

CLEVELAND NEIGHBORHOODS BY THE NUMBERS

2015 CLEVELAND PROPERTY INVENTORY

FOREWORD

Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Thriving Communities Program helps cities across Ohio move from vacancy to vitality.

Ohio cities were ravaged by the foreclosure crisis. Statewide, the presence of as many as 100,000 vacant and abandoned homes drove down property values, became magnets for criminal activity, and led to an outmigration of urban residents. Our communities needed help and Western Reserve Land Conservancy stepped up.

The Land Conservancy established the Thriving Communities Program and named nationally known expert Jim Rokakis as its director. Thriving Communities is working with cities and organizations throughout Ohio to transform vacant, unsafe, and unproductive properties into useful ones. In the process, communities are finding new opportunities to attract economic growth, add green space, and support safe, beautiful neighborhoods.

Blight removal, vacant land stewardship, and neighborhood revitalization are crucially important in Cleveland. To assist in these efforts, Thriving Communities conducted a citywide property inventory in 2015, with support from the Cleveland Foundation, as well as the Cleveland Cavaliers, JACK Entertainment, and Quicken Loans. The inventory was completed in cooperation with the City's Department of Building and Housing, Cleveland City Council, and local community development corporations. More than 158,000 residential, commercial, and industrial properties in the city were inventoried.

This report documents the building conditions found through the inventory and provides a framework for blight removal and reinvestment city-wide. The report also captures the stories of Cleveland residents as they navigate the opportunities and challenges of a city in transition, as a way of contextualizing the large amount of data presented in this report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory provides a detailed look at property conditions throughout the city, block by block and building by building. In short, there are many deteriorated buildings in Cleveland—over 6,000 at the time of the inventory. But there are also neighborhoods where most homes are occupied and well-maintained, and local businesses are thriving.

Although neighborhood conditions vary widely across the city, deteriorated buildings affect everyone, even in suburban communities where homeowners are paying a greater share of countywide property tax bills as a result of depressed values in the City of Cleveland and certain inner ring suburbs.¹ Vacant and distressed buildings reduce adjacent property values and undermine the appeal of city neighborhoods.² The problem is most pronounced on blocks where numerous buildings are in poor condition and vacant lots are prevalent. But even stable and well-maintained neighborhoods can be affected by negative perceptions and the downward pressure on real estate values caused by distressed properties.

The City of Cleveland and the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation (Cuyahoga Land Bank) demolish vacant and deteriorated buildings throughout the city. With the data in the Cleveland Property Inventory, decisions about where to target demolition and rehabilitation efforts, as well as greening projects for vacant land reuse, can now be based on an understanding of different neighborhood conditions, enabling policymakers to target limited resources for maximum impact.

This report and an interactive map available through Western Reserve Land Conservancy's website³ provide detailed results from the 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory. Parcel level data were provided to the city and published to the Neighborhood Stabilization Team Web Application, available through Case Western Reserve University.⁴

¹ Robin Thomas and Mark Gillespie, *The Cost of Vacancy—Everybody Pays: Findings on Real Estate Tax Shift in Cuyahoga County as a Result of Housing Abandonment and Foreclosures*, 21 March 2016.

² Griswold Consulting Group, *Examining the Effect of Demolishing Distressed Structures in Cleveland, OH, 2009-2013*. Western Reserve Land Conservancy, 2014, 71.

³ Cleveland Property Inventory results and interactive map <http://www.wrlandconservancy.org/articles/2015/11/21/cleveland-property-survey-results-released/>

⁴ Neighborhood Stabilization Team Web Application <http://neocando.case.edu/nst/>





Image ©2015 Google Earth

In addition to the maps and data about building conditions throughout the city, this report examines the human elements of neighborhood disinvestment. As discussed in subsequent chapters, the health of Cleveland's children is affected by distressed properties. For example, older, deteriorated houses may harbor lead hazards. Kids exposed to lead may struggle in school, develop behavioral issues, and experience lost potential that follows them into adulthood. Lead abatement and targeted demolition are essential in neighborhoods where children are surrounded by deteriorated buildings that increase their risk of lead exposure.

Elderly residents are also affected by vacancy and abandonment. For long-time residents, it can be painfully difficult to live amid deteriorating properties and to no longer feel safe and comfortable in your own neighborhood. Worse yet is the fact that for most elderly residents in these communities, the majority of their net worth is not in liquid savings but in the equity of their home. Deteriorating neighborhood conditions rob them of their 'savings.'

Distressed properties often attract crime. Vacant houses can harbor drug activity and prostitution. Scrappers break into vacant houses and remove anything of value. And illegal dumping tends to occur in areas where there are many deteriorated buildings and vacant, overgrown lots. The overall effect of distressed properties is that community connections become weaker and the social fabric of a neighborhood begins to unravel.

However, this report is not only about the city's problems. It also points to new residential, commercial, and industrial development opportunities that emerge when blighted buildings are removed. Targeted demolition can create new opportunities for growing food, reducing flooding risks, planting trees, and protecting the water quality of Lake Erie. The report also looks at historic properties and why it is important to preserve and restore the buildings that make Cleveland such a beautiful and distinctive city.

These topics are discussed in the following chapters. Throughout the report you will also find stories of community members who are experiencing the wide range of conditions—good and bad—that Cleveland has to offer.



About the Cleveland Property Inventory

The Cleveland Property Inventory began in June 2015. It was conducted by Western Reserve Land Conservancy's Thriving Communities Program, in cooperation with the City's Department of Building and Housing, Cleveland City Council, and local community development corporations.

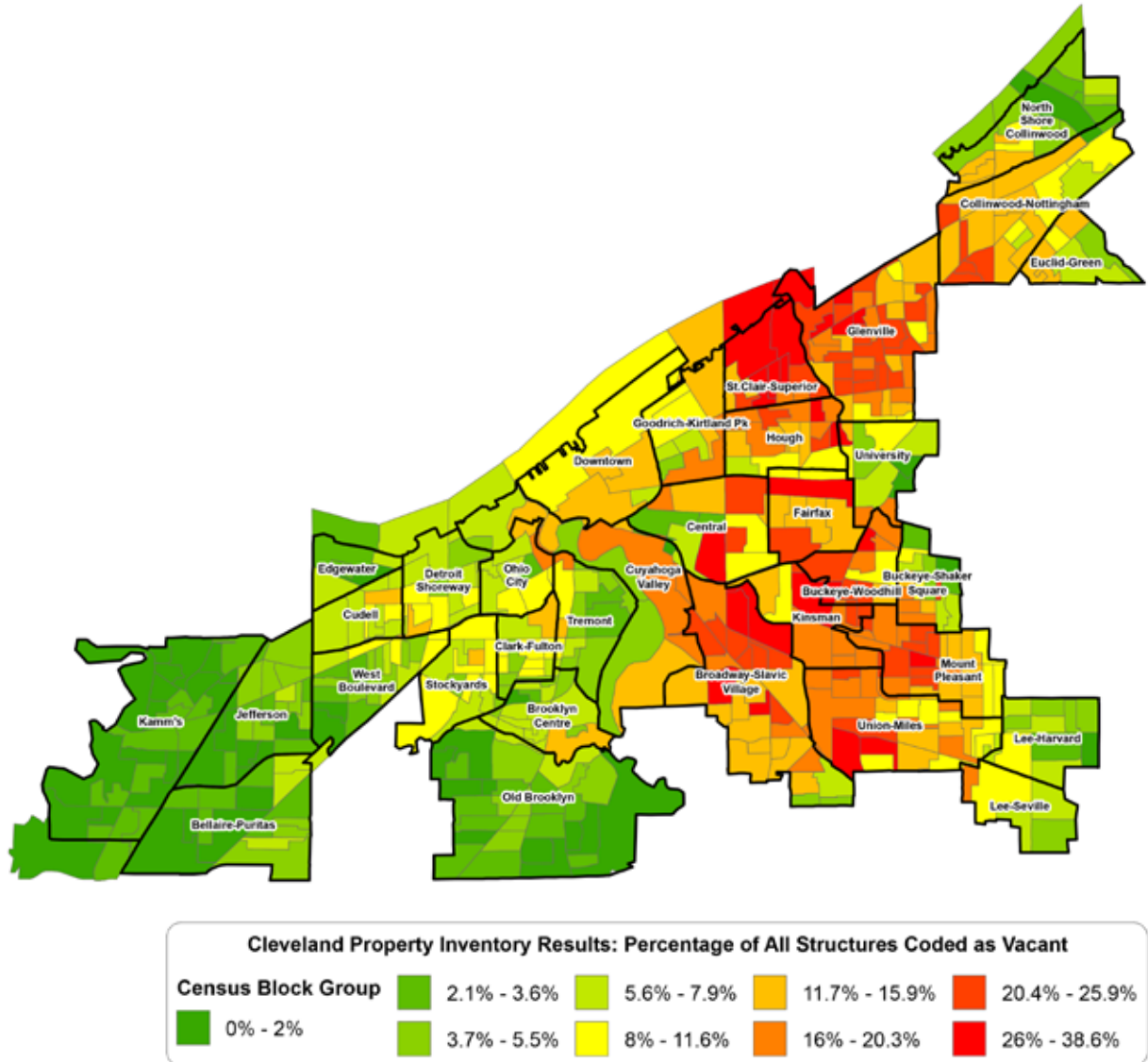
The inventory was initiated to provide detailed data about property conditions throughout the city. Quantifying a problem is the first step to solving it and the inventory is an important tool for addressing the city's challenges with vacant and distressed properties.

A 16-member team, consisting of mostly Cleveland residents, worked to inventory all of the more than 158,000 parcels in Cleveland. Information about each parcel—including its vacancy status, the condition of any structures on it, and a photograph—was recorded on a tablet computer. If team members were approached by local residents and neighbors, they recorded any comments provided, along with the data about each property.

Team members were trained to assess each property in a consistent way, beginning with conditions of vacancy. They used the following questions to identify vacant structures:

1. Is the building open and unsecured? Are windows and doors missing?
2. Is the building boarded up?
3. Is there an accumulation of trash and debris on the property?
4. Is there some type of notification displayed on the property?
5. Is the house for sale or rent?
6. Is the grass cut?
7. Is the electric meter attached to the house?
8. Is the mailbox overflowing with mail?
9. Has aluminum siding been removed from the structure?
10. Are there any visible signs that people are living in the house?

PATTERNS OF VACANCY *Neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of vacant properties are concentrated in the city's east side neighborhoods.*



Every building in the city was given a grade of A through F based on exterior conditions, with “A” meaning excellent condition and “F” assigned to buildings that are deteriorated to the point of being unsafe or hazardous.

Although no property inventory this large and comprehensive can be perfectly accurate, there were quality control measures built into the process to ensure that the information recorded by the project team reflects actual conditions in city neighborhoods. On-the-ground data collection for the Cleveland Property Inventory ended in October 2015. The Land Conservancy then began the second phase of the project, compiling the data and performing quality assurance checks.

PROPERTY INVENTORY GRADING SYSTEM



A EXCELLENT

- No visible signs of deterioration
- Well maintained and cared for
- New construction/renovation
- Historic detailing, unique



B GOOD

- Needs basic improvements
- Minor painting required
- Removal of weeds
- Cleaning necessary



C FAIR

- Some cracking of brick or wood
- Major painting required
- Deteriorated cornice
- Crumbling concrete
- Cracked windows or stairs



D DETERIORATED

- Major cracking of brick, wood rotting
- Broken or missing windows
- Missing brick and siding
- Open holes



F UNSAFE/HAZARD

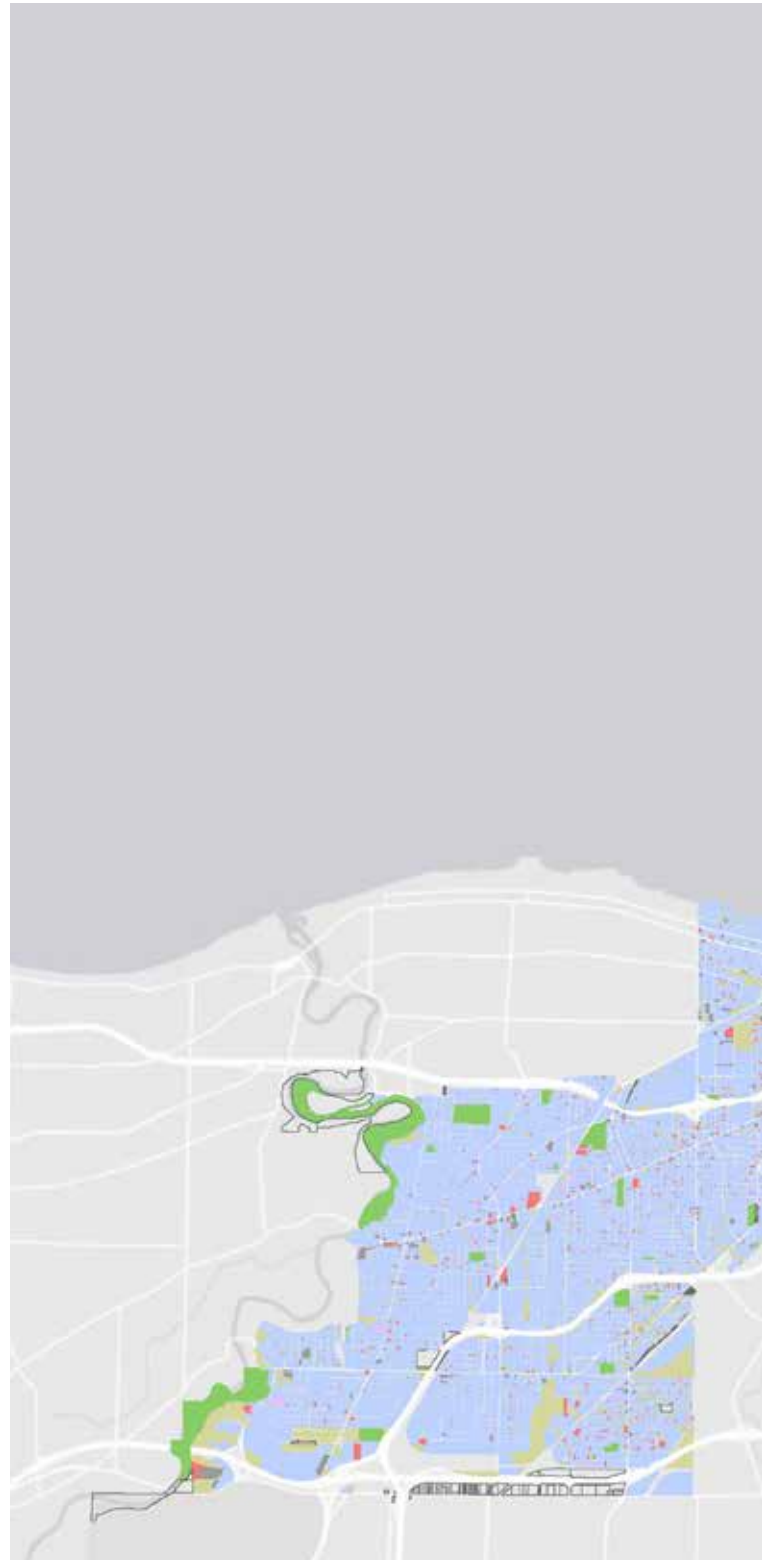
- House is open and a shell
- Can see through completely
- House ransacked / filled with trash
- Immediate safety hazard

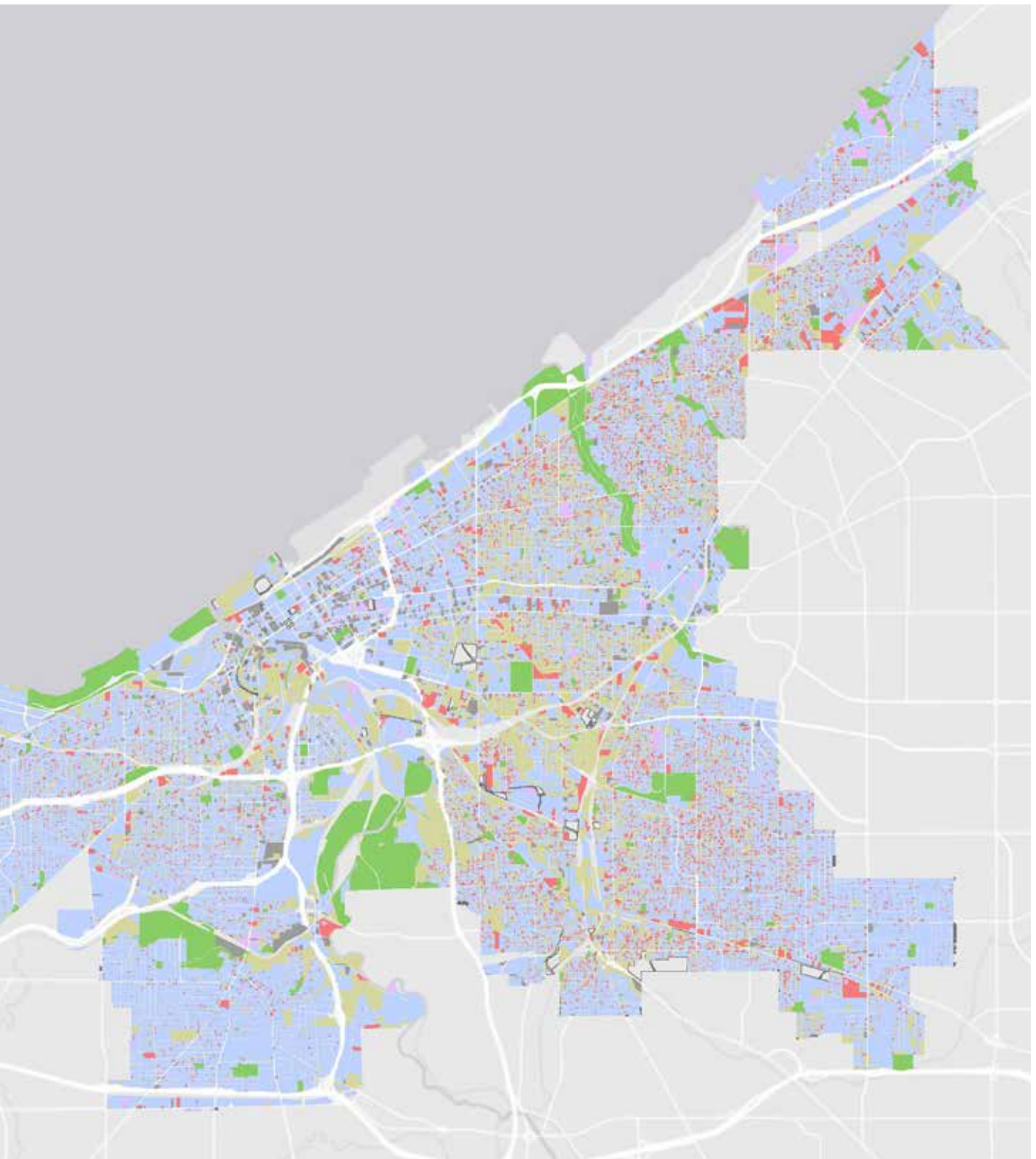
OVERALL RESULTS: CLEVELAND PROPERTY INVENTORY



⁵ The “With Adjacent” category represents structures that span multiple parcels. Since data collection is parcel-based, this category prevents multiple parcels from being categorized as “Occupied” or “Vacant” when in fact together they contain only one such structure, allowing for a more accurate count of total occupied and vacant structures.

⁶ “Not Inventoried” parcels were either inaccessible to surveyors or were small, remnant parcels that did not fit the parameters of the inventory process.





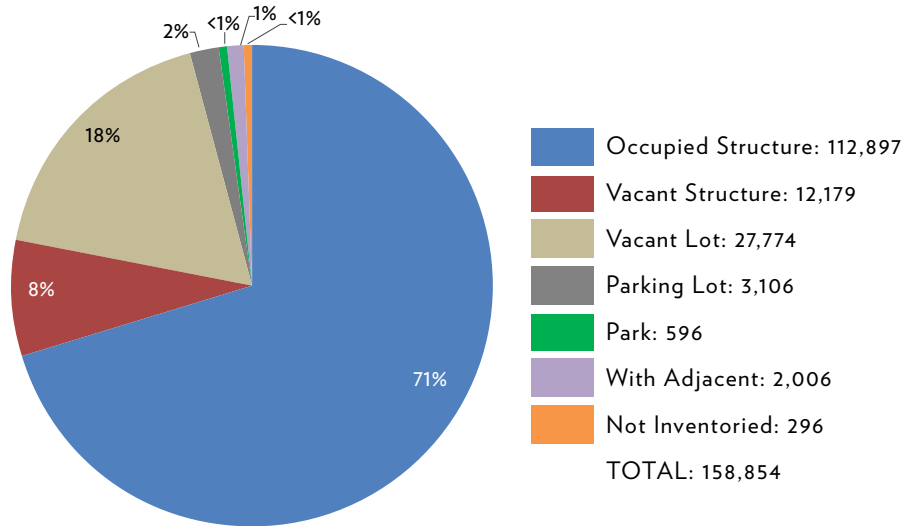
SUMMARY

CLEVELAND PROPERTY INVENTORY

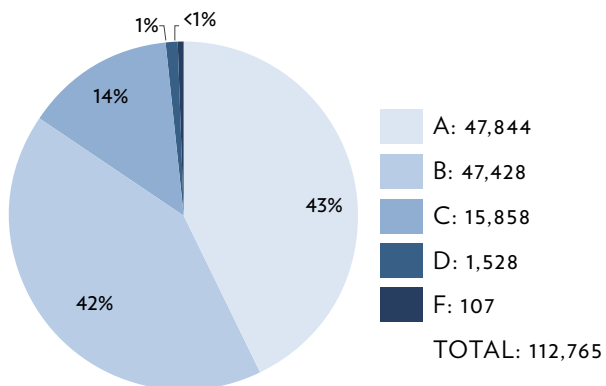
	A	B	C	D	F	No Grade ⁷	Total
Occupied Structure	47,844	47,428	15,858	1,528	107	132	112,897
Vacant Structure	685	2,509	4,450	2,833	1,667	35	12,179
Subtotal	48,529	49,937	20,308	4,361	1,774	187	125,076
Vacant Lot						27,774	27,774
Parking Lot						3,106	3,106
Park						596	596
With Adjacent						2,006	2,006
Not Inventoried						296	296
Subtotal						33,778	33,778
TOTAL	48,529	49,937	20,308	4,361	1,774	33,942	158,854

⁷ Parcels that were categorized as containing a structure but did not receive a grade were due to human data collection error. An effort was made to assign grades based on photographs during desktop review, but some photographs were insufficient to determine grade.

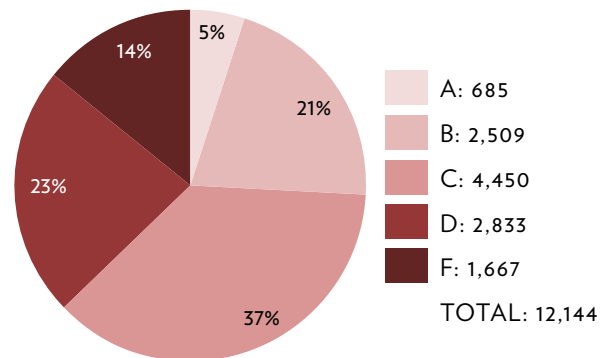
CLEVELAND CATEGORICAL RESULTS



OCCUPIED STRUCTURES



VACANT STRUCTURES



A Stockyards Story...

Bonnie Walker is fairly blunt when talking about the Stockyards neighborhood on Cleveland's west side, where she and her husband have lived for more than 30 years. "The major problem we have is an abundance of empty lots and abandoned houses," she says. "We are making some headway on the abandoned houses, but just getting on the list of the ones that will be torn down doesn't mean it will happen any time soon."

"So you have to keep pushing things along," she says. "Not always easy, but nothing ever is in a working-class neighborhood like this."

Walking on Camden Avenue near West 71st, just south of Clark Avenue, it becomes quite clear what she is talking about. It isn't the sheer number of vacancies; it is how they stick out in a neighborhood where many working families still live. The vacant properties attract trash dumping—car tires, furniture, old drywall, and roofing materials—trash from home repair contractors who want to save money by dumping in a neighborhood they think won't notice.

But they do notice. "It's disgusting that people would even think like that," she says. "But we have to be vigilant, and that is sometimes tough to do."

One house is boarded up and has been condemned by the city—and has been empty for years—but Walker points out a satellite dish attached to the roof. "Someone lives there now, and we hear the owner has let someone in even though it is condemned," she says. "That's pretty crazy, a person living in a condemned house and having the electricity turned on and satellite TV installed."

Walker works as a clerk in the Cleveland Municipal Courts and has been president of the West 73rd Community Coalition for more than a decade. When she walks through the neighborhood, she is quick to point out the successes as well as the problems.

One success is Camden Community Place at West 70th Street. The neighborhood got together and cleaned up four abandoned parcels for a neighborhood park. There are benches and picnic tables. The neighborhood hopes to get some financial help from the city to install barbecue grills. "We didn't ask permission to make a park out of the vacant lots, we just did it," she says proudly.

"We have lots of problems in many of the Cleveland neighborhoods," Walker says. "There has been job loss and population decline and complicated problems that can't be fixed overnight. This area has been hit as hard as anywhere else."

"But I've never seen a more accepting area of the city either," she continues. "We have a mixed population here—African-American, Hispanic, different ethnic groups, people who have moved here from Appalachia through the years. That's why I have so much hope for this area. This neighborhood is full of hard-working people, and we know that hard work will pay off."







2. PATTERNS OF VACANCY & BLIGHT

According to the Cleveland Property Inventory, 71% of the city's residential, commercial, and industrial parcels have occupied buildings. Approximately 8% of parcels in the city have vacant structures. An additional 18% of parcels are vacant lots. The remaining 3% are parks, parking lots, and properties that weren't inventoried.

The good news is that over 84% of the occupied buildings in Cleveland were graded A (Excellent) or B (Good). These structures are well cared for and maintained. At the other end of the spectrum, 37% of the vacant buildings in the city were graded D (Deteriorated) or F (Unsafe/Hazardous). Many neighborhoods have a mix of occupied, well-maintained buildings along with vacant and deteriorated ones. Carefully targeted demolition efforts and strategic reinvestments can help strengthen what's working well in the city and eliminate blight before the problem spreads.

It's important to also consider the many C (Fair) buildings in the city, which can be found in every neighborhood. With care and attention, many of these buildings can be upgraded to Excellent or Good. Otherwise, they risk sliding into Deteriorated or Hazardous condition.

Neighborhoods with the highest percentage of vacant D and F properties include:

- *St. Clair-Superior* 11.9%
- *Kinsman* 9.8%
- *Glenville* 9.2%
- *Hough* 9.2%
- *Buckeye-Woodhill* 9.1%

Neighborhoods with the lowest percentage of vacant D and F properties include:

- *Kamm's Corners* 0%
- *Edgewater* 0.1%
- *Bellaire Puritas* 0.2%
- *Old Brooklyn* 0.2%
- *Jefferson* 0.2%

The next pages show citywide maps of buildings rated:

- *Excellent or Good (A or B)*
- *Fair (C)*
- *Deteriorated/Unsafe (D or F)*

To see overall inventory results for every Cleveland neighborhood, see Appendix A, beginning on page 96.



Buildings graded as A or B in the Cleveland Property Inventory form the bedrock of city neighborhoods. These buildings include houses, schools, churches, shops, offices, and industrial buildings that are well-maintained and contribute to the overall stability of the city.

All buildings need on-going maintenance. Most A and B buildings can remain in productive use for the foreseeable future with periodic investments. City-wide, there are over 98,000 buildings that fall into the A and B categories.

There are 531 A and B buildings that have been condemned by the City of Cleveland based on interior and exterior inspections by the Department of Building and Housing. It's an interesting challenge in the city, where some buildings look fine from the street but may in fact have been broken into and gutted for pipes, wiring, and any other materials that can be salvaged.

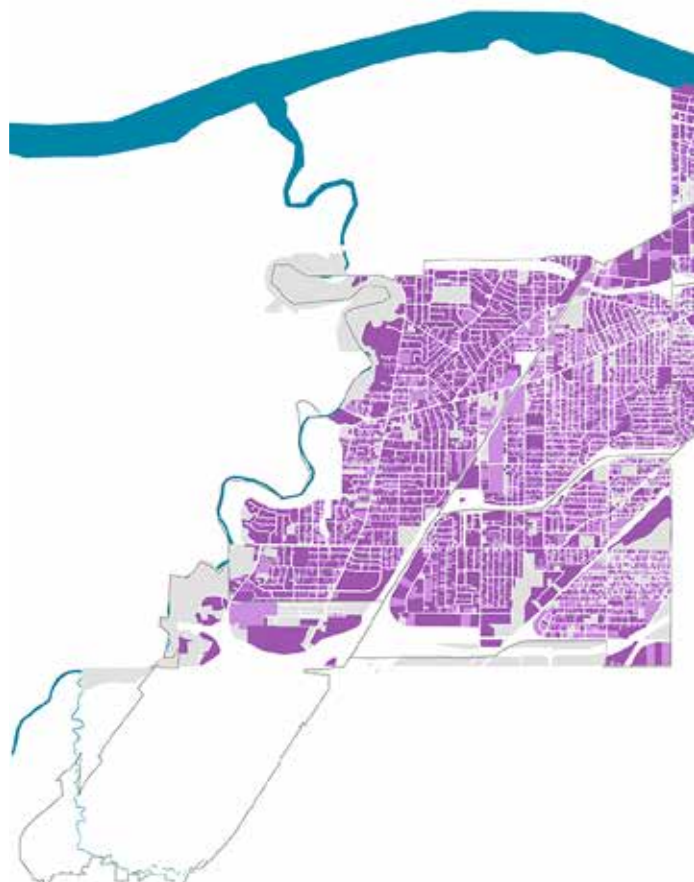
A- and B-Grade Structures

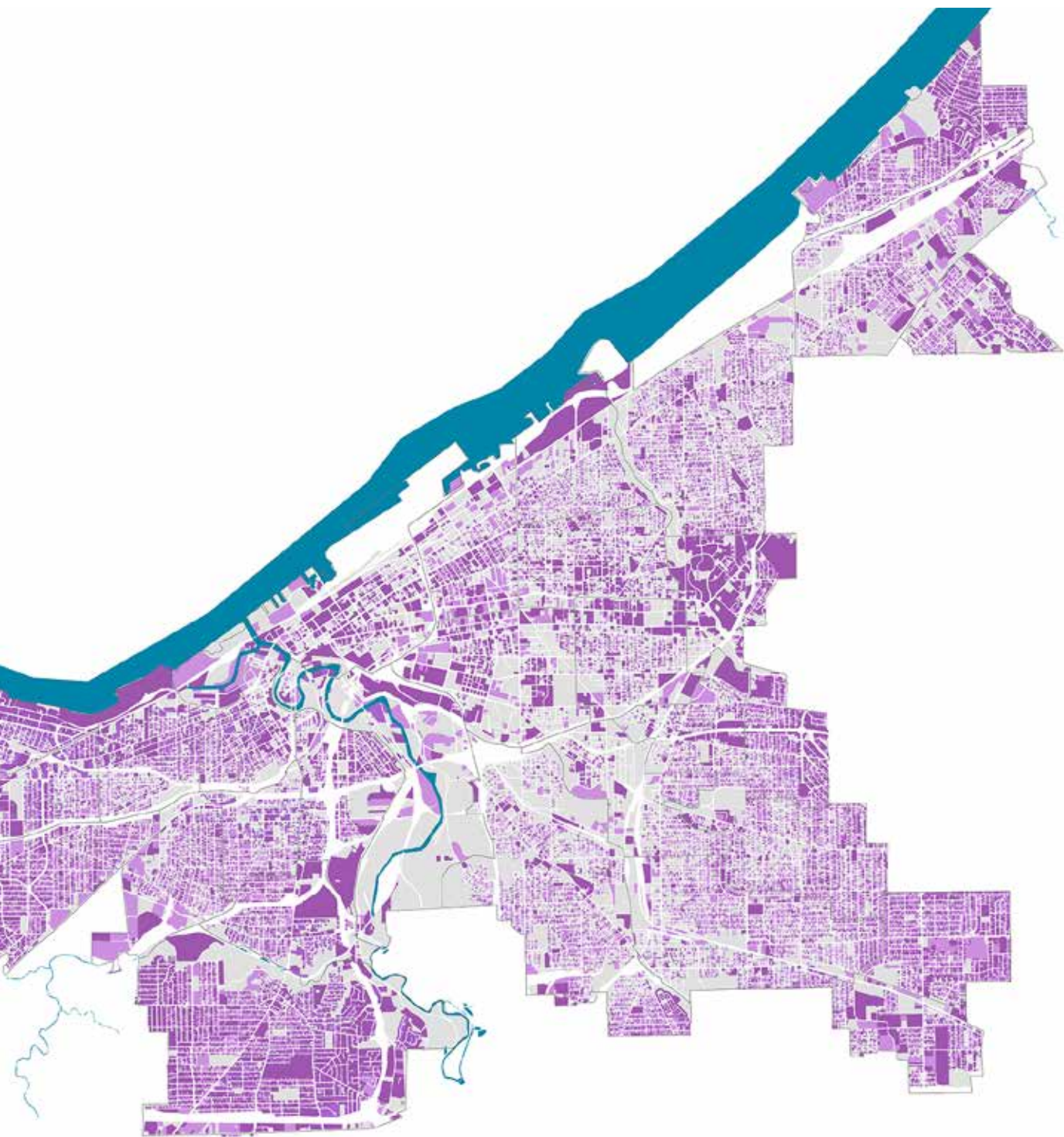
TOTAL CLEVELAND PARCELS: 158,854

 **A-grade structure**
CITYWIDE: 48,529

 **B-grade structure**
CITYWIDE: 49,937

 **All other properties**
CITYWIDE: 60,388





C-grade buildings are in fair condition. In general, these buildings appear to be structurally sound, but may need major painting, roof replacement, carpentry work, or other repairs. Many are in good enough condition that it is hard to justify demolition. However, about 1,050 C-grade buildings have been condemned by the city based on interior and exterior inspections.

For many C-grade buildings, it will be difficult and expensive to make the necessary repairs, especially in neighborhoods with low property values and weak market demand. If repairs don't get made, a C building could easily deteriorate into D or F condition and eventually be slated for demolition. Some factors that influence whether to make investments in a C building include:

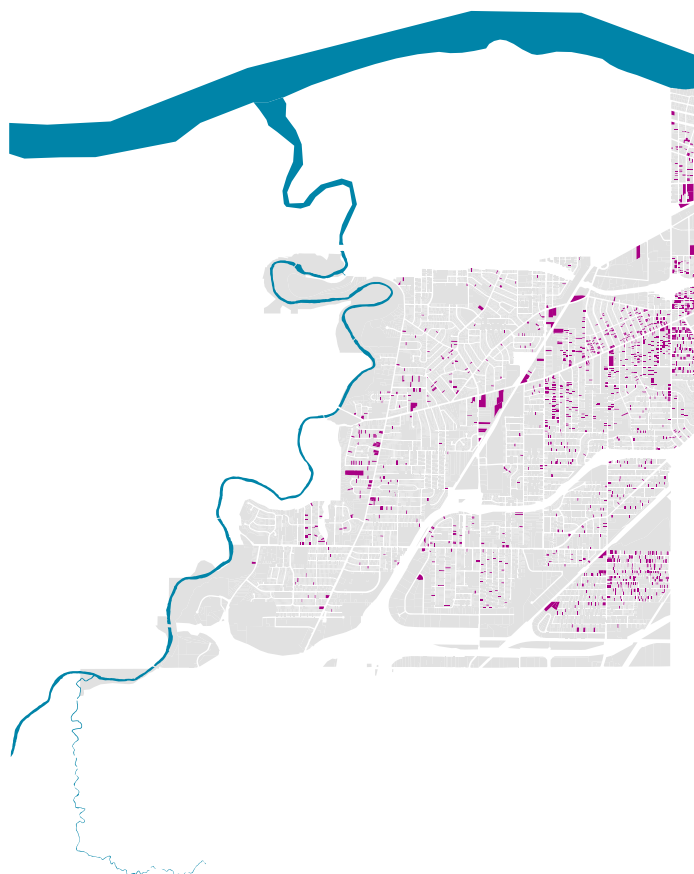
- *Weatherization:* The city has a home weatherization program that provides financial support for insulation, window repairs, and other improvements that increase the energy efficiency of a home. If a C property has been through the weatherization program, it could be targeted for rehab, rather than demolition, to preserve the weatherization investment.
- *Preservation:* If a C building is architecturally appealing or historically significant, it could be targeted for rehab incentives. Sometimes a relatively small investment will transform an architecturally significant C building into a valuable neighborhood asset.
- *Context:* One C-grade building on a block of D and F buildings is likely to deteriorate further, since there is often a reluctance to invest in a property when its surroundings are in decline. But a C building may be a good candidate for rehab if it is located on a block with mostly A and B buildings, because the owner is more likely to get a return on his or her investment.

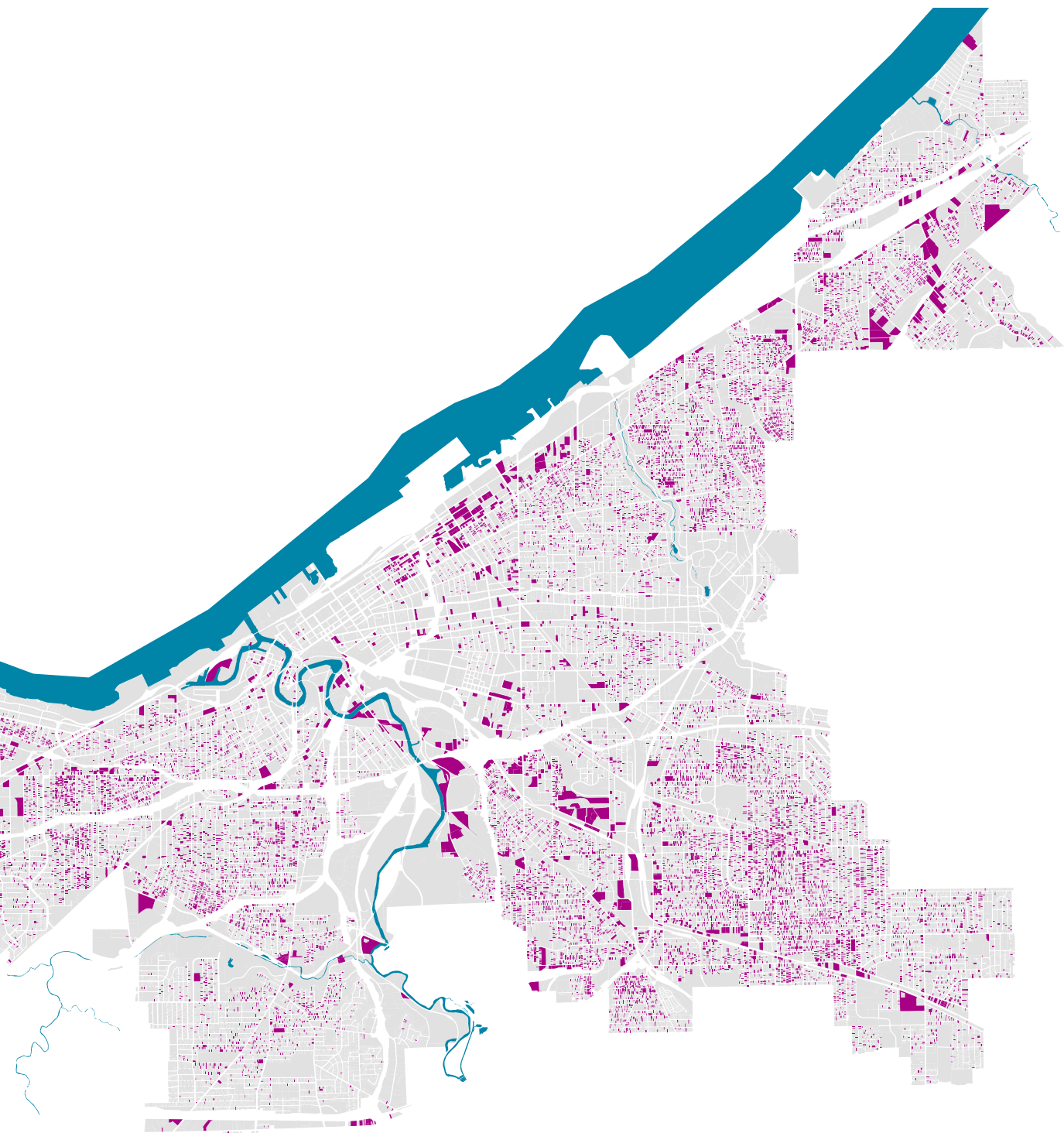
C-Grade Structures

TOTAL CLEVELAND PARCELS: 158,854

 **C-grade structure**
CITYWIDE: 20,308

 **All other properties**
CITYWIDE: 138,456





Sarah Presley loves her neighborhood...

She lives in the Corlett neighborhood on the far southeast side of Cleveland, and has been living in her house since 1961. She is within walking distance of her church—Bethany Christian Church on East 116th Street—and takes the bus to do her shopping in the Lee-Harvard retail area.

She is 86 years old, and been widowed since 1980. She has children and family who visit often and help take care of her. She spends most of her free time in the warm weather caring for her beautiful flower beds surrounding her corner house. “My yard is so important to me, I love to see the flowers bloom and how pretty it gets each year,” Presley says with a smile.

“We moved up from Alabama and my husband worked in the Chevy plant,” she says. “When we bought this house we had to remodel it, but we put in all sorts of work to make it nice and I think it still is.”

“We opened a bar and restaurant on East 55th Street that I ran mostly while he worked. We loved this neighborhood so much because it was so full of energy, people who worked hard, and it was a neighborhood that people wanted to live in.”

But as we walk outside, she points to numerous houses near her red house at East 121st Street and Dove Avenue. “That one there has been boarded up for ten years now, and nothing done about it,” she says. Another one she points to has been vacant about three years, she says, another one is empty and the owner uses it only to store trucks for his construction business.

“We need more young families to move into this neighborhood again, but it’s hard to make that happen when you live so close to so many vacant houses,” Presley says. “It is real simple, I think. We need to tear down the ones that are abandoned and have no chance of being used again.”

“Because people don’t want to fix up their own house when the house next door is falling down,” she says. “This neighborhood has gone down in many ways, and the main reason is that we have a lot of empty houses.”

And then there is the issue of safety. Presley says the abandoned houses are too much temptation for the children living in the neighborhood and worries about the criminal activities that abandoned properties in her neighborhood seem to encourage. “They are going inside and who knows what is happening, and then the copper pipes and siding and everything else is stolen,” she says. “I just don’t like it to be like that anymore, and we need to take more action to get rid of the houses that are problems for the neighborhood.”

But then she smiles and talks about how she still is active in her church and her neighborhood groups. And then she says that friends have asked her why she stays, and she tells them “I’m not going anywhere, because who is going to plant my flowers every spring?”



SARAH PRESLEY



There are over 6,100 distressed D- and F-grade buildings in the City of Cleveland. Most of these buildings will eventually need to be demolished. An additional 1,400 A, B, and C buildings have been condemned by the city and are slated for demolition based on interior and exterior assessment by city inspectors.

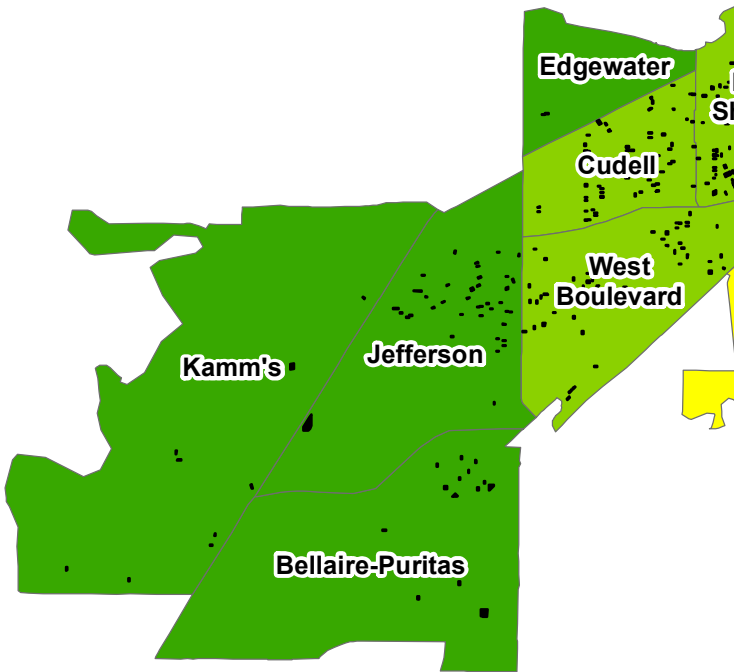
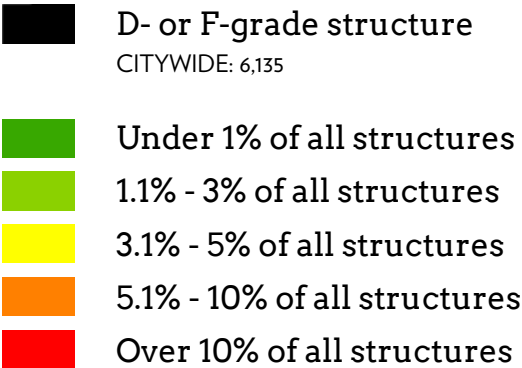
A residential demolition costs approximately \$10,000 per house, so demolishing 6,000 houses would cost about \$60 million. Demolition costs for commercial and industrial buildings can be much higher, depending on the size of the building and any necessary environmental remediation. Although the cost of removing all of the blighted buildings in the city will be enormous, allowing these deteriorated structures to remain in place also comes with costs, in terms of public health, safety concerns, and reduced property values.

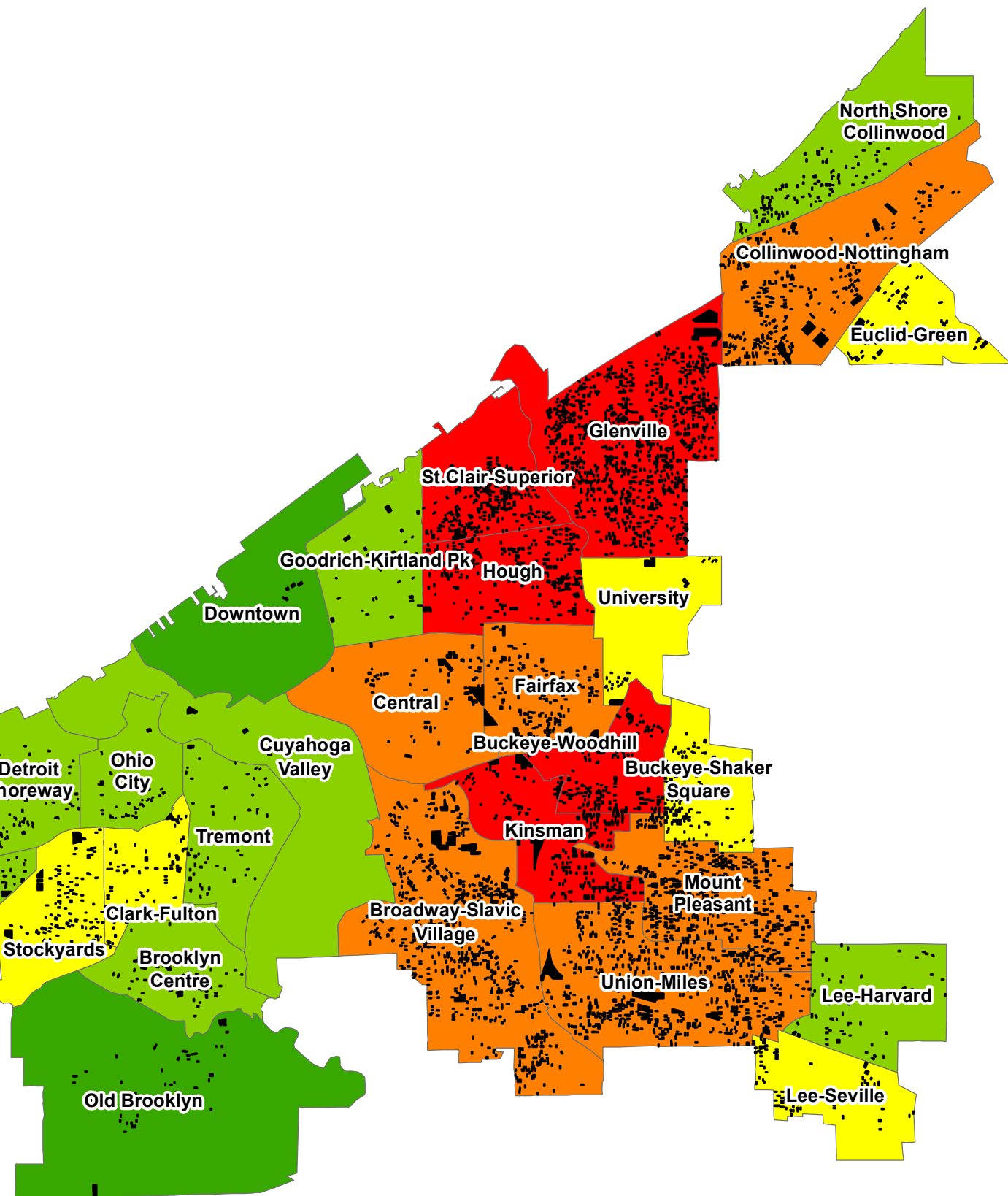
Between 2005 - 2015, the City of Cleveland spent \$63.6 million to demolish deteriorated buildings, including federal stimulus funds, a city bond issue, Community Development Block Grant funds, and general fund dollars. Additionally, the Cuyahoga County Land Bank has spent about \$7 million in four rounds of county demolition funding.

The adjacent map shows D and F buildings to illustrate concentrated areas of disinvestment and abandonment in Cleveland. Distressed buildings are not distributed evenly throughout the city. The largest concentration of D and F buildings and vacant lots occurs on the southeast side of the city. Removing blighted buildings in this area can help stabilize existing neighborhoods and create sites for new development, urban reforestation, and green space expansion. For D and F buildings scattered elsewhere in the city, targeted demolition may help deter further disinvestment.

D- and F-Grade Structures

TOTAL CLEVELAND PARCELS: 158,854





Rediscovering Slavic Village assets...

Standing outside his home on Claasen Avenue in the Slavic Village neighborhood, Jeff Bodziony looks up at the roofers balancing on fresh tar paper and hammering in new shingles. He is excited about his “new” 100-year-old home and has all sorts of plans. Making the big front porch welcoming to all who visit, re-doing the five bedrooms upstairs for his six children, and figuring out how to get that old wallpaper off the walls in the dining room.

But mostly, he is excited about living back in the neighborhood where he was raised, and being in the place where he practices his church ministry. “Our mission is to serve the community, and after we started our church about five years ago, we were spending most of our time in this neighborhood,” Bodziony says. “It will be good to live here and help more.”

Bodziony, 37, is the pastor of Forward Church, a storefront church that is located near the intersection of East 55th Street and Broadway Avenue. His ministry provides help for people recovering from addictions, job training and counseling for at-risk youth, and distribution of food to the needy that has been donated by grocery stores, restaurants, and the Cleveland Food Bank.

His own transformation is not unlike the house he is working to rehab. He became a drug dealer after dropping out of high school 20 years ago. Eventually he was arrested and served time in the Ohio prison system in 2006. But in Bible study class in prison, he rehabilitated his own life and made promises to family and friends to help others avoid the same pitfalls he experienced.

The house on Claasen Avenue is the next step. With help from the Slavic Village Development Corporation and other programs, the property and its vacant side yard were acquired for him, as long as he provided the funding for the rehab. The work will cost about \$25,000, and his wife and six kids—ages 1 through 17—are excited about moving in.

Part of the work will create guest bedrooms in the 2,200 square foot house so he will have room to help people short-term who may have no place to go. He and his family currently live in Garfield Heights and he says he wants “to be there for the people in this neighborhood, because I truly believe that the best help anyone can give is to help the people you know best, the ones who live around you.”

There are a few vacant houses on the street and many vacant lots where houses once stood. Bodziony sees a practical application to use the old homes in the neighborhood. “If houses have foundation issues, and have been abandoned for a long time, we need to get rid of them for the safety of the community,” he says.

“But we also need to use our neighborhood assets,” he says. “I’ve learned in our ministry that we have very talented people who need to work and move forward in their lives. Maybe we can help save some homes, maybe we can help some of the older people with the upkeep of their property. Because people can do amazing things when they have a purpose. That’s what we’re trying to bring to this neighborhood.”



JEFF BODZIONY



VACANT INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS pose major challenges in many Cleveland neighborhoods.



3. COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

Most of the vacant and deteriorated buildings in Cleveland are single- and two-family houses. To date, the majority of funding to deal with Cleveland's vacancy crisis has been aimed at these residential properties, primarily for demolition efforts.

Vacant commercial and industrial buildings are fewer in number (under 500 citywide) but still pose a major concern for Cleveland neighborhoods. These buildings include old factories and warehouses, obsolete office buildings, vacant retail buildings and shopping centers, and mixed use structures. Multi-family buildings with more than four apartments are typically classified as commercial buildings as well.

These buildings are often massive and highly visible. Some are historic and have a weathered beauty that tells the story of the city's past. But living in the shadow of a large abandoned building can have negative impacts on property values, public safety, and residents' sense of well-being.

Vacant commercial and industrial buildings are expensive to demolish because of their size and construction. Also, demolition usually incurs environmental remediation costs to remove asbestos and other hazardous building materials, and additional costs to address site contamination issues.

Cleveland (and other older industrial cities) will need state and federal support to fully address the problem of vacant and abandoned commercial and industrial properties, because the costs are too high for the city to bear on its own. Thus far the money raised at the Federal level for demolition, through the Hardest Hit Funds, have limited the use of these dollars to residential demolition alone. These rules need to be relaxed to allow for commercial and industrial demolition.



Setting priorities for commercial and industrial demolitions could be tied to a specific overall approach. For example:

1. *Economic Development Approach:* Strategic demolition of vacant commercial and industrial properties to assemble land for new development that creates jobs.
2. *Real Estate Stabilization Approach:* Targeted demolition of vacant commercial and industrial properties that are having a measurable impact on surrounding property values.
3. *Health and Safety Approach:* High-priority demolition of individual commercial and industrial properties that present known environmental or public safety hazards.

Vacant commercial and industrial buildings are often located along major streets in the city, making them prominent eyesores in some neighborhoods.

Social and economic impacts often extend far beyond the site boundaries of a vacant commercial or industrial building, impacting property values and causing safety concerns. These buildings become prime locations for illegal activities, are vulnerable to arson and accidental fire, and can be irresistibly dangerous for adventuresome teenagers and people who are homeless.

There are many examples of commercial and industrial adaptive reuse projects in Cleveland and elsewhere in the country. Ideally, Cleveland's most architecturally and historically significant structures could be retained for new uses. But many of these buildings, currently in D or F condition, may eventually face demolition.

Smaller-scale commercial properties, such as vacant storefronts, can be addressed more readily, through the city's Storefront Renovation Program⁸ and through creative efforts to reclaim and reactivate these spaces on a temporary or permanent basis.

⁸ The City of Cleveland's Storefront Renovation Program assists in the design and funding of signage and the rehabilitation of traditional storefront buildings. <http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/CityofCleveland/Home/Government/CityAgencies/CommunityDevelopment/StorefrontRenovation>

D- and F-Grade Commercial & Industrial Structures

TOTAL CLEVELAND PARCELS: 158,854

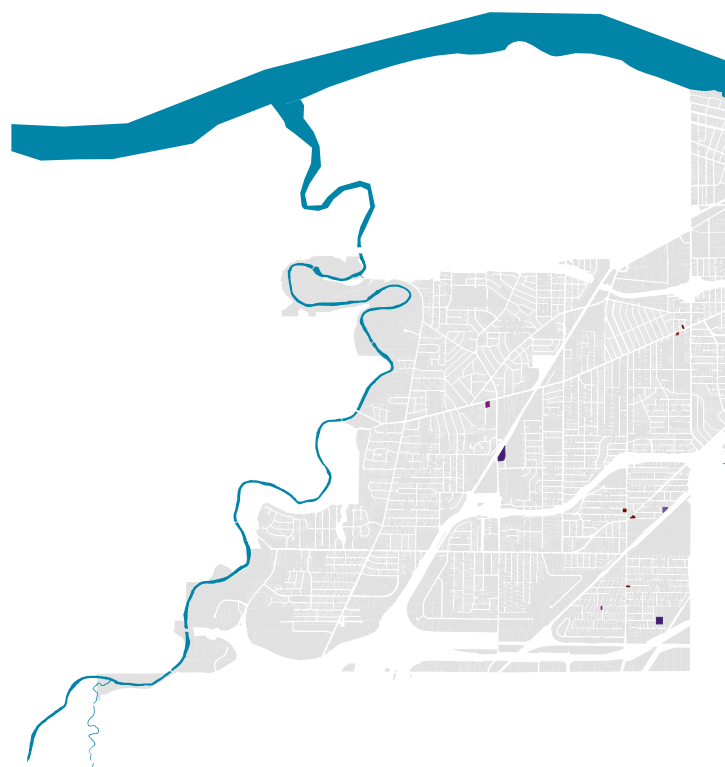
D & F Commercial Structure: 135

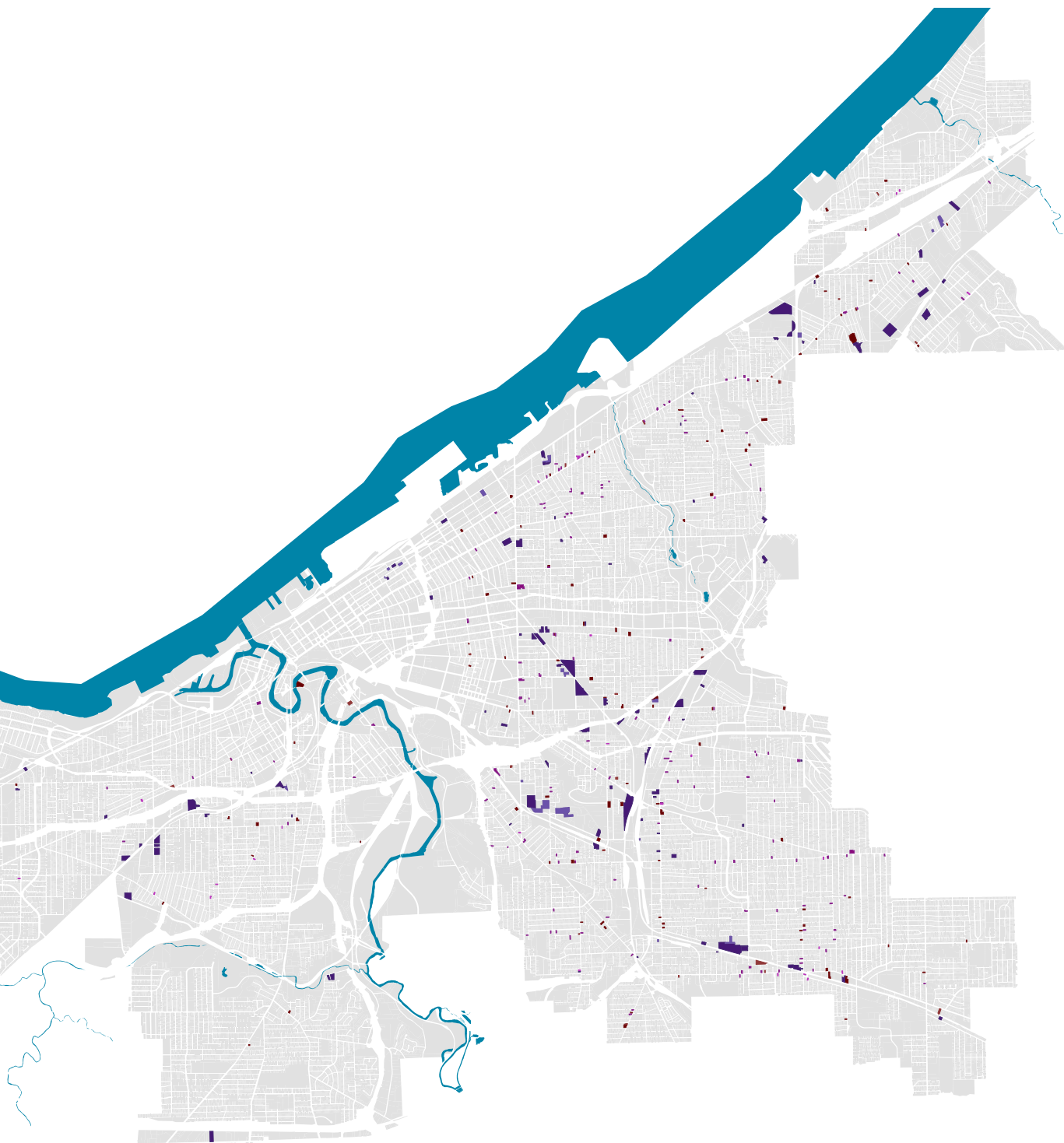


D & F Industrial Structure: 125



D & F Mixed Use Structure: 177





A real opportunity to do things right...

It is early morning on a Saturday, and Faa'izah Waheed is in the kitchen over the grill doing what she loves to do. As a cook in an old fashioned diner, she is multi-tasking in an old-fashioned way: pancakes need to be flipped over here, the corn beef hash is about done over there, and scrambled eggs need to be gently caressed in between.

She is not only a short-order cook, though. She owns Brown's Corner Restaurant where she is cooking, opened by her father in 1977. She also owns and has renovated three homes in the neighborhood as rental properties. Her Miles Avenue restaurant has long been a mainstay in the Lee-Harvard neighborhood, offering breakfast, lunch, and catered parties for people who live or work in the area.

Over time, the number of people who work in the area has gone down significantly. So what used to be a line waiting for seats at the counter no longer happens.

"Our customers worked at Mr. Coffee, the Dirt Devil vacuum cleaner plant, all sorts of plastics factories, you name it," she says. "There was a line out the door some mornings at 7 am. All the workers in this area were our customers. But now almost of all those jobs are gone."

But she doesn't see all as lost for her business or what was once the bustling Miles Avenue in the southeast part of Cleveland.

"One of the assets we have around here are buildings that once housed the industrial economy and can be turned into places that thrive in the service economy," Waheed says as she sits down at one of the tables in her restaurant. "If we want to do service work, Miles Avenue would be a gold mine, based on the location and the market. And many of these old commercial and factory buildings are in pretty good shape."

She wants to see an investment in businesses that repair everyday items—shoes, electronics, and automobiles—as the world moves from what she calls "a throwaway economy to a reuse economy." Along with those businesses, she adds that it would be a good place for vocational schools, social work training programs, and business development centers.

"We have to find ways to get our young people to learn about being entrepreneurs," she says. "That's part of what is missing these days. The young entrepreneurs are selling drugs. We need to show them other examples of success in business, especially small businesses in the neighborhoods."

Her main love these days is acquiring and rehabbing older houses in the neighborhood. She has finished two, and is working on a third. Waheed sees a need to balance the demolition of homes which have no use and the repair of good ones for reuse by the community. "For the most part, I am seeing the quality workmanship, so much better in the older houses than the newer ones," she says. "That can make rehabbing them more difficult too. But saving an old house is my passion."

"We have a real opportunity in these neighborhoods to do things right," Waheed continues. We can mix green space and older homes, and provide safe and secure neighborhoods. But we need to also realize that a thriving business community like there used to be on Miles Avenue is what makes a neighborhood work. I still think that can be done here again."



VACANT AND DETERIORATED BUILDINGS *reduce the real estate value of neighboring properties.*



4. REAL ESTATE VALUES

Vacant and distressed properties have a major and measurable impact on real estate values. Houses decline in value if they are located within 500 feet of a property that is vacant, distressed or in foreclosure. The extent of this decline in value depends on the market strength of a neighborhood.⁹

In Cleveland's more stable neighborhoods, housing values are most directly affected by the presence of nearby vacant and distressed properties. A well-maintained house, located within 500 feet of a distressed property, may decline in value by approximately 4%. The presence of several distressed properties within 500 feet of a house causes a further loss of value. Demolishing distressed properties can help stabilize property values among nearby houses, although the vacant lots left behind through demolition can also have a negative effect on surrounding property values.

Where rates of vacancy and disinvestment are high, property values decline. Even a well-maintained house will decline in value if it is located on a block where many of the surrounding properties are vacant and distressed. In this situation, the demolition of one distressed property might have no impact on surrounding property values, since it will take a much larger effort to break the cycle of decline.¹⁰

In Cleveland's east side neighborhoods where vacancy rates are the highest in the city, residential property values declined between 70 and 80% during the mortgage foreclosure crisis and these areas have been slow to recover. In neighborhoods with less vacancy, residential property values also declined during the foreclosure crisis, but have recovered some or all of their lost value.¹¹

⁹ Griswold Consulting Group. Examining the Effect of Demolishing Distressed Structures in Cleveland, OH, 2009-2013. Western Reserve Land Conservancy, 2014, 30-31.

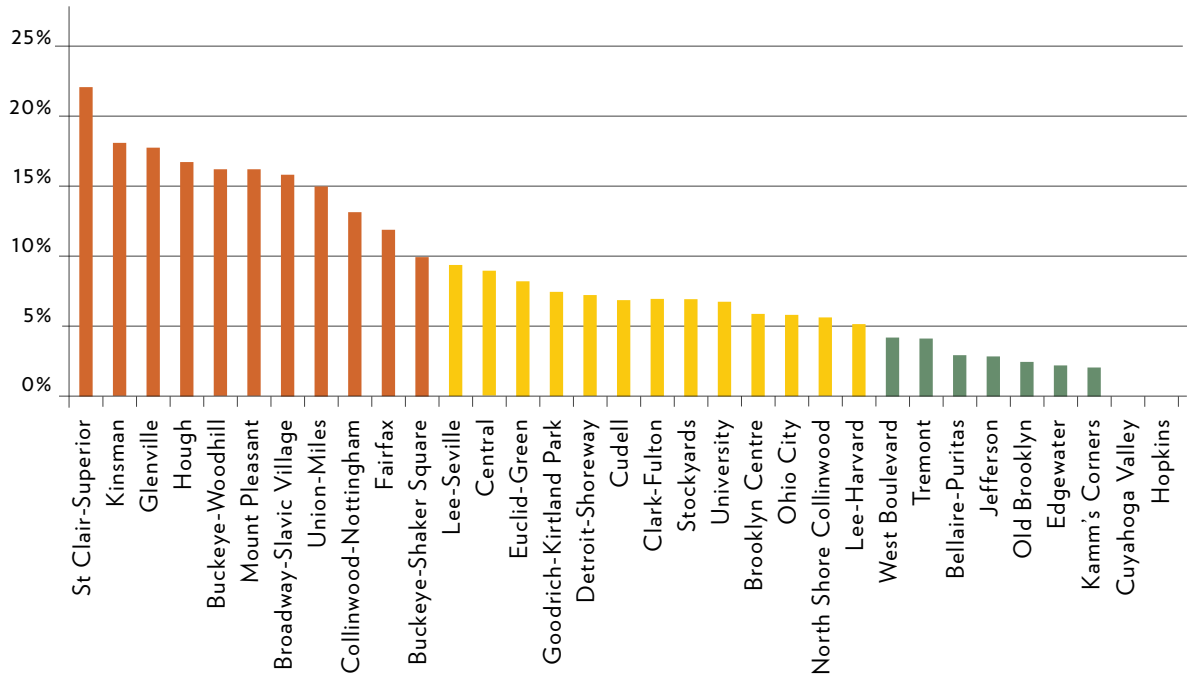
¹⁰ Ibid, 37-38.

¹¹ "Is the Cuyahoga County Foreclosure Crisis Over? It depends on where you're standing," *A Report on Housing Trends in Cuyahoga County: 1995 - 2015*. Frank Ford, Senior Policy Advisor, Western Reserve Land Conservancy. 17 March 2016.



% VACANT STRUCTURES

BY NEIGHBORHOOD



Source (for table above and chart on facing page): "Is the Cuyahoga County Foreclosure Crisis Over? It depends on where you're standing," *A Report on Housing Trends in Cuyahoga County: 1995 - 2015*. Frank Ford, Senior Policy Advisor, Western Reserve Land Conservancy. 17 March 2016.

For example, 22% of buildings in the St. Clair Superior neighborhood are vacant and 12% are distressed (rated a D or F in the Cleveland Property Inventory). This neighborhood had the lowest median housing sales price in the city in 2015.

At the other end of the spectrum, only 2% of the buildings in Kamm's Corners are vacant and 0% were rated D or F in the inventory. Not surprisingly, housing values in this neighborhood are stable and have recovered much of their pre-foreclosure crisis value.

The Cleveland Property Inventory and the real estate research efforts of Western Reserve Land Conservancy provide useful data to help understand the variations in real estate conditions across the city, and develop policies and programs to foster recovery, in strong neighborhoods and struggling ones. On some streets, the removal of a few blighted buildings can have an immediate and positive effect. In neighborhoods where vacancy and abandonment are prevalent, the revitalization strategy may require a combination of demolition, land use changes, land assembly, and long-term reinvestment.

2015 MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE

AS A PERCENTAGE OF PEAK MEDIAN SALES PRICE¹²

NEIGHBORHOOD	Peak Median Sales Price	Year of Peak	2015 Median Sales Price	2015 as % of Peak
University	\$170,000	2006	\$150,000	88%
Edgewater	\$132,000	2005	\$115,750	88%
Hopkins	\$149,900	2006	\$125,000	83%
Ohio City	\$165,500	2014	\$135,000	82%
Tremont	\$110,858	2013	\$88,000	79%
Kamm's Corners	\$125,000	2005	\$93,400	75%
Downtown	\$340,000	2007	\$218,500	64%
Old Brooklyn	\$101,158	2005	\$53,000	52%
Detroit-Shoreway	\$76,000	2005	\$37,000	49%
Fairfax	\$78,000	2005	\$36,200	46%
Jefferson	\$91,650	2005	\$42,000	46%
Bellaire-Puritas	\$78,000	2006	\$32,500	42%
Goodrich-Kirtland Park	\$58,000	2005	\$23,500	41%
Buckeye-Shaker Square	\$90,000	2006	\$35,000	39%
North Shore Collinwood	\$96,000	2005	\$36,800	38%
Central	\$92,900	2008	\$34,250	37%
West Boulevard	\$82,000	2005	\$27,575	34%
Brooklyn Centre	\$75,000	2005	\$25,001	33%
Clark-Fulton	\$65,000	2006	\$19,861	31%
Lee-Seville	\$74,000	2005	\$21,200	29%
Cudell	\$78,000	2005	\$20,000	26%
Lee-Harvard	\$86,500	2005	\$22,000	25%
Stockyards	\$60,450	2006	\$15,000	25%
Collinwood-Nottingham	\$74,650	2005	\$16,000	21%
Kinsman	\$72,000	2004	\$15,000	21%
Glenville	\$82,000	2005	\$16,700	20%
Broadway-Slavic Village	\$75,000	2005	\$14,137	19%
Buckeye-Woodhill	\$81,000	2005	\$14,875	18%
Union-Miles	\$80,500	2005	\$14,750	18%
Mount Pleasant	\$84,000	2005	\$14,837	18%
Euclid-Green	\$84,000	2005	\$13,590	16%
Hough	\$80,000	2005	\$11,750	15%
St Clair Superior	\$75,000	2005	\$9,632	13%
Cuyahoga Valley	\$100,000	2003	no sales	0%

¹² Median sales price does not always correspond to median housing value, since higher value housing in some neighborhoods may not have been sold in the time period reflected in this table.

Living in the old neighborhood...

Zigmunt Jamrus is sitting in the car in the driveway of his house on Korman Avenue, watching his son Joe fix a chainlink fence across the street. He and his son own the property. They recently tore down two houses they owned because the market is pretty much gone for rentals in this part of the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood.

“I used to do that kind of work myself,” he says. “But as I got older, the legs don’t work as well as they used to. I guess World War II is catching up with me.”

Jamrus, 91, then pulls up his pant leg to show scars around both knees he suffered from bullets wounds in battles in the Pacific Islands during the war. He came back from the war and did all sorts of jobs: owned a bakery, repaired heating and air-conditioning systems, and worked a number of factory jobs. He’s owned a half dozen homes over the years.

“I decided to retire three years ago,” he laughs. “Figured being 88 was getting to be too old to work anymore.”

He lived in suburban Lake County immediately after the war, but moved back to the old neighborhood where he grew up, near St. Casimir Catholic Church where he went to grade school. He’s been living with his son, Joe, and daughter, Sissy, in a house a few blocks west of Rockefeller Park for about twenty years now.

The Jamruses provide an interesting perspective on the issue of saving versus tearing down homes. The two homes they owned across the street had become too expensive to maintain so they tore them down, figuring it was better to use the lots “as a place to plant trees and let the grass grow,” Joe says. “But we also realize that there is no market to sell these lots for someone to build new houses on either. So we hang on to them and maintain them and wait for what might happen in the future as markets change.”

“We really have no other choice right now,” he says.

As to mothballing older homes and waiting for the market to change, “it becomes too costly for the owners to maintain, with the upkeep, the sewer bills, the property taxes, everything adds up,” he says. “In some respects, it is better to just get rid of them because we have too many homes in the market anyway.”

Zigmunt points to a dilapidated structure a few houses down from where he is sitting as an example of how things get stalled in the current market. “That house has been abandoned for about five years, the siding has been stripped, but it is now owned by some bank in Texas that has \$85,000 in it,” he says. “There is no way they are going to get that much money for that house, so it just sits.”

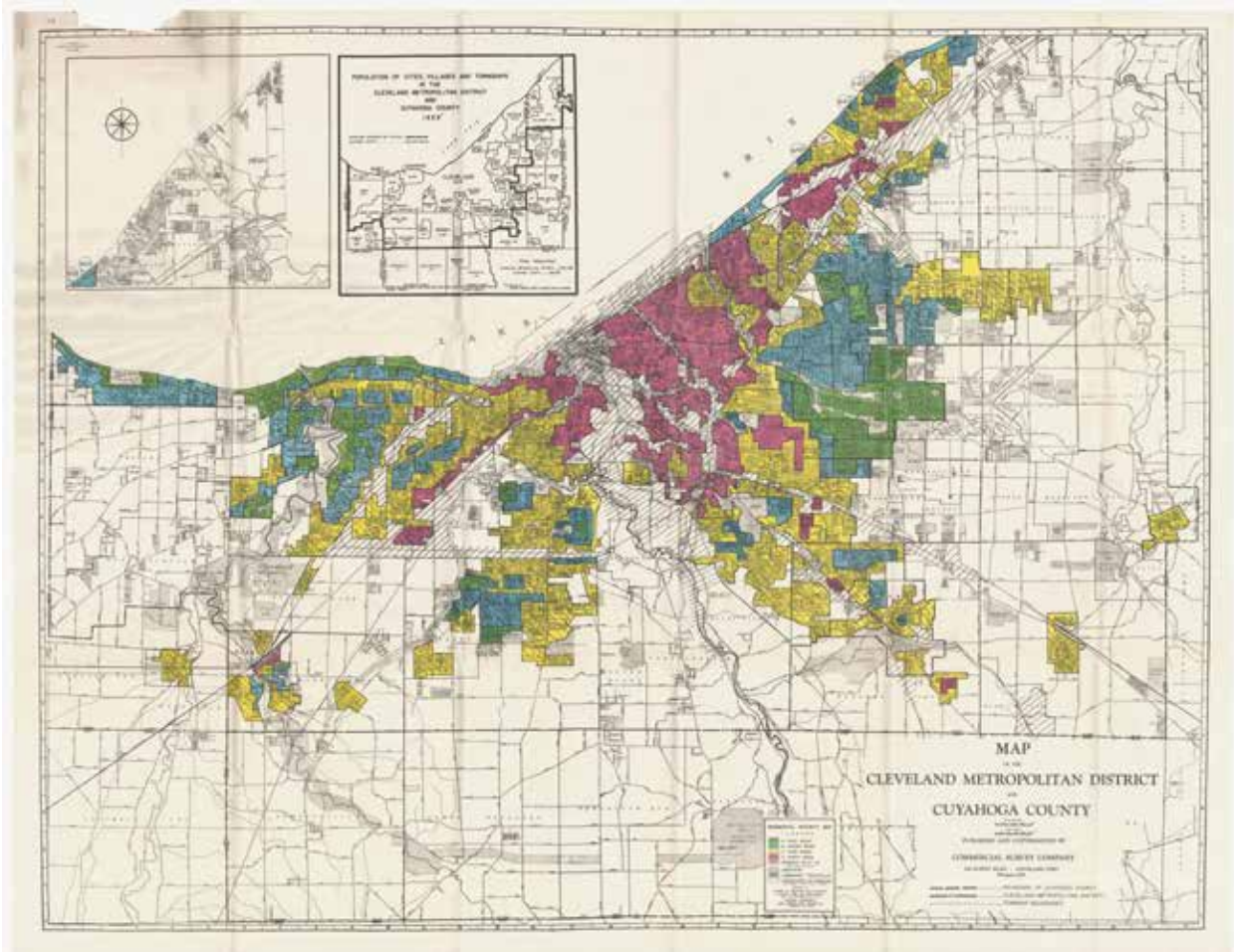
But despite the instability, the father and son like living in the old neighborhood and hope to see some resurgence. Joe works in University Circle in maintenance for one of the museums and likes being close to work.

“Sometimes it gets frustrating, waiting for the banks and the city to get moving on things, and seeing the rental market for housing in this neighborhood not being good,” he continues. “But for me, being here is much better than being out in the suburbs.”



ZIGMUNT JAMRUS
JOE JAMRUS





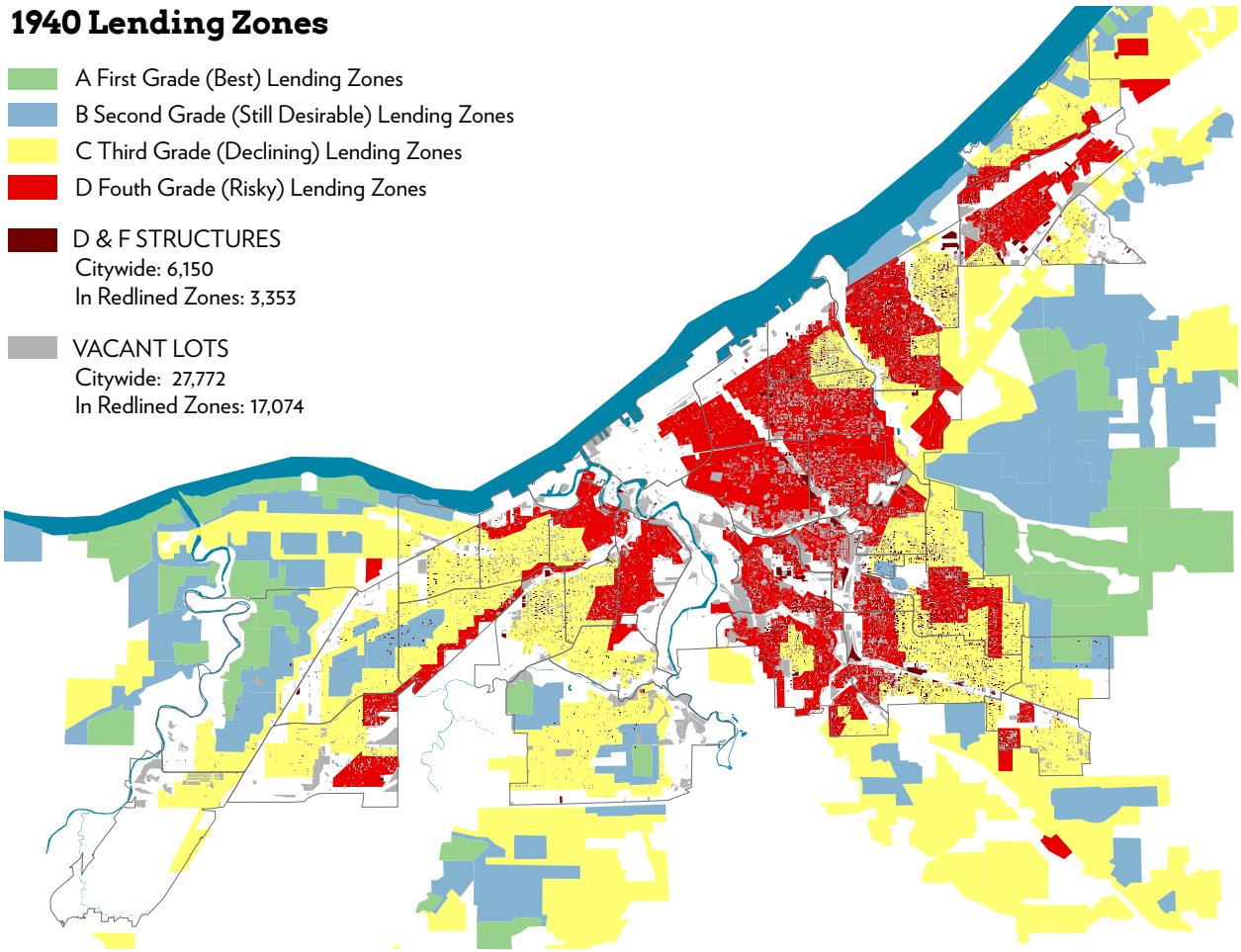
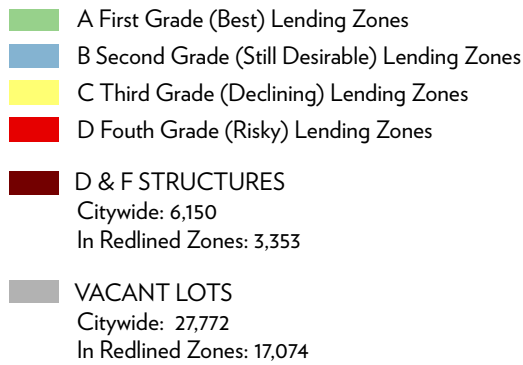
REDLINING MAP of Cleveland from the 1939. (The Ohio State University Libraries, 2013. Federal HOLC “Redlining” Maps for Ohio Cities.)

Redlining: A Lingerin Issue

The locations and extent of vacancy and abandonment in Cleveland illustrate how discriminatory “redlining” policies dating back to the early 20th century directly contributed to neighborhood disinvestment in Cleveland’s low-income, predominantly minority neighborhoods.

The process of redlining began in the 1930s when the federal government-sponsored Home Owner’s Loan Corporation drafted maps of urban neighborhoods to determine where banks would offer mortgages, and where they wouldn’t. Neighborhoods were ranked and color-coded based on who lived there. Areas with African American populations were typically outlined in red and residents of these neighborhoods were frequently denied mortgages.¹³

1940 Lending Zones



Over time, houses became deteriorated in areas where banks refused to lend, due to a lack of capital for repairs and improvements. Even though redlining was outlawed by the Fair Housing Act in 1968, many formerly redlined neighborhoods were later targeted for predatory lending practices in the 1990s and early 2000s. These neighborhoods were then hit hard by the sub-prime mortgage crisis.

The unfortunate legacy of redlining is still apparent today, as shown in this comparison of a historic redlining map from the 1930s and a current map of blighted properties from the Cleveland Property Inventory (above). As shown in the adjacent maps, formerly redlined neighborhoods continue to have significantly higher concentrations of vacant and deteriorated properties.

DISTRESSED BUILDINGS AND VACANT LAND *in formerly redlined neighborhoods.*

¹³ Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University, The History of Race and Real Estate in Cuyahoga County, February 2015 and Isaac Robb, "A Fine Red Line: How Race-Based Policies Continue to Impact the Communities of Cleveland, OH," Western Reserve Land Conservancy, 2016.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS *affect the health and well-being of city residents.*



5. PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

The negative impacts of vacant and distressed properties extend beyond economic loss. A street with empty, overgrown lots and abandoned houses undermines the quality of life in a neighborhood, destroys community pride and engagement, and discourages new investment.

All of this takes a toll on the physical and emotional well-being of neighborhood residents. Children and the elderly are especially at risk.

Specific health risks include greater risk of injury as people (especially children) navigate along city streets with crumbling buildings and the trash that often accumulates on vacant lots. Also, vacant buildings and overgrown lots attract rodents, which increase the risk of disease. Residents may also have a greater risk of mental health problems caused by the anxiety, stress, and the social stigma of living in a distressed neighborhood.¹⁴

A 2003 study of 107 US cities showed that neighborhoods with vacant, boarded up houses are associated with poor health among residents. Adverse health impacts include reduced life expectancy and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, diabetes, and suicide, even after controlling for socioeconomic factors.¹⁵ Vacancy also affects residents through the health impacts of physical disorder. Physical disorder refers to the visible signs of neglect—an overall appearance that an area is uncared for and that residents have little or no control over neighborhood conditions and activities.

Physical disorder has been linked to cardiovascular disease, hypertension, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse. The theory is that a physically disordered environment causes chronic stress, encourages risky behavior, and erodes the social connections between neighbors. Also, anxiety about neighborhood conditions may lead to reduced physical activity or increased drug use, both of which contribute to poor health.¹⁶

¹⁴ Eugenia Garvin, et al. "More Than Just An Eyesore: Local Insights And Solutions on Vacant Land And Urban Health," *Journal of Urban Health*, June 2013; 412–426.

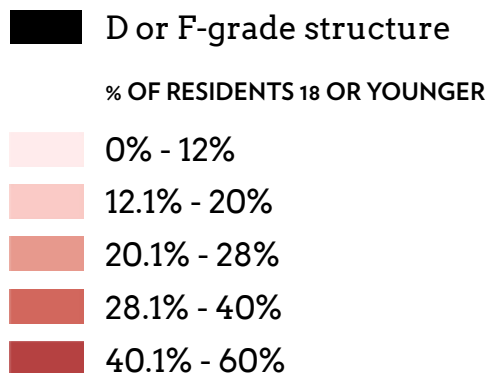
¹⁵ D.A. Cohen, et al. "Neighborhood physical conditions and health," *American Journal of Public Health*. 2003; 93: 467–471.

¹⁶ Garvin, 416.

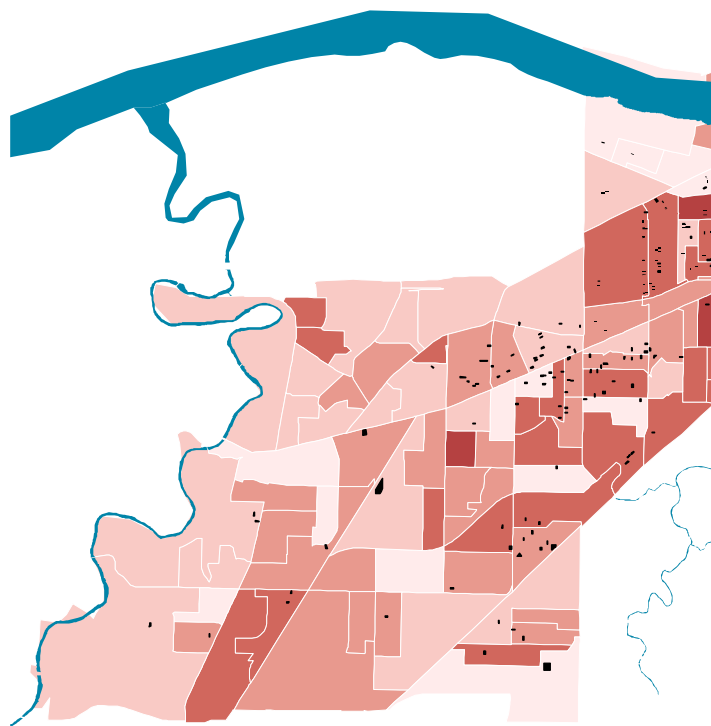
For children, the condition of their home and neighborhood are a major determinant of well-being. At the negative extreme, a neighborhood can pose threats to children's health, safety, and educational opportunities.

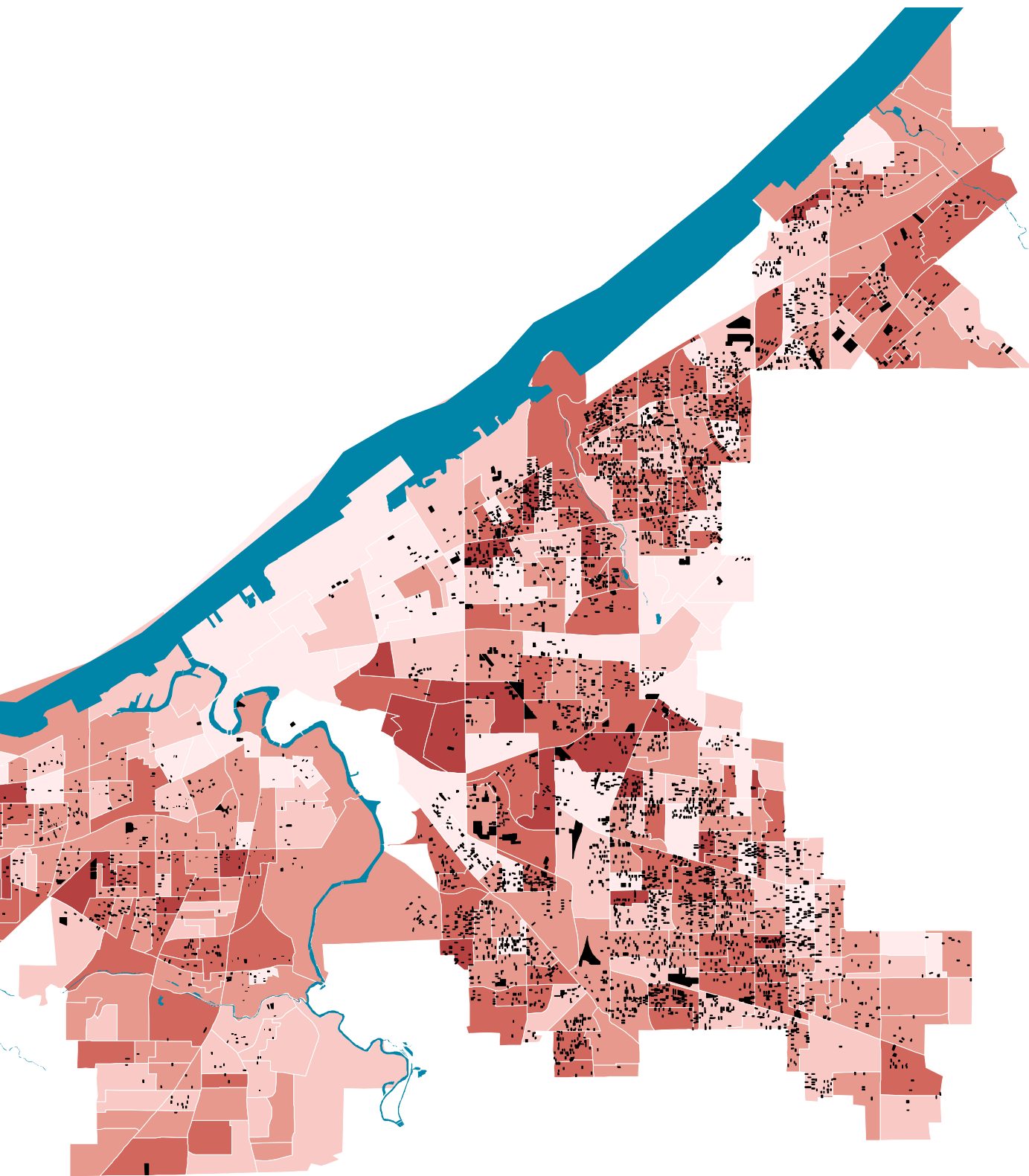
According to the 2010 Census, there are nearly 150,000 children under the age of 18 in the city. Many of the Cleveland's most distressed neighborhoods are home to high concentrations of families with children. Removing D- and F-buildings in these neighborhoods may help reduce childhood lead exposure and other serious dangers to children, provided that families currently living in deteriorated housing can find better maintained houses in more stable neighborhoods as an alternative to their current living situations.

CHILDREN UNDER 18 & DISTRESSED PROPERTIES



Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015
Property Inventory and the US Census (2013 estimates)





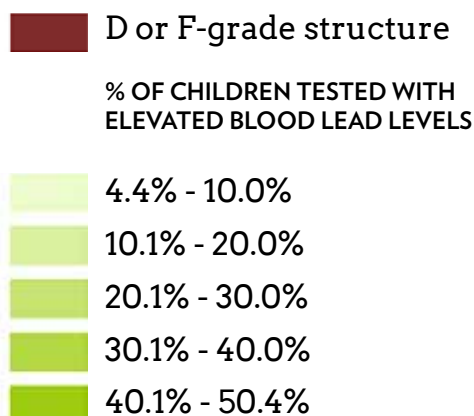
Vacant and deteriorated buildings put children at risk for lead poisoning. No level of lead in the blood of children is considered safe. Even low levels of lead exposure have been shown to affect IQ, behavior, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement. Children under age 6 are most at risk because their brains are growing and developing rapidly, so lead poisoning is especially harmful. Also, children tend to put their hands, which may be contaminated with lead dust, into their mouths. Protecting children from lead exposure is critically important to their lifelong health.¹⁷

According to new research from the Center of Urban Poverty at Case Western Reserve University, children who live in or near properties that have signs of deterioration and disinvestment are more likely to have elevated blood lead levels and to have low scores on a kindergarten readiness assessment test.¹⁸

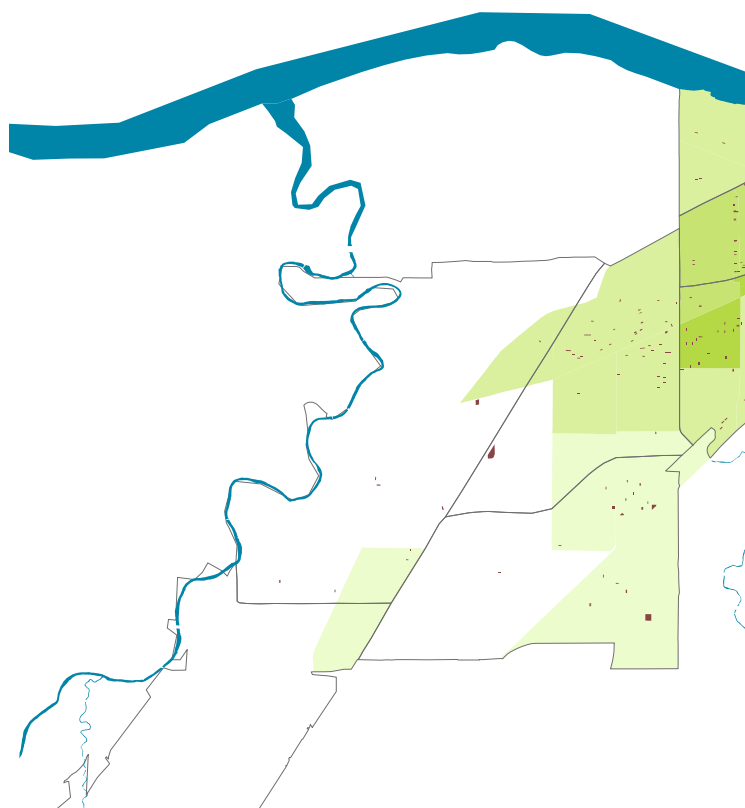
Researchers looked at monthly address histories for these children and considered their housing conditions, the condition of properties within 500 feet of their homes, the social and economic composition of their neighborhoods, and how frequently they moved. The study found that the total number of months a child has lived in a house in poor condition (defined as having an estimated market value below \$30,000) could predict an elevated blood lead test. Also, the amount of time spent in a house with markers of disinvestment (such as long-term tax delinquency or a very low sales price) is an even stronger predictor of lead exposure. These housing distress factors had direct negative effects on kindergarten readiness scores. Nearly 40% of Cleveland's kindergarten students entering school between 2007-2010 tested above the public health threshold for lead exposure (blood lead level >5 ug/dL).¹⁹

The adjacent map shows that neighborhoods with higher percentages of distressed properties tend to have higher percentages of children with elevated blood lead levels.

CHILD LEAD EXPOSURE & DISTRESSED PROPERTIES



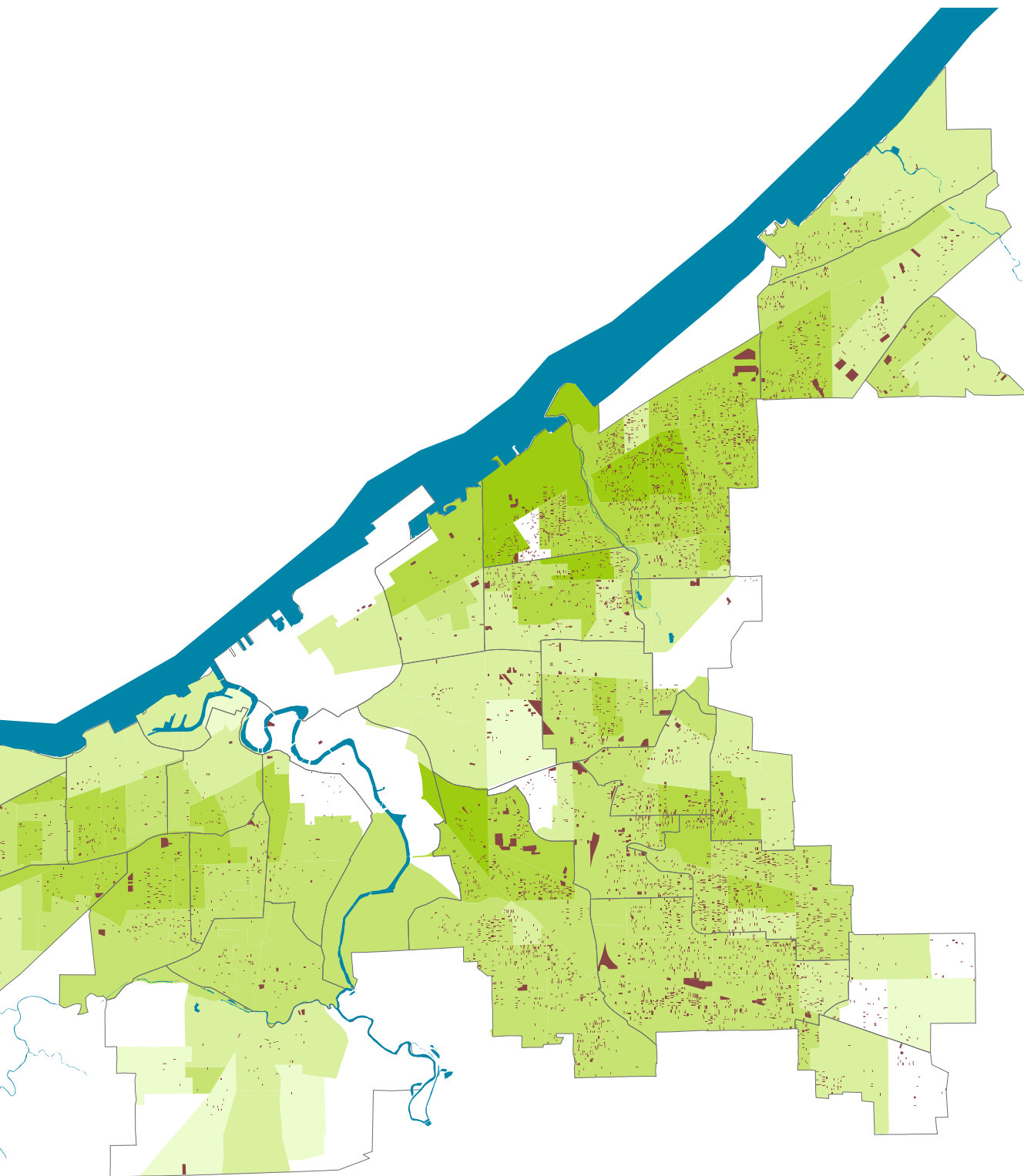
Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015 Property Inventory and the Kirwan Institute at The Ohio State University



¹⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Protection, A Healthy Home for Everyone. www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead

¹⁸ Claudia J. Coulton, Francisca García-Cobián Richter, et al, "Housing Deterioration Contributes to Elevated Lead Levels and Lower Kindergarten Readiness Scores in Cleveland," April 2016.

¹⁹ Ibid.



The adjacent map shows levels of lead poisoning by census tracts throughout Cleveland, based on mapping and analysis from the Kirwan Institute at Ohio State University.

Map data were aggregated over a five-year period. Census Tracts with fewer than ten children with elevated blood lead levels were excluded, in accord with Ohio Department of Health data masking guidelines. On Cleveland's east side, one third or more of the children in some neighborhoods are estimated to have elevated blood lead levels.²⁰

This map reflects the results of children who have been tested for lead. This raises questions about the additional children who should be tested, but have yet to be identified.

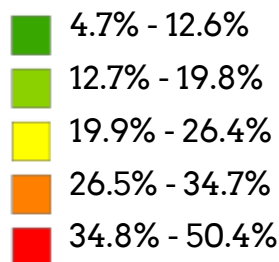
Lead poisoning can cause lifelong problems for children. And effects of lead exposure cannot be corrected.²¹ The goal is to prevent lead exposure to children before they are harmed. Lead testing for children throughout the city, and especially those who live in neighborhoods with high percentages of vacant and distressed housing is a public health priority. Houses where children have tested positive for lead exposure could be targeted for demolition or remediation efforts, to reduce the risk that lead issues in these houses are repeatedly affecting successive households with children.

²⁰ Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University, 2015.

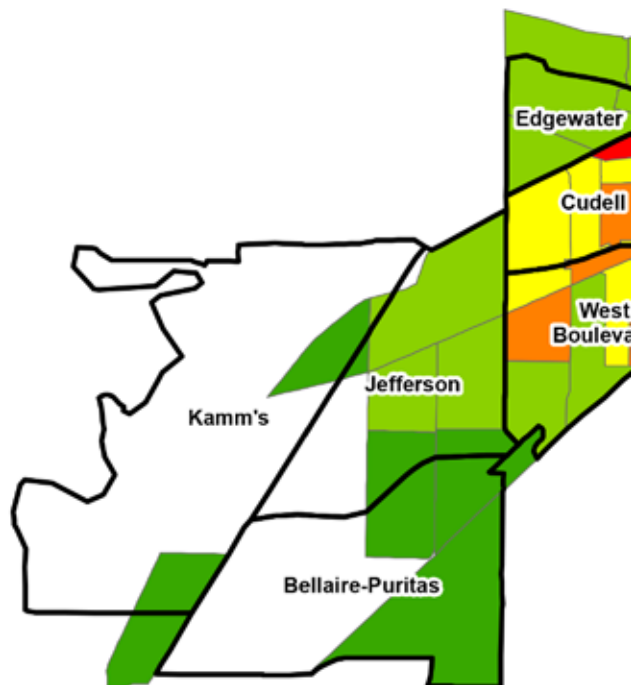
²¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Lead Prevention Tips," <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>.

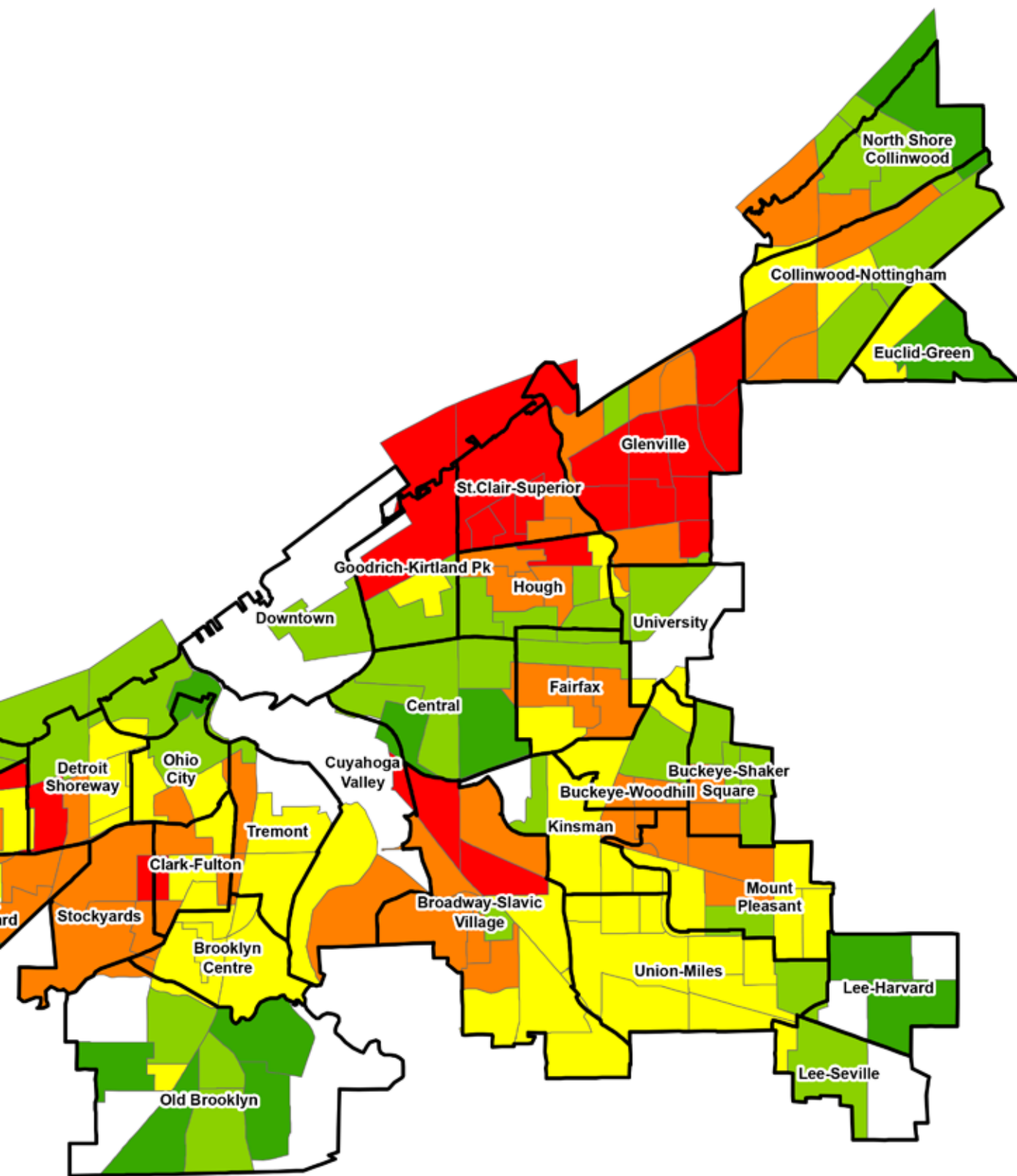
ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN UNDER 5

% OF CHILDREN TESTED WITH ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVELS



Source: Lead testing from Ohio Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, Ohio Department of Health. Analysis by The Kirwan Institute at The Ohio State University.





Children can be exposed to lead from different sources, such as paint, gasoline, solder, and consumer products. Lead reaches children through different pathways, such as air, food, water, dust, and soil. Although lead exposure can occur from many sources, lead-based paint is a common, widespread, and dangerous source of lead exposure for young children.²²

In addition to rating the exteriors of buildings based on their condition, the 2015 Cleveland Property Survey also identified specific indications of deterioration, including damaged siding and peeling paint. There are nearly 45,000 buildings with damaged siding and peeling paint.

It is difficult to know how many of these properties could pose a health risk to children. Quite possibly, condition of painted surfaces on the inside of a house, such as walls and window frames, are the greatest risk, especially for young children who spend much of their time indoors. But exterior surfaces are also a concern, since lead dust can settle into the surrounding soil, be tracked into a house on people's shoes, and blow into a house through open windows.

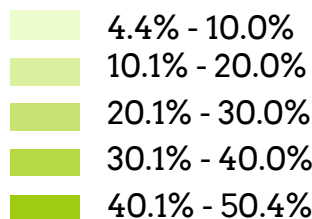
The adjacent map indicates higher percentages of children with elevated blood lead levels in some of the neighborhoods where buildings with damaged exterior siding and peeling paint are most prevalent.

²² Centers for Disease Control and Protection, *A Healthy Home for Everyone: The Guide for Families and Individuals*. www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead

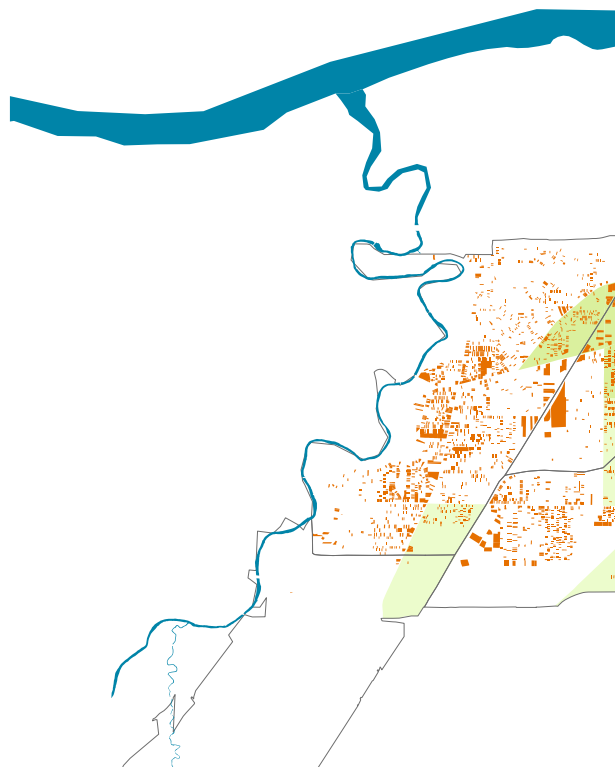
CHILD LEAD EXPOSURE & DAMAGED SIDING/PAINT

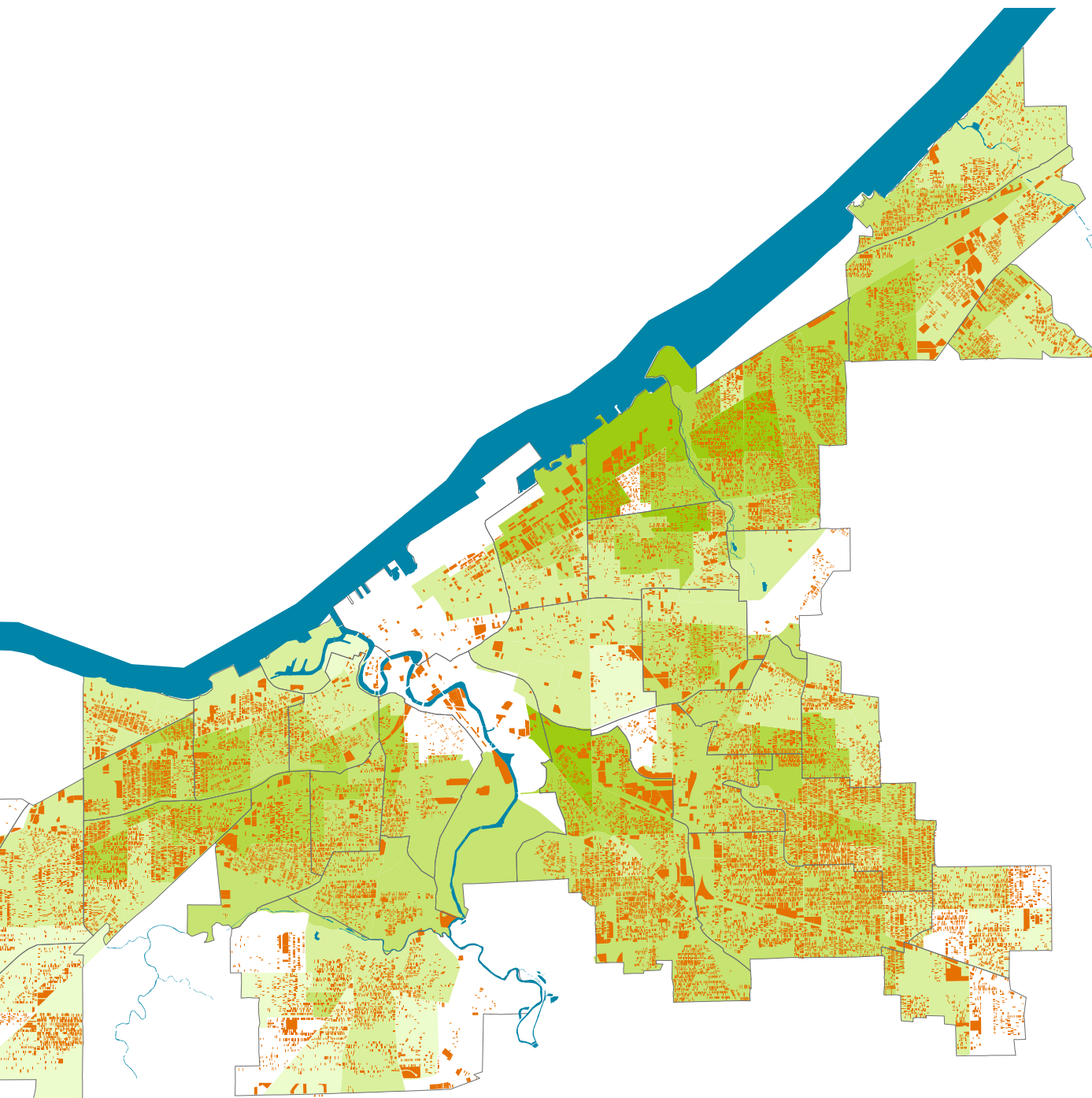
Structure with Damaged Siding and/or Flaking Paint
Citywide: 44,987

% OF CHILDREN TESTED WITH ELEVATED BLOOD LEAD LEVELS



Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015 Property Inventory and the Kirwan Institute at The Ohio State University.





There is a growing body of research about the place-based determinants of public health. In other words, the condition of your home and your neighborhood can affect both how well you live and how long you live.

It is difficult to say whether vacant and deteriorated properties have a direct effect on the life expectancy of Cleveland residents. According to US census data, a Cleveland resident has an average lifespan of 74 years, compared to 77.9 years in Cuyahoga County²³ and 78.8 years in the US as a whole.²⁴ But there are many complex and inter-related factors that affect people's health, well-being, and longevity.

The adjacent map shows average life expectancy in city neighborhoods, overlaid with the locations of distressed D and F properties. The Kinsman neighborhood, for example, has many D and F properties and the lowest life expectancy in the city of 68.8 years. Property conditions could possibly have some connection to longevity in Kinsman. However, the nearby neighborhoods of Slavic Village, Union Miles, and Mount Pleasant have similar concentrations of distressed properties, but life expectancies in these neighborhoods are close to the citywide average of 74 years.

Breakdown in community social life can occur in neighborhoods with numerous vacant and abandoned buildings. This has particularly serious health consequences for elderly residents who may feel isolated as familiar neighbors move away and empty houses become more prevalent. With insufficient or negative social interaction, older residents may experience loneliness, low self-esteem, social anxiety, and depression.²⁵

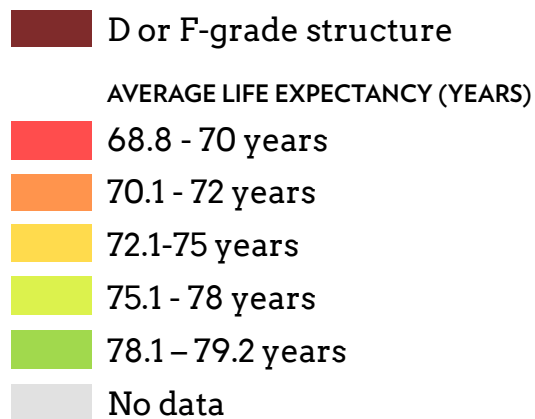
Elderly residents are also at greater risk of heat-related illnesses and death in the event of heat waves, especially if they live in older housing without air conditioning and if concerns about crime and safety keep them from opening their windows for ventilation in the summer months.

²³ Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

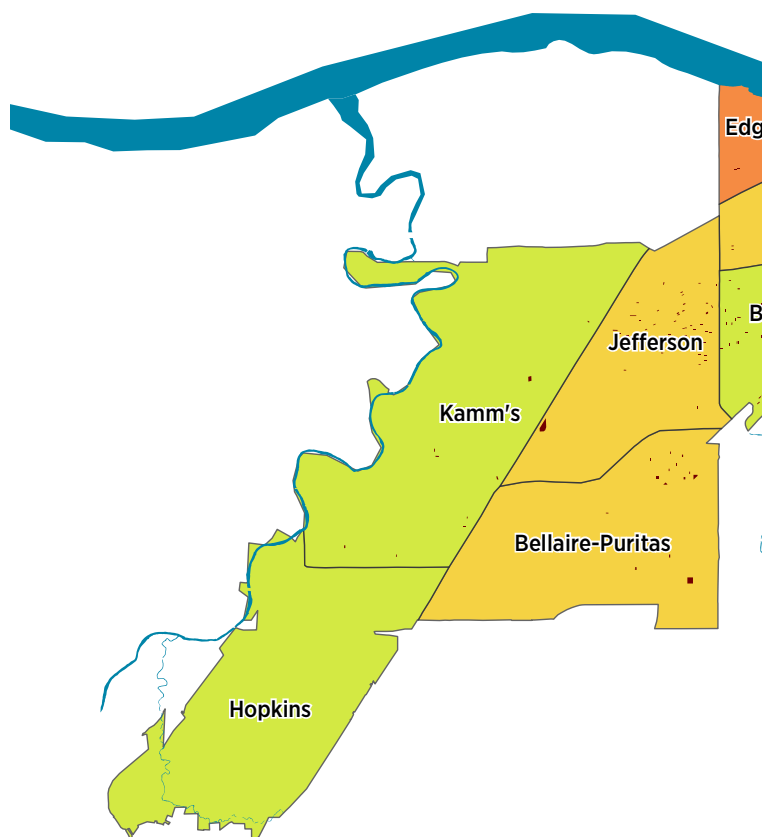
²⁴ National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

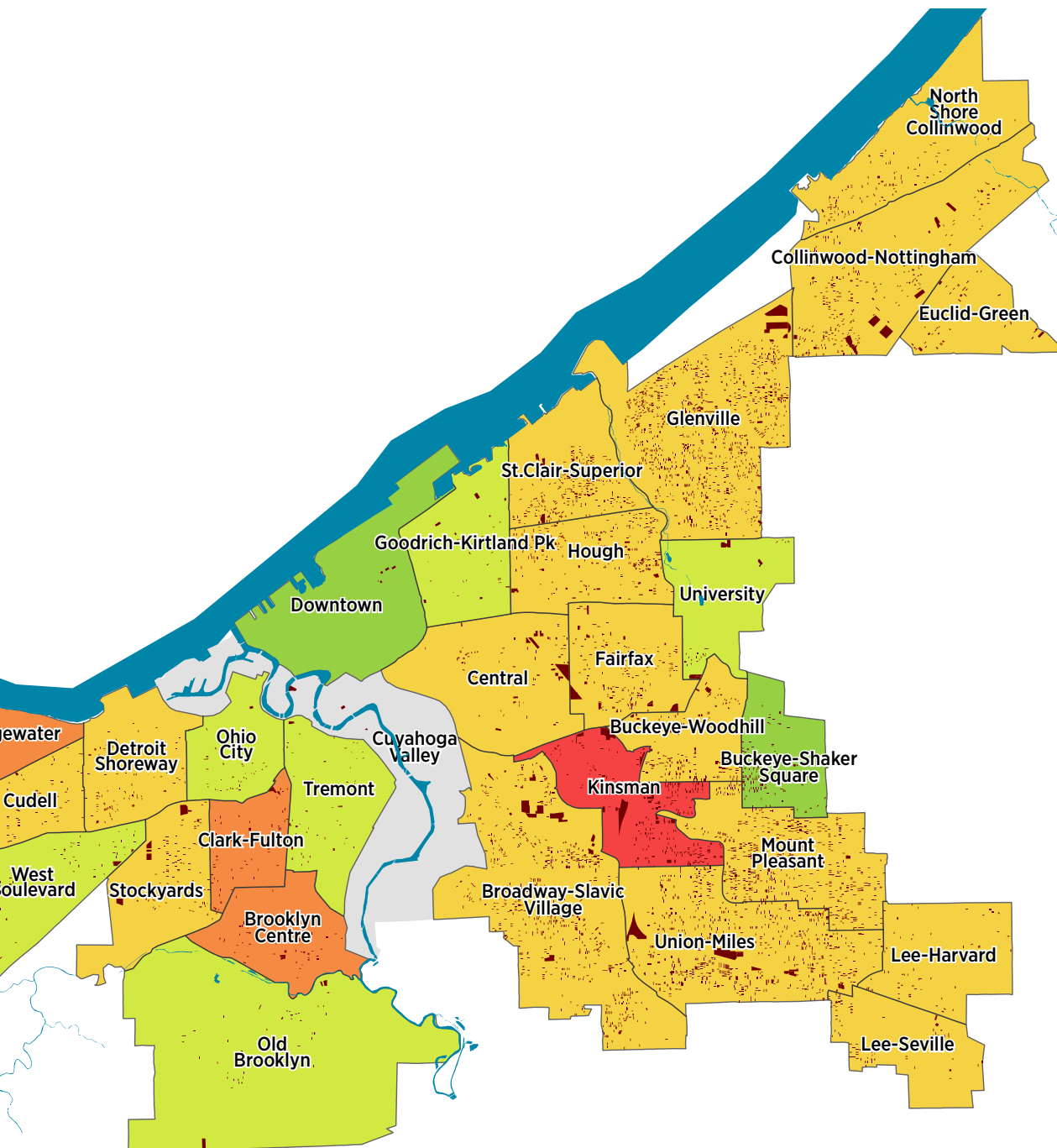
²⁵ Suzanne Crowhurst Lennard, "Planning for Healthy Living: the Next Challenge," www.livablecities.org, accessed 1 March 2016.

LIFE EXPECTANCY & DISTRESSED PROPERTIES



Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015 Property Inventory and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.





Cleveland is home to over 69,000 residents age 60 and older. According to a recent study completed by the Cleveland Department of Aging:

Abandoned and vacant properties are a concern for Cleveland's older adults, and many worry over the impact on their property values. Safety is also a frequent worry for many older residents in the city.

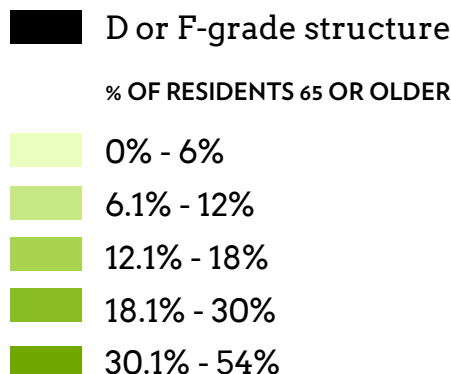
Older adults expressed concern over the high number of vacant and foreclosed properties in the city. Older adults found that the properties posed significant safety risks and they were eyesores that could impact their property values.

In addition, many older adults identified safety concerns while in public. Many reported being vigilant about what times they leave their homes, and what neighborhoods and streets they visit. A great number reported not leaving their homes after dark due to feeling unsafe.²⁶

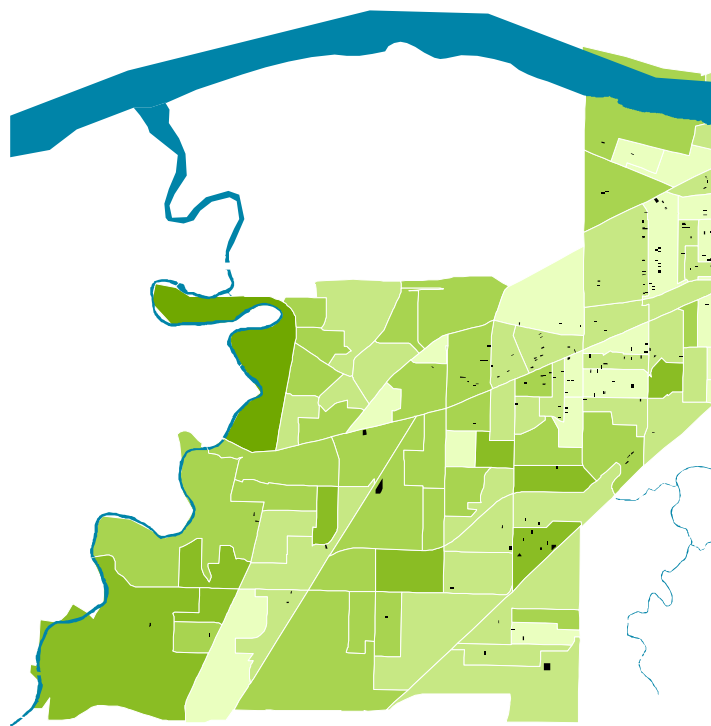
Efforts to demolish blighted buildings may help the city's older residents feel safer and more comfortable in their neighborhoods. Targeted social services, including transportation support and educational efforts to help seniors in the event of heat waves, winter storms, and power outages, could be targeted to neighborhoods where older residents may feel isolated due to concentrations of vacant and abandoned properties.

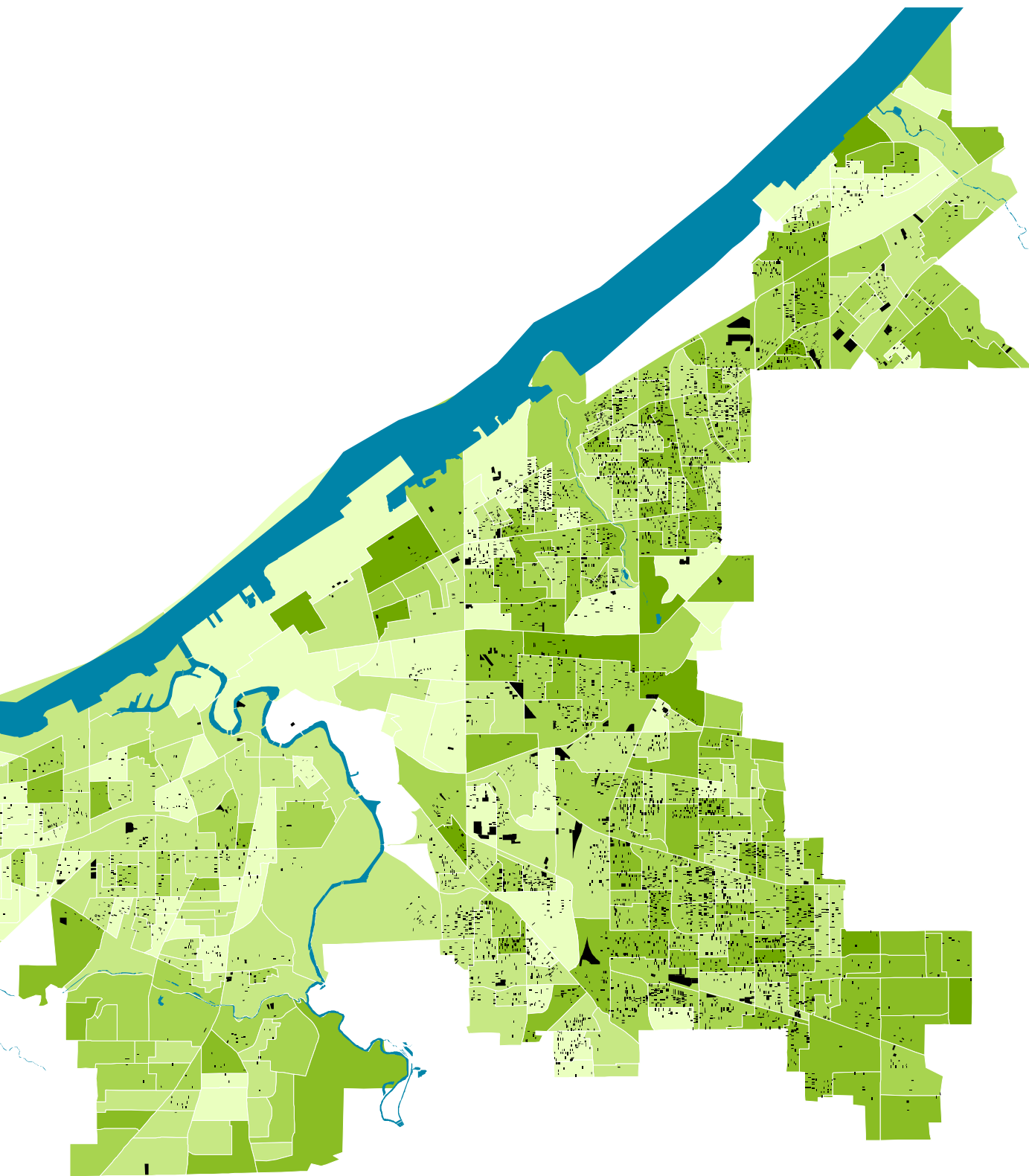
²⁶ *Age-Friendly Cleveland Assessment: A Report by the Center for Community Solutions, City of Cleveland Department of Aging, January 2016.*

POPULATION OVER 65 & DISTRESSED PROPERTIES



Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015 Property Inventory and the US Census (2013 estimates)





Persistence pays off in Mount Pleasant...

Sam Smith gets mad at the media sometimes. A few years ago, he kept seeing stories in the newspaper and on the local TV news about how his Mount Pleasant neighborhood was so horrible. Every story was about a drive-by shooting, and how the suburbs were all so nice and pretty. So he invited the media down his house on East 151st Street to see what it was really like.

“It was really a cold day in the spring, wind blowing and one of those days no one wants to be outside,” he says. “But we showed the media around and they did a story about how there were things happening in Mount Pleasant that were not all about drive-by shootings and other crime issues.”

The street he lives on has neat houses and manicured lawns, mostly in good shape and occupied. Part of that is Smith’s doing. He is known as “Safety Man Sam” in his neighborhood for leading the block watch and neighborhood involvement programs.

But he sees an issue creeping forward. Older residents like him (he is 78-years old) are dying off and after they die, the family has trouble selling the property. The upkeep goes down over time and the estate has neither the wherewithal, nor the financing, to keep the houses up.

“With the rental market the way it is, we have so many people moving in short term, and then moving out, a constant changeover in the population,” Smith says. “I moved into this house in 1967 and for many years the people on the street were the same. Now we don’t know who is moving in and for how long they will stay.”

Smith moved to Cleveland from rural Pennsylvania in 1957 to take a job with Ford Motor Company. He worked there for 33 years, retiring in 1990. Along the way, he opened his own limousine service, a business that is still active and run by his son. He bought the house next door in the mid-1990s, tore it down, and built two garages to house his limousines.

He now sees the problems from other nearby neighborhoods moving into Mount Pleasant. “In areas a few blocks away, we are seeing people dumping trash in the yards of abandoned houses, especially car tires,” Smith says. “I have seen it over and over again, how one tiny abandoned house that no one pays attention to can cause all sorts of problems in our neighborhoods.”

“I would prefer a vacant lot to a dilapidated home in my neighborhood under any circumstances,” he says.

Smith has advice for other neighborhood groups in Cleveland. “You have to take an active role in your neighborhood,” he says. “And think about taking care of your own house and the ones around you. Because doing what you think is best for you and your family is not selfish. It is just about caring for your neighborhood.”

One other thing he advises: “Don’t be afraid to bug people. Like your councilman, the housing inspector, the police department, and anyone else you can think of who can help out the neighborhood.”

“You have to be persistent,” he says.





ILLEGAL DUMPING is a crime that impacts neighborhoods throughout the city.



6. CRIME & SAFETY

The relationship between vacant and distressed properties and crime in Cleveland neighborhoods is complex and difficult to measure. However, some types of crime appear to be more prevalent in areas with higher levels of vacancy and disinvestment.

Newly vacant structures may become targets for burglary and theft, especially if they contain appliances, copper pipes, or other items of value. This problem was apparent during the height of the foreclosure crisis, as scrappers efficiently and illegally extracted anything of value from foreclosed houses, often leaving the properties in a condition that made them difficult to repair or rehabilitate.

Abandoned structures may become locations for illegal activities such as vandalism, drug use, and prostitution. The risk of arson and accidental fires increases when vacant buildings are not secured and monitored. Illegal dumping of old tires, construction debris, and other waste materials is more prevalent in neighborhoods. And increased turnover among residents may result in fewer eyes on the street, which in turn reduces the sense of safety in a neighborhood.²⁷

A recent research study analyzed whether demolitions and building rehabilitations in Cleveland, Chicago, and Denver reduced incidents of crime in or near foreclosed properties. The results of the study suggest that the demolitions conducted through the federally funded Neighborhood Stabilization Program in Cleveland reduced incidents of burglary and theft within 250 feet of demolished properties. The measured impacts of demolition were present while buildings were being demolished and continued for one year after demolition, and then dissipated. The study did not find similar impacts for building rehabilitations, perhaps because there were fewer rehabilitation projects to measure and assess.²⁸

²⁷ Jon Spader, "Can Demolitions and Property Rehabilitations Alter Nearby Crime Patterns?" *Housing Perspectives*, The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, 6 November 2015.

²⁸ Ibid. 2016.



Is there more crime in neighborhoods that have many distressed buildings? The Cleveland Property Inventory paints a complicated picture. A statistical test indicates a positive relationship between increased blight and increased crime. However, some areas in the city with high crime rates (shown in red on the adjacent map) actually have relatively few buildings in D or F condition. Some neighborhoods with low or moderate crime rates, in fact, have more blighted buildings.

It is important to note that no single factor determines the crime rate in a neighborhood. For example, proximity to a freeway ramp may increase the number of drug-related crimes by giving drug dealers and their customers easy access and a quick escape route. Neighborhoods with many deteriorated buildings may not attract as many home-break-ins, since the perpetrators may focus on more affluent areas. And in neighborhoods that have lost a lot of residents, there may no longer be many engaged residents to report crimes when they do occur.²⁹

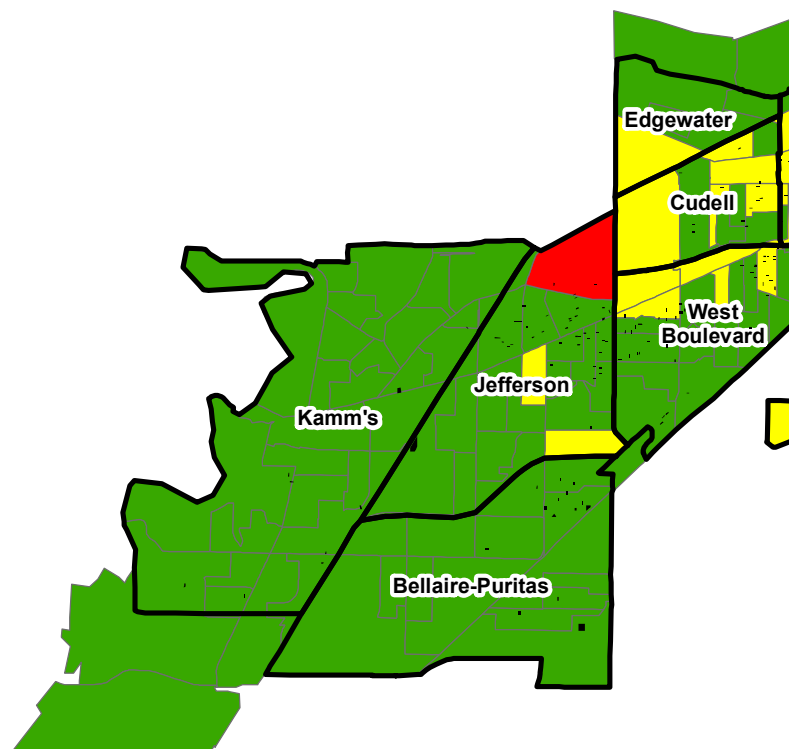
Regardless of the actual crime rate, residents in neighborhoods with many vacant and deteriorated buildings report feeling unsafe in their neighborhoods, and perceptions have a way of becoming a reality. If a neighborhood is perceived as unsafe, existing and prospective residents and businesses may be unwilling to invest in building repairs and improvements, leading to a diminished quality of life for everyone.

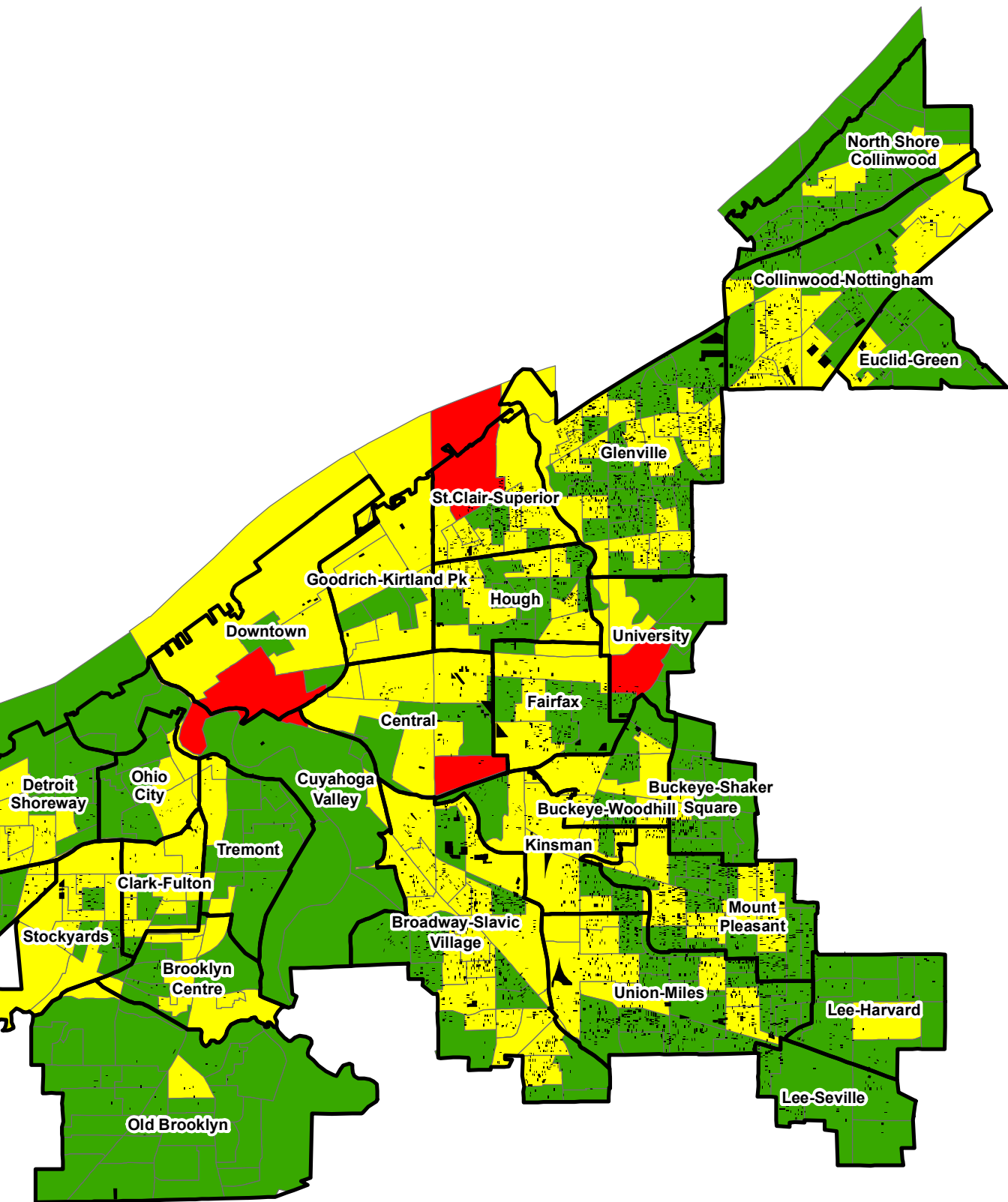
²⁹ Dongmei Chen, John Weeks, and John Kaiser, "Remote Sensing and Spatial Statistics as Tools in Crime Analysis" *Geographic Information Systems and Crime Analysis*, Idea Group Inc., 2005.

CRIME RATE PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

- D- or F-grade structure
- Low (0 - 150 crimes per 1,000 residents)
- Moderate (151 - 600 crimes per 1,000 residents)
- High (601 - 2,500 crimes per 1,000 residents)

Data from Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development, Case Western Reserve University, 2015.





Getting rid of unsafe eyesores...

Sharon Owens has lived on Colfax Road in the Kinsman neighborhood for most of her life. She now lives with her 82-year-old mother in their two-family home. Her son died a few years ago from heart disease, and she also cares for her two pairs of twin grandchildren—a boy and girl, age six; and two girls, age eight. She has seen many improvements in her neighborhood through the years, and is optimistic about where things are going.

There has been new home construction down the street on Colfax Road, and a few blocks over on Kinsman Road. Likewise, there has been some investment in retail shopping, including the popular Bridgeport Café nearby. Coming soon will be the Opportunity Corridor project, which will help link Interstate 490 to University Circle with a boulevard that will hopefully encourage more development. The link to the new road will be at the end of her street.

Owens, 58, worked in food service at the Anton Grdina Elementary School in the neighborhood before she had to retire a few years ago with a disability that makes walking difficult for her. The neighborhood now has a smattering of vacant lots, including a community garden next to her house. But she remembers vividly when those lots had abandoned houses on them, and how safety was a real factor in her neighborhood because of them.

“I would get up to go to work at six in the morning to start cooking the food for the day. There were times when I was afraid walking down my street because there were still things going on in those abandoned houses at that time in the morning,” Owens says. “It was tough for us, because the abandoned houses were places where kids were doing drugs and having sex and I didn’t feel safe. I felt sorry for the children in the neighborhood having to grow up like that.”

Part of that changed. With an active approach to ridding the neighborhood of unsafe eyesores, Burton, Bell, Carr Development, Inc. helped to acquire properties and clear out the abandoned homes to build new houses on those sites. Other properties were simply torn down and the land left vacant. Owens saw a big change take place.

“There was a huge difference in terms of safety,” she says. “I could walk to work in the morning and home in the afternoon and not be afraid. And over time, we have more people on our street who own their own homes and live in them.”

Sitting in her kitchen with the twins playing loudly in the next room, Owens looks around. Her brother is helping her rehab some parts of the family house, and the kitchen door is getting re-framed. There is a hole in the wall behind her as she and her brother are deciding if they need new drywall—or just carefully planned patchwork—to repair the walls.

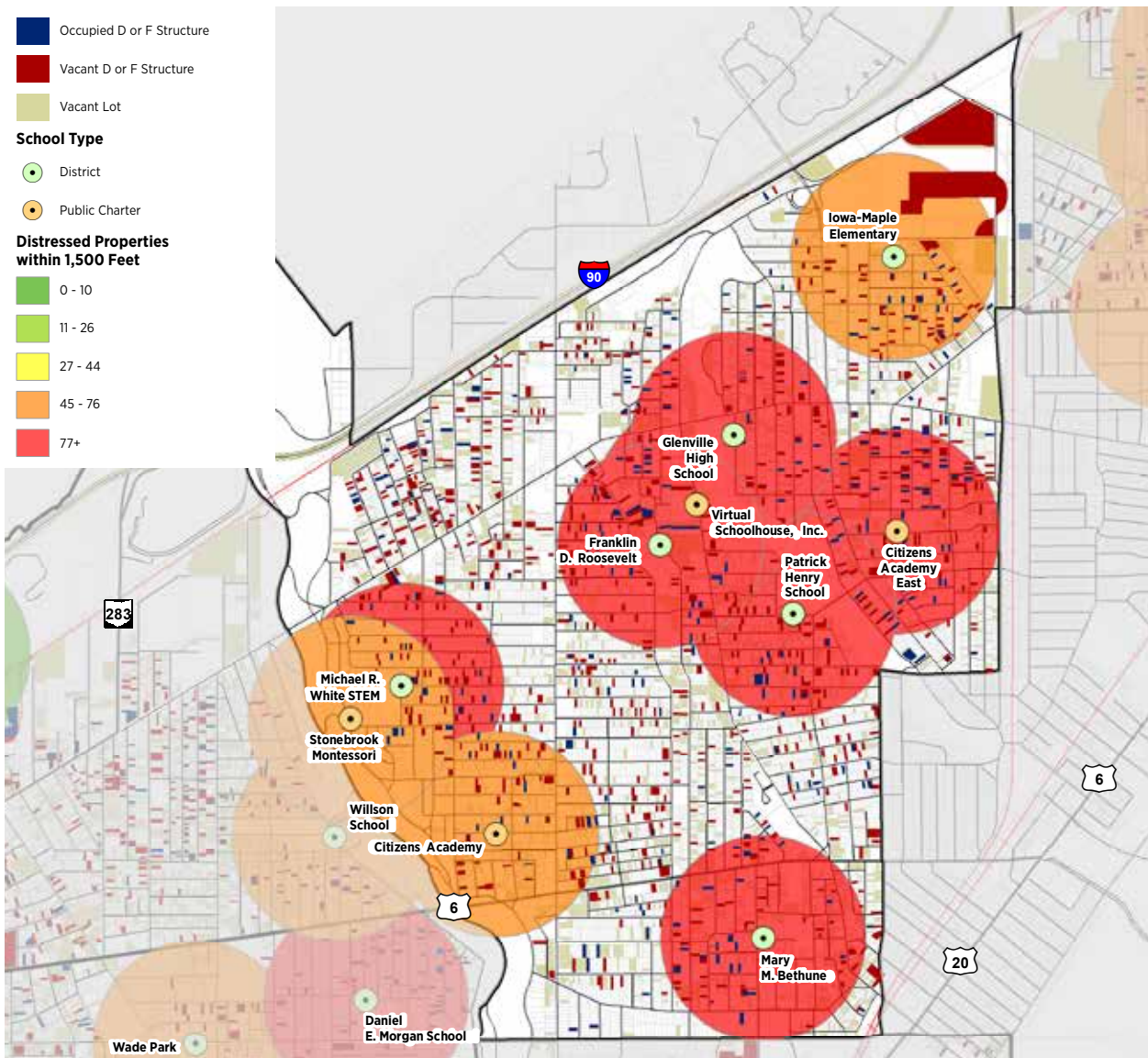
“This is home,” she says. “But always something we need to fix up. That’s how things are.”

SHARON OWENS



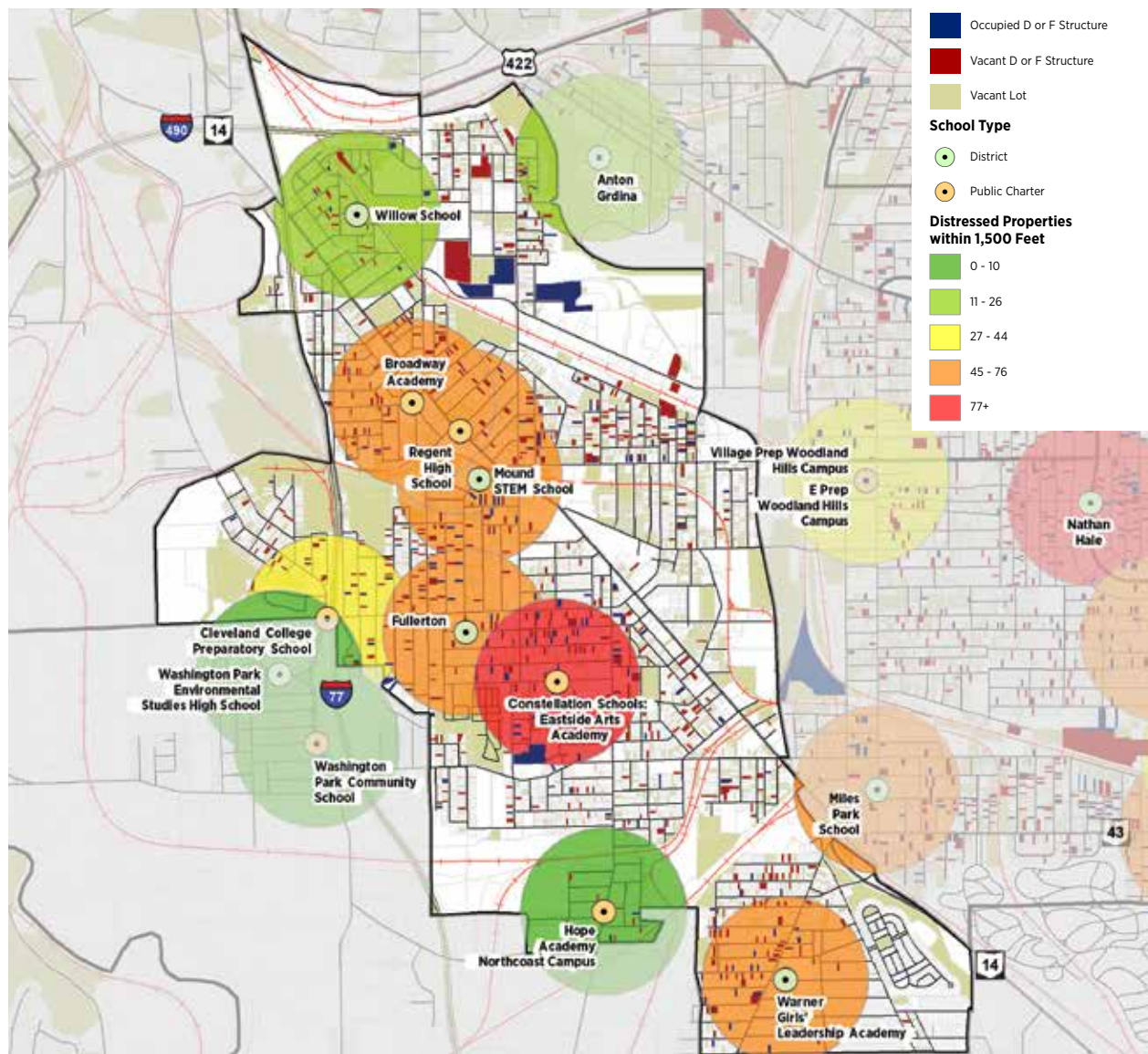
Blighted buildings and vacant lots can make it difficult and unsafe for children to get to school. The Cleveland Property Inventory provides existing conditions data that can help identify routes to get children to and from their schools without having to navigate their way past abandoned buildings that might pose safety risks. This data can also be used to target the demolition of deteriorated D- and F-grade buildings near schools to reduce the health and safety risks for kids. The maps below show two

GLENVILLE *distressed properties near schools.*



neighborhoods with blighted buildings in close proximity to neighborhood schools. Because building conditions change over time, school administrators, parents, and city officials could develop a consistent process for monitoring the presence of vacant and deteriorated properties near school buildings. Data from the 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory have been provided to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and their consultants for use in the *Safe Routes To School* planning effort.

SLAVIC VILLAGE distressed properties near schools.



Housing standards are changing...

The homes on West Boulevard in the Cudell neighborhood look very much like they belong in another era. The houses are big with large porches, and they sit back from the meandering boulevard behind the huge tree lawns between the street and the sidewalk. It is almost like urban planners of a century ago wanted to create a park in front of every house.

"It is a beautiful neighborhood in so many ways, and I'm sure this was once one of the most prized neighborhoods in the city back in the early 1900s," says Ron Phillips-Bey, who owns a home on West Boulevard just south of Madison Avenue in the Cudell neighborhood at the western edge of Cleveland. "There was so much attention to detail in the planning. You see that in the sycamore trees near the street in front of every house. It's almost like a piece of rich suburbia in the middle of the city."

While the neighborhood is stable in many ways, Phillips-Bey, who operates a home construction repair business, has seen changes in the ten years since he moved there. Fewer homeowners, more renters. Retail stores moving out and not replaced. Crime issues he had not seen before. Home values dropped by about 50 percent.

"This street looks nice, but when you get on the side streets around us here, things drop off in a hurry," he says. "It is one vacant lot, then an abandoned house, then a few occupied but in bad shape, and then the situation is repeated."

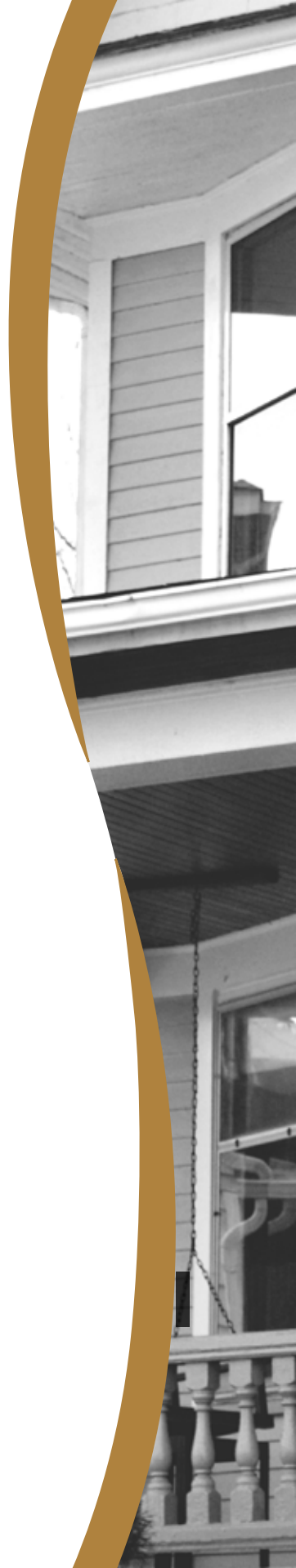
Housing standards are a big part of those changes. Phillips-Bey sees those often, both in his neighborhood and in his home repair business. "First the ants move in and then the roaches and then the cats," he says. "And before you know it the kitchen plumbing is gone and the aluminum siding removed. Then the drug dealers and users move in and it is over."

"This is what happens and we know it and sometimes we don't do enough about it," he says. "We have too much housing in the market based on our population, and it is good policy to take the bad ones down."

This downward spiral is tough to halt. Many of the homeowners have died, and their estates either can't pay off the liens on the properties or they decide to rent out the family homestead instead of living in it.

"We've had to call the police because we have people playing music loud at three in the morning," Phillips-Bey says. "Their kids are running around on the front lawn in diapers. They are barbecuing at this late hour on their front porch. A wooden porch."

Then he laughs: "People might think I'm the black version of Archie Bunker. But you see that type of behavior and you know what is coming next. And you know that's not good."



RON PHILLIPS-BEY



CUDELL

NEW CONSTRUCTION can occur in neighborhoods once deteriorated buildings are removed. (Sources: USA Roofing, Ohio City Inc., Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, www.homes.com)



7. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

If there is a bright side to Cleveland's vacancy crisis, it is the opportunity this situation offers to redesign neighborhoods in ways that are better suited to the needs of current and future populations. This may include expanding narrow city lots in some neighborhoods to allow for larger yards, garages, and additions. Also, vacant lots can be assembled for greenways, community gardens, recreational space and other neighborhood amenities that might help stimulate local housing markets and encourage new development.

As vacant D and F buildings are demolished, the city and county land banks' holdings grow. Coordinated strategies for managing and reusing properties in the land bank can help direct development to the areas where it is most needed and most likely to be successful.

In some parts of the city, the real estate market is strong and the private sector is ready to invest in new housing and other development projects, if there is land available. These neighborhoods are poised to attract new residents from elsewhere in the region, the country, and the world. The city has seen population growth in some neighborhoods, including an increase in immigrant and refugee populations.

In other parts of the city where there is less market demand, vacant land is an important resource that can be used strategically to enhance city neighborhoods for existing residents.

But how do we decide where to construct new buildings, where to rehabilitate existing buildings, where to create green spaces, and where to hold land for future needs that have not yet been determined?

By providing a parcel-by-parcel conditions assessment for every neighborhood in the city, the Cleveland Property Inventory is an essential tool for establishing new land use policies and making informed development decisions. The property inventory data can guide city policies and allow for a targeted and strategic approach to future public and private investments, promoting a balanced mix of development that attracts new residents and businesses, while improving neighborhood conditions for people who are already here.



A voice in what happens here...

Sitting in her kitchen, Rosita Rojas admires the recent paint job she did on her cupboards. They are now mint green with white trim, very bright and airy in a large kitchen with a high ceiling that 130-year-old homes tend to have. Through the back door you can see a chicken coop, where a dozen or so hens live and produce about 35 eggs a week.

On a small table in the kitchen is a cage with a heat lamp, where four little chicks huddle together underneath. One of Rojas' cats sits on the floor and stares up at the tiny birds.

Rojas, who is of Puerto Rican descent, points out the window of her kitchen to the house next door, not more than five feet away. The house next door was foreclosed and abandoned a few years ago in this near west side neighborhood, and she had worried about the possibility of a fire with the house only a few feet away from hers. She had seen more rodent infestation, and how that was affecting her chickens in the yard. She has just turned 60, is unemployed because of a disability, and wondered if her father's house, where she has lived since the early 1970s, would go up in flames.

But earlier this year, it turned more serious. "I looked out my kitchen window one night very late, and I could see someone with a flashlight going through the house next door," Rojas says. "It was a squatter, and here was a person only a few feet away from me living in that house. It was scary."

The squatter is now out, but the house is still empty. Rojas lives in the Queen/Vega/Barber (QVB) neighborhood in Clark-Fulton, just south of the West Side Market on West 25th Street. The food giant Nestle is expanding on the other side of West 25th, and Ohio City development might be inching south. The MetroHealth Hospital main campus is just a mile away, and they too are undergoing a big expansion.

So where does this leave the QVB neighborhood? With the same uncertainty the house next to Ms. Rojas has. It is still abandoned and the bank that owns it is sorting out the property taxes, who owes how much, and all those pesky details that will make it sit empty for many more years.

Part of the problem is that the QVB neighborhood is isolated. When the I-90 freeway was constructed in the 1970s, it cut off this neighborhood from retail areas along West 25th Street and Clark Avenue. Freight train tracks in a valley just north of the neighborhood cut it off from Ohio City. And to the east, is the Nestle plant.

"We realize there are problems in this neighborhood; you just need to walk around and see that many houses are abandoned or occupied by renters who don't care much," Rojas says. "The city and the community groups need to work with us to change that, because that is not a good situation for anyone."

"But I don't want some real estate developer to just come in here and buy us all out because they think Ohio City type development will work over here," she says. "We can't just kick out the old folks who have lived here and invested their lives here. I just hope we have a voice in what happens here, for good or for bad."





Development projects occur throughout Cleveland's neighborhoods. But given the city's growing inventory of nearly 14,000 publicly held vacant parcels, the Cleveland City Planning Commission created a Sustainable Development Pattern map to guide decisions about the disposition of these properties.³⁰







The map identifies existing neighborhood centers—and the major streets and transit lines that connect these centers—as priority locations for infill development. The goal is to create and reinforce walkable districts clustered around existing housing, commercial uses, recreation facilities, universities, and neighborhood services. Simply stated, the Sustainable Development Pattern map encourages development to occur in concentrated ways to leverage existing infrastructure, investments, and amenities.

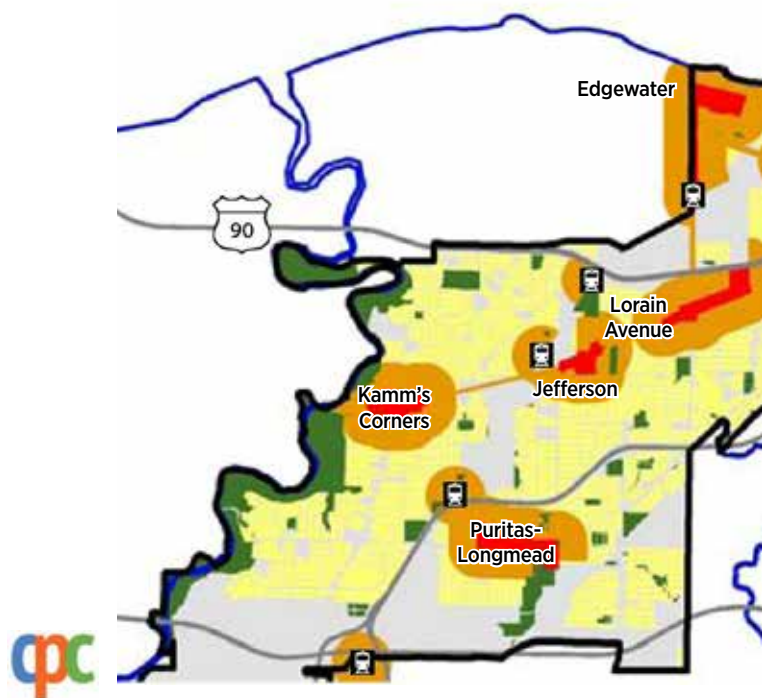
The results of the Cleveland Property Inventory can help guide new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings in ways that reinforce the sustainable development patterns shown on the map. For example, when buildings rated “D” or “F” are located in a Neighborhood Center or along a Development Corridor, they could first be assessed for possible rehabilitation, rather than demolition. If demolition is necessary, the resulting vacant sites could be held in the land bank for future infill development.

When demolition occurs outside of the priority development areas shown on the map, the resulting vacant sites could be made available to neighbors for community gardens, side yard expansions, and other green space uses.

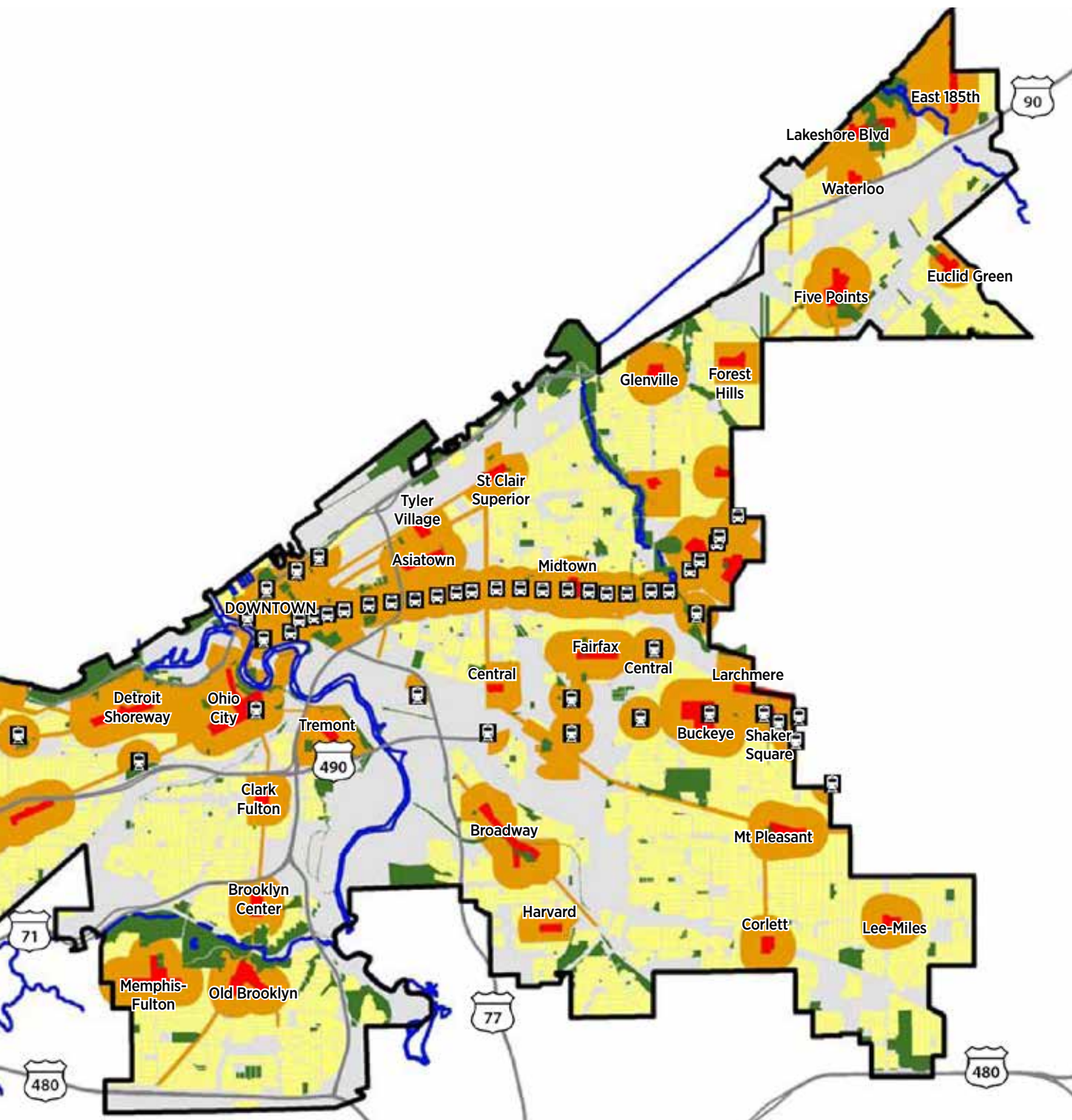
³⁰ Cleveland City Planning Commission, http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/sus_ovie

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN MAP

-  Neighborhood Centers
-  Rapid Transit Stops
-  BRT Stops
-  Walkable area around neighborhood centers, transit or development corridor
-  Proposed open space
-  Proposed residential outside of walkable distance



SOURCE: *Eight Ideas for Vacant Land Reuse*, Cleveland City Planning Commission, 2013



Value-added in demolition...

The name “Duck Island” refers to an obscure corner of the Tremont neighborhood, made up of a 100 or so houses at the western end of the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge. From what most can figure, it was a place where bootleggers could “duck in” and hide from the cops during prohibition. And given the geography around it, the Cuyahoga River and railroad tracks and various bridges, it has been an island of sorts through its history, close to downtown and Ohio City, but separated from them as well.

Real estate developers love location, and Duck Island certainly has had that over the years. But the isolation was always a problem. The area had become run down with absentee landlords who owned homes that had little architectural or historic value. It was difficult to do development one lot at a time.

“People would drive in to look at a home they might want to move into and refurbish, but turn right around because the rest of the housing stock was so bad,” says Matt Berges, one of the principals in the Duck Island Development Collaborative.

“This neighborhood is a great example of the value-added in demolition,” Berges says. “It isn’t about gentrification or moving poor people out. It is about landlords who owned older homes and wanted to get out from under it, but we couldn’t do it unless we did the whole neighborhood.”

Berges, 38, a home builder contractor by trade, bought a small apartment in Duck Island about five years ago. It came with two vacant parcels on either side, and Berges figured he could redo the apartment for his own family’s residence, and then build new homes on the side lots to pay for it all. He figured the proximity to Ohio City and Tremont would make these side lots valuable. But that was slow to happen and the banks weren’t enamored with investing in this neighborhood one house at a time. Because of its isolation, a small city park was a haven for drug dealers, crime was rampant, and Berges found it was a place where registered sex offenders were living. Even with Ohio City blowing up just a few blocks away, Duck Island was hidden from view and that is a problem in the development game.

He acquired about 60 properties and has torn down most of them. “We worked with the local block club, the community development organization, and other groups to do this right,” he says of the anti-gentrification argument some have raised. “We approached the owners of these houses and most were landlords who wanted a fair price to get out. I’ve employed many of the people who had been renting and helped them find new places to live.”

The newer homes can range from \$300,000 to \$600,000. Some have pristine views of the Cleveland downtown skyline from their third floor decks. The new residents (including Berges’ in-laws from Geauga County) are two blocks from the RTA Ohio City Rapid station, a few blocks from the West Side Market and Ohio City bars and restaurants, and a bike ride across the Lorain-Carnegie Bridge from downtown.

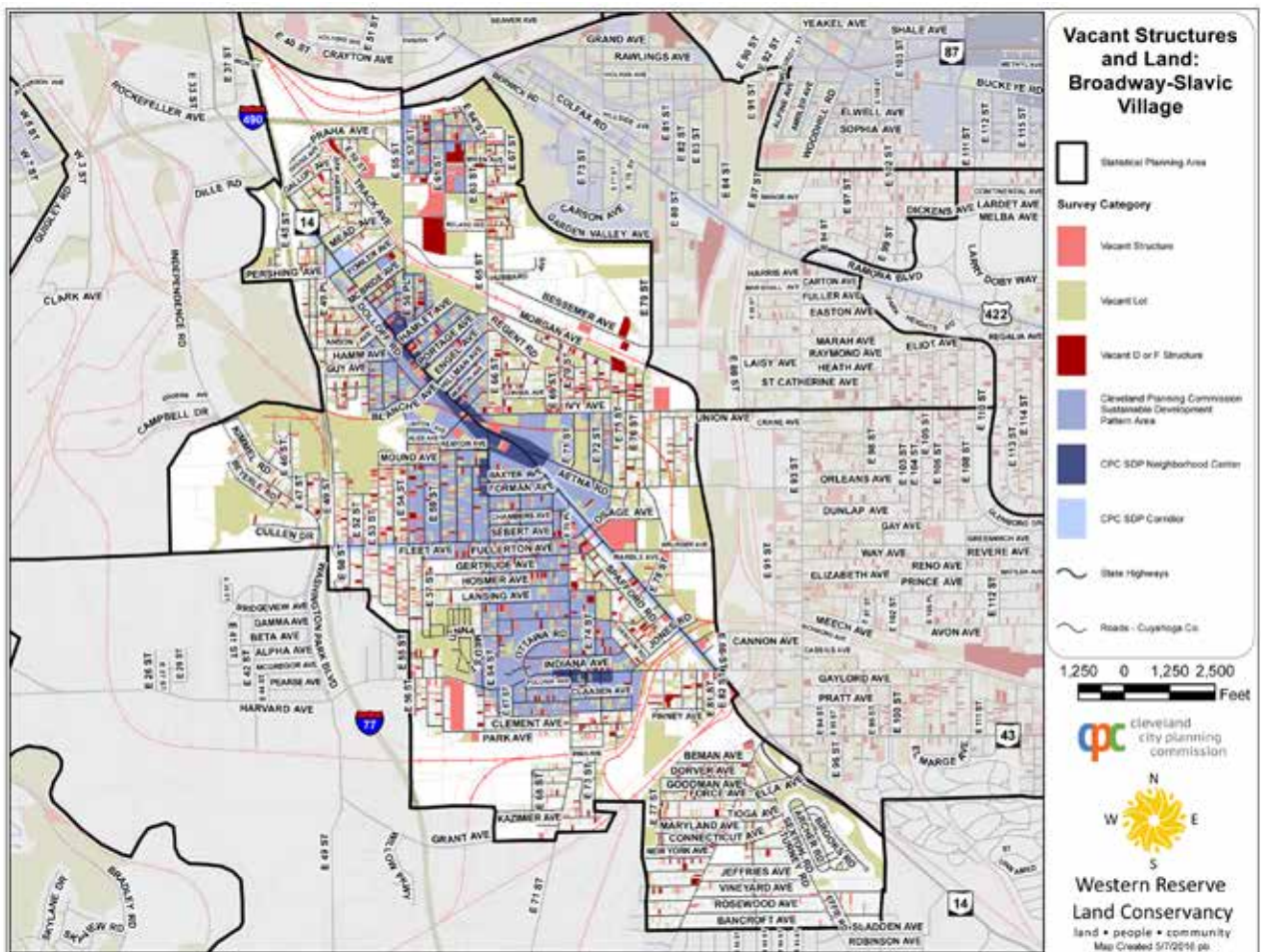
“What has attracted buyers is the volume of homes we have to offer in an urban setting,” Berges says. “We are creating a real neighborhood. My three kids couldn’t go to the park when we moved here. It was very dangerous. Now they can and I don’t worry about them. I’m proud that we have been a part in changing that.”

MATT BERGES



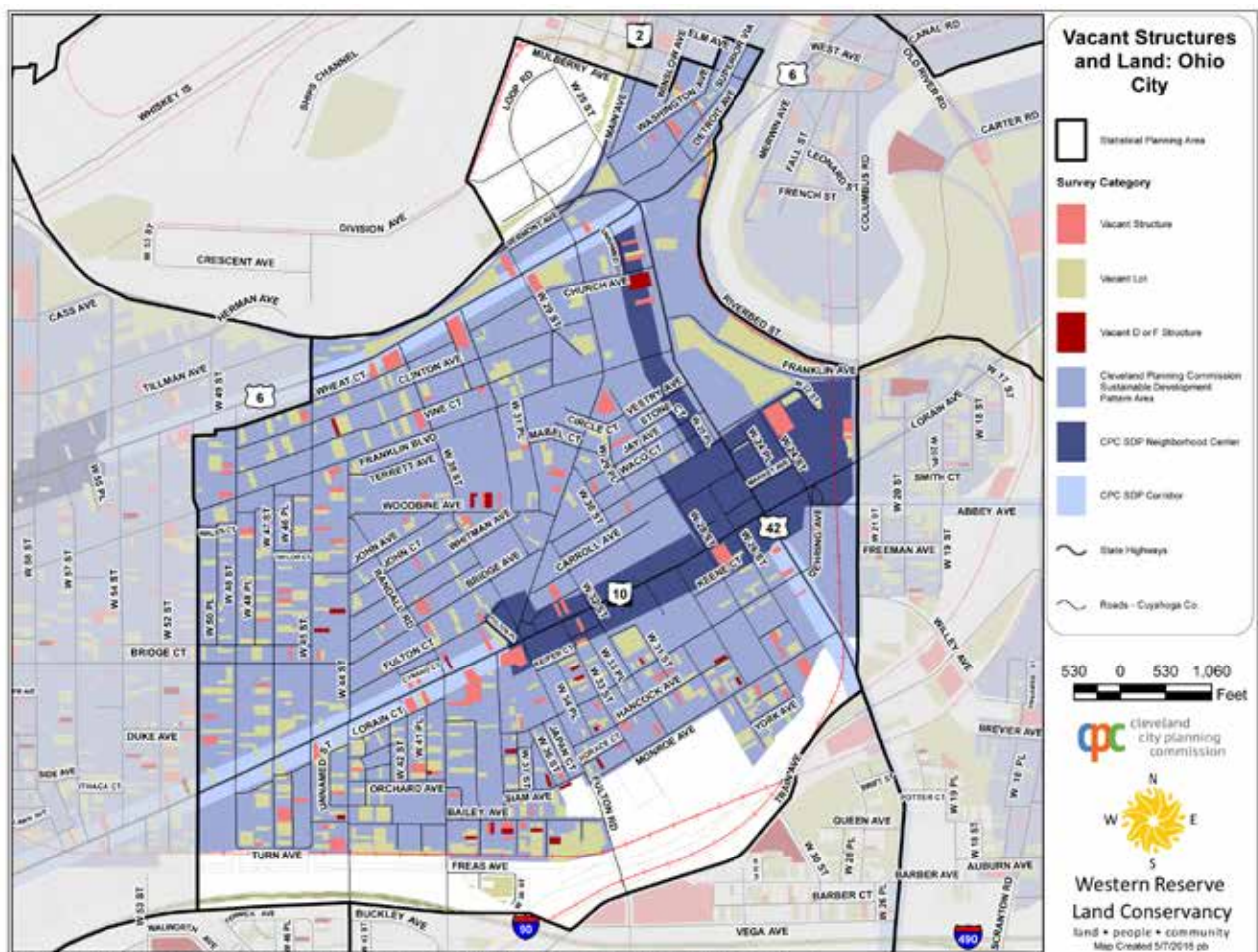
The Cleveland Property Inventory provides a fine-grained look at how the city's Sustainable Development Pattern map could influence land use decisions and future development projects in Cleveland neighborhoods.

The map below shows the Sustainable Development Pattern map applied to the Slavic Village neighborhood. In the light and dark purple areas of the map that stretch along Broadway and Fleet Avenues, rehabilitation of existing buildings and infill development on vacant sites would be encouraged. Outside of these areas, vacant lots and the sites of vacant D and F structures (once the structures are demolished) could be made available for community gardens, expanding people's back yards, stormwater management, and other green space uses.



In another example, the map below shows the Ohio City neighborhood. The real estate market is strong in Ohio City and there is a lot of demand for housing and retail development in this dense, walkable neighborhood that is well served by public transit. Almost the entire neighborhood is a priority area for sustainable development, so vacant buildings would be targeted for rehabilitation or redevelopment, and vacant parcels would be earmarked for infill development.

In APPENDIX B (beginning on page 131) there are maps of every Cleveland neighborhood showing the city's Sustainable Development Pattern overlaid with vacant lots and D and F structures. These maps are intended to show how the city's Sustainable Development Pattern map and policies regarding the disposition of vacant land bank lots are applied to specific neighborhood conditions.



Resettlement in Bellaire-Puritas...

There are about 4,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees living in Northeast Ohio, with about half of those in Cuyahoga County. They have come to Northeast Ohio because of political and ethnic persecution in their home country, and are often dropped off in different parts of the United States without any choice of their own.

Amber Pokwal, 55, is a Bhutanese refugee in Cleveland. He has been in Cleveland for seven years, joined by his wife, Santi, and six children. Most of those years have been spent in the Bellaire-Puritas neighborhood on Cleveland's West Side. Last year, he opened the Nepali Grocery Store and West 139th Street and Lorain Avenue to help serve the needs of the growing Bhutanese community.

His small store is staffed by his family. They live down the street in a home they rent, and Pokwal is quite thankful for where he and his family ended up. "What happens is that once some get settled in certain areas, they help others to get settled too," he says. "That's what happened here. And we have helped other people from Bhutan get settled in Cleveland."

"For the most part, people have been very welcoming, and helping us to learn the language and the culture," he says. "And the housing we have lived in here, from the apartments to the houses, have been very nice and very affordable."

Pokwal's store has become a magnet for the Bhutanese refugee population who lives close by. The store is stocked with Indian/Bhutanese foods that are hard to find here, but it is also a place where Bhutanese kids and others from the adjoining streets come by to chat and hang out. And, of course, the place to purchase phone cards.

Since 2000, about 5,000 refugees have resettled in Cleveland. The majority of them come from Bhutan, Burma, Iraq, and Somalia. Most are sponsored by Cleveland Catholic Charities, which sponsors about 350 to 400 refugees a year. Decades of inter-ethnic conflicts between the Bhutanese monarch government and Nepali-speaking ethnic groups in the country have caused numerous human rights issues. Bhutan lies just north of Bangladesh, between Tibet and India, and just west of Nepal. Pokwal and his family were deported to a refugee camp in Nepal, where they waited to be resettled.

That happened seven years ago when Cleveland Catholic Charities sponsored the family. What is tough to fathom is that Pokwal was not given the choice of his resettlement location; he was told that Cleveland is where he will land. And the refugee system is no free handout: the refugees are loaned the amount they need for transportation and initial resettlement costs and then have to pay back the loan.

There have been cultural issues to deal with, like the language and the fact that people drive on the right side of the road. And of course, the weather is an issue. Though Bhutan is mountainous in the north and quite cold, it is subtropical and warm in the south. The Pokwal family came from the temperate highlands in the middle of the country, cold but without much snow.

"The cold hasn't bothered us much," Pokwal says. "But the snow was tough to get used to. Too much snow in Cleveland."





NEPALI GROCERY STORE

WE SELL FRESH VEGETABLES AND SOUTH ASIAN GROCERIES!

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ACCEPTED HERE
goEBT

We Welcome
SNAP EBT
Customers

Lycamobile
Call the world for less

\$29 /mo.
3 hours to
NEPAL

Including Unlimited Nationwide Talk, Text & Data*

13859
ORAIN AVE

Lycamobile
Call the world for less

UNLIMITED NATIONWIDE
Talk and Text

NEED MORE DATA?

ADD ON: \$5 500M
\$10 1000M



BELLAIRE-
PURITAS

CLEVELAND'S HISTORIC HOUSING STOCK as captured in the *Cleveland Property Inventory*, is found in every neighborhood in the city. (*Urban Mutation*)



8. HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSIDERATIONS

Many buildings are demolished in Cleveland every year. Demolitions are necessary to remove blighted properties and protect the health and safety of city residents. But the speed and scale of demolition efforts raise concerns about the traditional architecture that is disappearing from Cleveland neighborhoods. In the 12-county Northeast Ohio region, an estimated 18 houses will be abandoned every day from now until 2040 due to population loss and a lack of market demand, according to the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium.³¹ These houses form the basis of traditional city neighborhoods. While they may not have dramatic architecture or major historical significance, they contribute to the familiar scale and character of city neighborhoods.

Creative rehabilitation efforts may save some from the wrecking ball. The Cleveland Restoration Society's Heritage Home Loan program provides financial assistance and technical support for housing rehabilitation.³² Streets where residents participate in this program show greater overall stability, and the action of reinvestment builds neighborhood confidence.

It is important to assess the historic and architectural value of vacant buildings and establish priorities for targeted rehabilitation efforts. A recent building survey completed by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network established simple criteria for identifying buildings most worth preserving. Volunteer surveyors used their smart phones to evaluate buildings in several Detroit neighborhoods using the following questions:

1. What is the architectural integrity of this property? High/Medium/Low/Not Historic
2. How much is this building in keeping with neighborhood character? High/Medium/Low
3. How intact is this block? Fully/Mostly/Somewhat/Not
4. Does this building warrant further research?
Yes/No

Buildings that scored high in the first three categories received special consideration for rehabilitation, rather than demolition.³³

³¹ Vibrant NEO 2014 Dashboard, <http://vibrantneo.org/action-products/dashboard/>

³² Cleveland Restoration Society Heritage Home Program <http://clevelandrestoration.org/homeowner/index.php>

³³ Emilie Evans, "Integrity, Character, and Intactness," *Historic Preservation and Urban Change*, Urban Infill Vol 7, Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative, 2014.





The adjacent maps shows existing local and National Register historic districts in the city. The good news is that these historic districts have relatively few vacant and deteriorated buildings—an indication that building owners value these historic resources.

But it is possible, in fact likely, that many appealing and culturally significant historic buildings exist outside of established historic districts. Some assessment of National Register eligibility already occurs, since this is required when federal funds are used for demolition efforts. But the only way to a comprehensive understanding of the unique architecture in Cleveland neighborhoods is through a comprehensive, citywide historic resources inventory.

Using traditional survey methods, this would be a time-consuming process. But perhaps by combining the simple assessment criteria used in Detroit with the photographic documentation of every building in Cleveland created through the Cleveland Property Inventory, a quick and comprehensive assessment of the city's historic building stock could be achieved. The results of this assessment could be used to guide future demolition efforts and target support for rehabilitation.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS & DISTRESSED PROPERTIES

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

-  National Register Historic District
-  Cleveland Landmark District

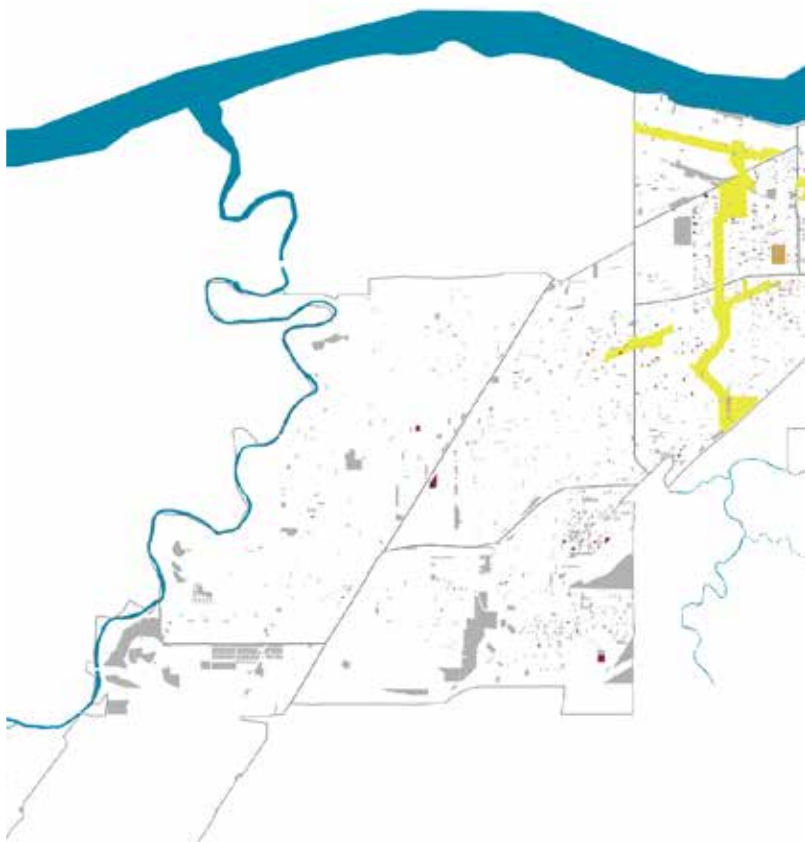
DISTRESSED PROPERTIES

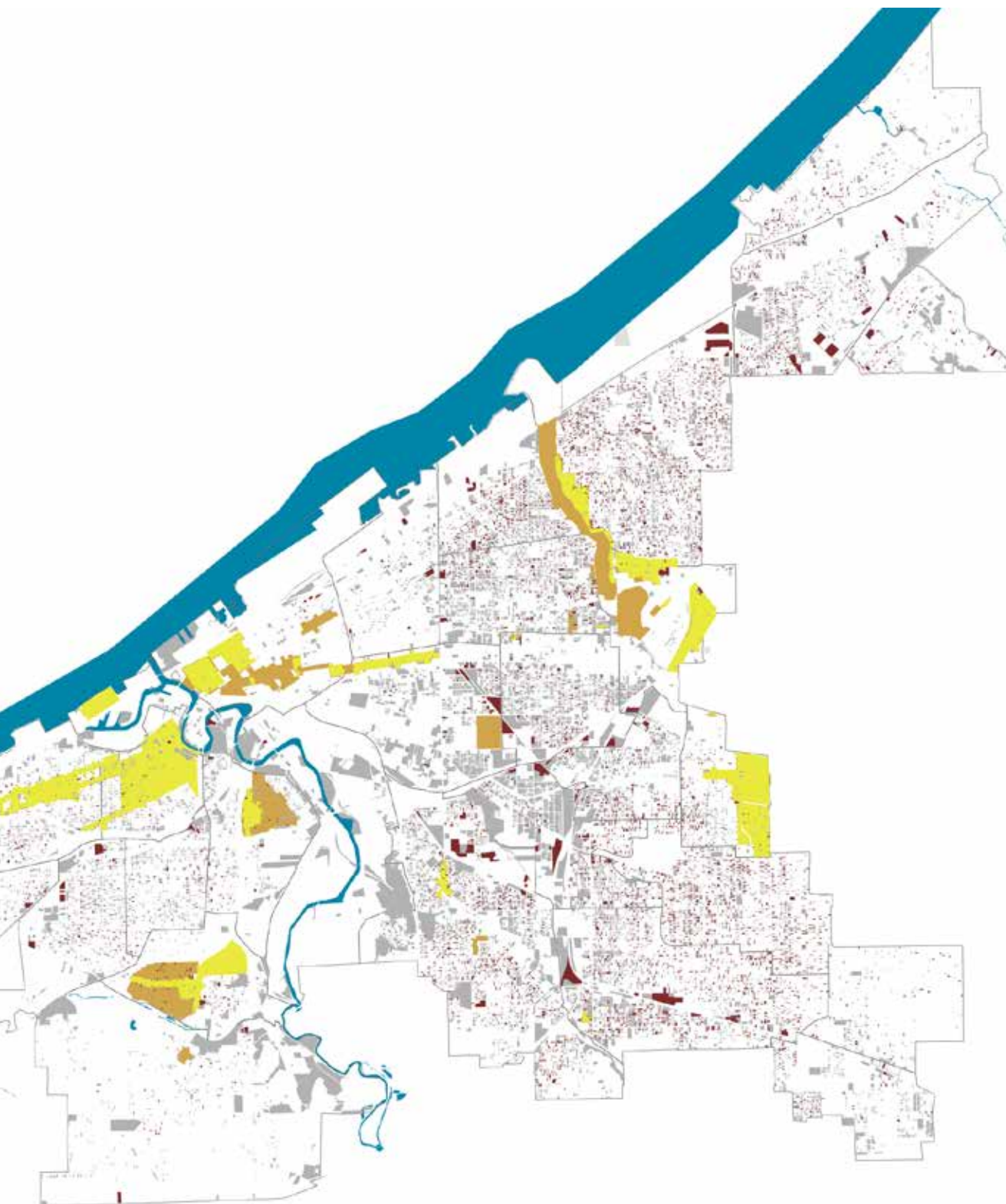
In National Register District: 103
In Cleveland Landmark District: 76

VACANT LOTS

In National Register District: 643
In Cleveland Landmark District: 573

*Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015
Property Inventory and the City of Cleveland.*





A home restoration story...

About five years ago, when Jonathan Karpick and Jamye Jamison lived in an apartment in the Detroit-Shoreway neighborhood on Cleveland's near west side, they saw a house for sale across the street. The house was on Franklin Boulevard, built in 1898, and had been abandoned for about eight years and condemned. There was a hole in the roof.

The couple had moved to Cleveland from the San Francisco Bay Area. She works in art restoration and he in banking, and they thought they might want to set down roots here. But they didn't know if they wanted to take on that much work, knowing that the major problem in historic home restoration is not what you see, but what you can't.

So they went to look at the house next door. It was a "twin" of the one they were thinking of buying and had been restored some years earlier. "When we went into that house, we were able to look at all the things they had done and could get an idea of what it would look like if we did the restoration," says Jamison.

"We knew we liked this neighborhood. It was within walking and biking distance of almost everything we like to do. We knew we liked our careers in Cleveland and we thought about this as a long-term commitment," she continues.

So they went "all in." Bought the house in July of 2013 for \$9,000 ended up putting in about \$370,000 to make the house livable. Just about everything—from plumbing to electrical to floor and walls—had to be redone. They moved into the house in October of 2014.

The investment may seem a bit steep for the overhaul of a condemned house, but the details show otherwise. A low interest loan from the Cleveland Restoration Society reduced their monthly payments. Cleveland's tax abatement plan for single-family residences froze their property taxes at the value prior to rehab for ten years. And by following the city's Enterprise Green Communities Initiative, they have been able to keep electricity and heating costs low.

They estimate the value of their house now at about \$350,000. "When we added up the savings from low interest loans, tax abatement, and lower utility bills, it reduced our monthly costs substantially," Karpick says. He estimated a similar house in the San Francisco area might go for at least \$1-2 million. He feels that their home's value is going up because development is boosting property values in the Ohio City and Detroit-Shoreway neighborhoods.

The house is about 2,400 square feet not including the basement and attic. They focused on simplicity—clean lines and open adjoined rooms. "We figured we would spend what we needed to upfront, because this is going to be home for a long time," Jamison says.

They have a few things they would like to see the city work on—improving city schools so more families move in and slowing down traffic on Franklin Boulevard. But for the most part, they are very happy with where they chose to live and invest. "We can walk to restaurants and a movie theater and bicycle to our jobs. Edgewater Park is nearby and nothing we need is more than a five minute walk or bike ride away," she says.

"But the most important part is the people who live in this neighborhood—and it is really a very diverse group—really care about this neighborhood and get involved," Jamison says. "It is nice to be a part of that."



JAYME JAMISON
JONATHAN KARPICK

6013

DETROIT-
SHOREWAY

SHORE
CITY

GREEN SPACE PROJECTS are taking shape throughout the city, including the Reforest Our City efforts of Western Reserve Land Conservancy.



9. GREENING OPPORTUNITIES

Demolishing vacant and deteriorated buildings allows for the creation of new green spaces on some of the sites where these buildings once stood. Although the long-term maintenance of urban green spaces can be challenging, these kinds of community amenities help to foster social cohesion, enhance property values, and make neighborhoods more livable.

Community gardens and urban agriculture projects have sprouted in neighborhoods all across the city. Small parks, playgrounds, and community gathering places are also part of local vacant land greening efforts.

Demolition of vacant and deteriorated buildings could be targeted to areas of the city where the resulting green space will help to manage stormwater runoff. Vacant sites with well-drained soil can be graded and landscaped to collect stormwater from roofs, sidewalks, and driveways and allow it to be absorbed into the ground, rather than directed into an aging and overburdened sewer system. Urban green spaces can also help keep temperatures cooler in the summer months, reducing energy costs and buffering residents from the adverse effects of climate change.

On a larger scale, vacant sites and deteriorated buildings could be assembled into linear green spaces that align with underground creeks and streams. In Cleveland, many creeks and streams were buried in culverts years ago, when urban growth pressures demanded more land for development. But now, when the city has so many unused buildings and vacant sites, there is an unprecedented opportunity to restore the region's urban watersheds by assembling vacant sites that align with and protect these buried waterways.



Stabilization through gardening...

In the middle of an open space in the Hough neighborhood, a four parcel plot of land where neighbors grow vegetables and host events, sits what looks like a giant beehive. About four feet high, rounded stones cobbled together, with a wooden door on the side and picnic tables around it.

It's a pizza oven. So what is a pizza oven doing outdoors on a quiet street in the middle of a community garden? "We make pizza in it," Elle Adams laughs. "Other food too. If you're going to grow food, it's nice to cook it and eat it as well."

Adams is speaking from the City Rising Farm on Blaine Avenue. She was among the community organizers who got the farm going in 2010. It now has a "high tunnel" for growing all year round, as well as plots that volunteers take care of. The yield of vegetables and herbs stays in the neighborhood for the most part, providing elderly with fresh food and teaching young people the value of producing their own food.

"People always asked what are the most important crops we produce and I always tell them the most important crop is people," Adams says. "We grow people as well as well as food. I have seen it so many times in that we give young people an opportunity for access to success. This garden is an important tool to not only teach, but to bring people in the neighborhood together."

Adams used to run the Cleveland Summer Sprouts program, which oversees the city's community garden, but is now concentrating on urban agriculture programs in Hough. The site of City Rising Farm used to have three houses on it. One burned while the other two were razed. The community group leases the property from the city for a nominal charge, and has gotten grants for improvement to the property. "We have people gardening here from three to 109 years of age," she says proudly.

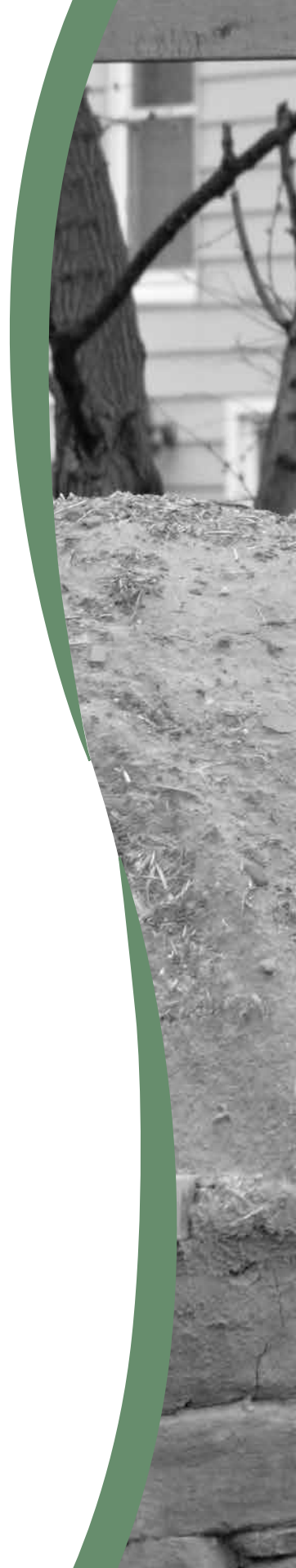
She has seen two major changes on Blaine Avenue since the farm started operating. Crime has declined in the areas immediately around the garden, and dumping on vacant lots has gone down as well. "When we first started, we had to clean up trash constantly, for people from all parts of the area saw this neighborhood as a place to dump their trash," she says.

"But people have an investment in this project now, and that transfers to neighborhood safety as well," Adams continues. "Having this garden makes people pay attention. There is positive activity in an area that didn't have a lot of positive activity."

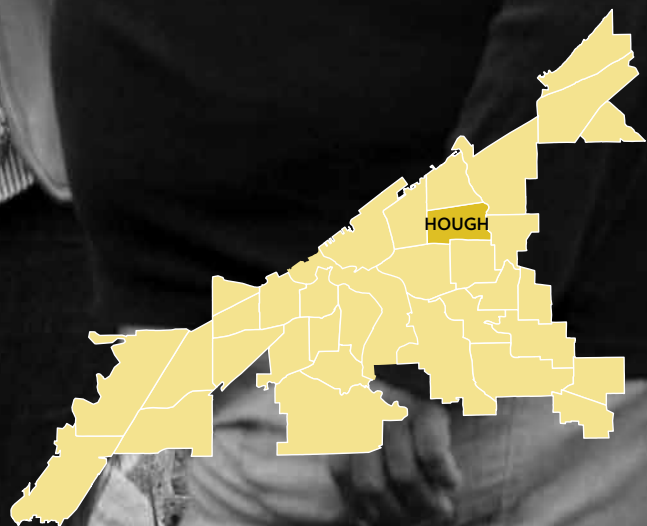
And that attitude should transfer to the area's housing policies, she says. On Blaine Avenue, there are a number of vacant lots and abandoned houses near the garden, and Adams feels that all efforts need to be made to save older houses.

"Not every house that is abandoned needs to be torn down, but some are too far gone to save, we all know that," Adams says. "But I think we need to make a better effort to find people in the community who might be able to put the effort in and stabilize the neighborhoods because the people living there have a very real investment if they have worked on the house they live in."

"That's what we have found with this very simple garden. It has stabilized this neighborhood in ways that other programs haven't. Because people feel like it is theirs and they take care of it. We can transfer that feeling into their homes as well with community input and involvement."



LORETTA WILLIAMS
ELLE ADAMS








Cleveland has existing parks and green spaces in every neighborhood. Vacant land could be used to expand some of these spaces in ways that wouldn't significantly increase the city's maintenance obligations. Also, some parts of the city lack sufficient parks and would benefit from the addition of new green spaces designed to address residents' needs.

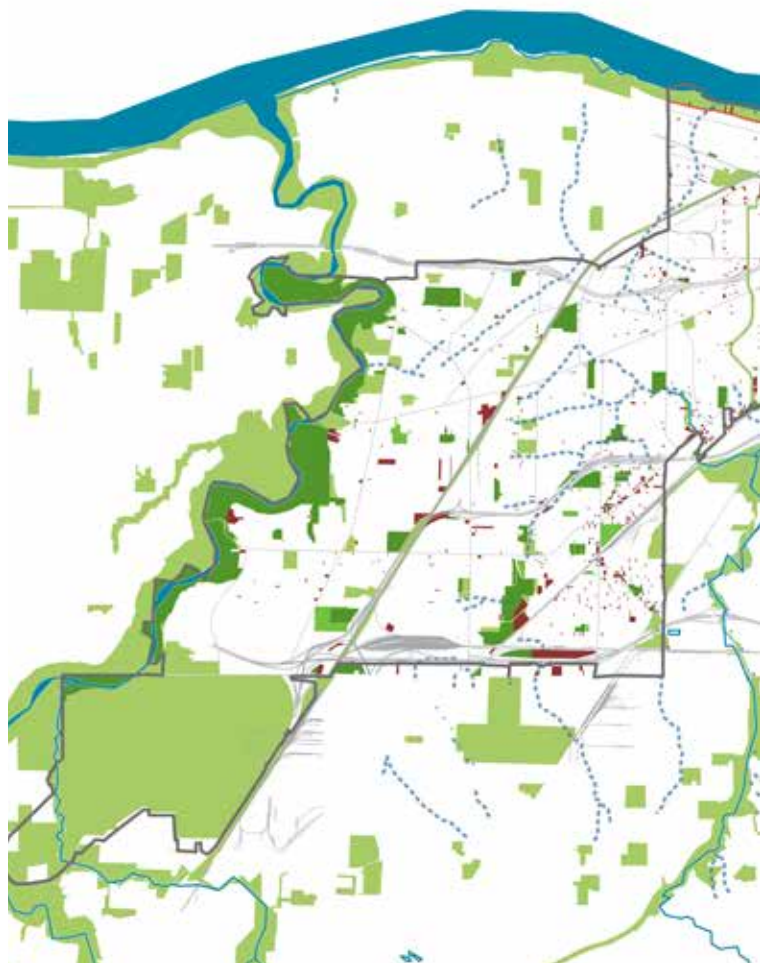
The adjacent map shows vacant lots and existing green spaces to suggest ways in which parks could be expanded, and in some cases connected, using some of the land in the land bank inventories.

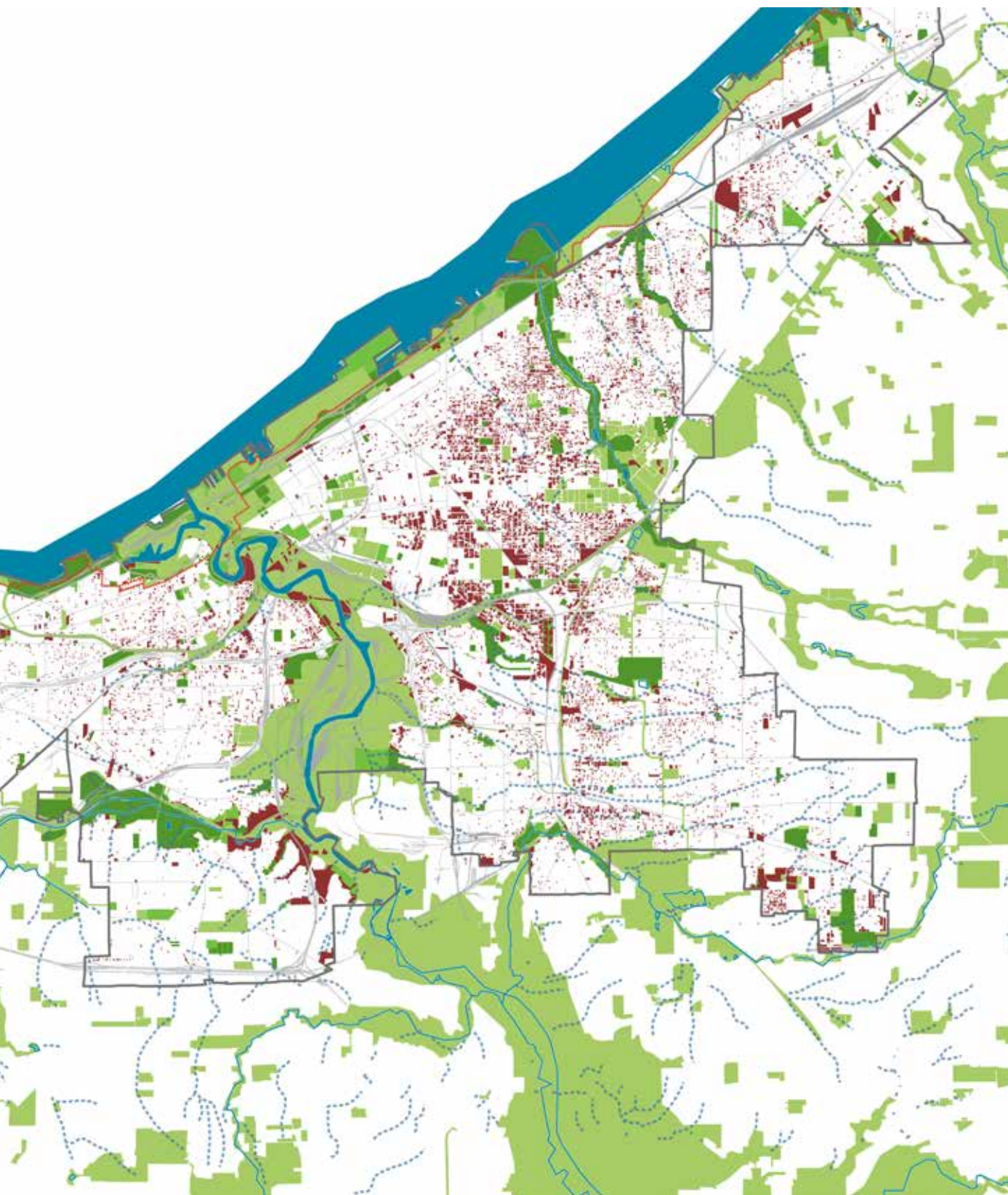
Detailed maps in Appendix C, beginning on page 165, provide a closer look at vacancy and green space in every city neighborhood, to suggest ways that vacant lots could be used to expand and enhance the existing green space network.

POTENTIAL GREEN SPACE EXPANSION

-  Existing Parks
-  Proposed Parks & Green Space Connections
-  County Greenprint
-  Culverted Streams
-  Vacant Lots

Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015 Property Inventory and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

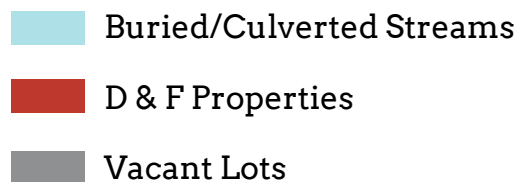




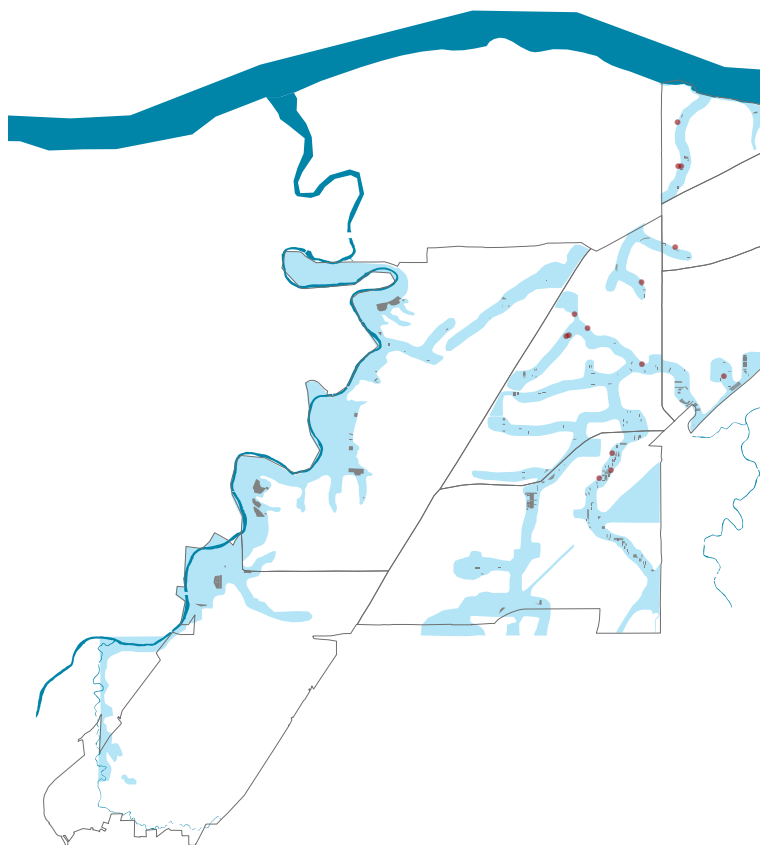
Years ago, when Cleveland was rapidly growing, development occurred with little regard for underlying natural systems. Many creeks and streams that once fed into the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie were buried in pipes to accommodate the development demands of a young and growing city. Few traces of these natural waterways were allowed to remain, as the city's dense neighborhoods emerged on top of them. But today, vacant land in the city offers an opportunity to restore the presence of water in the city.

Fully restoring Cleveland's network of creeks and streams would be vastly expensive and probably unrealistic, given the many other needs the city faces. But by simply choosing to set aside vacant land above these buried streams and not rebuild there, the city would make meaningful progress toward protecting and restoring the health of Lake Erie and the water that flows into it.

BURIED STREAMS, VACANT LOTS & DISTRESSED PROPERTIES



Data from the Thriving Communities Program 2015 Property Inventory and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.





STABLE NEIGHBORHOODS are essential to
Cleveland's future. (Image ©2015 Google Earth)



10. MOVING FORWARD

Cleveland faces many challenges due to a declining population, the loss of businesses and industries, and the lingering effects of the mortgage foreclosure crisis. But despite these challenges, much of the city is in remarkably good condition.

Stable Neighborhoods 71% of the buildings in the city are occupied. Of these occupied buildings, 84% of them are in good or excellent condition. For stable neighborhoods, where most buildings are occupied and well-maintained, it's important to rehabilitate any deteriorated buildings as quickly as possible, and to demolish those that are beyond repair. This will help protect neighboring property values and deter the spread of blight.

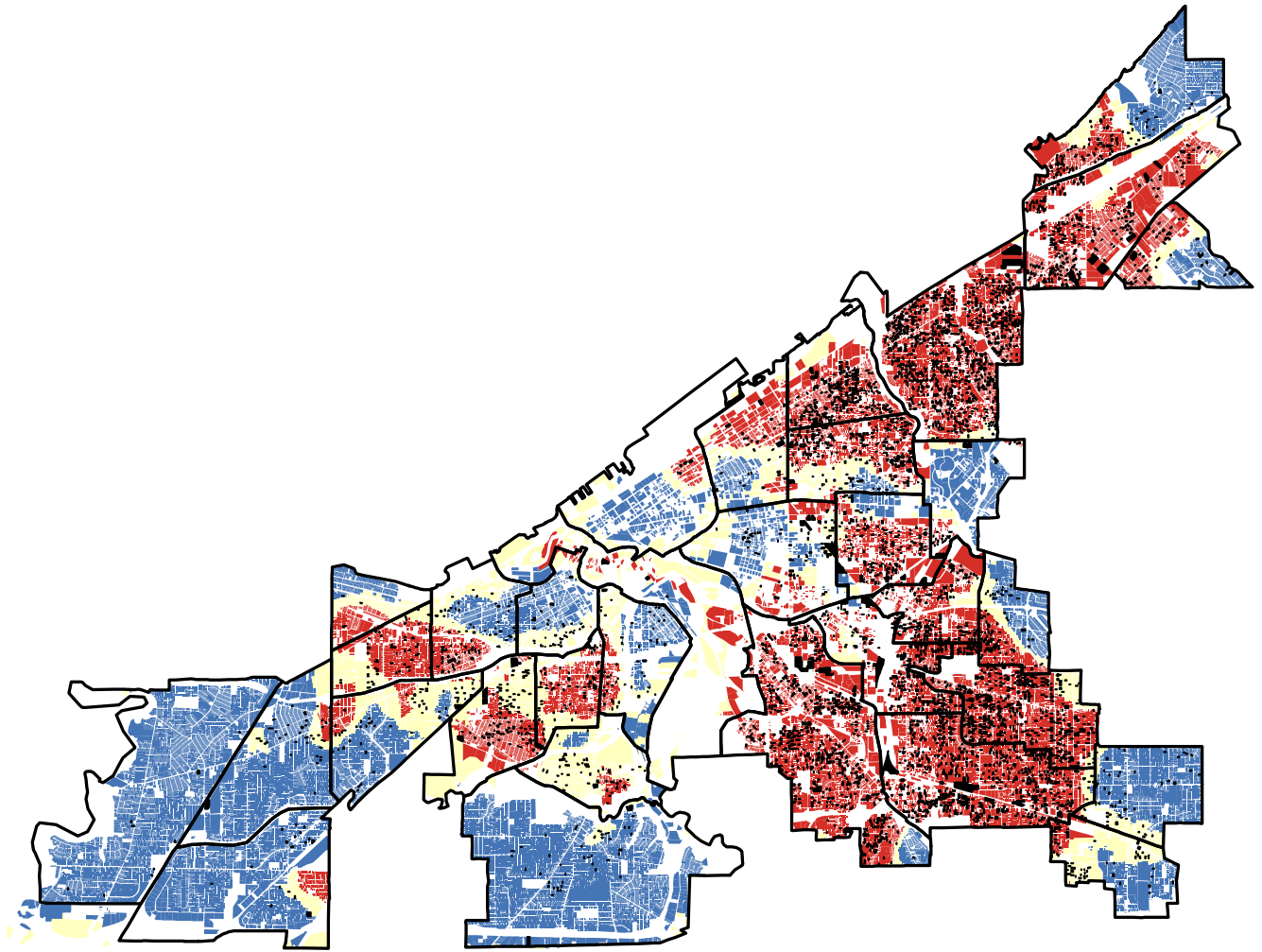
Struggling Neighborhoods There is no denying that some neighborhoods in Cleveland have too many vacant and distressed buildings. In these neighborhoods, one approach might be to demolish clusters of blighted buildings in a concentrated area, all at once. This might be more effective and impactful than spreading demolition efforts around more broadly.

The vacant lots left behind after demolition could be consolidated for future infill development, especially in those areas that correspond to priority zones on the Cleveland City Planning Commission's Sustainable Development Pattern map, discussed in Section 8 (pages 68-69) and shown by neighborhood in Appendix B (starting on page 131). In areas that are not priority locations for future development, groups of vacant lots could be converted to large-scale green spaces that offer neighborhood benefits like recreation space, stormwater management to reduce flooding, and urban reforestation to reduce household energy costs and buffer residents from the effects of climate change.

Most importantly, Cleveland residents would benefit from having an opportunity to help "ground-truth" the Sustainable Development Pattern map for their neighborhoods and participate in decisions about where infill development is a priority, and where green space uses are preferred.

While childhood lead poisoning is a concern in any neighborhood with older housing, the problem is most severe in struggling neighborhoods where many houses are in poor condition. The research outlined in Section 6 (page 44) describes the serious and lasting effects of lead poisoning in young children. Neighborhoods with





Cleveland Property Inventory Results: Hot Spot Analysis

All D & F selection
 Cold Spot - Low Grades are Dispersed
 Not Significantly Different than Random
 Hot Spot - Low Grades are Clustered

HOT SPOTS / COLD SPOTS ANALYSIS *This map summarizes the results of the Cleveland Property Inventory. It shows areas of the city where there are large clusters of distressed D- and F-grade properties (Hot Spots, in red) and areas where D- and F-grade properties are more dispersed in between well-maintained structures (Cold Spots, in blue).*

In Cold Spots, the targeted demolition or rehabilitation of distressed properties may be all that's needed to achieve neighborhood stabilization. In Hot Spots, an on-going effort may be required to eradicate concentrations of vacant buildings and assemble vacant land into larger parcels for redevelopment and community greening efforts.

concentrations of vacant and distressed buildings could become priority areas for:

- Testing and treating children for lead poisoning.
- Remediating lead contamination through housing rehabilitation and demolition.
- Helping families relocate from lead-contaminated properties in order to avoid childhood lead exposure.

Tipping Point Neighborhoods Some neighborhoods are experiencing disinvestment and reinvestment at the same time. In these neighborhoods, many buildings are occupied and well-maintained, but vacancy and disinvestment are also widespread. In these neighborhoods, perhaps the best approach is a hybrid strategy aimed at eliminating obvious health and safety hazards, demolishing nuisance properties, and protecting kids from lead exposure. Foreclosure prevention programs special rehab incentives could be targeted to these transitional neighborhoods, to help them tip toward stability, rather than falling into decline.

MOVING FORWARD There is a lot of work to be done to maintain and expand areas of stability in the city and to address the most urgent issues of decline. The City of Cleveland's Department of Building and Housing is already putting the Property Inventory to good use. Ronald O'Leary, Director of Building and Housing described the city's aggressive efforts to inspect and eradicate vacant and abandoned properties, which included the addition of temporary inspectors and support staff in 2012 and 2013 to deal with the aftermath of the mortgage foreclosure crisis.

Looking at the data in the Cleveland Property Inventory, it is clear that the city has reduced the number of distressed properties in the city through targeted demolition efforts.

The city has accelerated its demolition program in certain high priority areas. These areas are based on economic and community development needs, high levels crime, and proximity to schools and anchor institutions. Each condemned building in the city is scored based on a series of weighted factors. The highest scoring buildings are demolished first.

There is also an important human element to this decision-making process. In situations where a nearby homeowner or business is being seriously affected by a distressed property, the city can move that property up on the demolition priority list.

According to Mr. O'Leary, the Cleveland Property Inventory has been helpful to the city in two important ways:

1. *Big Picture*: The Inventory has confirmed the city's observations that neighborhood conditions are gradually improving. The number of vacant and distressed properties is going down and the number of permits being issued for building repairs and improvements has gone up.
2. *Routine Operations*: The city uses the Inventory when it does a bi-monthly screening of properties owned by bulk holders (absentee owners who own multiple properties in the city). In addition to checking whether these properties are condemned or have been boarded up, the city also checks the grade of each property in the Inventory as a way of preempting disinvestment and other problems that can occur with bulk property owners.³⁴

Every neighborhood can be a healthy and viable place to live, provided there are policies and programs in place that respond to changing conditions and neighborhood variations throughout the city. The Cleveland Property Inventory is a valuable tool to help stabilize and strengthen the city's neighborhoods.

³⁴ Interview with Ronald O'Leary, Director of Building and Housing, City of Cleveland, May 22, 2016.

Staying put is the goal for now...

There is a huge fenced-in, vacant property across the street from Joyce Pratt's home on Larchmere Boulevard. For years there were schools on that property, full of the kids being busy and all the noise and traffic that comes with that. But the A.G. Bell School was torn down in 2013 and the Jesse Owens Academy will be demolished this summer, and there was a lot of discussion about how to reuse the old school properties.

After long deliberations, a special education campus run by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District will be built--including a new facility for the Sunbeam School--which will serve medically disadvantaged children. Joyce Pratt and her neighbors are glad the property near Larchmere and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevards will continue to be used for education in their community and not multi-family housing.

"These schools had been in the neighborhood for such a long time, and there was talk of different kinds of housing being put up," says Pratt. "But we always found ways to work with these schools by being good neighbors, doing fundraising for the Sunbeam School and helping out wherever we could. We felt that having this new special ed campus served a need and served a purpose in our neighborhood, and more housing built there did not."

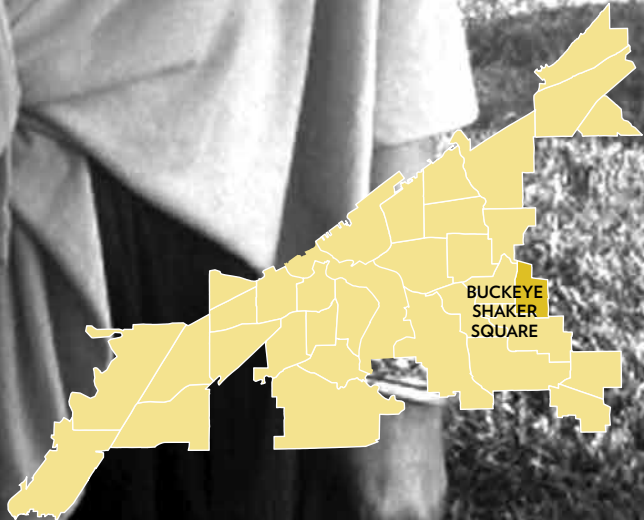
Joyce and her husband Allen bought their home (built in 1903) in 1977 and raised four children there. He is retired from a job with Ford Motor Company, and she has had a career in social service work, still working in elderly housing services at age 66. They love their neighborhood and the mix of people who live there--with its great view of downtown Cleveland from its high ground location and proximity to the Shaker Rapid lines and great shopping on Larchmere and at Shaker Square within walking distance of their home.

It was difficult for the neighborhood association she heads to advocate for tearing down the Jesse Owens Academy building, built in 1914. "I love the building and wanted to see it re-purposed," she said. "But it had been vandalized and was very dangerous for the neighborhood and the costs was going to be so high just to get it into usable shape," she says. "So I was very glad that the school district was able to find a use for this property which will serve the needs of these children, and have neighbors who are glad to be having these children in our neighborhood."

For the Pratts, now empty-nesters with their children living in Cleveland and in other cities around the country, staying put is the goal for now. "We are seeing a resurgence of people who love to live in the Larchmere neighborhood," she says. "It is so close to University Circle, and you can be downtown in 15 minutes on the rapid. We can walk to really great restaurants. And the diversity of the people on this street is great, different ages and incomes and jobs and backgrounds."

But if they do decide to move (one of their children lives in Hawaii, and that is very tempting, she says), Ms. Pratt doesn't see having much of a problem selling their house. "There has always been a very tight knit group of people on this street, and when a house is coming up for sale, we whisper to each other and they sell pretty quickly," she says. "No need to advertise."





NEIGHBORHOOD IMAGES *from
the 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory*



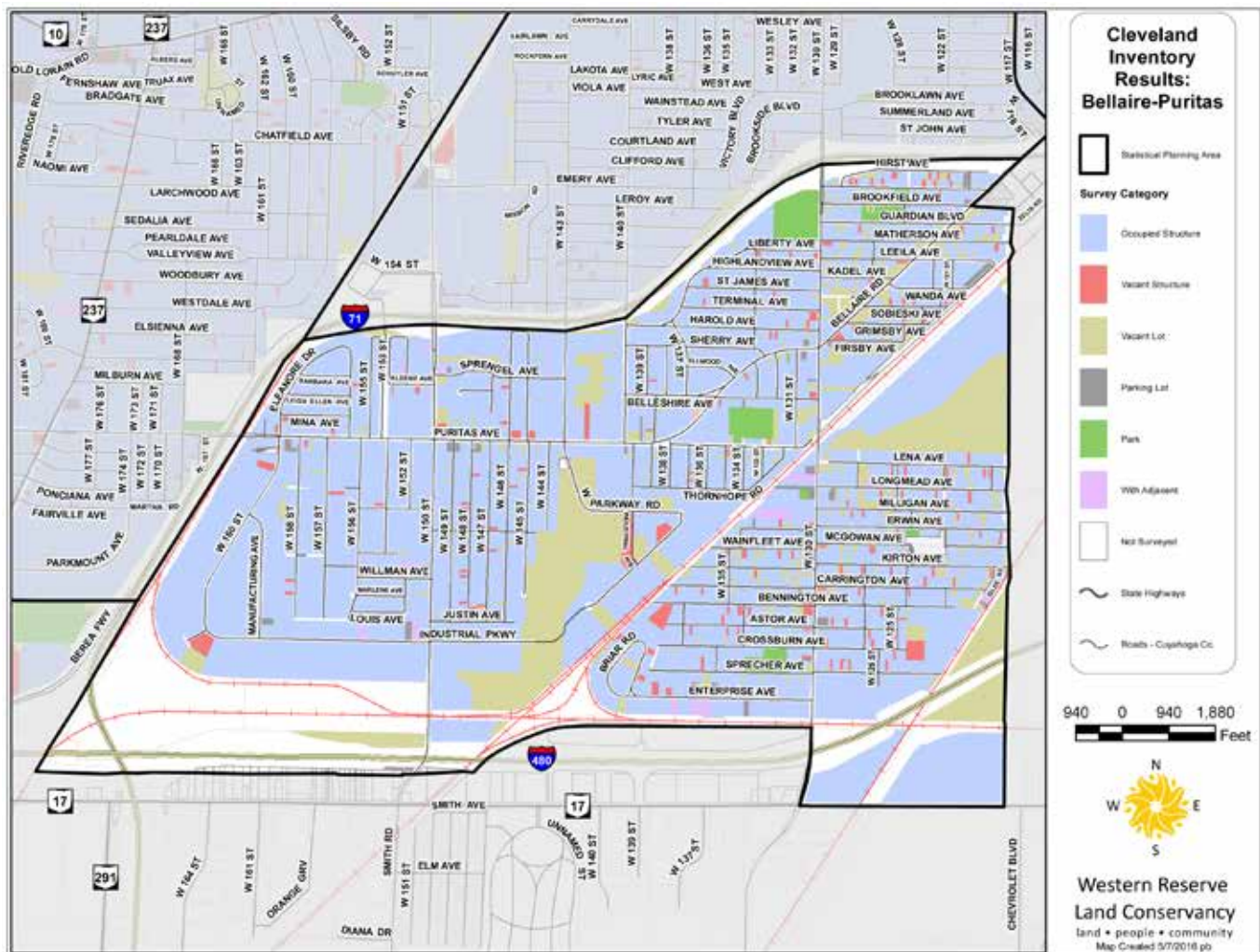
APPENDIX A: Property Inventory Results

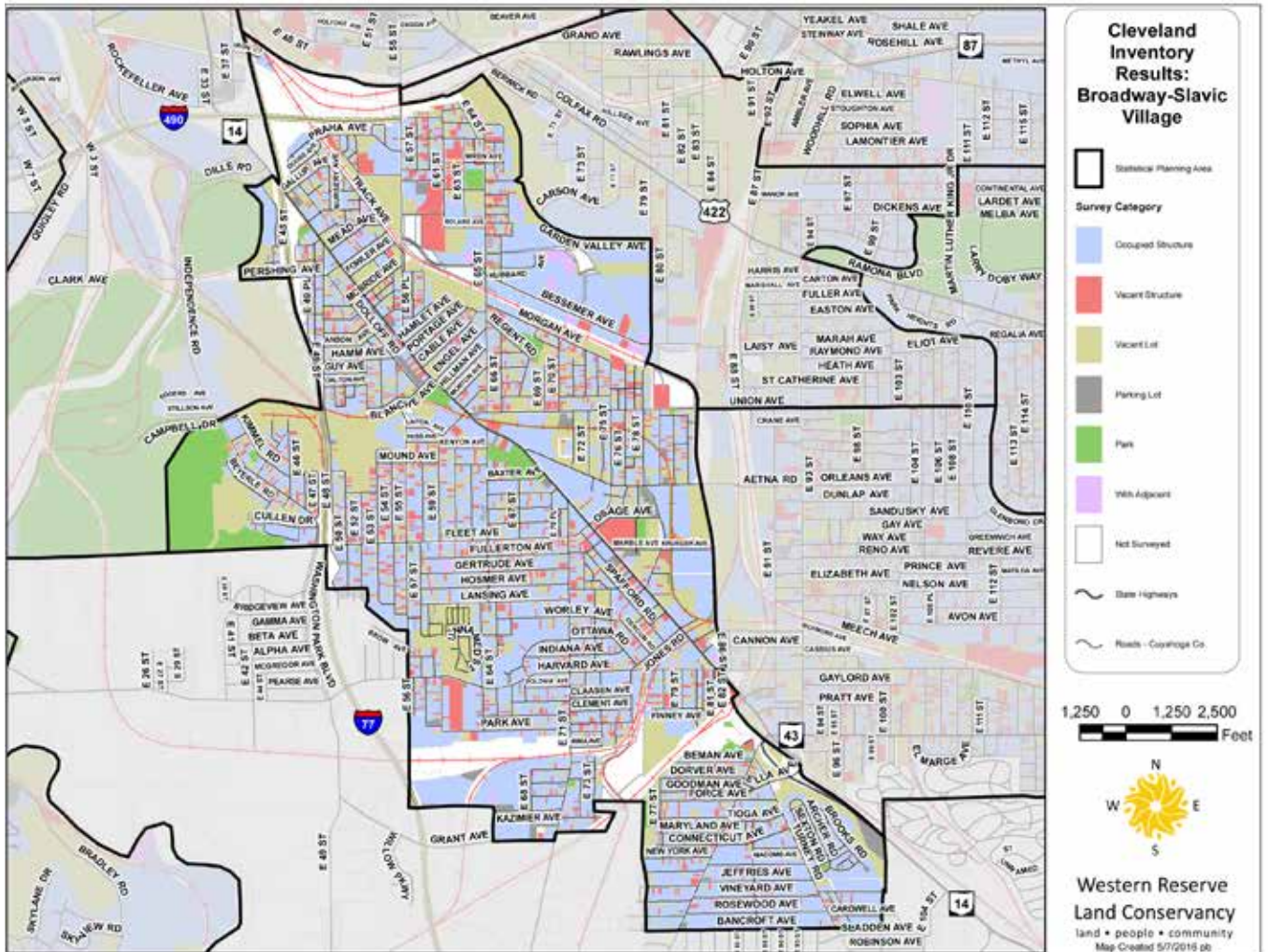
This appendix includes maps of Cleveland's 33 neighborhoods, showing the location and distribution of vacant and occupied structures, and vacant lots in 2015 when the Cleveland Property Inventory took place.

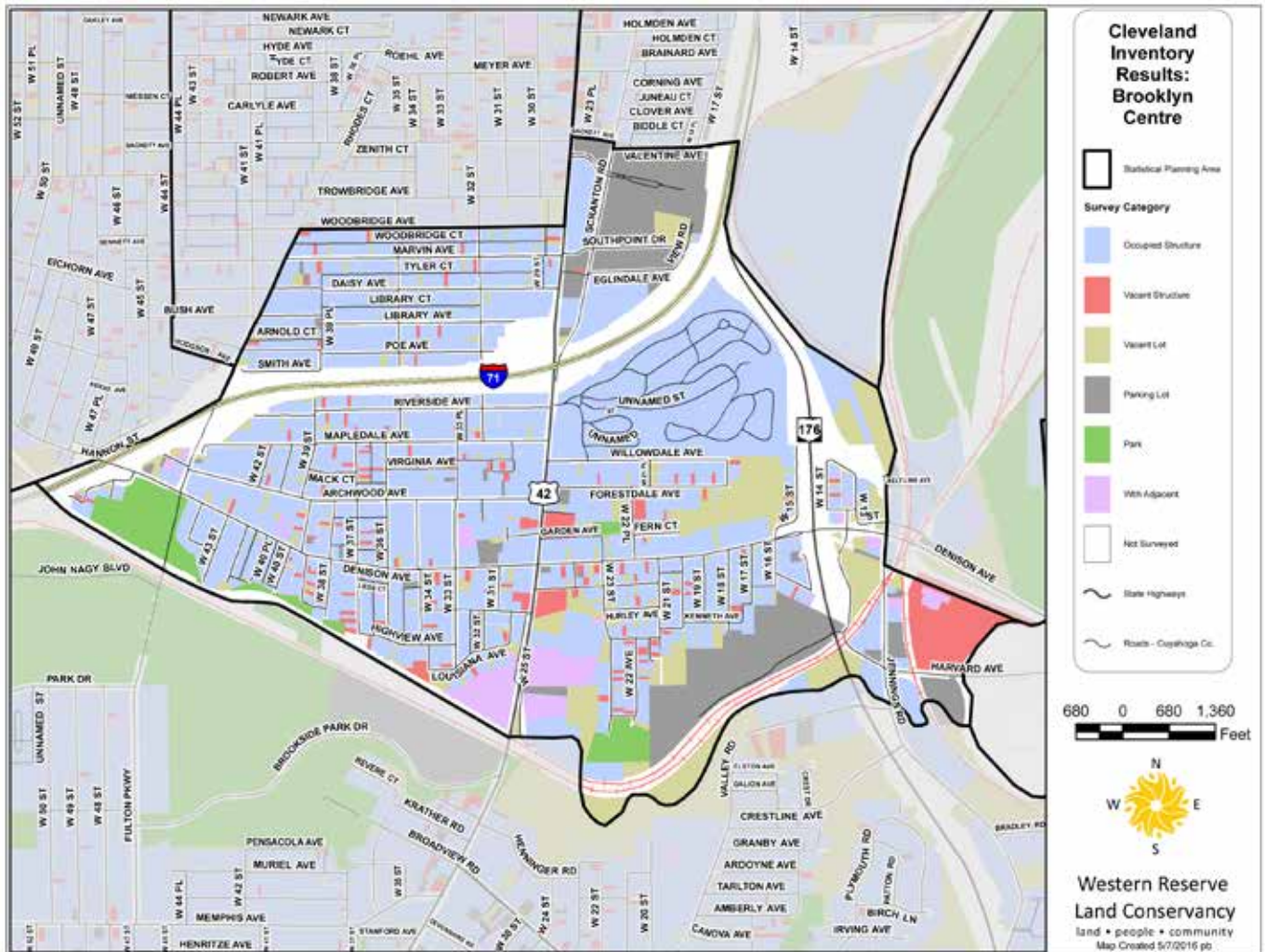
In addition to the maps, this appendix includes a small sampling of photographs for each neighborhood. Almost every property in the city was photographed as part of the inventory process. These photographs can be accessed through an interactive map created by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, available at:

<http://www.wrlandconservancy.org/articles/2015/11/21/cleveland-property-survey-results-released/>

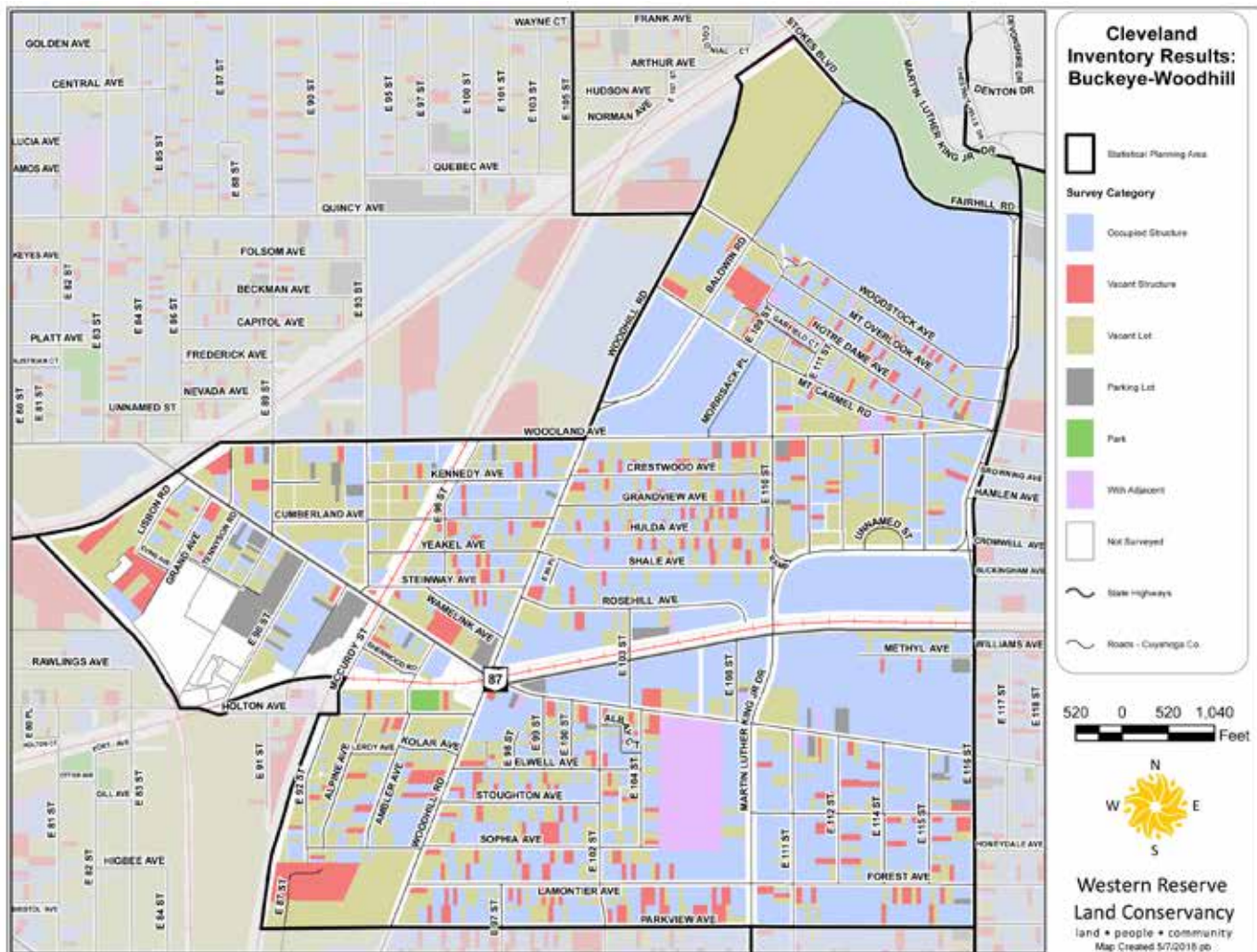


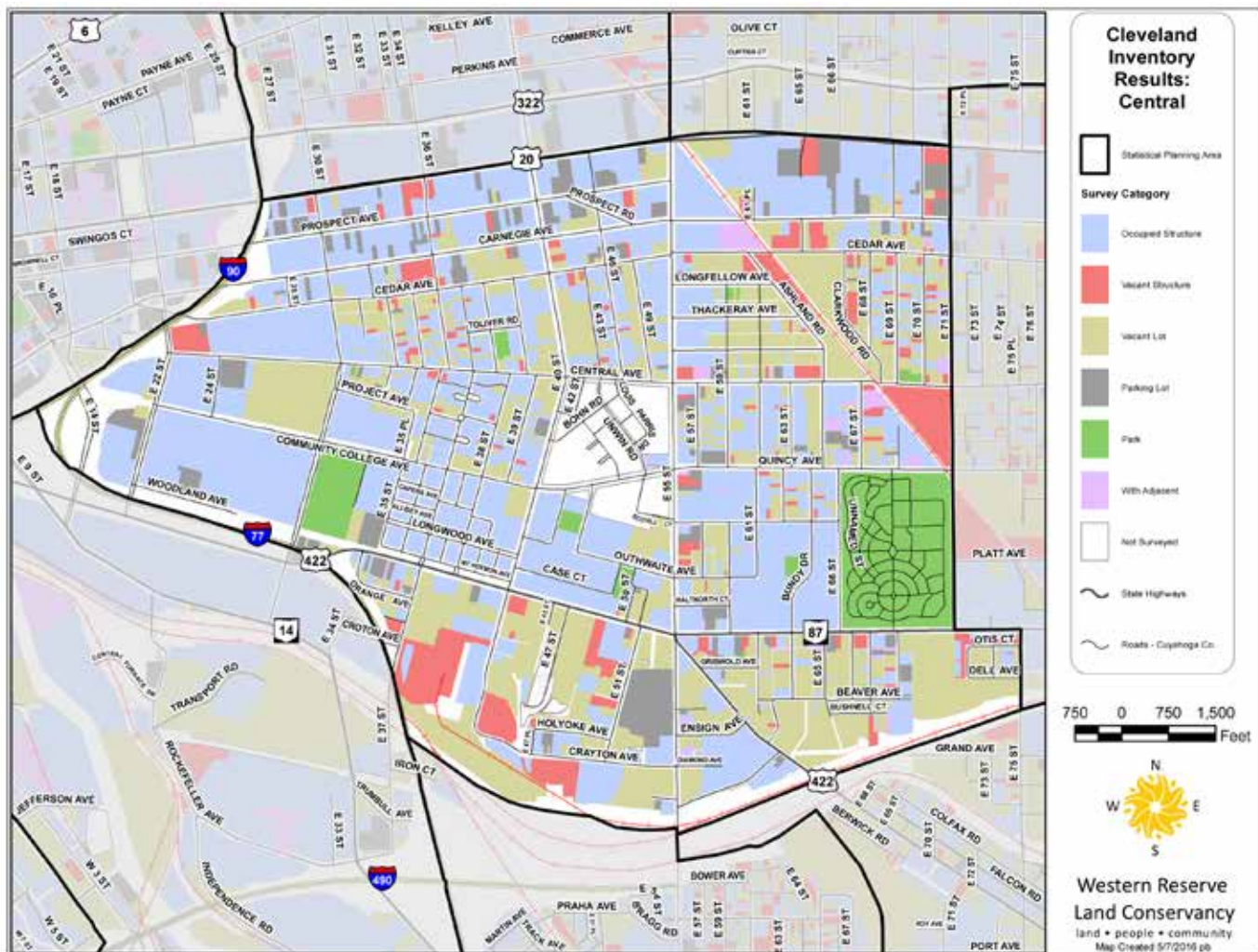


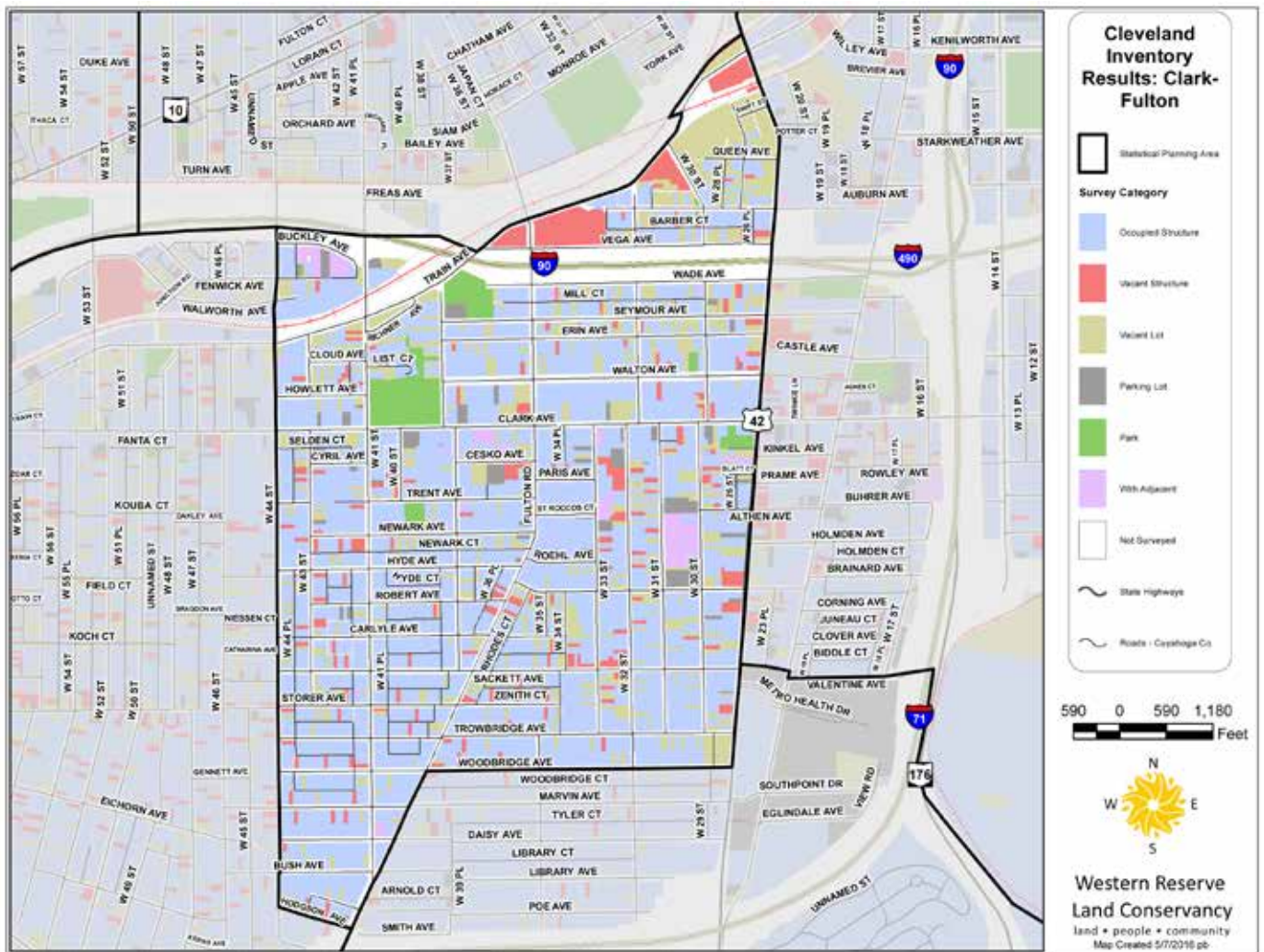


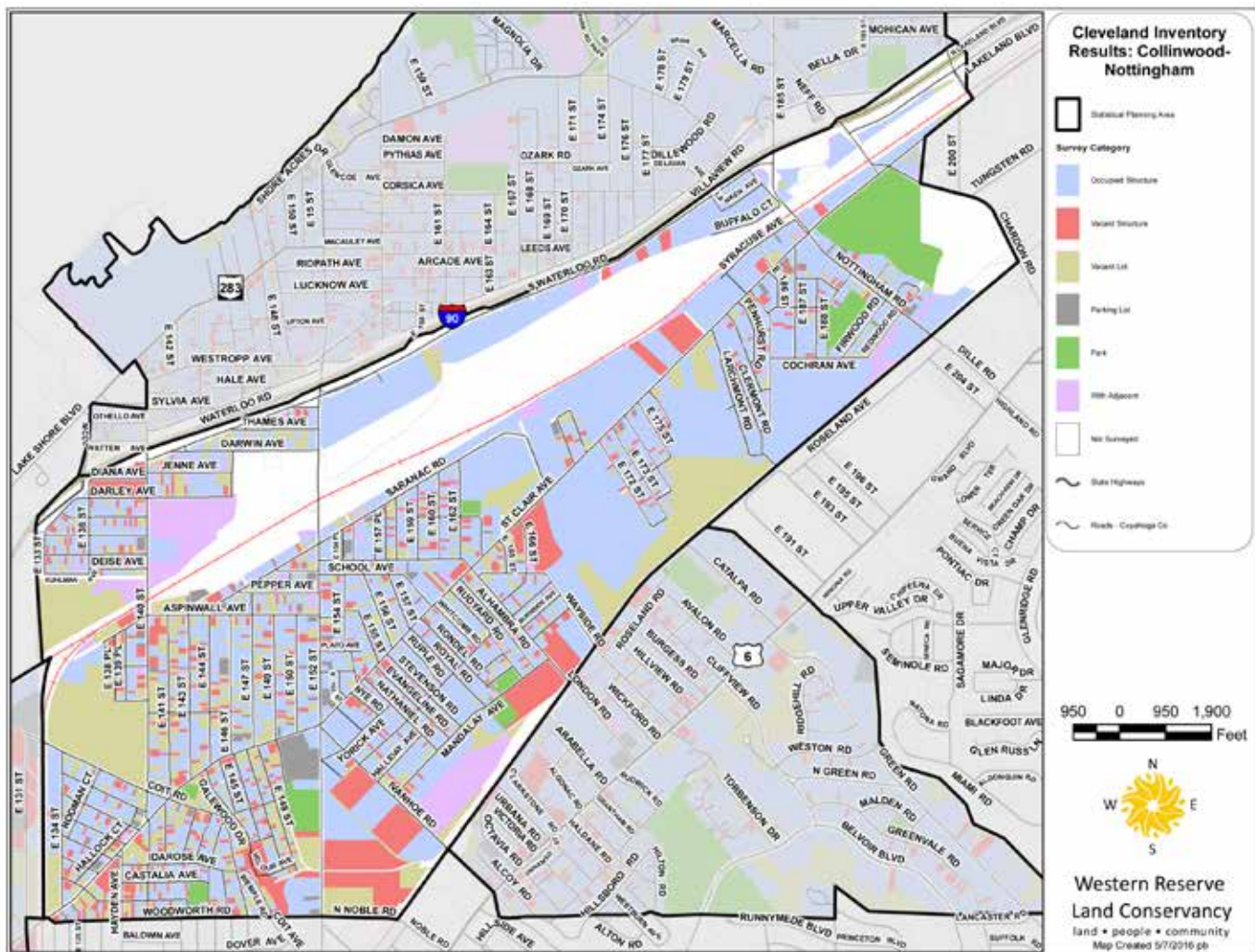


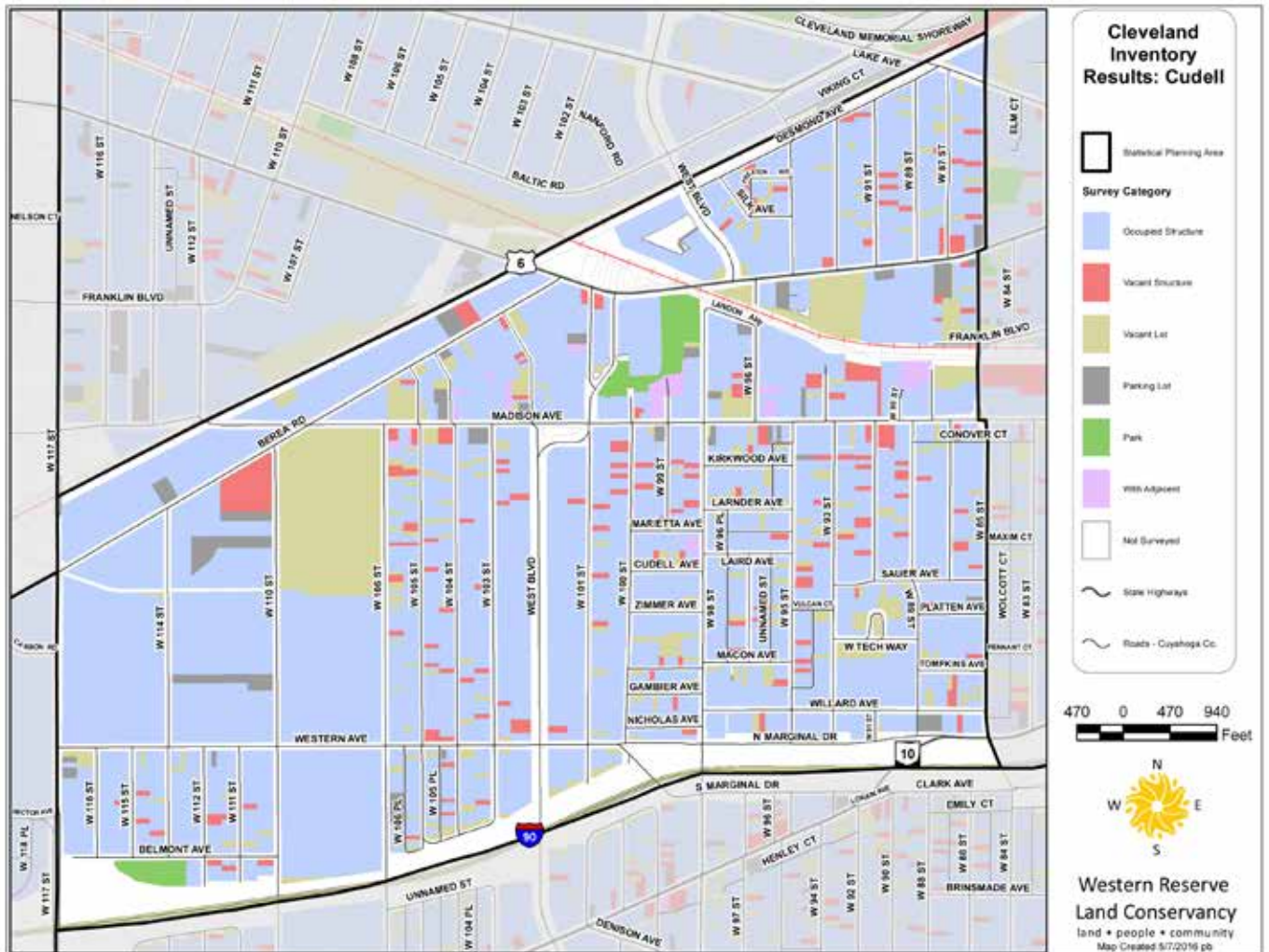


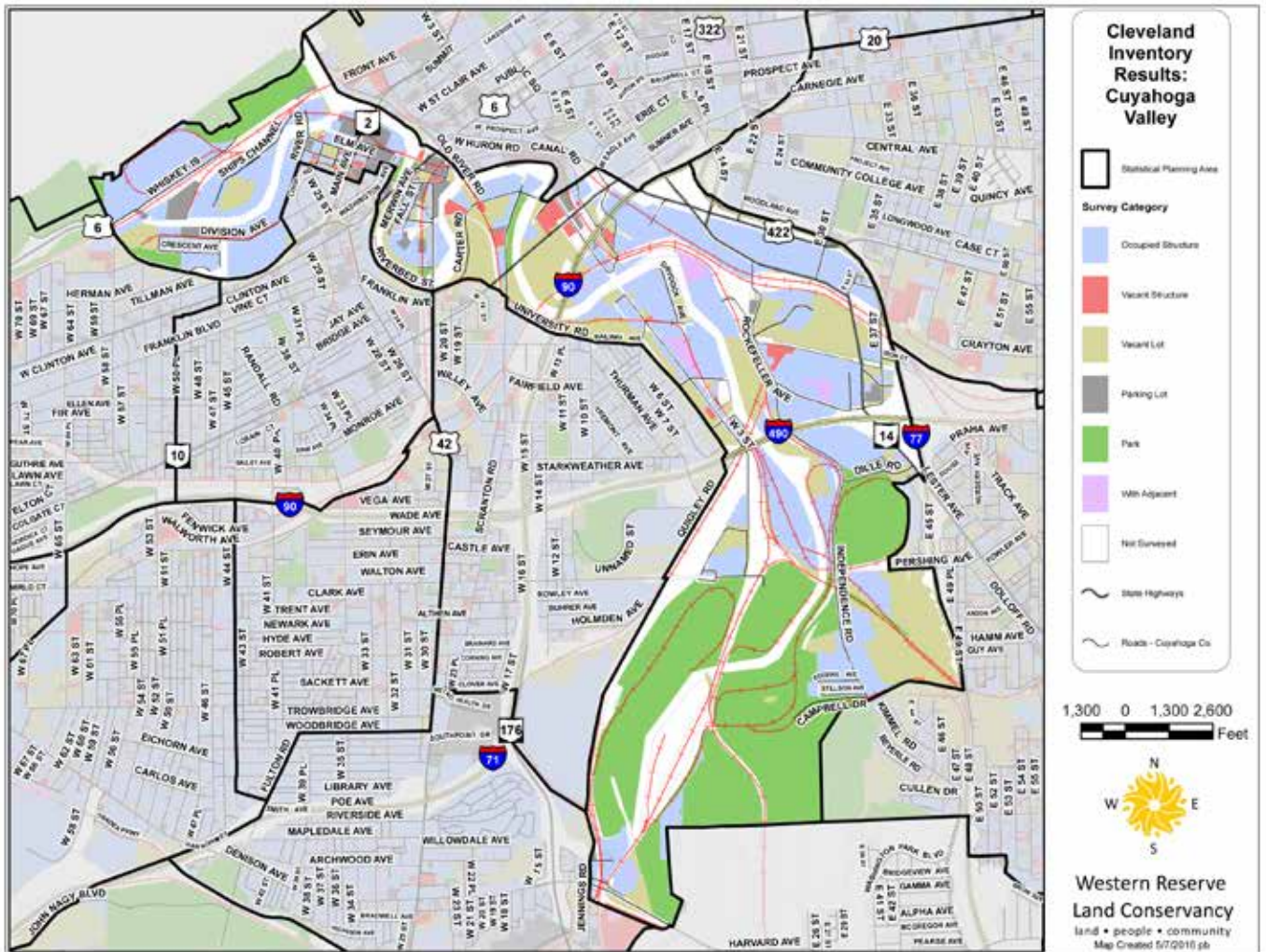


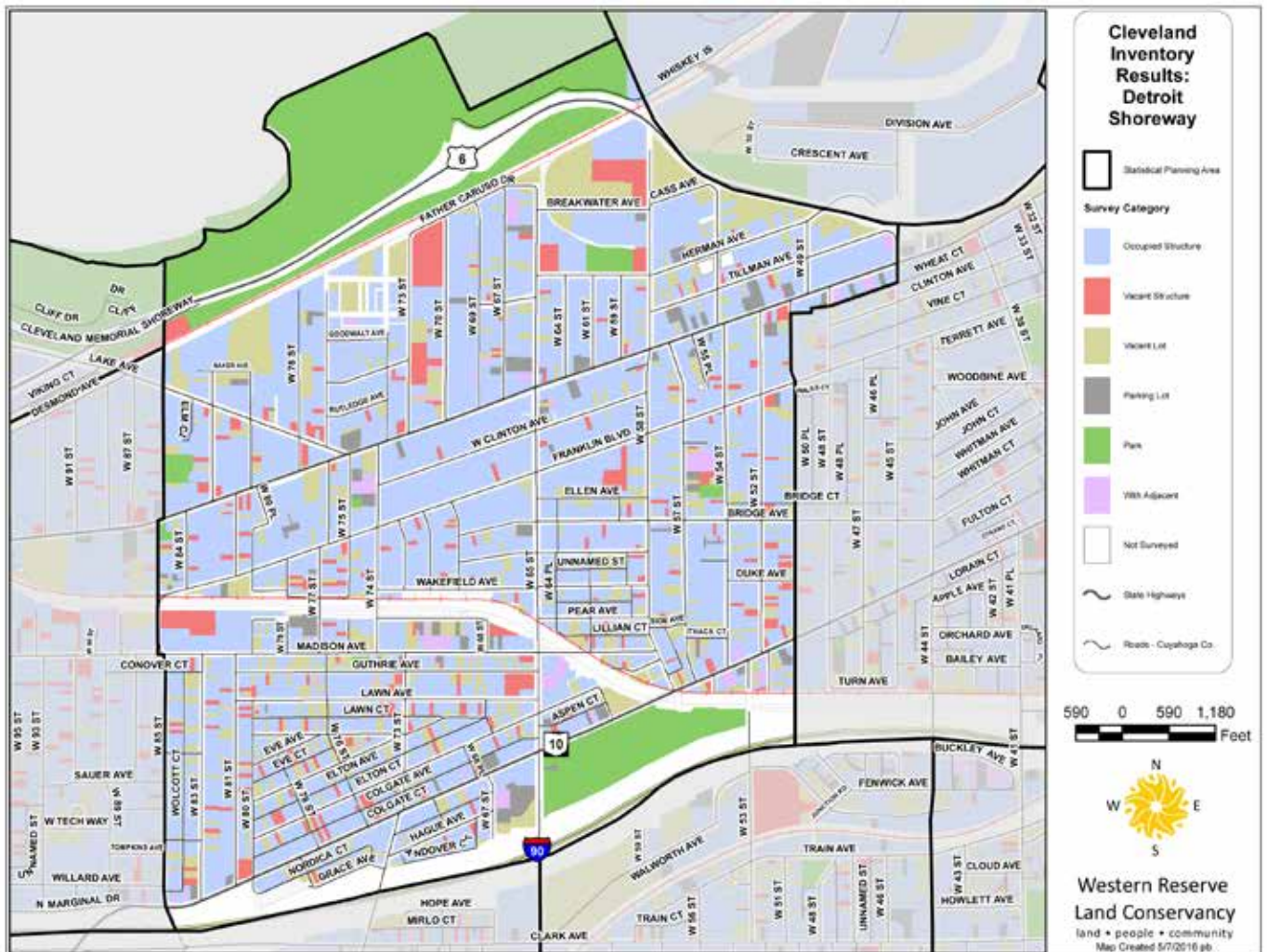


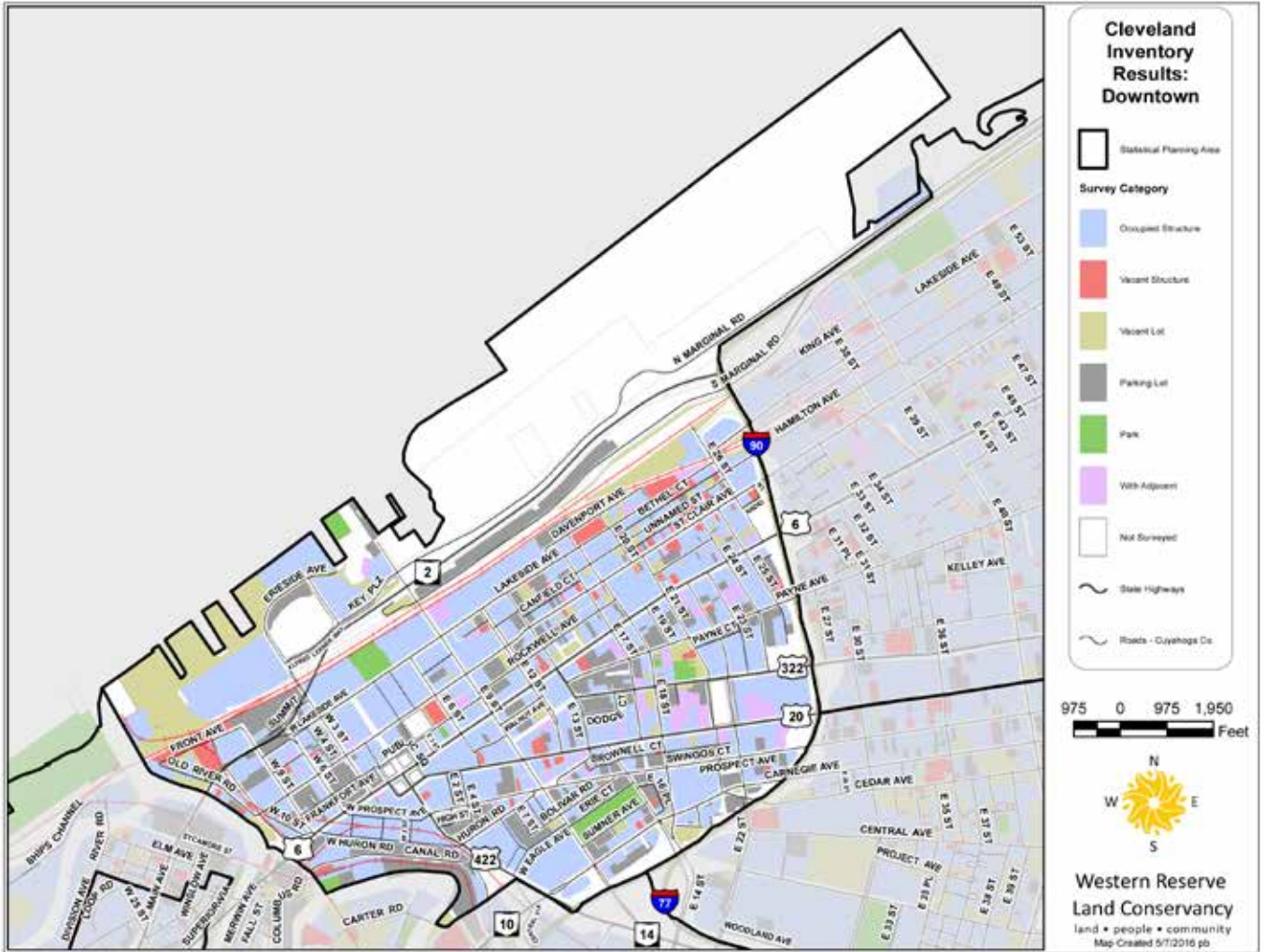


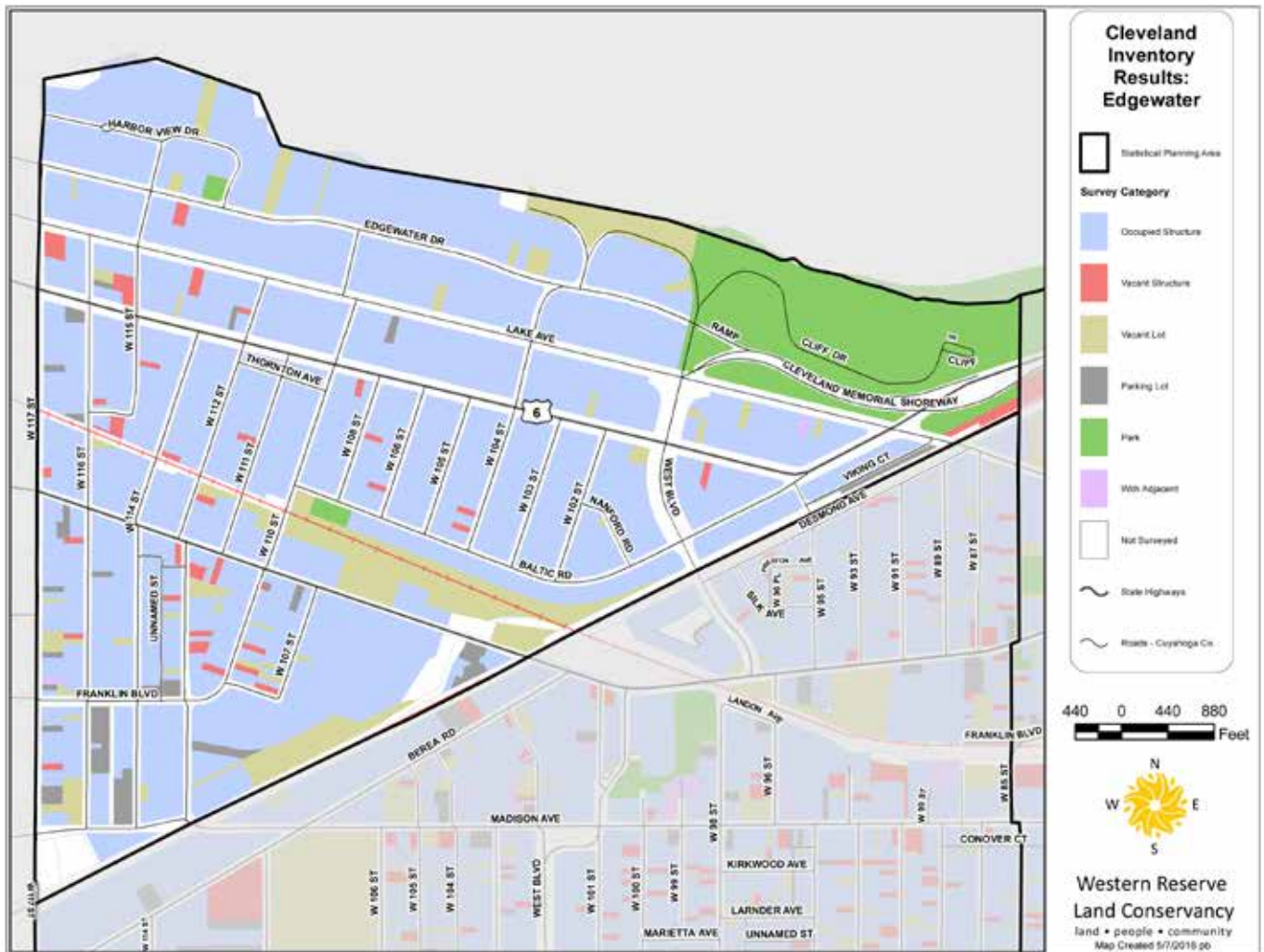


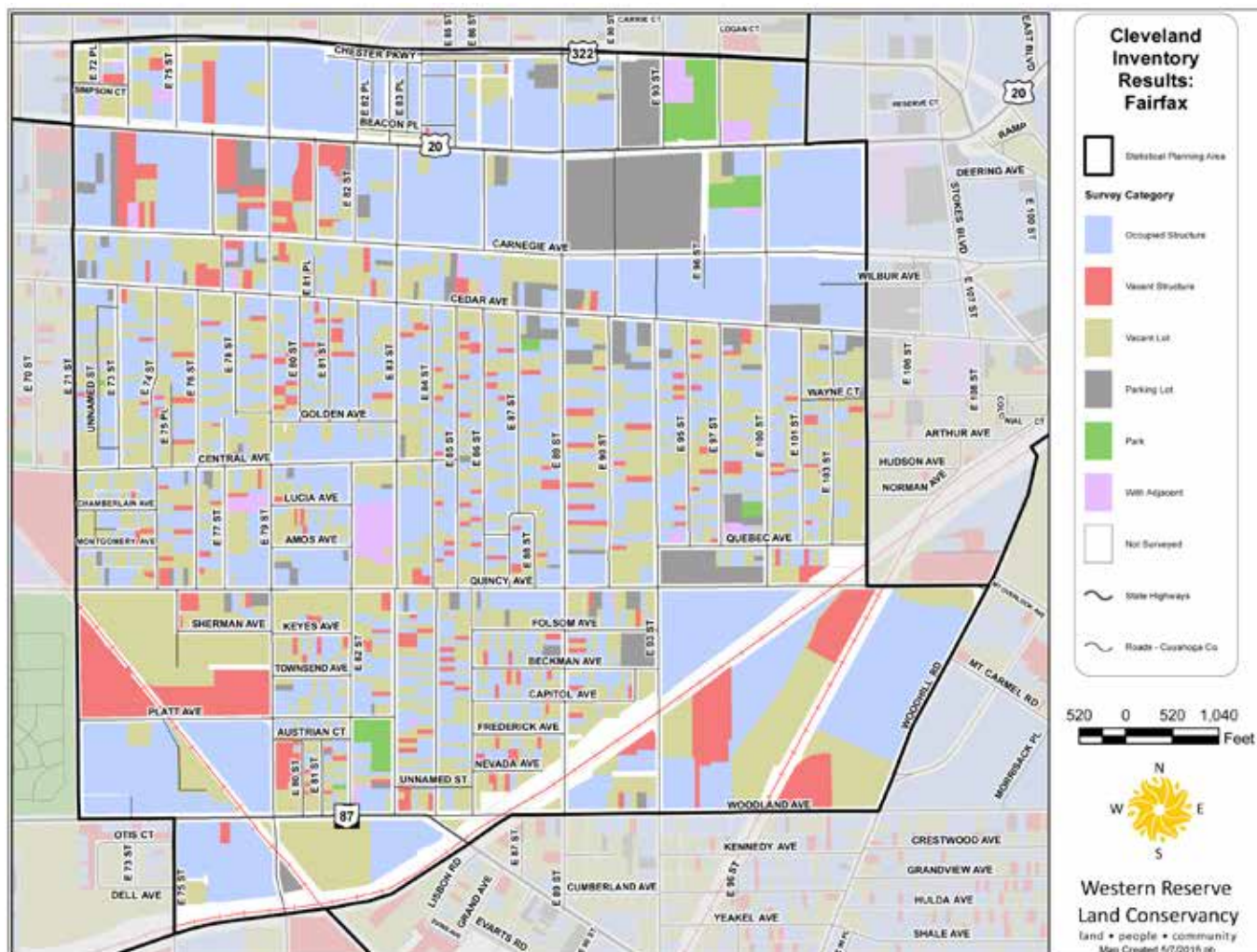


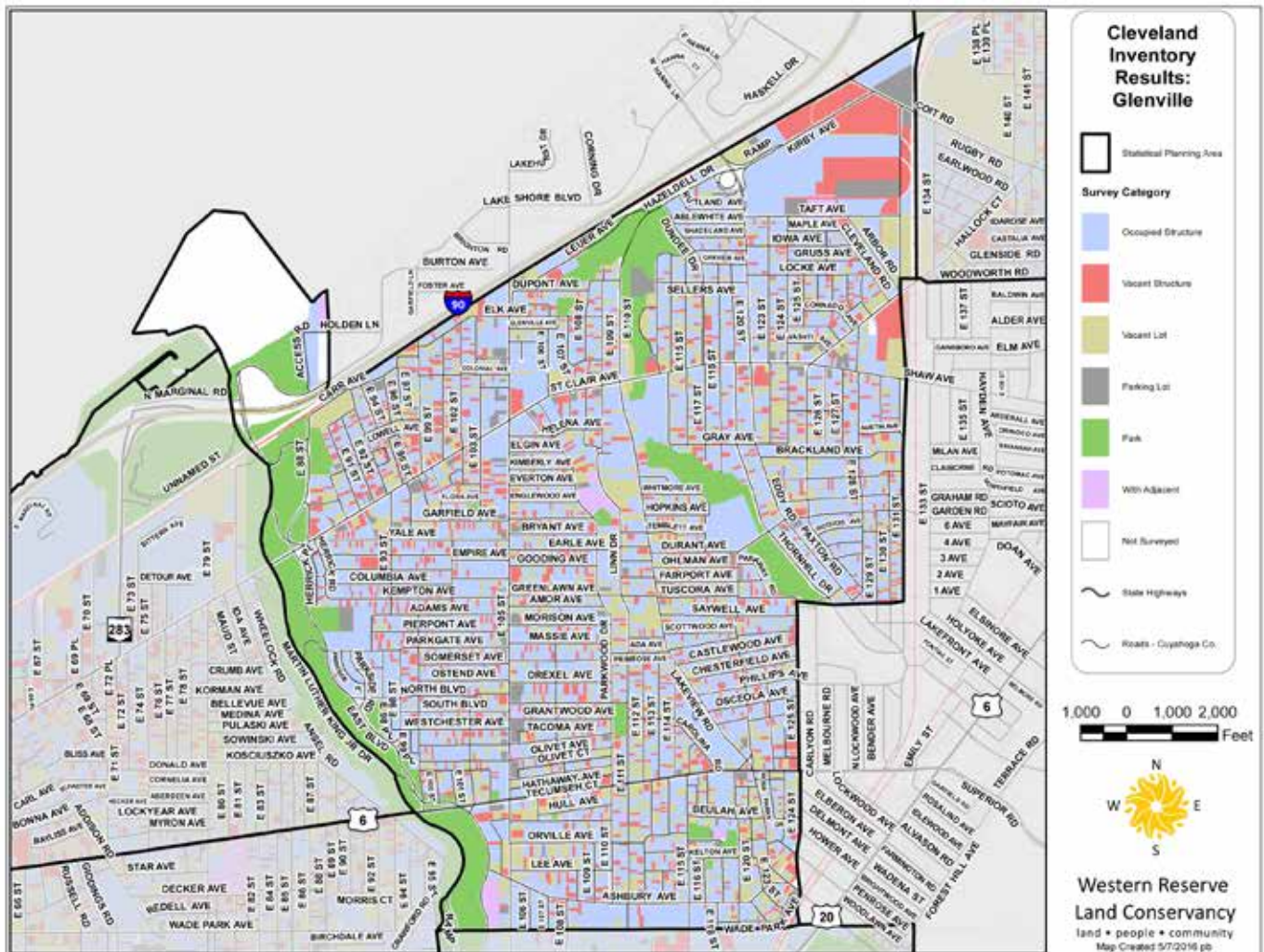


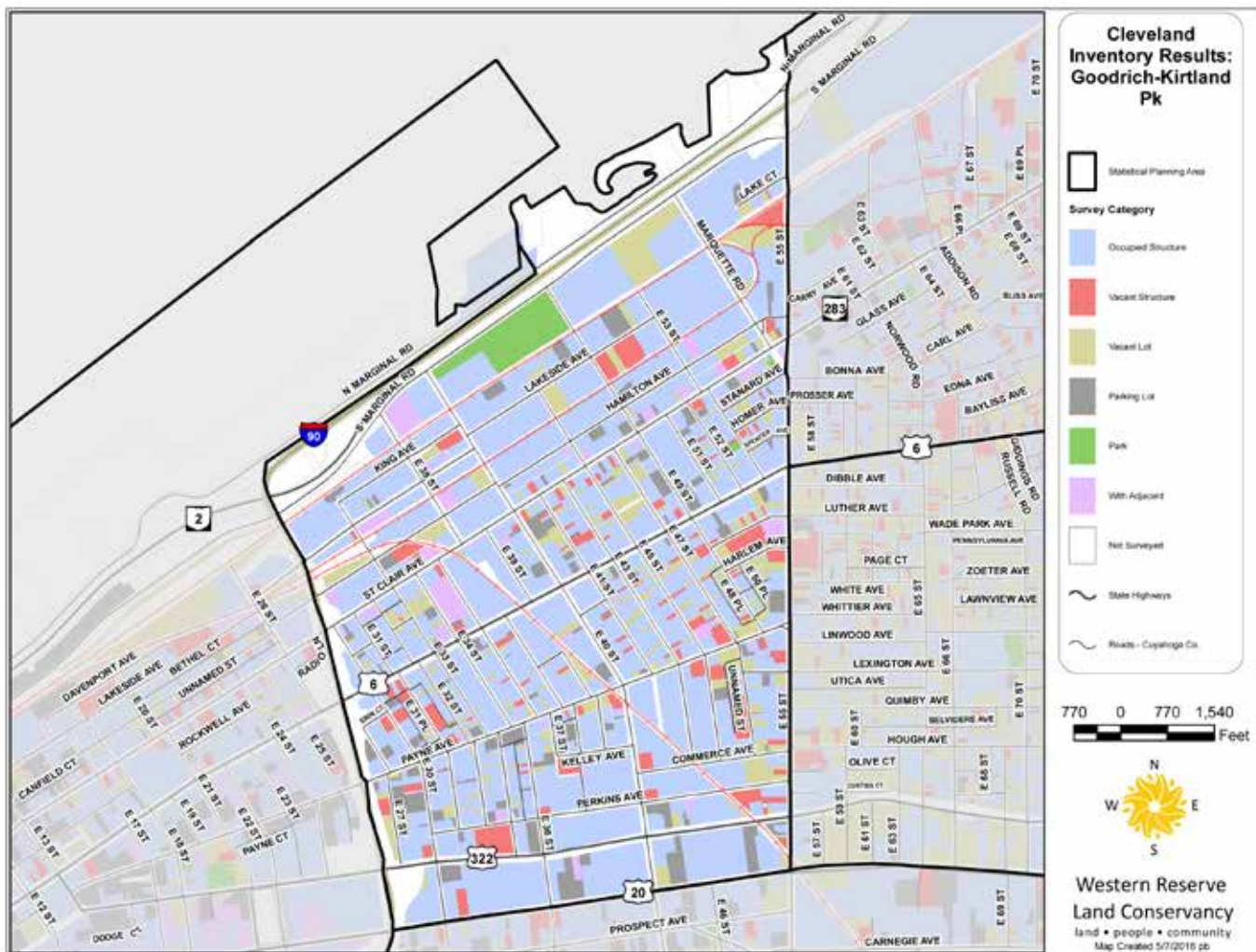


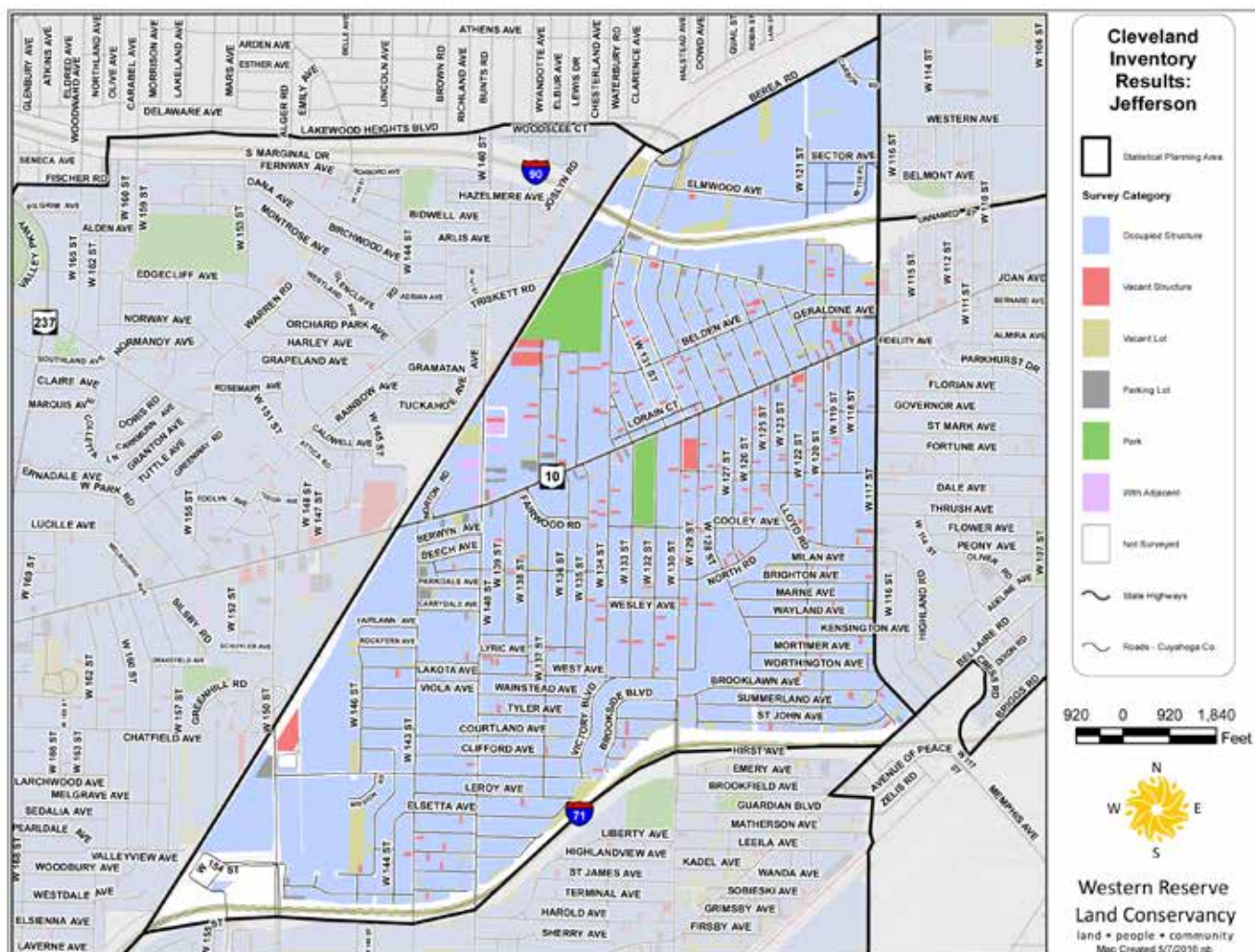


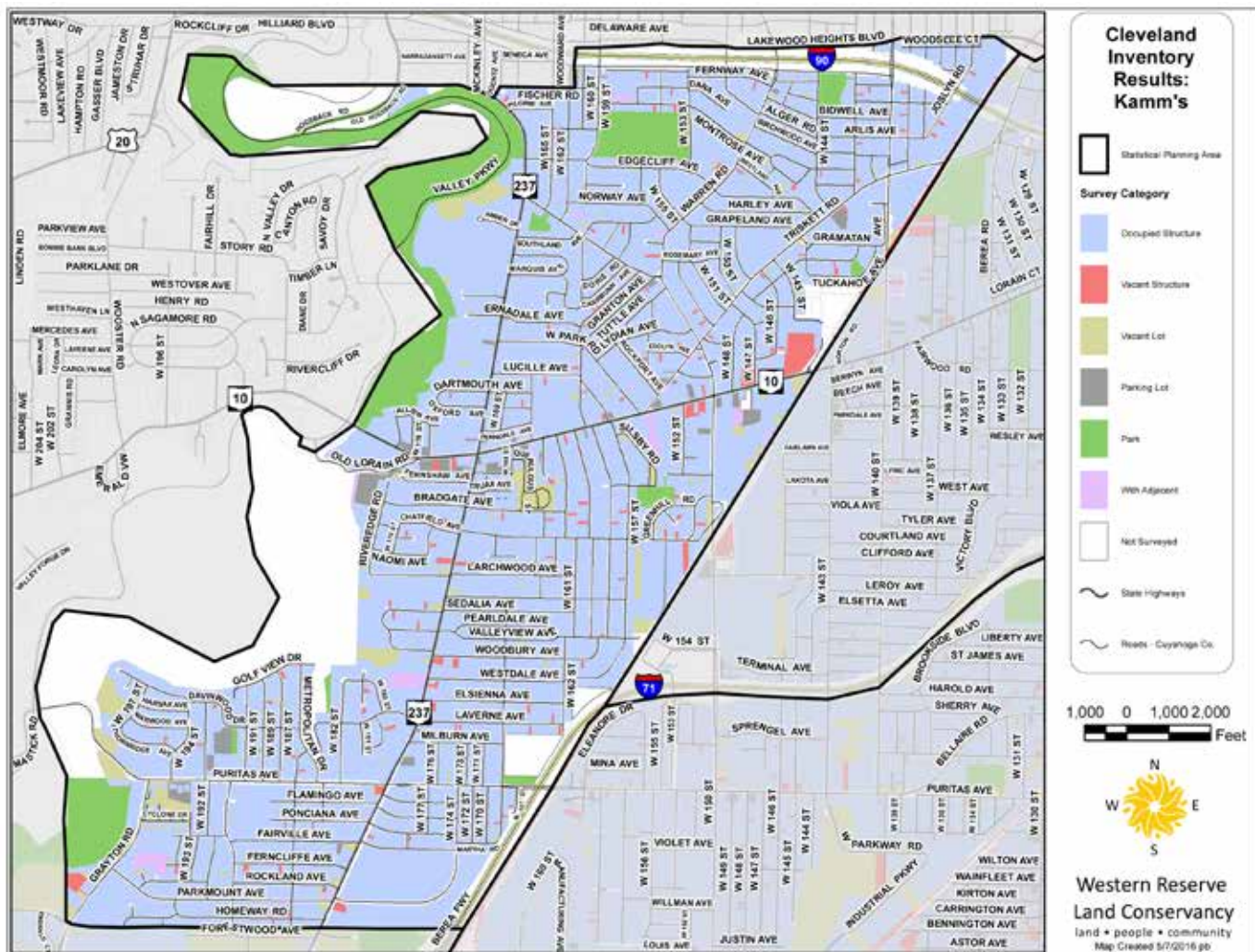


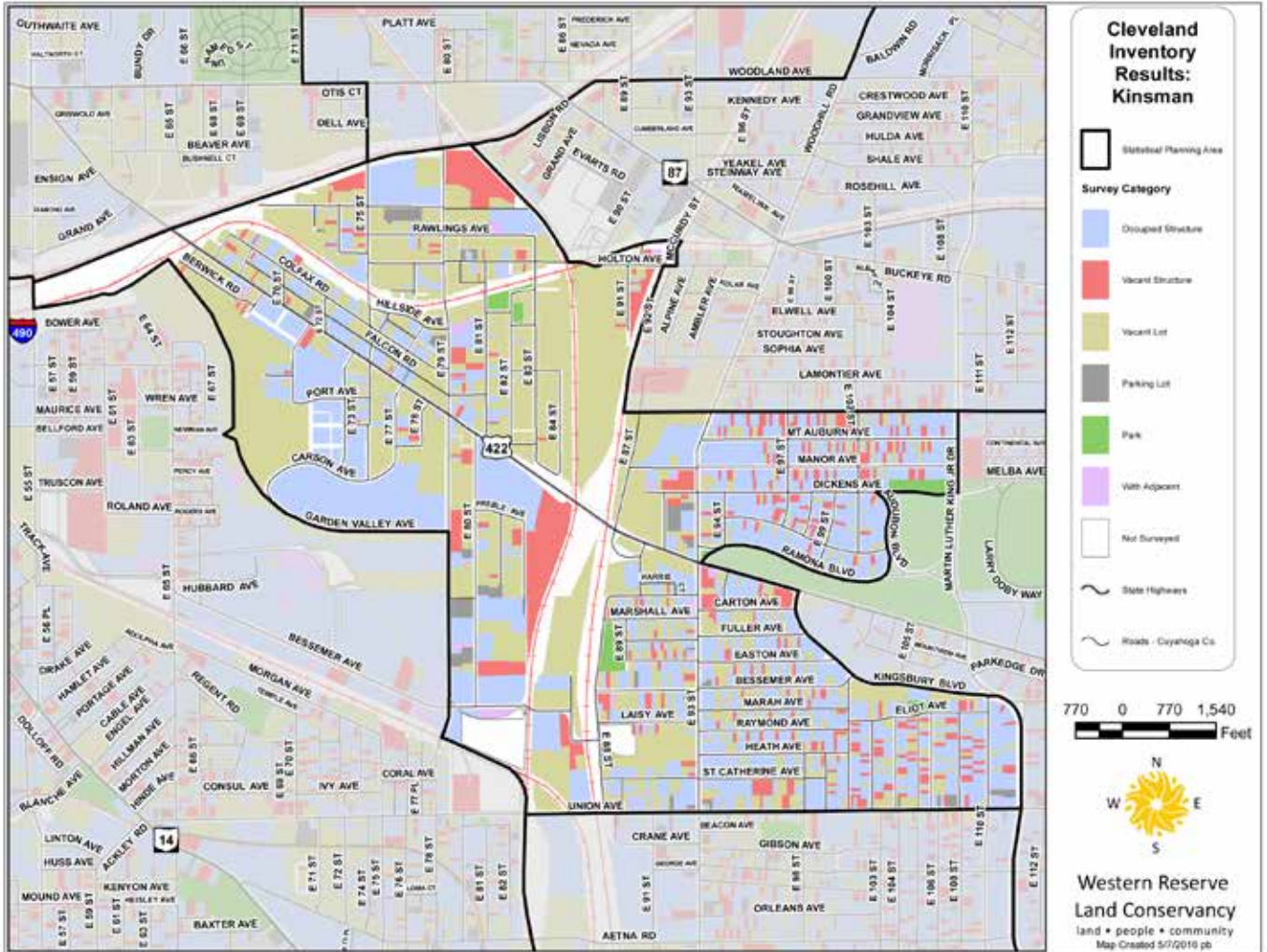


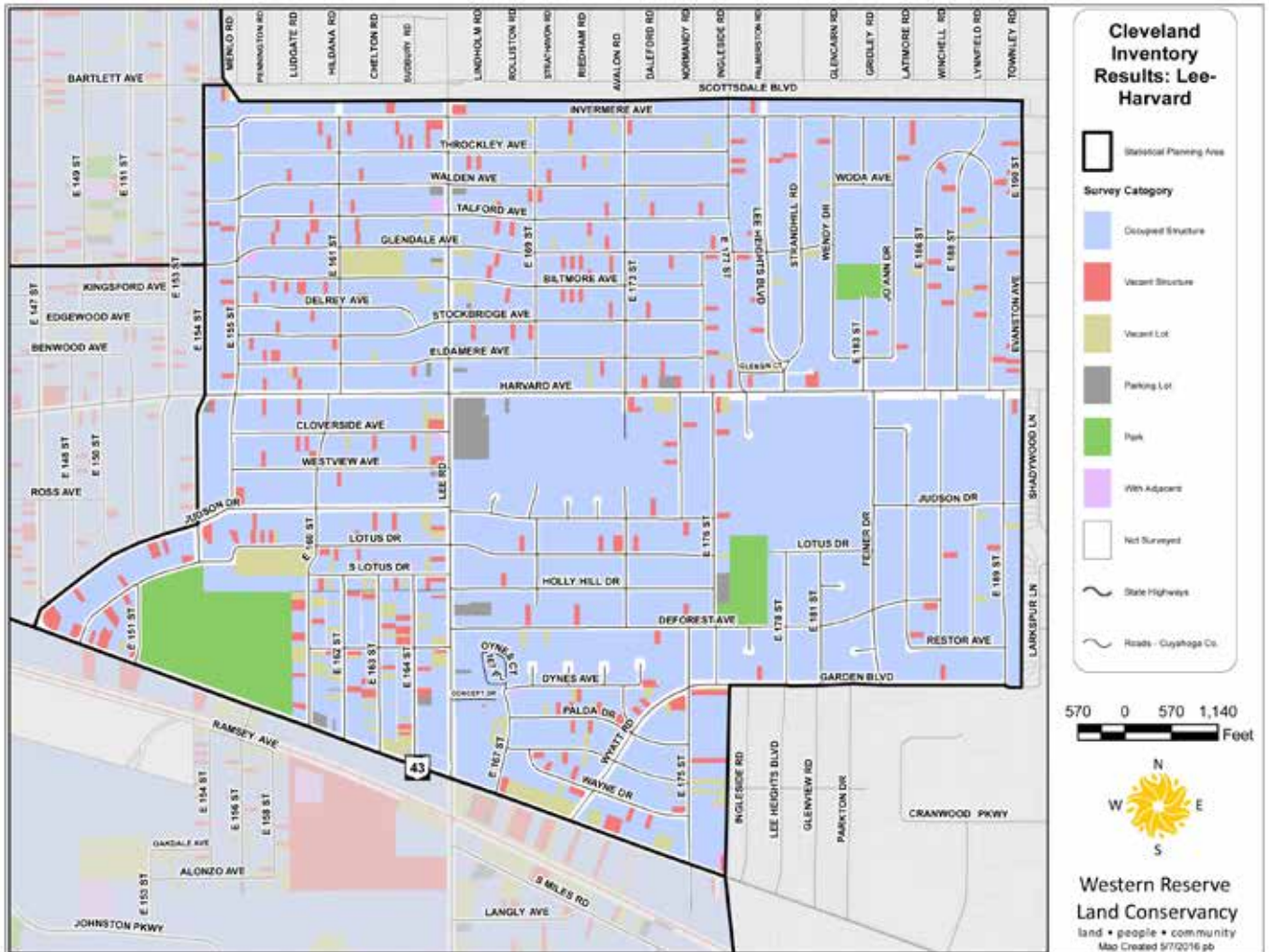


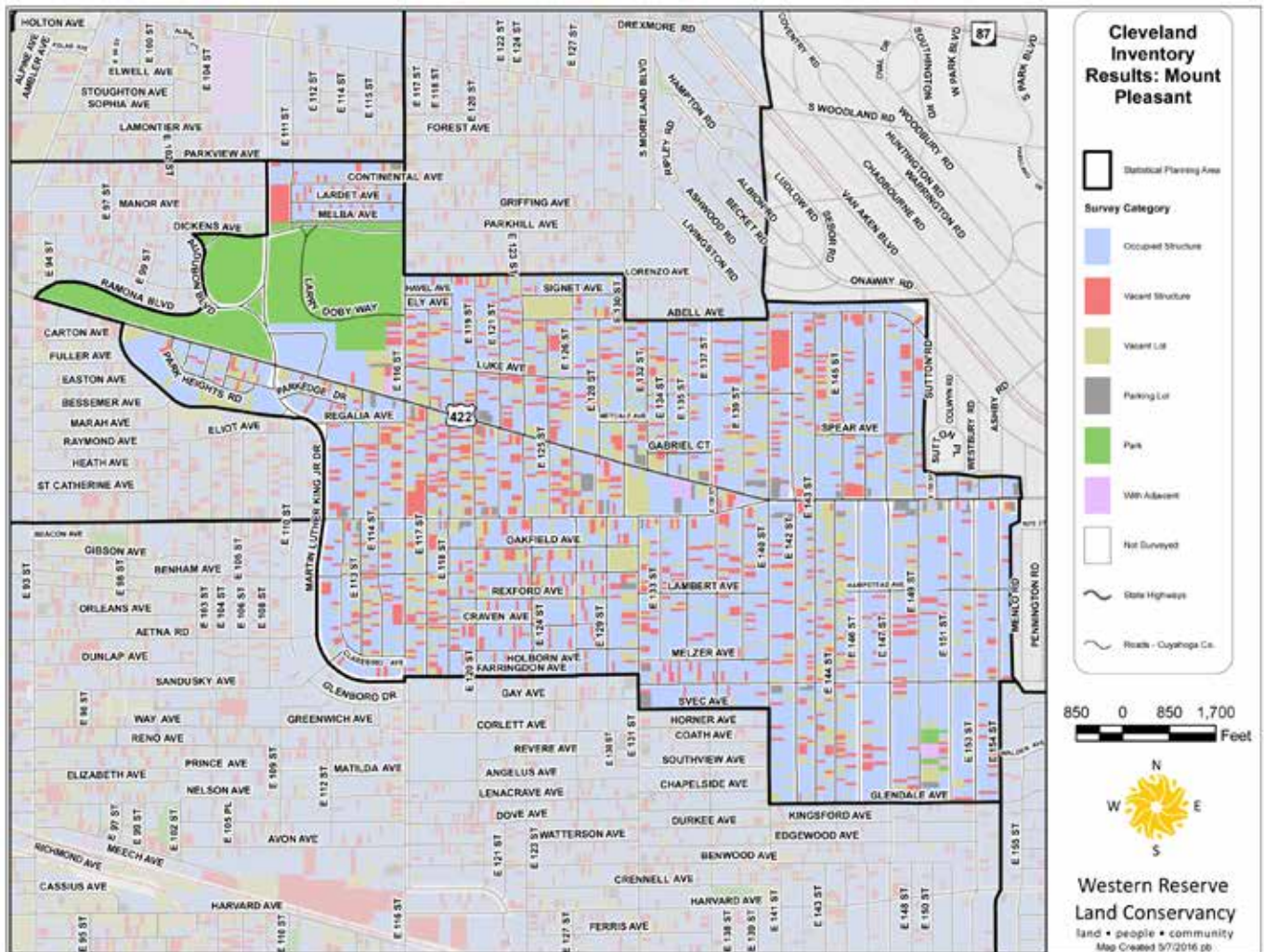


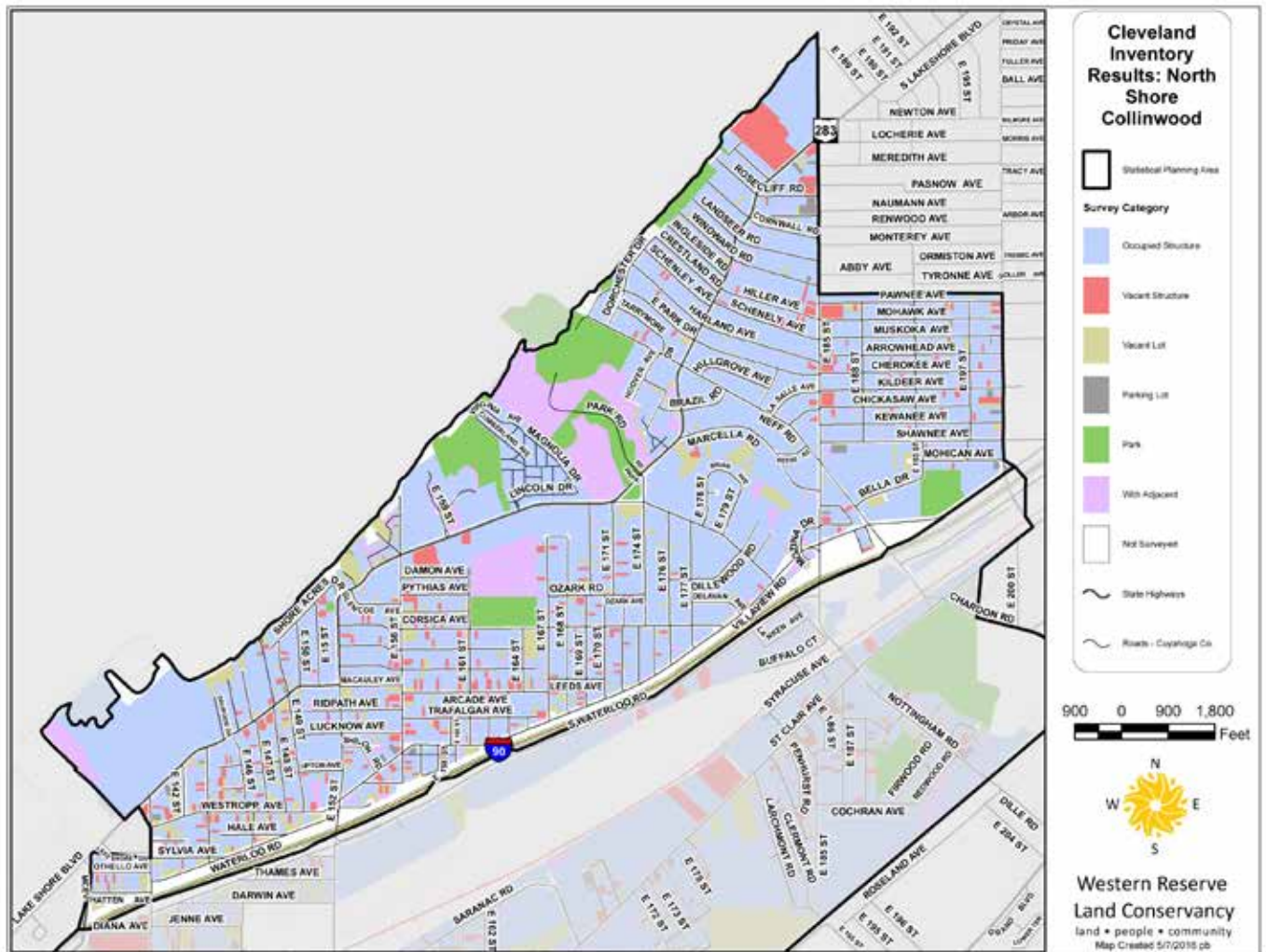


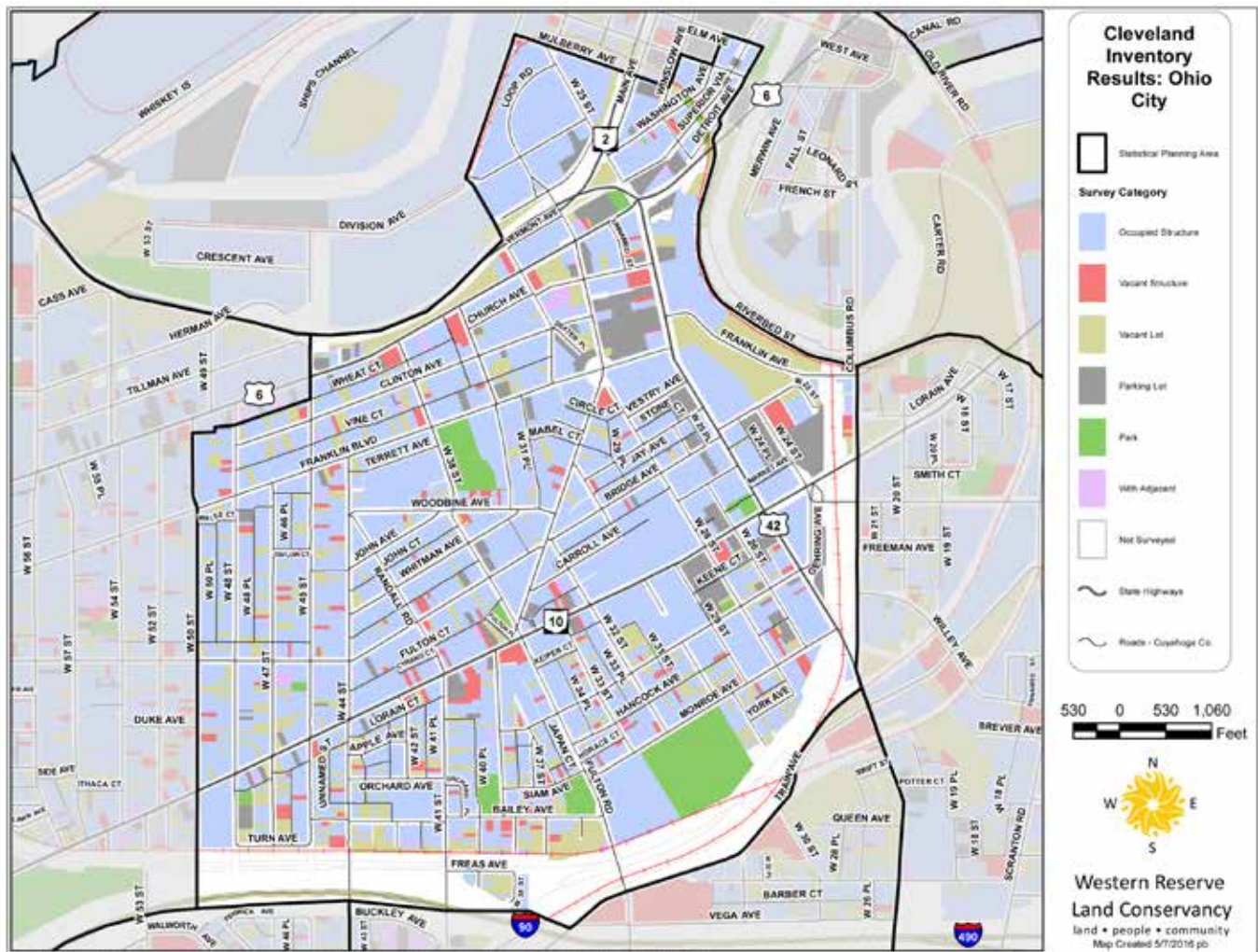


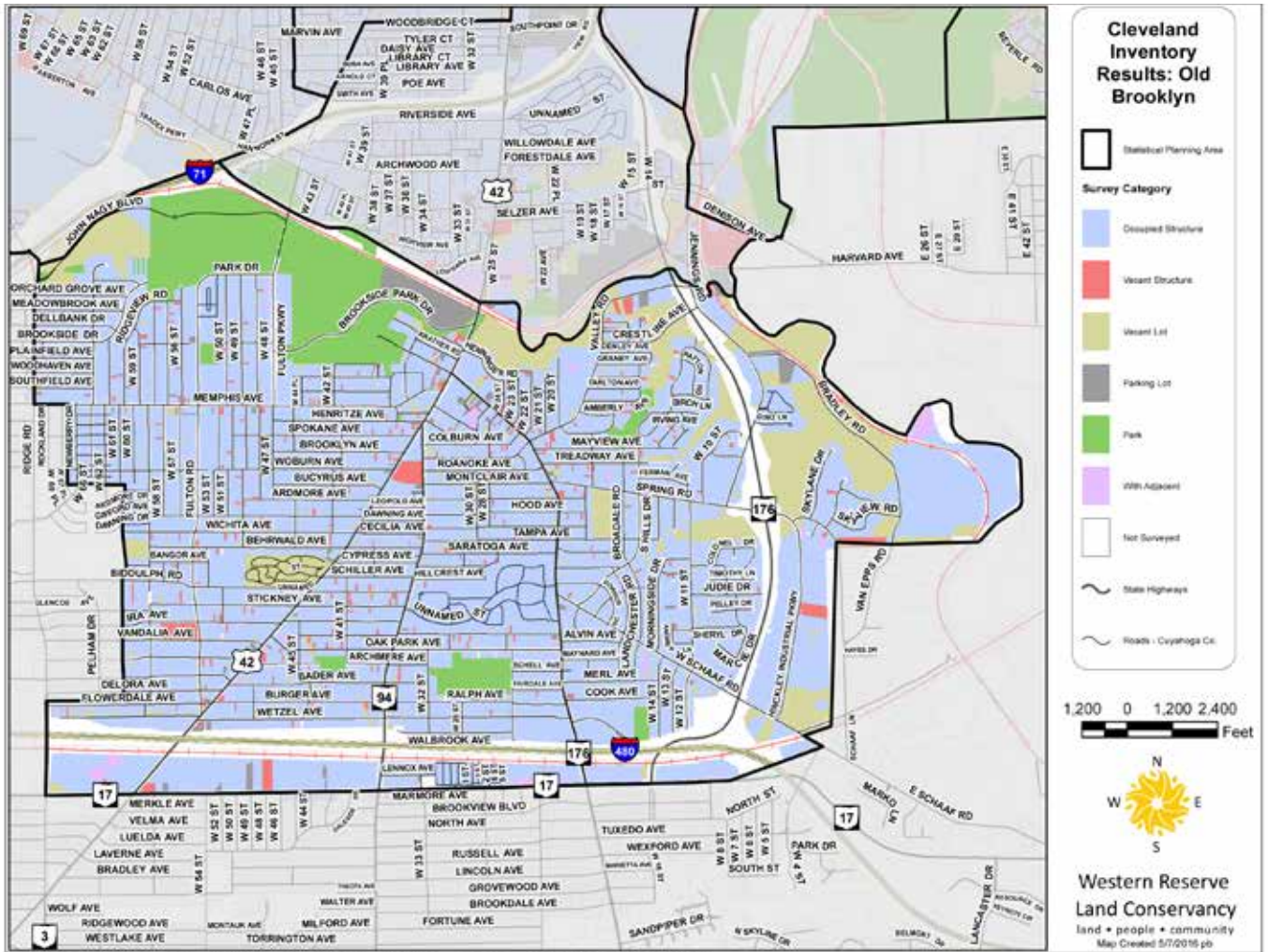


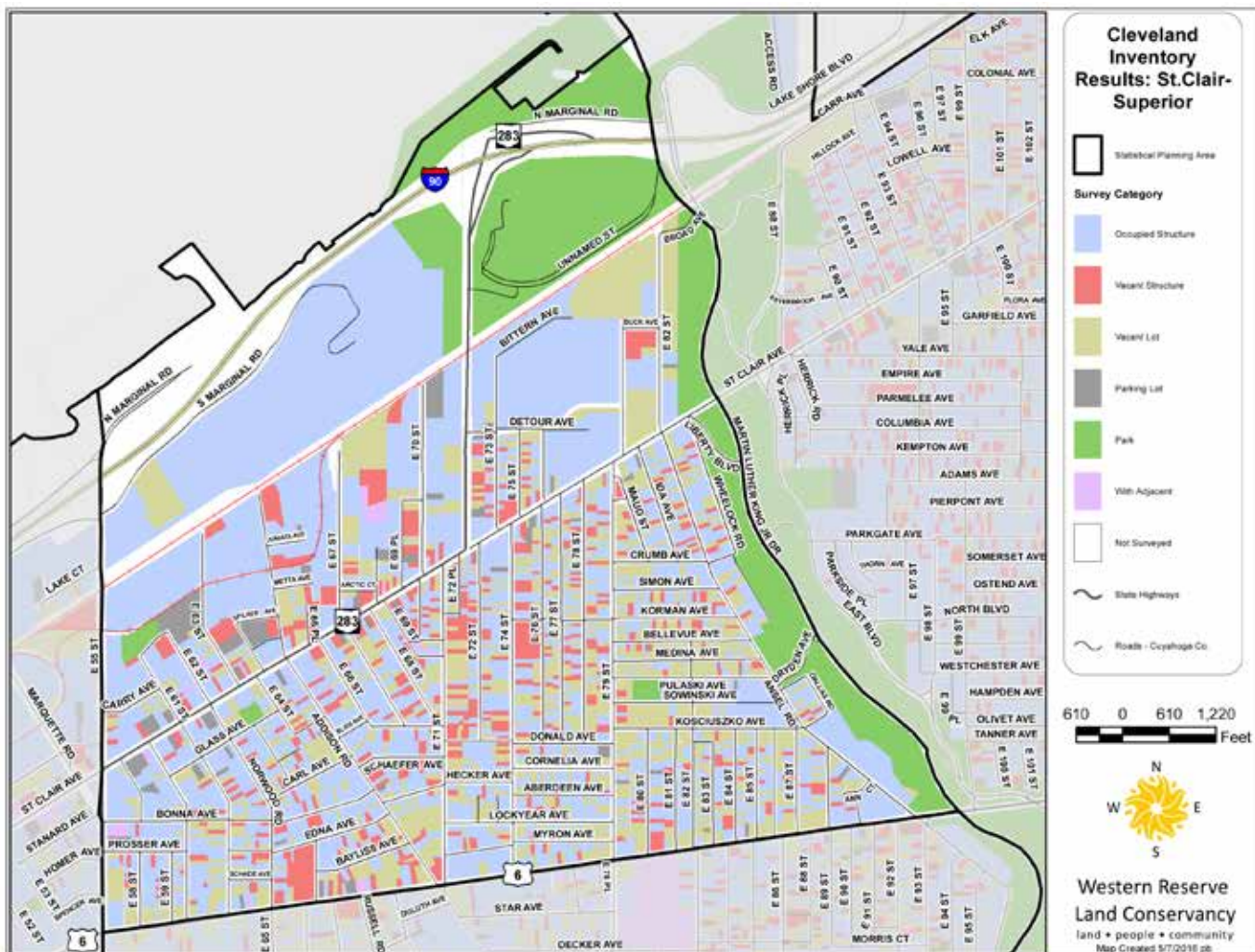


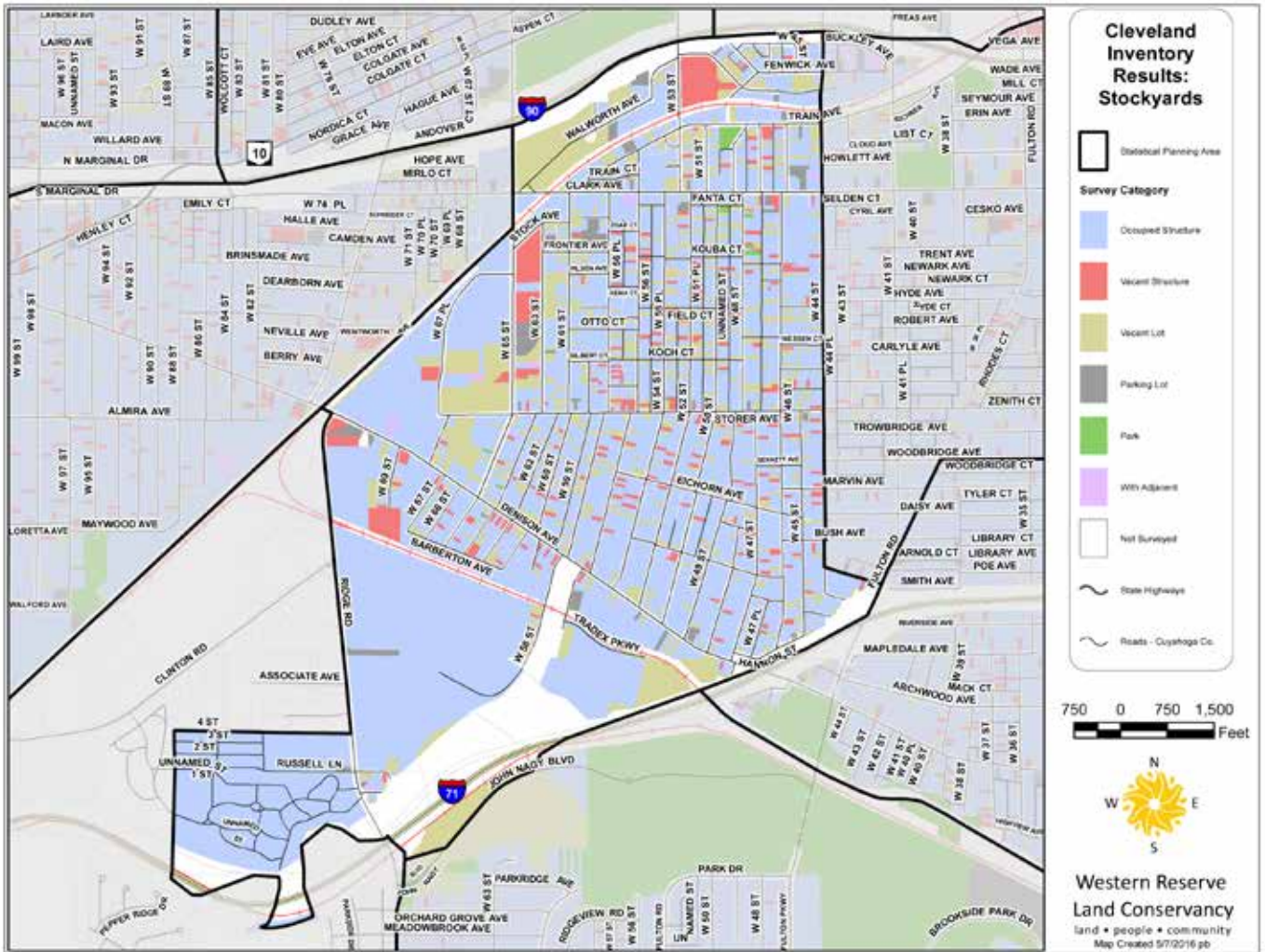


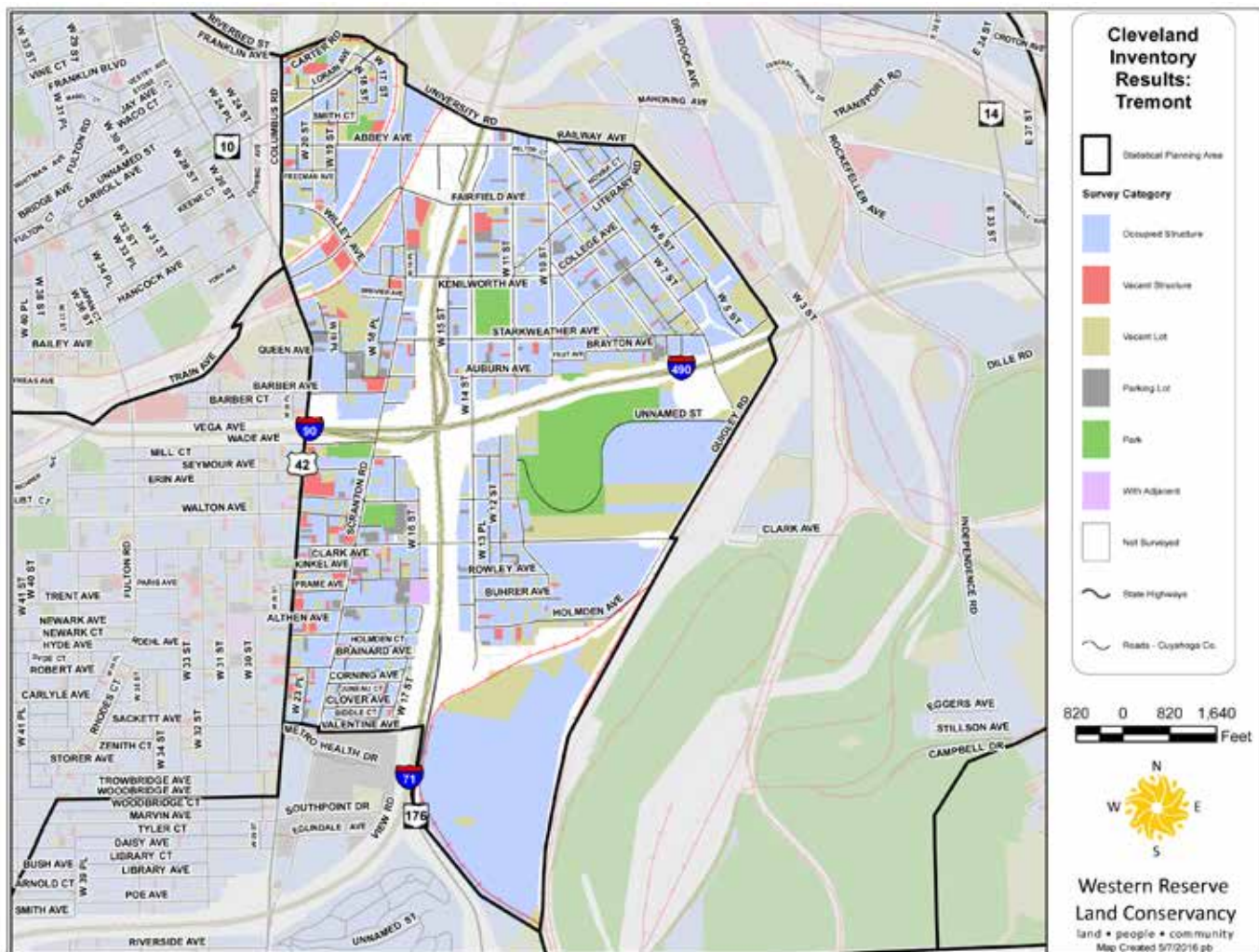


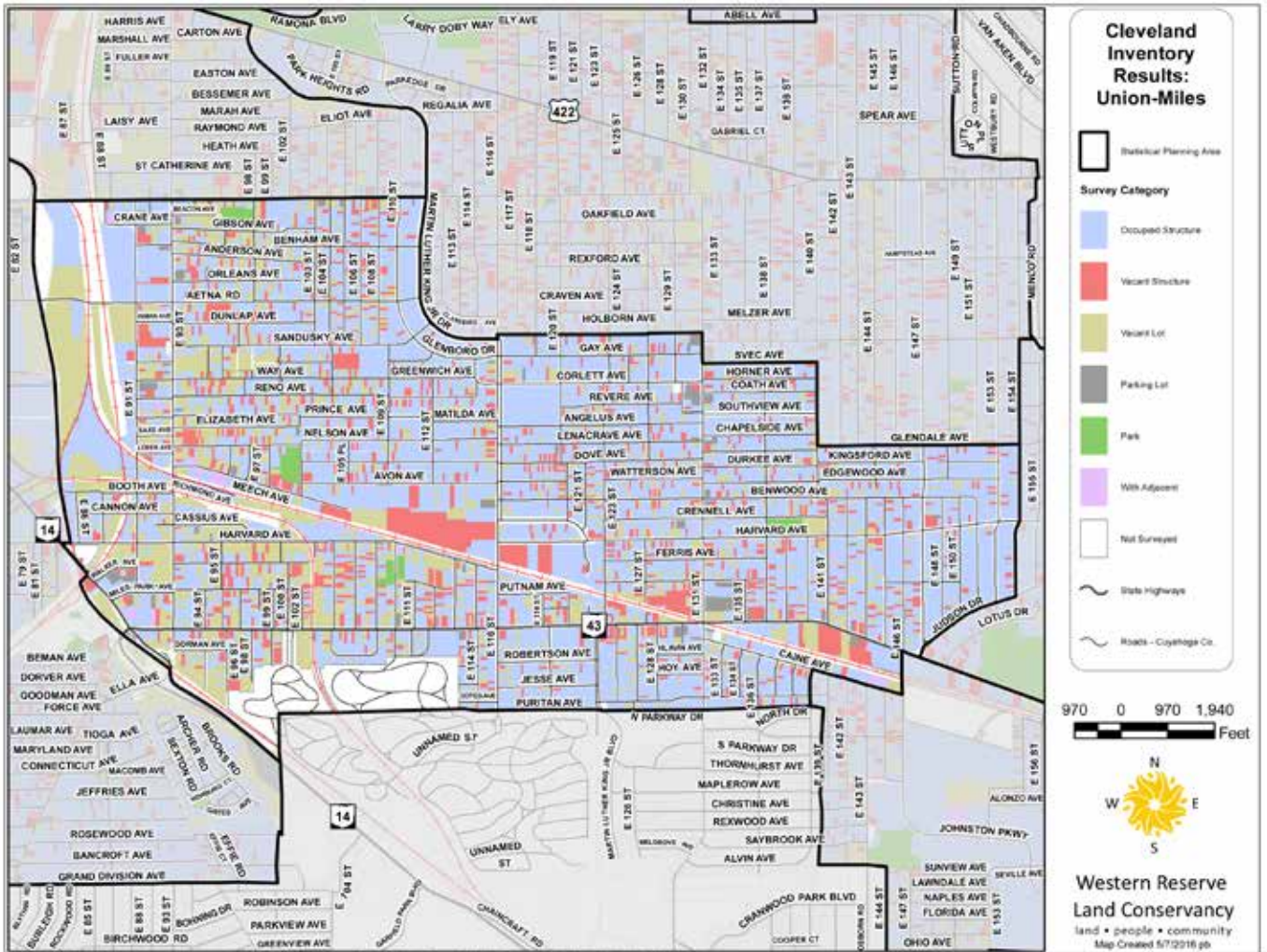


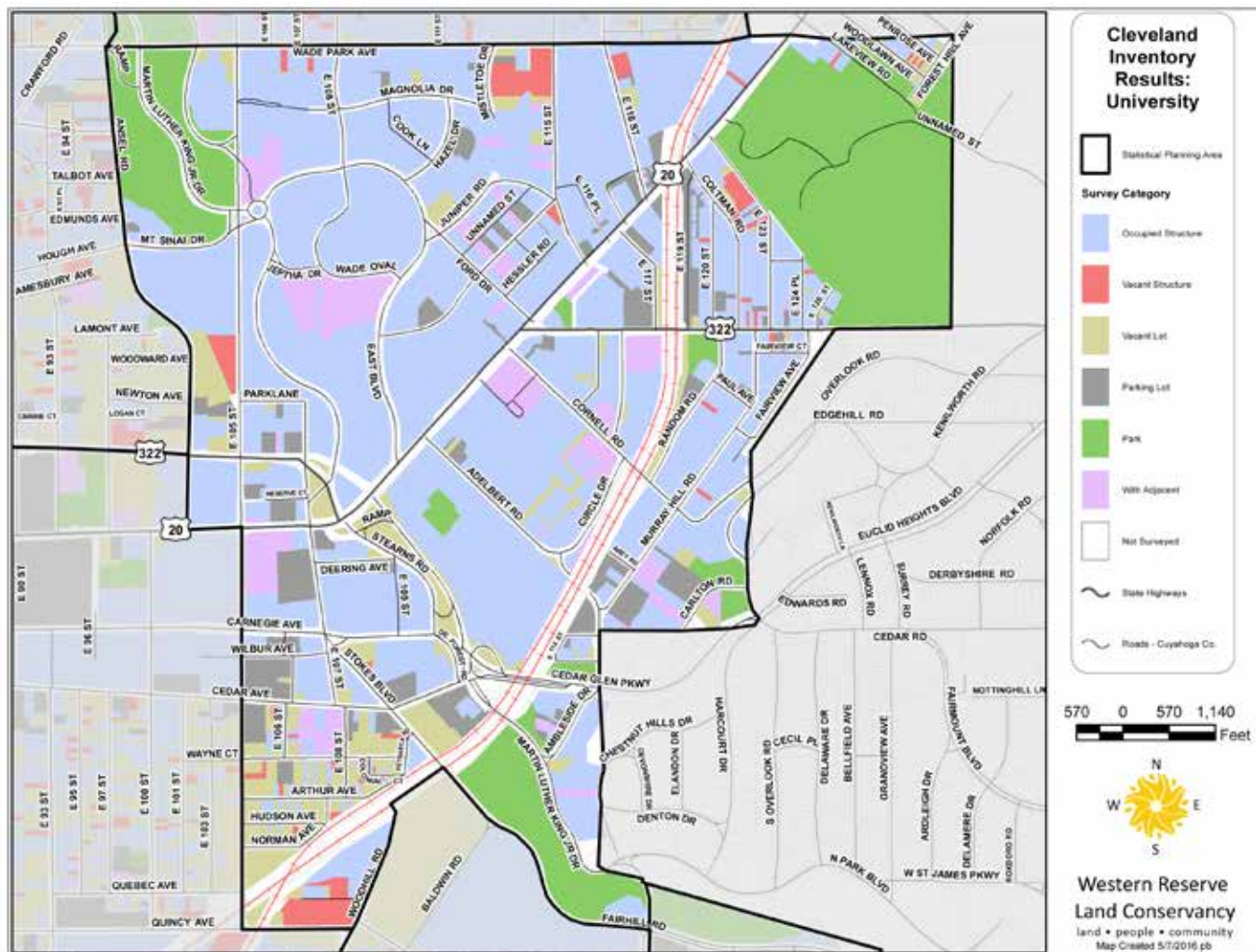


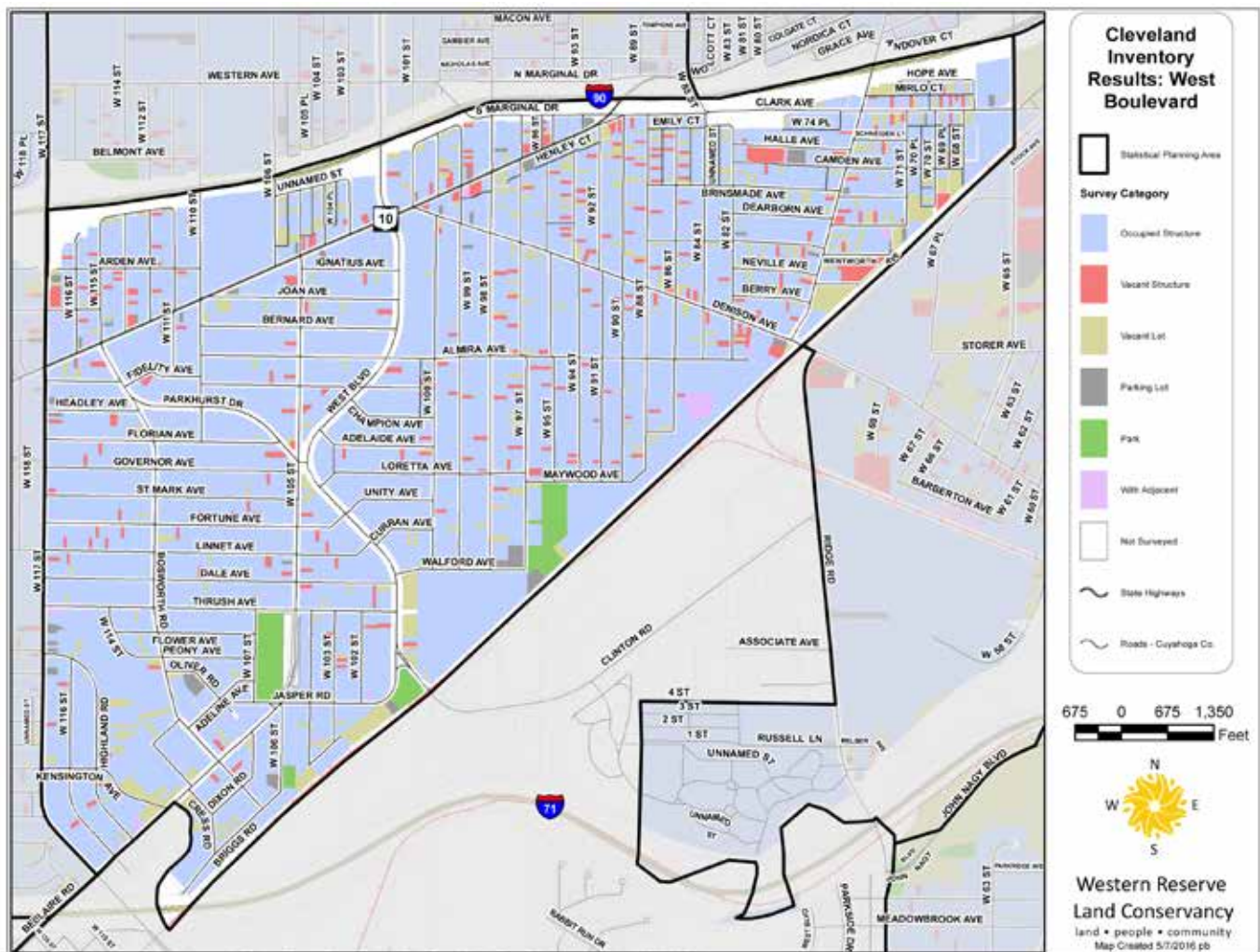












APPENDIX B: Sustainable Development Pattern

The maps in this appendix transfer the Cleveland City Planning Commission's overall Sustainable Development Pattern map (shown on pages 68-69) to each neighborhood in the city. The light and dark purple tones on each map identify priority development areas where infill construction and building rehabilitation are encouraged to maintain population density and take advantage of existing infrastructure. Each map also shows vacant lots and D & F rated properties to highlight areas where future development decisions may occur.

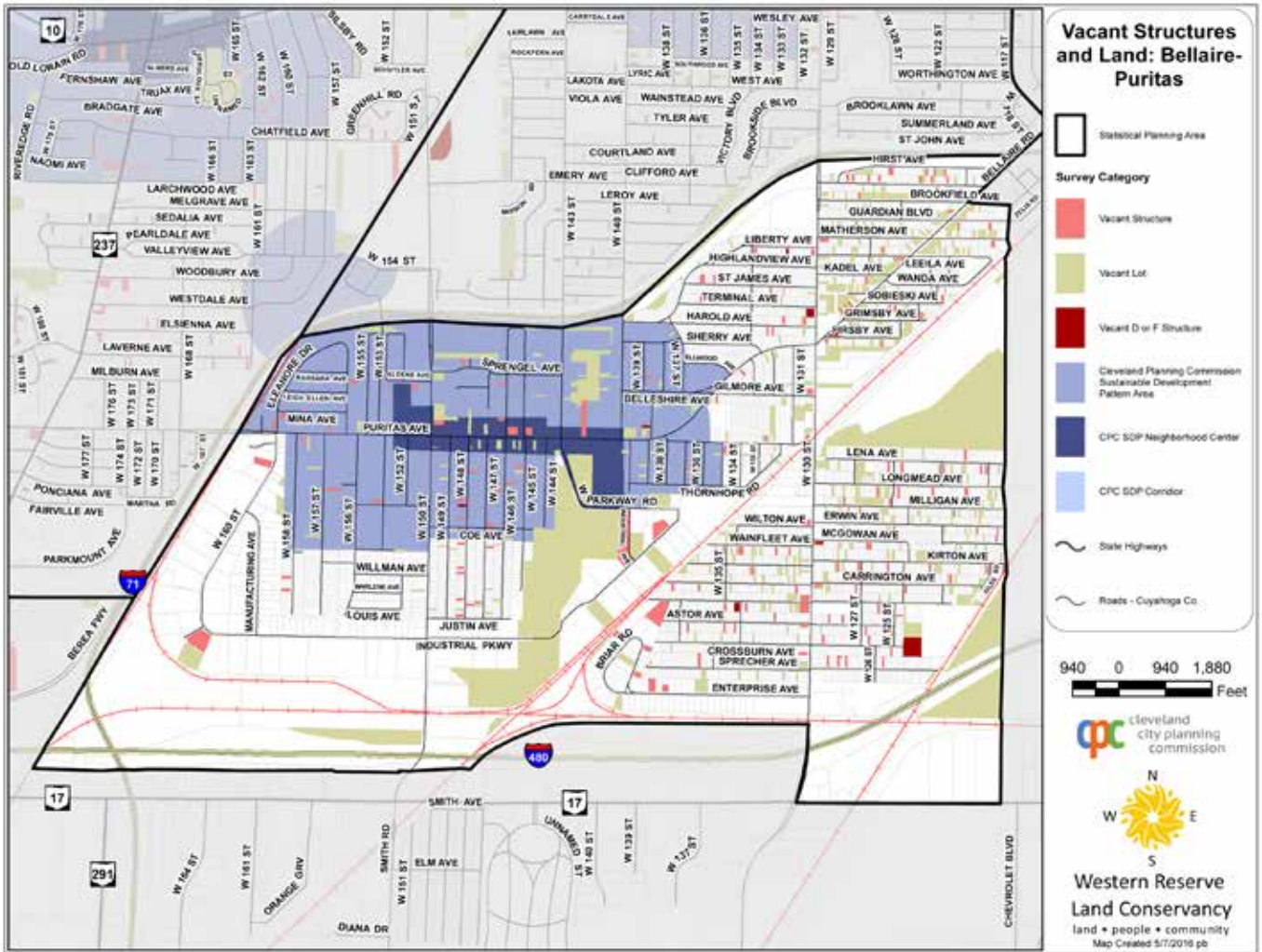
The city's Sustainable Development Pattern map identifies opportunities to create high-density, walkable districts clustered around housing, commercial uses, recreation, and neighborhood services. The goal is to develop a pattern of buildings and open space that supports sustainable development practices by enhancing existing neighborhoods and preserving opportunities for long-term growth, as illustrated in the *Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan*.

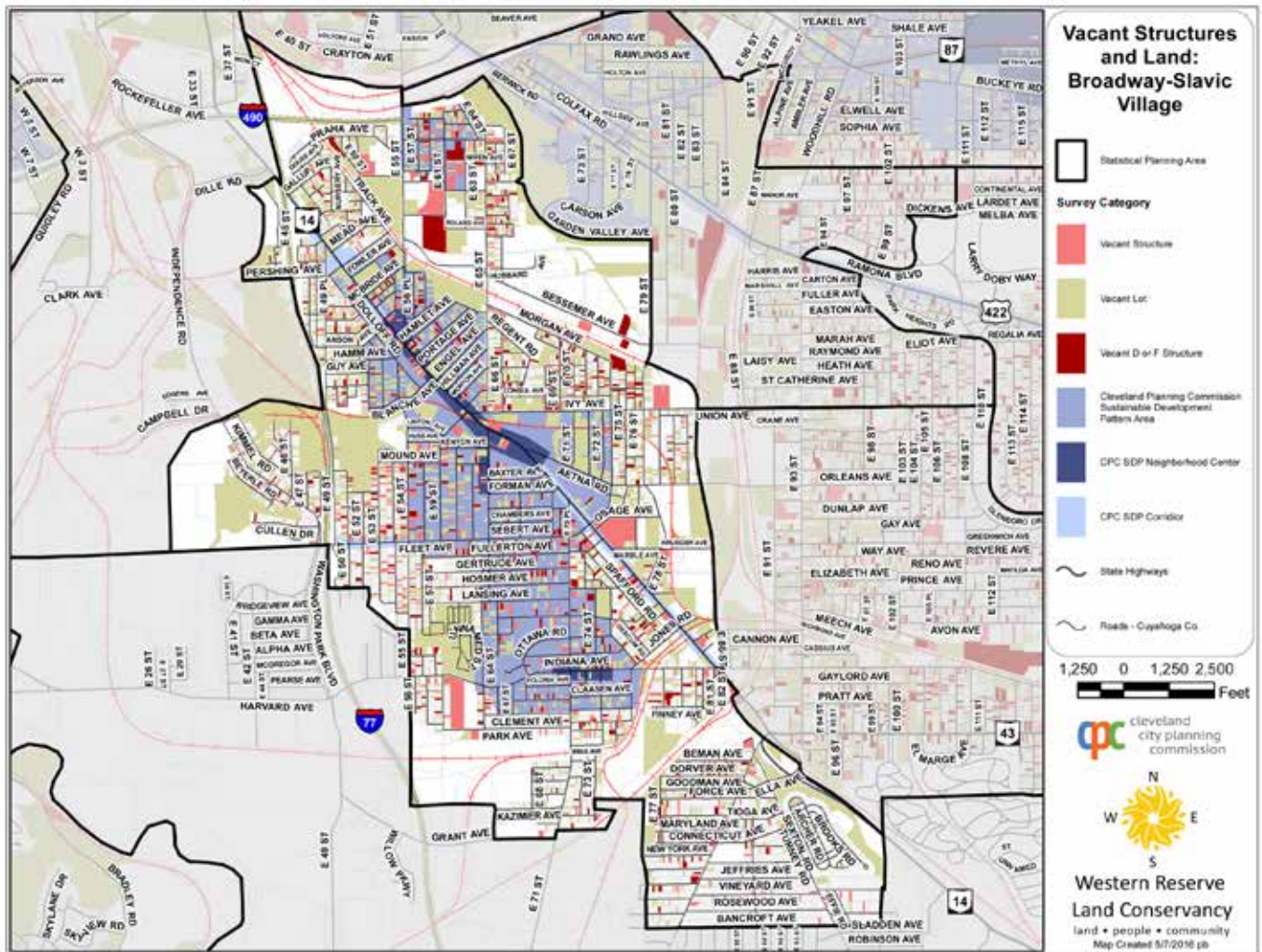
In addition to the maps, this appendix includes images from Google Street View that show conditions in parts of the priority development areas for each neighborhood. Please note: two maps (for the Lee-Seville and Stockyards neighborhoods) do not include images because these neighborhoods do not have any areas designated by the city as priority development areas on the overall Sustainable Development Pattern map.

For more information about the criteria that were used to develop the Sustainable Development Pattern map, please see the Cleveland City Planning Commission's publication, *8 Ideas for Vacant Land Reuse*, available at:

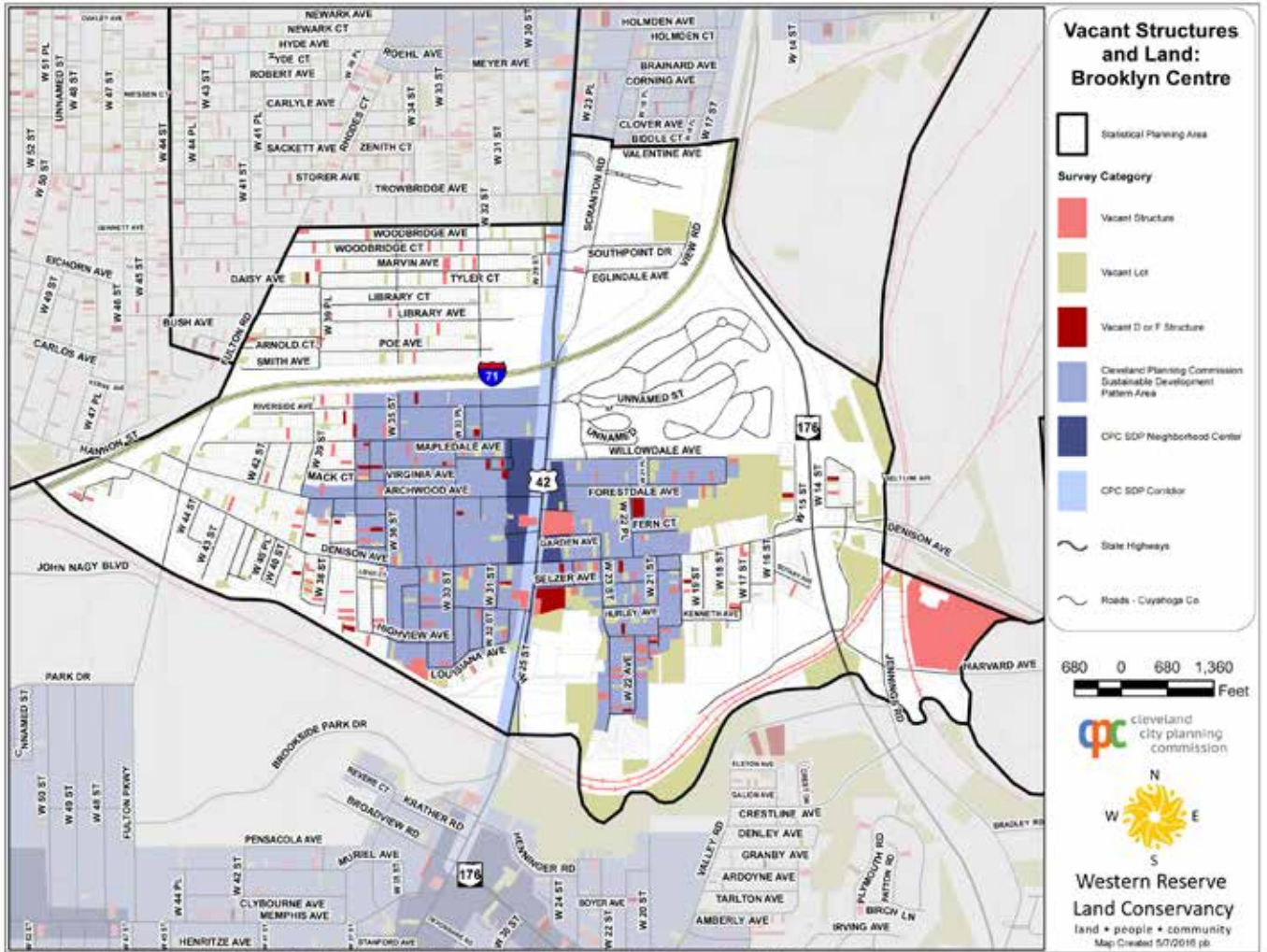
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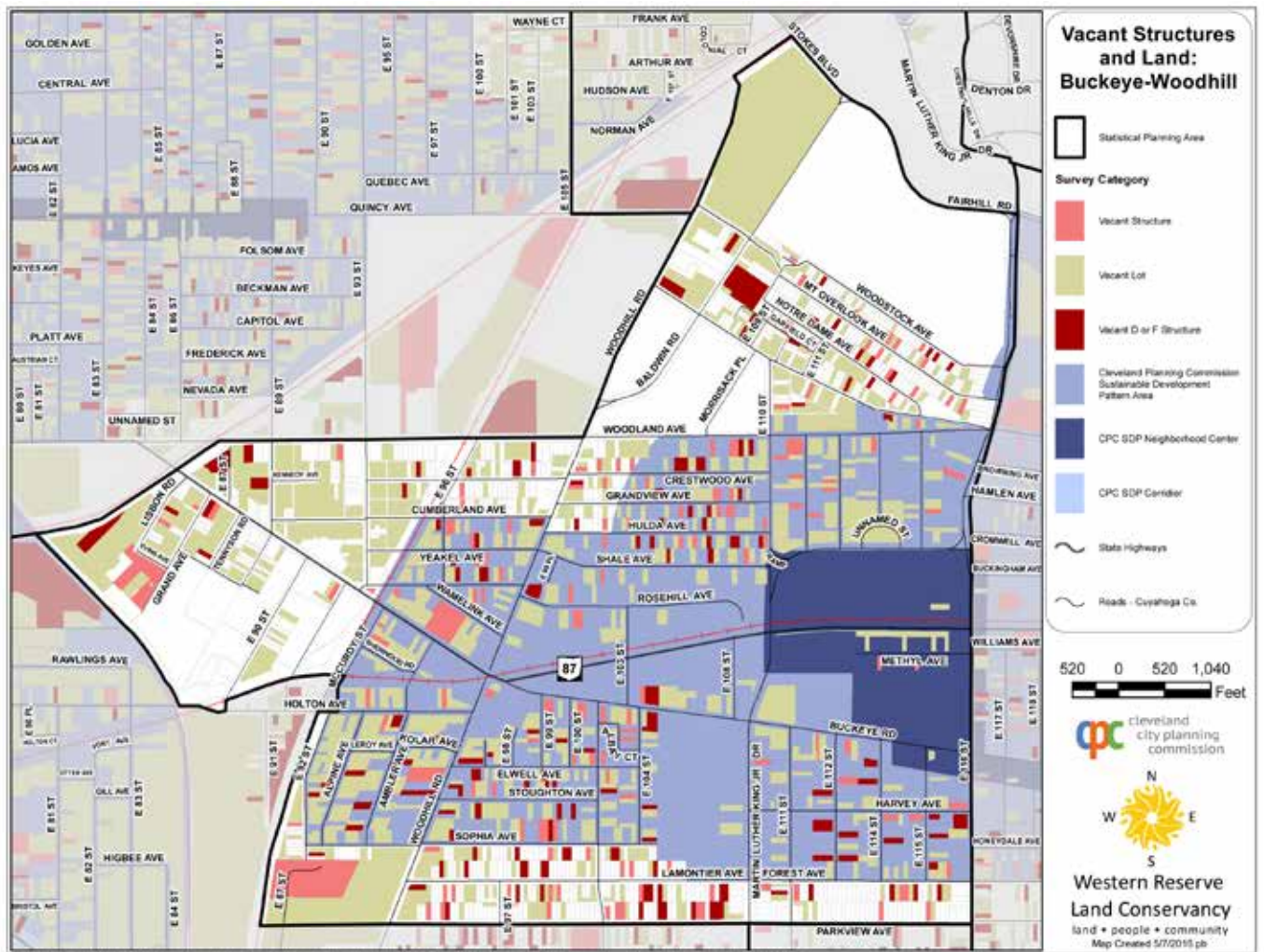
Street View data ©2014 Google



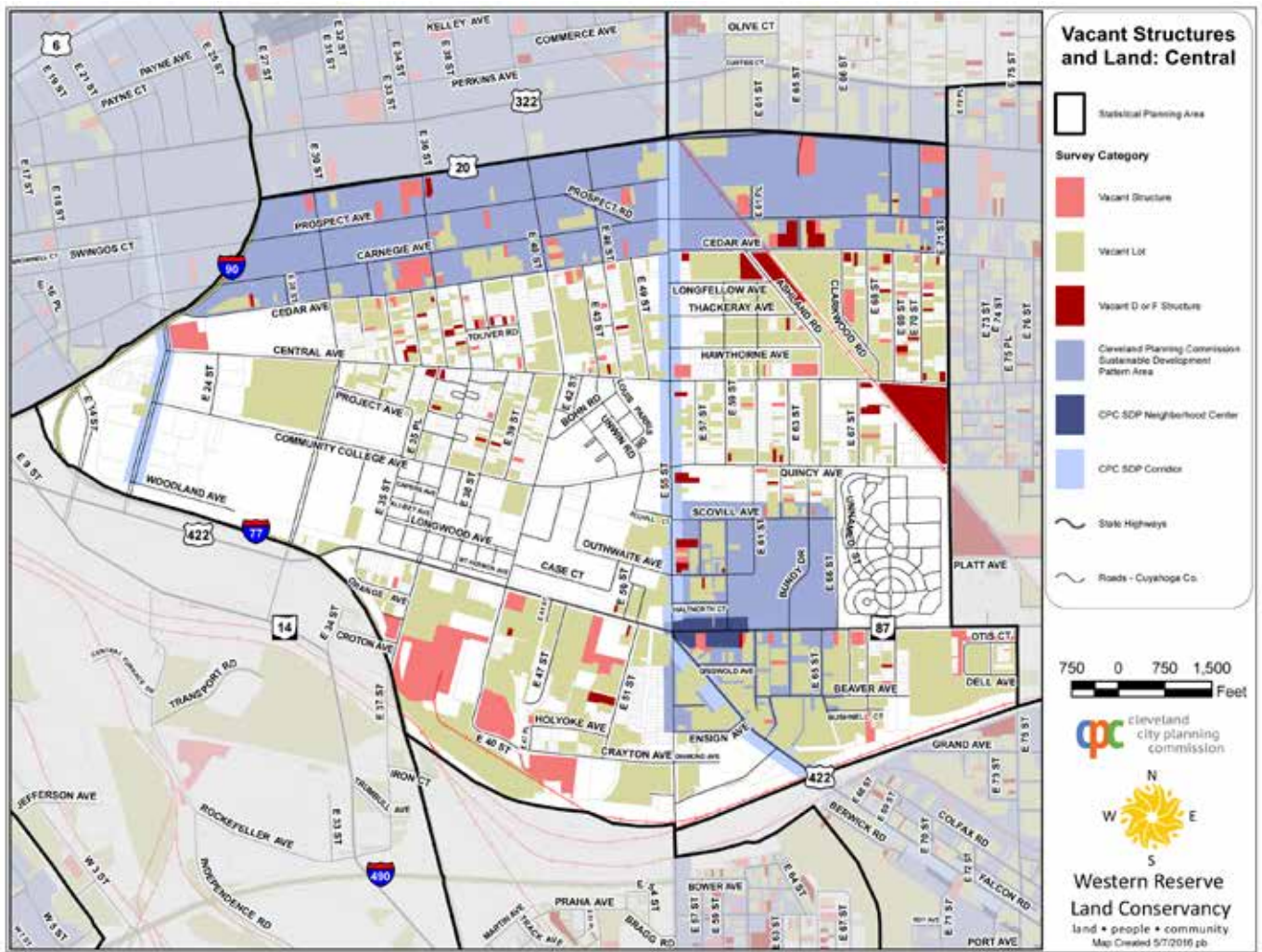
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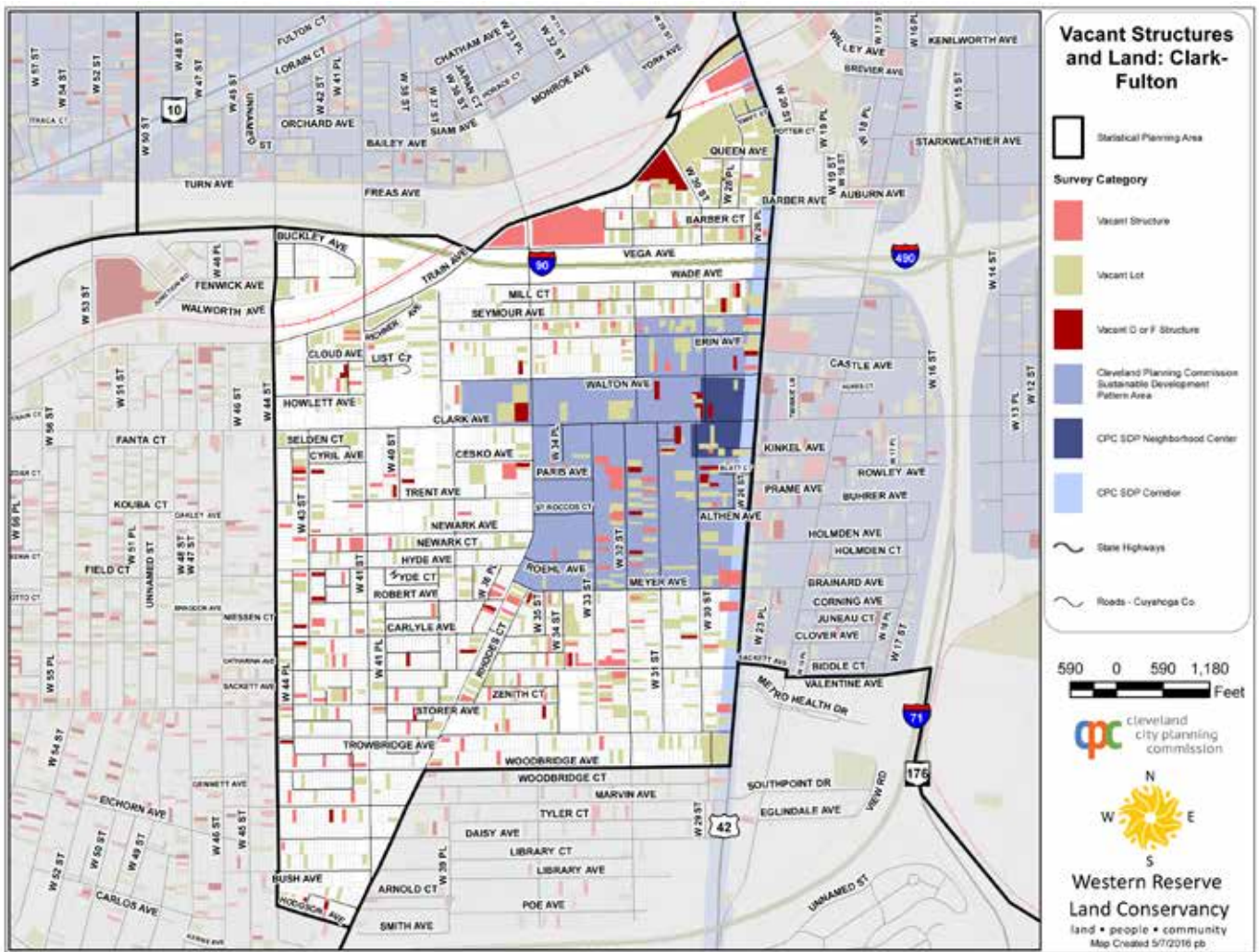
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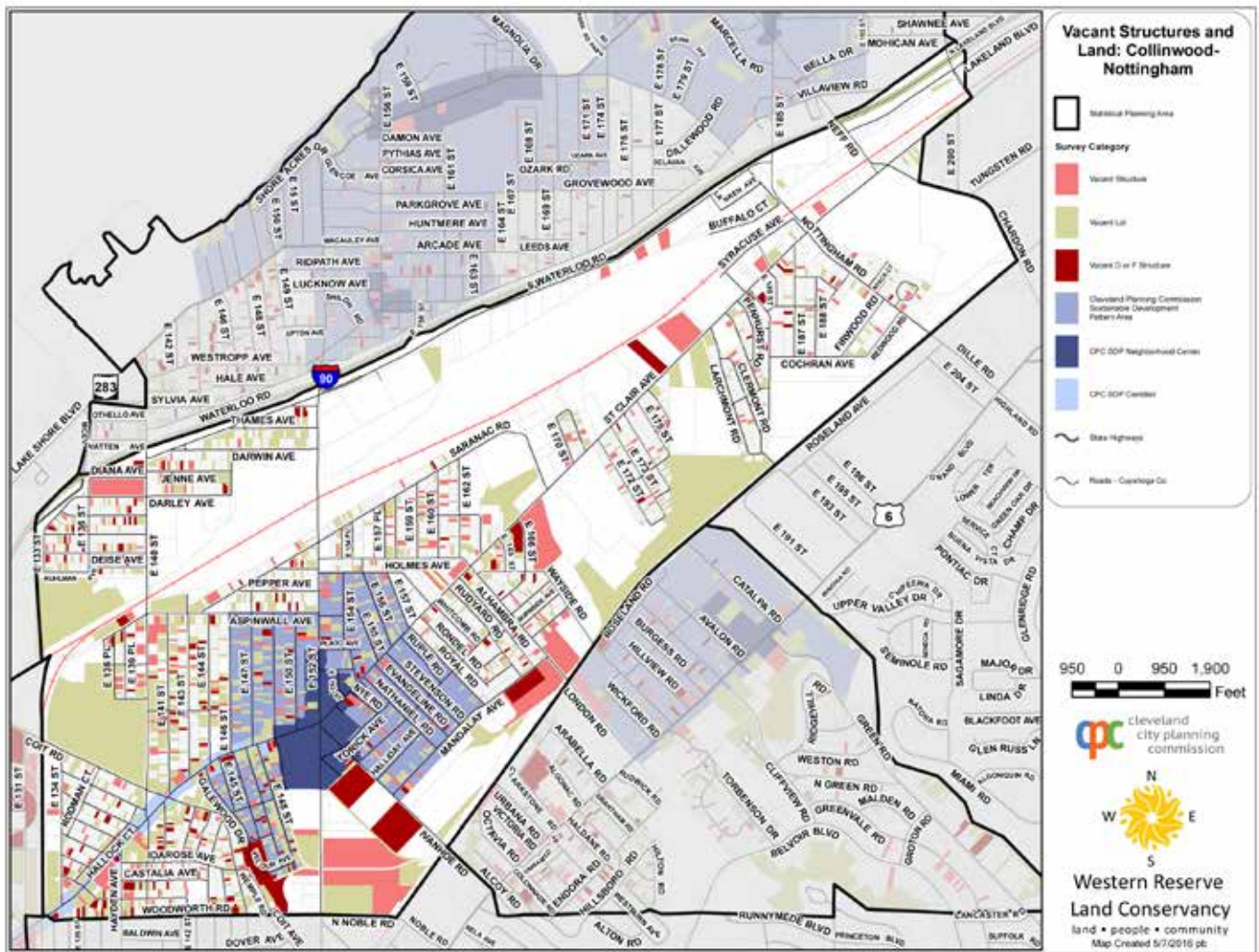
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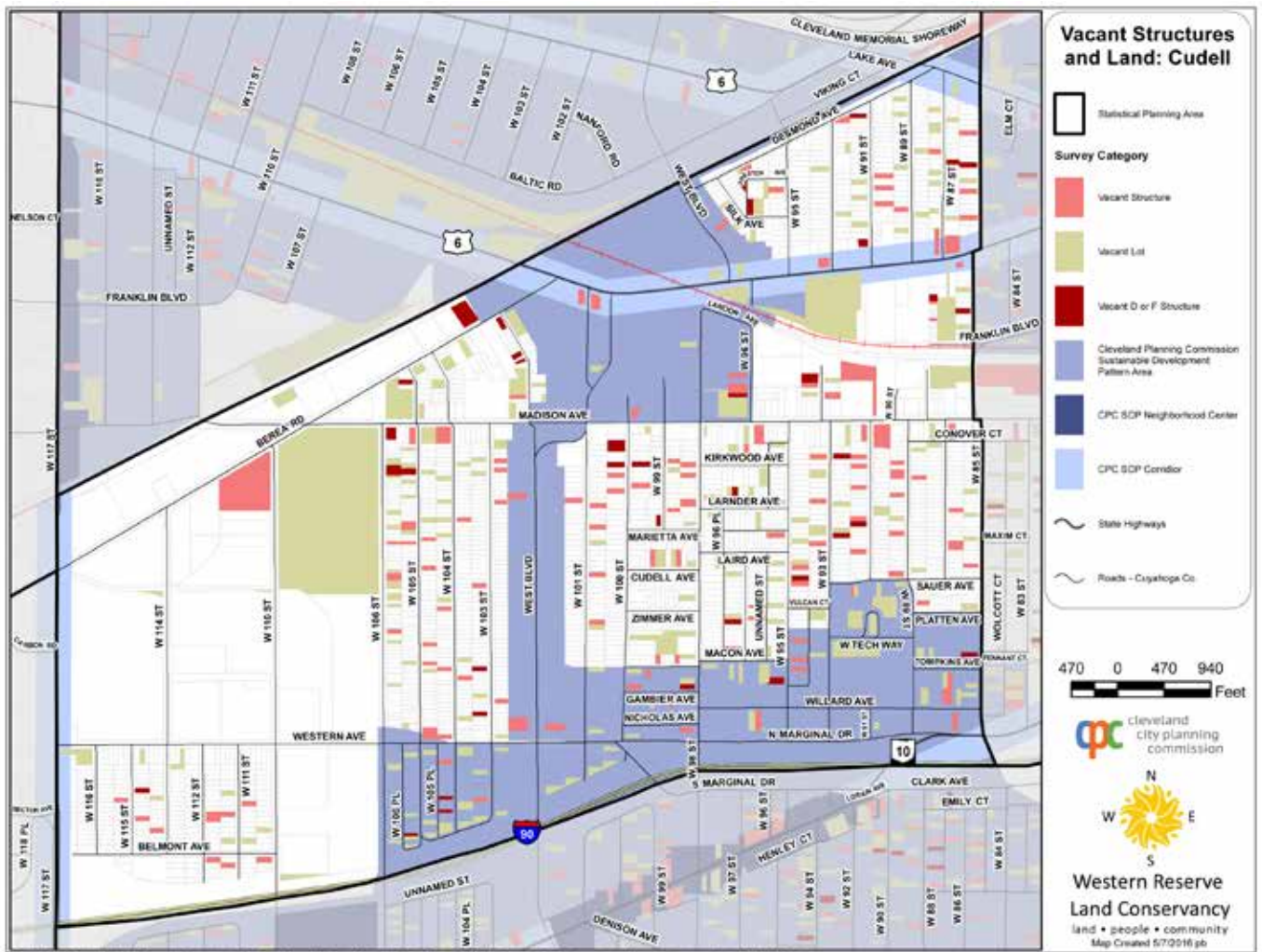


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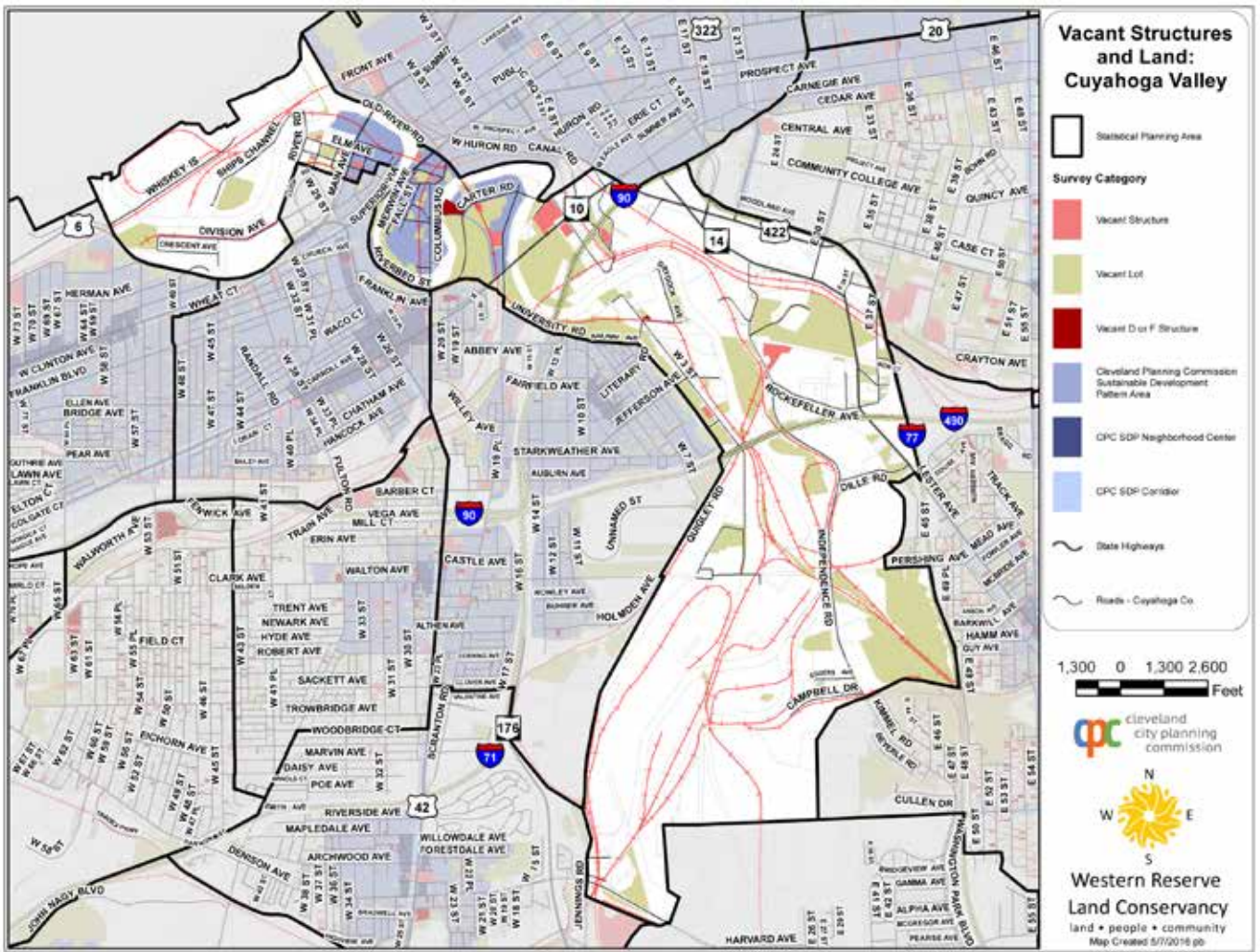


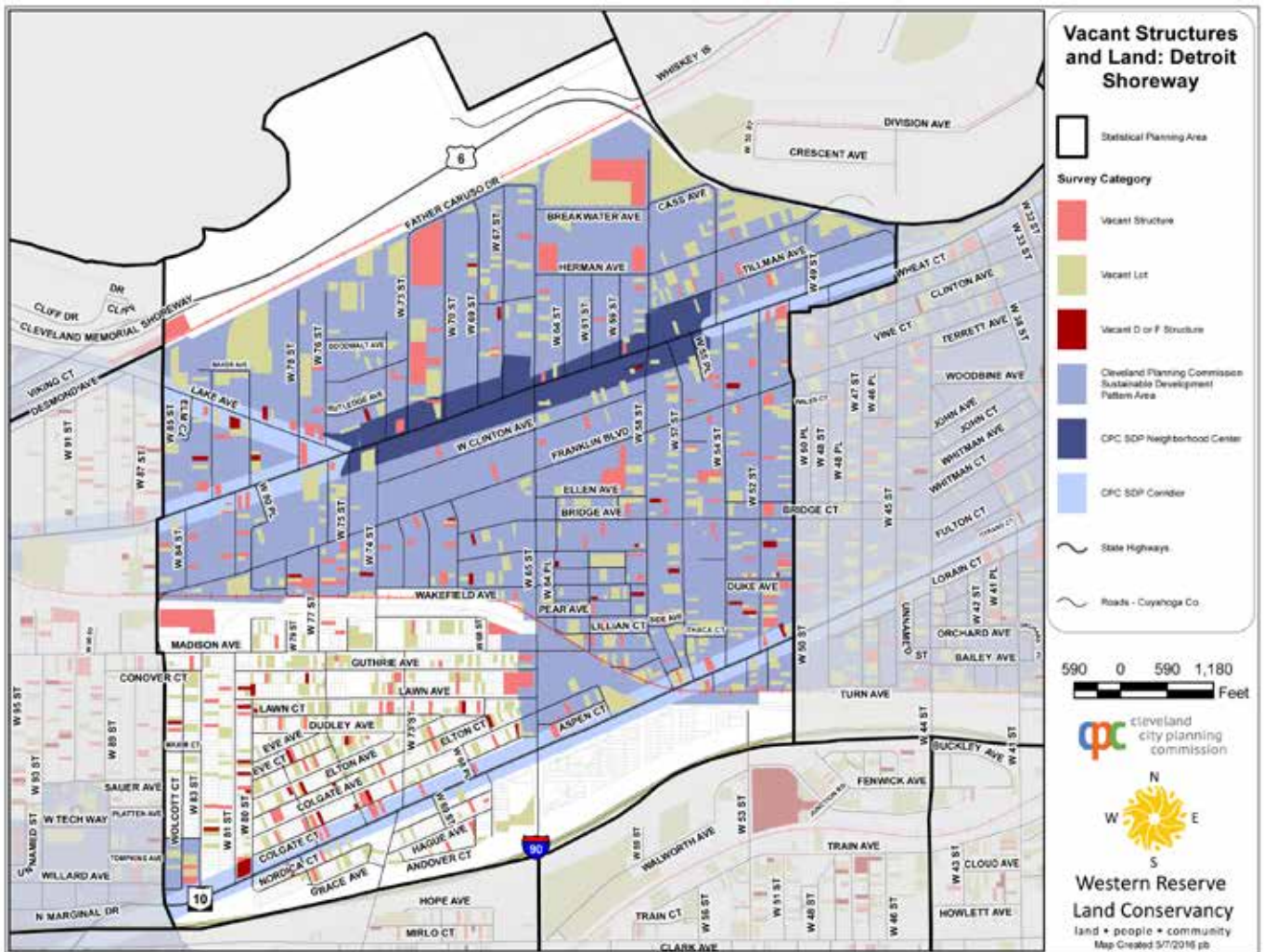
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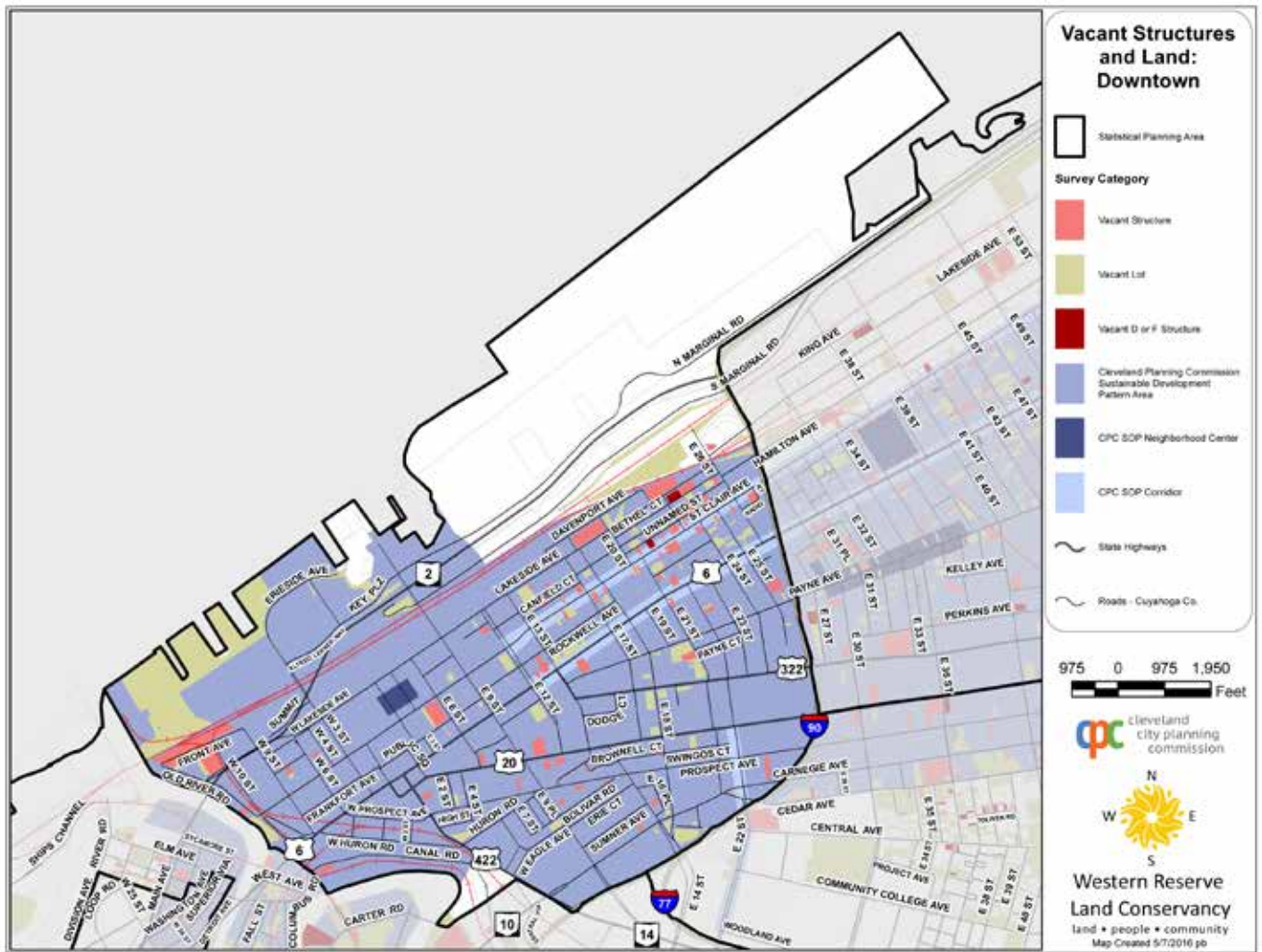


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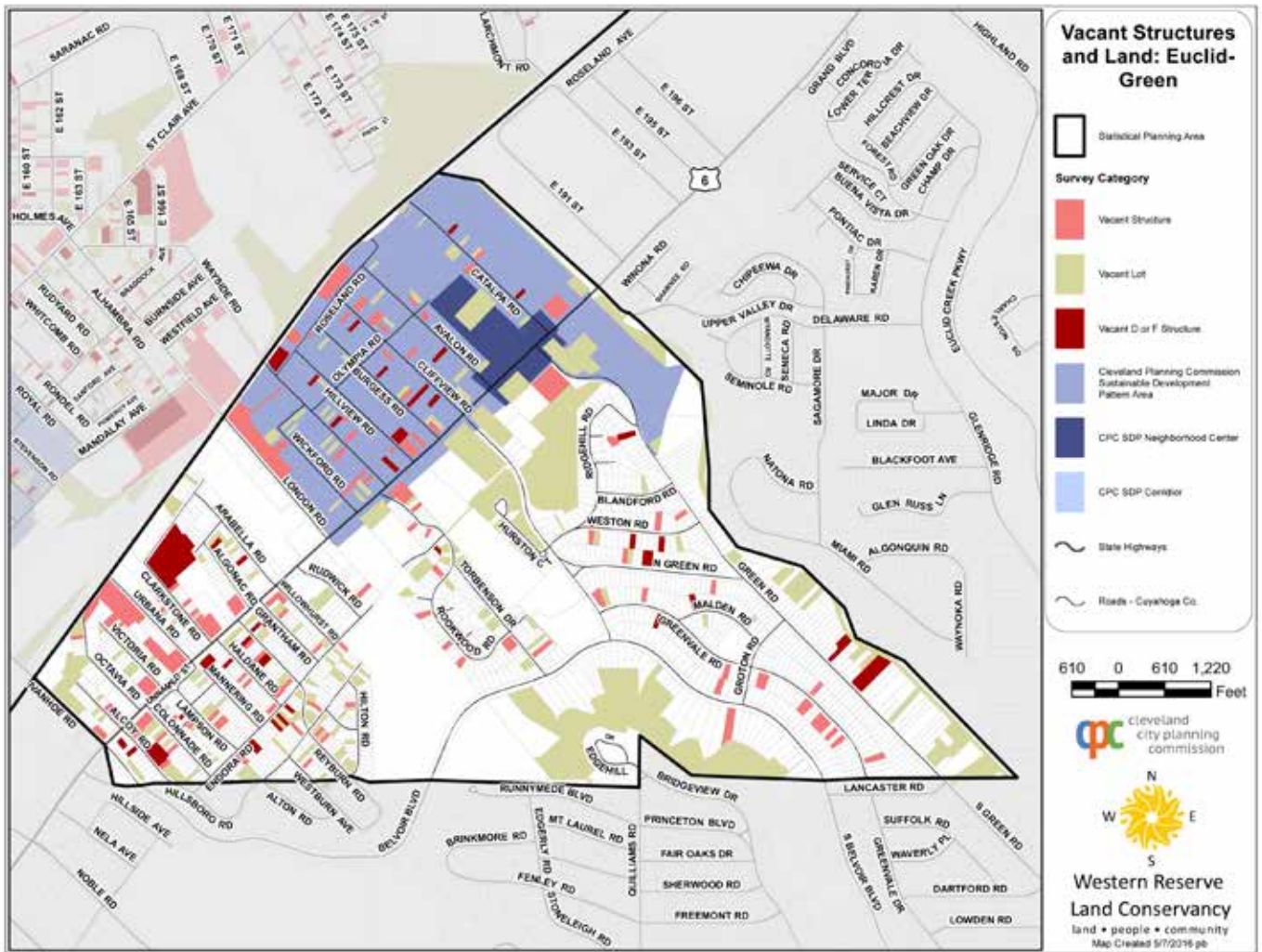




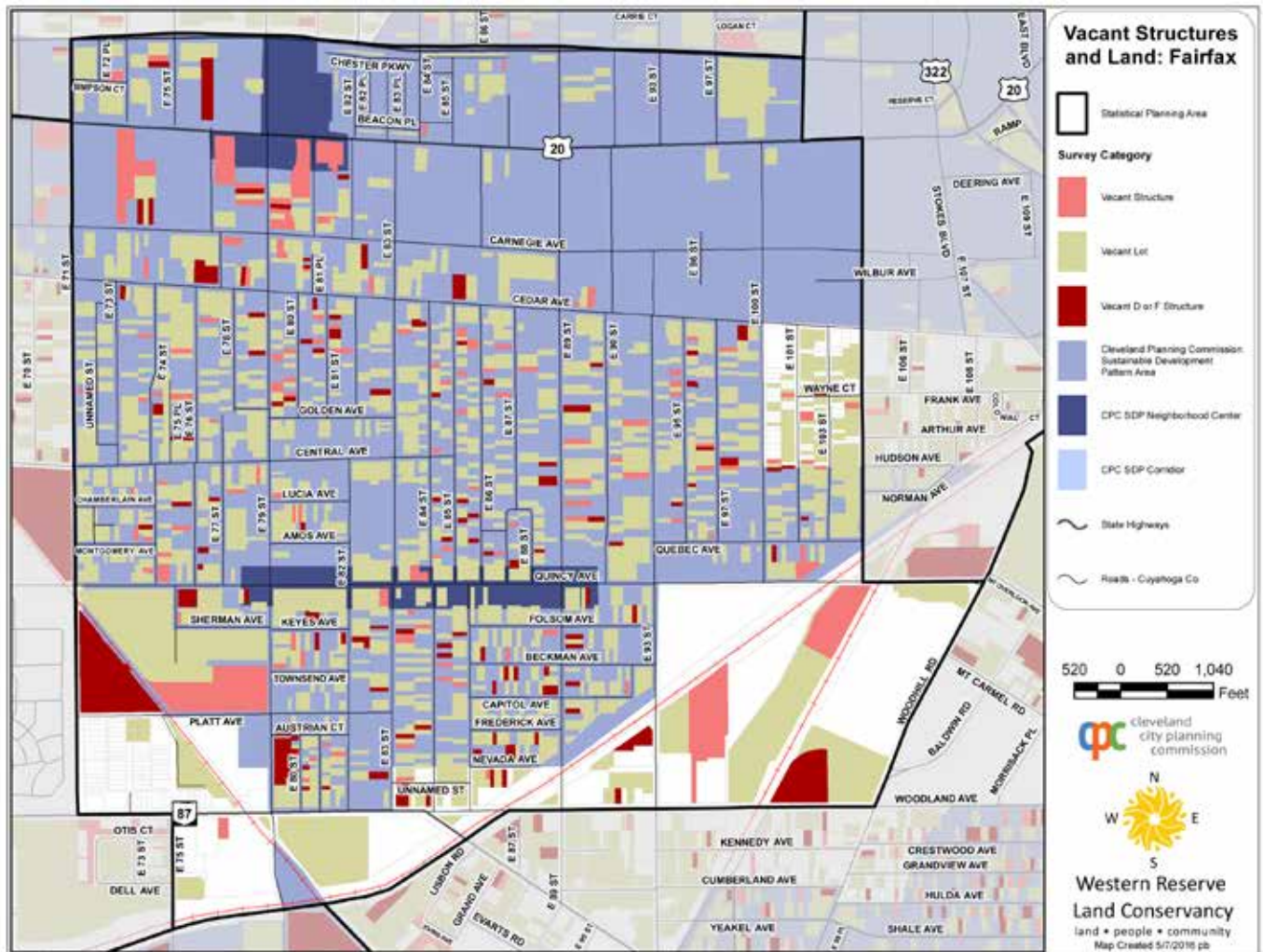
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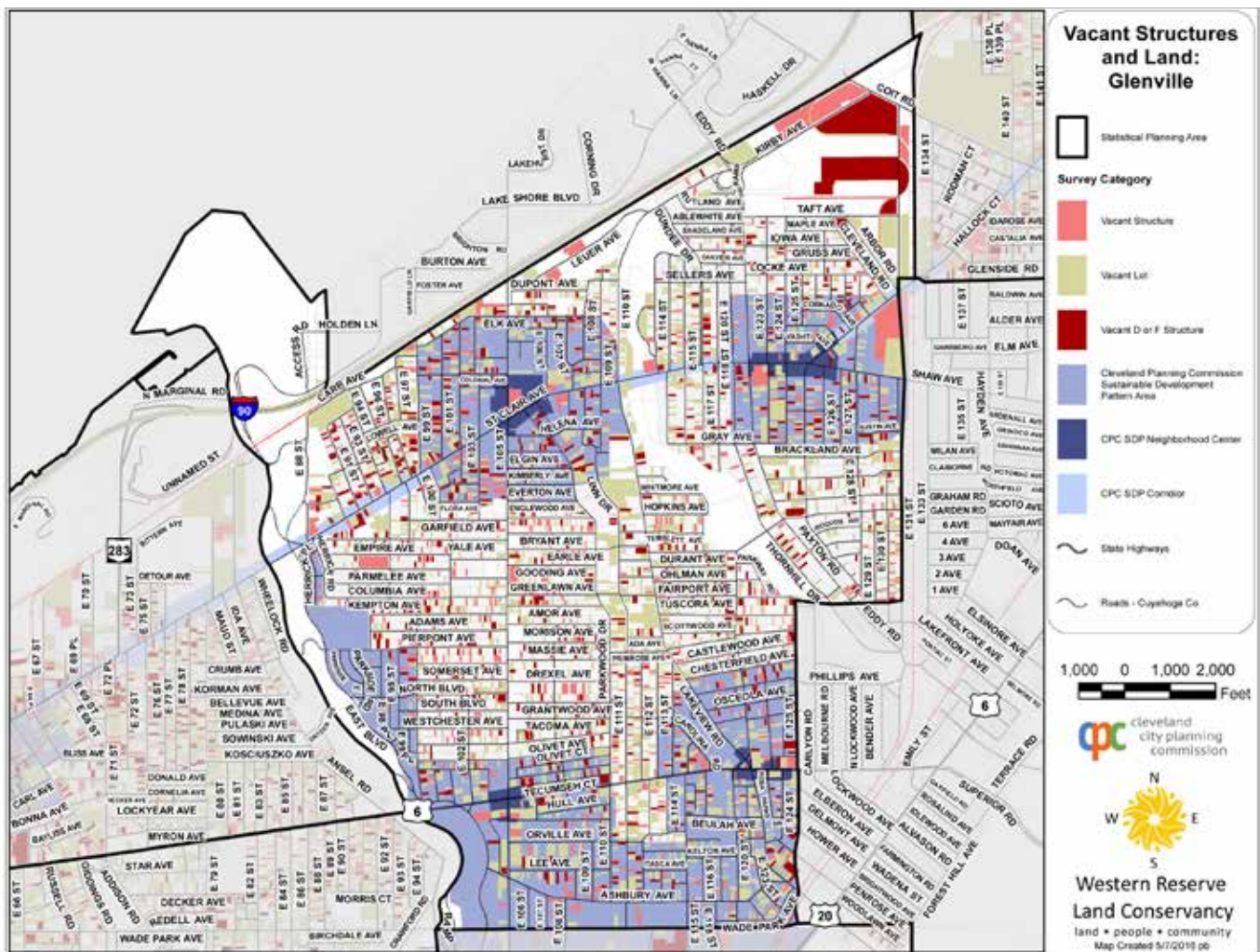
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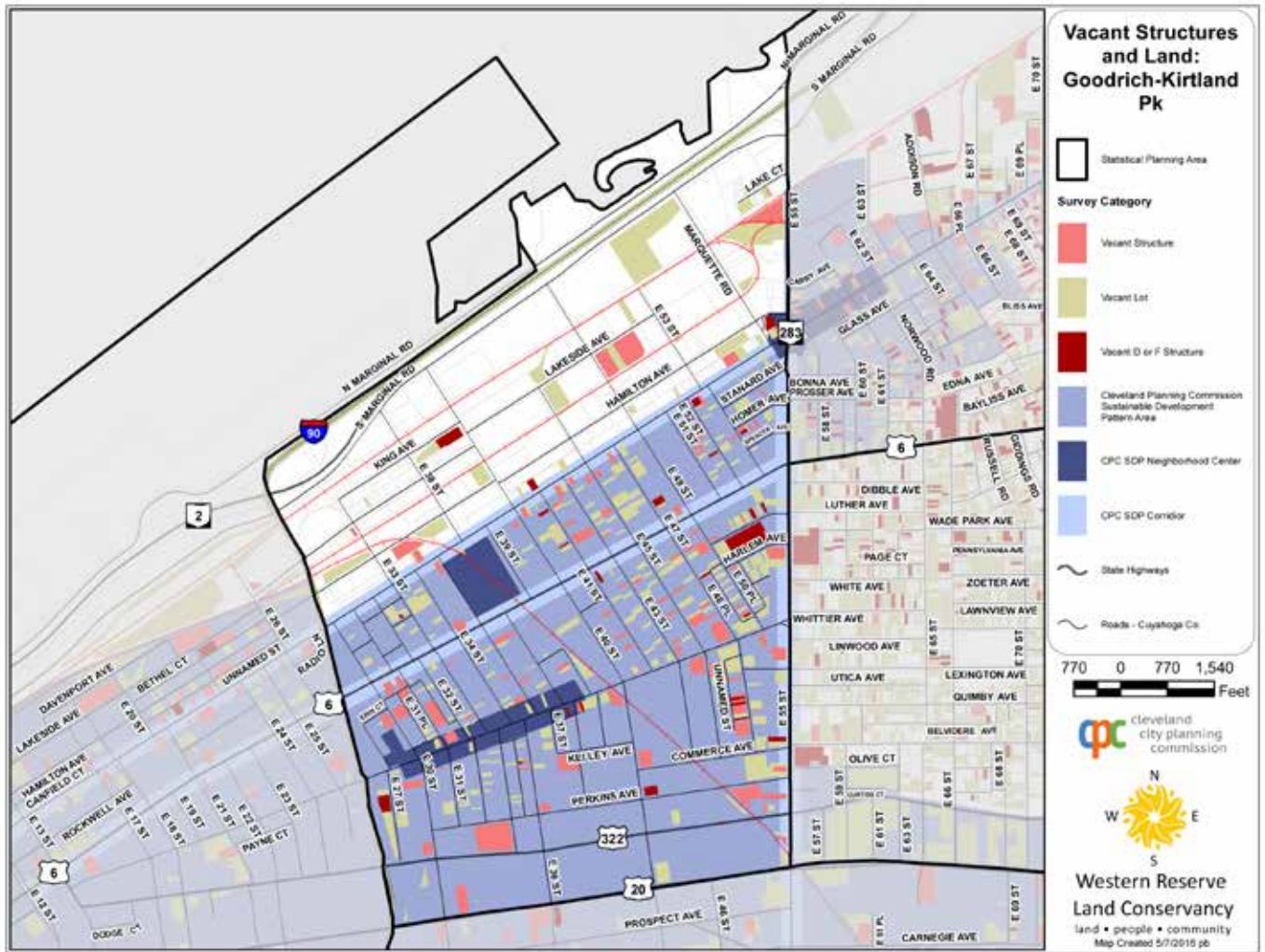
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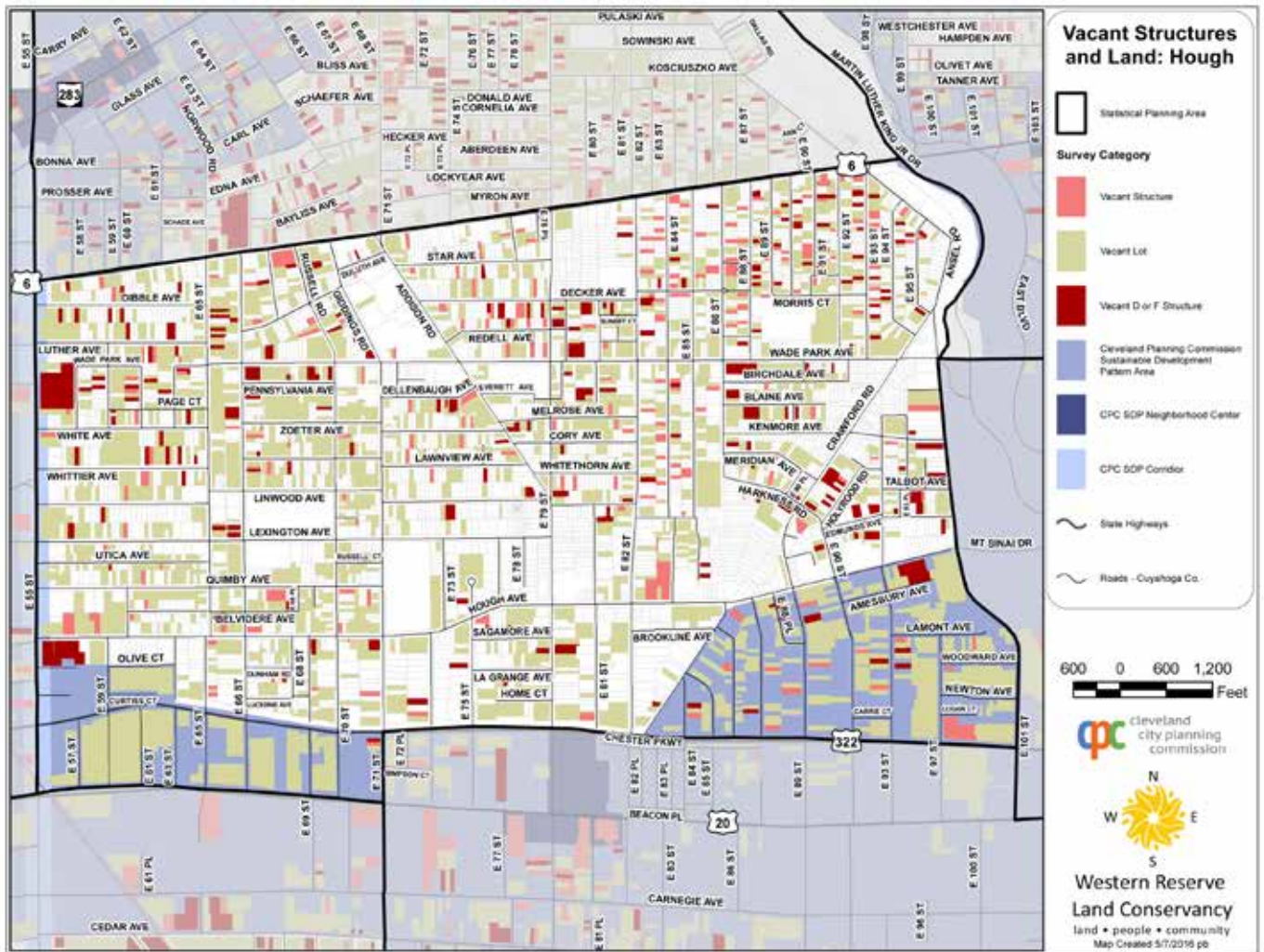
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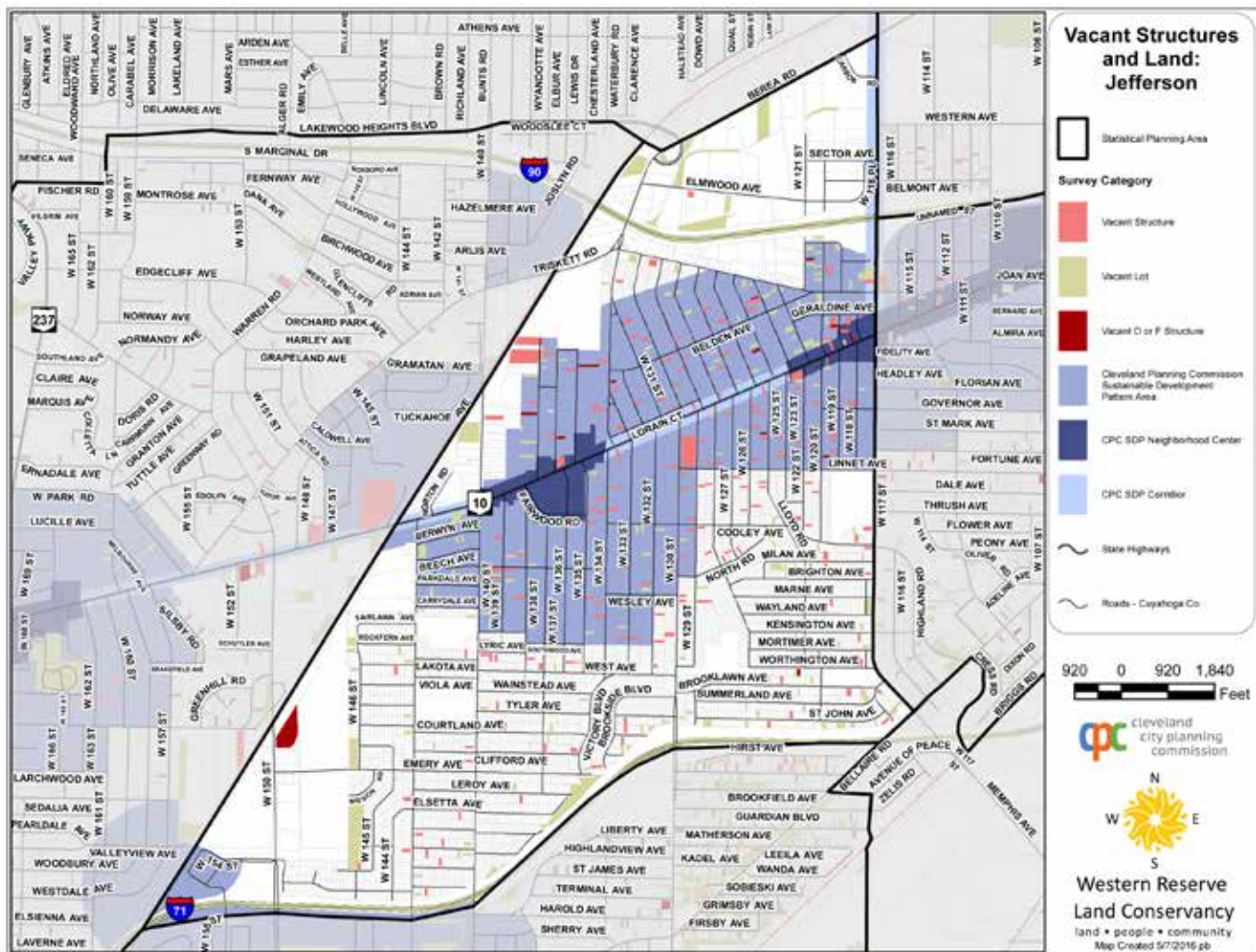


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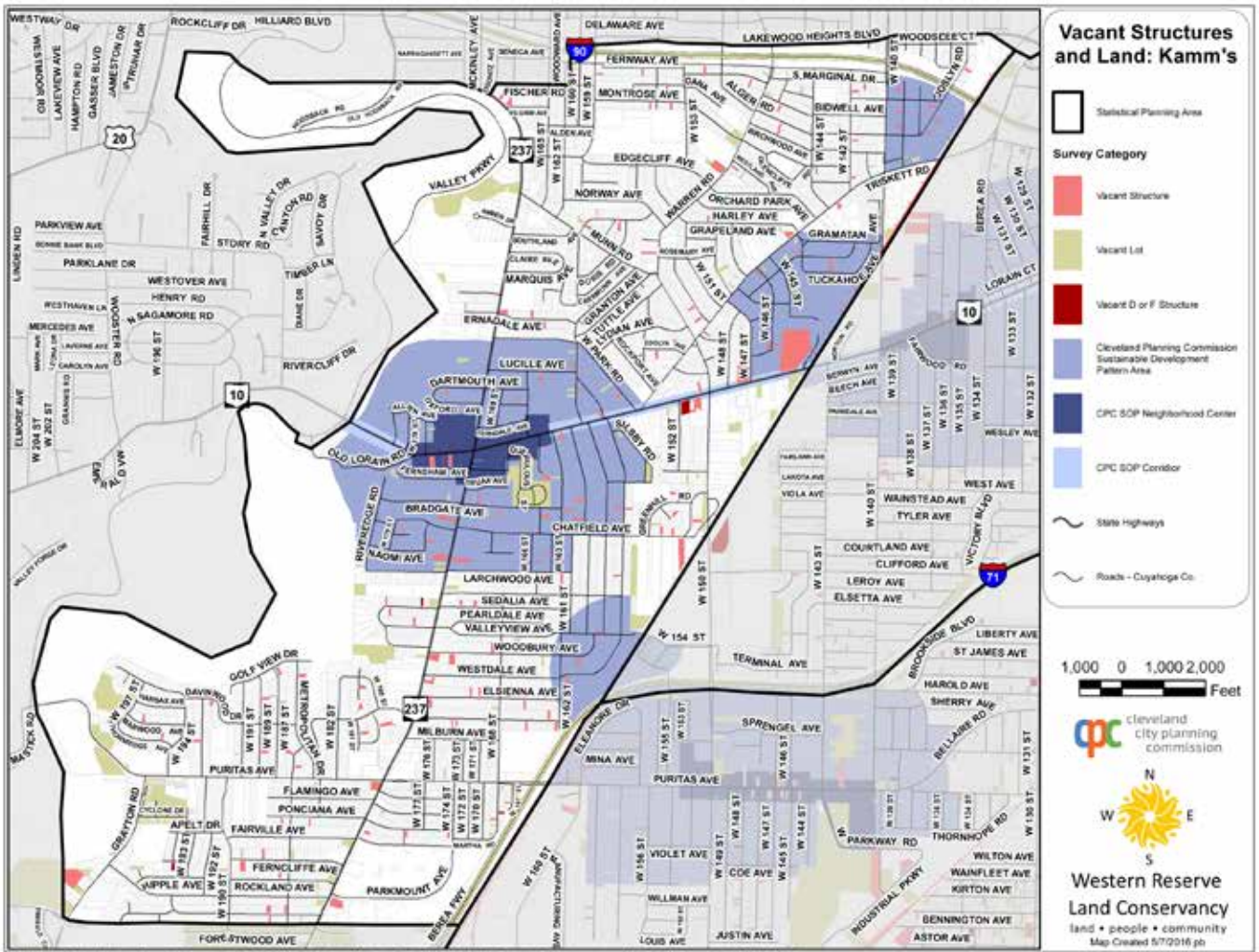


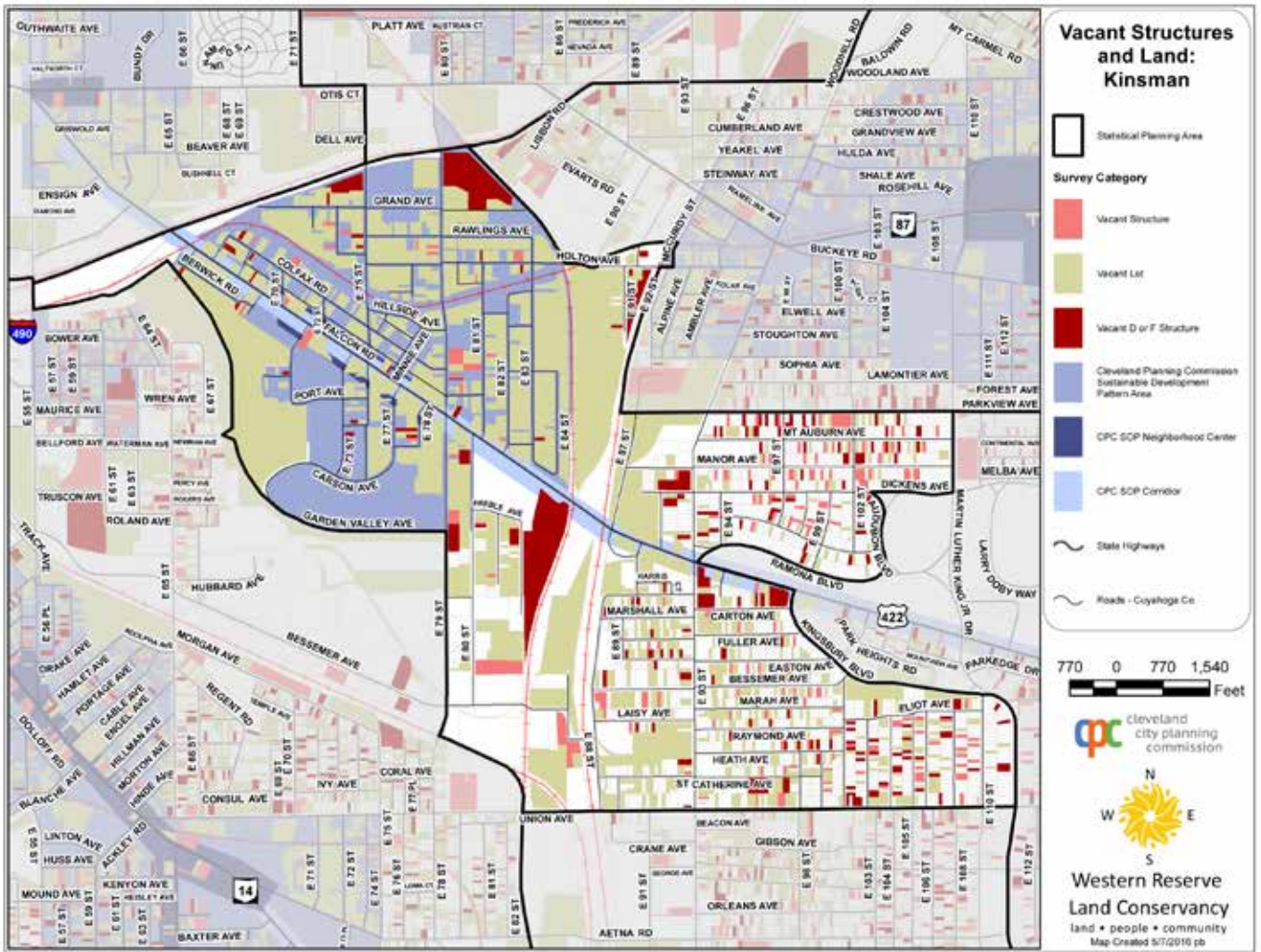
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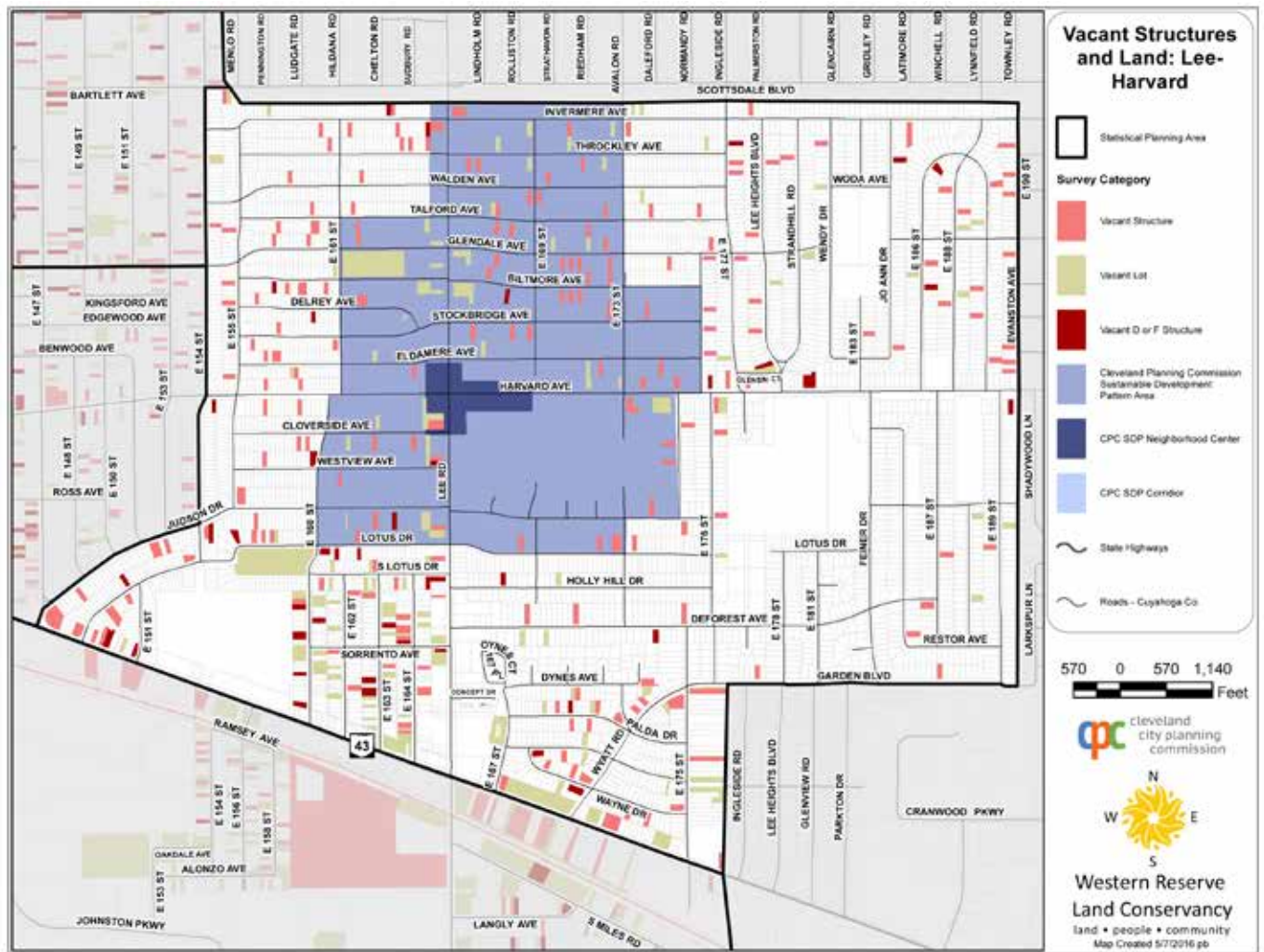


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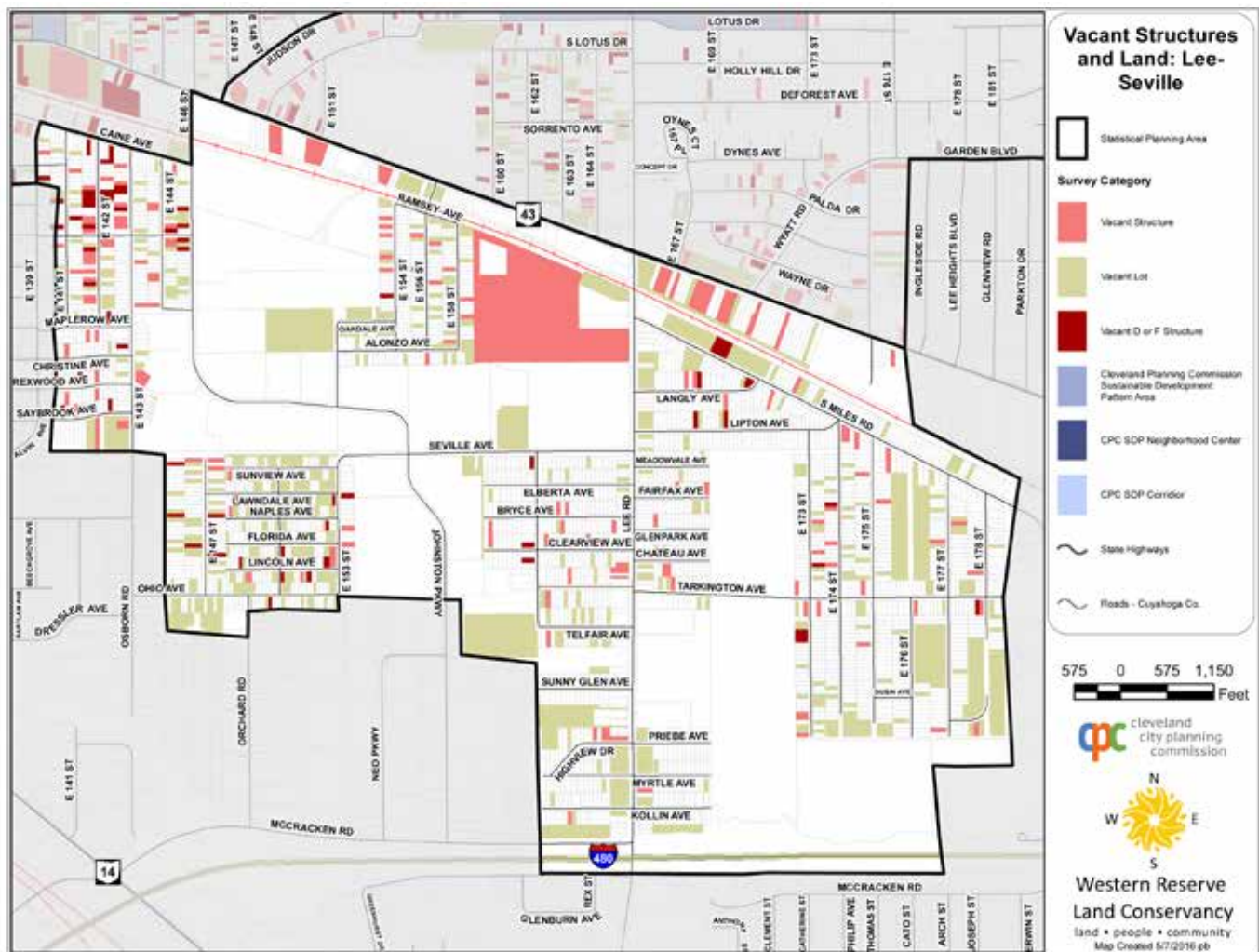


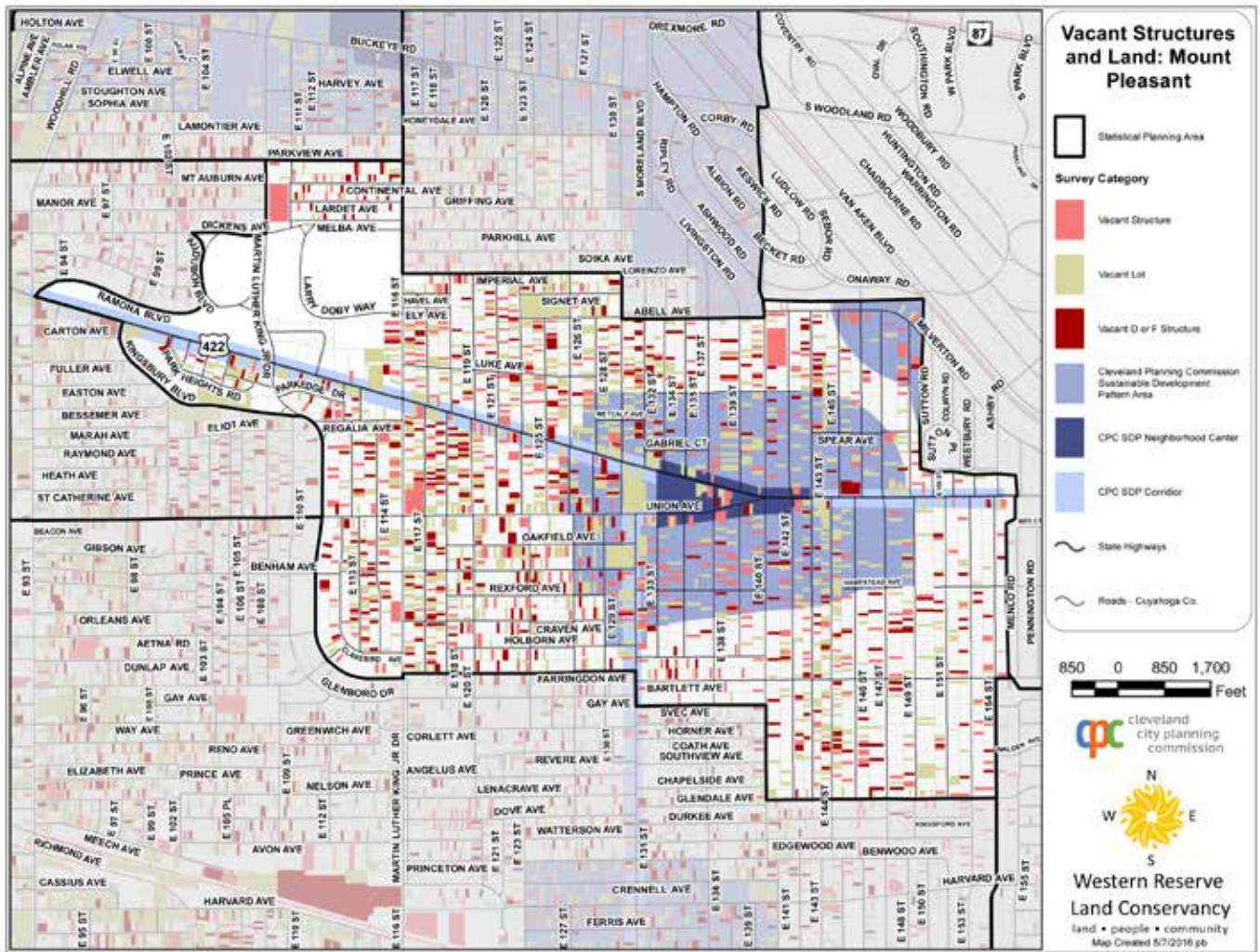


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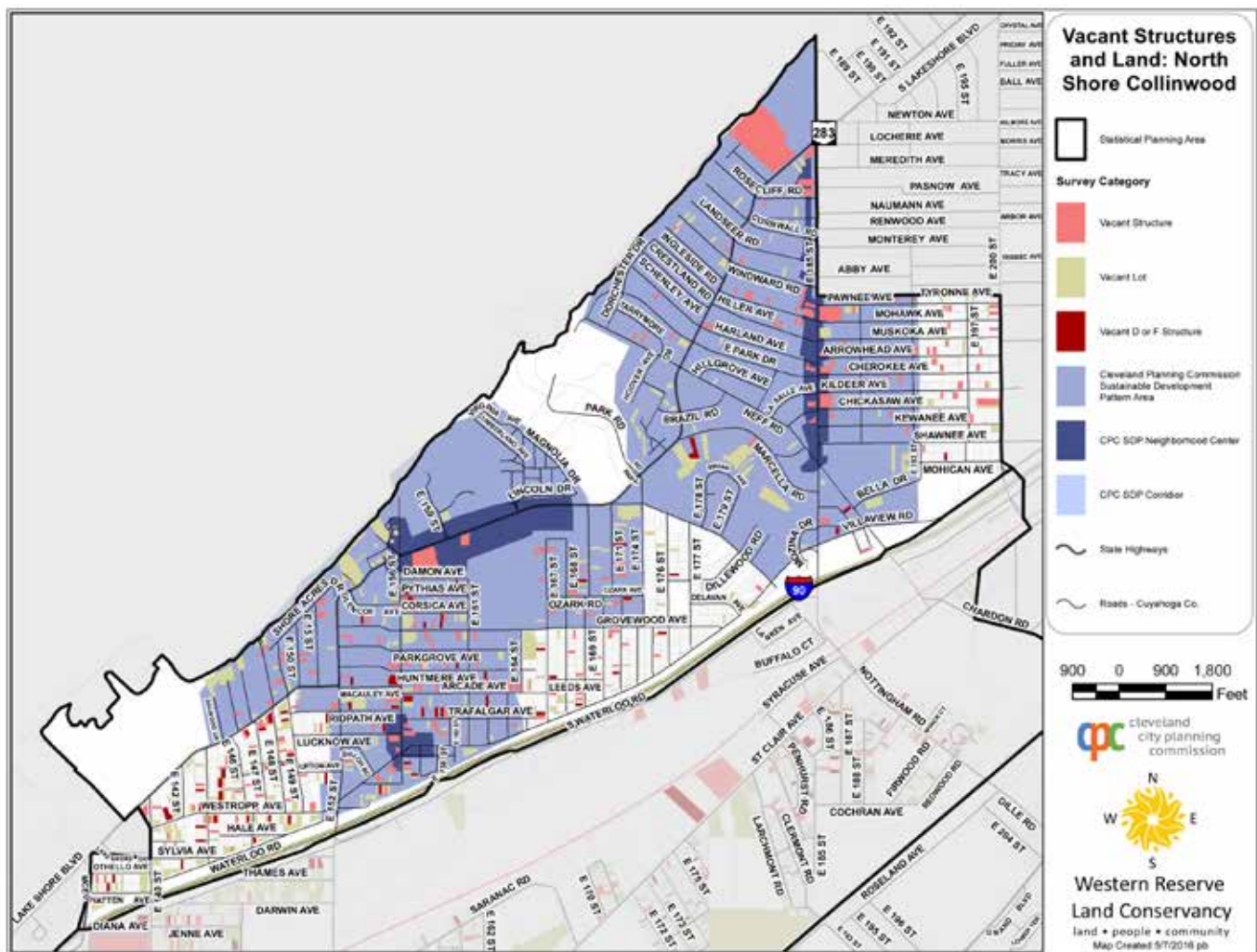


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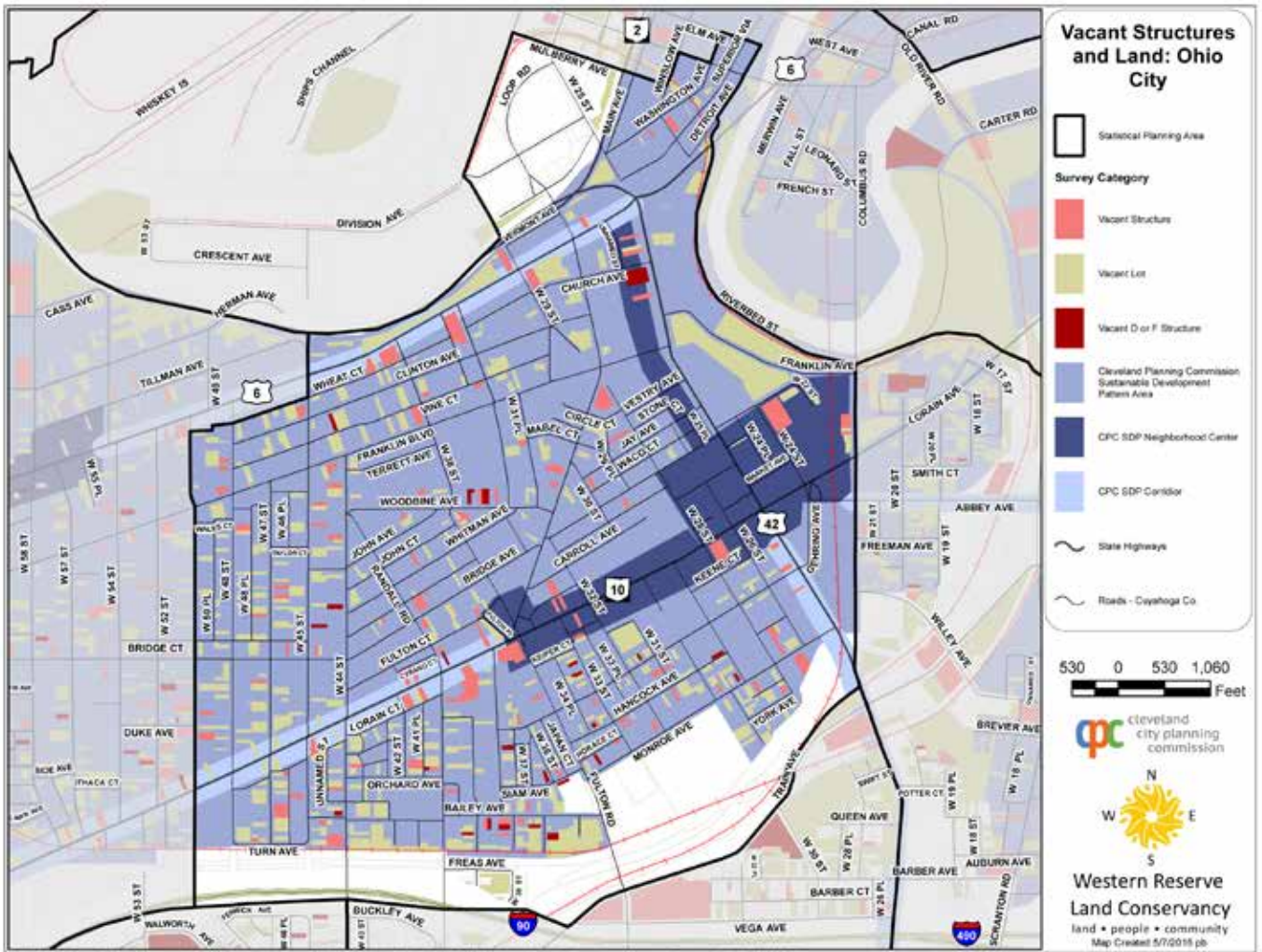




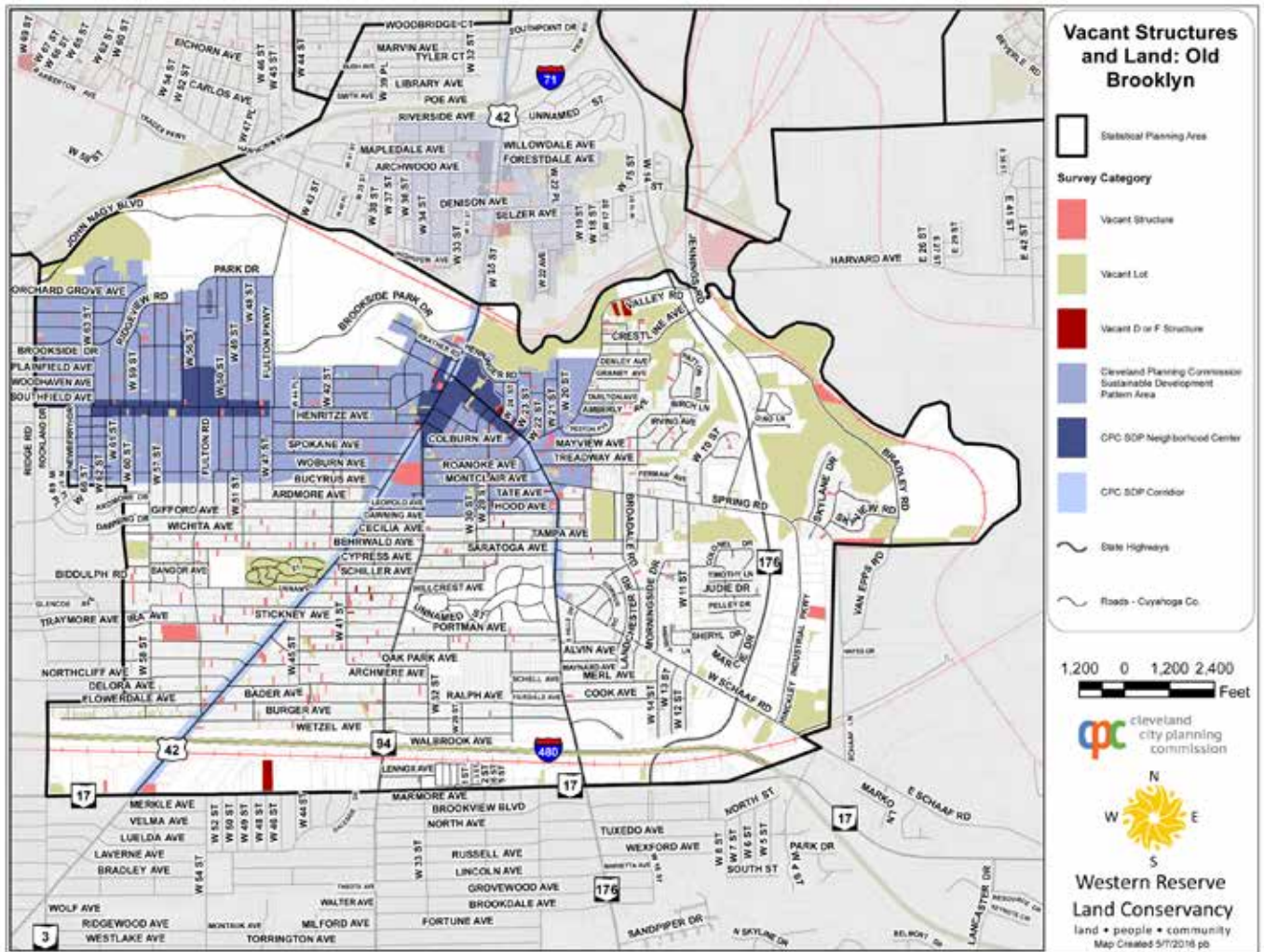
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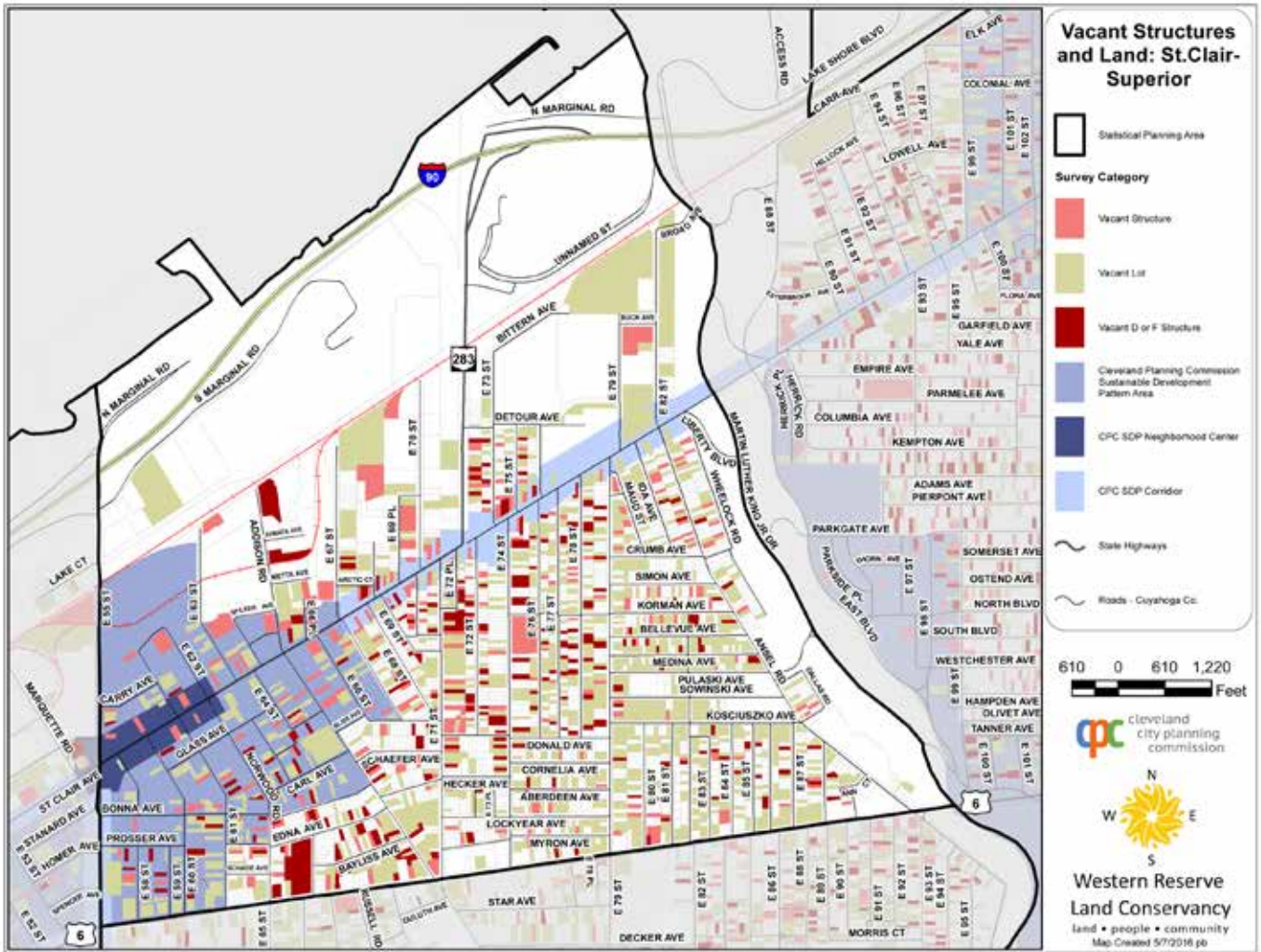
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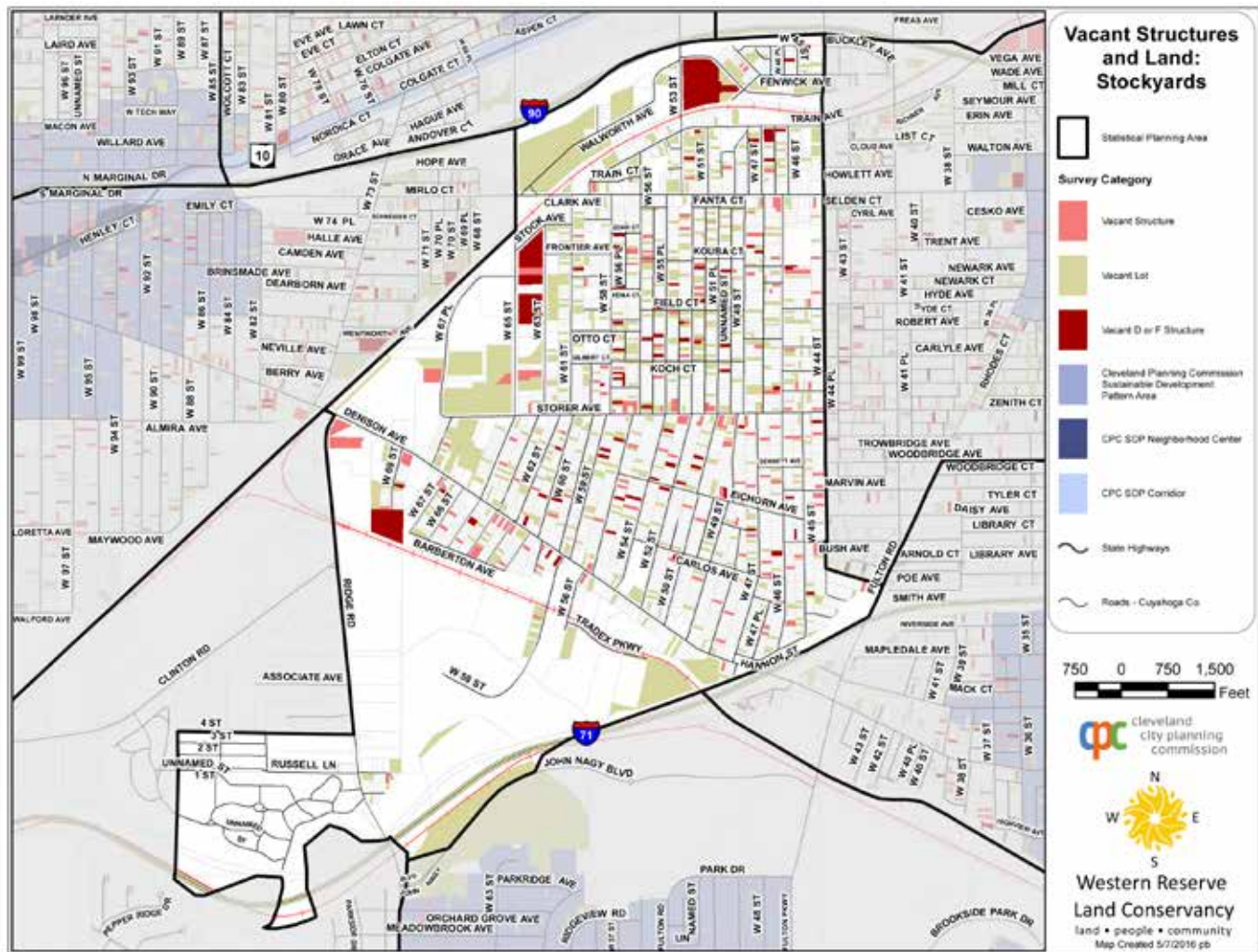
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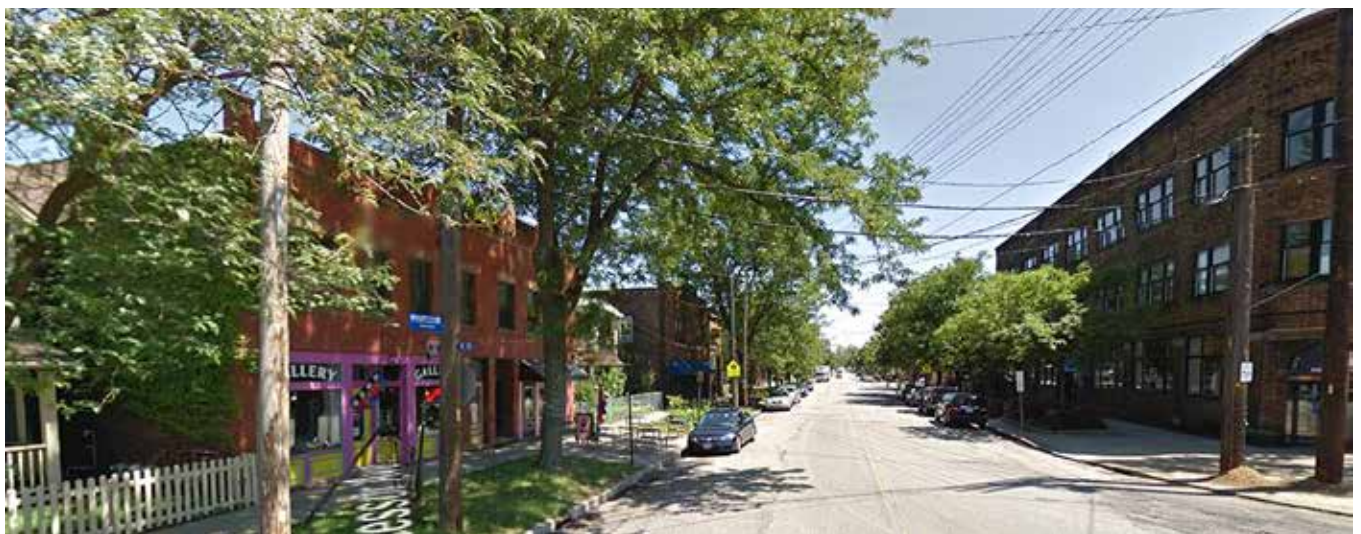
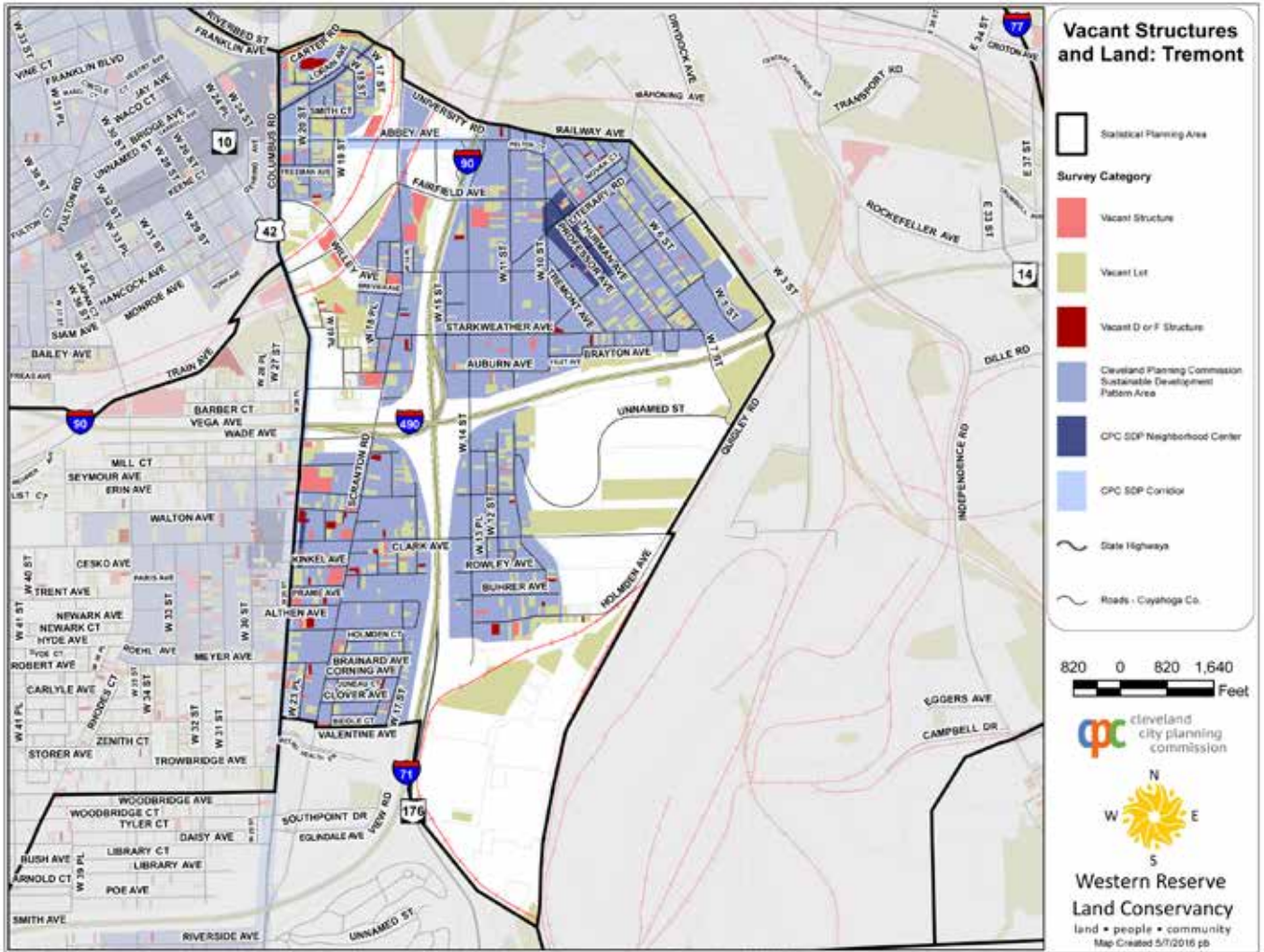


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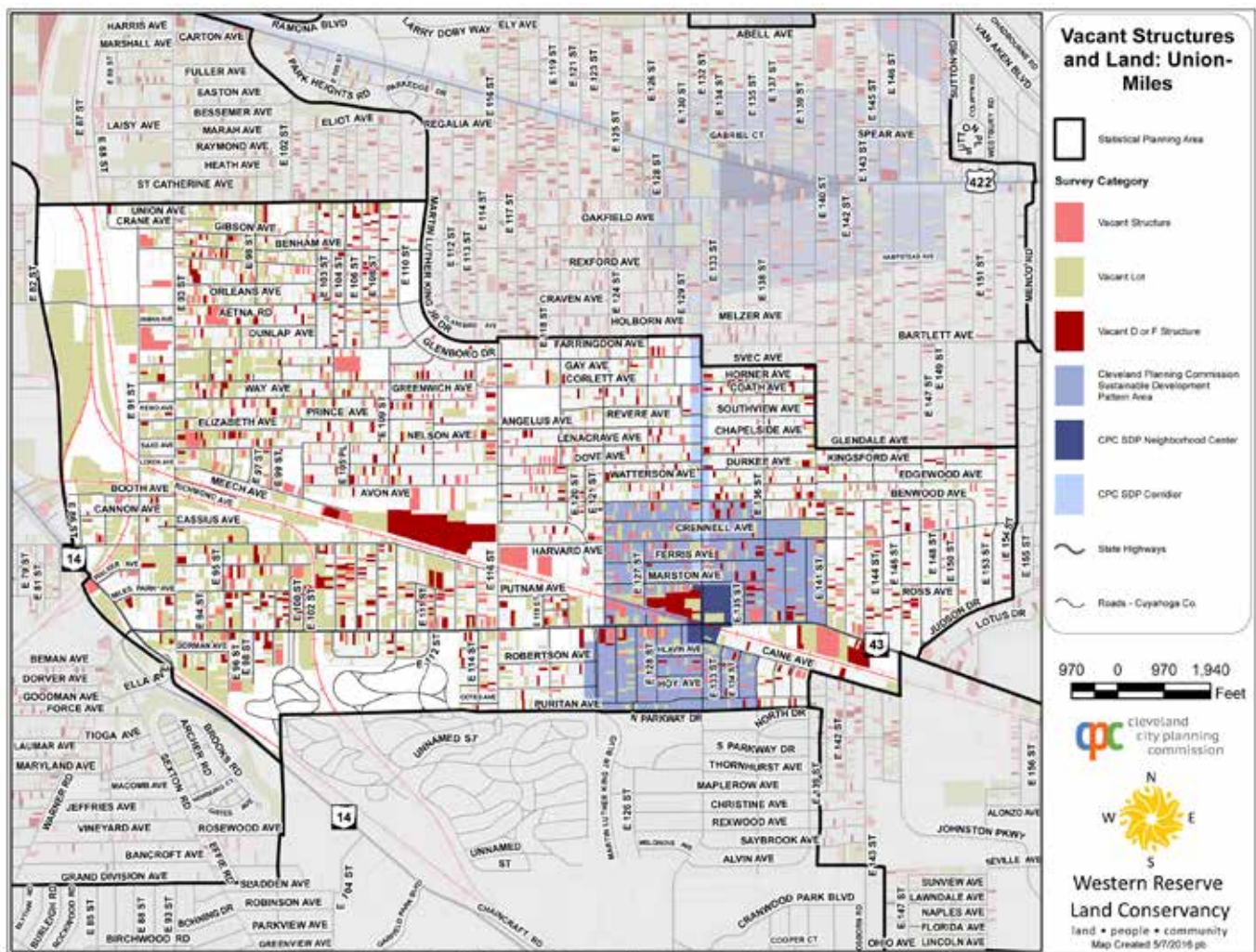


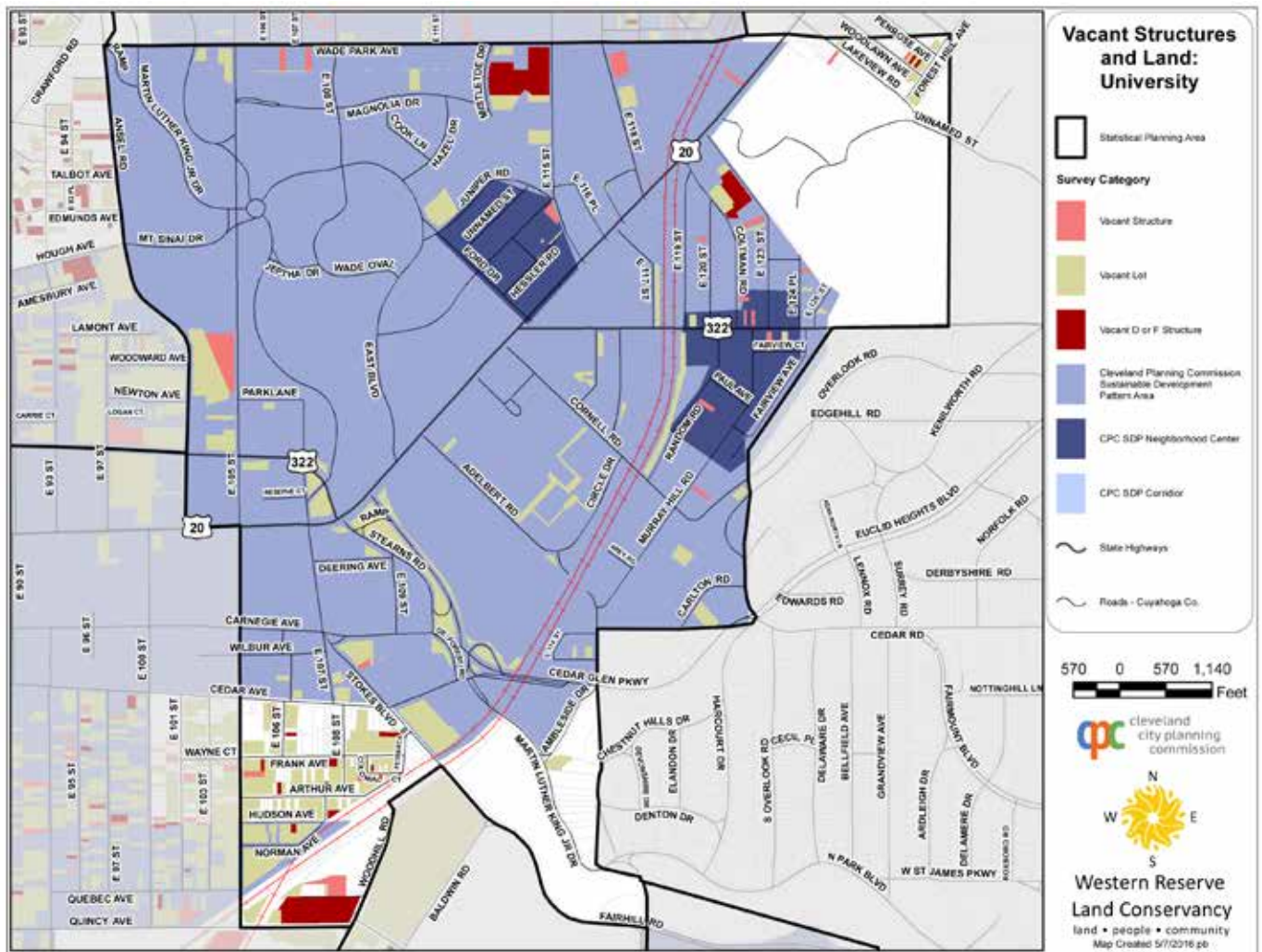
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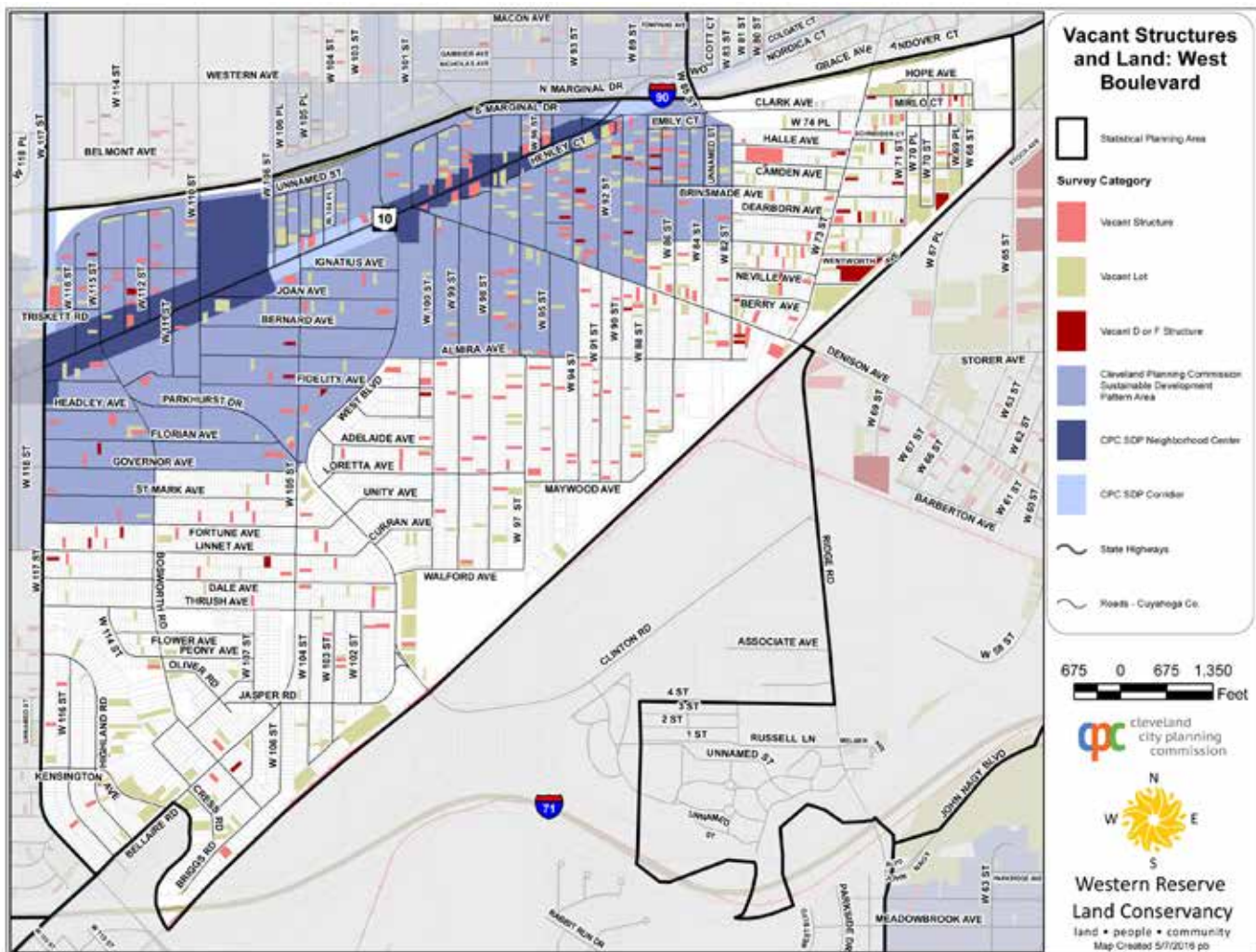


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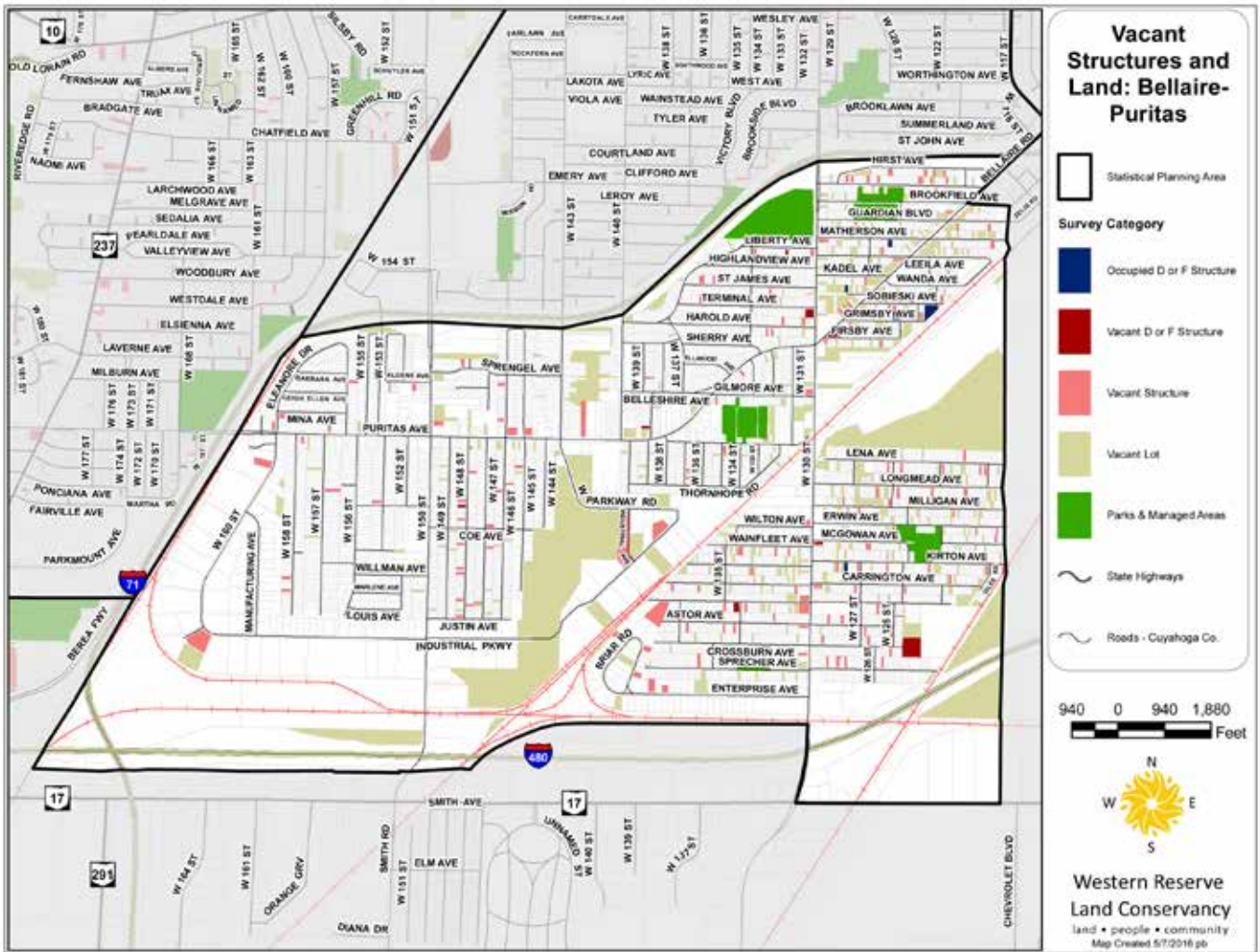


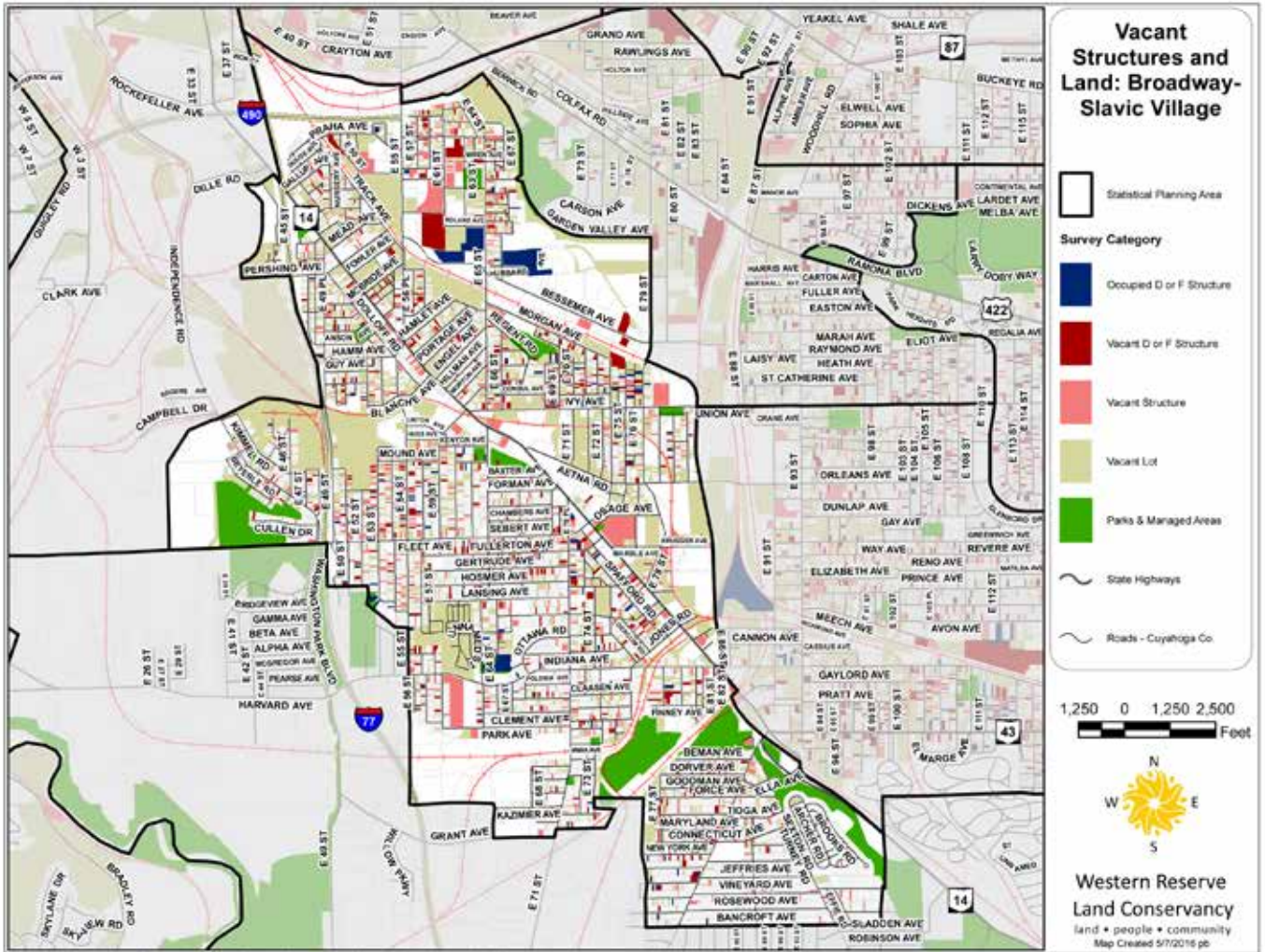
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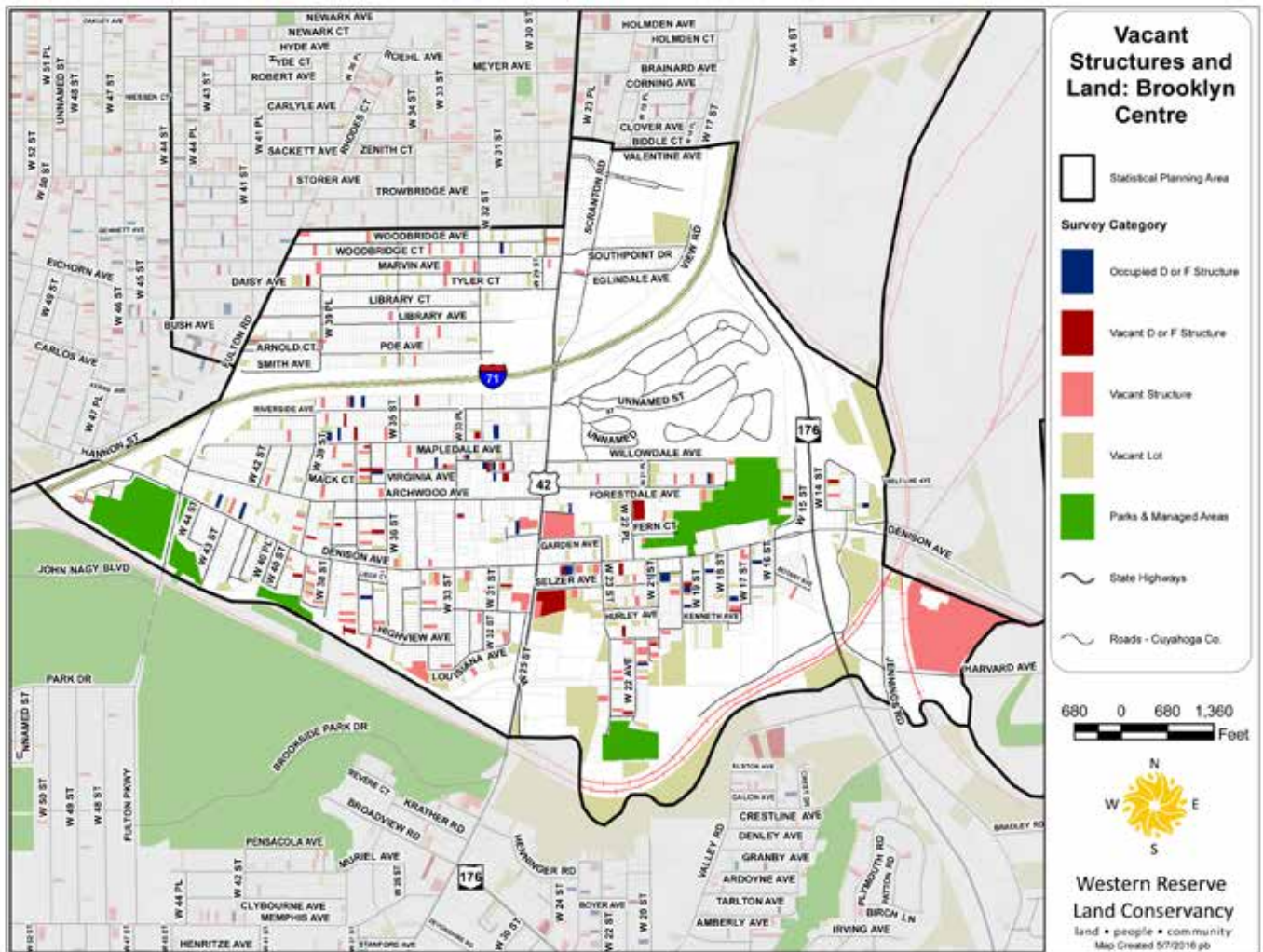
APPENDIX C: Parks, Vacant Structures & Vacant Lots

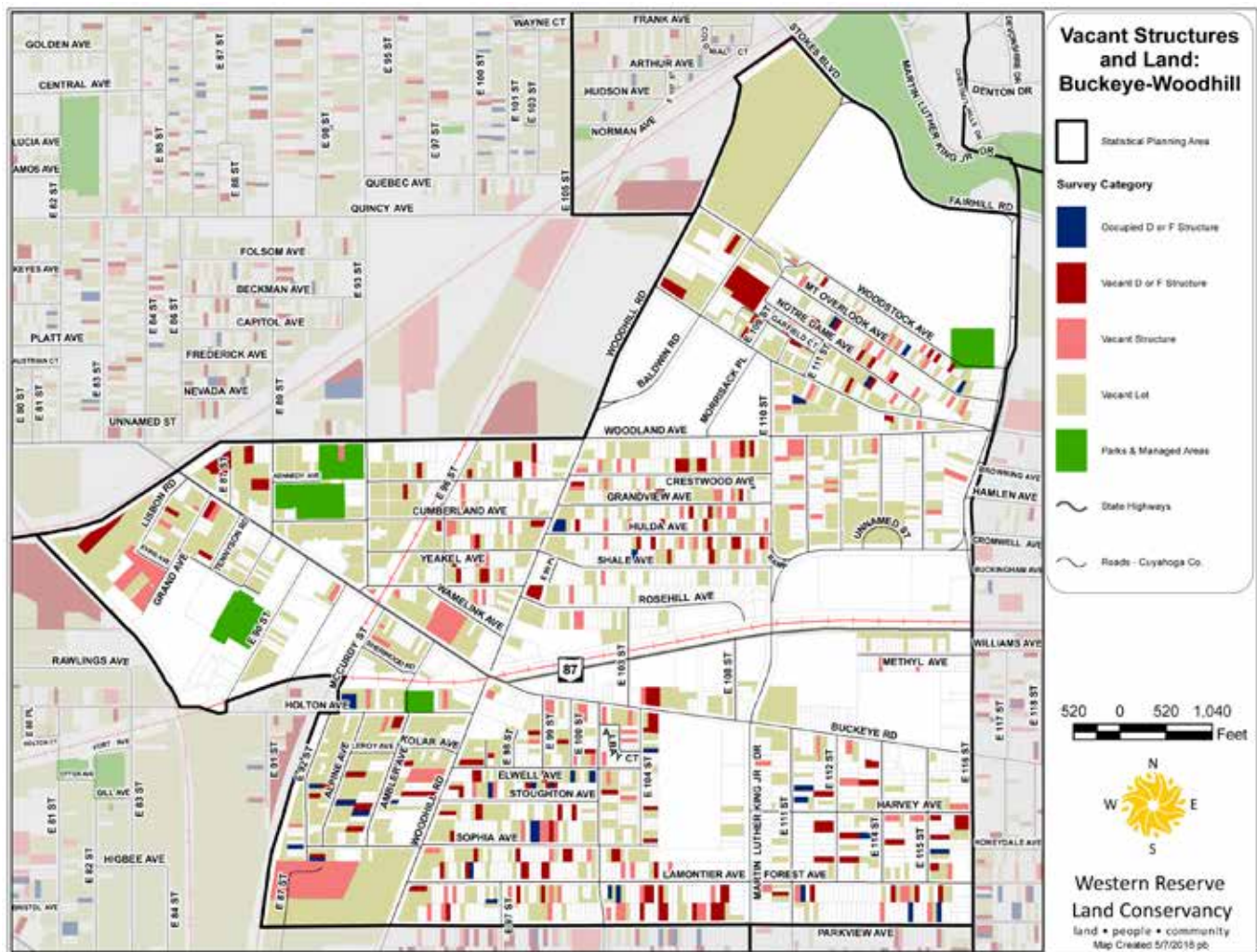
This appendix includes maps of all 33 neighborhoods in the city showing existing parks and green spaces, vacant lots, and distressed D and F buildings that could be demolished to allow for the expansion of existing green spaces or the creation of new amenities.

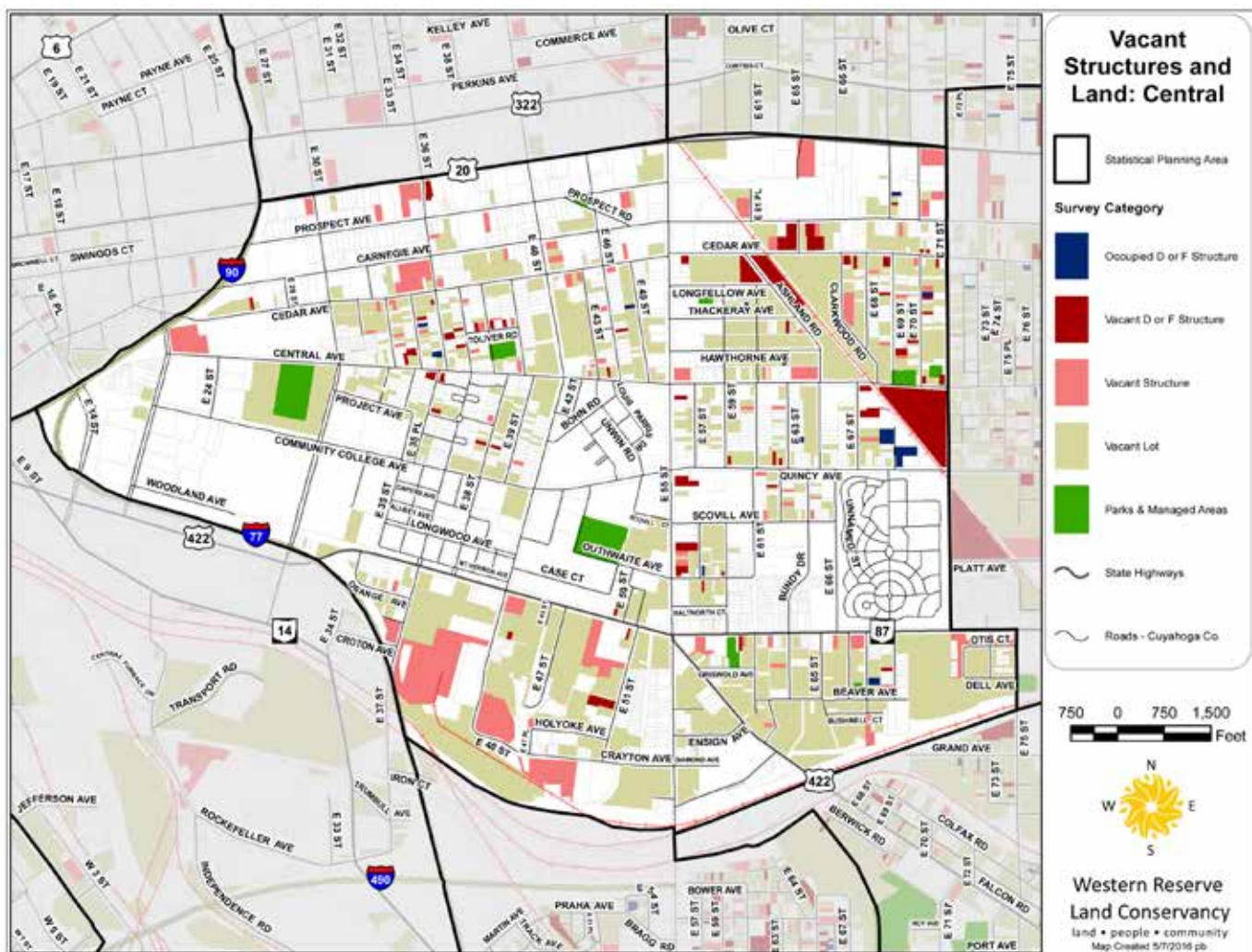


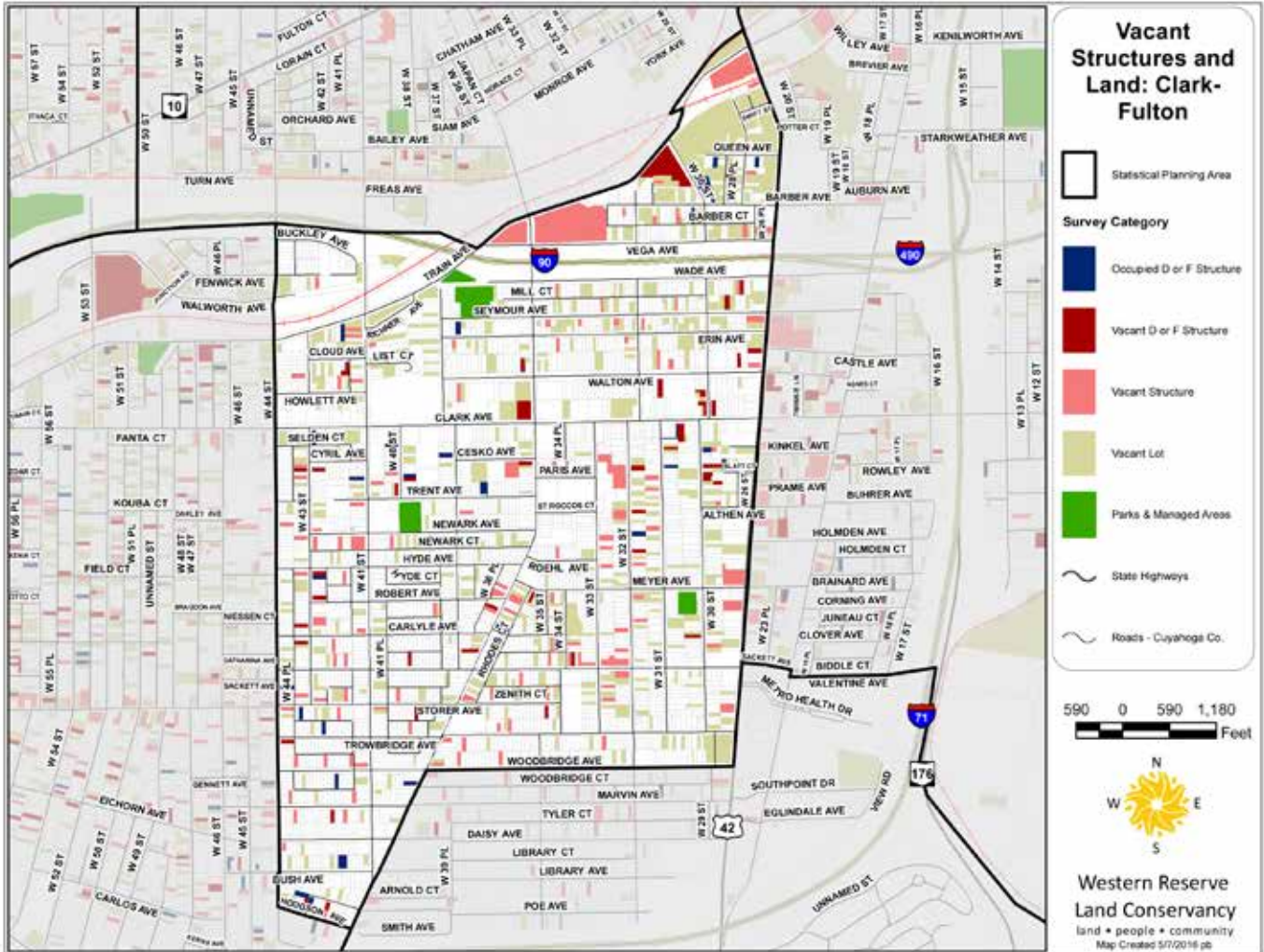


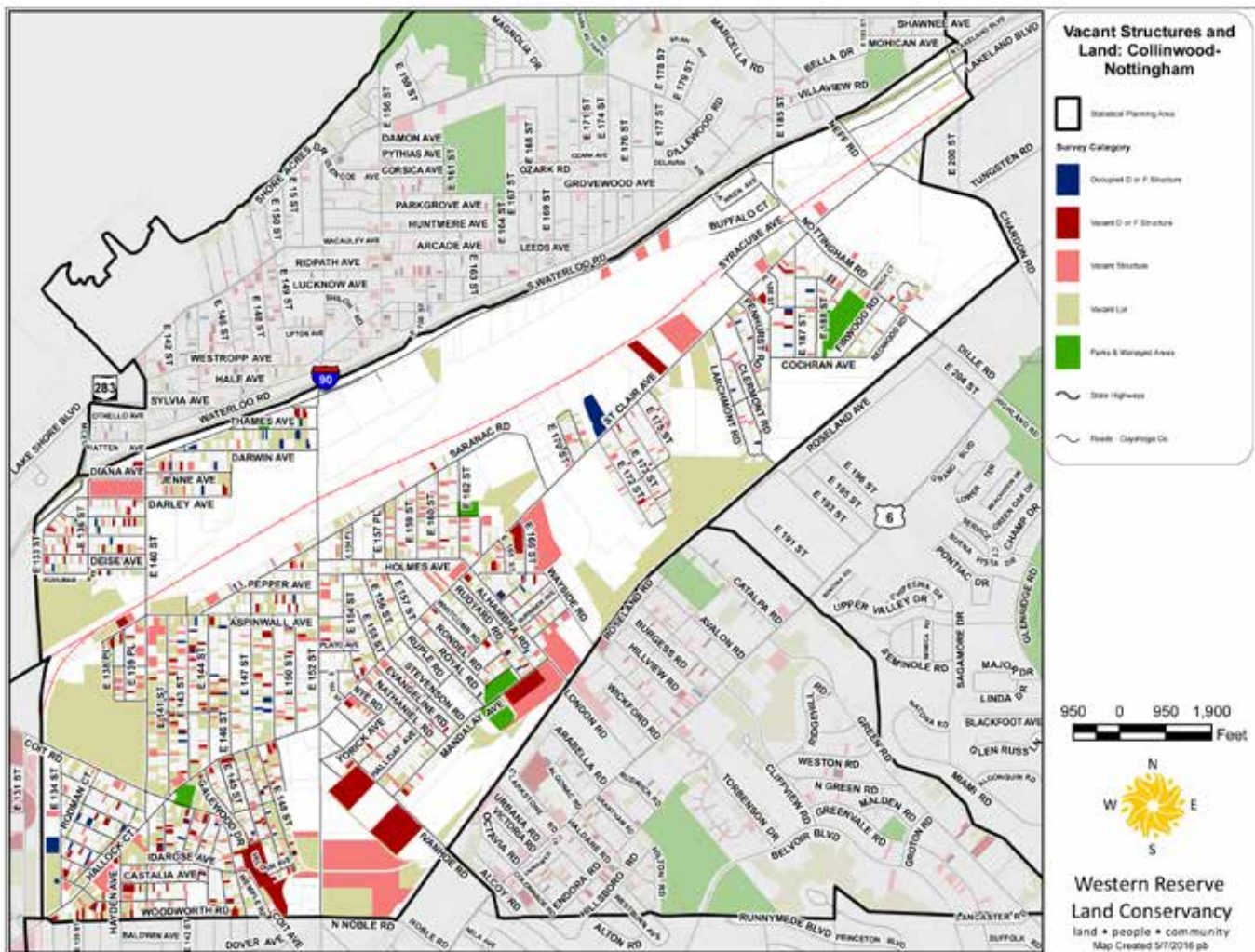


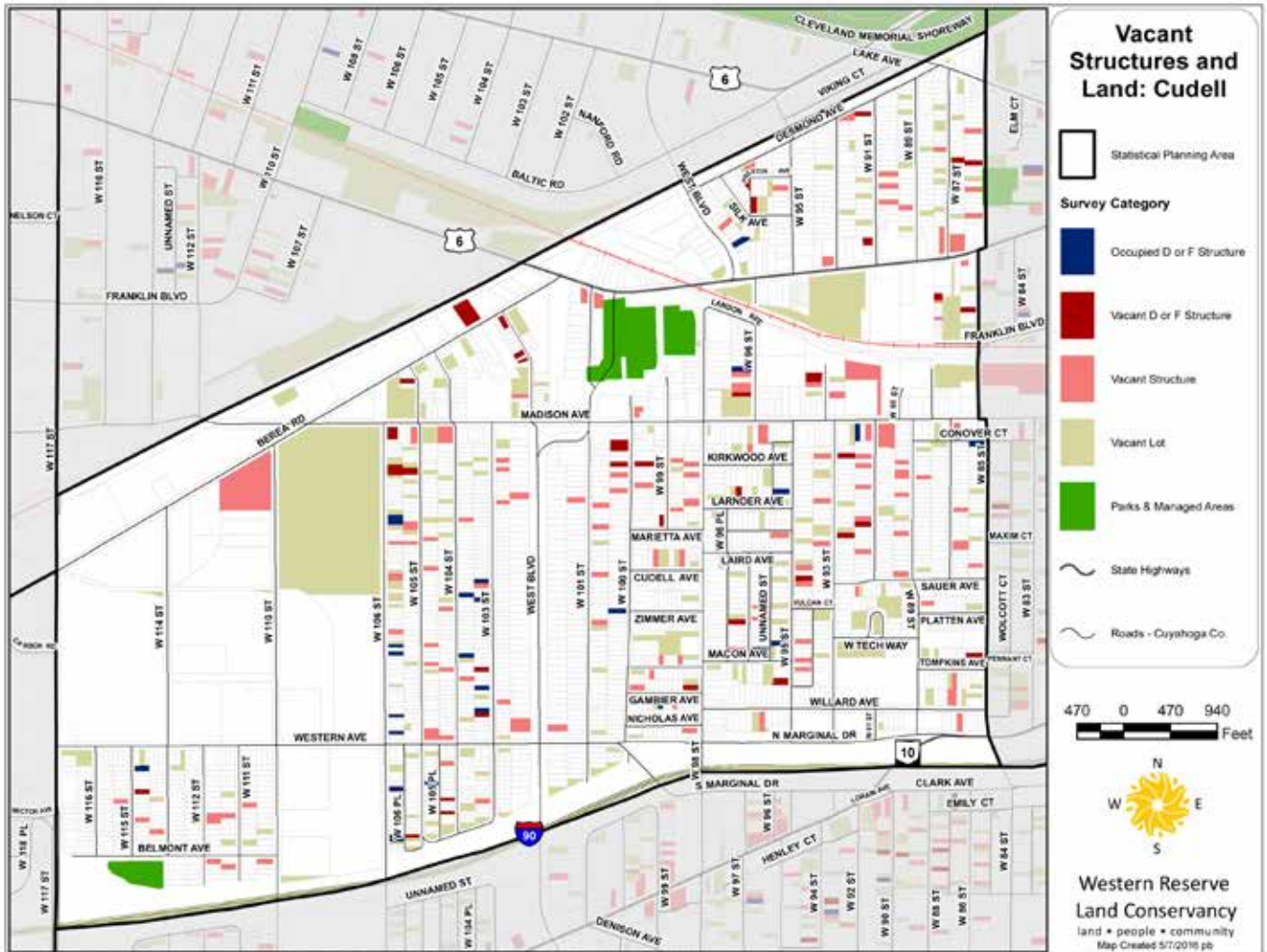


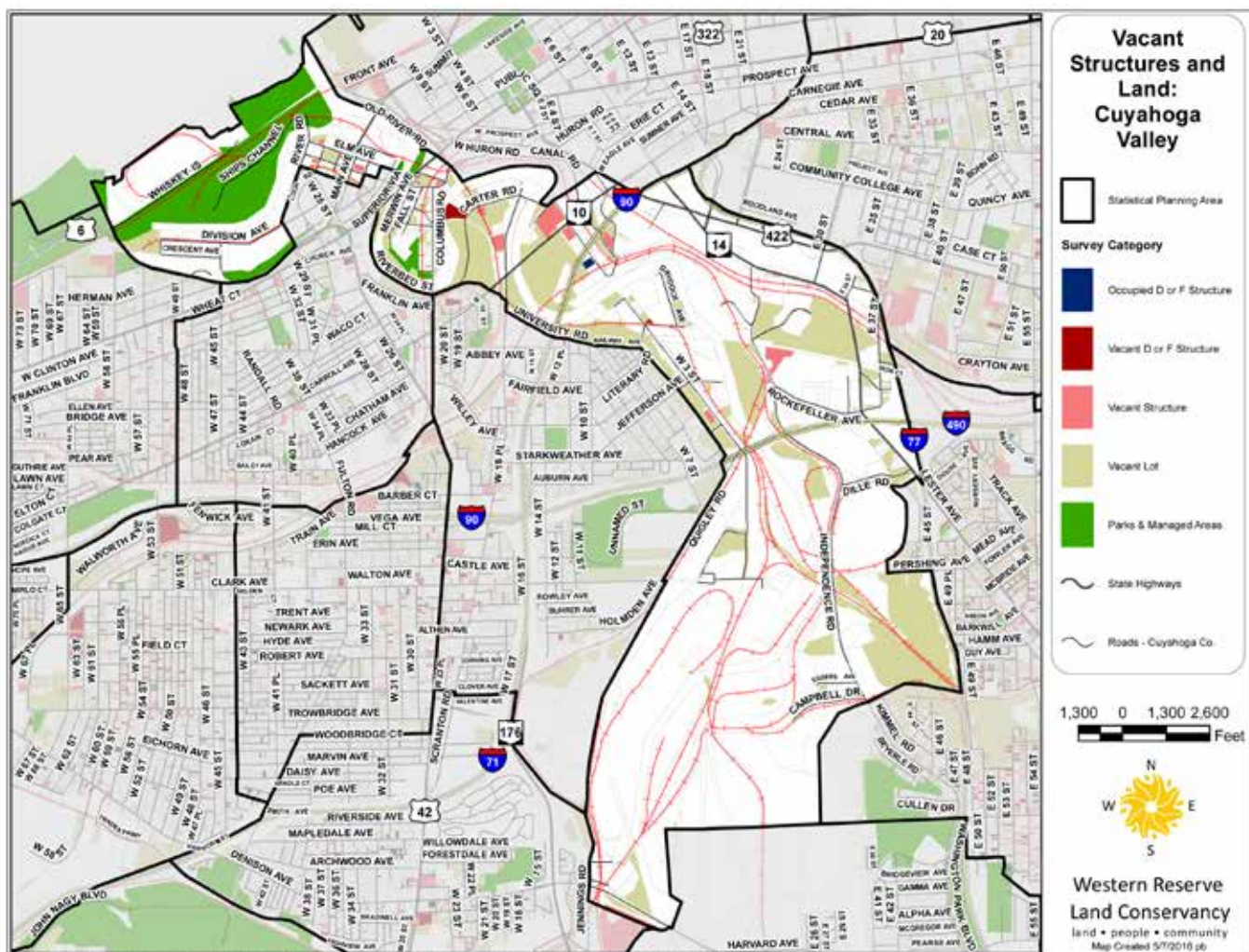


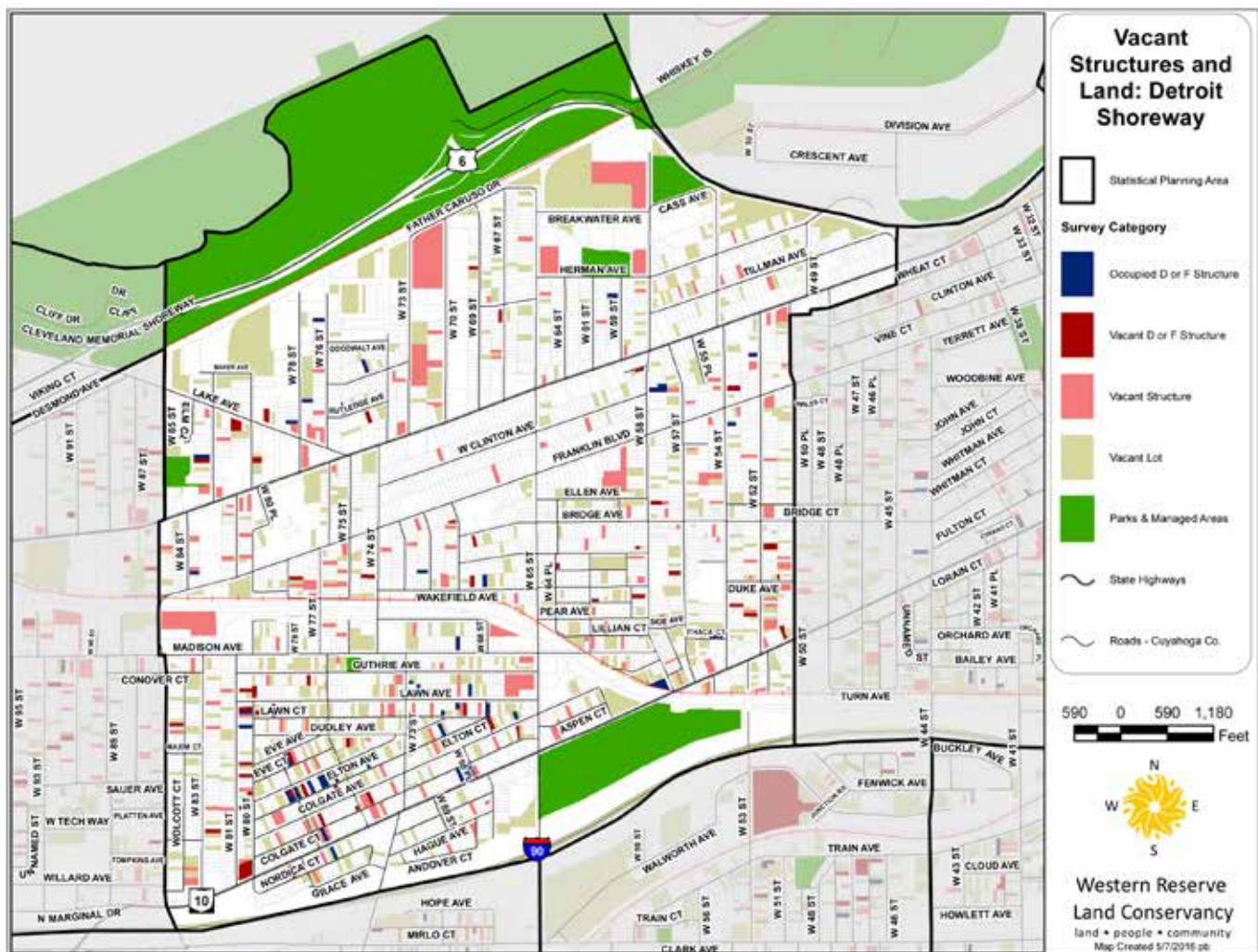


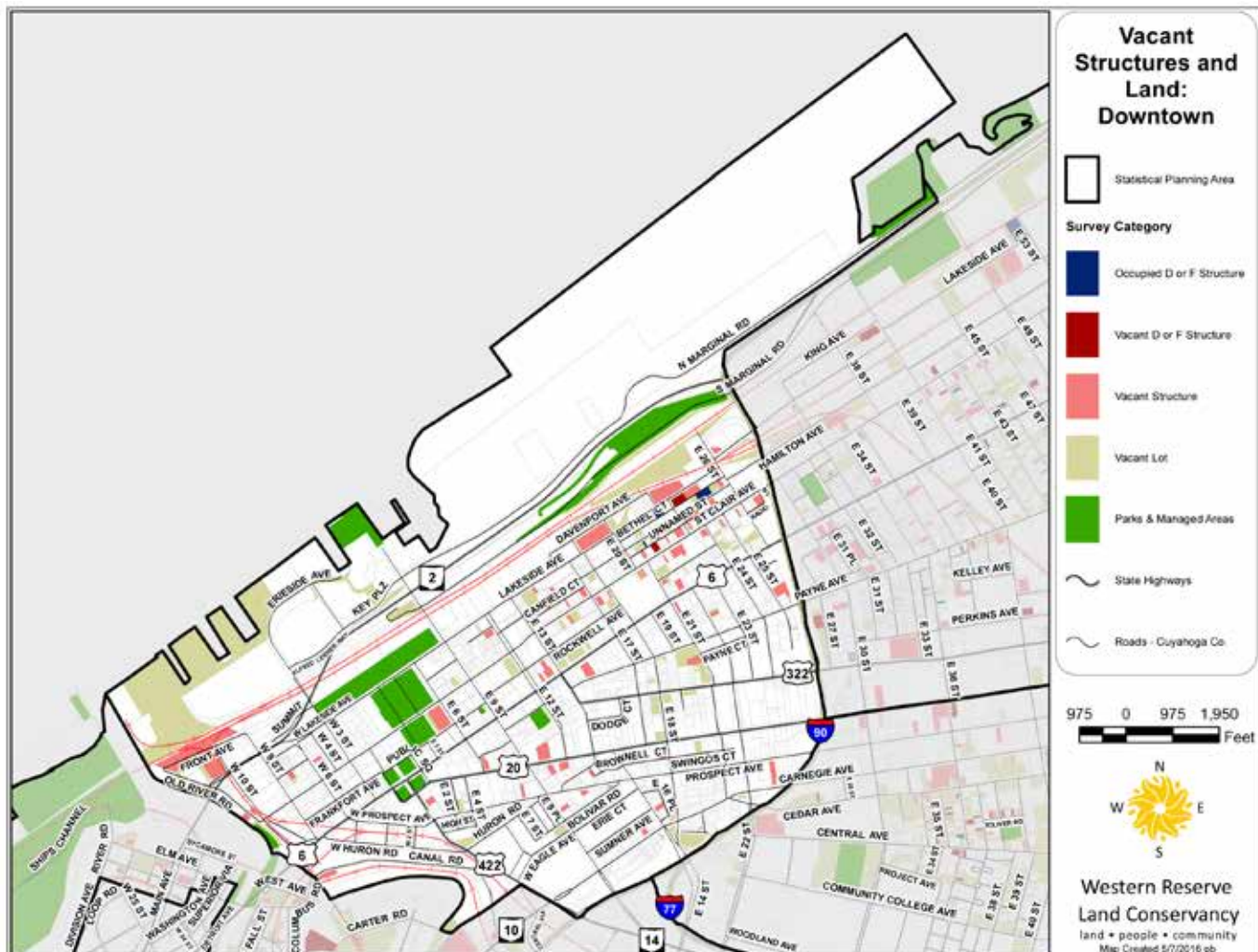


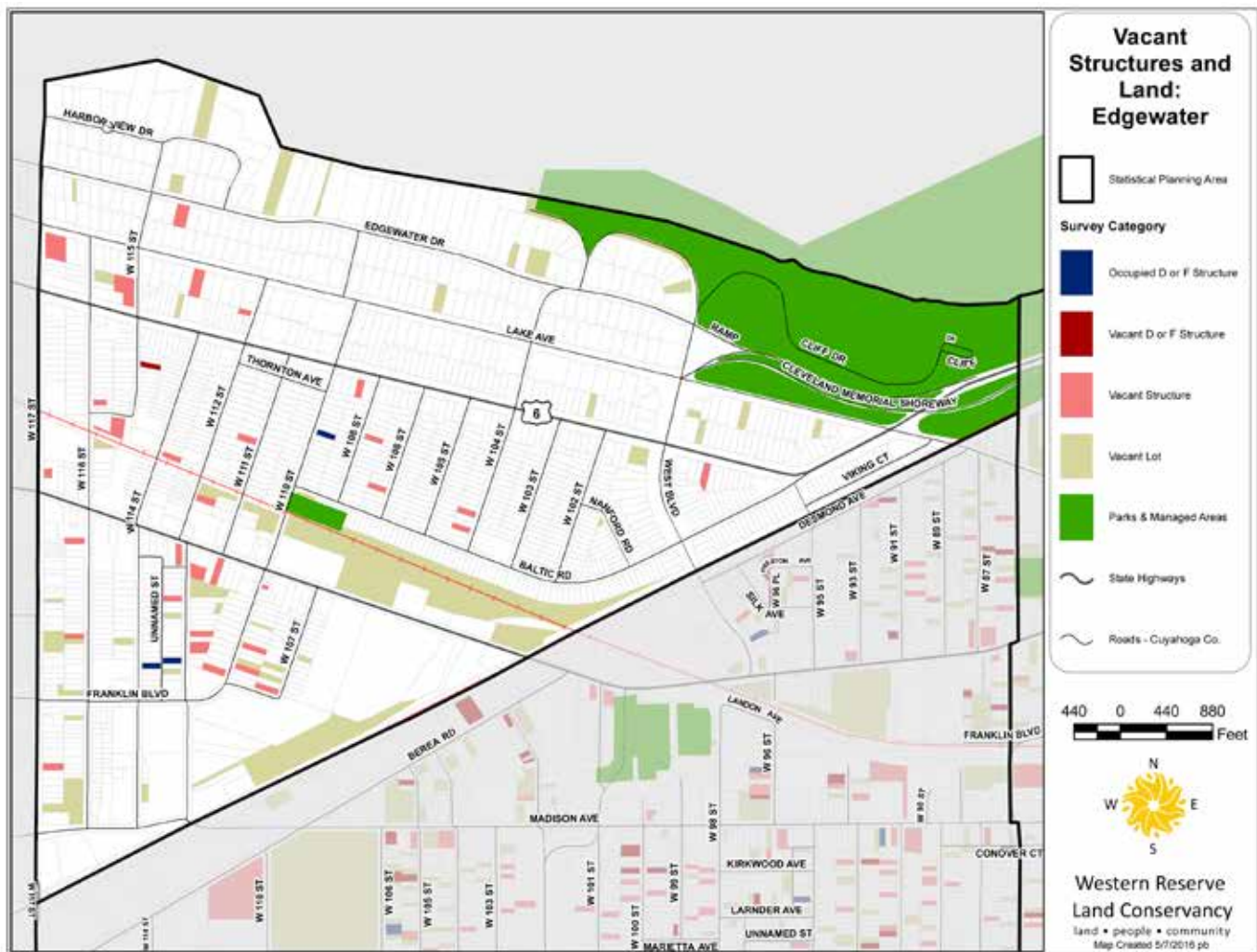


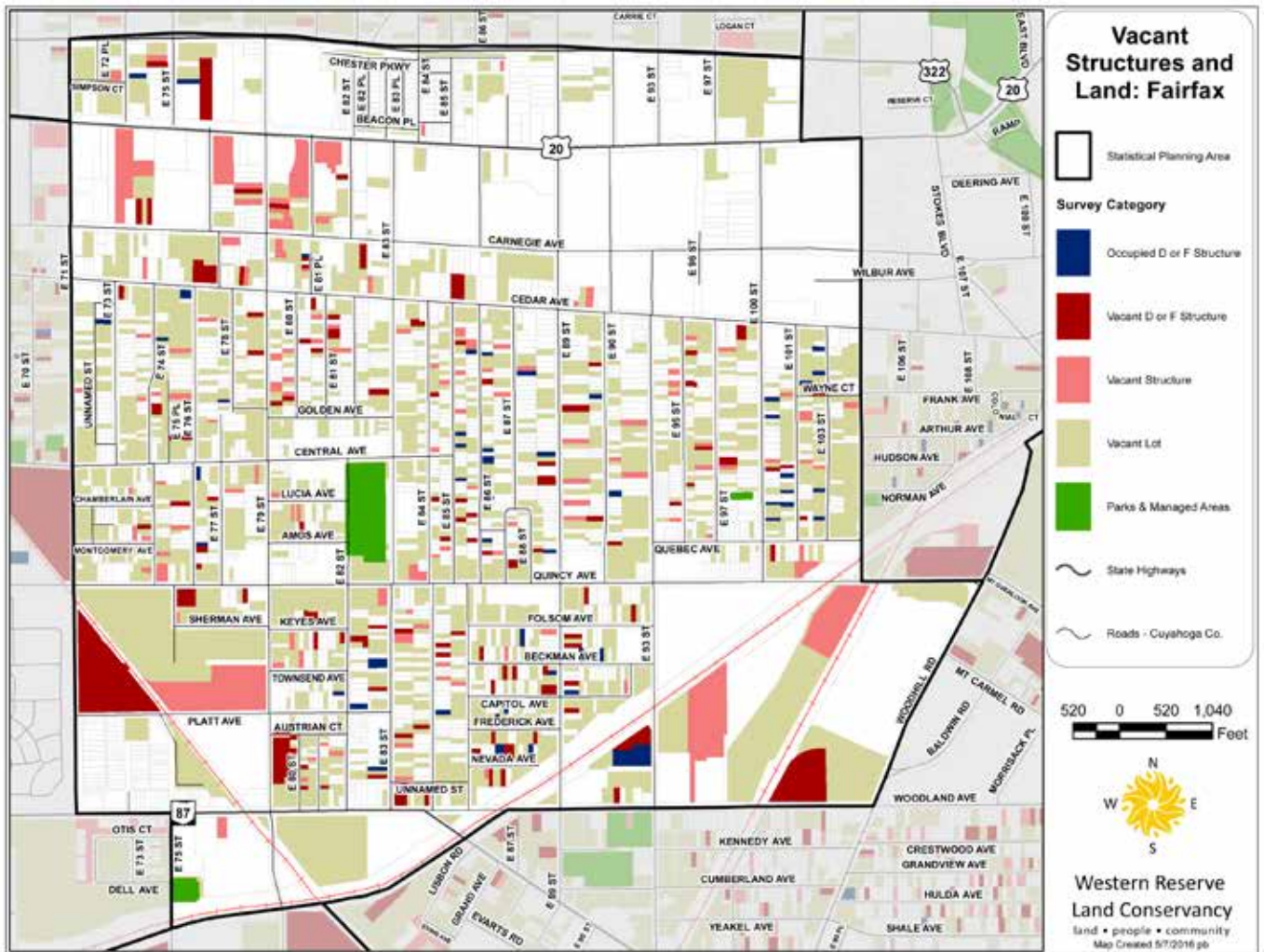


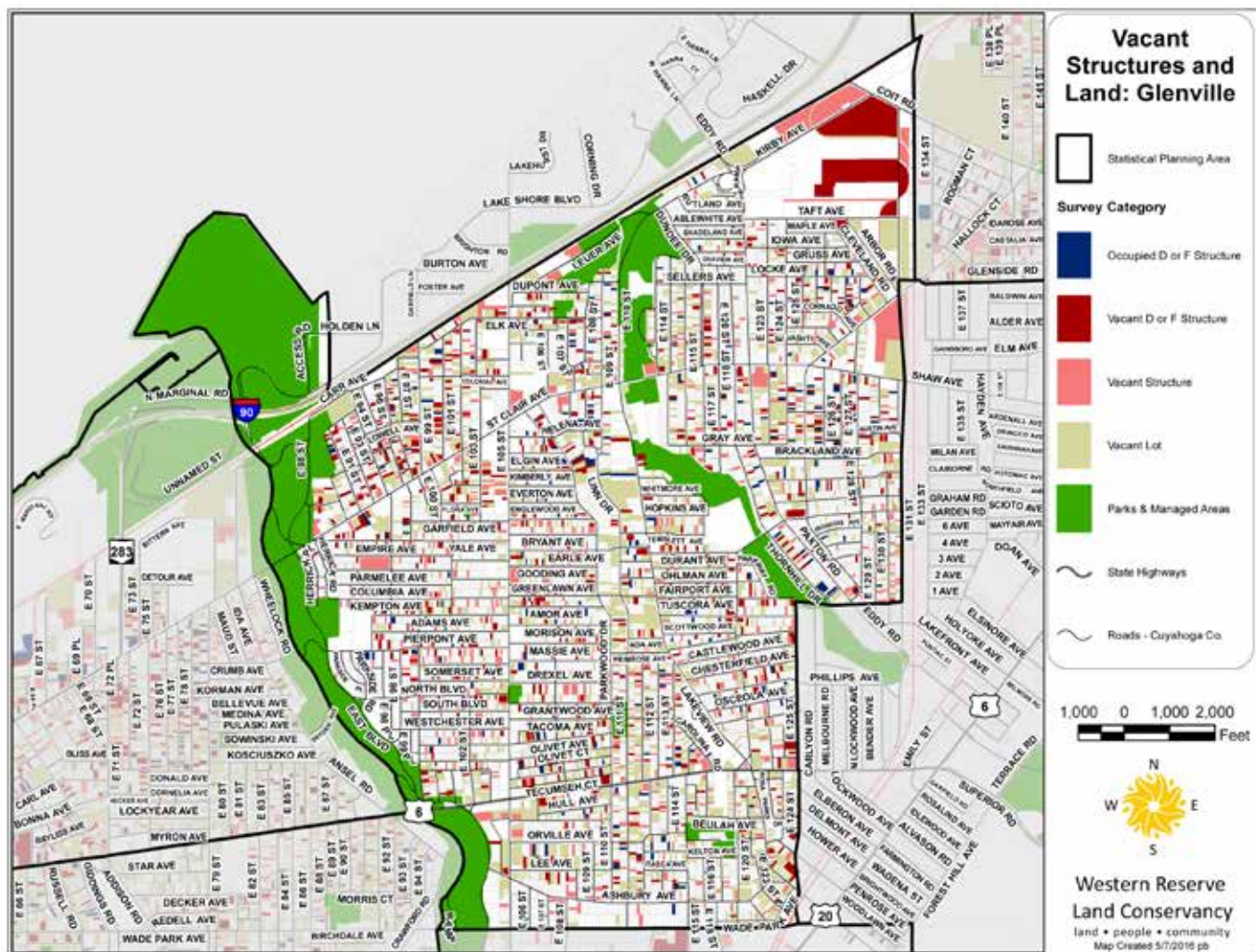


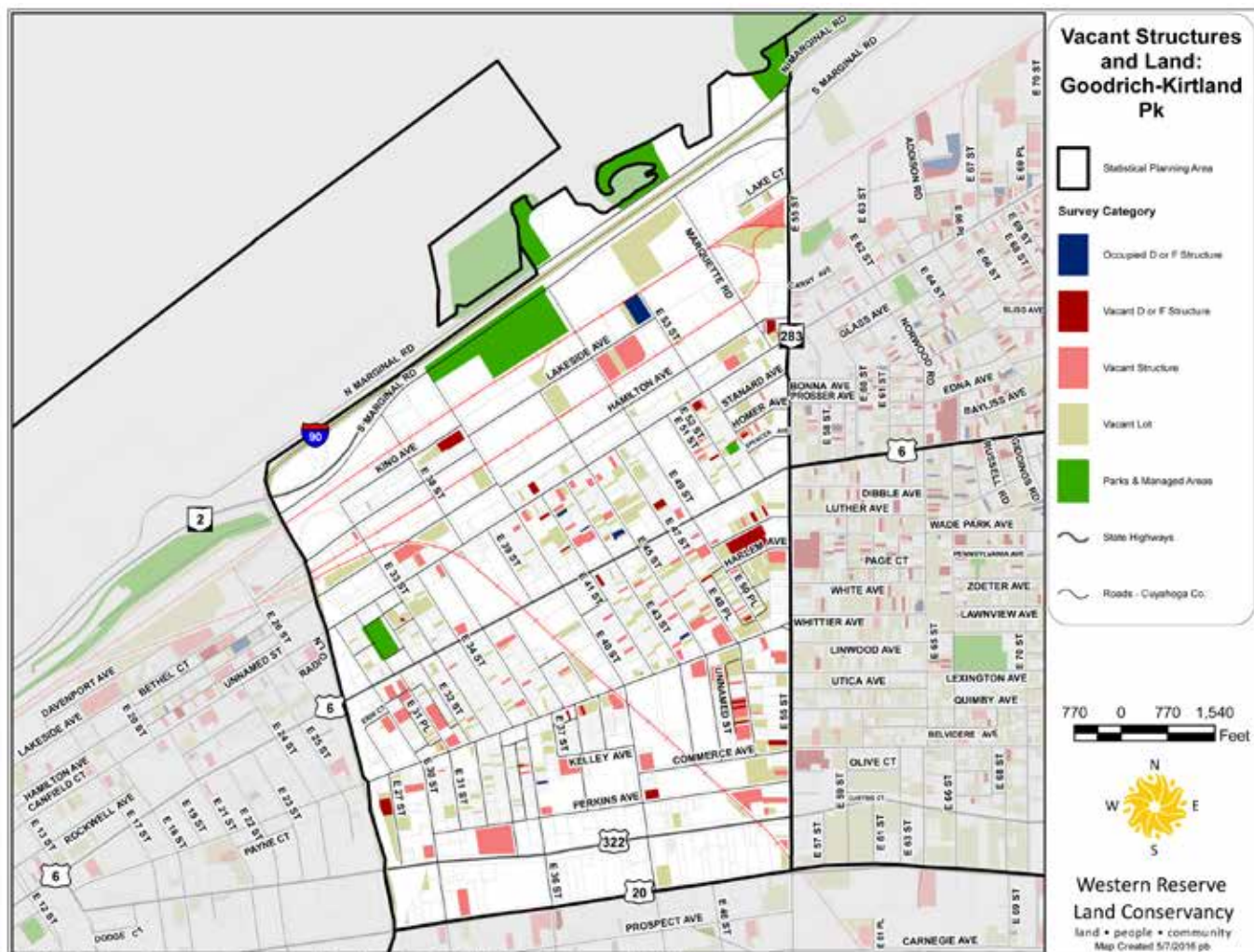


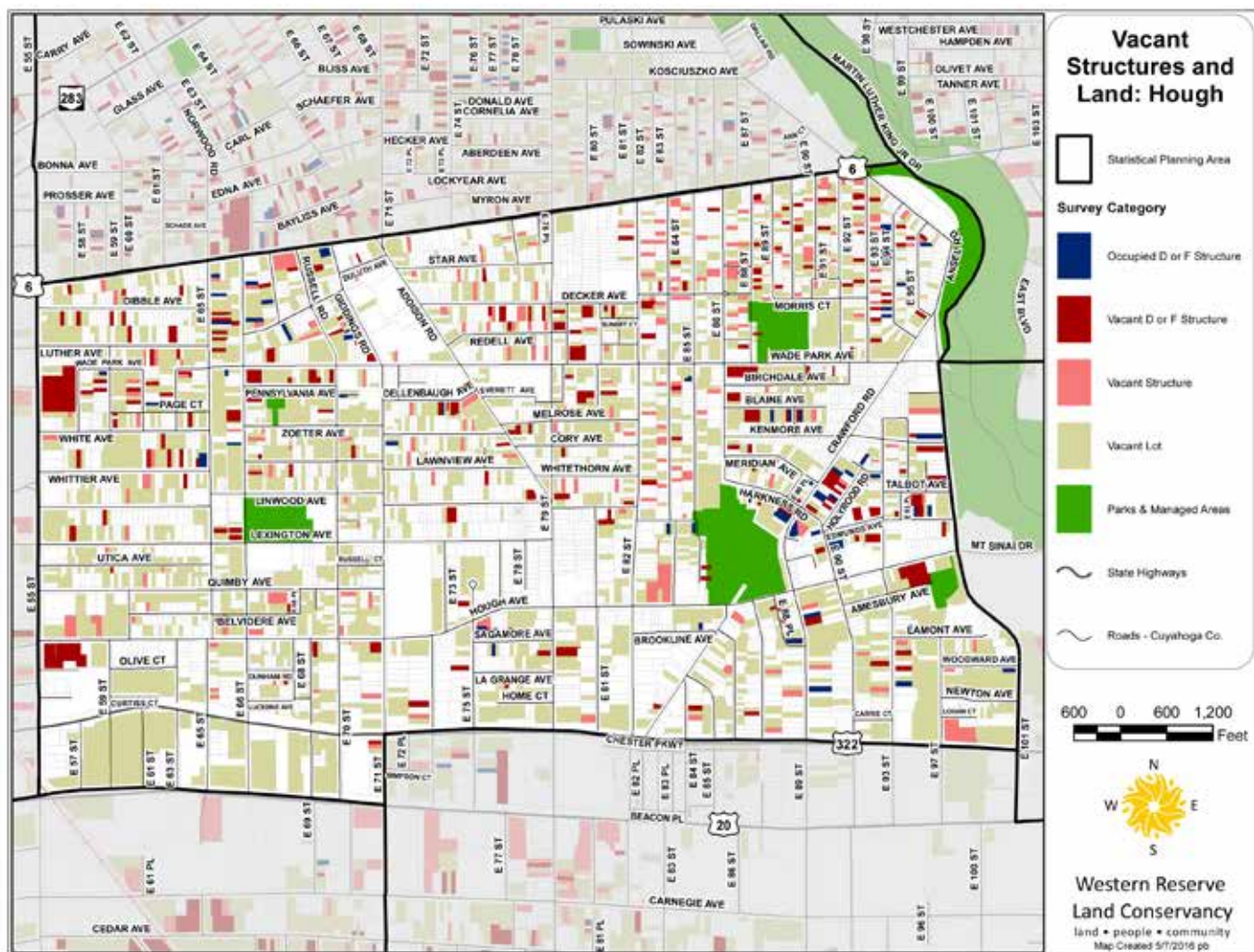


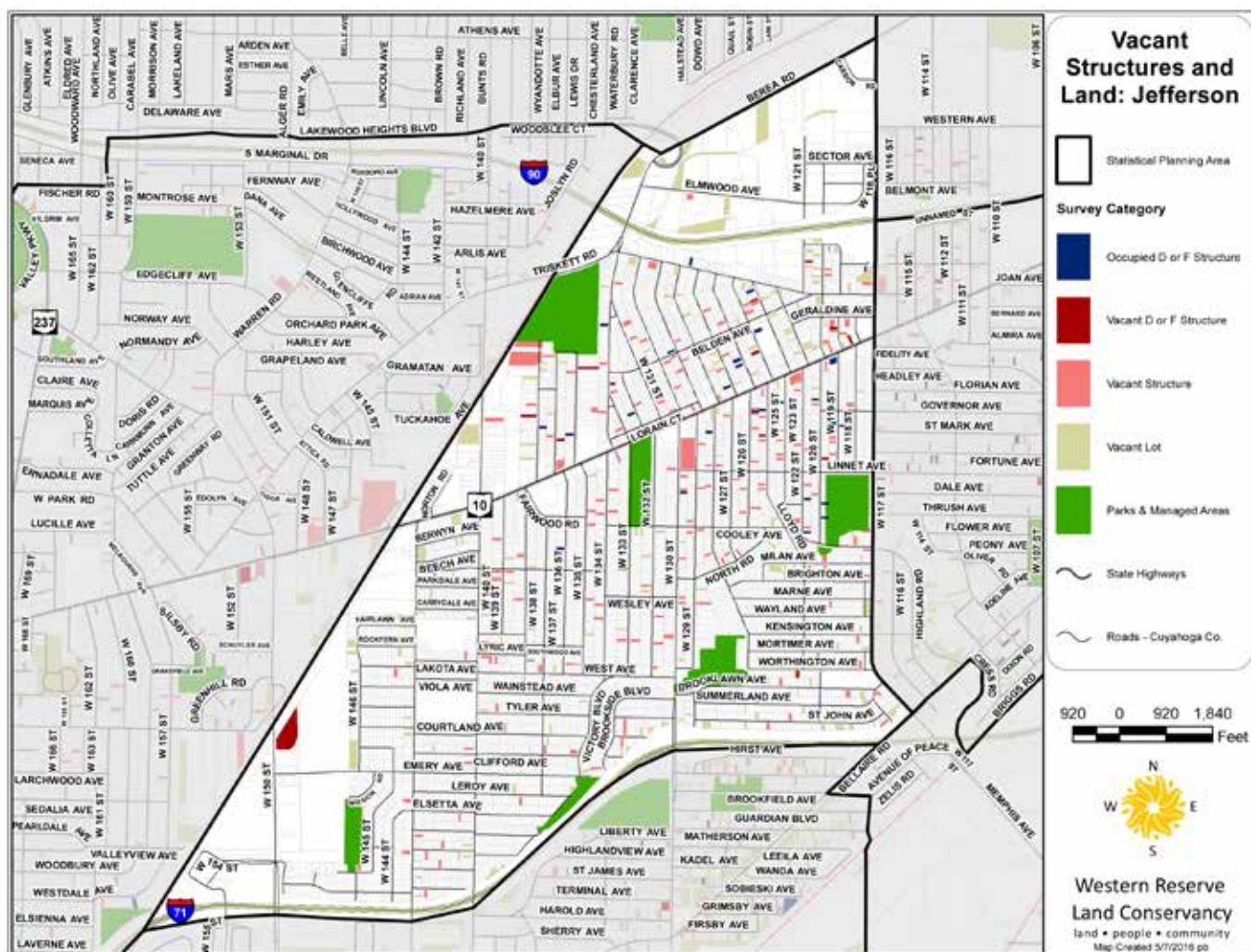


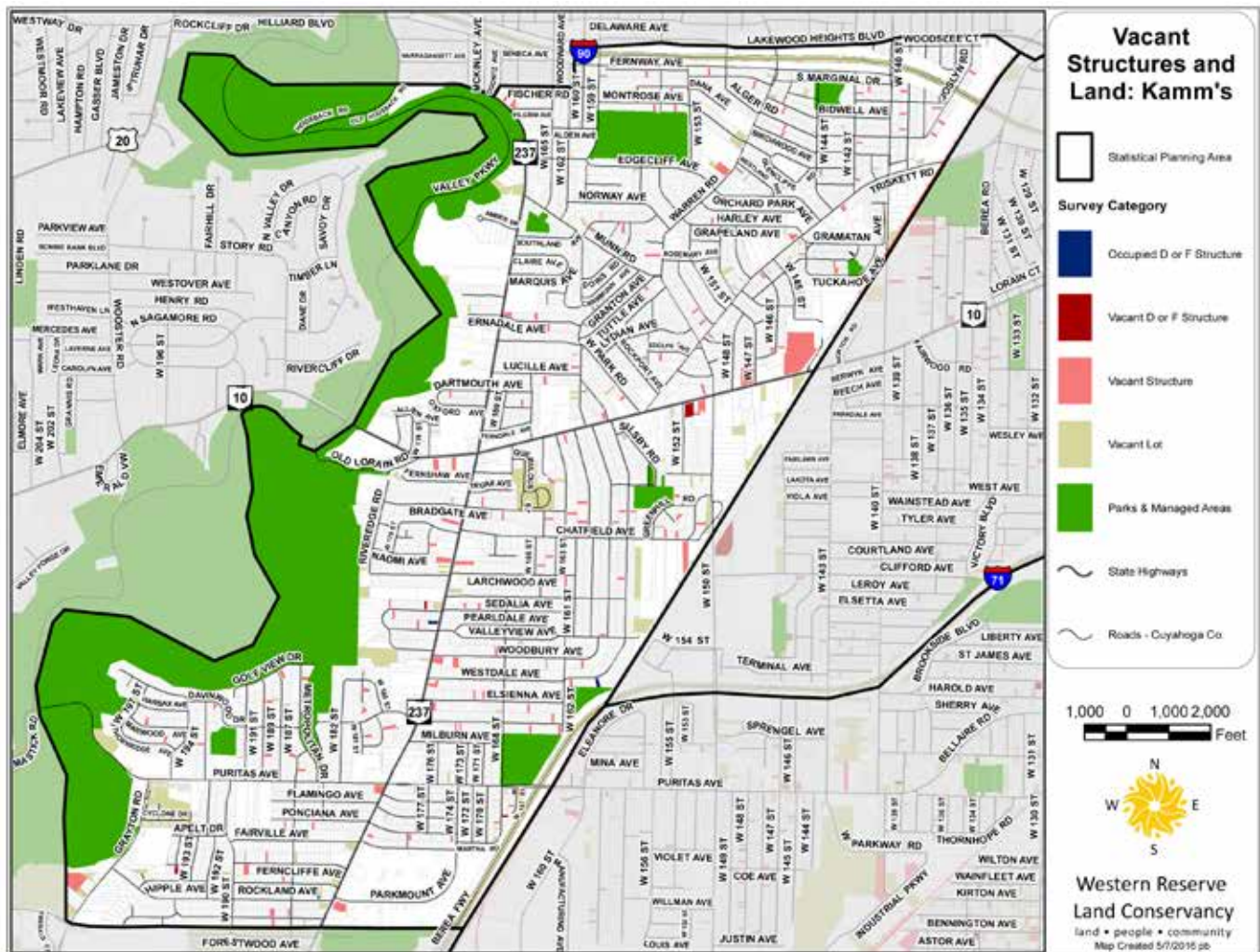


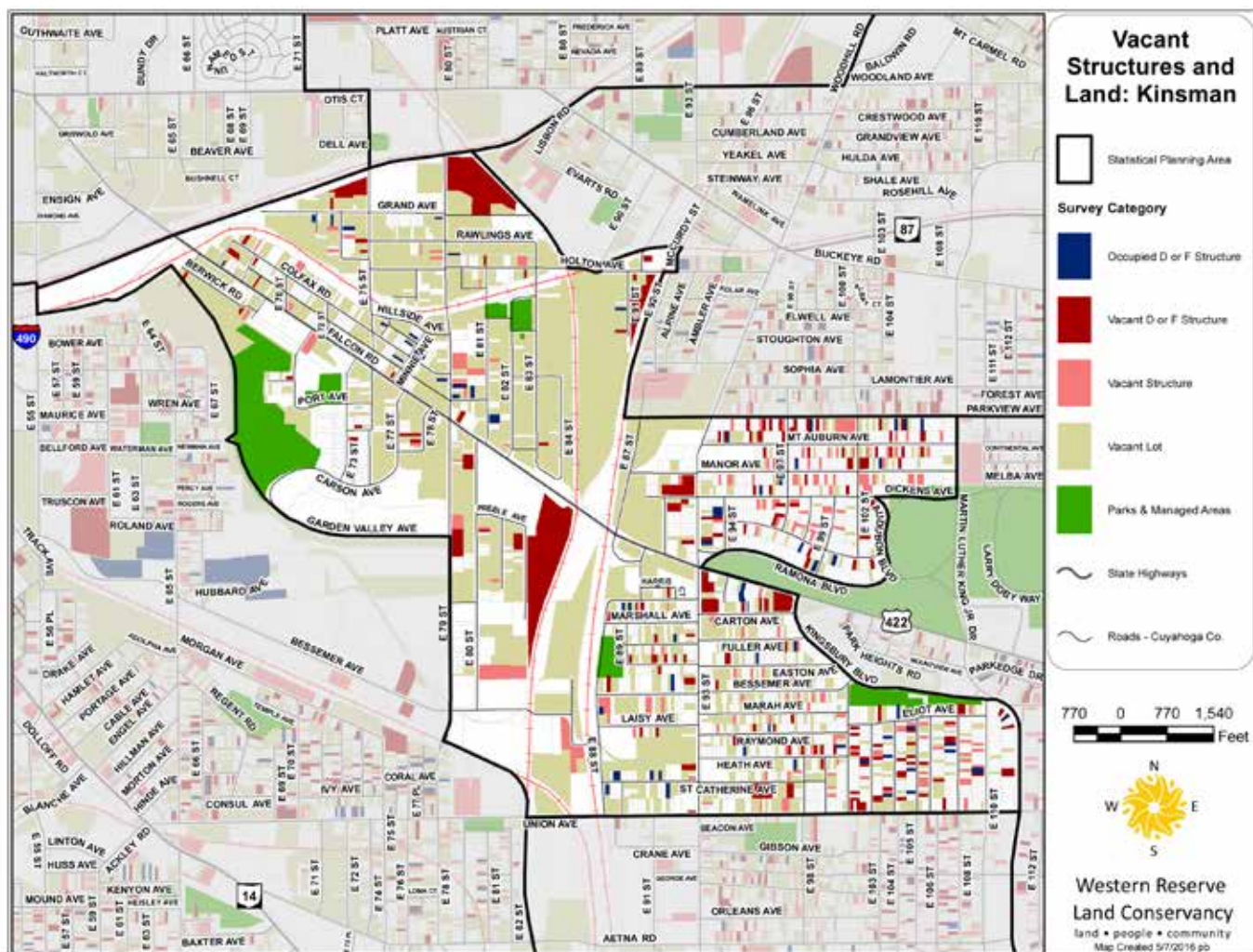


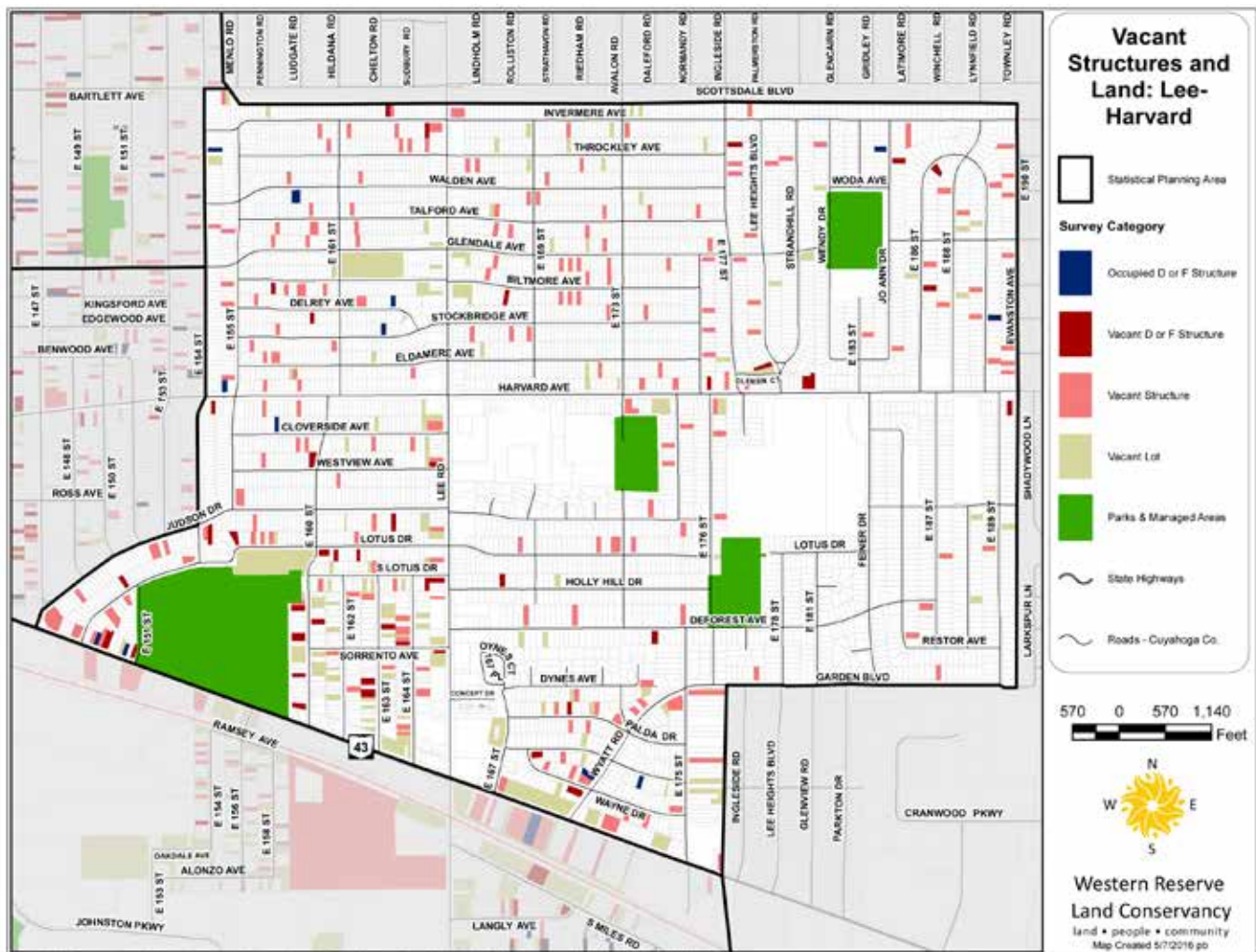


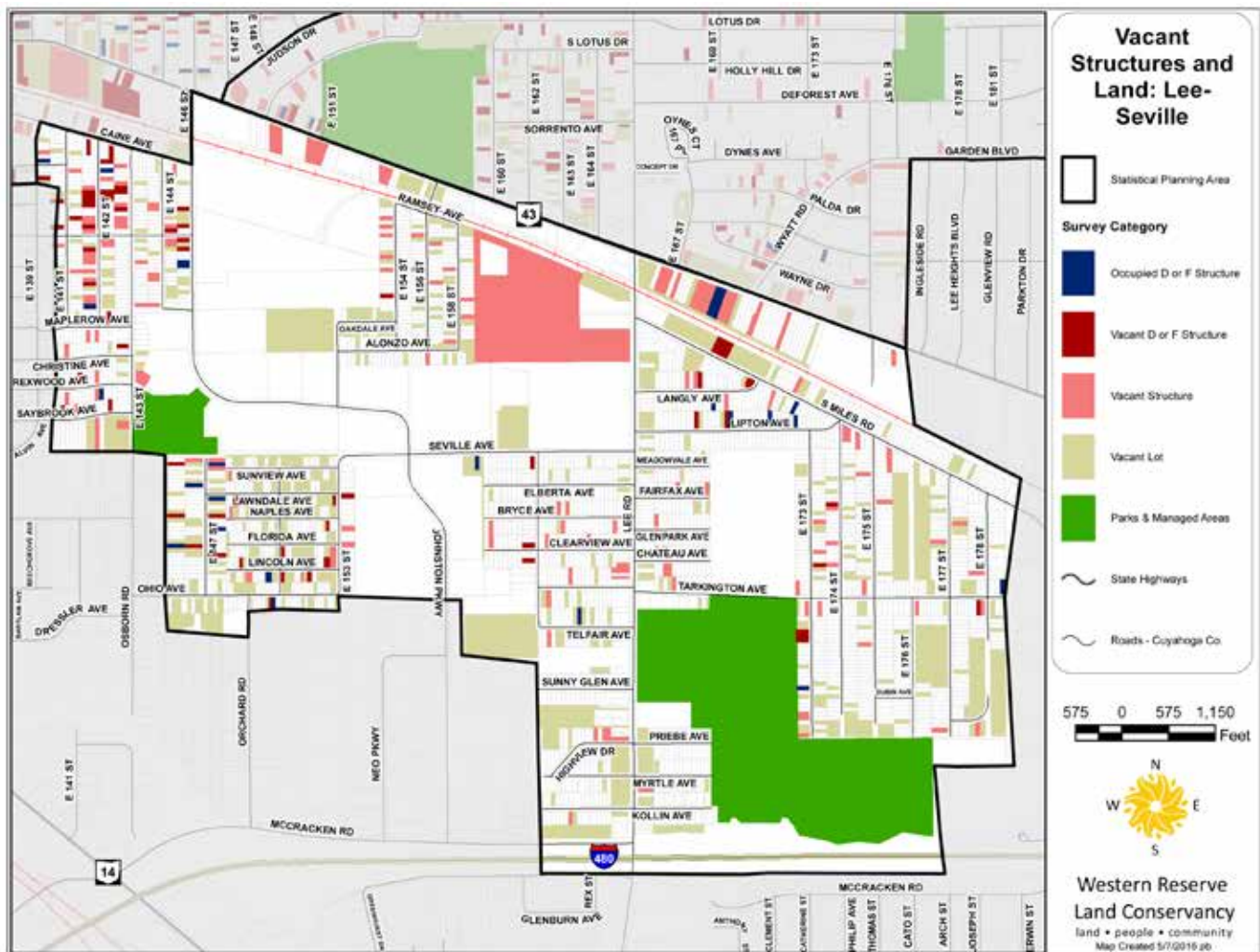


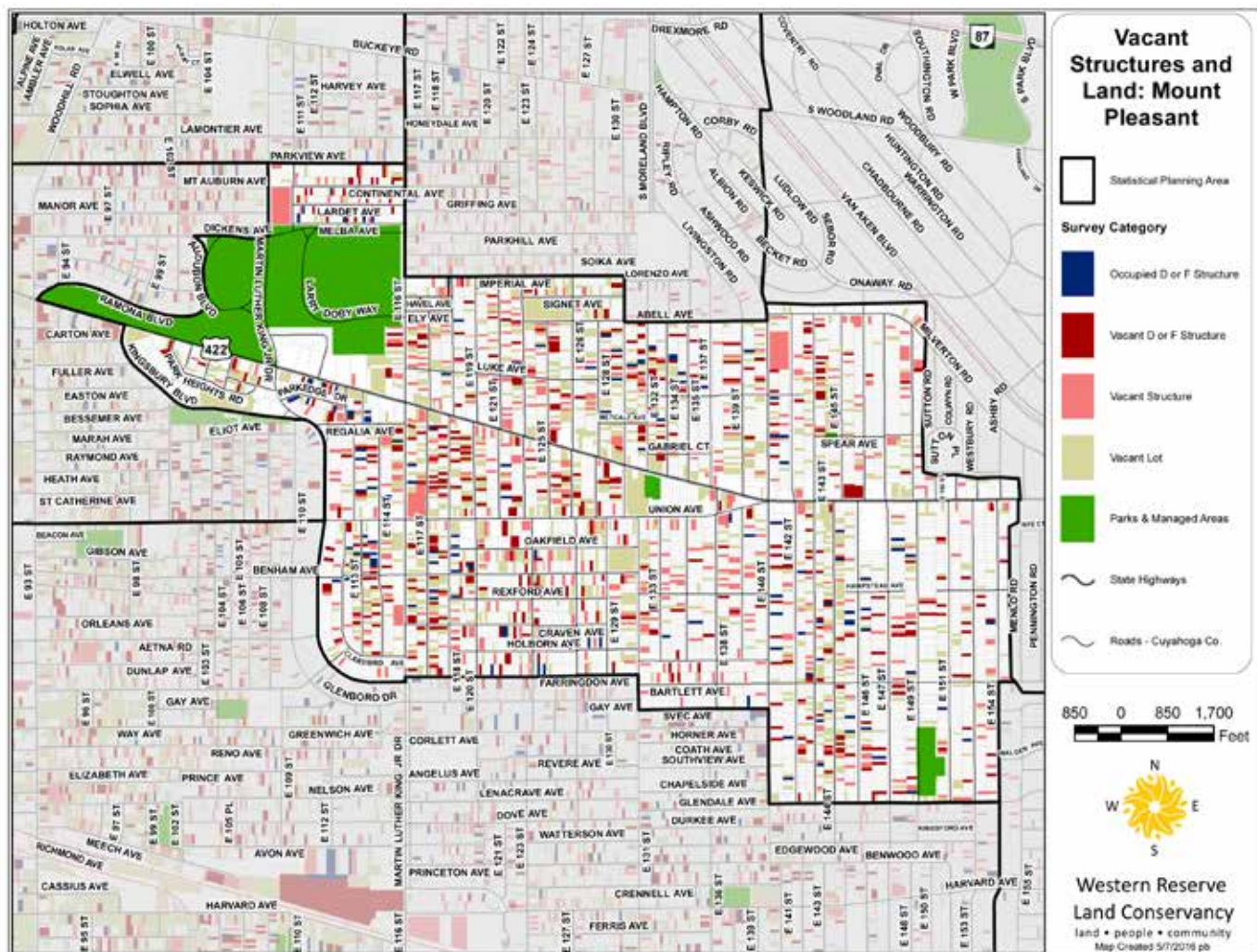


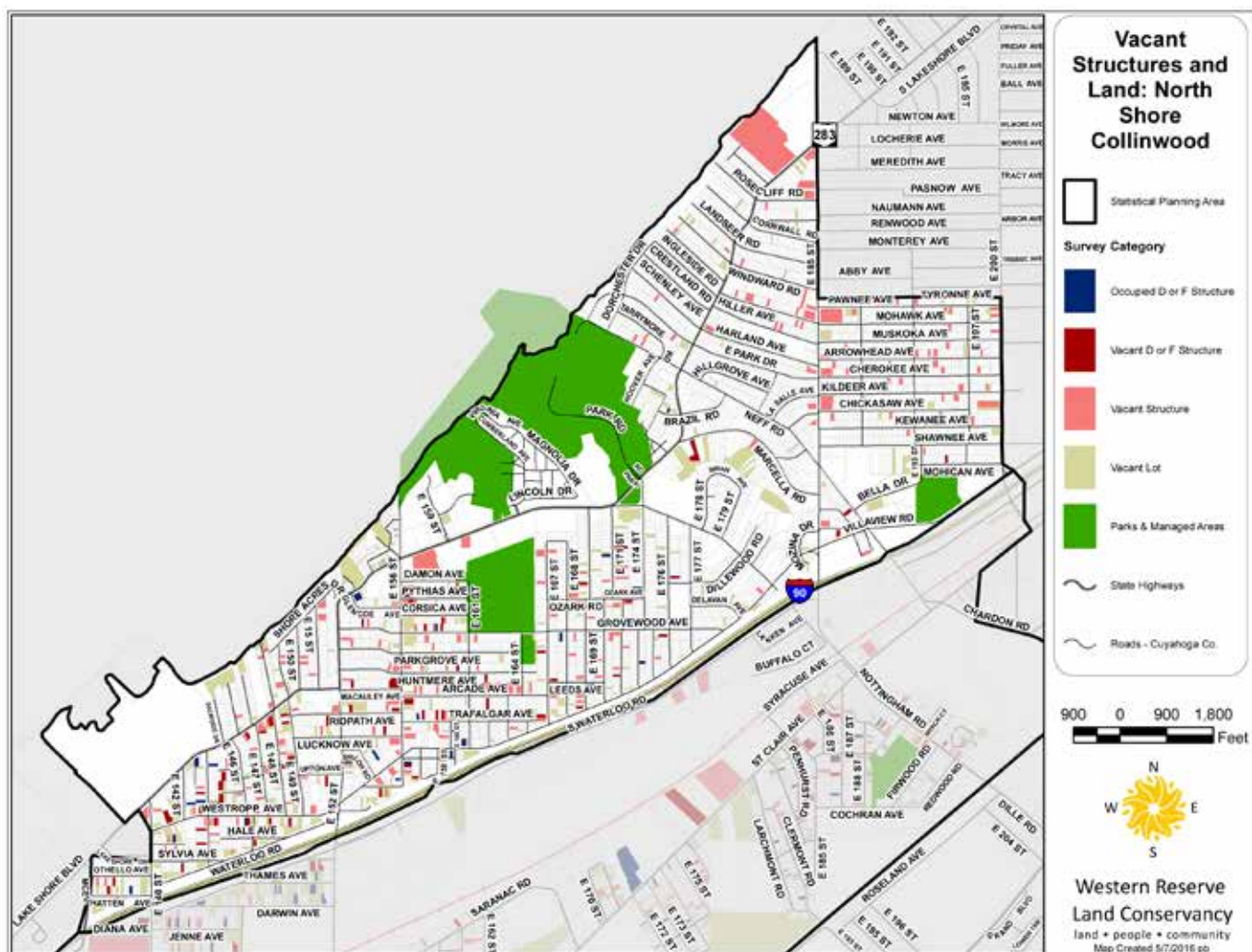


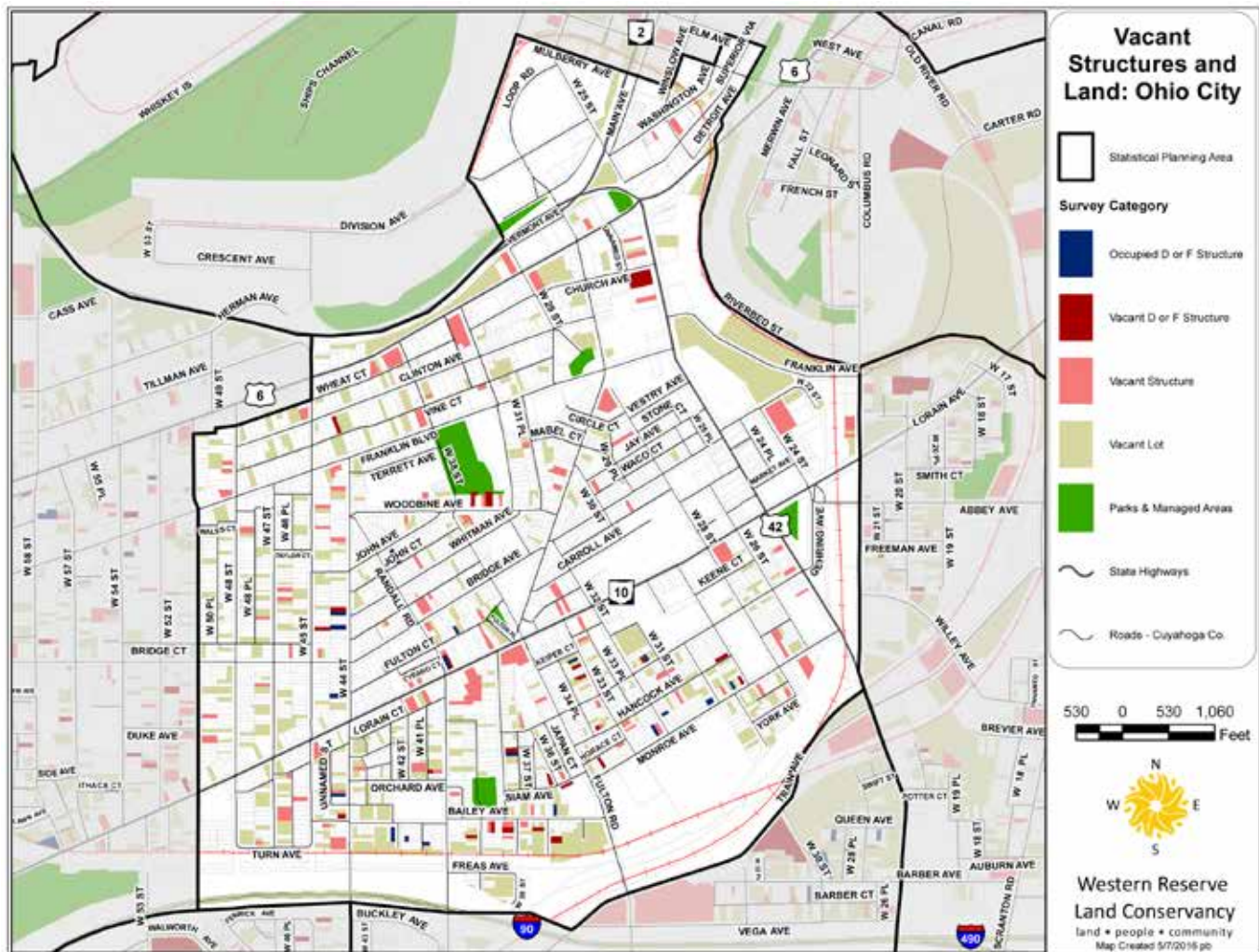


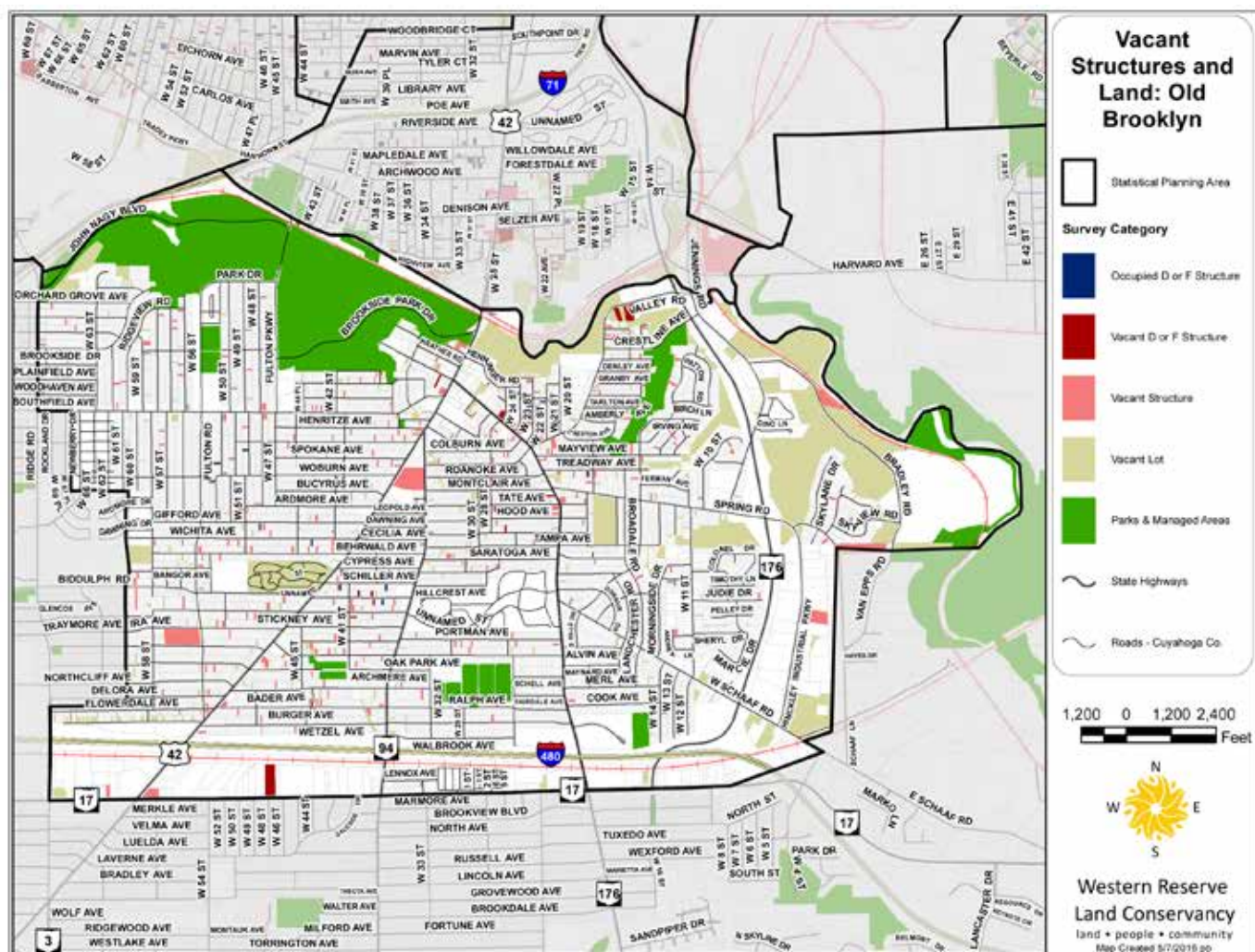


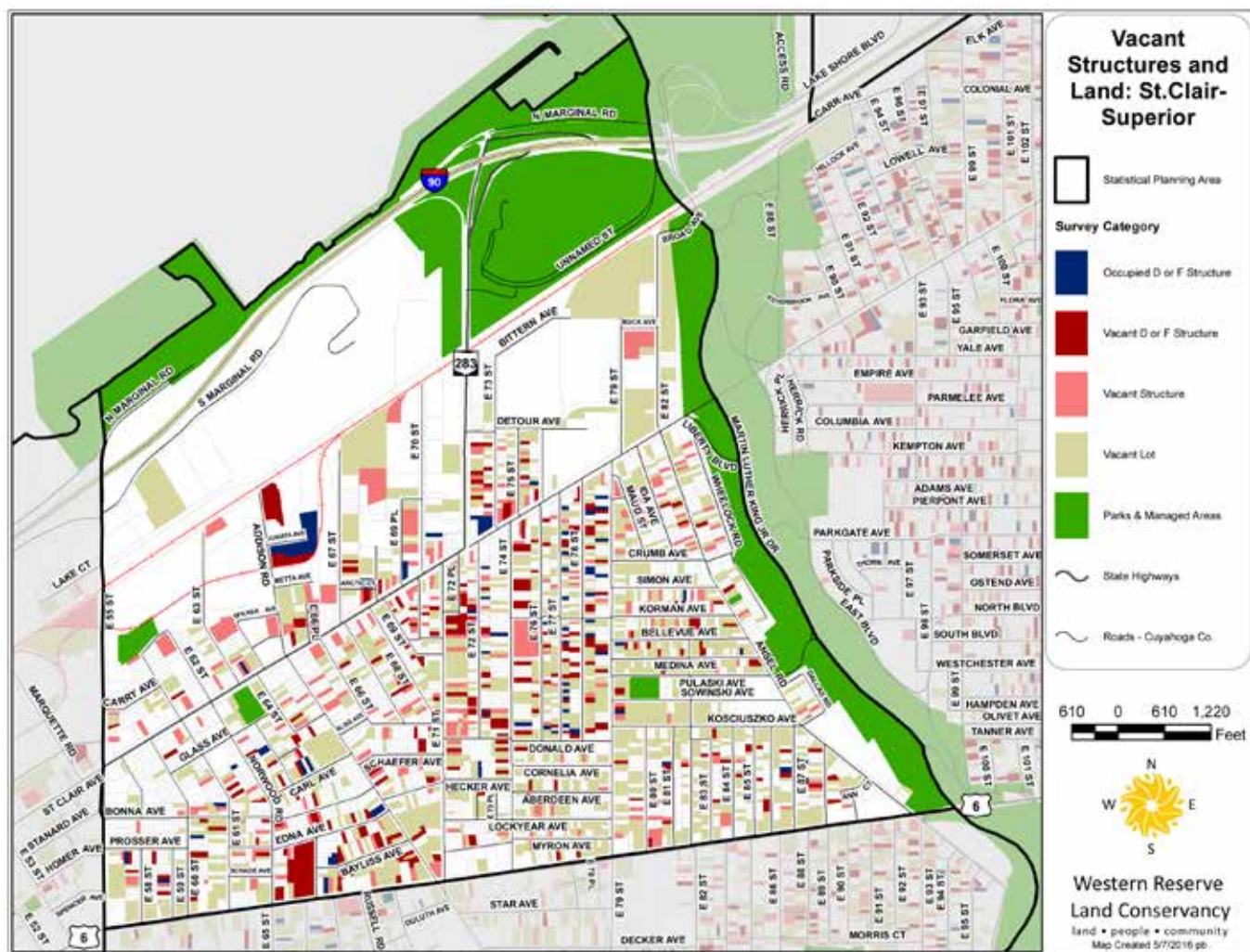


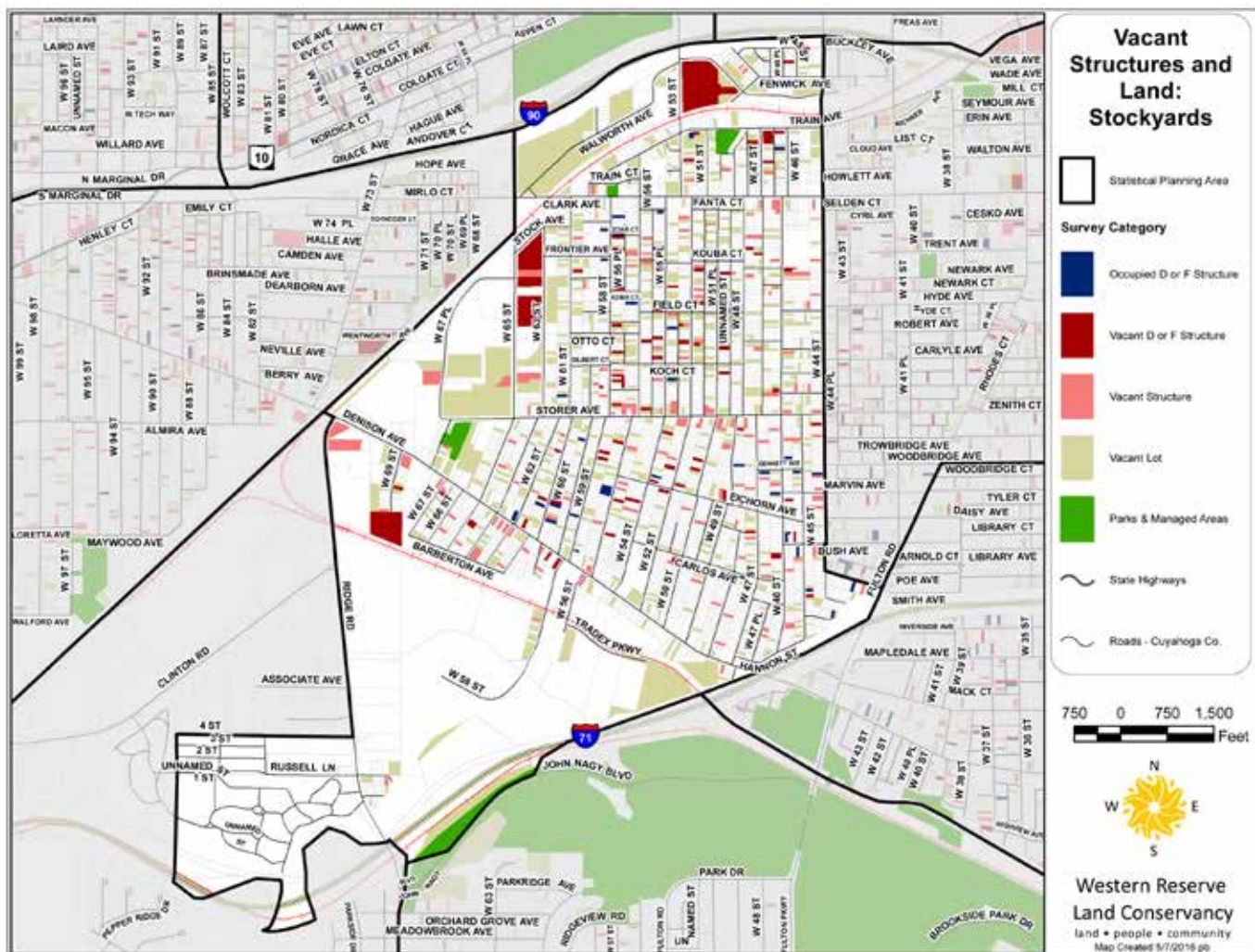


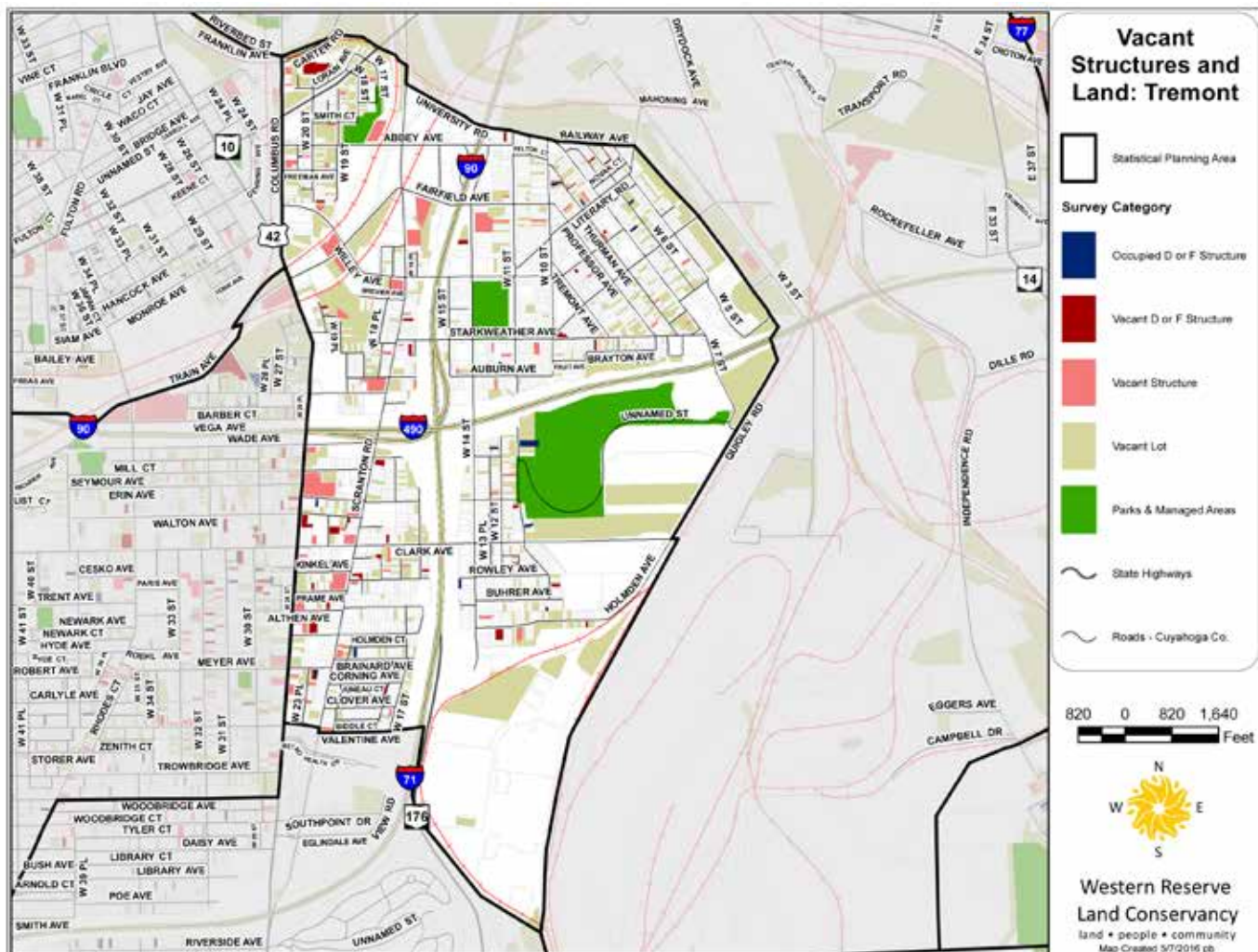


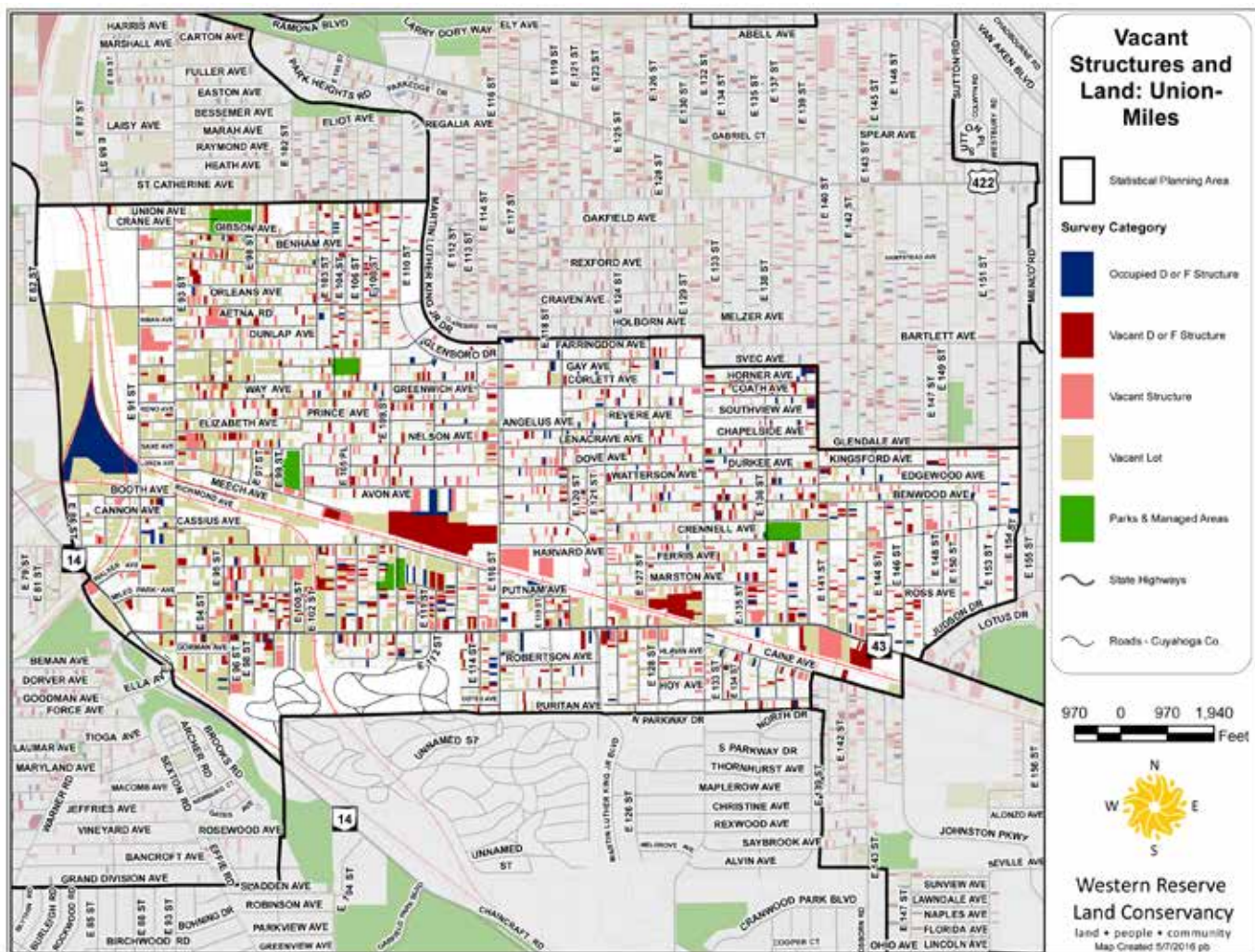


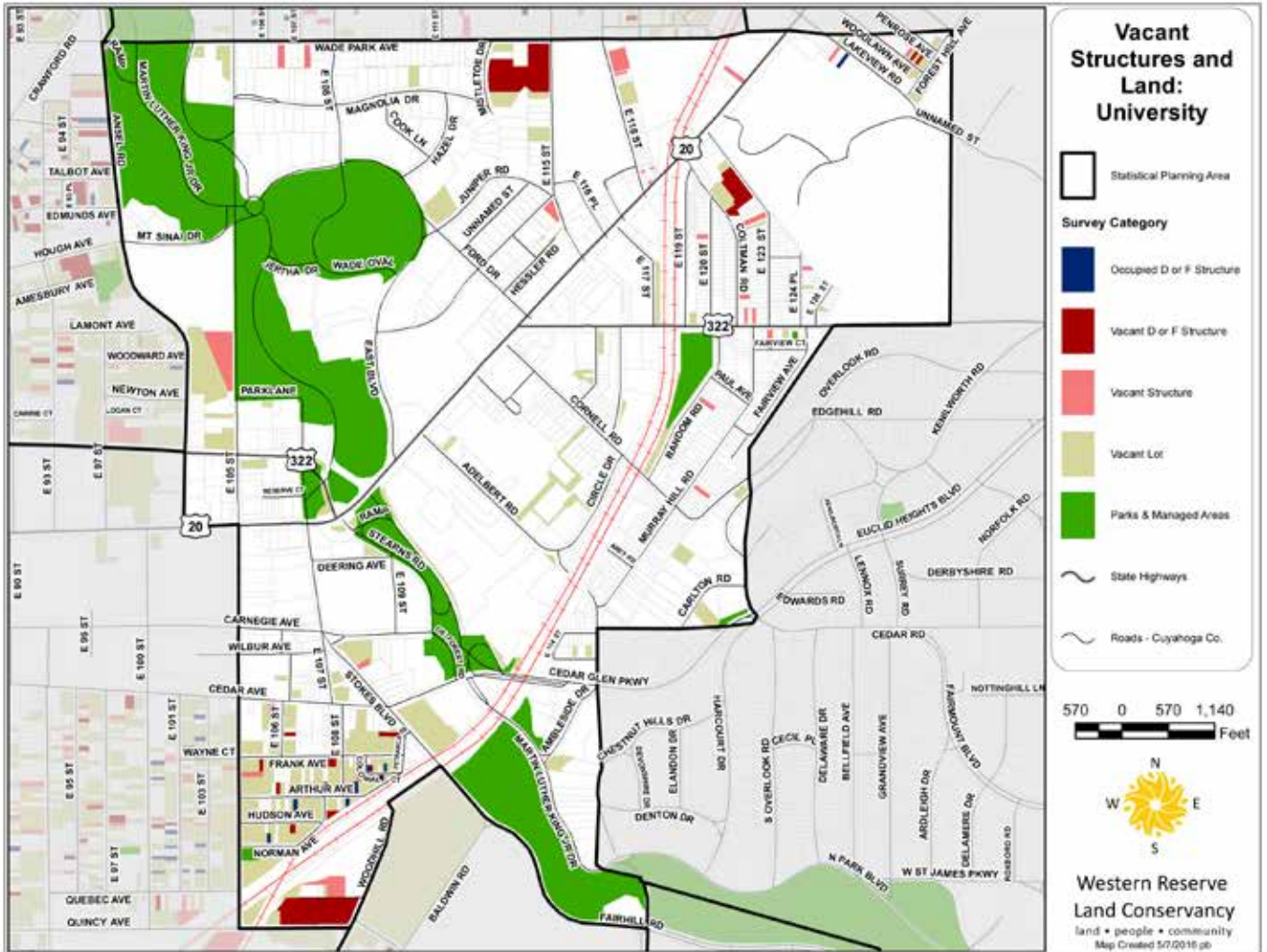


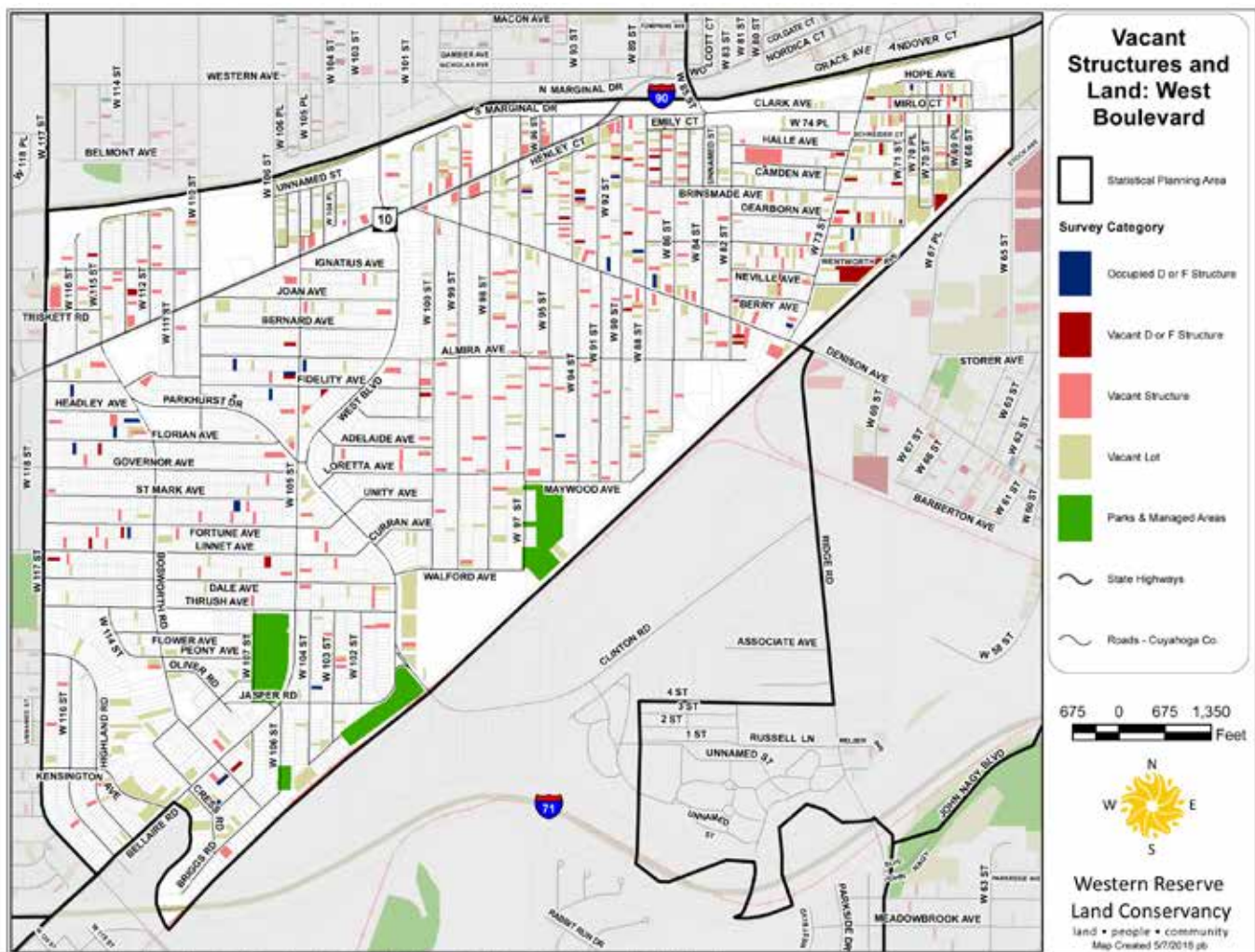












Cleveland by the Numbers: 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory was produced with the generous support of The Cleveland Foundation, as well as the Cleveland Cavaliers, JACK Entertainment, and Quicken Loans.

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The 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory was completed in cooperation with the City of Cleveland's Department of Building and Housing, Cleveland City Council and local community development corporations.



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Western Reserve Land Conservancy

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Cleveland by the Numbers: 2015 Cleveland Property Inventory was produced by Thriving Communities, a program of Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

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Bellaire-Puritas Development Corporation

Mount Pleasant NOW Development Corporation

Northeast Shores Development Corporation

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June 2016

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