

Executive Summary

The Abayomi Community Development Corporation practicum team performed a housing analysis and demographic study of a specific neighborhood in Northwest Detroit. It is within this neighborhood that the client, the Abayomi CDC, seeks to increase homeownership, quality of life, and community spirit and activism. Our recommendations for the neighborhood are put forth with a view towards these diverse objectives.

To produce a product that addresses these concerns, the practicum team's efforts were concentrated into two areas: gathering demographic information pertaining to the targeted neighborhood, as well as for surrounding comparable communities and jurisdictions; and performing a housing survey of every residential parcel in a specified "core area" of the neighborhood.

The targeted neighborhood—which is the service area of the Abayomi CDC—shows some signs of concern similar to those found in Detroit as a whole. The neighborhood, however, is in better condition than Detroit as a whole and many surrounding suburban communities as well. Demographic information obtained on the Abayomi service area neighborhood shows that many in key housing characteristics, including vacancy rate and owner occupancy, the service area compares favorably to neighboring communities; while in other demographic categories, such as income and poverty level, the service area struggles in comparison to these same surrounding towns.

Furthermore, much of the information about the residential condition of the neighborhood was gathered firsthand, by way of a windshield survey and housing unit evaluation that was performed on the smaller core area. In this area, which is approximately one-half square mile and located in the far northwest corner of the Abayomi CDC service area, the team observed the condition of existing housing stock and land use in a survey that occurred across approximately four weeks. The results of this evaluation of approximately 578 houses bears out that the condition of the housing stock in the neighborhood is quite good. 72 percent of the houses were rated "good"; 26 percent were rated "fair". 2 percent were rated "poor". Furthermore, owner-occupancy levels within the "core" area are strong and vacancy rates are notably low.

Consequently, the practicum team submits the following recommendations:

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- An emphasis on home maintenance and repair, through MSHDA loans, the purchasing of tools, education programs, and the expansion of existing assistance programs.
- An increase in owner-occupancy by seeking MSHDA funding, and by forming a land bank for the rehabilitation and resale of blighted properties.