

# PRESERVATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

## OVERVIEW

Historic Preservation is an important and well-utilized tool in many American cities to maintain historically meaningful and impactful physical structures, but it can be overlooked as an integral strategy for neighborhood stabilization and reinvestment for practitioners, city officials, and residents within cities suffering from depopulation and disinvestment. The resulting dilemma leaves cities with increasingly destabilized neighborhoods and high numbers of vacant and historically significant structures, without an effective understanding of how historic preservation can work to address both issues when strategically coordinated with other important investment decisions.

The Detroit Future City Implementation Office works with the Jefferson East Inc., State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Creekside CDC, Preservation Detroit, and Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) to develop and lead a pilot engagement campaign in the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood, to inform residents about how strategically coordinated preservation actions can be transformational contributions to neighborhood stabilization and reinvestment. As the City of Detroit prepares to increase its number of residential demolitions, this project demonstrates that preservation and rehabilitation are forms of blight remediation that complement more traditional methods of mitigation.

Phase I included three neighborhood workshops on caring for older homes and Phase II, the “My Neighborhood, My Heritage” project helped local students explore the history, cultural heritage connections and current conditions of their neighborhood through discussion and photography.

## RESOURCES

- Partners: DFC, SHPO, MHPN, Jefferson East Inc., Creekside CDC, Preservation Detroit, City of Detroit, Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, Residents
- Funding Source: Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), SHPO

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

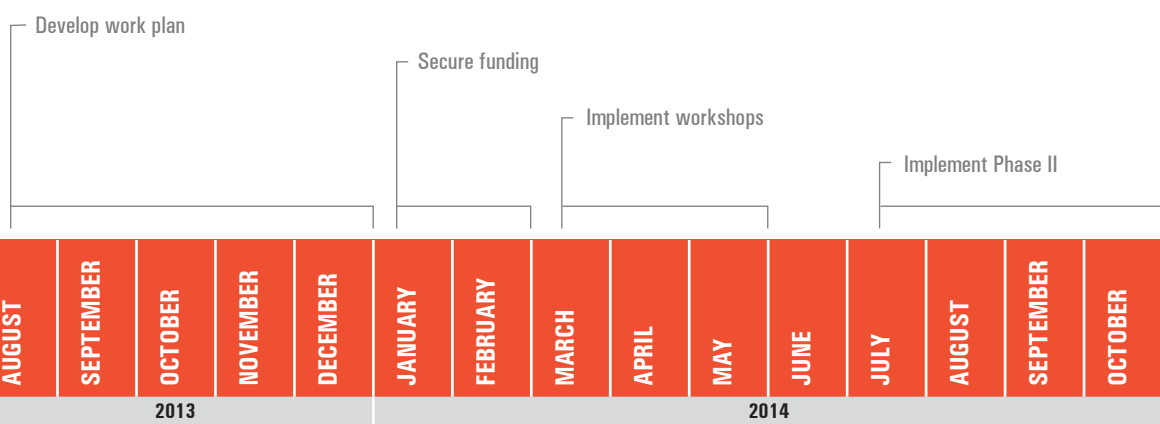
- B** CREATE DENSE, WALKABLE, MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS
- B1** Stimulate residential market demand.
- E** RENEW TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS
- E5** Target code enforcement on absentee property owners and landlords.

## OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate how the preservation of existing structures can be a tool to combat blight and stabilize neighborhoods as blight strategies are actively being developed
- Establish means and methods for historic preservation to complement other forms of neighborhood stabilization including demolition and deconstruction
- Inform residents about preservation-friendly maintenance practices that maintain and add value to buildings
- Establish a personal connection for residents with their community through exploration of public history. This emphasizes importance of local cultural and architectural history in promoting healthy urbanism and neighborhood identity and that connection to place keeps residents engaged in improving and maintaining a healthy neighborhood environment

## EVALUATION METRICS

- Number of participants in each event or workshop
- Increased investment/number of renovations in the target neighborhood
- Spinoff initiatives organized through the collaboration in the workshops



## INITIATIVE VITALS

**CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS:** DFC, Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Jefferson East, Inc., State Historic Preservation Office of Michigan, Creekside CDC, Preservation Detroit

**DFC INITIATIVE TYPE:** Partner

**DFC REPRESENTATIVE:** Victoria Olivier

**INITIATIVE SCALE:** Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood

**INITIATIVE DURATION:** October 2013–June 2014

**RELEVANT PLANNING ELEMENT:** Neighborhoods

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY:** Provide workshops and engage residents on their neighborhood’s history

## DFC APPROACH

DFC participates in the project planning process to help align MHPN’s activities with a traditional neighborhood within the Hardest Hit Fund zones. Additionally, due to DFC’s role in identifying Hardest Hit Fund neighborhoods, there is an emphasis on locating the project in one of those identified neighborhoods to demonstrate historic preservation as being one of the tools in the fight against blight.

DFC assists in finding the best community partners to work with and to leverage more impact on the neighborhood.

DFC engagement team used the communications platform to increase participation and also celebrate the project and staff served as featured speakers during their opening event to celebrate “My Neighborhood, My Heritage.”



Image Source: Hamilton Anderson Associates