

# BROWNLEE WOODS

## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



YOUNGSTOWN  
**NEIGHBORHOOD**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# “Real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present.”

— Albert Camus

## **ACTION PLAN PRODUCED SEPTEMBER 2014**

by the YOUNGSTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
and the CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN

## **YNDC PROJECT TEAM**

Ian Beniston, Executive Director  
John Bralich, Senior GIS Manager, YSU Center for Urban and Regional Studies  
Karen Schubert, AmeriCorps VISTA  
Matthew Honer, AmeriCorps VISTA  
Tricia D’Avignon, AmeriCorps VISTA  
Jack Daugherty, Neighborhood Stabilization Director  
Tom Hetrick, Neighborhood Planner

## **CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN PROJECT TEAM**

William D’Avignon, Director of the Community Development Agency and Planning  
T. Sharon Woodberry, Director of Economic Development  
Jason T. Whitehead, Comptroller, Community Development Agency  
Karen Perkins, Zoning Analyst



7th Ward Citizens Coalition Neighborhood Planning Meeting March 20th 2014

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# SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Youngstown, Ohio, has experienced typical Midwestern deindustrialization and subsequent disinvestment. After decades, the population loss has not slowed: between 2010 and 2012, Youngstown lost more residents than any American city over 50,000 people.

In 2005 the City of Youngstown gathered community members and other stakeholders to craft *Youngstown 2010*, a long-term planning document. Out of that effort arose a host of neighborhood associations as well as the non-profit Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC). In 2013, YNDC began providing neighborhood planning services for the City of Youngstown. In that capacity, YNDC crafted the *Neighborhood Conditions Report* to provide a detailed look at the housing markets and socioeconomic conditions facing our neighborhoods in order to inform a citywide strategy for improving quality of life and address basic challenges and opportunities facing our neighborhoods.

YNDC is forging collaboration between Brownlee Woods neighborhood groups and stakeholders, as well as the City of Youngstown, and the Mahoning County Land Bank to complete strategic neighborhood stabilization activities in this area. The following document is an action-driven plan that proposes a clear property-specific strategy for the stabilization of the Brownlee Woods neighborhood, which would allow more flexibility in neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. YNDC and the City of Youngstown Community Development Agency will take the lead in preparing, administering, reporting and monitoring the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Action Plan. This plan proposes the Brownlee Woods neighborhood be designated as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) for a term of five years to implement planned revitalization efforts identified in this plan.



Brownlee Woods neighborhood sign on Sheridan



# BOUNDARIES AND HISTORY

The area is named after James Brownlee, a farmer who purchased 235 acres of land of which Brownlee Woods was part of. It was annexed by the city in 1929 from Boardman Township. Initial development happened at the same time as the Cottage Grove and Pleasant Grove Neighborhoods. The development along Sheridan was upper-middle class and transitioned to middle class moving away from the boulevard. The cape cod housing style that is prominent in the neighborhood represents common post WWII housing developments of the 1950s and 1960s.



Brownlee Woods Branch Library



Lynn Park

# DEMOGRAPHICS AND AMENITIES

Census Tract 8014, made up of the neighborhood of Brownlee Woods, is one of two census tracts that juts south of Midlothian to border Boardman. The Brownlee name came from a prominent Youngstown family, originally immigrants from Scotland.

Most of the houses in this neighborhood are post-war, single family, frame homes. A notable exception is the diverse architectural styles along Sheridan Rd., a tree-lined boulevard that divides the tract. The median sales price of homes in this area is \$34,471, one of the highest medians in the city. Conversely, this area was one of the hardest hit during the foreclosure crisis. The current rate of owner-occupancy is 86%, one-third higher than the City of Youngstown; a 10% vacancy rate is one half of Youngstown's. Although the population loss here is less than Youngstown's 30%, over one-fifth of Brownlee Woods residents left the area between 1990-2010. Of those who remain, 90% identify themselves as White, 5% Black, and 4% Hispanic. Educational attainment is higher than the city average: 70% of adult residents graduated from high school, 12% college, and 5% graduate school.

Brownlee Woods residents have close proximity to commercial activity along E. Midlothian and Youngstown Poland Rd., and by accessing Hwy. 680, are a short drive from the commercial corridor on Hwy 224 in Boardman. The unemployment rate is only 8%, compared to 20% citywide. The median income is \$33,611, almost \$10,000 more than the Youngstown median. Slightly more than one-tenth of households possess no vehicle, yet less than 1% commute to work via public transportation.

Amenities in this neighborhood include an active neighborhood association, well maintained Lynn Park and playground, a branch of the public library, and the Montessori School of the Mahoning Valley. Along the Midlothian Blvd. and Youngstown Poland Rd. borders and slightly beyond, shopping opportunities include a grocery, pharmacy, restaurants, banks, auto parts store and many other independently owned shops as well as franchises. There are also many churches nearby, and medical clinics including a podiatrist.

**Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Demographic Summary**

	POPULATION (2010)	POPULATION LOSS (1990-2010)	AVERAGE HOME SALE PRICE (2007-2012)	PERCENT OWNER OCCUPIED (2010)	VACANCY RATE (2010)	PERCENT LOW- TO MODERATE- INCOME RESIDENTS (2010)
<b>BROWNLEE WOODS</b>	4,227	-21%	\$34,471	86%	10%	44%
<b>YOUNGSTOWN</b>	66,982	-30%	\$23,944	58%	19%	61%

SOURCE: United States Census and American Community Survey Data; HUD Low and Moderate Income Summary Data

<b>BROWNLEE WOODS NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS</b>	<b>BROWNLEE WOODS</b>	<b>YOUNGSTOWN</b>	<b>MAHONING COUNTY</b>
<b>TOTAL POPULATION (2010)</b>	4,227	66,982	238,823
<b>RACIAL/ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHICS (2011)</b>			
AFRICAN AMERICAN	5%	44%	15%
WHITE	90%	43%	78%
HISPANIC	4%	9%	5%
<b>TOTAL PERSONS BELOW POVERTY (2011)</b>	5%	34%	16%
<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2011)</b>	\$33,611	\$24,880	\$40,570
<b>UNEMPLOYMENT (2011)</b>	8%	20%	11%
<b>HOUSING VACANCY RATE (2010)</b>	10%	19%	12%
<b>HOUSING UNITS BUILT BEFORE 1940</b>	20%	40%	22%
<b>OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS (2010)</b>	86%	58%	71%
<b>RESIDENTS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (2011)</b>	12%	20%	12%
<b>RESIDENTS WITH AN ASSOCIATE'S AND/OR BACHELOR'S DEGREE (2011)</b>	12%	12%	19%
<b>RESIDENTS WITH A GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (2011)</b>	5%	4%	7%
SOURCE: United States Census and American Community Survey Data			

# PUBLIC CONSULTATION

On March 20th 2014, YNDC and the City conducted a citywide planning meeting for residents of the Brownlee Woods neighborhood at Faith Community Covenant Church, where both assets and priorities in the neighborhoods were established, discussed in detail, and recorded on comment cards. In general, residents considered housing and property issues, infrastructure concerns, and neighborhood safety to be primary issues. Residents were also asked to tell the YNDC planning team “one thing we need to know” about the neighborhood. Responses were recorded on comment cards and this activity was purposely left open-ended to gain a rich variety of feedback. Some of the responses are shown below. All public input from each meeting described above is found in the Appendix on page 32.



7th Ward Citizens Coalition Neighborhood Planning Meeting March 20th 2014

*“housing codes updated.”*

*“housing repair - if things get bad, people will move.”*

*“Youngstown needs to foster better quality of life through job opportunities, better schools, and better housing conditions to DRIVE population growth.”*

*“it's a "first impression" if you exit at Midlothian Blvd.”*

*“the ability of the city to deal with late property tax, code violations, and vacant homes stunts the stability of the quality of life in the city”*

*“to improve the enforcement in Youngstown.”*

*“empty lots, good to tear vacant houses down but no maintenance of lots.”*

*“help us prevent our neighborhood from being just another blight ridden place - we are a sustainable neighborhood! Let's keep it that way.”*

*“need to change mindset and focus - great neighborhood chart - Facebook, websites are net positive to draw in buyers - speech too much to negatives. Even the neighborhood group names (Brownlee Woods v ICU, boulevard park v eyes & ears, neighborhood association vs block watch)”*



# NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES

Each resident who attended the citywide public meetings held in early 2014, including the one hosted in the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood, was asked to identify his/her top three challenges or priorities to be addressed in their neighborhood. Residents overwhelmingly identified housing and property issues and the number one challenge they would like to see addressed. The top three neighborhood priorities identified by residents overall are as follows:

## 1. Housing and Property Issues

Issues identified by residents include litter, illegal dumping, code violations, vacant homes, unmaintained vacant lots, and general abandonment.

## 2. Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance

Issues identified residents pertain to repairing and maintaining existing infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, and street lights.

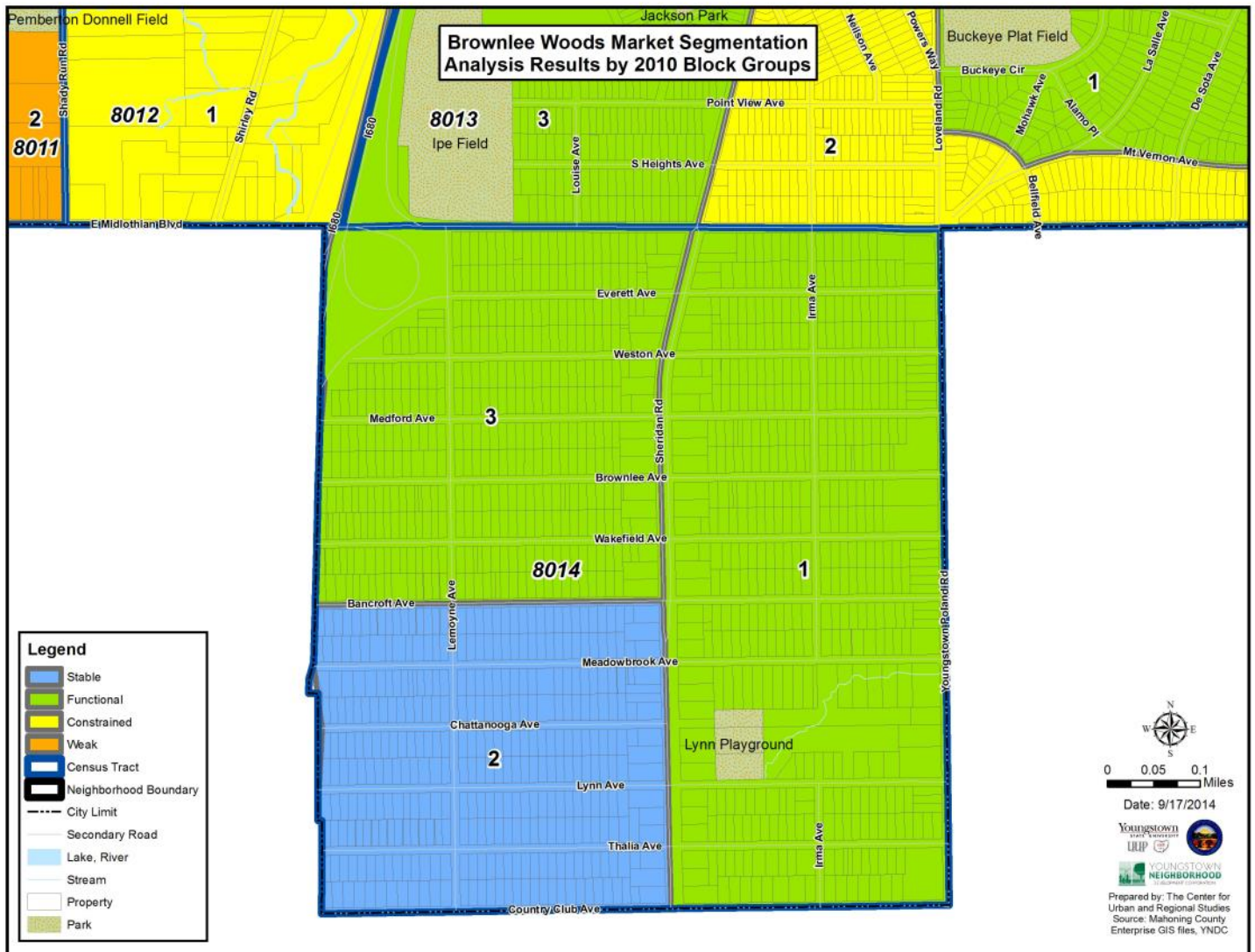
## 3. Crime and Safety Concerns

Issues identified by residents relate to addressing crime hot spots, including both vacant and occupied homes embedded within the neighborhoods where criminal activity is threatening the health and safety of neighborhoods.



4208 Sheridan is a priority property marked for code enforcement due to the high volume of traffic on Sheridan and the severe damage to the roof leaving the house vulnerable to further deterioration.

# HOUSING MARKET SEGMENTATION ASSESSMENT



The Brownlee Woods neighborhood has varying housing market conditions throughout. A detailed market segmentation analysis of all neighborhoods in the city was conducted by YNDC and the City of Youngstown in 2014 using U.S. Census and other relevant housing data. A detailed account of the market conditions throughout the city and the process for completing the analysis is included in the citywide *Neighborhood Conditions Report*.

The map above identifies the varying market conditions of the Brownlee Woods neighborhood by U.S. Census block groups, which is the smallest area for which housing market data could be collected and analyzed. Generally speaking, the southwest section of the neighborhood is stable, with areas to the north of Bancroft and east of Sherman being functional. Because of the conditions in the neighborhood demolition will be a minimum in Brownlee Woods. A detailed description of the varying market categories is provided on the following page.

Neighborhoods were categorized based on varying conditions because a different strategy is required to address areas with varying market conditions. For example, in the “functional” area of the neighborhood above, the priority is to rehabilitate viable properties, to employ targeted code enforcement to restore a high standard of maintenance, and to demolish only the homes that are beyond salvage on otherwise stable streets.



## **Market Segmentation Categories:**

An explanation of the varying categories of market conditions from the market segmentation analysis of the City of Youngstown are as follows:

**Stable market** block groups have the strongest indicators of any neighborhoods in the city, though they may or may not be considered strong by national standards. In general, they are represented by relatively few vacancies and high median sales prices. Homeownership rates are significantly higher than the citywide average and poverty rates, crime rates, and population loss are low. Home transfers involve traditional mortgages in nearly 50% of cases, compared to only 1 out of 10 in Youngstown as a whole.

**Functioning market block groups** are those in which all or nearly all indicators fall within ranges consistent with an adequately functioning housing market: houses generally sell when they come on the market; vacancies are manageable; few properties go into foreclosure; and housing quality is generally high. House prices, however, vary more widely than the other indicators, reflecting the fact that house prices do not correlate as strongly with the other indicators as most do with each other. These areas may not have strong markets by national standards, but they are functioning well by city or regional standards. As such, they are likely to be appropriate target areas for stabilization efforts to ensure that they retain their market viability. (Mallach, 2013)

**Constrained market block groups** are those in which market activity continues to take place, and houses generally sell fairly readily as they come on the market. However, one or more variables suggest that significant deterioration in market conditions is taking place, including extremely low sales prices—which is likely to reflect a market dominated by speculative investors—significantly more rapid erosion of home ownership than in the functioning market tracts, and significantly higher vacancy rates. Given their still relatively high housing quality, some or all of these areas may be appropriate targets for stabilization efforts. (Mallach, 2013)

**Weak market block groups** are those in which most variables suggest market weakness, particularly significantly slower turnover rates than in the two preceding clusters, yet at least one and in some cases more variables point to the continued presence of some level of market activity or neighborhood stability; for example, a tract may have sluggish sales and very low house prices, but may also have relatively low vacancy or foreclosure rates, or a high and relatively stable homeownership rate. Depending on the particular features of the individual census tracts in this cluster, some may be appropriate targets in whole or part for stabilization efforts. (Mallach, 2013)

**Extremely weak market block groups** are those in which all or nearly all variables indicate that little or no market exists for the housing in the tract. They are generally characterized by minimal sales activity, extremely low prices for those houses that do sell, extremely high vacancy rates and tax foreclosure, and low levels of homeownership and housing quality. It is unlikely that many of these areas are appropriate targets for stabilization efforts overall, although there may be small subareas where such efforts may be appropriate. It is important to ensure that the residents of these tracts continue to receive adequate public services. (Mallach, 2013)

# ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

Brownlee Woods is bordered by the commercial corridors along Midlothian Blvd. and Youngstown-Poland Rd. which both contain a variety of locally- and nationally-owned stores. Youngstown-Poland Rd. forms the boundary between Brownlee Woods and the City of Struthers. The majority of businesses are located on the east side of the road in Struthers, but are nonetheless important to the vitality of the Brownlee Woods neighborhood. These establishments include gas stations, restaurants, the Habitat ReStore, grocery stores, and a bakery, among others.

In 2011, only 5% of residents lived in poverty and 8% were unemployed. Median income in the neighborhood is significantly higher than the City of Youngstown—\$33,611 compared to \$24,880. In addition, education levels are higher in Brownlee Woods than the city as a whole; comparatively more residents have completed high school and more have obtained a graduate or professional degree. These indicators represent a strong demand for nearby commercial services.



Pizza Hut on Youngstown Poland Rd, BP Gas station in the background on the corner of Midlothian Ave.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The node of retail activity on Youngstown-Poland Rd, which includes a variety of businesses, can be used to leverage additional development through the targeted use of city incentives and funding. Youngstown-Poland Rd. itself has a significant number of active businesses. Vacant structures along Youngstown-Poland Rd. provide small retail spaces for local residents interested in starting a small business and also present opportunities for economic development. These structures could possibly become small stores, restaurants, or offices, creating jobs and providing services for local residents.

In addition, façade improvements and loans for new and existing businesses will be targeted along Midlothian Blvd. and Youngstown- Poland Rd., particularly at the retail node at the intersection of Midlothian and Youngstown-Poland Rd. The City's Economic Development Department and YNDC will perform outreach and convene a meeting of neighborhood business owners to inform them of opportunities and address their concerns.



# SECTION II. FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

The following section outlines neighborhood revitalization objectives for the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood to be achieved in accordance with this plan over the next five years, from 2015 to 2020.

## Housing and Property Five-Year Benchmarks

- 30 housing units are brought into compliance.
- 5 vacant housing units are rehabilitated and re-occupied as affordable housing through collaborative efforts.
- 2 severely blighted structures will be demolished.
- All unmaintained vacant lots are mowed with a higher frequency using a strategic method. Outreach is conducted where viable to identify adjacent homeowners to take over lots.
- All vacant properties with illegal dumping are cleaned up.

## Infrastructure Five-Year Benchmarks

- All existing street lights are operational and an annual survey is conducted by residents to report any further outages.
- All sidewalks adjacent to key amenities and institutions are either cleaned up or replaced where needed.
- All dead trees removed and at least 25 new street trees and park trees planted.

## Crime and Safety Five-Year Benchmarks

- 10 crime hotspots are addressed through community policing and neighborhood interventions.

## Community Building Benchmarks

- Engage 20 new residents through the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Association.
- Complete five resident-driven neighborhood improvement projects.
- Conduct a meeting of neighborhood businesses.
- Engage neighborhood institutions such as the Montessori school and Brownlee Woods library.
- Install one “Welcome to Youngstown” sign on Youngstown-Poland Rd.

## Economic Development Benchmarks

- Target city incentive programs to neighborhood retail node at Midlothian Blvd. and Youngstown Poland Rd.
- Improve at least two existing business facades or loans from the City of Youngstown.
- Provide two micro-enterprise loans to neighborhood entrepreneurs from the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation.
- Create or retain 10 jobs.

## Neighborhood Revitalization Outcomes

The following are outcomes desired as a result of implementing the strategies proposed in this Neighborhood Action Plan / Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area:

Outcome 1: Improve housing market conditions by decreasing the number of blighted properties in the neighborhood by 40% and increasing home sales prices by 10%.

- Baselines: 123 blighted residential properties (achieving a 40% reduction would be reducing the number of blighted properties by 49); \$34,471—average home sale price (increasing by 10% would equal an average home sale price of \$37,918)

Outcome 2: Improve basic public infrastructure by reporting all unlit street lights on a regular basis, resurfacing the most critical streets in the neighborhood, cleaning up and replacing 10 sidewalk squares through a collaborative partnership between residents and the city, and by mowing 100% of vacant lots in the neighborhood in a strategic manner to cut costs and maximize impact.

- Baselines: 7 unmaintained vacant lots; 2 nonfunctional street lights; 3.2 miles of road in fair or poor condition; 14 sidewalks need replaced

Outcome 3: Improve neighborhood safety by reducing the number of reported crimes by a minimum of 30% over a period of five years through community policing and securing of vacant properties.

- Baseline: 628 reported crimes between 2011-2013

Outcome 4: Improve capacity of neighborhood groups and institutions to collaborate with the City and YNDC on 5 neighborhood improvement projects.

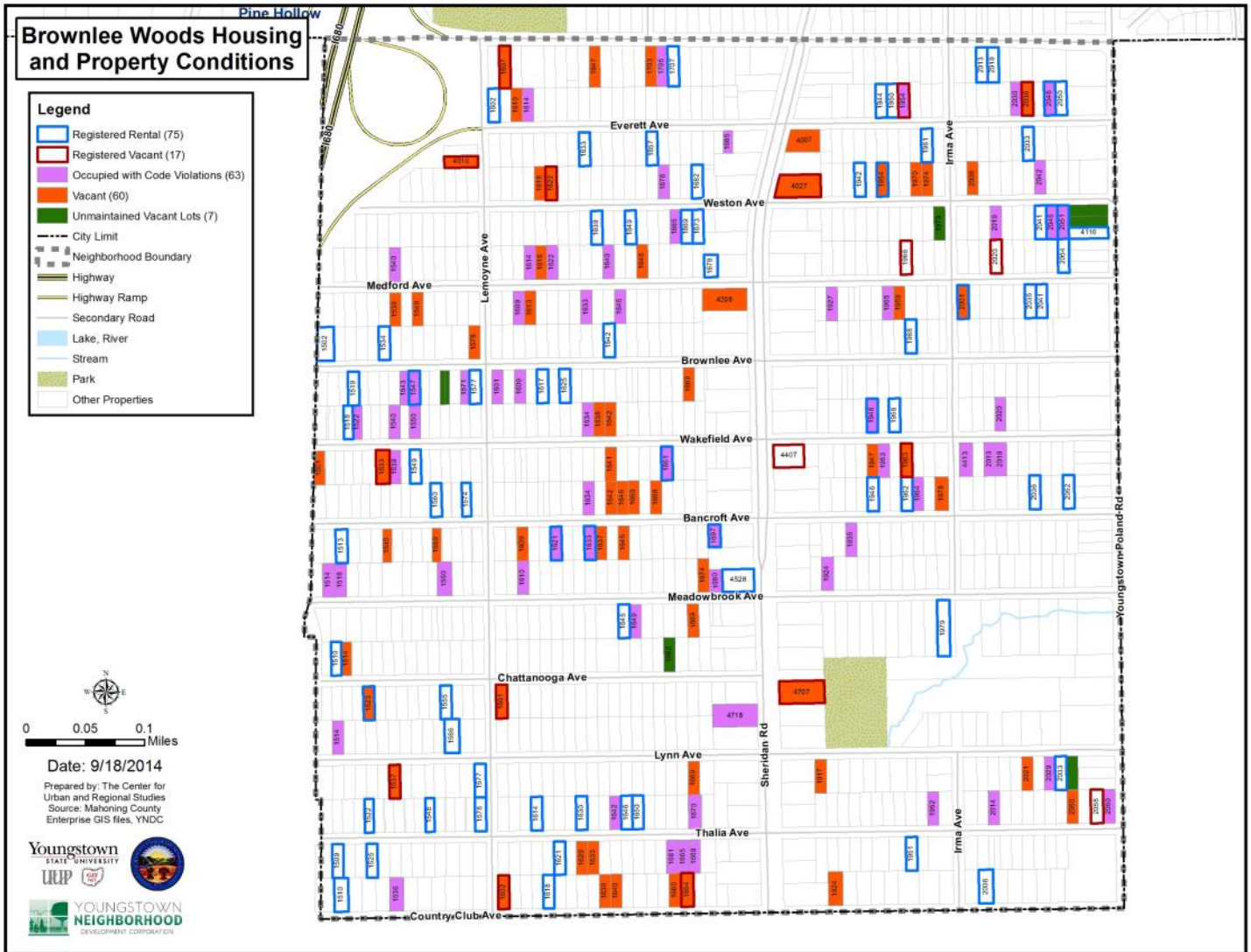
- Baseline: Number of large-scale collaborative, neighborhood improvement projects (currently there are none)

Outcome 5: Improve economic development by providing assistance to 5 businesses and/or entrepreneurs.

- Baseline: Number of Midlothian Blvd./Youngstown-Poland Rd. businesses and/or neighborhood entrepreneurs receiving assistance (currently there are none)

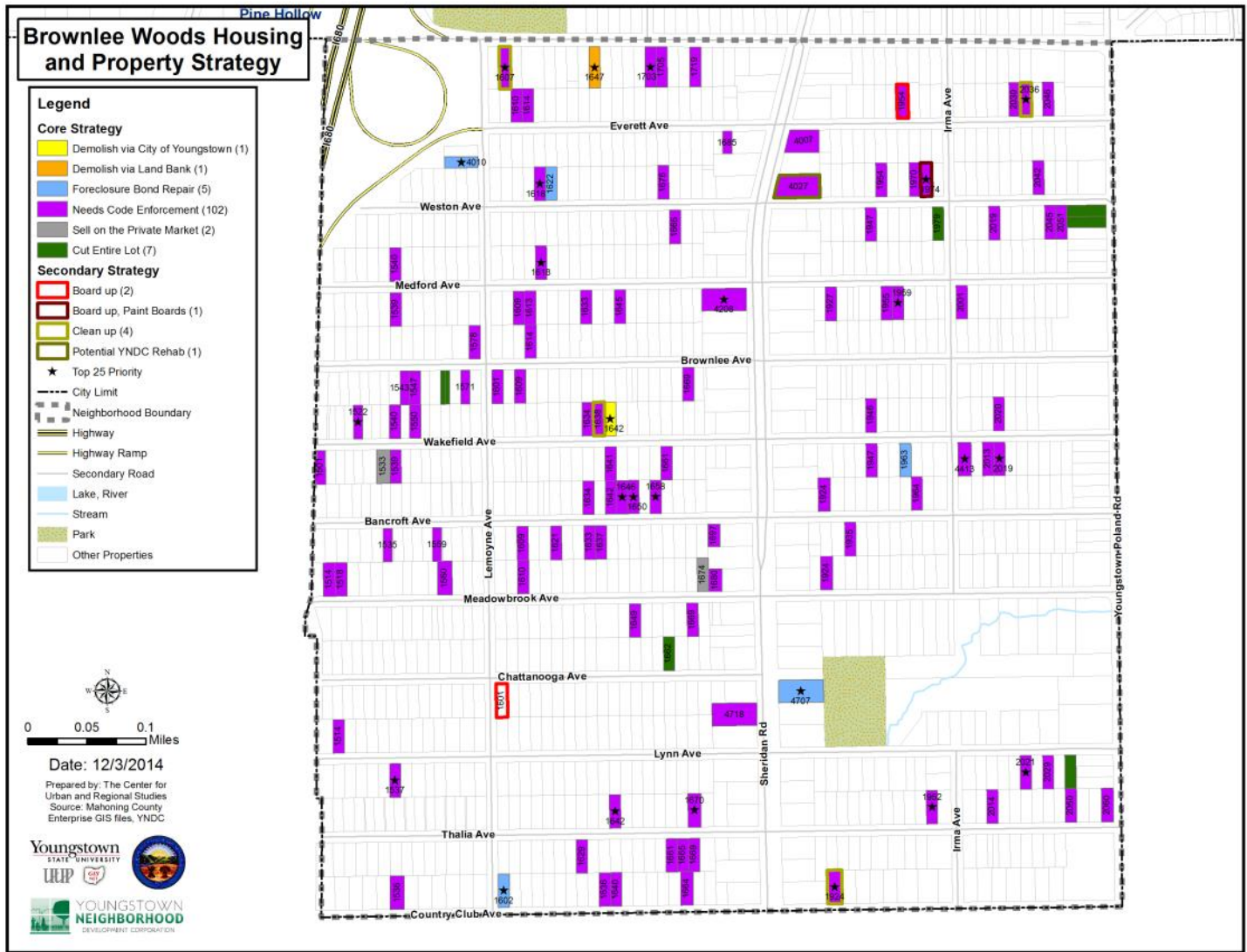
# SECTION III. HOUSING AND PROPERTY ISSUES

A detailed survey of the conditions of all properties in the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood was conducted by YNDC in order to assess all housing and property issues that are negatively impacting quality of life and hindering housing reinvestment in the neighborhood. The following map outlines all current housing and property conditions that challenge the Brownlee Woods neighborhood, including occupied properties with code violations, vacant and blighted properties, and unmaintained vacant lots.



This data was collected from a series of detailed field surveys conducted during 2014 by YNDC tracking all exterior code violations, property vacancy, and vacant lot maintenance for every property in the neighborhood. Vacancy was determined by a number of factors, whether or not the windows/doors were broken and whether or not the electric meter was operating. There are 63 occupied properties with exterior code violations, 60 properties that are vacant, and 7 vacant lots that are not being mowed and maintained on a sufficient basis.

# HOUSING AND PROPERTY STRATEGY



The map above identifies a strategy for every vacant home and occupied structure with exterior code violations in order to stabilize the neighborhood's housing market and improve quality of life for residents. The strategy of each property is determined by a thorough field survey conducted by YNDC of every property in the neighborhood and detailed property research examining ownership, tax status, and other related issues. This information was evaluated carefully to determine appropriate use of the strategies as described on the following two pages.



## Core Strategies

The following are descriptions of the core strategies assigned to each vacant property and occupied property with exterior code violations throughout the neighborhood. These strategies are necessary to bring the property into compliance or otherwise eliminate blight and disinvestment in the neighborhood.

**1) Code Enforcement:** This strategy seeks to have the home repaired through aggressive code enforcement by the City of Youngstown. Inspectors can issue warnings, administrative penalties, and can send the owner of homes in violation of the City's property code to either a Housing Appeals Board or to a prosecutor hearing, depending upon the severity of the violations and the financial circumstances of the owner. This is especially critical for occupied structures with violations and key vacant structures that are of significance to the fabric of the neighborhood and should be salvaged rather than demolished.

**2) Demolish via Land Bank:** In designated areas of the city, houses that are vacant, blighted, and certified tax delinquent for two years or more can be demolished through the Mahoning County Land Bank using Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) funds. The Land Bank typically acquires these properties through a tax foreclosure process. This strategy is assigned to severely deteriorated, tax delinquent abandoned properties that have already been identified and prioritized by the Mahoning County Land Bank for demolition. The advantage to this method of demolition is that the Land Bank will take ownership of the land and will landscape the properties after demolition, making them easily accessible for adjacent property owners to acquire and maintain.

**3) Demolish via City of Youngstown:** Properties that are vacant, severely deteriorated, and not eligible for demolition by the Mahoning County Land Bank are recommended in the plan for demolition by the City of Youngstown. These also include properties that must be urgently demolished because they are an immediate health and safety hazard and require urgent action to stabilize neighborhood conditions.

**4) Private Market Sale:** Properties that are either vacant or occupied that are actively for sale are noted in the plan, regardless of whether or not they have exterior code issues. These properties should be aggressively marketed by residents and the City of Youngstown in order to encourage reinvestment.

**5) Foreclosure Bond Repair:** This strategy utilizes the \$10,000 bond required by the city of Youngstown for properties entering the foreclosure process. The bond can be used to abate nuisances on the property. At the end of the foreclosure process, the bond is returned to the bank, minus an administration fee and any funds expended for nuisance abatement.

**6) Rehabilitation Candidate:** This strategy is applied to vacant properties that are in relatively good condition and should not be demolished, but may have some condition which is hindering direct sale on the private market (e.g. tax delinquency). Many of these homes need some level of code enforcement. A collaborative effort by the City, YNDC, and Mahoning County Land Bank should be considered to unencumber these properties so that they may be rehabilitated and re-occupied by YNDC, the Land Bank, or a private entity with the means to do so. Rehabilitated homes are marketed exclusively to homeowners, in order to build housing market activity in the neighborhood.

**7) Cut Entire Lot:** For single unmaintained lots that are between houses or maintained lots, the City should cut the entire lot in order to improve quality of life of surrounding residents and to give the lot the appearance of a side yard. Work should be conducted to acquire these properties and transfer them to a responsible owner nearby for ongoing maintenance.

## Neighborhood-wide Strategies

In order to strengthen the housing market and build a stronger community, several strategies have been identified to complement the targeted property strategies.

- 1. Market-building Activity:** Gateway signage, a neighborhood website, and landscape improvements can all help to build a strong neighborhood identity and market the neighborhood to potential residents.
- 2. Encouraging Homeownership:** As properties are rehabilitated through YNDC or the Mahoning County Land Bank, these should be marketed exclusively to owner-occupants in order to strengthen the housing market of the Brownlee Woods neighborhood. YNDC operates the Community Loan Fund, which has limited funding for homebuyer mortgages on rehabilitated properties in strategic neighborhoods, of which Brownlee Woods is one. The Community Loan Fund provides mortgages to individuals who do not qualify for traditional lending.
- 3. Community Building:** Resident-driven activities, in collaboration with the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Association and the Seventh Ward Citizens Coalition, can strengthen community ties and beautify the neighborhood.
- 4. Engaging Anchor Institutions:** The Brownlee Woods neighborhood contains several anchor institutions, including the Brownlee Woods Library, the Montessori School, and the Faith Community Covenant Church. These institutions may be able to provide meeting locations, as well as funding for community projects.
- 5. Engaging the Business Community:** The Midlothian Blvd. corridor contains a number of locally-owned and national chain stores. The City of Youngstown's Economic Development Department should hold a meeting of business owners to discuss needs and concerns. These businesses should be targeted for economic development.
- 6. Economic Development:** The City's incentive programs should be targeted to owners along Midlothian Blvd. and Youngstown-Poland Rd. In particular, building facades should be improved and loans provided to new and existing businesses. The Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation provides micro-enterprise loans to neighborhood entrepreneurs and potential candidates should be identified throughout the neighborhood.



Crickets restaurant and bar on Midlothian Blvd.

# TOP 25 PRIORITY PROPERTIES: BROWNLEE WOODS NEIGHBORHOOD

Through field research, 25 houses with code violations were identified as priority properties. Some vacant and some occupied, these houses were selected based on their visibility along a more highly trafficked road; severity of deterioration; concern for health and safety of occupants or neighboring residents; stabilization in an area where one blighted or at-risk house is threatening an otherwise stable area; or further stabilizing an area where existing reinvestment has been taking place.

The list is broken down into three sections: Priority Properties for Demolition, Priority Properties for Code Enforcement, and Priority Properties for Foreclosure Bond Repair. Lists are in alphabetical order and not prioritized by rank. Photos on the following pages demonstrate examples of some of the Top 25 Priority Properties.

## PRIORITY PROPERTIES: DEMOLITION

The following properties have been identified as priority properties for demolition. These properties were evaluated via data collected in the detailed property survey conducted by YNDC for the neighborhood and deemed a priority based on the poor condition on relatively stable street. Those with an “X” under the “Land Bank” column are two years’ certified tax delinquent and being considered as priority properties for the Mahoning County Land Bank to acquire for demolition. Those with an X under the “City” column have been identified as priority properties for demolition by the City of Youngstown.

Address	Description of Condition	CITY	LAND BANK
1647 E. Midlothian Blvd.	hole in roof, porch ceiling, outside stairs and garage in disrepair. Dumping (tires); overgrown vegetation.		X
1642 Wakefield Ave.	overgrown vegetation; truck cab in driveway; peeling paint on back fence; hole in roof; moss on roof; gutters in disrepair.	X	



1647 E. Midlothian Blvd.



1642 Wakefield Ave.

# PRIORITY PROPERTIES: CODE ENFORCEMENT

The following 21 properties have been identified as priority properties for code enforcement. The condition of these properties was evaluated using the detailed property survey of the neighborhood. Some of these properties are occupied properties that are in the poorest condition on an otherwise stable street. Properties that are vacant with issues but can likely be salvaged and rehabilitated are also included on this list, as basic enforcement is the initial step required to ensure these properties are kept in a good state of repair until the point that they can be acquired and re-occupied.

Address	Description of Condition
1646 BANCROFT AVE	overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on siding, trim, and wood shakes; roof damage; porch, garage, and gutters in disrepair.
1650 BANCROFT AVE	peeling paint on siding and trim; roof damage; gutters in disrepair.
1658 BANCROFT AVE	overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on siding, trim, and wood shakes; roof damage.
1924 COUNTRY CLUB AVE	overgrown vegetation; roof damage; garage in disrepair.
1607 E MIDLOTHIAN BLVD	severely overgrown; peeling paint on garage.
1703 E MIDLOTHIAN BLVD	overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on siding, trim, wood shakes and garage; porch in disrepair, held up by posts; outside stairs in disrepair.
2036 EVERETT AVE	overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on trim and garage.
4413 IRMA AVE	peeling paint on siding and trim, missing siding, outside stairs missing, soffit damage, roof damage, dead tree in yard.
1537 LYNN AVE	overgrown vegetation, porch and gutters in disrepair.
2021 LYNN AVE	overgrown vegetation, porch in disrepair; roof caving in.
1618 MEDFORD AVE	overgrown vegetation, roof and window trim damage.
1959 MEDFORD AVE	overgrown vegetation; upstairs window open; gutters need cleaned out.
4208 SHERIDAN RD	overgrown vegetation, porch roof completely missing, peeling paint on trim, porch pillars in disrepair, roof damage; slate shingles around house, secure.
1642 THALIA AVE	roof damage; moss; tarped.
1670 THALIA AVE	severe roof damage, garage in disrepair.
1952 THALIA AVE	overgrown vegetation, peeling paint on siding, roof damage, porch in disrepair.
1522 WAKEFIELD AVE	porch roof caving in, trash/debris on porch, overgrown vegetation in back, peeling paint on siding, stucco on sides, garage in disrepair.
2019 WAKEFIELD AVE	damaged siding; peeling paint on trim, exposed plywood on sides.
1618 WESTON AVE	overgrown vegetation, gutters need cleaned out, porch in disrepair.
1970 WESTON AVE	siding damage; peeling paint on siding, trim, wood shakes, and porch stairs; gutters need reattached.
1974 WESTON AVE	overgrown vegetation, roof damage, chimney needs repointed, partially boarded, gutters in disrepair, garage unsecure with peeling paint



# PRIORITY PROPERTIES: FORECLOSURE BOND REPAIR

The 2 properties below are priority properties for foreclosure bond repair.

Address	Description of Condition
1602 COUNTRY CLUB AVE	roof completely tarped.
4010 LEMOYNE AVE	roof damage on garage and house, peeling paint on garage doors, gutters need cleaned out, boarded.



4010 Lemoyne Ave.



4010 Lemoyne Ave. rear view

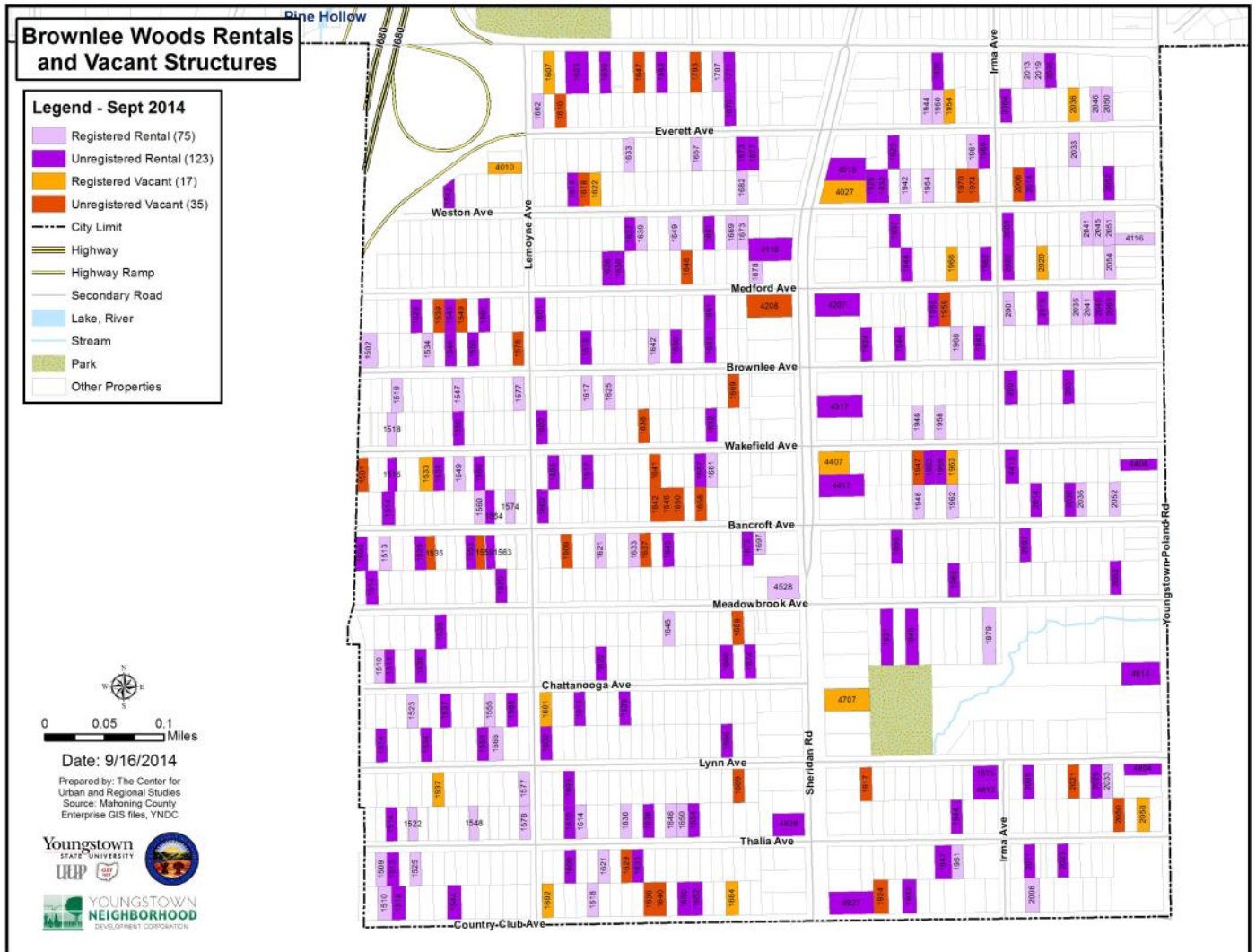


1602 Country Club



# RENTAL AND VACANT REGISTRATION

The following map identifies all registered rental and vacant properties within the neighborhood, with all the properties which are NOT registered but likely need to be registered identified as “Unregistered Vacant” or “Unregistered Rental.” Current registration data was obtained from the City of Youngstown Department of Property Registration and current ownership information was retrieved from the Mahoning County Auditor. Vacancy data was determined from a detailed property survey conducted by YNDC for the entire neighborhood.



All residential properties that are occupied and being rented must be registered with City of Youngstown. In total, there are 75 registered rental properties within the neighborhood and an additional 123 occupied houses that are likely rental properties which are unregistered. “Unregistered Rental” properties are properties that were either registered in the past two years but their registration is lapsed, or properties where the owner’s address is different from the address of the property, indicating that it is unlikely that the owner resides at the home. All properties that are not presently occupied and not actively being rented must be registered with the City of Youngstown as vacant. There are 17 registered vacant properties within the neighborhood, with an additional 35 “Unregistered Vacant” properties. These are properties that identified as vacant in the property survey conducted for the Neighborhood Action Plan where the owner has not registered the property with the City of Youngstown.

**Strategy Recommendation:** All of the unregistered vacant and rental property owners should receive an official notice to register as soon as possible. Investigative work should be completed by the City to identify any owners who do not respond to the notice and citations of \$100 per week per city ordinance should be issued in order to gain registration compliance.



# CRITICAL PROPERTIES FOR BOARDUP AND CLEANUP

The following 6 properties have been identified as priority properties for cleanup and board-up. All of these properties are among the worst in the neighborhood and have a primary strategy of Code Enforcement. In the event that owners do not take action to address the code violations it is suggested that these properties be cleaned up and boarded if necessary. While none are likely to be demolished, boarding, cleaning up trash and debris, and removing overgrowth will bring these properties into a manageable condition for residents.

Boarding and securing properties helps to prevent vandalism, theft, and drug-related activity from occurring inside the properties. Cutting down overgrowth and removing trash eliminates health hazards and improves visibility. Boards should be painted to resemble doors and windows to make these structures blend in better with the neighborhood, rather than stand out as eyesores.

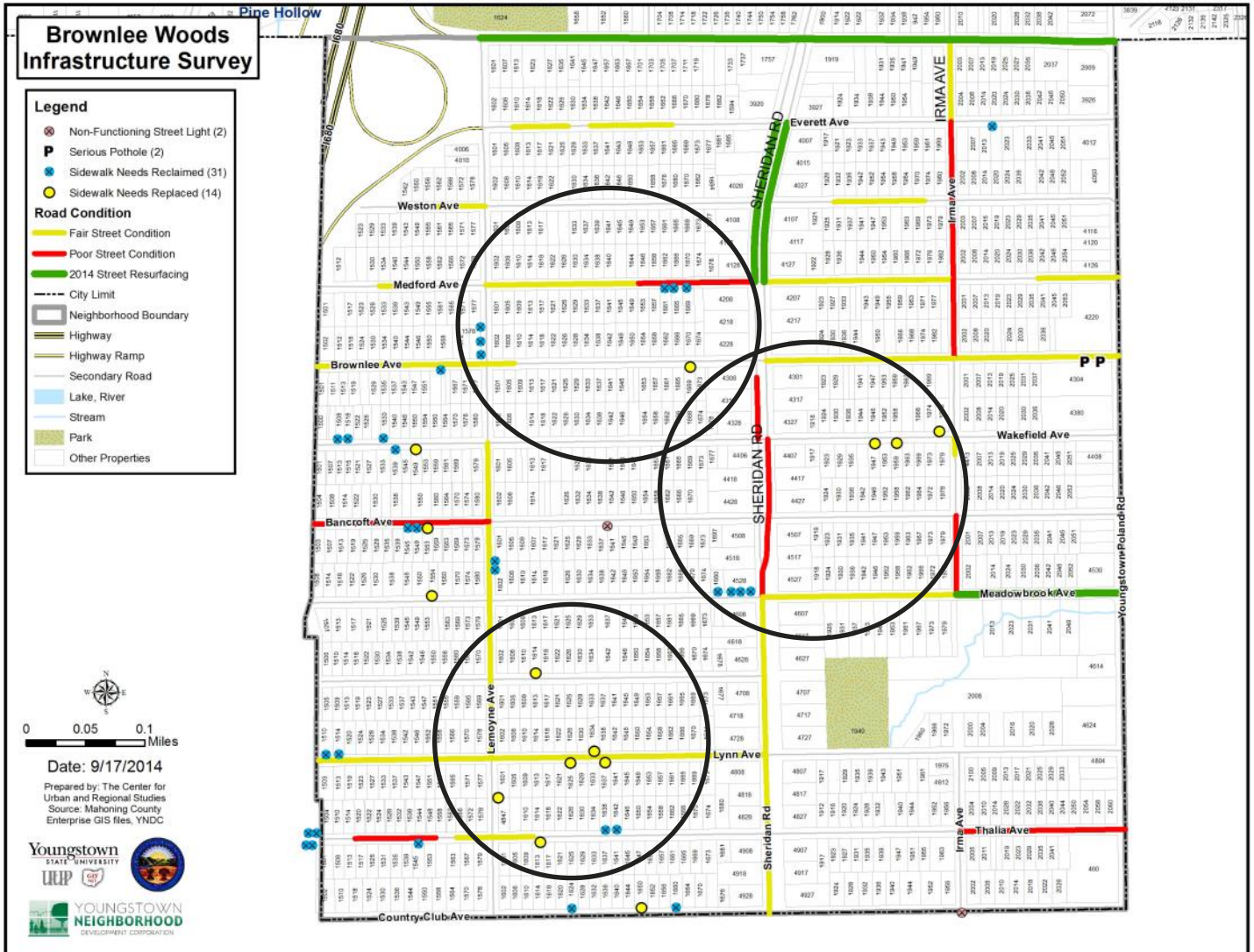
Address	Description of Condition	Strategy
1924 COUNTRY CLUB AVE	overgrown vegetation, roof damage, garage in disrepair.	Clean up.
1607 E MIDLOTHIAN BLVD	severely overgrown, peeling paint on garage.	Clean up.
2036 EVERETT AVE	overgrown vegetation, peeling paint on trim and garage.	Clean up.
1974 WESTON AVE	overgrown vegetation, roof damage, chimney needs repointed, partially boarded, gutters in disrepair, garage unsecure with peeling paint.	Clean up. Paint boards.
1954 EVERETT AVE	overgrown vegetation, side door and basement window open.	Board up.
1601 CHATTANOOGA	Rear garage door broken into.	Board up.



1974 Weston

# SECTION IV. INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

A detailed survey was conducted by YNDC to identify all roads, sidewalks, street lights, and other basic infrastructure and facilities issues that require attention throughout the neighborhood. The following map identifies the basic infrastructure issues that need addressed.



There are **2 street lights out** within the neighborhood. Pink circles indicate the location where a street light is out. There are a number of sidewalk issues throughout the neighborhood. Yellow circles identify sections of sidewalk that are either severely lifted up or severely cracked and need replaced. Blue circles indicate areas where sidewalks are covered in significant debris and overgrowth, but may be reclaimed and brought back into use if scraped and cleaned. Some of these sidewalks may ultimately need replacement, but this must be determined after they are uncovered.

Street conditions are also identified. Sections of street in red are in “poor” condition, with many potholes and uneven patches. Sections in yellow are in “fair” condition and have some patching and minor potholes. Sections that are highlighted in green are largely in poor condition, but the City presently plans to resurface these roads in 2014. Sections of road that are not highlighted are generally in “good” condition. Three clusters where infrastructure issues are concentrated were identified in the survey and are circled on the map.



## Infrastructure Strategy Recommendations:

1) **Focus street resurfacing improvements on critical thoroughfares and around core neighborhood institutions.** Streets in poor condition should be prioritized for street resurfacing in future years, followed by those in fair condition. Main thoroughfares, such as Sheridan Rd., should also be prioritized.

2) **Sidewalk replacement should be initially focused on Lynn Ave and Wakefield Ave.** A cluster of sidewalks that need replaced exists on Lynn Ave., a block west of Lynn Park, as well as a cluster in the 1900 block of Wakefield Ave.

3) **A concerted effort should be made to uncover and clean up overgrown sidewalks near most trafficked streets such as Midlothian and Sheridan.** Clusters of overgrown sidewalks exist near the corner of Meadowbrook Ave. and Sheridan Rd. and the end of Thalia Ave. These sidewalks should be scraped and cleaned of debris and overgrowth in order to enable people walking to local businesses to safely use them.

4) **All street lights which are out should be reported and tracked until addressed by Ohio Edison.** The 2 street lights should be replaced in a timely manner and must be reported to Ohio Edison in order to be addressed. This can be done through the First Energy website in a short time period First Energy provides a work order number through this system that can be used to follow up and track progress on light replacements. The URL for the online Report Lighting Problem system is as follows: [https://www.firstenergycorp.com/service\\_requests/report-lighting-problem.html](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/service_requests/report-lighting-problem.html). In September of 2014, YNDC reported all of these lights to First Energy using this system and developed a database for monitoring and tracking street light work orders.

5) **All dead street trees should be removed and new trees should be planted in the priority areas identified using the City of Youngstown Street Tree Planting Guide regulations.**

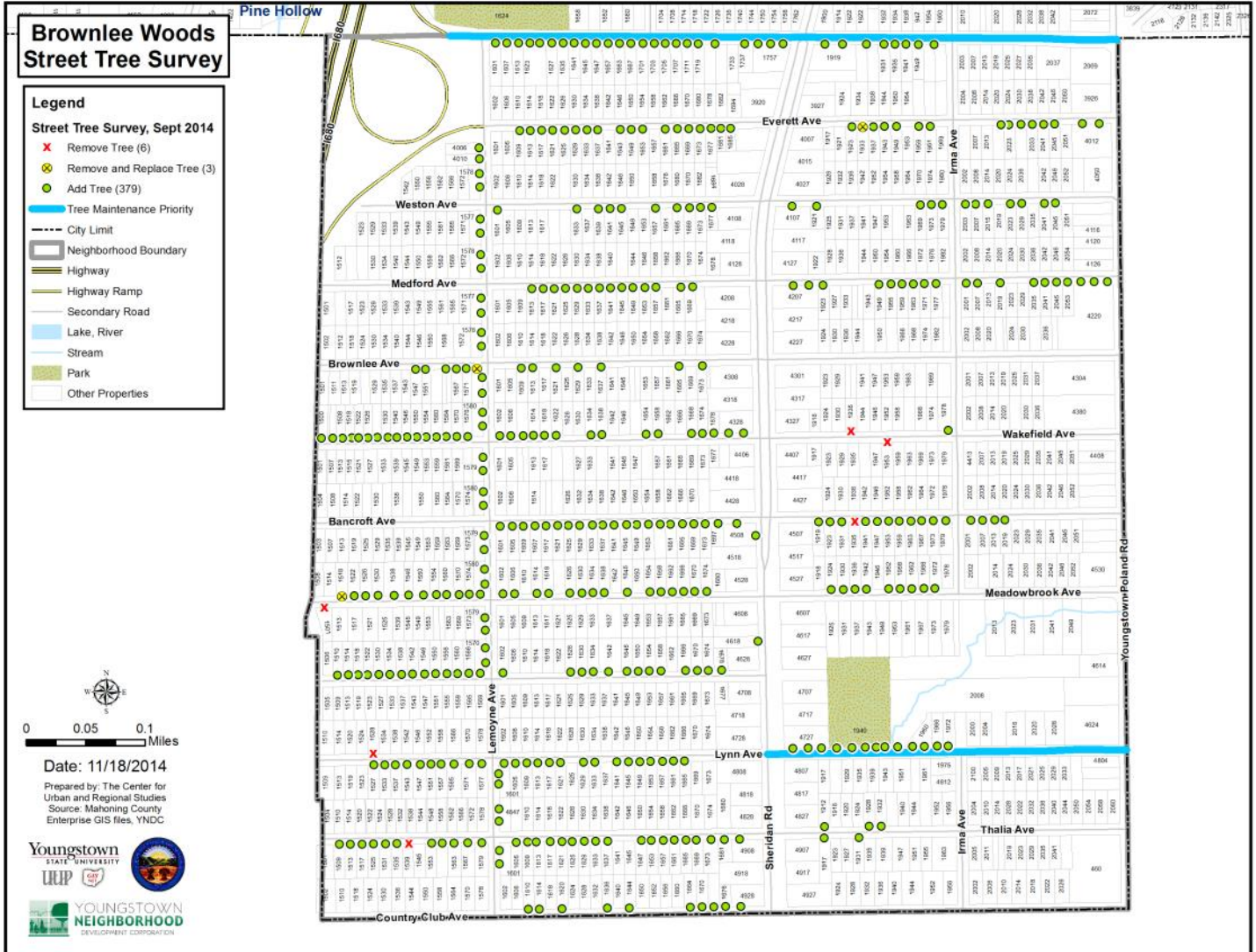
6) **New Welcome to Youngstown signage should be installed at gateways,** in Brownlee Woods along Youngstown–Poland Rd., visible to drivers headed north into Youngstown. Signage may be funded through solicitation of private funds and sponsorship.



Infrastructure improvements should be targeted near neighborhood assets, such as Brownlee Woods Library and Lynn Park. On streets leading to these assets, all sidewalks and street lights should be fully functional and streets in poor condition should be prioritized for resurfacing.

# STREET TREE REMOVAL AND PLANTING

The following map identifies the location of all dead street trees that need removed and all locations where new trees could be planted to rebuild the neighborhood tree canopy. Data for this map was collected through a detailed survey conducted by YNDC that identified all dead street trees and all tree lawns in the neighborhood where new street trees could easily be planted to re-establish the neighborhood's tree canopy. Tree lawns with

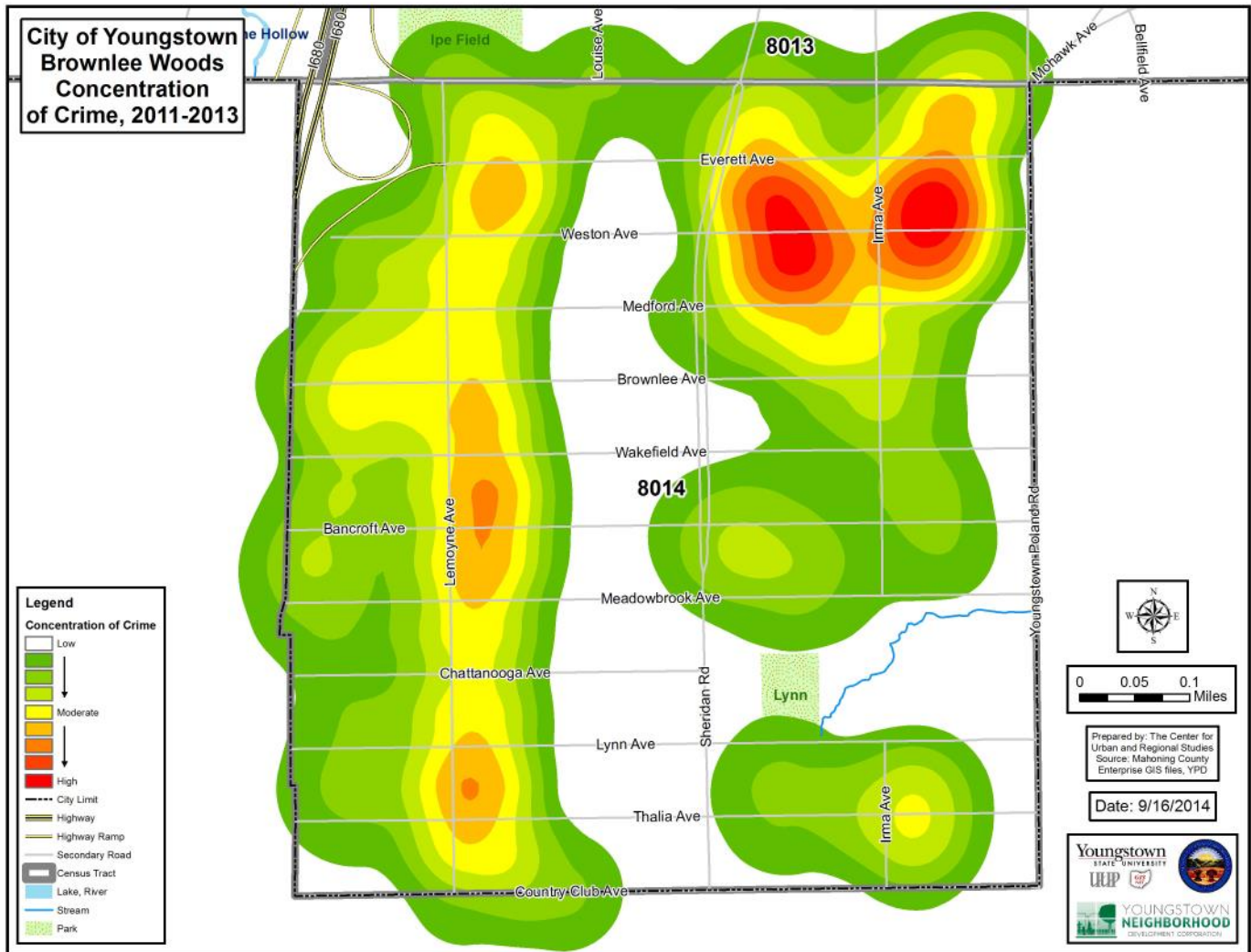


**Street Tree Strategy Recommendation:** Improving the condition of street trees in the neighborhood's was an infrastructure issue identified by residents, as was improving conditions along Brownlee Woods' key corridors. As such, dead tree removal and tree planting should be prioritized along and support existing reinvestment efforts along Midlothian and Lynn Ave near Lynn Park.



# SECTION V. NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME AND SAFETY

This heat map below illustrates “hot spots” or areas where there has been the most contact with the Youngstown Police Department. These are the locations of incidents at which the Youngstown Police Department has filed reports. Data collected includes all police reports filed at residential properties in the neighborhood between 2011 and 2013 that are violent, drug-related, and otherwise factors of distress. This also includes domestic incidences such as custody interference and runaway persons, which may not make the neighborhood less safe as a whole but may demonstrate patterns of neighborhood distress or disruption.



Properties included in this analysis include residences such as single-family, two-family, multiple-family and group home structures; and exclude commercial and recreational sites. Houses are a mix of rental, owner-occupied and vacant properties. One of the most valuable components of this data is that crime hotspots appear to be generally clustered in alignment with clusters of vacant and distressed properties and poor infrastructure conditions.

**Crime and Safety Strategy Recommendation:** The Neighborhood Action Team tasked to implement the plan should work with the newly-designated community police officer, code enforcement officials, and neighborhood residents to monitor these properties and to enforce all applicable codes to discourage criminal activity occurring at hotspot properties in the neighborhood. Targeted and systematic code enforcement sweeps and strict enforcement of rental and vacant registration, combined with door-to-door community policing efforts, should be utilized jointly to restore order to hot spot zones and prevent spillover effects of crime into adjacent areas.

## TOP 20 HOTSPOT PROPERTIES

The following addresses represent residential properties which have the highest number of police reports filed in the neighborhood. The total number of reports filed was tallied for the period between January 1, 2011 and December 31st, 2013.

Recurring police reports include Assault, Aggravated Assault, Runaway/Missing Persons, Menacing, Aggravated Menacing, Domestic Violence, Criminal Damaging, Towed Vehicles, and other related offenses.

Rank	Address	Number of Calls for Service, 2011 - 2013
1	A property in the 2000 block of E Midlothian	15
2	A property in the 1900 block of Weston	11
3	A property in the 2000 block of Weston	9
4	A property in the 1500 block of Medford	8
5	A property in the 2000 block of Thalia	8
6	A property in the 1600 block of Everett	8
7	A property in the 1900 block of Brownlee	7
8	A property in the 1900 block of Weston	7
9	A property in the 2000 block of Everett	7
10	A property in the 1600 block of Brownlee	7
11	A property in the 2000 block of Weston	6
12	A property in the 1500 block of Brownlee	6
13	A property in the 1600 block of Thalia	6
14	A property in the 1600 block of Country Club	6
15	A property in the 1900 block of Everett	6
16	A property in the 1500 block of Meadowbrook	5
17	A property in the 4000 block of Sheridan	5
18	A property in the 1500 block of Bancroft	5
19	A property in the 4500 block of Sheridan	5
20	A property in the 1900 block of Bancroft	4



## SECTION VI. NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION TEAM

A Neighborhood Action Team should be established immediately to oversee implementation of the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Action Plan in order to ensure continuous progress toward achieving objectives. The Team will also plan volunteer workdays, apply for grant funding, and seek sponsorship for neighborhood activities and projects. The Team should meet at minimum on a quarterly basis to review progress at achieving all objectives and benchmarks outlined in the plan. The Neighborhood Action Team should consist at minimum of representatives of the following entities:

- City of Youngstown Community Development Agency
- City of Youngstown Department of Planning and Zoning
- City of Youngstown Property Code Enforcement
- City of Youngstown Department of Public Works
- City of Youngstown Department of Parks and Recreation
- City of Youngstown Economic Development
- City of Youngstown Green Youngstown
- City of Youngstown Police Department Community Police Officer
- 7th Ward Councilman John R. Swierz
- 7th Ward Citizens Coalition
- Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Association

**Tracking Progress:** The activity of the partners involved in this plan will result in properties that are cleaned up, boarded, demolished, sold, and/or brought into compliance with city codes. Additionally, infrastructure issues and crime hotspots will be addressed. All of this activity is valuable information to be tracked as part of the 5-year performance benchmarks. The tracking form, shown on the following page, will be used by YNDC to measure quarterly progress toward achieving the plan's goals. All changes to individual property status will be filed in a database housed at YNDC and reviewed at each Neighborhood Action Team meeting. As properties cease to become priority properties, the "Top 30" list can be updated to include additional priorities. New properties may be brought to the team's attention by

residents, neighborhood groups, city departments, or YNDC surveys. The team will review the list of potential additions to the "Top 30" list and make a determination as to which should be included. As additional properties are added, updated priority lists will be distributed to team members.



Rocky Ridge Neighborhood Action Team

## Neighborhood Action Plan Progress Tracking Form

5-Year Performance Benchmark	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	2015- 2016 Total	2015- 2020 Goal
<b>Housing and Property Benchmarks</b>										
Housing units brought into compliance through										30
Vacant housing units are rehabilitated and re-occupied as affordable housing through collaborative efforts										5
Severely blighted structures are demolished										2
Vacant and formerly blighted housing units are cleaned up in order to improve neighborhood safety										5
Unmaintained vacant lots are mowed with a higher frequency using a strategic method										ALL
Vacant properties with illegal dumping are cleaned up										ALL
<b>Infrastructure Benchmarks</b>										
Non-functioning street lights repaired by First Energy										ALL
Sidewalks cleaned up or replaced where needed by a partnership between the City of Youngstown and residents										10
Dead street trees removed										ALL
New street trees and park trees planted										25
One new minimalist green infrastructure street improvement installed										1
<b>Crime and Safety Benchmarks</b>										
Crime hotspots are addressed through community policing and systematic code enforcement										10

## Neighborhood Action Plan Progress Tracking Form

5-Year Performance Benchmark	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	2015- 2016 Total	2015- 2020 Goal
<b>Community Building Benchmarks</b>										
Engage 20 new residents through the Brownlee Woods Neighborhood Association										20
Complete five resident-driven neighborhood improvement projects										5
Conduct a meeting of neighborhood businesses										1
Engage neighborhood institutions such as the Montessori School and Public Library										2
Install one "Welcome to Youngstown" sign										1
<b>Economic Development Benchmarks</b>										
Target city incentive programs to neighborhood retail node along Midlothian and Youngstown-Poland Rd										5
Improve at least two existing business facades or loans from the City of Youngstown										2
Provide two micro-enterprise loans to neighborhood entrepreneurs from YNDC										2
Create or retain 10 jobs										10

# APPENDIX 1. PUBLIC INPUT

The following input was obtained from residents at the March 20th neighborhood planning meeting at the Community Center. Attendees were asked to list what they believed to be their neighborhood's top three assets, top three priorities, and one thing the planning team needed to know.

Neighborhood Assets		
shopping on Yo Po Road	strong neighborhood attachment	churches
parks	strong neighborhood attendance in block watch	places of worship
parks	strong neighborhood groups / coalition	access to 680
parks	good streets	access to 680
parks & streams	grocery	access to 680
parks and recreation	grocery store	access to I-680
parks/playgrounds	historic construction (classic building styles)	access to I-680
parks/playgrounds	no one house is similar in design	centrally located between suburbs
playgrounds	diverse housing stock	businesses
good ground (not swampy area)	housing quality	businesses
7wcc and brownlee woods N.A.	nice kept home	proximity to business/services and other communities like Poland, Boardman, Struthers (thus schools)
block watch	quality housing	school
block watches	library	school
clean streets and good people around us	library	schools
engaged groups & individuals	library	schools (PC Bunn & Montessori)
neighborhood association/7WCC	library	sidewalks
neighbors	library	walkability
sense of community	library	church
sense of connectivity with others - clear boundaries, porches, sidewalks, trees	library	strong neighborhood association

Neighborhood Priorities		
more attractive gateway (Midlothian)	care of vacant homes/lots	roads
neighborhood involvement	Midlothian Blvd. cleaned up - code enforcement	poor street conditions
engagement by younger families	bad houses	poor street condition
economic development	strong code enforcement	police/speed
more businesses	code enforcement	improve traffic patterns / stop speeding
more development on south ave	get rid of blight ridden vacant homes	need more police patrol/neighborhood watch
dogs running loose	vacant homes	drug deals
home ownership and investment	boarded up homes	break ins
clean up Midlothian corridor / bring in small businesses	vacancy	crime (breaking and entering) drug deals
water distribution lines	crime - security	crime
code enforcement	Midlothian - walkability	crime
empty houses - need lawn maintenance	improve sidewalks	crime
investor owned property	poor road conditions	trash
absentee landlords	condition of Sheridan Blvd pot holes	
maintaining curb appeal and green space investment	potholes	



## “One thing we need to know”

decrease the gang membership in the 7th ward	to improve the enforcement in Youngstown	we need community organized solar panels on homes and businesses
the police don't respond very quickly	get rid of all the chained-up barking dogs!	people need to know that these neighborhoods are really nice places to live
drug house - corner south & east Judson	appearance of city is MOST important	Need to market our assets
protect our water supply and our homes from fracking	strict enforcement on section 8 housing	Try to clean up the neighborhood so the Youngstown 7 ward will have more things to do
I am a young professional trying to rehab property in Youngstown and have met with more hostility than help in dealing with city officials. The city is NOT encouraging or facilitating rehab. The focus is on demo and getting locals to pay.	need to change mindset and focus - great neighborhood chart - Facebook, websites are net positive to draw in buyers - speech too much to negatives. Even the neighborhood group names (brownlee Woods v ICU, boulevard park v eyes & ears, neighborhood association vs block watch)	marketing brownlee woods to potential owners - shale jobs, YBI, young professionals, as the 'ideal' place to invest in homeownership
paint Youngstown for owner occupied - more funds needs to be available - find ways to raise income eligibility	demolish as many houses as possible and revert to more common area	boulevard park has received over \$20,000 in grants from RJ Wean foundation over 5 years. With city assistance
house repaired	585 Lucius & 702 Detroit - children pass every day. School bus stops at Detroit and both are on school route. 2 blocks from school. Vagrants seen.	do not do a presentation based on 2010 data. At least change the date/year on the slide
by letting code enforcement slack off, peoples' lower class instincts have surfaced	585 Lucius, 702 Detroit - need demo- bus stop on Gibson where kids go to school	less talk, more action - contact neighborhood association
basic - good place to live - keep it clean	you already know this but SO much blight to be cleared out!	we have talked about these very "same" things for the past 20 years! And still no changes for the better
help us prevent our neighborhood from being just another blight ridden place - we are a sustainable neighborhood! Let's keep it that way	need to demolish vacant/abandoned properties and great a green area	people are important in the decisions you make
the ability of the city to deal with late property tax, code violations, and vacant homes stunts the stability of the quality of life in the city	empty lots, good to tear vacant houses down but no maintenance of lots	I live by south ave on Lucius and when the wards are redistricted I don't want to become part of the 6th ward. NEVER!!!
housing codes updated	Youngstown needs to foster better quality of life through job opportunities, better schools, and better housing conditions to DRIVE population growth	we love Youngstown - most of lansingville neighbors left because of city SCHOOLS. If schools (public) are not fixed, we will NOT have good neighborhoods
housing repair - if things get bad, people will move	if things get worse, people will start moving	potholes - beechwood PI & Roxbury
if things continue to deteriorate - more citizens will be fleeing the 7th ward	quality of life violations are overwhelming and causing residents to leave	it's a "first impression" if you exit at Midlothian Blvd.

# **BROWNLEE WOODS NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN**



**820 CANFIELD ROAD  
YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO 44511  
PHONE: 330.480.0423 | FAX: 330.259.7575  
INFO@YNSDC.ORG | www.yndc.org**



**YOUNGSTOWN  
NEIGHBORHOOD**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION