



# BUILDING ON MOMENTUM

A Plan for the Live in Osborn Initiative in Detroit

# Building on Momentum

## A Plan for the Live in Osborn Initiative in Detroit

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MECC Initiative

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And the entire staff at ONA

## Who We Are

*Building on Momentum* was created by seven Master of Urban Planning students at the University of Michigan. This project was born out of an initial partnership between two faculty members at the University of Michigan, Paul Fontaine and Eric Seymour, who reached out to ONA to gauge their interest in working with Urban Planning students to address issues and opportunities in the Osborn neighborhood. ONA agreed, and the University of Michigan Osborn capstone project emerged. This team is comprised of students with various expertise in urban planning including physical planning, housing policy, community development, natural resource management, and social work.

## MECC Initiative

The recommendations outlined in *Building on Momentum* are strengthened by an interdisciplinary partnership that was made available through the University of Michigan Engaging Communities through the Classroom (MECC) Initiative. The University of Michigan Urban Planning students worked collaboratively with students from the University of Michigan's College of Engineering to highlight transit opportunities in Osborn. *Building on Momentum* as well as the College of Engineering Projects in Appendix A are a result of the collaboration made possible under the MECC initiative.

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The Osborn Capstone Team with Quincy Jones



# 0

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18036 Schoenherr St, Live in Osborn Target Area

# Introduction

Building on Momentum presents three strategies to support ONA in making Osborn and the Live In Osborn Target Area a neighborhood of choice for families. The strategies are designed to build upon each other, as three steps necessary to increase housing demand and occupancy in the target area and to improve the quality of life for current and future Osborn residents. The strategies address the numerous vacant properties, population loss, and disinvestment that have occurred in Osborn in recent decades.

Strategy 1: Increase Occupancy

Strategy 2: Activate Spaces

Strategy 3: Increase Connections

Building on Momentum advocates for increasing residential occupancy and improving the public realm around the Matrix Center, achieved through these three sequential strategies. Strategy 1 introduces mechanisms to increase occupancy in LIOTA. Strategy 2 provides the necessary public spaces for both current and future residents. Strategy 3 strengthens Strategy 1 and Strategy 2 by improving non-motorized transportation options and wayfinding. Each strategy is composed of recommendations derived from case studies and conversations with the Osborn community. The recommendations are designed to break each strategy into tangible actions ONA can initiate.

## Strategy 1: Increase Occupancy

The first strategy recommends obtaining community control, creating move-in ready building stock, and providing a diversity of housing types to repopulate and stabilize the target area. The recommendations of Strategy 1 focus on policy tools and partnerships that can increase residential occupancy, capitalize on recent investments, and strengthen ONA's role in the community.

LIOTA's diverse building stock is able to support a range of residents and tenure, from homeowners to renters. By increasing the types of target residents, rather than just single-family homeowners, ONA can help address the existing challenges of increasing occupancy. Strategy 1 employs techniques to rehabilitate these existing structures and catalyze growth in LIOTA.

### Strategy 2: Activate Spaces

The second strategy is designed to provide neighborhood spaces for current and future Osborn residents. To increase interest in the neighborhood, the target area needs additional amenities for the residents encouraged to occupy Osborn's affordable, rehab- and move-in ready homes. A desirable family-oriented neighborhood has spaces for children and adults to play, to interact with others, and to enjoy leisure time. To achieve the vision of the LIO Initiative, the target area must have welcoming civic spaces, parks, and places for community gatherings. The area currently has several vacant parcels with the potential to meet these needs. Strategy 2 provides recommendations that focus on activating five unique properties, which Building on Momentum recommends ONA use to create great neighborhood spaces. Transforming these currently vacant properties into functional, active spaces can increase community interactions and make Osborn more desirable to families.

Research shows that greening vacant lots has been associated with beneficial health and safety outcomes. A University of Pennsylvania study found that, when compared to untreated lots, transforming vacant lots into pocket parks, community gardens, or grassy fields was associated with consistent reductions in gun assaults across all four sections of the city and consistent reductions in vandalism in one section of the city.<sup>XXIX</sup> Interviews with ONA and community stakeholders illuminated the perception of unsafe areas and further emphasized the importance of creating spaces for activity in the community.

### Strategy 3: Increase Connections

The third strategy builds upon and strengthens the first two by bringing the neighborhood together through improved connections between destinations and wayfinding signage. Strategy 3 addresses the perception of great distances between destinations by increasing the safety of people who bike and walk, providing directions to community anchors, and improving the streetscape. By improving multi-modal transit options, Osborn can become both more accessible and safe.

Building on Momentum advocates for the use of these tools and techniques as mechanisms to increase occupancy and improve the public realm in Osborn. Each of these recommendations have been selected for their potential to achieve these goals. To benefit from their individual abilities, appropriate uses within the community are discussed below.



**Figure 1:** Site plan of proposed strategies and recommendations



Pelkey St, Live in Osborn Target Area

# 1

## Strategy 1 Increase Occupancy

### Recommendation 1.1

14

Create a Limited Equity Cooperative to provide a stable and affordable housing option in Osborn

### Recommendation 1.2

16

Create an Artist-In-Residence Program to strengthen the community through further youth engagement in the arts, and to increase rental housing options

### Recommendation 1.3

17

Partner with housing and development organizations to coordinate and influence positive redevelopment efforts

### Recommendation 1.4

18

Prevent future tax foreclosures to protect existing and future residents

### Recommendation 1.5

20

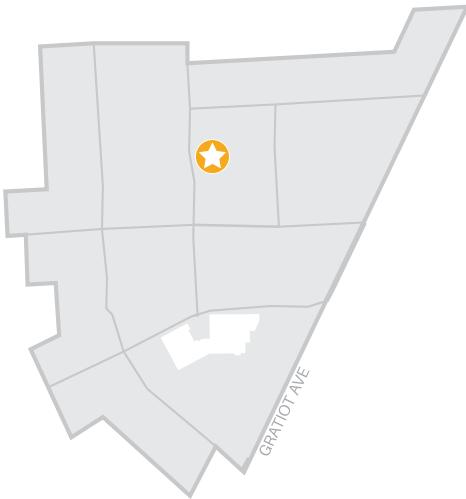
Create a Community Land Trust to protect community interests

## Recommendation 1.1

### *Create a Limited Equity Cooperative to provide a stable and affordable housing option in Osborn*

LIOTA's existing housing stock, from detached-single family homes to multi-unit apartment buildings, is capable of supporting a diversity of residents. Two multi-unit apartment buildings within the target area are located on Schoenherr St and adjacent to several of the properties that are the focus of the recommendations outlined in Strategies 2 and 3. Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 provide ways to transform these rehab-ready apartment buildings into occupied housing units. This recommendation can also be used to improve other multi-unit apartment buildings in Osborn.

The multi-unit structure at 18036 Schoenherr St, shown in Figure 5.5, has been identified by ONA as a building targeted for redevelopment. Located next to the Greening of Detroit's ecological restoration site and across the street from the proposed open-air pavilion (Recommendation 2.4), Building on Momentum recommends ONA acquire this building and develop it into a limited equity cooperative. Because the building is privately owned, ONA would need to follow the directions for acquiring privately owned property as detailed in the endnote.<sup>1</sup>



**FIGURE 2.1:**

Location of 18036 Schoenherr St



Establishing a multi-unit affordable housing limited equity cooperative (LEC) would provide affordable housing options for the neighborhood. LECs are a type of homeownership that falls between renting and owning; residents buy shares or membership into the cooperative that entitles them to a proprietary lease, giving them the right to occupy one unit in the building. Generally, a fixed monthly amount is paid that covers operating expenses and the mortgage for the building. Through homeownership programs, an LEC makes membership affordable through an initial subsidy that stays invested in the cooperative.<sup>I</sup>

LECs find value in the participation process, where self-management and autonomy allow the opportunity for marginalized and oppressed groups to become empowered. Research demonstrates that residents of LECs have:

*"reported fewer problems with crime and drugs, live in their homes longer, take better care of their homes, report a higher quality of life, and are more involved in their community."<sup>II</sup>*

LECs create equity and a stable living environment, which can influence residents to invest in their units, leading to positive effects in their neighborhoods.<sup>III</sup>

The physical development of an LEC is much like that of affordable rental housing. The difference comes in establishing the LEC and setting up the governance rules and processes. A prime example of a successful LEC model can be seen in Case Study 1 about the Champlain Housing Trust. Further, reaching out to the legal resources listed at the end of the document will help the ONA navigate the process of establishing an LEC.<sup>2</sup> Potential funding for the development of affordable housing units can also be found in the endnote.<sup>3</sup>

### Case Study 1 The Champlain Housing Trust

The Champlain Housing Trust, located in Northwest Vermont, is the largest community land trust in the country, with over 2,000 households in rental apartments, LECs, and shared equity housing units. As of 2014, they had 81 LEC units in five separate developments. The Champlain Housing Trust utilized their resources to rehabilitate properties while partnering with the Champlain Valley Mutual Housing Federation to locate residents who were interested in living in the LEC model. The Champlain Housing Trust facilitated the transition of the property to collective ownership, and provided protection for the property in case the governance model broke down, as ownership of the property would divert to the CLT.<sup>IV</sup>

### Case Study 2 Popp's Packing

Popp's Packing is an artistic venue located on the border of Hamtramck and Detroit, Michigan. Popp's packing promotes dialog and cultural exchange between local, national, and international communities.

Popp's offers live-in artists residency programs that range from \$400 to \$1100 per month; additionally, it provides space and resources for artists to work on their projects, as well nurture connections to the greater artist community in Detroit.<sup>v</sup>

### Recommendation 1.2

*Create an Artist-In-Residence Program to strengthen the community through further youth engagement in the arts, and to increase rental housing options*

Building on Momentum recommends renovating the apartment building at 18011 Schoenherr St to increase the amount of move-in ready rental housing in the target area. ONA has indicated a desire to turn the property into an artist-in-residence apartment and studio space. As two separate structures that were once small single-occupancy units, one structure could be renovated to be a larger live-in space for local artists while the other could become a studio and gallery space. Through an artist-in-residence program, a live/work space would be provided to artists as a way to attract and highlight talent within the community. The gallery space could be used to bring attention to the neighborhood, act as an event space, and host local artists' work. Recommendation 1.2 is strengthened through recommendations in Strategies 2 and 3, which provide opportunities for the artist-in-residence to partner with community members to create pieces of functional art for use throughout the target area.



18011 Schoenherr St

Artist-in-residence programs have been successful in other areas of the Detroit Metro region, as seen in Case Study 2. The artist-in-residence program in LIOTA should target artists of color, providing an opportunity for deserving artists who otherwise might be left out of the growing art scene occurring throughout Detroit. Details on obtaining the property at 18011 Schoenherr St can be found at the end of the document.<sup>4</sup>

## Recommendation 1.3

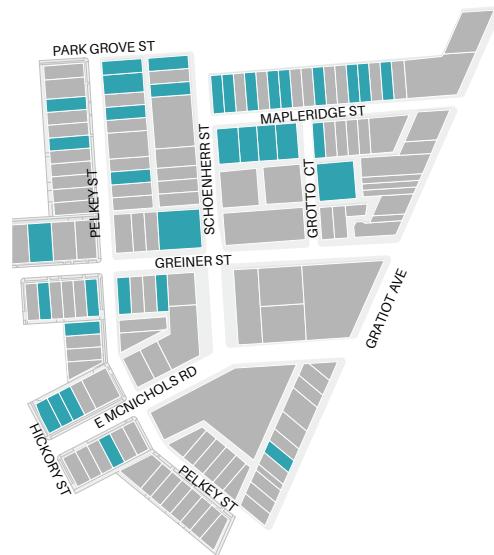
### *Partner with housing and development organizations to coordinate and influence positive redevelopment efforts*

Building on Momentum recommends ONA partner with City agencies to coordinate redevelopment efforts in LIOTA. The City of Detroit and the Detroit Land Bank Authority own many of the vacant properties located throughout the target area. Building on Momentum recommends partnering with these entities to return vacant properties to productive use or demolish structures beyond repair. The purpose of the DLBA is to coordinate side lot expansion programs, building demolition, and auctions for publicly owned properties. Land banks, which are financed through government and philanthropic support, donations, and property sales, are enabled by state law to acquire, manage, and develop vacant and abandoned properties.<sup>XIII</sup> An informal ONA/DLBA partnership could allow ONA to act as facilitator for new homeowner purchases of publicly owned properties – which currently account for 24% of homes in the target area (Figure 2.2).

If ONA would like to pursue a formal partnership with the DLBA, the sidebar provides a closer look at what is required. In a formal redevelopment partnership with the DLBA, ONA could propose the acquisition of more than ten properties. The proposal would need to be accompanied by a development agreement that details the amount and type of investment. The cost of properties is negotiable depending upon the amount of the investment. This type of partnership requires approval by the DLBA and Detroit City Council.<sup>VI</sup>

### A closer look at Community Partners

A ‘community partner’ is a formal relational designation that a community organization can hold with the DLBA. The requirements to become a community partner include holding a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, being current on property taxes, having not lost title to property through foreclosure due to nonpayment of taxes within the past three years and being free of material blight violations or fines.<sup>VII</sup>



**FIGURE 2.2:**  
Publicly owned properties in LIOTA

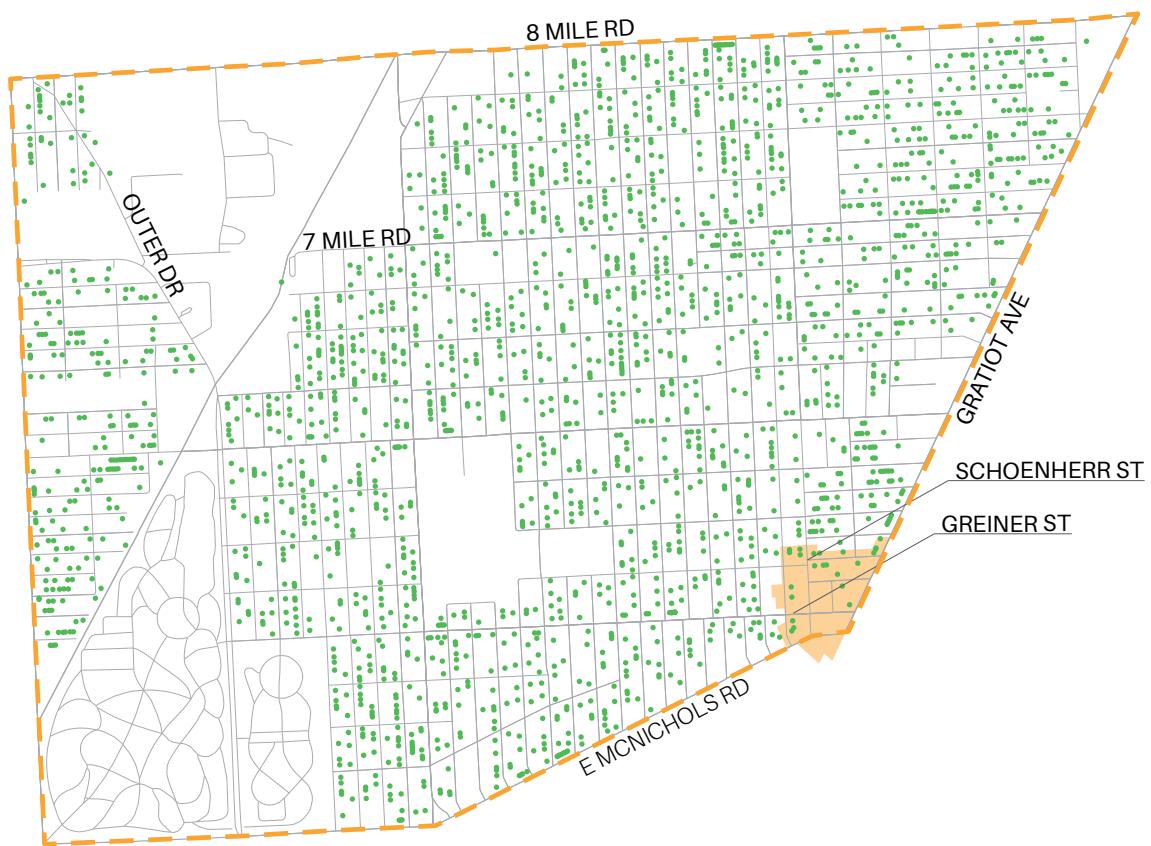
## Recommendation 1.4

### *Prevent future tax foreclosures to protect existing and future residents*

Like many Detroit neighborhoods, Osborn is facing the potential loss of many residents through the Wayne County Tax Foreclosure process. More than 1,600 properties throughout the Osborn neighborhood face tax foreclosure in 2015 (Figure 2.3). Of these properties, it is estimated that more than half are currently occupied.<sup>viii</sup>

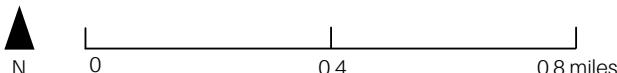
Through partnering with the United Community Housing Coalition (UCHC), ONA could help homeowners remain in their homes. UCHC is a nonprofit housing assistance organization located in Detroit, that has provided comprehensive housing services to homeowners, community organizations, and the homeless since 1973. One of UCHC's core functions is to help homeowners navigate the process of paying past-due taxes and enter into payment plans.

With UCHC, ONA could work with homeowners who are facing tax foreclosure to help them navigate the process of setting up a payment plan to prevent foreclosure. In this way, homeownership in the neighborhood could be stabilized and homeowners can stay in their homes despite facing financial hardship.



#### OSBORN TAX FORECLOSURE

- PROPERTIES SUBJECT TO  
TAX FORECLOSURE
- LIVE IN OSBORN TARGET AREA



Source: Motor City Mapping 2014; U.S. Census Bureau Tiger/Line, 2013  
Map Created by Lacey Sigmon

**FIGURE 2.3:** Osborn homes facing tax foreclosure

## Recommendation 1.5

### *Create a Community Land Trust to protect community interests*

Building on Momentum recommends ONA create a community land trust (CLT) in order to gain ownership and control of the high number of vacant and blighted homes in the target area. A CLT is a nonprofit, community-based development organization designed to ensure community stewardship of land.<sup>ix</sup> CLTs assist communities by gaining ownership of land; once a community's land is acquired, the CLT can influence design, usage and development of the neighborhood and make properties affordable by separating the cost of the land from the cost of the property. Community ownership of land can help communities to:

- Provide affordable housing and maintain affordability over time
- Have input in land development decisions and reduce absentee ownership
- Promote homeownership through homeowner programs
- Partner with homeowners to reinvest equity back into the neighborhood<sup>x</sup>

Using philanthropic and public subsidies, the CLT purchases and develops homes and vacant lots in a targeted geographic area and then sells those properties at an affordable price. This mechanism allows CLTs to increase and maintain housing affordability while promoting homeownership opportunities. Considering the high rate of poverty in Osborn, it is necessary to maintain housing affordability as the target area develops.

Through owning community land, a CLT can influence local development. A CLT could direct development of its vacant properties in Osborn to ensure that they have a positive impact on the neighborhood. A CLT can address issues of unwanted businesses such as gas stations or liquor stores that may be detrimental to the health of the neighborhood. Additionally, as a community organization, a CLT can use its resources to influence public officials and address existing land uses.

Restrictions within the ground lease may require that CLT homes be owner-occupied. In this way, a CLT can increase the number of homeowners in a neighborhood. Homeowners are more likely than investors or renters to remain in place for a substantial period of time and invest in their property.<sup>x1</sup> A CLT that has been especially successful and is acknowledged nationwide is the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) in Boston. DSNI's story can be found in Case Study 3.

Through the creation of a CLT, the Osborn community could take direct ownership of land in LIOTA and the Osborn neighborhood, setting a strong foundation for future growth. More information on the steps to become a CLT can be found at the end of the document.<sup>5</sup>

### Case Study 3 Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a nonprofit community-based organization in the Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston. DSNI formed in 1984 when residents came together to revive their neighborhood that had been devastated by arson, disinvestment, and neglect. In 1988, DSNI formed Dudley Neighbors, Inc. (DNI) to play a role in housing and community development. DNI is a community land trust focused on preserving affordable housing and providing residents with tools to control the development process. As of March of 2015, DNI has produced 225 new homes and owns land under several commercial properties. Within the next decade there are plans to develop an additional 250 homes.<sup>xii</sup>



The Matrix Center, 13560 E McNichols Rd, Live in Osborn Target Area

# 2

## Strategy 2 Activate Spaces

### Recommendation 2.1

24

Redesign Matrix Center entrance to increase its presence and reinforce its role as a community anchor

### Recommendation 2.2

25

Transform vacant lot adjacent to Matrix Center into an urban space for informal gatherings and programmed events

### Recommendation 2.3

26

Improve Franklin Branch Library exterior to provide more functional space for library users and transit riders

### Recommendation 2.4

28

Renovate 18069 Schoenherr St into an open-air pavilion to provide covered gathering space for community events

### Recommendation 2.5

29

Convert four adjacent lots into a park for young families and children

## Recommendation 2.1

### *Redesign Matrix Center entrance to increase its presence and reinforce its role as a community anchor*

The Matrix Center, a community center serving over 2,500 visitors a week and home to ONA, is located at the intersection of Schoenherr St and McNichols Rd. A half block west of Gratiot Ave, the Center is accessible by three bus routes and across the street from the Franklin Branch of the Detroit Public Library. Despite the many roles that the Matrix Center and ONA play in the Osborn community, the Center's signage and exterior, seen in Figure 3.1, is not easily recognizable by new visitors, nor does it adequately reflect the Center's importance. The following recommendations suggest a redesign of the entrance to create a more functional and accessible space and to better support the Center's role as a community anchor.

Installing an informative and permanent sign, widening the entrance, improving exterior lighting, and renovating the portico to avoid casting the entrance into shadow will help the Center be more easily found from the street. Shaded seating for transit riders and bike parking will make the Center more accessible for people using different forms of transportation. Outdoor furniture will also make the Center more welcoming and encourage the use of the exterior as an informal public space. The space in front of the Center is an appropriate location for a sculptural element to serve as a landmark, further helping visitors locate the Center. Drawing on Recommendation 1.2, ONA should commission the artist-in-residence to design the sculpture.

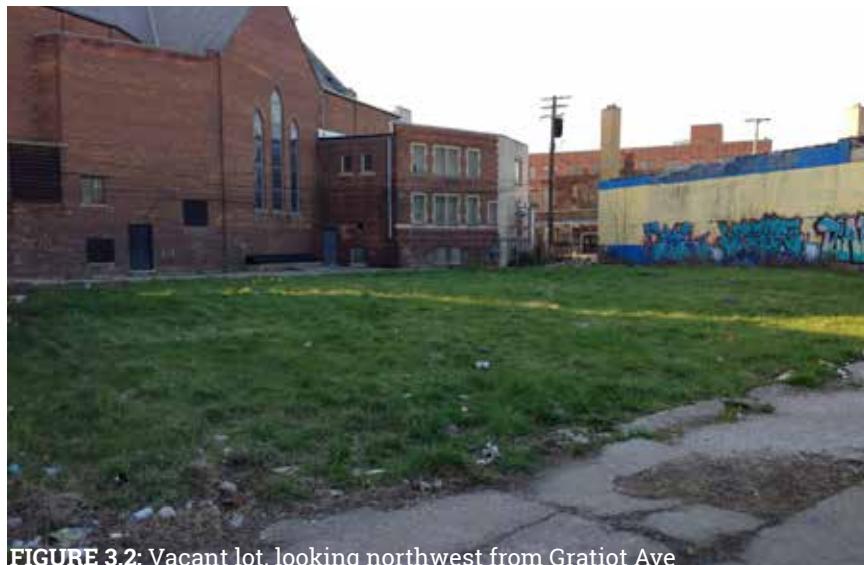


**FIGURE 3.1:** Current entrance to Matrix Center

## Recommendation 2.2

### *Transform vacant lot adjacent to Matrix Center into an urban space for informal gatherings and programmed events*

Building on Momentum recommends converting the vacant lot at 13565 Gratiot Ave into an active space to extend ONA's presence within the community. Directly adjacent to the eastern edge of the Matrix Center and ONA's green alley project, the 11,000 sqft lot (Figures 3.2, 3.3) lends itself to be a flexible space for ONA and the Matrix Center to expand their programmable activities. The lot is currently an unwelcoming and potentially dangerous space due to dumping and an unprotected edge bordering Gratiot Ave. To effectively transform this lot, several design interventions are proposed.



**FIGURE 3.2:** Vacant lot, looking northwest from Gratiot Ave

Painting murals on the southern and northern walls bordering the lot present an opportunity to utilize the artist-in-residence program, recommended in Strategy 1, to bring the community together and for ONA to more easily market the neighborhood. Preparing a wall for projecting



**FIGURE 3.3:** Location of 13565 Gratiot Ave

movies provides a low-maintenance way to host evening events. In addition to murals, the design of seating options is an opportunity for local artists to engage the youth community. Through a youth art competition, in partnership with the Evergreen Academy, students could design sculptural seating for the park.

To address the unprotected lot edge along Gratiot Ave, Building on Momentum proposes planting a low hedge to form a border along the eastern edge. The hedge, along with trees, will increase safety and mitigate both the air and noise pollution from Gratiot Ave traffic.

To increase awareness of, and access to this urban space and green alley, adding an entrance to the church along the east side of the Matrix Center is recommended. To address safety and staffing concerns, the entrance could be open on a part-time basis or only for outdoor events. Pole banners along the alley are recommended to better connect this urban lot and green alley to the front entrance of the Matrix Center and Schoenherr St.

This flexible space along a commercial corridor would expand programmable outdoor space, help eliminate blighted vacant properties and offer a more welcoming entrance into Osborn. The space could host movie nights, fitness classes, and other daytime and evening events. Programming such events would increase community engagement among Osborn and adjacent neighborhood residents.

### ***Recommendation 2.3***

#### ***Improve Franklin Branch Library exterior to provide more functional space for library users and transit riders***

On the north side of McNichols St across from Recommendation 2.2, the green alley, and the Matrix Center is the Franklin Branch of the Detroit Public Library. Although the library is only 5,500 sqft, it serves an important role in the community for both youth and adults by providing computer classes and study rooms. The space in front of the library presents an opportunity to offer additional functional space and be a welcoming entrance to this community anchor. The library (see Figure 3.4) is almost thirty feet back from the street, with security bars over its windows, a small entrance, and poor exterior lighting. These current conditions create the

perception, indicated in interviews with members of the community, that the branch is no longer open. The recommended design interventions create a functional space on the pavement between the street and the library for both library and transit users, allowing the Franklin Branch to better serve the community.

Building on Momentum recommends enlarging the entrance to improve its function and visibility, and to properly reflect the importance of this civic space. Painting the pavement in front of the library with bright colors can attract the attention of pedestrians and motorists and visually connect the road and entrance to the building (Figure 3.5). Adding bicycle parking to the library entrance space will increase accessibility to both the library and adjacent transit stops and can encourage more commutes be taken by bicycle. Installing seating and tables will open the space up and extend usable library space to the outdoors. An outdoor covered shelter will also provide a necessary amenity for those using public transit.



**FIGURE 3.4:** Entrance to the Franklin Branch of the Detroit Public Library

Currently, the nighttime lighting does not adequately cover the library's frontage, providing a safety risk for transit riders and pedestrians. Improving lighting in and around the building would increase safety and nighttime visibility.



**FIGURE 3.5:** Proposed pavement painting

## Recommendation 2.4

### *Renovate 18069 Schoenherr St into an open-air pavilion to provide covered gathering space for community events*

18069 Schoenherr St (Figure 3.6) has the potential to be a significant community gathering space in the LIOTA. The vacant twelve-unit single floor apartment building, see in Figure 3.7, is located across the street from the Greening of Detroit ecological restoration site and is connected by an alley to the proposed family park in Recommendation 2.5. The building consists of two L-shaped buildings that face a central courtyard. In 2014, ONA cleaned up debris from the site; currently, ONA uses the courtyard for parties and other events. The property's location one block north of the Matrix Center, its current use for community events, and physical design present an opportunity to transform the space into an active open-air pavilion.

By creating an open-air pavilion, the building provides shade and shelter for relief from the weather and creates a visually appealing structure. Increasing and improving lighting in and around the building improves safety and nighttime visibility in the target area.

This pavilion is an ideal space for scheduled celebrations, parties, reunions, art shows, or educational events. Unlike the vacant lot at 13565 Gratiot Ave, this covered space is on a residential street, making it ideal for smaller, more community-oriented activities. It also has the potential to adapt to future uses, such as youth fundraisers, farmers' markets, or holiday vendors.



FIGURE 3.7: Courtyard of 18069 Schoenherr St

## Recommendation 2.5

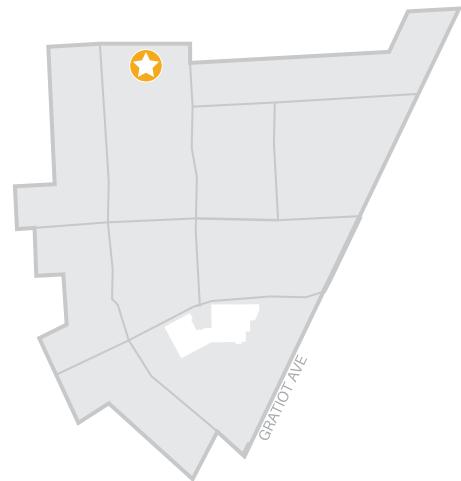
### *Convert four adjacent lots into a park for young families and children*

Just north of the property discussed in recommendation 2.4, between Schoenherr St and Pelkey St are four vacant lots (Figures 3.8, 3.9). Building on Momentum recommends converting the lots into a park for the young families of the target area and surrounding neighborhood. The nearest park to LIOTA, Josefiak Playlot, is a half mile away, twice the distance to destinations that research shows people are likely to walk to. Developing a family park as a walkable amenity in the target area would fill the need for a safe outdoor space for young children. This playground would serve existing residents and help attract new families to the area. The vacant lots are owned by the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority.<sup>xiii</sup> Because these parcels are owned by public entities, the partnerships recommended in Strategy 1 could make these lots easier to acquire and maintain. The following are design interventions that would help transform these vacant lots into a vibrant park for families.



**FIGURE 3.8:** Four lots bordered by Pelkey, Park Grove, and Schoenherr Sts

The park should include interactive play structures designed with the help of the artist-in-residence program, again drawing on the artistic talents of the youth community. Some design interventions that would be relatively simple ways to activate this park space would be playground equipment of various scales, and sculptures that could serve as climbing structures as well as public art. This park space has the potential to incorporate the alley that cuts through the lots to connect to the proposed open-air pavilion at 18069 Schoenherr St.



**FIGURE 3.9:** Site of proposed family park



- BUILDING INTERVENTIONS
- EXTENDED LIBRARY
- PUBLIC SPACE
- GREEN SPACE
- BIKE RACK
- GREEN ALLEY

0

0.05 MILES



Source: Data Driven Detroit 2014;  
Detroit Future City

**FIGURE 3.10:** Site plan detailing proposed recommendations for community spaces



Schoenherr

Mapleridge

SPEED  
LIMIT  
**30**

# 3

## Strategy 3 Increase Connections

### Recommendation 3.1

Build bicycle lanes to increase safety for people who bike and improve connections between Osborn anchors

34

### Recommendation 3.2

Install wayfinding signage to improve access to destinations and strengthen the Osborn identity

36

### Recommendation 3.3

38

Improve the streetscape to increase the safety of people who bike, walk, and drive, and improve the visual appearance of the neighborhood

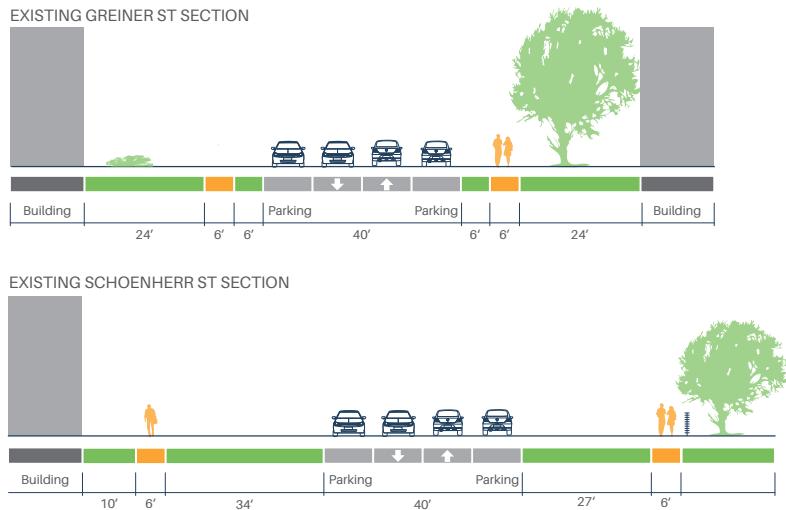
#### Case Study 4 Bike Lanes in New Orleans, Louisiana

Recent bike lane infrastructure improvement in New Orleans has provided an opportunity to measure how bike lanes affect bicycle ridership. One study led by Kathryn Parker, MPH, examined how the painting of bike lanes on S. Carrollton Avenue Birch and Green Streets did just that. These new bike lanes installed in "racially and economically diverse and mixed-use urban neighborhoods" did result in an increase in bicycle ridership. Additionally the bike lanes "appeared effective in attracting new cyclists who were diverse in race, sex, and age."<sup>xiv</sup>

### Recommendation 3.1

#### *Build bicycle lanes to increase safety for people who bike and improve connections between Osborn anchors*

Building on Momentum recommends constructing bike lanes to increase the number of bicyclists and pedestrians and to make the streets safer for non-motorized transportation. Existing automobile lanes on Schoenherr St and Griener St must be narrowed in order to accommodate the lanes. The narrower automobile lanes and the existence of the bicycle lanes will reduce the high speeds of automobile traffic and improve bicyclist and pedestrian awareness. Installing bicycle lanes lead to a higher rate of bicycling as a mode of transit (Case Study 4) and can decrease the perception of long distances between community destinations. In particular, bike lanes can make the commute for people who bike between the Matrix Center and Osborn High School more accessible. The increase in bicyclists can also lead to more people on the streets and in public spaces, improving safety in the neighborhood.<sup>xv</sup> Bike lanes attract users of diverse ages and backgrounds, including recreational users, commuters, and children. Bike lanes can help serve current and future residents, some of whom may not have regular access to a car, and others of whom may not want to be entirely auto-dependent.



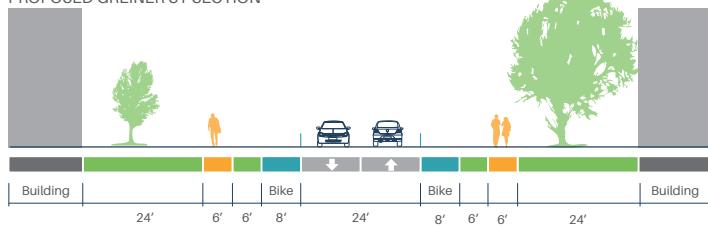
**FIGURE 4.1:**  
Existing target area street sections

**FIGURE 4.2 (right):**  
Proposed target area street sections

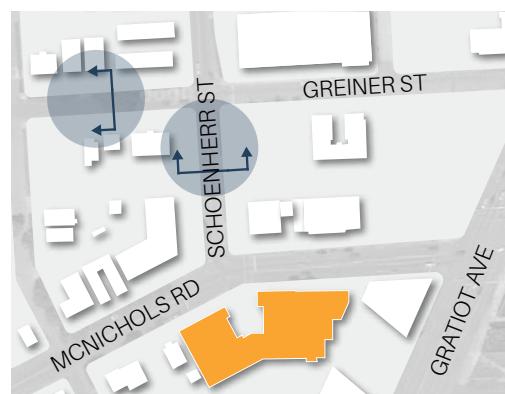
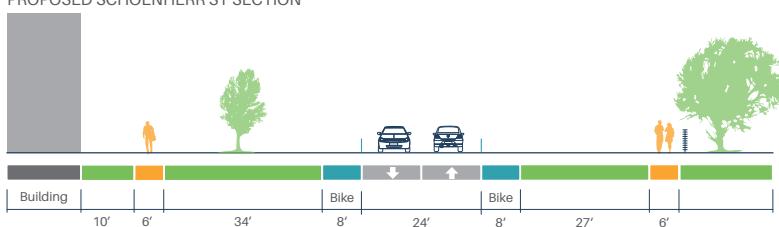
Bicycle lanes typically fall into one of two categories, dedicated and protected. Dedicated lanes are lanes in the roadway, marked by signage and painted lanes, strictly intended for bicyclists. Protected bike lanes are physically separated from car traffic, by bollards, barriers, or car parking, providing a higher level of protection from automobile traffic. The ideal implementation of this recommendation is protected lanes, installed by DDOT, along Schoenherr St, Griener St, and on McNichols Rd near Gratiot Ave. As the street section in Figure 5.21 shows, there is adequate space along these corridors to create protected bike lanes.

Given the cost and difficulty of constructing protected bike lanes in the near term, ONA should consider dedicated lanes as an interim solution. Dedicated lanes are less costly and simpler to install than protected lanes because they consist solely of paint on the roadway and adequate signage. Like protected bike lanes, dedicated lanes require permission and construction by DDOT. While ONA and others in the Osborn community advocate for bike lanes with DDOT, ONA should consider constructing temporary bike lanes through a community bike lane painting activity. Through measuring the impact of these temporary installations, ONA could demonstrate to DDOT the importance of these routes throughout Osborn. This is a low cost, effective way to get Osborn residents to begin to bike in their neighborhood. While such actions do not replace the need for formal permanent bike lanes, they perform the function of serving the short-term needs of people who bike in the neighborhood.

PROPOSED GREINER ST SECTION



PROPOSED SCHOENHERR ST SECTION



**FIGURE 4.3:** Street section locations

## Recommendation 3.2

### *Install wayfinding signage to improve access to destinations and strengthen the Osborn identity*

Wayfinding signage can be used to address the exaggerated perception of distance between neighborhood destinations. Perceived long distances limit the number of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling between destinations, which in turn limits the number of people willing to take walk or bike because of the absence of other people on the street. One technique to address the perception of long distances between destinations, such as the high schools, parks, and commercial centers, is to add visually attractive and informative material stating actual distances along the route. When distances are perceived to be shorter, more people will be willing to walk or bike. More people on the street creates a virtuous cycle by increasing perceptions of safety, and attracting additional pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Wayfinding signage helps orient people, directs them to community assets, and encourages new residents to explore their surroundings.<sup>xvi</sup> These signs can increase foot traffic to areas that may not be readily known by the public.<sup>xvii</sup> This particular form of community branding can identify a neighborhood's unique history or character, leading to an increased sense of community held by residents.

To address perceptions of long distances, wayfinding signs should be placed in the target area locations highlighted in Figure 5.22. As the Matrix Center is in an area with frequent pedestrian traffic, its courtyard offers a key location for a kiosk or small structure to provide information on community news and events to visitors and residents. A proposed kiosk design can be seen in Figure 4.4. This kiosk should display a map of the LIOTA and the larger neighborhood that includes major destinations: community spaces, commercial areas, and entertainment centers. Smaller wayfinding signs should be placed throughout the neighborhood (Figure 4.4), particularly along Schoenherr St and Greiner St as these are frequently traveled corridors, and at the community spaces highlighted in Strategy 2.

In addition to wayfinding signage, additional branding can help cities and neighborhoods define their identity and attract investment.<sup>xvii</sup> This recommendation builds upon ONA's existing branding efforts. Through a branding package, ONA can help establish what makes Osborn different and market the neighborhood through the use of an entrance sign, pole banners, and social media. Installing pole banners, as seen in Figure 4.5, along Schoenherr St and Greiner St can serve to mark the streets as main corridors in the community. Pole banners should also be placed along the green alley and McNichols Rd near the Gratiot Ave entrance to increase exposure to the Osborn identity upon entering the neighborhood.



**FIGURE 4.4:** Example of design and size of proposed main wayfinding kiosk (left) and wayfinding signage (right).



**FIGURE 4.5:** Example of design and size of proposed neighborhood pole banners

### **Recommendation 3.3**

#### *Improve the streetscape to increase the safety of people who bike, walk, and drive, and improve the visual appearance of the neighborhood*

If the target area is to be a desirable residential neighborhood and attract new families, the streets must be safer for walking. Adequate crosswalks at intersections and mid-block crosswalks can slow traffic, and increase the ability of pedestrians to move safely throughout the area. The current LIOTA development efforts combined with the activation of neighborhood spaces necessitate additional crosswalks (identified in Figure 5.25) to improve pedestrian accessibility to these spaces and other destinations. Furthermore, some of the existing crosswalks in LIOTA are faded and have lost their visual impact, reducing pedestrian safety.

Painting new crosswalks and improvements on existing crosswalks can provide a quick and informal solution to increase neighborhood walkability. The visual impact of crosswalks lead to slower automobile traffic and higher motorist awareness, increasing pedestrian safety.

In addition to Recommendation 3.2, landscaping in the right of way between the sidewalk and street also contributes to reduced perceptions of long distances between destinations. Studies have also shown that landscaping can lead to an increase in the property value of homes and increase in renter occupancy.<sup>xviii</sup> The impact of landscaping in Osborn provides a low cost opportunity to contribute to the beautification of the target area. Native landscaping in particular is recommended because it tends to be less expensive, lower in maintenance needs, and carries lower environmental impacts than traditional landscaping.<sup>xix</sup>

While there are some well-established street trees throughout LIOTA, landscaping is not consistent. The Greening of Detroit's new LIOTA development and educational outreach in Osborn provides a partnership opportunity for landscape improvements. Through such a partnership, ONA would have additional capacity to address landscaping deficits in the neighborhood and create ecological education opportunities for community members. ONA could organize community events to landscape Schoenherr St and Greiner St with native, low-maintenance, low-cost street trees and shrubs. This would provide an opportunity to work with homeowners along these corridors. While ONA would likely be responsible for organizing maintenance for this landscaping, giving information to homeowners on how landscaping could increase their property values could motivate residents to become involved land-stewards of Osborn.



**FIGURE 4.6:** Site plan of proposed connectivity recommendations

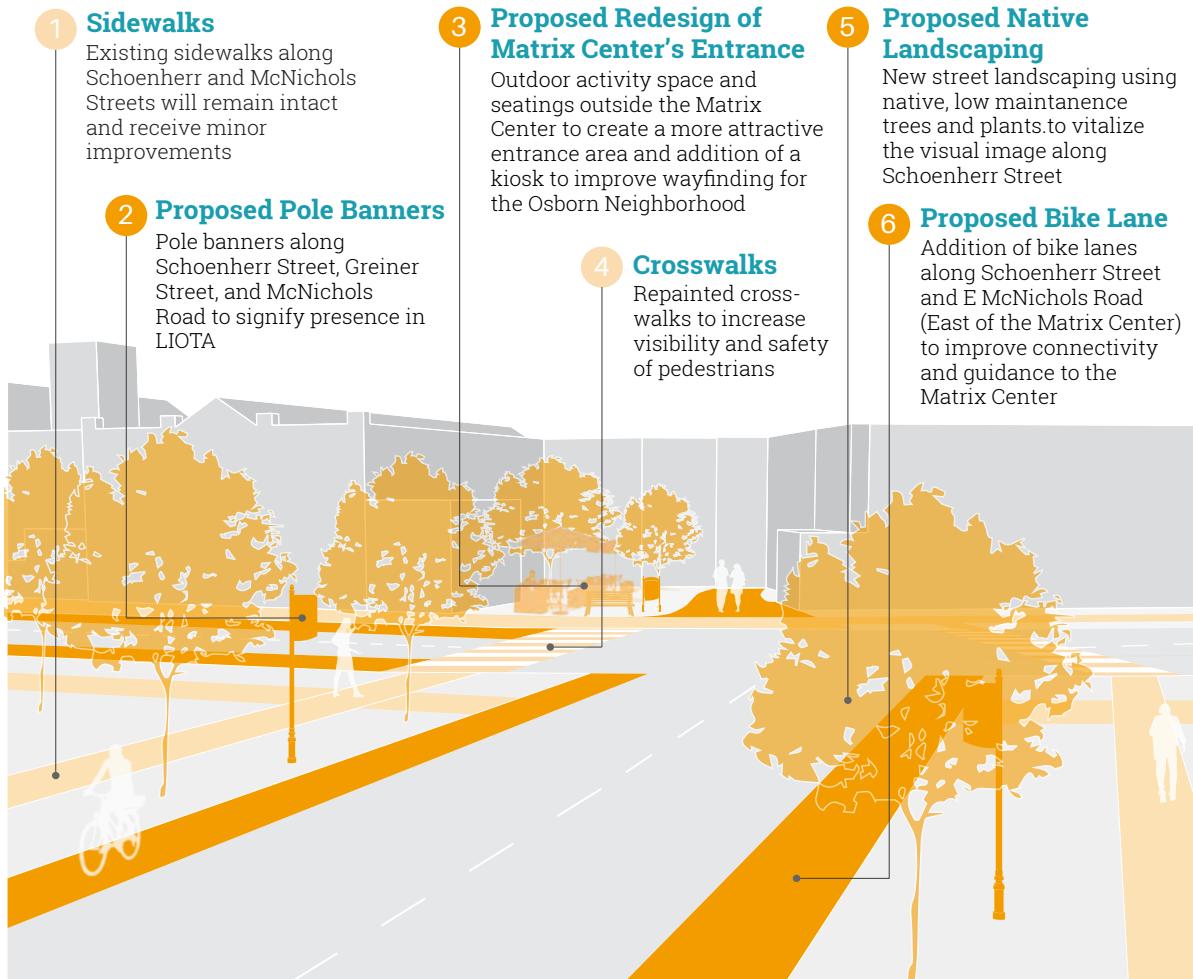
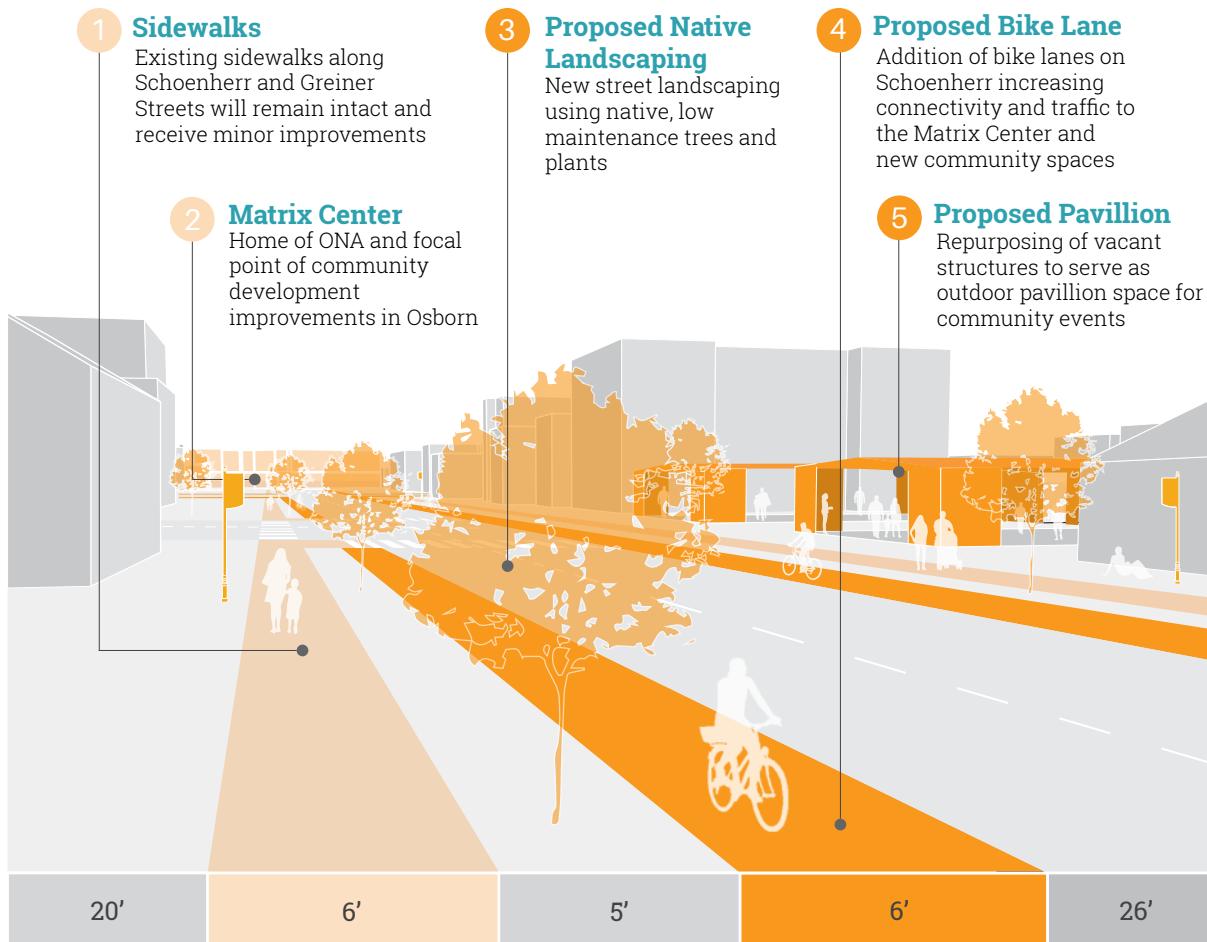
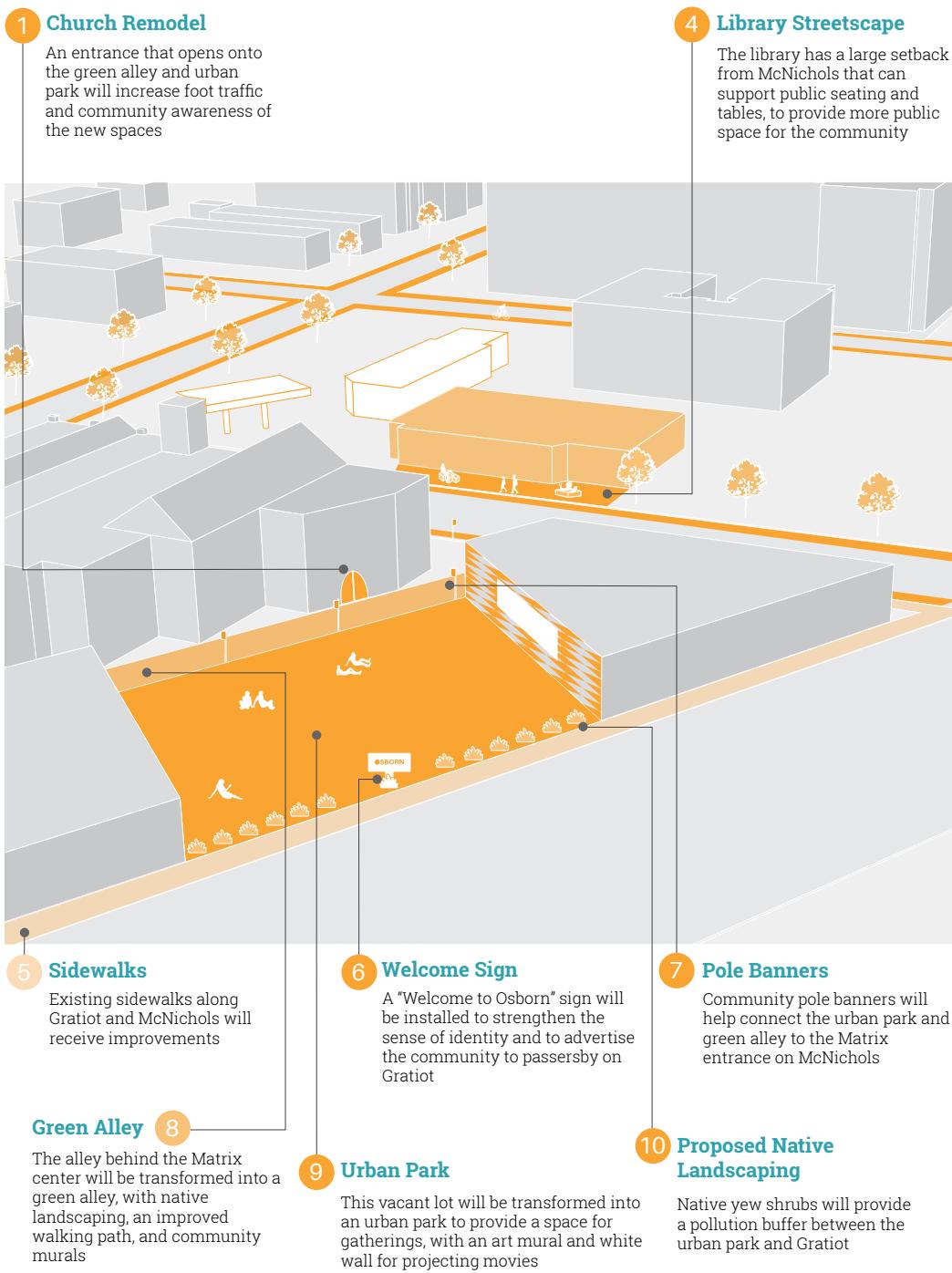


FIGURE 5.1:



**FIGURE 5.2:** Proposed recommendations and programming of 18069 Schoenherr Street



**FIGURE 5.3:** Proposed recommendations and programming of 13565 Gratiot Ave

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