River Rouge

MASTER PLAN

2017

CITY OF River Rouge MICHIGAN

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Acknowledgments

A special thanks to Karl Laub, the Community Development Director, for his dedication and support of this planning process.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING PROCESS

This phase of the Project Rising Tide (PRT) Master Plan process began in the summer of 2016. Over the course of the following year, a team of planners, economic developers, and workforce experts collaborated to engage the public in order to develop recommendations designed to guide growth and development in River Rouge for the next decade. The Action Plan is a result of a community survey, a SWOT analysis, and discussions held during various meetings with the Planning Commission, City Council, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

A 29-question survey was hand delivered to every home in River Rouge asking residents how they would prioritize issues pertaining to housing, commercial, industrial, recreation, and transportation. The results demonstrated an overwhelming response to prioritize housing, specifically to remove blighted structures. Community members also expressed a desire for the city to prioritize business recruitment, improved air quality, better maintenance of existing recreational facilities, and increased bus frequency.

In May 2017, the Planning Commission, City Council, and residents underwent a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat (SWOT) analysis. The top strengths identified for River Rouge lie in strong leadership and the new plans produced through the PRT process. Some of the opportunities mentioned are economically-driven with the construction opportunities from the Gordie Howe International Bridge, access to available grants, and intra- and inter-city collaboration for economic growth. On the other hand, the weaknesses and threats are serious concerns. River Rouge is concerned about the DTE closure and tax base loss, absentee landlords, and an aging population, all of which have potentially severe and negative consequences if not properly addressed. Interestingly, there was no overlap between weaknesses and threats. Community members believe drugs, race relations, and the absence of a grocery store to be the top weaknesses.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan addresses recurring concerns exposed during the community engagement process. The Action Plan is divided into five broader categories: housing, economic development, redevelopment, transportation, and communication.

The housing recommendations call for increasing the supply, improving the quality of the housing stock, and increasing the types of housing largely through modifying the zoning ordinance and creating a year-round rental inspection program. The redevelopment recommendations are centered on proactively inventorying and marketing potential sites to developers who otherwise might not come to the community. The intent of the health and environment goals is to boost the physical health of River Rouge's residents through non motorized transit, expanded tree canopy to improve air quality, and increased exercise classes. The public transportation goals aim to improve public options that are safe, accessible, and affordable including building bicycle lanes in the short term, and in the longer term work with SMART and DDOT to expand the bus frequency. Communication goals are intended to improve two-way communication between the city and its residents, as well as communicating the city's receptiveness to business through their new branding.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Demographics

- River Rouge has been experiencing population decline since the 1950s and is projected to lose 0.83% annually for the next five years.
- River Rouge follows national trends of an aging population.
- African-American/Black has become the dominant racial group accounting for 53% of the population.
- More than 1 in 5 residents aged 25 years or older do not have a high school diploma.
- Wayne County consistently ranks within the bottom two counties in the state for most health variables.

Housing

- As of 2015, River Rouge has a housing vacancy rate of 27.6% which equates to approximately 1,057 units vacant.
- A residential Target Market Analysis (TMA) showed that 90% new households that move in River Rouge are renters and are from the poorest lifestyle segments.
- River Rouge's housing stock suffers from a lack of "missing middle" housing options.
- Likely due to the Great Recession median housing values have fallen by about $30,000 and have not rebounded.
- A housing inventory conducted in November 2016 found that 78% of housing structures were considered in "good" condition.
- One-third of homeowners are cost-burdened compared to two-thirds of renters.

Economic Profile

- The median household income (MHI) has dropped by $2,000 annually since the year 2000, and the MHI of $27,641 is 56% of Wayne County's.
- As of 2015, 38.6% of families lived below the poverty line.
- River Rouge and Wayne County have lost 4% of manufacturing jobs, but one-third of jobs are still in manufacturing.
- A Gap Analysis revealed that the River Rouge market is saturated in gas stations, liquor stores, and fast food chains, but has not captured the demand for auto parts, grocery stores, clothing and general merchandise, and a full-service restaurant.

Natural Features and Existing Land Use

- Over 60% of land is used for industrial purposes.
- Belanger Park is the only public access to the riverfront.
- There are no wetlands remaining but there are potential wetland restoration areas left along the Rouge River.
- Almost 10% of the city's parcels are vacant.
- There are 21 open underground storage tanks (UST).

Corridors

- Average annual daily traffic on West Jefferson Avenue dropped between 2013-2016 due to the Bascule Bridge closure.
- The sidewalk gap analysis shows that most of the gaps are located along industrial land uses.

Redevelopment Sites

- There are two publicly held properties that can be redeveloped.
- 479 parcels are vacant land.

INTRODUCTION

REGIONAL SETTING

River Rouge is one of the seventeen Downriver Communities of Detroit. The City covers 2.65 square miles, a small city that is home to major industrial giants such as National Steel Corporation, Texaco, and Amoco Petroleum Products. The City is linked to Detroit in many ways; in addition to sharing a border, they are connected via two corridors: Jefferson Avenue, River Rouge's principal thoroughfare, and the Detroit River. River Rouge is also bounded on its northern side by the man made channel around wholly industrialized Zug Island.

As a city in Wayne County, River Rouge is a part of the most populous County in the state—nearly 2 of every 10 Michiganders lives in Wayne County. As such, River Rouge falls under the purview of the regional government SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. SEMCOG plans for eight counties in southeast Michigan to help coordinate development across jurisdictions, and can assist local governments through grants for planning initiatives, for example, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) that gives funding for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, safe routes to school, and historic preservation of transportation facilities, etc.

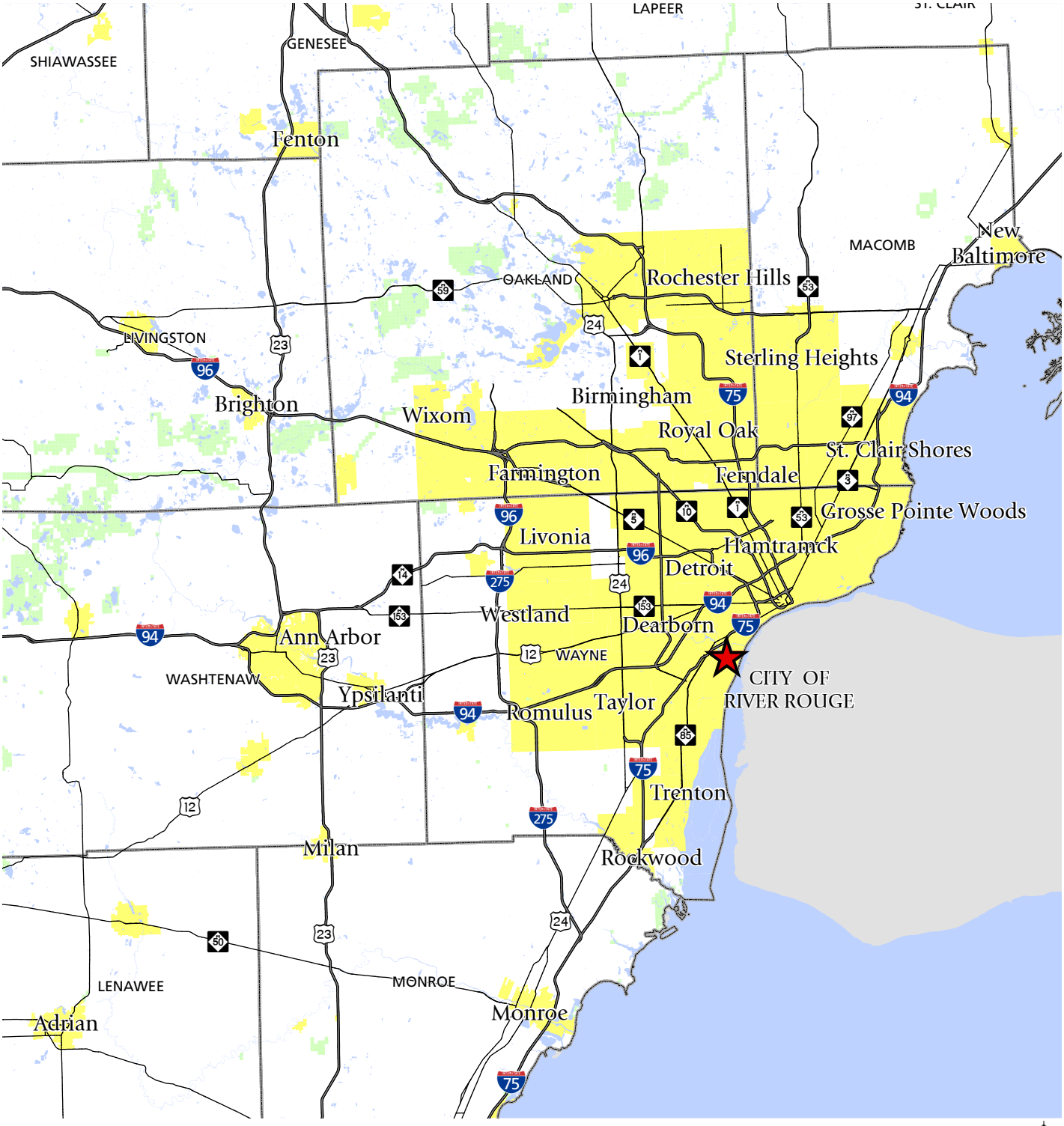
The City is well situated regarding highway access. One mile west of the City lies I-75, and farther west lies I-94, a major freeway that provides access to north-south freeways (I-75 and I-275). River Rouge is also only about 20 miles east of the international Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport.

HISTORY

River Rouge's location has forged its destiny as a hub of industrial activity. Primarily beginning as outgrowth of Detroit's expansion, its position between the iron ore in the upper peninsula and the coal mines in the eastern part of the US, and along the Detroit and Rouge Rivers, made it an ideal spot for manufacturing. River Rouge transitioned from farmland to a factory town. Ecorse Township was formed where River Rouge is currently located in 1827, before even the State of Michigan was formed. In 1899, River Rouge officially incorporated as a village. In April 1922, River Rouge incorporated as a City.

River Rouge's recent history falls in line with many communities experiencing a decline in their traditional economic base. In

1: Regional Location Map



CITY OF RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Regional Location

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Michigan DNR Open Data Portal

- Freeways
- State Roads
- County Boundary
- DNR Lands / Parks
- Cities
- Lakes / Ponds
- Rivers / Streams

its heyday, it was a productive, middle-class suburb with ample opportunity. However, with the decline of manufacturing, job loss followed by population loss has spurred a negative feedback loop of housing vacancy falling into disrepair, vandalism, and reduced tax revenue. Moreover, for three years the River Rouge business community was also negatively affected by the closure of the Jefferson Bascule Bridge, which removed reliable traffic and hurt business sales downtown. Fortunately, as the economy rebounds and the bridge reopens, business is due to pick up.

The DTE Energy Co.'s coal-fired plant is scheduled to close by 2023, and the City will lose one-third of its tax revenue. While this signals another round of job shedding, some residents are also happy to see a major polluter leave. And, with DTE progressing to renewable energy production, the jobs are expected to be recovered and converted into cleaner jobs, but may be relocated outside of River Rouge.

River Rouge Historical Museum. River Rouge Electric Company in 1903 before it was sold to Detroit Edison

"...River Rouge is a part of the most populous county in the state—nearly 2 of every 10 Michiganders lives in Wayne County."

PROJECT RISING TIDE

The Rising Tide initiative is a statewide program, envisioned by Governor Snyder and implemented by the Department of Talent and Economic Development (TED). TED is comprised of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Talent Investment Agency, and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). The mission is to provide at-risk communities with the necessary tools to design and build a successful economic framework.

River Rouge is one of ten communities selected statewide and represents Region 10, Metro Detroit. The communities from each prosperity region were selected based on the following criteria:

- Poverty level
- Unemployment level

- Labor participation rate
- Renter occupied units
- Vacancy rates
- Percentage of households receiving food stamps

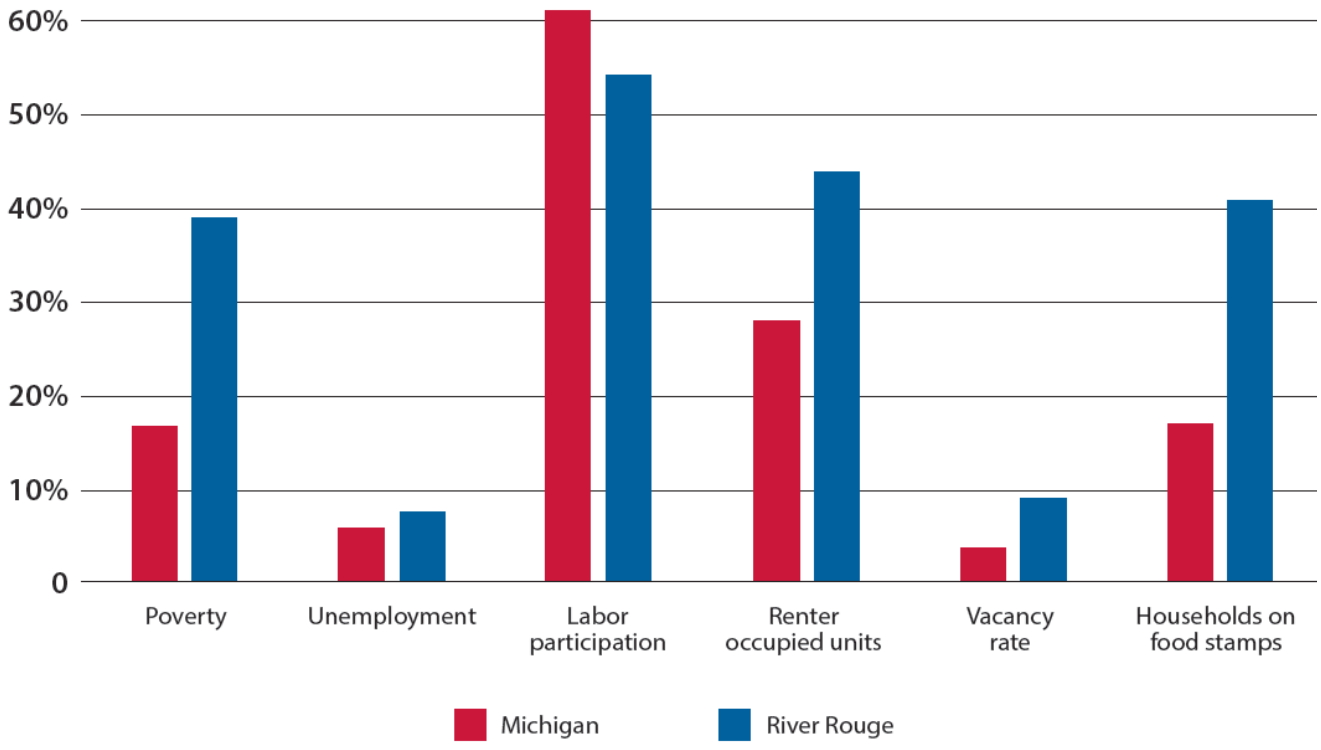
Below, the graph that compares River Rouge to the state of Michigan on these criteria.

This initiative employs MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program as a mechanism for preparing each city for a brighter economic future. RRC is a certification program that encourages communities to use innovative redevelopment strategies to signal to developers and businesses that they are attractive places to invest. The project's scope is to plan for economic stability and growth while maintaining River Rouge's "small town" feel. The Master Plan is an important step to achieve certification.

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The purpose of a Master Plan is to serve as a living document to guide the city's future development based on community needs and desires over the next 5 to 20 years. The plan records the condition of public facilities and community assets, and records community input on how to improve the quality of life for all residents. In addition to community input, the plan reviews various sources on demographics, housing, and economic data, and considers the feasibility of the community's desires. A Master Plan is comprehensive in scope, but also provides more specific actions and site locations for implementing the community's goals.

2: River Rouge Compared to the State of Michigan on PRT Criteria



DEMOGRAPHICS

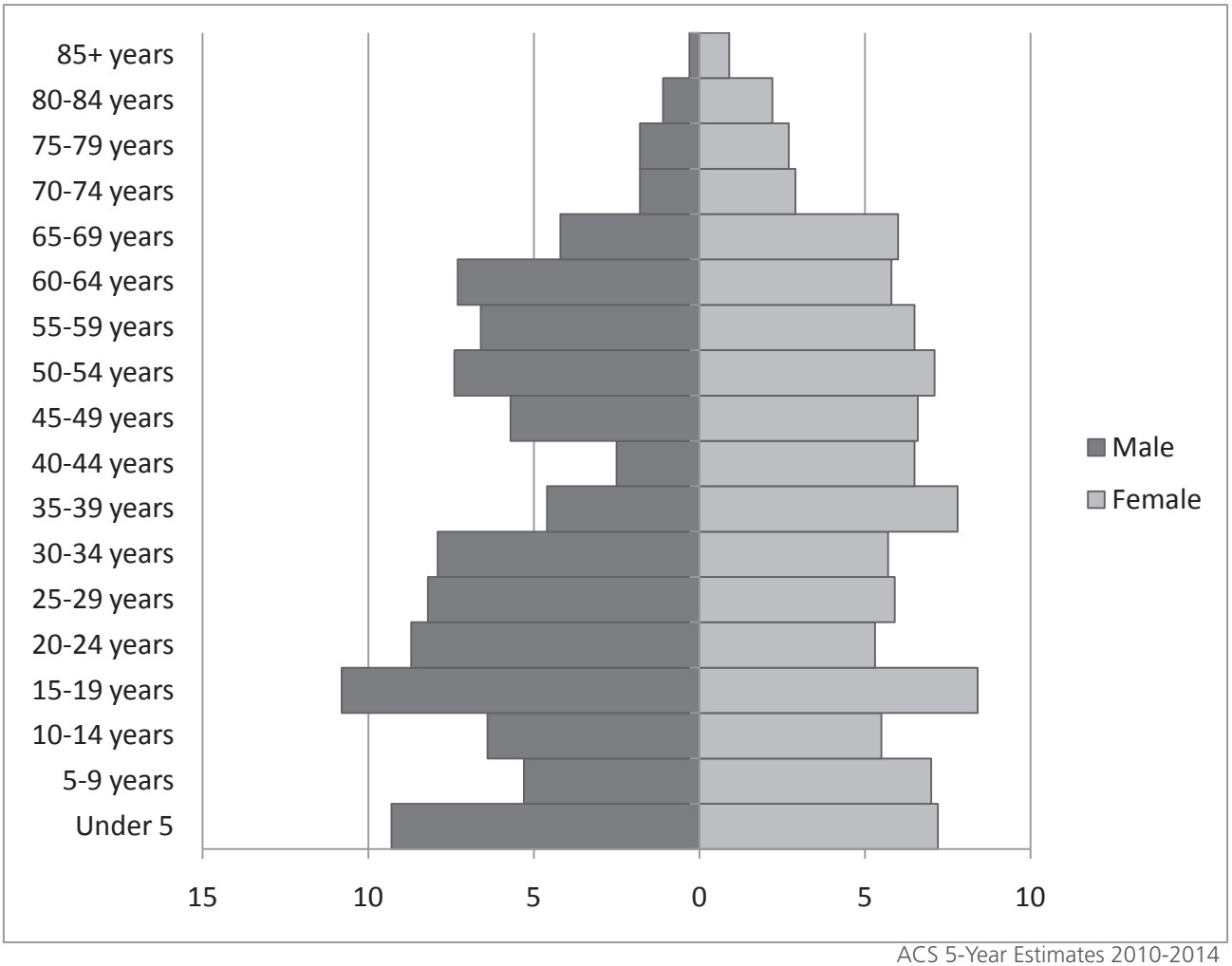
Understanding population and age trends is important because it sheds light on how a city can better accommodate its citizens in terms of providing the desired types of community facilities, housing, public utilities, transportation networks, and future land uses. As a point of comparison River Rouge's demographic data is compared to larger, but relevant geographies, namely Wayne County and the State of Michigan.

The figures in this section have been taken from the following sources in this preferred order:

- 2010 US Census. This is the gold standard for demographic data. It measures 100% of the population and offers comparable data points at regular intervals throughout most of the United States' developed history. However, available data is limited to population and housing information, and the ten-year interval between data points means it is rarely "fresh."
- 2011-2015 American Community Survey. The ACS program replaced the "long form" Census questions beginning in 2000, asking the same types of detailed questions about social, economic, and housing conditions on a rolling basis instead of once per decade. Statistical validity of the ACS depends on sampling. In larger communities (those with populations of 65,000 or more), it is possible to gain a valid sample within twelve months, which the ACS calls a "one-year estimate." For mid-size communities (population 20,000-65,000), it takes 36 months of data collection to achieve a valid sample size, and for communities smaller than 20,000, it takes 60 months. This system exposes the statistical tradeoff between the reliability gained by increasing sample size and the accuracy that is sacrificed in the time it takes to do so.
- Esri Business Analyst. This proprietary software presents privately-generated market research data. In addition, it estimates Census and ACS data for geographic configurations other than Census-defined tracts, blocks, and places.

Also, it is important to note that 'Hispanic' is considered an ethnicity and not a race, and therefore Hispanic persons may be double-counted. In certain cases, this may cause the total percentages of race to add up to more than 100%.

3: Age and Gender Pyramid, %



ACS 5-Year Estimates 2010-2014

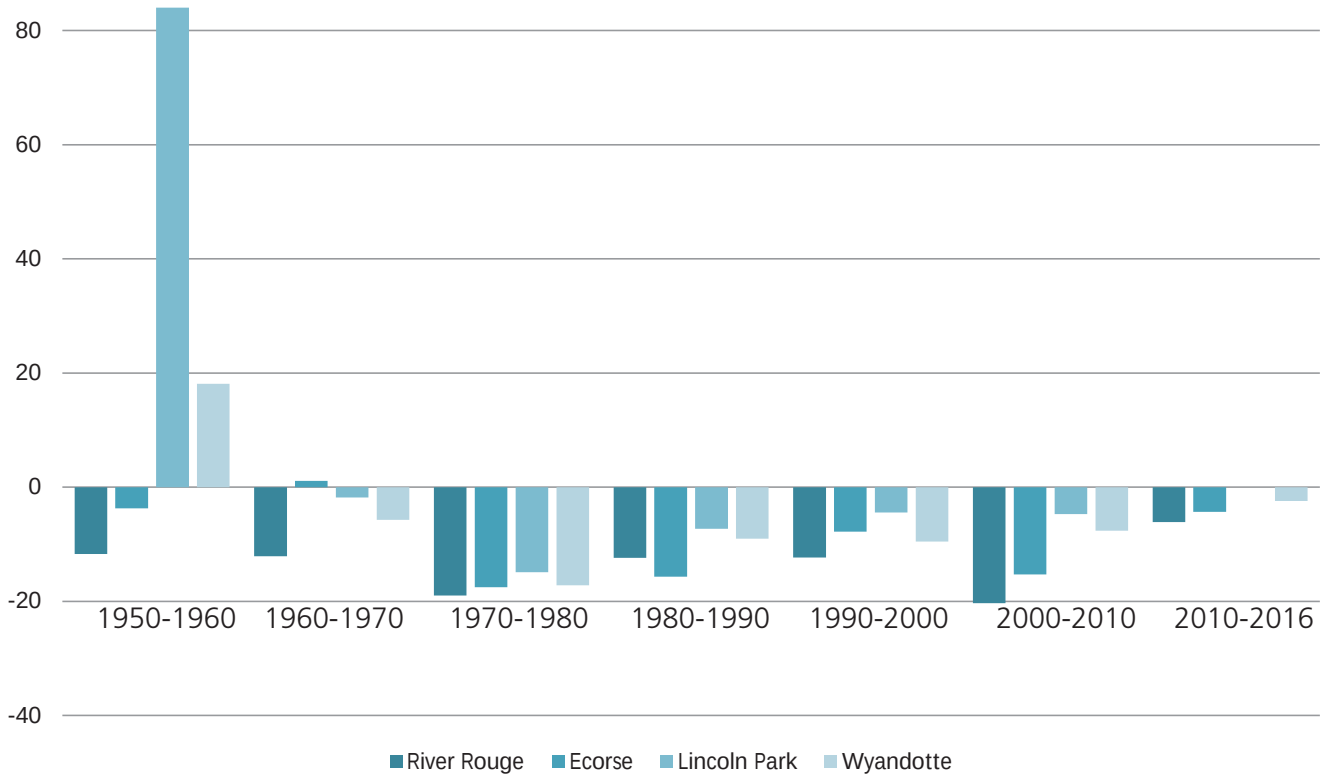
POPULATION AND AGE

River Rouge's population peaked in the 1950s at 20,549. According to 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates the population is about 7,673, or about 37% of its peak population. Since the last complete census in 2010, River Rouge lost close to 600 people. While many Detroit suburbs have experienced population decline over the last 50 years, River Rouge was the first, and its decline has been the quickest. River Rouge's population decline is happening in conjunction with population loss at the county level. Wayne County lost about 3.6% of its residents between 2010-2016, despite stable population growth in Southeast Michigan. The most recent growth is concentrated in Oakland, Macomb, and Livingston counties. River Rouge's loss can be partially explained by out-migration, but also by a national trend of smaller household sizes.

Population Projections

ESRI Business Analyst provides population projections five years into the future. ESRI predicts that the annual population growth will be -0.83%, leaving River Rouge with a population of 7,111 in 2021, a loss of approximately 560 people in the next five years. Population projections typically base forecasts on historic data, meaning that a myriad of unaccounted variables can affect

4: Population Growth



ACS 5-Year Estimates 2011-2015, SEMCOG Population and Household Estimates for Southeast Michigan

the forecast's accuracy such as the opening of a new major employer, construction of housing developments, immigration, etc.

Age Distribution

The median age in River Rouge is 34.7, about two years younger than the County and five years younger than the state of Michigan. River Rouge is following the national trend of an aging population, as the median age has increased by about two years every decade since 1970. As the Baby Boomers age, and the following generations have fewer children, the median age will naturally rise.

When grouped into different categories, stages of life as opposed to generations, it is easier to see where River Rouge is gaining and losing segments of the population. Below are the age categories used to broadly identify different life cycles:

- Pre-school: (5 and under): 8.2%
- School-aged (5-17): 18.2%
- Families (18-44): 51.5%
- Middle-aged (45-64): 26.4%
- Senior citizens (65+): 16.7%

Since the year 2000, the largest jump has been in the "families" category, increasing over 15%. However, a reflection of the emerging preference to have children later in life or not at all, the number of school-aged children dropped by almost 8%, despite an increase in family formation ages. It is also clear why the median age continues to rise; the middle-aged group and the seniors group grew by 7.6% and 6.1%, respectively. Because the population is not growing, but the median age continues advancing, this could indicate that River Rouge residents are aging in place.

As shown in the age and gender pyramid, there is a noticeable gap for men between ages 40-44, but not for women. The gap begins to emerge for men between ages 35-39 and takes a more dramatic shift in the following five year increment. Also, unlike other cities in Michigan, there is no decline amongst college-aged residents. This could mean that fewer residents are attending college or that the college-bound tend to remain in River Rouge while completing their degrees.

RACE

The racial makeup of River Rouge has changed dramatically in the last 15 years. Black or African-Americans have become the majority at 53% of the population, an 11% increase since 2000. Coincidentally, the white population's drop is almost equal at 12.5%. Between these two groups, 93.1% of the City is accounted for, with only 3.3% reported "some other race." One of the largest ethnic changes has been among Hispanics. This group has doubled in the last 15 years, growing from 5% of River Rouge residents to 11.8%. Again, please note that the percentages may exceed 100% because 'Hispanic' is not considered a race, and are counted separately. The largest nationality represented amongst the Latino/ Hispanic category is Mexican (9.6%).

Looking at the "Race" map discloses the potential legacy of housing segregation by race in River Rouge. The neighborhood west of the rail road line is almost entirely comprised of African-American with no other section of the City with such an intense racial concentration.

Foreign Born

There is an estimated 347 River Rouge resident that were born outside of the U.S. Of them, the vast majority come from Latin America (325), and about three-quarters are not U.S. citizens yet. Out of all the households in River Rouge, 10.2% speak languages other than English at home, but only 4.2% speak English less than "very well."

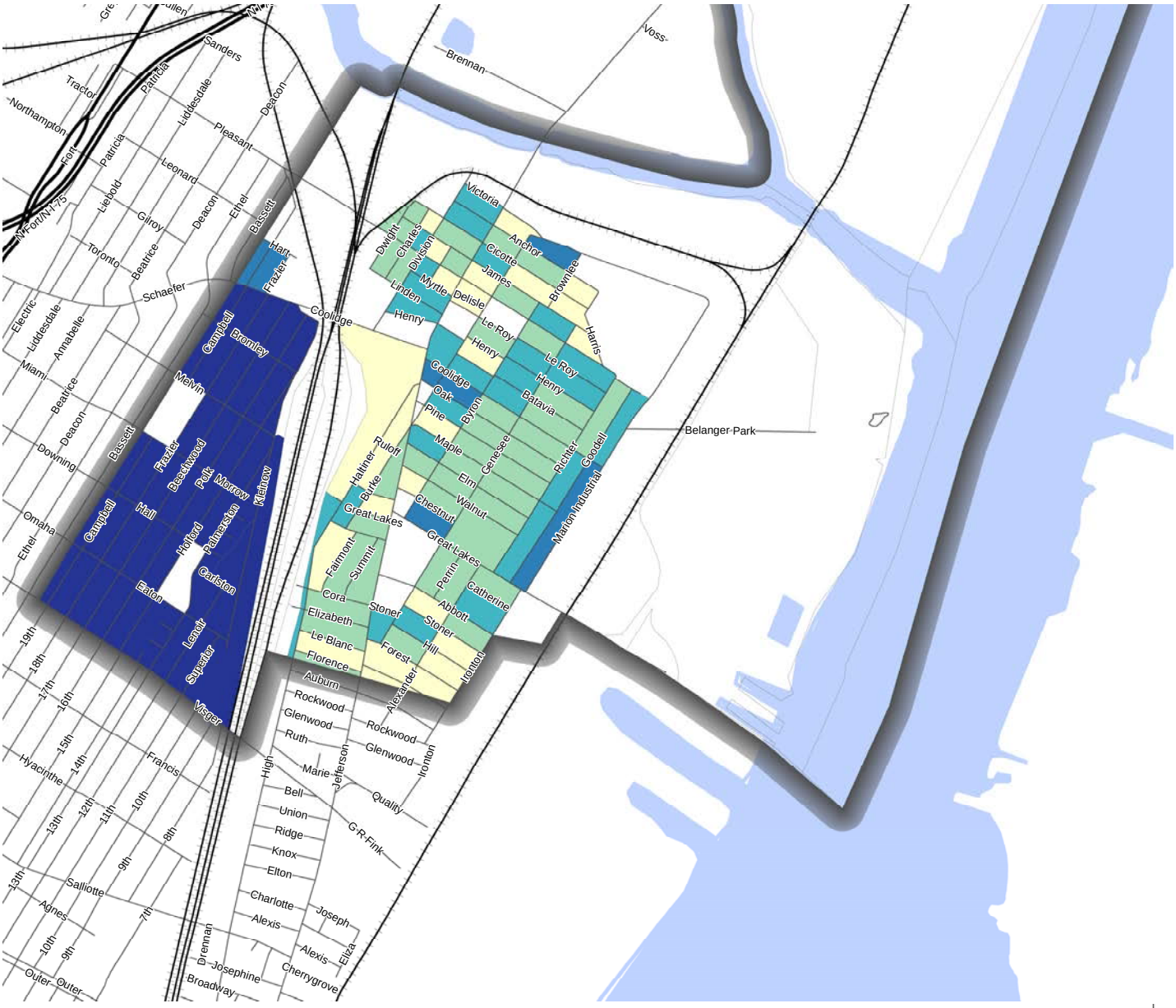
POVERTY

In a 12 month period between 2014-2015, 38.6% of families lived on an income below the poverty threshold. These rates are considerably higher than Wayne County and Michigan's respective family poverty rates of 19.9% and 11.9%. The poverty income thresholds depends on the number of people living in the household, but 44.4% of families make less than $25,000 annually which is slightly more than the federal poverty level for a family of four. With a female head of household and no husband present, the poverty rate increases to 62.2%, and when she has to care for children, the rate increases to 77.8%. This jump in poverty can also be attributed to

5: Poverty Threshold Guidelines, 2016

SIZE OF FAMILY UNIT	*POVERTY GUIDELINE*
One person under 65	$12,486
One person over 65	$11,511
Two people	
Householder under 65	$16,072
Householder over 65	$14,504
Three people	$18,774
Four people	$24,755
Five people	$29,854
Six people	$34,337
Seven people	$39,509
Eight people	$44,188
Nine people	$53,155

U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Thresholds for 2016



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Race by Block

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, U.S. Census Bureau

City Boundary
State Roads
All Roads
Railroads
Rivers / Streams
Lakes / Ponds

Percent African American:

0.0% - 10.0%
10.1% - 28.1%
28.2% - 45.8%
45.9% - 78.5%
78.6% - 100.0%
Unpopulated Blocks

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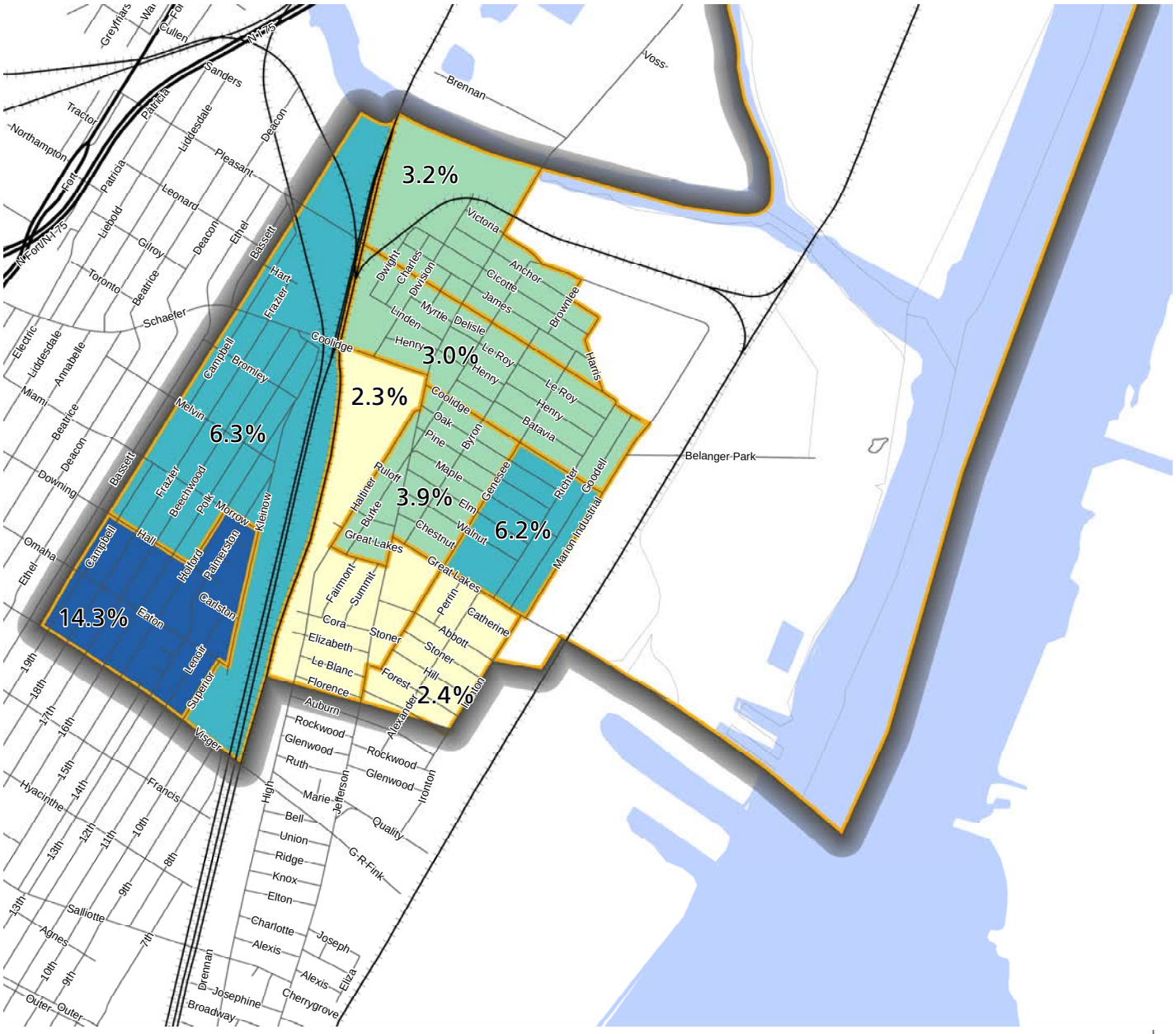

RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Poverty by Block Group

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, U.S. Census Bureau

0 0.5 1 Miles

City Boundary
State Roads
All Roads
Railroads
Rivers / Streams
Lakes / Ponds

Number of Households Below the Poverty Level:

Unpopulated Blocks
1 - 181 Households
182 - 298 Households
299 - 481 Households
481 - 1,094 Households

Block Group Boundary

Beckett&Raeder

the wage gap: in River Rouge the median earning for a full-time, year-round female worker is 75% of her male counterpart.

The childhood poverty rate is 54.4%. More than half of the children in River Rouge live in poverty! The factors contributing to poverty are multi-faceted and are examined as part of median household income (MHI), unemployment, and labor participation rate.

As can be seen by the "Poverty" map, poverty and race are highly correlated. West of the railroad line where the population ranges from 75%-100% African-American also has the greatest amount of households in living in poverty for a total of 1,575 households. The area with the third highest number of households in poverty, along Marion Industrial Road, has an African-American population of 45.6%-78.5%, and is sandwiched between higher income areas. That is to say, African-American and impoverished households are generally concentrated into the same neighborhoods.

Income & Employment

The median household income in River Rouge is $27,641 with a per capita income of $14,360, about half of Wayne County's MHI ($52,733) and 56% Michigan's ($49,576). Since 2000, the nominal median household income in River Rouge has dropped by $2,000. Also, since 2000 the percentage of those receiving a "wage and salary income" has dropped from 74.8% to 59.6%. However, the drop in wage earners does not correspond to an increase in public assistance, retirement income or social security income; in fact, the percentage of residents receiving public assistance dropped 2%. This means that a growing but unknown number of residents have little public financial support.

The unemployment rate provides some idea of the employment situation, but not the full picture. The unemployment rate is a measure of those actively looking for work but cannot find employment. River Rouge is an area of concentrated unemployment (26.0%), almost double that of Wayne County (14.9%).

There is a percentage of working-age people who have stopped looking for work, and are therefore not included in the unemployment figure. In that case, it is useful to look at the labor participation rate to understand how many working-aged individuals are employed and actively looking for work. The labor participation rate is 53.6%, meaning that only slightly more than half of those who can work are working. The civilian labor force has dropped by almost 1,100 people since 2000, from 4,250 to 3,157. As mentioned previously, this is in part due to due an aging population that is leaving the labor force.

Industry

Previously, industry in River Rouge clearly mirrored Wayne County. However in the last 15 years, there has been some divergence that may help explain the lower median household income, and a low labor participation rate in River Rouge.

Both locations have experienced about a 4% drop in manufacturing work, and in River Rouge a subsequent uptick of about 4% in retail trade. A loss in manufacturing, and a gain in retail likely results in lower wages, fewer than full-time hours, and a loss of benefits. Wayne County has not shared that fate as the rate of retail trade worked has stagnated within the same time period.

River Rouge has also not matched the County's push towards "new economy" jobs which are largely jobs in service-based industries such as health care, education, and professional services. In these areas, Wayne County has grown more, for example, the percentage of jobs in the "finance, insurance, and real estate" has doubled to 5.5%, whereas River Rouge dropped by half to 2.8%.

One positive shift for River Rouge has been growth in the "professional, scientific, and management" by 4.5 percentage points. Nationally, the economy is moving in this direction, and will likely be where employment opportunities expand.

Commuting Patterns

Given that River Rouge resident's commute time average (28.8 minutes) is 3 to 4 minutes longer than the County and state averages, there is some evidence that River Rouge residents must

8: Percentage of Workers by Occupation

	RIVER ROUGE 2000	WAYNE COUNTY 2000	RIVER ROUGE 2015	WAYNE COUNTY 2015
Agriculture	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.3
Construction	4.9	4.6	6.3	4.0
Manufacturing	21.5	21.8	17.0	16.7
Wholesale Trade	3.8	3.2	1.3	2.4
Retail Trade	10.6	10.7	14.1	10.9
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	6.7	6.4	8.4	6.0
Information	2.0	2.5	1.1	1.8
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	5.6	5.9	2.8	5.5
Professional, scientific, management	8.6	9.2	13.0	10.6
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food service	9.7	8.0	12.1	10.4
Educational, health, and social services	16.8	18.6	18.4	23.3
Other services	4.7	5.0	4.0	4.9
Public administration	4.5	4.0	1.4	3.4

2000 Decennial Census, 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates

9: Educational Attainment

	TOTAL POPULATION AGE 25+	% NO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	% HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	% SOME COLLEGE	% ASSOCIATES DEGREE	% BACHELOR'S DEGREE	% GRADUATE/ PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
River Rouge	2,128	22.9	38.8	21.1	5.3	4.3	3.3
Wayne County	1,170,589	10.6	30.3	24.5	7.9	13.4	8.6
Michigan	6,652,665	7.2	29.9	23.8	8.9	16.5	10.5

ACS 5-Year Estimates 2011-2015

look farther outside of their community for employment. This could prove problematic for the 549 residents without access to a vehicle.

However, more River Rouge residents rely on public transportation and carpooling than at the county and state level. Almost 16% of workers carpool compared to 9.7% in Wayne County, and 8.8% in Michigan. Also, 4% of workers use public transit, almost four times the state average of 1.4%.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment plays a huge role in a person's economic future, especially as more jobs require a bachelor's degree. More than 1 in 5 residents aged 25 or older do not have a high school diploma, compared to 1 in 10 in Wayne County. Furthermore, a considerable portion of high school graduates (21.1%) have achieved "some college" but only 4.3% have a bachelor's degree. This indicates a large portion of those starting college do not finish. This figure is quite low when compared to the County (13.4%) and the state (16.5%). Since 2000, the number of college-graduates residing in River Rouge has dropped by 1.2 percentage points.

There is a clear connection between level of education and economic stability. In general, the higher the level of education obtained, the more economic security a person experiences. For instance, in River Rouge the labor force participation rate is 93.4% for bachelor's degree holders, 60% for high school graduates, and 51.6% for those with less than a high school dipolma. The census data also shows that a college degree significantly reduces the likelihood of being unemployed. In River Rouge, the unemployment rate for those without a high school degree is 45.2%, 17.5% for high school graduates, 13.1% for people with an associate's degree or some college, and 5.4% for people with a bachelor's degree. This trend rings true for Wayne County and the State of Michigan too. Consequently, poverty rates are lower for residents with a college degree.

Vocational Training

In Wayne County there are also training programs in a range of fields for those who prefer a career that does not require a bachelor's degree. Focus:HOPE, a civil rights organization and SEMCA, the local MiWorks office, have partnered to provide free training for qualified students in information technology and machinist courses. Their Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides an accelerated path for high school students. Starting in their junior year,

students learn STEM curriculum and graduate with college credit for engineering technology and information technology. New as of Fall of 2016, Focus:HOPE began the American Apprenticeship Program so enrollees can gain hands-on experience.

DISABILITY STATUS

As is common in most communities, the disabled population is disproportionately represented by senior citizens (65 years or older). For example, 17.3% of residents have a disability, over one-third of whom (34.5%) are over 65 years old. The disabilities that have the largest impact on planning for the built environment are ambulatory and independent living difficulty. It is important for a municipality to have a grasp on these figures in order to tailor amenities and buildings towards all levels of ableness. Almost 20% of the population aged 65 years or older have difficulty living independently, 28.6% have ambulatory difficulty, and 9.4% have vision trouble.

It is important to track types of disabilities and how they change over time because residents with mobility and living constraints require different amenities to help them access recreational and housing opportunities. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act requires that site development provide reasonable access for the disabled. Universal design is a concept that strives to make products and environments usable for all people; the emphasis is building the appropriate design into the product as opposed to adapting existing products or creating a specialized product. This can help ease the pressure of accommodating changes in ability throughout the population.

Health Statistics

Unfortunately, Wayne County ranks last in measures of health in the State of Michigan. Based on the Robert Wood Johnson County Health rankings compiled in 2016, Wayne County is ranked 83rd of 83 counties in Michigan for health outcomes. Health outcomes are based on length and quality of life. Wayne County is also ranked last of 83 counties for health factors, which more specifically is a score for health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment (see Table for more detail). Since 2011, Wayne County has ranked either last or second to last in the state.

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is, and are measured by how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive. Health factors influence the health of a county, and are measured by health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical

10: Wayne County Health Rankings

WAYNE COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS	
HEALTH VARIABLE	*RANKING*
Health Outcomes	83
Length of Life	81
Quality of Life	83
Health Factors	83
Health Behaviors	83
Clinical Care	77
Social and Economic Factors	83
Physical Environmental	83

Source: 2016 County Health Rankings

environment factors.

Moreover, almost 88% of the County's residents are uninsured. At the county-level, the percentage of uninsured persons peaked in 2010, and fell in the subsequent years. However, starting in 2013, the trend has worsened, and those without health insurance is rising again. Using the ACS 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates to hone in on River Rouge shows that 13.8% of its residents are uninsured. When the uninsured are examined by demographic groups, the uninsured rates are highest between ages 25-34 (40.6%), those with less than a high school education (23.6%), and surprisingly those earning between $75,000-$100,00 annually (18.3%).

Interestingly, those who worked full-time in the past 12 months had a only a slightly lower uninsured rate (17.0%) than those who did not work at all (18.4%). This may provide some evidence that unemployed persons are better protected through state insurance such as Medicaid than through an employer. While those "who did not work at all" could be retired or disabled, the uninsured rate for those 65 years or older is 0%, and the uninsured rated for the disabled is 11.9%. These figures could also describe a situation in which employers may not be providing jobs with healthcare benefits to River Rouge residents.

River Rouge Planning Commissioner, Douglas Myers Jr., at a Sierra Club event in 2015 advocates for clean air in River Rouge due to high asthma rates in the area. http://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/blog/Volunteersathearing3.jpg

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EXISTING LAND USE

NATURAL FEATURES

Rouge River

The Rouge River originates in Oakland County and flows through Wayne County where it connects to the Detroit River next to Zug Island in the City of River Rouge. The river has always been an integral part to the success of River Rouge. According to the US Army Corps of Engineers, 6.7 million tons of material were either shipped or received in River Rouge in 2013. The large amount of material moving through Rouge River was facilitated by three feet of dredging that took place in 2012 to accommodate ships. This process should occur every 2-5 years but the harbor was not dredged in 2016. A reduction in the harbor's capacity could have stark consequences as it supports 53,949 jobs directly and indirectly, and produces $2.58 billion per year in income for transportation and commodity-related industries.

The channel that goes around Zug Island was not originally a part of the Rouge River. It is a man made channel dug in 1888 to connect the Rouge and Detroit Rivers. Known as the Short Canal, it was enlarged in the 1920s by Henry Ford to facilitate navigation by larger ships to the Ford River Rouge Complex.

In addition to being a major corridor with economic value, the river also offers some recreational opportunities. While most of the river is blocked by industry, Belanger Park allows residents and visitors access to the water. It's becoming a more significant destination as kayaking and other water sports grow in popularity in the region.

Detroit River

The Detroit River connects River Rouge to Lake Erie and is about 30 miles long. It is an important waterway because it is an international border between the United States and Canada. It was historically important because after 1817 when the Erie Canal was created, the Detroit River connected the region to the East Coast. The Detroit River is easy to navigate as there are no major tributaries (on the U.S. side), nor any dams or locks.

Wetlands and Floodplains

River Rouge no longer has wetlands, but there are still about 98 acres of potential wetland restoration areas. These areas, logically located along Rouge River, were likely wetlands pre-settlement. They have the potential to be restored because

of their hydrology, water source and quality, substrate makeup, plant material, etc. Wetlands are important because they form where dry land and water meet, and therefore play a huge role in water management for cities. Wetlands help reduce flooding, purify contamination in surface runoff, recharge groundwater supplies, produce oxygen, and add recreational opportunities to a community.

Because of their importance to both human and animal life, the state and federal legislation, chiefly the Natural Resources and Environmental Protect Act of 1994, require the preservation of or responsible management of wetlands. Part 303 of the MDEQ Wetlands Protection Act allows MDEQ to administer wetlands permitting at the State level.

Some of the potential wetlands restoration areas in the City are bound by and/or overlap with the floodplains. There is only one 100-year floodplain in River Rouge, on the northern part of the City covering about 60 residential parcels on parts of Brownlee, Anchor, Cicotte, and Harris Streets. A 100-year flood means that there is a 1% percent chance of a flood occurring in a year. When adding the 500-year floodplain, about 90 residential parcels could be affected. A 500-year flood refers to the 0.2% chance of flooding in a given year. While these seem like infrequently occurring events, this is merely a statistical chance, and flooding could occur more often, especially given that climate change predictions estimate more intense and frequent storms.

Parks

There are eight parks of varying sizes within the City that provide important respites from urban living. Memorial Park, River Rouge's most prominent park at the heart of the City, received a $300,000 Community Development Block Grant to build a splash pad. The splash pad will be 5,200 square feet with easy access to permanent bathrooms and pavilions. With construction beginning in the spring or summer of 2018, the area will have three different areas catered to different users: young children, teens, and families. The City is thrilled to be able to provide a safe place for children to socialize and exercise.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Industry

The history of River Rouge's industry and its impact on the City and its residents is no secret. The residents are surrounded by heavy and light industry which affects the quality of the air, soil, and water.

Many industries rely on an underground storage tank (UST) to store materials. An UST refers to any tank or underground piping connected to that tank that has at least 10% of its combined volume underground. Nearly all USTs in the U.S. contain petroleum. Until the 1980s, most USTs were made of bare steel which over time is likely to corrode, causing the contents to leak out into the soil. A leaking underground storage tank (LUST) is dangerous because petroleum

Wayne County Executive Warren Evans (left) and River Rouge Mayor Michael Bowdler (right) Displaying The Memorial Park Splash Pad Concept

RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

LUST and Brownfield Sites

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Parcels
- Brownfield Sites
- Open Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Sites
- Closed Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Sites

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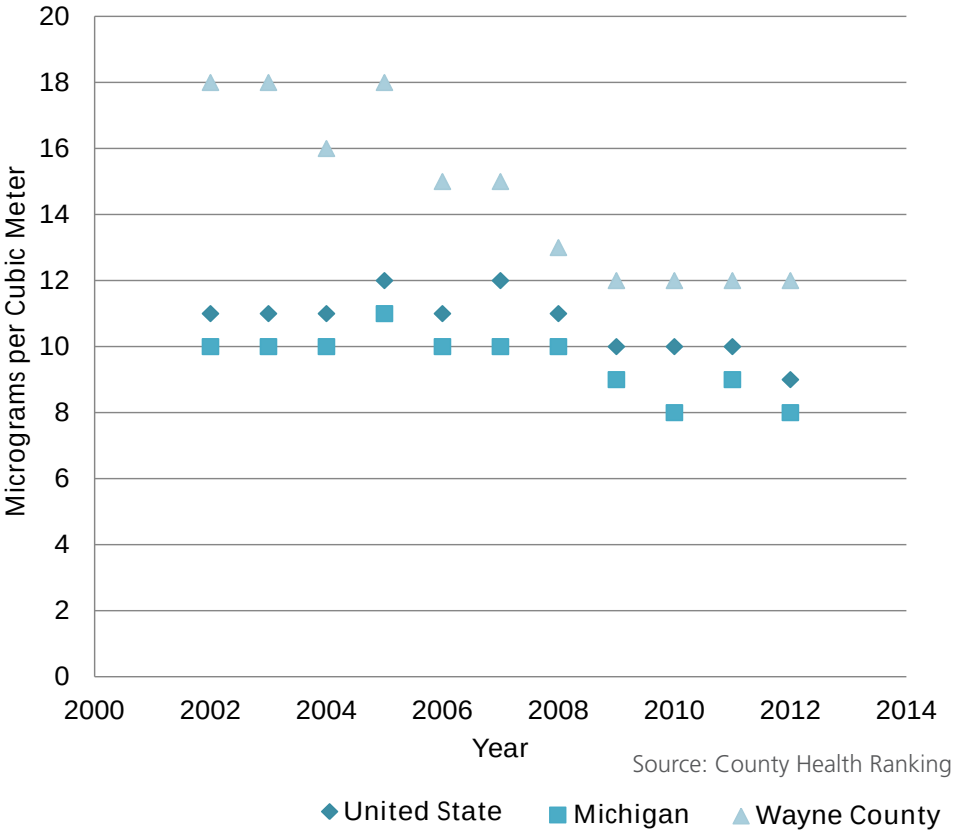
and other hazardous substances can contaminate the soil and groundwater. Since 1986, more than 21,800 LUSTs were found in Michigan. In River Rouge, there are 21 open USTs, 10 closed USTs, and 3 brownfields. An open LUST site means that a release has occurred but no corrective action has been completed to meet the land use criteria. A closed LUST is when a release has occurred and corrective action has been completed, however, the MDEQ may not have agreed with the action described in the closure report.

In 2016, 170 LUST Closure Reports were submitted, and 100 were approved demonstrating there is a huge backlog for cleaning up leakages. The same year, the state of Michigan reduced the deductible amount for owners and operators of LUSTs from $50,000 to $10,000 (for those with 8 USTs or more). The idea was that this would increase the number of closures, but that has not proven to be the case.

The following open LUSTs are from the following companies:

- Amoco Petroleum Products
- Mercury Manufacturing
- Gary Saab
- Million and One Services, Inc.
- National Steel-Great Lakes Division
- National Steel Corporation-Great Lakes Division
- River Rouge Animal Shelter
- Texaco Lubricant Company
- Wolverine Gasket & Manufacturing

12: Average Density of Fine Particulate Matter, 2002-2012



Source: County Health Ranking

Air Quality

The industrial land use has a negative affect on air quality as well. While emission standards have become more stringent over the last decade, the area still suffers from heightened exposure to particulate matter. The graph "Average Density of Fine Particulate Matter" shows that the average density of fine particulate matter has decreased substantially since 2002, but also that Wayne County started with much higher averages than the state and the nation. Exposure to particulate matter has many negative impacts to humans, nature, and infrastructure. The following are some of the effects:

- Exacerbates respiratory and cardiovascular ailments
- Linked to heart and lung diseases
- Reduced visibility, haze
- Damages paint, building materials, and surfaces
- Increases corrosion of metals
- Impacts vegetation ecosystems

Brownfield Sites

Brownfields are the result of abandoned or dilapidated structures and environmental contamination that makes it difficult to redevelop. When this happens, the consequences are wide reaching; these properties or land often contribute to public health and safety hazards as well economic stress. There are three brownfields in River Rouge, only one of which is located near an open LUST.

The City of River Rouge received funds from the Downriver Community Conference to complete a Phase 1 and Phase 2 clean up on a brownfield site

13: Existing Land Use Categories

LAND USE CATEGORY	NUMBER OF PARCELS	ACREAGE	% ACREAGE
Unknown	4	35.381	2.46%
Commercial - Improved	151	21.693	1.51%
Commercial - Vacant	55	7.538	0.52%
Exempt-Public and Religious	657	187.12	13.0%
Industrial - Improved	62	818.378	58.86%
Industrial - Vacant	37	96.949	6.74%
Residential - Improved	2539	241.901	16.81%
Residential - Vacant	387	29.948	2.08%
Residential Land Bank PA 260	5	0.475	0.03%
TOTAL	3,897	1,439.38	100.0%

River Rouge Assessment Data

located on Pleasant Road. As commonly happens in demolition, basements are left underground and whoever purchases the property is then liable for removing the concrete. This can cause a delay in the redevelopment process. River Rouge worked with the Department of Environmental Quality to fill the basement with clean soil as a way to remediate the site, and return it to productive use. River Rouge followed through with this process as a part of an economic development strategy to bring new business to the City. The site is now legally remediated and ready for new development.

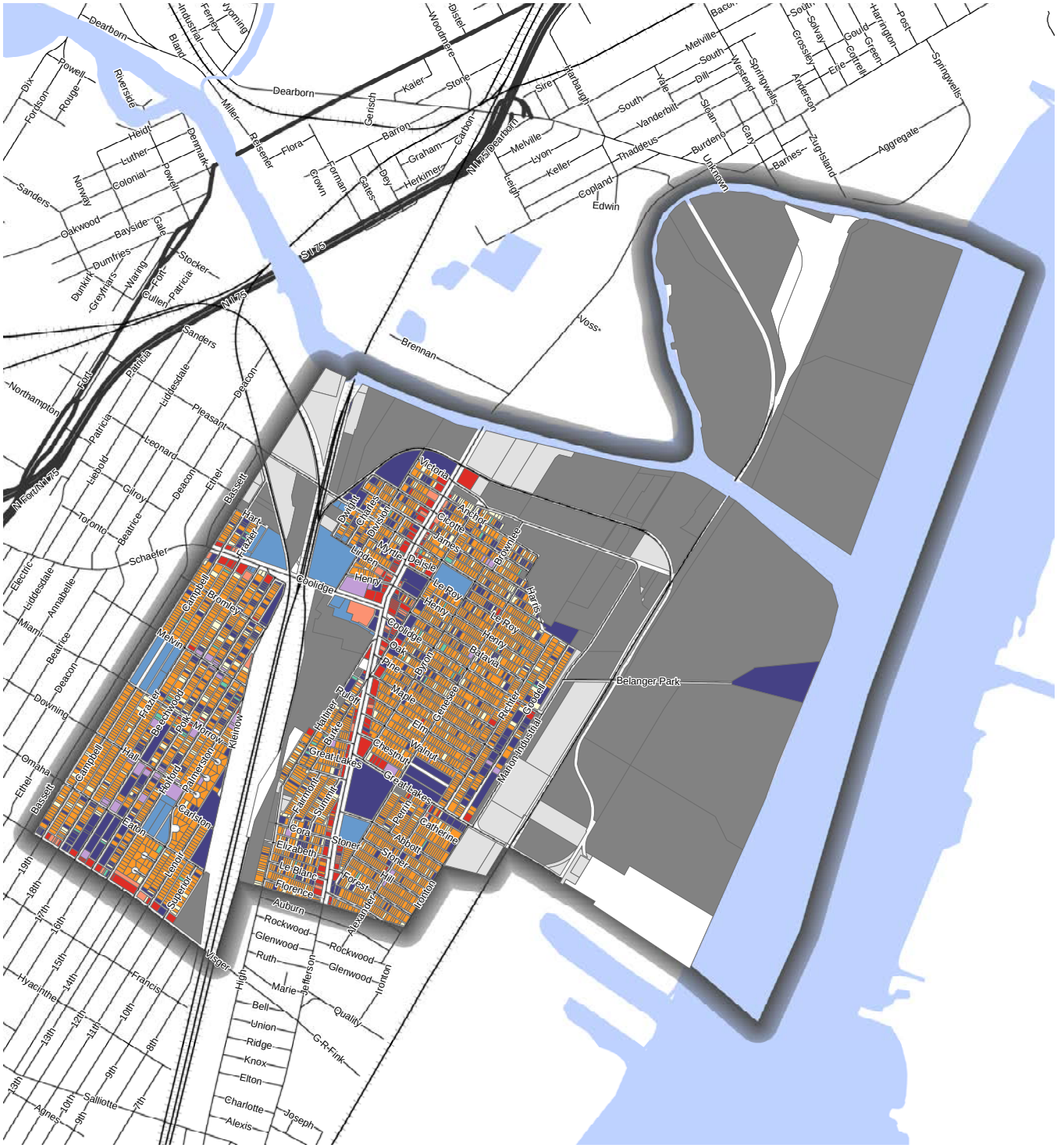
Energy Management

Beginning in 2016, the City of River Rouge and Ecoworks, through funding provided by the Michigan Energy Office, collaborated to assess the City's energy management system. Together, they worked to benchmark existing municipal building performance, implement energy management policies, and find funding sources for project implementation.

This collaboration has also led to two projects that have improved the energy efficiency of the library and City Hall. It is estimated that the new insulation and windows on the library will save the City $3,000 per year in energy expenditures. City Hall will replace its air handler and windows to reduce energy consumption. Prior to this most recent energy conscious effort, the City of River Rouge had installed rooftop solar photovoltaic cells on City Hall, and replaced all of the streetlights with light-emitting diodes (LEDs) which has saved the City thousands of dollars annually.

The City will continue its commitment to responsible energy management in several ways. The City has already established an energy usage baseline year for 13 municipal buildings (September 2014-August 2015) and will work towards adopting a revolving energy fund. The goal for the revolving energy fund is to use 80% of energy savings to pay for future clean energy investments. The revolving energy fund can also serve as way to educate municipal staff and residents about energy efficiency. The Community Development Director will serve as an energy leader liaison between the City and the energy management consultant.

In 2017, along with 25 other Michigan communities, River Rouge won an award from the statewide Michigan Green Communities Challenge for its commitment to sustainability projects. River Rouge received a bronze medal for establishing a revolving energy fund to improve the library's energy efficiency.



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Existing Land Use

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, City of River Rouge

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Residential - Improved
- Residential - Vacant
- Commercial - Improved
- Commercial - Vacant
- Schools / Colleges
- Religious / Churches
- Industrial - Improved
- Industrial - Vacant
- Land Bank Properties
- Government (City, County, State, Federal)
- Unknown

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Land Use Summary

The following section provides a brief description of how land is used in River Rouge, described by the larger zoning districts.

Residential

The largest number of parcels belongs to the residential improved category with 2,539 parcels. It is typically true that the majority of land use is dedicated to residential structures. To have the vast majority of vacant properties be improved is a good sign because it generally means that properties have remained occupied since last assessed.

Commercial

Commercial properties have a relatively small presence in River Rouge. Despite a combined 216 parcels, they account for just about 2% of the total acreage which means they are likely smaller buildings for retail and restaurants. The commercial parcels are clustered along West Jefferson Road, Coolidge Highway, and along the border with Ecorse.

Industrial

The improved industrial land use category has by far the greatest amount of acreage in the City. Taking up just over 818 acres, industry constitutes close to 60% of River Rouge's land. In addition, there are nearly another 100 acres of vacant industrial land. Together, they account for 65.6% of the land.

Exempt Land Uses

This category includes federal, state, and city land in addition to public schools, religious institutions, and land bank owned property. Together, these properties account for 13% of the land in River Rouge, on which the City cannot collect property taxes. However, none of them are categorized as vacant, so while they do not enhance the City's revenue they play a pivotal role in the civic life of its residents. A perfect example of properties that contribute to civic life in the community are the schools within the River Rouge School District:

- Ann Visger Preparatory Academy
- River Rouge STEM Academy
- River Rouge High School
- Sabbath Middle School

Vacant Parcels

When all of the vacant land use categories are combined, they account for 9.59% of the City's parcels. This is a considerable amount. Depending on how its used, vacant land can have a positive or negative effect on a neighborhood. A parcel without a structure can be converted in a public amenity such as a pocket park, but if left unmaintained it can add to the perception of blight. Equally important to the raw number of vacant parcels is how they are clustered. If vacant parcels are distributed evenly throughout the City, it may seem less visible to residents and/or investors. Residential vacancy is fairly evenly distributed throughout the City.

The most noticeable vacant land are the large swaths of industrial land located on:

- Marion Street bounded by Belanger Park Road on the north
- North of Marion Street adjacent to the Rouge River
- The northwest corner, north of Pleasant Street, bound by railroad track to the east.

While it is hard to say to what extent this vacancy affects the residents and the City, the land itself will need to be tested for contaminants and remediated accordingly before future development can take place.

Since commercial properties are generally limited to West Jefferson Avenue, it is easier to detect a concentration of 25 vacant commercial parcels on this street. While the vacancies are spaced out, the need for more business to fill the commercial corridor is still apparent.

There are also 387 vacant residential parcels, meaning that the structures have been abandoned. Vacant properties have a negative impact on the neighboring property values, and if they cannot be rehabilitated, it is best for the community to demolish them before they attract unwanted activity such as vandalism and illegal squatting.

Demolition

According to the River Rouge's Building Department, about 273 commercial and residential structures have been demolished since 2005. Since 2010 some of the residential demolitions have taken place as a result of the Hardest Hit Funds established by the federal government to help restore the neighborhoods. The state of Michigan has received approximately $381 million for blight elimination, most of which is concentrated in Wayne County.

Side Lot Program

The City of River Rouge has instituted a side lot program where adjacent property owners can buy a vacant lot for $100. The hope is that under ownership the parcel's appearance will be improved and benefit the entire neighborhood.

RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Vacant Properties

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, City of River Rouge

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Vacant Residential Properties
- Vacant Commercial Properties
- Vacant Industrial Properties
- Land Bank Properties

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DOWNTOWNS & DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS

Downtown

Downtown is the governmental and cultural center of a city. Likewise, it is typically a large employment hub and a place that attracts visitors to events and entertainment options. Downtowns are also the location where multi-modal forms of transit converge, and where pedestrians are given higher priority than in other districts. Here, pedestrians become potential clients. In River Rouge, the downtown takes on a linear shape as its core is one street: West Jefferson Avenue. River Rouge's downtown is managed in partnership between the City and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

River Rouge currently has two bus lines running through its downtown, but not the multi-modal network to draw people from outside the City to the downtown. On the other hand, there are 275 residential parcels that are within a quarter-mile walking distance to where West Jefferson Avenue and Coolidge Highway intersect, the heart of downtown. To have this many residents living so close is a boon for downtown. Building up housing density within this quarter-mile buffer could be even more advantageous as retail tends to follow rooftops.

Shopping Hubs

A shopping hub should differ from a downtown in a couple of ways. While the downtown is meant to provide a multi-faceted experience of dining, shopping, and entertainment, a shopping hub is typically designed for convenience. In River Rouge, however, the shopping hub and the downtown are one and the same. The shopping hub is primarily located on West Jefferson Avenue which is a car-oriented commercial corridor that accommodates commuters or those who do not wish to make shopping an experience; it's designed for those looking to make big purchase items, comparing prices, or running errands by car. The layout is usually characterized by larger building footprints surrounded by parking lots, and are not within close proximity to residential neighborhoods.

West Jefferson serves this purpose to River Rouge residents and those passing through. For example, some of the businesses on this street are Dairy Queen,

McDonald's, Bi-Rite Supermarket, Michigan Screen Print, BP gas station, a party store, etc. These businesses accommodate speedy or convenient shopping and eating over a leisurely retail experience.

Industrial

The industrial districts in River Rouge surrounds the City. Aside from industrial activity, these uses can also spur the development of complementary businesses representative of the New Economy. Manufacturing has the potential to contribute to jobs in other areas such as logistics, marketing, and administrative functions. This is the hope of industry-dominated cities.

While spin-off jobs would benefit the local economy, there is no guarantee that the offices are located in the same community. Headquarters for service-sector jobs could be located anywhere in the US, unlike industry, they are relatively footloose. Moreover, heavy industry emits toxins into the air and potentially the soil and waterways, and is usually accompanied by frequent semis transporting parts and products. Their vast footprint can be unsightly, if not buffered appropriately. An industrial landscape makes it difficult to attract other business to the area, younger individuals and households to work there.

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking is an approach to creating desirable places where people ***want*** to live, not just tolerate living. There are many tangible features that help to create a sense of place (discussed below), and when they are fully employed communities can emerge as thriving places with amenities, opportunity, and a mix of different lifestyles.

A part of placemaking is pride in civic spaces, and understanding that the design of these spaces influences how the public accesses and interacts with them. Cities should strive for a public realm that distinguishes it from others and gives its built environment a recognizable identity. The spaces we experience often—roads, sidewalks, parks, plazas—must not only be highly regarded and well implemented, they should also be well coordinated with private development for a high quality experience for all users.

Placemaking Elements

Build-to Lines

Build-to lines are a tool for creating a uniform building facade line on the street, sometimes known as a "street wall." Build-to lines usually have a setback of zero feet. If buildings frame a street, then the build-to-line explains how a building interfaces with the public realm. The building should relate to the streetscape in a way that is agreeable to pedestrians. For instance, a building that is too tall disrupts the human scale and can feel intimidating to newcomers.

River Rouge's buildings downtown do form a street wall, as evidenced by a walk audit that showed a equal distance between building fronts and the road.

Open Store Fronts

Open store fronts are another design feature that make

Boarded up building downtown

Billboards

Building Signage

downtown more inviting. A successful open store front creates "transparency," or an adequate amount of window for pedestrians to see into stores. Transparency has a couple of benefits: it allows pedestrian to window shop, and to feel safer on the street. A transparent store front allows for more "eyes on the street" that make even a solo pedestrian feel less alone or vulnerable.

River Rouge suffers from a high commercial vacancy rate downtown, making it difficult to feel safe. Some of the vacant storefronts have been boarded up, eliminating transparency altogether and suggesting blight instead. The buildings that are occupied have large windows but few displays. This is a signal of weak retail enterprise.

Ground Floor Signage Standards

Signage has an impactful influence on shoppers. Guidelines are necessary for a cohesive "look" for downtown while still permitting variety. Signs are meant to advertise for a company, but also be compatible with the architectural style and scale of the building. Sign standards may address legibility, placement, colors, materials, and illumination.

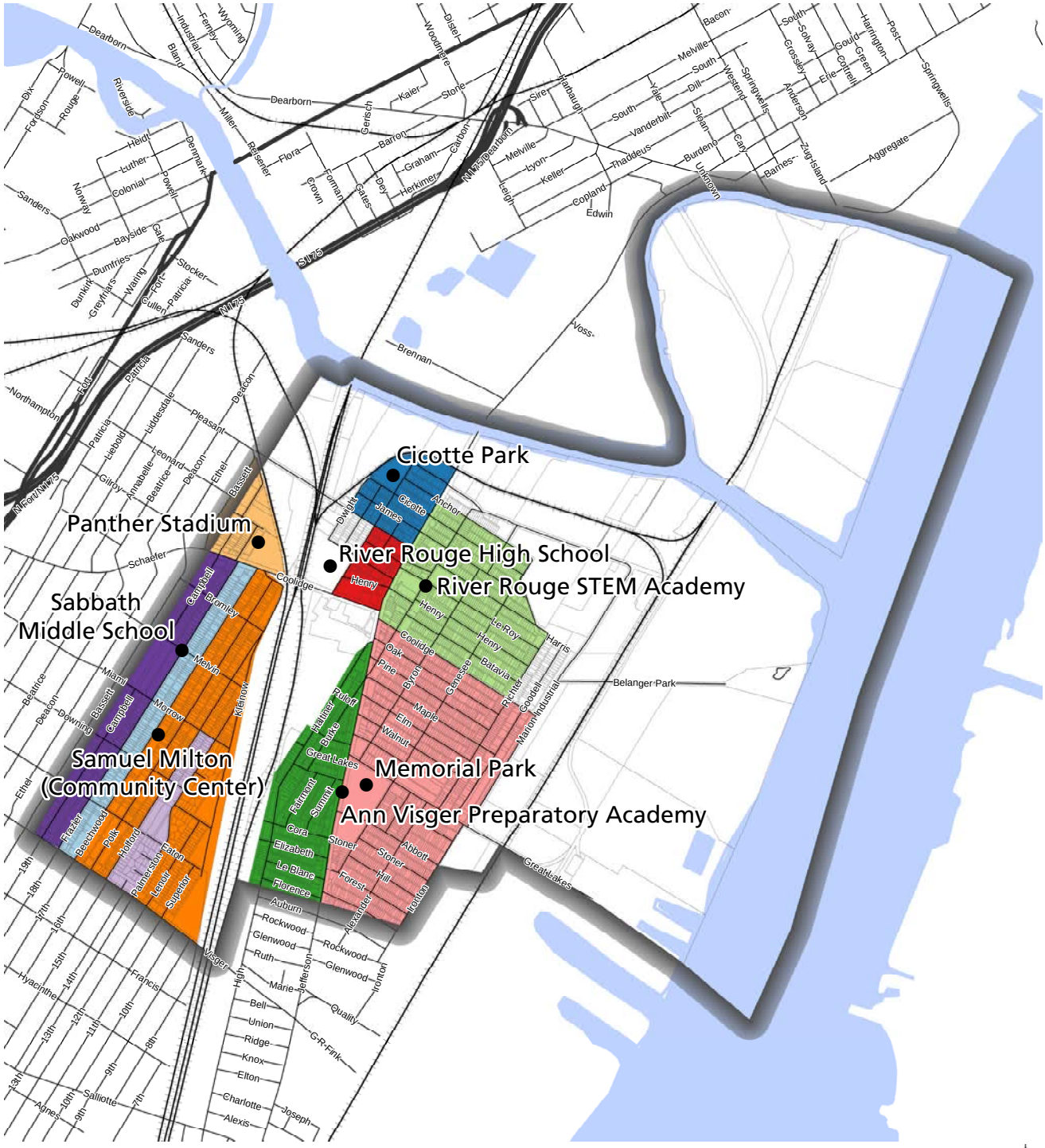
From one entrance into downtown, driving in from Coolidge Highway, a visitor is greeted by two billboards with a height that is meant to be seen from a distance. In general, billboards do not belong in downtown but rather on the side of a highway. Billboards detract from a downtown setting because their scale are not compatible with the quaintness of a Main Street.

Aside from the placement of the billboards on top of a building, most signs seemed to be placed in a similar location: between the window and the roof line, with slight variation. They are either flat against the building, on an awning, or jut out perpendicular to the facade. No signs are located in the windows. Having signs placed at an equal height creates a visual coherence that is also more legible for drivers passing by and pedestrians.

NEIGHBORHOOD TYPOLOGIES

River Rouge's neighborhoods are largely transected by three corridors: West Jefferson Avenue, Coolidge Highway, and the Canadian National rail line. These roads and rail lines serve as unofficial neighborhood boundaries. Typologies are a way

16: Neighborhood Typologies Map



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Neighborhood Typologies

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, City of River Rouge

0 0.5 1 Miles

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhoods:

- Beechwood Center Area
- Cicotte Park Area
- Dunn Park Area
- Haltiner Triangle
- Memorial Park Area
- Pleasant Area
- Stadium Area
- The Backstreet
- The Circle
- The Front Street

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Traditional urban neighborhood, East Pleasant Avenue

to categorize the various attributes of a complicated subject into a coherent grouping. Neighborhood typologies are important because not only do they evaluate density, housing type, road type, proximity to amenities, and setbacks, but also the residents' experience of living there. The combination of all of these attributes impact the residents' quality of life. As such, these typologies are the building blocks to a people-centered approach to planning. In addition, the "Neighborhood Typologies" map includes the centers, edges, and corridors that bound neighborhoods. With changing demographics and development needs, these typologies should be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changing preferences.

Neighborhood Centers

A neighborhood center is based on sense of place rather than geography. It can be an anchor institution, a landmark, or a frequently visited and adored location that serves its members in some way—a place to congregate socially or to conduct community matters, or both! Where possible, the "Neighborhood Typologies" map identifies a center for most of the neighborhoods.

Traditional Urban

All of River Rouge's neighborhoods fall into this category. Traditional urban residential development refers to higher density, single-family, usually detached homes. These areas can be a transition between downtown living and spacious residential areas; however, because River Rouge is bounded by another city on all sides, there are no spacious lots on the periphery. Multi-family units consist of duplexes or quadriplexes, but still not higher than three stories. Homes in this typology typically have setbacks of 2 to12 feet from the right of way, and sit on a street grid. Typically these homes are within walking distance to more amenities such as neighborhood schools, parks, community centers, and places of worship than in a suburban neighborhood.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement has been codified as part of the master planning process. Soliciting public feedback is an acknowledgment that in many ways the residents are the experts of their communities, and that their daily experiences and suggestions should serve as the foundation of the Master Plan.

METHOD

As a part of the community engagement, the Planning Commission drafted and approved a 29-question survey asking the residents how they would prioritize issues pertaining to housing, commercial, industrial, recreation, and transportation. The survey was then delivered door-to-door by the Mayor to reach out to the entire community. Of the approximate 2,700 surveys delivered, 27 were returned for about a 1% response rate. The survey link was also distributed for residents to take the survey online, however, all of the surveys were completed by hand. It is important to note that the results are therefore not totally representative of the population, and the findings of this survey should be viewed as providing direction for the resident's, but not as definitive results.

Project Rising Tide also developed a website where every community was represented with a promotional video, background documents, and the City's Action Strategy. Also, posted to this website is a bi-weekly update that recorded how the communities are progressing through the project's goals.

Survey Responses

Over half of the survey respondents have lived in River Rouge for over 20 years, with the highest proportion going to those who lived in the City for 40 years or more. As such, the results skewed towards residents who are aged 44 or older. No person under the age of 24 took the survey.

In terms of racial demographics, whites were over-represented in this survey accounting for about 52% of the respondents when they make up about 40% of the population. The next highest racial group to take the survey were African-Americans at about 35%, who were under-represented by about 18 percentage points. Only 4.4% of survey-takers were of Hispanic origin, and they comprise nearly 12% of River Rouge residents. There were no Asians or Native American who took the survey.

The income of the residents also fell slightly out of line with that of the community at large with about

70% earning less than $25,000 per year, compared to 60% earning that much in reality.

Description of River Rouge

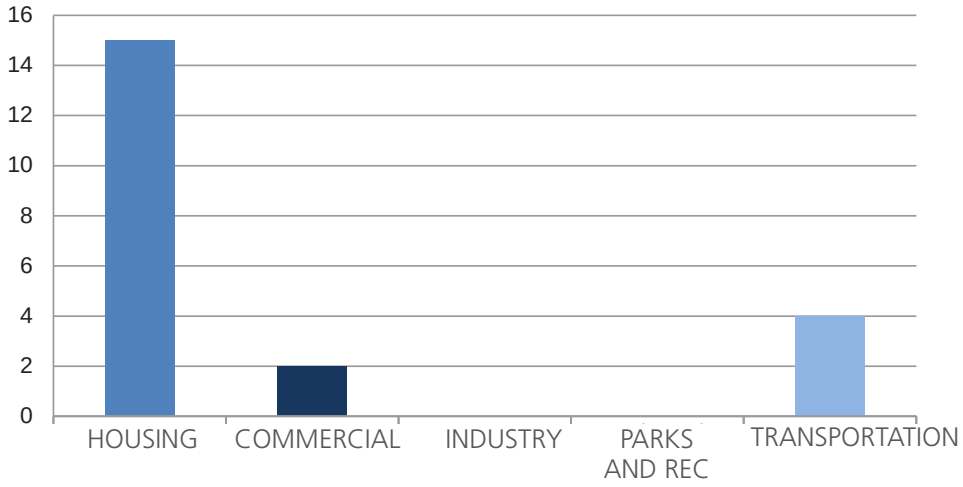
Interestingly, when asked to use one word to describe River Rouge as it is now, and one word you would like to use to describe River Rouge in the future, the most popular answer was the same. To describe the City currently, 14.3% said family, and 10% wished to describe the City the same way in the future. This is an indication of what keeps people in River Rouge is the people, and a strong tie to family. Some other positive descriptors were "fun," "resilient," and "community." Others reported less kind words such as "boring," "stagnant." For the future, residents hope to see a city that is "modern," "unique," "growing," and "safe."

Overall Priorities

With limited resources, it is a worthwhile exercise to see how the community would prioritize different components to improve the City. Overwhelmingly, respondents chose housing as a priority over commercial, industry, parks and recreation, or transportation. Parks and Recreation received equal votes for second and fourth priority. Commercial was consistently selected as a middling priority as third or fourth priority. Transportation also did not receive a clear response as it was selected

17: Community Engagement Results

How do you think the City of River should prioritize the following issues? A Summary of the Respondents First Choice



equally between first, third, fourth, and fifth position. Industry was clearly ranked most often as a last priority.

Housing

When asked to more specifically select what actions should be prioritized in terms of housing, there was a general consensus on "removing blighted structures" first. Half of the participants chose this as the number one priority. The following responses are listed by the percentage of votes for the number one priority:

1. Remove blighted structures (50%)
2. Convert 2nd floor space into apartments on West Jefferson Avenue (25%)
3. Code enforcement (15%)
4. New construction of alternatives to single-family housing (10%)

The community's biggest concern is housing appearance. This makes sense because it has a big impact on the neighborhood, and the adjacent property owner's ability to sell their homes. Secondly, blighted structures can attract unsavory activities that make neighborhoods appear dangerous and disorganized. There was also a preference for using underutilized building stock over new construction.

Later in the survey, residents were asked what type of housing development they would support. The most common answer (76.2%) was detached single-family homes. Single-family homes already comprise the majority of housing stock and a strong response in favor of more of this housing type indicates that residents want to see River Rouge return to its suburban past. There is considerable request for other formats, the

most popular being lofts and flats (38.1%), then duplexes (28.6%), and townhomes (23.8%). This is an interesting finding given that another study, the Target Market Analysis (found in the Housing Section), recommends development of housing alternatives to single-family homes. Given the difference between public opinion and the TMA, there may need to be further discussion about the advantages and disadvantages for a City with only one dominant housing type.

Commercial

This question asked residents how they would prioritize commercial issues. The following responses are listed by the percentage of votes received for the number one priority:

1. Business recruitment (35%)
2. Business retention and physical improvements to the commercial corridor (2-way tie at 25%)
3. Business training programs (10%)
4. Collective marketing (5%)

The priority for residents is to bring new business to River Rouge. A slight preference for business recruitment over business retention could imply that residents are not satisfied with the type, quantity, or quality of existing businesses. A low vote for business training could be because the majority of the participants were senior citizens and are uninterested in training, but also that residents would rather draw in business than start their own.

Residents also had the opportunity in this survey to report what type of retail they would like to see come to River Rouge. General merchandise and department stores received equal votes at 56%, followed by clothing stores at 44% of the votes. These retail options illustrate that residents cannot find basic goods within their community. Convenience shopping must be done elsewhere.

Survey-takers also reported that when they cannot find the retail options they are looking for, 69.6% of them will go to Lincoln Park, the neighboring City. A little less than half of the respondents (47.8%) said they go to Allen Park to meet their retails needs.

As for meeting their entertainment needs, residents noted a desired for a movie theatre (80%), and a full-service restaurant (60%). ESRI Business Analyst supports these responses; in the last 6 months, over 53% of residents attended a movie, and 35% went out to dine. The option for adding a bar received zero votes. To find these entertainment options, residents' responses are varied. The most common response was "other" which reported primarily Southgate and Taylor. The next most common response was Detroit with 39% of the vote. These findings show that residents have to travel quite far for entertainment and would prefer to have options within the City.

Industrial

This question asked residents how they would prioritize industrial issues. The following responses are listed by the percentage of votes received for the number one priority:

1. Air quality (70%)
2. Water quality and redevelopment of DTE site (2-way tie at 10%)
3. Encroachment on residential neighborhoods and tax abatement (2-way tie at 5%)
4. Soil quality (0%)

Survey participants are most concerned with air quality, possibly because it has a more noticeable effect than water and soil quality which received considerably fewer votes. Despite the DTE plant leaving a huge gap in the City's economic profile, few of the respondents were concerned about the economic consequences, again perhaps due to the age of the respondents who do not rely on DTE for employment.

Recreation

This question asked residents how they would prioritize recreational issues. The following responses are listed by the percentage of votes received for the number one priority:

1. Maintain existing facilities (52.6%)
2. Upgrade existing facilities (36.8%)
3. Develop new facilities (10.5%)
4. Acquire new land for parks and

recreation (0%)

The order of these responses are logical as a city would likely improve maintenance of existing facilities if given the resources, rather than upgrade them first. Also, no votes for acquiring new land would suggest that the residents are happy with the current amount of land dedicated to recreation, or do not believe there is any land available for purchase.

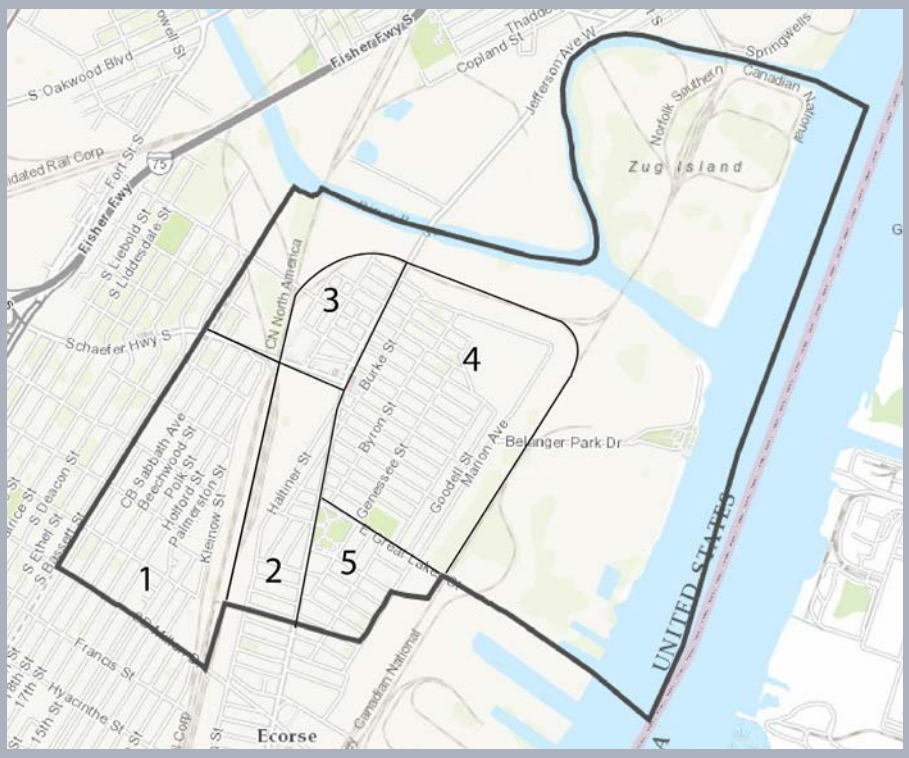
This section also asked residents if they support the vacant post office to be converted into a community boxing center. Over 72% of respondents either "support" or "strongly support" this conversion. No one opposed the idea, but 11.5% of respondents strongly oppose this development, although it is unknown why. Further community engagement should be considered before initiating re-development of the site.

Transportation

This question asked residents how they would prioritize transportation issues. The following responses are listed by the percentage of votes received for the number one priority:

1. Increase bus frequency (47.3%)
2. Improve quality of roads (36.8%)
3. Add bicycle lanes (15.8%)
4. Improve walkability (0%)

Given that many residents leave River Rouge for employment, increased bus frequency would make job opportunities more



Map of River Rouge used in the community engagement survey

The top housing priority for residents is to demolish blighted structures, particularly those which have been subject to considerable fire damage

accessible or the daily commute more flexible. The next most common response is to improve road quality. This was also likely have to happen before a city could add more bicycle lanes or improve walkability. "Improve walkability" received no votes; although this could be because it is not a priority or because respondents feel that the City is already walkable.

Neighborhoods

The purpose of this question was to put residents in the role of a City official. The question refers participants to a map of River Rouge with five neighborhoods delineated, seen on page 41, and asks them to imagine they were given $100. How would they divide these funds amongst the five neighborhoods for housing demolition? The majority of survey-takers,19 of the 27 respondents, skipped this question. For the eight people that responded, the average amount spent were roughly equal between the neighborhoods with about $24 given to each. The favored approach is to spread the funds evenly throughout the City as opposed to focusing on one area. Given that the "Vacant Properties" map (shown in the Economics Section) shows that there is not a major clustering of vacant homes, an even spread of demolition funds may be best.

Respondents were then asked to select the top criterion for deciding where to demolish homes. Almost 43% replied that the "condition of the home" was the top criterion, followed by the "concentration of blighted homes" (33.3%). Tied

City of River Rouge, River Rouge Days

City of River Rouge, River Rouge Days

at 9.5% were the options "high visibility in the community" and "amount of unwanted activity taking place in the home." Surprisingly, receiving the fewest votes was "severity of unwanted activity taking place in the home" with 4.8% of the votes. Residents are more concerned with the visible impact of blighted housing.

Events

The question "what is an event in River Rouge that you consider fun" is meant to gauge what residents consider to be an asset to the community. This question helps to understand where to draw momentum for events that generate civic pride. Sixty percent of the survey participants filled in "Rouge Days" as a fun event. Secondly, respondents wrote "music in the park." This is valuable information because it demonstrates that efforts to build community ties through events is appreciated. River Rouge residents enjoy coming together for communal events.

In the same vein, the survey wanted to discover some of the residents favorite places in the City. When asked, the parks received the highest praise, naming Belanger and Memorial park primarily. Another favorite is the Senior Center. Again, this is uplifting news as residents consistently state that publicly run, community-based amenities are among their favorite places.

SWOT Analysis

As a part of the Rising Tide planning process, River Rouge received a specialized Economic Development Strategy that provides a series of steps to improve River Rouge's downtown prospects. During this analysis, a SWOT was conducted with the community to determine the City's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Conducted on May 18th, 2017, the session began with the participants listing all of their SWOT examples before prioritizing them. Each participant was given twelve stickers of which they placed three for each SWOT category. The stickers were weighted so that each participant could rank his/her top three priorities for each category.

Top Strengths

- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)/Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
- New plans
- Stable homeownership

The residents were pleased with how the City is managed as both the DDA and the EDC were called out as strengths. The community at large also sees the influx of new plans from the Rising Tide Initiative along with the Corridor Plan for West Jefferson as beneficial for planning the City's future. Residents listed "stable homeownership" which seems counterintuitive at first considering the high vacancy number. However, this weakness suggests that the blighted properties are largely in the hands of landlords, as noted in the "threats" category, instead of owner-occupied units.

Top Weaknesses

- Drug problem
- Race relations
- No grocery store

A drug problem can also spiral out into many other negative effects such creating a reputation that River Rouge is dangerous. Also, drug dealers can disincentivize others from legitimate work if they can offer more money than a local business.

The weakness "race relations" was not expanded upon in much detail. It is not clear where exactly the tension lies. Upon hearing this the Planning Commission decided to continue to promote River Rouge as a place of diversity of inclusiveness.

One of the top weaknesses, not having a grocery store, has already being proactively addressed. The City is already looking to recruit grocery stores to River Rouge in a larger building to help drive the cost of food down.

Top Opportunities

- Gordie Howe International Bridge (GHIB)
- Available grants
- More collaboration

The opportunities' top scores were clustered close together. The GHIB is expected to bring a lot of business to River Rouge which is welcomed after the Bascule Bridge closure. Residents also see grant-writing efforts and both intra- and

inter- City collaboration as an opportunity for economic growth.

Threats

- DTE closure/ tax base loss
- Absentee landlords
- Aging population

The threats identified could have a large impact on the City's future. The DTE closure was noted as the largest threat receiving twice as many votes as the others. The loss of the DTE plant will reduce the City's revenue substantially, which could mean that the City has to reduce its staff or services. Fortunately, the county is dedicated to transitioning the site to another use that could benefit the City.

Another major threat is absentee landlords who are not invested in the community and contribute to the number of blighted properties in the City. As property values rise and demolition persists, the instances of absenteeism will likely diminish as it will become more expensive for them to hold empty or unkempt property.

The participants were also worried about an aging population. The census shows quite a young median age of about 34 years old. However, as was pointed out, it is possible that the younger residents are transient and do not stay long. In general, the elderly are the residents who have lived in River Rouge the longest. It is likely that, despite census data, River Rouge is aging in step with the state and the rest of the country.

Crumbling buildings in River Rouge may be prevented with proper upkeep and dedicated landlords

Now vacant parcels once comprised a solid base for City tax revenue; with the imminent DTE Closure, it is important to find stability in the tax base

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HOUSING

HOUSING DATA

The data presented in this section is from the 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates and is used to supplement observations made from fieldwork.

River Rouge has 3,826 housing units, with an overall vacancy rate of 27.6%, leaving about 1,057 housing units vacant. Of all the occupied housing units, 57.1% are owner-occupied, and 42.9% are renter-occupied. Homeownership rates in River Rouge are lower than the county (63.0%) and the state (71.0%).

The majority of homes in River Rouge are single-family detached (68.3%). The City has a very small proportion of 1-unit attached housing (0.7%). Most of the multi-family units are relatively small scale: 11.3% are 2 units, and 10.7% are 3 or 4 units. Such a small proportion of attached and multi-family units may affect what types of demographics are attracted to moving into the City. Younger professionals and students prefer smaller, more affordable units, and currently River Rouge lacks this type of housing.

Household Size & Type

The average household size is 2.71 for owner-occupied households and 2.85 for renter-occupied households, not a considerable difference by tenure. The average household size has not changed since 2000. Nationally, the average household size continues to decline; however, in areas with high unemployment and low median household incomes, household size may increase. Residents struggling financially may form non traditional households to share the housing cost burden. This is not yet reflected in the housing data in River Rouge because the vast majority of nonfamily households (84.9%) live alone.

More than two-thirds of households are headed by a family unit (68.8%) which include the following:

- Married-couple
- Male householder, no wife present
- Female householder, no man present

31.9% of occupied housing units are nonfamily households and include:

- Living alone
- Not living alone (non relative roommates,or with unmarried spouse)

Home Values

The median housing value in River

Rouge is estimated at $34,100. Three-quarters of homes are valued under $50,000 (75.8%). Likely due to the Great Recession when home values collapsed nationwide, the median housing value has fallen by about $10,000 since 2000. The values have not rebounded.

The median monthly mortgage payment is $989. Homeowners who dedicate more than 30% of their gross monthly income towards their mortgage are considered "cost-burdened." One-third of homeowners are considered cost-burdened. Moreover, in addition to being cost-burdened, many homeowners have lost significant value in their homes. In 2009, the median home value was $65,200 and in 2015 the estimated median home value was $34,100. Homeownership in River Rouge does not prevent households from financially precarious situations, although overall they are in a better spot than renters. A higher portion of renters suffer from being cost-burdened (see below).

Gross Rent

The median gross rent is $681. Tenants who pay more than 30% of their gross monthly income towards rent are considered "cost-burdened." Over two-thirds (67.7%) of renters are cost-burdened by their rent revealing that renters are in a severely more financially precarious situation than homeowners. And, perhaps explains the increase of single-family homes being converted into units with multiple tenants. Since the year 2000, the median gross rent has almost doubled from $358 to $681. Despite a decreasing population and decreasing wages, the demand for rental housing, and therefore the prices, has increased because people cannot afford to buy homes.

18: Housing Assessment Scoring

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
0 (Demolition)	House is not structurally sound
1 (Poor)	Needs two or more major repairs
2 (Fair)	Needs three or more minor repairs, but no more than one major repair
3 (Good)	Needs 2 or fewer minor repairs

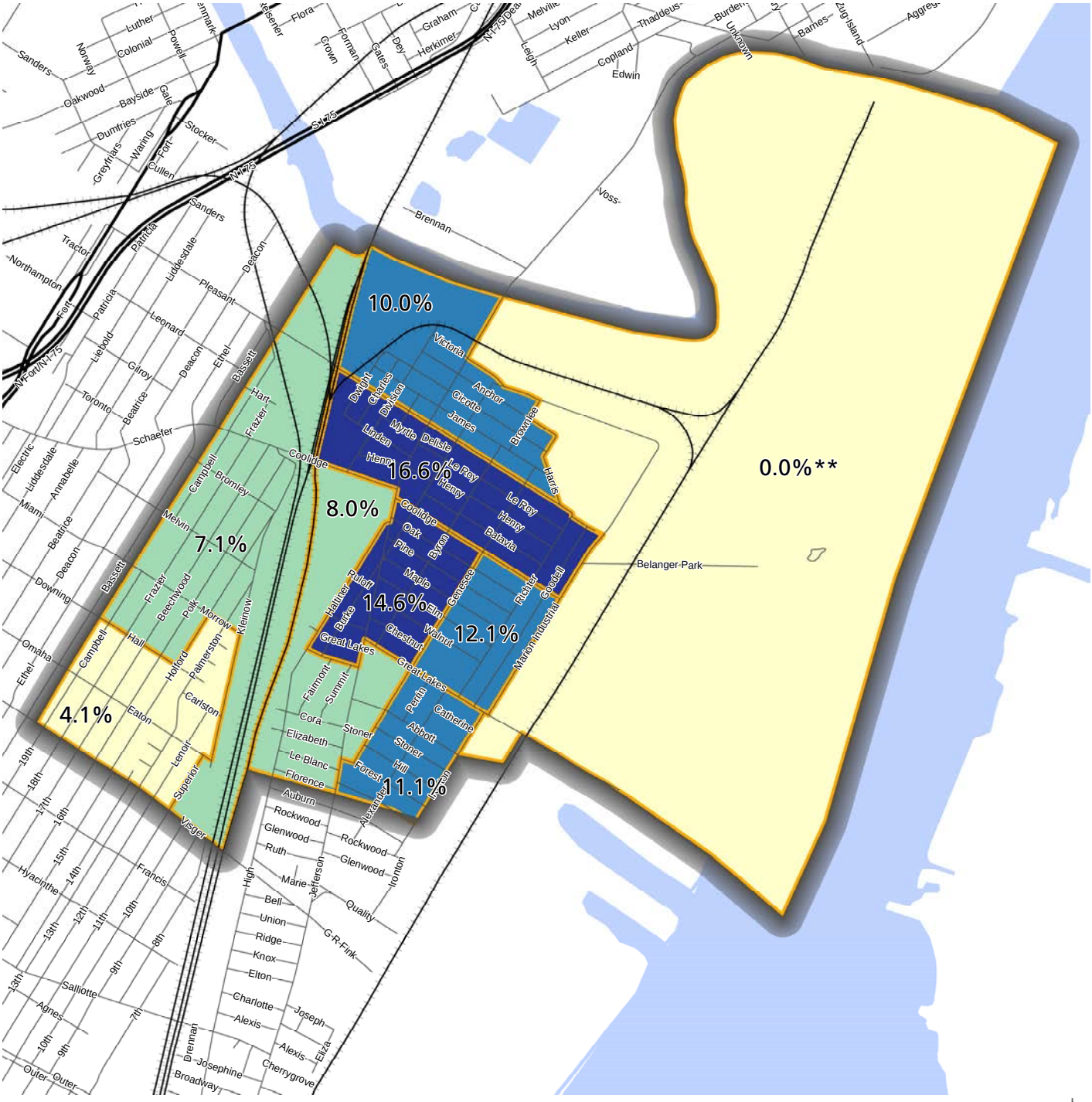
Age of Housing Stock

Since 2014, no new housing units have been built. Just over 50 units have been built since 2000. River Rouge's housing stock continues to age; over half of the housing units were built before 1939 (56.4%). The map titled "Housing Units Built Before 1940" shows the largest concentration occurs in the center of the City. The next largest concentration of housing built prior to 1940 is located next to industrial uses along Marion Industrial Road and north of Pleasant Avenue. Interestingly, the area in the farthest south western corner, where both poverty and African-Americans are clustered, is also where the smallest proportion of the oldest housing stock (the area with 0.0% is all industrial land uses).

HOUSING ASSESSMENT

An assessment of River Rouge's housing stock found the majority of the housing exteriors to be in good condition. A housing unit can be a detached, single-family home, an attached home, an apartment or condo in a multi-family building. A unit is different than a structure, because one structure could contain several housing units. This is an important distinction because only data on housing structures was collected, which precludes an assessment on individual units if located inside a structure. No interior assessment was conducted.

As a part of the housing analysis, a



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Housing Units Built Before 1940

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, U.S. Census Bureau

City Boundary
State Roads
All Roads
Railroads
Rivers / Streams
Lakes / Ponds

Number of Households Built Before 1940:

20 - 158 Households
159 - 305 Households
306 - 463 Households
463 - 637 Households

Block Group Boundary

**Twenty housing units were built here prior to 1940 but no occupied housing remains in this block group

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team visited a sample of 22.4% of the total 3,826 housing structures in River Rouge. Assessing the housing conditions was based on the amount and severity of damage visible on the exterior of the home on major household features. The scoring system was based primarily on assessing the quality of the structure; therefore structural damage such as missing windows or a building that leans lowers the score more so than chipped paint, for example. The types of repairs were categorized as "major," "minor," or "no problem," and the final score depended on the combination of major and minor repairs recorded. Using the checklist, the team ranked homes on a scale of 0 to 3.

The ArcGIS collector app used during fieldwork allows for immediate data collection and compilation. As an online mapping platform, it allows for the collection of a variety of features, and saves the information directly to "the cloud" for easy accessibility and updating. For example, during fieldwork the user can place a point and label it as a "point of interest" for a community center, and then take a photo and attach it to that location. These maps can also be shared, and the data expressed as desired with a wide range of options. This method allows for more precise data collection, and a better reference for decision-making.

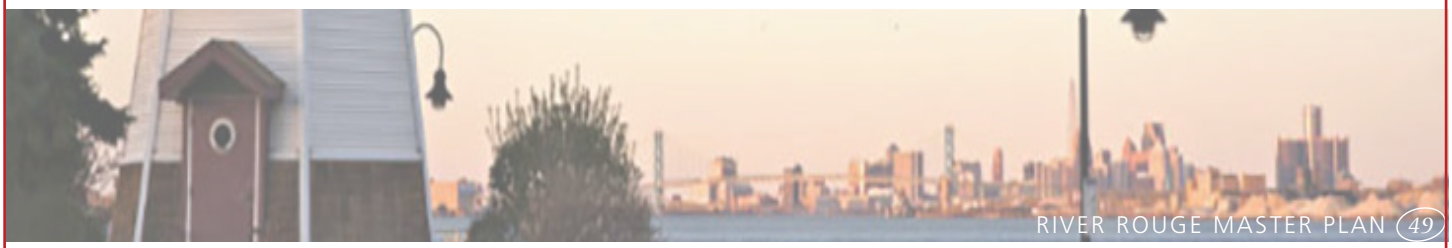
20: Boarded Homes by Block

BLOCK NUMBER	BOARDED HOMES
1	4
2	2
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	4
7	1
8	6
9	3
10	3
11	1
12	2
13	1
TOTAL	32

Fieldwork November 2016

21: Housing Checklist Example

HOUSING FEATURE	TYPE OF REPAIR NEEDED			
	Major	Minor		Notes
Building frame/ structure	The building is not straight; leans or tilts	Building is not leaning; but foundation is in need of minor repairs or is missing material		
Roof/chimney/ gutters	A lot of deterioration, missing material, holes in roof, or sagging roof	Minor deterioration, improper roof repair, some mortar missing from chimney, gutters in need of repair	X	Some roof shingles are loose
Windows/doors	Windows missing, doors missing or rotted	Window frames need replacing or paint is peeling		
Siding/paint	Building missing many bricks, wood siding is rotted	Some peeling or cracking paint	X	Paint is chipping
Porch	Significant deterioration; steps missing, porch sagging, supports holding up porch are rotted	Separation of the porch from the building, paint needed		
SCORE: 3			GOOD	GOOD



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Housing Condition

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS

0 0.3 0.6 Miles

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Parcels
- Great Quality
- Average Quality
- Poor Quality
- Demolition Recommended
- Vacant

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In River Rouge, the features collected included housing quality, number of boarded houses, points of interest, and photos that were spatially linked to their location. With this type of comprehensive housing data, it becomes clear if there is any clustering of poorly maintained homes, and where to target any programs or assistance.

The condition of River Rouge's housing stock is varied. Of the 858 housing units the team sampled, 669 were ranked "good" (78.0%). 113 or 13.1% were ranked "fair" and 38 were ranked "poor" (4.4%). Two were ranked zero for "demolish." The homes that were ranked poorly are primarily located east of the CN North America rail line, with just two falling west of the railroad. Homes ranked "fair" and "good" do not have a clear-cut spatial pattern, and are spread fairly evenly throughout the City.

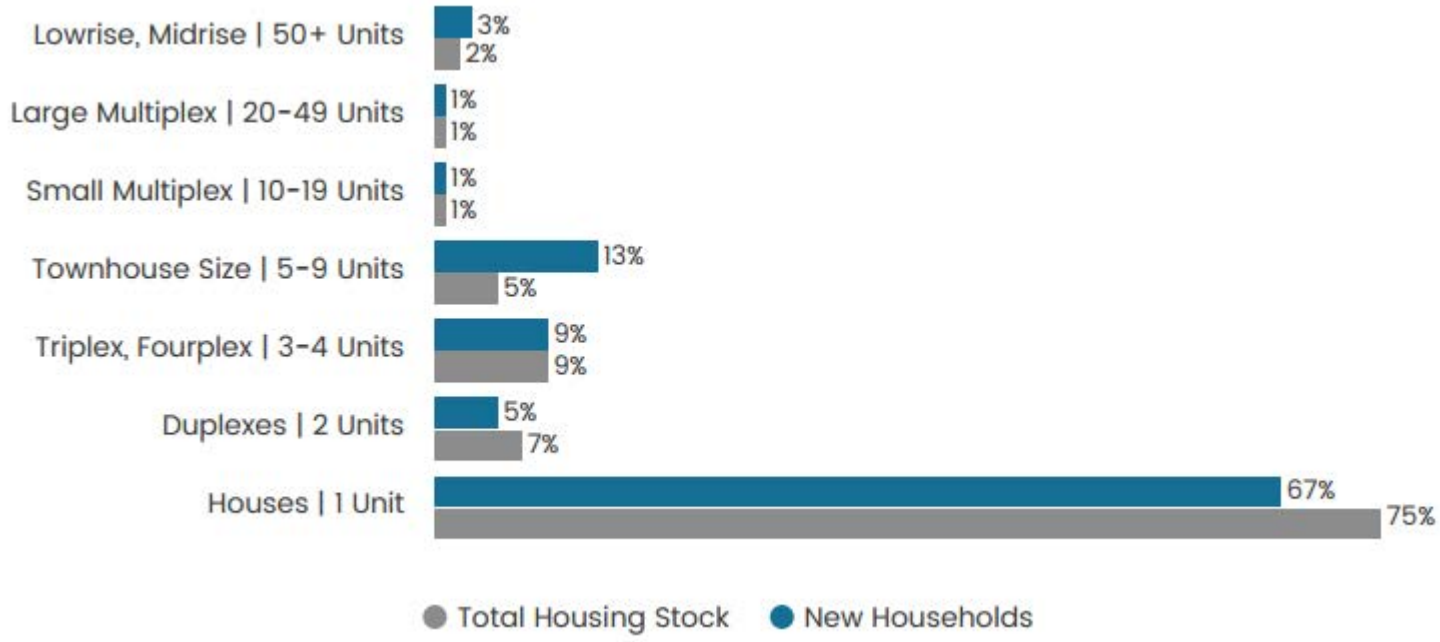
Target Market Analysis (TMA)

Renters

A residential target market analysis is a study that attempts to gauge what type of residents are moving into a community, their lifestyle and housing preferences, and translate that into an estimate for the type and amount of housing needed to accommodate them. Many factors are at play so a TMA usually casts a regional net known as a "trade area" to investigate trends outside of a community that could influence the supply and demand for certain housing types.

In River Rouge, there are about 34 new households that move into the City annually; 90% of them are likely to be renters seeking attached units. The remaining 10% that are homeowners are likely seeking affordable detached homes. Once out-migration is considered, only about 10 renters will be seeking attached units, which suggests that River Rouge can support 10 new attached rental units annually.

23: Market Potential vs. Existing Housing Stock, Share of Total by Building Size



Missing Middle Housing Types

MissingMiddleHousing.com is powered by Opticos Design.
Illustration © 2015 Opticos Design, Inc.

There is currently a mismatch in building size as well, as the study shows that about 13% of new renters prefer buildings with 5 to 9 units, but this format only represents 5% of the building stock. With this shortage, River Rouge could stand to gain two buildings with 5-9 units per year. New rental formats are needed, and it is recommended that at least 60% of rental cost $700 monthly or less.

Homeowners

The TMA shows that there is a surplus of detached homes, even with an estimated 70 households per year moving into the City and looking for detached homes. With low home values and high vacancy rates, it is difficult to renovate, rehab, or remodel homes.

The research suggests that there is a need to build three new attached, owner-occupied units per year. Ideally, the homes would be row houses or townhouses valued at least $100,000.

Housing and Economic Development

There is a direct link between housing and economic development. Due to population decline, there is not so much as a housing shortage but a housing mismatch in River Rouge. The TMA finds that only when new jobs, placemaking amenities, and downtown reinvestment occur will new, owner-occupied housing be developed. Workers must live somewhere, and if the housing product does not align with their income and format preference, economic development could become stifled. Workers, at best, will commute to River Rouge for a job but will not be able to invest in the community in any other way if a neighboring city can fulfill their housing desires.

"Missing Middle" Housing

Housing units are the building blocks of neighborhoods, and neighborhoods the blocks that make up a city. The importance of not only the amount, but the type, size, tenure options, and location of housing units has been brought to the forefront in the aftermath of the housing crisis. Only recently has housing construction picked up, but River Rouge has not experienced that change. Unfortunately, River Rouge did not avoid the negative impacts of the housing crisis: no new construction and falling home values

Again, because the population is declining, the approach is more mixed than in other communities. In River Rouge, a combined effort to build new units and to preserve and convert existing units into the types of housing stock that more appropriately serves a lower-income demographic.

The homes listed below are a part of "missing middle" housing, a reference to the range of housing stock that falls between the two extremes of single-family detached homes, and large apartment blocks. These housing types can be smaller-scale multi-unit structures such as duplexes or triplexes, and also townhouses and clustered courtyard apartments. Some of the different housing formats include:

- Duplexes
- Triplexes
- Fourplexes
- Subdivided homes
- Accessory dwelling units
- Studios
- Cottage courtyards
- Lofts/condos

Having a variety of housing types can have several benefits. In particular, for River Rouge a City with a low median household income, missing middle housing provides a better range of affordable options. Secondly, small housing format options support different phases of life, for example, seniors who want to downsize or individuals who live alone. This enables residents to age in place. Another benefit is that smaller units may help attract millennials or young families who cannot yet afford homeownership, but need somewhere to live while they save. Lastly, variation in housing types provides architectural interest to a neighborhood.

However, as shown by an overwhelming preference for detached, single-family homes in the community survey, it can be a gradual change to understanding the merits of other housing types. Still, nearly 40% of survey respondents wished to see lofts and flats. Housing preferences are changing, but development hasn't caught up!

Range of Housing Alternatives

CORRIDORS

http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/Operations/Rouge-River-MI/

Networks and connectivity are the cornerstones of a modern society. Our economy, and increasingly our social lives, depends on how well cities are both physically and virtually linked to other markets. Either via physical or online networks, corridors are a building block to connectivity. Road corridors are still the most common type of connector in an auto-dominated state, but the Rouge and Detroit River come in a close second.

ROADS

River Rouge does not have a highway running through it, but in effect its principal road, West Jefferson Avenue, serves as one. Running north to south, and five lanes wide, West Jefferson links all of the downriver communities to Detroit and continues to Monroe County for a total of about 64 miles. The right-of-way segment for West Jefferson in downtown River Rouge is 120 feet wide with one 10-foot wide center turn lane.

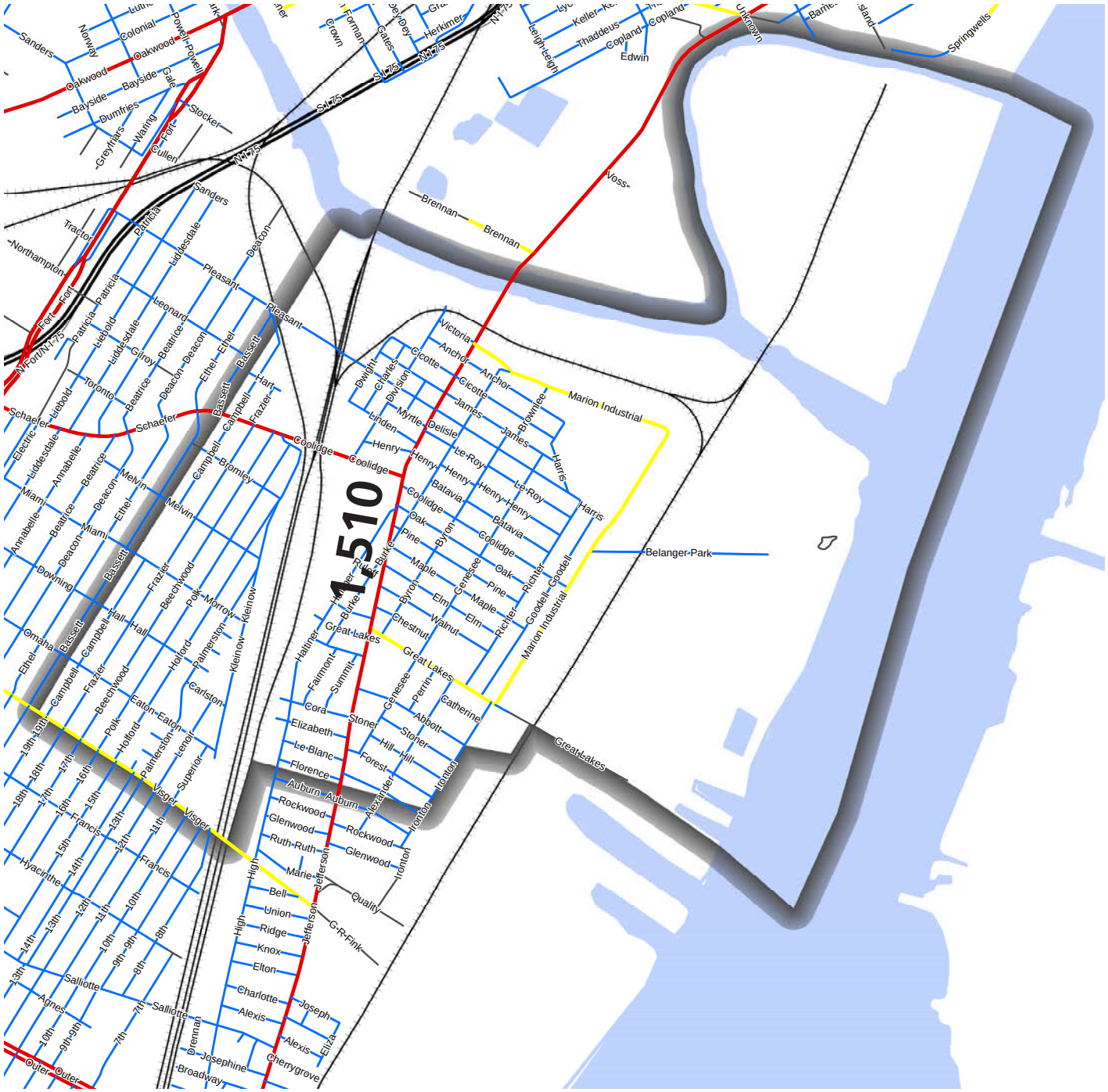
At the border with Detroit, there is a bridge that crosses the Rouge River. It was closed for three years, slowing down automobile throughput substantially on West Jefferson Avenue. Recently reopened, there is hope that increased transit will benefit local business. Coolidge Highway, also known as M-85, connects River Rouge through its downtown to Interstate 75.

The Transportation Asset Management Council, a state agency that rates and monitors infrastructure, reports that none of River Rouge's roads are in good condition as of 2015. About 10% are in poor condition, and the remaining 90% are in fair condition. As of 2014,River Rouge's transportation budget was $527,373, 61% of which is used for preservation and structural improvement. The next largest portion is spent on the winter budget (19.4%), and routine maintenance accounts for a little more than 11% of the total budget.

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)

Primary Corridors

Examining the National Functional Classification (NFC) ratings for roadways provides insight into local road variations and funding eligibility. This rating system was developed by the Federal Highway Administration in the 1960s and is used to classify streets by traffic counts and use. Local and unclassified roads are not eligible for federal funding, which can



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Road Classifications

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, U.S. Census Bureau

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

National Functional Classification:

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local
- Unclassified

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be found primarily in residential areas.

There are three types of roads in River Rouge: principal arterials, major collectors, and local roads. The principal arterials in River Rouge are West Jefferson Avenue and Coolidge Highway. These roads are designed to carry a higher volume traffic for longer distances. The major collectors are Marion Industrial Road and Visger Avenue. These streets primarily connect local roads to arterials. Local roads primarily provide access to property and are represented on the "Road Classifications map" in the neighborhoods.

The average annual daily traffic is recorded semi-regularly by SEMCOG. The AADT data shows that as of 2010 there was 4,080 vehicles on West Jefferson Avenue, but dropped drastically to 1,510 in 2016. This change is largely due to the 2013 closure of Bascule Brige that crosses the Rouge River on West Jefferson Avenue. While not in River Rouge, I-75 carries approximately 100,000 vehicles per day, and Fort Street which runs parallel to I-75 sees 7,000 vehicles on average per day. This amount of traffic could positively influence River Rouge's ability to attract visitors downtown.

Buses

In operation since 1967, the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) is the only regional public transportation service in metro Detroit. It runs seven days a week, for nearly 23 hours per day. There is one fixed route that runs through River Rouge. Route 125 starts at Eureka Road near the Metro Detroit airport and ends on West Jefferson Avenue in River Rouge.

There is also a connector that provides a curb-to-curb service that requires an advanced reservation. The advanced reservation must be six days prior to a medical appointment and two days prior for any other destination. This service will take a passenger anywhere within a 10 mile radius of the service area, but the rider must live within one-third of a mile from the connector's fixed route. The hours are limited to Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

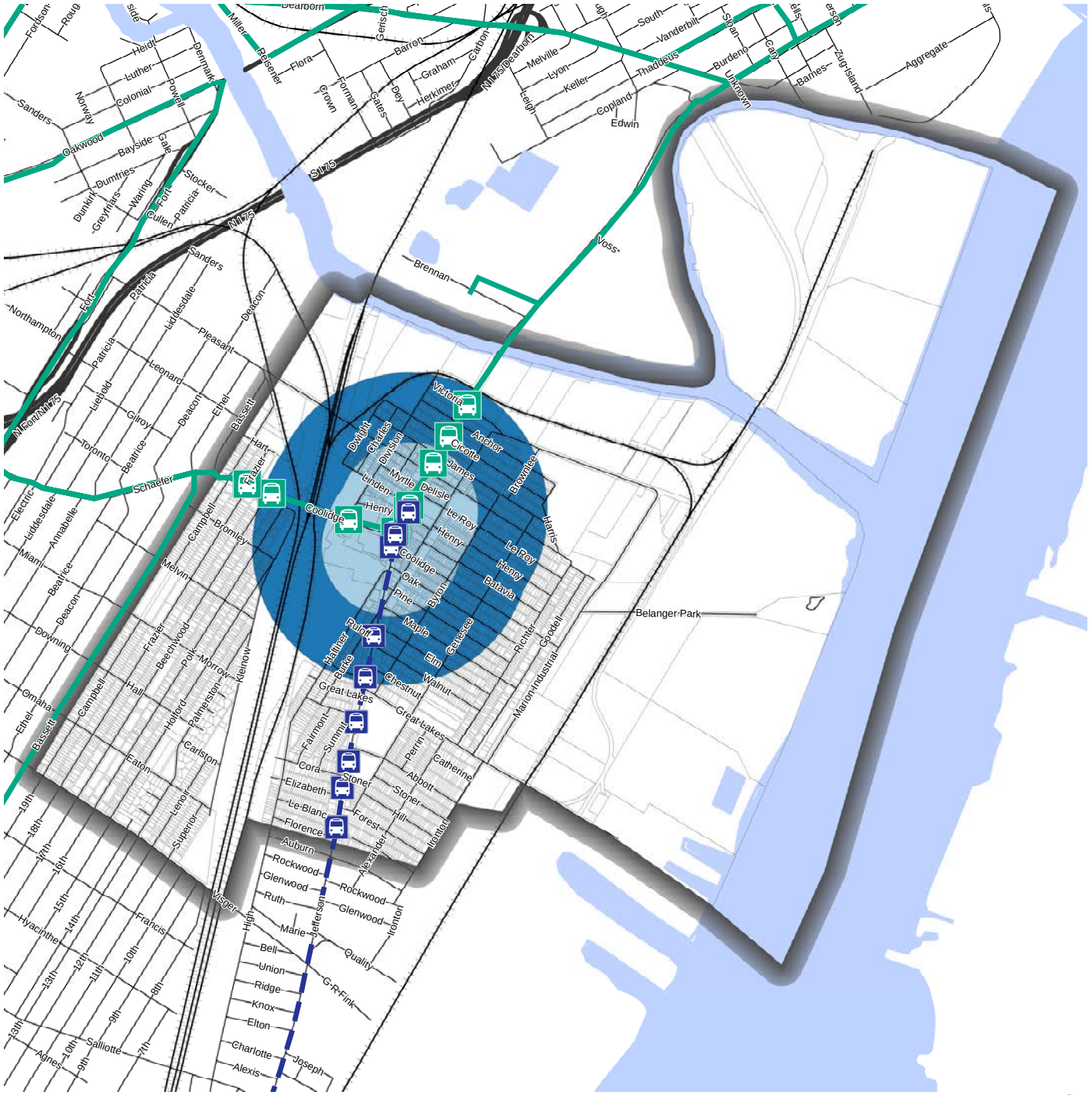
The fixed route buses are also equipped with a tracker that notifies those waiting with real time information to a mobile or computer. Also, those without smart phones can text SMART the stop ID number, and receive a text with the estimated time of arrival. The buses also feature bike racks and are wheelchair accessible.

There is a similar service that complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). This service is available for any person with a disability that cannot get in, ride, or get off a fixed route bus. Pick up and drop off destinations must be within three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route.

Detroit Department of Transportation's (DDOT) managed bus routes largely pass the City of River Rouge, but there is one important connection made on West Jefferson Avenue. Bus line 41 runs every hour from about 6am to 10pm Monday through Friday from the Brennan/West Jefferson stop. On Saturdays it runs every hour from 7:45 am to 8:44pm. The bus does not run on Sundays. DDOT recently announced that it will expand six of its bus lines to 24-hour service. While this does not include line 41, it shows an understanding in the importance of serving those who do not work conventional work schedules, or do not have a car to run errands and socialize.

The "Public Transportation" map has a quarter-mile and half-mile buffer around the three bus stops in River Rouge, all of which are located downtown. Within a quarter-mile, a generally recognizable walking distance, there are 275 residential parcels, and within a half-mile, there are 869 residential parcels. That is to say that even with limited

Bus shelter for bus line 41



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Public Transportation

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, DDOT, SMART

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Parcels
- SMART Bus Route
- DDOT Bus Route
- SMART Bus Stop
- DDOT Bus Stop
- 1/4 Mile Distance of Bus Stops
- 1/2 Mile Distance of Bus Stops

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bus service, these stops have the potential to serve on average about 2,433 people, or close to 32% of residents.

Nonmotorized Features

Nonmotorized features broadly refer to any piece of infrastructure that facilitate transit by foot, bicycle, or wheelchair. These features are a part of larger movement known as Complete Streets. Simply put, Complete Streets are designed for everyone, not just vehicles. Historically, the US has funneled transportation spending to highway construction and expansion for a more "efficient throughput" of vehicles. More recently, there has been push back by organizations such as Smart Growth America that streets should be designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit users of all ages and abilities. Instead of only measuring a successful road by vehicular mobility, Complete Streets look at design elements, safety, and convenience for all users. In 2010, Complete Streets legislation passed in Michigan that requires MDOT to consider multi-modal features with new road construction.

Elements of Complete Street differ by community, but common characteristics are sidewalks, bike lanes and racks, frequent and safe crossings, median islands, curb extensions, or elements that enhance the experience of using a street to encourage multi-modal transit. The idea is to reduce reliance on automobiles and shift the bias from mobility to accessibility.

Sidewalks & Streetscape Design

A complete sidewalk network has several benefits. When pedestrians have a separated path to walk, they are safer and therefore are more likely to travel by foot. If design could encourage residents to walk instead of driving, then the entire community would benefit from cleaner air, improved human health, and longer lasting road infrastructure.

In addition to a complete sidewalk network, there are other features that can enhance the pedestrian experience to encourage people to walk:

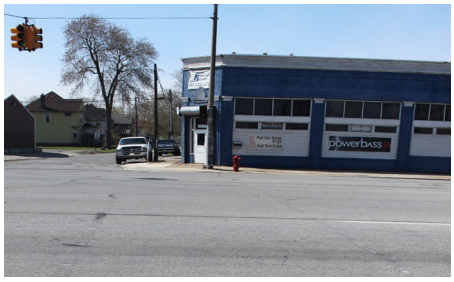
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Amenities
- Crosswalks

Existing Design Features

In the downtown, some of these streetscape design elements can be found. For example, West Jefferson features historic lampposts and benches along the sidewalk for pedestrians to rest. However, because the street is so wide and loud, a bench cannot fully serve its function as a relaxing respite. With a narrower street where cars drive at a slower speed, with a bike lane buffer, and trees or landscaping to provide shade, a bench becomes an effective and functional amenity.

An example of a well-maintained and well designed sidewalk

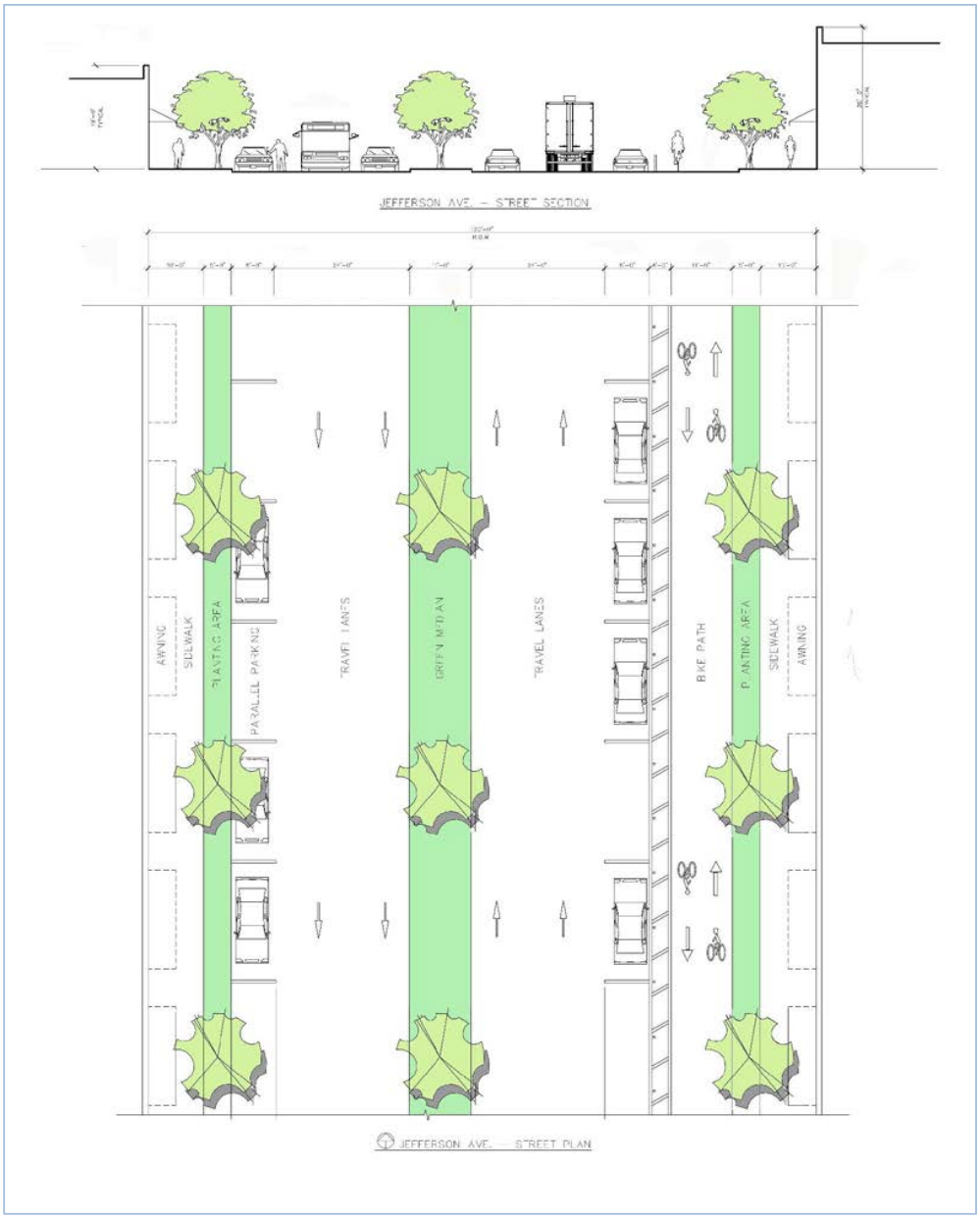
The minimal existing landscaping Downtown can be improved



No crosswalk across five-lane traffic on West Jefferson, a daunting experience for a pedestrian

***Mobility:** Moving people and goods efficiently from place to place. **Accessibility:** The ease with which something can be reached or obtained.*

26: Preferred Roadway Configuration, West Jefferson Corridor



Source: River Rouge West Jefferson Corridor Plan 2016, McKenna Associates

Possible Improvements

River Rouge could work to improve its landscaping as there is little to none built into the street. Along West Jefferson, there are some tree planter boxes but no examples of landscaping that improve pedestrian safety such as bulb-outs decorated with native vegetation or medians, both of which shorten the distance to cross the road and slow down vehicular traffic.

Throughout almost the entire City, there are no crosswalks, even across the five-lane corridor West Jefferson! A crosswalk provides a clear signal for where cars should stop, and a clear path for pedestrians to cross. Without a crosswalk, pedestrians are at increased risk of a dangerous interaction with a vehicle.

Sidewalk Network

River Rouge has an excellent sidewalk network. There are no major gaps in the sidewalks, with only a few exceptions. In front of River Rouge High School, the sidewalk jogs toward the school entrance, leaving pedestrians who wish to proceed straight without a path. Secondly, the roads that abut major industry lack sidewalks, mainly on just one side. These gaps exists on the following streets:

- Harris Street (both sides)
- Marion Avenue (both sides)
- Division Street, north of Cicotte Street (one side)
- West Pleasant, west of Dwight Street (both sides)
- Kleinow Street (one side)

A well connected and maintained sidewalk network is the first step towards a pedestrian-friendly community. In addition to a strong network, many of the residential sidewalks have a grass buffer between the street and the footpath. These grass buffers do not exist downtown, but primarily in the neighborhoods. Aside from being well connected, the sidewalk infrastructure should be well maintained.

Pedestrian Routes

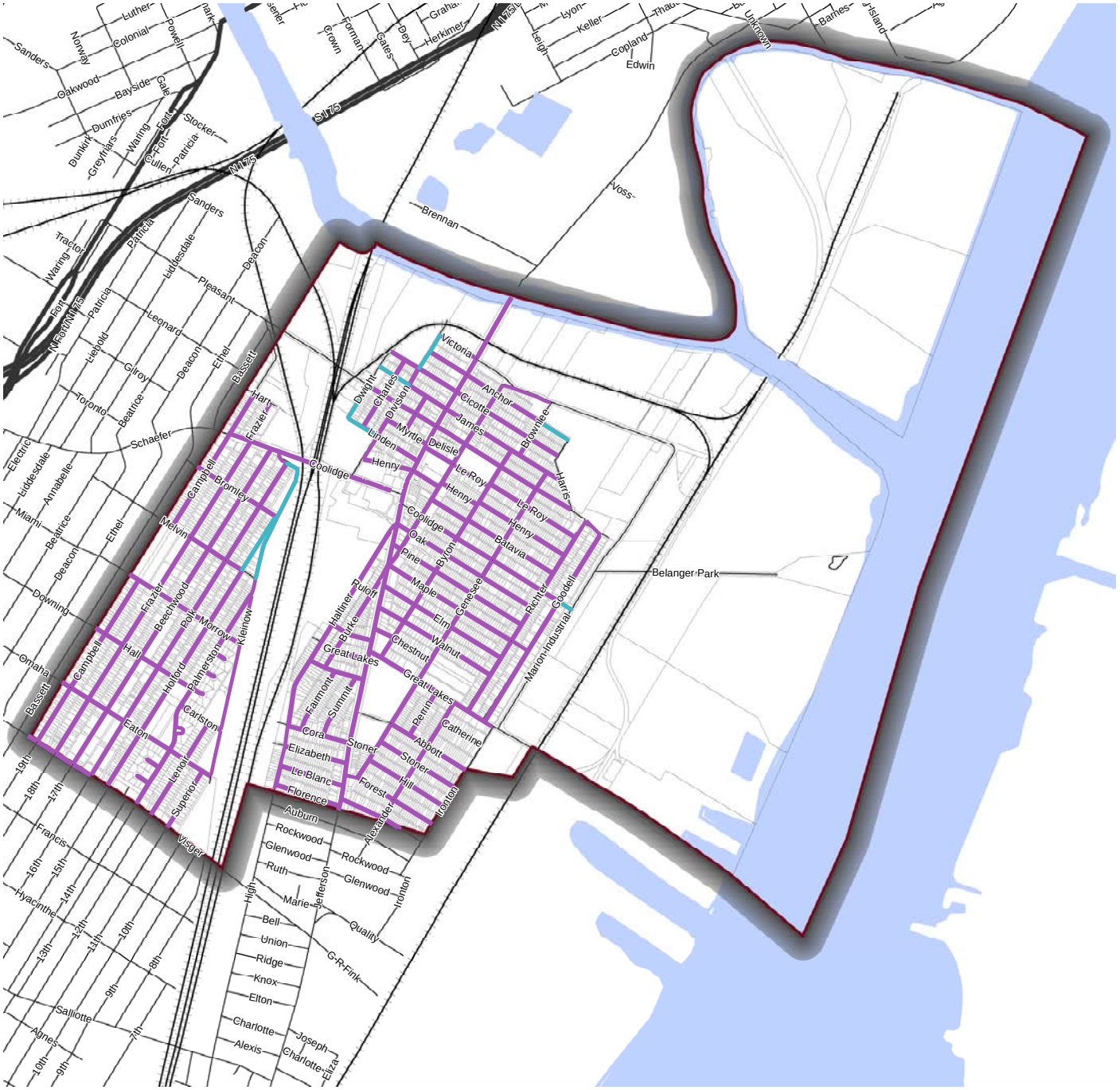
River Rouge is a part of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative (DLGI), which is a community-driven effort to improve non-motorized transportation in the Downriver area. In 2008, the DLGI updated its master plan but kept the goal of coordinating green linkages to improve the quality of life for these communities.

The North-South Connector links the Lake Erie Metropark to the City of Detroit, and follows Jefferson Avenue through River Rouge to an existing link in Ecorse. For a total of 16 miles, it would continue through Wyandotte, to Elizabeth Park in Trenton, and the future Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. This would become another link in the Iron Belle Trail, the longest state-designated trail in the nation. Iron Belle Trail extends from the Upper Peninsula to the southeast Michigan. The hiking route's 1,259 miles are 72% completed, and the biking portion of the trail's 774 miles are 60% completed. In 2017, the Department of Natural Resources

Historic Lamp Post

gave out $350,000 in its third round of grants to communities to continue connecting missing links in the trail. DLGI was awarded $21,000 to install signage along the trail through 10 downriver communities.

Another pedestrian route called the Rouge River Gateway Corridor would span the final eight miles of the Rouge River, but runs for a total of 27 miles. The goal of this trail is to maximize recreational opportunities and show visitors the area's historical legacy. It would be a paved pathway that connected the Hines Drive trail system through Henry Ford Community College and U-M Dearborn to Ford Road and the Rouge River. Along the river there are several proposed "interpretive points" and visitor destinations such as a community



RISING TIDE

Sidewalk Gap Analysis

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Parcels
- Sidewalks on Both Sides of Street
- Sidewalks on One Side of the Street

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organic garden, the Henry Ford estate, wildlife and fish habitat construction, etc. The river will become an example of how to convert an urban river, once heavily polluted, to a natural area that the community values.

However, in order to complete this vision, DLGI would need to obtain easements through private property to reach the riverfront.

Iron Belle Trail

The Iron Belle Trail crosses the entire state, and the portion that enters River Rouge would run along Jefferson Avenue and then west along Coolidge Highway. From there it would connect to Fort Street and through to Detroit. The trail is important to River Rouge because it places the City in a larger network of both hiking and biking trails, and provides an excellent connection to recreational space.

Bicycle Amenities

There are currently no bike lanes within the City's downtown. The few bike amenities such as bike racks are located in front of City Hall, and at both Memorial and Belanger Parks.

The Living Corridors, Detroit & Rouge River

The Detroit River is about 30 miles long and connects Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie, and forms the border between the US and Canada. It was once one of the busiest waterways in the world, and as a result of its proximity to heavy industry, has become an "area of concern" as determined by the US Environmental Protection Agency. An area of concern designation was due to high levels of bacteria, PCBs, metals, and oil found in the river. However, much work has been completed to protect the habitat in the last 20 years.

Due to its position as an international border, an American and Canadian collaboration have jointly funded major pollution prevention and conservation efforts, and environmental clean ups. Now it is known as the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, the first status of this kind in North America.

As a result of these efforts, smallmouth bass, yellow perch and muskellunge have returned. The river now offers several species of fish and has blossomed into a well known fish spot. Moreover, the river has also become a destination for kayakers. The 2015 Detroit River Paddling Guide describes where to stop, details about the sites along with recommended paddling routes. One route takes kayakers to River Rouge's Belanger Park. Belanger Park is highlighted for having park amenities and a lighthouse.

In 2006, a vision for how municipalities could capitalize on this movement with paddling amenities and improved infrastructure was created, and since then, interest in paddling in southeast Michigan has grown. River Rouge is a part of water trail with over 30 destinations. This network's increasing popularity could bring more people to the City.

Once highly polluted, the Rouge River is making a comeback. Because Melvindale has a boat launch, another suggested trip from the Detroit River Paddling Guide is to depart from Melvindale, passing River Rouge to see the heart of the steel production. Paddling up the Rouge River toward the Detroit River, one can see Fordson Island, Ford Rouge Complex, and Zug Island. This experience offers both recreation and tourism opportunities.

Rail

There is no passenger rail that runs through River Rouge, but there are two freight lines. One is operated by Canadian National Railway (CN). CN is a Class 1 railroad, meaning that it has an annual operating revenue greater than $256 million. This freight runs closer to the Detroit River serving the Great Lakes Steel Boat Club. The other railroad passing through the City is a privately a owned freight operation run by Consolidated Rail Corporation, called Conrail for short. This train runs through the City, parallel to West Jefferson, likely to service the Shelby Steel Processing plant.

Transportation Typologies

Transportation typologies are categories with loose definitions that describe a driver's, cyclist's, or pedestrian's transit options and experience. Transportation

typologies are based on the following criteria:

- its physical conditions
- how it accommodates its users
- the surrounding land uses
- the development intensity

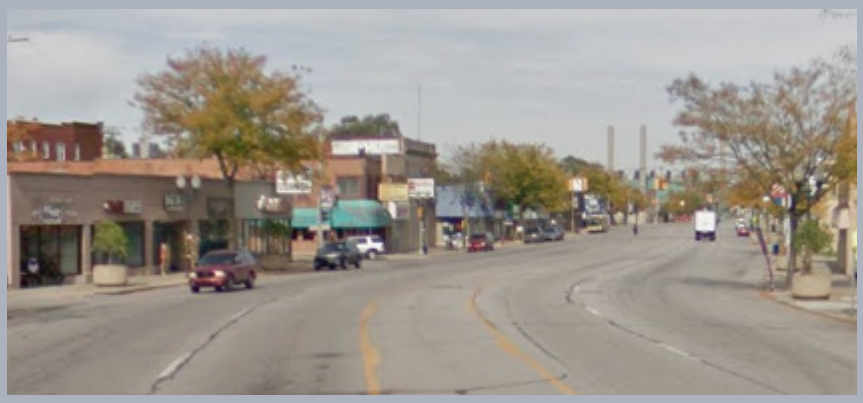
These typologies differ from the National Functional Classifications because they assess how a road is viewed by users other than drivers. These typologies are not exact, but show various options for how roads can suit different user's needs. Understanding the criteria for each transportation typology assists cities in pairing them with the corresponding neighborhood and/or district to maximize all user's experience.

Main Street

West Jefferson Ave is the principal street that runs through the downtown. A main street should serve as many users as possible, in addition to drivers, and offer an attractive ambiance. Speed limits are slower to make pedestrians more comfortable, and amenities are available to enhance their experience such as benches, trees, bike racks, etc. However, in River Rouge, the main street resembles many of the characteristics of a commercial arterial. The street is so wide, it is not ideal for users other than cars.

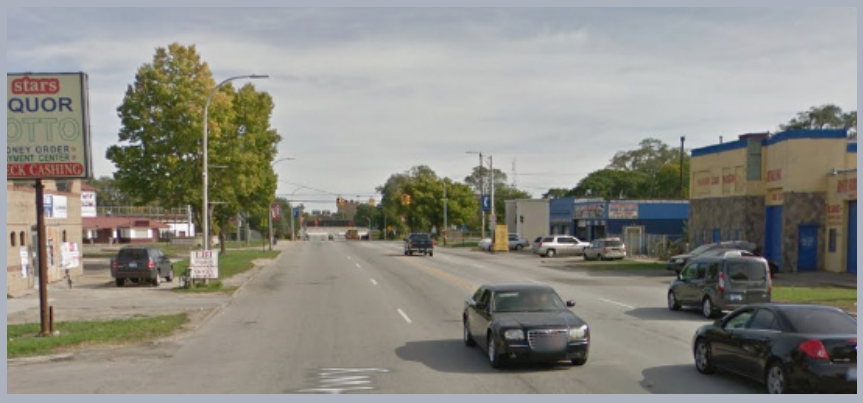
Urban Center Streets

Urban Center Streets are also a part of the downtown and are designed



Main Street, West Jefferson Avenue

Urban Center, Burke Street



Commercial Arterials, Coolidge Highway

to support intense development. They also usually accommodate multi-modal transit, provide access to mixed-use development, and serve most of the parking and trucking needs of downtown.

Examples

- Burke Street

Commercial Arterials

Commercial Arterials prioritize vehicular mobility between residential neighborhoods. Vehicular mobility is usually measured by flow of traffic and speed limits, and these streets are therefore less pedestrian or bicycle oriented. This type of corridor contains retail stores with a large footprint or retail closer to the right-of-way. Because throughput is relatively high, commercial arterials are not suitable for on-street parking. They should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood, although these streets host very little residential development.

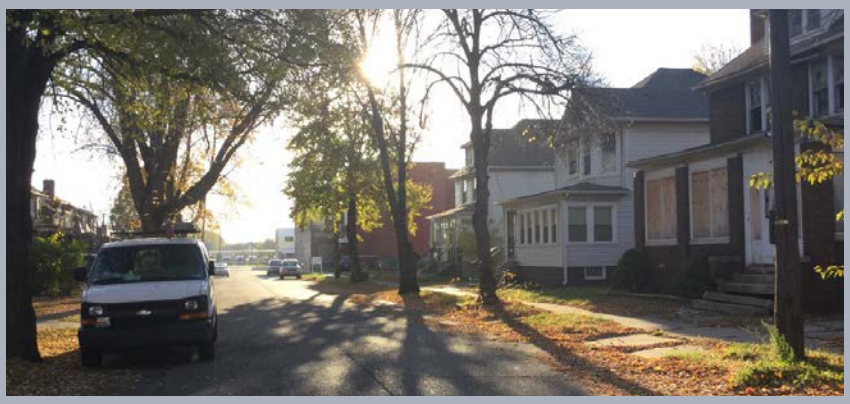
Examples

- Coolidge Highway

Industrial

Mobility is highly valued on industrial streets. Speed limits are often higher than on similarly-sized streets, and there is no on-street parking. Development differs on industrial streets because buildings have larger setbacks and larger footprints than commercial or residential streets. There is also ample parking to accommodate

Industrial Street, Marion Avenue



Neighborhood Connector, Linden Street

Residential, Charles Street

employees and larger vehicles such as trucks and semis.

Examples

- Marion Avenue

Neighborhood Connector

Neighborhood connectors provide access to neighborhood commercial properties and multi-family housing. They may also serve as residential collectors, but mobility is still second to access. Some of their other purposes are to connect neighborhoods to arterials and to connect pedestrians and bicyclists to neighborhood commercial uses. There is sometimes street parking, only as a supplement to off-street parking. Overall, the neighborhood connector should balance neighborhood character with mobility. In River Rouge, these streets that primarily run east to west, and connect the neighborhoods to West Jefferson Avenue.

Examples

- Batavia Street
- East Henry Street
- Linden Street

Residential

A residential street provides access to individual residential properties for motorized vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. They carry traffic that has a destination or an origin in a residential neighborhood. They may also offer on-street parking. This typology helps to define the

Alley, vehicular alley parallel (and in between) to West Jefferson Avenue and Burke Street

Nonmotorized pathway

neighborhood character.

Examples

- Charles Street
- Genessee Street

Alleys

Alleys are designed to provide alternative access to residential or commercial properties. Alleys may either be for vehicular access for delivery trucks, a link to rear parking, or for pedestrian use only. Their purpose is to enable service and maintenance functions in less visible locations, to accommodate one-way traffic for vehicles, and reduce the amount of access points on a street. They are not suitable spaces for parking. While alleys are perceived as dangerous places, with little effort alleys can be re-programmed into more inviting spaces.

Nonmotorized

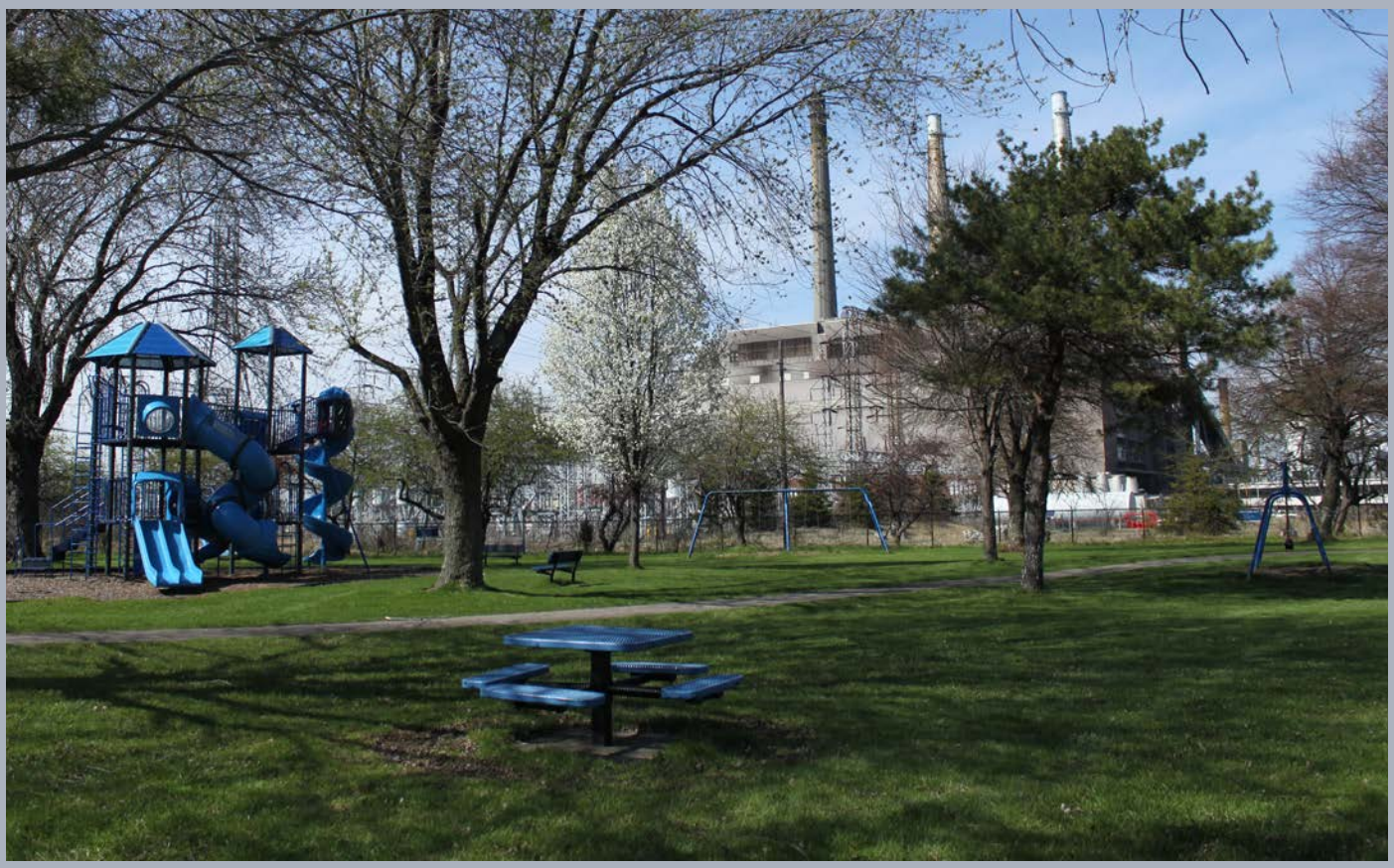
Nonmotorized paths are separate from the vehicular right-of-way. While separate, they are usually located adjacent to high-volume traffic roads. Some may be completely separate such as a trail in a park.

Example

- Belanger Park

Emergency Routes

As shown in the "Road



Belanger Park

Classification" map, West Jefferson Avenue is the most heavily transited road in the City. Due to its width and higher velocities permitted, West Jefferson Avenue's accessibility would make it a likely candidate for resident's to use when needed to flee a city in crisis. Fires, floods, natural or man-made disasters can occur at any moment, and the City must have a plan in place that expedites an evacuation should people's lives be in danger. While a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Plan is warranted to hash out the details, some Planning Commissioner's believe that Haltiner Street could serve as a valuable conduit to alleviate excess traffic on West Jefferson Street in the event that residents are compelled to leave River Rouge for safety reasons.

Haltiner Street intersects West Jefferson Avenue near City Hall but branches off and becomes a parallel street that can carry vehicles out of the City to West Outer Drive that connects to I-75 in Ecorse, or to Schaefer Highway north towards I-75. A portion of Haltiner Street also runs parallel to the rail line. More research is necessary to understand the trade offs involved in planning an effective evacuation, and educating the public on what steps to take in case of an emergency is key to saving lives.

ECONOMIC PROFILE

ECONOMIC TRENDS

River Rouge's economy, like the rest of the nation's, has changed dramatically over the last few decades. A shift from producing goods to producing knowledge through a college-educated workforce has several implications for economic development strategies. Because growing industries are less land-intensive, providing cheap land in the form of tax abatements is no longer the carrot it once was to attract business. Jobs are following talent now, and strategies to draw in industry are based on creating a place that fosters and retains talent, so that business will follow. The following section discusses what types of businesses are already in River Rouge and how they fare, and which types of businesses are missing.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

DDAs were created through the Downtown Development Authority Act, State of Michigan Public Act 197 of 1975, which was designed primarily to help spur economic growth and to encourage commercial revitalization and historic preservation. DDAs work in collaboration with the City but are in charge of programming and boosting the downtown.

There are 59 establishments within the DDAs boundaries, and as of March 2017 they had a taxable value of almost $3.7 million. Twenty-three of those properties have a $0 state equalization value. Of those, 17 are either City, county, state properties, and only six are privately run businesses. It will be difficult for the DDA to fund and implement significant projects under these current financial restraints.

GAP ANALYSIS

The Corridor Study conducted by McKenna Associates between 2016-2017 for West Jefferson Avenue consists of a gap analysis within the trade area which covers River Rouge, and a portion of Ecorse and Melvindale. This trade area overlaps with the DDA boundaries but does not entirely encompass it. It is assumed that visitors would not come to River Rouge's downtown from outside of that boundary. A gap analysis compares the demand of a good or service, based on estimated dollars spent, to its corresponding supply for goods and services. When demand exceeds supply, then a new business may be warranted

to meet unmet demands. If supply exceeds demand, then there is an oversupply of a good or service which could have a few different effects on a local business. Generally, inventory that cannot be sold due to low demand is not a positive situation for a business owner.

The analysis shows that River Rouge is saturated with gas stations, fast food restaurants, bars, and liquor stores. This is a common occurrence in communities with a low median household income and high poverty rates. There is also a surplus in motor vehicle dealers. The analysis also shows that there is not sufficient demand to support new retail businesses, likely not because the residents do not wish to have retail options, but because they do not have the disposable income to support them. The demand for new establishments would be for the following:

- Automobile dealers
- Auto parts
- Electronics and appliances
- Grocery/specialty food stores
- Clothing
- General Merchandise/ Department stores
- Full Service restaurant

These findings are validated by the community engagement survey where respondents reported that they would like to see clothing stores, department stores, and general merchandise in River Rouge.

Financial

According to ESRI Business Analyst, the average River Rouge adult resident is not financially secure. Only 24% have a checking account, and only 10% have a retirement savings plan. This indicates that residents do not have a steady income, nor do they have the privilege to plan for the future. While almost 62% used a credit card in the last twelve months, most are quite responsible with using it, as the highest proportion of residents (9.9%) carry a monthly balance of less than about $111. Still, this is not the type of economic environment that attracts retail or the commercial enterprises the community wishes to see. The priority must be on raising wages and teaching financial literacy to empower residents, and then to close the supply and demand gap.

However, there are certain essentials that residents cannot go without. Despite a low median household income, people must continue to eat and to buy clothes. In the last 12 months, 44% of residents bought men's clothing, and 42% purchased women's clothing within a 0 to 5 mile radius. 47% shopped at a convenience store in the last 6 months within a 0 to 5 mile radius. Knowing that there are no grocery stores in River Rouge explains why there is such a high percentage of convenience store purchases, and goes hand in hand with demand for an adequately sized and priced grocery store. When it comes to necessity, people don't want to have to travel far, and it becomes a quality of life issue if forced to do so.

Employment Hub

As of 2014, River Rouge was not an employment hub. Despite large industry, the Longitudinal Employment-Household Dynamic (LEHD) produced by the census shows that 2,579 people commute out of River Rouge for work, and 795 enter for work. Only 83 people live and work in the City. That translates to 96.9% of workers being employed outside of River Rouge. One-third of the jobs are in manufacturing, 16.9% are in utilities, and 10.1% are in transportation and warehousing. Together, those three industries comprise 57% of the jobs in River Rouge. Another 10.4% of jobs are in public administration, and 8% for retail trade. Within the City, the two largest concentrations of jobs are Shell Oil Products and Great Lakes Steel Boat Club.

The LEHD tool also tracks where people travel for work. In 2014, those who worked outside of River Rouge likely traveled southwest. Just about half of workers (49.7%) travel less than 10 miles away, and another one-third (33.9%) travel 10 to 24 miles away. The largest recipients of River Rouge workers are Lincoln Park and Wyandotte. The next biggest employment locations are Melvindale, Allen Park, Southgate, and Romulus. This helps to explain some of the survey respondents answers for shopping and seeking entertainment in these cities; they are already familiar with them from working there.

BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH IN MICHIGAN

TALENT PIPELINE

According to the 2013 Governor's Economic Summit, **85%** of projected jobs will likely require a bachelor's degree between 2012-2021. Yet, Michigan has the highest rate of educated youth leaving the state; at about **4%** per year that's more than double other Midwestern states. Michigan ranks in the bottom five states for the percentage of 25-34 year olds. River Rouge sees the largest drop off of residents between the ages of 20-39.

JOB GROWTH

With a historically accurate track record, the University of Michigan Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics estimates there will be almost 42,000 jobs created in 2017 and another 50,000 jobs in 2018. However, this job growth rate projection falls short of reaching residents who often remain chronically unemployed. In 2016, according to the Current Population Survey, there were 237,600 unemployed workers in Michigan— a figure that does not include discouraged workers, or those who have stopped actively looking for work because they believe there are no jobs available. In 2016, the Bureau of Labor of Statistics estimated the discouraged workers to be around 18,300 in Michigan. This leaves a gap of over 163,000 jobless Michiganders. That is to say, that job growth in itself is not a comprehensive enough indicator to describe a person's economic opportunity. Regardless of the type of occupation, there is some truth to the statement that "there are no jobs." In fact, ***the poverty status of families in River Rouge has increased between 2010 to 2015, from 34.5% to 38.5%, respectively, despite 5 years of job growth.*** Job growth has either not reached vulnerable populations yet, or worse, even as workers they continue to live in poverty. In either case, job growth alone has not improve the quality of life of a considerable amount of families in River Rouge.

Transportation

Transportation plays a major role in job accessibility. In 2015, the Michigan Works! for Region 9 interviewed 400 of its clients, former job-seekers. Almost half (48%) of the interviewees reported that transportation is a problem for finding and keeping a job; those with reliable access to a vehicle are more likely to be employed. Transportation by automobile is most household's second largest expense (up to $15,000 per year), leaving those in poverty without a reliable way to connect to employment. Furthermore, in Region 9, 56% of workers with cars cannot necessarily afford repairs. The need for improved transportation networks is affirmed by the high demand for transportation services requested through other MiWorks! agencies, 76-92% of all requests are for transportation assistance. If this happens where there is arguably some of the best transportation networks in Michigan, imagine the impact on rural areas! ***While River Rouge has two separate bus lines, the lines do not follow routes to major employment hubs such as Lincoln Park, Allen Park, Southgate, etc.***

Housing

Many communities are dealing with the complicated relationship surrounding housing values, vacancy rates, and changing tenure, and how this affects a city's prospects for attracting and retaining talent. Some MiWorks representatives working on the ground with employers also report that when companies find qualified candidates, there may not be homes available for him/her to live within the community. This is due in large part not only to a shortage post-recession, but also to a lack of housing options. Housing formats that lie

along the spectrum of single-family detached homes, and large apartment complexes, are missing. For those who wish to live in a condo, townhome, loft, or midrise apartment complex downtown, they are out of luck.

As median housing values fell in River Rouge over $30,000 between 2010 and 2015, residents who could no longer afford their homes or turned to the rental market. ***With increased demand for rental units, rents nearly doubled from 2000-2015. As of 2015, two-thirds of renters were cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.*** The rental market has become unaffordable to its current residents, and unattractive to newcomers. By tracking the demographic changes in the city, there is evidence that there is a gap between what new households prefer and what exists. That is to say, even if River Rouge could expand its job opportunities, it still may not be able to house new and current residents.

Education and Training

The largest labor mismatch comes from middle-skilled jobs. Over the past few decades, manufacturing decline has had devastating effects to Michigan's economy. With a rebounding economy, manufacturing and construction have seen an uptick in activity, but are hindered by an untrained workforce. Middle-skilled jobs refer to jobs that require more than a high school degree but not necessarily a bachelor's degree, typically an associates degree or some technical training. In 2015, 54% of jobs were middle-skilled, but only 48% of workers were trained for these jobs. ***A 6% difference equates thousands of workers out of work***. Below, are some shortcomings in both the public and private sector that have contributed to this gap.

Public

- Federal cuts to career, technical and adults education in 2012 that are only recently filled
- Michigan state funding tied to ratio of college-bound students
- Little effort to teach soft skills

Private

- Drop in the amount of apprenticeship programs through employers eroding a pathway to middle-skilled jobs
- Less money spent employee on training and education
- Stagnating wages

STIGMA

Well-intentioned parents are often at the forefront of steering children away from working in factories with claims that the work is dangerous, unstable, and low-paying. Some of their trepidation stems from images of polluting factories, jobs being shipped offshore, and stagnating wages. According to a survey conducted by the non profit organization, SME, 20% of parents surveyed think manufacturing is outdated and nearly 25% think it is not well-paying, half of all respondents do not think it is exciting or challenging.

Barriers

Statewide, a common and seemingly contradictory issue has been identified regarding the economic plight of PRT communities. From the worker's perspective there are no jobs, and from employers expanding their operations, there are not enough qualified workers to fill new positions. This problem, of not being able to match workers to job opportunities within a given geography, is called labor mismatch, and the consequences are steep. When workers and employers cannot connect, unemployment and underemployment rise, labor force participation shrinks, and poverty becomes more prevalent. The factors that contribute to this mismatch are complicated and intertwined but there is a role for both the public and private sector in alleviating the heartache many families in Michigan face.

Vacancy

Combined, there are 92 vacant industrial and commercial parcels that amount to 104.5 acres. That makes up 2.7% of the City's total acreage. Depending on the owner's willingness to sell, the site's existing infrastructure, and the community's input, these can be evaluated as redevelopment sites.

Alternative Economy

River Rouge is already home to three medical marihuana dispensaries, known as the Green Mile. The state has approved legislation that created a new industry with several positions: salesmen, retail, agriculture, transportation, etc. Many communities will forbid this type of industry due to a historic stigma on drug use. However, if zoned appropriately by location and design, this could also be used as an economic development tool, in terms of filling vacant buildings, providing jobs, and becoming a tourist destination. It is recommended that River Rouge stay updated on changes to the legislation and consider the costs and benefits to expanding the Green Mile.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public facilities are an important part of assessing a city's potential to grow, both in terms of population and economics A city's economic prosperity can be limited if it does not have the infrastructure or services necessary to develop suitable housing or grow commercial capacity.

Water Supply and Capacity

The City of River Rouge's water is purchased from the City of Detroit and comes from Detroit Department of Water and Sewer's Southwest Plant located in the City of Gibraltar. The water at this plant comes from the Detroit River No water is stored in River Rouge. As of 2015, Detroit's water quality ranked among the top ten in the country.

Wayne County has agreed to sell the state's second-largest wastewater treatment facility for $57.5 to 13 downriver communities. The transfer from Wayne County to the Downriver Utility Wastewater Authority may have a financial benefit to the communities, who will no longer have to pay surging prices to the county. With under 80 employees, sewage from River Rouge is treated in this plant located in Wyandotte and transported through the Riverdrive Interceptor along with Ecorse, Lincoln Park, and about 90% of wastewater from Allen Park.

The sewage system's current capacity can treat 225 million gallons per day of raw sewage. The average annual flow is 65 million gallons per day which indicates that there is sufficient capacity should the communities grow, especially as the population shrinks.

The treatment facility has undergone about $300 million of investment. A state of the art ultra-violet disinfection treatment process occurs before discharging it back into the Trenton Channel. No water can bypass the disinfection process prior to discharge.

Stormwater Management

Large portions of the stormwater and sewer systems are combined. This type of system can have seriously negative consequences

RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Tree Canopy Cover

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, Wayne County GIS, National Land Cover Dataset 2011

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds

Percent of Tree Canopy:

Low (1%) — High (100%)

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in the event of a large storm. For example, in August 2014, when southeast Michigan received around 5 to 6 inches of rain in one day, exceeding the systems capacity to treat water. Ten billion gallons of untreated water were consequently discharged into Lake St. Claire and its tributaries. According to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, 44 million gallons of raw sewage from sanitary sewers, and 3 billion from combined systems, were discharged. Contaminating the water supply with sewage spreads bacteria such as E. coli, becoming a major public health issue and a threat to the quality of the region's drinking water.

View of Detroit River From Belanger Park

Green Infrastructure

Aside from trees, there are no examples of green infrastructure within the city limits. SEMCOG produced a Green Infrastructure Vision that inventories the region for tree canopy, parks, agricultural land, wetland, riparian corridors, and access to greenery. One critical area for improvement is tree canopy coverage. Within the region, Wayne County has the lowest tree canopy coverage, and River Rouge mirrors the lowest percentage range from 0.01-20% of coverage. American Forest, a non-profit conservation organization recommends tree coverage of 40%, and this has become the standard the region strives to meet. This vision serves a framework for considering the benefits of greenery as a network.

Given that residents ranked air quality as their number one priority in regard to industrial uses, improving tree canopy cover is a logical next step. Depending on the tree type and density, trees can make residents healthier. According to a study conducted by U.S. Forest Service (in conjunction with the Davey Institute) there is a link between the reduction of particulate matter through tree canopy coverage to saving people's lives! It also finds that trees can remove up to 64.5 metric tons of particulate matter from the air.

Flooding

During a typical sized storm, the streets pond but there is not much flooding. Currently the strategy for handling a storm is for the Water and Sewer Department to inspect all of the catch basins and repair any that have been damaged. However, the department has also reported that like all of the communities in the region, River Rouge is not equipped to handle a larger storm, meaning 2 to 3 inches of rain in a short period of time. Flooding is likely to become a larger problem for the Midwest because storms are predicted to become more severe due to climate change.

Fire Protection Upgrades

River Rouge received a $400,000 grant from the State's Treasurer Department met with a $150,000 local match to purchase a new

fire truck. The current truck was 17 years old, and while kept in excellent condition, the City was in need of updated equipment. The City is set to receive the new truck in December 2017. The River Rouge Fire Department is actively involved in the Downriver Mutual Aid Association; members of this group are the participating downriver communities and make up a hazardous materials response team. Also, River Rouge is a part of the Automatic Aid agreement with the neighboring City of Ecorse Fire Department who provide mutual assistance to each other in time of need.

POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITES

From a land-use planning perspective as well as an economic development perspective, it is important to take stock of the areas in the community that are ripe for redevelopment. This section provides an overview of the redevelopment ready sites in River Rouge as well as some of the strategies the City is using and plans to use to attract redevelopment. River Rouge fosters a supportive redevelopment culture and offers ample space for such ventures.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) encourages communities to take a proactive approach to identifying and preparing properties to be redeveloped. A key element of the MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program is to identify redevelopment ready sites and strategies associated with each site. River Rouge has several sites that could be redeveloped. These sites include vacant buildings for sale, vacant land, site with space available for rent, or publicly owned land.

The "Redevelopment Ready Sites" map shows vacant residential, commercial, and industrial sites, in addition to two properties owned by the City of River Rouge. The yellow areas represent residentially zoned parcels where two or more vacant sites lay adjacent. Because River Rouge has a side lot program, that encourages residents to purchase an adjacent vacant lot for a low fee, those parcels were removed from this map. By identifying larger or adjoining parcels, the City can package and market these areas for denser residential development.

For any potential redevelopment opportunities, it is important to collect basic data on the sites such as square footage, lot size, years vacant, available infrastructure, nearby amenities, and building characteristics. With this data, the City can approach developers and work to guide development that aligns with the city's vision.

Priority Sites

First, it is up to the community to determine what type of development it would like to see, and from there determine its development priorities. Those priorities should be the guiding framework for pursuing and/or approving new development. However, it is best to start with what is under the City's control. Property that is already owned by

RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Redevelopment Opportunities

0 0.5 1 Miles

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, City of River Rouge

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Large, Vacant Residential Properties, many with Multiple Adjacent Vacant Lots
- Redevelopment Sites as Identified by the City
- Vacant Commercial Properties
- Vacant Industrial Properties

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the city can reduce the time line for converting land into a productive use, and help to spur private investment where development is lagging. Despite the community's financial situation, a publicly held building provides greater impetus than an absentee property owner. Next, a city should develop relationships with private property owners who are interested in disposing their property and willing to work in alignment with the city's redevelopment goals.

Second, upon reaching out to property owners, there are several questions to consider in addition to the community's priorities. Below is a list of some data points a city should explore if it wants to remain proactive in the development process.

- Does the owner want to sell?
- Does the property have financial restrictions (back taxes, liens) that prevent the site's redevelopment?
- Are there governmental incentives available to assist the property owner, or to bring a new owner to the table?
- Is there data on the environmental conditions of the site?
- Have market studies been conducted that inform how this property could successfully be developed?

Daniel D. Riney Hall

Former Post Office

Public Properties

Daniel D. Riney Hall, located at 141 E. Great Lakes Street. It is a former ice arena that is owned by the City. There is a parking lot in front, and the building sits at the rear of the parcel. To the west of the property is John Bilak Park. The estimated size of the building is 50,200 square feet and crosses three parcel boundaries. The site is currently zoned R-1, which permits primarily single-family homes.

Post Office

The site is located at 235 Burke Street, on the corner of Burke and Oak. It was formerly a US Post Office and is owned by the City. The site features a ramp up to the front door and a rear parking lot. The estimated size of building is about 5,065 square feet, on an approximately 16,944 square foot parcel. It is zoned B-1, Central Business District.

The City has proposed that the building be re-used as a boxing gym. During the Great Recession, the city of River Rouge had to sell some of its properties that were geared towards youth activities. The goal is to bring some of those spaces back. This idea was tested through the community survey and was highly supported by residents.

Vacant Sites

In the mean time, while vacant parcels remain without structures and awaiting redevelopment, there are several temporary ways to use the site to enrich the neighborhood. Depending on the amount of space, zoning, and input from residents this space could be converted into the following uses:

- Dog park
- Community garden
- An outdoor art gallery
- Outdoor movie theatre
- Small obstacle course
- Food truck circle
- Pop-up events

All of these uses require minimal set up and take-down and are good ways to occupy a space so that it becomes an asset as opposed to an eyesore.

Placemaking Efforts

River Rouge has recently made some placemaking efforts to beautify the downtown. The DDA has ordered and hung banners with River Rouge's new logo, installed planter boxes by storefronts, and hung lights to create not only ambiance but a layer of safety. Combined, these downtown additions enliven the area and signal to potential businesses that River Rouge supports the business community.

Other recommended placemaking efforts are to reduce the width of Jefferson Avenue so that it's more accessible to other modes of transit. For example, adding bike paths and a landscaped median to give pedestrians a brief respite when crossing the street offers a more pleasant experience downtown. Slowing down cars and boosting foot traffic benefits storefronts.

Artist Tours

The City of River Rouge has taken a proactive approach to finding artists to move into downtown. On a semi-regular basis, the City organizes bus tours of River Rouge, shuttling displaced artists through the downtown and to sites that can become artist lofts and/or workspace. Attracting people to the city is another important step towards spurring development projects, as retail and entertainment tend to follow people.

FUTURE LAND USE & ZONING

This section details potential future land use and a plan for zoning changes for River Rouge to undertake in order to implement the City's vision for the future.

FUTURE LAND USE

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008 requires the inclusion of a future land use map and zoning plan in the master plan. The future land use map and districts identify a generalized, preferred organization of future land uses in the City of River Rouge. It is a general framework intended to guide land use and policy decisions within the City over the next 15 to 20 years. It guides the development of a Zoning Plan and ultimately influences changes that may be made to the zoning ordinance. A table summarizing the future land use districts may be seen on the adjacent page.

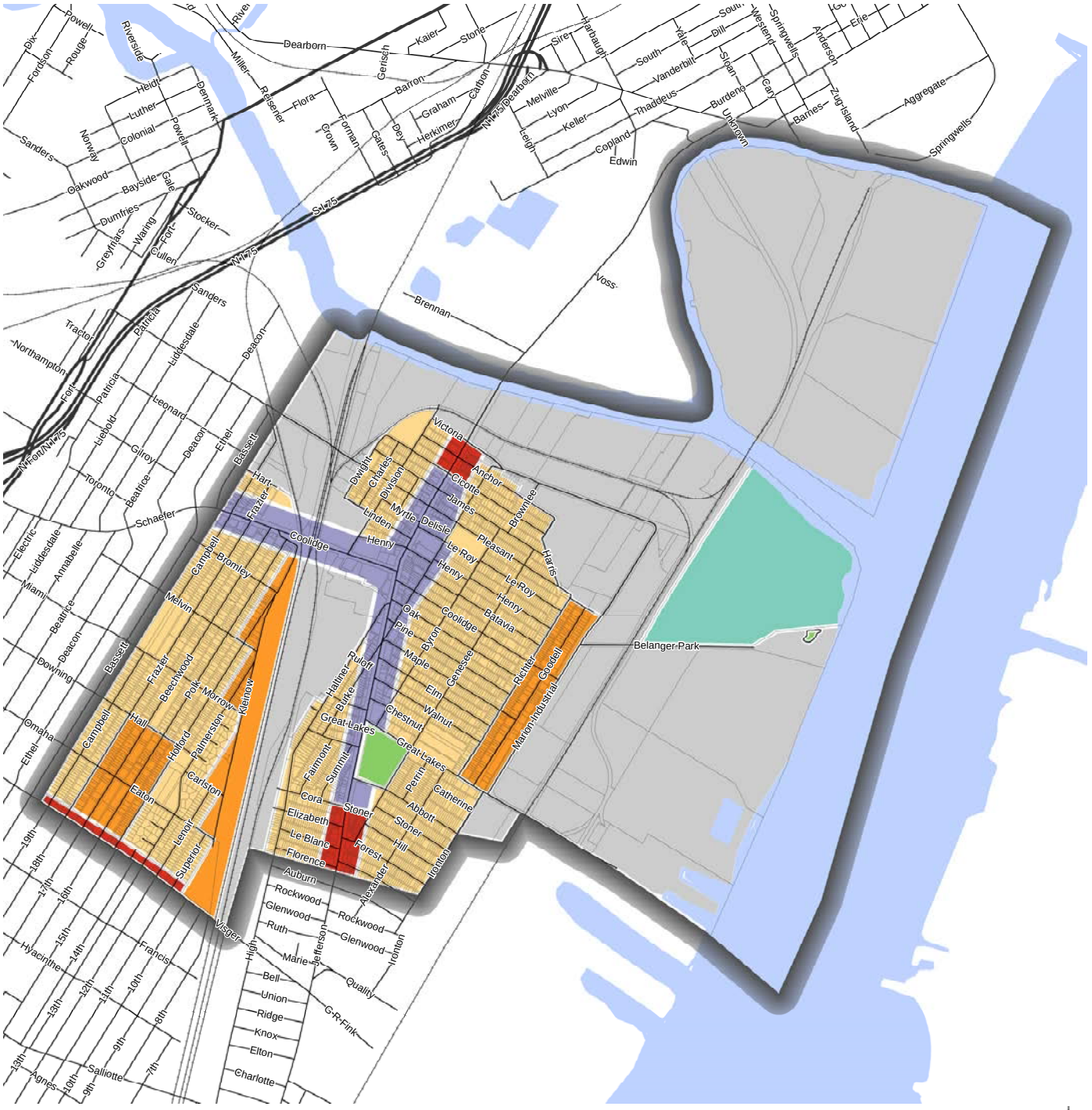
The "Future Land Use Map" is not intended to be used to identify future land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis, but rather to identify districts that may evolve within the City. The Future Land Use Map, shows the preferred locations for future development in River Rouge.

In general, residential districts are expected to retain their existing character, with the integration of R-1 and R-2 into one zone. While R-2 is a slightly higher density zone, zoning ordinances can be developed to ensure that duplexes maintain the same scale and appearance as single-family home.

Second, a mixed-use district has been added to the perimeter of the Central Business District and almost the entire length of West Jefferson Avenue to allow for a gradual transition between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. While these areas will still be predominately commercial, the district allows for residential units as well. Mixed use offers closer proximity between residences and services in the commercial areas, often in walking distances.

ZONING PLAN

According to Section 2(d) of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008), the Master Plan shall include a Zoning Plan depicting the various zoning districts and their use, as well as standards for height, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises. The Zoning Plan serves as the basis for the Zoning Ordinance.



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Future Land Use Map

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, City of River Rouge

0 0.5 1 Miles

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Redevelopment Area
- Recreation Conservation
- General Business
- Industrial

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32: Future Land Use Districts

DISTRICT	*INTENT*	*USES*
Low Density	The intent of the Low Density Future Land Use District is to provide for single-family and two-family homes in residential neighborhoods.	The primary uses are single-family and two-family residential. Other complementary uses such as cemeteries, churches, and schools would be permitted.
High Density	The intent of the High Density Future Land Use District is to provide for denser housing options in residential neighborhoods.	The primary uses are multiple-family dwelling units such as town homes, apartments, condominiums, lofts, flats, etc.
Mixed Use Neighborhood	This new district would be to provide an opportunity for neighborhood services located within walking and biking distance to residences, while retaining the primary land use as residential.	Developments may include a mix of housing types, including multiple-family units, and complementary, essential neighborhood services
DDA Overlay	The downtown is encompassed by the mixed use neighborhood but the overlay district can be applied to the downtown to maintain different design standards	This district should include an appropriate mixture of commercial, office, residential, entertainment, institutional, and public uses.
General Commercial	The intent of the General Commercial District is to provide for general retail and commercial uses with pedestrian-oriented nodes compatible with surrounding residential areas, but also require more parking.	This district can accommodate a mix of businesses, such as restaurants and grocery stores.
Recreation Conservation	The intent of the Recreation Conservation District is to identify and protect parkland, open space, conservation areas, and environmentally sensitive areas. This includes land not currently owned by the City identified for land acquisition or future recreation easements.	ppropriate uses include City, County, and State parkland, privately-owned forested areas, passive recreational areas, and open space.
Industrial	The intent of the Industrial District is to provide an exclusive area for light industrial uses dependent on transportation to and from the site.	Appropriate uses include small and medium plants that involve manufacturing, stamping, and machine operations.

Relationship to the Master Plan

As a key component of the Master Plan, the Zoning Plan is based on the recommendations of the Master Plan and is intended to identify areas where existing zoning is inconsistent with the objectives and strategies of the Master Plan, and to guide the development of the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is the primary implementation tool for the future development of River Rouge. The following sections detail existing zoning regulations in the City.

With flexible zoning, a residential zone with vacant parcels could become a redeveloped site with new housing types

Current Zoning Districts

Residential Districts

Residential 1- The R-1 District provides areas for low density residential development. Desired development includes single-family dwellings.

Residential 2- The R-2 District encourages the use of single-family and two-family dwellings. This district is still designed to be low density.

Multiple-Family Residential District- The RM-1 District permits higher density housing. Some of the desired developments are row houses and apartments.

Commercial Districts

Central Business District- The B-1 District is intended to support retail, services, public, and limited residential development. Development should be compact and offer convenient pedestrian circulation.

General Commercial District- The B-2 District provides retail for businesses with a larger footprint. This district permits a wide range of commercial uses, generates more traffic, and is located towards the edges of the City.

Industrial Districts

Light Industrial- The M-1 District primarily accommodates wholesale operations, along with manufacturing. There are mean to be no physical effects experienced by surrounding districts.

Heavy Industrial- The M-2 District is intended for manufacturing, assembling, and fabrication. This district can include large-scale operations that affect the surrounding districts. In addition to uses permitted in M-1, this district permits processing and compounding products from raw materials.

Parking District

Vehicular Parking-The P-1 District is intended to accommodate off-street parking for non-residential uses, where there is not adequate space within its district.

Zoning Changes

The following section reflects proposed changes to the existing Zoning Ordinance. Proposed changes are based on the Future Land Use Map as well as input gathered throughout the master planning process.

Parking

The "Future Land Use Map" recommends eliminating a parking zone. In order to encourage other modes of transit, the City can instead address new parking requirements by zoning district that consider how to reduce the presence of parking while still accommodating vehicles. As noted by RRC, right-sizing parking

33: Current Land Use Districts

DISTRICT	*USES (GENERAL)*	*SETBACKS (MINIMUM)*	*LOT SIZE (MINIMUM)*	*HEIGHT*
R-1 One Family	Single-family dwellings	Front-20 ft Side- 3 ft* Rear-25	5,000 sq ft	30 ft
R-2 Two Family	Single-family dwellings; duplexes	Front-20 ft Side- 3 ft* Rear-35	7,000 sq ft	35 ft
RM-1 Multi-family	Multiple-family dwellings	Front-20 ft Side- 3 ft* Rear-25	8,000 sq ft	25 ft
B-1 Central Business	Retail, services, offices, restaurants	N/A	N/A	50 ft
B-2 General Commercial	Retail, services, offices, restaurants	Front-15 ft Side** Rear-15	6,000 sq ft	30 ft
P-1 Vehicular Parking	Off-street parking	***	4,000 sq ft	15 ft
M-1 Light Industrial	Manufacturing, wholesale	Front-25 ft Side-20 ft Rear-****	20,000 sq ft	30 ft.
M-2 Heavy Industrial	Same as M-1, transportation, storage	Front-60 ft Side- ***** Rear-50 ft	30,000 sq ft	80 ft.

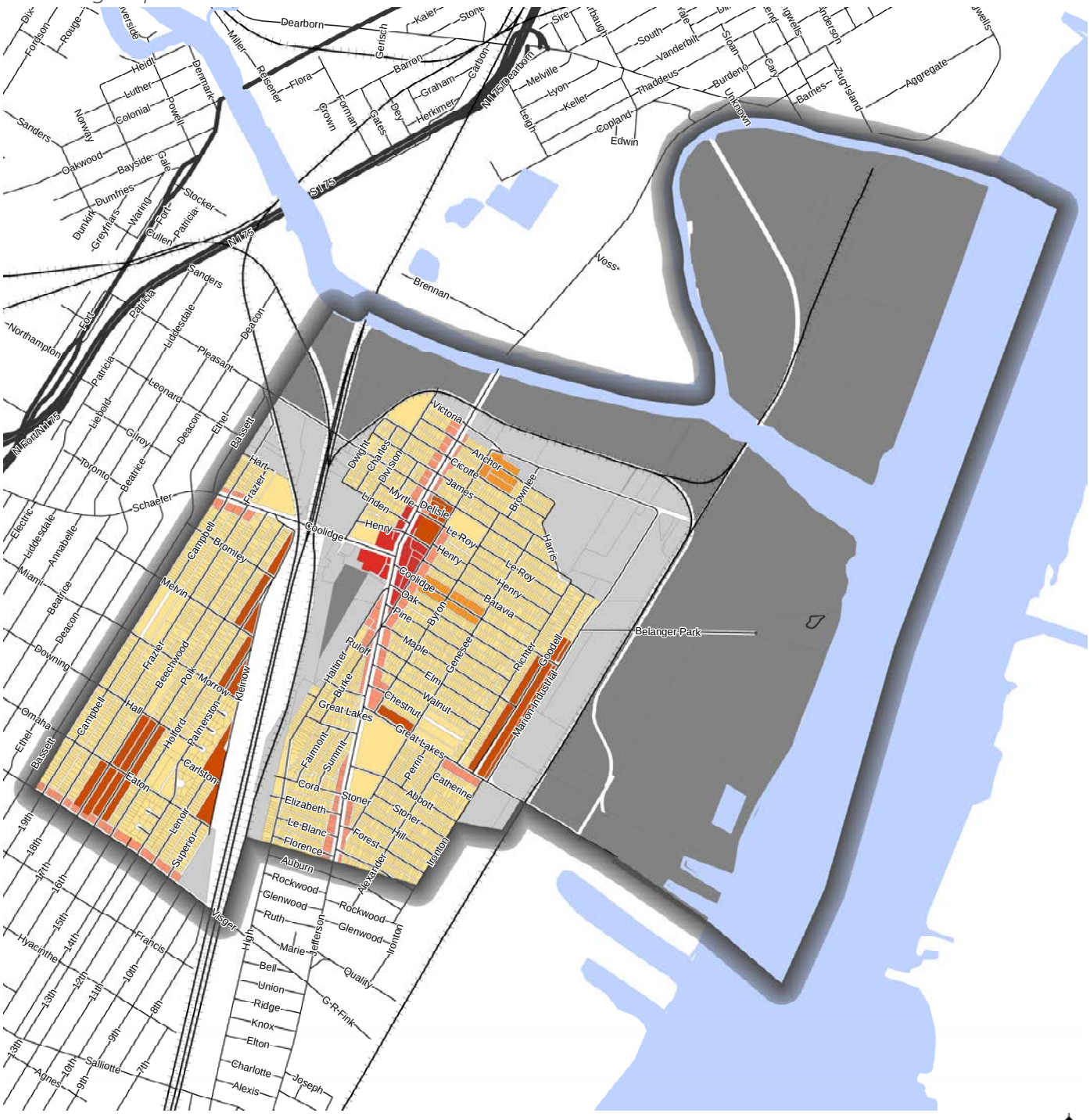
* In residential zones, side yard setbacks are required to be a minimum of 3 feet on one side, and a total of 10 feet for both sides, unless otherwise specified

** No side yard is required along an interior side lot line, except as specified in the Building Code. If the exterior side yard borders a residential district there shall be provided a side yard setback of not less than fifteen (15) feet. The openings (windows and doors) side or other side of the lot shall have a side yard of not less than fifteen (15) feet. Corner lots' side yards must equal the setback required for the front yards on the street to which they side.

*** Where the P-1 District is contiguous to side lot lines of premises within a residentially zoned district, the required wall shall be located at least ten (101 feet from the side lot line opposite the residential unit or vacant residential. Where the P-1 District is contiguous to a residentially zoned district which has a common frontage on the same block with residential structures, or wherein no residential structures have been yet erected, there shall be a setback equal to the required residential setback for said residential district. The required wall shall be located on this minimum setback line.

**** No side yard is required along one of the two interior side lot lines, except as otherwise specified in the Building Code. The openings (windows and doors) side or other side of the lot shall have a side yard of not less than twenty (20) feet. Corner lot side yards must equal the setback required for the front yards on the street to which they side. Where an authorized use is located on a lot contiguous to a residential district, there shall be provided on such lot a yard setback along such residential district of not less than one hundred (100) feet. Whenever there is an apparent conflict in the application of these provisions, the requirement providing the greater separation shall apply.

***** Twenty (20) linear feet. Corner lot side yards must equal the setback required for the front yards on the street to which they side. Where an authorized use is located on a lot contiguous to a residential district, there shall be provided on such lot a yard setback along such residential district of not less than one hundred (100) feet. Whenever there is an apparent conflict in the application of these provisions, the requirement providing the greater separation shall apply.



RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN

Zoning Map

Data Sources: State of Michigan Geographic Data Library, ESRI Basemap, Wayne County GIS, City of River Rouge

- City Boundary
- State Roads
- All Roads
- Railroads
- Rivers / Streams
- Lakes / Ponds
- R-1: One Family
- R-2: Two Family
- RM-1: Multiple Family
- B-1: Central Business District
- B-2: General Commercial
- M-1: Light Industrial
- M-2: Heavy Industrial

Disclaimer: This map was created following the districts of the 1996 Zoning Map. Parcel boundaries have, however, changed during the following 30 years, and therefore this map is meant to be used as a guide and any specific zoning information must be confirmed with the City of River Rouge.

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Example of a property in a residential zone that could redeveloped into a community asset

infrastructure has the added benefits of increasing pedestrian friendlessness and creating more available space for development.

Another type of standard for new developments that can be added are for green infrastructure requirements. Currently, there are few instances of greenery in the City. The City should consider incentives or requirements of developers to include added green infrastructure like rain gardens and trees as a part of the site plan review process, especially in flood-prone areas. Green infrastructure provides needed greenery in urban settings and helps to control stormwater on-site.

DDA Overlay District

River Rouge, like many communities, has different design and dimension standards for the Central Business District. Because the downtown is now encompassed by the mixed-use district, a DDA overlay district is recommended to preserve downtown's unique design.

An overlay district is a set of land development requirements that are required in the zoning district for the area in question. Overlay districts have a defined physical boundary and may add or decrease regulations, depending on the desired outcome. In this case, it would align with the DDA boundaries. The DDA overlay is superimposed on the mixed-use district in order to maintain

35: Corresponding Future Land Uses

MASTER PLAN FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS	*CURRENT ZONES*
Low Density Residential	R-1 Single Family R-2 Two Family
High Density Residential	RM Multiple Family Residential
Mixed Use	RM Multiple Family CBD Central Business District DDA Overlay
Redevelopment Areas (PUD)	RM Multiple Family B-1 Central Business District
General Business	B-2 General Commercial
Industrial	M-1 Light Industrial M-2 Heavy Industrial

the downtown's established characteristics.

Housing

To promote a diversity of affordable and accessible housing options that meet the changing demographics of River Rouge, the City can expand the types of housing options in residential districts through its zoning code. Some way to increase housing supply and housing formats is to allow two-family housing units in single-family districts. Also, using mixed-use and planned unit developments as tools to encourage the construction of alternative types of housing such as lofts, condominiums, and town homes that provides options for people in different life stages.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Another opportunity the planning commission plans to explore is allowing for Planned Unit Development (PUD) as a tool which can provide more flexibility and innovation for development. Many communities allow PUD as way to facilitate mixed-use and clustered development, and variable parcel sizes in a single development.

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act provides local governments with two different options for how they can facilitate a PUD. Communities can elect to handle a PUD as a zoning amendment which requires approval from elected officials, or as a special use permit which would be approved by the planning commission after reviewing a set of standards. River Rouge will need to decide which of these options is most appropriate for the community's redevelopment goals. This type of district could be applied to the DTE site.

Corresponding Future Land Uses

The "Corresponding Future Land Uses" table above shows how the proposed land use districts are a combination, with some modifications, of the current zones. When juxtaposed, it is clearer how the proposed land uses correspond to the current zones. These future designations and the current zones do not always align given that the some of the proposed land uses are new entirely, for example, the Recreation Conservation District.

ACTION PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION

Under the direction of the Planning Commission and City Council, with citizen and stakeholder input, River Rouge has identified six overarching goals, each with a series of action steps to take in order to achieve these goals. Because this master plan takes a 15 to 20 year approach to planning, it is anticipated that these goals and corresponding actions could take up to that amount of time to be realized. The tables on the following pages outline a planned implementation schedule for each action and includes a general time-frame for implementation, the party responsible for implementing, and priority level.

GOALS & ACTION STEPS

This section discusses the following actions that are associated with each goal. River Rouge's goals fall into six major themes as listed below:

1. Housing
2. Redevelopment
3. Health and Environment
4. Communication
5. Transportation
6. Economic Development

Housing

With a central goal of providing housing that meets a variety of income and life stage needs, all of the actions listed are designed to increase housing supply. In addition to housing supply, the hope is to increasing the types of housing format to alternatives to single-family, detached homes. For example, loosening the single-family zoning restrictions to allow duplexes, restoring second-story units downtown, and allowing accessory dwelling units for residents will help to expand the variety of housing formats and therefore options for incoming and incumbent residents.

Redevelopment

The redevelopment actions are tied to the Redevelopment Ready Certification program. The goal is for River Rouge to become its own champion for redevelopment through a city-led process, as opposed to waiting for developers to approach the City. In order to get in front of development, the city must take steps towards identifying sites, documenting their current characteristics, and providing this data online as a way to market to a wider audience. The City can also look for state and county incentives that assist in expediting redevelopment.

Health, Environment, & Energy

Due to River Rouge's location amongst industrial uses, there is concern about the health of its residents. With the goals of improving the residents physical health, and the city's natural assets, action items are geared towards increasing opportunities for exercise, and opportunities to improve the city's air and water quality.

In collaboration with Ecoworks, River Rouge has created extensive goals for improving energy efficiency among municipal buildings. The goal is to continue to build off the momentum created by this partnership and to use its successes as a way to teach future generations about the importance of responsible energy consumption.

Transportation

A lack of reliable modes of transportation can be a huge barrier to economic opportunity. This is a difficult area to improve because the bus lines running through the city are managed by outside entities: DDOT and SMART. With the goal of providing safe, accessible, and reliable transportation to its residents, River Rouge can focus on non motorized transit options. In addition to voicing its concerns for improved frequency of bus routes to the respective agencies, River Rouge can work to provide a bicycle network, cross walks for pedestrians, and a safe route for those who do not have a car.

Communication

As demographics and technology change, it is essential that a city re-evaluates its outreach methods. There are two goals under this theme that address how River Rouge can improve communication to non residents, such as potential business owners, and to its residents. Improving communication to outsiders is a matter of changing marketing tactics to spread the City's new branding, using varied media sources, and expanding tours to a wider audience.

To improve communication with its residents, the City should consider attending more events and group meetings that take place in the community. Being present in already established events outside

***Vision:** River Rouge residents envision a growing city that maintains its small town feel, with state-of-the art facilities, bustling sidewalks, and a family-friendly atmosphere. River Rouge will have housing formats that support all stages of life, clean, high-paying jobs, and a reliable and efficient transportation system.*

of City Hall shows the community the City's dedication and provides additional outlets for information exchange.

Economic Development

The goals in this section are three-fold. This holistic approach to economic development focuses on improving the vibrancy of downtown, cultivating local business, and training the next generation to be successful professionals in a variety of fields.

There are several steps to take to improve the appearance and enthusiasm towards downtown. First, to enact real change, the City of River Rouge should consider hiring a part-time Community Development staff person who can dedicate time to improving downtown's prospects. Without additional attention, it will remain difficult to build momentum and advance these goals.

The recently completed 2017 Corridor Plan holds many design ideas for making downtown more walkable, transit-oriented, and beautiful. In addition, the physical structures can be updated and made uniform to strengthen River Rouge's image to its residents and visitors.

Increasing the number of local business owners will take time. If the City and the DDA are at the forefront of supporting and encouraging hesitant business owners, River Rouge will begin to cultivate and retain its talented residents.

36: Housing Goals

GOAL	*ACTION*	*PRIORITY LEVEL*	*RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS*	*TIME FRAME*
1. Provide high quality housing options throughout the City that meet the housing needs of all ages, income levels, and levels of disability.	Use the TMA as a guideline for the type of tenure, number, and housing format to build (2).	Low	City, developers, DDA	1 year
	Create more flexible zoning that allows for two-family residential units in R-1 zones (6).	Medium	City	1 year
	Apply for MEDC funds to rehabilitate 2nd story housing units. Target West Jefferson Avenue (9).	High	City, DDA, MEDC	1-5 years
	Change the definition for Accessory Use to include residential uses (4).	Medium	City	1 year
	Reduce the minimum floor area for studios and one-bedroom units (2).	Low	City	1-5 year
2. Reduce the presence of blighted structures within the community to improve the overall attractiveness of neighborhoods.	Continue to inventory the condition of homes every six months to target Hardest Hit Funds towards any concentration of blight (15).	High	City, Building Department	Ongoing
	Institute a year-round rental inspection program to help reduce the number of blighted structures (8).	High	City, Building Department	Ongoing
	Increase both natural and built buffering standards to reduce the negative effects of industry on residential zones (4).	Medium	City, Building Department, Parks and Recreation	1-2 years

37: Redevelopment Goals

GOAL	ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
1. Take a proactive, city-led approach to redevelopment.	Inventory potential redevelopment sites according to the Redevelopment Ready criteria (8).	High	City, DDA, EDC	Ongoing
	Prioritize sites that serve the immediate needs of residents, (i.e. grocery store, credit union). (6)	High	City, DDA, EDC	Tied to development
	Create an online directory with the redevelopment site's basic information to market to developers (2).	Medium	City, DDA, EDC	1-2 years
	Apply for brownfield redevelopment funds to make more sites available for redevelopment (0).	Low	Downriver Community Conference	1-3 years
	Consider a community benefits agreement for incoming businesses (3).	Medium	City, DDA, Employers	Contingent upon incoming business
	Consider an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District for vacant industrial properties (0).	Low	City, EDC, MEDC	2-5 years
	Contact small-scale developers using MSHDA's approved list and invite them to tour sites identified for housing and mixed-use development (0).	Low	City, DDA, MSHDA, MEDC	2-5 years
	Develop an ordinance that regulates the expansion of fast food and liquor stores (0).	Low	City	1-3 years
	Continue to follow RRC best practices (4).	Medium	City, DDA	Ongoing
	Create a Capital Improvement Plan (3).	Medium	All City departments	1 year
	Maintain relationship with Wayne County to promote redevelopment sites (3).	Medium	City, DDA, Wayne County	

GOAL	*ACTION*	*PRIORITY LEVEL*	*RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS*	*TIME FRAME*
1. Improve the physical health of River Rouge's residents.	Build a partnership with the local hospital to increase awareness about health insurance options and programs that support healthy lifestyles (6).	High	City, Southwest Service Center	Ongoing
	Create non motorized transit options to encourage residents to walk or use their bicycles (4).	Medium	City, MDOT, SEMCOG	1-3 years
	Bring exercise classes to neighborhood parks and community centers in the summer (3).	Medium	Parks and Recreation Department	1 year
	Apply for a grant to build a kayak launch in Belanger Park to encourage residents to participate in water sports (6).	High	Parks and Recreation Department, DTE	1-3 years
2. Improve and expand the city's natural assets.	Test ground water regularly surrounding industrial land uses for contamination (1).	Low	DEQ, Wayne County Health Department	1 year
	Apply for grants to expand tree canopy coverage to improve air quality and reduce instances of flooding (6).	High	Parks and Recreation Department, DNR, USDA	3-5 years
	Continue to work with Ecoworks to meet energy management goals (9).	High	EcoWorks, Michigan Energy Office	Ongoing
	Promote successes of energy savings to teach municipal staff and residents about energy efficiency (4).	Medium	City, EcoWorks, Energy Commission	3-5 years

GOAL	*ACTION*	*PRIORITY LEVEL*	*RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS*	*TIME FRAME*
1. Provide a variety of safe, accessible, and affordable transportation options.	Work with SMART and DDOT to expand the time schedule and frequency of the bus service (17).	High	City, SMART, DDOT	Ongoing
	Build a bicycle lane network and amenities to encourage ridership (8).	Medium	City, MDOT	1-3 years
	Continue working with SEMCAs transportation assistance to workers (5).	Low	City, SEMCA	3-5 years
	Plan a meeting with SMART, SEMCA, and resident to discuss how to spend annual budget (8).	Medium	SMART, SEMCA	Ongoing
	Complete sidewalk network. Prioritize sidewalks in front of schools (13).	High	City, MDOT	3-5 years
	Consider a volunteer-based ride service to assist residents in getting to appointments (9).	Medium	City	1-2 years

40: Communication

GOAL	ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
1. Increase awareness of River Rouge as a place of economic opportunity.	Use new branding to communicate with businesses that River Rouge is a supportive business environment (4).	Medium	Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber	Ongoing
	Expand the media outlets used to include radio, travel magazines, regional newspapers, and social media (3).	Low	Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber	<1 year
	Expand tours of River Rouge to perspective residents and/ or entrepreneurs (2).	Low	City, DDA	Ongoing
2. Improve communication with residents about their vision for the city.	Use social media consistently to share information with the residents (7).	High	City	1 year
	Set up kiosks at city events to disseminate current information and listen to resident's feedback (5).	Medium	City	Ongoing
	Plan an annual meeting with High School students for community engagement (4).	Medium	School Board	1 year
	Promote River Rouge as a place of unity, diversity, and inclusiveness (8).	High	Planning Commission, City Council	1 year
	Work with School Board to incentivize students to volunteer for the City (10).	High	School Board, City	1-2 years

GOAL	ACTION	PRIORITY LEVEL	RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS	TIME FRAME
Foster a healthy and vibrant downtown.	Use the data from the 2017 Corridor Plan to engage entrepreneurs who manage the type of retail needed in River Rouge (4).	Medium	DDA	1-2 years
	Update zoning to reflect desired aesthetic standards for buildings related to medical marijuana (3).	Low	City	1-2 years
	Follow Complete Street guidelines that improve the safety, accessibility, and beauty of the downtown (2).	Low	DDA	1-3 years
	Create a Facade Improvement Program for downtown buildings (8).	High	DDA, EDC	1-3 years
	Create a vacant storefront program with local artists (8).	High	DDA, artists	1 year
	Hire a part-time Community Developer with a relevant degree (9).	High	City, DDA	2-3 years
	Consider MMLs PlacePop as a way to temporarily gauge the impact of design interventions on underutilized space. Monitor impacts (2).	Low	DDA, MML	1-2 years
Increase the number of local business owners.	Host classes that teach residents how to develop a business plan (4).	Medium	DDA, DCC	1-3 years
	Introduce the idea of worker co-operatives and provide resources for residents to learn more.	Low	U.S. Federation of Worker Co-operatives	3-5 years
	Identify and create a worker co-rental space.	Medium	DDA, EDC	3-5 years
	Promote the city as supportive to medical marijuana-related businesses.	Low	DDA	1-3 years
Create a workforce that is trained for a variety of occupations.	Continue to host job fairs with varying locations within River Rouge.	High	SEMCA	Ongoing
	Teach soft jobs skills as a part of the school curriculum (0).	Low	School Board, SEMCA, United Way	Ongoing
	Promote SEMCAs Skilled Trades Training Fund and Business Services (5).	Medium	SEMCA, Regional Chamber of Commerce, Community Colleges	1-3 years
	Continue to build a relationship with the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) (4).	Medium	City, WDBA, SEMCA	Ongoing

APPENDIX

42: River Rouge Master Plan Survey Results

River Rouge Master Plan Survey

Q1 What is ONE WORD you would use to describe the City of River Rouge?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 6

#	Responses	Date
1	Inexpensive	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	Fun	4/19/2017 5:10 AM
3	Industrial	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
4	Family	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
5	Resilient	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
6	Precious	4/19/2017 4:18 AM
7	Avrage	4/19/2017 4:05 AM
8	Community	4/19/2017 3:59 AM
9	Boring	4/19/2017 3:53 AM
10	The Geto	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
11	Family	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
12	Empty or stagnant	4/19/2017 3:37 AM
13	Close friends	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
14	Fluster cluck	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
15	Family	4/19/2017 3:23 AM
16	Progressive	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
17	Home	4/19/2017 3:17 AM
18	Strong	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
19	Ok	4/19/2017 2:35 AM
20	Quiet	4/19/2017 2:31 AM
21	Like	4/19/2017 2:27 AM

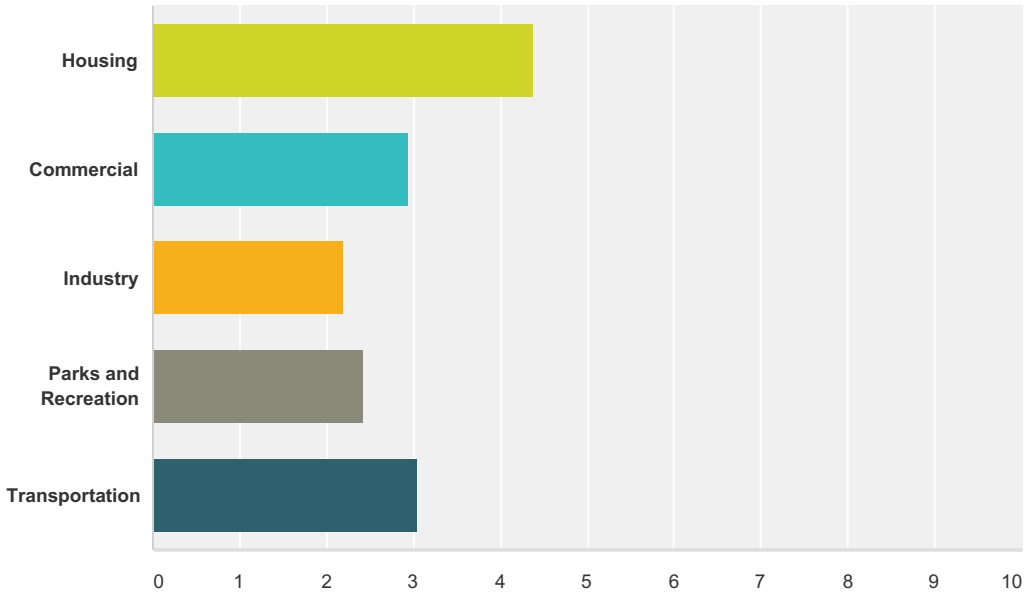
Q2 What is ONE WORD you WOULD LIKE to use to describe the City of River Rouge?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 7

#	Responses	Date
1	Bustling	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	Artis	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	Unity	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
4	Fantastic	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
5	Concerned	4/19/2017 4:18 AM
6	Depressed	4/19/2017 4:07 AM
7	Avrage	4/19/2017 4:05 AM
8	Safe	4/19/2017 3:59 AM
9	Lively	4/19/2017 3:53 AM
10	State of the Art	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
11	Family	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
12	Modern	4/19/2017 3:37 AM
13	Unique	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
14	Livable	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
15	Family	4/19/2017 3:23 AM
16	Successful	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
17	Growing	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
18	Ok	4/19/2017 2:35 AM
19	Recreational	4/19/2017 2:31 AM
20	Good	4/19/2017 2:27 AM

Q3 How do you think the City of River Rouge should prioritize the following issues? (1-top priority, 5- lowest priority)

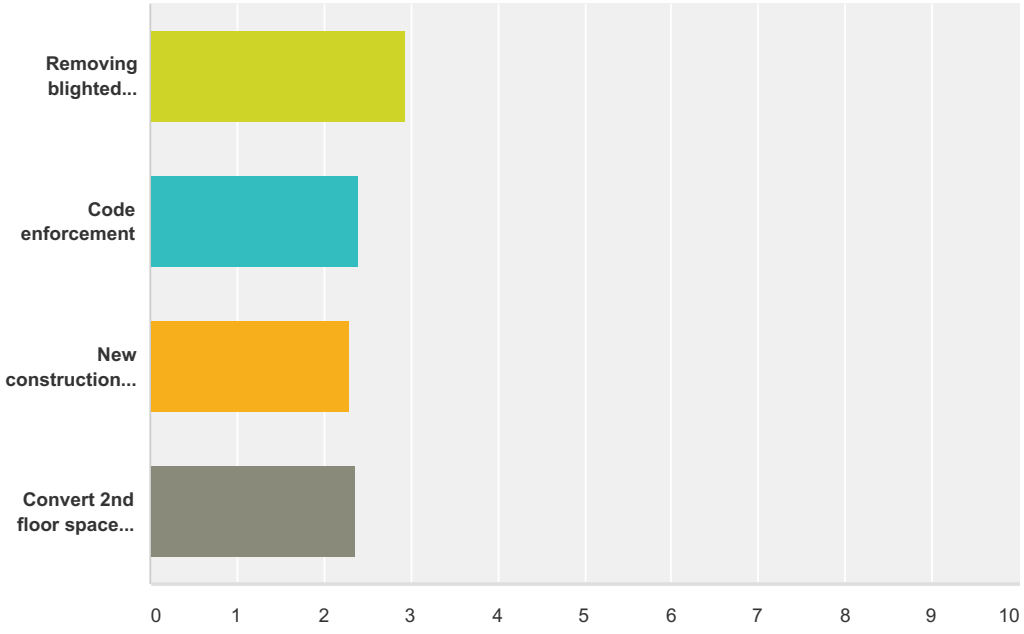
Answered: 21 Skipped: 6



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Score
Housing	**71.43%** 15	**14.29%** 3	**4.76%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**9.52%** 2	21	4.38
Commercial	**9.52%** 2	**23.81%** 5	**28.57%** 6	**28.57%** 6	**9.52%** 2	21	2.95
Industry	**0.00%** 0	**4.76%** 1	**42.86%** 9	**19.05%** 4	**33.33%** 7	21	2.19
Parks and Recreation	**0.00%** 0	**33.33%** 7	**4.76%** 1	**33.33%** 7	**28.57%** 6	21	2.43
Transportation	**19.05%** 4	**23.81%** 5	**19.05%** 4	**19.05%** 4	**19.05%** 4	21	3.05

Q4 How should the City of River Rouge prioritize the following HOUSING issues? (1-top priority, 4-lowest priority)

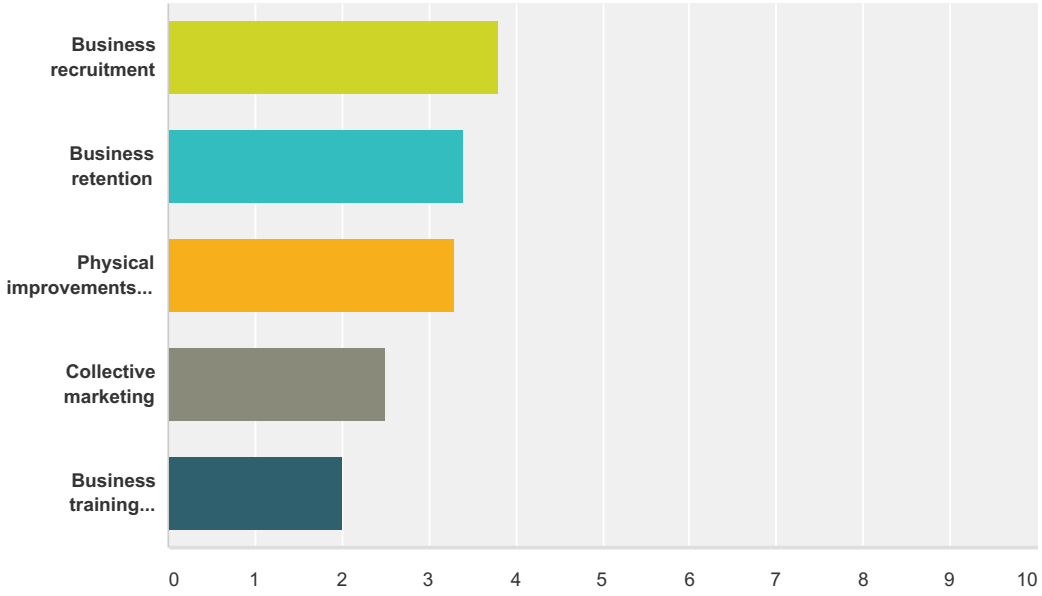
Answered: 20 Skipped: 7



	1	2	3	4	Total	Score
Removing blighted structures	**50.00%** 10	**10.00%** 2	**25.00%** 5	**15.00%** 3	20	2.95
Code enforcement	**15.00%** 3	**35.00%** 7	**25.00%** 5	**25.00%** 5	20	2.40
New construction of alternatives to single-family housing	**10.00%** 2	**40.00%** 8	**20.00%** 4	**30.00%** 6	20	2.30
Convert 2nd floor space into apartments on Jefferson Avenue	**25.00%** 5	**15.00%** 3	**30.00%** 6	**30.00%** 6	20	2.35

Q5 How should the City of River Rouge prioritize the following COMMERCIAL issues? (1-top priority, 5-lowest priority)

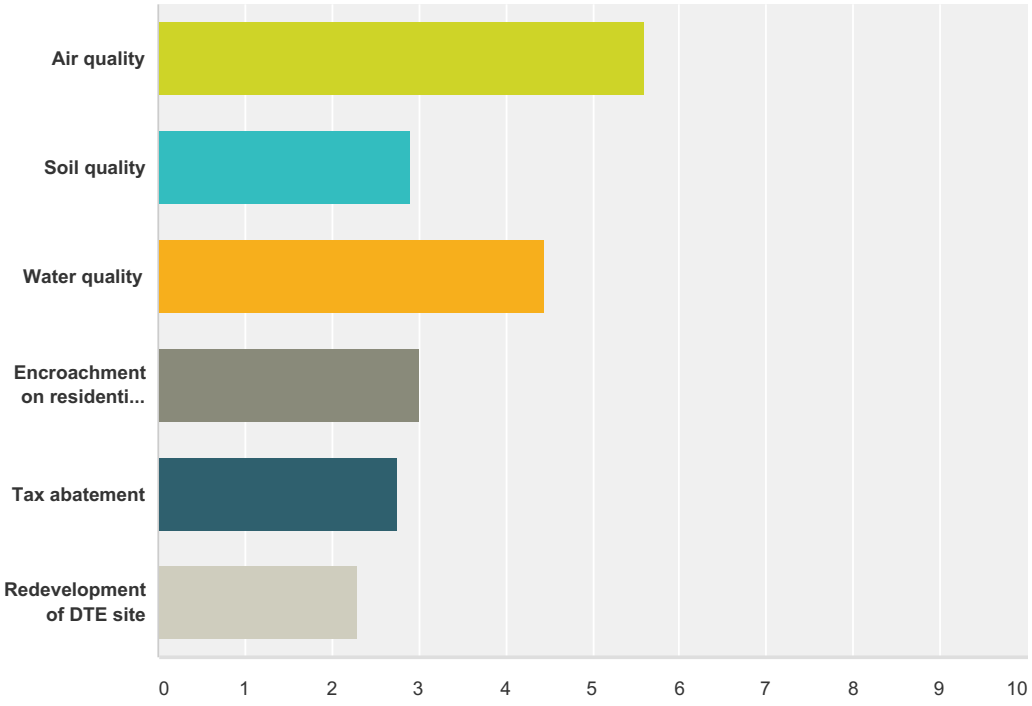
Answered: 20 Skipped: 7



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Score
Business recruitment	**35.00%** 7	**30.00%** 6	**15.00%** 3	**20.00%** 4	**0.00%** 0	20	3.80
Business retention	**25.00%** 5	**25.00%** 5	**25.00%** 5	**15.00%** 3	**10.00%** 2	20	3.40
Physical improvements to commercial corridor	**25.00%** 5	**20.00%** 4	**30.00%** 6	**10.00%** 2	**15.00%** 3	20	3.30
Collective marketing	**5.00%** 1	**20.00%** 4	**15.00%** 3	**40.00%** 8	**20.00%** 4	20	2.50
Business training programs	**10.00%** 2	**5.00%** 1	**15.00%** 3	**15.00%** 3	**55.00%** 11	20	2.00

Q6 How should the City of River Rouge prioritize the following INDUSTRIAL issues? (1-top priority, 6-lowest priority)

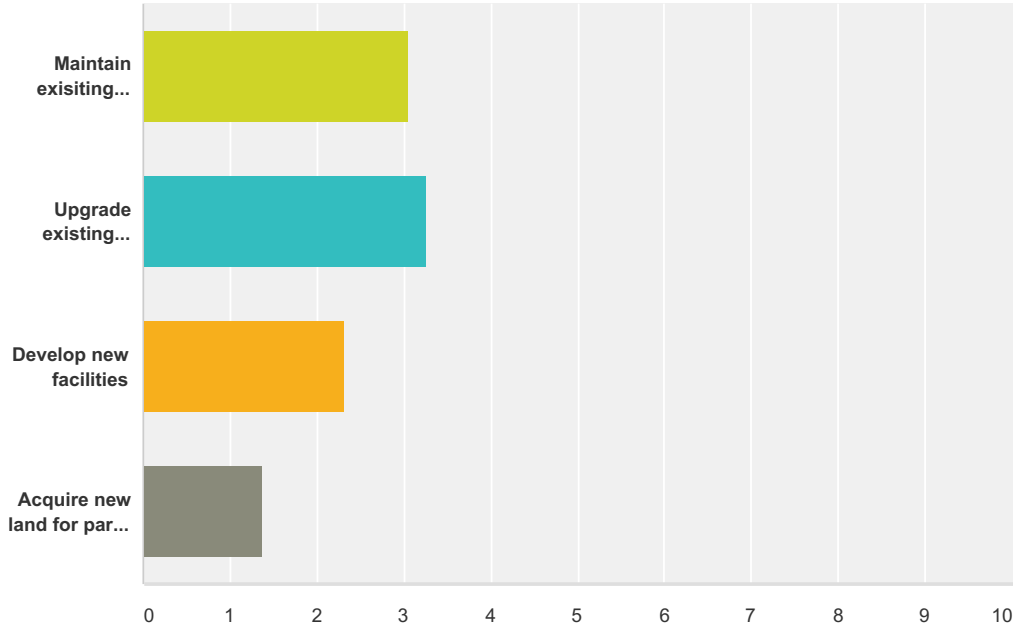
Answered: 20 Skipped: 7



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Air quality	**70.00%** 14	**20.00%** 4	**10.00%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	20	5.60
Soil quality	**0.00%** 0	**20.00%** 4	**20.00%** 4	**20.00%** 4	**10.00%** 2	**30.00%** 6	20	2.90
Water quality	**10.00%** 2	**40.00%** 8	**40.00%** 8	**5.00%** 1	**5.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	20	4.45
Encroachment on residential neighborhoods	**5.00%** 1	**15.00%** 3	**10.00%** 2	**25.00%** 5	**35.00%** 7	**10.00%** 2	20	3.00
Tax abatement	**5.00%** 1	**5.00%** 1	**15.00%** 3	**25.00%** 5	**35.00%** 7	**15.00%** 3	20	2.75
Redevelopment of DTE site	**10.00%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**5.00%** 1	**25.00%** 5	**15.00%** 3	**45.00%** 9	20	2.30

Q7 How should the City of River Rouge prioritize the following RECREATION issues? (1-top priority, 4-lowest priority)

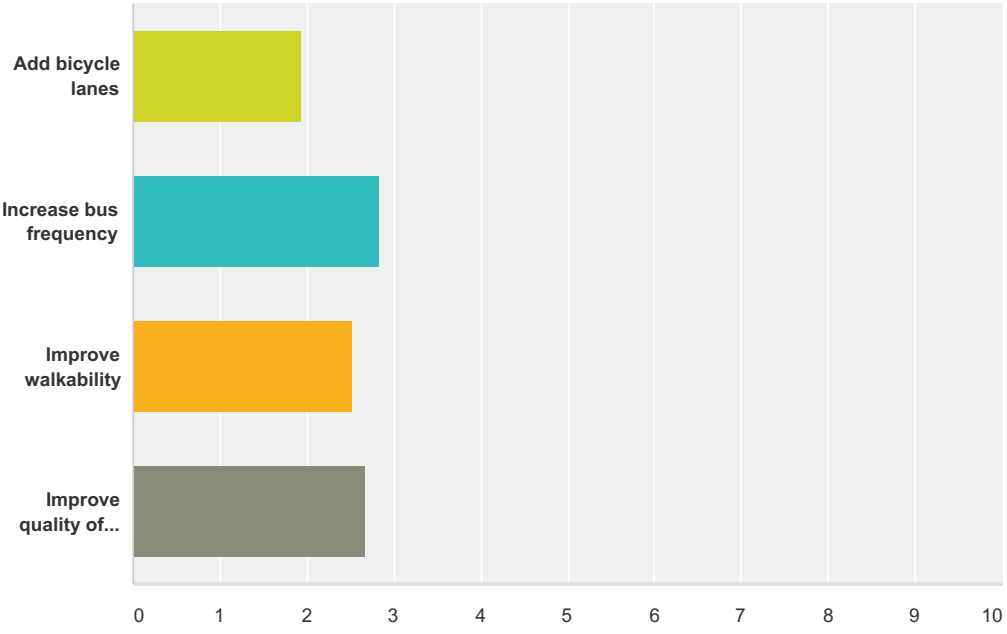
Answered: 19 Skipped: 8



	1	2	3	4	Total	Score
Maintain exisiting facilities	**52.63%** 10	**10.53%** 2	**26.32%** 5	**10.53%** 2	19	3.05
Upgrade existing facilities	**36.84%** 7	**52.63%** 10	**10.53%** 2	**0.00%** 0	19	3.26
Develop new facilities	**10.53%** 2	**31.58%** 6	**36.84%** 7	**21.05%** 4	19	2.32
Acquire new land for parks and recreation	**0.00%** 0	**5.26%** 1	**26.32%** 5	**68.42%** 13	19	1.37

Q8 How should the City of River Rouge prioritize the following transportation issues? (1-top priority, 4-lowest priority)

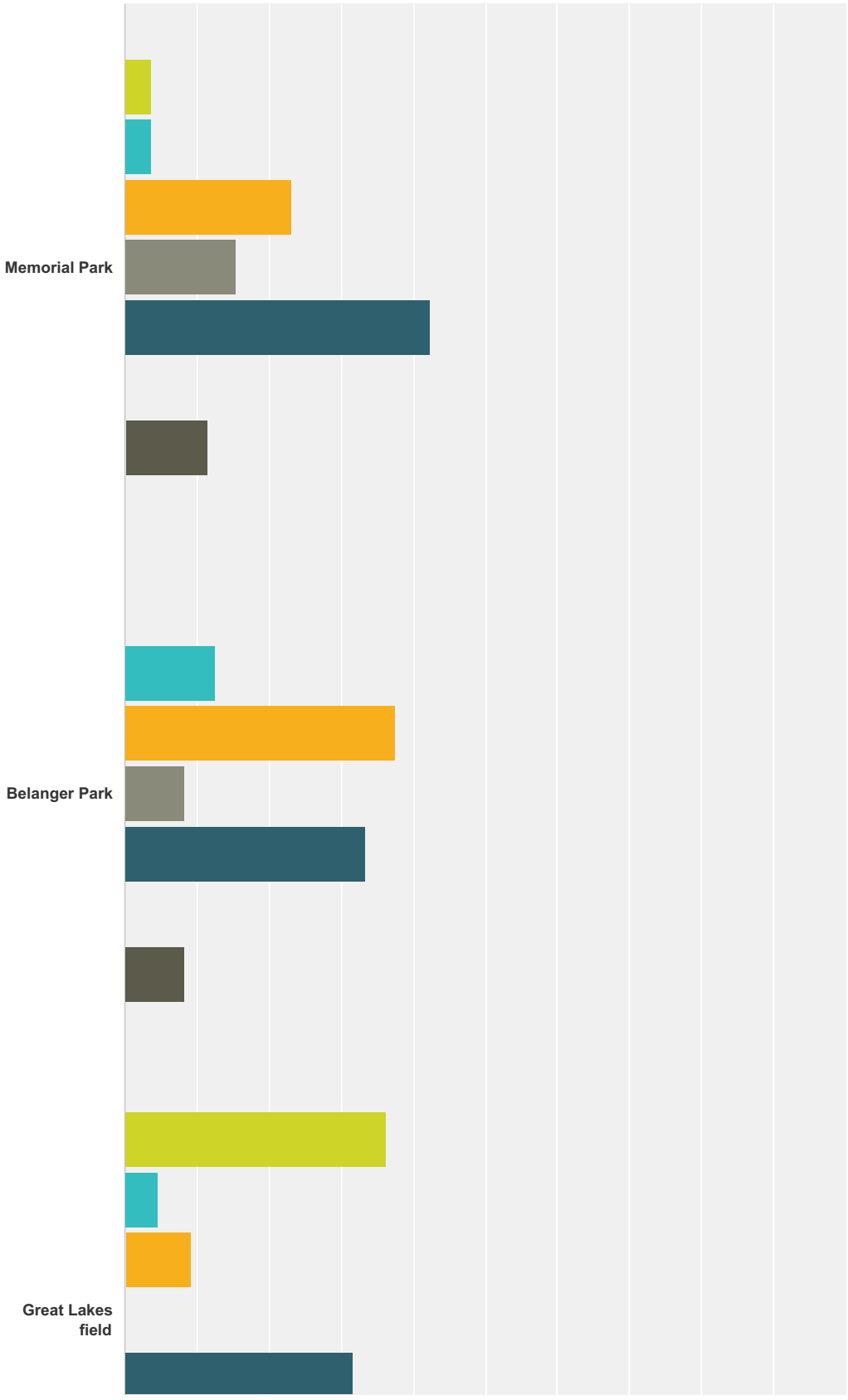
Answered: 19 Skipped: 8

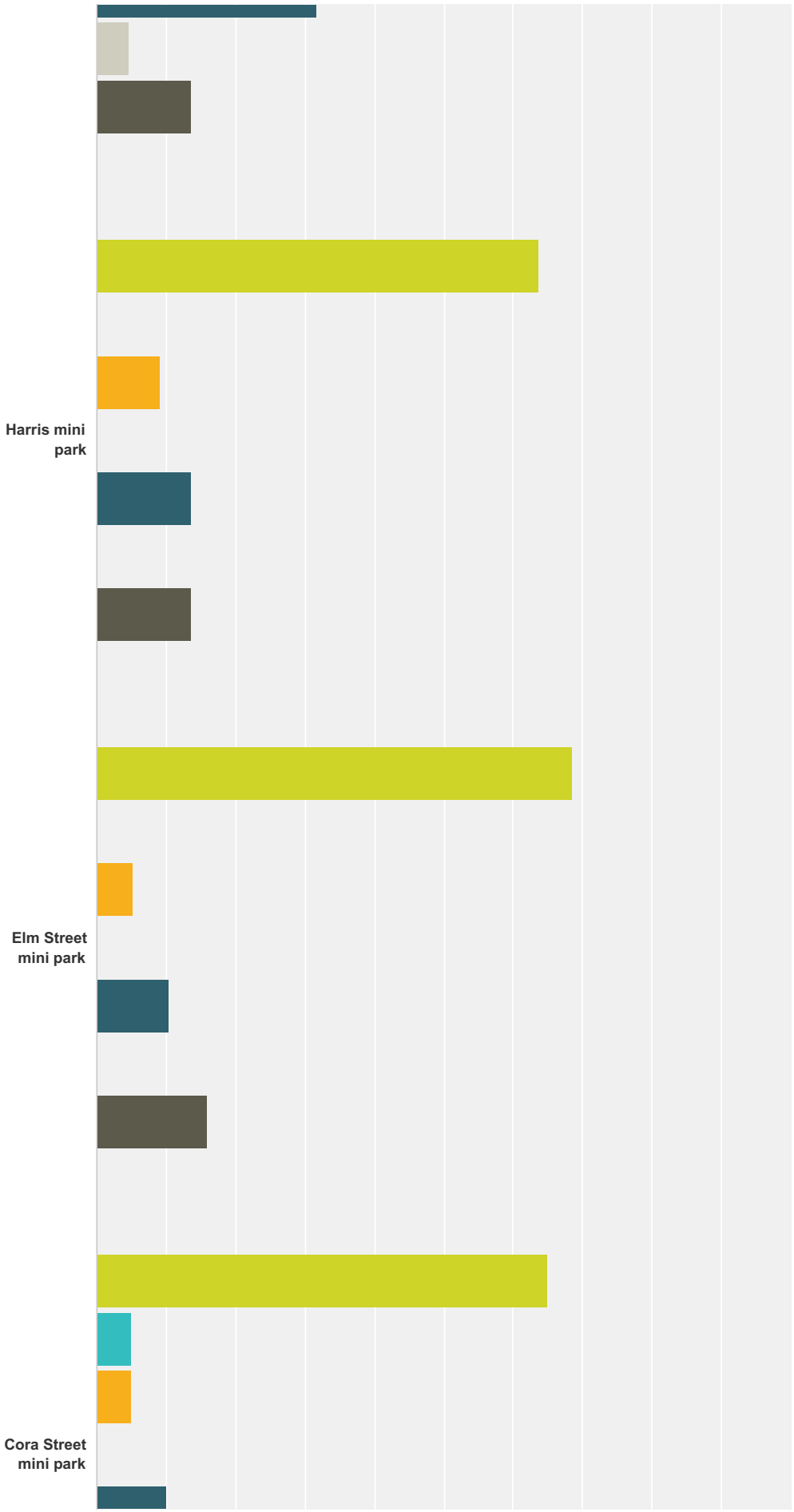


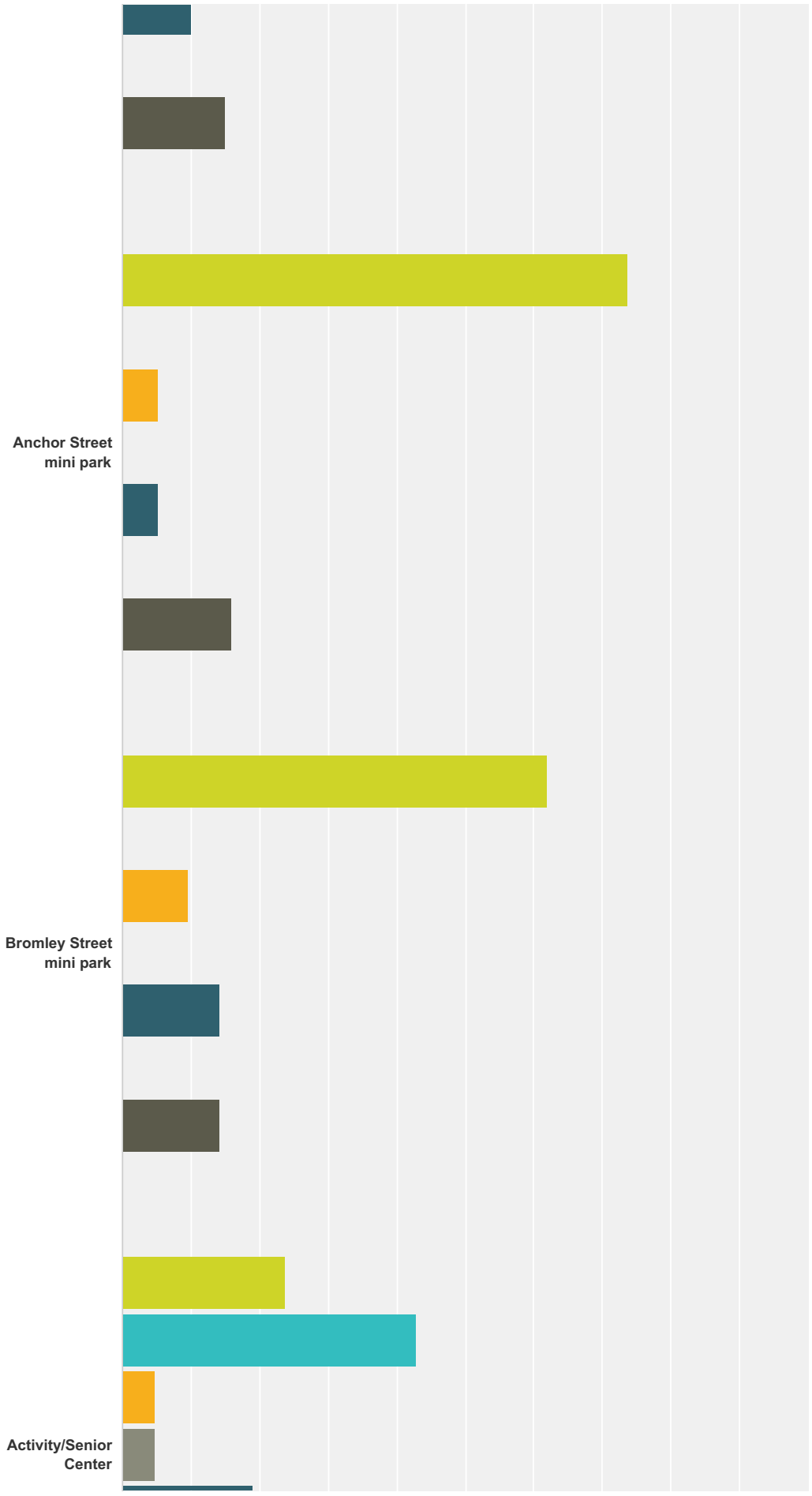
	1	2	3	4	Total	Score
Add bicycle lanes	**15.79%** 3	**10.53%** 2	**26.32%** 5	**47.37%** 9	19	1.95
Increase bus frequency	**47.37%** 9	**15.79%** 3	**10.53%** 2	**26.32%** 5	19	2.84
Improve walkability	**0.00%** 0	**52.63%** 10	**47.37%** 9	**0.00%** 0	19	2.53
Improve quality of roads	**36.84%** 7	**21.05%** 4	**15.79%** 3	**26.32%** 5	19	2.68

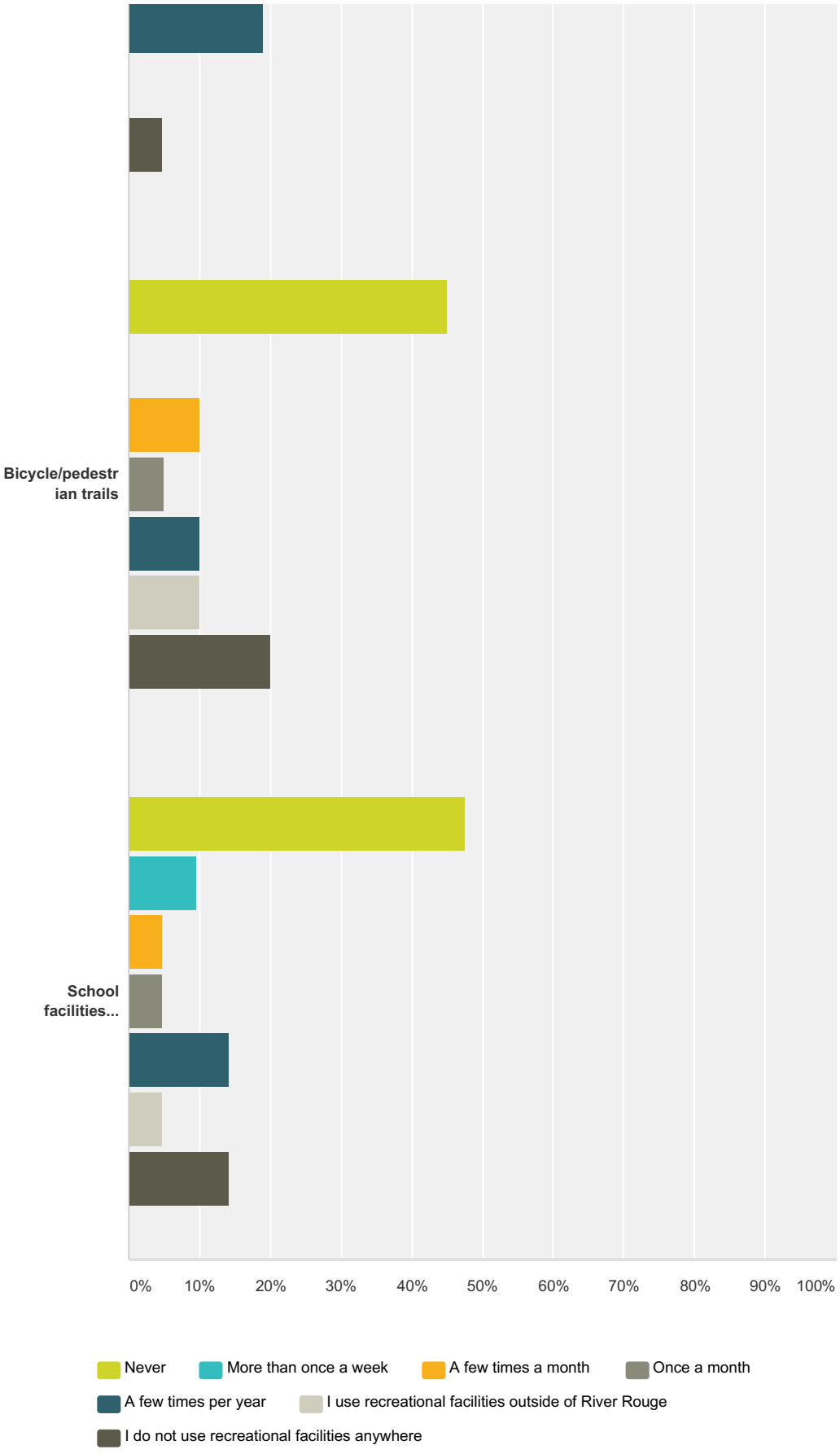
Q9 How often do you use the recreation facilities in River Rouge?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1




Harris mini park
Elm Street mini park
Cora Street mini park

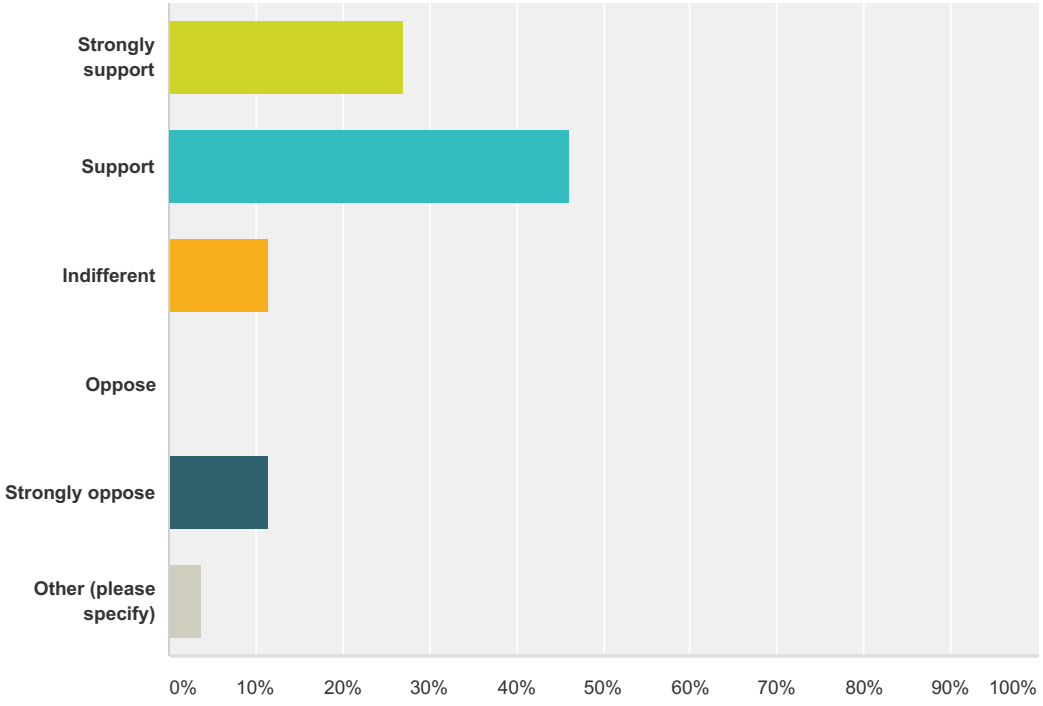

Anchor Street mini park
Bromley Street mini park
Activity/Senior Center


Bicycle/pedestrian trails
School facilities...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
Never
More than once a week
A few times a month
Once a month
A few times per year
I use recreational facilities outside of River Rouge
I do not use recreational facilities anywhere

	Never	More than once a week	A few times a month	Once a month	A few times per year	I use recreational facilities outside of River Rouge	I do not use recreational facilities anywhere	Total
Memorial Park	**3.85%** 1	**3.85%** 1	**23.08%** 6	**15.38%** 4	**42.31%** 11	**0.00%** 0	**11.54%** 3	26
Belanger Park	**0.00%** 0	**12.50%** 3	**37.50%** 9	**8.33%** 2	**33.33%** 8	**0.00%** 0	**8.33%** 2	24
Great Lakes field	**36.36%** 8	**4.55%** 1	**9.09%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**31.82%** 7	**4.55%** 1	**13.64%** 3	22
Harris mini park	**63.64%** 14	**0.00%** 0	**9.09%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**13.64%** 3	**0.00%** 0	**13.64%** 3	22
Elm Street mini park	**68.42%** 13	**0.00%** 0	**5.26%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**10.53%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**15.79%** 3	19
Cora Street mini park	**65.00%** 13	**5.00%** 1	**5.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**10.00%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**15.00%** 3	20
Anchor Street mini park	**73.68%** 14	**0.00%** 0	**5.26%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**5.26%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**15.79%** 3	19
Bromley Street mini park	**61.90%** 13	**0.00%** 0	**9.52%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**14.29%** 3	**0.00%** 0	**14.29%** 3	21
Activity/Senior Center	**23.81%** 5	**42.86%** 9	**4.76%** 1	**4.76%** 1	**19.05%** 4	**0.00%** 0	**4.76%** 1	21
Bicycle/pedestrian trails	**45.00%** 9	**0.00%** 0	**10.00%** 2	**5.00%** 1	**10.00%** 2	**10.00%** 2	**20.00%** 4	20
School facilities (outside of school hours)	**47.62%** 10	**9.52%** 2	**4.76%** 1	**4.76%** 1	**14.29%** 3	**4.76%** 1	**14.29%** 3	21

Q10 To what extent do you support using the vacant post office building on West Jefferson as a community boxing center?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 1

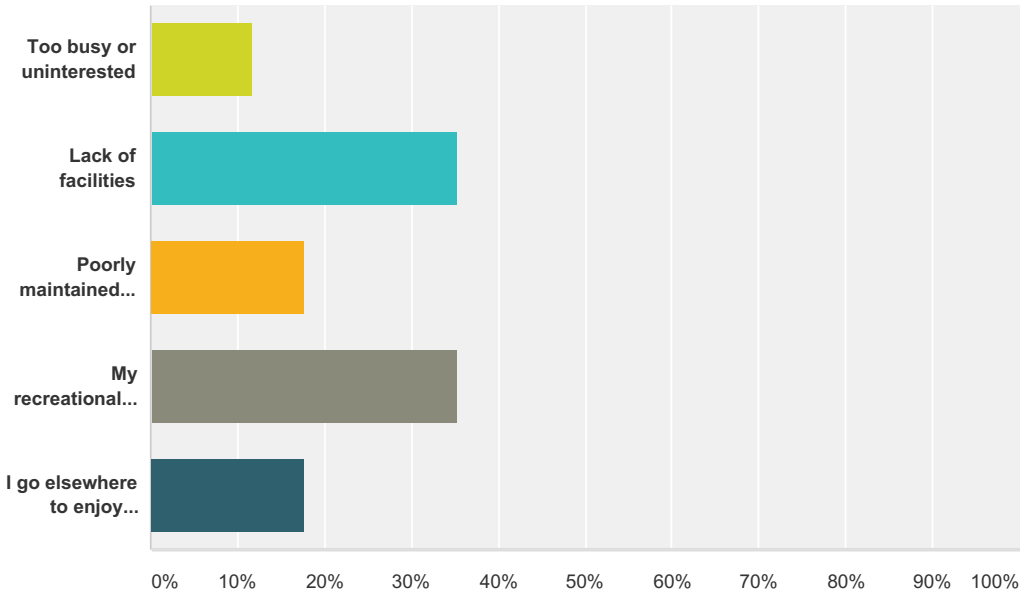


Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly support	**26.92%**	7
Support	**46.15%**	12
Indifferent	**11.54%**	3
Oppose	**0.00%**	0
Strongly oppose	**11.54%**	3
Other (please specify)	**3.85%**	1
Total		**26**

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	No extent	4/19/2017 4:07 AM

Q11 As a River Rouge resident, what prevents you from using recreation facilities more frequently? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 17 Skipped: 10

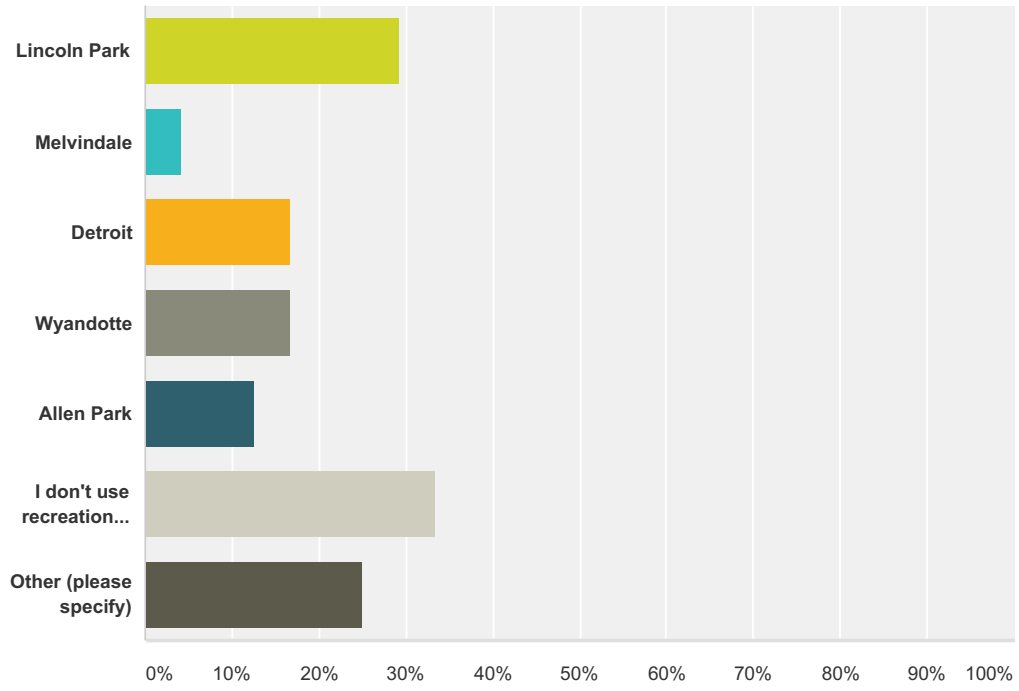


Answer Choices	Responses	
Too busy or uninterested	**11.76%**	2
Lack of facilities	**35.29%**	6
Poorly maintained facilities	**17.65%**	3
My recreational needs are met	**35.29%**	6
I go elsewhere to enjoy recreational facilities	**17.65%**	3
Total Respondents: 17		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Health	4/19/2017 4:05 AM
2	I walk daily to the bridge	4/19/2017 3:53 AM
3	I am elderly and don't drive anymore.	4/19/2017 3:37 AM
4	Health reason-not too ambulatory	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
5	Need recreational provisions for adults	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
6	Transportation	4/19/2017 2:44 AM
7	not into recreation	4/19/2017 2:16 AM

Q12 If you use recreation facilities outside of River Rouge, where are they located? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3

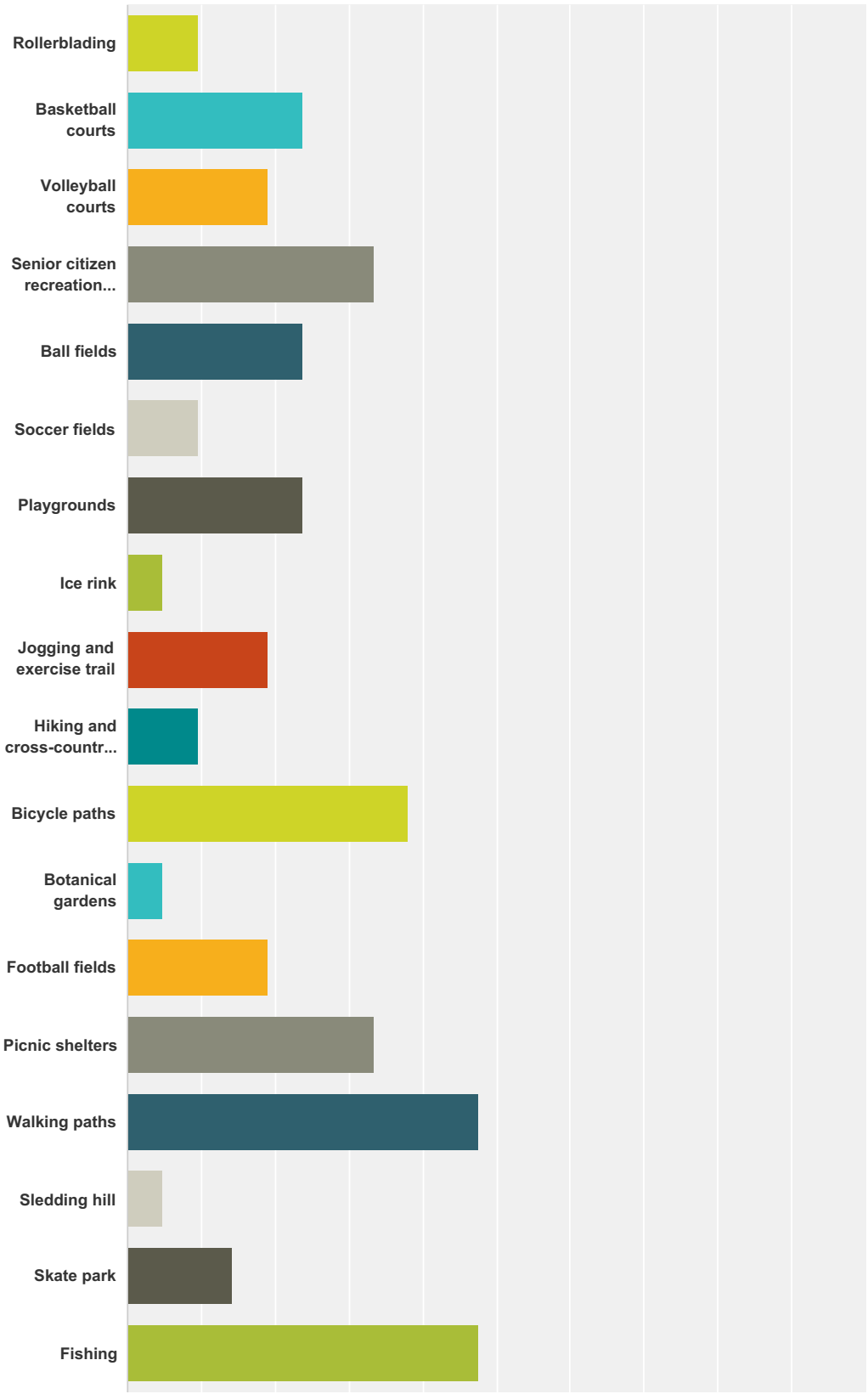


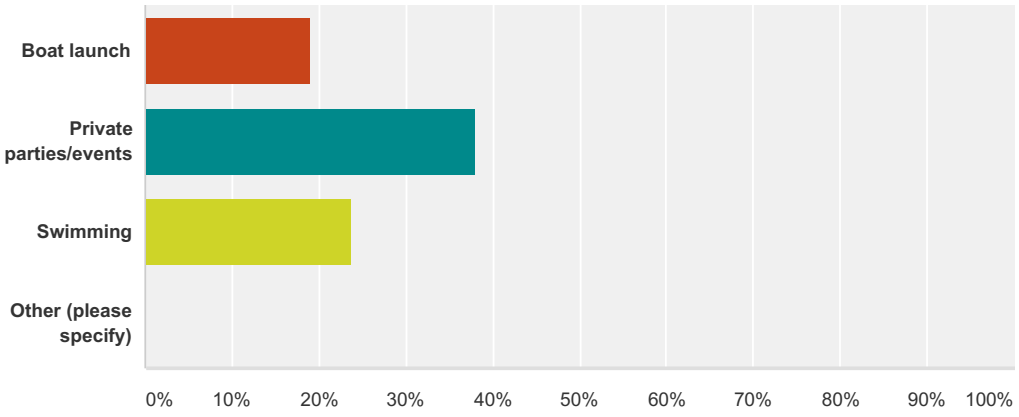
Answer Choices	Responses	
Lincoln Park	**29.17%**	7
Melvindale	**4.17%**	1
Detroit	**16.67%**	4
Wyandotte	**16.67%**	4
Allen Park	**12.50%**	3
I don't use recreation facilities outside of River Rouge	**33.33%**	8
Other (please specify)	**25.00%**	6
Total Respondents: 24		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Southgate	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
2	Flat Rock- Woodhaven	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
3	Taylor- Heritage Park-They allow my dogs	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
4	visit Belanger Park occasionally	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
5	swimming and exercise facilities elsewhere	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
6	not into recreation	4/19/2017 2:16 AM

Q13 What types of activities do you regularly use recreational parks and facilities for? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 21 Skipped: 6



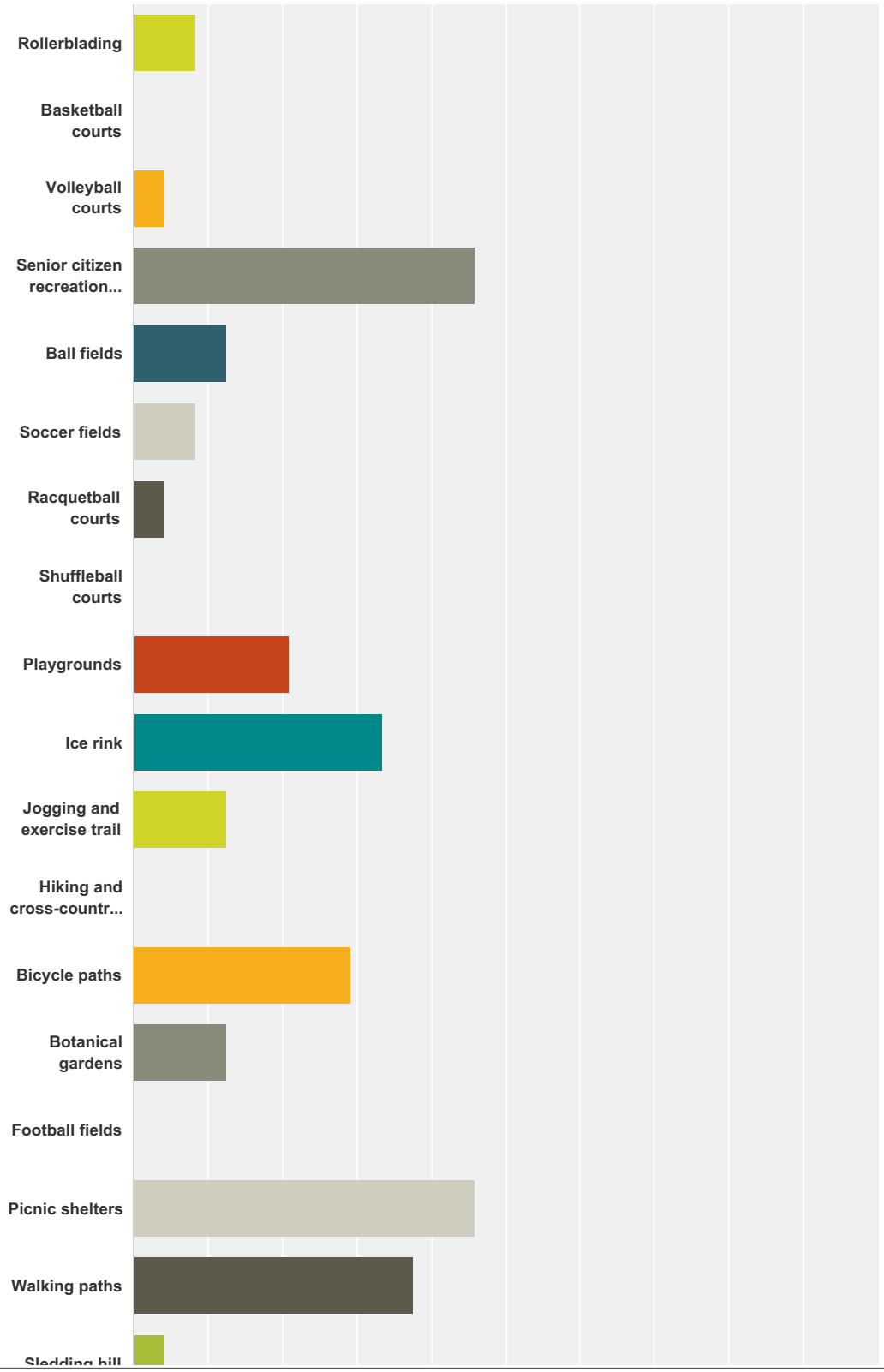


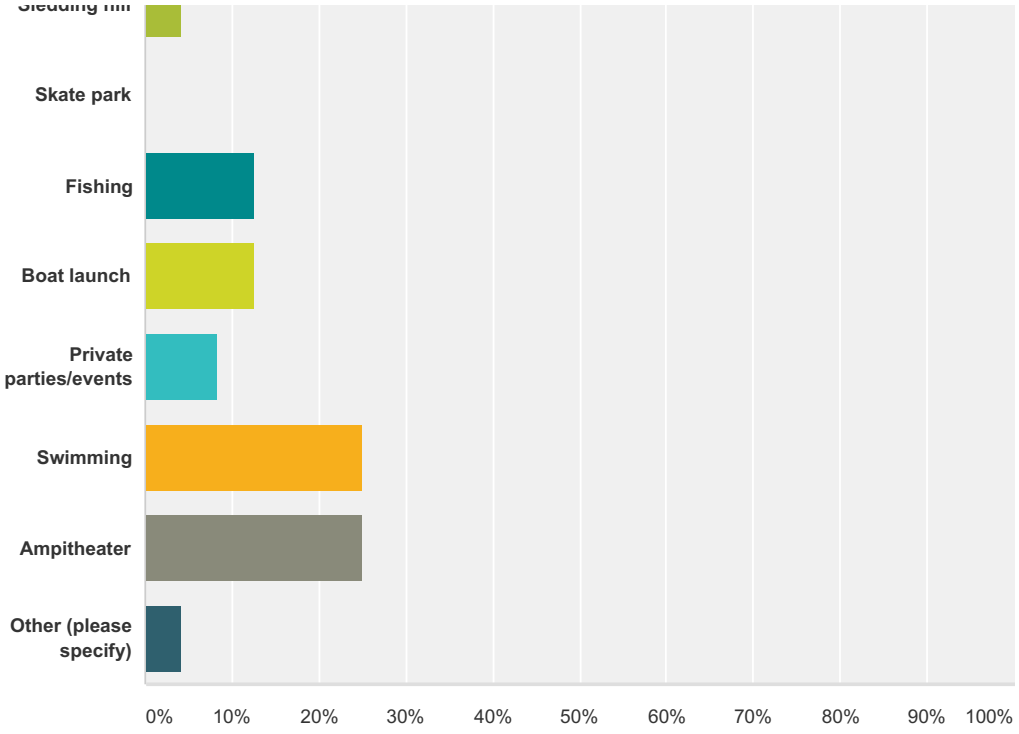
Answer Choices	Responses	
Rollerblading	**9.52%**	2
Basketball courts	**23.81%**	5
Volleyball courts	**19.05%**	4
Senior citizen recreation center	**33.33%**	7
Ball fields	**23.81%**	5
Soccer fields	**9.52%**	2
Playgrounds	**23.81%**	5
Ice rink	**4.76%**	1
Jogging and exercise trail	**19.05%**	4
Hiking and cross-country ski trail	**9.52%**	2
Bicycle paths	**38.10%**	8
Botanical gardens	**4.76%**	1
Football fields	**19.05%**	4
Picnic shelters	**33.33%**	7
Walking paths	**47.62%**	10
Sledding hill	**4.76%**	1
Skate park	**14.29%**	3
Fishing	**47.62%**	10
Boat launch	**19.05%**	4
Private parties/events	**38.10%**	8
Swimming	**23.81%**	5
Other (please specify)	**0.00%**	0
Total Respondents: 21		

#	Other (please specify)	Date

Q14 Please indicate which of the following facilities and activities River Rouge should plan for and/or develop further. Please check all that apply.

Answered: 24 Skipped: 3





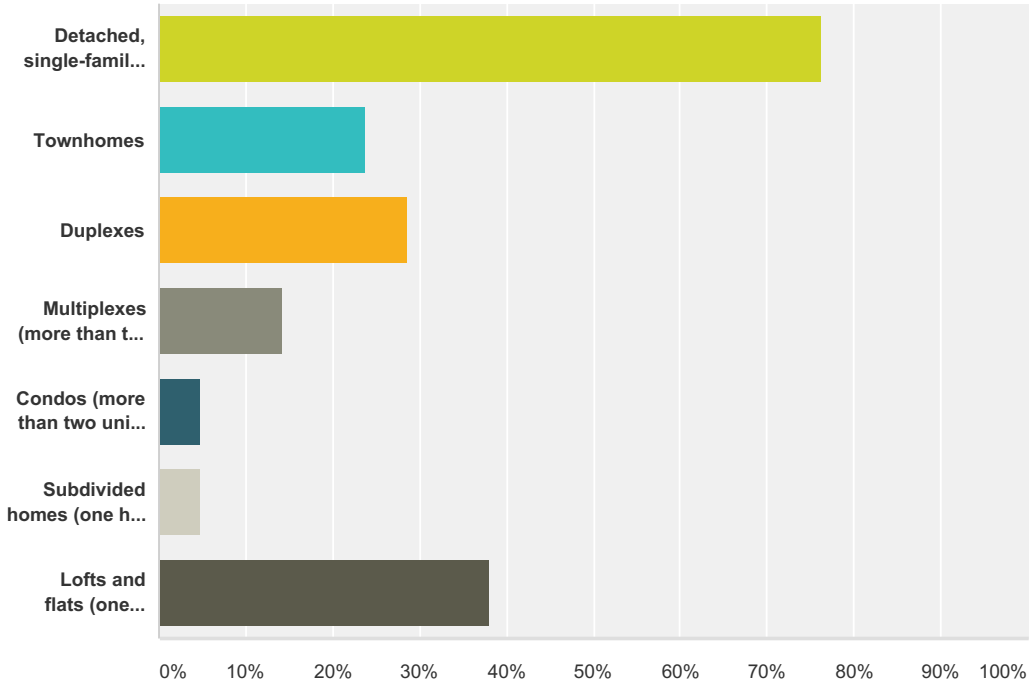
Answer Choices	Responses	
Rollerblading	**8.33%**	2
Basketball courts	**0.00%**	0
Volleyball courts	**4.17%**	1
Senior citizen recreation center	**45.83%**	11
Ball fields	**12.50%**	3
Soccer fields	**8.33%**	2
Racquetball courts	**4.17%**	1
Shuffleball courts	**0.00%**	0
Playgrounds	**20.83%**	5
Ice rink	**33.33%**	8
Jogging and exercise trail	**12.50%**	3
Hiking and cross-country ski trail	**0.00%**	0
Bicycle paths	**29.17%**	7
Botanical gardens	**12.50%**	3
Football fields	**0.00%**	0
Picnic shelters	**45.83%**	11
Walking paths	**37.50%**	9
Sledding hill	**4.17%**	1

Skate park	**0.00%**	0
Fishing	**12.50%**	3
Boat launch	**12.50%**	3
Private parties/events	**8.33%**	2
Swimming	**25.00%**	6
Ampitheater	**25.00%**	6
Other (please specify)	**4.17%**	1
Total Respondents: 24		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Do to a disability,I don't get out much	4/19/2017 3:33 AM

Q15 What type of housing development would you support in River Rouge? Please check all that apply.

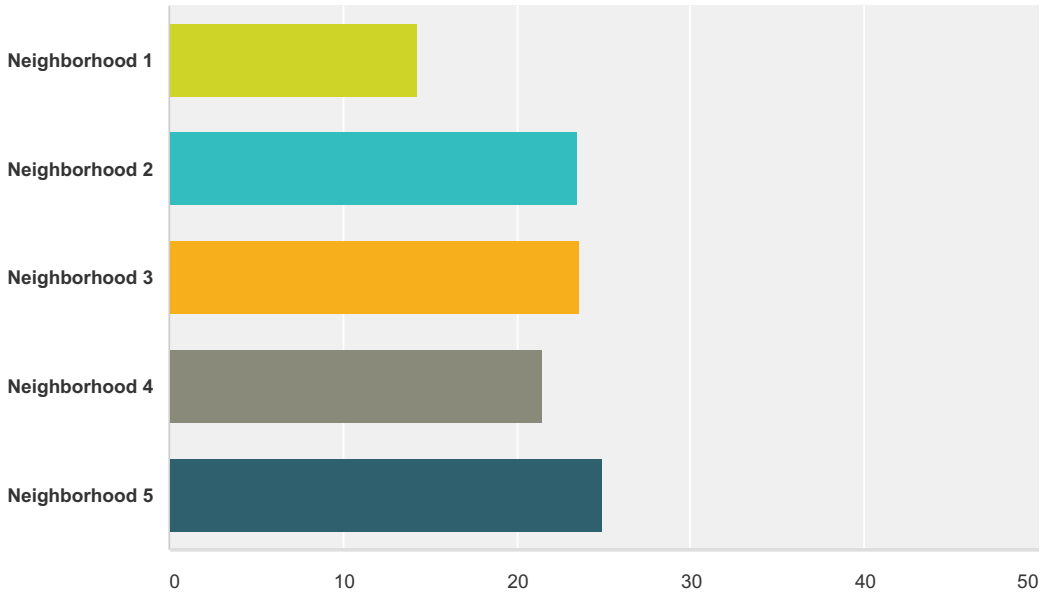
Answered: 21 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	
Detached, single-family homes	**76.19%**	16
Townhomes	**23.81%**	5
Duplexes	**28.57%**	6
Multiplexes (more than two units in a single building, mostly for lease)	**14.29%**	3
Condos (more than two units in a single building, for sale)	**4.76%**	1
Subdivided homes (one home retrofitted into a multiple dwelling unit)	**4.76%**	1
Lofts and flats (one floor of a building, often part of a mixed-use development; for sale or lease)	**38.10%**	8
Total Respondents: 21		

Q16 You were given $100 for housing demolition. Please indicate using the map below how you would divide these funds.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 19



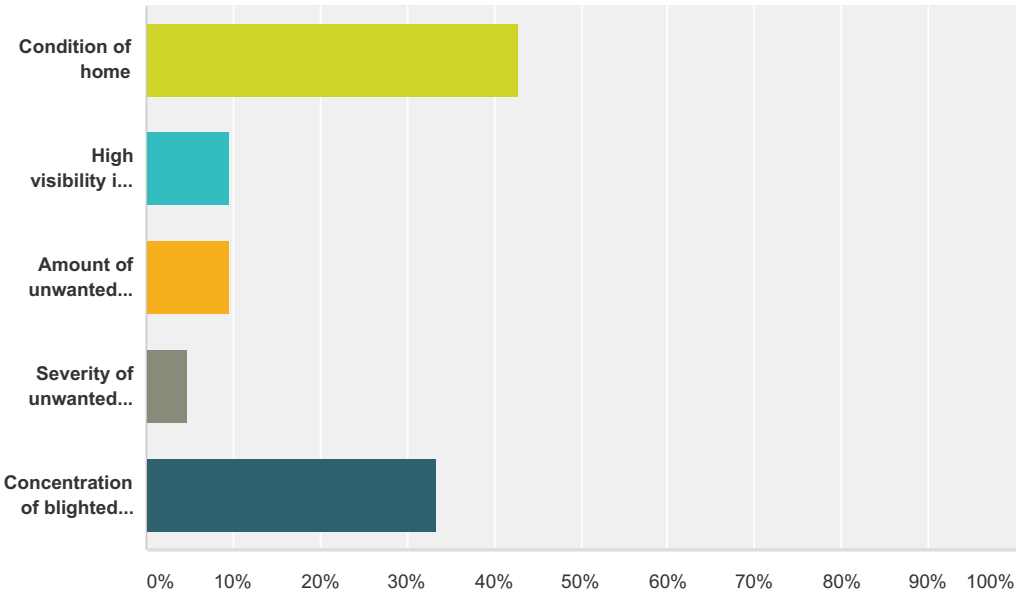
Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
Neighborhood 1	14	100	7
Neighborhood 2	24	188	8
Neighborhood 3	24	165	7
Neighborhood 4	22	172	8
Neighborhood 5	25	175	7
Total Respondents: 8			

#	Neighborhood 1	Date
1	15	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	20	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	10	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
4	20	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
5	0	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
6	15	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
7	20	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
#	**Neighborhood 2**	**Date**
1	40	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	10	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	20	4/19/2017 4:26 AM

4	18	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
5	50	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
6	5	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
7	15	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
8	30	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
#	**Neighborhood 3**	**Date**
1	15	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	30	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	50	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
4	15	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
5	10	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
6	15	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
7	30	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
#	**Neighborhood 4**	**Date**
1	10	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	15	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	10	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
4	22	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
5	50	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
6	40	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
7	15	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
8	10	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
#	**Neighborhood 5**	**Date**
1	20	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	25	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	10	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
4	25	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
5	45	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
6	40	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
7	10	4/19/2017 2:40 AM

Q17 What is the top criterion you used to decide where to demolish homes? Please check one box.

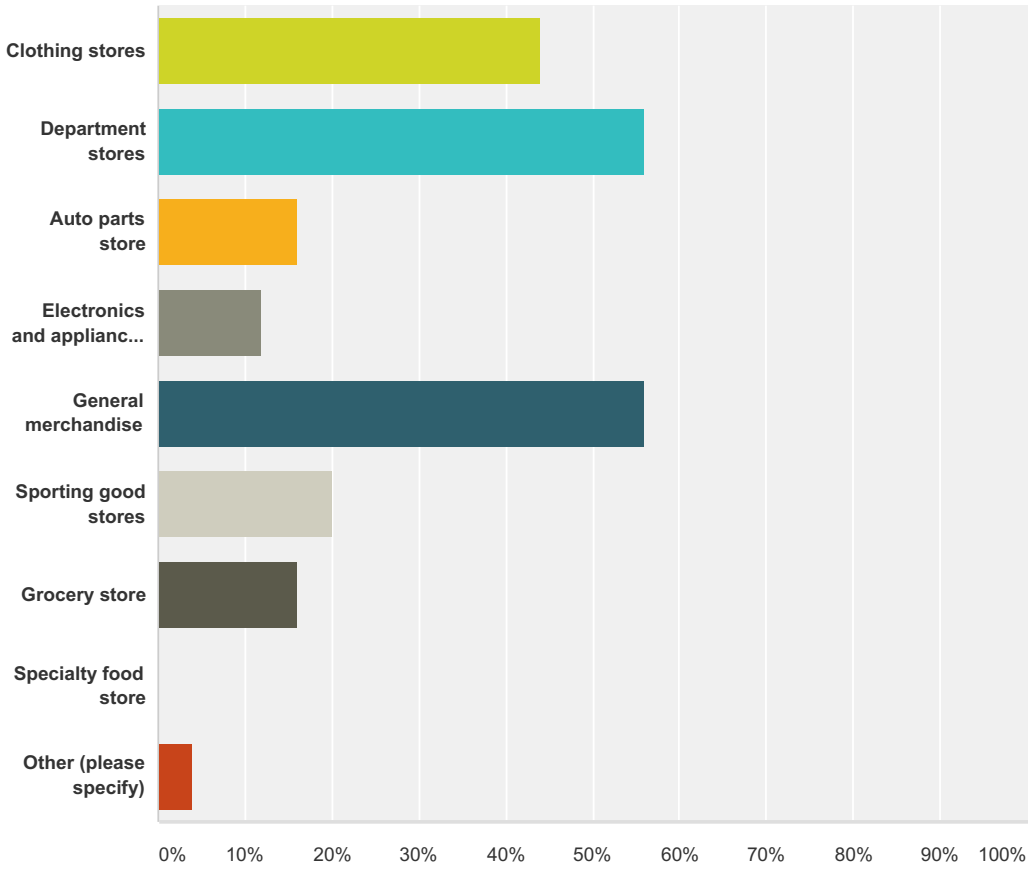
Answered: 21 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	
Condition of home	**42.86%**	9
High visibility in the community	**9.52%**	2
Amount of unwanted activity taking place in the home	**9.52%**	2
Severity of unwanted activity taking place in the home	**4.76%**	1
Concentration of blighted homes	**33.33%**	7
Total		**21**

Q18 What type of retail would you like to see in River Rouge? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2

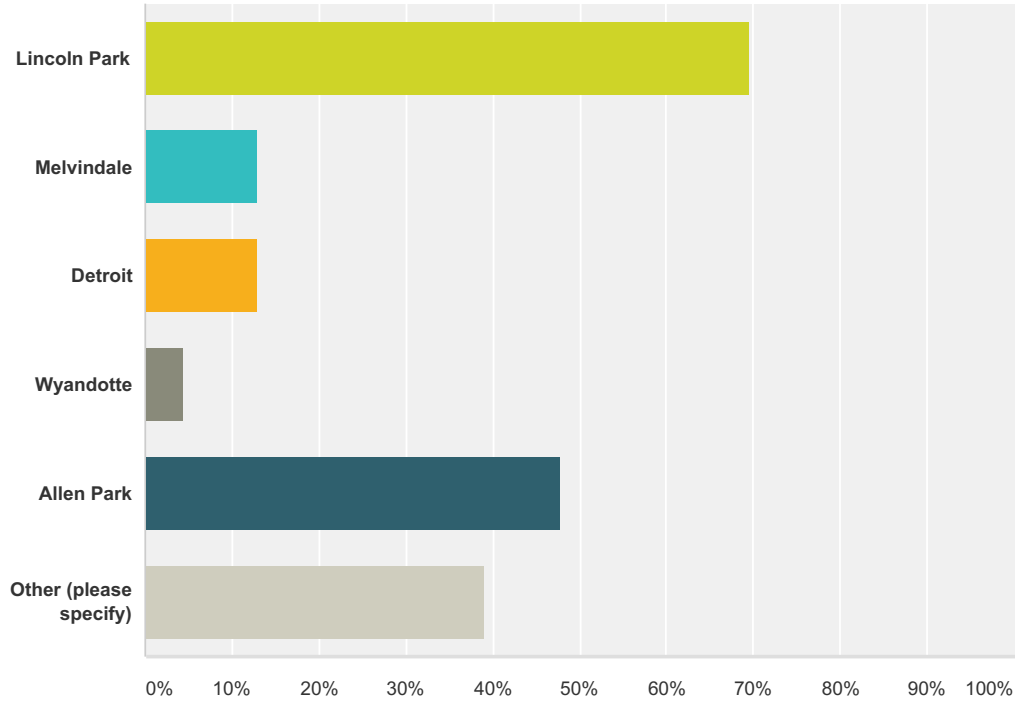


Answer Choices	Responses	
Clothing stores	44.00%	11
Department stores	56.00%	14
Auto parts store	16.00%	4
Electronics and appliance store	12.00%	3
General merchandise	56.00%	14
Sporting good stores	20.00%	5
Grocery store	16.00%	4
Specialty food store	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	4.00%	1
Total Respondents: 25		

#	Other (please specify)	Date

Q19 If you cannot find the retail option you are looking for in River Rouge, where do you go to shop? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4

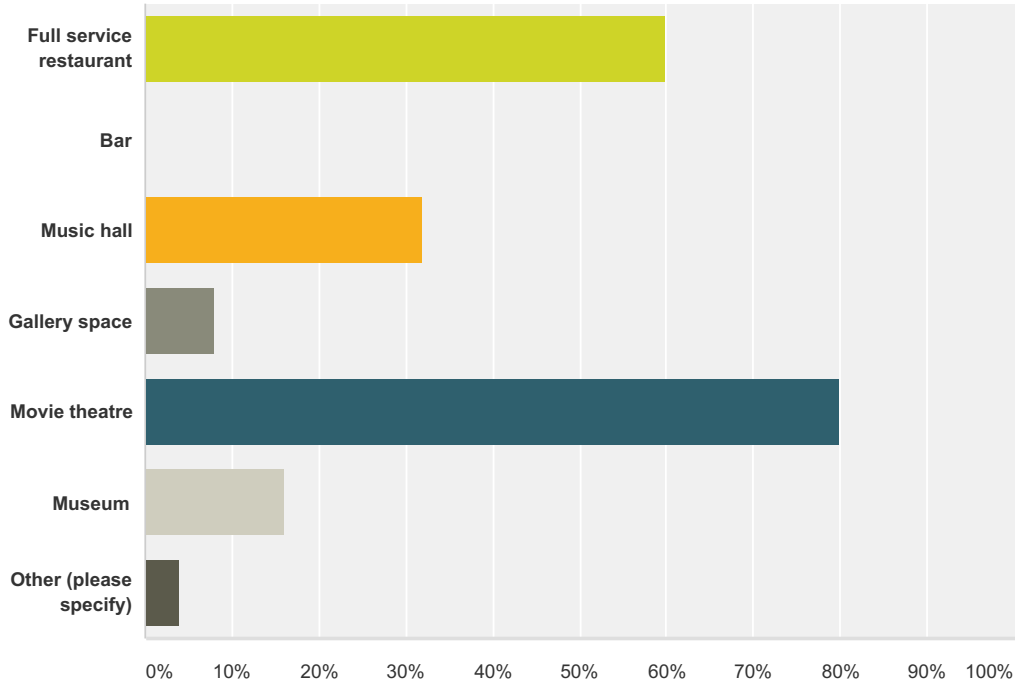


Answer Choices	Responses	
Lincoln Park	**69.57%**	16
Melvindale	**13.04%**	3
Detroit	**13.04%**	3
Wyandotte	**4.35%**	1
Allen Park	**47.83%**	11
Other (please specify)	**39.13%**	9
Total Respondents: 23		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Taylor	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
2	Taylor	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
3	Taylor	4/19/2017 4:11 AM
4	Southgate, Wal-mart	4/19/2017 3:53 AM
5	Taylor, Southgate- it's on the bus route	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
6	Groceries	4/19/2017 3:37 AM
7	Southgate	4/19/2017 3:22 AM

Q20 What type of entertainment options would you like to see come to River Rouge? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2

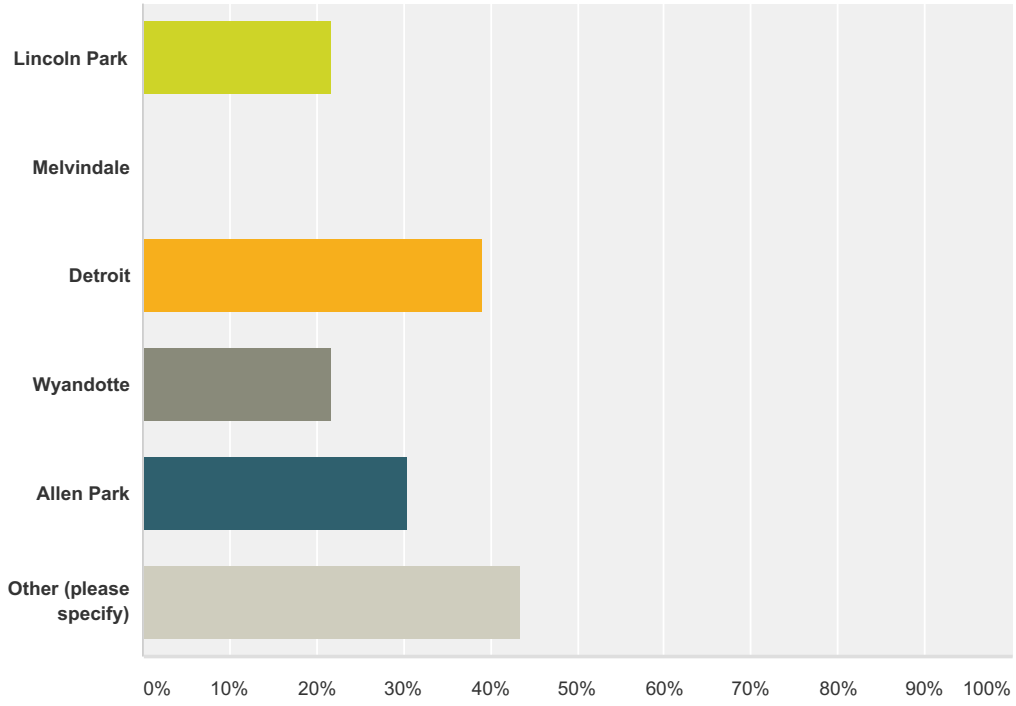


Answer Choices	Responses	
Full service restaurant	**60.00%**	15
Bar	**0.00%**	0
Music hall	**32.00%**	8
Gallery space	**8.00%**	2
Movie theatre	**80.00%**	20
Museum	**16.00%**	4
Other (please specify)	**4.00%**	1
Total Respondents: 25		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Grocery stores	4/19/2017 3:37 AM

Q21 If you cannot find an entertainment option you are looking for in River Rouge, where do you go? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Lincoln Park	**21.74%**	5
Melvindale	**0.00%**	0
Detroit	**39.13%**	9
Wyandotte	**21.74%**	5
Allen Park	**30.43%**	7
Other (please specify)	**43.48%**	10
Total Respondents: 23		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Southgate	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
2	Taylor, Woodhaven	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
3	Monroe, Dearborn	4/19/2017 4:14 AM
4	Southgate	4/19/2017 3:59 AM
5	Taylor, Southgate	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
6	I watch TV	4/19/2017 3:33 AM

7	Southgate	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
8	Trenton	4/19/2017 2:31 AM
9	Ecorse	4/19/2017 2:27 AM
10	Southgate	4/19/2017 2:16 AM

Q22 What is an event in River Rouge that you consider fun?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 7

#	Responses	Date
1	Block parties	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	Concerts	4/19/2017 5:10 AM
3	Music Fest	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
4	Music in the park	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
5	Rouge Days for all	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
6	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 4:18 AM
7	River Rouge Days	4/19/2017 4:11 AM
8	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 4:05 AM
9	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 3:59 AM
10	Flea Mkt at the park	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
11	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
12	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 3:37 AM
13	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
14	House fires that are beyond needed to clean up the city	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
15	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 3:17 AM
16	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
17	Fishing	4/19/2017 2:35 AM
18	Rouge Days	4/19/2017 2:31 AM
19	Parade, Rouge Days	4/19/2017 2:27 AM
20	Nothing	4/19/2017 2:16 AM

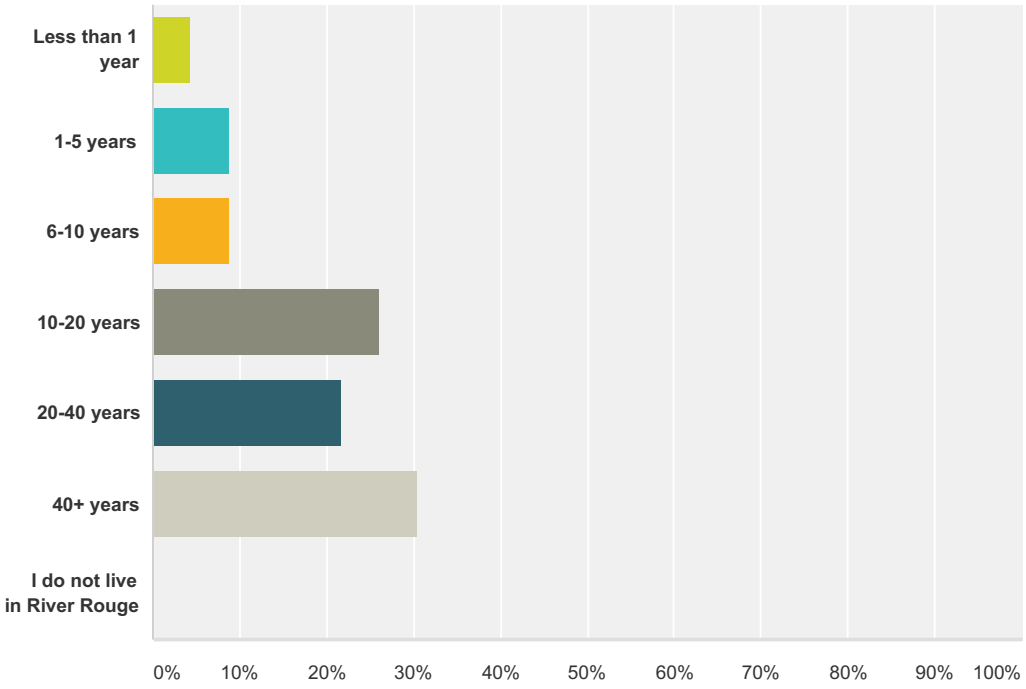
Q23 What are some of your favorite places in River Rouge (in no particular order)?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 10

#	Responses	Date
1	The Avenue	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	N/A	4/19/2017 5:10 AM
3	Belanger Park, Memorial Park	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
4	RR Museum, Memorial Park	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
5	Parks and museum	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
6	City Hall, Senior Center	4/19/2017 4:18 AM
7	Senior center, Zenith, Belanger	4/19/2017 4:05 AM
8	Belanger Park	4/19/2017 3:59 AM
9	Home	4/19/2017 3:53 AM
10	Senior Citizen Center	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
11	Senior Club, Zenth, MD	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
12	Belanger Park-City Hall-Bank	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
13	Sports, games, music in parks, Rouge Days	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
14	Belanger Park, Rouge Bar & Grill, the Avenue	4/19/2017 2:40 AM
15	Park	4/19/2017 2:31 AM
16	Parks	4/19/2017 2:27 AM
17	Nowhere	4/19/2017 2:16 AM

Q24 How long have you lived in River Rouge?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 1 year	**4.35%**	1
1-5 years	**8.70%**	2
6-10 years	**8.70%**	2
10-20 years	**26.09%**	6
20-40 years	**21.74%**	5
40+ years	**30.43%**	7
I do not live in River Rouge	**0.00%**	0
Total		**23**

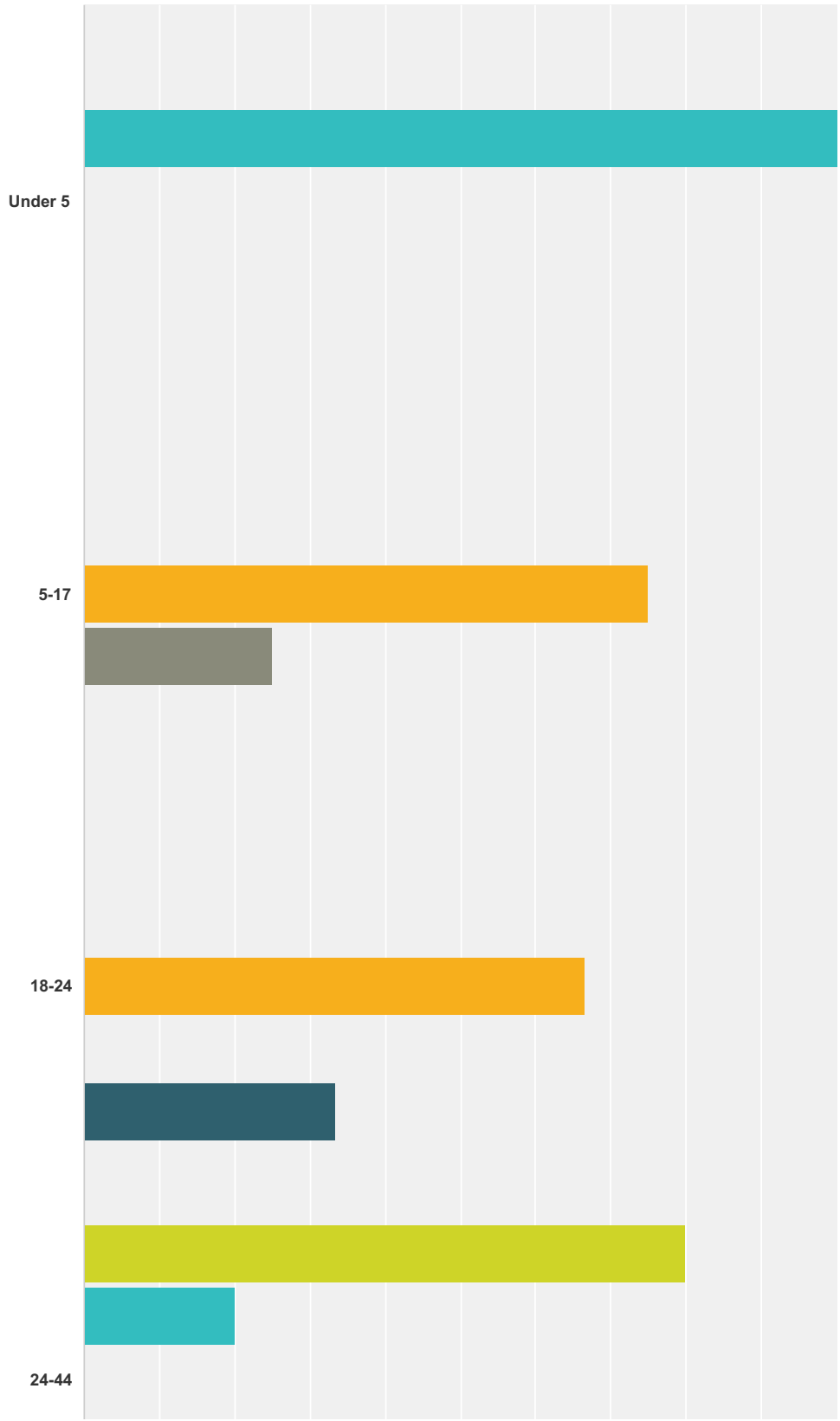
Q25 If you do not live in River Rouge, please provide your ZIP code.

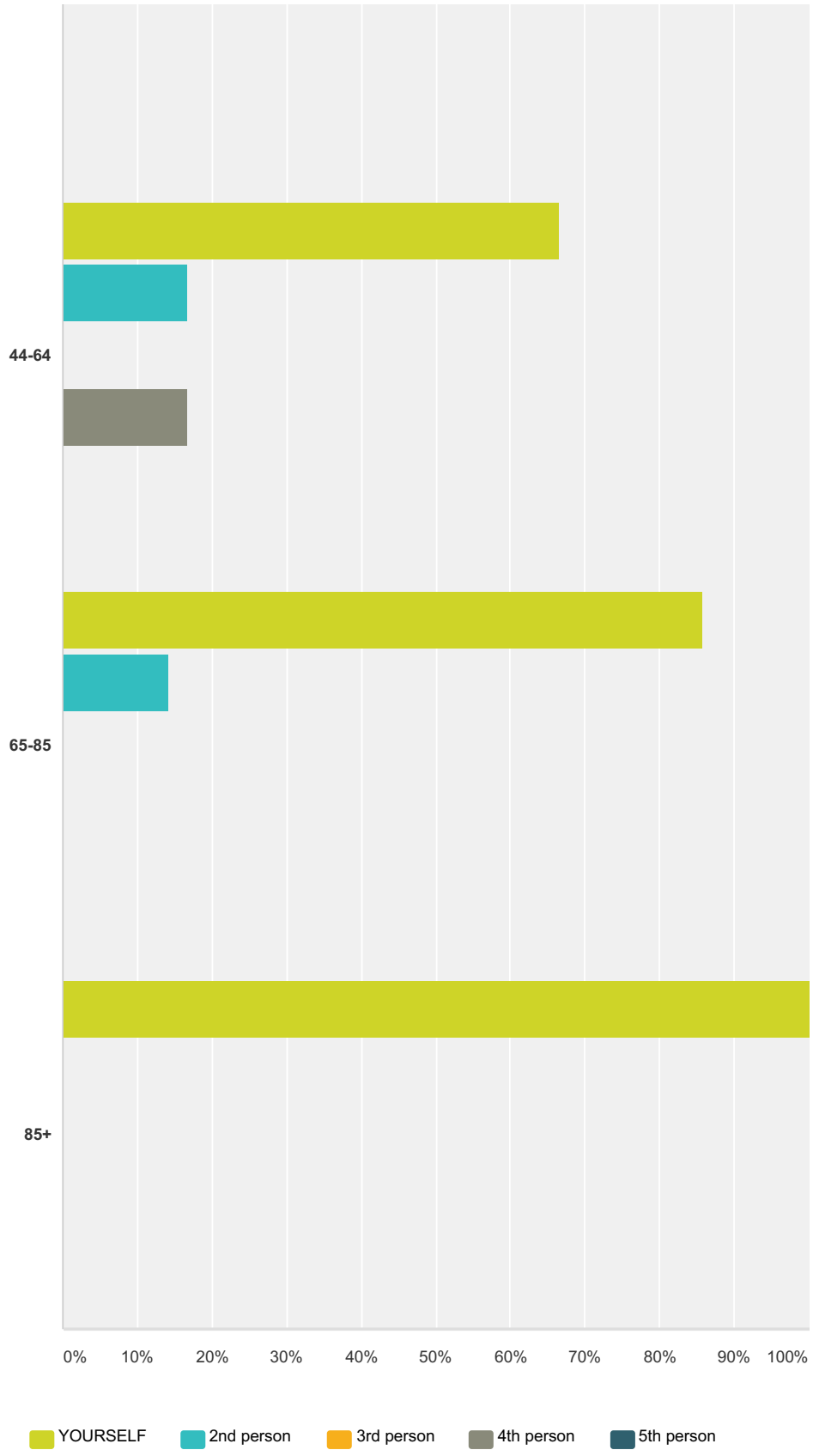
Answered: 1 Skipped: 26

#	Responses	Date
1	48183	4/19/2017 4:22 AM

Q26 Please select, by age group, the number of individuals currently living in your household.

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4





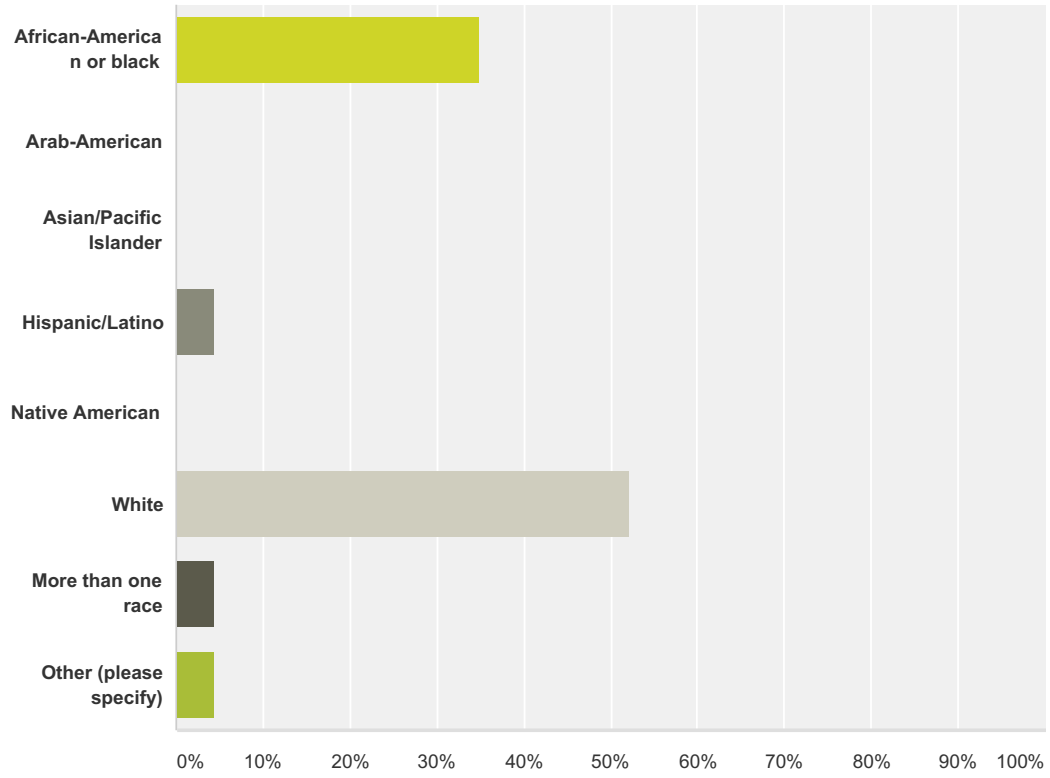
	YOURSELF	2nd person	3rd person	4th person	5th person	Total
Under 5	**0.00%** 0	**100.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	1

5-17	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**75.00%** 3	**25.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	4
18-24	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**66.67%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**33.33%** 1	3
24-44	**80.00%** 4	**20.00%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	5
44-64	**66.67%** 4	**16.67%** 1	**0.00%** 0	**16.67%** 1	**0.00%** 0	6
65-85	**85.71%** 12	**14.29%** 2	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	14
85+	**100.00%** 3	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	**0.00%** 0	3

#	Other (please specify)	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q27 With which race and/or ethnicity do you identify?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4

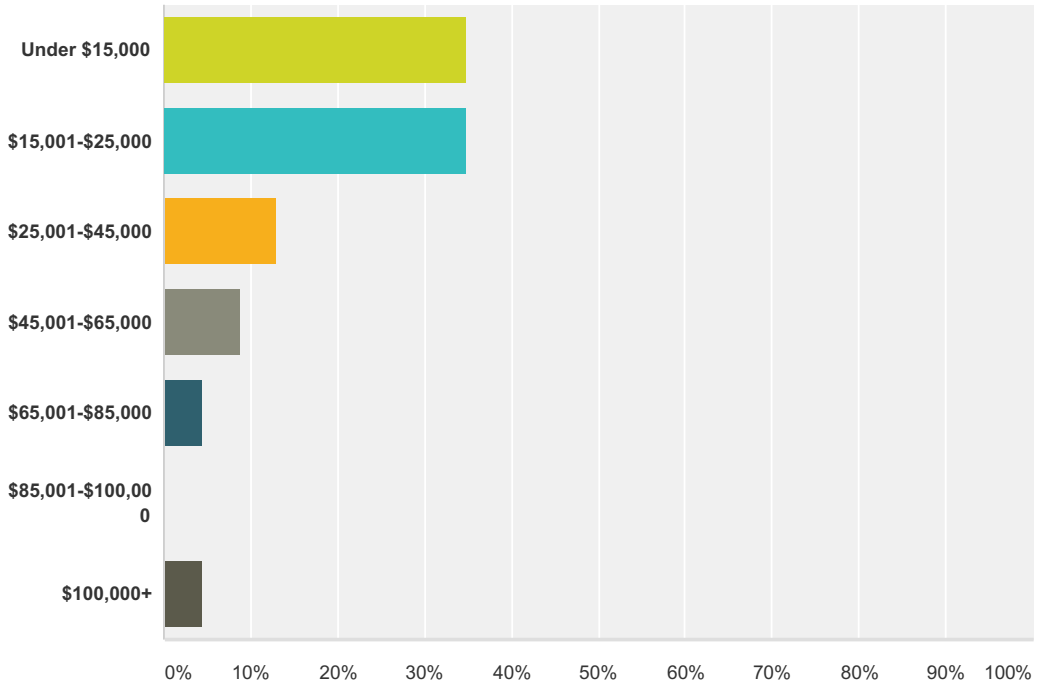


Answer Choices	Responses	
African-American or black	**34.78%**	8
Arab-American	**0.00%**	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	**0.00%**	0
Hispanic/Latino	**4.35%**	1
Native American	**0.00%**	0
White	**52.17%**	12
More than one race	**4.35%**	1
Other (please specify)	**4.35%**	1
Total Respondents: 23		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	what does that matter	4/19/2017 4:14 AM

Q28 What range does your household income fall into?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Under $15,000	**34.78%**	8
$15,001-$25,000	**34.78%**	8
$25,001-$45,000	**13.04%**	3
$45,001-$65,000	**8.70%**	2
$65,001-$85,000	**4.35%**	1
$85,001-$100,000	**0.00%**	0
$100,000+	**4.35%**	1
Total		**23**

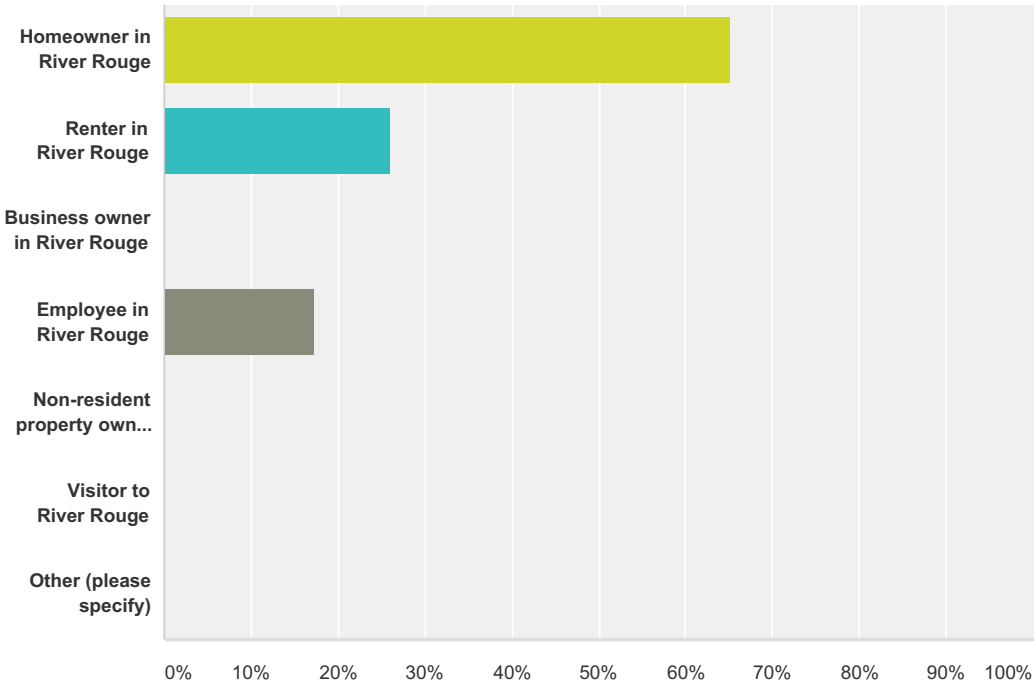
Q29 If you are willing to take a follow-up survey, please enter your email address in the box below.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 24

#	Responses	Date
1	letha436@aol.com	4/19/2017 4:18 AM
2	griffingladys@yahoo.com	4/19/2017 4:07 AM
3	thickspigot@yahoo.com	4/19/2017 3:27 AM

Q30 Are you a...? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 23 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Homeowner in River Rouge	**65.22%**	15
Renter in River Rouge	**26.09%**	6
Business owner in River Rouge	**0.00%**	0
Employee in River Rouge	**17.39%**	4
Non-resident property owner (own property but do not live or conduct business in River Rouge)	**0.00%**	0
Visitor to River Rouge	**0.00%**	0
Other (please specify)	**0.00%**	0
Total Respondents: 23		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
	There are no responses.	

Q31 Based on your responses from the previous question, use the map below to indicate what neighborhood each of the following are located. Please use the neighborhood number for the places that apply to you.

Answered: 18 Skipped: 9

Answer Choices	Responses	
Home	83.33%	15
Rental unit	5.56%	1
Business	5.56%	1
Place of employment	22.22%	4
Investment property	0.00%	0

#	Home	Date
1	3	4/19/2017 5:16 AM
2	4	4/19/2017 5:06 AM
3	5	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
4	1	4/19/2017 4:18 AM
5	2	4/19/2017 4:14 AM
6	2	4/19/2017 4:05 AM
7	4	4/19/2017 3:59 AM
8	4	4/19/2017 3:49 AM
9	4	4/19/2017 3:43 AM
10	4	4/19/2017 3:37 AM
11	2	4/19/2017 3:33 AM
12	4	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
13	1	4/19/2017 3:22 AM
14	4	4/19/2017 3:17 AM
15	1	4/19/2017 2:27 AM
#	Rental unit	Date
1	1	4/19/2017 2:35 AM
#	Business	Date
1	4	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
#	Place of employment	Date
1	2	4/19/2017 4:26 AM
2	2	4/19/2017 4:22 AM
3	4	4/19/2017 3:27 AM
4	4	4/19/2017 2:40 AM

#	Investment property	Date
	There are no responses.	

PATHWAY TO BECOMING A REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITY

Six Best Practice Steps

ONE COMMUNITY PLANS & PUBLIC OUTREACH

THE PLANS

Adopted a master plan in the past five years, and must achieve:

- Reflects a desired future direction
- Identify priority redevelopment area
- Identify land use, infrastructure, & complete streets elements
- Includes zoning plan
- Implementation recommendations
- Progress annually reported
- Available online

Adopted a downtown plan & corridor plan

- Identify projects, costs, & timeline
- Identify development boundaries
- Includes mixed-uses & pedestrian oriented development
- Includes transit oriented development
- Coordinates with master plan & capital improvements plan
- Available online

Adopted a capital improvements plan

- Details a minimum of a six year projection with annual review
- Coordinates with other projects to minimize construction costs
- Coordinates with master plan & budget
- Available online

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation strategy for engaging a diverse set of community stakeholders

- Identify key stakeholders
- Identify public participation methods & venues
- Any third party adheres to strategy

Public participation efforts go beyond the basic methods

- Basic practices: Open Meetings Act, newspaper, website, community hall door, postcards, water bills inserts, local cable access, announcements
- Proactive practices: Individual mailings, charrettes, focus groups, workshops, canvassing, crowd-sourcing, social networking, interviews

Share outcomes of the public participation processes

- Track outreach methods
- Communicate outcomes

TWO ZONING REGULATIONS

Alignment with the goals of the master plan

- Evaluate master plan recommendations

Provide for areas of concentrated development in appropriate locations & encourages the type & form of development desired

- Allow mixed-use by right in development
- Consider form-based code
- Requires one or more: build-to lines, open store fronts, outdoor dining, ground floor transparency, streetscaping, preservation of historic & environmentally sensitive features

Include flexible parking standards and improves nonmotorized transportation

- Includes bicycle parking, pedestrian-scale lighting, traffic calming, public realm standards where appropriate
- Includes pedestrian connectivity ordinance
- Requires two or more: parking off street requirements, parking lot connectivity, shared parking, parking max, parking waivers, electric vehicle charging, bicycle parking, payment in lieu of parking, complementary use accommodation

Include standards for green infrastructure

- Requires one or more: low impact development techniques, green roofs, pervious pavement, native species, existing tree protection
- Requires street trees & parking lot landscaping

Creating a user-friendly ordinance

- Portrays clear definitions & requirements
- Provide electronic format
- Convenient hard copies
- Accessible online

THREE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURES

Zoning articulates a thorough site plan review process

- Provide clear roles & responsibilities for all bodies

Define & offer conceptual site plan review meetings for applicants

- Defined expectations online

Joint site plan review team

- Define the joint site plan team, include multiple disciplines

A clearly documented internal staff review policy

- Define clear roles, responsibilities, & timelines
- Define development review standards

Annually review successes & challenges with the development review process

- Obtain customer feedback & integrate changes
- Capture lessons learned from joint site plan review team

GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT

Annually review the fee schedule

- Cover the community's true cost
- Accept credit card payment

Maintains guide to development, explaining policies, procedures & steps to obtain approvals

- Provide: contact information, meeting schedules & procedures, flowcharts of development processes, relevant ordinances, site plan review requirements & application, administrative approval requirements, process & applications for rezoning, variances, & special uses, fee schedule, financial assistance tools, design guidelines & processes, building permit requirements & applications
- Available online

FOUR RECRUITMENT & EDUCATION

RECRUITMENT & ORIENTATION

Set expectations for board & commission positions

- Outline expectations & desired skill sets defined
- Available online

Provide orientation packets to all appointed & elected members of development related boards & commissions

- Include all relevant planning, zoning & development information

EDUCATION & TRAINING

A dedicated source of funding for training

- Allocate budget for elected & appointed officials & staff

Identify training needs & track attendance for elected & appointed officials & staff

- Manage tracking mechanisms: training needs & attendance
- Identify trainings which relate to stated goals & objectives

Encourage elected & appointed officials to attend trainings & share information

- Notify elected & appointed officials & staff about training opportunities
- Hold collaborative work sessions & joint trainings
- Prepare annual report

FIVE REDEVELOPMENT READY SITES

Identify & prioritizes redevelopment sites

- Maintain updated list of sites

Gather basic information for prioritized redevelopment sites

- Require photo/ rendering, desired outcomes, owner contact, community contact, zoning, lot & building sizes, SEV, & utilities

Create a vision for priority redevelopment sites

- Include desired development outcomes
- Identify community champions
- Require public engagement with high controversy sites

Identify potential resources & incentives for prioritized redevelopment sites

- Identify negotiable development tools, financial incentives and/or in-kind support linked to desired outcomes

Assemble property information packages for prioritized sites

- Include financial incentives, deed restrictions, tax assessment, survey, past uses, existing conditions, known environmental and/or contamination conditions, soils, demographics, amenities, planned infrastructure improvements, GIS, natural features, traffic studies, target market analysis, feasibility studies

Prioritize redevelopment sites and actively market

- Available online

SIX COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

An approved economic development strategy

- May be part of the master plan or annual budget
- Connects to the master plan & capital improvements plan
- Identify opportunities & challenges within the community
- Incorporate recommendations for implementation
- Coordinate with a regional economic development strategy
- Available online

Annually review the economic development strategy

- Report progress on economic development strategies annually

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Develop a marketing strategy

- Identify opportunities & steps to attract businesses, consumers & real estate development
- Creates or strengthens the community image
- Identify approach to market priority development sites
- Coordinate marketing efforts with local, regional, & state partners

An updated, user-friendly municipal website

- Link to master plan, downtown plan, corridor plan, capital improvements plan, zoning ordinance, development guide, online payment, partner organizations, board & commission applications, property information packages, & economic development strategy
- Easy to navigate

Include flexible tools to encourage development & redevelopment

- Define special land use & conditional rezoning requirements
- Allow for compatible uses that serve new economy businesses in commercial and industrial districts

Allow for a variety of housing options

- Requires two or more: accessory dwelling units, attached single family units, stacked flats, live/ work, co-housing, corporate temp housing, cluster, micro units

Qualified intake professional

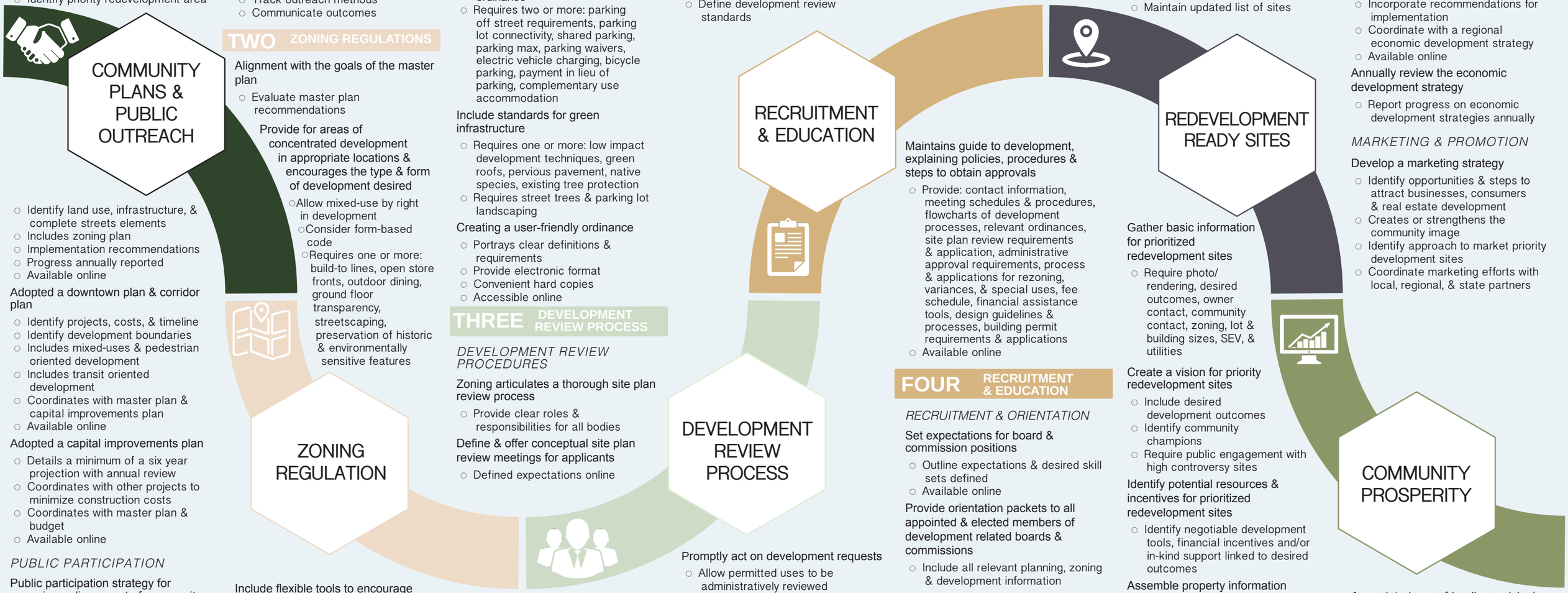
- Identify a point person for receiving applications, documenting contact, explaining procedures, facilitating meetings, processing approvals, & excellent customer service

Encourage developers to seek input from neighboring residents & businesses at the onset of the application process

- Assist the developer in soliciting input from the public

Promptly act on development requests

- Allow permitted uses to be administratively reviewed
- Adhere to procedures & timelines
- Provide development process flowchart with timeline
- Coordinate among community development, permitting, & inspections

Create method to track development projects

- Develop a tracking mechanism for projects during development, permitting, and inspection process