

Suburbanization in Urban Spaces: A Study of 4 Neighborhoods Across Detroit and Chicago

By

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Abstract

Recent trends of lower-income and minority populations leaving increasingly expensive cities for suburbs have led to several theorists arguing that the suburbs are undergoing a process of urbanization. Fewer, however, have argued that cities themselves are becoming suburbanized as a result or function of gentrification. Theoretical discussions on gentrification and suburbanization are often kept separate, but in this paper, I argue that both are critical to understand current trends in gentrified or currently gentrifying neighborhoods in both Detroit and Chicago. Suburbs have experienced continuous population growth, even while their neighboring cities have experienced dramatic losses. The demographics of those leaving the cities for the suburbs have shifted, with more lower-income and people of color making the suburbs their home. In this paper, I focus on four neighborhoods across the two cities: Lafayette Park and Corktown in Detroit, and Kenwood and Wicker Park in Chicago. Using maps of zoning districts, housing types, and population density created with GIS, as well as interviews with 16 residents, I find that the commercial landscape and general “feel” of these neighborhoods, as described by residents, have begun to more closely resemble the suburbs. Based on these findings, I offer recommendations for urban planning departments to encourage mixed-use developments in revitalizing neighborhoods without displacing current residents. Both Detroit and Chicago have experienced population loss in recent decades; creating neighborhood structures that are amenable for all socioeconomic levels is critical to staunch the loss of urban residents to other locales.

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Introduction

As lower-income and minority populations are leaving increasingly expensive cities for the suburbs, scholars argue that suburban areas have become increasingly urbanized (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008; Orfield and Luce 2013; Hyra 2014; Hochstenbach and Musterd 2018). However, little work considers the inverse: the suburbanization of urban areas. Of the limited literature on this issue, authors take two varied approaches to measure “suburbanization.” One camp relates suburbanization with commercial shifts; in other words, when a neighborhood loses its boutiques and independent shops in favor of large chain stores (e.g. Frank 2018; Hochstenback and Musterd 2018; Mermet 2017; Zukin et al 2009). The second camp analyzes suburbanization through the lens of the “back-to-the-city movement” where affluent suburbanites return to the cities their parents and grandparents left during the age of suburban expansion (e.g. Loukaitou-Sideris, Gonzalez, and Ong 2017; Hyra 2014). The two frameworks used to study suburbanization in the United States and Europe – the commercial gentrification framework and the “back-to-the-city movement” framework – are not used in tandem to explain the process of suburbanization within urban spaces. As a result, we know little about how these two theories may work together within a singular process of suburbanization. Through synthesizing these two perspectives, I argue that suburbanization in urban neighborhoods can and should be analyzed through both the lens of commercial gentrification *and* from a reversal of roles between suburban and urban residents. Commercial gentrification helps explain how urban neighborhoods become more like their suburban counterparts in terms of type of commercial offerings. I followed a mixed methods approach to address the topic in the Wicker Park and Kenwood neighborhoods of Chicago, and the Corktown and Lafayette Park neighborhoods of Detroit. I combine both GIS-generated maps and interview data. I use demographic data and zoning information, specifically focusing on changes in commercial land use. Additionally, I utilized interviews with current and former residents of these neighborhoods to uncover how they perceived their neighborhoods and any changes the neighborhoods may have undergone. Each of the neighborhoods I studied are in varying stages of gentrification and different histories of mid-20th century urban renewal policies.

In this study, I find that suburbanization can be studied in urban spaces by using both the commercial gentrification and back-to-the-city frameworks of gentrification. Additionally, I find that the study of suburbanization in urban spaces must also take into consideration historical

legacies of urban renewal planning and developments. Overall, the findings have legitimized the idea of urban spaces that feel suburban; even neighborhoods which residents deem as the picture of typical urbanity have become more suburban due to changes in population and commercial offerings. I argue that this research can and should be extended to other municipalities undergoing any stage of gentrification. Ultimately, I offer recommendations to municipal governments and planning agencies to prioritize higher-density, multi-use developments to better satisfy the needs and desires of long-time residents.

History of the Suburbs

Though over half of the U.S. population lives in suburbs, scholars continue to argue about how best to define the suburbs. Suburbs themselves have existed for centuries; the first use of the word appeared in 1386 in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (McManus and Ethington 2007). Throughout their long history, suburbs have been subject to shifting public opinions, and have taken different evolutionary paths in each country. In the United States, most residents associate suburbs with their post-war form (Mieszkowski and Mills 1993; Jordan, Ross, and Usowski 1998; Jackson 1987). These suburbs are defined by their middle- to upper-middle class residents, the lack of industrial development within the suburb, and their sense of uniformity. There is a notion that if one has seen a single suburb, they have seen all suburbs in the US; the stereotype of the American suburb has lasted generations (Jackson 1987; Jordan, Ross, and Usowski 1998; Diamond 2020). The suburbs are thought to be homogenous both in terms of race and socioeconomic status, as well as the terrain of the built environment itself (Mieszkowski and Mills 1993; Harris and Larkham 2003; Forsyth 2012; Walks 2012; Phelps 2015; Diamond 2020). For much of the post-war period, this was not necessarily false. Single family homes and other low-density structures were the quintessential suburban dwelling (Clark 1966; Walks 2012; Phelps 2015). Low density remains one of the common indicators used to determine whether an area is a suburb. Additionally, many chose the suburbs to seek homogenous communities, and more affluent groups had the means to access expensive transportation to commute from the suburbs to the cities in the middle of the 20th century (Jackson 1987; Mieszkowski and Mill 1993; Keatinge and Martin 2015; Jordan, Ross, and Usowski 1998). From the late 1970s to the mid 1980s, Black people were substantially less likely than their white counterparts to move

from cities to the suburbs, even after controlling for socioeconomic difference (South and Crowder 1997).

However, the presumed homogeneity of the suburbs is increasingly inaccurate; in the past decade, suburbs have become increasingly diverse both in terms of racial diversity and socioeconomic diversity (Orfield and Luce 2013). The increased racial and socioeconomic diversity is, in part, due to the "back to the city movement" in which affluent millennials who grew up in the suburbs move to the city. Many of these new residents are the children or grandchildren of those who left the city in the suburban boom of the 1950s. As a result of the influx of upper middle-class residents moving back into the city, and in the face of an increasing cost of living, lower-middle class residents are being displaced to the suburbs (Hochstenbach and Musterd 2018; Hyra 2014; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008). Suburbs are becoming more diverse for the same reasons that certain urban neighborhoods are becoming more suburbanized: namely, because there has been a shift in suburban populations moving into cities, and urban populations moving to the suburbs. Though suburbanization is typically theorized as the decentralization of population from cities to surrounding locales, there are aspects that are associated with suburbs and that can exist outside of the locus of suburbia. Gentrification helps bring aspects of suburban life into urban spaces.

Gentrification, a term first coined by Ruth Glass in 1964, has been a widely studied phenomenon across the globe (Lees 2018; Glass 1964; Glass 1988). It is widely accepted that there are four stages of gentrification, as first outlined by Phillip Clay (1979). In the first stage of gentrification, lower middle-class residents enter the city and fix up neighborhoods that may have had a surplus of vacant buildings. These middle-class residents live alongside the original, typically poorer, residents of the neighborhood in this stage. Many of the new residents may be artists, and begin to build a vibrant arts scene in the neighborhood. The second stage of gentrification is marked by upper-middle class people moving in and buying more real estate. At this point, a few investors capitalize on the neighborhood's art scene. Displacement also begins in this second stage. The third stage of gentrification is when large-scale investment, generally backed by large companies rather than the individuals of the first two stages, takes place. In stage four, the real estate landscape of the neighborhood shifts from being affordable to the middle class to solely being accessible by the upper class. Many flock to the area, but few, if any, of the original residents or artists of the first stage of gentrification are able to remain in the area.

In the later stages of gentrification, neighborhoods become inhabitable to all except an affluent few. For many cities, later stages of gentrification signal a shift in which capital and commerce are prioritized above the livelihoods of the poorer and more marginalized communities they displace (Deener 2007; Ferm 2016; Zukin et al. 2009; Zukin 2010).

The study of gentrification soon birthed related fields, such as green gentrification, commercial gentrification, and super-gentrification (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008). Super-gentrification differs from earlier forms of gentrification because it takes place in already-gentrified neighborhoods (Halasz 2018). Indicators of super-gentrification include above average median household income, a very low percentage of low-income households, and above average home value and increasing rents relative to the rest of the city (Halasz 2018). Studies of commercial gentrification, another subset of gentrification related to super-gentrification, focus on retail transformation in gentrifying cities. Just as post-war suburbanization is conceptualized as homogenizing an area, commercial gentrification also causes urban neighborhoods to become more uniform (Yoon and Park 2018). Chain stores are introduced where independent boutiques used to stand (Burnett 2014; Deener 2007; Mermet 2017; Yoon and Park 2018; Zukin, Trujillo, Frase, Jackson, Recuber 2009).

Many scholars use either quantitative (Zukin 1990; Hammel and Wyly 1996; Krijnen 2018; Eckerd, Kim, and Campbell 2019) or qualitative methods (Moore 2009; Keatinge and Martin 2015, Doucet 2020; Tuttle 2020) to study gentrification, though using the two in tandem helps provide a more robust study of gentrification (Pérez 2002; Gonzalez and Waley 2013; Loukaitou-Sideris, Gonzalez, and Ong 2017). However, using both qualitative and quantitative methods can be too expensive for many researchers. Demographic data, often taken from Census data, is often critical to the study of gentrification. Census data is heavily used to evaluate demographic changes that indicate gentrification, such as rising property values, median household income, education attainment levels, as well as decreasing poverty rates (Brown-Saracino 2009; Hochstenbach and Musterd 2018; Karsten 2014). Other studies take an ethnographic approach to engage with families who have returned to the city from the suburbs they were raised in (Karsten 2014; Keatinge and Martin 2015). The current study of gentrification is closely related to the study of the suburbs and their evolution.

Scholars who study commercial gentrification sometimes use archival documents to analyze policy and urban planning documents and building ledgers to measure change in

occupants over time (Sakizlioglu and Lees 2019; Yoon and Park 2018). Interviews are also used to gain insight in many studies. Scholars of commercial gentrification, for example, will interview both residents and business stakeholders to gain insights about how a community changes when its retail landscape is transformed. These scholars have documented how early lower middle-class gentrifiers, many of whom are in an economically fragile position, grow to like living where they can afford to live (Sakizlioglu and Lees 2019; Tissot 2011). Qualitative researchers in the field have drawn upon interviews to uncover how residents perceive their environments, as well as the conditions that led them to leave or stay in their neighborhoods. The communities that comprise suburban areas have undergone several changes in recent decades; by utilizing an ethnographic approach, researchers have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of how changes to the built environment impacts the everyday life of residents. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, one can begin to understand whether suburbanization is occurring within the boundaries of the city, and also how residents react to these changes.

Suburbanization within the City

Gentrification has long been defined by the introduction of middle-class residents into poorer urban neighborhoods. Though the demographics of these new residents can be similar to the middle and upper-middle class enclaves in the suburbs, suburbanization is not always an extension of gentrification, particularly not in its earliest stages. After the initial stages of gentrification, it is not guaranteed that a neighborhood will become more suburbanized – in fact, neighborhoods could undergo yet another process of gentrification, becoming further upscaled at the expense of the original middle-class gentrifiers who are displaced via super-gentrification (Halasz 2018).

European scholars have begun to contextualize suburbanization taking place within cities in recent years, using cities like Amsterdam, Berlin, and London as sites of the suburbanization of cities (Butler 2007; Frank 2018; Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2010). An emphasis on families has been established in each study because suburbanization was often tied to middle-class families seeking more space, green areas, and safety for their children. As Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd explain, gentrification is typically thought of as being connected to a life stage before having children. Young, single, and relatively wealthy individuals are perceived to

be the main group of gentrifiers. However, as this segment ages and starts their own families, there has been a shift away from moving back to the suburbs. Each study finds that there are growing numbers of gentrifiers that have decided to raise their families in the cities they have become accustomed to. Butler emphasizes that both suburbanization and gentrification involve a “dependency on the city,” but argues that, though the original move to the suburbs was done by the middle-class, it was not necessarily a class-driven process. Frank argues that suburbs and suburban ways of living are quite diverse, and landing upon a single definition for either may be a futile exercise. Because of this, Frank would likely agree that, at least for some, the move to the suburbs was not a class-driven process. However, she might disagree that the move was not class-driven in another context. Both studies do come to the same conclusion that there has been a trend, dating back to at least the mid 1980s in the Netherlands (Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2018), of an increased number and proportion of families in major cities. Frank makes the important conclusion that this increase in middle-class family enclaves in and around the central city and the wave of inner-city suburbanism is a result of the transformation in settlement patterns – specifically lower-income urban residents leaving the city for the suburbs, and of higher-income suburbanites becoming urban residents.

These studies are helpful for creating a standard in methodology for this concept, but it is difficult to apply them directly to the US context because of different histories of the suburbs across countries. However, still little is known about suburbanization within cities in the specific U.S. context. In this paper, I will explain how certain urban neighborhoods are becoming more “suburban” in nature. I will be using the post-war definition of suburbs, as well as drawing upon the common associations of these post-war developments: targeting towards the middle class, generally homogenous in terms of race and socioeconomic status, and sites where industry is not located. This paper joins commercial gentrification, super-gentrification, and the “back-to-the-city movement” into one framework about how suburbanization occurs in urban spaces. Recent papers about the suburbanization within urban spaces tend to choose either “back-to-the-city” influenced demographic changes, or commercial gentrification as the theory and evidence for inner-city suburbanization. In this study, I build on these frameworks and also posit that historical factors, such as histories of urban renewal, also shape how suburban neighborhoods appear today.

Commercial Gentrification and the “Back-to-the-City” Movement

Commercial gentrification theory and the more classic “back-to-the-city” gentrification theory are both helpful lenses to help conceptualize suburbanization in urban contexts. The “back-to-the-city” movement explains that many of the early to mid-stage gentrifiers grew up largely in a suburban context; when they return to the city that either they or their parents moved from, they attempt to recreate some of the more familiar aspects of suburban life in their new urban setting. Some of the most obvious changes occur through commercial gentrification – introducing new big box stores, such as the supermarkets and mall staples of the suburbs, into gentrifying urban neighborhoods. Commercial gentrification, sometimes referred to as retail gentrification, has often been analyzed as a step in the larger process of residential gentrification (Davidson and Lees 2010; Gonzalez and Waley 2013). In commercial gentrification, a process typically called “boutiquing” occurs, where independent stores like coffee shops start to pop up in gentrifying neighborhoods (Zukin 2008; Davidson and Lees 2010; Gonzalez and Waley 2013). The next step occurs when the original neighborhoods begin to turn into chain stores; as in classical gentrification, commercial gentrification is marked by the displacement of not only the original stores, but the residents who frequented them. Commercial gentrification occurs either immediately after or concurrently the first stage of gentrification – where higher-income individuals begin to move into a lower-income, less developed neighborhood.

Supermarket Redlining

Suburbanization in this study is theorized irrespective of place – making it possible for communities couched deep within a city to resemble their suburban counterparts. These processes take place through commercial gentrification, when the retail options within a neighborhood shift first from mom-and-pop shops, to high-end boutiques, and finally to chain stores like those seen in the typical American suburb. Availability of supermarket chains within the city were also impacted by class and racial discrimination in a process called “supermarket redlining”. Chains preferred to build in the more affluent, less racially diverse suburbs. Smaller, locally owned grocers were more prominent in the typical urban neighborhood. Supermarket Redlining is defined as the disinclination of chain supermarkets to locate or pullout existing stores from impoverished neighborhoods. It is used to describe a phenomenon where major chain

supermarkets are disinclined to locate their stores in inner cities or low-income neighborhoods and usually pull out existing stores and relocate them to suburbs (Eisenhauer 2001). The result is that this particular type of commercial offering becomes associated with the suburbs, just as large indoor malls might be. In neighborhoods where chain supermarkets were once unheard of, the entry of one into the market may be construed as a push towards suburbanization.

For many years, urban populations were on the decline while their suburbs grew in size – a decentralization of American metropolitan areas (Sturtevant and Jung 2011). The “back-to-the-city” movement became popular amongst academics in the late 1970s; there is no strict consensus on the definition of the movement (Hyra 2014). Some define it as a return to the city by upper-income suburban populations – the definition my study uses – while others link it to population increases in cities without taking into account where those new residents moved from (Laska and Spain, 1980; Simmons and Lang 2003; Hyra 2014). The definition of the “back-to-the-city” movement that my paper uses is focused mostly on the socioeconomic status and suburban origin of new gentrifiers – it is not predicated upon race or ethnic background (Moore 2013). Robert Fishman predicted a “Fifth Migration” movement, wherein urban neighborhoods that were depopulated during the “Fourth Migration” from the cities to the suburbs would be “reurbanized” (Fishman 2007). Millennials are largely leading this movement back into the city (Ehlenz et al. 2019; Lee 2018; Birch 2012). Many grew up in the suburbs, and are the children or grandchildren of those who left the city in the Fourth Migration. These millennials have a preference for certain urban amenities, such as walkable and amenity-rich neighborhoods, while still desiring certain aspects of the suburbs they grew up in, such as chain stores (Ehlenz et al. 2019; Ehrenhalt 2013; Markley 2018).

Commercial gentrification and the “back-to-the-city” movement theory of gentrification are not necessarily competing theories but focus on different aspects when analyzing gentrification. As a key feature, both theories contend with population displacement, increasing property values and cost-of-living and evictions processes that are considered to be part and parcel of the gentrification process. Both theories represent varying stages of the gentrification process and both are necessary to examine the suburbanization of urban neighborhoods. Commercial gentrification and its push towards more suburban forms of commerce, particularly chain stores in the place of independent shops, can help explain that the “suburban” is not limited to its spatial domain outside of the city. The “back-to-the-city” movement theory also helps

account for demographic shifts that make urban neighborhoods more closely resemble their suburban counterparts. Using both in tandem can begin to explain the mechanisms by which urban neighborhoods become suburbanized.

Setting and Context

Corktown, Detroit

According to the Detroit Historical Society, Corktown is the oldest existing neighborhood in the city, developing in tandem with the arrival of immigrants in the 1820s and 1830s. In the 1840s, as a result of the Great Irish Potato Famine, significant numbers of Irish immigrants began to move west of downtown to the area now established as Corktown. Corktown is represented by Census tract 5214. The neighborhood is about 0.5 square miles and, according to the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, is home to approximately 1,179 residents. There are 555 households in Corktown, and per capita income is \$41,518 – about 1.4 times the per-capita income for the city of Detroit. It is also higher than many other neighborhoods in Wayne County, where the city is located, though it is not the highest in the county.

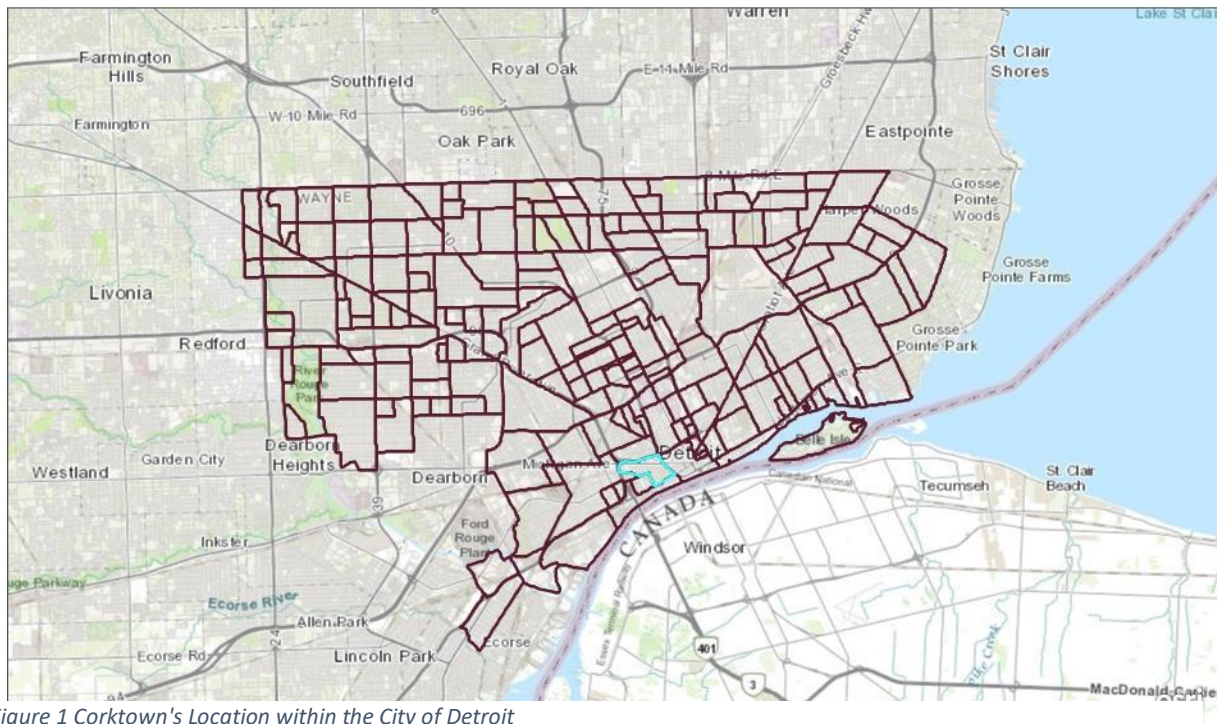


Figure 1 Corktown's Location within the City of Detroit



Figure 2 A Close-up of Corktown's Neighborhood Boundaries

Lafayette Park, Detroit

Lafayette Park is a historic urban renewal district directly east of Detroit's Downtown center. Prior to its redevelopment as an urban renewal district, the area was known as Black Bottom, a predominately black neighborhood that was entirely demolished to create Lafayette Park. The neighborhood itself is relatively small – only about .3 square miles. It was designated a National Historic Landmark District in 2015, and is perhaps most known for being the home of the world's largest collection of residential buildings designed in the 1950s by famed architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The neighborhood covers Census tracts 5170 and 5171 and is home to 4,499 people according to the 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. There is a total of 3,212 households in the neighborhood. The median household income for the neighborhood is \$41,250, which is about 1.4 times higher than the amount for the whole city of Detroit (\$29,481).

Lafayette Park in Detroit directly borders the Downtown and Eastern Market districts – there is a small grocery store/commercial strip in Lafayette Park as a result of HUD requirements back of the 1960s. Surprisingly enough, high density multi-family structures are the prominent housing type in Lafayette Park, though as a whole, it is a low-density neighborhood relative to the rest of Detroit. The Eastern Market neighborhood directly to the west of Lafayette Park is

denser in terms of population but is an entirely commercial area with no predominant housing type.

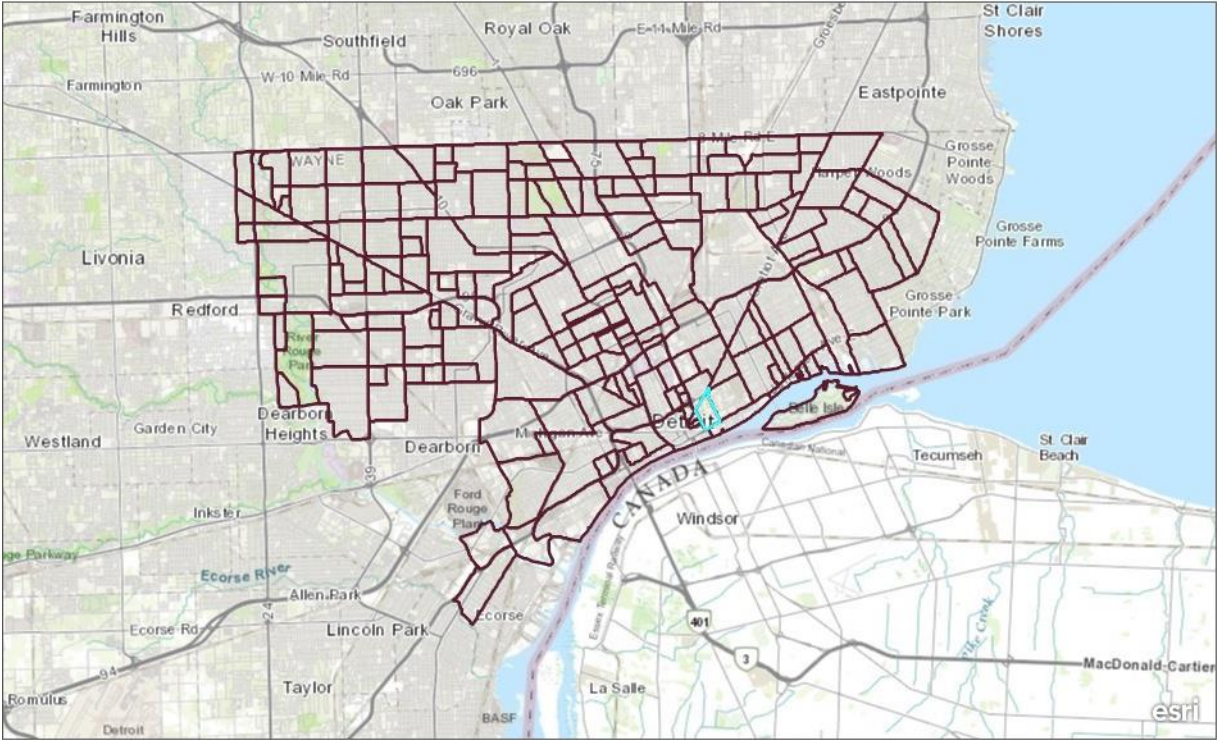
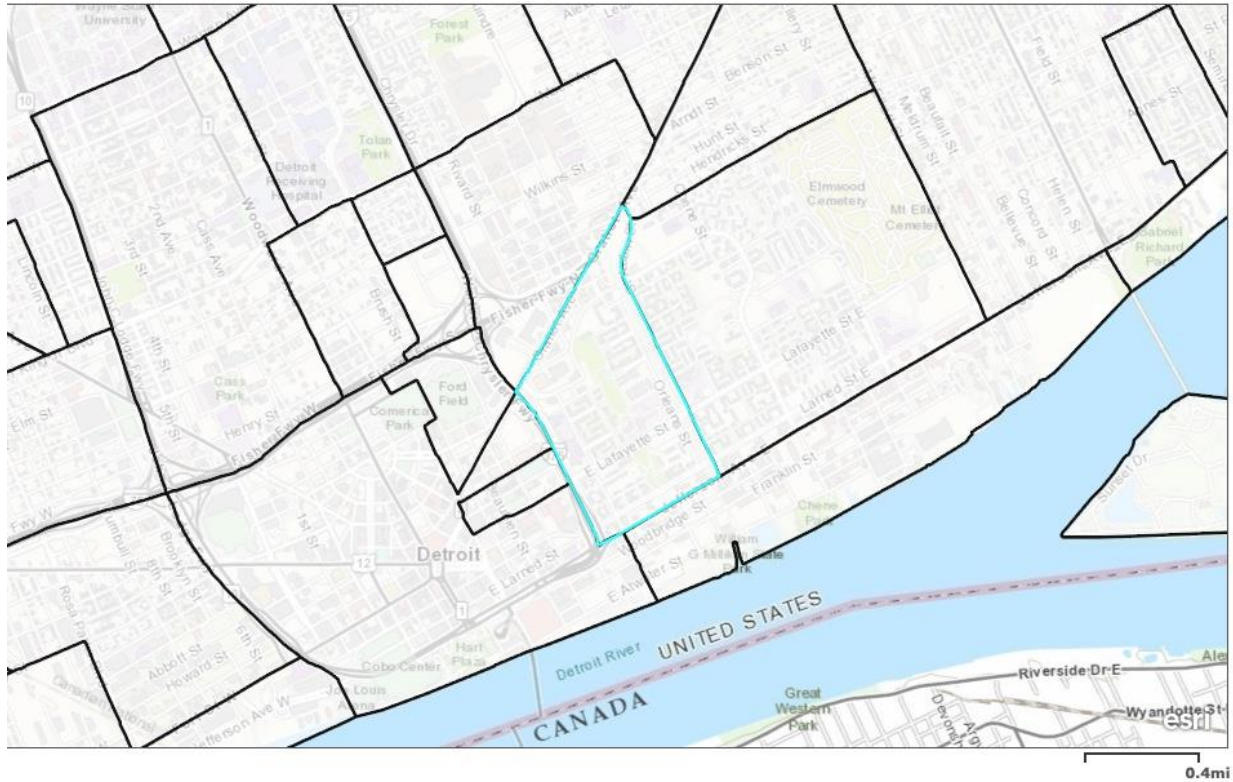


Figure 3 Lafayette Park's Position within the City of Detroit



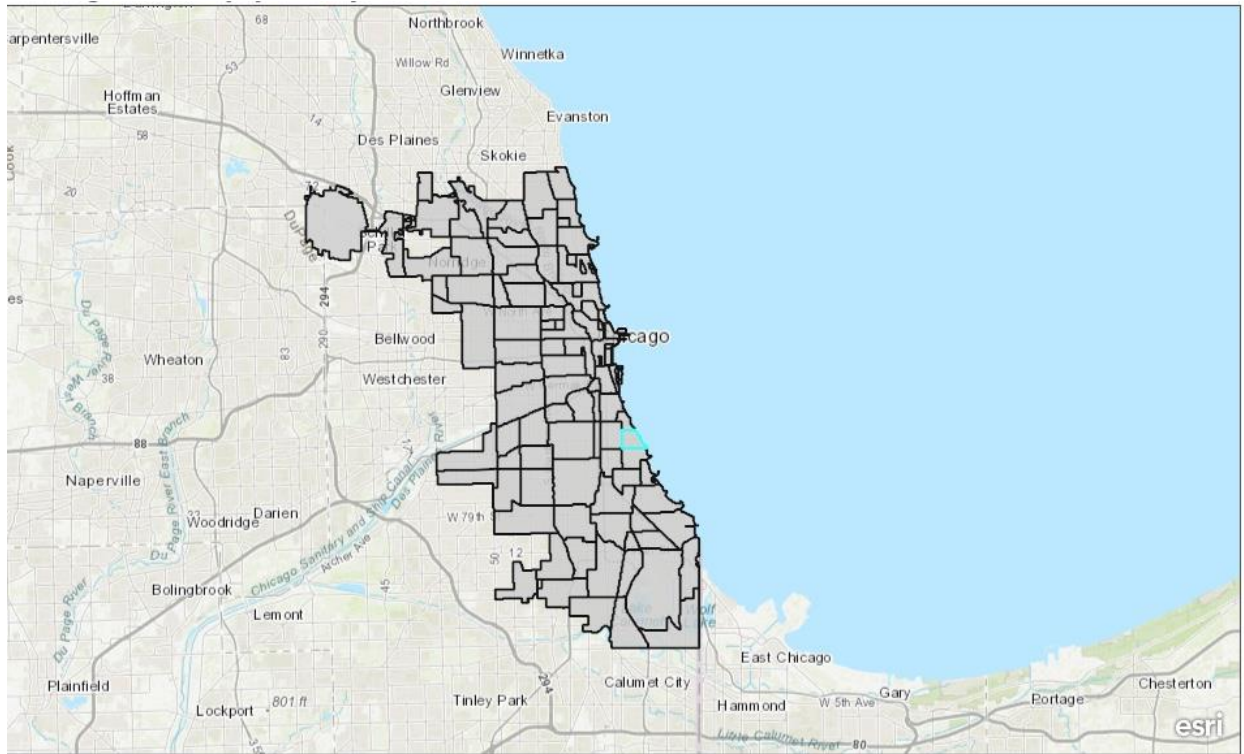
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Figure 4 Lafayette Park's Neighborhood Boundaries

Kenwood, Chicago

Kenwood was originally a suburb of Chicago and was annexed in 1889. The neighborhood still is home to some of the largest single-family homes in the city. Like Lafayette Park in Detroit, Kenwood is another haven for architecture lovers, with a mix of stately 19th century mansions, Art Deco buildings, mid-century modern architectural gems, and high-rise apartment buildings near the lake. Muhammad Ali was a former resident of the neighborhood, along with Muddy Waters, and of course, the Obamas. The neighborhood is approximately 1 sq. Mile and is home to 17,440 people. Kenwood has 9,308 households. Like other neighborhoods in Chicago, it has experienced a decrease in population between 2000-2018. The median household income in Kenwood is \$49,161, slightly lower than the city of Chicago's median household income at \$55,198. The landscape of Kenwood was also changed by urban renewal, when the neighborhood was informally divided at 47th Street in between the wealthier Hyde Park-Kenwood District to the south, and the poorer Kenwood-Oakland division to the north of 47th.

The Kenwood neighborhood of Chicago and the Lafayette Park neighborhood of Detroit share similarities in population demographics and in zoning classifications. Firstly, they both have nearly the same proportion of Black residents (67% in Kenwood versus 64% in Detroit). The homeownership rates and professional and educational attainment levels are similar across both neighborhoods. Notably, both are not highly commercialized areas as emphasized by interview respondents from each neighborhood.



Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS

Figure 5 Kenwood's Position within the City of Chicago

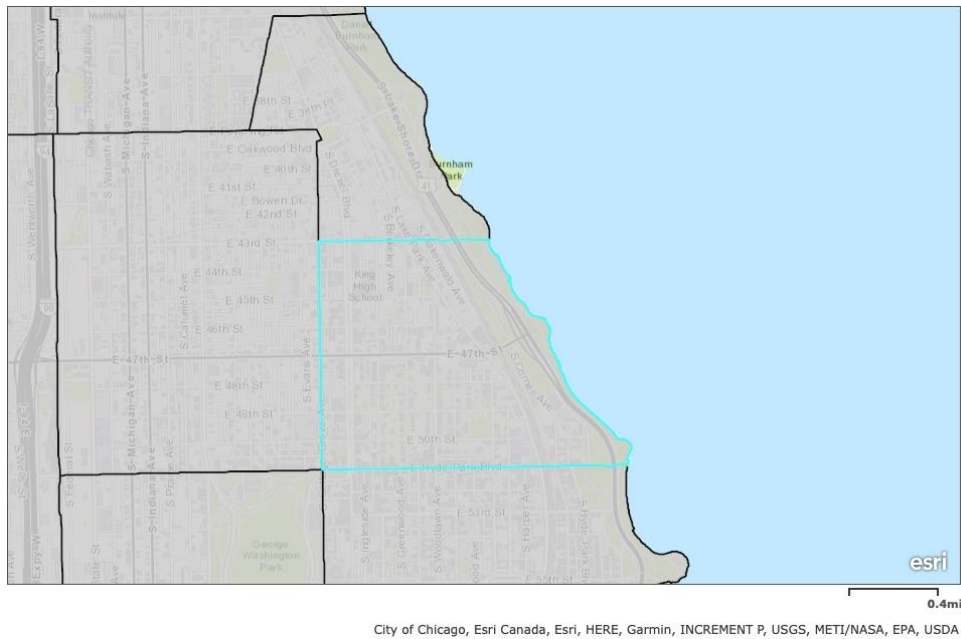
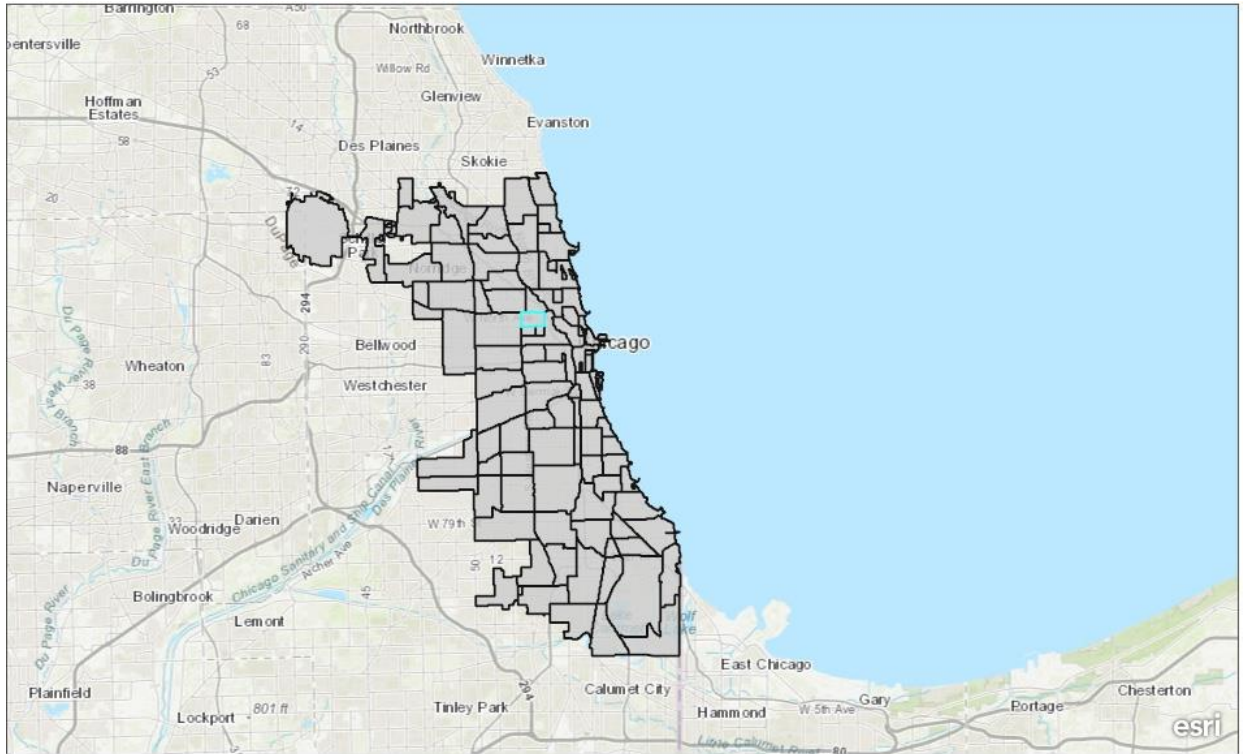


Figure 6 Kenwood's Neighborhood Boundaries

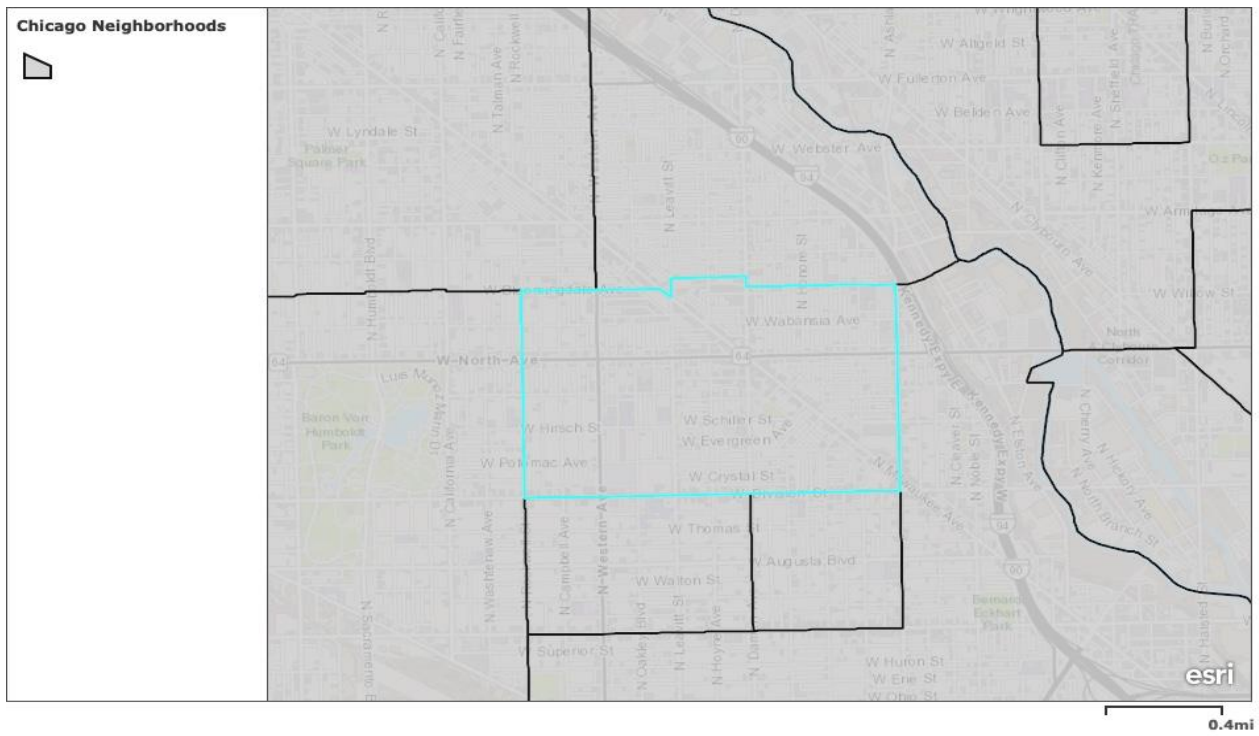
Wicker Park, Chicago

Wicker Park covers an area of about 1 square mile and has been a part of the city since Chicago was incorporated in 1837. Walking along the residential streets of the neighborhood, one will find a mix of historic single-family homes alongside contemporary modern condominiums and townhouses. The neighborhood has a busy commercial district along Milwaukee, with plenty of small boutiques, clothing stores, and restaurants. Division is also home to plenty of shops and eateries. The Blue Line runs along the neighborhood, with two stops at Division and Damen. Buses, cars, and cyclists all share the road, with scooter users and the occasional skateboarder completing the mix. Urban renewal and the construction of freeways, particularly the Kennedy Expressway which was completed in 1960, also displaced quite a few people - namely Polish-American residents. As a result, many Puerto-Ricans and other Latinos displaced by urban renewal in Old Town and Lincoln Park began moving into Wicker Park. West Town, the community area where Wicker Park is located, has a total population of 84,255 people and 37,594 households. Wicker Park accounts for approximately 53,000 of these total residents. The median household income in the neighborhood is \$96,499, which is over \$40,000 above the median household income of Chicago.



Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS

Figure 7 Wicker Park's Position within the City of Chicago



City of Chicago, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA

Figure 8 Wicker Park's Neighborhood Boundaries

Data and Methods

Qualitative Interviews

In this study, I utilized a mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative interviews and quantitative data analysis. I conducted 19 interviews with 18 respondents, as one respondent had lived in both Corktown and Wicker Park. I completed 3 interviews for Corktown, 4 for Lafayette Park, 9 for Kenwood and 6 for Wicker Park. For each neighborhood I interviewed a range of current and former residents; some were familiar with the pre-gentrified neighborhoods, others came at the height of revitalization efforts. In Kenwood, I interviewed several residents who had lived in the area since the 1950s and 1960s, and some who moved in the early 2000s. I also interviewed people from a range of education attainment levels and professional status. In Lafayette Park, I interviewed a recent college graduate and young professional, a retired salesman, and a self-identified Millennial professional. I interviewed a similar spread for Corktown and Wicker Park. The goal of the interviews was to gauge how people in each neighborhood perceive their neighborhood and any changes it has undergone – if they felt the “culture” of the neighborhood has changed and how it has impacted their relationship to their environment. In order to maintain anonymity of the respondents, all participants are identified using a pseudonym. Over the course of this study, I created write-ups to determine key themes that arose from the interviews, and adjusted interview questions to delve more into these key areas. I coded these interviews to look for common themes between residents, first within the same neighborhood and then compared against respondents in a different city.

Population Demographics and Changes in Commercial Land Use

In addition to these qualitative interviews, I also used open-source data from the City of Detroit and City of Chicago to explore neighborhood demographics, zoning patterns, and predominate housing types. I began by creating demographic profiles for each of the neighborhoods I examined in this paper. I focused on factors such as education attainment levels, median income, homeownership levels, and socioeconomic and racial demographics. I also used several datasets to track population density and housing types in each neighborhood because suburban neighborhoods tend to be less dense than their urban counterparts. Additionally,

suburban neighborhoods are predominately populated by low-density housing types, whereas urban neighborhoods are more likely to have higher-density multi-family housing units. By analyzing this data, and particularly searching for changes from higher density housing to lower density housing, such as high-density apartment buildings being converted into condominiums with fewer units, is one metric by which to measure how suburbanized an area has become. Isolated households, particularly in the post-war period, became the American middle-class ideal and associated with the culture of American suburbs (Jackson 1985). I used public zoning data from both the City of Chicago and Detroit Open Data Portals to determine how the commercial landscape has changed in the neighborhoods to search for markers of commercial gentrification. I paid close attention to the specific residential zoning classifications to understand whether the neighborhoods were coded for lower-density housing structures, such as detached homes or townhomes, or if the neighborhoods were optimized for high-density developments. Much of the data is taken from the Census, and thus does not account for any recent changes in demographics, either due to COVID or due to the masses of Black Chicagoans leaving the city (Cordova et al. 2020). I drew on CMAP data to analyze Chicago neighborhoods that have undergone significant changes in commercial land use, beyond what is immediately obvious just by using zoning information. I analyzed all of this data using ArcGIS to create various maps for each neighborhood that simultaneously displayed population density and predominate housing types, as well as separate maps to show changes in zoning and commercial land use over the years.

Findings and Analysis

In each of the four neighborhoods, residents identified the feeling of living in an enclave. For respondents in Kenwood, Lafayette Park, and Corktown, the idea of the neighborhood being an isolated enclave was common. In Wicker Park, respondents identified the quiet residential streets as feeling like an enclave, with only the busy Milwaukee Avenue breaking this feeling. Respondents also responded to different aspects of neighborhood change and history based on where they were from. Wicker Park residents almost always pointed to the commercial gentrification occurring in the area. Corktown residents pointed to similar concerns, also focusing on restaurants more specifically. South Kenwood residents turned to the historical legacies of urban renewal policies and Kenwood's own history as a suburb as key factors that

shaped the neighborhood today. Less consideration was given to commercial gentrification, though a few respondents noted how the neighborhood north of 47th was undergoing a great amount of change, particularly in the housing market. Lafayette Park residents similarly had little to say about commercial gentrification in their own neighborhood but were concerned with rising rents pushing out long-time residents with new residents from the surrounding suburbs replacing them.

Kenwood, Chicago

Kenwood's history as an original suburb of the city

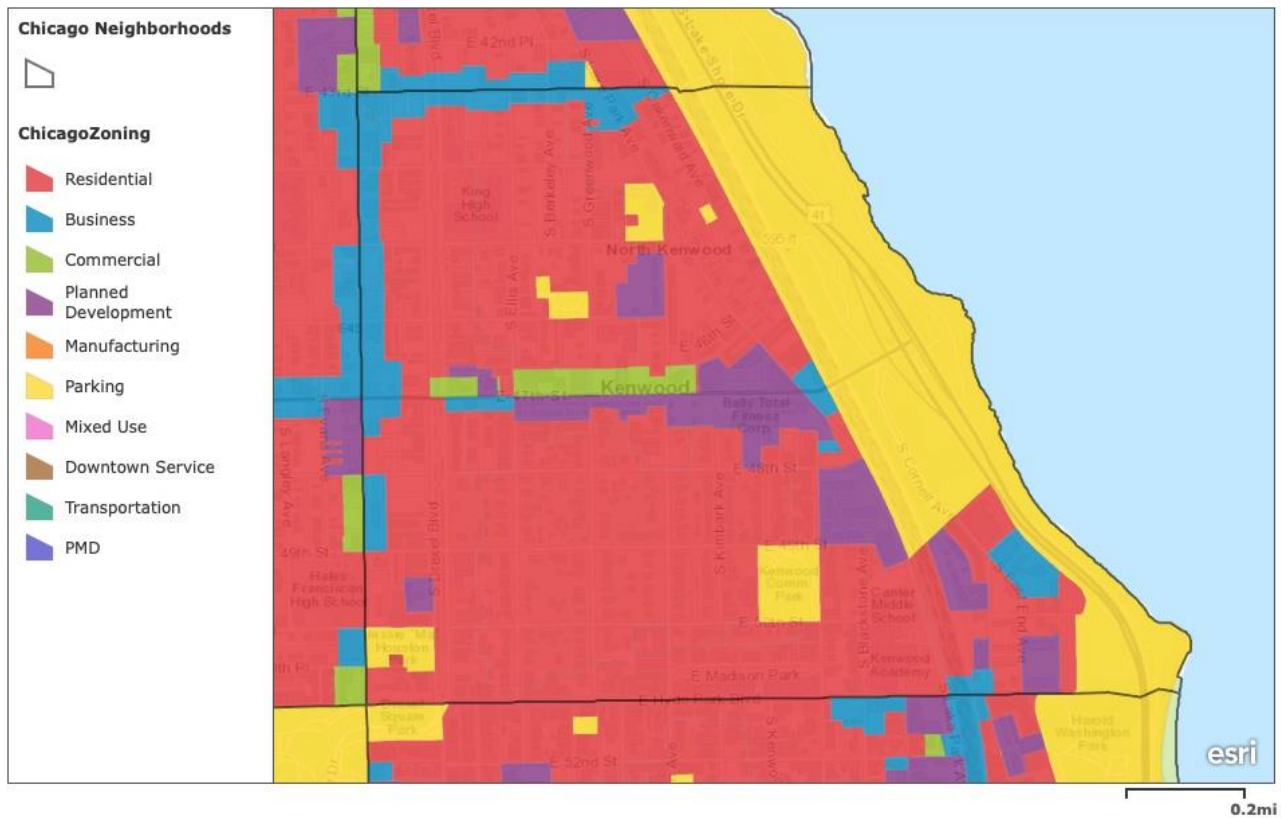
Before its annexation into Chicago, Kenwood was a part of Hyde Park Township. Hyde Park became a township in 1867, and annexed the parts between 87th and 138th between what is now King Dr. and State St. The southern portion of the village began to industrialize in the 1870s and 1880s, raising tensions between the north and south ends of the village of Hyde Park (Hansen 86). It was the working-class residents of southern Hyde Park, poorly served by the village's government, who began agitating for annexation into the city of Chicago by the middle of the 1880s. Residents of Kenwood and Hyde Park largely wished to remain a suburb of the city but in 1889 an annexation vote in the village tipped in favor of the residents of the southernmost portion (Hansen 87). Interestingly, the southern portion of Hyde Park Township was urbanized and industrialized, while north Hyde Park, where Kenwood and Hyde Park are, remained wealthy and mostly suburban. However, the whole of the village was annexed into the city in 1889, effectively making the suburban urban.



Figure 9 A large single-family home on Woodlawn in Kenwood



Figure 10 Townhomes in the foreground with high-density apartment towers in the background



City of Chicago, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA

Figure 11 Kenwood Residential and Commercial Zoning

Residential Zoning

The primary residential zoning districts in Kenwood are the RM-5, the RS-1, and the RT-4 zoning classifications. The RM-5 Residential Multi-Unit District is for medium to high-density apartment buildings, and also allows for two-flats, townhomes, and single-family homes. The RS-1 Residential Single Unit District signifies detached, single family homes with a minimum lot area of 6,250 sq. ft (Second City Zoning). The RT-4 Residential Two-Flat, Townhouse, and Multi-Unit District allows for low-density units, such as two-flats, townhouses, low-density apartment buildings, and single-family homes. Higher density units are not permitted in this zoning classification. The majority of the neighborhood is not zoned to allow higher-density units, making low- to mid-density residential units the predominant housing type in Kenwood.

Commercial Zoning

The neighborhood has prominent B1, B2, B3, as well as C1, commercial zoning districts. There is a B2-3 Neighborhood Mixed-Use District at the Northern boundary of the neighborhood, which represents a Community Shopping District. This zoning type allows for retail storefronts, apartments on the ground floor of the structure, and is meant to “encourage development in commercial corridors with low demand for retail” (Second City Zoning). There is a C1 Neighborhood Commercial District along 47th Street that runs through the center of the neighborhood; along the same street, there are also C2 zoned parcels for Motor Vehicle-Related Commercial District. The C1 zoning classification allows for a larger variety of businesses than the B1 commercial district, and apartments are permitted only above the ground floor. C2 districts contain shopping centers that also include parking lots, similar to suburban malls. From Ford Street to just past 47th Street on Cottage Grove Avenue, there is a large Community Shopping District (B3-3 zoning classification). Running straight through the middle of the neighborhood is a Planned Development zone (PD 62). Planned Development designations can be used for a number of projects, including large residential or commercial developments, or for buildings that exceed the height thresholds of certain zoning districts (“Planned Development Designations” City of Chicago Planning Department). Along the eastern edge of the neighborhood, there is a large portion of land zoned as POS-1, which signifies a regional or community park along the lakefront.

The Village of Hyde Park and Kenwood’s early History as a Chicago Suburb

Before its annexation into Chicago, Hyde Park Township followed its own curve of industrialization through its annexation of several townships between 87th and 138th, as well as between what is now King Drive and State Street (Hansen 85). This extended the township’s footprint from 39th Street (now called Pershing Road) to 138th, bounded by State Street on the west and Lake Michigan on the east. This dramatic expansion in land also led Hyde Park’s population to grow from 16,000 in 1880 to 85,000 in 1889 (Hansen 85). Within the township, Hyde Park and Kenwood were viewed as two largely middle-class town, while areas in the south, such as Calumet and Kensington were largely working-class and highly industrialized. It was these industrialized areas in the south of the Hyde Park Township that made annexation into the city possible, as residents felt many needs were not being adequately met by the village board. Increases in industrialization and urbanization along the south, while Kenwood and Hyde

Park remained “fashionable residential districts” led to tensions within the village that were exacerbated to the tipping point once municipal duties, such as improving water mains and sewer lines down to 138th Street, proved too much for the village (Hansen 19). From its earliest days as a suburb of Chicago, Kenwood became known as an attractive residential district just a short commute from Downtown Chicago for some of the city’s elite. It maintained that designation throughout Hyde Park Township’s expansion as well as the Township’s annexation to Chicago.

North Kenwood vs South Kenwood – Impact of Urban Renewal on the Neighborhood

During the urban renewal years, Kenwood, and more specifically the area of Kenwood south of 47th Street, was marketed as a suburb within the city. The Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal Plan of 1956 extended to 47th, further entrenching a close-knit relationship between South Kenwood and Hyde Park, while simultaneously isolating South Kenwood from North Kenwood. The 1958 “Final Plan” encompassed approximately 106 acres across South Kenwood and Hyde Park (Hansen 295). The urban renewal plans led to shifts in populations due to the demolition of many residential units that housed working class and lower-middle class residents - eventually giving birth to the slogan mentioned by several respondents, “Hyde Park, Where Black and White Unite Against the Poor” - as well as dramatic shifts in the commercial landscape of the area. Several neighborhood organizations, such as the Kenwood Open House Committee, fought to maintain Kenwood and Hyde Park’s status as a racially integrated enclave, even at the expense of remaining a socioeconomically integrated community. Prior to the 1950s, the area, primarily along Lake Park Avenue, had been filled with many local establishments, ranging from restaurants, pharmacies, hardware stores, and small grocers to bars and liquor stores and automobile dealerships (Hansen 292). After the Hyde Park-Kenwood Plan went into effect, a small number of these establishments were replaced by lower density residential and commercial buildings, but many more were left open for either large parking lots or neighborhood parks (Hansen 295).

Natalie, a long-time resident of the neighborhood, said of the Kenwood of the 1950s and 1960s she grew up in:

It was advertised as being separate from the city, and in a lot of ways it was.

Natalie connected Kenwood's history as a former suburb of the city with its current "very suburban feel" – having grown up and then raising her family in the area, Natalie felt that Kenwood south of 47th was quiet and a sort of bedroom community within the city. Other respondents mirrored Natalie's sentiments – Mark, a former resident of Kenwood and Hyde Park who lived in the neighborhood from the 1960s to 1990s, said that, "it felt like a town, a town within a city". Most South Kenwood residents did not shop in the neighborhood, and instead went to shopping centers in Hyde Park, such as the shopping district on 55th and Lake Park. South Kenwood was largely residential, save for a few stores along 47th street. However, many, if not all respondents, noted that there was a hard boundary at 47th Street dividing South Kenwood from North Kenwood. As Natalie put it, she was never allowed to cross 47th as a child.

It's sort of like the Earth was flat and we'd fall off if we crossed 47th Street.

Jane, who grew up in the neighborhood in the 1980s and currently resides in Woodlawn, stated that she was not even allowed to approach 47th Street as a child. Jane also noted the infrastructure barriers that reinforced this boundary at 47th Street. As one approaches 47th Street from the South, one will find that Woodlawn is the first through-street starting from the east of the neighborhood. Jane noted the many cul-de-sacs along streets like Dorchester and Kenwood that prevent both vehicles and pedestrians from accessing 47th Street. While the Kenwood Open House Committee, at one time led by Natalie's mother, fought to keep South Kenwood integrated, there seem to have been concerns about the socioeconomic status of North Kenwood residents that created and reinforced this boundary within the neighborhood.

Of the boundary, James, another long-time Kenwood resident, said bluntly:

47th Street was the line - north of 47th Street was completely Black and very poor. And when you crossed [47th], you were suddenly in Kenwood. Now there were there was some Black people living in [South] Kenwood. But they you know their parents had probably slightly better jobs they weren't really poor.



Figure 12 The Commercial Strip along 47th Street bisecting North and South Kenwood



Figure 13 A second strip mall on 47th Street containing restaurants and stores

Black and White Unite

James also mentioned the socioeconomic differences between North and South Kenwood as factors that perhaps caused, but definitely reified the division between the two. Terry, another longtime resident of Kenwood offered this quote to help explain the attitude of Hyde Park and South Kenwood residents in the face of the 1950s urban renewal driven upheaval:

“I mean, it goes back to the famous old Mike Nichols line about, you know, black and white working together against the poor.”

James and Jane echoed this almost exactly, with James saying, *“Hyde Park, where blacks and whites unite to keep out the poor,”* and Jane saying, *“Black and white people unite against the lower classes.”*

This “Black and White unite against the lower classes” quote that was repeated by several respondents also helps explain, at least in part, the strict dividing line along 47th Street. The image of the two neighborhoods as integrated hinged solely on race rather than class. Kenwood quickly became untenable for working class and lower-income residents, starting first with the demolition of multi-family units due to urban renewal plans of the 1950s, and continuing into the present day with increasing property values as a result of gentrification surrounding the South Kenwood neighborhood. Even at a time when South Kenwood was seen as being affordable for lower middle-class families, there was still a sense that “true” poverty, as defined by several respondents as low-income and working-class populations, was a delocalized issue isolated to North Kenwood. The language of hard boundaries or strict borders is unfortunately still parroted today – as recently as Autumn of 2017, incoming students of the University of Chicago were told explicitly and implicitly not to go south beyond 62nd Street. Since its days as a village to its current form, Hyde Park and South Kenwood have enjoyed a status as an isolated island within the majority Black South Side of Chicago. This is only possible through the construction of borders, in this case a longstanding border that bisects Kenwood along racial and socioeconomic lines along 47th Street.

Given this historical hardline at 47th Street, it is interesting that each respondent cited the commercial development along 47th and Lake Park as the harbinger of commercial gentrification in the Kenwood neighborhood. In an interview with James, he explained that, prior to the development of the strip mall that now houses Binny's Beverage Depot and a Walgreens amongst other commercial offerings, there were few storefronts along the street.

47th Street was no storefronts, three flats, or apartments, and like from Lake Park to Woodlawn at all got basically all of it got torn down, except the mosque was there. And then they built that. I don't know if that Sports Center was there, they kind of got revitalized in the 90s.

James explained that this development was “the beginning of the rebirth, if you will, of North Kenwood”. Though this commercial redevelopment was meant to signal changing views about North Kenwood, James explains that it also served to make South Kenwood more marketable.

“...the whole North Kenwood piece has been really really integral in making South Kenwood marketable.”

In this section, James talked about how the housing developments and revitalization in North Kenwood gave Toni Preckwinkle, then the Alderman of the 4th Ward, enough evidence of North Kenwood's increasing value to convince developers to build a commercial strip on 47th in the 1990s. This strip only helped raise property values in South Kenwood. James suggested that the perception of North Kenwood as a site of gentrification was integral in making South Kenwood even more valuable. As North Kenwood was seen as less of a threat, and a safer place for professionals to call home, South Kenwood was also able to benefit. Most residents I interviewed still do not shop along 47th, but in Hyde Park. They found that as North Kenwood began to gentrify, prices began to rise in South Kenwood as well – Mark specifically stated that “the economy in Hyde Park seems to be shifting toward less affordable goods and services”. Jane also noted that stores within Hyde Park were shifting from independently owned shop to chain stores.

One of the biggest changes is that when I was a kid chain, restaurants chain stores were like fought against we wanted to be crunchy granola. All bootstrap up and independent. Nothing from outside, just let us be our little, small town. No, no, no corporate outside.

Though not within the boundaries of South Kenwood, the area was impacted nonetheless by commercial gentrification in neighboring Hyde Park. As property values in both Kenwood and Hyde Park rose, the number of small independent restaurants and retailers began to shrink. Residents stated that in the past, the only chains in the area were the grocery stores, like A&P on 51st and Woolworth's within the Hyde Park Shopping Center on 55th. Today, the neighborhood is home to several chain restaurants and stores, including the Target on 53rd and the new Taco Bell just a few blocks down from it. These brands represent a split from the type of commercial offerings generally associated with urban areas, and instead are brands typically represented in suburban locales. South Kenwood itself continues to lack many commercial offerings, maintaining a vision of it as a suburban-like bedroom community. Several respondents, including Terry, specifically noted the University's role in driving some of these new developments in the neighborhood. When asked about any changes in the neighborhood, Terry noted that Hyde Park, and South Kenwood as an extension, had been gentrifying steadily for nearly two decades, but has intensified in recent years.

I would have to say that the gentrification process, which was ongoing then and had been for a long time has accelerated. For a lot of different reasons. A lot of which was sort of there's a knock-on [cumulative] effect of the university under Bob Zimmer becoming aggressive about molding the place socially, you know, [in a way] that they haven't been this aggressive about since the 1950s.

Lafayette Park, Detroit

In 1947, a comprehensive master plan for urban renewal in Detroit was adopted which pinpointed Lafayette and Corktown as areas in need of redevelopment. Detroit was the first city to begin residential redevelopment under the Federal Housing Act of 1949. The urban renewal project began by clearing 129 acres including Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, two majority Black neighborhoods with thriving business districts that were razed to become what is now Lafayette Park. The general footprint of the neighborhood has not changed much since the mid-century. It is still home to the largest number of Mies van der Rohe homes in the entire world, and these units in the heart of the area still anchor the neighborhood.



Figure 14 A View of a Mies van der Rohe townhome from the plaiissance



Figure 15 A frontal view of the Mies van der Rohe townhomes with an apartment tower in the background



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Figure 16 Lafayette Park Zoning Map

Residential Zoning

The Lafayette Park neighborhood was primarily zoned for a low-density Residential District (R3 Zoning by the city). The R3 Low Density Residential District is designed to encourage multi-family units, such as town homes and garden apartments (City of Detroit Planning Commission 2). The entire core of the neighborhood is under this zoning classification, while being surrounded by a shallow strip of R6, or high density, residential zoning. This zoning type is specifically used in areas adjacent to the central business district of the city and in “other areas which have a high concentration of persons and land values” (City of Detroit Planning Commission 3). Lafayette Park is directly adjacent to the Downtown business district. Additionally, this R6 zoning classification permits a range of housing types, including lower-density structures to very high-density structures, but only allows single-family detached and

two-family dwellings on a conditional basis. The easternmost and westernmost edges of the neighborhood are both general business districts based on this 2010 data.

Commercial Zoning

In Lafayette Park, there is a small General Business District (B4) and an even smaller swath of a General Industrial District (M3) along the northern edge of the neighborhood. Within the heart of the neighborhood, a B3 district along E Lafayette Street is the only non-residential parcel along this stretch of road. The B3 zoning classification represents a shopping district, which provides for a “range of convenience and comparison-shopping goods stores” generally grouped into shopping centers (City of Detroit Planning Commission 4). This shopping district is known as the Lafayette Park Shopping Center, and houses one of the only grocery stores in the area, Lafayette Foods, a laundromat, and a Thai restaurant called Bai Mai Thai. The neighborhood in general is not regarded as a commercial destination, and therefore does not have many sites of commerce within its limits. Lafayette Park borders Eastern Market, which is home to scores of vendors who sell anything from seasonal local produce, meat, baked goods, plants and flowers, and other specialty food stores. The market itself is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays, but the neighborhood also houses several restaurants and other shops. Lafayette Park residents will often go to Eastern Market to dine out or shop at the market. Lafayette Park also borders Downtown and is within walking distance of Greektown, another popular site for recreation and dining.



Figure 17 A view of the Lafayette Plaza with the Lafayette Towers in the background



Figure 18 Lafayette Foods grocery store

Urban Renewal's Impact on the Creation of Lafayette Park

Before the implementation of the Gratiot Redevelopment Plan, Lafayette Park was originally a community called Black Bottom, named for its dark, rich soil. In some ways, Black Bottom's built structures resembled those of Corktown, including similarly designed shotgun houses. The neighborhood was a bustling one, full of businesses and known as one of Detroit's prominent Black enclaves, along with Paradise Valley directly to the east of the neighborhood. By all accounts, Black Bottom was a model of a dense urban community with housing, shopping, and entertainment all contained within the boundaries of the neighborhood. However, Black Bottom was deemed to be a blighted neighborhood infamous for poor quality housing, and as a result entirely razed by the urban renewal projects of the 1950s. 7,000 people were displaced from the neighborhood due to construction on the Gratiot Redevelopment Plan, and while the city's documents included rough plans to rehouse some of the displaced, very few were able to remain in their former neighborhood (Gratiot Redevelopment Plan). Such an extensive project had lasting effects on Lafayette Park's built environment that are witnessed even today. This appraisal of the Plan, published in 1964 after the implementation stated:

The typical grid pattern of streets and alleys indigenous to most cities has been supplanted by a residential superblock with a sizeable shopping center and a modern elementary school. A 13-acre park runs the length of the superblock, and cul-de-sacs service the residential developments. (Gratiot Redevelopment Plan 1964).

Planners sought to create a "model community" – though planted firmly within the city, and though it formerly was a more typical picture of an urban neighborhood, the plan for Lafayette Park intentionally created a built environment and community that was more typical of the newly developed suburbs than an urban community.

Back to the City Movement - Suburbanites finding familiar feel one mile from downtown

Respondents Lianne, a current resident of the neighborhood working Downtown, and Jenna, a former resident who moved due to the pandemic, both describe Lafayette Park as a quiet neighborhood that feels like, "its own little pocket". Lianne explains that the neighborhood is, "really peaceful and a nice escape from being in the city," even though it directly borders the

Downtown district. As with Corktown and Kenwood, residents feel that Lafayette Park is a bit of a bedroom community – many have to travel outside of the neighborhood to go to work or do any serious shopping, for example. Lianne, a recent college graduate on a budget, explained that in order to find truly affordable groceries, she had to leave the city for the suburban supermarkets, like Meijer or Kroger, though there is a small grocery store called Lafayette Foods close to her home.

I go to other neighborhoods for that because like there are no there's literally nowhere to shop. There's a Whole Foods, yeah, but it's expensive. I go there because it's convenient. There's like a little grocery store here and there. But it's just like, I don't really shop around here. So I'll either go to like the Royal Oak area or like back down river to do big grocery shopping. But they are actually making a little Meijer right across the street from me.

The Whole Foods store Lianne refers to is technically outside of the neighborhood but is easily accessible by car. The new Meijer is a bit of commercial gentrification in an area that is not heavily commercialized and calls to mind the theory of supermarket redlining (cite). There are very few chain stores within the city of Detroit, and even fewer supermarkets. Meijer only opened its first Detroit location a few years ago, so the entry of a Meijer seems to suggest that the Lafayette Park neighborhood has some qualities that makes a retailer that typically remains in the suburbs comfortable enough to enter its market.

Commercial offerings in Lafayette Park as a whole are relatively sparse. Jenna pointed out that new businesses going near or in Eastern Market, as well as other gentrifying areas in the city, tend to be craft restaurants especially – she felt that there is an “oversaturation of these new craft restaurants, the ones with expensive cocktails. It can be overwhelming - and expensive.” This falls in line with the early stages of gentrification, specifically because of the shift to new higher priced boutique commercial offerings. Because retail offerings are so sparse in the area, it is difficult to argue the presence of stores associated with late-stage commercial gentrification beyond the entry of the Meijer supermarket. However, the case of the Meijer supermarket is striking enough, as the famous Michigan chain only opened its first Detroit location in 2013. The retailer, as with many other supermarkets in different regions of the United States following the practice of supermarket redlining, was heavily associated with suburban areas. The new Meijer store, while slated to be a smaller neighborhood store, serves as a critical symbol of Lafayette Park’s more suburban image.

Community Feel

Though neither Lianne nor Jenna would classify Lafayette Park as a suburban neighborhood, there were similarities between how they described what they thought of as a typical suburban neighborhood, and how they described Lafayette Park.

Lianne did not go so far as to say that Lafayette Park was not a typical urban neighborhood, but she did suggest that she wanted her neighborhood [as well as the city of Detroit as a whole] to have a more “city feel”.

It's just I wish there was like more like a like city feel even if it's not like directly downtown you know, like in Chicago they have like where there's the Forever 21, the Target, everything but then like if you live in like an apartment complex that's not like directly right downtown, there's still little stores and like little bars.

This image of a mixed-use, walkable neighborhood is what Lianne typically associates with the “urban”. Having grown up in the suburbs of Metro Detroit, she associates suburban with plentiful essential shopping centers, housing the grocery stores and other shops that she will still leave the city to frequent. Lianne explained that Royal Oak is the main destination for when she needs to get out of the city. Jenna came up with a similar image of the suburban.

Cookie cutter, lots of gas stations to pick from. Multiple gas stations on every corner, multiple grocery store options like a Walmart, a Costco, a Target.

Lafayette Park does not match this hyper-commercial conception of the suburban identified by these interview respondents, but nevertheless continues to be perceived as closer to a “suburban” neighborhood than urban by many of the interview respondents. Jenna also mentions that she perceives suburbs as less diverse, excluding a few that have “really specific pockets for very specific nationalities,” citing Dearborn and Hamtramck, two cities in the Metro Detroit area, as examples.

Future Developments

Future developments in the area are focused on increasing the urban feel of the neighborhood. When conversing with Jose, a Lafayette Park resident and Planner with the City of Detroit, he emphasized the “suburbanness” of Lafayette Park’s general footprint. According to him, and mirroring the original language of the Gratiot Redevelopment Plan, the neighborhood is characterized by “lots of bigger lots, single family homes, lots of dead end streets”. Jose also explained:

The organizational layout of the Lafayette Park is your typical suburban approach to planning and design of a neighborhood. If you look at the neighborhood plan, the way that it's organized and the way that the townhouses within the neighborhood are organized is a very suburban typology. Additionally, Jose calls attention to the layout of streets and presence of cul-de-sacs that help cement Lafayette Park's style as more suburban than urban.

You don't have your sort of gridded streets at a lot of you have cul-de-sacs that dead end into some of these some of these co-ops and groups of townhouses so to me that that's so that that aspect of, you know dead-end road or cul de sac is what makes it very suburban. Direct access to a park that centered around these, all these residences, is very suburban. Interestingly enough, he also mentions the high-rise apartments buildings in the area, such as 1300 Lafayette, and says that even the presence of these buildings does not necessarily make the neighborhood feel any more urban. In other words, the presence of these high-density apartment buildings, generally associated with urban environments, do not make the neighborhood feel any less suburban.

Jose mentions that much of Detroit follows this planning approach, giving more credence to the concept of a typical urban landscape and a typical *Detroit* urban landscape. Typical urban neighborhoods for him, as with several respondents, are denser and have more convenient public transit access. He explains that a typical Detroit urban neighborhood is "something more like Downtown or Corktown around Michigan Avenue, or even midtown area where you have a lot more access and convenience to, you know, various types of amenities". The distinction of Corktown specifically around Michigan Avenue is important, because the rest of the neighborhood does not fit his perception of a typical neighborhood, and instead veers closer to a suburban community for many of the same reasons why Lafayette Park is, especially in terms of its plan and built structures, a more suburban neighborhood. Lafayette Park is in stark contrast with Jose's vision of both a typical urban neighborhood and the typical Detroit urban neighborhood.

Corktown

As in other areas of the city targeted by urban renewal plans, the shape of Corktown was dramatically impacted by the implementation of these policies. According to John Hartigan, "the area designated as Corktown today is a remnant of a much larger zone that followed the parish boundaries of Most Holy trinity, which extended along Trumbull Avenue through what is now

the Briggs area." (Hartigan 1999). Over 70% of the homes in Corktown were razed in the West Side Industrial urban renewal project (Hartigan 1999). Hartigan finds that "whites in Corktown are positioned uneasily within a nebulous racial and class collective. Commonly their backgrounds are in middle-class families, and their youth was spent in overwhelmingly white small towns or suburbs" (Hartigan 1999). They were attracted to the neighborhood because of its historical nature and architecture, as well as due to its close proximity to the business district downtown. Hartigan's claim here does not seem to take into account the long-time residents of the neighborhood, who may have remained put even during the White Flight of the 1960s, but instead on relatively new white Corktown residents labelled as gentrifiers in the neighborhood. Hartigan also explains that these residents moved to Corktown because starter homes are much less expensive than suburban starter homes - enabling them to get a piece of the suburban dream at a discount, so to speak.



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Figure 19 Corktown Zoning Map

Corktown, similar to Lafayette Park, is overall a lower density neighborhood in regard to population density. This is in contrast to Wicker Park, a highly populated and dense

neighborhood. Its most prominent housing type is by far the single-family detached home, followed by low-density structures with no more than 9 units, a feature it shares with Wicker Park.

Residential Zoning

The neighborhood has a swath of land zoned as an Intensive Industrial District along its southern edge. The two-family residential (R2) zone code is the most prominent residential zoning in the area, followed closely by the R3 code, which still represents a low-density residential district. According to the Zoning District Classifications by the City of Detroit, the R2 two-family residential district is designed to “protect and enhance those areas developed or likely to develop with single- or two-family dwellings” (City of Detroit Planning Commission 2). The majority of homes in North Corktown are single-family dwellings, though frequently inhabited by several generations of one family. There are fewer high-density residential structures in this neighborhood than in other areas of Detroit, such as Midtown.

Commercial Zoning

The neighborhood has a large amount of space zoned as a General Industrial District (M3) as well as several parcels marked as General Business District (B4), and a few larger parcels marked as Major Business Districts (B5). The M3 General Industrial District disallows any new residential construction, with the exception of loft conversion of existing structures and residential uses combined in buildings that have permitted commercial uses (City of Detroit Planning Commission 5). The General Business District (B4) allows for business and commercial uses of a thoroughfare-oriented nature”, generally driven by car traffic (City of Detroit Planning Commission 4). These districts are thought to be suitable for industrial development, but not for most residential uses because of the potential undesirable environmental impacts of living in such close proximity to industry. The B5 classification is particular to neighborhoods within the Central Business District and the New Center Area and is meant to provide adequate regulations within a major business district. The commercial offerings in this area are geared less towards pedestrians from the area and more towards visitors using vehicles to reach their destinations. The shopping districts are not evenly dispersed within the neighborhood, instead remaining clustered along Michigan Avenue. When speaking to a city planner with the City of Detroit, he said that the corridor along Michigan Ave is one of the only

areas in the city that has the most typical attributes of an urban neighborhood – the area is high density, highly walkable, and has more multifamily structures in close proximity to one another. However, the neighborhood outside of this commercial area is generally more suburban in plan, due to a lack of retail and more widely spaced single-family homes contributing to less density in the area.

Impact of Urban Renewal on Corktown

The Corktown Urban Renewal Project, called the West Side Industrial Project, was the first in the city to clear blighted areas to be used for industrial purposes. The project, as described in “A Tour of Detroit’s Urban Renewal Projects” published by the city in 1965, was set in a part of the “old Corktown neighborhood that had been primarily residential with some mixed commercial and institutional uses”. The projects, conducted over two phases, expanded across an area totaling 169 acres, and “relocated” 412 families. One of the most striking and immediately obvious impacts of the developments of the midcentury was the bisection of Corktown along the expressway, creating two communities: North Corktown and Corktown (sometimes also referred to as the Historic Corktown District). In this paper I mainly use Corktown to refer to both areas, with the exception of when interview respondents make obvious a distinction between the two within their responses. The Federal Highway Act of 1956 jumpstarted the construction of I-75, also called the Fisher Freeway, which began in 1957 and completed in 1973.

Pre-Gentrification Corktown



Figure 20 A former parking lot for the Tigers Stadium along Trumbull in Corktown



Figure 21 Current Site of the Former Tigers Stadium

Corktown had been the long-time home of the Detroit Tigers baseball franchise. The team played at what is now referred to as Old Tigers Stadium from 1912 to 1999. The stadium resided on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Trumbull Avenue. Though the last Tigers game at the stadium was held in September of 1999, the stadium itself was not demolished until 2009. The loss of the Tigers was a devastating blow to the neighborhood – Corktown was not known as a commercial hub, and most of the neighborhood pubs and restaurants were in effect sports bars. They thrived on game day, and the loss of the team in the neighborhood meant less traffic for these Corktown businesses. Beyond game day, Corktown was the home to a strong Irish and Hispanic community. Corktown is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city of Detroit, and had been named by the Irish immigrants who made their home in the area after immigrating to the United States in the 1800s. The loss of the Tigers in the neighborhood opened up quite a bit of space for artists warehouses and underground raves amidst the historic pubs and cultural organizations along Michigan Avenue in the neighborhood. The residential areas away from the central commercial street remained the home to mainly working and lower-middle class families, even after the major economic draw of the neighborhood departed for Downtown.

Luca said about Corktown in the late 1990s:

“In like the late 90s. Yeah. Oh, it was a free for all. It was, you know, it was it was *Gotham*. It was, it was legit Gotham. It was there were no fucking lights on. There were no lights. I don't know if you remember, but there was a time when Detroit didn't have streetlights. And I mean, we loved it.”

In his description of the neighborhood at that time, what truly sticks out are the mentions of the art scene, and more specifically, the underground art scene. In his words, it was “rebellious” and “alive” – it was “grimy”. It was “a very DIY movement. You were going to do shit yourself. And there was no one to tell you what to do. And no one even gave a shit if they if they did.”

Detroit is the birthplace of Techno. On any given night one could sneak into Corktown, hidden by unlit streets, into a warehouse and hear the greatest DJs playing Detroit’s own electronic genre. Or perhaps come into the neighborhood for Soul Night at Majestic. The art scene was alive and well through the 1990s into the very early 2000s, anchored by mainstays like PJs Lager House and The Works. Luca spotlighted The Works as the singular best place to see all of the

new and best talent in the city and worldwide. It was the culmination of the rebellious and lively neighborhood Luca described. The lively and gritty art scene described by Luca parallels the art scene of Wicker Park in the earliest stages of its gentrification.

The Onset of Commercial Gentrification in Corktown

Corktown as a whole had little in terms of retail during the underground art period described by Luca. Kelsey, another Corktown resident, explained that even 10 years, Michigan Avenue, the main street running through Corktown, had little commerce.

I don't know if you were familiar with Michigan Avenue, like 10 years ago, or whatever but there just wasn't anything before. So there was a shift because things opened. I mean, there were some surviving businesses up and down Michigan Avenue, like, you know, the Nemos and the Detroit Athletic Company that's there. Some of those long-standing businesses. But yeah, I mean, when Slows opened in like 2004, like three or whatever. I mean, that was the first thing on that block in a long time. Yeah. Now, I mean, that's almost 20 years of, you know, pretty consistent economic growth.

Several interview respondents traced the onset of gentrification in Corktown to the opening of one restaurant – Slows BBQ in 2005. Luca said of the restaurant opening:

“I think Slows really changed things in that neighborhood. Because what Slows did was that there weren't new restaurants being opened. You know, it was just kind of, from what I saw, it was stagnant because the Tigers left and it was like, Oh, shit, okay, and they knew they were going to leave. So, you know, wasn't like a secret, but still, you can't plan for that. I don't care who you are. You can't plan for that level of income loss without feeling the pain first, right? You can try. But the thing is how, how are you going to get investors to set something up?”

When the restaurant opened on a mostly abandoned block at the intersection of Michigan and 14th Street, many were shocked at their decision to enter into what many outsiders viewed as an abandoned wilderness. When Slows succeeded, other businesses were encouraged to strike while the iron was hot – and cheap. For many newcomers to Detroit, particularly from the early 2000s into the 2010s, there was a language of conquest surrounding their involvement in the city. Detroit as a whole was seen as an unexplored wasteland for others to “discover”, completely erasing the hundreds of thousands of residents who lived and continue to live in the city. As a

result, many new residents and business owners were attracted to the neighborhood from outside of the city, and in some cases, even from out-of-state.

In 2019, the owner of PJ's Lager House, PJ Ryder, put the music venue, bar, and restaurant hybrid up for sale. Ryder, who bought the Lager House in 2007, said the neighborhood was an entirely different place back then, citing the difficulties in getting bank loans for opening the business, the lack of streetlights in the city, and the coolness of the neighborhood at the time (Baetens 2019). He grouped the Lager House with Slows BBQ as the two businesses that fostered an artist community and helped the area get “so hip that the real estate companies come in and the big companies come in and then the neighborhood has changed again” – Ryder questioned whether he wanted to be a part of the change, citing Ford Motor Company's recent developments at the Michigan Central Train Station. Though the neighborhood remains home to a few art galleries, it is clear that Corktown has shifted beyond the artist stage of gentrification and is squarely in the realm of small boutique restaurants and new big business investments.

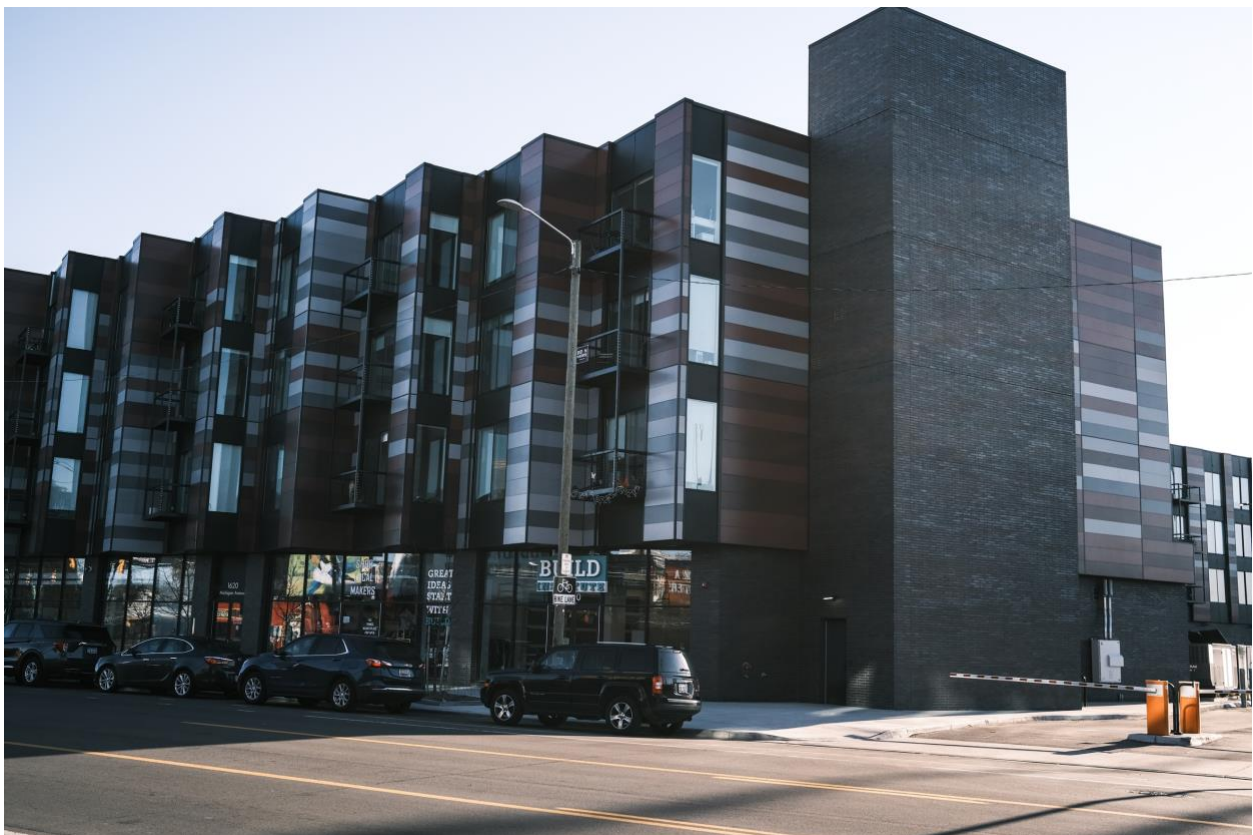


Figure 22 New housing developments on Michigan and Trumbull in Corktown

Back to the City Movement and Out of Town Implants

Kelsey is a Detroit native, hailing from the east side community of Morningside. She lived in Corktown for five years before returning to the neighborhood she grew up in. Throughout the course of her tenure in Corktown, she noticed marked changes occurring in the overall feel of the community. Both Kelsey and Luca noted that, as the neighborhood continues to gentrify, it has become a sort of hotspot for new residents working at Quicken Loans or other large companies in the city, originally hailing from the suburbs, are coming to Corktown to live before returning to the suburbs. Kelsey felt that Corktown was an “insular community,” and this status as a sort of enclave is tied heavily to its historical nature as an Irish neighborhood. There was a feeling identified by both Kelsey and Luca that the neighborhood was growing into two distinct separate worlds – the Corktown of old, the insular community of long-time residents who are active in trying to make Corktown a “nice and pleasant place to live” and the gentrifying Corktown, summed up in the image of drunk passengers of the peddle pubs being dropped off in the middle of quiet residential streets.

Lara, a Chicago native and current North Corktown resident who moved to the neighborhood in 2016 from New York City, explained that there is a difference in communities between North Corktown and Corktown. Corktown, which is home to the Michigan Avenue commercial district as well as the Corktown Historic District, has become a hot district for new Detroit residents, many of whom work Downtown and view the neighborhood as a transitory stop. North Corktown has remained a relatively quiet residential district populated by long-term residents. Lara, as with Kelsey and Luca, identified a specific population segment moving into the neighborhood. When asked about what type of new residents are moving into Corktown, Lara gave them a specific name: The Lost Boys of Corktown.

I feel like Corktown has a lot of that. We also refer to them, some friends, and I call them the Lost Boys of Corktown. [They have] a sort of bohemian, French Cafe vibe. [They move in] and they kind of do the do the bar scene, and then a few years later, they disappear.

One of the most notable details about Lara’s description of The Lost Boys is the impermanence of their time in the neighborhood. It is understood that these residents are only in the neighborhood for a short stint before moving on. These new Corktown residents come to the city mostly from the Metro Detroit suburbs, such as Farmington Hills and Bloomfield, and work at large tech and finance companies like Quicken Loans in Downtown Detroit. Many, as Lara pointed out, live in Detroit in their youth but move out to the suburbs when they decide to settle down with their families. Lara noted that there is a level of conflict between these new residents and old Corktown residents and explained that it might be partially explained by the new residents lack of connections to the strong community due to the perception that they will be leaving the area within a few years. Kelsey noticed a similar pattern:

There’s definitely, like, you know, younger people, people moving into these, like brand new units that, you know, are either coming from the suburbs, or like, tech jobs and Ford and, you know, Bedrock and all that. So. So, yeah, I mean, it's interesting, because there's some really, really deep roots and really invested families. And then there's all this like, new blood, which, you know, is just an interesting thing. And, like a battle of the old people that want to keep things the same. And new people that don't really understand or value the history.

Kelsey had a strong insight on what a typical Detroit is versus what the ideal would be. In a typical Detroit neighborhood, Kelsey explains

Most of our neighborhoods are pretty desolate when it comes to retail and business, restaurants, grocery stores, essentials. Unfortunately, like our urban neighborhoods are not taken care of. So yeah, I mean, it makes life more challenging for everyone that lives in them.”

In this light, she did not view Corktown as a typical urban neighborhood within the Detroit context, but instead regarded it as closer to the ideal model for a Detroit urban neighborhood. Corktown is “fancy and very populated” – there’s increased access to small grocers and restaurants, as well as reasonably well-maintained sidewalks. The residential areas of the neighborhood are highly populated (72% of units are occupied) and well maintained – when it snows, there are people at home who will shovel. In other neighborhoods, vacant homes of course have no one living in them to shovel or maintain the sidewalks adjacent to the property, and the city is slow to act in such areas. Corktown’s nature as an ideal urban neighborhood,

particularly within the context of Detroit, is seen as a large reason why it has become the destination for so many “back-to-the-city” gentrifiers.



Figure 23 Industrial buildings directly across from single-family homes [next photo]



Figure 24 Single family homes in Corktown Historic District

Wicker Park, Chicago



Figure 25 The intersection of Milwaukee and Wood in Wicker Park

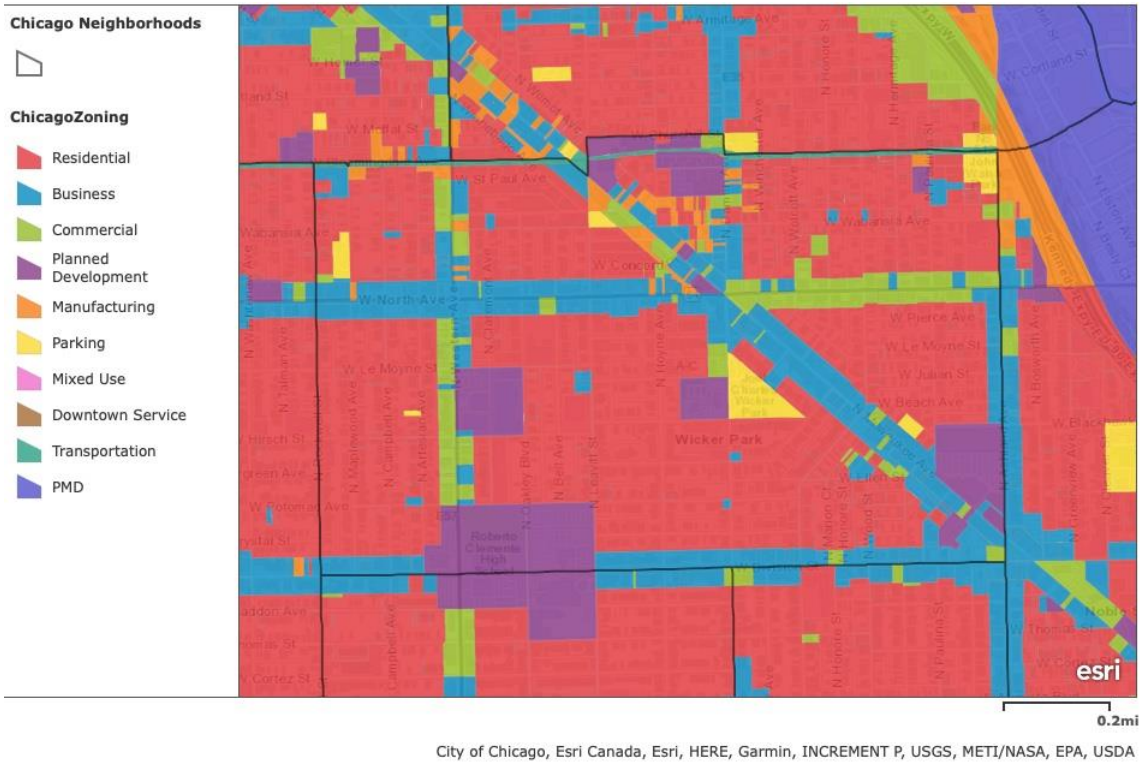


Figure 26 Wicker Park Zoning Map

Residential Zoning

The RT-4 Zoning Classification, the largest zone in the middle of the neighborhood boundary, nearing Milwaukee Avenue is a Residential Two-flat, Townhouse, and Multi-unit District, solely for low-density units. High-density apartments are prohibited in this zoning classification. Much of the residential zoning in this neighborhood falls under either the low-density RT-4 zone, or the RS-2 and RS-3, Residential Single-Unit District. The RS-2 and the RS-3 zone is saved solely for detached single-family homes, and does not permit high-density structures. The neighborhood has a good mix of large, stately single-family homes, low-density apartment buildings, and higher density residential units. Along Milwaukee Avenue, there are many residential units above the retail shops on the first floor.

Commercial Zoning

Wicker Park has a large amount of B3 zoning districts within the neighborhood. B3 Community Shopping Districts allow for shopping centers, large stores, and retail storefronts – they also allow for more types of businesses than the B1 and B2 zoning districts. This zone is often used to permit community shopping centers along major streets. B3 districts are generally destination-oriented, with most patrons arriving by car – the amount of off-street parking is higher in B3 zones than in B1 or B2 districts (Chicago Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Ordinance).

Wicker Park also has its share of smaller neighborhood commercial districts (C1-2, B1-2) which permit retail storefront on low-traffic streets. This zoning classification is less vehicle-oriented than B3 zones. C1 community shopping districts are neighborhood districts, allow for retail stores fronts, and also allows more business types than B1 districts – namely liquor stores, warehouses, and auto shops. The businesses allowed under the C1 zoning district are typically more car-oriented than those in B1 districts. As with B3 districts, apartments are permitted above the ground floor of the structure. Wicker Park is similar to Corktown in that both neighborhoods have a high concentration of lower-density residential zones, large commercial zones, and maintain some manufacturing and warehouse business districts.

The Early Years of Wicker Park

The neighborhood, unlike Kenwood, has been a part of Chicago since its incorporation in 1837. At the time, Wicker Park was one of the northernmost portions of Chicago, as the city itself expanded to North Avenue and Wood. The neighborhood's boundaries expanded again to

Western Avenue in 1847. By 1857, Wicker Park gained its first industrial site when the Rolling Mill Steel Works open near the river. In the following years, Wicker Park's industrial presence would grow to include furniture, musical instruments, breweries, and more. Middle-class German residents settled in Wicker Park near Damen and North in the late 1870s (notably after the Great Fire of 1871). At this stage, Wicker Park became home to many prominent Chicago business and social figures (similar to what was seen in Kenwood). As explained on the Wicker Park and Bucktown Chamber of Commerce website by Elaine A. Coorens, a historian and Author of *Wicker Park from 1673 Thru 1929*, these residents included well-known families and Chicago personalities, such as the Pritzkers, Crowns, Saul Bellows, and Nelson Algren. The population shifted to an ethnically Polish neighborhood at the turn of the century, specifically around 1902 (Pacyga 1986). At this time, the original mansions were largely being turned into multi-family dwelling and boarding houses, a pattern also witnessed in other Chicago neighborhoods, such as Kenwood. The neighborhood at this time was home to a multitude of businesses, including blacksmiths, tailor shops, sausage makers, stone and lumber yards, greenhouses, and bakeries (Coorens 2016).

Impact of Urban Renewal on future Gentrification

Unlike the other neighborhoods analyzed in this study, Wicker Park was not directly impacted by development associated with mid-century urban renewal plans. Instead, the neighborhood was impacted by projects in other neighborhoods, especially the Old Town and Lincoln Park urban renewal plans. These plans, which displaced over 900 families, led to an increase in Wicker Park's Latinx and Black populations. By the late 1970s, the neighborhood began to gentrify. Driven by increases in Latino and black residents, disinvestment in the neighborhood likewise increased - setting the stage for the first stage of gentrification (Betancur 2002, Clay 1979; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2010). Irina, a former resident of Wicker Park and current resident of Humboldt Park explained that her father was heavily involved in organizing against urban renewal-led displacement in Lincoln Park.

My dad was really involved in organizing efforts to prevent gentrification in Lincoln Park when he was in his 20s. And now he's in his 70s. And he's like now living in another neighborhood [Humboldt Park] that people are attempting to gentrify, but it's not quite sticking.

For Irina, though she personally never experienced urban renewal, its legacy has continued to impact her family. When residents were displaced from Lincoln Park, many came to Wicker Park, only to be displaced again, this time not by urban renewal, but by contemporary gentrification.

Residents' Responses to Changes in Commercial Offerings - "That used to be the area where you would go for less expensive stuff."

For former Wicker Park resident Irina, Wicker Park was not always such a popular site of commerce. Irina, a current University student, grew up in the neighborhood before moving to neighboring Humboldt Park towards the end of her high school years. Recalling the years she spent in the neighborhood, she found that Wicker Park was not always such a popular site of commerce as it is now.

Like it was kind of not a place of commerce at all. Like that. That's, I think, like, the huge difference is that now it's a place of commerce, which is part of why I think a lot of people dislike Wicker Park, if they're from Chicago, it's like, it's just another like, it's not very different from State Street.

For Irina, the neighborhood used to have a “gritty, do it yourself kind of vibe” – it was home to artists and families, and the small mom-and-pop stores necessary to sustain them. Luca, a 10-year resident of Wicker Park, had similar observations. When he moved to the neighborhood, Luca loved the artists, poets, and musicians the community was home to. Wicker Park was, to both Irina and Luca, a diverse mix of artists and families. It was *not*, however, a destination where out-of-towners would come to visit. Over the course of our interview, Irina frequently mentioned how when she visits the neighborhood now, she is always struck by how many people come into the neighborhood from the Chicagoland suburbs for the shops or restaurants.

Back then [when she lived in Wicker Park] it was more like, like Subterranean was there. So it was like more about the music venue, and then the art scene. So you weren't, it wasn't about going and buying clothes and things I was more about, like, I hate I feel so shitty, say this, like, like experiences. Or the stores that were there, you knew who owned it, you knew the people around there. Like there is like a little like mom-and-pop grocery store that like it's closed. Now. I didn't realize it was closed until I drove by there the other day. So it's like it things like that. Whereas

now it's like, very, like, you go there, you get like ramen, and where you go and shop and where you live is very different.

Both Irina and Luca expressed a link between commercial offerings in the neighborhood and the overall community feel. Luca argues that this process of commercial turnover is triggered by new residents from suburban locales preferring chain dining establishments and shops to locally owned establishments, in addition to rising rents due to gentrification.

And that's going to, it's ultimately going to people coming to a neighborhood, and they think, "Okay well yeah, I want to live here. It's fun." But then something bad happens, a crime happens and it's like, "Oh, shit, we got to get out of here", or "We're gonna change this and this and I don't like this graffiti and I don't like this mom and pop place, it's been here for so long. I want a Starbucks instead of some local coffee spot that's been around for 15 years...and when you combine that with the rent going up and it changes the neighborhood. And, you know, I mean I could go on, go on a tear of places that have closed that I love that aren't here anymore simply because of the rent. Yeah, and they've either. Maybe the close up shop all together or they move [to different neighborhoods].

Irina pointed to new, more expensive, restaurants opening that signaled the shift in community dynamics in Wicker Park.

I was in high school, I was commuting by train to my school. And I would get off at the Damon stop when I would come back home. And so I saw the progression of change there. Like I was able to see like, Oh, this really fancy building has gone up. It's very modern, like that doesn't really fit in with what I'm used to. This store has closed. This has come up in its place when like I didn't. I feel like food is always like a way for me to gauge things. And when Jenny's went up, I was like, I have no idea what Jenny's is. Yeah. But then I saw the prices and I was like, okay, expensive ice cream.



Figure 27 Free People Boutique on North Milwaukee Ave in Wicker Park

The neighborhood Irina grew up in had thrift shops and less expensive eateries. As it gentrified, these offerings were replaced with higher end boutiques – Irina specifically named the Free People boutique on Milwaukee Avenue as an example. Catherine, a current resident of Wicker Park who moved into the neighborhood one year ago, also highlighted Free People as an example of the expensive boutiques she was surprised to see moving in.

And, you know, turned it into, you know, you know this, you see like these pricier stores, they're announced there and there's like, a lot of big brands slowly coming in.

Marie, a recent graduate of the University of Chicago who moved to Wicker Park in the fall of 2020, also noted that bigger chains had an easier time remaining open during the pandemic.

I think some of that was already happening I think the big thing that I've noticed is that a lot of those bigger chains, so like I guess like Dunkin, talking about all those places have been able to stay open. And I think a lot of the other smaller restaurants and more family out are just places that I haven't seen other or elsewhere, they have not been able to really stay open.

The introduction of these high-end boutiques and then larger chain stores signaled a shift away from the individuality and uniqueness of the neighborhood to a community feel more in line with how respondents viewed the suburbs.

When asked about some of the most notable changes in the areas that shocked them, Camellia, a former Wicker Park resident who recently left the neighborhood, noted:

The furniture stores. So to close them down, there were a lot of like, these multi building, like locally, family-owned furniture places, and those started closing down. And then getting replaced with like, boutique stores and stuff like that all of them, like, [not necessarily] big chains started coming in as much as it was just really high-end stores.

They also noted gas stations, which also functioned as convenience stores, being replaced by a large hotel chain.

“You know, like, after you get off work or something, [the gas station is] like, yes, like, it’s this close, and it has snacks. But now it’s like this giant Marriott or like, yeah, like some of the smaller older, like restaurants and places like that, like they’re gone now.”

Camellia mourned the loss of a convenient and cheap place to get small necessities, especially because it was replaced with what they saw as its antithesis. In both instances, Camellia noted that stores that had a deep tie to the community were replaced with options many saw as more impersonal.

Residents’ Perceptions of the “New” Wicker Park

Among several former residents, there is the perception that the urban community feel of Wicker Park is being eroded, and that this erosion is directly tied to the commercial gentrification in the area. Respondents equated the new crop of chain stores in the area with those one can find in the suburbs. When asked if they perceived Wicker Park to be more urban or more suburban, no one would say that they found Wicker Park, still by all accounts a bustling urban neighborhood, to be suburban. However, many respondents identified specific aspects of the neighborhood’s transformation that they felt brought more suburban touches to Wicker Park. Noting the atmosphere of the quieter residential streets of the neighborhood, Marie said that Wicker Park is definitely more urban than suburban, but still not a completely typical urban neighborhood.

I would say more so than suburban. But I think, like, I guess what stopped me from saying yes to that question is there’s definitely streets that you can walk down further away from all of like the hustle and bustle that five corners that you know you feel it’s like very quiet... maybe I think this

could just be my background growing up in the suburbs like looking for things that are more associated with like my first home. So it's like the quieter residential streets feel more suburban.

Marie went on to say, “Overall, it's a really good neighborhood and I like the mix of being able to still have that more residential suburban connected feel and still be really close to everything as a whole.”



Figure 28 A Taco Bell chain restaurant on North Milwaukee Ave.



Figure 29 A sweetgreen chain restaurant on North Milwaukee Ave

Discussion

Theoretical discussions on gentrification and suburbanization are often kept separate, but in this study I have found that both frameworks are critical to understand current trends in gentrified or currently gentrifying neighborhoods in both Detroit and Chicago. Wicker Park and Corktown, in Chicago and Detroit respectively, are well-known sites of gentrification. Kenwood and Lafayette Park both have a decidedly more suburban planning footprint than other neighborhoods, and are less commercialized than the other two neighborhoods analyzed in this

study. In some cases, particularly Kenwood and Lafayette Park, suburban qualities are exalted.

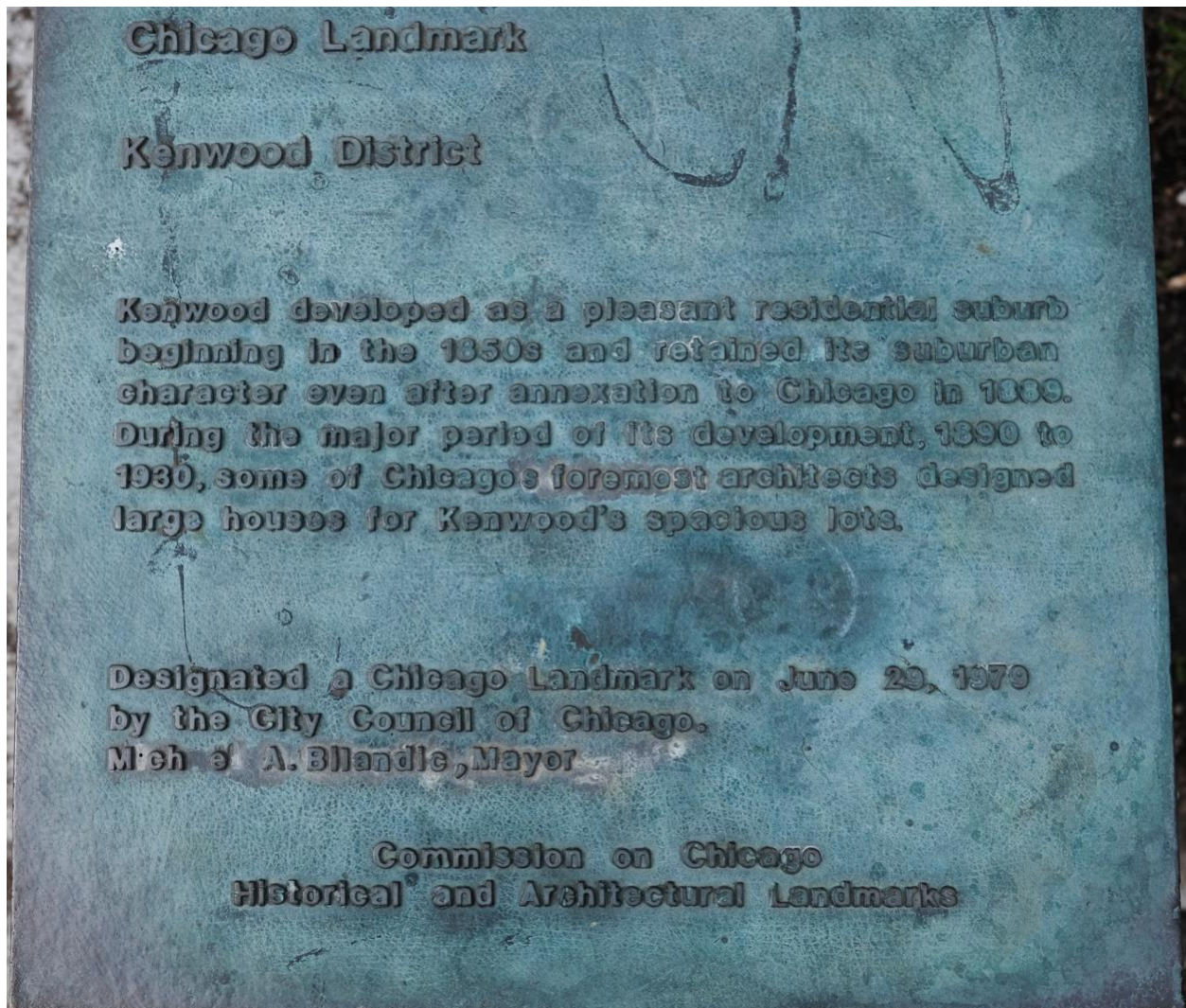


Figure 30 A historical landmark sign on the corner of 49th and Dorchester in Kenwood. It says, in part, that Kenwood was originally a "pleasant residential suburb" and has "retained its suburban character even after annexation to Chicago in 1889."

In others, as in Wicker Park or along Michigan Ave in Corktown, the designation of “suburban” couldn’t be more jarring for their residents. However, each neighborhood is becoming more suburban. Using maps of zoning districts, housing types, and population density created with GIS, as well as quantitative interviews with residents from each neighborhood, I have found that the commercial landscape, marked by an increase in chain stores and a decrease in independently owned shops, and general “feel” of these neighborhoods, as described by residents, have begun to resemble the suburbs. Overall, the findings show that suburbanization of urban spaces can and has taken place across a variety of urban context and historical timelines.

Each of the four neighborhoods has a legacy tied to the urban renewal plans of the mid-twentieth century, though Wicker Park is the only of the four that was not demolished or home to major construction. Instead, it became the new home of residents displaced by urban renewal projects in Lincoln Park. While the neighborhood's built environment was unaffected by these projects, its community was heavily impacted. In neighborhoods like Lafayette Park and Kenwood, the built structure created through mid-century urban renewal developments directly impacts the degree to which they feel suburban for their residents today. Lafayette Park has a large amount of lower density housing structures and few commercial offerings. Though it is relatively more walkable than other Detroit neighborhoods, it is still a neighborhood within a city that largely still promotes car dependence over alternate means of transportation. Likewise, Kenwood, particularly South Kenwood, has a large amount of lower density structures and few commercial offerings besides those along 47h Street. As a result, the suburbanization of these neighborhoods can be traced back to these formative urban renewal developments. Legacy zoning practices serve to maintain the suburban nature of these urban neighborhoods.

While the built environments of both Corktown and Wicker Park share some similarities with suburban layouts - especially the predominance of low-density single-family homes and zoning classifications in both - current gentrification is the leading factor in the suburbanization of these neighborhoods. The "back-to-the-city" movement framework is highly valuable for contextualizing the demographic shifts or backgrounds of new residents in both Detroit neighborhoods, while it seems prominent only for Wicker Park in the Chicago context. In Wicker Park, there is a sense that residents are being attracted to the neighborhood from not only the Chicagoland suburbs, but also from other Chicago neighborhoods and other states entirely - like the two Detroit neighborhoods, it is a site for relocation for a good number of young professionals, many of whom have either gone to university in the city or are from the area.

Commercial gentrification is also particularly useful for analyzing the mechanisms of suburbanization for neighborhoods with higher concentrations of commerce like Wicker Park and Corktown. Wicker Park is in a more mature stage of gentrification than Corktown, and as a result has a higher number of large chain stores moving into the area than Corktown. Corktown is still in a relatively early stage of commercial gentrification marked by expensive boutique stores and restaurants which will be replaced by larger chain stores in later stages of gentrification, similar to the Wicker Park case. Lafayette Park's suburbanization, though it has

few commercial areas, is mainly explained through historical legacies of urban renewal and the new increases of suburbanites making the neighborhood their home. However, it too is experiencing commercial gentrification with the development of new supermarkets generally only found in the surrounding suburbs of Detroit, most notably the new Meijer development.

The relationship between the “back-to-the-city” framework of gentrification and the commercial gentrification movement is a symbiotic one. Both are cycles that feed into the other – the back-to-the-city gentrifiers are attracted to urban environments that have been commercially gentrified, and once there, they influence further commercial gentrification that makes the commercial offerings in these neighborhoods more closely resemble those found in the suburbs. An article in Crain’s New York titled “Urban suburbia: More local businesses are catering to suburban tastes” uses the increasing number of Target stores in city neighborhoods as a symbol of this transformation. Within the article, there is a sense that the population that make up the “back-to-the-city” gentrifiers are not the population that drove the first stage of gentrification – the artist class – but instead those who are more affluent and driven to the city once the reputation of their chosen neighborhood has shifted from grungy to a cleaner “hip” location. The back-to-the-city gentrifiers are attracted to an already changing neighborhood, and once there, continue to drive transformations that make these gentrifying neighborhoods more closely resemble suburban enclaves. The article also argues that these changes fundamentally alter the community feel of the neighborhoods, often in a negative fashion, a finding echoed by many of my own interview respondents. While neighborhoods can resemble the suburbs due to their built environment, the community changes that make these urban neighborhoods seem more suburban generally use the “back-to-the-city” and commercial gentrification frameworks as mechanisms.

Policy Recommendations

As a related consequence of the “back-to-the-city” movement, many lower-income people are moving from the increasingly more expensive cities to suburbs. This phenomenon has been dubbed the “suburbanization of poverty” by many scholars in the field, and has implications for the greater trend of population loss that Detroit and Chicago are both facing (Orfield and Luce 2013). The city of Detroit has experienced population decline for several decades; in the 2000 Census the population was shown to be 945,471, a decline from over 1 million residents in 1990. The population fell again to 711,120 in 2010, and finally to 670,031 in

2019. Several theorists argue that the reasons for decline include the loss of industry, as well as the resulting abundance of abandoned buildings that are expensive to renovate. According to the Urban Institute, Detroit gained households even while still losing population. This suggests the increasing prevalence of smaller households, and perhaps also suggests that there is a demand for smaller units to accommodate these smaller households. Designing high-density, mixed-use structures could reasonably provide more housing and additional commercial units while using land more efficiently than if the city were to build a comparable amount of single-family detached houses. These higher-density units could simultaneously provide housing and more conveniences, such as stores and potential office space, which would as a result encourage more interest from a variety of stakeholders – including current Detroiters and those interested in moving to the city.

The city of Chicago is also contending with the tremendous population loss of one particular group of residents – Black Chicagoans. Between 2000 and 2010, Chicago lost approximately 181,000 Black residents (UIC Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy 2020). This was substantially higher than any other major city in the United States except for Detroit. As in Detroit, part of this loss can be explained by the departure of manufacturing employment in the city and economic neglect and disinvestment of the South and West Sides of the city. The IRRPP study found that there is an inverse relationship between white and black population growth in Chicago. Neighborhoods that experienced an increase of white residents had a subsequent decrease of black residents, and neighborhoods that experienced an increase of black residents had a decrease in white residents. The study concluded that there appears to be a relationship between gentrification and population shifts in certain neighborhoods. In both cities, intense efforts should be undertaken to encourage revitalization that attracts and welcomes both new and old residents. Municipal governments, and planning departments in particular, should signal to current residents that they are still a priority while simultaneously attracting new residents. This is a fine balance, but one that must be maintained to combat population loss. Planning departments, regional agencies, as well as architects should prioritize higher-density housing, mixed-use developments, and should plan in a way that allows old and new residents to enjoy a revitalized neighborhood together.

City Planning Agencies

In Chicago, Aldermen have the greatest influence in changing zoning in their wards. Higher density housing units and B1-B3 commercial zoning areas should be incentivized to create more walkable neighborhoods that maintain the character of the neighborhood and encourage the retention of original residents and entrepreneurs. In Detroit, those who wish to change zoning classifications must submit an appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals, which is made up of seven appointed officials from City Council. As in Chicago, higher-density housing units and pedestrian-oriented commercial developments should be prioritized. Dense, more walkable urban development is preferred to sprawl, both in terms of fostering healthy and more eco-friendly communities. These communities, especially if they have access to public transit, help encourage physical activity among residents and improves health incomes, especially for frequent transit users (Besser and Dannenberg 2005; Frank et al. 2006 Lachapelle and Noland 2011; Bivina, Gupta, and Parida 2020). Many public transit users were found to achieve physical activity recommendations solely by walking to transit (Lachapelle and Noland 2011). Maximizing walking accessibility, which is influenced in part by walking distance but also by quality of the built infrastructure, such as sidewalks and crosswalks, is critical to maximixing the potential benefits of dense, transit-oriented neighborhoods.

These types of dense neighborhoods also help reduce harmful emissions due to their increased walkability and use of modes of transportation that produce no tailpipe emissions, such as walking and cycling (Santos et al 2010). People living in more walkable neighborhoods, defined as neighborhoods characterized by mixed-use, connected streets, high residential density, and pedestrian-oriented retail, do more walking and biking for transportation, drive less, have lower BMIs, and produce less air pollution than people living in less walkable areas (Frank et al. 2007; Tétreault et al. 2018). These factors all support the recommendation for denser, pedestrian and transit-oriented development in each of the four neighborhoods studied. Pedestrian-oriented commercial zoning areas, such as the B1-B3 areas for Chicago and Detroit, are preferred, as they encourage modes of transport that do not emit pollutants and encourage more activity for residents in the area than auto-oriented zoning and neighborhood design.

Particularly in the Detroit context, there is a need to make the neighborhoods more walkable by investing in pedestrian infrastructure. Additional crosswalks, as well as protected bike and bus lanes are necessary to make walking around bustling neighborhoods easier and

safer for residents. In Detroit, each interview respondent voiced a desire for their neighborhoods to become more walkable. Corktown and Lafayette Park have some of the better-quality infrastructure in the city, so any measures that go into making these neighborhoods safer and easier to traverse for pedestrians should be extended throughout the city. In Detroit in particular, residents also voiced desires for better public transportation options. There are currently no train lines that would connect Corktown to downtown, for instance, and only a few bus lines that connect Downtown Detroit to the Metro Detroit Airport (DTW). Several respondents felt that Detroit's future growth is tied closely to whether or not the city and state will build a more comprehensive and efficient public transportation system. Younger residents have come to expect urban neighborhoods to be walkable and well-serviced by transit systems. Creating a stronger public transit infrastructure will help Detroit build stronger urban neighborhoods, combatting the suburbanization of urban spaces, in addition to priming the city for growth.

I also recommend that the City of Detroit Planning agency continue to prioritize making Detroit neighborhoods denser, as well as adding amenities such as small grocers and other small retail offerings to these neighborhoods. Current city plans for Lafayette Park include adding more high-density residential structures, as well as trying to add more retail for those who will be attracted to the area. The city is not prioritizing mixed-use structures at the time, but I do recommend they maintain their current focus on increasing the density and convenience of Lafayette Park - and extend this focus to other neighborhoods in the city. In my conversation with a City Planner, the Planning Department is running into conflict with developers, who would prefer to create more "suburban" developments in these areas, which are typically described as lower density residential developments and stores with larger footprints. Based on findings from interviews as well as research around the benefits of denser, more walkable neighborhoods, I argue that this is not the best way to develop the city in a way that best supports current residents as well as attracts new residents. I also argue that these sorts of developments would not create more walkable or vibrant neighborhoods, but would instead continue to support the city's dependence on personal vehicles – a dependence that is both harmful for the environment, and that also hurts the city's prospects of welcoming more residents who are less keen on needing a car to navigate the city. In the face of our dire climate change predicament, more car-oriented development is not just ill-advised, but dangerous.

Conclusions

Commercial gentrification and the “back-to-the-city” movement theory of gentrification are critical for understanding how suburbanization might be theorized within an urban context, but much of the literature does not use these lenses simultaneously. Both theories represent varying stages of the gentrification process and both are necessary to examine the suburbanization of urban neighborhoods. Commercial gentrification and its push towards more suburban forms of commerce, particularly chain stores in the place of independent shops, can help explain that the “suburban” is not limited to its spatial domain outside of the city. The “back-to-the-city” movement theory also helps account for demographic shifts that make urban neighborhoods more closely resemble their suburban counterparts. Using both in tandem can begin to explain the mechanisms by which urban neighborhoods become suburbanized. though the course of this research, I also discovered that historical conditions of development, such as Kenwood’s history as a suburb before being annexed into the city, and Kenwood, Corktown, and Lafayette Park’s history of urban renewal also shape how much a neighborhood can resemble a suburban area.

In this study, I found that suburbanization in urban spaces can be studied, but depending on case, should be evaluated considering two different historical periods - contemporary gentrification and historical legacies of mid-20th Century urban renewal policies. There was also the impulse to relate suburbanization to a specific stage or era of gentrification (typically late stage gentrification) but one must rely heavily on the specific context of each city, rather than the timing of when they began to gentrify. Wicker Park and Corktown have followed similar trends of gentrification, especially in the late 1990s and the early 2000s - but the neighborhoods are not in the same stage of gentrification now. Future research can and should be applied to other neighborhoods and cities to confirm whether there is a link between stage of gentrification and level of suburbanization.

Broadly, this research suggests that the suburbanization of urban spaces is a legitimate phenomenon that occurs due to a mix of historical development practices, such as zoning practices and developments enacted due to urban renewal policies, as well as current-day commercial and ‘back-to-the-city’ movement gentrification. Future research should consider other urban cases, both within the cities addressed in this study, as well as in other municipalities, to determine whether the findings of this study are generalizable. Additionally,

future scholars should endeavor to research a multitude of neighborhoods in different stages of gentrification. Overall, I argue that suburbanization can occur in a multitude of urban neighborhoods, and even among those that, upon first glance, appear to share little qualities with the suburban.

Appendix

Zoning

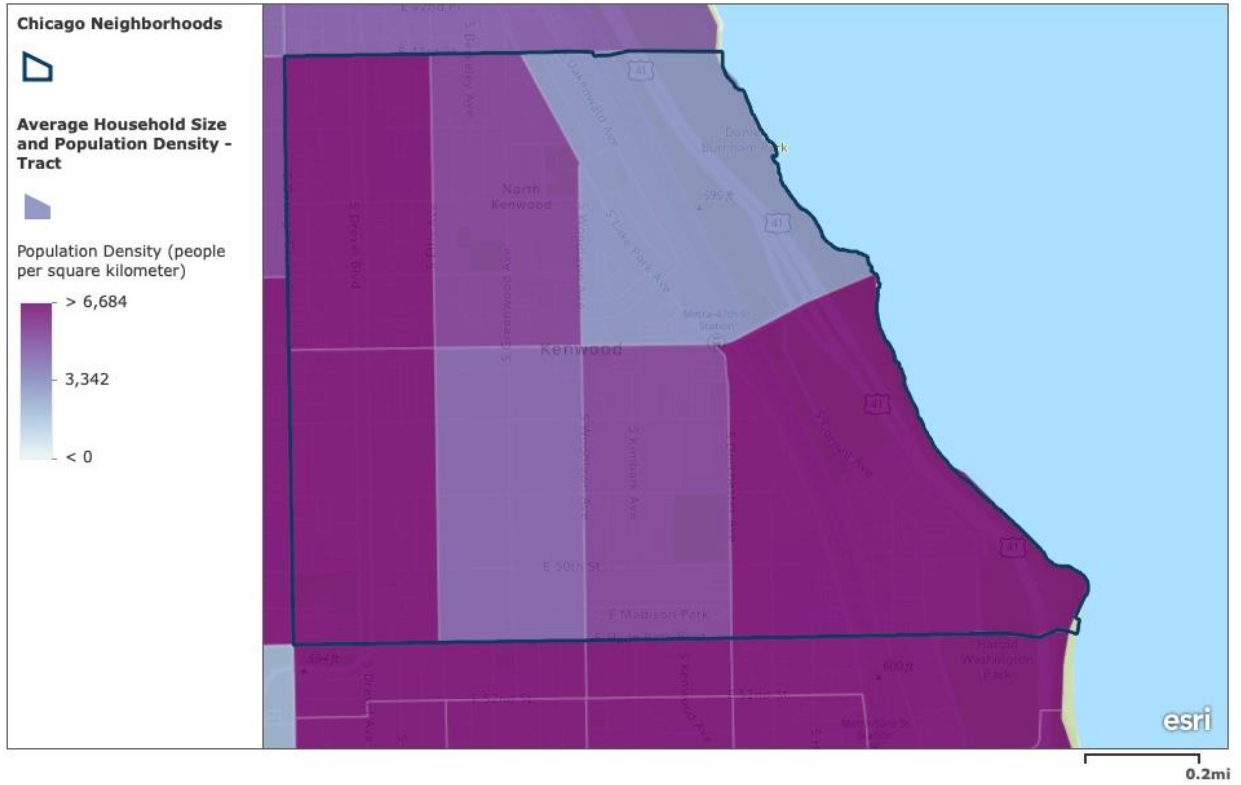
Detroit

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Residential | |
| R2, R3 | Two-family residential, low-density residential unit |
| Commercial | |
| B3, B4, B5 | Shopping district [shopping centers] General Business District, Major Business District |
| M3 | General Industrial District |

Chicago

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Residential | |
| RS-1, RS-2, RS-3 | Residential Single Unit – single family homes |
| RM-5 | Medium to High-density apartments |
| RT-4 | Residential Two -Flat |
| Commercial | |
| B1, B2, B3 | Neighborhood Mixed Use Shopping District |
| C1, C2 | Neighborhood Commercial District, Motor-Vehicle Related Commercial District |

Additional Maps
Kenwood, Chicago



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA | Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Chicago, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Figure 31 Kenwood Population Density Map

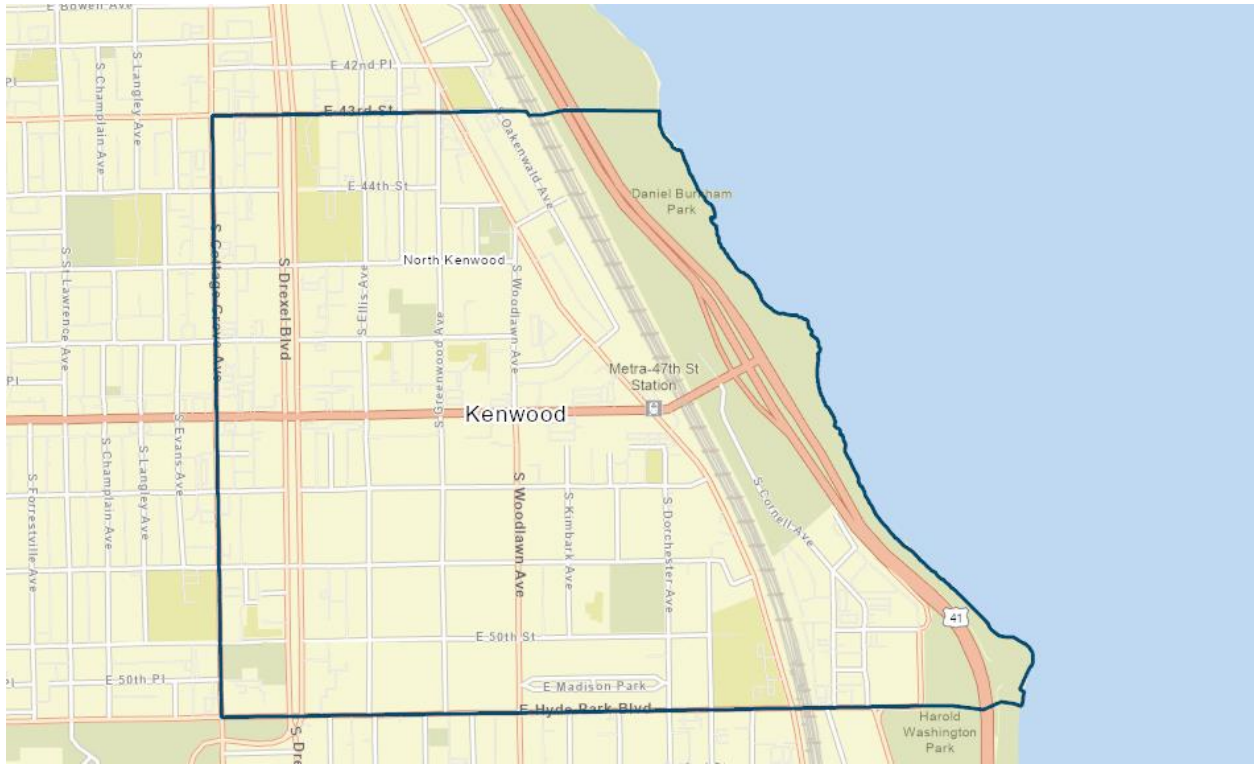


Figure 32 Kenwood Street Networks

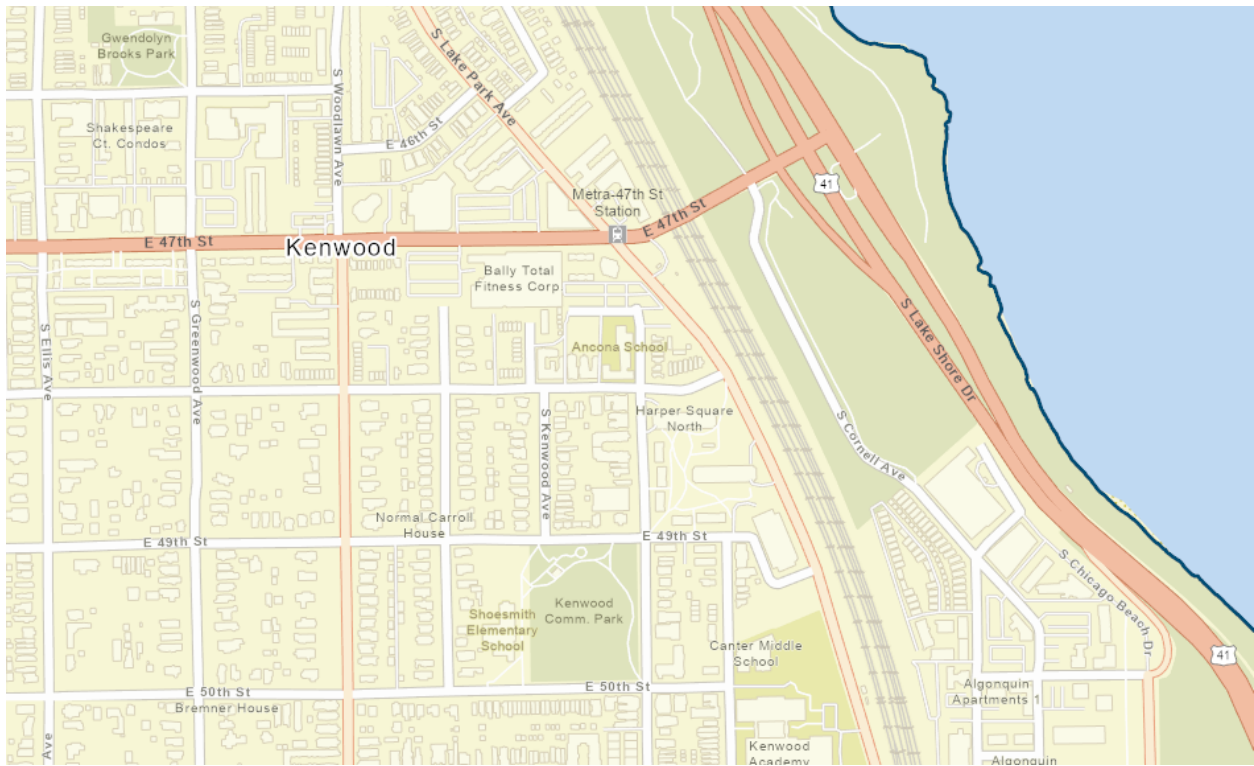


Figure 33 A Close-up of the Abruptly disconnected streets between 47th and 48th in Kenwood

Lafayette Park, Detroit



Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Windsor, Province of Ontario, SEMCOG, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, NRCAN, Parks Canada

Figure 34 Lafayette Park Population Density Map

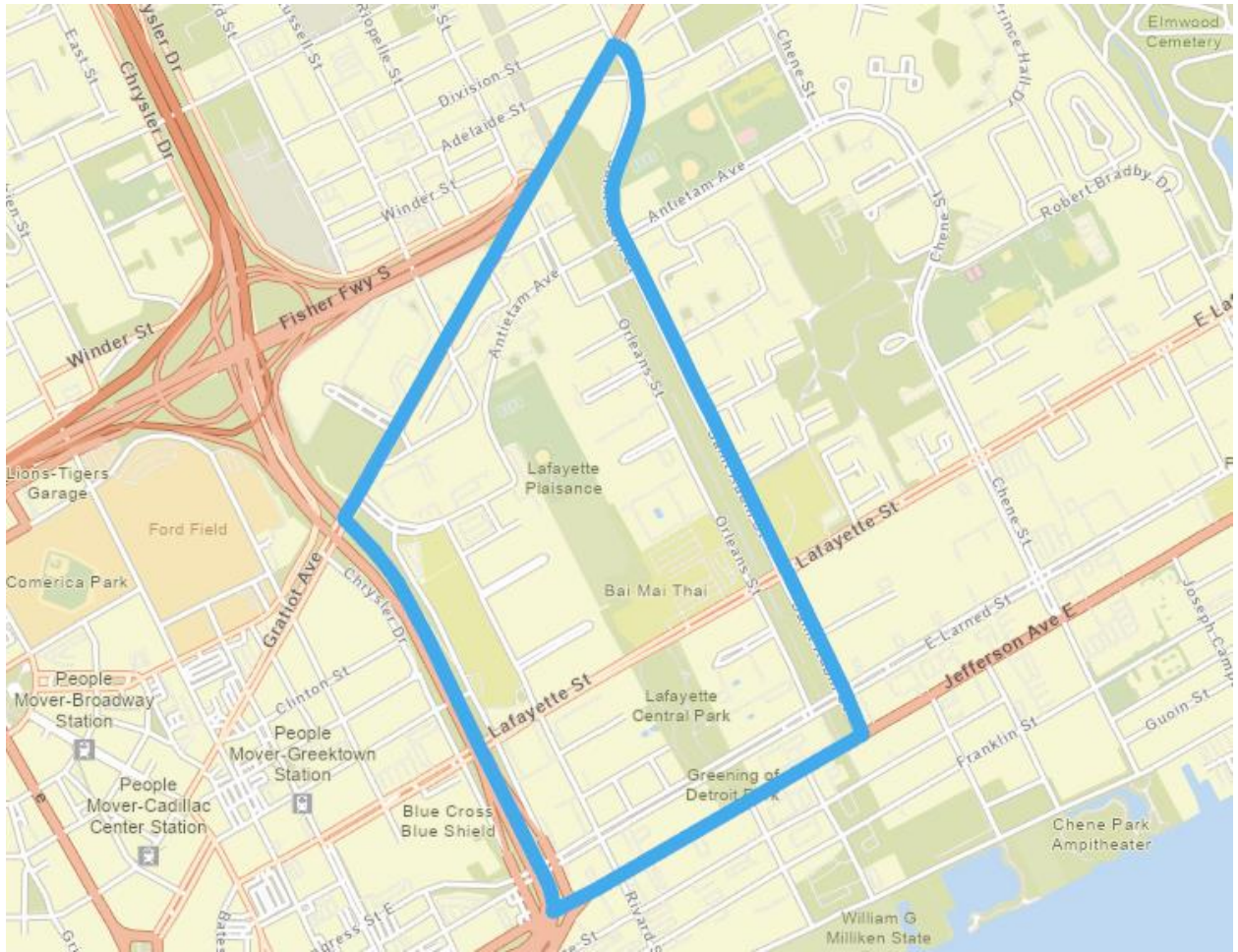


Figure 35 Lafayette Park's Street Network - note the large number of cul-de-sacs

Corktown, Detroit



Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Windsor, Province of Ontario, SEMCOG, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, NRCan, Parks Canada

Figure 36 Corktown Population Density Map

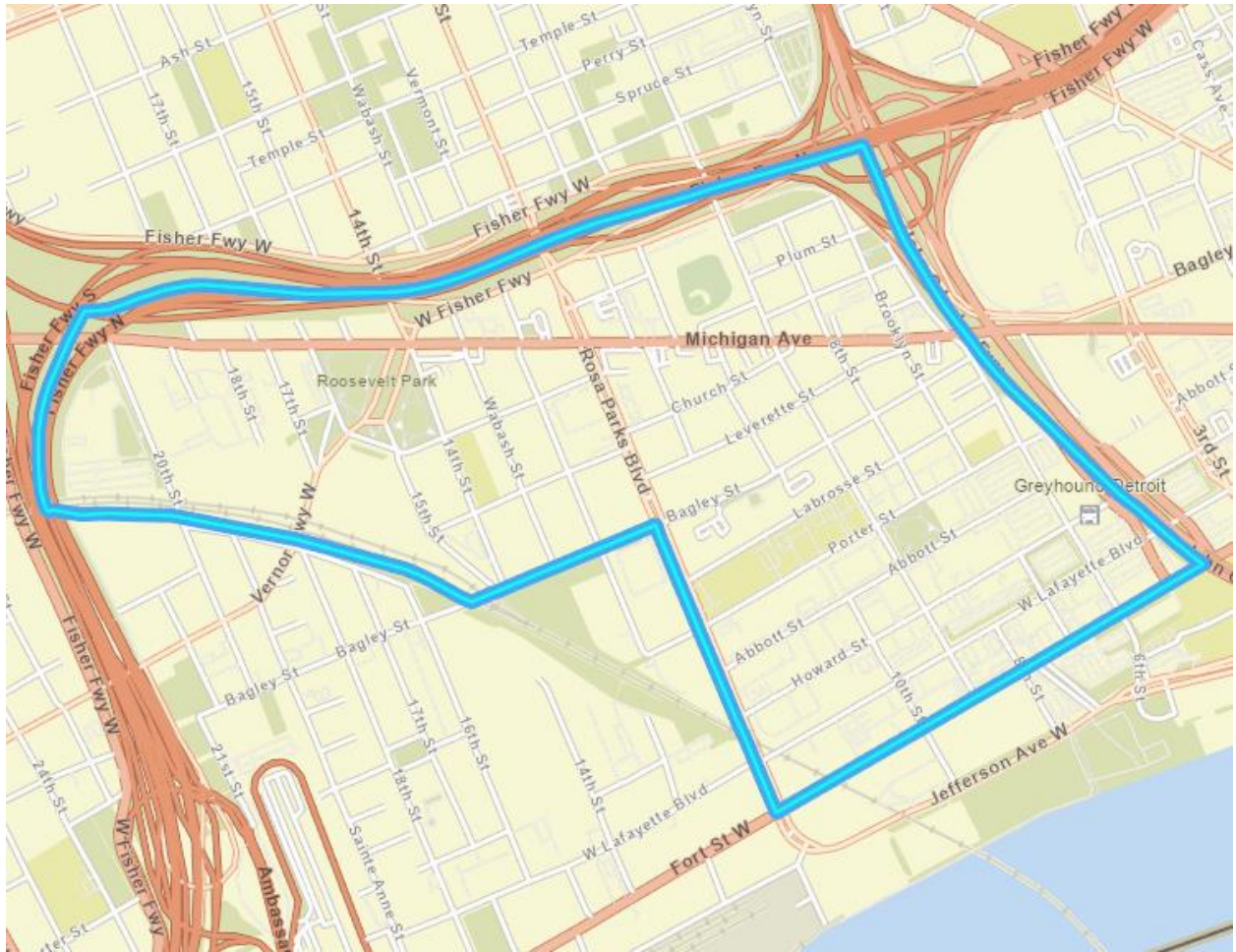


Figure 37 Corktown Street Networks

Wicker Park, Chicago



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA | Esri Community Maps Contributors, City of Chicago, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, INCREMENT P, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Figure 38 Wicker Park Population Density Map

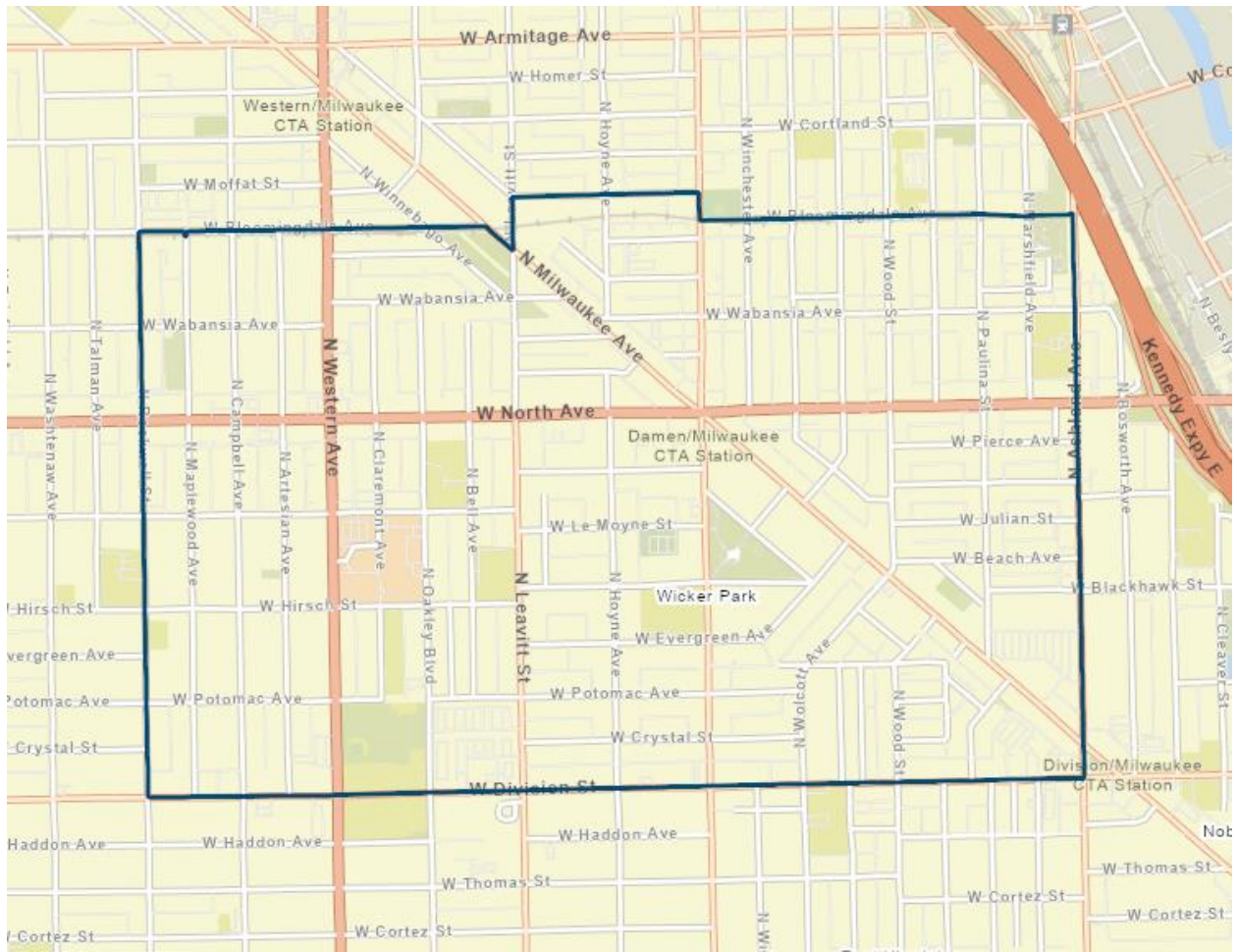


Figure 39 Wicker Park Street Networks

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