St. Martha’s Commons
Community Vision

Michigan State University
Practicum 2012
Contributors

Client:
Presbyterian Villages of Michigan
St. Martha’s Commons Planning Session
Canterbury on the Lake

Team:
Lauren Chapman, Patrick Crawford,
Michael French, Christopher Hughes,
Yiming Li, Sharnese Marshall,
Melinda McIntosh, Alexxa Young
Project Description

- Project Goals
- Community Commons’ Vision
- Methodology
- Project Location
- Current Zoning/Future Land Use
- Historical Significance
- Site History
  - St. Martha’s Church
  - St. Peter’s Boys Home
  - Village of St. Martha’s Senior Living
Project Goals

- Provide the client with relevant local and regional data to enable them to plan for the optimal re-use of St. Martha’s Church and its surrounding sites.

- Build upon the authenticity and historic nature of the site to strengthen a sense of pride and identity in the community.

- Propose a plan for a Community Commons designed to build community cohesion, intergenerational cooperation; physical, spiritual, social health, and wellbeing.
Community Commons’ Vision

Community commons that brings together people from diverse generations, spiritual and personal backgrounds, races and physical and mental capabilities to promote the well being of all.
Methodology

- Gather demographic data
- Conduct an on site inventory
- Conduct SWOT analysis
- Identify the needs of the community
- Develop a comprehensive and site specific plan for the St. Martha’s Commons
Location
Description of the Project Site

- 80 acre site located in southwest Detroit.

- The area is bounded by Joy Road, Greenfield Road, Mettatal Avenue, and the C&O railroad track.

- 20 acres specifically include the St. Martha’s Commons area.
Historical Significance

- Original Ford Farm settled by George and Samuel Ford in 1832
- Burial Site of Henry and Clara Ford
St. Martha’s Church

- Constructed by Clara Ford in honor of her mother Martha Bryant
- Burial site of Clara & Henry along with other Ford family members
- The church is currently vacant and in need of repairs
St. Martha’s Focus Area

Source: Village of St. Martha’s
St. Peter’s Boys Home

- Established in 1962, it was a residential facility for boys 11 to 19 years old.
- The facility has been depreciated with the appearance of extensive damage due to vandalism.
- The building closed in 2010 due to lack of funding.
Village of St. Martha’s

• Presbyterian Villages of Michigan was established in 1945.

• The senior living center was constructed in 2005.

• The facility includes 45 one bedroom apartment homes for persons 62 years or older.
Demographics

- Population Trends & Age Distribution
- Race
- Housing Occupancy
- Employment vs. Unemployment
- Income
- Poverty Status
- Health Care Access
Population & Age Distribution

Percent Change in Population by Region

1990-2000  2000-2010

-2.25  -0.30  6.91  22.8  18.0  11.7  -0.55

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Race

State of Michigan

- Caucasian: 82%
- African American: 15%
- Asian: 1%
- Other: 2%

Wayne County

- Caucasian: 54%
- African American: 41%
- Asian: 3%
- Other: 2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Employment Vs. Unemployment

Employment Status: 1 Mile

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Poverty Status

Poverty Trends

Source: ESRI Business Analyst
Health Care

Average Health Care Consumer Spending

Source: ESRI Community Analyst

Percentage of Doctor Visits

Source: ESRI Community Analyst
Demographic Summary

- Population Trends & Age Distribution
- Race
- Housing Occupancy
- Employment vs. Unemployment
- Income
- Poverty Status
- Health Care Access
Community S.W.O.T. Analysis

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
Strengths

- Historical Background
- St. Martha’s Church
- St. Martha’s Planning Session
Weaknesses

- Disinvestment in the surrounding area
- Poor accessibility to quality recreation
- Poor accessibility to healthy foods
Healthy Food Access

Grocery Stores, Bakeries, Butchers, and Produce Markets, Detroit, 2010

Legend:
- Speciality Stores (35)
- Produce Markets (20)
- Bakeries (34)
- Butchers (56)
- Grocery Stores (111)

St. Martha

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles

N
Healthy Food Access

Detroit Food Accessibility Areas, 2010

Legend:
- Food Desert
- Low-Accessibility Areas
- High-Accessibility Areas

St. Martha
Healthy Food Access

1 & 3 Mile Surplus/Leakage Factor by Industry Group

- Automobile Dealers
- Other Motor Vehicle Dealers
- Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores
- Furniture Stores
- Home Furnishings Stores
- Electronics & Appliance Stores
- Building Material & Supplies Dealers
- Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores
- Grocery Stores
- Specialty Food Stores
- Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores
- Health & Personal Care Stores
- Gasoline Stations
- Clothing Stores
- Shoe Stores
- Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores
- Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument Stores
- Book, Periodical & Music Stores
- Department Stores Excluding Leased Dept
- Other General Merchandise Stores
- Florists
- Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores
- Used Merchandise Stores
- Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers
- Electronic Shopping & Mail Order Houses
- Vending Machine Operators
- Direct Selling Establishments
- Full Service Restaurants
- Limited-Service Eating Places
- Special Food Services
- Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages

1 Mile Radius  3 Mile Radius
Opportunities

- Available Real Estate
- Community Organizations
- Community Involvement
- Gardenview Estates
Planning began in 1996 after the demolition of Herman Gardens.

The plan includes 4 phases equaling $228 million in investments.

Once completed there will be over 1000 new units:
- 231 market rate single family homes
- 833 rental units of varying types
Threats

- Security Issues
- Vandalism
- High cost of church maintenance
Recommendations

• Districts 2 - 10
• District 1 (St. Martha’s Site)
Recommendations
District 2: Joy West Apartments

- Currently occupied
- Viable investment

Recommendation:
  - Continue current use
  - Incorporate residents in Commons activities
District 3: Abandoned Homes

- Multiple abandoned and vandalized single and multi-family dwelling
- Ownership has reverted back to the City of Detroit
- Recommendation:
  - Demolish buildings
  - Green space will serve as a buffer
District 4: Christ Child Society

- Operating facility for at-risk boys in the community
- Has built a relationship with Presbyterian Villages of Michigan
- Recommendation:
  - Continue to build upon existing relationship with St. Martha’s Commons
District 5: Former Islamic Center

- Vacant facility
- Former owners have moved operations to a newly constructed building
- Recommendation:
  - Advocate for a new Islamic group to occupy the facility
District 6: Existing Commercial

- Commercial uses unlikely to change in near future

- Recommendation:
  - Continue current use
  - Improve parking lot with landscaping and pedestrian friendly walkways
  - Monitor future commercial proposals
District 7: Wooded Lot

- One of the last undeveloped natural areas in Detroit
- Provides a natural buffer to railroad tracks

- Recommendation:
  - Preservation
**District 8: Former Wayne County Community College**

- Northwest College campus was relocated
- The building is falling into disrepair due to vacancy

**Recommendation 1:**
- Repurpose for technical or training facility

**Recommendation 2:**
- Demolish campus
- Encourage cottage style senior assisted living housing
District 9: Former Detroit Urban Lutheran School

- Former K-12 school
- Abandoned & deteriorating
- Recommendation:
  - Advocate for a K-12 school to once again occupy the building
District 10: Existing Industrial

- City of Detroit Bus Terminal
- CF Burger Creamery

**Recommendation:**
- Continue current use
District 1: St. Martha’s Commons

- Place church on historic registry
- Establish a non-profit entity to manage the Commons
- Establish Women of Ford Museum in church
- Find a full time tenant for the church
- Establish St. Martha’s Community Center/Health Clinic
- Create Community Farmers’ Market
- Incorporate community organizations
We would like to thank our clients and everyone involved in this project.

Questions?