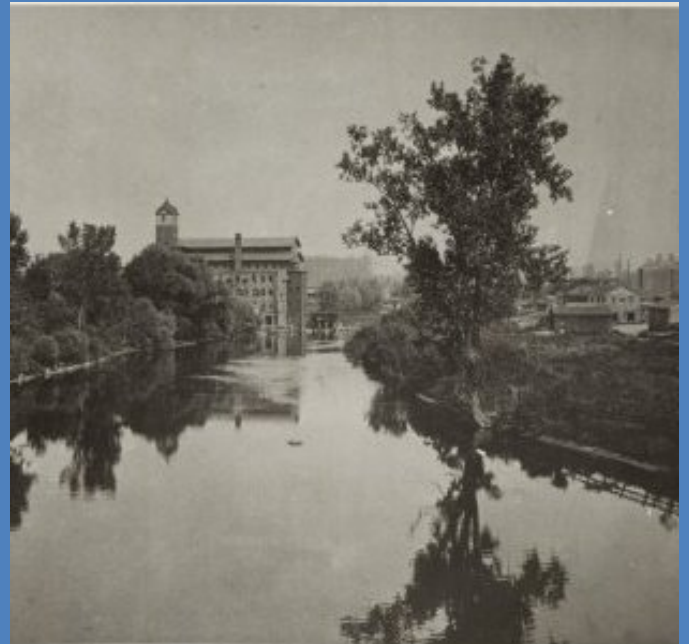*City of Ypsilanti:*

MIDTOWN
&
RIVERSIDE

NEIGHBORHOOD
STUDY

2011 Comprehensive Study
E.M.U Department of Geography and Geology 559

Acknowledgements

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E.M.U. Student Government

Table of Contents

We represent a group of students from Eastern Michigan University's Urban and Regional Planning Program. The focus of Planning Program's 2011 Graduate Planning and Preservation Studio was on two near campus neighborhoods in the City of Ypsilanti: the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods. As a class, we assessed the existing conditions, conducted public and stakeholder input opportunities, and developed a series of recommendations. As a result of the live aspect of this project, our group has a vested interest in its outcome, and we hope that our recommendations are considered by the City of Ypsilanti. Throughout the entire process we have kept one prevailing question in mind: "How can near campus neighborhoods be made sustainable, unique, vibrant, stable, diverse and safe?"

Below is a map of our study area. Summit Street represents the western boundary of the study area, including an extension in the southwest corner to encompass the properties on the west side of the street. Similarly, an expansion of the study area's eastern boundary, Huron Street, covers the properties on the east side of the street. The study area is bordered to the north by Washtenaw Ave, Cross Street, and Forrest Street. This boundary was designed to exclude Eastern Michigan University property and the Water Tower. The southern boundary of the study area follows Michigan Avenue east until it merges with Congress Street. Certain properties along Michigan Avenue have been left out of the study area; those primarily include retail and commercial uses such as Brandy's Liquor Store and the Michigan Avenue Animal Hospital. The southern boundary meets the south edge of the eastern boundary on Huron Street just north of Pearl St. The boundary separating Midtown from Riverside follows eastbound Washtenaw Avenue until Hamilton Street, then follows southbound Hamilton until Michigan Avenue. All property southwest of the boundary until Summit Street represent Midtown. All other property to the north and east

Study Area Parcels

represent Riverside.

In this section of the report, we present a thorough profile of the neighborhoods in our study area in order to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T.) facing Midtown and Riverside. We begin with a brief history of the study area.

Midtown and Riverside History

In 1809, Godfroy's on the Pottawatomie Trail was a French fur trading post and the first permanent building in Washtenaw County, located where the Indian trail crossed the Huron River. Three French men took up land claims on the west side of the Huron River: the northern boundary ran WSW for two miles, first along Forest and then along Cross; it made a right-angle turn and ran two miles SSE along Mansfield before turning east back to the river along I-94. Our study area comprises roughly the northeast quadrant of the original French Claims.

By the time Michigan's territorial government commissioned a road linking Detroit to Chicago in 1825, the natives had moved west and the traders had followed them. Three investors, including federal Judge Augustus Brevoot Woodward of Detroit, saw the land-development opportunity offered by this improvement in transportation, purchased the French Claims, and promptly platted a village. It was Woodward who named the village after Demetrius Ypsilanti, who led the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire from 1821 to 1830.

Within a few years, the first public school on the west side of the river was opened at what is now 119 N. Washington St., St. Luke's Episcopal Church was founded at 120 N. Huron St., and St. John the Baptist Catholic Church was built at Cross and Hamilton Streets. Arden H. Ballard, who may have built the Ladies Literary Clubhouse at 218 N. Washington St., settled there by 1828. The first cemetery was established at the corner of Summit St. and Chicago Road now the site of Brandy's Liquor Store on Michigan Ave., in 1830.

When the first railroad in Michigan passed through as it connected Detroit to Chicago in 1838, Ypsilanti became an excellent location to establish mills, factories and machine shops powered by water from the Huron River to make goods that could then be shipped all over the country. The Michigan Normal School, now Eastern Michigan University, also brought a new population and market when it was established just north of our study area in 1849 and dedicated in 1852.

Many of the homes in Midtown and Riverside were built between 1860 and 1890. Early among them was the Daniel Quirk Jr. House and Gardens at 206 N. Huron St. (now Manchester and Associates law firm), at which Quirk's daughter married future Michigan governor G. Mennen Williams. Even earlier was the home of his partner Asa Dow at 220 N. Huron, which now houses the Ypsilanti Historical Museum. A Gothic revival mansion at 502 W. Forest Ave. built in 1870 was only one in a line of impressive homes that lined that street. They were demolished in order to make way EMU's expansion in the mid-20th century.

By 1888, businesses in the study area included the Curtis Carriage Factory, Cleary's Business College and the Ypsilanti Dress Stay Manufacturing Company. Zwergels on Cross Street opened in 1896 to sell books, groceries, dry goods, ice cream, and it became the campus stop when the Ypsi-Ann interurban arrived in 1898. From Ann Arbor, the interurban line ran along Packard and Cross St. through the Riverside community to Washington St., south to

Michigan Avenue, then east to Wayne and west to Saline. The interurban closed down in 1928.

The landmark "gravity system of water works on the corner of N. Summit and W. Cross" was built in 1890, and its "ill-proportioned wooden dome" had already prompted famous landscape architects the Olmstead Brothers to offer a proposal to change its shape by 1913. W. Congress (now Michigan Ave.) and Washington Streets were paved with brick in 1899 and 1900. In 1928, architect Ralph Gerganoff pioneered a phenomenon that would become a hallmark of the study area when he converted two mansions on N. Washington Street into apartment buildings.

Brooks Food Center moved from Depot Town to 406 W. Michigan Ave in 1936, instituting innovative practices like self-service and evening and Sunday hours in order to compete against A&P and the Kroger across the street. It expanded and thrived for decades, but a robber shot and killed one of the Brooks brothers in 1978 and the remaining brother sold the business in 1985. It is now the Mexican market Dos Hermanos.

The greatest time of change and growth for Midtown and Riverside occurred in the 1940s and 50s. The construction of the Willow Run Bomber Plant during World War II prompted a large migration of people from Kentucky and Tennessee to come seeking jobs, and many spacious single-family homes in our study area were converted to apartment buildings in response to the increasing the demand for housing. As the manufacturing industry declined at the end of the 20th century, the apartments became primarily occupied by students from the growing Eastern Michigan University.

Demographics, Housing, and Property Profile

Population

Block-level data from the 2000 census aligns fairly closely with our study area, with the greatest mismatch at the northeast and southwest corners. The data indicates 8,525 residents of the two neighborhoods combined,

Figure 1: Population

- Midtown
- Riverside

which is approximately 38% of Ypsilanti's total population (Figure 1). Riverside has a little less than three times the population of Midtown (6,279 and 2,246 residents, respectively).

72% of the population is white and 22% of the population is black. The majority of residents (65%) were born in Michigan. Less than 5% were born outside the United States.

Fully three-quarters of the population (76%) is between the ages of 15 and 25, and another 10% are 26-30 years old. Children younger than 15 make up about 2% of the population.

Household Size

Just 12% of households consist of two or more related individuals, defined by the Census Bureau as a family household (Figure 2).

The remaining households are about evenly split between one-person households (45%) and households consisting of two or more unrelated individuals (43%).
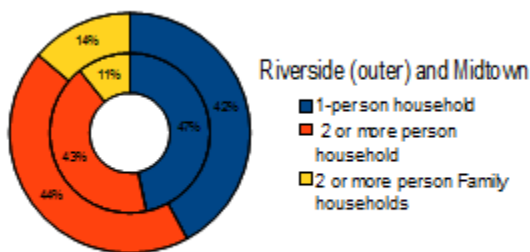
Figure 2: Household Size
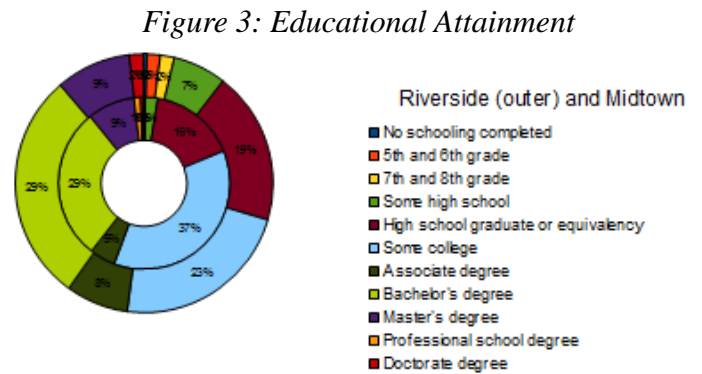
Education

Three quarters of the residents have attended college: 36% have some college education but less than a four-year degree, 29% have bachelor's degrees, and the remaining 11% have master's, professional, or doctorate degrees (Figure 3).

Income and Poverty

Household incomes at the block group level range from $16,336 to $30,7285, with higher incomes at the periphery of the study area than at the core. By comparison, the median household income for the City of Ypsilanti is $28,610; for Washtenaw County, it is $51,990.
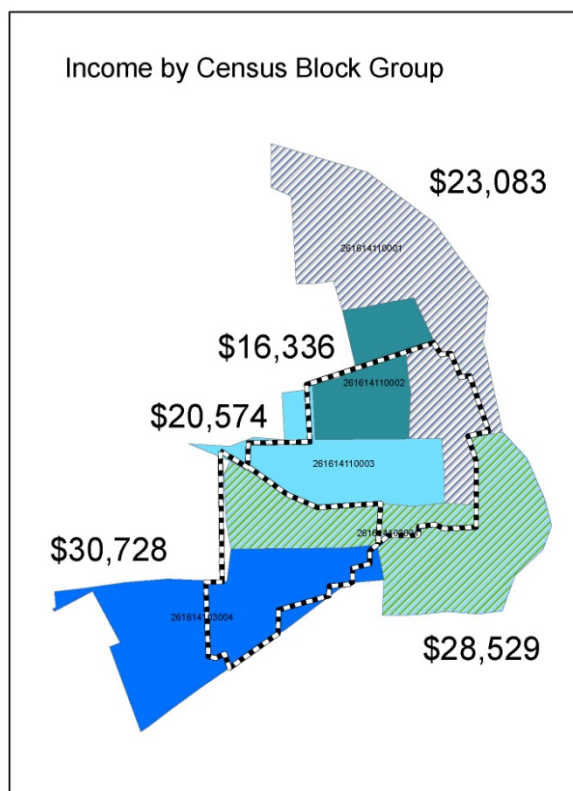
Figure 5

There was some disparity in poverty levels, defined in 1999 as an income below $8,240 for one person or $16,700 for a family of four, between the two neighborhoods as approximated by the block groups. Nearly twice the proportion of Riverside residents (30%) reported incomes below the poverty level as Midtown residents (15%). 84% of the households in poverty consisted of unrelated individuals (Figure 5).

Employment

Occupations are overwhelmingly white collar. Sales and office jobs employ 40% of the population, with management (24%) and service (26%) jobs close behind. Jobs in construction and production make up the remaining 10% (Figure 6).

The most detailed jobless rate available is for the City of Ypsilanti. Between May 2009 and September 2010, it has ranged between 12.0% and 14.2%, averaging 12.9%.

Riverside (outer) and Midtown

- Management; professional; and related
- Service
- Sales and office
- Construction; extraction; and maintenance
- Production; transportation; and material moving

29% 22% 27% 23% 43% 31% 10% 2% 7%

Figure 6: Occupations
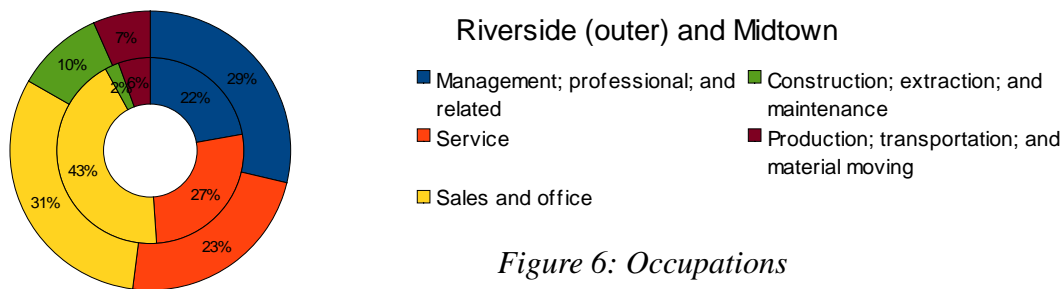
Each of the following characteristics is shared by approximately three-fourths of the population in our study area: white, between the ages of 15 and 25, living in a household alone or with unrelated individuals, possessing some college education, and working a white-collar job. This suggests a demographic homogeneity of neighborhood. Although interesting, it may not be particularly significant because "standard demographic characteristics are the least useful correlates of variations in neighborhood quality" (Greenberg 1999).

Transportation/Commuting

The majority of residents in both Midtown and Riverside drive alone to work. This is another area in which the proportions are different in each neighborhood: 75% of Riverside residents drive alone while 12% walk, whereas only 53% of Midtown residents drive alone and 32% walk. Nationally, walkers comprise 2.5% of all commuters.

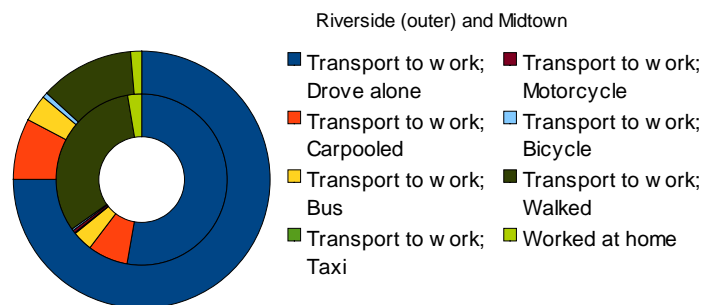84% of residents commute less than 30 minutes, and an additional 10% arrive at work in less than 45 minutes (Figure 7). Of those residents who take public transportation (just under 4% of all workers age 16 and over), however, only 25% commute less than 30 minutes. An additional 36% arrive at work in less than 45 minutes, and 32% of public transportation commutes take 45-59 minutes.

Transportation seems to be the least pressing need for our neighborhoods. Many residents are able to walk to work, and most of the remaining populace drives less than 30 minutes. Given the sharp increase in commute time by users of public transportation, it does not at the moment seem adequate to justify advocating strenuously for a switch to it.

Riverside (outer) and Midtown

- Transport to work; Drove alone
- Transport to work; Carpooled
- Transport to work; Bus
- Transport to work; Taxi
- Transport to work; Motorcycle
- Transport to work; Bicycle
- Transport to work; Walked
- Worked at home

Figure 7: Transportation to Work

Crime

About a third of the crimes in the City of Ypsilanti took place in our study area. This is disproportionate with regard to the site's geographical area (0.44 square miles out of 4.2 square miles, or about 10%), but more representative with regard to the study area's population (38% of Ypsilanti's total population). From EMU's Crime Incident Map[1]:

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[1] Some crimes are reported twice in these charts due to the overlap in reporting timeframes available on the crime incident map. This does not affect the variable of interest, which is the ratio of crimes in our study area to total crimes.

Nov. 15 2010-Jan. 14 2011	Study Area	City of Ypsilanti excluding EMU and study area	Percentage in study area
Arson	0	0	0
Aggravated assault	7	11	39
Burglary	10	48	17
Criminal sexual conduct	1	2	33
Larceny from vehicle	12	32	27
Motor vehicle theft	7	16	30
Robbery	7	8	47
Total	88	161	35

Dec. 25 2010-Feb. 23 2011	Study Area	City of Ypsilanti excluding EMU and study area	Percentage in study area
Arson	0	1	0
Aggravated assault	4	9	31
Burglary	6	19	24
Criminal sexual conduct	0	3	0
Larceny from vehicle	12	23	34
Motor vehicle theft	5	5	50
Robbery	2	6	25
Total	29	66	31

Ypsilanti's crime rates are higher than the state and national averages.

	Ypsilanti	Michigan	United States
Violent crimes per 100,000 population	1377	645	583
Property crimes per 100,000 population	5862	4214	4185

Housing Profile

General

Totals from the 2000 Census indicate that there are 9,215 housing units in Ypsilanti. There is a small disparity between the percentage of owner-occupied (33%) and renter-occupied (57%) homes in the city. In the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods, however, the disparity is much greater: 89% and 85% of the dwellings are renter-occupied, respectively. This extensive stock of rentals houses many of the students attending EMU, but the lopsided distribution has also been perceived as a threat to the property value of home owners in the neighborhood.
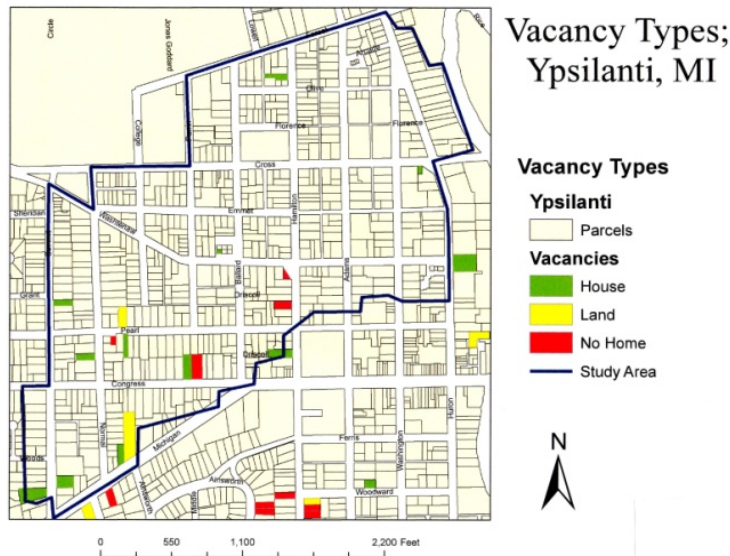
Figure 8

Vacancy Rates

For the entire city of Ypsilanti, we found 664 total vacancies. Of the 69 vacancies in Riverside, 64% were rental properties and 7% were single-family homes. The vacancy comparisons were even more striking in the Midtown neighborhood, where rental properties accounted for 74% of the 70 total vacancies and single-family homes accounted for 13% (Census, 2000). Other vacant uses within the neighborhoods included commercial, retail, and industrial vacancies.

The development of Peninsular Place Apartments may contribute to the rental property vacancies in our study area. According to American Community Survey for Ypsilanti data, the vacancy rate increased from 8% in 2000 to 14.9% in 2005, the year that Peninsular Place opened. This increase of vacant rental properties occurred despite an increase of 5,000 students in EMU's population.

Of course, the existence of Peninsular Place is not solely responsible for the increase in rental vacancies in the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods. Further research must be conducted in order to properly address the high percentage of rental vacancies in both neighborhoods. The rental vacancies may be indicative of a need for better marketing in an effort to attract non-student renters into the area.

Housing Uses in Study Area

The majority of the residences in the study area are 2 to 3 apartment units. However, the residential use map (Figure 9) indicates that there are clusters of 5+ apartment units throughout the study area. For the most part, these large unit residences are in proximity to similar multi-apartment units, but there are exceptions. For example, on Ballard St. between Pearl and Congress, one owner-occupied home is surrounded by six 5+ apartment rental units. The pattern is repeated again on Ballard St., this time between Washtenaw and Pearl; where five 5+ apartment uses surround two single family homes. In both cases, the 5+

Figure 9

11

apartment rental units were converted from single family homes. Currently, under the provisions of the downzoning in Midtown, these parcels remain as conditional uses but must be converted to single family homes in the event of a rebuilding situation.

Age of Homes

Most of the homes in the study area were built between the mid-1800s and 1936 (Figure 12). All of the residential parcels were built in or prior to 1961, thus satisfying the age requirement for a historic district (additional requirements will be explored in the recommendations). The city of Ypsilanti has a firm reputation of celebrating its historic architecture, and this represents an opportunity to expand the benefits of historic preservation beyond the boundaries of the existing district (Figure 13). These benefits include holding on to long standing architectural traditions, giving the community a unique look, providing legal protection for historic resources, controlling demolition and inappropriate infill, tax incentives, economic development, tourism and even local job creation.

Homes Qualifying for Historic Preservation; Based on Age of Home

Qualifying Residential Parcels
Study Area
Residential Units
Year Built
Non-Residential
1819 - 1862
1863 - 1887
1888 - 1910
1911 - 1932
1933 - 1947
1948 - 1961

Ypsilanti Historic District

The Ypsilanti Historic District includes all properties within the area outlined. Additionally, the district includes 401 and 407 S. Adams, 601 W. Forest, and the Water Tower at W. Cross and Washtenaw.

The Starkweather Historic District includes the Starkweather House located at 1266 Huron River Drive.

City of Ypsilanti Planning & Development Department
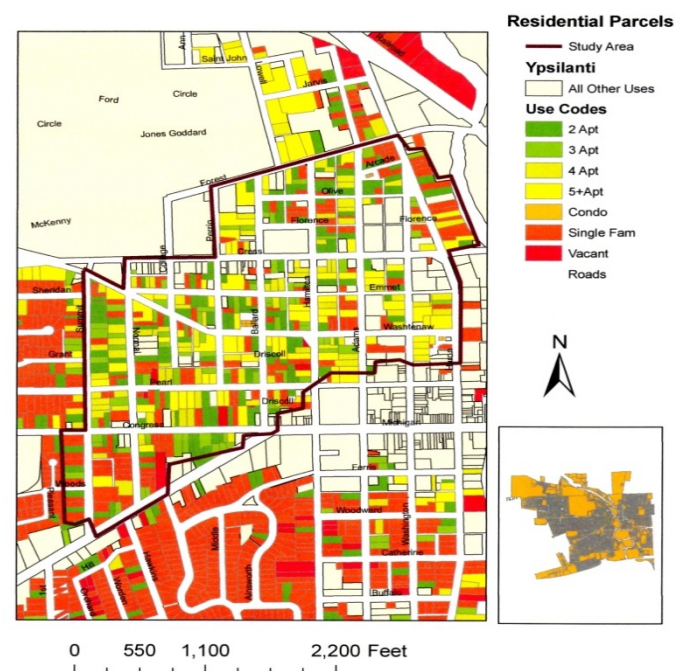Road and parcel data from Washtenaw County
October 9, 2006

Figure 13

Property Profile

      The Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods have two main economic drivers that are directly related to properties. This area is dominated by rentals of residential properties while the commercial activity is represented by a small stretch of businesses down West Cross Street. In order to evaluate the nature of the properties and see what impacts the rentals and businesses have in the area, it is necessary to point out some indicators of showing economic health.

      Property values are often used as an indicator of local economic levels. "Property values take into account many economic and quality of life factors since they reflect demand for an area." (San Diego 2003) Also, according to Galster, Hayes and Johnson (2005), property value can be a "robust" neighborhood indicator when studying social disadvantage and prestige.

      Local governments use many factors (final sales figures, existing comparables, inflation, market conditions, etc.) to calculate what should represent 50% of the cash value of the property, which becomes the assessed value. If the property is a primary residence (the owner actually uses greater than 50% of the structure as their home and primarily stay there over 50% of the time in a year) than a tax exemption is applied resulting in what's called the taxable value. "Michigan law defines principal residence as the one place where a person has his or her true, fixed, and permanent home to which, whenever absent he or she intends to return and that shall continue as a principal residence until another principal residence is established." The county and state further evaluate the property to make sure the 50% cash value is properly represented. Eventually this process yields the state equalized value (SEV) from the exhaustion of tribunals, market analysis, and regional statistics. (Michigan Taxpayer's Guide 2009)

      The primary residence tax exemption is also synonymous with the term Homestead. A truly owner occupied residence is referred to as having 100% Homestead; this is an important indicator that serves as an effective tool for separating residential parcels into ownership groups and it signifies a variance in tax revenue collection (Smith, Murray and O'Dell 2003). The exemption is reported to the Assessor's office in order for a reduction in tax obligation to the owner. As seen in the millage chart defining the tax beneficiaries from the city of Ypsilanti's website (below), there is a difference between Homestead and Non-Homestead. "Pursuant to MCL 211.7cc, eligible homeowners are exempt from paying 18 mills of school operating taxes. To be eligible, the homeowner must both own and occupy his/her principal residence on May 1 each year." (cityofypsilanti.com 2011)

JULY '10	HOMESTEAD	NONHOMESTEAD
GENERAL OPERATING	19.0211	19.0211
POLICE & FIRE PENSION	5.3356	5.3356
DEBT RETIREMENT	0	0
CITY SUB-TOTAL	**24.3567**	**24.3567**
SANITATION	2.7814	2.7814
STREET IMPROVEMENT 01	2.1824	2.1824
STREET IMPROVEMENT 03	2.2109	2.2109
CITY TOTAL	**31.5314**	**31.5314**
LIBRARY	2.1574	2.1574
WCC	3.6856	3.6856
SCHOOL OPER	0.0000	18.0000
SCHOOL DEBT	7.0000	7.0000
STATE ED	6.0000	6.0000
WISD	3.9745	3.9745
COUNTY - SUMMER	4.5493	4.5493
TOTAL OTHER	**27.3668**	**45.3668**
TOTAL JULY	*58.8982*	*76.8982*

The following example shows how the homestead exemption creates a difference between primary residences and rental/investment properties:

> Residential Property (**Homestead**) assessed at $60,000 with 1% Administrative Fee
> * $60,000 x 58.9 = 3,534,000 x 1.01 = 3,569,340 / 1,000 = **$3,569 tax**
> Residential Property (**Non-homestead**) assessed at $60,000 with 1% Administrative Fee
> * $60,000 x 76.9 = 4,614,000 x 1.01 = 4,660,140/ 1,000 = **$4,660 tax**

A rental or investment property would therefore have a greater tax obligation as the school operating mill demands. In the above case, for the same valued home, the non-homestead property pays $1,091 more in taxes (30.5% more than the homestead location).

Square footage of a property is another indicator of not only sales interests for residential, but also of local investment for non-chain commercial business. A study in Andersonville, a neighborhood in Chicago, IL, (2004) showed that when locally originating businesses were patronized, 68 cents of every dollar spent rolled back into the local economy. The study went on to explain that these area-based shops typically employed local residents and often ordered supply and material needs from other local vendors. The amount of square footage of local stores versus franchise/chain stores is also supported by the study. "Urban policy makers pay close attention to real estate occupancy and absorption rates, as improvements in these measures reflect the health of the local real estate market. National chains are often believed to improve these measures, if only because they occupy more space per outlet." The difference that the study points out is that the profit stream and supply lines generally lead directly out of the area, often to another state, thus not leaving a "Local Premium" that smaller, home-grown stores create through community business synergy. "For every square foot occupied by local businesses, the economic impact in the City of Chicago reaches $179. By contrast, for every square foot

occupied by chains, the economic impact reaches only $105."

    Midtown and Riverside Commercial Properties – According to the Ypsilanti Assessor/Inspection Data from 2010, many of the commercially leased properties on Cross St. are currently unoccupied. Out of the 30 parcels deemed as "Commercial Improved" by Ypsilanti from Huron St. to Washtenaw Ave., 11 house no businesses (confirmed by walking down the street). It is still required that the property owners pay taxes on these unused locations.
    The building dates of all of Ypsilanti's "commercial improved" sites range from 1814 to 2009, and those on Cross Street span the years between 1924 and 2001. The most frequent use on this stretch is retail (14 occupied & unoccupied parcels). An additional seven lots are marked as apartments, but the data is questionable because most of the locations shows a zero taxable value. The only chain store that exists on the stretch is a Jimmy John's restaurant.
    The taxable values of the study area parcels serve as indicators for economic review, as do the physical footprints of the buildings. The table below compares the taxable values in our study area to the 320 total Commercial Improved sites in the city alongside the square footage of the buildings.

Square Footage	Study Area	Ypsilanti	Taxable Value	Study Area	Ypsilanti
Smallest	441	128	Minimum	$19,400	$0
Largest	9,811	120,436	Maximum	$290,820	$3,003,300
Average	3,983	5,873	Average	$98, 960	$147,424

Turnover is a key issue. Former city planner Richard Murphy pointed out a restaurant on a walking tour (January 2011) that had housed a number of pizza establishments in a short time. The fact that the location had the ovens for making pizzas was enough for multiple persons to try to establish a successful restaurant. All were unsuccessful, and the failure to thrive as a pizza outlet may be problem of marketing rather than a functional issue. This small commercial district could benefit from the right developer who can utilize the list of incentives that are available from city, state and federal sources.

    Midtown and Riverside Residential/Rental Properties – There are not many abandoned residential sites, according to data obtained directly from the City of Ypsilanti's Assessing and Inspection Departments for 2010: seven out of 537 parcels (1.3%) are denoted as "Residential-Vacant," one of which is a parking lot, and another deemed a gap parcel (a discrepancy in legal descriptions or surveying – "Land descriptions for adjoining parcels sometimes overlap or leave a gap between them." MCGISA 2010). Of the remaining parcels, marked "Residential-Improved," there are 10 bank-owned properties (1.8%) and 11 called "Vacant House" (2%). In total, this represents 5.2% of parcels with a designation of residential in the Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods.
     As stated previously, the streets in Midtown and Riverside are lined with housing that is used mostly for renting. Eighty-two percent of the neighborhoods' residential-improved sites are rental properties; this does not take into account the 72 apartment/condominium parcels that also exist in the study area (Ypsilanti data 2010). The structures are large – averaging 504 square feet larger than the average home in all of Ypsilanti – and often split into several "units" with individual entry. There are primary residences, but the "homestead" percentage is low. In combination, these factors yield an average taxable value that is nearly 18% more than the average taxable value of housing in the city as a whole.

Square Footage	Study Area	Ypsilanti
Smallest	726	220
Largest	5,024	7,072
Average	2,024	1,520
100% Homestead	**Study Area**	**Ypsilanti**
Number	536	4007
Percent of total	18%	65%
Taxable Value	**Study Area**	**Ypsilanti**
Minimum	$4,504	$4,316
Maximum	$166,900	$166,900
Average	$60,195	$51,154

In summary, the Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods are dominated by rental properties which have a significant economic impact, particularly when it comes to tax revenues. The income from rental properties would be sorely missed if the properties entirely converted to 100% primary residences.

The businesses on Cross Street have limited effect on commercial strength but are not too far under the average of Ypsilanti on a whole. This is considering that there are much larger locally based businesses marked as commercial-improved in the city, which would also account for a higher average taxable value. Midtown and Riverside are more residentially structured; even Cross Street has a large number of apartments intertwined throughout the businesses.

Related Plans and Ordinances

In the following section, we provide an analysis of the Cross Street Plan, Ypsilanti Master Plan, Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, and Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance. Their impact on our study area will be examined.

Master Plan

The adopted master plan for the City of Ypsilanti was last updated February of 1998 and contains amendments through December 2004 (City of Ypsilanti Master Plan, 1998). By state law, the City is required to review its master plan every five years, and it would benefit the City to update and rewrite sections of their plan as they seek to comply with the state review law.

Housing Conditions

According to the master plan, 97% of the City's housing is over 25 years old and 60% of the dwellings are over 56 years old. There are 3,400 multiple-unit dwellings, 437 duplexes, and 530 single family homes. In 1990, nearly 85% of the owner-occupied dwellings were valued at less than $100,000, reflecting the advanced age of the structures (Master Plan, 1998).

Maintaining good housing conditions is found to be a challenge due to the large number of short-term student housing rentals and the age of the housing stock. It is felt absentee

landlords or landlords who are unwilling to upgrade properties beyond minimum code requirements intensify negative aspects of the neighborhood (Master Plan, 1998)

The City is comprised of six neighborhoods. However, the neighborhoods presented in the master plan do not align with the Neighborhood Association designations. For this study, we will focus on the Riverside and Midtown Associations and the Cross Street plan.

Neighborhood and Historic Preservation

The Riverside, Midtown and Cross Street areas contain high concentrations of historic buildings with a wide variety of land uses. Many of these historic, once single-family residential homes have been converted into multi-dwelling units to accommodate the high need for student housing (Cross Street Neighborhood Improvement Plan, 2002). Several homes have deteriorated and have become a serious problem for the neighborhoods (Cross Street, 2002).

"The preservation and enhancement of neighborhoods are essential to the success of any community" (Cross Street, 2002). Therefore, the City has established neighborhood and historic preservation goals as a guideline in restoring the neighborhoods. The first goal, "To preserve and enhance the integrity of existing neighborhoods to offer City residents a quality neighborhood environment," has three objectives:

1. Preserve and maintain residential land uses in existing neighborhoods;
2. Enhance the physical appearance of existing neighborhoods and establish programs to minimize blighted housing; and,
3. Foster greater coordination and communication between City and University officials and establish strategies for "town/grown" improvements. (Master Plan, 1998)

Strategies to meet these goals would provide limited rezoning of single-family homes to higher intensity uses, promote neighborhood district identification and programs, engage more responsiveness from landlords and establish a strong partnership with EMU.

The historic preservation goal, "To encourage the preservation of the City's historic character by preserving or restoring historically significant properties, as well as promoting new development compatible with the existing character," also has three objectives:

1. Encourage the rehabilitation of historic structures,
2. Promote historic assets of community; and
3. Ensure new development is compatible with existing historic character (Master Plan, 1998).

Strategies to meet these goals would recruit developers for reuse of vacant structures, provide incentives for restoration of historical buildings and develop a design guideline manual to promote the historic aspects of the city.

Cross Street Residential

The Cross Street neighborhood contains a portion of the Student Housing District. Some of the landlords in this area have made efforts to upgrade and maintain their properties; however, many have not. The increased blight, loss of owner-occupied housing and lack of landlord concern is causing this area to become less desirable for students to live (Cross Street, 2002).

To address these concerns, the Cross Street plan has amended the zoning designations in the small mixed commercial / residential area. The hope is that rezoning the area from a R4 Multiple-Family district to a R3 Multiple-Family district will minimize blight and encourage

upgrades, lessen density and excessive parking, and encourage families to purchase the homes and return them to Single-Family dwellings (Cross Street, 2002).

Additional strategies implemented for the Cross Street area are the implementation of design guidelines, providing density increase incentives, and the creation of off-street shared parking. Currently only fraternities and sororities are regulated by guidelines. The new plan would include any existing single-family homes converted to apartments within the student overlay district, and incentives would be provided for exceeding design guidelines (Cross Street, 2002).

Implementation of the guidelines, stricter code enforcement, and increased single-family home ownership are thought to be effective solutions to preserving the quality of living in these neighborhoods.

Residential Redevelopment

Moving forward, the City hopes to revitalize the Cross Street neighborhood by establishing the following goals:

1. Develop a cohesive neighborhood by facilitating rehabilitation of existing homes, encouraging the construction of new housing, promoting the development of public improvements and open space and increasing neighborhood pride.
2. Maintain and upgrade current housing stock.
3. Preserve and enhance the existing historic district and ensure new residential projects preserve the contextual character of the neighborhood.
4. Improve residential parking throughout the neighborhood.
5. Minimize crime related concerns.
6. Transform Cross Street into a clean, well-maintained neighborhood. (Cross Street, 2002)

Land Use Designations

The City of Ypsilanti has developed many land use designations. The table below highlights those utilized by our study area.

Designation	Definition
R-1 Single Family Residential	low-density, single family detached dwellings (5 to 6 units per acre)
R-2 Two Family Residential	Transitional residential area between single family residential and office or multiple family residential; mix of housing types (12 to 14 dwelling units per acre)
R-3 Medium Density Residential	Serves as a traditional land use between lower and higher density areas (4 dwelling units with a three story height limit on an 8,000 sq. ft. lot)
R-4 High Density Residential	Consists of apartments, condominiums and townhouses that generate high amounts of traffic (6 dwelling units with a six story height limit on an 8,000 sq. ft. lot)
B1 - Local Commercial	Designed to provide local services and convenience shopping for day to day needs of the surrounding community

RO - Mixed Residential / Commercial	Designed to provide a mix of residential and low intensity commercial uses which would allow single, two family, and medium density multiple family housing as a permitted use and high density multiple family, office and select commercial uses as a special use. (Master Plan, 1998)

Cross Street Commercial

Prior to the 1970s, the Cross Street commercial district was a flourishing business area. Traffic redirection, rezoning, business relocations and the closing of the old High School were major contributors to the decline of business activity in this area. Business owners also feel EMU has contributed to the decline of student interest by increasing on-campus student services (Cross Street, 2002).

"Unkempt dumpsters, poor lighting, insufficient and inappropriate signage, sloppy use of materials, poorly maintained back facades, windblown trash and debris and confusing access contribute to perceptions of an unwelcome and unsafe environment" (Cross Street, 2002).

Redevelopment Strategies

The Cross Street commercial area lacks a sense of "place." The City recommends revitalization for this area with the following goals:
1. Improve the physical environment of the Cross Street Frontage; and,
2. Develop a commercial revitalization economic plan for Cross Street businesses. (Cross Street, 2002)

Transportation

The City of Ypsilanti is located near two major transportation routes: I-94 running east / west and US-23 running north / south. Washtenaw and Michigan Avenues are high traffic roads contributing to automotive downtown traffic. While allowing for larger automobile volumes (over 30,000 vehicles a day) and faster speeds, these roads also deter pedestrian foot traffic (Master Plan, 1998).

Another area of concern is the Washtenaw Ave. and Cross Street multiple-lane traffic loop created by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in the 1970s. This high traffic area has negatively impacted the business strip located on Cross Street. Since the implementation of these changes, pedestrian traffic has declined and the businesses have struggled to remain viable.

Transportation Goals

The City has established a transportation goal, "To provide a transportation system which facilitates the smooth, safe, and efficient flow of automobiles, trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians," with two objectives:
1. Ensure the roadway system is safe, efficient, and adequate; and,
2. Promote use of transportation alternatives such as biking, walking and public transit. (Master Plan, 1998).

Strategies to meet these goals would improve pedestrian safety, promote shared access, expand bike paths and complete sidewalk assessments.

Public Transit

Service agreements with the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA) provide bus transportation for the City of Ypsilanti. Routes operating seven days a week provide transportation within the city as well as connections to the City of Ann Arbor. A call ahead door-to-door service is also provided for people with disabilities. Eastern Michigan University also has a service agreement with AATA, providing free transit for students (Master Plan, 1998).

Parking

The City has on-street parking and four parking lots within the downtown area which provide a mixture of free, paid and permit parking spots. However, parking in the residential areas has become a problem. Neighborhoods that were designed as single family residences have now become multi-dwelling units, bringing increased automobile traffic and parking needs. Additionally, EMU has become more of a commuter college, bringing a demand for increased street parking. The combination of these changes has dramatically increased the need for parking solutions in these neighborhoods (Cross Street, 2002).

The City has responded to the neighborhood parking issues by implementing a parking permit system. Permits can be purchased by residents and students for a small fee and are good for one year. The permit system has not solved the demand for parking issue, however, as evidenced by tenants who continue to park on lawns (Cross Street, 2002).

Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan

Adopted by the Planning Commission in 2010, the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan was designed to aid Ypsilanti in establishing a built and cultural environment that "supports and encourages safe, accessible, comfortable, and convenient transportation options, focusing on non-motorized means such as bicycling and walking" (City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, 2010). The goal of the plan was to increase the number of individuals using alternative methods of transportation. Such an increase would lead to a safer transportation system and a more environmentally sustainable City. A more comprehensive transportation system is "vital to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Ypsilanti" (Non-Motorized Plan, 2010). Some of the recommendations made within the Non-Motorized Transportation include the adoption of a "Complete Streets Ordinance"; which promotes capital improvement plans that are geared toward non-motorized transportation. Additionally, the plan recommended incorporating bicycle parking into zoning and development guidelines; which will allow for practical bicycle access during future development (Non-Motorized Plan, 2010). These recommendations are two of a much larger body that included zoning amendments as well as changes in legislation.

Summary

Our introduction to Ypsilanti's Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods was both revealing and enjoyable. It is an area with a rich commercial and industrial history that's preserved in its architectural form: proximity to major thoroughfares by road, rail, and river, several nearby

commercial districts, and large closely-set homes which once housed those who benefited most from Ypsilanti's early successes. But although the location and the buildings remain the same, nearly everything else has changed. Industry has disappeared, taking its direct and indirect economic benefits with it. The study area's neighbor to the north, Eastern Michigan University, has become the neighborhoods' defining feature by supplying the overwhelming majority of their tenants. This has made the neighborhoods quite homogenous in many ways, from the demographic characteristics of their residents to the type and duration of housing that is in demand.

Such homogeneity has produced a unique set of consequences. The constant demand for short-term housing has converted almost the entire study area into a collection of income-producing buildings, which is a welcome source of revenue for both the City of Ypsilanti and its residents who are also landlords. However, it has also created a situation in which the proportion of residents in our neighborhoods who are invested in them, either financially or through long-term association, is extremely low. Could this, we wondered, be related to some of the challenges faced by our study area, such as its crime rate or commercial vacancies?

Chapter 2: Focus Groups

In seeking an accurate ground-level temperature on the neighborhood streets, our research team opted to conduct a series of focus groups aimed at people who live and own property in our neighborhoods. Participation is a bedrock of the planning process, and Bernie Jones (1990) expounded on the use of focus groups as a way of giving the community a voice: "Doing things democratically takes more effort and more time, but it is worth it for the quality of product that emerges and the sense of commitment that people will have toward it."

As we pored over the vast collection of profile data, we compiled a set of indicators which were useful in formulating our focus group activities and the analysis of those activities. The group came up with these topics: Access, Environment/Green Spaces, Traffic and Parking, Code Enforcement, Crime/Safety/Security, Ownership/Investment, Participation, Aesthetics/Character, University/Community Relations, and Identity.

Many issues, we discovered, stemmed from property. The dominance of rentals, the presence of publicly-owned or tax-exempt parcels, buildings' historic designations, and the population of 100% and partially owner-occupied homes had some influence on who we chose to target for focus group participants. Even as we walked the streets, we noticed that the physical aspects of property management, landscaping and tree canopies were tied to the parcels.

Since homes represent the most prominent feature of the neighborhoods, the team selected its stakeholder participants based on their use of them: we spoke with renters, homeowners, and landlords. University leadership and community activists were also considered, but other methods were discussed to address those avenues as time became a crucial factor in our approach.

Methodology

Participant Recruitment

Homeowners: We used a three-pronged approach to recruit homeowners for our focus group. First, we contacted key neighborhood residents/homeowners, identified through the area neighborhood associations, via e-mail. We then used snowball sampling to recruit additional participants. Second, we sought assistance from the City of Ypsilanti Planning Department and used its mailing lists to contact other neighborhood homeowners. Finally, we created and distributed a postcard with details of the focus group to over 40 residential homes in our study area. We isolated target homes using a combination of homestead exemption data and the city assessor's website for home addresses. We also posted a flier with similar content in some local neighborhood shops.

Landlords: We began the landlord focus group recruitment efforts by contacting two landlords with properties in our study area whose names and telephone numbers we obtained through personal contacts. They then provided the names of additional landlords who owned/operated properties within our study area. An internet search also revealed the names of some of the larger and best-advertised property management companies in our neighborhoods.

Further, we performed a windshield survey of the neighborhoods under study to identify rental signs and associated contact information for both property management companies and landlords.

This yielded a list of about 25 landlords and/or management companies with rental property in the study area neighborhoods, and we placed phone calls to recruit these landlords and property managers for our focus group. Those we were able to reach directly expressed an interest in attending the focus group. Some landlords had conflicts with the time and date of our scheduled focus group, so they spoke with one member of the study team in additional informal meeting.

Renters: We began recruitment efforts for the renter focus group by contacting fraternities and sororities. We also used references and personal contacts to connect with student renters in the area, then used those students' contacts for snowball sampling. We also solicited recruitment assistance from several landlords and requested that they relay information on the renter focus group to those renting homes in their properties. (All telephone and e-mail scripts associated with the focus group recruitment efforts are included in Appendix.)

Focus Group Locale

In the selection of a venue for our focus group, it was important to us that we elicit no preconceived notions or feelings by holding discussions about the city in City Hall. We considered our classroom, Ypsilanit District Library, Eastern Michigan University's Halle Library, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Authority, churches, and business incubator Spark East.

Spark East was chosen for its proximity to the study area and the fact that it could comfortably accommodate the size of groups we anticipated. Coordination with manager Kyle DeBord allowed us to schedule sessions with the residents and the landlords there. We conducted the renter session in our classroom, 201 Strong Hall.

Script and Question Preparation

We employed a four-step process to plan and conduct our focus groups. Materials including the script, questions, activities, participant input forms, and focus group questions were generated through literature review, We then added case-specific adjustments, peer collaboration and recommendations regarding the subject/audience. We tried to approach these steps with a broad scope in order to capture an appropriate emphasis on the topics generated by the groups themselves, and then use follow-up comments or questions to "flesh-out" key thoughts.

The literature review yielded the bulk of the script and a basis for the questions. Many of the case studies offered direct language to address the need for honesty in a confidential setting, stress of voluntary participation, and to strive for clear thoughts and feelings from the participants. The questions found in the texts usually followed a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) format but were greater in number than our own.

After reading and using the basic structure of other formats, we made adjustments specific to our project. The difference in size between our study area and the citywide studies found in the readings (Seattle, WA for one) required us to amend the scale. We also shortened the

standard number of questions found in the literature from six to four in order to fit into a 90-minute timeframe.

The class reviewed the questions and the script and gave feedback. Topics discussed were the group's purpose statement, the roles of the class members, and the future application of the data from the focus groups as explained in the script, to name a few. This process was conducted several times. Finally, we considered the nature of each focus group (renters, landlords and residents of 100% owner-occupied homes) in drafting additional questions targeted to each group specifically. The script and questions provided in this report's appendix, then, were conducted through an open and debate-driven process.

Focus Group Roles

Each member of the team was responsible for certain roles in the execution of the focus group meetings. Dominic Romano served as the moderator to do introductions, ask questions, and keep things moving in order to cover multiple topics and also allow as many people to respond to a topic as possible. Jacob Albers provided many of the pens and pencils, copies of forms and maps, and conducted the ice-breaker activity. Wanda Norman and Leah DuMouchel were seated with the focus group and took notes throughout the meeting; they were also responsible for participation forms, sign-in sheets, and refreshments. At the conclusion of each meeting, the two sets of notes were compared for consistency and accuracy, then combined into an approximate transcript and disseminated to the work group. A recording device was also used in assisting the transcription and analysis process. At the meeting, David Silver wrote key words and phrases on a large sketch pad for all persons to see and reference. Bill Diesenroth, Kwabena Ananda and Jason Krol were available to note down any side-bar conversations and reactions away from the immediate conversations that may have been of merit. All members of the research team welcomed the participants as they arrived, directed them to the coatrack, restrooms, forms, and refreshments, and asked additional questions to clarify and expand ideas that came up in the sessions. Dr. Nina David also helped ask questions during the meetings and spoke at length to participants after the groups to further gain information that was key to our post-group meetings.

Participant Form Results Summary

Participant forms collecting demographic and background data were distributed at each seat (see appendix). The following text gives the results of those forms and some analysis to consider.

Landlord group

There were 12 participants. The most common age group was "over 45" (6) followed by "36-45" (4) and one "26-35." Eight males and 3 females were present. Seven participants identified themselves as "white" and five declined to choose a race. Seven of the landlords said they enjoyed participating in community groups, 3 said they had not yet found the right group, and 2 did not respond.

The mean tenure as a landlord in the study area was 20.91 years (n=11 due to 1 non-response). The mean number of study area properties per landlord was 10.25, and the mean number of units was 46.8. The landlords reported a mean renewal rate of 58% after the first year

and 28% after 2 years (n=11 due to one non-response in each category).

Ten landlords reported that they were responsible for lawn maintenance and 2 landlords reported shared responsibility with tenants. Six landlords took sole responsibility for snow removal, 3 shared the duty with tenants, and 3 said it was within their tenants' purview. Three landlords said they took care of trash removal on their properties, 4 said it was their tenants' job, 1 said it was shared between the tenants and city, and 4 assigned responsibility to the city.

When asked what motivated them to attend the meeting, 3 people cited an interest in improving their communities and 2 attendees mentioned the opportunity to offer their input. Other reasons included an interest in city/landlord issues, the possibility of personal economic improvement, information, a chance to meet with other landlords, love of Ypsilanti, and guilt.

Factors in these landlords' decision to invest in the study area included price (5 citations), proximity to EMU (3) and other locational considerations (2), return on investment (4), historic architecture (4), attachment to Ypsilanti (2), good neighbors (2), energy efficiency and basic charm.

Rental history and income verification were the most commonly cited documentation required in the landlords' tenant approval process (4 each). Three landlords required rental applications, 2 ran credit checks, and 2 required a security deposit. One landlord who only rented to students asked about their year and course of study, one did not allow pets, and one required a signature. One participant answered "none."

Resident group

There were 18 participants. The most common age group was "26-35" (9) followed by "over 45" (6) and then "36-45" (3). Ten males and 8 females were present. Fourteen participants identified themselves as "white," 2 identified themselves as "black," and 2 declined to choose a race. The mean tenure as a resident in the study area was 8.9 years. The mean tenure as a resident in Ypsilanti was 12.3 years (n=17 due to 1 non-response). Seventeen of the residents said they enjoyed participating in community groups and 1 had not yet found the right group.

Seventeen residents reported that they were responsible for lawn maintenance (n=17 due to 1 inapplicable response). Sixteen residents took sole responsibility for snow removal and 1 said it was within the city's purview (n=17 due to 1 inapplicable response). Nine residents said trash removal was their job, and 9 residents assigned the responsibility to the city.

When asked what motivated them to attend the meeting, 6 residents cited an interest in the neighborhood/desire to learn about community, and 5 residents professed a desire to improve their community. Three residents mentioned personal encouragement from Ypsilanti's city planner, Teresa Gillotti. Two participants cited an interest in urban planning, and 2 were interested in relations between Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti. Other reasons included love of Ypsilanti (2) and their historic home, enjoyment of community participation, and an opportunity to meet other residents.

Price was the dominant reason for investment in the study area (13 citations, n=17 due to 1 non-response). Interest in historic homes followed (9), and other housing considerations included nice windows, a duplex, general charm, and the opportunity to make custom improvements and renovations. Six residents praised the neighborhood, 4 of whom specifically mentioned its diversity. Location played a role in many residents' decisions: proximity to EMU (3), downtown (2), Depot Town, parks, schools, and a workplace were all mentioned. Three

residents cited access to public transit, and 2 considered the area's walk-ability.

Miscellaneous comments: One participant emphasized positive future changes in the Ypsilanti public school system and reiterated the need for more jobs in Ypsilanti. Another participant noted with approval that drug activity has decreased "due to the tight economy and some police work." A third resident commented that taxes are too high.

Renter group

There were 6 participants. The most common age group was "16-25" (5), with 1 participant responding "26-35." Two males and 4 females were present. Four participants identified themselves as "white," 1 identified as "black," and 1 declined to choose a race. The mean tenure as a resident in the study area was 1.8 years, and the mean tenure as a resident in Ypsilanti was 4 years. Two of the residents said they enjoyed participating in community groups, and 4 had not yet found the right group.

One student claimed responsibility for lawn maintenance, and the other 5 said it was their landlords' job. Three students said they were responsible for snow removal, and 3 students said their landlords did it. Two students said trash removal was within their landlords' purview, and 4 students assigned the responsibility to the city.

When asked what motivated them to attend the meeting, 2 students said they wanted to improve their community and 1 student wanted to know what other people were doing to improve it. Another student responded "Why not?" to a roommate's invitation. Two attendees left the question blank.

Factors in the students' decision to rent in the study area included price (4 citations) as well as proximity to EMU (3) and other students (2). Other factors included the area (2), a specific apartment feature (1) and a rental company (1). One participant did not respond.

The one attendee who offered a miscellaneous comment expressed a desire for stronger emphasis on historical sites and for shops to move into the empty storefronts on Cross Street and Michigan Ave. S/he also felt that litter in the streets "makes the city look dirty and unsafe."

Ice Breaker

After attendees were comfortably seated, able to look over the forms, and listen to the moderator's introduction, the ice breaker activity took place. The objective of the ice breaker was to get our participants comfortable speaking around one another prior to beginning the focus group. The ice breaker activity involved simply asking the participants to introduce themselves and answer a hypothetical question regarding their neighborhood. The renters and home owners were asked the same question; the landlords were asked to answer a different question due to the fact that many of our landlord participants did not live within the study area. Alternate activities were scripted in the event of a lack of participants. The questions for each particular focus group were as follows:

Home Owners/Renters: Please introduce yourself to the group? What is the first thought that comes to your mind when you walk out your front door?

Alternate: Introduce yourself to the person to your right. Next, share with them the first thought that comes to your mind when you walk out your front door.

Landlord: Please introduce yourself to the group? What one word comes to mind when you think of your ideal tenant?

Alternate: Introduce yourself to the person to your right. Next, share with them the one word that comes to mind when you think of your ideal tenant.

In all cases, the result of the ice breaker was the successful establishment of a desirable comfort level among focus group participants.

Map Activity

In an effort for us to better understand how our focus group participants viewed their neighborhood, we created a map activity for our participants to complete. The map consisted of a blank page; featuring only a legend in which participants could label aspects of their neighborhood. The legend items included the following:

1. Your Properties/Residence
2. Enjoyable Areas
3. Disliked Areas
4. Safe Areas
5. Unsafe Areas
6. Favorite Destinations
7. Dining Options
8. Entertainment Options
9. Biking Routes
10. Walking Routes
11. Community Gathering Spaces
12. Park/Recreation Options

Responses to the map activity were mixed. The homeowner group had the most respondents, followed by the renter group. Only one participant from the landlord group completed the activity. The following is an analysis of the map activity responses broken down by focus group.

Homeowners

Although only about half of the participants completed the map activity, some trends regarding the study area can be observed. Respondents identified the Cross St. business district as a viable destination for entertainment and dining options, and many of our respondents indicated that they walked there. However, several areas along Ballard St. were identified as both disliked and unsafe, specifically the blocks on Ballard St. between Washtenaw Ave. and Cross St. Additionally, some respondents considered Michigan Avenue, the southern boundary of the study area, as unsafe and disliked. All respondents identified Depot Town as well as Riverside Park as enjoyable, safe areas in which dining options are available. However, both destinations lie outside of the study area.

Renters

Responses from renter focus group participants were largely positive. All of our respondents considered Cross St. as an enjoyable area with dining options. Renter respondents enjoyed walking through their neighborhoods. Similar to the home owners, the renter respondents considered the Ballard St. area as disliked.

Landlords

The lone landlord respondent indicated that Eastern Michigan University was an enjoyable area. The respondent noted that EMU must increase enrollment, perhaps because such

an increase would provide greater tenant demand. EMU lies outside of the study area.

Focus Group Discussions

The most substantive part of the focus groups, a discussion generated by the research team's list of questions, followed the ice-breaker. It forms the bulk of our data and the basis for our analysis.

Results and Analysis

At the conclusion of our focus groups, the research team had gained approximately 30 pages of data transcribed directly from primary sources: our neighborhoods' stakeholders. The class reviewed these transcripts and compared them to the list of neighborhood quality indicators we had assembled while developing the focus group materials. Using each relevant indicator as a lens, we read through the transcripts and pulled out the data, suggestions, and conclusions pertaining to it. We then combined this information with the profile data and literature to form the most complete picture possible of our neighborhoods with regard to each indicator.

Crime and Safety

Anecdotal evidence of crime was presented by multiple participants at every focus group. The severity of the crimes reported increased with the amount of the respondent's daily contact with the study area. The landlords, none of whom lived in the study area currently (although several had previously and one still lived nearby), reported exclusively on property crimes: one said she had three break-ins this year and none the previous 20 years, another said her property had been broken into twice, and a third landlord noted a decrease from one break-in a month to none this year. The student group, which had lived in the study area an average of 1.8 years, reported a break-in and the assault of a friend by a group of six people. The residents, with a mean neighborhood tenure of 8.9 years, provided copious stories focused heavily on guns, drugs, and prostitution. One participant who had lived in the neighborhood for four decades reported that all three activities had increased in recent years. Another resident cited a drive-by shooting, "gunplay going on downtown," and residents who had been approached by people with guns in the Perrin/Cross/Oakwood area. The same resident reported three vehicular break-ins and an armed robber in the College Heights neighborhood (just outside the study area). Another attendee mentioned a consistent group loitering and doing drugs on the steps outside the Riverside Arts Center, making it unpleasant to walk there. Two residents reported improvement: one who said prostitutes had stopped coming around after repeated phone calls to police, and another who said fewer homeless people were looking through trash for bottles.

The residents posited an interesting systemic contributor to crime that also demonstrated their intimate familiarity with the area: ease of movement throughout the city. Noting that the study area contains migration paths from the transit station in the central city to EMU and Depot town, one participant said that while the alleys and lack of fences give the area its character and promote walkability, they also create opportunities for the proximity and anonymity that serve

criminals well. Another resident pointed out that the area is attractive not only to those who choose not to drive but also to those who can't because of financial or legal restrictions: "it can mean that some people have larger issues." Conversely, one attendee suggested that crime was made worse by residents' failure to walk *enough* to demonstrate ownership of the area, particularly after dark: "If you're locking yourself in your house at night and won't come out, you're making it worse."

The landlords, on the other hand, presented a wide variety of theories: poor security practices by students (for example, not locking doors), ease of targeting students because of their predictable vacation schedules, lowered rental applicant standards as a result of a tough economy, high school students and non-EMU youth roaming the neighborhoods, a psychiatric hospital closing that led to increased homelessness, high proportion of public housing relative to population, and criminal migration from other parts of the city. The attendee whose break-ins decreased attributed the decline to the arrest of two other landlords, stating that their properties had attracted criminals.

When asked for potential solutions to crime, the residents tended to rely on personal action while the landlords favored more systemic approaches. The most commonly cited suggestion in the residents' group was to call the police. Two residents shared stories of discouraging drug dealers and prostitutes through repeated reports, and another participant praised Ypsilanti's new chief of police for setting a new tone in the department. An officer in attendance called the residents "our eyes and ears in the community" and repeatedly urged them to make a report "when the hair stands up on the back of your neck." He also suggested using common sense to lower one's likelihood of victimization. The participant who advocated for an increased level of resident nighttime activity suggested using a cell phone camera as a deterrent to criminal activity by offering to photograph the offenders in the act.

The clearest contrast between the residents' and the landlords' approaches to fighting crime occurred in the context of this discussion. When the residents were asked whether anyone had found COPAC, the organizational mechanism connecting neighborhood associations to the police department, to be effective, the question was met with silence until a participant asked, "What's COPAC?" On the other hand, when an individual call to the police was mentioned in the landlords' group as a solution, one attendee said doubtfully, "If you can get them to respond," and another added, "It's often too late then." Suggested solutions in the latter group included increasing the proportion of families in the neighborhoods and using inspections as a mechanism for targeting resources to consistently problematic areas. One landlord noted that Depot Town (outside study area) seemed to be particularly attractive to potential tenants from Ann Arbor looking for lofts near a downtown environment, saying, "I think economics will be taking care of this." Even the landlord who had considered security cameras on his own property said they might help "if everyone had them."

All participants in each group agreed that perception of crime in Ypsilanti was a problem. The students' statements were the most dramatic: one participant's friends told her, "That's the most dangerous city in Michigan. You are guaranteed to have something bad happen to you." Another said, "When I moved from Ann Arbor, all my friends said, 'Oh my God, you are going to die.'" One landlord strongly stated that Ypsilanti had a "very bad reputation as not being a safe place to live." A landlord who rented Ann Arbor properties to a pair of female EMU students quoted the students as saying they chose to live in Ann Arbor because Ypsilanti was not safe enough. Several residents, including the officer in attendance, used the word "stigma" to describe

the perception of crime in Ypsilanti. Two residents shared anecdotes about real estate agents steering clients away from the city.

One resident called Ypsilanti's reputation "totally out of proportion to anything I've seen," an opinion shared by other members of the group. When asked what they told people about where they lived, one resident said, "Invariably, 'It's not as bad as you think.'" The officer in attendance commented that his department fought the stigma all the time and had statistics to back them up. He pointed out that no community is crime-free, that shootings in Ypsilanti Township are sometimes accidentally attributed to the City of Ypsilanti, and that most violence happens between people who know each other. One participant in the landlords' group noted that problems which exist in all communities may be more prominent in the study area because it is a "fragile neighborhood," and another contended that break-ins in a student neighborhood were common and not necessarily indicative of an unsafe environment.

Not all participants were convinced of the disparity between the perception and the reality of crime, however. One resident reiterated that she was "really worried about the crime - I think it's high and I think it's a problem" and said she did not walk downtown. Another resident said he would not feel safe walking anywhere from home after dark and that when he had to go out after dark, he ran from his car to his front door and back. A landlord said she felt less confident assuring female tenants of their safety than she had in the past.

The student group, which theorized little about either the causes of or the solutions to crime but did speak freely about how fear of it constrained their movements, said darkness and unfamiliar terrain increased their anxiety. Three participants agreed that they felt safe in the area surrounding their homes but that their discomfort increased proportionally according to the distance away from it. Many reported altering their routes to avoid areas perceived as dangerous, including Peninsular Place (outside study area), Emmet Street and Ballard Street. One student said that a friend with a porch overlooking Emmett Street felt compelled to retreat inside when the sun went down.

All three groups mentioned the homeless population as a contributor to the perception of crime, but it figured most prominently in the students' discussion. Two students said the presence of homeless persons sometimes made them uncomfortable, but they did not think they were particularly dangerous: "I feel like the homeless folks are persistent and intense, but they aren't really threatening." When asked if it was easy to walk down the street and meet people, a student said they sometimes made her less willing to "put myself out there," although people were friendly when she did.

Ownership and Investment Results and Analysis

Several residents expressed a deep devotion to and affection for their homes. One said she preferred renovating a historic home over converting agricultural land to residential use. Another who spoke repeatedly of his dissatisfaction with the neighborhood said love for his house of 36 years was probably the main reason he stayed. Reasons cited by the landlords for purchasing an investment property in our study area were both personal and practical. Practical considerations included the recent drop in home prices, proximity to EMU and freeways, and the desire to share expenses on a primary residence. Personal attractions were enjoyment of restoring homes, Ypsilanti, landlording, and historic architecture. The students' reasons for renting in the study area largely centered on convenience: proximity to EMU, availability of a room through a

friend, and a desire to rent with a particularly accommodating management company.

Both the residents and the landlords expressed a desire to see a better mix of owner-occupied and rental housing in the study area. One landlord suggested that owners would be more interested in community activism than renters and that their involvement could reduce crime. Another pointed out that many in the group had lived in their study area properties at one time, adding that owners who occupied their rental properties could expand their sphere of influence to the neighborhood. It was suggested in the residents' group that their emotional attachment could be connected to the physical condition of a property: "When you own, it's yours, and you feel like it's yours. You shovel, you get salt, even when it's the second snowiest – third snowiest – whatever, we got a lot of snow. … It's also mowing grass, the broken window theory: if you own, you feel like you want it to look nice, but if you rent, it doesn't matter."

The opinion that homeowners always took better care of their property than renters was not unanimous, however. One resident said he was not particularly good about shoveling the snow or mowing his lawn, going on to say he had bought his home because it "was such a good deal" but was more interested in a low-maintenance lifestyle than having "a fancy looking place." He said he had begun to feel a sense of peer pressure that encouraged him to improve since getting to know more of his neighbors. Another participant mentioned that renters have the option of calling a landlord to address any issues that may crop up, but homeowners sometimes have to wait until they have the money to fix it. A third attendee said she had cared for lawns and removed snow as a renter and that she currently had renting neighbors who acted equally responsibly.

The way to achieve a better balance between renters and homeowners was less clear. When participants at the landlords' group were asked if they wanted the city to engineer change, several said, "No," emphatically and in unison, and one added, "It should happen on its own." One attendee, however, suggested that the current low house prices might be ideal for an urban pioneering program. Members from both the residents' group and the landlords' group advocated for increased involvement from EMU, including incentives for its faculty and staff to live within walking distance or even simple encouragement for them to do so. A resident who is also a business owner said he has seen an increasing number of EMU staff in his store and that the university president frequents a local eatery, saying the thought that kind of "bully pulpit" could be effective in changing perceptions.

The residents also emphasized marketing as a tool for attracting interest, particularly as it relates to the housing stock: "We need to capitalize on the fact that we have a lot more beautiful properties than Ann Arbor. We can bring forth the facts of our historic homes – many have been restored and are being restored. That's more economical than a LEED certified home that's used a bunch of materials to get there. It's economical, and you have a piece of long-time history." One resident said that if it was known which houses on the block were owner-occupied, homeowners might feel less overwhelmed by students. Lack of employment in the city was mentioned as a potential barrier to immigration.

The down-zoning proposal of 2006 was rarely mentioned by name, but its effects were discussed by the landlords. Two thought that single-family occupation *per se* was not an effective goal, because it is difficult to get families to live near students and because single-family renters do not provide the same stabilizing benefits of owner-occupiers. Several landlords said they had been under the impression that the city's goal was to move the students from the study area to the north side of campus in order to make way for owner-occupants in Riverside and Midtown, but

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that those prospective buyers had not materialized. As a result, vacancies increased and the quality of tenant decreased because "at a certain point, as a landlord, you just have to fill it or it goes back to the bank."

The statement, "Taxes are a central issue for all of us as far as the city is concerned," was met with general agreement in the landlords' group. One participant connected the issue with the low rate of owner occupation, saying that he could not afford the taxes on a house he wanted to live in it himself and had to convert it to a multi-unit rental instead.

The landlords felt that the tenants' level of investment in their properties was very small, saying, "Most of these people are on the very low end of the responsibility scale," and "I have not met many tenants who really act responsible." One told an anecdote from earlier that same day about a tenant who moved out without notice, leaving him to sue for the remainder of his lease with little hope of recovery. Another noted that it wasn't reasonable to expect a student population to take good care of a neighborhood full of historic homes. Some residents spoke of the student population with affection, but all agreed that as a whole, it was not made up of fully trained citizens: "It's always astounding the number of students who have no idea what the expectations are. There's lots of theories on that, but they don't understand shoveling. They just don't understand different aspects of the community." Another said that students didn't really have an interest in issues like keeping the streets cleared, so they didn't expend any effort to help with them. A resident who also owned a rental property said that many of her tenants were living on their own for the first time and that it fell to her to spell out every expectation clearly and then follow it up by insisting on accountability.

It was suggested by several residents that the community could offer assistance to neighboring students by introducing themselves, giving a few pointers on the neighborhood, or reminding them about which day trash gets picked up. Not all residents felt that this was their responsibility. Some residents felt that EMU should help train its students to be good citizens of the community, perhaps by offering an orientation session or using students' early years in the dorms as an opportunity to present good community practices. One participant agreed that EMU should bear some responsibility, but pointed out that it was easier to maintain accountability in one's own neighborhood than in an academic class of several thousand.

Student living conditions, which could be seen as a measure of the community's investment in *them*, were highly dependent on their rental management companies in this small sample. Two students who were roommates were very dissatisfied with the manager and co-occupant of their duplex, citing problems with the heat, unclear billing for electrical services, failure to respond to requests for service, and profuse dog feces in the yard. Another student mentioned landlords who left a light on in a locked room for two weeks on the tenants' electrical meter. That student reported a great improvement when switching management companies, saying her new landlords had responded to a broken lock within three minutes so her roommate could get to class and had also installed a ceiling fan at her request. As a result, she had only considered that company's properties when choosing where to live the following year. After the student identified the management companies by name, another participant said she had heard similar things about each of them, later adding that it would have been nice to have that information before signing a lease.

Students' understanding of the responsibilities associated with their living arrangements was similarly dependent on their landlords. The roommates talked about a caretaker who arrived with no notice to perform repairs, then yelled at them for not taking the garbage out. The student

felt that was unfair: "Nobody's told me what day garbage is, what to do, when to bring it back, so I don't do it. Tell me what to do and I'll do it, but I'm not going to do it unless you tell me to." On the other hand, the attendee who had switched to a more attentive management company named the services she was responsible for and listed the information the company had provided in order to help her get them and answer her questions.

Student methods of choosing a place to live, however, were haphazard, with most saying they found their places through friends and Craigslist.

In a show-of-hands survey to determine level of interest in various forms of community involvement, all students said they would attend monthly block parties if their neighborhood held them. Five students said they would participate in a community garden, and two participants mentioned a desire to garden in conjunction with barriers to doing so (lack of space, dog feces). Three students each said they would take an internship serving a neighborhood organization for credit or volunteer to be part of a neighborhood-level crime-fighting group, and two students said they would be a student representative to a neighborhood association. One student said her service fraternity had a difficult time finding projects in the Ypsilanti area and so often went to Ann Arbor to perform community-level service.

Amenities Results and Analysis

Our focus group participants identified destinations and amenities as important to their neighborhoods. Overall, our respondents felt that there are not enough amenities, either in number or in type, and that there are barriers to accessing those amenities which do exist.

Many of our respondents commented on the under-utilization of their neighborhood, particularly the Cross Street area. It was noted that few businesses serving EMU students exist on Cross Street, which forms a boundary between the campus and our study area and thus must be crossed by all students in the study area at least twice on each day they attend class. Respondents pointed out that the lack of student-oriented businesses encouraged the students to frequent on-campus sites, go home during weekends, or take their business to neighboring cities.

Many of the students in the study area live there because of a lack of transportation options. The ability to walk to school is crucial for them. Likewise, student respondents did not want to have to leave the neighborhood in order to take care of essential needs. The question of where to get groceries sparked an earnest discussion among them, with a four-mile trip to Meijer or the Mexican market Dos Hermanos, described as difficult to find, emerging as the preferred sources. They did not, however, cite an increase in bars or liquor stores as an improvement of amenities. On several occasions, they expressed hope for a neighborhood in which there are stores that sell more than "chips and beer."

Some student respondents professed or displayed a lack of knowledge of area amenities and destinations. When asked where such information might be placed so that it would be available, however, no concrete suggestions were offered. One participant said he was not interested in receiving flyers promoting local businesses, for example, referring to such tactics as "desperate."

A common thread with regard to the use of amenities was safety, and other barriers to accessing area destinations included high-speed traffic and the condition of the sidewalks. These

will be addressed more fully in the relevant sections below, but it is worth stating here that many from each group felt that an increase in foot traffic must be attained in order to develop sustainable destinations as well as make full use of existing ones.

Accessibility Results and Analysis

Across all focus groups, crime was cited as a barrier to accessibility. Although our respondents agreed that Ypsilanti is not as unsafe as its reputation suggests, the homeowners and students also overwhelmingly indicated at least some degree of apprehension when walking at night, citing problems such as homelessness, drug use, and prostitution in their neighborhoods. Not all participants reported being afraid of these elements, but did consider them an uncomfortable obstacle to otherwise smooth travel. They felt that the area was completely accessible by foot only during the day. The homeowners cited a lack of lighting in the neighborhood as another deterrent to access, stating that they would consider alternate forms of transportation if they felt both themselves as well as the undesirables were within clear view of others in the neighborhood.

Interestingly, members of the renter focus group seemed willing to accommodate this apprehension as long as there was a worthwhile destination. This may be out of necessity, since this demographic is not particularly likely to either own a car or stay home every night. Unfortunately, it completes a vicious circle begun in the previous section: destinations are limited because people can't access them enough to support them, and people don't go out because because they don't perceive the destinations as worth it.

Many landlords commented that one of the primary reasons that rental revenue has gone down is the lack of foot traffic in their neighborhoods, citing a perception of crime as a primary deterrent to accessing the study area. They expressed a desire for a neighborhood that is accessible by multiple forms of transportation, stating that the key to increasing rental revenue as well as attracting more suitable tenants is an increase in walkability.

The condition of the walking paths was another barrier. Our focus groups convened during the winter, and the resident group in particular expressed dissatisfaction with the neighborhoods' snow removal practices. They agreed that they thought the snow had been cleared from the rental properties less quickly than from the owner-occupied properties in their neighborhoods, although they allowed for variation among management companies. One participant said that contractors hired to clear snow by the city and billed to the landlord had offered improvement in the past, indicating a potential for area landlords to have an effect on improving property maintenance. Many of our student respondents, however, mentioned that they have never even met their landlords, let alone discussed snow removal. This communication gap necessarily means that are neither aware of their own snow maintenance responsibilities nor able to hold the landlords accountable for theirs.

Primarily, landlords in the study area viewed the importance of access from a code enforcement angle. In short, they determined optimal accessibility as a sidewalk free of trash cans and snow, adding that some of their tenants displayed a lack of urgency regarding the removal of trash cans. In both of these cases, the landlords framed these issues in reference to their bottom line in the form of code violation tickets rather than affecting their own personal access to the neighborhood.

Heavy automobile traffic surrounding their neighborhood was another impediment to access indicated by home owners. The study area is guarded by three major roadways carrying high-speed traffic (Cross Street, Washtenaw Avenue, and Michigan Avenue), and it is necessary to cross at least one of these streets in order to reach most of Ypsilanti's business districts. The participants noted a lack of alternative paths leading to their destinations.

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Parking and Traffic Results and Analysis

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The focus groups all mentioned aspects of parking and traffic. In this section, keywords were searched for its frequency in the overall discussion and re-read several times to determine their context. They include parking, ticket, street, permits, path, structure, traffic, two-way, one way, walk, car, drive, bike, or any alternate version of these.

Landlords:

The landlord discussion seemed to focus mostly on the term parking and the knowledge or lack of knowledge in the policies and procedures surrounding the topic. One participant said "I got a permit and I got an extra pass, so if I ever have to park, I don't get a ticket. But that's because I knew." These terms were used in discussion of parking: parking (19), ticket (10), street (8), & permits (2). Many concerns revolved around the ticketing of work crews' vehicles due to the lack of spots. There was also a statement that addressed the lack of spaces and how to resolve the problem: "It would be better to take down some of the back buildings in the downtown area and put some lofts on top and parking on bottom. Buy the houses out and provide parking." This type of design idea could result in a solution tied to further economic development.

The term structure appeared four (4) times as a way to alleviate street parking concerns and promote more foot traffic as a result of placing a parking structure being slightly out of the main traffic area. It was noted that Ann Arbor has used structures successfully: "Not much on the street, but they got structures. At EMU there is no parking that anyone can get into. Why would people want to stop at a pizza joint if there is no place to park?"

The term traffic was relayed once (1) in regards to the need to generate foot traffic." We read that what is important is that what you want in the core of the city is high density; that translates to foot traffic and interaction, so that you have a critical mass, so that people want to live there." It is interesting that the term traffic here is used in regards to walking and not driving a vehicle.

Two-way (2) and one-way (1) were used to discuss the need to convert one-way streets back to two-way streets, and also to note how difficult that may be due to jurisdiction and structural challenges: "I think one thing is that it's not a simple thing to put West Cross back to two-way because of the physical changes around the water tower area." This idea was, however, addressed in the Cross Street Improvement Plan.

Residents:

Parking (2) was used to denote a separation of the students of EMU from the neighborhoods and that one university parking area was seen as a crime area as well. "I see this giant funnel of traffic into a giant parking lot [on S. Oakwood]. It would be great if they would stay rather than travel in and out."

Tickets (2) were mentioned as a means for removing illegally parked cars in a not necessarily negative light for persons other than the owner of the automobile. For instance, in the case of cars parked on the street during the snow emergencies, a participant commented, "As

soon as they got tickets in their windshields, and then the car was moved."

Bike (1) was used to relay the desire for children to be recreationally active by biking in a safe environment. Streets (16) and walk (35) were discussed most from this group. Many of the "street" ideas were related as means of travel (transit center, walk through), as being dangerous when not cared for (plowing), and as a barometer of neighborhood activity. The term "walk" and related thoughts involved differences in day or night travel, safety, closeness to work, the area as a transit center, seeing various people on the street, the basic use or inability of use of sidewalks, the absence or presence of walking students, drug dealers, prostitutes, or other pedestrians.

Renters:

The keyword walk or other versions (11) was also popular in the renter session. It was in the contexts of: a primary mode of transport; a negative (e.g. walking with groceries) and positive (e.g. absorb the beautiful architecture); and as a connector of locations. Street (8) also came up as a source of connectivity, and a source for recreational use. Car (2) and drive (1) were discussed in relation to the ability to go outside of area for living necessities. Parking (2) was brought up because a renter's landlord spoke of parking in orientation materials on where and how to get street parking permits. The term path (2) referred to the desire to have designated walking, biking and roller-blading paths as the participant felt there was a lack of such trails. Lastly, one mention of bile (1) described the mode best used to get "everywhere" in the summer.

There are immediate differences from group to group that pop out from the data. The difference between the landlord group and the residents shows that the former looks at parking as more of a separate issue where the latter views it as more of a whole, referring to parking in the context of the whole "street." The student group hardly mentioned any issues surrounding this topic or any transportation besides walking and one mention of biking.

The residents also spoke frequently of walking. Many aspects were tied into this topic like safety from snow removal, crime/safety, transit around the area, and aspects of observing activity on the streets. There seemed to be an integration of parking, walking and access to the area. The students also spoke of walking mostly as a means of getting somewhere.

Green Space Results and Analysis

Green spaces can improve communities in a variety of ways. Gardens contribute to healthy and active life-styles.[1] Parks are a good investment for a community providing intrinsic aesthetics, as well as, recreational, environmental and economic benefits.[2] They improve ecosystem functions, improve water quality and reduce storm water runoff. "Quality landscaping makes homeowners feel good about their community and less likely to leave," while "connectivity encourages walking."[3]

Of the three focus groups, only the residents and the renters had any comments on green space concerns in our neighborhood. One renter indicated that the houses in our neighborhoods are classic "but there's nothing positive I can say about the landscaping." Another felt Washtenaw was "really grey and kind of bland." Uncared-for landscapes may be sending a message that other important details are being neglected as well. One resident who liked living close to the Riverside Park indicated that unsavory people hang out on the steps and do drugs, making it uncomfortable to walk and sometime impassible.

Members of the renter focus group most sharply noted a disconnect between the student population and the wider Ypsilanti community. Said one student: "You go to school and you know one side of Ypsi, and then you graduate and it's two different worlds. And there is no bridge between the two. ... You don't really feel welcome in the college areas if you're from the community, and it's the other way around there too." One participant noted that since there was so little industry in Ypsilanti that was likely to retain a recent college graduate, students could be fairly sure they were leaving the area and so had no incentive to form a relationship with the community. In a show-of-hands survey, only one student said she would keep Ypsilanti in mind when it was time to purchase a home. One student suggested, "If you want students to stay, you have to give them a reason to stay. If they have no other ties in the community, they're going to leave."

The participants commented that students don't even get involved on campus, much less in the community. They also noted that since EMU is a commuter campus, many students continue their involvement in their home communities rather than in Ypsilanti. Lack of amenities was again cited: "My first year, everyone went home every weekend. [Students] don't give themselves the opportunity to get involved in the community. There's nothing to do in Ypsilanti – EMU is isolated, and it isolates the students." Another student said, "I would like to feel more like I wanted to do things in the community all the time and I feel bad that I don't; I want to, but I don't. I want to feel like the community is doing stuff that I can always participate in." The students also agreed that the available events and amenities are not being effectively promoted, either at EMU or in the city, so as to encourage a mingling of the two communities. The lone student who mentioned personally feeling part of the community said it was during the summer, when most of the rest of the students were gone, and one of the more popular amenities cited by the resident group, the Crossroads Music Festival, also takes place during the summer.

One student said she thought a greater EMU presence in the neighborhood itself would be beneficial: "In Ann Arbor, the campus is integrated into the downtown, and the students don't feel so separate from the community. Many people from the community are involved in campus life and activities, and when there are things going on at the U-M campus, they let people in the community know. Eastern should make this effort." Other students suggested a community center which would draw students off campus to hang out.

Several students expressed affection for the area and a desire to see it flourish, but one student's statement that "I feel like 20 years from now, we'll come back and the city will be nothing but rust," was also met with agreement. They connected this feeling with the condition of the buildings surrounding them: One spoke of a structure that was being "consumed by the earth," with moss and trees growing out of it. Another mentioned "crumbling" and "abandoned" buildings in the student area. A third student was dismayed to see historic architecture fall into disrepair and connected it to the level of student involvement in their neighborhoods: "I love it when they take old homes and turn it into student housing. I feel like that is bringing students into the communities." The landlords agreed, expressing a desire for EMU to provide information on the availability of off campus housing in order to integrate students into the Ypsilanti community.

Even when organizations exist specifically to connect the students with the communities,

however, a lack of communication can cripple their success. One student reported, "I'm part of a service fraternity, and the three kind of service we do are campus, community, and nation. It's easy to find stuff to do on campus. But there's not a lot to do in the community, in Ypsilanti, so we go to Ann Arbor and help out at the Hands On Museum." Several participants said they thought a lot of the community-based organizations have moved to Ann Arbor.

Past outreach efforts between the neighborhoods associations and the students yielded mixed results. One member of a neighborhood association said the group had organized events that got no response, leaving them to think that the students were not interested in the community. A Riverside association member noted that the issues covered in a typical neighborhood meeting were not relevant to the student population. Another association member indicated a better response from sororities, adding, "I think that might be a better way to go, because they're a house of organized people living together for a common purpose, even if they do party." A couple related a story about a student who had knocked on their door and asked about their home to gather information on a class project. They thought that kind of connection to the neighborhood had the potential to make a student behave more respectfully in it.

Pitfalls and Limitations

Before proceeding, it is important to mention some limiting factors in our study. It may be necessary to view certain aspects of the study as strictly starting points when considering the following:

- The timeframe for our study was limited to one semester, further compounded by a closure due to weather
- Many other methods for comparative measure could have been utilized in regards to other stakeholder groups (university leadership, commercial business owners, activists, and city leadership, etc.)
- Loss of team personnel over the course of the project had adverse effects on workloads
- The renter group represented a very small sample due to poor response, although we gathered good information from the resulting group

Summary

After several meetings, debates, focus group sessions, emails, reactions, analytical after-thoughts and more, the team discovered many things out of the focus groups that were supportive of the profile data findings and more definitive about the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods. Out of the second set of ten indicators (Access, Environment/Green Spaces, Traffic and Parking, Code Enforcement, Crime/Safety/Security, Ownership/Investment, Participation, Aesthetics/Character, University/Community Relations, and Identity) we felt that the focus group data revolved around three more prominent topics. These three subject areas typically encompassed multiple aspects of other areas, while holding more weight considering all the data

we have collected on the two neighborhoods:

- ⚼ Crime and Safety
- ⚼ Ownership and Investment
- ⚼ Area Amenities

Every group mentioned experiences and perceptions concerning crime and safety in relation to the neighborhoods, and these experiences and perceptions colored nearly every other area we studied. Foot traffic was cited again and again as a means to "take back the streets." Liaison with law enforcement, improved lighting, security cameras, and a targeted inspection system were all suggestions highlighting a multi-level approach to this problem. Ownership and investment came up in several contexts. Every group mentioned the historic nature of the area and the experience of living in a rental-dominated market. Both code enforcement and the responsibilities of good citizenship were represented from various perspectives. The idea that amenities are required for a sense of place came through loud and strong, and a better presence of college-relevant businesses and events is hoped to improve everything from economics to safety to community involvement. Finally, the team also felt that university/community relations as well as communication between all stakeholders are crucial aspects that run through each of these categories.

In the following chapter, we present recommendations which relate directly to each of the three areas listed above. We sought to address the needs identified by our profile research as well as our focus groups by applying case studies, participant suggestions, and our own imaginations.

Chapter 3: Recommendations

In this chapter, we return to the question we asked at the beginning of this report: "How can near campus neighborhoods be made sustainable, unique, vibrant, stable, diverse and safe?" We arrived at this section of the report after immersing ourselves in the Midtown and Riverside neighborhood for weeks, walking their streets and talking to their residents and spending plenty of quality time with their census data. At the same time, we were learning how to think of a city as planners: to understand our challenges and assets as clearly as possible, to seek evidence and reasonable justification, and to look to other cities for both inspiration and caution. These recommendations, then, combine the best of our research with the best of our training to comprise what is, for most of us, our first foray into actually trying to make the world a better place through urban and regional planning.

Ownership and Investment

Study: Protecting and Promoting Ypsilanti's Buildings

Issue: Neighborhood "stability" is defined in terms of the tenure of its residents. Because the majority of the residents in our study area are young, students, and/or renters, the tenure is low and the neighborhoods are unstable by definition. Does this mean they are also unhealthy? Not by definition, but empirical research has linked increased social problems with a renter-to-owner occupancy threshold of about 85.5%, which is similar to the ratio on our study area (Rohe, 2001).

Goal: To encourage owner-occupation and enhance its benefits by providing support for anyone who has a building to design, maintain, or preserve, with particular emphasis on new homeowners and neighborhood-based, smaller-scale landlords.

Recommendation A: Establish an EMU-led Building/Support/Foundation which would combine the concept of a Neighborhood Design Center with aspects of landlord support organizations to serve as an information and resource hub for buildings and the people who use them. This recommendation in its current form is more of an organizational lens than a concrete blueprint; it begins by looking at the number of needs and communication gaps expressed by the community which could fall within the scope of such a lens, and the local academic community's resources which could be used to address them.

Homeowners	New homeowners' survival guide: basic tax information, maintenance schedule, list of emergency phone numbers (Roto-Rooter, for example), coupons from participating businesses
	Seminars to the community by experts and property managers to indicate various tax incentives for specific bank-owned or foreclosed property purchase by residents
	Historic property information: overlay map, wording of applicable ordinances, rehabilitation standards, tax credit applications and help filling them out, any available tips
	Bank and mortgage information for area-specific needs (renovation loans for conversion from a multi-family to a single-family home, for example)
	Construction and design advice
	Yelp.com-style local contractor database with reviews
Landlords	"Toolkit" that includes standard forms
	Create a contractor listing for discounted work or a school/university service based program for partially owner-occupied or smaller-scale local landlords to help maintain properties at lower costs, including services like lawn care and snow removal
	Legal assistance, mediation, or referrals
	Assistance with zoning concerns
	Market access through database listing
	Venue/gathering space for mutual support (either online or in person)
Business Owners and Community Groups	Provide reduced cost student services for design, architecture, site review, and planning to maximize investment dollars and get improvement projects off the ground.
	Assistance with construction and zoning concerns
	Serve as organizational permissions arm for public art projects
Realtors	Provide Ypsilanti-specific marketing materials to assist them in pointing out its benefits
Contractors	Market access, both private and commercial
Community	Organization devoted to one of its most beloved assets
	An ideal place from which to market that asset
	Unique resource for addressing a need shared by everyone – securing shelter

Some of these needs may already be met by community organizations such as the Heritage Foundation; this organization should not duplicate those services but rather find out about them and provide solid links to them. Many other needs could be easily and even ideally met by students under faculty supervision. One possible configuration would be for EMU and

the City of Ypsilanti to share the cost of one or two semi-permanent faculty or staff members to run the organization, which would define project proposals and/or accept them from the community and then coordinate them with interested faculty and students at EMU, University of Michigan, and Washtenaw Community College. This would ensure adequate supervision of student projects while potentially allowing a large number of projects to take place. Additional funding could be secured through fees for services, and a good early business project would be to examine the model for ways to ensure its self-sustainability. Academic departments which may be of particular interest include:

Eastern Michigan University	Urban and Regional Planning
	Historic Preservation
	Economics
	Communication Technology
	Business Law and Marketing
	Interior Design
	Construction Management
	Hotel and Restaurant Management
	Paralegal Studies
University of Michigan	Architecture and Urban Planning
	Natural Resources and the Environment
	Law
Washtenaw Community College	Business and Entrepreneurial Studies
	Construction Technology
	Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management

   Case studies: The Neighborhood Design Center in Baltimore, MD[2] organizes volunteer architects, planners, engineers and other designers to help improve neighborhood livability, viability, and sustainability. They offer free "conceptual building and site plans, preliminary feasibility studies and cost estimates, neighborhood master plans, and community development guidance" for community-sponsored initiatives which may not be able to afford them otherwise. They have assisted 375 projects since 1968, including playgrounds, reclaimed vacant lots and abandoned buildings, commercial district revitalization, community master plans, and neighborhood beautification. Their designs helped leverage $8.6 million in grants and public funding – three times their actual budget – and can serve as a catalyst for increased investment in neighborhood development.
   The website www.mrlandlord.com is a comprehensive landlord resource that could be considered a starting reference for possible services, to be tailored to the community's particular needs. Those needs would likely best be determined in consultation with current landlords who

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2   http://www.ndc-md.org/

are living on the properties they rent, and this process could be beneficial in its own right by giving the landlords a forum in which to share information among themselves.

Analysis and justification: Residents, landlords, and students alike shared concerns about Ypsilanti's historic architecture, interested in both preserving and promoting it but concerned that effort to do so lack organization. One resident's statement that a population comprised of student renters is not ideal for the care of historic buildings rang particularly true. Because the majority of the study area's residents should be expected to have limited tenure and ownership, then, we feel that it is vitally important to develop a community-wide sense of these buildings' ownership and cultivate the students' sense of belonging to that community. Deteriorating buildings were mentioned by students as a detriment to envisioning a post-graduation future in the community; housing in buildings connected to Ypsilanti's past were mentioned as creating a greater sense of connection.

The down-zoning proposal of 2006 was enacted to promote single-family homeownership, but it will take effect slowly. The student rental market will remain a defining feature of these neighborhoods, and its health is vital to the city's tax base. Two of the three focus groups, the landlords and the residents, emphasized the ownership status of a property – whether it was "owner-occupied" - rather than the property's size when discussing its effects on the neighborhood.

One way to get more owner-occupiers in a rental market is to encourage landlords to live on their properties. Focus group data confirms that there are small-scale landlords in our neighborhoods who are limited by their level of available capital and that costs of scale affect their decisions about property maintenance priorities. Discussions about community leaders mentoring or consulting other business owners occurred in the landlord focus group and in class discussions. A windshield survey of partially owner-occupied homes showed that while many were in need of attention (paint job, power-wash, etc.), it was of a superficial nature.

The center could encourage single-family ownership by examining local, state, federal and lender/bank based incentives for assistance, particularly in regard to foreclosed properties. Fannie Mae not only helps with closing costs but also renovation costs for purchasing bank-owned homes through their HomePath program[3] These newer programs, in tandem with other tax incentives, could make a difference in initial costs, and in the case of Fannie Mae, help launch rehabilitation. Because focus group data indicates that new owners can face a steep learning curve when it comes to property maintenance, the organization can support the
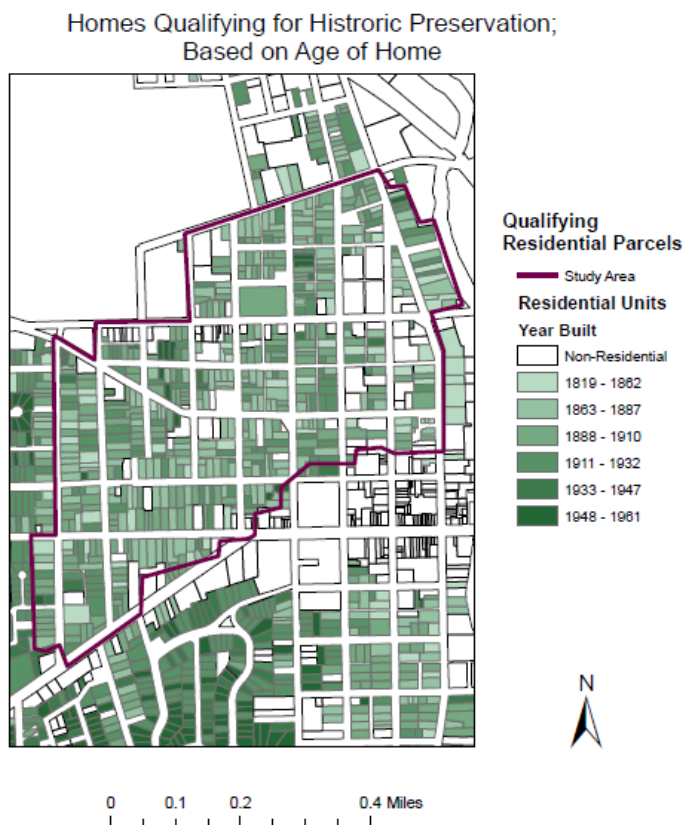
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3   http://www.homepath.com/financing/index.html

neighborhood as a whole by helping them adjust to their new responsibilities.

Profile data from the Ypsilanti assessor's office shows that property values continue to drop, a key issue among focus group participants. Placing added importance on community design is one strategy to revitalize neighborhoods: the City of Birmingham, UK, created private-public partnerships to not only come up with attractive design solutions but also to "sell the city" as a destination (Hubbard, 1995), and a neighborhood design organization would be a viable venue for establishing similar partnerships between EMU, the City of Ypsilanti, and local development, construction, or planning firms. Solicitation of input from innovative local firms such as Ypsilanti's Clean Energy Coalition[4], which works with companies and communities to refine their energy use, could transform renovation recommendations from superficial to paradigm-shifting and make a substantial difference in long-term maintenance. The student-led aspect of the center could help to improve the Campus and Community relationship (Bromley and Kent, 2006).

Other web links:
http://www.annarborusa.org/business-accelerator/incubators/spark-east

Homes Qualifying for Historic Preservation; Based on Age of Home

Qualifying Residential Parcels
— Study Area
Residential Units Year Built
Non-Residential
1819 - 1862
1863 - 1887
1888 - 1910
1911 - 1932
1933 - 1947
1948 - 1961

Recommendation B: Consider expanding Historic District further into Study Area. The current Historic District encompasses only northeast border of study area. All residential parcels within the area were built in 1961 or prior, making the entire study area eligible for historic preservation based on age. The 1849 founding of Michigan Normal School, now Eastern Michigan University, places the study area in close proximity to an educational establishment of historical significance as described by the U.S. Secretary of Interior (michigan.gov).

Case study: A study of the Speedway-Drachman National Register Historic District in Tucson, Arizona showed that between the districts designation (1987) and 2007 the average value of homes within the district appreciated 15% higher than the average home in a nearby neighborhood with housing stock of similar age that was not within a designated Historic District.

Additionally, in Phoenix in 2005, a study was conducted of 25,975 single family homes sold, 212 of which were located in historic districts. The research indicated that the homes located within designated historic districts showed an average increase in sale price of 31%

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4   http://www.cec-mi.org/PROGRAMSSERVICES/MichiganEnergyenseResidentialAuditServices/tabid/66/Default.aspx

compared to those single family homes not located within historic districts.[5]

Analysis and justification: As cited in Chapter 1, preservation of historically significant properties is a stated goal in the City of Ypsilanti's master plan. The fact that the only Historic Preservation university program in the state is located adjacent to a neighborhood which entirely qualifies for its services is a confluence that should be maximized at every opportunity. In addition, a direct link to the community is available as members of the study area neighborhoods can aid in mandatory resource survey and evaluation. Because the district is already established in an adjacent part of the city, extension would be a relatively simple way to confer those benefits onto the study area.

According to michigan.gov, the advantages of a historic district designation include legal protection of resources, increased property and resale values, tax incentive eligibility, economic development and community revitalization promotion, increased tourism revenue, and local job creation. Historic district standards can also set a design precedent, encouraging neighboring homeowners and landlords to follow suit.

Other web links:
http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-03-22/news/ct-met-oak-park-historic-district-20110322_1_historic-district-historic-preservation-commission-village-approval
http://www.eastrow.org/articles/hostoricdist.html
http://www.eastrow.org/articles/hostoricdist.html

Study: EMU Student and Faculty Housing Liaison

Issue 1: Communication gap between student renters and the landlords who serve them.

Goals: Create a better search process for students to find housing in the neighborhoods.

Recommendation: Develop a university-run website/database of rental properties for student access that also educates and informs students of their basic rental responsibilities.

Case study: Ohio State University conducted research to accommodate student population and determine if a minimum of two years on campus should be required. One of the researched case studies was of the University of Illinois, whose 50-year policy was simply to allow but strictly regulate the leasing to students for their safety and academic benefit. Many universities utilize a website or division of their own housing department to fulfill this need, including Virginia Tech, Central Michigan University and Rutgers New Brunswick. These sites include rental searches and sometimes roommate searches, as well as community

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5 _____
http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/Resources/HPO/Historic%20District%20benefits_Mabry_%206-7-07.pdf

statistics, guidelines for living off-campus and exposure to local businesses and area amenities.[6]

Analysis and justification: Neighborhood profile analysis shows that rental properties dominate the area. Focus group results indicate that students and landlords both expressed a desire for a better process by which to connect them. Residents, students, and landlords all also strongly agreed that it would be beneficial for the students to have a clearer understanding of the responsibilities and expectations placed on them. Focus group data supports the desire from the landlord group to strengthen the relationship between themselves and the university, while also encouraging better property maintenance standards and gaining promotional opportunities for their properties.

This could be a great opportunity for EMU in taking a higher role in the off-campus welfare of its students, and should initiate at least a website to house information that would assist local-living students in what can be a daunting experience. Landlords and property managers could be charged a fee per listing that would fund the site and its maintenance (the University of Michigan charges $50 for 1-3 properties all the way up to $1103.00 for 200-1000 properties. http://www.offcampus.housing.umich.edu/lt/register.cfm); disclaimers of code-worthiness could be partnered with property registrations to provide a sense of well-being for the students engaging in the search process.

Other web links:
http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/
http://www.cmich.edu/Admissions/Transfers/Housing/Off-Campus.htm
http://web.offcampuspartners.com/5

Issue 2: New Faculty and Staff Housing
Goal: Increase home ownership by incentivizing purchases in the study area by new staff and faculty to EMU to buy homes in neighborhoods.

Recommendation A: Use a university/city assistance program to subsidize closing costs or other purchase transaction costs for homes in the Midtown and Riverside neighborhood.

Recommendation B: Amend hiring benefits or start-up packages to accommodate a housing allowance or bonus to cover purchase closing costs. Temporarily suspend purchase of parcels for university (tax-exempt) use and apply those specified funds to support the subsidization program.

Recommendation C: Develop a welcome packet that includes data and points of interest to new faculty, focusing a portion of it to include realtors specializing in Ypsilanti and local bank information pertaining to funding for the purchase and rehabilitation of homes in the study area.

Case study: The University of Maryland had a market analysis for a development project that would infuse faculty living into the community. Although the project was for new development, there are many points made from other university case studies on the importance of having a shared environment for the community and faculty.[7]

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6   http://www.universitydistrict.org/sophomore_residency.php
7

Back in 2003, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, started their own homebuyer assistance program using the motto "building the community where you work." Where many of the west coast programs help staff in high-priced scenarios, this vessel aimed to stabilize neighboring streets, bring faculty and staff closer to work, engage the groups already making revitalization efforts, and build city-university relations. After partnerships were established, the rolled-out provisions would give a two-tiered approach: specific ward-located purchases would yield $15,000 or in other areas of Cleveland $10,000 for the costs of the transaction. For rehabilitation for existing owners, low-interest loans ranging from $66,000-77,000 maximum were also made possible. By the end of 2004 "…81 Case Western employees had participated in the program. A total of 61 of these employees have either purchased a home or received a renovation loan for a home through the program. Seventeen of these homes were purchased within the special incentive neighborhoods that immediately surround the campus. A good majority of the homes, thirty-nine, were purchased within Cleveland, but in other neighborhoods." (Hoereth et al, 2007, page 17)

Analysis and justification: Although the city master plan lumps the two neighborhoods together with the university in one zone, there appears to be little planning effort that involves the neighborhoods in regards to EMU. There seems to be a disconnect here that, if mended, could harbor effective university investment in the surrounding-campus neighborhoods, local faculty (benefit to faculty through reduced travel costs), stabilization of depressed neighborhoods, a collaborative network of school/city/lender/county, and better relations for EMU in the local and regional arenas. Hoereth, Packnett, and Perry (2007) stress the importance of these efforts though Employer-Assisted Housing programs: "Try as they might, urban universities who seek to insulate themselves from the struggling communities around them are learning that ignoring economically declining neighboring communities eventually returns to haunt them." (page 2) And "For the entire history of EAH, dating back to company towns, EAH has been less about providing a social benefit for employees and more for ensuring the stability, cost and productivity of labor. To the extent that EAH serves as a form of investment in the urban fabric these programs also contribute to economic development, the revival of struggling real estate markets and serving as a public private mix of investment in sites of urban regeneration." (page 3).

Several universities buy properties outright in which to house students and faculty, but as supported by this study's profile data, the further acquisition of property into tax-exempt status is not a viable solution for Ypsilanti. Sales prices for homes in Michigan have dropped significantly and so should the closing costs that accompany such a transaction. These programs are regularly initiated by the academic entity so EMU would need to take the lead on this endeavor. The university, with Washtenaw County and a lender like Higher One (who executes the student ID/debit cards), could serve as the base since the county already has similar programs (http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/extension/CommDevelopment/Informatio nal%20brochures%20on%20Homebuyer%20Assistance%20Programs%20available%20in%20W ashtenaw%20County) and Higher One is already working with the university. It would be worth contacting local, regional and state level community development corporations to make a stronger push to spark the program.

This effort would infuse EMU personnel into the neighborhoods, provide a relatively

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http://www.eastcampus.umd.edu/Image/market/UM%20East%20Campus%20Market%20 0Analysis.pdf

low-cost way to keep EMU investing in the neighboring areas, and minimize the impact of this investment on the city's tax base. Options offered by other universities include rentals owned by the school, low-interest mortgages originated by the institution, salary adjustments, or housing allowances (ucop.edu). Additionally, universities typically hand out materials to new hires to familiarize them with many aspects of the position, so including Ypsilanti-specific housing resources would be a simple addition.

> *Other web links:*
http://www.ucop.edu/acadadv/acadpers/handbook/housing.htm
http://www.housing.ucsb.edu/hchoices/faculty-housing.htm
http://www.villageofshorewood.org/vertical/Sites/%7B5230848F-4209-4497-9E80-89EC90BA64AE%7D/uploads/%7BDE8B9F98-4308-48C6-80AB-C8C2A3F7D891%7D.PDF
http://www.newcomersws.com/?module=Page&sID=about-us
http://www.grandforksgov.com/reports/gatecitybank.pdf

Study: Student Cooperatives

Issue: Conflict between the study area's dependence on the highly kinetic student housing market, which requires flexible terms, and its need for more stable caretakers.

Goal: To support increased owner-occupation through emphasizing ownership patterns outside the absentee-landlord-and-renter/single-family-owner dichotomy.

Recommendation: Create a hospitable environment for the development of student cooperatives. The zoning ordinance currently defines cooperative housing as "a multiple dwelling owned by a corporation which leases its units to stockholders/shareholders on a proprietary lease arrangement," then mentions it no further. Three Michigan communities have established student cooperative systems – Ann Arbor, East Lansing, and Kalamazoo – and all have taken different approaches to zoning. We recommend a hybrid of the approaches taken by Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo (see case studies below).

Some universities are more involved with their cooperatives than others. While a greater level of involvement with university administration can lead to greater access to resources for cooperatives, it also leaves the cooperative continually vulnerable to the university's allocation of those resources. In accordance with cooperatives' general emphasis on self-reliance, we recommend that it be viewed as an independent ambassador from EMU students into the community rather than soliciting direct administrative assistance.

Case studies: As in Ann Arbor, cooperatives could be introduced in the same category as fraternities and sororities and subjected to the student overlay guidelines listed in Section 122-

548 of Ypsilanti's current zoning ordinance, cited in Chapter 1. This would open the door for cooperatives' organizational ownership model without affecting any currently permitted uses. It is a simple first step that could also stand on its own.

Kalamazoo's approach is more flexible and requires more information from the applicant, both of which could be particularly useful in the initial stages of building a cooperative tradition. The "institutional campus" designation is used to accommodate Kalamazoo's large uses in campus-like settings. Applicants are required to submit a ten-year Institutional Master Plan to be reviewed under the standards for Planned Unit Developments. This plan must include an analysis of the surrounding area, the organization's mission, site plans, uses and needs, development envelope, transportation and parking management, pedestrian circulation, design guidelines' compatibility with supporting neighborhoods, quality standards and citizen participation.

A potential concern with this approach is the sheer quantity of information and analysis required from an organization that is overwhelmingly likely to be comprised of new, young, and transient members. However, the work of establishing a co-op requires just such an undertaking regardless of the zoning particulars. Much of the information needed by the City will also be needed for other parts of the project, such as incorporating as a non-profit and securing funding. The work of creating the planning-specific portions of the application, such as transportation and pedestrian circulation, should be expected to pay off for the cooperative in terms of increased flexibility. The city should also provide as much technical assistance as possible with these portions, expecting their returns in the form of well-run working prototypes of new ownership forms.

Analysis and justification: Copious comments recorded in the focus groups indicate that residents, landlords and even students agree that the journey to full citizenship doesn't happen overnight. It is hard to tell who is responsible for teaching responsibility, too: parents, peers, neighbors, landlords, and academic professionals all play a part. These paragraphs from the North American Students of Cooperation Organizer's Handbook speak to the contribution cooperatives strive to make in exactly that regard:

"[B]ecause cooperatives put participation and education at the core of the community, those who live in them are given the tools to impact their community. This can come through training, workshops, and conferences for the members, but in most cases the learning experiences in a co-op are just that: experience. By trusting the members to be concerned participants in the community, and also to become the treasurer, or lead a marketing push, or build a wall, cooperatives can inspire the residents in a way that an apartment, dorm, or other housing option never could.

"In student organizing groups, cooperatives can offer a crucial bridge between their education and 'real world' experience. By bringing students together to manage the organization, cooperatives create a community that works toward common goals, and gives an environment

that is lively and exciting, but still responsive to the needs of students. Building a sense of community on campus is integral to reviving civic life and student involvement, and a co-op can not only house students, but serve as a community space controlled by the same students who use it."

<div style="text-align:center; background-color:#c0504d; color:white; padding:8px;">Study: Code Enforcement</div>

Goal: To find ways the most cost-effective ways to deliver the greatest amount of code enforcement services

Recommendation A: Create a student code enforcement internship. This could be set up in several ways, depending on the costs and resources the city feels it can most afford. It could be free to the city, in which case it would be the building department's responsibility to fully train the student. Or it could represent a partnership in which the city pays EMU for some of a faculty member's time to coordinate the internship and help train the candidate, saving the building department from deploying its professionals' limited time on teaching basic concepts.

Recommendation B: Invite the community to help with code enforcement. Possibilities include an easily-accessible, web-based citizen complaint portal that trains and deputizes citizens to perform some code-enforcement functions in order to more carefully focus the building department's limited resources.

Recommendation C: Identify innovative code enforcement procedures from across the country and study them for possible application.

Case studies: Many municipalities offer code enforcement internships, either through the city directly or under the city attorney. New York City and San Francisco are two examples.

Port St. Lucie FL, Monterey Park CA, and Austin TX have all deputized community members to assist with code enforcement. Tasks assigned include sign patrol, lawn cutting inspections, monitoring of abandoned homes, nuisance abatement, zone surveys, complaint inspections, and office work. Besides the actual tasks accomplished by the volunteers, the City of Austin's website points out a potentially even greater benefit to their services: educating the public about property codes.

The City of Los Angeles, CA, implemented a Systematic Code Enforcement Program in 1998 which won the 2005 Harvard Kennedy School Innovations in American Government award. It took a two-pronged approach which shifted the cost of code enforcement from the public to landlords and tenants through a per-unit annual fee, then realigned its inspection program from a complaint-based system to a systematized approach.

Analysis and justification: During the focus group sessions, both residents and landlords expressed some frustration with the current level of code enforcement. One landlord suggested

that the inspection process was a mechanism that could be used to address crime. Code enforcement is cited in the master plan as a means of preserving neighborhood quality. But with well over 4,000 parcels in the city and only six full-time building department employees, the job is very large and the resources are limited. These collaborations can provide a needed service at a low cost while offering an educational benefit to students and the community and creating one more bridge between the city and the university. It is also another good candidate for an academic connection, since the research and presentation skills involved might detract from the actual work of inspecting buildings but are the focus of academic training.

<div align="center">**Study: Curb Appeal**</div>

Goal: Initiate citywide investment in making streetscapes more functional and walkable

Recommendation A: Encourage intended flexible landscaping options in front yards through zoning ordinance adjustments to allow for alternative gardening and edible plantings.

Recommendation B: Seek events like Plant Sharing and Community Tree Planting to educate the neighborhoods and service/support this initiative through social interaction.

Recommendation C: Ask non-profits and community service/outreach organizations to get involved through collaborative events

Case studies: In Florida, there are statewide efforts to not only maintain better appearances, but to also protect native species. "Local governments can derive substantial benefits from promoting and protecting native vegetation that is appropriate to the area. 'Appropriate native vegetation' is vegetation found in the natural community that is suited to the soil, topography, and hydrology of a particular site. The use of appropriate native vegetation in local landscaping can help achieve water conservation goals, preserve habitat in urban areas, greatly reduce maintenance costs for landscaping, and protect property values" (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Tree planting has also created value for neighborhoods. Canopies are recognized in an article from Joe Rojas-Burke in which more trees make for healthier newborns (2011). Tree planting community groups often work in tandem with public service departments to more effectively distribute and properly plant trees in the right-of-way.[8]

Residents in many communities are already taking their own action to implement rain gardens or raised beds in their front yards despite whether an applicable ordinance or policy exists. In Oak Park, MI, resident Julie Bass redesigned her front yard after the city conducted a sewer repair, leaving the right-of-way and their street-side property as a dirt patch rather than the preexisting grass lawn. With the assistance of friend Ryan Turpin, they installed raised beds for flowers and edible plantings. The work was initiated after several attempts to contact the city to make sure there was no violation to the local code. After the projects completion, a city inspector first warned, then cited, and finally summonsed the Bass Family, where Julie faced three months of jail time. The incident gained national attention from the Daily Show on Comedy Central and many news outlets like this quote from the Huffington Post: 'According to a local ABC affiliate, city code states that "all unpaved portions of the site shall be planted with grass or ground cover or shrubbery or other suitable live plant material." Posing the question: Are cabbages, peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers"suitable" for the front lawn?,

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8   http://www.oregonlive.com/health/index.ssf/2011/01/more_trees_in_a_city_bring_sur.html

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/08/julie-bass-jailvegetable-garden_n_893436.html)

Although some portion of the area was covered by mulch, the code was not clear enough, and questions to the interpretation of the ordinance resulted in internal and external debate, and the eventual dropping of charges in July of this year. (http://berkley.patch.com/articles/oak-park-drops-charges-on-front-yard-garden).

Analysis and justification: Neighborhood profile analysis shows that grassroots efforts have been made to start community gardens in providing for more availability and more choices of food options. Focus group results from the residents and renters groups spoke in depth about walking as their main mode of transportation through this area, as well as interest in increasing the availability of fresh produce and food related amenities. The Ypsilanti Zoning Ordinance Article 5 Section 302.4 indicates that "weeds" or plants over ten inches in height are the main concern of growth on parcels but that "...this term shall not include cultivated flowers and gardens." The ordinance initially addresses the issue in Article 3 Section 110.80 speaking to a bigger concern that "vermin" are not encouraged to take up residence in overgrown yards. The purpose of this recommendation is that the action to engage in alternative landscaping should be an "intended" activity that should always have regular maintenance and not allow for overgrowth that could 1. encourage vermin activity and 2. limit the sight of walking persons. Adhering to the ten inch limit in most cases would not be difficult, as long as corner properties and areas abutting the sidewalk were not obscured by growth. It seems that the ordinance is already broad enough, but may be supported further by additional language to protect individuals' rights and protect other citizens and the city as a whole. It would be of great measure to include those organizations that already have started community gardens and planting activities to lead the way in showing proper technique so that the average new participant has a better chance at making this type of effort a benefit to their property. One group in particular is Growing Hope (growinghope.net) whose efforts include addressing legislative concerns and educating the public. The city may contact individuals like Mr. Turpin whose technical knowledge of raised beds and his recent experience through the legal system on this topic could serve as a sounding board when considering strategies and policy adjustments. Ultimately it falls on the city to review the current ordinance and determine whether the code needs to be adjusted or simply enforced in a particular way.

The first walking tour that the study group took revealed the lack of right-of-way (ROW) and property trees in the study area compared to neighboring streets. Tree canopies are not only vital for good health as mentioned prior, but can help support property values as found in a study that revealed "tree cover has a positive monetary effect on the sale price of homes in the six Cincinnati, Ohio communities studied. From the coefficients derived from the analysis it was estimated that the average value of tree canopy is $20,226 or 10.7% of the total sale price of the homes observed." (Dimke, 2008) Improved tree cover has been the focus of the Old Village Association in Plymouth, MI for the past five years; this neighborhood group uses proceeds from fundraisers to purchase and plant ROW trees throughout their streets. (http://plymouth-mi.patch.com/blog_posts/view-from-the-village-give-a-tree-a-break) Since the Department of Public Service is the provider of tree maintenance for the area, it would be best for the associations to start a conversation with DPS in order to find out the best way they can be supportive to the department's work. Removing dead or diseased trees is dangerous business and needs to be handled by certified and insured professionals. Although planting and taking care of trees is extremely important, training volunteers can be done to enhance the city tree service.

Bottom line is the profile data suggests that an improvement to the overall property values and curb appeal is necessary; everyone can look at their front yards for the answer. In a survey of 760 home sales, DesRosiers, Theriault, Kesten and Villeneuve (2001) found that landscaping had a significant impact.
http://business.fullerton.edu/finance/journal/papers/pdf/past/vol23n0102/09.139_162.pdf

Other web links:
http://www.oregonlive.com/environment/index.ssf/2008/09/is_it_time_to_kill_your_lawn.html
http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/bitstream/handle/10535/6509/multifunctional%20urban%20agriculture.pdf?sequence=1
http://www.sustainweb.org/pdf/edible_buildngs.pdf
http://local.ecosalon.com/Home_Gardening_Supplies_Providence_RI-p3806-Providence_RI.html
http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=928

Amenities

Study: Diversity of Amenities

Goal: Develop creative ways to increase public space.

Recommendation A: Intersection Repair[9.] Citizen-led conversion of urban street intersections into public squares changes them from car movers into public space and offers an opportunity for members of the neighborhood to come together and make their neighborhood their own.. It does not close the street to cars; instead, it's designed to make them drive more slowly. The project is non-profit, and all materials and labor are donated. However thrifty an idea this may be; considerable cooperation must take place prior to any implementation. Responsibilities for maintenance, location, and possible removal would have to be established in order for Intersection Repair to come to fruition.

Recommendation B: Public Seating. The City of Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor Transit Authority have a partnership in which the Authority services the city with public transportation. However, a walk through the study area displays a considerable amount of bus stops that are not "easy on the eyes." Many bus stops offer little protection from the elements for riders. Additionally, stops are located in low light areas; making riders feel vulnerable. Given the unsafe perception that pervades the minds of our respondents, an effort to improve bus stops should be a priority. Additionally, our respondents would like to live in a neighborhood that supports multiple modes of transportation. An improvement of area bus stops would encourage increased ridership. This burden however does not need to be placed squarely on the shoulders of the City and Transit Authority. Members of communities represent a unique resource in neighborhood improvement. Likewise, allowing residents to develop their own amenities will give the neighborhood a character all its own. Here are two examples of creative public seating

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9   cityrepair.org

and its effects on communities; the first represents what community members can do to improve their neighborhood. The second represents what municipalities can do to improve amenities in neighborhoods with creative public seating. A resident's $100 bench in front of his property has become a neighborhood destination in Mississauga, Toronto,[10] helping establish a friendlier atmosphere. It has never been vandalized or defaced. In San Francisco, parking lanes were converted to public seating areas along a commercial corridor,[11] representing a relatively inexpensive way to transform parking spaces into "people spaces." Businesses along the corridor have committed to maintenance and upkeep of benches.

Recommendation C: Public Art Shows. Drive-Way Theater[12] uses partnerships with local theater groups to stimulate grass roots opportunities like bringing family-friendly theater into neighborhoods. Driveways represent areas the public can share, making everyday space a public destination. Similarly, temporary residential art installations convert residential front yards into art, making the neighborhood itself a destination. Locally, the Michigan Design Militia, Fly Art Center and Spur Studios represent valuable resources for connecting local artists with the community. The City of Ypsilanti has a unique resource in Dreamland Theater; a non-profit theater company that specializes in puppetry. Currently, Dreamland presents puppet shows every Sunday from their theater in Downtown Ypsilanti. One of the missions of Dreamland is to "provide classes in puppetry and other art forms to give community members of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to create and share ideas."[13] A venture into outdoor puppetry can increase the exposure of Dreamland Theater as well as provide a unique event for the neighborhoods within the study area.

Case study: A study of an Oakland CA neighborhood focused on local artists and their transformation of neighborhood installations from "junk to art, from low to high value – and ultimately to commodity for consumption" (Chapple and Jackson, 2010). Over time, the neighborhood became a destination for residents, non-residents, and developers alike. The increase in art installations in this Oakland community had a part in escalating property values and a new neighborhood identity. In fact, the art installation neighborhood found so much popularity that a city-run bus service began transporting visitors throughout the neighborhood from gallery to gallery. In another example, the Village Bottoms neighborhood in West Oakland became a destination to African American art installations. This grassroots art movement gave rise to a sense of self-determination for African Americans throughout Oakland. Meanwhile, the Village Bottom neighborhood became a destination for prospective African American homeowners (Chapple and Jackson, 2010).

Analysis and justification: Focus group participants, specifically the student focus group, indicated a lack of diverse public space as a destination. Mobile and public art installations located within the heart of study area neighborhoods represent such an open space. Overall, focus group participants are eager to create a neighborhood that they can be proud of; one that is a destination for residents and non-residents alike. Furthermore, creating organic public spaces within the study area will bring the diverse residents (renters and homeowners) together; helping to bridge the gap between the two. The study area in general is lacking open space, but Ypsilanti is home to a broad array of arts organizations with a particular emphasis on indie and DIY culture. Permitting art installations and seating on private residences could use that resource to

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10   thestar.com

11   sf.streetsblog.org

12   openeyetheater.org

13 dreamlandtheater.com

create unique public space by using existing land.

A series of loosely structured meetings were conducted with some local artists and community members. These individuals are eager to add some excitement to their neighborhoods. They submitted several unique ideas that would improve and create public space in the study area. There ideas ranged from neighborhood wide yard sales, front yard beautification competitions, to moving concerts throughout the neighborhood. However, like most people with ideas, they are uncertain as to what they are permitted to do, nor are they certain as to who must be contacted in order to initiate their ideas. The participants agreed that organic expression is what gives a neighborhood character, but of course nobody wants to do anything illegal. An effort must be made to open the doors of communication between community members and the correct channels of government. Improved channels of communication may be a simple solution that could have an immense impact on the creativity of the open space of the neighborhoods.

<div align="center">

Study: Essential Destinations

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Goal: To meet residents' basic needs within the study area

Recommendation: Explore creative ways to offer a greater range of food and supplies.

Analysis and justification: Options for fresh food are extremely limited within walking distance of the study area. The student focus group in particular cited this as a cause of dissatisfaction, expressing a strong desire for a convenient store that sold "more than chips and beer" and stating that the most commonly-used sources for groceries were a difficult-to-find local market and a four-mile trip to a supermarket accessible only by car. The expressed need for a local source of such everyday items as milk and toiletries was repeated and emphatic, leading the students to spend part of the focus group sharing insider tips with each other about the best way to secure various necessities. The landlord group also posited that the lack of food available for students on campus over the weekends could contribute to students' decisions to return to their home communities for those days, taking their recreation budgets with them.

One possible solution is to use the upcoming reconsideration of ordinances related to food as an opportunity to incentivize fresh, healthy offerings. New York City, for example, has made additional mobile vending permits available only to vendors who agree to offer fresh food in currently underserved areas. Food Desert Action uses a converted Chicago Transit Authority bus to make the rounds of communities which lack regular access to healthy food; such a partnership could be formed between Growing Hope and AATA.

http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=resources/lifestyle_community/green&id=8178612
http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/cities/in-seattle-food-desert-pop-up-grocery-provides-an-oasis/960

<div align="center">

Study: Sustained Businesses

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Goal: Establish partnerships for business development

Recommendation A: A partnership between the City of Ypsilanti and the EMU Business School could provide educational opportunities to help prospective business owners identify suitable sites, perform market research, and develop a sustainable business plan. It could also

support current business owners through "serve and learn" opportunities for students (Cisneros, 1995).

Recommendation B: Increase the presence of local businesses on campus through advertising or the provision of services, such as catering. Offer students a pamphlet mapping out area amenities. Maintain an updated list of events happening around town that may be of interest to students, from architectural tours to local bands.

Recommendation C: Further partnership with SPARK East Business Incubator

Case study: Linn-Benton Community College Microbusiness Program (Williamette Neighborhood Housing Services, w-nhs.org) was designed to help low-income individuals who want to start a business or build and existing business. Geared towards businesses that will have five or less employees and start-up needs of $35,000 or less, it presents 12-week workshops focused on building basic business skills such as business planning, bookkeeping, and marketing. It also offers counseling, business plan assistance, access to Microloans and Individual Development Accounts, and business mentoring programs with existing business owners.[14]

Analysis and justification: All focus groups indicated a desire to see a more sustained business community in the study area. More specifically, they were concerned with the knowledge of prospective business owners in regard to the capital necessary to achieve an effective start-up, citing several local sites that have housed a string of unsuccessful businesses in rapid succession. They suggested that lack of marketing and business expertise may have contributed to the high turnover.

Students' complaints that there is nothing to do coupled with business owners' complaints that they don't get enough student customers add up to a potential missed marketing opportunity. A concerted, sustained effort to let students know what the community has to offer could increase local revenues while offering the students a myriad of new ways to enjoy, connect with, and get involved in the community outside EMU.

Crime and Safety

It may seem odd that we are addressing crime and safety last, when it was among the foremost concerns of every focus group. But in fact, it's that pervasiveness which we took most seriously.

Jane Jacobs begins her seminal work on planning, "The Death and Life of Great

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14   http://www.w-nhs.org/microenterprise_program.html

American Cities" (1960), with a discussion of the perception of safety: "The bedrock attribute of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among...strangers. He must not feel automatically menaced by them. A city district that fails in this respect also does badly in other ways and lays up for itself, and for its city at large, mountain on mountain of trouble." We have seen in Chapter 1 that there is in fact crime in our neighborhoods – more than the national average, more than the state average, and more than in other parts of the city. And in Chapter 2, we learned that the *perception* of crime is an even greater barrier to feelings of personal security. We heard again and again from residents who fit Jacobs' description of "normally prudent, tolerant and cheerful people who show nothing more than common sense in refusing to venture after dark – or in a few places, by day – into streets where they may well be assaulted, unseen or unrescued until too late."

By definition, crime is the purview of law enforcement, but there are few recommendations we can point to in that direction. Budgets are too constrained to call for additional police personnel. Systematized liaison between the neighborhood associations and the department already exists through COPAC. Residents already report an enthusiastic and dedicated police chief, and the arrival of a uniformed officer to our focus group in order to hear its concerns and offer his assistance was clear evidence of the tone she has set. Law enforcement is holding up its end as best it can. What, then?

"The first thing to understand is that the public peace – the sidewalk and street peace – of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are," Jacobs explains. "It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves. In some city areas – older public housing projects and streets with very high population turnover are often conspicuous examples – the keeping of public sidewalk law and order is left almost entirely to the police and special guards. Such places are jungles. No amount of police can enforce civilization where the normal, casual enforcement of it has broken down."

This, too, is something that our neighborhoods' residents, particularly the homeowners, told us. They were the ones looking out over their streets, making the police reports, and even personally harassing criminals into moving on. In this sense, there was direct evidence to support the logic of the 2006 down-zoning proposal's goal of promoting homeownership, but this kind of vigilance can be an exhausting task that often goes against the "common sense" mentioned earlier. Only some will choose to do it, while others prefer to live with the limited access that is the other available consequence. The focus groups told us of many who make that choice to varying degrees, whether they change their routes to avoid certain streets or simply confine themselves to house and car once the sun goes down.

Yet residents, landlords, and renters alike all told us that more foot traffic was needed. And there was one group that was willing to brave the unsavory on a regular basis – as long as there was a good enough time on the end of it. Fortunately, it happened to be the group that comprises the overwhelming makeup of our study area.

We suggest that students could be instrumental in reversing the "vicious circle" mentioned in Chapter 2, in which destinations are limited because people can't access them enough to support them, and people don't go out because because they don't perceive the destinations as worth it. If we focus on providing the destinations and the students are willing to contribute the access, it is possible that we could get the circle going in the other direction: the "feet on the ground" could become the "eyes on the street" helping to voluntarily enforce decent behavior.

We also think that this process is inextricable from our discussion of the students' involvement with the community. Jacobs particularly cites areas of high turnover as being vulnerable to lack of public supervision, but our residents' short tenure is simply a defining characteristic for the foreseeable future. Our focus, then, is on developing a sense of continuous community through events, destinations, and institutions. To frequent a destination is to develop a place-based affection, and in the case of a destination that is walked to, the affection can often extend to include the journey. This affection becomes a small measure of a student's investment. Forming an attachment to a destination is also a form of identity: one becomes a "person who hangs out at the Ugly Mug," for example. In this way, the neighborhoods and the students can strengthen their working relationship into a welcoming one, inviting all to care for and feel at home on its streets at all times.

Summary

We have proposed a series of recommendations based on our research into the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods of Ypsilanti in which we have offered our best contribution to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter and this paper. Because these neighborhoods are at the geographic heart of the city, represent historical significance, and are home to one of the more distinctive populations in the city, we believe that their success is a public good that will be enjoyed by every citizen – and requires participation from every sector.

The study area's largest neighbor and biggest influence is Eastern Michigan University. We would like to invite EMU to renew its commitment to the neighborhoods which help house its student body through an innovative collaboration dedicated to one of Ypsilanti's greatest resources, its buildings, by providing design, maintenance, and preservation assistance. We also urge the administration to consider providing information and financial incentives to incoming faculty members encouraging them to make their homes in Ypsilanti. Finally, our data revealed an opportunity to address a communication gap between landlords and prospective student tenants by instituting an off-campus rental office or website.

Several of the recommendations require changes to be made at the municipal level. Although the extension of the historic district and the improvement of code enforcement procedures could both be enhanced by involvement from EMU, they officially fall within the city's purview. We also hope that the business community will seek partnerships and assistance from the resource of EMU's business school, and that the school will be reciprocally proactive in supporting the community that surrounds it. And although we may clamor for a grocery store or suggest a thousand alternative uses for existing sites or propose wildly interesting amenities, it rests with the business community to actually make those investments.

Citizens have the largest role to play. Simply altering the zoning language to allow the use of art in private spaces or increase landscaping flexibility will not necessarily result in any physical changes, and the explicit inclusion of cooperatives into the student overlay alone does not change any ownership patterns. In these instances, it will be up to the neighborhood's residents to take advantage of vehicles offered by the city to define their own kind of vibrant sustainability.

Appendix A: Focus Group Materials

Focus group questions:

Landlords/Property Managers

1. What attracted you or helped you decide to invest in this area?

a. What do you tell potential renters about the neighborhoods to get them into your properties?
b. Was it the history, price, area amenities, local events, etc.

2. What worries you the most about this area's future?

What about safety, physical aspects, cost of living, local economy

3. What negative things come to mind about these neighborhoods?

4. What would make these neighborhoods ideal?

In your experience what things from other communities would you envision/like for your neighborhood?

5. Can you briefly describe the orientation process you go through with a new renter?

Does it include a tour of the property, overview of rules and maintenance, renewal process, etc.?

Focus group questions:

Residents

1. What attracted you or helped you decide to buy in this area?

a. What do you tell your friends and family about where you live or why you moved there? b. Was it the history, price, area amenities, local events, etc.

2. What worries you the most about this area's future?

What about safety, physical aspects, cost of living, local economy

3. What negative things come to mind about your neighborhood?

4. What would make your neighborhood ideal?

In your experience what things from other communities would you envision/like for your neighborhood?

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Focus group questions:

Renters

1. What attracted you or helped you decide to rent in this area?

a. What do you tell your friends and family about where you live or why you moved there? b. Was it the history, price, area amenities, local events, etc.

2. What worries you the most about this area's future?

What about safety, physical aspects, cost of living, local economy

3. What negative things come to mind about your neighborhood?

4. What would make your neighborhood ideal?

In your experience what things from other communities would you envision/like for your neighborhood?

5. Can you briefly describe the orientation process you went through as a new renter?

Did it include a tour of the property, overview of rules and maintenance, renewal process, etc.?

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Script

Focus Group Script

"Hello everyone,. I think we're about ready to get started. *(wait for people's attention)*

First of all, thank you all for coming. I know you all have different things you could be doing tonight and we really appreciate your taking the time to come out and talk to us. ***We would like to state that your participation is voluntary. You are not obligated in any way to talk and you are free to leave at any time during the meeting. We hope you will stay and share your opinions.***

I'll start with **introductions**. My name is Dominic Romano, and I'll be moderating our

discussion today. The person sitting next to me is Jake Albers, who will be conducting our icebreaker activity. This is Wanda Norman and Leah DuMouchel who will be writing down a *lot* of notes, but don't mind them; they are mostly here to make sure we capture your valuable input. David Silver will be helping display key points on the board as we navigate through our discussions

Over here are Bill Diesenroth, Kwabena Ananda, and Jason Krol. They may be writing down additional notes but are here in general to help the rest of us if needed.

We are graduate students from Eastern Michigan University's Urban and Regional Planning Program. We, in collaboration with the Ypsilanti Planning Department ,are working on a class project aimed at developing a better understanding of the dynamics of Ypsilanti's Midtown and Riverside Neighborhoods. You have been invited here because of your ties to these two neighborhoods. Our primary **goal** is to find out what you think about these neighborhoods – quite simply, we would like to see the neighborhood through your eyes. Through your experiences, we hope to get a better sense of the positives and negatives of the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods. We will take the information you provide us today and use it to give the city with an overview of the key issues in the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods and recommendations to address these issues. ***The answers we receive for these questions will be neighborhood specific, not person specific. To further protect your confidentiality, your names will not be included in any of our notes or official reports to the city. We hope that you'll feel comfortable enough to give us your most honest opinions***. Our conversation tonight is going to be about an hour and a half long at most. Because we won't be taking any breaks today, please feel free to leave and use the restroom at any time.

The ground rules for our talk today are as follows:

First off, we are interested in everyone's opinion. There are **no** right or wrong answers, we are not trying to reach agreement, we just want to know what you think and feel about the questions being asked. We want to hear everyone, so please only speak one at a time and try to limit your response to around one minute so we are able to hear what you have to say. This may also allow us to have some time to react to what others say.

Also, if any of you have cell phones if you could please turn off your ringers that would be greatly appreciated.

Also, I should say that while we will be one a first name basis tonight, **no** names will be attached to your comments in our later reports, so everything said tonight is completely confidential.

Since we *are* running on a time budget, I might sometimes have to cut you off to go on to the next topic or another person. Please don't be offended, I am still very interested in what you have to say. We just have a set of topics we have to cover in a limited time and I have been asked to keep the conversation flowing. If I do have to cut you off, please just jot down a note on the form provided and approach myself or one of the other group members afterwards. We would love to talk with you further on anything brought up today. You can also just give one of us a written note if you prefer.
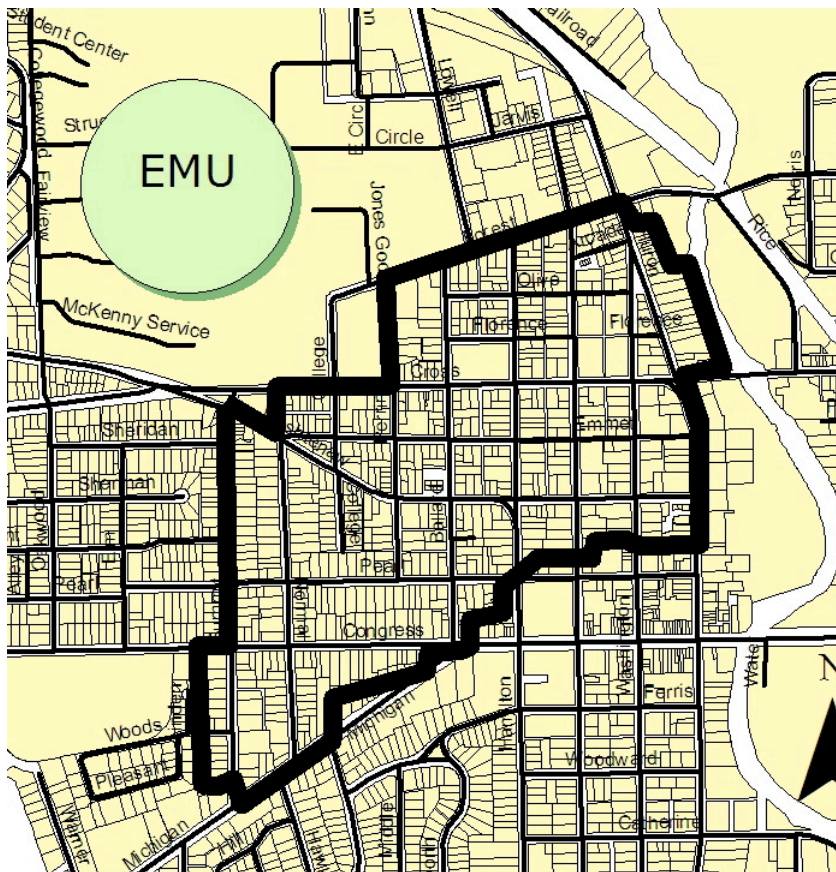
Bathrooms are… (described where they are). Please use them at any time you need to.

Also, feel free to get more refreshments at any time should you want them. Everything sound good to you all? Does anyone have questions before we get started?

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Focus Group Renters

SINCE YOU RESIDE IN THE HIGHLIGHTED AREA BELOW YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN….

We are students from a graduate Urban and Regional Planning Class at Eastern Michigan University. We are working with the support of the City of Ypsilanti, Planning Department, on a project aimed at developing a better understanding of the needs of Midtown and Riverside neighborhood residents in Ypsilanti.

We are specifically looking for **renters** from the Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods to participate in a student led focus group. The purpose of this focus group is to seek input from renters to identify the factors that adversely impact or positively contribute to these two

neighborhoods. We will use your input to provide the city with an overview of the key issues in the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods and recommendations to address these issues.

We value your input and would appreciate your participation in our focus group.

The focus group is being held in downtown Ypsilanti at Spark East, 215 W. Michigan Avenue on Tuesday March 8, 2010 at Spark East. Light refreshments will be served.

If you are interested in participating or have questions please contact

Kwabena Ananda (313)408-XXXX (313) 408-XXXX   Kananda@emich.edu

or

Dave Silver (248)766-XXXX, dsilver@emich.edu

Please RSVP

Postcards for Homeowner Recruitment

Hello Midtown and Riverside residents,

We are students from a graduate Urban and Regional Planning Class at Eastern Michigan University. We are working with the support of the City of Ypsilanti, Planning Department, on a project aimed at developing a better understanding of the needs of Midtown and Riverside neighborhood residents in Ypsilanti.

We are specifically looking for homeowners from the Midtown and Riverside neighborhoods to participate in a student led focus group. The purpose of this focus group is to seek input from homeowners to identify the factors that adversely impact or positively contribute to these two neighborhoods. We will use your input to provide the city with an overview of the key issues in the Riverside and Midtown neighborhoods and recommendations to address these issues.

We value your input and would appreciate your participation in our focus group.

The focus group is being held in downtown Ypsilanti at Spark East, 215 W. Michigan Avenue on Thursday, March 3, 2010, at 7.00pm. Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP to

Dave Silver (248)766-XXXX dsilver@emich.edu

Active Student General Housing Poll

**Areas where EMU students desire to live -
1,998 Students polled**

- West of Campus, towards Ann Arbor - 40.8%
- East of Campus and Depot Town - 16.3%
- Midtown Between Cross St. and Michigan Ave - 13.7%
- North of Campus, and Peninsular Place - 7.78%
- On Campus - 21.3%

Information provided by the EMU student body Polling service.

Appendix B: Neighborhood Indicators

Indicators	Importance	Source References
Economic Development		
Number of non-chain businesses.	Local labor & investment, fiscal externalities 68-43 of 100 spent half the space for local.	*Andersonville Study of Retail Economics* (2004).
Number of total businesses.	Shows strength of business and employment.	George Galster, Chris Hayes and Jennifer Johnson, "Identifying Robust, Parsimonious Neighborhood Indicators," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24 (2005): 265
Number of jobs.	Shows strength of business and employment.	George Galster, Chris Hayes and Jennifer Johnson, "Identifying Robust, Parsimonious Neighborhood Indicators," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24 (2005): 265
Occupations, places of work of residents and Change in industrial structures with housing data.	Links region to neighborhood through the process of industrial change.	Wim Wiewel, Bridget Brown and Marya Morris, "The Linkage between Regional and Neighborhood Development," *Economic Development Quarterly,* 3 (1989): 94.
Proximity to other thriving communities.	Regional effects through already established links.	Wim Wiewel, Bridget Brown and Marya Morris, "The Linkage between Regional and Neighborhood Development," *Economic Development Quarterly,* 3 (1989): 94.
Consumption by residents at independent local stores.	Shows level of support for local businesses.	Crossroads Resource Center, "How To Create Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators in Your Neighborhood," (1999).
Purchases from local vendors by	Continues the investment and	Crossroads Resource Center,

local businesses.	cycle of local economy.	"How To Create Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators in Your Neighborhood," (1999).
Other Indicators		
Property values.	Social Disadvantage and Prestige.	George Galster, Chris Hayes and Jennifer Johnson. Identifying Robust, Parsimonious Neighborhood Indicators. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24 (2005): 265
Income levels.	Demographic.	
Education levels.	Demographic.	
Personal residence exemption percentage.	Credit worthiness and bankruptcy.	faculty.insead.edu/dick/personal/documents/pers_bkp_cred_comp.pdf
Traffic Indicators		
Rate of traffic (vehicles/hour)	Helps determine whether slowing or calming of traffic is needed.	James E. Mundell and Daryl Grigsby, "Neighborhood Traffic Calming: Seattle's Traffic Circle Program*," City of Seattle, Seattle Transportation*, (1997).
Accidents/year (involving a motor vehicle).	Can show impact of vehicle use on safety of pedestrians and other non-motorized trans. Helps determine if area intersections are eligible for improvements.	James E. Mundell and Daryl Grigsby, "Neighborhood Traffic Calming: Seattle's Traffic Circle Program*," City of Seattle, Seattle Transportation*, (1997).
Injuries/year (involving a motor vehicle).	Can show impact of vehicle use on safety of pedestrians and other non-motorized trans.	James E. Mundell and Daryl Grigsby, "Neighborhood Traffic Calming: Seattle's Traffic Circle Program*," City of Seattle, Seattle Transportation*, (1997).
Row, sidewalk, border and street widths.	Shows how local standards and laws are followed or used for traffic and non-motorized safety and accessibility to the neighborhoods.	Eran Ben-Joseph, "Residential Street Standards & Neighborhood Traffic Control: A Survey of Cities' Practices and Public Officials' Attitudes, *Institute of Urban and Regional Planning,* University of California at Berkeley, (1995), *web.mit.edu/ebj/www/Official%20final.pdf*
Road obstruction counts.	Highlights areas where road and	Eran Ben-Joseph, "Residential

	street shoulders may be absent or lacking proper width.	Street Standards & Neighborhood Traffic Control: A Survey of Cities' Practices and Public Officials' Attitudes, *Institute of Urban and Regional Planning,* University of California at Berkeley, (1995), *web.mit.edu/ebj/www/Official%20 final.pdf*
Population and income levels.	Related to public transit needs and other non-motorized uses.	City of Ypsilanti, "Non-motorized Transportation Master Plan, 2010-2015," *Planning and Development Department*, (2009), http://cityofypsilanti.com/services /administration_services/planning _and_development/non_motor_pl an/FINAL_ADOPTED.pdf
Parking Indicators		
Persons per car in traffic.	Low per vehicle counts may indicate too much free parking or a lack of public transit.	Donald Shoup, "An Opportunity to Reduce Minimum Parking Requirements*," "Journal of the American Planning Association,"*; 61(1) Winter (1995)1: 14, ProQuest Direct Complete
Frequency of non-conventional parking.	Points to a lack of designated street or off-street spots.	Jennifer Evans-Cowley, "University District Code Enforcement: An Assessment and Recommendations for Improvement*," Ohio State University City and Regional Planning Program,* Ohio State University.
Inventory of parking spots.	Supply and demand by population.	Jennifer Evans-Cowley, "University District Code Enforcement: An Assessment and Recommendations for Improvement*," Ohio State University City and Regional Planning Program,* Ohio State University.
Road Obstruction counts.	Highlights areas where parking spots are lacking in size.	Eran Ben-Joseph, "Residential Street Standards & Neighborhood Traffic Control: A Survey of Cities' Practices and Public Officials' Attitudes,"

		Institute of Urban and Regional Planning, University of California at Berkeley, (1995) *web.mit.edu/ebj/www/Official%20 final.pdf*
Ownership/Investment Indicators		
Physical deterioration, broken fixtures, crumbling cement, abandoned cars, litter, graffiti and vandalism.	"Crime and physical deterioration are the most critical factors associated with poor neighborhood quality. When both crime and serious blight are present, a neighborhood is rated as poor or fair quality, irrespective of other characteristics."	Michael R. Greenberg, "Improving neighborhood quality: A hierarchy of needs," *Housing Policy Debate,* 10:3 (1999): 601-624.
Percent of residential properties with other types of housing violations (excluding vacant) at year end.	Provides one measure of physical deterioration. If taken with an independent field survey of physical deterioration, may also measure city resources dedicated to blight prevention.	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance/The Jacob France Institute, "Vital signs: housing and community development," http://www.bniajfi.org/vs/vital_sig ns/1
Percent of properties that undergo rehab, perhaps above a certain dollar amount.	Concrete measure of financial investment in neighborhood.	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance/The Jacob France Institute, "Vital signs: housing and community development," http://www.bniajfi.org/vs/vital_sig ns/1
Percent of residential properties that are vacant and abandoned at year's end.	May be seen as a concrete measure of DIS investment in neighborhood	Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance/The Jacob France Institute, "Vital signs: housing and community development," http://www.bniajfi.org/vs/vital_sig ns/1
Number of neighborhood home-based businesses and resident-managed studio/office spaces.	Resident has invested her work time as well as her home time in the neighborhood. Also measures mixing residential and commercial uses and allows a measure of how many people are working there during the day for (public safety)	Urban Ecology Coalition, *Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook* (1999), http://www.crcworks.org/guide.pd f
Crime Indicators		
Frequency of assaults on persons	"Crime and physical deterioration	Michael R. Greenberg,

and property.	are the most critical factors associated with poor neighborhood quality. When both crime and serious blight are present, a neighborhood is rated as poor or fair quality, irrespective of other characteristics."	"Improving neighborhood quality: A hierarchy of needs," *Housing Policy Debate,* 10:3 (1999): 601-624.
Clear delineation of responsibility for every space.	People vigilantly maintain areas which are "theirs"; as the number of permissible users of a space increases, the sense of responsibility each user feels for the space decreases proportionally. "Enhancing proprietary feelings is what Defensible Space is all about."	Oscar Newman, *Creating Defensible Space*, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research (1996).
Lighting: should be provided to a level which will allow a user to recognize another person's face at a distance of 25 m; have an even, consistent level of light; should eliminate dark tunnel effects in areas such as underpasses; in no case should lighting lure a person into a dark area.	The ability to appraise and recognize strangers, and the ability to survey visually approach directions and areas in close proximity to one's position are key factors in enhancing the perception of safety for users.	Don T. Luymes and Ken Tamminga, "Integrating public safety and use into planning urban greenways," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995): 391-400.
Vegetation design and management: should allow clear sightlines between knee height and eye level within a verge width; vegetation that creates shadow pools and potential hiding places should be pruned or relocated.	The ability to appraise and recognize strangers, and the ability to survey visually approach directions and areas in close proximity to one's position are key factors in enhancing the perception of safety for users.	Don T. Luymes and Ken Tamminga, "Integrating public safety and use into planning urban greenways," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995): 391-400.
Signs and maps: must clearly communicate routes and destinations, where to go for assistance, and where key landmarks are in relation to the user's current location; should be clear, readable from 20 m away and positioned at strategic places; isolated natural areas should inform the user that the trail leads to unlit, low-use areas.	The awareness of where one is in relation to one's surroundings is an important component in feeling secure.	Don T. Luymes and Ken Tamminga, "Integrating public safety and use into planning urban greenways," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995): 391-400.
Movement options: A variety of entrances and exits should be	Options for free movement permit users to escape threatening	Don T. Luymes and Ken Tamminga, "Integrating public

provided to avoid entrapment places and to reduce the incidence of movement predictors.	situations, and allow the user to control his or her experience.	safety and use into planning urban greenways," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995): 391-400.
Locating activity generators: opportunities to encourage use should be encouraged, especially in the evening hours.	Use of public space tends to lead to more use; people are more likely to use a space if they feel safe there, which in turn leads to enhanced feelings of security. Activities that draw people are perhaps more important than physical design in enhancing real and perceived safety from the threat of crime.	Don T. Luymes and Ken Tamminga, "Integrating public safety and use into planning urban greenways," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995): 391-400.
Number of people walking during the day.	Theory: The number of pedestrians is an indicator or urban health.	Unsourced – I have not yet found literature which addresses this directly
Number of people walking at night.	Theory: The number of pedestrians at night is an indicator of how safe people feel in their neighborhoods, although separating out the actual pedestrians from the folks they're afraid of (drug dealers and prostitutes) is more difficult than taking a simple count.	Unsourced – I have not yet found literature which addresses this directly
Police presence	Theory: A greater number of visits by police officers could mean a number of things, from top-notch crime prevention to a persistent crime infestation.	Unsourced – I have not yet found literature which addresses this directly, although I am halfway through the original "Broken Windows Theory" article and believe some may come from there
Neighborhood Accessibility Indicators		
Neighborhood Connectivity: a measure of the directness of route and the route distance of the pedestrian for each home-destination trip.	Examinations of connectivity during new or retrofitted developments can ensure that pedestrian transportation can thrive.	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 1
People designed community: A neighborhood that is designed for people first; cars second.	People first communities are walk first communities. Lowering emissions from cars as well as	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban

	congestions and danger from automobile travelers.	Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 2
Pedestrian Connectivity, a measure of how accessible, with regard to walking, a neighborhood is to its residents.	Proper pedestrian connectivity improves route accessibility, safety, and social equity in transportation.	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 3
Route Distance, a measure of the distance in which pedestrians must walk to a destination covering built structures (sidewalks).	Shorter built distances to destinations will foster a more walk-able environment.	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 3
Preferred DRD = 300-400 meters (0.1-0.2 miles)	Studies have shown that people are more likely to travel on foot if the destination is within 0.1-0.2 miles of home.	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 3
Geodetic Distance: A measure of the distance in which a pedestrian must travel in order to reach a destination, regardless of built terrain.	Retrofitted or new developments must attempt when possible to keep route distance as close as possible to geodetic distance.	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 4
Pedestrian Route Distance: A measure of directness of the chosen path to a particular destination. PRD = Route Dist/Geodetic Dist.	A solid PRD ratio (1.0-1.5) makes for an accessible community.	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 3
Pedestrian Path Design Elements: Paths should link adjacent streets and should not be excessively long. Paths should be paved and maintained for all-weather travel. Sight lines from adjacent dwellings should be maintained; they should not become isolated pockets where travelers can pass unobserved. Paths should be adequately lit. Where possible, wide corridor	estrians should have an advantage in travel. Paths should go where drivers cannot. ntained paths can keep pedestrian travel strong all year round. ntaining sight lines ensure maximum visibility and increases safety by lowering the possibility of unnoticed crime. quately lit paths will improve a sense of safety and allow travel after dark. ding, bicycling and walking are	Todd A. Randall and Brian W. Baetz. "Evaluating Pedestrian Connectivity for Suburban Sustainability," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development*, March (2001): 5-6

widths are preferable to allow for multiple uses and for landscaping.	possible in wide corridors.	
Adopt a "Complete Streets" Ordinance.	Such an ordinance would create strict design guidelines for road projects. Complete Streets encourages capital improvements that are planned to encourage safe pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and motor vehicle use.	"City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, 2010-2015," Adopted 17 March 2010.
Pedestrian right of way without stop sign or traffic lights.	Granting and enforcing pedestrian right of way increases awareness of motor vehicle travelers. Pedestrian travel will become safer as a result of increased right of way knowledge.	"City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, 2010-2015," Adopted 17 March 2010.
Active neighborhood code enforcement.	Adopt a Street and Adopt a Sidewalk programs are ways in which community members can actively enforce violations. Active communities can keep sidewalks and bike areas free of impediments; thereby promoting non-motorized transportation.	"City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, 2010-2015," Adopted 17 March 2010.
Amend of remove bicycle registration ordinances.	Although registration ordinances are design to aid in stolen bicycle recovery; registration ordinances are often a deterrent to bicycle travel.	"City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan, 2010-2015," Adopted 17 March 2010.
Participation Indicators		
Neighborhood organizing in a major collective effort to create a stabilization plan	Citizen participation to address social disorder like crime, drugs, fear and safety, as well as economic disorder caused by the loss of the industrial job base.	Patrick G Donnelly and Theo J. Majka, "*Residents' Efforts at Neighborhood Stabilization: Facign the Challenges of Inner-City Neighborhoods*," Sociological Forum 13 (2) (1998) 189-213. doi: 0884-8971/98/0600-0189.
How the design of the environment of common spaces affects social ties and community participation	The design of physical space can transform individuals into a community capable of forming strong local organizations	Frances E. Kuo, William C. Sullivan, Rebekah Levine Coley and Liesette Brunson, "*Fertile Ground for Community: Inner-City Neighborhood Common Spaces*," American Journal of Community Psychology 26 (2) (1998) 823-851. doi: 0091-0562/98/1200-

		0823.
Relationship between political and civic participation and the sustainability of cities	How does the pursuit of sustainability in public policy affect civic and political participation	Kent E. Portney and Jeffrey M. Berry, "*Participation and the Pursuit of Sustainability in U.S. Cities*," Urban Affairs Review 42 (1) (2010) 119-139. doi: 10.1177/1078087410366122.

Citizen participation techniques during the planning process in an industrial suburb.	How action research principles enhance traditional approaches to citizen participation.	Robert Mark Silverman, Henry L. Taylor, Jr. and Christopher Crawford, "The Role of Citizen Participating and Action Research Principles in Main Street Revitalization," Action Research 6 (1) (2008) 69-93. doi: 10.1177/1476750307083725.
Strategic planning and action plans used by coalition efforts to change and improve communities	This is a study of the effectiveness of the processes used in collaborative efforts	Jomella Watson-Thompson, Stephen B. Fawcett and Jerry A. Schultz, "*Differential Effects of Strategic Planning on Community Change in Two Urban Neighborhood Coalitions*," American Journal of Community Psychology 42 (2008) 25-38. doi: 10.1007/s10464-008-9188-6.

Open space, parks, greenways and trails Indicators.		
Incorporating comprehensive parks and open space in neighborhoods	Parks and open spaces have positive impacts: increasing property values, local business traffic and increased economy	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez, "Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+. *General OneFile*.
Preserving open space	Parks and open spaces create a strong sense of place and foster community identity	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez, "Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+. *General OneFile*.
Environmental benefits	Greenspaces can improve air and	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez,

	water quality, reduce storm water runoff, improve ecosystem function and protect biodiversity and habitats. They can also reduce urban heat effects and provide residents opportunities for physical activity.	"Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+. *General OneFile*.
Economic benefits	"Property values increase with proximity and access to parks." Parks in mixed-use areas provide a rest spot to have lunch or coffee purchased at a local business.	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez, "Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+. *General OneFile*.
Community benefits	→ sense of community identity and pride → health benefits → sense of happiness and relaxation → contact with nature and fresh air → increased awareness of history → increased awareness of water issues and ecology	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez, "Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+. *General OneFile*.
Ease of use	Community will utilize local parks if they are close, easy to access and publicized.	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez, "Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+. *General OneFile*.
Potential for social injustices	Making public spaces accessible and available to diverse users diminishes potential for injustices	Anna Read and Isabel Fernandez, "Integrated greenspace networks a smart option: find out the benefits of investing in green infrastructure," *Public Management* 92 (10) (2010): 16+.
Links between outdoor environments and physical activity	"Outdoor environments can motivate both physical activity and learning among children."	"Child's Play: Robin Moore, DIPL.ARCH., M.C.P., Investigates Parks as Active Recreation Sites for Kids." *States News Service* 27 Dec. (2010),

		General OneFile.
Outdoor and other natural amenities contribute to local and regional economy	Provide higher quality of life, health benefits, and increased resident populations and enhanced property values.	The Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University, "How Important are Parks and Trails to Michigan's Economic Recovery?," *State of the State Bulletin #SOSS-3 (*2009) http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS/Publications/Parks_Trails.pdf.
Real estate near green assets shown to have higher property values	Average home in close proximity to greenways can have 33% higher value, thus increasing tax revenues. These properties are also perceived to be a better place to live and influence homeownership and renters alike.	The Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University, "How Important are Parks and Trails to Michigan's Economic Recovery?," *State of the State Bulletin #SOSS-3 (*2009) http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS/Publications/Parks_Trails.pdf.
Green infrastructure attracts population	Sense of "place" attracts knowledge workers, retirees and the creative class.	The Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University, "How Important are Parks and Trails to Michigan's Economic Recovery?," *State of the State Bulletin #SOSS-3 (*2009) http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS/Publications/Parks_Trails.pdf.
Green infrastructure networks	Encourage establishments and generate revenue from soft goods sales (water, lunch, soda, candy, etc.)	The Land Policy Institute at Michigan State University, "How Important are Parks and Trails to Michigan's Economic Recovery?," *State of the State Bulletin #SOSS-3 (*2009) http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS/Publications/Parks_Trails.pdf.
Curb appeal / landscaping	"Managers of all types of properties are also investing in quality landscaping to increase interests in their properties and decrease vacancies."	Diana Mirel, "Breaking ground: good landscaping revitalizes any property, often attracting new tenants and residents," *Journal of Property Management* 71 (5) (2006): 36+. *General OneFile*.
First Impressions	People make snap judgments	Diana Mirel, "Breaking ground:

	based on first impressions. The first impression is usually the lasting impression, good or bad. If good landscaping is the first impression people feel positive about the property, if landscaping is bad people feel negative about the property and area.	good landscaping revitalizes any property, often attracting new tenants and residents," *Journal of Property Management* 71 (5) (2006): 36+. *General OneFile*.
Uncared for landscape	"If management can't take care of landscaping, it sends a message they might not be taking care of other important details, like tenants and residents, he said.	Diana Mirel, "Breaking ground: good landscaping revitalizes any property, often attracting new tenants and residents," *Journal of Property Management* 71 (5) (2006): 36+. *General OneFile*.
Landscaped areas	Good landscaping can sway renters who consider landscaping an amenity to sign leases.	Diana Mirel, "Breaking ground: good landscaping revitalizes any property, often attracting new tenants and residents," *Journal of Property Management* 71 (5) (2006): 36+. *General OneFile*.
Landscape payoff	Quality landscaping makes homeowners feel good about their community and less likely to leave.	Diana Mirel, "Breaking ground: good landscaping revitalizes any property, often attracting new tenants and residents," *Journal of Property Management* 71 (5) (2006): 36+. *General OneFile*.
Allotment Gardens	Potentially promote aesthetic pleasure, health and well-being, community engagement, stress management and physical activity.	Agnes E. Van Den Berg, et al., "Allotment gardening and health: a comparative survey among allotment gardeners and their neighbors without an allotment," *Environmental Health: A Global Access Science Source,* 9 (2010): 74. *Academic OneFile*.
Connectivity	"Connectivity encourages walking, reduces vehicle journeys and makes connections between homes, jobs and amenities easier. It gives people choices about how they get around, breaks down social barriers and prevents	David Tittle, "Community Connection," *Planning,"* 17 (2009), *General OneFile*.

	territorialism."	
Financial Investment	"Parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our cities. They are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees."	Megan Lewis, "How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development," *City Parks Forum Briefing Papers 03,* American Planning Association. http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/economicdevelopment.htm.
Attracting talent / knowledge workers	"…cities are characterized by a sense of place, beauty in the natural environment, a mixed use transportation system and a 24-hour lifestyle."	Megan Lewis, "How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development," *City Parks Forum Briefing Papers 03,* American Planning Association. http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/economicdevelopment.htm.
Attracting talent / knowledge workers	More concerned with quality of life, knowledge workers prefer to live in 'places' with a diverse range of outdoor activities.	Megan Lewis, "How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development," *City Parks Forum Briefing Papers 03,* American Planning Association. http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/economicdevelopment.htm.
Residential selling points	Potential buyers choose to live close to open spaces and are willing to pay more for it. "The National Association of Home Builders found that 65 percent of home shoppers surveyed felt that parks would seriously influence them to move to a community."	American Planning Association, "How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development," *APA City Parks Forum Briefing Papers*, Chicago, IL. (2002) http://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/pdf/economicdevelopment.pdf.
Greenways	Recreation destinations that stimulate tourism, attract visitors from near and far and stimulate recreation-related spending.	Rails to Trails Conservancy, "Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways," *Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse,* http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/tgc_economic.pdf.

Trails	→ shape communities → connect people with places → enhance urban centers → kick-start stagnated economies	Rails to Trails Conservancy, "Economic Benefits of Trails and Greenways," *Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse,* http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/resource_docs/tgc_economic.pdf.

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