

# THE LATHROP AND SHERRICK ROAD NEIGHBORHOODS



2010

Part of the Canton Neighborhood Project

# The Lathrop and Sherrick Road Neighborhoods

TWO COMMUNITIES WITH DEEP ROOTS

## INTRODUCTION

There's always more to neighborhoods than just a collection of buildings and people. Communities each have unique stories based on when, how, and for whom they were built; such places often have long histories of serving distinct racial and ethnic groups. Some neighborhoods are well defined and have clear boundaries. Other important neighborhoods are really corridors leading to other communities. It is this complexity that makes understanding neighborhoods as much of an art as it is a science.

Southeast Canton has two excellent examples of historic neighborhoods that are distinct places and perform very different functions. The first is Lathrop, a small cluster of blocks literally encircled by a transportation corridor of streets, highways, and railroad tracks. Within those boundaries is a stable community with high levels of homeownership and a remarkably stable population.

The second neighborhood, with less than two-dozen houses, is well known for its important role in Southeast. This place is the Sherrick Road SE corridor. Today, this historic road is the front door to other neighborhoods and is defined by its institutional life as much as its housing.

These workplans will look at both places and suggest ways that the residents, the city government, numerous institutions, and others can come together to strengthen these communities as resources in Canton. Therefore, the neighborhoods are being examined not just because they are valuable as places, but also because they are important as Canton repositions itself for decades to come.

# LATHROP

## NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

North	East	South	West
13 <sup>th</sup> Street SE	Cherry Avenue SE	Nimishillen Creek	Market Avenue S/I-77

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

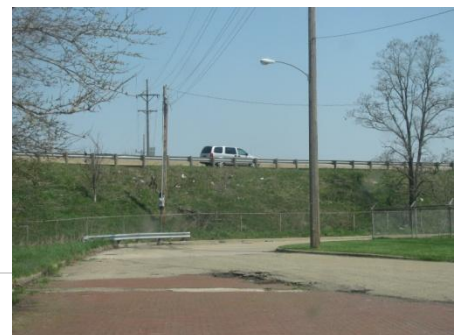
Description	Number
Houses	139
Duplexes	2
Multi-family	1
Residential vacant land	46
Industrial vacant land	3
Commercial vacant land	14
Commercial properties	16
Average year built	1950
Average size	1,146
Properties lived in by homeowner	90 (71% of known)
Investment Properties	37 (29% of known)
Unknown/Vacant	15

## WORKPLAN



The Lathrop neighborhood is unique to Canton. It functions like a village located inside a metropolitan center. There is a sense of place with distinct entrance and exit points. Lathrop boasts blocks of housing joined by a school and a church, nearby industry, and even the remnants of a past commercial life, especially along Market Avenue South. Nearby is a branch of Nimishillen Creek and a popular park. Canton’s downtown begins just a few blocks north; and there is easy access to excellent transportation routes.

The boundaries of this village-like neighborhood are a critical aspect of the community. First, there are the railroad tracks that form much of the southern edge. Second, there are the highways. There is highway 43 on the east, US 30 to the north, and I-77 to the west. Lathrop is literally bounded and defined by busy transportation corridors that serve the larger metropolitan area.



Internally, there are important conventional streets that service the community. The first is Allen Avenue SE that connects to the commercial areas to the south; two others are Bernard Place SE and 14<sup>th</sup> Street SE, both of which move traffic from downtown and toward the larger Southeast community. In addition, there is Market Avenue South, which retains only a few buildings from the active business life that previously defined that street.



Today the streets primarily serve an African-American community of about 130 households joined by a handful of commercial and public structures. Over 50 houses are relatively new, meaning, they were built in the last two decades, and 77 are older structures that trace back to the beginnings of the community a century ago. There are about 15 properties that are in various stages of vacancy, foreclosure, or abandonment. Four of the occupied houses are severely distressed and three outbuildings are collapsing. The remainder of the neighborhood consists of the Southeast Church of Christ, the Paralee Watkins Compton Learning Center, five modern commercial structures, one historic

commercial building selling used goods, and two closed stores attached to houses.

With few exceptions, the houses are one and two-story frame buildings. Most are located on the major streets, but some are tucked away on smaller courts and places. With many long-term owners and an extensive homeownership effort by Habitat for Humanity, Lathrop today has a remarkably high level of homeownership.



The current real estate sales market for residences is somewhat distorted because so many owners are part of the Habitat program. Also, many other owners have acquired their properties through family. This means that few houses sell conventionally and the generally low prices usually reflect the fact that it is mostly the older houses on the market. While some have been fully updated, many older properties need repairs and modernizing.



Only one property sold in the last six months, with its selling price being \$15,900. It was a foreclosure sale of a house built in 1995 and was on the real estate market for just over three months. The only other property listed was built nearly one hundred years earlier in 1896. The asking price was \$4,500, but after 780 days on the market, it was removed. This story reflects one of the key challenges for Lathrop. The newer houses are marketing at very low prices, so the older houses face even more depressed prices. At this point, it is difficult for owners to invest in their homes with an eye toward recapturing the costs at the time of sale. The investment that does take

place is to serve the comfort and pride of the owner.



As a result, the standards of upkeep and improvement vary greatly. Many houses demonstrate enormous resident pride. The paint is fresh and the yards are kept clean and orderly; there are flowers and seasonal decorations. Other houses are maintained to a minimum standard and a few are much below the standards of the neighborhood. Some conditions appear to reflect income limitations, but much of the variance seems to relate to household priorities. Many people are working two jobs or assisting extended family members. This is very much like any working income community, but in the case of Lathrop, the small size of the neighborhood makes any substandard properties stand out more.

Today, Lathrop isn't able to compete for new residents for a number of reasons. However, it has been able to keep many of its current residents, so abandonment is unusual. Obviously, current residents are the backbone of the neighborhood and are the source of its continued stability. Because of the long patterns of occupancy, residents tend to know who lives there and who does not. This creates an immediate sense of oversight, allowing Lathrop to present itself as a safe and neighborly place. Surely, the key is an effective workplan that builds on the sense of continuity in a way that fits with the values and pace of Lathrop as a village in the city.

In keeping with the view of the neighborhood as a small village, the proposed workplan is more open-ended to allow for a broad-based community process. The workplan suggests activities and actions over a possible two or three year period. The residents will need to determine the appropriate options and opportunities that can be put in place as organizational capacity grows and resources become available.

## THE LATHROP WORKPLAN

Central Premise: The Lathrop neighborhood must build on its strength of continuity and high level of homeownership. The workplan should include the direct involvement of residents to sustain neighborhood change, but it should also reach out to local and citywide educational, religious, and civic leaders to assist in the planning and execution of activities. Principles to guide this process are more fully reviewed in the Canton Neighborhoods Workbook, but a few key organizing themes are used here to illustrate key points for discussion.

- ✓ The most effective investments build on the neighborhood strengths.

*EXAMPLE: LATHROP IS A NEIGHBORHOOD OF HOMEOWNERS. BUILDING ON THAT STABILITY IS THE BEST WAY TO RETAIN CURRENT RESIDENTS AND EVENTUALLY ATTRACT NEW OWNERS AND STABLE RENTERS. PARTNERING WITH HOMEBUYER PROGRAMS, SUCH AS THOSE OFFERED BY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY AND ABCD, CAN POTENTIALLY LEVERAGE THE STRONG HOMEOWNER BASE AS ONE OF THE CENTRAL AMENITIES OF LATHROP. WHEN A HABITAT HOUSE RECENTLY WENT ON THE MARKET AS A FORECLOSURE, THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A COORDINATED PLAN TO RESELL TO A HOMEOWNER SO THAT A PRIME PROPERTY DIDN'T BECOME A RENTAL UNIT.*

- ✓ Residents must commit to their responsibilities in order for others to meet theirs.

EXAMPLE: LATHROP HAS BENEFITED FROM YEARS OF VOLUNTEER LABOR AND THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN COMMENDABLE. NOW THE RESIDENTS AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS NEED TO REPAY THE FAVOR BY VOLUNTEERING, SUCH AS CLEANING UP THE BANKS OF THE NIMISHILLEN OR BY ASSISTING ELDERLY NEIGHBORS IN MAINTAINING THEIR HOMES. OTHER ACTIONS COULD INCLUDE HELPING RESIDENTS PLANT VEGETABLE GARDENS, SHARING FLOWER CUTTINGS, OR HOLDING A NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE YARD SALE TO FUND A NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC.

- ✓ Hands-on resident involvement leads to sustained neighborhood change.

EXAMPLE: THERE ARE ABOUT FOUR-DOZEN OWNERS OF HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PROPERTIES. MANY OF THOSE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL OWNERS FOR YEARS. NOW IS THE TIME TO ASK NOT ONLY THE HABITAT OWNERS, BUT ALSO OTHER OWNERS, TO STEP BACK AND ASSESS WHAT CAN BE DONE ON THEIR HOMES TO DEMONSTRATE PRIDE AND IMPROVE CURB APPEAL. THE WORKPLAN SHOULD OUTLINE ATTRACTIVE, AFFORDABLE OPTIONS AND SHOULD FACILITATE WAYS FOR HOMEOWNERS TO UPGRADE THEIR PROPERTIES. IN PARTICULAR, THERE SHOULD BE WAYS FOR NEIGHBORS TO LEND LADDERS AND OTHER TOOLS TO HELP OTHERS MAINTAIN THEIR HOMES.

- ✓ Many small activities usually produce more impact than one large action.

EXAMPLE: WHEN FIRST PASSING THE NEIGHBORHOOD AT CHERRY AVENUE SE, YOU'LL SEE 13<sup>TH</sup> STREET SE HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR YEARS. REMARKABLY, THE REMNANT OF A VERY LARGE, CHAIN LINK FENCE WITH BARBED WIRE HAS BEEN THERE FOR YEARS AND MAKES THE NEIGHBORHOOD LOOK THREATENING TO VISITORS. REMOVING THE FENCE WOULD DEMONSTRATE COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE. ONCE THE FENCE IS DOWN, THE RESIDENTS, CHURCH MEMBERS, AND OTHERS SHOULD ORGANIZE A PLANTING EFFORT TO INCLUDE FLOWERING TREES, PERENNIALS, AND SHRUBS. THESE EFFORTS SHOULD THEN BE EXTENDED THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

- ✓ Resident pride is a powerful force supporting neighborhood stability.

EXAMPLE: LATHROP NEEDS TO CELEBRATE ITSELF AS A STABLE, LIVABLE COMMUNITY. THERE SHOULD BE ENTRY SIGNS, A NEIGHBORHOOD LOGO AND SLOGAN, AND SPECIAL TOUCHES LIKE SEASONAL FLAGS, BETTER PORCH LIGHTS, AND MORE VISIBLE HOUSE NUMBERS. TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN, NEIGHBORS AND OTHERS SHOULD COME TOGETHER TO PICK THE COMMON ELEMENTS AND TO MAKE IT EASIER TO COMPLETE THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS. AS OFTEN STATED IN THE CANTON NEIGHBORHOODS WORKBOOK, THESE EFFORTS SHOULD BE CELEBRATED WITH AWARDS, SOCIAL EVENTS, MEDIA COVERAGE, AND OTHER POSITIVE ACTIVITIES.

- ✓ Good neighbors want to work together for a shared positive outcome.

EXAMPLE: WORKING TOGETHER SUCCESSFULLY REQUIRES LISTENING TO EACH OTHER. ONE WAY TO DO THIS COULD BE AN INFORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD "CENSUS" THAT FINDS OUT ABOUT THE COMMUNITY. THE QUESTIONS NEED NOT BE INTRUSIVE; THE TOPICS MIGHT BE WHO HAS TOOLS, LADDERS, SKILLS, ETC., AND WHO HAS GARDEN PLANTS TO SHARE. THE CENSUS COULD EASILY DETERMINE WHO SHOULD BE HONORED FOR GOOD UPKEEP AND WHO MIGHT NEED ASSISTANCE — FINANCIAL OR OTHERWISE. THIS PROCESS COULD HELP DETERMINE WHAT GETS DONE FIRST AND WHAT GETS DELAYED.

*IT COULD ANSWER BASIC QUESTIONS. WHICH SIDEWALK, CURB, AND STREET REPAIRS ARE CRITICAL? IS THERE A NEED TO EDUCATE THE RESIDENTS ABOUT SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR REHAB LENDING OR FORECLOSURE INTERVENTION? SHOULD THERE BE JOINT ACTIVITIES WITH THE CITY GOVERNMENT SUCH AS EXTERIOR CODE COMPLIANCE EFFORTS WITH PRE-COMPLIANCE PROJECTS SPONSORED BY THE NEIGHBORS? DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO SELECT ONE HOUSE EACH YEAR AS A RESIDENT AND CITYWIDE VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE? SHOULD THERE BE A LATHROP COMMUNITY-WIDE REUNION? THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS WILL SHAPE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES THAT WILL REIGNITE LATHROP AS A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE.*

## **WORKPLAN PART ONE**

In essence, the workplan begins with the neighbors coming together to describe and catalogue what is working successfully and to identify the small, doable projects that could enhance the neighborhood as an urban village of stable homeowners and renters.

Once the census is done, the committee needs to increase its membership to include groups from the neighborhood, citywide nonprofits, and others to sponsor small activities or events to build a sense of identity and a more positive neighborhood image.

## **WORKPLAN PART TWO**

With success in knowing more about the neighborhood and with experience in operating small projects, the working committee needs to widen the scale of activities and seek out financial and other support throughout Canton, including from individuals with historic ties to the community. There should be a special emphasis on reaching out to as many residents as possible and on celebrating the best aspects of Lathrop both internally and externally.

Also, in this second phase, Lathrop needs more partners. When a fifteen-year-old house on a good block recently sold for less than \$16,000, this was a golden opportunity for the community to intervene to make the sale happen for a homebuyer. Perhaps ABCD should have been asked to review its pool of potential homebuyers or Habitat might have been able to provide a summary of necessary repairs. Perhaps the city government could have used its NSP or other resources to assure that the property stayed in homeownership. Once there is attention to these issues and once partners are involved in these types of neighborhood development goals, the cooperation will likely continue and, thereby, further strengthen the community.

## **THE PROCESS AS A PLAN**

What is described above is a process with steps instead of a defined plan. This is intentional since Lathrop is unique in many ways. The initial efforts will likely be very modest, but in the long run this community could be a bellwether for how working income communities can retain their homeowners and even attract new stable households. Even though benchmarks for each year are not included, we know more about the responsibilities of each of the partners.

## PHILANTHROPIC AND NONPROFITS SECTORS

The funding and nonprofit communities will need to provide the initial staff support to convene the neighbors for this important work. It is hoped that the various nonprofit groups in Southeast and those serving Southeast can play a major part in this process. It is also true that the work of the Community Building Partnership and the Stark Community Foundation uniquely position these groups to play a central role. After the initial convening occurs, resources for small projects and leadership mentoring will be a critical part of this work. It will be up to the funding and nonprofit groups to negotiate roles and responsibilities. Finally, Canton's philanthropic organizations should work closely with the city government and nonprofits to develop innovative lending tools, rehab programs, and technical services to improve the neighborhood.

## RESIDENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In terms of "residents", it is expected that three profiled groups will emerge. Certainly many of the long-term residents should be strongly encouraged to participate, but a second and equally important group will be the more recent Habitat for Humanity homebuyers, who will form a pool of younger households. Third, there are "residents" of another type; these are the educators, the church members, the business people, and others who are in the neighborhood daily and who help shape how its functions. Once we agree to this broader definition of residents, it is clear that the outreach efforts should be wide-ranging and should expect diverse opinions about what should be done and how it can be achieved. Nevertheless, these residents must take responsibility for the small projects, the block-by-block outreach, and the direct assistance to neighbors, all of which are critical to Lathrop's successful functioning as a village in a city.

## CITY GOVERNMENT

The final partner is, of course, the city government. It has a central function due to the importance of the roads, gateways, and parks. It also has a vital role in dealing with the community projects and with the special lending and renovation functions mentioned above. As with many of the other workplan neighborhoods, the City of Canton should:

- ✓ Commit to assisting in the installation of gateway signs and landscape amenities
- ✓ Provide the neighbors with maps, data, and technical support for a possible neighborhood "census"
- ✓ Facilitate special projects such as a neighborhood festival, a clean-up day, or a bulk trash removal effort
- ✓ Address any public eyesores such as abandoned fencing or old signage
- ✓ Assist in a code compliance effort or similar initiative developed by the working committee
- ✓ Work with the lending community and philanthropic leaders to create loan funds, grant programs, technical assistance efforts, or other actions which promote more investment and better property upkeep



**REAL ESTATE INFORMATION**

*Recent Sales*

Address	Listing Price	Sale Price	Listing Date	Sale Date	Type	Year built	Square footage
1472 Housel Ave SE	\$15,900	\$15,900	1/6/10	4/13/10	Single family	1995	1040

*Recently Expired*

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Expire Date	Type	Year built	Square footage
506 14 <sup>th</sup> St SE (vacant)	\$4,500	1/8/08	2/26/10	Single family	1896	916

## NEIGHBORHOOD: SHERRICK ROAD SE

### NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

North	East	South	West
Sherrick Road SE	Warner Road SE	Sherrick Road SE	Cherry Avenue SE

### WORKPLAN

Sherrick Road SE is an important front door in Southeast Canton. Over the summer of 2010, this thoroughfare has received a “facelift” and as a result it could have an even more significant role to play in supporting the larger Southeast community. This workplan is being offered as an example of how a single public investment, such as road improvements, can be a trigger for building community pride and for engaging the residents and others in positive community change.



Certain corridors in Canton perform especially significant roles in defining the overall city. Other corridors are particularly important in characterizing specific neighborhoods. The powerful impact of these gateways is being acknowledged in the extensive corridor projects the city government is undertaking, such as the redevelopment of 12<sup>th</sup> Street NE and NW and Mahoning Road NE. In the case of Southeast Canton, Sherrick Road SE is a key spine that serves a variety of neighborhoods and institutions.

The road begins at one commonly recognized point just east of where Cherry Avenue SE crosses Nimishillen Creek. The road runs in a northeasterly direction and serves a new elementary school, the Stark County Urban League, numerous churches, large apartment complexes, a senior housing project, and dozens of homes both on Sherrick Road SE and nearby. The road also provides access to three parks and is a convenient route to other neighborhoods. With all these functions, Sherrick Road SE obviously plays a critical part in shaping the image of the larger community.

Regrettably at this time, the road itself, some of the public space, and a number of houses undermine the image of Southeast. Essentially, the corridor doesn’t convey the story of the ongoing renewal of these neighborhoods. In particular, the road clearly needs its current repaving and would greatly benefit from improved sidewalks and plantings. Some of the open spaces, parklands, and recreation facilities should also be upgraded. Further, a few of the houses need to be repaired and two newly constructed houses must be more actively marketed at prices that make sense in today’s economy. Even some of the better houses ought to be



polished with the finishing touches that more strongly demonstrate pride of ownership. Sherrick Road SE is the front door to many of Canton's most important historic minority neighborhoods and institutions. It deserves to be improved, better marketed, and more celebrated.

First, let's acknowledge that this part of Southeast Canton is a rapidly improving neighborhood. Overall, the large rental complexes are well maintained and the senior apartment complex on Robin Court SE is extraordinary. Queen Esther, the recently opened, nearby senior housing apartments, is continuing that tradition of excellence as well. Allen Elementary School is not only new; it is attractively positioned on its site, well designed, and inviting. Likewise, the Stark County Urban League owns an outstanding facility. Along Sherrick Road SE and in clusters throughout this part of Southeast, are well-built, attractive houses constructed by ABCD, a local nonprofit corporation committed to increasing homeownership. On or near Sherrick Road SE are dozens of new and old houses that demonstrate homeowner pride.



Second, with that being said about this area improving, there are still serious challenges. Many of the houses are rentals or are owned by households with very limited means. Too often, the park spaces are only empty fields and sometimes lack easy access or obvious parking. Retail services are limited and are principally represented by the Hall of Fame Fuel Mart, which started as a community-initiated business, but today, has become a tired-looking convenience store with a limited range of products and little attention to upkeep. At least two of the newer houses on Sherrick Road SE were long left unsold due to high development costs in a depressed housing market. Those years of new houses sitting vacant sent

a message of failure. Some of the other new houses have not yet added the landscaping and trees that give a finished feel to new development and many of the older houses have not received the extra attention that make a place look special.

To add a layer of complexity to this discussion of strengths and weaknesses, it is important to consider broader conditions impacting this part of Southeast. Good rental options – both public and private – exist elsewhere in the city or are under development. Home purchase opportunities are available throughout Canton, and many of those locations offer much better commercial convenience. Further, this part of Southeast has long been identified as an African-American neighborhood. Since many other areas of Canton are competitors for those same households, only a small pool of qualified buyers and renters remains for this community.



Due to all of the challenges for the Sherrick Road Corridor, it is important to convene every player involved in this neighborhood.

First, consider the citywide institutions and agencies.

- ✓ The **School Board** has a major role beyond just the large presence of the elementary school. The school system is a critical player because so many people use Sherrick Road SE to visit that school throughout the year.
- ✓ A second key organization is the **Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority**. In addition to a beautifully maintained senior housing project, there are two other complexes that are served by Sherrick Road. One of those projects begins at the corner of Sherrick and Freed Court SE.
- ✓ The third citywide agency is the **City's Parks Department**. They oversee Ida Park, situated near the beginning of Sherrick Road, Jackson Park, a large open area located between Sherrick Road SE and the Nimishillen, and Crenshaw Park near Warner Road SE on the eastern end of the study site.
- ✓ In addition to the Parks Department, **other city programs** are managing not only the current repairs to the road, but also are responsible for ongoing maintenance of the streets and sidewalks and for any further upgrades.
- ✓ The fifth agency of importance is the **Housing Department**, which in conjunction with the City Council, funds development projects such as the new construction housing. Because of this central role, the Housing Department helps set both what is built and the prices at which the houses are sold.
- ✓ The sixth citywide group that has a major impact on Sherrick Road SE is **ABCD** with its long history of property development in Southeast Canton. Not only does ABCD often have houses for sale; it also has continuing relationships with new homebuyers of recently constructed properties.
- ✓ Finally, one of the most important organizations on the Sherrick Road Corridor is, of course, the **Stark County Urban League**. This organization has served Canton for nearly 90 years and continues to offer services throughout the county and, especially, at its facility at 1400 Sherrick Road SE.

Second, there are a number of more local players impacting Sherrick Road SE.

- ✓ The first group is, of course, the **residents**. Both renters and homeowners represent nearly two-dozen properties along the road.
- ✓ The second group consists of **investors** who own and maintain houses along the road and in one case, own and do not maintain a house.
- ✓ The third is the members of the **Sherrick Road Church of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mount Zion Church of God in Christ**, all of which own and maintain modern, well-maintained religious facilities.
- ✓ The fourth is the owners and the operators of the previously mentioned **Hall of Fame of Fame Fuel Mart**, which is the convenience grocery store for much of this part of Southeast Canton.

The current road repairs can be a catalyst to bringing together these players to look at options for Sherrick Road SE. By its action to upgrade the road surface, the city government is tacitly acknowledging the importance of this gateway street, but much more should happen. Sherrick Road SE cannot reach its full potential without all of the players convening and agreeing to develop a realistic, affordable approach to strengthening the corridor. Fortunately, these citywide and local players have the organizational and programmatic capacity to make this gateway corridor a showpiece for Canton.

Therefore, a two-year workplan is recommended. Essentially, the first year should be focused on planning and completing a few small projects. The second year should raise the bar by attempting some highly visible activities and programs that promote Sherrick Road SE as an attractive gateway street serving Southeast

Canton. Suggested formats for this work are outlined in the Canton Neighborhoods Workbook, but it should be remembered that this initiative is a unique mix of institutional and individual leadership.

This emphasis on institutional involvement deserves some additional attention. Once an organization or group undertakes these activities in a neighborhood, there are certain guidelines that should be considered. What follows are a few examples relevant to Sherrick Road SE.

1. First, a complex action like a gateway improvement needs to be done as a partnership. In this case, the partner groups should be convened and each asked what they could pledge to do. Perhaps each church could agree to expand the landscaping at their sites and install and maintain a street tree. Or the Urban League could be asked to sponsor Jackson Park as a site for family reunions and, thereby, agree to provide some limited signs, landscaping, and picnic tables. Or the school system could be asked to have one of the classes involved in a tree planting project on a piece of open land. Perhaps the Hall of Fame Mart could agree to some signage improvements and landscaping of the parking lot. Each of these actions could be accompanied with a temporary sign celebrating the renewal of the street.
2. Second, even at this late date, the city government could install a temporary sign that announces Sherrick Road SE as a designated gateway street. This shows the importance of the street much better than the actual sign, which states that the street was repaired with Federal stimulus funds. That message is fine, but left alone it implies that the street wouldn't have been improved without that funding. A major historic gateway shouldn't be repaired only because of a Federal windfall.
3. Third, the city government and its Housing Department should look closely at the CCBG resources that are available annually. Is it possible that an aggressive door-to-door campaign be put into effect to use loans and grants to repair any deficient houses? Could these Federal dollars be used to widen the sidewalks or add more street trees? Could banners be installed on the streetlight poles to promote the road as a gateway corridor?
4. Fourth, there are many ways to reach out to other institutions and individuals with historic ties to the corridor and to request that "adoptions" take place. For example, could an individual agree to fund and water a tree? Could a church or social group commit to helping a household better maintain or even improve a house?

Of course, these are all only examples. It is up to the various partners to chart the course. Stakeholders must decide the timing and level of investment that should be made to bring the quality upgrades and recognition this corridor deserves. However, while possible tasks for individuals and institutions are suggested above, it is important to highlight potential assignments to two particular stakeholders.

1. First, the philanthropic community must recognize that no one is experienced at this kind of neighborhood convening. While significant resources are available for this work in the downtown area, there are no dollars or staff members for performing these outreach functions in the neighborhoods. Gateways such as Sherrick Road SE or 12<sup>th</sup> Street from I-77 to Mahoning Road NE have no designated sponsors that facilitate the process of community convening. Indeed, the process on Mahoning Road NE demonstrates how this could be done, since the J R Coleman Center has decided to provide the "field staff" to that project. The resulting gateway will be much better due to

this investment. The funders in Canton should recognize the long-term impact of these gateways and invest in their renewal.

2. Second, the city government should look at gateway corridors as opportunities to promote Canton for decades. These aren't just street repairs; these are major public investments. With those dollars, there should be serious efforts at engaging property holders to upgrade their properties. Likewise, there should be planning for neighborhood signage, community banners, and other tools to promote living in Canton. Spending dollars on an improved road is a good decision; spending time and money to leverage the impact of public investment is an even better decision.

## NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Description	Number
Houses	22
Duplexes	0
Multi-family	0
Residential vacant land	3
Average year built	1942
Average size	1,370 square feet

## REAL ESTATE INFORMATION

### Recently Expired

Address	Listing Price	Listing Date	Expire Date	Type	Year built	Square footage
1013 Sherrick Rd SE	\$60,000	11/6/08	5/12/10	Single family	2007	1,296
1017 Sherrick Rd SE	\$60,000	11/6/08	5/12/10	Single family	2007	1,296