

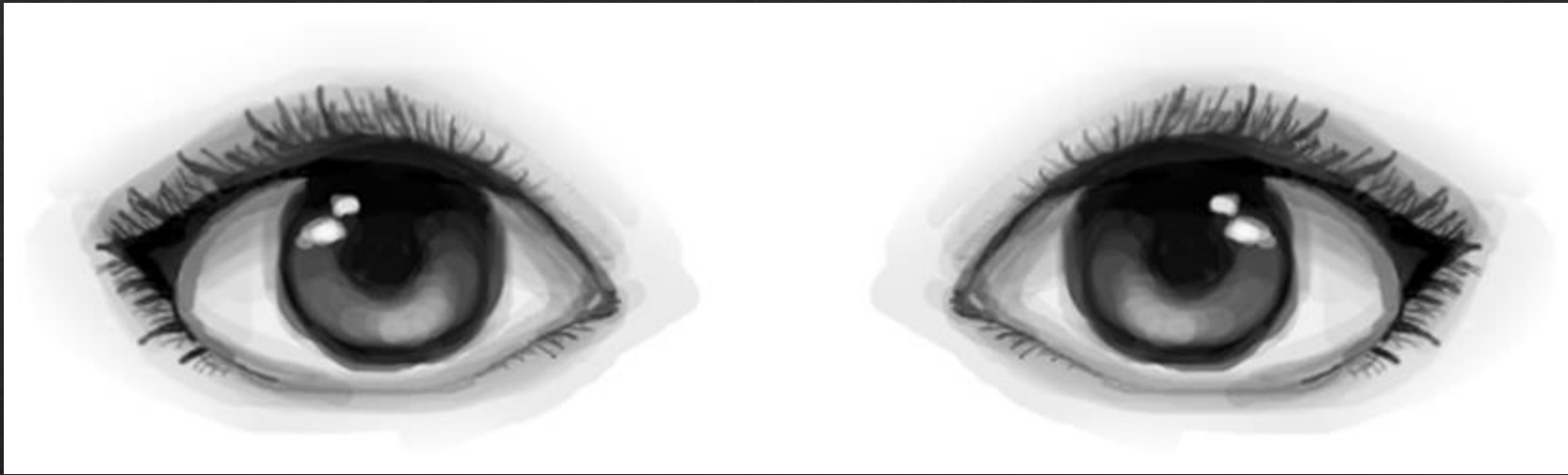
Leveraging Community Prosocial Networks: Using Police Officers as Public Characters

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Eyes on the Street



The Legacy of Jane Jacobs

THE DEATH
AND LIFE
OF GREAT
AMERICAN
CITIES
JANE JACOBS

"Perhaps the most influential single work in
the history of town planning... a work of literature."
— *The New York Times Book Review*

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- **Jacobs (1961) was one of the first to propose physical design as a means to create safer places.**
- **Also focused on the political and economic aspects of how cities are created and change**
- **“Eyes on the Street”**

Whose eyes?



According to Jacobs,
crime declines when we
“orient buildings to
encourage surveillance
by residents”

(Taylor & Gottfredson, 1986, p. 398)



Jacobs believed that
“...residents have
enhanced opportunities to
self-police the streets...”

(Cozens, 2008, p. 154)



“The high-rent tenants, most of whom are so transient we cannot even keep track of their faces, have not the remotest idea of who takes care of their street, or how”

(Jacobs, 1961, p. 39)



“...storekeepers and other small businessmen are typically strong proponents of peace and order themselves; they hate broken windows and holdups; they hate having customers made nervous about safety. They are great street watchers and sidewalk guardians if present in sufficient numbers”

(Jacobs, 1961, p. 37)

- ◆ Part I of *Death & Life* (1961)
 - ◆ 111 pages; 110 examples

 - ◆ 13 examples about control
 - ◆ 3 involve residents*
 - ◆ 10 involve place managers

 - ◆ 14 examples highlighting the importance of stores



“But stores in city neighborhoods are much more complicated creatures which have evolved a much more complicated function. Although they are mere holes in the wall, they help make an urban neighborhood a community instead of a mere dormitory.

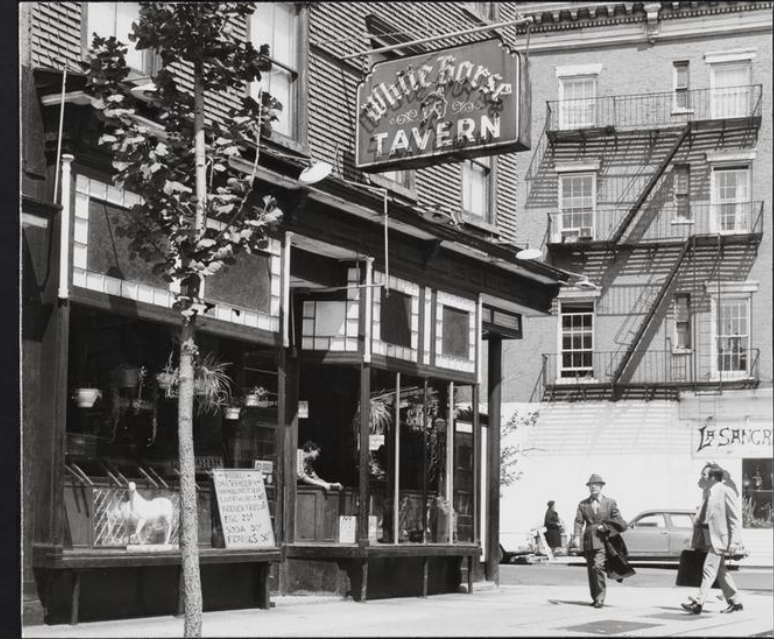
A store is also a storekeeper. One supermarket can replace 30 neighborhood delicatessens, fruit stands, groceries and butchers...But it cannot replace 30 storekeepers or even one”

(Jacobs, 1956, p. 132)



Property Owners Matter

- ◆ Jacobs' discussion of shopkeepers
- ◆ Often external, non-residents of neighborhoods
- ◆ Possess immense control within neighborhoods



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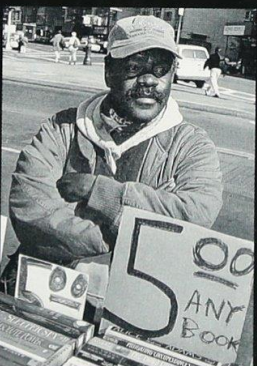
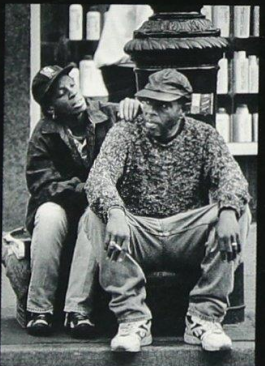
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Public Characters

The social structure of sidewalk life hangs partly on what can be called self-appointed public characters. A public character is anyone who is in frequent contact with a wide circle of people and who is sufficiently interested to make himself a public character... Most public sidewalk characters are steadily stationed in public places. They are storekeepers or barkeepers or the like. These are the basic public characters. All other public characters of the city sidewalks depend on them"

(Jacobs, 1961 p. 68)

SIDEWALK



MITCHELL DUNEIER

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY OVIE CARTER

"Insightful and compelling . . . Capture[s] the pathos, struggle, joy, honor and dignity of the men and women of 'the sidewalk.'" —Elaine Rivera, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Public Characters

“Jacobs had modeled her idea of the public character after the local shopkeepers with whom she and her Greenwich Village neighbors would leave their spare keys...the social context of the sidewalk is patterned in a particular way because of the presence of the public character: his or her actions have the effect of making street life safer, stabler, and more predictable. As she goes on to explain, this occurs because the public character has “eyes on the street””

(Duneier, 1999, pp. 7-8).

**Who would your agency
consider to be public
characters?**

Absence of Public Characters

- ◆ Some corporate policies prevent the existence of public characters
- ◆ Large chain stores
- ◆ Abandoned buildings
- ◆ Crime enablers



The “Rat” Problem

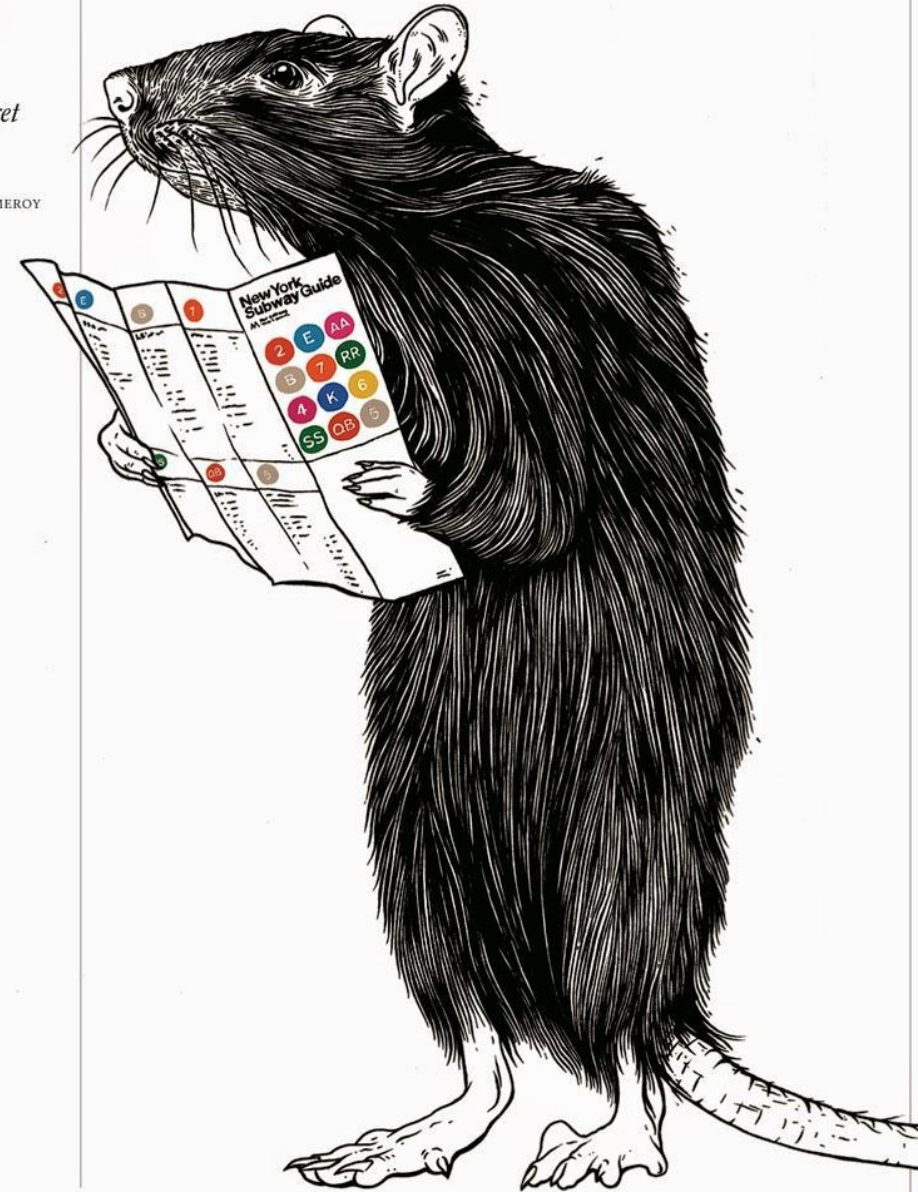
◆ John Mudd (1985, p.8)

- ◆ If a rat is found in an apartment, it is a housing inspection responsibility
- ◆ if it runs into a restaurant, the health department has jurisdiction
- ◆ if it goes outside and dies in an alley, public works takes over.

CREATURES OF HABIT

*How New York's animals get
where they're going.*

BY RYAN BRADLEY
ILLUSTRATION BY LOUISE ZERGAENG POMEROY



Police as Public Characters



Example: Networking with Landlords

- ◆ What are their goals?
- ◆ Consider the consequences of vacancy
- ◆ Consider legal restraints
- ◆ Ability to evict

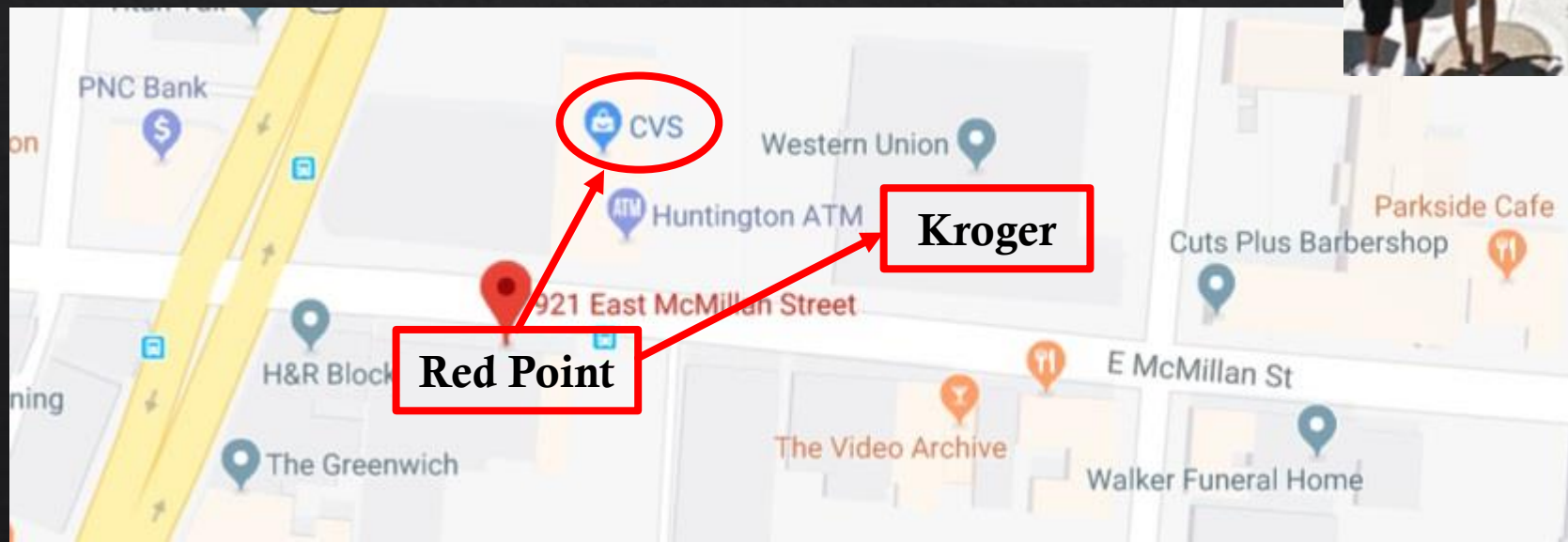


Example: Red Point Market

- ◇ Money Laundering
- ◇ Drug dealing
- ◇ Illegal weapons
- ◇ Diffusion of crime to surrounding locations
 - ◇ I.e., Crime enabler



Google Street View; August 2011



Example: Red Point Market

◆ Solution?

◆ Partnership with city agencies

◆ Transfer in property ownership



Shannon Linning; March 2017



Shannon Linning; October 2018

**Who are the public
characters in this
example?**

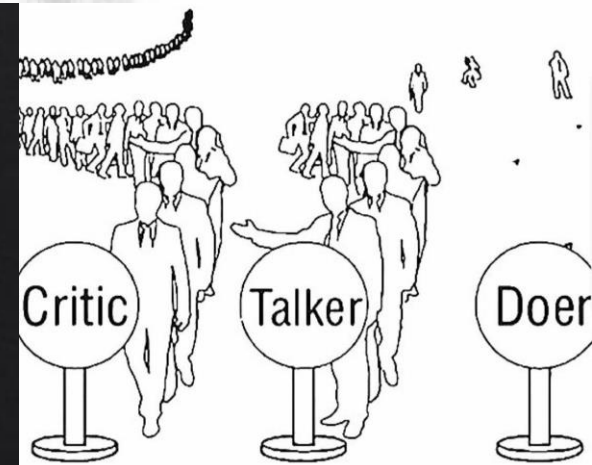
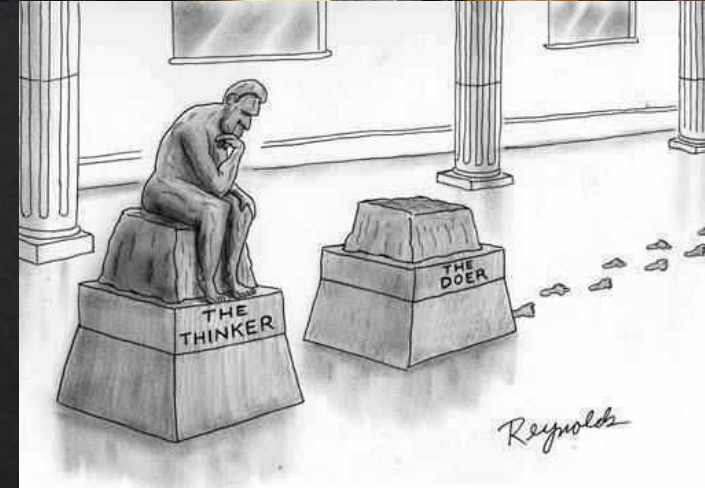
Identifying Public Characters

◆ Who makes up the “community”?

◆ Talkers vs. Doers

◆ Stable network of prosocial people

◆ Stability of officers in neighborhoods



Understanding Property Ownership



The Suzanne Building
Google Street View; July 2011



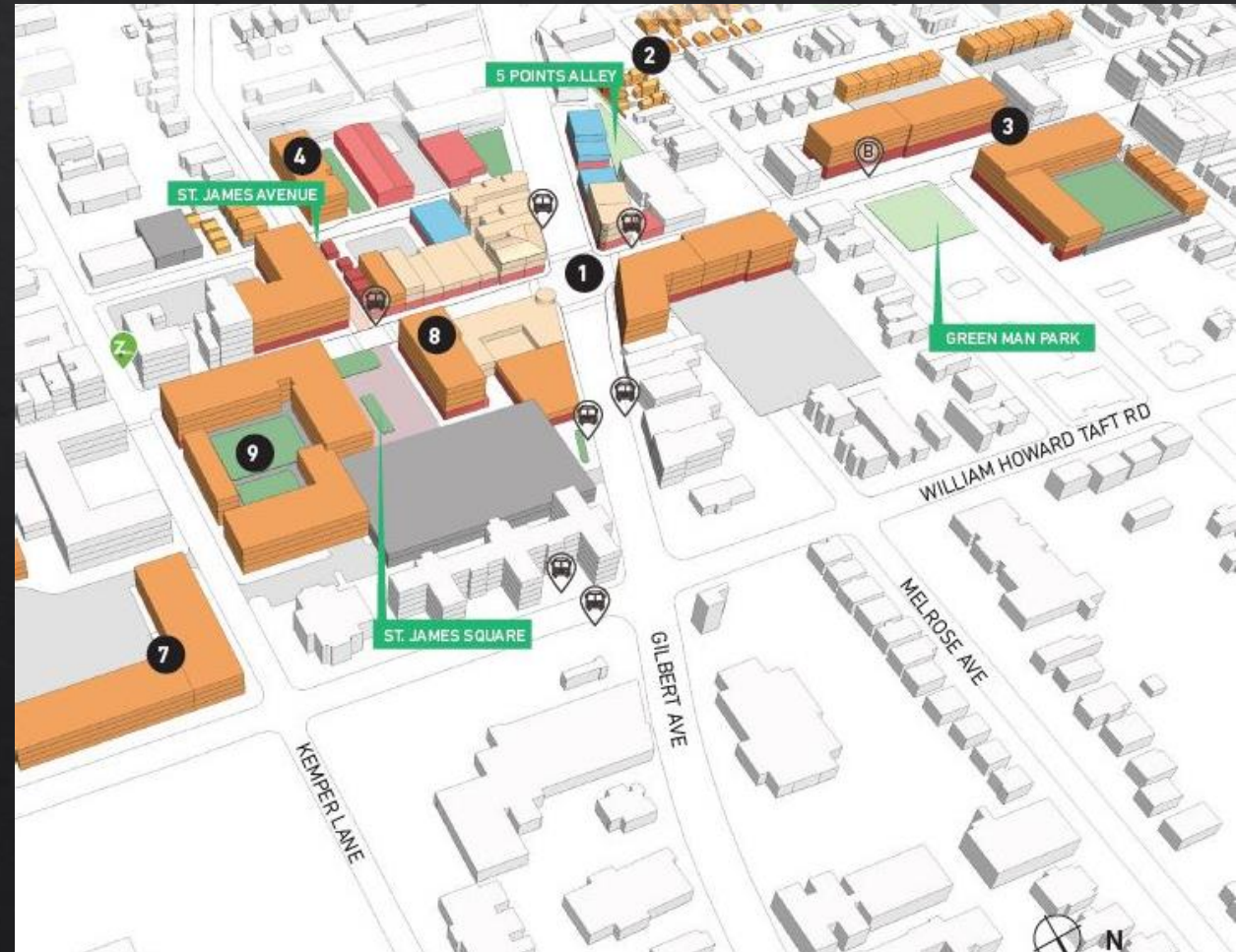
The Suzanne Building
Shannon Linning; May 2018

- Study in redeveloping neighborhood
- Interviews with:
 - property developers,
 - business owners,
 - police officers,
 - residents,
 - municipal employees,
 - non-profit agencies

“We can’t control what happens in the neighborhood until we control the real estate”

“Buy as much property around your rehabbed places as possible. Then you control the area”

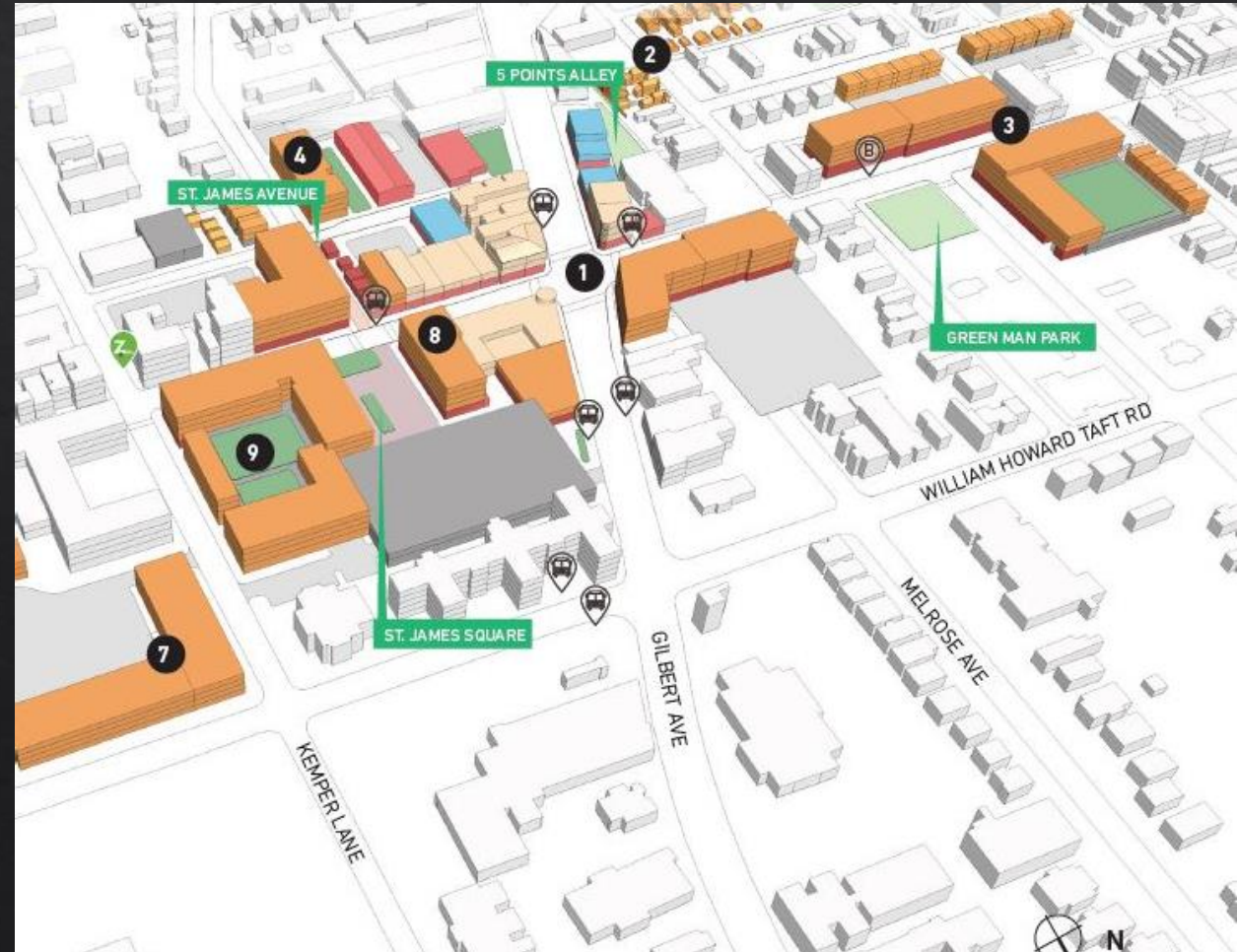
(Eric; Developer)



“We can’t control what happens in the neighborhood until we control the real estate”

“[anonymized developer] does not rent to check cashing facilities. If he sees a check cashing facility open, he’ll go and buy the property so he can shut them down”

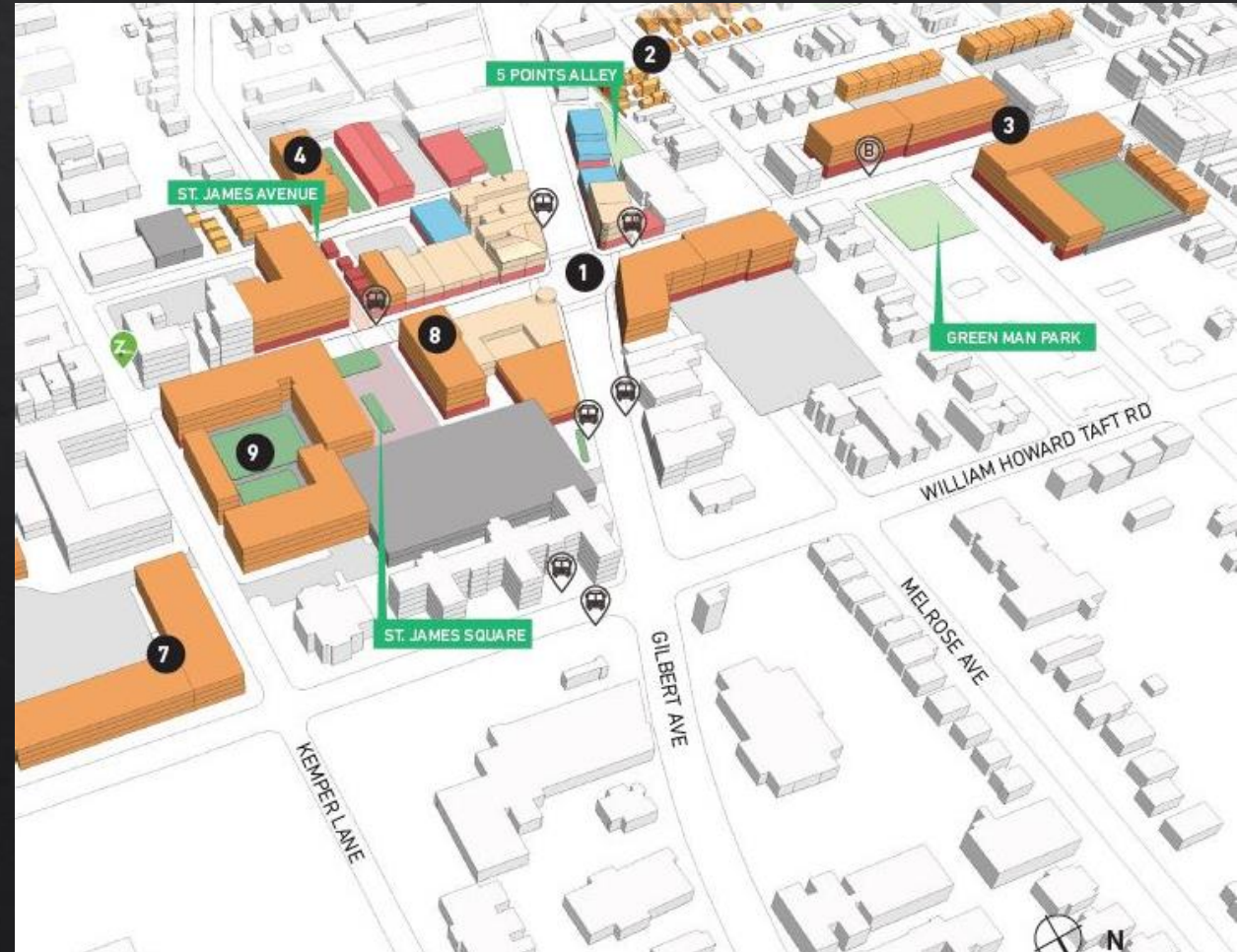
(John; Municipal Employee)



“We can’t control what happens in the neighborhood until we control the real estate”

“I spent \$250,000 rehabbing that building [pointing out the window]. Why did I do it? I have partners who had invested \$50 million in this [anonymized] area. They want it to be a safe area that they control. If we had gone to the city to fix the problem, it wouldn’t have happened or would’ve taken too long. So I took matters into my own hands, bought the building and fixed it myself. It was worth the \$250,000 investment to me”

(David; Developer)



“The health of the first floor is most important”

“You need to have good/attractive businesses on the ground level to make profits overall. We’re even willing to take a hit [financially] for the first year or so if we think the business has potential. We’ll subsidize the rent for those new ideas”
(Jeff; Developer)



“The health of the first floor is most important”

“I only lease to people who seem to have a passion for what they do and who want to do good by the neighborhood. I will not lease to cell phone carriers, wig shops, tattoo parlors, check cashing places, and dollar stores”

(Eric; Developer)



Photos: Shannon Linning (May & August 2018)

“The health of the first floor is most important”

When looking at who to lease to “they have to be passionate and energetic. Many of them have a social mission. They want to make things better and contribute. Many times they just don’t know how to”

(David; Developer)



“You’ve got to have people with skin in the game”

“To succeed, you must have public and private dollars. You cannot exist using public dollars along. Who’s going to put skin in the game? You need to find private investors”

(Taylor; Resident)



“You’ve got to have people with skin in the game”

“To change neighborhoods you need risk takers. You need entrepreneurs and stakeholders. The government will not do it, especially not swiftly...You’ve got to ask who has skin in the game? It’s not the renter, it’s the owner. When I decide to buy something, it’s my livelihood on the line. Owners care because they want to make a profit and something like crime is bad for my investment”

(David; Developer)



“You’ve got to have people with skin in the game”

“[Chain stores] don’t care. Because all they care about is making money. You don’t become part of the neighborhood. And a lot of people that come here want to be part of the neighborhood. I mean that nice [new business] that’s going in there, it’s [a first-time business owner] and he’s really vested...If you’ve got money in the pot, you’re gonna care. Hell, I want him to be successful. If you’ve got your own money in the game, you’re gonna work at it to make it right”

(Steve; Business Owner)



Take Aways

- ◆ The “community” is larger than we typically think
 - ◆ Public characters are included and may not be residents
- ◆ You must ID public characters
- ◆ Sometimes you don't have public characters
 - ◆ The police may step in...

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