

Federal Reserve Neighborhood Stabilization Video Reports
Detroit: Community Engagement

This is a transcript of a Federal Reserve Board video released April 28, 2011.

OPEN

Governor Elizabeth A. Duke

In Detroit the nexus between decades of population loss and the foreclosure crises have created a pivotal moment in which the city of Detroit must reinvent itself. The city is partnering with community leaders to bring together thousands of residents to help make the tough choices that will determine the city's future.

SHOTS OF DETROIT

Karla Henderson

"When the foreclosure crises hit Detroit, people were being evicted from their homes, our vacancy rate was skyrocketing and we really did not have a mechanism to deal with the population that was leaving the city of Detroit."

"It's a challenge that the city has been facing over the last 50 years. The city was built for 2 million and we lost almost a million people so something has to be done about it. And that's really what The Detroit Works Project will address."

Announcer

Welcome to the Detroit Works Project Community Meeting.

Karla Henderson

"The Detroit Works Project will lay out the blueprint for the future of our city."

Woman from Grandmont Rosedale

We know that the biggest and most impactful changes result from listening and working with residents."

Tom Godderris

"It almost took this much of an economic and housing crisis to kind of jolt people to saying, "You know, we really need to—to come up with bolder, more creative ideas."

Karla Henderson

"We kicked off in September of 2010 with community forums, had feedback from almost 5,000 residents."

Marja Winters

What is the most damaging impact of population loss in your neighborhood?

Marja Winters

What is your neighborhood's most important asset?

Detroit video transcript

Karla Henderson

It's going to give us a guide in terms of how we allocate resources, how we do zoning for particular parts of the city and the civic engagement component is crucial to the success of the plan."

Marja Winters

44% of you responded that a sense of community is your neighborhood's most important asset.

Karla Henderson

"Every citizen, every stakeholder, our suburban counterparts everybody has a voice in the future of the city of Detroit."

OUT OF MEETING AND ON THE STREETS OF DETROIT

Karla Henderson

"We know we're going to have some tough conversations with our community. Being able to explain the level of service a citizen or stakeholder can expect in a certain neighborhood. Lighting and trash removal and snow plowing and road resurfacing - we are going to be making very strategic decisions of where we put our resources. We're not going to say that one neighborhood is going to get benefit at the cost of others but we know we don't have enough resources to go around."

WE ARE IN BRIGHTMOOR NEIGHBORHOOD

Riet Schumack

Brightmoor is a very impoverished, very thinly populated, very blighted neighborhood in Detroit. The vacancy rate is probably 70%.

Chazz Miller

In Detroit obviously we've got a lot of blight and I was looking at different ways to deal with the blight. The struggle that a butterfly goes through so it can fly for me is symbolic for Detroit and what it is going through.

Karla Henderson

"Probably perhaps the tougher conversations will be to go to a community like Brightmoor and say, the city will not be aligning its resources for your redevelopment strategy on single family homes. But if there is urban agriculture or some kind of community garden, we perhaps can support those kinds of efforts. We just have to be very, very strategic with our limited resources."

TRANSITION TO GRANDMONT ROSEDALE NEIGHBORHOOD

Karla Henderson:

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“We think it’s very important that we do some interventions, depending on the type of neighborhood. Grandmont Rosedale is a significant neighborhood in the city of Detroit. Um, that great quality housing stock. A traditionally strong neighborhood with a strong tax base.”

AT THE GRANDMONT ROSEDALE HOLIDAY DINNER AND MEETING

Tom Godderris

“City government and the mayor are recognizing the importance of neighborhoods, like ours, the importance of preserving neighborhoods like ours.”

Tom Godderris

Good evening everybody. I’m the Executive Director of the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation. Obviously we all know that over the last couple of years we’ve seen a dramatic increase in the number of foreclosed properties and the number of vacant houses. Now GRDC has been purchasing and renovating houses for over 20 years. But we’ve never had to face the scale of the problem that we are facing today.

Tom Godderris

“People are really concerned about the number of vacant houses in our community right now. We went from having just a couple of houses in the whole neighborhood that might be what you’d considered troubled houses to vacant houses on every block.”

Wendy Jackson

So what’s the story on this house Tom?

Tom Godderris

Well we bought this house a couple of months ago. It’s a vacant property and it was mortgage foreclosed.

Karla Henderson

“The key part of this is making sure that we are aligned with our philanthropic communities, because when we start to put our dollars behind each other then it has such a greater impact.”

Tahirih Ziegler

“Why Grandmont Rosedale is really important to us is that it—we think it’s a tipping-point neighborhood. It’s a neighborhood that if the right resources and the right, uh, public and private dollars are leveraged, this neighborhood could actually become the neighborhood it was at one time, which was a very vibrant neighborhood.”

SCENE WITH CLARENDA AND CAROLYN, VACANT PROPERTY TASK FORCE VOLUNTEERS

Carolyn answers phone:

Hello?

Detroit video transcript

Tom Godderris

“It’s really volunteers and the community people who drive what we do, and there are people now who are rising to the challenge that we face, bigger challenges than we’ve ever faced before.”

Carolyn

Detroit is not just what you see in the news. There are real communities here where people have strong ties and they work together.

Karla Henderson

“Detroiters are very passionate. Detroiters could have left but love the city and chose to stay. It’s a community that understands that status quo is no longer acceptable.”

BACK TO THE DETROIT WORKS PROJECT MEETING

Wendy Jackson

“And perhaps no other American city has had to transform on so many levels. But what has been heartening about Detroit in this moment is that, I think, everyone has had a wakeup call.”

Karla Henderson

“We cannot continue to allow the population to decrease. We have to do things differently as an administration and as a city.”

Wendy Jackson

“This is Detroit’s defining moment.”

THE END