After School:
Detroit Historic Vacant School Property Study

April 2021

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Appendix: School Ranking Tables

Project Overview

The *Detroit Vacant Historic School Building Disposition Strategy* is the result of a one year study of vacant schools in Detroit conducted by the City of Detroit in 2020.

The objective of this project was to complete a holistic, comparative study of 63 vacant school properties (VSPs) in Detroit—including 39 owned by the City of Detroit (City) and 24 owned by the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD)—and to make recommendations regarding their redevelopment potential.

One key goal of this project was to develop a set of citywide metrics and strategies that can be broadly applied to VSPs across the city in order to assess, prioritize, and market them for redevelopment. A second major goal was to identify the opportunities and challenges of preserving, rehabbing, and reusing historic vacant school buildings, and imagine new futures for these special places.

The project scope included:

- **Site visits** to each of the 63 VSPs included in the study, up to 4 hours each, conducted from January to August 2020
- **Detailed building conditions assessments of 39 City-owned VSPs.** Assessments include interior and exterior walkthroughs and detailed assessments of building envelope, structural systems, architectural characteristics, and historic significance.
- **Reconnaissance-level conditions assessments of 24 DPSCD-owned VSPs.** Assessments include interior and exterior walkthroughs, and assessments of building envelope and architectural characteristics.
- **Building conditions summary reports** for all VSPs, including descriptions of the overall condition of the structure, facade, and roof systems, and an overall Building Risk Index (BRI) score that based on the type, severity, and distribution of distress.
- **Order-of-magnitude construction cost estimates** for general building stabilization and rehabilitation (to a greybox state) for all VSPs.
- **Neighborhood analysis** for all VSPs, including mapping surrounding building stock, open space, land use, ownership, and key neighborhood assets.
- **Market analysis** for all VSPs, including demographic trends, economic trends, and key real estate market indicators.
- **Redevelopment recommendations** for all VSPs including for sites that are viable for reuse and for those deemed non-viable.
- **Investment memos** for high-potential City-owned VSPs, including schematic-level reuse scenarios, order-of-magnitude construction costs, and pro forma templates.
- **A website** to serve as a public-facing repository of information

about each of the City-owned VSPs, as well as resources promoting and facilitating the disposition and reuse of these sites. The website serves as a platform for community engagement and as a marketing tool.

The core project team included:

- City of Detroit Planning and Development Department (PDD)
- City of Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD)
- City of Detroit Department of Neighborhoods (DON)
- Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD)
- Interboro Partners - Lead consultant, architecture and urban design
- Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates (WJE) - structural engineering
- BJH Advisors - Real estate and economic development
- A.M. Higley - Construction cost estimating

Additional support was provided by the following partners:

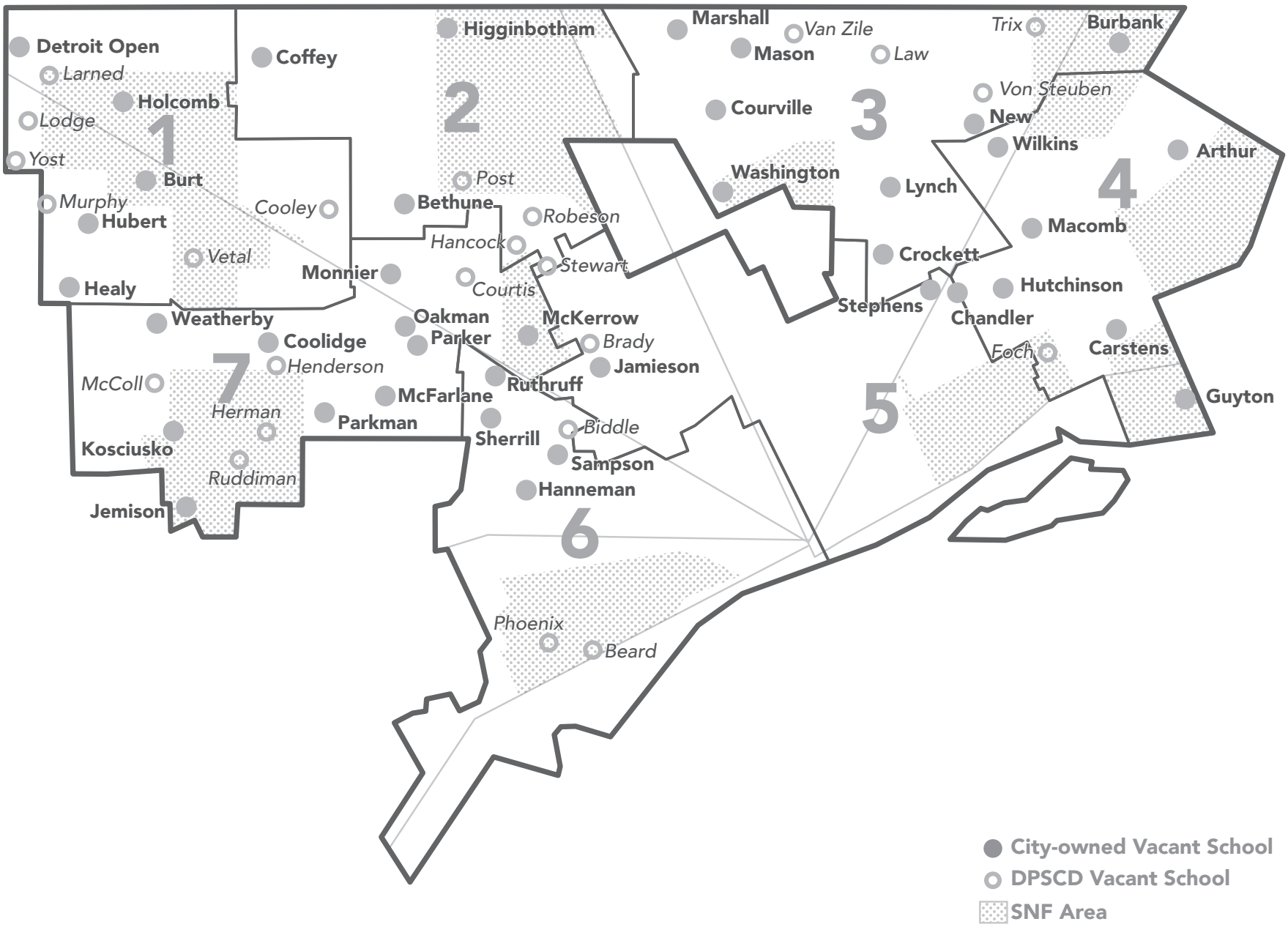
- Detroit Building Authority
- Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board
- Detroit Parks and Recreation
- Detroit Economic Development Corporation
- Granco Security

The following organizations contributed their time and shared insights from their own development experience for this project:

- Curtis Building Company
- Midtown Detroit Inc.
- Q Factor
- Artspace Consulting

Finally, the project team thanks the many caring and concerned Detroiters who came forward to share their memories, ideas, and wishes for the vacant historic schools in their communities. These historic schools served as anchors of your communities for many decades, and we sincerely hope that this project will pave the way toward new uses for these important places that will serve Detroit for decades to come.

Vacant School Properties



City of Detroit-owned Vacant School Properties

District	Name	Address
1	Burt	20710 Pilgrim
1	Detroit Open	24601 Frisbee
1	Healy	12834 West Parkway
1	Holcomb	18100 Bentler
1	Hubert	14825 Lamphere
2	Bethune	10763 Fenkell
2	Coffey	19300 Lindsay
2	Higginbotham	20119 Wisconsin
3	Burbank	15600 E State Fair
3	Courville	18040 St. Aubin
3	Crockett	8950 St. Cyril
3	Lynch	7575 Palmetto
3	Marshall	1255 E State Fair
3	Mason	19635 Mitchell
3	New	17142 Rowe
3	Washington	13000 Dequindre
4	Arthur	10125 King Richard
4	Carstens	2550 Coplin
4	Guyton	355 Philip
4	Hutchinson	5220 French
4	Macomb	12051 Evanston
4	Wilkins	12501 Hamburg
5	Chandler	9227 Chapin
5	Jamieson	2900 W Philadelphia
5	Stephens	5974 Seneca
6	Hanneman	6420 McGraw
6	Ruthruff	6311 W Chicago
6	Sampson	6075 Begole
6	Sherrill	7300 Garden
7	Coolidge	16501 Elmira
7	Jemison	6201 Auburn
7	Kosciusko	20390 Auburn
7	McFarlane	8900 Cheyenne
7	McKerrow	4800 Collingwood
7	Monnier	13600 Ward
7	Oakman	12920 Wadsworth
7	Parker	12744 Elmira
7	Parkman	15000 Mackenzie
7	Weatherby	12099 Fielding

DPSCD-owned Vacant School Properties

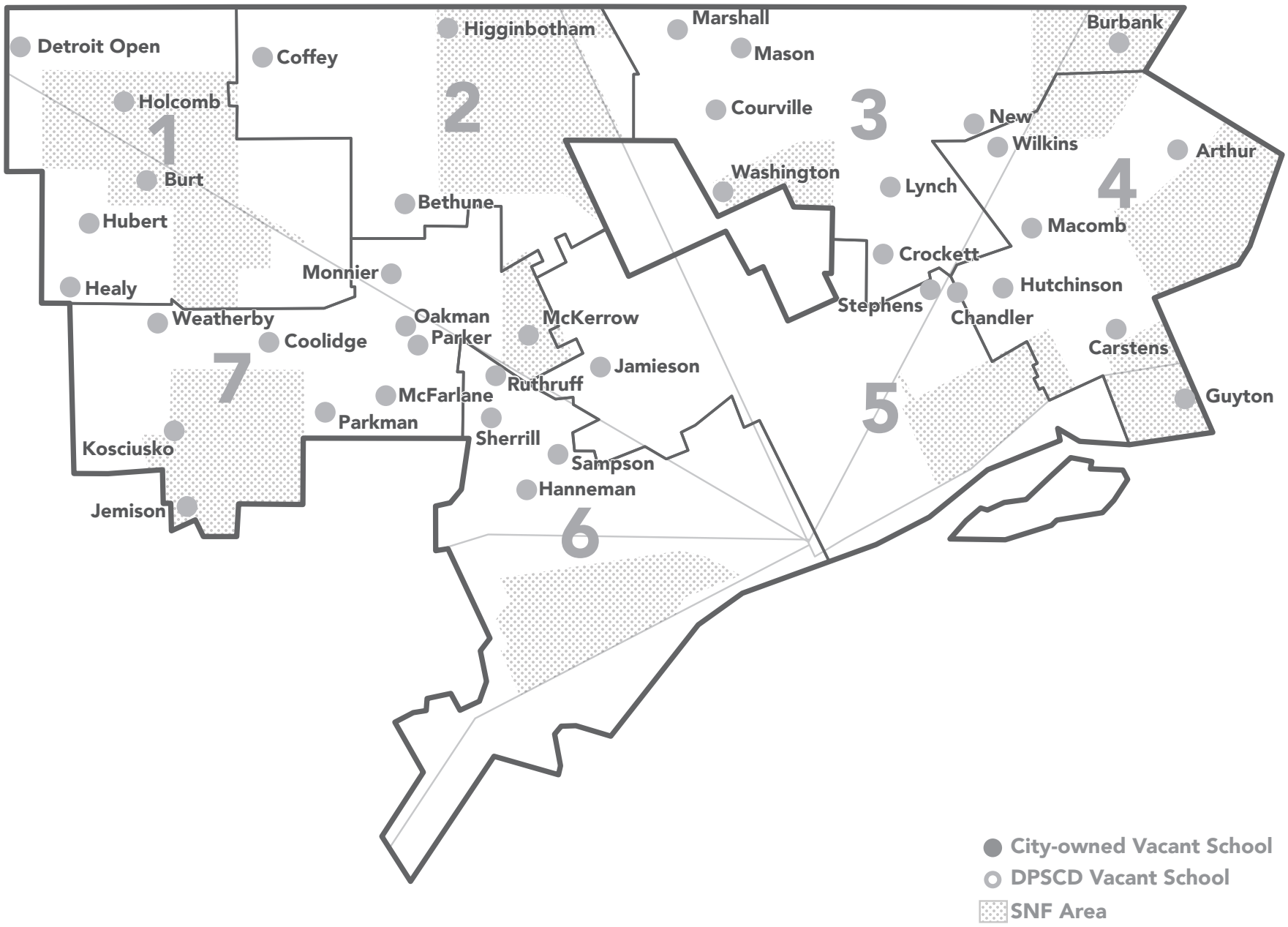
District	Name	Address
1	Cooley	15055 Hubbell
1	Larned	23700 Clarita
1	Lodge	17454 Lenore
1	Murphy	23901 Fenkell
1	Vetal	14200 Westwood
1	Yost	16161 Winston
2	Hancock	2220 Ewald Circle
2	Post	8200 Midland
2	Robeson	14900 Parkside
2	Stewart	13120 Wildemere
3	Law	19490 Carrie
3	Trix	13700 Bringard
3	Van Zile	2915 E Outer Drive
3	Von Steuben	12300 Linnhurst
4	Foch	2962 Fairview
5	Brady	2920 Joy
6	Beard	840 Waterman
6	Biddle	4601 Seebaldt
6	Phoenix	7735 Lane
7	Courtis	8100 W Davison
7	Henderson	9600 Mettetal
7	Herman	16400 Tireman
7	McColl	20550 Cathedral
7	Ruddiman	7350 Southfield

City-Owned Vacant Schools

This study of Detroit's historic vacant school properties was led by the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, with additional support from Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD). The consulting team conducted assessments of 63 vacant school properties owned by both the City and DPSCD; however, since this was a City-led study, special emphasis was placed on the 39 properties owned by the City.

The following section contains a series of recommendations and priority lists for the 39 City-owned vacant school properties. While the discussion is specifically about the City-owned properties, the general principles may be applied to all historic vacant school properties in Detroit, regardless of ownership.

City-Owned Vacant School Properties



Priority Sites: SNF

Priority #1: Redevelop vacant school sites located in Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) Areas.

SNF areas have already been identified as high-potential neighborhoods, and vacant school redevelopment projects there will benefit from targeted funding resources, clear planning and development priorities, a mobilized community, political will, and positive synergies from other nearby development projects. Vacant school redevelopments will be among the largest and highest-profile projects in the SNF area and can play an important role in catalyzing smaller developments around them.Conversely, vacant schools that are not redeveloped promptly and continue to be large, visible sites of blight may put a damper on other revitalization efforts within the SNF area, especially when located in dense neighborhoods or near key community hubs.

DBA should take immediate steps to waterproof roofs, ensure drainage, and secure SNF schools, starting with schools that are in the best condition.

The City should aggressively seek out development opportunities for the most viable SNF schools, and plan to issue RFPs in the next 1-2 years.

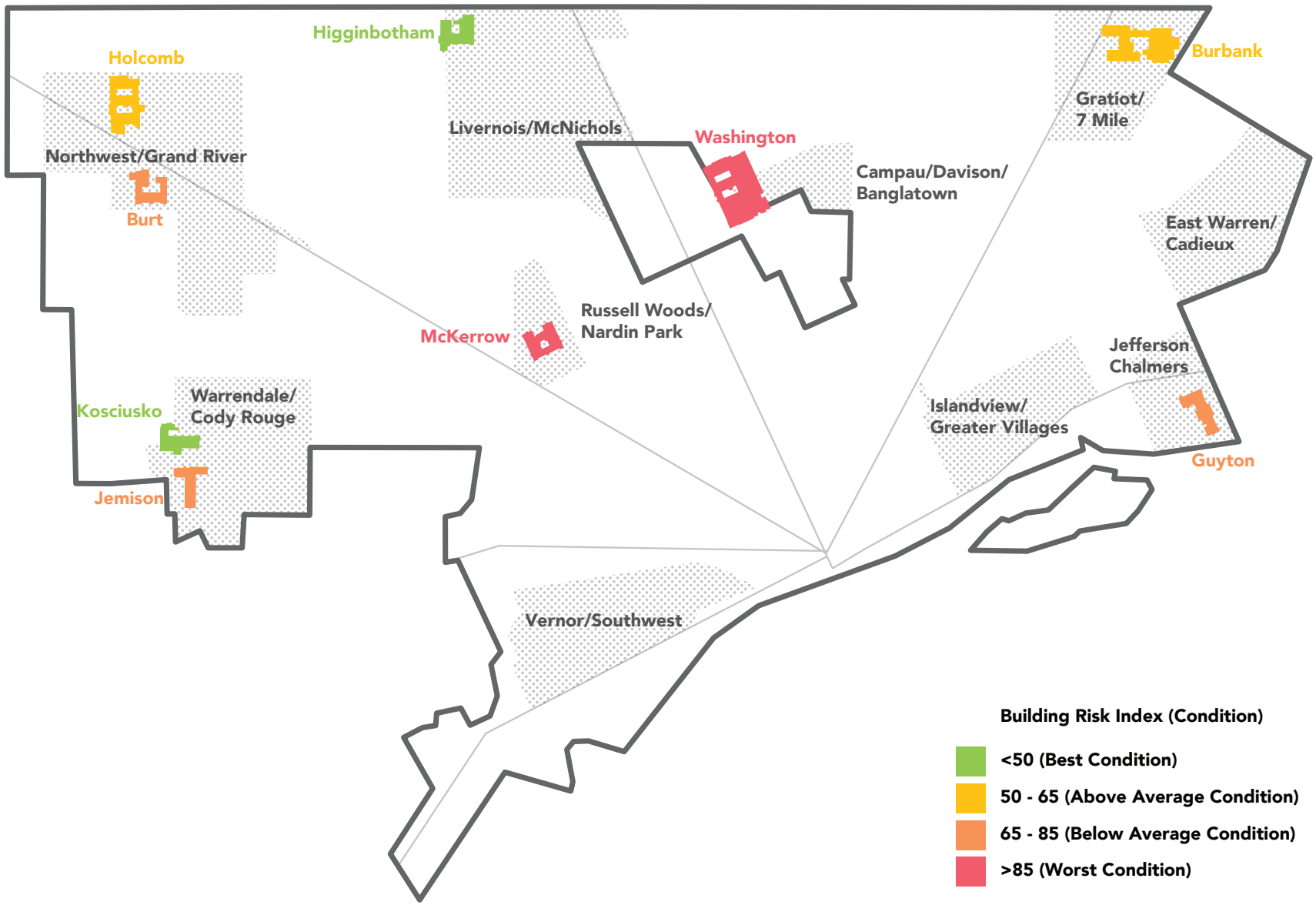
There are nine City-owned vacant schools located in seven different SNF areas. These sites can be placed in three groups:

Group 1: Preserve and Redevelop
Higginbotham, Holcomb, Kosciusko
Three schools in good condition, strong neighborhood and/or market indicators, and good historic integrity. The City should seek redevelopment proposals that will preserve the existing buildings. If no proposals emerge, the buildings should be stabilized and mothballed; demolition should be avoided.

Group 2: Neighborhood Catalysts
Burbank, Guyton, Jemison, Burt
Four schools in fair condition but in stronger neighborhoods. Each of these buildings has challenges that will make redevelopment more difficult, but they should not be left standing vacant for long. The City should be aggressive in marketing these schools for preservation and reuse; however, the City should remain open to development proposals that would demolish parts or all of the current buildings in order to make way for new development that can benefit the surrounding community.

Group 3: Challenge sites
McKerrow, Washington
These schools are in below-average condition and in more distressed neighborhoods, making them the most difficult to rehabilitate. If there is no immediate path to redevelopment, these schools should be stabilized and mothballed while City resources are directed towards other priority development projects in the SNF area. A tactical preservation approach, including site activations that do not use the building itself, could help seed interest in more permanent solutions. However, if building conditions deteriorate or the building becomes a nuisance or public safety hazard, the City should consider demolition in order to minimize negative effects on the surrounding neighborhood.

City-owned VSPs in SNF Areas



Priority Sites: Building Condition

Priority #2: Protect schools still in good condition.

With fewer technical hurdles and lower redevelopment cost, these may provide easier opportunities for a broader pool of potential developers, including smaller and less-experienced developers. The longer these schools remain vacant, the greater the risk that their condition will deteriorate, making them harder to market and substantially driving up the cost to rehabilitate them. For the schools in the best condition, the City must act rapidly; their redevelopment potential may never be higher.

For this study, schools were evaluated and ranked based on the observed condition of structural systems, facades, roofs, and adjusting for the severity, pervasiveness, and potential consequences of distress or damage.

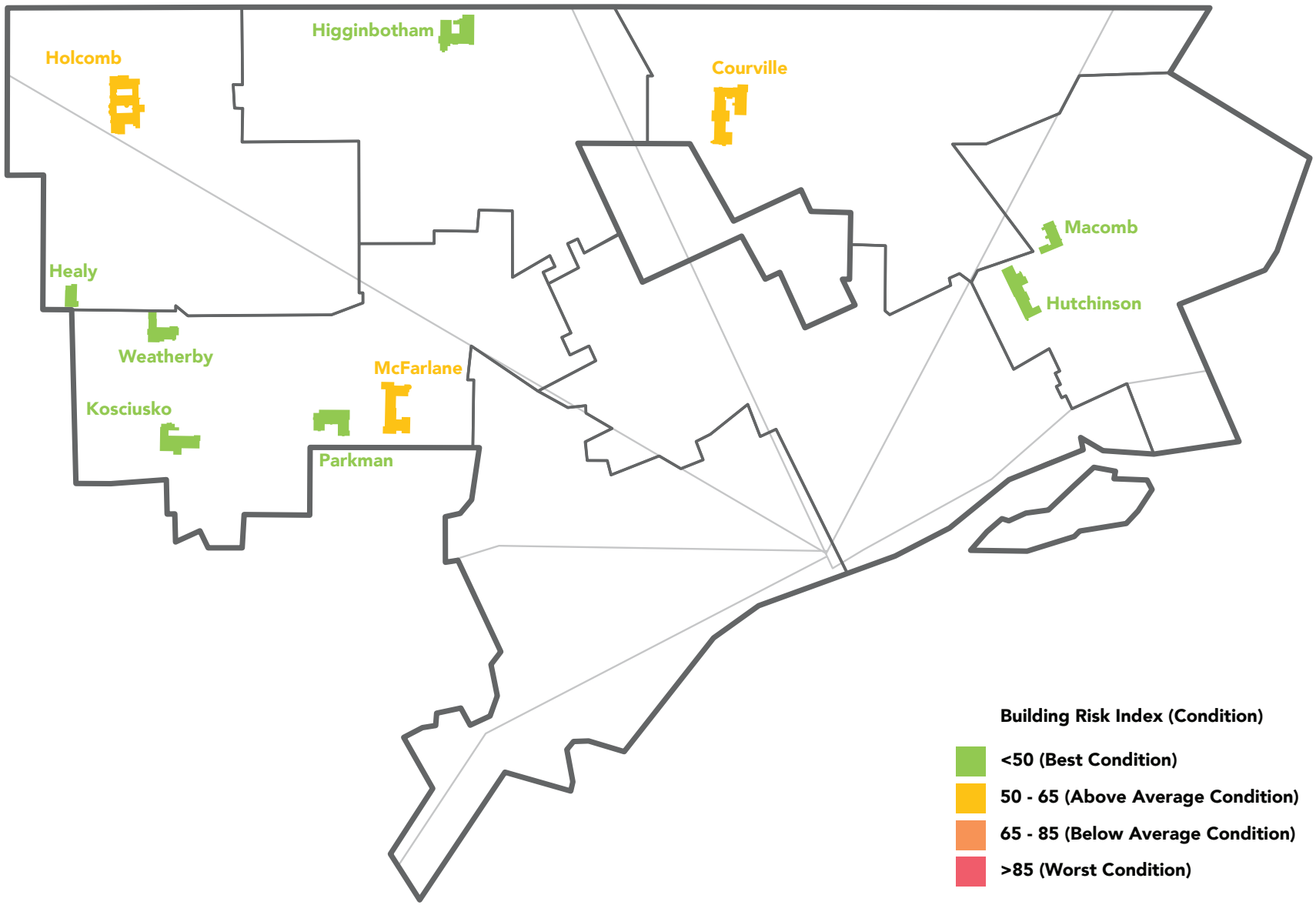
The ten schools in best condition can be placed in three groups:

Group 1: SNF
Higginbotham, Holcomb, Kosciusko
See notes in previous section—these schools are already high-priority sites due to their SNF status; their excellent condition makes them top-priority among SNF schools.

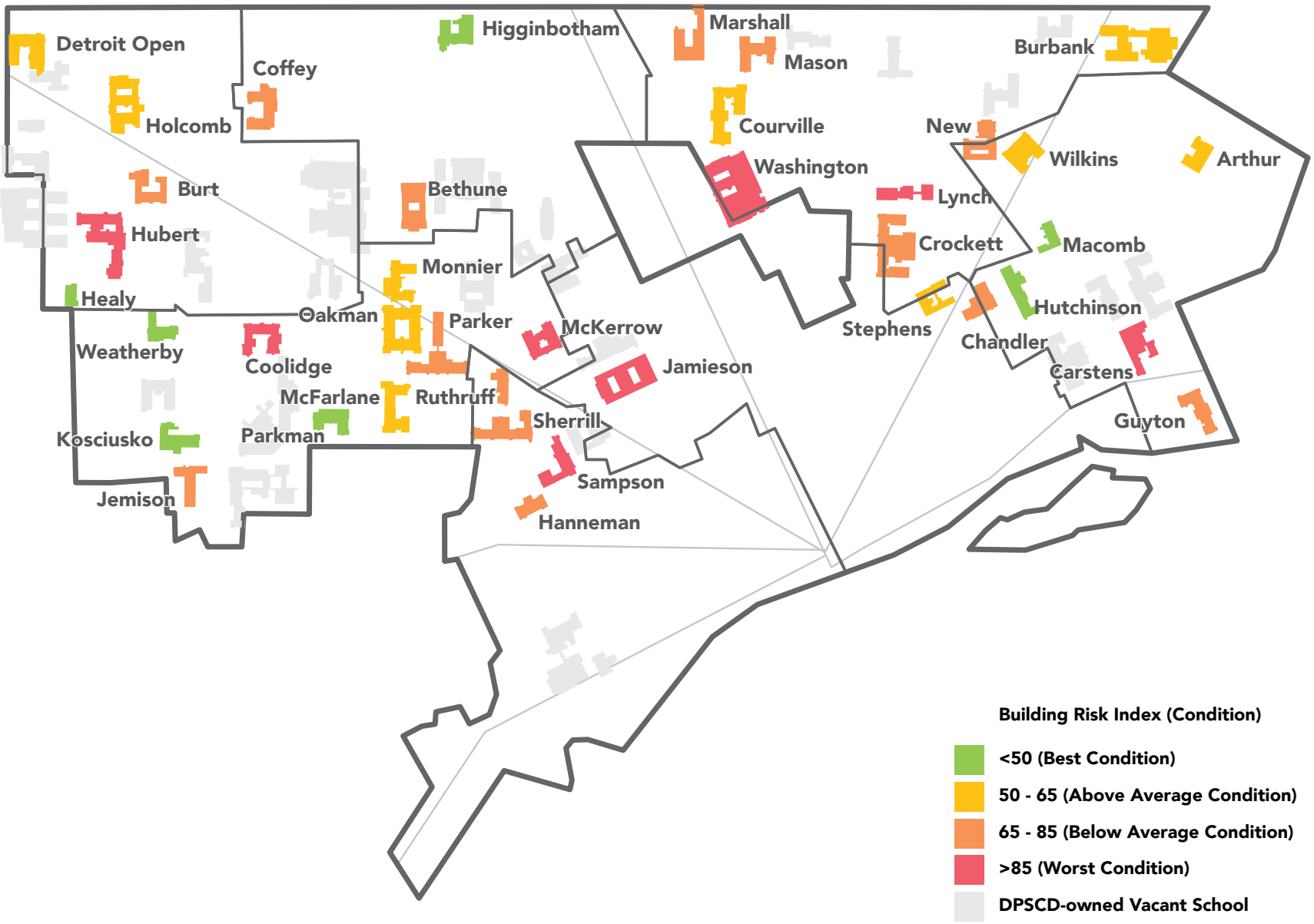
Group 2: Low-hanging Fruit
Weatherby, Healy, Parkman
These West Side schools make up three of the top five schools in best condition. Weatherby and Healy, the top two schools overall, are also small buildings, meaning their estimated rehabilitation costs are significantly lower than most other schools in this study. Because they are in relatively stable neighborhoods, these three schools are among the highest-priority development sites outside SNF areas. These schools should appeal to groups that desire a faster turnaround and a less-challenging project, including smaller developers and community organizations.

Group 3: Save for Later
Macomb, Hutchinson, Courville, McFarlane
These four schools are in good condition, but are located in more distressed neighborhoods or weaker real estate markets. They should be highlighted in the City's marketing efforts, but if no immediate path to redevelopment emerges, they should be stabilized and mothballed for the near- and medium-term.

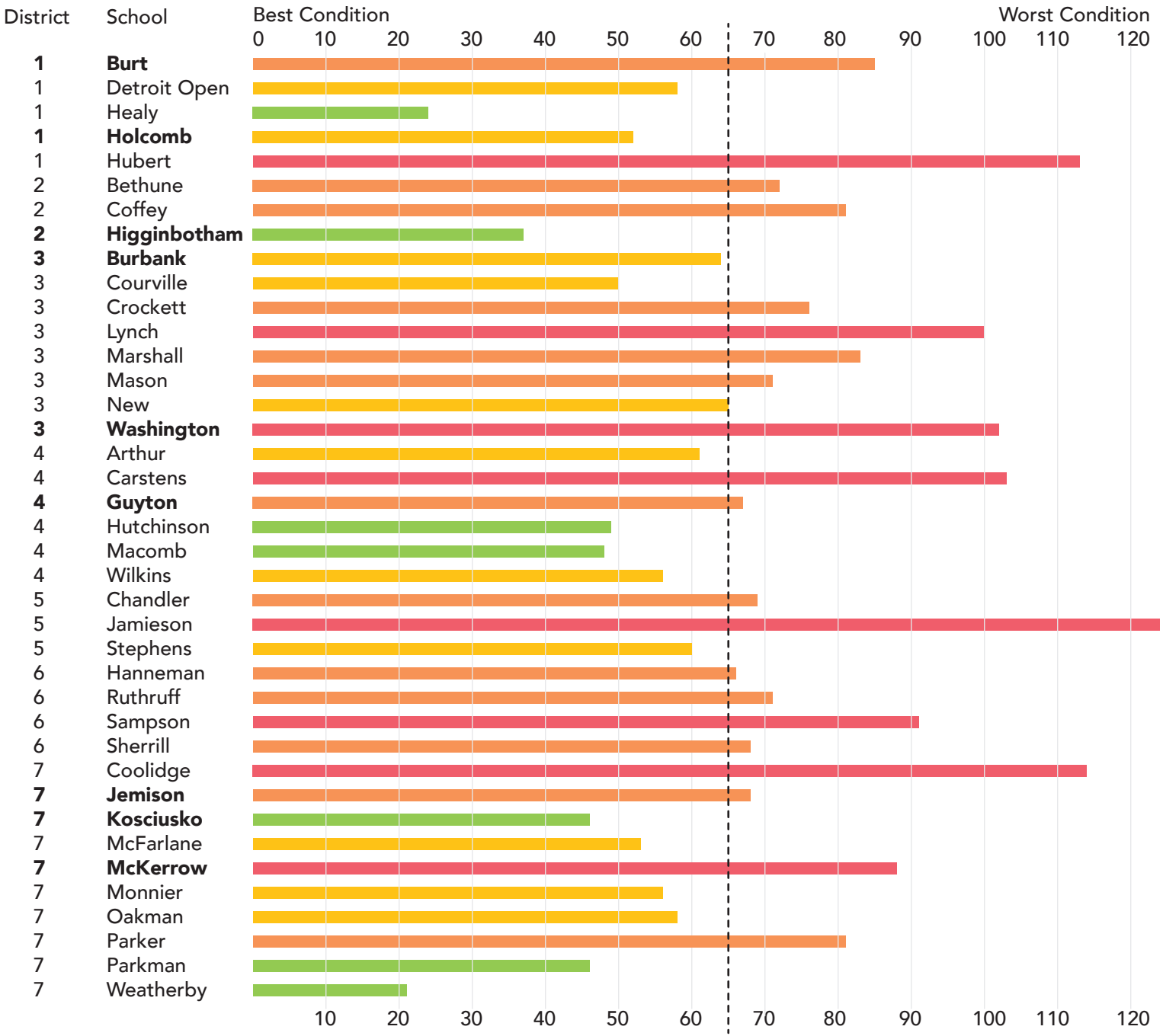
Ten City-owned VSPs in Best Condition



All City-owned VSPs by Condition



City-owned VSPs by Condition



Priority Sites: Neighborhood

Priority #3: Take near-term action at school sites in strong neighborhoods

Vacant schools in more stable, denser neighborhoods should either be redeveloped themselves, or demolished so that their sites can be redeveloped in the near-term. These schools may be the most prominent examples of blight in their neighborhood and allowing them to remain vacant for an extended period of time risks a negative impact on their surroundings. For these schools, security and exterior maintenance should also be priorities, in order to reduce blight and increase safety and curb appeal. Neighborhood stewardship and activation of the school grounds should be encouraged.

The neighborhoods around each vacant school site were evaluated and ranked based on:

- Walkability and access to quality transit
- Availability of civic amenities like parks, schools, libraries and rec centers within walking distance
- Distance to the nearest stable business corridor
- Percentage of vacant and DLBA-owned properties within a quarter-mile radius
- Demographic indicators such as household income, home values, educational attainment, and poverty rates
- Number of active community development and grassroots organizations whose territories include the school site.

The ten schools with the highest scoring neighborhoods can be placed in three groups:

Group 1: SNF Schools
Jemison, Burbank, Guyton, Higginbotham, Kosciusko, Burt

See notes on SNF sites above. Within this set of schools, Higginbotham and Kosciusko of highest priority for preservation because of their excellent condition. The remaining four schools should be marketed for near-term redevelopment of their buildings OR their sites, but should not be left vacant for long.

Group 2: Low-Hanging Fruit
Healy
Healy is in excellent condition and the smallest school in the study, meaning it should be among the least expensive rehabilitation projects. Its surrounding neighborhood stands out for having one of the lowest vacancy rates in the city, with almost no Land Bank-owned properties. This property should be redeveloped immediately, in order to prevent it from becoming a source of blight in an otherwise stable neighborhood.

Group 3: Decisive Action
Hanneman, New, Coffey
These schools are located in promising neighborhoods, but the buildings themselves are in fair to below-average condition. If these buildings are ignored and allowed to deteriorate further, they could have increasingly negative effects on the surrounding neighborhoods. If no clear near- to mid-term path to redevelopment exists, then the City should consider demolishing these schools in order to remove the blight. The remaining open space can be a site for future new construction, or for community-driven, land-based productive or recreational uses.

Priority Sites: Real Estate Market

Priority #4: Redevelop sites located in strong real estate markets

While the multifamily and commercial real estate markets for Detroit's neighborhoods remains weak overall, some areas show promise—particularly in SNF areas, areas near the Downtown-Midtown core, and neighborhoods near Detroit's suburban neighbors. These areas offer higher development potential for the school buildings themselves, as well as potential for new construction on the open space surrounding the school—which may in turn offset the costs of historic rehabilitation. Where the historic school buildings themselves are in good condition or of particular historic significance, preservation should be a priority; if protected, the schools may remain mothballed while being marketed for redevelopment. Where the school buildings are in poor condition or low historic value, demolition may be an option for creating space for new development.

Real estate markets were evaluated on a wide range of criteria for multifamily residential, retail, office, and industrial development, and ranked based on an overall composite score. Inputs included:

- Eligibility for special incentives, including SNF, New Market Tax Credits, and Opportunity Zone status
- Accessibility, including walkscore, proximity to commercial corridors, and distance to nearest freeway access
- The inventory of nearby multifamily, commercial, and industrial buildings, including available square footage, vacancy rates, and rent per square foot and per unit.
- Demographics trends, including projected population change for the overall population and seniors
- Amount of recent construction activity, indicated by building alteration permits.

The ten schools with the best-performing markets can be placed in three groups:

Group 1: SNF, better condition
Holcomb, Higginbotham, Guyton, Burbank

Group 2: SNF, worse condition
Jemison, Burt, Washington, McKerrow

Group 3: Non-SNF opportunities
Detroit Open, Parkman

Priority #5: Identify commercial or mixed-use developments for school sites on commercial corridors

Most schools in this study are located within low-density residential neighborhoods, with deep setbacks and limited street access. While these factors do not rule out commercial, industrial, or mixed-use developments, they do pose challenges. A small number of schools, however, are located directly on commercial corridors, making them uniquely suited for non-residential or mixed-use projects. These four schools are:

Ruthruff
located at the interchange of a major commercial artery and interstate freeway (Livernois and I-96). Also, this site is zoned B4 commercial, the only school with non-residential zoning.

Bethune, Marshall, New
Located on secondary neighborhood-oriented business corridors.

Priority Sites: Proximities

The neighborhood and real estate market recommendations on the previous pages are based on holistic assessments that tie together a number of important location-based factors.

The maps and discussion on the following pages zoom in on some of these important individual factors that contribute to the overall strength of a neighborhood or real estate market: proximity to local economic hubs, freeways, and community resources.

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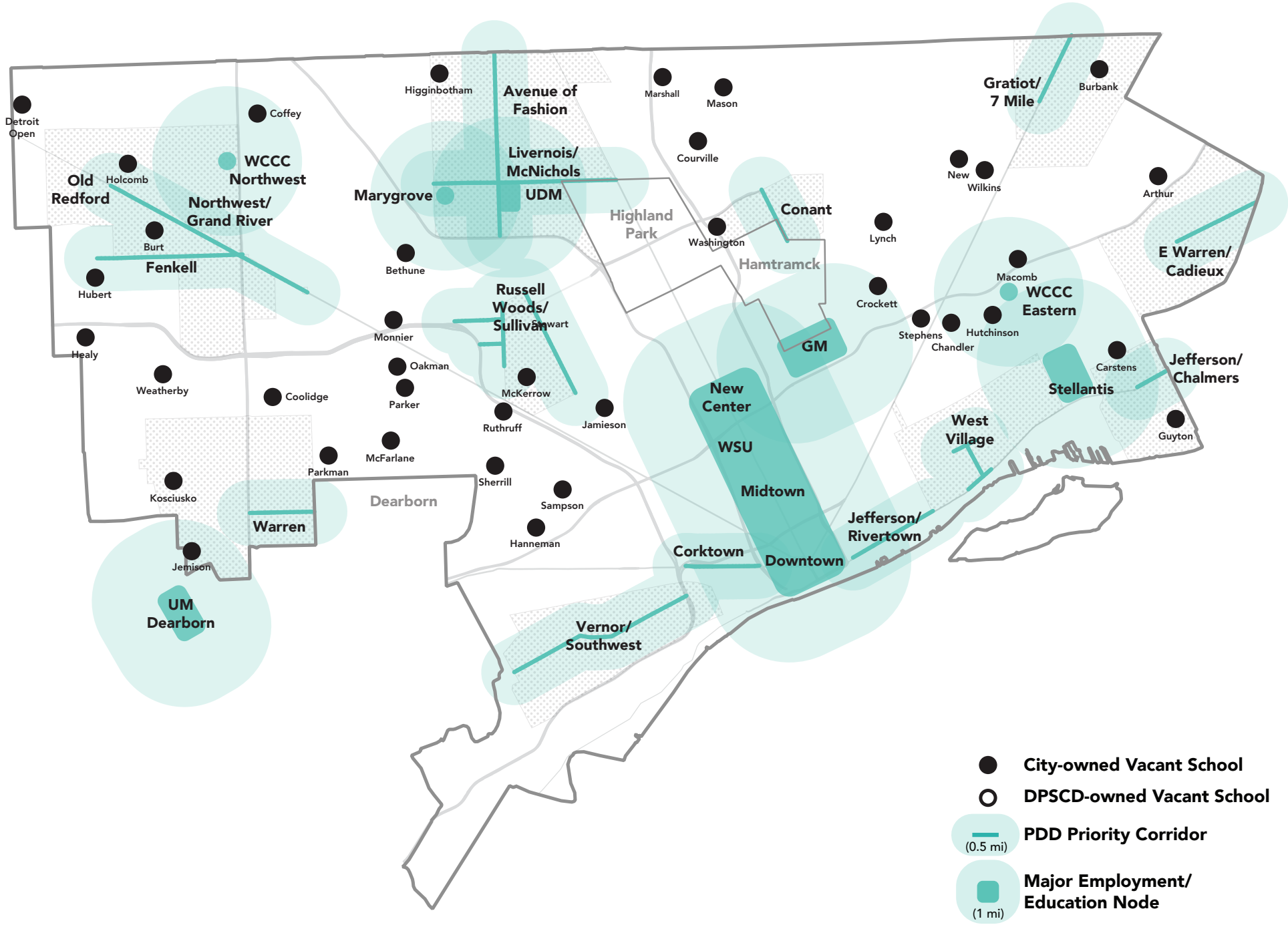
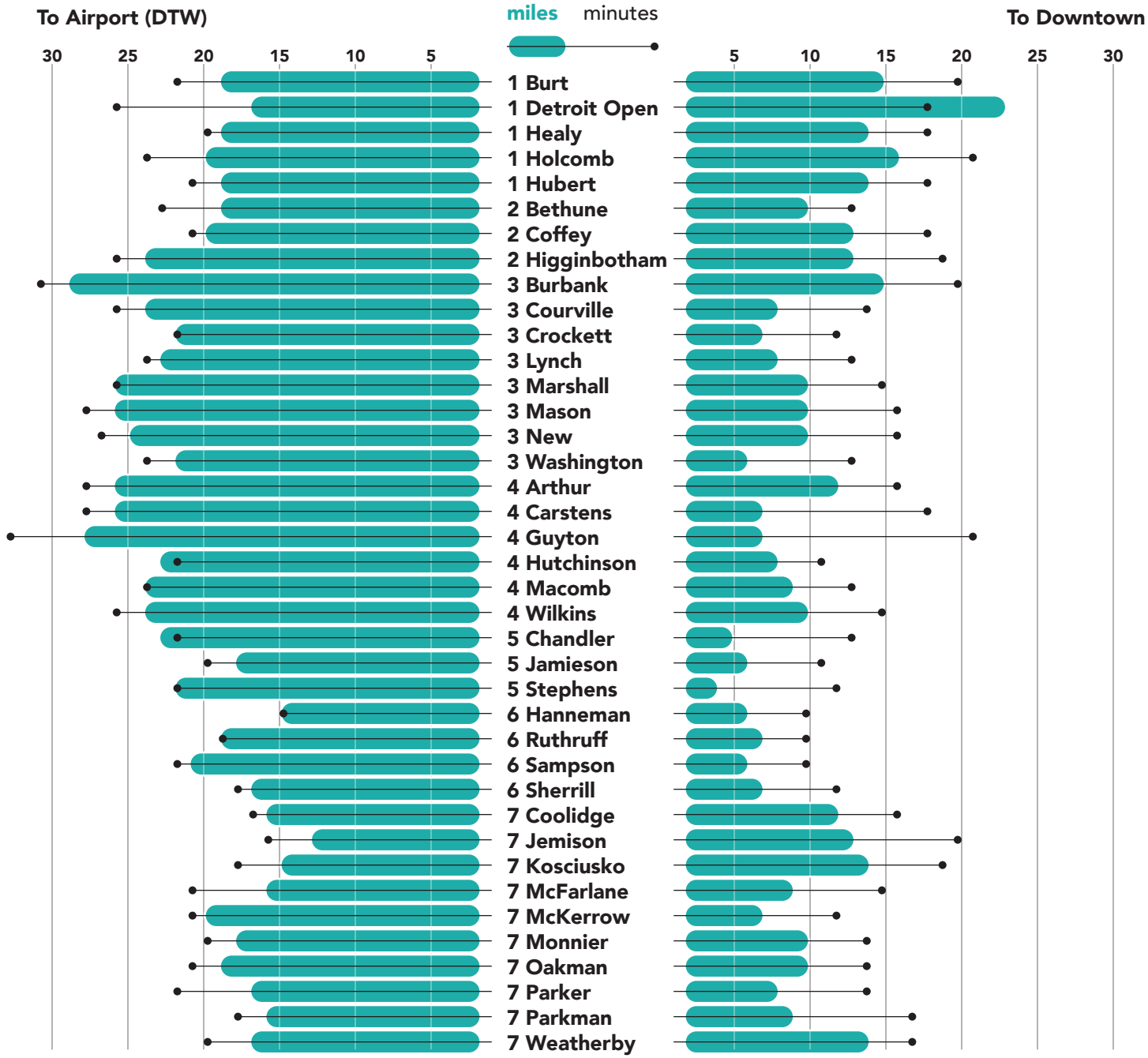
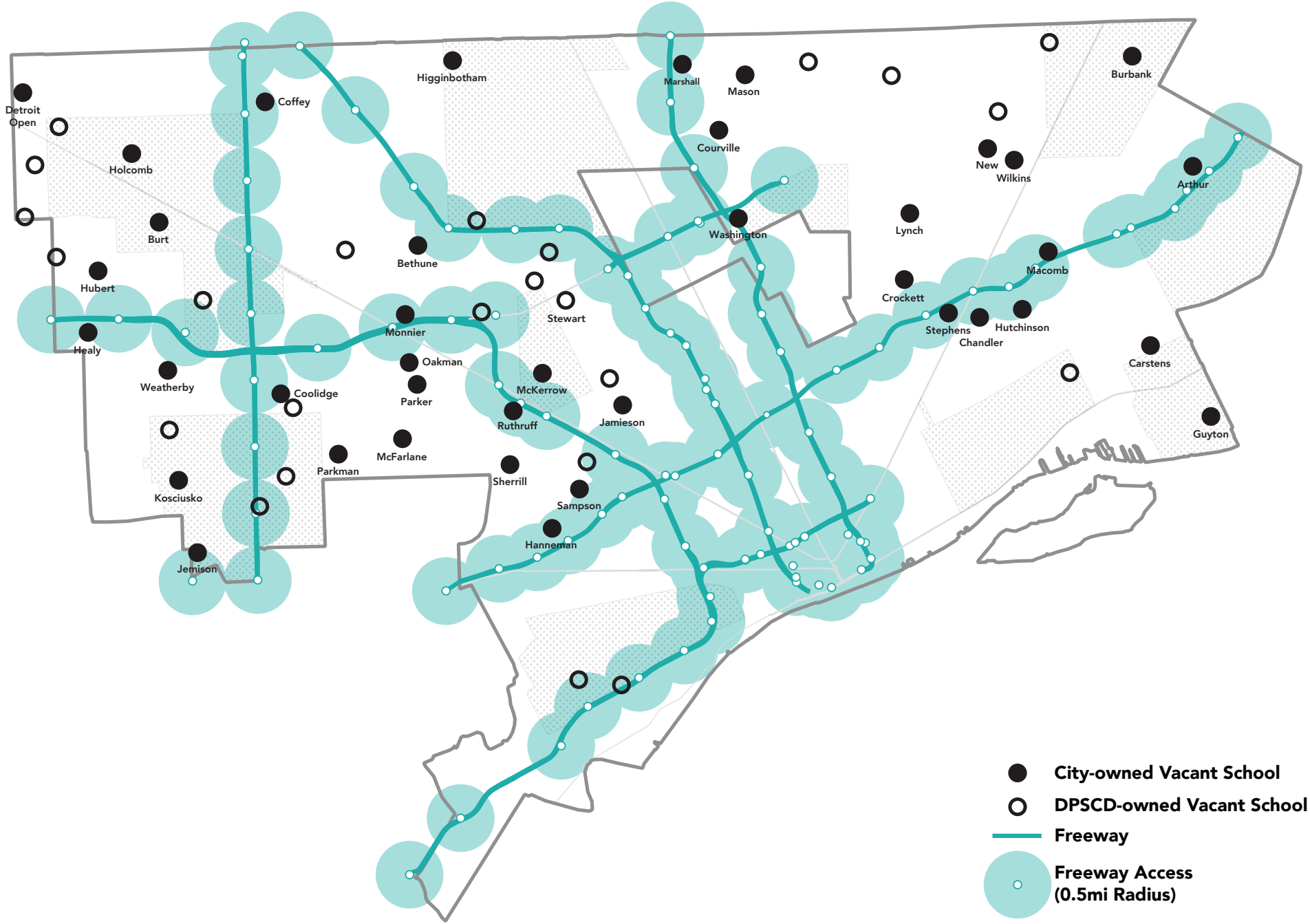
Distance to Economic Nodes



Distance to Airport & Downtown



Distance to Freeway Access



Convenient freeway access is an important consideration for vacant schools in auto-centric Detroit. Proximity to freeway access can be an important selling point for a variety of reasons. For residential uses, easy freeway access means better connections to jobs, shopping, services, entertainment and recreation, and social networks. For commercial uses, proximity to freeways means better access to customers across the city and metro area, as well as more convenient shipping and receiving. Finally, for industrial uses, freeway access is a must for reducing truck travel time—not only for speed and cost reasons, but also to prevent trucks from driving through residential neighborhoods.

The map on the previous page shows City- and DPSCD-owned vacant schools relative to Detroit's freeways and on/off-ramps. Schools located within the light green buffer are within a half-mile of freeway access—about 1 minute drive on local roads.

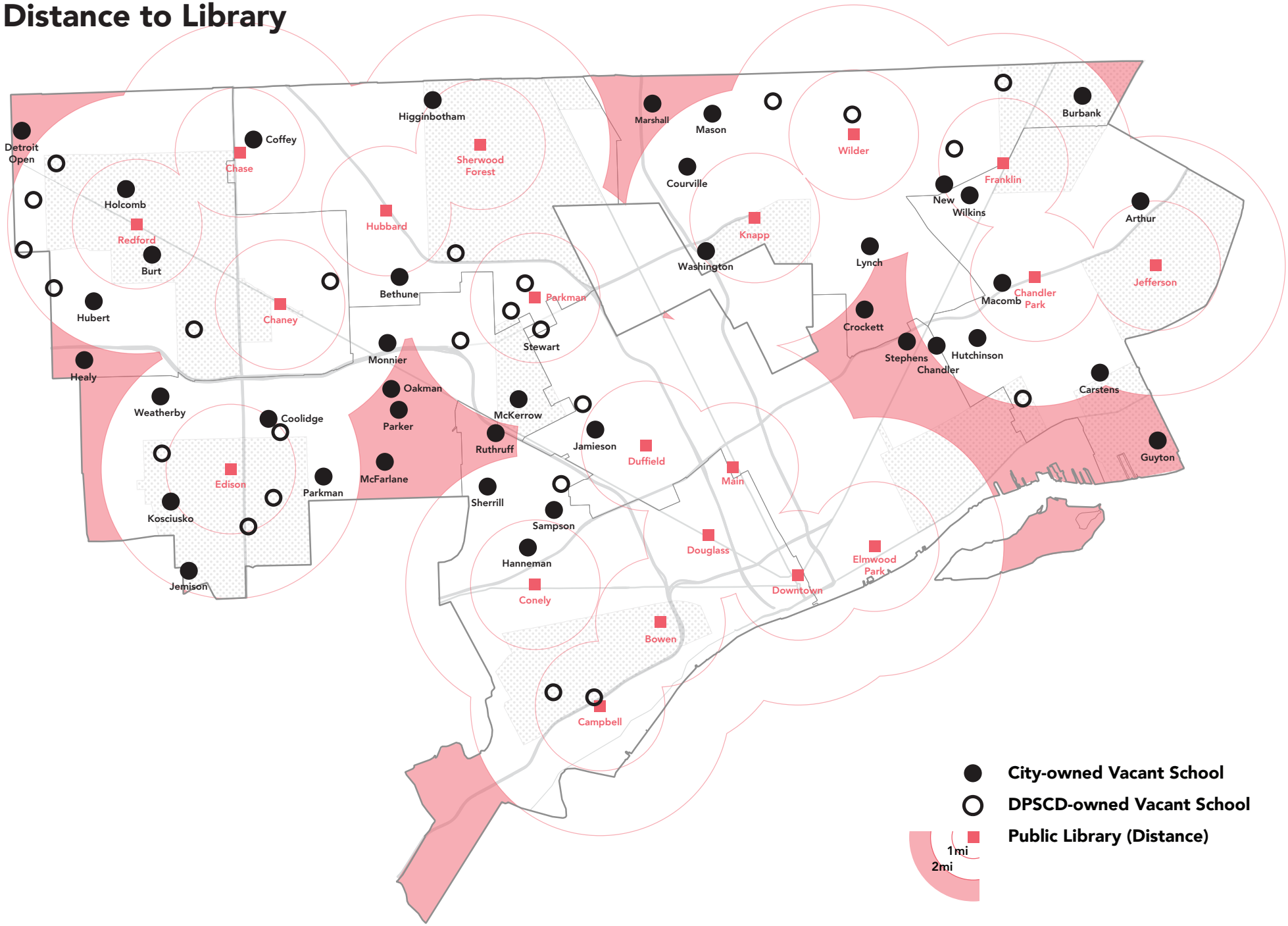
VSPs nearest to freeway access (<0.5 mi/1 min drive)

- 6 Ruthruff (I-96/Livernois: 0.1 mi)
- 7 Monnier (I-96/Grand River: 0.3 mi)
- 4 Arthur (I-94/Cadieux: 0.3 mi)
- 6 Hanneman (I-94/Livernois: 0.3 mi)
- 4 Hutchinson (I-94/French: 0.4 mi)
- 5 Chandler (I-94/Gratiot: 0.4 mi)
- 5 Stephens (I-94/Van Dyke: 0.4 mi)
- 2 Coffey (M-39/7 Mile: 0.4 mi)
- 7 Jemison (M-153/Evergreen: 0.5 mi)
- 4 Macomb (I-94/Conner: 0.5 mi)

VSPs farthest from freeway access

- 1 Detroit Open (M-39/7 Mile: 3.6 mi)
- 4 Guyton (I-94/Outer Dr: 3.0 mi)
- 7 McFarlane (M-39/Joy: 2.2 mi)
- 3 Burbank (I-94/Moross: 2.1 mi)
- 1 Holcomb (M-39/McNichols: 2.1 mi)
- 2 Higginbotham (M-10/7 Mile: 2.1 mi)

Distance to Library



Public libraries are important community anchors. Libraries are not only sites for promoting all-ages learning and literacy, they also offer employment support and servies, access to internet and digital tools, safe spaces for youth and teens, heating and cooling centers for the vulnerable, and meeting space for community groups.

The map on the previous page shows City- and DPSCD-owned vacant schools relative to active Detroit Public Library branches (pre-COVID pandemic). This map can be read in multiple ways. Schools located near libraries may be desirable locations for residential uses, senior housing, shelters, and other social support, since residents can benefit from the library services offered. On the other hand, schools located in library "gap areas" (red areas on map, denoting no library within 2 miles) may be good locations for incorporating educational and community-oriented uses, since there is no library nearby to fill those needs. Vacant school buildings are natural fits for reuse involving educational programming, in large part due to their historic and symbolic role within their communities.

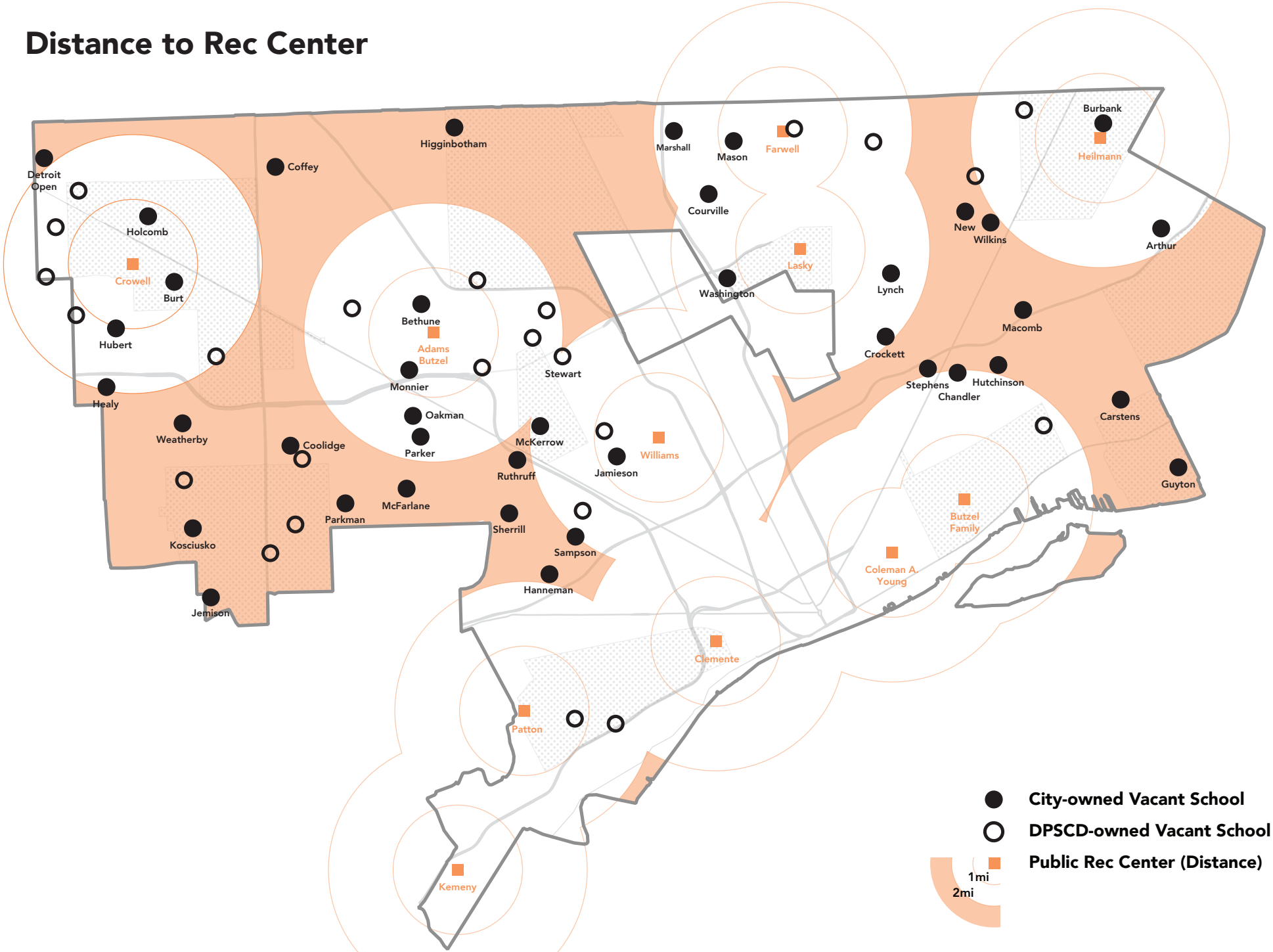
VSPs Near Libraries
(<1 mile/15 min walk)

- 2 Coffey (0.25 mi - Chase)
- 1 Burt (0.5 mi - Redford)
- 1 Holcomb (0.5 mi - Redford)
- 4 Macomb (0.5 mi - Chandler Park)
- 6 Hanneman (0.6 mi - Conely)
- 4 Wilkins (0.7 mi - Franklin)
- 5 Jamieson (0.8 mi - Duffield)
- 3 Washington (0.9 mi - Knapp)
- 7 Coolidge (0.9 mi - Edison)
- 3 New (1.0 mi - Franklin)
- 2 Higginbotham (1.0 mi - Sherwood Forest)

VSPs in Libary Gaps
(>2 mi/30+ min walk)

- 4 Guyton (2.6mi)
- 3 Marshall (2.4 mi)
- 7 McFarlane (2.4 mi)
- 7 Parker (2.4 mi)
- 1 Healy (2.3 mi)
- 1 Detroit Open (2.2 mi)
- 3 Crockett (2.2 mi)
- 5 Stephens (2.2 mi)
- 6 Ruthruff (2.2 mi)
- 7 Oakman (2.1 mi)

Distance to Rec Center



Public recreation centers create healthier communities by providing space for fitness and play; they also strengthen communities by providing space for community meetings and events, and programming and services for all ages.

The map on the previous page shows City- and DPSCD-owned vacant schools relative to City of Detroit Recreation Centers (pre-COVID pandemic). This map can be read in multiple ways. Schools located near rec centers may be desirable locations for residential uses, senior housing, shelters, and other social support, since residents can benefit from the public services offered. On the other hand, schools located in rec center "gap areas" (orange areas on map, denoting no rec center within 2 miles) may be good locations for incorporating recreation and community-oriented uses, since there is no rec center nearby to fill those needs. Vacant school buildings are good fits for reuse involving recreational programming because they typically already include specialized spaces like gyms, playfields, auditoriums, kitchen/serving areas, and parking that can be utilized by the community.

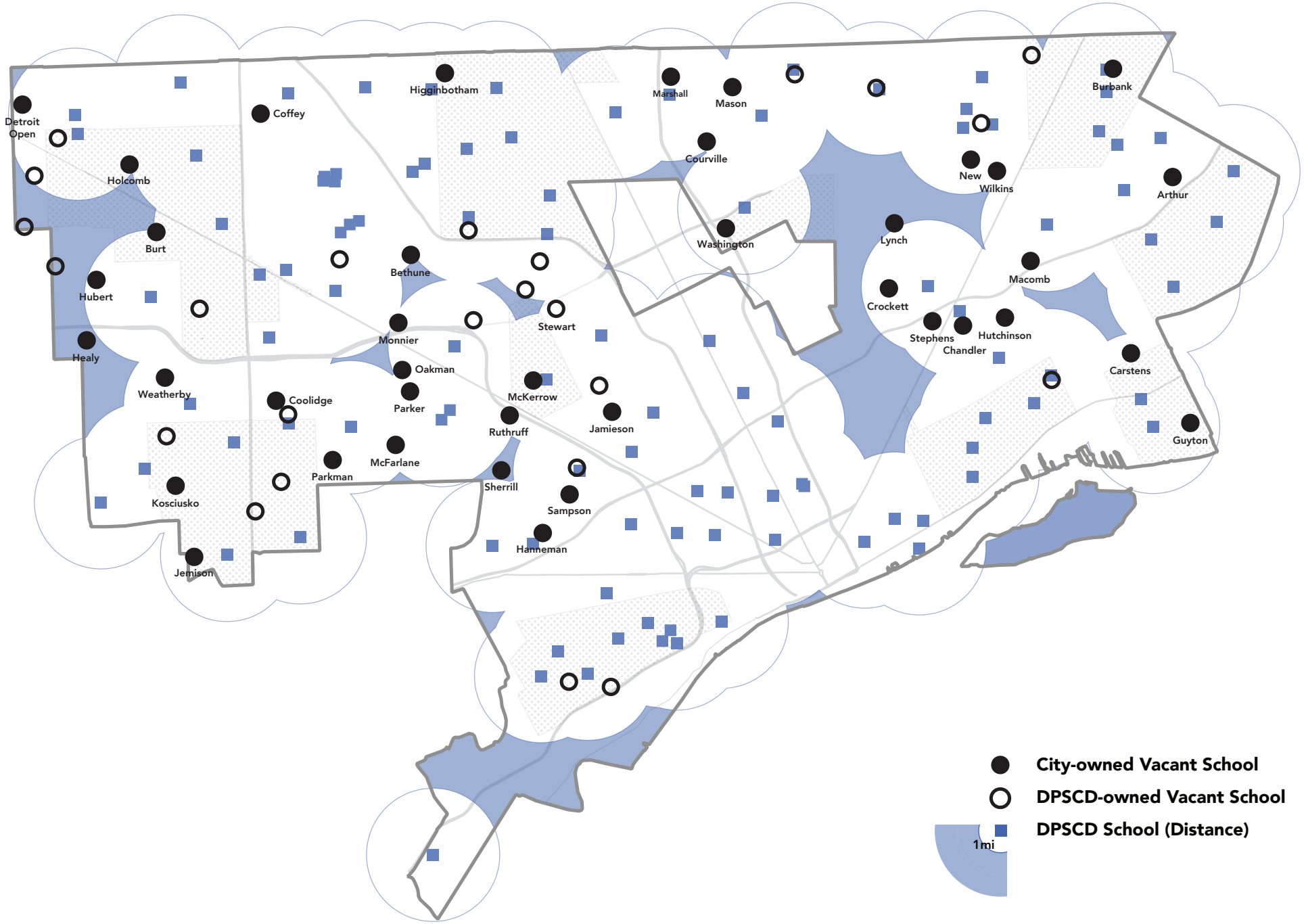
VSPs Near Rec Centers
(<1 mi/15 min walk)

- 3 Burbank (0.2 mi - Heilmann)
- 2 Bethune (0.4 mi - Adams Butzel)
- 7 Monnier (0.6 mi - Adams Butzel)
- 1 Burt (0.7 mi - Crowell)
- 5 Jamieson (0.7 mi - Williams)
- 1 Holcomb (0.7 mi - Crowell)
- 3 Mason (0.8 mi - Farwell)
- 1 Hubert (1.0 mi - Crowell)

VSPs in Rec Center Gaps
(>2 mi/30+ min walk)

- 7 Jemison (5.2 mi)
- 7 Kosciusko (4.2 mi)
- 4 Guyton (3.4 mi)
- 2 Higginbotham (3.2 mi)
- 4 Carstens (2.9 mi)
- 4 Macomb (2.9 mi)
- 7 Parkman (2.9 mi)
- 7 Coolidge (2.8 mi)
- 2 Coffey (2.7 mi)
- 6 Sherrill (2.6 mi)
- 7 Weatherby (2.5 mi)
- 7 McFarlane (2.4 mi)
- 3 New (2.4 mi)
- 6 Ruthruff (2.2 mi)
- 6 Hanneman (2.1 mi)
- 4 Wilkins (2.1 mi)
- 1 Detroit Open (2.1 mi)
- 5 Stephens (2.1 mi)
- 4 Hutchinson (2.1 mi)
- 6 Sampson (2 mi)

Distance to Active Public School



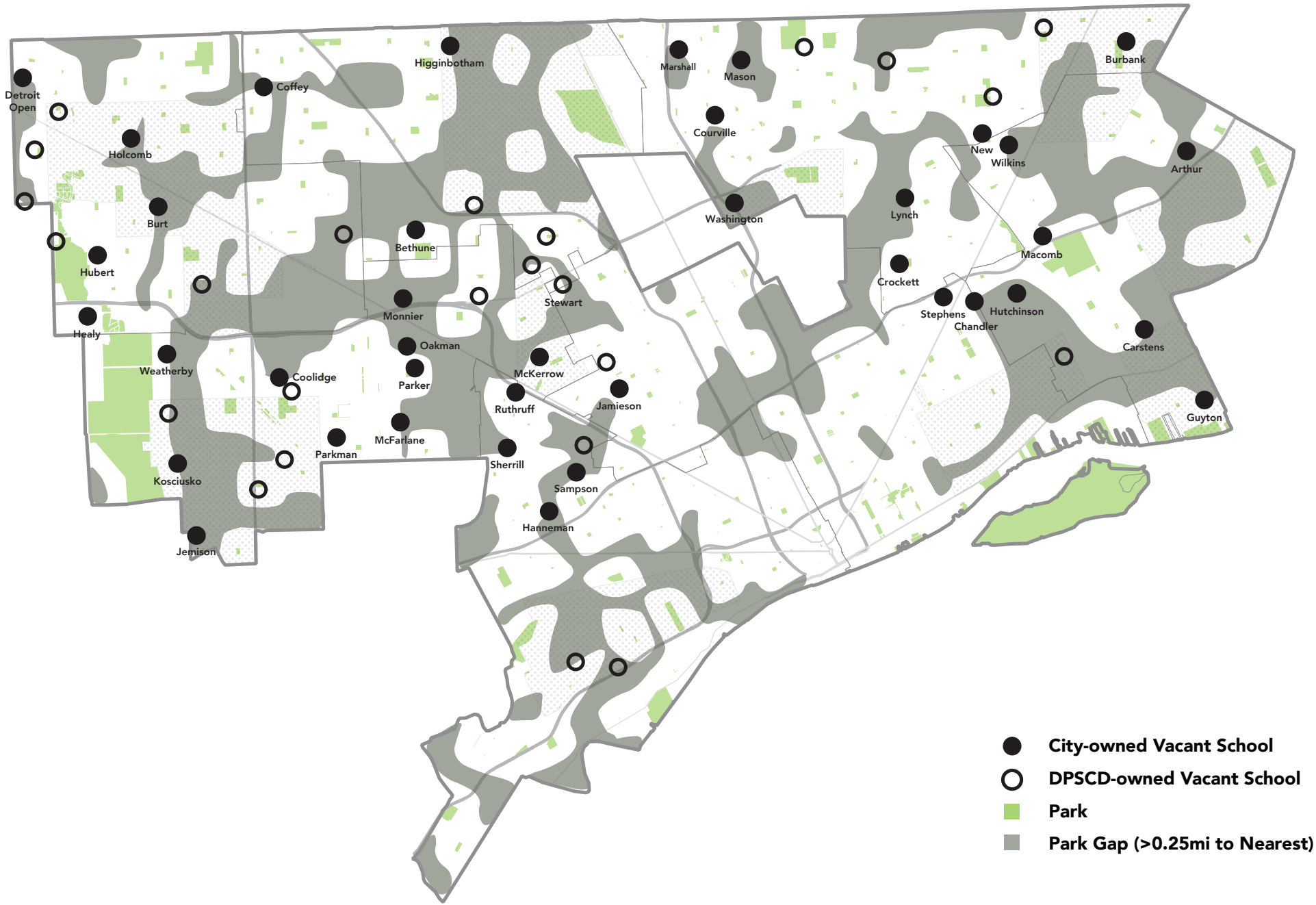
Like libraries and public rec centers, public schools are key anchors in their communities—in fact, they are perhaps the most important anchor of all. Naturally, a common idea for reusing a vacant school is to not repurpose it at all, but rather re-open it as a school. Because the context for this study has been a public school district undergoing a significant downsizing and consolidation of its facilities, it was understood that City-owned vacant schools would most likely not become schools again. However, vacant school sites may still be repurposed as sites for learning, health and recreation, community building, and other social services—important services public schools offer in addition to classroom education.

The map on the previous page shows City- and DPSCD-owned vacant schools relative to active public schools. This map can be read in multiple ways. Vacant schools located near active schools may be desirable locations for residential uses, particularly family-oriented housing. On the other hand, vacant schools located in school "gap areas" (blue areas on map, denoting no school within 1 mile) may be good locations for reuse incorporating education, training, youth services, and community-oriented programming.

VSPs in School Gap (>1mi/15 min walk)

- 1 Healy (1.2 mi)
- 6 Sherrill (1.1 mi)
- 3 Lynch (1.1 mi)
- 2 Bethune (1 mi)
- 1 Burt (1 mi)

Distance to Park



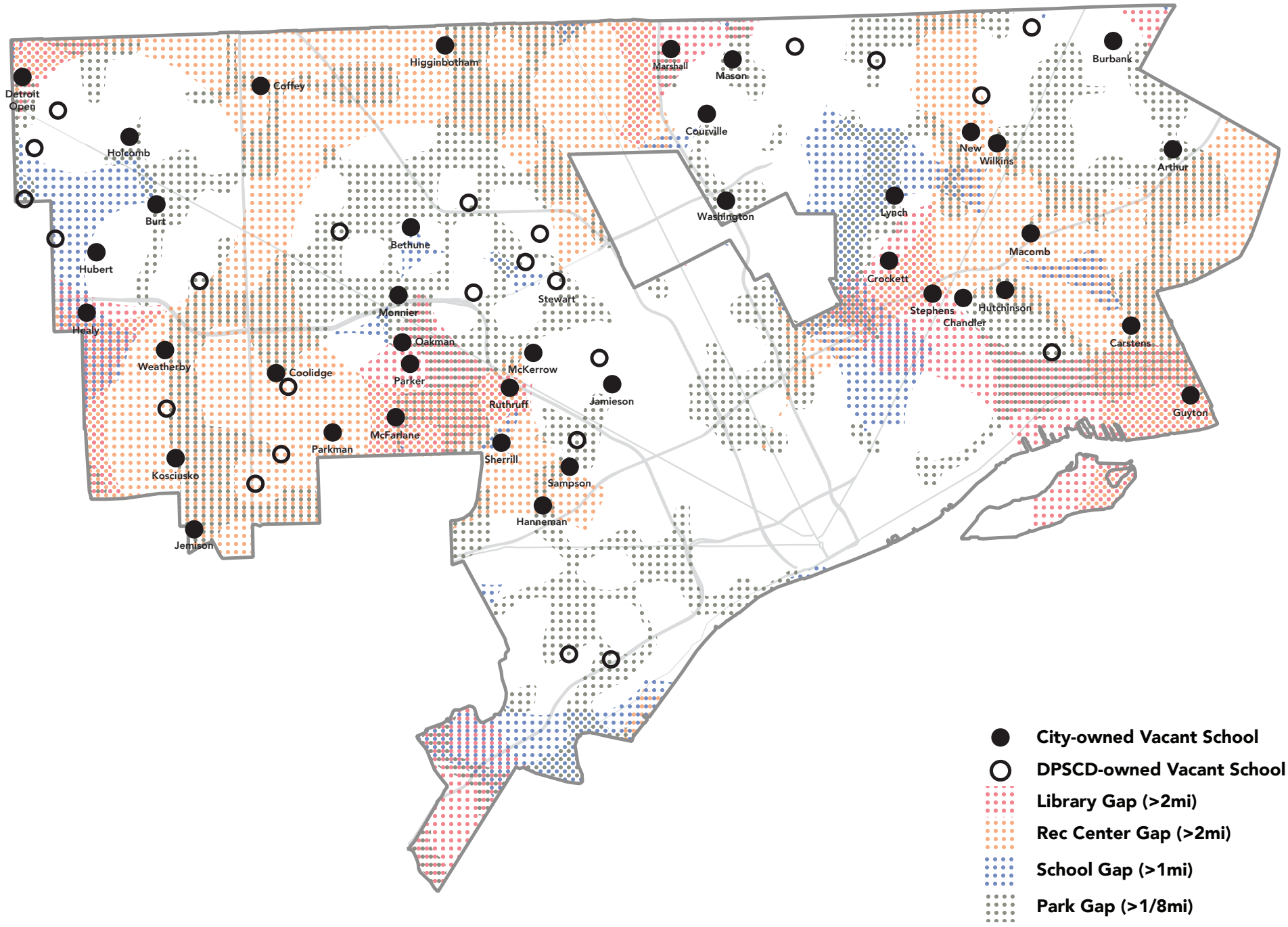
Detroit's public school grounds often feature large grassy playfields, playground equipment, sports courts, and gardens. As a result, schools have long served as *de facto* neighborhood parks, forming a network of recreational and green space that exists alongside the official city park system. The unfortunate consequence of widespread school closures means that many of these school parks have fallen into disrepair, and are no longer available to the community. At some vacant schools included in this study, neighborhood residents continued to mow schoolyards and maintain school playgrounds themselves, rather than lose their local "park."

The map on the previous page shows City- and DPSCD-owned vacant schools relative to city parks. This map can be read in multiple ways. Schools located near parks may be desirable locations for many types of reuse, including residential, mixed-use, and community programming. Schools located in park "gap" areas (grey areas on map, denoting no park within 0.25 mi) are excellent opportunities for providing walkable neighborhood green space, whether as a new city park, or as a privately-managed space in connection with other development on site.

VSPs in Park Gap (>0.25mi)

- 7 Jemison (0.6 mi)
- 3 Washington (0.6 mi)
- 7 Monnier (0.6 mi)
- 4 Hutchinson (0.5 mi)
- 7 McFarlane (0.5 mi)
- 3 Mason (0.4 mi)
- 4 Arthur (0.4 mi)
- 6 Sherrill (0.4 mi)
- 7 Oakman (0.3 mi)
- 6 Sampson (0.3 mi)
- 3 Marshall (0.3 mi)
- 4 Carstens (0.3 mi)
- 5 Chandler (0.3 mi)
- 2 Coffey (0.3 mi)
- 7 Kosciusko (0.3 mi)
- 4 Guyton (0.3 mi)
- 3 Courville (0.3 mi)
- 2 Higginbotham (0.3 mi)
- 6 Hanneman (0.3 mi)
- 6 Ruthruff (0.3 mi)

Community Resource Gaps



The city maps on the previous pages highlight resource "gaps"—areas that lack easy access to key community resources like libraries, rec centers, schools, and parks. In Detroit, like many other cities, these gap areas often overlap: if a community lacks sufficient resources in one area, there is a good chance that it may lack resources in other areas as well.

The map on the previous page shows library, rec center, school, and park gaps overlaid on the same map. Seventeen City-owned vacant schools—almost half of those in the study—are located in areas with at least two overlapping resource gaps. When redeveloping those sites, strong consideration should be given to including inclusive, community-oriented programming and amenities that help fill existing resource gaps.

The map also shows that there are a handful of schools that are in relatively well-served areas with no major resource gaps. These schools should be considered as priority development sites that can both benefit from the existing network of services, as well as help further stabilize and catalyze their neighborhoods.

VSPs with 3 overlapping resource gaps

- 4 Guyton (Library, Rec Center, Park)
- 6 Ruthruff (Library, Rec Center, Park)
- 6 Sherrill (Rec Center, School, Park)
- 7 McFarlane (Library, Rec Center, Park)

VSPs with 2 overlapping resource gaps

- 1 Detroit Open (Library, Rec Center)
- 1 Healy (Library, School)
- 2 Coffey (Rec Center, Park)
- 2 Higginbotham (Rec Center, Park)
- 3 Marshall (Library, Park)
- 4 Carstens (Rec Center, Park)
- 4 Hutchinson (Rec Center, Park)
- 5 Stephens (Library, Rec Center)
- 6 Hanneman (Rec Center, Park)
- 6 Sampson (Rec Center, Park)
- 7 Jemison (Rec Center, Park)
- 7 Kosciusko (Rec Center, Park)
- 7 Oakman (Library, Park)

VSPs with no resource gaps

- 1 Holcomb
- 1 Hubert
- 3 Burbank
- 5 Jamieson
- 7 McKerrow

Priority: Historic Significance

Priority #6: Preserve school buildings with the greatest historic significance

While all of the schools in this study are, by definition, of local historic significance, a handful exhibited high degree of historic integrity and architectural distinction. These include both schools which have totally unique architecture and those which best exemplify a particular style or era of school construction in Detroit. They tend to have minimal modifications and cohesive architecture throughout; most—but not all—are in good condition.

The eleven schools which rate highest for historic significance can be divided into four groups:

Group 1: SNF schools
Holcomb, Higginbotham, Guyton, Kosciusko
These schools are all in above-average to excellent condition, and as noted in previous sections, should be immediately and aggressively marketed for historic rehabilitation and redevelopment. Extra emphasis should be placed on securing and protecting these buildings, including waterproofing roofs, ensuring proper drainage, and deterring further scrapping and vandalism.

Group 2: Non-SNF schools with high potential
Healy, Crockett
Healy, as noted in previous sections, is among the highest priority non-SNF schools due to its excellent condition, small size, and stable neighborhood. It is also an excellent example of 1950s modern school architecture in the city. Meanwhile, Crockett should be a challenging project due to its size and distressed neighborhood; however, its potential lies in its large, open site and proximity to major manufacturers. A large and expensive rehab like Crockett may be out of reach for most developers, it could be saved by a top-tier industrial partner willing to preserve historic school as a legacy project, in return for development rights on the large adjacent parcel.

Group 3: Non-SNF schools with good condition but uncertain potential
Macomb, Courville, Oakman
These three school buildings are unique and well-worth preserving in themselves, but they are located in more challenged markets which may make near-term redevelopment difficult. These buildings should be preserved and mothballed while the City pursues a patient, potentially longer-term search for an appropriate development partner. These sites may be best suited for development by community-based or mission-driven organizations that have a strong commitment to the immediate neighborhood and an interest in preserving the school as local heritage.

Group 4: Non-SNF schools in below-average condition and uncertain potential
Marshall, Carstens
These two schools are historically significant but will be challenging to rehabilitate and are in distressed neighborhoods. The City should take basic measures to waterproof the roofs and prevent further deterioration. The marketing approach should be the same as though the development timeline will likely be the longest of all of the priority schools listed so far.


Holcomb


Higginbotham


Guyton


Guyton - Auditorium


Kosciusko


Healy


Crockett - Gym


Crockett


Macomb


Macomb - Parapet


Courville


Courville - Auditorium

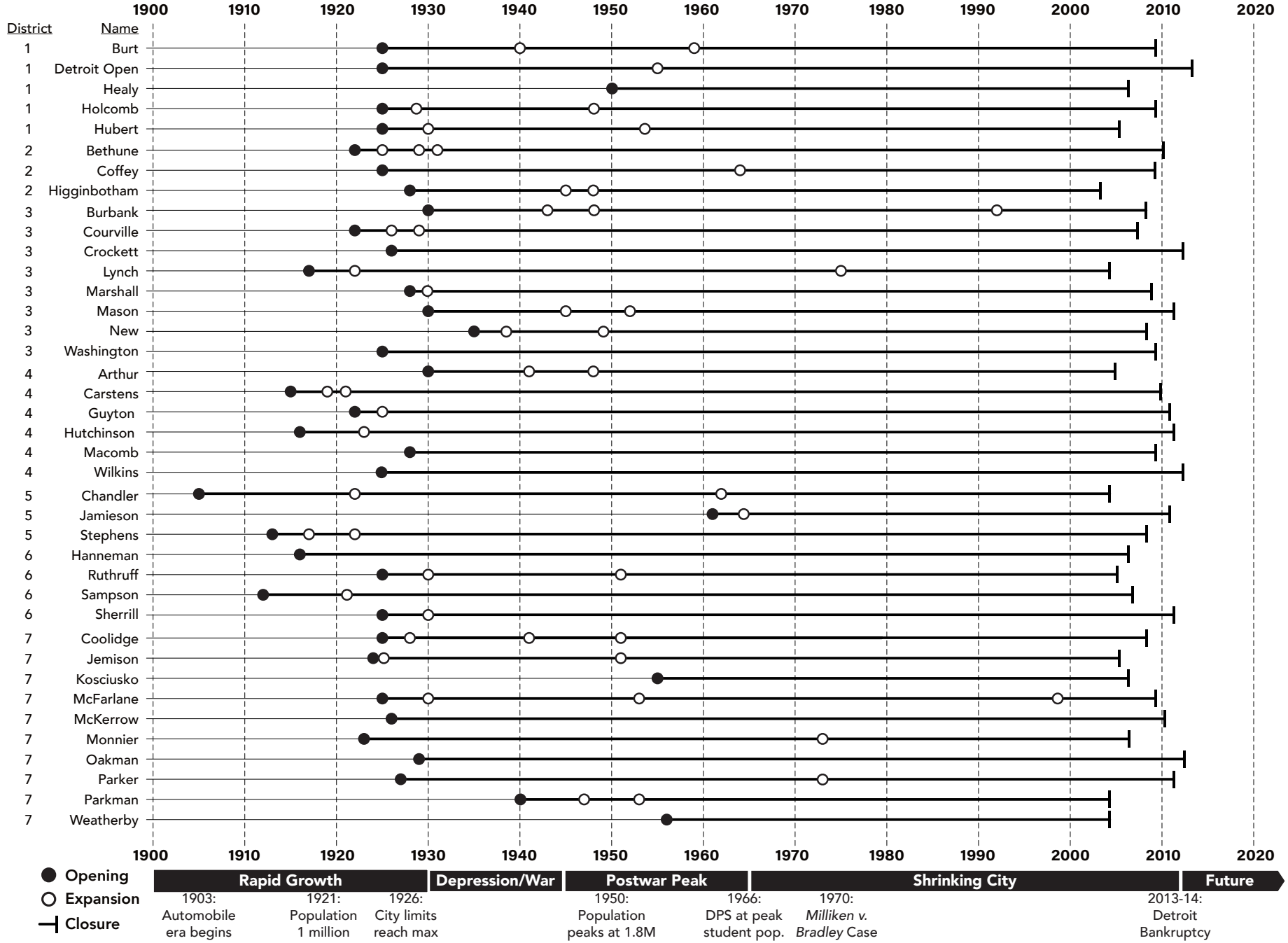

Oakman


Marshall


Marshall - Facade

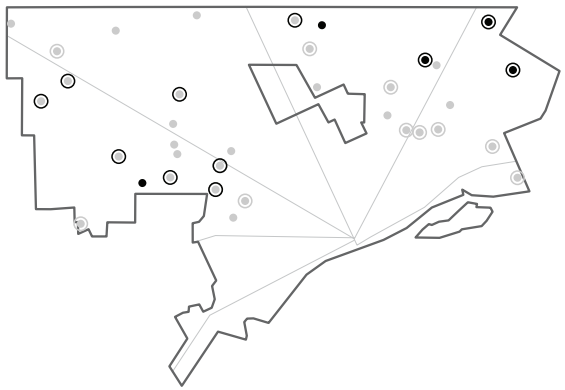

Carstens

Construction and Service Timeline



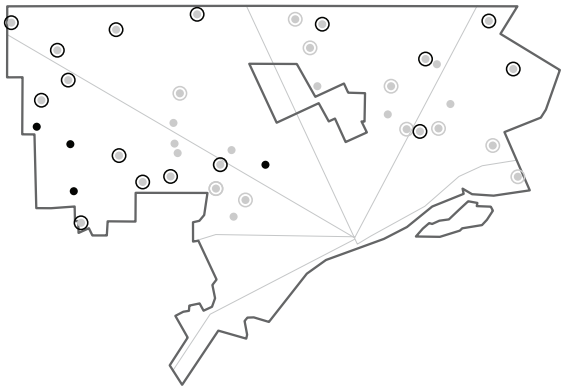
1900-1930: Rapid Growth

The early 20th century was a period of explosive growth in Detroit, as the auto industry took off. Much of the school construction shown above occurred in areas that were annexed by the city between 1906 and 1926.



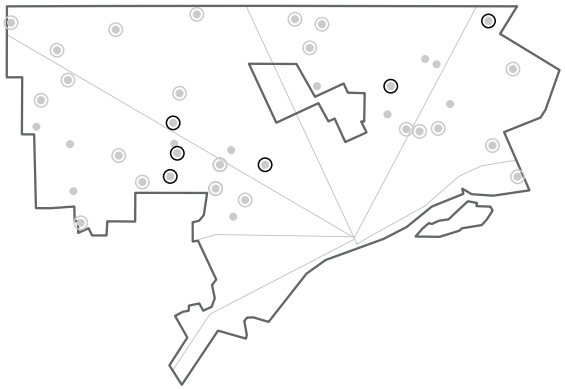
1930-1945: Great Depression / WWII

Detroit saw a wave of school construction around 1930, but building and population growth cooled as the Depression continued. However, population swelled as wartime industry picked up, leading to another wave of school expansion.



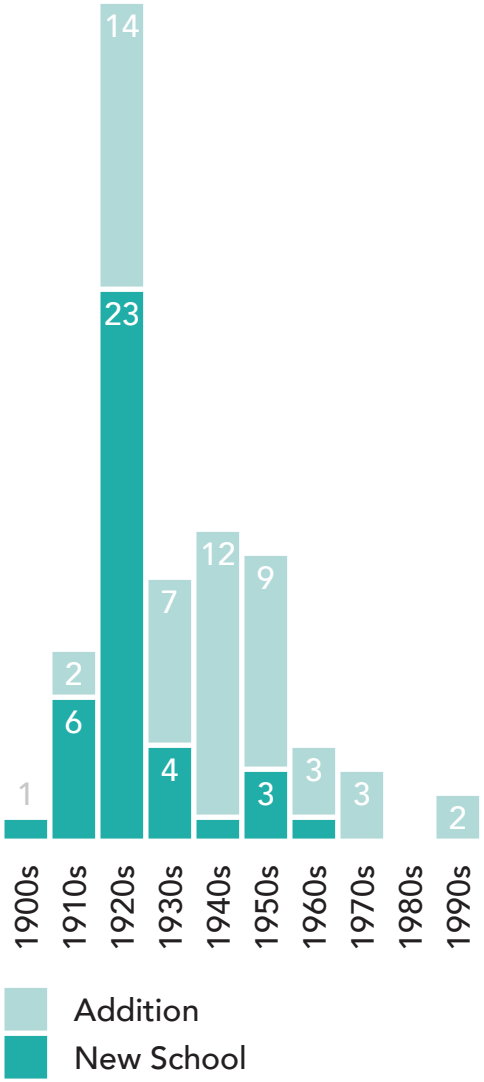
1945-1966: Postwar Peak

Detroit reached its population peak of over 1.8 million in 1950, and Detroit Public Schools reached its peak of nearly 300,000 students in 1966. School design in this era favored simple and modern architecture.



1966-Present: Shrinking City

The public school has system lost over 250,000 students since its 1966 peak. Only a handful of the schools in this study have been updated in the last 60 years.



Note: The visuals on these two pages include only the historic City-owned vacant schools that were part of this study. Many DPSCD schools that are still in service were constructed or updated in recent decades.

Other Recommendations:

Judge the redevelopment potential of each building holistically.

Most, if not all, of the schools in this study can be rehabilitated from a structural/architectural standpoint. The cost of rehabilitation is linked to the type, severity, and extent of a building's distress. Each building's viability ultimately depends on whether the demand and available resources can justify the cost of rehabilitation.

- **Recommendation:** Any decision to rehabilitate, mothball, or demolish a historic vacant school should be based on careful consideration of the current building condition, location and market strength, architectural features, historical significance, and availability of local development partners.

Consider the development potential of open space within and adjacent to the school property, in addition to the building itself.

By design, school sites have a large amount of open space to accommodate playfields and parking lots. At most school properties in this study, the built area takes up less than 20% of the total site, and developable open areas of 1-2 acres or more are common. Looking beyond the property lines, many school sites are adjacent to groupings of Detroit Land Bank Authority-owned residential parcels which could potentially be bundled and developed together with the school. A variety of on- and off-site open space configurations may provide opportunities for new one- and two-family residential, multifamily, mixed-use, or larger-scale construction. While many historic school rehab projects may not pencil out as stand-alone projects, encouraging developers to include new construction alongside historic reuse of existing school buildings may increase the number of viable projects.

- **Recommendation:** Bundle multi-parcel clusters of vacant DLBA land adjacent to vacant school sites as incentive for developers to rehabilitate historic school buildings.

- **Recommendation:** Ease zoning restrictions on school sites and vacant land bundles zoned R1 and R2 to encourage denser, context-appropriate new construction. The current School Adaptive Reuse Ordinance allows expanded conditional uses in existing school buildings themselves, but these provisions do not necessarily apply to other non-rehab development on school properties.

Protect vacant school roofs.

Roofing and roof drains are a vacant school's greatest vulnerability. Deterioration or damage to the roofing membrane, coping and flashing, and roof drains allows water to infiltrate the building, which causes damage to the façade, interior finishes, and structural systems.

- **Recommendation:** Take immediate steps to repair or cover rooftops in order to prevent further water infiltration. Clean, repair, and/or redirect failed internal roof drains to ensure that water is properly drained away from the school.

- **Recommendation:**Secure school buildings to discourage theft and vandalism of metal components from rooftops, including flashing, coping, drain elements, ventilators, and mechanical units.

- **Recommendation:** Prioritize waterproofing, drainage, and security measures at high-priority

redevelopment sites and schools that are in the best overall condition.

Clearboard vacant school windows and doors, instead of plywood.

Virtually none of the 39 City-owned vacant schools were completely secure during the team's site visits. Although most City-owned schools are boarded up with plywood and secured with a padlock, nearly all of them had been breached by trespassers. Plywood appears to be easily removed and weakens after long exposure to the elements.

Opaque window coverings make it difficult for police and concerned neighbors to see inside; this may provide cover for trespassing, scrapping, and other illegal activities that may occur inside these schools.

Opaque window coverings also reduce the appeal of the school buildings. First, boarded windows signal vacancy and abandonment from the exterior. Second, by rendering the schools completely dark, opaque coverings make it difficult to fully inspect, document, and appreciate the qualities of the interior spaces. Lighting has an important effect on how the spaces are perceived, and schools that had more natural light—even when a result of boards being removed—simply felt safer, more pleasant, and more memorable. Although difficult to quantify, this psychological effect should be considered as an important part of wooing potential buyers.

- **Recommendation:** Transition to using clear PCB security boards instead of plywood. They are more secure, more durable, allow views into the building, and are more aesthetically appealing.

- **Recommendation:** Focus security efforts on schools that are in best condition first, to limit damage from scrapping and vandalism.

- **Recommendation:** When window assemblies are still intact (originals or replacements), take care not to damage frames or lites when installing security measures.

Establish dedicated channels for inter-departmental communication and coordination regarding the disposition of vacant school properties.

There are many important stakeholders that play a role in the disposition of vacant schools, including PDD, HRD, DBA, DON, Mayor's Office, GSD, CPC, DPSCD, DEGC, and DLBA. These stakeholders have related, yet independent sets of priorities, knowledge, and tools which can shape the future of Detroit's vacant schools. Vacant school projects and initiatives within each department may overlap or conflict, leading to more inefficient decision-making processes.

- **Recommendation:** Take active steps to promote communication and knowledge-sharing among City departments, DPSCD, and other partner organizations to ensure a cohesive, coordinated, citywide approach to vacant school disposition.

- **Recommendation:** establish an inter-departmental task force that will meet regularly to identify priority development sites, provide updates on marketing and development leads, and coordinate vacant school strategy with the City's broader planning and development goals.

- **Recommendation:** identify a primary point of contact within city government to track vacant school redevelopment inquiries, both internal and external to the City. Create a central clearinghouse for

vacant school information that is visible to all relevant City agencies.

Make full information about the vacant school portfolio available to all relevant City departments and partner agencies, and promote education about school redevelopment opportunities.

City-owned vacant schools are challenging redevelopment projects and will require a concerted effort from the City to market them effectively. The City agencies most closely involved in planning and real estate development must have an awareness and understanding of the current citywide portfolio of properties, including their locations, building and site characteristics, physical conditions, potential uses, and opportunities and barriers to redevelopment. All should agree on how vacant school properties fit within the larger portfolio of potential development sites across the City. And, each department should identify a champion to support vacant school redevelopment efforts.

- **Recommendation:** PDD project staff should lead a presentation or training workshop to educate other teams and departments about the results of this project and the opportunities that exist for redeveloping vacant school properties.

- **Recommendation:** Establish an interdepartmental task force or piggy-back on existing City working groups that can regularly meet to exchange information and updates about vacant school development activities.

- **Recommendation:** Create information clearing house for vacant school information that is easily accessible by all relevant City agencies.

Expand the pool of potential developers and development partners as much as possible, both locally and outside of Detroit.

With 63 vacant school sites included in this study alone, many requiring significant resources and creativity to repurpose, the City and DPSCD must take active steps to generate interest and engage with a broad pool of potential purchasers. The wide variety of potential projects will require a large and diverse group of development partners, and may require expertise or resources that are not currently available locally. Innovative marketing approaches will help raise local, national, and international awareness of the importance and value of these school sites, making it more likely that a larger number of sites can be redeveloped.

- **Recommendation:** Partner with media such as TV, film, press, and online outlets to publicize the schools, highlight their historical and cultural significance, and advertise their potential development opportunities.

- **Recommendation:** Partner with local artists, creators, and community groups to stage site-specific interventions or events at vacant school sites; this is an opportunity to draw positive attention to these sites via temporary activations, while highlighting the potential for longer-term solutions. Local precedents include DLECTRICITY, Murals in the Market, the DIA's InsidelOut program, and Detroit Month of Design.

Priority Development Schools

The following schools ranked among the top ten in at least one of the priority categories. This list shows the top ten schools overall, along with 16 "honorable mentions" which had at least one distinguishing strength, even if they were weaker in other areas.

Rank	Dist.	Name	Address	SNF	Condition	Neighborhood	Market	History	Corridor
1	2	Higginbotham	20119 Wisconsin	●	●	●	●	●	
2	1	Holcomb	18100 Bentler	●	●		●	●	
3	1	Healy	12834 West Parkway		●	●		●	
4	7	Weatherby	12099 Fielding		●				
5	4	Guyton	355 Philip	●		●	●	●	
6	7	Kosciusko	20390 Tireman	●	●	●		●	
7	7	Jemison	6201 Auburn	●		●	●		
8	3	Burbank	15600 E State Fair	●		●	●		
9	7	Parkman	15000 Mackenzie		●		●		
10	1	Burt	20710 Pilgrim	●		●	●		
	7	McKerrow	4800 Collingwood	●			●		
	3	Washington	13000 Dequindre	●			●		
	4	Macomb	12051 Evanston		●			●	
	3	New	17142 Rowe			●			●
	3	Marshall	1255 E State Fair					●	●
	3	Courville	18040 St. Aubin		●			●	
	4	Hutchinson	5220 French		●				
	7	McFarlane	8900 Cheyenne		●				
	6	Hanneman	6420 McGraw			●			
	2	Coffey	19300 Lindsay			●			
	1	Detroit Open	24601 Frisbee				●		
	4	Carstens	2550 Coplin					●	
	3	Crockett	8950 St. Cyril					●	
	7	Oakman	12920 Wadsworth					●	
	6	Ruthruff	6311 W Chicago						●
	2	Bethune	10763 Fenkell						●

Comparing Schools

The diagram on the facing page visualizes each of the 39 City-owned vacant schools based on their relative performance in the four priority categories of building condition, neighborhood strength, market strength, and historic significance. Each school was graded in each category on a normalized 4-point scale, with 4 being the best, and 0 the worst. Larger bubbles represent better performance in a given category.

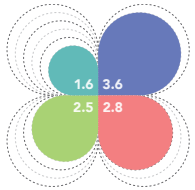
This diagram makes it clear that each school has different strengths and weaknesses, which should inform the school's individual disposition approach. Some schools, like Higginbotham, Guyton, and Kosciusko, score high well across categories; other high-priority schools like Jemison and Burt, are outstanding in one or two areas, but weak in others.

Schools which score relatively poorly in most categories, such as Jamieson or Lynch, are not necessarily non-viable sites. Even these challenging schools may have appeal to a mission-driven local developer who places high value on a school's particular location. A targeted match-making approach might be better for those schools, in contrast to the higher-performing school sites which will have broader appeal and can find success through a competitive, open call for proposals.

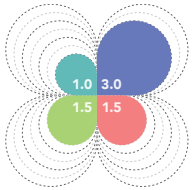
There are many other ways to evaluate this highly diverse set of schools besides the major priority categories discussed up to this point. The following pages visualize other ways of seeing and sorting Detroit's vacant schools.

Strengths and Weaknesses

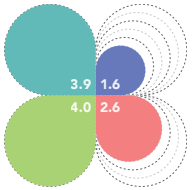
Key
Building Market
History N'hood
0 = weakest
2 = average
4 = best



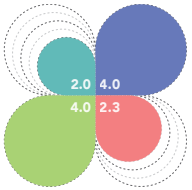
Burt (SNF)
District 1



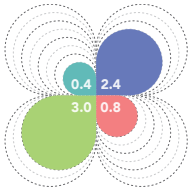
Detroit Open
District 1



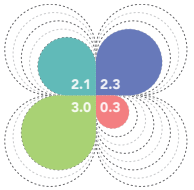
Healy
District 1



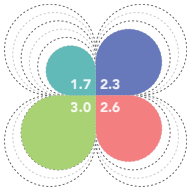
Holcomb (SNF)
District 1



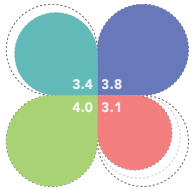
Hubert
District 1



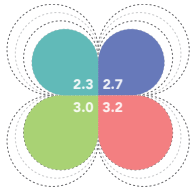
Bethune
District 2



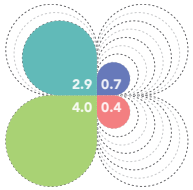
Coffey
District 2



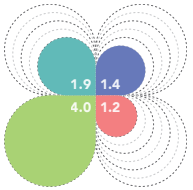
Higginbotham (SNF)
District 2



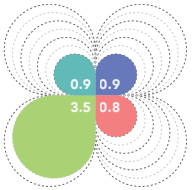
Burbank (SNF)
District 3



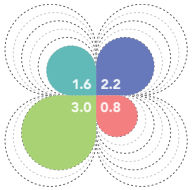
Courville
District 3



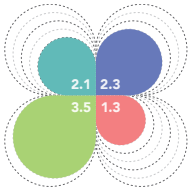
Crockett
District 3



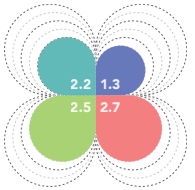
Lynch
District 3



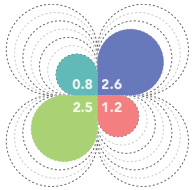
Marshall
District 3



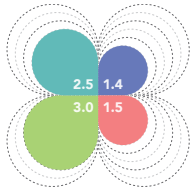
Mason
District 3



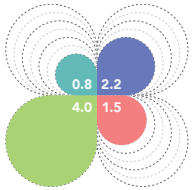
New
District 3



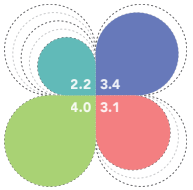
Washington (SNF)
District 3



Arthur
District 4



Carstens
District 4



Guyton (SNF)
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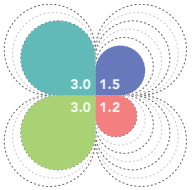
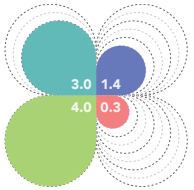
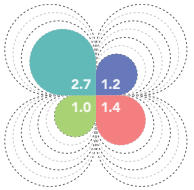


Hutchinson
District 4



Macomb
District 4



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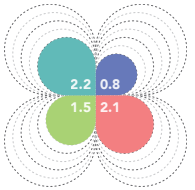
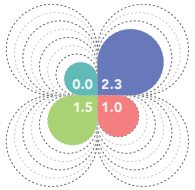
District 4



Chandler
District 5



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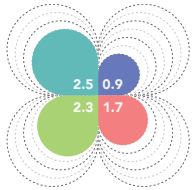
District 5



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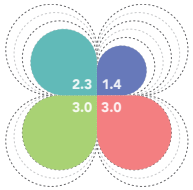
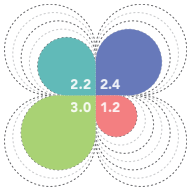
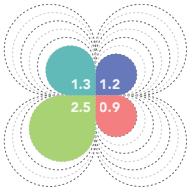
District 5



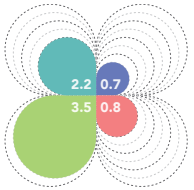
Hanneman
District 6



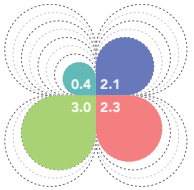
Ruthruff
District 6



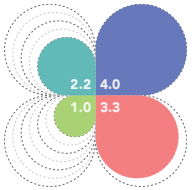
Sampson
District 6



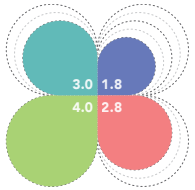
Sherrill
District 6



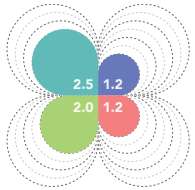
Coolidge
District 7



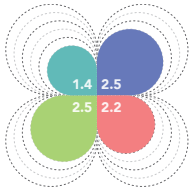
Jemison (SNF)
District 7



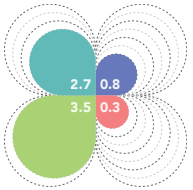
Kosciusko (SNF)
District 7



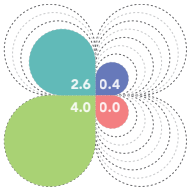
McFarlane
District 7



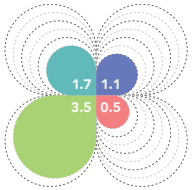
McKerrow (SNF)
District 7



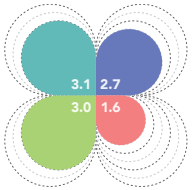
Monnier
District 7



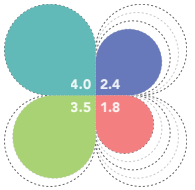
Oakman
District 7



Parker
District 7



Parkman
District 7



Weatherby
District 7

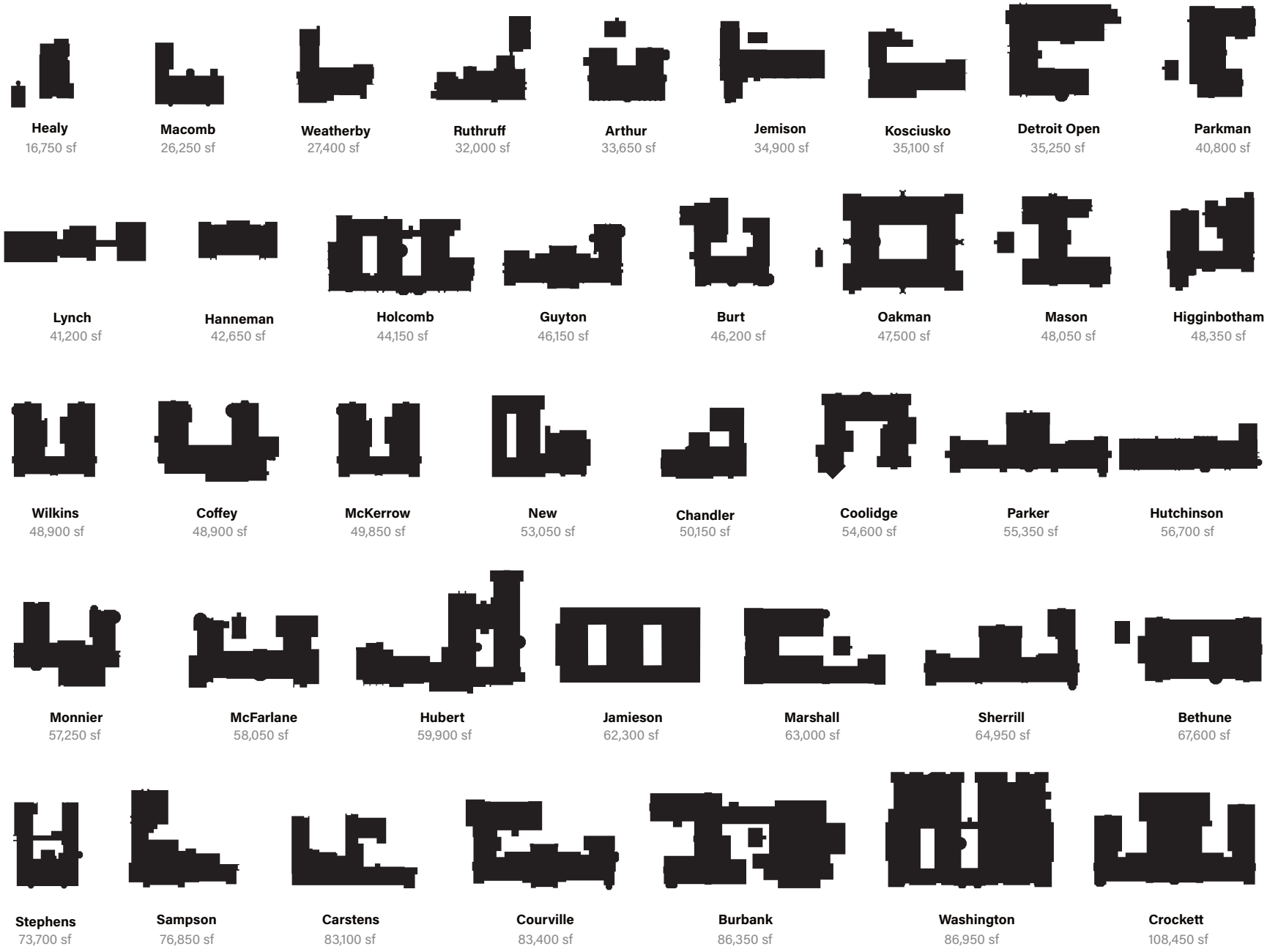
Floor Area

The historic vacant schools in this study come in all shapes and sizes. The smallest school, Healy, is less than 17,000 square feet; the largest school, Crockett, is six times as large, with over 108,000 sf. The average size is about 50,000 sf.

The image at right shows the footprints of each school building arranged from smallest to largest. You'll notice that the size of a school's footprint doesn't always tell us how much floor area it has. For example, Hanneman and Holcomb on the second row are have similar floor areas, even though Holcomb looks much larger. This is because Hanneman has three levels, while Holcomb only has one.

Building size can affect the rehab potential of a vacant school in a variety of ways. While larger buildings provide a lot more space, they are typically more expensive to repair up front and to operate and maintain over time.

Building Footprint & Gross Floor Area



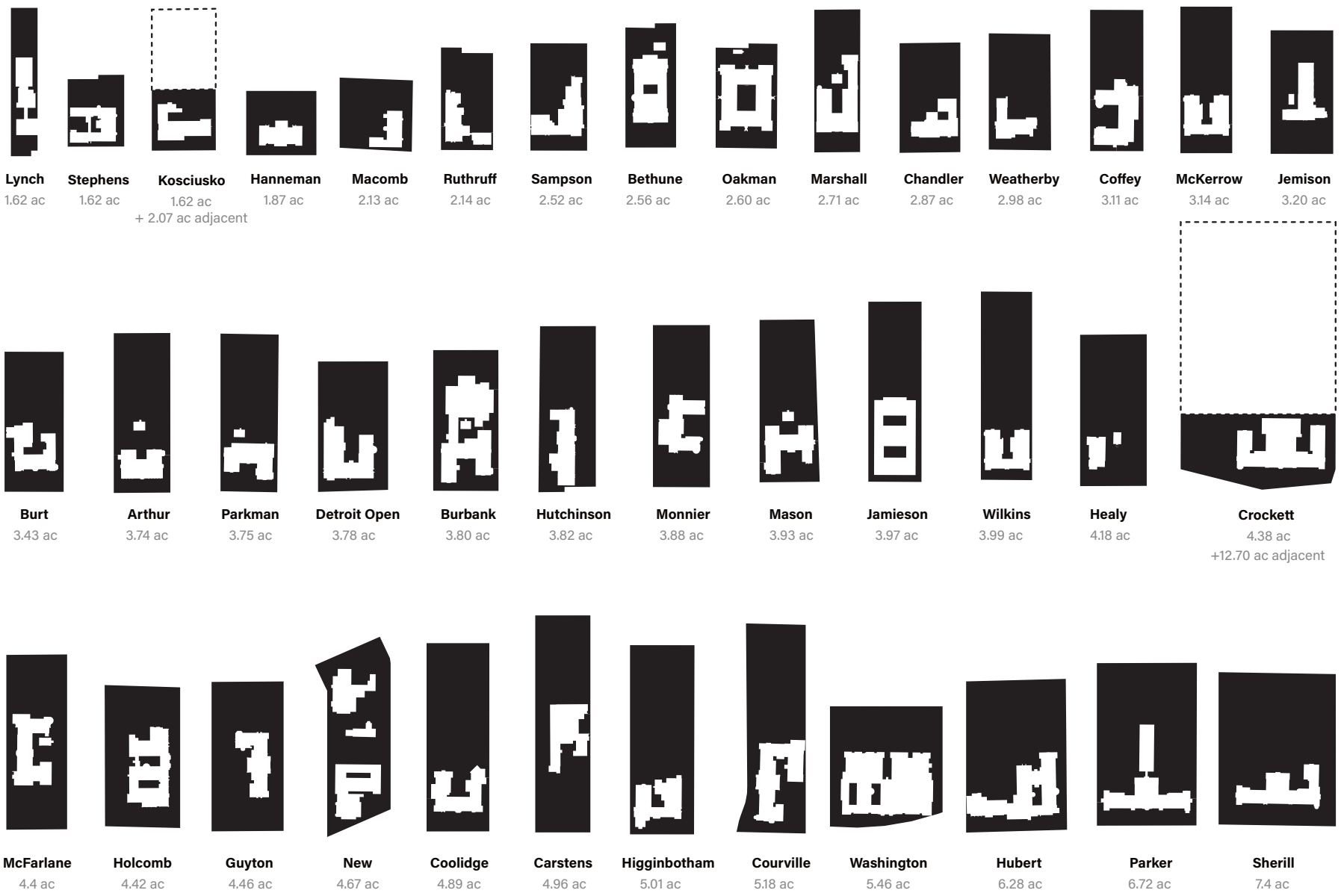
Floor Area

The schools in this study can also be measured by the size of their site (the piece of land the building sits on). Like building area, school sites vary in both shape and size. Lynch is the smallest site, at just 1.62 acres); Sherrill is the largest, with a whopping 7.4 ac site—two full city blocks! The average, meanwhile, is 3.6 ac, which is close to a full city block.

Two school sites, at Kosciusko and Crockett, are adjacent to additional City-owned open land. Although these neighboring parcels are not part of the school property, but they make the school site feel much larger. If Crockett's site was combined with the neighboring parcel, it would be the largest area in the study by far, at over 17 ac.

The size of a school site has an impact on the possibilities for redeveloping the property. The size and position of the school building on the property also matters. Many schools with larger sites have a lot of leftover land. For example, most school properties consist of 75% or more open space, while Healy's site is over 90% open space. Of course, that open space could be preserved as parkland or green space. New buildings could also be built on that land to make the site more dense. On the other hand, schools with small sites like Stephens or spread-out buildings like Oakman, Burbank, and Washington don't have much land left over so there isn't much opportunity to build more without demolishing the existing building.

Reverse Figure-Ground: Site Area



Accessibility

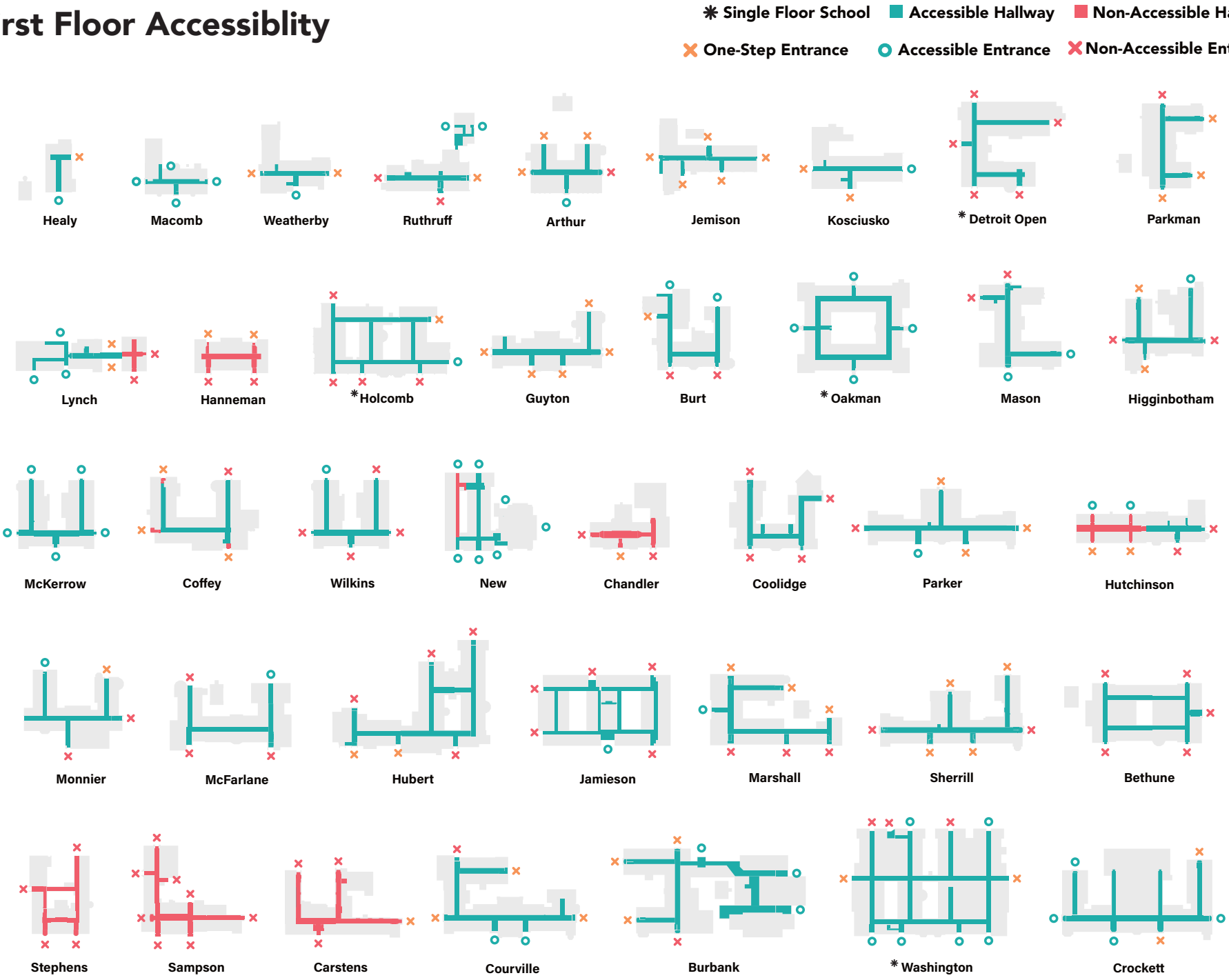
One of the primary challenges of rehabilitating any historic building is updating it to comply with ADA standards for accessibility. As all of the schools in this study were built long before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Architectural Barriers act of 1968; in fact, many were built at a time when students with disabilities did not attend public school at all.

Multistory schools in this study do not have elevators. Many schools are comprised of multiple additions; in some cases, these different units were not constructed at the same grade or with corresponding floor heights, leading to level-changes within the building. The oldest school buildings were typically built on raised basements, which means that reaching the first floor from any entrance requires ascending a half flight of stairs. And finally, many buildings, even single-story at-grade construction, may have steps or barriers at entrances, preventing universal access.

All of these issues are fixable, though some are easier than others. The diagrams on the following page show the first floor corridors and entrances of each City-owned school in the study. Schools with corridors and entrances marked with O's have fully accessible entrances and ground floors (or near enough to become fully accessible with minor alterations). Schools with green corridors and entrances marked with X's are barrier-free inside and partially accesible, though entrances may need additional measures such as wheelchair ramps and handrails. Finally, schools all in red are raised-basement schools in which no part of the building is handicap accessible without major modifications. Schools marked with an asterisk (*) are single-story buildings that can be made 100% accessible. All others are multistory and require an elevator to reach upper levels.

Although there are several schools that are largely accessible or could easily be made accessible, there is only one school in this study that is fully accessible in its current state. Oakman Elementary is a particularly special building because it was built specifically for children with physical disabilities. Built in 1929, it was a pioneering building that was one of the first and most important special needs schools in Detroit.

First Floor Accessiblity



Large Spaces

Detroit's historic school buildings have many unique qualities that set them apart from other buildings in the city. One of the most important is the presence of large, high-ceilinged, column-free spaces in nearly every building—that is, school gyms and auditoriums. Not only do these spaces set historic school buildings apart from other building types, the design and arrangement of these spaces is unique in school to school.

The diagrams on the following page show the locations of gym and auditorium spaces within each building. The arrangement of these spaces is sometimes reflects a clear original design concept: for example, Oakman is anchored by four large spaces at its corners, Courville and Guyton have their large spaces paired in the center to create the focal point of a symmetrical elevation, and Parker and Sherrill pair the spaces in their own wing at the rear of the school to form a T-plan. Other times, the arrangement of gyms and auditoriums is more a reflection of site constraints or of the practice of constructing schools little-by-little, starting with classrooms and adding increasingly specialized spaces as the student body grew.

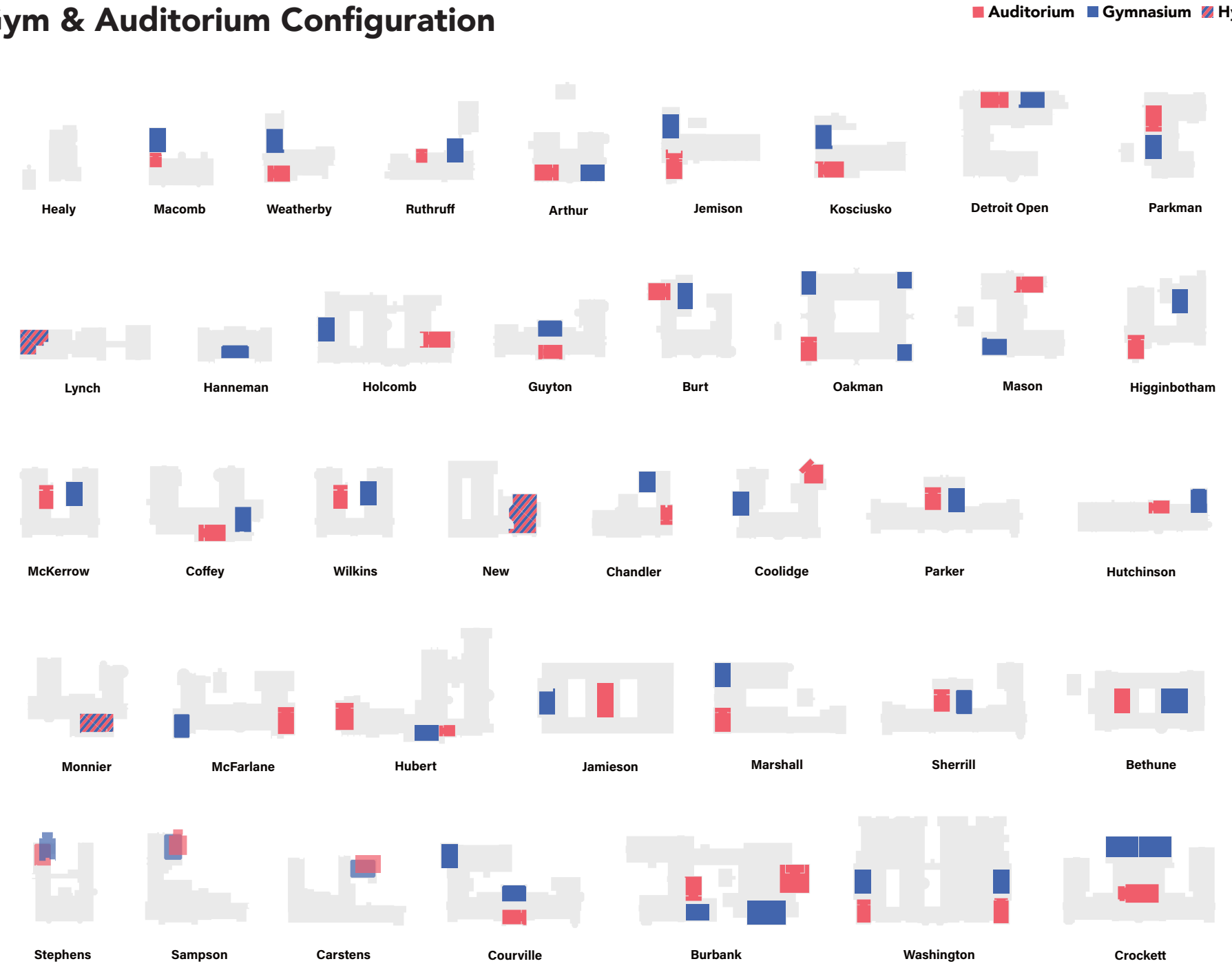
The arrangement of gyms and auditoriums has implications on the potential future uses of these schools as well—particularly if phased development, tactical preservation, or multiple groups of building use is part of the strategy. Some gyms and auditoriums were designed and positioned with public use in mind—they are located near street frontages or parking lots and have dedicated entrances that allow outside access to these spaces even while the rest of the school is closed to the public. Often, but not always, these more accessible gyms and auditoriums are clustered, so they can be accessed together, creating a special community zone within the building. Schools with these characteristics are well-suited towards hybrid uses, such as maintaining secure wings for private apartments, offices, and/or studios, while opening up the gym and auditorium to host public events.

Schools where gyms and auditoriums are located in different parts of the building, and especially those with gyms and auditoriums located in the center of the school may be slightly more difficult to divide into clear public and private sectors, though it is certainly possible with some creativity.

Beyond their location and arrangement within the school buildings, it is important to consider the unique design characteristics and reuse opportunities of each individual gym and auditorium on its own. While each space could of course be used for its original purpose (an auditorium becomes a community theater; a gym used for fitness classes), there are other opportunities for these versatile spaces. From taking advantage to their large, tall volumes (sculpture studios, manufacturing, drone flight training), to dividing them up (2-story lofts or stacked modules), there are many different paths available to creative developers.

The different design variations of gyms and auditoriums—as well as other school spaces like kindergartens and courtyards—are described in greater detail in the following pages.

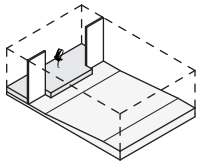
Gym & Auditorium Configuration



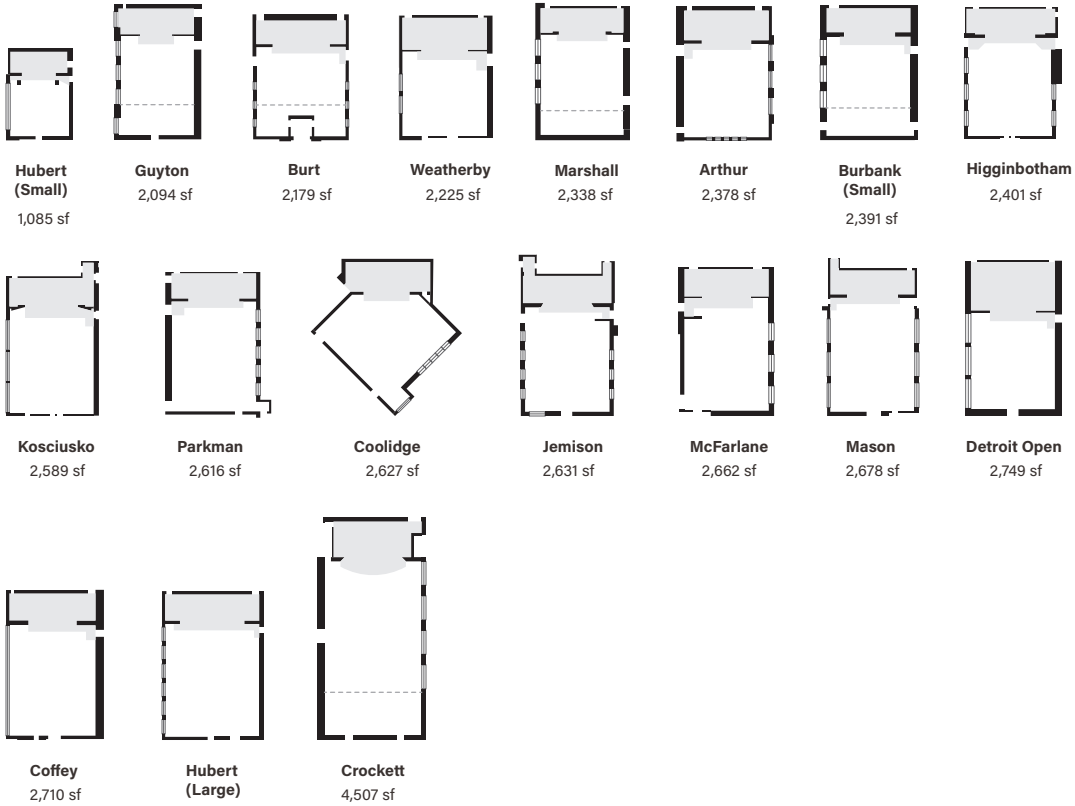
Auditoriums

Standard Auditorium

The most common type of auditorium found in historic schools has a roughly 40x60' floor area including the stage. They have 15-20' high ceilings, large windows, and a gently sloping (or "raked") floor. This type of auditorium can be found in many elementary schools built from the 1920s to 1950s, and although the decorations may be different from school to school, the basic elements are the same.

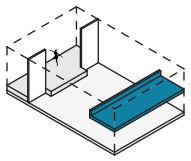


Raked Floor

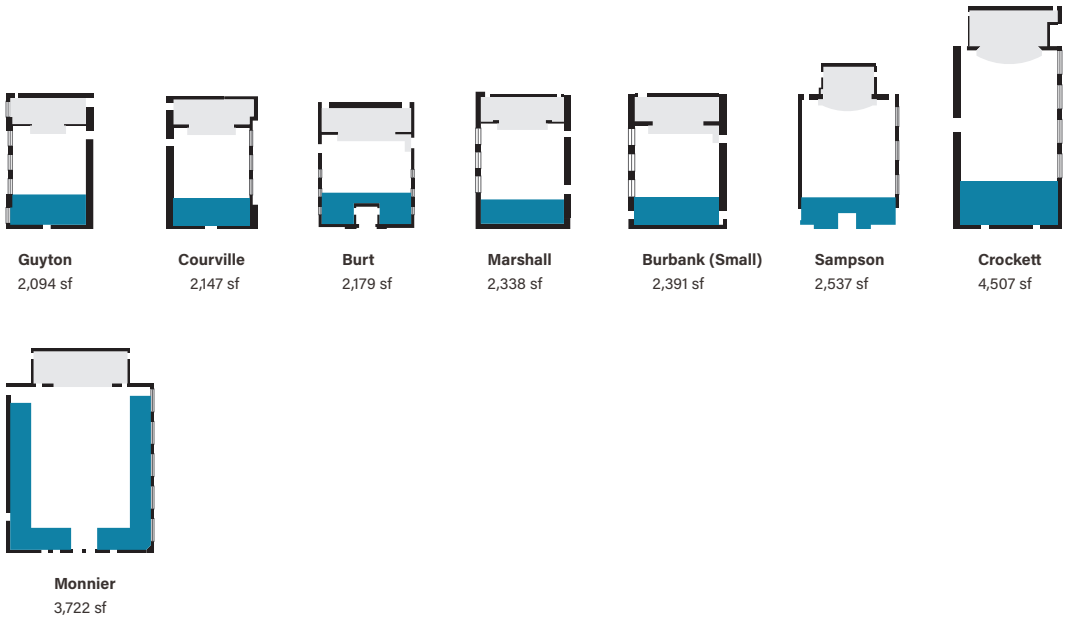


Balcony Auditorium

Some schools have an upper-level seating area, in the form of a balcony or mezzanine level. This feature allows more seating capacity within the same space. Other times, the balcony is used as a way to fit in other special spaces, such as entrance lobbies, coatrooms and ticketing, or projection rooms.

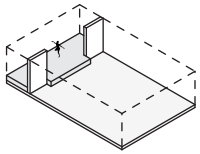


With Balcony

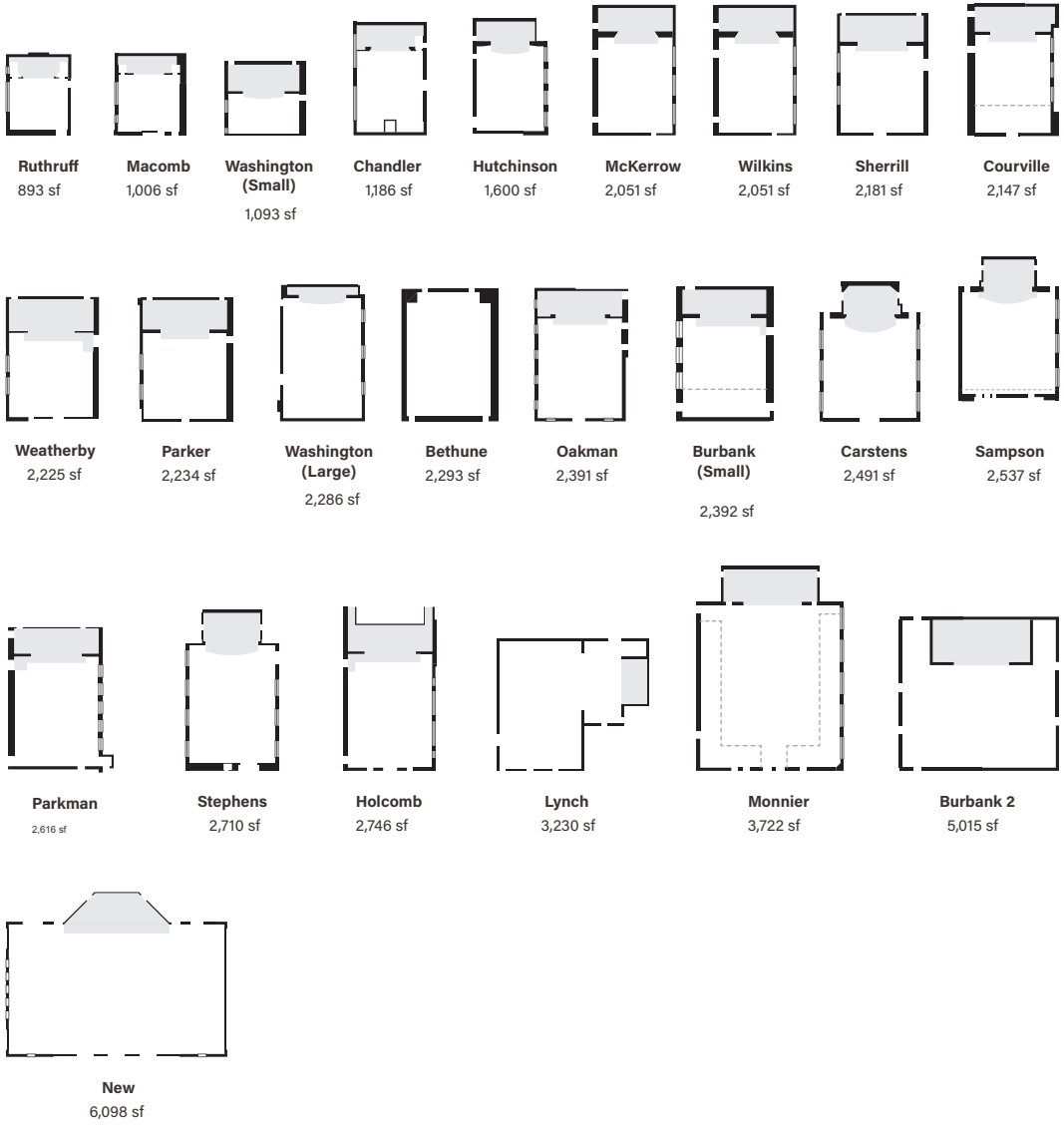


Flat-Floor Auditorium

While most auditoriums have sloped-floor seating areas (so the audience can see better), some auditoriums have flat floors. This makes the auditorium more accessible for people in wheelchairs or with limited mobility. Also, if the seats can be removed, the flat floor makes the auditorium easier to use for a wider variety of activities.



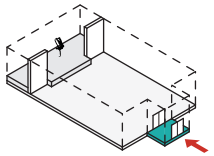
Flat Floor



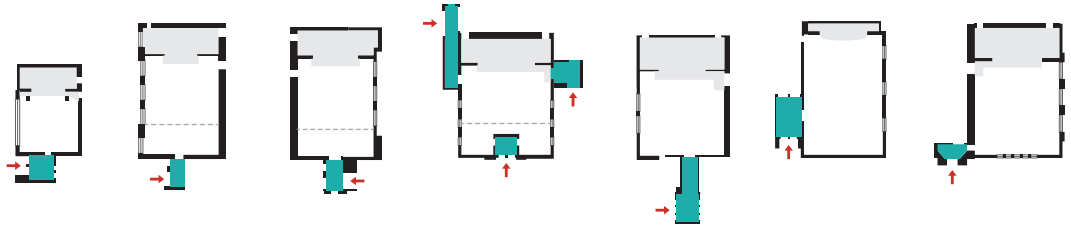
Auditorium Access

Many school auditoriums, particularly those built after the late-1920s, were designed to serve as community spaces when school was not in session. Some of these auditoriums offer direct access from the street via a dedicated entry vestibule, sometimes combined with a small cloakroom. Others are located near a main school entrance that can be gated off to allow public access to just the auditorium.

Vacant schools with auditoriums that can function semi-independently from the rest of the school building may offer more flexible approaches to rehabilitation, occupation, and operation.



Direct Access



Hubert (Small)
1,085 sf

Guyton
2,094 sf

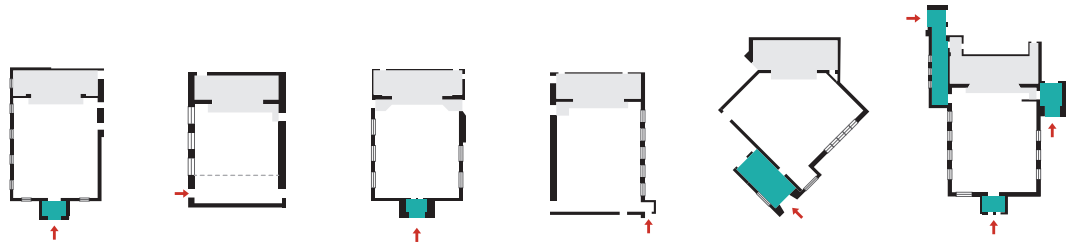
Courville
2,147 sf

Burt
2,179 sf

Weatherby
2,225 sf

Washington (Large)
2,286 sf

Arthur
2,378 sf



Oakman
2,391 sf

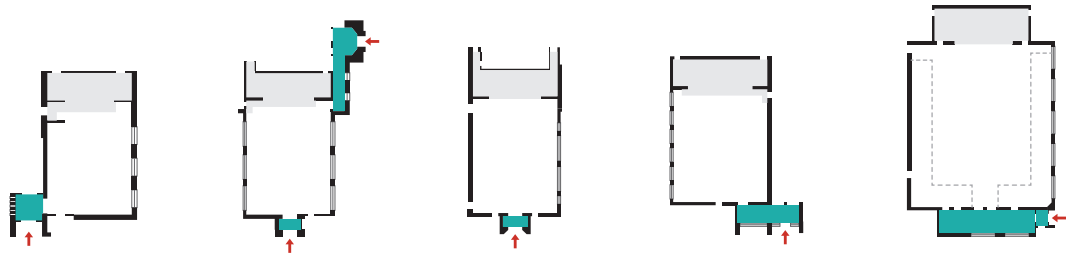
Burbank (Small)
2,392 sf

Higginbotham
2,401 sf

Parkman
2,616 sf

Coolidge
2,627 sf

Jemison
2,631 sf



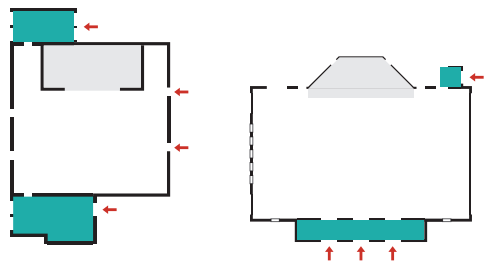
McFarlane
2,662 sf

Mason
2,678 sf

Holcomb
2,747 sf

Hubert (Large)
2,988 sf

Monnier
3,722 sf

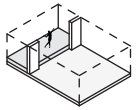


Burbank (Large)
5,015 sf

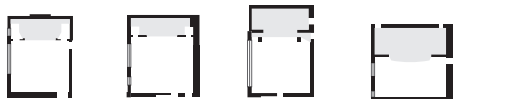
New
6,869 sf

Mini Auditoriums

At Ruthruff and Macomb, the primary auditorium is only the size of a typical classroom. Hubert, Washington, and Sherrill are large schools that include both large and small auditoriums



Mini Auditorium



Ruthruff
893 sf

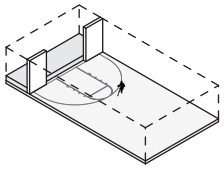
Macomb
1,006 sf

Hubert (Small)
1,085 sf

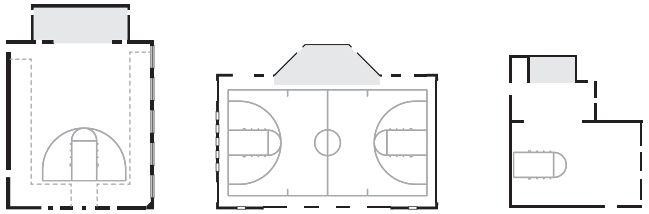
Washington (Small)
1,093 sf

Multipurpose Spaces

A few schools feature combination gym/ auditoriums. The three examples at right show very different stage and seating area configurations.



Shared Auditorium & Gym



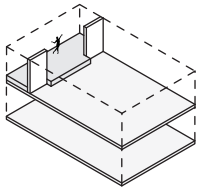
Monnier
3,722 sf

New
6,869 sf

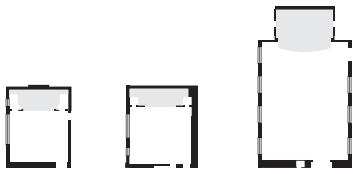
Lynch
3,230 sf

Second-Floor Auditorium

Most school auditoriums are located on the main level, where they can be easily accessed by both students and the public; this also helps accommodate their taller ceilings. Stephens is the only instance of a full-size auditorium located on an upper floor.



Second Floor



Ruthruff
893 sf

Macomb
1,006 sf

Stephens
2,710 sf


Burt


Detroit Open


Holcomb


Hubert


Coffey


Higginbotham


Burbank

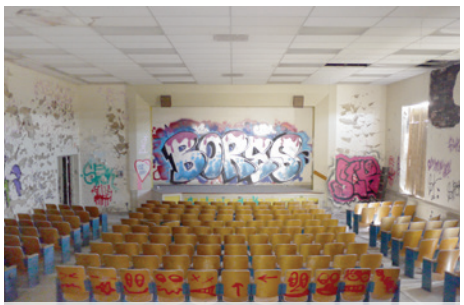

Courville


Crockett


Marshall


Mason


New


Washington


Arthur


Carstens


Guyton


Hutchinson


Macomb


Wilkins


Chandler


Stephens


Ruthruff


Sampson


Sherrill


Coolidge


Jemison


Kosciusko


McFarlane


McKerrow


Monnier

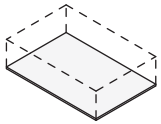

Oakman


Parker

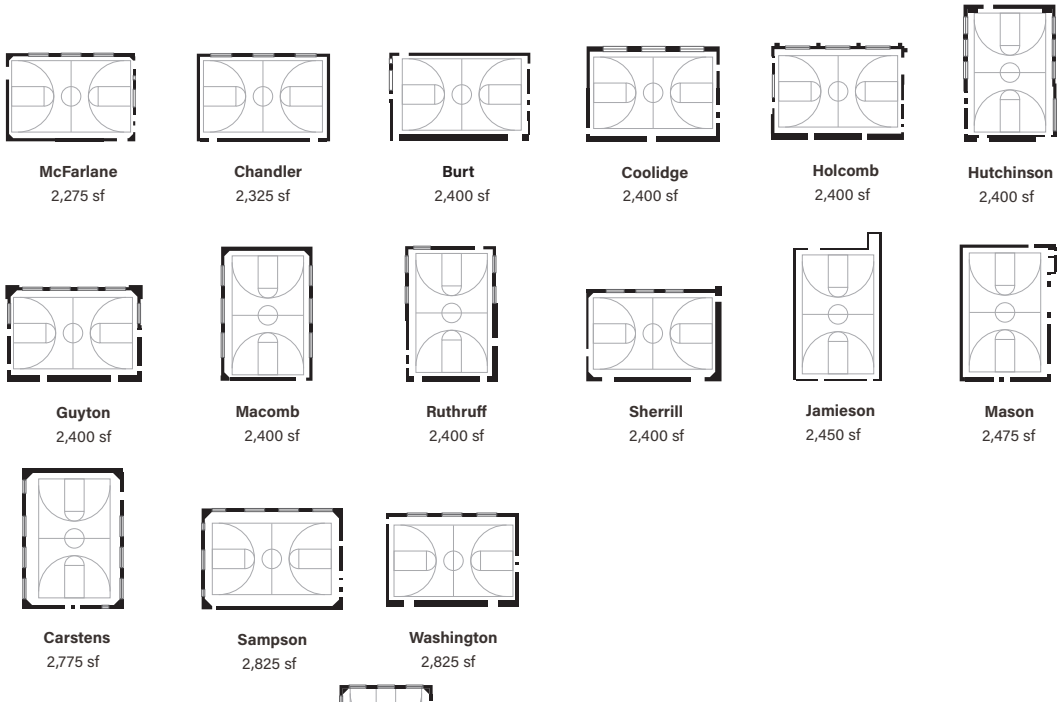
Gymnasiums

Standard Gym

The majority of schools included in this study were elementary schools, which commonly feature a 40x60' gym—large enough to accommodate one half-size basketball court. Design details vary: 1920s-era gyms are typically brick with large, often arched windows, while 1950s-era gyms are CMU construction, often with glass block clerestory windows.

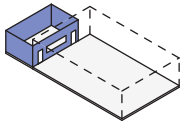


Standard Elementary (40x60')

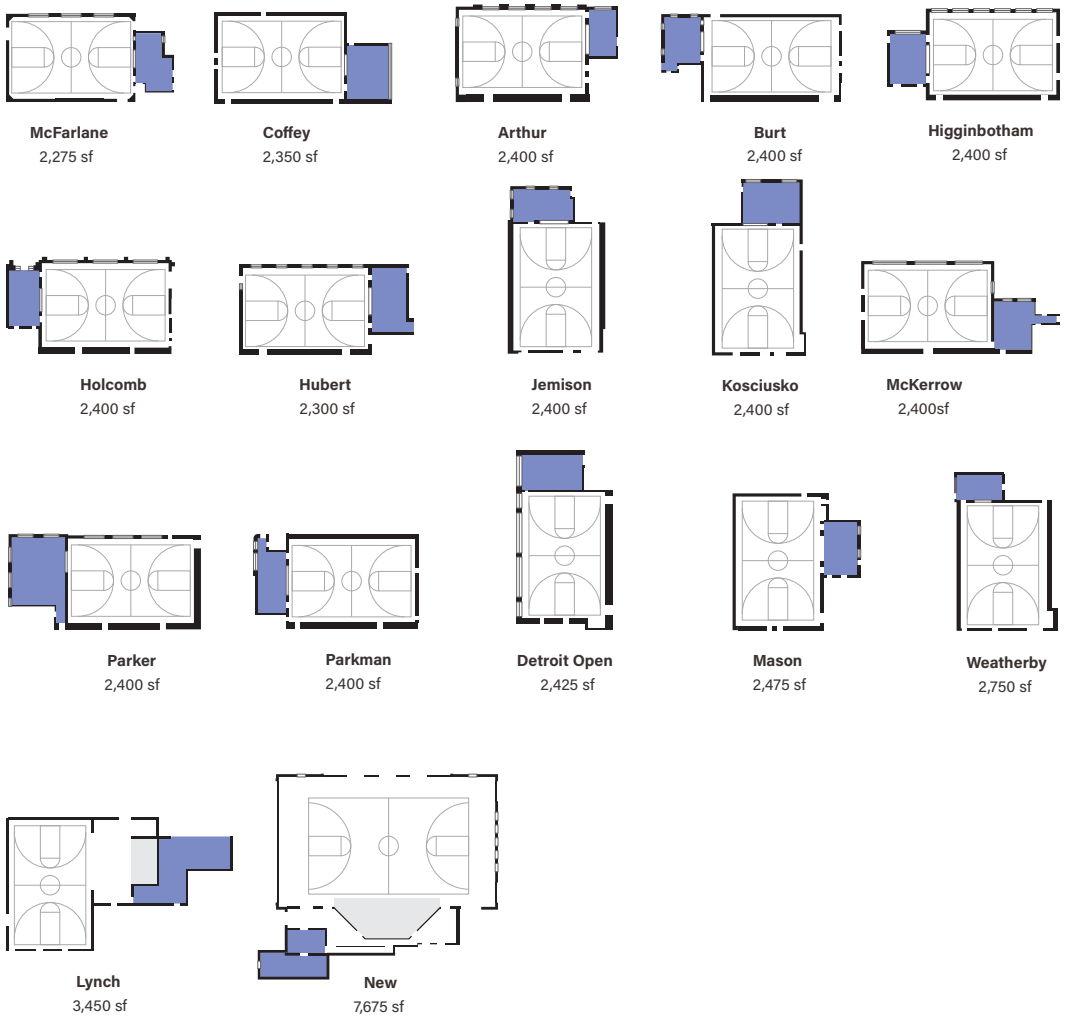


Gym/Cafeteria

Many of the gyms built from the 1940s on are combination gym/cafeterias: typically the standard 40x60' space with a small attached kitchen and a small serving window. Another common feature is a system of metal tables and benches that fold down from the gym walls. This change appears to coincide with the rise of government-supported school lunch programs during the 1930s and 40s, culminating with the 1946 National School Lunch Act.

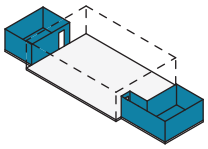


Shared Gym & Lunch Room

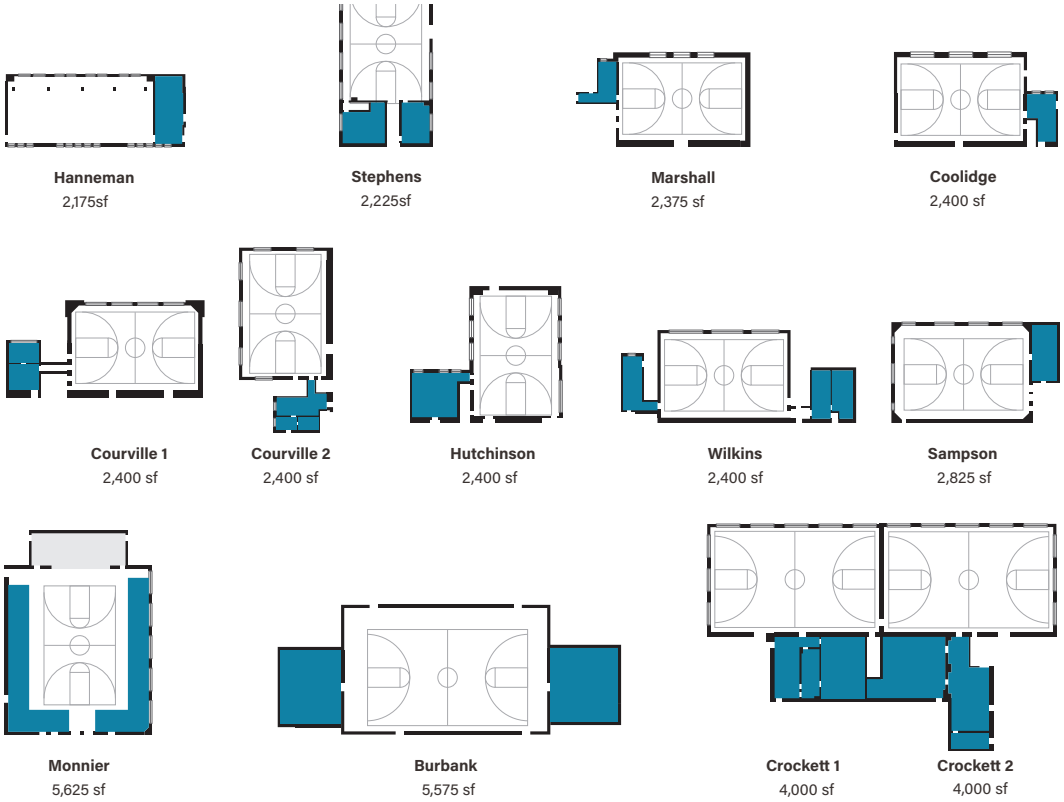


Locker Rooms

Locker rooms are a less common gym addition. Full-size gyms like those found at Crockett H.S. and Burbank feature large boys' and girls' locker rooms with showers and restrooms. Smaller schools often have just one small boys' locker room which may be little more than a space for changing and storage.



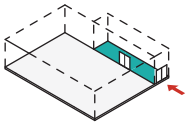
With Attached Locker Rooms



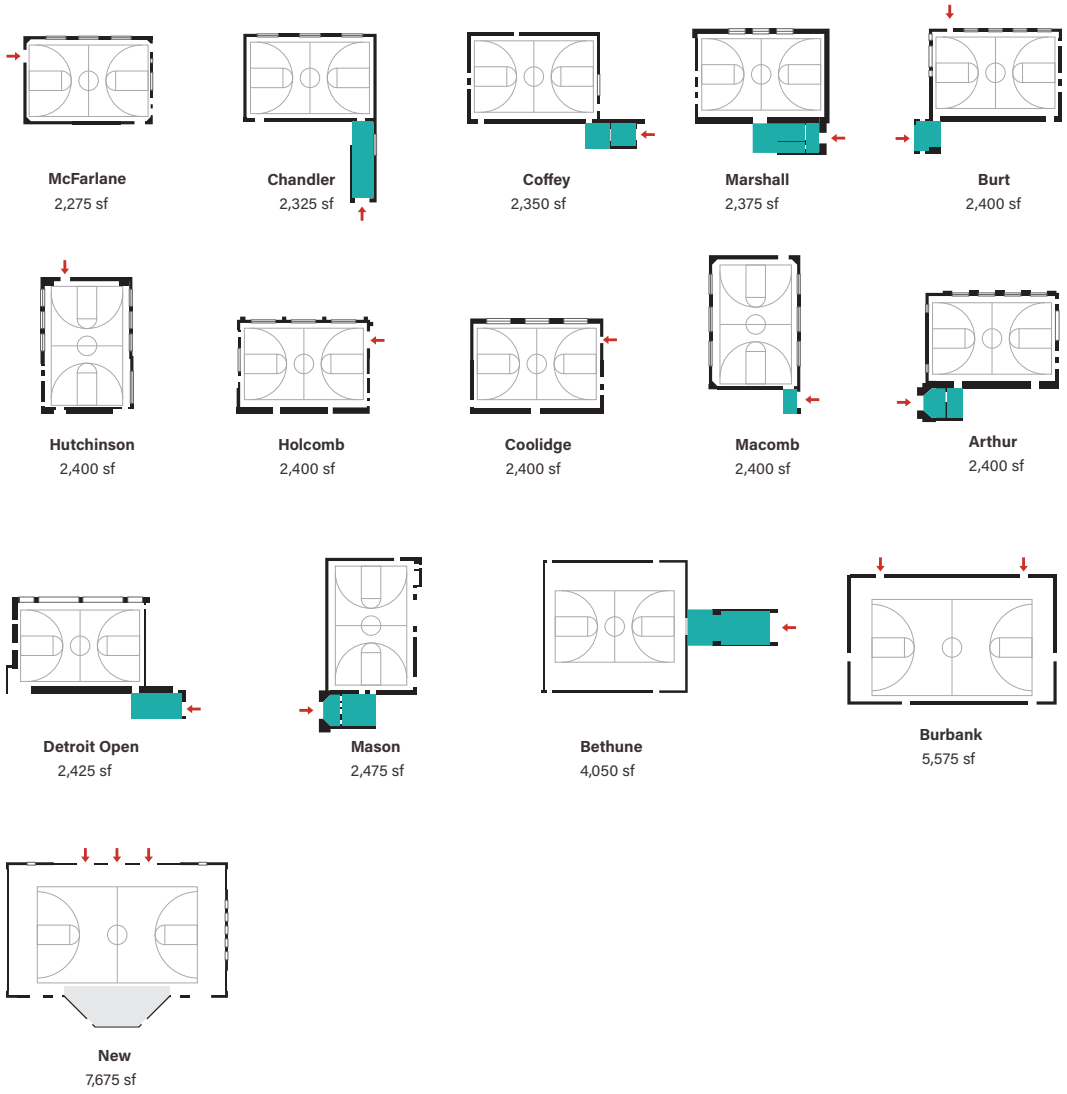
Gym Access

Many gyms feature dedicated exterior access, enabling them to be used by the public while the rest of the school is closed. While auditoriums may have a more formal entrance with a dedicated vestibule facing the street, gym entrances tend to be a nondescript door to the side or rear parking lot. Another approach was to locate the gym door inside, near a main school entrance that can be gated off to allow public access to just the auditorium.

Vacant schools with auditoriums that can function semi-independently from the rest of the school building may offer more flexible approaches to rehabilitation, occupation, and operation.

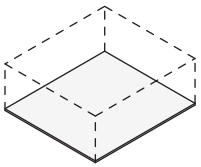


Direct Access

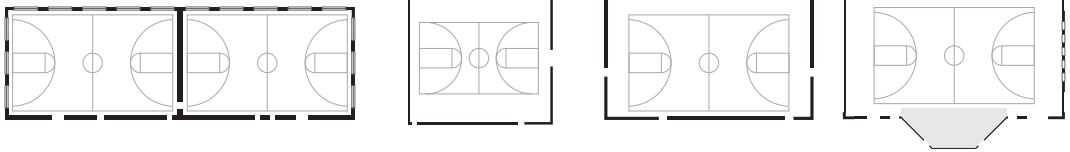


Full-Size Gyms

Gyms at Crockett, Burbank, and New schools are large enough to fit a full-size basketball court. Burbank and New both have pull-out bleachers, while Crockett has small mezannine area for spectators.



Large Gym



Crockett 1
4,000 sf

Crockett 2
4,000 sf

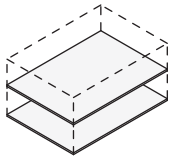
Bethune
4,050 sf

Burbank
5,575 sf

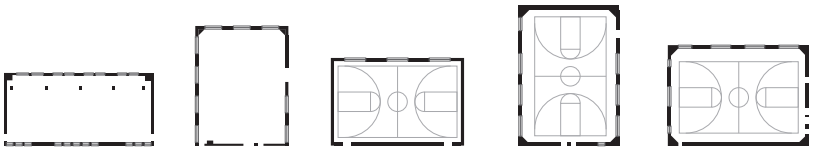
New
7675 sf

Basement Gyms

Gyms at Crockett, Burbank, and New schools are large enough to fit a full-size basketball court. Burbank and New both have pull-out bleachers, while Crockett has small mezannine area for spectators.



Lower Level Gym



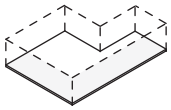
Hanneman
2,182 sf

Stephens
2,215 sf

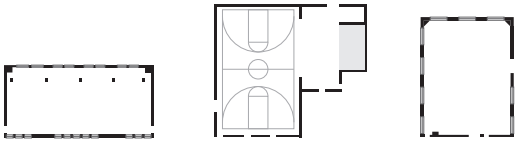
Chandler
2,313 sf

Carstens
2,774 sf

Sampson
2,832 sf



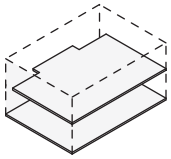
Irregular Gym Shape



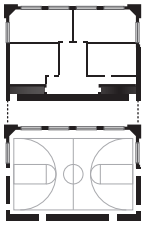
Hanneman
2,182 sf

Lynch
3,230 sf

Stephens
2,215 sf



Gym & Mezzanine



Guyton
2,391 sf

Detroit Open

Holcomb

Bethune

Coffey

Burbank

Courville

Crockett

New

Guyton

Wilkins

Jamieson

Sampson

McFarlane

Monnier

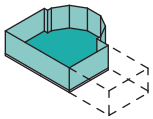
Oakman

Weatherby

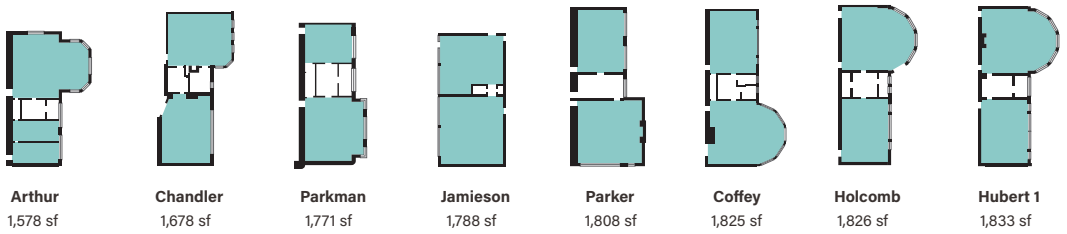
Kindergartens

1+ Room

One of the defining characteristics of Detroit's historic kindergartens is a main room with an attached auxiliary space. The extra space typically includes a boys and girls toilet, coat room, and storage closet.

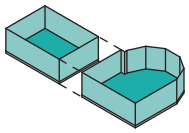


1+ Rooms



2+ Room

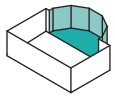
The most common kindergarten arrangement observed in the schools in this study is two main rooms connected by an auxiliary space. Like the 1+ arrangement, the extra space includes toilets, coat room, and storage closet.



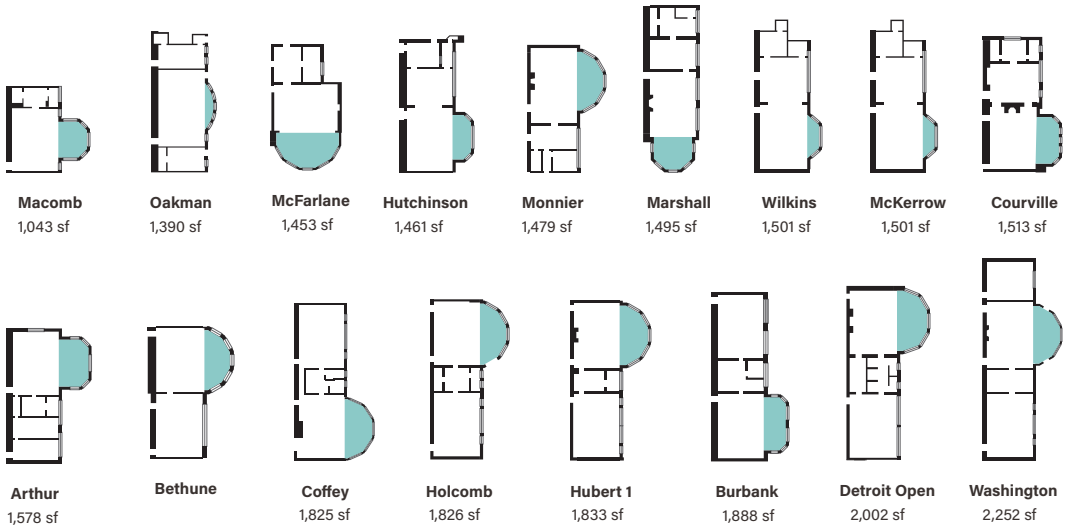
2+ Rooms

Round Bay Window

The most noticeable feature of most historic kindergartens is the bay window. Shapes and sizes range from large half-circles that are as wide as the room itself, to shallow bump-outs. The bay typically includes a wooden bench beneath the windows, with radiators in the back, and sometimes toy storage under the seat.

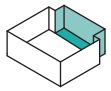


Round Bay Window

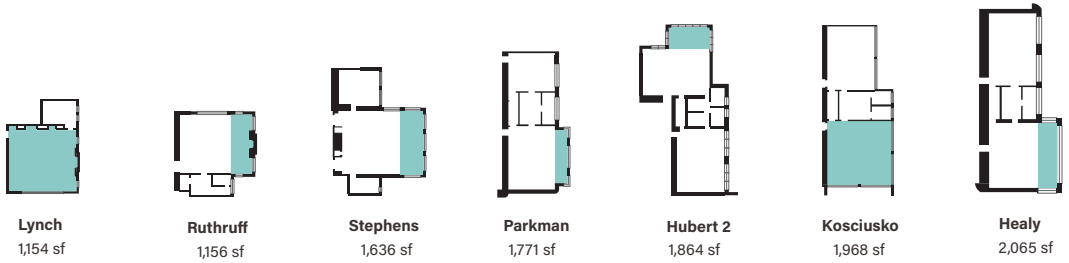


Multiple Windows

Kindergartens built before 1920 and after 1950 typically do not have round bay windows. Instead, these schools often have windows on at least two walls, ensuring ample sunlight.

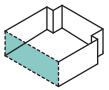


Windows on Multiple Elevations

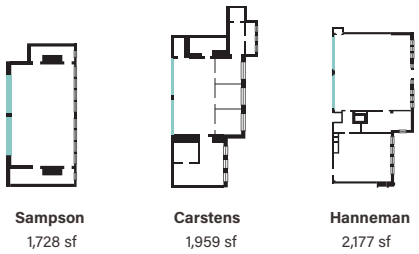


Operable Wall

Kindergartens built before 1920 are often large rectangular rooms with an operable wall that allows the space to be opened to the main hallway.



Operable Wall to Hallway



Detroit Open

Healy

Holcomb

Bethune

Coffey

Lynch

Marshall

Washington

Guyton

Macomb

Hanneman

Sampson

McFarlane

Oakman

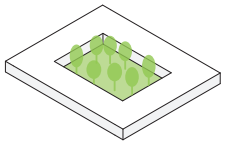
Parker

Weatherby

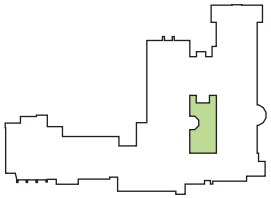
Courtyards

Enclosed Green Space

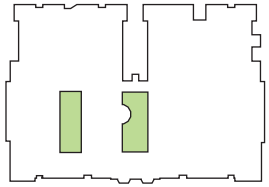
Five schools in this study feature one or more accessible green courtyards that are completely enclosed. Washington, Oakman, and Jamieson had these spaces from the start, while Hubert and Holcomb formed them as a result of multiple additions. In the older schools, a kindergarten or library bay window extends into the green space.



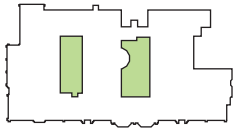
Interior Green



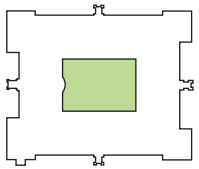
Hubert
3,062 sf



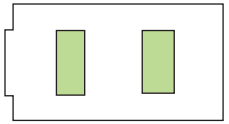
Washington
6,216 sf



Holcomb
6,406 sf



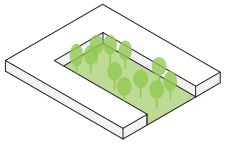
Oakman
8,705 sf



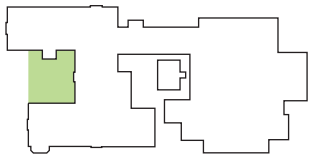
Jamieson
8,794 sf

Semi-Enclosed Green Space

Several schools have green space that is surrounded by wings of the school on three sides. At Burbank, Mason, and Parkman, the courtyard is positioned at the front of the school, creating a public-facing garden flanked by two main entrances. At Carstens, Open, and Coffey, the space is located at the rear and is an extension of the schoolyard. At the other four schools, this area is green, but not an accessible space.

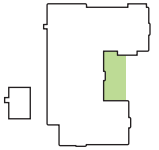


Open Green



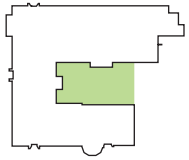
Burbank
5,356 sf

Mason
4,223 sf

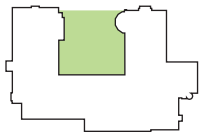


Mason
4,223 sf

Carstens
7,011 sf

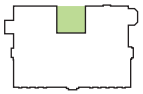


Detroit Open
7,075 sf



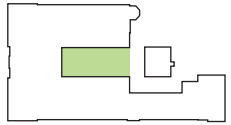
Coffey
9,082 sf

Chandler
1,624 sf



Arthur
1,773 sf

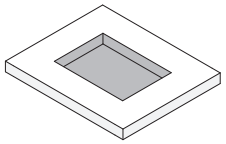
Courville
4,363 sf



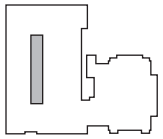
Marshall
4,537 sf

Enclosed Hardscape

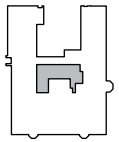
Not all enclosed courtyards are green. New and Bethune feature enclosed, accessible paved areas. At Stephens, there is a central lightwell that is not accessible at all.



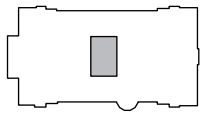
Interior Paved



New
1,847 sf



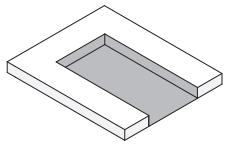
Stephens
2,056 sf



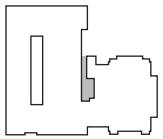
Bethune
2,370 sf

Semi-Enclosed Hardscape

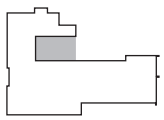
The most common type of courtyard is a partially-enclosed paved area. Typically, these areas are purely utilitarian spaces used for parking and deliveries. Often, these spaces are actually the concrete roof of a basement boiler room—this is where coal was delivered and ash hauled away. The other function of these semi-enclosed spaces was to provide light and ventilation to interior classrooms. They are usually not aesthetically pleasing, but could be repurposed in the future.



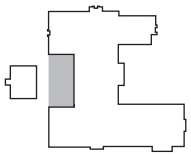
Open Paved



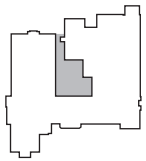
New
890 sf



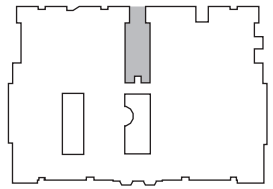
Kosciusko
2,246 sf



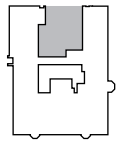
Mason
3,042 sf



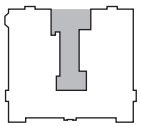
Higginbotham
3,152 sf



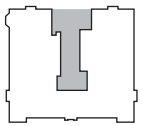
Washington
3,940 sf



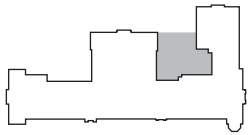
Stephens
4,596 sf



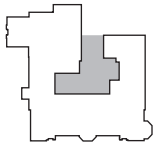
McKerrow
5,064 sf



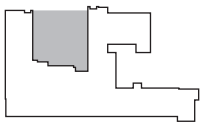
Wilkins
5,064 sf



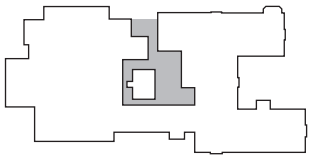
Sherrill
5,011 sf



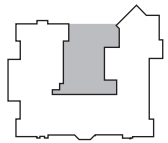
Burt
5,250 sf



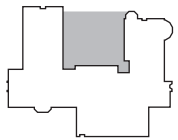
Carstens
7,011 sf



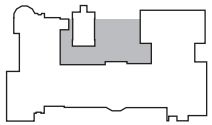
Burbank
7,079 sf



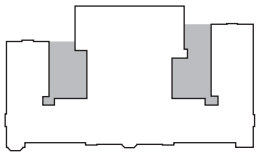
Coolidge
7,803 sf



Monnier
7,990 sf



McFarlane
7,990 sf



Crockett
10,790 sf