

# ENVISIONING THE FUTURE: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Detroit, MI

In the wake of major population loss and disinvestment, many of Detroit's neighborhoods need to radically reinvent themselves and identify new areas of opportunity that are compatible with residents' visions for the future. With planning departments overtaxed, the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Framework gives residents the tools to identify a shared vision and a pathway to achieving it.

## Skills and Capacity

Data analysis, GIS and mapping, facilitation, strategic planning, community engagement, cross-cultural communication

## Partners

Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD), City of Detroit, Data Driven Detroit, local community development organizations

## Issues

Economic mobility and inclusion, housing stability, mobility and connections

## Tools

Indicators, community mapping, planning games, community forums, block clubs

## Building Pathways to Better Neighborhoods



Cody Rouge Bioretention Gardens (University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability, Flickr Creative Commons)

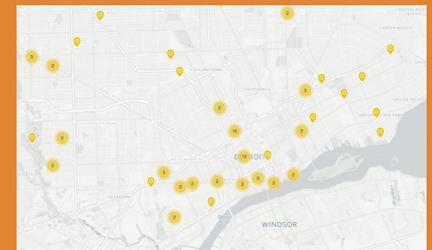
Having faced a major population loss and housing crisis, Detroit residents and leaders knew they needed to reimagine the city and rewrite the playbook on planning and community development. Many of Detroit's neighborhoods will likely never look the same; a vibrant future will mean major changes to land use and development and to engagement and planning. While the city focused on regional challenges, [CDAD](#) and a team of local partners came together in 2009 to create a process that empowers people to design the future of their neighborhoods, block by block.

The [Neighborhood Revitalization Strategic Framework](#) gives residents the data, tools and opportunities to create shared visions for their neighborhoods and develop actionable plans. As of 2017, CDAD had helped five Detroit neighborhoods engage hundreds of people in critical conversations about assets and opportunities around housing, economic development, businesses, transportation and more. With a vision in hand, these neighborhoods are now spearheading implementation of projects that matter to their residents.

## Tool Spotlight

### Community Mapping

Hyper-local maps are invaluable tools for informing decisions and supporting action. Maps of current conditions share critical baseline information and asset maps help people find resources and partners.



### Block Clubs

Outreach works best when it is neighbor-to-neighbor, block by block. Block clubs help organize trusted leaders to reach people where they live and work.

### Planning Games

Land use can be abstract. Games are one way to engage people in challenging conversations and help them explore trade-offs. Low-tech games using blocks allow people to explore different scenarios and allocations, while working directly with neighbors.



## Hyper-Local Planning Involves Residents on Their Own Terms

Residents are the best experts on their own neighborhoods. This framework is carefully designed to give people the power to define their neighborhood's future and drive implementation. CDAD provides technical assistance and a detailed [process guide](#), but local leaders run the process, customizing the Strategic Framework to include activities that resonate locally and reach people in their homes and neighborhood gathering places.

### PARTNER

Organizations from across the city collaboratively developed the Strategic Framework; they now provide support for neighborhood processes and connect neighborhood plans to city and regional efforts. An [interactive online directory](#) helps leaders find community development resources and organizations across Detroit.

With that support, local partners drive each neighborhood process. CDAD only works in neighborhoods where leaders invite them, and that form representative local "Community Stakeholder Teams" to shape the process and work directly with neighborhood residents.

### ACT

Neighborhoods build leadership and capacity through the process and many take action on their own after completing plans.

CDAD and partners help connect neighborhood plans to city or corporate investment opportunities. Funders and businesses are more likely to invest in a neighborhood where a vision is clear and where leaders are ready to support action.

### PARTNER

### ASSESS

[Data Driven Detroit](#) creates block-level maps for each neighborhood, showing detailed land use patterns and indicators on current conditions.

This baseline information helps people accurately understand the neighborhood reality and opportunities.

### ACT

### ASSESS

### ENGAGE

### ENGAGE

Each local Community Stakeholder Team sets out to engage at least 10 percent of residents, through activities they design specifically to resonate locally:

- Block clubs offer existing forums for conversations with trusted neighborhood leaders.
- Neighborhood team members lead safety audit walks, spend time at laundromats and bus stops, and go door to door to talk with neighbors.
- Community forums offer in-depth opportunities for residents to explore data, share visions and hopes and prioritize potential actions to improve the neighborhood. A distinct [neighborhood typology](#) helps residents articulate current land uses and opportunities to evolve.
- Leaders post all draft plans and recommendations in public places for comment and publish final plans only with clear community support.

## Impacts for Opportunity

Detroit may never again see traditional development patterns with a house on every parcel. The Strategic Framework helps residents see this shift as an opportunity. Neighborhood-driven visions allow local people to turn disinvestment into empowerment, identifying the best future land uses and projects for their neighborhoods, block by block.

With five distinct neighborhood plans now complete and more in the works, Detroit already is seeing impacts from the Strategic Framework. The completed plans clearly articulate preferences and directions for neighborhood reinvestment, which makes it easier for the city or corporate investors to launch projects. The robust engagement process also builds local capacity and leadership, helping residents advocate for the changes and projects they want to see.

## Housing Security

Detroit's land use, population, housing and neighborhoods have changed drastically, but these major shifts are an opportunity for residents to redefine what housing and land use can look like. Robust local data and inclusive conversations help neighbors create new models for housing (and connected issues, such as transportation and services) that balance their desires and changing conditions.

## Employment

With major changes in land use come major opportunities for creative economic development. A shared vision offers guidance for residents and companies to develop new enterprises that support the neighborhood while increasing local employment and wealth.

For more information, visit: [CDAD-online.org](http://CDAD-online.org) or [datadrivendetroit.org](http://datadrivendetroit.org)



Brightmoor neighborhood sign (Flickr creative commons: user sj carey)

## By the Numbers



### Neighborhood Typologies

help residents describe current and desired land uses. They cover a spectrum from natural lands to the urban core and include both traditional and innovative land uses.



80

Citywide partners involved in designing Strategic Framework



500

Or more residents engaged in each neighborhood



132

Organizations in the d[COM]munity online directory



5

New neighborhood visions on the way to becoming reality

