Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy
The Southend District - Dearborn, Michigan
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INTRODUCTION

Goal Statement: Create a Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy that will include recommendations for beautification, façade evaluation and analysis, and redevelopment opportunities. The City of Dearborn seeks to attract commercial and residential redevelopment, improve non-motorized access and mobility, and identify underutilized land for the Dix-Vernor Corridor.

COMMUNITY TRENDS

The Southend has different socioeconomic characteristics compared to the rest of the City of Dearborn, Wayne County, and the State of Michigan in regards to population, housing, income, employment, and educational attainment. Main points of importance are:

- Fairly stable population from 2010-2015
- Median age in the mid 20’s compared to the mid 30’s in the other focus areas
- More than 50% of the housing in The Southend are renter occupied
- Low household income with an average of $24,833. More than 50% of the populations having income less than $25K in 2015
- High unemployment rate at 19.9%
- High percentage of population below poverty level at 44.8%
- Low educational attainment for residents with 13% of the Dix-Vernor Corridor in the population of 25 and over have received an Associate's Degree or Higher

COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS

The characteristics measured include windows, doors, rooftop, paint & brick, lighting, parking, decor & greenery, signage, and setback.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Corridor adequately serves the community’s needs
- Vibrant, diverse community
- Roads have been recently resurfaced
- Small geographic boundary
- Tight-knit community

Weaknesses

- Lack of housing availability and variety in options
- Not enough parking
- Isolated from Detroit and Dearborn
- Heavy industrial & truck traffic
- Low level of walkability
- Little mixed use development

Opportunities

- Recreation opportunities and park improvements for residents in vacant space within neighborhood
- façades could be updated and made safer for pedestrian need
- Need for low income housing
- Vacant space for parking, housing, retail

Threats

- Possibly unaffordable to change facades
- Potential lack of incentives to create new business & residential space
- Aging infrastructure in residential and commercial areas
- Potential environmental contamination from industrial use & truck traffic along the corridor

ASSESSMENTS

COMMERICAL CONDITIONS

Of the 57 structures assessed in the commercial condition survey, 1 is in “Poor” condition, 31 are in “Fair” condition, and 25 are in “Good” condition. The characteristics measured include windows, doors, signage, and setback.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MARKETING & BRANDING

Create a marketing and branding strategy, and campaign for the corridor including:

- Logo for The Southend, increased social media presence, monument and wayfinding signs

VACANT SPACE

RECREATION, HOUSING, COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS

Efficiently utilize city owned parcels within the district to activate public involvement and promote economic development by:

- improving recreation facilities, creating and implementing a commercial façade program, conduct further studies on housing stock and potential low income housing developments.

INTERSECTION CONDITION SURVEY

Of the 18 intersections studied in the intersection condition survey, 2 were deemed to be in “Good” condition, 14 in “Fair” condition, and 2 in “Poor” condition. Factors such as connectivity, safety, and accessibility were all acknowledged in this study.

COMPLETE STREET ASSESSMENTS

Utilizing the Complete Streets Assessment Guidelines from Smart Growth America, The Team conducted a sidewalk and street/shoulder assessment in order to assess walkability and bikeability of the corridor. It was found that in its current state, the sidewalks and shoulders are not safely accessible for pedestrians and bikers along the corridor.

SWITCH 1

PARKING ASSESSMENT

Date Time Occupied Total Percentage of spots
2/11/2016 12:00pm 22 20 100%
2/11/2016 1:00pm 21 20 100%
2/11/2016 2:00pm 19 20 95%
2/11/2016 3:00pm 23 20 105%
2/11/2016 4:00pm 23 20 105%

A visual assessment was conducted to measure the current parking conditions located in 3 of the Blocks located within the corridor. It was noted that non-designated parking spaces are being utilized as overflow parking on the buffer curbs which explains the over 100% occupancy.

WALKABILITY & BIKEABILITY

Enhance walkability and bikeability for pedestrians through the area by:

- improving sidewalk conditions along corridor along with buffers, connections and signage as well as designated painted bike lanes that connect with the bike systems in The City of Dearborn and Detroit, engage in the Safe Routes to School Program.

PARKING

Create and manage adequate parking facilities and systems for the corridor by:

- including multi-lingual signage, engage community members and business owners to obtain further data, improve enforcement, consider the addition of more parking within the corridor.

$30,000 grant awarded to the Dix-Vernor corridor for:

- streetlight banners, concrete planters, monument signs, and picnic tables & benches

The demographic analysis of The Southend suggest this is a fairly young, low-income, less educated community. These characteristics can be important to consider when thinking about the development and future of the area.