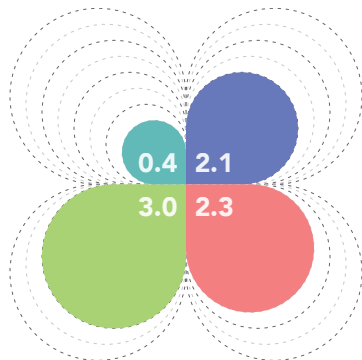


# 7 Coolidge



Address: 16501 Elmira  
Parcel: 22062989  
District: 7  
SNF Area: n/a  
Owner: City of Detroit  
Site Area: 4.9 ac  
Gross Floor Area: 54,600 sf  
Floors: 2  
Plan Type: U  
School Type:  
Year Built: 1925, 1928, 1941, 1951  
Zoned: R1  
Base Rehab Cost (est): \$1.9M  
Total Rehab Cost (est): \$13.4M

Condition Market



History Neighborhood



## Building Overview

Two-story C-plan building surrounding an asphalt courtyard.

North and east wings built in late 1920s; west additions added in 1940 and 1950.

1950 addition features a large auditorium with a diamond-shaped configuration. Auditorium has its own access and vestibule, and may be used independently from the rest of the building.

Large grassy schoolyard, covering a full block.

Building is in poor structural condition due to water infiltration from roof; second floor slab may need full replacement.

Extensive damage from scrappers throughout.

## Neighborhood Overview

Located in the Joy Community neighborhood.

Single-family residential neighborhood with small, wood-framed houses.

Surrounding blocks have high levels of vacancy.

DON reports few active neighborhood groups.

Located one block south of Plymouth Ave, a key east-west commercial corridor with some new businesses.

Located one block north of Stoepel Park No. 2, a large City park with a playground and new soccer field.

Easy access to I-96 and Southfield Freeway.

Henderson Academy, a DPSCD-owned vacant school included in this study, is located less than half a mile to the south.

Near storied Kronk Boxing Gym.

## Development Overview

### Opportunities

- Beautiful exterior details
- Large auditorium can be used independently.
- Large school yard provides ample room for outdoor programming, parking, or new development.
- Accessible location near a Plymouth commercial corridor.

### Challenges

- Building is in poor condition and needs extensive repairs.

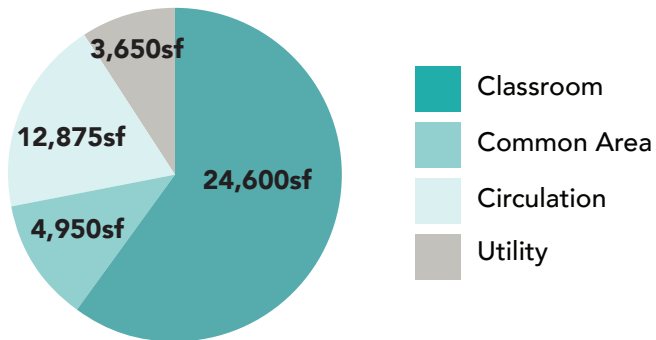
Real Estate Market summary:  
(1-mi radius, compared against subset of 39 City-owned vacant schools)

- Multifamily: Average
- Retail: Average
- Office: Average
- Industrial: Average

### Market-based Use Recommendations

- Best market for mixed-use retail and residential, due to low retail vacancy rates and above average rents.

## Existing Floorplan and Program



31,425sf net floor area

### Structure

- Concrete frame (1925/28 units)
- Concrete-encased steel frame (1941/51 units)

### Roof System:

- Concrete tee slab-joist
- Open-web steel joist (auditorium only)
- Gravel-surfaced bituminous built-up roof
- Internal drains

### Floor System:

- Concrete tee joist-slab

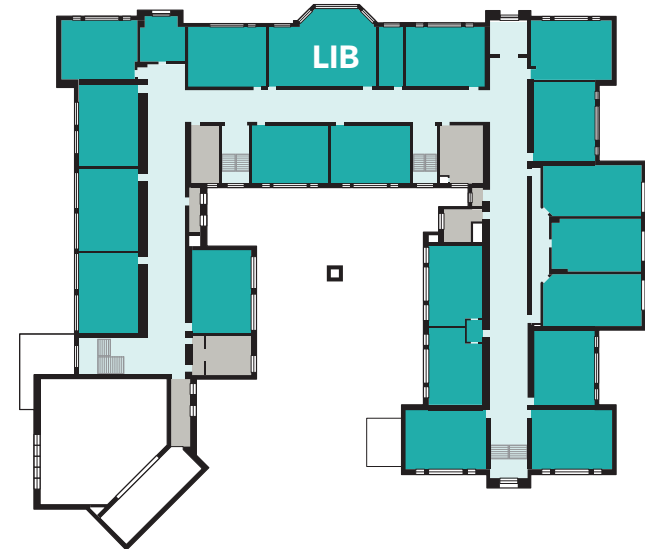
### Facade:

- Brick masonry with CMU or brick backup
- Limestone accents
- Wood windows (1925/28)
- Steel windows (1941/51)

### Interior Walls (original unit):

- Plaster on steel lathe, gypsum block, brick (1925/28)
- Painted CMU (1941/51)

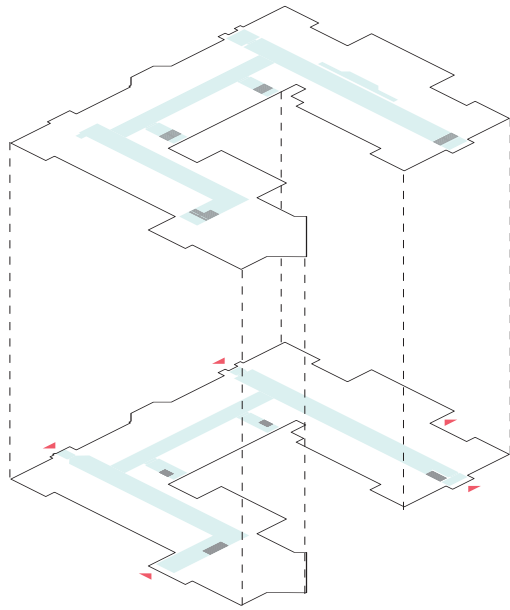
## Second Floor



## First Floor



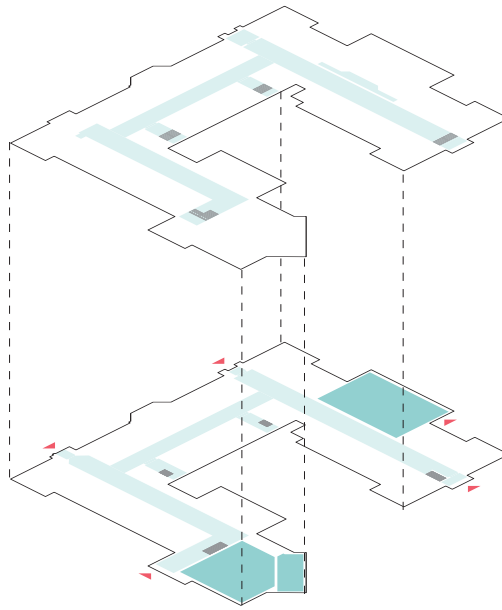
## Existing Floorplan and Program



### Circulation

Coolidge features a U-shaped layout with double-loaded corridors. There are four primary entrances: two on the main north elevation, and one at the south ends of each of the classroom additions. There are also four sets of stairs, located near each entrance.

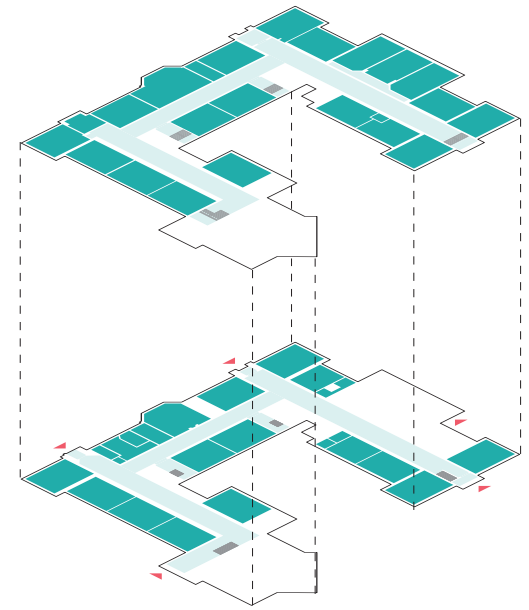
The original north unit has narrower corridors, at 11'10" wide; both additions have 14' corridors. Ceiling heights are 10' throughout.



### Common Areas

Coolidge has a standard 40x60' gym with 16'5" ceilings. The gym has a small locker room (boys only) and office attached on the north and south ends. There is one exterior door on the southeast corner.

The auditorium, added in 1951, has an unusual diamond configuration. The main seating area is a 47'4" square box, with the stage area positioned at a 45-degree angle on the southeast corner, and the floor raked from northwest to southeast.



### Classroom Areas

Classroom areas are distributed throughout all three wings of the school, and are double-loaded the corridors, facing both the street and the central courtyard. There are 29 standard classroom spaces, a larger kindergarten and library with bay windows, and three long, narrow classrooms on a mezzanine over the gym.

Typical classrooms are 22x30' with 12' ceilings.

# School History

## Calvin Coolidge Elementary

Redford Township, School District No. 7 erected the first unit of the Calvin Coolidge Elementary School in 1925. Prior to the building's erection, classes for the neighborhood's grammar-school aged children were held at a "...little red district school" on Southfield Road, while its primary students attended classes that were held "...at a nearby cottage." (Detroit Board of Education, 1967). The school's original unit boasted a capacity of 420 and housed nine rooms. Shortly after the building was constructed, it was absorbed into the Detroit Public Schools system when the area was annexed to the City of Detroit. Between 1926 and 1927, the City's school population increased by 22,000. The Grand Dale neighborhood, within which the school was built, was developed by the Frischkorn real estate company and platted in the early 1920s along the City's Plymouth Road commercial corridor. By the mid-1920s, new construction in the neighborhood boomed, necessitating the erection of the Coolidge school, as well as the Ford and Parker schools. This rapid growth spurred the Detroit Board of Education to expand the Coolidge school in 1927-1928 with addition of a new 16-room wing. The cost of the addition was \$187,960 with a design by architects Vernor, Wilhelm, and Molby. The new unit could accommodate 640 pupils, increasing the school's capacity to nearly 1,100.

By 1934, the school reached an enrollment of 1,104 with classes organized according to a sixteen-section platoon in addition to four "regular" non-platoon classrooms, and

an open window room. Two of the regular classrooms located held within a portable building within the site. By 1940, the school was overcrowded to the extent that the students were required to attend half-day sessions. The Detroit Board of Education therefore constructed a new four-room unit in 1941 at a cost of \$114,000. The wing was erected as a result of a \$1,122,316 City-wide building campaign. Growth within the Grand Dale neighborhood continued apace, with enrollment at Coolidge reaching 1475 by 1947. In order to accommodate the still-overcrowded conditions, the open window and vocational programs were eliminated and a playroom was subdivided. Also, grades seven and eight were transferred to the nearby Tappan Intermediate School.

In 1949, Detroit residents approved a special millage which provided \$50,000,000 to the Detroit Board of Education so that it might update and expand its facilities to ease overcrowded conditions which existed in the decade immediately following the close of World War II and to prepare for a projected enrollment increase of 40,000 students between 1955 and 1963. During this building campaign, which extended between 1949-1954, the Detroit Board of Education erected 119 new school buildings and additions to existing buildings. A 1951 addition to the Coolidge school was erected during this building campaign. The wing, which was erected at a cost of \$266,843, allowed for the return of seventh and eighth grades. The new unit included an auditorium and classrooms and had a capacity of 280 pupils. The Detroit Public School system,

successor to the Detroit Board of Education, closed the school in 2009 and subsequently sold the property to the City of Detroit in 2015.

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Detroit, City of, Board of Education. *Histories of the Public Schools of Detroit*. Detroit: Board of Education, 1967.

Detroit Free Press. *Million Added to School Fund*. Detroit: Detroit Free Press; Feb 15, 1941; pg. 10

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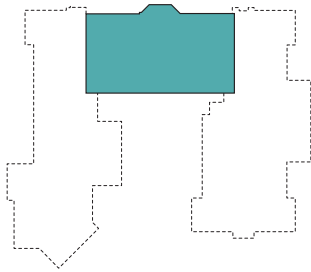
School Annex Work Rushed. Detroit: Detroit Free Press; Jan 1, 1928; pg. 49

Great Highway Inspires Rapid Progress, Beautiful Homes, Schools, Detroit: Detroit Free Press; May 8, 1927; pg. 51

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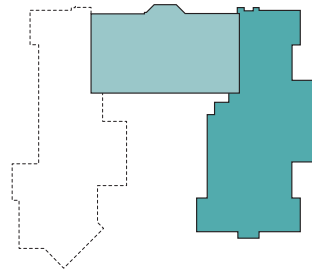
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## Building Evolution



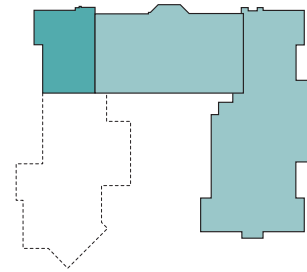
### Original Unit (1925)

The first school unit was a symmetrical rectangular block with seven classrooms, a kindergarten, and a library arranged along a single double-loaded corridor.



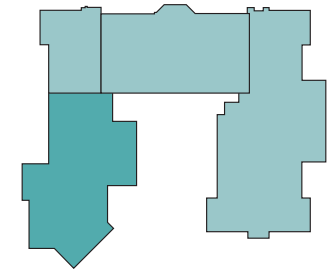
### First Addition (1928)

The school was more than doubled in size just 3 years shortly after the original building opened. The addition contained ten regular classrooms, as well as three larger specialty classrooms for art, industrial arts, and home economics. The addition also added a gym and locker rooms.



### Second Addition (1941)

A small classroom addition in 1941 added four additional classrooms and restored the symmetry of the main (north) elevation.



### Third Addition (1951)

The final expansion added six more classrooms and a large auditorium.





The exterior of the building features stone cartouches depicting academic, athletic, and Michigan themes. The facade also features multicolored diamond-pattern brickwork and limestone and formed-stone window frames. The 1928 addition is pictured above.



Classroom 101 is a small library space located on the first floor in the original 1925 north unit. It is one of the few rooms with intact original finishes, including built-in shelving, a stone fireplace, and decorative plasterwork. Wood frame windows are intact, but need repair.



The brick gym is located in the center of the 1928 unit. The space features three large wood-framed windows that appear intact. The plaster ceiling has deteriorated and fallen, obscuring the condition of the floor itself.



The interior of the building has suffered from extensive water infiltration and scapping. This image shows the first floor east corridor, part of the first addition in 1928. The slab above is exposed and may require replacement.





This second-floor classroom in the original 1925 unit features steel-frame windows instead of wood. Although the frames are present, the windows need repair.



Classrooms in the 1940/1950 west addition are austere, with simple concrete block construction. The rooms feature high ceilings and large windows. Holes in the walls created by scrappers reveal the concrete frame structure.



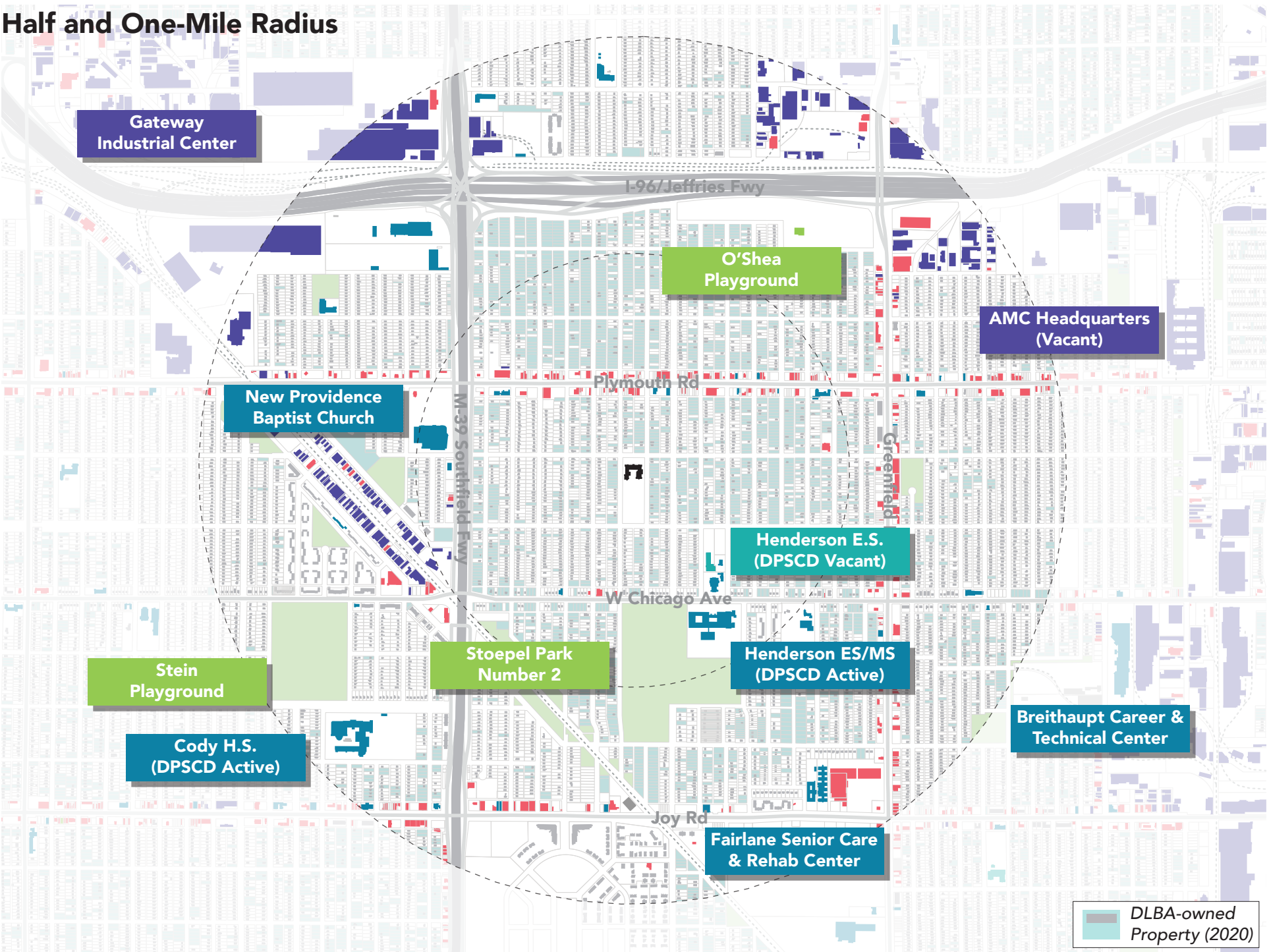
The 1951 auditorium features an unusual diamond-shaped configuration. The main seating area is a square space that is orthogonal to the rest of the school building, while the stage area is located in the corner and oriented at a 45-degree angle.



The second-floor corridor in the 1951 unit has been extensively scrapped, but otherwise, finishes are in good condition and there is little evidence of water damage.



# Half and One-Mile Radius



## Neighborhood By The Numbers

44<sub>/100</sub>

**Walkscore**  
Car dependent

0.2<sub>mi</sub>

**Transit Access**  
Less than 5 minute walk to nearest  
DDOT Connect Ten or Key Route

0.5<sub>mi</sub>

**Freeway Access**  
Less than 5 minute drive  
to nearest freeway ramp

0.2<sub>mi</sub>

**Park Access**  
Less than 5 minute walk  
to nearest park (1+ acre)

2.8<sub>mi</sub>

**Nearest Recreation Center**  
No city rec center  
within walking distance

0.9<sub>mi</sub>

**Library Access**  
10-15 minute walk  
to nearest public library

35%

**Vacant/DLBA Property**  
Moderately High rate of vacancy  
within 0.25 mile radius (2020)

162

**Building Alteration Permits**  
Moderate construction activity  
within 1mi radius (2016-2018)

2.4%

**Senior Population Growth**  
Moderate projected growth  
within 1mi radius (2019-2024)