

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Other names/site number: Mexicantown

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Detroit's Latinx Communities

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

### 2. Location

Street & number: Generally, 2443-3500 Bagley Street and 1753-4750 West Vernor Highway

City or town: Detroit State: Michigan County: Wayne

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

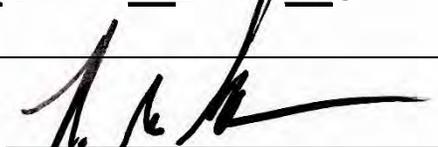
I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: of

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

	SHPO	December 4, 2025
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Michigan State Historic Preservation Office</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of commenting official:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

*James Gabbert*  
Signature of the Keeper

1/22/2026  
Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>66</u>	<u>50</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>66</u>	<u>50</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure  
COMMERCE/TRADE/business  
COMMERCE/TRADE/professional  
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution  
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant  
EDUCATION/school  
EDUCATION/library  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater  
RELIGION/religious facility  
RELIGION/church-related residence  
SOCIAL/meeting hall  
SOCIAL/civic  
OTHER/market  
OTHER/utility building

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure  
COMMERCE/TRADE/business  
COMMERCE/TRADE/professional  
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store  
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant  
EDUCATION/library  
RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility  
SOCIAL/meeting hall  
SOCIAL/civic  
TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related  
VACANT/NOT IN USE  
OTHER/community center  
OTHER/market  
OTHER/utility building

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Tudor Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT/Art Deco

MODERN MOVEMENT/Post-Modern

OTHER/Commercial Brick

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundations: CONCRETE

Walls: WOOD – weatherboard

BRICK

STUCCO

CONCRETE

METAL: ALUMINUM

SYNTHETICS: VINYL

OTHER – Compressed Styrofoam

Roofs: ASPHALT

SYNTHETICS: MEMBRANE

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District is located in the city of Detroit, in Wayne County, Michigan. It encompasses a one-and-one-quarter mile-long area that extends westward from a point located approximately one-and-a-half miles southwest of Campus Martius, the center of Detroit's radial land plat. The district is linearly organized around two east-west commercial thoroughfares that follow Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway. A wide, subterranean freeway interchange, which connects Federal Interstates I-75 and I-96 to the Ambassador Bridge international crossing into Canada, bisects the district between 21st and 23rd Streets. The district's eastern portion encompasses a three-block area generally bounded by 18th Street, on the east; Bagley Street, on the south; St. Anne Street, on the west; and West Vernor Highway on the north. The district's western portion includes the north and south sides of West Vernor Highway between I-75, on the east, and Ferdinand Street, on the west. Both portions of the district have generally flat terrain. Both portions encompass urban landscapes with paved roadways, alleys, driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks, separated by patches of grass, gravel, and dirt. Both portions of the district primarily contain one- and two-story commercial buildings built between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Apartment buildings, churches, a library, and one- and two-family residences built during the same period are also located throughout the district.

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### Narrative Description

#### *Definition and Use of the Latinx Term*

The term "Latinx" is a relatively modern, *pan-ethnic* term that identifies many groups of people whose ethnic heritage connects to Central and South America and the Caribbean. The concept of *panethnicity* describes people and communities who maintain subgroup labels, such as Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban, among others; while simultaneously identifying with a broader group of people, such as the terms Latina, Latine, Latino, and Latinx.<sup>1</sup> The term "Latinx" first appeared in Google searches in 2004 and began appearing in printed, mostly academic, publications around 2015.<sup>2</sup> Scholars of ethno-racial labels and community identity

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<sup>1</sup> Dina Okamoto and G. Cristina Mora, "Panethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014), 219.

<sup>2</sup> G. Cristina Mora, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas, "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'? The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels," *Social Forces* 100, no. 3 (2022), 1176-1177.

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write that “individuals collect a range of labels, which they use in different settings.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the Latinx term represents a broad, high-level label that encompasses many groups of people who may choose to adopt the Latinx label, reject it, or use it with or without additional labels as they see fit.

Significant and passionate discourse has surrounded the term since its creation. Users of the term argue that the suffix “x” is inclusive as it removes connotations of gender and sexuality implied by the use of the words “Latino” or “Latina.” Critics note that the use of the letter “x” makes the term incomprehensible to Spanish speakers without experience with the English language, as the letter “x” is rarely used in the Spanish language. Another criticism interprets the term as a form of linguistic imperialism, whereby its use becomes ingrained from the top down, rather than from widespread, everyday usage.<sup>4</sup>

Noting the varied opinions regarding use of the Latinx term, it will be used throughout this document when broadly referring to the Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and additional communities in Detroit composed of ethnic identities associated with Central America and the Caribbean. The term’s usage is not intended to imply that ethnic diversity and varied histories do not exist within Detroit’s Latinx communities. Throughout the text, specific terminology relating to national or ethnic identities will be used when referring to specific people and cultural traditions.

### ***The City of Detroit and Southwest Detroit***

The city of Detroit is a large municipality located in southeast Michigan. Detroit is Michigan’s largest city in terms of population and physical size, and encompasses over 138 square miles of land. Its main roadways and neighborhoods are radially organized around its downtown district, located along the Detroit River opposite the city of Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District is wholly located within an area locally known as “Southwest Detroit.” This area is named for its directional location southwest of Detroit’s downtown area. Southwest Detroit’s boundaries are not explicitly defined, and many residents and historians may define it differently. Throughout this nomination, “Southwest Detroit” will be used in reference to a large, trapezoidal land area roughly bounded by Rosa Parks Boulevard, on the east; the Detroit and Rouge Rivers, on the south; Springwells Street, on the west; and Michigan Avenue, on the north. West Vernor Highway runs through the center of Southwest Detroit from the northeast to the southwest and comprises its main commercial thoroughfare. Several secondary commercial areas, residential and industrial areas are located north and south of West Vernor Highway.

Southwest Detroit has a mostly flat topography that slopes gently upward toward the north and west with increased distance from the Detroit and Rouge Rivers. Swamps, marshlands, and small wooded areas dominated this landscape before largescale European settlement. These swamps

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<sup>3</sup> Mora, Perez, and Vargas, “Who Identifies as ‘Latinx’?” 1176-1177.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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were filled to spur industrial development between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since the development of the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the landscape of Southwest Detroit has generally been urban in nature. Large industrial facilities line the banks of the Detroit and Rouge Rivers, to the south and west, and the Michigan Central Railroad line to the north. Southwest Detroit's roadways are often clogged with industrial traffic, including trucks waiting to cross the Ambassador Bridge into Canada. Pollutants generated by these industries consistently compromise the area's air quality. Industrial activities and traffic also contribute to sustained, elevated noise levels throughout the area.

Despite these deterrents, Southwest Detroit maintains a large, densely populated residential area surrounded by roadways, railways, and industries. One- and two-story houses and three- and four-story apartment buildings, plus churches and schools, line a dense grid of residential streets north and south of West Vernor Highway. Most of these buildings were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at the same time as surrounding industries. Most residential streets are paved with asphalt and include concrete sidewalks. Most residential blocks are bisected by dirt, gravel, and concrete alleys. Southwest Detroit's residential area is moderately tree-covered, with less foliage and tree cover along commercial corridors. Clark Park, a large, city-owned recreation area, is located near its center and includes large, mature trees at its northern end, adjacent to, but just south of, the historic district. Smaller parks, including Stanton Park and the Boyer Playfield, as well as green spaces associated with schools and municipal buildings, are scattered throughout the neighborhood outside the district. These natural amenities help mitigate air and noise pollution generated by nearby industries and highways.

The most recent (2013) study of Southwest Detroit's demographics reported that its residential areas had a population of 43,902 residents. These residents were identified as being 57.2 percent Latino, 23.6 percent Black, and 16.9 percent White, with the remaining percentage identifying as mixed race or other.<sup>5</sup> However, these statistics included the predominately African American neighborhood of Boynton, located south of the Rouge River and outside the boundaries of Southwest Detroit as defined by this nomination. The residential areas adjacent to West Vernor Highway are, therefore, likely more densely occupied by Latinx residents than these statistics indicate.

Other notable sites in Southwest Detroit include Fort Wayne, a military installation developed in the 1840s, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.<sup>6</sup> It is separated from Southwest Detroit's residential area by I-75 and warehouse facilities associated with the new Gordie Howe International Bridge crossing into Canada. These landmarks are located outside the historic district's boundaries, south and west of I-75.

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<sup>5</sup> Data Driven Detroit, "Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods Profile," accessed September 10, 2023, [https://datadrivendetroit.org/files/SGN/SW\\_Detroit\\_Neighborhoods\\_Profile\\_2013\\_081913.pdf](https://datadrivendetroit.org/files/SGN/SW_Detroit_Neighborhoods_Profile_2013_081913.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> National Register of Historic Places, "Fort Wayne," Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, National Register #71000425.

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### *District Setting and Physical Characteristics*

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District encompasses both sides of Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway, two east-west commercial thoroughfares, between 16th Street and Ferdinand Street. Its noncontiguous boundaries follow a linear concentration of civic, commercial, and social resources that embody broad historic themes related to the history of Detroit's Latinx community. Adjacent blocks are primarily populated by residential buildings that do not fully embody these themes. The district's eastern boundaries adjoin the Michigan Central Railroad and associated industrial sites, which mark the eastern extent of both roads' commercial corridors. Its western boundaries follow the eastern boundaries of the previously designated West Vernor-Junction Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1960s, a large portion of this corridor was demolished to build a subterranean expressway interchange between federal interstate highways I-75 and I-96 and the Ambassador Bridge international crossing into Canada. The construction of this wide, subterranean interchange created an artificial separation between historic resources that are otherwise linked historically, architecturally, and culturally. Thus, the Bagley-West Vernor Historic District includes two noncontiguous sections located east and west of this interchange. The district's eastern portion encompasses a three-block area generally bounded by 18th Street, on the east; Bagley Street, on the south; St. Anne Street, on the west; and West Vernor Highway on the north. The district's western portion includes both sides of West Vernor Highway between I-75, on the east, and Ferdinand Street, on the west. These now-separate portions of the historic district are united through their historic significance as an important place in the Latinx experience in Detroit. The resources of both portions embody the development of Southwest Detroit and the Latinx community, and the disruption in visual continuity does not limit the significance of either portion of the district in conveying the significance of the overall district.

In both portions of this district, Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway are asphalt-paved, two-lane roadways with two sides of on-street parking. West Vernor widens to include center turn lanes and bike lanes at intermittent points throughout the district. Concrete sidewalks with intermittent tree wells line both roads. Most of the residential streets that intersect these thoroughfares contain grass, gravel, or dirt easements between their curbs and sidewalks. All roadways are lined intermittently with modern cast-iron streetlights, wooden telephone poles, standard traffic signage (stop signs, yield signs, pedestrian crossing signs, etc.), fire hydrants, mailboxes, parking bollards, and other objects. Traffic lights strung on overhead wires between galvanized steel posts protect major intersections, such as the intersection of West Vernor Highway and West Grand Boulevard. Concrete and gravel driveways, concrete and gravel alleys, and concrete walkways to set-back buildings complete these streetscapes.

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<sup>7</sup> National Register of Historic Places, "West Vernor-Junction Historic District," Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, National Register #02001503.

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A two-block portion of Bagley Street between the I-75 service drive and 24th Street contains modern, decorative streetscape elements that distinguish it from other streets in the district. These modern elements were added after 2020 and enhance the area's curb appeal and walkability. Here, sidewalks were repaved with light red pavers. Bagley Street was narrowed to expand on-street parking lanes, which are further distinguished by dark grey pavers. Overhead lights strung between buildings on the north and south sides of Bagley enhance the area's pedestrian experience at night.

The entire Bagley-West Vernor Historic District sees consistent levels of vehicular traffic throughout the daytime and evening hours. Most of this traffic is generated by people visiting businesses along Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway, though West Vernor also carries a lesser level of through traffic. Consistent, underlying noise generated by nearby industries and dense commercial traffic on I-75 carries throughout the district. Detroit's Michigan Central Station, a large and historically significant Beaux Arts building located near West Vernor Highway's eastern terminus (outside the district's boundaries), is visible behind streetscapes throughout the district, even at its far western end.<sup>8</sup>

Both portions of the district primarily contain one- and two-story commercial buildings built between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Apartment buildings, churches, a library, and one- and two-family residences built during the same period are also interspersed between commercial buildings. These buildings display a wide array of architectural styles that reflect their use and the periods in which they were built.

Commercial buildings comprise the majority of the district's contributing historic resources. These buildings strongly convey the evolution of Latinx-related commercial activities in Southwest Detroit. Other resources, including religious, civic, and social service buildings, also express aspects of the social, cultural, religious, and ethnic history of the district. Some resources reflect more than one the significant themes of the district. Throughout this nomination, some buildings that have housed multiple functions are classified as "commercial" as a reflection of their architectural form or historic functions. Many mixed-use buildings are also classified as "commercial" buildings, even if they contain upstairs residential units. Second-story apartments historically served secondary functions that were not related to these buildings' primary retail functions, which were conducted in first-story commercial space(s).

The historic district's oldest commercial buildings are located near its eastern end along Bagley Street. These resources were built between the 1870s and 1890s and exhibit Italianate and Victorian stylistic influences. Most were originally clad in red brick. A larger number of two-story, wood-frame commercial buildings with minimal stylistic embellishments were erected throughout the district between the 1890s and 1910s. These were originally clad in wood clapboard siding, though many were covered by faux-brick, tar paper panels, or vinyl and aluminum siding during the twentieth century. Numerous commercial buildings of mixed masonry construction were also built throughout the district between the 1910s and 1930s. These

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<sup>8</sup> National Register of Historic Places, "Penn Central Station," Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, National Register #75000969.

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exhibit a wide range of subtle stylistic embellishments and reflect the so-called Commercial Brick style. Most are clad in red, tan or painted brick, and feature limestone, concrete, or painted stone embellishments that reflect mixed architectural influences. A small number of commercial buildings built between the 1940s and 1960s are also located throughout the district. These are mostly clad in red, tan, or painted brick, and some reflect the aesthetic influence of the Modern Movement. Most of the district's commercial buildings, regardless of their age, style, or construction type, have flat membrane-clad roofs surrounded by parapet walls.

Individual commercial and specialty buildings embrace unique and high-style designs. For example, the original portion of the former People's State Bank building at 3400 Bagley Street, built in 1910, includes Classical Revival design elements, including prominent pilasters with Corinthian capitals. This building also includes a large Postmodern-style rear addition, erected after the 1980s. Similarly, the El Club music venue located at 4114 West Vernor Highway was remodeled in the 1950s with the addition of porcelain enameled steel panels and glass block windows, characteristic of the Art Deco movement. The former Vinewood Avenue Church of Christ, located at 1901 Vinewood Street, was remodeled in 1907 with a Tudor Revival exterior. Its detailing has since been obscured with yellow paint, which illustrates how some of the district's buildings have undergone several stylistic transitions through time.

As the district changed throughout the twentieth century, commercial buildings often evolved to accommodate the changing needs and cultural values of business owners and customers. Many buildings were altered and combined between the 1950s and 1970s, and these modifications now reflect important aspects of the Latinx experience in Detroit. For example, the Mexican Village Restaurant building located at 2600 Bagley Street combined three nineteenth century commercial buildings that were originally separate. Though the building's second story retains some Italianate-style ornamentation, its first story storefronts were connected by Spanish Revival-style alterations during the 1970s. These modifications illustrate Mexican Village Restaurant's success and subsequent expansion over time and compliment the building's conveyance of important cultural themes embodied throughout the district.

Apartment buildings are located throughout the district and were largely built between the 1910s and 1920s. These are differentiated from commercial buildings with upstairs apartments in that apartment buildings' first stories do not include retail units. Most do not reflect any single stylistic influence and instead feature vaguely traditional exteriors clad in red brick.

Single-family houses are also located sporadically throughout the district. Most are located between adjacent commercial buildings, or on short residential blocks that connect commercial thoroughfares (for example, 24th Street between Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway). Most were erected between the 1870s and 1910s and primarily reflect the Folk Victorian and National Folk styles. Most houses were originally clad in wood clapboard siding. Many were re-sided with faux tar paper shingle panels or aluminum siding within the district's period of significance. Others were re-faced with vinyl siding more recently.

A majority of the historic district's commercial, apartment, and residential buildings are occupied. Some buildings are currently vacant but will likely experience future reuse due to their

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location along Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway. Many buildings, both occupied and unoccupied, show signs of wear and disinvestment, which reflect the socioeconomic status of Southwest Detroit's working-class population. These conditions have prompted many occupants to undertake recent ad-hoc alterations to clean up their buildings' appearances. These efforts often include painting historic brick and masonry.

These efforts, however, have also resulted in the painting of large, colorful murals on the sides of buildings throughout Southwest Detroit. Murals have provided an important creative outlet for Latinx artists in Detroit since the 1960s. Businesses, residents, and homeowners use public art, murals, flags, and graffiti to "assert their identities and claim ownership of the area," and the vibrant art on display throughout Southwest Detroit adds cultural vibrancy to the neighborhood.<sup>9</sup> Physical art pieces and ornaments have also been installed for similar reasons. Flags of various countries are prominently displayed in the enhanced commercial area along Bagley Street between I-75 and 24th Street. Metal sculptures depicting various Latinx-related cultural symbols are also arranged along the sidewalks in this area. Collectively, these public art installations exhibit residents' cultural pride. They also serve as wayfinding markers that help customers find stores that carry unique products from specific areas in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and more.<sup>10</sup>

As of 2025 no major archaeological investigations have been conducted within the boundaries of the Bagley-West Vernor Historic District, though investigations have occurred at nearby Clark Park, an important location in the Detroit Latinx experience. Archaeological deposits are present within the park. The decades of uses, in- and out-migration, demolitions, constructions, and vacant parcels within the district indicate the potential for cultural and building materials. Testing of extant and former resource locations may reveal deposits that were associated with their historic use, occupants, and history. These deposits may provide specific information about individuals and events associated with the specific site, which may inform the understanding of the general development of the district.

### ***District Inventory Methodology***

This nomination's resource inventory was arranged alphanumerically by street name and address numbers. Construction dates were derived by comparing historic maps, photographs, and aerial imagery; building permits and assessor's records maintained by the City of Detroit; and city directories and other primary-source publications. Unless otherwise noted, these dates reflect the year that a building was completed and/or first occupied. "Circa" was included where build dates could not be confirmed.

Resources in the inventory were classified as "Contributing" or "Noncontributing" primarily based on their relationships to the commercial, civic, and cultural histories of Detroit's Latinx

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<sup>9</sup> Jesus J. Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit, a Case of Incremental Re-adaptive Use," *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 5, no. 2-3 (2012), 151.

<sup>10</sup> Lara, 151.

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community. All contributing resources were constructed before or during the district's period of significance (1920-1975) and retain integrity of location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association. Permanent outbuildings including garages and sheds were included in the resource inventory. Temporary and mobile buildings and structures were omitted.

Commercial and civic buildings that exhibit a high degree of traditional architectural integrity were determined to be contributing resources. For example, the 1881 Matrix Theater building, located at 2728-2730 Bagley Street, is primarily clad in orange brick with Victorian-style green and purple-painted wood trim. Its original design and detailing are intact, and it therefore exhibits individual integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, and additionally contributes to the district's integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

Altered commercial buildings were also determined to be contributing resources if their alterations occurred during the district's period of significance (1920-1975) and if they were undertaken by a Latinx business owner or exhibit the architectural expressions of Latinx owners/users. Many altered commercial buildings retain their historic rooflines and massing but may have experienced renovations including the installation of aluminum, stucco, vinyl, or other synthetic siding; the replacement of doors and windows; large additions; or the total replacement of first-story storefront walls and fenestration. As previously mentioned, the current Mexican Village Restaurant building at 2600 Bagley Street connected three earlier buildings with Spanish Revival-style façade alterations during the 1970s. This building is classified as a contributing resource because these alterations reflect the success and expansion of Mexican Village Restaurant, an important Latinx-owned business that has made significant contributions to the commercial and cultural identity of the historic district. In a slightly different example, the La Michoacana Tortilla Factory building at 3353-3361 Bagley Street was altered several times between the 1960s and 1980s with the construction of two additions, infill of historic openings, and installation of aluminum siding over historic fenestration. These alterations embody the district's commercial and cultural identities in that they facilitated a traditional retail building's conversion into a tortilla factory, a Latinx-specific food production business.

Commercial and civic buildings are only classified as noncontributing if they were built after the district's period of significance or experienced extensive modern alterations. For example, the 1889-built commercial building located at 3849 West Vernor Highway has had its entire storefront level replaced with new openings, new materials, and new brick siding within the last twenty years. Its historic fenestration patterns no longer exist, and historic materials have either been removed or covered. The building no longer conveys any significant associations with the themes of the district and is therefore classified as a noncontributing resource.

Residential buildings including homes, townhomes, and apartments are generally classified as noncontributing resources because this district is intended to recognize themes related to the historic development of Detroit's Latinx community at-large. Though these buildings may have housed Latinx residents, they generally did not accommodate functions that served large numbers of surrounding community members, such as businesses and social service organizations. Individual exceptions to this rule were made in cases where a residential building served as the original operational location of a notable Latinx-owned business or organization.

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The house and garage located at 4065-4101 West Vernor Highway, for example, is where Misael “Tony” Martinez established the Diseños Ornamental Iron studio and first produced Spanish-inspired ornamental ironwork for surrounding businesses and residents. Thus, this single-family residence is classified as contributing because it housed a business that influenced cultural development and identity-making activities throughout Southwest Detroit.

### *Property and Resource Inventory*

#### **18TH STREET**

##### **1771 18th Street**

##### **Single-Family House; 1889**

##### **2 Noncontributing Buildings**

This one-and-a-half-story single-family house has an irregular plan, and a cross-gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The house is clad in beige vinyl siding with aluminum and wood trim. This house is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

##### **Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles is located behind and west of the house. The garage is also noncontributing to the district.

##### **1781 18th Street**

##### **Single-Family House; 1870**

##### **2 Noncontributing Buildings**

This one-story single-family house has a rectangular plan, and a front-gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The house is clad in white vinyl siding. This house was moved to this from its historical address of 304 18th Street between 1911 and 1912, when the intersection of 18th and Newark Streets was realigned. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

##### **Carport; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan carport with a flat roof is located behind and west of this house. The carport is also considered noncontributing to the district.

##### **1801 18th Street**

##### **Single-Family House; 1884**

##### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story single-family house has an L-shaped plan. It has a front-gable roof with a side-gable wing, both clad in asphalt shingles. The house is clad in grey-painted clapboard siding. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

#### **23RD STREET**

##### **1633-1635 23rd Street**

##### **Apartment Building; 1910**

##### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story apartment building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in brown brick with a brown-painted wood porch overhang and cornice. There are two bay windows on its second story. This building is noncontributing to the historic commercial district due to its residential use.

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**1759 23rd Street, 3445 West Vernor Highway**

**Garage; 1950**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story garage has a rectangular plan, and a hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles. Its walls are constructed of blue- and green-painted concrete block. This garage was built behind a residence formerly located at 1759 23rd Street. When this residence was razed, the garage was reused in an unknown capacity with the secondary address of 3445 West Vernor Highway. This garage is noncontributing to the historic district because its primary resource is no longer extant and, as a secondary resource without context, it cannot convey its historic functions and association with the significant themes of the historic district.

**24TH STREET**

**1717 24th Street**

**Commercial Building; 1924**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat membrane-clad roof. Its east-facing facade is divided into five equally spaced bays by pilasters clad in red brick with decorative stone bases. Four of the five bays contain eight-part aluminum storefront windows set atop red brick bulkheads. One bay contains a metal coiling security door. The parapet is clad in grey-painted vinyl siding and wood panels.

This commercial building was constructed in 1924. Its original façade, which featured a decorative Spanish Revival-style parapet wall clad in red brick, was extensively altered between 2016 and 2017. These alterations, completed after the district's period of significance, compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's cultural themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

**1729 24th Street**

**Single-Family House; 1888**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story single-family house has an irregular plan, and a compound gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The house is clad in beige vinyl siding with brown aluminum trim. This house is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**1737 24th Street**

**Single-Family House; 1884**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story single-family house has a rectangular plan and a front-gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. A one-story, irregular-plan addition with rear-gable and shed roofs extends from the two-story house's west-facing rear elevation. The house is clad in blue vinyl siding with white aluminum trim. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**1738 24th Street**

**Single-Family House; 1884**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story single-family house has an irregular plan. It has a front-gable roof with a side-gable wing, both clad in dark asphalt shingles. The house is clad in beige vinyl siding with beige-painted wood trim. This house is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

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**1743-1745 24th Street**

**Two-Family House; 1896**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story two-family house has a rectangular plan, and a Dutch gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. A two-story, rectangular-plan addition with a rear-gable roof extends from the house's west-facing rear elevation. A square turret bay wraps the second story's southeast corner. The house is clad in yellow vinyl siding. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**25TH STREET**

**1737 25th Street**

**Apartment Building; 1913**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story apartment building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in orange brick and has a one-story entrance porch along its north-facing side elevation. It shares a parcel and many stylistic elements with the neighboring apartment building located at 1739-1755 25th Street and was likely constructed by the same owner. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**1739-1755 25th Street**

**Apartment Building; 1913**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story apartment building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in orange brick. A two-story recessed entrance bay is located along its east-facing elevation. It shares a parcel and many stylistic elements with the neighboring apartment building located at 1737 25th Street and was likely constructed by the same owner. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**BAGLEY STREET**

**2443 Bagley Street**

**Honey Bee Market, La Colmena; 1875, c.1897, 1980, 2005**      **1 Contributing Building**

The grocery store located at 2443 Bagley Street is composed of three distinct sections constructed at different times. The first and oldest section (1875) is a one-and-a-half-story, rectangular-plan building with a front gable roof located at the southeast corner of Bagley Street and 17th Street. A one-story addition to the original building (c.1897) has a shed roof and extends the full length of the one-and-a-half-story portion's east elevation. This section is primarily clad with beige-painted, vertically oriented metal siding. Red-painted stone veneer surrounds an entrance door located on the shed roof addition's north-facing façade.

A one-story addition with a rectangular plan and flat roof was constructed to the east of the building's first section in 1980. This section is clad in red-painted concrete block and has a north-facing façade that fronts Bagley Street. An entrance doorway, located on the façade's eastern end, contains two glass doors with aluminum frames and wrought iron screen doors. Two, two-part ribbon windows with aluminum frames, beige-painted concrete sills, and red fabric awnings are located to the west of the entrance. This section's east elevation includes a

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five-part ribbon window with aluminum frames and a concrete sill covered by a hipped-roof awning clad with red clay tiles.

A third, large, one-story section (2005) with an irregular plan and flat roof extends from the south elevations of the building's first and second sections. It is primarily clad with red brick. A four-foot-high band of stacked stone veneer surrounds the building. The section's façade faces east toward a large parking lot that extends along 16th Street. The façade is organized into two sections with a loading dock bay on its south end and a centered main entrance on its north end. The building's main entrance is centered on the north end of this section's façade and includes two glass doors set within a six-part storefront window with aluminum frames. One four-part ribbon window and one eight-part ribbon window, both with aluminum frames and stone sills, are located north and south of the main entrance. The entrance is covered by a one-story, hipped-roof canopy clad with clay tiles and supported by four columns clad in red brick and stacked stone veneer. A stepped parapet wall is centered above the main entrance and canopy.

This supermarket's oldest section was originally constructed as a single-family house around 1875. It later housed multiple businesses, including a grocery store and a tin shop. A shed roof wing to the home's original east-facing side elevation was added before 1897. This home now comprises a small section of Honey Bee Market, La Colmena, a specialty grocery store that sells Latinx-related cultural foods. The grocery store was established by Geraldo Alfaro in 1956 and originally named La Colmena.<sup>11</sup> The Alfaro family operated the store from their home (at 2512 Bagley Street, not extant) before they moved to 2442 Bagley Avenue around 1958. Three generations of the Alfaro family have since owned and operated the store.

### **2545-2547 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1955**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat membrane-clad roof. A brick parapet wall surrounds the roof on three sides. The building is primarily clad in painted brick. Its north-facing façade is organized into two sections that correspond to the building's two addresses. The eastern section includes a centered, recessed entrance door, set into a three-sided bay, which is flanked by two sets of four-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on brick bulkheads. The western section features a centered, four-part, aluminum-frame ribbon window, flanked by two four-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on brick bulkheads. An angled entryway, which includes two glass doors with aluminum frames and a transom window above, is located at the building's northwest corner. A non-historic flat canopy suspended by metal tie rods runs the length of the west-facing elevation along 18th Street.

This commercial building was constructed in 1955. It housed Morry Drug, a discount drug store with one address (2545 Bagley) until about 1973. Latinx residents from the surrounding neighborhood frequented Morry Drug throughout the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>12</sup> In about 1974, it was

<sup>11</sup> Jennifer Dixon, "Honey Bee's New Hive," *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1998; Francis X. Donnelly, "Mexican Food Industry's Hot," *Detroit Free Press*, June 16, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Mariya Elena Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown* (Charleston, SC: Acadia Publishing, 2011), 28.

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purchased by a Latinx owner and renamed “LaBottella Shoppe” party store, a misspelling of a Spanish phrase meaning “the bottle.”<sup>13</sup> It housed a liquor store into the mid-2000s.

## **2600 Bagley Street**

### **Mexican Village Restaurant; c.1873, 1879, 1979**

### **1 Contributing Building**

This restaurant is composed of three commercial buildings constructed during the late nineteenth century that originally housed six storefronts, collectively. Spanish Revival-style alterations visually joined their exteriors in 1979. A hipped-roof awning, clad with red clay tiles, wraps its south-facing façade and east-facing elevation above its first story, along Bagley and 18th Streets. The exterior is primarily clad with white-painted stucco. Arched and circular windows with colored glass and decorative wrought iron grates are intermittently spaced along the first story of the south-facing façade. The buildings’ northern elevations are connected by a one-story, rectangular-plan addition (1979) with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. A shed roof awning clad with brown, standing-seam metal panels spans the width of the addition’s north elevation. Signage for Mexican Village Restaurant is affixed to the building’s second story.

The building’s westernmost section (1879) is a two-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. The second story of its south-facing façade includes five openings framed by stucco-clad pilasters and a horizontal stucco band located below is vinyl-clad cornice. Its center opening features a set of two, three-part, wood and vinyl-frame windows. It is flanked by two three-part wood- and vinyl-frame windows on each side. Arched, brown-painted stone headers are located above all five windows. A prominent parapet arch engraved with the date of “1879” is located above the center window.

The building’s center section is a two-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. The second story of its south-facing façade includes four equally spaced openings framed by stucco-clad pilasters and a horizontal stucco band located below a vinyl-clad parapet wall. Each window opening has a small, two-part, sliding window, topped by arched, brown-painted stucco headers with pointed keystones. The original window openings appear to be shortened by infill walls.

The building’s third and eastern section is a shorter two-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. The second story of its south-facing façade includes three equally spaced openings framed by a decorative stucco cornice. Each opening includes a one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl window topped by arched, brown-painted headers with pointed keystones, and covered by wrought iron Juliet balcony railings.

This building’s eastern section may be its oldest, having housed a drug store “established over five years” in 1878.<sup>14</sup> Businesses were also active in the building’s middle section before 1879, when druggist E.J. Bolio built its third, western section as Bolio’s Hall. The middle section is depicted on historic maps as having changed from frame to brick construction between 1884 and

<sup>13</sup> Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, September 20, 1977.

<sup>14</sup> “For Sale, Miscellaneous,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 5, 1878.

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1897, although it may have simply received a brick veneer when its second story was joined with the western section's second story and renamed Abrey's Hall.

The three buildings still included six separate storefronts in 1940, when Club Dramatico Español, likely a Spanish-language theater club, was located at 2612 Bagley. By the 1950s, the building housed two Mexican American-owned businesses, Mexican Village Restaurant and La Paloma Market. La Paloma was established around 1933 by owner David Tenorio.<sup>15</sup> It was originally located at 3050 Bagley Avenue, within the current route of I-75, but moved and combined three storefronts at 2610-2620 Bagley before 1954. Tenorio and later owner Juan Morales operated La Paloma for over forty years. In the 1950s, the Latin American Labor Council held regular meetings above La Paloma, possibly in the former Bolio/Abrey's Hall. By this time, the building's eastern section housed Mexican Village Restaurant, which was founded by Trinidad Guterrez at 2600 Bagley around 1951.<sup>16</sup> Mexican Village was purchased by Fernando Gutierrez, owner of the La Michoacana tortilla factory, in 1959. Gutierrez expanded the restaurant and combined the building's multiple storefronts with Spanish Revival-style façade alterations in sections between 1964 and 1979. Mexican Village can now seat over four-hundred-and-fifty people and is one of Detroit's longest-running Latinx businesses.

### **2628-2630 Bagley Street**

#### **Algo Especial Super Mercado; 1887, 1997-1999**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

The two-story commercial building at 2628-2630 Bagley Street has a rectangular plan and a front-facing gable roof shrouded by a false-front gabled parapet. The second story is primarily clad in beige vinyl siding. Its south-facing façade features a recessed main entrance door set into a three-sided bay, which is flanked by two one-part aluminum storefront windows set on a bulkhead clad with blue tile. A residential entrance is located west of the storefront windows. Three red brick pilasters frame these features. A shed roof awning, clad with red clay tile roofing, spans the width of the façade above its first floor. The façade's second story has three equally spaced, one-over-one, double-hung vinyl windows. Signage for Algo Especial Super Market is affixed between the second floor's center and eastern windows. A one-story, rectangular-plan addition with a flat roof extends north from the building's north-facing rear elevation. It is clad with concrete block.

This commercial building was constructed between 1887 and 1888 and first housed a confectionary business and an upstairs apartment. Around 1956, Mexican immigrant Rogelio Fuentes Ramon opened Roy's Jewelry Store in its first-story storefront. Ramon transitioned his business into Roy's Radio & TV in the early 1960s, and later Roy's Music Record Shop in the 1970s. Throughout these periods, Roy's stocked and sold Tejano and Spanish-language music records for the surrounding community.<sup>17</sup> In 1980, Algo Especial Super Mercado was established

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Ann Weston, "U.S. Looks into Bias Felt by City's Latin Americans," *Detroit Free Press*, March 29, 1971.

<sup>16</sup> "Mexican Shops to be Visited by AAUW," *Detroit Free Press*, April 27, 1951; and "Police Hold Café Owner in Shooting," *Detroit Free Press*, April 12, 1957.

<sup>17</sup> Eric Guzman, "Tejano Music Legend Martin Solis to Receive Mexicantown's First Historic Marker," *El Central Hispanic News*, March 9, 2023.

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here by Raul and Martha Hernandez.<sup>18</sup> Their market still operates today and offers a wide range of grocery products that represent varied regions of Mexico, each with its own traditional ingredients and cooking methods. A small concrete block addition, which likely expanded Algo Especial market's stockroom, was constructed behind the building between 1997 and 1999.

### **2631 Bagley Street**

#### **Roberto Clemente Recreation Center; 1882-1884, 1909, 1951, 1983-1985**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This community center is composed of four sections constructed for a variety of commercial purposes in at least four different periods. The first and oldest section (1882-1884) is a two-story, rectangular plan building with a flat, membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. Its north-facing façade includes three second-story openings that have been infilled with wood lattice. A rectangular, glass block window is located near the west end of its first story. A prominent, freestanding arch is located over the façade's parapet. The building's second section (1909) is a one-story, rectangular plan building with a flat, membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. This section extends east from the first section's northeast corner and includes a secondary, north-facing façade along Bagley Street defined by a large, colorful, painted mural. A third section (1951) is a large, one-story, irregular-plan building with a combination flat- and barrel-vault roof clad in synthetic membrane. This section extends south from the first and second sections' south-facing elevations and includes an arched parapet wall along its south-facing rear elevation. A fourth section (1983-1985) is a one-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat, membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. It extends west along the first section's west-facing side elevation and includes another north-facing façade along Bagley Street. A short, rectangular monitor with a flat, membrane-clad roof and parapet walls engages this section's west-facing elevation but is recessed behind its other walls. A small, shorter, one-story, rectangular bay with a flat, membrane-clad roof and parapet walls extends from this section's northwest corner. A one-story portico covers a single entrance door where the north-facing façade of the building's fourth section intersects its first section's west-facing elevation along Bagley Street. The entire building is clad in painted stucco. Its main entrance is a single door, covered by a shed-roof awning, located near the center of its south-facing rear elevation. There are no other openings on any of the building's elevations.

The oldest portion of this recreational complex was built between 1882 and 1884 as a two-story commercial building with the former addresses of 405, later 2641, Bagley Street. It housed a hardware store, tin shop, shoe store, and a Baptist church before the 1930s. Another one-story commercial building, which originally housed four addresses between 2625-2633 Bagley, was built east of the two-story building in 1909. These buildings were connected by plumbing suppliers Davis Brothers, Inc., between the 1930s and 1940s. In 1951, Davis Brothers erected a large, barrel-roof warehouse that further combined these formerly separate storefronts.

Davis Brothers closed around 1964, and by 1968, the City of Detroit purchased their building for use as a recreational center. It was named the Bagley Neighborhood Service Center, and a large

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<sup>18</sup> Susan M. Selasky, "Fit For A Fiesta," *Detroit Free Press*, May 3, 2012; Darrell Hughes, "If You're Stuck Without Cactus, Try Mexicantown Market," *Detroit Free Press*, August 12, 2007.

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interior gymnasium was built inside the former warehouse in 1968. The center was immediately frequented by Latinx residents from the surrounding neighborhood. In 1980, the center was renamed in honor of Puerto Rican professional baseball player Roberto Clemente (1934-1972). The center was renovated again, and a final large addition was built, between 1983 and 1985. The building's various sections have since been blended with a uniform and colorful stucco exterior. A large and colorful mural that depicts Clemente surrounded by flowers and foliage was recently painted on the façade's eastern end.

### **2634 Bagley Street**

#### **La Michoacana Tortilla Factory; 2003**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial bakery has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in concrete block. Its south-facing façade is clad in brown brick and includes three arched bays and one rectangular bay, all framed by brick trim. Each arched bay includes a three-part sliding window covered by decorative wrought iron grilles. The building's recessed main entrance is located within the rectangular bay.

This bakery building replaced an earlier bakery on the same site that housed the La Jalisciense Tortilleria. La Michoacana purchased the La Jalisciense business around 2014. This building bears several architectural similarities with the neighboring building at 2650 Bagley, also owned by La Jalisciense/La Michoacana. It is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the district's period of significance.

### **2650 Bagley Street**

#### **La Michoacana Tortilla Factory; 1983**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial bakery a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in concrete block. Its south-facing façade is clad in brown brick and includes three rounded, rectangular bays framed by brick trim. There are five, three-part, sliding windows covered by decorative wrought iron grilles. The building's recessed main entrance is located in the western bay.

This bakery building was built in 1983 as a new facility for the La Jalisciense Tortilleria, which was established by Ray Abundis in 1946 and formerly based next door at 2634 Bagley Street. La Michoacana purchased the La Jalisciense business around 2014. This building bears several architectural similarities with the neighboring building at 2634 Bagley, also owned by La Jalisciense/La Michoacana. It is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the district's period of significance.

### **2661-2669 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1922**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat membrane-clad roof. Its north-facing facade is divided into five equally spaced bays by columns clad in beige-painted brick with stone bases and red-painted, diamond-shaped stone ornamentation. An ornamental parapet wall clad in beige-painted brick with similar stone ornamentation spans all five bays and includes four rectangular piers and a shallow gable that spans the façade's second and third bays (looking from east to west). Its three eastern bays include recessed entrance doors set into three-

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part aluminum storefront windows set on beige-painted brick bulkheads. The façade's fourth bay has been infilled with stucco walls, four glass block windows, and one two-part ribbon window, all set atop an older beige-painted brick bulkhead. The westernmost bay includes a fourth, angled, recessed entrance doorway set beneath the building's rounded northwestern corner. The entrance is flanked by two, two-part aluminum storefront windows set on beige-painted brick bulkheads, and a six-part aluminum transom window. Three groupings of painted ornamental stonework that feature reliefs of drapes, scrolls and urns are set within the parapet wall above along its Bagley Street façade and St. Anne Street elevation.

This commercial building was constructed in 1922 with five retail storefronts. It housed several early Latinx-owned businesses during the 1940s and 1950s. These included the New Mexico Chili Co. storeroom at 2661 Bagley, which was later replaced by La Fiesta Restaurant; Latin American cleaners at 2667 Bagley; and Medrano's Barber Shop at 2669 Bagley. La Gloria Bakery operated from 2663 Bagley briefly in the late 1950s before it moved to the standalone building at 3345 Bagley. Tamaleria Nuevo Leon, a woman-owned tortilla factory founded by Maria Villarreal, also operated from 2661 Bagley between 1963 and 1978. In 1979, artists George Vargas and Martin Moreno painted a large mural entitled "City Spirit" on the building's St. Anne Street elevation. It depicts a "tree of life" among various Latinx cultural symbols that represent "uniting the ancient roots of Latino culture with modern industrial Detroit."<sup>19</sup>

### **2701 Bagley Street**

#### **Diseños Ornamental Iron; 1925, 1960**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building includes two sections. The building's western section (1925) has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad with yellow-painted brick and concrete block. Its façade faces north and includes a centered main entrance with two glass doors, flanked on each side by one-part windows, and above by a one-part transom window, all with aluminum frames. A two-part window with an aluminum frame is located west of the main entrance. A secondary entrance with a metal door is located east of the main entrance. A stepped parapet wall is centered above the main entrance. The building's newer, eastern section (1960) has an irregular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad in red-painted concrete block. A large art piece is affixed to the addition's north-facing façade where it joins the older section's façade. Doorways and windows of varying sizes, covered by decorative wrought iron grates, are located along the building's east elevations.

The western section of this commercial building was constructed in 1925. It housed several automotive-related businesses during the twentieth century, primarily the Magnetic Battery & Equipment Co., and had a previous address of 2715 Bagley. The building's eastern portion was built in 1960 as the Gutierrez Service Station, operated by Texas native Ynocencio Gutierrez. In 1987, Colombian immigrant Misael "Tony" Martinez purchased both buildings as a new location for his notable art studio, Diseños Ornamental Iron. Diseños was founded in 1974 at 4065-4101 West Vernor Highway and produced Spanish-inspired ornamental ironwork for residential and

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<sup>19</sup> ResearchGate, "City Spirit," accessed October 6, 2023, [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-mural-City-Spirit-by-George-Vargas-and-Martin-Moreno-in-Mexicantown-simbolizing\\_fig2\\_345321066](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-mural-City-Spirit-by-George-Vargas-and-Martin-Moreno-in-Mexicantown-simbolizing_fig2_345321066).

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commercial clients throughout Southwest Detroit.<sup>20</sup> In 2022, Diseños Ornamental Iron was purchased by Martinez's student Javier Lugo, who renamed the studio Artistic Diseños. It operates today from multiple locations, including 2701 Bagley and a large factory building located outside the historic district at 6789 Goldsmith Street, purchased in 2001.

### **2728-2730 Bagley Street**

#### **Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Church/Matrix Theater; 1881 1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat membrane-clad roof. Its exterior is primarily clad in orange brick with green- and purple-painted wood trim. Its south-facing façade includes two recessed entryways on its first story with eight-panel wood doors topped by one-part transom windows with red-painted wood trim. The entrances are framed by three brick columns and a centered, four-part storefront window set on a brick bulkhead. A flush-mounted, green-painted wood signage panel for the Matrix Theatre is located above the transom window. The façade's second story includes ornamental brick banding and a denticulated cornice of green-painted wood. A rounded bay, with a centered two-part window flanked by two one-over-one, double-hung windows, is located above the eastern first floor entrance. A single, one-over-one, double-hung window is located west of the bay window. Additional double-hung windows are sporadically placed along the building's east and west elevations. A large painted mural, located near the south end of the west elevation, depicts Diego Rivera and other significant Latinx figures.

This commercial building was constructed in 1881 with retail space on the first store and residential space above. In 1947, its first-story storefront windows and retail interior were altered to accommodate a branch of the Church of God, Mountain Assembly. Before 1972, this church was replaced by the Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Church.<sup>21</sup> Iglesia de Dios offered Spanish-language services into the mid-1980s. The building is now occupied by the Matrix Theatre Company, an organization for local playwrights founded in 1991 by Shaun and Wes Nethercott, who moved into the building in 2001.

### **3345 Bagley Street**

#### **La Gloria Bakery; 1958, 1984 1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. The building's east-facing elevation includes a northern section that protrudes slightly beyond this elevation's southern section and forms a small L-shaped bay. The exterior is primarily clad in pink-painted concrete block, with patches of pink-painted stucco located on its north-facing façade. The façade's first story includes a single main entrance door flanked by two, one-part windows with aluminum frames and ornamental, wrought iron screens, all surrounded by red brick trim. An additional, double-door entrance is located west of this main entrance and features a wrought iron gate with red brick trim. A shed roof awning clad with red-painted metal panels extends the full width of the façade over the first story. The façade's second story includes two, two-part, sliding windows with aluminum frames, set into largely infilled

<sup>20</sup> Yadira Lugo, Office Administrator, Artistic Diseños Inc., email communication, March 3, 2025.

<sup>21</sup> Hiley H. Ward, "Spanish-Speaking Boy, 10, Picks Up Marjoe's Trail Here," *Detroit Free Press*, October 21, 1972.

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rectangular openings. Prominent lettering that reads “La Gloria Bakery” is painted above the second story windows. The building’s east-facing elevation includes three, two-part sliding windows and similar painted lettering on the second story of its protruding northern section. A large, triangular billboard rises more than double the building’s height on a cylindrical, steel post set within the slight notch along the building’s east-facing elevation.

La Gloria Bakery has occupied this building since it was built in 1958. The bakery itself was founded by Manuel Zaragoza before 1957 and was previously located at 2663 Bagley Street. Reuben Gonzalez, who started baking when he was eight years old in Monterrey, Mexico, purchased the business in August 1981. Gonzalez oversaw the construction of a large rear addition around 1984. Gonzalez’s daughter, Juanita Franco, took over the business after he retired in 2012. According to Franco, the business was named after Manuel Zaragoza’s daughter and has retained that name ever since, despite the change in ownership.<sup>22</sup>

### **3353-3361 Bagley Street**

#### **La Michoacana Tortilla Factory; 1907, 1986, c.1988**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

The commercial building located at 3353-3361 Bagley Street contains three different sections. The oldest (1907) is located at the southeast corner of Bagley and 23rd Streets and is a two-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. This section’s first story is clad in white-painted brick and its second story is clad in white-painted aluminum siding. Its façade faces north and features two, one-over-one, double-hung windows on its second story. Concrete block on the façade’s first story suggests this portion has been infilled. It now includes two recessed doorways protected by wrought iron gates. An awning with a shed roof, clad in red-painted wood shake roofing, spans the width of the façade above the first floor. A one-story, rectangular-plan addition (1986) with a flat roof extends from the older section’s south-facing rear elevation. It is clad with concrete block and features three ribbon windows on its west elevation facing 23rd Street. A newer, two-story, rectangular-plan addition (c.1988) extends across the eastern elevations both older sections. It is also clad with concrete block. This addition also added an eastern section of the building’s Bagley Street façade. It includes a single metal door on its first floor and three double-hung windows on its second floor, with two metal vents located below the center and eastern windows. Signage for La Michoacana Flour Tortilla Factory is affixed to the second floor of the building’s façade and west elevation.

The western portion of this commercial building was built in 1907 and originally included two storefronts numbered 3359 and 3361 Bagley. It has since undergone many alterations related to its reuse by the La Michoacana tortilla factory. La Michoacana was founded in 1942 by Fernando Gutierrez, an immigrant from Monterrey, Mexico.<sup>23</sup> It had several locations in and near the Bagley corridor before it moved into 3359 Bagley in 1960. People from the Southwest neighborhood once made daily trips to La Michoacana for fresh tortillas, even after the

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<sup>22</sup> Juanita Franco, “Detroit’s Beloved La Gloria Bakery Celebrates Hispanic Heritage and Traditions All year Long,” September 21, 2023, <https://www.dawnfoods.com/insights/la-gloria-bakery-celebrates-hispanic-heritage-and-traditions-all-year-long>.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Brown, “Latin Entrepreneurs Hope to Emulate Greektown Success,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1984.

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construction of the Fisher Freeway in 1970.<sup>24</sup> The business's success is evidenced by two additions to this building, constructed in the 1980s, and its expansion into several nearby buildings (located at 2634, 2650, and 3428-3430 Bagley).

### **3362 Bagley Street**

#### **Los Galanes Restaurant; 1891, 1912, c.1993**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building includes two separate commercial buildings and infill sections constructed at different times. The first section (c.1891), located at the northeast corner of Bagley and 23rd Streets, has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. The second section (1912) is located north of the first section and originally faced 23rd Street. It also has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. These sections were connected by a trapezoidal-plan infill section (c.1993) that extends the full width of the first section's former north-facing rear elevation. A two-story, enclosed exit stairway comprises a small addition located at the south end of the first section's east-facing elevation. It has a rectangular plan with a shed roof. The entire building is primarily clad in painted stucco. The stairway addition and portions of the building's east-facing elevations are clad in red brick.

The first section's original, south-facing elevation fronts Bagley Street and is organized into five bays on its first story. The western bay includes a recessed corner entrance framed by a red brick archway. The four eastern bays are separated by pilasters clad in red brick, and include three-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on red brick bulkheads, with red brick headers and modern, rounded aluminum awnings clad in green fabric. The façade's second story is clad in beige-painted stucco and is framed by two pilasters and a flat cornice clad in red-painted stucco. The façade's second story includes nine, irregularly spaced, one-part, arched and half-round windows with aluminum frames.

The building's combined sections also create a secondary, west-facing façade that fronts 23rd Street. The majority of its first story is covered by a one-story, rectangular-plan porch with a shed roof clad in corrugated metal panels. An east-facing barrel-arched awning, also clad with corrugated metal panels, covers a secondary entrance at the porch's northern end. The entire porch is supported by ornamental wrought-iron columns. A brick archway frames a recessed corner entrance at the southern end of the secondary façade's first story at the corner of Bagley and 23rd Streets. The secondary façade's second story is divided into two sections by pilasters clad in red-painted stucco. Its southern section is clad in beige-painted stucco and includes two sets of two, one-part, half-round windows and a single, two-part, arched window, all with aluminum frames and red-painted stucco trim with stucco keystones. Its northern section is clad in teal-painted stucco and includes a three-sided bay window with a hipped roof and three, two-part windows with aluminum frames at its northern end. A small, square opening filled with ornamental concrete blocks is located south of the bay window. A large mural that includes various Mexican motifs is painted on the building's north-facing elevation.

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<sup>24</sup> Louis Cook, "Street-Closing Is No Easy Decision," *Detroit Free Press*, June 15, 1977.

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The current restaurant building located at 3362 Bagley Street combined two earlier commercial buildings. Its first section was built before 1891 and originally had three storefronts, one of that housed a drug store between the 1890s and 1921. The building's second section was built in 1912 as a combined doctor's office and flat whose original addresses were numbered 258-260, later 1714-1718, 23rd Street. Mexican American residents and small businesses occupied its storefronts and flats during the 1960s and 1970s; for example, A.A. Gonzales Tax Service, located at 3362 Bagley Street in 1974. Los Galanes restaurant was opened in the spring of 1993 by Armando Galan, his wife Joyce, and his son, James.<sup>25</sup> Los Galanes has since gained local popularity for hosting elaborate festivals around cultural holidays, including Cinco de Mayo, and in conjunction with non-Latinx sporting events including Opening Day for the Detroit Tigers baseball team. The Galan family also lived in the building during this period.

**3400 Bagley Street**  
**Peoples State Bank/El Tenampa/Las Vegas Bar;**  
**1910, 1987-1999; John Scott**

**1 Contributing Building**

The primary section of this two-story restaurant and entertainment venue has a square plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its exterior is clad in off-white brick with limestone ornamentation. A black-painted, metal, denticulated metal cornice surrounds the parapet walls of this section. A two-story addition with a flat, membrane-clad roof extends the full width of the primary section's north-facing elevation and has a secondary façade facing 23rd Street. It is primarily clad in white-painted stucco.

The primary section's south- and east-facing elevations are organized into five bays by matching colonnades that include four pilasters, clad in off-white brick, with carved limestone bases and Corinthian-styled capitals. A carved limestone architrave band caps both colonnades. Limestone blocks inscribed with "The Peoples State Bank" are centered within frieze bands of both elevations. The south-facing elevation's three center bays include arched openings filled with red-painted stucco and capped by limestone headers with keystones on their first stories, with sets of three, one-over-one, double-hung windows on their second stories. The second and fourth bays feature Juliet balconies with wrought iron railings. The south-facing elevation's first and fifth bays are lined with limestone quoins and include centered doorways framed by limestone trim on their first stories, with single, one-over-one, double-hung windows on their second stories. The doorway on the fifth (eastern) bay's first story includes an ornamental limestone header.

The primary section's east-facing elevation matches the south-facing elevation's materiality and layout but has different openings in each bay. Its first (southern) bay has a single, narrow, one-part window on its first story and a single, one-over-one, double-hung window on its second story. Its second bay contains a one-part storefront window within its first-story, stucco-filled arched opening; and a single, one-over-one, double-hung window on its second story, without a Juliet balcony. Its center bay contains a nine-part storefront window within its first-story, stucco-filled arched opening; and a Juliet balcony with wrought iron railing on its second story beneath

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<sup>25</sup> Molly Abraham, "Los Galanes Stakes Claim to Mexican Town Crowds," *Detroit Free Press*, February 5, 1993.

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a set of three, one-over-one, double-hung windows. Its fourth bay contains a centered, single glass doorway, surrounded by two one-part windows and a transom window, within its first-story, stucco-filled arched opening; and a single, one-over-one, double-hung window on its second story, without a Juliet balcony. Its fifth (northern) bay only has a single, one-over-one, double-hung window on its second story.

The northern addition of the building (1987-1999) contains a secondary, east-facing façade that fronts 23rd Street. There is a recessed entrance bay at its northeast corner. A three-part storefront window with aluminum frames, set atop a stucco bulkhead, is located south of the entryway. Both are covered by a shed-roof awning clad in red clay tiles. There is a separate shed-roof awning, also clad in clay tiles, located above a carry-out window near the south end of the first story. There are two, two-part, ribbon windows with aluminum frames, as well as a porch with wrought iron railings, on the second floor.

The main portion of this building, a Classical Revival-style former bank building, was designed by Detroit architect John Scott and constructed in 1910.<sup>26</sup> It first served as a branch location of the Peoples State Bank and included a second-story office and residence used by dentist Dr. G. M. McMann. The bank closed in 1933. Around 1957, it was converted into a bar and restaurant named El Tenampa, billed as “Detroit’s only Latin-American nightclub.”<sup>27</sup> The bar served tequila and other alcoholic beverages while Latinx musical groups played dance music. By 1961, the husband-and-wife team of Basilio and Olivia Galan opened the Las Vegas Bar at the same location. Olivia was widely known for her hospitality and vocal talent.<sup>28</sup> She also hosted a Latin radio show on WQRS-FM that broadcasted on Sundays from the Las Vegas Bar.

In 1983, the Las Vegas Bar was replaced by El Zocalo Restaurant, founded by Costa Rican immigrant Victor Hugo Cordoba and his wife, Yvonne.<sup>29</sup> Olivia Galan ultimately purchased the building in 1990, and may have prompted the construction of a large, Postmodern-style addition to the original bank building during this period.<sup>30</sup>

### **3401-3409 Bagley Street**

#### **Xochimilco Restaurant; 1883-1884, 1910; M. Scholes & Son 1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. The building is primarily clad in white-painted brick. Its north-facing façade is clad with a cast stone veneer and brown-painted wood trim. Its first floor includes three brown-painted metal doors and two ribbon windows. A shed-roof awning clad in brown-painted

<sup>26</sup> “Peoples State Bank Opens Handsome New Branch Office,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 8, 1911.

<sup>27</sup> “El Tenampa,” advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1957.

<sup>28</sup> “Las Vegas Club,” advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, August 5, 1961; “Gun Victims Hint Faction War Brews,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 26, 1967; Bob Talbert, “Tired of Humdrum? Get Out, Get With It,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1974; “‘The Peace Forever’ And ‘The Hard Hat’: What Gives?” *Detroit Free Press*, January 27, 1974.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Kurlyandchik, “El Zocalo Restaurant to Close After 30-plus Years,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 1, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> “Area Closings,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 25, 1990.

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synthetic shingles spans the façade's width and wraps onto part of the building's east elevation above the first floor. The façade's second floor is organized into three bays by cast stone pilasters. The eastern and center bays feature three arched openings filled with brown- and white-painted wood panels. The western bay includes a three-sided bay window with a hipped roof and three openings filled with brown- and white-painted wood panels. A single opening with wood panel is located west of the bay window. A boxed cornice clad in brown-painted synthetic shingles also spans the width of the façade. The building's east elevation includes a decorative brick cornice and three window openings with arched brick headers. The primary entrance to the building is located on the west façade, and is situated within a single-story, red brick vestibule with a crenelated parapet.

The current restaurant building located at 3401-3409 Bagley Street includes two earlier commercial buildings constructed during the late nineteenth century. The façade's eastern two bays comprise the oldest building, constructed between 1883 and 1884 by M. Scholes & Son.<sup>31</sup> The building's western bay was constructed separately in 1910. Both buildings originally housed retail space on their first stories with residential space above. Between 1956 and 1958, Heledoro and Yrena Garza founded Xochimilco Restaurant in the storefront at 3409 Bagley. The Garzas also opened a confectionary at 3401 Bagley. Sergia Dela-Garza, who was likely related to Heledoro and Yrena, assumed operations in the early 1970s. Midcentury-style renovations including the application of cast stonework visually merged their exteriors between 1970 and 1971. Today, Xochimilco has become a favorite local restaurant whose longevity is rivaled only by Mexican Village Restaurant (2600 Bagley).

### **3428-3432 Bagley Street**

#### **La Michoacana Bakery; 1912, 1970-1971**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This commercial bakery building includes two sections. The oldest section (1912) is a one-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. It is clad in white-painted stucco. Its façade faces south and is framed by two white stucco pilasters. Its main entrance is a single metal door near the façade's west end. A single, infilled, rectangular opening is centered below the parapet wall and is flanked on both sides by three square sections of white-painted decorative brickwork. A one-story, rectangular-plan addition with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls extends the full length of the older section's west elevation. It is also clad in white-painted stucco. This section features a roll-up metal garage door covered by sliding wrought iron security screen near the east end of its south-facing façade.

The east half of this building was completed in 1912 and originally housed a movie house named the Baker Theater. It was later modified to house commercial tenants. La Michoacana tortilla factory began using this building around 1968 and constructed the western addition between 1970 and 1971. The building's stucco exterior was likely applied at this time. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the buildings also housed the Zapata Center, where Latinx activists congregated.<sup>32</sup> La Michoacana still uses the building today as one of many bakeries.

<sup>31</sup> "Building Permits," *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1883.

<sup>32</sup> Osvaldo Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan, interview by Katie Cook, Detroit, MI, June 7, 2023.

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### **3434-3456 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1890-1891**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its south-facing façade's second story is divided into six identical bays by pilasters clad in red brick. Each bay features three arched, one-over-one, double-hung vinyl windows framed by arched headers of red brick with stone lintels. A bracketed ornamental cornice with shed roof sections clad in slate shingles runs above all six bays. The four eastern bays on the façade's first story are connected by an infill wall clad in beige-brown brick. This section includes four single metal entrance doors; a single glass storefront door with a transom window, flanked to the west by a three-part ribbon window with aluminum frames; a set of two glass storefront doors with a transom window, flanked on both sides by a one-part windows with aluminum frames, all covered by decorative, red-painted, wrought iron screens; and a single, four-part ribbon window with aluminum frames covered by decorative, red-painted, wrought iron screens. The two western bays on the façade's first story are connected by a red brick infill wall. This section includes four single metal entrance doors, and three small, arched windows.

This Victorian-style commercial building was constructed between 1890 and 1891. Latinx residents rented upstairs apartments here starting in the 1950s. Between the 1960s and 1970s, its retail storefronts housed at least three Latinx businesses: Rios Market, owned by Rudy Morales, at 3434 Bagley; La Fiesta Market, at 3438 Bagley; and Los Norteños Club at 3448 Bagley.

### **3437-3443 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1894**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in red brick with stone accents. Its façade faces north and is divided into two equal, mirrored sections. Each section features a three-sided bay window with a hipped roof and painted wood ornamentation on its second story. The bays are topped by ornamental raised parapets and flanked by a set of two, one-over-one, double-hung windows on one side and a single one-over-one double-hung window on the other side. The storefront of 3437 Bagley Street features a centered main entrance door covered by wrought iron screens. This door is flanked a single storefront window set on a wood bulkhead and a secondary entrance to the east; and a two-part storefront window with an aluminum frame, set on an ornamental wood bulkhead, to the west. The storefront of 3443 Bagley Street includes a large infill wall clad in light red brick with a centered, one-part storefront window. There are two entrance doors located on its west end. A large mural depicting artist Frida Kahlo, recently painted by Mexican folk artist Elton Monroy Duran, is located on the building's east elevation.<sup>33</sup>

This Romanesque Revival-style commercial building was built around 1894 and originally housed four storefronts. By the 1960s it housed two organizations that catered to Latinx residents: the Mexican Recreation & Cultural Center, at 3443 Bagley; and Los Caballeros Catalicos credit union, at 3445 Bagley.

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<sup>33</sup> Kimberly P. Mitchell, "Southwest Artist Elton Monroy Duran," *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 2024.

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### **3453-3457 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1895, 1911; Spier, Rohns & Gehrke 1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building includes two sections. The oldest section (1895) is a two-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. It is primarily clad in red brick with stone accents. Its façade faces north and features a three-sided bay window with a hipped roof and wood ornamentation on its second story. The bay is topped by an ornamental parapet and flanked by a set of two one-over-one double-hung windows on the east and a single one-over-one double-hung window on the west. Its storefront includes a wood entrance door with a twelve-part transom window on its east end, flanked to the west by a large infill wall clad in light red brick with two one-part storefront windows. The building's newer section (1911) is a two-story, rectangular-plan building with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls. It extends the full length of the older section's west elevation. It is primarily clad in multicolored orange brick with stone accents. Its main entrance is located beneath a rounded second story corner at the intersection of Bagley and 24th Streets and includes a glass door framed by one-part storefront windows and a three-part transom window with wood frames. A raised, Mission Revival-style parapet wall is located above the rounded corner. A blue-painted, wood, denticulated cornice extends along its north and west elevations. A large canvas awning covers a patio along the south side of the building.

A building permit for this building's eastern section was recorded in December 1894 by grocer E. Siggelko.<sup>34</sup> Its architecture matches the adjacent Romanesque Revival-style building at 3437-3443 Bagley Street. The building's western corner section was designed by architects Spier, Rohns & Gehrke, and constructed in 1911.<sup>35</sup> Its original Mission-style ornamentation was applied before Southwest Detroit housed a large Latinx population. Both buildings housed non-Latinx-owned businesses throughout much of the twentieth century. The first stories of these separate buildings were combined by Mexican Town Restaurant at an unknown point after 1987.

### **3458 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1909**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in orange brick with stone accents. A cast iron cornice wraps its south- and west-facing elevations and a rounded, second-story southwest corner at Bagley and 24th Streets. Its main entrance is located beneath this rounded corner and includes a single doorway, framed by one-part storefront windows on cast iron bulkheads on each side, and a four-part transom window above, all set into brown-painted wood frames. A four-part transom window above an infilled storefront window is located on the building's south-facing elevation. Four sets of infilled storefront windows, topped by three-part transom windows, are located along its west-facing elevation. Both elevations' second stories include intermittently spaced openings. Some contain one-over-one double-hung windows with brown-painted wood frames,

<sup>34</sup> "Building Permits," *Detroit Free Press*, December 16, 1894.

<sup>35</sup> Benjamin Gravel, "Designed by Spier, Rohns & Gehrke for John Schwein. Commercial Block, 3457 Bagley built in 1911 Mexicantown, Detroit, MI," Facebook, April 5, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/412764338844049/posts/9621189931334731/>.

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and others are filled with plywood panels. There are double loading doors on the first and second floors of the rear (north) elevation stacked atop one another.

This Classical Revival-style building was constructed in 1909 and originally housed a furniture distributor. It housed several commercial businesses during the twentieth century, including two bars and a restaurant.

### **3500-3508 Bagley Street**

#### **Commercial Building; 1924**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

The one-story commercial building located at 3506 Bagley Avenue has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in red-painted brick. The building's rounded southeast corner facing Bagley Avenue and 24th Street includes a large historic storefront opening that has been closed with red-painted plywood infill panels. Its south-facing elevation includes three storefront bays that have also been largely filled with red-painted concrete block. The eastern and center bays now include single doorways flanked by two-part windows on their west sides. The western bay has a single, two-part window. All of these doors and windows are covered by decorative, red-painted, wrought iron screens.

This 1924 commercial building originally housed four separate storefronts. The units and their south-facing façade openings were combined and infilled by three Latinx-owned businesses between the 1950s and 1970s. In the early 1960s, a partnership including Arturo Morales purchased the A&B Barber Shop, formerly located in the single storefront at 3504 Bagley, and expanded it eastward into the corner unit at 3500 Bagley. It was purchased by another entrepreneur named Armondo Foster and renamed the Mexican Barber Shop before 1974. Also during the 1960s, Geraldo Alfaro purchased an existing grocery store at 3506 Bagley as a second location for his Honey Bee Market. "Honey Bee Market No. 2" expanded westward into 3508 Bagley but ceased operating at this location before 1974.

## **CHIPMAN STREET**

### **2627 Chipman Street**

#### **Storage Building; 1997**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story storage building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in concrete block. It has just two openings, a metal pedestrian door and a large garage door. This building is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the district's period of significance.

### **2630 Chipman Street**

#### **Single-Family House; 1869**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story single-family house has an irregular plan. It has a front-gable roof with a side-gable wing, both clad in asphalt shingles. A small, one-story, rectangular-plan addition with a shed roof extends from its north-facing rear elevation. This house is clad in beige vinyl siding with aluminum trim. It was likely moved to this site in 1911 from 303 18th Street, when the intersection of 18th and Newark Streets was realigned. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

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## **HUBBARD STREET**

### **1921 Hubbard Street**

#### **Apartment Building; 1925**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

The two-story apartment building located at 1921 Hubbard Street has a square plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in brown brick. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

## **McKINSTRY STREET**

### **1919 McKinstry Street**

#### **Single-Family House; 1889**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-and-a-half-story single-family house has an L-shaped plan. It has a front-gable roof with a side-gable wing, both clad in red asphalt shingles. The house is clad in yellow vinyl siding with white-painted wood trim. The house is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

## **ST. ANNE STREET**

### **38 – 1720 St. Anne Street**

#### **Utility Building; 1925**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story utility building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in red brick. The building's west-facing façade includes a centered roll-up garage door flanked on each side by two pilasters with limestone bases and capitals. A single metal pedestrian door is located between the two northern pilasters, and a window covered by wrought iron bars is between the two southern pilasters. An arched stone inscribed with the date "1925" and initials "W.D." is centered above the garage door. A colorful mural depicting several Latinx themes is painted across the building's south-facing side elevation.

This commercial garage was built in 1925. It housed several auto repair businesses and a grinding shop during the twentieth century. Around 1982, it was purchased by Ray Abundis, owner of the La Jalisciense Tortilleria. It is unclear if or how this building contributed to *tortilleria* operations. The family, however, commissioned the painting of a large mural by local artist Vito Valdez, which depicts the "history and importance" of corn as a part of the tortilla making industry.<sup>36</sup> This building now shares the same parcel as the La Michoacana Tortilleria buildings located at 2634 and 2650 Bagley Street.

### **1730-1750 St. Anne Street**

#### **Townhouses; 1906**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story townhouse building has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. There are three narrow airshaft bays located along its east-facing rear elevation. It is primarily clad in stone-patterned concrete block. Its west-facing façade is

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<sup>36</sup> Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 28.

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organized into seven bays that correspond to seven addresses, and each has its own recessed entrance door. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**1906-1908 St. Anne Street  
Townhouses; c.1908**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story townhouse building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is now being reclad in blue vinyl siding. It has a white-painted wood cornice with ornamental corbels on its south- and west-facing elevations. This building first appears in city directories in 1908; however, its architecture appears to predate 1900, and it may have been moved from an unknown prior location. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**SCOTTEN STREET**

**1920 Scotten Street  
Single-Family House; 1920**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story single-family house has a rectangular plan and a hipped roof clad in brown asphalt shingles. There is a front-gable dormer on its east-facing façade. The house is clad in red-orange brick. It is noncontributing to this historic district due to its residential use.

**1921-1923 Scotten Street  
Apartment Building; 1904**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story apartment building has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in green-painted brick with red-painted stone accents. The building's east-facing façade includes two entrance doors on its first story that are framed by two, two-story, three-sided bay windows and a one-story masonry porch with a flat roof overhang. This building is noncontributing to this historic district due to its residential use.

**VINEWOOD STREET**

**1901 Vinewood Street  
Vinewood Avenue Church of Christ; 1883, 1907**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story church building has a rectangular plan and a compound gable roof clad in brown asphalt shingles over its main section. A northern wing that extends the full length of the main section's north-facing elevation includes a shed roof with a Jerkinhead roof dormer, also clad in brown asphalt shingles. The building's first story is clad in yellow-painted brick and its second-story gabled sections are clad in stucco with half-timbering, also painted yellow. Yellow-painted wood bargeboards and triangular brackets frame its second-story gables. The building's façade faces east and includes a one-story, fully enclosed vestibule with a hipped roof. Its main entrance is centered on this porch and includes two metal doors beneath a front-gable overhang with ornamental woodwork, supported by triangular brackets. Three one-part wood windows with stone sills and brick headers flank both sides of the centered main entrance and are arranged on upward angles that likely follow interior stairways. The building's south-facing side elevation along West Vernor Highway includes five irregularly spaced, boarded window openings. A rectangular chimney stands along the building's west-facing rear elevation.

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According to Detroit historian Silas Farmer, this church building was first dedicated in January 1883 as the Wesley Church, a Methodist congregation.<sup>37</sup> In August 1887, it was purchased by the Church of Christ. What later became the Vinewood Avenue Church of Christ was based at 1901 Vinewood Street for over sixty years. The building was remodeled several times. Its Tudor Revival-style exterior and first-story brick veneer were added in 1907. A fire on October 30, 1936, caused extensive damage which was repaired between 1936 and 1937.<sup>38</sup> In 1949, the church built a new building next door at 1937 Vinewood (outside district boundaries). Their old building was used thereafter for Sunday school classes and community meetings. The church began offering Spanish language services and classes as Latinx residents settled the surrounding area between the 1950s and 1970s. Today, the building at 1901 Vinewood is vacant.

## **WEST GRAND BOULEVARD**

### **480 West Grand Boulevard Single-Family House; 1893**

### **2 Noncontributing Buildings**

This two-story single-family house has an irregular plan. It has a combination Dutch gable and hipped roof clad in green asphalt shingles. The house is clad in white-painted asbestos siding with wood trim. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

#### **Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a front-gable roof is located behind and east of this house. It is clad in white vinyl siding and is also noncontributing to the district.

### **484 West Grand Boulevard Single-Family House; 1892**

### **2 Noncontributing Buildings**

This two-story single-family house has an irregular plan. It has a compound gable roof clad in black asphalt shingles. The house is clad in a variegated cast stone veneer. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

#### **Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a hipped roof is located behind and east of this house. It is clad in red-painted wood siding and is also noncontributing to the district.

## **WEST VERNOR HIGHWAY**

### **1753 West Vernor Highway Commercial Building; c.1929, 1948, 1957-1966**

### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has an irregular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in natural and grey-painted pale orange brick, with large sections infilled by natural and grey-painted concrete block. The building's north-facing façade is framed by rounded northeast- and northwest-facing corners. Two large, streamlined fins clad

<sup>37</sup> Silas Farmer, *History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan* (Detroit, MI: Silas Farmer & Co., 1890), 574.

<sup>38</sup> "100th Anniversary of the Vinewood Avenue Church of Christ, 1885-1985," pamphlet (Detroit, MI: Vinewood Avenue Church of Christ, 1985), 4-5.

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in formed plywood frame a corrugated steel spandrel panel above a single metal entrance door at the center of the façade.

The central portion of this commercial building was built circa 1929. It had a prior address of 1925 19th Street (now St. Anne Street) and originally housed the Stock Transfer & Storage Co. Around 1948, it was expanded by large northern and southern additions into a Plymouth-DeSoto automobile dealership with the address of 2703 West Vernor Highway. Another addition was added to the building's southern end between 1957 and 1966. By the 1970s, it was owned by the Service Tire Co., who also operated next door at 2737 West Vernor.

**2640 West Vernor Highway**  
**El Sol; 1967, 1987-1999**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has an irregular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. A shed-roof cornice clad in red clay tiles wraps the roof on all sides. The building is clad in white-painted stucco and red-brown brick. The building's southeast-facing façade fronts West Vernor and includes a single, metal entrance door near its west end. The door is flanked by two, two-story pilasters clad in fieldstone veneer, and covered by a small shed-roof awning clad in corrugated metal panels. A two-part, sloped entrance ramp with iron railings is located east of the entrance door. A ribbon window covered by wrought iron bars is located on the building's first story east of the main entrance. A set of four, one-over-one, double-hung wood windows is located above it on the second story. There are two single, metal entrance doors and three, six-part, wood windows on the façade's east end. A one-story outbuilding with a rectangular plan and a shallow, membrane-clad, side-gable roof is located north of the main building. It is connected to the main building's north-facing elevation via a narrow-enclosed walkway. Its elevations have multiple boarded openings and are clad in white-painted T1-11 plywood siding.

This building was built between 1966 and 1967 and originally housed El Sol, a restaurant, bar, and banquet center owned by Cuban immigrant Angel Chacon. El Sol served Cuban, Mexican, and American foods, and hosted large parties for holidays such as New Year's Eve. It drew crowds from throughout Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, Canada, who enjoyed food, listened to live bands with Latinx musicians, and danced to salsa music.<sup>39</sup> Chacon operated El Sol until the late 1970s, and it was closed shortly after its sale to Mexican musician and entrepreneur Salvador Torres. In 1982, the building was repurposed as a psychiatric rehabilitation center. A one-story outbuilding was erected north of the original restaurant and club between 1987 and 1999.

**2667 West Vernor Highway**  
**Residence; 1999**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story residence has an irregular plan. It is composed of two geodesic dome structures connected by a breezeway, which have various openings and overhangs throughout. The domes are clad in white-painted concrete. This residence is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the district's period of significance.

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<sup>39</sup> Mike Duffy, "That's Salsa, The Latin Soul Music," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1977; Sheldon Annis, "The Art Of Living In Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1970.

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**2669 West Vernor Highway**  
**Tamaleria Nuevo Leon; 1957**

**1 Contributing Building**

This one-story restaurant building has an L-shaped plan and flat, membrane-clad roof. Its primary section has a rectangular plan and is taller than a small, one-story, rectangular plan addition that extends from the primary section's northeast corner. Parapet walls with shed-roof slopes clad in red clay tiles line both sections' north- and west-facing elevations. The building is primarily clad in white-painted stucco. The building's main entrance is centered on its primary section's north-facing elevation and contains a single glass door surrounded by two one-part windows and a three-part transom window with aluminum frames, set within an arched opening with red-painted trim. A single metal door with red-painted trim, and a single, two-part, carry-out window with aluminum frames and green plastic shutters, are located west of the main entrance. On the main section's west-facing elevation, a centered two-part sliding window with aluminum frames and a shed-roof overhang clad in red clay tiles is flanked by a two-part sliding window with aluminum frames, red trim, and green plastic shutters to the north, and an arched opening infilled by a painted mural with red trim and green plastic shutters to the south. Another single metal door with red trim is located on the one-story addition's west-facing elevation. Decorative, black-painted, wrought iron screens cover all openings. Another mural is painted on the one-story addition's north-facing elevation.

This small commercial building originally housed a coal, fuel oil, and ice sales business. In 1972, it was converted for use as a carry out restaurant and reoccupied shortly after by the now-popular restaurant Tamaleria Nuevo Leon. Maria Villarreal began making and selling tamales from home at 1630 St. Anne Street in the late 1950s, primarily to support her family when her husband went on strike from his job at Great Lakes Steel.<sup>40</sup> Between 1963 and 1978, Maria occupied another storefront at 2661 Bagley Street. Today, Maria's business is operated by her daughter, Susana Villarreal-Garza. Spanish Revival elements present on the building, such as the stucco exterior, wrought iron screens and red clay tiles, date to when Villarreal moved into the building. The mural on the addition's north-facing elevation is representative of the plentiful public art in Southwest Detroit. It was painted by Elton Monroy Duran.

**2737 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Garage; 1967**

**1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has an L-shaped plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad in grey-painted brick and concrete block. An upper band of blue-painted, vertically oriented wood siding wraps its north- and west-facing elevations. A retail window wall with one-part glass panels and aluminum frames extends from the eastern half of the building's north-facing elevation onto the short, west-facing end of the L-plan's leg. There are two large garage doors, separated by five window openings and a boarded double-door entrance, along the recessed, west-facing elevation that comprises the L-plan's stem.

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<sup>40</sup> John Tanasychuk, "Tamales Heat Up December's Cold," *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1988; Tom Nicholson, "Great Lakes Steel Corp. And Union Schedule Talks Sunday," *Detroit Free Press*, December 23, 1959; David Rodriguez Muñoz, "Detroit's Tamaleria Nuevo Leon Has Been Serving Tamales For Over 60 Years," *Detroit Free Press*, March 24, 2023.

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This commercial garage was built in 1967 and housed the Service Tire Company throughout the period of significance. It is classified as contributing because Latinx residents remember using this business as they settled the surrounding neighborhood between the 1940s and 1970s.

### **3344 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Garage; 1942**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial garage has an irregular plan and flat, membrane-clad roof. Its primary section has an L-shaped plan with prominent west- and south-facing wings that front West Vernor Highway and 23rd Street. A smaller, secondary wing extends from the building's northeast corner. It is primarily clad in red-painted concrete block. The building's main entrance is a single door located on the west-facing wing's rounded southwest corner. It is flanked by three, one-part square windows with aluminum frames on the north and two, two-part windows with aluminum frames on the east. Three single metal doors located east of these windows open into a paved area enclosed by tall wrought iron fencing. The south-facing elevation of the building's south-facing wing includes two roll-up metal garage doors. This building housed a commercial garage and auto repair business throughout the district's period of significance.

### **3456 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Medical Clinic; 1973**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This small medical clinic has a rectangular plan. Its southern one-story section and northern two-story section both have flat, membrane-clad roofs with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in red brick with large sections of modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam trim. Glass block windows of varying sizes are regularly spaced along its east- and south-facing elevations' first stories. It is classified as noncontributing because its present exterior was applied after the historic district's period of significance.

### **3502-3514 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Townhouses; 1916**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story townhouse building has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in red brick. Its south-facing façade is divided into two equally sized sections, each of which includes a one-story, rectangular plan porch with a hipped roof flanked by two, two-story, three-sided bay windows. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

### **3516-3528 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Townhouses; 1914**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story townhouse building has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in red brick. Its south-facing façade is divided into two equally sized sections, each of which includes a one-story, rectangular porch with a hipped roof flanked by two, two-story, three-sided bay windows. A large front-gable parapet is centered above both sections. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

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**3525 West Vernor Highway**

**Garage; 1944**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story garage has a rectangular plan and a front-gable roof clad in grey asphalt shingles. It is clad in beige-painted concrete block. This garage originally had a flat roof and housed auto trim and glass shops during the twentieth century. It was altered from its historic appearance at an unknown date. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to modern alterations including its front-gable roof and aluminum window wall.

**3535-3537 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1922**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a side-gable roof with parapet walls and stone copings at its northern end with a rear-gable extension at its southern end, both clad in brown asphalt shingles. There are two hipped roof dormers on the side-gable roof's north-facing front slope. The building is primarily clad in variegated red brick. Its north-facing façade is clad in yellow brick with stone accents. Its first story includes two recessed entrances with wrought iron gates separated by two one-part ribbon windows with aluminum frames and decorative wrought iron screens. A fabric awning extends the full width of the façade above the first story. There are three, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows centered on the second story.

This eclectically styled combination store and flat was built in 1922 by the Henry S. Koppin Co.<sup>41</sup> It was first occupied by grocer Michael Kutkauskas, who lived upstairs and operated his store on the ground level. During the 1960s, the first story housed John's Bar, which was operated by John Zyren, who, like Kutkauskas, lived on the second floor. In 1973, Giovanna Rodriguez purchased the building and opened Giovanna's Lounge which, more than fifty years later, has become a favorite neighborhood destination.<sup>42</sup>

**3540 West Vernor Highway**

**Garage; 1950**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story garage has a hipped roof clad in grey asphalt shingles. The building is clad in concrete block. A tall privacy fence surrounds the property south of the garage. This garage is noncontributing to the historic district due to its unclear historic association(s).

**3547-3549 West Vernor Highway**

**Apartment Building; 1910**

**2 Noncontributing Buildings**

This two-story apartment building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in variegated red brick. Its north-facing façade includes a centered main entrance flanked by two, two-story, square bay windows. This building is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

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<sup>41</sup> City of Detroit, Department of Buildings and Safety Engineering (BSEED), Building Permit Card Index (Detroit, MI), Building Permit #31068, May 17, 1922.

<sup>42</sup> Kelli B. Kavanaugh, "Mexicantown's largest outdoor patio debuts at Giovanna's Lounge," *Model D*, October 9, 2007, <https://www.modeldmedia.com/devnews/giovanna11407.aspx>.

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**Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a hipped roof is located behind and south of this apartment building. It is clad in red-painted concrete block and is also considered noncontributing to the district.

**3553 West Vernor Highway**

**Saint Anthony's Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church**

**1923, 1960; F. R. Patterson Construction Company**

**1 Contributing Building**

This four-story building has a rectangular plan and a front-gable roof clad in black asphalt shingles over its primary section (1923). The building is clad in dark red brick with limestone ornamentation. Two square towers are located at the building's northeast and northwest corners and have flat, membrane-clad roofs with parapet walls. Both towers' north-facing façade walls include fourteen-part, steel arched windows on their third stories and sets of two, one-part, smaller arched wood windows on their fourth stories. The façade's center section includes a prominent set of three, fourteen- and seventeen-part, steel arched windows on its third story, framed by brick pilasters that terminate at a front-gable parapet wall with arcaded brick ornamentation. The pilasters start atop a one-story portico with a front-gable header centered within the façade's center section. The building's main entrance is centered on this portico and includes two metal doors framed by a three-part, steel arched transom window set in an arched opening with brick trim. The building's east- and west-facing side elevations are organized into five bays behind the corner towers by brick pilasters. Each bay contains two, three-part, double-hung windows on their first stories and two, three-part, arched windows above. A tall, square brick chimney stands at this section's southeast corner.

A two-story, rectangular-plan addition (1960) with a rear-gable roof clad in black asphalt shingles spans the width of the primary section's south-facing rear elevation. It is primarily clad in beige brick and sections of vertically oriented metal siding on its south elevation, separated by four-part sliding aluminum windows. An additional, one-story garage section with a rectangular plan and flat, membrane-clad roof is located at the building's southeast corner.

This large, Romanesque Revival-style building was built in 1923 by the F. R. Patterson Construction Company as Saint Anthony's Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church.<sup>43</sup> The church's sanctuary was located on the building's second story, with community meeting rooms located below. Between 1927 and 1929, the first story was repurposed as a parish school. A rear addition that housed a new rectory was completed in 1961. Like the former Lithuanian Hall (3564 West Vernor Highway), St. Anthony's Church hosted community events and neighborhood groups that welcomed other residents beyond their core Lithuanian worshipers. Some were attended by Latinx residents as their community grew in Southwest Detroit.

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<sup>43</sup> BSEED, Building Permit #13893, July 7, 1923.

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**3554 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1952, 2019**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has an irregular plan. Its newer eastern portion (2019) has a large, modern shed roof clad in standing-seam metal panels and its older western portion (1952) has a flat membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. The building is clad in red brick and currently occupied by Sicily's Pizzeria, a modern Italian restaurant. It is noncontributing to the historic district due to significant modern alterations completed after the district's period of significance.

**3564-3470 West Vernor Highway**

**Lithuanian Hall/Hispanos Unidos; 1921;**

**M.E. Zaldokas, Dayton & Goodman**

**1 Contributing Building**

This three-story commercial building and social hall has an irregular plan and a combination hipped and flat roof. Hipped roof slopes, clad with replica slate shingles, surround a flat, membrane-clad roof above. A parapet wall surrounds the hipped roof slopes along the building's north, west, and south-facing elevations. The building is primarily clad in brown brick with stone ornamentation. A stone cornice wraps its west- and south-facing elevations.

The building's south-facing façade includes a retail wall on its first floor with four bays separated by five columns clad in beige brick with stone bases. Its center two bays include six-part storefront windows with aluminum frames. Its western bay includes a three-sided recessed corner entrance with a single glass door surrounded by two, three-part storefront windows to the north; three, three-part storefront windows to the east; and a one-part transom window above, all with aluminum frames. The façade's eastern first-floor bay includes another recessed entrance with two glass doors, surrounded by three-part sidelites and one-part transom windows, set in aluminum frames, and separated by a wood partition. The façade's second and third floors are vertically divided into three sections. The center section features four bays of single, three-over-one, double hung windows on the second floor topped by single, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the third floor, arranged within vertically oriented stonework. A large stone spandrel is inscribed with the words "Lithuanian Hall" between the second and third floors. A raised parapet with ornamental stonework emphasizes this section's vertical orientation. This center section is symmetrically flanked to the east and west by sets of two, three-over-one, double-hung windows on the second floor topped by sets of two, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the third floor, also arranged within vertically oriented stonework.

The building's west-facing elevation includes six irregularly spaced retail bays on its first floor separated by columns clad in beige brick with stone bases. Its southern end bay connects with the façade's southwest-facing corner entrance. Its northern bay features a double-door secondary entrance with a transom window, covered by decorative wrought iron screens. Three bays include centered, recessed entrances flanked by three-part storefront windows. The west-facing elevation's second and third floors are divided into three sections. The largest, center section includes five equally spaced arched openings with arched brickwork and stone keystones. Each opening includes a center, one-over-one, double-hung window flanked by two narrow, one-over-one, double-hung windows; topped by a metal spandrel panel and three-part arched window with mullions organized in a sunburst pattern around a center, circular opening. The west-facing elevation's second- and third-floor center section is flanked on the south by narrow section that

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includes a set of two, three-over-one, double-hung windows on the second floor topped by a set of two, one-over-one, double-hung windows on the third floor, arranged within vertically oriented stonework. The center section is flanked on the north by a narrow section that includes a three-over-one, double-hung window on the second floor topped by a one-over-one, double-hung window on the third floor, arranged within vertically oriented stonework.

The building's north- and east-facing elevations are clad in plain red brick. A recessed portion of its east-facing elevation contains arched windows that match those on its opposite west-facing elevation. A large, colorful mural that depicts a skeletal figure playing a guitar is painted on a protruding three-story portion of the building's east-facing elevation. Three variously sized sash windows are arranged on its north-facing elevation.

This combination commercial building and social hall was designed by M.E. Zaldokas and constructed in 1921 by Dayton & Goodman as Lithuanian Hall, a community space that held dances, celebrations, and political activities.<sup>44</sup> The Lithuanian Business Men's Association operated out of the building in the 1920s and 1930s. Hispanos Unidos, a social organization formed in the 1920s or 1930s to support Latinx residents, moved into the building in 1944 and continued holding dances, celebrations, and political activities. In November 1944, Hispanos Unidos held a celebration featuring Spanish folk songs and dances to inaugurate the building.<sup>45</sup> Hispanos Unidos operated here into the 1980s.

### **3600-3608 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1893**

#### **1 Contributing, 1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story apartment building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. A hipped roof parapet clad in red clay tiles wraps the building's south-facing façade and east-facing elevation. The building is primarily clad in tan-colored brick. Brick on the east-facing elevation's first story has been painted white. The building's west-facing elevation is clad in stucco on the first story and beige vinyl siding on the second story. The building's south-facing façade has a centered, recessed entrance bay accessed by three concrete stairs on the first story. It is flanked on both sides by rectangular glass block windows. There are three sets of two, wood, one-over-one double-hung windows, covered by aluminum storm windows, on the façade's second story. Five similar windows are located on the second story of the building's east-facing elevation.

A two-story frame building with a footprint that matches the present building has stood on this site since about 1893. It originally housed a grocery store with a "rooming house" on the second story. Many businesses have since operated on the first story.

<sup>44</sup> Eric Hergenreder, "3564-3570 West Vernor Highway," eherg (blog), <https://www.eherg.com/locations/lithuanian-hall>; "Detroit's Building Outlook," *Michigan Manufacturer and Financial Record* (Detroit, Mich.), March 18, 1922, 16. M.E. Zaldokas is likely Mathew (or Matthew) Elizeus Zaldokas, a Lithuanian-born architect from Chicago. If so, Zaldokas studied architecture at the Art Institute in Chicago and graduated in 1915. He remained there and practiced architecture into the 1960s. M.E. Zaldokas passed away in 1966 (Chicago Tribune, June 18, 1915; June 28, 1966).

<sup>45</sup> "Chips," *Detroit Free Press*, November 19, 1944.

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**Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a hipped roof is located behind and north of this commercial building. It is clad in orange-painted concrete block. The garage is considered noncontributing to the district.

**3615 West Vernor Highway**

**The Cole Apartments; 1924**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

“The Cole” apartment building is four stories tall and has a rectangular plan and a flat membrane-clad roof. The front entrance is recessed between two front-gabled towers. The center entrance clad in limestone and the name “Cole” is engraved above the door. The building is clad in dark brown brick with a cast stone belt course above the first story. There are square cast stone decorative details on the front façade at the lintels of upper story windows, and limestone sills at each window. The original three-part-over-one wood windows are in place. This apartment building retains a high degree of integrity in terms of design, materials, and workmanship, but is noncontributing to the historic district due to its residential use.

**3627 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 2002**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has an L-shaped plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is clad in red brick and beige-painted stucco. This building is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the historic district’s period of significance.

**3648 West Vernor Highway**

**Herbert Bowen Library; 1912; Stratton and Baldwin**

**1 Contributing Building**

The two-story library building located at 3648 West Vernor Highway has a T-shaped plan and a hipped roof clad in grey asphalt shingles. Its hipped roof conceals the building’s second story. The library’s west-facing façade includes a projecting central section that represents the stem of its overall “T” plan. North and south-facing wings form the top of the “T.” The building is primarily clad in red vitrified brick with buff Ohio stone accents. A stone water table and metal cornice surround the building on all sides.

The library’s façade is defined by the west-facing end wall of its projecting wing. This wall contains five equally spaced windows. The three center windows are twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows with narrow stone frames. These windows are flanked by two taller, twelve-over-twenty-four, triple-hung windows that rise from large sills set along the building’s stone water table. Above each window is a trapezoidal header composed of red brick. The lower halves of all five window openings are covered by wrought iron bars.

The library’s main entrance is located where its protruding, west-facing center section intersects its north-facing wing. A similar entrance is located at the center section’s symmetrical intersection with the building’s south-facing wing. Both doorways are framed by ornamental stone surrounds with quoins and segmentally arched concrete hood molds. A decorative wrought-iron gate covers the southern entry’s heavy wood door. The northern entry has a decorative wrought iron gate without a door, which forms an open vestibule. Both wings’ west-

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facing elevations contain single, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows with narrow stone frames, centered between the entrance doors and the ends of each wing. Both wings' north- and south-facing end elevations contain five, equally spaced, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows, with headers and wrought iron bars matching those on the west-facing wing's end wall. Beneath each window, sections of ornamental brick work alternate between a checkerboard-like pattern and a diamond-shaped herringbone pattern.

The library's east-facing rear elevation is generally utilitarian. A small, shed dormer is centered on the hipped roof's east-facing slope. Rectangular brick chimneys are positioned near the centers of the north- and south-facing wings' east elevations. Two, twelve-over-twelve, double-hung windows flank each chimney. Additional windows are sporadically arranged near the center of the east elevation.

The Herbert Bowen Branch of the Detroit Public Library first opened in Western High School in 1900. In 1907, it moved to another location at 4438 Dix Avenue. The library's current building opened on December 28, 1912. The library's construction was financed with \$40,000 from industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and was one of several "Carnegie libraries" constructed in Detroit. The building was designed in the English Collegiate style by the firm of Stratton and Baldwin, which was led by Detroit architect William B. Stratton. In the 1970s, a community-driven movement led to the library developing a bilingual services and content center at the branch. This movement made the library a central hub for social and cultural activities for Latinx residents. The library still serves its original function today.

**3801 West Vernor Highway  
Gas Station; 1950**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This gas station includes a one-story service station building with an irregular plan and flat, membrane-clad roof; and two, one-story, flat-roof canopy structures that cover gas pump lanes. It is noncontributing to the historic district because it has been extensively altered and reflects modern commercial design.

**3827 West Vernor Highway  
Car Wash Building; 2005**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This car wash building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is clad in concrete block and brick. Large garage doors are located its east- and west-facing side elevations. This building is noncontributing to the historic district because it was constructed outside the district's period of significance.

**3800-3830 West Vernor Highway  
Commercial Building; 1997**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in concrete panels with vertical striations. It is classified as noncontributing because it was constructed outside the district's period of significance.

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**3849 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Building; 1889**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. The first-story storefront on its north-facing façade has been entirely replaced with new openings and a modern red brick veneer. The building's second story has been reclad in modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam material, and new vinyl windows have obscured the historic openings. These alterations, completed after the district's period of significance, compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's cultural themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

**3855 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Building; 1891**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

The oldest section of the two-story commercial building located at 3855 West Vernor Highway has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. A one-story addition clad in concrete block extends from the two-story section's south-facing rear elevation. The building's first-story storefronts along its north- and west-facing facades have been entirely replaced with new openings and a modern brick veneer. Its second story has been reclad in modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam material, and new vinyl windows have obscured the historic openings. These alterations, completed after the district's period of significance, compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's cultural themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

**3917-3923 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Building; 1914, 1916, 1921**

**1 Contributing Building**

The one-story commercial building located at 3917-3923 West Vernor Highway has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls over its original, eastern section (1914, 1916). Its western section (1921) comprises a large, rectangular-plan addition to the original section and has a front-gable roof. Both sections are primarily clad in beige-painted stucco. A one-story, shed-roof porch covers a secondary storefront that faces a parking lot on the building's west-facing elevation. The upper portion of the building's north-facing façade includes a decorative parapet wall clad in dark red brick with stone accents. The façade's eastern storefront (3917 West Vernor) has been infilled with a beige-painted stucco wall and includes a centered, three-part ribbon window and a single, glass door with aluminum frames near its eastern end. The façade's western section (3923 West Vernor) includes a centered, double-door entrance surrounded by a one-part transom window, above, and four-part storefront windows, set on concrete bulkheads, on each side. An additional, four-part storefront window set on a concrete bulkhead is located east of the centered entrance bay and separated by a concrete column. A colorful mural is painted on a flat wall section west of the entrance bay.

This building's eastern section (3917 West Vernor) opened as the Waldecker & Thierry public garage in 1914. It was expanded with a small, one-story rear addition in 1916, and again with a large western addition (3923 West Vernor) in 1921. It housed several automobile-related businesses during most of the twentieth century. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by this building's reuse as La Mexicana restaurant, now La Jaliscience Supermercado and restaurant, starting in the early 2000s.

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### **3938 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; c.1924, 1945**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has an L-shaped plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in beige-painted stucco. Its south-facing façade is clad in beige-painted brick and organized into four bays by five pilasters, also clad in beige-painted brick with green-painted stone accents, topped by ball-shaped stone finials. All four bays include upper sections with decorative, checker-painted brickwork. The façade's two eastern bays include recessed entrance bays offset by six-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on brick bulkheads. The western bay has been largely infilled with painted brick, but includes a double-door entrance with a two-part transom window, offset by a two-part storefront window set on a brick bulkhead, all of which have aluminum frames. The façade bay second from west includes an eight-part storefront window with aluminum frames set on a brick bulkhead.

The main portion of this commercial building was completed around 1924 and originally housed three tenants with addresses of 3938, 3942, and 3950 West Vernor Highway. A 1945 addition to the building's western storefront once housed an additional tenant (Rear 3950 West Vernor) and gave the building its current L-shaped plan. A food processing company, two automotive supply companies, and two restaurants operated here during the mid-twentieth century.

### **3955-3971 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 2002**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in red brick with beige concrete accents. This building is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the historic district's period of significance.

### **3960-3962 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1913**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

The two-story commercial building located at 3960-3926 West Vernor Highway has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its west-facing elevation (obscured by the neighboring building at 3964-3968 West Vernor) includes a recessed air shaft. The building is primarily clad in white-painted brick. The first story of the building's south-facing façade includes a recessed entrance bay with two doors, offset by a three-part storefront window with aluminum frames, set on a bulkhead clad in cast stone veneer. A three-sided bay window, which includes a centered one-part window flanked by two, one-over-one, double-hung windows, clad in black-painted vertical wood siding, is located on the east end of the façade's second story. A plain wood cornice spans the façade above the bay window. A single, one-over-one, double-hung window is located west of the bay window.

This commercial building includes an upstairs apartment and was built in 1913. Its first-story storefront has housed a wide array of businesses, including two separate barber shops in the 1950s and 1970s.

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**3964-3970 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Building; 1909**

**1 Contributing Building**

The two-story commercial building located at 3964-3970 West Vernor Highway has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its east-facing elevation (obscured by the neighboring building at 3960-3962 West Vernor) includes a recessed air shaft. The building is clad in red painted brick. Its south-facing façade is symmetrically organized with two, three-sided bay windows clad in green-painted wood trim located at the east and west ends of its second story. Each bay includes three, one-over-one, double-hung vinyl windows. Two, single, one-over-one vinyl windows are located between the bays. The bays are connected by a green-painted wood cornice that also wraps the building's west-facing elevation along Hubbard Street, which includes an additional, matching bay window. A half-round raised ornamental parapet wall is centered above the cornice on the south-facing façade. The façade's first story includes two recessed entrance bays. The eastern bay is framed by green-painted decorative brickwork laid in a quoin pattern and contains a single door accessed by four concrete steps located behind a black-painted wrought iron gate. The western bay contains two doors set at ground level topped by two, one-part transom windows. A single two-part window, covered by a wrought iron screen, is located between the entrance bays. A three-part storefront window set on brick bulkheads, whose openings are also covered by decorative wrought-iron screens, is located west of the western entrance bay.

This commercial building, completed in 1909, also includes several upstairs apartments. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by several Latinx-owned businesses having been established here between the 1980s and early 2000s.

**4000 West Vernor Highway**

**LaJoya Gardens; 2024; Sitio, O'Brien Construction Co. 1 Noncontributing Building**

This four-story, mixed-use building has an irregular plan and several flat-roof sections. Its exterior is clad in multiple sections of dark grey, light grey, and tan brick. This new building, named LaJoya Gardens, occupies the entire block between Hubbard Street and Palms Street. It was developed by Cinnaire Solutions and the Southwest Detroit Business Association; designed by Sitio architects of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and built by the Detroit-based O'Brien Construction Company. It is noncontributing to the historic district.

**4003 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1916-1917**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in brick, which has been painted dark blue. Its east-facing façade fronts Hubbard Street and is framed by brick pilasters and a flat brick cornice. A metal pedestrian door and a set of two, larger metal doors are located near the north end of the façade's first story. A set of three, two-over-two, wood double-hung windows is centered on the façade's second story and is partially boarded. A raised, rectangular parapet wall is centered above the façade.

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This small building was built between 1916 and 1917. It originally sat behind a large nineteenth century store that stood at the southwest corner of Hubbard Street and West Vernor Highway. This larger building, numbered 4001-4005 West Vernor, was razed around 2014. During the early twentieth century, the smaller building that stands today housed an auto shop and upholstery business and had prior addresses including 509, 1741, and 1745 Hubbard Street. By the late 1960s, it was no longer listed as a separate address. The building may have been used as storage by Casa Estrada and Anaya's Market, notable Latinx-owned party stores housed in the parcel's larger building at 4001 West Vernor. It is currently being renovated.

### **4029 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1983**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad in blue-painted concrete block. The building's façade faces north and includes a centered main entrance door with a one-part ribbon window to the west. A red fabric awning covers the main entrance. Today, the building houses Mangonadas Del Barrio, a Latinx restaurant and specialty food shop that sells Mexican cuisine. This building is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the historic district's period of significance.

### **4035 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Dix Theater, Buses Adame; 1914**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and front-gable roof clad in brown asphalt shingles. Its exterior is primarily clad in beige-painted brick. The first story of the building's north-facing façade is clad in beige vinyl siding, and includes only a single, centered, main entrance door. The façade's second story is entirely covered by a large shed-roof awning clad in black asphalt shingles. A large plywood sign that originally read "Autobuses: Adame, Salidas Diarias a Mexico" has since been painted over, but is still centered on the awning's front-facing slope. The building's only other openings are on the western façade: a single door nearly centered on the first story and a two-part, vinyl sliding window on the second story.

This building was constructed in 1914 as the Ila Theater, a neighborhood movie house with 384 seats.<sup>46</sup> It was later renamed the D&G Theater, and finally, the Dix. It closed in 1956, and the building was converted into a church, originally named "Church of God." It is unclear which denominational structure this church, which operated into the 1980s, belonged to. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by its reuse as a bus terminal in the late 1990s. "Autobuses Adame" offered daily bus trips to Mexico.

### **4100-4106 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1895, 1908**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

The oldest section of this commercial building (1895) is two stories tall and has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. A one-story, rectangular-plan addition (1908) extends the full width of the older section's west-facing elevation and has a flat, membrane-clad roof. The entire building is clad in grey-painted wood clapboard siding. A

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<sup>46</sup> Andrew C. Morrison, *Opera House, Nickel Show, and Palace: An Illustrated Inventory of Theater Buildings in the Detroit Area* (Dearborn, MI: Greenfield Village, 1974), 15.

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brightly painted mural covers the building's enclosed first story storefront below a small overhang. Three boarded window openings are located above the overhang on the two-story section's south-facing façade.

This building's eastern portion was built in 1895 and originally housed the J. Becker & Son grocery store. The store expanded around 1908 with a one-story addition. It housed a hardware store named Basala Paint & Wallpaper between the 1950s and 1970s. The building is currently vacant, but the boarded first story storefront now hosts a large, Latinx-inspired mural that reads "Southwest Detroit: Where Culture Thrives, Community Unites and Roots Run Deep."

### **4065-4101 West Vernor Highway**

#### **House (4065 West Vernor Highway); 1892**

#### **2 Contributing Buildings**

The one-and-a-half-story house located at 4065 West Vernor Highway has an irregular plan and a cross-gable roof clad in red asphalt shingles. The house is clad in beige-painted, vertical wood siding with red-painted wood trim. Its main entrance is a wood door, covered by a one-story, shed-roof porch, located near the house's northeast corner. The house's north-facing façade includes a set of three, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows, covered by aluminum storm windows, on its first story; and a set of two similar windows on its second story. Both are covered by aluminum storm windows. The first-story windows are covered by an ornamental wrought iron grille.

#### **Garage (4101 West Vernor Highway); 1936**

The one-story garage located at 4101 West Vernor Highway has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is clad in beige-painted concrete block. Its north-facing façade includes a large garage door opening, framed by a glass block side lite to the east and a glass block transom window above, all set within an iron frame. A single pedestrian door, covered by a rounded, green fabric awning, is located west of the garage door. Four additional glass block windows are located on the garage's east-facing side elevation.

The Folk Victorian-style house located at 4065 West Vernor Highway was built in 1892, according to a permit filed that year by C. Falklam.<sup>47</sup> It was used as a residence throughout the early twentieth century. The concrete block garage next door at 4101 West Vernor was built as a standalone real estate office in 1936. It was repurposed by a welding business in the 1940s.

Around 1972, Colombian immigrants Misael "Tony" Martinez and his brother, Joe, began using the garage to produce Spanish-inspired ornamental ironwork. Tony formally established the Diseños Ornamental Iron studio at this location in 1974. He used the home as a residence and office and worked in the garage, where he crafted custom wrought ironwork for residential and commercial clients throughout Southwest Detroit.<sup>48</sup> Diseños prospered and outgrew these quarters, and in 1987, relocated to 2701 Bagley Street.

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<sup>47</sup> "Building Permits," *Detroit Free Press*, August 14, 1892.

<sup>48</sup> Yadira Lugo, Office Administrator, Artistic Diseños Inc., email communication, March 3, 2025.

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Today, the house at 4065 West Vernor remains a residence, and the garage at 4101 West Vernor has no obvious commercial use, although it was reused as a “secondhand store” in the 1990s. Both buildings now occupy one parcel whose northern property line is framed by a prominent wrought iron fence and gate designed and produced by Diseños. Despite the property’s current residential use, it is considered contributing to the historic district because it retains a high level of integrity related to the period when Diseños Ornamental Iron operated here. Its buildings further illustrate how Latinx-owned businesses often started in their founders’ homes and garages, then moved into conventional commercial storefronts once they proved successful.

#### **4109-4119 West Vernor Highway**

##### **Commercial Building; 1980**

##### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a side-gable roof. It is primarily clad in concrete block, which has been painted with colorful graphic designs. A small glass block window is centered on its north-facing façade. This building is noncontributing because it was built outside the historic district’s period of significance.

#### **4114 West Vernor Highway**

##### **El Club; 1913-1914, 1951; John Holtz Construction Co.**

##### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan. Its flat, membrane-clad roof has three sections that vary in height and are divided by parapet walls. Its south-facing façade is clad in light grey, porcelain enameled steel panels. It includes a single main entrance door framed by a steel panel to the west and a glass block transom window above. Rectangular glass block windows, covered by black fabric awnings, are located on both sides of the main entry. A large, neon-lit sign with a downward-facing arrow motif is hung above the entrance. The building’s east-facing side elevation is clad in red brick.

The eastern half of this commercial building opened in 1914 as a branch of the Michigan Savings Bank. In 1951, it was expanded with a large western addition, both sections’ façades were covered by porcelain enameled steel panels. The work was completed by the John Holtz Construction Co. for the Detroit Lithuanian Club, which operated here until the 1980s. The Latinx community’s continued growth after the district’s period of significance is evidenced by the building’s reuse as the Mexicantown Center, later renamed the Mexicantown Fiesta Center, in the 1990s. This reception hall that hosted events, weddings, and holiday celebrations for Latinx residents. In 2016, the hall was converted El Club, a nightclub known throughout metropolitan Detroit for hosting live bands and Latinx musicians.

#### **4122-4128 West Vernor Highway**

##### **LA CASA/El Central Office; 1897, c.1907**

##### **1 Contributing Building**

This commercial building is composed of two sections. Its two-story eastern section (1897) has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. A one-story addition extends from this section’s north-facing rear elevation. The building’s one-story western section (c.1907) has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof, and extends the full width of the two-story section’s west elevation. The first stories of both sections’ south-facing facades are connected by a shed-roof awning clad in red asphalt shingles. Both storefronts include matching infill walls clad in colorfully painted vertical wood siding that include two small, twelve-part, leaded glass

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casement windows. These infill walls are separated by two recessed entryways, enclosed by wrought iron security screens, located near each section's eastern end. A set of three, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows, and a single, one-over-one, wood double-hung window, all covered by aluminum storm windows, are located on the second story of the two-story section's façade. This second-story portion is clad in grey vinyl siding and includes a smaller, shed-roof cornice overhang clad in red asphalt shingles.

This building's eastern section (1897) first housed a hardware store, which added two additions around 1907. Frank Mohr Plumbing & Heating occupied this storefront (4124 West Vernor) until the 1970s, while the second story housed apartments (4122 West Vernor) and the building's western section became a separate storefront (4128 West Vernor).

The Latinx community's continued growth is evidenced by the establishment of LA CASA, a social service organization that served Latinx families, in the early 1970s. LA CASA was established by the Latino Mental Health Task Force and first had offices in the former Lithuanian Hall (3564 West Vernor Highway) before it moved here in 1976.<sup>49</sup> In 1991, LA CASA merged with another organization and moved to new offices on West Fort Street. *El Central Hispanic News* reoccupied this space shortly after. This prominent Spanish language newspaper was established in 1988. It is now published by Dolores Sanchez through her company Sanchez Communications to "inform Hispanic people... [and] promote and enhance the image of Hispanics and Hispanic-owned businesses" in Detroit.<sup>50</sup> *El Central* moved to 4200 West Vernor in 2017, and this building is now used by El Club as a ticket office.

### **4138 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Wayne County and Home Savings Bank/LA SED;**

#### **1925; Donaldson & Meier, Max Bartholomaei & Son                      1 Contributing Building**

This two-story bank building has a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It has a generally rectangular plan with a southwest-facing angled entrance wall located at the corner of West Vernor Highway and Scotten Street. It is primarily clad in smooth, buff-colored limestone. A denticulated stone cornice wraps the building's west- and south-facing elevations and angled entrance wall. The building's main entrance is centered on this angled wall and includes two glass doors with aluminum frames, surrounded by ornamental bronzed aluminum columns and spandrel panels; and is topped by an arched window with original steel-framed divided glass and a circular clock. The opening is surrounded by two freestanding, limestone columns with ornamental Romanesque capitals that support a pedimented arch. The pediment includes a denticulated cornice band and a carved floral panel that mimics a keystone. The building's south and west-facing elevations contain matching sets of arcaded, arched window openings set between smooth limestone pilasters with stylized Romanesque capitals. There are two windows on the south-facing elevation and four on the west-facing elevation. The openings feature arched headers with alternating stones decorated with stylized floral motifs. The windows themselves

<sup>49</sup> Osvaldo Rivera, email communication, March 6, 2025.

<sup>50</sup> Jill Wurm, "WSU Now Home To 3-Year Run Of Influential El Central Newspaper," *Today@Wayne*, May 16, 2019, <https://today.wayne.edu/news/2019/05/16/wsu-now-home-to-30-year-run-of-influential-el-central-newspaper-32090>.

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have been replaced with modern, eight-part, arched windows with aluminum frames. The west-facing elevation's northern window opening extends to the ground and includes a double-door entrance. Wrought iron grillwork covers the bottom of each window.

This building opened in December 1925 as a branch of the Wayne County and Home Savings Bank. It was designed by Detroit architects Donaldson & Meier and built by general contractor Max Bartholomaei & Son.<sup>51</sup> The bank underwent several mergers and name changes in the late 1920s and collapsed in 1933, during the Great Depression. The building had various other uses until 1971, when it was purchased by a Latinx-oriented 501c3 non-profit social service organization, Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development (LA SED). LA SED was founded in 1965 to promote social and economic development among Detroit's Latinx community. Their offices helped neighborhood residents with various services including "counseling, job placement, nutrition, and consumer programs and recreation."<sup>52</sup>

#### **4200-4208 -West Vernor Highway Commercial Building; 1896, 1915**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls over its older, primary section (1896). A one-story, rectangular-plan addition (1915) with a flat membrane-clad roof and parapet walls extends the full width of the original section's north-facing rear elevation. The entire building is primarily clad in green-painted brick with red- and dark-green-painted stone and brick accents. The building has two facades that face Scotten Street, to the east, and West Vernor to the south. Both are capped by an ornamental cast iron cornice that wraps the building's southeast corner. Its primary, south-facing façade includes six, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows on its second story. Each window includes a red-painted arched brick header and a wrought iron Juliet balcony railing. The primary façade's first story storefronts are topped by a small wood cornice that extends onto the neighboring building at 4212-4222 West Vernor. Brick columns with rusticated stone bases and capitals define four irregularly sized bays. The first, easternmost bay includes a three-sided recessed entrance with a glass door and one-part transom window, framed on each side by two-part sidelites. A set of four, six-over-one storefront windows, set on a brick bulkhead, fills the second bay. The third bay contains a single glass door with a one-part transom window. The fourth bay contains a centered, three-sided recessed entrance with a single glass door and one-part transom window, framed on each side by two six-over one storefront windows set on brick bulkheads. The building's secondary, east-facing façade includes two sets of four, six-over-one storefront windows, set on brick bulkheads, located at its north and south ends; separated by a four-part ribbon window on its first story. Its second story contains seven irregularly spaced, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows with red-painted brick headers and wrought iron Juliet balconies, which match those on the south-facing façade's second story.

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<sup>51</sup> Benjamin Gravel, "Designed by Donaldson & Meier. Wayne County and Home Savings Bank Branch, 4138 West Vernor built in 1925 Southwest, Detroit, MI," Facebook, June 6, 2024,

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/412764338844049/permalink/7763231907130552/>.

<sup>52</sup> "Share Christmas with Less Fortunate," *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1976.

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This store block was built in 1896 and expanded in 1915. It notably housed the Carnival Show Bar and Tavern during the mid-twentieth century and until the 1980s. Although Latinx residents likely visited the Carnival Show Bar, this building now embodies the Latinx community's growth and reinvestment in their neighborhood after the district's period of significance. In 2001, LA SED purchased the building, and in 2007 held a reopening event that celebrated "the transformation of a building that was once marred by drug use and prostitution."<sup>53</sup> A coffee shop named Café Con Leche, founded by Jordi Carbonell, signified its revitalization when it opened at 4200 West Vernor.<sup>54</sup> The former show bar now houses the offices of *El Central Hispanic News*.

### **4212-4222 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1909; Killean & Robertshaw**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

The two-story commercial building located at 4212-4222 West Vernor Highway has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. A recessed bay forms an air shaft along the building's east-facing elevation, which adjoins the neighboring building located at 4200-4208 West Vernor. A small, one-story, rectangular-plan addition with a flat roof and parapet walls extends from the building's northwest corner, and may have been added at a later date. The entire building is clad in green-painted brick with red- and dark green-painted stone and brick accents. Its south-facing façade is symmetrically organized and includes two matching storefront sections on its first story, each of which includes centered, three-sided, recessed entrance bays with single doors and six-part transom windows, framed on each side by three, six-over-one storefront windows set on brick bulkheads. These storefronts are framed by single doorways with one-part transom windows at its east and west ends. A small wood cornice tops the first story storefronts and extends onto the neighboring building at 4200-4208 West Vernor. The second story of the building at 4212-4222 West Vernor is also symmetrically organized by includes two three-sided bay windows with hipped roofs and three, one-over-one, wood double hung windows. Single, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows with red painted brick headers are located east and west of the bay windows. All second story windows include wrought iron Juliet balconies. A bracketed cast iron cornice spans the building's façade above its second story. A stepped, ornamental parapet wall with a rectangular, framed central placard is centered above the cornice, and two brick columns frame the parapet wall at its north and south ends. It faces a landscaped lot used by Armando's Mexican Restaurant, next door.

This two-story commercial building was built in 1909 for C.M. Wesch by contractors Killean & Robertshaw.<sup>55</sup> Its western storefront (4220 West Vernor) originally housed a neighborhood movie house named the Bell Theater.

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<sup>53</sup> Niraj Warikoo, "Building Leaves its Shady Past Behind," *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Corey Williams, "New Wave of Latinos Helping to Revitalize Southwest Detroit," *Lansing State Journal*, February 28, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> "Building Permits," *Detroit Evening Times*, January 23, 1909.

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**4242 West Vernor Highway**

**Armando's Mexican Restaurant; 1899, 1964, 2019**

**1 Contributing Building**

This restaurant building is composed of two sections. The primary section (1899) is two stories tall and has an L-shaped plan and a flat membrane-clad roof with parapet walls along its south and west-facing elevations. A one-story addition (2019) with an irregular plan, a flat membrane-clad roof, and parapet walls extends the full length of the two-story building's north elevation. The building's exterior is primarily clad in red brick. Its façade faces south. The building's recessed main entrance is a glass door set in an arched brick opening near the west end of the façade's first story. It is flanked by two, one-part, arched windows with aluminum frames and brick trim. Three arched, brown-painted wood doors, framed by brick pilasters and arched headers, are also located along the façade's first story. A shed-roof awning clad with standing-seam metal panels extends the full length of the façade above the first story. The façade's second story is divided into two sections. The larger, western section includes four equally spaced, one-over-one, double-hung windows with aluminum frames and green fabric awnings. Its eastern section includes a set of three, one-over-one, double-hung windows; and two individual, one-over-one, double-hung windows; all with aluminum frames and green fabric awnings. There are four similar windows located on the second story of the building's west elevation, as well as a large exhaust duct, which exists the elevation's wall and curves onto the roof.

This building was originally two separate commercial buildings, both completed in 1899, with six storefronts that composed the addresses 4232-4244 West Vernor. They were connected around 1964 by enclosing a narrow walkway between them. A slender, two-story, frame and concrete block addition was also built along both buildings' north elevations. In 1972, the first floors of both buildings were connected to create the current Armando's Mexican Restaurant. Armando's was established as Armando's Taco House in 1968 by Armando Galan at a smaller location outside the district. Galan, like many Mexicans and Mexican Americans, came north to Detroit from Texas in 1958 because of the relatively high wages of factory employment.

**4300-4308 West Vernor Highway**

**I.O.O.F. Riverside Lodge No. 303/Mexicantown**

**Bakery; 1894; W.W. Wilkinson**

**1 Contributing Building**

This three-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in red brick with buff-colored stone accents. Its south-facing façade is symmetrically organized. Its first story includes a centered, recessed entryway enclosed by a wrought iron gate, surrounded on both sides by storefront walls, separated by brick columns. Both storefront walls include recessed entrance bays on their east ends and two, one-part storefront windows set on green-painted wood bulkheads, all surrounded by green-painted wood trim. The façade's second story includes seven equally spaced, one-over-one, double-hung windows, all of which are topped by one-part rectangular windows and have modern aluminum frames. A stone plaque describing the building's original use as an Odd Fellows Hall, with a date of "1894," is centered above the middle second-story window. The façade's third story appears to have been altered with the addition of four sets of two, one-over-one, aluminum double-hung windows, which have obscured original brick ornamentation. Six half-round brick pilasters with stone bases and caps are symmetrically spaced along the façade's parapet wall above the third floor. The building's eastern elevation faces Clarkdale Street and is organized into six, unevenly-

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spaced bays by pilasters clad in red brick. There are seven, one-over-one, aluminum double-hung windows on this elevation's second story and five, one-over-one, aluminum double-hung windows on its third story. A side entrance with signage for "Mexicantown Bakery" is located near the east-facing elevation's north end. The building's rear elevation includes a steel fire escape and just two arched, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows on its second story.

This large building was dedicated on August 3, 1894, as the International Order of Odd Fellows Riverside Lodge No. 303.<sup>56</sup> It was built by W.W. Wilkinson. The hall was used frequently by neighborhood residents for student events, community meetings, political rallies, and union fairs during the twentieth century. Its first-floor retail areas housed various businesses during including the Lange Bros. Grocery Store, the Southwestern Political Club, St. Paul's Council of the Knights of Columbus, and Green's Cut Rate store. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by the establishment of the now-popular Mexicantown Bakery at this location by Lena and Omar Hernandez in 1996.<sup>57</sup>

### **4314-4316 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Professional Building; 1908**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. A small, one-story, rectangular-plan addition extends from the building's north-facing rear elevation and also has a flat roof. The building's south-facing façade is clad in grey-painted brick. It includes a three-sided, recessed entrance bay on its first story, which is flanked on both sides by one-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on brick bulkheads. A secondary entrance is located at the first story's west end. There are two, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows with stone sills and headers on the façade's second story. Colorfully painted wood boards and a steel angle beam separate the first and second stories.

This combination commercial and professional building was built in 1908. It originally housed a confectionary on the first story with apartments above. For much of the mid-twentieth century, it was owned by Canadian optometrist Frederick LeHeup and his son, Kenneth, who ran their practice on the first story and lived above. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by the establishment of a notable Mexican restaurant here in the early 2000s. Taqueria La Tapatia was known as a clean, affordable restaurant that also hosted "CyberTaqueria" events that helped Latinx residents translate and send e-mail messages to their home countries during the early internet age.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Eric Hergenreder, "4300 West Vernor Highway," *eherg* (blog), <https://www.eherg.com/locations/4300-west-vernor-highway>.

<sup>57</sup> Melanie Eversley, "Ready for Rebirth: Hispanic Shops Spring Up," *Detroit Free Press*, January 3, 1997.

<sup>58</sup> Tracy Van Moorlehem, "Tres Detroit Taquerías," *Detroit Free Press*, May 5, 2000; "Detroit Community," *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 2002.

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**4322-4324 West Vernor Highway  
Parkview Apartment Building; 1899**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story apartment building has an irregular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its east- and west-facing side elevations include angled bays as airshafts between neighboring buildings. The building is clad in red- and beige-painted brick with green-painted stone trim. Its south-facing façade is symmetrically organized and includes a centered, arched portico around its main entrance. The arch is framed by green-painted stonework with an ornamental keystone and is enclosed by a wrought iron security gate. An arched opening with green-painted stone pilasters and a single, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung window is located above the main entrance. Eight, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows with green-painted stone sills and lintels and brick quoins are located east and west of the centered entrance on the façade's first and second stories. A green-painted, cast iron cornice spans the width of the façade near its parapet wall. A stone plaque that reads "PARKVIEW" is centered below the cornice.

This apartment building was completed in 1899. This primarily residential building is classified as a contributing resource because its units also housed small businesses and professional offices during the twentieth century.

**4336-4338 West Vernor Highway  
Commercial Building; 1909, 1935**

**1 Contributing Building**

The front section of this two-story commercial building (1909) has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in painted brick. A one-story, rectangular-plan, flat-roof addition (1935) extends from the two-story section's north-facing rear elevation. The addition is clad in painted concrete block. The building's south-facing façade is primarily clad in light red brick, which was reconstructed to match its previous design in 2009. Its first story includes a three-sided, recessed entrance bay that is flanked on both sides by two-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on brick bulkheads. A secondary entrance is located at the first story's west end. The first story is covered by a shallow fabric awning. The façade's second story includes two, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows.

This small commercial building was built in 1909 and expanded in 1935. It housed a variety of businesses during the twentieth century, including a bar, a men's clothing store, and a small electronics store.

**4340-4342 West Vernor Highway  
Professional Building; 1921; Giaver, Dinkelberg & Ellington 1 Contributing Building**

This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in orange brick with stone accents. Brick quoins adorn the second story's corners, and a stone cornice above two bands of denticulated brick wraps from the south-facing façade onto its west-facing elevation. The building's primary façade faces West Vernor Highway to the south. Its first story includes two storefront walls with three-part, aluminum-frame windows, set on brick bulkheads, with glass block transom windows above. The storefront sections are separated by three recessed entrance bays and four, square columns clad in beige-painted stone with ornamental capitals. An ornamental, arched, wrought iron gate conceals the center entrance bay. The façade's second story includes a centered, three-sided bay with three,

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one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows. It is flanked by two rectangular stone plaques that read "A.D." and "1921," as well as two, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows, to the east and west. The building's west-facing side elevation includes a similar bay window and five, irregularly spaced double-hung windows on its second story. Its first story has been largely infilled by brown-painted brick with a single, rectangular, glass block window near its south end.

This combination commercial and professional building was designed by architects Giaver, Dinkelberg & Ellington for two physicians, Dr. Taylor and Dr. Davids.<sup>59</sup> It later housed a variety of stores and professional practices; for example, a lawyer, physician, three dentists, and a party store in 1973.

**4400 West Vernor Highway**  
**Gas Station; 1968**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story, former gas station building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is clad in white-painted concrete block. Two infilled garage door openings and a single metal pedestrian door are located beneath a rectangular overhang on the building's south-facing façade. Boarding and decay related to many years of vacancy have compromised this building's ability to convey the district's historic themes, and it is therefore classified as noncontributing.

**4415 West Vernor Highway**  
**Gas Station; 1963**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story gas station building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in brown brick with beige painted, modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam panels. An open canopy structure with a rectangular plan and flat roof is located north of the gas station building. It is classified as noncontributing because it has been extensively altered to comply with modern commercial standards.

**4424-4426 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Building; 1902, 1983**

**1 Contributing Building**

The front section of this two-story commercial building (1902) has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in painted brick. A one-story, rectangular-plan addition with a rear-facing shed roof (1983) extends beyond the width of the two-story section's north-facing rear elevation and adjoins the vacant gas station next door (4400 West Vernor). The addition is clad in painted concrete block. The south-facing façade is organized into two irregularly sized bays by three brick pilasters. The first story's eastern bay includes a recessed entrance with two metal doors. Its western bay has been infilled by plywood panels. A small wood cornice covers the first story. The second story of the façade includes two window openings, topped by rusticated, painted stone lintels, which have been covered by wire mesh. A rectangular stone plaque that reads "H. REECK, 1902" is centered above the second story, below a shallow cornice composed of ornamental brick. Two half-round finials stand at the corners of the façade's parapet wall.

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<sup>59</sup> Blueprints dated February 11, 1921, stored on microfilm in HDAB collections.

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This commercial building was built in 1902 and originally housed a shoe store. It housed a bar throughout the mid-twentieth century that transitioned into Latinx ownership after the district's period of significance.

#### **4433 West Vernor Highway**

##### **Commercial Building; 1950, 2010**

##### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad in painted concrete block. Its north-facing façade is clad in dark red brick with a cornice of modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam material. The façade includes a recessed bay with a single glass door at its east end, flanked by a one-part, rectangular storefront window.

This building was built in 1950 as a storefront addition to a frame house located next door (4429 West Vernor, not extant). It originally housed the Wagatha Printing Co. and was later reused as a restaurant and beauty salon. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by the establishment of Lupe's Barber Shop here in the 1990s.<sup>60</sup> Lupe's renovated the building in 2010 and added the large rear addition.

#### **4435 West Vernor Highway**

##### **Commercial Building; 1893; H.W. Raper 1 Contributing, 1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in white, beige, and yellow vinyl siding. Its north-facing façade includes two enclosed, three-sided bays with hipped roofs on its second story. Its first story includes a centered entrance door flanked on both sides by four-part storefront windows with aluminum frames, set on stone bulkheads.

This commercial building was built in 1893 by builder H.W. Raper.<sup>61</sup> It was combined into a single building by Gamble Plumbing & Heating in 1974.

##### **Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a flat roof and parapet walls is located behind and south of this commercial building. It is clad in concrete block. The garage is considered noncontributing to the district.

#### **4430-4440 West Vernor Highway**

##### **Commercial Building; 1928**

##### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. Its side and rear elevations are clad in red brick. Its south-facing façade is organized into four bays by five plain columns clad in white marble panels. All four bays include different arrangements of storefront walls, including modern windows with aluminum frames, set on concrete and wood bulkheads. There are two recessed entryways.

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<sup>60</sup> Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs, *Hispanic Resource Directory* (Lansing, MI: Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs, 1995), 26.

<sup>61</sup> "Building Permits," *Detroit Free Press*, March 19, 1893.

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A one-story commercial building has stood on this site continuously since 1907. Its original façade, which included infilled storefront walls attributable to Latinx-owned businesses, was extensively altered in 2017. These alterations, completed after the district's period of significance, compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's cultural themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

#### **4442-4452 West Vernor Highway**

##### **Commercial Building; 1911**

##### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in brown brick with stone accents. Its south-facing façade is symmetrically organized with mirrored, three-sided bay windows on its second story. Both bay windows include hipped roofs and stone sills below centered eight-over-one, wood double-hung windows, flanked on both sides by six-over-one, wood double-hung windows. Sets of two six-over-one, wood double-hung windows are located east and west of each bay. A white-painted, cast iron, ornamental cornice spans the building's façade above the second story windows. An ornamental brick parapet wall with sloping wing walls is centered above the cornice. The façade's first story has been largely infilled by blue-painted, vertically oriented wood panels. Three-part, prism glass transom windows are located above both infilled storefronts.

This commercial building was built in 1911. It maintained two retail storefronts with upstairs apartments throughout the twentieth century. For a brief time around 1963, one of the apartments was occupied by Rev. Raymond Agular of the Spanish-speaking Spanish Bible Church.<sup>62</sup> It is unclear if this church had a standalone building, or if Rev. Agular conducted services in his unit.

#### **4454-4458 West Vernor Highway**

##### **Commercial Building; 1919**

##### **1 Contributing, 1 Noncontributing Building**

This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in red-orange brick with stone accents. Its south-facing façade is symmetrically organized around a centered set of two brick pilasters that frame a doorway on the first story and a single, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung window on the second story. Sets of three, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows are located east and west of the centered pilasters on the façade's second story. The façade's first story includes two retail storefronts. The eastern storefront is currently being remodeled with a modern infill wall clad in light red brick. The western storefront has been infilled with beige brick and includes a centered entrance door, topped by a brick arch, framed on the east and west by one-part arched windows. The doors and windows are covered by an iron accordion security screen.

This building was completed in 1919 and originally housed a dry goods store. A grocery store named Polo's Market, which sold Mexican food items, occupied the storefront at 4454 West Vernor between the late 1950s and early 1980s. The Latinx community's continued growth after the district's period of significance is evidenced by the establishment of several Latinx-owned

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<sup>62</sup> Hiley H. Ward, "Little Nicky Finds God," *Detroit Free Press*, February 25, 1963.

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businesses here between the 1980s and 1990s, including The Florida, a Cuban restaurant opened by Cuban native Olympia Garcia at 4458 West Vernor.<sup>63</sup>

**Garage; n.d.**

A one-story, rectangular-plan garage with a hipped roof is located behind and north of this commercial building. It is clad in vinyl siding. The garage is considered noncontributing to the district.

**4460-4466 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1911**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its second story is clad in orange brick. Its south-facing, primary façade is symmetrically organized with mirrored, three-sided bay windows at the east and west ends of its second story. Two sets of two, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows, surrounded by brick quoins, are located between them. The first story of the façade has been largely infilled with grey-painted brick. Three single metal doors are irregularly spaced between a four-part ribbon window, on the east, and a two-part ribbon window on the west. The building also has a secondary, west-facing façade that fronts McKinstry Street. Its first story storefront sections have been infilled by concrete block and painted with a colorful mural. The secondary façade's second story includes two bay windows and four, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows that match those on the primary façade.

This commercial building, completed in 1911, housed a variety of retail tenants throughout the twentieth century. Among them was a recording studio owned by Mexican musician, performer, and radio host Olivia Galan. She recorded several Spanish-language records here during an unclear period the 1960s.<sup>64</sup> In 1973 the City of Detroit established a "Neighborhood City Hall" in its Galan's former studio (4460 West Vernor). These neighborhood service centers were opened throughout Detroit under Mayor Roman Gibbs and offered "an array of services," including help with voter registration and tax forms.<sup>65</sup> This office also offered translation services for Latinx residents. The service center moved to 4450 West Vernor in 1980, then back to this building's corner storefront (4466 West Vernor) in 1990. It operated until at least 1994.

**4465 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1937, 2019**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in dark red brick. Its north-facing elevation includes a modern storefront window with aluminum frames. A modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam cornice wraps the building's façade and east- and west-facing elevations. This building was built in 1937 as a gas station and auto repair shop. It was extensively remodeled in 2013 and expanded with a large addition in

<sup>63</sup> Jeremy Iggers, "Cuban Restaurants Add New Flavor to Mexican Village," *Detroit Free Press*, September 9, 1987.

<sup>64</sup> "Galan," Discogs, accessed November 20, 2025, <https://www.discogs.com/label/261975-Galan>.

<sup>65</sup> "City Services Close to Home," *Detroit Free Press*, February 19, 1987.

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2019. These alterations, completed after the district's period of significance, compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's significant themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

### **4600-4602 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1898**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a generally rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in beige and white-painted brick. A one-story, shed roof addition, clad in concrete block, extends the width of the building's north-facing rear elevation. A circular turret, also with a flat roof, is located at the second story's southeast corner and overhangs an angled corner bay below. A white-painted, denticulated cast iron cornice wraps the building's southeast corner and across its south-facing façade and east-facing side elevation. A smaller wood cornice is located above the façade's first-story storefront and includes original brackets and dentil detailing and is painted red, white, and blue. The building's main entrance is located within a three-sided bay below the wood cornice's rounded eastern end, at the northwest corner of West Vernor Avenue and McKinstry Street. It includes a glass door framed by one-part storefront windows and a three-part transom window with aluminum frames. A cast iron column with a Corinthian capital supports the turret and cornice above.

The building's south-facing façade includes an eight-part storefront window with aluminum frames, set on a brick bulkhead, on its first story. A transom panel that has been painted white with large lettering for "GUERO'S BARBER SHOP" spans the top of this window. A secondary, metal, single entrance door with two-part transom window is located at the west end of the façade's first story. Three, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows with ornamental arched hoods and brick keystones are irregularly spaced along the façade's second story. Three identical windows are evenly spaced along the second-story turret's curved wall. The building's east-facing side elevation, along McKinstry Street, includes five openings with plain brick arches on its second story. The first (southernmost) includes three, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows. Two northern openings include single, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows, and two others have been infilled with vinyl siding. This elevation's first story includes a six-part storefront window with aluminum frames at its southern end. Several small, closed window openings with plain brick arches are irregularly spaced along the first story north of this storefront window. The building's northeast corner appears to have originally contained a porch that has since been closed by walls clad in beige vinyl siding.

This Victorian-style commercial building was built in 1898 and originally housed a saloon on its first story. Its upstairs apartment housed Latinx residents as far back as the 1940s, including Texans Elisio and Minnie Herrera. During the 1970s, Caribe's Food Market, operated by Miguel Diaz, sold Cuban and Latinx-related foods from the first-story storefront.

### **4601 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1949**

#### **1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is clad in grey-painted concrete block and brick. The building is located at the back of its lot. A tall chain-link fence encloses a concrete parking lot between West Vernor Highway and the building's north-

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facing façade, which includes a roll-up garage door and a single pedestrian door. This building was originally built as an addition to a store located near the front of its parcel, which has since been razed. Several alterations have compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's cultural themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

**4607 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 2008**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is clad in red brick with stone accents. This building is considered a noncontributing resource because it was constructed outside the historic district's period of significance.

**4616-4618 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1915, 1979**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls over its primary section (1915). It is clad in white- and grey-painted brick. A one-story addition with a rectangular plan and shed roof (1979) extends the full width of the primary section's north-facing rear elevation. It is clad in grey-painted concrete block. The first-story storefront on the building's south-facing façade has been infilled by a grey-painted concrete wall, a seven-part ribbon window with an aluminum frame, and white vinyl siding. The store's main entrance is located at the south end of the building's east-facing side elevation and faces a parking lot. A second entrance door is located at the western end of the façade's first story. The façade's second story includes a set of three, nine-over-nine, vinyl double-hung windows at its eastern end, and a single, nine-over-nine, vinyl double-hung window to the west. The corbeled stone support for an original bay window remains below the set of three modern windows. The façade's parapet wall has a segmented castellated design and decorative brick work. The building's east-facing side elevation includes several second-story window openings including a three-part bay window, also with replacement vinyl windows that match those on the facade.

This commercial building was completed in 1915. It housed several businesses, including a restaurant and a church, during the twentieth century.

**4621 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1950, 1953**

**1 Contributing Building**

This one-story building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily clad in painted concrete block. Its north-facing façade is clad in red brick with stone coping above its parapet wall. A four-part storefront window with an aluminum frame, set on a concrete block bulkhead, is framed to the west by a single glass door and one-part transom window. This commercial building was built in 1950 and expanded in 1953. It housed several businesses during the twentieth century.

**4624 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1922, 1968; E.C. Thurlin**

**1 Contributing Building**

The oldest, eastern section of this one-story commercial building (1922) has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is primarily constructed of concrete block. A one-story addition (1968), also with a rectangular plan and flat roof, covers most of the

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original building's west-facing side elevation. It is also constructed of concrete block. The building's south-facing façade has two sections that correspond to its construction dates. The façade's older, eastern portion is clad in variegated brown brick with limestone accents. It is symmetrically organized and defined by two arched portals with scrolled keystones set between two sets of two pilasters with stone bases, framed by vertically oriented stone trim. Two large, rectangular storefront openings are set between the arched façade openings. They are framed by a similar pilaster, in the middle; brick bulkheads, below; and raised parapet walls with decorative brickwork above. Two smaller, rectangular openings are located east and west of the arched openings and are topped by lower parapet walls. All openings have been filled with painted concrete block. A rectangular-plan addition to the south elevation is faced in concrete block and lacks any openings. The blocks in this addition feature an elevated center triangle, which provides a textured detail to the wall surface.

This building's oldest (eastern) portion was built in 1922 by contractor E.C. Thulin.<sup>66</sup> It originally served as a public market owned by the Dix Avenue Market Company, which was organized in March 1922 by Robert L. Theisen, James B. Layes, and Angelo Gordo.<sup>67</sup> The Dix Avenue Market hosted an array of small meat and grocery vendors during the early twentieth century. For example, its tenants in 1953 included an Awrey's Bakery Outlet, Banner Market, butcher Martin Bonkovich, the Detroit Cheese Company, and seafood dealer Isadore Tonkin. The building was purchased by a trucking company in the 1960s. In 1968 a large eastern addition was built along the building's west-facing side elevation.

**4627-4645 West Vernor Highway, 1632-1650 Lansing Street**  
**Commercial Building; 2002**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story strip mall building has an irregular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in red brick, and includes a cornice made from modern, compressed and coated Styrofoam material. The building adjoins its parcel's eastern and southern property lines, behind an expansive parking lot. This building is noncontributing because it was constructed outside the historic district's period of significance.

**4644-4646 West Vernor Highway**  
**Commercial Building; 1936, 1949**

**1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. It is clad in concrete block. Its south-facing façade has been infilled by a concrete block wall. This building was completed in 1936, and a small rear addition was completed in 1949. In the 1960s, it was combined with the adjacent building at 4624 West Vernor. These alterations compromised the building's ability to convey the historic district's cultural themes and, thus, it is classified as a noncontributing resource.

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<sup>66</sup> BSEED, Building Permit #28223, April 1, 1922.

<sup>67</sup> "New Michigan Corporations," *Michigan Manufacturer and Financial Record* 29, no. 12 (March 25, 1922): 24.

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**4648-4650 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1900, 1990-1999**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls over its primary section (1900). It is clad in red-painted aluminum siding. A one-story addition (c.1990s), which also has a rectangular plan and flat roof, extends the full width of the building's north-facing rear elevation. The addition is clad in red-painted concrete block. The building's south-facing façade is clad in modern red brick. It includes two single entrance doors and two one-part rectangular windows on its first story. A two-part, vinyl sliding window and a set of two, one-over-one, vinyl double-hung windows are located on its second story. Protruding signage for "Chicago's Pizza" is located between the second story windows.

This commercial building opened in 1900. The building is classified as a contributing resource because Latinx residents likely visited the businesses it housed as they settled the surrounding neighborhood between the 1940s and 1970s. The community's continued growth after this district's period of significance is evidenced by the establishment of Chicago's Pizza here in the mid-1990s, which resulted in the building's façade being rebuilt. Mexican immigrant Cirilo Amézquita worked in various Detroit pizza shops before starting Chicago's Pizza, which has now been active at this location for nearly thirty years.<sup>68</sup>

**4654 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1924**

**1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof with parapet walls. Its south-facing façade is clad in orange brick with stone accents, and includes a set of five, one-over-one, wood double-hung windows on its second story. A small limestone cornice spans the width of the façade above the second story. The façade's first-story storefront, which is framed by two orange brick pilasters, has been infilled with mid-century cast stonework and gold-colored Roman brick. A recessed entrance bay, covered by a wrought iron gate, is located at its eastern end. A single, one-part rectangular window is located west of the entrance bay. The building's west-facing, red-brick side elevation, which was originally obscured by a neighboring building, is now painted with a colorful mural. A three-sided, recessed bay located near the middle of this elevation's second story has been infilled with concrete block.

This commercial building was built in 1924. The building is classified as a contributing resource because Latinx residents likely visited the businesses it housed as they settled the surrounding neighborhood between the 1940s and 1970s.

**4730 West Vernor Highway**

**Commercial Building; 1948**

**1 Contributing, 1 Noncontributing Building**

This one-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad in red-painted concrete block. The building's south-facing façade is clad in porcelain enameled steel panels, which have also been painted red. Its main entrance is a centered glass door, surrounded by a one-part side lite to the east and a two-part transom window

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<sup>68</sup> Cirilo Amézquita, "Chicago's Pizza en la Vernor pone el sabor Mexicano en sus Pizzas," *Latinos en Michigan TV*, video interview, September 24, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoJsAyhzaJQ>.

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above, all with aluminum frames. The opening is covered by a decorative wrought iron grille and screen door. A two-part storefront window adjoins the entry on the east and a three-part storefront window adjoins the entry on the west. Both have modern aluminum frames and are set on bulkheads clad with painted porcelain enameled steel panels. A black vinyl awning covers the windows and main entrance.

This small commercial building was built in 1948. It originally housed a jewelry store owned by Henry Migdal, which operated here through the 1970s. The building is classified as a contributing resource because Latinx residents likely visited Migdal's business as they settled the surrounding neighborhood between the 1940s and 1970s.

### **Shed; 2020**

An un-sided storage shed is located behind the commercial building at 4730 West Vernor. It is considered noncontributing because it was constructed outside the historic district's period of significance.

### **4736-4738 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; 1907**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This two-story commercial building has a rectangular plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. It is primarily clad in faux brick tarpaper siding that has been painted blue. Several patches of this siding have fallen from the building's west-facing side elevation and revealed original wood clapboard siding beneath. The building's first-story storefront has been infilled by red-painted vertical wood siding. Two doorways and narrow rectangular window openings are boarded closed. A hipped-roof awning clad in blue-painted shingles spans the width of the façade above the storefront. Two window openings on the second story have also been boarded.

This commercial building was likely built in 1907 and housed multiple businesses, including a grocer, until the 1950s. Between the late 1950s and about 1984, Nolan's Bar occupied the main floor. The building is classified as a contributing resource because Latinx residents likely visited these businesses as they settled the surrounding neighborhood between the 1940s and 1970s.

### **4746-4748 West Vernor Highway**

#### **Commercial Building; c.1921**

#### **1 Contributing Building**

This one-story building has an L-shaped plan and a flat, membrane-clad roof. The exterior is clad in painted brick and concrete block. The building's south-facing façade includes two doorways that originally corresponded to two retail units. The eastern unit includes a single steel entry door and a rectangular window that is obscured by steel security bars and mesh. The western unit has a steel entry door with a glass and aluminum entry door behind it. A window identical to that of the one on the eastern retailer's side is west of this second entry door. Both windows are adorned by round brick arches, above, and brick sills below. A colorful mural is painted on the building's west-facing side elevation.

A frame office was built on this site for the Charles F. Roberts coal yard in 1900. It is unclear if it survives within the current building at 4746-4748 West Vernor, but the earliest building permit tied to this property, filed in 1923, notes an addition to a "present store." It was later expanded

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several times. Around 1950, this building housed a restaurant named Pancho Chili House, operated by John and Sarah David. Sarah, a Texas native with no Latinx ancestry, may have opened the restaurant to serve Mexican-style foods familiar in the American southwest. The building was renovated to house a health center in 1968 and later divided into two businesses.

### *Summary of District Integrity*

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District encompasses a roughly one-and-one-quarter mile-long stretch of two east-west commercial thoroughfares that front Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway through Southwest Detroit. Although the eastern and western portions of this noncontiguous district are separated subterranean expressways, both portions remain united through their historic significance as an important place in the Latinx experience in Detroit. The resources of both portions embody the development of Southwest Detroit and the Latinx community, and the disruption in visual continuity does not limit the significance of either portion of the district in conveying the significance of the overall district.

The district, collectively, retains the overall urban planning characteristics common among early twentieth century cities, including original street patterns, and building spacing and setbacks. The introduction of modern streetscape materials, such as asphalt paving and modern street signage, has not compromised the known existence of historic materials used for similar purposes.

The buildings along Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway in both portions of the district formed the backdrop for the experiences of Detroit's Latinx community between 1920 and 1975, and that have continued into the twenty-first century. Many of the district's buildings retain all seven aspects of traditional historic integrity in terms of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association, in that their current appearances reflect the design intentions and uses of their original builders, designers, and occupants. Many more buildings were altered between the 1940s and 1970s as their ownership or uses transitioned to serve Detroit's Latinx community as it grew and moved westward down Bagley and West Vernor. These buildings were also determined to retain all seven aspects of historic integrity if their alterations or combinations reflected or enabled their reuse by a Latinx-owned or -oriented business within the district's period of significance. In some examples, such as the Mexican Village Restaurant building at 2600 Bagley Street, these modifications reflected the cultural and architectural values of Latinx entrepreneurs and their customers. In others, such as the first La Michoacana tortilla factory building at 3357 Bagley, the addition of aluminum siding and infill of storefront windows with concrete block walls reflect both aesthetic improvements that Latinx users undertook when confronted with limited finances as well as functional modifications that allowed the building's reuse by a different business or industry. Both buildings in these examples were determined to retain several aspects of integrity, but most importantly integrity in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association with the district's cultural and historic themes.

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District experienced a wide array of changes during the twentieth century, including the loss of buildings due to abandonment, fire, and redevelopment. Some business owners demolished buildings along both Bagley Street and West Vernor

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Highway to build parking lots beside their functioning businesses, illustrating their successful adaptation to the advent of automobile travel. Furthermore, the loss of potential historic resources within the district's boundaries has not compromised the ability of surviving resources to convey their cultural and historic themes. The most important historic sites within the district's boundaries survive. In instances where a building's demolition exposed the party walls of neighboring buildings, Latinx artists have since coopted these exposed walls as canvases on that they painted large and colorful murals representing cultural iconography. Other empty lots are now regularly used by Latinx entrepreneurs who operate fledgling restaurants from food trucks. These examples illustrate how Detroit's Latinx community has further adapted to and leveraged social and urban challenges including disinvestment to their benefit.

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District thus retains overall integrity in terms of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Moreover, the district remains an active commercial and culture-making center for Detroit's Latinx community. Current visitors to the district may experience the same everyday activities that were practiced within its period of significance, including shopping at Latinx stores, eating at Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican restaurants, dancing to salsa music in Latinx entertainment venues, and smelling the scent of fresh-baked tortillas each morning outside one of La Michoacana's many tortilla factories.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: HISPANIC  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
COMMERCE

**Period of Significance**

1920-1975

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Donaldson & Meier  
Stratton, William B.  
Scott, John  
Zaldokas, M.E.  
M. Scholes & Son  
F.R. Patterson Construction Co.  
Dayton & Goodman  
Henry S. Koppin Co.  
Thurlin, E.C.  
Killean & Robertshaw  
Giaver, Dinkelberg & Ellington  
Raper, H.W.  
Wilkinson, W.W.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Bagley-West Vernor Historic District is significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage, Social History, and Commerce for its unique and important associations with the development of Latinx history and culture in Detroit, Michigan. Latinx immigrants, primarily of Mexican and Mexican American heritage, began settling in Detroit around 1918.<sup>69</sup> They first established homes and businesses in the district's eastern portion, along Bagley Street and surrounding blocks, during the 1920s.<sup>70</sup> Latinx residents spread westward down Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway as automotive factories and related industries expanded in Southwest Detroit. Immigrants of Mexican and Mexican American heritage, who were among the first to settle here, lived among and blended with earlier waves of German, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Romanian immigrants.<sup>71</sup> The businesses and social service groups they established facilitated the immigration of more Latinx peoples, including Cubans and Puerto Ricans, beginning in the 1950s. Latinx peoples became Southwest Detroit's dominant ethnic group by the 1970s. Their presence in the Bagley and West Vernor area was solidified as entrepreneurs and activists established bakeries, grocery stores, restaurants, retail stores, and social service organizations that served their growing community. These establishments now reflect the social and entrepreneurial successes achieved by Detroit's Latinx community. The period of significance for this district begins in 1920 and ends in 1975, fifty years from the date of this nomination (2025). The historic themes and community building activities embodied in the Bagley-West Vernor Historic District continued shaping its development beyond its period of significance, and the district remains an important center for Detroit's Latinx community today.

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<sup>69</sup> Osvaldo Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan, interview by Katie Cook, Detroit, MI, June 7, 2023.

<sup>70</sup> Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletariats of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 64-65, 126-127.

<sup>71</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 126-127; Carlos Vasquez, "Carlos Vasquez video interview and biography," Digital Collections, Grand Valley State University, July 18, 2012, <https://digitalcollections.library.gvsu.edu/document/24633>.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Introductory note regarding the association of this nomination with the *Detroit's Latinx Communities Multiple Property Documentation Form***

In 2021 the City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board (HDAB) was awarded an Underrepresented Communities grant from the National Park Service to conduct a historic resources survey and prepare a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) and National Register of Historic Places nomination to identify, document, and designate places important in the Latinx experience in Detroit. The survey and MPDF were prepared by Cassandra Talley, Lillian Candela, and Katie Cook of Kraemer Design Group, LLC, for HDAB in 2023 in conjunction with this nomination. The MPDF describes local contexts related to the broad, national themes outlined in the 2013 National Park Service (NPS) Report *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*.<sup>72</sup> The NPS report identified four broad themes related to Latinx heritage around the country: Making a Nation, Making a Life, Making a Living, and Making a Democracy. It also identified several subthemes including Immigration, Religion, Labor, Business, And Education. The *Detroit's Latinx Communities* MPDF recognized people and places throughout the city of Detroit, in Wayne County, Michigan, that reflected these themes and subthemes at a local level. Because the majority of Detroit's Latinx community lives in Southwest Detroit near the boundaries of this historic district, many of the historic contexts and sites described therein are repeated in this nomination.

***Industrial Development in Southwest Detroit, Michigan***

The arrival of Latinx peoples in Detroit during the 1920s was influenced by many of the same developmental factors that attracted other migrant and immigrant groups between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The growth of Southwest Detroit as one of the city's industrial centers is an important component of the histories of the city as a whole and the specific areas encompassed by this historic district.

The city of Detroit was founded in what later became the state of Michigan by French explorer Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac in 1701.<sup>73</sup> Cadillac established a fort along the Detroit River primarily to secure trade routes with Native Americans, who traversed and settled in the current area of Southwest Detroit before and during Detroit's European settlement. Southeast Michigan was home to many Native American peoples including members of the Huron, Odawa, Potawatomi, and Wyandotte tribes.<sup>74</sup> These tribes built settlements and earthen burial mounds near the mouth of the Rouge River and inside the historic grounds of Fort Wayne.<sup>75</sup> Plains tribes, including the Sauk and Fox, also traversed a network of pathways to trade with French colonists

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<sup>72</sup> National Park Service, *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*, 2013, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/latinothemestudy.htm>.

<sup>73</sup> "Cadillac, Antoine de la Mothe," Detroit Historical Society, accessed March 26, 2025, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/cadillac-antoine-de-la-mothe>.

<sup>74</sup> Alice Bostick, *The Roots of Inkster* (Inkster, MI: City of Inkster Library and Historical Commission, 1980), 9.

<sup>75</sup> Paul Sewick, "The Mound Builders," DetroitUrbanism, accessed October 3, 2022, <http://detroiturbanism.blogspot.com/2015/12/the-mound-builders.html>.

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in Detroit and British colonists in Fort Maulden, Ontario, Canada.<sup>76</sup> The modern routes of Michigan and Jefferson Avenues through Southwest Detroit follow portions of these trails. For Native Americans and early European settlers, these trails represented the only means of crossing the otherwise swampy lowlands that bordered the Detroit and Rouge Rivers throughout what developed into Southwest Detroit.

Detroit's population grew rapidly from about 8,000 in 1820 to 32,000 by 1830.<sup>77</sup> It continued growing after Michigan gained statehood in 1837. Throughout this period, several roads were built to help settlers cross the fledgling city's outlying swamps. The first development efforts in Southwest Detroit included the improvement Jefferson Avenue, to the south, and Michigan Avenue, to the north, as "military roads" between about 1817 and 1830.<sup>78</sup> While these roads improved access to the city's center, much of their routes remained rural.

Commercial activities began spreading west from Detroit's city center between the 1840s and 1860s, and interstitial farms were subdivided and crossed by secondary roads to promote development. Baker Street, the original name for Bagley Avenue, was first laid westward from the intersection of Sixth Street and Michigan Avenue between 1855 and 1857.<sup>79</sup> Baker was extended several times and reached Twenty-Fourth Street by 1870. Sixty years passed before it was renamed in honor of Michigan Governor John J. Bagley around 1930.

The construction of railroad lines toward downtown Detroit spurred industrial development in the swampy lowlands southwest of 24th Street. The first, the state-sponsored Michigan Central Railway, was built parallel to Michigan Avenue in 1837.<sup>80</sup> Several other lines followed, and by the 1870s, these rail lines converged in rural Springwells Township, near the modern intersection of Livernois Avenue and West Vernor Highway. This crossing provided an ideal site for industrial growth.<sup>81</sup> Several factories including railroad car builders, tobacco and cigar makers, stove makers, and foundries developed here during the 1880s.<sup>82</sup> By 1890, historian Silas Farmer observed that this area was "destined to be a great manufacturing center."<sup>83</sup> His prediction

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<sup>76</sup> John H. Hauberg, *Indian Trails Centering at Black Hawk's Village* (repr., IL: Illinois State Historical Society, 1921), 4.

<sup>77</sup> "Boomtown Detroit (1820-1860)," Detroit Historical Society, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/timeline-detroit/boomtown-detroit-1820-1860>.

<sup>78</sup> Silas Farmer, *History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan*, 3rd Ed. (Detroit, MI: Silas Farmer & Co., 1890), 925-926.

<sup>79</sup> James Dale Johnston, *Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetteer for Michigan for 1855-1856* (Detroit, MI: R.F. Johnstone & Co., 1855), 240; Johnston, *Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetteer for Michigan for 1856-1857* (Detroit, MI: Henry Barns, 1856), 51.

<sup>80</sup> Richard R. Andrews, William H. Henning, and Jack E. Schramm, *When Eastern Michigan Rode the Rails, Book III* (Glendale, CA: Interurban Press, 1988), 10.

<sup>81</sup> Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 69, 183.

<sup>82</sup> Marilyn Florek, "West Vernor Highway Survey Area, Detroit, Michigan," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Cornerstone Building Co., Detroit, MI (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002), E3.

<sup>83</sup> Farmer, *History of Detroit*, 1369.

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proved correct during the early twentieth century, when steelmaking and shipbuilding companies were also established nearby.

Industrial development spurred increased immigration to Detroit. Though Springwells Township attracted German and Irish farmers as early as the 1830s, more German natives, plus Italians and Poles, arrived to pursue industrial jobs between the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>84</sup> Neighborhoods were built near factories to house these workers and their families. To promote further development, the areas that now compose Southwest Detroit were annexed by the city in three portions, in 1857, 1885, and 1906.<sup>85</sup> Dix Road, a formerly rural thoroughfare that stretched southwest into Springwells Township, was simultaneously improved. An early streetcar line, the Baker Street Line, began service in 1873 along Baker Street and Dix.<sup>86</sup>

Industrial activities expanded again to accommodate increased automobile production during the 1920s. By this time, Southwest Detroit's land area was largely developed, so employers established new factories just outside city limits. Between 1917 and 1928, Ford Motor Company erected their sprawling River Rouge factory complex in neighboring Dearborn, Michigan. In 1929, the Great Lakes Steel Corporation also opened a large steel plant along the Detroit River in Ecorse, Michigan. These employers attracted new waves of immigrants to Southwest Detroit, including people of Latinx heritage. Their proximity to Southwest Detroit influenced Latinx settlement there and in their own cities; for example, Ecorse also developed a large Latinx population during the twentieth century.<sup>87</sup>

These newer, outlying industrial sites initially relied on workers who commuted from the city's older, central neighborhoods. As these workers increasingly used automobiles for transportation, the need to efficiently move commuters through Southwest Detroit became acute.<sup>88</sup> In 1919, the Detroit City Plan Commission recommended that Dix Road be expanded and straightened into a crosstown highway between downtown Detroit and its western city limits near Ford's River Rouge plant.<sup>89</sup> Its construction required the widening of existing streets and the condemnation of approximately four hundred properties throughout the late 1920s.<sup>90</sup> In 1926, Dix was renamed West Vernor Highway, and soon became Southwest Detroit's primary commercial thoroughfare.

Opinions on the transformation of West Vernor Highway varied. Some owners of commercial property along the highway complained when their taxes were raised to exorbitant rates. Others considered the road a "back alley" that failed to alleviate crosstown traffic as promised, and

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<sup>84</sup> Florek, "West Vernor Highway Survey Area."

<sup>85</sup> Board of County Auditors, *Manual, County of Wayne, Michigan, 1926* (Detroit, MI: 1926), 244-245; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 146-148.

<sup>86</sup> Florek, E5.

<sup>87</sup> David A. Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 13.

<sup>88</sup> Florek, E7.

<sup>89</sup> Florek, E4-E5; "Commission Plans East, West Street," *Detroit Free Press*, September 28, 1919.

<sup>90</sup> Florek, E7; "Crosstown Route Named for Vernor," *Detroit Free Press*, July 1, 1925; "Condemned Houses Ordered Torn Down," *Detroit Free Press*, July 28, 1926.

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resulted in decreased rental opportunities for commercial establishments along the route.<sup>91</sup> The construction of West Vernor Highway prompted some property owners of European heritage to leave the area, which may have provided opportunities for new immigrant groups, including Latinx immigrants, to purchase properties throughout Southwest Detroit.

### ***Mexican and Mexican American Settlement in Detroit***

Mexican immigrants and Mexican American migrants were the first Latinx people to settle in Michigan in notable numbers. The 1900 United States Census reported that fifty-six Mexicans lived in the state.<sup>92</sup> Their numbers increased between 1910 and 1920, when sugar beet farmers in northern Michigan recruited Mexican contract labor.<sup>93</sup> Some of the first Mexican immigrants who arrived in Detroit had moved from northern Michigan where they had first settled on sugar beet farms during the 1910s.

Railroad companies also recruited Mexican laborers to Detroit during World War I. The Michigan Central Railroad housed *traqueros* (railroad workers) and their families in bunk cars, the equivalent of dormitories on wheels, near places where railroad work was being conducted along their main line through Southwest Detroit.<sup>94</sup> The 1920 Census recorded sixty-eight people born in Mexico and children born to Mexican parents living in bunk cars near Livernois Avenue.<sup>95</sup> Men in the camp held jobs laying track and performing “shovel labor,” while women also found employment as camp housekeepers.

Public works entities and construction companies also hired Mexican and Mexican American men in and around railroad jobs. All these jobs tended to be physically demanding and short in duration.<sup>96</sup> Thus, after they arrived in Detroit, many *traqueros* sought alternative employment in Southwest Detroit factories. The burgeoning automobile industry attracted more immigrants from Mexico and migrant agricultural laborers from Michigan’s sugar beet farms. Many farms dismissed Mexican laborers in the spring of 1920 due to a post-World War I economic downturn.

Initially, Mexican immigrants and migrants dispersed throughout the city. Because they occupied the lowest income levels of Detroit society, Mexicans tended to reoccupy the houses that older ethnic groups left as they achieved economic mobility during the same period.<sup>97</sup> Such housing was amply available in near-downtown neighborhoods such as Black Bottom, a “port of entry” for many immigrant groups, which was once centered near the intersection of Lafayette and St.

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<sup>91</sup> Clifford A. Prevost, “Will Settle Widening Proposal on Tuesday,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1930.

<sup>92</sup> Rudolph Valier Alvarado and Sonya Yvette Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 13.

<sup>93</sup> Vargas, “Armies in the Fields,” 52-53.

<sup>94</sup> Murillo, 17.

<sup>95</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920*, population schedule, sheets 21B-23B, enumeration district 0418, ward 14, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan.

<sup>96</sup> Humphrey, 916-918.

<sup>97</sup> Florek, E16.

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Antoine Streets east of downtown. Groups of Mexicans also settled along Grand River Avenue northwest of downtown, including on Abbott, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Streets.<sup>98</sup> The Brunswick Hotel, formerly located at Grand River and Cass Avenues, housed many single, male, Mexican laborers in this period.<sup>99</sup> In 1926 a *Detroit News* article noted that Mexican immigrants were scattered throughout Detroit “in such small groups that there is no real colony.”<sup>100</sup>

Another group of Mexican and Mexican American residents congregated at the eastern end of Detroit’s Corktown neighborhood during the 1920s. This area was located immediately west of downtown and was generally bounded by Michigan Avenue, Cass Avenue, Fort Street, and 14th Street.<sup>101</sup> Corktown’s historically Irish population moved north and west during this period, which left older housing for newer immigrants. The eastern Corktown area attracted larger numbers of Latinx residents in the late 1920s as Ford’s Rouge plant in Dearborn reached full production capacity. Ford Motor Company developed a reputation as a “fair employer” for Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and Corktown provided affordable housing along the Baker Street streetcar line and the eastern terminus of West Vernor Highway, which eased commutes to Dearborn.<sup>102</sup>

It is difficult to approximate the size and growth of Detroit’s Mexican and Mexican American populations during the 1920s. The United States Census recorded 712 Mexican-born residents in Detroit in 1920.<sup>103</sup> This increased to 6,515 residents in 1930 census.<sup>104</sup> However, other historic sources believed Detroit’s Mexican community was much larger. A *Detroit Sunday News* article estimated that some four thousand Mexicans lived in Detroit in 1920, and Ignacio L. Batiza, leader of the Mexican Consulate office established in Detroit the same year, later claimed that as many as fifty thousand Mexicans and Mexican Americans lived in Detroit before the Great Depression.<sup>105</sup> Because many Mexican immigrants followed circular migration patterns, and may have resided with family members for short periods at a time, they may have been omitted from the federal census counts. Others who immigrated illegally purposely avoided government polling.<sup>106</sup> These estimates, however, make it clear that Detroit’s Mexican and Mexican American populations swelled during the 1920s in accordance with increased employment opportunities.

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<sup>98</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 13-15.

<sup>99</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 67-68, 125.

<sup>100</sup> A.M. Smith, “20,000 Mexicans Find Michigan Land of Opportunity,” *Detroit News*, August 1, 1926.

<sup>101</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 65, 125-126.

<sup>102</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 20-21.

<sup>103</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920*, population summary for Michigan, Table 6, 33, <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v20-25ch1.pdf>.

<sup>104</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Fifteenth Census of the United States 1930*, population summary for Michigan, Table 17, 1152, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-3/10612963v3p1ch09.pdf>.

<sup>105</sup> Rodriguez, 98; James L. Devlin, “A Little Bit of Old Mexico Right Here in Detroit,” *Detroit Sunday News*, September 5, 1920; Humphrey, “Migration and Settlement,” 360-361.

<sup>106</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 15.

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Between 1931 and 1932, Michigan's Mexican and Mexican American communities were subjected to forced and incentivized repatriation campaigns. The Great Depression's stifled labor market fueled fears that immigrant and minority workers took much needed jobs away from American citizens, and political groups and individuals seized the opportunity to remove Mexican residents.<sup>107</sup> Repatriation occurred in many Michigan cities, including Adrian, Blissfield, Grand Rapids, Pontiac, Port Huron, and Saginaw.<sup>108</sup> In Detroit, the United States Department of Immigration worked with organizations like the *Liga de Obrero U Campasinos Mexicanos* (League of Mexican Workers and Peasants) and community leaders (including Mexican Consul Batiza and Mexican artist Diego Rivera) to organize repatriation efforts.<sup>109</sup> Ultimately, the campaign failed to meet its goal of removing five thousand people, and only between 1,200 and 1,400 residents were actually repatriated.<sup>110</sup> Other factors, however, including the extreme difficulty of securing work during the Great Depression, enticement by the Mexican government, and discrimination that targeted Mexican workers, led more families to leave the United States voluntarily. Batiza later estimated that around forty-two thousand of the estimated fifty thousand Mexican people in Detroit left the city by 1932.<sup>111</sup> The remainder stayed in Detroit and worked odd jobs to make ends meet until employment prospects improved.<sup>112</sup>

Those who stayed helped those who left return to Detroit as economic conditions improved in the late 1930s. Returning immigrants settled in Corktown again, fixing the neighborhood as a center for Latinx settlement in Detroit. This area contained a thorough mix of "low grade aliens" including Chinese, Maltese, and Mexican immigrants in 1939.<sup>113</sup> During the Depression, Corktown religious establishments including Holy Trinity Church and the Sainte Anne Parish (both located outside district boundaries) continued bilingual charity work and held Spanish-language services for Detroit's remaining Mexican community.<sup>114</sup> Father Clement Kern, the priest at Most Holy Trinity Church from 1943 through 1977, later became a key figure amongst Latinx Detroiters.<sup>115</sup> He organized English language classes, sought to prevent exploitation of temporary and migrant workers, and worked with the League of Catholic Women to organize Casa María, a social work agency for Latinx immigrants, in 1944.<sup>116</sup> The work of these religious establishments helped Latinx peoples settle permanently in Corktown between the 1930s and 1950s.

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<sup>107</sup> Murillo, 122-126, 169; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 169; Florek E15.

<sup>108</sup> Murillo, 156-158, 176.

<sup>109</sup> Florek E16; Murillo, 110.

<sup>110</sup> Murillo, 160.

<sup>111</sup> Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360.

<sup>112</sup> Murillo, 111.

<sup>113</sup> Federal Home Loan Bank Board and Home Owners' Loan Corporation, *Residential Security Map* (Detroit, MI: Hearne Brothers, 1939), "Mapping Inequality," University of Richmond, Richmond, VA, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/map/MI/Detroit>.

<sup>114</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 35-36.

<sup>115</sup> Badillo, 20.

<sup>116</sup> Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, x; Badillo, 20.

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During World War II, Mexicans and Mexican Americans continued to return seeking defense industry positions. By 1951, Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American communities had rebounded to at least twenty-seven thousand residents, most of whom lived in the Corktown area "from W. Fort Street to Michigan Ave., between 12th [Street] and Trumbull Avenue."<sup>117</sup>

Although, like earlier groups, these immigrants maintained cultural and familial ties to Mexico, widespread job opportunities following World War II encouraged many to settle in Detroit permanently. Others stayed because their children assimilated into American society.<sup>118</sup> The community's growth during the 1940s and 1950s thus cemented Corktown's earlier role as an ethnic enclave and led to the establishment of many Latinx-specific businesses along Bagley Street during this period.

### *Changes and Growth in Detroit's Latinx Community*

Detroit's Latinx community grew and evolved between the 1950s and 1990s. Its historically Mexican and Mexican American population diversified with increased immigration from other Latinx sovereignties, including Cuba and Puerto Rico. Increased population numbers, combined with the effects of urban renewal activities, also caused Latinx enclaves to expand westward along Bagley and West Vernor Highway, further into Southwest Detroit.<sup>119</sup>

Although people of Mexican heritage comprised the vast majority of Detroit's Latinx community between the 1920s and 1940s, immigrants from other Spanish-speaking areas also arrived in the early twentieth century. A December 1926 celebration for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (a significant religious holiday in Latinx nations) was reportedly attended by "Spaniards, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Central and South Americans."<sup>120</sup>

Charles C. Benjamin, a native of Panama, became one of Detroit's first prominent Spanish-speaking attorneys by aiding the repatriation campaign of 1931-1932.<sup>121</sup> Other, non-Latinx, Spanish-speaking peoples also comingled with Latinx residents. A 1951 study found that around five thousand Spaniards, or "people whose parents came directly from Spain," lived in Southwest Detroit near Junction Avenue in the 1940s.<sup>122</sup>

In 1972 community historian Osvaldo Rivera interviewed three Puerto Rican elders who claimed to have settled in Black Bottom between 1918 and the early 1920s.<sup>123</sup> They belonged to a wave

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<sup>117</sup> Wayne [State] University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, "Ethnic Groups in Detroit: 1951" (Detroit, MI: June 1951), 43.

<sup>118</sup> Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 102-103.

<sup>119</sup> Florek, E16.

<sup>120</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 145-146.

<sup>121</sup> R. L. Polk and Co., *Polk's Detroit City Directory: 1931-32* (Detroit, MI: R. L. Polk and Co., 1931), 329, Legal C; World War II Draft Registration Card, "Charles Clement Benjamin," Michigan, U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, Ancestry.com; Patricia Edmonds, "Ex-Attorney Guarded Rights of Hispanics," *Detroit Free Press*, April 16, 1985.

<sup>122</sup> Wayne [State] University, "Ethnic Groups in Detroit: 1951," 70.

<sup>123</sup> Osvaldo Rivera, "The First Puerto Rican Community in Detroit (1918)," *E1 Central Hispanic News*, January 30, 2020.

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of Puerto Ricans who moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, and then fanned out across the country shortly after the island became a United States territory. The elders, Juan Santos, Carlos Rivera and Eugene Rivera, believed about a hundred Puerto Ricans lived in Black Bottom, although scholarly works have estimated that fifty-nine lived in Detroit in 1920.<sup>124</sup> This group's ancestral ties were blurred as they intermarried with African Americans between the 1920s and 1940s. In 1965, Ines Mendoza de Munoz Marin, First Lady of Puerto Rican Governor Luis Munoz Marin, visited Detroit to find that its early Puerto Rican community had dispersed "rather than staying within their own group."<sup>125</sup>

Puerto Ricans also lived among Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Corktown area. One of Detroit's oldest Spanish-speaking Baptist congregations, *Primera Misi3n Bautista Mexicana* (First Mexican Baptist Mission), was led by Puerto Rican Reverend Florenzio M. Santiago starting in 1935.<sup>126</sup> Originally based on 25th Street near Michigan Avenue, this church, now named the First Latin American Baptist Church, still operates outside district boundaries. Detroit's Puerto Rican population grew further as Michigan farm workers migrated toward industrial jobs in the early 1950s. By the 1970s, around ten thousand Puerto Ricans lived in Southwest Detroit among other Latinx groups.<sup>127</sup>

Starting in the late 1950s, several thousand Cuban refugees fled to the United States following the Cuban Revolution. Supported through resettlement programs operated by the federal government, Cubans from largely white-collar backgrounds including "doctors, lawyers, teachers, [and] businessmen" were placed throughout the country.<sup>128</sup> Around six hundred Cubans arrived in Michigan via charity-funded flights by 1963.<sup>129</sup> They settled into existing Latinx neighborhoods in Southwest Detroit, which by this time included a broad array of Spanish-speaking businesses and social and religious groups. Though many Cubans immigrated to flee Fidel Castro's regime, Detroit's Cuban community held varied beliefs. A 1959 gathering of around three hundred people at Hispanos Unidos Hall (the former Lithuanian Hall located at 3564-3470 West Vernor Highway) celebrated Batista's defeat alongside representatives of the 26th of July Movement, a revolutionary organization associated with Castro's political party.<sup>130</sup>

Urban renewal activities in eastern Corktown, and freeway construction in the Bagley commercial corridor, forced Detroit's older Latinx communities to move west in the 1950s (see

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<sup>124</sup> Victor Vázquez-Hernández and Carmen Teresa Whalen, eds., *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2005), 24.

<sup>125</sup> Pauline Sterling, "A Visitor Marvels Over Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, November 23, 1965.

<sup>126</sup> United States Census Bureau, *Seventeenth Census of the United States 1950*, population schedule, sheet 10, enumeration district 85-1031, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, Ancestry.com; "New Mexican Pastor Is Here," *Detroit Free Press*, July 13, 1935; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 148.

<sup>127</sup> Vázquez-Hernández and Whalen, *The Puerto Rican Diaspora*, 32-33.

<sup>128</sup> Drew Pearson, "People-to-People," *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1961.

<sup>129</sup> Warren Stromberg, "Weather's Hard to Take, but Cubans Warm to City," *Detroit Free Press*, January 8, 1963.

<sup>130</sup> John Mueller, "Detroit Cubans Rejoice at Rally," *Detroit Free Press*, January 12, 1959.

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“Urban Renewal and Freeway Construction in the Bagley/West Vernor Corridors”). West Vernor Highway began transitioning into a predominately Latinx business district, though this did not occur overnight. Latinx residents initially mingled with older German, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Romanian populations throughout the 1940s to 1960s.<sup>131</sup> Members of these ethnic groups even intermarried, which created an increasingly diverse population.<sup>132</sup>

Slowly, Latinx businesses moved into spaces between existing, non-Latinx-owned stores along West Vernor. Some organizations and buildings were sold to Latinx buyers; for example, the former Lithuanian Hall at 3564-3470 West Vernor Highway was reorganized as Hispanos Unidos Hall in the 1940s. Other institutions, such as St. Anthony’s Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church (3553 West Vernor Highway), began serving Latinx residents alongside existing Lithuanian constituents through social service programs.

Starting in the 1950s, some Latinx residents followed older ethnic groups into suburban cities including Allen Park, Ecorse, Lincoln Park, and Melvindale.<sup>133</sup> Some of this migration was spurred by urban renewal, which prompted business owners to establish new restaurants and stores in the suburbs.<sup>134</sup> Other movement was prompted by the closure of industrial plants in Detroit and the availability of working-class jobs in these downriver cities. Today, Allen Park, Ecorse, Lincoln Park, and Melvindale all contain large Latinx communities.

However, rapid growth in Detroit’s Latinx population during the late twentieth century ensured that the Bagley and West Vernor commercial districts remained viable, and account for the community’s continued spread throughout Southwest Detroit. Detroit’s Mexican population was estimated at thirty-two thousand people during the 1960s.<sup>135</sup> In 1980, when the Census first categorized many Spanish-speaking groups as “Hispanic,” Wayne County’s Latinx population was counted at over forty-six thousand people, a majority of whom resided in Southwest Detroit.<sup>136</sup> Hispanics became one of Michigan’s “fastest growing” minority groups during the 1990s, when Wayne County added over fifty-five thousand Spanish-speaking peoples for a combined Latinx population of nearly one hundred thousand.

Several factors attracted Latinx peoples to Southwest Detroit. First, real estate values began to fall after Detroit’s 1967 Uprising. As white residents moved to suburbs during the 1970s, the homes and businesses they left became affordable for working-class newcomers.<sup>137</sup> Second, local activists staved off further urban renewal and redevelopment plans during the 1980s and 1990s, and preserved the neighborhood’s remaining Latinx businesses and organizations.<sup>138</sup> Authors and historians Rudolph and Sonya Alvarado later attributed the fact that “most of these newcomers

<sup>131</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 126-127; Vasquez, “video interview.”

<sup>132</sup> Rodriguez, 44.

<sup>133</sup> Wayne [State] University, “Ethnic Groups in Detroit: 1951,” 43.

<sup>134</sup> Rodriguez, 8.

<sup>135</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 39.

<sup>136</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 52.

<sup>137</sup> Luz María Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration: Engendering Transnational Ties* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010), 47-48.

<sup>138</sup> Rodriguez, 8-9.

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settled in Southwest Detroit” to the “network of stores, churches with bilingual Masses, and support services” that developed there.<sup>139</sup> Thus, the Bagley and West Vernor corridors provided a transitional space for newly arrived Latinx immigrants, as well as business and real estate opportunities that allowed them to permanently settle in Southwest Detroit.

### ***Early Latinx Entrepreneurship in Detroit***

Many of the businesses and social service organizations that facilitated the explosive growth in Southwest Detroit’s Latinx community during the 1990s were established throughout the twentieth century in the Bagley and West Vernor commercial corridors. Their growth reflected the enduring presence and purchasing power that Detroit’s Latinx community attained by the mid-twentieth century.<sup>140</sup> They also reflected the familial bonds and support that older immigrants lent to newer groups to help them gain a foothold in the United States.

Many of Detroit’s first Latinx businesses, founded between the 1920s and 1930s, only operated for short periods due to fluctuations in Detroit’s Mexican and Mexican American populations.<sup>141</sup> Business owners were affected by regular seasonal fluctuations as residents oscillated between agricultural employment during the spring and summer months and industrial employment during the winter. Later, the Great Depression and Detroit’s repatriation movement made it difficult to operate stores, eateries, and bakeries that were dependent on the continued presence of Mexican and Mexican American residents.

Still, early Mexican and Mexican American entrepreneurs started short-lived businesses throughout the city. A November 1929 issue of *Prensa Libre*, one of Detroit’s first Spanish language newspapers, contained advertisements for 27 businesses of various types.<sup>142</sup> Near Ford Motor Company’s Highland Park plant, El Buen Gusto Restaurant and Everybody’s Pool Hall served factory workers during the early 1920s.<sup>143</sup> On Detroit’s east side, restaurants, bakeries, barbershops, pool halls, tailoring businesses, and boardinghouses were located along East Congress Street. As evidence of their temporary nature, many of these operated out of their owners’ apartments, flats, and boardinghouses.<sup>144</sup>

The origins of these businesses in apartments and homes also illustrates their dependence on familial ties. Latinx residents largely financed commercial endeavors with loans from family and friends, as traditional lenders often turned away immigrants.<sup>145</sup> Other businesses depended on free familial labor to get started. The involvement of children in business pursuits, especially that of the oldest son or daughter, often guaranteed their survival as children more quickly acculturated, learned English and American business skills, and later inherited restaurants and

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<sup>139</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 54.

<sup>140</sup> Lara, “Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes,” 141, 144.

<sup>141</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 139.

<sup>142</sup> Murillo, 40.

<sup>143</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 142.

<sup>144</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 140.

<sup>145</sup> Lara, 142.

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stores from their parents.<sup>146</sup> These trends were reflected in Cuban, Mexican, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican-owned businesses throughout the twentieth century, and continue to shape Latinx-owned businesses today.

Already strained by regular population fluctuations, most of Detroit's early Latinx businesses closed permanently in the 1930s due to the Great Depression and repatriation movements.<sup>147</sup> Some survived in the eastern Corktown neighborhood thanks to the continued presence of Latinx peoples and help from local churches. As Latinx populations returned and grew anew between the 1930s and 1950s, they reestablished a permanent commercial corridor along Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway, which significantly aided the community's later growth.

### *Latinx Foodways in the Bagley/West Vernor Corridors*

Access to culturally specific foods was of paramount importance to Detroit's early immigrants. With such small populations, who generally lacked the resources required to build large cultural and social establishments, Latinx-owned grocery stores and restaurants served as hubs where members of varying Latinx identities could "meet, find their favorite Latin foods and feel like a part of the community."<sup>148</sup> Thus, bakeries, grocery stores, and restaurants were among the first and most important businesses that Latinx residents established in Detroit.

Grocers in particular fulfilled the "strong demand for basic ingredients to make real Mexican food" of recent arrivals.<sup>149</sup> Even in the 1920s, grocery stores like Surtidora Grocery (location unknown) carried "over 190 different medicinal herbs for home use in addition to many varieties of dry chili, metates, stone mortars and pestles, sugar cane, pork rinds, black beans, and many other food items from Latin America."<sup>150</sup> Though Latinx residents also purchased fresh vegetables and meats at public markets such as Western Market (Detroit's western counterpart to Eastern Market, razed in the 1960s), Latinx-specific grocers filled important gaps in these markets' cultural offerings.

Several Latinx-owned grocery stores were established along Bagley Street between the 1930s and 1950s. Among Detroit's earliest Mexican-owned grocers was La Paloma Market, established around 1933 by David Tenorio.<sup>151</sup> It was originally located at 3050 Bagley Street, within the current route of the I-75 expressway, but moved and combined three storefronts at 2610-2620 Bagley before 1954. Tenorio and later owner Juan Morales operated La Paloma for over forty years before its space was absorbed by Mexican Village Restaurant.

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<sup>146</sup> Murillo, 54-62.

<sup>147</sup> Murillo, 122.

<sup>148</sup> Alejandro Bodipo-Memba, "Bakeries Thrive, As Does Community," *Detroit Free Press*, October 1, 2002; Alejandro Bodipo-Memba, "Rising Fortunes," *Detroit Free Press*, October 1, 2002.

<sup>149</sup> Rodriguez, 7.

<sup>150</sup> Murillo, 39.

<sup>151</sup> Mary Ann Weston, "U.S. Looks into Bias Felt by City's Latin Americans," *Detroit Free Press*, March 29, 1971.

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The western movement of Latinx residents in the 1950s prompted one Mexican native, Geraldo Alfaro, to establish La Colmena market in 1956.<sup>152</sup> The Alfaro family operated La Colmena from their home (at 2512 Bagley Street, not extant) before moving into a converted house across the street at 2443 Bagley in 1958. La Colmena (Spanish for “the hive” or “the beehive”) is still operated by the Alfaros’ grandchildren as Honey Bee Market. In the 1960s, Alfaro also purchased an existing, non-Latinx grocery located at 3506 Bagley. “Honey Bee Market No. 2” then expanded westward into 3508 Bagley but ceased operating at this location before 1974.<sup>153</sup>

Several other groceries served Latinx residents in the Bagley and West Vernor commercial corridors between the 1940s and 1970s. Before culturally specific grocers opened, several non-Latinx grocers, like the Dix Avenue Market (a semi-public facility at 4624 West Vernor), served Latinx shoppers. Polo’s Market, a non-Latinx grocery operated by Ralph and Helen Polo (at 4454 West Vernor) began stocking Mexican-related food items in the 1950s as Latinx residents moved into surrounding blocks. At least one Cuban husband and wife team also owned a grocery store near Clark Park (location unknown) in the 1950s.<sup>154</sup>

*Tortillerias*, tortilla bakeries and factories, were also among the earliest food-related businesses that Mexican and Mexican Americans established in Detroit. When they first arrived in the 1920s, tortillas, a staple item of many Mexican dishes, were difficult to find. Mexican women thus gathered at the homes of families who owned wood burning stoves and baked supplies of tortillas that would feed many families for several days.<sup>155</sup>

Detroit’s first dedicated *tortilleria*, La Michoacana, was established in 1942 by Fernando Gutierrez, a native of Monterrey, Mexico.<sup>156</sup> It had two original locations at 1321 Trumbull Street and 3335 Bagley (neither is extant). The Gutierrez family lived in an apartment above the Bagley location, and hand-delivered tortillas to customers during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>157</sup> In 1960, Gutierrez purchased a former retail store at 3359 Bagley and converted it for use as a tortilla factory. Success led Gutierrez to expand La Michoacana with the purchase of another building at 3428 Bagley around 1968, and the construction of several additions to both locations between the 1970s and 1980s. La Michoacana operates today as one of Detroit’s largest and longest-running Latinx businesses.

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<sup>152</sup> Jennifer Dixon, “Honey Bee’s New Hive,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1998; Donnelly, “Mexican Food Industry’s Hot,” June 16, 2002.

<sup>153</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk’s Detroit West Side City Directory: 1965* (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk & Co., 1966), 571.

<sup>154</sup> Gordillo, 40.

<sup>155</sup> Murillo, 52.

<sup>156</sup> Brown, “Latin Entrepreneurs.”

<sup>157</sup> Courtenay Thompson, “Flat-out American,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 25, 1993; Santiago Esparza, “Tortilla Bakers Making a Lot of Bread,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 12, 1993; Donnelly, “Mexican Food,” June 16, 2002.

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Another prominent *tortilleria*, La Jalisciense, was established at 2634 Bagley Street by Damaso Abundis, a native of Jalisco, Mexico, in 1946.<sup>158</sup> Originally based in a single-family home, La Jalisciense operated for over sixty years. It expanded several times into the former commercial garage at 1720 St. Anne Street and into new buildings built at 2634 and 2650 Bagley Street. La Michoacana purchased the La Jalisciense business shortly after Raymond Abundis, Damasco's son, passed away in 2010.<sup>159</sup>

While *tortillerias* focused on making single components of Mexican dishes, other food-related businesses served as multi-functional bakeries, restaurants, and retailers. La Gloria Bakery, a now-staple Latinx business that supplies breads, desserts, and more to individual customers and surrounding restaurants, was founded by Manuel Zaragoza (also spelled "Jaragosa") around 1957.<sup>160</sup> It first operated from a storefront at 2663 Bagley before Zaragoza erected a standalone building at 3345 Bagley in 1958. According to the Gonzalez/Franco family, who purchased the bakery in 1981, La Gloria was named for Manuel Zaragoza's daughter, which emphasized the familial operations common among Latinx businesses.<sup>161</sup>

As soon as the ingredients for distinctive Latinx dishes were commercially available in Detroit in the early 1920s, enterprising individuals opened restaurants to share these dishes with fellow immigrants and the non-Latinx public. Several Mexican and Mexican American-owned restaurants opened in eastern Corktown between the 1920s and 1940s. Maria Elena Rodriguez noted that at least six restaurants were among this group: "Veracruz, on Bagley; Penjamo, on Michigan Avenue; Texas, on Clifford Street; Las Palmas, El Matador, and Mexican Village."<sup>162</sup> Most of these locations were outside this historic district's boundaries or are no longer extant, with the exception of Mexican Village, now one of Detroit's longest-running Latinx businesses.

According to Rodriguez, Carmen Casillas and her family were the first owners of Mexican Village, which they likely started in the late 1940s.<sup>163</sup> By 1951 their restaurant was at its current location of 2600 Bagley, and had become a popular destination for Detroiters and visitors, including Mexican actor Luis Aguilar, who was photographed with Casillas in 1953.<sup>164</sup> In 1959, Carmen's brother Trinidad Gutierrez sold Mexican Village to Fernando Gutierrez, founder of the

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<sup>158</sup> Rodriguez, 27; Evelyn S. Stewart and Dorian Hyshka, "Food is Exotic, Delicious in Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1957; Donnelly, "Mexican Food," June 16, 2002; Pauline Lubens, "Business Chugs Along, Plans for Revitalizing Aside," *Detroit Free Press*, December 22, 1994.

<sup>159</sup> Obituary for Raymond Abundis, *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 2010.

<sup>160</sup> Sommers and Casa de Unidad, 45; R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Detroit West Side City Directory: 1958* (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk & Co., 1959), 673.

<sup>161</sup> Juanita Franco, "Detroit's Beloved La Gloria Bakery Celebrates Hispanic Heritage and Traditions All year Long," September 21, 2023, <https://www.dawnfoods.com/insights/la-gloria-bakery-celebrates-hispanic-heritage-and-traditions-all-year-long>.

<sup>162</sup> Rodriguez, 8.

<sup>163</sup> Rodriguez, 30; "Mexican Shops to be Visited by AAUW," *Detroit Free Press*, April 27, 1951; "Mexican Village Restaurant," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, May 16, 1956.

<sup>164</sup> Rodriguez, 30.

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La Michoacana Tortilleria.<sup>165</sup> Gutierrez expanded the restaurant and combined multiple storefronts with Spanish Revival-style façade alterations in sections between 1964 and 1979. Mexican Village can now seat over 450 people.

Another enduring Mexican restaurant, Xochimilco, was founded as Latinx businesses moved west down Bagley in the 1950s. Heledoro Garza and his wife Yrena opened Xochimilco's first storefront at 3409 Bagley between 1956 and 1958.<sup>166</sup> The Garzas also opened a confectionary at 3401 Bagley. By the early 1970s, then-owner Sergia Dela-Garza (possibly a relative of the founding Garzas) combined the storefronts into a larger restaurant. Finally, around 1980, Texas native Rudy Morales and his wife, Sally, purchased Xochimilco and fostered its success as a Detroit staple restaurant and friendly rival to Mexican Village.<sup>167</sup>

The westward movement of Detroit's Latinx community is evidenced in the establishment of Armando's Mexican Restaurant at 4242 West Vernor Highway in 1972. Armando Galan, like many Mexicans and Mexican Americans, came north to Detroit from Texas in 1958 following high-wage jobs in Detroit factories.<sup>168</sup> Ten years later, he started a restaurant named Armando's Taco House at a small location outside the district. Like Mexican Village and Xochimilco, Galan later combined several storefronts to build the staple restaurant that stands today.

While restaurants like Armando's, Mexican Village, and Xochimilco served a wide array of Mexican staple meals, others started with specialized menus. Mexican native Maria Villarreal began making and selling *tamales*, a distinctive corn dough- and husk-wrapped dish, in the mid-1950s from her family's home just south of Bagley. She started the business primarily to support her family when her husband went on strike from his job at Great Lakes Steel.<sup>169</sup> Her business succeeded, and around 1963 Villarreal opened a storefront at 2661 Bagley Street. She expanded in 1978 by purchasing a standalone restaurant at 2669 West Vernor Highway which is still operated today by her daughter, Susana Villarreal-Garza.<sup>170</sup>

These notable establishments are just a few of the many food-related Latinx businesses that operated along Bagley and West Vernor between the 1920s and 1970s. Several restaurants and bars occupied smaller storefronts for shorter periods, including La Fiesta Restaurant (at 2661 Bagley) and John and Sarah David's Pancho Chili House (at 4746-4748 West Vernor). Other long-running bars and restaurants with non-Latinx owners were sold to Latinx individuals near the end of, and after, the district's period of significance. Among them is John's Bar, operated by

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<sup>165</sup> "Mexican Shops to be Visited by AAUW," *Detroit Free Press*, April 27, 1951; and "Police Hold Café Owner in Shooting," *Detroit Free Press*, April 12, 1957; Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs."

<sup>166</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Detroit West Side City Directory: 1958*, 1345.

<sup>167</sup> Molly Abraham, "Holy Jalapeno! It's the Battle of the Botana," *Detroit Free Press*, February 12, 1982; Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs."

<sup>168</sup> Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs."

<sup>169</sup> John Tanasychuk, "Tamales Heat Up December's Cold," *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1988; Tom Nicholson, "Great Lakes Steel Corp. And Union Schedule Talks Sunday," *Detroit Free Press*, December 23, 1959.

<sup>170</sup> David Rodriguez Muñoz, "Detroit's Tamaleria Nuevo Leon Has Been Serving Tamales for Over 60 Years," *Detroit Free Press*, March 24, 2023.

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John Zyren at 3535-3537 West Vernor Highway in the 1960s. It was purchased by Giovanna Rodriguez and renamed Giovanna's Lounge in 1973, which is still present as of 2025.<sup>171</sup>

### ***Other Latinx Businesses in the Bagley/West Vernor Corridors***

Bakeries, grocery stores, and restaurants in the Bagley and West Vernor corridors have long been anchors of the Latinx community in Southwest Detroit. Both corridors also contained, and continue to host, a wide array of Latinx businesses besides food establishments, however. Essential neighborhood businesses including barbers, doctors' offices, drug stores, hardware stores, law firms, salons, tax preparers, and more operated along Bagley and West Vernor Highway during the district's period of significance. Many were founded and run by non-Latinx owners but began serving Latinx individuals as they moved further into Southwest Detroit. . Others were started by Latinx entrepreneurs to serve their fellow immigrants in unique and culturally specific ways.

*Los Caballeros Catalicos* Credit Union, which was affiliated with a Spanish-speaking branch of the Knights of Columbus and operated at 3445 Bagley in 1965.<sup>172</sup> Medrano's Barber Shop, owned by Joseph M. Medrano, operated at 2669 Bagley between at least 1956 and 1965.<sup>173</sup> In 1960, Texas native Ynocencio Gutierrez built Gutierrez Service Station, a small commercial garage and gas station, at 2701 Bagley.<sup>174</sup> Also in the early 1960s, a partnership including Arturo Morales purchased the existing A&B Barber Shop, formerly located in a single storefront at 3504 Bagley, and expanded it eastward into the building's corner unit (3500 Bagley). It was resold to Armondo Foster and renamed the Mexican Barber Shop before 1974 and operated into the 1980s.<sup>175</sup>

Around 1972, Colombian immigrants Misael "Tony" Martinez and his brother, Joe, began building Spanish-inspired ornamental ironwork in a garage located at 4101 West Vernor. Tony Martinez formally established the Diseños Ornamental Iron studio in 1974. He used the neighboring home (at 4065 West Vernor) as a residence and office and, in the garage, crafted custom wrought iron columns, railings, signs, art, and more for residential and commercial clients throughout Southwest Detroit.<sup>176</sup> Diseños prospered and outgrew these quarters, and in 1987, relocated to the former Gutierrez Service Station at 2701 Bagley. Diseños expanded again in 2001, when it moved to a large factory outside the district, and is still in operation as of 2025.

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<sup>171</sup> Kelli B. Kavanaugh, "Mexicantown's largest outdoor patio debuts at Giovanna's Lounge," *Model D*, October 9, 2007.

<sup>172</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Directory: 1965*, 768.

<sup>173</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Detroit West Side City Directory: 1956* (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk & Co., 1956), 805; *Directory: 1965*, 856.

<sup>174</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Directory: 1965*, 499.

<sup>175</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Detroit West Side City Directory: 1973* (Taylor, MI: R.L. Polk & Co., 1973), 781.

<sup>176</sup> Yadira Lugo, Office Administrator, Artistic Diseños Inc., email communication, March 3, 2025.

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A notable Latinx retailer in the Bagley corridor was Roy's Jewelry Store. It was founded Mexican immigrant Rogelio Fuentes Ramon around 1956 at 2628 Bagley.<sup>177</sup> Ramon transitioned his business into Roy's Radio & TV in the early 1960s, and later Roy's Music Record Shop in the 1970s. Throughout these periods, Roy's stocked and sold Tejano and Spanish-language records as well as musical instruments.<sup>178</sup> Roy's building still serves the community today as Algo Especial Supermercado, founded by Raul and Martha Hernandez in 1980.

Music and dancing were (and are) important cultural and recreational activities for Detroit's Latinx community. Cultural dance groups, which feature dancers dressed in traditional clothing, still perform traditional Mexican dances at public events and major holiday celebrations throughout Southwest Detroit.<sup>179</sup> However, even in the 1920s, Mexicans and Mexican Americans also sought out informal and modern recreational dancing and frequented dance halls alongside Detroit's European immigrants.<sup>180</sup> Mariachi and salsa music were later performed at restaurants including Mexican Village and Xochimilco for the entertainment of diners, as well as at cultural and holiday parties held at such restaurants.

Many restaurants grew into specialized entertainment venues that hosted regular dances and musical events. Among the earliest were the El Patio Bar (at 3331 Bagley, not extant) and El Tenampa (at 3400 Bagley), both opened during the 1950s by the husband-and-wife team of Basilio and Olivia Galan. Basilio was born in Texas and Olivia was born in Mexico, and in Detroit, they shared an apartment above the El Patio Bar.<sup>181</sup> In 1957, El Tenampa was billed as "Detroit's only Latin-American nightclub," although El Patio continued operating under different ownership before the I-75 expressway was built.<sup>182</sup> El Tenampa regularly hosted Latinx musical groups that specialized in dance music.<sup>183</sup>

The Galans prospered and expanded their music business. By 1961 they had rebranded El Tenampa as the Las Vegas Bar, where Olivia became known for her hospitality and vocal performances.<sup>184</sup> The Galans also opened a separate recording studio in a small commercial unit

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<sup>177</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Detroit West Side City Directory: 1956*, 1026.

<sup>178</sup> Eric Guzman, "Tejano Music Legend Martin Solis to Receive Mexicantown's First Historic Marker," *El Central Hispanic News*, March 9, 2023; Sandra Bunnell, "Latino Detroit: Despite Problems There Is Pleasure and *Gran Historia* for Non-Turistas," *Detroit Free Press*, January 4, 1976.

<sup>179</sup> Sommers and Casa de Unidad, 87-88.

<sup>180</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 162-163.

<sup>181</sup> "Galan, Olivia," obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, March 8, 2002.

<sup>182</sup> "El Tenampa," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1957; R.L. Polk & Co., *Directory: 1965*, 380.

<sup>183</sup> Stewart and Hyshka, "Food is Exotic," September 22, 1957; "New Year's Shows Lining Up," *Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1956; "El Tenampa," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 6, 1956; "El Tenampa," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1956.

<sup>184</sup> "Las Vegas Club," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, August 5, 1961; "Gun Victims Hint Faction War Brews," *Detroit Free Press*, November 26, 1967; Bob Talbert, "Tired of Humdrum? Get Out, Get with It," *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1974; "'The Peace Forever' And 'The Hard Hat': What Gives?" *Detroit Free Press*, January 27, 1974.

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at 4460 West Vernor.<sup>185</sup> The Galan label released several Spanish-language records during the 1960s. Olivia Galan also became a radio host and broadcasted a Latin radio show on WQRS-FM on Sundays from the Las Vegas Bar for over forty years. The Galans operated the bar until at least 1976.<sup>186</sup>

Another notable restaurant and entertainment venue was El Sol (Spanish for “The Sun”), built between 1966 and 1967 by Cuban immigrant Angel Chacon. From the outset, El Sol was “not the place to go for tacos,” and instead served “sophisticated” food and hosted live bands on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.<sup>187</sup> It drew crowds from throughout Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, Canada, who enjoyed food, listened to live bands with Latinx musicians, and danced to salsa music.<sup>188</sup> Chacon operated El Sol until the late 1970s.

### ***Urban Renewal and Freeway Construction in the Bagley/West Vernor Corridors***

Many of these businesses, and the families who operated them, were impacted by urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 1960s. Some businesses closed, and others were forced to relocate. Those that survived, however, reaffirmed the Bagley and West Vernor corridors’ roles as business and social centers for Detroit’s Latinx community.

Detroit’s oldest Mexican and Mexican American groups began moving west from Corktown after much of the neighborhood was destroyed between 1958 and 1960. The West Side Industrial Redevelopment Project cleared a large area south of Bagley between the John C. Lodge Freeway and 12th Street for new industrial developments.<sup>189</sup> Though statistics vary, one source estimated that the project forced 412 “Mexican, Maltese, and Puerto Rican families” to relocate.<sup>190</sup>

Organizations hosted fundraisers to aid affected families. Some, like the “authentic Mexican ‘*jamacia*’” held at Corktown’s Most Holy Trinity Church in July 1957, embraced cultural traditions as a comforting gesture of continuity.<sup>191</sup> As Latinx residents resettled west of 16th Street, businesses followed. Xochimilco restaurant (3401-3409 Bagley) and La Colmena market (2443 Bagley) were established during this period. They filled cultural and economic voids left after historic Latinx sites outside district boundaries, including the popular Texas Restaurant and La Michoacana’s first *tortilleria* on Trumbull Avenue, were destroyed.

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<sup>185</sup> “Galan,” Discogs, accessed November 20, 2025, <https://www.discogs.com/label/261975-Galan>.

<sup>186</sup> Tom Schram, “Touring Detroit’s Joyfully Inharmonious Unmelting Pot of Ethnic Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 20, 1976.

<sup>187</sup> “Eat, Eat, Eat,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1970.

<sup>188</sup> Mike Duffy, “That’s Salsa, The Latin Soul Music,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1977; Sheldon Annis, “The Art of Living in Detroit,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1970.

<sup>189</sup> “Notice of Public Hearing,” *Detroit News*, May 29, 1957.

<sup>190</sup> William W. Lutz, “Corktown Bows Before Wrecker,” *Detroit News*, April 29, 1959; Jerome Aumente, “25 Businesses Up or Going Up in Area,” *Detroit News*, January 26, 1966.

<sup>191</sup> “Raise Corktown Fund,” *Detroit News*, July 29, 1957. The article states that *jamaica* was a Spanish word meaning “a bazar, festival, and carnival all in one package.”

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As soon as Latinx Detroiters reestablished their community near Bagley's western end, they confronted another destructive project. Planning to establish the route of the Fisher Freeway, now a portion of Interstate 75 (I-75), began in 1959. While a Wayne County Road Commission planning committee sought to "avoid dividing school districts and neighborhoods," the location of the Ambassador Bridge international crossing forced the road to turn northward near 22nd Street and bisect the Bagley commercial corridor.<sup>192</sup> Citing the importance of easing vehicular commutes into and out of Detroit, the Fisher Freeway project progressed rapidly. At least twenty-seven homes and commercial buildings facing Bagley Street, plus several blocks of homes between 21st and 23rd Streets, were razed between 1965 and 1966.<sup>193</sup>

The Fisher Freeway divided the Bagley commercial district into eastern and western portions. It also isolated what remained of Latinx neighborhoods east of 21st Street from growing Latinx areas west of 23rd Street. Author Maria Elena Rodriguez later recalled how the eastern area "felt like an island."<sup>194</sup> Churches east of I-75 immediately noticed a drop in attendance as Latinx parishioners began worshipping west of the freeway. A bicentennial anniversary booklet for Sainte Anne Parish lamented how the "freeways gouged deep into the life stream of the parish, [and forced] unwilling families out."<sup>195</sup>

Several Latinx-owned businesses were destroyed or displaced by I-75.<sup>196</sup> Basilio and Olivia Galan's El Patio Bar, formerly located at 3331 Bagley, and an adjoining Spanish-language movie house named the Alamo Theatre at 3327 Bagley, were razed. The original site of David Tenorio's La Paloma market, at 3050 Bagley, was also demolished. La Michoacana Tortilleria abandoned its storefront at 2805 Bagley when it was isolated east of the freeway. Aztec Cleaners, a dry-cleaning business formerly based at 3048 Bagley, similarly followed its clientele in moving further west to 3851 West Vernor Highway (extant but noncontributing).

Despite the destruction, Latinx business owners and residents remained committed to their neighborhood. Rumors of further urban renewal projects failed to deter long-time entrepreneurs like Alex Alfaro, son of La Colmena founder Geraldo Alfaro, who insisted he would "stay until they pull the neighborhood down."<sup>197</sup> Loyal customers continued to support businesses east of the freeway, including Mexican Village restaurant and Tamaleria Nuevo Leon.<sup>198</sup> Likewise,

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<sup>192</sup> Wayne County Road Commission, "Fisher Freeway Route Location Study," report, May 1961, 20.

<sup>193</sup> Demolition permits for buildings formerly located at 3008-3342 Bagley Street reviewed in-person at the City of Detroit, Department of Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department.

<sup>194</sup> Rodriguez, 67.

<sup>195</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 40.

<sup>196</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Polk's Detroit West Side City Directory: 1958*, Street and Avenue Guide, 61.

<sup>197</sup> Beverly Eckman, "Viva New Community: Mexican Life Grows Out W. Vernor Way," *Detroit News*, September 22, 1969.

<sup>198</sup> Rodriguez, 110.

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residents stranded east of I-75 made daily crossings to buy fresh tortillas at La Michoacana.<sup>199</sup> These residents' resilience led one 1972 reporter to note how "Bagley, with all the freeway disruption, is still the main street for southeast Michigan's Mexicans."<sup>200</sup>

Furthermore, urban renewal activities in Southwest Detroit coincided with a cultural and political awakening among Detroit's Latinx community. As the "radical 1960s" inspired people "from a variety of backgrounds" to take pride in their "heritage and culture," local activists founded an array of organizations to help newly arrived immigrants build lives in Detroit and promote broader public awareness of Latinx traditions.<sup>201</sup> Many soon realized that education and political involvement could prevent future destruction in their neighborhood, especially as Detroit's Latinx population continued to grow. The loss of Detroit's oldest Latinx neighborhoods prompted a variety of civic, political, and social service programs to mature in the last decades of the twentieth century.<sup>202</sup>

### ***Civic, Political, and Social Services in the Bagley/West Vernor Corridors***

Detroit's first Mexican and Mexican American residents founded several mutual aid and social service groups throughout the city in the 1920s.<sup>203</sup> Most did not reflect the sometimes discordant, individual interests of particular Latinx ethnicities, but instead supported various viewpoints on issues related to the broader community.<sup>204</sup> These cooperative methods of external representation were essential before the Great Depression, when even at their largest numbers, Detroit's Latinx population was still small compared to other ethnic groups.

These early social and political groups attained particular importance between the 1930s and 1950s. Some advocated for the rights and protection of Mexican and Mexican American immigrants during repatriation, while others provided financial and social assistance to Latinx residents who stayed in Detroit throughout the Great Depression. At least seventeen financial, social, and veterans' aid associations were based in the eastern Corktown neighborhood, primarily at the southern ends of Porter and 19th (now St. Anne) Streets, by 1951.<sup>205</sup>

By the 1950s, an array of groups began meeting further west in the Bagley and West Vernor corridors. The *Liga de Obreros y Campesinos* (League of Mexican Workers and Peasants) was an international political organization created in the 1930s with assistance from artist Diego Rivera.<sup>206</sup> Most of its members were industrial employees laid off during the Depression.

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<sup>199</sup> Louis Cook, "Street-Closing Is No Easy Decision," *Detroit Free Press*, June 15, 1977.

<sup>200</sup> James Harper, "90,000 Latins: Our Forgotten Minority," *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1972.

<sup>201</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 50.

<sup>202</sup> "Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development," Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development Records, 1969-1997, Box 1, Call No. 9816-Bd-2, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>203</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 67-70; Murillo, 32, 37.

<sup>204</sup> Miner, 655.

<sup>205</sup> Wayne [State] University, "Ethnic Groups in Detroit: 1951," 43.

<sup>206</sup> Murillo 143; Miner 653; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 178.

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Although headquartered outside district boundaries, members often met at, and managed the repatriation effort from, the Lithuanian Hall at 3564-3470 West Vernor Highway.<sup>207</sup>

The Hispanos Unidos Building/Lithuanian Hall was among the first and most important social service sites in the West Vernor corridor. Latinx residents used the building for a variety of community events and meetings alongside Lithuanian immigrants during the 1930s and 1940s. In 1944, it was purchased by the “Hispanos Unidos of Detroit Benevolent Society,” a political and social aid organization formed in the 1930s and led by Spaniard Nicasio R. Duran.<sup>208</sup> Though organized by Spanish Americans, Hispanos Unidos became an ambassador for many Latinx Detroiters between the 1940s and 1980s. Their building hosted cultural events on religious holidays, music performances, plays, and political rallies. Its first-story storefronts also served as incubators for later Latinx organizations, such as Casa de Unidad, which was founded in a Hispanos Unidos Building storefront in 1920 25th Street around 1980 before it moved into a former residence at 1920 Scotten Street.<sup>209</sup>

Other buildings in the Bagley and West Vernor corridors hosted community groups and meetings in their second-story apartments. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Latin American Labor Council of Michigan met above La Paloma Market at 2620 Bagley (now part of Mexican Village Restaurant). The council was founded by Raul “Roy” Flores, a Texas native, who became a noted local activist after he arrived in Detroit in 1937.<sup>210</sup> Flores helped establish the United Auto Workers’ Latin American Council after he was hired at Ford Motor Company, and in 1956, founded the Latin American Labor Council with help from Amado Gonzalez, a fellow Ford employee.<sup>211</sup> Flores and Gonzalez worked together to support Michigan’s autoworkers and migrant agricultural workers by sending representatives to factories and farms across the state. In the early 1960s, the Council founded a welcome center at 3423 Bagley. It was later razed by Xochimilco restaurant for parking.

Also during the 1960s, a nationwide Latinx civil rights movement was born from the combined efforts of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans to end discrimination against Latinx people and secure fair access to employment, housing, and political representation.<sup>212</sup> Simultaneously, the term “Chicano,” thought to have originated in the 1920s among immigrant laborers, gained wider usage among young, second-generation Mexican Americans, particularly those aligned with countercultural movements.<sup>213</sup> While the Chicano/a Civil Rights movement is

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<sup>207</sup> Vargas, *Proletariats*, 178.

<sup>208</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 51; “Spanish Americans Dedicate Building,” *Detroit News*, November 19, 1944.

<sup>209</sup> Osvaldo Rivera, “Ana Cardona: Her Days at Casa de Unidad and Beyond,” *El Central Hispanic News*, January 16, 2023.

<sup>210</sup> “Raul Ray Flores: Latino Community Came First with Him,” obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, May 19, 1982.

<sup>211</sup> “Detroiters Try Own Good Neighbor Policy,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1956.

<sup>212</sup> Stacey K. Sowards, *Si, Ella Puede! The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2019), 22.

<sup>213</sup> Mario T. García, “Introduction: The Chicano Movement, Chicano History, and the New American Narrative,” in *Rewriting the Chicano Movement: New Histories*

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largely associated with Mexican Americans, the movement was perpetuated by participation from many Latinx groups.<sup>214</sup>

The Chicano/a Civil Rights movement gained traction in Detroit alongside the Black Civil Rights movement, particularly after the city's 1967 Uprising. Newer Latinx activists, many of whom were young adults and students, called attention to the neglect, mistreatment, and discrimination faced by Latinx peoples. Throughout the 1960s, public demonstrations including marches and protests brought attention to the movement along the Bagley and West Vernor corridors. For example, in 1966, *Seglares en Acción* (Laymen in Action) organized an Easter Sunday march down Bagley Street in support of securing livable wages for Michigan's migrant farm workers. Around two hundred residents and members of the Mexican American Legion Post No. 505 (based outside of district boundaries) took part in the protest.

A direct outcome and one of the greatest achievements of the Chicano/a Civil Rights movement was a renewed sense of pride in Latinx cultures.<sup>215</sup> Accordingly, new organizations developed to increase political involvement among Latinx Detroiters and educate younger generations and the public about Latinx cultural traditions. In April 1969, Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development (LA SED) was formed with help from Latin Americans United for Political Action (LAUPA), federal funding, and a \$48,000 gift from the Archdiocese of Detroit.<sup>216</sup> LA SED was first based outside district boundaries before they bought and repurposed the former bank building at 4138 West Vernor in 1971.<sup>217</sup> Their offices helped residents with various services including "counseling, job placement, nutrition, and consumer programs and recreation."<sup>218</sup> Community historian Ray Lozano also remembered that, in 1975, due in large part to the practice of placing Spanish speaking children into special education classes, LA SED filed a lawsuit against Detroit's Board of Education.<sup>219</sup> Their actions resulted in more equitable educational facilities, courses, and programs for Latinx youth in Detroit Public Schools.

LA CASA, a partner organization established by the Latino Mental Health Task Force, was also based along West Vernor in the 1970s. LA CASA started in the Hispanos Unidos Building before it moved to the former Frank Mohr hardware store (at 4124 West Vernor) in 1976.<sup>220</sup> In 1991, LA CASA merged with another organization and moved outside district boundaries. Local activists also succeeded in securing Spanish-language and culturally specific services from the City of Detroit between the 1960s and 1970s. Spanish interpreters were provided to the Herbert

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*of Mexican American Activism in the Civil Rights Era*, ed. Mario T. García and Ellen McCracken (Bielefeld, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2021), 3.

<sup>214</sup> García, 6.

<sup>215</sup> García, 5-6; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, 24-25.

<sup>216</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 45-46.

<sup>217</sup> "Latin Americans For Social and Economic Development," Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development Records, 1969-1997, Box 1, Call No. 9816-Bd-2, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>218</sup> "Share Christmas with Less Fortunate," *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1976.

<sup>219</sup> Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown CDC, community elder, and historian, interview by Katie Cook, Detroit, MI, August 24, 2023.

<sup>220</sup> Rivera, interview.

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Bowen Branch of the Detroit Public Library (at 3648 West Vernor) as early as 1966.<sup>221</sup> By 1974, a revitalization effort rebranded the library as a *Biblioteca de la Gente* (Library of the People), introduced new Spanish-language books, films, and newspapers, and dramatically increased library usage among nearby Latinx residents.<sup>222</sup> Simultaneously, the city provided the neighborhood's eastern end with a new community center when they purchased and renovated the Davis Brothers' plumbing business at 2631 Bagley in 1966.<sup>223</sup> The new Bagley Neighborhood Service Center provided a gymnasium frequented by neighborhood children, a bilingual library, and interpretative services to elderly Latinx residents.<sup>224</sup> In the early 1980s, the center was expanded and renamed in honor of Puerto Rican professional baseball player Roberto Clemente (1934-1972).<sup>225</sup> The City of Detroit established a unique office that engaged with Latinx residents at 4460 West Vernor in 1973. The Southwest Detroit "Neighborhood City Hall" it was one of several service centers placed throughout the city under Mayor Roman Gibbs. The Southwest location offered "an array of services" to Spanish-speaking residents, including help with translations and filling out voter registration and tax forms.<sup>226</sup> The office moved to 4450 West Vernor in 1980, then back to 4466 West Vernor in 1990, before it closed in 1994.

### ***Continuing Themes after the Period of Significance (1920-1975)***

The private and public social service centers that served Latinx Detroiters between the 1920s and 1970s helped the Bagley and West Vernor commercial corridors survive the many socioeconomic challenges that plagued the city of Detroit in the latter half of the twentieth century. Collectively, these businesses and organizations facilitated increased Latinx migration and immigration to Southwest Detroit between the 1980s and 1990s. As Rudolph and Sonya Alvarado later noted, this geographically concentrated "network of stores... and support services," set within densely built historic neighborhoods, helped new generations of Latinx immigrants permanently establish themselves in Southwest Detroit.<sup>227</sup>

Many of the themes associated with Detroit's Latinx history in the Bagley and West Vernor corridors continued to develop after the end of this historic district's period of significance. New arrivals established even newer businesses and organizations between the late 1970s and early 2010s, by which point Latinx peoples comprised almost 60 percent of Southwest Detroit's population.<sup>228</sup> Their endeavors were supported by growing levels of economic and political organizing, which united entrepreneurs and residents and protected Southwest Detroit from

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<sup>221</sup> Warren Stromberg, "5,000 Oldsters Aid Drive for Medicare," *Detroit Free Press*, March 1, 1966.

<sup>222</sup> Judith Serrin, "It's Really a People's Library," *Detroit Free Press*, February 1, 1974.

<sup>223</sup> "TAP to Open 1st Recreation Center," *Detroit News*, April 26, 1966.

<sup>224</sup> John Askins, "The Poor? The Affluent? There's Really Only 'Us,'" *Detroit Free Press*, May 31, 1974.

<sup>225</sup> "Notice of Public Hearing: April 11, 1984," *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1984; "Roberto Clemente Center is Reopened in Detroit," *Detroit News*, May 16, 1985.

<sup>226</sup> "City Services Close to Home," *Detroit Free Press*, February 19, 1987.

<sup>227</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 54.

<sup>228</sup> Data Driven Detroit, "Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods Profile."

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further destruction due to urban renewal projects and redevelopment plans.<sup>229</sup>

In the 1980s, following the success of marketing and renewing Detroit's "Greektown" business district as an ethnic enclave and tourist destination, various interests began using the name "Mexicantown" to describe the Bagley and West Vernor commercial corridors.<sup>230</sup> Such colloquialisms as "the *barrio*," "*colonia*," "Mexican village," and "Mexican town" were sporadically used by journalists and outsiders to describe Detroit's Latinx neighborhoods since the 1920s; for example, a 1976 advertisement for Armondo's Taco House described it as being located "in the heart of Mexican town."<sup>231</sup> However, Maria Elena Rodriguez later traced the widespread embrace of the name "Mexicantown" to a series of wrought iron signs that Diseños Ornamental Iron installed in front of Latinx businesses along Bagley Street around 1984.<sup>232</sup> Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the City of Detroit Economic Development Department partnered with Latinx organizations to facilitate such streetscape enhancements and begin attracting new businesses, suburbanites, and tourists to the Bagley commercial corridor.

The Mexicantown Community Development Corporation (CDC) was founded by Maria Elena Rodriguez as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 1989.<sup>233</sup> Originally aimed at building "a strong coalition of interests" important to the Bagley corridor, they simultaneously increased patronage at local businesses by 65 percent before 1994. New restaurants and markets that served both Latinx locals and tourists were soon established. Mexican Village and Los Galanes restaurants were started in this period at 3362 Bagley and 3453-3457 Bagley, respectively. Los Galanes, opened in the spring of 1993 by Armando Galan, his wife Joyce, and his son, James, gained local popularity by hosting large parties in conjunction with city-wide holidays like Opening Day for the Detroit Tigers baseball team.<sup>234</sup>

Meanwhile, newly arrived Latinx entrepreneurs established more resident-oriented businesses in the West Vernor corridor between the 1980s and 1990s. They purchased and revitalized buildings left behind as West Vernor's remaining white residents moved out or passed away. These new businesses were as diverse as the Latinx community itself. For example, Caribe's Food Market, operated by Miguel Diaz, sold Cuban and other Latinx-related foods at 4600 West Vernor, next door to New San Juan Market, a Puerto Rican-owned grocery store, at 4616 West Vernor.<sup>235</sup> The Florida, a Cuban restaurant, was opened by Cuban Olympia Garcia in the mid-

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<sup>229</sup> Rodriguez, 8-9.

<sup>230</sup> Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs;" Chauncey Bailey, "All Together Works Best: Vernor-Springwells Folks Know how to Get the Job Done," *Detroit News*, March 10, 1985; Armand Gebert, "Luring Tourist Dollars: Ethnic Ties Enrich," *Detroit News*, April 10, 1985.

<sup>231</sup> "Armondo's Taco House," *Detroit Free Press*, June 20, 1976.

<sup>232</sup> Rodriguez, 11; Armand Gebert, "Fiesta Time as 'Mexican Town' Rises," *Detroit News*, January 31, 1985.

<sup>233</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 63.

<sup>234</sup> Molly Abraham, "Los Galanes Stakes Claim to Mexican Town Crowds," *Detroit Free Press*, February 5, 1993.

<sup>235</sup> R.L. Polk & Co., *Detroit West Side City Directory: 1973*, 173.

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1980s just two blocks away at 4458 West Vernor.<sup>236</sup> Other staple businesses including Lupe's Barber Shop (at 4433 West Vernor) offered haircuts to Latinx men, while food offerings broadened with the establishment of Chicago's Pizza (at 4650 West Vernor) by Mexican immigrant Cirilo Amézquita.<sup>237</sup>

Detroit's Latinx communities went without a local Spanish-language newspaper between 1961, when a short-lived paper named *El Heraldo* folded, and the early 1980s.<sup>238</sup> In 1988, however, entrepreneur Dolores Sanchez founded *El Central Hispanic News* in a storefront 4124 West Vernor. Sanchez published *El Central* to "inform Hispanic people... [and] promote and enhance the image of Hispanics and Hispanic-owned businesses" in Detroit.<sup>239</sup> *El Central* relocated to its current office at 4200 West Vernor in 2017.

Between the 1920s and 1970s, Latinx entrepreneurs often established businesses in their apartments and homes before purchasing permanent storefronts. Between the 1990s and early 2000s, this trend evolved to include mobile food carts and food trucks as viable stand-ins for brick-and-mortar restaurants. Food trucks are easier to finance and purchase than buildings, and by parking pop-up kitchens at outdoor events, entrepreneurs capture additional business from patrons that may pass their physical storefronts.<sup>240</sup> Food trucks have even activated and revived vacant sites along Bagley and West Vernor previously associated with lost historic resources. For example, the parking lot where the El Punto Alegre Social Club, operated by Puerto Rican husband and wife Fermi and Idi Colon, once stood at 4049 West Vernor, is now frequented by food trucks with outdoor tents and picnic tables.<sup>241</sup> In this manner, mobile food trucks and carts have become staple businesses and structures throughout the Bagley and West Vernor corridors.

As of 2025, Latinx peoples remain a large constituent population in the city of Detroit. Having now resided in the city for over a century, the Latinx community has made an indelible impact on Detroit history. It is important to recognize that the historic themes outlined in this nomination continued to develop past this historic district's period of significance in the late twentieth century and continue to develop in the early twenty-first century. Future research and analysis will determine how these recent people, places, and events contribute to Latinx history in Detroit and how they shape the Bagley and West Vernor commercial corridors.

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<sup>236</sup> Jeremy Iggers, "Cuban Restaurants Add New Flavor to Mexican Village," *Detroit Free Press*, September 9, 1987.

<sup>237</sup> Cirilo Amézquita, "Chicago's Pizza en la Vernor pone el sabor Mexicano en sus Pizzas," *Latinos en Michigan TV*, video interview, September 24, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoJsAyhzaJQ>; Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs, *Hispanic Resource Directory* (Lansing, MI: Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs, 1995), 26.

<sup>238</sup> Alvarado and Alvarado, 41.

<sup>239</sup> Jill Wurm, "WSU Now Home To 3-Year Run of Influential El Central Newspaper," *Today@Wayne*, May 16, 2019, <https://today.wayne.edu/news/2019/05/16/wsu-now-home-to-30-year-run-of-influential-el-central-newspaper-32090>.

<sup>240</sup> Gordillo, 7.

<sup>241</sup> Jeremy Iggers, "The Food Is Exotic and So Is the Journey," *Detroit Free Press*, July 8, 1981.

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**Interviews and Personal Communications**

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Rivera, Osvaldo. Activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member  
at WSU and University of Michigan. Interview by Katie Cook, Detroit, MI. June 7, 2023.

Rodriguez, Maria Elena. Author of *Detroit’s Mexicantown* and founding member of the  
Mexicantown CDC. Interview by Lillian Candela, Detroit, MI. June 27, 2023.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Historic Designation Advisory Board

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** ±51.0 (±14.4 acres east portion/±36.6 acres west portion)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.319192 | Longitude: -83.099800 |
| 2. Latitude: 42.317674 | Longitude: -83.098778 |
| 3. Latitude: 42.328646 | Longitude: -83.078053 |
| 4. Latitude: 42.325206 | Longitude: -83.076183 |

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**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Southwest Detroit Latinx Commercial District includes two noncontiguous sections. The eastern section, located east of Interstate 75, is defined by the following boundaries:

Beginning at a point, that point being the intersection of the centerlines of West Vernor Highway and 20th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of 20th Street to its intersection with a line, that line lying 31 feet north of and parallel to the boundary between lots 19 and 20 of Block 4 of Whitwood & Cargill's Subdivision (L.56 P.269 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between St. Anne Street and 20th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with a line, that line lying 30 feet north of and parallel to the boundary between lots 4 and 5 of Block 4 of said Whitwood & Cargill's Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of St. Anne Street; thence southerly along the centerline of St. Anne Street to its intersection with the boundary between lots 2 and 3 of Block 4 of said Whitwood & Cargill's Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between St. Anne Street and 20th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with a line, that line lying 30 feet north of and parallel to the boundary between lots 23 and 24 of Block 4 of said Whitwood & Cargill's Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line as extended to its intersection with a line, that line lying 21.92 feet west of and parallel to the eastern boundaries of lots 23 and 24 of Block 4 of said Whitwood & Cargill's Subdivision extended northerly and southerly; thence southerly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of Bagley Street; thence easterly along the centerline of Bagley Street to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between St. Anne Street and

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20th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the boundary between lots 14 and 15 of Block 3 of said Whitwood & Cargill's Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of St. Anne Street; thence northerly along the centerline of St. Anne Street to its intersection with a line, that line lying 56 feet south of and parallel to the northern boundaries of lots 37 and 38 of Ward's Subdivision (L.1 P.263 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said line as extended to its intersection with the boundary between lots 38 and 39 of said Ward's Subdivision extended northerly and southerly; thence southerly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the vacated east-west alley lying south of and parallel to Bagley Street; thence westerly along the centerline of said vacated alley to its intersection with the centerline of St. Anne Street; thence southerly along the centerline of St. Anne Street to its intersection with a line, that line lying 50 feet north of and parallel to the southern boundaries of lots 47 and 48 of said Ward's Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said line to its intersection with a line, that line lying 13 feet east of and parallel to the boundary between lots 47 and 48 of said Ward's Subdivision extended northerly and southerly; thence southerly along said line as extended to the centerline of Wing Place; thence easterly along the centerline of Wing Place to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between 18th Street and St. Anne Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the boundary between lots 184 and 191 of the Stanton Farm Subdivision of P.C. 473 (L.47 P.558-9 Deeds) extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of 18th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of 18th Street to its intersection with the boundary between lots 185 and 190 of said Stanton Farm Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between 17th Street and 18th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the boundary between lots 194 and 197 of said Stanton Farm Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of 17th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of 17th Street to its intersection with a line, that line lying 10 feet north of and parallel to the boundary between lots 179 and 180 of said Stanton Farm Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between 16th Street and 17th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Bagley Street; thence westerly along the centerline of Bagley Street to its intersection with the centerline of 18th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of 18th Street to its intersection with the centerline of Newark Street; thence northwesterly along the centerline of Newark Street to its intersection with the centerline of the vacated north-south alley lying north of West Vernor Highway and east of St. Anne Street; thence southerly along the centerline of said vacated alley to its intersection with a line, that line following the northern boundaries of lots 27 and 28 of Ward's Subdivision (L.1 P.213 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line as extended to its intersection with the boundary between lots 26 and 27 of said Ward's Subdivision extended northerly and southerly; thence southerly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of West Vernor Highway to the point of beginning.

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The district's western section, located west of I-75, is defined by the following boundaries:

Beginning at a point, that point being the intersection of the centerlines of West Vernor Highway and Ferdinand Street; thence easterly along the centerline of West Vernor Highway to its intersection with the centerline of Lansing Street; thence southerly along the centerline of Lansing Street to its intersection with the southern boundary of Lot A, Morses Subdivision (L.22 P.39 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence easterly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the north-south alley lying between Lansing Street and McKinstry Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying south of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of McKinstry Street; thence northerly along the centerline of McKinstry Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying south of and parallel to West Vernor Highway between McKinstry Street and Clark Avenue; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Clark Avenue; thence northerly along the centerline of Clark Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of West Vernor Highway; thence easterly along the centerline of West Vernor Highway to its intersection with the centerline of Scotten Street; thence southerly along the centerline of Scotten Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying south of and parallel to West Vernor Highway and north of Bagley Street; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Hubbard Street; thence southerly along the centerline of Hubbard Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying south of and parallel to West Vernor Highway and north of Bagley Street; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Vinewood Street; thence southerly along the centerline of Vinewood Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying south of West Vernor Highway and north of Bagley Street; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the boundary between lots 1 and 2 of H. M. Perrin's Subdivision (L.5 P.64 Plats) extended northerly and southerly; thence southerly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of Bagley Street; thence easterly along the centerline of Bagley Street to its intersection with the centerline of 24th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of 24th Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying south of and parallel to Bagley Street and north of Lambie Place; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of 23rd Street; thence southerly along the centerline of 23rd Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying between Bagley Street and Lambie Place; thence easterly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the West Fisher Freeway Service Drive; thence northerly along the centerline of the West Fisher Freeway Service Drive to its intersection with the centerline of West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of West Vernor Highway to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between the West Fisher Freeway Service Drive and 23rd Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the boundary between lots 102 and 103 of the Porter Farm Subdivision (L.1 P.25 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of 23rd Street; thence southerly along the

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centerline of 23rd Street to its intersection with a line, that line lying 20 feet north of and parallel to the boundary between lots 47 and 48 of the same Porter Farm Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line to its intersection with the north-south alley lying between 23rd Street and 24th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the east-west boundary between lots 29 and 30 of said Porter Farm Subdivision extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line to its intersection with the centerline of 24th Street; thence southerly along the centerline of 24th Street to its intersection with the northern boundary of lot 47 of Scotten & Lovett's Subdivision (L.1 P.203 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said boundary as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between 24th Street and 25th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of 25th Street; thence northerly along the centerline of 25th Street to its intersection with the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway between 25th Street and Hubbard Street; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Hubbard Street; thence northerly along the centerline of Hubbard Street to its intersection with a line lying 41 feet north of and parallel to the southern boundary of lot 44 of Hubbard's Subdivision (L.64 P.1 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between Hubbard Street and Palms Street; thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between Palms Street and Scotten Avenue extended southerly; thence southerly along the extended centerline of said alley to its intersection with an east-west line lying 109.5 feet north of and parallel to the southern boundary of lot 1 of Daniel Scotten's Subdivision (L.1 P.190 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of Scotten Street; thence northerly along the centerline of Scotten Street to its intersection with an east-west line lying 130 feet north of and parallel to the southern boundary of lot 5 of Scotten & Lovette's Subdivision (L.1 P.198 Plats) extended easterly and westerly; thence westerly along said line as extended to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between Scotten Street and Clarkdale Street; thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Clark Avenue; thence southerly along the centerline of Clark Avenue to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the north-south alley lying between Clark Avenue and McKinstry Street; thence northerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of McKinstry Street; thence northerly along the centerline of McKinstry Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to the point at which it

Bagley-West Vernor Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI  
County and State

turns southerly, thence southerly along the centerline of said alley to the point at which it turns westerly, thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Lansing Street; thence northerly along the centerline of Lansing Street to its intersection with the centerline of the east-west alley lying north of and parallel to West Vernor Highway between Lansing Street and Ferdinand Street; thence westerly along the centerline of said alley to its intersection with the centerline of Ferdinand Street; thence southerly along the centerline of Ferdinand Street to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Southwest Detroit Latinx Commercial District include historic resources located along Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway that embody the history and significance of Detroit's Latinx community. Its two noncontiguous portions reflect the historical development of the neighborhood during the period of significance, which was separated by a wide highway interchange between I-75, I-96 and the Ambassador Bridge international crossing into Canada. But for this intrusion, the district would remain united to the present (2025).

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Rebecca Binno Savage, Ian Tomashik, Angela Gallegos, and Aishlyn Hernandez  
organization: Detroit City Council Historic Designation Advisory Board  
street & number: 2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 218  
city or town: Detroit state: MI zip code: 48226  
e-mail: Ian.Tomashik@detroitmi.gov  
telephone: (313) 224-3847  
date: September 2025

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch maps** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Bagley-West Vernor Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI  
County and State

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: MI

Photographer: Ian Tomashik

Date Photographed: March 11-18, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0001)

Bagley Street commercial district (east of I-75) looking west from 18th Street.

2 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0002)

Historic resource at 2600 Bagley Street (Mexican Village Restaurant), looking northwest.

3 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0003)

Historic resource at 2443 Bagley Street (Honeybee Market), looking southeast.

4 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0004)

Historic resource at 2631 Bagley Street (Roberto Clemente Recreation Center), looking southeast.

5 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0005)

Bagley Street commercial district (east of I-75), looking northeast from St. Anne Street.

6 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0006)

Historic resource at 2661-2669 Bagley Street, looking southeast.

7 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0007)

Historic resource at 2701 Bagley Street (Diseños Ornamental Iron), looking southwest.

8 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0008)

Historic resource at 2728-2730 Bagley Street (Matrix Theater), looking northwest.

Bagley-West Vernor Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI  
County and State

- 9 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0009)  
St. Anne Street and noncontributing residences, looking north from Bagley Street.
- 10 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0010)  
Historic resource at 1720 St. Anne Street (utility garage), looking northeast.
- 11 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0011)  
18th Street and noncontributing residences, looking north from Bagley Street.
- 12 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0012)  
West Vernor Highway (east of I-75) looking southwest from Newark Street.
- 13 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0013)  
Historic resource at 2640 West Vernor Highway (El Sol), looking north.
- 14 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0014)  
Historic resource at 2669 West Vernor Highway (Tamaleria Nuevo Leon), looking southeast.
- 15 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0015)  
Historic resource at 1753 West Vernor Highway (Service Tire Co.), looking southeast.
- 16 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0016)  
Bagley Street commercial district (west of I-75) looking west from 23rd Street.
- 17 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0017)  
Historic resource at 3400 Bagley Street (El Tenampa, Las Vegas Bar and Taqueria El Rey), showing signage for former El Zocalo Restaurant, looking northwest.
- 18 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0018)  
Historic resources at 3345 Bagley Street (La Gloria Bakery) and 3353-3361 Bagley (one location of La Michoacana Tortilla Factory), looking southeast.
- 19 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0019)  
Historic resource at 3401-3409 Bagley Street (Xochimilco Restaurant), looking southwest.
- 20 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0020)  
Historic resource at 3434-3456 Bagley Street (Popo Market and Evie's Tamales), looking northwest.
- 21 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0021)  
Historic resource at 3428-3432 Bagley Street (one location of La Michoacana Tortilla Factory), looking northwest.

Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Wayne County, MI  
County and State

Name of Property

22 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0022)

Bagley Street commercial district (west of I-75) looking east from 24th Street.

23 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0023)

Historic resource at 3453-3457 Bagley Street (Mexican Village Restaurant), looking southeast.

24 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0024)

Noncontributing residences at 1729, 1737 and 1745 24th Street, looking northwest.

25 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0025)

Food trucks in parking lot along 23rd Street, looking west.

26 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0026)

West Vernor Highway commercial district (west of I-75) looking west from 24th Street.

27 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0027)

West Vernor Highway commercial district (west of I-75) looking east from 25th Street.

28 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0028)

Historic resource at 3564-3570 West Vernor Highway (Lithuanian Hall), looking northeast.

29 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0029)

Historic resource at 3553 West Vernor Highway (St. Anthony's Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church), looking southeast.

30 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0030)

Historic resource at 3648 West Vernor Highway (Herbert Bowen Branch , Detroit Public Library), looking northeast.

31 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0031)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from West Grand Boulevard.

32 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0032)

Historic resource at 1901 Vinewood Street (Vinewood Avenue Church of Christ), looking northwest.

33 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0033)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from Hubbard Street.

34 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0034)

Wrought iron fence produced by Diseños Ornamental Iron in front of historic resource at 4065-4101 West Vernor Highway, looking southwest.

Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Wayne County, MI  
County and State

Name of Property

35 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_LatinxCommercialDistrict\_035)

Historic resource at 4065-4101 West Vernor Highway (original location of Diseños Ornamental Iron), looking southeast.

36 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0036)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking east from Scotten Street.

37 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0037)

Historic resource at 4138 West Vernor Highway (LA SED), looking northeast.

38 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0038)

Historic resources at 4200-4208 and 4212-4222 West Vernor Highway, looking northwest.

39 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0039)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from Scotten Street. Clark Park (not in district boundaries) visible at left.

40 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0040)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking east from Clark Street. Clark Park (not in district boundaries) visible at right.

41 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0041)

Historic resource at 4242 West Vernor Highway (Armando's Mexican Restaurant), looking north.

42 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0042)

Historic resource at 4300-4304 West Vernor Highway (Mexicantown Bakery), looking northwest.

43 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0043)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from Clarkdale Street. Clark Park (not in district boundaries) visible at left.

44 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0044)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking east from Clark Street. Clark Park (not in district boundaries) visible at right.

45 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0045)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from Clark Street.

46 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0046)

Mural on east-facing side elevation of historic resource at 4424-4426 West Vernor Highway.

47 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0047)

West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from 4433 West Vernor Highway.

Bagley-West Vernor Historic District  
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI  
County and State

48 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0048)  
Historic resource at 4600-4602 West Vernor Highway (Guero's Barber Shop), looking northwest.

49 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0049)  
West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking west from McKinstry Street.

50 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0050)  
West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking northeast from Lansing Street.

51 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0051)  
Historic resources at 4648-4650 and 4654 West Vernor Highway (Chicago's Pizza and Mutiny Tiki Bar), looking north.

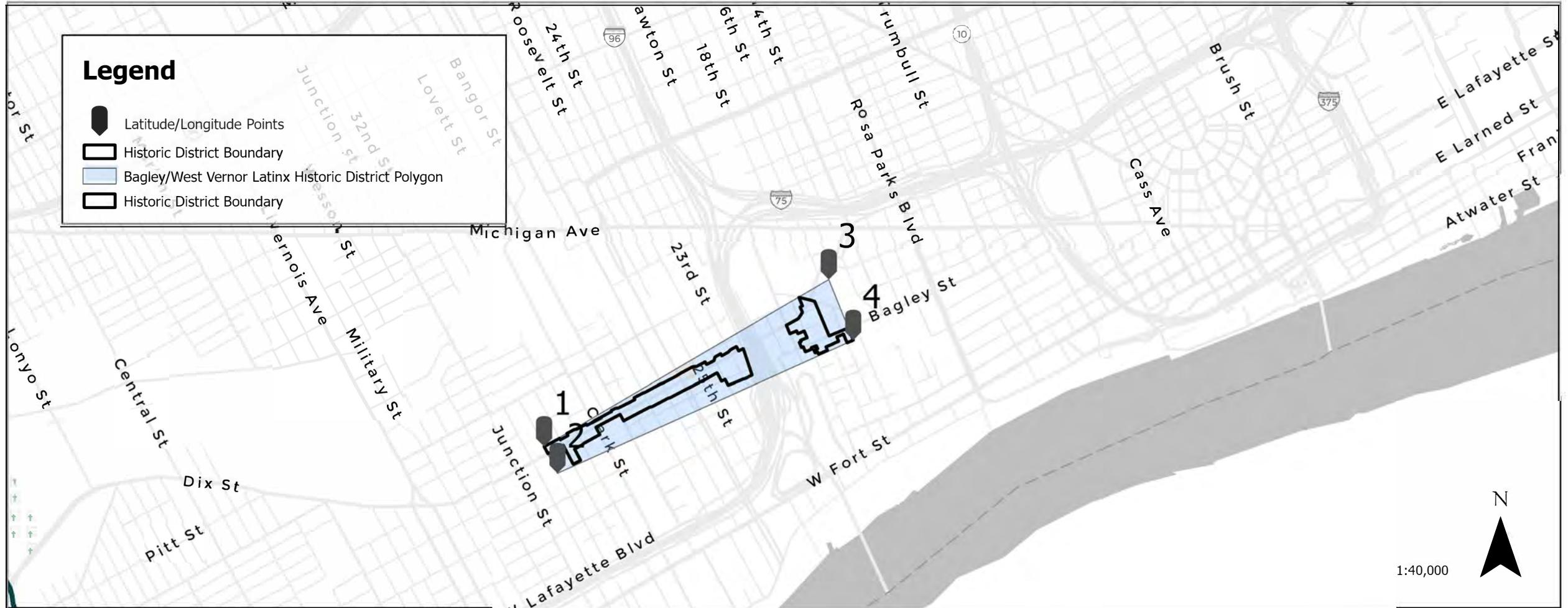
52 of 52 (MI\_Wayne\_Bagley-WVernorDistrict\_0052)  
West Vernor Highway commercial district, looking northeast from Ferdinand Street.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

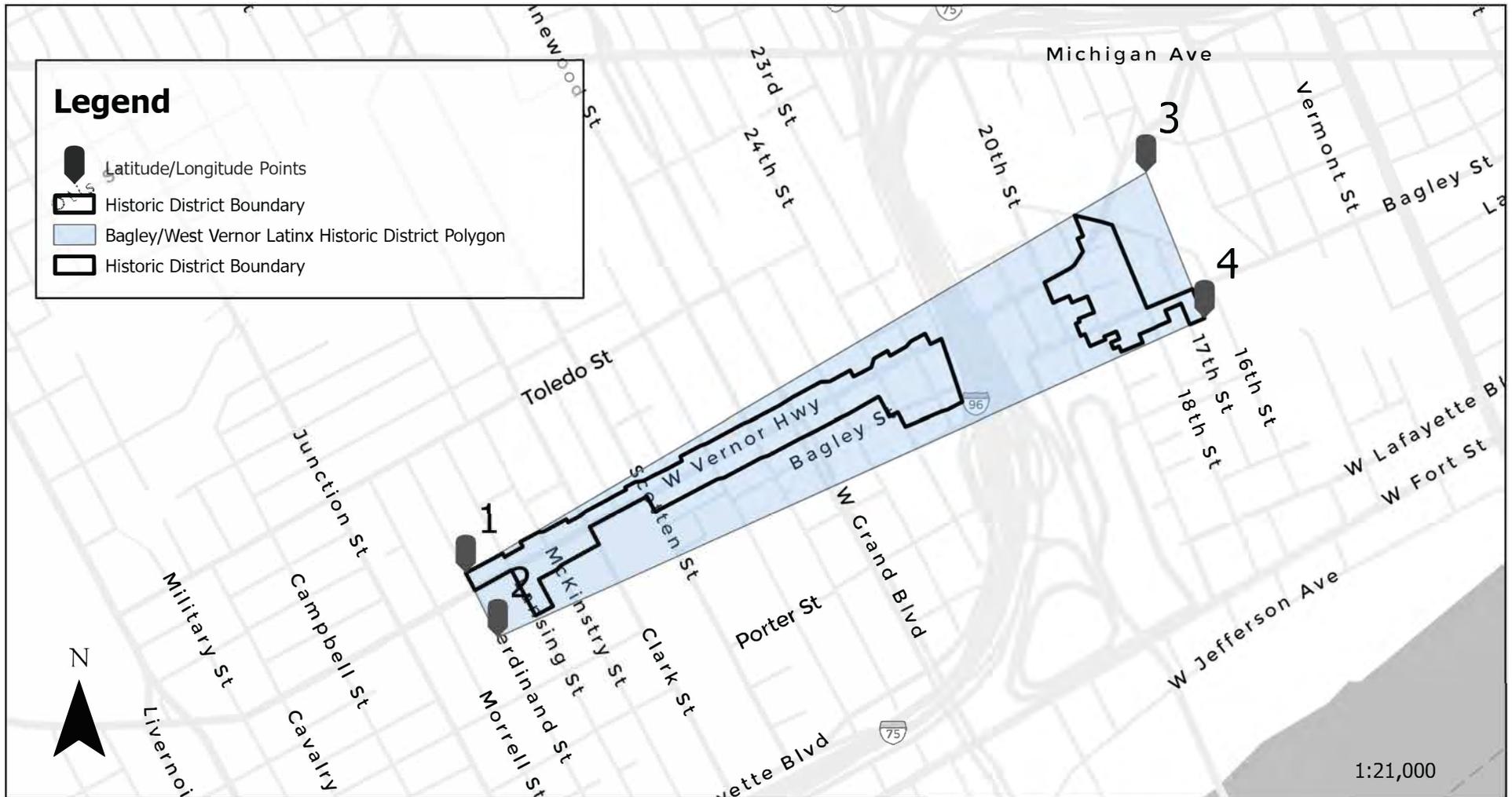


## Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

- |                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. (NW) Latitude: 42.319192 | Longitude: -83.0998   |
| 2. (SW) Latitude: 42.317674 | Longitude: -83.098778 |
| 3. (NE) Latitude: 42.328646 | Longitude: -83.078053 |
| 4. (SE) Latitude: 42.325206 | Longitude: -83.076183 |

Locational Map 1



## Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

- |                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. (NW) Latitude: 42.319192 | Longitude: -83.0998   |
| 2. (SW) Latitude: 42.317674 | Longitude: -83.098778 |
| 3. (NE) Latitude: 42.328646 | Longitude: -83.078053 |
| 4. (SE) Latitude: 42.325206 | Longitude: -83.076183 |

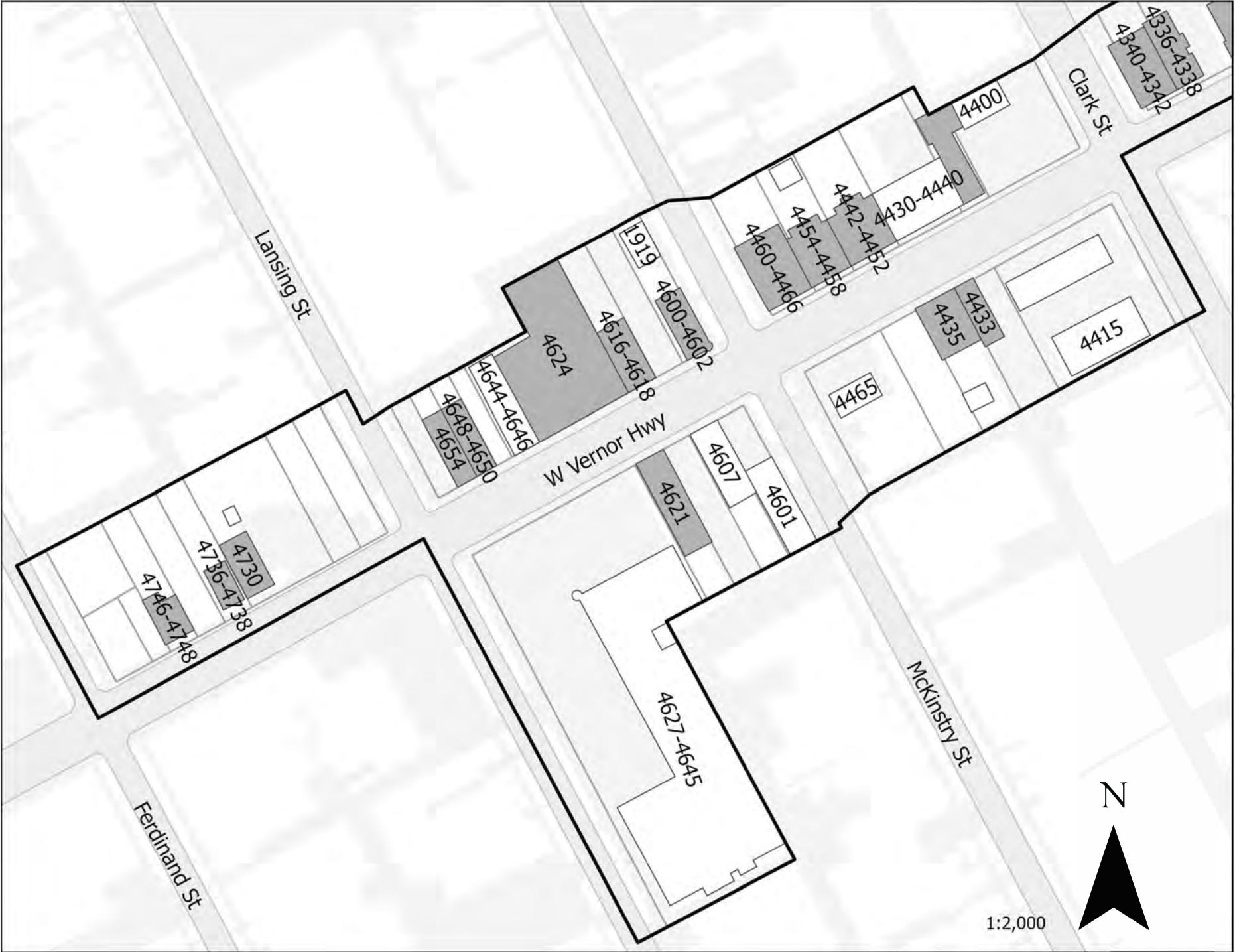
Locational Map 2

# Resource Map 1. Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

## Legend

-  Non Contributing
-  Contributing
-  District Boundary
-  Parcel Boundary



1:2,000

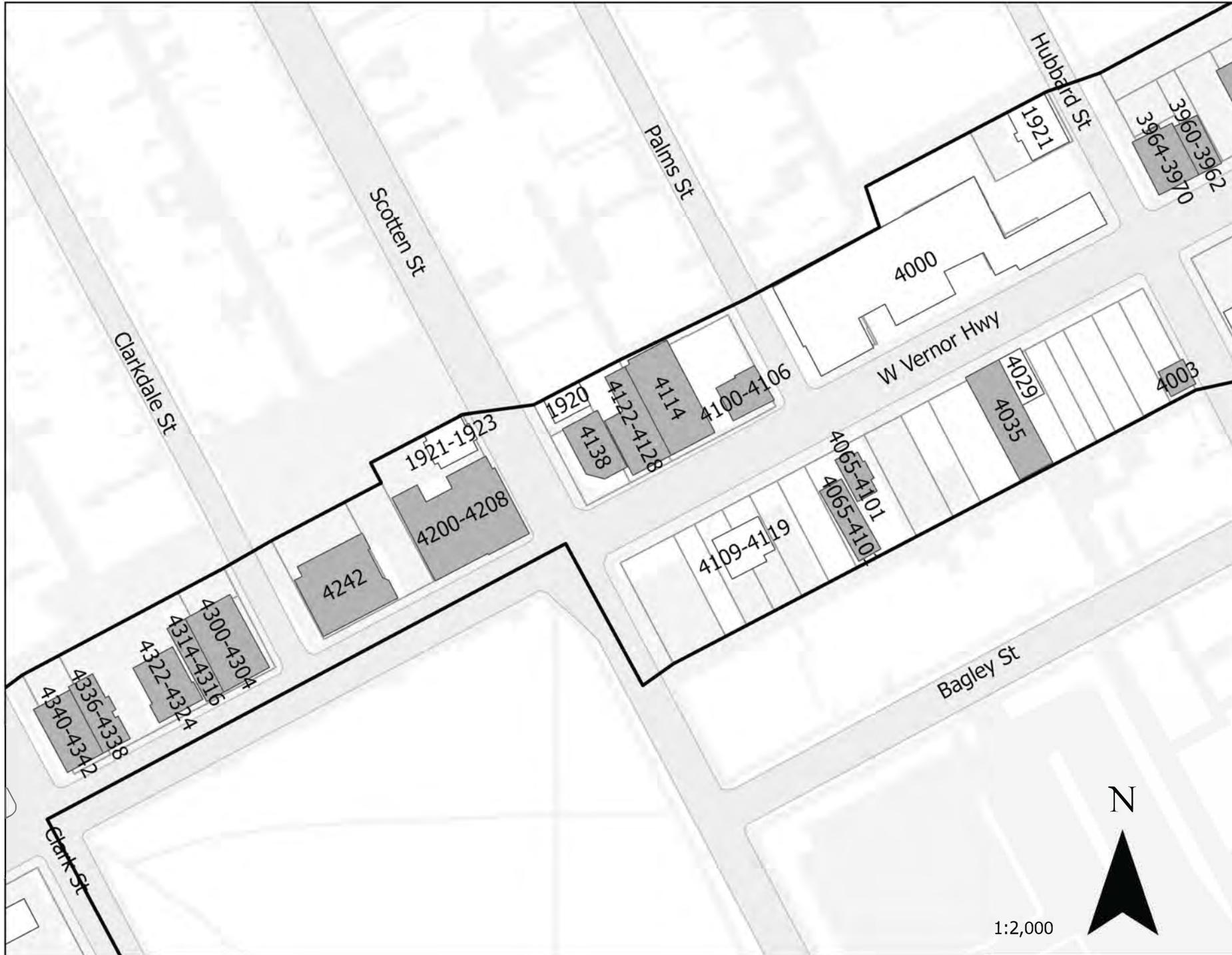


# Resource Map 2. Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

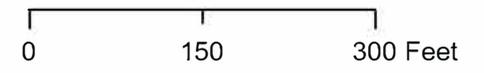
Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

## Legend

-  Non Contributing
-  Contributing
-  District Boundary
-  Parcel Boundary



1:2,000

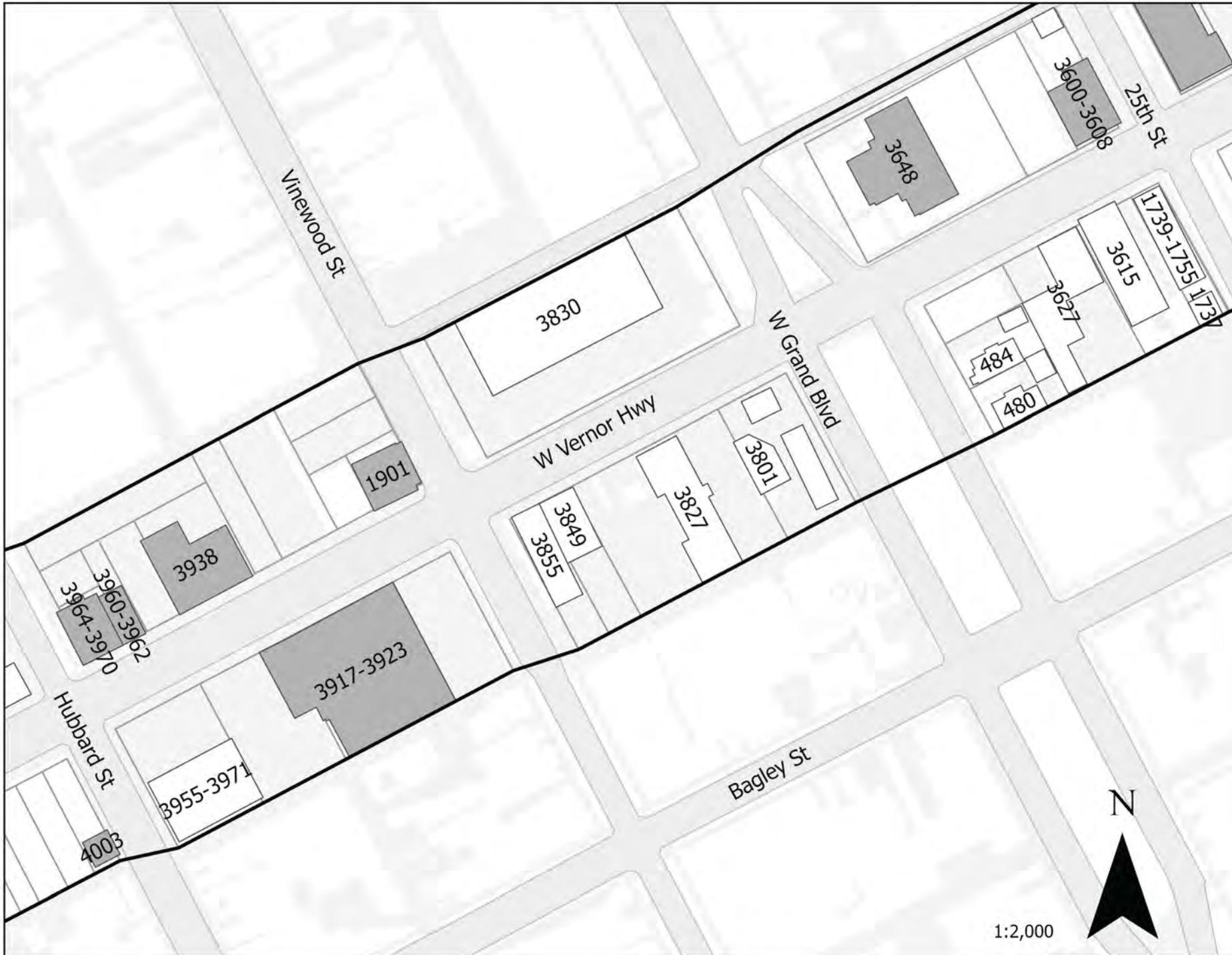


# Resource Map 3. Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

## Legend

-  Non Contributing
-  Contributing
-  District Boundary
-  Parcel Boundary



1:2,000

0 150 300 Feet

# Resource Map 4. Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

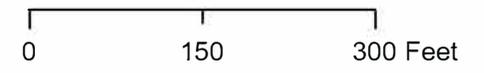
Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

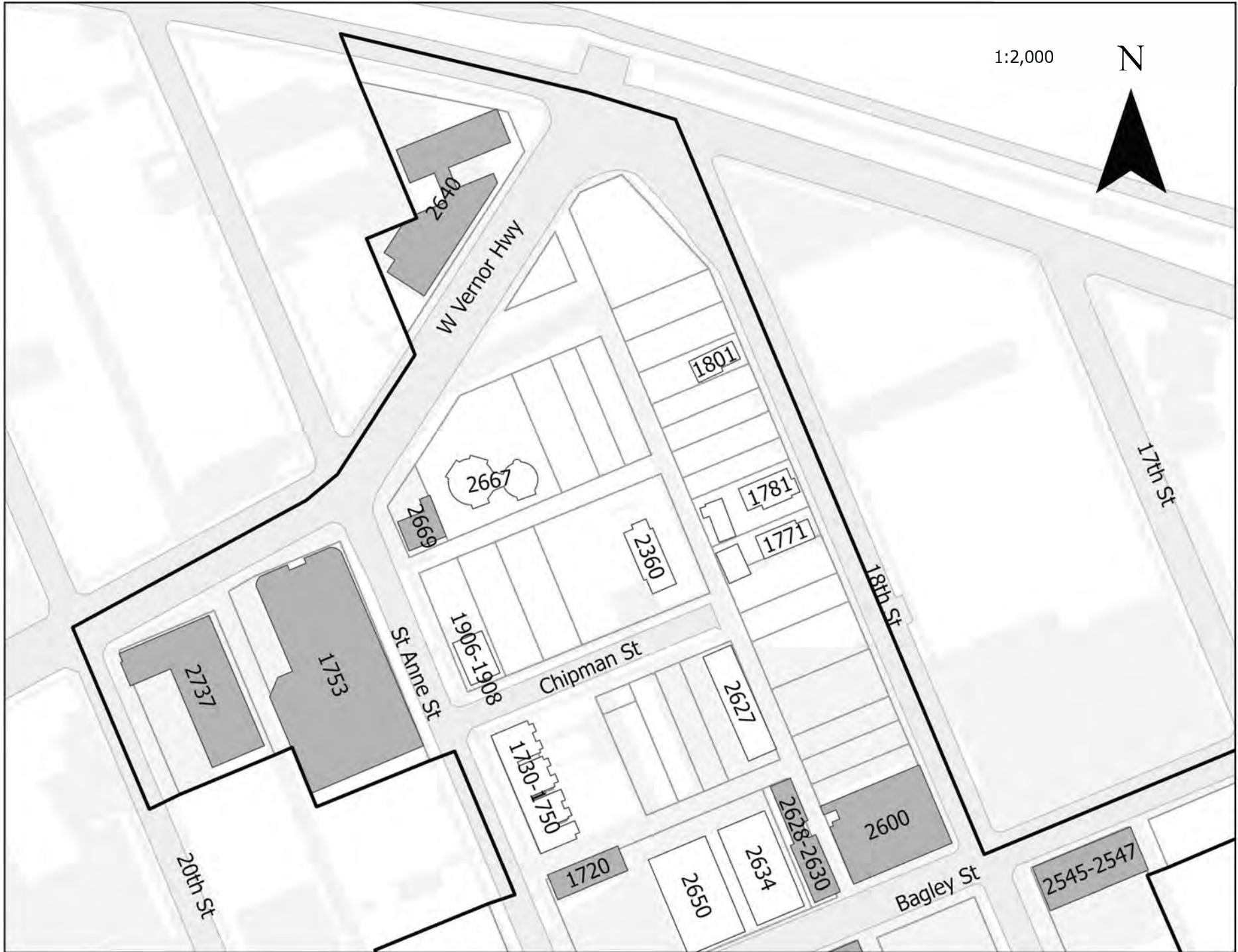
## Legend

-  Non Contributing
-  Contributing
-  District Boundary
-  Parcel Boundary



1:2,000



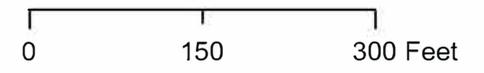


# Resource Map 5. Bagley-West Vernor Historic District

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

## Legend

- Non Contributing
- Contributing
- District Boundary
- Parcel Boundary

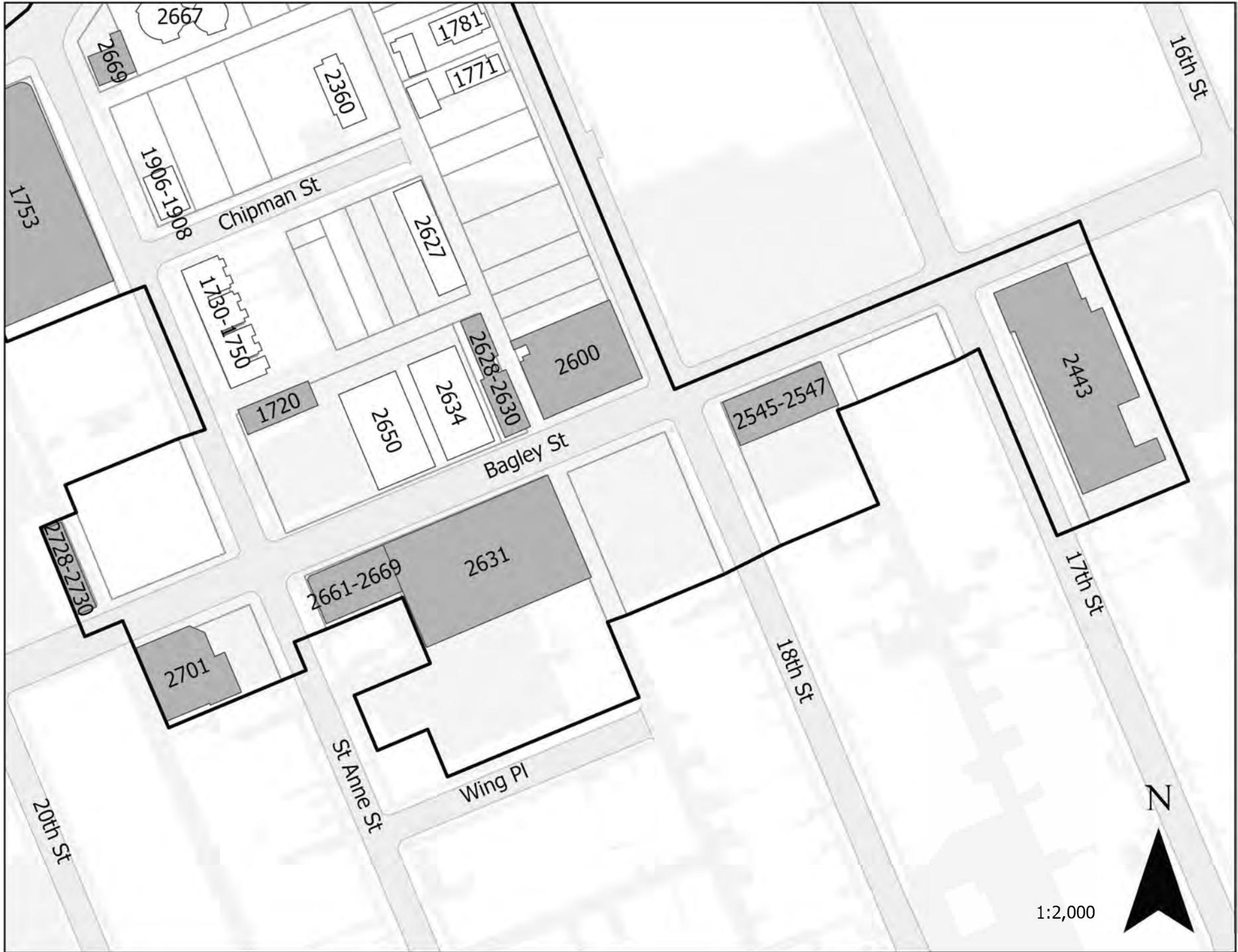


# Resource Map 6. Bagley/West Vernor Historic District

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

## Legend

- Non Contributing
- Contributing
- ▭ District Boundary
- ▭ Parcel Boundary



1:2,000

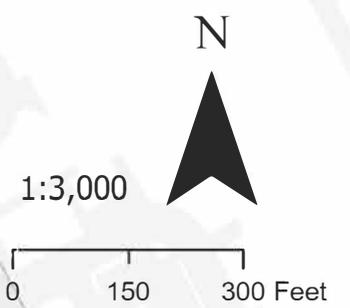
0 150 300 Feet

**Legend**

-  Non Contributing
-  Contributing
-  District Boundaries
-  Parcel Boundaries

**Photo Key 1.**  
**Bagley-West Vernor Historic District**  
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

 Photo View

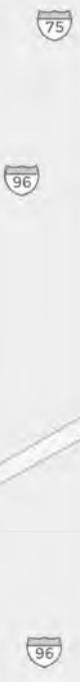
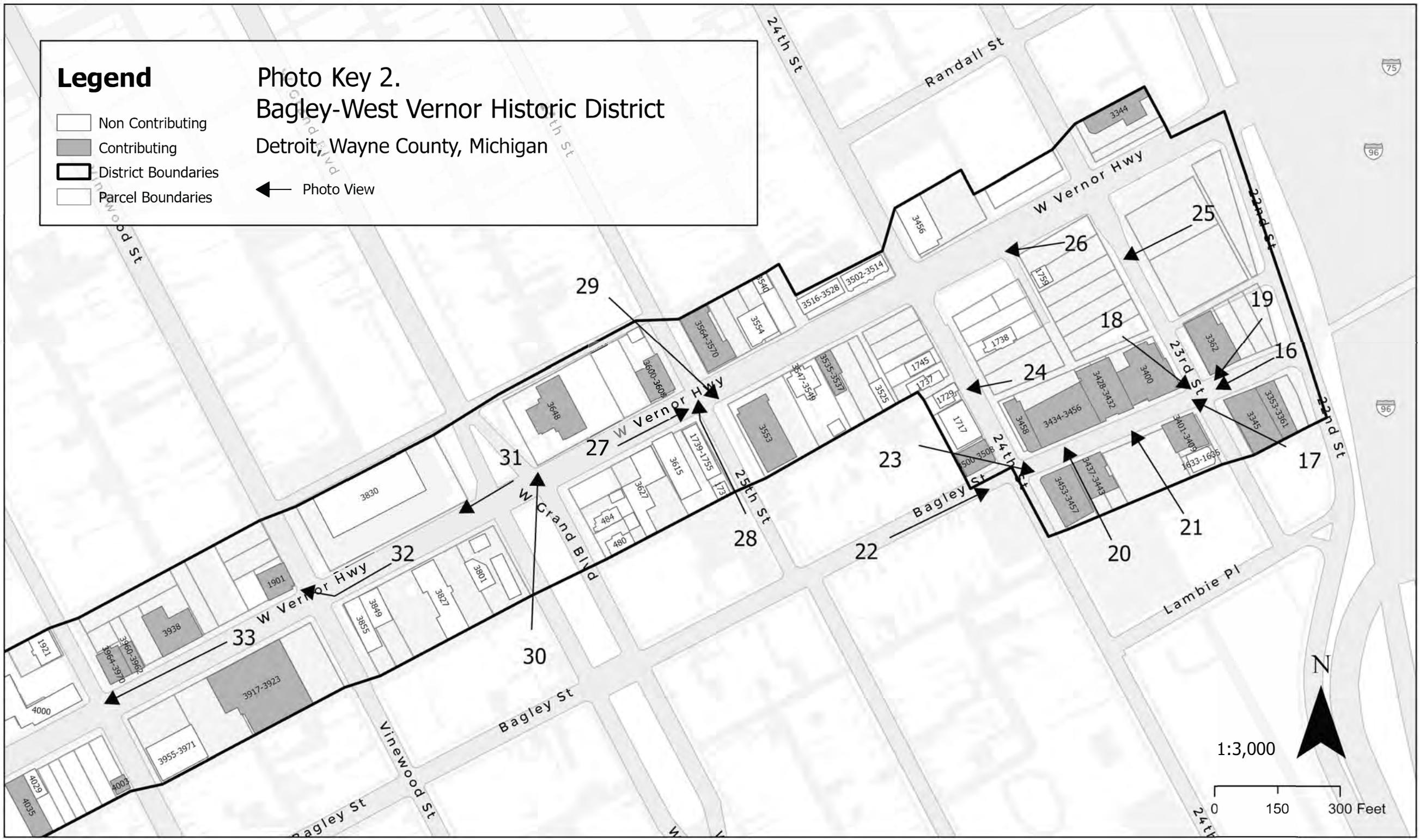


**Legend**

-  Non Contributing
-  Contributing
-  District Boundaries
-  Parcel Boundaries

**Photo Key 2.**  
**Bagley-West Vernor Historic District**  
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

 Photo View







Mexican Village  
RESTAURANT  
CUSTOMER  
PARKING ONLY

MEXICAN  
VILLAGE  
RESTAURANT  
MEXICAN & AMERICAN  
FOOD  
LIQUOR

*Mexican Village*  
RESTAURANT

2600  
BAGLEY

18th

Welcome  
MVC  
MEXICAN  
VILLAGE  
RESTAURANT  
Bienvenidos  
DTE  
Bagley



MEXICAN VILLAGE  
COCKTAILS  
FOOD

Mexican Village  
RESTAURANT

2600  
ENGLEY

2600  
BAGLEY



HONEY BEE



FRESH PRODUCE  
FRESH CUT MEATS  
AUTHENTIC HOT FOOD TO GO

HONEY BEE MARKET

CITY OF DETROIT | PARKS & RECREATION

ROBERTO CLEMENTE RECREATION CENTER

2631





La Michoacana

2857

HOTEL

MEXICAN RESTAURANT



COMMUNITY COUNCIL

2899

WMA

WMA





MATRIX THEATRE

Theatre

Office & Deliveries  
Theatre entrance



SPEED  
HUMP

Chipman

DTE



IN THE SPIRIT  
OF THE  
INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLE  
WHO CULTIVATED  
THE LAND THAT  
WAS  
ONCE  
THEIRS

1720

SPONSORED BY  
HARLEY TRADING CENTER  
ROBERT C. & D. TRADING  
MICHIGAN FISH BOATS  
COAST GUARD  
MICHIGAN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
MICHIGAN DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION



**Mexican Village**  
**RESTAURANT**  
DETROIT'S ORIGINAL  
At 18th Street & Bagley, One Block  
Ample And Secure Lighted Parking







962-8066

Tamaleria  
NUEVO LEON

Tamaleria  
NUEVO LEON

2669

PLACE  
CARRY OUT  
ORDER HERE





EL ZOCALO  
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Cinco de Mayo

La Mexicana  
Tortilla Factory  
1000 E. Main St.  
Tulsa, OK 74103  
761-524-4429



EL ZOCALO  
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

PEOPLES STATE

PEOPLES STATE

BRIS  
C  
R  
M  
L  
A

EL REY



**TYCOON 440**  
DETROIT  
WEEKEND  
@ANTHONYADIESMAN

*La Michoacana*  
**FLOUR TORTILLA FACTORY**

*La Michoacana*  
**FLOUR TORTILLA FACTORY**

**Mexican Village**  
RESTAURANT'S  
Bakery & 1200  
3-Block east of the Renaissance Center  
734-237-6333  
Vendyke North of 27 Mile  
855-254-2296

**Mexican Village**  
RESTAURANT'S  
Bakery & 1200  
3-Block east of the Renaissance Center  
734-237-6333  
Vendyke North of 27 Mile  
855-254-2296

**LA GLORIA BAKERY**

**BAKERY**  
*La Gloria*

Bagley

27th





KOSKIJLCO





OPEN  
COLD BEER  
MONEYGRAM  
LOTTERY  
313-438-0249  
FULL LINE OF MEXICAN PRODUCTS  
PRODUCTOS MEXICANOS

MoneyGram

MoneyGram  
envío de dinero

Popo  
MARKET  
313-438-0249

TAMALES  
FAMILY RESTAURANT

Mexican  
RE  
3 bla  
BAGLEY  
Catering  
Amp

LOADING  
ZONE  
TRUCKS  
ONLY



**Mexican Village**  
RESTAURANT  
Burgers & More  
215-237-0333  
VanDyke North of 21  
985-254-2290  
Catering & Banquet Facilities

La Michoacana  
**Tortilla Factory**  
Authenticity  
Corn & Flour  
Tortillas  
Corn Chips &  
Tostitos Shells  
554-4450

3428

NISSAN

LOADING  
ZONE  
TRUCKS  
ONLY



COLD BEER  
MONEYGRAM  
LOTTERY  
**Po-Po**  
MARKET  
313-439-0249  
FULL LINE OF MEXICAN PRODUCTS  
PRODUCTOS MEXICANOS

OPEN

24TH

Taverna Tapas  
Mexican restaurant  
Original mexican tacos  
843-705

XOCH  
RESTAURANT

Welcome to  
Xochimilco  
Restaurant  
ENTRAN

NASCAR

MoneyGram

EL ZOCAL  
MEXICAN RESTAURANT

SIERRA  
GMC  
9NSV82



Bagley  
24TH

Mexican Town Restaurant

Mexican Town Restaurant

Mexican Town Restaurant

OPEN  
FINEST  
MEXICAN FOOD

COCKTAILS

Quality & Present  
less a child  
have  
happy holiday!  
Santa's Children  
Organization



BEWARE  
of DOG

TEXAS  
KCF-1684

Trés Leches N Snacks advertisement featuring:

- Kid's Popsicles**  
Lemon - Lime  
Mango - Strawberry
- Trés Leches N Snacks**
- Organic Coffee**  
Black Latte - Supreme - Mocha - Hot Cocoa  
Energy Drinks - Smoothies w/ Natural Fruit
- Mango Mada Piruli**
- Palitos**
- Phone number: 334-398-7487
- Website: www.treslechesnacks.com
- Facebook and Instagram icons with the text "FOLLOW US:"

Red barn structure with:

- El Rey** logo
- Air conditioning unit on the roof
- Gas cylinders and other equipment near the entrance



Welcome  
to Mountain Home  
Tennessee  
DTE







CANDELA

LITHUANIAN HALL

Allstate

25th  
Verner W



Agroberto Benavides  
313-649-2000



Help With Every  
Side Of Life.  
MiSide

St. Mary's  
LITURGY CENTER

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY - THE HERBERT BOWEN BRANCH

DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**BOWEN  
BRANCH**  
BIBLIOTECA PUBLICA BOWEN  
3648 WEST VERNOR



ONE WAY

V



H

T'S  
Z A

TEBBO EXPRESS  
LIQUOR  
IMPORTED  
BEER  
GROCERIES  
WIC-EBT  
LOTTO  
OPEN

COIN  
LAUNDRY

SPEED  
LIMIT  
25





Vernor W

Vinewood

WERNOR W  
CHURCH - CHRIST  
FELLOWSHIP HALL

AG  
1887  
1908











LATIN AMERICANS  
for SOCIAL and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, Inc.

Latin - Americans  
for Social and Economic Development, Inc.

13-5'

NEXT  
2200 FT

SPEED  
LIMIT  
25



LA SED

4138

MON-FRI  
2:30PM-3:30PM  
SCHOOL DAYS





ONLY



**NEXT LEVEL**  
TAX SERVICE

GOOD CASH  
WARRANTY

LEVEL  
GET EMPLOYER  
PROBLEM  
OPEN DEC 2015

LEVEL  
LARGEST REFUND

**EL CENTRAL**  
HISPANIC

Vernor W

Scotten



BIKE LANE

MSide

SW roit



ONLY

NEXT  
LEVEL  
TAX SERVICE

5000 CASH  
LEVEL  
LARGEST REFUND





Mexican Restaurant

CARRY OUT Entrance

Motels



THE FELLOWS HALL  
BROOKLYN COLLEGE  
1897



MEXIKANTOWN BAKERY

4300

CROISSANTS

TRES LECHES

TAARTS

OPEN

MEXIKANTOWN BAKERY





MEXIKONTOWN BAKERY



LIQUOR





LIQUOR  
IMPORTED  
BEER  
GROCERY  
LOTTO-EBT

LIQUOR

LEFT TURN ONLY

Ice Cream  
La Michoacana

Clark

Corner W



's Barber Shop

WELCOME

SPEED LIMIT 25





FOR SALE

AAA  
WALLACE FAMILY  
INSURANCE  
AGENCY

DR PEDIATRY  
PC  
DENTISTRY

SHOP  
SOUTHWEST  
Clark  
Vernor W

SHOP  
SOUTHWEST

WELCOME TO  
SOUTHWEST  
CLARK  
VERNOR W

PIZZA PLEX  
PIZZA PEOPLE PLANET

BIKE LANE

PIZZA PLEX





WELCOME TO  
SOUTHWEST  
DETROIT  
BIENVENIDO  
Cork  
Vern: W

**GuerO's**  
BARBER SHOP

OPEN

GuerO's  
BARBER SHOP  
Walk In  
**OPEN**  
313-215-6724

DO NOT  
ENTER

313-554-3300  
**FAMILY DENTISTRY**  
VERNOR PEDIATRIC, PC  
PEDIATRA  
Nibras Karmo, MD  
313-554-3300

**FAMILY DENTISTRY**

FREE  
SHOP

La Brea Market  
**FAMILY DENTIST**  
metro  
Little Caesars  
CHINA MOUNTAIN  
S-M-C KETTLE  
BAR

LIQUOR  
LOTTO  
BEER & WINE

WELCOME TO  
WETMORET  
ADVISORY  
CLUB  
Vernon  
MI

ONE WAY





SHOP  
SOUTHWEST  
CLEAN  
Washing Machine



CHICAGO'S  
PIZZA

CHICAGO'S PIZZA  
CALL (312) 843-3777

McIntyre  
The Bar

COMING SOON  
EL DORADO

BICYCLE  
BIKE LANE

AHEAD





*Mutiny*  
Tiki Bar  
4654 W VERNOR HWY DETROIT MI 48209



4654

CHICAGO'S  
PIZZA

CHICAGO'S PIZZA

(313) 843-3777



4648



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/8/2025      Date of Pending List:      Date of 16th Day:      Date of 45th Day: 1/22/2026      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL            | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLG  |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      1/22/2026 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR.  
PRESIDENT

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed files contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Bagley-West Vernor Historic District, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a  X  New Submission   Resubmission   Additional Documentation   Removal.

- 1  Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- 2  Locational maps (incl. with nomination file)
- 9  Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s)
- 2  Pieces of correspondence (incl. with correspondence file)
- 52  Digital photographs
- Other (incl. with nomination file): \_\_\_\_\_

**State Historic Preservation Review Board**

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the nomination materials at its meeting on  Monday, September 22, 2025 . The Review Board voted  9  to  0  to approve the nomination under National Register Criterion/Criteria  A  and recommended the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination and nominate the property.

**Association with Multiple Property Documentation Form**

- X  This property is associated with the following Multiple Property Documentation Form:  
 Detroit's Latinx Communities .
- This property is not associated with a Multiple Property Documentation Form

**Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits**

- X  This property is not utilizing the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits
- This property is being rehabilitated using the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits. A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.



### Notifications

- Notification of the nomination was sent to the property owner(s) and chief elected official(s) on: \_\_\_\_\_.
- No objections to the nomination were submitted during the public comment period.
- One or more objections to the nomination were received during the public comment period.
- One or more letters of support to the nomination were received during the public comment period.

### Federal Property

- The nominated property \_\_\_ does  does not contain federally owned or controlled Resources.
- Notification of the nomination was sent to the Federal Preservation Officer(s) of the affected agency/agencies on: n/a\_\_\_\_\_.

### Certified Local Government

- The nominated property  is \_\_\_ is not located in a Certified Local Government community.
- The local commission  does \_\_\_ does not concur with the eligibility of the property.
- A copy of the local commission's review \_\_\_ was  was not received within 60 days, and \_\_\_ is  is not included with the correspondence file.

### NPS Grant-Funded Submissions

- Not funded with an NPS grant
- Underrepresented Communities Grant
- African American Civil Rights Grant
- History of Equal Rights Grant
- Tribal Heritage Grant
- Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant
- Disaster Recovery Grant

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 331-8917 or WalshT@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,



Ryan M. Schumaker  
State Historic Preservation Officer

August 27, 2025

National Register Coordinator  
Michigan State Historic  
Preservation Office  
300 North Washington Square  
Lansing, Michigan 48913

Dear National Register Coordinator:

I declare under penalty (or certify, verify, or state) of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. I, Sally B. Ramon, will object to listing in the National Register of Historic Place and object to the nomination of my property and the inclusion in a historic district.

My property address: 2630 Chipman St., Detroit, Michigan 48216

Sally B. Ramon  
(print name)

Sally Ramon  
(signature)

Executed on August 27, 2025

Acknowledged by Sally Ramon before me  
on the 27 day of August, 2025

Signature Cynthia A Duda  
Print name Cynthia A Duda

**CYNTHIA A DUDA**  
NOTARY PUBLIC - STATE OF MICHIGAN  
COUNTY OF WAYNE  
My Commission Expires December 1, 2030  
Acting in the County of Wayne

Notary public, STATE OF Michigan, County of Wayne  
My Commission expires 12-01-2030

Acting in the County Wayne (including when performing a  
notarial act outside of Notary's County Commission.)