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# Rebound Neighborhoods in Older Industrial Cities: The Story of St. Louis

A White Paper

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## Preface

This project grew out of a desire to understand neighborhood dynamics in older industrial cities like St. Louis, Missouri. St. Louis has a reputation as a city in decline, yet we observed that many neighborhoods were doing quite well. We wanted to know why certain neighborhoods appeared to “bounce back” or rebound from urban decline while others languished. We decided the only way to do this was to construct a historical database that would enable us to track neighborhoods over time. Our data covering four decades (1970-2010) showed that, indeed, many neighborhoods in the older parts of the St. Louis region had rebounded from urban decline.

Next, we wanted to find out *why* certain neighborhoods were able to rebound and what role local actors and institutions played in the process. So many factors vary simultaneously in neighborhoods that it is difficult to sort out the causal factors behind decline and renewal. Our quantitative data was useful in identifying rebound neighborhoods but it did not help us much in identifying the causal factors driving neighborhood change. For this reason, we decided to conduct qualitative case studies of five different rebound neighborhoods.

We have been gratified by the interest shown in neighborhood change in St. Louis. Using our research, the Community Partnership at UMSL put on four “What’s Brewing” sessions covering our five case studies (combining Shaw and Botanical Heights into one session). In each of these sessions, a panel of local leaders involved in the neighborhood’s turnaround led a discussion about the evolution of their neighborhood. These sessions each attracted between 40 and 90 people and the lively discussions that ensued contributed greatly to our understanding of what drove change in each neighborhood.

Public discussion of rebound neighborhoods was stimulated by other events. In October 2013 we presented our initial findings at the Missouri History Museum at a forum attended by about 300 people. We discussed our research on KWMU’s *St. Louis on the Air* with Don Marsh and we also appeared on an hour-long *Stay Tuned* program by the Nine Network that was focused on rebound neighborhoods in St. Louis. Todd Swanstrom also discussed rebound neighborhoods on KDHX’s *Collateral Damage* program.

We believe that public discussion about the causes and consequences of rebound neighborhoods is critical. Healthy neighborhoods are necessary for a healthy region. The rebound neighborhoods we have identified are exciting success stories that can teach us valuable lessons. But many neighborhoods, especially neighborhoods segregated by poverty and race, are not doing well. As a region, we need to figure out how to spread the success of rebound neighborhoods to all the older parts of the region.

We believe we have made considerable progress in understanding rebound neighborhoods but our research only scratches the surface. Local knowledge by activists working in neighborhoods is just as valuable as scholarly research. We invite readers to join the discussion about how to build strong neighborhoods for a strong St. Louis region.

# Rebound Neighborhoods in Older Industrial Cities: The Story of St. Louis

## Introduction

The United States, like all of its industrialized peers, contains an astonishing diversity of cities, regions, towns, and neighborhoods. We all know, or think we know, what America's strongest and fastest growing cities are: New York, San Francisco, Miami, Houston. We also all know which cities have seen extraordinary falls from grace, transforming from the heart of the American economic engine into places struggling with bankruptcy and fleeing populations: Detroit, Youngstown, Cleveland. What the general narrative often misses, however, is the variety that is located within all large cities. Every city in America contains neighborhoods full of well-off families, with clean streets, beautiful homes and a strong sense of safety. Every city also contains, however, neighborhoods struggling with high levels of poverty, with poorly maintained streets, crumbling homes, and constant concerns about crime. Even more perplexingly, these areas of strength and weakness are often located next to each other, although the lives of the inhabitants are worlds apart.

American cities are currently experiencing a resurgence not seen since the early 1900s. For the first time since the 1920s, the cities in America's largest metropolitan areas are growing faster than their surrounding suburbs (Oremus, 2012). This revitalization is particularly welcome in the older industrial cities that experienced the most dramatic declines in the second half of the twentieth century. In cities like Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, and St. Louis, there is a set of thriving neighborhoods that are successfully attracting new populations back into the urban core. Young people are moving in and renovating historic homes, and neighborhoods are seeing a level of urban vibrancy return. Despite these success stories, each of these cities still contains desperately poor neighborhoods that have remained so for decades. Why are some neighborhoods experiencing a vibrant rebirth while others continue to decline? And what can we, as policy makers and citizens interested in bolstering the neighborhoods that continue to struggle, do to replicate success across our cities?

The goal of this paper is to identify the factors that determine whether neighborhoods in older industrial cities are likely to revitalize, stagnate, or decline. In particular, we are interested in determining how local actors can influence neighborhood trajectories. What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of neighborhood revitalization and which of those factors can local governments, nonprofits, and residents control? How can local actors help ensure that neighborhood revitalization, when it occurs, benefits the low-income and minority residents who have lived in these areas for many years?

Our analysis focuses on St. Louis, an older industrial city whose urban core has declined for more than forty years while the region as a whole has grown modestly. Our unit of analysis is the neighborhood. Neighborhoods are often easier to describe than define, but for our purposes we define a neighborhood as an identifiable section of a city where social networks are stronger within rather than across neighborhood boundaries and where residents identify with the area (Schwirian, 1983). Neighborhoods are often defined by a common history and by political boundaries, such as wards. Unfortunately, there is no national database that tracks data by neighborhood, so we must rely on census tract data as our means of following trends over time. Census tracts are geographic



## I. Context: Regional Decline

St. Louis, like many older industrial cities, has undergone significant change in recent decades. Some of these changes can be explained by national trends that affected most Midwestern and older industrial cities. These stories are familiar: domestic migration to the Sunbelt and West Coast drained population from central cities; immigration trends shifted over time to primarily favor the East and West coasts and the biggest cities of each region; interstate highways altered land use and broke the urban fabric to facilitate the depopulation of inner cities; and there was a significant shift in the American economy away from domestic manufacturing. The decline in manufacturing had a particularly large impact on Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and St. Louis, among others.

Beyond these national changes, St. Louis has been hurt by a set of factors that negatively impacted many cities but were disproportionately strong in St. Louis. The most famous, and historically detrimental, are the restrictive covenants and racial redlining that persisted in St. Louis to a degree not felt in many other cities (Gordon, 2008). This unfortunate history continues to haunt St. Louis as the city struggles with a substantially racially segregated and unequal population.

St. Louis also has an unusually high degree of political fragmentation, found at every level of government. The City of St. Louis, despite only covering 62 square miles, is made up of 28 wards, each represented by its own alderman/woman. Since the “Great Divorce” of 1877, the City of St. Louis, which is also its own county, has been independent from surrounding St. Louis County, resulting in completely separate political, funding, and maintenance systems.<sup>4</sup> St. Louis County itself is made up of 91 separate municipalities; 20 separate municipal fire departments and 23 fire protection districts provide fire department services.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the St. Louis metropolitan region covers two states (Missouri and Illinois), and encompasses the City of St. Louis, 8 counties in Illinois, and 7 counties in Missouri. As a result of this fragmentation, St. Louis has 31.5 units of local government per 100,000 residents; aside from Pittsburgh (33) and Denver (32.5), this ratio is significantly higher than any other older industrial city including Baltimore (1.5), Philadelphia (11), Cleveland (10), and Milwaukee (10) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Governments Division, 2007).

St. Louis today faces a set of daunting challenges that are unfortunately quite common in legacy cities. These challenges include: large areas of concentrated poverty, particularly in northern St. Louis City and East St. Louis in Illinois; poor public schools in St. Louis City and many inner-ring suburbs; neighborhoods suffering from very high levels of crime; no physical boundaries to suburban sprawl; and some level of ailing infrastructure. However, the region also has important areas of strength that will be vital to future success: crime rates overall are trending down; the city boasts some of the best urban parks in America; the region has retained some important anchor institutions that continue to invest heavily in regional employment and neighborhood revitalization; St. Louis’ strong universities attract growing numbers of students to the area; and the region has one of the lowest costs of living among major metropolitan areas.

### Study Area Trends

Like many other older industrial cities, the core of the St. Louis region faces the ongoing challenge of sprawling suburban growth leaving behind growing pockets of concentrated poverty. Although

<sup>4</sup> The City of St. Louis, Missouri. (2011). Retrieved from: <https://stlouis-mo.gov/>.

<sup>5</sup> St. Louis County Government. (2010). Retrieved from <http://ww5.stlouisco.com/scripts/communities/>.

the population of the St. Louis region has grown by 10% since 1970, its population has simultaneously spread outward, with each passing decade resulting in a geographically larger urbanized region, as shown in Figure 1. This sprawling growth drained the region's core. In the 1970s, although the metropolitan area's population remained virtually unchanged, the older parts of the region lost 20.4% of their population as people were attracted to newer homes with larger lots in the suburbs and exurbs (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of population 1950-2000, n.d.; U.S. Bureau of the Census, American community survey 2006-2010, n.d.). This problem was exacerbated by the region's pattern of constructing more new housing units than were needed by new households. This problem has persisted since 1970, but the decade from 2000 to 2010 had the highest ratio of overbuilding, with 1.4 new housing units built for every 1 new household in the St. Louis metropolitan area (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of population 1950-2000, n.d.; U.S. Bureau of the Census, American community survey 2006-2010, n.d.). This imbalance has led to an excess supply of housing, resulting in falling occupancy rates and increased numbers of vacant units, particularly in the region's older neighborhoods.

On the heels of this thinning of the region's core, the study area has seen a growth in the number of high poverty tracts in its neighborhoods. By 1990, the study area already had an unacceptable number of poor neighborhoods; 40% of the area's census tracts had poverty rates of at least 20%; 13% of the census tracts had poverty rates over 40%. The figures have modestly worsened in the past twenty years; by 2010, 49% of the census tracts in the area had poverty rates of at least 20%; 14% of the census tracts had poverty rates over 40% (Logan & Stults, 2011).

Despite these challenges, the core of the St. Louis region has enjoyed some success. Between 2000 and 2009, more than half of the City of St. Louis experienced increases in residential property values based on the Constant Quality Index, with some areas seeing increases of more than 87%. As shown in Figure 2, the majority of these increases came in the City of St. Louis, especially in neighborhoods within the central corridor and southern part of the city. Changing demographics have led to increased demand for smaller housing units within walkable neighborhoods, which plays directly into the strengths of St. Louis' older, more compact and pedestrian-friendly communities.

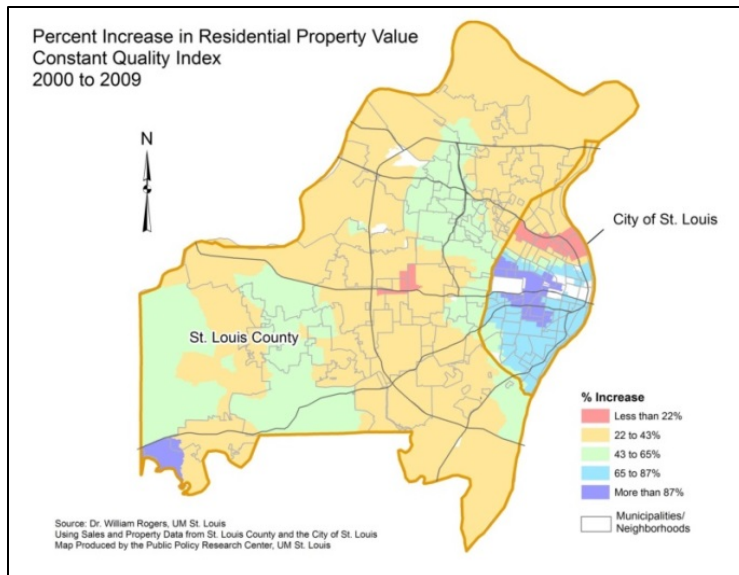


Figure 2. Increase in residential property value, 2000-2009.



Table 1 shows the median performance of census tracts in the urban core of St. Louis from 1970 through 2010. The general pattern over time is one of decline, although the rate of decline has slowed somewhat. On average, census tracts have seen shrinking populations, increased poverty rates, decreased occupancy rates, fewer children, and some white flight. The college-educated population and per capita income (in 2012 dollars) have increased.

In light of the average performance of neighborhoods in the urban core, one might predict that all neighborhoods saw declines over this period. The data reveals, however, that there is enormous heterogeneity within St. Louis. Neighborhood performance over the past forty years can be roughly divided into four categories: strong neighborhoods that stayed strong; weak neighborhoods that stayed weak; neighborhoods that improved slightly over this time; and neighborhoods that improved dramatically over this time. Our goal is to explain these patterns, focusing specifically on the two categories of neighborhoods that improved or “rebounded” between 1990 and 2010.

Table 1. Means of All Study Area Census Tracts: 1970-2010 (Logan & Stults, 2011).

Year	1970	1990	2010
Population	6,047	4,317	3,665
Poverty Rate	13%	19%	22%
Per Capita Income (2012 dollars)	\$17,555	\$22,660	\$25,547
Occupancy	94%	89%	84%
% Under 18	32%	25%	23%
% 18-34	22%	28%	26%
% White	77%	60%	47%
% with 4-year Degree	6%	13%	19%

## II. Neighborhood Change Theory

To understand what causes neighborhoods to change, we turn first to scholarly literature on the subject. Scholars have long observed that neighborhoods in American cities are in a constant state of change. A study of 35 metropolitan areas from 1950 to 2000 found dramatic change in the economic status of neighborhoods, with the change in relative economic status of census tracts ranked within each metropolitan area averaging roughly 12 to 13 percent up or down per decade (Rosenthal, 2007). Researchers have extensively studied the causes and consequences of neighborhood decline. Research on revitalizing or rebounding neighborhoods is less extensive but growing. A recent study of over 50,000 census tracts between 1970 and 2005-2009 classified between 13.6 percent and 20.6 percent of the census tracts in each decade as “ascending” (Owens, 2012).<sup>6</sup>

Most research on revitalizing neighborhoods views them as cases of “gentrification;” the movement of young, often single, professionals into low-income, usually minority, neighborhoods near urban employment centers. Scholars have long debated the costs and benefits of gentrification. (For overviews of the gentrification debate, see Lees, Slater, and Wyly, 2008; Brown-Saracino, 2010.) The dominant view in the literature has traditionally been that in gentrifying neighborhoods the new,

<sup>6</sup> Owens defines ascending census tracts as those that increased their rank in the metropolitan area on her indicators of socioeconomic status by 10 percentile points or more.

higher income residents end up displacing the low-income and minority residents and taking over the local culture and consumption patterns. The implication is that gentrification harms previous low-income residents of the area, who, pushed out of the neighborhood by rising rents, are forced to sever their social ties and often end up paying more for replacement housing.

Recently, scholars have presented a more complex and nuanced picture of gentrification. Despite its negative connotations, gentrification has the potential to improve conditions for long-term residents. By introducing higher income residents into high-poverty areas, gentrification can improve conditions for the low-income residents who remain (Freeman, 2006). A study of New York City found that low-income residents were actually less likely to move out of gentrifying neighborhoods than other neighborhoods (Freeman, 2002). Gentrification can improve job prospects for low-income residents, improve public services by upgrading the tax base, generate more retail opportunities, and even improve the financial health of existing residents (Vigdor, 2002; Hartley, 2013). Most of the research on gentrification has taken place in strong market or rapidly growing regions, such as Boston, Seattle, and San Francisco; there is little research on the extent to which gentrification or other forms of market improvement exist in weak market regions like St. Louis.

Theories of neighborhood change come in three basic forms, drawing on the insights of economics, sociology, and political science: 1) economic theories based on rational actors in free markets; 2) sociological theories that stress the importance of status concerns, racial attitudes, and networks; and 3) political explanations that focus on the role of public policies and powerful institutions in shaping neighborhood outcomes.

### **Economic theories of neighborhood revival**

Early economic theories of neighborhood change originated with the Chicago School of human ecology in the 1920s. According to Burgess's concentric zone theory, high-income households move into new housing on the urban periphery, leaving older housing behind for lower income families (Park, Burgess, & McKenzie, 1925). The outward movement of high-income households is driven by the different demand curves for housing by high- and low-income consumers. Another theory, Alonso's bid rent theory, posits that high-income households are willing to trade off longer commutes to jobs in the central business district in order to inhabit larger homes on large lots in the suburban fringe (Alonso, 1960). Homer Hoyt modified Burgess's concentric zone theory, developing what he called the sector theory of neighborhood change: cities tend to develop outward from the center along transportation corridors; once established in one sector, high-rent neighborhoods "tend to move out in that sector to the periphery of the city" (Hoyt, 1939). Economic theories portray neighborhood change as an orderly process in which high-income households move out to new housing in the suburbs, setting in motion a housing filtering chain by which older housing gradually passes down to middle and lower income households.

Early economic models were good at explaining why older urban neighborhoods gradually moved down the economic ladder, but they were not good at explaining why some older neighborhoods reverse course and move up socioeconomically. In their 1959 study of the New York metropolitan area, Edgar Hoover and Raymond Vernon noted that some high-income professionals were violating the classic filtering process, which would predict their preference for large houses in the suburbs. They explained this early gentrification as driven by a desire to live closer to white-collar employment centers in Manhattan (Hoover & Vernon, 1959). The implication is that as suburban

commutes lengthen, eventually some higher income professionals will prefer to live in smaller housing units on more expensive land in order to enjoy shorter commutes to work.

Economic supply and demand factors driving rebound neighborhoods can be summed up as follows:<sup>7</sup>

#### Demand Factors

- Expanded professional employment in downtowns drives up demand for housing in nearby neighborhoods.
- Growth in the number of small, childless households and retirees increases demand for smaller urban housing, such as brownstones, condominiums, and luxury apartments.
- Consumer tastes shift in favor of amenity-rich, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.

#### Supply Factors

- Longer commutes from suburban housing make living in close-in urban neighborhoods more attractive.
- A supply of undervalued older urban housing with attractive architectural features attracts in-movers.<sup>8</sup>
- Urban land close to employment centers left vacant and abandoned at the end of the filtering process offers attractive opportunities for investors (Rosenthal, 2007).<sup>9</sup>

The strength of the supply and demand factors driving neighborhood revitalization will vary from one metropolitan area to another. One study estimated that a third of variation in neighborhood conditions can be attributed to metropolitan-level factors (Weissbourd, Bodini, & He, 2009). Neighborhood revitalization will be more difficult in metropolitan areas in which housing market demand is being siphoned off from older parts of the region by new suburban development. As David Rusk puts it, the “inside game” of neighborhood revitalization needs to be supplemented with an “outside game” that puts limits on suburban sprawl (Rusk, 1999). Metropolitan areas with relatively slow population growth, often associated with low immigrant populations, and few geographical barriers to outward development such as deserts, mountains, and oceans, face more challenges in neighborhood revitalization because of the increasing supply of alternatives to older

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<sup>7</sup> Supply and demand factors underlying neighborhood revitalization are adapted from Downs, 1981, p. 75. For recent summaries of the economic factors driving urban revitalization, see Ehrenhalt, 2012; Glaeser, 2011; and Leinberger, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Neil Smith explains gentrification as the result of investors jumping in to take advantage of a “rent gap” – the difference between the actual ground rent received for a parcel of land versus the potential ground rent given a more profitable use in upscale housing (Smith, 1979; Smith, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> Rosenthal (p. 822) notes that housing depreciates at about 2 percent per year and therefore after about 50 years older urban housing is ripe for reinvestment.

urban housing. St. Louis is an example of such a city. The decentralization of employment out of the central business district will also weaken the demand for older urban housing. St. Louis ranks 6<sup>th</sup> among the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the nation in the percentage of jobs located more than three miles from the central business district (Kneebone, 2013).

Economic theories can provide coherent explanations as to why some neighborhoods, after suffering decades of downward economic decline, enjoy renewed consumer and investor confidence. Based on the assumption that markets tend toward equilibrium as supply and demand are constantly adjusting, economic theories portray neighborhood decline and renewal as a gradual and orderly process. Economic theories clearly capture some of the underlying dynamics of neighborhood change, but they have two major flaws. First, they do not effectively explain on a micro-level why variety exists in the strength of neighborhoods that are equidistant from downtowns and other job centers. Second, anyone who has studied neighborhood change knows that it is far from a gradual and orderly process. Neighborhoods can go up and down very quickly and land values can fall off a cliff at the boundary between two neighborhoods. To account for the seemingly irrational patterns of neighborhood revival, we must turn to social and political explanations.

### **Sociological theories of neighborhood revival**

According to economic theory, households and investors make independent decisions based on what is in their rational economic interest. In contrast, sociological theory postulates that actors are motivated by cultural values and norms passed on from one generation to the next and expressed through social structures and roles. According to sociologists, people do not just act as independent rational actors; they are acutely interested in status hierarchies and social networks and they make decisions on where to live and invest accordingly.

Sociological theories of status hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, and economic class have been used to understand neighborhood change.<sup>10</sup> Sociological theory asserts that people at the top of social hierarchies prefer to live among others like themselves.<sup>11</sup> Thus, whites prefer to live among other whites. These processes of self-segregation have contagion effects and tipping points that can set into motion neighborhood trends that are difficult to reverse (Grodzins, 1957; Schelling, 1971; Schelling, 1969). Thomas Schelling demonstrated that under a wide range of preferences for different racial mixes, neighborhoods will tip toward completely white or completely black – even though no individual intends this result. Data on American neighborhoods seems to support this theory; there are far more neighborhoods that are primarily inhabited by a single racial group than there are neighborhoods that are evenly integrated. Robert Sampson reports that from 1960 to 2000 not a single neighborhood in Chicago transitioned from predominantly black to predominantly white (Sampson, 2012). However, a recent review of the evidence on integrated neighborhoods in American cities paints a more complicated picture. The number of all-white neighborhoods has declined significantly; many more neighborhoods are diverse in the sense of having a mix of whites

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<sup>10</sup> We focus here on sociological theories based on status. Sociological theories of social capital and trust are also important in understanding neighborhood change. The level of “collective efficacy” in a neighborhood can explain its trajectory independent of economic factors (Sampson, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Of course, affluent households can benefit economically from living among other affluent households, e.g., in being able to generously fund local public schools while paying relatively low tax rates. However, this kind of collusion in residential location, while it can be motivated by economic gain, does not fit the market model which requires that households make decisions independently of each other.

and other races. On the other hand, once communities become predominantly black, they continue to have a difficult time attracting white residents (Ellen, Horn, & O'Regan, 2012).

Status-seeking through residential location is economic; the rich prefer to live among other affluent households. Beginning with William Julius Wilson's original 1987 work on concentrated poverty, researchers have documented the rise of economic segregation in American neighborhoods and, in particular, the disturbing rise of concentrated poverty (Drier, Mollenkopf, & Swanstrom, 2014). The flip side of concentrated poverty is concentrated affluence. As wealthy households move into a neighborhood, it can become more attractive for other high-income households, setting in motion a process of rising housing and land value costs that pushes out lower income residents.

The implication of economic theory is that neighborhood revival will take place in a gradual and smooth manner. With supply and demand for housing kept in rough equilibrium the socioeconomic slope between neighborhoods will be gentle. Under concentric zone theory, for example, the urban land gradient, or underlying land prices, should decline slowly and evenly as one moves outward from employment centers. Neighborhood change should also be slow and steady as the market constantly adjusts to the changing preferences of consumers and investors.

Sociological theory can help explain why the urban land gradient, far from being a smooth, gradually sloping plain, is often characterized by jagged peaks and valleys. Land prices can drop precipitously from one neighborhood to another. Also, neighborhood change can happen rapidly, as when panic selling sets in. The concept of tipping points based on reinforcing cycles can explain the sudden and discontinuous nature of much neighborhood change. Ascending neighborhoods may reach a tipping point, swiftly displacing the previous low-income and minority residents. Instead of supply and demand being in equilibrium, under certain conditions a neighborhood can become "hot" as a high status location and, as a result, prices may increase rapidly. Home purchases may be motivated as much by a desire for speculative gains as by the inherent characteristics of the neighborhood. Depictions of gentrifying neighborhoods as resulting in wholesale displacement of low-income and minority residents are rooted in sociological processes of cumulative causation.

Sociological theory also suggests that the urban land gradient can be characterized by peaks and valleys. Hot or rapidly rising neighborhoods can exist next to very cold or depressed neighborhoods. If homebuyers make decisions partly on the bases of racial and ethnic status hierarchies, which in the United States are still generally correlated with economic class, then housing demand can become concentrated in predominately white neighborhoods and higher income households will shun housing in a nearby predominantly minority areas even if objectively the two areas are very similar.

The dominant prediction from the theory of tipping points is that as neighborhoods rebound and attract higher income and "higher status" racial and ethnic households, they will tend to tip into becoming all or majority white and upper income communities. Economically, racially, and ethnically diverse stable rebound neighborhoods will be rare. The degree to which this tipping point process actually occurs in rebound neighborhoods is an empirical question. Our study of rebound neighborhoods in St. Louis provides data for evaluating tipping point theory.

The ability of neighborhoods to rebound from urban decline also depends on the actions of governments and large institutions that are able to shape local housing markets. Uneven neighborhood development can either be accentuated or ameliorated by political/institutional interventions. We now turn to this third source of neighborhood change.

## Political/Institutional theories of neighborhood revival

According to the political/institutional school of thinking, the principal drivers of neighborhood change are not rational economic actors or social norms and networks but powerful institutions, especially governments. Public policies have always played an important role in neighborhood change. In earlier periods in America, governments played a direct role in neighborhood change; in more recent decades powerful private and nonprofit institutions have partnered with governments to shape neighborhood trajectories. The ability of neighborhoods to draw strength from political and institutional relationships varies significantly across metropolitan areas.

The classic case of public policy driving neighborhood decline is the federal government's home loan guarantee programs. In the 1930s, Homer Hoyt was hired to advise the new federal loan guarantee programs. Hoyt's job was to provide advice on how to reduce the risk of guaranteeing mortgages. As we discussed in the previous section, Hoyt's research showed that there was a racial and ethnic status hierarchy and people shunned neighborhoods that included low-status groups such as blacks or southern Italians. Partly on the basis of Hoyt's research, the federal loan guarantee programs discriminated against black and racially diverse neighborhoods. The unwillingness of the federal government to guarantee mortgages in diverse urban neighborhoods exacerbated the tipping point phenomenon discussed earlier and contributed to the decline of many inner-city neighborhoods. The loan guarantee programs also discriminated against mixed-use neighborhoods on the grounds that home purchasers preferred all-residential areas. The federal urban renewal and highway building programs are another case of federal public policy influencing neighborhoods. These programs, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, forcibly displaced many urban residents, especially low-income and minority households. The roiling of the social structure and invasion of neighborhoods by forcibly displaced households contributed to neighborhood decline (Gordon, 2008).

The decline of many urban neighborhoods was also driven by public policies that subsidized suburban development. The tendency of large water, sewer, and electric utilities to subsidize new development on the backs of existing rate payers made it less expensive for residents of older urban neighborhoods to flee to outlying suburbs. Autonomous suburban governments passed zoning laws that excluded rental housing and required single-family homes on large lots. This meant that the inner-city poor could not follow jobs out to the suburbs. Rising rates of poverty and fiscal stress in cities contributed to neighborhood decline. Redlining by banks also contributed to neighborhood decline. According to growth machine theory, landowners joined forces with investors and governments to form "growth coalitions" that promoted commercial development, often at the expense of inner-city residential neighborhoods (Logan & Molotch, 1987). In the 1970s and 1980s political scientists documented a "corporate-center strategy" by local governments that focused on downtown development at the expense of neighborhoods (Fanstein, Fanstein, Hill, Judd, & Smith, 1986).

Although many actions of institutions and governments contributed to neighborhood decline, another set of policies was designed to support the revitalization of older urban neighborhoods. Government policies in support of older neighborhoods have changed significantly in the post-industrial period. Direct government funding of housing has dropped significantly. HUD production of housing fell from 248,000 units in 1977 to only 18,000 in 1996 (Erickson, 2009). The inventory of public housing is shrinking. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the main successor to the War on Poverty programs, has shrunk to only about \$4 billion for the entire

nation. Instead of directly constructing housing, the federal government and states have assembled a series of tools that can be used for neighborhood revitalization. The primary federal housing production tool is the Low-income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), which subsidized the construction of more than 2 million units between 1987 and 2006 (Erickson, 2009).

In order to access the new policy tools for neighborhood revitalization, local actors must assemble networks of actors (Keyes, Schwartz, Vidal, & Bratt, 1996). Community development corporations (CDCs) are key actors in the new policy paradigm. The first CDCs were formed in the 1960s with the help of Senator Robert Kennedy. Today there are almost 5,000 across the nation. CDCs engage local residents, devise strategic neighborhood interventions, and pursue funding to implement them. But CDCs cannot do this work alone. They need intermediaries to develop their capacity and syndicate the tax credits to wealthy investors. The capacity of community development systems varies tremendously across metropolitan areas. National intermediaries and foundations, such as LISC, NeighborWorks, Living Cities, and Enterprise Community Partners, work in cities across the country to build up the capacity of the community development system. Cities without these national connections are disadvantaged in the competition for funds for neighborhood revitalization. The participation of local community foundations is also a crucial ingredient in building local capacity to revitalize low-income neighborhoods (Lowe, 2006).

So-called “anchor institutions” are also key actors in the new decentralized community development system. Anchor institutions are defined as institutions that are tied to specific locations “by reason of mission, invested capital, or relationships to customers or employees” (Webber & Karlstrom, 2009). Universities and large medical complexes (“eds and meds”) in particular are becoming increasingly important players in metropolitan economies. Between 2000 and 2010, while manufacturing jobs across the country fell 33 percent, jobs in education and health services increased 23 percent, a greater increase than any other industry sector (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Further, for historic reasons these institutions tend to be located in cities, and continue to grow in cities. In 2011, in 66 of the country’s 100 largest inner-cities, an anchor institution was the largest employer (Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, 2011). Eds and meds have few options for mobility and many have come to realize that their well-being, especially their ability to attract talented professional employees, depends on the success of the neighborhoods around them. Many anchor institutions are investing heavily in neighborhood revitalization. Neighborhoods with strong anchors are in a much better position to rebound from neighborhood decline than neighborhoods without anchor institutions.

In sum, the political/institutional approach predicts that the ability of a neighborhood to rebound will depend on its political power and institutional relationships, as well as broader public policies. It is not enough that a neighborhood be close to large employers; it must also partner with these anchors to bring resources from outside the neighborhood to the task of neighborhood revitalization. The ability of a neighborhood to form local nonprofits that steward redevelopment is also important, as is its ability to access and utilize public policies, from governmental grants to zoning laws, which support neighborhood redevelopment.

### III. Neighborhood Change in St. Louis

Understanding the economic, social, and political/institutional theories of neighborhood change, we used historical data on neighborhood performance in St. Louis to begin an analysis of the degree to which these theoretical predictions match actual neighborhood trends.

#### Index of neighborhood vitality

In order to compare the performance of neighborhoods in St. Louis, we created a measurement tool called the Index of Neighborhood Vitality that rates census tracts on their relative strength. The index looks at three data points for each census tract in each decade from 1970 to 2010: per capita income, poverty rate, and vacancy rate. These three data points were picked as one way to represent a census tract's economic (per capita income), social (poverty rate), and physical (vacancy rate) performance. The index score is calculated as the sum of the standardized values for each of these three variables. Index scores range from around 10 to 260, with a higher score representing stronger performance and 150 representing the study area median. Index scores were calculated for each tract in 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010.

Using these index scores, census tracts can be roughly divided into four categories: 1) neighborhoods like Clayton, a wealthy inner-ring suburb of St. Louis City, that has always been above-average and has stayed so over the past 40 years; 2) neighborhoods like College Hill, a high-poverty neighborhood in north St. Louis, that has consistently scored low relative to its peers; 3) neighborhoods like Shaw, a middle-class neighborhood in the near south side of St. Louis City, which declined dramatically before 1990 and then rebounded quite impressively to levels at or above its historic highs; and 4) neighborhoods like Mark Twain, a working-class neighborhood in north St. Louis, which struggled historically but has recently enjoyed modest improvements relative to its peers.

#### “Rebound” neighborhoods

Of these four types of neighborhoods we are most interested in two types: the neighborhoods that saw either substantial or modest improvements after a previous decline. We call these “rebound” neighborhoods, and they are the focus of the remainder of this paper. Rebound census tracts are defined as those that meet the follow three requirements:

1. The census tract increased at least 10 percentiles in its ranking either from 1990 to 2000 or from 2000 to 2010.
2. The census tract's index score was once below the median of all study area tracts.
3. If the census tract improved from 1990 to 2000, it did not then decline from 2000 to 2010.

The full set of rebound neighborhoods can be seen in Figure 3; the orange census tracts fit into the rebound definition. As the map shows, the rebounding tracts are primarily located within the City of St. Louis (outlined in yellow), with particular concentration in the central corridor of the city.



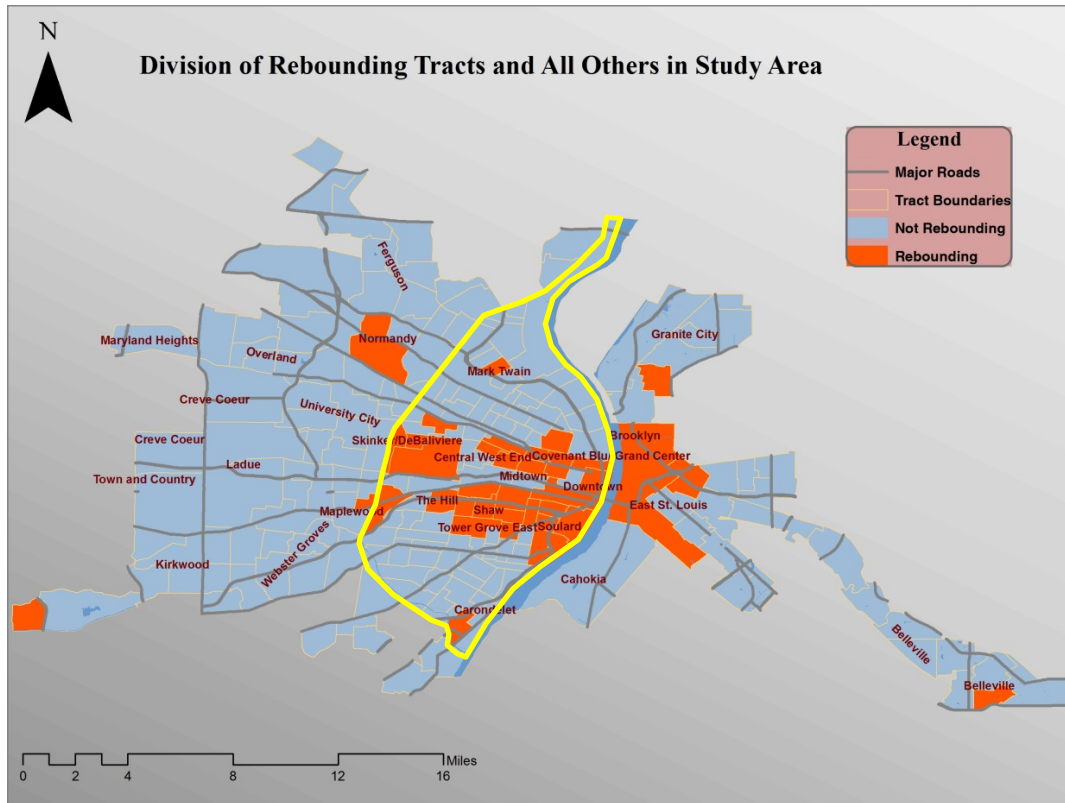


Figure 3. Rebounding Tracts in Study Area

### Rebound neighborhood performance

Figure 3 clearly shows that rebound neighborhoods are predominantly located in the central core of the region, but many other questions remained about these rebound neighborhoods. Are the residents of rebound neighborhoods different than the residents of other neighborhoods in our data set? Has neighborhood improvement produced gentrifying communities that are less economically and racially diverse?

Economic theory predicts that neighborhood revitalization will be driven by increased demand for urban living among the growing number of single and childless households, as well as elderly “empty nesters.” Our data analysis, displayed in Figure 4, shows that rebound neighborhoods did have significantly higher percentages of young people and single households than non-rebound census tracts. The reputation of the St. Louis public schools has undoubtedly contributed to the low number of households with children under the age of 18 in our rebound census tracts.<sup>12</sup>

Surprisingly, however, rebound tracts actually had lower percentages of the elderly and married couples without children than non-rebound tracts. These findings suggest that young single households are driving neighborhood revitalization in St. Louis.

<sup>12</sup> The St. Louis public schools lost state accreditation in 2007 but gained provisional accreditation in 2012.

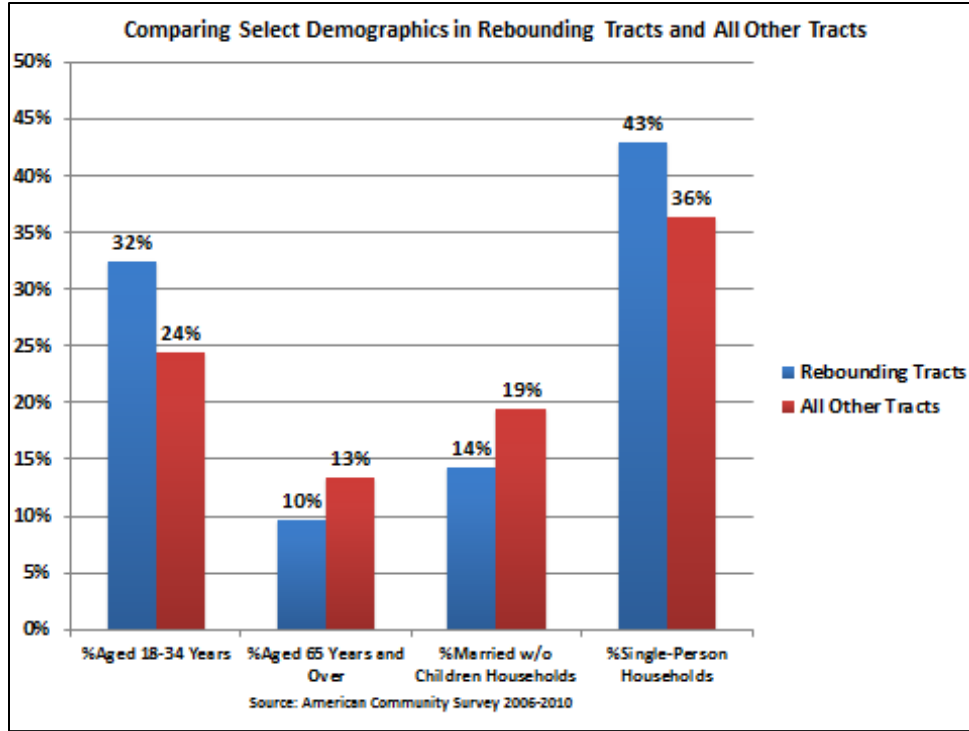


Figure 4. Residential demographics in rebounding and non-rebounding tracts.

Tipping point theory would suggest that rebound neighborhoods that attract more high-income professionals and white residents will reach tipping points at which point most low-income and minority residents will be displaced. To test this generalization, we constructed a racial diversity index that measures the probability that two individuals randomly selected from a single census tract will be of different races. Essentially, this attempts to measure the degree to which a place facilitates interaction among individuals of different races – assuming that racial interaction is random and based on spatial propinquity. Our measure is similar to an isolation index in measures of metropolitan segregation. Our racial diversity index was computed using the following formula based on four racial groups:

$$D = 1 - (w^2 + b^2 + h^2 + o^2)$$

Where D= racial diversity index, w= % white non-Hispanic, b= % black non-Hispanic, h= % Hispanic and o= % other races. The highest diversity score possible is .75 (25 percent in each racial category); the lowest possible score is zero (entire population of one race).

We did not find evidence that rebound neighborhoods in St. Louis reach tipping points that drive them toward racial homogeneity. To our surprise, the rebound tracts on average were more diverse than non-rebounding tracts. As shown in Figure 5, rebound tracts had a mean diversity score of .40 and a median score of .49, compared to mean and median scores for non-rebounding tracts of .30 and .27. A diversity score of .40 could be generated by a neighborhood that was 73% white and 27% black. Conversely, a diversity score of .30 could be generated by a neighborhood that was 82% white and 18% black.

In addition to racial diversity, we were interested in understanding whether the rebound neighborhoods were less economically diverse. In order to study this question, we computed a score for each census tract based on the percentage of residents in professional occupations and the percentage of residents in poverty, in both cases using census data. We used this measure of economic diversity to provide a preliminary test of the idea that the in-movement of young professionals pushes out the poor. As shown in Figure 6, compared to non-rebound neighborhoods, our rebound neighborhoods were much more likely to have higher than median poverty rates and higher than median number of residents with professional occupations. In other words, many of our rebound neighborhoods have both more professionals and more poor people, contradicting the idea that the influx of young professionals pushes out all or most poor households.

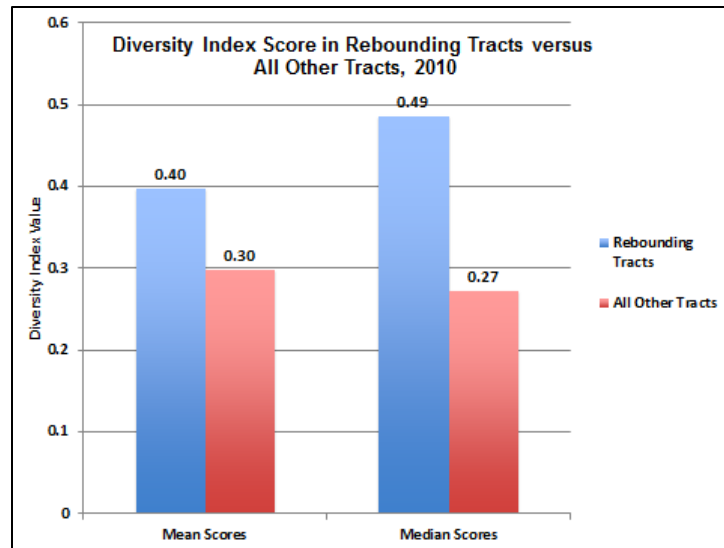


Figure 5. Diversity index scores, rebounding and non-rebounding tracts.

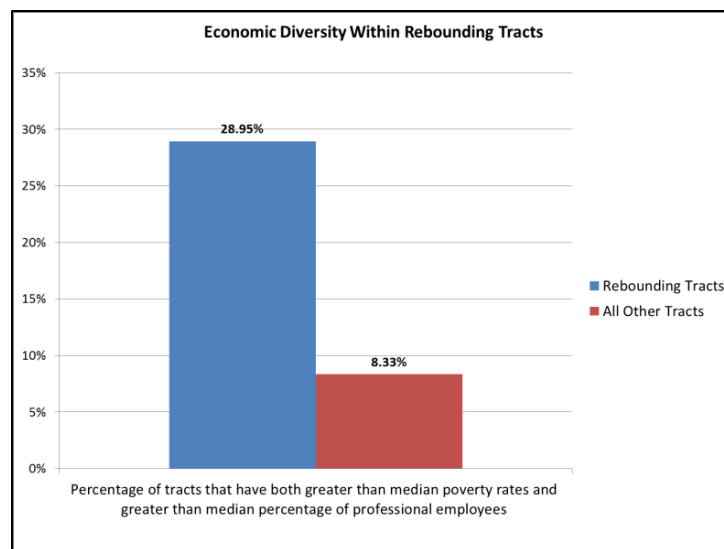


Figure 6. Economic diversity of rebounding and non-rebounding tracts.

There are some important caveats to the preceding analysis. First we should note that our analysis cannot speak to what might happen in these neighborhoods in the future; we do not have a way of knowing whether the rebound neighborhoods are approaching a point at which they will become less diverse, or if the non-rebound neighborhoods will in the future become more diverse. Second, the racial and economic diversity indexes are census tract-level measures; this analysis does not reflect the diversity of individual streets, but rather looks at whether the census tract as a whole is diverse. Individuals may be priced out of living on a specific block, but this analysis suggests that rebounding neighborhoods at least contain areas that are still accessible to lower-income and minority residents.

Moreover, we cannot be sure that the supposed diversity of rebounding neighborhoods reflects a constant population. Census data provides a snapshot of residents every ten years, but it does not track which residents have remained in the same location year after year. Because of this, our analysis does not enable us to determine if longtime minority and low-income individuals have been able to remain in rebound neighborhoods. Therefore it is possible that neighborhoods could appear to be as or more diverse as they were in the past, but the individuals that make up those neighborhood statistics could be an entirely new set of residents. It could also be the case that neighborhoods became less diverse as they rebounded but remained more diverse than other neighborhoods.

Our findings contradict the classic image of gentrification. The continued racial and economic diversity of rebound neighborhoods in the St. Louis metropolitan area suggests that there has not been large-scale involuntary displacement at the census tract level. Our findings are consistent with a study of six corporate-sponsored redevelopment areas in St. Louis which concluded that the areas were more economically and racially diverse after redevelopment. “[T]he improvements they have seen look very little like gentrification” (Monti & Burghoff, 2012).

There are a number of possible reasons why the rebound census tracts in our study remained relatively diverse:

- 1) The relatively weak housing market in St. Louis may have meant that housing inflation in rebound neighborhoods was not sufficient to displace most low-income residents.
- 2) When rents did increase, the availability of subsidized housing may have enabled low-income and minority residents to remain.
- 3) The presence of a diversity of housing types, e.g., modest apartments mixed in with expensive single-family homes, may have made it easier for low-income persons to remain in rebound neighborhoods.
- 4) Levels of racial intolerance among the new residents of rebound areas may have been low enough to prevent a racial tipping process to have been set in motion.
- 5) Civic groups may have mediated relations across racial and economic divides, increasing levels of trust and toleration, and short-circuiting racial tipping points.
- 6) These results may reflect a fundamental change in the attitudes of some portion of the population. Young adults in particular are showing a greater preference for living in

racially and economically diverse neighborhoods, and the rebound neighborhoods may be capturing a population that actively values diversity as a neighborhood attribute.<sup>13</sup>

We cannot confirm or disconfirm these hypotheses with census data alone. The next section of our report, which presents case studies of five rebound neighborhoods, does provide some insight into these issues.

#### IV. Case Studies

In order to better understand the causes of neighborhood change and to identify best practices for local actors seeking to improve neighborhoods, we conducted a set of case studies of rebounding neighborhoods. A total of 38 census tracts were identified as rebounding; we chose 5 neighborhoods containing 12 census tracts for detailed analysis. These neighborhoods were the Central West End, Botanical Heights, Shaw, Mark Twain, and Maplewood. The case study neighborhoods were selected for their differing characteristics. The five neighborhoods vary by location (central corridor, northern and southern St. Louis, suburb); historic economic status (from historically wealthy to working class); and current character (popular with professionals, attractive to students and young couples, working class).

Figure 7 provides an overview of the relative performance, as measured by the index score, of our five case study neighborhoods. As the chart shows, the five neighborhoods started out at very different points in 1970 and remain very different today. These neighborhoods provide examples of the different types of rebound neighborhoods that exist in our sample. The Central West End experienced its greatest decline before 1970 and by that year was well below average. In the past 40 years, it has seen consistent dramatic improvements, ending up well above average. Botanical Heights started out as the weakest case study neighborhood, and saw further decline between 1970 and 1990. The neighborhood has successfully reversed its decline in the past twenty years, with a 2010 index score above its 1970 level. Shaw had a very similar U-shaped performance, although it has remained stronger than Botanical Heights throughout the past forty years. Mark Twain experienced a different pattern, with significant constant decline from 1970 to 2000. In the past ten years Mark Twain has rebounded slightly, although it remains well below its 1970 score. Finally, Maplewood has remained above average for the last forty years, although individual census tracts within the neighborhood have at times fallen below average. Maplewood successfully bounced back from a slight decline between 1970 and 1980.

Each of these neighborhoods improved substantially while generally maintaining or increasing levels of resident diversity. Every neighborhood but the Central West End saw a loss in white population in the 1970s and 1980s as white flight hit the core of St. Louis. In fact, only Shaw and the Central West End have had any increase in white population since 1970. Despite that, Figure 8 shows that by 2010, other than Mark Twain, none of these neighborhoods was made up of more than 75% of a single race. These results support our prior discussion of diversity, which suggested that rebound neighborhoods in St. Louis are relatively diverse places. Mark Twain follows a different and more challenging pattern; since the 1990s it has remained an entirely African American community. This is

<sup>13</sup> A recent survey of 3,000 individuals examined attitudes toward racial and ethnic diversity. The 160-point composite openness index measured the degree to which people are open to racial and ethnic diversity. The youngest age group—Americans ages 18 to 29—reported a mean score of 92, compared to the oldest age group—Americans ages 65 or older—which scored an average of 80 on the index (Teixeira, Halpin, Barreto, & Pantoja, 2013).

true of most of the neighborhoods in north St. Louis, and follows the prediction that neighborhoods that become entirely or nearly entirely African-American find it very difficult to attract white residents. Of the 51 census tracts in our study area that were under 10% white in either 1970 or 1990, none reached even 15% white by 2010.

While these overall trends are important to understanding the story of St. Louis, we were interested in learning what specific actions made each rebound neighborhood relatively successful. The following case studies provide in-depth profiles of each individual neighborhood with the goal of developing from these stories a list of community-level factors that contribute to neighborhood revitalization.

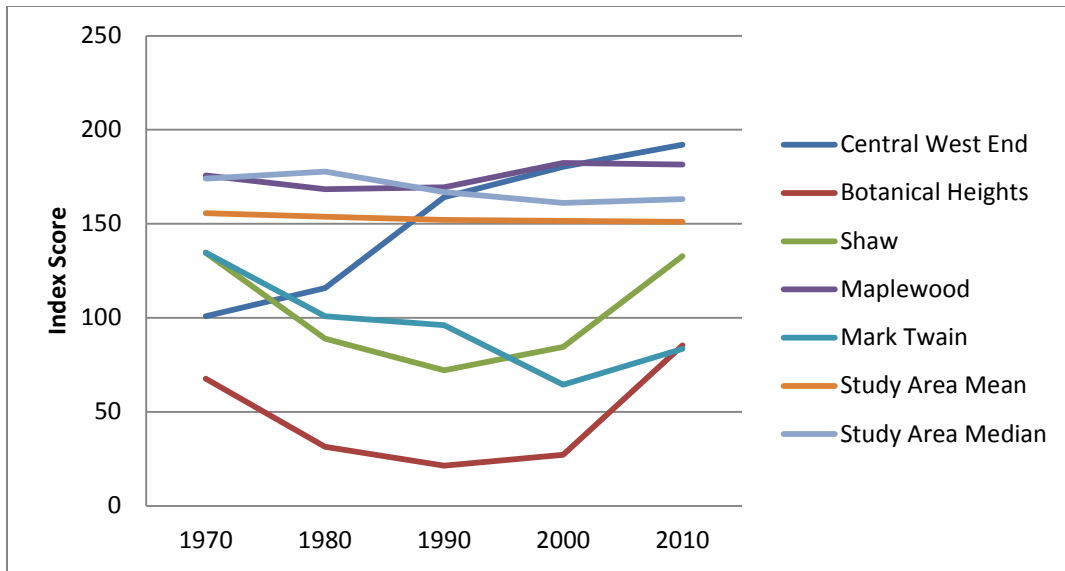


Figure 7. Performance of case study neighborhoods, 1970-2010.

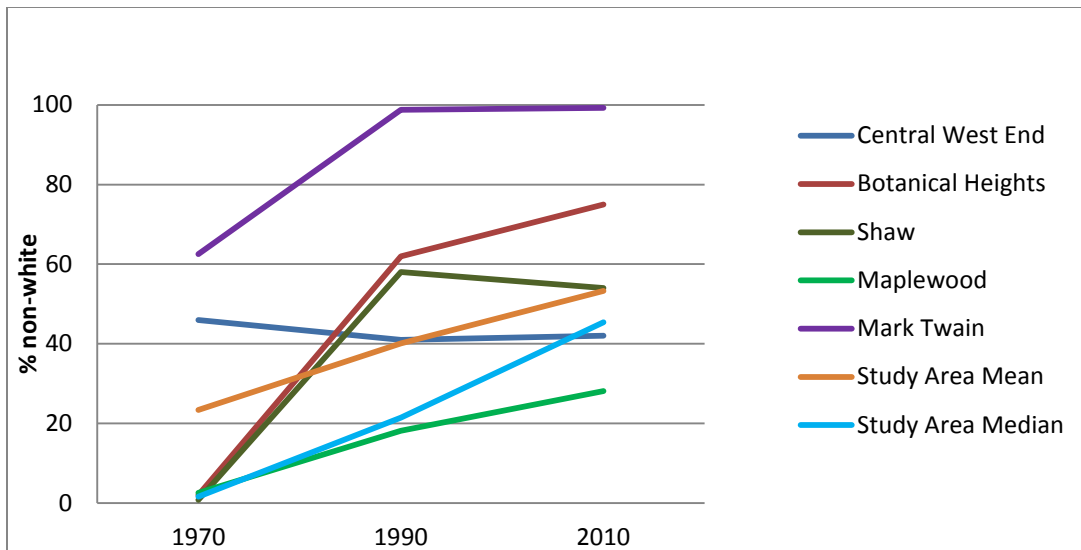
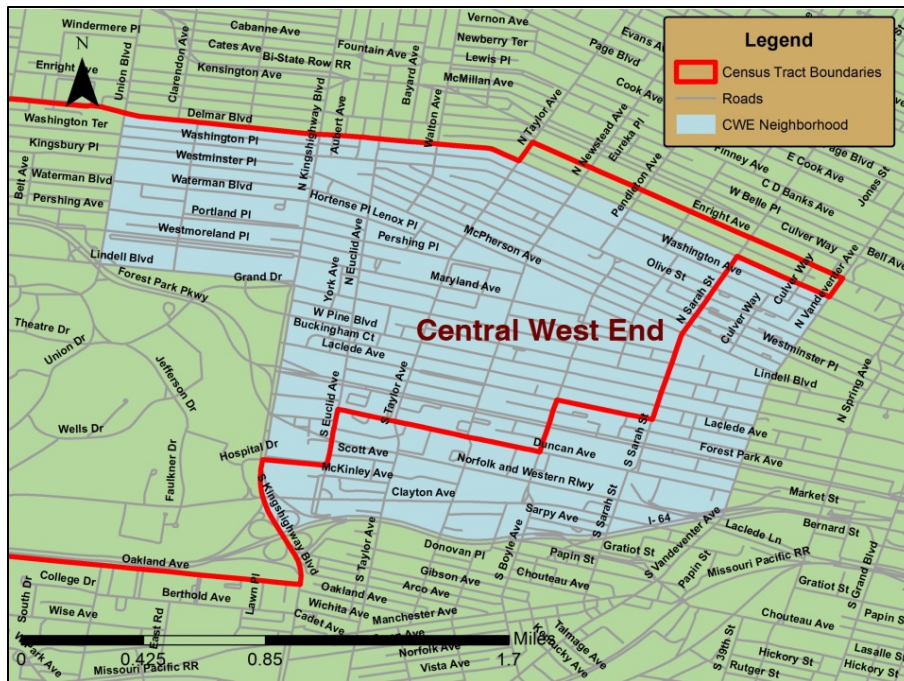
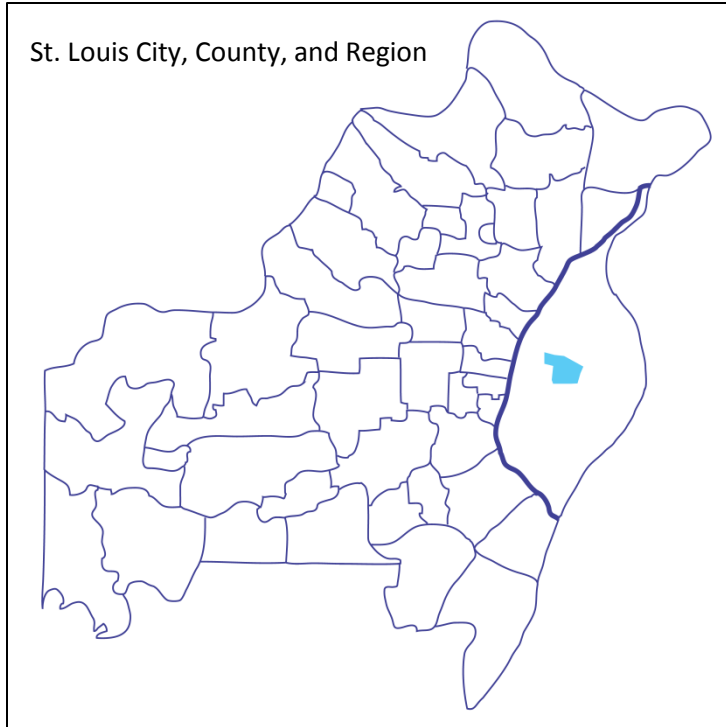


Figure 8. Racial makeup of case study neighborhoods, 1970-2010.

Central West End



The Central West End (CWE) is located in the central corridor of the City of St. Louis, adjacent to Forest Park. The neighborhood is bordered by Delmar Boulevard to the north, Interstate 64 to the south, Union and Kingshighway to the west, and Vandeventer to the east. The quantitative analysis conducted for this study utilizes census tracts, which, as displayed on the map above, omit a small section of the eastern and southern portions of the neighborhood and include a few blocks north of Delmar and west of Union. The exclusion of some of the southern area likely has little effect on the quantitative analysis as the area is a large medical center and therefore has few residents. The inclusion of several blocks north of Delmar has the effect of depressing the average income and increasing the poverty rate for our Central West End data. In St. Louis, neighborhoods north of Delmar Avenue tend to be much poorer than their neighbors south of Delmar.

Table 2. Central West End: 1970-2010 (Logan & Stults, 2011).

Year	1970	1990	2010
Population	25,859	17,282	15,518
Poverty Rate	24%	22%	24%
Per Capita Income	\$23,078	\$38,690	\$43,406
Occupancy	85%	86%	86%
% Under 18	20%	10%	7%
% 18-34	28%	35%	44%
% White	54%	59%	58%
% with 4-year Degree	18%	45%	63%
Index Score	100.84	164.15	192.12

The major employment center in the Central West End has long been the Washington University Medical Center. The Center historically included Barnes, Jewish, St. John's, Shriners, and Children's hospitals, as well as the Washington University School of Medicine. Many of these institutions have long had national and international reputations and serve as some of the largest employers in the St. Louis region (Goell, 2007).

Despite an attractive location, strong anchor institutions and an excellent housing stock, the Central West End was not immune to the decline in the City of St. Louis during the years following World War II. Since 1970, the Central West End has experienced a rebirth after years of decline. This rebound was fueled by the substantial investment by and dedicated efforts of the institutions, residents and political leaders in this neighborhood.

#### *Post-WWII decline*

The decline of the Central West End began with suburban flight. From 1950 to 1970 the City of St. Louis lost 27% of its residents (Baybeck & Jones, 2004). The next twenty years brought little relief from this pattern of decline. Many residents who owned homes in the Central West End moved elsewhere or died, and few came to take their place due to fear of crime and difficulty in obtaining home loans. Much of the neighborhood was redlined with few banks offering home mortgages (Goell, 2007; J. & N. Dwyer, personal interview, August 8, 2013).<sup>14</sup> The neighborhood's housing stock was impressive, but it included many old homes that began to deteriorate, becoming more

<sup>14</sup> West End Word (2014) About the West End Word. Retrieved from <http://www.westendword.com/CallPage-9609.114137-Company-History.html#axzz2kRjODTxP>.



expensive to maintain. Commercial spaces were also threatened. Despite the grand history of the Chase Hotel, it fell into disrepair, closed in 1989 and remained vacant for a decade. With the development of malls outside the City of St. Louis, Maryland Plaza became largely vacant despite several attempts at redevelopment (Goell, 2007).

The Central West End was also impacted by the decline of nearby Forest Park, traditionally the great city park of St. Louis and the home of the St. Louis Zoo, St. Louis Art Museum and other cultural and athletic venues. Starting in the 1950s, the quality of Forest Park was threatened by lack of maintenance and improvement initiatives (Goell, 2007).

*Partial rebirth: 1970 to 1990*

The institutional and civic forces in the Central West End neighborhood responded to the challenges facing the neighborhood with skill and dedication. There was much they could not control, but many groups in the Central West End worked effectively to promote the neighborhood and capitalize on its strengths.

The single largest factor contributing to the CWE's success was the decision of Washington University's School of Medicine, the Central Institute for the Deaf, and Barnes, Jewish, and Children's Hospitals to remain in place and launch a concerted effort to improve the surrounding neighborhoods (Croy, 1983; Goell, 2007). This decision to stay and improve the environment was not true of all of the medical center's institutions – St. John's Hospital and Shriners Hospital relocated to the suburbs – but the largest institutions stayed and invested. Investments were aimed at increasing safety and livability for students, faculty, staff, physicians and visitors to the medical complex (Croy, 1983).

In order to coordinate their neighborhood improvement activities, the institutions in the Washington University Medical Center District combined to create the Washington University Medical Center Redevelopment Corporation (WUMCRC), a non-profit corporation (Croy, 1983). Among its duties were physical planning, land acquisition, developer recruitment and managing development in the Central West End. Formed in 1973, WUMCRC sponsored and raised \$432 million of investment from 1975 to 1985, creating 641 new housing units and rehabilitating 685 units (Croy, 1983; Goell, 2007; Levitt, 1986). WUMCRC also attracted commercial developers and businesses to the corridor surrounding the medical complex, creating a thriving commercial district (Goell, 2007; Pratter & Conway, 1981).

Much of this development was aided by Chapter 353, a Missouri State statute that provides incentives such as tax abatement to developers of blighted areas. This statute also allowed the use of eminent domain, a policy that facilitated the purchase of underutilized land. Many believe that without Chapter 353, the WUMCRC developments would not have been possible and much of the Central West End would not have been redeveloped. In addition, the city's support of the developments helped to secure \$2.2 million in Community Development Block Grants, which are still an essential source for development in the city (Pratter & Conway, 1981).

The decision of these anchor institutions to stay and invest in the neighborhood led other employers to invest as well. Blue Cross and Monsanto located substantial facilities in the CWE, adding 1,350 new jobs, and the Medical Center itself grew by 3,540 employees from 1975 to 1985 (Levitt, 1986). With growing employment, new businesses and retailers chose to locate in the CWE. Many historic

buildings were refurbished rather than torn down, much to the relief of many vocal neighborhood residents (Goell, 2007; Pratter & Conway, 1981).

WUMCRC was not the only developer active in the neighborhood. By 1988, the Union-Sarah Economic Development Corporation, an organization formed in 1969 by several long-term neighborhood residents, had stimulated more than \$55 million in residential and commercial developments in one of the previously most desolate parts of the neighborhood. McCormack Baron Salazar (previously McCormack Baron), a development company that would become a national leader in mixed-income housing developments, also developed housing in the CWE (Goell, 2007).

One of the issues facing the Central West End through the 1980s was the conflict between preservation and new construction. Preservation of the neighborhood's historic legacy was important to many residents and with the help of the Landmarks Association a large portion of the CWE was declared a local historic district in 1974. The Landmarks Association also helped to get many buildings on the National Register of Historic Places (Goell, 2007). The decision to make preservation an important part of the CWE neighborhood strategy was rewarded over time as increasing numbers of home buyers valued historic property.

The creation of the local historic district and the listings of buildings on the National Register also allowed residents and developers to access Investment Tax Credits and Federal and Missouri State Historic Tax Credits. Investment Tax Credits provide incentives to developers to preserve rather than tear down historic buildings (Goell, 2007). Federal Historic Tax Credits were widely used throughout the CWE by developers and owners of income-producing property (commercial or residential rentals) interested in rehabilitating and re-using historic buildings (Goell, 2007). Missouri Historic Preservation Tax Credits are a more recent development, instituted in 1998, which can be used by home or property owners to revitalize historic buildings. When used together, state and federal historic tax credits can reduce the cost of building renovations by 25-40%.<sup>15</sup>

The presence of anchor institutions and supportive public policies were two of the three major forces fighting neighborhood decline in the CWE in the 1970s and 1980s. The third major force was local activism, which was led primarily by the Central West End Association (CWEA). Formed by concerned residents in 1958, the CWEA was particularly active in the 1970s and 1980s and engaged many residents from the neighborhood. The CWEA sought to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood while improving the safety and vitality of the area. Residents involved in the CWEA created their own newsletter, the *West End Word*, as a means for getting out important information about events, crime, meetings, and other neighborhood news (Goell, 2007). Leaders of the CWEA included both long-term CWE residents and urban pioneers who moved into the city from the suburbs (J. & N. Dwyer, personal interview, August 8, 2013). Among the many achievements of residents of the Central West End was the creation of the New City School, a high quality private school that kept many families in the neighborhood (Goell, 2007).

Local churches and religious institutions were another source of support for residents and the neighborhood. Three local churches – Second Presbyterian, First Unitarian, and Trinity Episcopal – formed the Joint Community Board in the early 1970s to help address decay in the surrounding neighborhood. The board brought residents together and offered tutoring programs and emergency food services, as well as other community resources (Goell, 2007). Another organization called

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<sup>15</sup> The City of St. Louis, Missouri, Historic Preservation Tax Credit Programs.

TW3, sponsored by a generous donation from Second Presbyterian Church and representing the streets of Taylor, Westminster, Walton, and Washington, was formed with the help of local residents and offered forgivable loans to nearby residents for home improvements. All of these efforts helped to strengthen the fabric of the neighborhood on a block-by-block basis (A. Perry, personal communication, August 30, 2013).

Strong political leadership was also essential to the success of the CWE. In 1986, Alderwoman Mary Stolar was tasked with directing rehabilitation of Forest Park. She created Forest Park Forever, the not-for-profit entity tasked with fundraising and planning for the park's future development and maintenance. Prior to her death in 1987, Stolar raised over \$400,000 for the park's development, laying the foundation for the revival that has made Forest Park the jewel that it is today (Goell, 2007).

*Continued growth: 1990 to Present*

The initiatives for neighborhood improvement in the Central West End that began in the 1970s and 1980s flourished after 1990. The anchor institutions in the Washington University Medical Center grew in quality and size, reflecting national growth in the education and health care sectors. Today, almost 30,000 people work daily at the Washington University Medical Center, and Barnes-Jewish Hospital (Barnes and Jewish Hospitals merged in 1992) and Children's Hospital are regularly ranked among the top ten hospitals in the U.S.<sup>16</sup>

The two most visible improvements in the CWE after 1990 were commercial revitalization and the rebirth of Forest Park. The Chase Hotel reopened very successfully in 1999 as the Chase Park Plaza, which now includes a four-star hotel and luxury condominiums as well as a movie theater and upscale restaurants and bars. Commercial development around the Washington University Medical Center and the Chase Park Plaza also boomed. The bars, restaurants, and shops along Euclid Avenue are among the more attractive urban destinations in the country, serving local residents, visitors, students, and employees. Maryland Plaza has once again become an upscale commercial and residential area, with attractive condominiums adjacent to unique shops (Goell, 2007).



Pedestrian-friendly mixed-use areas like Euclid Avenue are a valuable asset in the Central West End.

<sup>16</sup> Barnes-Jewish Hospital/Washington University rankings. (2013). U.S. News and World Report. Retrieved from <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/area/mo/barnes-jewish-hospitalwashington-university-6630930>.

The rebirth of Forest Park is among the great success stories of urban redevelopment in the nation. A long and extensive public process led to an award winning master plan. Responsibility for funding this plan was shared by Forest Park Forever and the City of St. Louis.<sup>17</sup> Thanks to the adoption of a master plan in 1995 and a strategic plan for the post-restoration era in 2009, Forest Park is now a thriving destination hosting bike trails, the newly expanded art museum, zoo, Missouri History Museum, 36 holes of golf, restaurants, the Muny Theater, and numerous community events.<sup>17</sup>

In 1993, much of St. Louis benefited from the introduction of improved public transportation through the creation of the Metrolink Light Rail system.<sup>18</sup> The Central West End Metrolink stop is directly adjacent to the medical center, improving access to the neighborhood and other parts of the city. Since the area surrounding the Metrolink stop was developed with pedestrians in mind, people can now easily access the CWE without a car.

Security in the neighborhood has improved due to the combined efforts of WUMCRC and the CWEA. The two groups had established Special Business Districts within their respective areas in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the districts operated independently of each other with little or no communication. (Special Business Districts are voter-approved property tax increases, which provide funding for increased patrolling by off-duty police officers, crime monitoring, and other security efforts.) In 2007, WUMCRC and the CWEA came together to develop a joint Neighborhood Security Initiative that allowed the districts to pool their security resources together and become more efficient and effective. Since the creation of the CWE NSI, crime rates have gone down over 40% and cost savings have allowed for increased investment in security services.<sup>19</sup> Neighborhood beautification has also been a priority, with the introduction of the CWE Community Improvement District (CID) in 2009 providing an increase in sales taxes for beautification and marketing efforts.<sup>20</sup> The Central West End-Midtown Development Corporation was founded in 2001 and has had a significant impact on the marketing and physical development of the eastern portion of the neighborhood. More recently, the group expanded its footprint to include several neighborhoods south of the CWE, including Botanical Heights, and changed its name to Park Central Development; this expanded organization now provides centralized marketing and development review for this collection of midtown neighborhoods (B. Phillips, personal communication, June 19, 2014.).

From 2000 to the present, the CWE has undoubtedly become one of the most desirable and affluent urban neighborhoods in the St. Louis region. Housing prices in the neighborhood have increased substantially, with homes that sold for under \$30,000 in the early 1970s now costing over \$500,000, even as the area has maintained racial and economic diversity (Goell, 2007).

### *Conclusions*

The Central West End has benefited from an unusual number of positive attributes including strong housing stock, an excellent location, strong anchor institutions, organized and passionate residents, and effective political leadership. While few if any of the other neighborhoods in the city have as

<sup>17</sup> Forest Park Forever. (2013). History. Retrieved from [http://www.forestparkforever.org/learn/forest\\_park\\_forever/](http://www.forestparkforever.org/learn/forest_park_forever/).

<sup>18</sup> Metro Transit- St. Louis. (2013). Metrolink History. Retrieved from <http://www.metrostlouis.org/About/History/The1990's.aspx>.

<sup>19</sup> Central West End Neighborhood Security Initiative. (2013) About CWE NSI. Retrieved from <http://cwensi.com/>.

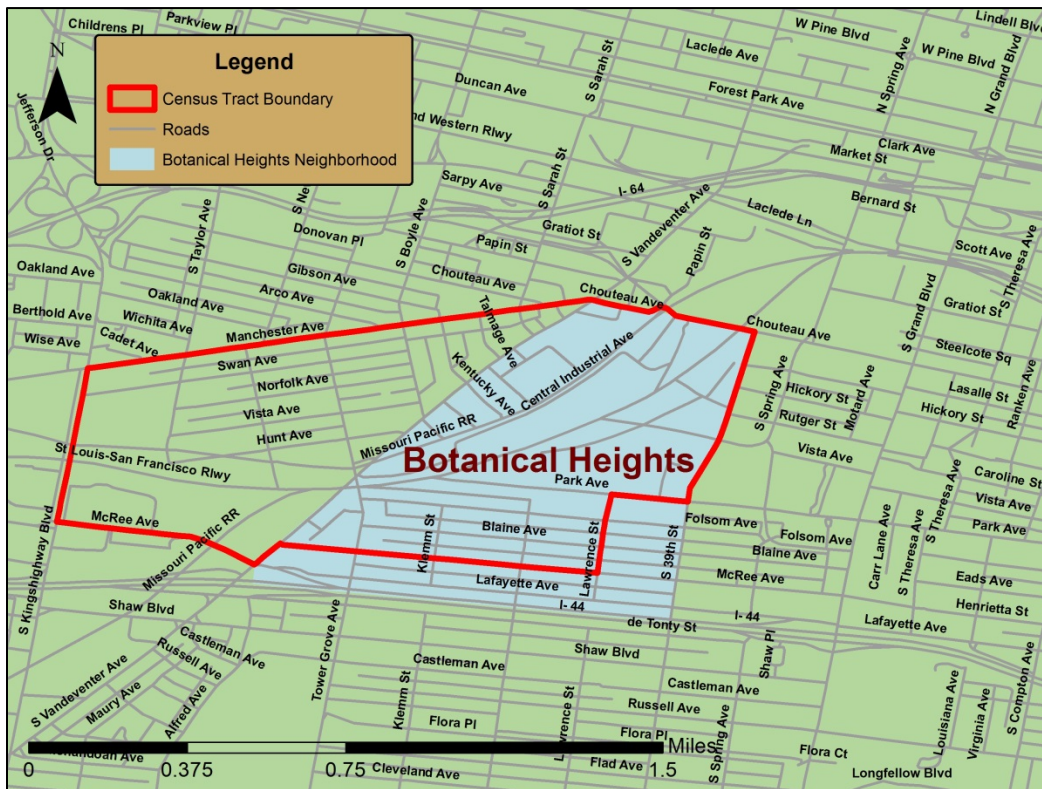
<sup>20</sup> About the CWE North CID. (2014). *Central West End Scene*. Retrieved from <http://cwescene.com/about-the-cwe-north-cid/>.

many obvious assets, the great success of the CWE is nevertheless indicative of the potential for success in other urban areas.

*Lessons for other neighborhoods*

1. Involved anchor institutions can dramatically improve their host communities.
2. Local employers and businesses can sometimes assist with investment in the neighborhood, including participation in a Business District which helps raise funds for security.
3. Individuals and organizations that are active in a community can drive significant change. Through active participation, residents and organizations can help influence leaders, potential investors, and developers to make choices that benefit the neighborhood.
4. Churches and other religious institutions can play a vital role in community development. Church members or leaders can help facilitate the institutions' roles in the neighborhood and can sometimes assist with leveraging funds for community improvement.
5. If the neighborhood has historic buildings, making efforts to have them registered with the National Registry of Historic Places and/or creating a local historic district can help protect these landmarks. State and Federal Historic Tax Credits can then be used to preserve these buildings and attract developers interested in rehabilitating them. Homeowners benefit from these tax credits as well.
6. Parks can play a vital role in retaining and attracting neighborhood residents. Maintaining and revitalizing green spaces can be a helpful tool for neighborhood development.
7. Capitalizing on the location of a neighborhood can help to attract people to the neighborhood. Availability of public transportation and/or access to main thoroughfares can serve as a marketing tool for the neighborhood.

### Botanical Heights



Botanical Heights is located near the central corridor in south St. Louis City. Neighborhood borders are Vandeventer Avenue on the west, Interstate 44 to the south, South 39<sup>th</sup> St. to the east, and Chouteau Avenue to the north. The census boundaries include some of the Forest Park Southeast neighborhood and exclude a small portion of the southern part of Botanical Heights. Prior to construction of Interstate 44 in the early 1970s, Botanical Heights was considered a part of the Shaw neighborhood.

The table above shows dramatic changes in Botanical Heights from 1970 to 2010. From 1970 to 1990 the neighborhood declined sharply on all indicators, with the population dropping by 40%, the poverty rate climbing to 50% and the neighborhood experiencing significant white flight as the population shifted from virtually all white to majority minority. In the early 2000s, a major physical reconstruction of the neighborhood led to a further reduction of population but a major reversal in other demographic trends. Between 1990 and 2010 the poverty rate fell by more than half and per capita income grew by 80%. Due to the continued physical redevelopment, occupancy rates remained very low, driven primarily by vacancies due to construction. As with other strengthening neighborhoods in the central corridor, the percentage of the population under 18-years old continued to decline. The index score for the neighborhood bounced back considerably in 2010, passing its 1970 height.

*Botanical Heights prior to 1970*

Botanical Heights, or McRee Town as it was known for much of its history, was originally the northern portion of the Shaw neighborhood. While substantial in terms of area, much of the neighborhood was occupied by industry and railroads. The housing in this area was predominantly built between 1900 and 1910. Unlike the more affluent Shaw neighborhood, the dominant housing stock was a dense mix of small and modest single- and multi-family homes.

Table 3. Botanical Heights: 1970-2010 (Logan & Stults, 2011).

Year	1970	1990	2010
Population	3,815	2,553	1,324
Poverty Rate	19%	50%	20%
Per Capita Income	\$13,108	\$9,225	\$16,694
Occupancy	87%	73%	63%
% Under 18	31%	37%	23%
% 18-34	22%	28%	29%
% White	98%	38%	25%
% with 4-year Degree	2%	7%	10%
Index Score	67.67	21.39	85.38

*1970 to 1990: Decline in McRee Town*

In 1970 McRee Town was performing below average compared to the rest of the study area, with poverty and occupancy rates, per capita income, and education levels below the mid-point of our sample. However, the area was about to experience substantial further decline. Some of this decline was a result of the white flight which affected the majority of inner-ring St. Louis neighborhoods in the 1970s, but other important factors were unique to McRee Town. While Mcree Town was always the least affluent part of Shaw, it was traditionally part of this larger and more successful neighborhood. This changed in the early 1970s when the construction of Interstate 44 physically and politically separated McRee Town from Shaw. The result of these trends was a 74% decline in owner-occupied homes in McRee Town from 1970-1990, an increase in vacancies, and a rise in housing disrepair.<sup>21</sup>

*1990 to 2010: Interventions and early recovery*

In the 1990s, in the midst of the economic recession and the crack epidemic, observers felt that many neighborhoods in St. Louis were declining dangerously; conditions in McRee Town in particular had reached a crisis point. A total of 41% of the land in the neighborhood was vacant or occupied by vacant buildings, and more than 30% of all residential structures were vacant. More than 56% of structures in the neighborhood were dilapidated or in nearly unlivable conditions. Property values declined 34% from 1990 to 2000.<sup>22</sup> In a 19-month period in 1993 and 1994 there were eight murders and 20 shootings in an area of less than a square mile.<sup>22</sup>

By the mid-1990s, these conditions, combined with more moderate declines in other nearby neighborhoods, began to be of major concern to the neighborhoods surrounding Botanical Heights and to the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Missouri Botanical Garden is among the three great botanical gardens of the world and is one of the crown jewels of St. Louis. Its attendance depends in good part on regional and out-of-town leisure visitors, making it particularly vulnerable to concerns about safety. In 1997 the Board of Trustees of the Garden created the Garden District Commission (GDC), a non-profit organization composed of neighborhood residents, business owners, and representatives of local institutions. The GDC was designed to promote community-based planning efforts to revitalize neighborhoods surrounding the Missouri Botanical Garden, including Shaw, Southwest Garden, Tiffany, and with a particular focus on McRee Town. This group developed a comprehensive redevelopment plan for McRee Town that focused on a substantial physical redevelopment of much of the neighborhood.<sup>23</sup>

In 2002, the McRee Town community development plan that had been developed with local residents by the GDC was adopted by the City of St. Louis. The plan gave redevelopment power to the GDC, including the power of eminent domain for non-owner occupied properties. Phase 1 of this plan targeted the part of McRee Town east of Thurman for total redevelopment; this area was to be vacated and rebuilt. The west side of the neighborhood, which was generally in better shape than the east, was left for Phase 2 of the plan, which would focus on infill housing and repairing viable properties. \$18 million was raised to support pre-development purposes such as acquisition of

<sup>21</sup> Missouri Botanical Garden. (2013). Botanical Heights Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/media/fact-pages/botanical-heights.aspx>.

<sup>22</sup> From McRee Town to Botanical Heights. (2014). U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Retrieved from: <http://www.hud.gov/local/mo/news/botanicalheights2004.cfm>.

<sup>23</sup> Botanical Heights Fact Sheet. (2013).



nearly 200 parcels of property, demolition of vacant buildings, grading of several blocks, and resident relocation. The Botanical Garden contributed \$3 million from its capital campaign, and helped raise the remaining \$15 million from public and private sources (B. Herleth, personal communication, July 15, 2014).

The GDC selected McBride & Sons to complete the construction of 143 new, market-rate homes ranging in value from \$155,000 to \$400,000. McBride & Sons took on the challenge of building new homes in this weak housing market. By the end of 2007, all of the newly built homes had been sold, and the neighborhood name was changed to Botanical Heights. The size and scale of the development changed the perception of the neighborhood dramatically (B. Herleth, personal communication, July 15, 2014).

In 2007 the Garden District Commission engaged the University of Missouri – St Louis’ Public Policy Research center to conduct a survey of households that had been relocated from McRee Town in 2003 and 2004 in the hopes of understanding what had happened to those who were displaced by the redevelopment process. The center attempted to contact 137 households that had been relocated from McRee Town; they were only able to make contact with about 12% of this group, with the remainder of the group having already moved another time since being relocated three years before. Therefore one conclusion we can draw from this survey is that the relocated residents represent a fairly transient population. Despite the low response rate, the survey provided some valuable feedback from the former residents of McRee Town. The survey responses supported three general conclusions: 1) most of the former residents agreed that McRee Town had been deteriorating prior to the redevelopment; 2) most of the respondents felt that their new neighborhoods were better than what they left behind in McRee Town; and 3) most of the respondents believed that the redevelopment did improve McRee Town. Acknowledging that major physical redevelopments such as this one inevitably cause displacement of residents, these generally positive responses from former residents speak to the success of the McRee Town redevelopment (T. Pickel, personal communication, June 19, 2014).

#### *2010 and beyond: An urban renaissance?*

In the wake of the success of the McBride development, the Garden District Commission decided to build housing on the west side of the neighborhood that would complement earlier developments and target smaller households, such as first-time homebuyers and adults without children. The GDC recruited Urban Improvement Construction (UIC), a high-quality local architecture and construction firm whose principals live and work in Botanical Heights, to develop Phase 2 which included 31 new or rehabilitated homes. The homes would be LEED certified and in a contemporary style that complimented the scale of existing housing stock (T. Pickel, personal communication, June 19, 2014). Construction of Phase 2 began in 2011, and so far UIC has sold 25 houses at an average of \$295,000 per house (\$330,000 for new homes). One particular marker of success has been the diversity of tenants in these new homes; 35% of buyers are families, 20% are young singles, 25% are young couples, and 20% are empty nesters.<sup>24</sup>

UIC’s role has not been limited to housing. They also assisted in the revitalization of commercial space along Tower Grove Avenue and have recruited several highly successful commercial tenants including Olio and Elaia (an upscale restaurant and bar) and Chouquette (a French café). UIC was

<sup>24</sup> Brent Crittenden. (2013). “What’s brewing: Botanical Heights” event, Dec. 12, 2013.

also instrumental in reviving an old industrial building to house the new City Garden Montessori School, a thriving charter school that moved to the neighborhood in 2012. City Garden Montessori School was founded in 2008 by a group of local parents and was housed in a church in the nearby Shaw neighborhood until they outgrew the space and found their new home in Botanical Heights. The school serves children and families living exclusively in the 63110 zip code, providing the community with opportunities for quality education that were previously unavailable. City Garden Montessori has among the highest test scores of any public school in the state and has a long waiting list of interested students (Crouch, 2013). While the original McRee Town redevelopment plan did not call for building a school, City Garden's success has turned out to be a major benefit in terms of strengthening the Botanical Heights housing market and enhancing the neighborhood's new brand as a walkable, sustainable, family-friendly area. (It is important to note that because City Garden did not move into the neighborhood until 2012, its impact is not reflected in the 2010 census numbers used for this analysis. If City Garden's success continues, one would expect to see an increase in the under-18 population in future census results.)

In conjunction with the new housing and commercial developments, the community has worked to beautify the surrounding neighborhoods and creatively re-use vacant lots. These efforts have included the creation of a community garden and fruit tree orchard, an urban farm plot managed by the International Institute, and a neighborhood playground.<sup>25</sup> The neighborhood is also benefiting from the strengthening of its neighbor to the north, Forest Park Southeast, which is experiencing spillover benefits from nearby Cortex Innovation District, a fast-growing innovation and life sciences hub. While the future is always uncertain, at present Botanical Heights is seen as one of St. Louis' recent success stories.



Located in a 1930s-style Standard Oil Gas Station, Olio is a successful wine bar and eatery in the Botanical Heights neighborhood.

<sup>25</sup> Botanical Heights Fact. (2013).

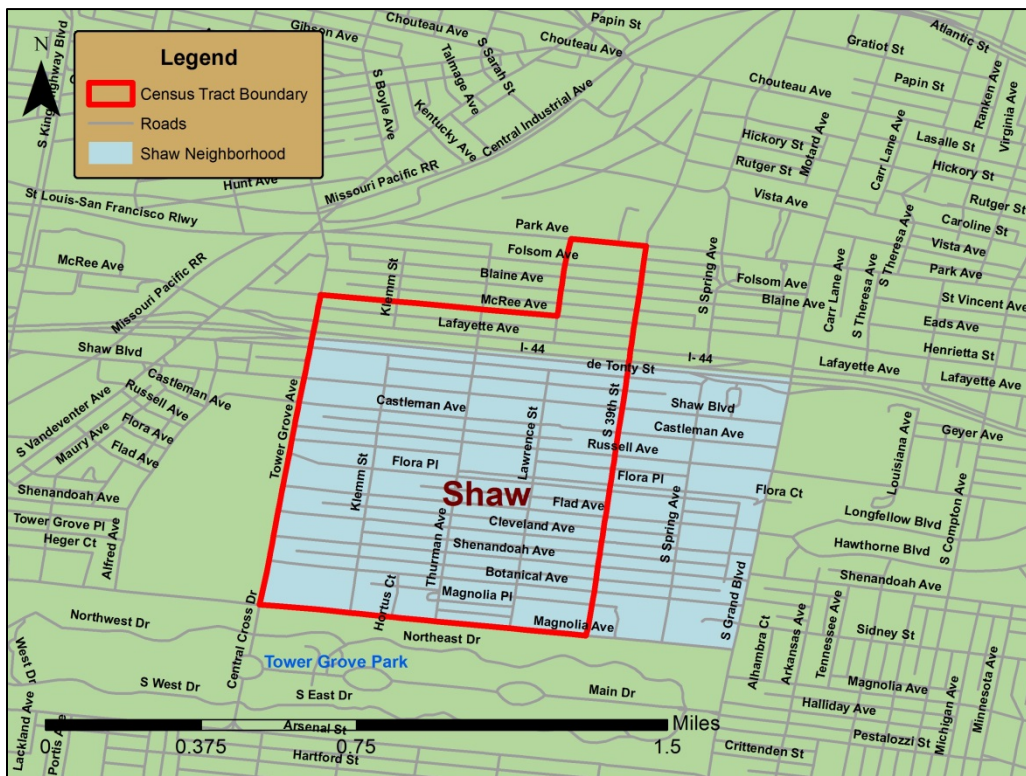
*Conclusion*

The rebirth of Botanical Heights represents the concerted effort of a strong anchor institution in cooperation with residents and local activists. The success of the neighborhood's physical redevelopment depended on the willingness of McBride & Sons to invest in a risky neighborhood, followed by UIC's creative approaches to introducing new commercial and residential activity. Botanical Heights is located near strong neighborhoods, and thus has the potential to benefit from neighboring success. Although still in the process of rebounding, Botanical Heights provides hope for development in other older parts of the city.

*Lessons for other neighborhoods:*

1. Changes in the built environment can produce dramatic results. From the development of the Interstate to the demolition and new construction of housing, Botanical Heights has experienced tremendous changes. Sometimes dramatic physical change is needed to produce dramatic results.
2. The feasibility and acceptability of development approaches can change over time. While demolition and rebuilding were deemed necessary in the early 2000s, rehabilitation and construction on vacant property were more appropriate in later years.
3. Anchor institutions are helpful in leveraging resources and setting the groundwork for future development. Missouri Botanical Garden, through the Garden District Commission, provided substantial investment in the neighborhood and was able to leverage further development from McBride & Sons and UIC.
4. Grassroots efforts can play significant roles in long-term neighborhood change. The success of the Garden District Commission was due in part to its inclusion of representatives not just from the powerful anchor institution, but also from the long-term residents of the area.
5. Residential interventions are important, but are not the only solution. In order to attract new, market-rate individuals and families to a neighborhood, commercial development and quality schools are essential. This helps to create a more attractive and walkable neighborhood, while increasing revenue.
6. Successful redevelopment requires flexibility. City Garden Montessori School was never envisioned in the original plans for Botanical Heights, but it has turned out to be a very valuable local asset. By capitalizing on unplanned successes, neighborhoods can help ensure future success.

# Shaw



Shaw is in the near south side of St. Louis City. It is immediately south of Interstate 44 and north of Tower Grove Park. Its borders consist of Magnolia Avenue/Tower Grove Park to the south, Interstate 44/De Tonty Street to the north, South Grand Boulevard to the east, and Tower Grove Avenue to the west. The census boundaries exclude a portion of the neighborhood to the east of 39<sup>th</sup> Street. Since the Shaw neighborhood is fairly consistent in its demographics and housing stock throughout the neighborhood, it is likely that this omission, with the exception of the population numbers, is insignificant.

As with almost all neighborhoods in the older parts of the St. Louis region, the population in the Shaw neighborhood has decreased over time, with a loss of a third of its population from 1970 to 1990, and the loss of another 27% from 1990 to 2010. On all economic and social criteria, Shaw declined from 1970 to 1990 and sharply rebounded from 1990 to 2010. The poverty rate more than doubled between 1970 and 1990, but then fell between 1990 and 2010. Per capita income showed a similar pattern of falling from 1970 to 1990 and increasing sharply from 1990 to 2010. Occupancy rates rose from 1990 to 2010, after having fallen from 1970 to 1990. The neighborhood was hit hard by white flight, with the white population dropping by half between 1970 and 1990, and subsequently stabilizing after 1990. The index score improved dramatically from 1990 to 2010, nearly reaching its 1970 ranking.

Table 4. Shaw: 1970-2010 (Logan & Stults, 2011).

Year	1970	1990	2010
Population	10,877	7,301	5,359
Poverty Rate	12%	28%	25%
Per Capita Income	\$14,752	\$15,974	\$26,399
Occupancy	93%	79%	81%
% Under 18	34%	33%	25%
% 18-34	24%	34%	30%
% White	99%	42%	46%
% with 4-year Degree	6%	25%	44%
Index Score	134.54	72.22	132.82

#### *Botanical Heights prior to 1970*

Shaw is a historic neighborhood named after Henry Shaw, an English businessman and philanthropist who came to St. Louis in the early 1800s and eventually created the Missouri Botanical Garden and assisted with the development of Tower Grove Park. Tower Grove Park is, aside from Forest Park, the most attractive and prominent public park in the City of St. Louis. The most notable stretch of developments commissioned by Shaw is Flora Place, a street lined with elaborate mansions and a gated entrance, built in 1897.<sup>26</sup> Much of the neighborhood was developed between 1890 and 1920.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Improvement Association. (2012). A brief history of Shaw. Retrieved from: <http://www.shawstlouis.org/articles/2012/may/04/a-brief-history-of-shaw/>.

<sup>27</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation. (2013). Shaw: The best of city living! Retrieved from: <http://shawhousing.wordpress.com>.

Shaw has undergone numerous changes since Henry Shaw's time, but the neighborhood retains much of its original character. The Garden and Park, along with a strong housing stock, have consistently attracted residents and have played important roles in the neighborhood's success. Traditionally, Shaw was a predominantly white, upper-middle class neighborhood with some economic diversity as a result of a variety of housing types. While the neighborhood is best known for its single-family residences, there is also a reasonable variety of smaller single-family dwellings, multi-family homes, and rental properties.<sup>28</sup>

*1970 to 1990: Stability to decline*

In 1970 Shaw was doing relatively well; the poverty rate was below average among neighborhoods in our sample, per capita income was close to the regional average and the neighborhood maintained high occupancy rates.<sup>29</sup> Despite the strength of the neighborhood, macroeconomic and social changes in the 1970s resulted in challenges for the area. White flight from the City of St. Louis, a declining regional population, and rapid suburbanization created pressures that resulted in Shaw experiencing declines on all indicators in the 1970s and 1980s. A particular challenge was the availability of mortgage and home improvement funds. For a period of time, Tower Grove Bank, a neighborhood-based institution, was the only bank that was willing to provide loans for the purchase or rehabilitation of older homes in the area (D. Burrus, personal communication, October 21, 2013).

Community leaders, particularly from local Catholic churches, responded to the challenges Shaw faced. St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church had played an important role in the neighborhood since the late 1800s, operating a parochial school that served the Shaw neighborhood.<sup>30</sup> St. Margaret's members played a leading role in forming block groups to improve public safety and ensure that resident concerns were being addressed fairly. Don and Elaine Burrus, who had lived in the neighborhood since the 1960s, attended St. Margaret's Church and saw the need for improved safety and neighborhood cohesion. Elaine worked with other members of the parish going door-to-door, discussing with residents the importance of starting neighborhood block groups (D. Burrus, personal communication, October 21, 2013). Later, the Archdiocese awarded St. Margaret's with \$250,000 in seed funding to identify LRA-owned and distressed properties to rehabilitate for rentals or for sale properties. The organization's name was eventually changed to the Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation (SNHC), and it emerged as the neighborhood's leader in attracting new development and marketing to potential residents.<sup>31</sup>

In 1975, the Shaw Neighborhood Improvement Association (SNIA) was formed in order to address some of the neighborhood's concerns. SNIA is governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of elected representatives of each neighborhood block, designed to ensure that all residents had a voice in local decision-making. The SNIA served as the voice of the neighborhood, influencing aldermen and the City of St. Louis. In 1985, Shaw was designated as a Certified Local Historic District, helping to provide incentives for redevelopment and preservation in the neighborhood.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation. (2013).

<sup>29</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Improvement Association. (2012).

<sup>30</sup> St. Margaret of Scotland Church. (2013). News and Announcements.

<sup>31</sup> In 2014 SNHC merged with Grand Oak Hill Community Corporation and Southwest Neighborhood Housing Corporation to form the Tower Grove Neighborhoods CDC, serving a population of 25,000 (Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation. [2013].)

<sup>32</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Improvement Association. (2012).



Historic brick-frame homes are a valuable asset of the Shaw neighborhood.

*1990 to 2010: Intervention and rebirth*

Despite concerted efforts, the population in Shaw continued to decline and poverty rates grew, culminating in 1990 in the highest poverty rates, lowest per capita income, and lowest occupancy rates in the neighborhood's recent history. As we saw in McRee Town, Shaw experienced increased crime rates as crack cocaine sales and subsequent gang violence increased in the late 1980s and 1990s. More whites fled the neighborhood during this time, and homeownership rates and investment in the neighborhood decreased.

Eventually, however, the tide began to turn. In the late 1990s, the Garden District Commission was formed with the purpose of stabilizing the neighborhoods surrounding the Botanical Garden. After an inclusive community-based planning process, the GDC took on its first task of stabilizing McRee Town, as mentioned previously. Since many of the problems of McRee Town were spreading into Shaw, improving McRee Town alleviated many of the crime issues in both neighborhoods. During this time, the neighborhood block groups, along with SNIA, remained active in the neighborhood.<sup>33</sup>

By the early 2000s there was an increase in young families looking to return to the city. Shaw was attractive and visible, convenient to Highway 44, featured large and affordable historic homes, had a parochial school with a good reputation, and was close to major amenities such as Tower Grove Park, the Botanical Garden, and the newly revitalized South Grand commercial area. The diversity of housing types in Shaw allowed many students and other young people to move to the neighborhood. Shaw has successfully marketed itself to potential visitors and residents through community events like the Historic Shaw Art Fair and housing tours every spring and fall.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the improvement seen from 1990 to 2010, Shaw continues to work towards continued growth and improvement. The Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation recently launched a comprehensive action plan to improve Shaw Boulevard, a main arterial road and entrance to the neighborhood. The plan includes efforts to “leverage history, housing, and quality of life to plan and accomplish a living community.”<sup>35</sup> Elements of the plan include: partnering with other organizations to survey residents; using available tax credits to develop and improve vacant buildings and lots;

<sup>33</sup> The Garden District Plan: Third Report to the Community. (2001). Garden District Commission.

<sup>34</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation. (2013).

<sup>35</sup> Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation. (2013).

providing forgivable home repair loans and assisting home owners with home repairs; educating homeowners on foreclosure prevention; developing a neighbor-led beautification program; improving relationships with landlords and providing landlord/developer education; educating home buyers on available assistance programs; and assisting business owners with grants to improve building facades.<sup>35</sup> SNHC has also worked with Urban Improvement Construction (UIC), the primary developer in Botanical Heights, on a proposal to build on land on DeTonty Avenue that has been vacant for the last 20 years due to its close proximity to Interstate 44. In order to abate noise and create a pleasant view for residents of the future development, UIC has proposed a variety of live/work, rental, and owner-occupied buildings that will be built perpendicular to the street, facing central courtyards rather than the interstate. Creative approaches such as this one further increase the appeal of the Shaw neighborhood (Inhen, 2013).

### *Conclusion*

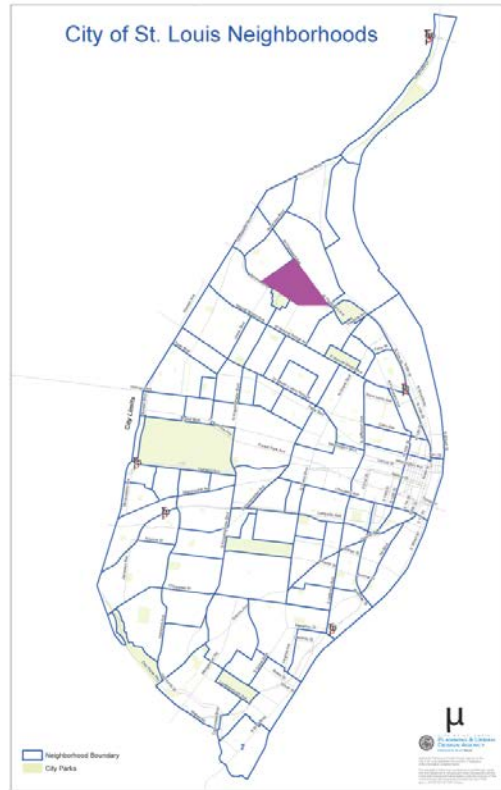
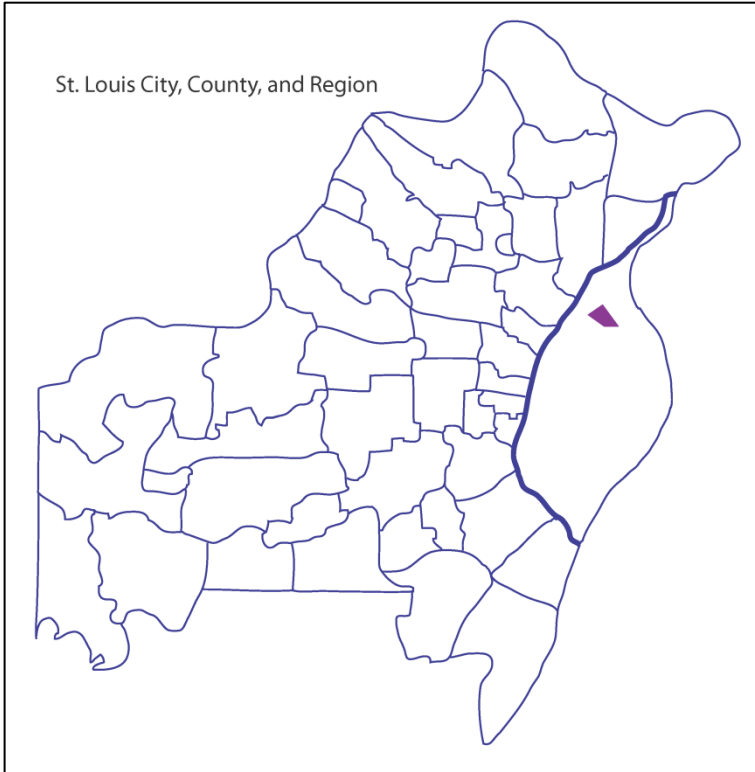
Shaw has experienced revitalization due to the presence of the Missouri Botanical Garden, Tower Grove Park, dedicated residents, and active community organizations, including churches. Although the neighborhood had many assets working in its favor from early on, it would likely not have rebounded without the combined efforts of a strong anchor institution, passionate residents, and strong community organizations.

### *Lessons for other neighborhoods*

1. Anchor institutions need not be large universities and hospitals; local churches can play a significant role in leveraging funds and guiding development to revitalize surrounding areas.
2. Conducting community-based planning for future development can allow anchor institutions and developers to meet the needs of residents and build sustainable neighborhoods.
3. Utilization of historic tax credits and the creation of a local historic district can help provide incentives for revitalization and preserve the historic character of a neighborhood.
4. Neighborhood residents can and should be mobilized to look out for their neighborhoods. Neighborhood block groups can be formed as part of a neighborhood safety plan.
5. Neighborhood associations and housing corporations are important for connecting residents, planners, developers, law enforcement, and political leaders to ensure that residents are involved and informed.



# Mark Twain



The Mark Twain neighborhood is in northern St. Louis City, directly north of Interstate 70, and south of Bellefontaine Cemetery. Mark Twain is primarily accessed from the south by Kingshighway or from the east or west by West Florissant Avenue. The area is also easily accessed by Interstate 70. The entire neighborhood is included in the census tract boundaries, with the addition of a few blocks south of Interstate 70 between Kingshighway and Shreve Avenues.

Between 1970 and 1990 Mark Twain went through a rapid decline. The total population dropped by 19% and the poverty rate grew from 14% to 31%. By 1990 white flight had driven virtually all white residents out of the neighborhood. The period from 1990 to 2010 was one of relative stability with a modest increase in poverty rate, a slight decline in occupancy rates, and an increase in per capita income. By national standards, 1990 to 2010 was not a strong period for the Mark Twain neighborhood. It did, however, hold its own which is far better than most other neighborhoods on the north side of the City of St. Louis, and it saw a rebound in its Neighborhood Vitality Index score between 2000 and 2010. Given the sharp macro-economic decline in north St. Louis, maintaining a relatively high occupancy rate, a stable physical infrastructure and a poverty rate under 40% must be considered a success.

#### *Mark Twain prior to 1970*

The Mark Twain neighborhood, originally named Harney Heights, was developed in the early 1900s as a desirable middle-class neighborhood along a streetcar line (Wayman, 1978). The streetcar originally came to the neighborhood due to Calvary and Bellefontaine cemeteries, the major destinations in the area at the time (Wayman, 1978). Mark Twain Elementary School, originally named Harney Heights School, was a historic school building designed by architect William Ittner that opened in 1912. Most of the housing stock was built prior to 1939 in cohesive block units, creating a dense neighborhood of modest homes. Prior to the early 1960s, the population was primarily white and middle class (Wayman, 1978).

Table 5. Mark Twain: 1970-2010 (Logan & Stults, 2011).

Year	1970	1990	2010
Population	9,648	7,854	4,936
Poverty Rate	14%	31%	35%
Per Capita Income	\$12,736	\$12,821	\$14,895
Occupancy	96%	88%	81%
% Under 18	38%	32%	24%
% 18-34	22%	27%	23%
% White	38%	1%	0.75%
% with 4-year Degree	4%	7%	7%
Index Score	134.72	96.09	83.60

The economic base of Mark Twain, like most neighborhoods in the northern parts of the City of St. Louis, was manufacturing (Wayman, 1978). Nearby industrial facilities included Pillsbury Flour Mills, Combustion Engineering Company, Alton Box Board Company (now Jefferson Smurfit) and Barry-Wehmiller Machinery Company. To the south of the neighborhood was a large industrial area near the Terminal Railroad belt line which was home to a Chevrolet Truck Assembly plant and the Pullman Company, which manufactured buses and train cars. Many local residents were employed by these industries, and people moved to the neighborhood to be close to jobs (Wayman, 1978). During World War II, the largest war industry plant and producer of ammunition in the St. Louis region was located just to the southwest of the neighborhood and employed more than 35,000 people, including 8,000 African-American men and women (Wayman, 1978).

Mark Twain's decline began with the post-World War II drop in manufacturing (Wayman, 1978). The Pullman Company went defunct in 1968, and the Chevrolet plant, which had been an anchor for the neighborhood since the 1920s, closed in 1987. In the early 1960s, the streetcar lines ceased operations, isolating the neighborhood from much of the region. Also in the 1960s, the first African Americans moved to the neighborhood, immigrating from the south and from other parts of St. Louis. The combination of declining jobs and racial fears causes the demographics of the neighborhood to shift quickly and dramatically. By 1970, over 60% of neighborhood residents were black (Wayman, 1978).

#### *1970 to 1990: Continued decline*

From 1970 to 1990, the Mark Twain neighborhood sharply declined. As deindustrialization took hold and manufacturing plants continued to close or relocate from the City of St. Louis to surrounding counties, many working-class families left the neighborhood. Poverty rates rose and per capita income fell. The remaining whites in the neighborhood moved elsewhere. Occupancy rates fell modestly, although not as dramatically as in other parts of north St. Louis. Crime rates increased as drug dealing and gang violence escalated. The neighborhood adjacent to Mark Twain, which had some of the highest crime rates in the city, became known as "Murderville" (A. Cousins, personal communication, August 18, 2013). Neighboring communities were assisted by the Riverview West Florissant Development Corporation, which provided assistance in establishing block groups and Neighborhood Watch programs to address crime on a block-by-block level. Still, Mark Twain continued to face challenges with crime.

There were those who fought the decline in Mark Twain. The Royal Knights Athletic Association operated fields and sporting events for youth in the neighborhood. New Sunny Mount Baptist Church, which has been an anchor in the neighborhood since 1932, provided services for the surrounding community (Groth, 2011). Despite these efforts and the fact that much of the neighborhood remained relatively physically intact, the dominant trend was negative. Mark Twain experienced housing abandonment, but not nearly to the degree that other parts of North St. Louis faced. Part of this stability may have been due to building type. Most of the homes in Mark Twain were modest and capable of being maintained by working class residents while in many other parts of North St. Louis, the homes were larger and far more expensive to maintain.

#### *1990 to 2010: Stabilization attempts*

From 1990 to 2010 the Mark Twain neighborhood was relatively stable. Buried in this stability are competing trends. On the negative side, the economic base of the community continued to decline

and the homeowners in the neighborhood aged. Crime continued to be an issue with rates well above the city average.<sup>36</sup> Due to population loss and decreased revenue, the Mark Twain School was closed in 2009. While data is not yet available, it is likely this closure will contribute to further population decline in the neighborhood, as there are few other public schools nearby, and those that remain have performed poorly. The former Mark Twain School is currently under contract to be converted into affordable housing, but movement on this project has yet to begin (Groth, 2011; Crouch, 2012). The area continues to have a very poorly educated population. In 2010, 40% of individuals in the Mark Twain neighborhood had not completed high school and only 7% of adults had received a Bachelor's degree.<sup>37</sup>

There are positive trends, however. The area has benefited from a strong array of efforts focused on neighborhood improvement. The New Sunny Mount Baptist Church and the North City Church of Christ have been active in youth programming, tutoring, and other programs. Bellefontaine Cemetery, which is located immediately north of the neighborhood, was particularly important in stabilizing the area. Founded in 1849, Bellefontaine's 314 acres are the resting place for over 87,000 people, including many of the most prominent St. Louis residents of the past hundred and fifty years. The cemetery is also a well-visited architectural museum with buildings, mausoleums and larger monuments in a variety of styles including a tomb designed by Louis Sullivan.<sup>38</sup>

Beginning in the 1990s, the Board of Trustees of Bellefontaine became increasingly concerned about the lack of safety in Mark Twain and the attractiveness of the Cemetery to visitors and staff, some of whom live on site. The continuation of the Cemetery as a regional amenity, the Board of Trustees concluded, depended on neighborhood improvement (R. Lay, personal communication, October 23, 2013). A lengthy process of engagement led to a specific focus on declining housing. While wholesale abandonment was a not a great challenge, housing quality was. Declining housing was identified as the most important priority for neighborhood residents and was an area of expertise for many members of the Board of Trustees of the cemetery, creating the potential for productive engagement.

A non-profit housing development organization, the Union West Florissant Housing Solutions (UWFHS), was created in 2001 using funds from a generous endowment funded by Cemetery. The mission of the organization was to help revitalize the areas of Mark Twain located near Bellefontaine Cemetery to improve the safety and quality of the neighborhood for residents, visitors and Cemetery staff (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013). All of the homes that were rehabilitated or built were to be sold or gifted to families in need.

In 2001, UWFHS began its first major intervention in the neighborhood. The first area that UWFHS addressed was the line of houses facing the Cemetery along West Florissant Avenue. From 2001-2003, UWFHS rebuilt 12 town homes and duplex units along the street. A small corner park was also developed to improve the appearance of the street. In 2002, UWFHS initiated a home and business grants program, designed to empower residents to address their own housing concerns and to improve residential involvement in the neighborhood. Residents applied for grant assistance by submitting applications to a neighborhood coordinator. Within the program's first year, 15 grants of

<sup>36</sup> Area Vibes, "Mark Twain, St. Louis, MO: Crime Rates and Statistics," retrieved from: <http://www.areavibes.com/st.+louis-mo/mark+twain/crime/>.

<sup>37</sup> Census of Population, 1950-2010.

<sup>38</sup> City Data, "Mark Twain neighborhood in St. Louis, MO, 63115, 63120 detailed profile," retrieved from: <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Mark-Twain-Saint-Louis-MO.html>.

up to \$15,000 were awarded to neighborhood residents. In order to ensure high quality work, all work done for grant recipients had to be completed by UWFHS-approved contractors (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013).

From 2002 to 2007, UWFHS continued to issue grants, conduct building renovations, and build new housing. The initial efforts along West Florissant were extended to reach further into the neighborhood in order to make a greater impact. New buildings were constructed on vacant land or in the place of derelict buildings that were torn down. All of the new construction was built to mimic the historic character of the neighborhood, including brick facades, similar roof shapes, and porch styles. In 2006, UWFHS began working with Habitat for Humanity by donating vacant lots and providing \$30,000 in grants for each home built. Habitat for Humanity built 31 single-family homes on the donated lots, helping to increase the density of the neighborhood. By 2008, the neighborhood's housing stock had improved considerably (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013).

Since 2009, UWFHS has examined other issues in the neighborhood and considered other ways to intervene. UWFHS hired an urban planner and developer to conduct a needs assessment and to assist with identifying potential partners for future projects. This process led to a new partnership with New Sunny Mount Baptist Church that began by jointly initiating a round of neighborhood meetings to identify residents' pressing concerns. These meetings established the need for a supermarket, a tax-credit funded elderly housing development, neighborhood gardens, youth programs, additional Habitat homes, and a local health clinic (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013).



Mark Twain still has many blocks of solid, well-maintained brick housing.

UWFHS has attempted to address each of these concerns, but with limited success. A tax credit proposal was developed for the elderly housing facility, but New Sunny Mount later had concerns that led to the project being cancelled. The small population of the neighborhood made recruiting a supermarket unsuccessful, despite years of efforts. The partnership with Habitat for Humanity dwindled as Habitat cancelled projects due to fear of instability in the neighborhood. UWFHS was also unsuccessful in enticing two health clinics to locate in the neighborhood (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013).

However, there have been a few smaller successes. A mobile health van was recruited to serve neighborhood residents, and a health fair was held at New Sunny Mount. New Sunny Mount established a summer youth academy for 80-120 children, which has operated every summer since 2009. UWFHS supports the program by providing approximately half of its operating budget (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013).

Throughout all of its efforts from 2009 to 2013, UWFHS invested a net total of \$16 million. While some major improvements to the physical state of the neighborhood have been made, much progress is still needed for the neighborhood to effectively address crime, limited educational options, limited access to groceries and other amenities, and waning commercial activity (N. Ylvisaker, personal communication, October 30, 2013).

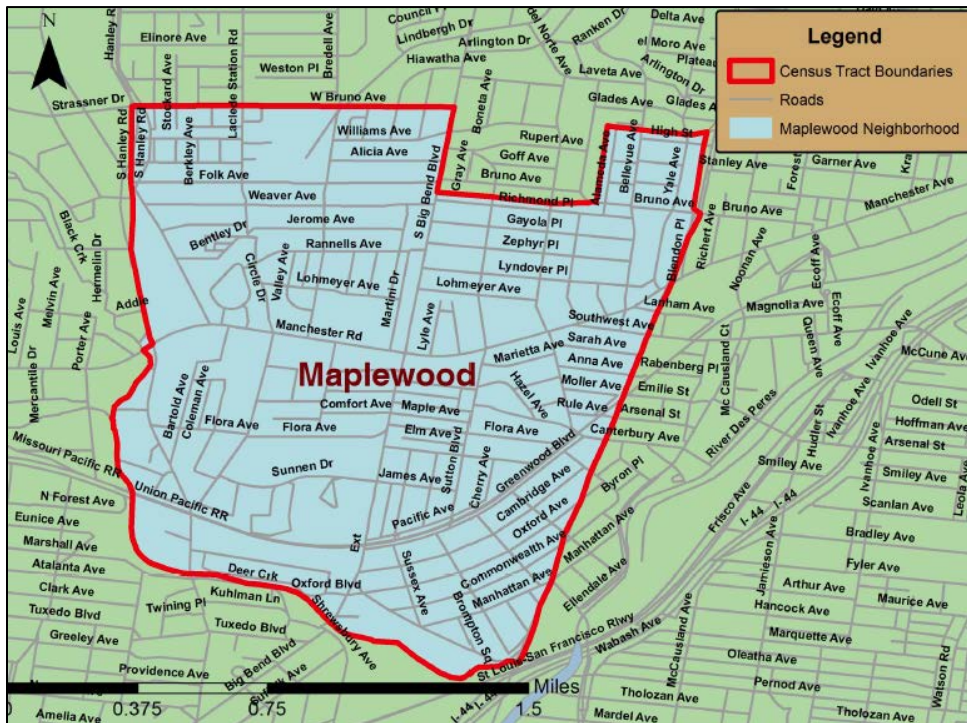
### *Conclusion*

Despite the devastation of the manufacturing economy of North St. Louis, Mark Twain has been maintained as an intact community with high occupancy and a reasonable quality of housing. This is the result of efforts by community members, local anchors in a church and a cemetery, a community housing association, and the inherent characteristics of the housing stock. Careful attention will need to be paid in order to maintain the neighborhood into the future.

### *Lessons for other neighborhoods*

1. Stable and dense housing stock goes a long way. Maintaining the quality and density of housing can help both the image of the neighborhood and the potential for neighborhood residents to interact, increasing the likelihood of successful neighborhood block groups and other safety-related interventions.
2. When a community lacks access to more traditional anchor institutions, smaller anchors like community organizations can play an important role. The work of New Sunny Mount Baptist Church and Bellefontaine Cemetery in particular had an important influence on the stability of this neighborhood.
3. Neighborhood block groups and neighborhood watch programs are ways that residents can get involved, even in the absence of a strong community organization. With a strong leader, residents can be mobilized to improve the safety of their neighborhoods.
4. Access to jobs and transportation are important for neighborhood success. Policy makers and local leaders should aim to attract a diverse array of businesses to ensure continued economic wellbeing.

# Maplewood



Maplewood is an inner-ring suburb of St. Louis, located on the western edge of the city. The borders of the neighborhood are Hanley Road on the west, Bruno, Richmond and High Streets to the north, McCausland Avenue to the east, and a staggered border to the south along Deer Creek Road. Manchester Road bisects Maplewood and is part of the Historic Route 66. Maplewood sits north of Interstate 44 and south of Interstate 64, making it reasonably easy to access from both thoroughfares. Municipalities surrounding Maplewood include the City of St. Louis to the east, Brentwood to the west, Richmond Heights to the North, and I-44 and Shrewsbury to the south. The census tracts examined for this study match the boundaries of Maplewood.

Maplewood is a historically strong city that has remained above average among our census tract sample, although it saw modest declines in the 1990s. Population declined modestly throughout the entire period, likely as a result of smaller family sizes. Per capita income increased steadily over time, but poverty rates also increased. Occupancy rates declined modestly during this period but remain above average for the study area as a whole. The percent of residents with a 4-year degree increased significantly, especially between 1990 and 2010. Compared to other inner ring suburbs in St. Louis, Maplewood has been notably successful in maintaining diversity. Not apparent in this data is the great success of the Maplewood commercial district.

Table 6. Maplewood: 1970-2010 (Logan & Stults, 2011.)

Year	1970	1990	2010
Population	12,785	9,962	8,046
Poverty Rate	9%	11%	16%
Per Capita Income	\$17,120	\$20,890	\$26,238
Occupancy	96%	90%	87%
% Under 18	26%	21%	17%
% 18-34	29%	37%	34%
% White	97%	82%	72%
% with 4-year Degree	9%	18%	39%
Index Score	175.78	169.51	181.45

### *Maplewood prior to 1970*

Maplewood is a classic streetcar suburb. The city began to grow in the 1890s, when the St. Louis electric streetcar line was extended west, allowing residents easy access to downtown St. Louis. Much of the housing in Maplewood was built between 1900 and 1910 for local workers. Rental buildings, many two or three stories, are very common. Throughout the early 1900s, Maplewood was predominantly a working-class and middle-class area, with a vibrant commercial area, manufacturing companies, and predominantly blue collar jobs. Entrepreneurs like the Sunnens, a couple who were seeking to sell newly invented honing (metalworking) equipment, started their companies in Maplewood in the 1920s. Maplewood became one of the major shopping districts in the region in the early 1900s, offering a variety of small shops along Route 66, now Manchester Road. People would often venture out of St. Louis City to shop in Maplewood, helping contribute to the suburb's vibrancy.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> City of Maplewood, Missouri, "Maplewood History," (2013) retrieved from: <http://www.cityofmaplewood.com/index.aspx?NID=102>.



Maplewood's success was challenged in the 1950s. National trends, aided by changes in tax policy and federal mortgage assistance, encouraged the growth of previously undeveloped areas outside of urban cores (Feinberg & Meoli, 1991). With this development came the popularity of shopping malls, which inevitably took business away from urban commercial strips like those in Maplewood (M. Corcoran, personal communication, September 17, 2013).

By 1970, Maplewood was still doing well overall, but was beginning to experience a number of challenges. Some of the commercial spaces in the historic downtown area became vacant. The school district suffered from financial challenges and a decline in population. Because more than 50% of the housing stock was rental property, revenue for the city was limited and absentee landlords were an ongoing problem. Still, Maplewood had a low poverty rate, a high per capita income, and high occupancy rates.

*Maplewood 1970 to 1990: Problems and responses*

The period between 1970 and 1990 presented continued challenges to Maplewood as residential areas, the government, the school district, and commercial areas all faced problems. Issues with maintenance of Maplewood's substantial rental housing stock became apparent. Many landlords had neglected proper maintenance of their properties, and living conditions had deteriorated. There were challenges in attracting people to Maplewood to live and invest long-term due to limited quality options for homeownership.<sup>40</sup>

In 1979 the mayor was ousted in a recall election, and was succeeded by another mayor who was recalled in 1982 (Hente, 1982). Three city council members were also recalled during this time, deepening the negative reputation of the city and emphasizing the need for new governance (M. Corcoran, personal communication, September 17, 2013). The Maplewood Richmond Heights School District was experiencing similar issues with leadership and finances. Due to ongoing budget problems, the Maplewood Schools were forced to enact substantial teacher layoffs and to close a school. The school district proposed a tax levy to try to address the deficit spending that had been occurring, but budget problems persisted through the 1990s.<sup>41</sup> School test scores fell and the city's declining population resulted in further loss of property taxes to support the schools (Crouch, 2012).

Responses to these issues began with modest progress. In order to address concerns with absentee landlords and poorly maintained rental housing, the city passed a housing code in 1974 that required annual inspections of all rental housing, both inside and out. This resulted in many lackadaisical landlords selling their properties to more reputable landlords, who in turn improved the conditions in the apartments and surrounding neighborhoods. In the 1980s, an occupancy code was created to limit the number of residents that could occupy residential properties, based on a unit's size (M. Corcoran, personal communication, September 17, 2013). This code was aimed at preventing nuisance properties.

In order to address the waning commercial areas and negative reputation of the city, in 1982 the Maplewood Chamber of Commerce was formed in order to attract new visitors and residents (Mitchell, 2005). The Chamber was formed with the help of Sunnen Products Company, the

<sup>40</sup> City of Maplewood, Missouri, "Maplewood History," (2013) retrieved from: <http://www.cityofmaplewood.com/index.aspx?NID=102>.

<sup>41</sup> Maplewood-Richmond Heights School District, "District History," (2013), retrieved from: <http://www.mrhdsd.org/about-us/district-history>.

company started by the Sunnens back in the 1920s, which had grown into a thriving asset for the city. Also in 1982, Sunnen helped to establish the Maplewood Community Betterment Foundation, a non-profit corporation that assisted city staff with reviving the central business district and surrounding community (Mitchell, 2005).

In 1983 new mayor, Andy Hummert, attempted to continue the difficult process of reviving the city and its reputation. The first step was to transition the government structure from a strong mayor form of government to a city manager form (Mitchell, 2005). The hiring of a strong city manager set the stage for considerable progress in the years ahead.<sup>42</sup>

*1990 to 2010: Progress*

Maplewood improved substantially from 1990 to 2010 in political strength, commercial activity, and school performance. Maplewood found a commercial niche by attracting small, artisan businesses to its historic downtown area, thus creating a walkable, thriving central business district. The combination of policies and skills put forth by political leaders, along with occasional luck, helped to revive Maplewood.

Maplewood's location near Interstates 44 and 64/40, with ample historic commercial space along Manchester Road, created the potential for a commercial revitalization in downtown Maplewood. While there are large malls nearby and many affluent consumers in nearby towns, there was no high quality downtown retail. Maplewood's triumph was in capitalizing on this potential and becoming the major urban retail area in this part of the St. Louis region. Some of the success was the result of strong local leadership. Among the first projects of the newly formed Chamber of Commerce was to lead the revision of the municipal process for new businesses. In other parts of St. Louis County, proprietors of incoming businesses had to go through a lengthy process, lasting at times six months to a year, to obtain approval to open their businesses. Maplewood reduced that timeline to about 45 to 60 days. In the early 1990s, Citizens National Bank, a community-owned bank, offered assistance to small businesses that had been displaced by changes in the city's landscape, making it possible for them to relocate to other spaces in Maplewood without too much financial burden. The bank also offered low-interest loans to new businesses locating in the city, providing incentives for new business to locate in Maplewood.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Marty Corcoran, a Maplewood native, took the city manager position in 1983f and has held it ever since. In 2008 the East-West Gateway Council of Governments gave Corcoran its Lifetime Public Service Award.

<sup>43</sup> Ron Birenbaum, "What's Brewing: Maplewood" event, Nov. 14, 2013.



Lively, locally-owned businesses on Manchester Avenue are an attraction for Maplewood.

Some reasons for Maplewood's success had a considerable element of luck, but luck that depended heavily on the neighborhood's efforts to be friendly to businesses. In the early 1990s, Schlafly Brewing Company was looking for a large building to house their growing brewing operation. The company had looked at numerous old warehouses and facilities in various parts of St. Louis City, but city policies and building-specific issues presented a set of challenges that Schlafly was hesitant to take on (Mitchell, 2005). During their search process, Schlafly learned of a vacant grocery store building in Maplewood, and although they had not previously considered locating outside of St. Louis City, they found the space ideal for their operations. With the help and ongoing efforts of the city of Maplewood, Schlafly became convinced that with the expedited process for moving into the space, Maplewood could be the new home of their brewing and bottling facility. Schlafly Bottleworks, which includes a restaurant and bar, opened in 1993, and has become a notably successful craft brewery, a city anchor, and a major attractor of people from throughout the region (D. Kopman, personal communication, September 23, 2013).

The most controversial part of Maplewood's turnaround was the development of Maplewood Commons, an enormous shopping center built in the northwest corner of Maplewood in 2004. The development was anchored by the big-box stores of Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, and Lowe's – a sharp contrast to downtown Maplewood's focus on local businesses. Located directly off Highway 40, the city believed that the development would quickly become a major regional shopping center. In order to compile the land for the shopping center, the city of Maplewood gained power of eminent domain and displaced 200 households. The residents were each given about \$225,000 (existing homes were worth around \$80,000 to \$120,000) and were sometimes helped with relocation and moving expenses. Many people were very critical of the development process. The city argued that the addition of a major regional retail hub would provide Maplewood with an increase in tax income that could not be gained any other way. Indeed, by 2005 Maplewood was receiving more than \$2 million a year from the development and traffic throughout the neighborhood had picked up considerably.<sup>44</sup> Since its creation, Maplewood Commons has spurred the development of several other shopping centers along Hanley Road, becoming one of the largest retail hubs in the entire St. Louis region and a major source of employment for local residents (Mitchell, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Maplewood is a point-of-sale city and therefore gets to keep all or most of its sales tax revenue.

Maplewood's success was also helped by the opening of two Metrolink light rail stations within the city in 2006. These stations were part of an 8-mile extension of the existing light rail system called the Cross County Extension, which extended Metrolink's service west and south from Forest Park into St. Louis County. One of the new stations is located on Manchester Road and serves significant residential and commercial traffic, and the second station is located on Sunnen Road, at the headquarters of Sunnen Products. The addition of public transit made Maplewood an even more appealing neighborhood; in particular, the Metrolink directly connected Maplewood with downtown, Saint Louis University, Washington University, the popular suburb of Clayton, and The Galleria, the other major shopping center in St. Louis. These new stations helped attract more students and young people to Maplewood (Clendennen, 2006).

Maplewood is among the few inner-ring St. Louis communities that has successfully improved its public schools. In the late 1990s, Maplewood school facilities were in disrepair, Missouri Aptitude Test (MAP) scores were declining, and the school district (which includes neighboring Richmond Heights) was on the verge of losing its accreditation (Crouch, 2012). In 1996, the district was classified as "financially stressed" by the State of Missouri, due to the district's budget being exceeded by over a million dollars.<sup>45</sup> Some improvements were made in the district in the late 1990s, and MAP scores started to show improvements. In 1999, the school district received its first review by the Missouri School Improvement Program and received full accreditation.<sup>46</sup> Still, much work was needed to improve the condition of and support for the schools.

In 2000, Dr. Linda Henke, a former superintendent for the highly successful Clayton School District, was hired as superintendent for the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District. One of Henke's first and most controversial steps in improving the district's quality of education was firing more than 30 teachers (Crouch, 2012). Although she met great resistance from the teachers union and some residents, concurrent efforts to engage community members and parents helped to increase support for the schools (Crouch, 2012).

To address the schools' financial woes, a \$12 million bond was proposed and passed in 2001 (Crouch, 2012). This was in addition to a 52-cent tax levy. Additional bonds were passed in 2004 and 2010, and Proposition C, which provided further funds, was passed in 2007 (Crouch, 2012).<sup>46</sup> These financial changes were essential for providing competitive salaries to attract quality teachers, upgrading buildings and creating new facilities, and creating additional programs such as services for homeless teens and students with special needs (Crouch, 2012). The district has also adopted a set of unique academic programs, including programs focused on technology, agricultural training, and child-led early childhood education.

In addition to having a large student base and continuously improving MAP scores, the Maplewood Richmond Heights School district has one of the most racially diverse populations in the St. Louis Region (B. Adkisson, personal communication, September 23, 2013). The school district has actively incorporated diversity into its curriculum through programs like its Social Justice Initiative, which

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<sup>45</sup> Maplewood Richmond Heights School District. (2013). Educational equity. Retrieved from <http://www.mrhdsd.org/programs/educational-equity>.

<sup>46</sup> Maplewood Richmond Heights School District. (2013). Educational equity. Retrieved from <http://www.mrhdsd.org/programs/educational-equity>.

encourages students to reflect on and learn about how social justice issues related to race are looked at and talked about.<sup>47</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Maplewood has transitioned over a 40-year period from an economically and politically challenged inner-ring suburb to a thriving, desirable place to live and work. This process was a result of collaboration between a variety of important players. Maplewood serves as a positive example for how older, inner-ring suburbs can succeed.

### *Lessons for other neighborhoods and cities*

1. Strong leadership is instrumental in bringing about change. Sometimes drastic changes are needed in governmental and educational leadership to break away from old patterns and create a vision that fits a contemporary context.
2. Existing commercial space, especially historic space, can be an asset to a city or neighborhood. Investing in this space and attracting new businesses can revive a suffering downtown area.
3. Policies that make it easier for businesses to locate in a community are beneficial. By streamlining the process for businesses to get up and running, Maplewood was able to compete with other cities and neighborhoods for commercial tenants.
4. Strong governmental policies for residential units, such as regular inspections of rental housing and enforcement of occupancy codes, can be helpful in ensuring that housing is properly maintained and preventing nuisance properties.
5. Progress often takes time. Although some progress can be made in the short term, combating a place's negative reputation and truly revitalizing a neighborhood takes the concerted effort of many key players over time.
6. Diversity in schools is possible and desirable. When schools possess quality teachers, community support, and creative curriculum that helps create educational equity, students can learn to bridge cultural and economic differences.

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<sup>47</sup> Maplewood Richmond Heights School District. (2013). Educational equity. Retrieved from <http://www.mrhdsd.org/programs/educational-equity>.

## V. Conclusions

The period from 1970 to 2010 was a difficult time for the older parts of the St. Louis region. The region lost important employment centers, a significant amount of the population, and the core was depleted by white flight and suburbanization. Despite these factors, however, a set of neighborhoods have very successfully rebounded.

### Success factors

The case studies allowed us to identify eight factors that appear to increase the likelihood of neighborhood success, displayed in Table 7. All of the case study neighborhoods displayed some of these factors, but the number and strength of factors varied greatly. Success in a neighborhood did not rely on the existence of all of these factors, but a higher quantity and intensity of the success factors increased the probability of success.

#### *Anchor institutions*

Political theory supports the idea that local anchor institutions have emerged as key players in today's decentralized community development system. The need for investment from anchors is amplified further in a city with a weak tax base and a state that has not historically invested in urban development. Four of the five case study neighborhoods saw significant investment from local anchors. Notably, while some of these anchors were very large institutions, others were not.

Table 7. Neighborhood Success Factors.

Success Factor	Central West End	Botanical Heights	Shaw	Mark Twain	Maplewood
Strong Anchor Institutions	X	X	X	X	
Excellent Housing Stock	X		(X)		
Thoughtful Commercial Development	X				X
Thoughtful Residential Development	X	X		X	
Resident Civic Engagement	X	X	X	X	X
Good Location	X	X	X		X
Successful Public Policy	X				X
Strong Public Schools		(X)			X

*Excellent housing stock*

As an economic rule, neighborhoods with higher quality housing stock have greater potential to attract residents and investment. The Central West End is the one case study neighborhood with truly extraordinary housing stock, featuring one of the most impressive historic districts in the country. There is no doubt that this physical asset contributed to the neighborhood's ability to entice professionals and their families back to the city. Shaw's housing, while not as grand as the Central West End's, is also very strong and played an important role in attracting middle- and upper-income families to the neighborhood.

*Thoughtful commercial and residential development*

Economic theory also supports the value of thoughtful development of commercial areas (creating demand for the neighborhood) and residential areas (improving available supply). Thoughtful development has also allowed many of these communities to successfully retain a level of economic diversity through development of a diversity of residential options. Maplewood's success is due in great part to the development of its commercial centers, including a downtown full of small unique businesses and a major shopping center on the edge of town. The Central West End restored its commercial district as the city's center for boutique stores and nightlife, bringing increased vitality to the neighborhood. Mark Twain was successful in building new housing options that improved the attractiveness of the neighborhood while remaining manageable in size and cost for working-class residents.

*Resident civic engagement*

The engagement of local residents is the backbone of classic community organizing. Every case-study neighborhood was supported by an active citizen base, suggesting that this is one factor necessary for success. Rather than relying on government or major institutions to independently support neighborhood change, community organizing attempts to generate a new source of power through a critical mass of active residents. In Shaw, improvements were supported by a neighborhood association and grassroots organizing through the local Catholic church. Botanical Heights' citizens were engaged by the Missouri Botanical Garden as part of their community redevelopment planning process. In addition, the creation of City Garden Montessori School was a grassroots effort by a group of local parents who wanted to stay in the area but had no quality school options for their children.

*Good location*

Economic theory makes it clear that location is a key factor in attracting residents to a neighborhood. The definition of a "good" location varies by region and perspective, but for these purposes the central corridor of St. Louis was viewed as the most advantageous location in the city. This area contains some of the largest job centers in the region and provides access to most of the major regional amenities, including Forest Park, the MetroLink light rail system, and the major regional highways. All of our case study neighborhoods, with the exception of Mark Twain, are located in or very close to the central corridor, which significantly improved their ability to rebound.

*Successful public policy*

In order to maximize a neighborhood's potential, local actors must successfully navigate and utilize public policies that can support local development. This ability is often contingent on a neighborhood's access to individuals or organizations with the sophistication and knowledge required to coordinate these complex policies. The Central West End was remarkably adept at utilizing public policies to support development, especially physical development. The neighborhood utilized a variety of policies, from Missouri Chapter 353 to Historic Tax Credits and Low Income Tax Credits. The use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits was particularly important in maintaining the neighborhood's economic diversity. Maplewood successfully used the legislative process to pass multiple bond issues and tax increases that funded the transformation of the school district.

*Strong public schools*

There is no shortage of literature regarding the value to neighborhoods of strong public schools. Without strong school options, a neighborhood significantly reduces its ability to attract families with children. St. Louis City, which is home to all of the case study neighborhoods except Maplewood, has had a particularly hard time maintaining school quality, and successful neighborhoods in the city are succeeding despite the failing public schools, mostly by attracting students and couples without children. The one case study neighborhood that saw significant success in this area is Maplewood. Botanical Heights has had a taste of success with the emergence of City Garden Montessori School, but the majority of the neighborhood remains dependent on a relatively weak set of public school options. Successful parochial schools, such as St. Margaret of Scotland in Shaw, can help to compensate for weak public schools.

**Results relative to neighborhood change theory**

Our quantitative analysis of rebound neighborhoods provides broad support for economic theory which predicts that neighborhood revitalization can be explained by changing market demand for urban living and supply of attractive housing stock near employment clusters. Sociological tipping point theory, which predicts that revitalizing neighborhoods will be subject to a reverse tipping process, is generally not confirmed by our analysis. This should not be taken to imply that residential choice in St. Louis is not influenced by racial and economic status hierarchies. Also with some exceptions, relatively few all-black neighborhoods rebounded, even those located right next to rebounding neighborhoods. St. Louis is still one of the most racially segregated regions in the United States (though segregation has been slowly declining for forty years).<sup>48</sup> And the number of people living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty is increasing in the St. Louis metropolitan area.<sup>49</sup> What our research does suggest, however, is that older urban neighborhoods that rebound are often racially and economically diverse; four of our five case study neighborhoods achieved success while maintaining high levels of diversity.

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<sup>48</sup> In 2010 St. Louis was ranked as the 11th most segregated metropolitan area out of the 50 areas studied (Logan, J.R., & Stults, B.J. (2011, March). The persistence of segregation in the metropolis: New findings from the 2010 census. US2010 Project.

<sup>49</sup> For updated analysis of trends in concentrated poverty, see: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Papers/2011/11/03%20poverty%20kneebone%20nadeau%20be-rube/profiles/41180.pdf>. For a synthesis of the research on concentrated poverty, see Dreier, P., Mollenkopf, J., & Swanstrom T. (2014) *Place matters: Metropolitics for the twenty-first century*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.



Although our analysis generally confirms that rebound neighborhoods are driven by economic factors, especially proximity to clusters of high-wage professional employment, there are exceptions to this pattern. As our map of rebound neighborhoods (Figure 3) shows, rebound neighborhoods are scattered throughout the older urbanized area, some located far from employment clusters. Moreover, some neighborhoods located close to employment clusters are not rebounding, especially areas north of Delmar Boulevard. At the same time, surprisingly, a few neighborhoods in all-black North and East St. Louis have modestly rebounded. We believe the variation from classic economic theory can be primarily explained using the third theoretical tradition, political/institutional theory. Some neighborhoods have been much more successful than others in forming high-capacity local organizations to access the resources of government and anchor institutions in the area. Success in these neighborhoods generally required a combination of inherent neighborhood advantages (location, thriving local anchors, etc.) and very careful attention by key local and regional actors.

As we look ahead, there are increasing signs that the macro-economic environment of St. Louis is changing. The relative decline of the St. Louis region is at least slowing and there are some signs of increasing economic viability, particularly in the life science industry. These changes raise at least two possible scenarios. First, it may be impossible, in a stronger economy, for rebounding neighborhoods in St. Louis to avoid the long term negative effects of gentrification common in hot market cities. On the other hand, a stronger economy may make it possible for a greater number of neighborhoods to rebound. We will be following both trends.

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