the visibility of the neighborhood, but also to encourage people to come and see what Woodbridge is all about; gateways should act as a welcome mat that lets people know they're about to enter a place that is truly unique and worth seeing. This section will address the current and potential gateways in Woodbridge.

Current and Proposed Gateways



Source: 2011 Capstone Team, Google Maps

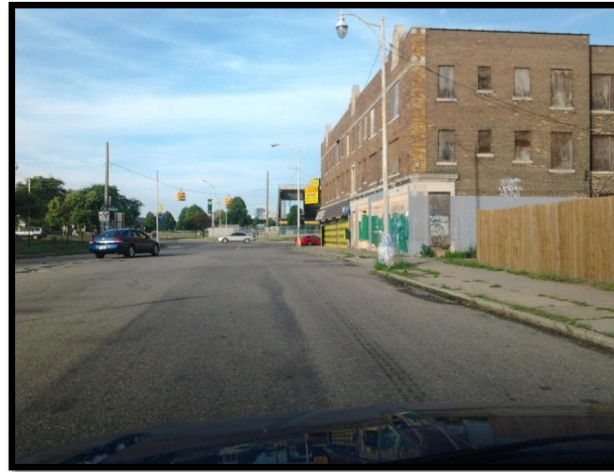
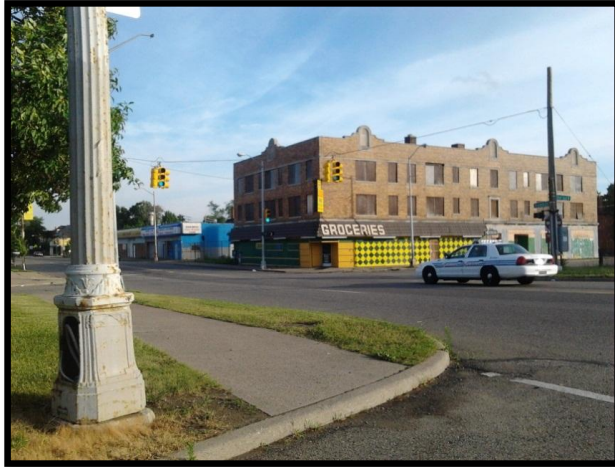
Grand River at Trumbull: Southern Exposure

This gateway, by way of the painting on the building, is probably the most impactful of all the gateways into Woodbridge. Unfortunately, any sunshine and happiness garnered from the painting is immediately wiped away by the condition of Scripps Park. The park is poorly maintained, with overgrown lawn, damaged equipment, and a portion of the fence on the ground. Friends of Scripps Park have attempted to organize around the issue of improving the park, but

if this gateway is to see any kind of a face-lift, the park *must* be overhauled or improved. This gateway is on the border of multiple neighborhoods, so the concern should be a shared collaboration between them and their large anchor: Motor City Casino.



I-94 and Trumbull: The Heavy-Traffic Gateway

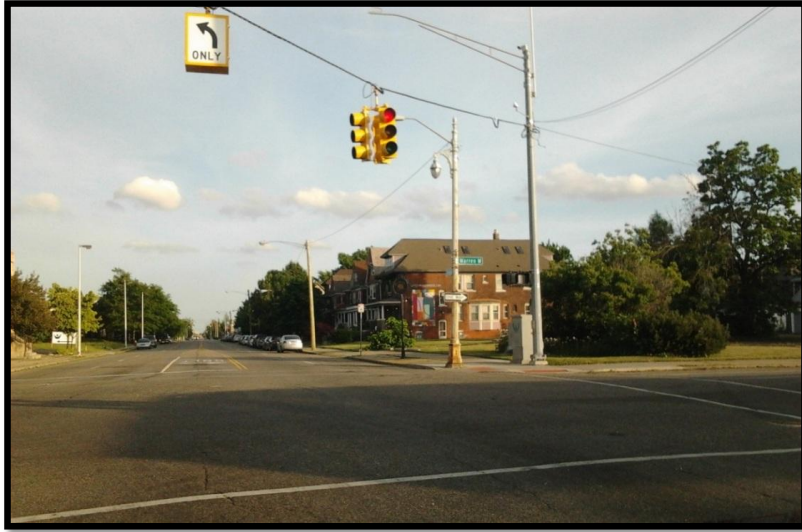


The gateway at I-94, by far, sees the most traffic. The gateway is populated with a three story building with boarded windows, a large, blank, University-owned grass lot, and a service drive in severe disrepair. Neighborhood leadership should seek façade improvement grants to give the building – quite possibly many people’s first and ONLY impression of Woodbridge – a much needed facelift, as well as the possibility for future tenancy. Henry Ford Health Systems (HFHS) has expressed interest in their expansion plan to make improvements to this Gateway, as it is the main exit taken to get to their campus. Appeals should be made to the three large anchors of this area: WSU, DMC, and HFHS to repair this gateway, starting with the streets and lights, since they are unarguably deteriorated to the point they are directly due to traffic going to their facilities.

Rosa Parks and Edsel Ford W: The Forgotten Gateway

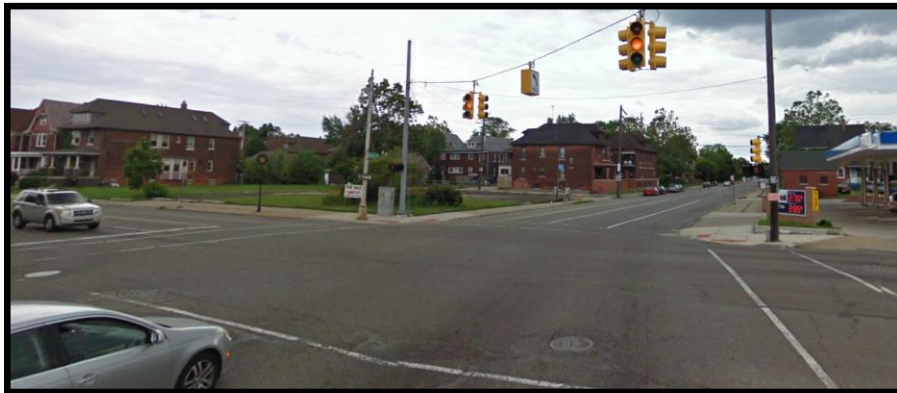
Looking at this gateway, one wonders whether the neighborhood they're entering is, in fact, still there. This gateway signage might be well served to be moved east to Avery Street, where the stable, discernable part of Woodbridge begins. The sign is speaking to a very small crowd in this location, and in its current incarnation speaks wasted words.





Trumbull and Warren: The Warrior Gateway

This Gateway, seen by thousands of motorists and pedestrians daily, is one of the busiest intersections in all of Detroit. There is no signage aside from the “Liveinwoodbridge.com” logo on the side of the home. The intersection needs signage, seating and trash receptacles at the bus stop, and landscaping/decorum on the vacant, southwest corner, shown in the bottom photo. This intersection has the most potential for making a highly impactful first impression to anyone passing through; therefore it is one of the most important to improve.



Forest Ave: The Wilderness Gateway

The “cartographic” gateway, shown above is the vacant remainder of a tract of land that was first victim to urban renewal, and later victim to school closure and demolition. The majority of the land at this gateway, city owned, is now reclaimed by nature. While the market is still weak, little possibility for any type of construction exists for these parcels. In the interim, Woodbridge should move their celebratory gateway location to Forest and Rosa Parks. While the signage here is also nonexistent, there is definitely a glimpse of the density and vibrancy Woodbridge has to offer.

The defunct school of Performing Arts should be better secured, and possibly, while waiting for reuse or demolition, be used as a canvass, possibly in an event hosted by the adjacent Woodbridge Gallery. Signage could be installed on the



Northeast Corner (shown left) welcoming motorists to Historic Woodbridge.

6. Land Banks and Side Lot Disposition Programs

Land Banks provide an excellent tool for economic and community development. A land bank is a public authority created to efficiently acquire, hold, manage and develop vacant and abandoned properties. The essential function of a land bank is to hold, manage and maintain the assemblage of land until it can be returned to productive use and returned to the tax rolls. One very important element to redevelopment that land banks can offer is the ability to quiet title. Quiet title simply means that land banks have the ability to clear all back liens on property. The three land banks that have jurisdictional control over the Woodbridge neighborhood area are the Detroit Land Bank Authority, Wayne County Land Bank Corporation and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority.

The Detroit Land Bank Authority and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority have side lot programs. Within the program, property that is owned by the land bank can be sold to an adjacent homeowner as a side lot. This is beneficial to the neighborhood because it reutilizes vacant land and ensures that it will be maintained. Many residents that acquire side lots plant flower or vegetable gardens, expand their yard, or redevelop the land by building amenities such as a garage.

The identification of both land bank and city owned parcels should be a priority for the WCDC. If the WCDC acquires any city owned property, the land banks should be approached to take control of the title to the land so as to be maintained until such time when a viable redevelopment plan is available. Since the Land Banks of Wayne County are generally new, Woodbridge can seek to develop a strong relationship early on.

7. Neighborhood Business Committee

Neighborhood Business Committees develop a framework for improving neighborhood center(s), and align public and private investments to achieve deeper and longer lasting benefit to the economic health of the targeted neighborhood

district(s). It is suggested that Woodbridge create a task force to garner consensus on a Woodbridge Neighborhood Business Committee and examine Woodbridge stakeholders' organizational capacity to carry-out the business plan.

Impetus for recommended strategy: Community Advisory Councils to exist alongside Citizens' District Councils

On November 4, 2009, city voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum to once again elect most of the city council by districts beginning in 2013, while allowing for two at-large seats. The City of Detroit Charter Revision Commission has sent a final draft of the proposed Detroit City Charter to the Governor and the Attorney General for approval of placement on the November 8, 2011 ballot. The ordinance, if passed, would create seven contiguous council districts. The ordinance would also allow signature petitions to create Community Advisory Councils. Under Article 9, Chapter 1 of the Detroit Home Rule City Charter, Community Advisory Councils' power and duties include charging the WCDC's with the responsibilities of:

1. Communicating to City Council the concerns of groups, agencies, businesses and residents within its districts with respect to the delivery of programs and services;
2. Assisting groups to clarify issues in the community;
3. Using proper procedures to access city government;
4. Providing advice to community representatives and city council on issues within the council district, including: housing development, commercial blight, safety and security, economic and community development, employment opportunities; code enforcement, and other concerns impacting social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions within the district;
5. Familiarizing themselves and assist others in understanding the City Charter;

6. Familiarizing themselves and assist others in understanding the Master Plan for the City of Detroit; and
7. Meeting annually with the Mayor and city council to discuss the challenges confronting the district and the resources required to advance the interest and support the viability of the district.

On one hand is the onset of the City Charter Community Advisory Councils; on the other hand are the existing Citizens District Councils. Citizens District Councils, according to their Preamble, recognize their own community of interest, establish their Constitution to maintain and improve their neighborhood and environment, and act to insure the best interest of the Woodbridge community through cooperation with public and private bodies. Furthermore, legislation empowers WCDCs as consultants on any proposed development, rehabilitation, or redevelopment activities within their area. In short, it serves as a Planning Advisory Board on area improvements.

If Community Advisory Councils exist alongside Citizens' District Councils, we recommend WCDC be aware and prepared to engage in the changing political process of Detroit and the implications it would have for the agency. Woodbridge Citizens' District Council is at a crossroads whereas it can strengthen or diminish its role in the community. Contained in this plan is our task force recommendation to address and examine WCDC's role in the future of Woodbridge's businesses.

Task Force recommendation to answer political, fiscal, and organizational questions

Should a task force be adopted, the immediate goals should be to answer the questions:

1. How can neighborhood stakeholders focus on a set of strategies essential to creating a healthy neighborhood business district outlined in this plan?
2. Does Woodbridge need another legal mechanism to facilitate such strategies, and if not
3. How does the existing organizations/stakeholders build capacity to fiscally and politically execute plan's goals.?

With the proposed presence of another public functioning organization (Community Advisory Councils) how will WCDC and other Woodbridge stakeholders remain effective and efficient in their pursuits? Thus, we propose exploring an alternative mechanism for fiscal and political sustainability.

In response to some of the challenges and opportunities WCDC faces we propose exploring incremental steps toward the creation of a Neighborhood Business Committee to understand the marketplace of the neighborhood and to create realistic action plans. The proposed WNBC would catalyze private, city, state and federal investments. National and local research highlights some of the primary benefits of a business committee (discussed on the next page):

1. **Formation of a public-private entity to create, administer, advocate and assist with funding in the business development process while revitalizing Woodbridge;**
2. **Establish long-range development planning, including a land use vision and action plan that the private sector, government entities and funders can recognize as a road map for current and future development;**
3. **Build consensus among stakeholders and the public sector to foster economic and community development;**
4. **Serve as a marketing tool to promote the target area;**
5. **Oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of a neighborhood section; and**
6. **Technical business development support for retention and attraction of new businesses.**

Key ingredients in exploring and pursuing a neighborhood business committee:

- **Form Task Force** to undergo a feasibility study for the creation of a permanent, legal organization directed by a board of directors, for the purpose of retaining and attracting new businesses, new jobs and income growth in Woodbridge. Task force involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate

human and financial resources to explore and answer the question “should we create an organization to implement a neighborhood business center revitalization program?”

- **Developing strong community leadership and organization** from a wide-range of area stakeholders; garner commitment of key stakeholders to create a multi-year comprehensive plan for commercial district revitalization employing short-term and long-term strategies.
- **Develop a mission-statement/purpose.** Draw-up a Preamble, including what will be the purpose of the organization.
- **Establishment of a Committee** via WCDC By-Laws or Incorporation as a not-for-profit corporation, or for-profit corporation.
- **Short-term goals and strategic plan**, including formation of an operating budget, membership dues, formation of committees, fundraising and education of nonparticipating residents and businesses.

8. Business Improvement District/Zones

The State of Michigan provides many resources to areas that demonstrate the need to redevelopment in some form or another. One recommendation for the WCDC would be to advocate for Woodbridge to become a Business Improvement District or Zone (BID or BIZ). This promotes economic development within a defined area of a municipality. The WCDC would need to advocate on behalf of Woodbridge to become a Business Improvement District. A BID may levy special assessments to finance activities and projects for seven years and is created by a petition driven by at least 30% of the property owners within a zone plan. This is a great tool to utilize, because it takes the investment of the residents themselves, instead of the city of Detroit. After the BID is created they must establish a Board of Directors. The city of Detroit would appoint one board member, and the rest of the board would consist of business and property owners from

the district. To become a BID, you must have a comprehensive plan for the district. For this purpose, the existing WNDC plan could be utilized, along with the information in this plan.

Public and Private Investment Opportunities

Forward thinking economic and community development projects are positioned to receive significant sums of money by public and private investors. What distinguishes these organizations from unfunded ones are their successful track records and that they have clear plans with measurable benchmarks for the future. Furthermore, their leaders and community stakeholders who are accountable to leading the way to get the plan accomplished. From the federal government's Department of Housing and Urban Development to national non-profits based in Boston, there are well-funded entities that are looking to partner and support local grassroots groups' plans. Woodbridge can have a seat at the table once its infrastructure is developed and vision is defined.

Public Economic Development Investment

HUD's "Strong Cities, Strong Communities" (SC2) is a pilot project that uses taxpayer dollars to spark economic activity in seven targeted communities, including Detroit. Specifically, the second pillar of this initiative, strengthening communities and working with stable communities.

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced on July 11th that 6-12 federal staff will be dedicated to advising Mayor Bing's city improvement plans with SC2. These individuals will advise on planning and economic development, workforce development, buildings, safety, engineering and environmental, and transportation, affirming Detroit and the federal government that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely. Up to a dozen urban policy experts will need to locate in Detroit.

Finally, Mayor Bing is interested in working with coalitions and local organizations to ensure that Detroit's redevelopment policy is organic and that local leaders are involved with the city's forward momentum. If the residents of

Woodbridge do not have an organized and professional entity to present to the public sector, they will be left out. Moreover, this entity needs to be united across businesses and residents.

Private Economic Development Investment

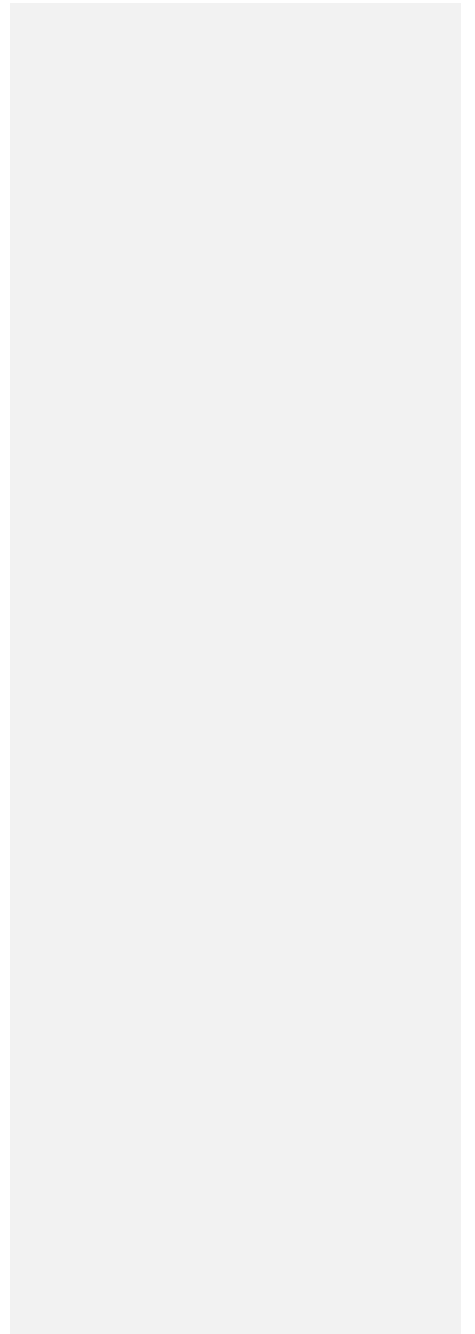
Should Woodbridge chose to partner with other community organizations to have the capacity and legal ability to receive private investments, the opportunities are endless. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations can apply for grants in the areas of arts and culture, civic affairs, health, human services, neighborhood and regional economic development, work force development, environment, and land use. At least two of these areas, neighborhood development and land use can be applicable to Woodbridge; however, the nonprofit status must be established first.

It would take the Woodbridge WCDC several steps to be eligible for a CFSEM grant, but it is not impossible. First, the WCDC should merge with a nonprofit organization locally to establish this status. Next, the WCDC needs an overarching governing plan that states its objectives and purpose where a more specific project can then be detailed out. Should the WCDC wish to develop its own endowment or fundraising plan to support said project, it then could look to private organizations for support.



Implementation

Utilizing Wayne State University



University of Pennsylvania and West Philadelphia

In the 1980s, several University of Penn professors engaged students in a class to study the decline of the West Philadelphia area. The class drew institutional and community interest and support. Ultimately, Penn's president participated in the course. At the completion of the course, the class recommended the creation of the West Philadelphia Improvement Corps. The new Corps' mission was to transform the West Philadelphia public school system. Since its inception, the Corps has introduced West Philadelphia youth to landscaping-design and basic building-renovation skills.

Inspired by these actions, Penn's President established a Penn Center for Community Partnerships. The purpose of the Center is to strengthen ties between Penn and the community and promote new and innovative community development programs. One of the initiatives forwarded by the Center is a housing initiative that helps first-time home owners navigate the credit system. Further, it encouraged Penn to develop a policy that for any Penn project costing more than \$5 million, contractors must draw 25% of their workforce from disenfranchised groups (i.e., women and under-represented minorities) in the West Philadelphia area.

Source: www.communitywealth.rog/pdfs/mews/recent-articles/12-05/artocje-reardpm.pdf.

The implementation of this plan will rely on early completion of the above noted near-term goals and building the capacity of the WCDC. The Capstone Team recommends that the WCDC develop a Neighborhood Coalition in conjunction with Wayne State University to ensure this plan remains a living document.

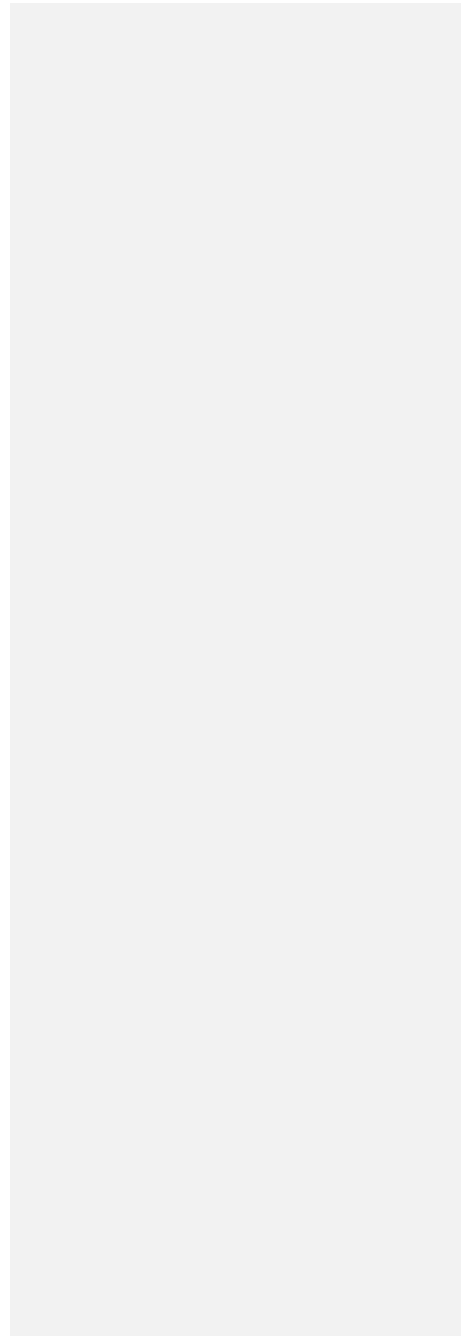
As stated previously, there is a natural synergy between Wayne State University and Woodbridge. To establish this coalition, we suggest that the WCDC, and community at-large, approach the President of the University and various departments that could assist in forwarding the measures set forth in this plan. For example, there is already a relationship with the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, and, for the purposes of gaining practical field experience, a student could work with the WCDC in furtherance of this plan. The WCDC could also approach other departments, such as the Law School, particularly the Small Business Enterprises and Nonprofit Corporation Clinic, to help with community legal issues and assistance in obtaining grants and other funding for local initiatives. If contacts within Wayne State are established and there is departmental support, the group could approach the President/Board of Governors and request a nominal amount of capital to fund this coalition and help assist the WCDC in the implementation of these proposals.

The mission and work of this Coalition model itself after a similar Task Force established at the University of Pennsylvania in its work with the West Philadelphia neighborhood. Indeed, the start of the Philadelphia Improvement Corps has similar roots to the relationship established between the WCDC and the 2011 capstone class. The exploration of shares interest and common ground will hold great benefits and these relationships should be cultivated.

With the emergence of LIVE Midtown, Woodbridge stands to attract an estimated 24,000 homeowners. The midtown area, with Woodbridge as its true urban neighborhood, is sure to be the center of attention for these professionals. The CDC stands to benefit from a cooperative relationship with the institutions that are reinvesting in the area. As Woodbridge continues to grow in the city, it will be important to be sensitive to the unique opportunities offered through the various constituencies in the city. Establishing long-term relationships with community partners and crafting well-informed programming supplemented with strategic investments will be vital to driving sustainable change.



Appendices



Appendix A – Cultural Institutions and Community Leadership Resources

Cultural Programs and Contacts

The majority of the cultural institutions offer discounts to their members or visiting large groups. Some of them offer or participate in programs that offer free admission or services. Below are those programs that the Woodbridge Community can use.

- **Museum Adventure Pass (Presented by Macy's)** - The Museum Adventure Pass gives free admission to participating museums and galleries. As you would check out a book from your library, you can check out a Museum Adventure Pass with a valid library card. The passes are available on a first-come, first-serve basis and a limited number of passes are available at each library location for the participating cultural institution. Both the Main and Douglass branches offer this pass. Depending on the participating museum, the pass will admit 2 to 4 people and may give additional discounts. The program is in its fourth year of operation. This year's pass is valid from October 1, 2010- September 30, 2011. More information is provided at <http://www.detroitadventurepass.org> or at a local library branch.
- **The Contemporary Artist Program (CAP)** - The Charles H Wright Museum of African American History offers the Contemporary Artist Program. "The Contemporary Artist Program provides opportunities for local artists to display their work in one of the Museum's galleries for three to four months. The subject matter must pertain to African American history and culture. This program introduces Museum audiences to innovative contemporary artists who are creating original works in a variety of media. CAP also includes a lecture series to allow a more personal and informative interaction between the visitors, the artist and their work. If you are a local area artist, living in Michigan, with a collection of work pertaining to African American history or culture and would like to participate in this program, contact the Museum's CAP Coordinator by calling (313) 494-5813..." or an application and the guidelines to the program can be downloaded from the museums website at <http://www.thewright.org/learn/programs>.

- **McDonald's Books and Backpacks** - In addition to access to books for free, the Detroit Public Library has teamed up with McDonald's to offer a free Happy Meal or Mighty Kids Meal. Children, or their parents, must get a McDonald's bookmark from the librarian. Each time the child checks out a book, the bookmark is stamped. When the bookmark is full, the child can take the bookmark to McDonald's to redeem. Separately, an entry form can be completed at the library for a chance to win a McDonald's backpack and a \$20 Borders Gift Card. Please speak with the librarian at the Douglass or Main branch for more information.
- **Hannan House** - The Ellen Kayrod Gallery is housed in the Hannan House that also houses other non-profit organizations. The programs and services target the senior population. The center offers free gardening classes every Wednesday for hour. Rachel Jacobsen is the person to contact for more information on this program; by phone 313-833-1300, ext. 24 or rjacobsen@hannan.org.
- **Detroit Eastern Market** - The Eastern Market is home to many stationary wholesale retailers. They also have a special time for wholesalers to bring their goods to the market. The wholesale market takes place Monday through Friday from midnight until 6 am. Outside of individual bargaining, the Eastern Market offers membership options that give discounts to participating businesses.
- **NW Community Access Center** - Tony Kenzie, Manager for the NW Community Access Center for Grand River. Arranging for dumpster delivery can be done by contacting, 313-870-0649.
- **University Center Cultural Association** - Neighborhood leadership should work with the UCCA to implement many of the proposed strategies. The UCCA can be contacted at the following address:
UCCA
3939 Woodward Ave ste. 100
Detroit, MI. 48201
313-420-6000
www.detroitmidtown.com

- **Fresh Food Share** - Members pre-order a box of produce online or by phone and pick up the fresh produce from community sites during a pre-set time. Each box contains a nutritious variety of fruits and vegetables from local farmers and a monthly newsletter with recipes and nutritional information. The Eastern Market is a partner in the program, along with Gleaners Community Food Bank, The Greening of Detroit, and the Fair Food Network. Communities sites, in or close to Woodbridge, are Woodbridge Manor, Hannan House, and New Center One. For more information contact 313-550-8034, email FreshFoodShare@gcfb.org, or visit <http://www.freshfoodshare.com/>.

Community Leadership Organizations That May Assist the Woodbridge Community

As with any community-based initiative, it is important to be aware of other institutions and partners doing similar work. In Detroit, a variety of stakeholders are launching their own initiatives to address the issues aforementioned. The following are just a few of the relevant initiatives occurring or near the target neighborhood:

- **Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan: Senior Engagement Programs**– The Senior Engagement Program is committed to helping participating organizations do the following: 1) Reshape their current operations to be more welcoming, inclusive and supportive to the largest growing demographic group in our region; 2) Learn more about how to serve or engage older adults and develop partnerships with organizations with expertise in serving and/or engaging older adults in their work; and 3) Enhance collaboration and improve the capacity of organizations to serve and/or engage older adults and address the fundamental issues of aging.
- **Crossroads of Michigan** – This nonprofit organization provides many vulnerable adults 50 and older with much needed assistance: bus tickets, identification, birth certificates, food, clothes, and prescription assistance. Crossroads has been around for more than 50 years serving the Detroit vulnerable community.

- **Adult Well Being Services**– Adult Well-Being Services has been providing services to the greater Detroit area for over fifty years. They were founded by the Junior League of Detroit in 1953 and have operated continuously since that time. They began as a senior center on the east side of Detroit, providing a place for seniors to socialize and use their time constructively. Today, they operate out of nine locations throughout Wayne County and provide outreach services in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.
- **Block Clubs** – A myriad of Block clubs and/or Neighborhood Associations helping the neighborhoods advocate for city services, esthetics, parks, safety and friendship.
- **Wayne State Farmers Market** - While there are not a lot of fresh food sources for Detroit’s communities, urban farming and fresh food markets have gained a lot of attention. Wayne State’s Market is fairly new to the area and enables low income, vulnerable populations the opportunity to buy fresh food. The Framers Market recently announced themselves as one of the markets now accepting the Bridge Card, also known as “food stamps.”
- **Detroit Area Agency on Aging (DAAA)** – With over 30 years of service aiming towards “the senior solution,” DAAA’s dedicated to educate, advocate and promote healthy aging, enabling people to make choices about home and community-based services and long term care that will improve their quality of life.
- **Matrix Human Services** – Matrix Human Services was founded in 1906 by a small and generous group of individuals known as The League of Catholic Women. They recognized the importance of helping the less fortunate who migrated to Detroit and are adapting to a new life in an unfamiliar environment.
- **Technology** – While not a leader physically, existing technology has been proven to bring people together and make connections across the globe. If leveraged properly, social media like Twitter and Facebook has the potential to connect older adults to family and friends. And if used to its full capacity, mobile phones are becoming powerful tools to purchase goods, receive services, and even vote.

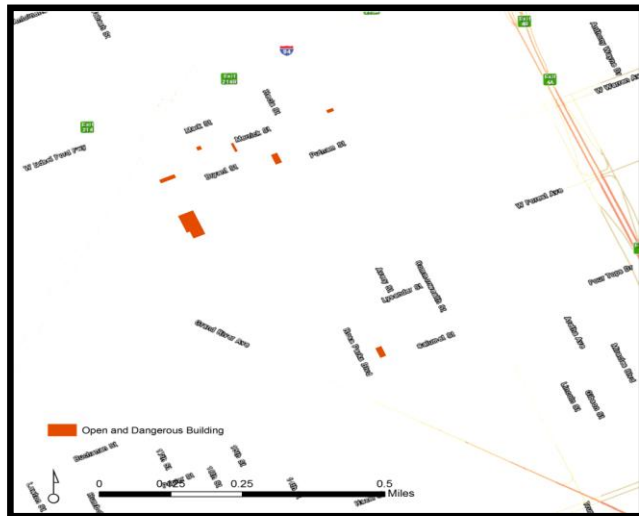
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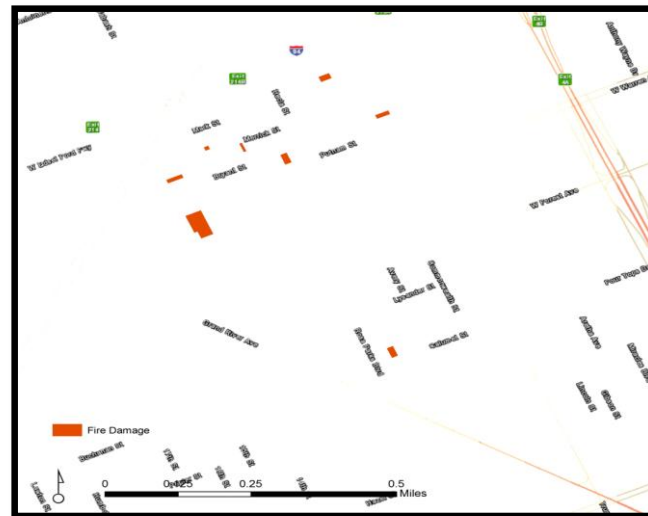
Supplemental Maps

Open and Dangerous Structures



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

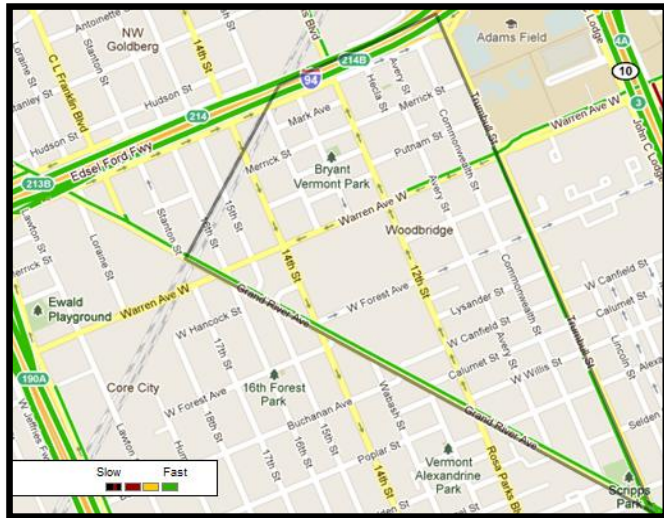
Fire Damaged Structures



Source: 2011 Capstone Team

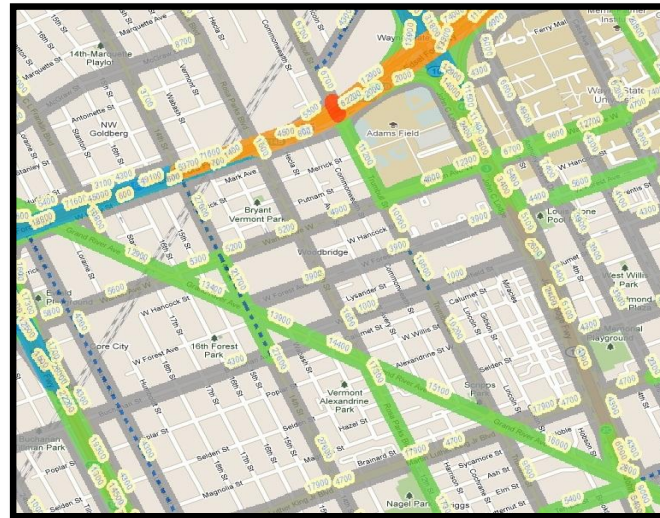
Supplemental Maps

Traffic Flow



Source: 2011 Capstone Team, SEMCOG

Traffic Counts



Source: 2011 Capstone Team, SEMCOG