



EASTERN MARKET

**Neighborhood Framework
and Stormwater Management
Network Plan**

Planning and Development Department
City of Detroit, November 2019



EASTERN MARKET

Neighborhood Framework and Stormwater Management Network Plan

City of Detroit

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November 2019

Forward

The City of Detroit launched a comprehensive neighborhood framework study for Eastern Market in January 2018. The goals of the framework were to provide a vision for future growth, preserve the market's authentic character, improve the quality of life for residents, and become a center of job growth for Detroiters. The core partnership of the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, City of Detroit Planning & Development Department, The Nature Conservancy, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), and the Eastern Market Partnership embarked on an inclusionary process that was respectful of the varied interests of residents and merchants alike. Eastern Market Partnership's *Eastern Market 2025 Strategy* was in part the impetus for this framework. The 2025 Strategy captured the need for food businesses within the market to expand due to both regulatory and market forces and highlighted both Detroit's potential and significance in local, state, and national markets. This framework illustrates how Detroit can emerge as the center of the Great Lakes food economy and seize opportunities for economic growth.

Stormwater management is a key component of the framework because of the flat topography of the city at large and in particular Eastern Market. "The world is round; but Detroit is flat" is the refrain Palencia Mobley, Deputy Director and Chief Engineer of the DWSD, often uses to emphasize the city's difficulty to drain. Expected large footprint development and the need to properly account for the impact future development will have on the neighborhood, provided an opportunity to develop a coordinated district-wide vision that intentionally integrates new development, nature, stormwater management, and interconnected greenways. The framework provides design guidelines for greenways with examples for managing stormwater and identifies where to make critical investments. It also provides design guidelines as to how to buffer residential areas from food processing and production facilities.

Throughout the community engagement process, we heard questions about future development (particularly in the existing market district), gentrification, and displacement, as well as inquiries about truck traffic in the greater Eastern Market area. The framework seeks to answer many of these questions and presents recommendations for protecting the authentic character of the market as a historic place of commerce and vitality for all of Detroit; scaling future development to maintain intimacy in certain spaces and allow for more density in others; planning defined truck routes that lessen impacts on residential areas; and addressing safe routes for Detroit Edison Public School Academy students.

The framework also identifies new areas for residential growth via live-work opportunities, recalling historic patterns of development in the area where buildings functioned as places to both live and run businesses. Eastern Market and its residents stand to gain from the development of the Joe Louis Greenway that will connect with the Dequindre Cut and can bring residents to the riverfront. Also important to note is the neighborhood's burgeoning art scene and its famed Murals in the Market program, which has become a Detroit cultural staple.

Eastern Market at one time was one of the densest neighborhoods in Detroit. It is a neighborhood that is authentic, yet adaptable. This framework elevates Eastern Market as a place to live, work, play, and prosper. We can build on the strengths of the neighborhood by improving neighborhood conditions for current and future residents and supporting job opportunities for Detroiters in food industry areas that are properly planned and buffered by landscape.

Acknowledgments

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**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY**



EASTERN MARKET

SUNDAY

EASTERN MARKET
MARKET HOURS
MONDAY - SATURDAY
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
SUNDAY
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
CLOSURE
MAY 15, 2020
FOR INFORMATION
CONTACT
301-223-3333

Growing a Food-centered Neighborhood

Eastern Market is a thriving connection to Detroit's history. It is both an economic engine for the city, as the premier center of food industry in the Great Lakes region, and a singular cultural asset that brings Detroiters of all backgrounds together. Its 128-year history of operation as a working market is today challenged by new federal food safety standards enacted in the 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act and recent development pressure for non-food business uses. To maintain its status as the hub of food industry in Detroit and the Great Lakes region, Eastern Market must grow and adapt.

The framework described in the following pages positions Eastern Market for economic success well into the future, while keeping the market authentic to its past. It is based on input from residents and stakeholders, expertise from an interdisciplinary project team, and insights from past planning efforts and public processes. It will assure that Eastern Market will continue to be an exciting, diverse, and enjoyable place for residents, employees, and visitors for generations to come.

Planning Approach

The framework's focus is on the implementation of its recommendations in the short- and long-term. Its strategic phasing aims to build initial momentum so that efforts can be sustained toward full realization. Regulatory tools are crucial to ensure that core principles are followed, but must be flexible enough to encourage development interest and innovation, and enable adaptation to unforeseen economic changes. This principled flexibility will assure long-term goals are achieved, even if their physical manifestation differs from initial concepts.

The project team regularly met with and coordinated the interests of a diverse group of stakeholders and the general public. Stakeholder roundtable discussions and local business interviews allowed the project team to have targeted conversations with key members of the Eastern Market community. Four town hall meetings gathered feedback from the general public at critical moments in the framework's development. The project team also sought to reinforce the vision and goals generated in previous



Photo: Utile



Three intertwined goals have guided the Eastern Market Neighborhood Framework Plan.

planning processes like the *Eastern Market 2025 Strategy*. Balancing these various perspectives in all their complexity has shaped a rich and well-informed framework rooted in the needs and aspirations of the wide array of people who live in, work at, and visit Eastern Market.

Three overlapping goals have guided the development of this framework:

- A. Create jobs for Detroiters
- B. Improve the quality of life for residents
- C. Keep the authenticity and function of Eastern Market's historic core

Achieving these goals both protects the character of the existing market district and prepares the neighborhood for the future. Central to this effort is the establishment of an expansion area for the concentration of modern food business buildings adjacent to the existing market district. Growing the market enables existing businesses to remain and expand within Eastern Market while meeting new federal food safety standards. It also opens

the market to new food-related businesses that will strengthen the existing market district's commercial character. The expansion area will feature a network of greenways that may also serve as green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) to help new developments to comply with Detroit's Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance (PCSWMO). This network will improve the area's visual character and provide recreational amenities. Design guidelines will shape the character of new buildings and the greenways to create a neighborhood attractive to both existing and new residents. In the existing market district, guidelines and regulatory changes are intended to direct development pressure there in a way that enhances existing assets and maintains their physical and commercial character.

Following an overview of the community engagement process, the framework is presented in three chapters: Existing Conditions, Neighborhood Framework Plan, and Stormwater Management Network Plan.

Existing Conditions

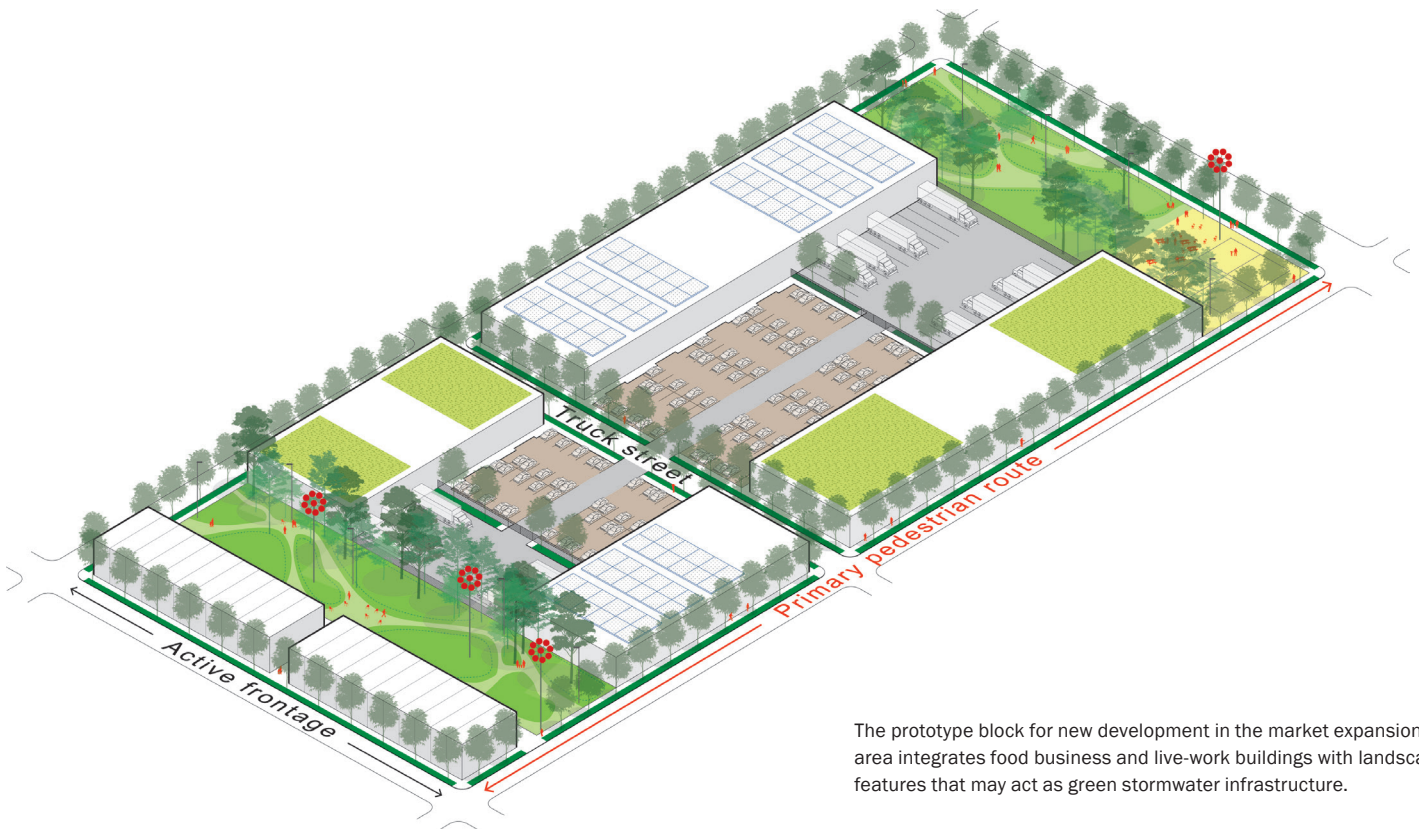
The Existing Conditions chapter comprises a detailed breakdown of objectives followed by an analysis of the existing market district's character, real estate, residential housing stock, public space assets, and mobility infrastructure. Economic and real estate analysis confirms that Eastern Market is a true functioning cluster economy, in which the close proximity of allied businesses provides operational efficiencies. It also highlights the significant amount of publicly owned land in strategically advantageous proximity to the existing market district. The relative lack of topographical change across the planning area prevented the design of a centralized stormwater feature for the expansion area. Instead, a network of greenways, which may be used for stormwater management, is proposed. It is also necessary to address the lack of designated truck routes in planning the market expansion. In these and other important ways, the existing conditions analysis forms the foundation of subsequent planning work.

Neighborhood Framework Plan

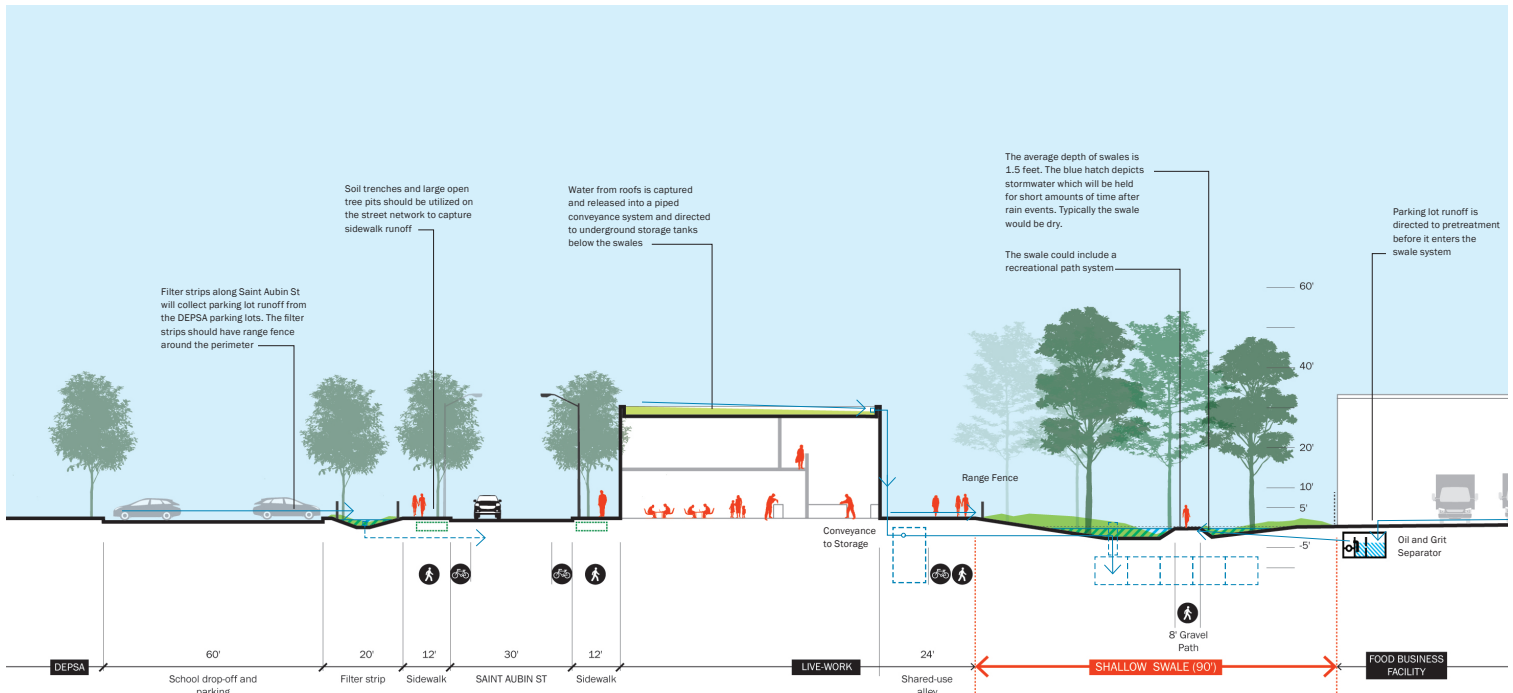
The Neighborhood Framework Plan (NFP) chapter is organized into five sections:

- An overview of regulatory and mobility recommendations for the entire planning area,
- A review of transformations planned for the expansion area,
- A review of measures planned to improve the quality of life for existing and new residents,
- A review of actions planned to maintain the market's physical and cultural identity, and
- A recommended schedule for implementation.

Proposed regulatory and mobility changes provide a foundation for the three goal-oriented sections that follow. The first of these focuses on the expansion area and its primary role in achieving the goal of creating and retaining jobs in Eastern Market. The next section focuses on the role of mixed-use development and streetscape improvements in improving the quality of life for existing and new residents. The following section highlights preservation strategies for the existing market district. The implementation section presents the recommendations of the previous four sections in a format that makes clear their phasing with respect to one another and highlights how the market will grow and change in the immediate-, short-, and long-term.



The prototype block for new development in the market expansion area integrates food business and live-work buildings with landscape features that may act as green stormwater infrastructure.



The SWMNP presents multiple integrated methods to manage stormwater runoff that add or enhance public open space.

Stormwater Management Network Plan

The Stormwater Management Network Plan (SWMNP) was developed in coordination with the NFP and is integral to the development of the market expansion area. Building on the analysis of existing topography, the SWMNP chapter presents the proposed design characteristics, environmental impact, and public benefits of green space. The SWMNP describes how proposed greenways should be sized in relation to new development, how they interface with existing utilities, and how they may be built incrementally into a larger stormwater management and open space network. Three alternative scenarios for the network's operation are examined and the preferred scenario is elaborated in greater detail. Landscape design guidelines are proposed to shape the character of the greenways. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the Stormwater Management Design Manual developed by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to guide developers toward compliance with the PCSWMO.

The Future of Eastern Market

The attentive implementation of the strategies described in this framework will position Eastern Market to continue its growth as a food-centered neighborhood that respects its historic cultural identity, maintain its status as a working market, and sensitively integrate opportunities for a mix of other uses. These strategies will guide the neighborhood's growth into a resilient and competitive center of modern food business that is also attractive for residents, employees, and visitors. Within 18–24 months from the conclusion of the framework study, projects will be implemented on multiple fronts, including a zoning update for the existing market district and expansion area, the issue of design standards and guidelines for new development, and pedestrian-oriented improvements to a segment of Riopelle St. These and other recommendations in this framework will ensure that Eastern Market continues to play a significant role in Detroit's history for generations to come.

2

**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**



Learning from the Neighborhood

During the planning process the project team met with a variety of stakeholders including residents, business owners, developers, and city officials to ensure that as broad an array of perspectives as possible could be heard and integrated into framework recommendations. Community engagement activities took one of four forms: stakeholder roundtable discussion, public town hall meeting, business or landowner interview, and City official workshop. The engagement process was led by the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) in partnership with the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department (PDD), Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The project team initiated its engagement with in-person interviews and walkthroughs of nine market businesses and properties to gain a firsthand understanding of how the market currently operates. Also early in the process, the project team held a workshop with multiple government agencies focused

on the critical issue of stormwater management in the market's expansion. These early events formed the basis for conversations with community members from the Eastern Market and nearby neighborhoods.

Major project phases were developed through two sets of roundtable discussions with key stakeholders and four town hall meetings with the broader community that focused in turn on existing conditions, land use planning, stormwater management, and implementation. Stakeholder discussions sought targeted feedback on specific topics and consisted of a brief presentation followed by breakout group activities. Public meetings included presentation slides and boards, as well as activities that facilitated attendees to provide feedback directly to the project team. Participants could provide anonymous feedback on boards that were organized around a theme, like mobility or public open space, or they could speak directly with City staff. Feedback was recorded and integrated into the framework throughout the planning process.



The first public meeting in April 2018 was well-attended.

Photo: City Form Detroit

Phase 1: Existing Conditions

During the first phase of the framework one set of stakeholder roundtable discussions was held in March 2018 and the first public meeting on April 10, 2018. The meetings were based around four themes: Economic Development, Neighborhoods, Public Space, and Mobility. Participants in the public meeting were asked to write responses to basic thematic questions to allow a degree of flexibility in their answers. The answers below reflect those that most frequently recurred in public comments.

Economic Development: How can job growth and business growth benefit this community?

- Provide programs to expand opportunity
- Expand the food economy into the neighborhood
- Build the green economy
- Give back to the community; community benefits

Neighborhoods: What new amenities would you like to see in the area?

- Greening the market
- Preserve, improve, and expand housing options
- New neighborhood amenities
- Address neighborhood concerns regarding future development

Mobility: How can the experience of getting to and moving around the area be improved?

- Create better bike and pedestrian connections
- Separate trucks from other modes of transportation
- Improve safety and connectivity

Public Space: What makes public space enjoyable to you?

- To answer this question, respondents were asked to choose from music, play areas, bike paths, shade, natural areas, walking trails, artwork, trees, and community as their priorities for new public space. The results are on the right.

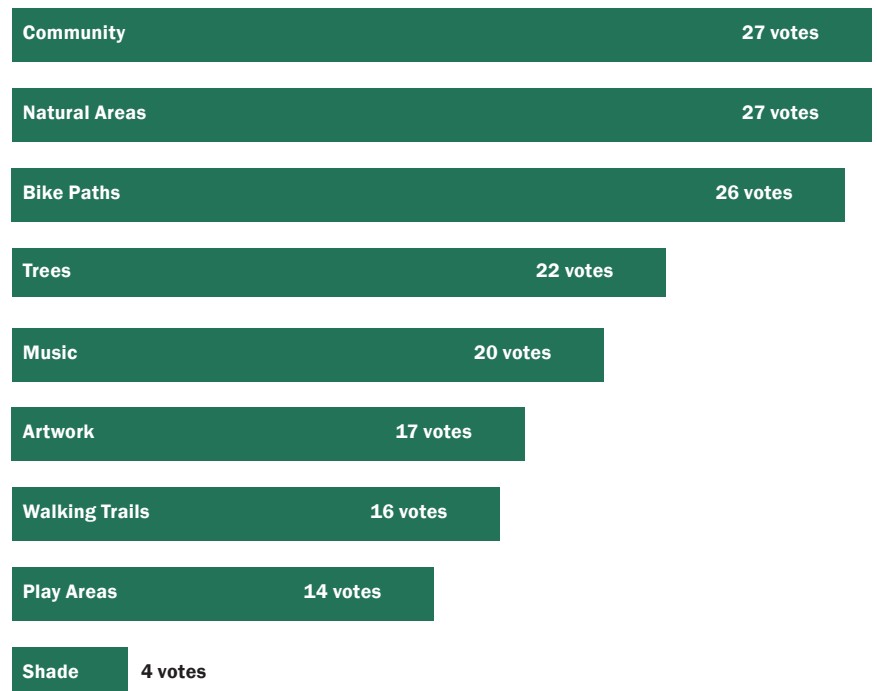


Attendees of the first public meeting wrote their thoughts on a thematic board.

Photo: City Form Detroit

Survey Responses

What makes public space enjoyable to you?





Phase 2: Land Use

The second phase of the framework's development focused on changes to land use to enable a greater mix of uses in the Core Market and food business development in the Greater Eastern Market (GEM). A second set of stakeholder roundtable discussions was held in May 2018 to gather focused feedback on this issue. Two public town hall meetings followed, with the first in June focused on the GEM and the second in July focused on the Core Market. In both cases, refined land use plans were presented with development prototypes that illustrated how new land uses could be translated into buildings. The transitions between different types of land uses was a particular point of emphasis in all three meetings.

Phase 3: Stormwater Management

The framework's third phase of community engagement centered on the Stormwater Management Network Plan (SWMNP). A public town hall meeting was held in September 2018 to provide information on the importance of stormwater management in Detroit and to present three alternative scenarios for the SWMNP. Each scenario illustrated the implementation of a different system of stormwater infrastructure, including green stormwater infrastructure. The advantages and disadvantages of each was discussed and feedback sought on what scenario or elements from different scenarios meeting attendees thought was most beneficial to the future of their neighborhood.

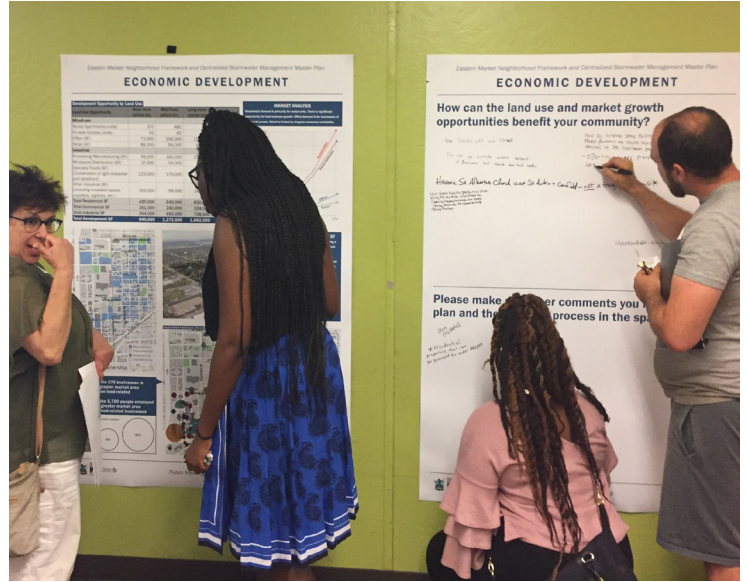
Phase 4: Implementation

The final phase of the framework focused on the implementation plan for the framework's recommendations. Recommendations were developed through the planning and community engagement processes. A final public town hall meeting was held in November 2019 to present projects planned for implementation in the 18 to 24 months after the conclusion of the framework.



Stakeholder meetings (*above*) broke into groups for targeted feedback while the larger public meetings (*below*) enabled people to respond directly on boards and engage staff in deeper discussion.

Photos: Utile



Public town hall meetings were typically well attended (above, top left) and provided opportunities to speak with City staff and provide anonymous feedback (top, right).

Photos: City Form Detroit

3

**EXISTING
CONDITIONS**

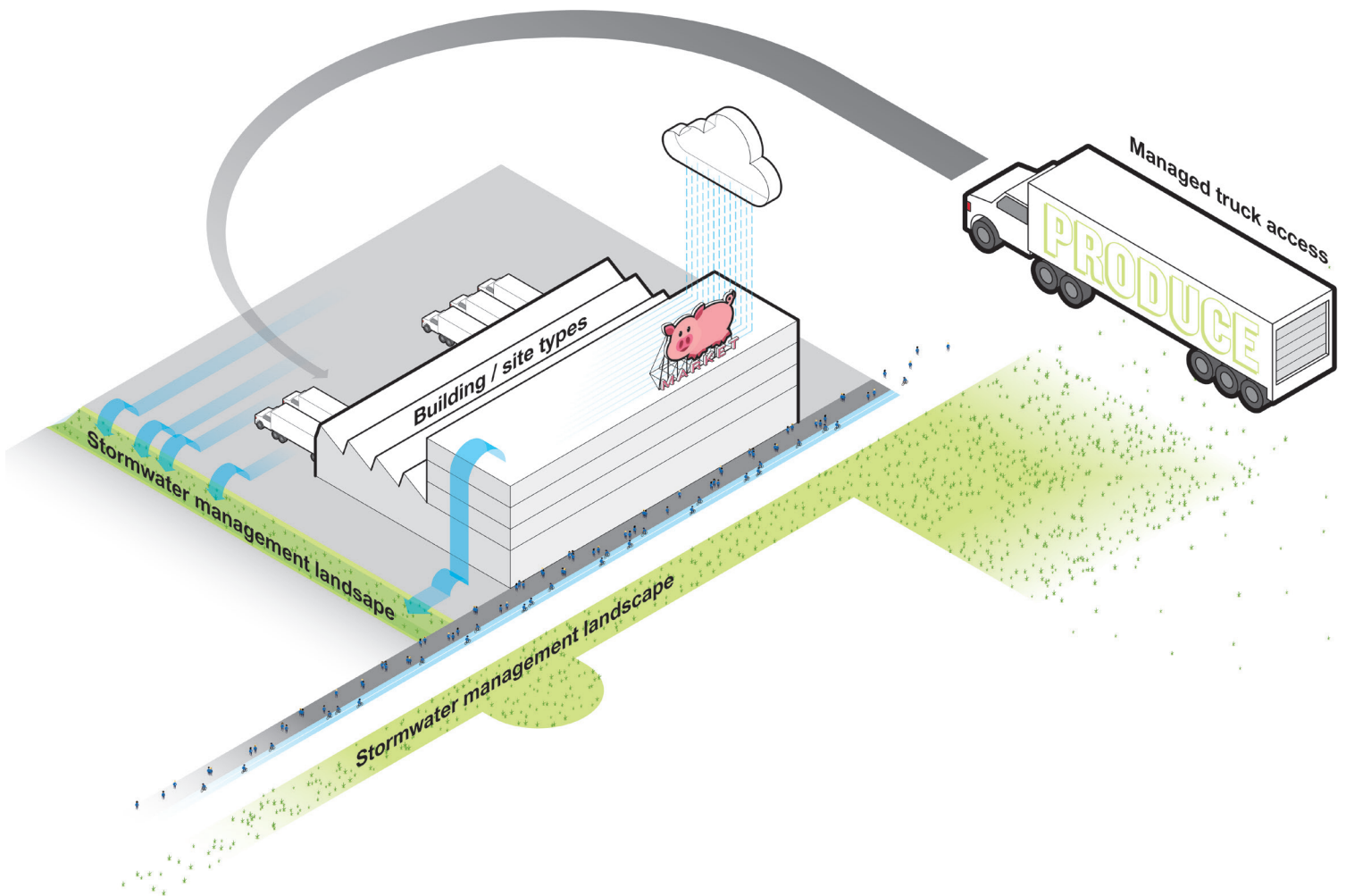


Photo: Nadir Ali / 3andthird

Introduction

Eastern Market is Detroit's living history. A public market has operated on site since the 1870s, and has been known as Eastern Market since 1891. Over the last 128 years it has remained the center of Detroit's food industry and a true working market while the city grew, declined, and revived, and as food industry trends and technologies evolved. In part due to new facility standards defined in the 2011 federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) the historic urban fabric of Eastern Market can no longer meet the needs of its long-standing food-related businesses. It must grow and adapt.

This is the seeming paradox at the core of this framework: to maintain its place as the preeminent center of food-related business in Detroit and the Great Lakes region, Eastern Market must grow and change. This framework builds on the deep historical and cultural meaning Eastern Market carries for all Detroiters to direct the market's expansion in a way that is both authentic to the market's past and innovative to retain and support its future cultural significance and economic competitiveness.



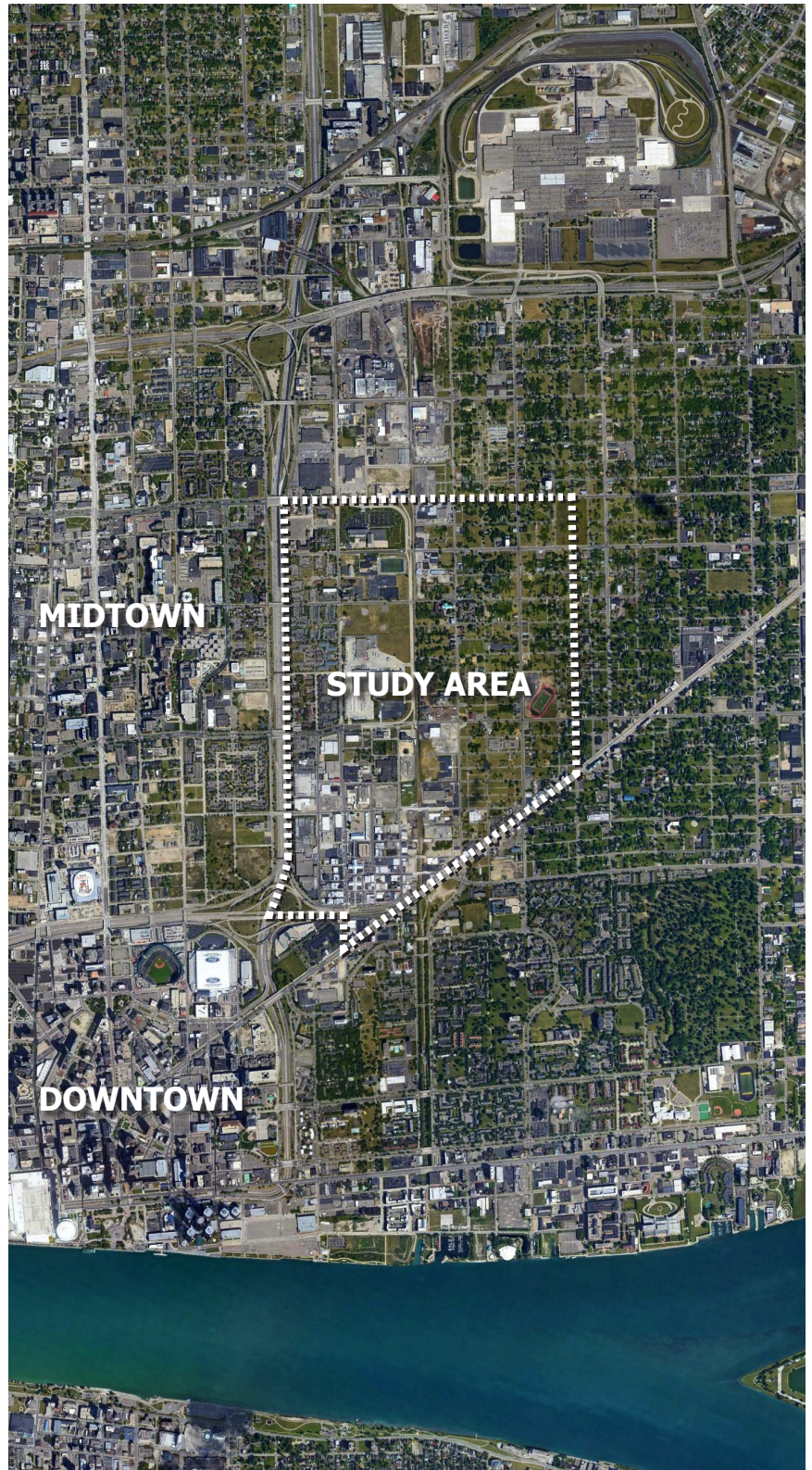
This framework integrates the demands of industrial development, stormwater management, and quality streetscape design.

Eastern Market is located just outside of Downtown Detroit and is separated from Midtown by I-75. Burgeoning development in Downtown and Midtown spurred the creation of this framework as Eastern Market seeks to chart its future before development pressures outpace considered planning efforts.

To better understand the existing physical, economic, and social conditions within Eastern Market, the team coordinated a variety of engagement activities with planning agencies, stakeholder groups, and the general public. Beyond visiting and documenting the physical state of the Study Area, the team conducted interviews with an array of businesses in the market, met with key stakeholders in two sets of roundtable discussions, and held a workshop with multiple government agencies on the topic of stormwater management. The first meeting with the wider public was held on April 10, 2018.

The information and insights gathered from these activities are synthesized in this chapter. First, the framework's objectives and intended outcomes are presented and its physical and planning context defined. A section highlighting the historical and cultural importance of Eastern Market follows, after which the bulk of the existing conditions analysis is organized into four thematic sections: *Economic Development*, *Neighborhoods*, *Public Space*, and *Mobility*. *Economic Development* synthesizes the needs of local businesses, wider market trends, and land ownership patterns. *Neighborhoods* highlights the unique characteristics of Eastern Market's built fabric, catalogs the distribution of residential types, and identifies planned residential development. *Public Space* examines the market's varied streetscapes, lays out the criteria by which a stormwater management strategy may be implemented, and identifies some of the kinds of green stormwater infrastructure that may aid developers to comply with Detroit's Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance (PCSWMO). *Mobility* examines the various means by which people travel to and through the market. The conclusions drawn from each section form the foundation for the Neighborhood Framework Plan (NFP).

The Study Area in Context



The study area is in close proximity to Downtown and Midtown Detroit.

Photo: Google

The Task Ahead

The aspirations of this framework are outlined in the lists of objectives and intended outcomes below. These carry forward the vision and direction established in previous planning projects for Eastern Market, but are broader in scope and address a larger geographic area. The analysis of existing conditions that follows in this chapter informs how growth may be directed and objectives achieved.

Framework Objectives

Improve the quality of life for residents, and expand opportunities for employment. The market's growth should consider how businesses can make jobs more accessible to its residents and those of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Maintain the working market's authenticity. Despite commercial development pressure from Downtown, preservation of the market's commercial character through zoning and economic development strategies is important.

Create a vibrant mixed-use district. Eastern Market is a cultural hub of Detroit and particularly attracts people to spend time there on market days. Finding ways to also draw people there on non-market days could further enliven the market and neighborhood.

Expand the market's role as a regional hub of food production and distribution. Eastern Market's physical "footprint" must expand to accommodate the growth of existing businesses and the establishment of new ones. To maintain competitiveness in the regional food economy, new facilities must be constructed and access to highways preserved.

Improve City of Detroit land stewardship. Over half of the land in the Eastern Market vicinity is publicly owned. Sensitive monitoring how land is treated and preserving green space is environmentally responsible and beneficial to the local community.

Create a Neighborhood Framework Plan with an action-oriented set of recommendations. The *Eastern Market 2025 Strategy* set the market's vision for growth and expansion. The NFP is broader in scope and provides actionable guidelines that both realistically set the course for economic growth and enhance the well-being of its residents.

Create a Stormwater Management Network Plan (SWMNP) to guide infrastructure investment and catalyze future development. Managing stormwater is critical for the economic viability and environmental sustainability of Eastern Market. Developers are required to comply with the PCSWMO, which may be addressed by implementing green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). GSI can contribute to the sustainable growth of the area by managing stormwater runoff and may provide public green open space amenities for local communities.

Market days are a major attraction for all Detroiters.

Photo: City Form Detroit (left), Eastern Market Corporation (opposite)



Intended Outcomes

Jobs for Detroiters in a diverse food economy.

Eastern Market is composed of both large-scale food businesses and local small-scale manufacturers. The framework makes recommendations to ensure a range of job opportunities.

New housing that balances market demands and the needs of existing residents.

New housing in Midtown, Downtown, Brush Park, and along the waterfront indicates that development pressure is growing towards Eastern Market.

Inclusive engagement with diverse stakeholders.

Eastern Market is a destination for all Detroiters and home to a variety of businesses and residents. The planning process intends to bring all voices to the table for a framework that benefits everyone.

Context-sensitive industrial building prototypes.

The growth of Eastern Market beyond its existing core must be sensitive to the scale and character of the adjacent neighborhoods. Designing building

prototypes that are compatible with other uses is of paramount importance.

Interconnected transportation modes and parking.

The framework makes recommendations to safely accommodate truck, private vehicle, and pedestrian movement together. Dedicated truck routes, clear circulation, and a parking strategy will mitigate conflicts in the future.

A stormwater management network.

The framework proposes the incorporation of stormwater management features into new development sites as an asset to businesses and the neighborhood.

An integrated implementation strategy.

The framework will only be as successful as its component parts. A strategy that is intentionally coordinated between economic development, design, transportation, sustainability, and neighborhood cohesion will provide an outcome that is ambitious and achievable.



The Framework Area

The area of analysis and planning for Eastern Market is broken into three sub-areas:

- **The Core Market** is the existing market district and what is most commonly understood as Eastern Market today. It is bounded by Mack Ave to the northwest, Saint Aubin St to the northeast, Gratiot Ave to the southeast, and I-75 to the southwest. Land use in the Core Market is primarily for food-related business with some smaller commercial/retail businesses around the market sheds. Space constraints, facility modernization requirements tied to the FSMA, and future demand for development are spurring growth beyond the core, although the framework aims to preserve the identity of Eastern Market defined by the Core Market.
- **The Greater Eastern Market (GEM)** is the focus of detailed planning and economic development

recommendations. It is defined by Dequindre St northwest from Mack Ave to Superior St, Superior St northeast to Grandy St, Grandy St southeast to Erskine St, Erskine St southwest to Chene St, Chene St southeast to Wilkins St, Wilkins St southwest to Saint Aubin St, Saint Aubin St northwest to Mack Ave, and Mack Ave southwest to Dequindre St. The GEM encompasses a mix of residential and industrial uses. Much of the land in the area is publicly owned, and thus presents the best opportunity for the future growth of the market. However, market expansion must be sensitive to existing residents.

- **The Study Area** is the general “area of influence” outside of more detailed planning areas. It is bounded by I-75 to the southwest, E Warren Ave to the northwest, Joseph Campau Ave to the northeast, and Gratiot Ave to the southeast.

The framework takes into account that the Study Area contains not only the Eastern Market neighborhood, but also overlaps some or all of the neighborhoods of Forest Park to the northwest and McDougall-Hunt to the east. What happens in the Study Area impacts other nearby neighborhoods like Brush Park, Brewster Homes, and Lafayette Park.

Planning Context

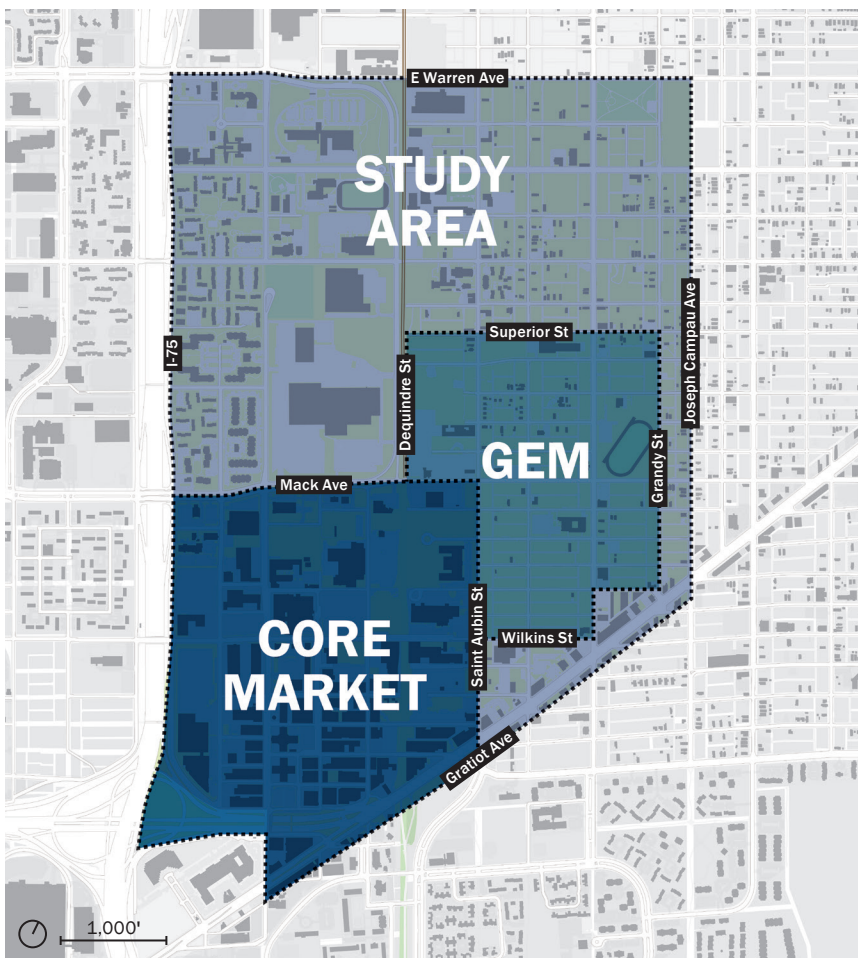
The *Eastern Market 2025 Strategy* is the foundation for the NFP. Its major objectives for the inevitable growth of the market are as follows:

Expand to areas served by major roads. Truck-based transportation logistics require direct and easy access to highways for the local, regional, and national movement of goods in and out of the market.

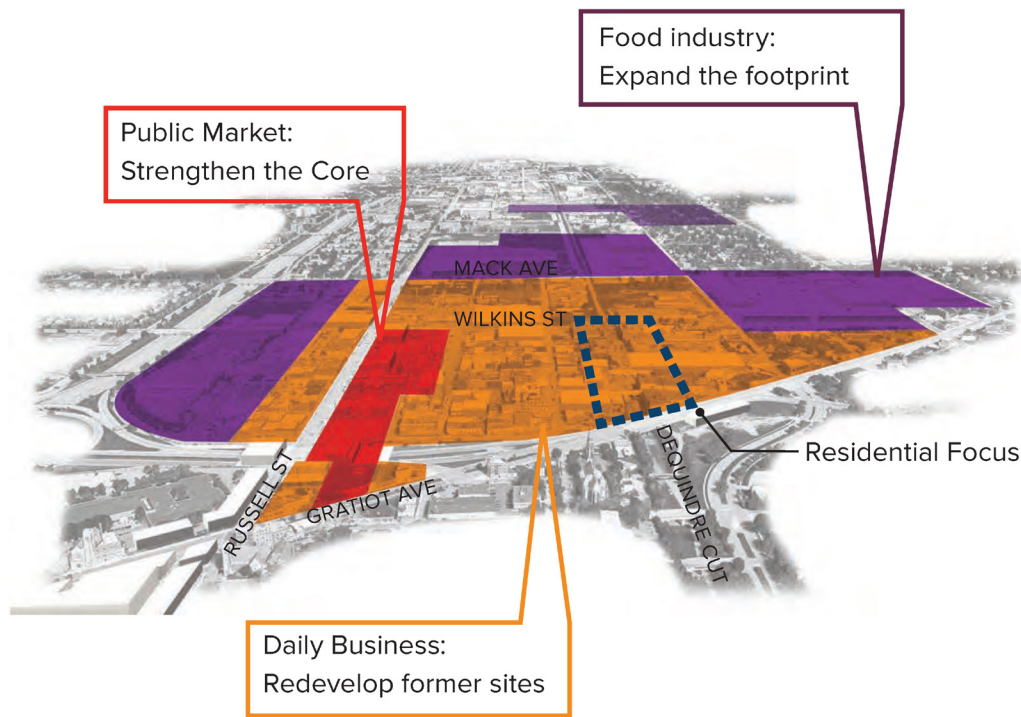
The expanded food industry should be near the existing market and allow for further growth. Eastern Market is a cluster economy in which business relationships between operators depend on adjacencies and proximity for the exchange of goods.

Detailed planning efforts within the Study Area focused on the Core Market and Greater Eastern Market.

Neighborhood Framework Plan Study Area



Eastern Market 2025 Strategy



The Eastern Market 2025 Strategy established the vision for the Neighborhood Framework Plan. Images: Olin

Design flexibility for phasing, expansions, and additional future demand. Land assembly for future development should consider the relative unknowns of shifting demand and ensure that development areas are able to accommodate different types of food-related business uses.

Establish preferred truck routes based upon efficiency and proximity to a modern food distribution hub. Dedicated truck routes are important for future growth and existing operations. There are presently no dedicated routes within the Study Area. As the market grows this is sure to cause vehicular conflicts.

Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into food business expansion. The PCSWMO requires any new development or re-development that includes over one half-acre of impervious surface to manage stormwater on-site. Green stormwater infrastructure may be implemented to reach compliance. Many green stormwater infrastructure practices have the ability to capture and filter excess runoff before it enters the combined sewer system.

Authentic Character

Embedded in Eastern Market is the cultural fabric of Detroit. It is a place where all Detroiters, spanning multiple generations, gather. As much as the produce from local growers or the smell of sausage from Detroit Sausage Company, people are drawn to Eastern Market because of the deep sense of community that is shared by everyone. Eastern Market is unique; similar historic market entities are rarely found in U.S. cities, and none at this scale. It is a key part of Detroit's identity, and will remain so well into the future.

History and Continuity

Unlike many outdoor markets in urban areas, Eastern Market has remained an active and significant food

production and processing district for over 150 years. Its small blocks and low buildings produce a pedestrian-oriented environment that speaks both to Detroit's history before cars became dominant, as well as to its future as a city accessible by means of transportation other than the private automobile. The variety of local shops and the continued operation of the market sheds in the historic center lend the area an authenticity that must be retained even as the neighborhood undergoes significant transformations. The intention of this framework, developed by the City of Detroit, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, and the people of Detroit to ensure that the area remains a food industry hub and an employment center for Detroiters for decades to come.



Photo: Eastern Market Corporation



Photo: Eastern Market Corporation

Commerce

Eastern Market's allure lies well beyond a sense of nostalgia. Its lifeblood is the businesses that exist within it. Maintaining it as a viable and competitive district for food-related businesses is the driving force behind this framework.

Eastern Market is in a precarious position. If it does not structure its development and growth well, it may lose its competitive edge to sites that are cheaper and more easily assembled in suburban locations. Part of the allure for being in Eastern Market is its history, but that alone cannot sustain the economic viability of the district.



Photo: Utile

Community

Community in Eastern Market expresses itself in many ways. It encompasses the residents who live within and adjacent to the market. The weekend market, retail businesses, and public programming together bring a diverse audience to the market. The business community is also thriving. Relationships are established between businesses that fuel the culture and productivity of the district.

Culture

Detroit's cultural ambitions are to remain steeped in its own history of entrepreneurship and community-based growth. Nowhere are these characteristics more pronounced than in Eastern Market. From small-scale manufacturers like Detroit Distillery, to the nationally recognized Wolverine Packing, the businesses and industry in Eastern Market are intimately tied to their association with Detroit.

Eastern Market is ingrained in the cultural fabric of Detroit, a place where generations of people have come to work in its production facilities or visit on the weekends to purchase groceries, in either case taking part in the perpetuation of this key element of Detroit's identity. This cultural significance should be carried forward in the growth of Eastern Market, taking care to preserve it as an active food business district while welcoming new businesses and residents to contribute to its unique character.



Photo: Utile



Photo: Eastern Market Corporation



Photo: Eastern Market Corporation



Photo: Eastern Market Corporation



Photo: BuroHappold Engineering

Economic Development

The historical and cultural significance of Eastern Market has been a key factor influencing the decision of local businesses to remain located there. Yet, these businesses cannot grow in place; current spaces are too small to allow for significant expansion and are difficult to upgrade to comply with the standards of the 2011 federal Food Safety Modernization Act. To maintain the character of Eastern Market as both a working market and a significant center for local business and employment, the area to the northeast of the Core Market was identified for the expansion and modernization of existing businesses and the incubation of new businesses. This forms the basis for an expansion area (the GEM) tied to retail and market activities in the core. The development of the GEM will secure

Eastern Market's status as the hub of modern and sustainable food production and distribution for the Great Lakes region.

The growth of the market into the GEM also means the ability to retain and create jobs for Detroiters. The diversity of businesses and their requisite skill sets ensures that new job opportunities will arise. Commercial and residential development pressure around the market will require that the City take measures to protect the neighborhoods and food businesses via zoning changes or development controls. Eastern Market must balance the commercial growth of the urban core of Detroit with the need to preserve the food economy and its job base in the city.



Photo: Eastern Market Corporation

Feedback from Businesses

The planning team met with nine businesses over two days. The interviewees included large-scale warehousing and distribution facilities, local retailers, small-batch manufacturers, and developers. Each company represented a different perspective on Eastern Market's growth and its future direction. They all shared a profound attachment to Eastern Market as a place, one that is deeply embedded in the culture and history of Detroit.

Market Gentrification

A refrain heard from some of the more established businesses was a concern about the potential for gentrification in the Core Market as development interest in commercial uses there increases. Increased land values may price out existing tenants, and the introduction of commercial uses, and associated traffic, may cause conflicts with trucks for production and distribution operations.

Room for Expansion

The businesses interviewed spoke of the need to expand their facilities. Due to size limitations and food safety requirements, new facilities will need to be constructed to handle this additional demand. Interviewees saw a natural extension of the market area and related food businesses beyond the core, particularly to the north where there is a significant concentration of publicly owned land. One goal of the GEM is to provide such a place to keep existing businesses in the area.

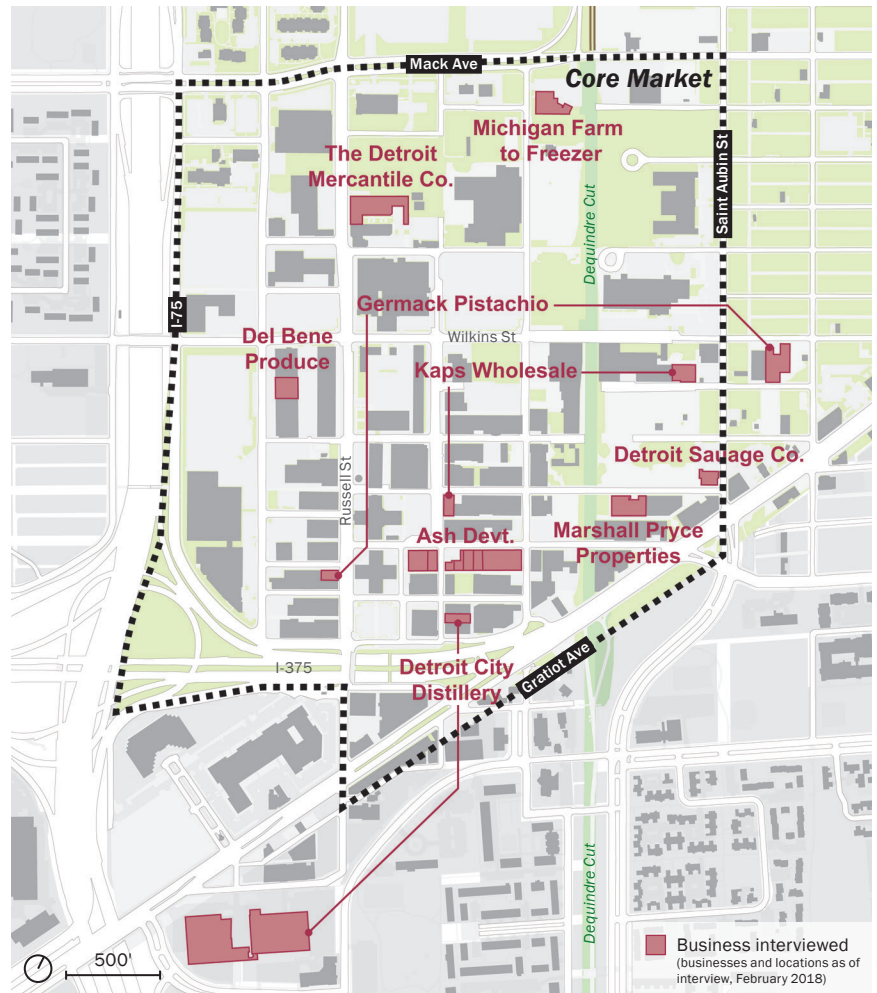
Synergies

Part of the appeal of Eastern Market for many business operators is the ability to build relationships with other food-related businesses. It is common for companies to share storage facilities, source from Eastern Market businesses, and provide distribution services locally. The proximity to complementary businesses provides operating efficiency.

Real Estate Value

The Dequindre Cut is not only a recreational greenway, but also a real estate asset. Future land use planning will need to take measures to balance pressures for new development and the preservation

Eastern Market Businesses Interviewed



of existing food-related uses and the commercial character of Eastern Market. Some property owners are land banking and waiting for higher bidders, which prevents food businesses from growing locally in the core. Interviewees want the core to stay food-related, but also recognize the shifting tide of development there.

Managing Mobility

It was noted by several business owners that the district lacks dedicated truck routes. Conflicts with increased vehicular traffic on the weekends are common and day-to-day truck operations pose a nuisance to the neighborhoods and future non-food-related development. Conversely, additional commercial or residential development runs the risk of interfering with the “just-in-time” nature of shipping and logistics for the food industries.

Market Analysis

As development pressure expands beyond Downtown, Eastern Market needs a strategy to leverage a growing mixed-use market opportunity while retaining the active food businesses that form the core of its economic value to the city and region.

There are three critical reasons to believe that the market trajectory for Eastern Market can and should differ from analogous urban industrial areas elsewhere:

- First, Detroit’s economic growth fundamentals are more moderate than even some other mid-size Rust Belt cities, like Pittsburgh.
- Second, mixed-use development interest in the neighborhood is only just beginning and most projects still require some level of subsidy or gap financing to be feasible.
- Due to the active market presence, strong interstate access, and proximity to a local customer base, Eastern Market still maintains the locational advantages necessary to attract and retain an economic cluster of food-related industrial businesses.

Overview of Opportunities

Demand-driven market opportunity for Eastern Market— unconstrained by current construction feasibility or land availability—totals approximately 4.1 million square feet over the next 15 years, comprising 2.5 million square feet of mixed-use and 1.6 million square feet of food business uses.

The City and its community development partners, through the disposition of publicly owned land and public/gap finance tools, have more capability to shape where and how new development is realized outside of Downtown than many other cities.

The GEM is perhaps the best and only opportunity within the City of Detroit to attract major food processing and wholesale businesses that require large sites with good truck access.

Residential uses may be a risk for attracting food businesses, which desire control over their immediate environment and are not willing to take the chance that nearby residents or employees may voice concern over noise, traffic, or smells and seek to impact their business operations.

Scales of Food Industry



Smaller buildings, more cars and pedestrians, greater public access.

Larger buildings, more trucks, limited public access.

Food-related Business

Eastern Market is the most significant concentration of food-related businesses in the Detroit metropolitan region, containing an estimated 15% of the area’s food-related industrial employment. Food-related businesses occupy about 80% of Eastern Market’s industrial space.

Across the metropolitan region, growing consumer expenditures are projected to drive demand for an additional 5.4 million square feet of food-related industrial space over the next 15 years, which can be categorized into three distinct business profiles that each have specific spatial needs:

- **Processing/Manufacturing businesses** need large contiguous spaces and have significant truck activity, but no consumer-facing presence.
- **Wholesale/distribution businesses** can utilize smaller-footprint facilities with more vertical storage than manufacturing businesses. They have highly concentrated truck traffic at certain times of the day and very little street presence.
- **Specialty food businesses**, such as a coffee roaster, have the most potential synergy with a mixed-use environment, as they derive value from a consumer-facing space that may look indistinguishable from a retail storefront and fronts a light industrial space. They may still need truck access, but the vehicles are smaller and can potentially service only the rear of the space.

Eastern Market is likely to capture some of this demand through the planned expansions of existing businesses, and can position itself to capture a much higher share of growth if it can assemble and prepare appropriately sized sites to market to future users.

	Food-related industry sectors	Number of businesses	Estimated jobs
	Manufacturing	12	511
	Wholesale trade	39	486
	Specialty food services	24	223
	Restaurants & bars	22	321
	Total	97	1,541

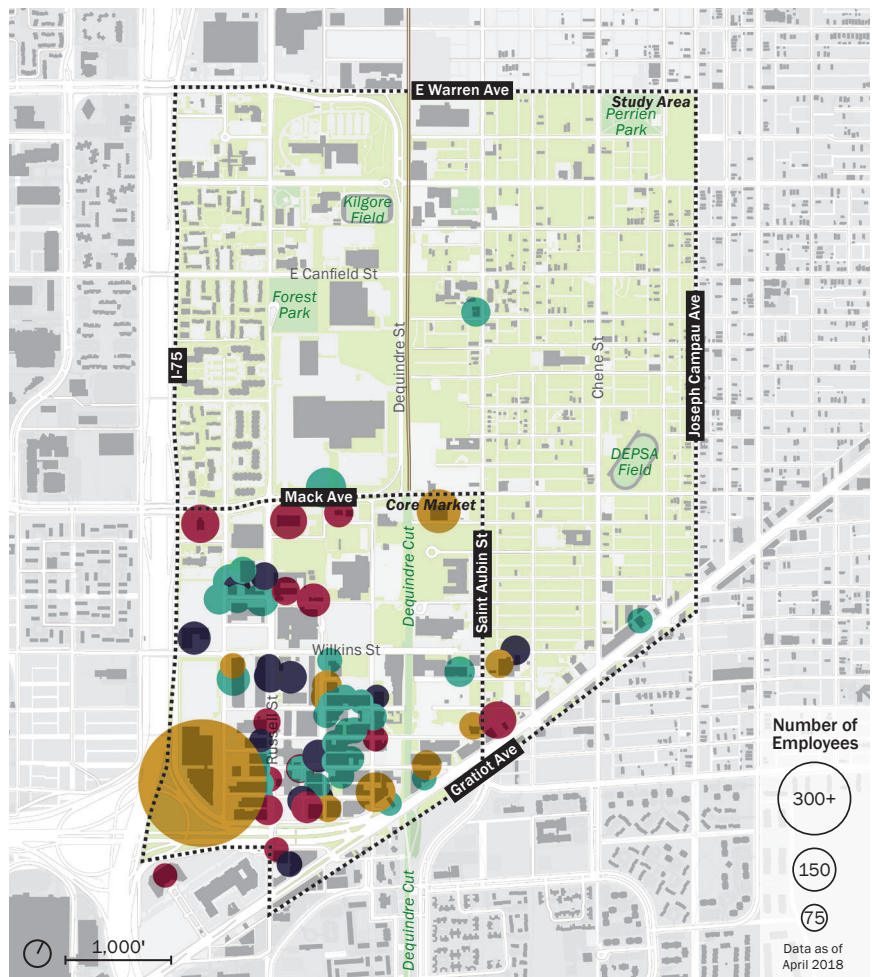
Data as of April 2018

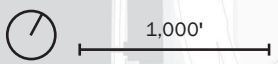
Critical Investments for Success

Across all land uses, the market area is underperforming its market potential today as a result of several barriers and challenges:

- The construction feasibility of new development and complexity of renovation/reuse
- The lack of existing spaces easily occupiable by new businesses
- The lack of contiguous, shovel-ready sites of 5 acres or more for food industry uses
- The need for better infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety and truck access

Existing Food-related Employment





Public Land Ownership
 Publicly owned parcel
 (as of September 2018)

Public Land Ownership

Just over half of parcels in the Study Area and in the GEM are publicly owned. This wealth of public land ownership reduces the acquisition burden on the City to assemble properties and thus allows the market to more easily expand from the Core Market. While there are some publicly owned parcels in the Core Market, the need for large sites for industrial expansion will drive new food business uses to move into the GEM.

The GEM and the Market's Future

The City of Detroit has targeted an area to the north of the Core Market for future market growth. In this area—the GEM—55% of land is publicly owned, making it the best opportunity to assemble properties large enough to host contemporary food business buildings in Eastern Market. On average, a five-acre site for a 50,000 square foot floor plate is typical, but buildings may be smaller or larger depending on the type of their use.

Beyond allowing the market to grow, utilizing currently vacant land for future food-related business uses could have the collateral effects of new job creation and additional business development.

Takeaways

Sensitivity to the existing residential neighborhood north and east of the GEM is of paramount importance. Providing jobs for local residents is a key component of this growth plan, but developing uses that are not invasive and do not negatively impact the existing neighborhoods is of equal importance.

As the Core Market runs out of area for expansion, finds difficulty in right-sizing parcels, and sees land values increase, expansion into the GEM will be needed to keep food-related jobs in Detroit.

Despite high levels of public land ownership in the GEM, development there will require negotiations with private owners to assemble industrial-scale parcels.

Neighborhoods

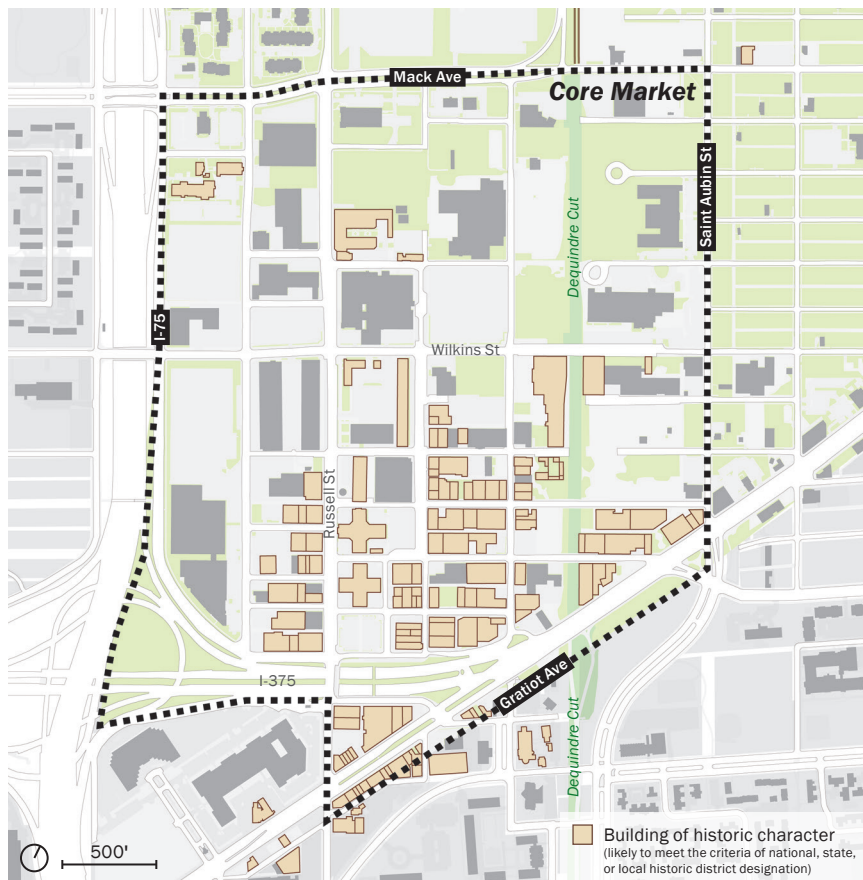
The necessity for market expansion puts development pressure on the neighborhoods to the north of the Core Market. For decades these areas have been characterized by their vacancy and population loss, yet the needs of the remaining residents must be respected and addressed in future planning. Similarly, economic growth puts pressure on the core for new kinds of retail and loft residential development, but any new development in the Core Market must respect its unique historical and cultural character. Taken together, the Study Area's single-family houses, loft apartments, and the multi-family residences northwest of the Core Market in Forest Park suggest the foundation of a diverse and mixed-income greater market community. Yet, existing public amenities inadequately serve existing residents, let alone a growing community, and remain both few in number and unevenly dispersed throughout the GEM.

Historic Character

The historic character of Eastern Market derives from more than select designated buildings of architectural merit. Its longstanding status as a center of culture and the food industry for Detroit and the surrounding region are reflected in the typical built fabric of the neighborhood.

Although much of the Core Market is designated as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a reconnaissance-level survey found that some buildings of historic character fall outside these boundaries, and that no local historic district, with its attendant protections, has been designated for the area. It is recommended that the existing NRHP Eastern Market historic district be expanded to include additional buildings of historic significance, such as Shed 6 and the Schmidt Brewing complex, to make these properties eligible for federal historic tax credits. Although a local historic district designation would provide greater protection for historic structures in Eastern Market, private property owners may see the review process it requires for external changes to be a barrier to redevelopment. It is recommended to pursue preservation by other means, such as a zoning update or design guidelines.

Core Market Buildings of Historic Character



Shown here in 1922, Eastern Market has been an active part of Detroit city life for over 150 years. Many buildings in the area, including the sheds, are of historic value, but lack local protection.



Murals

The Eastern Market mural program, Murals in the Market, which brings local and internationally known muralists and street artists together, has created a veritable outdoor museum in Eastern Market. Official tours and brochures of the more than 100 murals on buildings between Gratiot and Mack Avenues are indicators of the draw that the murals of Eastern Market have for the city.

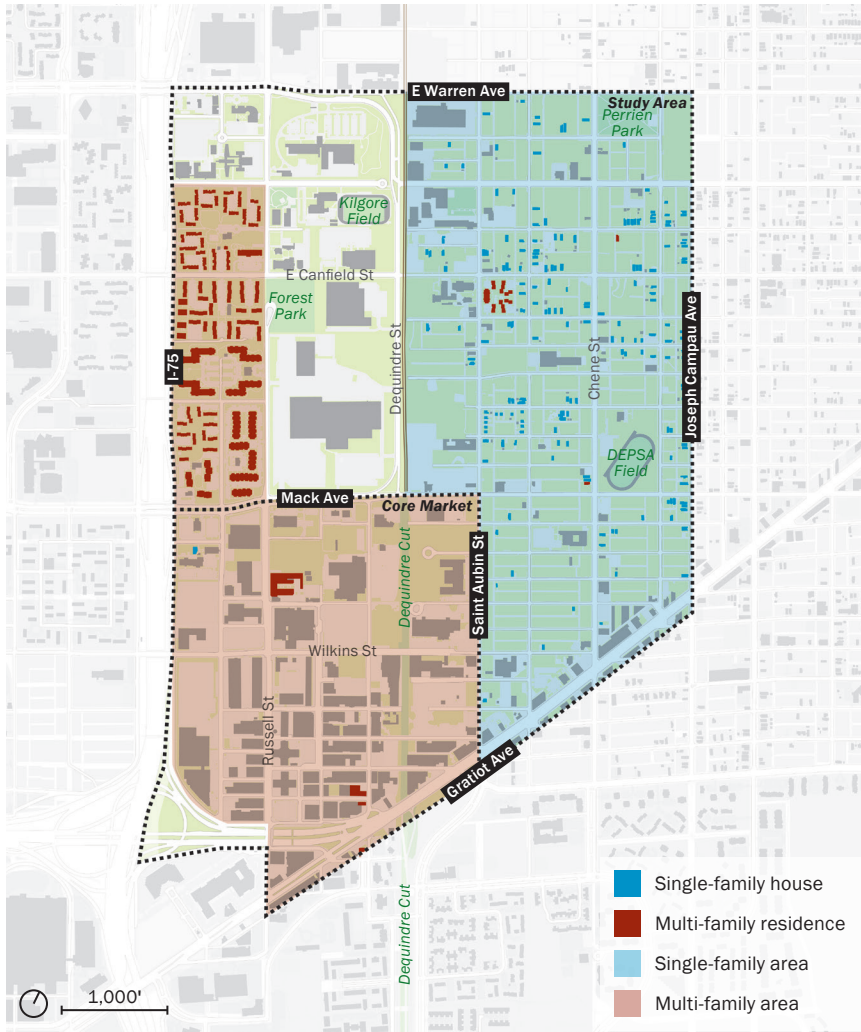
Using the facades of the relatively nondescript industrial buildings that characterize the area, the mural program has given a public life to the market beyond the sheds and retail center. The gallery of murals transforms the market's public space, which is otherwise lacking in landscape amenities.

Left and below: Some of the more than 100 murals found around the market core.

Photos: Utile



Single- and Multi-family Housing



Residential Types

Most housing in the Study Area is outside of the Core Market in the neighborhoods of Forest Park and McDougall-Hunt. The vast majority of the housing stock is single-family residential and is located north of Saint Aubin St. Some multi-family loft apartment buildings exist in the core, but most multi-family housing is northwest of Mack Ave along I-75 in Forest Park, where there are more than 800 units in clusters of low-rise buildings.

Neighborhood Amenities

Eastern Market’s core and Gratiot Ave provides the most concentrated commercial uses serving the Study Area. In addition to weekend market days, Gratiot Central Market provides access to fresh food.

The Dequindre Cut provides recreational green space for the neighborhood, but there are only a few small neighborhood parks scattered across the rest of the GEM. Public open green space should be increased in the Study Area and could double as stormwater management infrastructure as part of developers' compliance with the PCSWMO.



Converted loft apartments are the most common form of housing the Core Market.
Photo: Kramer Design Group

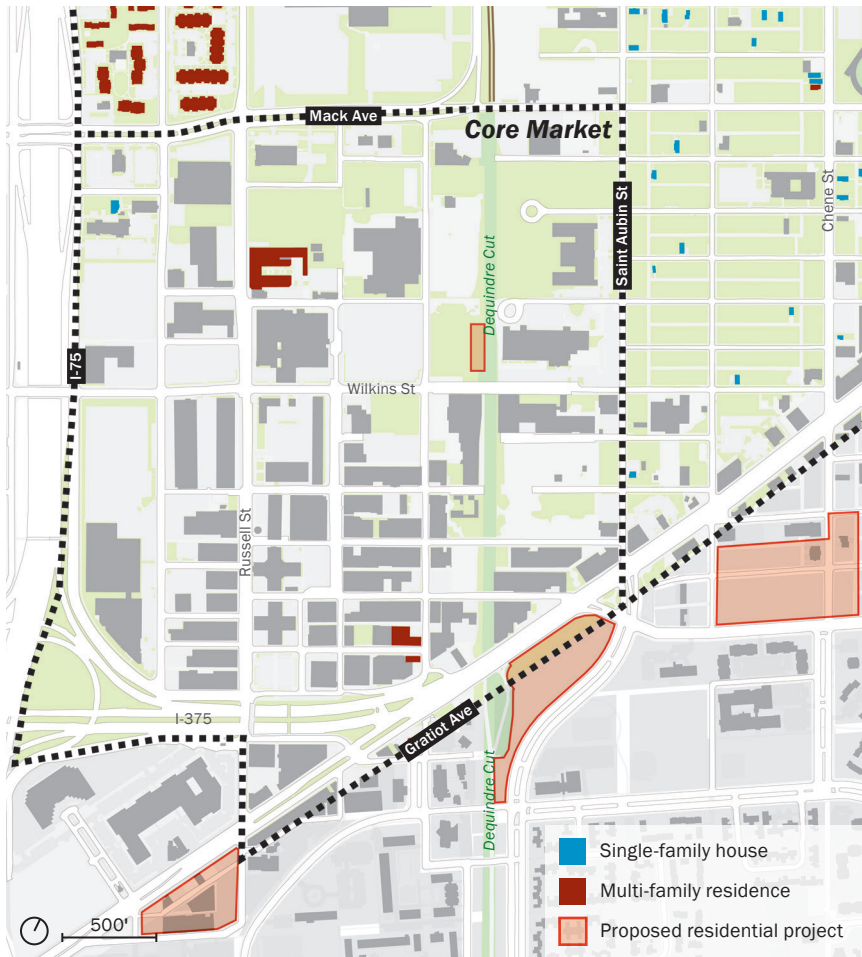


Low-rise multi-family residences make up the Forest Park neighborhood northwest of Mack Ave.
Photo: PEA



McDougall-Hunt, the neighborhood northeast of the core, is primarily made up of single-family houses.
Photo: PEA

Planned Mixed-use Residential Development



Planned Mixed-use Residential

Demand for residential development in Downtown and Midtown continues to grow, and is now heading towards Eastern Market. The existing market district’s amenities, historical character, and walkability make it a natural draw for new residential uses.

Developments along Gratiot Ave represent the inevitable growth of real estate values in this area. While the influx of new residents may be welcome to commercial business owners, the needs and wishes of existing residents of the adjacent neighborhoods should also be considered. All residents, new and old, can benefit from Eastern Market becoming a more active neighborhood throughout the day and week.

Takeaways

The Study Area, and in particular the Core Market, offers a destination unlike anywhere else in Detroit. Its proximity to greenways, Downtown, Midtown, Lafayette Park, and even the waterfront, along with its own commercial district and attractions, comprise a complete neighborhood. Future development must, however, accommodate existing food production and distribution operations in the district and should consider anti-displacement measures.

The proposed Eastern Market Gateway project along Gratiot Ave would add 200 mixed-income residential units with ground-level retail. Image: Detroit Economic Growth Corporation



Public Space

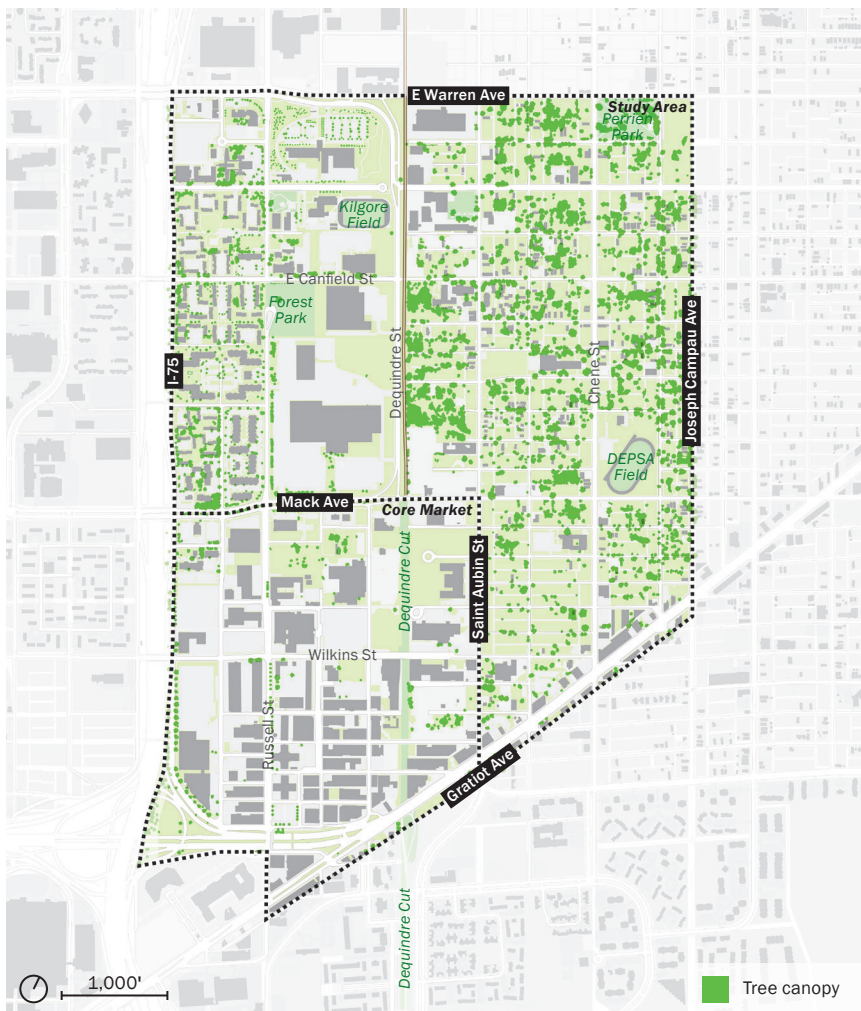
Designated public open spaces, such as parks, are unevenly distributed throughout the Study Area, with the Core Market especially lacking not only formal green spaces, but tree cover as well. The abundance of hardscape in the core reflects the density of truck staging areas there, which similarly impact the quality of streets. Although streets are the most common form of urban public space, concessions to servicing trucks in the Core Market have weakened their public character. There is great potential in the core for street design to better mediate between pedestrians and trucks. In the design of both streets and formal public open spaces, there are opportunities to integrate GSI. GSI filters stormwater runoff and delays its entry into the sewer system to prevent overflows during a storm, reduces surface flooding,

and can provide visual and recreational amenities. In Eastern Market, a plan for continuous green open space across adjacent parcels, which may be used for stormwater management, will be explored.

Tree Canopy

Like most urban industrial districts, Eastern Market lacks tree coverage, with few or no street trees in much of the Core Market. This reflects the need for large impervious areas for parking and truck staging. The lack of trees reduces shade for pedestrians and exacerbates the heat island effect in the core. In the residential neighborhoods east of Dequindre Street and the Dequindre Cut, however, the tree canopy is consistent and full. Introducing shade trees in the core is important to the market's appearance and the personal comfort of people walking in the neighborhood and market. They also act as a means to buffer noise and absorb air pollutants.

Tree Canopy



Hardscape and Softscape

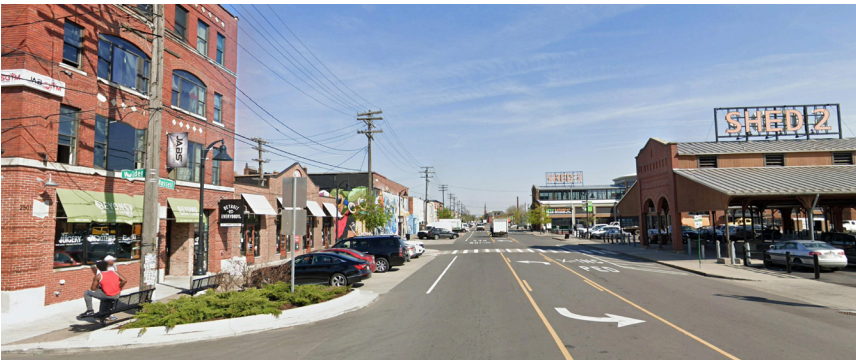
Detroit's ongoing complications from excess stormwater runoff into its combined sewer system is only exacerbated in industrial areas like Eastern Market, where large building footprints and vast amounts of impervious ground surface for parking and truck movement and staging means that water enters the combined sewer at a high flow rate. Introducing GSI into the market area through developers' compliance with the PCSWMO could alleviate this condition.

In addition, such large areas of impervious surface have a "heat island" effect, in which sunlight is not absorbed by the asphalt surface and no shade is provided, thus heating the area more than its surroundings. Additional green space or trees would be a first step in addressing this condition.

There is a sharp discrepancy between the tree canopy in the Core Market and its surrounding neighborhoods. This has major implications for pedestrian comfort and noise/pollution reduction.



Residential street, Study Area



Commercial street, Core Market



Service street, Core Market



Industrial street, Core Market

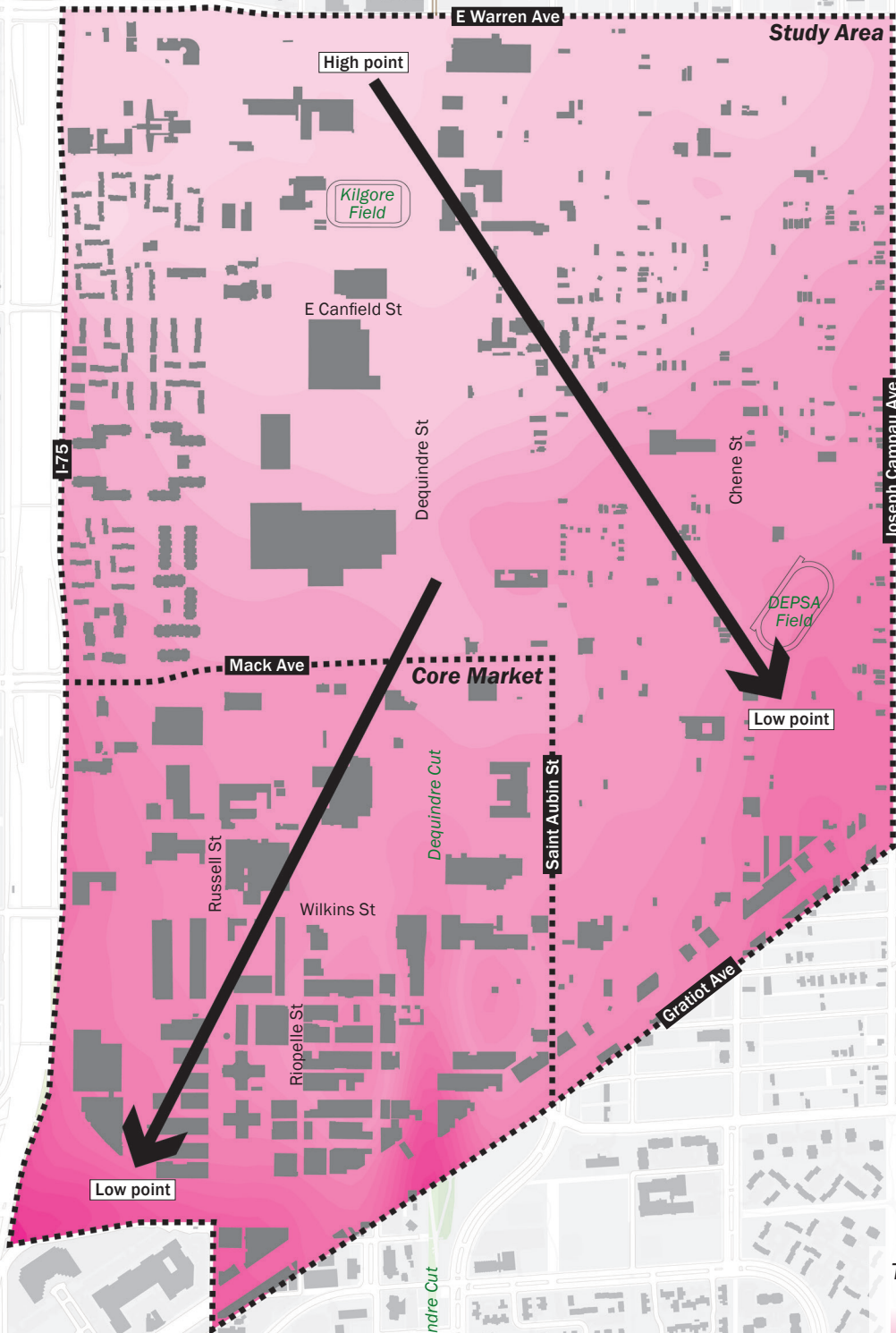
Photos: Google

Streetscape

Since there are few dedicated areas for public space in the traditional sense of parks or other green spaces, the streets of Eastern Market become the primary arena for public dialogue and interaction. Improvements in the streetscape in Eastern Market that cater to both pedestrians walking through the market and consider the requisite dimensional standards for semi-trailer trucks would be of great benefit towards making the market an even more public space.

Four primary types of streets in the market include:

- *Residential*
Found primarily east of the Dequindre Cut and Dequindre Street, these streets are slower speed with low traffic volumes.
- *Commercial*
Generally in the Core Market, they provide access to retail and commercial establishments and are pedestrian-oriented.
- *Service*
Also in the Core Market, these streets provide access to loading and “back-of-house” for industrial and commercial uses.
- *Industrial*
Streets that have no front door experience, are not pedestrian-oriented, and solely cater to trucking and logistics.



Stormwater Management

Increasing the amount of green space and decreasing the impermeable nature of Eastern Market's public areas is important to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to the area and may have the potential to manage stormwater runoff. The market's need to expand and the large amounts of vacant land in the GEM present unique opportunities for developers to manage stormwater on their site to comply with the PCSWMO, potentially through the use of GSI. GSI can provide greater recreation and mobility options for those living, working, and visiting the GEM and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Stormwater management benefits development by easing the burden of drainage charges and reducing the impact of runoff on the sewer system. The following assessments factor into the development of a stormwater management strategy for runoff in Eastern Market.

Stormwater Management in Detroit

The City of Detroit has invested over \$1 billion in stormwater infrastructure over the past two decades and made great strides to better manage stormwater and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Part of the stormwater management program is a system of monthly charges based on the amount of impervious area on a parcel. The charges help the City pay the debt on the major sewer investments, maintain and improve its extensive sewer system, and cover operations and maintenance costs for CSO facilities. The PCSWMO requires stormwater management on newly developed or re-developed parcels over one half-acre in area.

The charges also incentivize property owners to implement engineered solutions to manage stormwater on site. Up to 80% of required charges can be removed, depending on measures taken on the property owner's parcel to keep stormwater out of the combined sewer system.

Topography, Slope, and Subcatchment Areas

The Study Area is relatively flat, with only a 0.15% average slope, though it does have some topography. Generally, the Study Area is gradually sloped toward the southeast and the Detroit River. Within the Study Area, the Dequindre Cut and Dequindre Street act as a mild divide. To their southwest, drainage generally tends toward the Core Market and the I-75 interchange near Gratiot Ave. Northeast of the divide, drainage tends to head southeast toward the historic channel of Bloody Run. Due to the Study Area's relative flatness, minor changes in topography define numerous surface-drainage subcatchment areas into which runoff water flows.

Soils

Data from the Wayne County soil survey was obtained from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The dominant drainage class attached by the NRCS to most Study Area soils is "somewhat poorly drained." Another measure of drainage, hydrologic soil group, indicates that essentially all Study Area soils drain poorly. Soils northeast of the Dequindre Cut and Dequindre Street promote moderately high runoff and those on the southwestern side tend to promote even higher runoff volumes. All of the soils are heavily impacted by past development.

Combined Sewer System

All Study Area sewers are part of Detroit's large combined sewer network. Wastewater from homes and businesses drain to the same pipes that collect stormwater runoff from buildings and pavement.

Generally, the network of sewers in the Study Area flow southeastward toward the Detroit River and the large interceptor there that ultimately sends flows to the wastewater treatment plant on the far west side of the city.



Top: The berms at Recovery Park allow for increased stormwater infiltration, while adjacent swales retain excess runoff.

Above: The water feature at William G. Milliken State Park filters all runoff from adjacent sites through grading and the creation of a wetland.

Photos: PEA (top), Detroit Riverfront Conservancy (above)

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

After topography, soil, and the sewer system have been considered, GSI may yet take a number of different forms, each with specific advantages and disadvantages. Detroit has a number of GSI projects to look to for examples, two of the largest of which are near Eastern Market.

- **GSI Example 1: Recovery Park**

North of the Study Area is Recovery Park, a 22-block urban agriculture project. Stormwater runoff is handled there via the creation of a system of earth berms and swales along the southwestern edge of the project area. The berms increase stormwater infiltration to reduce runoff. When the berms are saturated, adjacent swales retain water, allowing it to infiltrate more slowly into the ground. It is important to be aware that the berms have a significant impact on the streetscape which may not be appropriate for application in other projects.

- **GSI Example 2: William G. Milliken State Park**

The water feature at William G. Milliken State Park is both an effective piece of infrastructure and a visual and recreational amenity for visitors to the Detroit River waterfront. Runoff is directed from adjacent land to a central reconstructed wetland for retention and filtration. The wetland has become a habitat for migratory birds and other species and is an attractive landscape through which visitors can walk, run, and bike. It is this synthesis of functional, visual, and recreational considerations that future GSI features in Eastern Market must strive to achieve.

GSI can also take other forms that might lend themselves to smaller-scale interventions or integration with large systems like those discussed above. Permeable pavement may allow for greater integration of recreational paths into GSI. Green and blue roofs similarly lessen the runoff load on sewers.

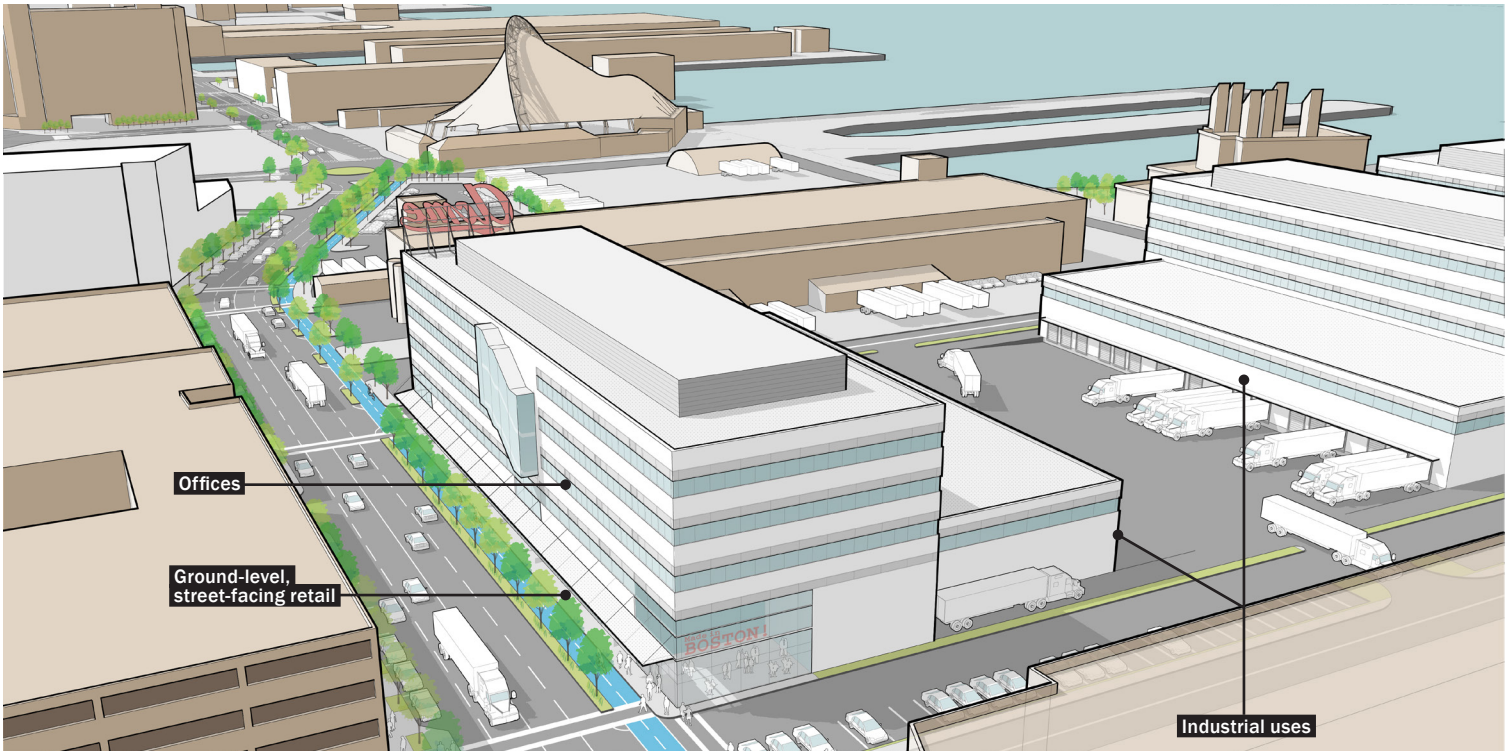
Takeaways

The urban fabric of the Core Market is predominantly hardscape. Efforts should be made to soften it with street tree plantings and small-scale green space. Developing a SWMNP is critical to the success of the market expansion and ensuring that it does not reproduce the impermeability of the core. The PCSWMO requires developers to manage their stormwater in a way that does not increase the load on the combined sewer system. Consideration should be given to encourage developers to consider GSI in their site plans to help them to comply with the PCSWMO. GSI can be designed to be assets for the neighborhood that are functional, visually appealing, and encourage public recreation.

It is important to remember that the public space of the market also includes both streets and storefronts. Streets should be designed for the comfortable coexistence of all of the market’s users: pedestrians, bicyclists, private motorists, and, where designated, semi-trailers. As the market expands it will be important to not only provide street trees and green spaces, but also design industrial buildings that acknowledge the street presence of pedestrians.



Above: A wetland landscape treats and retains runoff from the parking area of the Herman Miller Factory in Cherokee County, GA. Photo: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates
Below: Ground-level retail could be paired with industrial uses for an improved pedestrian experience. Image: Utile



Mobility

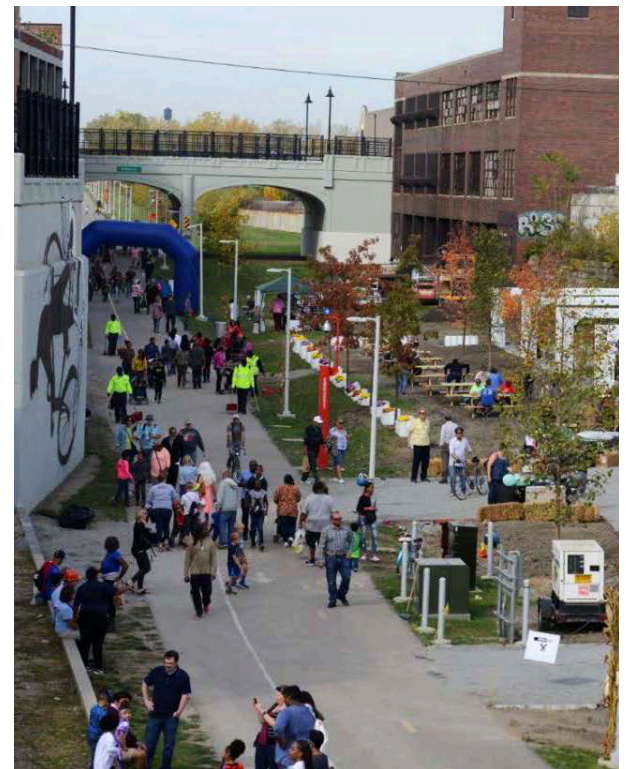
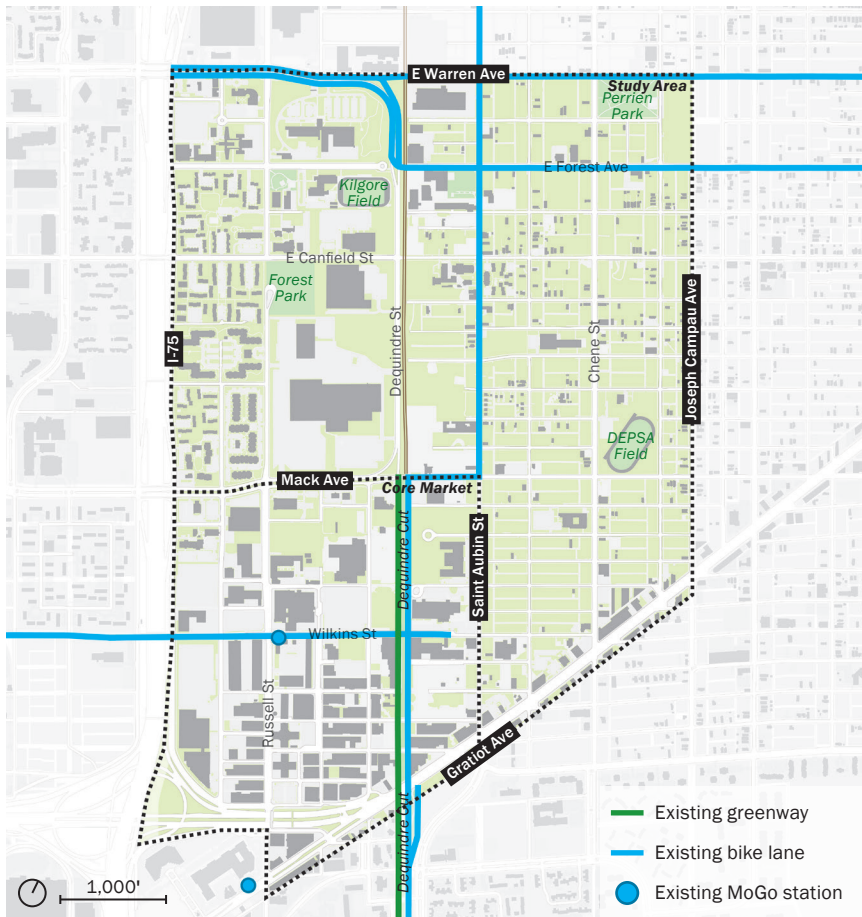
Access is critical to Eastern Market’s continued success, but it is not equal across different modes of transportation. Infrastructure for active transportation—biking, running, or walking—has seen recent investments, although opportunities for improvement remain. Access via buses is poor due to infrequent scheduling. Private motorists are best served as the market has ample parking, although its distribution and management create issues during peak-use times. Food business trucks have easy access to the market via the highways that bound the Study Area, although they too have parking issues where narrow streets do not provide adequate space to pull in and out of loading bays. Trucks also present potential navigational hazards for pedestrians as there are no designated truck routes within the Study Area. Through-navigation is further complicated for all modes by numerous breaks in the street grid.

Active Transportation and Transit

Eastern Market is most accessible to motorists. There is an opportunity to improve walkability and bikeability, which can foster both retail and commercial success as visitors and employees benefit from walkable, human-scale environments. Indeed, the City has made great strides in recent years to improve active transportation and public transit options with additions like the QLINE. Notably, DDOT ridership has been increasing, in contrast to other Michigan cities.

In Eastern Market active transportation infrastructure is mostly concentrated in the Core Market. Sidewalks are generally present, but they start to disappear as one moves away from the core. Pedestrian enhancements, such as curb extensions and

Bike Lanes and Greenways



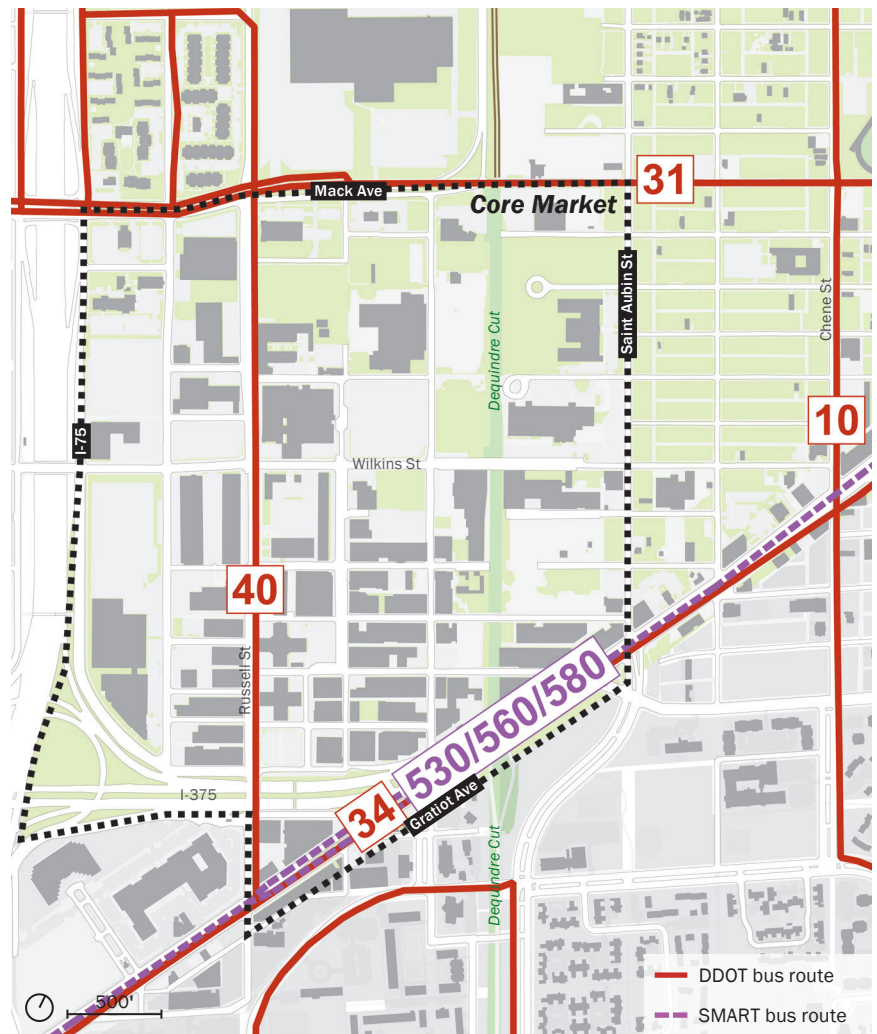
The Dequindre Cut is a successful recreational greenway, but direct connections to the Core Market could be improved.
Photo: Detroit Economic Growth Corporation

Bus Routes

protective planters, are concentrated along Russell Street. Marked crosswalks (partial or full/four-way) exist, albeit only in the heart of the market between Rivard and Riopelle Streets from Wilkins St to Fisher Service Dr. Traffic levels in the Core Market are generally low, which reduces the likelihood of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. However, with empty roads, motorists tend to travel beyond the speed limit, making traffic accidents more dangerous.

The Dequindre Cut is an important asset for Detroit's bicycle network; however, it serves more as a recreational trail. Trailheads exist on the south sides of Gratiot and Mack Avenues and on Wilkins St, although there are no bike lanes on Gratiot Ave or Mack Ave west of the Cut. Once in the core, there are bike racks along Russell St, allowing bicyclists to easily access the sheds and other retail there. Additionally, there are two MoGo bike share stations (one each at the intersections of Russell St with Gratiot Ave and Wilkins St) which help provide access for residents and tourists alike.

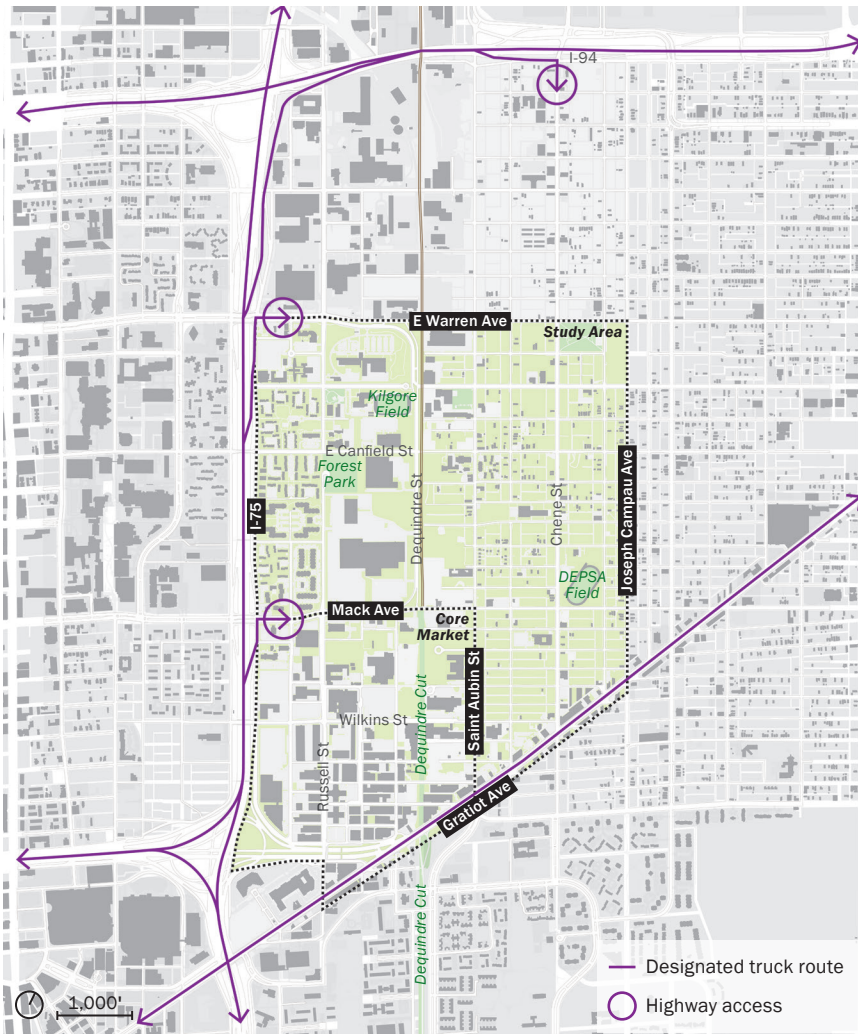
While overall DDOT bus ridership is increasing, service to the market is lacking. Although there are three primary thoroughfares in the Core Market served by transit—Mack Ave, Gratiot Ave, and Russell St—only Russell St actually cuts through the core. The market sheds are serviced there by the #40 bus, but it only comes once an hour. There may be opportunities to increase its frequency by adjusting its snaking route and combining service with nearby north-south routes. The #31 bus service along Mack Ave that runs one bus every half-hour. Service along Gratiot Ave is frequent, with the #34 bus arriving every 15 minutes and SMART commuter buses (#530, 560, and 580) during the morning and evening rush hours; however, the bus stop on Gratiot Ave that is closest to the Core Market requires crossing I-375 to get there.



DDOT bus service is sparse in the Core Market, with the #40 arriving once per hour.

Photo: BuroHappold Engineering

Designated Truck Routes and Highway Access



Truck Circulation

Eastern Market’s location and highway access is ideal for commercial operators and makes it very competitive as an industrial district. Framed by Gratiot Ave and the State Trunkline Highways, I-75 and I-94, Eastern Market allows regional distributors to circumvent urban traffic jams, while also being accessible to workers near downtown.

Major north-south (Saint Aubin, Chene, and McDougall Streets) and east-west (Wilkins St, Mack Ave, Warren Ave) roads provide ample options and redundant paths for trucks to enter and exit the market. However, with no formalized truck routes, when trucks pass through residential neighborhoods, they create noise and vibration nuisances. Designated truck routes are constructed differently than normal roads, allowing them to withstand the 40-ton loads from fully loaded 18-wheelers and mitigate the accompanying vibration. When trucks deviate from these routes, there is unnecessary wear on the pavement, road deterioration, and a reduced quality of experience for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike.



Rivard St (right) is wide enough for semi-trailers, while Brewster St (left) is too tight and leads trucks to encroach on the sidewalk. Photos: Google Earth

Parking and Truck Staging

Within the Core Market, there are 438 on-street spaces and 1,125 parking lot spaces available to the public. There are also 713 spaces for employee/permit parking and 331 truck and trailer spaces over 8.6 acres of truck aprons and staging areas.

It can often seem like there is an undersupply of parking in the most desirable locations. Most visitors want to park along Russell St or as close to the sheds as possible. Even on non-market days, the shed parking lots are filled with cars. Employees in the area prefer to park by the sheds, instead of employee parking areas, as they are more visible and there is perceived to be less of a security risk. On market days, visitors want to park there for the same reason, and tend to avoid the Wilkins St lots.

These concerns can be alleviated—and parking more evenly distributed around the core—with parking management programs. For visitors, the Wilkins St lots can be staffed with attendants who would also serve as a deterrent to crime. Overall congestion will decline with fewer cars searching for parking along Russell Street and within the shed lots. The perceived undersupply of parking may be fully resolved by addressing safety concerns and tapping into these underutilized lots. If parking is efficiently managed there is also the potential for some lots to be entirely freed up for new development.

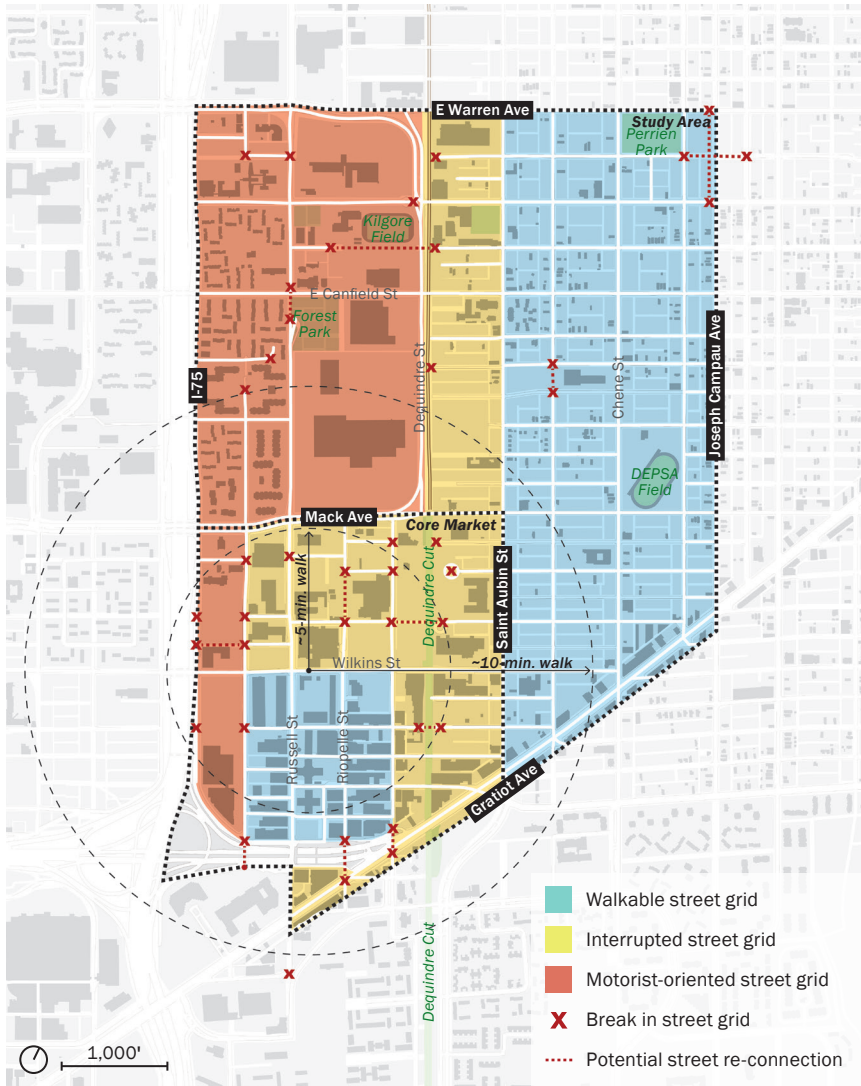
Most truck activity is concentrated along Rivard St, servicing the main processing, packaging, and distribution businesses. With a typical curb-to-curb distance of 40 feet, and deep setbacks for semi-trailer loading bays, trucks can back in without “hopping the curb” across the street. However, off Rivard St, semi-trailers struggle to make turns exiting their lots. Curb-to-curb distances drop to 30 feet or less, and semi-trailers making wide turns encroach on the sidewalk and occasionally come into contact with street signs, utility poles, and trees. Future development in the Market should ensure that appropriate setbacks for truck bays exist, especially where street width is limited.

Core Market Parking



The intersection of Saint Aubin and Brewster Streets at Kap's Wholesale is too tight for large trucks, resulting in sidewalk damage. Photo: BuroHappold Engineering

Street Grid Analysis



The Street Network

The Eastern Market street network provides a competitive advantage for commercial success. However, there remain connectivity issues that create challenges for pedestrian, private vehicle, and bicycle access and limit the ability for a “sense of place” to be established, which in turn hinders retail success. These challenges can be mitigated through tactical improvements and larger urban design decisions.

Grid Discontinuities and Navigability

Eastern Market’s street network is mostly laid out in an orthogonal grid pattern. The blocks adjacent to the market sheds form a dense grid, but the pattern becomes less dense and more irregular to the northwest of Mack Ave. The “superblocks” found there are detrimental to the pedestrian experience. A dense, regular street grid of blocks between 150 and 300 feet long is easily comprehensible for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers and encourages walking, which aids retail success.

Despite being somewhat hindered by an irregular grid, the entire Core Market is accessible within a 10- to 15-minute walk (traveling by bike, 5-10 minutes covers most of the Study Area). Although travel time is less an issue for motorists, vehicular travel also suffers from the navigational challenges of an irregular grid. Drivers are likely to prefer straight through-streets, which in Eastern Market translates into overburdening Russell St.

Connectivity to Adjacent Neighborhoods

Gratiot Ave is a physical and psychological barrier to access Eastern Market from Lafayette Park to the south. While it is possible to cross it and I-375 by walking along Russell St, this is an unpleasant, wind-swept, and car-oriented stretch that feels longer than it actually is. However, there are ongoing plans to rectify this condition. The *I-375 Improvement Project* will replace the I-375 connector and a portion of the Fisher Freeway with boulevards and stitch Eastern Market together with Lafayette Park’s large, vibrant community. The Regional Transit Authority of



Northwest of the Core Market pedestrian infrastructure lessens and block size increases.

Photo: PEA

Takeaways

Southeast Michigan proposed converting Gratiot Ave into a transit-oriented “complete street” in its 2016 *Gratiot Avenue Transit Study*. This will improve access to Eastern Market from neighborhoods along the length of the street.

I-75 poses a greater challenge. Brush Park can only be accessed via Mack Ave and Wilkins St, but these are unpleasant crossings similar to the bridging of Russell St over I-375. However, with a series of crosswalk improvements, signage, street tree plantings, public art, and sound barrier installations, these access points can be significantly improved.

On the opposite side of the Core Market, the Dequindre Cut is both a connectivity asset and obstacle. Although it is an important open space and active transportation corridor, it interrupts the street grid and disconnects the Core Market from areas to the northeast. However, some connections could be revived with bridges.

Eastern Market’s transportation network is central to its success, yet there remain significant challenges to access, mobility, and safety. Gaps in the active transportation and public transit networks limit mobility options for workers and visitors alike. Highways are essential for commercial trucking, but present physical and psychological barriers to accessing the Core Market by other means. The lack of designated truck routes causes quality-of-life nuisances in neighborhoods in the Study Area.

Improvements to the Core Market and plans for the market’s expansion must balance commercial demands for food business truck activity with the creation of a place that is welcoming and navigable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists alike. To improve access, mobility, and safety, the Neighborhood Framework Plan in the next chapter presents recommendations to create safer intersections, improve road crossings, formalize truck routes, and consolidate parking.



Although the Dequindre Cut is an active transportation asset, it breaks the street grid in the Core Market.

Photo: Kraemer Design Group

Conclusion

Eastern Market is well-positioned to retain and grow its status as the hub of the local and regional food industry. Yet, expansion and modernization will require the relocation of some businesses and new kinds of development in the core. This must be done in a way that both respects the Core Market's historical, cultural, and commercial character and the needs of existing residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. As development pressure grows in Eastern Market, anti-displacement measures in the Core Market and new zoning regulations in the GEM will be critical tools to guide growth to these ends.

The market's expansion is an ideal moment to implement a new model of industrial development. New food business buildings should avoid the typical model of introverted industrial development by integrating pedestrian-oriented uses at ground level to activate street edges and maintain an urban character. The market's expansion also represents a critical opportunity to encourage developers to choose green stormwater infrastructure to meet the requirement for compliance with the Post-Construction Stormwater Management Ordinance. Doing so will reduce ground surface imperviousness and can also provide visual and recreational amenities to the neighborhood.

Finally, to smooth the transition of both the core to more mixed-use and its surroundings to food-related business uses, access from different transit modes must be enhanced. Designating truck routes in the district will minimize nuisances for residents. Bus service should be improved and recent investments in active transportation should continue.

Implementing these recommendations will allow the GEM to develop into a rich neighborhood that comfortably interweaves residential, commercial, and food business uses; pedestrian, bicycle, car, and truck traffic; built and green open space; and history and innovation. As the hub of the region's modern and sustainable food industry, and a great place to live and work, Eastern Market will secure its role in Detroit's ongoing history for decades to come.





Photo: Eastern Market Corporation