

Field studies Detroit 2014

Urban Farming

## **PROVISIONAL RESEARCH REPORT**

**For the MARSHALL PLAN FOUNDATION**

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**„Detroit did not become knowingly by centrally planned visions.**

**Detroit became significant by the millions from spontaneous, very personal  
and not always fair/great visions of his inhabitants.“**

Quote after Robert Arens in the book "Shrinking cities".

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 WHY DETROIT?

After reading an article about the city Detroit in the paper “stadtaspekte – Erste Blicke”, edition 01, 09.03.2013, my interest for this city was awoken.

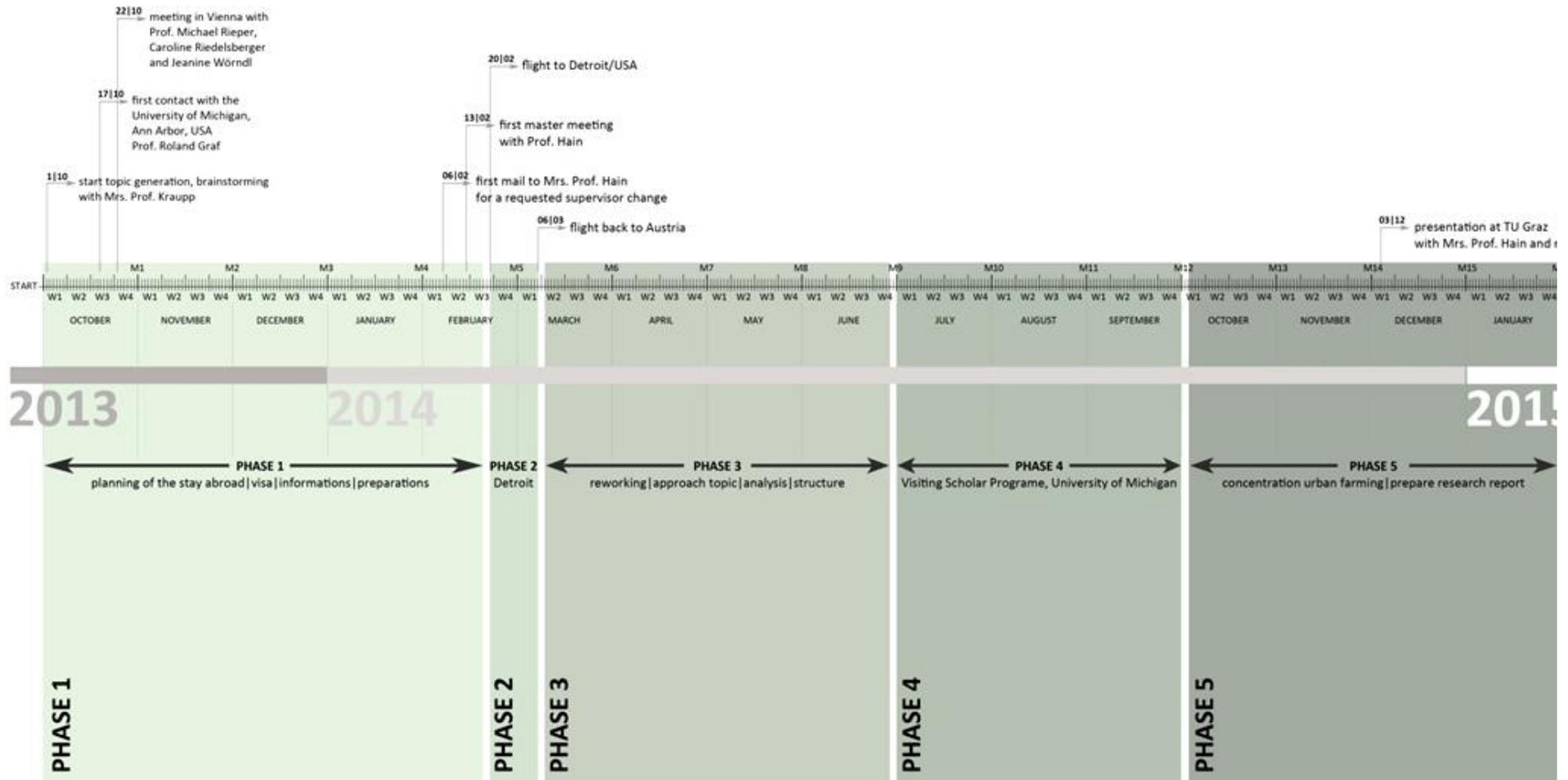
Detroit is a city in the U.S. state of Michigan and also known as “Motor City” or “Motown”. In the first part of the 20th century Detroit developed into the center of the American auto industry and the auto city: Motor City. Representative boulevards and interstates, lined with huge skyscrapers, cinema palaces or impressive factory halls; these were the pure proud of the city. In the 1950<sup>th</sup> 1, 8 million people lived there. Back in the days Detroit was the fourth largest U.S. metropolis. The nickname “Motown” represents the heart of the US automobile industry. "Motown" was also called the record label which had soul dimensions like Marvin Gaye or the young Stevie Wonder under contract.

At the beginning of the 1970s the decline of the city started with the economic crisis and the following movement of industry. In parallel with the decline of the auto giants the population took the flight. Who could afford it, moved to the surrounding settlements or

completely somewhere else. Back remained people whom lacked the financial independence for a change of location and an impoverished and abandoned city centre, surrounded by well-to-do suburban settlements. Today only 700,000 people live in Detroit.

So it`s indisputable: Detroit is a “Shrinking City” with a lot of problems to deal with. Any future plan for Detroit has to be a plan for a city in shrinkage. The city will have to develop strategies for the controlled decrease of its density in order not to lose its over-all urbanity. And this was my initiation. I was highly motivated and intense convinced to figure out Detroit`s reasons for such a development and to take a deeper view to the everyday life of the people who still live in the city Detroit.

### 1.1.1 Timeline



## 1.2 FIRST CONCEPT: A GREEN ARCHIPELAGO

### Proposal 1/28/2014

One possible point of departure and model for both analysis and scenario writing I saw in O. M. Ungers and Rem Koolhaas study of Berlin in 1977 with the title: “The city in the city – Berlin: A green archipelago” a precedent that has been both influential and debilitating to urbanism.

For Ungers and Koolhaas, the future planning of Berlin had to respond to depopulation without adjusting the overall footprint of the city, or ‘jeopardizing the general quality of the urban environment’. Instead of addition, the project was born from selective subtraction from the existing generic fabric to remove under-performing spaces and replace them with a neutral field. This act of urban amputation was viewed to strengthen the preserved neighborhoods by intensifying their contrast to the field between them. This Berlin of distinct islands, each with an individual morphological identity, was held together with a green field condition. For Ungers and Koolhaas, the city could be reduced to these strategic islands and connected by a ‘green glue’ that stated the limits of the urban megalopolis. However, nowhere in the

drawings do Ungers and Koolhaas suggest how connection between the islands occurs. Each island, surrounded by its own space of production and pleasure, effectively imagined the city as isolated pieces floating within a green “ocean”.<sup>1</sup>

So as a point of departure, I want to use this by now historical study of Berlin in 1977 as a point of departure and first approximation to the needs and state of the city: projecting the archipelago-strategy of Ungers on Detroit. I want to describe a translational work of this concept and add or modify it in some aspects to the situation of Detroit; the imagination that inner-city areas can only be rehabilitated through more construction is counterproductive. On the contrary: through a program of selective reduction of urban pressure fragments that would be preserved are better visible and could be refined through strategies. But also to differentiate the malfunctioning parts of the present city, to identify and “weed out” those parts of the city that are now substandard. And just as a next step not to forget and ignore them, rather create another strategy, but perhaps time-displaced.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Koolhaas 2013, ?.

I have structured this borrowed Archipelago-Concept of Ungers and my first strategic approach within this project into four different parts:

### **Define town-islands**

The first operation of my project – Detroit as an archipelago – is the identification and selection of those areas that already have a strong existing identity that deserves to be preserved and reinforced. These enclaves would not be selected on the basis of a particular taste or even for their esthetic qualities. The choice of these areas with a pure and legible form is that they embody ideas and concepts, so that the history of architecture would coincide with the history of ideas once more.

The differentiations of the islands should not be only of architectural nature. Social and political differences should be superimposed on the system of islands, so that the units also work socially as identifiable enclaves.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Koolhaas 2013, ?.

In the following I will mention the next steps of Ungers study of Berlin which could be put into use as well for my project, of course adapted to the city of Detroit, depending on the findings of the first step:

### **Complete the selected islands**

The next step in the operation of Ungers study in 1977 is the “completion” of the preserved fragments that will now receive their final architectural intervention.

Through the study the objective needs of each “island” would be identified once and require the insertion of a series of Social Condensers. This interaction would lead to the development of a repertoire of complementary facilities.

This phase would be as much an exercise in drafting instructions and programmatic sophistication, as it would deal with formal issues. Not all the new insertions have to be designed anew. The most relevant examples of such an approach are still offered by constructivist proposals, where architects, through extreme material shortages, developed an economy of both conceptual and material means, and minimal architectural expenditure had maximum social benefit.

It would therefore be possible to realize projects that were once proposed for other parts of the world, but were, for whatever reasons aborted, in retrospect. With analogisms and confrontations it is possible to acquire knowledge than can be employed in a typological sense.<sup>3</sup>

### **The gap – the “nature” grid**

In Ungers thesis around the “tuned-up” and “completed” enclaves, the remaining fabric of the city would be allowed to deteriorate and turn slowly into nature.

Parts of this abandoned structure form a system of nature. This nature grid would isolate the island, establish the metaphor of a “green” archipelago and define the structure of the city in a city in Ungers study of Berlin.<sup>4</sup>

### **The development of the nature grid**

In this step Ungers determines that the nature grid would also accommodate the infrastructure of the Modern Age, for example a highway-system that connects the islands. In the study of Berlin in

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<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Koolhaas 2013, ?.

<sup>4</sup> Ebda., ?.

1977 it would absorb all those typologies that rely not on ‘place’ but on mobility, and that cannot be inserted in existing urban fabrics without ruining them.<sup>5</sup>

To sum up, I suggest that the city Detroit has a strong identity but it must be discovered for specific parts of the city and has to be refined through a superposition of new strategies. This planning project for a city within the city is in antithesis to the current definition of the city as a single whole. This corresponds to the contemporary structure of society which is developed more as a society of individuality with different demands, desires and conceptions. The project also involves an individualization of the city and therefore a moving away from typing and standardization.

This conception of the city, not only suggests an open city system in which many different places together form a diverse and complex urban environment. It is also politically and socially a pluralistic concept, in which different views share their place side by side.

In its best case, for its citizens, the environment is manageable again and thereby attracts human quality. When it comes to personal

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<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Koolhaas 2013, ?.

initiative and participation, the small unit is a much better field of activity than the city as a whole.

Through the individualization of the city, the issue of identification of the citizen is addressed within the city at the same time. While in an anonymous city, designed by a uniform principle, a loss of identity and thus a depersonalization occurs directly, the residents can decide in an open system for the identity space corresponding to his individual wishes.

For my first planned trip to Detroit on 20<sup>th</sup> February till 6<sup>th</sup> March I want to get a first personal impression of the city. I want to see how the city is structured: it's infrastructure as well as other organizational substratum, such it's municipality, social or even cultural existing grids. Where do formations of new or still cultural, political, economical, medical, architectural centers exist, etc. etc. In short, what makes the city tick? Just with this first inside I believe it will be possible to further define the path of my project, while with the concept of the "Archipelago" of Ungers though I hope to receive already a worthy first concept of approach.

## 2 BASIC INFORMATION DETROIT

### 2.1 HISTORY

#### 2.1.1 Settlement

The city was named by French colonists, referring to the Detroit River (French: le détroit du lac Érié, meaning the strait of Lake Erie), linking Lake Huron and Lake Erie.

In 1701, the French officer Antoine de La Mothe Cadillac, along with fifty-one French people and French-Canadians, founded a settlement called Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit. When the city reached a total population of 800 in 1765, it was the largest city between Montreal and New Orleans, both French settlements. By 1773, the population of Detroit was 1,400. By 1778, its population was up to 2,144 and it was the third-largest city in the Province of Quebec.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cfr. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#History>.

#### 2.1.2 19th century

From 1805 to 1847, Detroit was the capital of Michigan. It was recaptured by the United States in 1813 and incorporated as a city in 1815.

The city had grown steadily from the 1830s with the rise of shipping, shipbuilding, and manufacturing industries. Strategically located along the Great Lakes waterway, Detroit emerged as a major transportation hub.<sup>7</sup>

About 1850 the first industry settled in the city. In 1900 the „Olds Motor Works“ came to Detroit and established a auto factory. Ransom E. Olds, the vice president and general manager instituted here already before Henry Ford the production line and was able to quadruple the output of cars from 425 to 2500 in the subsequent year. In 1908 the company "General Motors" bought up "Oldsmobile". Since 2004 General Motors with his brands like Cadillac, Buick, Chevrolet, Pontiac as well as the European brands Opel, Saab and Vauxhall, build no more cars under the brand "Oldsmobile".

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<sup>7</sup> Cfr. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#19th\\_century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#19th_century).

In 1896, a thriving carriage trade prompted Henry Ford to build his first automobile in a rented workshop on Mack Avenue.

### 2.1.3 20th century

In 1903 Henry Ford established „Ford Motor Company“ as the second big car manufacture together with 11 investors. In 1908 Ford constructed the model T, which was one of the most sold cars of the world; till 1927 15 million pieces of this model were built in the USA. A production number only topped in 1972 by the VW Beetle.

The jobs at Oldsmobile and Ford were desired and led to a boom of immigration. The company Ford had already introduced the 8-hours working day and the wage level was clearly above the average. Thereby Henry Ford wanted strengthen the buying power and with it the sales of mass-made goods. The growth of the auto industry was reflected by changes in businesses throughout the Midwest and nation, with the development of garages to service vehicles and gas stations, as well as factories for parts and tires.

Ford's manufacturing—and those of automotive pioneers William C. Durant, the Dodge brothers, Packard, and Walter Chrysler—

established Detroit's status in the early 20th century as the world's automotive capital.<sup>8</sup>

General Motors established the biggest office building of the world at Grand Boulevard in 1921. Between 1925 and 1929 an active building activity dominates the city. Around the Grand Circus Park a pleasure quarter with cinema palaces like the Michigan Theatre with 5000 places was developed. Today, took over from multiplex cinemas and television, the cinemas stand empty or were torn off. Since 1977 cars park under the grand dome of the Michigan Theatre.

In the thirties the labor union of the car workers wins with hunger marches and strikes the first wage agreements and, finally, the highest industrial wages of the USA. The own car is already no more specific feature. Already since 1923 the new car market is fed in the USA.

In the beginning of the 40s the factories in Detroit move to production on war goods. The gaps in the workforce, came up by the

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#20th\\_century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#20th_century).

induction of workers to the military service, got closed by the integration of women in the production and the immigration of 300,000 people with origin Afro-American from the Southern States. In a short period Detroit became the 4th-largest city in the nation. As a result of this immigration wave it comes to violent conflicts because of housing shortage and racism.

On January 20, 1942, 1,200 whites tried to prevent black families from moving into a new housing development in an all-white area of the city. In June 1943, the Packard plant promoted three blacks to work next to whites on its assembly lines. In response, 25,000 whites walked off the job, effectively slowing down critical war production. During the protest, a voice with a southern accent shouted in the loudspeaker, "I'd rather see Hitler and Hirohito win than work next to a nigger." Over the course of three days, 34 people were killed, of whom 25 were African American, and approximately 600 were injured.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cfr. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#20th\\_century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#20th_century).

### Detroit Riot of 1943

The Detroit Race Riot of 1943 took place three weeks after the Packard plant protest. Altercations between black and white youths started on June 20, 1943, on a warm Saturday evening on Belle Isle. A fist fight broke out when a white sailor's girlfriend was insulted by a black man. The brawl eventually grew into a confrontation between groups of blacks and whites and then spread into the city. The riot escalated with a false rumor that a mob of whites had thrown an African-American mother and her baby into the Detroit River. Historian Marilyn S. Johnson argues that this rumor reflected black male paranoia over white violence against black women and children. Another false rumor swept white neighborhoods that blacks had raped and murdered a white woman on the Belle Isle Bridge. Angry mobs of whites spilled onto Woodward near the Roxy Theater around 4 a.m., beating blacks as they were getting off street cars. Stores were looted and buildings were burned in the riot, most of them in a black neighborhood in and around Paradise Valley, one of the oldest and poorest neighborhoods in Detroit. The clashes soon escalated to the point where black and white mobs were "assaulting one another, beating innocent motorists, pedestrians and streetcar

passengers, burning cars, destroying storefronts and looting businesses." Both sides were said to have encouraged others to join in the riots with false claims that one of "their own" was attacked unjustly.<sup>10</sup>

### 2.1.3.1 Excursion: The "Fordism"

In 1903 Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Company. In 1908 Henry Ford (1863-1947) initially brought out his compact car, the "T-Model" and produced it on the assembly line since 1913. By doing this, Ford promoted the industrial mass production and achieved an increase in productivity. In 1940 Ford Motor Company was the second-biggest automobile producer in the world and produced 28 million compact cars and 5 million tractors.<sup>11</sup>

This was Henry Ford's keynote: "Fabricates a product as well and as cheap as possible, and pays so high wages that the worker is able to buy himself what he generates; switches off every waste and saves the most precious good, the time: allow to do all works which a machine can do from machines and not from people, because human

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit\\_race\\_riot\\_of\\_1943](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit_race_riot_of_1943).

<sup>11</sup> Translated from:

[https://e-pub.uni-weimar.de/opus4/files/1065/Gerhard\\_Fehl.pdf](https://e-pub.uni-weimar.de/opus4/files/1065/Gerhard_Fehl.pdf).

strength is too valuable; opens always new artificial power sources - and you must prosper."<sup>12</sup>

In his book "My life and work" of 1923, which was soon assumed to be the "Bible of industrial progress" in Germany, he shows his technical principles: The principle of time saving through "short distances" – so the work piece should come to the worker and not backwards (assembly line); the principle of "separated traces" - where delivered material and tools never cruise with the ready product (separation of traffic); the principle of scientific labor division on production and assembling, the uniformity of the production facilities at high level with bright rooms, cleanness at the workplace, security of the machines and exactly apportioned workspace as required. Finally, also the principle of the extreme uniformity of the product which existed only in just one, well thought-out and solidly built auto model for the "big mass of the normal families".<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ford 1928, p. ?.

<sup>13</sup> Ford 1923, p. ?.

#### 2.1.4 Postwar era

As in other major American cities in the postwar era, construction of an extensive highway and freeway system around Detroit and demand for new housing stimulated suburbanization. In 1956, Detroit's last heavily used electric streetcar line along the length of Woodward Avenue was ripped out and replaced with gas-powered buses. It was the last line of what had once been a 534 miles network of electric streetcars, which had once served outlying cities as well. In 1941 at peak times, a streetcar ran on Woodward Avenue every 60 seconds.

All of these changes in the area's transportation system favored low density, auto-oriented development rather than high-density urban development. These were factors that contributed to the metro Detroit area becoming the most sprawling job market in the United States, though other major American cities also developed suburbanization. The expansion of jobs and lack of public transportation put many jobs beyond the reach of lower income workers who remained in the city.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Cfr. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Postwar\\_era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Postwar_era).

Till 1958 20 shopping centers were established in the area by Detroit, half of its downtown. 25 years later none of them had survived. Whole streets of houses were leaved to rot.

The town politics hoped for a Renaissance of the city trough investments like new high-rise office blocks in the center of Detroit. Finally, between 1970 and 1977 the "Renaissance centre" was built in the city centre for more than 340 million Dollars as a shopping complex, leisure complex and office complex. But the project has been criticized on urban design terms for cutting itself off from the larger city and reducing urban interaction. The expectations put in the "Renaissance centre" have not come true. With his fortress architecture it could not contribute to the stimulation of the city centre.

In the 1990s, additional developments were constructed in the Downtown, Midtown and New Center areas. New downtown stadiums were constructed for the Detroit Tigers and Detroit Lions in 2000 and 2002. The Lions' home stadium was returned to the city. Three large casinos have opened: MGM Grand Detroit, Motor City Casino and Greektown Casino, which debuted as resort hotels in 2007–08. The historic Book Cadillac Hotel and the Fort Shelby Hotel

were renovated and reopened for business for the first time in more than 20 years.<sup>15</sup>

Large-scale projects like the Renaissance centre or new sports stadia for American football and baseball can help to draw the attention to Detroit. But often many small measures are more effective to make a space again more active for his inhabitants.

Between 1970 and 1990 the number of people in the city centre below the poverty line increased from 15% to more than 30% and remained at a level from more than 25% till the year 2000.

### 2.1.5 Decline

The development population of the city indicates a serious and long running decline of Detroit`s economic strength: within the last sixty years the city lost 60 percent of its residents. Detroit reached its population peak in the 1950 census. The peak population was 1.8 million people. Following suburbanization, industrial restructuring and loss of jobs lead to a number at just over 700,000 residents in the year 2010. The city has declined in population with each

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Postwar\\_era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Postwar_era).

subsequent census since 1950 as you can see impressive in Figure 1. The one-time world`s traditional automotive center suffered an enormously setback in economy, culture, cityscape, population and infrastructure.

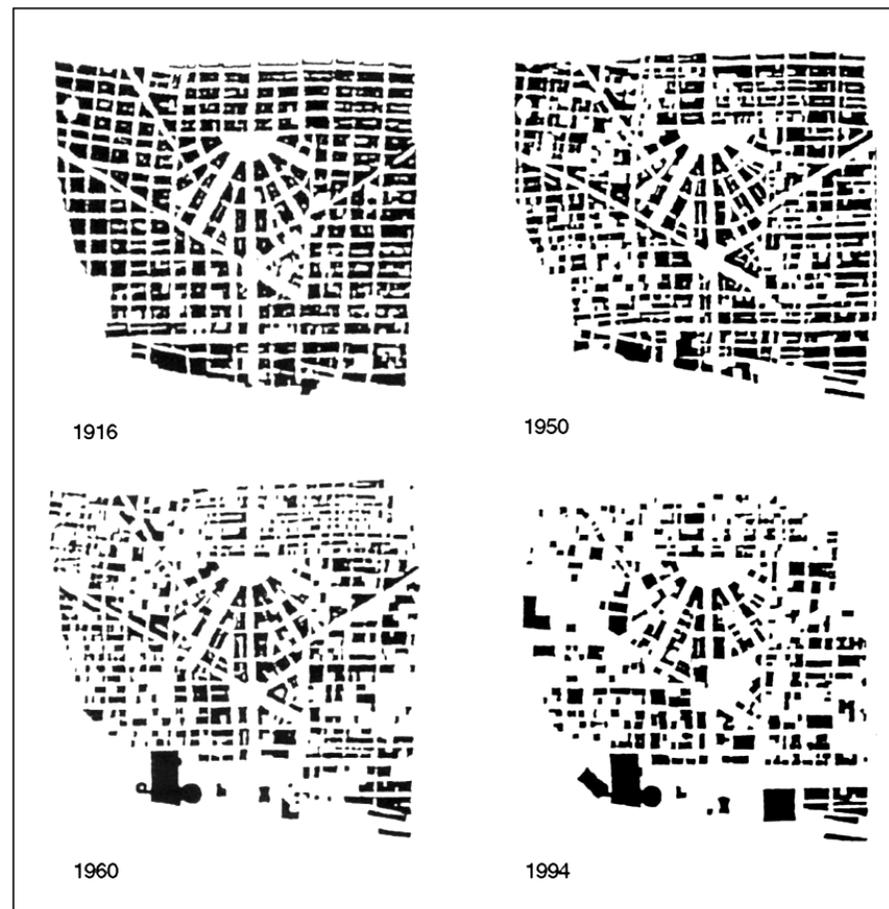


Figure 1 Process of decay, black plans of 1916, 1950, 1960 and 1994 (Unger, F.: "Wie Detroit, so das ganze Land". In: Stadtbauwelt 127, H. 36, S.S. 2012)

## 2.2 GEOGRAPHY

### 2.2.1 Location and extension



Figure 2 International location of the US state Michigan (Korber, Andrea. Own graphic)

Detroit is a city in the US-American federal state Michigan, as you can see in Figure 2 with the dark grey highlighted area. The city is located directly on the Canadian border and the Detroit River, between the Lake Saint Clair and the Eriesee. Detroit is the only city of the US which has a view to Canada in southern direction. Michigan, with his

official abbreviation MI, is divided into five big parts, as seen in Figure 3 and further the state is divided into 83 counties.<sup>16</sup>



Figure 3 Michigan with its structure (Korber, Andrea. Own graphic)

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_der\\_Countys\\_in\\_Michigan](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Countys_in_Michigan).

In Figure 4 you can see on the left graphic the seven counties of Southeast Michigan. Detroit is located in Wayne County and more specifically in the north-east area, as you can see in Figure 4 on the right graphic.

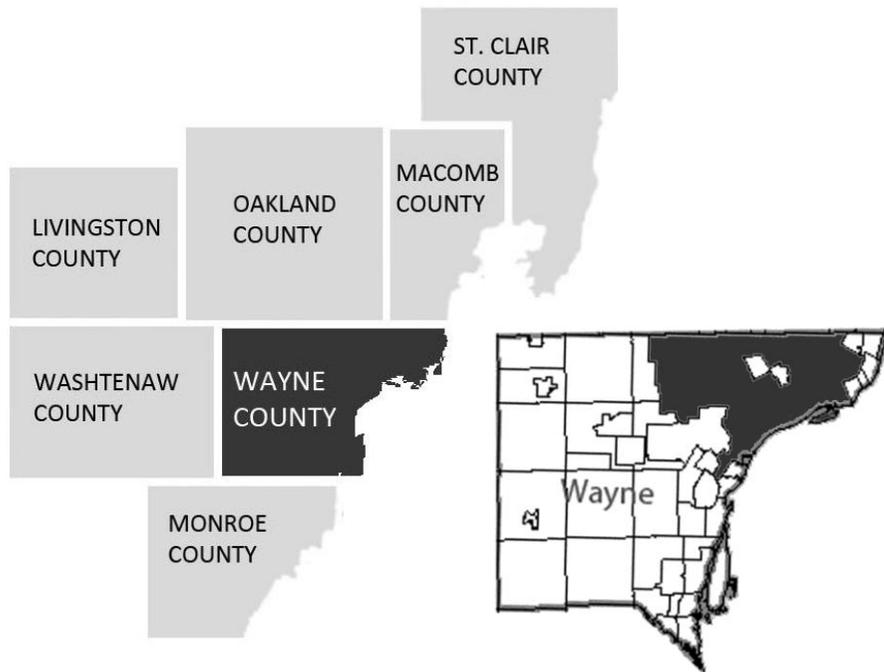


Figure 4 Left: Southeast Michigan with its counties, highlighted with dark grey Wayne County; Right: Wayne County highlighted with dark grey the city Detroit. (Korber, Andrea. Own graphics)

In particular the northern town border of Detroit is equivalent on her whole length with the county border of Wayne County. She ranges

exactly more than 28.5 kilometers in west east direction and is marked by the 8Mile-Road.<sup>17</sup> Hamtramck and Highland Park are two cities located a bit to the north of the geographic middle of the city Detroit, which is clearly recognizable in

Figure 5 as an enclave.

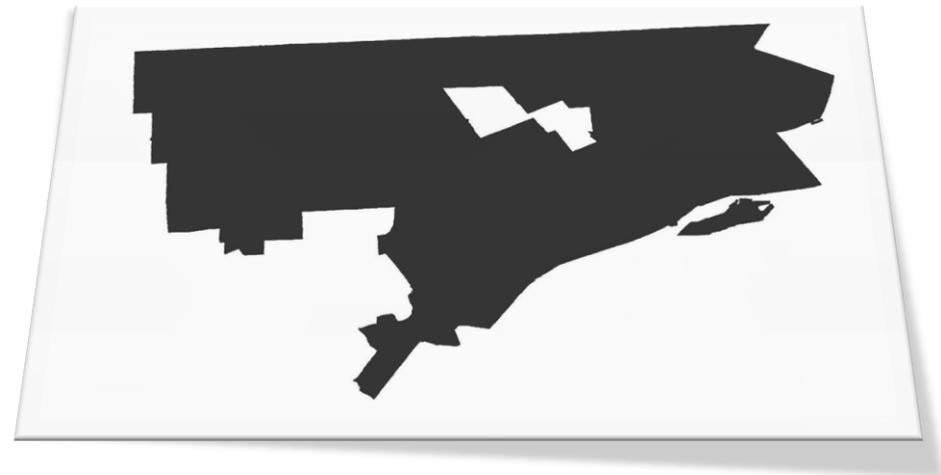


Figure 5 The area of the city Detroit with the enclave Hamtramck and Highland Park (Korber, Andrea. Own graphic)

<sup>17</sup> Translated from: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Lage\\_und\\_Ausdehnung](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Lage_und_Ausdehnung).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau\*, the city has a total area of 142.87 square miles (370.03 km<sup>2</sup>), of which 138.75 square miles (359.36 km<sup>2</sup>) is land and 4.12 square miles (10.67 km<sup>2</sup>) is water. The city region extends more than about 17 kilometers along the riverside as well as 10 kilometers to the eastern edge and 23 kilometers to the western edge towards the interior of the country. Also an 4.6 km long and 3.9 km<sup>2</sup> big island in the Detroit River belongs further to Detroit: the Belle Isle, which is located at the eastern periphery.<sup>18</sup>

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\* "The United States Census Bureau (USCB; officially the Bureau of the Census, as defined in Title 13 U.S.C. §11) is a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System responsible for producing data about the American people and economy." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Census\\_Bureau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Census_Bureau)).

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<sup>18</sup> Translated from: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Lage\\_und\\_Ausdehnung](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Lage_und_Ausdehnung).

### 2.2.2 Town subdivision

There is not a firm arrangement of the town in the proper sense. Police areas, school areas or redevelopment areas exist side by side and have been changed already several times as a result of the demographic development.

Apart from the city centre Downtown located directly at the Detroit River, especially the Woodward Avenue figure prominently. As a historical important arterial highway, run from the centre to northwestern direction, she divides the city into the West Side and the East Side. Along this street some city districts with a strongly different image are located, beginning with Downtown, Midtown, New Center, North End and the area Palmer Park as you can see in Figure 6. Further districts are the southwest area near to the Detroit River, Southwest Detroit, together with corridor along the Jefferson Avenue east of the centre.



Figure 6 City districts of Detroit  
 (<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#mediaviewer/File:Detroitareamap.gif>)

## 2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS

### 2.3.1 Population development

In the 2010 United States Census, the city had 713,777 residents, ranking it the 18th most populous city in the United States.

The city became the 4th-largest in the nation in 1920, after only New York City, Chicago and Philadelphia, with the influence of the booming auto industry. At its peak population of 1,849,568, in the 1950 Census, the city was the 5th-largest in the United States, after New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Of the large shrinking cities of the United States, Detroit has had the most dramatic decline in population of the past 60 years (down 1,135,971) and the second largest percentage decline (down 61.4%, second only to St. Louis, Missouri's 62.7%). While the decline in Detroit's population has been ongoing since 1950, the most dramatic period was the significant 25% decline between the 2000 and 2010 Census.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#City).

The population collapse has resulted in large numbers of abandoned homes and commercial buildings, and areas of the city hit hard by urban decay.

Detroit's 713,777 residents represent 269,445 households, and 162,924 families residing in the city. The population density was 5,144.3 people per square mile (1,895/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 349,170 housing units at an average density of 2,516.5 units per square mile (971.6/km<sup>2</sup>). Housing density has declined. The city has demolished thousands of Detroit's abandoned houses, planting some areas and in others allowing the growth of urban prairie.

Of the 269,445 households, 34.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 21.5% were married couples living together, 31.4% had a female householder with no husband present, 39.5% were non-families, 34.0% were made up of individuals, and 3.9% had someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older. Average household size was 2.59, and average family size was 3.36.

There is a wide distribution of age in the city, with 31.1% under the age of 18, 9.7% from 18 to 24, 29.5% from 25 to 44, 19.3% from 45 to 64, and 10.4% 65 years of age or older. The median age was 31 years.

For every 100 females there were 89.1 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 83.5 males.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.3.2 Race and ethnicity

As of the 2010 Census, the racial composition of the city was:

- 82.7% Black or African American;
- 10.6% White (7.8% non-Hispanic whites, 2.8% Hispanic whites);
- 3% from other races;
- 1.1% Asian;
- 2.2% from two or more races;
- 0.4% American Indian;
- 0.02% Pacific Islander.

In addition, 6.8% of the population self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, of any race, with ancestry mainly from Mexico and Puerto Rico.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#City).

<sup>21</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Race\\_and\\_ethnicity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Race_and_ethnicity).

Detroit remains one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States. From the 1940s to the 1970s a second wave of Blacks moved to Detroit to escape Jim Crow laws in the south and find jobs. However, they soon found themselves excluded from white areas of the city—through violence, laws, and economic discrimination (e.g., redlining). White residents attacked black homes: breaking windows, starting fires, and exploding bombs. The pattern of segregation was later magnified by white migration to the suburbs.

A traditional boundary between black and white is Eight Mile Road, which separates the city from suburbs to the north.<sup>22</sup>

With Detroit's 82.7% black inhabitants, the city is one of the biggest black municipalities within the USA.

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<sup>22</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Race\\_and\\_ethnicity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Race_and_ethnicity).

### 2.3.3 Income and employment

The loss of industrial and working-class jobs in the city has resulted in high rates of poverty and associated problems. From 2000 to 2009, the city's estimated median household income fell from \$29,526 to \$26,098. As of 2010 the mean income of Detroit is below the overall U.S. average by several thousand dollars. Of every three Detroit residents, one lives in poverty. Luke Bergmann, author of *Getting Ghost: Two Young Lives and the Struggle for the Soul of an American City*, said in 2010, "Detroit is now one of the poorest big cities in the country."<sup>23</sup>

In the 2010 American Community Survey, median household income in the city was \$25,787, and the median income for a family was \$31,011. The per capita income for the city was \$14,118. 32.3% of families had income at or below the federally defined poverty level.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Income\\_and\\_employment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Income_and_employment).

<sup>24</sup> Ebda.

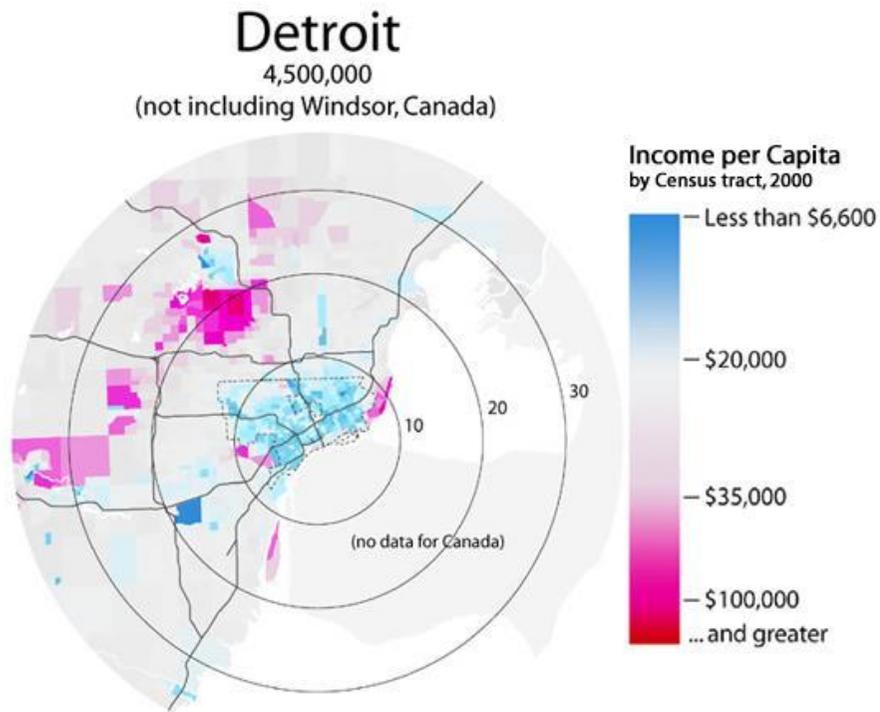


Figure 7 Per Capita Income of Detroit, by Census 2000  
 ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#mediaviewer/File:Economic\\_map\\_of\\_metropolitan\\_Detroit.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#mediaviewer/File:Economic_map_of_metropolitan_Detroit.jpg))

## 2.4 ARCHITECTURE

### 2.4.1 The Layout of the city Detroit

Generally US-American cities are marked by a checkered, orthogonal street network. This doesn't apply to the street network of Downtown Detroit. The freeways in Detroit are crossed concentric through three major axes, which come together in the heart of the Downtown at Campus Martius Park: Michigan Avenue, Gratiot Avenue and Woodward Avenue. Latter, once the central shopping street of the city, today it's the "principles artery" through Downtown. She is named by Augustus B. Woodward. As the city expanded, a geometric street plan developed by Woodward was followed, featuring grand boulevards as in Paris.

He planned the altogether five major avenues where Grand River Avenue (between Woodward and Michigan Avenue) and Jefferson Avenue belong to it. Both Avenues lead in different directions through the state Michigan.

In 1805 Detroit was destroyed by a devastating fire. This is the reason for the Latin quotation on the Detroit flag "Speramus Meliora; Resurget Cineribus" (We hope for better things; it will revive from the ash). Woodward designed a plan for the reconstruction of the

city and followed in his ground plans to the plan of Washington D. C. from 1791. Significant for this design are wide avenues and main streets, which lead away radial from distinctive monuments or landmarks. The radial arrangement of the streets is a probably referring to the ground plan of Karlsruhe and with it a referring to a city layout of the absolutism era. The radial arrangement of the main streets, which run up to a central square, accentuate the centre of the terrestrial world.

The enormous effect of this concept not remained without consequences. Over time concepts with radial axes became a preferred method to show the authority of the centre as an absolutely design element of the city.

### 2.4.2 Cityscape

Seen in panorama, Detroit's waterfront shows a variety of architectural styles. The post modern neogothic spires of the One Detroit Center (1993) were designed to blend with the city's Art Deco skyscrapers. Together with the Renaissance Center, they form a distinctive and recognizable skyline. Examples of the Art Deco style include the Guardian Building and Penobscot Building downtown, as well as the Fisher Building and Cadillac Place in the New Center area near Wayne State University.<sup>25</sup>

The Detroit International Riverfront includes a partially completed three-and-one-half mile riverfront promenade with a combination of parks, residential buildings, and commercial areas. It extends from Hart Plaza to the MacArthur Bridge accessing Belle Isle Park (the largest island park in a U.S. city).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Architecture).

<sup>26</sup> Ebda.

During the late 19th century, several Gilded Age\* mansions reflecting the wealth of industry and shipping magnates were built east and west of the current downtown. During this period some referred to Detroit as the Paris of the West for its architecture, and for Washington Boulevard, recently electrified by Thomas Edison.

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\* The Gilded Age in United States history is the late 19th century, from the 1870s to about 1900. It was an era of rapid economic growth, especially in the North and West. American wages, especially for skilled workers, were much higher than in Europe, which attracted millions of immigrants. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilded\\_Age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilded_Age)).

### 2.4.3 Cultivation

While the Downtown and New Center areas contain high-rise buildings, the majority of the surrounding city consists of low-rise structures and single-family homes. Outside of the city's core, residential high-rises are found in upper-class neighborhoods such as the East Riverfront extending toward Grosse Pointe and the Palmer Park neighborhood just west of Woodward.<sup>27</sup>

The closed cultivation stretches far outwards and extends over a radius of 40 to 60 kilometers at the US-American side around the centre. The biggest part of the settlement/activity was in the era after the World War II. The initially practice to incorporate new existing building areas at the edge, found already an end in the middle of the 1920s. The new suburbs emerge more and more self-confidence and so they have prevented their integration into Detroit. This is a reason for the far closed cultivation especially to the north and west, far beyond the city region of Detroit. Therefore less residential districts with a young structure and modern living comfort exist in the city.

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<sup>27</sup> [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Architecture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Detroit#Architecture).

The city core marks the densely built-up inner-city at the riverfront with their typical ensemble of office towers. Furthermore a mainly compartmentalized cultivation with small parcels dominates except for a corridor along the Woodward Avenue. Through the long ongoing outflow of people empty houses and fallow properties characterize the picture in wide parts of the city. Especially in areas immediately to the west, to the east and northeast of the inner-city, the cultivation is strongly thinned out more than several kilometers.

The industrial facilities are distributed relatively consistent over the whole metropolitan area of Detroit. They cover along the most important railway lines and often form distinctive miles-long corridors.

However, many older companies lie fallow by the decline of the local industry especially in the area of Detroit or have gone run-down to ruins.

#### **2.4.4 Traffic**

The builder of the Michigan Central Station did not foresee, that the car would become the main means of transportation in the USA. This was the reason why no parking places were included and why the main entrance was concentrated on the station for the streetcars and the interurban-train, where the travelers should come in town.

In expectation of an active building activity the Michigan Central station was established isolated from the city centre in a slum area. People were looking for a business district here like the Pennsylvania station in New York. But the worldwide economic crisis distributed various plans for the construction of office buildings.

Even if the passenger's figures of the streetcars and interurban-trains therefore decreased – the so-called Interurban – the automobile industry strongly helped for the shutdown of them. General Motors, till 1948 the only bus supplier in the USA, bought through the sub company “National City Lines” one streetcar company after the other. This was also the reason for the closure of the interurban-trains and with it the Michigan Central Station lost the connection to the local feeder.

In 1956 the streetcar traffic was ceased in Detroit. The line from Detroit to Chicago suffered only losses, so the railroad company tried to sell the Michigan Central Station in 1956. Although the purchase price was simply 5 million Dollar, no buyer was found. In 1967 the waiting hall and the main entrance were closed because of the falling passengers; later also the shops and restaurants of the railway station. However, not only the state of the central station got worse increasingly. Through the movement of the wealthier population and new shopping centre into the countryside also the city centre suffered a setback in buying power.

In the year 1971 there was hope for the Michigan Central Station through the takeover of the remained railway company by Amtrak. In 1975 the main entrance and the waiting hall opened again. In 1978 circa 1 million dollars of renovation works at the railway station began. But however the building was sold to a private owner in 1984. In 1988 the last train goes from Michigan Central Station – the railway station was closed and since this time empty. He became terrain for the aggressions of youngsters, residence of homeless and symbol for the decline of the city Detroit. "Shame on you, Detroit for

letting this beautiful old building go to rack and ruin. ", was written on a wall at the station.

### 3 FIELD STUDIES DETROIT

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

##### 3.1.1 Definition „fieldwork“

„Fieldwork is the systematic collection of academically evaluable facts about relations in the reality on location.“<sup>28</sup>

„Fieldwork means the research in the living space of a group with ‘nature’ conditions, therefore not changed for the research purpose, through the investigator. The intension is the data collection with different methods and different goals.“<sup>29</sup>

Fieldwork is primarily descriptive; this means that detailed information about the relations in the environment is collected and examined. In addition to it, the fieldwork take care to focus the view of the investigation to the totality of the living conditions and to look at the whole connection or at the existing relations.

<sup>28</sup> Translated from: <http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Feldforschung>.

<sup>29</sup> Translated from: Fischer, 1981, ?.

##### 3.1.2 The ten commandments of fieldwork

1. You should live after the customs and rules which are important for the people with whom you do research. This means esteem of her rituals and holy times, in the clothes as well as with food and drinking.
2. You should be able of the generosity and impartiality to recognize values and to judge by principles which are not the own. It is obstructive if you suppose everywhere bad and underhand people.
3. You should never talk and report disparagingly about your hosts and those people with whom you have drunk beer, wine, tea or something else.
4. You should appropriate a respectable knowledge about the history and the social relations of the culture you are interested in. Therefore visit first their cemeteries, markets, pubs, churches or similar places.
5. You should make yourself a picture of the geography of the places and houses you want to investigate. Go along the concerning area by foot and rise on a steeple or a hill.

6. You should carry away the experience and report about that possibly without prejudices to distinguish yourself from the usual travelers. Therefore it is important to keep a research diary (beside the other recordings) in which you sign up your thoughts, problems and joys of the research, but also the annoyance. This stimulates to honest reflection about yourself and your research, but also to the self-criticism.
7. You should raise the leisure to a free conversation. That means, people may not be seen as bare data suppliers. You should speak with them in such a way that they feel respected. One must introduce himself as a person and may not force himself. This is the way to get good conversation and observation protocols.
8. You should try to estimate your interlocutors in some degrees. Otherwise it can be happen that you are put in or are consciously lied.
9. You should not show off as a missionary or social worker. It is not entitled to appeal "educationally" on the putative "savages". You are no judge, but merely witness!

10. You must have a good constitution to feel fine in the field, in musty bars, in the church, in noble inns, in the wood, in the stable, on dusty streets and also somewhere else. To this belongs the ability to eat, to drink and to sleep any time.<sup>30</sup>

### **3.2 RESEARCH FIELD AND METHODS**

The cultural anthropological fieldwork is characterized by a variety of methods: informal interviews, direct observation, participation in the life of the group, collective discussions, analyses of personal documents produced within the group, self-analysis, results from activities undertaken off- or on-line, and life-histories. Although the method generally is characterized as qualitative research, it may (and often does) include quantitative dimensions.

The combination of the methods arises from the issues and topics which are elaborate. Normally conversations and interviews are conducted and one takes part in the everyday life of the sources. First one should ask himself which methods should be applied for which subject areas, issues, hypotheses and phases of the fieldwork.

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<sup>30</sup> Cfr. <http://www.qualitative-forschung.de/fqs-supplement/members/Girtler/girtler-10Geb-d.html>.

In my implementation of a field study followed methods arise as a result:

1. Participant observation
2. Informal conversation
3. Perceptions walk
4. Field notes
5. Mental map
6. Expert`s interview

### 3.2.1 Participant observation

The researcher is located in the field of study for a longer time and lives in a close contact with the sources. It is tried to understand the experiences of the research group. It is observed the everyday life, the material culture, the form of action, the architecture etc., and it is descriptive recorded.

You can differentiate between an open and covert observation. “Open observation” means that the observed people are clarified about the research work. “Covert observation” is not always ethical

legitimate. But for example in the ethnographic observation of public squares it is impossible to lead an open observation continuous.

If you are familiar with the field of study through a direct observation you can go forward to the focused observation and concentrate on the attention on a definite detail of the study.

The aim of the participant observation is to get a view to the complexity of an appropriate detail of the lived everyday life from their point of view.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.2.2 Informal conversation

These conversations accidental arise from different social fields. They are marked by an essential input for the structure of the conversation through the respondent.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.2.3 Perceptions walk

The perception walk primarily serves as collection of first impressions in the field, which are recorded in the field diary. To filter own gaps of the perception it is helpful to draw the used path from the

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<sup>31</sup> Cfr. Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, zit. n. Götsch/Lehmann 2007, 169-188.

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. Raymond 2011.

memory after doing the perception walk. All objective elements are written down and taped which one can remember. If one commits then the same way once again, so-called "white spots" can appear, therefore objects, impressions etc. which one has not perceived the first time. Symbolic borders can be filtered out where one maybe does not dare there or where uneasiness is felt. This uneasiness must become questions because it makes clear unaware differences between the person of the researcher and the investigation field.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2.4 Field notes

In the field notes intimate information about sensitivities is held on like fears, wishes, hopes, but also everything which appear as new or astonishing. Besides, the ethnographer's broad experience is never returned unfiltered, but is based on selective perception of the researched people. On the one hand all impressions can be never established and, on the other hand, the described can be formulated always also differently. So it is important to consider strategies to produce notes of good quality.

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<sup>33</sup> Cfr. Greverus 1994.

Four kinds of the writing are distinguished: 1. Writing down of notes to hold on observations, 2. The holding on of stories, 3. More comprehensive descriptions of observed cultural realities and 4. The holding on of physical facts in the form of sketches or diagrams.<sup>34</sup>

A central aspect of the field notes is the need to be able to remember experienced events in the field as good as possible.

### 3.2.5 Mental Map

Daily individuals stand before the job to orientate themselves in the space and to hit behavioral decisions, e. g., at the commuting between flat and Job, at shopping, at the choice of the leisure activities etc. These decisions are influenced of how we perceive and understand our environment, in other words how our environment is cognitive presented.

Mental or cognitive mapping is the product of a series of psychological processes that register, code, store, then call to mind and decode all information on our everyday spatial environment. In

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<sup>34</sup> Cfr. Clifford 1986.

this sense cognitive mapping is a cognitive characteristic to be found in our minds. When a researcher does mental mapping, he is actually interested in mapping maps that is collecting and interpreting mental maps in our minds.<sup>35</sup>

One can differentiate between the „real environment“ and the so-called „cognitive map“ as a subjective mental representation of the environment. The cognitive map can be visualized as a multidimensional construct, which one covered affective or social judgments of the perceived environment. The cognitive map concerns here not only a (spatial) image picture of the real environment (an actual map with objects in the space), she also contains elements from the social environment (subjects in the space, social groups, events in the space, assessments, symbols etc.).<sup>36</sup>

#### Analysis of cognitive maps

To examine aspects of the environmental perception and environmental assessment of the cognitive space representation and

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<sup>35</sup> [Http://www.mentalmap.org/](http://www.mentalmap.org/).

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. Ziervogel 2013, 191-192.

behavior different methods can be used. Possibilities for these methods are surveys with the help of questionnaires, the use of photographs and miniature models or the making of map sketches, the query after distances and direction data of certain places, detailed verbal descriptions of places or travel routes as well as field experiments to the observation of the actual spatial behavior.<sup>37</sup>

In practice drawn map sketches are often used, the so-called Mental-Maps. The way of the drawings as well as the form and details of the sketch give tips to the meaning of the elements for the test persons.

#### 3.2.5.1 Space\_elements\_of\_cognitive\_maps\_after\_Kevin\_Lynch\_(1960)

Kevin Lynch, born in 1918, was a significant contributor to city planning and city design in the twentieth century. One of the first comprehensive conceptual investigations for the capture and representation of cognitive maps of city planning interest is his work with the title „The image of the city“ (1960).

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<sup>37</sup> Cfr. Liben 1981, 11; Garling/Selart/Böök 1997, 165-174; Linden/Sheehy 2004, 33-35; Werlen 2008, 258-265.

One of Lynch's innovations was the concept of place legibility, which is essentially the ease with which people understand the layout of a place. By introducing this idea, Lynch was able to isolate distinct features of a city, and see what specifically is making it so vibrant, and attractive to people. To understand the layout of a city, people first and foremost create a mental map. Mental maps of a city are mental representations of what the city contains, and its layout according to the individual. These mental representations, along with the actual city, contain many unique elements, which are defined by Lynch as a network of paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks as you can see in Figure 8. First, paths are channels by which people move along in their travels. Examples of paths are roads, trails, and sidewalks. The second element, edges, are all other lines not included in the path group. Examples of edges include walls, and seashores. Next, districts are sections of the city, usually relatively substantial in size, which have an identifying character about them. A wealthy neighborhood such as Beverly Hills is one such example. The fourth element, nodes, are points or strategic spots where there is an extra focus, or added concentration of city features. Prime examples of nodes include a busy intersection or a popular city center. Finally,

landmarks are external physical objects that act as reference points. Landmarks can be a store, mountain, school, or any other object that aids in orientation when way-finding.

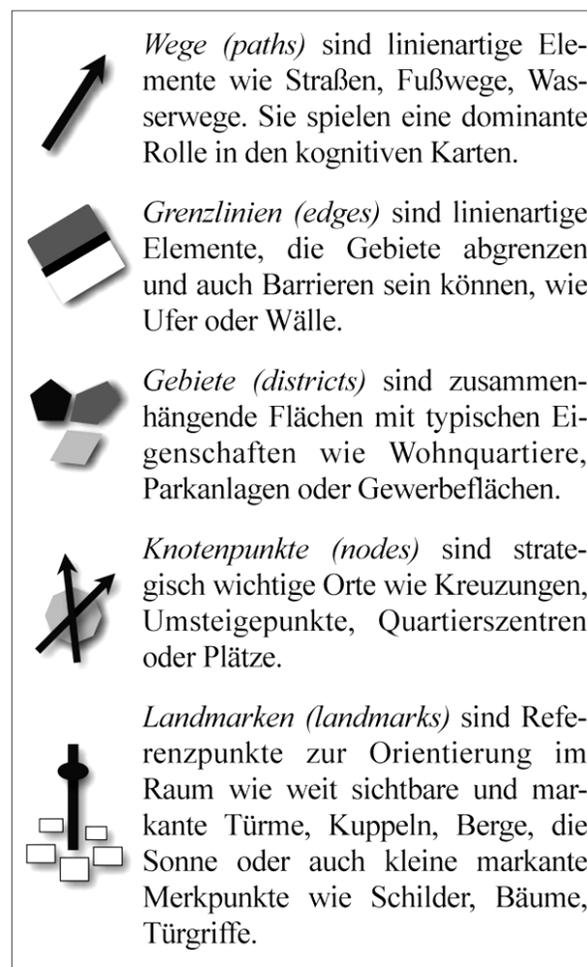


Figure 8 Types of space elements in the picture of the city after Kevin Lynch<sup>38</sup>  
Lynch 1960, 46-48

<sup>38</sup> Cfr. Lynch 1960, 46-48.

### 3.3 FIELDWORK DETROIT

Extract: Proposal from the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014

*“For my first planned trip to Detroit on 20<sup>th</sup> February till 6<sup>th</sup> March 2014 I want to get a first personal impression of the city. I want to see how the city is structured: it’s infrastructure as well as other organizational substratum, such it’s municipality, social or even cultural existing grids. Where do formations of new or still cultural, political, economical, medical, architectural centers exist, etc. etc. In short, what makes the city tick? Just with this first inside I believe it will be possible to further define the path of my project, while with the concept of the “Archipelago” of Ungers though I hope to receive already a worthy first concept of approach.”*

I have structured my study of field into five phases:

#### 3.3.1 1. Preparation phase

In the preparation phase a suitable question must be developed first. The choice of the investigation field (e.g. a residential district, a hospital, a family) as well as the scenes to be examined, events and people depend on the question. An important preliminary

consideration concerns the accessibility of the scenes of a field. One distinguishes open (e.g. streets, squares), half-open (e.g. shops) and closed scenes (e.g. meeting room of a concern, a living room). To allow the access to closed scenes to the field researcher, it requires the introduction by intermediaries or "doorkeepers".

It should belong to my strategy not to approach with an agreed research plan to the work. My content questions should arise rather from the everyday experience of the city of Detroit. Nevertheless, there were main areas of interest which derived from my background knowledge:

- Places: Where exists place for social life? Streets, shops, pubs, farms, halls, flats, ...
- Times: How correlates the history of the city Detroit with the biographies of the inhabitants?
- Social relations: Who knows whom, speaks with whom, to what extent social contacts are helpful or incriminating?
- Problems of everyday life and life: How do the inhabitants see her problems and how they handle with it?

- Fortune, satisfaction, mental health: What do the inhabitants experience as positive, healthy, normal? Which beliefs do they have of the "good life"? What gives a sense to her life?
- Isolation: Under which conditions and by which actions does it come to the isolation and exclusion of single inhabitants?
- Institutions: How do the inhabitants experience the interventions of offices and experts? Which kind of institutional help do they wish?

### **3.3.2 2. Access phase**

The access in the field is the most difficult part of the fieldwork, particular for beginners. The first important question is: which social role should be target from the researcher in the field. The spectrum reaches from the harmless spectator's role up to the double role of the crucial participant and researcher. The participant observation requires a back and forth commute between participant, observer or researcher. Normally this can be reached best by the fact that the researcher uses close roles in the field and informs openly his research interests at the same time.

At the beginning I fear to didn't be accepted as a researcher and have troubles at contacting. Through my collected pre-information about the city of Detroit I was very careful, afraid and could trust nobody. A lot of negative articles in online papers made me feel uncomfortable and uncertain to live in the city for two weeks.

### **3.3.3 3. Exploration phase**

The exploration phase serves the specification of the question and the choice of especially important informants or scenes.

Through informal contacts on the street, in small shops or in pubs I got to know some different people. Some of them were content to tell their story or events of my interest.

My observations and meetings I recorded in detailed field notes. The writing of a field note required a lot of time in contrast to the described event. But it was an important instrument to reflect the experiences in the field. At the start the self-imposed obligation to record every encounter was a nagging work. Over time the reports getting more specifically and shorter.

### **3.3.4 4. Elaboration phase**

In the elaboration phase aimed information are collected whereby structured methods of observation and survey are used.

In this phase I conducted a few interviews which I have recorded. Now I appeared as somebody who was here in the city to collect material for a research project of Detroit. This role enabled me to inform single inhabitants in greater detail about the purpose of my investigation and ask them for interviews. At the beginning my interview partners were experts, that were people who knew the town very well. Later I interviewed single inhabitants whose everyday life seemed to be especially important for my question.

### **3.3.5 5. Exit phase**

The received connections normally end with the exit of the field. My exit was preprogrammed by the return to the university.

### 3.3.6 Results and discussion

A wise saying reads as follows:

*Problems of access are problems of exit.*

For me the field research was connected with a multiple exit: loss of the familiar neighborhood, quit of the usual everyday life at home, quit of my present academically identity and associated the loss or relaxation of more importantly relationships. The result was a longer lasting depression and identity crisis which hindered me to my fieldwork. I think it's very important to recognize such crisis as a risk of the fieldwork and if possible to prevent them, e.g. through a gently dosage of the field contacts. In my mind the extent of such crisis depends on the person of the field researcher, his present living environment and the stresses and deprivations of his field.

I hoped to receive already a worthy first concept of approach with the study of Berlin of O. M. Ungers and Rem Koolhaas in 1977 "A green archipelago", but it turned out wrong at the first day I spent in Detroit. To be sure some aspects of the study could be adapted to my own research work of Detroit, but after spend more and more time

in the once fourth-largest city in the United States I became aware of the fact that I can identify and differentiate the malfunctioning parts of the present city but I cannot "weed out" those parts of the city that are now substandard. And just as a next step not to forget and ignore them, rather create another strategy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 142.87 square miles (370.03 km<sup>2</sup>) and the today's population is scattered over this whole huge area, also over the malfunctioning parts of the city. Questions rushed into my mind like:

Who has the right to decide on the people in the desolate areas?

Who can demand that these people abandon her home?

Which parts of the city does work/which are abandon?

How does the city work?

To whom belongs the city?

Who plans the city?

Who are the users of the city?

To whom belongs the abandoned land?

Where do the new come from?

How does the future look like?

The very close contact with misery, dilapidation, suffering, violence and hopelessness was very difficult and emotional demanding for me. My determined openness for questions which should arise from the work in the field, offered the problem to spread oneself too thin. On the one hand, I wanted to understand the life of the city Detroit as a whole; on the other hand I wanted to investigate the single problems very detailed. Indeed I was aware that I got lost in the shuffle of dates and information if I didn't decided myself upon a limited range. Nevertheless I couldn't specify. This was a certain disadvantage for my research project, not yet for my own experience.

Detroit is a city of vacancy and ruins, of poverty and unemployment. But some people don't accept this situation, they want to change their future and take an active part in transforming the city. They pick the positive aspects out of the negative overall situation and try to benefit from the crisis. Unlike other cities, Detroit still offers a fertile ground for self expression and creative business ideas.

These so-called 'Space Cowboys' merge pieces of vacant Detroit with business ventures and create huge startup communication networks

in the internet. Some soon-to-be entrepreneurs even move to Detroit to jump on that bandwagon and put their own business ideas into practice. Detroit is on its way to become a so-call 'Do-It-Yourself-City'.

### 3.4 WHAT HAPPENS TO VACANT LAND/ABANDON STRUCTURE?

Through the beginning decline of the 1970s the population of the city Detroit started to vacate her home and took the flight to the surrounding settlements or completely somewhere else. Back remained people whom lacked the financial independence for a change of location and an impoverished and abandoned city centre.

According to a survey of Motor City Mapping (MCM)\* 113,636 of the 374,721 properties surveyed are lots, 260,996 are structures.<sup>39</sup>

In the following part I will show the different initiatives to act on the current situation of the city.

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\*Motor City Mapping (MCM) is a comprehensive effort to digitize Detroit's property information and create clear communication channels back and forth between the public, the government, and city service providers. (<https://www.motorcitymapping.org/about>)

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.motorcitymapping.org/#t=overview&s=detroit&f=all&x=preset2>.

#### 3.4.1 LEAP

##### What is LEAP?

The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) is a community-driven project designed to engage people in a process to transform vacant land and property into uses that improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and surrounding areas.<sup>40</sup>

##### LEAP Project Goals:

- Generate a plan that addresses the vacant land crisis on the lower eastside of Detroit
- Create strategies that adapts vacant land for more efficient uses
- Issue recommendations for best uses of vacant land based on the needs and assets of the surrounding community
- Affect policy changes to support vacant land adaptation

#### 3.4.2 CDAD Strategic Framework

Detroit's community development trade organization, the Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD), sees the

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<sup>40</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/leapdetroit/>.

need for a bold new vision for Detroit’s neighborhoods – one that acknowledges that the loss of population will not be reversed for the foreseeable future and that current conditions in Detroit’s neighborhoods are socially, economically, and environmentally no longer sustainable. Detroit must truly reinvent itself – from the core downtown to the city limits.

Both a process and a neighborhood typology, the CDAD Strategic Framework is a tool to help residents envision the future of their neighborhood, describes that vision, and achieves it. Residents must take the lead in creating bold and innovative plans for revitalization. These neighborhood plans must be based on data, realistic, and community-driven. Together, these plans can create a comprehensive vision for every neighborhood across the city. A sustainable Detroit requires different investment strategies for every neighborhood and the CDAD Strategic Framework is a toolkit designed to be flexible. It allows every neighborhood to be unique and provides for a variety of uses within a single neighborhood.

### 3.4.2.1 Neighborhood Typology

The CDAD Strategic Framework uses a set of ten descriptive typologies to help residents visualize the future that they want for their neighborhood. Once goals are identified, residents can chart a course from a neighborhood’s current condition to its future direction. Each typology has suggested strategies to help residents turn their vision into reality.

#### 3.4.2.1.1 Traditional Residential Typology

For specifically identified areas of the city that are high-density single family residential, these sectors feature many older, historic single-family homes and quiet, friendly streets away from the hustle and bustle of shopping hubs and job zones. Families push strollers down the sidewalks as neighbors mow their lawns. Block clubs close streets and hold block parties. While some of these neighborhoods are close enough to walk to the bus or light rail train stop, many of the residents will drive from their home to the main street neighborhood store several blocks away, or to the shopping hubs. Each of these neighborhoods has a community center where young people and seniors can use their free time productively for learning and

recreation, and families can take classes and hold community meetings.

#### 3.4.2.1.2 Spacious Residential Typology

Covering many residential areas of the city, these sectors are low density with many vacant lots, unoccupied buildings and homes. One block may include a few homes or low-density apartment buildings. In these Spacious Residential Sectors, homes will feature very large side lots and back yards. Even though the population is less dense, residents organize to prevent crime, maintain vacant lots, create community gardens and improve the parking lot or playground around the local school. Residents are provided a multiplicity of needed social services to help Community Engagement for land use planning and planning for distribution of vacant land according to collective plan; and to promote residential cohesion Creation of a “collective land ownership” structure to assemble and conserve vacant land that is not used for side lots Coordination of side lot acquisition program Blight Awareness/Code Enforcement & Blight Reduction organizing them gain employment, improve their basic skills, resolve family challenges, and gain access to better quality

shopping at the Shopping Hubs. This unique category suggests that these neighborhoods will evolve over time into a “Naturescape” or “Urban Homestead” sector. Residents are provided information and support to help them make choices on which other neighborhoods to move to, when appropriate.

#### 3.4.2.1.3 Urban Homestead Typology

Country living in the City! A family harvests some vegetables that they intend to sell at their local farmer’s market. They enjoy their large older home, surrounded by a natural landscape comprising the huge lot/yard/small farm that comprises their property, away from the high-energy, noisy activity in other places in the city. Many city services (IE public lighting) are no longer provided, and homeowners enjoy lower taxes, in exchange for experimenting with and using alternative energy programs for heat and electricity, and where possible, well-water services. However, they are still close enough to the rest of the city where they can easily sell produce at Eastern Market, enjoy a ball game downtown, and take advantage of the city’s cultural amenities.

#### 3.4.2.1.4 Naturescape Typology

These are areas that offer beautiful, low-maintenance, managed natural landscapes intended to bolster air and water quality, and support indigenous wildlife. No one lives in these areas – they have been reinvented to highlight and preserve special natural indigenous features and plant/animal species. Detroit’s former creeks and rivers are day lighted, offering new opportunities for recreation. Families hike along marked paths. A hundred yards away, residents hike through some natural wooded walking trails. These natural areas help to filter air and water pollutants, creating a healthier city. They are distinct from Detroit’s major city parks (which offer more active and built amenities including golf courses, zoos, nature centers, and tennis courts, swimming pools, boating and canoeing).

#### 3.4.2.1.5 Green Thoroughfare Typology

Green well-lit wide traveling corridors, flush with trees and other low-maintenance foliage, are interspersed throughout the City. These corridors provide tasteful way-finding directions to nearby neighborhoods, separate incompatible uses, and convey a sense of beauty, safety and spaciousness. Bus and bike lanes help form

complete streets. They are distinguished from “Nature Scope” areas in that they are auto and/or mass transit corridors, not intended for visitors or recreation.

#### 3.4.2.1.6 Green Venture Typology

These are “green and blue” industrial areas that have been reinvented from vacant land and vacant industrial buildings to economic generators. Fish hatcheries, hydroponic gardens and newly rehabbed warehouses take up once-abandoned factories, while local foresters harvest trees to ship across the county, local horticulturists grow acres of nurseries for sale, and small market farms dot the landscape. No one lives in these zones, but they are well managed, safe, and create hundreds of jobs for local residents in farming, warehousing and logistics, forestry, horticulture and fish production.

#### 3.4.2.1.7 Industrial Typology

These are heavier industrial areas, buffered by Naturescapes and Green Job Zones because of their typical disruptive environmental factors such as noise, heavy truck traffic and various forms of pollution. Factories produce everything from cars and car parts to

solar panels and wind turbines and hydrogen energy cells that are then shipped overseas. Large-scale commercial growers raise sunflowers which are then sent to a processing plant to make bio-fuel. Inter-modal transportation centers serve as transfer and transport points for truck, rail, shipping and air -freight traffic.

#### 3.4.2.1.8 Shopping Hub Typology

City residents from across town as well as suburban commuters leaving their downtown offices or factories, pull into a “node” shopping center on an existing commercial corridor, to comparison-shop on the weekend, buy large-ticket items, or make a quick stop at the cleaners, donut shop or grocery store before or after work. Some Shopping Hubs are intermixed with tracts designated for Green Corridors.

#### 3.4.2.1.9 Village Hub Typology

This all-in-one neighborhood hub offers residential living, nearby shopping, and entertainment all wrapped in an authentic urban lifestyle. With a small main-street feel, these high-density streets include neighborhood shopping districts and gathering spots for the

surrounding residents. A young couple exits their single-family house or town home to walk to the local bakery for some pastries, and then go upstairs to where their accountant has his office. A retiree street-park his car in front of his barbers – who also happens to be his next-door neighbor. A young single leaves his apartment building to ride his bike along the local greenway path. Libraries and schools cater to active families including the influx of new immigrant residents, catering to their unique cultural/religious customs, and providing “English as a Second Language” (ESL) and other immigrant services. An array of ethnic restaurants and stores attract a variety of customers including a growing mix of new immigrant residents who enjoy the neighborhood along with long-time residents.

#### 3.4.2.1.10 City Hub Typology

The center of the city, and perhaps even the metropolitan region, the City Hub is the primary location for government, employment, entertainment and culture. Morning traffic jams herald the arrival of a new day as business executives, government officials, engineers, secretaries, and attorneys rush get to their office on time. Office workers exit their high-rise buildings to grab a quick lunch and run a

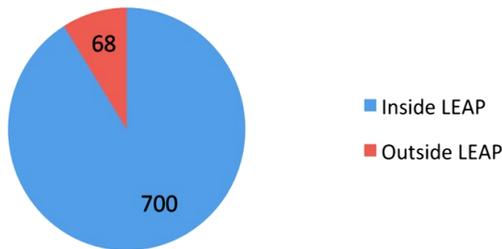
few errands, retirees sip coffee and read newspapers into the late at coffee shops getting busier and louder as students gather to do homework, text and chat. An evening ball game attracts fans from across the region as couples leave a museum art opening to have dinner. As they leave, they pass the restaurant lounge filling with young professionals eager to begin their evening tour of the clubs.

LEAP Future Direction Survey Analysis (2011)

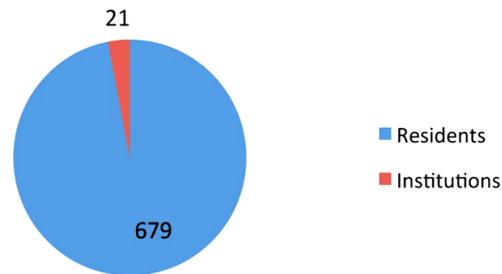
Prepared by Nathan Brown, University of Michigan; and Michelle Boyd, University of Chicago<sup>41</sup>

Survey Demographics

**Survey Responses**



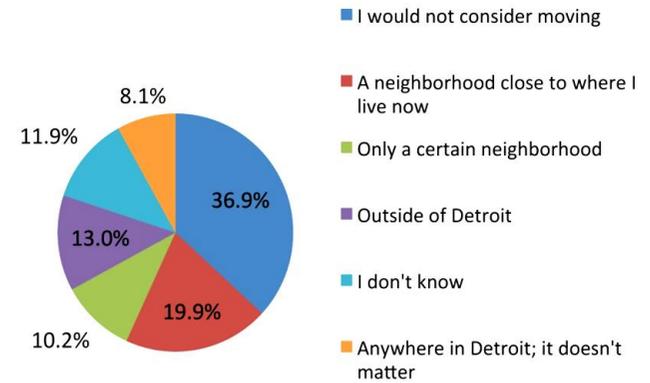
**Survey Breakdown**



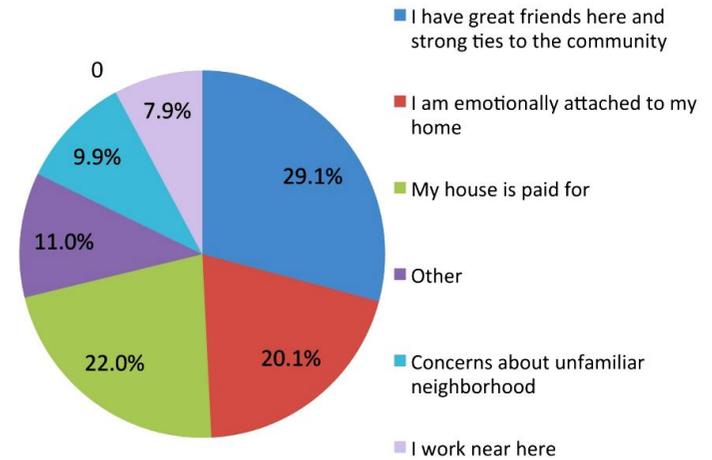
<sup>41</sup> Brown/Boyd 2012.

Relocation and Incentives

**Are you willing to move, if so where?**

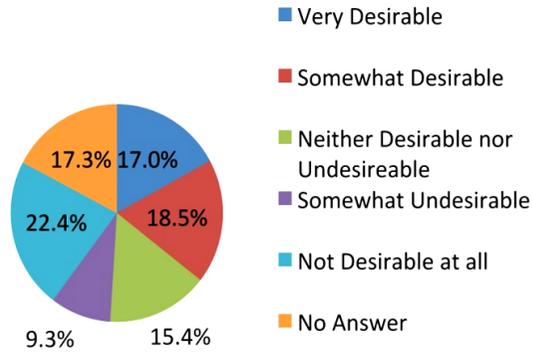


**Reasons for not moving**

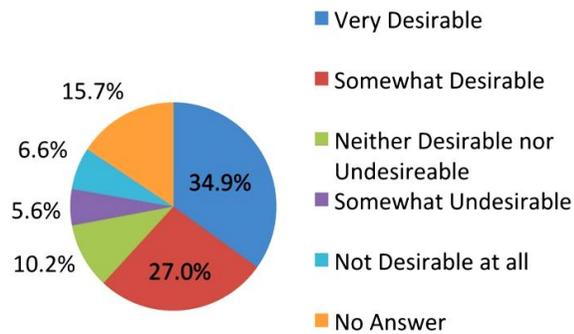


Typology appeal

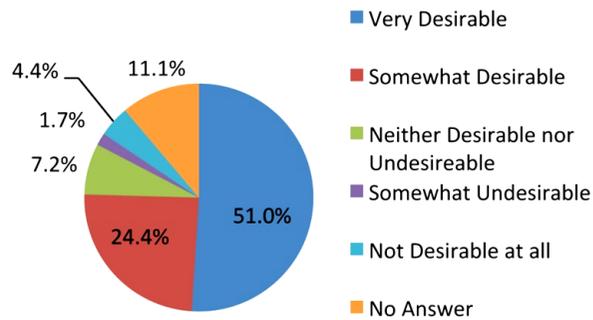
**Urban Homestead**



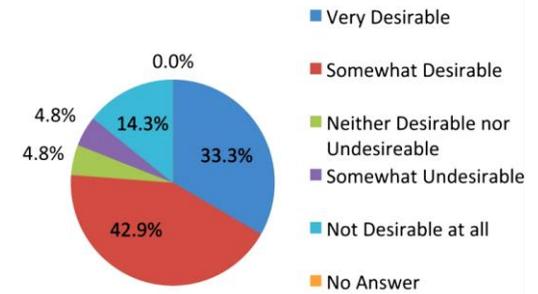
**Spacious Residential**



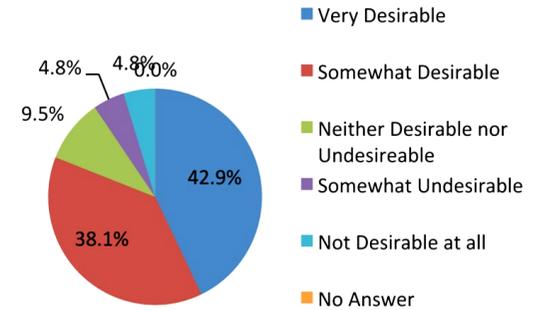
**Traditional Residential**



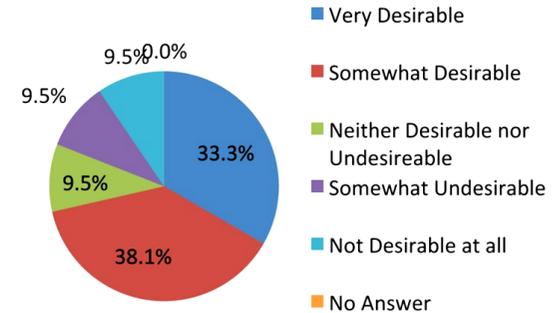
**Green Thoroughfare**



**Green Venture Zone**



**Naturescape**



### 3.4.3 Illegal Use

#### 3.4.3.1 Dumping

There is no official estimate of the number of mounds in Detroit, partly because few city officials appear to have noticed them.

Even though the mounds have made their mark on the city's topography for more than a decade, in many ways they are hiding in plain sight. Many are in sparsely occupied neighborhoods rarely visited by outsiders. Illegal dumping is less risky in such isolated spots.

Ron Brundidge, director of the city's Department of Public Works discovered them in 2007, when he drove all of the approximately 2,100 streets in the city while working on a project for the Detroit Free Press. He saw as many as ten mounds each week during the 4½ months that he drove around the city, but he didn't realize they were dump sites until he noticed new ones with debris still visible under the slowly spreading vegetation.

"We've seen them all over the city," says Dean Hay, an arborist who serves as director of green infrastructure for The Greening of Detroit, a nonprofit that since 1989 has planted trees and worked to improve the city's open spaces and urban agriculture. "My interpretation of

this phenomenon is that most of the piles contain biodegradable items or items that 'capture' soil-less airborne particles along the surface of the pile. When enough medium is collected as a top layer, seeds begin to be trapped, [then] germinate and create a green cover."<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 9** This mound, located on a vacant lot that once was part of a densely packed working-class neighborhood near Huber Avenue, is shown in 2009. The mound's vegetation is now much more developed.  
Photograph by Scott Hocking

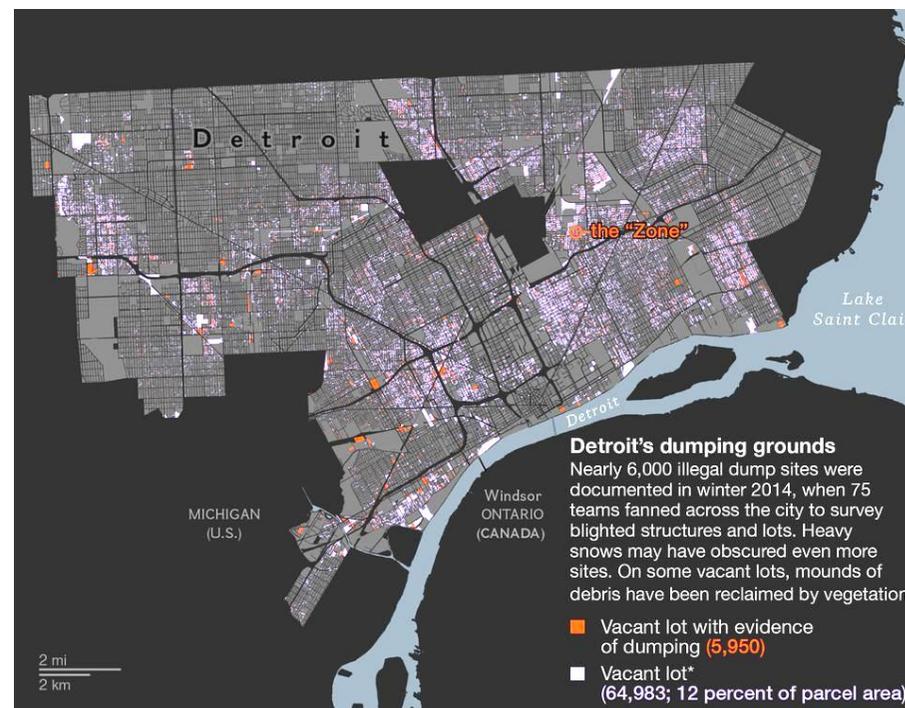
<sup>42</sup> McGraw 2014.

The picture you can see in Figure 9 is not a hill in Michigan's pristine North Woods; it is an illegal dump site at the edge of an abandoned neighborhood along Huber Avenue in the middle of Detroit. The discarded soil and construction materials have morphed into a mound covered with vegetation. It raises two stories and sprawls across an area the size of two baseball infields. Some trees are 30 feet (9 meters) tall.

The Huber Avenue mound is among the biggest of hundreds of dump sites across Detroit reverting to nature. Some are the size of a few automobiles; others are as small as a pup tent. A new two-story pile of dirt on the west side is just starting to turn green. Older ones are resplendent with Queen Anne's Lace, thistle, goldenrod, grass, and weeds. The oldest are sprouting cottonwoods, silver maples, and other trees.<sup>43</sup>

Virtually all the mounds are byproducts of the bankrupt city's epic abandonment as its population fell from about two million residents in the early 1950s to about 688,000 today.

<sup>43</sup> McGraw 2014.



**Figure 10** Vacant lots are parcels that are unmaintained, not for public use and without structures, numbers as of September 2014  
**SOURCES:** Motor City Mapping; Data Driven Detroit



Figure 11 Illegal dumping  
Photographed by  
Andrea Korber 2014



Figure 12 Lot used for  
illegal dumping  
Photographed by  
Andrea Korber 2014

### 3.4.3.2 Parking

“Illegal” parking sites are unpaved and they are not designed for parking, not coded as a parking lot.



**Figure 13** Illegal parking, vacant lots with cars  
Unpaved and no parking stripes  
Photographed by Andrea Korber 2014



**Figure 14** Illegal parking, overgrown lots  
Photographed by Andrea Korber 2014

### 3.4.4 Demolition

The Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) of the city Detroit provides for the safety, health, welfare and improvement of quality of life of the general public relative to buildings and their environments in an efficient, cost effective, user-friendly and professional manner.<sup>44</sup>

The Dangerous Buildings Division responds to complaints of dangerous buildings, inspects dangerous properties and prepares cases to obtain a demolition order from City Council.

A permit for demolition must be secured in order to remove all or part of a structure. Private companies or individuals planning to demolish a structure have to complete a Building Permit Application form. Public demolition of structures in the City of Detroit is now performed by the Detroit Building Authority, the Detroit Land Bank Authority and the Planning & Development Department. The BSEED holds no authority for demolition of property or the execution of demolition contracts.

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<http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/BuildingsSafetyEngineeringEnvironmental/AboutUs.aspx>

### Demolition Program Funding – Hardest Hit Funds

On August 20, 2013, Governor Snyder announced that Detroit will receive \$52.2 million of the total sum of Hardest Hit Funds from the United States Department of Treasury for demolition of residential structures in Michigan.

The Hardest Hit Fund demolition program is intended to stabilize lower-vacancy neighborhoods and is not meant for clearance of vacant structures in high vacancy areas. Moreover, this demolition program requires public ownership of the structure before it is demolished.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.4.5 Urban Agriculture

Urban Farming as the last but not least point of action to vacant land will be more exactly looked in my work in the following pages.

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<http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/BuildingsSafetyEngineeringEnvironmental/Divisions/DangerousBuildings/DemolitionProgramFunding.aspx>

## 4 URBAN AGRICULTURE

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Detroit has a history of gardening and farming lots that goes back decades. African-Americans, who left southern states to provide for their families through factory jobs in the Detroit area, brought with them their connection to the land and their knowledge of how to grow vegetables and flowers. They knew how to preserve food, as well. Mayor Coleman A. Young started the Farm-A-Lot program in the 1970s which allowed residents to obtain a permit to farm vacant lots in their neighborhoods. The program provided seeds, seedlings and tilling of the land. Today, there is an urban agriculture movement in Detroit that is recognized throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. Three farms currently exist within the city, as well as over 100 community and school gardens as well as hundreds of family gardens. There are also extensive training programs and support for urban agriculture ranging from bio-intensive growing methods to building a solar passive greenhouse.

Detroiters recognize that the value of the vacant land in the city goes beyond the construction of a structure. Residents have turned

“abandoned” lots into productive agricultural resources. Mini farmers markets are springing up citywide providing Detroiters with fresh, organic food grown right in the neighborhood. Urban agriculture should be recognized as an essential contributor to the local food system. It ensures a ready supply of nutritious, high quality vegetables and fruits. The entry costs associated with intensive food production on small urban farms in a cooperative environment is much lower and accessible than the current trend of mega farms. Urban growers stand to benefit from increased opportunities to market local products. The potential market for local value-added products makes urban agriculture even more attractive as a local economic development tool.

Despite the city’s problems—and partly because of them—Detroit has become an epicenter for the urban farming movement in America. Hundreds of community gardens and micro-scale cooperative farms have sprung up on abandoned properties.

On my second trip to Detroit in summer 2014 I got involved more and more into the topic “Urban farming”. Through my fieldwork in the area Detroit I came in contact with different farms/gardens

where I was able to help working and creating a better vibrant, healthy and productive life for the city. Especially the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative made it possible for me, to work together in a community, to see the good things going on in Detroit, to learn more about Urban Agriculture and to give hopeless people back their hope and pleasure of the life.

In the next part of my work I will expand on three selected farms.

1. Earthworks Urban Farm
2. Hantz Woodlands
3. Michigan Urban Farming Initiative

## **4.2 EARTHWORKS URBAN FARM**

### **4.2.1 Mission**

Earthworks is a program of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, a human service organization of caring people inspired by the spirit of St. Francis and sponsored by the Capuchins of the Province of St. Joseph and concerned benefactors. Earthworks seeks to promote

sustainable agricultural practices, nutrition and care for the Earth. We strive for peace, respect and harmony between Neighbor and Nature.

### **4.2.2 History**

In 1997, Brother Rick Samyn felt a calling to start a garden at his workplace, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. The response was overwhelming and positive. Brother Rick began Earthworks on a very small plot of land on the corner of Meldrum and St. Paul. In 1999, the garden expanded onto lots at the new site for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.

In 2001, after a season of restoration Earthworks began conversations with the Wayne County Department of Health as to how promote the consumption of fresh vegetables among low income families with children. Project FRESH (for Women Infant and Children (WIC)) is one program the county offers to its WIC clients. Participants receive coupons for fresh, locally grown Michigan produce purchased directly from the farmer. However, poor families often find it difficult to get to famers because of transportation limitations. Earthworks suggested that instead of having families

come to the market, have the market come to the families! We began to host weekly markets at local health clinics for cash and Project FRESH sales. Later Earthworks expanded its programming by including "value added" products such as canning tomatoes, pickled beets and jams.

In 2003, Earthworks formed another partnership to establish a youth program, Growing Healthy Kids, focused on nutrition and wholesome activities, including growing, cooking and eating homegrown food. The program has been a huge success in the way it positively impacted the lives of the children and their families. It has opened them up to a new way of being with each other and given them opportunities to explore our relationships with the land that sustains us.

In 2004, Earthworks expanded its work even further by adding a 1,300 square foot greenhouse for the production of vegetable seedlings. Today, Earthworks grows over one hundred thousand seedlings each season, both for the own gardens and for the hundreds of local family, community and school gardens participating in the Garden Resource Program Collaborative.

#### **4.2.3 Size/Spread**

Today Earthwork's gardens consist of approximately 7 gardens spread over 20 city lots spread within a 2 block radius of the headquarters. They don't garden outside of that space.

#### **4.2.4 Where does the produce go?**

Earthworks provide produce to a number of different outlets. Some produce is sold through the Grown In Detroit co-op, some is provided to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen which we are a part of, some goes to markets at health clinics, and some is marketed at a small farmers market they run out of their workspace at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. They also use most of their berries harvested for making jams they sell as a fundraiser.

Earthwork's approach to distributing and marketing their produce is always changing and growing. They are working to develop effective strategies to build a just food system.

#### Meldrum Fresh Market

The Meldrum Fresh Market (MFM) features Earthworks certified organic produce and products, such as our honey and jams.

### Youth Farm Stand Markets - "Grown in Detroit"

Earthworks support "Grown in Detroit" markets, a program of the Garden Resource Program Collaborative, at farmers markets throughout Detroit. "Grown in Detroit" is produce that has been grown in family gardens, community gardens and urban farms in Detroit, Highland Park and Hamtramck.

### WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) - Project Fresh Market

Earthworks is working to provide Michigan-grown produce to WIC clients through the Project Fresh. They sell the Earthworks produce at the WIC health clinics, where coupons are distributed to eligible women with children.

### Solanus Center

Located in the same Detroit block as the Earthworks gardens and the Meldrum Capuchin Soup Kitchen is another Capuchin ministry, the Solanus Casey Center. During specific Wednesday healing services, Earthworks' will be stationed at the Mt. Elliott entrance to the Solanus Center.

## **4.3 HANTZ WOODLANDS**

### **4.3.1 Mission**

Hantz Woodlands is transforming blight to beauty as vacant, abandoned properties are converted to fields for new agricultural production.

Hantz subscribes a different philosophy contrary to the urban farm movement. He says that there's nothing inherently wrong with those small community gardens and family vegetable plots, but he believes the city's huge land surplus requires a radical shift in scale. So he has taken the concept of urban farming and super-sized it.

Picture oaks, maples, and other high value trees planted in straight, evenly spaced rows. Grass between rows of trees will be mowed regularly, and flowering trees will be planted between streets and sidewalks to create a breathtaking place of beauty each spring and fall season.

### **4.3.2 History**

The Hantz Group, a billion-dollar investment group, was established about fifteen years ago. Over the last twenty years Detroit is going through a transition. Houses started to be vacated, somebody lose

their house, damaged houses and some houses set on fire. They all spread over the neighborhoods of Detroit. Hantz, the chief executive officer of a the investment group in the Detroit suburbs, said he is pouring tens of millions of dollars of his own money into the project because he believes private enterprise can solve urban America's problems more effectively than the public sector can do. He has bought thousands of blighted city lots, and he has purchased tens of thousands of hardwood saplings.

Hantz Woodlands begun paying property taxes for their purchased land, take part over the maintain costs and create jobs with the revaluation of them.

The slogan for Hants Woodlands:

*"We can build a new, green economy in Detroit, and lead the world by example."<sup>46</sup>*

Hantz Woodlands is available to participate in education and consulting work that assists leaders in expanding and improving

urban agriculture as a new commercial sector within urban economies.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 Hantz Woodlands, one of the nation's largest urban reforestation projects, received its Certificate of Completion from the City of Detroit. The Certificate recognizes the sweeping effort, which met and exceeded the tenets of its agreement with the City by planting more than 15,500 trees, maintaining more than 2,000 lots and engaging residents in an effort to create Detroit neighborhoods where people want to live, work and play in just one year. The agreement provided a two-year timeline for completion.

In the following photos, Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 17 and Figure 18, I will show some changes in vacated land through the hands of Hantz Woodlands.

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<sup>46</sup> [Http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/introduction.html](http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/introduction.html).



Figure 15 Before, 06/11/2009 (<http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/gallery1.html>)



Figure 16 After, 04/06/2013 (<http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/gallery1.html>)





Figure 17 Before, 06/11/2009 (<http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/gallery1.html>)



Figure 18 After, 04/06/2013 (<http://www.hantzfarmsdetroit.com/gallery1.html>)



Last but not least I will expand on The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative, which gave me the opportunity to work on site with the community and learn to understand better the hopeless people in the city Detroit.

#### **4.4 MICHIGAN URBAN FARMING INITIATIVE (MUFI)**

##### **4.4.1 Mission**

Michigan Urban Farming Initiative is a nonprofit organization that seeks to engage members of the Michigan community in sustainable agriculture. They believe that challenges unique to the Michigan community (e.g., vacant land, poor diet, nutritional illiteracy, and food insecurity) present a unique opportunity for community-supported agriculture. Using agriculture as a platform to promote education, sustainability, and community—while simultaneously reducing socioeconomic disparity—they hope to empower urban communities.

##### **4.4.2 Some challenges they hope to target**

###### 4.4.2.1 Vacant land

Some recent additions to the Michigan scenery include abandoned buildings and houses, unkempt land, and other poorly used spaces. Redeveloping these locations into food producing plots would be making them valuable assets to any community.

###### 4.4.2.2 Unemployment

With the current state of Michigan's economy, a large community of unemployed people exists. These people are not bound by the constraints of 9-to-5 employment and may have more time available to participate in community service projects. Community farming can support a healthy lifestyle, especially in times of limited income.

###### 4.4.2.3 Access to nutritious food

Urban areas have particular difficulty providing consistent access to nutritious food and fresh produce. Such circumstances are particularly acute in low-income neighborhoods, where people may not have access to transportation. Local urban gardens and farms

provide a source of fresh, affordable produce available to the whole community.

#### 4.4.2.4 Food miles and nutrition information

Many people are disconnected from their food and where it comes from. We intend to provide ongoing educational opportunities for the community concerning the growing and harvesting of produce, in addition to its nutritional value. We want people to develop a certain consciousness about where their food comes from and their role in the process.

#### 4.4.3 **Community Garden**

Using the 1-5 acres of vacant land surrounding the 7432 Brush Street property (Figure 19), MUFI will build approximately 150 raised community garden beds to facilitate community engagement in agriculture. The gardens will serve as a resource for the public to plant their own plants, grow their own food, learn the skills from knowledgeable individuals living in the Co-op, and partake in the community gardening process. Each bed would be rented out seasonally at cost, and would include the service of individuals living

in the house, who would be available to help with any aspect of gardening.

MUFI have found approximately one acre of contiguous city-owned land, with an additional four acres of city owned vacant land within a three block radius. MUFI members also have additional properties available for use, mainly in the New Center area and near Eastern Market. These can serve as community garden extensions and will require more community involvement than the Brush Street Garden.



Figure 19 MUFI site on Brush Street (<http://www.miufi.org/#!/projects/c10d6>)

#### **4.4.4 Community Resource Center**

The main focus of MUFI is currently on the development of 7432 Brush Street and its surrounding area.

7432 Brush Street is a distressed property in Detroit that was purchased by MUFI in October of 2011. It was built in 1915 and used continuously until circa 2009. The property is a three story, six unit apartment complex, which has since become uninhabitable. MUFI's goal is to restore the structure to multi-unit residence that would serve as a model of sustainability and urban renewal.

At my duration of stay in summer 2014 I helped with preparing the plans for this Community Resource Center.

The first floor of the community resource center will be designed to accommodate new or small scale non-profits that seek to advance sustainability, community, and/or education in the Detroit community. This will be a place where organizations with similar missions can collaborate, pool resources, engage in relevant dialogue, and ultimately have a physical space that is economically accessible. A specific business model is currently in development.

#### Multi-Purpose Room

An additional structure will be attached to the existing building using passive and sustainable design. This structure will serve as a multi-purpose room which will facilitate workshops oriented to engage citizens in sustainable agriculture. More specifically, we plan on providing a hands-on experience to interested parties centered on growing food, providing an educational foundation regarding the nutritional value of food, and the preparation of food. The space will also feature an industrial kitchen in which community members can manufacture goods for selling at markets.



Figure 20 Photo series of the future community center, work in progress  
Photo 1 and 2 (<https://www.crowdrise.com/windowsformufi/fundraiser/MUFI>)  
Photo 3 (Photographed by Andrea Korber, 2014)

In the next part of my work I will focus on the Community Resource Center with detailed proposal plans.

→ WORK IN PROGRESS

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