

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: PRESERVATION IN THE HEARTLAND:
 REVITALIZING DAVENPORT'S
 HERITAGE NEIGHBORHOODS

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Degree and Year: Master of Arts in Historic Preservation, 2018

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In a post-industrial environment, Davenport, Iowa, is experiencing the same phenomenon as many other rustbelt cities across America. While a once-vacant downtown is flourishing as historic buildings find new uses as homes to millennials and brick-walled conversions host new shops and businesses, surrounding urban core neighborhoods have been slow to share in revitalization. These areas continue to struggle with a loss of residents, too many vacant or abandoned buildings, high levels of poverty, and reduced property values. At the same time, they are home to diverse communities as well as affordable and architecturally-significant properties.

These compact 19th and early 20th century residential neighborhoods continue to decline as the city's borders, encouraged by traditional planning practices, have expanded to more than sixty-five-square miles. Davenport's slow population growth coupled with a late 20th century economic setback means that a citizenry the same size as it was in 1980s must support existing and new infrastructure and development. Previous attempts to address urban core issues have been feeble and short-lived.

Many American cities are struggling with even more extreme conditions than Davenport. The effective practices in use in other cities underscore the importance of equipping cities with necessary tools as well as the need for all parts of government to work collaboratively toward the common goal of reversing decades of disinvestment and neglect. It is apparent that residents and city government must engage in planning that is long-term and sustainable. Careful study of each neighborhood's unique assets and challenges should be followed by crafting of individual revitalization plans that retain current residents and attract new ones.

Subject Headings: Historic preservation, urban core revitalization, effective practices, heritage neighborhoods, historic districts, legacy or rustbelt cities, impact of historic zoning regulations, abandoned houses, nuisance abatement, municipal policy, tax liens, tax sales.

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Frances Marion Meginnis

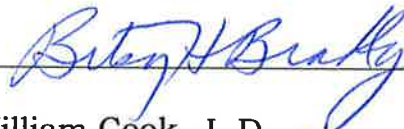
Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Goucher College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Historic Preservation

2018

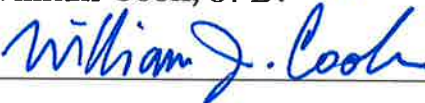
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PREFACE

In April 2018, my husband and I were guests at a Big Table discussion, an initiative to get people all over the Quad Cities talking about how to make our region a more vibrant place to live.

The discussion took place in a Davenport, Iowa, neighborhood not my own but, like our neighborhood, located in an older section of the city. Everyone but the two of us lived nearby. Some had been associated with the neighborhood for their entire lives. One sixty-five-year old still living in a house his parents had purchased recalled former occupants along the street based on his memory as the area's paperboy. Another had returned to the home where she grew up to care for her elderly mother after spending much of her adult life far away. A third person came back to Davenport and the neighborhood after a job had taken her to Texas. Since Americans move about every nine years,¹ finding a roomful of people with such close associations to one place was remarkable.

While there was no pre-determined topic, the conversation quickly turned to neighborhood concerns over development pressures from a

¹ "How Long Do Most Families Stay in Their Home?" 2017, accessed May 6, 2018, at <https://www.keepingcurrentmatters.com/2017/02/28/how-long-do-most-families-stay-in-their-home/>.

nearby university, the loss of owner-occupied homes to conversions as student rentals, the bitterness toward a religious institution's demolition of several houses to make parking lots, the lack of young families moving in, the need for volunteers to work with children at risk attending a nearby grammar school, and the frustration of getting other residents involved in neighborhood activities.

Since moving to Davenport twenty-one years ago, I've been struggling with some of the same questions. Together with my neighbors, I've worked to strengthen my historic neighborhood, to market to new and younger residents, to reduce the number of vacant and deteriorated buildings, to punish bad landlords, and to advocate that my municipal government use its powers to properly manage the part of the city I call home. For me and my husband, "this place matters" in a way that no place I've lived in my sixty-five plus years ever has.

It was this advocacy that brought me to graduate school and propelled me toward this area of study. Several times, I tried to reject the topic as being impossibly broad and difficult to manage. In the end, I really had no choice.

I offer this work as one person's thoughtful perspective of life in a mid-sized city and a heritage neighborhood that she believes can be made better by conscientious government and committed citizens.

This work is dedicated to my dear Jack for his inspiration and support,
to people everywhere fighting for their neighborhoods, and to those still
searching for a place they can call home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the guidance of a skilled thesis committee and to the Goucher Masters in Historic Preservation program and its instructors. Both texts and teachers wove together my disparate life experience of business and community activism with a formal understanding of the past and present condition of the historic preservation movement and the buildings, sites, and places it was designed to conserve. A special thank you to the late Stuart Meck, whose Urban History course especially informed my understanding of the historic trajectory of America's industrial cities and that of Davenport.

Many patient government staffers, preservationists, and agency professionals took time to share their insights with an unknown Iowa graduate student. Their knowledge of how their own communities coped with changing fates and fortunes was critical in helping draw a portrait of challenges facing legacy cities across America. Their commitment to the places where they live continues to inspire me here in Davenport.

Finally, it sometimes takes a neighborhood to raise a graduate student. For her technical support, hats off to neighbor and Word Wizard Sarah Bartholomew. More than once over the past four years, her mastery of format allowed me to stay focused on content.

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CHAPTER I DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Urban core residential neighborhoods in many American cities are facing challenges, particularly where shrinking populations have created excess and abandoned housing. They have, in turn, suffered disinvestment and decay. These established city areas often include designated historic districts that may receive various levels of preservation protection based on local ordinances drawn from nationally recognized preservation tenets. Designated historic districts are often surrounded by nearby neighborhoods of similar age without such designation or protection.

“Heritage neighborhoods” is a term that captures both historically-designated and non-historic areas. Cities do not use the phrase to define or measure their historic infrastructure and typically address designated historic districts differently. That is unfortunate. Both types of areas comprise a city’s built heritage, a record of its architectural past. They also can offer diverse, affordable, housing stock. Without the planning or oversight that focuses on preserving the continuity of a streetscape or

retaining infrastructure, heritage neighborhoods can lose infrastructure and be at greater risk of becoming less attractive residential alternatives.

In many cities like Davenport, Iowa, these convenient neighborhoods, with serviceable transportation systems and side-by-side commercial and domestic uses, began to be cast aside with the arrival of the automobile and exclusionary zoning practices in the early 20th century.² In Davenport, many of these neighborhoods are located in what was defined in a 2005 comprehensive plan as the city's Core Development Area (Core).³ (Figure 1) While the nearby old downtown business district has been transformed by redevelopment of historic commercial buildings, many of the outlying heritage neighborhoods have not experienced the same rebirth.

² The Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SSEA) and Standard City Planning Enabling Act (SCPEA) were federal model laws written in the 1920s that enabled cities to enact zoning regulations and create master plans for their jurisdictions. American Planning Association, "Standard State Zoning Enabling Act and Standard City Planning Enabling Act," accessed February 20, 2018, at <https://www.planning.org/growingsmart/enablingacts.htm>.

³ Davenport Planning Department, *Davenport 2025: Comprehensive Plan for the City*, (City of Davenport, Iowa, August 2005.) Digital copy in possession of author.

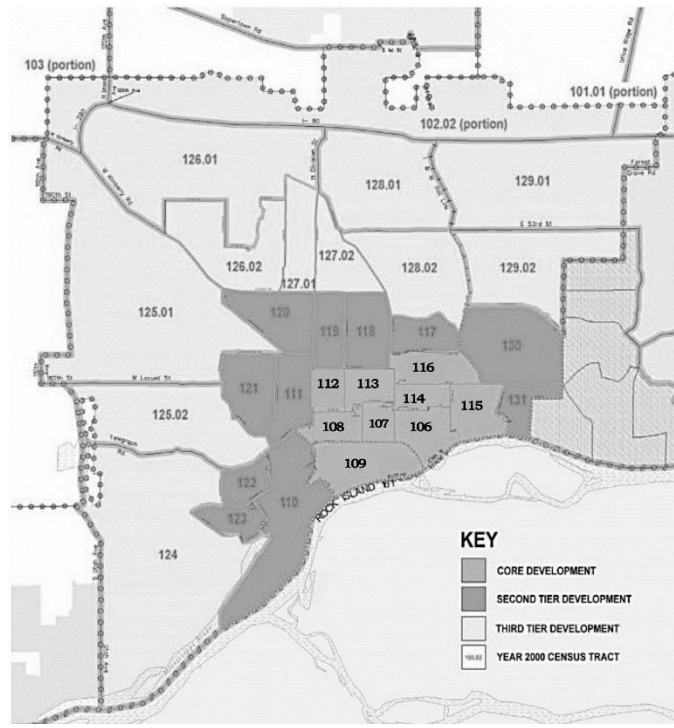


Figure 1: Development groupings created for *Davenport 2025*. The small central section is the Core Development Area (Core). [Source: Davenport 2025: Comprehensive Plan for the City, August 2005, 122.]

Statement of Hypothesis

Many of Davenport’s heritage neighborhoods are struggling with urban core issues. These places, dotted throughout the compact 19th century footprint of the city, are in need of sustained intervention. It is their plight that has inspired this study and frames its hypothesis.

Davenport’s heritage neighborhoods are important community assets that, for too long, have been subjected to well-meaning, but short-term tactics that have failed to stem outward migration of the city’s residents and deterioration of its built environment. Traditional historic preservation tools are not adequate to reverse these trends.

Cities across America face the same challenge, many to a much greater degree than Davenport. They are being forced to innovate and reexamine how they govern and plan for their futures.

Cities and states are endowed with legal powers that their citizens do not possess. It is imperative that both elected officials and staff better marshal their considerable assets and infrastructure and engage residents in implementing long term, effective strategies to restore heritage neighborhoods to vibrant, safe and desirable places to call home.

This treatise will explore Davenport's evolution from a small frontier settlement to a regional business center. It will examine the city's efforts to measure and enhance its historic infrastructure. It will frame Davenport's experience within the context of other cities challenged with reinventing neighborhoods that have been the victims of post-industrial economics into vibrant, healthy, 21st century places to live. Finally, it will seek to identify long-term solutions for Davenport that are capable of generating sustained and positive change.

City Development

Davenport was established in 1836 on land ceded to the United States Government by Native American tribes in the peace treaty following the Blackhawk War. Scott County was established in 1837; in

1839, Davenport was named its county seat.⁴ Statehood would take longer to achieve. Iowa entered the Union as the nineteenth state in 1846.

The city's first "Original Town" plat was laid out in 1835, but sales were slow due to a national financial crisis and legal questions surrounding the survey work.⁵ Antoine LeClaire, one of the city's founders, who owned non-contested adjacent land due east, established a few of its blocks as "LeClaire's Addition" in 1839. A building boom ensued on the unencumbered property. Ferry service linked Davenport to the Illinois riverbanks. The combination of transportation, shops, factories, hotels and warehouses created the central business district of downtown Davenport.⁶

The district's importance was enhanced in 1856 when, at its eastern edge, the first bridge across the entire length of the Mississippi River connected Rock Island, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa.⁷ The new

⁴ Marlys Svendsen and Martha Bowers, *Davenport Where Mississippi Runs West*, (Davenport: City of Davenport, 1980)1-3.

⁵ Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie du Chien, 1750-1860*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 251.

⁶ Mahoney, Timothy. *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 106-107, 266; and Svendsen and Bowers, *supra* note 4, at 5, 1-3.

⁷ "Approaching the Turn of the Century. Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones," February, 1999, 1, 3, 8, accessed March 14, 2014, at <http://www.iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf>.

transportation option drew both settlers and speculators. Davenport, the western terminus for the railroad bridge, had the greatest advantage and quickly outstripped other nearby cities in terms of growth.⁸ What was to become known as the “Tri-Cities”— Davenport, along with Rock Island and Moline in Illinois⁹ — began to establish itself as a prosperous industrial center and regional powerhouse. Timber, lashed together into rafts, was floated down from the great forests to the north to milling operations in the cities, which were an early source of jobs and prosperity as workers shaped it into lumber and furniture. Flour milling was another early industry with raw materials for processing coming from surrounding farms and going back out as finished flour. Local factories built wagons and foundries forged hardware.¹⁰ John Deere chose Moline as the home for his manufacturing empire.¹¹ Wholesale dry-goods establishments opened their doors and local businesses served the needs of the growing communities. (Figure 2)

⁸ “Population of Davenport, IA,” <http://population.us/ia/davenport/>, and “Population of Moline, IL,” <http://population.us/il/moline/>, and “Population of Rock Island, IL,” <http://population.us/il/rock-island/>, all accessed February 28, 2018.

⁹ “History,” accessed February 20, 2018, at <https://www.quadcities.com/about/history/>.

¹⁰ Marlys Svendsen, “Crescent Warehouse Historic District,” 20-21. (National Register Nomination Form), digital copy in possession of owner.

¹¹ “History,” *supra* note 9, at 6.

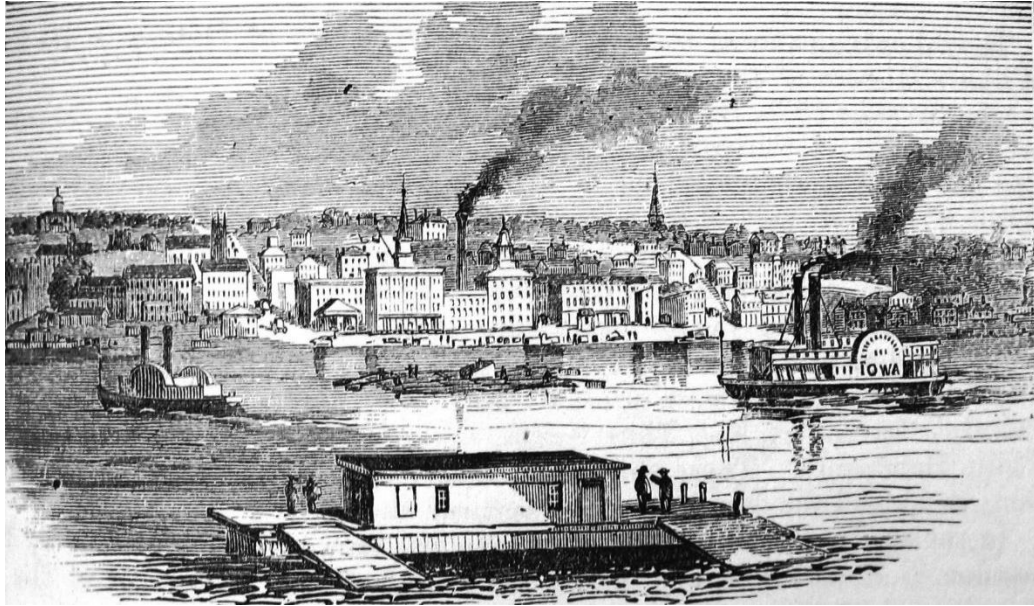


Figure 2: Davenport, Iowa, 1865.

[Source: Barber and Howe, *The Loyal West in the Times of the Rebellion*, Wikimedia Commons, accessed April 6, 2018, at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Davenport_Barber_1865p517_crop.jpg.]

From a settlement of a few hundred in 1836, Davenport grew to a population of 1,848 in 1850, 11,267 in 1860, and 20,038 in 1870 when it was, briefly, Iowa's largest city.¹²

By 1870, additional platting expanded the early footprint along streets running east and west with a downtown central business district and mills and industry along the river front, east and west of the business district. Housing was interspersed within these commercial areas. Later, residential neighborhoods, designed in a grid pattern, appeared in upland areas to the north. Street car lines ran throughout

¹² "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places: 1850-2010," accessed March 1, 2017, at <http://www.iowadatatcenter.org/archive/2011/02/citypop.pdf>.

the city and to nearby communities. In 1888, Davenport had added its first electrified trolley along its hilly Brady Street Line. In 1898, the system featured forty-two miles of track.¹³ (Figure 3)

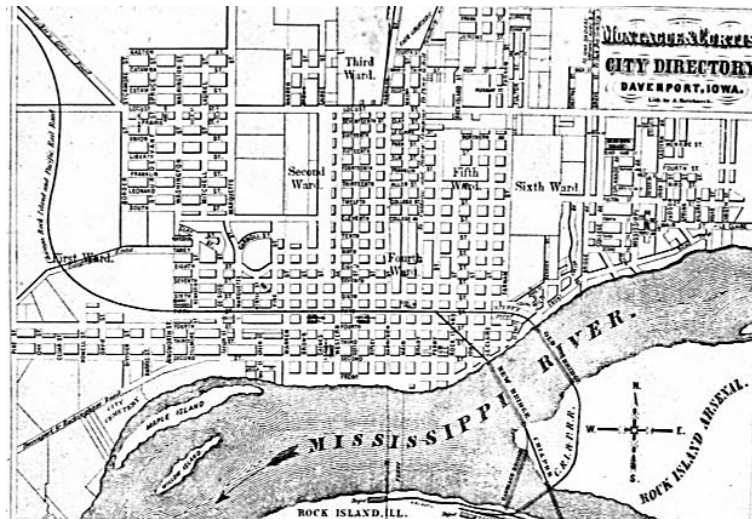


Figure 3: Davenport, 1870.

The largest city in Iowa with 20,000 people living in a compact grid. The area forms most of today's Core.

[Source: *Montague and Curtis City Directory Davenport, Iowa, 1870*. Richardson-Sloane Special Collection, Davenport Public Library. Used with permission.]

By 1900, Davenport had developed a solid twenty-block matrix from the river north to today's Vander Veer Park. Above the riverfront and downtown, residential neighborhoods of mostly single-family homes were interspersed with small commercial districts. From 1900 until today, Davenport has maintained its position as the state's second or third largest city.¹⁴

¹³ Marlys Svendsen, *Davenport Historical Survey Report. A Thematic History of Davenport, Iowa, 1836-1940*, (City of Davenport, November 1980), 7, and Thomas P. Christiansen, "An Industrial History of Scott County, Iowa." *Annals of Iowa, July 1940. Vol XXII, Number 5*. (Des Moines: Iowa State Department of History and Archives, 1940), 301-304.

¹⁴ "Total Population," *supra* note 12, at 7.

The arrival of the automobile encouraged expansion of the city beyond its turn-of-the-century boundaries. Between 1916 and 1960, Davenport's footprint grew from 8.79 miles to 47.62 miles. Today, the city encompasses 65.1 square miles.¹⁵ Pent up demand for housing after World Wars I and II helped to spur growth. The city's first zoning code was passed in 1925.¹⁶ Gridded neighborhoods gave way to developments with curvilinear streets and larger lots.¹⁷ As Davenport grew away from its centralized beginnings, new ordinances increased density in many older heritage neighborhoods which, in turn, increased the number of rental properties created by conversion of existing single family homes to multi-family occupancy.¹⁸ A 1935 housing survey found a high percentage of conversion rental property in areas south of Locust. The

¹⁵ U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Population, Housing Units, Area, and Density: 2010 - State -- Place and (in selected states) County Subdivision, 2010 Census Summary File 1," accessed February 28, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

¹⁶ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 134.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 134-135.

¹⁸ Examples may be found in the parcel abstracts for various properties within the Core. The abstract for 1125 Pershing Street reflects zoning changes in 1927 and 1948 that allowed increased density. "Abstract of Title for Lots 7 & 8, Block 95 a/k/a 1125 Pershing," located at Pasternak Law Offices, Davenport, Iowa. The abstract for 627 W. 6th Street reflects a change in 1927 that rezoned the area an "Apartment District" and another 1948 rezoning to an "E-Multiple Dwelling District." "Abstract of Title to Lot 8 in Block 29 Original Town (now city) of Davenport, Scott County, Iowa," in possession of author.

city's heritage neighborhoods began losing ground as desirable places to live. (Figure 4)

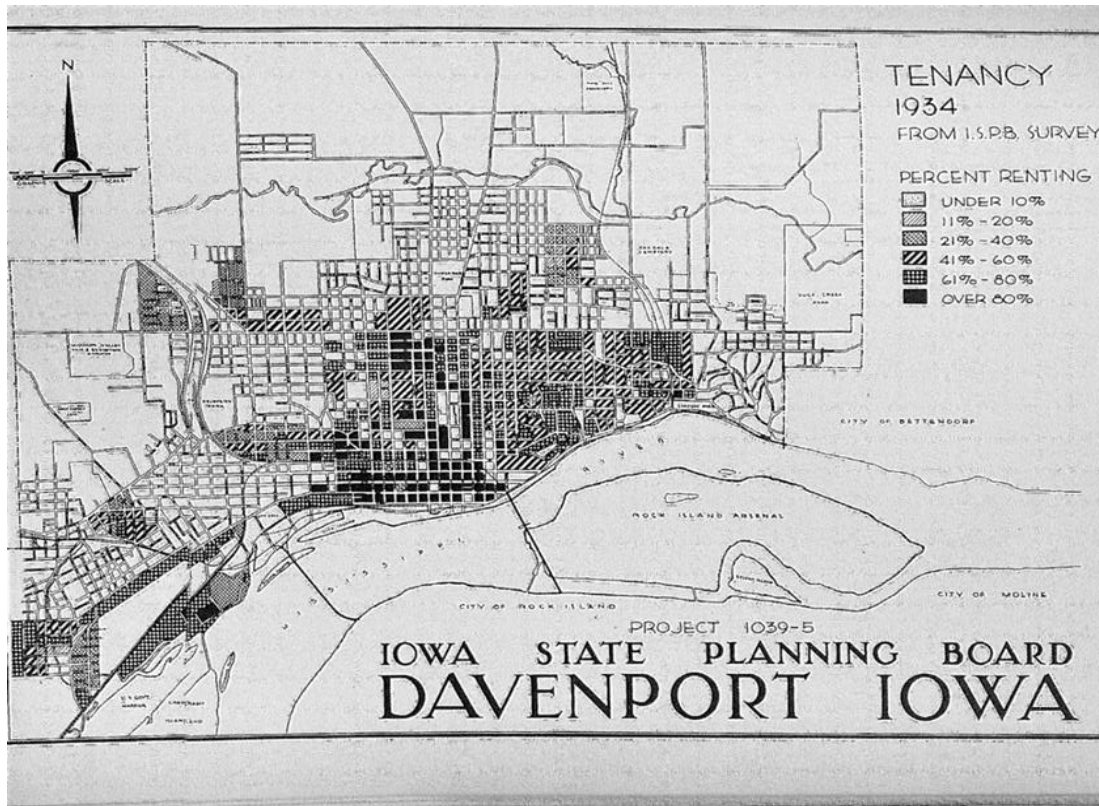


Figure 4: Map showing 1934 residential tenancy.
[Source: *Iowa State Planning Board Committee on Health and Housing. Report on Housing Davenport IA, May, 1935.*]

Changes to its zoning code and land use planning fostered urban sprawl with narrowly defined land uses, separating neighborhoods from commercial and industrial development.¹⁹ Unfettered to the north and west, Davenport grew by annexing land outside its 19th century borders. At the city's eastern border, the small town of Gilbert that had incorporated in 1903 into the new town of Bettendorf evolved into a

¹⁹ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 135.

suburban community. By the mid-20th Century, it was siphoning residents and development from the older city and its heritage neighborhoods.²⁰ Davenport, a compact city in 1900 with a population of 6,940 people per square mile had ballooned to one with only 1,566 per square mile in 2000.²¹ (Figure 5)

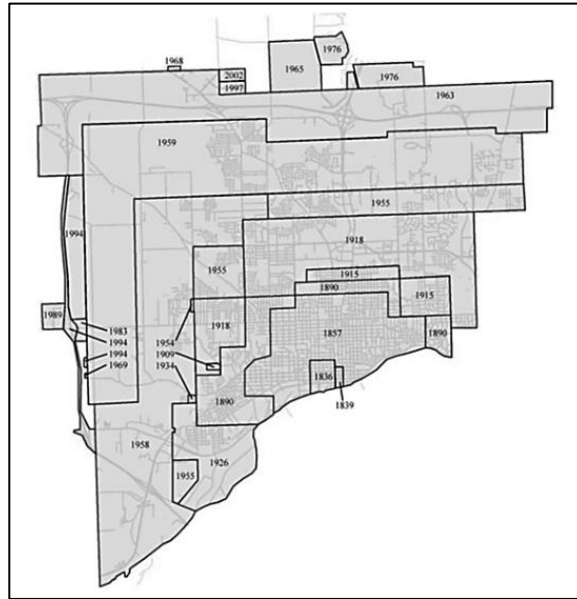


Figure 5: Davenport Annexation Map 1840 – 2005.
[Source: *Davenport 2025*, 428.]

Davenport’s Heritage Neighborhoods

What defines a heritage neighborhood? A good example is one located at the northwest corner of Davenport’s Core. “Historic Washington Street” is a thirty-eight block area south of Locust Street and east of Division Street. (Figure 6)

²⁰ “Community Profile,” accessed February 28, 2018, at <http://www.bettendorf.org/egov/apps/document/center.egov?view=item;id=2145>.

²¹ *Davenport 2025*, *supra*, note 3, at 2, 425.



Figure 6: Area of Historic Washington Street neighborhood. Low-moderate census tract south and east solid black line. Historic Washington Street within the white dotted lines. Black dotted line is Thirteenth Street. Riverview Terrace and Marycrest Historic Districts are smaller areas outlined in black, near the neighborhood’s south border.

[Source: City of Davenport, April 2017 census tract map, transposed onto GIS map with author additions.]

Other than a few properties that had been individually listed in the National Register, most of this neighborhood has no local or national historic designation although its residents chose to use “historic” in its name when they sought designation as one of Davenport’s “Recognized Neighborhoods” in 2012.²²

²² “Recognized Neighborhood Groups,” accessed February 28, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/our_community/neighborhoods/recognized_neighborhood_groups.

Clay Street marks the neighborhood’s southern, bluff-top border. Along it, large south-facing homes and smaller bungalows make up the small Riverview National Register Historic District. Directly west of that District is the Marycrest College Historic District, a converted campus, listed in the National Register at the time of its conversion to senior housing.²³ The neighborhood is bisected by Washington Street, an old commercial and residential corridor that includes several individually listed National Register buildings. (Figure 7)



Figure 7: Washington Street.

Top, Johnnie’s Meat Market at 13th and Washington. Below, mix of purpose-built commercial and converted residential buildings, typical along the street.

[Source: Author photographs, March 1, 2018.]

Houses along West 13th Street are good examples of residential construction found throughout the neighborhood. Built between 1880 and 1940,²⁴ including large four square dwellings, gable-front vernacular

²³ “Marycrest College Historic District,” accessed March 2, 2018, at <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail?assetID=937576e3-721a-4dbc-8a0b-ea9f785a897d>.

²⁴ No survey of this area has been completed. Assessor dates are unreliable. The range is an estimate based on the author’s assessment.

homes, and classic bungalows, this four-block streetscape is intact with a few vacant lots where houses once stood. The building types clearly reflect the development of a neighborhood over time.

The dissonance that often accompanies a streetscape that has lost too many buildings or where unsympathetic new construction has been allowed to flourish is not present here. While a discussion of the general area was included in a city historic survey, these blocks and the streets surrounding them were not surveyed for potential listing as a National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or local historic district when Davenport's surveys were conducted in the 1980s. At that time, some of the residential properties had not reached the fifty-year mark. Another reason was that efforts were focused on designated community development areas. In the 1980s, this neighborhood was not one of those, making inclusion difficult to justify.²⁵ Since this group of residential buildings has no particular history in terms of association with important people, architects, or events, significance would likely be based on architecture.²⁶ Yet these simple vernacular buildings have few

²⁵ Eligibility for listing in the National Register generally requires that a building be fifty years or older and some in this neighborhood were just reaching that threshold. In the 1980s, the census tract in which the neighborhood was located was not designated low/moderate income. Marlys Svendsen, voicemail with author, March 7, 2018.

²⁶ "National Register Criteria for Evaluation," (State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, November 2015), accessed May 1, 2017, at <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/NRfacts2-Criteria.pdf>.

distinguishing architectural characteristics. Many of the exteriors were originally wood clapboard that have lost their original materials to coverings of asbestos shingle, aluminum or vinyl siding. Retention of original materials is a key factor in a building's historic integrity when determining its eligibility for listing in the National Register. This could make listing the area as a National Register Historic District challenging. (Figure 8)



Figure 8: Houses along West 13th Street.
A variety of types; houses in bottom photo have all had original cladding covered or replaced with modern vinyl or metal.
[Source: Author photographs, March 1, 2018.]

This area fits the definition of a heritage neighborhood. It features older housing stock on compact lots; alleys running between blocks provide access to parking areas and storage for trash bins. Its sidewalks and the few driveways cutting across curbs make it walkable. A small shopping area is located nearby. The Mississippi riverfront is thirteen blocks away

and a small park with a magnificent bluff side view of the river defines the neighborhood's edge. The houses appear solid, although a few are boarded and some look a bit shabby.

Like on many streets in Davenport's heritage neighborhoods, the West 13th Street houses reflect a higher-than-city-average rental to owner-occupied ratio²⁷ and are located in a low-moderate income census tract.²⁸ The standard definition for affordable housing are homes whose monthly cost is less than 30 percent of median income.²⁹ Within the neighborhood, there were thirty house sales between April 2016 and April 2017. The average sale price was \$61,027, well below the

²⁷ Per the 2010 and 2015 Census figures, Davenport's percentage of owner-occupied buildings is 65.1 percent and 63.9 percent respectively. Across this four-block stretch of Washington Street, the percentages were 49.4 percent and 45.5 percent respectively. "2010 & 2015 Davenport Iowa City Directory," *Polk City Directories: Ralston, NE, ND, and U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Selected Housing Characteristics, 2010 Census" and "Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 American Community Survey,"* accessed April 25, 2017, at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#.

²⁸ "City of Davenport Block Group by Percent LOWMOD Income," and "City of Davenport Block Group by Percent LOWMOD Income W.12th Street Area," Maps showing core neighborhoods and the W. 13th Street area in neighborhoods with percentage of low-moderate income residents at more than 51 percent. Maps created by city of Davenport and in possession of author.

²⁹ While there is some debate as to this definition of affordable housing, it is the standard still used by most state and federal agencies. Gary Pivo, "The Definition of Affordable Housing: Concerns and Related Evidence," September 16, 2013, accessed April 28, 2017, at http://www.fanniema.com/resources/file/fundmarket/pdf/hoytpivo_mfhousing_affordablehousingdef_122013.pdf.

Davenport average house cost of \$146,437 for the same period and affordable in a city where the median income is \$47,343.³⁰

One might ask why a neighborhood like this should matter. As sales prices demonstrate, streets like West 13th Street offer modestly priced homes that could become great starter homes for young families or downsizing older couples. While the ratio of rentals to owner-occupied buildings is higher here than the city average, the variance is not great.

³⁰ Houses ranged in price from \$18,000 to \$108,000 and price per square foot from \$19.62 to \$83.17. The simple formula for calculating required income relative to sales price, according to a local realtor, is Cost of House/3; in this case, that equates to an annual income of a little over \$20,000. The median household income in Davenport is \$47,343; using the formula, a family with this income could afford a house costing \$142,029. Alex Wolking, in discussion with author and “CMA Summary Report - Residential Summary Statistics” report provided by him, April 28, 2017 and in possession of author. Wolking is a realtor working in the Quad Cities and in Chicago. And U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Davenport city, Iowa Median Household Income 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” accessed April 28, 2017 at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#.

A Heritage Neighborhood at Risk

This is a neighborhood at a tipping point. Three years ago, School #6, Jackson School, a long-shuttered grammar school, reopened as a senior housing project.³¹ In 2016, local businesses and residents led an effort to organize a neighborhood association and the area received its



Figure 9: Telephone poles along Washington Street. Offering a set of confusing mixed messages, these are adorned with place making signs and surveillance cameras. [Source: Author photographs, March 1, 2018.]

Recognized Neighborhood status, making it eligible for city assistance.³²

Grants paid for street signs and a set of surveillance cameras. (Figure 9)

³¹ Tory Brecht, “Company Eyes Another Davenport Renovation,” *Quad City Times*, October 22, 2010, accessed February 28, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/company-eyes-another-davenport-renovation/article_bc7b10c6-de59-11df-b1f6-001cc4c03286.html, and “School #6 (Davenport, Iowa), accessed February 28, 2018, at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_Number_6_\(Davenport,_Iowa\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_Number_6_(Davenport,_Iowa)).

³² “Recognized Neighborhoods,” *supra* note 22, at 12.

The designation does not offer any protection from demolition or what some might deem inappropriate encroachment.

In fact, in April 2017, a controversy erupted when a local group offering services to the homeless purchased a building on Washington Street and moved from a downtown site to the new location. Local business people and residents were concerned about the impact to their shops and the neighborhood, describing a still-fragile area that might not withstand introduction of a population in need.³³ People supporting efforts to assist the homeless asked the city to allow the use.³⁴ Eventually, their wish was granted.

The term heritage neighborhood, encompassing both officially designated historic districts and older neighborhoods without such distinction, recognizes a set of resources with common locations in core areas. In addition, they warrant the attention of municipalities in various ways, as many could either remain stable residential neighborhoods or face disinvestment and decline. They should have a place in many cities' historic preservation programs and infrastructure planning. In another community, a neighborhood like Historic Washington Street might

³³ On May 15, 2017, these concerns were stated in a neighborhood meeting convened to discuss the issue. The author was in attendance.

³⁴ Dev Patel, "Davenport to Explore Zoning Changes as Solution to Timothy's House of Hope," *Quad City Times*, May 2, 2017, accessed May 4, 2017, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/government-and-politics/davenport-to-explore-zoning-changes-as-solution-to-timothy-s/article_36c24157-fee2-5f30-b10a-37191546a367.html.

receive a conservation district designation. A frequent goal for such areas is protection of essential character and scale but with less restrictions on changes or modifications that formally designated historic districts face.³⁵ Davenport does not offer this option.

People in Davenport became interested in engaging in emerging historic preservation programs relatively early. During the 1960s and 1970s, enabling federal legislation authorized creation and funding for State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), designed to serve as conduits for listing properties in the National Register. It was the first time the city had engaged in formal historic preservation efforts.

Historic Preservation in Davenport

The narrative of historic preservation in Davenport follows a familiar path. Unlike Charleston, South Carolina, or New Orleans, Louisiana, most American cities did not turn their attention to historic infrastructure until it was threatened or when new legislation brought the topic to the forefront and kindled local interest. Davenport's

³⁵ Dubuque, Iowa, has designated nine conservation districts; buildings in these areas have the same demolition oversight as the structures in the city's local historic districts. Dave Johnson, in discussion with author, November 2, 2015, and March 6, 2017. Johnson is Building Services Manager, and was formerly Assistant Planner and HPC liaison for Dubuque and "Conservation Districts," accessed January 13, 2018, <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/1461/Conservation-Districts>.

introduction contained a bit of both elements and, as has been the case across the country, its coming has not been without controversy.

The 1966 passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, the development of state historic preservation offices (SHPOs) and enthusiasm for local history surrounding the nation's Bicentennial celebration triggered local preservation efforts. Prior to this initiative, Davenport appears to have had no local preservation ethos. Local efforts began with volunteers, including senior citizens, high school students and others like Karen Anderson, a woman who had moved with her husband into a home in the East Village, a historic mill district. She and others fanned out across neighborhoods to survey and research historic buildings.³⁶

By 1979, Davenport had begun a massive multiple listing effort to nominate properties to the National Register. For Iowa, the effort was unprecedented and was the first such nomination to be approved by the state. Its scope was larger than that of any other Iowa city.³⁷ When completed in the 1980s, more than half of all Iowa National Register

³⁶ Jim Arpy, "The Sleuths," *Times-Democrat*, February 24, 1974, and Karen Anderson, in discussion with author, September 13, 2014. Anderson is a community activist who was engaged in early historic preservation activity.

³⁷ Marlys Svendsen, email with author, September 16, 2014. City planner who led the 1979-1985 Davenport National Register nomination process.

properties were located in Davenport.³⁸ This massive initiative did not come without controversy that polarized some residents for, and some against, historic preservation.

At the same time historic preservation was coming of age in the city, many of its proponents found themselves pitted against powerful interests whose goals were not aligned with their own. As was the case in many other cities, historic preservation efforts took place in the shadow of transportation planning options that brought with them the potential to disrupt heritage neighborhoods. During the 1970s, the Iowa Highway Commission, later the Iowa Department of Transportation, proposed a freeway running south from Interstate 80 through Davenport's heritage neighborhoods and connecting to the Centennial Bridge at the Mississippi River. The first opposition came, not from preservationists, but from a politically-connected dentist who took exception to the plan. Dr. Alan Hathaway had moved his office away from downtown, but he lived on Gaines Street north of Locust and in the path of the freeway. He was soon joined by others equally concerned.³⁹ Hathaway amped up his

³⁸ "List of Iowa National Register Sites," History Survey Collection, Box 2, Richardson-Sloane Collection, Davenport Public Library.

³⁹ Peg Hathaway, in discussion with author, October 9, 2014. UFO member and wife of Dr. Alan Hathaway.

opposition, announcing the formation of a group that would become UFO, “United Friends Opposing the Expressway.”⁴⁰

The fight attracted the attention of people living in heritage neighborhoods and preservationists. St. Ambrose student Thom Hart turned twenty that year. The expressway route ran through the heart of his ward. He decided to run for alderman. He won the seat, making him the youngest person ever elected to that position and beginning a political career that would last for almost twenty years.⁴¹ Nora DeJohn, a community activist who was concerned about heritage neighborhoods closer to downtown, was present at a meeting with the Highway Commission in Ames in Spring 1974.⁴²

The freeway through the city was never built; an alternative solution using existing roads was selected. But other Highway Commission plans continued to focus on solving what was perceived as traffic problems in the Gaines Street corridor. This concern was repeated later by a city planning committee.⁴³

⁴⁰ Bruce Johnson, “Davenport Expressway Plans Get Hostile Reaction,” *Times-Democrat*, April 17, 1973.

⁴¹ Thom Hart, in discussion with author, October 6, 2014. Hart is a native of Davenport and the city’s mayor from 1986-1992.

⁴² “Freeway Opponents Buoyed By Alternative Plan,” *Times-Democrat*. May 1, 1974 and Hathaway.

⁴³ “Session Lifts Freeway Foes,” *Times-Democrat*. May 1, 1974; “Panel: Avoid Freeway,” *Times-Democrat*. July 21, 1975.

As historic areas were being researched and planning for the city's Bicentennial observance were underway, the Iowa Highway Commission broached new transportation proposals in 1975 and 1976 that would separate the downtown area from the heritage neighborhoods above. The proposals would have dramatically impacted the old neighborhoods paralleling the river and taken portions of historic parks.⁴⁴ Use of federal dollars required an Environmental Impact Statement defining just how much historic infrastructure the plan would have impacted.⁴⁵ (Figure 10)

⁴⁴ "Brice, Petrides & Associates, "Davenport Transportation Study," Prepared for the Iowa State Highway Commission, January 27, 1975.

⁴⁵ Iowa State Highway Commission Corridor Planning Department, "Draft Environmental Statement 561 North-South Facility and U.S. 61-67 C.B.D. Bypass Scott County," February, 1975.



FIGURE 21

B

Figure 10: 1975 Plan for Gaines Expressway and Central Business District Bypass.

Numbers above diamond-shaped route identify only National Register eligible properties known at the time of the plan. The Gaines Street Expressway running north-south would have removed entire blocks in what would become the Hamburg Historic District. The CBD Bypass options would have impacted properties on the block between 5th and 6th Streets, with other areas likely impacted for ramps and other elements of roadway design.

[Source: Administrative Action Draft Environmental Impact Statement," February 14, 1975. See Bibliography for complete listing.]

During the same period, the city's mayor made application for a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grant to fund a revitalization study for a historic area in the eastern part of the city, preservationist Karen Anderson's neighborhood, The Village of East Davenport. Dollars were awarded in 1976 and the study was published in December 1977.⁴⁶ It surveyed over 1,000 buildings in a twenty-block area, the first city historic preservation study that focused on more than a building or building complex. The study proposed building treatments and traffic flow, streetscapes and signage.⁴⁷ The effort assisted in bringing about a nomination and listing in the National Register.

Engagement in the earlier UFO fights taught preservationists how the federal process could slow down road plans. Research of historic properties was now underway. When new proposals to create high speed freeways in and around the central business district and nearby neighborhoods were introduced, preservationists lobbied for review. They organized a group of volunteers and spent weeks doing door-to-door research across the entire area. In the process, they discovered that relocation expenses for the 1,200 people impacted would reach into the

⁴⁶ Charlie Heston, in discussion with author, November 18, 2014. Heston was a Davenport senior city planner during the 1970s.

⁴⁷ John Milner Associates, "A Community Preservation & Revitalization Study For the Village Of East Davenport," Prepared for the City of Davenport. Iowa Department of Community Development. December, 1977.

“millions” of dollars. DeJohn spent time reviewing traffic studies and other pertinent data.⁴⁸ Addressing one proposal, 150 neighbors attended a city council meeting to protest the plan.⁴⁹ (Figure 11)

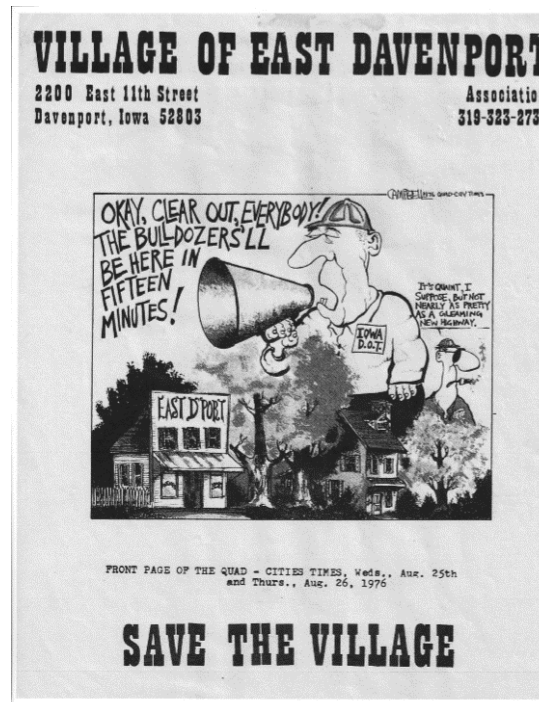


Figure 11: Flyer from Village of East Davenport. A 1976 protest against proposed road changes. [Source: Karen Anderson Personal Files. Used with permission.]

A planner working for the city during this era believes that the preservationists’ strategy to document historic buildings and fight the proposed transportation plans went hand in hand. He believes it was a deliberate part of the strategy and that, at times, preservation was used to “stop...divert...obstruct.”⁵⁰ Both Anderson and DeJohn had become

⁴⁸ Anderson, *supra* note 36, at 21.

⁴⁹ Paul Davies, “Mezvinsky: East Villagers Have a Say,” *Quad City Times*, August 18, 1976.

⁵⁰ Heston, *supra* note 46, at 26.

aware that transportation projects using federal funds near historic properties or sites could trigger a Section 4(f) review.⁵¹ In facing down the various transportation challenges, they had talked to people in Cedar Rapids and other communities where road construction had impacted historic neighborhoods. Eventually, plans for the Gaines Gateway and the Central Business District Bypass were abandoned.⁵²

Planner Charlie Heston was becoming overwhelmed by the volume of research required for the National Register surveys. Learning of grant funding that was available for such work, he asked and received permission to pursue the opportunity. The city received a two-year grant, later extended to three years, to fund an extensive National Register nomination process for properties throughout the city.⁵³ Marlys Svendsen was hired as the city's first historic planner in spring 1979, making Davenport the only city in the state with this full-time position.

Soon after Svendsen arrived in Davenport, one final protest against a new transportation plan erupted. The Iowa Department of Transportation, the former Iowa Highway Commission, proposed

⁵¹ Anderson, *supra* note 36, at 21. Anderson was not familiar with NHPA Section 106 review, but remembered the 4(f) process. Heston confirmed that, at the time of the actions, 4 (f) procedures would have had “more teeth” and would have been more impactful.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Heston, *supra* note 46, at 26; Charlie Heston, “Memo to Michael D. Kadlecik.” August 28, 1978. In possession of author.

straightening a curve on River Drive; the mayor and city council concurred.⁵⁴ The curve was located at an 1874 wooden railroad trestle recently added to the Iowa Register of Historic Places. The trestle spanned the Drive near the Village of East Davenport.⁵⁵ The district's consultant said the trestle could be modified but state officials said the structure had to go.⁵⁶ Ultimately, the district prevailed and the trestle was modified, its original appearance retained, the roadway beneath divided, and the dangerous curve eliminated.⁵⁷

Svendsen's job was to conduct the historic surveys, work with outside firms and consultants documenting the individual properties, and manage the granting process. The Iowa SHPO felt that Davenport had "a lot of skin in the game." Charlie Heston supported the effort and both his supervisor and city council had approved Svendsen's hiring. The Davenport process was exceptional for Iowa because the city focused on establishing historic districts rather than individual listings. Davenport received funding even though it was not yet a Certified Local Government

⁵⁴ Tom Collins, "Dangerous Curve Survives 24 Years," *Quad City Times*, January 20, 1980.

⁵⁵ Ibid; "Backers Rally around Trestle," *Quad City Times*, May 19, 1979.

⁵⁶"Backers Rally," *supra* note 55 at 29.

⁵⁷ "Demolition Reveals 1870's Elevated Tracks," RT&S website, November 24, 2010, accessed March 1, 2018, at <http://www.rtands.com/index.php/news/demolition-reveals-1870s-elevated-tracks.html>.

(CLG), due in great part to its aggressive plans for National Register surveys and nominations.⁵⁸

The National Park Service (NPS) implemented a multiple-property listing process about the time the Davenport project began that allowed it to move with speed and scope. Svendsen created her own two-page form for individual property listings; she was discouraged by NPS from making them any longer.⁵⁹

Svendsen and her crew concentrated first on nominations for the central city area that would most likely benefit from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) rehabilitation programs. Phase I & II were completed between 1979 and 1982. Two hundred individual properties and six historic districts were included, a total of more than 900 buildings.⁶⁰ Phase III, completed in 1984, added 750 buildings, including 150 individually-listed properties and six districts.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ralph Christian, in discussion with author, November 17, 2014. Christian worked for the Iowa SHPO during the 1970s and beyond.

⁵⁹ Marlys Svendsen, in discussion with author, September 16, 2014. Svendsen graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, with a double major in history and political science and headed the National Register surveys and listings between 1979 and 1985.

⁶⁰ "Davenport Historic Places to Be Picked At Hearing," *Rock Island Argus*, February 25, 1983.

⁶¹ Planning Division, "Historic Preservation in Davenport Iowa," 1985, 7-12. Pages in possession of author.

In addition to her work as historic planner, Svendsen, on her own time, taught a Davenport history and architecture class at a community college, led community walking tours and gave lectures.⁶² Svendsen went out of her way to make the process a positive experience. In addition to keeping the process running smoothly, Svendsen proved adept at dealing with the city council and public. Larry Minard was a city alderman in the 1980s and, as a high school teacher, had engaged his students in historic preservation research during the 1970s. While he doesn't believe that historic preservation was a top priority for most of the aldermen, he gives Svendsen high marks for her approach, saying, "Marlys was always very professional. She could read the council and respond to them. I think that they respected her and her learning."⁶³

Newspaper articles from the period reflected a positive attitude about the process. In one story that appeared a few months after she came on board, Svendsen stated clearly one key goal that Heston was hoping to accomplish. "It will help Davenport plan for its historic resources before it gets to the wrecking stage," she said. The process was described as one that would "fulfill a federal requirement that city officials consider their historic resources when planning the use of

⁶² Jim Arpy, "Take a Walk On the Mild Side. Tours Explore Davenport's Past," *Quad City Times*, September 16, 1984.

⁶³ Larry Minard, in discussion with author, September 17, 2014. Minard was a member of the city council and a high school teacher whose students were involved in historic research.

federal funds.” She touted the cost and energy savings of rehabilitation; she mentioned the availability of historic tax credits for commercial structures.⁶⁴

In 1985, city staff prepared a report recommending that historic preservation become part of the city’s comprehensive plan and establishment of a local Historic Preservation Ordinance and Commission.⁶⁵ Thom Hart, the twenty-year-old who won his seat as alderman during the UFO protest, was mayor and a friend of preservation. But it would take another six years for city council to pass a Historic Preservation Ordinance and establish a Commission.⁶⁶

Despite the city’s success at National Register surveying and listing, its central business district continued to deteriorate as businesses moved out of downtown to the suburbs beyond the Core. Don Decker, a CPA working in a downtown firm, was upset at the empty buildings around him and had been disappointed that the 1970s expressways had not been built.⁶⁷ In February, 1987, saying “What I see

⁶⁴ “Historian Can Channel Funds through Her Digs,” *Quad City Times*, August 15, 1979.

⁶⁵ Planning Division, “Historic Preservation in Davenport Iowa,” 1985, 56-63. Pages in possession of author.

⁶⁶ Hart, *supra* note 41, at 23.

⁶⁷ Don Decker, in discussion with author, October 14 and 23, 2014. Decker was the founder of Rejuvenate Davenport.

below me is ugly. It makes me want to vomit,”⁶⁸ Decker invited a group of seventeen younger businessmen to a meeting where he proposed an organization that would become “Rejuvenate Davenport.” “Demolition Davenport” would be the branch that dealt with problem properties.⁶⁹ He asked each to commit to \$9,000 to \$11,000 for each of five years,⁷⁰ estimating it would take \$1.5 million to “buy and clear some ghastly blocks and ugly [sic] eyesores.”⁷¹ Decker believed that the big money in the city was not willing to step up and write the checks, so he turned to a younger crowd. To those who complained that there was no plan once the buildings were down, his answer was that cleared land would attract developers.⁷² By May, the group and its partners had targeted thirteen buildings for demolition, one for rehabilitation and another for either rehab or demolition.⁷³ Rejuvenate sometimes used outside buyers to keep the price down. In one instance Decker says the group hired a “midnight marauder” for a controversial demolition.⁷⁴ During its time of greatest

⁶⁸ Bill Wundram, “Getting Tough To Save a City,” *Quad City Times*, February 16, 1987.

⁶⁹ Decker, *supra* note 67, at 32.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Wundram, *supra* note 68, at 33.

⁷² Scott Grau, “Somebody Has To Do It,” *Quad City Times*, June 7, 1987.

⁷³ *Quad City Times*. “Rejuvenate Davenport Targets 7 Projects.” May 28, 1987.

⁷⁴ Decker, *supra* note 67, at 32.

activity, from 1987 until the early 1990s, Decker estimates that Rejuvenate and its partners purchased or demolished about fifty-five buildings in and around the downtown area.⁷⁵ Some had recently been listed in the National Register.

The clash between opposing views came to a head when a business interested in moving downtown into one historically-designated building on Brady Street wanted to tear down another for parking. The buildings were located in one of the last city blocks that retained its extant historic block face. The city council, backed by Mayor Thom Hart, voted for a ninety-day moratorium on demolition of historic buildings in order to consider a historic preservation ordinance. Decker called it the best downtown project in twenty years. From his standpoint, “A healthy company wants to do something and we just screw around.”⁷⁶ Hart’s response was, “We need to be looking at that block and others like it in a broader context, not simply on what would be the easy thing to do now.”⁷⁷ The council debated the issue, with some concerned about property rights and others supporting the moratorium. The controversy

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ John Willard, “Downtown Buildings Create Stir Between Developer, Davenport,” *Quad City Times*, May 26, 1991.

delayed passage of the ordinance.⁷⁸ The council voted to lift the moratorium, but the business dropped its bid on the property. In the November election, Mayor Thom Hart lost his re-election bid, the first loss of his career, to a Davenport police officer. A public hearing on the proposed ordinance was held in early November.⁷⁹ Amendments were added that preservationists charged weakened the ordinance's usefulness.⁸⁰ On December 18, 1991, just a few weeks before Hart left office, the city council unanimously approved Davenport's historic preservation ordinance which permitted creation of its Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).⁸¹

Despite historic preservation's contentious past, there are two positive postscripts to this saga. First, the old the railroad trestle remains in good shape in 2018. Second, twenty years after Thom Hart fought to save the Brady Street building, it reopened as twenty-four luxury

⁷⁸ Michelle Landrum, "Aldermen Refuse to Rush Preservation Ordina[n]ce Passage," *The Leader*, June 19, 1991.

⁷⁹ Barb Arland-Fye, "Davenport Seeks Input On Ordinance," *Quad City Times*, November 5, 1991.

⁸⁰ Catherine Guy, "Some Davenport Residents Rap Amendments To Pending Historic Preservation Ordinance," *The Leader*, December 18, 1991.

⁸¹ *Quad City Times*, "Davenport OKs Preservation Law," December 20, 1991.

apartments. The building to its north was renovated in 2014 and the three remaining buildings are currently undergoing rehabilitation.⁸²

(Figure 12)



Figure 12: Brady Street, looking southeast.
Intact block face, rehabbed or with rehabilitation underway.
[Source: Author photograph, May 2, 2014.]

Unfortunately, in 2018, the historic preservation debate continues even as private development fueled by historic tax credits has resulted in an estimated \$400 million in reinvestment in downtown Davenport.⁸³ That figure does not include reinvestment in buildings outside downtown like School #6 in the Historic Washington neighborhood. It does not

⁸² Tory Brecht, “Forrest Block. Luxury Apartments Open in Former Eyesore,” *Quad City Times*, January 26, 2011, accessed March 1, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/luxury-apartments-open-in-former-eyesore/article_b53825a6-2913-11e0-9ec0-001cc4c03286.html, and “Home,” accessed March 1, 2018, at <http://www.democratlofts.com/>, and the author is the tax credit consultant on the other three buildings.

⁸³ Alma Gaul, “Tax Reform Would Eliminate Credits Used for Historic Rehab,” *Quad City Times*, November 7, 2017, accessed March 1, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/tax-reform-would-eliminate-credits-used-for-historic-rehab/article_f21a555f-b2d9-5682-bd8a-cca0f4a7e007.html.

count the over \$1.4 million in private reinvestment by homeowners who are rehabilitating residential buildings in Davenport's Hamburg Historic District using the Iowa state historic tax credit program.⁸⁴

While additional properties have been added to the National Register, in most cases they are commercial buildings listed to gain access to state and federal tax credits. No new residential districts have been listed. The Hamburg Historic District, the city's only combination National Register and Local Historic District, was resurveyed in 2015-2016. Its boundaries were reduced due to loss of structures.⁸⁵

The average Davenport citizen is still under the impression that historically designating a property means restricting what can be done to it.⁸⁶ That is despite the fact that, for the Davenport HPC, its only oversight for any building not in one of two local historic districts or on the local register is the granting or denying of demolition requests.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ An informal study done by the author shows that twenty-one state historic tax credit projects for eighteen buildings resulted in over \$500,000 in approved Part 2 refundable credits. Since the tax credit is 25% of qualified rehab costs, and not every expense associated with rehab is a qualified one, the out-of-pocket cost to owners is typically higher than 75%. That equates to more than \$1.4 million.

⁸⁵ "Hamburg Historic District (amendment, increase, decrease)," National Register Draft Nomination, July 11, 2016. In possession of author.

⁸⁶ Observation based on author's experience as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, a tax credit consultant, and a community member who frequently speaks on the topic.

⁸⁷ "17.23.090 Commission's Demolition Review Process," accessed April 1, 2018, at <http://clerkshq.com/default.ashx?clientsite=davenport-ia>.

Many are quietly approved. When owners butt heads with the HPC, it can become a battle waged in the media. The HPC is seen as dogmatic, stubborn and unyielding.

Like Davenport's historic preservation evolution, the resulting confusion as to what exactly historic preservation regulations require is a story repeated in many cities. What is difficult for many to grasp is that, while the enabling legislation that established the process was enacted at the federal level, the decision about what will or will not be protected rests at the local level through a city's preservation ordinance which varies from city to city. If a local jurisdiction has placed no restrictions on how an historic building can be rehabbed, then all the developer needs to follow are appropriate local building codes or zoning guidelines. But if that option is selected, then access to federal, and often state, historic preservation funding is off the table.

In *A Richer Heritage*, Robert Stipe posits that, in the United States, true sovereign government rests with state government because the people writing the Constitution, the document that enabled the federal government, kept at the state level the right to manage property, defined within its "police power."⁸⁸ That police power has, in term, descended to

⁸⁸ Robert Stipe, "Some Preservation Fundamentals," *A Richer Heritage. Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, Robert Stipe, ed., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 24-29.

municipalities through state code and legislation. And cities, through their preservation ordinances, define local protection.

The powerful tool that federal and state governments hold is financial. Their power to require preservation projects to meet certain rehabilitation standards or follow specific processes in order to obtain funding drives receipt of tax credits, grants, or approval for certain projects.⁸⁹

In cities like Davenport, the issue of what is regulated and what is not is further confused by the city's historic preservation ordinance, which requires oversight of external rehabilitation of a very limited number of properties, but requires demolition permission for any of the more than 1,400 properties listed in the National Register. The county assessor's website contains no notation of whether or not a property is historic. That means a purchaser could gain ownership of an historic property without knowing restrictions, oversight, or opportunities.

The situation is not helped by the city's management of its historic assets. A 2017 city website update eliminated maps of historic districts and preservation surveys, retaining only HPC guidelines. There is little

⁸⁹ Federal historic tax credit and most state tax credit programs require that the Secretary of the Interior Standards be followed. Projects using federal dollars that impact or have the potential to impact historic infrastructure must also follow certain procedures that may require remediation or changes in plans to avoid impact.

physical recognition, such as signage, for many historic districts.⁹⁰ Even existing signs in different neighborhoods do not share a common style. As a fundraiser, a local historical society made bronze plaques noting properties listed in the National Register for owners wishing to pay for them.⁹¹ The result is inconsistent building signage across the city.

Tackling the Topic and Research Resources

The treatise topic grew out of an attempt to understand the various forces at work that helped create the condition of Davenport's heritage neighborhoods. Equally important was gaining a clear picture of the strategies that Davenport and other cities might employ in an attempt to address these issues. Developing this comparison required a study of how current conditions in Davenport and other cities evolved. An attempt was made to develop a multi-dimensional picture of each by including various viewpoints and assessments. Interviews were not limited to city staffers but also included residents, not-for-profit groups and people working in other government agencies.

A number of policy groups with focuses on land use, abandoned housing, urban issues, and poverty have published a range of research-based surveys and case studies of how various urban areas are coping

⁹⁰ One exception is the Hamburg Historic District whose neighborhood association purchased street signs to be mounted at its boundaries.

⁹¹ Judy Belfer, in discussion with author, April 6, 2018. Belfer is President of the Scott County Historic Preservation Society.

with issues related to the treatise topic. Less available are comprehensive reports on the intersection of historic preservation and its role and impact within heritage neighborhoods. Individual masters and doctoral treatises exploring various historic preservation topics have filled in some of those gaps. United States census data has provided baseline measurements over time and across metropolitan areas.

Davenport Baseline Research

The baseline for contrasting demographics over time in the city's heritage neighborhoods is found in *Davenport 2025: Comprehensive Plan for the City*. City planners, working with a citizen steering committee, developed it over a period of two years. It was adopted in 2005 by Davenport's city council.⁹² This work will be discussed in depth in later chapters and forms an important reference point for discussion of the Core since it breaks out the city by census tracts, allowing the reader to compare this area with others across the city.

Complicating the discussion is the impact of the mortgage crisis which occurred after the plan was adopted. There were no formal studies conducted locally to assess the impact of that period on home sales. As a general rule, in good times and bad, the Quad Cities area, including Davenport, tends to offer affordable housing prices which may explain its

⁹² *Davenport 2025*, *supra*, note 3, at 2.

high percentage of home ownership. The nationally agreed-upon house-price-to-income (PTI) ratio is 3.3 percent; Davenport's stands at 2.5 percent.⁹³ Census data was also used to compare Davenport and Iowa's population growth and age of housing stock to that of other cities and states.

Davenport Historic Information Sources

Several 19th century city fathers published colorful memoirs about the early days of Davenport. Most of these authors were not trained as historians or journalists. Nonetheless, their accounts provide interesting perspectives on the people and the events forming the early city. Other sources include early newspaper accounts, printed Davenport annual reports dating to 1899, and local government archives stored within the Richardson-Sloane Collection of the Davenport Public Library.

Twentieth century sources include the work of professional writers and historians. In 1910, former reporter Harry E. Downer published a two-volume history of Davenport and Scott County.⁹⁴ Historian Thomas

⁹³ "How to Worry about House Prices," accessed March 1, 2018, at http://www.freddiemac.com/research/insight/20160531_how_to_worry_about_house_prices.html, and "Peer City Identification Tool," accessed March 1, 2018, at <https://www.chicagofed.org/region/community-development/data/pcit>.

⁹⁴ Harry E. Downer, *History of Davenport and Scott County Iowa: Illustrated*, (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1909.) Vols I and II.

P. Christiansen's 1940 article in *The Annals of Iowa* covered the city's industrial history.⁹⁵ In the 1980s, Marlys Svendsen and her cohorts working on the Davenport historic surveys wrote several resource books, including *Davenport Where the Mississippi Runs West*, and *Davenport Architecture, Tradition and Transition*.⁹⁶ More recently, Timothy R. Mahoney, professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, who studies Midwestern urban history,⁹⁷ has written about early Davenport and other early river towns, focusing on their early business elites and how geographies and transportation access impacted long term growth and economic positioning within their regions.⁹⁸ The opening of a German-American Heritage Center in 2000 spurred new interest and scholarship on the impact of Davenport's German heritage. Dr. Bill Roba, a professor with Scott Community College, has written extensively on this topic for several decades.⁹⁹

Sources for Davenport's recent history from 1970 to the present include *Davenport 2025*. With no lengthy scholarly accounts of city

⁹⁵ Christiansen, *supra* note 13, at 8.

⁹⁶ Martha Bowers and Marlys Svendsen, *Davenport Architecture Tradition and Transition*. (City of Davenport Iowa, 1984.)

⁹⁷ "Timothy R. Mahoney," accessed February 24, 2018, at <https://history.unl.edu/timothy-r-mahoney>.

⁹⁸ Mahoney, *River Towns in the Great West*, *supra* note 6, at 5.

⁹⁹ Bill Roba, *German-Iowan Studies*, 2004 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004).

development or decline during this period available, information has been gleaned from newspapers, planning documents and archives maintained by the Bi-State Regional Commission and the Richardson-Sloane Special Collection.¹⁰⁰ One interesting library archive is a group of files from the original 1970s-1980s National Register survey work.

Author interviews with people who worked in government, served in political positions or as neighborhood or economic development activists helped fill in gaps. Some early participants have died. Local newspapers beginning in the 1970s were not online at the time this research began. A well-kept newspaper morgue belonging to the *Quad City Times* and a 1970s era scrapbook of clippings detailing successful efforts to fight off plans for a highway through the heart of the city were extremely helpful. Within these archives were found details of how this effort linked to Davenport's early historic preservation movement.

Vacant and Abandoned Property Literature

The presence of abandoned residential properties is an ongoing issue in Davenport and a hallmark of shrinking cities as well as many that are still growing but whose footprint has expanded to accommodate

¹⁰⁰ The Richardson-Sloane Special Collection is located at the Davenport Public Library at 321 N. Main Street in downtown Davenport. Bi-State Regional Commission is an inter-governmental planning group made up of forty four communities in the Davenport-Rock Island-Moline MSA. Their offices are at 1504 Third Avenue, Rock Island, IL.

more generously sized suburban platting. Cities are looking for stronger tools to help them cope.

Land banks, governmental entities designed to deal with the problem, were active in Georgia and Missouri for decades while state enabling legislation in New York and Ohio took longer to grant the option to their hard-hit cities and counties. Land banks tackle blight through their legal power to gain control of vacant land and buildings and convey them to responsible owners. Demolition, mothballing of structures for future use, and accumulation of multiple parcels for larger scale development are frequent actions within their legal scope.

The Center for Community Progress, an organization focused on the issue of vacant properties, published a helpful 2014 report that highlighted land banking across several states.¹⁰¹ In 2015, the Ohio Policy Center concentrated on land banks in its state, offering best practices and strategies. Since Ohio land banking was not approved until after the mortgage crisis, many were not established until after 2010. The report offered a useful contemporary snapshot of a relatively new tool and its function across municipalities.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Payton Heins and Tarik Abdelazim, “Take It to the Bank: How Land Banks Are Strengthening America’s Neighborhoods,” *Center for Community Progress*, 2014. This is an example of a post-crisis publication that looked at the impact of established and new land banks across the country.

¹⁰² Greater Ohio Policy Center, “Taking Stock of Ohio County Land Banks,” May, 2015, I, I, accessed March 22, 2018, at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/>

Assessing the impact of vacant/abandoned properties is the focus of local reports from two Oklahoma cities, Tulsa and Oklahoma City. That both commissioned these studies although neither fits the typical profile of a post-industrial, declining city underscores the widespread nature of the problem.¹⁰³

National Perspectives

Researchers and planners have written about challenges to heritage neighborhoods for many decades. Since 2000 and once again in the face of the mortgage crisis, the tone is more urgent. How Davenport fits into this national conversation will be discussed in upcoming chapters.

This body of work has maintained a general continued focus on America's larger cities and less on her smaller industrial towns such as Davenport. In places like Detroit, these issues are brought in to sharp

59396fee59cc6877bacf5ab5/t/5963e388ff7c50a4828b3fbf/1499718547183/greaterohiolandbankreport5-15-15.pdf.

¹⁰³ Corrine Bannon and Erica Wilt, "Effects of Abandoned Housing on Communities Research Report for the City of Topeka, Wichita State University, June 2016, accessed December 24, 2017, at <http://webs.wichita.edu/depttools/depttoolsmemberfiles/hugowall/Topeka-Abandoned-Housing-Report-Final.pdf>, and GSBS Richman Consulting, "Addressing Vacant & Abandoned Buildings in Oklahoma City. Prevalence, Costs + Program Proposal," Final Draft, June 13, 2013, accessed December 24, 2017, at <https://www.okc.gov/home/showdocument?id=2518>.

and dramatic focus by statistics of staggering loss and street after street of abandoned and boarded houses.

Davenport is not one of America's larger cities. Its problems are less extreme than those faced by America's iconic metropolitan landscapes and its statistics are less dramatic. But problems within its heritage neighborhoods abound. Written before the full impact of the subprime mortgage crisis was apparent,¹⁰⁴ Jennifer Vey's 2007 "Restoring Prosperity" identified 302 older industrial cities of all sizes and included Davenport in her list. She made recommendations of how they might begin recovery and stressed the importance of the state's role in revitalization.¹⁰⁵

As the country fell into recession, other reports published by think tanks, advocacy organizations, and consortiums provided background and context. Ohio's shrinking industrial base has left most of the state's "Big Eight" cities experiencing dramatic population loss; that crisis was

¹⁰⁴ While there were certainly earlier concerns, warnings of problems to come, house prices and building starts did not slow until fall 2006. Kimberly Amadeo, "Subprime Mortgage Crisis, Its Timeline and Effect," accessed February 24, 2018, at <https://www.thebalance.com/subprime-mortgage-crisis-effect-and-timeline-3305745>.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer Vey, "Restoring Prosperity. The State Role in Revitalizing America's Older Industrial Cities," *Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program*, 2007, accessed March 1, 2017, at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/20070520_oic.pdf

the subject of a 2010 Brookings report.¹⁰⁶ Another seminal work in which a new term “Legacy Cities” emerged dates to 2011. “Reinventing America’s Legacy Cities” grew out of a meeting of eighty representatives from the United States and Europe in April 2011 in Detroit. It was sponsored by The American Assembly of Columbia University, the Center for Community Progress (CCP), and the Center for Sustainable Urban Development of Columbia University’s Earth Institute. Over three days, the group discussed development of a language and approach to addressing issues in American cities that had continued to face disinvestment and shrinking population. Participants included local politicians, state agencies and federal government officials, foundations, and academicians. Alan Mallach, an urban planner, a Senior Fellow with CCP, and currently a lecturer at the Pratt Institute,¹⁰⁷ was tasked with editorial oversight of papers that were presented at the conference and was part of the team that edited the final report. Interestingly, there were few mentions of the mortgage crisis or foreclosures. It is as if in April 2011, these events were too fresh to process as later researchers might.

¹⁰⁶ Alan Mallach and Lavea Brachman, “Ohio’s Cities at a Turning Point: Finding the Way Forward,” (Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, May 2010), accessed July 9, 2016, at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ohios-cities-at-a-turning-point-finding-the-way-forward/>.

¹⁰⁷ “Alan Mallach,” accessed February 24, 2018, at <http://www.communityprogress.net/alan-mallach-pages-116.php>.

The 2011 report used the year 2000 as the cutoff to divide communities that had rebounded from those continuing to lag behind.¹⁰⁸

Mallach has continued to write and lecture about legacy cities by himself and in partnership with others. In 2013, “Regenerating America’s Legacy Cities,” published by the Lincoln Land Institute was written with Lavea Brachman of the Ohio Policy Institute. The authors quantified common characteristics, identified eighteen legacy cities, tested their characteristics against a common set of criteria, and offered recommendations for a way forward. A few smaller cities like Flint, Michigan, and Youngstown, Ohio, both with profound issues, were included. Most of the cities were metropolitan areas whose residents are measured in the hundreds of thousands. It is assumed that they will never recover their historic populations or be able to manage the infrastructure required to sustain their historic land masses.

Cities the size of Detroit or Cincinnati may have large problems but also may retain world-class assets that smaller cities lack. An August 2017 report acknowledged the differences between large and small cities. It focused on legacy cities with populations of 30,000 to 200,000, whose original growth had come from strong manufacturing bases, but that had

¹⁰⁸ Alan Mallach, ed., “Reinventing America’s Legacy Cities: Strategies for Cities Losing Population,” *The American Assembly*, April 2011, accessed March 29, 2017, at http://www.achp.gov/docs/Reinventing_Americas_Legacy_Cities_0.pdf.

lost substantial population. These cities exhibited challenges more scalable to those found in Davenport.¹⁰⁹

Historic Preservation and Heritage Neighborhoods

Less has been written about how recognized historic districts might impact the trajectory of nearby undesignated heritage neighborhoods. In most cities, buildings in recognized residential historic districts make up a fraction of all homes. How oversight or financial incentives available to a small portion of a city's housing stock is of benefit to surrounding neighborhoods can be difficult to quantify.

In her 2011 master's thesis, Emilie Evans sought to address that gap. She writes about ongoing work in Cleveland, Ohio, and Buffalo, New York, two cities that have faced dramatic population drops and have a number of identified historic preservation districts as well as other non-designated older neighborhoods. In Buffalo she found that, while rehabilitation approaches might differ, groups working in both areas found common cause in the ultimate goal of saving neighborhoods.¹¹⁰ In

¹⁰⁹ Torey Hollingsworth and Alison Goebel, "Revitalizing America's Smaller Legacy Cities Strategies for Postindustrial Success from Gary to Lowell," *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*, 2017, accessed August 29, 2017, at <https://www.lincolninst.edu/download-pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Emilie C. Evans, "Historic Preservation in Shrinking Cities: Neighborhood Strategies for Buffalo and Cleveland," Master's thesis, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, May 2011, accessed November 15, 2017, at http://rightsizeplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Evans_Thesis2011.pdf.

a later periodical article, Evans discusses an initiative in Detroit that trained volunteers to use historic preservation techniques to quickly assess nearly 18,000 non-designated residential properties at risk for demolition after federal Hardest Hit funding was reallocated to permit demolition without Section 106 review ordinarily required when historic or potentially historic properties are facing demolition.¹¹¹ This project provides useful object lessons in how the same data collection process might be applied in mapping and assessing homes outside designated districts.

Cara Bertron's 2011 master's thesis explored effective preservation practices in seven shrinking cities. While her focus was on how these entities were addressing buildings in historic districts, she also explored how controversy can erupt between traditional preservationists and officials seeking to rapidly clear areas of blight.¹¹²

Economic impact studies are often cited to demonstrate how historic preservation benefits challenged communities in an effort to head off the elimination of federal and state historic tax credits by

¹¹¹ Emilie Evans, "Integrity, Character & Intactness. A Preservation Survey Model for Legacy Cities," *Historic Preservation & Urban Change (Urban Infill 7)*, 2014.

¹¹² Cara Bertron, "Between a Rock and a Historic Place: Preservation in Postindustrial Urban Planning," Master's Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 2011, accessed December 12, 2016 at https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1163&context=hp_theses.

politicians setting budgets.¹¹³ These studies rarely deal with residential neighborhoods. Instead, they often focus on historic areas in central business and warehouse districts because the federal historic tax credit, the only national financial incentive, is available only to income-producing properties.

Some state historic tax credits do include residential properties, but these are rarely headline-grabbing, ribbon-cutting, multi-million dollar projects that are touted to show the success of the tax credit programs. Because the incentives vary from state to state, it is very difficult to create a national report that measures their overall impact.

The people driving the conversation and writing the checks to fund reports on the positive impact of the credits or to pay lobbyists to influence legislation are not as often engaged in residential rehabilitation.¹¹⁴ Consortiums like one in the Beall's Hill area in Macon,

¹¹³ *Baker Tilly*, "Iowa Historic Tax Credits," 2017, accessed February 20, 2018, at http://www.preservationiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/IA-HTC_Full-Report_direct-pages-1.pdf, and *Place Economics*, "Catalyst for Change. The Federal Historic Tax Credit: Transforming Communities," June 2014, accessed March 10, 2016, at <http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/advocacy-center/policy-resources/Catalytic-Study-Final-Version-June-2014.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ The author is part of a statewide consortium seeking to maintain the Iowa Historic Tax Credit. Most of the members are focused on large projects, defined as those costing \$750,000 or more. Despite conversations about marketing the credit's ability to assist homeowners, the focus of the 2017 report was on large projects; the only residential photograph was of a very impressive large home.

Georgia, that focuses on a residential neighborhood is an interesting contrast. The project will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.¹¹⁵

A recent report and two theses examined property values and addressed whether or not property values in historic districts were higher than those in similar, undesignated neighborhoods or if historic districts were more resilient during the mortgage crisis than similar areas. These were local studies, focused on specific cities.¹¹⁶ No studies have emerged that measure whether or not there is spillover impact to properties located close to, but not in, historic districts.

The answers to how cities are reinventing their heritage neighborhoods, and particularly how Davenport can accomplish this goal, is the focus of the remaining chapters of this treatise.

¹¹⁵ The group includes a university, a not-for-profit, and city agencies engaged in a transformational neighborhood project; this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

¹¹⁶ Michigan State Housing Development Authority and the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, "Local Historic Districts and Property Values in Michigan Neighborhoods," 2016, accessed February 15, 2018, at http://www.mhpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/MHPN_property_value_final_WEB.pdf; Curtis Aardema, "Residential Property Values and Historic Districts: A Kalamazoo Case Study," Master's Thesis for Western Michigan University, May 2015, accessed February 15, 2018, at [cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1163&context=hp_theses](http://viewcontent.cgi?article=1163&context=hp_theses); Kimberly A. Broadbent, "Assessing the Impact of Local Historic District Designation on Mortgage Foreclosure Rates: The Case of Philadelphia," Master's Thesis For University of Pennsylvania, 2011, accessed January 26, 2018, at http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/176?utm_source=repository.upenn.edu%2Fhp_theses%2F176&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

Scope of this Study

Chapter II provides an in-depth definition of America's legacy cities and how their downward spirals were impacted by geography, government policy and changing industrial focus. It goes on to view Davenport's changing fortunes through the lens of this legacy city profile. The chapter ends with an exploration of the central issue of vacant and abandoned residential properties within heritage neighborhoods and their effect on cities and their residents.

Chapter III looks at how Davenport and six other American cities are attempting to cope with legacy city issues. Many of the chosen cities have suffered dramatic losses in population, measure their abandoned properties in the thousands, and have been forced to look for innovative ideas and fresh approaches to solving their issues. The chapter seeks to define those practices that may be helping to reverse downward trajectories.

Chapter IV focuses on Davenport. It updates the *Davenport 2025* comprehensive plan with a specific focus on the city's Core and its heritage neighborhoods. It explores current city policies, efforts, assets, and rehabilitation partners to generate recommendations of how the city can strengthen its heritage neighborhood efforts.

Chapter V is a call to action that sums up lessons learned during the course of research and offers final recommendations for Davenport.

CHAPTER II YESTERDAY AND TODAY

“Legacy Cities” is a term that began appearing about 2011 that replaces the earlier, more pejorative “Rustbelt City” moniker. That year, a report, “Reinventing America’s Legacy Cities. Strategies for Cities Losing Population,” identified these cities as being most often located in the Mid Atlantic, New England, and Midwest regions;¹¹⁷ a few have also been identified in the South. Writer Alan Mallach describes them as former “industrial powerhouses and hubs of business, retail, and services,”¹¹⁸ rich with natural and cultural resources, sharing attributes like strong universities and medical centers.¹¹⁹ Cities that had been home to national industry and located in America’s larger metropolitan areas first drew the attention and focus of planners and

¹¹⁷ Alan Mallach, *supra* note 108, at 49.

¹¹⁸ Alan Mallach and Lavea Brachman, “Regenerating America’s Legacy Cities,” *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*, 2016, 2. Accessed March 1, 2017, at <http://ti.org/pdfs/LegacyCities.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 3. Cities included in this report were Baltimore, MD; Camden, NJ; Newark, NJ; Philadelphia, PA; Akron, OH; Birmingham, AL; Buffalo, NY; Canton, OH; Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; Dayton, OH; Detroit, MI; Flint, MI; Milwaukee, WI; Pittsburgh, PA; St. Louis, MO; Syracuse, NY; Youngstown, OH.

economists. However, as the legacy city discussion has continued, researchers are recognizing that smaller regional industrial towns share some of the same characteristics and issues and may even have less resiliency to rebound than larger urban areas due to their lack of institutional anchors, traditional corporate headquarters, and other assets.¹²⁰ (Table 1)

For legacy cities large and small, loss of traditional manufacturing contributed to their decline. And, while the number of jobs in the sector did not peak until 1979, manufacturing's share of all U.S. jobs began to diminish starting in the 1950s¹²¹ as the country's population increased, growing from 152,203,000 to 225,055,000 between 1950 and 1979.¹²²

¹²⁰ In August, 2017, a new report focused on cities with populations between 50,000 and 200,000. Torey Hollingsworth and Alison Goebel, "Revitalizing America's Smaller Legacy Cities. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2017, 10-11.

¹²¹ Robert D. Atkinson, Luke A. Stewart, Scott M. Andes, Stephen J. Ezell, "Worse than the Great Depression: What Experts Are Missing about American Manufacturing Decline," *The Information & Innovation Foundation*, March, 2012, 4, accessed January 21, 2018, at <https://itif.org/publications/2012/03/19/worse-great-depression-what-experts-are-missing-about-american-manufacturing>.

¹²² "The Population of the United States, 1790-2006," accessed January 20, 2018, at <http://eh.net/database/u-s-population-series/>.

Cities	1950 Pop¹	2000 Pop¹	2010 Pop¹	% Pop Change 1950-2010	% Families in Poverty 2012-2016²	% Vacant Housing Units 2012-2016²
Detroit, MI	1,849,568	951,232	723,777	-60.9	39.4	29.8
Baltimore, MD	949,708	651,262	620,961	-34.6	23.1	18.4
Milwaukee, WI	637,392	596,783	594,833	-6.7	28.4	10.2
Cleveland, OH	914,808	477,450	396,815	-56.6	36.0	21.0
St. Louis, MO	856,796	348,192	319,294	-62.7	26.7	20.2
Pittsburgh, PA	676,806	334,325	305,704	-54.8	22.3	13.6
Cincinnati, OH	503,998	330,796	296,943	-41.1	29.9	16.5
Buffalo, NY	580,132	292,810	275,688	-52.5	31.2	16.3
Birmingham, AL	326,037	241,645	212,237	-34.9	29.4	19.9
Syracuse, NY	220,583	146,321	145,170	-34.2	33.6	15.5
Dayton, OH	243,872	165,579	141,527	-42.0	34.5	22.7
Flint, MI	163,143	124,768	102,434	-37.2	41.9	25.2
South Bend, IN	115,911	108,148	101,168	-12.7	26.7	17.0
Scranton, PA	125,536	76,816	76,089	-39.4	23.1	14.2
Muncie, IN	58,479	71,423	70,085	19.8	30.9	15.3
Youngstown, OH	168,330	81,990	66,982	-60.2	38.0	20.1
Huntington, WV	86,353	51,711	49,138	-43.1	30.8	17.1
Binghamton, NY	80,674	47,391	47,376	-41.3	33.6	16.1
Macon, GA ³	70,252	97,137	91,351	30.0	27.4	16.8

Table 1: Legacy Cities- population over time, poverty and vacancy rates. [Source: ¹ Population.us, accessed January 25, 2018, at <http://population.us/>. ² United States Census, "American FactFinder," various city pages accessed January 25, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. ³ Macon, GA Information: 2000 and 2010 population figures for Macon, GA from <http://censusviewer.com/city/GA/Macon>. 1970 city annexation swelled population figures 175% but Macon began losing population immediately. It merged with Bibb County in 2014. Vacant housing figures are from 2010 Census.]

New manufacturing factories and firms were often established away from the old Midwest and Northeast industrial hubs. While

manufacturing continues to be a vital to the economies of many traditional industrial states in these regions, states like California and Texas have surpassed states like Ohio and Michigan in the number of manufacturing jobs and population.¹²³

The Midwest and Northeast's share of overall U.S. population declined from 55.7 percent in 1950 to 41.9 percent in 2000. In the same fifty-year span, the South and West regions' share grew from 44.3 percent to 58.1 percent.¹²⁴ Jobs and people were not just migrating to other parts of the country. As legacy cities such as Detroit, Michigan, and Cleveland, Ohio, lost population within their municipal limits, surrounding towns and suburbs gained new residents. Economist Jordan Rappaport defines this as a "metropolitan area"— cities and everything else within a forty-mile radius.¹²⁵ For Cleveland and Detroit,

¹²³ A 2016 report puts the combined number of manufacturing jobs in California and Texas at 2,133,100 and Michigan and Ohio at 1,217,400. Robert E. Scott, "The Manufacturing Footprint and the Importance of U.S. Manufacturing Jobs," January 22, 2015, accessed January 24, 2018, at <http://www.epi.org/publication/the-manufacturing-footprint-and-the-importance-of-u-s-manufacturing-jobs/>.

¹²⁴ Fred Smith and Sarah Allen, "Urban Decline (and Success) in the United States," *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, edited by Robert Whaples, June 5, 2008, accessed January 20, 2018, at <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/urban-decline-and-success-in-the-united-states/>.

¹²⁵ Jordan Rappaport, "The Shared Fortunes of Cities and Suburbs," 51, *Economic Review*, Third Quarter 2005, accessed January 23, 2018, at <https://www.kansascityfed.org/VTPVZ/PUBLICAT/ECONREV/PDF/3q05rapp.pdf>, 51. Economist Rappaport defines metropolitan areas differently than does the U. S. Office of Management and Budget. His metropolitan areas do not correlate to the commonly

population in these regions grew by double digit numbers between 1950 and 2000 as city populations dropped by almost 50 percent.¹²⁶ Across the United States, suburban growth began in the 1920s and exceeded that of cities by the 1930s. By the 1950s, city center growth had begun to slow or decline while the suburbs continued to grow until the 21st century.¹²⁷ The major reasons for this exodus included not just overall population growth, but also the increase in use of automobiles and national highway expansion projects, in personal wealth and income, and in the government's support of home ownership.¹²⁸

In the 1930s, the futures of legacy cities and their urban, heritage neighborhoods was also shaped by segregation, driven by whites unwilling to live near other ethnic groups. This attitude was sometimes supported by government policies. Maps created by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal program to help homeowners refinance troubled mortgages during the Great Depression, rated neighborhoods of 239 American cities in a process that has come to be

used Metropolitan Statistical Area definition. Smith and Allen, *supra* note 124, at 59, reference Rappaport's metropolitan areas in their report.

¹²⁶ Smith and Allen, *supra* note 124, at 59. The Cleveland metropolitan area grew by 21.7% and that of Detroit by 38.6%. Cleveland lost 47.7% of its people and Detroit, 48.6%.

¹²⁷ Jordan Rappaport, *supra* note 125, at 59, 34-35.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

known as “redlining.”¹²⁹ The agency used local lenders and real estate professionals to assess city neighborhoods. Whether the HOLC’s bias was intentional or whether its data absorbed existing local attitudes towards race is still under debate.¹³⁰ HOLC’s use of maps to define city neighborhoods in order to assess risk became accepted practice by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and, in succeeding years, private financial institutions. (Figure 13) What is very clear is the FHA’s practice of funding new construction explicitly underscored what it felt was the need to protect neighborhoods from “lower class occupancy and inharmonious racial groups.”¹³¹ This approach continued beyond the Depression era. The FHA made one of its loan requirements to the builders of suburban Levittowns in New York and Pennsylvania that they not sell to African Americans.¹³² In many American cities,

¹²⁹ “Redlining” was first used to describe a 1960s practice of Chicago Savings & Loans mortgage lenders who outlined in red neighborhoods they believed at risk for racial change; these “redlined” areas were refused financing. The HOLC maps used red to designate “D” neighborhoods, areas deemed in worst condition. The term has come to reflect both the 1930s and 1960s practices. Amy E. Hillier, “Redlining and the Homeowners’ Loan Corporation,” *Departmental Papers (City and Regional Planning)*, 2003, 3, accessed January 26, 2018, at http://repository.upenn.edu/cplan_papers/3, crediting Jean Pogge, “Reinvestment in Chicago Neighborhoods,” in Gregory Squires, ed., *From Redlining to Reinvestment*, (Temple University Press, 1992), 134.

¹³⁰ Hillier, *supra* note 129, at 61, 3.

¹³¹ Jake Blumgart, “How Redlining Segregated Philadelphia,” *Next City*, December 8, 2017, accessed January 23, 2018, at <https://nextcity.org/features/view/redlining-race-philadelphia-segregation>.

¹³² *Ibid.*

residents in heritage neighborhoods were left with less access to mortgage and rehabilitation financing. African Americans particularly were confined to restricted urban housing markets.

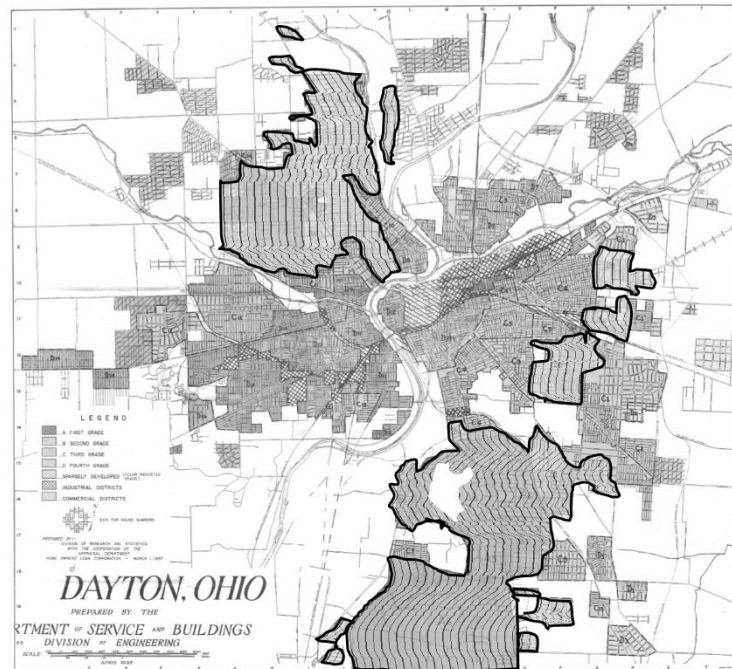


Figure 13: HOLC Map of Dayton, Ohio, March 1, 1937.

The areas outlined in black are “First” and “Second” grade residential areas. The white areas are industrial, commercial, or undeveloped. Any other shaded area is deemed undesirable “Third” and “Fourth” grade, indicating location of “low grade” or “undesirable populations” and poor structural conditions.

[Source: “Maps and Geospatial Data,” accessed January 28, 2018, at https://library.osu.edu/documents/redlining-maps-ohio/maps/Dayton_map.JPG. Author additions to mark specific areas.]

Cleveland, described by one writer as experiencing “sprawl without growth,”¹³³ and other legacy cities have been left with issues

¹³³ Alan Mallach and Lavea Brachman, *supra* note 106, at 48, 10. The authors attribute first use of the phrase within Rolf Pendall’s 2003 report on issues in Upstate New York for the Brookings Institution, “Sprawl without Growth: The Upstate Paradox.”

like eroding tax bases and people living in concentrated pockets of poverty with no financial way out. They are dealing with an over-abundance of older building stock, deteriorated vacant homes, and empty commercial buildings. Most will never regain historic population or employment levels. The benefits that have accrued to suburban growth areas such middle-class residents, corporate headquarters, and a stronger tax base are unavailable to help resolve urban issues. They are being forced to turn to innovative and sometimes drastic practices in order to survive.

Davenport as a Legacy City

Although the discussion surrounding legacy cities has not included Davenport, Iowa, its history as an industrial center and later loss of manufacturing shares similarities. Davenport's downward trajectory has been less extreme. Prosperity brought sprawl and a shrinking population in heritage neighborhoods. Loss of manufacturers and their jobs in the late 20th century left the city with fewer residents and too many houses.

Davenport is part of an economically interdependent Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) of 383,000 people. Its MSA is a group of tightly-packed cities. Comprised of four counties, the area has concentrations of residents in Davenport (102,305) and Bettendorf (35,048), Iowa; and Moline (42,805), East Moline (21,394), and Rock Island (38,647),

Illinois.¹³⁴ The Rock Island Arsenal, a major manufacturing hub, sits on an island between the two states. Except for obvious separations at Mississippi River bridge crossings and welcome signs at town borders, physical transitions between the Iowa and Illinois communities, collectively known as the Quad Cities, are seamless.

MSA rankings are determined by size of population. One indicator of economic health is how an MSA is growing or shrinking in population in comparison to all the other MSAs across America. The Quad Cities ranked 121 in 2000; by 2010, it had fallen to 138.¹³⁵ Relative to the rest of the country, with comparatively sluggish growth, the Quad Cities is shrinking. A declining regional standing and the fact that Davenport

¹³⁴ Davenport's home county of Scott in Iowa, is joined by Rock Island, Henry and Mercer Counties in Illinois to form the Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL Metropolitan Statistical Area. *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 28. In possession of author; population figures, U. S. Bureau of the Census, "2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Davenport city, Iowa; Bettendorf city, Iowa; Rock Island city, Illinois; Moline city, Illinois," accessed January 30, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

¹³⁵ U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016 - United States — Metropolitan Statistical Area; and for Puerto Rico. 2016 Population Estimates," accessed March 28, 2017, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk> and U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Population in Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas in Alphabetical Order and Numerical and Percent Change for the United States and Puerto Rico: 1990 and 2000," accessed March 28, 2017, at <https://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t29/tables/tab01a.pdf>.

shares other characteristics of previously identified legacy cities tends to identify it as belonging in that category.

Davenport was included in a 2007 report from the Brookings Institute, *Restoring Prosperity*, which looked at state government's role in revitalizing industrial cities. The publication predated the use of the term "legacy city." Author and city planner Jennifer Vey studied 302 older industrial cities, a list generated from population information. Using 1990 and 2000 census data, she sorted them as strong, moderate, and weak on scales she called "City economic condition" and "Residential economic wellbeing." Vey focused on the lowest performing sixty-five. Davenport, one of eight Iowa cities included in the larger list, was not singled out as one of the sixty-five.¹³⁶

Overall, Davenport tended to fall into the top 50 percent of all cities surveyed but not in the top third. Vey gave little detail for cities outside the sixty-five she chose for more study. Davenport received a negative economic condition index — 1990s growth in establishments, payroll, and employment — ranking 137 on that scale. It received a positive residential wellbeing condition— household income, poverty rate, and employment— ranking 110 among all cities. Judged by Vey's indexing system, Davenport was neither flourishing nor failing.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Jennifer S. Vey, *supra* note 105, at 47, 12.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 70.

While the city's industrial base has declined, manufacturing continues to be a critical factor today. Out of the state's 1.5 million jobs, 14 percent are in manufacturing. Only Indiana (16.8 percent) and Wisconsin (16.3 percent) rank higher. Iowa's 2nd Congressional District, where Davenport is located, ranks nineteenth out of a total of 436 districts in manufacturing as a share of total employment; 17 percent of its jobs are in that job sector.¹³⁸

Population Growth and Its Impact on Housing Stock

With state population growth averaging less than 3 percent per decade since 1920, including one devastating decade where the population dropped by 4.7 percent, Iowa cities, including Davenport, struggle to maintain a balance between upholding the quality of historic housing stock and addressing issues within decaying heritage neighborhoods.¹³⁹ Between 1900 and 2000 Iowa's residents increased by

¹³⁸ Scott, *supra* note 125, at 59, 18, 36

¹³⁹ Thom Hart, in discussion with author, December 4, 2015. Hart's believes Davenport's historic neighborhoods had suffered from disinvestment and redlining for many decades and that the city had employed a "classic urban renewal approach to economic development." Hart believes that, historically, banks had red lined older neighborhoods. See also Lynn Zerschling, "When Owners Walk Away, Taxpayers Get the Bill," *Sioux City Journal*, July 10, 2010. Accessed October 15, 2015 at http://siouxcityjournal.com/news/local/when-owners-walk-away-taxpayers-get-the-bill/article_7b90e0ee-2e81-51f4-8d09-77b902fb7e28.html. The article details the results of disinvestment in the Rose Hill neighborhood, a Sioux City historic district near the city's old central business district; formerly single family homes were up zoned to apartments and many are now derelict.

only 31 percent.¹⁴⁰ Contrasting Iowa’s growth with that of other states with similarly-sized populations in 1900 illustrates how slow its population increases have been.

In 1900, the populations of Kentucky, Wisconsin, Indiana, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee were similar in size to that of Iowa’s 2.2 million residents. (Table 2) Iowa’s 39.2 percent growth rate between 1900 and 2010 pales in comparison to these states where growth ranges from a low of 105.6 percent in Kentucky to a high of 425.1 percent in North Carolina during that same period.¹⁴¹

Comparison of Population Growth-Selected States			
State	1900	2010	Percent Increase
Iowa	2,231,853	3,107,126	39.2
Kentucky	2,147,174	4,413,457	105.6
Indiana	2,516,462	6,596,855	162.2
Wisconsin	2,069,042	5,757,564	178.3
Tennessee	2,020,616	6,549,352	224.1
Georgia	2,216,331	10,097,343	355.6
North Carolina	1,893,810	9,943,964	425.1

Table 2: Comparative population growth 1900-2010. Similarly sized states in 1900 grew much faster than Iowa. [Source: “U.S. Population by State,” accessed January 20, 2018, at <https://www.infoplease.com/us/population/us-population-state-1790-2015>.]

It is no surprise, then, that the proportion of housing stock fifty years or older in eastern Iowa’s oldest Mississippi River towns, Burlington, Dubuque and Davenport, is greater than 50 percent. From a

¹⁴⁰ “Total Population,” *supra* note 12, at 7.

low in Davenport of 54 percent to a high in Burlington of 67.4 percent, all three cities exceed the statewide average of 42.5 percent.¹⁴² The percentage of Davenport's housing stock built before 1960 is greater than that of comparably sized cities in Kentucky, Wisconsin, Indiana, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee where the percent of housing stock fifty years or older averaged only 35.1 percent.¹⁴³ (Table 3)

¹⁴² U. S. Bureau of the Census. All cities listed in Figure 16, "Physical Housing Characteristic for Occupied Housing Units," 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates," accessed November 15, 2015, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>. Interviews with Burlington and Dubuque staff peg these percentages higher. Charlie Nichols, in discussion with author, November 9, 2015. Nichols is a city planner for Burlington, Iowa. And Dave Johnson, *supra* note 35, at 20.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

Comparative Populations - Age of Housing Stock			
City	Population¹	Total Housing Units²	Percent 50+ Years³
Davenport, IA	99,685	44,252	53.6
South Bend, IN	100,800	47,154	63.2
Green Bay, WI	104,057	45,812	43.0
Bowling Green, KY*	58,067	25,226	34.7
Murfreesboro, TN	108,755	46,108	16.1
High Point, NC	104,371	46,246	33.4
Sandy Springs, GA	93,853	46,971	20.4

Table 3: Age of selected cities of 100,000 or less in Table 2 states. [Source: United States Census Bureau, various pages accessed November 15, 2015, at http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml. ¹ 2010 Demographic Profile; ² 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; ³ 2011-2015 Physical Housing Characteristic for Occupied Housing Units.]

Aging housing stock both outside and inside designated historic districts often goes hand in hand with nuisance or abandoned properties.¹⁴⁴ The terms “nuisance” and “abandoned” are defined differently in each jurisdiction. Dubuque, Iowa, designates properties as nuisances if they have an incomplete exterior shell for a period of time and meet one or more of other criteria that include violating the maintenance, building, or fire codes adopted by the city.¹⁴⁵ Cedar Rapids

¹⁴⁴ Sarah Galvan, “Rehabilitation Rehab through State Building Codes,” *Yale Law Review*, p. 1756. Galvan sources a 2002 speech by Richard Moe, President of The National Trust, to the U. S. Congress of Mayors, who stated that 60% of buildings within historic districts were in census tracts with a poverty level of 20% or more.

¹⁴⁵ “Chapter 4 Nuisances 6-4-2: Definitions,” Dubuque, Iowa City Code, accessed April 6, 2018, at <http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/>

defines them as properties that have required multiple calls for service by city staff responding to code violations, requests to clear debris, or illegal activity.¹⁴⁶ Iowa code defines them under the definition of “public nuisance” within its Chapter dealing with abandoned or unsafe buildings as a “menace to public health.”¹⁴⁷ What is consistent is the negative impact of such properties on heritage neighborhoods, a topic explored in detail later in the chapter.

Davenport’s Economic Crisis

For many legacy cities, declines in manufacturing and population spanned many decades. For some, like Youngstown, Ohio, there is a defining moment, a “Black Monday.” On September 19, 1977, the first furloughs and layoffs by the steel industry began. The area lost 40,000 jobs during the next ten years. Already declining in population by 1977, Youngstown was reduced from a city of 139,788 in 1970 to one of 65,062 in 2014.¹⁴⁸

[index.php?book_id=803](#).

¹⁴⁶ “Nuisance Property Program. Rental Services,” accessed April 6, 2018, at http://www.cedar-rapids.org/residents/rental_services/nuisance_property_program.php.

¹⁴⁷ “Chapter 657A.1 Abandoned or Unsafe Buildings-Abatement by Rehabilitation,” accessed April 6, 2018, at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code//657A.pdf>.

¹⁴⁸ Salena Zito, “The Day that Destroyed the Working Class and Sowed the Seeds of Trump,” *The New York Post*, September 19, 2017, accessed January 25, 2018, at <https://nypost.com/2017/09/16/the-day-that->

Davenport's future continued to be bright as other industrial areas began to decline in the 1950s. Based on 1966 census data, a New Jersey firm that developed a 1969 Master Plan projected a Davenport population of 127,200 – an increase of more than 38,000 residents as well as almost 8,000 new jobs – by 1985.¹⁴⁹ The 1960 census had recorded 88,981 residents and the 1970 census enumerated 98,469.¹⁵⁰ The firm went on to propose an aggressive plan for adding schools, new neighborhoods, connectors and bypasses around surface streets, and even two downtown pedestrian malls.¹⁵¹

Many of these plans never materialized. Continued growth was halted when Iowa ran headlong into the Farm Crisis, the darkest financial period in its recent history. Issues began to emerge in the 1970s as farmers overextended their credit to “plant fencerow to fencerow,” to “Get big or get out.”¹⁵² By the early 1980s, statistics were staggering for the agricultural state and would worsen throughout the decade. Public

destroyed-the-working-class-and-sowed-the-seeds-for-trump/, and “Population of Youngstown, OH,” Population.us, accessed January 27, 2018, at <http://population.us/oh/youngstown/>.

¹⁴⁹ Jim Eberle. “Davenport 1985-Master Plan For Growth Revealed.” *Times-Democrat*. February 12, 1969.

¹⁵⁰ Total Population,” *supra* note 12, at 7.

¹⁵¹ Eberle, *supra* note 149, at 71.

¹⁵² Tom Philpott, “A Reflection on the Lasting Legacy of 1970s USDA Secretary Earl Butz,” *Grist*, February 8, 2008. Accessed October 23, 2014 at <http://grist.org/article/the-butz-stops-here/>.

farm auctions were held at the rate of 500 a week by 1983. By the end of the 1980s, 300,000 farmers had defaulted on their loans. The crisis spread beyond the farming community. In 1985, more banks failed than had in any year since the Great Depression.¹⁵³

The Iowa/Illinois Quad Cities was a powerhouse of farm machinery production. The far-reaching impact of the crisis forced long-operating factories to close and jobs to disappear. Scott County was less dependent on agriculture than many counties in the state. At the beginning of the crisis in the 1970s, area heavy-equipment manufacturers continued to produce, keeping factories busy and most workers employed. Bucking the statewide downward spiral would not last. In December 1984, Farmall, which had employed 4,000 people in 1979, announced it would close its doors. In January 1987, Caterpillar shuttered its Davenport facility, putting 1,350 people out of work.¹⁵⁴ Deere & Company, headquartered in the Quad Cities, survived by diversifying its financial interests and by laying off 40 percent of its staff

¹⁵³ Iowa Public Television. "The Farm Crisis." 1:29:50. Posted September 6, 2013. http://www.iptv.org/iowastories/story.cfm/farm-crisis/10632/frc_20130701/video.

¹⁵⁴ Matt O'Connor, "Caterpillar to Close 3 Plants. Manufacturer Still Expects '86 Profit," *Chicago Tribune*, January 15, 1987, accessed January 23, 2018, at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-01-15/business/8701040669_1_caterpillar-plants-quad-cities.

worldwide.¹⁵⁵ Closings by these major employers had a ripple effect on retailers and their business subcontractors. Job losses in the Quad City area were estimated at 18,000. Davenport's population dropped by 8,000 from 1980 to 1990.¹⁵⁶

By 1990, every city but Bettendorf had lost residents.¹⁵⁷ In the years that followed, business consolidation has forced the closure of other industrial entities. Davenport has recovered its population slowly but steadily. Suburban Bettendorf has continued to grow. Davenport's slow recovery and growth in Bettendorf and other areas of Scott County have moderated continued population declines in the Illinois Quad City MSA cities.

The Farm Crisis stunted growth and stagnated development, conditions that worked against the health of Davenport's Core neighborhoods. In 2018, these areas share some of the same housing and poverty issues found in cities identified by the Legacy Cities Partnership (LCP), a group that has focused on forty-eight legacy cities across America.¹⁵⁸ Overall, 16.6 percent of Davenport residents live

¹⁵⁵ "History of Deere & Company," accessed November 14, 2014, at <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/history2/59/Deere-Company.html>.

¹⁵⁶ "Total Population," *supra* note 12, at 7.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ "Legacy Cities Partnership," accessed March 20, 2017, at <http://www.legacycities.org/>.

below the poverty level. Census tracts in heritage neighborhoods return a poverty rate of 27.6 percent,¹⁵⁹ coming close to matching the concentrated poverty level of 28.3 percent found in LCP's legacy cities.

When compared to residential vacancy in legacy cities, Davenport's overall rate is a relatively healthy 7.9 percent. However, vacancy rates in its Core, where its heritage neighborhoods are located, is 13.54 percent,¹⁶⁰ two points above the national average of 11.4 percent.¹⁶¹

Where Davenport varies from already-identified legacy cities is in the number of its vacant buildings. Legacy cities, even smaller ones, often have thousands of vacant properties.¹⁶² Davenport's estimate is in

¹⁵⁹ 2015 figures accessed by census tract, then calculated as an average percentage per city area U. S. Bureau of the Census, "2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Trend, U. S. Bureau of the Census, accessed March 22, 2017, at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_DP03&prodType=table. Core poverty rate calculated by author by adding up figures from all Core census tracts.

¹⁶⁰ U.S. Census, "Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Trend," accessed March 22, 2017, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>. Core vacancy rate calculated by author by adding up figures from all Core census tracts.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Macon, GA is an example of a city of less than 100,000 whose vacancy rate is 16.5 percent; unlike many cities with high vacancy rates, this is not due to a catastrophic loss of industry.

the hundreds.¹⁶³ In January, 2017, Neighborhood Housing Services, a Davenport-based Community Development Corporation (CDC), reported that its list had grown to 550. In March, 2017, a new city list put the figure at 780; approximately 480 are in heritage neighborhoods.¹⁶⁴ The story might have been very different had Davenport not undertaken a rigorous demolition program between 1970 and 2000. *Davenport 2025* estimates that, during that period, 3,750 housing units were removed, most in heritage neighborhoods.¹⁶⁵ Without that program, its vacant properties could number in the thousands.

Chronically-vacant neighborhood properties are frequent threads woven through the legacy city tapestry. Davenport's hundreds of empty homes, modest when compared to statistics in Youngstown or Detroit, continue to challenge the appeal and value of her heritage neighborhoods.

¹⁶³ The United States Census tracks housing units, of which Davenport had 44,635 in 2010 with a vacancy rate of 7.9%. That would equate to 3,526 vacant units. The vacant property lists maintained in Davenport focus on what the city believes to be chronically-vacant buildings that do not maintain utility services. Since these buildings may contain more than one housing unit, a side-by-side comparison is not possible.

¹⁶⁴ Brook Hayes Upton, in discussion with author, January, 23, 2017. Hayes Upton is the Finance Director/MLO for Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), a community development corporation (CDC) that rehabilitates home in Davenport's Core. She has tracked vacancy rates for a number of years. And "Copy of Newest Vacant Property and Demo Data Newest 3 23 17." Number of vacancies in heritage neighborhoods based on a sorting and rough count of addresses

¹⁶⁵ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 90-91.

Heritage Neighborhoods: The Challenge of Abandoned Homes

Dwindling populations have left legacy cities with more homes than residents to fill them. In extreme cases like Baltimore, these are counted in the tens of thousands. Even a relatively small city like Macon, Georgia, numbers its abandoned properties at 4,000. Derelict properties are a central challenge facing legacy cities, spawning a host of other issues. With tax bases dwindling, financially-strapped cities face the immediate need to fund day-to-day operations and basic public-safety needs. Heritage neighborhoods can lose the necessary financial means to recover when their governments are forced to make hard choices. In 2017, the Syracuse, New York Common Council voted to end funding for the Greater Syracuse Land Bank. The land bank's role is to take possession of derelict properties for demolition or rehabilitation. Most of these properties are in Syracuse's urban neighborhoods.¹⁶⁶

Developing and interpreting comparative data surrounding abandoned properties is complicated. The definition of "abandoned property" varies from city to city and state to state. Researchers are seeking to better define these impacts as results of studies focused on Baltimore, Maryland; Buffalo, New York; Topeka, Kansas; and Oklahoma

¹⁶⁶ Chris Baker, "City Council Slashes Funding for Syracuse Land Bank, Allocates \$1.5M for New Cops," May 8, 2017, accessed January 14, 2018, at http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2017/05/common_council_slashes_funding_for_land_bank_adds_27m_for_new_cops.html.

City, Oklahoma, will show. Baltimore and Buffalo have consistently been identified as legacy cities. Topeka and Oklahoma City have not, instead experiencing continued and steady population growth.¹⁶⁷ Despite that, both have identified vacant properties as a serious issue. In Oklahoma City, most of the vacant properties identified in the study are in two wards that are also home to the city's nine local historic districts.¹⁶⁸

Impact on Property Values

The author of a 2013 dissertation that explored abandoned buildings in Baltimore believes that many studies have not clarified “whether abandoned properties reduce nearby property values or whether abandonment is more common in areas with already lower-valued properties.”¹⁶⁹ Her research found that the former statement was

¹⁶⁷ Topeka is the capital of Kansas and a city of 127,215 people. Except for a drop of about 10,000 between 1970 and 1980, the city has continued to experience moderate growth throughout subsequent years. “Population of Topeka, KS,” accessed January 27, 2018, at <http://population.us/ks/topeka/>. Oklahoma City has been on a steady growth trajectory since it was founding in 1890. “Population of Oklahoma City, OK,” accessed January 27, 2018, at <http://population.us/ok/oklahoma-city/>.

¹⁶⁸ Oklahoma City's Wards 2 and 6 are where most of the vacant properties and the city's historic districts are located. Katie Friddle, in discussion with author, February 1, 2018. Katie is the Oklahoma City Historic Preservation Officer.

¹⁶⁹ Hye-Sung Han, *A Longitudinal Analysis of the Linear and Nonlinear Impacts of Housing Abandonment on Neighborhood Property Values*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2013, 166-168, accessed November 17, 2017, at <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent/uuid:3296ba2a-147f-4d73-abda-ab65c1044986>, iii.

true. Looking at the impact of abandoned, residential Baltimore properties on their neighbors over a nineteen-year period, she discovered that the length of a property's abandonment had a direct relationship to the growth of its negative impact on adjacent buildings and on the surrounding neighborhood. She also found that drops in property value varied depending on the number of nearby vacant buildings.¹⁷⁰

In Buffalo, which has engaged in an aggressive demolition program to address abandoned properties, a 2016 study concluded that the presence of abandoned properties had the single greatest impact on reducing home values and that nearby demolition did not impact, that is, raise, the value of remaining properties significantly.¹⁷¹

A Topeka, Kansas, study found that houses on blocks without vacant buildings had a 7 percent higher value than those on blocks where vacancies existed. The presence of abandoned buildings also slowed the appreciation of adjacent properties. Prior to the introduction of abandoned properties, the valuation of these homes grew 14 percent over five years. With vacant properties nearby, growth slowed to 4 percent in the same time span.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Li Yin and Robert Mark Silverman, *Housing Abandonment and Demolition: Exploring the Use of Micro-Level and Multi-Year Models*, *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, July 13, 2015, 1194, accessed January 27, 2018, at www.mdpi.com/2220-9964/4/3/1184/pdf.

¹⁷² Bannon and Wilt, *supra* note 103, at 46, 3, 14-16.

Breaking housing data out by wards, a 2013 Oklahoma City report found a correlation between home values, the percentage of owner-occupied buildings, and the number of vacant or abandoned buildings. It noted that the longer a home is vacant, the lower its assessed value and tax bill, making continued ownership cheaper. Cheaper ownership costs encourage property owners to hold onto vacant buildings, creating a continued environment of declining values. The study estimates the reduction in value of nearby homes to be between 12 and 27 percent.¹⁷³

Costs to Cities

Each year, Baltimore cuts grass at some 40,000 properties and boards up about 2,325 buildings.¹⁷⁴ The city spends \$2 million annually in vacant property boarding and maintenance. A 2008 city study pegged the annual cost of police and fire services to blocks with vacant properties at \$1,472 per building.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ GSBS Richman Consulting, *supra* note 103, at 46.

¹⁷⁴ “Vacant Home Costs Taxpayers \$30,000,” WBAL-TV, accessed February 1, 2018, at <http://www.wbaltv.com/article/vacant-home-costs-taxpayers-30-000/7101738>.

¹⁷⁵ Han, *supra* note 169, at 77, 33, quoting Bob Winthrop and Rebecca Herr, “Determining the Cost of Vacancies in Baltimore,” *Government Finance Review*, June 2009, 40, accessed February 1, 2018, at http://www.gfoa.org/sites/default/files/GFR_JUN_09_38.pdf.

Between 2000 and 2013, Buffalo demolished 6,411 abandoned buildings, with the median costs ranging from \$5,000 to \$16,989, a total of \$84.5 million.¹⁷⁶ In 2007, the city's mayor estimated that, over a five-year period, each structure cost the city \$20,060 in services and property tax loss.¹⁷⁷

Topeka's study compared city services over a five-year period to blocks with and without abandoned properties. Blocks were composed of housing of similar age, size and location.¹⁷⁸ A variety of city actions, ranging from police response to burglaries, fire department response to emergency calls, and code enforcement's need to address blight were measured. In every case, city engagement was greater along blocks that included vacant properties. Adding together the costs to deal with weeds, sanitation, graffiti, and other measures, city blocks with vacant properties cost \$31,100 more in direct code enforcement hours than did blocks without them.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Marc J. Masson, "Vacant and Abandoned Housing in Buffalo," Partnership for the Public Good, December 2014, accessed January 27, 2018, at https://ppgbuffalo.org/files/documents/data-demographics-history/demographics_and_data/datademographicshistory-_vacant_and_abandoned_housing_in_buffalo.pdf.

¹⁷⁷ Ken Belson, "Vacant Houses, Scourge of a Beaten-Down Buffalo," *The New York Times*, September 16, 2007, accessed January 27, 2018, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/13/nyregion/13vacant.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Bannon and Wilt, *supra* note 103, at 46, 2-3.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 3, 12-14. Estimates based on \$19 per hour cost for a code enforcement officer and does not include supporting back office expense.

In Oklahoma City, the annual cost to the city for fire, police, and animal control calls to all vacant-property types was \$6.5 million. The report included a limited survey of residents who strongly supported the concept of the city taking control of these properties.¹⁸⁰

Impact on Neighborhood Stability and Satisfaction

A characteristic of many legacy-city, heritage neighborhoods is a decline in owner-occupied residences and an increase in rental units. Within the literature, a debate continues as to whether people who become homeowners and those who rent have different values that lead them to their housing choices, even when other factors like income or race are considered. What is generally agreed upon is that there is a positive relationship between neighborhood stability and long term occupants. Homeowners, invested in neighborhoods by their purchases, bring stability with them by their longer tenure.¹⁸¹

Predictably, declining neighborhoods can leave residents questioning whether they should stay. Several studies in the last quarter of the 20th century note that a family unhappy with the quality of its

¹⁸⁰ GSBS Richman Consulting, *supra* note 103, at 46, 1-3, 61-68.

¹⁸¹ Alan Mallach, *Neighborhood Change. Leveraging Research to Advance Community Revitalization. Supplement: What Does Research Tell Us?* January 2016, accessed December 20, 2017 at http://vacantpropertyresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Companion-Brief_Neighborhood-Change-FINAL.pdf, 7-9.

home but content with the neighborhood might opt to move to a new dwelling nearby and remain in familiar surroundings. However, if residents are unhappy with the neighborhood, they are more likely to relocate out of the area.¹⁸² Researchers in the Buffalo study cited the impact of perceived neighborhood decline or rebirth on the behavior of property owners. They concluded that where neighborhoods are being abandoned or demolished, owners are less likely to reinvest. If they are being revitalized, they are more willing to spend money on upkeep.¹⁸³

Deteriorated neighborhoods also are less likely to attract new residents. Alan Mallach and Charles Buki note that homebuyer behavior models that of all consumers. Homebuyers are the demand side of the equation and the neighborhood is the supply side. It is homebuyers, i.e. consumers, who determine the neighborhood trajectory by their purchasing decisions. According to Mallach and Buki, consumers are risk averse and prefer neighborhood stability over neighborhood assets. All assets are not created equal; an unkempt neighborhood park is a liability while a well-kept one is an asset. First impressions are important as well. Disorder, abandoned properties and poorly

¹⁸² Han, *supra* note 169, at 77, 36, referencing R. Quercia and W. M. Rohe, "Models of Housing Adjustment and Their Implications for Planning and Policy," *Journal of Planning Literature*, 1993, 8 (1),20-31.

¹⁸³ Yin and Silverman, *supra* note 171, at 78, 1186.

maintained homes along a streetscape are less likely to attract new owners.¹⁸⁴

Heritage Neighborhoods: Poverty, Access to Capital, Outside Investors

Poverty

In general, when cities shrink, poverty is not far behind, for two reasons—one obvious, the other subtler. The obvious reason: urban populations fall because of relocation of industry and drop in labor demand; as jobs vanish, people living in a city get poorer. The subtler reason: declining areas also become magnets for poor people, attracted by cheap housing.¹⁸⁵

Writing in 2008, Harvard professor of economics Edward L. Glaeser described how the fate of Buffalo’s residents shifted alongside that of their city. He could as easily have been writing about Dayton, Baltimore, or Cincinnati. Located in the heart of American cities, heritage neighborhoods are likely to be aligned with poverty.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Alan Mallach and Charles Buki, “Boosting the Odds of Success: Matching Neighborhood Conditions and Problem Property Strategies,” Center for Community Progress Vacant Spaces into Vibrant Spaces Conference Presentation, September 29-30, 2017.

¹⁸⁵ Edward L. Glaeser, “Can Buffalo Ever Come Back?” *New York Sun*, October 19, 2007, accessed April 20, 2017 at <http://www.nysun.com/opinion/can-buffalo-ever-come-back/64879/>.

¹⁸⁶ Malik R. Watkins and Melissa Jest, “Exploring the Contribution of Historic Preservation to the Persistence of Poverty: Developing Affordable Housing in Savannah, Georgia,” ND, 3, referencing information from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, accessed February 1, 2018, at http://www.ukcpr.org/sites/www.uky.edu.ukcpr/files/files/newsletters/Newsletter-Vol5_1_Article5.pdf

Poverty in America's suburbs following the Great Recession increased dramatically with the number of extreme-poverty census tracts growing from 4.7 percent (2005-2009) to 7.1 percent (2010-2014). Unfortunately, the percentage of people in the poorest urban tracts also increased, growing from 19.7 percent to 25.5 percent. In other words, the density of concentrated poverty in urban neighborhoods was worse after the Great Recession than it was before. When race is factored in, both poverty concentration and incidence over time were more pronounced.¹⁸⁷

Research by George Galster has shown that once a neighborhood's poverty level exceeds 20 percent, other issues like educational dropout rates, crime and how long residents experience poverty become more critical factors.¹⁸⁸ Legacy cities commonly have poverty rates exceeding this threshold. And, as has been previously noted, poverty within Davenport's heritage neighborhoods – 27.7% – exceeds that threshold and comes close to matching conditions common in legacy cities.

Access to Capital

On a positive note, heritage neighborhoods tend to offer affordable

¹⁸⁷ Elizabeth Kneebone and Natalie Holmes, "U.S. Concentrated Poverty in the Wake of the Great Recession," *Brookings*, March 31, 2016, accessed January 20, 2017, at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/u-s-concentrated-poverty-in-the-wake-of-the-great-recession/>.

¹⁸⁸ Kneebone and Holmes, referencing Galster. George C. Galster, "The Mechanism(s) of Neighborhood Effects: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications." Presentation at the ESRC Seminar, St. Andrews University, Scotland, UK, 4–5 February 4-5, 2010.

housing options, particularly for those who qualify for financing. What is uncertain is if that funding still exists.

According to an Urban Institute study, the percentage of loans of \$50,000 or less are declining. The report describes access to these dollars as “next to impossible.” The study looked at ten Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with large shares of affordable homes, including several like Dayton, Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri, already identified as legacy cities. While the percentage of homes available in this price range has generally increased since the Great Recession, the number of loans has decreased. Denial rates for loans under \$50,000 were higher than for more costly loans, with denial rates higher in the government marketplace than in the conventional one. Because some financing costs are fixed, small mortgages are less profitable. In a tight credit environment, with more profitable ways to invest their money, lenders are not finding these loans attractive. This can lead to more cash sales to investors who may be less likely to participate in helping neighborhoods rebound, or contract sales that can burden already financially strapped home buyers.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Urban Institute, “Where Have All the Small Loans Gone?” June 2016, accessed January 27, 2018, at <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/where-have-all-small-loans-gone>.

Outside Investors

The subprime-mortgage crisis during the Great Recession brought new players into real estate markets. National property acquisition firms and private investors found opportunities to purchase, individually or in bulk, foreclosed properties that were purchased from banks or through municipal sales.¹⁹⁰ The mortgage crisis hurt people all across the financial spectrum, but those in poverty and people of color were more susceptible due to a larger percentage of loans in the subprime-mortgage marketplace.¹⁹¹

Purchasers who see buildings purely as collateral or investment are unhelpful to most neighborhoods since they tend not to engage in community redevelopment, participate in comprehensive planning efforts, or be a positive influence in neighborhood revitalization. “Flippers,” who purchased inexpensive buildings, made minimal cosmetic changes, and quickly resell, tend not to be good neighborhood partners.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Sarah Treuhaft, Kalima Rose, and Karen Black, *When Investors Buy up the Neighborhood: Preventing Investor Ownership from Causing Neighborhood Decline*, (PolicyLink, April 2010), 3, accessed January 23, 2018 at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/WhenInvestorsBuyUpTheNeighborhood.pdf>.

¹⁹¹ Kristopher S. Gerardi and Paul S. Willen, “Subprime Mortgages, Foreclosures, and Urban Neighborhoods,” (presentation, UCLA and UC-Berkeley, October 30-31, 2008), 8. Accessed March 22, 2017, at <https://www.frbatlanta.org/-/media/Documents/filelegacydocs/wp0901.pdf>, and Treuhaft, *supra* note 190, at 86, 2.

¹⁹² Treuhaft, Rose, and Black, *supra* note 190, at 86, 8-10

But investment by outside buyers does not always produce negative community impacts. This conclusion in a 2016 report found positive characteristics associated with investors who purchased properties, did thorough upgrades and resold at a substantial profit; those who purchased homes for long-term leasing potential; and those who purchase foreclosed properties in order to rent them to former owners.¹⁹³

Some real-estate-owned (REO) companies buy properties in bulk. A Tulsa company purchased 145 distressed properties in Cleveland before heavy fines imposed by Cleveland's Housing Court discouraged further forays into the market. Such companies realize profit by bundling groups of properties and selling them to other investment companies at a small profit per home. Other hurtful practices include buying and renting low-value properties without improving them, contract or lease-to-own sales, or investors who simply sit on properties, waiting for the market to improve.¹⁹⁴ Remarkably, a number of legacy cities with a large renter-to-homeowner ratio and a substantial number of vacant properties have no

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 8-10, and Claudia Coulton, Michael Schramm, and April Hirsh, *Beyond REO: Property Transfers at Extremely Distressed Prices in Cuyahoga County, 2005-2008*, (The Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development, 2008), 9-12, accessed February 1, 2018, at http://neighborhoodindicators.com/sites/default/files/publications/coulton_beyond_reo_final-dec2008.pdf.

routine rental inspection programs. Such an environment allows predatory investors to prey on hapless residents.¹⁹⁵

Sales of property tax liens and tax-delinquent properties are another way investors, including many who operate long distance, can impact distressed neighborhoods. Delinquent property taxes are dealt with differently depending on whether a property is located in a tax-deed state or a tax-lien state. In a tax-deed state, auctions for delinquent properties result in the successful bidder gaining ownership at the auction's end. The bidding can begin well below the assessed value of a property since the base price includes only taxes and interest owed to the taxing body. In tax-lien states, the governing body sells only a lien on properties where taxes are due.¹⁹⁶ These sales draw investors because of the very high interest owners must pay to redeem their properties. In tax-lien-state Iowa, interest accrues at 24 percent a year. If owners fail to redeem their taxes, in a process that stretches over several years, the lien holder may eventually foreclose on the property, paying only taxes and interest owed.¹⁹⁷ The waiting period can increase the likelihood of

¹⁹⁵ Dayton, Ohio and Buffalo, NY, are two such cities; rental property registries and licensing are discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

¹⁹⁶ "What Happens If My Home Goes to a Tax Sale?" accessed March 28, 2017, at <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/what-happens-if-my-home-goes-tax-sale.html>.

¹⁹⁷ Tim Huey, in discussion with author, February 15, 2016. Huey is the Scott County, Iowa, Planning and Development Director. His office is involved in dealing with tax delinquent properties.

greater property deterioration, especially if it is vacant or abandoned.

Even derelict, abandoned properties with taxes unpaid for many years still have value. For investors like Paul Bernard, General Manager of Residential Equity Partners, LLC, there is always value in real estate through the assessed value assigned to it. Several years ago, Bernard paid a fixed price for a portfolio of about forty properties across Iowa, knowing that the value of individual properties varied greatly. One was a commercial building assessed at \$60,000. Another was a small house at 814 W. 8th Street in Davenport, Iowa, with a very modest assessment.

(Figure 14)



Figure 14: 814 W. 8th Street, Davenport, Iowa.

An 840-square-foot cottage. One of the forty properties in the portfolio purchased by Residential Equity Partners that helped the company acquire a \$500,000 loan.

[Source: Author Photo, April 1, 2018]

This small property was bundled with others to obtain a \$500,000 loan to rehab another company-owned California property. Bernard claims to

have \$5 million in real estate across Iowa that Residential Equity is using as collateral.¹⁹⁸

Investors who purchase properties in order to use them as collateral, with no intention of improvement or resale, do not contribute to neighborhood revitalization. Bernard says his company employs local crews to maintain their buildings.¹⁹⁹ Investors who do not follow this practice create more issues for overburdened city crews. Cities are finding ways to require more accountability for these practices. These efforts will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

Davenport within the Legacy City Context

Millions of Americans now live in cities that are “less than” they once were. Looking back from the vantage point of half a century makes it easier to understand how the economic drivers, world events, and government policies that propelled the growth of metropolitan areas during the first half of the twentieth century were overtaken by other factors in the decades that followed.

Davenport has never experienced the spectacular growth or steep decline of a Cleveland or a Buffalo. But during the 20th century, it engaged in the same planning practices that were used across America. These long-term approaches have left its heritage neighborhoods behind.

¹⁹⁸ Paul Bernard, in discussion with author, April 17, 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Taken alone, heritage neighborhood statistics resemble those of legacy cities and not Davenport as a whole.

That means that the people living in these areas experience life in the same way as residents of legacy cities. Their houses have less value, their neighborhoods are more likely to suffer from the impact of derelict properties, and they may be more exposed to the impacts of crime and poverty. In other words, they experience a city that is “less than” it once was.

The hallmark of legacy cities is vacant and abandoned housing. Cities who fail to tackle this issue strategically do so at their peril. As city after city has experienced, not addressing this issue reduces property values in large areas and drains dollars needed to address essential services like infrastructure and community safety.

Davenport’s challenges pale in comparison to those in many cities where elected officials and staff have had to dig deeply to find solutions. States have stepped up to empower their communities with new tools to help them reshape their futures. Chapter III explores the impact of these initiatives in six cities.

CHAPTER III IN SEARCH OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES: HOW LEGACY CITIES ARE COPING

Overview

In order to find answers for the challenges facing Davenport and its heritage neighborhoods, the author examined how six other American cities are tackling the impact of deterioration and disinvestment of infrastructure within their heritage residential areas.²⁰⁰ The goal was to understand not only what is being accomplished but also factors contributing to success or failure.

Five had been identified as “legacy cities” within recent literature. They include Buffalo and Syracuse, NY; Cincinnati and Dayton, OH; and Macon, GA. Dubuque, IA, the sixth city examined, has not been included in any legacy city reports. However, like Davenport, it lost population and jobs during the farm crisis and has been slowly recovering since.

Most of the legacy city literature was published after 2010 in the years following the subprime mortgage crisis during the Great Recession. It was then that the national discussion surrounding abandoned buildings expanded and the time during which states like New York and

²⁰⁰ The study was completed in May 2017.

Ohio passed laws that enabled land banks or allowed cities to intervene more aggressively in the sales of tax-distressed properties. Property owners across every economic spectrum suffered, but the impact was often greater in urban settings where many heritage neighborhoods are located.²⁰¹

Selecting comparison cities proved challenging. While Davenport's population is only about 100,000, it is part of the geographically-compact Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, two-state Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that tends to function as one larger economic unit of 383,000 residents rather than a smaller, independent city. However, like most cities, its historic preservation and neighborhood revitalization efforts are community based and not focused on its MSA.

Six target cities emerged, urban areas with a substantial number of surveyed historic assets and negative or slow population growth over the past fifty years. City populations range in size from a low of 57,637 in Dubuque, Iowa, to a high of 261,310 in Buffalo, New York.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Robert I. Lerman and Sisi Zhang, *Coping with the Great Recession: Disparate Impacts on Economic Well-Being in Poor Neighborhoods*, (Urban Institute, 2012), accessed December 14, 2017, at <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/23216/412728-coping-with-the-great-recession-disparate-impacts-on-economic-well-being-in-poor-neighborhoods.pdf>.

²⁰² Population.us, "Population of Dubuque, IA," accessed February 20, 2017, at <http://population.us/ia/dubuque/>, and Population.us, "Population of Buffalo, NY," accessed April 20, 2017 at <http://population.us/ny/buffalo>.

The study was conducted through a combination of online research of municipal, not-for-profit, and redevelopment group websites; local preservation, zoning, and land use ordinances; and a review of current relevant literature. Through in-person and telephone interviews, city staff working in zoning, preservation, legal, and code enforcement departments provided insight. Local and regional preservation organizations, redevelopment groups, preservation activists, media, institutional partners and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) offered other viewpoints.

The discussions explored not just what the relevant policies and tools were, but also how effective they were proving to be. “Effective practices” is a term used in this treatise to describe policies and procedures that appear to be helping cities manage and revitalize heritage neighborhoods. What works in one community may not in another. Some practices may be so new that their long-term impact cannot be measured. Ideally, effective practices should produce outcomes that can be duplicated and are scalable. They should be within the means of a government entity — a city, a county, or a state — to sustain. The outcomes they generate should contribute to specific objectives that support strategic revitalization.

The study sought to compare how well cities were making public information accessible, how they were using governance to manage issues, and how they were partnering with private and government

resources. In these legacy cities, not-for-profit and historic preservation organizations were at work, sometimes independently of and sometimes hand-in-hand with local government. Groups focused on what traditionally is seen as economic development, with primary activity on commercial property rehabilitation. Others concentrated efforts on neighborhoods. Hospitals and educational institutions, entities whose expansion has sometimes disrupted and diminished heritage neighborhoods,²⁰³ are playing significant roles as rehabilitation partners in some of the study cities.

The study also explored the responsiveness of state governments in implementing enabling legislation to address emerging issues as well as political ideology that actively hurts cities' abilities to address systemic problems in their heritage neighborhoods.

²⁰³ This issue will be discussed more fully in Chapter II. Recent literature on the subject includes Davarian Baldwin, "When Universities Swallow Cities," July 30, 2017, accessed January 13, 2018 at <https://www.chronicle.com/article/When-Universities-Swallow/240739>, and "Healthy Homes," accessed January 17, 2018 at <http://www.healthyhomesco.org/healthy-homes/>, and Daniel Diamond, "How the Cleveland Clinic Grows Healthier While its Neighbors Stay Sick," July 17, 2017, accessed January 13, 2018 at <https://www.politico.com/interactives/2017/obamacare-cleveland-clinic-non-profit-hospital-taxes/>.

The Study Cities and Their Historic Assets

Buffalo and Syracuse in New York, Cincinnati and Dayton in Ohio, and Macon, Georgia, share characteristics of poverty, vacant properties and population loss. The cases for the two Iowa cities, Davenport and Dubuque, are less extreme.

All cities had a substantial number of historic assets. While the ratio of properties listed in the National Register to the number of buildings overall in most cities is typically small, the act of taking time to survey these assets and list them in the National Register can measure their importance to a community as well as its attitude toward its history and heritage neighborhoods. And, while each city may opt for different standards for local registers, the National Register process is consistent. The study also explored how each city measured its historic assets or registered historic properties²⁰⁴ and extended protection to them through city codes and ordinances.

All have engaged in the process of both local and national designations. The number of National Register properties in the two smallest cities, Macon and Dubuque, reflect both the smallest and

²⁰⁴ The term “registered historic property” is used to define by properties listed in the National Register or those who have been listed in local historic registers. In each of the surveyed cities, while the definition of a National Register-listed property is the same, that of a locally listed or locally landmarked property may vary. Some cities, like Davenport, retain a small list of locally landmarked buildings which may or may not be listed in the National Register. Other cities, like Dayton, define any contributing building in a local register district as a local landmark.

largest numbers within the study. No city maintains an accurate and up-to-date list. Measuring municipal historic infrastructure is a time consuming and inexact exercise. Such a task can be streamlined where state databases are available. (Table 4)

City	Population 1960/1970/2010	Percent Housing Stock Built Pre 1960	National Register Listings (Est.)	Total Housing Units	Percent Vacant
Buffalo	532,759/462,768/261,310	84.7%	3,707	132,134	16.3
Cincinnati	502,550/452,524/296,943	63.7%	2,839	162,398	18.1
Davenport	88,981/98,469/99,685	48.6%	1600	44,638	7.9
Dayton	262,332/243,601/141,527	58.8%	3,000	74,254	22.8
Dubuque	56,606/62,309/57,637	50.5%	1,000	25,483	6.2
Macon	69,784/122,423/91,351	40.3%	6,000	69,957	18.5
Syracuse	216,038/197,208/145,170	72.5%	1,236	64,866	15.5

Table 4: Study cities, their populations, and housing statistics. Davenport’s peak population was 103,264 in 1980. Dubuque’s population peaked in 1980 at 62,374, dropped to 57,753 in 1990 and since has averaged a .163% growth rate per decade. Macon population increase 1960-1970 due to annexation. [Sources for all statistics: See bibliography.]

Buffalo, New York

Buffalo is its state’s second largest city. Its population peaked at 580,000 in 1950, and then began a rapid decline to its 2010 population of 261,310.²⁰⁵ Urban renewal in the 1960s split the city’s core and

²⁰⁵ Glaeser, *supra* note 185, at 83.

destroyed historic elements;²⁰⁶ its population continues to shrink.²⁰⁷ In 2014, vacant housing units were estimated to be more than 18,000.²⁰⁸ While prosperity is returning to its west side, much of the east side of the city remains in what one writer calls “utter disrepair.”²⁰⁹ More than 31 percent of its residents live in poverty; a 2014 U.S. Census Department report listed it as the fourth poorest city in America.²¹⁰

Buffalo has nine historic districts and an estimated 3,700 properties in the National Register.²¹¹ In Buffalo, a nine-person Preservation Board reviews all exterior changes to landmark properties or properties within what the city calls Preservation Districts. The Secretary

²⁰⁶ “Frederick Law Olmsted Designing America,” accessed April 20, 2017, at <http://www.pbs.org/wned/frederick-law-olmsted/learn-more/olmsteds-buffalo-park-system-and-its-stewards/>.

²⁰⁷ “Population of Buffalo, NY,” *supra* note 202, at 93.

²⁰⁸ G. Scott Thomas, “Buffalo Finishes among the 10 Cities with the Worst Vacancy Rates for Housing,” October 10, 2014, accessed April 28, 2017, at http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/blog/morning_roundup/2014/10/buffalo-finishes-among-the-10-cities-with-the.html.

²⁰⁹ Ethan Powers, “The Tour de Neglect: A Cycle Ride through Buffalo's Deprived East Side,” *The Guardian*, October 14, 2014, accessed April 29, 2017, at <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/oct/14/-sp-cycle-buffalo-new-york-deprived-east-side-tour-de-neglect#img-8>.

²¹⁰ Emily Guggenmos, “Buffalo Is the Fourth Poorest City in the Nation,” June 5, 2014, accessed April 29, 2017, at <http://wivb.com/2014/06/05/buffalo-is-4th-poorest-city-in-nation/>.

²¹¹ “Maps of Historic Districts,” accessed April 10, 2017, at http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/RegulatoryBoards/Preservation_Board/MapsHistoricDistricts.

of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation provide the framework for decision making.²¹²

Applicants seeking demolition approval for city landmarked properties must demonstrate economic hardship. Additionally, the Preservation Board reviews applications for demolition of any property fifty years or older anywhere in the city exclusive of structures built for automobile storage. The role is advisory but puts demolition on hold for thirty days.²¹³ Despite this power, the city's webpage explaining demolition procedures does not mention this thirty-day Preservation Board review process.²¹⁴

Syracuse, New York

Between 1960 and 2000, Syracuse lost 31.8 percent of its residents, bringing its 2010 population to 145,170.²¹⁵ Syracuse is a city

²¹² "Historic Preservation," accessed April 10, 2017, at http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/RegulatoryBoards/Preservation_Board.

²¹³ "Expanded Application for Demolition for Properties Not Landmarked or in a Historic District," accessed April 10, 2017, at http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/city_departments/SPlanning/PreservationBoard/DemolitionApplicationNon-HistoricProperties.pdf.

²¹⁴ "Demolition FAQs," accessed April 28, 2017, at https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/EDPIS/Inspections/Demolition/DemolitionFAQs.

²¹⁵ Population.us, "Population of Syracuse, NY," accessed February 20, 2017, at <http://population.us/ny/syracuse/>.

challenged by a 15.5 percent residential property vacancy rate. The percentage of residents who rent their homes is 61.4 percent while 34.8 percent live in poverty.²¹⁶

Syracuse has four local Preservation Districts. Two are in relatively affluent residential locations and two are commercial in nature. More than 1,230 properties are listed in the National Register.²¹⁷ The city also has twelve National Register residential and commercial districts. A 2012 Preservation Plan also notes eighty individual properties that are either listed in the National Register or are local Protected Sites.²¹⁸

In 2009, in response to demolition requests triggered by federal stimulus money, the city ordered an in-depth report and implemented changes as to how it dealt with historic buildings. Preservation gained a powerful advocate that same year when Common Council member and mayoral candidate Stephanie Miner, created a 50 Point Plan that included the positive outcomes of retaining historic infrastructure. She was elected and Syracuse had a preservation advocate in its highest

²¹⁶ U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Selected Economic Characteristics. 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates,” accessed February 20, 2017, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

²¹⁷ Kate Auwaeter, in discussion with author, February 3, 2017. Auwaeter is the Syracuse staff liaison for historic preservation activities.

²¹⁸ “Historic Preservation Plan Syracuse New York. A Component of the Syracuse Comprehensive Plan,” accessed January 13, 2018, at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2Xo82GXTbPdbUZjN3J0R3pBN3c/view>.

office.²¹⁹ Its Landmark Preservation Board ordinance now requires review of any demolition request for buildings fifty years or older. The report found many properties targeted for demolition to be significant. It estimated that more than 50,000 buildings were constructed prior to 1960.²²⁰

According to former Syracuse Neighborhood & Business Development Commissioner Paul Driscoll, historic designation was once considered a negative, the “kiss of death.” That’s because, some years ago, Syracuse had been put on probation after its demolition procedures failed to include adequate oversight in reviewing historic status prior to taking action. For a long time, preservation oversight rested at the state level.²²¹ Syracuse Preservation Officer Kate Auwaeter agrees; she recalls that owners once said, “Please tell me my property is not historic.” Now, with the implementation of state historic tax credits, they are “begging” to get historic designation.²²²

²¹⁹ Bertron, *supra* note 112, at 51, 45. What is known as “city council” in many cities is “Common Council” in Syracuse.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, 181.

²²¹ Paul Driscoll, in discussion with author, March 3, 2017.

²²² Auwaeter, *supra* note 217, at 100.

Cincinnati, Ohio

In Cincinnati, almost one in three residents lives in poverty, many in the city's historic districts.²²³ The city lost 34.1 percent of its population between 1960 and 2000, falling from 502,550 to 296,943 between 1960 and 2010.²²⁴ In 2010, across a city hit hard by the mortgage crisis, more than 4,800 buildings stood vacant.²²⁵ Historic neighborhoods were under threat. By 2010, Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, one of the largest historic districts in the country, had lost more than half of its pre-1930 buildings.²²⁶ Both preservationists and politicians, concerned about the speed of loss, began to rethink how the city might deal with blight. Ed Cunningham, Division Manager in the Property Maintenance Code Enforcement Division of the Inspections Department, has played a leading role in this new initiative. A new approach to code enforcement and new municipal tools were keys in

²²³ "10 Poorest Neighborhoods," accessed March 3, 2017, at <https://citylinkcenter.org/about-us/the-need/10-poorest-neighborhoods>. Among the neighborhoods listed are historic districts Over-the-Rhine, West End (Dayton Street), and Walnut Hills.

²²⁴ Joseph Schilling and Jonathan Logan, "Greening the Rustbelt," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Autumn, 2008, accessed December 14, 2016, at <http://www.esf.edu/cue/documents/Greeningtherustbelt.pdf>, and Population.us, "Population of Cincinnati, OH," accessed February 20, 2017, at <http://population.us/oh/Cincinnati>.

²²⁵ Bertron, *supra* note 112, at 51, 83.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 84.

allowing the city to more effectively deal with the issues its heritage neighborhoods faced.²²⁷ That overhaul included a 2012 reorganization of the city’s legal department to include a Quality of Life/Affirmative Litigation Division and breaking down administrative walls between departments like legal and code enforcement to enhance inter-department co-operation.²²⁸ Cincinnati’s website lists twenty-eight local landmarks, twenty- eight local and National Register historic districts, and approximately 2,830 National Register properties.²²⁹ The term “conservation” replaces “preservation” in Cincinnati; the city’s Historic Conservation Board (HCB) was established in 1980.²³⁰ The board reviews proposed changes to properties in local districts based on conservation guidelines for specific landmarks or districts. The HCB can grant relief from the city’s zoning code as well as demolition based on hardship.

²²⁷ Ibid, and Ed Cunningham, in discussion with author, February 20, 2017. Cunningham is a Division Manager for the Cincinnati Department of Buildings & Inspections, Property Maintenance Code Enforcement Division.

²²⁸ Jessica Powell, in discussion with author, February 21, 2017. At the time of the interview, Powell was Assistant City Solicitor with the City of Cincinnati Department of Law.

²²⁹ “Historic Conservation,” accessed January 24, 2017, at <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings/historic-conservation/>. This is the front page of the Historic Conservation section. Links to other pages in the section are located the left column of this page.

²³⁰ Cincinnati opted for a term more closely aligned to European models and to avoid confusion with federal terminology that gives “preservation” a very specific meaning. Beth Johnson, in discussion with author, February 2, 2017. Johnson is the Urban Conservator for Cincinnati.

Changes to the city’s ordinance a decade ago require owners to prove that denying demolition rises to the level of a taking by the city. The city code forbids demolition by neglect.²³¹ An “At-Risk Historic Buildings” list noting privately owned buildings is available on the city website. The Cincinnati Preservation Association, a strong not-for-profit preservation partner, is offered as a contact for more information.²³²

While privately-owned buildings fifty years or older, not located in local historic districts and not locally landmarked, may be demolished by their owners without review, the city sets the bar higher for itself. City-owned buildings, either those already registered as historic or deemed eligible for listing in the National Register, may not be demolished without HCB review except in emergency situations.²³³ City demolition proposals for any building fifty years or older deemed dangerous or unsafe are subject to a hearing by the Urban Conservator to assess the building’s historic significance.²³⁴

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² “At-Risk Historic Buildings,” accessed February 21, 2017, at <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings/property-maintenance-code-enforcement/at-risk-historic-buildings/>.

²³³ Beth Johnson, *supra* note 230, at 103.

²³⁴ Ibid.

Dayton, Ohio

“The City of a Thousand Factories,”²³⁵ as Dayton was once nicknamed, is perhaps most famous as the birthplace of American aviation. Evolving into an innovation hub, early 20th century Dayton had more patents, per capita, than any other United States city.²³⁶ Population peaked in 1960 at 262,332. During the 1970s, the city lost 46 percent of its manufacturing jobs.²³⁷ By 2010, its declining population had dropped to 141,527, below that of 1920.²³⁸ Loss of population led to an estimated 7,000 to 10,000 vacant homes.²³⁹ More than one third –

²³⁵ Christine Negroni, “Pitching in to Preserve Aviation History,” *The New York Times*, December 13, 2016, accessed April 20, 2017, at https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/13/realestate/commercial/pitching-in-to-preserve-aviation-history.html?_r=0.

²³⁶ “About Carillion Park,” accessed April 24, 2017, at <https://www.daytonhistory.org/about-us/> and Lewis Wallace, “Why Did Dayton Produce So Many Inventors and Inventions? WYSO Curious Pops Open an Answer,” August 1, 2014, accessed April 24, 2017, at <http://wyso.org/post/why-did-dayton-produce-so-many-inventors-and-inventions-wyso-curious-pops-open-answer> and Krissy Clark, “America’s Forgotten Forerunner to Silicon Valley,” March 20, 2014, accessed April 24, 2017 at <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-31989802> and “NCR Leaves Dayton,” accessed April 24, 2017, at <https://circa71.wordpress.com/2009/06/02/ncr-leaves-dayton/>.

²³⁷ “Regenerating America’s Legacy Cities,” *supra* note 118 at 56, 4.

²³⁸ The city’s 2010 population was greater than it was in 1910 (116,577) and less than it was in 1920 (152,559). Population.us, “Population of Dayton, OH,” accessed April 20, 2017 at <http://population.us/oh/dayton/>.

²³⁹ Alex Heckman, in discussion with author, April 27, 2017. Heckman is Director of Education and Museum Operations for Dayton History and a member of the Dayton Landmarks Commission.

35.5 percent – of residents live below the poverty level and 52.3 percent rent their homes.²⁴⁰

Dayton has twenty historic districts and eighty-three individual landmarks listed in the National Register, about 3,000 properties. Of these, twelve districts and fifty-eight individual landmarks have local zoning protection.²⁴¹ Dayton’s Landmark Commission approves exterior changes to three different types of historic overlay districts known collectively as the “Dayton Register of Historic Landmark Properties.” Approvals can be required for changes to significant interiors in public buildings.²⁴² The city requires demolition review only for individual landmarks or properties within local historic districts.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Dayton city, OH, “Individuals below Poverty Level, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” accessed April 20, 2017, at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml# and “Selected Housing Characteristics 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.”

²⁴¹ “Historic Districts – National Register,” accessed January 13, 2018, at <https://www.daytonohio.gov/223/Historic-Districts---National-Register>.

²⁴² “Section 150.345 Historic Overlay Districts,” Dayton, Ohio Zoning Code, Amended May 4, 2016, 233-248, accessed April 15, 2017, at <http://www.daytonohio.gov/DocumentCenter/View/550>.

²⁴³ Rachel Banowitz, in discussion with author, April 26, 2017. Banowitz is Dayton’s Preservation Officer.

Macon, Georgia

Macon has a rich architectural history. Growth fueled by annexation between 1960 and 1970 that drove the city's population to 122,423 was not sustainable.²⁴⁴ Between 1970 and 2010, it lost 31,072 residents.²⁴⁵ Between 2000 and 2010, city population fell by 6.07 percent to a population of 91,351 in a state where population grew by 18.34 percent.²⁴⁶ The number of residents below the poverty level is 27.4 percent, with many census tracts exceeding 50 percent.²⁴⁷ Four

²⁴⁴ "Stories of the Century," accessed April 14, 2007, at <http://www.mindspring.com/~teeth/caution/macontg100years.htm>. Comparing 1960 census with 1970 census returns an increase of 75.4 percent.

²⁴⁵ Anne Carpenter, Emily Mitchell, Shelley Price, "Blight Remediation in the Southeast: Local Approaches to Design and Implementation," (discussion paper, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, November, 2015), accessed April 14, 2017, at <https://www.frbatlanta.org/-/media/documents/communitydevelopment/publications/discussion-papers/2015/05-blight->.

²⁴⁶ "Macon Georgia Population: Census 2010 and 2000 Interactive Map, Demographics, Statistics, Quick Facts," *CensusViewer*, accessed April 1, 2017, at <http://censusviewer.com/city/GA/Macon> and "Population of Georgia: Census 2010 and 2000 Interactive Map, Demographics, Statistics, Quick Facts," *CensusViewer*, accessed April 1, 2017, at <http://censusviewer.com/state/GA>.

²⁴⁷ U. S. Bureau of the Census, Macon-Bibb County, Georgia, accessed March 15, 2017, at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#. And U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates," accessed March 15, 2017, at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_S1701&prodType=table. In Macon-Bibb census tract 105, 74.9 percent of the population lives below the poverty level.

thousand Macon buildings are abandoned, a relatively high number for a city of just over 90,000 people.²⁴⁸

Macon, whose government merged with primarily suburban and rural Bibb County in 2014,²⁴⁹ has fourteen National Register districts; five districts have local designation as “design review districts.”²⁵⁰ Beginning in the early 1970s, the Middle Georgia Historical Society and a cadre of volunteers began an aggressive effort to survey and list the city’s historic assets, both districts and individual-listed properties, totaling an estimated 6,000.²⁵¹ Some of the districts were quite large. The Macon Historic District, listed in 1974 and revised in 1995, included more than

²⁴⁸ John Baker, in discussion with author, April 3, 2017. Baker is Macon-Bibb’s Building Abatement Manager working in the Property Maintenance Division.

²⁴⁹ “Consolidation: HB 1171,” signed by the Georgia Governor on April 20, 2012 permitted the restructuring of the governments of Macon, Payne City, and Bibb County; to create and incorporate a new political body corporate under the name Macon-Bibb County. Accessed March 14, 2017, at https://web.archive.org/web/20121030001652/http://www1.legis.ga.gov:80/legis/2011_12/sum/hb1171.htm.

²⁵⁰ “Historic Macon,” accessed January 2, 2018, at www.historicmacon.org/macons-historic-districts/ and “Macon-Bibb Historic Design Guidelines,” accessed January 2, 2018 at <https://files.acrobat.com/a/preview/bafec095-c9d6-4a15-8e7a-11d149e36dfa>.

²⁵¹ Josh Rogers, in discussion with author, March 13, 2017. Rogers is President/CEO for NewTown Macon and former executive director of Historic Macon Foundation.

1,200 properties on 688 acres, covering downtown and several neighborhoods.²⁵²

Macon's historic preservation review process – limited to its design review districts even before merger – falls under an independent Planning and Zoning Commission. Applications for rehab, demolition, or new construction in these districts are first reviewed by a Design Review Board (DRB) that functions in an advisory role. Those recommendations are reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z). Staff can recommend routine changes, but final approval comes from P&Z. P&Z decisions are not subject to override by a county commission vote; appeals must be resolved through judicial process.²⁵³

In Macon, buildings in all five design review districts are subject to demolition review by the DRB and the P&Z. The demolition process requires not only a structural report but also plans for what is to be built on the site. Only when the city has issued a permit for the new structure is the petitioner issued a demolition permit. The two entities also review proposals for new construction which must be compatible with the site's existing streetscape.²⁵⁴

²⁵² "Macon Historic District," accessed April 6, 2017, at <https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/74000658.pdf>.

²⁵³ Sara Dusenberry, in discussion with author, March 22, 2017. Dusenberry is the staff liaison to the Design Review Board.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

Dubuque, Iowa

In the aftershock of the farm crisis, Dubuque suffered the highest unemployment rate in the state – 23 percent²⁵⁵ – and city population fell by 7.8 percent within a decade.²⁵⁶ In 2010, its population was 57,637, above its 1960 level of 56,606 but still below its 1970 level of 62,309.²⁵⁷ The city’s vacancy rate of 6.2 percent is the lowest of the seven cities surveyed. Its poverty rate was also a lower 16.2 percent.²⁵⁸

In 2006, the city rallied around the goal of becoming an international model for sustainability, setting goals around prosperity, equity, environmental integrity, and social and cultural vibrancy. Within the broad sustainability context, preservation of historic infrastructure finds solid grounding.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵“History,” accessed February 20, 2017, <https://imaginedubuque.com/about-2/history-of-planning/#more-103>.

²⁵⁶ The City of Dubuque, *Creating an International Model for Sustainability. Dubuque, Iowa*, revised September 2015, accessed January 13, 2018, at www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2702.

²⁵⁷ “Population of Dubuque, IA,” *supra* note 202, at 93.

²⁵⁸ United States Census, “Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months,” 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, *American FactFinder*, and United States Census, “Selected Housing Characteristics 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” *American FactFinder*, accessed May 5, 2017, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

²⁵⁹ *Creating an International Model for Sustainability*, *supra* note 256, at 110.

Dubuque has approximately 1,000 properties listed in the National Register. It has five combination local and National Register historic districts. It also has twelve National Register Districts, most clustered in neighborhoods in and near the old downtown, and ten locally-landmarked structures.²⁶⁰ Dubuque has long had conservation districts, nine located within its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. They include both historic and non-historic buildings and structures that have been deemed important in terms of their overall value to their neighborhood. Some overlap with existing local and National Register districts. Combined, they blanket the city's heritage neighborhoods and commercial districts. The city may opt someday to list some in historic registers.²⁶¹

Dubuque's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approves exterior changes for locally-landmarked properties and historic districts. Demolition without review may proceed for properties holding only National Register designation. To further protect all properties, the city

²⁶⁰ "Historic Reports," accessed February 27, 2017, at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/1475/Historic-Reports>. The Dubuque estimate is based on comparing the city list of National Register properties with details within historical surveys found on the city's website and in Wikipedia articles. The city's website is an excellent and accessible resource for information about many initiatives and studies. And "City Designated Landmarks," accessed January 13, 2018 at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/341/City-Designated-Landmarks>.

²⁶¹ Dave Johnson, *supra* note 35, at 20.

has implemented a demolition-by-neglect ordinance.²⁶² Offering further protection for heritage neighborhoods, Dubuque’s demolition process includes not only landmarked buildings and buildings in local historic districts, but also buildings in the city’s conservation districts. That brings the number of buildings with demolition oversight to more than 2,900.²⁶³ Under the city’s sustainability umbrella, Dubuque views demolition as a “failure.” Petitioners seeking to demolish protected buildings, including those in Conservation Districts, must pass a number of hurdles and provide proof that all efforts to seek assistance have been made, a record of property maintenance as well as attempts to sell the property.²⁶⁴

Davenport, Iowa

In the aftershock of the farm crisis, it has taken Davenport more than thirty years to approach 1980 population levels; its 2010 population

²⁶² “Demolition by Neglect Prohibited,” accessed May 16, 2017, at http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=803.

²⁶³ Dave Johnson, *supra* note 35, at 20; “Conservation Districts,” *supra* note 35, at 20.

²⁶⁴ Laura Carstens, in discussion with author, August 1, 2016. Carstens is Dubuque’s Planning Services Manager; Dubuque, Iowa City Code, “Review of Demolition Permits in Conservation Districts, accessed May 31, 2018, at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/DocumentCenter/View/2800/Review-of-Demolition-Permits-in-Conservation-Dist>.

was 99,685.²⁶⁵ During these decades of severe economic challenge, heritage neighborhoods lost 20 percent of their population and 25 percent of their infrastructure.²⁶⁶

Davenport's overall vacancy and poverty rates are relatively low.²⁶⁷ Both these numbers are considerably higher within the city's heritage neighborhoods. There, the poverty rate rises to 27.6 percent and the vacancy rate to 11.4 percent.²⁶⁸

Currently, Davenport has over 1,400 extant properties listed in the National Register, either individually or contributing in one of its eighteen National Register Districts. Seven of these districts contain mostly commercial, mixed-use properties or are historic campuses. The remaining eleven are primarily residential in nature. The city has only

²⁶⁵ "Total Population," *supra* note 12, at 7.

²⁶⁶ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 91.

²⁶⁷ Davenport's vacancy rate is 7.9 percent; its poverty rate is 16.6 percent. U.S. Census, "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months," 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, and U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Selected Housing Characteristics 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates," accessed May 5, 2017, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

²⁶⁸ 2015 figures accessed by census tract, then calculated as an average percentage per city area. U. S. Bureau of the Census, "2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Trend," accessed March 22, 2017, at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_DP03&prodType=table. Core poverty rate calculated by author by adding up figures from all Core census tracts.

two local historic districts. One is a portion of a residential National Register district and the other is a 19th Century orphans' home campus and some later additions.

In Davenport, demolition of any property listed in the National Register must first be approved by the city's Preservation Commission. While the city's ordinance requires owners to prove hardship in that rehabilitation costs would exceed the value of the property, applications rarely include that level of detail.²⁶⁹

Effective Practices

It is worth noting that what cities deem effective practices in one decade may reap disaster in succeeding years. Efforts to revitalize city centers by clearing neighborhoods to introduce highways is one example. Highway construction into Buffalo's urban center destroyed not just sections of its legacy Olmsted park system but isolated some heritage neighborhoods to such an extent that they still struggle to recover.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Observation based on author's experience as a former member of the city's Historic Preservation Commission; she resigned that position in July, 2017.

²⁷⁰ William Fox, "Segregation along Highway Lines: How the Kensington Expressway Reshaped Buffalo, New York," (master's thesis University at Buffalo, May 2017), 35-39, accessed January 15, 2018, at <http://arts-sciences.buffalo.edu/content/dam/arts-sciences/history/documents/FINAL-Segregation-Along-Highway-Lines-by-Will-Fox.pdf>

More recently, the Great Recession and its mortgage crisis sparked changes in both state and local statutes. Some of the changes identified in this study are a result of that legislation. It may be too soon to assess their long-term benefit or consequences; close tracking of their impact is advised.

Ultimately, assessing effective practices is something that should be considered in the short and medium terms and later to detect any unintended consequences. The assertion of an experienced city official like Cincinnati's Ed Cunningham, who believes new regulations have helped him save heritage infrastructure, is credible and worthy of notice. His perception was backed up in interviews with staffers and city preservationists.

Establishing baseline metrics and goals, carefully measuring progress over time, and developing a consistent review process will better ensure sustained focus on how well cities are addressing chronic challenges within their neighborhoods.

Effective Practice – Tracking Individual Historic Assets

No city surveyed had a solid method for tracking all historic assets. For example, no preservation officer was able offer more than an estimate of those numbers. This is related to how cities classify historic properties. Locally-designated districts and properties tend to experience better management because they often are subjected to more specific

review of proposed changes. As has been noted, in several cities, demolition review is required for such properties but not for those listed only in the National Register. Both Syracuse and Buffalo require review of all properties that are older than fifty years.²⁷¹ However, in Syracuse, code enforcement too often may be overriding Landmark Preservation Board review, using emergency demolition as its rationale.²⁷² Buffalo's demolition review of non-locally designated structures is nonbinding.²⁷³

Tracking every asset can be very time consuming. That is unfortunate since, in three of the cities surveyed,²⁷⁴ both National Register residential and commercial properties are potentially eligible for state historic tax credits, a financial incentive that could enhance a property's salability to a prospective buyer or probability for redevelopment.

There is another danger when historic assets are not tracked. Without oversight, districts can easily lose them. With enough demolition, the integrity of an entire district could be lost. None of the surveyed cities offered an all-encompassing historic-asset-mapping system that drilled down to specific parcels. Such a system might allow

²⁷² Anonymous interviewee, in discussion with author.

²⁷³ Kate Auwaeter, *supra* note 217, at 100; Cunningham, *supra* note 227, at 103; Chris Hawley, in discussion with author, April 13, 2017. Hawley is Buffalo's Preservation Officer.

²⁷⁴ Georgia, Iowa and New York historic tax credit programs offer a residential component. Ohio's does not.

overlaying various characteristics such as historic assets, abandoned properties, or low-to-moderate census tracts, creating a potentially powerful redevelopment or planning tool.

State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in Ohio and New York do offer online databases of National Register districts and individual sites; users can access historic resources on the county and state level. The Ohio site can be slow and unwieldy.²⁷⁵ New York's Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS) National Register mapping software has similar functions but is fast and simple to use. Both Syracuse and Buffalo easily could boost the local robustness of available information by linking their websites to the state site.²⁷⁶ (Figure 15)

²⁷⁵ "Ohio National Register Searchable Database," accessed March 1, 2017, at <http://nr.ohpo.org/Details.aspx?refnum=88002536>. Accuracy of these state websites is dependent on the how well the databases are updated.

²⁷⁶ "CRIS," accessed February 28, 2017 at <https://cris.parks.ny.gov/>. Neither Buffalo nor Syracuse offer links on their city websites to this comprehensive resource.

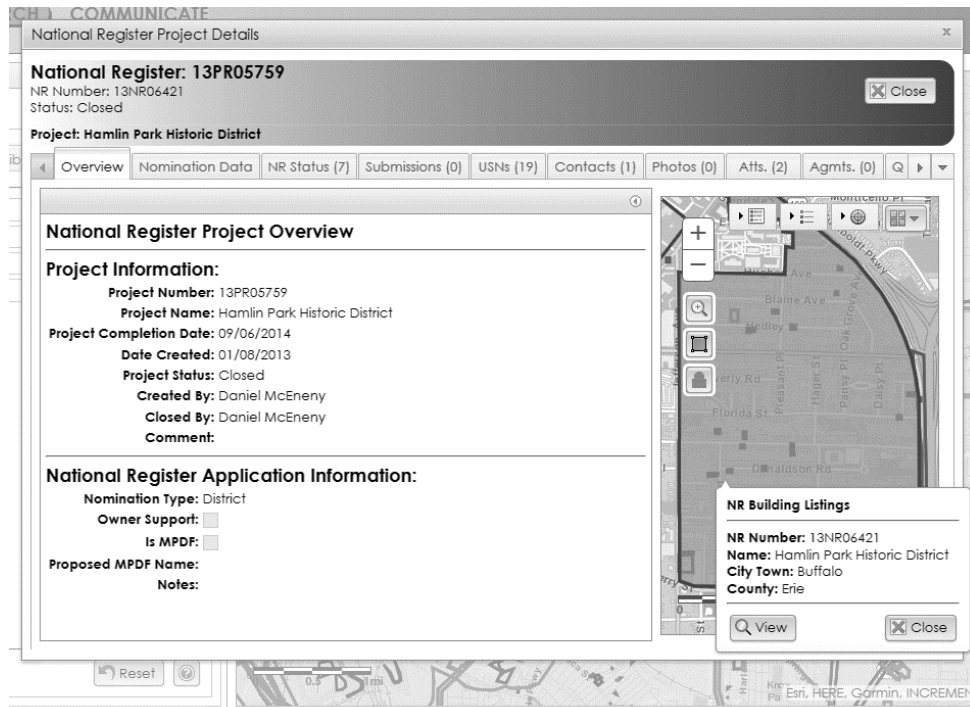


Figure 15: Buffalo’s Hamlin Park Historic District. Tabs lead to more detailed information. [Source: New York State CRIS System at [https://cris.parks.ny.gov/.](https://cris.parks.ny.gov/)]

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “Atlas of Reurbanism” initiative is mapping American cities and their historic assets.²⁷⁷ In an ideal world, these state and national databases could be expanded to include other dimensions and be overlaid with local information that shows land use regulations, zoning designations or conditions – such as abandonment – for individual parcels.

Effective Practice – Accessible Public Information

Well-organized municipal websites that are rich with information

²⁷⁷ “Atlas of Reurbanism Buffalo,” accessed May 5, 2017, at <https://nthp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1a0006180f284681b34960e89074a554>.

and include links to other sources offering background material are a definite plus in terms of accessibility. These websites not only help residents navigate available services, but also can make a statement to potential developers and investors about a city's capability to share information.

For instance, the inclusion of original National Register surveys on the Dubuque and Buffalo sites allows users to easily gain access to information on a particular area of the city. Mapping, particularly interactive mapping software such as that found on the Dayton and Cincinnati sites, is another useful tool.²⁷⁸

Dayton also offers an interactive map that highlights the city's local historic districts and individual landmarks. Clicking on a particular district brings up a short descriptive paragraph; clicking on a landmark brings up its address.²⁷⁹

Cincinnati's easy-to-navigate site has fewer interactive features and depends more on classic links to reports and static maps for its "Historic Conservation" web pages.²⁸⁰ Within its Code Enforcement pages is also found a list of vacant and condemned buildings that includes a

²⁷⁸ Dayton's "Lot Links" interactive program and Cincinnati's Vacated Building Maintenance License (VBML) program are explained in the "Managing Vacant Properties" section.

²⁷⁹ "Historic Districts," accessed May 9, 2017, at <http://www.daytonohio.gov/710/Historic-Districts>.

²⁸⁰ "Historic Conservation," *supra* note 229, at 103.

notation as to whether or not the structure is historic.²⁸¹

Effective access does not need to be highly technical. What Dubuque lacks in interactive maps it more than makes for in the sheer amount of well-organized information it offers site visitors. Its historic preservation pages are accessed from a drop down menu. Maps of historic districts and conservation districts are available along with National Register district nomination forms.²⁸² Revitalization taking place in heritage neighborhoods is located in another section of the site under Community Development.²⁸³

There's another reason why accessibility is important. Accessible information is more likely to produce better accountability on the part of changing staff and elected officials, especially when controversial matters arise. Residents, particularly activist residents, tend to have long memories but generally are not the keepers of city archives. That makes a central digital repository important in keeping all parties informed.

²⁸¹ "Vacant and Condemned Buildings," accessed May 5, 2017, at <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings/property-maintenance-code-enforcement/vacant-hazardous-buildings1/>.

²⁸² "Local Historic Districts," accessed February 27, 2017, at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/387/Local-Historic-Districts>.

²⁸³ "Neighborhood Revitalization Programs," accessed May 11, 2017, at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/714/Neighborhood-Revitalization>.

Effective Practice – Rental Property Registration and Inspection

The trajectory of heritage neighborhoods in legacy cities has often been one of disinvestment, decay, and the conversion of owner-occupied buildings into higher density multi-family residences owned by absentee purchasers. City ordinances can have powerful impacts on heritage neighborhoods. Rental and vacant property registries or inspections, or fines for properties violating ordinances are some of the ways cities are attempting to manage issues in neighborhoods impacted by issues of deterioration and abandonment.

Remarkably, several of the surveyed cities with the highest percentage of renters do not inspect most rental properties.²⁸⁴ Despite having a high ratio of rental-to-owner occupied properties, Buffalo, Syracuse, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Macon, are limited in their abilities to register or inspect rental properties.²⁸⁵ In Buffalo, a city official

²⁸⁴ Dayton, Buffalo, Syracuse, Cincinnati all have a high percentage of renters but either have no interior rental inspection, a limited program, inspect exteriors only, or upon receipt of a complaint. Hawley interview and “Property Maintenance Code Enforcement,” accessed May 16, 2017, at <http://cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings/property-maintenance-code-enforcement/>; “Unfit Premises,” accessed February 28, 2017, at <http://www.syr.gov.net/UnfitPremises.aspx>. And Tony Oppy, in discussion with author, April 27, 2017. Oppy is a Conservation Specialist with the Dayton Housing Department.

²⁸⁵ In five of the survey cities, more than 45% of residents, including Cincinnati (61%), Buffalo (58.5%), Syracuse (52.3%), Dayton (50.1%), and Macon (46.7%), rent their homes. For Davenport citywide, over one-third (36.8%) rent. In Dubuque, 32.5% of residents rent. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “2010 Census General Housing Characteristics,” accessed January 12, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/>

characterizes the city’s rental registration program as “a way to collect fees” and as having “no teeth.”²⁸⁶ In Georgia, state law caps rental registry fees to a one-time \$100 fee; Macon charges only \$10 and failure to register carries no legal recourse. The low fee and lack of enforcement consequence make the ordinance ineffective.²⁸⁷ Inspections in most of these cities are driven by tenant complaints.

A recent Ohio court ruling and Wisconsin state legislation that found in favor of those opposed to rental inspections as a violation of the Fourth Amendment could chill further expansion of this enforcement tool. In 2015, an Ohio federal judge found that a city rental inspection ordinance violated due process and owners’ protection against undue searches because it included language that could impose criminal penalties. The city had enacted the inspection program after the Great Recession left properties vacant for long periods and, from the city’s perspective, potentially unsafe.²⁸⁸ In 2016, the Wisconsin legislature enacted a law prohibiting local ordinances that allow routine rental

[jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#](#).

²⁸⁶ Anonymous source, in discussion with author.

²⁸⁷ Baker, *supra* note 248, at 108.

²⁸⁸ Dan Sewell, “Judge Rules Ohio City's Rental Inspections Unconstitutional,” October 2, 2015, accessed January 11, 2018, at <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2015/10/02/judge-rules-ohio-citys-rental-inspections-unconstitutional/73196886/>.

inspections. Support of Fourth Amendment rights against unlawful searches was the driving force behind the legislation.²⁸⁹

Dubuque maintains rental registry and annual inspection programs. Registration fees vary but are generally below \$50 and carry penalties for owners not in compliance of city ordinances. Landlords receive several days' notice of inspections and the time between annual inspections may be waived if landlords have been in compliance. In what is a highly transparent policy, the city also maintains on its website a list of registered landlords and their contact information.²⁹⁰

Davenport requires annual registration of rental properties and inspections. The registration cost is \$25 per family unit and \$35 for inspections. Landlords must complete a "Landlord Education Assistance Program." Those with good record of compliance are able to increase the time between required inspections.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ John D. Finerty Jr., "The New Standard for Rental Inspections," April 15, 2016, accessed January 13, 2018, at <http://wislawjournal.com/2016/04/15/the-new-standard-for-rental-inspections/>.

²⁹⁰ "Rental Property Licensing and Inspections," accessed January 11, 2018, at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/788/Inspections-Licensing>.

²⁹¹ "Rental Property Owner's Guide to Davenport's Property Maintenance Code," 4-6, accessed January 13, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6481372/File/Departments/Public%20Works/Landlord_s%20Guide%20to%20Rental%20Property%20Maintenance.pdf.

Effective Practice – Managing Vacant Properties

State law can sometimes cripple local code enforcement efforts as demonstrated in Macon, where white flight began in the 1960s and 1970s. Residents moved out of the city into the rural areas of Bibb County or to adjacent counties for lower taxes, new neighborhoods and private schools.²⁹² Macon’s code enforcement effort, a formidable tool in many cities struggling with disinvestment and blight that can accompany 4,000 vacant properties, has been hobbled by the lack of state-enabling legislation that protects property rights. Inability to enforce city standards can reduce the value of nearby properties and hurt neighborhoods. Before 2015, Georgia code did not permit inspectors to levy even simple fines for code violations until a case has been presented in municipal court. Code violations still do not carry civil penalties.²⁹³

In 2010, Macon’s residential vacancy rate was 18.5 percent.²⁹⁴

John Baker, Building Abatement Manager with the Property Maintenance Division, ranks buildings by condition on a scale of A, best,

²⁹² “Blight Remediation in the Southeast,” *supra* note 245, at 107; and anonymous sources, in discussion with author.

²⁹³ Baker, *supra* note 248, at 108; Debbie Blankenship, “New Property Inspection Process Helping Ease Crowds in Macon-Bibb Municipal Court,” *The Telegraph*, September 19, 2015, accessed April 1, 2018, at <http://www.macon.com/news/special-reports/house-next-door/article35865426.html>

²⁹⁴ U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Macon, GA. General Housing Characteristics: 2010,” accessed March 13, 2017, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmlk>.

to F, worst. He estimates that there are approximated 2,000 in the D to F categories. The budget limits demolitions to about a hundred per year. In contrast, an average 120 buildings a year become vacant. There is a backlog of 430 buildings approved for demolition. The city lacks staff to board abandoned properties and does not require boarding by private owners.²⁹⁵ As of September 2015, of 3,000 open cases of code violations, 1,200 were for unsafe buildings which may require demolition.²⁹⁶

In 2017, Macon contracted with Detroit-based Loveland Technologies to map its vacant properties to allow the city to better manage this challenge.²⁹⁷ A Macon “blexting”– short for blight texting – event took place in the summer of 2017. The survey of 32,000 buildings, completed by paid and volunteer workers, found about 20 percent were either unoccupied or partially occupied. Most of these were residential properties. All of the data was captured on an online Loveland Technologies interactive map, allowing staff to see pockets of blight or

²⁹⁵Baker, *supra* note 248, at 108.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Alison Goldey, in discussion with author, April 4, 2017. Goldey is the Executive Director of the Macon-Bibb County Land Bank Authority, a position she has held for twenty years; “Loveland Technologies: Putting the World Online One Parcel at a Time,” accessed May 16, 2017, at <https://makeloveland.com/company>.

opportunity.²⁹⁸ Macon has used the data to help it visualize and strategize its abandoned property inventory. The survey, which cost approximately \$183,000, is helping direct the expenditure of \$9 million in blight elimination bond dollars.²⁹⁹ (Figure 16)



Figure 16: Macon-Bibb property survey map.
Each dark shape is a color coded vacant parcel.
[Source: [https://www.maconbibbsurvey.com/.](https://www.maconbibbsurvey.com/)]

In contrast, some of the surveyed cities have more tools at their disposal. Beginning in 2012, Cincinnati required registration of vacant and foreclosed residential properties that includes a fee of up to \$515 per year. Failure to register comes with stiff penalties compounded daily. Prior to resale, properties must pass occupied residence property codes

²⁹⁸ “An Updatable Map of Land Use, Occupancy & Property Conditions in Macon-Bibb’s Urban Redevelopment Zone,” accessed January 3, 2018, at [https://www.maconbibbsurvey.com/.](https://www.maconbibbsurvey.com/)

²⁹⁹ Goldey, *supra* note 297, at 125; Cass Hatcher, in discussion with author, January 18, 2018. Hatcher, Chief Facilities Development Officer, River Edge Behavioral Health Center. He has extensive experience in demolition of derelict properties and construction of replacement units.

and must pass a point of sale inspection. There are currently more than 1,000 properties on this Vacant Foreclosed Property Registration (VFPR) list. The list and an interactive map are available online.³⁰⁰

All unsafe buildings ordered vacated by the city must be licensed, maintain liability insurance, minimum safety standards, secure openings and protection from decay. A city license called a Vacated Building Maintenance License (VBML) carries a minimum annual fee of \$900 with fines and liens levied if owners do not comply. The 2017 list included 2,280 buildings; 154 are noted as “historic,” one as “historic-condemned,” 888 as “condemned,” and 1,236 as “keep the building vacant.”³⁰¹

For either city-owned or emergency abatements, code enforcement turns to the city Stabilization of Structures (SOS) program when funds are available. The goal is to properly mothball a building for at least ten years, addressing roof and drainage issues so that the structure meets the vacant building maintenance code.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Cunningham, *supra* note 227, at 103; “Vacant Foreclosed Residential Property Registration,” accessed February 21, 2017, at <http://cagismaps.hamilton-co.org/cincinnatiServices/VacantForeclosedRegistration/>.

³⁰¹ “Vacant Building Maintenance License,” accessed January 13, 2018, at http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/buildings/assets/File/VBML%20Information%20Rev_%2003-3-2017.pdf; and “Buildings Ordered to be Kept Vacant by the City of Cincinnati,” accessed February 21, 2017, at <http://cagisperm.hamilton-co.org/cpop/vacantbuildings.aspx>. The file downloads as a sortable Excel spreadsheet.

³⁰² Cunningham, *supra* note 227, at 103.

Code Enforcement works closely with Cincinnati's legal team; the department was reorganized in 2012 and now includes a Quality of Life/Affirmative Litigation Division. In the past, the city most often found itself in court as a plaintiff. It now finds itself managing fifty civil cases and two hundred criminal cases per year. Most are as a result of properties subject to the VBML and facing multiple issues of failing to follow code enforcement orders. A judgement against one property can be extended to cover other properties of the same owner, putting multiple assets at risk. A new part of the Ohio state code also permits cities to file a foreclosure claim on properties where it has been forced to perform abatement. Most of these cases have not dealt with historically-designated properties.³⁰³

Dubuque has also implemented enhanced enforcement tools directed at reducing issues with vacant properties and demolition by neglect. The city requires all vacant properties be registered with the city.³⁰⁴ Registration comes with an annual fee and civil penalties for non-compliance. Both Dubuque and Cincinnati also prohibit boarding vacant properties on façades facing thoroughfares.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Powell, *supra* note 228, at 103.

³⁰⁴ "Vacant Building License," accessed May 16, 2017, at <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/2376/Vacant-Building-License>.

³⁰⁵ Cunningham, *supra* note 227, at 103; Dave Johnson, *supra* 35, at 20.

In 2016, Syracuse implemented a vacant property registry for properties with exterior code violations. Fees range from \$100 to \$1,000 a year per residential unit on a scale that increases each year. By year four, a seven-unit residential building could pay \$7,000 a year. Penalties apply for non-compliance.³⁰⁶

Effective Practice – Land Banks and Property Acquisition

Several states within the survey have enacted legislation that allows greater local control of tax-distressed and abandoned properties, a chronic issue in many heritage neighborhoods. The historic model of local banks holding ownership of distressed properties has given way to national finance companies whose models often favor bundling individual properties into portfolios that are used as collateral in securing loans.³⁰⁷ Ohio enabling legislation allows cities to file foreclosure claims against properties requiring abatement, interrupting the cycle of sales to

³⁰⁶ “Unfit Premises,” *supra* note 284, at 121.

³⁰⁷ Paul Bernard, in discussion with author, April 17, 2017. Bernard, General Manager of Residential Equity Partners, LLC, a California-based company that purchases real estate portfolios across the country, explains that there is always value in real estate through the assessed value assigned to it. For example, several years ago, Bernard paid a fixed price for a portfolio of about forty properties across Iowa, knowing that the value of individual properties varied greatly. While one was a commercial building valued at \$60,000, another was a small house assessed at only a few thousand dollars. It was bundled with other properties to secure a \$500,000 rehab loan for a California property. Bernard says these national purchasers have a presence at local tax sales, even in relatively small cities like Davenport.

property speculators, and allowing resale to responsible buyers committed to rehabilitation.³⁰⁸

Georgia, Ohio, and New York passed state enabling legislation that permits creation of land banks. Georgia's 2012 amending legislation to its 1996 statute,³⁰⁹ and like New York (2011) and Ohio (2008) land bank legislation, was a direct response to the impact of the mortgage crisis on foreclosures. All three states provide services to county-wide areas and permit transfer of tax-distressed properties to land-bank ownership, which clears titles and allows for redevelopment, transfer to a new responsible owner, or demolition. These land banks are also permitted to undertake new construction.³¹⁰

The Greater Syracuse Land Bank (GSLB), formed in 2012, was one of the first five organized in New York as a not-for-profit, charitable corporation with the power to own, demolish, rehabilitate or foreclose on

³⁰⁸ Powell, *supra* note 228, at 103.

³⁰⁹ *Georgia Land Bank Resource Manual*, (Center for Community Progress, June 2013), accessed May 16, 2017, at http://www.communityprogress.net/filebin/pdf/new_resrcs/GA-LandBank-ResourceManual.pdf.

³¹⁰ Greater Ohio Policy Center, "Taking Stock of Ohio County Land Banks," May, 2015,i, I, accessed March 22, 2018, at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59396fee59cc6877bacf5ab5/t/5963e388ff7c50a4828b3fbf/1499718547183/greaterohiolandbankreport5-15-15.pdf>; Office of the New York State Comptroller, "Land Banks Enter the Fight against Blight," accessed March 3, 2017, at <http://syracuselandbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/landbanks1016-1.pdf> and *Georgia Land Bank Resource Manual*.

properties. In allowing the formation of land banks, New York’s primary focus was addressing issues with foreclosed residential buildings.³¹¹

The GSLB became the primary repository for Syracuse properties seized through tax sales or delinquent tax liens. In the 1990s, Syracuse engaged in tax-sale auctions to for-profit companies who would resell them to other financial groups. Former Syracuse Commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development Paul Driscoll defines this practice as “cruel” because it put what were often cash-strapped residents into further indebtedness and forced them to pay extraordinary interest to clear tax certificates.³¹² The city ceased holding auctions and did not enforce tax delinquency for about ten years. With no penalties motivating compliance, some residents simply paid no taxes at all. An estimated 1,200 properties became chronically delinquent. These were the properties seized – including some that were occupied – and turned over to the land bank. A city department focused on relocating homeowners.³¹³

As of December 12, 2017, the GSLB had acquired 1,425 properties, sold 513 and demolished 212. It claims to have generated \$17.6 million in private investment and increased property taxes by

³¹¹ “Land Banks Enter the Fight,” *supra* note 310, at 130.

³¹² In Iowa, purchasers of tax credits get a 22 percent annual return when owners redeem their tax certificates.

³¹³ Driscoll, *supra* note 221, at 103.

\$884,000 a year.³¹⁴ On its website, interested parties can apply to purchase residential and commercial buildings as well as side lots and green lots. A group of sixty-two featured properties range in price from \$3,500 to \$29,000; one outlier was priced at \$95,000. These properties are offered with photos, property details, and an interactive map.³¹⁵ A spreadsheet of more properties, including only a name and address, is also available to download.³¹⁶

Initial funding for New York’s land banks, \$5 million in the case of the GSLB, came from dollars received from state settlements stemming from bank lawsuits. Additional funds were committed by the city and county.³¹⁷ A long-term question of viability raised during a 2015 audit³¹⁸

³¹⁴ “Greater Syracuse Land Bank,” accessed January 15, 2018, at <http://syracuselandbank.org/>.

³¹⁵ “Greater Syracuse Land Bank,” accessed January 15, 2018, at <https://public-gslb.epropertyplus.com/landmgmtpub/app/base/propertySearch?searchInfo=%7B%22criteria%22%3A%7B%22criterias%22%3A%5B%5D%7D%7D#>.

³¹⁶ “Greater Syracuse Land Bank,” accessed February 15, 2017, at <http://syracuselandbank.org/>.

³¹⁷ “A.G. Schneiderman Awards \$20M to Land Banks across New York State,” October 15, 2014, accessed March 3, 2017, at <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-awards-20m-land-banks-across-new-york-state>; and Paul Driscoll, *supra* note 222, at 103.

³¹⁸ Robert E. Antonacci II, CPA and the Syracuse City Auditor Martin D. Masterpole, “The Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation ‘The Land Bank’ Audit,” August 27, 2015, accessed March 3, 2017, at http://www.syr.gov.net/uploadedFiles/City_Hall/Elected_Officials/Content/Land%20Bank%20Final%2008-15.pdf.

became a reality when, in May 2017, the Syracuse city council overrode Mayor Stephanie Miner's veto and voted to eliminate funds for the GSLB in favor of hiring more police officers.³¹⁹ The GSLB is no longer accepting properties from the city that are headed for demolition.³²⁰ The sheer volume of properties owned by the land bank makes it difficult for it to move the buildings into new ownership as quickly as some residents would like.³²¹

While Iowa does not have land banks, it has given municipalities a powerful tool to manage abandoned buildings. Under Section 657A 10A of the Iowa Code dealing with abandoned properties, cities can petition the court to be given properties deemed abandoned. The original language dealing with residential properties was passed in 2006. Additional legislation permitting the same option for commercial buildings was added later. It defines "abandoned" by several characteristics and provides a relatively rapid process that can take a few months to accomplish. That speed is in contrast with property-acquisition processes dependent on tax delinquency which can take

³¹⁹ Baker, *supra* note 166, at 76.

³²⁰ Chris Baker, "City Stuck Maintaining Vacant Houses as Land Bank Tightens its Belt," July 17, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, at http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2017/07/city_stuck_with_ru_n-down_houses_as_land_bank_turns_its_back.html/.

³²¹ Benjamin Roth, "Syracuse Land Bank Needs More Time to Revitalize South Side," October 18, 2016, accessed March 3, 2017, at <https://nccnews.expressions.syr.edu/2016/10/18/syracuse-land-bank-needs-more-time-to-revitalize-south-side/>.

years.³²² Dubuque has made use of 657A 10A as part of its abandoned property tool kit. Davenport has not used this option but recently has begun exploring doing so.

A 2015 Buffalo housing report estimated the number of vacant housing units not on the market at 11,200.³²³ To help New York municipalities address vacant property issues, the New York Foreclosure Relief Act of 2016 allowed them to intervene in the tax sale process by acquiring properties in upcoming auctions.³²⁴ The goal of the legislation was to keep tax sale properties out of the hands of speculators with no intention of improving them and make them available to those willing to rehab them. Another target was rentals that were routinely allowed to become tax delinquent that were then repurchased by another negligent landlord.³²⁵

Effective Practice- Financial Incentives

All cities offer some version of tax abatement for property

³²² “657A.10A,” *supra* note 147, at 70.

³²³ “Homestead Plan City of Buffalo,” 4, October 2015, accessed April 28, 2017, at http://buffalogreencode.com/October2015/Homestead_Plan.pdf.

³²⁴ “Mayor Brown's Push for Legislation to Combat Blight Gets Governor Cuomo's Signature,” accessed January 12, 2018, at https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Mayor/Home/Leadership/Archived_Press_Releases/2016_Archives/Mayor_Browns_Push_for_Legislation_to_Combat_Blight.

³²⁵ *Ibid*.

rehabilitation located within low-to-moderate-income census tracts or historic districts. Several cities assist purchases or rehabilitation of homes, but most programs are income restricted. Dayton’s “Lot Links” program offers the public vacant tax-delinquent properties. The city’s website offers fast, interactive technology that drills down to individual properties and relevant tax information, including the location of historic districts.³²⁶

State tax credits, now available in about thirty-five states, are assisting property owners of historic buildings.³²⁷ Historic tax-credit programs in Iowa, Georgia, and New York include residential properties; Ohio’s program is limited to income-producing buildings.

Iowa’s historic tax credit is a refundable 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenses for residential and income-producing buildings. Owners can take a cash refund in lieu of a tax credit. The required rehabilitation for non-commercial buildings must be at least \$25,000 or 25 percent of a building’s assessed value. Refundability makes the credit attractive to not-for-profits with no tax liability and non-resident investors. There is no owner-occupied requirement or prohibition, as there is for the use of federal historic tax credits.³²⁸ (Figure 17)

³²⁶ “Lot Linker,” accessed April 19, 2017, at <http://www.lotlinker.com/>.

³²⁷ “Iowa Historic Tax Credits,” *supra* note 113, at 52.

³²⁸ “State Historic Preservation and Cultural and Entertainment District Tax Credit Program (HPCED) Instructions.” accessed May 16, 2017, at

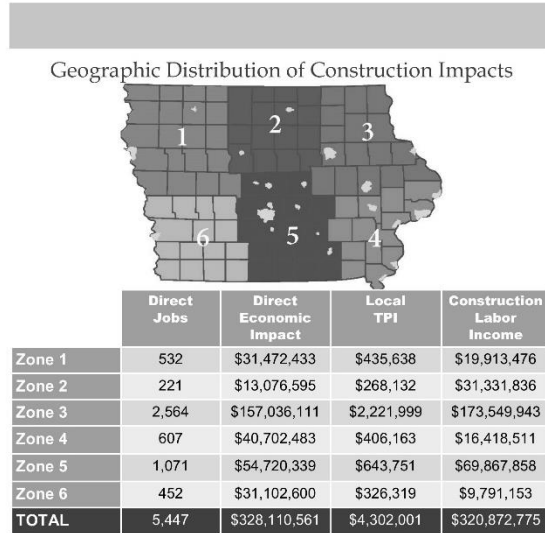


Figure 17: 2017 Iowa Smart Growth Development Group report. Produced in response to legislative threats to the program. [Source: Smart Growth Development, accessed at http://www.preservationiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/IA-HTC_Full-Report_direct-pages-1.pdf. Redrawn by author.]

Georgia offers a 25 percent historic tax credit for residential and commercial properties which rises to 30 percent in low-to-moderate-income census tracts. Its residential program is limited only to owner-occupied homes. The credit is transferable and, in targeted areas,³²⁹ a low threshold of \$5,000 is all that is required to participate.³³⁰ The

<https://iowaculture.gov/sites/default/files/History%20-%20Preservation%20-%20Tax%20Incentives%20-%20State%20Tax%20Credit%20-%20Guide%20%28PDF%29.pdf>.

³²⁹ Per state code, "Target area" is a qualified census tract under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, found in the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development document number N-94-3821; FR-3796-N-01. 2010. Georgia Code, "48-7-29.8 – Tax Credits for the Rehabilitation of Historic Structures; Conditions and Limitations," accessed May 16, 2017, at <http://law.justia.com/georgia/2010/title-48/chapter-7/article-2/48-7-29-8./codes/>.

³³⁰ Historic Macon Foundation, a not-for-profit, routinely prepares tax credit applications for homes it is rehabbing, and transfers them to

transferability option allows other rehabilitation entities to perform the work and transfer the credit to a new owner. The credit reduces tax liability for up to ten years.³³¹

New York's Historic Home Ownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit offers a 20 percent state tax credit. Buildings must be listed in the National Register, owner occupied, and located in low-to-moderate-income census tracts. It offers extra incentives for homeowners earning less than \$60,000 per year. For these applicants, the registration fee is waived and some of the tax credit may be returned as a cash refund. New York purposefully made the homeowner application simple, requiring a limited number of photographs and documentation.³³² Applications for both the Iowa and Georgia tax credit are more detailed and complex.³³³

The city of Buffalo was an early proponent of its state historic tax

purchasers. This has the effect of reducing state tax liability for new owners. Kim Campbell, in discussion with author, March 15, 2017. Campbell is HMF's Preservation and Education Coordinator.

³³¹ "Georgia State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property," accessed May 16, 2017, at http://georgiashpo.org/sites/uploads/hpd/pdf/State_tax_credit_fs.pdf.

³³² Larry Moss, in discussion with author, February 21, 2017. Moss is an architect who works with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP.) He indicated that unpainted aluminum storm windows would be an acceptable replacement; federal HTC and Iowa SHTC reviewers require painted storms. He also noted the limited number of pictures that the New York program requires. This is in sharp contrast to requirements in Iowa or Georgia.

³³³ The author has prepared Iowa historic tax credit applications since 2007 and attests to the increased requirements. Kim Campbell in Macon described a similar comprehensive submission process in Georgia.

credit.³³⁴ To boost greater participation, the city created an extensive 348-page “Preservation Ready” document of buildings that includes historical site inventories and surveys as well as photos, addresses and a site’s current or likely status for accessing historic tax credit programs. The document essentially cues up properties for prospective developers and homeowners.³³⁵ (Figure 18)

177 ELM ST
ca. 1891, Warehouse
SHPO USN: 02940.003107
SBL No.: 111.55-7-22
Year Built: ca. 1891
Architect: R.A. & L. Bethune
2013 Recommendation: Potential HD (contrib.)

Historic District: POTENTIAL 173-181 Elm St
H.D.



181 ELM ST
ELM STREET HALL
SHPO USN: 02940.003108/02940.003109
SBL No.: 111.55-7-23
Year Built: ca. 1850; ca. 1870s
2013 Recommendation: Potential HD (contrib.)

Historic District: POTENTIAL 173-181 Elm St
H.D.



Figure 18: Preservation Ready brochure. Surveys and individual building listings noting tax credit potential. [Source: Preservation Ready Study. City of Buffalo]

³³⁴ Beth Cumming, in discussion with author, February 16, 2017. Cumming is a Senior Historic Site Restoration Coordinator with OPRHP.

³³⁵ “Preservation Ready Study of Buildings Downtown, Northland and Fougerson/Urban Survey Areas City of Buffalo, Erie County, New York,” (City of Buffalo, December 2013), accessed January 13, 2018, at https://www.city-buffalo.com/files/1_2_1/city_departments/SPlanning/BuffaloPreservationReadySurvey2013.pdf.

Effective Practice-Preservation Partners

Several of the survey cities are fortunate to have investors, foundations, not-for-profits, and institutional partners playing significant roles in revitalization of heritage neighborhoods.

Macon rehabilitation efforts receive support from two foundations, one founded locally and another with a national footprint. The Peyton Anderson Foundation (PAF) was established by the long-time owner of the city's newspapers prior to their sale to the Knight Ridder Newspaper Company. PAF helped found a community foundation that funnels grants for planning efforts offering "transformational ideas" for revitalizing in-town and downtown areas.³³⁶ Its funding helped establish the NewTown Macon redevelopment organization focused on the city's historic downtown commercial district. NewTown Macon's goals include growing businesses, increasing residency, and facilitating rehabilitation and new construction. It offers loans and workshops, and recruits investors and assists in syndication of tax credits. It prefers to work with local investors and developers to keep dollars in the local community.³³⁷

³³⁶ "Welcome to the Peyton Anderson Foundation," accessed April 4, 2017, at <http://www.peytonanderson.org/> and "History and Mission," accessed April 4, 2017, at <http://www.newtownmacon.com/powering-newtown/history-mission/> and "Downtown Challenge Revitalizing Macon," accessed April 4, 2017, at <http://www.cfcga.org/DowntownChallenge>.

³³⁷ Rogers, *supra* note 251, at 108.

The Knight Foundation underwrites initiatives in cities where Knight Ridder once owned newspapers.³³⁸ In Macon, the focus is on urban renewal, contributing down-payment-assistance funding for new home owners in a targeted heritage neighborhood as well as dollars for planning initiatives.³³⁹

Mercer University is located near some of Macon's most challenged heritage neighborhoods. Historically, its approach had been to demolish blighted neighborhoods near its campus. Under new leadership, it began to actively work to revitalize them instead. Mercer, the city, and other preservation partners are revitalizing the Huguenin Heights and Beall's Hill neighborhoods. Area planning, tutoring, and a down-payment-assistance program to encourage staff to purchase homes in these neighborhoods are features of the initiative.³⁴⁰ (Figure 19)

³³⁸ "Macon," accessed April 8, 2017, at <https://www.knightfoundation.org/communities/macon>.

³³⁹ "College Hill. Project History," accessed March 25, 2017, at <http://collegehillmacon.com/index.php/about/project-history>; "College Hill. Master Plan," accessed March 25, 2017, at <http://collegehillmacon.com/index.php/about/master-plan>; "Beall's Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Project," accessed March 25, 2017, at <https://community.mercer.edu/partnerships/beall/>.

³⁴⁰ "Beall's Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Project," *supra* note 340, at 140; "Mercer University Down Payment Assistance Program," accessed March 25, 2017, at <http://dpa.mercer.edu/www/mu-dpa/upload/Mercer-DPA-Final-2015-2.pdf>.

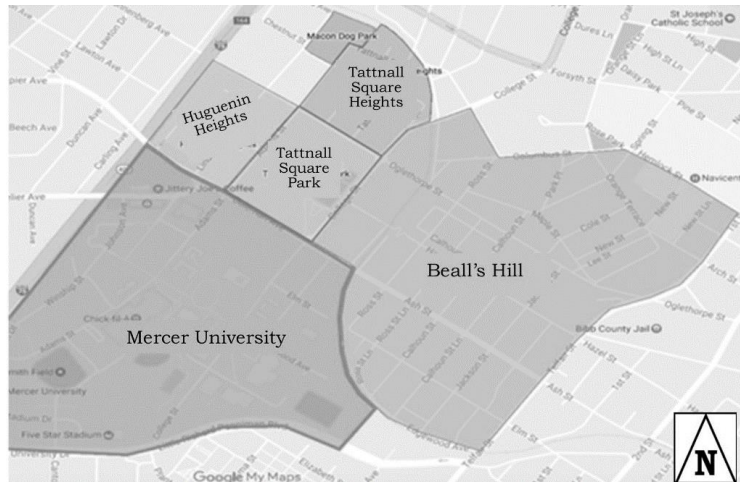


Figure 19: Mercer University and nearby historic neighborhoods. Rehabilitation partnerships are at work.
 [Source: “Preservation through Revitalization: Economic Impact of the Historic Macon Foundation on the Neighborhood of Beall’s Hill.” Emailed to author by Historic Macon Foundation.]

The Historic Macon Foundation (HMF) emerged from earlier groups with a focus on saving historic infrastructure and sharing history. The combined efforts of these groups have enabled the purchase, rehab or sale of almost 150 buildings.³⁴¹ It has been the construction and rehab partner in the Huguenin Heights and Beall’s Hill initiatives. It makes use of state historic tax credits during rehab, following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, and then transfers the tax credit benefit to new owners.³⁴²

In Dayton, institutional medical partners, working with community development corporation Citywide, have focused on rehabilitation of

³⁴¹ “About,” accessed March 10, 2017, at <http://www.historicmacon.org/who-we-are/>.

³⁴² Campbell, *supra* note 330, at 136.

several neighborhoods near their campuses. The Genesis, Phoenix, and DaVinci projects provide various incentives for home construction, repair, and rehabilitation as well as business assistance and outreach programs to enhance the quality of life in these heritage neighborhoods.³⁴³ Citywide also played a role in the development of Tech Town in downtown Dayton, a revitalized riverside area targeting knowledge-based industries and their workers. Tech Town is located on a twenty-four acre, brownfield site that once housed a General Motors plant. The site is now home to forty-five firms. The surrounding neighborhood includes new commercial and residential construction as well as adaptive reuse of another old General Motors plant as 120 loft dwellings. (Figure 20) The surrounding heritage neighborhoods are described as “thriving” by Citywide’s Senior Vice President, Steve Nutt.³⁴⁴

³⁴³ “The Genesis Project,” accessed April 20, 2017, at <http://citywidedev.com/community-development/genesis>. “The Phoenix Project,” accessed April 20, 2017, at <http://citywidedev.com/community-development/phoenix>. “DaVinci Collaborative,” accessed April 20, 2017, at <http://citywidedev.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/DaVinci-Winter-2015-Update.pdf>.

³⁴⁴ “Welcome to Tech Town,” accessed April 20, 2017, at <http://daytontechtown.com/>; and Steve Nutt, in discussion with author, April 6, 2018. Nutt is Senior Vice President for Citywide. He’s worked with the organization for seventeen years.



Figure 20: Delco Lofts, formerly a Delco/General Motors factory. Recently converted to 130 market-rate dwelling units after the building sat vacant for seventeen years. Redevelopment spurred by Citywide's Tech Town, which trades on Dayton's innovation heritage to attract high tech industries to a former downtown industrial section along the Miami River.

[Source: "Photo Tour," accessed April 6, 2018, at <https://www.delcolofts.com/Gallery.aspx>.]

A Catholic institution, the University of Dayton, fosters neighborhood revitalization through its leadership center focused on community-engaged learning (CEL) and building stronger relationships between students and staff and Dayton's urban neighborhoods.³⁴⁵

Buffalo gains support from PUSH, a community-based advocacy and housing group engaged in a west-side neighborhood originally built between 1880 and 1930 for immigrant populations. The group focuses on reducing rapid gentrification to control the loss of existing residents in revitalized areas and in green construction to offset the sometimes

³⁴⁵ "Fitz Center for Leadership in Community," accessed May 16, 2017, at <https://www.udayton.edu/artssciences/ctr/fitz/>.

staggering energy costs of Buffalo's extreme winter conditions.³⁴⁶

The Buffalo Urban Development Corporation (BUDC) promotes available downtown sites with an easy-to-read guide to current opportunities.³⁴⁷ It is also working on a redevelopment plan that includes housing, training and business development opportunities for a blighted area in the city's northeast sector,³⁴⁸ a project being funded by the "Buffalo Billion" pledge made to the city in 2012 by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who committed the state to an investment of \$1 billion in tax credits and grants to the area.³⁴⁹

Summary

This study provides a snapshot of how seven cities are addressing issues in their heritage neighborhoods. The current conditions and challenges of each city and their ability to find solutions and a way

³⁴⁶ "Building Green and Affordable Housing," accessed April 1, 2017, at <http://greendevlopmentzone.org/housing/> and "The Neighborhood," accessed April 14, 2017, at <http://greendevlopmentzone.org/introduction/the-neighborhood/>.

³⁴⁷ "Downtown Buffalo, NY 2016 Development Guide," Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, accessed April 10, 2017, at http://www.buffalourbandevelopment.com/documents/Downtown/2016_Downtown_Buffalo_Development_Guide.pdf.

³⁴⁸ "Northland Corridor Public Outreach," accessed April 14, 2017, at <http://www.buffalourbandevelopment.com/northland-corridor-public-outreach>.

³⁴⁹ "Buffalo Billion," accessed January 17, 2018, at <https://buffalobillion.ny.gov/about-buffalo-billion>.

forward are shaped by individual circumstance. Despite these differences, several commonalities are apparent.

States play a key role. For many cities surveyed, the issue of vacant and abandoned housing is a source of continuing concern within heritage neighborhoods. Enabling legislation such as that implemented in New York that allows cities local legal recourse when dealing with tax-distressed property issues is of critical importance. Iowa's Section 657A 10A is another powerful tool in managing blight. While the impact of these laws might be greater in large urban areas, they can also provide benefit for smaller communities whose resiliency and asset base may not be as extensive as their larger cohorts.³⁵⁰ Conversely, state laws protecting property or personal rights, like those in Georgia limiting a city's right to inspect buildings, can hurt a community's ability to address blight.

New York State has wisely tailored and streamlined its historic tax credit program for residential properties to fit the pocketbooks and capabilities of non-professional applicants. By permitting applications only for houses in low-to-moderate census tracts it has also given access to the resource to the homeowners and neighborhoods that need it most.

Strong local governance is also an important component. Good government often begins with long-term community or elected leaders with vision, like Stephanie Miner of Syracuse or Ron Buol in Dubuque.

³⁵⁰ "Ohio's Cities at a Turning Point," *supra* note 106, at 48, 21.

Both Miner and Buol spent time on their respective city councils prior to becoming mayors. Elected in 2005 after serving ten years on Dubuque's city council, Buol came to office on a platform of sustainability. For Buol, sustainability included the goal of creating a supporting structure outside the realm of elected officials who come and go from office. He envisions the plan, not as a top down initiative, but bottom up, with a diverse forty-member community council charged with driving the vision and raising it above political concerns.³⁵¹

Use of technology, particularly mapping programs, is playing an increasing role in allowing cities to more easily access information, track assets, and overlay interrelated factors as they plan for the future. The more public the information is made, the greater the potential citizen participation, investment, and commitment. A healthy future for our cities will require transparency and the efforts of all stakeholders. Macon's use of this technology, and the public process it used to gather it, are great examples of this approach.

The need for public, private and not-for-profit collaboration, with each partner bringing its specialized assets, expertise, and sphere of influence, becomes more and more critical as cities face shrinking revenues and negative or sluggish population and job growth. Altering the downward trajectory of the Beall's Hill neighborhood is not being

³⁵¹ "City of Dubuque Investing in Sustainability for Future Generations and Future Prosperity, *IBM Smarter Planet Leadership Series*, 2012.

made possible by one entity, but an outstanding commitment by Mercer University, the city of Macon, the Historic Macon Foundation, and the Knight Foundation.

Most of the cities surveyed face much greater impediments to success than does Davenport. Lessons learned from their struggles can help define a roadmap for Davenport as it moves into the future.

CHAPTER IV 2018 CORE UPDATE AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Introduction

Davenport 2025, approved in 2005, was the first city planning document that identified the Core, the 5.24 square miles that are home to most of the city’s designated historic districts and many of its heritage neighborhoods, its historic central business district and several historic shopping areas.³⁵² Two private not-for-profit educational institutions, Palmer College of Chiropractic and St. Ambrose University, also are within or adjacent to the Core.

A number of initiatives that were implemented following adoption of the plan focused on challenges to Core heritage neighborhoods. However, the city council’s major development focus was on open areas nearer to the city’s outer perimeter including development of an industrial center, a “New Urbanism” neighborhood and a mixed-use corridor.³⁵³

³⁵² *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 135.

³⁵³ Jennifer DeWitt, “Eastern Iowa Industrial Center Takes Off,” *Quad City Times*, October 27, 2013, accessed April 29, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/business/eastern-iowa-industrial-center-takes-off/article_bbf16086-02f6-58f8-b467-a42e31d309db.html; Eastern Iowa Industrial Park, Prairie Heights, and Elmore Corners.

Growing Support in City Council

Davenport elects its mayor and city council every two years. Three times over the past thirty-two years, most recently in 2006, voters have rejected a referendum for four-year staggered terms for council members and four-year terms for the city's mayor. The most recent referendum was in 2006.³⁵⁴

In 2015, city elections placed three new members on the council dais. Through retirement or defeat, they supplanted aldermen, whose focus generally favored fringe development over core redevelopment. Rita Rawson was one of the newly-elected officials whose experience as a community leader in her Core neighborhood and desire to see attention paid to such areas inspired her to run for office.³⁵⁵ In the months that followed, she chaired a Community Engagement committee and worked with stakeholders to develop a set of Urban Revitalization objectives which were presented to the City Council in October 2017. The list included operational, funding, and enforcement

³⁵⁴ *Quad City Times*, "Davenport's Four-Year Term Referendum Fails," July 25, 2006, accessed June 1, 2018, at https://qctimes.com/news/local/davenport-s-four-year-term-referendum-fails/article_13648c2d-457d-5383-80d4-00dffc924151.html.

³⁵⁵ Devan Patel, "The Big Story: Fresh Faces Pointing Davenport in New Direction in 2017," *Quad City Times*, February 6, 2017, accessed February 15, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/government-and-politics/the-big-story-fresh-faces-pointing-davenport-in-new-direction/article_e74819d8-86b7-5b37-b7bc-ca496bf56914.html

strategies for dealing with issues in the city's heritage neighborhoods.³⁵⁶

2017 non-partisan city elections increased the number of alderman favoring urban revitalization. The topic was publicly supported by the majority of candidates running in the fall elections.³⁵⁷ In December 2017, as part of its two-year planning process, the new council was asked to submit, score and prioritize goals for the coming cycle. The goal receiving the highest number of points and most often included on top five lists was urban revitalization. Money has been set aside in the upcoming city budget and staff has been tasked with creating a plan.

Emphasis on improvement to the Core alters the trajectory of past city councils. From time to time, short-lived city initiatives, to be discussed later in the chapter, provided some funding to rehabilitate homes, but money and focus were consistently placed on development in the Tier 3 area to boost new housing starts and business development in an effort to compete with the growth of neighboring suburban communities to the east.

³⁵⁶ "Urban Revitalization/Stabilization Economic Development Initiative Ideas," in possession of author.

³⁵⁷ Candidate forums were held October 17, 2017, and October 24, 2017.

A primary example of this is the Davenport NOW program. Established during the mortgage crisis and created to jump start a moribund home-construction market, the ten-year program offered property tax abatement for new construction or rehabilitation of homes. The dollars could be taken at the end of construction as a one-time discounted payment or as a property-tax abatement over ten years. Since property taxes were frozen at the bare-ground rate, the greatest benefit came to new construction in fringe areas.³⁵⁸

As the program's sunset approached, aldermen debated renewing the initiative. But with growing voices on council asking for city emphasis to be put elsewhere, the program's scheduled end date of June 30, 2018 is on track.³⁵⁹ Funding will be required in outlying years to offset promised tax abatements, but no new properties will qualify after May 31, 2018.³⁶⁰

Davenport's focus on its Core area fits seamlessly with revitalization of heritage neighborhoods and many of the conditions

³⁵⁸ "Davenport NOW," accessed February 16, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6481372/File/Departments/CPED/Davenport%20NOW%20Brochure%202017.pdf.

³⁵⁹ Brian Wellner, "Davenport Housing Incentive under Scrutiny," *Quad City Times*, February 27, 2016, accessed February 16, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/government-and-politics/davenport-housing-incentive-under-scrutiny/article_046c45ff-fa37-5683-848c-3704c7efc3db.html.

³⁶⁰ "Davenport NOW," *supra* note 358, at 151.

identified in *Davenport 2025* that warrant continued concern and attention.

Davenport 2025: 2018 Core Statistics

Davenport 2025 identifies neighborhoods as a city's essential building blocks with defined edges and borders. Strong neighborhoods, it states, help to ground residents and build community support, while weak ones make it difficult to develop "identity, character, and a sense of place."³⁶¹ The planners found few areas that met the plan's definition of neighborhood. Instead, they characterized the city as composed of districts, an identity arising from post-1925 zoning that worked against what the plan's authors saw as a desirable mixed use environment.³⁶²

Metrics in Core neighborhoods have continued to diverge from those in other city areas since *Davenport 2025* was completed. (Figure 21)

³⁶¹ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 132.

³⁶² *Ibid*, 132.

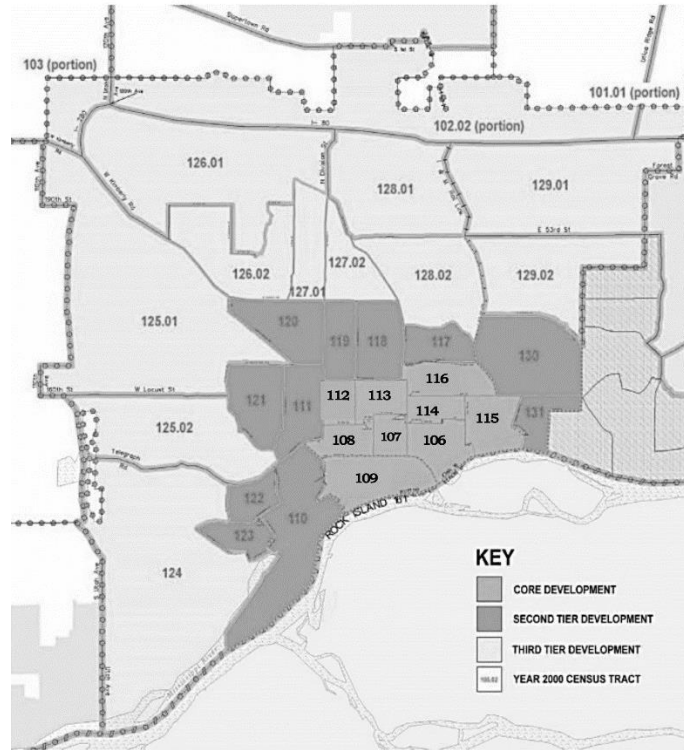


Figure 21: Davenport’s development areas.
 [Source: *Davenport 2025: Comprehensive Plan for the City*, 122.]

Core Population Characteristics

Iowa is America’s sixth least-diverse state, with an overall minority population of 11.8%. Davenport is more ethnically diverse than Iowa.³⁶³ In turn, the Core is more diverse than the city as a whole. Census tract 107 is the only tract where the white population is less than 50%. Minority populations tend to be more heavily clustered in the central part of the Core. The least diverse tracts are located to the Core’s northern edge, in tracts located adjacent to Locust Street. Tract

³⁶³ “Race and Ethnicity by State in the United States,” accessed May 6, 2018, at <https://statisticalatlas.com/United-States/Race-and-Ethnicity>.

116, located completely north of Locust,³⁶⁴ has a white population greater than that of the city overall. (Table 5)

Percentage Ethnicity - Core - Davenport - Iowa				
Area	White	Black	Hispanic	All Other
Core	61.5	18.8	11.1	8.5
Davenport	76.1	11.3	7.8	4.8
Iowa	88.2	3.0	5.1	3.7

Table 5: Ethnicity by Core, Davenport, and State.
 [Source: "Race and Ethnicity in Davenport, Iowa (City)." Statistical Atlas, accessed May 4, 2018, at [https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Iowa/Davenport/Race-and-Ethnicity.](https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Iowa/Davenport/Race-and-Ethnicity)]

Loss of population in the Core was dramatic between 1980 and 1990. Davenport began to regain residents after 1990 but the Core population remained static. By 2010, neither Davenport nor the Core had yet regained their 1980 population. While the rate of loss between 1980 and 1990 was not repeated in subsequent years, the Core lost population between 2000 and 2010 but showed a healthy bump in the 2012-2016 American Community Survey (ACS). This may be attributable to substantial growth in residents living in downtown housing units. In the 2012-2016 ACS estimates, the Core has about 7,700 less people than Tier 2. In turn, Tier 3 has 14,000 more residents than Tier 2 and almost twice that of the Core. (Table 6)

³⁶⁴ See Figure 30 at page 214.

Population by Area and Percent Change over Time									
Area	1980	1990	Change 1980- 1990	Change 1980- 1990	2000	2010	2016	Change 1990- 2016	Change 1990- 2016
Core	31,580	25,287	-6,293	-19.9	25,286	23,212	24,286	(1,001)	-4.0
Tier 2	38,298	34,492	-3,806	-9.9	33,446	32,449	32,013	(2,479)	-7.2
Tier 3	33,701	35,921	2,220	6.6	39,606	42,797	46,131	10,210	28.4
Total	103,579	95,700			98,338	98,458	102,430		

Table 6: Davenport population over time in city areas.
 [Source: *Davenport 2025*, 2010 Decennial Census, 2012-2016, American Community Survey 5-Year estimates. Calculations by author.]

These shifts in population are inversely proportional to the size of each area. The Core is a compact 5.24 miles. Tier 2 is more than twice its size and Tier 3, even with agricultural land excluded, is more than six times the size of the oldest part of the city. In 1900, Davenport’s approximate six-square-mile footprint was home to 35,254 people, or 5,775 per square mile.³⁶⁵ In 2010, its sixty-five square-mile area returns a density of only 1,508 people per square mile. Core density was 5,000 people per square mile, Tier 2 density was 3,000, and Tier 3 density was under 1,200. The city has lost density,³⁶⁶ requiring Davenport’s residents and businesses to underwrite new infrastructure

³⁶⁵ “Total Population,” *supra* note 12, at 7.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 136.

and extended city services. A population base smaller than that of 1980 is supporting these additional costs as well aging infrastructure throughout the city.

Core Housing Units and Ownership

Core housing units steadily declined between 1980 and 2000.

Number of Housing Units and Percent Change by Area									
Area	1980	1990	Change 1980- 1990	Change 1980- 1990	2000	2010	2016	Change 1990- 2016	Change 1990- 2016
Core	13,243	11,566	-1,677	-12.7	10,488	10,990	10,252	-1,314	-11.4
Tier 2	14,978	14,982	4	0.03	14,870	14,558	15,057	75	0.5
Tier 3	12,019	13,936	1,917	15.9	16,001	18,194	19,924	5,988	43.0
Total	40,240	40,484			41,359		45,233		

Table 7: Number of housing units in each area.

[Source: *Davenport 2025*, 2010 Decennial Census, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Author calculations.]

(Table 7) The numbers grew in the 2010 census but were still substantially below where they were in 1980. Tier 2 housing-unit growth has been relatively stagnant. The beneficiary is Tier 3, with its greater number of residents and housing units. (Figure 27)

As noted in Chapter III, a higher percentage of owner-occupied properties goes hand in hand with neighborhood stability. Although the 1935 Davenport housing study showed large areas of rental in neighborhoods south of Locust Street (Figure 4 page 10), 56.4 percent of Core housing units were still owner-occupied in 1970. By 1980, that

number had dropped below 50 percent. Three Core census tracts now record home ownership at less than 40 percent. That contrasts with two census tracts in Tier 2 and Tier 3 where home ownership is over 90 percent.³⁶⁷ Overall, while ownership in the Core grew between 1990 and 2000, it declined in 2010 Census and the 2011-2016 ACS.

(Table 8)

Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units by Area and Change over Time								
Area	1980	1990	1980-1990	1980-1990	2000	2010	2016	1990-2016
Core	43.5	44.4	2.2	2.2	48.1	45.9	42.7	-4.0
Tier 2	76.6	73.7	-2.9	-3.8	75.4	76.0	72.4	-1.6
Tier 3	64.5	60.5	-4.0	-6.1	66.3	66.5	63.1	4.3

Table 8: Percentage of owner occupied-housing units in each area. [Source: *Davenport 2025*, 2010 Decennial Census, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Calculations by author.]

Core Housing Vacancy Rate

As occurs in most legacy cities, chronically vacant housing is a persistent issue in the Core. Between 1970 and 2000, 3,750 Davenport housing units were demolished, almost all within the Core.³⁶⁸ Some were lost to fire or planned flood-control measures, but many were simply torn down after years of neglect. The core area lost one quarter

³⁶⁷ In 2010, Tract 106, 109, and 107 in the Core had less than 40% owner occupied properties. In Tier 2, Tract 131 had 91% and Tier 3's Tract 124 had 93.1%. Decennial 2010 Census.

³⁶⁸ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 90-91.

– 25 percent – of its housing units.³⁶⁹ One would assume that this extensive demolition would have eliminated surplus housing.

Unfortunately, since 2010, vacancy rates are again on the rise. While all vacant properties are not abandoned, chronically-vacant buildings tend to receive poorer maintenance, attract vandalism, and devalue surrounding buildings.³⁷⁰ (Table 9)

Percent Vacant by Area					
Area	1980	1990	2000	2010	2016
Core	8.9	14.8	9.0	14.3	16.1
Tier 2	3.2	4.7	3.7	5.3	6.4
Tier 3	3.7	5.2	4.7	6.2	6.3

Table 9: Housing unit vacancy rates.
 [Source: *Davenport 2025*, 2010 Decennial Census, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Calculations by author.]

Measuring the number of vacant buildings is a challenge since they are moving targets. City staff maintains a vacant property list, updated with notes as to ownership changes, potential activity, and, in some cases, physical condition. The most recent vacant property list issued by the city was in August 2017. Not all the properties were distressed, but the notes accompanying the list indicated that many had code violations. The list includes 580 homes and open parcels.³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Ibid, 90.

³⁷⁰ See Topeka and Oklahoma City reports, Chapter III, page76-80.

³⁷¹ “Suspected Vacant Properties and Vacant Land August 18%2c (sic) 2017 Data Pull,” in possession of author and emailed to her by Davenport’s Public Works Department. STET

The Core is comprised of neighborhoods in portions of city wards 3, 4, and 5.³⁷² Ward 1, in the west end, was not included in the original Core definition although many of its southern neighborhoods and housing stock date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries and had been annexed by Davenport by 1890. However, there is substantial mid-20th century development within its census tract, which skews the overall results, returning very different metrics than those found in Core neighborhoods.

Sorting the city's vacant property list to exclude all outside the Core, including all in Ward 1 and some in Wards 3, 4, and 5, returned a total of approximately 342 vacant houses and 56 vacant lots, or 68.6 percent of the August 2017 list. Staff notes for twenty lots included recent demolition information; given their locations, the other lots were likely former building sites.³⁷³

³⁷² The boundaries of the Core are as follows: West boundary, Division Street from the Mississippi River to Lombard Street plus a triangular wedge to the west bordered on the north by West 9th and south by the railroad tracks at Pacific Street; North boundary, east along Lombard Street to Harrison Street, north to Central Park East, and east along Central Park East to the railroad tracks east of Esplanade Avenue, then south along the tracks to East Locust Street and then east along Locust until Jersey Ridge Road; East boundary, Jersey Ridge Road south to 11th Street, east along one block on 11th Street and then south across River Drive to the Mississippi River.

³⁷³ The author sorted the list by ward and address. Some entries without ward designation were sorted by reviewing a city ward map. Any addresses north, west, or east of the Core boundaries were removed from the list.

Other organizations within the city also are attempting to keep track of vacant properties. A list maintained by one housing organization measures the number at 823. Of the 823 properties, 56.6 percent are in the hands of rental/investment/LLC/non-resident deed holders, 3.6 percent are in government Real Estate Owned (REO)³⁷⁴ (Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, FHLB or city) ownership, and 12.7 percent are bank- owned REO properties. Only 26.1 percent are in the possession of resident deed holders.³⁷⁵ Many studies have corroborated the negative impact when properties are owned by REOs or absent property owners. These houses tend to suffer more neglect, continue to deteriorate, reduce the value of nearby properties, and be the target of vandalism and other crimes.³⁷⁶ Absentee ownership is a characteristic of these properties. Both accountability and a reliable means of communication are often obstacles to property improvement.

³⁷⁴ Term used to describe foreclosed properties that do not sell at foreclosure auction and remain in lenders' portfolios. These are often banks or entities like Fannie Mae or Freddy Mac. "Real Estate Owned – REO," accessed February 14, 2018, at <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/realestateowned.asp?ad=dirN&qo=investopediaSiteSearch&qsrc=0&o=40186&lgl=myfinance-layout-no-ads>.

³⁷⁵ The owner of this list wishes to remain anonymous. List is in possession of author.

³⁷⁶ "Effect of Abandoned Housing," *supra* note 103, at 46; and Christopher Briem and Sabina Deitriek, "Real Estate Owned Property and Impact on Neighborhoods in Pittsburgh," September 2010, *Pittsburgh Economic Quarterly*, accessed May 2, 2018, at https://ucsur.pitt.edu/files/peq/peq_2010-09.pdf.

Core Historic Property Inventory and Management

Most National Register individually-listed properties and residential historic districts are located entirely or partially in the Core.³⁷⁷ Echoing an earlier 1986 city plan, *Davenport 2025* identifies historic preservation as an important tool in aiding neighborhood redevelopment, spurring economic growth and safeguarding city history. The authors acknowledge the city's failure to capitalize on its historic assets and the public's resistance to embracing historic preservation practices and policies.³⁷⁸ The plan notes that, after the early 1980s historic surveys and nomination process, the number of Davenport properties listed in the National Register tallied 1,650, representing a combination of individually-listed properties and contributing buildings within designated districts.³⁷⁹ (Figure 22) Other properties and districts were listed in the decades that followed.

³⁷⁷ The exception is McClellan Heights Historic District which abuts the eastern boundary of the Core.

³⁷⁸ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 156.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 160.

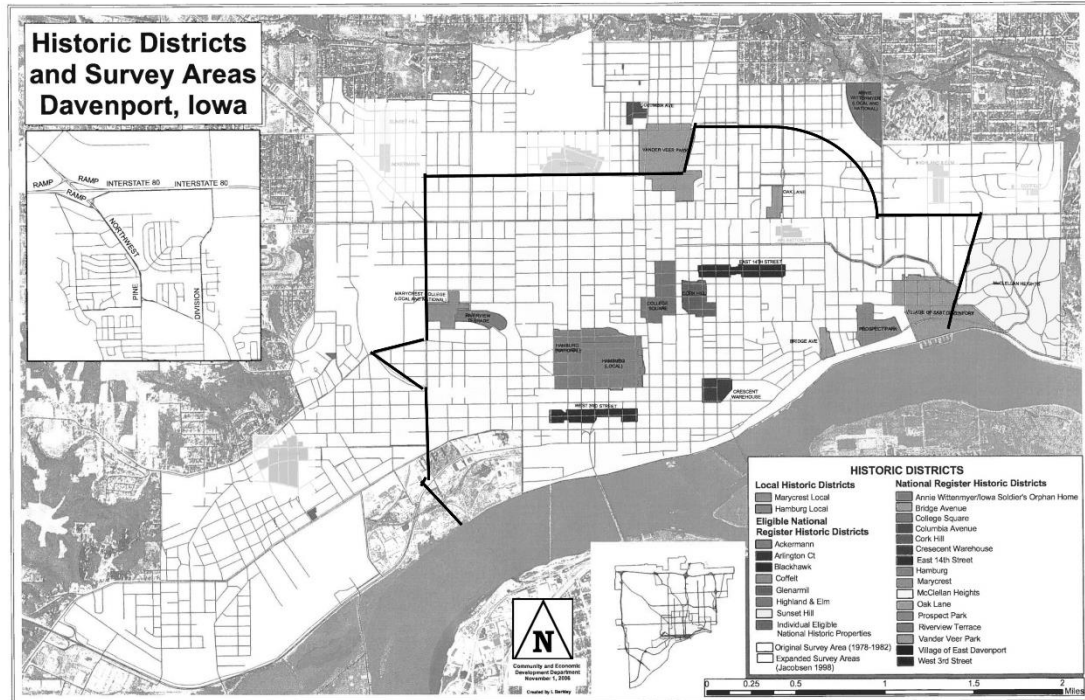


Figure 22: Davenport’s historic districts. Core boundaries are in black. [Source: *Davenport 2025*,172. With author added Core boundaries.]

Keeping track of Davenport’s historic assets should be a relatively easy task for the historic preservation staff liaison. The first reason is because the Iowa SHPO maintains a spreadsheet of National Register properties. The second is that, unlike many cities that do not require special permission to demolish National Register properties, Davenport requires its HPC and city council to approve demolition of any National Register building. That requirement triggers a written record of commission and council actions. Finally, since 2000, Davenport has not engaged in widespread demolition efforts.

Despite these factors, the figure commonly quoted for the number of National Register properties is still 1,600, and not the extant number

of 1,476 and non-extant number of 114 that is reflected in the most recent SHPO spreadsheet which was easily obtained by request. The spreadsheet does not include several recent demolitions.³⁸⁰

Core Housing: Past Attempts for Improvement

City Housing Initiatives

Davenport 2025 noted there were approximately 150 abandoned residential properties in the city.³⁸¹ This number may have come from a 2003 Abandoned Housing Task Force appointed by then-Mayor Charlie



Figure 23: Before and after photos of 822 Gaines Street. A property boarded for twenty-five years and rehabbed with assistance from the HAPPEN program. [Source: Author photographs. January 31, 2005 and June 18, 2008.]

³⁸⁰ “DavenportRegister_2018_02_15,” Excel file emailed by Berry Bennett, Preservation Program Manager, Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, February 15, 2018, in possession of author.

³⁸¹ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 13. Given that the 2000 census listed the overall vacancy rate at 5.4%, the number of housing units at 41,359, the condition of housing in the Core, the task force count of abandoned properties seems vastly understated.

Brooke. The group identified 154 properties, some located in historic districts. Eventually, the city created “Housing Assistance to Protect and Preserve our Established Neighborhoods” (HAPPEN), a local grant program that set aside dollars to rehabilitate single family houses identified on the task force list. HAPPEN grants matched 40 percent of a building’s rehabilitation costs, up to \$30,000, and carried no income restrictions. Potential homeowners as well as contractors interested in rehabilitating and flipping houses were encouraged and welcomed. (Figure 23)

Given the state of the houses involved, securing loans was sometimes difficult since the money was paid only after all work was completed. Rehabbers had difficulty gaining clear title to some of the abandoned properties. The HAPPEN program ended in 2011. \$988,000 was expended and thirty-nine homes were rehabbed.³⁸²

In the early days of the Abandoned Housing Task Force, the city began looking for legal solutions to the conundrum of how to deal with abandoned properties. Then-Assistant City Attorney Tom Warner drafted the language in 2003 for what would become, with a few

³⁸² “Program Has \$430,000 Available for New Projects,” *Quad City Times*, August 13, 2006. The author and her husband rehabbed a house under the HAPPEN program, attended meetings with the Abandoned Housing Task Force and staff who review project progress, and worked as volunteers to assist others filing for the program. There were delays in projects because titles could not be cleared.

tweaks by legislators, section 10A of Chapter 675A, an amendment to Iowa's code dealing with abatement of abandoned and nuisance properties, passed in 2006 with bi-partisan support. Despite the city's leading role in drafting this legislation, it has never opted to invoke the terms of the code it had helped create to assist it with abandoned property issues.³⁸³

"100 Homes" was a shorter-lived initiative to encourage home buying in the city's urban revitalization tax exempt area, an area that included most of the Core. It offered \$15,000 to offset down payment and rehabilitation costs for homeowners buying single family homes. When the program ended, seventeen homes had been rehabbed. After HAPPEN and "100 Homes" ended in 2011, no new unrestricted-income housing programs emerged.³⁸⁴

For both programs, results were disappointing. The original champion of HAPPEN, Mayor Charlie Brooke, had died. New administrations and councils were focused on other issues. The economic climate changed with the Great Recession and city revenues

³⁸³ Tom Warner, in discussion with author, October 15, 2015; "657A 10A," note 148, at 70.

³⁸⁴ Tory Brecht, "Davenport Expands its 100 Homes Program," *Quad City Times*, July 8, 2009. Accessed December 5, 2015 at http://qctimes.com/news/local/davenport-expands-its-homes-program/article_4b004330-6c36-11de-a7a0-001cc4c002e0.html, and Bruce Berger, email with author, December 14, 2015. Berger is Director of Davenport's Community Planning and Economic Development Department.

tightened up. From a programmatic standpoint, acquisition of abandoned properties took longer than the city had originally anticipated,³⁸⁵ an issue exacerbated by its reluctance to use Section 657A 10A.

The programs were funded from the same sources used to fund street repairs and address other aging infrastructure. The decision was made to redirect dollars elsewhere.³⁸⁶

More recently, the city has focused HOME and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) dollars along two blocks of East 6th Street, demolishing several homes, clearing sites and installing new infrastructure to build six new income-restricted houses between 2015 and 2018. Many of the homes have river views; sales prices have ranged from \$90,000 to \$110,000. This project represents a \$2.3 million investment.³⁸⁷

The initiative includes a public-private partnership. The city deeded six vacant lots along East 6th Street to a local architect. He has

³⁸⁵ Bruce Berger, email with author, March 13, 2018.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ John Willard, "Davenport's East 6th Street Gets a Boost with New Housing," *Quad City Times*, September 16, 2015, accessed February 10, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/davenport-s-east-th-street-gets-a-boost-with-new/article_1d0863a0-bc38-5dfa-b181-ef355302f5ce.html, and Alma Gaul, "Davenport Invites You to See New Homes," *Quad City Times*, October 20, 2017, accessed February 10, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/davenport-invites-you-to-see-new-homes/article_e1ad33df-d4c0-5a4e-889c-207e0d30d00a.html.

committed to build three houses, one of which will become his residence, and sell the other three lots bundled with house plans.³⁸⁸

(Figure 24)



Figure 24: New homes on East 6th Street. The 1850s Italianate home of Davenport founder Antoine LeClaire sits behind them.

[Source: Author photograph, January 29, 2018.]

The goal of offering a mix of affordable and market rate residences was to concentrate public/private investment along one street and develop Davenport's first new Core neighborhood in many decades. Whether or not the project will succeed is still to be determined.

Increasingly rigorous requirements when federal funding is used have complicated the number of properties that the city can rehabilitate. When using federal funding, the only activity that does not require whole house compliance is roof replacement. Most homes in the program were built before the 1970s when lead paint was

³⁸⁸ Gaul, *Ibid.*

banned. When interior walls are being disturbed, the city assumes that lead is present. It, along with asbestos, must be abated. Removing lead includes replacing original windows, the most cost-effective means of eliminating the hazard. HOME funding requires replacement of any appliance, such as furnaces and hot water heaters, older than five years so that buyers aren't saddled with expensive bills in the near future. The bottom line is that shrinking CDBG and HOME dollars don't go as far as they once did when regulations were less stringent.³⁸⁹

Tradition of Demolition

With the loss of programs like HAPPEN and 100 Homes, Davenport's fall back strategy for dealing with derelict properties has continued to be demolition. Demolition as a strategy tends to be cyclical. In 2015, Davenport entered another such phase when city council approved a plan to remove thirty-three properties that were vacant or abandoned. Twelve were properties listed in the National Register and all thirty-three were in heritage neighborhoods. After residents expressed concerns, city staff removed some of the National Register properties from the active demolition list.³⁹⁰ In January 2016,

³⁸⁹ Bruce Berger, in discussion with author, March 8, 2018.

³⁹⁰ Author was on the HPC at the time of the demolition request and neighbors spoke at the HPC meeting.

the Davenport City Council approved a \$273,140 contract to demolish twenty-one homes.³⁹¹

In any given year, it is an impossible task to deal with all abandoned buildings. So, the worst cases, or those that receive the most complaints, are addressed first. With funds and staff time exhausted, less challenged buildings are left for another day and continue to deteriorate. As is the case in most cities, Davenport's abandoned properties can be a threat to the stability of its neighborhoods and are often found in and around designated historic districts and heritage neighborhoods.³⁹²

Generally, there has been no strategy when empty neighborhood parcels are left behind after demolition has occurred. Area developers often assert that they cannot afford to build just a few houses at a time.³⁹³ Since the city uses its police power to demolish buildings, it does not take legal possession of the structure or the parcel and does not control what is left behind. Frequently, the empty parcel receives a tax lien which goes unpaid, the city absorbs demolition costs within its

³⁹¹ "City of Davenport, Iowa Tabulation of Bids," Davenport City Council agenda packet, February 3, 2016, accessed February 4, 2016, at <http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/departments/division.php?structureid=69>.

³⁹² Galvan, "Rehabilitation Rehab through State Building Codes," *supra* note 144, at 69.

³⁹³ The author's most recent confirming conversation was with a newly elected alderman who is also a property developer.

budget, and the parcel passes through a series of investor ownership changes with little oversight.

The recent activity on East 6th Street is an exception, but those actions were costly and required demolition of properties. In the case of at least one large property that was relatively intact, another option might have been to use funding to rehab it into a large single-family home or an owner-occupied duplex for the same cost.³⁹⁴

Not-for-Profit Housing Partners

Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities (HHQC) was formed in 1993. Since its inception, it has built fifty-two houses in Davenport with two more soon to be under construction. Fifty of the homes are within the Core; the other two are in a low-to-moderate-income census tract in the city's northwest corridor.³⁹⁵ HHQC does not rehabilitate existing homes except in very limited circumstances when a building needs a new kitchen or bathroom. According to its executive director, in the past few

³⁹⁴ The author participated in salvaging a large home demolished as part of the East 6th Street project. While the home's size might not have met the city's plans for the area, the home was sound from attic to basement. It had suffered a small fire in one area, and some questionable design choices had been made over the years, but many original materials, like exterior clapboard siding, oak staircase and flooring, fireplace and dust pressed tile surround were intact and in good condition.

³⁹⁵ Kristi Crafton, email with author, February 13, 2018. Crafton is the Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities.

years, there have been few vacant parcels for it to build on in Davenport.³⁹⁶

Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) is a not-for-profit community development corporation that began rehabbing homes in 1981. Since then, it has rehabilitated more than 180, almost all south of Locust Street in the city's Core. Through the years, it has provided a range of other services including mortgage lending, homebuyer education, lead abatement, and an exterior grant/loan fund. While many of its rehabbed homes historically targeted low-to-moderate-income buyers,³⁹⁷ more recently, it has launched a new program called REACT using new funding that focuses on low-to-moderate-income census tracts rather than the income of the home buyer. This change permits NHS to widen its potential pool of homebuyers to include people at higher income levels while still doing work in neighborhoods that traditionally have not benefitted from private developer investment. Through REACT, it has rehabbed four previously vacant homes. Three current projects are already sold prior to completion.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Kristi Crafton, HHQC Executive Director, email and discussion with author, May 11, 2017.

³⁹⁷ "NHS History in the Community," accessed February 12, 2018, at <http://www.mvnhs.org/nhs-accomplishments.html>.

³⁹⁸ Brook Hayes Upton, in discussion with author, February 12, 2018.

Interfaith Housing Ltd. has been working in the Core since 1994. Its mission is to refurbish homes to sell to low-to-moderate-income first-time buyers and to manage rentals for the same population. It has also offered lead training classes and lead assessment services. Funding has come from various sources including community foundations and federal HOME dollars.³⁹⁹

Effective Practice: Improve Core Housing

Address the Chronic Issue of Abandoned Housing

Davenport's city code does not include a definition for abandoned property. Since derelict properties are an endemic issue, closer attention to defining what the city means by the term "abandoned" might give everyone – staff, council, and property owners – a common understanding. The Iowa Code solves this problem. Section 657A 10A lists nine different characteristics by which a property may legally be deemed abandoned; not all characteristics are required to define a property as such.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁹ Todd Theis, in discussion with author, February 13, 2018. Theis is Director for Interfaith Housing Ltd.

⁴⁰⁰ "Chapter 657A," *supra* note 147, at 70, 657A.10A lists nine elements that can define the term "Abandoned." They include any of the following: Presence of unpaid special assessments; lack of utilities; occupancy status; code issues; exposure leading to deterioration; boarding; presence of vermin or debris; amount of communication city has had with owner; compliance history of owner.

For several years, Davenport’s Public Works department has worked diligently to keep track of chronically vacant buildings. The city must begin addressing abandoned properties prior to their becoming so derelict that demolition becomes the only option. A vacant structure that devolves into one that requires repeated calls for weed and brush clearance, generates neighborhood complaints of vandalism, or has unpaid utility and sewer bills are early warning signs of trouble. The city has the means to track calls for service.⁴⁰¹ Cities like Cincinnati and Dayton are using publicly-accessible online databases, tracking foreclosures and properties available at tax sales.⁴⁰²

Recently, Davenport’s Neighborhood Services Director proposed a vacant property registry closely modeled on the existing ordinance in Dubuque that permits additional oversight of potential problem properties earlier in the cycle. In its city code, “Vacant” is defined by at least one of eight different characteristics that range from unable to be secured in a conventional fashion to being without utilities. Buildings so identified must be annually registered and their owners pay a fee. This

⁴⁰¹ The 2016 demolition list demonstrated a clear pattern of neglect and calls for service. Even the Scott County assessor website lists property assessments for each parcel. The author used that resource to research the history of all thirty-three parcels. Public Works has its own capabilities to access this information.

⁴⁰² “Lot Linker,” *supra* note 326, at 135; “Vacant Foreclosed Residential Property Registration,” *supra* note 300, at 127.

registration gives Dubuque the right to enter the structures for inspection every year.⁴⁰³

Dubuque also does not allow long-term boarding of building elevations facing thoroughfares. Improper boarding that does not address moisture retention can be extremely unhealthy for heritage buildings.

Locally drafted ordinances and legislation can also prohibit demolition or neglect of protected classes of properties; scope can vary from city to city. An example is Dubuque's demolition ordinance, noted in Chapter III. It provides oversight of buildings in a variety of locations, including neighborhoods in conservation districts, many of which are not historically designated.⁴⁰⁴ Another example comes from Davenport. Proposed demolition of any National Register properties requires prior

⁴⁰³ "Chapter 4 Licensing of Vacant and/or Abandoned Buildings," accessed April 21, 2016, at http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/m_index.php?book_id=803. Dubuque's definition for "Vacant" is one or more of the following characteristics: Unsecured; secured by means other than those used in the design of the building; declared a "dangerous building" as defined in other parts of the code; unfit for occupancy as determined by the city manager; noncompliant with the international property maintenance code; having housing, building, fire, health or zoning code violations; open to vagrants, vandals, children or the unwary; not receiving service by public utilities. And Crenna Brumwell, in discussion with author, November 11, 2015 and April 26, 2016. Brumwell is Assistant City Attorney for Dubuque.

⁴⁰⁴ "Demolition of Landmarks, Landmark Sites, and Structures in Historic Districts and Conservation Districts," accessed April 20, 2016, at http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/m_index.php?book_id=803.

approval by the city's historic preservation commission; in many cities, only locally-designated buildings receive this protection.

Several cities have implemented demolition review of buildings based on age. Des Moines, Iowa, now does demolition review for any residential property eighty years or older and commercial properties fifty years or older. Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Buffalo, New York, perform demolition review for any building fifty years or older. Each community establishes its own criteria.⁴⁰⁵

In Davenport, prior attempts to deal with vacant and abandoned properties have focused on temporary task forces like those appointed to handle the HAPPEN initiative. A commission with legal standing and specific ordinances guiding it would have the power to make recommendations to city council. Such a commission should include Core residents and be tasked with developing a comprehensive plan and making an annual report to city council on its progress.

Finally, Davenport should use tools at hand to intervene in the fate of abandoned buildings, including the powerful Section 657A 10A in Iowa's code. The language appears to be unique among all states⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ Julia H. Miller, "Protecting Potential Landmarks through Demolition Review," (The National Trust, 2006). Accessed April 20, 2016, at <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1072/files/09%20Protecting%20Landmarks%20Demo%20Review.pdf>.

⁴⁰⁶ The author has extensively surveyed this topic and can find no other example of this law in any state code. While other states permit receivership and some allow cities to require purchasers to sell tax

and allows Iowa municipalities to petition district court for title to properties deemed abandoned. In the most expedient cases, the entire petition and final hearing process can take as little as ninety days. The code permits cities to act before abandoned buildings become so derelict that rehab is financially unfeasible.

Davenport can look to Dubuque and Burlington, Iowa, for examples of how effective this tool can be. Between 2007 and 2015, Burlington has petitioned for ownership of over one hundred properties. Of those, thirty were demolished, but seventy were auctioned to new owners under firm rehabilitation timetables. All but two of the vacated lots were sold or donated. By 2015, most of the properties coming to Burlington through Section 657A 10A were in much better condition than was the case when the program began. The city is now intervening before buildings become severely deteriorated. By October 2015, the city had generated more than \$275,000 in auction sales.⁴⁰⁷ The city's attorney reports almost no property-rights protests to the city's petitions or the court's rulings. City residents generally have been very happy that the city is addressing its abandoned building issue.⁴⁰⁸ Both

certificates to them (Iowa's code permits both), to date, no other state has passed a law like 657A.10A.

⁴⁰⁷ Eric Tysland, in discussion with author, October 9, 2015. Tysland wears two city hats in Burlington as both its Parks and Community Development Director.

⁴⁰⁸ Scott Power, in discussion with author, October 5, 2015. Attorney Power is in private practice but has worked with the city of Burlington's

Dubuque and Burlington attempt to have a goal in mind for the target building prior to using the tool. This could include determining potential for redevelopment or, in the case of demolitions, whether or not neighbors are interested in vacated parcels as side lots for their property.⁴⁰⁹

On April 24, 2018, after many discussions between staff and council, including sessions where Davenport staff met with representatives from Burlington, the city proposed a limited test of Section 657A 10A. The draft plan calls for Davenport to take legal possession of four properties currently slated for demolition, offer them for sale to private or not-for-profit developers, requiring that the winning parties rehabilitate them within a tight time frame. Individuals owning properties that violate city code are not eligible bidders.⁴¹⁰

Given that this is a limited test, the city would be wise to coordinate meetings with the developers and building code officials to set out expectations and rehabilitation plans. Repair of long-neglected properties can uncover unexpected and costly conditions that can delay the process. Staff should acknowledge that the buildings on offer

city attorney for 30 years and handles the legal aspects of the city's 657A.10A filings, and Eric Tysland, *supra* note 408, at 176.

⁴⁰⁹ Crenna Brumwell, *supra* note 403, at 174; Power, *supra* note 409, at 176; Tysland, *supra* note 408, at 176.

⁴¹⁰ "657A Pilot Program," memo, March 23, 2018, in possession of author.

are in extremely deteriorated condition. They should build flexibility into construction schedules. Without compromising building safety, the city should be engaged in easing the way for rehabilitators. This can include monitoring the permitting entities, including city departments and external partners like utility companies with a goal of streamlining a process that has proven problematic for some developers in the past.⁴¹¹

The city should be flexible in how it enforces city rehabilitation codes. Rehab of vacant buildings carries with it the expectation is that all elements will be brought up to current standards. This can make already difficult work even harder.

For historically-designated buildings, the state's adopted historic building code permits some leeway not available to heritage buildings without that distinction.⁴¹² Long term, this may require engaging state legislators in introducing changes to the Iowa code surrounding the rehabilitation of abandoned properties. Davenport is not alone among

⁴¹¹ Conflicts have arisen in the past between building code officials and utility companies in the steps required to grant various permits and gain access to utilities.

⁴¹² In recent years, the city has attempted to address issues with deteriorated rental properties by stricter code enforcement. City nuisance abatement procedures can require that landlords to vacate properties. The impact of this well-meaning approach, sometimes for buildings already operating on narrow economic margins, is that they do not reopen and may sit empty or boarded for several months or years. Rehabilitation of any property that has not operated for some time typically brings with it the requirement that all elements be brought to current code, creating rehabilitation issues too great to overcome.

Iowa cities in wrestling with this issue and might find common cause with other cities tackling this concern.

Finally, the city should consider implementing HAPPEN II to incentivize single-family ownership in conjunction with acquisition of properties through Section 657A 10A and under the umbrella of urban revitalization. With council support and city departments aligned to facilitate the initiative, the process would likely be much smoother and the impact to Core neighborhoods greater.

Align Core Historic Assets with Economic Development

As previously noted, the city has not done a good job of tracking historic assets. Since cities that fail to measure assets are more apt to lose them, Davenport should commit to better accounting for this asset.

In seeking to revitalize the Core where most of these properties are located, the city should pay special attention to its treatment of historically designated buildings. Iowa is one of thirty-five states offering historic tax credits. Those credits extend to non-income producing residential historic structures.⁴¹³ In the Hamburg Historic District, twenty-one residential projects resulted in approved tax credits of more than \$513,000.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³ “State Tax Credit,” accessed April 20, 2016, at <https://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/tax-incentives/state-tax-credit>.

Demolishing properties that may be eligible for these credits does not make good economic development sense. Of the 1980s-era surveys, only the Hamburg Historic District, resurveyed three years ago, and the Village of East Davenport, resurveyed fourteen years ago,⁴¹⁵ have been updated. That leaves hundreds of properties – potentially eligible for tax credits to help fund rehabilitation – whose status has not been reviewed for more than thirty years. As recently as 2016, city staff proposed demolition of thirteen National Register properties that owners had allowed to deteriorate. Four were removed from the list due to resident intervention, one is undergoing rehabilitation and a third has been restored to the point that it is has been given a certificate of occupancy. Assuming Davenport’s test with Section 657A 10A proves successful, the city should cross index its vacant property index with its National Register property list to identify those properties potentially eligible for state historic tax credits but also at greater risk of demolition.

The city would also be wise to update its historic surveys, developing a “Preservation Ready” brochure similar to the one developed by Buffalo.⁴¹⁶ Updating surveys can provide people interested in

⁴¹⁴ Author’s calculations based on financial information from homeowners and tax credit applications she has worked on. The \$513,000 figure represents the approved Part 2 tax credits set aside by the Iowa SHPO for twenty-one projects for eighteen different properties; fifteen were single family homes and three were multi-unit rentals.

⁴¹⁵ Jim Jacobsen, email with author, April 30, 2018. Jacobsen was the consultant on the project which was completed in 2004.

rehabilitating historic properties access to current historic research and property condition analysis required for site inventories that are needed for Iowa's historic tax credit program. Davenport's dated surveys require extra work for applicants.⁴¹⁷ The information gathered for Davenport's surveys is not located in a single printed or digital depository but scattered across many, most of which are inaccessible to the public. None of the information is available through contemporary GIS mapping tools.

Davenport can simply take a lesson from a city closer to home. Dubuque has updated many of its surveys and offers rich website content on the city's historic resources. (Figure 25)

⁴¹⁶ "Preservation Ready Study," *supra* note 335, at 138.

⁴¹⁷ This is based on the author's experience with writing state tax credit applications. Individually-listed National Register properties with dated survey information are more easily approved, but buildings that are contributing buildings in districts have been rejected unless updated historic information and research is provided.



Figure 25: Historic Preservation Page on Dubuque, Iowa, website. Access to historic preservation resources is an easy click away. [Source: City of Dubuque website, accessed April 30, 2018, at <https://www.cityofdubuque.org/341/City-Designated-Landmarks>.

The city should join others struggling with urban core issues in advocating to reinstate allocation of funding for small projects within state historic tax credits (SHTCS). Although the program funds both commercial and residential properties, the small project fund (SPF), under which residences and small commercial projects fall, was reduced several years ago from ten percent to five percent of the \$45 million program. At the same time, caps were raised from \$500,000 to \$750,000 in qualified rehabilitation expenses per project to provide more flexibility for what the state classifies as small commercial projects to apply. For

the first time in the history of the SPF, applicants are being told that it has been exhausted until the start of the next fiscal year in July 2018.⁴¹⁸

Davenport and other cities should follow New York State's lead and advocate with the state to streamline the small project application process. Unfortunately, Iowa has gone in the wrong direction, evolving an ever-more complicated process that places tax credits out of reach of most homeowners. It is fine to maintain rigorous standards for multi-million-dollar projects that will likely be applying for the federal historic tax credit as well. However, Iowa should rethink how it reviews applications and administers funding for residential properties. Another lesson Iowa could take from New York is the requirement that eligible properties be located in low-to-moderate-income census tracts.⁴¹⁹ That restriction would put limited dollars where they typically are most needed, in Iowa's urban core neighborhoods.

Finally, Davenport has thousands of houses fifty years or older throughout its heritage neighborhoods. Fifty years is the threshold age to list most properties in the National Register and to receive state tax

⁴¹⁸ When the small project funds were reduced, the SHPO offered to shift funds into the small project fund if needed. Now, financial oversight comes from a new department more focused on economic development that apparently is not willing to do this. "404A.4 Aggregate Tax Credit Award Limit," accessed April 9, 2018, at <https://iowaculture.gov/sites/default/files/History%20-%20Preservation%20-%20Tax%20Incentives%20-%20Resources%20-20Iowa%20Code%20404A%20%28PDF%29.pdf>.

⁴¹⁹ Moss, *supra* note 333, at 137.

credit benefits. Yet the city includes only 1,476 properties as historically significant.⁴²⁰ The city should seize the opportunity to maximize the value of older properties by implementing a new round of historic surveys to identify potential new districts that have aged into potential eligibility. Following Dubuque's example, Davenport could introduce conservation districts to neighborhoods where National Register listing is not appropriate or desired. As discussed in Chapter I, such designations might work well for the Historic Washington Street neighborhood or others wishing to maintain their integrity and sense of place.

Strengthen Collaboration with Housing Partners

Long-time, not-for-profit housing partners will likely continue to be important assets in the Core, continuing to provide some of the city's most affordable housing through rehabilitation of existing properties or infill of new structures.

In recent years, the city has functioned in the role of developer, directing scarce housing dollars to the East 6th Street project. While the intent was to test the concept of focusing in one area of the city and to leverage public/private partnership, the actual number of properties

⁴²⁰ Table 9, Chapter II, page 66. Davenport has 44,252 residential units and 53.6% built before 1960, giving the city 23,719 buildings fifty years or older. Since Davenport is a city with few apartment buildings of this age, the majority are single-family homes.

impacted is small and the amount of staff time to oversee the projects has been substantial.

As the city moves forward to aggressively address vacancy by property acquisition, it would do well to continue to build stronger relationships with not-for-profit and for-profit developers as well as residents willing to rehab homes in heritage neighborhoods. City staffers should avoid becoming developers but instead spend their time facilitating the process. This might include setting out expectations between developers and city inspectors as to the level to which each property must be brought to be deemed successful.

Effective Practice: Core Neighborhoods Management

While *Davenport 2025* was a comprehensive planning document for all areas of the city, it included an intense focus on the need to address issues within the Core. Several new initiatives and studies followed the plan's adoption. Some are important to reconsider, strengthen, or implement as the city engages in revitalization of its Core.

Recognized Neighborhoods and Planning Areas

Davenport 2025 acknowledged the need to strengthen the city's neighborhoods. Strong neighborhoods foster social cohesion and social

capital. They can reduce an individual's sense of isolation and bridge connections between diverse community members.⁴²¹

After adoption of *Davenport 2025*, Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) staff began a new initiative to develop individual plans for thirteen different areas within the city. Only four area plans appear to have been completed. Between 2007 and 2014, planning staff was reduced from twelve to four, sharply reducing time available to manage ongoing processes.⁴²² This reduction in staff could have been the reason why the planning-area initiative was abandoned.

A Recognized Neighborhood Group program continues.

Neighborhoods are recognized after they establish themselves with published bylaws, regularly scheduled meetings, and elected officers. Twenty-four neighborhoods are currently shown on the city's interactive map. For many, this designation marks their first effort to officially organize. A number of these groups overlap the city's historic districts. Some associations are active while others are not.⁴²³ The most

⁴²¹ Christina Freiler, "Why Strong Neighbourhoods Matter, Implications for Policy and Practice," *Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force*, November 4, 2004, accessed April 28, 2018, at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.636.4047&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, , 6-7, 12-13.

⁴²² These reports were accessed online by the author for a planning report written in spring 2016. At that time, planning for only four area reports were available online.

⁴²³ "Neighborhoods," accessed February 18, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/our_community/neighborhoods.

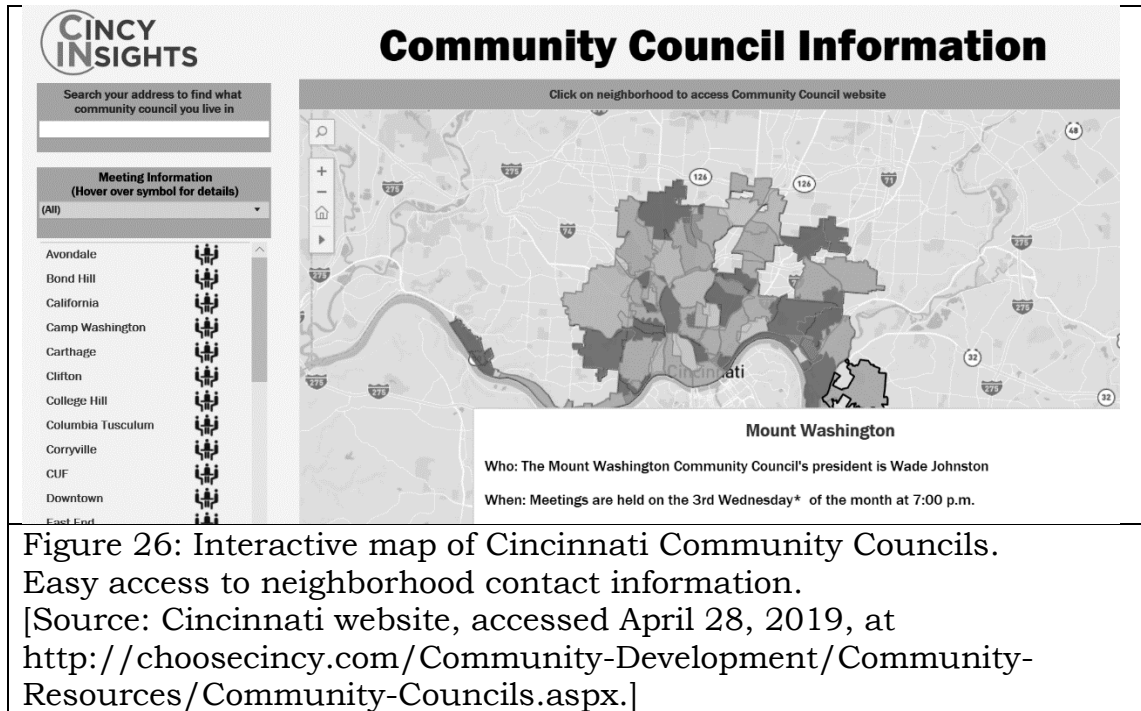
recently recognized group is located in a residential section of the Village of East Davenport. Other neighborhoods are exploring options.

According to the city's website, benefits granted to groups willing to undertake the process include a certificate from the Mayor and Council, city assistance in creating a neighborhood plan, consultation on issues affecting the neighborhood, and city assistance with neighborhood projects.⁴²⁴ There is no city budget line or specific grant program for Recognized Neighborhoods.

In some cities, formal neighborhood councils are recognized entities. According to code enforcement officer Ed Cunningham, Cincinnati has a strong tradition of organizations called Community Councils that the city listens to before making decisions that impact neighborhoods.⁴²⁵ The city's website includes an interactive map that shows how widespread they are throughout the city. It provides links to neighborhood websites and meeting information. (Figure 26)

⁴²⁴ "Get Your Neighborhood Recognized!" Accessed April 28, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6481372/File/Departments/CPED/Neighborhood%20Recognition%20Application.pdf.

⁴²⁵ Cunningham, *supra* note 227, at 103.



Bloomington, Indiana, a Council of Neighborhoods Association (CONA) meets monthly, serving as an advocate to city, county and state government. The CONA website offers links to information sites of member neighborhoods.⁴²⁶

Since neighborhood structure is weak in Davenport, staff and council should support a citywide culture that encourages such associations and they should listen to what they have to say. People living in connected neighborhoods are in the prime position to understand what is happening along their streets and what their issues are. In 2017, one of Davenport's Recognized Neighborhood leaders took the initiative to organize a meeting of representatives of

⁴²⁶ "CONA," accessed April 28, 2018, at <http://cona.bloomington.in.us/about/>.

other recognized neighborhoods. About five people attended. She is considering establishing a quarterly meeting with the group.⁴²⁷ This is the kind of grass roots effort the city should support and formalize so there is accountability among residents, staff and council.

Nuisance Abatement

Davenport 2025 focused on improving infrastructure but spent little time on code enforcement or nuisance abatement of problem properties. Chapter 8.12 of the city's municipal code addresses nuisances, including those arising from property maintenance. After 2000, with an increasing number of landlords operating throughout the city, the Davenport Public Works and Police Departments worked together to establish more effective code enforcement procedures and rental registration, inspections, and guidelines.⁴²⁸ While nuisance abatement had been part of city code for many years, after 2000 additional enforcement procedures were introduced to strengthen the city's ability to abate nuisances if an owner is unwilling or unable to do

⁴²⁷ Kim Miller, who leads the South Vander Veer neighbors, speaking at a meeting on April 20, 2018.

⁴²⁸ Mike Ryan, in discussion with author, March 3, 2016. Ryan is a District Chief with the Davenport Police Department.

so. One example is the reduced number of notices that must be sent to owners before city abatement can begin.⁴²⁹

In spring 2017, the Public Works Department created the job of Neighborhood Services Director, whose duty it is to direct the work of city inspectors and property abatement and manage other neighborhood issues. The city's website offers both a phone number and an online system for filing property complaints. Wayfinding through the site is confusing; its page is titled "Public Works Call for Service," assuming that a resident who might never have called before will understand city departmental structure. Once accessed, the operator taking calls is responsive and the online program for reporting complaints is fast and easy to use.⁴³⁰

The Neighborhood Services Director reports directly to the City Administrator. The person in the role has re-organized a three-person inspection team into city sectors. He brings a fresh set of eyes to how ordinances are interpreted. In several instances, chronic issues that

⁴²⁹ Changes to city ordinances are evidenced by dates of alterations to the code. "Chapter 8.12 Nuisances," and "8.12.050 Notice to Abate—Contents," B.2, accessed February 16, 2018, at <http://clerkshq.com/default.ashx?clientsite=davenport-ia>.

⁴³⁰ "Public Works Request for Service," accessed February 10, 2018, at <http://cityofdavenportiowa.com/cms/One.aspx?portalId=6481456&pageId=9922810>.

had been interpreted in the past as not violating city ordinances were deemed to be violations and were addressed.⁴³¹

There is the opportunity for his approach to spill over into other jurisdictions that impact neighborhoods. Whether perception or fact, some Core residents strongly believe that violations permitted to continue in Core neighborhoods would not be allowed to exist in more prosperous areas.⁴³²

Given the current size of the enforcement staff, there may be unrealistic expectations of its ability to manage the scope of issues it confronts every day. Council may need to take another look at staff and at introducing ordinances that require tighter turnaround on compliance that existing city code affords.

⁴³¹ In one case, a resident had been generating electricity for his house by means of a gas-powered generator for sixteen months. Past code enforcement officials did not see this as an issue. New enforcement deemed it a violation of the city's noise ordinance. In another case, an occupied property that neighbors had asked the city to take action on for over a decade was deemed a nuisance and uninhabitable building. The new Neighborhood Services Director interpreted that the ordinance allowed him to petition the court for the right to gain entry, asked for and was granted the order, inspected the property and immediately ordered it boarded.

⁴³² A common comparison is how such violations would be addressed in McClellan Heights, a relatively affluent historic neighborhood that abuts the Core's east boundary. Most recently, this was expressed in a conversation with the author by a resident who has also owned a business in the Core for more than forty-five years.

Rental Oversight

There are a limited number of purpose-built rental properties in the Core, both historic and modern. Three low-to-moderate-income apartment buildings have been built in the past five years.⁴³³ While some new rental stock is in converted commercial and educational buildings, the vast majority of units are found in conversions of single family homes.

In the first decade of the current century, Davenport landlords were a powerful group who tried to weaken the city's rental-inspection program. A city employee involved in the events of the time claims that one alderman tried to abolish the entire initiative.⁴³⁴ Rental inspection moved to the fire department's jurisdiction in 2009. That department's fundamental responsibility for ensuring safe buildings strengthened the program. About the same time, Davenport fire and police departments began working together on new nuisance-abatement processes that resulted in penalties including denying landlords the right to rent non-compliant properties for six months. The inspection program moved to the Public Works Department in 2011.⁴³⁵ Since

⁴³³ Harrison Lofts at 1416 N. Harrison opened in 2013, and Lafayette Square and 501 Brady Lofts in 2017.

⁴³⁴ Information from an anonymous source close to the rental controversy, in discussion with author, February 20, 2018.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

then, the city has maintained a solid rental licensing and inspection program supported by city council.

In April 2018, city staff proposed additional conditions to strengthen the city's rental ordinance. The proposals grew out of revitalization discussions as well as concerns surrounding less responsible out-of-town investors. The goal is to reward responsible landlords, who may see a reduction in city rental fees, and hold less responsible landlords accountable with increased fees and penalties.⁴³⁶

Davenport's requirement that almost all rentals be licensed⁴³⁷ makes it easy to track properties that violate city codes. Complaints come not just from tenants but also from nearby neighbors who can supply helpful insights.⁴³⁸ New leadership and organization within the inspection department have made this process more accountable and responsive.

An unresolved issue relating to rentals is contract sales. To avoid inspections that are required for rental properties, some investors sell homes under contract, shifting the burden of home maintenance to

⁴³⁶ Rich Oswald, presentation to Davenport City Council, April 17, 2018. Oswald is the city's Neighborhood Services Officer.

⁴³⁷ The city ordinance permits unlicensed rentals to family members of one degree of kinship, allowing an owner to rent to a parent, a child, or a sibling.

⁴³⁸ Some staff need to be encouraged to listen more closely. It is the author's experience that assumptions are sometimes at the department level that result in inaction and not getting issues addressed.

residents. Years before *Davenport 2025* was adopted, city staff explored ways of eliminating contract sales or requiring a substantial down payment for former rental properties that were being converted to contract sales. The conversation continued after the plan was implemented. Both legal and oversight issues kept the city from enacting new ordinances restricting the practice.⁴³⁹

If the city is able to enact more restrictive code enforcement in the future, it should step carefully through the contract sale process. Frequently, private contract sales are the only way individual owners can sell properties for which lenders are unwilling to supply mortgages. Buyers may not have the cash to purchase them outright but might have the means to improve the property to a point that a conventional mortgage is within reach. Such an ordinance could set higher accountability for multiple-property sellers.

Enhance the Role of City Boards and Commissions

A number of city committees are engaged in reviewing and approving proposals that can have an impact on the Core. In Davenport,

⁴³⁹ Ann McGlynn, "Davenport's 'Problem' Houses Illustrate Loophole," *Quad City Times*, August 18, 2008, accessed February 15, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/davenport-s-problem-houses-illustrate-loophole/article_f2a83d57-6e33-589d-a3df-b293bf0ea1d7.html; "Get Inspectors Back Inside Contract Sale Homes," *Quad City Times*, August 23, 2008, accessed February 15, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/get-inspectors-back-inside-contract-sale-homes/article_8476cf73-337f-5f46-a3b1-ce0e938d18fb.html.

these volunteers must either reside in Davenport or own property in the city. In their roles, they often interact with residents and the issues they are facing. Through their service, they gain expertise on city policies and procedures.

In addition to its approval for proposed exterior changes to local landmarks and buildings within local historic districts and demolition requests for all National Register properties, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has a formal agreement with the Davenport Parks and Recreation Department that requires HPC approval of any exterior changes to permanent structures, signage or pathways in eleven different city-owned parks or historic properties.⁴⁴⁰ The HPC also approves any changes to important historic brick streets through an ordinance adopted four years prior to the approval of the city's historic preservation ordinance. Procedural directives for Davenport Public Works identify specific streets to be maintained as brick.⁴⁴¹ Over the years, the directive has not always been followed, resulting in inappropriate patching in

⁴⁴⁰ "Historic Preservation Review Agreement," September 13, 2005. Copy in possession of author.

⁴⁴¹ Davenport, Iowa, City Code. "12.32.190 Restoration of Pavement." Accessed April 10, 2018, at <http://clerkshq.com/default.ashx?clientsite=davenport-ia>; John Frueh, email to author, March 9, 2016. Frueh chairs the city's HPC.

some areas. The importance of maintaining historic brick surfaces has been a part of recent council discussions relating to revitalization.⁴⁴²

Implementation of neighborhood design standards was an objective identified in *Davenport 2025*. The Design Review Board is an outgrowth of the plan. This eleven-member panel reviews proposed new construction and substantive⁴⁴³ exterior changes to existing buildings in an area that covers most of the city's heritage neighborhoods, including buildings in most National Register historic districts. The board does not approve changes to local landmarks or buildings within local historic districts; the HPC is charged with this task. The Board has shown itself sensitive to what is being built as infill in heritage neighborhoods. One example is its strong recommendation to Habitat for Humanity to replace its one-story, hipped-roof homes with two-story, gable-front models that are more in keeping with most heritage neighborhoods.⁴⁴⁴ Illustrated neighborhood design standard brochures were created but are currently unavailable on the city's new website.

⁴⁴² In fall 2017, a badly-patched historic brick intersection was proposed by staff to be replaced in concrete due to cost. Instead, supportive residents lobbied council steadily to replace it and the adjoining non-historic brick street in brick. In an eight-to-one vote, the council approved replacement in brick.

⁴⁴³ In residential review areas, cost of changes must equal 25 percent of the assessed value or the square footage of the building being altered. "Design Review Board," accessed February 10, 2018, at <http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=12159094>.

⁴⁴⁴ The author was present at a DRB meeting when this occurred.

There is a great opportunity for the HPC and DRB and other city boards to work together as the city explores how to enhance its heritage neighborhoods. Although each group has different areas of responsibility, their efforts complement each other in that they both encourage property owners to seek out appropriate treatments for housing and commercial stock that is historically designated or that is surrounded by heritage buildings. To date, the groups have not been invited to hold joint meetings or goal-setting sessions. Members of both groups need to be engaged in development of the city's urban revitalization plans.

Impact of Institutional Partners, Downtown Redevelopment, and Historic Commercial Corridors

Two colleges, one medical center, and numerous religious organizations are sited within the city's heritage neighborhoods and engage in demolition. The city as well as private property owners — the major investors in heritage neighborhoods — should have access to their development plans since they can have a dramatic impact on neighborhood landscapes, transportation routes and quality of life. For example, the conflict surrounding a proposed St. Ambrose Planned Institutional District (PID) plan brought it and surrounding neighborhoods into conflict.⁴⁴⁵

Another recent PID proposal, was submitted by Palmer College. The plan, expected to roll out over the next ten years, represents a \$50 million investment in the area, but will result in substantial demolition of historic infrastructure and affordable housing. Concerned that the city's approval of the plan could violate the Fair Housing Act, the city's Civil Rights Commission contracted a study with an outside firm. The study's finding was that there was no adverse effect.⁴⁴⁶ However, other housing entities offered conflicting opinions. Fair housing advocates also voiced concerns.⁴⁴⁷ In each of three cycles, council voted to approve the PID, allowing the plan to move forward. (Figure 27)

⁴⁴⁵ Tom Geyer, "Neighbors Voice Their Concerns about St. Ambrose's Expansion," *The Quad City Times*, February 12, 2012, accessed April 19, 2016, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/neighbors-voice-their-concerns-about-st-ambrose-s-expansion/article_0664e0ce-5d0a-11e1-9dc0-001871e3ce6c.html.

⁴⁴⁶ Mosaic Community Planning, "Palmer PID Disparate Impact Analysis," December, 2017, accessed March 20, 2018, at <https://davenport.novusagenda.com/AgendaPublic/MeetingsResponsive.aspx?meetingType=2>, 125-154.

⁴⁴⁷ Devan Patel, "Expert Raises Red Flags on Analysis of Impact of Rezoning for Palmer College Improvement Plan," *Quad City Times*, January 9, 2018, accessed March 20, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/government-and-politics/expert-raises-red-flags-on-analysis-of-impact-of-rezoning/article_6919fc1e-9733-5fc0-a7f3-36e840a661d4.html.

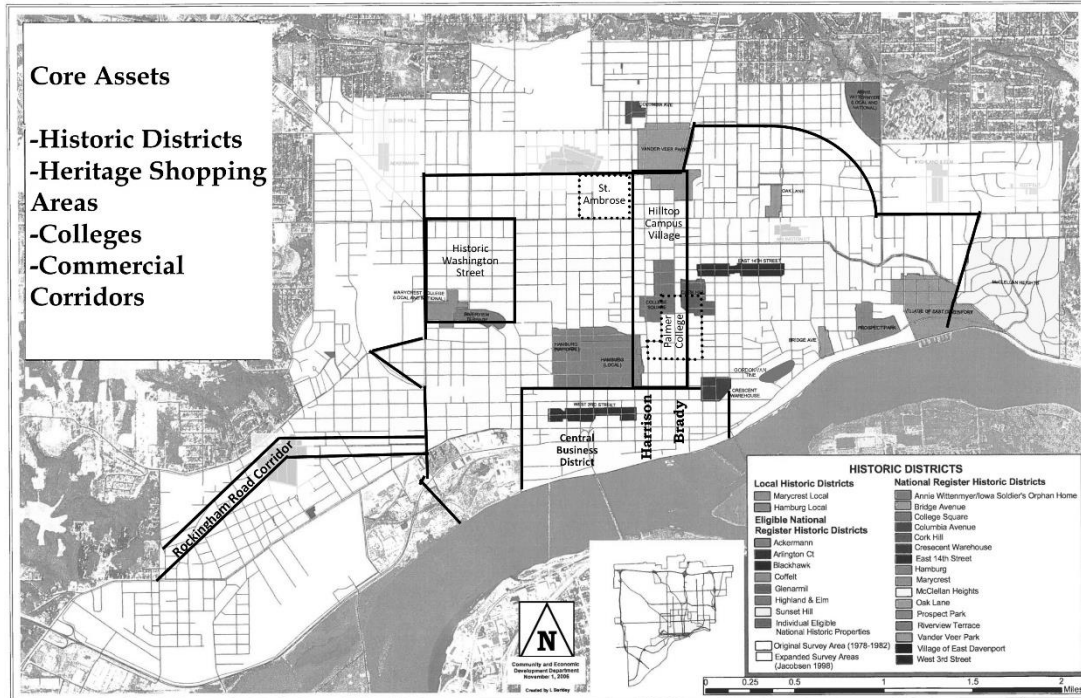


Figure 27: Core area historic districts, shopping corridors, colleges. [Source: *Davenport 2025*, with author edits.]

Davenport 2025 envisioned a downtown that included relocation of cultural institutions, revitalization of the riverfront, and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings as market rate and affordable housing. Some of these improvements were underway by the time the plan was adopted.

What had been the Davenport Museum of Art, a city-owned asset, moved from its location within a heritage neighborhood, reopening as The Figge Art Museum in 2005 in a new David Chipperfield-designed building facing the Davenport riverfront and a heritage park. Management of the new entity and responsibility for the new gallery

housing the city's art collection was transferred to a separate not-for-profit organization.⁴⁴⁸

In 2003, the city became engaged in a process called RiverVision that sought to reinvent what had been a working riverfront and, later, docking and a parking lot for a casino gambling boat. The city had long resisted the idea of installing a flood wall along its nine-mile riverfront, opting instead for spaces designed to permit flooding and preserving an open riverfront.⁴⁴⁹ This ongoing debate and a proposed change of venue for the casino precipitated formal planning. RiverVision emerged from the 2004 process. The commitment to an open riverfront was affirmed. By 2014, the casino had decided to move away from the riverfront, and the 2004 work was updated.⁴⁵⁰ Starting in 2016, development of Main Street Landing, a new downtown park at the site of the old casino and adjacent to the central business district began to evolve.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁸ "About," accessed January 30, 2018, at <http://figgeartmuseum.org/About/Museum.aspx>.

⁴⁴⁹ The commitment to an open riverfront appears to be a point of civic pride and identity. In recent RiverVision meetings attended by the author, participants again expressed the need to protect smaller communities to the south who are adversely affected by flood walls to the north.

⁴⁵⁰ The author participated in both RiverVision planning processes, and "Projects and Planning," accessed February 1, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/our_community/davenport_riverfront.

⁴⁵¹ "Riverfront Design Guidelines," accessed February 1, 2018, at http://www.cityofdavenportiowa.com/our_community/davenport_riverfront.

The city's downtown began to change dramatically with conversion of empty commercial buildings into residential units, most using low-income or historic tax credits. Rehabilitations began a few years prior to *Davenport 2025* with a group of buildings primarily offering affordable housing.⁴⁵² In 2006, a four-year restoration of a historic but shuttered hotel began. When completed it offered market-rate, long and short-term accommodations.⁴⁵³ Other projects were soon underway.

A 2017 downtown housing study surveyed twenty-three buildings housing a total of 752 market-rate units. Fourteen of them were 100 percent occupied and the overall downtown residential occupancy was 96.7 percent. Rehabilitation continues at other locations. Almost all use state and federal historic tax credits as part of their financing and most feature market-rate apartments.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² Alma Gaul, "Old Hotel is Home to New Apartments," *Quad-City Times*, April 24, 2007, accessed February 1, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/article_0d35e233-75b5-5961-8663-1f4d34603307.html, and "History," accessed February 1, 2018, at <http://crescentlofts.com/history.php#entrance1>.

⁴⁵³ Jennifer DeWitt, "Hotel Blackhawk Opens Today, Unveiling 4-Year, \$35 Million Restoration," *Quad City Times*, December 15, 2010, accessed February 8, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/hotel-blackhawk-opens-today-unveiling--year-million-restoration/article_581cea96-0811-11e0-b03e-001cc4c002e0.html.

⁴⁵⁴ DiSalvo Development Advisors, LLC, "Housing Assessment – 4th Quarter 2017. Downtown Davenport, Iowa," accessed January 30, 2018, at <https://www.downtowndavenport.com/uploads/2018/01/DTDavenportHousingAssessment11.17.pdf>.



Figure 28: Downtown Davenport historic tax credit projects. Left, new Scott Community College Urban Campus located in the 1965 First Federal Bank building. Right, Andresen Flats, built 1900 and a rare surviving example of a downtown turn-of-the-century purpose-built apartment building. [Source: Andresen, author photograph, November 16, 2016. First Federal Bank, accessed February 17, 2018, at <https://www.eicc.edu/images/downtown-project/FirstFederal-Large.jpg>.]

Yet another building benefitting from historic tax credits recently celebrated its opening. (Figure 28) Scott County Community College relocated downtown students from two buildings to a 1965 converted bank building newly added to the National Register. It forms part of a new urban campus with classes focusing on high tech training.⁴⁵⁵ Long-term plans are to rehabilitate the college's old site in the historic Kahl Building into eighty apartments, ground floor retail, and refurbishment of the historic Capitol Theater.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ Alma Gaul, "New SCC Urban Campus Opens for Classes," *Quad City Times*, January 18, 2018, accessed February 10, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/new-scc-urban-campus-opens-for-classes/article_ce60f6f8-63d0-532d-a919-7da7be5c9be6.html.

⁴⁵⁶ Johnathan Turner, "Scott Community College Progresses on \$30M Urban Campus," *Dispatch-Argus*, January 25, 2018, accessed February 10, 2018, at http://qconline.com/news/local/scott-community-college-progresses-on-m-urban-campus/article_6db4159c-f804-56e5-b9e6-edfa39c3bdde.html.

Located away from the central business district but within the core are several historic commercial corridors. Core neighborhoods grew hand in hand with nearby small commercial areas that served the shopping and entertainment needs of residents. Revitalization of these corridors was a goal identified in *Davenport 2025*. Three such corridors, Washington Street at the northwest side of the Core, Harrison Street at its north center, and the Village of East Davenport at its southeast edge have all been engaged in rebranding, reorganizing or revitalizing efforts before and after the plan was published. (Figure 27 page 196)

Residents along Washington Street began to organize in 2001 at when they implemented a neighborhood watch. A park along its south border had been nicknamed “Needle Park” due to drug paraphernalia often found there.⁴⁵⁷

The mixed used corridor, including one of Davenport’s original Turner halls, was established by 19th century German immigrants. In 2010, merchants formed the Historic Washington Street District Association. City grants for signage and beautification followed. In 2013, the long-shuttered 1893 Jackson School reopened as senior

⁴⁵⁷ Ray Ambrose, in discussion with author, February 12, 2018. Ambrose is the ward alderman for the area and a long-time neighborhood resident.

housing after an \$11 million renovation.⁴⁵⁸ This followed the 2011 conversion of another long-vacant, historic school, Taylor, for the same purpose.⁴⁵⁹

In 2009, Hilltop Campus Village (HCV) was named a Main Street Iowa Urban District. The Village includes historic shops and homes that begin three blocks north of Locust and run south along Harrison and Brady Streets, major one-way corridors connecting to downtown Davenport. HCV's north, east, and west borders co-mingle with four of the city's National Register districts, the Vander Veer Park, College Square, Cork Hill, and Hamburg Historic Districts along with undesignated heritage neighborhoods. It also abuts or encompasses part of the campuses of St. Ambrose University and Palmer College of Chiropractic.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Alma Gaul, "Good Things Are Happening on Washington Street," *Quad City Times*, June 12, 2013, accessed February 10, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/good-things-are-happening-on-washington-street/article_665781cc-ad2c-11e1-bf1d-0019bb2963f4.html, and Kathleen Hagen, "Grand Opening of The Jackson Renaissance in Davenport," *Dispatch-Argus*, April 13, 2013, accessed February 4, 2018, at http://qconline.com/business/grand-opening-of-the-jackson-renaissance-in-davenport/article_b931ac86-2324-5aeb-85b8-de2b13ff5028.html.

⁴⁵⁹ Doug Schorpp, "Former Taylor School Opens as Senior Housing," *Quad City Times*, June 22, 2011, accessed February 4, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/former-taylor-school-opens-as-senior-housing/article_6b2ec3dc-9d50-11e0-8053-001cc4c002e0.html.

⁴⁶⁰ Chiropractic care was invented in Davenport in 1895 by D. D. Palmer. "Our Identity," accessed March 9, 2016, at http://www.palmer.edu/about-us/identity/#Identity_Statement.

HCV's emergence revitalized a slumbering neighborhood commercial district and infused it with new life and identity. The district's residential areas are a combination of multi-family rentals, small historic apartment buildings, and single-family homes. Also included within its borders are several historically-designated churches organized under their own social networking organization.⁴⁶¹

The Village of East Davenport (The Village) is another National Register Historic District. Beginning as an early mill village, it was annexed to Davenport in 1856. A small business district and a park located near River Drive are surrounded by residential properties.

Much of Davenport's early volunteer historic preservation research and activism, both for the Village and surrounding city areas, were contributed by Village residents.⁴⁶² Over the past ten years, development interests have sometimes been pitted against traditional preservationists.⁴⁶³ In 2013, the city, the Village Self Supporting

⁴⁶¹ "Home," accessed February 10, 2018, at <https://hilltopcampusvillage.org/>. P.U.N.C.H., "People Uniting Neighborhoods and Churches." includes Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, AME, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Christian/Disciples of Christ congregations located within or near HCV borders. They offer a variety of individual social outreach programs and family events.

⁴⁶² Anderson, *supra* note 36, at 21.

⁴⁶³ Barb Ickes, "Historic East Davenport Home Coming Down," *Quad City Times*, April 19, 2011, accessed February 10, 2018, at http://qctimes.com/news/local/historic-east-davenport-home-coming-down/article_1c8c35e8-6a97-11e0-b99a-001cc4c03286.html, and Jenna Morton, "Five-Story Apartment Building in the Village of East Davenport

Municipal Improvement District (SSMID),⁴⁶⁴ and a not-for-profit group funded a \$121,600 master plan for the commercial area. It focused on many elements touching the district’s heritage and built environment. Planning did not extend to nearby residential neighborhoods.⁴⁶⁵ In 2017, the Village Heights Neighborhood Association, located in a residential section of the historic district, was recognized by the city.

Effective Practice: Engage Institutional Partners and Leverage Downtown Redevelopment and Commercial Corridor Redevelopment to Enhance Nearby Residential Areas

Several examples from legacy cities demonstrate how conflicts between institutions and nearby neighborhoods can be resolved in a win-win scenario. In Dayton, a hospital has been actively engaged in rehabilitation of the neighborhood surrounding it.⁴⁶⁶ Mercer

Might Be too Big,” *Quad City Times*, accessed February 10, 2018, at <http://wqad.com/2017/07/25/five-story-apartment-building-in-the-village-of-east-davenport-might-be-too-big/>.

⁴⁶⁴ SSMIDs are structures under which districts can assess themselves levies beyond their ordinary taxes and other fees in order to fund improvements not otherwise provided. These entities are known as BIDs in some states and are enabled by Iowa Law. Other SSMIDs exist within the city of Davenport boundaries. “Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement Districts. A Toolkit for Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation,” accessed March 12, 2018, at <https://iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/userdocs/programs/SSMIDFinalReport.pdf>.

⁴⁶⁵ “Village of East Davenport Master Plan,” no longer available on the city of Davenport’s website. The author participated in the planning sessions.

⁴⁶⁶ “The Genesis Project,” *supra* note 343, at 142.

University’s engagement with Macon and preservation partners to revitalize Beall’s Hill Historic District illustrates how effective such interaction can be.⁴⁶⁷ In yet another collaboration, Mercer and Macon worked together on a “College Hill Corridor” visioning initiative that sought to link the educational institution with the city’s old downtown.⁴⁶⁸

Davenport can assist these institutions by committing rehabilitation dollars and code enforcement efforts in the neighborhoods surrounding them. Both for-profit and not-for-profit partners may also have a role to play. Many of these areas will continue to offer affordable owner-occupied and rental housing. It is in the city’s best interest to stabilize these areas.

The city’s historic commercial corridors can also enhance revitalization of nearby residential areas. A 2014 study called the “Older Commercial Corridor Plan” reviewed three historic-transportation corridors and proposed enhancements along their lengths tailored to distinct areas through which they passed. These included areas of Harrison and Brady Streets included in HCV’s boundaries.

⁴⁶⁷ “Beall’s Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Project,” *supra* note 339, at 140.

⁴⁶⁸ “College Hill. Project History,” *supra* note 339, at 140; “College Hill. Master Plan,” *supra* note 339, at 140.

Another corridor was along Rockingham Road, a mixed-use corridor outside the Core area, but that runs along the edge of heritage neighborhoods built near a west end historic industrial district. Currently, this study is the starting point for discussions focused on potential changes to zoning regulations along this major roadway. The goal is creation of a more walkable neighborhood.

Various modes of transportation, another target area in the 2025 plan, was studied in depth in the 2010 “Davenport in Motion 10-Year Plan.”⁴⁶⁹ The motion study continues to be reviewed and focuses on alternative transportation modes as well as reverting one-way streets back to two-way routes.⁴⁷⁰

Changing Financial Landscape

Revitalization of heritage neighborhoods requires partnerships with both the public and private sector and advocacy at all governmental levels. With traditional government funding shrinking from historic highs of previous decades, dependence on it as a revitalization driver is ill advised.⁴⁷¹ For the past two years, the White House’s budget has

⁴⁶⁹ “Davenport in Motion,” October 2010, accessed February 10, 2018, at <https://www.downtowndavenport.com/uploads/2012/04/Davenport-in-Motion-2.2015.pdf>.

⁴⁷¹ Isaac Shapiro, Bryann DaSilva, David Reich, Richard Kogan, “Funding for Housing, Health, and Social Services Block Grants Has Fallen Markedly Over Time,” March 24, 2016, accessed March 15, 2018, at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/funding-for-housing-health-and-social-services-block-grants-has-fallen>.

proposed elimination of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, the bedrock financial mechanism for revitalizing struggling neighborhoods for the past forty years. Despite this, Congress has continued to allocate CDBG dollars, even increasing the program by 7.8% in its Omnibus Spending Bill.⁴⁷²

The impact on Davenport of this change in funding is unknown. Until this year's slight uptick, Davenport's CDBG and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds had declined; CDBG dollars first dropped below \$2 million a year in 1994, settling in at about \$1.2 million annually since 2014. HOME funding hasn't fared any better, going from a high of \$811,000 in 2004 to a current level of \$362,000 in 2017. Use of these dollars to rehabilitate existing housing is challenged by the requirement to complete remediate all hazardous materials and replace any mechanical systems in place for five years or more.⁴⁷³

This year, Davenport will spend more than \$180,000 in CDBG funding to rehabilitate a house in the Historic Washington Street neighborhood. On the exterior, the 1900-era house does not appear

⁴⁷² Spending on HUD programs such as HOME, CDBG, Section 8 and others increased by 9.8% over the previous budget. "Congress Agrees to Historic Funding for HUD in Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus Spending Bill," accessed April 6, 2018 at <https://www.novoco.com/notes-from-novogradac/congress-agrees-historic-funding-hud-fiscal-year-2018-omnibus-spending-bill>.

⁴⁷³ Bruce Berger, *supra* note 385, at 166.

derelict. The interior is worn and a bit shabby but the floors, walls and woodwork are generally intact. The high rehabilitations costs are due in part to requirements attached to funding restrictions.⁴⁷⁴

Indeed, federal housing programs, focused on rehabilitating substandard housing or construction of new affordable housing in low-income census tracts, tend to concentrate poverty. Such a strategy does not rebuild neighborhoods. It may, instead, destabilize them further.⁴⁷⁵

Effective Practice: Refocus Existing Funding, Maximize Emerging Opportunities and Build New Alliances

In Davenport, using CDBG dollars to rehab existing homes in the city's middle-income census tracts might be a better approach for residents, offering them the opportunity to move to another area with easier access to amenities and different educational options. The city, in turn, should cultivate relationships with other not-for-profit partners or market developers with access to dollars that are more flexible in their requirements.

⁴⁷⁴ Heather Johnson, remarks during CDBG Week bus tour, April 4, 2018, the author in attendance. Johnson works with the Davenport Community Planning and Economic Development Department.

⁴⁷⁵ David Boelhke, "Strategies to Improve Middle Neighborhoods," in *On the Edge America's Middle Neighborhoods*, Paul C. Brophy, ed. (New York City: The American Assembly, 2016), 87.

Businesses in Davenport should explore employer-based housing incentives. A good local example that has been going strong for more than a decade is across the river in Rock Island, Illinois. Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation’s (RIEGC) “Live and Work Rock Island” offers down payment and closing cost assistance with less income restrictions than most federally-funded programs.⁴⁷⁶ RIEGC is a subsidiary of Renaissance Rock Island, an umbrella organization that combines business and downtown redevelopment and marketing as well as housing assistance. Much of RIEGC’s housing activity focuses on the city’s heritage neighborhoods, but the Live and Work program is not restricted to that area. (Figure 29)

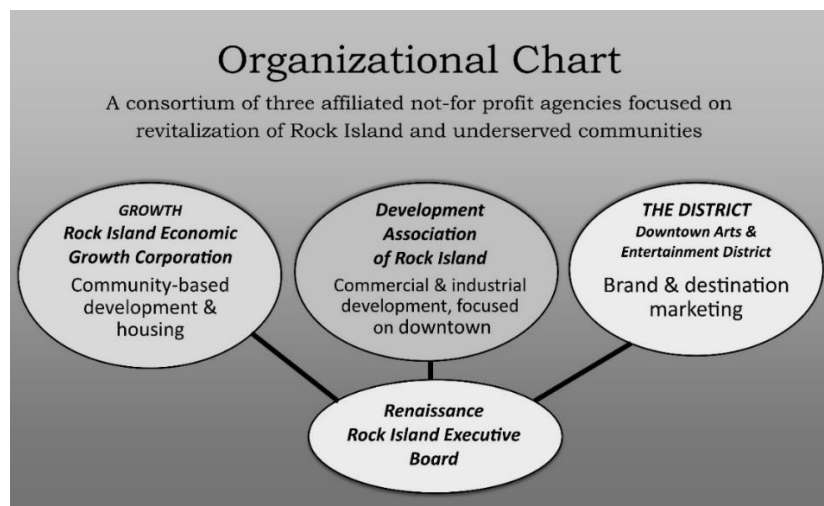


Figure 29: Renaissance Rock Island organizational chart. Housing, business development and downtown revitalization areas in one organization.

[Source: “Economic Growth Corporation.” Redrawn by author, accessed April 9, 2018, at <http://www.rocksolidrockisland.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/11-2016-Organization-Chart-.jpg>

⁴⁷⁶ “Homebuyer Programs,” accessed March 15, 2018, at <http://www.rocksolidrockisland.com/housing/homebuyers/homebuyer-programs/>. Applicants can earn up to 120% of the area’s median income.

For-profit and not-for-profit housing, marketing, real estate entities as well as business specialists need to be a part of the conversation. Davenport should assemble parcels for redevelopment or offer a richer tax offset for rehabilitation of existing commercial and residential buildings within heritage neighborhoods.

The state of Iowa offers financial incentives that should be maximized. City staff has recently recommended an expansion of the city's Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption program (URTE) to include areas outside the traditional URTE area that includes Core neighborhoods. URTE holds taxes on properties being improved at pre-rehabilitation levels for a specific number of years. The incentive in the new areas will be less than those in existing URTE areas. The city has also proposed to offer the maximum URTE limit of no increase on property taxes for ten years, the largest option available, for residential properties in the central city.⁴⁷⁷

In Iowa, tax increment financing (TIF) granted for one area may be allocated for use in another.⁴⁷⁸ Davenport should consider allocating a

⁴⁷⁷ "Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption," accessed April 9, 2018, at http://cityofdavenportiowa.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6481372/File/Departments/CPED/URTE%20General%20Brochure.pdf

⁴⁷⁸ Robert E. Josten, "What Is Tax Increment Financing? Questions and Answers About TIF," ND, accessed March 17, 2018, at https://www.pdiowa.com/media/13133/559c4what_is_tif_q__a.pdf.

certain percentage of TIF for all projects to its designated urban revitalization zone.

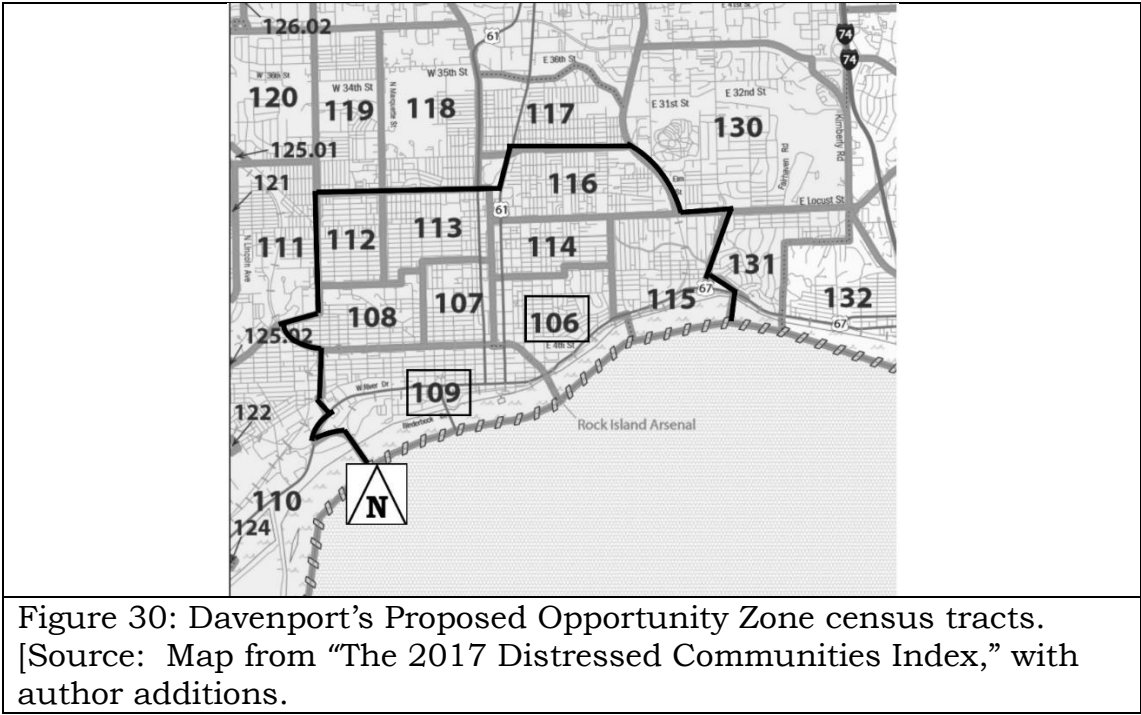
Iowa's Workforce Housing tax credit incentivizes private investors to rehab or construct multi-unit or single-family homes with no income restrictions in targeted areas that include the Core. The program was recently suspended due to high demand for the credits and to complete proposed administrative rules changes.⁴⁷⁹ While all tax credit programs are under the microscope in Des Moines during this legislative session, legislators should be encouraged to expand this program.

At the federal level, the recently adopted 2017 Tax Cuts and Job Opportunity Act (TCJA) includes designation of Qualified Opportunity Zones measured on the Distressed Communities Index which uses data from the 2011-2015 ACS.⁴⁸⁰ By investing in selected low-to-moderate

⁴⁷⁹ Iowa's program includes single or multi-unit housing in low income census tracts and brownfields, restricts the cost per unit, but does not restrict the income of the buyer. The program does not specify that properties must be owner-occupied. "Workforce Housing Tax Credits," accessed April 6, 2018, at <https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/WHTC>.

⁴⁸⁰ "The 2017 Distressed Communities Index," accessed February 16, 2018, at <http://eig.org/dci>, and Andrew Potts, "Preservationists Must Act Now to Secure Big Benefits for Historic Neighborhoods," accessed February 16, 2018, at <https://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/andrew-potts/2018/02/16/preservationists-must-act-now-to-secure-big-benefi>; and James O. Lang and Justin J. Mayor, "Qualified Opportunity Zones and Tax Credit Incentives under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act," January 25, 2018, accessed April 6, 2018, at <https://www.gtlaw.com/en/insights/2018/1/qualified-opportunity-zones-and-tax-credit-incentives-under-the-tax-cuts-and-jobs-act>.

census tracts, investors can reduce or abate capital-gains tax increases. Davenport has several tracts that qualify. New construction or rehabilitation of existing buildings are some of the qualifying activities. Recently, the city filed its application and the state approved two Core census tracts to recommend to HUD for inclusion. The tracts were 109, which includes most of the downtown area and continues over to the city’s mixed use west side, and the adjoining tract 106. Tract 106 is mostly residential and has the highest poverty rate of any tract within the Core and the second lowest rate of owner-occupied housing.⁴⁸¹ (Figure 30)



⁴⁸¹U. S. Bureau of the Census, “2016 American Community Survey,” accessed April 8, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>. The tract with the lowest number of owner-occupied residences is tract 109, where much of the housing is rental.

Rules are still being written for this new program and many questions are unanswered. There are concerns that investors will opt for areas that are already beginning to undergo gentrification rather than severely-distressed neighborhoods that need the most help. The greatest tax benefit will come from areas whose property values increase sharply. Change comes more slowly in areas of deep poverty. The act also does not include language that focuses on local residents or affordable housing.⁴⁸²

If Davenport is chosen for inclusion in the incentive, it should use its west side redevelopment plan as a kicking off point to bring new investment to the historic corridor in census tract 109. At the same time, the city should develop a housing-based option for the heavily residential 106 tract.

Summary

Since *Davenport 2025* was adopted, changes have occurred in and near the city's Core. The impact of extraordinary private investment coupled with state and city incentives have reanimated once-empty downtown streets and filled vacant buildings. New businesses and restaurants are opening along old commercial corridors. It is obvious

⁴⁸² Adam Looney, "Will Opportunity Zones Help Distressed Residents or Be a Tax Cut for Gentrification?" *Brookings*, February 26, 2018, accessed April 6, 2018, at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2018/02/26/will-opportunity-zones-help-distressed-residents-or-be-a-tax-cut-for-gentrification/>.

that many objectives chosen by those who created the plan have found fertile soil and begun to take root.

Still, the city's heritage neighborhoods remain challenged. The city's commitment to development of a sustainable and comprehensive urban revitalization plan is still some months away. Chapter V will address the need to assess individual neighborhood assets and weaknesses and to engage the community in defining solutions.

CHAPTER V NEXT STEPS

Every city's history is informed by how its people manage its growth and development as well as by less controllable variables like natural assets, geography, and regional and national economies. Some decisions are made based on an expected outcome. In 1838, Davenport's founders fought hard for the city to be named the county seat because they believed it was spur enterprise and industry. They were right, and the other village vying for the honor was later absorbed by the victor.⁴⁸³

Some decisions have unforeseen consequences. It is unlikely that later leaders, adopting early 20th century planning principles, understood the long-term implications of sprawl or intended to begin the process of emptying the city's Core neighborhoods.

In 2018, Davenport, Iowa, finds itself in a stable financial position with a recently improved ratings for its general obligation bonds.⁴⁸⁴ Its

⁴⁸³ Most accounts say Davenport, having fewer residents than its competition, cheated by bringing in people from Dubuque to vote, the winner being the city with the most votes. After two more rounds of voting, Davenport was declared the winner. Willard Barrows, "History of Scott County, Iowa. Chapter III. Rockingham Township," *The Annals of Iowa*, Number 1, 1863, 26-31, accessed April 8, 2018, at <http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1764&context=annals-of-iowa>.

⁴⁸⁴ A higher bond rating reduces borrowing costs. In March, 2018, Standard & Poors raised the city's general obligation bond rating from

population has continued to slowly recover from the impact of 1980s Farm Crisis. In planning sessions held in the first quarter of 2018, its council, mayor and staff prioritized “Urban Revitalization” as one of its top goals,⁴⁸⁵ a priority its city administrator believes would not have happened even five years ago.⁴⁸⁶

While the specific urban revitalization area is yet to be defined, heritage neighborhoods in the Core area will be the focus of many initiatives. Planning, defining the scope of initiative, understanding the needs of individual neighborhoods, and preservation have roles to play as Davenport begins the process of re-envisioning the future of its heritage neighborhoods.

As Davenport tackles the challenge of heritage neighborhoods, it should look beyond short-term tactics of the past that failed to address systemic challenges. Staff, council, and residents must be on board with the process. Lasting change is only possible with comprehensive

AA- to AA and Moody’s Investors Service existing Aa3 rating was enhanced with a positive outlook. “Standard & Poor’s Global Ratings Raises Davenport’s GO Bond Rating to AA from AA-. “Moody’s Updates Outlook to Positive,” City of Davenport News Release, March 12, 2018. In possession of author.

⁴⁸⁵ The council was asked to submit goals for the upcoming 2019 fiscal year beginning in July, 2018. All goals were rated by importance and urgency and council was asked to list top five goals from the list. Urban Revitalization received the highest number of points and was most often listed in the top five desired goals.

⁴⁸⁶ Corri Spiegel, Davenport City Administrator, in conversations and meetings with council during the recent planning period. The author was present at these meetings.

planning that considers the varied conditions and assets within each neighborhood.

Building Consensus

Davenport must first determine the boundaries for urban revitalization. Delineating the area by census tracts is a natural first step and permits measuring impact over time.

Davenport is made up of eight wards represented by individually-elected ward aldermen and two at-large aldermen. The city's Core neighborhoods are located in three city wards comprised primarily of low-to-moderate-income census tracts. A fourth ward that was not included in the original Core area also includes these tracts. Deciding what those boundaries should be could require some old-fashioned political horse trading.

Ordinances can be passed on six votes that could include votes from the four aldermen representing wards with low-to-moderate-income census tracts plus two at-large alderman, or five alderman and the mayor's vote as a tie breaker. Fortunately, the 2018 council is more focused on consensus than conflict. Seven current aldermen were part of the former council where urban revitalization discussions began. New aldermen tend to favor the initiative and understand its implications for the overall health of the city.

Input and buy in from neighborhoods will be important. As discussed in Chapter IV, neighborhood identities are well established in some cities like Cincinnati⁴⁸⁷ and less so in places like Davenport, a challenge pointed out in *Davenport 2025*.⁴⁸⁸ The revitalization planning process should serve as a catalyst for fostering the development of new recognized neighborhood groups.

It is logical to begin with neighborhoods or heritage commercial corridors that have already established strong identities. Accommodation can be made in cases where city-recognized neighborhoods overlap artificially created boundaries such as census tracts. Resident-selected boundaries should be honored; in their absence, landmarks such as roads, parks or natural geographies can define study areas. One-size-fits-all strategies must be avoided. Revitalization plans should begin street by street.

As previously recommended, the city should commit to a program that enables neighborhoods across the city to find their voices. Such a program should foster a relationship among neighborhoods, council, and staff that requires formal input and listening sessions. Davenport might also establish a Council of Neighborhoods as is found in Bloomington, Indiana.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁷ Cunningham, *supra* note 227, at 103.

⁴⁸⁸ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2,132.

⁴⁸⁹ “CONA,” *supra* note 426 at 188.

Defining Scope and Neighborhood Needs

Staff and council should develop a detailed understanding of how neighborhoods are functioning. That process likely means turning to metrics to develop a comprehensive snapshot over time.

Several legacy cities are using GIS-based mapping to get a handle on various aspects of their communities and they engaged volunteers in the process. Both Detroit and Macon's use of this technology to map abandoned properties gave both cities more detail and scope.⁴⁹⁰ The projects also used volunteer assistance for information gathering and in continual updating of conditions over time. Engaging residents in this process helps promote buy in and support.⁴⁹¹ City staff, in turn, may gain insights about the neighborhood on a granular level from people who have lived along city streets for many years.

Geographic information systems (GIS) like ESRI or ARCHES can overlay spatial characteristics with other attributes allowing not only information storage, but visualization and impact. Davenport already

⁴⁹⁰ Goldey, *supra* note 297, at 125; "Loveland Technologies," *supra* note 297, at 125.

⁴⁹¹ "Battling Blight: Detroit Maps Entire City to Find Bad Buildings," *National Public Radio*, February 18, 2014, accessed February 16, 2018, at <http://www.npr.org/2014/02/14/277058384/battling-blight-detroit-maps-entire-city-to-find-bad-buildings>.

uses ESRI for its public works database. ARCHES is another GIS-based tool developed to help cities deal with cultural resources.⁴⁹²

Davenport should be thoughtful as to what areas to include in the urban revitalization area. Areas that were excluded from the Core in *Davenport 2025* may have experienced shifting metrics since the plan was adopted.

Systems for Assessing Neighborhoods

Measuring neighborhood metrics is a starting point for developing any targeted plan. One example used to determine the health of communities, measured by zip code, is the Distressed Community Index (DCI) which measures health based on seven metrics. They include the number of adults without a high school diploma, the poverty rate, adults not in work, housing vacancy rate, ratio of census tract median income to city income, percentage change in employment, and change in business establishments.⁴⁹³ Communities, but also zip codes, are measured along a trajectory from distressed to prosperous. (Figure 31)

⁴⁹² “ARCHES,” accessed February 15, 2018, at <https://www.archesproject.org/>.

⁴⁹³ “The 2017 Distressed Communities Index,” accessed April 29, 2018, at <http://eig.org/dci#1503319659458-2c7f2f91-acb1>.

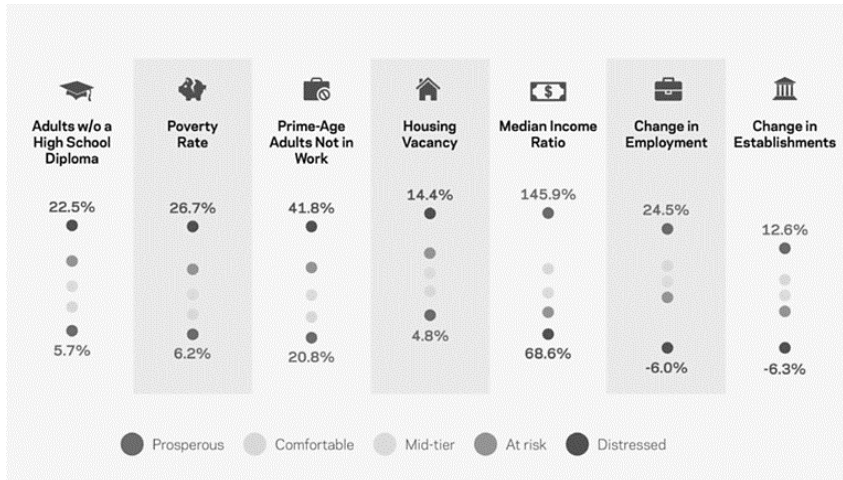


Figure 31: Distressed Community Metrics. Seven different metrics and five levels of community descriptions. [Source: ““The 2017 Distressed Communities Index.””]

Market Value Analysis (MVA) is a tool developed by The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), a certified community development financial institution (CDFI) that focuses on reinvestment in communities in need.⁴⁹⁴ MVA measures neighborhoods by their real estate characteristics and works to develop strategies that play to the assets of strong neighborhoods and provide appropriate intervention to those with fewer. It takes as its premise that financial resources are limited and should be used where they can have greatest impact. It sorts neighborhoods into nine various market types, based on such characteristics as median sales price, foreclosures, vacancy rate, new construction, and occupancy. It does not define neighborhoods by

⁴⁹⁴ “The Reinvestment Fund at 30: Insights and New Directions,” Fall 2015, accessed May 1, 2018, at https://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/cascade/89/04_the-reinvestment-fund.

describing resident types or their lifestyles.⁴⁹⁵ (Figure 32)

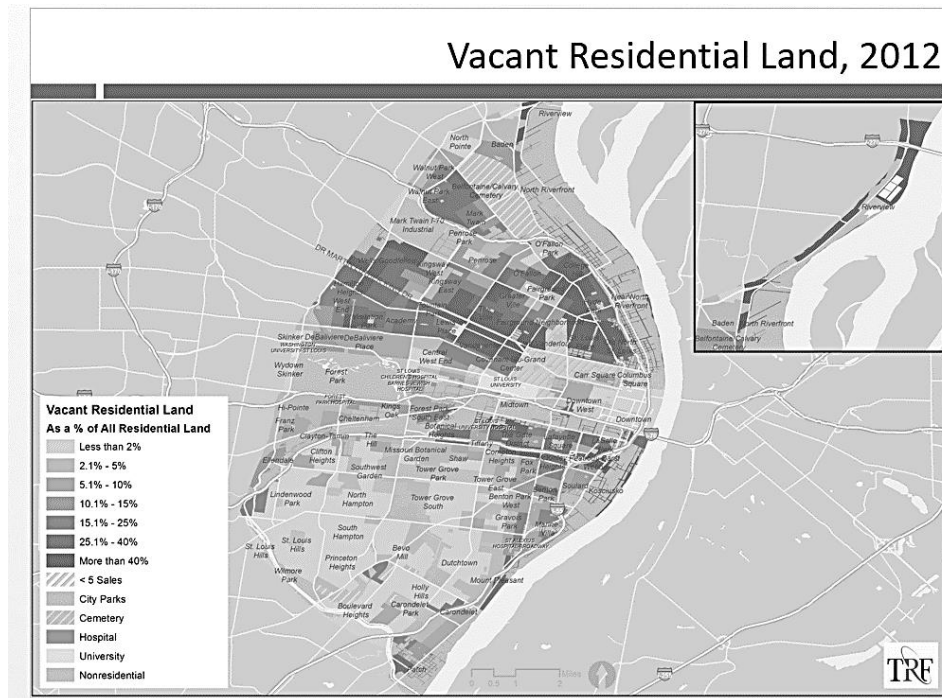


Figure 32: TRF MVA study of St. Louis.

Darker areas show higher vacancy rate in north section of the city. [Source: Market Value Analysis (MVA): St. Louis, MO DRAFT Final December, 2013.]

A 2009 study that does look at neighborhoods in terms of resident characteristics is “Dynamic Neighborhoods. New Tools for Community and Economic Development.” It defined nine different neighborhood typologies based on change dynamics, growth trends and other factors.⁴⁹⁶ The study defines neighborhoods by their individual characteristics.

⁴⁹⁵ “Market Value Analysis (MVA): St. Louis, MO DRAFT Final December, 2013, and “Average Housing Market Characteristics for St. Louis Housing Market Categories April 18, 2014,” accessed May 2, 2018, at <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/planning/documents/Residential-Market-Analysis-2014.cfm>.

⁴⁹⁶ Robert Weissbourd, Riccardo Bodini, Michael He, “Dynamic Neighborhoods. New Tools for Community and Economic Development,”

It also explores “drivers of change,” conditions that may hurt one neighborhood and have a neutral effect on another. The researchers researched neighborhoods across four American cities including Seattle, Chicago, Cleveland, and Dallas. (Figure 33)

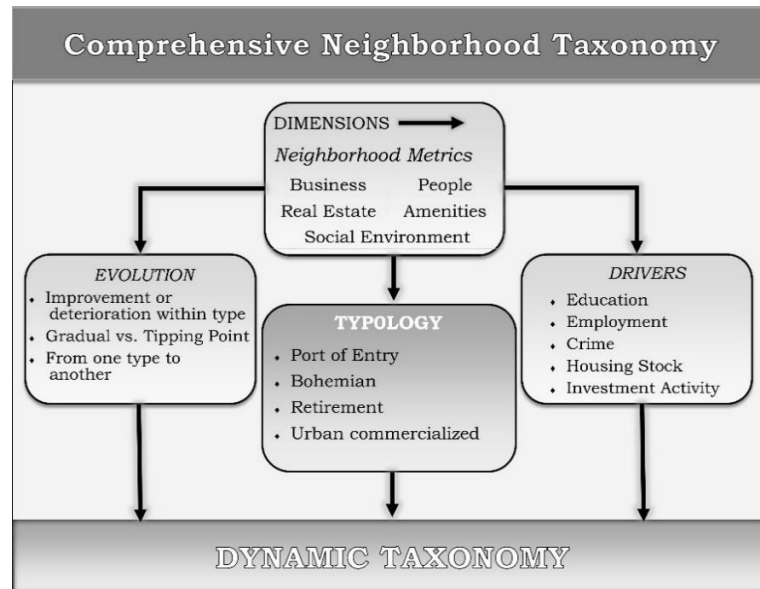


Figure 33: Dynamic Taxonomy Chart. The method tracks neighborhood health, evolution, change drivers and classifies by nine “typologies.” [Source: “Dynamic Neighborhoods. New Tools for Community and Economic Development,” 5. Graphic rebuilt by author. Accessed March 18, 2018, at <http://rw-ventures.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DNT-Final-Report.pdf>.

One finding from the four study cities may be good news for Davenport since its heritage neighborhoods abut the old central business district. The report found that low-income neighborhoods near downtown

Living Cities, September 2009, 121-143, accessed March 18, 2018, at <http://rw-ventures.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DNT-Final-Report.pdf>.

areas are changing more rapidly than those further away. This change was attributed to new residents moving into the neighborhood, “new movers,” or what once were called “urban pioneers.” The study also found that mobility – the movement of people into and out of neighborhoods – was a strong positive driver. The study noted that gentrification was not the inevitable outcome of mobility and neighborhood change.⁴⁹⁷ The rehabilitation of Davenport’s central business district, with a few exceptions, opened up new residential options, appealing to new residents who did not displace existing tenants.

The report found that amenities that helped draw new residents included income diversity, access to public transit and jobs, and undervalued housing in areas that researchers defined as having “sound economic and social fundamentals.”⁴⁹⁸

In reviewing the report’s neighborhood typologies, Davenport’s heritage neighborhoods would most likely fall into Type 3, “Stable Low Income,” characterized by relatively high levels of home ownership and low median income. These mostly residential neighborhoods have residents that stay in place despite negative drivers such as high crime and foreclosure rates. Most of these typologies include residence by

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid, 57-59.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid, 63.

race.⁴⁹⁹ While many of Davenport’s heritage neighborhoods are home to larger minority populations than the city overall, Davenport’s relatively low minority population figures tend to depress the significance of racial percentages used as part of the characteristics of some of the typologies defined in the study.⁵⁰⁰

As both Market Value Analysis (MVA) and Dynamic Taxonomy (DT) illustrate, there are many ways to measure neighborhoods. While the specific neighborhood types found in Davenport may vary from those found in the Dynamic Taxonomy report, the most important element is the study’s premise that it is critical to understand the drivers operating in individual city areas. That one heritage neighborhood within a city may be very different from another is a lesson that Davenport must learn.

Market Value Analysis illustrates the need to understand the market condition of housing stock; this is another aspect Davenport should pursue. Surveying the condition and the occupancy status of just

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid, 127-128.

⁵⁰⁰ See Table 5, page 154, “Ethnicity by Core, Davenport, State.” The city’s population is 81% White, 12% African-American, and 8% Hispanic. The typologies in the study, developed using examples from larger areas with more diverse populations, note larger populations of various ethnic groups as part of the definition. U. S. Bureau of the Census, “2016 American Community Survey,” accessed April 8, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

the 10,250 Core housing units⁵⁰¹ requires investment and resources. A housing survey should be a priority for the city's urban revitalization effort.

Topics for Further Study

Sustaining Davenport's Commitment to Heritage Neighborhoods

The city's current city council has affirmed its commitment to urban revitalization. Unfortunately, one critical factor – short, two-year council and mayoral terms like those found in Davenport – work against the longevity of any strategic plan.

Officials, newly-elected in November and seated in January, spend much of their first year in office learning the ropes of city government. While many may bring clear-eyed objectives to their swearing in ceremonies, coalitions and joint vision develop over time. Consensus built-strategic planning requires aligned budgeting. Davenport's fiscal year begins July 1st and budget preparations begin months before newly elected aldermen are seated. By year two, when freshmen officials are finding their feet, they are already back into campaign mode.

Two-year terms are also difficult for staff. Each new election can bring with it changing council goals. Even in the best of circumstances, fully engaged managers and line staff can suffer from burnout as they try

⁵⁰¹ See Table 7, "Number of Housing Units in Each Area," page 156.

to lead through inconsistent political demands. In the worst case scenario, managers might opt to pay lip service to new goals without ensuring that new expectations are shared throughout the city's departmental structure, knowing that change could come again in two years.⁵⁰²

Davenport voters have rejected three referendums for four-year terms. While some voters may believe that shorter terms mean shorter leases for politicians and more accountability, longer, staggered terms could foster a more sustainable planning environment and vision. That sustained vision could enable greater organizational alignment and retention of valued employees.

Four years must elapse before a defeated referendum item can be brought back to voters; it has been twelve since the 2006 vote. It is unclear if a new initiative would succeed.⁵⁰³

Marketing of Heritage Neighborhoods

One of the city's fundamental challenges will be how to increase demand for heritage neighborhood housing. The goal is not just to

⁵⁰² The author experienced this dynamic as a department head in a publicly owned media company where upper-management turnover during a six-year span was constant and toxic to creating fundamental organizational change.

⁵⁰³ "Davenport's Four-Year Term Referendum Fails," *supra* note 354 at 149.

ensure that existing residents stay in place but to appeal to new residents as well. Based on existing vacancy rates, Davenport's Core neighborhoods appear over supplied with housing stock.⁵⁰⁴ Simply reducing supply with demolition that leaves mostly empty lots – activity that occurred between 1970 and 2000⁵⁰⁵ – has proven to be a failed solution. The Dynamic Neighborhoods researchers found that empty lots were a “negative and significant” factor for neighborhood change.⁵⁰⁶ Davenport's experience corroborates that finding. Despite extensive demolition, the overall Core vacancy rate percentage is higher now than it was in 1970.⁵⁰⁷

The work of Alan Mallach and other planners underscores that people looking to invest in a given neighborhood respond to supply and demand. Where demand is static, house prices remain low. If supply increases without a corresponding increase in demand, prices are likely to remain flat. If the perception of a neighborhood's future is positive, it may increase the willingness to invest.

That means that each neighborhood should be assessed as an individual marketplace. Increasing demand means developing a clear

⁵⁰⁴ Based on current vacancy rates in various city areas. 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, *American FactFinder*.

⁵⁰⁵ *Davenport 2025*, *supra* note 3, at 2, 90-91.

⁵⁰⁶ “Dynamic Neighborhoods,” *supra* note 496, at 224, 64.

⁵⁰⁷ See Table 9, “Housing Unit Vacancy Rates,” page 158.

understanding of existing assets that are important to both current and potential residents and tailoring marketing approaches to them. One neighborhood might be attractively located near a revitalized downtown area. Another might draw young families due to its proximity to schools. A neighborhood with a grittier urban appeal could attract a different type of resident. As “Dynamic Neighborhoods” illustrates, residents do not value the same assets equally.

For example, in 2010, of Davenport’s 40,620 housing units, only 31 percent included children under age 18, just 2 percent below the national percentage.⁵⁰⁸ While caring about health of local schools is important to many people without school-aged children, living in a neighborhood near schools might hold less importance for them. Often cities plan neighborhood changes based on the desires of current residents. They would do well to seek input from prospective residents as well.⁵⁰⁹

Having a solid grasp of these micro-housing markets is important. Understanding real estate activity – the percent of conventional

⁵⁰⁸ U. S. Bureau of the Census, “Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 Demographic Profile Data,” accessed March 16, 2018, at <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.

⁵⁰⁹ Marcia Nedland, “Using Place-Branding Strategy to Create Homebuyer Demand for Legacy City Neighborhoods,” in *On the Edge America’s Middle Neighborhoods*, Paul C. Brophy, ed. (New York City: The American Assembly, 2016), 101-102.

mortgages, cash sales and real-estate-owned property; the foreclosure rate and frequency of tax-delinquent or tax-lien properties – helps measure a neighborhood’s strength or weakness. It can help Davenport decide which interventions would have greatest impact. It is also important to determine if residents are remaining in neighborhoods because they feel they have no other option.

Maintaining Stability and Supporting Diversity

Stability is a critical factor in rebuilding neighborhoods. Owner-occupied homes have a direct relationship to resident stability and better property condition; renters tend to be more transient.⁵¹⁰ Studies have shown that in neighborhoods where the owner-occupied ratio is relatively high, maintenance for rental, or absent-owned property, is also better. Overall, absent-owned houses tend to experience more foreclosures, tax delinquency, and receive poorer maintenance than owner-occupied houses.⁵¹¹ That, in turn, leads to less-than-ideal living conditions for

⁵¹⁰ Alan Mallach, “Homeownership and the Stability of Middle Neighborhoods,” in *On the Edge America’s Middle Neighborhoods*, Paul C. Brophy, (New York City: The American Assembly, 2016), 68-69.

⁵¹¹ Ibid, 71-73. Mallach, citing reports by George Galster, *Homeowners and Neighborhood Reinvestment*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Yannis M. Ioannides “Residential Neighborhood Effects,” *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, 32, no. 2, 2002, 145-165; and his own report, “Lessons from Los Vegas: Housing Markets, Neighborhoods, and Distressed Single-Family Property Investors,” *Housing Policy Debate* 24, No. 4, 2014, 769-801.

tenants and may shorten their stays. Families, both those who live in their own homes and those who rent, are more likely to share social capital – mutual expectations and obligations – if residency is long term. The softer demand for owner-occupied housing in many heritage neighborhoods means that renters will likely always be present in them and deserve to have housing that meets more than a basic threshold for occupancy. Cities with strong ordinances that encourage care of rental properties can help keep neighborhoods stable and both renters and homeowners in place. Davenport is on the right track in its steady focus on rental oversight and in continuing to refine its ordinance.

Finally, it is important to develop strategies that allow current residents to remain amid neighborhood transitions. Unless there is an extraordinary change in the city's slow population growth, Davenport's heritage residential neighborhoods are unlikely to undergo rapid transition. That same slow growth also means that the city's neighborhoods should continue to remain among its most affordable places to live.

Long-term residents help maintain a neighborhood's identity and social fabric. They can serve as "village elders" whose experience over time contributes to its sense of place. In order to maintain that group, enhanced incentives that lower or freeze property taxes or reduce levies for services based on residency or income help offset rising costs for people of modest means.

Further Study on Core Housing

Several important questions remain unanswered. Is increasing the number of new housing units in the Core, an area already experiencing vacancy, adding to the problem of neighborhoods with limited demand?

The city's Core includes downtown; there, rehabilitation of vacant commercial buildings into mostly market-rate rental units has increased inventory. Are new rental units in the downtown area hurting landlords' ability to lease nearby apartments elsewhere in the Core or are the downtown units attracting a completely new population? Could millennial downtown renters be transitioned into Core homeowners as they enter new life stages? Surveying downtown residents and Core landlords could answer these questions and help shape future strategy.

Ensuring Sense of Place

Sense of place is a term that describes both the physical and the emotional relationship people have to their surroundings, to both natural and built environments.

When entertaining out-of-town visitors, residents typically take them, not to modern shopping malls or subdivisions found in every city, but to uniquely local places. In older industrial cities, these are often heritage neighborhoods or commercial corridors that speak to a city's transition through time. While the number of assets within Davenport's designated historic districts are too few on their own to have a strong

impact on the trajectory of the city's Core neighborhoods, historic preservation still has a role to play. It brings to the conversation its system of surveying and categorizing areas and its sensibility toward the importance of sense of place.

Edward T. McMahon, writing about what connects residents to their cities says:

Place is more than just a location on a map. A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, social, and environmental – that provide meaning to a location. Sense of place is what makes one city or town different from another, but sense of place is also what makes our physical surroundings worth caring about.⁵¹²

McMahon notes that a 2010 Knight Foundation “Soul of the Community Survey,” comprised of twenty-six cities and almost 43,000 people, found that the three strongest reasons people feel connected to the places they live were not economy or jobs but their city's physical beauty, openness to all people, and opportunities for socializing and being part of a caring community. The study also found a direct correlation between resident connectedness and the growth of a city's local GDP.⁵¹³

⁵¹² Edward T. McMahon, “The Distinctive City,” *Urbanland*, April 4, 2012, accessed May 4, 2018, at <https://urbanland.uli.org/development-business/the-distinctive-city/>. McMahon is Senior Resident Fellow at the Urban Land Institute.

⁵¹³ “Knight Soul of the Community 2010. Why People Love Where They Live and Why it Matters: A National Perspective,” 2010, accessed May 3, 2018, at <https://knightfoundation.org/sotc/overall-findings/>.

McMahon rates tourism as a top industry in most states, an activity that is all about seeing what is unique and different. In a world he describes as having “footloose” capital, McMahon believes that communities without a strong sense of place lose a competitive advantage. He believes historic buildings and neighborhoods contribute to a city’s distinctiveness and equates preservation of historic buildings to “saving the heart and soul” of communities.⁵¹⁴

Sense of place can describe either a negative or positive experience. Walking down a residential street where houses are boarded and trash tumbles through unkempt yards can certainly evoke a very different sense of place than a stroll down a block where there are obvious signs of people living inside the houses, visible evidence of residents working in their gardens or neighborhood children playing along the sidewalks. Historic preservationists have chosen a positive interpretation, making sense of place one of the driving forces behind the movement.

Historic Preservation’s Evolution

Historic preservation in America emerged as cities were under siege from federal urban renewal policies that obliterated, not just the physical past, but also the emotional and spatial relationships people had to the places where they lived and worked. In many places it began

⁵¹⁴ Edward McMahon, “Where am I? The Power of Uniqueness,” 17:00, *TEDxJacksonville*, posted January 6, 2015, accessed May 4, 2018, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qB5tH4rt-x8>.

as it did in Davenport, in reaction to potential destruction of sites deemed important or worth saving by early activists.

From a movement, it grew into an industry. Lost in the maturation process may be the connection of people to historic preservation's essential character of saving treasured places. Those unfamiliar with its formal framework become outsiders looking in, confused by jargon and strictures. The early days of volunteers fanning out across cities to survey and record the history of buildings have been replaced by professionally-trained architectural historians, archaeologists, conservationists, rehab specialists, and consultants. Reporting requirements to have buildings or districts recognized as "historic" have grown from a two-page form⁵¹⁵ to rigorously-defined reporting and review. Historic preservation is now big business. Rehabilitation of commercial buildings can cost tens of millions of dollars and historic district surveys, tens of thousands to complete. Historic preservation's practitioners have created this structure. It doesn't have to be that way.

Bringing Historic Preservation Back to its Community-based Roots

Ordinances governing historic neighborhoods or sites vary across the country and are designed to suit individual communities. Just as

⁵¹⁵ Marlys Svendsen was restricted to two-page forms by the National Park Service for a period of time. Note 59, page 30.

Davenport developed different levels of protection for National Register properties within the city, it should consider developing local conservation guidelines for heritage neighborhoods as a part of its revitalization initiative. Such zoning overlays are typically less restrictive than those found in historically-designated areas but they help recognize the unique character of neighborhoods like Washington Street or other neighborhoods that retain original, defining features.⁵¹⁶ In many cities, developing such overlays requires agreement from a majority of property owners. Buy in and recognition can help stimulate neighborhood pride and commitment.

Connecting to neighborhoods by learning about their roots can help residents understand that, as the National Trust reminds us, “This place matters.”⁵¹⁷ When people research the places they live, it can have the effect of deepening their relationships to their physical spaces. Today, millions of Americans are drawn to learning about their ancestors.⁵¹⁸ In

⁵¹⁶ Vince Michael, “Heritage Conservation, not Historic Preservation,” October 2009, accessed May 4, 2018, at “<https://vincemichael.wordpress.com/2009/10/17/heritage-conservation-not-historic-preservation/>; “What are Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts? Accessed May 4, 2018, at <https://www.presnc.org/neighborhood-conservation-overlay-districts/>.

⁵¹⁷ “This Place Matters,” accessed May 4, 2018. At <https://savingplaces.org/this-place-matters#.WvCbLkxFwaE>.

⁵¹⁸ Tia Ghose, “Why We Care about Our Ancestry,” October 26, 2012, accessed March 17, 2018 at <https://www.livescience.com/24313-why-ancestry.html>. Ghose notes that, in 2012, ancestry.com had more than two million users.

the same way, encouraging people to become interested in their “architectural genealogy” could create a stronger commitment to the heritage places they call home.

Fostering a sense of place does not have to be limited to research of the distant past. Many heritage neighborhoods have witnessed the exit of founding populations and the arrival of new cultural or ethnic groups. Collecting and retaining their histories adds depth and richness to the narrative.

In 2014, Cornetta Lane learned of an effort to rebrand her Detroit neighborhood as part of a redevelopment effort. Fearing loss of the area’s identity, she began an effort to collect stories from residents and to invite visitors on bicycle tours that stopped at various points along the way to learn from people living along neighborhood streets. The original “Core City Stories” project has evolved to an activity Lane has dubbed “Pedal to Porch” and has expanded its efforts to include tours in other neighborhoods.⁵¹⁹

Pedal to Porch is an interesting model that uses a popular past time to make heritage accessible and to introduce people to neighborhoods they might not otherwise visit and to people they would not meet in their everyday lives. The Quad Cities’ focus on establishing

⁵¹⁹ Eric Thomas Campbell, “All The Neighborhood’s A Stage: The Power of Storytelling,” accessed May 4, 2018, at <https://riverwisedetroit.org/article/all-the-neighborhoods-a-stage-the-power-of-storytelling/>; “Pedal to Porch,” accessed May 4, 2018, at <http://www.pedaltoporch.org/>.

regional bike trails⁵²⁰ and Davenport’s own multi-modal “Davenport GO” initiative⁵²¹ that envisions bike lanes throughout the city align well with activities like Pedal to Porch that get people out and about in heritage neighborhoods.

Los Angeles Catalogues its Heritage Places

Defining historical resources does not need to be limited to National Register surveys. History can merge with heritage seamlessly as a comprehensive Los Angeles project demonstrates.

In 2010, the city began a process to integrate historic preservation with city planning efforts by mapping the city’s entire historic inventory. In this application, “historic” included assets that were not already so designated. The goal was not to identify new historic districts, but to develop an accessible list of what the city deemed historic resources such as buildings, objects, and cultural landscapes.⁵²² Los Angeles saw the need for one GIS source that would enable future planning and land use, zoning change requests and approvals, and cultural tourism. The last

⁵²⁰ “Popular Bike Trails,” accessed May 4, 2018, at <http://www.visitquadcities.com/listings/biking-hiking#sort=sponsored&show=all>.

⁵²¹ “Davenport GO,” accessed May 6, 2018, at https://rdgusa.com/sites/davenportbikes/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/02/2018_02_OpenHouseBoards.pdf.

⁵²² “SurveyLA FAQs,” accessed April 8, 2018, at <https://preservation.lacity.org/survey/faq>.

goal on the list was identification of potential historic designation. More specific to Los Angeles' needs were assisting environmental reviews, film locations, and disaster recovery planning.⁵²³ The surveys also mapped resources within "historic contexts" which included such elements as historical eras, specific cultural groups, or type of industry.

The project used ARCHES GIS-mapping software first developed by the Getty Conservation Institute to document cultural resources endangered during the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. The software offers free, open-sourced licensing. It is customizable and accessible.⁵²⁴ (Figure 34)

⁵²³ "Why a Citywide Survey?" accessed April 8, 2018, at <https://preservation.lacity.org/survey/why>.

⁵²⁴ "Changing the Heritage Inventory Paradigm," Conservation Perspectives, Fall 2013, accessed April 7, 2018, at http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/28_2/changing_heritage.html.

LOS ANGELES CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

Context: Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

Theme: Residential Properties Associated with the Entertainment Industry, 1908-1980

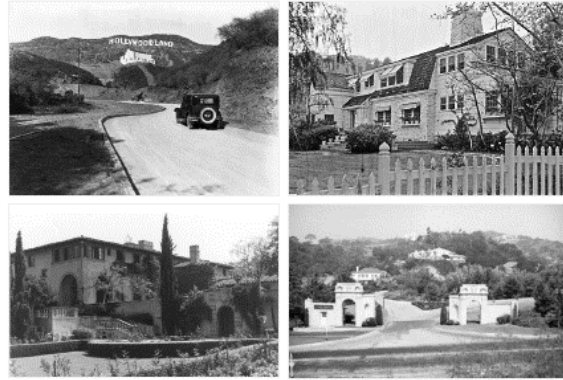


Figure 34: Cultural Context Statement-Entertainment District Houses. One of many documents available online developed during the SurveyLA process.

[Source: SurveyLA, accessed April 8, 2018, at https://preservation.lacity.org/sites/default/files/Entertainment%20Industry_Residential%20Theme_1908-1980.pdf]

SurveyLA’s application allows the public to contribute to or update nominations. While the city surveys have been completed, the site offers a downloadable guide. It teaches the user how to record property information, explains the SurveyLA process, and encourages the user to tell his or her own story.⁵²⁵

⁵²⁵ “Contribute Information to SurveyLA!” accessed April 8, 2018, at <https://preservation.lacity.org/survey/contribute>; “My Historical LA,” accessed April 8, 2018, at https://preservation.lacity.org/files/01%20MyHistoricLA%20Cover%20Page_4.pdf.

Unlike Los Angeles, Davenport doesn't have 880,000 parcels or 500 miles to survey. But the Los Angeles model offers a method of collecting data on heritage neighborhoods and sites that brings all of that information to one accessible location. Done publicly and with residents engaged, it offers people a chance to become more connected to their neighborhoods.

Conclusion

The challenges facing Davenport's heritage neighborhoods evolved over decades due to economic factors beyond the city's control as well as the unanticipated consequences of well-intended planning policy. Despite population growth that did not keep up with development, the city engaged in planning practices that led to expanding city boundaries and a focus on construction near those borders. In doing so, it hurt older city areas and left vacant and abandoned houses behind. Disinvestment has been expensive; it has reduced property values and diverted scarce city funds away from other more productive enterprises.

Despite the obstacles they face, Davenport's heritage neighborhoods retain many positive attributes. They provide the city's most affordable housing options. They offer the opportunity to live among people of diverse backgrounds and cultures. Sited along their streets are sturdy homes of character, quality and classic design.

Davenport can no longer ignore the problems these neighborhoods face. If revitalization is to succeed, Davenport must engage community assets from the worlds of business, academia and not-for-profits in planning the process and visioning the future. Such partnerships could help lift the plan above political divides and better sustain it through changes in elected officials and staff.

It must begin to engage the people most impacted – residents – in beginning to better understand neighborhood assets, dynamics, and challenges in order to developed individualized plans for each area. It should encourage the development of stronger neighborhood associations and implement a formal recognition and accountability structure for them.

Finally, residents should hold staff and elected officials accountable for sustained focus on achieving results.

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