

DETROIT: MAPPING A NEW NARRATIVE

by

Joshua Oliver Peter Bedard

A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfillment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2009  
© Joshua Oliver Peter Bedard 2009



## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.



## ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies the attractors of Detroit's growth and divulges into the cultural, federal, socio-economic and urban deterrents that have afflicted Detroit for the past fifty years. It probes the city of Detroit and exposes a hyper-segregated city that has been destroyed by a self-feeding cycle of nomadic behaviour and a speculative culture of endless opportunities.

To initiate change this thesis examines real alternatives that are not defined for the citizens of Detroit, but are created by them. It is a self-organizing grassroots approach that applies pressure on the city to rethink its conventional methods of urban revitalization. Utilizing the city's large inventory of vacant land, abandoned buildings and neighbourhood schools, an alternative design methodology is logically applied to atomize, consolidate, fortify and envisage a new Detroit; one where residents can remain sufficiently abreast of the social and economic problems that consistently challenge them.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Advisor: Val Rynnimeri  
Committee: Pierre Filion, Lola Sheppard  
External Reader: Adrian Blackwell  
Editors: Megan Dalley, Court Sin

To Mr. Val Rynnimeri, Mr. Pierre Filion and Mrs. Lola Sheppard I would like to extend a great deal of gratitude and appreciation for graciously sharing the tremendous amount knowledge they have in their respective fields.

I would also like to thank my parents Ernie and Donna Bedard as well as my fiancée Liane for their continued love, support and patience throughout my educational career.

I must also acknowledge all the Detroiters I have encountered in my life, including uncles, aunts and cousins, for their undying love and persistent quest for a better quality of life within the city in which they live.

To the family and friends who I have lost throughout my life, I thank them because without them I would not be the person I am today.

## D E D I C A T I O N

To my Nana and Poppy, Hannah and Emile, as well as my family and friends who showed me why it is important to care.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	xI
	AUTHOR'S NOTE	xix
CHAPTER ONE:	INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER TWO:	THE RISE OF DETROIT	15
	The River 1701 – 1850	
	Heavy Industries 1850 – 1890	
	The Automobile 1890 – 1917	
	The Arsenal of Democracy 1917 – 1956	
CHAPTER THREE:	THE DEMISE OF DETROIT	37
	The Spatial Logic of the Automotive Industry	
	The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956	
	Racial Segregation	
CHAPTER FOUR:	THE CULTURAL DETERRENTS	54
	Concentrated Poverty	
	Poor Living Conditions	
	Urban Decay	
	The Detroit Public School Crisis	
	The Collapse of a Mono-Economy	
CHAPTER FIVE:	THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE	80
	BOOTSTRAPPING DETROIT	88
	APPENDIX – VACANT PARCELS OF DETROIT	150
	REFERENCES	197



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
1.1	Hollow-core landscape of Detroit, illustration. drawn by author	1
1.2	Urban area of Metropolitan Detroit in 2000, map. base image source: www.semcog.com	2
1.3	Erasing Detroit, aerial photograph. image source: "Detroit — Motor City," <i>Shaping the City</i> , courtesy Dan Hoffman	4
1.4	Detroit neighbourhood, aerial photograph. image source: Microsoft Live Search Maps	5
1.5	Decamping Detroit, Refugee Center, illustration. from "Decamping Detroit," <i>Shrinking Cities, Vol.2</i> , Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munne	6
1.6	Decamping Detroit, Refugee Center, plan. image source: "Decamping Detroit," <i>Shrinking Cities, Vol.2</i> , Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munne	6
1.7	Decamping Detroit, Exurban Survival Training Course, plan. image source: "Decamping Detroit," <i>Shrinking Cities, Vol.2</i> , Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munne	6
1.8	Decamping Detroit, Exurban Survival Training Course, illustration. image source: "Decamping Detroit," <i>Shrinking Cities, Vol.2</i> , Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munne	7
1.9	Vacant parcels of Detroit, map. drawn by author, base image sources: Google Earth and January 2000 Existing Land Use Map	8

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
1.10	The prototype village's new attractor; Carstens Elementary School, bird's-eye view and elevation. photograph by author and aerial photographs from Microsoft Live Search Maps	11
2.1	The rise of Detroit, photomontage. constructed by author	12
2.2	The Griffon, photograph. image source: St. Clair Shores Public Library	14
2.3	The Detroit River in 1815, map. image source: Arthur M. Woodford, <i>This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001</i>	15
2.4	Detroit in 1702, letter. image source: Arthur M. Woodford, <i>This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001</i>	16
2.5	Untitled map of Detroit, map. image source: Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library	17
2.6	1810 Plan of private claims in Michigan territory, map. image source: Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library	18
2.7	The Fort of Detroit in 1749, map. image source: St. Clair Shores Public Library	19
2.8	Detroit in 1818 , bird's-eye view. image source: Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library	19
2.9	Detroit in 1830, plan. image source: Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library	20

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
2.10	The Battle at Thames, painting. image source: Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library	21
2.11	Detroit riverfront 1838, painting. image source: Arthur M. Woodford, <i>This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001</i>	21
2.12	Copper, iron ore and coal deposits in the Great Lakes region, map. drawn by author	22
2.13	Michigan Central Railroad roundhouse in the mid-1800s, engraving. image source: Dossin Great Lakes Museum	23
2.14	Michigan Central Railroad in 1879, map. image source: www.davidrumsey.com	24
2.15	Michigan Central Railroad principal connections, map. image source: www.davidrumsey.com	24
2.16	Detroit in 1890, tourist pocket map. image source: Dossin Great Lakes Museum	25
2.17	Detroit's central location within the Great Lakes region, map. drawn by author	27
2.18	Ford Model T, photograph. image source: www.carstyling.ru	28
2.19	Ford highland Park production facility, photograph. image source: National Automotive History Collection, Detroit Public Library	29
2.20	Early auto manufacturing, photograph. image source: Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village Research Center	30

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
2.21	Highland Park assembly line, photograph. image source: <a href="http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu">www.autolife.umd.umich.edu</a>	30
2.22	Detroit the capital of automotive production, picture map. image source: Arthur M. Woodford, <i>This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001</i>	31
2.23	Miss Detroit — an ambitious young lady, cartoon. image source: <i>Aviation Magazine</i> , Oct. 16, 1922	32
2.24	Give'em more firepower, poster. image source: <a href="http://www.hclib.org/pub/search/WWIIPosters">www.hclib.org/pub/search/WWIIPosters</a>	32
2.25	Eagle Navy ship in production, photograph. image source: Dossin Great Lakes Museum	34
2.26	M-3 tank production, photograph. image source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University	34
2.27	B-24 Liberator assembly line, photograph. image source: Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University	34
3.1	July 1967 Detroit riots, photomontage. constructed by author, image sources: <a href="http://www.life.com">www.life.com</a> and <a href="http://www.corbis.com">www.corbis.com</a>	37
3.2	1950 Metro Detroit manufacturing establishments, map. drawn by author, data source: <a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a>	38
3.3	1970 Metro Detroit manufacturing establishments, map. drawn by author, data source: <a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a>	38
3.4	2000 Metro Detroit manufacturing establishments, map. drawn by author, data source: <a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a>	39

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
3.5	Historical annexation timeline of Detroit, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <i>Detroit: Race and Uneven Development</i>	40
3.6	Municipalities of Metro Detroit, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	41
3.7	1940 Metro Detroit population, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <i>Detroit: Race and Uneven Development</i>	42
3.8	1950 Metro Detroit population, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <i>Detroit: Race and Uneven Development</i>	42
3.9	1960 Metro Detroit population, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <i>Detroit: Race and Uneven Development</i>	43
3.10	1970 Metro Detroit population, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <i>Detroit: Race and Uneven Development</i>	44
3.11	1980 Metro Detroit population, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <i>Detroit: Race and Uneven Development</i>	45
3.12	1940 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	46
3.13	1950 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	46
3.14	1960 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	47

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
3.15	1970 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	48
3.16	1980 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	49
3.17	1990 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	50
3.18	2000 Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	51
3.19	2000 Metro Detroit predominant race, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	52
3.20	2000 Metro Detroit families living below national poverty line, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	53
4.1	Abandoned homes, photomontage. constructed by author, photographs by author	55
4.2	2000 Metro Detroit unemployment, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	56
4.3	2000 Metro Detroit public assistance, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	56
4.4	2000 Metro Detroit median household income, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	57

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
4.5	Metro Detroit grocery stores in 2007, map. drawn by author, data source: Google Earth	58
4.6	Metro Detroit home improvement stores in 2007, map. drawn by author, data source: Google Earth	58
4.7	2000 Metro Detroit households without vehicles, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	59
4.8	Socio-Economic factors contributing to increased isolation within Detroit, diagram. drawn by author, data source: <a href="http://www.factfinder.census.gov">www.factfinder.census.gov</a> (2007 A.C.S.) and <a href="http://www.fbi.gov">www.fbi.gov</a> (2007 FBI U.C.R.)	60
4.9	Metro Detroit year housing was built, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	62
4.10	Metro Detroit elevated blood lead cases age six under, map. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a>	62
4.11	2003 Detroit Youth behavioural Risk Survey. drawn by author, data source: <a href="http://www.detroitkidsdata.org/dkdquickfacts.htm">www.detroitkidsdata.org/dkdquickfacts.htm</a>	63
4.12	2000 Vacant housing units per block, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu">www.cus.wayne.edu</a> , photos by author	64
4.13	Convicted offenders and Detroit public schools, diagram. drawn by author, base image source: <a href="http://www.familywatchdog.us">www.familywatchdog.us</a> , photo by author	65

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>	<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
4.14	Carstens Elementary School, photograph. photo by author	67	4.23	Depiction of Detroit as an American wasteland, illustration. drawn by author, photo by author	79
4.15	1966 – 2008 Detroit public school enrollment. drawn by author, data source: <i>The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System</i> and www.detroit.k12.mi.us	70	5.1	Heidelberg Project , photomontage. constructed by author, photos courtesy of Derek Farr	80
4.16	Front exterior, James McMillan Elementary School, photograph. image source: www.detroityes.com	71	5.2	MGM Grand Detroit, photograph. image source: www.prnewswire.com/mnr/mgm/ 29571/images/29571-hi-CurtClaytonStudio.jpg	82
4.17	Interior, Joy Middle School, photograph. image source: www.flickr.com/photos/ 16939591 @N04/321165556	71	5.3	Home foreclosure, photograph. image source: Mel Evans/AP Photo	83
4.18	2007 – 2008 Detroit Public Schools, grade seven M.E.A.P. scores, diagram. image source: www.detroityes.com data from: www.detroitk12.org.nyud.net	72	5.4	Detroit with healthy urban fabric, map. drawn by author	84
4.19	2000 Metro Detroit residents with high school diploma or higher, map. drawn by author, base image source: www.cus.wayne.edu	73	5.5	Detroit's urban fabric with vacant parcels erased, map. drawn by author, base image source: www.cus.wayne.edu	85
4.20	Packard auto factory, photograph. photo by author	74	5.6	Combined population and land mass of Boston, San Fransisco and Manhattan within Detroit's city limits, diagram drawn by author, base image source: www.freep.com, courtesy of The University of Detroit Mercy	86
4.21	2005 Southeast Michigan employment quotient by industry, diagram. drawn by author, data source: <i>A Region in Turbulence and Transition: The Economic Outlook for Southeast Michigan Through 2035</i>	76	6.1	Detroit: the Post-American city, illustration. drawn by author	88
4.22	2001 – 2007 Shares of the Big-Three and the impact on Metro Detroit's automotive workers, diagram. drawn by author, data source: www.bls.gov	77	6.2	Atomization, illustration. drawn by author	90
			6.3	Detroit highways, map and photograph. drawn by author, photo by author	92
			6.4	Detroit approach routes, map and photograph. drawn by author, photo by author	94

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
6.5	Detroit surface arteries, map and photograph. drawn by author, photo by author	96
6.6	Detroit railroad lines and industrial lands, map. drawn by author	98
6.7	Detroit infrastructure, illustration. drawn by author, photo by author	98
6.8	Detroit atomized, map. drawn by author	99
6.9	Consolidate, illustration. drawn by author	100
6.10	Detroit public school locations, map. drawn by author	102
6.11	One-mile square village, diagram. drawn by author	104
6.12	Cores to be intensified, map. drawn by author	105
6.13	Catherine Ferguson Academy, photograph. image source: <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/gardenmuppet/3147629755/">www.flickr.com/photos/gardenmuppet/3147629755/</a>	106
6.14	The Heidelberg Project, photograph. photo by author	107
6.15	Earthworks Urban Farm, photograph. image source: <a href="http://www.cskdetroit.org/EWG/history.cfm">www.cskdetroit.org/EWG/history.cfm</a>	108
6.16	Detroit Summer mural, photograph. photo by author	109
6.17	Avalon Bakery, photograph. photo by author	109
6.18	Tyree Guyton, photograph. image source: <a href="http://3.bp.blogspot.com">http://3.bp.blogspot.com</a>	110

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
6.19	Reading night at Georgia street Community Collective, photograph. image source: <a href="http://1.bp.blogspot.com">http://1.bp.blogspot.com</a>	111
6.20	Movie night at Georgia street Community Collective, photograph. image source: <a href="http://www.detroitenergy.org/projects/dsgshares">www.detroitenergy.org/projects/dsgshares</a>	111
6.21	Three keys to building community, illustration. drawn by author, source image: <a href="http://communitycitysanjose.org/images/3Circles_Health-Education-Nhood2.jpg">http://communitycitysanjose.org/images/3Circles_Health-Education-Nhood2.jpg</a>	112
6.22	Network of consolidated villages, illustration. drawn by author	113
6.23	Fortify, illustration. drawn by author	114
6.24	Existing neighbourhood census tracts, illustration and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	116
6.25	Combined demographics of study area, part one, illustration. drawn by author, source information: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu/census/censusindex.asp">www.cus.wayne.edu/census/censusindex.asp</a>	118
6.26	Combined demographics of study area, part two, illustration. drawn by author, source information: <a href="http://www.cus.wayne.edu/census/censusindex.asp">www.cus.wayne.edu/census/censusindex.asp</a>	120
6.27	The primary anchor, illustration and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	122
6.28	Vacant parcels, illustration. drawn by author	124



<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
6.29	Abandoned Homes, bird's-eye view. drawn by author	125
6.30	Abandoned homes and vacant parcels, illustration. drawn by author	126
6.31	Constructive deconstruction, illustration. drawn by author	127
6.32	Secondary anchors, map. drawn by author	128
6.33	Existing secondary anchors, photographs. photos by author	129
6.34	New street typology, map. drawn by author	130
6.35	Removing the streets, illustration. drawn by author	131
6.36	Buildings to be relocated, map. drawn by author	132
6.37	Eyes on the street, illustration. drawn by author	133
6.38	Relocated buildings, map. drawn by author	134
6.39	Communal garden, illustration. drawn by author	135
6.40	Controlled voids, map and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	136
6.41	Programmed core, map and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	138
6.42	Institutional anchors, map and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	140
6.43	Micro commercial zones, map and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	142

<b>Fig.</b>	<b>Description and Source</b>	<b>Pg.</b>
6.44	Commercial zone, map and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	144
6.45	Industrial zone, map and bird's-eye view. drawn by author	146
6.46	Bootstrapped Detroit, aerial photo. drawn by author	148
7.1	Vacant Parcels of Detroit, map. drawn by author, base image sources: Google Earth and January 2000 Existing Land Use Map	151 – 96



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The degradation of post-industrial cities has been the subject of much scholarly writing. Architects, planners, sociologists and many others have examined these cities and analyzed their collapse. Literature by social activist Jane Jacobs, author Charles Waldhiem, and architect Oscar Newman, have all had profound influence on this study. In addition, articles offered in *Shrinking Cities, Volume 1: International Research* and *Shrinking Cities, Volume 2: Interventions* presented innovative projects that have had a creative impact on the design intervention offered in the latter half of this thesis.

It is important to note that this thesis uses the terms “black” and “white” to identify African-American and Caucasian ethnicities, respectively. This terminology is taken from current literature on Detroit and is no way intended to represent a derogatory opinion. In addition, when addressing “Metro Detroit,” I am referring to suburban Detroit. The city of Detroit is simply referred to as “Detroit”.



SUBURBIA

BEREFT ZONE

DOWNTOWN CBD

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*The capital of our republic may be Washington, but the capital of our culture is in Detroit, where the future is all behind us.<sup>1</sup>*

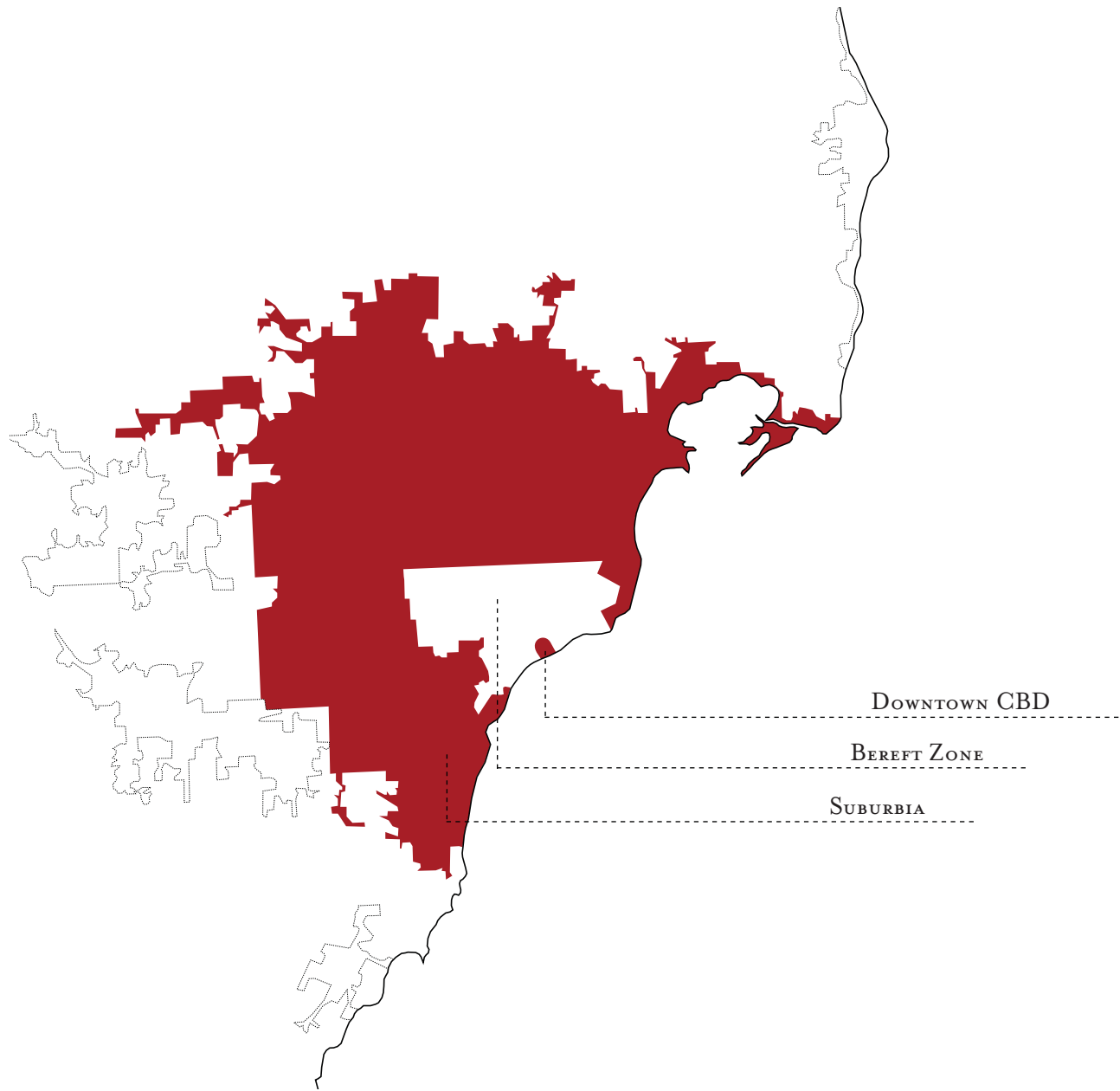
Jerry Herron, "I Remember Detroit" (2004)

Globalization has had a profound impact on the United States. It has helped catapult America into becoming the most powerful nation since Imperial Rome, and it has created a capitalist society that typifies American culture. Characterized by nomadic tendencies, American culture has been relentless in its pursuit of happiness — a happiness found in material wealth rather than social gain. As a result, some cities have been rewarded while others have been punished. No city in America better exemplifies the bipolar forces of globalization and American culture than the city of Detroit.



Figure 1.1. (Above) Vignette of Detroit's hollow-core landscape.

<sup>1</sup> Jerry Herron, "I Remember Detroit," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper Working*, p.34.



## HOLLOW-CORE CITY

*Dresden was rebuilt, and so was Hiroshima, and so were the cities destroyed by natural forces – San Francisco and Mexico City and Tangshan – but Detroit will never be rebuilt as it was. It will be the first of many cities forced to become altogether something else.<sup>2</sup>*

Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape" (2007)

In the last fifty years Detroit has rapidly transformed from the mightiest industrial city of the 20th century to the ultimate hollow-core city in America; obsolete at its core and rapidly growing beyond its fringe. Plagued by uneven development, class and race disparity, and commercial disinvestment, Detroit has been fragmented into not one, nor two, but several surrounding suburbs. A victim of suburban flight, the once booming and densely populated core has become an apocalyptic panorama of abandoned homes, boarded-up stores and urban prairie. Afflicted by severe urban decay, inner-city neighbourhoods have become areas of unemployment, high crime rates and concentrated poverty.

Historically, great cities have endowed richer opportunities for education to contest poverty-stricken neighbourhoods. However, in Detroit school funds have run dry, making it virtually impossible for the continuous cycle of poverty to be broken. As a result, a

Figure 1.2. (*Opposite*) Urban Area of Metropolitan Detroit in 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape," *Harper's Magazine*, July 2007, p.70.



Figure 1.2. (Above) “Erasing Detroit,” an early 1990s aerial photograph with vacant parcels blacked-out.

majority of black middle-class residents have begun to flee the city for more affluent suburbs and school districts, taking with them the possibility to initiate change within the city of Detroit.

This scenario is not exclusive to Detroit. Other manufacturing cities, such as Buffalo, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh, have eroded into hollow-core cities. However, unlike Detroit, none have been so overcome that the city’s ombudsperson, at the recommendation of the City Planning Commission, would publicly call for “the discontinuation of services to, and the relocation of vestigial populations from, the most vacant portions of the city.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, any urban design strategy capable of addressing Detroit’s radical condition renders itself a precedent for other hollow-core cities to follow.

3 Charles Waldheim, “Detroit — Motor City,” *Shaping the City: Case Studies in Urban History, Theory and Design*, p.78.





Figure 1.3. (Above) Aerial photograph of abandoned blocks near Erskine St. and St. Aubin St. in Detroit, Michigan.

## THE BEREFT ZONE

*Just about a third of Detroit, some forty square miles, has evolved past decrepitude into vacancy and prairie – an urban void nearly the size of San Francisco.<sup>4</sup>*

Rebecca Solnit, “Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape” (2007)

Once the defining edge of the metropolis, inner-ring neighbourhoods have become excessively isolated from the thriving suburbs and gentrified core. As these neighbourhoods deteriorate, the affluent flee further and further toward the edge while a perpetual underclass becomes victimized by unremitting difficulties that strengthen one another. Deeply engrained in American society, race has disproportionately divided the “haves” from the “have-nots.” In this winner-take-all mentality the suburbs remain prosperous and white, while the inner city remains black and poor.

While the suburbs grow and advance toward the future, Detroit’s bereft zone is reversing; it is going backward in time. Neighbourhood blocks that once flourished with life now look like ravaged war zones, with only one or two homes left standing. As Detroit continues to erode, its heyday as an industrial city is all but a memory. Although the city seems ephemeral, this thesis attempts to map a new narrative and set the groundwork for a post-American city to emerge.

<sup>4</sup> Rebecca Solnit, “Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape,” *Harper’s Magazine*, July 2007, p.66 – 67.

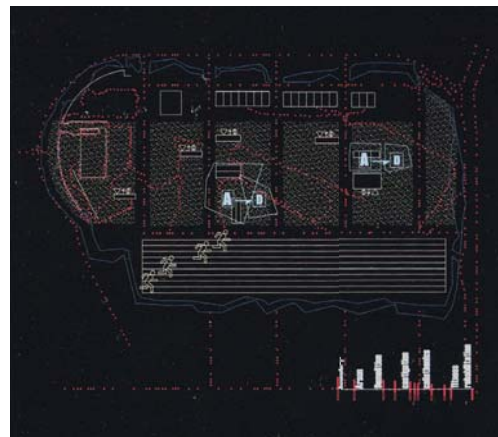
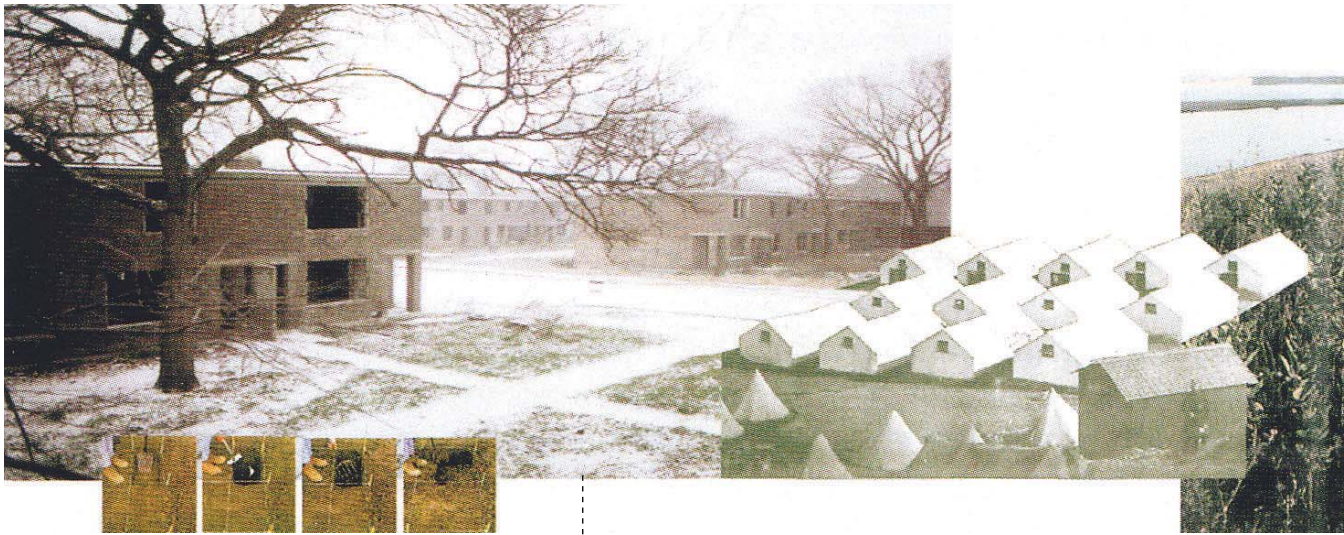




Figure 1.5. (*Opposite, Top*) “Decamping Detroit” vignette of refugee center.

Figure 1.6. (*Opposite, Bottom Left*) “Decamping Detroit” plan for refugee center.

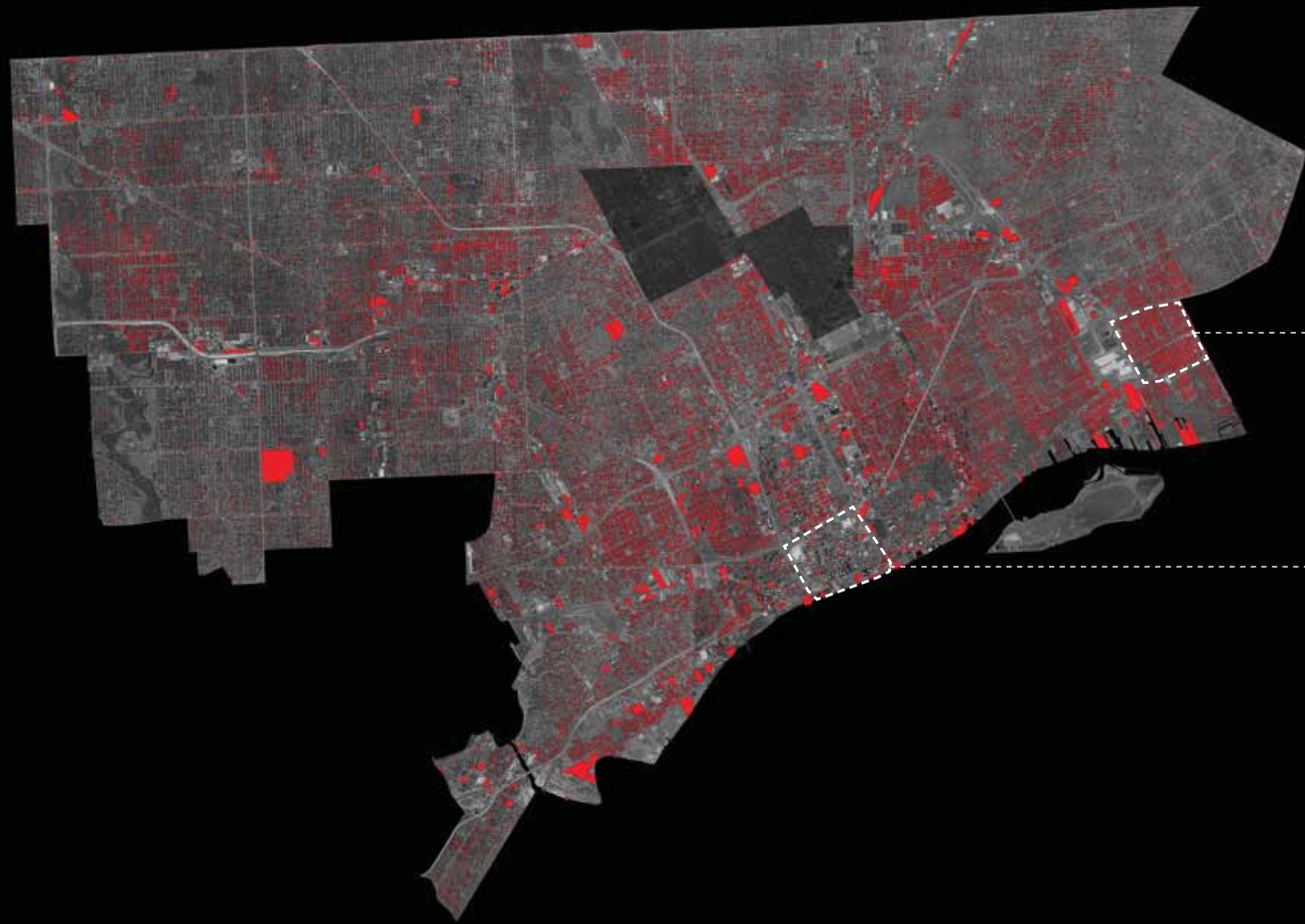
Figure 1.7. (*Opposite, Bottom Right*) “Decamping Detroit” plan for exurban survival training course.

Figure 1.8. (*Above*) “Decamping Detroit” vignette of exurban survival training course.

## DECAMPING DETROIT

In a design project entitled, “Decamping Detroit,” Charles Waldheim and Marili Santos-Munnē develop a process in which Detroit could strategically retreat through landscape urbanism. The project identifies seven regions that are over 70% vacant and recommends four stages that will lead to the complete abandonment of each area. Dislocation, erasure and absorption are the first three stages in which Detroit could abandon itself. These territories become exurban landscapes of indeterminate status rather than urban abscesses. This in turn would allow for the fourth and final step, infiltration, to occur. Here “Decamping Detroit” considers the potential use of the dismantled regions and recommends how these exurban landscapes could be creatively taken over from agents and constituencies outside the city. While “Decamping Detroit” hypothesizes on the process in which Detroit may stage its own vacancy, it does not master plan nor script the future of each abandoned region.<sup>5</sup>

5 C. Waldheim and M. Santos-Munne, “Decamping Detroit,” *Shrinking Cities, Volume 2: Interventions*, p.80 – 81.



## MAPPING A NEW NARRATIVE

Inspired by “Decamping Detroit,” this thesis seeks to develop an urban design strategy capable of dealing with the social and economic problems that inflict hollow-core cities and their bereft neighbourhoods. This thesis examines the role of architecture and illustrates its capability to develop an alternative subculture that is free from the transitional webs of globalization. While “Decamping Detroit” focused on the infiltration of exurban landscapes, this thesis focuses on the relocation of vestigial populations into atomized villages that consolidate economy and community into a manageable scale. To achieve this, an alternative urban design strategy called bootstrap urbanism is used to create nodes of urban and social networks that identify schools as the nuclei of community stability and trust.

The following is a brief outline of the structure and components of the thesis.

Chapter two, “The Rise of Detroit,” explores the early history of Detroit and examines the historical attractors that rapidly transformed Detroit into an industrial zenith. The four historical attractors identified in this chapter are: the river, heavy industries, the automobile and the arsenal of democracy. Through analysis of these four attractors, Detroit is seen as a self-sustaining city, dependent upon its natural resources and the hard work and perseverance of its citizens.

STUDY AREA

DOWNTOWN CBD

Figure 1.9. (*Opposite*) Aerial photograph of Detroit highlighting the Central Business District, the study area and vacant parcels in red. For larger map please see appendix.

Chapter three, “The Demise of Detroit,” reveals how the spatial logic of the automotive industry, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, and racial segregation have aided and abetted the siphoning of residents and capital from the city of Detroit to suburban Detroit, where the rate of return is the highest. The rise of suburban Detroit exposes an American culture that is more infatuated with individual wealth and social status than community wellbeing and social gain.

Chapter four, “The Cultural Deterrents,” delves into the socio-economic fabric of Detroit and reveals a city inflicted by concentrated poverty, poor living conditions and urban decay. In addition, research into Detroit’s public school crisis and the collapse of the American automotive industry articulates the need for an alternative urban design strategy that aims to restore community stability and trust within Detroit’s bereft neighbourhoods.

Chapter five, “The Catalyst for Change,” contests Detroit’s top-down approach to revitalization. It argues that jobs and community well-being cannot come to realization through large corporations nor concentrated gentrification downtown. Instead, chapter five advocates for an urbanism that consolidates Detroit and transforms local liabilities into community assets. It speculates that if Detroit has the potential to become the model of a post-American city, then it also has the potential to create an alternative culture that is no longer affected by globalization and the nomadic tendencies of a capitalist culture.

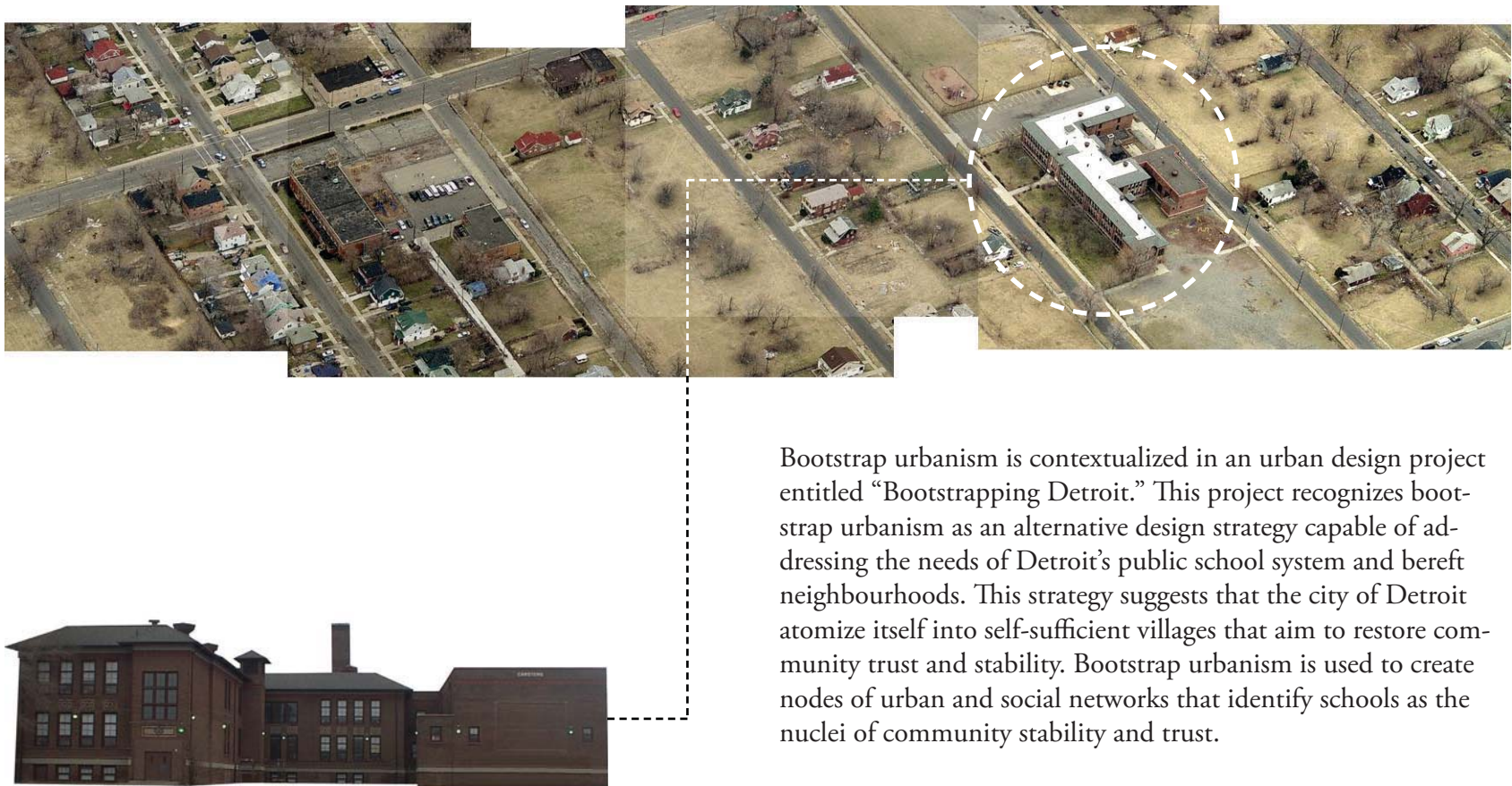
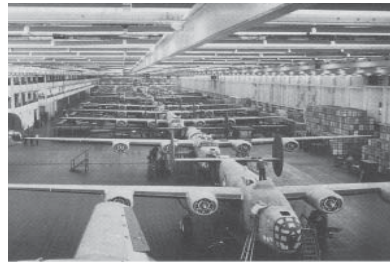
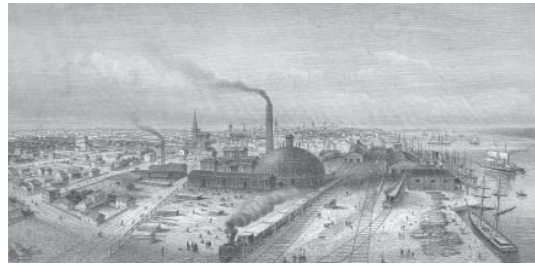
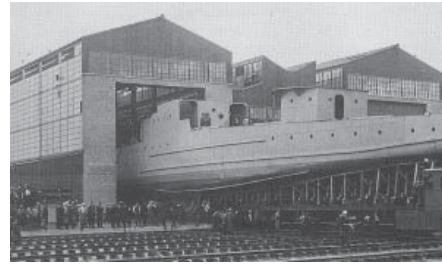


Figure 1.10. (*Opposite*) Bird's-eye view and elevation of the prototype village's new attractor; Carstens Elementary School.

Bootstrap urbanism is contextualized in an urban design project entitled “Bootstrapping Detroit.” This project recognizes bootstrap urbanism as an alternative design strategy capable of addressing the needs of Detroit’s public school system and bereft neighbourhoods. This strategy suggests that the city of Detroit atomize itself into self-sufficient villages that aim to restore community trust and stability. Bootstrap urbanism is used to create nodes of urban and social networks that identify schools as the nuclei of community stability and trust.

In “Bootstrapping Detroit,” bootstrap urbanism is applied to one of Detroit’s most desolate neighbourhoods. The purpose of the prototype village and the maps and images that accompany it is to cultivate grassroots community development and illustrate the future viability Detroit and other hollow-core cities have to offer.





## CHAPTER TWO

### THE RISE OF DETROIT

*Detroit took us in, gave us jobs and made us rich, beyond any working man's or woman's wildest dreams.<sup>1</sup>*

Jerry Herron, "I Remember Detroit" (2004)

When reciting the history of Detroit, often told is a cautionary tale about a one-industry town that has simply run dry. More often than not this narrative begins with the advent of the automobile and ascends into how it, and often it alone, contributed to the rise and fall of the city. As a result, Detroit's historical narrative has become misconstrued and has led many to believe that the city can only be revitalized if the auto industry within it is recharged.

In order to design an alternative urbanism for Detroit, it is important to analyze the historical context of the city and identify all of the key attractors that led to its fruition.

To begin, the historical rise of the city into a modern metropolis will be chronologically divided into four distinct eras: 1701 – 1849, 1850 – 1889, 1890 – 1916, and 1917 – 1956. During these eras, four historical attractors significantly impacted Detroit's rise: the river, heavy industries, the automobile and the arsenal of democracy.

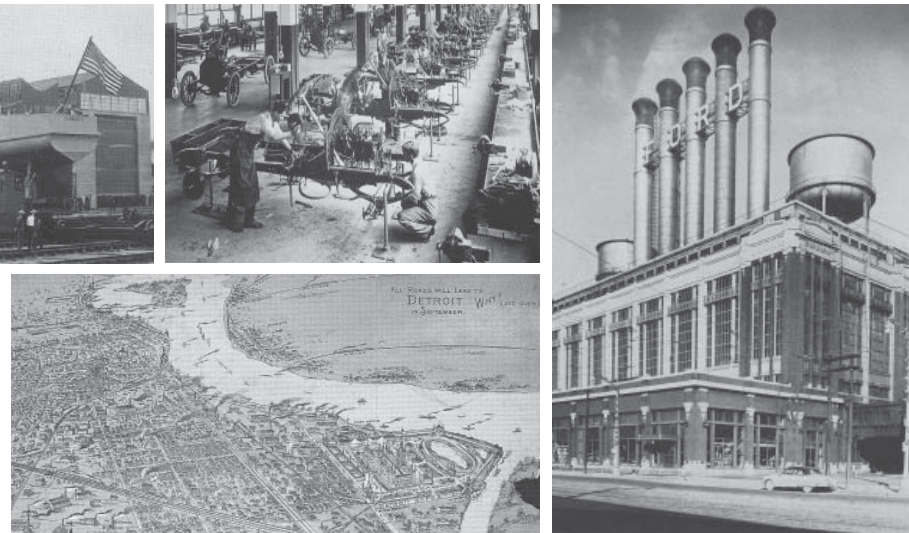
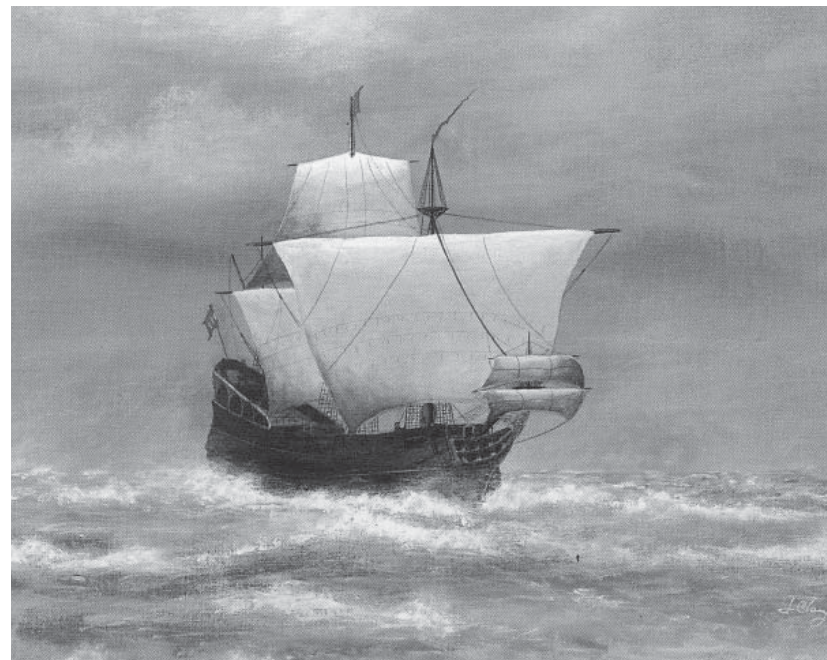


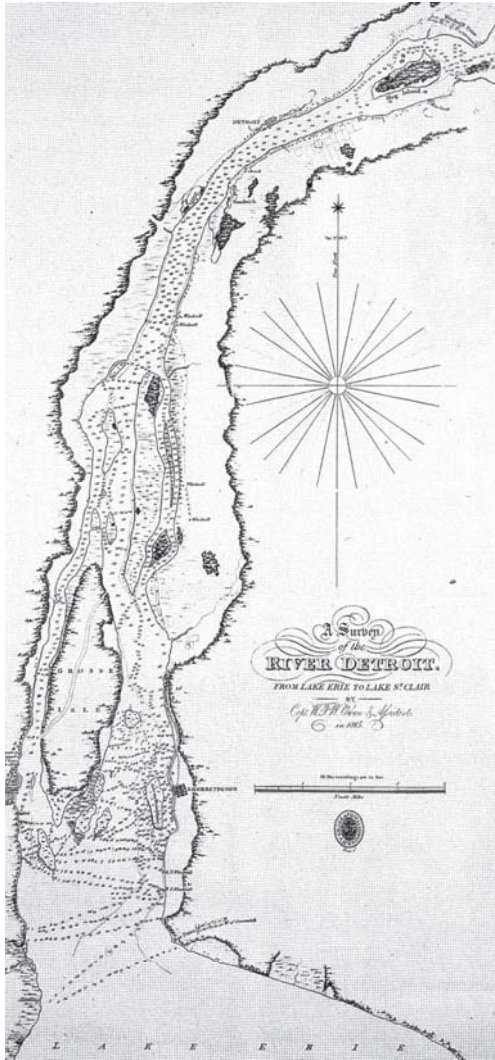
Figure 2.1. (Above) Photomontage of Detroit's rise.

<sup>1</sup> Jerry Herron, "I Remember Detroit," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.34.

Figure 2.2. (*Right*) French explorer René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle and his men were the first to sail the Detroit River aboard this ship, the Griffon, on August 11th, 1679.

Figure 2.3. (*Opposite*) 1815 map of “The River Detroit from Lake Erie to Lake St. Clair.” Detroit is shown at the top of the map.





## THE RIVER 1701 – 1850

*This strait is finer than that of the Niagara, being thirty leagues long, and everywhere one league broad, except in the middle which is wider, forming the lake we have named Ste. Claire. The navigation is easy on both sides, the coast being low and even. It runs directly from north to south. The country between these two lakes is very well situated and the soil is very fertile. The banks of the strait are vast meadows, and the prospect is terminated with some hills covered with vineyards, trees bearing good fruit, groves and forests so well disposed that one would think Nature alone could not have made, without the help of Art, so charming a prospect. The country is stocked with stags, wild goats, and bears which are good for food, and not fierce as in other countries.<sup>2</sup>*

Father Louis Hennepin (1679)

Stretching thirty-two miles and a little more than half a mile in width, the Detroit River separates the United States of America from Canada. While the name of the people to first settle on the banks of the Detroit River remains a mystery, it is estimated that Native Americans may have been living along its edge as early as 6000 B.C. Archaeologists believe these prehistoric tribes were

<sup>1</sup> Sailing aboard the *Griffon* on August 11th, 1679, Father Louis Hennepin wrote this description of the Detroit Region as René-Robert Robert Cavalier de La Salle and his men became the first recorded men to sail the Detroit River. Quoted by Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.13 – 14.

*The banks of the river are so many vast meadows where the freshness of those beautiful streams keeps the grass always green. These same meadows are fringed with long and broad avenues of fruit trees which have never felt the careful hand of the watchful gardener; and fruit trees, young and old, droop under the weight and multitude of their fruit, and bend their branches toward the fertile soil which has produced them.... On both sides of this strait lie fine, open plains where the deer roam in graceful herds, where bears, by no means fierce and exceedingly good to eat, are to be found, as are also the savory wild duck and other varieties of game. The islands are covered with trees; chestnuts, walnuts, apples and plums abound; and in season the wild vines are heavy with grapes of which the forest rangers say they have made wine that, considering its newness, was not at all bad.*

- Antoine Cadillac (1702)

Figure 2.4. (Above) Antoine Cadillac's description of his new settlement in 1702.

hunters from the central plains of the United States who were drawn to the area in pursuit of bison, mastodon, beaver and venison. Some experts also suggest that these Native American tribes would have, at the very least, been familiar with the region as they passed along the Detroit River to carry out trade and commerce with distant tribes around 4000 B.C. Although much speculation has been made by archaeologists in naming the first native settlers along the Detroit River, written documentation by early French explorers identify seven tribes that had an impact on Detroit River region in the early 1600's: the Huron, the Ottawa, the Chippewa, the Fox, the Sac, the Miami and the Potawatomi. Depending on where these tribes were located, many of the tribe members were hunters, fishermen or agriculturists who moved from place to place.<sup>3</sup> As French travellers increasingly began to travel this passage en route to Montreal and Quebec, they named it "le Detroit," which translated in English is "the strait."

In 1683, opportunist Antoine Cadillac arrived in New France and quickly flourished as a fur trader in Upper Canada. However, in 1696 heavy fighting with natives forced Louis Frontenac, the Governor of New France, to curtail the fur trade due to the heavy cost of staffing and maintaining western forts. Upset, Cadillac sailed back to France and asked King Louis XIV for authorization to create a new outpost for the fur trade. His request was granted and in June of 1701, Antoine Cadillac and some one hundred men paddled their canoes from Montreal up the Ottawa River,

3 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.5.



Figure 2.5. (Above) Untitled map that many historians believe Cadillac enclosed with his report to Count Pontchartrain on September 25,

across Georgian Bay, down Lake Huron and through Lake St. Clair searching for the ideal location. Finally on July 24th, 1701, Cadillac and his men settled on a spot where the river was narrow, the banks were high and the eye could see furthest both up and down river. Cadillac called this French settlement “Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit.”<sup>4</sup>

Antoine Cadillac’s plan for Detroit was to develop it into a genuine colony and not just a trading outpost. Ideally, Cadillac wanted farmers and artisans to populate Detroit, and have Native Americans in villages nearby. Cadillac believed that in achieving this, the town would be self-sustained by farmers and economically stabilized by the trading of furs by Native Americans and traders. This was not the case however. French farmers and artisans were unwilling to relocate, and thus Cadillac relied heavily upon Native Americans to populate the colony.

It wasn’t until 1706 that Cadillac was able to lure French farmers to Detroit. Cadillac granted farmers house lots within the fort walls of Detroit while they cultivated the land beyond in the public domain. On March 10, 1707, settlers of Detroit were granted large farms lining the Detroit River. The farm grants provided farmers with land that had a frontage of one to five arpents and extended as far back as three miles onto the river. Since the river was not only a rich source of food and water but also a means of transportation of goods, ribbon farms as they are referred to

<sup>4</sup> R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.14.



Figure 2.6. (Above) “1810 Plan of Private Claims in Michigan Territory Map.” This map shows several of the ribbon farms that surrounded the fort of Detroit. These farms were often 200 to 400 feet wide and stretched inward from the Detroit River for approximately three miles, and were built to attract European settlers to Detroit. A large portion of Detroit’s rectilinear grid was built off the division lines of these ribbon

today, quickly attracted French habitants to the region.<sup>5</sup>

During the 1700s the Detroit River region became a greatly disputed territory in an ongoing battle between French and English command over North America. Armed by the British, Native American tribes fought the French for control over the Great Lakes and the Ohio River from 1754 until 1760. Finally, in November of 1760, Detroit became an English colony. Even though the French had surrendered control to the British, Detroit remained a small French-speaking village into the 1800s. For the first time Detroit had a purpose — its riverside location became a valued British outpost that could thwart invading French troops from bordering British Canada.<sup>6</sup>

The following is a description of Detroit under British Rule in the 1700s:

*Detroit was still more of an area than a village when the British arrived. The entire population up and down both sides of the river was about two thousand, with fewer than five hundred people living in the village. The fort itself was considerably larger than the one Cadillac had built; its dimensions were about one hundred yards north and south by two hundred yards east and west. There were blockhouses at the corners and over the main gates, and these towers were*

5 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.22.

6 R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.15.

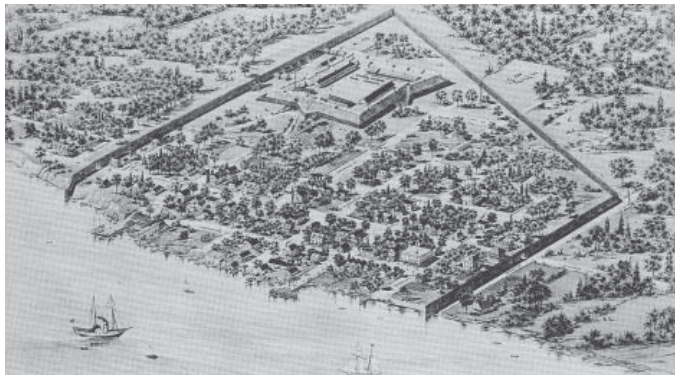
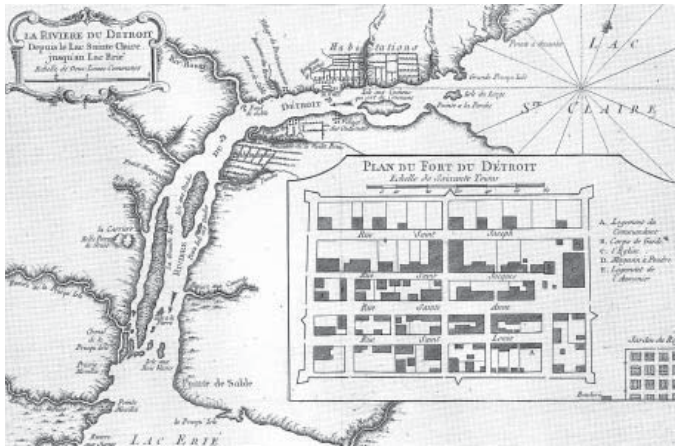


Figure 2.7. (Top) This 1749 map was the first map of the Detroit region and the fort of Detroit.

Figure 2.8. (Bottom) Bird's-eye view of Detroit in 1818.

*armed with cannons of varying size. Inside the stockade the streets were much as they had been, though some of them had been extended beyond the walls, so the village actually included more than just the fort. In fact more people lived outside the walls than inside.*<sup>7</sup>

While under British rule, the Detroit River region became an area of conflict as suspicion and tension between the British and Native Americans erupted into large rebellions and massacres. Although a truce was made and the conflict had concluded, peacefulness and normalcy in Detroit was short-lived. In 1775 Detroit's gateway location into Britain's eastern colonies thrust Detroit into the American Revolutionary War. This time however there was no bloodshed in Detroit. Instead, the colony became a valuable base from which white partisan raiders embarked on their attacks of rebelling American settlements in New York, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. Finally in 1794, General Anthony Wayne and his American troops defeated the British at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, near Toledo, Ohio. Thus on July 11th, 1796, Colonel John Hamtramck marched his American brigade into Detroit. The fort was turned over peacefully by the British and Detroit became an American town at last.<sup>8</sup>

For the next thirty years Detroit did not experience much growth. In 1805 President Thomas Jefferson established Michigan as a ter-

7 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.25.

8 R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.15.



Figure 2.9. (Above) John Mullett’s plan of Detroit in 1830. This plan shows the portions of the Woodward plan that were carried out. The Woodward plan consisted of interlocking hexagons that consisted of large north-south and east-west boulevards that, when bisected would form large circular plazas or circuses. The plan was adopted in 1807 and abandoned in 1818.

ritory and Judge Augustus Woodward named Detroit the capital of Michigan. Although Woodward had hoped the town would grow into the dominant mercantile centre of the Midwest, two issues hindered its growth. First; the West became highly contested between European settlers and Native Americans. Since Detroit was surrounded by many Native American tribes, European settlers were skeptical of moving to Detroit. Second; Detroit lacked easy access for travellers to make the journey west.<sup>9</sup>

Two major developments soon overcame these obstacles and prompted growth in Detroit. The first was the American victory over the British and Native Americans in the War of 1812. The victory began the removal of Native Americans from the Midwest as Native American leaders agreed to live on reserves and receive annual payments as long as the territorial governors agreed to respect their land rights. Thus, the Native Americans surrendered most of their land to the federal government. Supported by the military, the public land was then sold to settlers from the east.<sup>10</sup>

The second development was a combination of the design of the steamboat by Robert Fulton in 1811 and the completion of the Erie Canal in 1826. Prior to this, trips to Detroit required travel through Canada or Ohio and involved crossing either the treacherous Black Swamp, or sailing aboard large vessels that were often slow and expensive.<sup>11</sup> The innovation of the steamboat

9 R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.16.

10 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.50.

11 *Ibid.*, p.48.





Figure 2.10. (*Top*) A painting of the Battle at Thames where American troops defeated British and Indian Forces.



Figure 2.11. (*Bottom*) A view of Detroit and its busy waterfront from the Canadian shore in 1838.

and the Erie Canal, for the first time provided settlers with an efficient route west toward Detroit. As a result, state and federal governments began investing in the west and Detroit's population rapidly grew from 2,222 in 1830 to 9,102 in 1840.<sup>12</sup>

From 1701 to 1850 the Detroit River played a significant role in the development of Detroit. Its central location within the Great Lakes made it an attractive outpost for trade, commerce and military usage. Consequently, Detroit witnessed a steady growth in population. Soon however, the natural resources of Michigan were about to propel Detroit from a quiet American town into a bustling industrial city.

<sup>12</sup> R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.17.

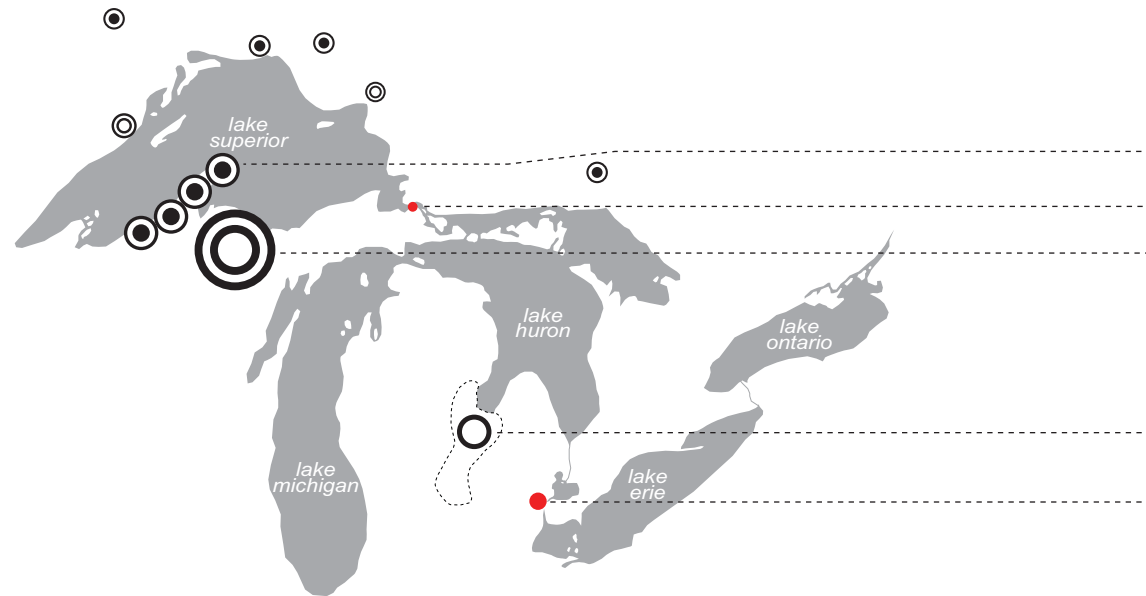
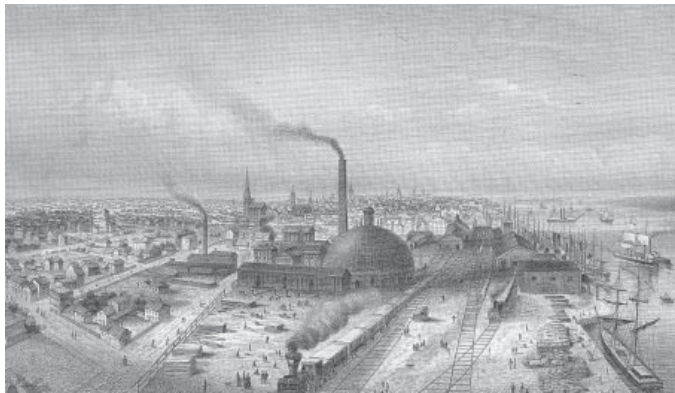


Figure 2.12. (*Right*) A map of the Great Lakes Region highlighting Michigan's rich deposits of copper, iron ore and coal.

Figure 2.13. (*Opposite*) An engraving of the Michigan Central Railroad roundhouse in the mid-1800's.



## HEAVY INDUSTRIES 1850 – 1890

*The United States faced the future uncertainly, little knowing that it stood on the threshold of an industrial expansion which, in little more than half a century, would make it the richest and strongest nation in the world. Detroit was to play a vital role in this industrial growth.<sup>13</sup>*

Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001* (2001)

Once the government began to invest in the West, Detroit experienced some dramatic changes that had a profound impact on the town. Swamps were drained, canals were dug and railroad lines were laid at a feverish rate. As a result, Detroit's population grew two-fold every ten years from 1840 to 1870.<sup>14</sup> Fuelled by copper, iron and ore, Detroit suddenly went from being an American town with no purpose to being the transportation and manufacturing hub of the Midwest.

Long before the settlement of Detroit in the eighteenth century, it was well known that copper deposits existed in the Great Lakes Region. Indeed many of the French expeditions that initially mapped the Great Lakes began as aspirations to find deposits of copper. However, it was not until Douglass Houghton unearthed rich deposits of copper in Michigan's Upper Peninsula that the mining of copper ore began on a commercial basis. The use of

COPPER

SAULT STE. MARIE

IRON ORE

COAL FIELDS

DETROIT

<sup>13</sup> Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.73.

<sup>14</sup> R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.17.

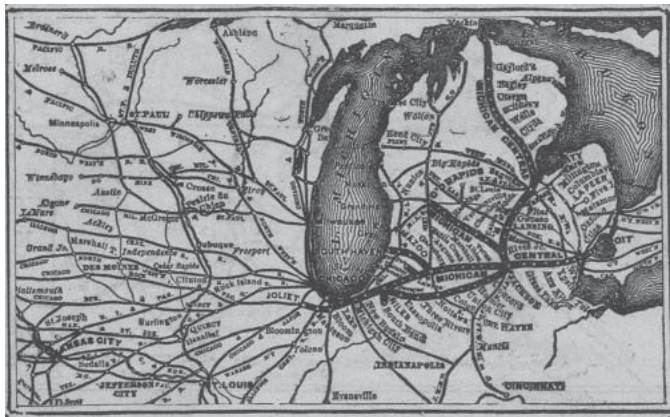


Figure 2.14. (Top) A map of the Michigan Central Railroad in 1879.

Figure 2.15. (Bottom) A map of the Michigan Central Railroad and its connections with the Great Western Railroad shortly after 1854.

Copper and brass in the fabrication of steamships and engines led to the creation of several manufacturing industries within Detroit.<sup>15</sup>

As the copper industry flourished in 1844, sizeable quantities of iron ore were being exhumed from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. When combined with limestone, iron ore could be formed into pig iron and steel. When a canal was opened in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan in 1855, several shipments of iron ore made their way down the Great Lakes. Detroit’s central position proved to be an optimum location for large foundries to be. Consequently, Detroit began to grow as a centre for heavy industry.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1840s and the 1850s Detroit lacked transportation connections with the East. During mild months, shipping vessels carried freight and passengers between Buffalo, Cleveland and Detroit, but during the winter months lake navigation became impermeable.<sup>17</sup> Since the railroad lacked connections beyond Michigan’s borders, Detroit had to rely heavily upon local industries to fabricate many of its necessities. As a result, Detroit’s brass foundries and city factories began to produce stoves, gasoline engines, farm tools, marine apparatus, pharmaceutical supplies and railroad equipment.<sup>18</sup>

15 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.75.

16 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.75.

17 Ibid., p.77.

18 J. Darden, R. Hill, J. Thomas, R. Thomas, *Detroit, Race and Uneven Development*, p.14.



Figure 2.16. (Above) This 1890 tourists' pocket map of Detroit shows several of the factories that lined the river and the railroad. Adjacent to these factories were ethnic enclaves where the European immigrants who worked in the factories lived.

Mid-nineteenth century Detroit citizens and merchants began to covet better rail connections with the East. Finally in 1854, the Great Western Railroad was constructed in southern Ontario. When it was combined with existing railroad lines in Illinois, Michigan and New York, trade, travel and commerce in the east became more accessible for Midwest settlers. For the first time, “a traveler from Chicago using the Michigan Central could make connections on the Great Western Railroad to the Niagara River, where he or she could board the New York Central for Albany and New York.”<sup>19</sup>

Detroit quickly became a gateway to the West as an assiduous cycle of opportunity and development began to transform the city. Railroad expansion attracted factories, factories created jobs, and jobs enticed immigrants — Hence Detroit began to experience a great increase in population. The Germans, the Irish and the Poles were the first to relocate to Detroit; Germans fled political unrest, the Irish escaped the potato famine and the Poles were heavily recruited to fill common labour vacancies in railroad and stove work shops. Shortly after the Germans, Irish and Poles immigrated to Detroit, immigrants from all over the world began to follow. As a result Detroit experienced a large influx in population as it amplified from 45, 619 in 1860, to 79, 577 in 1870, to 116,340 in 1880.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.77.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87.

As immigrants arrived in Detroit, they began to settle near the factories in modestly priced, high-density workmen homes. Located in close proximity to their jobs and one another, ethnic enclaves began to develop across Detroit. The Germans settled near Gratiot on Detroit's near east side, the Irish established residence in Corktown on the lower west side, and the Poles chose to settle in central Hamtramck. Foreign immigrants from other countries continued this trend by establishing residency based on neighbourhood ethnicity and nearness to work. Although this pattern of settlement provided support, comfort and companionship, it was chosen based on necessity rather than desire. As Arthur M. Woodford, author of *This is Detroit: 1701 - 2001*, explains, "it was necessary in a society that recognized them as little more than a tool for getting the job done, instead of appreciating the richness of culture and tradition they brought to their new land."<sup>21</sup>

Detroit's heavy industries changed the city. Once a small town of trade and commerce, manufacturing quickly attracted several labourers, businessmen and prosperity from afar. Detroit quickly transformed itself into a national manufacturing centre as its population grew from 21,019 in 1850 to 205,876 in 1890.<sup>22</sup> Although Detroit was one the United States' largest cities at century's end, the automobile was about to catapult Detroit into one of the world's major urban centres.

Figure 2.17. (*Opposite*) Map of Great Lakes Region showing Detroit's central location on isthmus between the iron ore fields of northern Michigan and the coal fields of Appalachia.

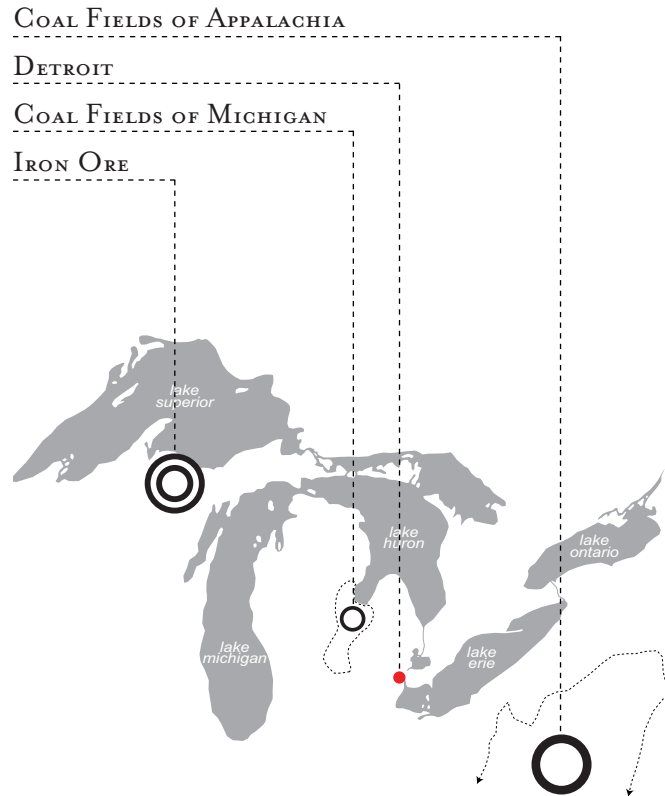
21 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.87.

22 R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.17.

## THE AUTOMOBILE 1890 – 1917

*In 1900, Detroit ranked 15th on the list of the nation's largest cities, but by 1920 it was 4th, trailing only New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. This leap was attributed to a single development: the rise of the auto industry.<sup>23</sup>*

R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided* (2000)



In the winter of 1896, two young men simultaneously created the world's first horseless carriages. One was Charles B. King, a local mechanic, and the other was Henry Ford, a night shift engineer at the Edison Illuminating Company. After King and Ford constructed the horseless carriage, more commonly known today as the automobile, several cities in the Midwest's industrial heartland began production on the automobile. Access to wood, steel, capital and machine shops made manufacturing vehicles in Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland and Pittsburgh possible.<sup>24</sup> However, Detroit's natural and industrial terrains began to slowly centralize the auto industry within itself. The city's natural placement on an isthmus between Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie, combined with its central location between the coal fields of Appalachia and the iron ore fields of northern Michigan, offered the burgeoning auto industry an abundance of heavy factories, skilled laborers and prosperous citizens it could not deny.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.21.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>25</sup> J. Darden, R. Hill, J. Thomas, R. Thomas, *Detroit, Race and Uneven Development*, p.14.



Figure 2.18. (Above) Henry Ford's Model T automobile.

Figure 2.19. (Opposite) A photograph of Henry Ford's 60-acre Highland Park production facility where the first assembly line was conceived and used to build automobiles.

In the early twentieth century, several car producers arose in Detroit as innovators, sought financial assistance from local philanthropists. The first to begin automotive production in Detroit was Ransom E. Olds. After meeting with Samuel L. Smith, a successful Detroit businessman, Olds established Olds Motor Works and began production on the Oldsmobile. The initial cost of an Oldsmobile was \$2,382 and only the affluent could afford them. In 1901, after a fire destroyed the Olds car factory and all the designs for the Oldsmobile, Olds began to design a smaller curved-dash car that could be sold at a lower price. Lacking his own factory and machines, Olds distributed the work amongst several suppliers in what later became known as the assembly process. As a result, the price of the Curved Dash Oldsmobile was significantly reduced to \$625. In 1902, Olds built one quarter of all autos in the United States and became the auto industry's first millionaire.<sup>26</sup>

*I want to build a motor car for the great multitude. It will be large enough for the family, but small enough for the individual to run and care for. It will be constructed of the best materials, by the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise. But it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one – and enjoy with his family the blessings of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces.<sup>27</sup>*

<sup>26</sup> Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.91.

<sup>27</sup> Henry Ford, quoted by Ray Batchelor, *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, p.20.





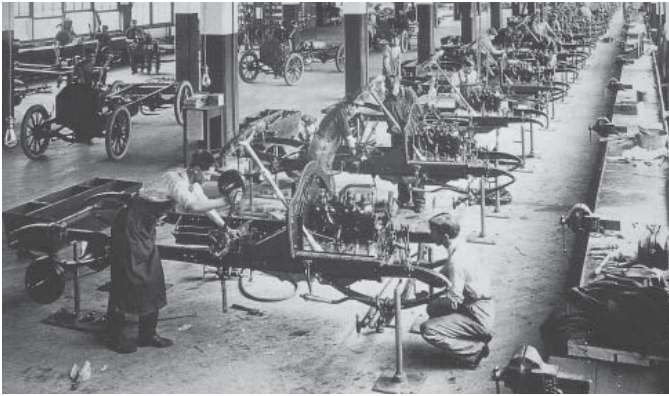
On June 16th, 1903, after receiving funds from local venture capitalists, Henry Ford incorporated the Ford Motor Company and began working on a mass-produced, low-priced automobile that could provide transportation for rural and urban inhabitants. In 1906, the Ford Motor Company relocated from a small factory on Mack Avenue at Bellvue Street to a larger factory on Piquette Avenue at Beaubien Street. It was here in 1908 that production of the renowned Model T began. The Model T was light, strong, well powered and more importantly, priced at \$850, it was affordable to the general public.<sup>28</sup> As demand for the Model T escalated, Ford rapidly fell six months behind in production and was forced to construct a new 60-acre factory in Highland Park.<sup>29</sup> It was there that Ford and his mechanics developed an ingenious procedure in the production of automobiles.

High demands for the Model T paid huge dividends for the Ford Motor Company. As orders increased, money poured in. Rather than pocketing the money, Henry Ford reinvested in his company. As a result Ford and several talented mechanics were able to experiment in various production techniques. Finally in 1913, Henry Ford was able to simplify production and keep pace with overwhelming demands by developing an assembly line that allowed production to flow in a continuous stream. The assembly line brought an increase in efficiency that simultaneously reduced the cost of the Model T to \$380 and increased demand.<sup>30</sup> The

<sup>28</sup> Ray Batchelor, *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, p.22.

<sup>29</sup> Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.92.

<sup>30</sup> Ray Batchelor, *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, p.22.



efficiency of the assembly line can be observed in the following quote by Woodford:

*The extraordinary change in technique of manufacturing allowed Ford to produce 146 Model T's per hour in 1913. By comparison in 1908, initial Model T production was, at best, only 7.5 per hour. In 1910, before the moving assembly line, the price of a Model T was \$780. By 1916, after the introduction of the assembly line, Ford was able to reduce the price to \$380.<sup>31</sup>*



While the Model T and the assembly line dramatically changed the landscape of both Detroit and America, it was Ford's groundbreaking \$5-a-day campaign that attracted thousands to Detroit. In January of 1914, the Ford Motor Company announced to the world that it would begin to pay its employees \$5 a day. In addition, Ford also announced that the ten-hour work day would be reduced to eight hours. This provided Ford with two eight-hour working shifts per day and further increased efficiency. For the labourers who made a minimum of \$2.34 for a ten-hour work day, this seemed like a gold strike. Thus several unskilled and semi-skilled labourers began to appear in Detroit.<sup>32</sup>

Men from all over Michigan left lumber camps and farms and headed for Detroit. Job seekers came from other states as well,

<sup>31</sup> Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.93 – 94.

<sup>32</sup> Ray Batchelor, *Henry Ford: Mass Production, Modernism and Design*, p.22.

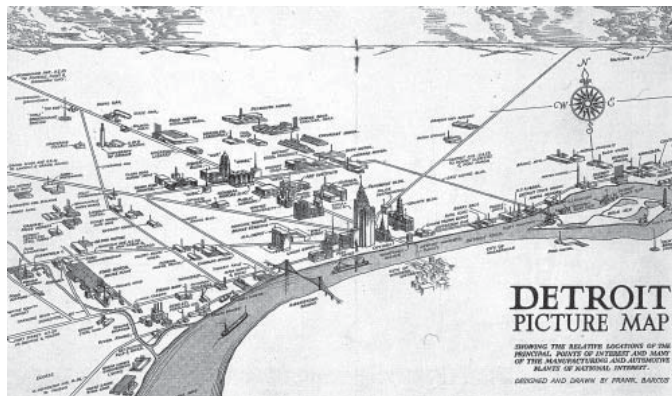


Figure 2.20. (*Opposite, Top*) A photograph of automobile production before the assembly line.

Figure 2.21. (*Opposite, Bottom*) A photograph of a Model T on the assembly line in Ford's Highland Park factory. The assembly line allowed Ford to offer \$5-a-day wages, which drew several immigrants to the Detroit area.

Figure 2.22. (*Above*) A tourists' picture map that depicts Detroit as the capital of automotive production. Several manufacturing and automotive plants are highlighted on the map.

and even Europe. Thousands lined up at the Highland Park plant gates. So dense was the throng of job applicants that it was necessary on one occasion to use firehoses to disperse them. In 1904 the Ford Motor Company had thirty-one workers, but by 1920 it employed fifty-six thousand, with two-thirds of them working at the Highland Park plant.<sup>33</sup>

The influx in labourers had a threefold effect on Detroit. First, as labourers flocked to Detroit, more automotive companies began to emerge. As a result the need for a bigger parts and accessories industry was created, which also meant the need for additional skilled labour. This in turn produced a hotbed of skilled labour, which attracted several other manufacturing businesses to Detroit. Accordingly, Detroit received its infamous epithet as the Motor-City.

33 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.94.





Figure 2.23. (Opposite) 1922 cartoon called “Miss Detroit — an Ambitious Young Lady.” The cartoon shows Detroit as a young girl grasping for the airplane industry while she already has the automotive and boating industries in her grasp.

Figure 2.24. (Above) Wartime poster encouraging American citizens to get involved in wartime production.

## THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY 1917 – 1956

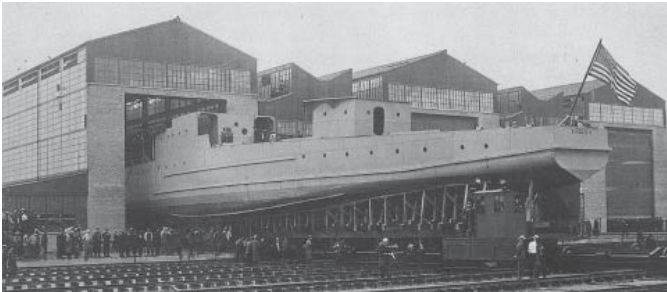
*Just as Detroit was a symbol of America in peace, so it is the symbol of America at war. Other towns make arms, as other towns make automobiles, but whether we win this war depends in great measure on Detroit.*<sup>34</sup>

Alan Clive, *Forbes Magazine* (1942)

Although Detroit became known as the Motor-City, it would not have gained that status nor prospered as it had if it was not for the United States’ involvement in the world wars. When the United States entered World War One on April 6th, 1917, Detroit was called upon to supply war materials. The city produced large quantities of weapons, tanks, boats and chemicals; however its greatest contribution toward the war effort came from the automotive industry.

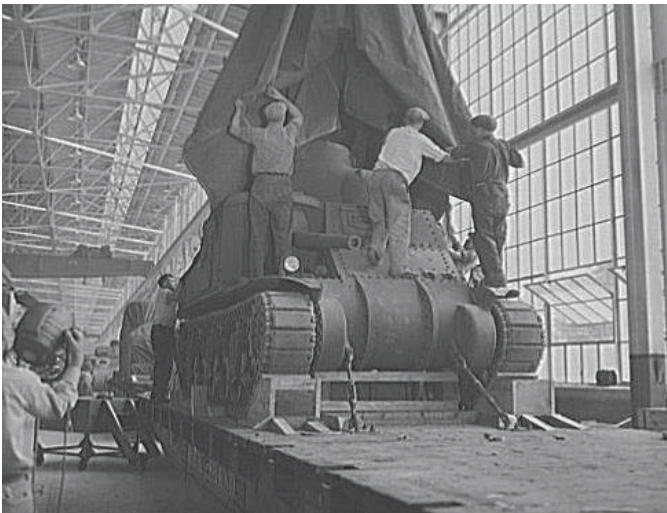
Prior to World War One, the shipment of goods was navigated by ship or railroad, however during the war railroad lines became heavily congested and waterways proved too slow. Transportation of armaments and munitions from the industrial Midwest to the eastern ports became very difficult. As a solution, the Detroit auto industry shifted its focus from the transportation of people to the shipment of goods and began production on the truck and tractor. The introduction of the truck and tractor siphoned military

<sup>34</sup> Alan Clive, quoted by Jeffery Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907 – 81*, p.153.



goods east, increased automotive production ninefold and accelerated population growth in Detroit.<sup>35</sup>

By 1920, Detroit's population had grown to nearly one million people, making it the fourth largest city in the country. As a result, Detroit experienced severe shortages of housing and transportation as people flocked to Detroit in search of defence industry jobs. After World War One, Detroit's factories switched back over to automobiles and other domestic goods, but production of these goods was limited as a result of the stock market crash in 1929.<sup>36</sup>



After World War One Detroit experienced its first plateau in growth as the number of foreign immigrants seeking refuge within the city began to decrease. Further, the stock market crash in 1929 put a stranglehold on the city and slowed industrial production in Detroit. However, the plateau was brief. On December 7th, 1941, after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, America was propelled into World War Two, and once again Detroit became the chief contributor too wartime production.

To supply the war, the United States government built new plants and turned them over to the auto companies. The Ford Motor Company, Chrysler Corporation and General Motors all became huge contributors too the wartime effort. Ford was responsible for

35 J. Booza and K. Metzger, "On Some Socio-Economic Aspects of Detroit," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.45.

36 *Ibid.*, p.45.

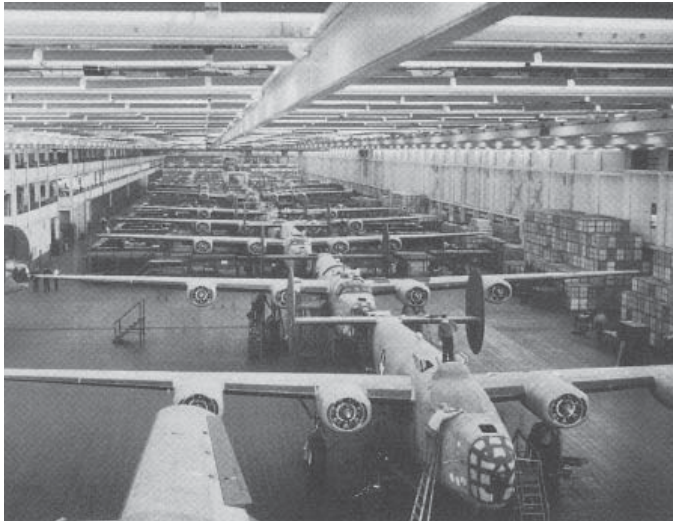


Figure 2.25. (*Opposite, Top*) A photograph of an Eagle navy ship coming off an assembly line at the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge plant.

Figure 2.26. (*Opposite, Bottom*) A photograph of workers covering an M-3 tank at Chrysler's great tank arsenal factory in 1941.

Figure 2.27. (*Above*) This photograph shows some of the 8,685 B-24 Liberator bombers that the Ford Motor Company built in their Willow Run factory.

building 8,685 B-24 bombers; Chrysler manufactured more than 25,000 tanks as well as anti-aircraft guns, ammunition, pontoons, aircraft engines and fuselage parts; and General Motors produced more than 2,300 items ranging from guns and shells to thirty ton tanks.<sup>37</sup> As a result, Detroit led the nation in defence contracts and quickly became praised as the "Arsenal of Democracy."

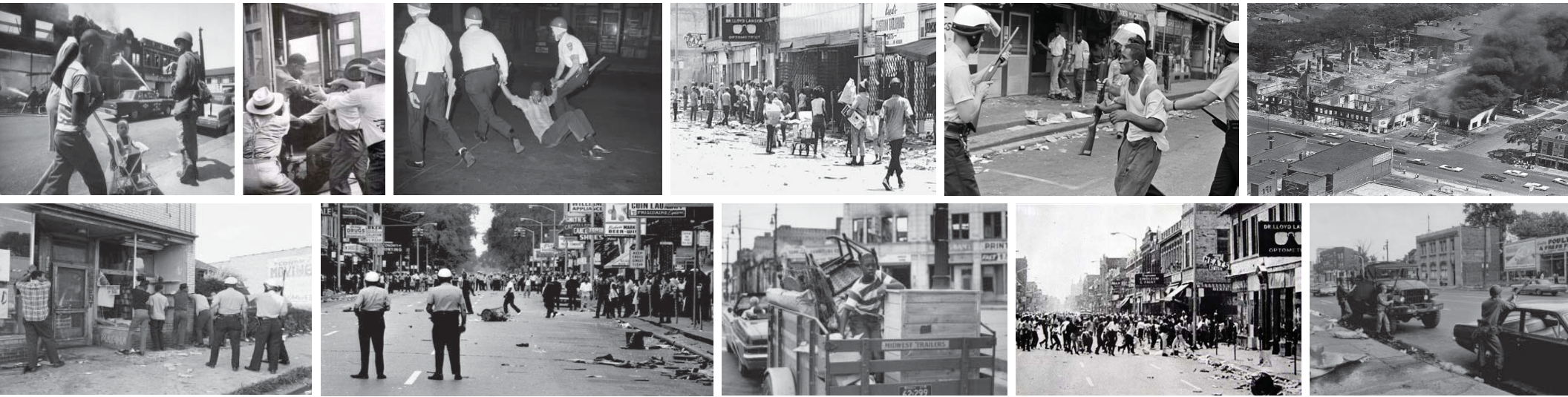
With over twelve million dollars pumped into Detroit, the city quickly grew into an economic and industrial zenith.<sup>38</sup> Job vacancies left by men and women in the armed forces attracted an influx of domestic immigrants from the south. It is estimated by Woodward that, "between 1940 and 1943 more than 50,000 blacks from the South and 200,000 whites from West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee migrated to Detroit to work in the city's factories."<sup>39</sup> Thus Detroit's population swelled from roughly 1,600,000 in 1940 to 1,900,000 in 1950.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, it became very strenuous for Detroit to accommodate both an engorged population and a flourishing industry. As Detroit became overcrowded, both residents and industries began to disperse into the suburban periphery. This can be seen as one of the first instances of population mobility from the city centre to the suburbs that have greatly come to characterize patterns of uneven development in the Metropolitan Detroit area today.

37 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.154.

38 J. Booza and K. Metzger, "On Some Socio-Economic Aspects of Detroit," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.45.

39 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.156.

40 Philipp Oswalt, *Shrinking Cities, Volume 1: International Research*, p.228 – 229.





## CHAPTER THREE

### THE DEMISE OF DETROIT

*One of the most difficult problems facing postwar Detroit was population loss: almost half within a thirty-year period. Some of this loss came as a natural by-product of families moving to the suburbs, a move that the federal government helped finance with highway programs, mortgage insurance subsidies, and income tax policies. Some families moved because of the American love affair with the suburban dream, as symbolized by a single-family house with its own lawn and white picket fence, but others moved because of racial change.<sup>1</sup>*

June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (1997)

Unlike the rise of Detroit, the city's demise is very complex. Whereas the prior chapter divided Detroit into four consecutive eras, each defined by three distinct catalysts of growth, the decline of Detroit is seen as a juxtaposition of elements that abetted the siphoning of residents and economics from the central city to the surrounding suburbs. The three key elements that have disproportionately severed Metropolitan Detroit into a region of dualities are: the spatial logic of the automotive industry, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, and racial segregation.



Figure 3.1. (Above) Photomontage of the 1967 riots.

<sup>1</sup> June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, p.83.

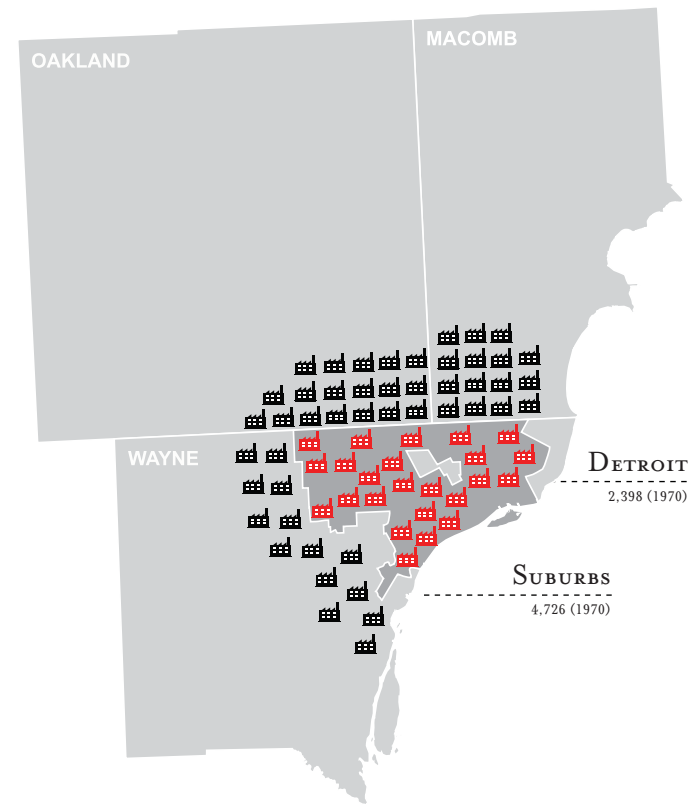
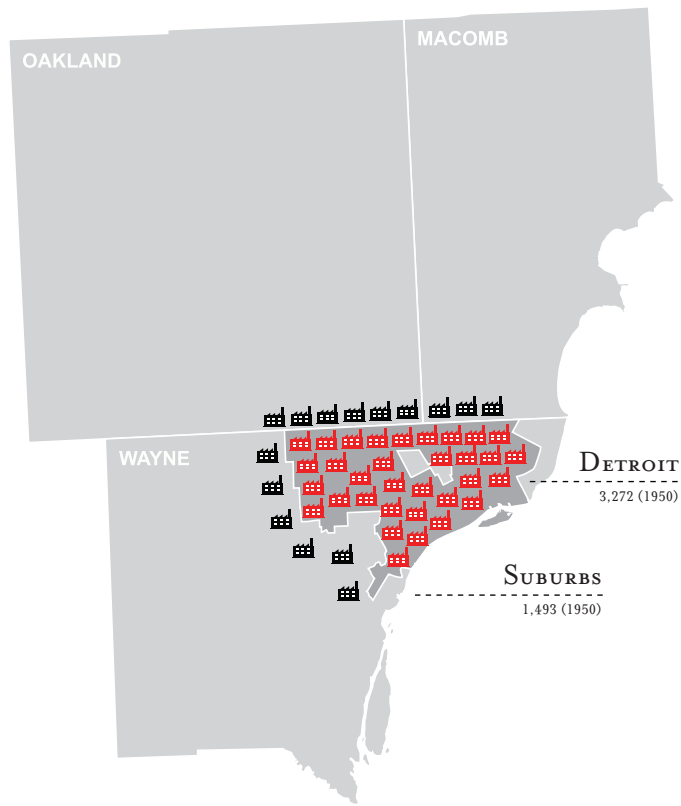


Figure 3.2. (Above, Left) Map of Metro Detroit manufacturing establishments in 1950s.

Figure 3.3. (Above, Right) Map of Metro Detroit manufacturing establishments in 1970s.



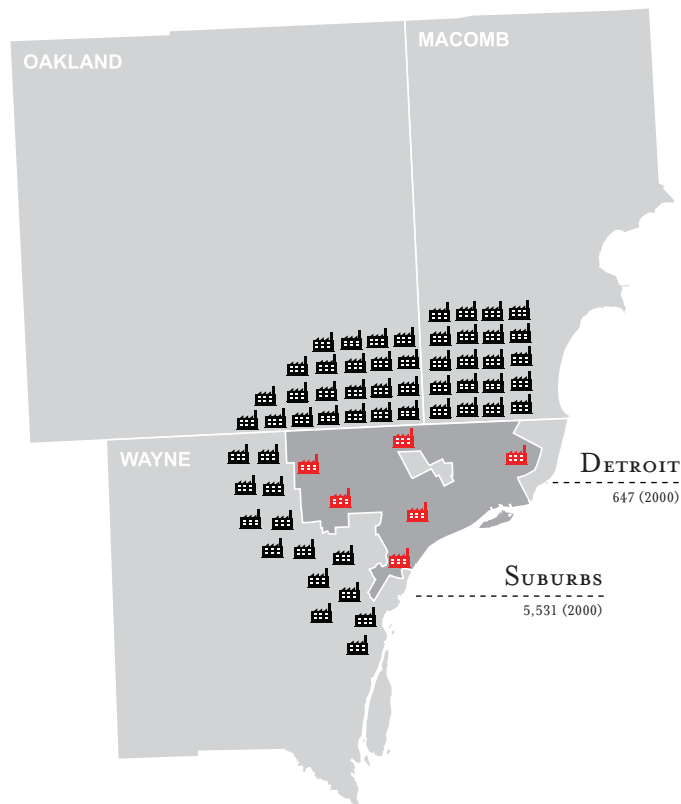


Figure 3.4. (Above) Map of Metro Detroit Manufacturing establishments in 2000s.

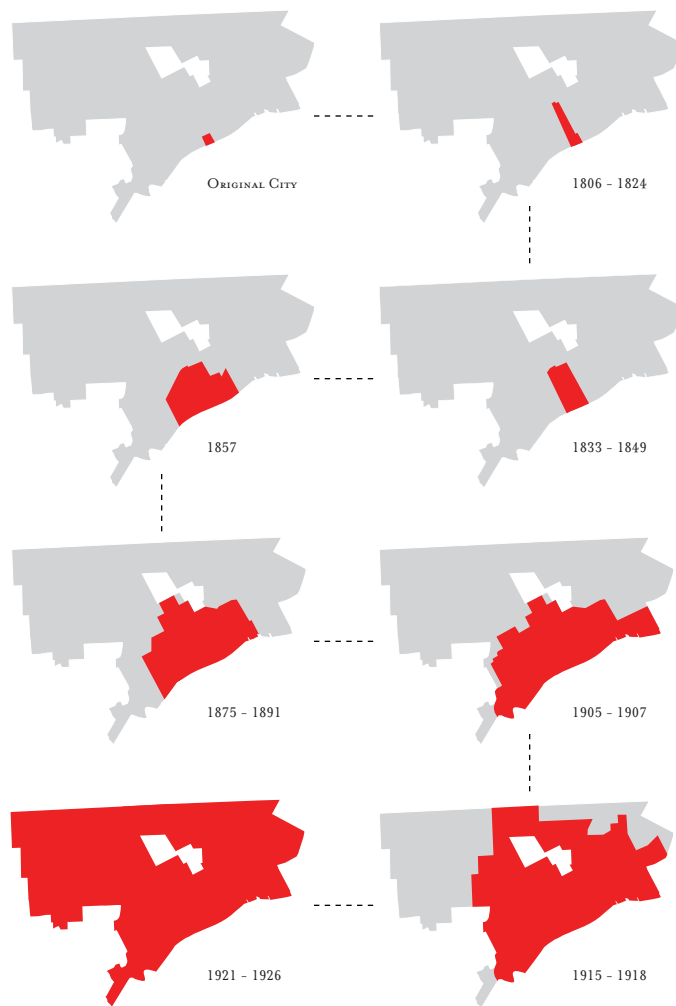
## THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

*Detroit grew with the auto industry, and the auto industry grew according to a kind of leapfrog spatial logic. Car factories were built next to railroad lines, in open space but not too far from an available labor force. Once built, an auto plant attracted complementary metal and machinery industries, then residential subdivisions. So as the auto industry expanded, the Motor City sprawled, farther and farther out.<sup>2</sup>*

J. Darden, R. Hill, J. Thomas, R. Thomas, *Detroit: Race and Uneven Development* (1987)

Although analysis of statistical population and economic data throughout the 20th century depicts the 1950s as the era that Detroit began its initial descent from its industrial zenith, research into the spatial logic of the automotive industry suggests that Detroit's demise began around 1913. Prior to 1913, access to the river, the railroad and an available workforce attracted automotive manufacturers to the city. Since automotive production at the time consisted of workers attaching components to a single frame, production could be confined within relatively small parcels of land in multi-storey factories. The logistics of automotive production and the layout of the factory proved efficient at the time. Soon however, Ford, with the advent of the assembly line, greatly altered both the logistics of automotive production and the spatial logic of Metropolitan Detroit.

<sup>2</sup> J. Darden, R. Hill, J. Thomas, R. Thomas, *Detroit, Race and Uneven Development*, p.15.



One of the key components of the assembly line was the factory that housed it. The Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant was unlike any other manufacturing plant at the time. One it was located outside the city, and another is that it was long, expansive and only one storey high. The logistics of the plant combined with the efficiency of the assembly line produced not only a quality vehicle that was highly affordable, but also created an influx in residential and industrial expansion as complementary industries and residents began to follow the burgeoning automotive industry outward. Consequently, as the auto industry grew outward, so did Detroit. As auto manufacturers began to seek undeveloped land outside of the central city, Detroit annexed as much land as it could. Unfortunately for Detroit, in 1926 the state of Michigan adopted a strict state law that prohibited the city from expanding. Bound by the Detroit River on one side and enclosed by several adjacent suburban municipalities on the other, Detroit had no more undeveloped land to offer the automotive industry. As a result, the automotive industry moved to suburban Detroit where tax breaks, cheaper labour, and other subsidies made the rate of return the highest.<sup>3</sup>

During World War Two the “leap frog” spatial logic of the automotive industry was further encouraged by a national defence policy that urged the dispersion of war production facilities into

<sup>3</sup> Robert Fishman, “The American Metropolis at Century’s End,” *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.20.

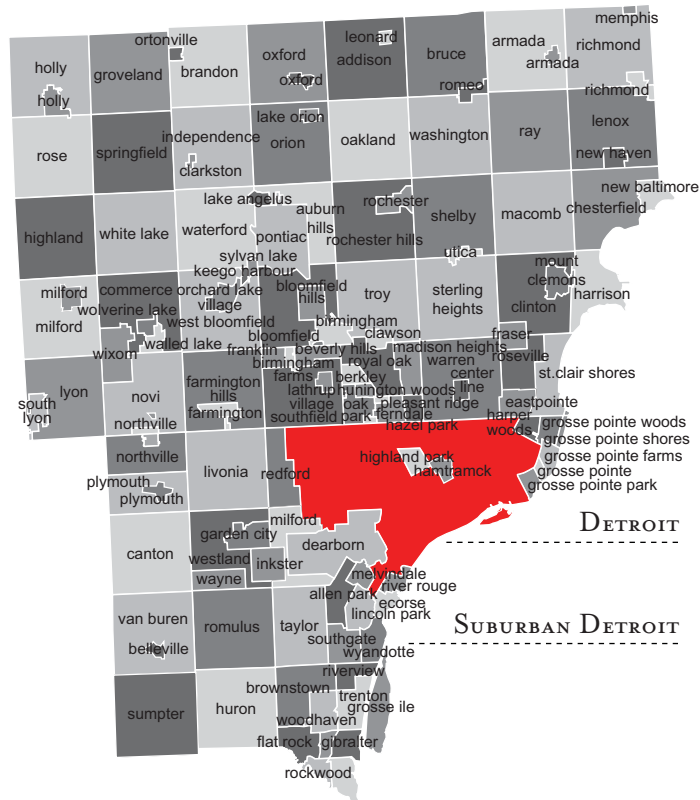


Figure 3.5. (*Opposite*) Historical annexation timeline for the city of Detroit.

Figure 3.6. (*Above*) Map of Metro Detroit, showing the city enclosed by several adjacent municipalities.

satellite cities. The policy, which sought to protect Detroit from an atomic attack, forced many factories outside of the city limits. Between 1947 and 1955, Chrysler, Ford and General Motors built 20 new plants in several satellite cities that surrounded Detroit.<sup>4</sup> As in the past, residents and complementary industries followed these factories, further eroding the city of Detroit and its tax base.

As the automotive industry began to grow outward, it promoted the need for expressways that could alleviate traffic congestion and connect central city workers to suburban automotive factories. Detroit's expressway system began in 1941 with the creation of the Davidson Expressway near Highland Park, and was soon followed by the Willow Run Expressway in 1942 and the John C. Lodge Expressway in 1950. Although these expressways paved the way for the automotive industry to relocate to the suburbs, it was the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 that siphoned the populace from the city.

<sup>4</sup> J. Darden, R. Hill, J. Thomas, R. Thomas, *Detroit, Race and Uneven Development*, p.16.

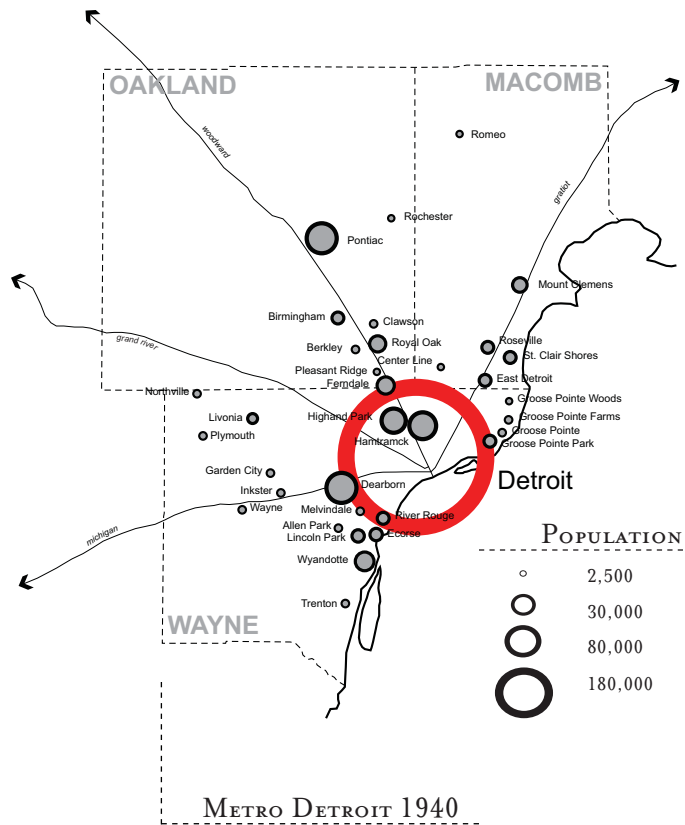


Figure 3.7. (Above, Left) Population dot diagram showing population of Detroit and surrounding municipalities over 2,500 in 1940.

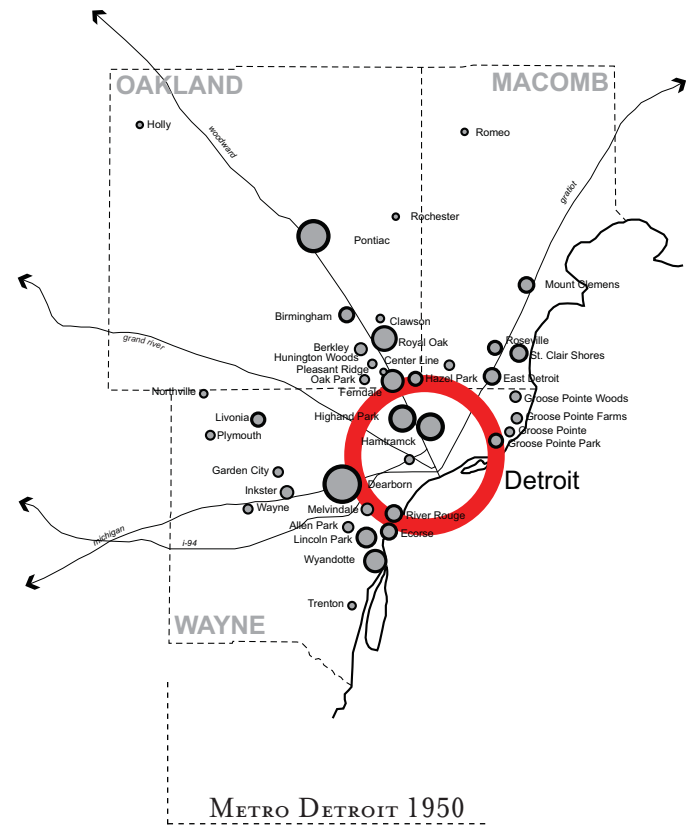


Figure 3.8. (Above, Right) Population dot diagram showing population of Detroit and surrounding municipalities over 2,500 in 1950.

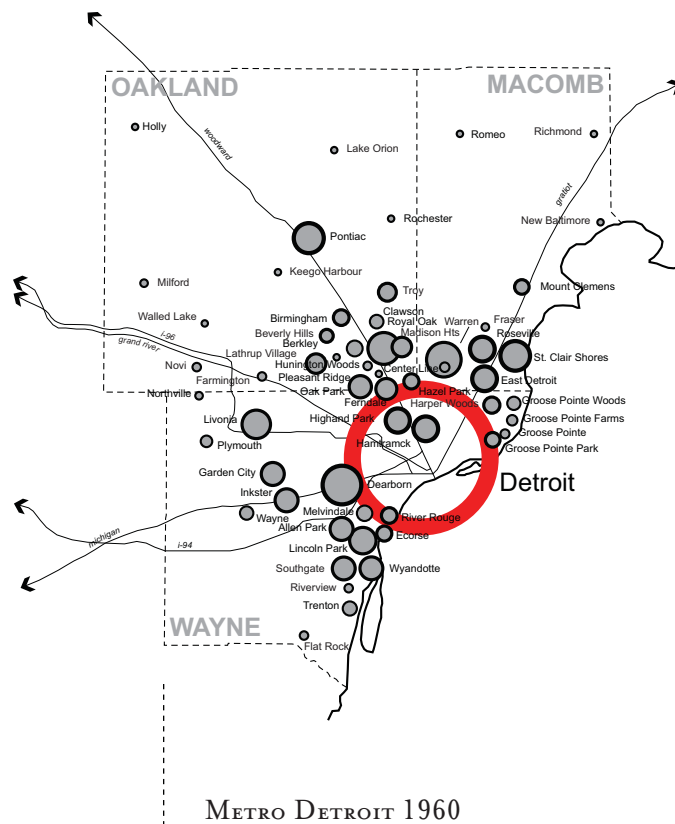


Figure 3.9. (Above) Population dot diagram showing population of Detroit and surrounding municipalities over 2,500 in 1960.

## THE FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY ACT OF 1956

*In 1950 the city's population was at an all-time high of 1,849,568, and the population of the suburban area was 1,166,629. By 1960 the city's population had fallen to 1,670,144, while the suburban area had doubled to 2,092,216. In 1970 these figures stood at 1,511,482 and 2,688,449, respectively.<sup>5</sup>*

Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001* (2001)

In 1956 the United States federal government introduced a national defense policy named the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956. The act called for the construction of over 41,000 miles of paved highway that would connect suburbs to their central cities and connect cities to cities nationwide. Although the act was intended to save central cities from congestion and the threat of a foreign attack, in industrial cities like Detroit, it accelerated the flight of capital and people to the suburbs.

Prior to the construction of the Interstate Highway system, Detroit roadways were heavily congested. Cars, trucks, horse-drawn wagons and even electric streetcars clogged Detroit arteries as freight trains pushed boxcars into local factories.<sup>6</sup> On several occasions the city tried to develop a more efficient streetcar system and had plans for a superhighway system that could alleviate

<sup>5</sup> Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.164.

<sup>6</sup> R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.25.

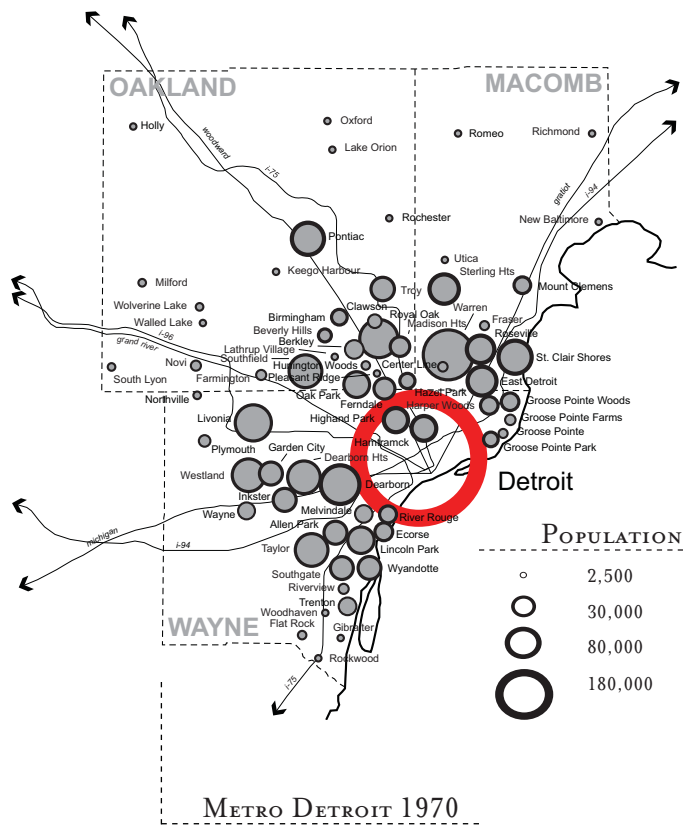


Figure 3.10. (Above) Population dot diagram showing population of Detroit and surrounding municipalities over 2,500 in 1970.

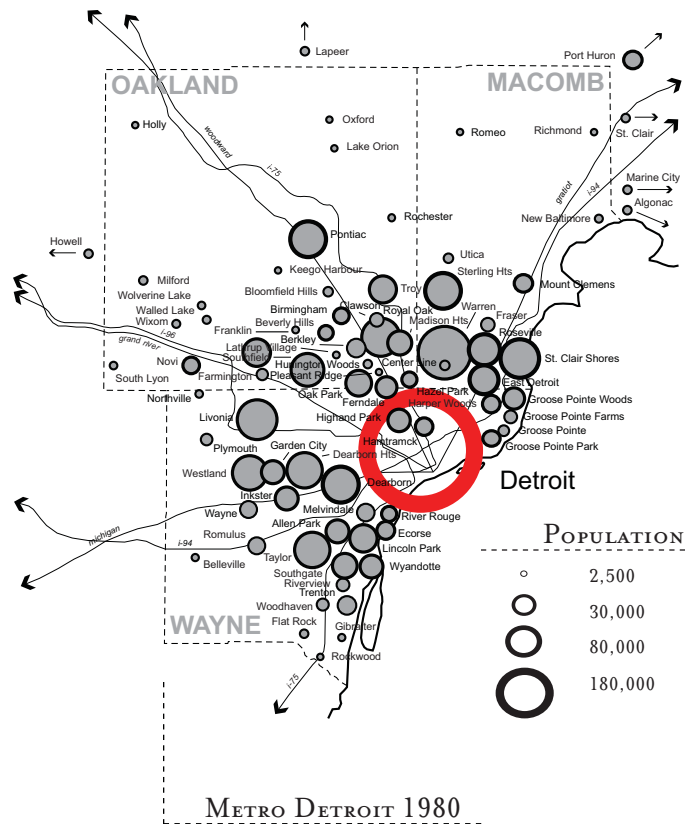
congestion; however the Great Depression followed by the two world wars curtailed those plans due to insufficient funds. As a result, congestion within Detroit only worsened as it grew into the Arsenal of Democracy. Thus, when the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 established a trust fund that covered ninety percent of expressway construction costs, City officials trying to leverage limited tax dollars found the act irresistible.<sup>7</sup> Although, mass transit had proven to be the most efficient means of transporting people to and from the urban core, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 did not offer any such incentive. As a result, Detroit fell into a relentless cycle of trying to alleviate congestion by building more highways. As more highways were built, more capital and residents fled the city.

In total over 265 miles of freeway was constructed in Detroit between 1956 and 1981.<sup>8</sup> One of the most extensive freeway networks in the nation, these freeways had polarized consequences on suburban Detroit and the city of Detroit. In suburban Detroit the freeways provided easy access to plentiful amounts of undeveloped land to the east, west and the north. As a result, many industries relocated to the suburbs and were closely followed by residents who sought to live the “American Dream,” and commercial establishments that could cater to their needs. On the inverse side of things, Detroit was ravaged by an extensive network of freeways. Since the freeways were designed to gather residents

7 June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, p.68.

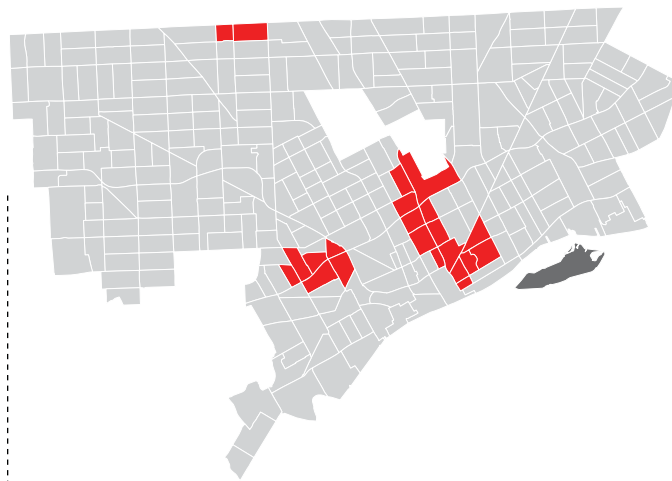
8 Arthur M. Woodford, *This is Detroit: 1701 – 2001*, p.163.



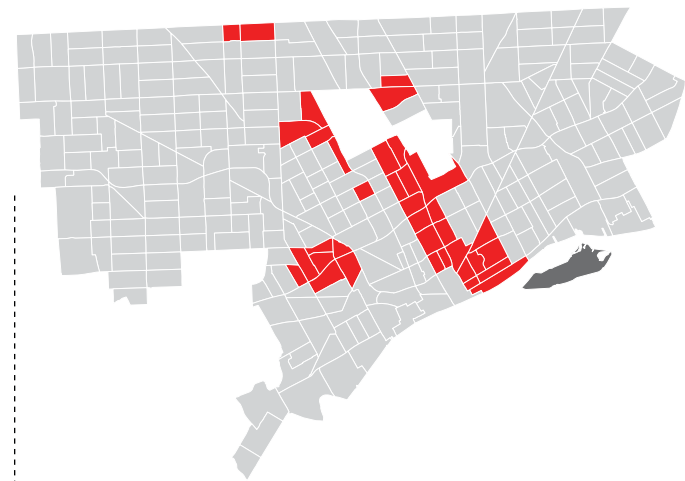
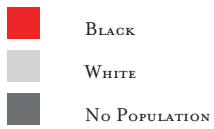


within the central city and disperse them into the periphery, most of the freeways converged upon the central core. As a result, dense city neighbourhoods were either destroyed or divided as 20,400 homes were demolished to accommodate new highways. In a city where available housing was short and racial tension was high, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 became a conduit for white flight and further heightened the racial disparity between the city of Detroit and its suburban neighbours.

Figure 3.11. (Above) Population dot diagram showing population of Detroit and surrounding municipalities over 2,500 in 1980.



DETROIT 1940



DETROIT 1950



Figure 3.12. (Above, Left) Predominant race map of Detroit in 1940.

Figure 3.13. (Above, Right) Predominant race map of Detroit in 1950.

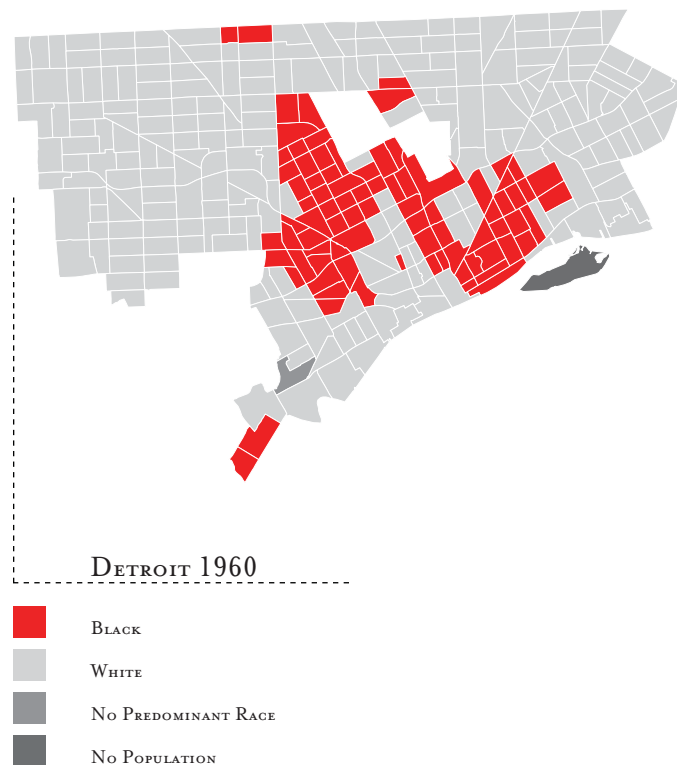


Figure 3.14. (Above) Predominant race map of Detroit in 1960.

## RACIAL SEGREGATION

*Neighborhood segregation does not distinguish Detroit from Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, or New York. In all the nation's older metropolitan areas with substantial African American populations, blacks and whites seldom live in the same neighborhoods. But the thoroughness with which long-term social, economic, and racial trends produced an African American central city in Detroit surrounded by an overwhelmingly white suburban ring makes Detroit unique.<sup>9</sup>*

R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided* (2000)

It may have been the spatial logic of the automotive industry and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 that pulled whites toward the suburbs, but it was poor race relations that subsequently decimated the city of Detroit.

Deeply ingrained within American society, racial segregation has had a tremendous impact on the city of Detroit. Its pervasiveness and long-standing historical presence has torn the central city from its adjacent suburbs and created a landscape of economic and social disparity. Although some believe the riot of 1967 pushed many whites to the suburban fringe, historical analysis reveals that racial segregation has existed in Detroit since the automotive industry began to flourish in 1913. Although it began with the settlement of European immigrants into ethnic enclaves,

<sup>9</sup> R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.9 – 10.

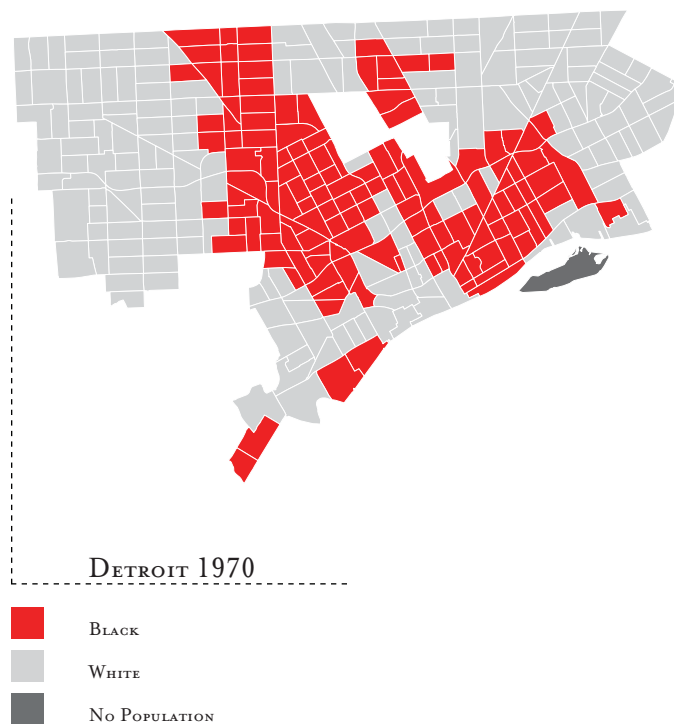


Figure 3.15. (Above) Predominant race map of Detroit in 1970.

it was exacerbated by the racial discrimination in employment of blacks during World War One.

During a World War One labour shortage, several blacks moved to northern industrial cities to fill open job vacancies. Although they had hoped to escape racial discrimination in the south, black labourers encountered cities defined by colour lines and job ceilings. In Detroit the job ceiling restricted black labourers to the least-skilled, lowest-paid, dead-end jobs in the automotive industry. As a result, low wages created by the job ceiling forced blacks to live in inferior housing within the city's ghetto. Since black labourers were unable to move up the economic ladder and seek better housing, Detroit quickly developed a colour line that dictated where blacks could and could not reside. In the early 20th century Detroit's color line confined most blacks to live within the Black Bottom neighbourhood located near St. Antoine and Hastings Streets on Detroit's lower east-side.

When the United States entered World War Two, employment in Detroit soared from 857,000 in 1940 to 1,119,000 in 1950.<sup>10</sup> Several of these labourers were southern black farmers who had been recruited by private employers and the U.S. Federal Department of Labor to work in wartime production factories. The migration of tens of thousands of black men and women to the city and the strict boundaries set by the colour line forced many blacks to live in overcrowded ghettos, paying high rent for di-

10 R. Farley, S. Danziger, H. Holzer, *Detroit Divided*, p.33.

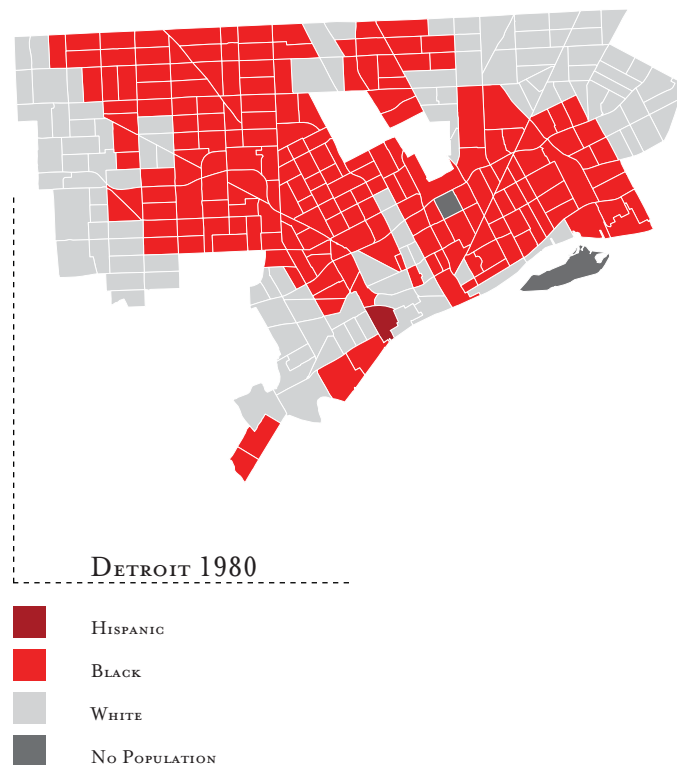


Figure 3.16. (Above) Predominant race map of Detroit in 1980.

lapidated housing. As blacks began to earn better wages, they sought out better housing for their families just as the Germans, Poles and Italians had done before them. Unfortunately for blacks, racial discrimination and prejudices caused many whites to staunchly oppose the entry of blacks into their neighbourhoods. Thus, when black families did attempt to cross the colour line into white ethnic neighbourhoods, they were often met with hostility and violence.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the 1940s a severe shortage in housing and overcrowding within the ghetto brought racial tension to a boiling point. One of the first instances of racial conflict in Detroit occurred in 1942, after frustrated blacks lobbied the federal government to construct a new housing project for black families within an all-white neighbourhood. Despite much opposition from the community, a U.S. congressman, and most of the housing commission, the Sojourner Truth housing project was completed in 1942. In February of 1942 when black tenants began to move in, they were confronted by several irate white picketers who blocked them from entering the complex. Soon several fights broke out and more than 100 people were arrested — all but one were white. This proved to be the first of several turf wars that would occur in Detroit.<sup>12</sup>

11 Robert Fishman, "The American Metropolis at Century's End," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.22.

12 Thomas Sugrue quoted by Celeste Headlee in "A Brief History of Segregation in Metro Detroit," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.96.

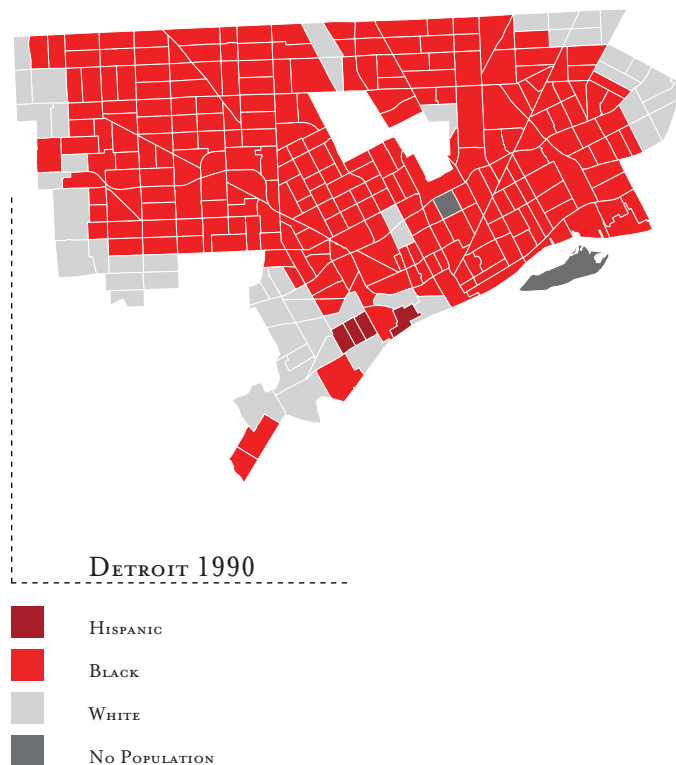


Figure 3.17. (Above) Predominant race map of Detroit in 1990.

The following is a description of the violent methods whites would use to keep blacks from moving into their neighborhoods.

*Often there was arson, sometimes there were petty attacks and in one case I documented, the white neighbours pouring salt on the lawn of the first black family to move in. In another case, they broke in, turned on all the water faucets and flooded the house. In another case, some folks tied a chain to their truck and pulled off the porch. Again, all these acts intending to signal to blacks that there is a high price to crossing the racial line, to moving into what was considered to be white turf.<sup>13</sup>*

In addition to the turf wars that occurred throughout Metro Detroit, urban renewal efforts by the federal government in the 1950s, and in particular the Housing Act of 1949, escalated racial tension to a new extreme. Although the federal government intended for the Housing Act to provide every American with a decent home and a proper living environment, it also provided cities with the funds and necessary tools to raze their most blighted areas. In addition, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 meant that several inner-city neighbourhoods, including Detroit's Black Bottom neighbourhood, would be destroyed to accommodate an extensive expressway system. Although the job ceiling and the colour line had been outlawed, and blacks were given

13 Thomas Sugrue quoted by Celeste Headlee in "A Brief History of Segregation in Metro Detroit," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.96.

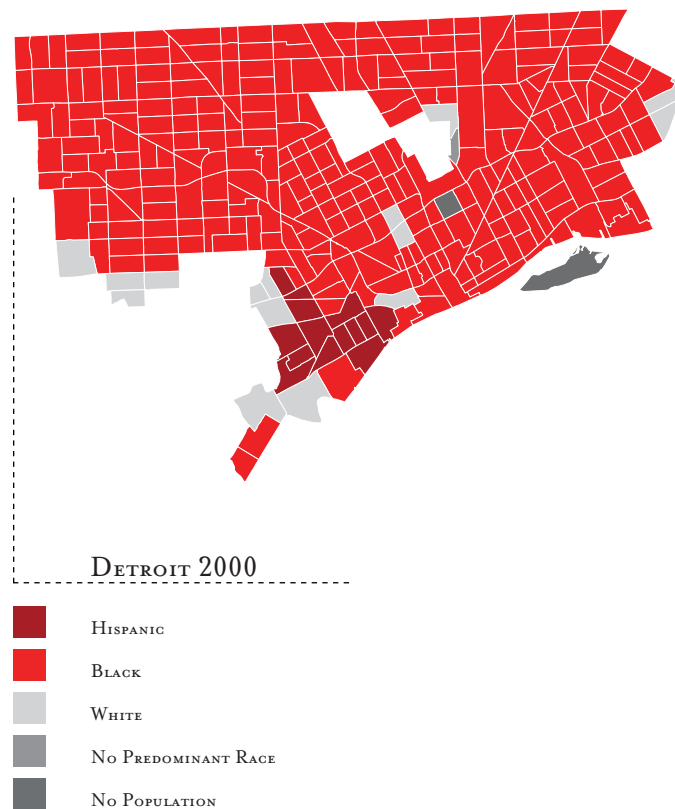


Figure 3.18. (Above) Predominant race map of Detroit in 2000.

government-issued money to build or buy new homes where they desired, two new forms of racial discrimination limited their options. One was a technique developed by real estate agents called “blockbusting,” and the other called “redlining” was a technique used by the Federal Housing Administration to delineate where banks would not invest.

Blockbusting was an unethical fear tactic that real estate agents used to capitalize on a severe black housing shortage and the heightened racial tension at the edge of black neighbourhoods. To achieve blockbusting real estate agents would use fear tactics, such as paying an African-American woman to walk her baby throughout an all-white neighbourhood, to convey to white homeowners that blacks were moving into their neighbourhood. Real estate agents would then solicit homeowners to sell their homes to them as quickly as possible at a panic price. Once they obtained the home they would raise the price of the home and sell it to a black family for a large profit. Within two to five years several white neighbourhoods became predominantly black. Rather than integrating blacks within white neighbourhoods, this tactic simply pushed the colour line outward, preventing residential integration.

Redlining was a technique first developed by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) in 1933. It was a practice that instructed staff to approve home loans based on the rating a neighbourhood received. Neighbourhood ratings were either one

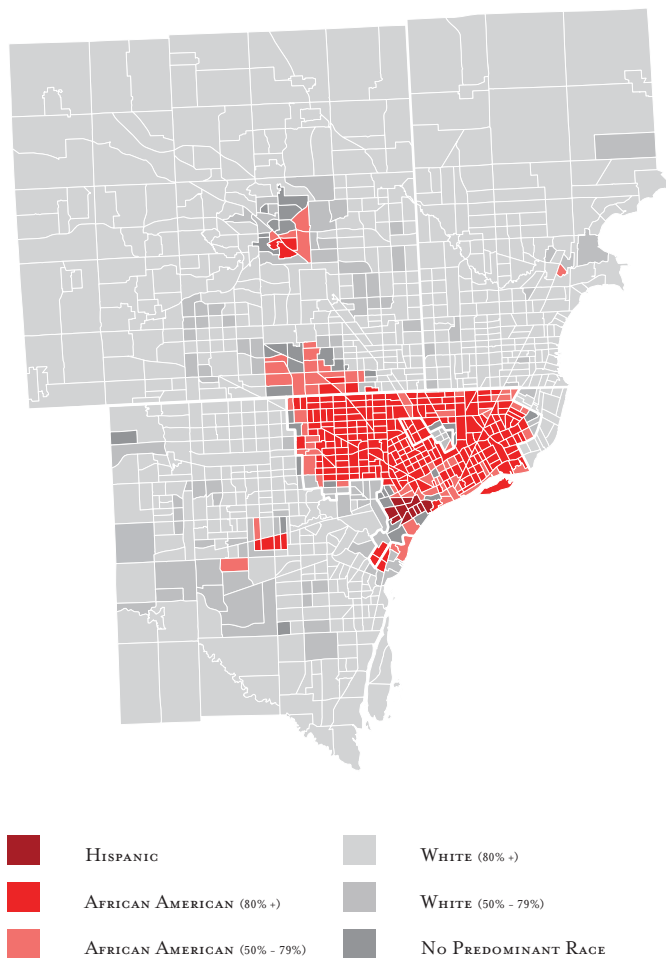


Figure 3.19. (Above) Predominant race map of Metro Detroit in 2000.

of four coded categories that ranged from the new and homogeneous ‘A’ category to the old and dilapidated ‘D’ category.<sup>14</sup> Since the job ceiling and the colour line had confined black families to the city’s ghetto, the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation refused to make loans to ‘D’-rated black neighbourhoods, regardless of the condition housing was in. When the National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the FHA adopted the same appraisal techniques and maps as the HOLC. As a result, the FHA’s low-down payment, long-term, fixed-rate mortgages were only approved for housing in the suburban fringe. This left city residents with one of two options: either move to the suburbs where they would be approved for an FHA mortgage, or take out an older more conventional mortgage with higher rates and short terms. Unfortunately for black city residents, the first was not an option because the FHA Underwriting Manual instructed its staff to use subdivision regulations and restrictive covenants to ensure that properties were occupied by the same social and racial class. Thus, redlines were drawn upon city maps to exclude blacks from the FHA-subsidized suburbs and the booming suburban economy.

On July 23rd, 1967, racial tension in Detroit reached its boiling point. Frustrated by decades of discrimination, poor housing and police brutality, a large group of African-Americans confronted a Detroit police force after a raid on an illegal after-hours club on

<sup>14</sup> June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, p.85.



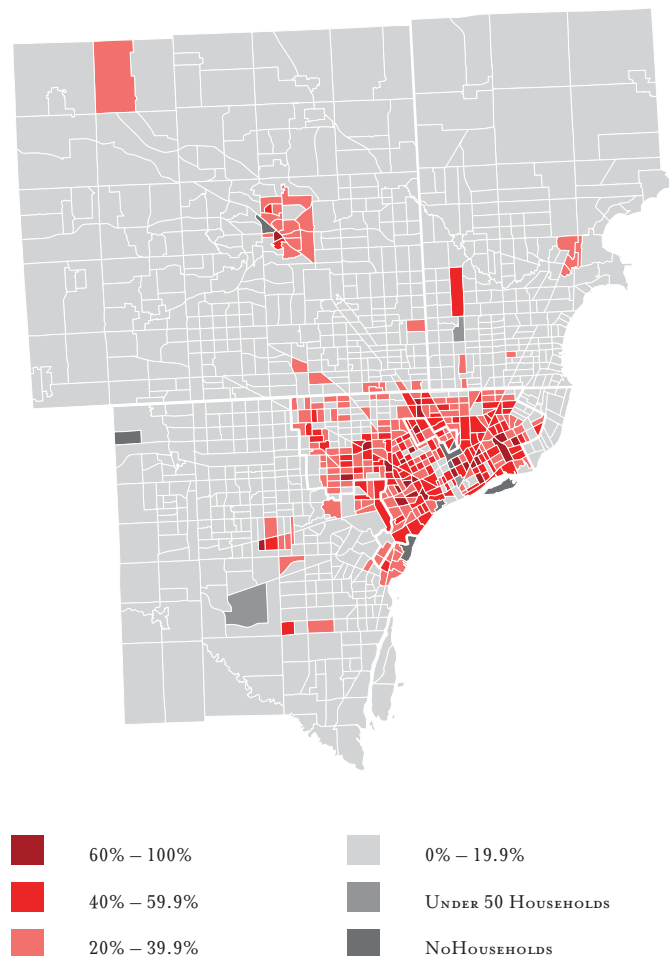


Figure 3.20. (Above) Percentage of families in Metro Detroit living below the national poverty line in 2000.

the near west side of Detroit. The incident, which occurred at the intersection of 12th and Clairmount Streets, began with a dozen angry black citizens taunting the police and quickly escalated into a citywide riot that killed 43, injured 467 and over 7,200 people were arrested. In addition, the four days of rioting destroyed over 2,000 buildings and left almost 400 families homeless.<sup>15</sup> The practice of redlining by Detroit insurance companies during this era prevented many homes and businesses within the city from being repaired. Detroit's present apocalyptic landscape of vacant land and charred buildings depicts the long lasting effect the 1967 riots have had on the city.

The culmination of past and present customs of racial discrimination and the riot of 1967 ignited a powder keg underneath Detroit that decimated the city's social infrastructure. As a result, many black families have been isolated within a city overcome by concentrated poverty, high crime rates, and other indications of social disorganization.

15 Anonymous, "History Today: Detroit's 12th Street Riot," *Free Republic*, July 23rd, 2007



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CULTURAL DETERRENTS

*In cities, liveliness and variety attract more liveliness; deadness and monotony repel life. And this is a principle vital not only to the ways cities behave socially, but also the ways they behave economically.<sup>1</sup>*

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1989)

Since 1967, Detroit has hastily regressed into a hyper-segregated city severely overwhelmed by social and economic deterrents. Today Detroit is an isolated pocket of concentrated poverty, poor living conditions and urban decay. In addition to these three indications of social disorganization, the Detroit public school crisis and the collapse of the American automotive industry continue to threaten the opportunity for social and economic advancement within the city. Analysis of these five socio-economic deterrents articulates the need for a new urban design built on community stability and trust.



Figure 4.1. (Above) Photomontage of abandoned homes on Detroit's east-side.

<sup>1</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.99.

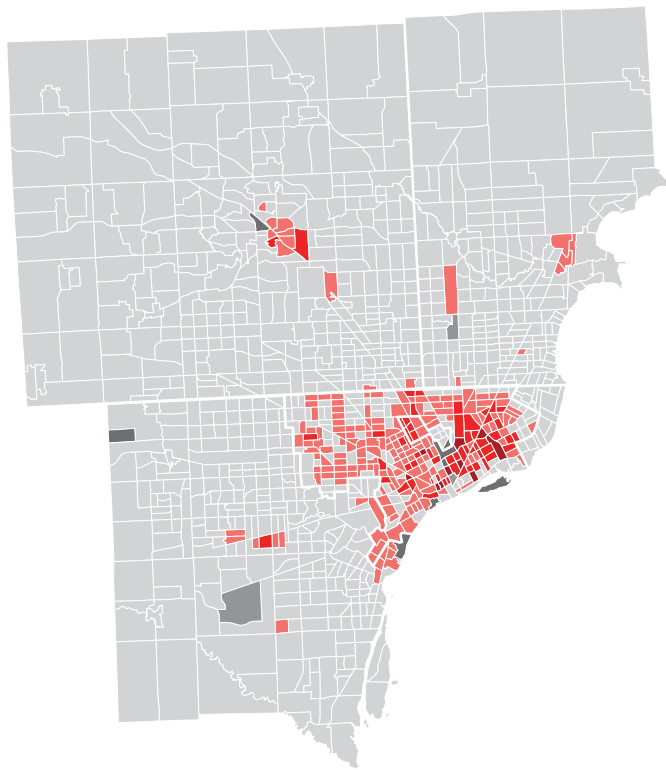


Figure 4.2. (Above, Left) Metro Detroit unemployment in 2000.

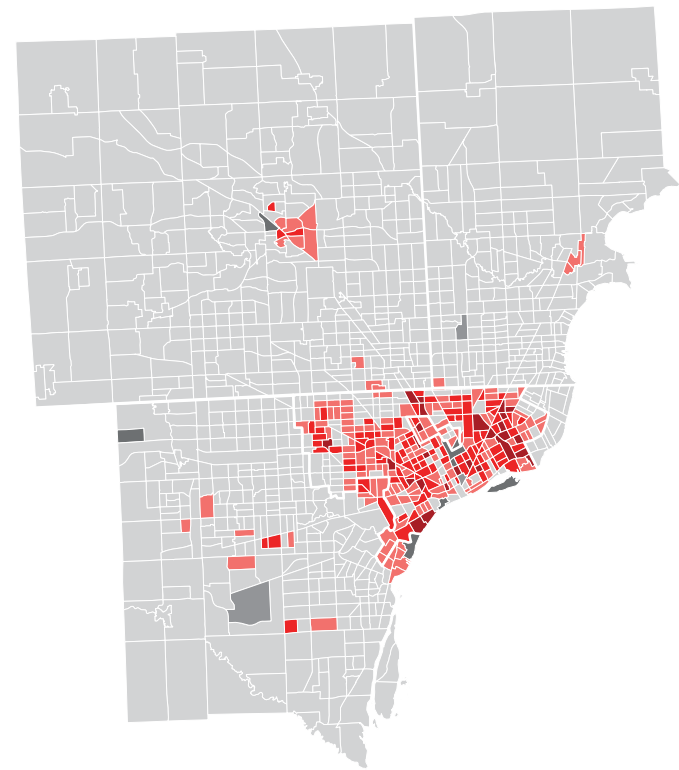


Figure 4.3. (Above, Right) Metro Detroit public assistance in 2000.

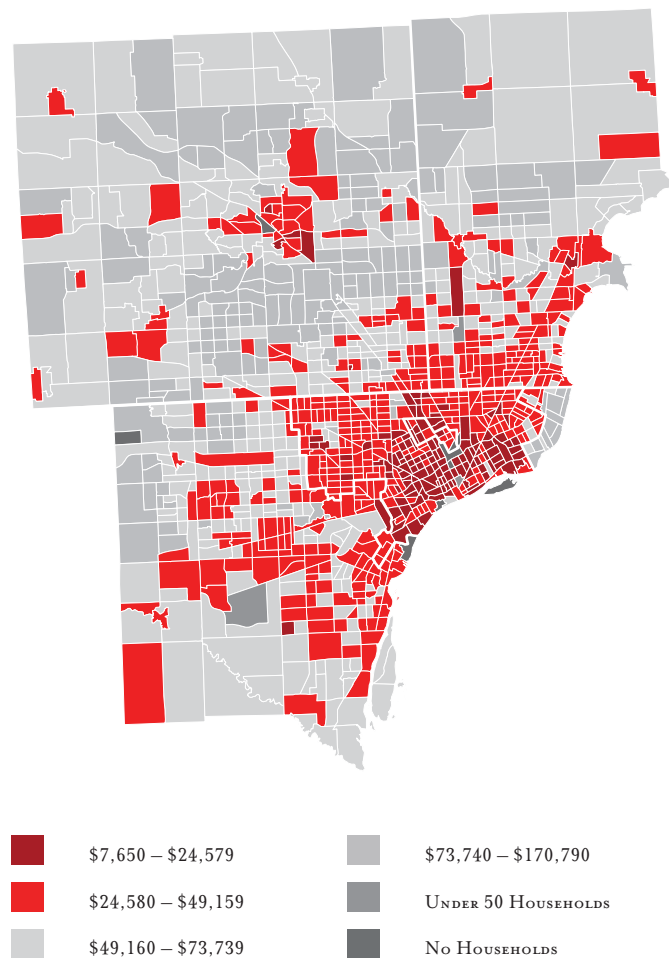


Figure 4.4. (Above) Metro Detroit median household income in 2000.

## CONCENTRATED POVERTY

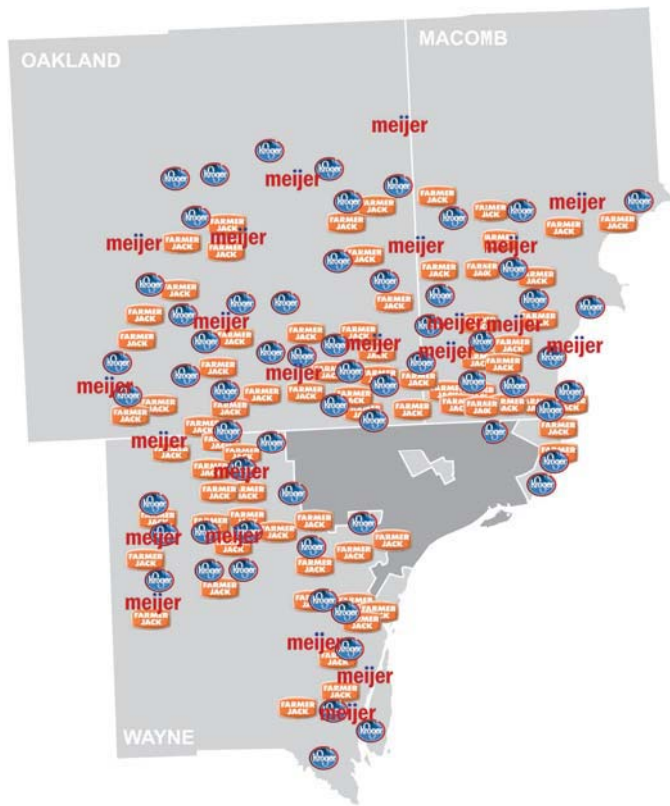
*Disturbing disparities of poverty and wealth exist in the metropolitan area. Poverty affects a wide variety of social indicators, such as lifespan, health, unemployment, income, educational attainment, and crime victimization. For each of these areas central city populations suffer more than their share.<sup>2</sup>*

June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (1997)

Based on economic characteristics gathered from the 2000 census by the U.S. Census Bureau, a fairly accurate picture of the average Detroiter and his or her living conditions can be revealed. To begin with 56.3% of the population work in the labour force and 13.8% of the population are unemployed. Of the 56.3% of the population who do work, their average annual income is \$14,717, which is roughly half of a Metro-Detroiters \$27,638 average annual income. These low incomes and high unemployment rates have placed 21.7% of Detroit's families and 26.1% of Detroiters below the national poverty level.<sup>3</sup> One outcome of these statistics is that consumer capitalist have begun a form of commercial redlining in which business owners refuse to locate businesses within poverty-stricken zones due to high crime risk and fear of low profits. For Detroit this becomes evident through a simple mapping exercise that maps the locations of three differ-

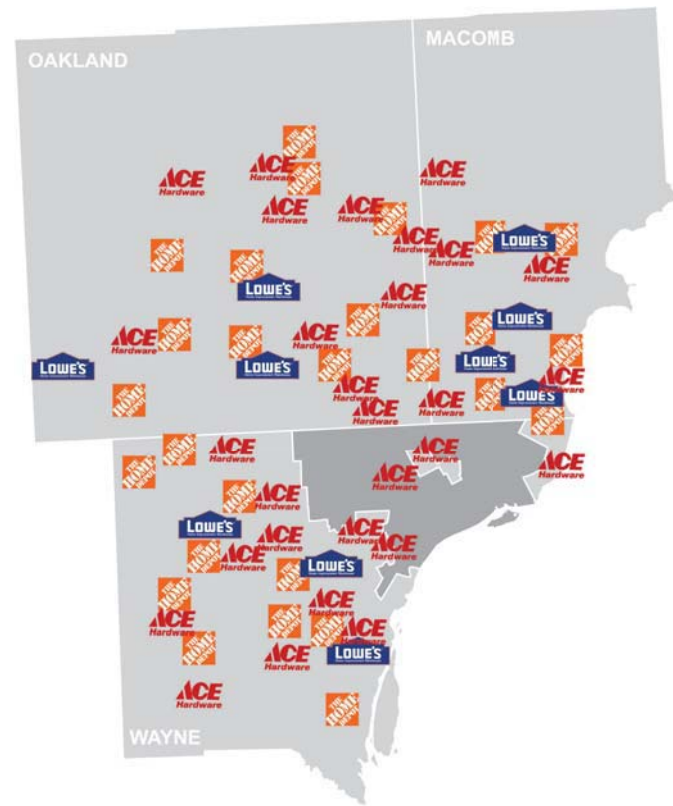
<sup>2</sup> June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, p.209 – 10.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2000), *State and County Quickfacts: Detroit (City), Michigan*.



-  FARMER JACK
-  KROGER
- meijer** MEIJER

Figure 4.5. (Above, Left) Metro Detroit grocery stores.



-  HOME DEPOT
-  LOWE'S
- ACE** ACE HARDWARE

Figure 4.6. (Above, Right) Metro Detroit home improvement stores.

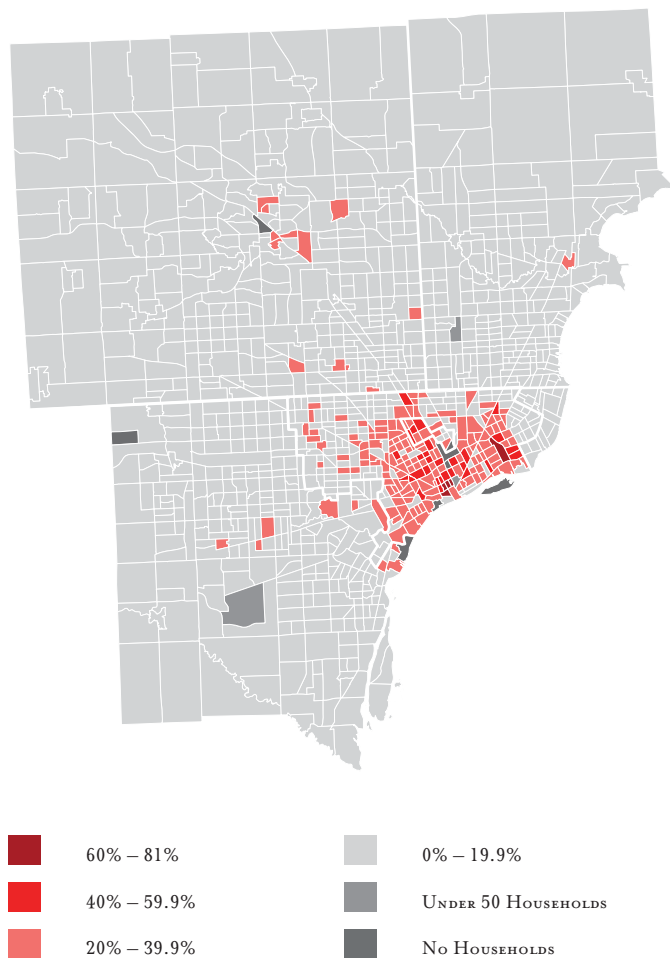


Figure 4.7. (Above) Percent of households in Metro Detroit with no vehicle.

ent supermarkets — Kroger, Farmer Jack and Meijer — and three different home improvement stores — Home Depot, Lowe’s and Ace Hardware. The numbers of stores were then separated into two columns, those located within the city of Detroit and those located in the surrounding Metro Detroit area. The results of this exercise are as follows. In the home improvement category approximately 66 home improvement stores were located in Metro Detroit, while only three were found within the city of Detroit. Similarly disproportionate were the locations of the supermarkets. In this category approximately 155 supermarkets were located in Metro Detroit and only one was located in the city of Detroit. Considering that per 1000 Detroit residents only 44% have access to a vehicle, it may be very hard for the average Detroiter to have access to either home improvement supplies or quality food from a supermarket.<sup>4</sup> Based on this, it is no surprise that Detroit is one of the unhealthiest cities in America, and has a rapidly decaying housing stock.

<sup>4</sup> Philipp Oswalt, *Shrinking Cities, Volume 1: International Research*, p.227.

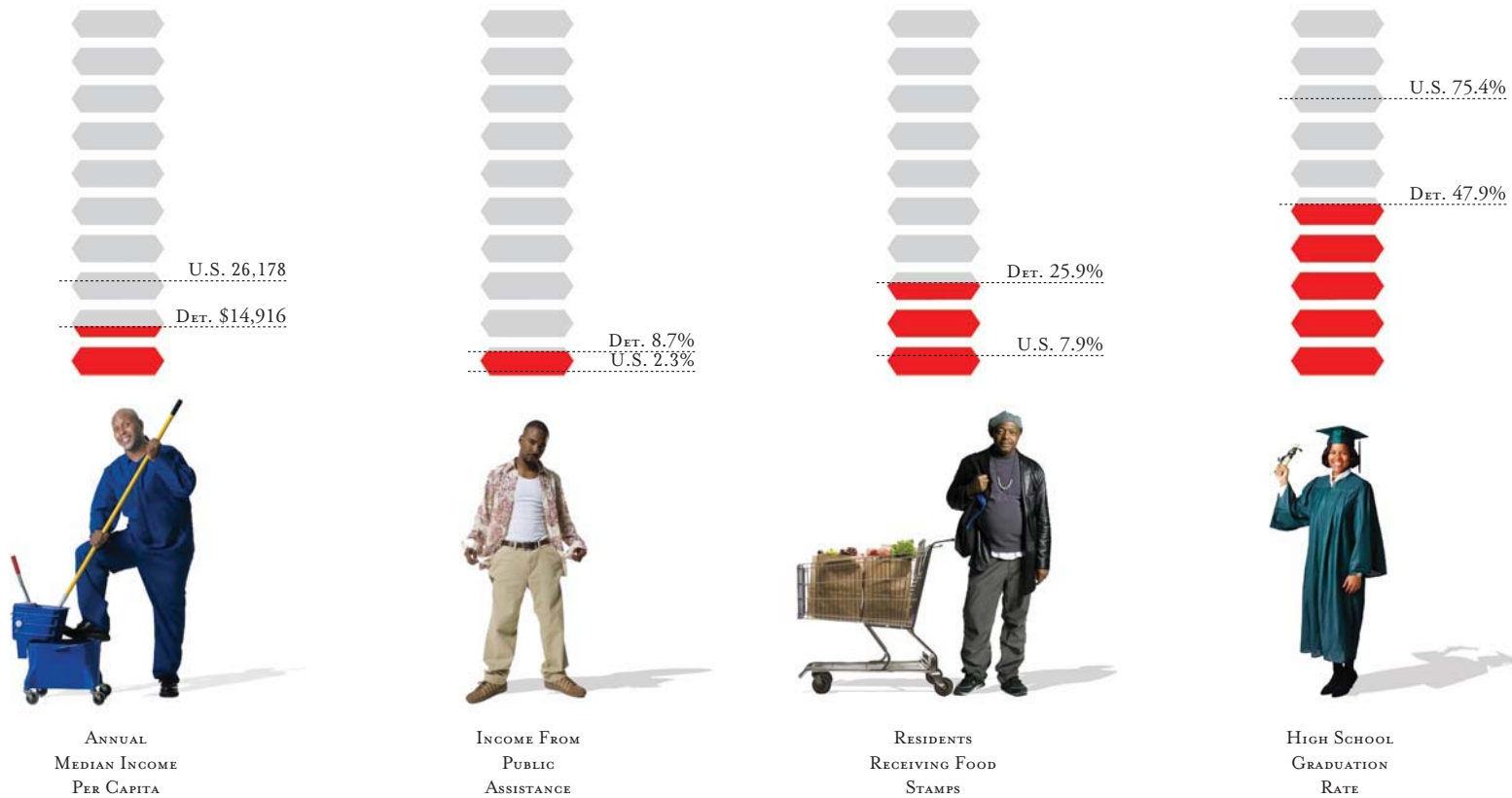
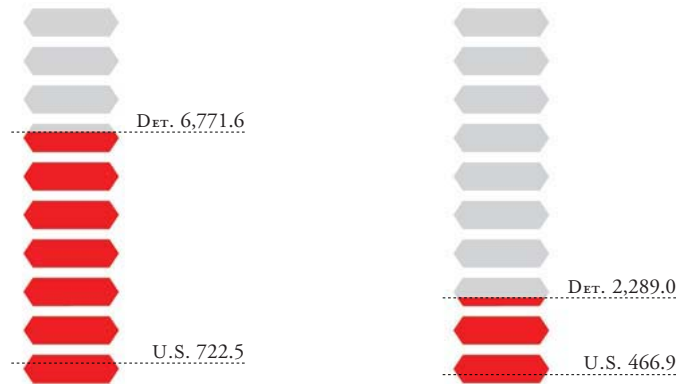


Figure 4.8. (Above and Opposite) Socio-Economic factors contributing to increased isolation within the city of Detroit.





PROPERTY  
CRIME RATE  
PER 100,000  
RESIDENTS



VIOLENT  
CRIME RATE  
PER 100,000  
RESIDENTS

## POOR LIVING CONDITIONS

*When only low-income workers or welfare recipients live in a neighbourhood, children have no positive role models. Their isolation in ineffective school systems can make it appear education offers no way out. The lure of drugs and crime becomes irresistible as legitimate means of employment fade. Marriage fragments – or never takes place – as males lose earning power. And all of these problems can cause more isolation.<sup>5</sup>*

June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit* (1997)

The poor living conditions in the city of Detroit have created an unhealthy environment for its residents and have put them at risk for both physical and mental illness. According to *Environmental Health Perspectives* writer Ernie Hood, “substantial scientific evidence gained in the past decade has shown that various aspects of the built environment can have profound, directly measurable effects on both physical and mental health outcomes, particularly adding to the burden of illness among ethnic minority populations and low-income communities”.<sup>6</sup> Hood then lists several contributing factors, all of which are evident within Detroit, leading to poor physical and mental health within low-income neighbourhoods. One is: a lack of bike paths, sidewalks and areas

<sup>5</sup> June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, p.212.

<sup>6</sup> Ernie Hood, “Dwelling Disparities: How Poor Housing Leads to Poor Health,” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, p.A 312.

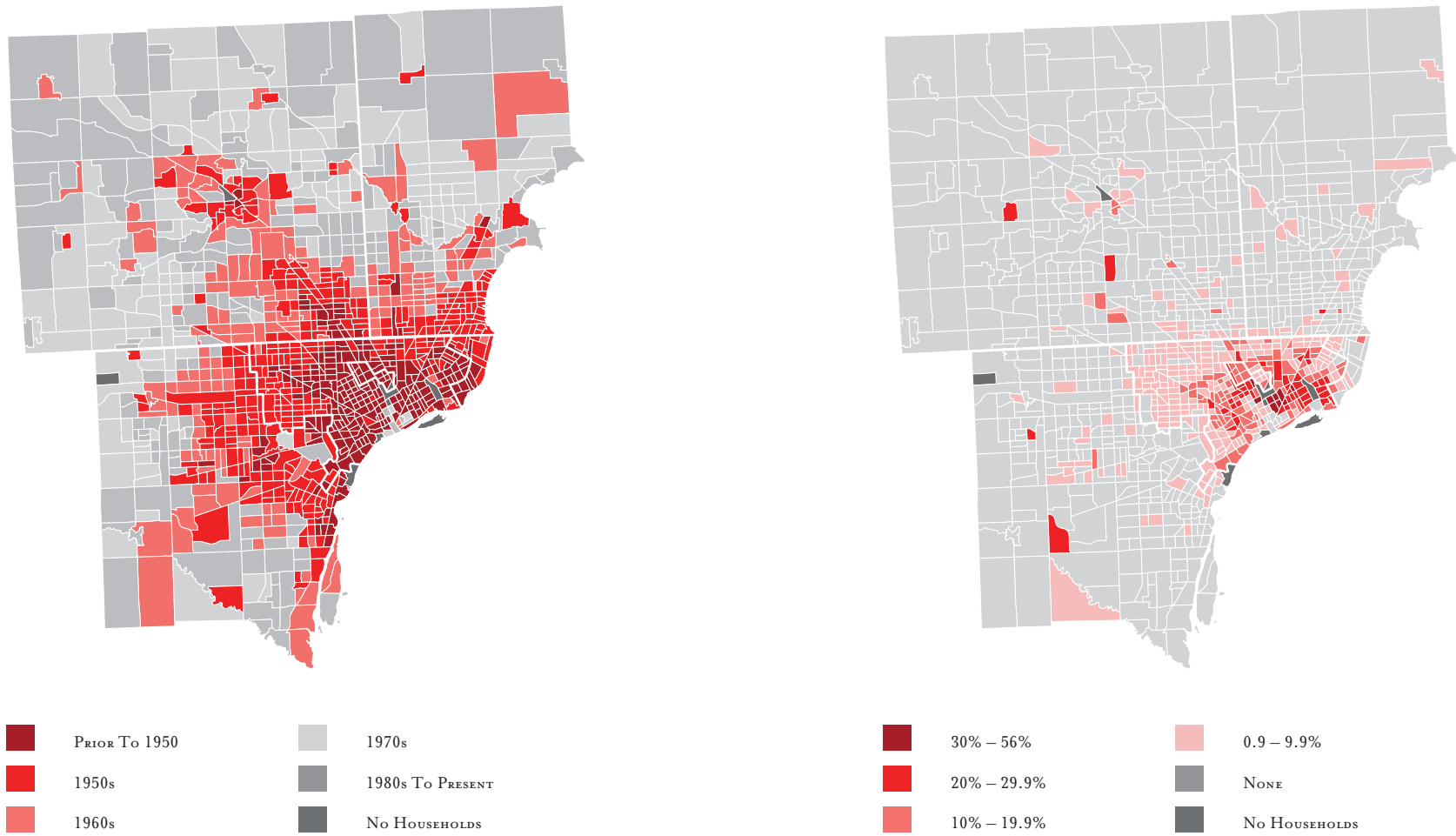


Figure 4.9. (Above, Left) Year homes built within Metro Detroit.

## 2003 YOUTH BEHAVIORAL RISK SURVEY

PERCENT OF DETROIT YOUTHS THAT:	DET.%	U.S.%
HAVE CARRIED A GUN TO SCHOOL:	8.7	6.1
HAVE BEEN IN A PHYSICAL ALTERCATION:	20.5	12.8
HAVE FELT UNSAFE AT SCHOOL:	11.0	5.4
HAVE FELT SAD, HOPELESS, OR SUICIDAL:	31.4	28.6
HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ACTIVE BEFORE AGE 13:	18.2	7.4
HAVE HAD 4 OR MORE SEXUAL PARTNERS:	26.0	14.4
ARE OVERWEIGHT:	19.9	12.1
DO NOT ENGAGE IN MODERATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:	17.3	11.5

Figure 4.10 (*Opposite, Right*) Percent elevated blood lead cases age 6 and under in Metro Detroit.

Figure 4.11. (*Above*) 2003 Detroit Youth Behavioral Risk Survey results.

for physical activity. Hood argues that these are leading contributors to obesity and coronary heart disease. Perhaps that is why Detroit had the third highest rating of obesity amongst American cities in 2005, its lowest ranking since 2000.<sup>7</sup> Hood continues to explain that in low-income areas that do have these amenities, the threat of crime tends to keep people inside their home. Next he discusses how low-income areas usually lack supermarkets, limiting a resident's access to healthy foods. As previously discussed and shown in the mapping exercise, the commercial redlining of fresh food supermarkets clearly exists within the city of Detroit. Lastly, Hood explains in his article that "dilapidated housing is associated with exposure to lead, asthma triggers (such as mold, moisture, dust mites, and rodents), and mental health stressors such as violence and social isolation."<sup>8</sup> With roughly 36,000 abandoned housing units in 1998 — the nation's highest number of abandoned housing units — Detroiters have more of a health risk from this factor than any other American city.<sup>9</sup>

7 The American Obesity Association, "AOA Fact Sheets: Overweight and Obesity in U.S. Cities," (2005)

8 Ernie Hood, "Dwelling Disparities: How Poor Housing Leads to Poor Health," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, p.A 312.

9 James R. Cohen, *Abandoned Housing: Implications for Federal Policy and Local Action*, p.7.





Figure 4.12. (Above and Opposite) Diagram showing percent of vacant units per block within the City of Detroit.

## URBAN DECAY

*[B]etween 1970 and 2000, more than 161,000 dwellings were demolished in Detroit, amounting to almost one-third of the city's occupied housing stock ... more than the total number of occupied dwellings in Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>10</sup>*

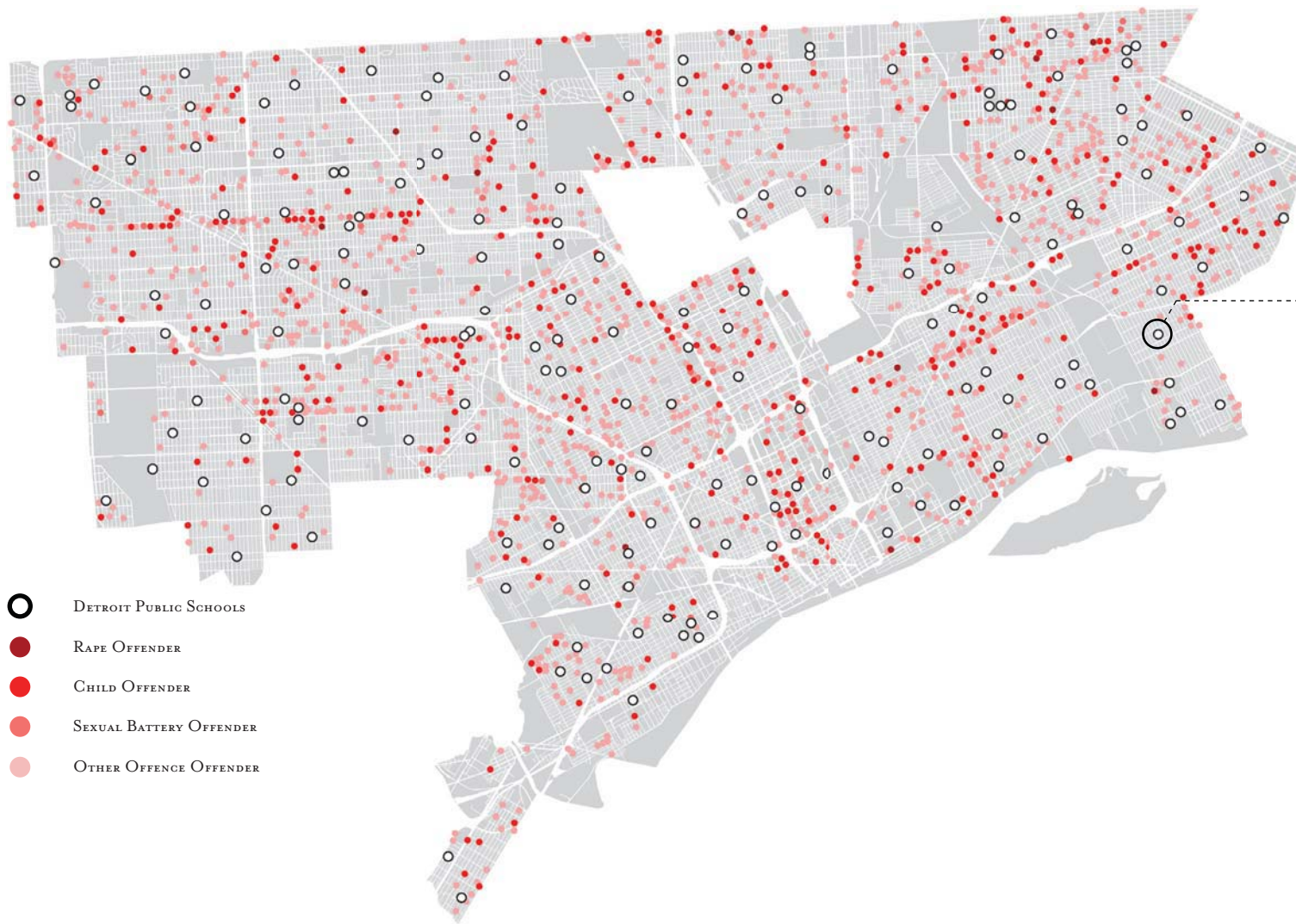
Allen Goodman, *The Detroit News* (2004)

When one considers the statement made by Allen Goodman of *The Detroit News*, it is apparent that abandoned housing units have become a plague on the city of Detroit. To the mayor this is an understatement, when one considers that the city annually demolishes roughly 2,000 to 2,500 homes a year at an estimated cost of \$5,600 per unit.<sup>11</sup> This estimate per unit means that annually the city spends \$11,200,000 to \$14,000,000 on demolition costs of vacant housing units. In addition, the city of Detroit has not been able to maintain a physical inventory of either its buildings or the ones that need to be demolished or rehabilitated; the city also lacks a comprehensive plan to fix the problem. With a staggering amount of abandoned homes, 10,000 of which have been deemed open and dangerous by a local consulting firm in 1998, residential safety is in jeopardy.<sup>12</sup> Most of the abandoned

10 Allen C. Goodman, "Detroit Housing Rebound Needs Safe Streets, Good Schools," *The Detroit News*, March 10th, 2004.

11 James R. Cohen, *Abandoned Housing: Implications for Federal Policy and Local Action*, p.7.

12 James R. Cohen, *Abandoned Housing: Implications for Federal Policy and Local Action*, p.7.





buildings have become havens for rapists, crack dealers, arsonists and prowling packs of dogs. In the 1999 – 2000 school year there were an estimated 1,181 vacant buildings near Detroit public schools.<sup>13</sup> In that same school year, during a two-month period, eight Detroit schoolgirls were raped in abandoned buildings on their way to school.<sup>14</sup> Although former Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick established an emergency cleanup initiative to prioritize demolition on all abandoned buildings within a 750-foot radius of all Detroit schools, many abandoned buildings still surround Detroit public schools. With the highest number of home foreclosures in the nation, it is highly likely that the number of abandoned buildings and number of crimes in Detroit will only increase.

Figure 4.13. (*Above and Opposite*) Diagram showing the location of convicted offenders and Detroit public schools within the city of Detroit.

13 “Detroit Moves to Condem 504 Buildings: Emergency Hearings Focus on only half of the Demolitions sought,” *The Detroit News*, December 5th, 2000.

14 Robyn Meredith, “Rapes of 8 Schoolgirls Puts Detroit on Edge,” *The New York Times*, November 24th, 1999.







Figure 4.14. (Above) Photograph of Carstens Elementary School on the east-side of Detroit.

## THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOL CRISIS

*Important as good schools are, they prove totally undependable at rescuing bad neighbourhoods and at creating good neighbourhoods. Nor does a good school building guarantee a good education. Schools, like parks, are apt to be volatile creatures of their neighbourhoods. In bad neighbourhoods, schools are brought to ruination, physically and socially; while successful neighbourhoods improve their schools by fighting for them.<sup>15</sup>*

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1989)

Healthy neighbourhoods generate good schools and decrepit neighbourhoods breed bad schools. In Detroit the essential correlation between school and neighbourhood has been overlooked since 1917 when the Detroit Public Schools changed from a ward-based board of education to an elected at-large board of education. Since then migration and settlement patterns have formed a racially and economically segregated geography that has had intense overshadowing on educational politics in Detroit. Thus, schools have become the battleground for supremacy as issues regarding education have been decided based on blatant bigotry and self-seeking interests.<sup>16</sup> As a result, much like the city, Detroit public schools are suffering from population out-migration and a diminishing tax base.

<sup>15</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.113.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffery Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907 – 81*, p.370.

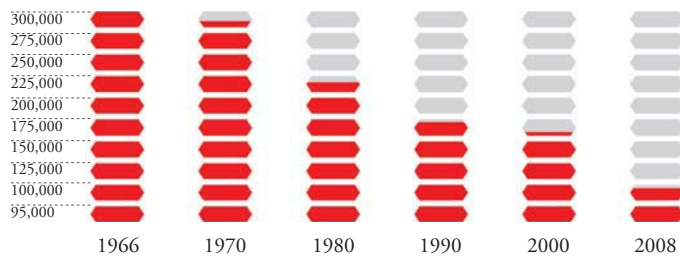


Figure 4.15. (Above) Detroit Public School enrollment from its peak in 1966 to present.

Figure 4.16. (Top, Opposite) Photograph showing the front exterior of the abandoned James McMillan Elementary School in Detroit.

Since their peak enrollment of 300,000 in the 1960s,<sup>17</sup> Detroit public schools have lost roughly 190,000 students. In fact, in the last decade alone, 67,000 pupils<sup>18</sup> have fled Detroit public schools and district officials are forecasting that another 10,000 students will flee the district in each of the next few years.<sup>19</sup> With each student that has left Detroit public schools, they have taken with them thousands of dollars in state funding and placed the district within a crippling deficit.

The victim of a harsh deficit, Detroit Public Schools is facing financial ruination as it struggles to stay abreast of its problems. In 2007, the district was operating under a \$200-million state-mandated deficit elimination plan.<sup>20</sup> Under this state-mandated deficit, Detroit Public School officials were faced with the uncomfortable task of trying to stabilize the district’s finances without jeopardizing the quality of education. As cuts were made and schools were closed, the Detroit Public School District created a “culture of mistrust, low morale and high anxiety.”<sup>21</sup> Sadly, those cuts and closures were not enough. It has recently been revealed that hidden deficits in the district’s operating budget have placed Detroit Public Schools more than \$400 million below the red

17 Kate Randall , “The Further Hemorrhaging of Detroit – City to Shut 34 Public Schools,” World Socialist Web Site, February 12th, 2005.  
 18 J. McCray and W. Esaw, Detroit Public Schools Adopted Budget, July 1st, 2008.  
 19 Chastity Pratt, “Cost of School Closings,” *The Detroit Free Press*, March 23rd, 2007.  
 20 C. Pratt, L. Higgins, P. Walsh-Sarnecki, “Plan to Close 37 Schools Moves Ahead,” *The Detroit Free Press*, March 22nd, 2007.  
 21 C. Pratt Dawsey and P. Walsh-Sarnecki, “Report Blasts Finances, Leaders of DPS,” *The Detroit Free Press*, June 27th, 2008.



Figure 4.17. (Above, Bottom) Photograph showing the interior of abandoned Joy Middle School in Detroit.

line; its hugest deficit to date.<sup>22</sup> According to Chastity Pratt Dawsey of *The Detroit Free Press*, “The current year’s deficit has ballooned to \$127 million ... with a \$280 million deficit projected for the 2008 - 09 school year.”<sup>23</sup> Consequently, further school closings and severe budget cuts are inevitable for the upcoming school year.

*[T]he chips are all cashed in and there is NO hope left and people have stopped giving a rip. This is DPS – it’s over. Done. Stick a fork in it. Jesus Christ himself would have his hands full with that cesspool of failure, corruption and incompetence.*<sup>24</sup>

Since the fall of 2005 the Detroit Public Schools system has been operating under a state-enforced Deficit Elimination Plan.<sup>25</sup> As such, school officials have been required to close several schools in an attempt to balance the district’s budget. Although the 2005 Deficit Elimination Plan called for the closure of 110 schools to balance the budget,<sup>26</sup> district officials have only managed to

22 Chastity Pratt Dawsey, “DPS Projects \$400 Million In Shortfalls,” *The Detroit Free Press*, June 17th, 2008.

23 Ibid.

24 Anonymous writer quoted by Rochelle Riley, “Kids are Suffering in Detroit Public Schools Mess,” *The Detroit Free Press*, June 26th, 2008.

25 Chastity Pratt Dawsey, “DPS Projects \$400 Million In Shortfalls,” *The Detroit Free Press*, June 17th, 2008.

26 Diane Bukowski, “Where Did The First Billion Go? : DPS Wants Another \$2.5 Billion Bond, Community Wants Audit,” *The Michigan Citizen*, July 12th, 2008.

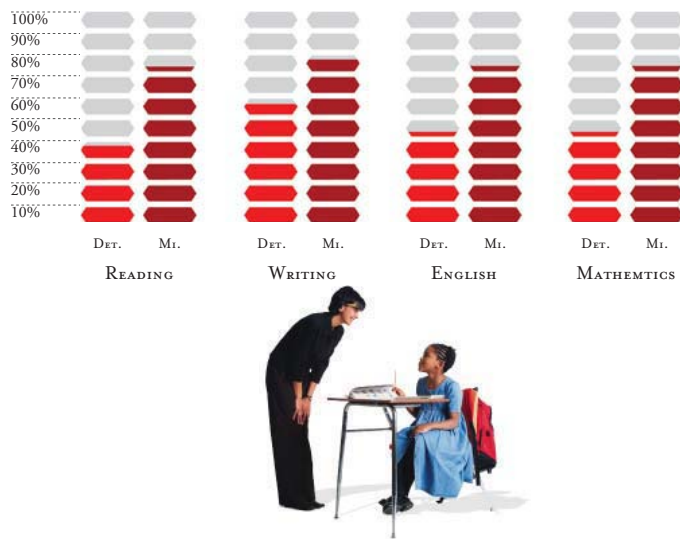


Figure 4.18. (Above) Michigan Educational Assessment Program (M.E.A.P.) scores for grade seven Detroit Public School students in 2007 - 2008.

shut-down 67 schools, 43 schools shy of the prerequisite.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the Detroit Public Schools system has continued to decline financially. Furthermore, the unpredictability and prolonged process of school closure has only increased the deficit as parents and students flee the district.<sup>28</sup>

Although schools are often one of the best forces capable of offsetting stratification, this has not been the case in Detroit. In fact, education in Detroit has only contributed to severe race and class disparities. Stratification within Detroit has become so severe that the majority of city residents live in third-world conditions, while others prosper. More specifically, the affluent who reside within the city are governed by privatized techniques; they enroll their children in private schools and shelter themselves within gated communities.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, members of the marginalized underclass of Detroit are forced to endure a cycle of poverty that is escalated by substandard education. Lost between the well-to-do and the underprivileged are middle-class citizens who have departed the city for better opportunities in suburbia. As a result, 81,659 of Detroit Public Schools, 108,165 students are economically disadvantaged.<sup>30</sup> Combined with a 24.9% graduation rate, the nation's worst, the widening differential between the "haves"

27 Chastity Pratt Dawsey, "Botched Plan To Empty Schools Staggers District," *The Detroit Free Press*, April 24th, 2007.  
 28 Kate Randall, "The further Hemorrhaging of Detroit – City to Shut 34 Public Schools," World Socialist Web Site, February 12th, 2005.  
 29 Robert Fisherman, "The American Metropolis at Century's End: Past and Present Influences," *Shrinking Cities: Detroit Working Paper III*, p.24.  
 30 The Detroit Public Schools (2008), *District Data Summary*, September 23rd, 2008.

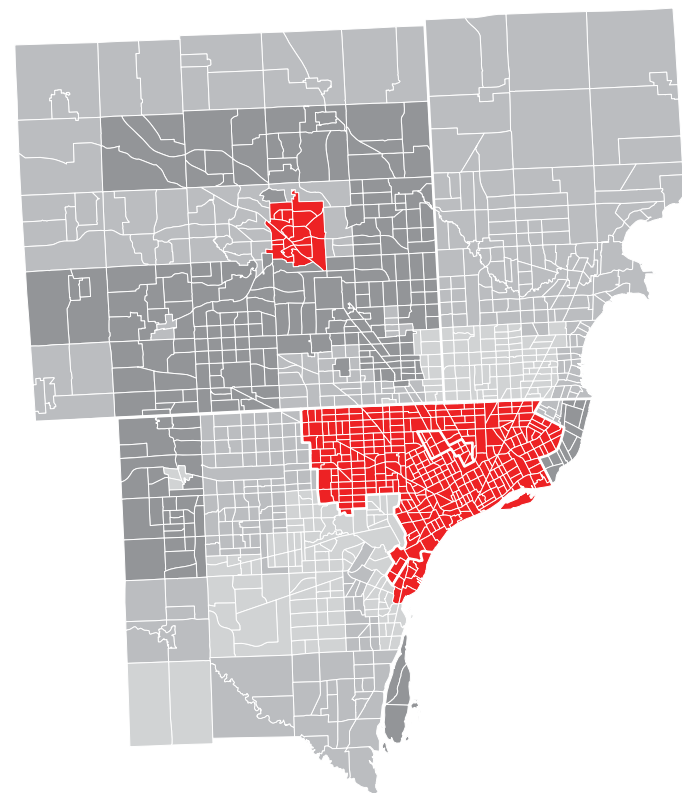


Figure 4.19. (Above) Percent of Metro Detroit residents with high school diploma or higher education in 2000.

and “have-nots” will not be reduced anytime soon.<sup>31</sup> In addition, a 75% graduation rate in suburban Detroit<sup>32</sup> and a disproportionate black to white ratio [89.23% (96,513) black and 2.54%, (2,752) white]<sup>33</sup> have only added fuel to Detroit’s social disaster.

31 Christopher B. Swanson, *Cities in Crisis: A Special Analytical Report on High School Graduation*, April 1st, 2008.

32 C. Pratt Dawsey and P. Walsh-Sarnecki, “Drastic Changes Planned at 5 Schools,” *The Detroit Free Press*, April 1st, 2008.

33 The Detroit Public Schools (2008), *District Data Summary*, September 23rd, 2008.





Figure 4.20. (Above) Photograph of the abandoned Packard auto factory on the east-side of Detroit.

## THE COLLAPSE OF A MONO-ECONOMY

*Detroit is a cautionary tale about one-industry towns: it shrank the way old boomtowns of the gold and silver rushes did, as though it had been mining automobiles and the veins ran dry, but most of those mining towns were meant to be ephemeral. People thought Detroit would go on forever.<sup>34</sup>*

Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape" (2007)

Infamously known as the Motor City, Detroit has always been a one-industry city. Just as the automobile has generated growth in Detroit, it has also spawned the decimation of Detroit. Although cultural deterrents and inherent contradictions have added to the demise of Detroit, it is the capitalist structure of domestic motor vehicle and parts manufacturing that has greatly contributed to the deindustrialization and depletion of Detroit's economy.

Historically, the American auto industry has been characterized by nomadic tendencies that typify American capitalism. Since the 1920s when Henry Ford first decentralized production outside of Detroit, the American auto industry has consistently pursued greener pastures, where the rate of return is the highest. As a result, Detroit's Big Three — Chrysler, Ford and General Motors — have rapidly developed into multinational corporations with manufacturing plants spread across the globe. The displace-

<sup>34</sup> Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape," *Harpers Magazine*, July 2007, pg.67 – 68.

2005 SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN EMPLOYMENT QUOTIENT  
BY INDUSTRY

INDUSTRY	LOCATION QUOTIENT
MOTOR VEHICLE, BODIES, AND PARTS MANUFACTURING	7.80
MANUFACTURING EXCEPT MOTOR VEHICLES	0.78
PRIVATE NONMANUFACTURING	0.99

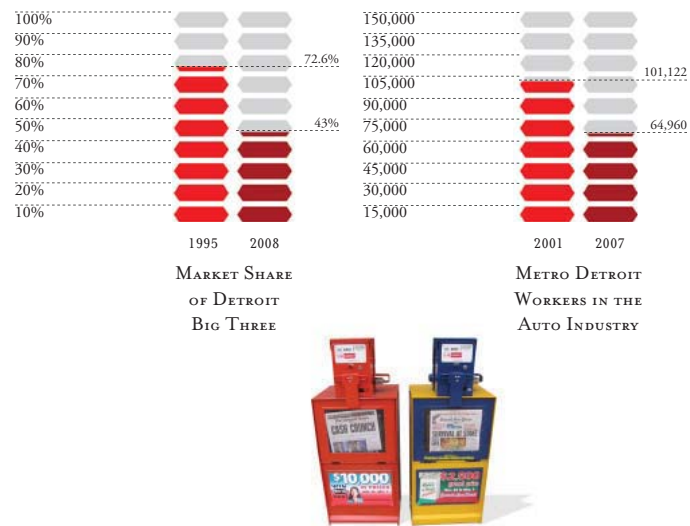
Figure 4.21. (Above) 2005 Southeast Michigan employment quotient. Detroit is 680% more concentrated in auto manufacturing employment than the national economy. However, when the auto industry is removed from the equation, the manufacturing sector in Detroit is 22% lower than the national economy.

ment of manufacturing jobs to third-world countries has turned Detroit’s economy from a boom to a bust.

The city of Detroit experienced the exodus of the automotive industry shortly after World War Two. Since new factories built for wartime production were no longer needed, several of these technologically advanced facilities became open for occupancy. As a result, many of Detroit’s older car factories were rendered technologically obsolete and production was moved to these newer facilities. A decade later, strong competition from German and Japanese auto manufacturers and skyrocketing gas prices forced American automotive industries to drastically redesign their vehicles and develop new labour-saving technologies that could provide Americans with quality vehicles at lower costs. Although new employment opportunities were created for highly skilled and highly trained workers, employment opportunities declined drastically for Detroit’s unskilled labourers. While many white suburbanites were able to adjust to the changes of the American auto industry, the majority of Detroit’s black population was unable to adapt due to racial disparities in educational attainment and the dispersion of blue-collar jobs into the suburban fringe. For a short period, Metro Detroit flourished, while the city of Detroit suffered.

Today regional competition, globalization and unsustainable economic folly have caused the collapse of not only the Big Three, but also of Detroit’s regional economy. As demonstrated in their





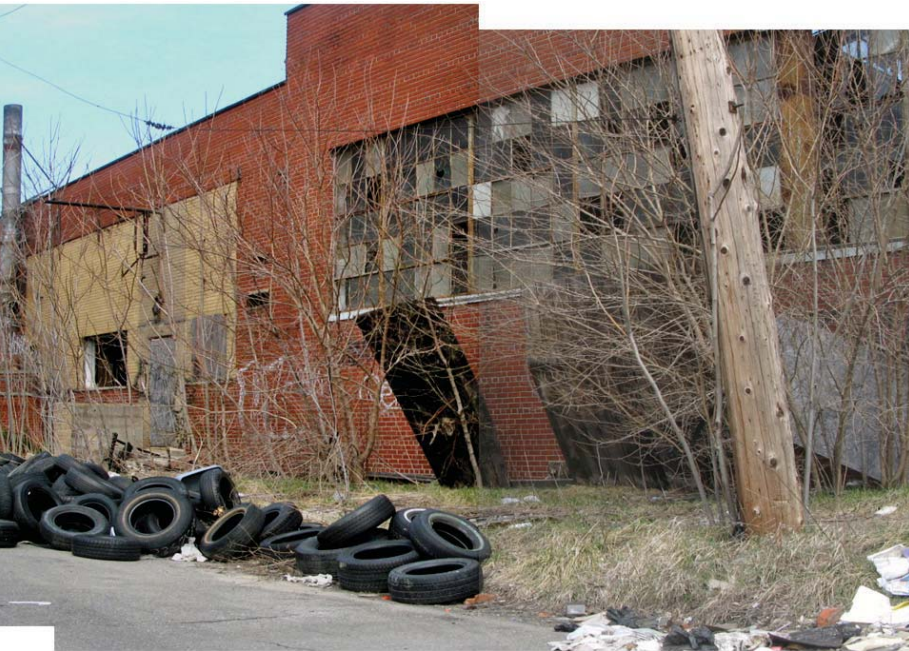
exodus from Detroit, the Big Three have consistently searched for ways to cut cost and maintain a reasonable profit. Similar to the fashion in which they left the city of Detroit, the Big Three shifted production from suburban Detroit to the southern United States, Mexico and various third-world countries, where labour rates were much cheaper. In addition, less demand, plummeting shares and a severe price-cost squeeze have forced Metro Detroit's remaining auto workers to accept reduced wages or buyouts. This in turn has caused the whole American auto industry to collapse because no one is making enough income to buy the Big Three's products; thereby breaking Henry Ford's fundamental principle that all workers should be able to buy the products of their labour. For a while workers paid by credit, but then the whole scheme collapsed when poor job security no longer allowed them to do so. Similar to the city of Detroit, Metro Detroit has begun to decline because there is no backup industry. Although the collapse of Detroit was driven by social issues, its decline should serve as an indicator for what will likely follow in Metro Detroit.

*There was a corporatist culture of big unions, big cars, big firms, sprinkling benevolence down through the economy. The American automobile was more than just a symbol of aspiration and freedom; for millions of workers connected to the industry it was the route to personal prosperity and a suburban culture of abundance.<sup>35</sup>*

Figure 4.22. (Above) The plummeting shares of Detroit's Big Three and the dramatic impact they have had on Metro Detroit's automotive workers.

<sup>35</sup> Tom Baldwin, "Mighty Motor City Detroit, Broken and Humbled, Awaits Help or Death," *The Times*, December 12th, 2008.





As the Big Three continue to downsize, several of Detroit's remaining automotive industries will be forced to close. The self-feeding cycle that caused Detroit's demise has now become exacerbated in both the city and suburbs. Thousands have already lost their jobs and many still will. Those who can leave will, as those who cannot will remain isolated in a downward spiral of social decay. The nomadic and capitalist behaviour of Detroit's mono-economy brought the city to this denouement and a new self-sustaining economy is all that can save Detroit from becoming an American wasteland.

Figure 4.23. (Above) Vignette depicting Detroit as an American wasteland.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CATALYST FOR CHANGE

*Detroit is where change is most urgent and therefore most viable. The rest of us will get there later, when necessity drives us too, and by that time Detroit may be the shining example we can look to, the post-industrial green city that was once the steel-gray capital of Fordist manufacturing.<sup>1</sup>*

Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape" (2007)

With Detroit's narrative on a steep decline and the crisis of the American auto industry forecasting the imminent death of the Motor City, Detroit is at a pivotal juncture where it must reinvent itself. The city can no longer depend upon one industry or one multinational corporation to save it. Instead Detroit must free itself from the stranglehold of globalization and become altogether something different; it must become the first post-American city. In order to do this, Detroit must take a few steps backward before it can begin to move forward.

Since the 1950s Detroit has been shrinking. The nomadic tendencies of a capitalist society and a lethal combination of social deterrents have brought Detroit to this denouement. With the city's population on a steep decline and the probability for more loss at a high, it seems logical that the city of Detroit should be searching for ways to consolidate itself. Cities, like living organisms, need

<sup>1</sup> Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia: Exploring the Post-American Landscape," *Harpers Magazine*, July 2007, p.73.



Figure 5.1. (Above) Photomontage of the Heidelberg Project.



Figure 5.2. (Above) Photograph of Detroit's new MGM Gand Casino.

to be resilient; they need to withstand shock without losing their basic functions, they must transform when their current model is no longer feasible. Although the citizens of Detroit are arguably the most resilient, downtrodden optimists in America, the city's government is stubbornly opposed to initiate any strategy that does not support the city's multinational corporations or attract people to the city. As a result, the heart of downtown Detroit has become little more than a destination theme park. Today, three large casinos, two large sports stadiums and several posh theatres serve as privately-owned for-profit cash cows where affluent ex-urbanites empty their pockets and desperate Detroiters spend every last dollar.

This "disneyfied" model of urbanism does not work. If anything, it has only accelerated the decay of Detroit. Much like suburban sprawl and deindustrialization, the disneyfication of Detroit has ignored, displaced and perpetuated the social deterrents that have hindered Detroit for years. Because city officials are unwilling to seek out new solutions that aim to benefit the larger segment of the city, "a clear message of betrayal and hopelessness is sent to [city] residents – the same people who have been at the bottom of this system before."<sup>2</sup> The stratification between the upper and lower classes has ensured that the rich will get richer, while the poor get poorer. With no relief in sight and no end to the relentless cycles of poverty, the city of Detroit is desperate for a change.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Ciaidella, "Debating Detroit's Redevelopment," *Planetizen*, January 12th, 2008.



Figure 5.3. (Above) With the highest number of home foreclosures in the nation, many Detroiters are desperate for a solution.

*To live in Detroit these days is to want to scream. But where do you begin? Our doors are being shuttered. Our walls are falling down. Our daily bread, the auto industry, is reduced to morsels. Our schools are in turmoil. Our mayor went to jail. Our two biggest newspapers announced they will soon cut home delivery to three days a week. And our most common lawn sign is FOR SALE.<sup>3</sup>*

Change in Detroit will not happen from the top down — city officials have too much pride and arrogance to admit the city must shrink. In 1993, when the city’s ombudsperson suggested that large sections of Detroit be cordoned off and returned to nature, her suggestion was ridiculed and brushed away. At the time, city officials believed Detroit was on the verge of a renaissance. They felt the minivan and increased sales in the Big Three would help save the city, but they were wrong. In 1993 Detroit had over 1,000,000 people; today the city’s population is less than 900,000. Undeterred by having the largest population loss in America, Detroit is still trying to re-populate the city. Despite having the greatest number of home foreclosures and abandoned buildings in America, the city still lacks a strategy to eliminate blight. In Detroit, words like shrinkage and downsizing carry a whiff of defeat, and defeat is something city politicians are too stubborn to concede.

<sup>3</sup> Mitch Albom, “The Courage of Detroit,” *Sports Illustrated*, January 12th, 2009.



Figure 5.4. (Above) Diagram of what a healthy urban fabric would look like in Detroit.

When we break something we are faced with three options — either throw it away, pay someone to fix it, or fix it yourself. In Detroit, the answer is obvious; no one is going to help fix the city, Detroiters must fix it themselves. The city could be written off, in fact many have argued that the city should return to nature, but the truth of the matter is that Detroit does need to be saved. Detroit represents every other American city; it's just a matter of time before they end up where Detroit is.

*[Detroiters] inventiveness, individualism, persistence, and ability to deal with enormous daily frustrations are a constant wonderment. The 'frontier' mentality that dominates large areas of Detroit is illustrative of great opportunity... The city is ripe for opportunities of cultural experimentation – with or without the approbation of government.<sup>4</sup>*

So then how will Detroit be saved? Simply stated, the repair process needs to begin with those who have had it all taken away. The change has to occur from the bottom up. It has to be created by the citizens of Detroit whose futures are at stake. They need to create a grassroots movement that has the tenacity to simultaneously initiate change and apply pressure on the bureaucratic regimes of Detroit. Since healthy neighbourhoods are dependent on good schools, it is imperative that city residents concentrate their efforts around neighbourhood schools.

4

Stephen Vogel, "Surviving to Create," *Urban Ecology: Detroit and Beyond*, p.19.





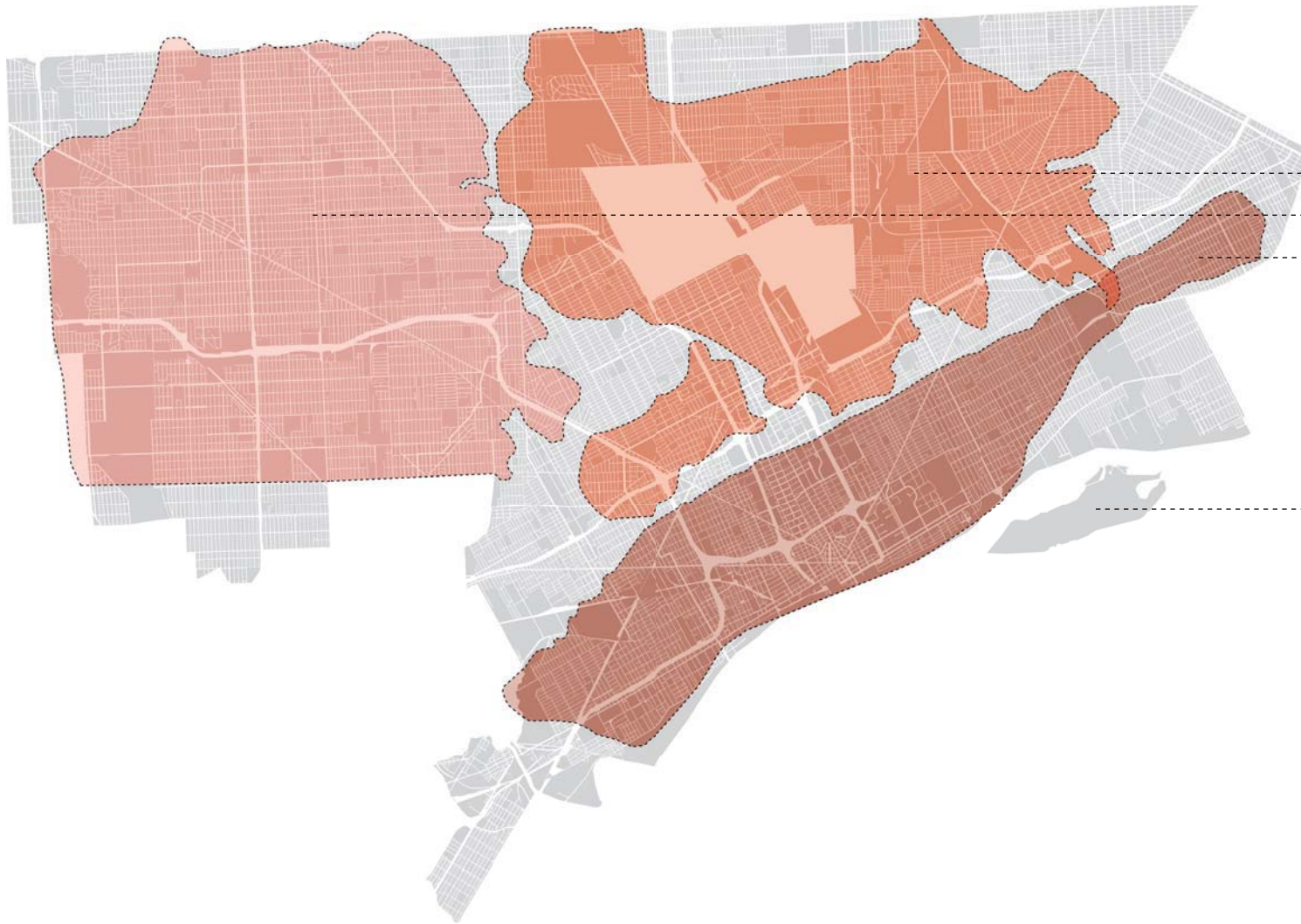
Figure 5.5. (Above) Diagram of Detroit's urban fabric with vacant parcels erased.

Although schools, more than anything else, have the potential to limit the harm on a community's social stability, little if anything is being done in Detroit to save its public school system. Part of the problem in Detroit is that schools are not an integral part of the community. In fact, both the city of Detroit and the Detroit Public Schools operate independently of one another. As a result, there are schools closing where new housing is being built and neighbourhoods being razed where schools remain open. To make matters worse, the city of Detroit has enacted a citywide cleanup initiative that condemns and destroys all abandoned buildings within a 750-foot radius of Detroit public schools, but does nothing with the vacant plots of land left behind. The removal of these buildings is in the best interest of the neighbourhoods, but a patchwork of urban prairie is equally as dangerous as abandoned buildings; neither creates the physical expression of a social fabric that defends itself. If Detroit is going to be saved, city schools and the neighbourhoods that surround them need to be strengthened.

*Detroit needs no more than 50 square miles of its land for its current population... The remaining 89 square miles could be used entirely for other purposes.<sup>5</sup>*

With the fallout of the American automotive industry, a public school system in turmoil, and a city that is nearly half-vacant, it appears that the only recourse for Detroit is to consolidate itself

<sup>5</sup> Alan Mallach, quoted by John Gallagher, "Acres of Barren Blocks Offer Chance to Reinvent Detroit," *The Detroit Free Press*, December 15th, 2008.



BOSTON	POPULATION: 581,616	SQ. MILE AREA: 48.43
SAN FRANCISCO	POPULATION: 751,682	SQ. MILE AREA: 46.69
MANHATTAN	POPULATION: 1,537,195	SQ. MILE AREA: 22.96
TOTAL	POPULATION: 2,870,493	SQ. MILE AREA: 118.08
-----		
DETROIT	POPULATION: 933,043	SQ. MILE AREA: 138.77

Figure 5.6. (*Above and Opposite*) Map depicting how Boston, Manhattan and San Francisco can all snugly fit their land mass and population within Detroit's city limits.

in a manner that is strategic and not haphazard. Detroit has too much potential to simply rope off the city and let it revert back to nature. There are visionaries within the city and an abundance of skilled labourers with time on their hands who can transform Detroit's liabilities into community assets; assets that circle locally rather than globally. Detroit has the potential to become a Post-American city — a city that prides itself on social gain and community, rather than on material wealth and individualism. All that is needed is a bootstrap urbanism that can consolidate the city into livable and sustainable villages that are not controlled from the top down, but from the bottom up, by a community of people sharing a common terrain.<sup>6</sup> This is the alternative sub-culture that Detroit can offer and so many other American cities need.

<sup>6</sup> Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: People and Design in a Violent City*, p.3.



Figure 6.1. (Above) Detroit: the Post-American city.

## DESIGN INTERVENTION



### BOOTSTRAPPING DETROIT

The following is a strategic design initiative that provides Detroiters with a radical and revolutionary vision for their city. This form of urbanism fragments Detroit into several isolated villages that consolidate school and community. Unlike the isolated pocket of urban revitalization that exists in downtown Detroit, this form of isolation strives to become a self-sustaining source of life for marginalized Detroiters. It aims to restore community trust and stability by identifying neighbourhood schools as the nuclei of community development.

This proposed strategy, called bootstrap urbanism, utilizes the city's large inventory of vacant land, abandoned buildings and neighbourhood schools to methodically atomize, consolidate and fortify several new Detroit.

While all three of these sequential processes are intended for the entire city of Detroit, a shift in scale is necessary to depict the fortifying process. While the atomization and consolidation processes of bootstrapping Detroit reorganize the city at large, the process of fortifying new urban nodes needs to be done at a more intimate scale. As a result, one particular node on Detroit's eastside has been randomly chosen as the prototype.

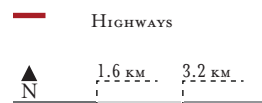


Figure 6.2. (Above) Atomization.

## A T O M I Z E

Although it is common to map the forecasted growth of a city, in Detroit it is necessary to map the reduction of the city. The atomization of Detroit maps a method of controlled shrinkage that logically dismantles the city into controlled voids and intensified urban nodes. Rather than allowing Detroit to wither erratically, this process ensures that Detroit neighbourhoods will be strengthened as the city continues to shrink.

Since Henry Ford introduced the Model T in 1908, Detroit has become home to a widespread network of highways, approach routes, surface arteries, railroad lines and industrial corridors. When mapped out, these infrastructures delineate a logical pattern for the atomization and consolidation of Detroit.

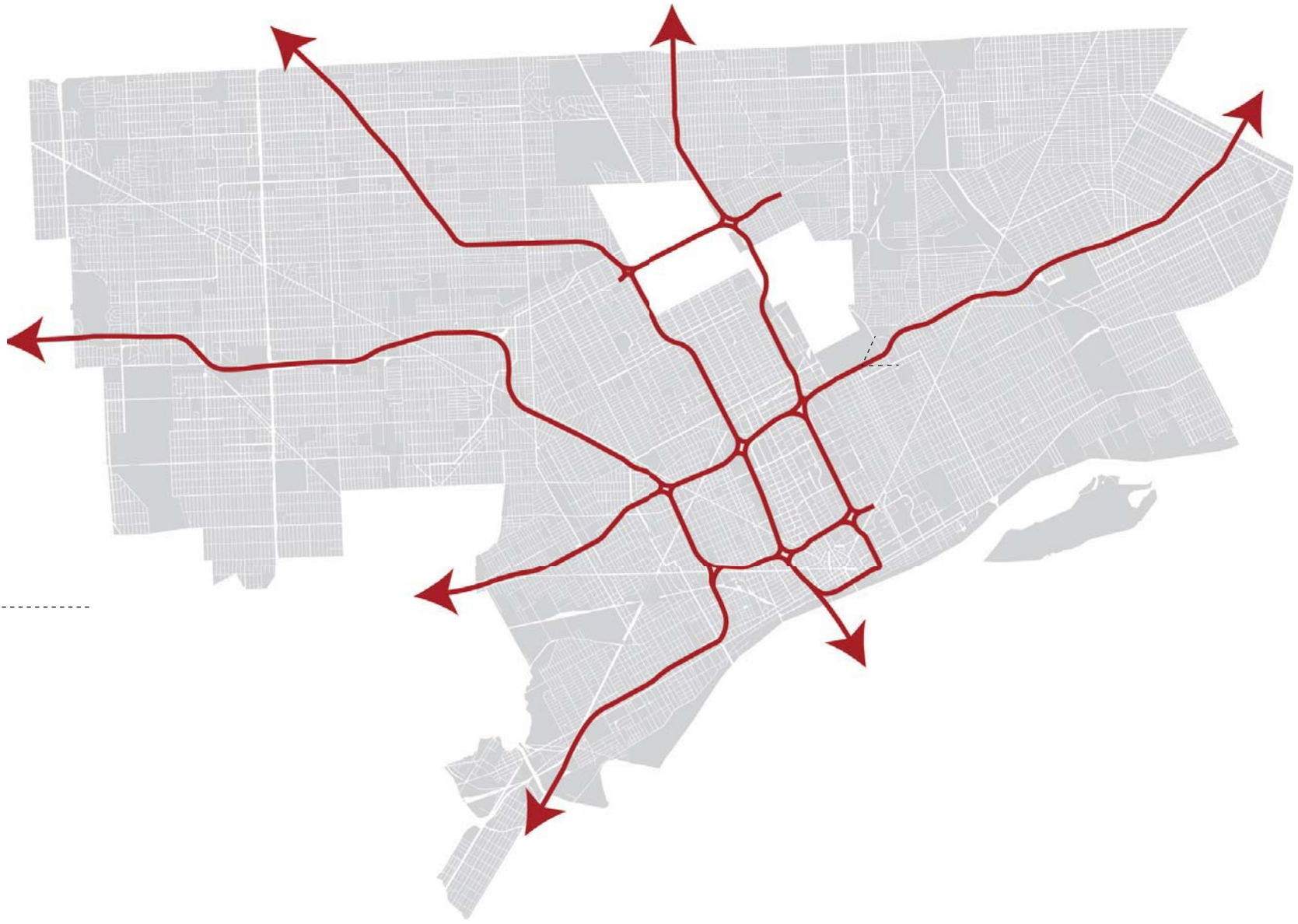


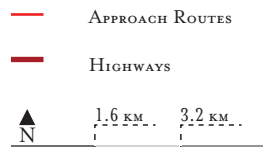
## HIGHWAYS

The primary function of a highway is to ensure that traffic flows steadily to and from one place to the next. While an inadequate amount of highways can create congestion and headaches for commuters, too many highways can be detrimental to the physical landscapes they serve. In Detroit, rather than helping define certain neighbourhoods within the city, an extensive network of sunken highways act as a blighting force as they irregularly carve through the city neighbourhoods they are intended to serve.

Figure 6.3. (*Above and Opposite*) Detroit Highways.





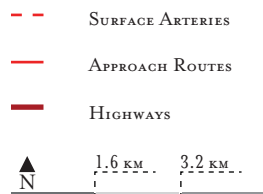


### APPROACH ROUTES

Two main requirements of an approach route are that they must inform us and conduct us throughout a city. Anchored by a focal point, approach routes orientate citizens and allow them to easily find their end destination. More often than not, approach routes present the city and its architecture in their best lights. In Detroit approach routes are laid out in a radial pattern. Reaching in from the periphery, they culminate on Detroit's urban core where the city's architecture is showcased as the main focal point. Similar to highways, these heavily traversed roadways can either define or divide the neighbourhoods they transgress.

Figure 6.4. (*Above and Opposite*) Detroit Approach Routes.

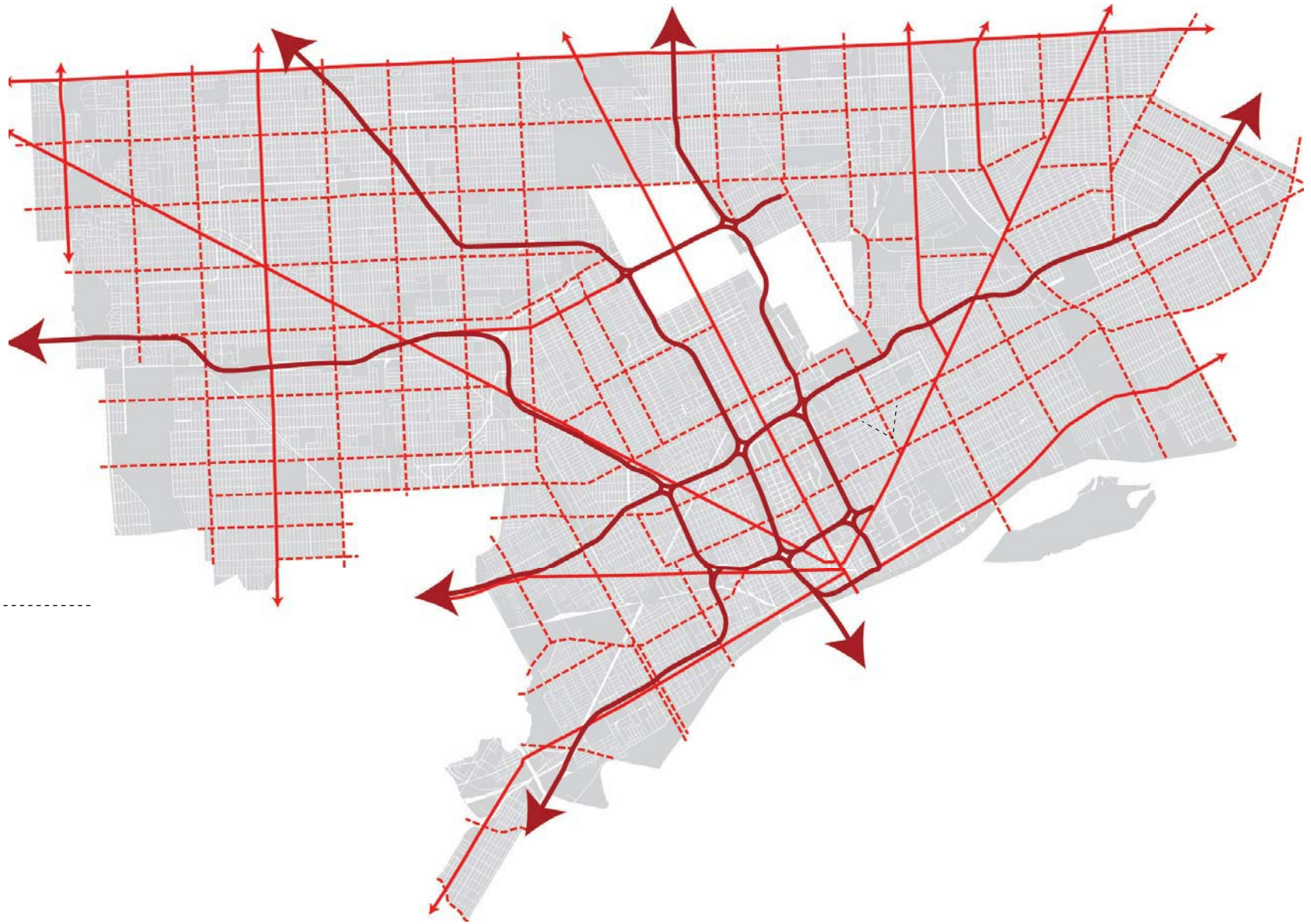




### SURFACE ARTERIES

Based on their clarity of form and connectivity to the cityscape and expressway system, surface arteries usually connect several city neighbourhoods. Evaluated on how well they tie into one another, surface arteries are often used as main public transportation routes. In Detroit, surface arteries are laid out in a grid that ensures that they intersect one another regularly and tie-in with area highways and approach routes appropriately. Depending on the volume of traffic surface arteries experience, they either create intensified zones of urban activity or clearly delineate one district from another.

Figure 6.5. (*Above and Opposite*) Detroit surface arteries.



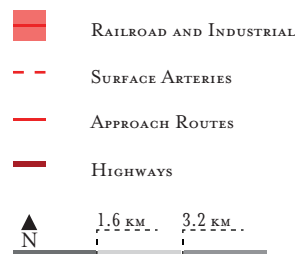
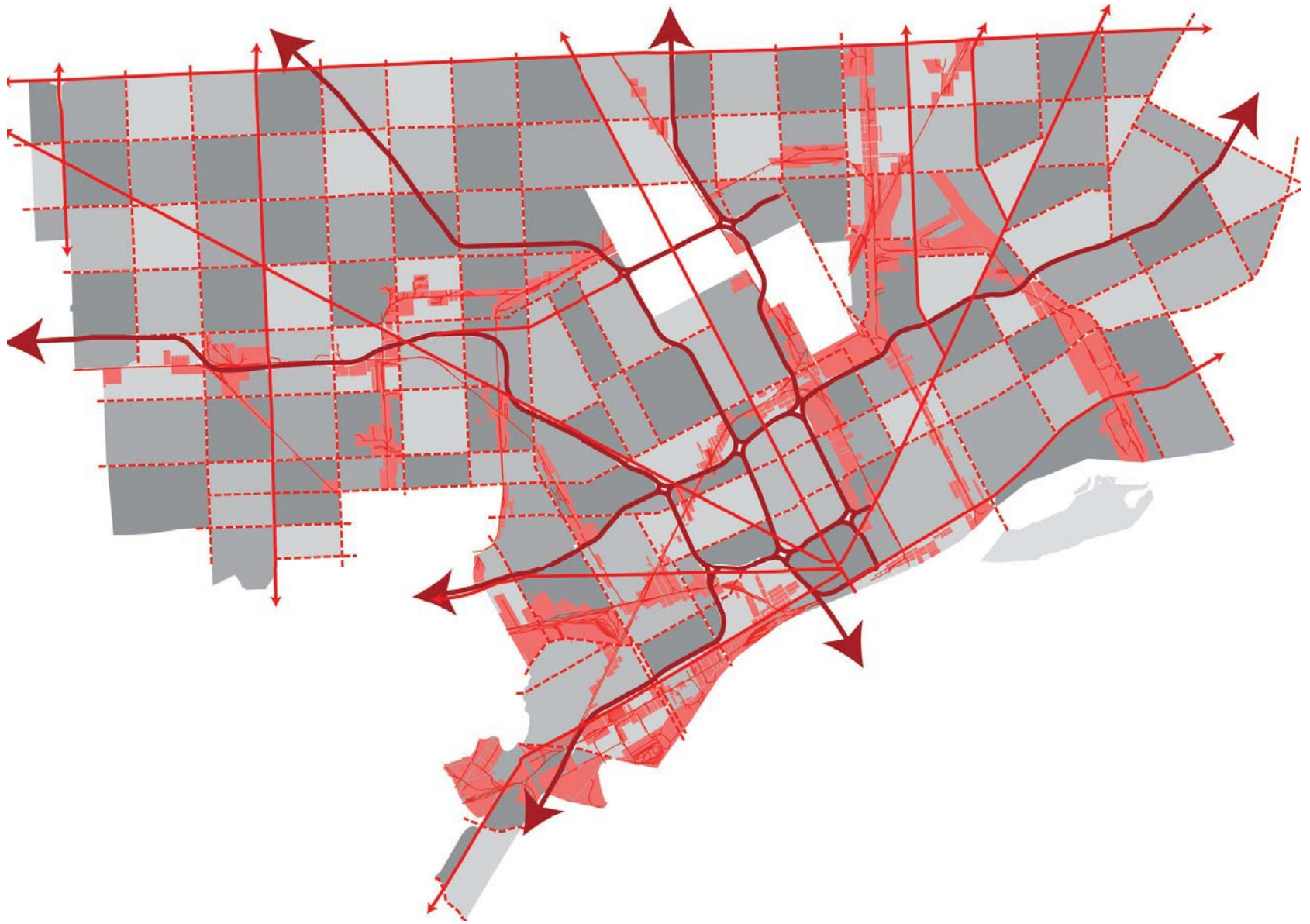


Figure 6.6. (Top) Detroit railroad lines and industrial lands.

Figure 6.7. (Bottom) Detroit infrastructure.



Figure 6.8. (Opposite) Detroit atomized.



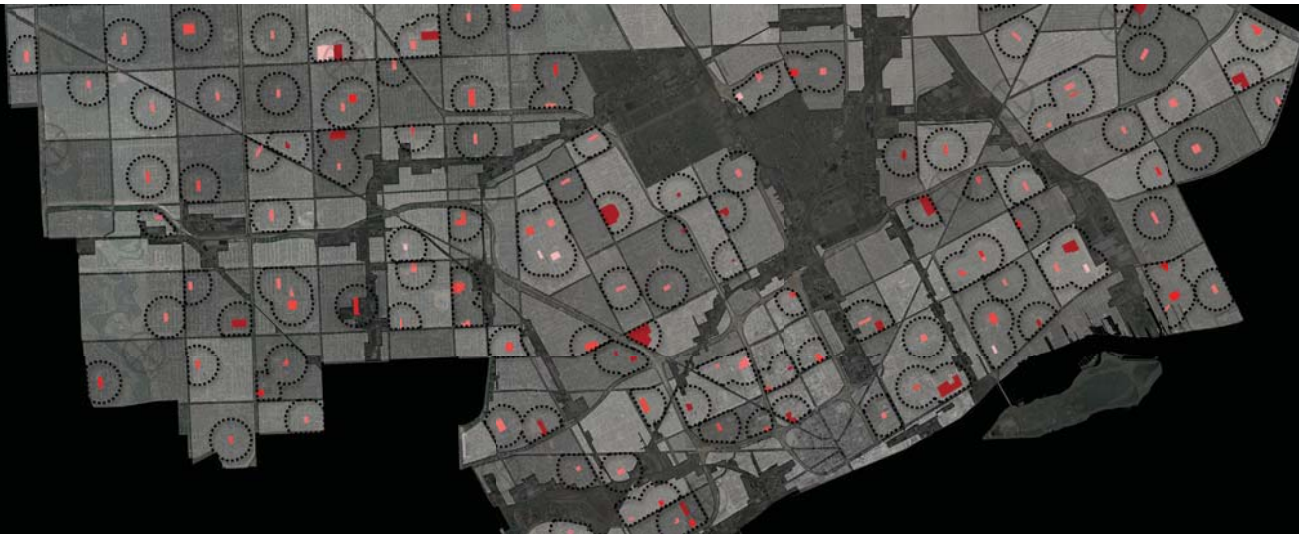
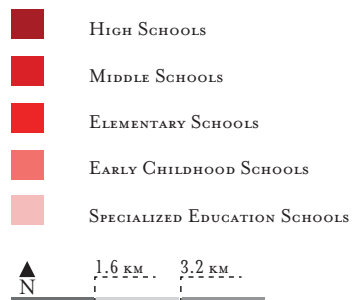


Figure 6.9. (Above) Consolidate.



## C O N S O L I D A T E

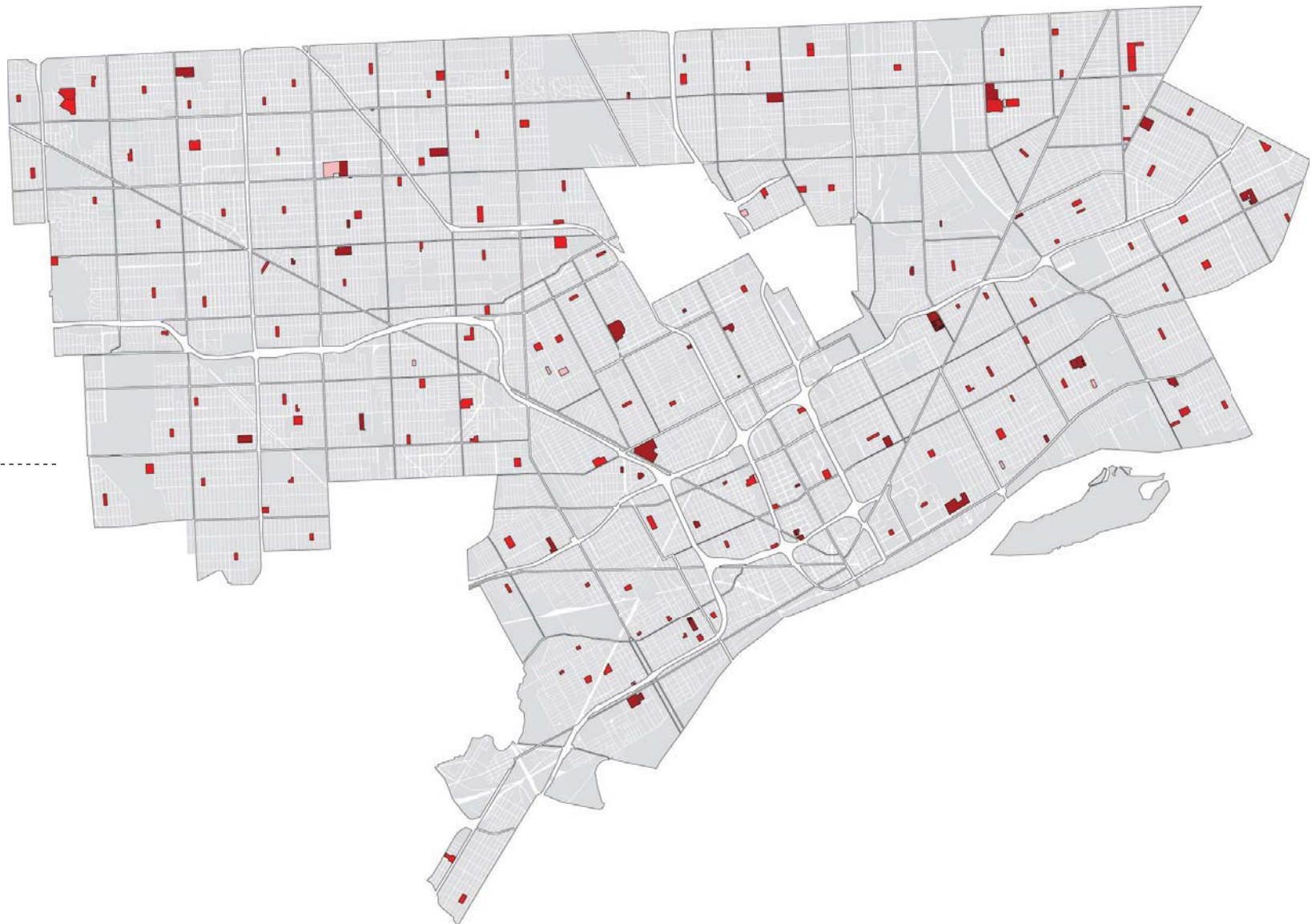
Extensive networks of highways, approach routes, surface arteries, railroad lines and industrial corridors have dismantled Detroit neighbourhoods. Rather than unifying Detroit, these networks have fragmented the city into several pieces. Thus, the mapping out of these infrastructures and the recognition of Detroit public schools as an agent of social change clearly distinguish a network of villages that need to be intensified. In addition, this process also identifies the large reserves of land that can begin to be bootstrapped for the future.



NEW ATTRACTOR

Racial issues have divided Detroit and are still deeply engrained within its culture. Although racial segregation is largely responsible for the social decay of Detroit, both city and suburbs refuse to integrate. To a large extent Metro Detroit wants nothing to do with the city and the city wants nothing to do with the suburbs. When outside organizations try to come in and provide aid to Detroit, decades of mistrust and racial disparities force community leaders to push them away. As a result, many of Detroit’s residents are overcome by a sense of helplessness and fall into the vicious cycles of poverty. The only way trust can be restored and the vicious cycle of poverty can be broken is if Detroit’s public schools are strengthened and new urban pioneers are cultivated. In order to achieve this, Detroit public schools must become the nuclei of community development. They must encourage Detroit’s youth to do socially meaningful and creative work that begins to establish connections with the community and local enterprises.

Figure 6.10. (Above and Opposite) Detroit public school locations.



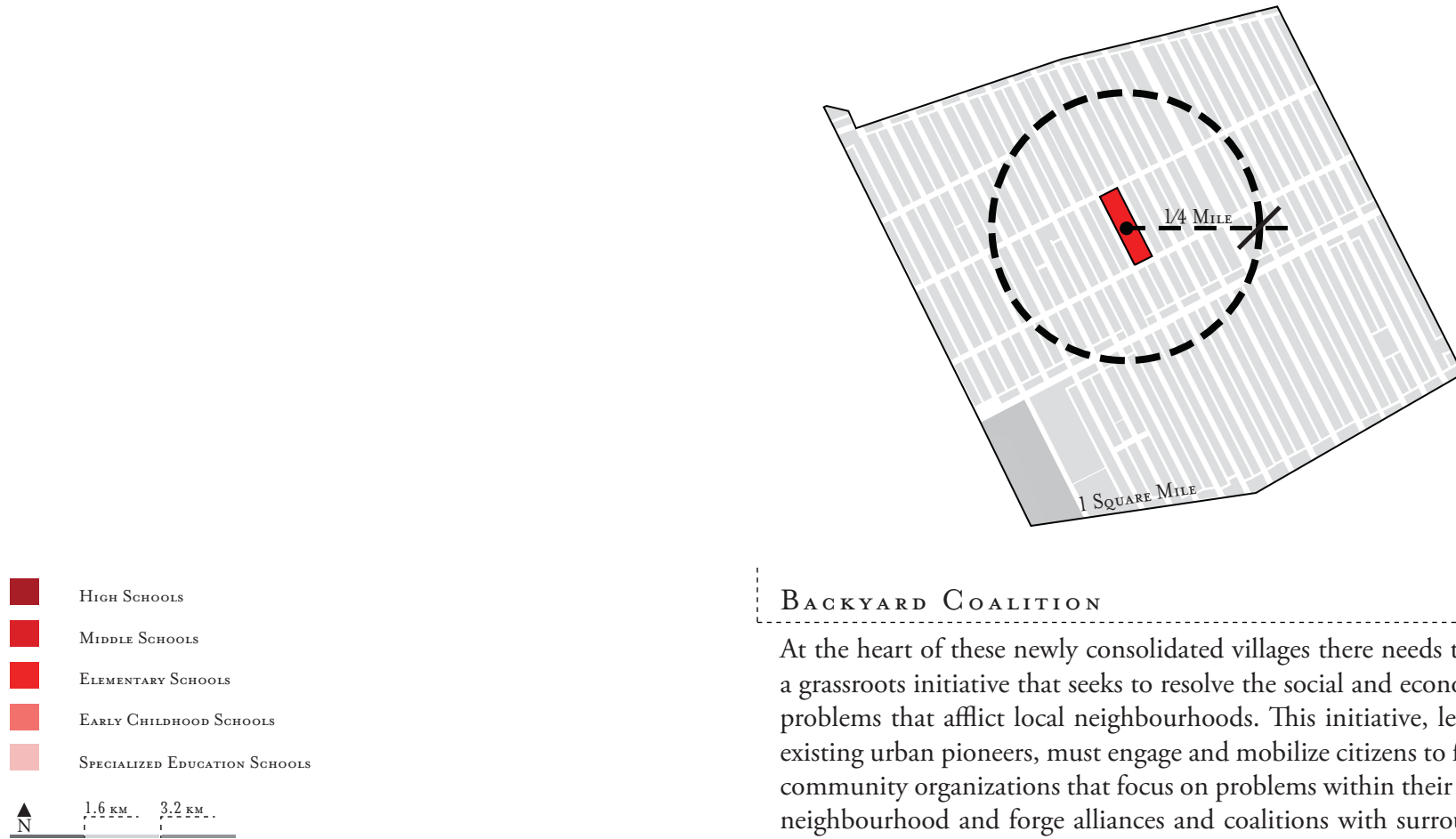


Figure 6.11. (Above) One-mile square village with the half-mile intensified core.

Figure 6.12. (Opposite) Cores to be intensified.

### BACKYARD COALITION

At the heart of these newly consolidated villages there needs to be a grassroots initiative that seeks to resolve the social and economic problems that afflict local neighbourhoods. This initiative, led by existing urban pioneers, must engage and mobilize citizens to form community organizations that focus on problems within their own neighbourhood and forge alliances and coalitions with surrounding villages to tackle the problems that distress the city at large.

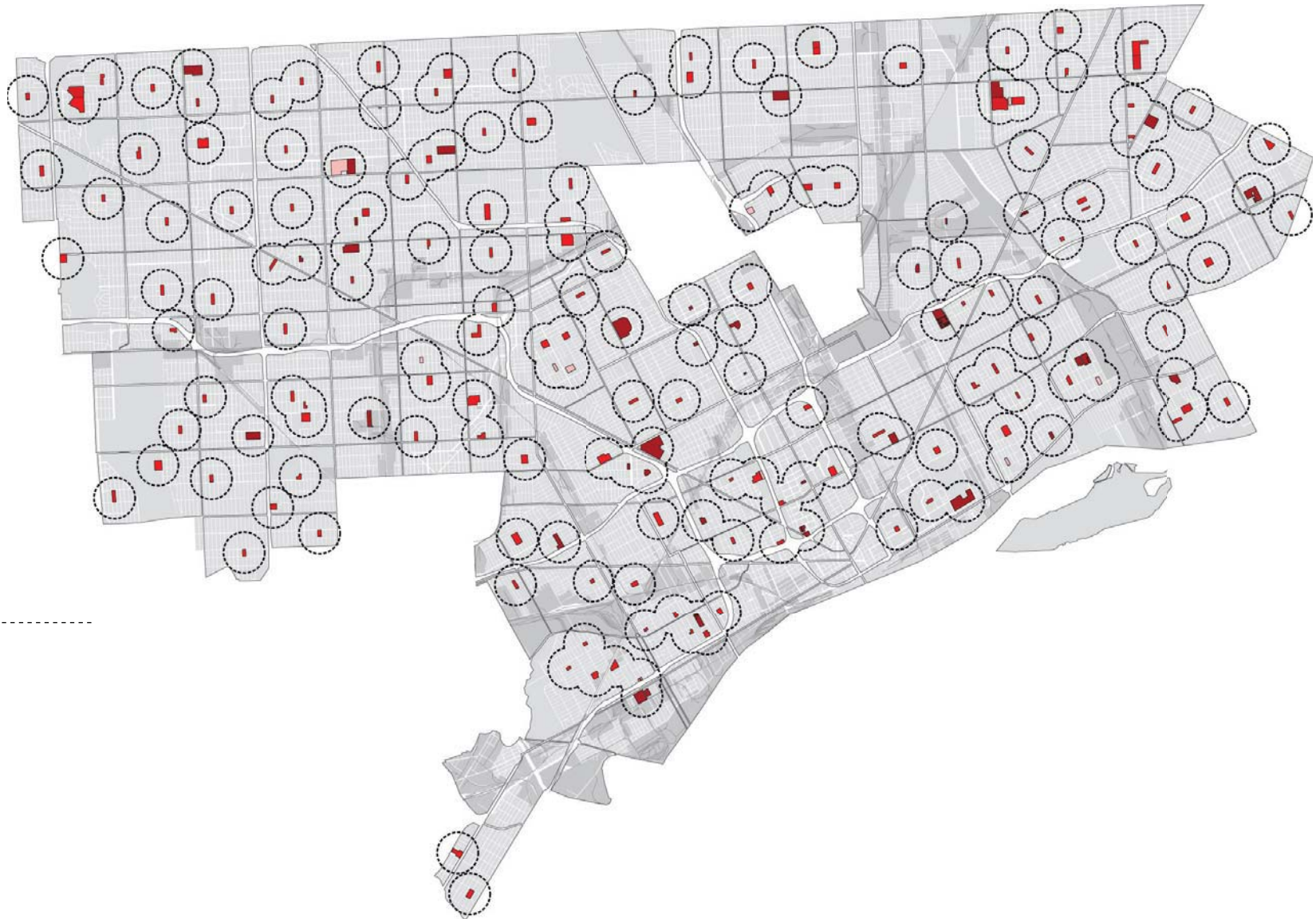




Figure 6.13. (Above) Catherine Ferguson Academy.

Figure 6.14. (Opposite) The Heidelberg Project.

## THE ACTORS

Despite living in a landscape of despair there are several urban pioneers and grassroots organizations within Detroit that are trying to move the city forward. The resilience, creativity and success displayed by these organizations thus far suggests that these organizations become the founding fathers of a citywide coalition that aims to move the city forward.

The following are some grassroots organizations that have already begun to successfully transform Detroit, with or without the approbation of government.



#### CATHERINE FERGUSON ACADEMY

Catherine Ferguson Academy is a Detroit public school for pregnant teens and teenage mothers. In addition to teaching academics, Catherine Ferguson Academy also runs a full-fledged farm in the city of Detroit. Created by science teacher and urban pioneer Paul Weertz, the farm transforms vacant parcels of land into fields of food, horses, chickens and goats, to help teach teenage mothers how to care for and nurture their children.

#### THE HEIDELBERG PROJECT

Created by Tyree Guyton, the Heidelberg Project uses art as a catalyst for rebuilding one of Detroit's under-resourced neighbourhoods. Encompassing the whole street, the project innovatively uses abandoned buildings, vacant parcels of land and neighbourhood refuse to discourage crime and offer new hope to its residents. Although the city of Detroit demolished the project in 1991 and 1999, the project has been rebuilt and continues to evolve today. The Heidelberg Project receives roughly 275,000 visitors annually.



#### EARTHWORKS URBAN FARM

Established in 1999, the Earthworks Urban Farm was cultivated on three vacant parcels of land on Detroit's east-side. The garden provides fresh produce for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and Gleaners Community Food Bank. In addition, the Earthworks Garden educates Detroit public school children on science, nutrition and biodiversity in organic agriculture.

Figure 6.15. (*Above*) Earthworks Urban Farm.

Figure 6.16. (*Opposite, Left*) Detroit Summer mural.

Figure 6.17. (*Opposite, Right*) Avalon Bakery.





### DETROIT SUMMER

Detroit Summer is a multicultural, intergenerational youth program that was established in 1992. This program invites groups from both inside and outside Detroit to work on projects and programs that use Detroit's despair as a canvas for opportunity. Several past projects have renovated community spaces, rejuvenated parks, and reprogrammed abandoned buildings through the use of community dialogue workshops and art installations. Several grassroots organizations began as Detroit Summer projects.



### AVALON BAKERY

Avalon Bakery is a business that is trying to create a new path to development for the city of Detroit. It is a path that is based on sustainability, local economy and community. Unlike most businesses, Avalon Bakery operates at a micro-level scale and seeks to improve the city by providing city residents with access to affordable healthy foods, and job opportunities that allow them to make a living wage with great benefits. To achieve this, Avalon uses food products that have been grown in or around the city of Detroit.



Figure 6.18. (*Above*) Tyree Guyton, artist and creator of the Heidelberg Project, teaching local students about the Heidelberg Project.

Figure 6.19. (*Opposite, Left*) Reading night at the Georgia Street Community Collective.

Figure 6.20. (*Opposite, Right*) Movie night at the Georgia Street Community Collective.

## INTERMEDIARY INSTITUTES

Although there have been many grassroots movements in Detroit, most have failed to initiate citywide change. One way in which a grassroots movement could successfully move Detroit forward is if a healthy network of intermediary institutes were established. These institutes would create a coalition of grassroots organizations to codify strategies, build upon successes, search for direct funding, improve and teach fundamentals of community development, and motivate residents to naturally do socially necessary and natural work that aims to transform Detroit with or without the approbation of government.



#### DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If the authority to make decisions in Detroit is shifted from the city back to the people then existing social institutions need to be strengthened. In Detroit the social institutes that need to be reinforced are the Detroit public schools. These establishments have the potential to serve as the intermediary community institutions that can help rebuild the social fabric of Detroit's troubled neighbourhoods.

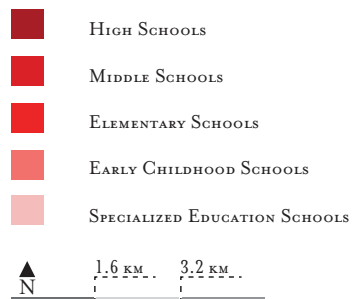


Figure 6.21. (Above) The three keys to building community.

Figure 6.22. (Opposite) Network of consolidated villages.



DECENTRALIZE

Since neither the city nor the school board has been able to save the Detroit Public School system from disaster, Detroit public schools should be decentralized into several new districts. These school boards should be run by an elected-at-large official who works in collaboration with the leader of their local empowered community organization. In addition, these officials should also be members of a coalition that decides on educational issues citywide. Decentralizing the Detroit Public School system is the only way hope and stability can be restored in Detroit's most bereft neighbourhoods.





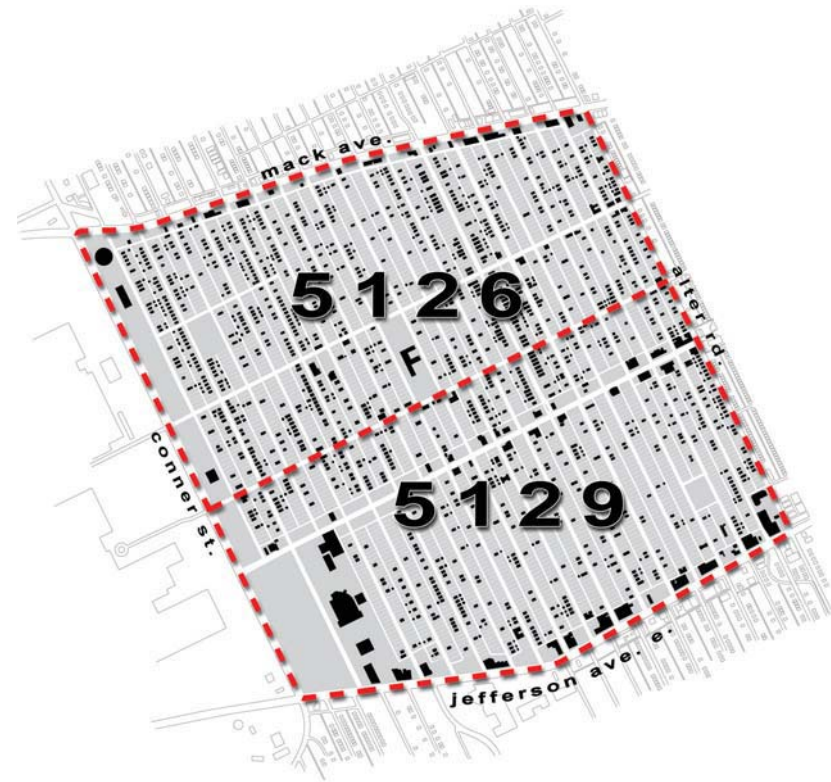
Figure 6.23. (Above) Fortify.

## THE STUDY AREA

## FORTIFY

If Detroit is to be atomized and consolidated into several healthy villages, then each community should be designed to operate at a micro scale that encourages social interaction, thwarts crime and protects against the coercion of globalization. The strengthening of these villages requires each community to enact a strategy that identifies neighbourhood anchors, erases all urban decay, eliminates barren streets, places eyes on remaining streets, promotes communication, and generates a local economy that creatively transforms local liabilities into assets.

The following is a list of strategies that can help strengthen each village. These strategies have been applied to a study area that is intended to serve as a prototype. The study area was randomly chosen and is located on the far east-side of Detroit where the city borders the wealthy suburb of Grosse Pointe.



1.0 SET THE BOUNDARIES

Each village should accommodate between 3,000 - 10,000 residents. The study area used for the prototype village combines census tracts 5126 and 5129 to form a village with an estimated population of 6,000.

The following is the combined demographics for the new prototype village. These demographics will help give insight into the social conditions that must be addressed.

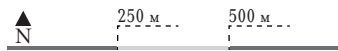
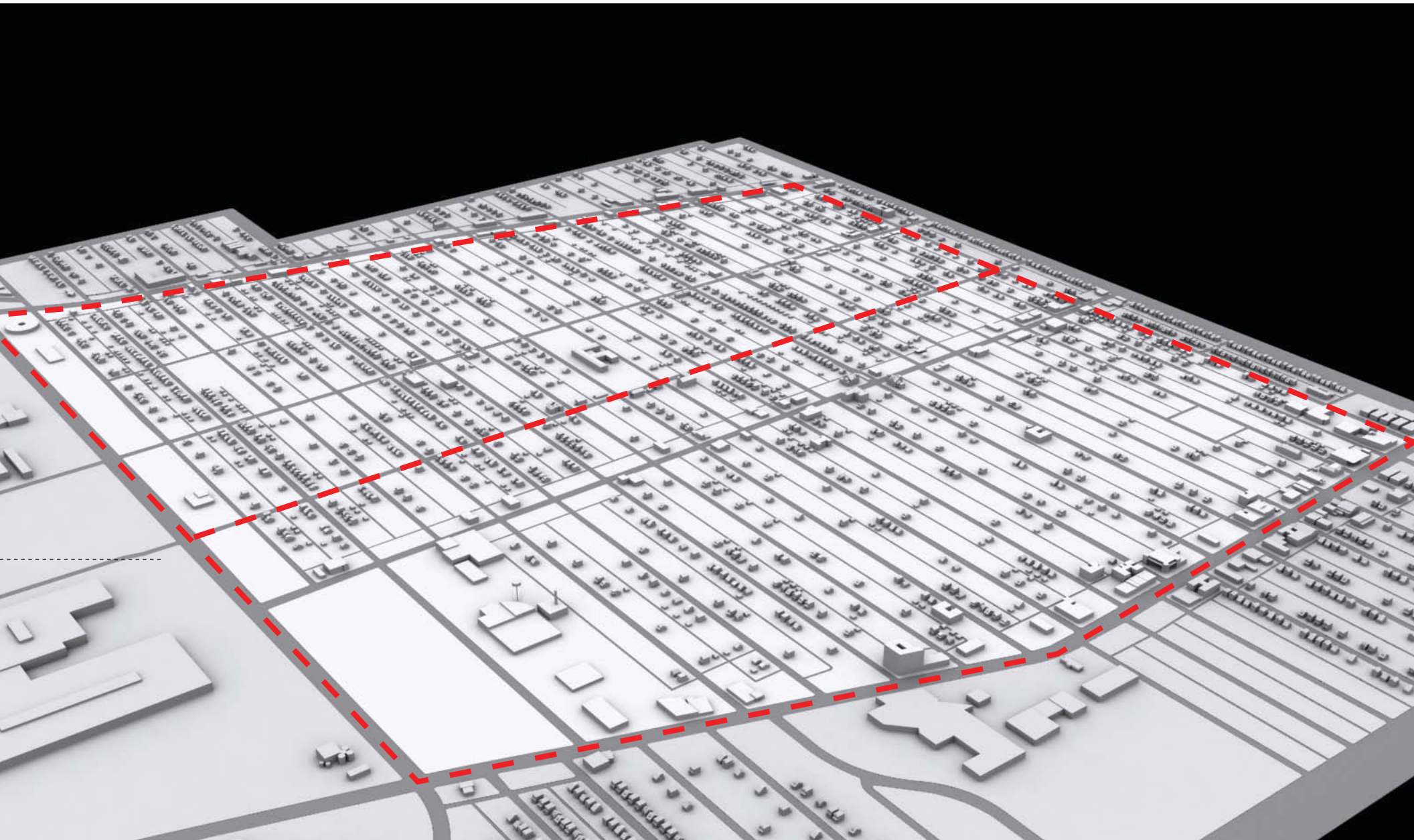


Figure 6.24. (Above and Opposite) Existing neighbourhood census tracts.





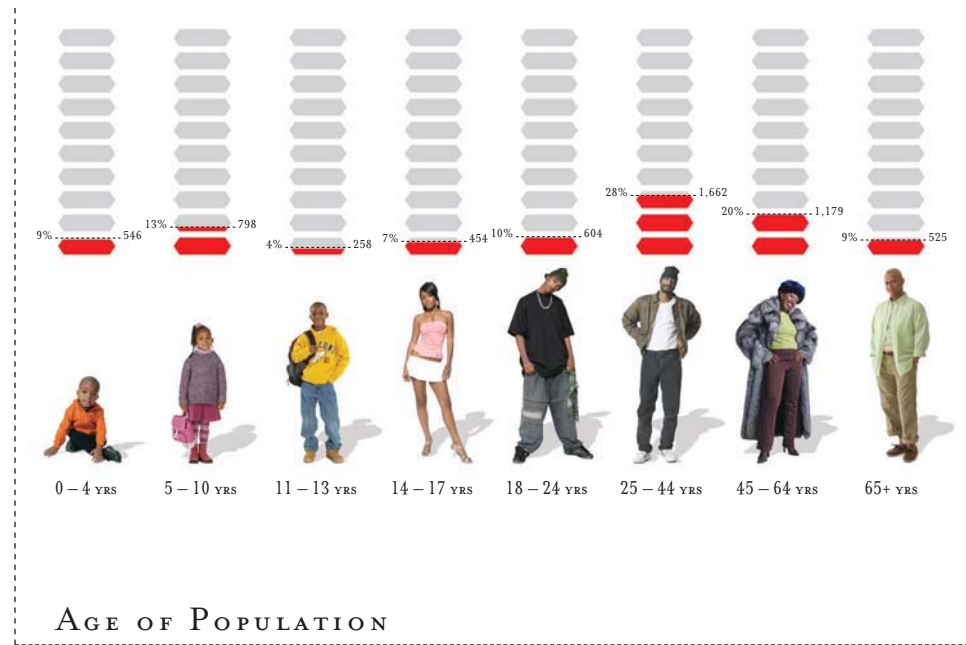
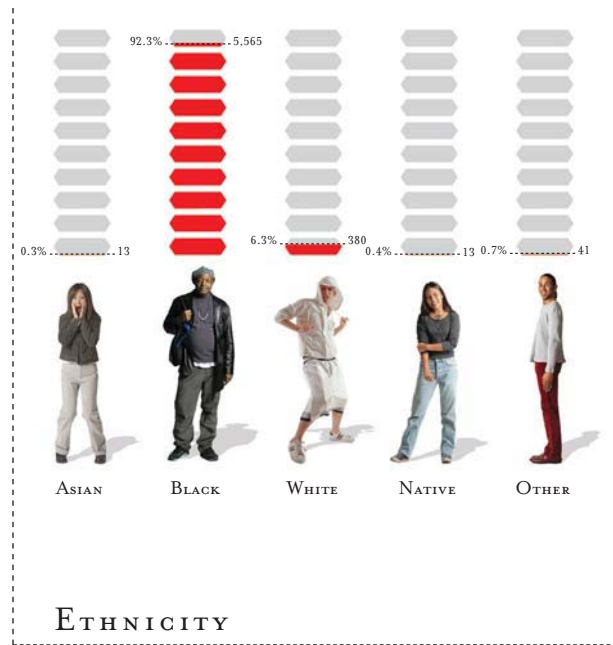


Figure 6.25. (Above) Combined demographics of study area, part one.

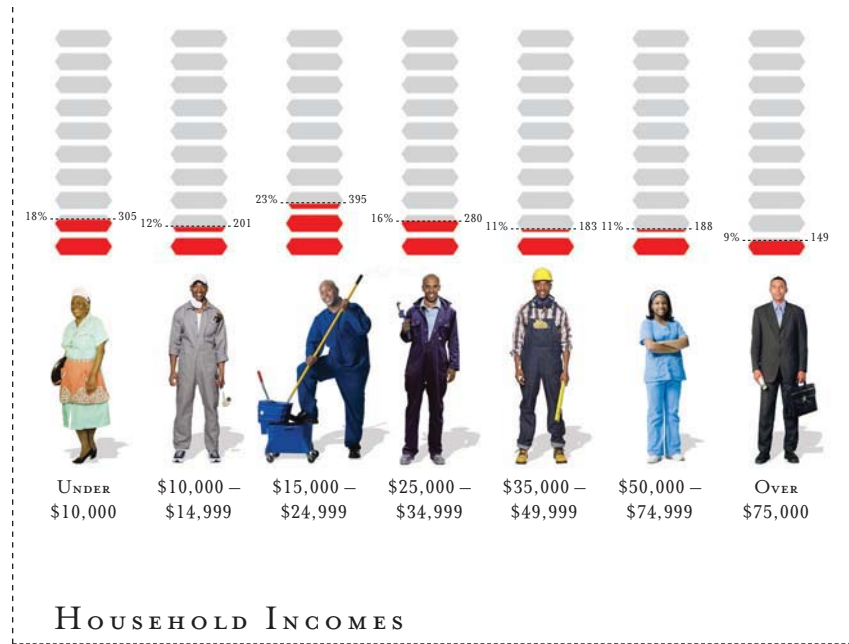
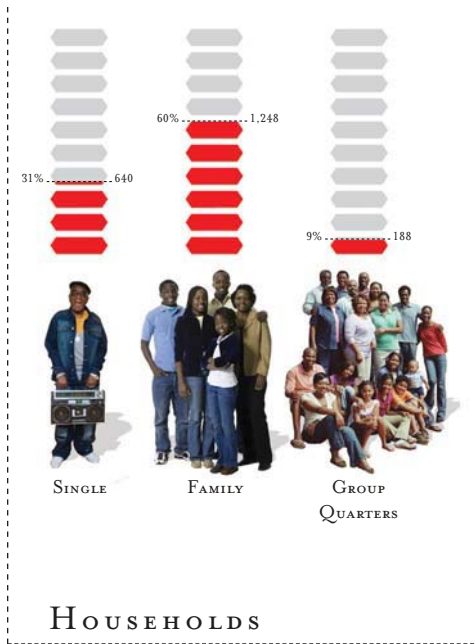
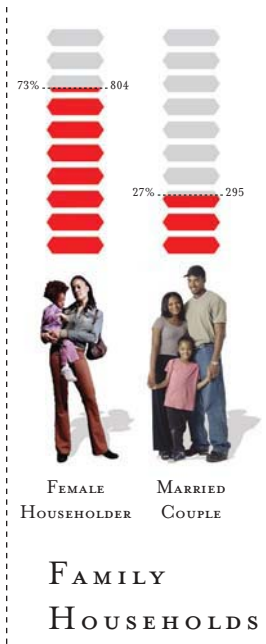
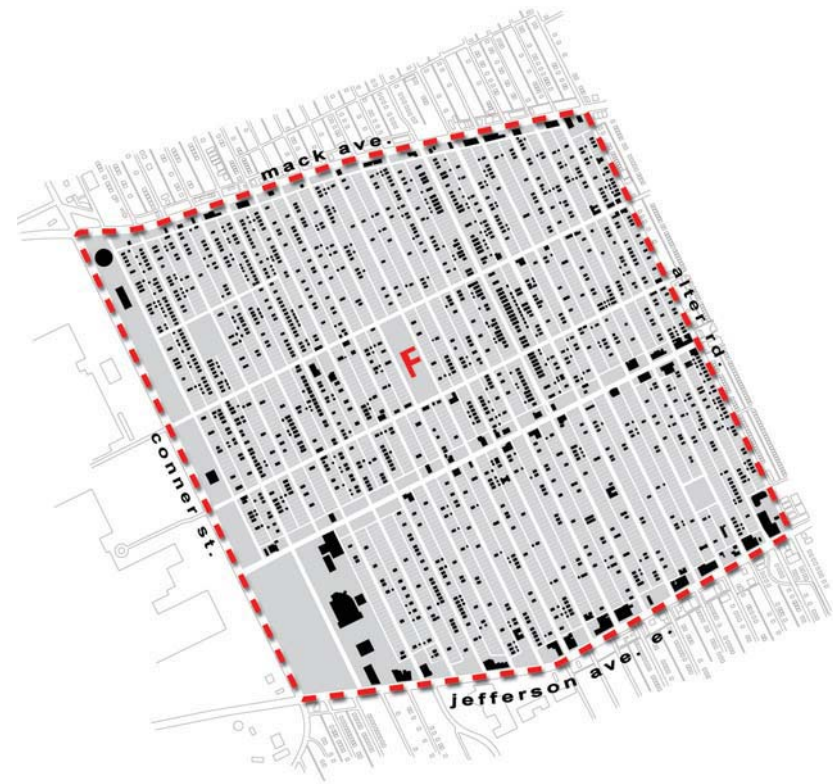




Figure 6.26. (Above) Combined demographics of study area, part two.



HOUSING VALUES



## 2.0 IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY ANCHOR

Since schools are the only public institutions capable of breaking unremitting social ills and the relentless cycles of poverty, neighbourhood schools must be identified as the primary anchor for village consolidation.

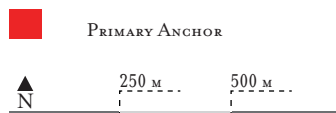
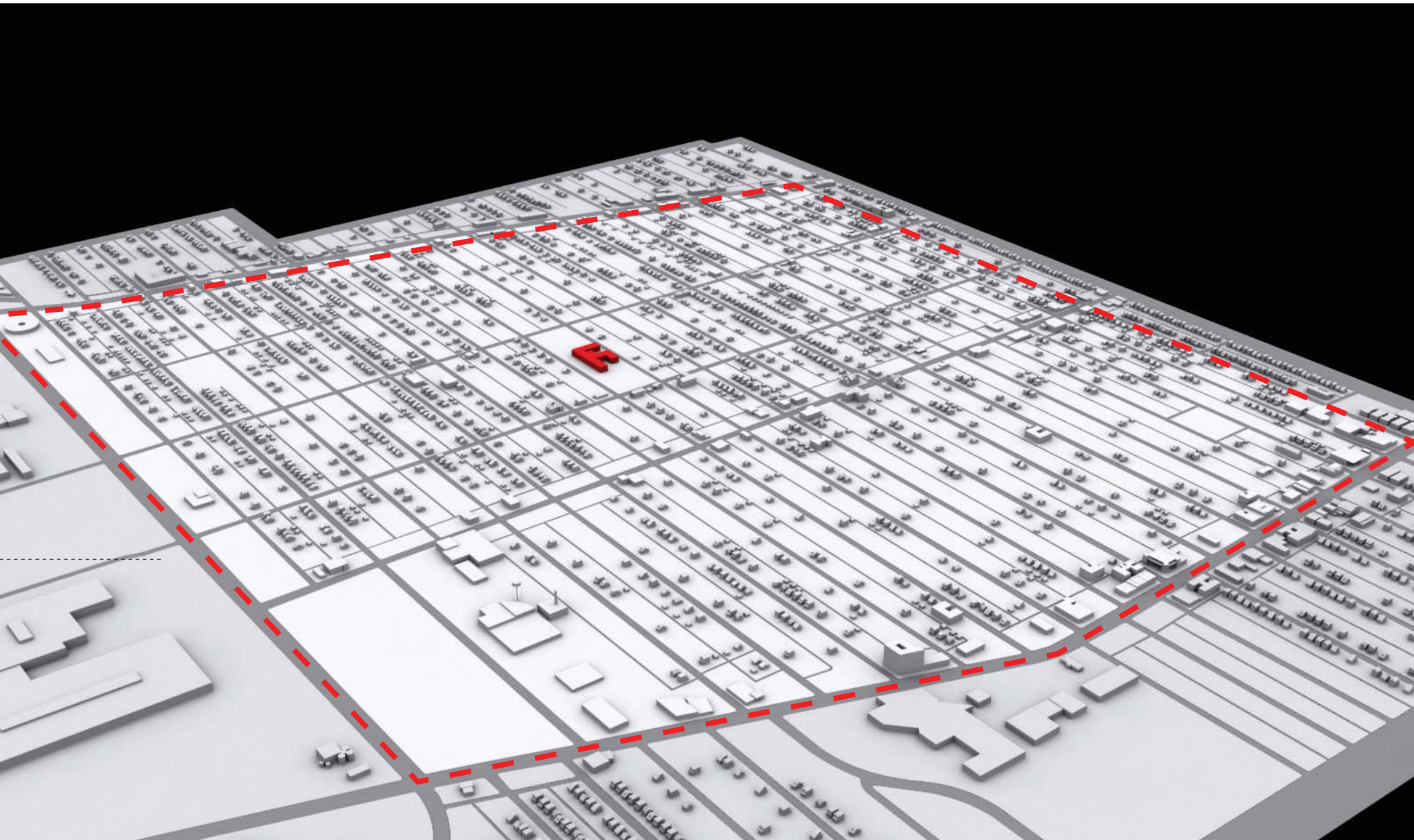


Figure 6.27. (*Above and Opposite*) The primary anchor, Carsten's Elementary School highlighted in red.



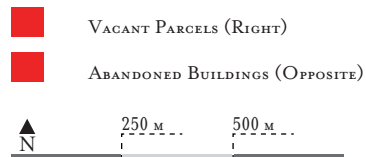
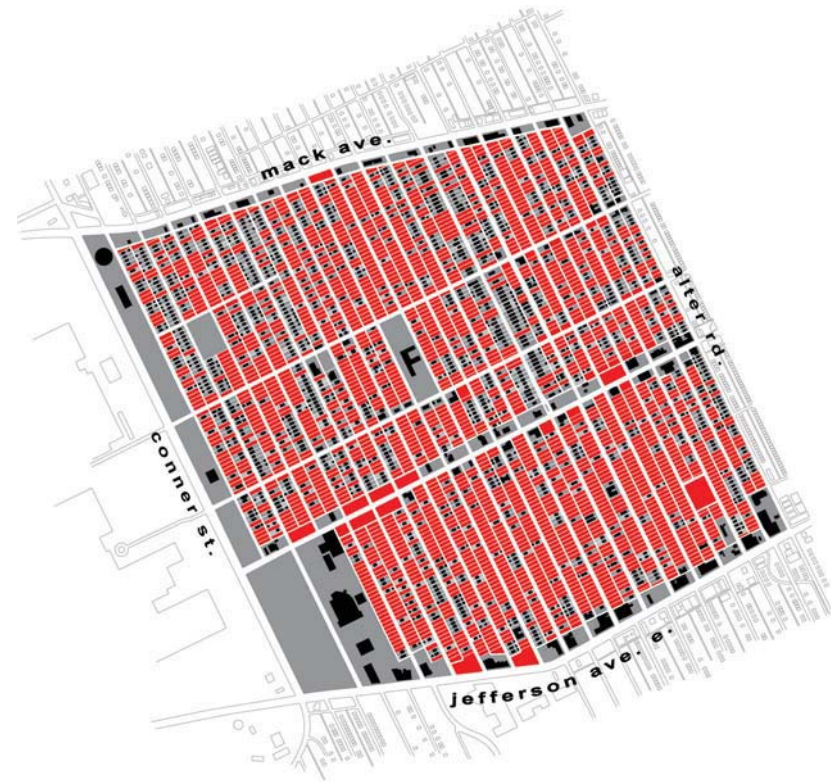


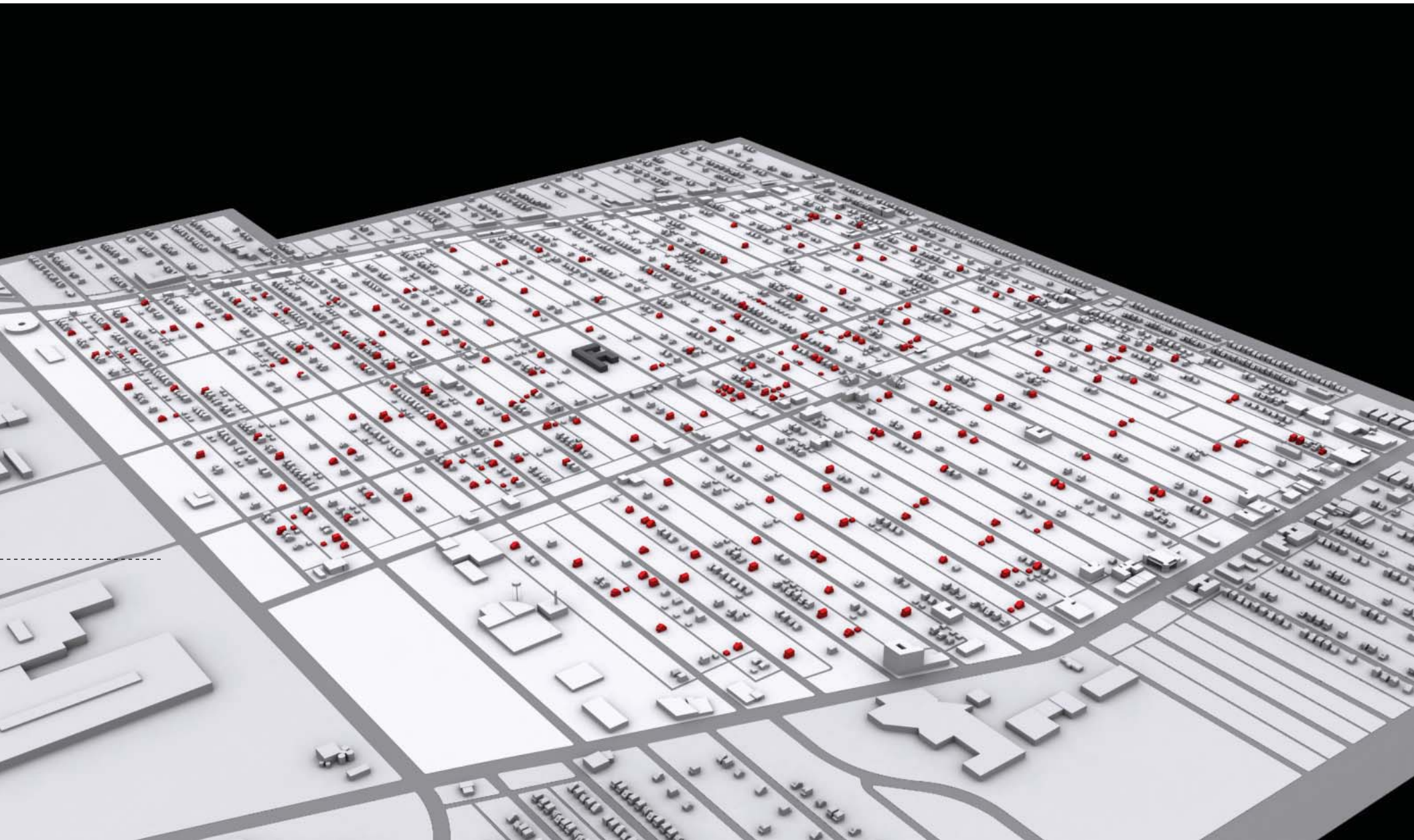
Figure 6.28. (Above) Vacant parcels highlighted in red.

Figure 6.29. (Opposite) Abandoned homes highlighted in red.

### 3.0 STUDY THE URBAN FABRIC

Prior to suburban flight in the postwar era, Detroit's dense residential fabric created the physical expression of a healthy urban fabric that defended itself from social ills. Today however, the rapid decay and erratic deterioration of most urban neighbourhoods has transformed the residential fabric of Detroit into a snaggle-toothed landscape of urban prairie that does little if nothing to thwart the social deterrents that inflict the city.





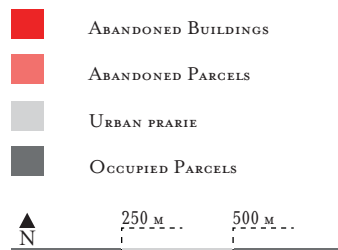
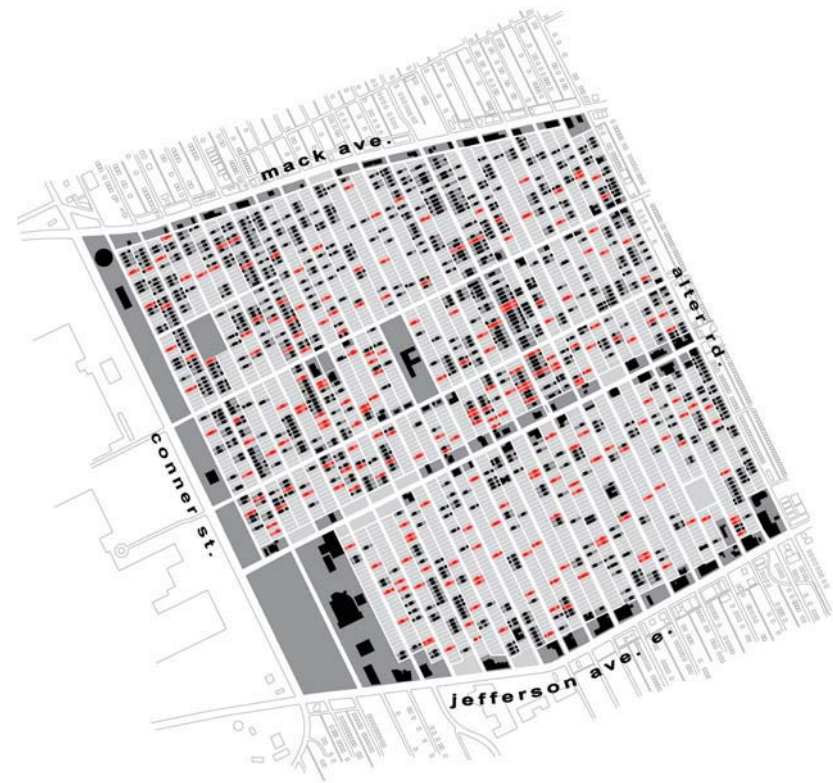


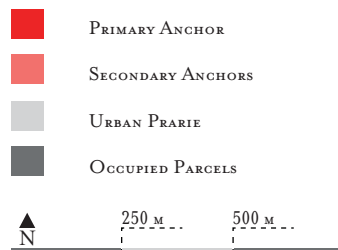
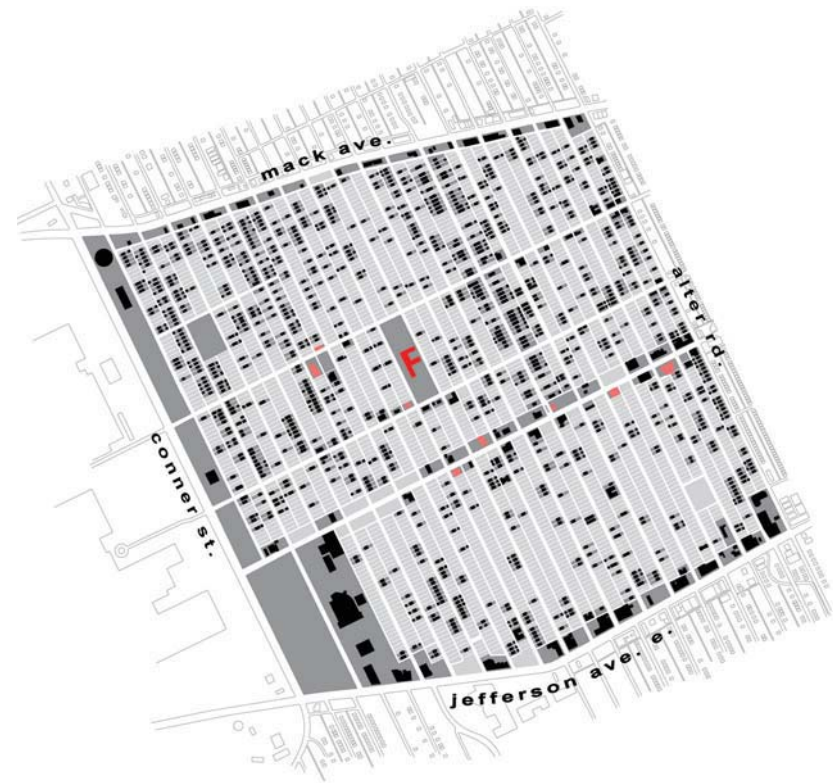
Figure 6.30. (Above) Abandoned homes and vacant parcels.

Figure 6.31. (Opposite) Constructive deconstruction.

#### 4.0 DECONSTRUCT ABANDONED BUILDINGS

As previously discussed, there is a vast amount of abandoned homes overwhelming the city. Since the city cannot afford to demolish these buildings, an alternative solution would be for the citizens to take action and use these structures to their advantage. Using the work of Samuel Mockbee and the Rural Studio as an inspiration, residents — or perhaps local high school students — could deconstruct the abandoned buildings and use salvaged materials to renovate other homes or construct alternative housing.



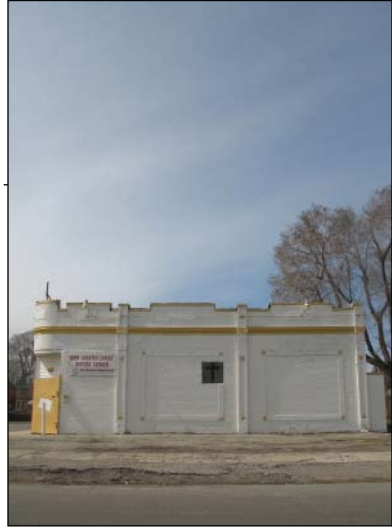


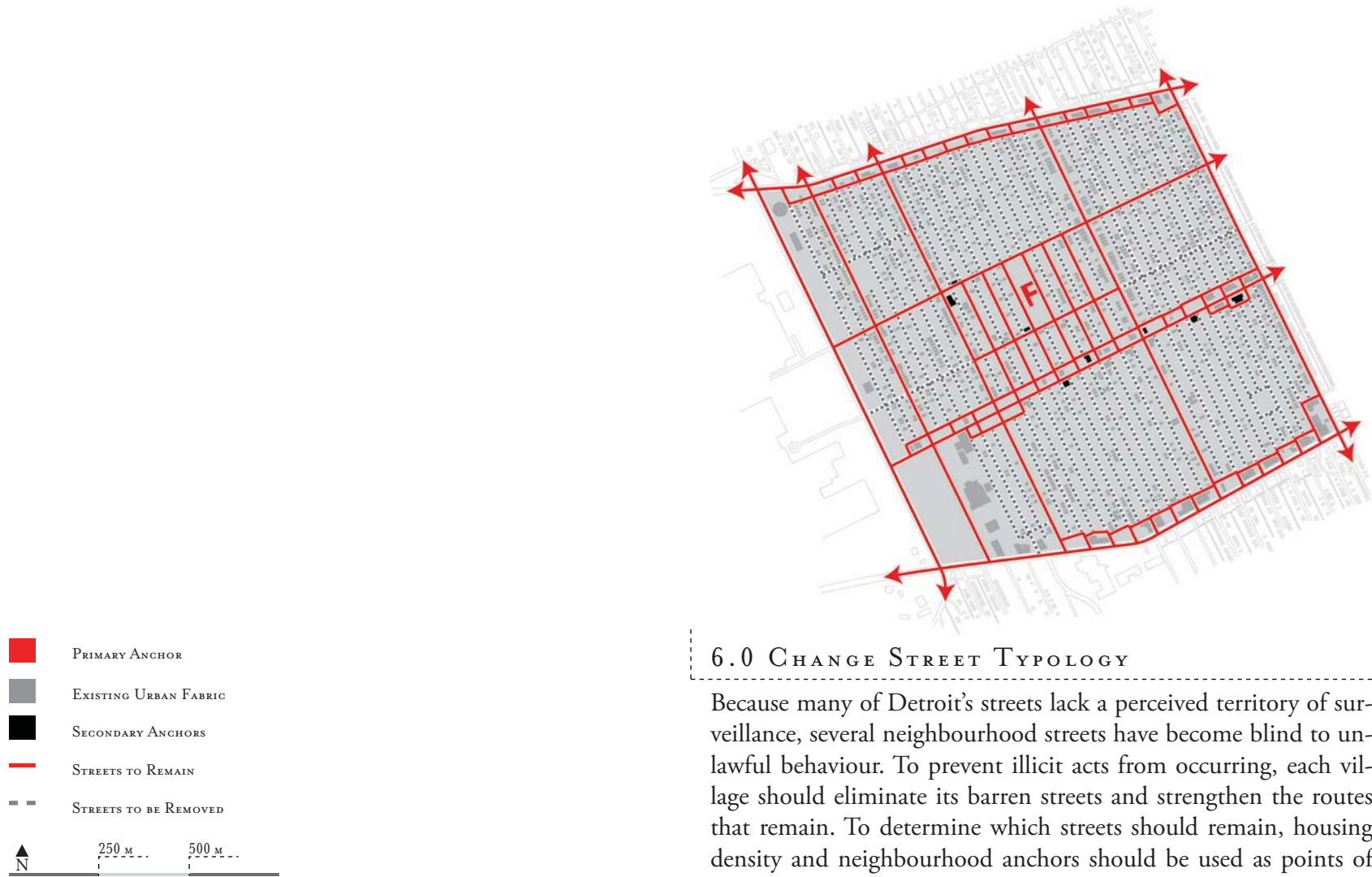
### 5.0 IDENTIFY SECONDARY ANCHORS

In addition to neighbourhood public schools, religious institutions should become secondary anchors for community development. These religious institutions provide the moral solidarity that is needed to help grassroots movements succeed.

Figure 6.32. (Above) Secondary anchors.

Figure 6.33. (Opposite) Existing secondary anchors.





## 6.0 CHANGE STREET TYPOLOGY

Because many of Detroit's streets lack a perceived territory of surveillance, several neighbourhood streets have become blind to unlawful behaviour. To prevent illicit acts from occurring, each village should eliminate its barren streets and strengthen the routes that remain. To determine which streets should remain, housing density and neighbourhood anchors should be used as points of departure.

Figure 6.34. (Above) New street typology.

Figure 6.35. (Opposite) Removing the streets.



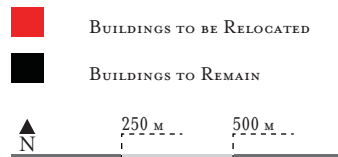
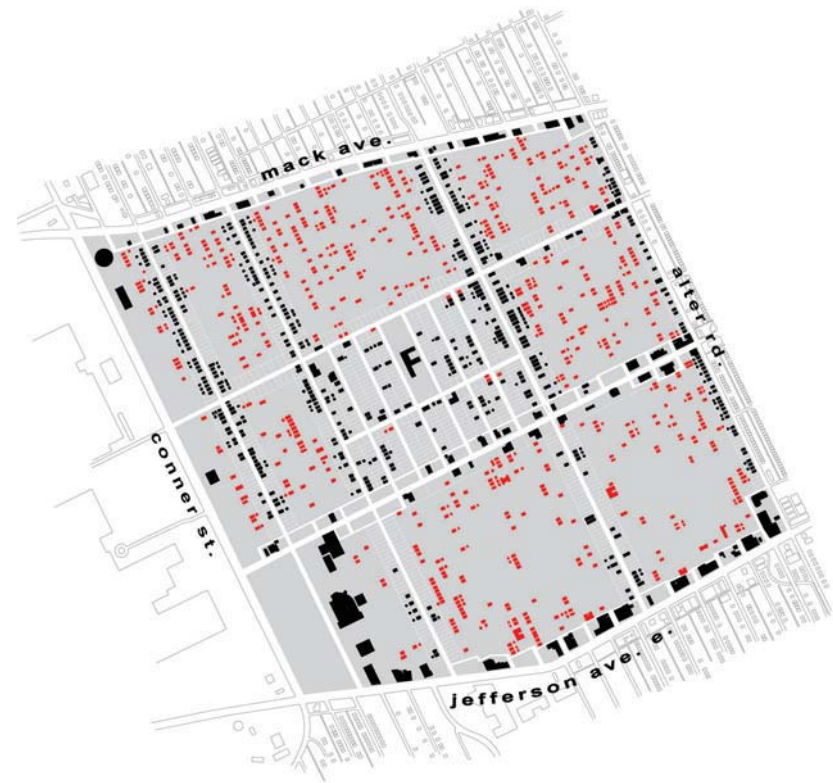


Figure 6.36. (Above) Buildings to be relocated.

Figure 6.37. (Opposite) Eyes on the street.

## 7.0 INTENSIFY THE CORE

Once a new street typology has been laid out, many residents will have to be relocated from disenfranchised portions of the village. It is important that these residents be repositioned onto the vacant parcels that surround the local public school. By infiltrating these lands, residents will become the natural proprietors of the street; they will provide a perceived zone of surveillance that ensures the safety of both residents and strangers. Thus, to ensure the health and vitality of the village, all buildings must be oriented toward the street.





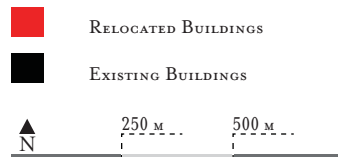
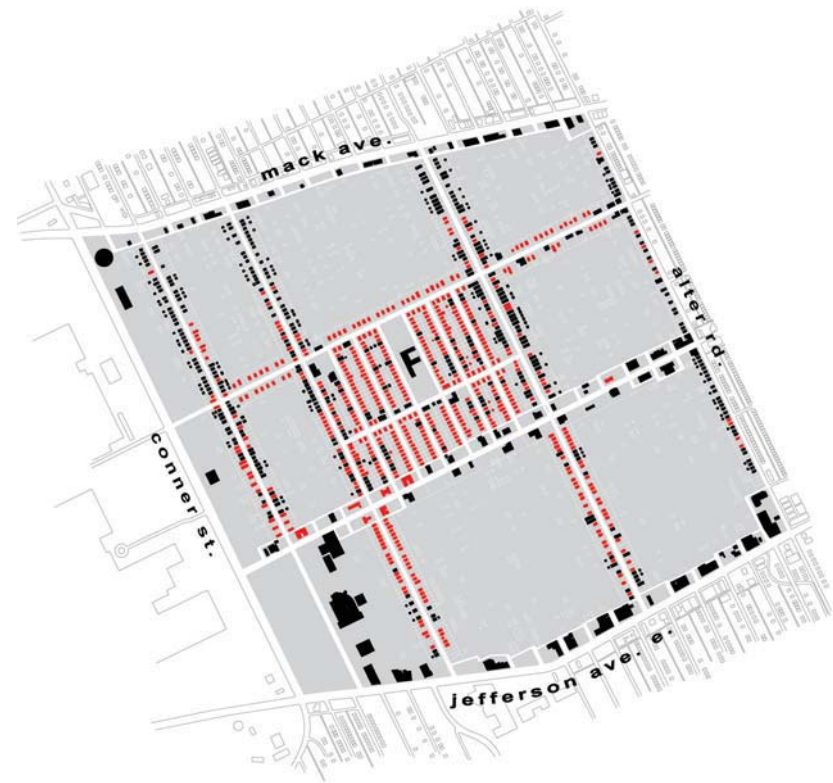


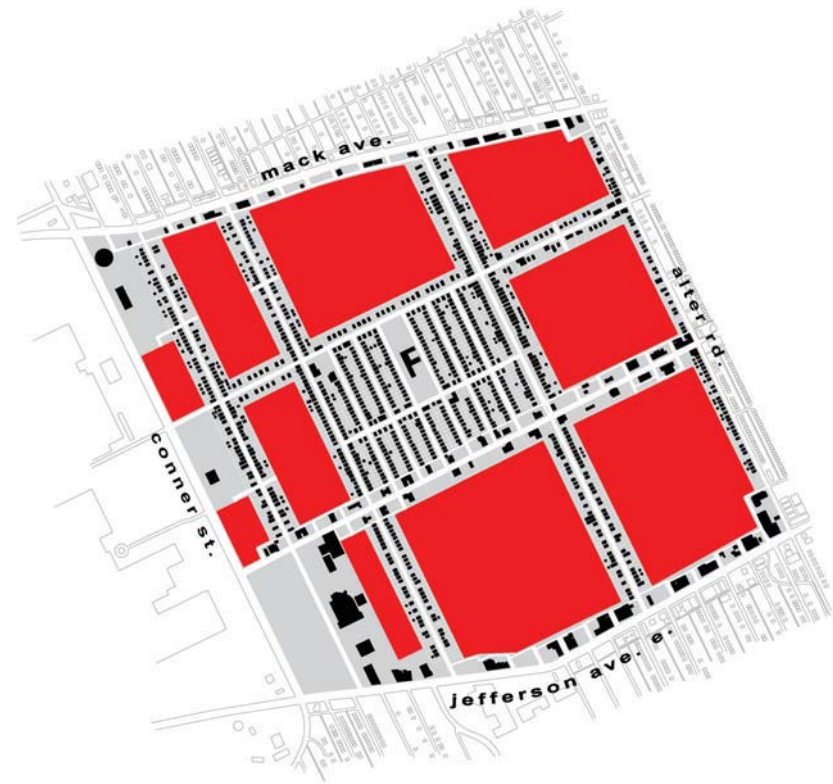
Figure 6.38. (Above) Relocated buildings.

Figure 6.39. (Opposite) Communal garden.

## 8.0 PROMOTE COMMUNICATION

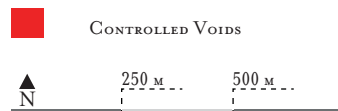
Newly consolidated villages must promote communication. Too many inner-city residents live in fear and isolation within their own homes. Although many Detroit homes have large front stoops where informal communication could occur, little if any are prevalent. If Detroiters are to make their streets safe they need to distinguish their neighbours from outside strangers. To do this they need to create a web of communication. Consequently, not all vacant parcels should be infilled with residents. Some should be reserved and programmed to promote impromptu conversations.





PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

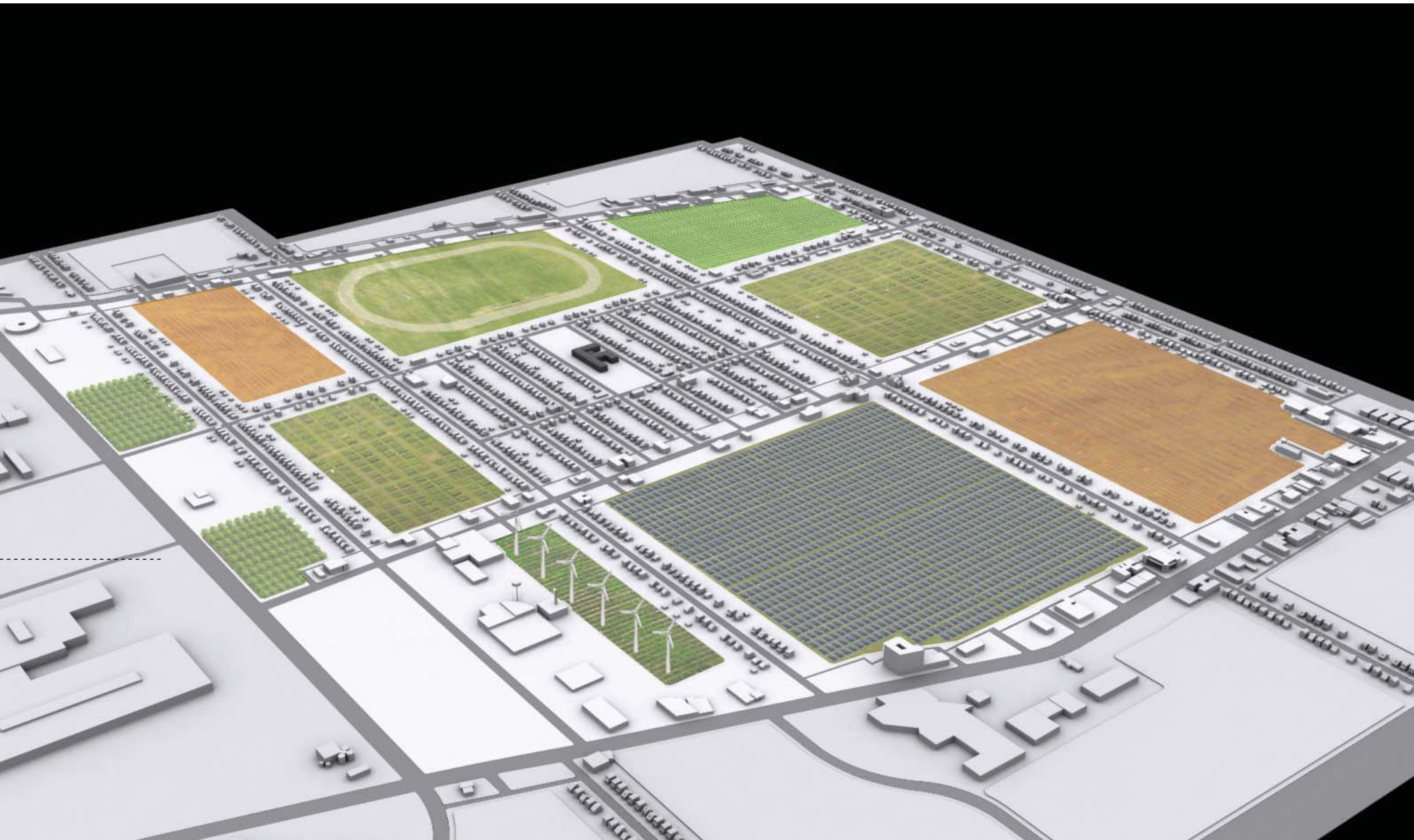
- AGRICULTURAL FIELDS
- RECREATION FIELDS
- FARM PASTURES
- SOLAR FARMS
- WIND FARMS
- TREE FARMS
- ORCHARDS

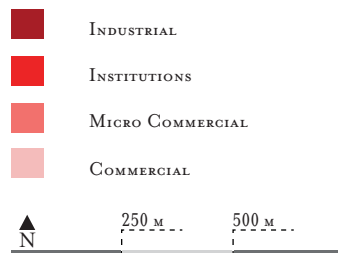
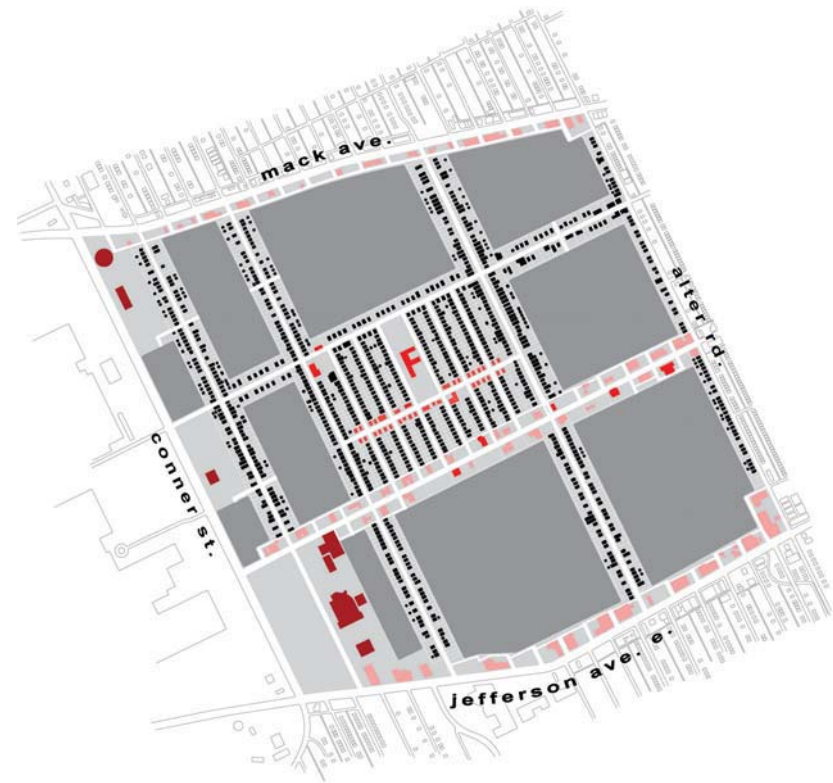


9.0 PROGRAM THE VOIDS

By consolidating and intensifying the built environment controlled voids will be opened up within and surrounding each village. These voids should be programmed as continuously productive urban landscapes; they should be constantly evolving to meet the needs of each village. The list of programming options that these voids offer is endless — they could become fields of food for local consumption, acres of land for new industries, cultural gathering spots for social play, experimenting grounds for greening the city, or several other things that would help strengthen each community.

Figure 6.40. (Above and Opposite) Controlled voids.

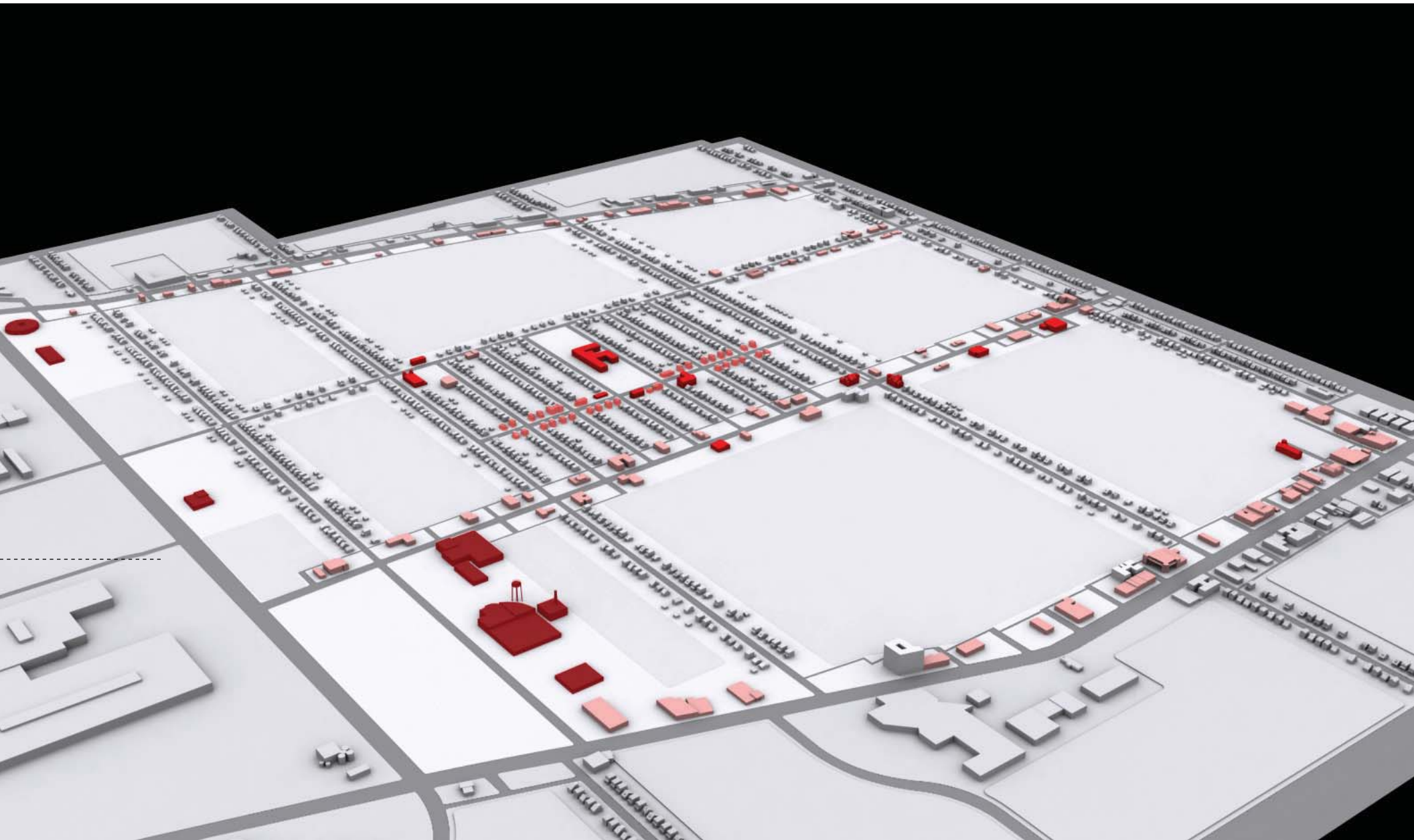


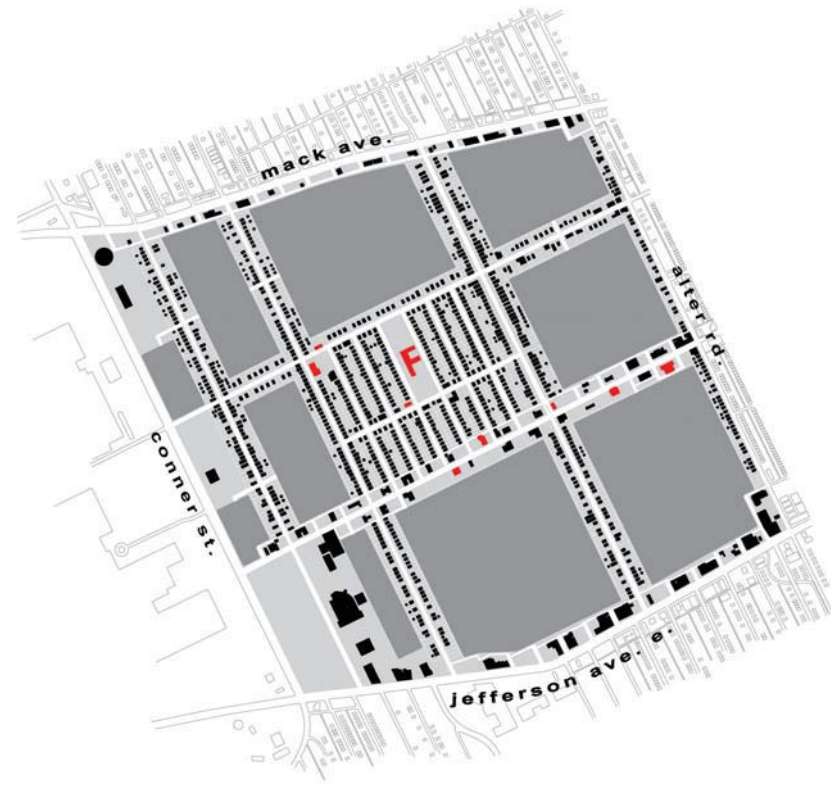


10.0 PROGRAM THE CORE

Each village should create a local economy that remains autonomous of the transitional webs of globalization. To do this, city residents and grassroots organizations must creatively develop small businesses that produce food, goods and services for their local market. Not only would this structure ensure that finances circle locally rather than flee globally, it would also generate a self-sustaining economy that is less susceptible to the travails of the global market. Ideally the village should be zoned so that institutions, businesses and industries all contribute to the development and sustainability of each community.

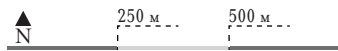
Figure 6.41. (Above and Opposite) Programmed core.





PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

- CARSTEN'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTER
- NEIGHBOURHOOD COALITION OFFICES
- NEIGHBOURHOOD FITNESS FACILITY
- NEIGHBOURHOOD HEALTH CLINIC
- WORKPLACE OUTREACH OFFICES
- WEEKEND FARMERS' MARKET
- ST. JOHN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE
- DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTEITH BRANCH
- NEW GREATER CHRIST BAPTIST CHURCH
- NEW ST. LAZARUS BAPTIST CHURCH
- CARSTEN'S INDEPENDENT BANK
- FREEDOM BAPTIST CHURCH
- DETROIT POLICE OUTPOST
- MISSION BAPTIST CHURCH



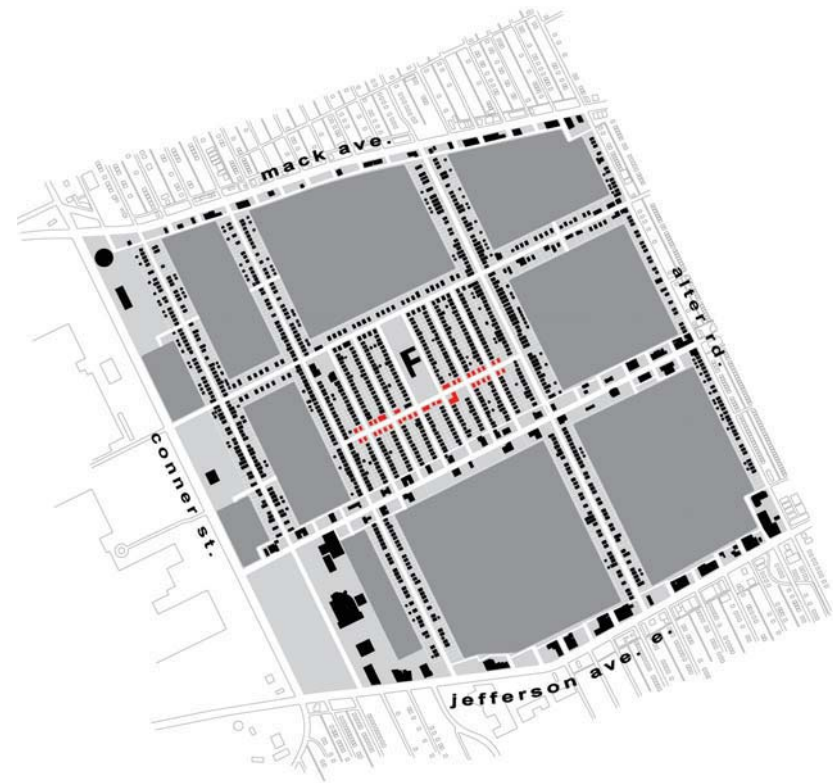
INSTITUTIONS

Institutions are the key to establishing a strong social fabric and restoring community. By providing the social settings for community organizations, celebrations and events, residents will be able to meet and exchange views and common goals for their community.

Figure 6.42. (Above and Opposite) Institutional anchors.

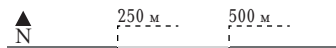






PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

- THE COLORFUL PALETTE ART AND CRAFT SUPPLY STORE
- BETTY-DEE'S NURSERY AND DAY CARE
- GRANDY'S HEALTH FOOD STORE
- SIZTA TO SIZTA BEAUTY SALON
- BIG JOHN'S CHICKEN SHACK
- CARSTEN'S RESELL STORE
- E-STREET INTERNET CAFE
- YVONNE'S CORNER STORE
- MR. DIGGS LAUNDROMAT
- BEN'S BARBER SHOP
- AVALON BAKERY
- SANDERS CAFE



MICRO COMMERCIAL

Micro-commercial businesses define the pedestrian-friendly zone of the village. Centrally located, they serve as establishments where informal contact is made and impromptu conversations are created. The wide range of services these mom-and-pop stores offer meet the daily needs of village residents and also provide an increased zone of surveillance to adjacent schools.

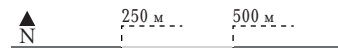
Figure 6.43. (Above) Micro commercial zones.





PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

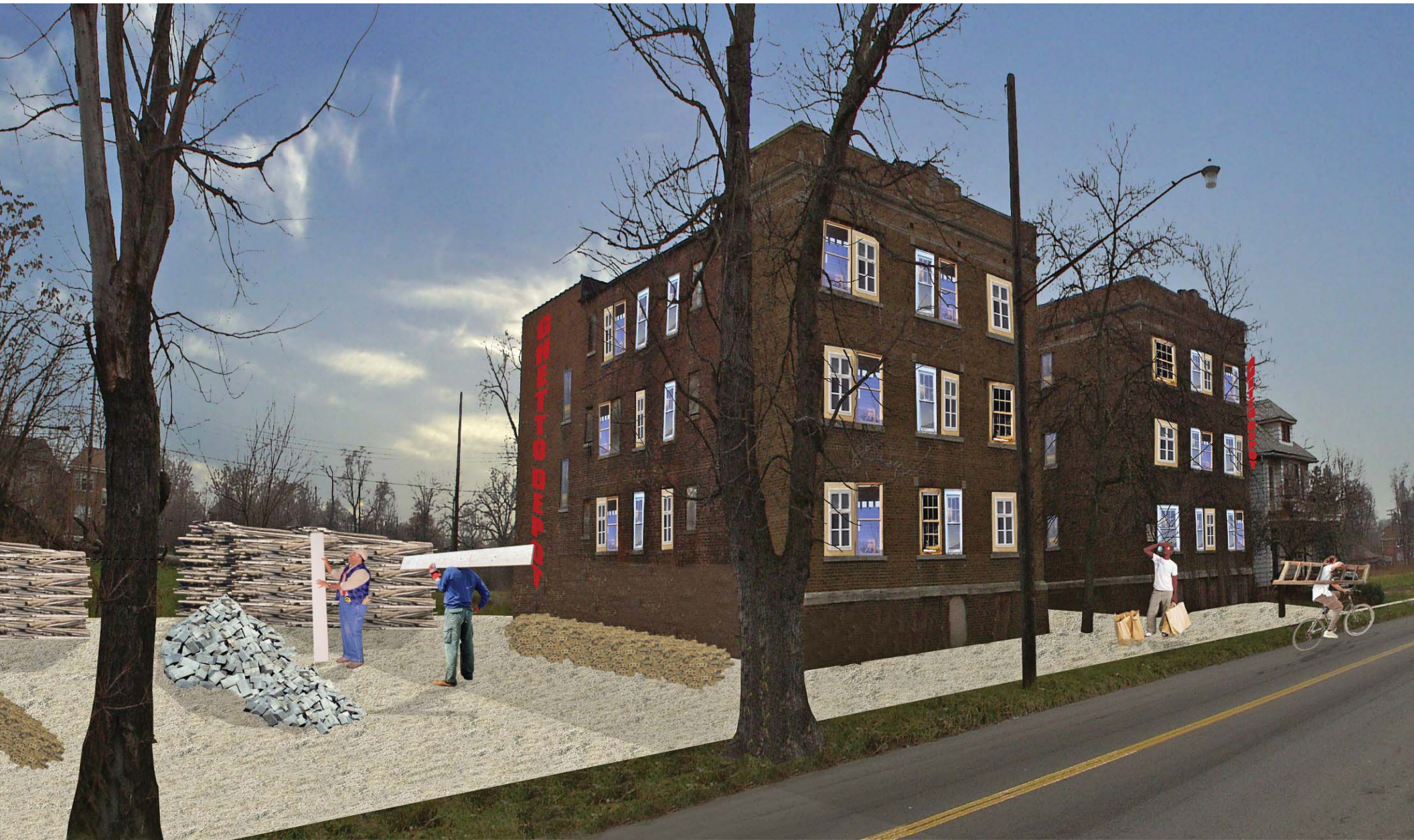
- GHETTO DEPOT: THE SALVAGE WAREHOUSE
- KERCHEVAL NURSERY AND GARDEN CENTER
- CARSTEN'S CAR-SHARE AND RENTALS
- NUISANCE NABBERS PEST CONTROL
- JUNK ETC. RUBBISH REMOVAL
- THREE ONE THREE PHARMACY
- CORNER PUMPS GAS STATION
- THE INDEPENDENT GROCER
- AQUA SHINE CAR WASH
- J & R SPORTING GOODS
- JEFFERSON TIRE SHOP
- BUBBA'S BODY SHOP
- SMITH'S AUTO CARE
- FAMILY DOLLAR

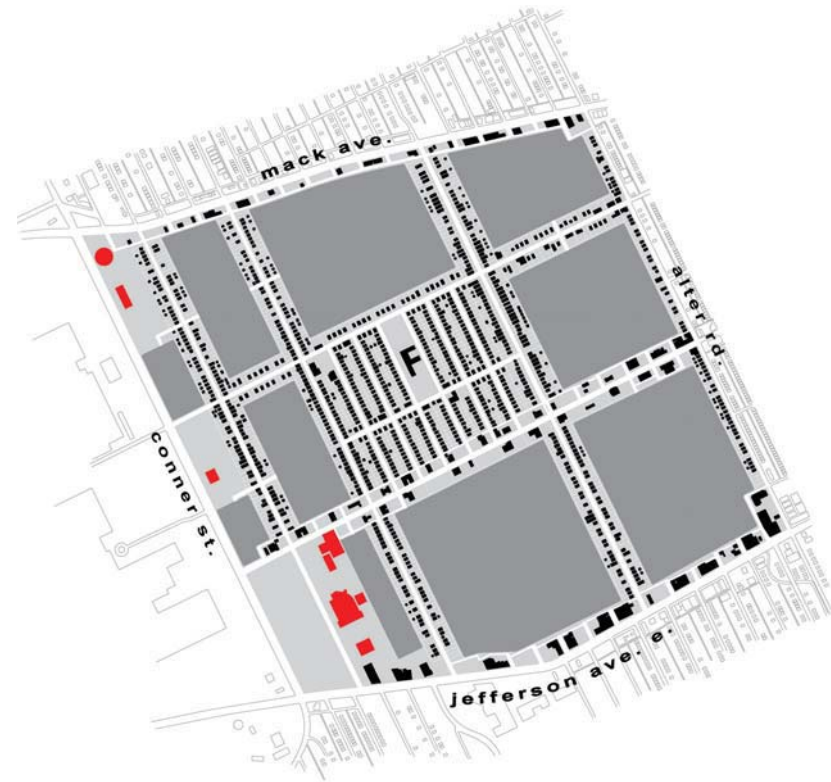


COMMERCIAL

Commercial establishments are zoned at either the termination of neighbourhoods or where two distinct edges form a heavily travelled seam. These zones differ from micro-commercial zones in that they are less pedestrian friendly, though they still serve crucial roles in the village. They bring outside income into the village and help establish social connections with neighbouring villages.

Figure 6.44. (Above and Opposite) Commercial zones.





INDUSTRIAL

Industrial zones should be situated where previous industries were located or on the perceived edge of the village where easy access to local railroad and highways can be made. Industrial lands should be opened up for prospective industries or the development of creative industries that will benefit the region. Once industries are established it is crucial that connections, such as co-operative education, be developed with local public schools to ensure that labour opportunities for the village's youth are made.

PROGRAM EXAMPLES:

- SOFSURFACES TIRE AND RUBBER RECYCLING FACILITY
- CONNER STREET GREEN HOUSES AND PEPPER FARM
- CONTINENTAL BIOFUELS AND WIND FARM
- EASTSIDE FABRICATION SPECIALISTS
- AMBS CALL CENTER

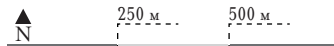


Figure 6.45. (Above and Opposite) Industrial zones.



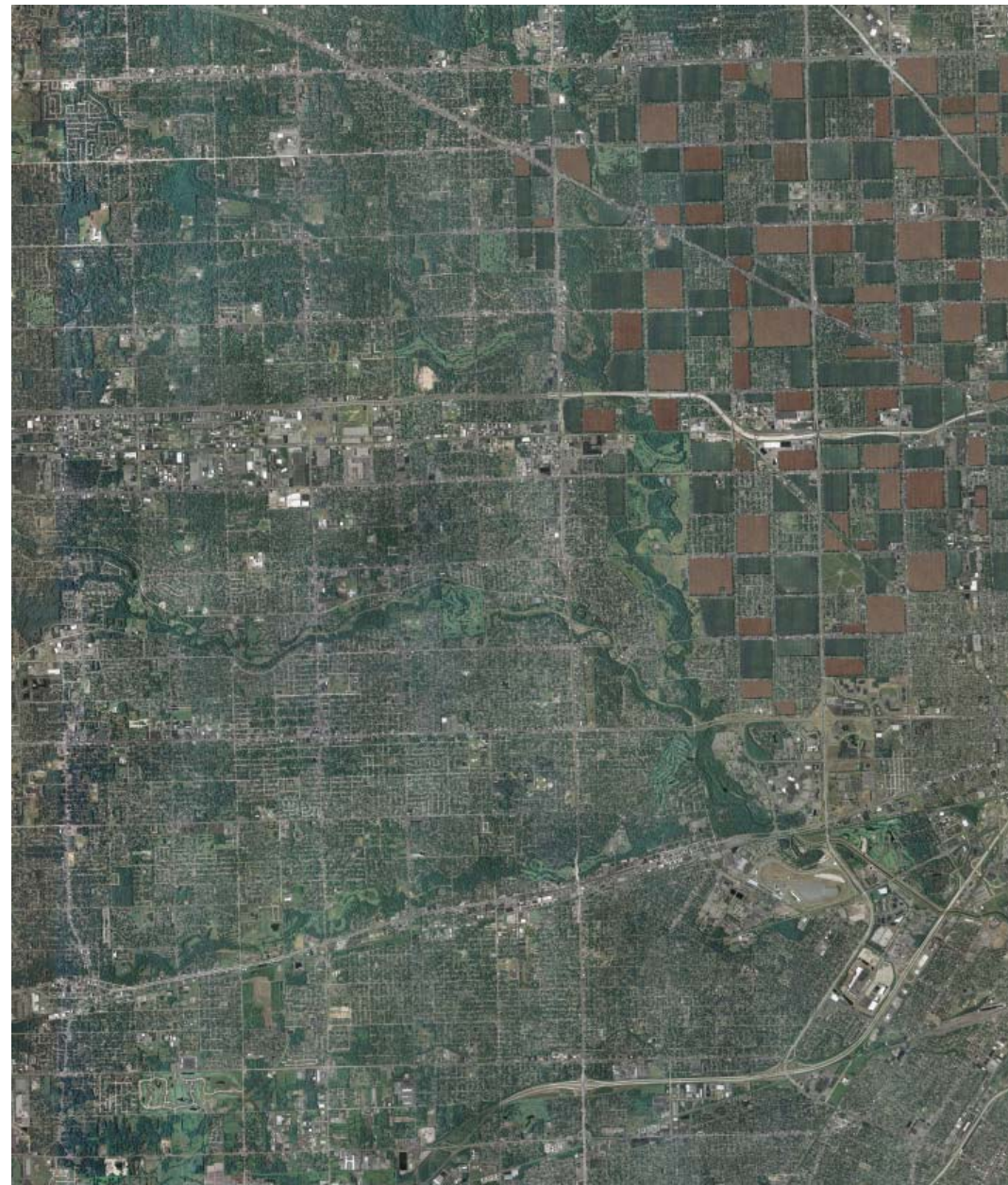
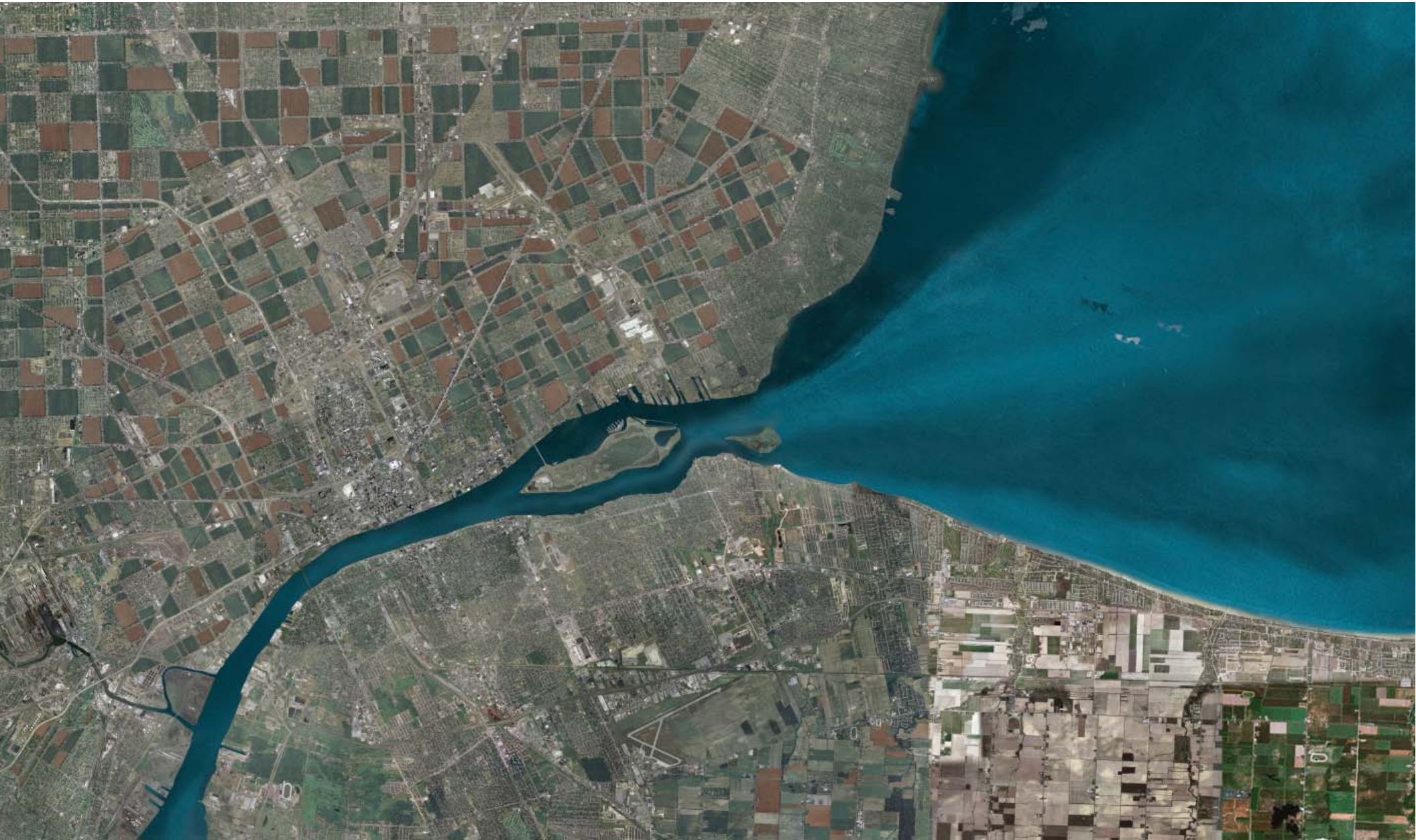


Figure 6.46. (*Opposite*) Bootstrapped Detroit.



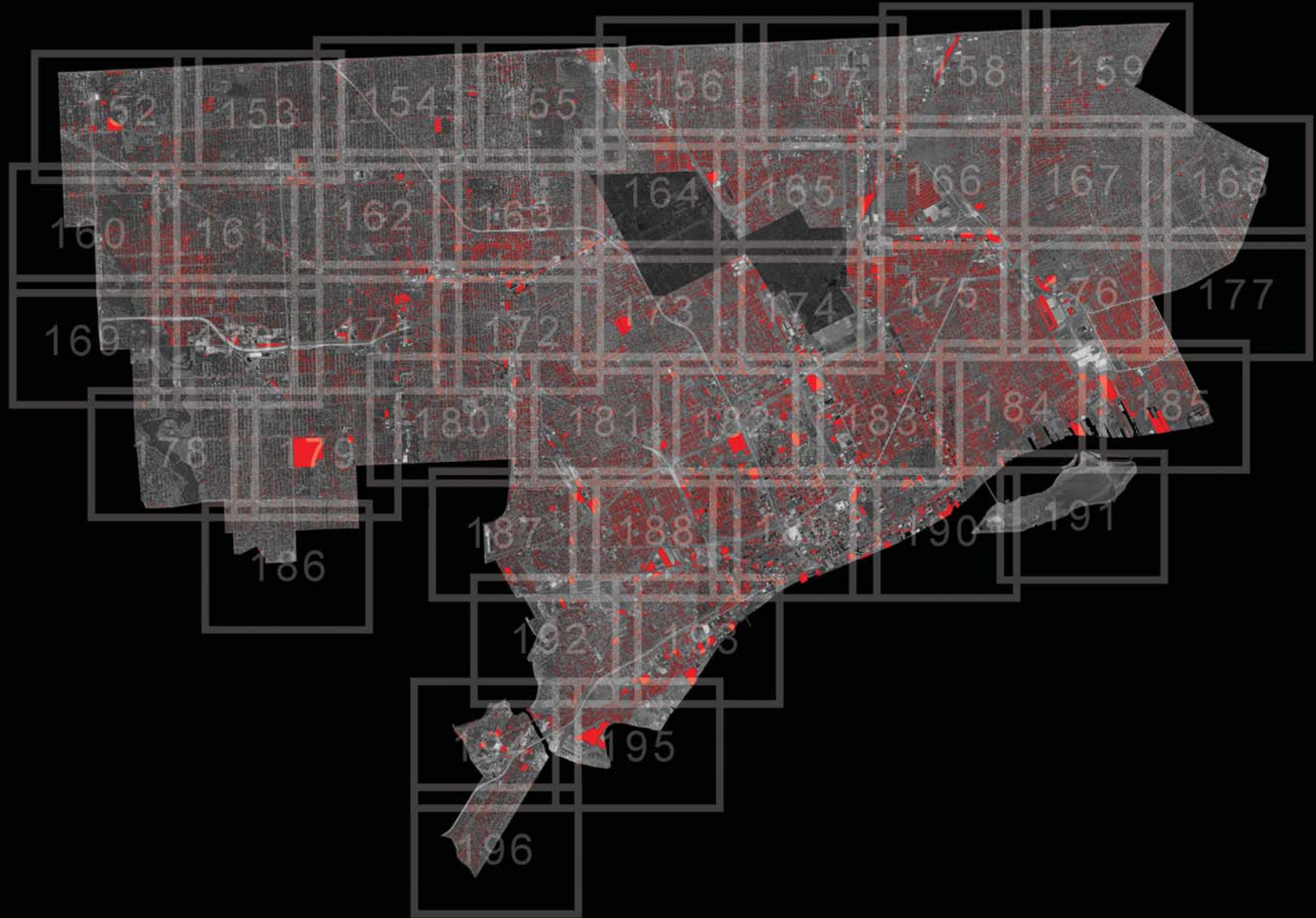


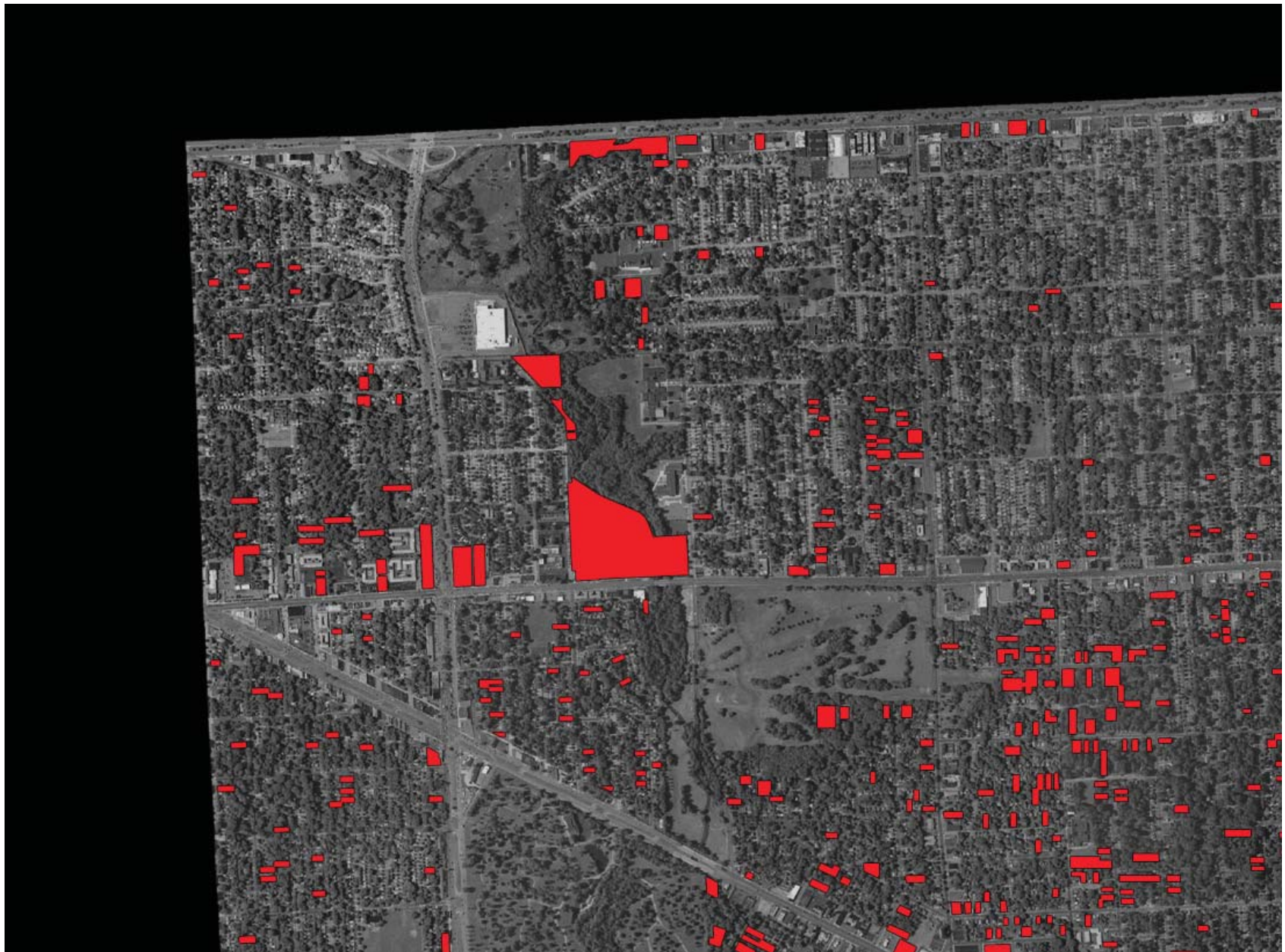
## A P P E N D I X

### VACANT PARCELS OF DETROIT

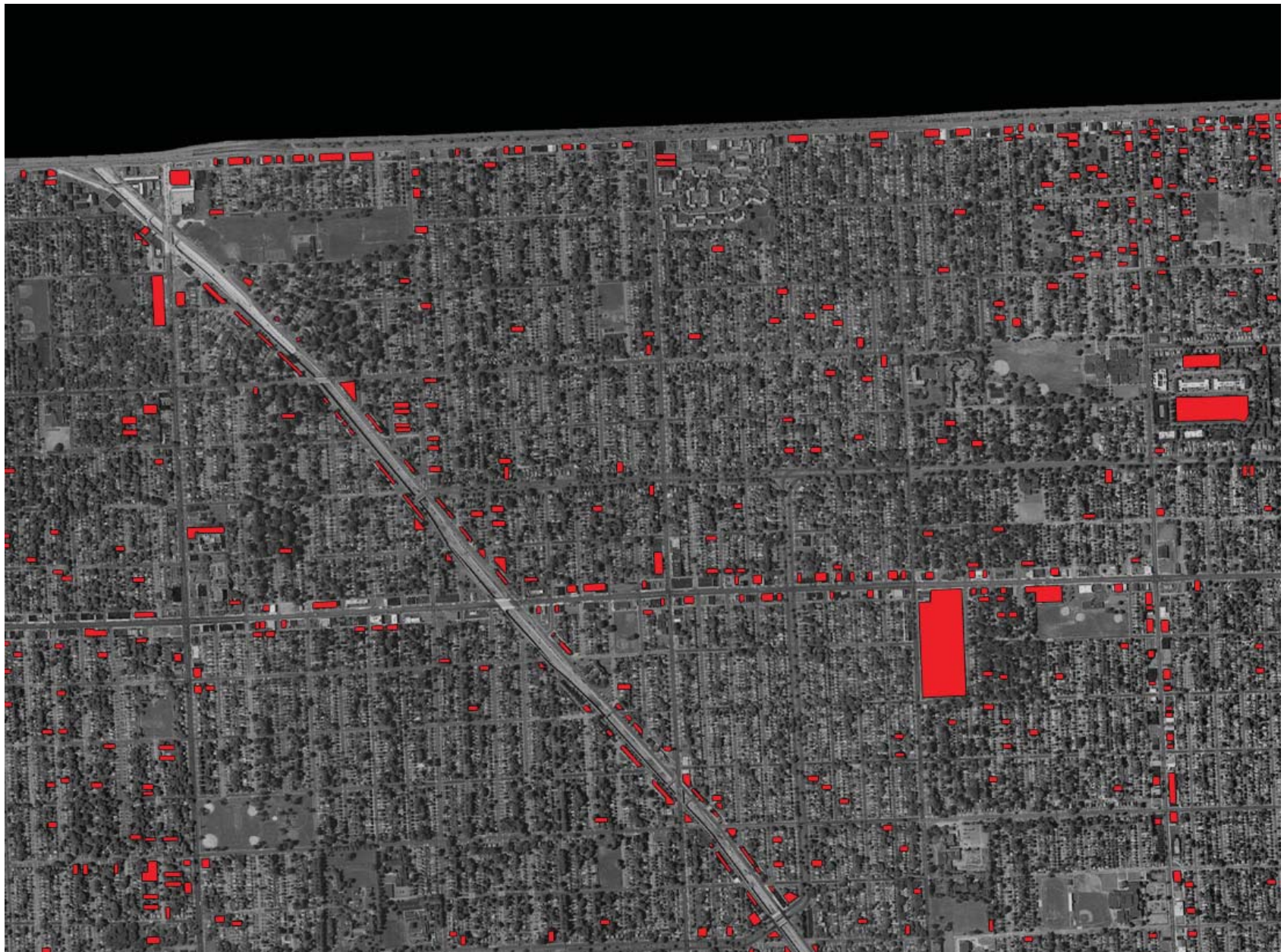
This map was constructed over a three month period to highlight the vacant parcels of land within the city of Detroit. Information used to construct this map was gathered from the city of Detroit's January 2000 Existing Land Use Map and Google Earth.

Figure 7.1. (*Opposite and following pages*) Vacant parcels of Detroit.

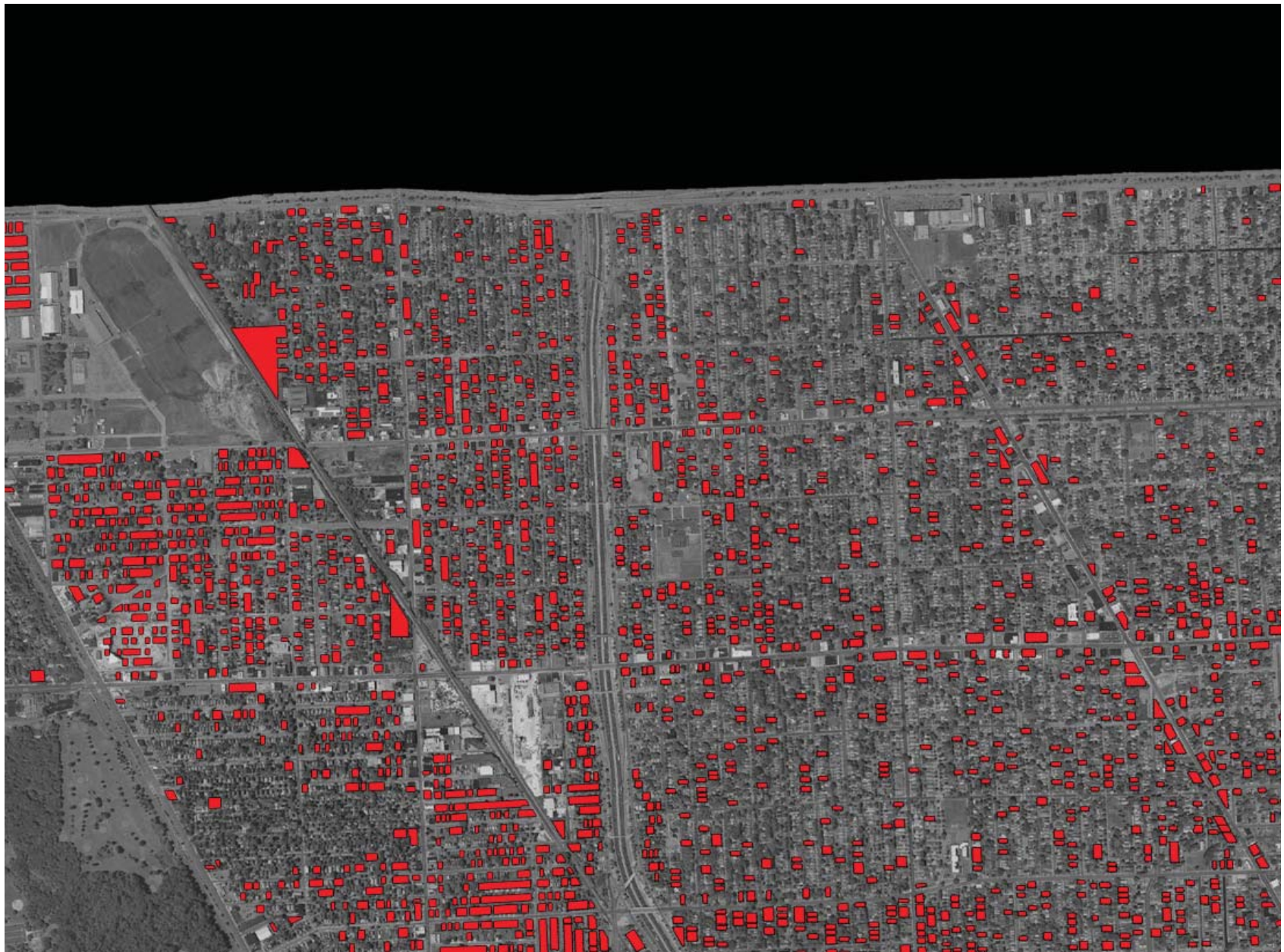






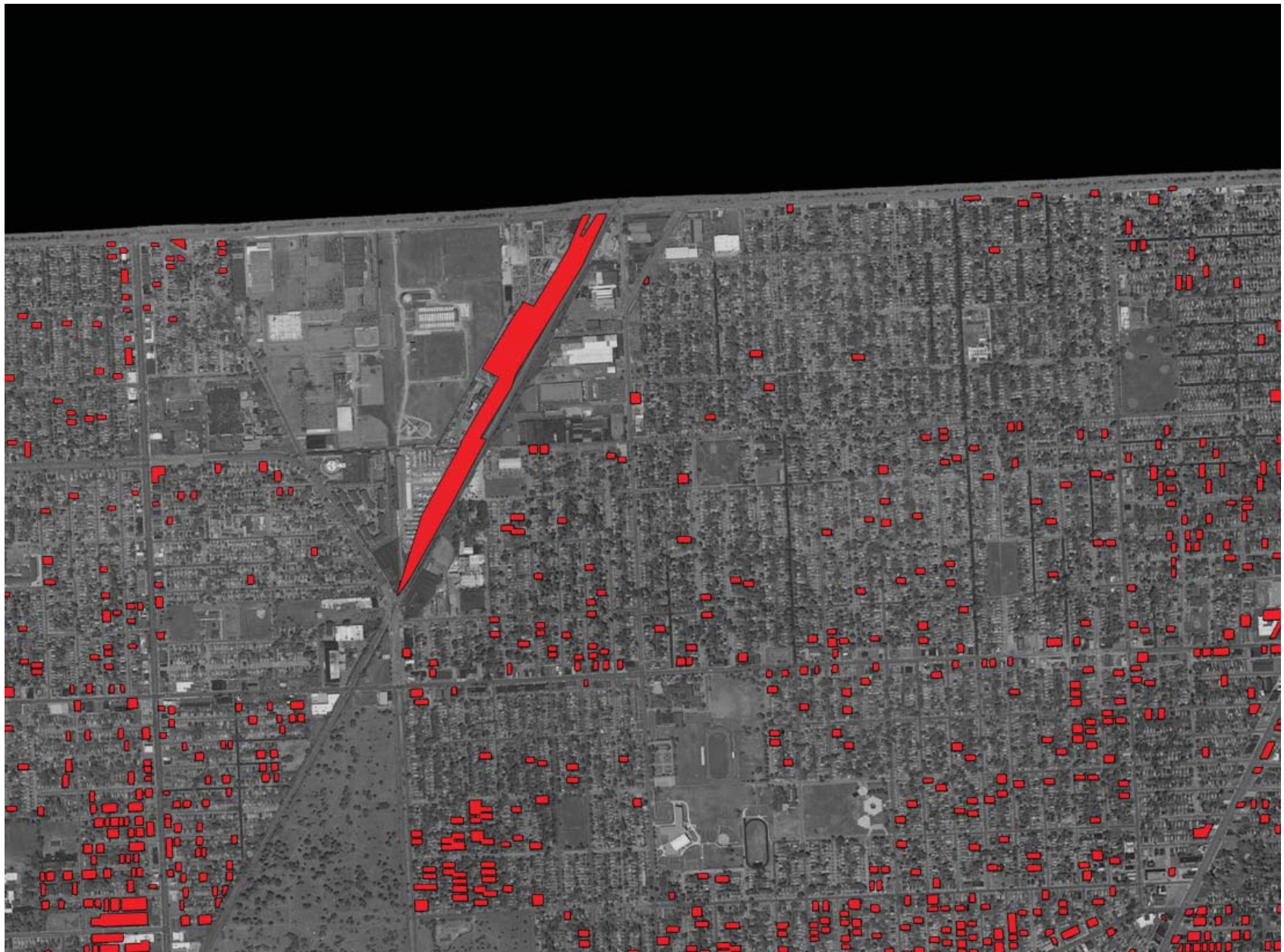


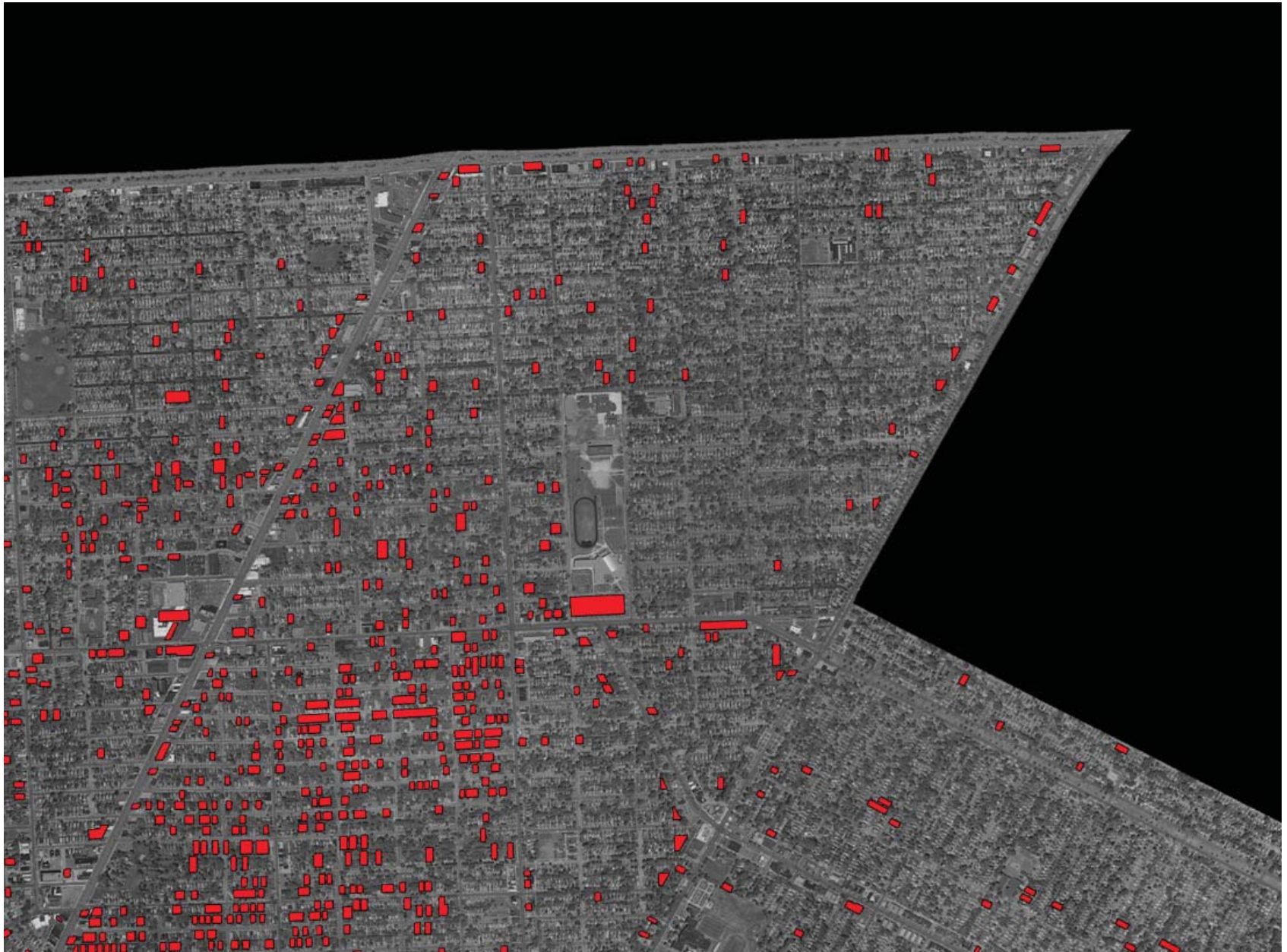


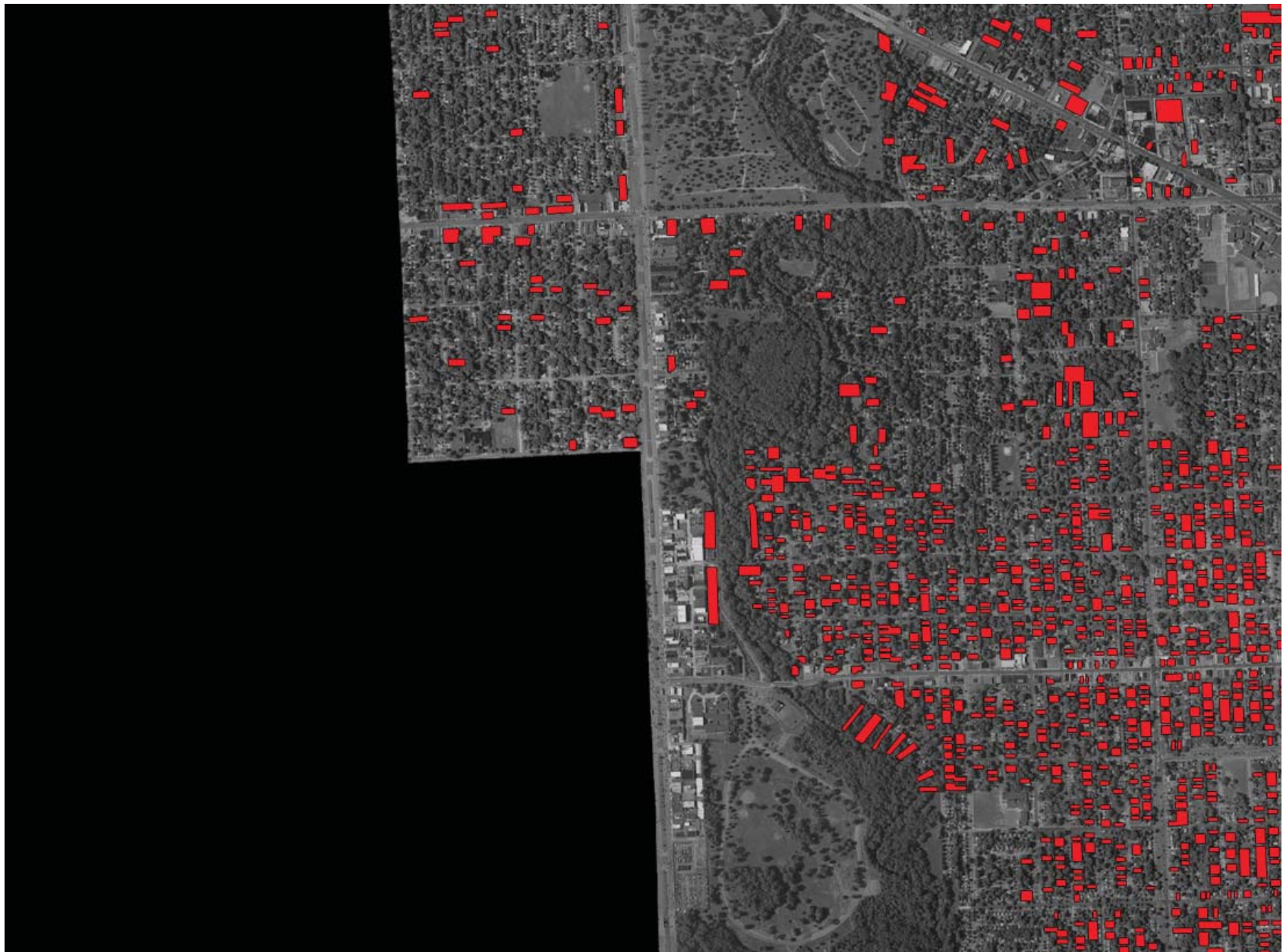


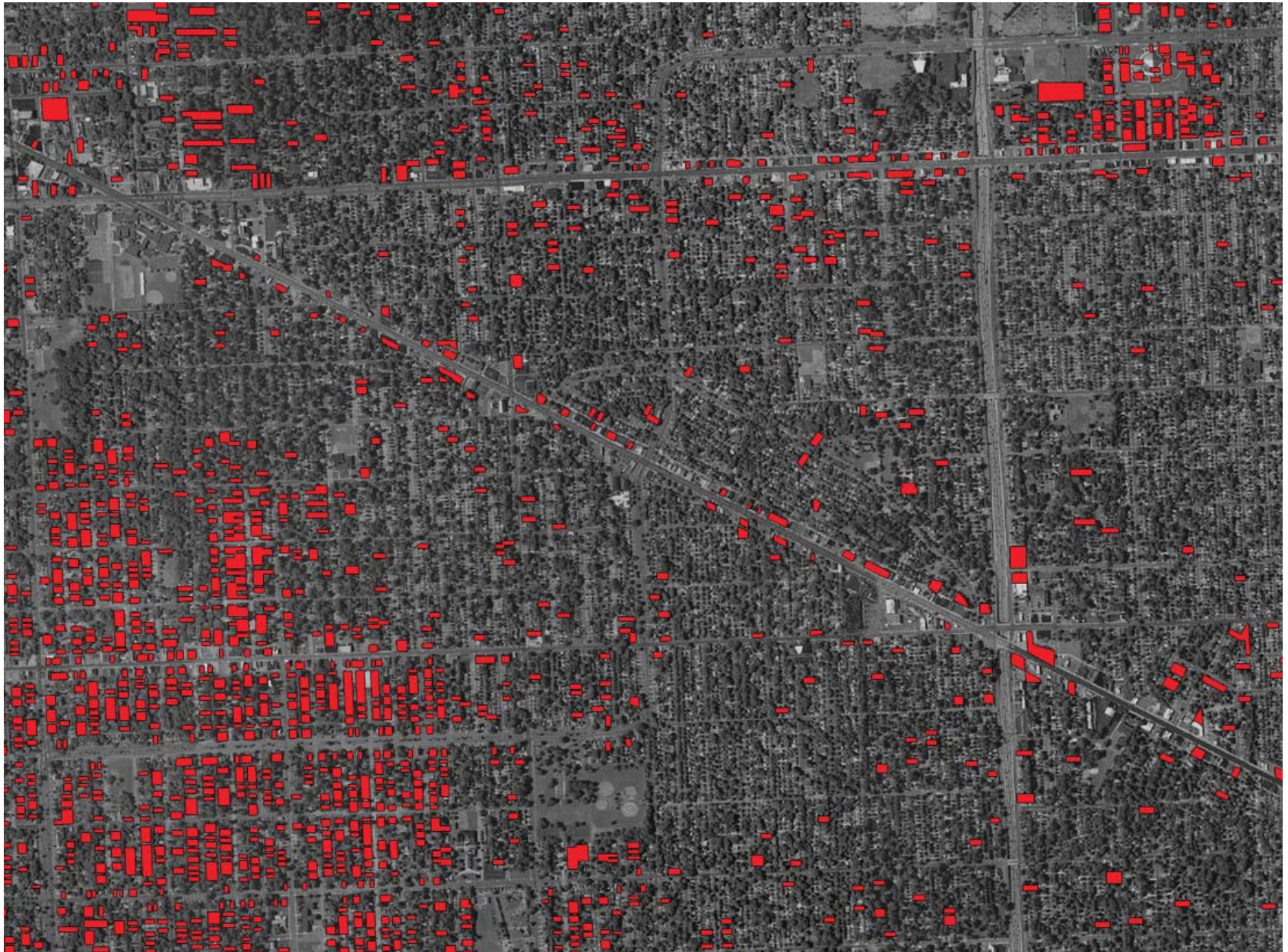


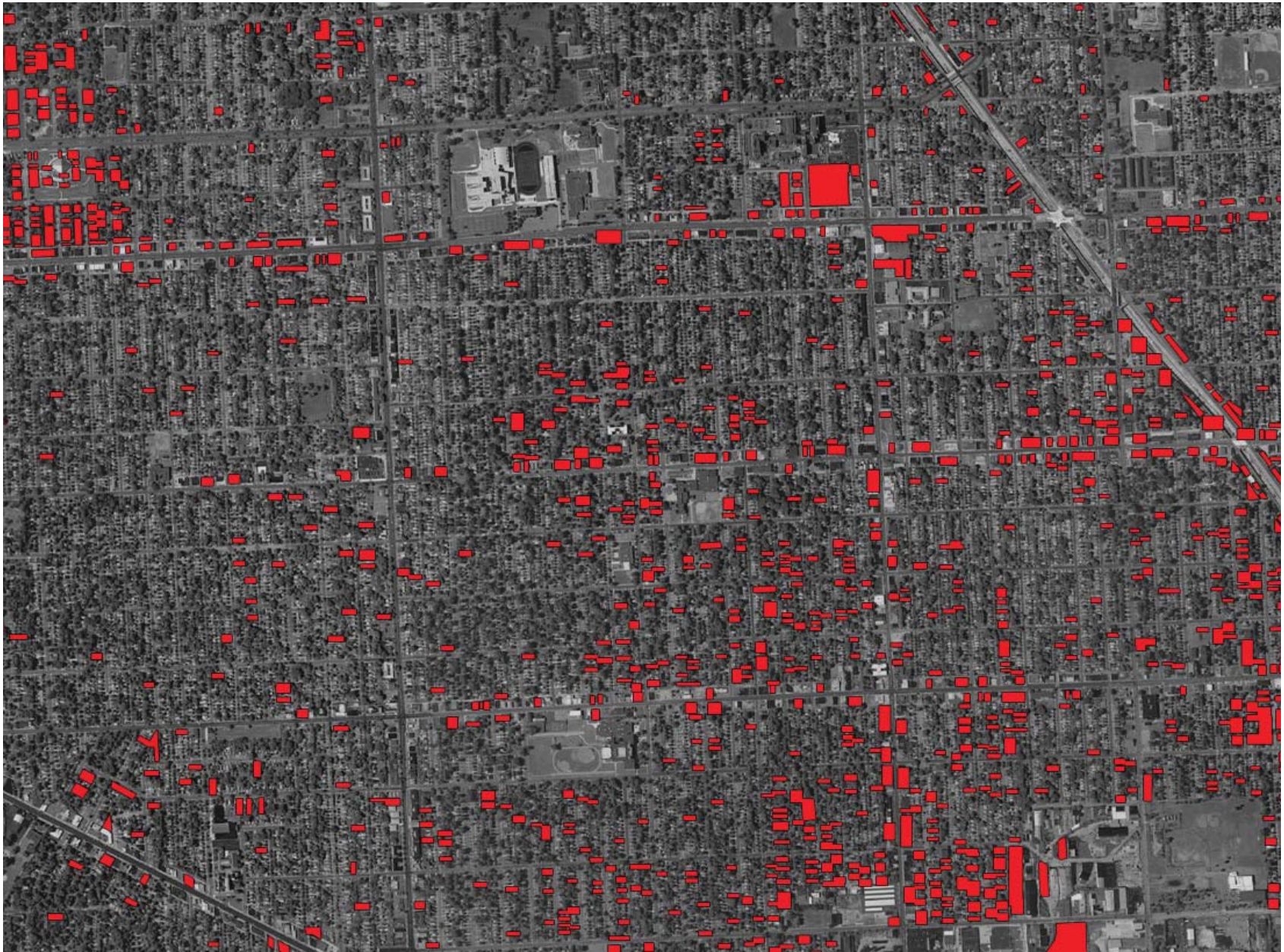














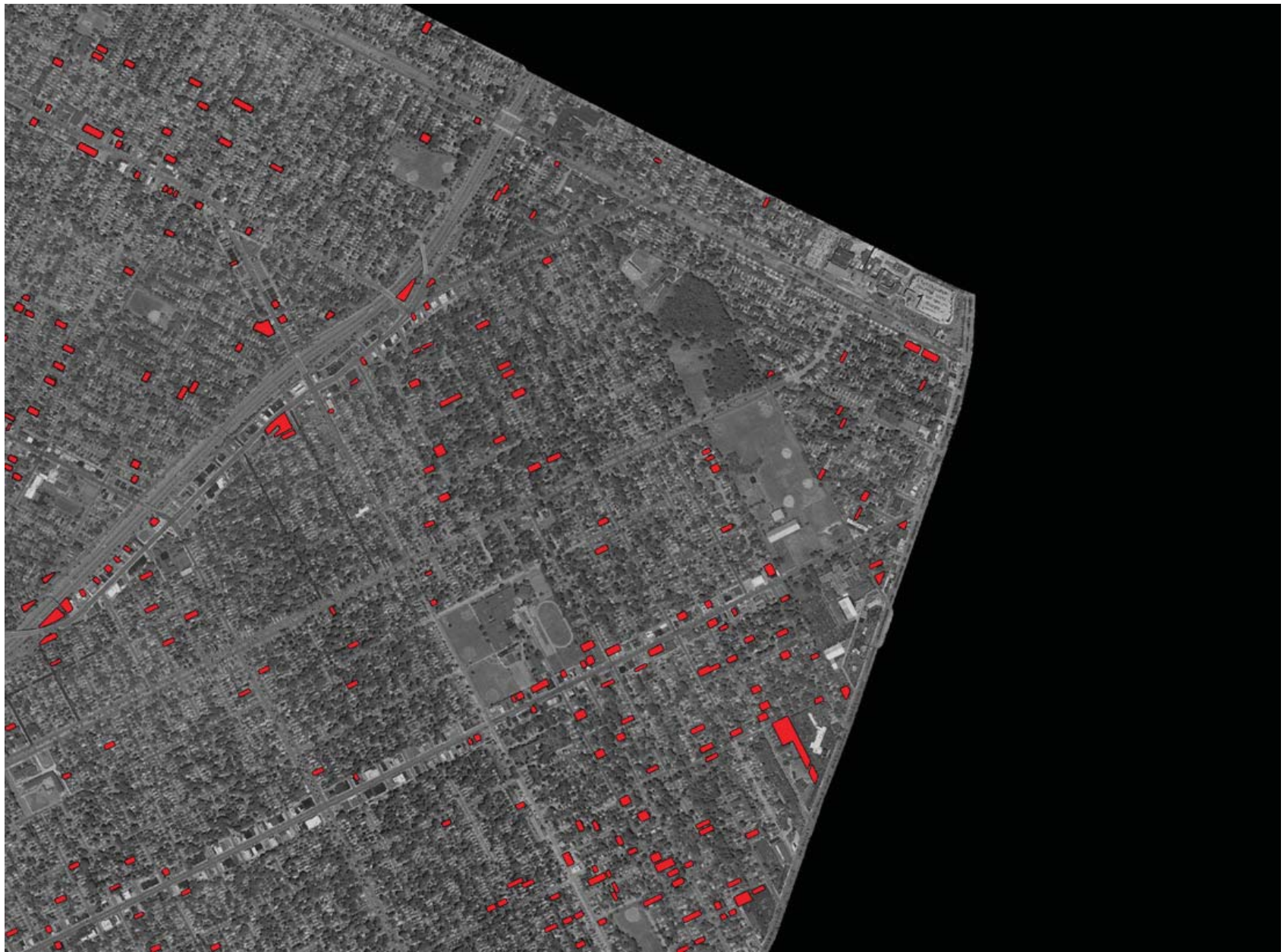


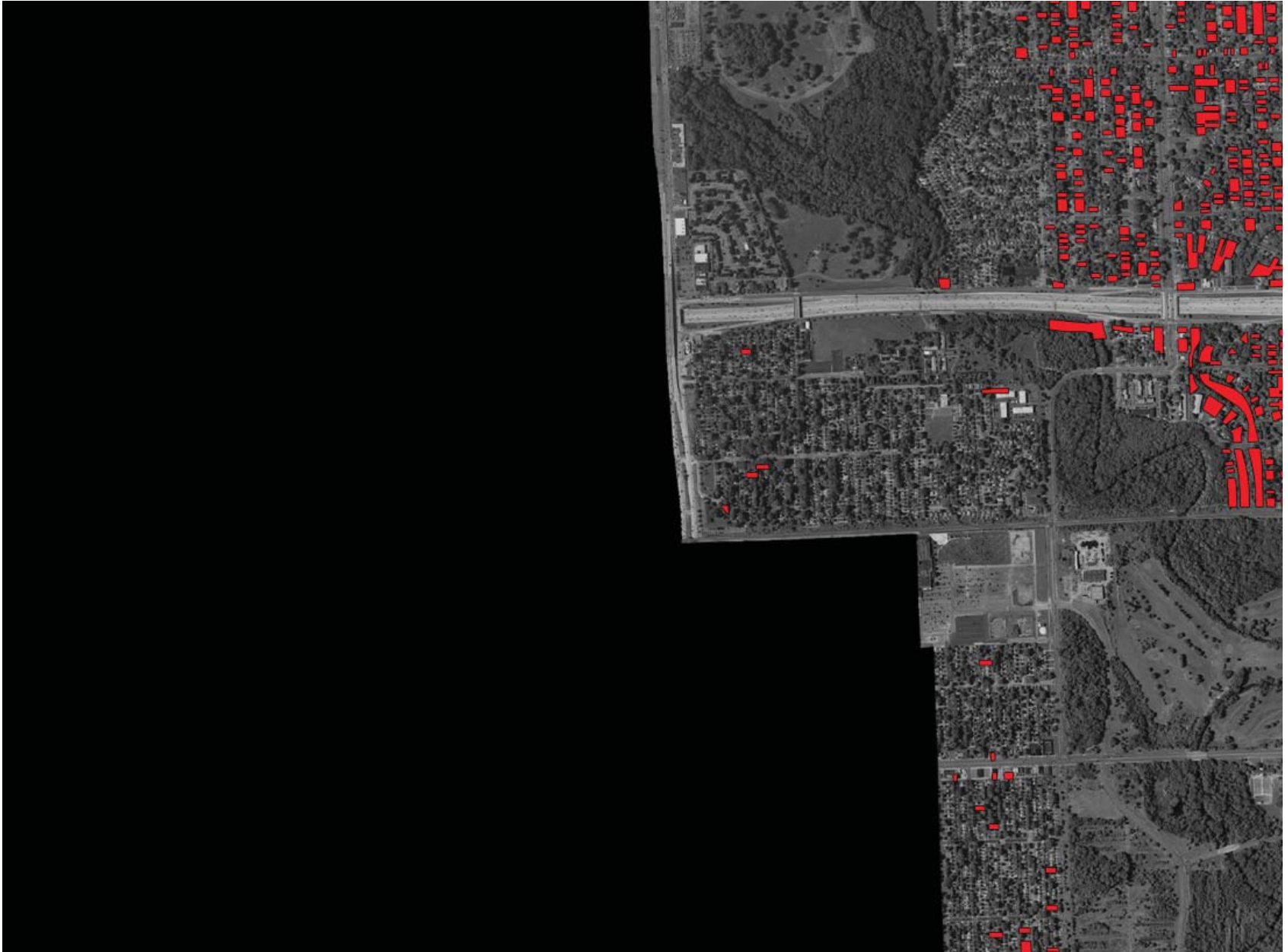


















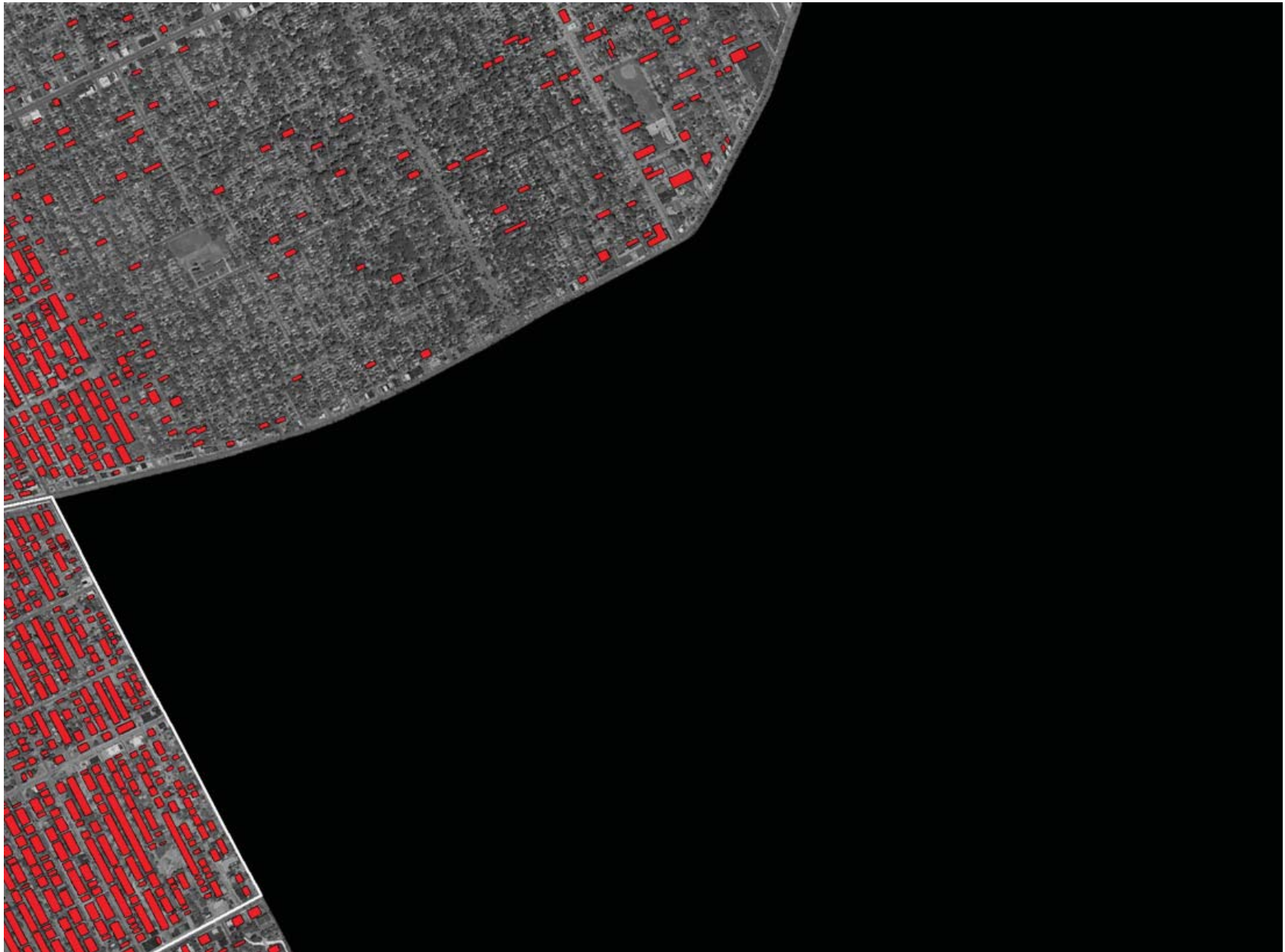


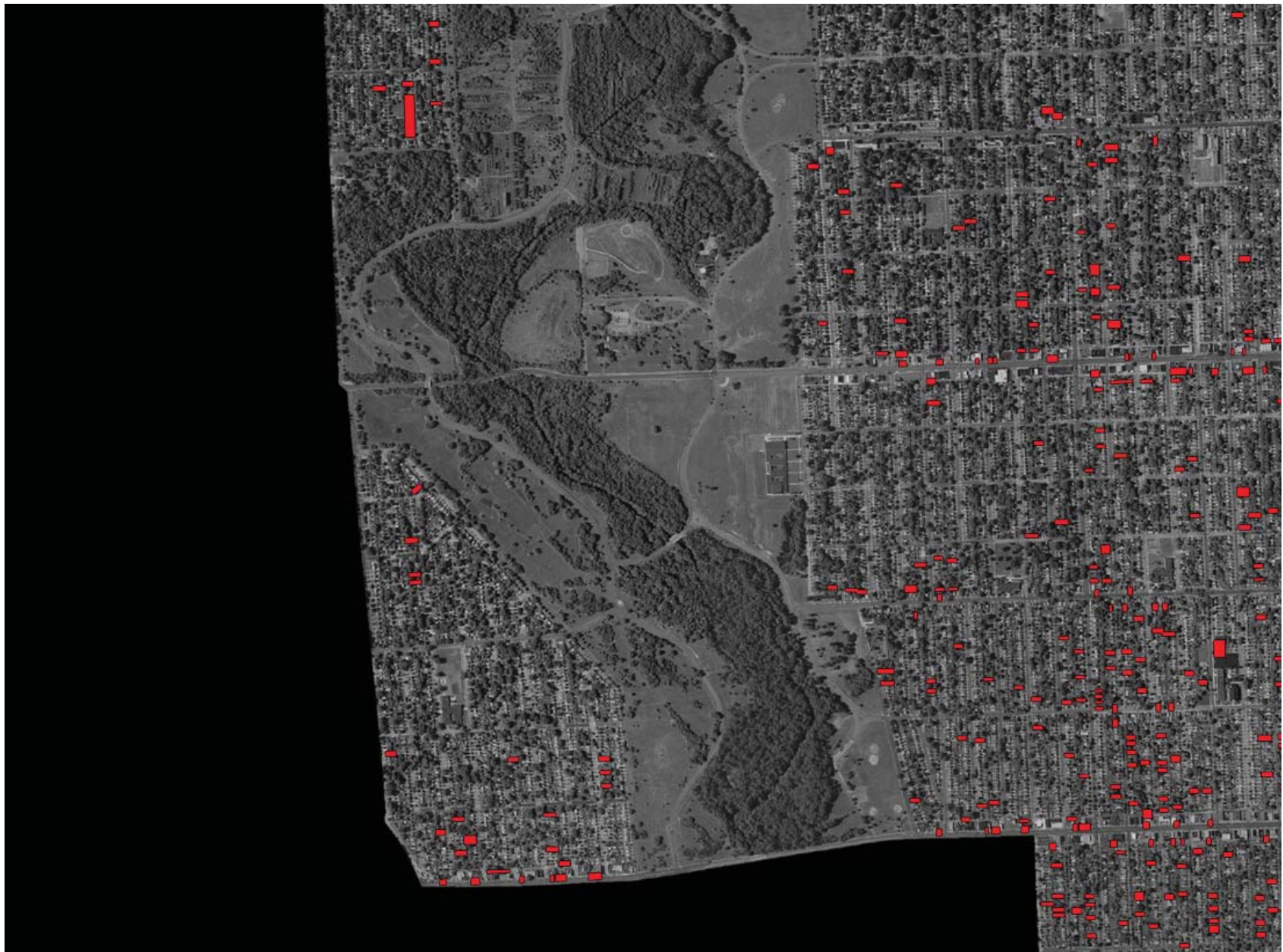




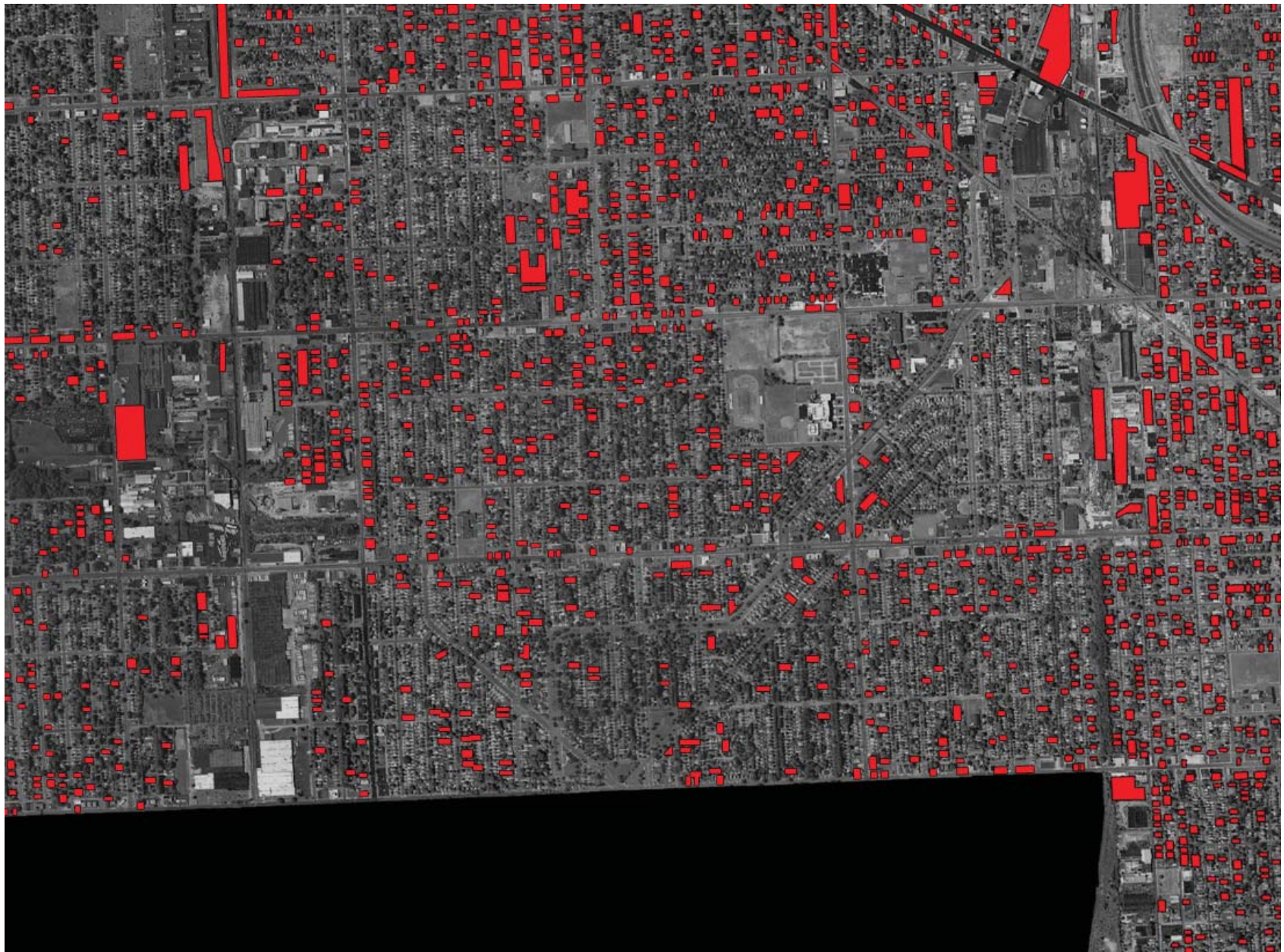












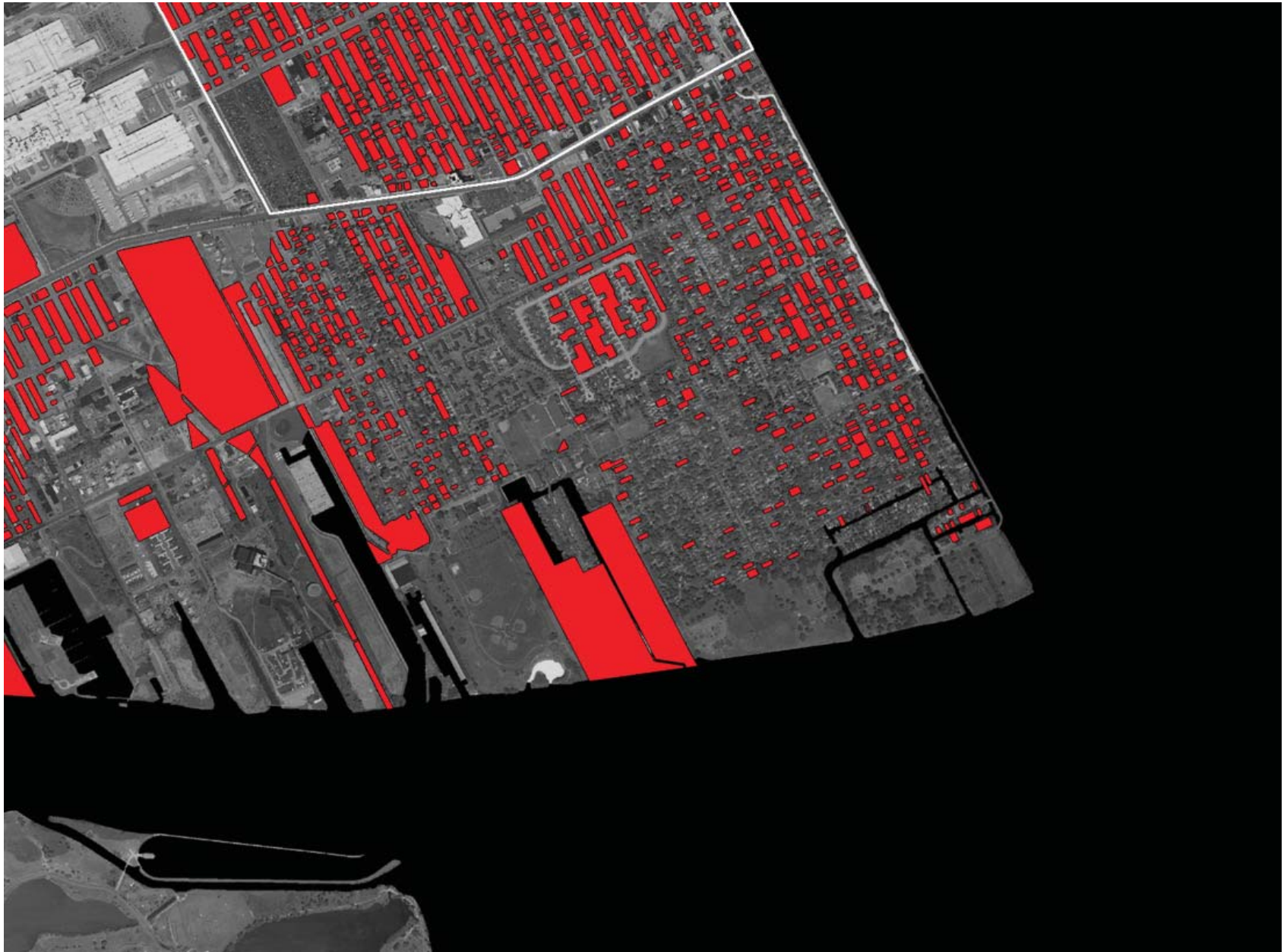


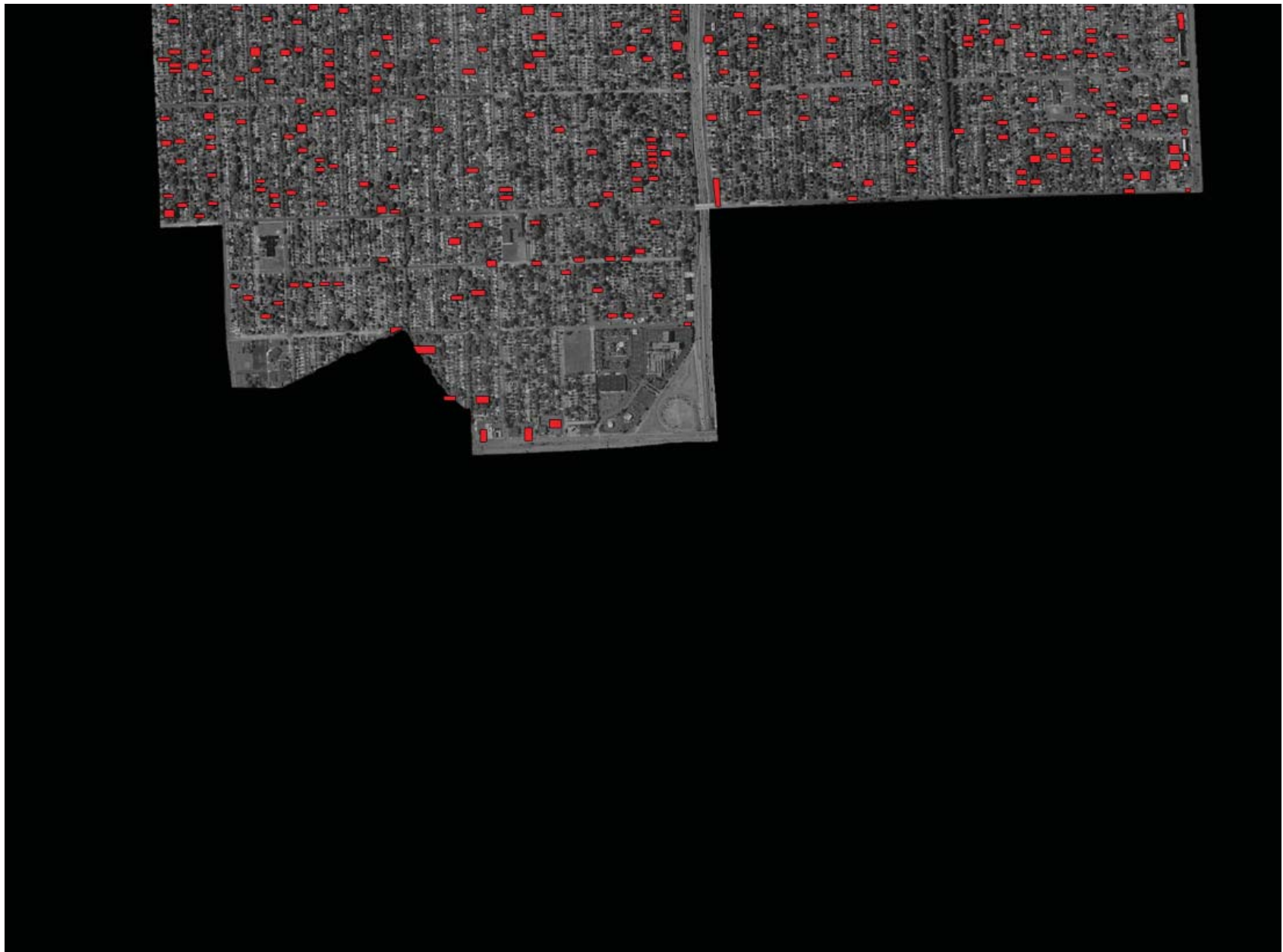


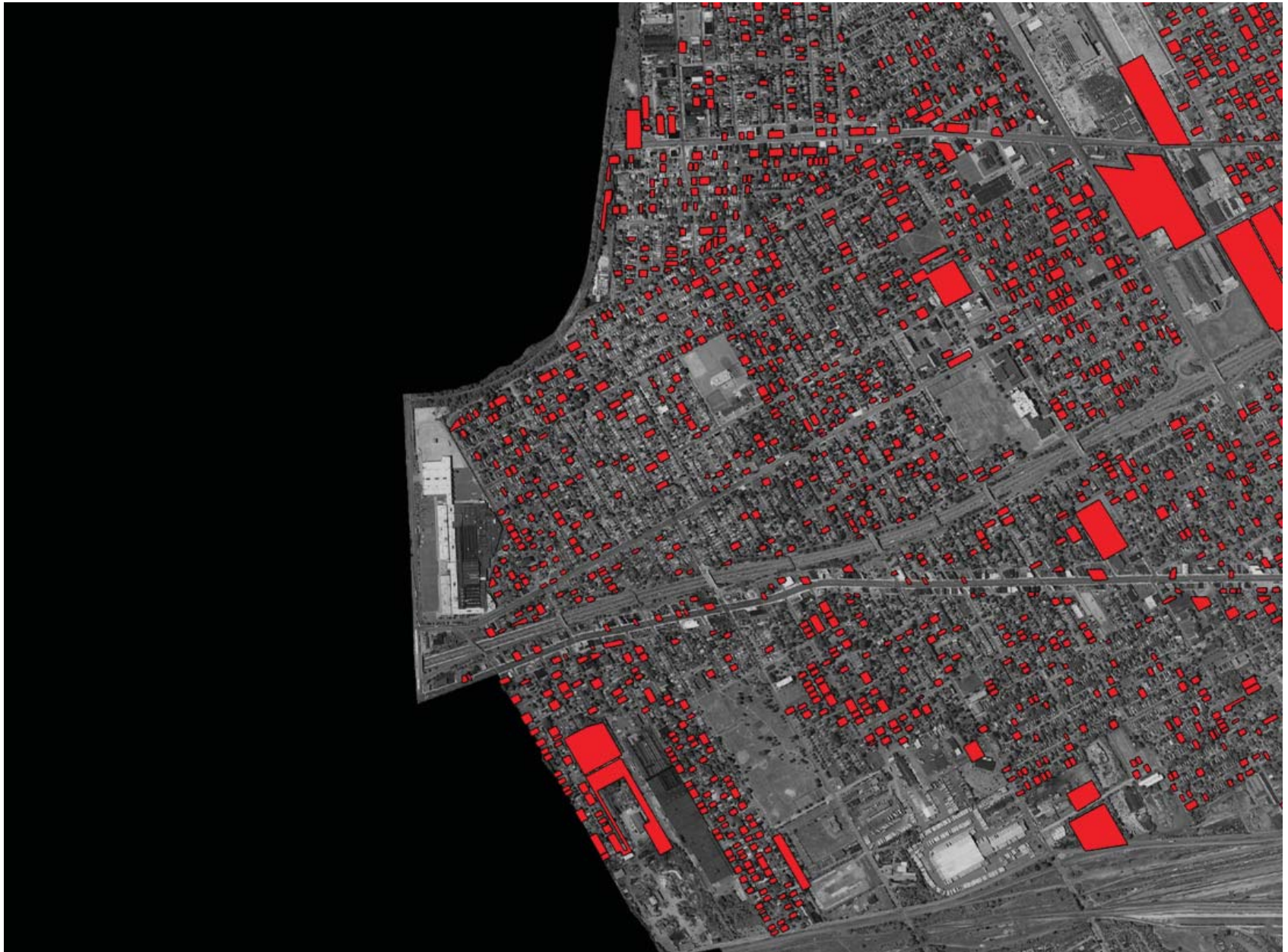






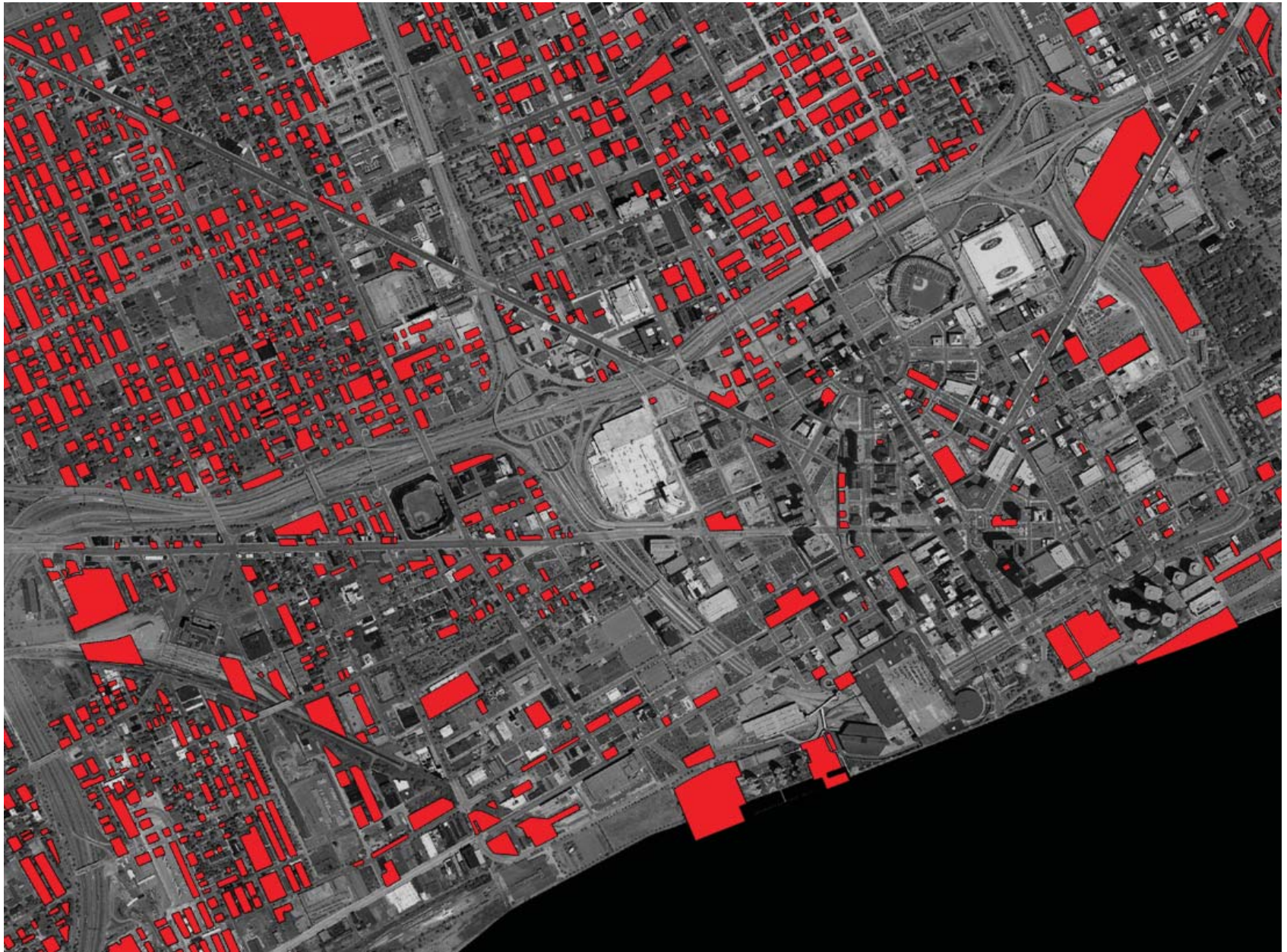


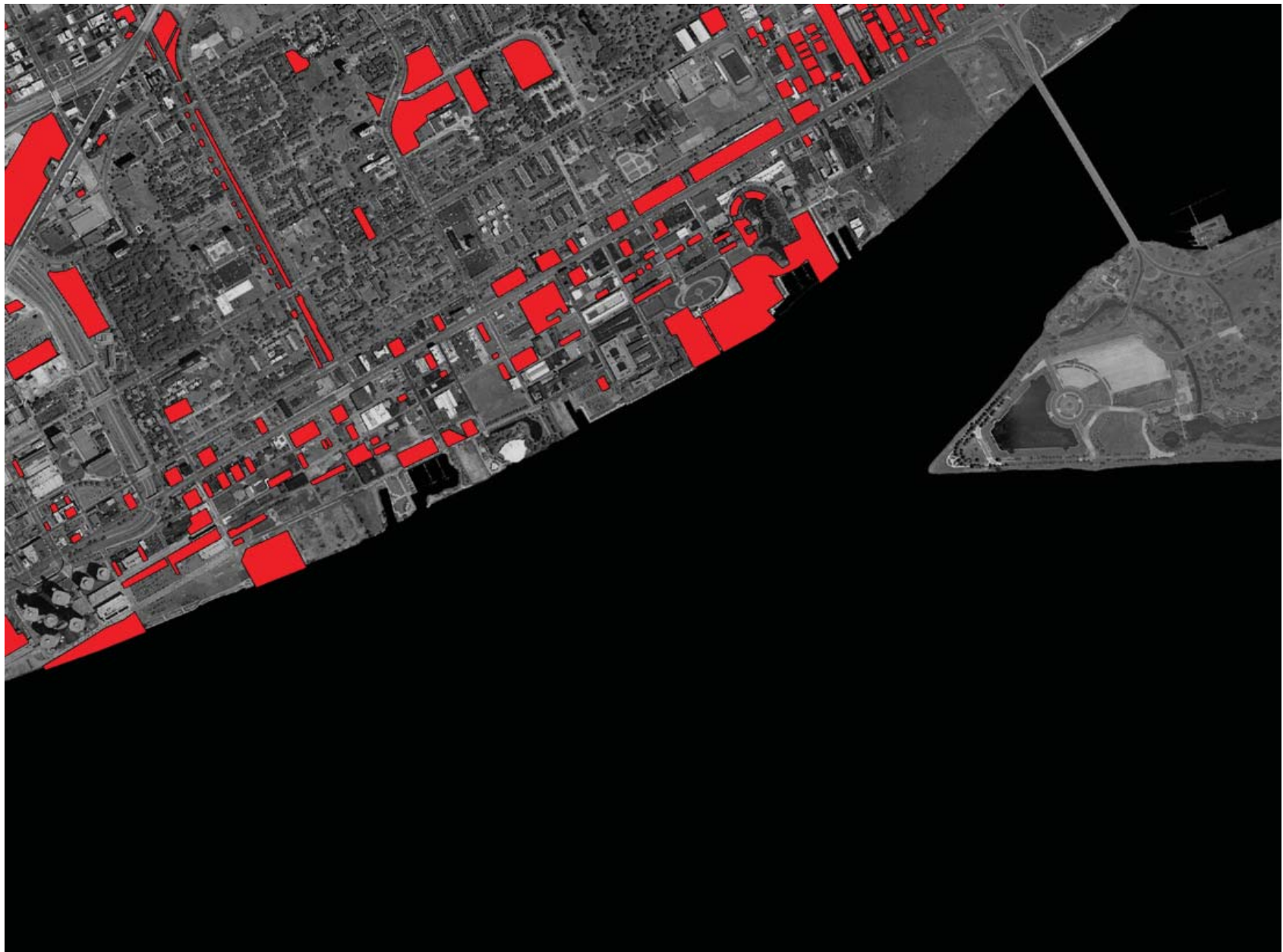


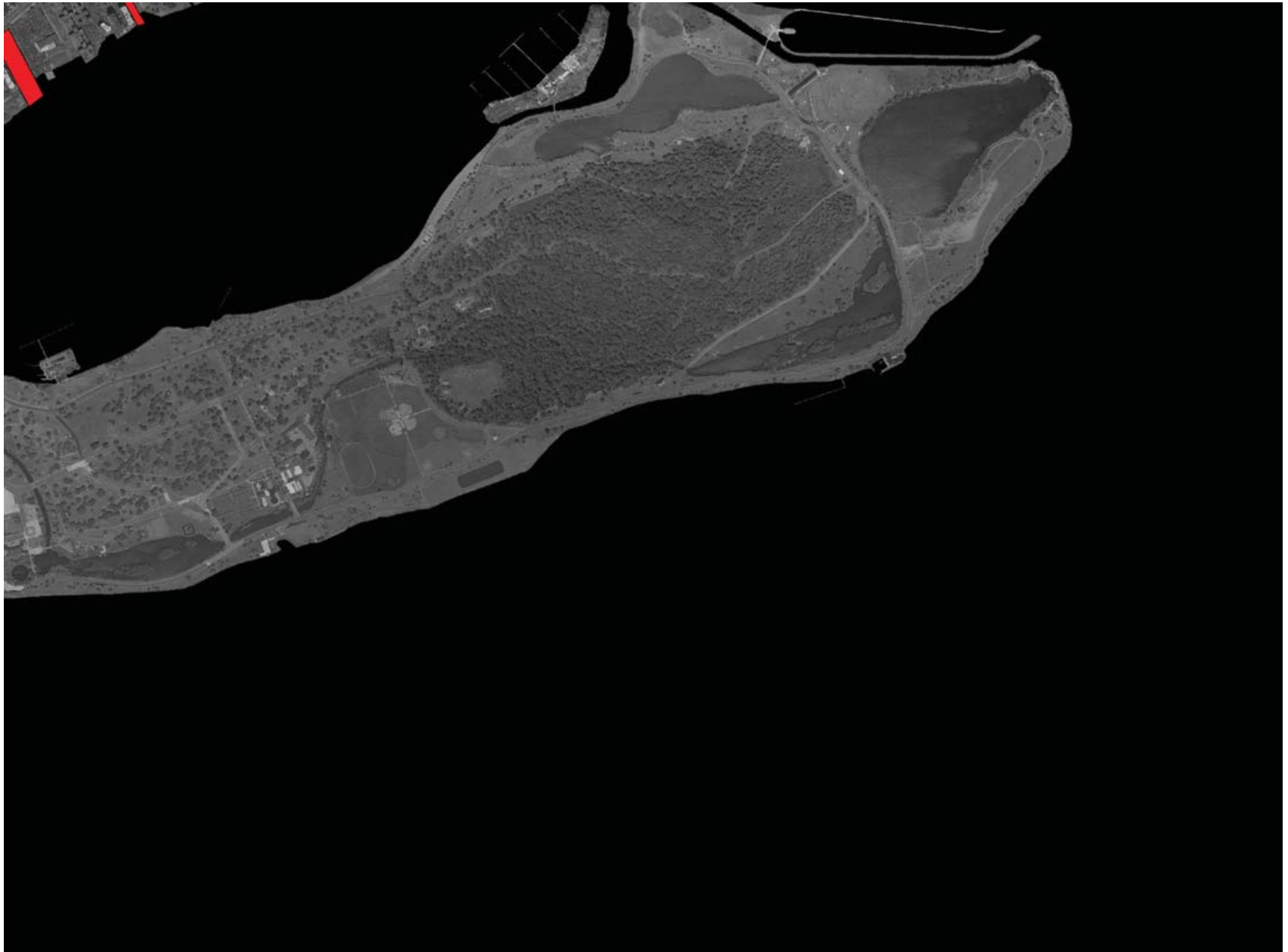






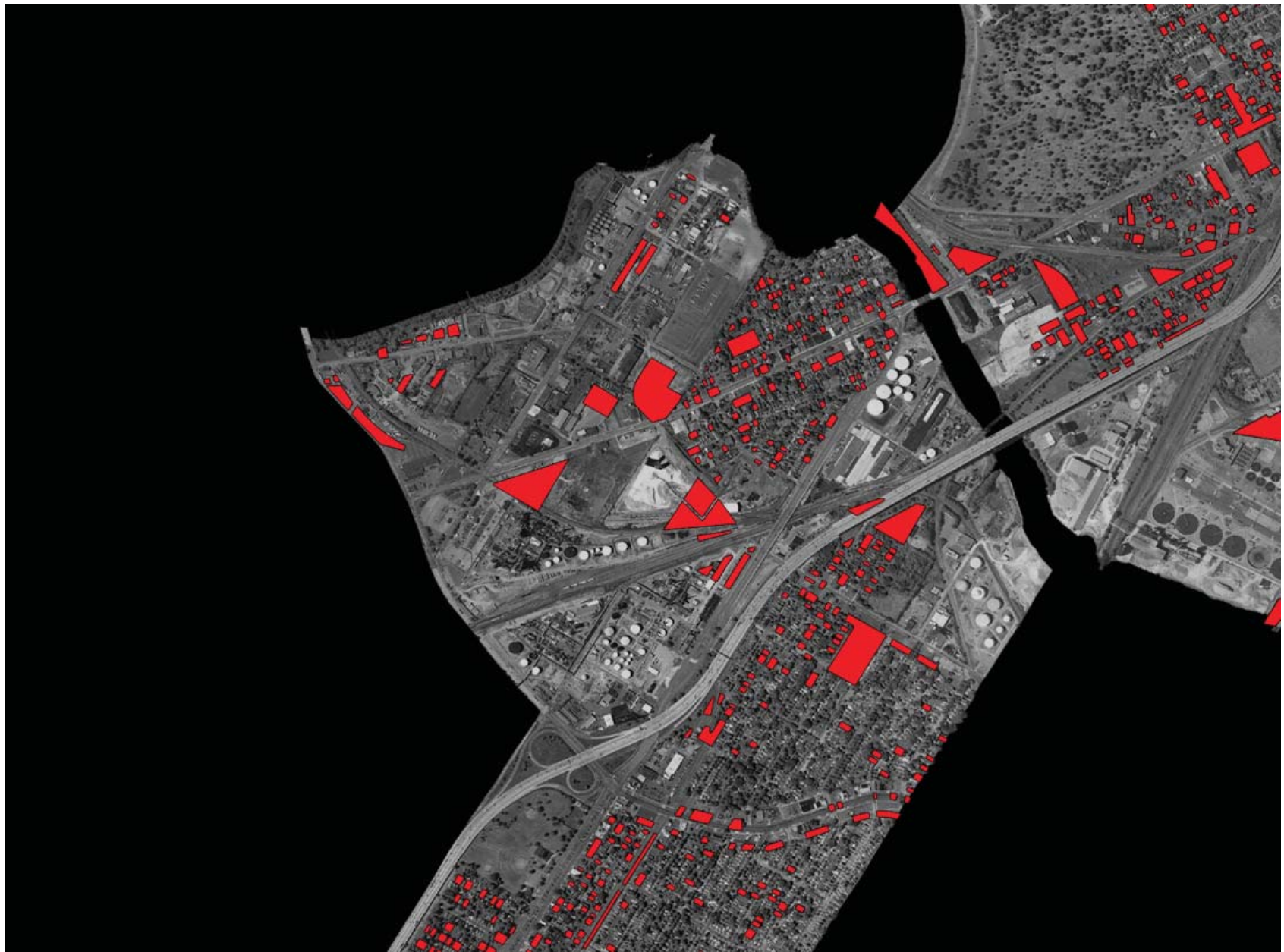


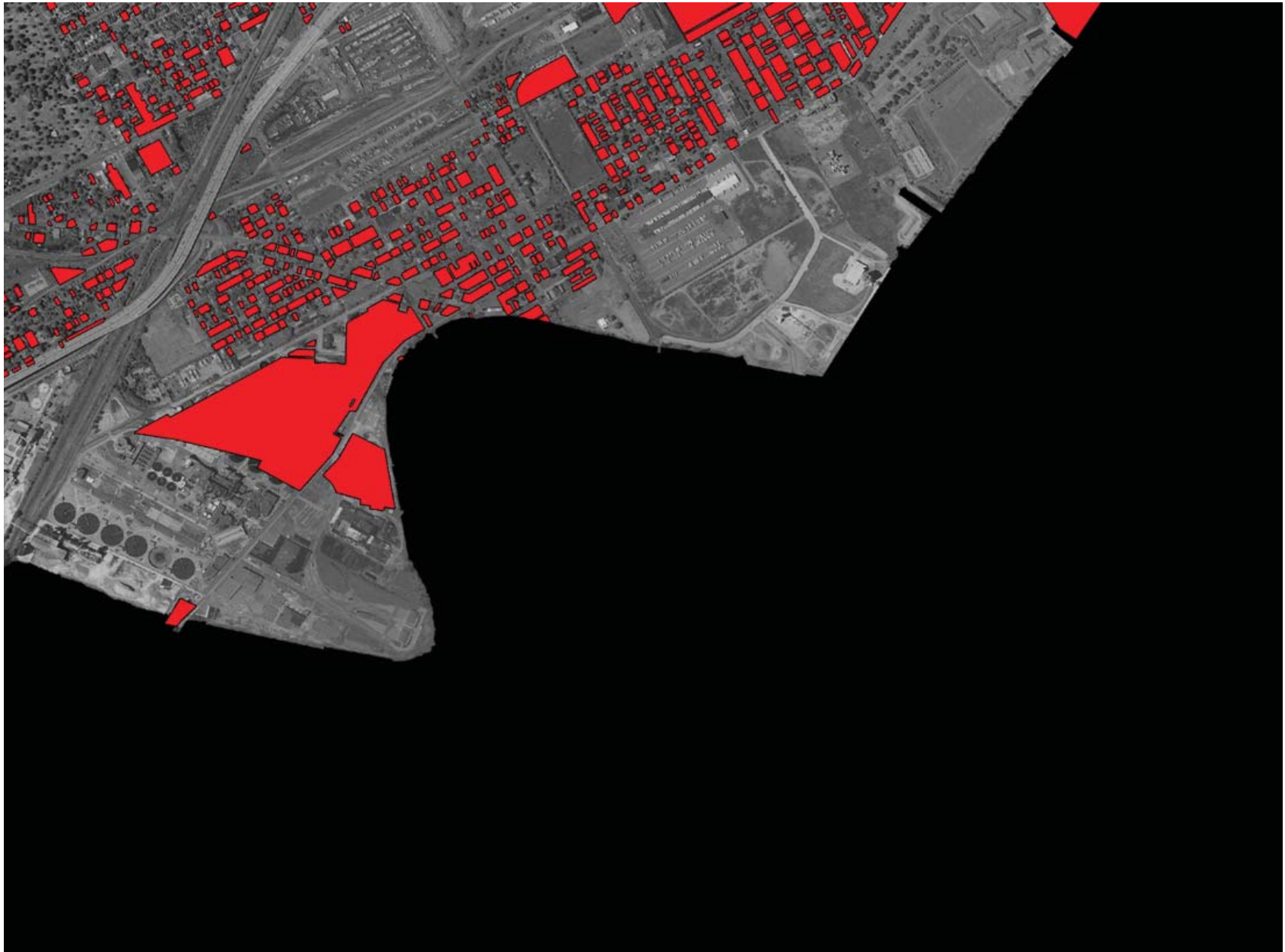


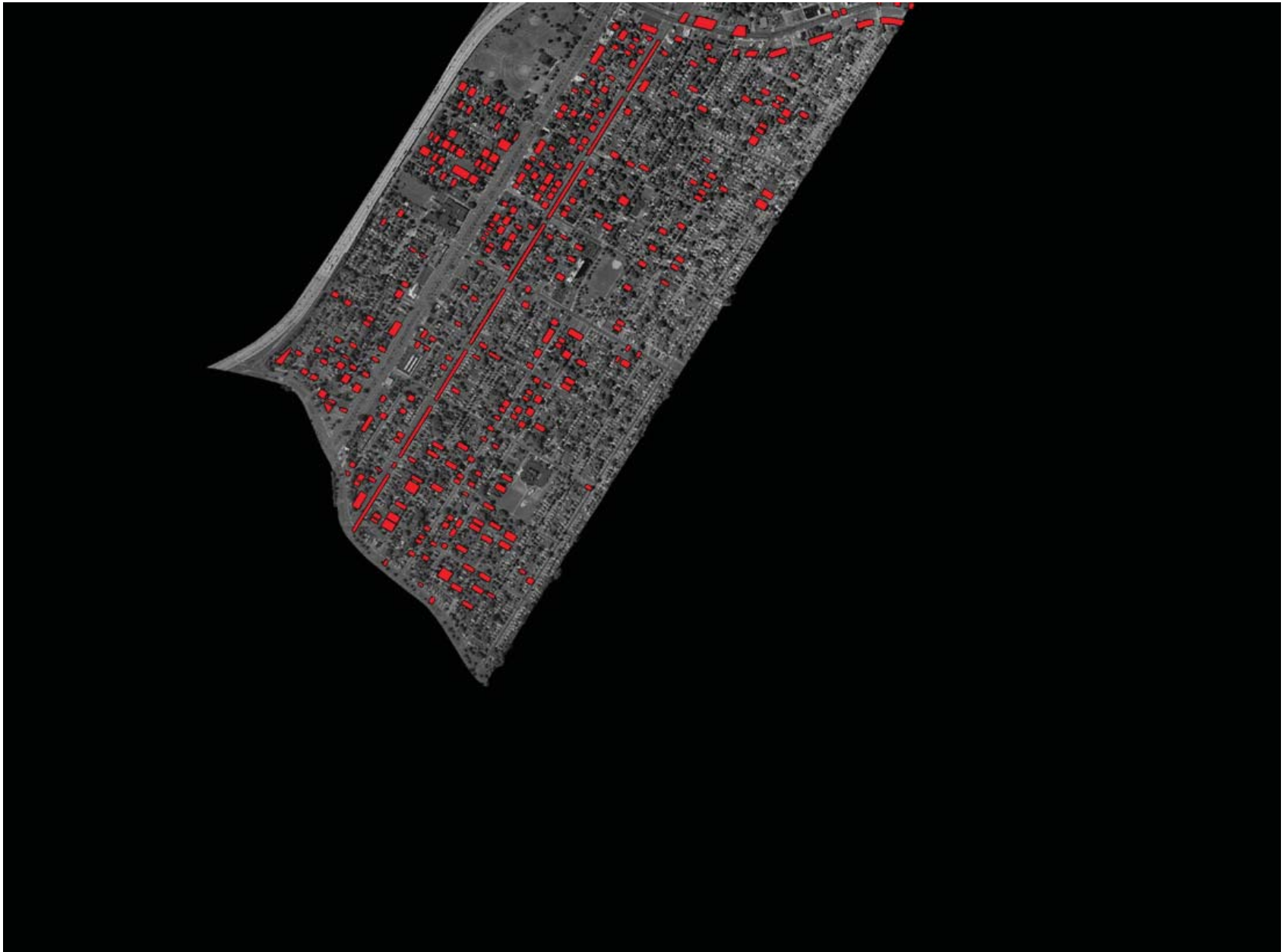














## REFERENCES

- Albom, M. (2009, January 12). The courage of Detroit. *Sports Illustrated*, 110 (1), 58-62.
- American Obesity Association (2002). *AOA fact sheets: Overweight and obesity in U.S. cities*. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://obesity1.tempdomaiempdomainname.com/subs/fastfacts/cities.shtml>
- Anonymous (2007). History today: Detroit's 12th street riot[July 23, 1967]. *Free Republic*. Retrieved July 30, 2007 from <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1870308/posts>
- Baldwin, T. (2008, December 12). Mighty Motor City Detroit, broken and humbled, awaits help or death. *The Times*. Retrieved May 13, 2008, from [www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/article5327523.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article5327523.ece)
- Batchelor, R. (1994). *Henry Ford: Mass production, modernism and design*. New York: Manchester University Press.
- Bellush, J. & Hausknecht, M. (Eds.). (1967). *Urban renewal: People, politics, and planning*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books Doubleday & Company, Inc.

- Boggs, J. (2004). Building Detroit: an alternative to the casino. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.99-101. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)
- Booza, J. & Metzger, K. (2004). On some socio-economic aspects of Detroit. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.44-49. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)
- Bukowski, D. (2008, July 12). Where did the first billion go? DPS wants another \$2.5 billion bond, community wants audit. *The Michigan Citizen*. Retrieved July 13, 2008, from <http://michigancitizen.com/default.asp?sourceid=&smenu=1&twindow=&mad=&sdetail=2858&wpage=1&keyword=&sidate=&ccat=&ccatm=&restate=&restatus=&reoption=&retype=&repmin=&repmax=&rebed=&rebat=&subname=&pform=&sc=1070&hn=michigancitizen&he=.com>.
- Ciadella, J. (2008, January 31). Debating Detroit's redevelopment. *Planetizen*. Retrieved February 2, 2008, from <http://www.planetizen.com/node/29527>

- Cohen, J. R. (2000, September 8). *Abandoned housing: Implications for federal policy and local action*. Paper presented at the conference on The Thinning Metropolis Conference, Ithaca, NY. Retrieved February 4, 2007 from [http://www.linconinst.edu/pubsdownloadasp?doc\\_id=205&pub\\_id=625](http://www.linconinst.edu/pubsdownloadasp?doc_id=205&pub_id=625)
- Darden, J. T., Hill, R. C., Thomas, J., Thomas, R. (1987). *Detroit, race and uneven development*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Dean, A. O. (2002). *Rural studio: Samuel Mockbee and an architecture of decency*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Detroit moves to condemn 504 buildings: Emergency hearing focus on only half of the demolitions sought. (2000, December 5). *The Detroit News*. Retrieved April 3, 2008, from <http://www.schooldude.com/news/2000/12/5/detroit-moves-to-condemn-504-buildings-emergency-hearings-focus-on-only-half-of-demolitions-sought/>
- Detroit Public Schools (2008), *District data summary*. Retrieved September 23, 2008, from <http://www.detroit.k12.mi.us/data/>

- Dreier, P. (1996). Community empowerment strategies: The limits and potential of organizing in low income neighborhoods. In E. Strom & J. H. Mollenkopf (Eds.), *The urban politics reader* (pp.191-203). New York: Routledge.
- Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany. (2004). Initiatives and Projects. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.115-118. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)
- Farley, R., Danziger, S. & Holzer, H. J. (2000). *Detroit divided*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.
- Fisherman, R. (2000). The American metropolis at century's end: Past and future influences. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.18-27. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)
- Gallagher, J. (2008, December 15). Acres of barren blocks offer chance to reinvent Detroit. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1A.
- Georgakas, D. & Surkin, M. (1975). *Detroit: I do mind dying*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Goodman, A. C. (2004, March 10). Detroit housing rebound needs safe streets, good schools. *The Detroit News*. Retrieved February 6, 2007, <http://www.econ.wayne.edu/agoodman/RESEARCH/PUBS/a09-87052.htm>
- Grimes, D. R. & Fulton, G.A. (2007, March). A region in turbulence and transition: The economic and demographic outlook for southeast Michigan through 2035. Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) (pp.1-51). Retrieved January 3, 2009, from <http://library.semcog.org/InmagicGenie/DocumentFolder/TurbulenceTransition2035.pdf>
- Headlee, C. (2003). A brief history of segregation in metro Detroit. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.96-98. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)
- Herron, J. (2004). I remember Detroit. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.28-39. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)

- Hoffman, D. (2004). The capital of the twentieth century. *Shrinking Cities: Detroit III Working Paper*, p.50-54. Berlin, Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation. Retrieved June 16, 2007, from [http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band\\_III\\_Detroit.pdf](http://www.shrinkingcities.com/fileadmin/shrink/downloads/pdfs/WP-Band_III_Detroit.pdf)
- Hood, E. (2005). Dwelling disparities: How poor housing leads to poor health. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 113 (5), A310-A317.
- Isodore, C. (2008, August 1). Auto sales plunge again CNNmoney.com. Retrieved August 1, 2008, from [http://money.cnn.com/2008/08/01/news/companies/auto\\_sales/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2008/08/01/news/companies/auto_sales/index.htm)
- Jacob, J. (1992). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kenyon, A.M. (2004). *Dreaming suburbia: Detroit and the production of postwar space and culture*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- McCray, J. & Esaw, W. L. (2008, July 1). Detroit public school board: The 2009 proposed budget. Retrieved July8, 2008, [http://www.detroit.k12.mi.us/data/finance/docs/2008.06.18\\_FY\\_2009\\_PROPOSED\\_BUDGET\\_formatted.pdf](http://www.detroit.k12.mi.us/data/finance/docs/2008.06.18_FY_2009_PROPOSED_BUDGET_formatted.pdf)

- Meredith, R. (1999, November 24). Rapes of 8 schoolgirls puts Detroit on edge. *The New York Times*. Retrieved February 2, 2007, from <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/11/24/us/rapes-of-8-schoolgirls-puts-detroit-on-edge.html>
- Mirel, J. (1993). *The rise and fall of an urban school system: Detroit, 1907 – 81*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Newman, O. (1972). *Defensible space: People and design in a violent city*. USA: The Macmillan Company.
- Oswald, P. (2005). *Shrinking cities, volume I: International research*. New York: Hatje Cantz.
- Park, K. (Ed.). (2005). *Urban ecology: Detroit and beyond*. Hong Kong: Map Book Publishers.
- Pratt, C. (2007, March 23). Cost of school closings: Despite upkeep, thefts a reality. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1B.
- Pratt Dawsey, C. (2008, April 24). Botched plan to empty schools staggers district. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1A.
- Pratt Dawsey, C. (2008, June 17). DPS projects \$400 million in shortfalls. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1A.

- Pratt Dawsey, C., Higgins, L., Walsh-Sarnecki, P. (2008, April 1). Drastic changes planned at 5 schools. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1A.
- Pratt, C. & Walsh-Sarnecki, P. (2007, March 22). Plan to close 37 schools moves ahead. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1A.
- Pratt Dawsey, C. & Walsh-Sarnecki, P. (2008, June 27). Report blasts finances, leaders of DPS. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1A.
- Randall, K. (2005, February 12). The further hemorrhaging of Detroit – city to shut 34 public schools. World Socialist Web Site. Retrieved July 4, 2008, from <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/feb2005/detr-f12.shtml>
- Riley, Rochelle. (2008, June 26). Kids are suffering in Detroit Public Schools mess. *The Detroit Free Press*. pp. 1B.
- Rusk, D. (1995). *Cities Without Suburbs* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Solnit, R. (2007, July 1). Detroit arcadia: Exploring the post-American landscape. *Harper's Magazine*, 65-73.
- Spreiregen, P.D. (1965). *Urban design: The architecture of towns and cities*. New York: McCraw-Hill Book Company.



- Swanson, C. B. (2008, April 1). *Cities in crisis: A special analytic report on high school graduation*. EPE Research Centre. Retrieved June 23, 2008, from [http://www.americanspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromiseAlliance/Dropout\\_Crisis/SWANSONCitiesInCrisis040108.pdf](http://www.americanspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromiseAlliance/Dropout_Crisis/SWANSONCitiesInCrisis040108.pdf)
- The Heidelberg Project: Mission and goals* (n.d.). Retrieved October 24, 2008, from <http://www.heidelberg.org/mission.html>
- Thomas, J. M. (1997). *Redevelopment and race: Planning a finer city in postwar Detroit*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Thomas, J. M. & Ritzdorf, M. (Eds.). (1997). *Urban planning and the African American community: In the shadows*. London, UK: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Thompson, H. A. (2001). *Whose Detroit? politics, labor, and race in a modern American city*. Ithaca, NY.: Cornell University Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau (2000). *State and county quick facts: Detroit (city), Michigan*. Retrieved November 23, 2007, from <http://www.quickfact.census.gov/qfd/26/262200.html>

- U.S. Census Bureau (2007). *Quarterly census of employment and wages (QCEW)*. Retrieved April 26, 2009, from [http://www.data.bls.gov/LOCATION\\_QUOTIENT/servlet/lqc.ControllerServlet](http://www.data.bls.gov/LOCATION_QUOTIENT/servlet/lqc.ControllerServlet)
- Victor, J. (2006, December 24-30). Detroit: The imagination economy. Michigan Citizen. Retrieved August 7, 2008, from [http://www.detroit-city-of-hope.org/jackie\\_victor\\_avolon.html](http://www.detroit-city-of-hope.org/jackie_victor_avolon.html)
- Vogel, S. (2005). Surviving to create. In K. Park (Ed.), *Urban ecology: Detroit and beyond* (pp.16-20). Hong Kong: Map Book Publications.
- Waldheim, C. & Santos-Munne, M. (1995/6). Decamping Detroit. In P. Oswalkt (Ed.), *Shrinking cities, volume 2: Interventions* (pp.80-85). Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz.
- Waldheim, C. (2004). Detroit – Motor city. In E. Robbins & E. El-Khoury (Eds.), *Shaping the city: case studies in urban history* (pp.77-96). New York: Routledge.
- Welch, S., Sigelman, L., Bledsoe, T., & Combs, M. (2001) *Race and place: Relations in an American city*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

