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Play & Grounds

Sustainability and the HOPE Village Initiative Integrated Assessment

Graham Institute Integrated Assessment Report Series Volume III Report 5

Focus: HOPE
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The HOPE Village Initiative
Educate | Empower | Transform

About The Reports

The Sustainability and the HOPE Village Initiative Integrated Assessment (IA) is the result of a partnership between the University of Michigan (U-M) Graham Sustainability Institute and Focus: HOPE. The IA was developed to support Focus: HOPE's comprehensive place-based effort known as the HOPE Village Initiative. The Initiative's goal: by 2031, 100% of residents living in a 100 block area surrounding the Focus: HOPE campus will be educationally well-prepared and economically self-sufficient, and living in a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment.

The IA recognizes that the success of the HOPE Village Initiative is tied to sustainability factors including the physical environment, economic development, community health, and education. Through collaboration with U-M researchers, residents, and Focus: HOPE staff, the IA developed data, tools, and concepts to advance the HOPE Village Initiative. This document is one of six final project reports completed for IA.

This work was made possible with support from the Graham Sustainability Institute, Focus: HOPE, and neighborhood residents.

Reports In This Series

- Applied Research and Service by Urban Planning Students in the HOPE Village Initiative Area
- Building a Healthy Community in Detroit: Tracking the Impact of the HOPE Village Initiative Area
- Legal Issues in HOPE Village Housing Cooperative and Green Space
- Mapping Community Economies and Building Capabilities in HOPE Village
- Play & Grounds
- The Development of a Community Based Coalition to Promote Career and College Preparation in the HOPE Village Neighborhoods of Detroit and Highland Park

Team

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Taubman College of Architecture & Urban Planning
Maria Arquero
Craig Borum
Jen Maigret
School of Natural Resources & Environment
Robert E. Grese
College of Engineering
Aline Cotel
Lorelle Meadows

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Executive Summary

"An important component...is the role of visualization as a form of design advocacy."

In 2011 Focus:HOPE entered into a partnership with the University of Michigan's Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute to sponsor an Integrated Assessment (IA) initiative. The "Sustainability and the HOPE Village Initiative Integrated Assessment" brings U-M researchers, Focus:HOPE staff and community stakeholders together to address the question, "What are common analytical approaches, data sets, tools and policies to advance decision making for the HOPE Village Initiative?"

Play&Grounds brings together six U-M researchers representing four distinct disciplines (Architecture, Urban Planning, Natural Resources and Environment and Civil and Environmental Engineering) to propose a place-based design initiative that prioritizes the potential of interconnections between public space, community building and environmental stewardship to restore and transform open space and embody the civic aspirations of the HOPE Village residents. The outcomes of this work include three main components summarized in the current report:

1. An OPEN SPACE VISIONING PLAN that focuses on the analysis and design possibilities tied to streetscapes and under-utilized, vacant open space. Methods of data acquisition in this planning effort include a three-component inventory composed of an analytical GIS (geographic information system) dataset, and a photographic and a plant species studies. Together with this data, the team has engaged in participant observation in numerous community

events during the duration of the project, and has organized dedicated conversations with residents on the theme of open space.

2. The CLASS WORK OF A SERIES OF UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN COURSES, each contributing creative and integrated design-research approaches in line with the overall ambitions of community engagement and environmental stewardship. These courses include undergraduate and graduate level courses, and bring together the disciplines of Architecture, Engineering, Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning (images of student work in Appendix, Figure 26).

3. The conceptualization, development and implementation of a "PROOF OF CONCEPT" design to transform the vacant lot at the corner of Oakman Boulevard and Linwood Avenue into a public park and market space. The construction is scheduled for the spring of 2014, and the broader visioning report documents the process and drawings for the schematic and design development phases.

This report documents the methods, community engagement events and recommended future directions tied to these three components. An important component in all three has been the role of visualization as a form of design advocacy. Through the diversity of representation methods and techniques, from maps, to photographs, to diagrams and realistic renderings, multiple facets of the existing open space network are expressed for consideration. This plurality in the way of looking, seeing and representing the current state and identity of these spaces, helps establish design intervention priorities and solicit feedback and test approaches to the recuperation of open spaces as safe, beautiful places that have the power to cultivate civic pride.

Recommendations include a variety of strategies that focus on two main open space components: streetscapes and vacant lots. In addition, we identify a focus area to prioritize investment. This area stretches between two important cultural anchors in the HOPE Village: New Paradigm Glazer Academy and the Parkman Public Library Branch. Other important places within the focus area include the Ford-LaSalle Playground, the Focused Hands Community Garden, and a series of residential streets that enable connectivity. Overall, the response to vacancy brings vegetation, shade, and color to these lots without requiring a large amount of regular garden maintenance by the residents or Focus:HOPE. When looking at the streets as transportation and civic infrastructure, our emphasis is on partnerships and funding sources that provide opportunities to establish official bike lanes and streetscape improvements (including street tree planting, sidewalk maintenance and street lighting). In this sense, the proximity to the Focus: HOPE Campus, the Oakman Boulevard Historic District and Linwood Avenue brings an important institutional oversight and could capitalize on the current work of residents and business associations, and the leadership of Focus: HOPE.

Finally, the report recognizes the challenge of the implementation of this strategic framework and recognizes that Focus: HOPE will continue to play a critical advisory and leadership role in this effort. Additionally, the success of this initiative will require the engagement of a dynamic and transient neighborhood population. It is only through residents' stewardship that the potential for small interventions to have a cumulative impact greater than the "sum" of each would be possible. In themselves, the small positive changes hold the potential to "attract" additional investment (monetary or otherwise) and these changes are as likely to emanate from within the community as they are to come from the ongoing, organized efforts of Focus: HOPE. Finally, our findings suggest the need to develop strategic programmatic activities that can foster and invite more frequent occupation of spaces to help transform under-utilized spaces into a thriving, living part of the city.

Introduction

"Open space supports numerous environmental, economic, and social functions, many of which are interconnected."

Figure 1 ***Engineering 100, Section 800***
It provides first-year students with an opportunity to practice engineering while addressing a global need in a local urban setting.

Figure 2 ***Landscape Architecture Graduate Studio***
The studio delves into ecologically-based landscape design and management that respects the cultural and natural history of place.

Figure 3 ***Liquid Planning, ARCH 505/ URP 515***
Liquid Planning fosters an interdisciplinary design practice through the careful consideration of Detroit's complex stormwater network.

Focus: HOPE & the Graham Institute for Environmental Sustainability

Since 1968, Focus: HOPE has been serving Detroit residents through its mission of "recognizing the dignity and beauty of every person," pledging "intelligent and practical action to overcome racism, poverty and injustice" and building "a metropolitan community where all people may live in freedom, harmony, trust and affection." [1] Over the years, this has meant an expanded slate of programs spanning food provision, career training, and neighborhood safety. Recently, a larger piece of Focus: HOPE's work has been concentrated on improving the quality of life in its immediate neighborhood, through community development initiatives including support for local schools, community arts programming, and beautification activities focused within a 100-block area adjacent to the organization's campus, called HOPE Village. Behind all of Focus: HOPE's initiatives lies a holistic approach to problem-solving, and an indisputable commitment to place.

Most recently, the HOPE Village Initiative (HVI), was initiated to develop "a safe, strong and nurturing neighborhood where children and their families can develop to their full potential." The HVI is a place-based initiative, dedicated to reinforcing support

networks and resources within a defined area. Taking part of its inspiration from the Harlem Children's Zone, Focus: HOPE is looking to partnerships and strategies from different sectors and disciplines that can help them address the neighborhood's needs from multiple perspectives.

The Graham Sustainability Institute, based at the University of Michigan, is dedicated to fostering connections between members of the campus community, stakeholders, decision makers, and practitioners in order to generate new knowledge and strategies for solving complex problems "at the human-environment interface." The Graham Institute facilitates these partnerships through the integrated assessment (IA) framework, a research methodology that emphasizes collaboration and synthesis of information across disciplines. The typical IA process defines a problem, taking into account the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, examines its short- and long-term impacts, and describes possible alternatives for action, along with potential costs and benefits. IAs are designed to promote cooperation and shared understanding, as well as comprehensive analysis of important issues that cross disciplinary and jurisdictional boundaries.[2]

The Sustainability and the Hope Village Initiative Integrated Assessment arose as a partnership between Focus: HOPE and the Graham Institute and was established to fund U-M faculty-led research that would advance the understanding and implementation of sustainable practices in the HOPE Village area. Focus: HOPE and the Graham Institute invited researchers to think in terms of sustainable community to support the six interlocking priorities of the HVI:

1. Community education and leadership programs
2. Early childhood to post-secondary education
3. Parent and family programs
4. Community health and safety initiatives
5. Community / economic development initiatives
6. Community building

Furthermore, in order to facilitate the engagement of the teams with community members, Focus: HOPE initiated a series of communication opportunities. Coordination efforts were overseen by an advisory committee (made up of community members) given the charge to encourage engagement while protecting against overburdening involved community members. The project objectives are positioned in relationship with the overall goals of the HOPE Village Initiative, aligning with the environmental and social sustainability agenda championed by Focus: HOPE. Through the HVI, and the work of the six selected teams, Focus: HOPE is working to foster an environment that ensures both opportunity and support for every resident in the 100-block service area. This report is a coordinated outcome of the HVI and a tool toward the integration of the findings and recommendations emanating from this initiative.

Team Overview and Areas of Focus

Play & Grounds supports the establishment of an open space network, in the HOPE Village, that fully realizes the potential of public places to nurture and invigorate the community that uses them. To facilitate this, our research inventories the current state of public open spaces in the HOPE Village and utilizes visualizations to communicate possible approaches and outcomes to initiate conversations surrounding desired future directions for activation and occupation.

Play & Grounds also introduces a framework for understanding different typologies of open space within HOPE Village and how these relate to the benefits of sustainable places. It also considers the feasibility of these components in terms of the unique conditions and demographics of the HOPE Village, showing what a successful open space

network might look like through further analysis of a smaller focus area within the neighborhood.

In support of these ambitions, Play & Grounds brings together science and design through teaching, research, and creative professional practice across four disciplines: Architecture, Urban Planning, Natural Resources & the Environment, and Civil & Environmental Engineering. It consists of three components:

1. A strategic plan that consolidates opportunities tied to underutilized and/or vacant open space. The resulting documents, drawings and models establish time-based scenarios that provide a baseline assessment of the neighborhood's open space assets, and serve as a fund raising tool for the implementation of future projects.

2. The coordination of a series of University of Michigan courses, each contributing creative and integrated design-research approaches pursuing the overall ambitions of community engagement and environmental stewardship. This coursework advances the findings of the strategic plan, and was conducted between Fall 2012 and Fall 2013. It includes graduate and undergraduate courses in the departments of Engineering, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Natural Resources & the Environment, Architecture, and Urban Planning (Figures 1 to 3).

3. A small, constructed "proof of concept" component that integrates an appreciation for water with the establishment of an anchor in the open space network and serves as a catalyst for future fund raising and implementation efforts. The design and installation of this component is underway and being coordinated with Focus: HOPE and members of the HOPE Village community.

Visioning Public Open Spaces in the HOPE Village

This report is a visioning document created for Focus: HOPE to inform and inspire community action around the open spaces of the HOPE Village neighborhood. The research and visualizations composing this visioning document, elaborate on the premise that the reconsideration of daily practices of design and construction of the built environment hold a key to establishing alternate sustainable futures. It is the first step in a longer cooperative effort in research and design within both the University and the HOPE Village community.

The HOPE Village Initiative has conceptualized sustainable communities to include both long-term environmental stewardship efforts to protect the quality standards of the ground, water, and air, and also cultural stewardship efforts that positively impact neighborhood economics and quality of life. Part of that environment is the physical and cultural landscape in which HVI residents live, including the open spaces that they use for travel and play, that they see every day, that forms the visible and tangible fabric of the neighborhood. Play & Grounds defines open spaces as those that are outdoors and accessible, with the potential to impact the cultural experience of the physical structure of the neighborhood. This category of space includes a multitude of land use types, and all of them play some role in affecting the quality of life in the HOPE Village neighborhood.

Open space supports numerous environmental, economic, and social functions, many of which are interconnected. For example, a streetscape that is maintained for pedestrians and cyclists promotes non-automotive transportation. This is good for the atmosphere as well as the health of residents, who have an opportunity to exercise and socialize, while

enjoying cleaner air to breathe. Open space design that provides public amenities like street trees or benches contributes to the comfort of those using the space. As such, public open spaces are accessible more frequently and for longer periods of time.

Well-maintained streetscapes can also impact safety, by increasing the number of people using and watching the street. They encourage "eyes on the street," neighbors and public space users who are able to observe the street's activities and who become its guardians.[3] Streetscaping can also delineate an area protected from traffic. More people using a space also means more opportunities for social interaction. That, in concert with efforts at place-making, can help residents become more familiar with one another and build a stronger sense of civic pride.

Of course, different types of open space can support different combinations of different functions. Some excel at providing ecosystem services, helping to improve the quality of the water, the ecosystem, and the air while some can provide economic benefits helping landowners with energy efficiency or offering opportunities for employment, training, or research. Others can have impacts on health, safety, educational opportunity, community strength, and, ultimately, happiness.

Open space in the HOPE Village neighborhood is abundant, but frequently underutilized. It encompasses playgrounds, a playfield, gardens, pocket parks, schoolyards, an extensive sidewalk system, and a reserve of vacant land that includes an overgrown abandoned railway. Some of these areas, like Salsinger Playfield and the Ford-LaSalle Playground are part of the City's parks system and are already open to the public at all hours. Others, like the Focus: HOPE Community Park, and the Cool Corner Park, are privately held, and may be reserved for special events or are subject to more restricted access hours. Still others, like the vacant lots and abandoned rail, are bound by more complex issues of ownership and management. These latter two groups are included on the basis of their potential, through collaborative partnerships and strategic design, to contribute positively to the overall function of the HOPE Village landscape. The importance of a flexible strategy to tackle the uneven distribution of residential vacant land will be key for the future livability of the neighborhood.

Thoughtful open space design and programming, incorporating knowledge about users' needs and desires as well as both the area's history and an overall vision for the neighborhood, can successfully support Focus: HOPE's goals in the HVI over-arching goals. The various open space sites within the HVI area hold numerous opportunities to impact the health, safety, education, and happiness of the surrounding community. Toward this end, the project also seeks to aid in the implementation of an open space vision by identifying potential partnerships and funding sources.

Play & Grounds represents an optimistic and generative design methodology for redefining the value and importance of the future of the built environment. In this endeavor we see the HOPE Village as a potential model for other community leaders and partnerships throughout the city of Detroit.

Findings

"Community input played an essential role...informing planning and design proposals."

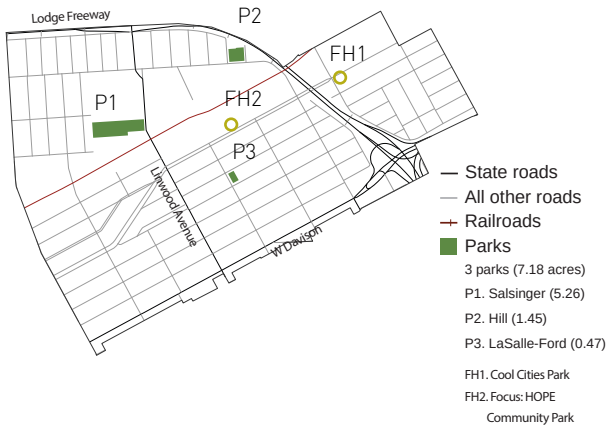


Figure 4 ***Parks and Transportation Lines***

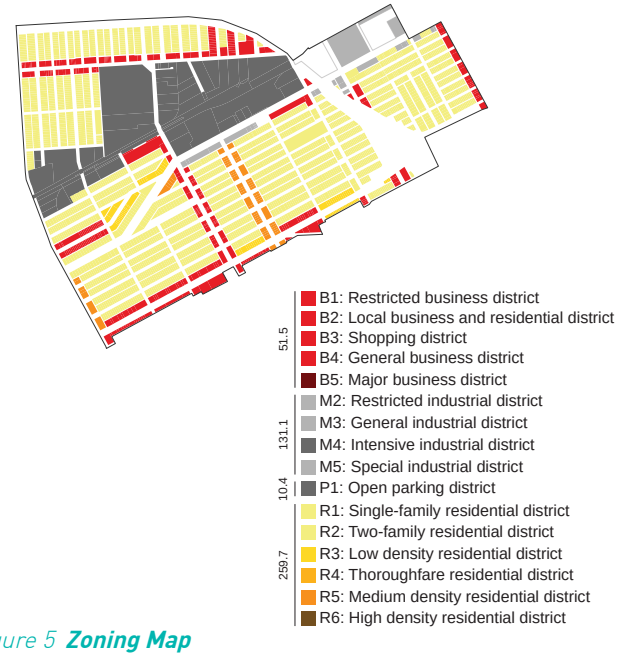


Figure 5 ***Zoning Map***

Research Methods of Data Collection: Introduction to the Inventories

The HOPE Village Initiative focuses on the area surrounding the Focus: HOPE campus in Detroit. It aims to develop a safe, strong and nurturing neighborhood where families can develop to their full potential. The next pages examine spatial, demographic, visual, historical, and cultural data from the HOPE Village area and the surrounding city. It is a process of building familiarity with both the neighborhood as a place and as the people living within it.

This section introduces the research methods of observation and data collection. The information has been structured through the creation of three different inventories: (1) a GIS Inventory, (2) a Photographic Inventory, and (3) a Plant Species Inventory.

GIS Inventory

The GIS Inventory sought to bring together layers of geospatial information describing the physical characteristics that describe HOPE Village today, and specifically, build an understanding of the distribution, ownership condition and materiality

of spaces that can be considered "open" and have the potential to contribute to the planning of an open space network. A Geographic Information System (GIS) allows for the storage, manipulation, and display of geographical data.[4] GIS can support complex analyses and decision-making through visualizing relationships and interactions between such things as policy, demographics, environment, and activities across space. This work primarily built upon available data and derived new knowledge and findings through the synthesis of information, and later through design approaches and constructions.

The definition of the "boundaries" of HOPE Village was an ongoing discussion throughout the grant and the final GIS Inventory reflects the most current approach to defining this area. It is important to note, and remember, that the definition of this boundary is important to bring focus to the study of something that continues to be an integral part of larger city systems as well as metropolitan networks. Perhaps the most direct opportunity to physically re-establish a more vibrant connection to the open space networks developing throughout Detroit is the former railway corridor now being considered for redevelopment as a greenway. This opportunity was studied in much more detail in the work of the team from the Law school focused on Legal Issues in HOPE Village Housing Cooperative and Green Space.

The GIS inventory includes geographic data derived from an original database created by U-M volunteer Thomas Skuzinski for Focus: HOPE, and further expanded to incorporate relevant layers for our project. The original database contained parcel information from the 2009 Detroit Residential Parcel Survey (DRPS) and 2010 U.S. Census information at the block and tract levels. Play & Grounds validated open space sites from this database against observations during site visits and consultation with Focus: HOPE staff to identify areas with public access or that could potentially contribute value to the network. These sites, along with new polygons delineating sidewalk and utility corridors using aerial photography, are included in the inventory and further classified into typologies according to the research design. Additional data was sourced from the City of Detroit, Wayne and Washtenaw County LiDAR, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

A simple view of the neighborhood's parks and transportation lines (Figure 4) shows a conversion between two clearly gridded road systems at Oakman Boulevard, and identifies Linwood as a major thoroughfare connecting to both the John C. Lodge and Davison Freeways. The unique rotation of street angles at Oakman Boulevard is an historical artifact that marks the northern border of the 10,000 Acre Tract granted to the city by Congress along with approval for Judge Woodward's radial plan.[5]

Figure 4 also shows that the residential street grid is divided in multiple places by more intensive transportation infrastructure. Together, the Lodge Freeway and Linwood divide the neighborhood into eastern, central, and western portions, while the abandoned rail corridor creates a north-south divide. These divisions coincide with marked differences in the characters of each portion, as seen both on the ground, and in block group maps developed by Focus: HOPE.[6] They also impact residents' ability to connect to other areas of the neighborhood, either by allowing rapid circulation from one area to another, as in the case of Linwood, or by limiting connectivity to a few points of passage, as in the case of the Lodge Freeway.

The parks shown on this map are publicly-owned by the city: Salsinger Playfield, Ben Hill Memorial Playground, and Ford-LaSalle Playground. All of them are well used by the residents for a variety of recreational activities and events. In addition to these amenities, Focus: HOPE owns and maintains two other parks open to the larger community. These are the Cool Cities Park at Oakman and Woodrow Wilson (with restricted access hours for specific

programming), and the Focus: HOPE Community Park in Oakman Boulevard.

The zoning map (Figure 5) shows that single- and two-family residency is the predominant land use, constituting 87.2% of the HVI's parcels, with commercial and industrial districts distributed along main transportation lines. Viewed alongside the parks and transportation lines, it's clear that the rail line isn't the only impediment to north-south connection between the HVI's different areas: 2.8 acres of intensive industrial district surround the rail and buffer the northern and southern residential blocks from one another. The aerial view in Figure 7 shows that these sites contain large structures on large lots, and include both the former Paul Robeson Academy (it should be noted that the building was demolished in the summer of 2012), and part of Focus: HOPE's Campus along Oakman Boulevard. One potential concern that arises from this analysis is that the residential northwestern section of the neighborhood actually has relatively limited mobility when compared to the others. Despite the fact that the railroad is no longer active, the industrial properties along it act as formidable barriers to movement from that area to other areas of the neighborhood, forcing travelers onto Fenkell Street, Linwood, Wildemere Avenue, and Dexter Avenue. It also highlights the importance of those streets, of which Fenkell and Linwood are both commercial corridors.

Land cover data (Figure 6) is derived from the National Land Cover Database 2006 dataset.[7] Based on Landsat satellite data from 2006, this dataset uses a classification scheme containing 16 different land classes applied across the contiguous United States (for a more detailed description, see the full "Play&grounds: Open Space Visioning Plan"). This form of remotely sensed land cover imagery augments aerial imagery (Figure 7) by offering an abstract reading of the materiality. While we can easily see from the aerial image that the neighborhood consists of structures and yards, the land cover data helps us see the intensity of that development in terms of materials and perviousness. It shows that certain abandoned areas of the neighborhood are vegetated to a degree that they conform to at least one definition of "open space." It also reinforces the sense that the neighborhood contains physical divisions between residential areas—in this case, they show up as the darker red lines of more intensely developed commercial and industrial space, as well as the highways.

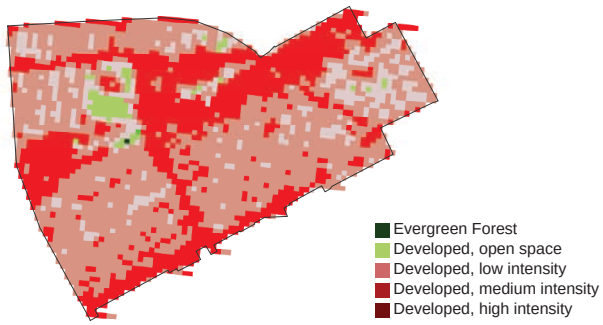


Figure 6 ***Land Cover Map***

Figure 7 ***Aerial Imagery***

Topographical analysis was completed using LiDAR data of Wayne and Washtenaw Counties from the spring of 2009 (Figure 8), and takes into account the built environment as well as land elevation. It shows that all of the HVI neighborhood falls within an elevation range of 623 – 653 feet above sea level. In effect, this means that the neighborhood's topography is fairly uniform, with a slight depression in the south-central area and along the highway, which is recessed. Topographical data is useful

for determining the direction that water might flow and collect, such as during a storm or flood. Flow accumulation modeling (Figure 9) uses that information to generate a drainage network that shows the relative difference in water quantity that an area would be expected to receive given the direction of flow in surrounding areas (for a more detailed description, see the full "Play&grounds: Open Space Visioning Plan").[8] The findings point to lower accumulation throughout the neighborhood, with three lines of high accumulation along the highway and crosscutting two residential areas where water is especially likely to collect.

Figure 8 ***Topography Map***

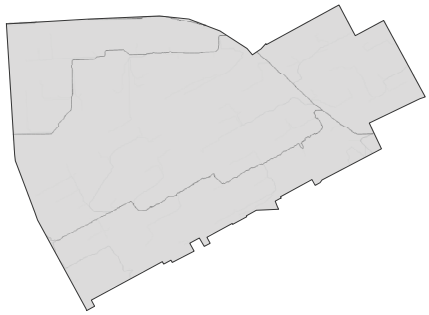


Figure 9 ***Flow Accumulation Map***

Population (Figure 10) and residential vacancy (Figure 11) analyses add yet another layer to our understanding of the neighborhood, and can be viewed at multiple scales. The map showing total population by block group is a broad-scale interpretation of the data, which comes from the 2010 U.S. Census. Although at a glance, it's clear that the neighborhood's central block group is the most populated, it should be noted that over 175 housing units have been added to the east block groups since the 2010 Census. In any case, census block groups may not be the most helpful unit of analysis in understanding the demographics of this neighborhood. One reason is the seemingly arbitrary distinction that they draw between neighboring blocks, and the association of other blocks that are farther removed from one another. They also obscure variations in population that might greatly differentiate one part of the neighborhood from another. This is clear when we look at a map that shows population by block. We find that the more highly populated areas are still clustered in the central part of the neighborhood, though they tend to be located towards the west and on blocks that contain multi-family housing units.

The map of residential vacancies shows the number of vacant housing units that can be found on each block. It is most useful when interpreted along with

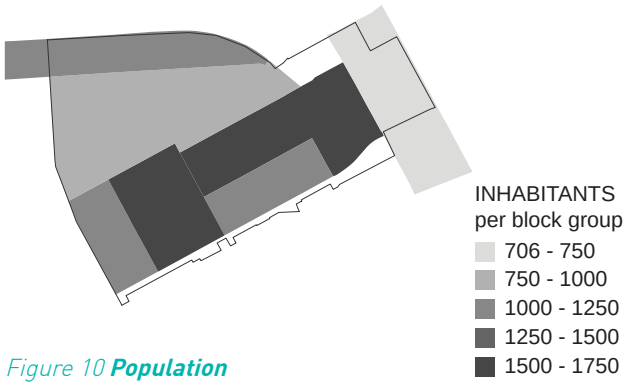


Figure 10 ***Population***

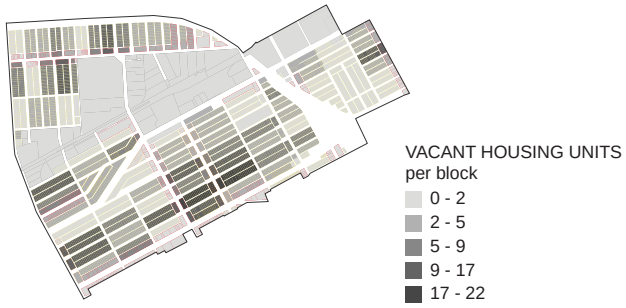


Figure 11 ***Residential Vacancy***

other data or knowledge about the neighborhood, and can serve to add dimension to population analysis. What we can glean from this is that even in blocks that reported 90-124 residents in the 2010 Census, 17-22 of the housing units may be vacant. So, even though those blocks with higher populations may have more residents, they are still not occupied to the full capacity of the housing stock.

Using a combination of land use information, residential parcel survey data, aerial imagery, and local knowledge, we have created a dataset that displays the neighborhood's open space assets (please see the full "Play&grounds: Open Space Visioning Plan" for notes regarding the accuracy of the data and discussion of verification). Maps made from this information help to visualize the distribution of open space assets over space and explore opportunities for design interventions.

Photographic Inventory

The photographic inventory is authored, in large part, by Shannon Cobb, a young resident of the neighborhood and a regular participant in Focus: HOPE's photography workshops. Ms. Cobb was tasked with photographing the framework's nine open space typologies, and the active nature of these areas and their users. As a resident, Ms. Cobb has been instrumental in her ability to photograph others using the neighborhood's public open spaces. Her photography shows community engagement, educational programming, playful occupation of open spaces in addition to the Village's specific physical features. The photographic inventory provides a culturally rich database that presents the social aspects of the HOPE Village landscape more faithfully than data is able to do alone.

Figure 12 ***Examples from the Photographic Inventory***

Plant Inventory

The report also contains a plant inventory of the HVI neighborhood that shows the characteristics of existing species and lists other viable species that may bring positive aesthetic and ecosystem impacts. This inventory was completed with the assistance of Lin Lin, a recent graduate of the University of Michigan's graduate program in Landscape Architecture using a walking survey covering each major segment of the neighborhood. The work was augmented with previous work completed by Tetra Tech and the Greening of Detroit.

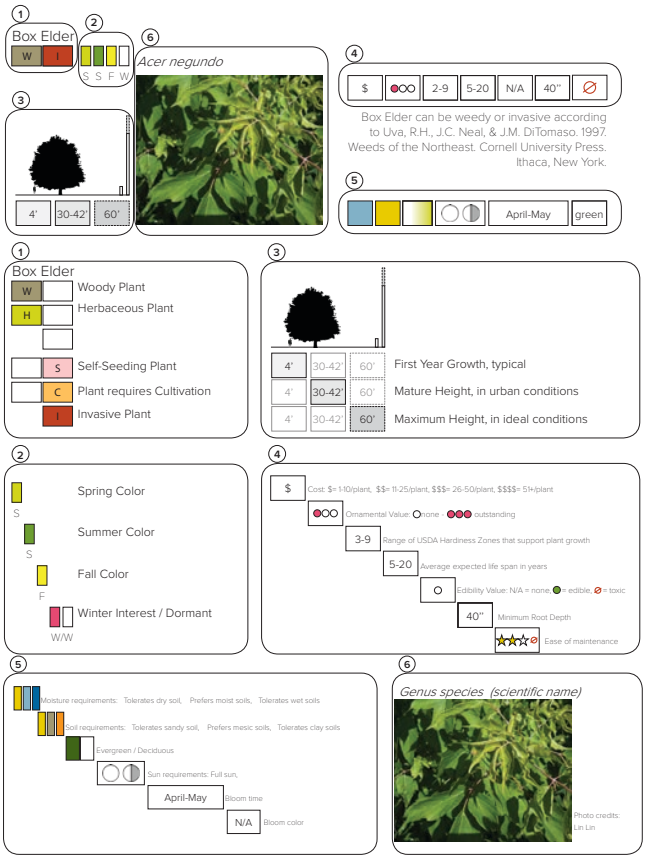


Figure 13 ***Key from the Plant Inventory***

Research Methods of Design: the Sustainable Open Space Framework

Our findings also include the use of design synthesis to visually examine open space frameworks and to initiate conversations with community members surrounding shared visions for the future of HOPE: Village. Our findings suggest that landscape is a critical interface between physical and cultural worlds, and its design enhance the resilience of both. Moreover, the framework considers that applying this concept to public open space, which belongs to the community, provides unique opportunities to nurture community building efforts and civic engagement.

Our partnership believes that small landscape interventions play a critical role in fostering community and inspiring a commitment to the environment that we live in. The targeted areas for intervention position youth as central participants in achieving a sustainable future. Working for and with the younger members of the community is an important step in ensuring their engagement in the future implementation of this framework.

The proposed framework considers land use strategies and their appropriateness for different segments of the open space network, with special attention to specific issues such as the suitability of urban agriculture, strategies for the temporary occupation of vacant properties, storm water management practices, and the design of the soft mobility (non-motorized) network. In particular, we focused on nine typologies of open space: playgrounds, playfields, parks & plazas, schoolyards, community gardens, alleys, rail & utility corridors, streetscapes and vacant land (Appendix, Figure 24).

The framework is a product of case study research, observation and expertise, and an evaluation of the unique character of the HOPE Village neighborhood.

It was developed alongside the inventory, taking into account the current usage patterns and physical characteristics of the open space areas. The nine typologies of open space are a way of organizing the spaces cataloged in the inventory. These are associated with ten components of sustainable open space—land use strategies and elements that can be implemented in an open space area (Figure 15).

These, in turn, are associated with their individual benefits, according to their impacts on the three cornerstones of sustainability: environment, economics, and society. The typologies, components, and benefits are organized into a matrix in order to show and compare the relationships between them. This method of organization was inspired in part by the City of Philadelphia's Green Plan, a preliminary survey of green spaces, green elements, and quality of life indicators.[9] The importance of an approach such as this is to enable decision making in response to individual opportunities while keeping in consideration a relative hierarchy of potential. The matrix also recognizes that in any circumstance of site-selection, it will continue to be important to make these decisions in coordination with the residents living near sites being considered and to solicit their ideas and opinions about the priorities they'd most support.

The framework analyses and visualizations also provided a base set of information that we brought to public engagement meetings to initiate conversations. Community input played an essential role in defining a focus area and informing planning and design proposals in the initial phases of this project. The research team sought diverse perspectives by targeting a range of age groups in different settings. To interact with youth, the team directly engaged three separate groups with activities and discussion. The first group consisted of participants in one of Focus: HOPE's summer photography workshops for students from the fourth to eighth grades. The second consisted of neighborhood teens and volunteers from Summer in the City's summer program (SITC). The third involved the participants of the SITC summer program (Figure 14). To engage older generations, the team looked to the Village of Oakman Manor, a senior home located at the corner of Oakman and Woodrow Wilson, east of the Lodge Freeway. Other public engagement initiatives include an open charrette to involve adults and families, and meetings with members of the Oakman Boulevard Community Association, and the Linwood Business Owners Association (Figure 14).

Our findings throughout the framework have been very much influenced by the conversations and interactions we've had the privilege to participate in. We found the most success by attending events that were organized around an event which shared a possible interest in nurturing an open space network, such as the summer in the city program where the children were clearly excited and opinionated regarding what makes for a great play space. In this way, as we continue to cooperate with Focus: HOPE, and more specifically, develop the construction plans for the vacant corner of Oakman and Linwood, we will continue to seek out events that are already active and underway within the HOPE Village neighborhoods in order to continue

Figure 14 ***Summer in the City Workshop and Oakman Manor conversations***

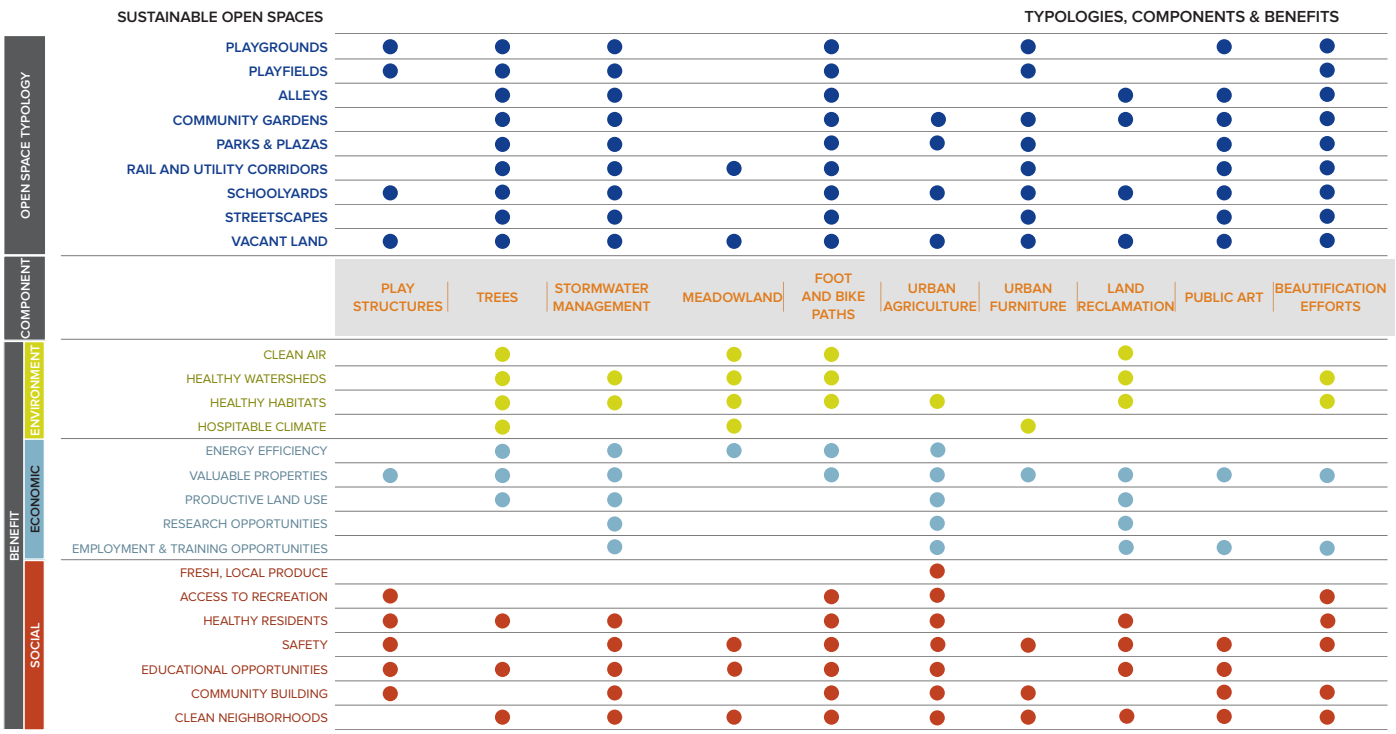


Figure 15 ***Sustainability, Scenario Matrix***

to solicit feedback as well as build a constituency that feels a sense of connection and commitment to those open spaces undergoing a transformation from underutilized to integrated and active.

6 Glazer Playground Improvements

During winter semester 2013, students from Professor Bob Grese's landscape architecture design class from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment worked with children and teachers at New Paradigm Glazer Academy to develop design ideas for revamping the schoolyard.

The project was a unique partnership with Focus: HOPE and Christ Church Cranbrook. University of Michigan held a series of workshops with children at the school and created imaginative plans for renovating the school's playground and creating a series of garden spaces in the schoolyard.

With generous support from Christ Church, Focus: HOPE was able to hire one of the students from the class—Robert Primeau—to work as an intern through the summer and work with Glazer to generate a plan for playground improvements that could be implemented in a series of volunteer workdays in August to have new playground equipment in place when children returned to school in September.

Robert sought advice from playground equipment manufacturers and carefully evaluated existing equipment and what could be purchased with the funds that had been raised. In the end, it was decided to remove the larger of two existing play structures that had key broken features and to repaint the smaller of the two structures. Features to be added included a new basketball play area, re-surfaced track, climbing structures, swings, benches, a zip-line, and balancing structures. Dozens of dedicated volunteers from the community, Glazer, Christ Church, and UM joined to install the equipment and prepare the play areas to open when classes began in September (see Appendix, Figure 27).

Recommendations

"Residential streetscapes hold a large responsibility for the quality of life of the residents living there."

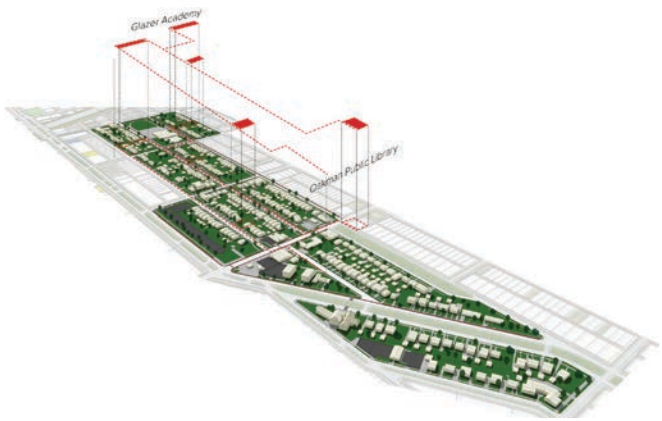


Figure 16 ***Model of the Area of Focus***

Focus Efforts within a Focus Area

Following the broader framework and inventory analysis, we first recommend that future efforts of open space revitalization and investment be initially focused in an area of the HOPE: Village that holds the potential to establish a central open space network that ties together established and important neighborhood institutions. The area is anchored in the east by Glazer Elementary, and in the west by the Parkman Branch of the Detroit Public Library, two of the main civic assets in the neighborhood.

The area was selected based on six major considerations, and informed by the project's inventories, site visits, discussions with Focus: HOPE's Community Development staff, feedback from the Community Advisory Board, and input from the community. The considerations included:

1. That the area include recognized neighborhood and city assets
2. That the area serve a diversity of users from the neighborhood and beyond who could be involved in the design process
3. That the area be large enough to illustrate a variety of networking opportunities
4. That the area be diverse enough to integrate different typologies of public open space
5. That the area be small enough to increase the

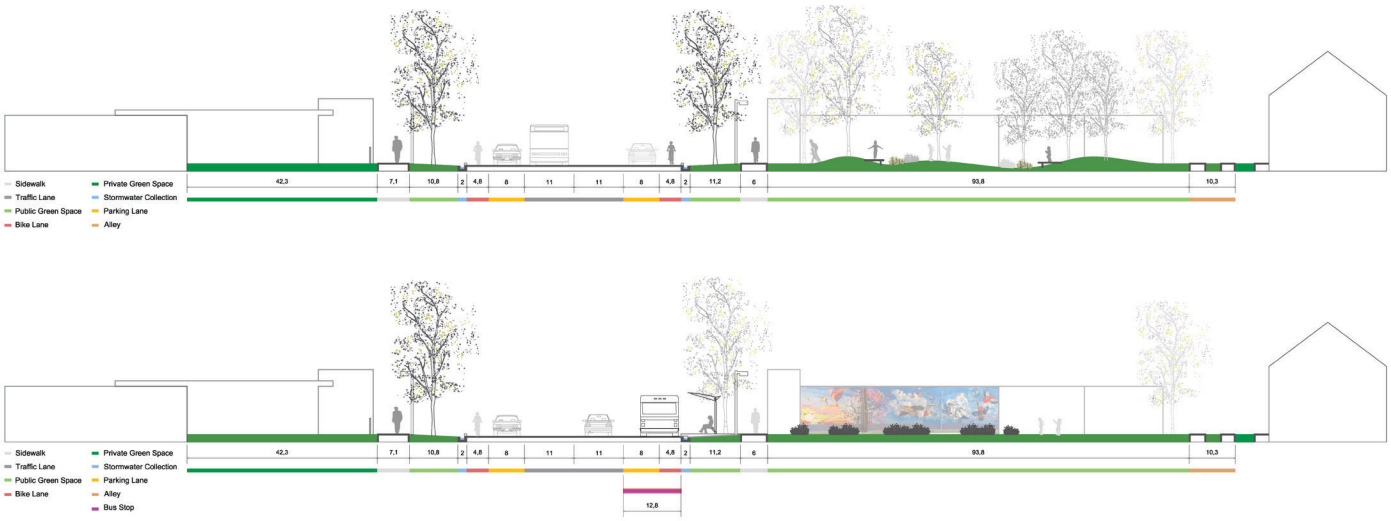


Figure 17 ***Linwood Avenue Scenarios: Street Right of Way & Vacancy Strategies***

chances of successful implementation

6. That the area be a currently active space where interventions and their effects would be noticeable

In addition to possessing the potential to reinforce those assets that are already serving as anchors within the community, the focus area fosters three types of open space recommendations that are more extensively described and illustrated within the broader Play&Grounds visioning plan. The work showcases ideas for streetscape improvements, strategies for reclaiming residential vacant lots, and playground improvements, as exemplified by the newly constructed play equipment, installed over the summer in the Glazer Academy schoolyard, as an outcome of the work done in the School of Natural Resources and Environment's Landscape Architecture studio, coordinated by Robert Grese (see Appendix, Figure 27).

In selecting this area, we recognize that both the library and the elementary school are two important anchors for the community. The Ford-LaSalle Playground and the Focused Hands Community Garden are each within a block of either the school or the library. Each holds opportunities for youth and families. Between these two sites are a handful of the neighborhood's open space amenities, as well as some of the more highly populated blocks in the neighborhood.

For example, LaSalle is an important route for many residents as a two-way connector to Davison. Automobile traffic is relatively light along LaSalle, with Linwood serving as the main thru-street for non-local traffic. LaSalle is also a fairly active street. Residents there, many of whom live in the apartment buildings along that stretch, will often sit together outside near the curb. The park, meanwhile, serves as a destination for play.

The area of focus also affords the opportunity to coordinate improvement efforts for the neighborhood open spaces with efforts already underway to improve the business corridor along Linwood. Here, the ongoing streetscaping design process spearheaded by the Linwood Business Owners Association and Focus: HOPE, is an important component within a broader open space network to provide continuity in the quality of urban spaces throughout the neighborhood and encourage improved conditions for walking and biking.

Figure 18 ***Linwood Avenue: Existing Conditions***

Figure 19 ***Linwood Avenue: Proposed Right of Way***

Figure 20 ***Ford Street: Existing Conditions***

Figure 21 ***Ford Street: Proposed Right of Way***

Partner to Construct Designed Elements that Foster Street Life

Designing and improving streetscapes is an effective way to respond to the diverse characteristics of the neighborhood and establish networks that integrate these areas. Residential streetscapes, in particular, hold a large responsibility for the quality of life of the residents living there. In order for these streetscapes to be safe places for children, teens, adults and the elderly alike, basic conditions need to be met.

The importance of Linwood Avenue in the HOPE Village is manifold: on one side, it is the main thoroughfare for many Detroiters to access the Lodge Freeway in their daily commute in and out the suburbs. On the other, it is the main commercial artery serving the needs of the neighborhood. For these reasons, the face of Linwood Avenue plays an important role in the overall image of the neighborhood, not only for the residents, but for the city at large.

The current state of Linwood, with higher rates of commercial vacancy and high density of fast traffic, does not serve the residents, as it lacks the capacity to support storefronts that host basic services and amenities including, but not limited to, healthy food options. The corridor needs to retain its business fabric, and invest in the urban landscape to better serve the residents and, in turn, be a more desirable environment for business owners to enjoy success and stability.

The streetscape proposal for Linwood, therefore, includes a complete street approach to welcome multi-modal transportation options such as bikes, bus transit and pedestrians. In addition to this, the renders showcase trees and planted stormwater gardens (rain gardens or swales), all of which would both add to the quality and experience of the environment as well as afford opportunities to forge partnerships with municipal, institutional and foundation supported initiatives aimed at the development and support of bikeways and green infrastructure.

Invest in the Temporary Occupation of Key Vacant Nodes

The approach to residential vacancy has followed a two-tier approach. First, the team developed a series of scenarios to discuss with residents. With these visualizations the team solicited ideas and learned about attitudes towards residential vacant lots among members of the community. The scenario approach was the perfect tool to challenge preconceived notions about the desirability of "solutions" being applied elsewhere in Detroit. In this sense, we discussed the desirability of community gardens, parking lots, playfields or blotting among different age groups, from different areas in the community. The options presented in the scenarios triggered interesting conversations and revealed equally important attitudes. Emerging from these discussions are four recommendations surrounding priorities for the temporary occupation and transformation of vacancy in the HOPE Village.

1. We recommend that landscape efforts focus on plants and groundscapes that offer low maintenance and provide a distinct aesthetic difference from the plants that otherwise "naturalize" vacant properties. Residents expressed a positive opinion of the presence of community gardens within the neighborhood but little to no desire to directly participate in them. Rather, residents expressed strong support for continued tree-planting efforts as well as landscaping that could bring color to the lots.

2. We recommend that residents who are interested in taking care of adjacent, vacant properties be encouraged to do so by aiding or recognizing the importance of their efforts to care for otherwise uncared for properties.

3. We recommend that efforts to develop or provide outdoor facilities for teens locate on vacant properties that are not directly adjacent to occupied residential lots. Most residents expressed concern about this type of occupation of vacant properties due to a perceived conflict owing to noise and activities that could go late into the night and disrupt quiet residential areas. While the perceived conflict may be greater than any actual conflict that might arise from this situation, the stress and anxiety triggered by this perception is very real and must be respected until the time that perceptions can shift into a more positive light owing to more positive experiences. Teen activity spaces are significantly lacking in the HOPE Village, so we additionally recommend that the development and design of spaces which could appropriately host basketball, dance and other recreational activities continue to be a high priority for Focus: HOPE's community outreach efforts.

4. We recommend that the vacant site at the corner of Oakman and Linwood serve as the first site for the implementation of vacancy transformation design strategies. The identification of this site emerged out of conversations with Focus: HOPE staff, community residents and librarians at the Parkman Branch Library. The potential of this site is enormous, given its adjacency to the Focused Hands Community Garden and position of "gateway" entry to the Focus: HOPE campus and the Oakman Boulevard Historic District. Current design development has identified three primary implementation aspects including

   (1) the demolition of the existing fence around the entire parcel and removal of uneven asphalt surface (shared costs with Focus:HOPE), in preparation for the future plans of development of a market place;

   (2) the design conceptualization, development and implementation of the park in the southern

portion of the site (a rectangle of dimensions 100'x35', contiguous to the Focused Hands Gardens). The design includes a treatment of the ground including a geometrical pattern alternating plantings and gravel areas, planter boxes of galvanized steel with seating areas, the planting of a mature tree, a soft fence facing the north side of the park, and the insertion of a small water feature (this element pending matching funds from the University of Michigan Office of Research); and

(3) continued efforts to program the space for use as a market space to increase the occupation and visibility of the site. Growing out of this recommendation to start tranforming the image of the site, the DreamUp! event welcomed visitors and residents alike during the Eleanor's Walk for HOPE in October 2013 (Figure 24).

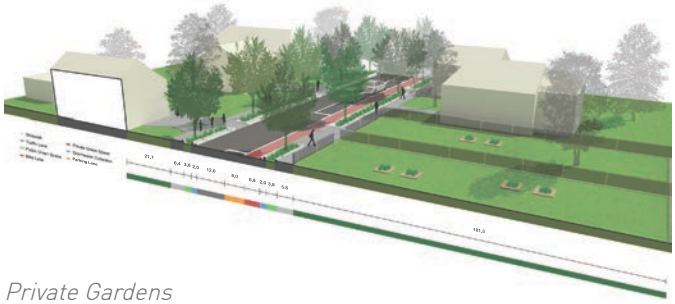
Implementation Strategies: Potential Partnerships and Programs

Implementation is an important aspect of achieving the ideas represented in this open space visioning plan to enable HOPE Village to move toward more sustainable public open space design. To that end, we describe some possible alternatives for the types of actions that Focus: HOPE and its partners may need to undertake in the next phase of their planning efforts. The following is an abridged summary of the implementation strategies that we recommend, given the complexity of decision making when there are so many pieces of a networked "puzzle".

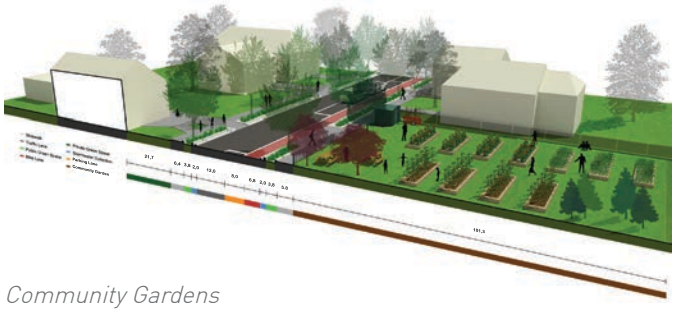
1. In most, if not all, of the vacant properties, partnerships will be necessary to achieve the implementation of a transformation strategy. Focus: HOPE has sponsored many successful partnerships in the past and we see a great value in an approach that builds on past relationships. We recommend that partnerships formed with the shared interest in transforming vacant properties extend beyond partnerships associated with coursework and class projects at local universities and institutions. While a large amount of exciting work has come from this type of partnership, the implementation of these ideas has limited potential owing to the lack of funding sources as well as the limitation of the timing of academic semesters. A large number of governmental, institutional, non-profit, for-profit and community based organizations are identified as other potential partners (for the full listing, see the full "Play&Grounds: Open Space Visioning Plan").

2. A second avenue toward successful implementation of an open space network will require the continued involvement of community outreach and education. In particular, we recommend that local community efforts continue to find ways to reach both targeted (bike riders, for example) and larger audiences. Recent discussions surrounding Pop Up Parlors and informal occupations of existing properties to sponsor activities and conversations possess a great deal of potential to build community support and help everyone imagine vacant properties as occupied once more. In addition, we recommend that efforts extend to groups beyond the boundaries of HOPE Village, in order to build networks with others in the city and to position the efforts happening within HOPE Village as crucial components of a larger urban network. Possible groups could include those already working on efforts to establish greenway and bike lane efforts.

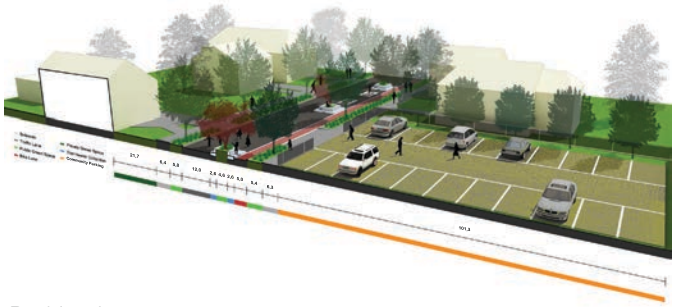
3. Perhaps the most challenging component of implementation surrounds decision making targeting priority locations and intervention time lines. The design visualizations that compose a significant portion of the visioning plan of Play & Grounds make significant effort to communicate the necessity for design thinking to be synthetic.



Private Gardens



Community Gardens



Parking Lots

Playfields

Figure 22 ***Residential Vacant Lots: Visualizing Options***

Figure 23 ***Residential Lots: Three Strategies for Vacancy***

While the acquisition of individual components of street furniture or planting beds, etc. will undoubtedly bring positive benefits to the HOPE Village community, continuing to involve design professionals in conversations will enable ongoing discussions about how to make more out of a little. In other words, we recommend that the involvement of design professionals can assist Focus: HOPE's efforts to make positive change and transform the physical character of the community through the targeted implementation of components and phasing of longer term projects. The full report identifies possible avenues to contact and engage design

professionals in the Detroit Metro area that could be potential partners, in addition to our ongoing commitment to continue our own engagement with Focus: HOPE.

4. It is through these partnerships with the larger community (HVI residents and businesses, donors, academic institutions and philanthropies), that designers can work closely with Focus: HOPE to leverage funding opportunities that advance the agenda for the transformation of the public space network in the HOPE Village. Under the umbrella of this grant, this team has already identified a series of funding opportunities: National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the Knights Foundation, Art Place, Kresge Foundation, just to name a few of the identifies targets. In addition, working through the University of Michigan, this team has also identified opportunities to match external funds through the Office for the Vice President of Research at the University of Michigan (OVPR). For the full listing of potential funding sources, see the full "Play&Grounds: Open Space Visioning Plan."

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Figure 24 ***DreamUp Event in the Linwood Oakman Corner***

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Appendix

Figure 25 ***Open Space Typology Photographic Matrix***

TYPOLOGIES

ALLEYS | RAIL & UTILITY CORRIDORS | STREETSCAPES | VACANT LAND

COMPONENTS

- PLAY STRUCTURES
- TREES
- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
- MEADOWLAND
- FOOT AND BIKE PATHS
- URBAN AGRICULTURE
- URBAN FURNITURE
- LAND RECLAMATION
- PUBLIC ART
- BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS

Landscape Architecture Studio, Students' work at Glazer Academy: students workshops, and design proposals: Sensory Playscape (left)Adventure Playground (center), Happy Habitats (right)

Engineering Students' work: New Roots Growing System, Focused Hands Garden, and Learning from HOPE Village

Liquid Planning Students' work: Follow the leader (upper row), and Running in Circles (lower row)

Figure 26 ***Images of Student Work: Landscape Architecture Studio (upper two rows), Engineering (center), and Liquid Planning Seminar, Architecture and Urban Planning (lower two rows).***

Figure 27 ***Glazer Playground Project build-day***

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