Urban [space] US12 Idea Center

a studio based on the 2012 NOMA student design competition

Detroit: the motor city. Birthplace of Motown records. I chose the fonts on this flyer intentionally to evoke this imagery of place. But what else is Detroit? It has received a great deal of press lately due to rapid population loss and an associated abundance of vacant urban land... but also because of the innovative ways in which its citizens have responded, weaving an entrepreneurial urban agricultural movement aimed at fostering local self-sufficiency with values of social justice rooted in the civil rights movement.

In this studio, you’ll design an “idea training center” (see program in attached competition information) -- a building that reflects this human energy and acts as optimistic icon representing Detroit’s future. Perhaps more importantly, however, this studio is a vehicle for investigating the relationship between architecture and identity. We’ll dig through stereotypes and received wisdom, unearth Detroit’s soul, and craft imagery for its future. What is Detroit? Find your own answer...

*NOMA is the National Organization of Minority Architects. To be clear, we won’t be submitting entries to the design competition because its schedule doesn’t mesh with our quarter system. In addition, although we will address the competition’s urban planning aspects, these will be de-emphasized and the focus will be on the building itself.

CHECK OUT THESE DETROIT FEATURES ON YOUR FAVORITE ELECTRONIC DEVICE:

Al Letson’s State of the Re-Union:
http://stateofthereunion.com/home/pilot-season/detroit

Detroit NOMA Conference You-YouTube Video:
http://www.noma.net/EventsPrograms/events_2012conference.aspx

NPR’s Tell Me More with Michele Martin Detroit Show:
"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

-Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report, 1987

**Urban [space] US12......Idea Center**

‘Envisioning Sustainable Communities’

2012 NOMA Student Design Competition

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**Competition Challenge:**

**NOMA** is seeking ideas for the invigoration and infusion of community led design and economic development for urban spaces in Southwest Detroit. The design problem requires in-depth research of historical site conditions as well as an understanding of the current social, cultural, economic, and physical space conditions found in this unique community. Designers must also understand the entrepreneurial spirit of the current citizens and envision solutions that will support sustained and enhanced economic development in Southwest Detroit, an area that has been severely under-resourced for several decades. Successful planning and architectural design solutions must address how the identity and physical spaces of the city/neighborhood may be reinvented to optimally leverage Michigan Avenue’s Corktown District.

Detroit was founded in 1701 and its name originates from the French word d’Etroit, which means strait, in reference to its location on the river connecting the Great Lakes. Detroit is most notably known as the “Motor City”, the birthplace of the American auto industry and headquarters location for General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. Detroit is also famous for introducing the “Motown sound” to the world with the establishment of Motown Records, which began popularizing the Soul and R&B genres during the 1950’s. From a design viewpoint, Detroit has been referred to as the “Paris of the West” for its grand electrified boulevards and distinct architectural character.

Today, many of the architectural gems of Detroit have fallen into disrepair as a result of drastic disinvestment in the City since the population loss of the 1960’s was initiated. In 1950, the City of Detroit was one of the largest and most influential American cities with a population of nearly 2 million. In 2010, the population count was just over 700,000 residents occupying a land mass of 139 square miles. As a point of reference, Manhattan had a 2010 population count of 1.6 million residents in 23 square miles. Plagued by high vacancy rates and low population, Detroit now has a unique opportunity to reinvent itself. NOMA invites competition entrants to take on this phenomenal challenge in an effort to demonstrate the power and value of design thinking as well as the potential resilience of a major American industrial city.
In 1971, Detroit provided a haven for Twelve African-American architects from different parts of the country who met during the AIA National Convention to discuss issues of discrimination and prejudices that prevented them from being awarded design commissions. What these professionals recognized was the desperate need for an organization dedicated to the development and advancement of minority architects. As a result of these initial conversations in Detroit, the National Organization of Minority Architects was formed.

Detroit served as an endearing location to nurture the development of NOMA and now the 40-year old organization is challenging the highly talented emerging designers of NOMAS chapters around the nation to help the City of Detroit to envision fresh and innovative solutions to the myriad of challenges currently facing it’s communities.

Corktown is known as the oldest neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan. Originally settled by Irish immigrants, Corktown is now primarily populated by Latin, Maltese and African Americans. Original Corktown homes were Federal-style detached and row houses, but in later years Victorian homes became the new predominant architectural style. The residential section of Corktown is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The successful design team must clearly articulate how they will incorporate new urban spaces and programming into the existing landscape of the City. As part of the submission, each team should present the role of context pertaining for their submission and be sensitive to the current and future resident’s needs, lifestyles and community culture.
Competition Brief:

The 2012 NOMA Student Design Competition is a two component design challenge:

I: The first component is an urban planning study of the Southwest Detroit neighborhoods for the development of new Urban Spaces, located off of Michigan Avenue [US12]. Michigan Avenue offers easy access to the amenities and entertainment of downtown Detroit and is ripe to become a zone for community enhancement in Southwest Detroit. New ideas for underutilized land should build upon existing urban redevelopment, services and business models intended to strengthen Michigan Avenue’s retail development and overall economic empowerment capabilities. The urban spaces should:

- Preserve and enhance the existing sites and community
- Provide visioning and planning of vacant urban spaces
- Consider new multi-transit ideas for the neighborhood/community
- Incorporate and reflect on the historic significance of the neighborhood

II: The second component of the competition calls for a cohesive urban planning scheme that incorporates key elements from The Greening of Detroit [http://greeningofdetroit.com/] initiative along with the design of a new Sustainable Training Center known as “The Idea Center”. The center will serve as the hub of the revitalization for the neighborhood, a nucleus for education and information focusing on holistic and healthy living. Entrants are expected to research the “triple bottom line” and incorporate social, economic and environmental objectives into their design solutions. Refer to SEED [www.seednetwork.org] as a resource on triple bottom line design and community participation in the design process. Each entry must demonstrate a thoughtful approach to addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges facing the Corktown community and the City of Detroit as a whole. Consider ways to create buildings and spatial interventions that can ultimately be seen as engines for positive transformation, driving Detroit to a healthy and revitalized condition in the years to come.
Building Program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea Training Center</th>
<th>Square Footage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Spaces</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibit Space</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture/Auditorium</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Café/Gift Shop</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Meeting Space</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indoor and/or Outdoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Janitor Closet</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanical/electrical Room</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loading</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<td>2 Semi trucks &amp; 1 DeliveryTruck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71,440</td>
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</table>

"If architecture truly is to be a social art, then the architect must truly be for the people—speaking for the people, crafting for the people, design for the people, communicating, connecting, including.” -Andera Dietz
### Sustainable Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Space (SF)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hydroponics Fishery</td>
<td>6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Packaging &amp; Food Processing</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Yard</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indoor Farm Space</td>
<td>min of 2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Farm Space</td>
<td>min of 7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Laboratory</td>
<td>1,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compost Training Area</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recycling Room</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PROJECT TOTAL** 103,440

Parking 1 per every 2,000 SF of usable space

**Note:** Plan to use farm space for educational training and wholesale goods to local retailers.

**Sustainable Design Requirements:** 100% of the roof must be of vegetation, power generating and/or water collection elements. Your design should reference the following resources for sustainability:

- The Living Principals - [http://www.livingprinciples.org/](http://www.livingprinciples.org/)
- Social Economic Environmental Design (SEED) - [http://www.seednetwork.org/](http://www.seednetwork.org/)
Submission Requirements:

- Maximum of (6) 24” x 36” mounted boards, including: plans, sections, elevations, 3D views, design concepts, sustainable and accessible design integration.
- A maximum 500-word essay should appear as part of the presentation boards describing the most important concepts of the urban planning and design project, as well highlighting the team’s integrative solution for the triple bottom line.
- Each team may also present their information in digital format, PowerPoint or PDF.
- Maximum of (2) scaled model, maximum size 24” w x 36”l x 24” h.
- CD with photos of model & submitted boards in jpeg or tiff and PDF format at a min resolution of 150 dpi.
- All contact information including names and schools, shall be placed on the back of each item.
- The final submission must be uploaded in (1) single (zip) file, not to exceed 15MB.
- Each team will be allotted a maximum 5 minute verbal presentation, followed by questions from the jury. Each team is allowed a maximum of 3 team members to present.
- A projector will be available upon request, for the competition presentation.

Prizes:

First Place: $1500
Second Place: $1000
Third Place: $750

Sponsors: TBD
Competition Schedule:

- Notification of 2012 Competition to Universities: **March 20, 2012**
- Final submission of questions: **September 23, 2012**
- Distribution of answers to questions on the NOMA website: **September 30, 2012**
- Notification of entry to your Regional University liaison: **October 3, 2012**
- Upload of all competition information to the FTP site: **October 12, 2012 by midnight PST**
- If your competition entry is late to the FTP, your entry **will not be eligible for the first place prize and other penalties can be enforced.**
- Presentation of work: **October 20, 2012, 9:00am-3:00pm**

All boards and the model must be submitted to the University Liaisons no later than **Friday, October 19, 2011 at 5:00pm**, unless an alternative arrangement is agreed upon by your University Liaison. If the model and boards are significantly different than the images uploaded to the FTP site, the entry will be disqualified.

Rules of Entry:

- There is no entry fee
- Open to all NOMAS chapters and NOMAS members
- All teams members must be financial (paid) members of NOMAS
- Only one entry per NOMAS chapter and/or school will be accepted
- Each entry must be issued a written acknowledgement from your Regional University Liaison
- A 2012 NOMAS Chapter Report must be submitted and approved before entries will be accepted. The Chapter Report requirement does not apply if you do not have a chapter on your campus.
Additional Information:

It is recommended that this design competition is integrated into a formal design studio or an independent study in order to encourage a vital discussion of diversity, culture, universal access and sustainability within the study/practice of architecture. A interdisciplinary team is highly encouraged to create the strongest and most coherent solution possible.

Each team member may earn up to 40 core hours in each IDP training area 1-15 for completion and submission of a design competition entry outside of a recognized work setting or academic requirement. Please see: http://www.ncarb.org/Experience-Through-Internships/Meeting-NCARB-Experience-Requirements/Supplementary-Education/Supplementary-Education-Core/Design-Competitions.aspx for information and requirements.

Upon receipt, all entries become the property of NOMA. NOMA reserves the right to publish drawings, written descriptions, photographs and the names of entrants, without issuing compensation.

To obtain additional promotional materials, receive program updates or inquire about concerns related to the competition, contact your Regional University Liaison:

Thomas Allen, South: southwestliaison@noma.net
Bryan Hudson, Midwest: midwestliaison@noma.net
Northeast: Any of the liaisons
Prescott Reavis, West: westliaison@noma.net

For additional information on the 2012 NOMA Conference: 40 Years in the Making, A Legacy Driven By Design go to: http://www.noma.net
URBAN SITE AREA
IDEA CENTER SITE AREA
Corktown

Corktown is generally bounded by the Fisher Freeway (I-75) to the north, the Detroit River to the south, the Lodge Freeway (M-10) to the east and 16th Street to the west. Landmarks include the former Tiger Stadium and the former Michigan Central Depot.

Between 1990 and 2000 Corktown lost over twenty percent of its population and thirty percent loss of its housing units. Yet, Corktown has one of the City’s lowest percent of vacant housing units with a high percent of rental housing units. Almost a third of the population are college graduates.

- **Neighborhoods and Housing**

  **Issue:** Corktown’s small lot sizes, the age of the area’s housing, and the vacant lots interspersed throughout the neighborhood create redevelopment challenges. The large vacant former rail yard along the Detroit River provides an opportunity for mixed-use development.

  **GOAL 1: Preserve sound neighborhoods**

  **Policy 1.1:** Maintain the stability of the central area through home repair programs, and scattered-site infill development of similar scale and character to the existing housing stock.

  **GOAL 2: Increase residential density**

  **Policy 2.1:** Develop the former riverfront rail yard as a mixture of high density residential and commercial uses, preserving views and public access to open space along the riverfront.

  **GOAL 3: Conversion of obsolete industrial buildings**

  **Policy 3.1:** Rehabilitate vacant industrial buildings along Lafayette and Fort into residential lofts.

- **Retail and Local Services**
Issues: The major issues for this community involve redevelopment of large vacant sites along the riverfront and along Michigan (i.e., Tiger Stadium and Michigan Central Depot) and their impact on the adjacent commercial strips.

GOAL 4: Develop mixed-use activity nodes

Policy 4.1: Encourage mixed-use development for the Tiger Stadium site (at Michigan and Trumbull), incorporating residences, shopping, offices, and recreation.

Policy 4.2: Encourage major office and retail development for the Michigan Central Depot.

Policy 4.3: Encourage high-density mixed-use development to replace obsolete industrial and commercial properties along Fort.

Policy 4.4: Develop commercial nodes south of Jefferson with a mix of locally serving, small-scale businesses, entertainment related venues, service establishments and civic space.

GOAL 5: Reduce conflicts between commercial and residential areas

Policy 5.1: Insure commercial development along Michigan does not encroach into the adjacent residential areas.

Industrial Centers

Issue: There are several functioning light industrial facilities in the central portion of the area. The expansion of trucking and other uses associated with the Ambassador Bridge is creating conflict with nearby residential and commercial uses.

GOAL 6: Increase the viability of industrial area

Policy 6.1: Redevelop the under-utilized sites west of Rosa Parks by attracting new and encouraging existing businesses to use the land for expansion or relocation.

GOAL 7: Reduce conflicts between industrial and residential areas
Policy 7.1: Establish and enforce designated truck routes to and from Rosa Parks and Fort.

Policy 7.2: Buffer the negative impacts of industrial land uses upon residential areas to the north.

Policy 7.3: Ensure that modernization and expansion plans for the rail and bridge facilities do not encroach upon the surrounding residential areas.

Policy 7.4: Encourage custom related uses to locate in the area east of 16th street and north of Lafayette.

- Parks, Recreation and Open Space

  Issue: There are few well-maintained green spaces or recreational areas for neighborhood residents. The area also lacks links to the riverfront.

  GOAL 8: Increase open space and recreational opportunities

  Policy 8.1: Improve the condition of the public open space immediately north of the Michigan Central Depot (at Michigan and Roosevelt).

  Policy 8.2: Develop open space and recreation uses along the riverfront to encourage recreational activities such as fishing and picnicking.

GOAL 9: Increase access to open space and recreational areas

Policy 9.1: Develop greenways connecting residential areas to the riverfront.

- Transportation and Mobility

  Issue: The redevelopment of the Michigan Central Depot and Tiger Stadium could create regional attractions. The area is poorly linked to downtown and other area attractions.

GOAL 10: Provide transportation options

  Policies 10.1: Development transit links for sites along Michigan to the CBD and other area attractions.
## Neighborhood
### Corktown

### Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1990 Population</th>
<th>2000 Population</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>1,955</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 to 2000 Change</td>
<td>-332</td>
<td>-21.74%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
<td>-21.74%</td>
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### Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1990 Population</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 4 years old</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 10 years old</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 13 years old</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 to 17 years old</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18 to 24 years old</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25 to 44 years old</td>
<td>418</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 64 years old</td>
<td>284</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 years old and older</td>
<td>144</td>
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### Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>1990 Population</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Only</td>
<td>646</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Only</td>
<td>327</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>1.76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other</td>
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<td>Pacific Islander Only</td>
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<td>Other Race Only</td>
<td>139</td>
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<td>11.63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
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### Hispanic Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic Origin (Any Race)</th>
<th>1990 Population</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990 Hispanic Origin</td>
<td>406</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990 to 2000 Change</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1.48%</td>
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### Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>1990 Population</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>630</td>
<td></td>
<td>52.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>565</td>
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<td>47.28%</td>
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### Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>1990 Population</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 25 or older</td>
<td>846</td>
<td></td>
<td>70.79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS Graduate or Higher</td>
<td>555</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assoc. Degree or Higher</td>
<td>261</td>
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<td>30.85%</td>
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### Housing Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Units</th>
<th>1990 Housing Units</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 to 2000</td>
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<td>-30.65%</td>
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### Housing Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Value</th>
<th>Owner Occupied Units</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>139</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

### Household Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Less Than $10,000</th>
<th>$10,000 to $14,999</th>
<th>$15,000 to $24,999</th>
<th>$25,000 to $34,999</th>
<th>$35,000 to $49,999</th>
<th>$50,000 to $74,999</th>
<th>$75,000 or More</th>
<th>1990 to 2000 Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
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<td>144</td>
<td>12.65%</td>
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<td>5.19%</td>
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### Summary

- **Total Population**: 1,955
- **Race**: White Only 646 (54.06%), Black or African American Only 327 (27.36%), American Indian or Alaska Native Only 21 (1.76%), Asian Only 0 (0.00%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Only 0 (0.00%), Other Race Only 139 (11.63%), Two or More Races 62 (5.19%).
- **Housing Units**: Total Housing 681, 1990 Housing Units 982, 1990 to 2000 Change -301.
- **Housing Value**: Owner Occupied Units 139.
- **Household Income**: Less Than $10,000 144 (25.13%), $10,000 to $14,999 62 (10.82%), $15,000 to $24,999 88 (15.36%), $25,000 to $34,999 48 (8.38%), $35,000 to $49,999 90 (15.71%), $50,000 to $74,999 59 (10.30%), $75,000 or More 82 (14.31%).
Map 4-2B
City of Detroit Master Plan of Policies

Neighborhood Cluster 4
Corktown

Future Land Use -
- Low Density Residential
- Low-Medium Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Major Commercial
- Retail Center
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Thoroughfare Commercial
- Special Commercial
- General Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Distribution/Port Industrial
- Mixed - Residential/Commercial
- Mixed - Residential/Industrial
- Mixed - Town Center
- Recreation
- Regional Park
- Private Marina
- Airport
- Cemetery
- Institutional
“Livability means a community where you can take kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, go to the grocery store, have dinner and a movie, and play with your kids in a park, all without having to get into a car.” Ray LaHood, Secretary of Department of Transportation

“Often people from the government, from labor unions, from the businesses, people who work with community centers for young people, they had never met in a conversation where they are trying to create something together. When they met, they had to fight about something. This is an opportunity for people to say ‘hey, we have to come together and co-create an opportunity here for our community.’” – Van Jones, 2008 Interview about the green movement in urban communities

INTRODUCTION

Detroit is on the cusp of historic changes. Van Jones got it right in the quote above, cooperation and “co-creation” are necessary for community development to be successful. This neighborhood profile is an invitation to decision-makers to assist us in the “co-creation” of our community.

For the purposes of this neighborhood profile, Corktown’s boundaries are Martin Luther King Boulevard on the north, Porter Street on the south, M10 (the Lodge) on the east and 16th Street on the west.* Corktown has approximately 4,500 residents with racial distribution of 40% African American, 40% Caucasian and 20% Latino – making it one of Detroit’s most diverse communities.** Our residents are doctors, lawyers, activists, urban farmers, artists, secretaries, yoga masters and wonderful everyday people. While Corktown faces many of the same challenges as other Detroit communities, it has weathered the economic crises surprisingly well. There have been only 2-4 home foreclosures in Corktown each year since the housing crisis and these homes are quickly re-occupied due to the high demand for homes in Corktown. However, Corktown’s continued stability is attributable to the character of Corktowners much more than the rate of housing foreclosures and demand for housing in Corktown. In 2009, Corktowners donated over $250,000 dollars of their time to ensure that the community remains safe and clean. Many of these hours were spent keeping our public spaces maintained and our streets safe. Corktown’s proximity to Wayne State University, downtown Detroit, Mexicantown and the Detroit River make it a highly appealing place to live, work and play.

This document contains a “district” vision for our community. This vision arose organically from the people based upon the existing built environment and the people’s opinions with regard to future uses. To borrow directly from the Futures Task Force of the Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD), our districts are the “classifications” suggested in CDAD’s “Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Framework” published in February 2010. These districts are the organic “indicators” described in the above plan. Finally, our neighborhood profile reflects the “triple bottom line” concept meaning that we treat each other as we’d like to be treated and continuously seek to uphold environmental integrity and economic prosperity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This document is the result of over two years of extensive work to engage ALL of our community members. We use ALL in all capitalization because community engagement must include everyone, not

* Actual borders, as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, extend to I-96, however, working borders for the purpose of this document are described as above. Outlying areas not mentioned will be included in future community engagement plans.

** Data provided by Data Driven Detroit
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CORKTOWN

** Map provided by Data Driven Detroit
just the “leadership”. We strongly support the CDAD report’s assertion that community organizing, education and engagement are fundamentally important to a community and should align with the realistic direction a neighborhood is moving in. Ultimately, Corktown’s recognition that social equity and long-term sustainability can only be achieved through the effort of engaged residents. Therefore, in order to involve the community, over 10 residents were individually interviewed for this document. Additionally, Corktown’s strong commitment to community involvement is demonstrated by the following:

- Districts use a bottom-up approach to community development, planning, and decision-making
- The Corktown Residents’ Council has implemented beautification, maintenance and safety programs, developed a vacant property action team, and holds monthly Residents’ Council meetings (40-50 average attendees) all in an effort to keep the community engaged and aware of issues and events; and,
- In 2009, Corktown residents donated in excess of $250,000 in “in-kind” volunteer time. In the future, the community will continue to drive volunteer efforts targeting key projects that promote a livable and sustainable Corktown.

Clearly, Corktown embraces the value of a diverse community unifying for a common goal as described by Van Jones in the opening quote of this document. Furthermore, Corktown has already achieved “authentic participation” by encouraging all residents to have a voice in community happenings.

**DEFINING CORKTOWN DISTRICTS**

Corktown is composed of three primary districts:

- District 1: the Corktown Historic District - located south of Michigan Avenue, north of Porter, west of the Lodge and east of 14th Street, this area is also subdivided into three subdistricts, A, B, & C
- District 2: the North Corktown region north of Michigan Ave between Rosa Parks and Trumbull
- District 3: the North Corktown region north of Michigan Avenue between Rosa Parks and 15th Street

Ultimately, the three districts have grown out of pre-existing conditions defined by residential and commercial buildings, the prevalence of vacant property, and the visions of residents. Each district is distinct both in terms of the physical built environment and the diverse community of people residing there. Residents choose to live in a particular district because the district fits their chosen lifestyle or their hopes for the future. Yet, while each district is socially, environmentally and economically unique, a bottom-up approach to decision-making and community planning exists in each whereby residents and community members play an integral role. Residents have strong opinions regarding the neighborhood they live in, as evident by this neighborhood profile, and continuously seek to make sure that their voice is heard. Furthermore, maintaining a stable, safe, and clean neighborhood is the foundation of each district’s vision. These three elements are the backbone of the com-
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munity and residents work relentlessly to ensure that they are upheld.

DISTRICT 1

The primary goals of the Historic District include the following:

- Strategies cited for “Traditional Residential Sectors” classification of the CDAD report match the needs of sub-districts A, B & C
- Continue efforts that increase overall stabilization
- Retain the historic nature of the houses and buildings

The Historic District, highly dense and impeccably maintained, is one of Detroit’s oldest residential neighborhoods. Many of the homes and structures in the district were built during the mid-1800’s and although many have been rehabilitated and/or renovated they have retained their historic exterior architecture. The built environment and current needs of the district vary slightly among District A, B and C. Districts A and B include a unique collection of historically pristine and well manicured homes, each with authentic personality and charm. Vacant property and blight are minimal in this area of the district. District C, although just as dense, contains more blight and incidents of crime tend to be higher, but residents are equally invested in maintaining a clean, safe, and stable neighborhood. District C would benefit from future activity that generates more stabilization. While its engaged, civic-minded resi-

Dents are the Historic Districts primary anchor, others include Most Holy Trinity Parish, Slows Bar B Que, and Mudgies Deli. The district is made up of a diverse community of residents, many of whom have lived in Corktown for many years. There is a strong sense of community among residents who are supportive and helpful of one another. Walking and biking is very popular among residents and the community strongly supports the future addition of bike lanes and bike racks.

“I'd love to see more amenities provided for residents along Michigan Avenue. Locally-owned restaurants, bars, bakeries, wireless tea/coffee cafes, grocery stores with fresh produce, a tool bank where people can share tools. I don't want to drive to the suburbs to access these amenities.”

-Barb Prusak, 60, Historic District Resident

DISTRICT 2

The primary goals of District 2 include the following:

- Strategies cited for “Traditional Residential Sectors” classification of the CDAD report match the needs of this community
- Increase density via infill housing
- Continue efforts that increase stabilization

District 2 is filled with many hidden gems. Well-manicured pocket parks distributed throughout the district provide charm and attractiveness. The neighborhood has a good reputation and has relatively low crime. The houses range in a variety of colors and architectural styles and many are new or recently renovated. Nonetheless, there are a number of vacant lots in this district. Residents strongly support new hous-
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The pheasant is a regular visitor to this district and a prime representative of the country-like environment present here. The district offers beautiful, low-maintenance natural landscapes that support a variety of wildlife. The greenspace, some of which have already been converted into urban farms, gardens and pocket parks, is truly the defining characteristic of the district. Thus, residents disagree with any development that would have an adverse impact on the wildlife or greenspace. Rather, similar to the “Naturescapes” and “Green Venture Zones” classifications, they would like to see more productive use of the current land in the form of pastures, aquaponics, orchards, and flower/tree farms. Thus, the main goal of the district is to build upon and improve management of the current infrastructure and green space and preserve the existing “country” atmosphere. Yet, unlike the “Naturescapes” and “Green Venture Zones” classifications, residents are an important component of this district. The district attracts a diverse community of people who seek to escape the hustle and bustle of a major city. The primary anchors in the district are Brother Nature Farm, a large urban farm located on Rosa Parks, Spaulding Court, which is under rehabilitation as a multi-unit apartment complex, and Burton International, a skillman high-performing school. Upon reopening, Burton International will function as an open-campus fusing together the school grounds and the community.

DISTRICT 3

The primary goals of District 3 include the following:

- Strategies cited for “Naturescapes” and “Green Venture Zones” classifications of the CDAD report fit the needs of this district
- Preserve country-side environment and expand upon “country-like” amenities
- Avoid any new development in the form of built structures

“Increased density will bring several benefits. It will improve safety since there will be more eyes watching the street. Also, it will improve pedestrian traffic - people will be more likely to walk around.”

-Jean Claude Lewis, Resident of District 2

ing and the addition of more parks. In fact, new homeowners purchased homes in the district envisioning that it would increase in density such that there would be a single-family house on almost every lot. Thus, residents strongly embrace infill housing since there is plenty of space for it. Presently, 29 infill houses have already been built, but more is needed in order to give residents the high density, city-like environment that they desire.
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MICHIGAN AVENUE, SURROUNDING AREAS TO THE NORTH AND SOUTHWEST OF CORKTOWN

The three districts coalesce in a common vision for Michigan Avenue. They desire a vibrant, lively and economically prosperous corridor that includes a mix of restaurants, bars, and retail. Currently, Michigan Avenue offers a variety of establishments that host up-and-coming bands and restaurants varying in different types of cuisine. Michigan Avenue has a very engaged and invested business community that is eager to contribute and assist in the community. Building upon partnerships with current and future businesses will greatly benefit all three districts. Not only will these businesses increase economic prosperity, they will provide more job opportunities and amenities, making Corktown a more walkable and livable self-contained community. Therefore, Michigan Avenue can fuse together social equity, environmental integrity, and economic prosperity.

Additionally, the more interconnectedness that exists among Detroit’s neighborhoods the more likely the entire City will prosper. Thus, just as Michigan Avenue brings the Corktown community together, our interconnectedness to Southwest Detroit (Mexicantown) and Woodbridge to the north will contribute to the creation of a corridor of vibrant, healthy Detroit neighborhoods.

MICHIGAN AND TRUMBULL & ADJACENT / CONNECTED AREAS

The redevelopment of the vacant lot at the corner of Michigan and Trumbull - which is the former site for the Detroit Tigers baseball team - presents a wonderful opportunity to rebuild, reenergize and renew our Detroit neighborhood. This site, the adjacent parking lots south of I-75 and the empty lots north of I-75 sit empty, desolate and almost desert-like. If the Old Tiger Stadium site is redeveloped and if the plan envisions a project that seeks to re-connect Corktown’s divided halves, the wonderfully vibrant neighborhood that once existed (prior to the imposition of the community destroying Interstate 75) can be resurrected. In fact, over 100 volunteer hours by community members and thousands of dollars have already been invested to improve the pedestrian overpass that connects the divided community with the explicit intention of reconnecting the two communities.

Alternatively, if this site is redeveloped in such a way that the community’s needs, hopes and desires are ignored, North Corktown (69% African American) will be again cut off and isolated from the economic development and prosperity that is present south of I-75 in Corktown. Furthermore, the fissure created by unhealthy development at the Michigan / Trumbull site will sever the interconnectedness necessary for vibrant, healthy communities.

“Corktown has tremendous opportunity for authenticity. A lot of cities are trying to replicate cities like New Orleans because it has authenticity. Corktown can be a model for this. It’s up to the community to define who we are.”

-Phil Cooley, Partner of Slows Bar B Que
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ROOSEVELT PARK REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

The large grassy area directly in front of the Michigan Central Station is known as Roosevelt Park. This Park and the surrounding buildings and vacant lots represent a Roosevelt Park Redevelopment District. This important area of Corktown connects our community to Southwest Detroit and Mexicantown. The redevelopment of this park and the adjacent structures will further form the sense of interconnectedness necessary for humans / neighborhoods to thrive.

CONCLUSION

Essentially, this is a “talking points” document arising out of community engagement. While the strategies outlined in the CDAD report entail a long term process of change, Corktown is ready to implement the activities listed in this neighborhood profile now. Corktown is home to a diverse community of people. It’s made up of three distinct districts that each have their own unique strengths as well as their own needs. Corktown will continue to move in the direction of building upon its current assets while also striving to achieve social equity, environmental integrity, and economic prosperity.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING COLLABORATORS:

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☐ COMMUNITY LEGAL RESOURCES (CLR)
☐ GREENING OF DETROIT
☐ SOUTHWEST DETROIT DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATIVE (SDDC)
☐ SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ASSESSMENT TEAM (SDAT)

THIS DOCUMENT WAS PREPARED BY:

THE CORKTOWN RESIDENTS' COUNCIL