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ERASING RED LINES

PART 3 - BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH

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INTRODUCTION

The first two parts of this series argued that patterns of spatial inequality are not accidents, nor are they temporary aberrations. Rather, they are the logical results of a prevailing political economic system that puts profits ahead of people and planet—a system where capital comes before labor,[1] development gets conflated with fantasies of limitless growth,[2] and privileged actors retain disproportionate shares of power, both through active exercises of that power and passive failures to use it in ways that advance the rights and wealth of the less empowered.[3] As a consequence, Erasing Red Lines of discrimination and inequality from our map is a monumental task that will require transformational systems-change.

As community-based organizations like PUSH Buffalo[4] and others[5] are demonstrating the possibilities of alternative systems in specific geographic places, the questions of (1) how to bring those efforts to scale, and (2) how public policies might change in response to the lessons learned from those efforts, require greater attention. Building on the previous installment of this series, the remainder of this report engages with aspects of these two questions by: (a) further unpacking some of the mental models (i.e., beliefs, values, and goals[6]) that define the current economic system; (b) summarizing and synthesizing selected ideas from the literature to describe mental models that might underwrite a "next system"[7]; and (c) relating a public policy case study from Buffalo, NY, in which a City-run program was redesigned to be a vehicle for bottom-up community empowerment as opposed to a tool for top-down command-and-control. The case study shows how the program redesign implicitly reflects, and explicitly embraces, some of the "next system" mental models that are outlined below.[8] For these and other reasons, the program has received (inter[9]) national recognition,[10] and researchers have argued that it might offer budding insights for how local governments can begin reorienting their existing policies away from goals of growth that support the status quo, and toward goals of equity and community wealth-building that can lead to systems-change.[11] Although the incremental nature of such actions might seem decidedly mismatched to the intimidating scale of systems-change, what matters is that the policy illustrates that local governments—and not

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just visionary community-based organizations—have the capacity to act, in the here and now, in ways that are more consistent with, and potentially prefigure, a "next system" characterized by a democratic economy that works for all persons and respects nature and the limits that it places on growth.

Moving from Global Growth to Local Wealth

BACKGROUND FOR POLICY WONKS (FOR EVERYONE ELSE, SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION!)

As implicated in Part 2 of this series, the prevailing economic system and model of economic development in the United States embraces a pro-growth logic and bias that overwhelmingly favors market-based and oversimplified command-and-control solutions to complex social problems. This bias is born out of mental models that endorse several assumptions about people and firms and how they participate in economic activities. Among those assumptions are that:

- Economic agents (e.g., individuals, firms, and governments) are rational, informed, and self-interested. They are aware of the costs and benefits of alternative choices, and they choose only those strategies that maximize their own well-being. Rather than acting as socially minded persons-in-communities,[12] people act strictly in their individual self-interests.
- What drives economic decision-making among rational, individualistic economic agents is a desire for accumulation. That is, economic agents (people, firms, governments) are assumed to always want more of something, and that something is universally linked to [financial] capital.[13]
- In the absence of high transaction costs and the presence of well-defined property rights, market exchange produces an efficient allocation of resources. More precisely, given a distribution of resources across a population of rational economic agents, competition in unregulated markets moves society—as if being led by an "invisible hand"—to an outcome in which no one agent can be made better off without reducing the welfare of another agent.
- The competition created by this market-based, "invisible hand" style of economic organization is good for society, insofar as it (1) maximizes the total size of the economic pie, and (2) allocates the

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slices of that pie to their "highest and best uses," as reflected by where they fetch the highest prices that rational actors are willing to pay for them. Under such a system, it is assumed that only and all mutually beneficial transactions occur, as rational, informed, and self-interested actors would never voluntarily participate in transactions that were harmful to them.

The preceding assumptions, which are grounded in neoclassical economic theory, have guided American economic and social policy, as well as urban development strategies, since at least the 1970s.[14] As noted in Part 2, they have informed a widespread ideology which holds that government's role in society ought to be limited to protecting private property rights and supporting the creation and functioning of private markets. Government intervention is therefore justified only when it is intended to correct "market failures" and strengthen the institution of private property[15]—in other words, government's charge is to help facilitate the goal of capital accumulation. As such, the preponderance of public interventions in cases of neighborhood distress and decline have been somewhat predicable in their pro-market orientations. The most common of these Low Road interventions include:

- "Order policing," whereby cities issue summonses, citations, and fines for conditions of blight and disorder[16]—e.g., broken windows, overgrown grass, graffiti, vagrancy, etc.—that detract from nearby property values. Such strategies are notoriously regressive, insofar as they disparately impact low income and homeless residents;[17]

- Lot-clearing, or large-scale demolition of eyesore properties, is typically done not with context-sensitive reuse plans for the resulting vacant lots in mind, but with expectations that real estate investors will be attracted to the development opportunities presented by "blank slate" parcels in targeted neighborhoods;[18]
- Tax foreclosure followed by private market auctions is used to dispose of abandoned properties and put them in the hands of private owners (typically investors);[19] and
- A variety of tax incentives and subsidies are offered for private development projects. This strategy is regularly referred to as a "race to the bottom" for its willingness to trade valuable public resources, in competitions with other places, to "win" development projects that create disproportionately many private benefits.[20] On occasion, these subsidized initiatives take the form of large-scale, property-led developments such as "signature" buildings[21] or similar interventions that offer a sense of "spectacle."[22]

The common thread running through these strategies is a belief that "market intervention in the material circumstances of poor… communities will…lead to community change." This expectation is grounded in the market-fundamentalist misconception that distressed neighborhoods can only be revitalized through a "redistribution of capital resources." More specifically, the logic goes that distressed neighborhoods experience positive change when public "bads" like blight and property abandonment are taxed (disincentivized), and public "goods" like economic development projects and real estate investments are subsidized (incentivized).

Such a logic exhibits evident pro-growth and pro-capital biases—at bottom, it holds up economic growth as an unambiguous public "good," even when growth facilitates private wealth accumulation without regard for, or even at the expense of, collective community wealth.[24] To use terminology that has been introduced and used throughout this series of reports, the mental models of the existing system give rise to a structure on which growth regularly takes precedence over development. Because the [financial] capital that fuels growth flows into, out of, and through geographic spaces at uneven rates, this system inevitably produces patterns of spatial inequality. In turn, spatial inequality is viewed as a "market failure" that can be remedied through market-based interventions aimed at catalyzing growth and enhancing the economic competitiveness of

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distressed places. Neighborhoods, as it were, are treated as discrete units that have value to potential investors. By intervening to make distressed neighborhoods more attractive to would-be investors, the neighborhood wins…or so the story goes.

Community Development as Community Wealth-Building

The reality of the situation laid out above is that a system built for economic competition between self-interested agents gets competition between self-interested agents. The map serves as a venue for doing battle, and the geographies of discrimination and uneven opportunity that arise on it are the scars we incur in the process. Market-based tools can potentially put bandages over some of those scars—but they can neither prevent them nor take them away. To create substantive change, it is therefore necessary to put down the first aid kit of the pro-growth event promoters, and to pick up the whistle and the rulebook of the referee. We need to call the fight, diagnose the scars for what they are and how they came to be, and begin to heal the whole body so that it may function as the collective that it is. In these respects, as a starting point for changing the mental models that guide contemporary, growth-oriented economic development, practitioners and policymakers might look to their counterparts in the bottom-up field of community development.

To create substantive change, it is therefore necessary to put down the first aid kit of the pro-growth event promoters, and to pick up the whistle and the rulebook of the referee.

Ron Shaffer and colleagues observed that "economic development and community development have been two distinct and separate concepts" for most of their existence. Whereas economic development has historically focused on "jobs, income, and business growth", community development has focused on "equal rights, institutional organization, and political processes, among others."[25] In other words, while economic development has pursued economic growth through market mechanisms, community development has pursued systems-change through tactics and strategies aimed at altering the prevailing power relations in a community. Thus, despite their similar sounding names, the two camps have historically operated from different bases, built atop different mental models. The remainder of this section briefly unpacks some of the mental models associated with community development. Echoing Shaffer and his coauthors, until Low Road economic development is upended and resituated on these or

related High Road mental models, the prospects for an equitable, sustainable, and democratic economy—at any spatial or temporal scale—are bleak at best.[26]

What is Community Development?

Community development is both a process and an outcome.[27] As a process, it is a "participatory effort to mobilize community assets that increases the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life."[28] As an outcome, community development is a realization of these participatory efforts. That is, community-development-as-outcome is positive community change that is embodied in the enhanced will or capacity of residents to undertake collective action, and/or in tangible, resident-driven improvements to local quality of life.[29]

Although the preceding definitions suggest that community development can occur anywhere, at a variety of scales, most practitioners, policymakers, and funders who work in the field argue that, as an intervention, its aim is to empower disadvantaged residents and neighborhoods.[30] As such, the process of community development can be recast as "integrating disadvantaged [residents] into the local economy to create community wealth."[31] The result of this inclusive process, community-development-as-outcome (i.e., positive community change), is thus measured "in terms of… [residents] gaining the skills and confidence…to overcome social barriers to economic success, and community institutions making… decisions and resource commitments that help sustain [and reinforce]…[these outcomes]."[32]

The 2019 Turkey Giveaway organized by Greater Eastside Fields of Dreams Block Club Association Inc. gave away 179 turkeys.

On that backdrop, the first key difference between the mental models of conventional economic development and community development lies in their ends, or their ultimate goals. As argued throughout this series of reports, conventional economic development works toward goals of growth and maximizing the total size of the economy, regardless of distribution. The means employed in pursuit of that growth—particularly property rights and market-based allocation—pit individual economic agents against one another in endless competition that results in persistent and widening inequality. By contrast, community development works toward the goal(s) of maximizing shared community wealth and ensuring that wealth is equitably distributed among residents and between communities.

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What is Community Wealth?

Community wealth is the "stock of all assets, net of liabilities, that can contribute to the well-being" of a community.[33] Another term for 'assets' is capital.[34] In everyday and economic development language, the term capital is regularly used to denote financial assets—for example, "funds held in deposit accounts and/or funds obtained from special financing sources." The term is also "associated with capital assets of a company [e.g., equipment and buildings] which require significant amounts of [money] to finance or expand."[35]

Crucially, this common conception of capital as money, or as marketable assets that have monetary value and that can enable economic agents to make more money, suffers from the same pro-market, pro-growth biases that inform so much economic development work in the U.S. In that sense, it is not surprising that widely used government interventions in distressed communities and regions tend to target capital in this narrow view (see "Background for Policy Wonks" above). Indeed, from fines and citations on individual property owners,[36] to tax incentives and subsidies for developers,[37] and onto capital infrastructure projects that connect local communities to global marketplaces,[38] the go-to public fixes for spatial inequality tend to think of and define success in terms of dollars invested, collected, and/or redistributed within the economy.[39]

A community Thanksgiving meal being shared at West Side Community Services.

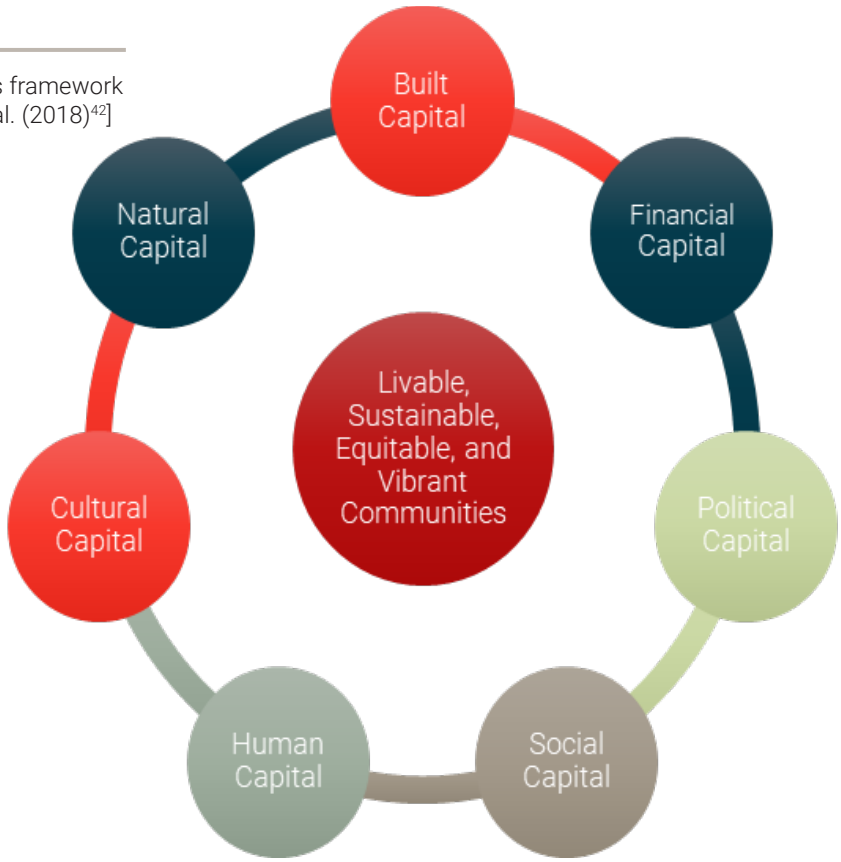
Counter to this narrow view of capital as financial and tangible physical assets, community development practitioners and researchers generally conceive of capital in multiple, interdependent dimensions. In this view, community wealth is not synonymous with numerical dollar values—it is instead more closely related to the qualitative notion of well-being. It is the total tangible and intangible value of all of the community's assets, net of liabilities, and the extent to which that value is evenly distributed among persons and locations within the community.

As a tool for thinking about community wealth in this broader sense, Flora and colleagues developed their highly-regarded community capitals framework (CCF).[40] In brief, the CCF argues that all spatial communities, irrespective of their social and economic statuses, possess varying degrees of seven types of capital, or assets (see Figure 1). At the center of the framework, where all seven forms of capital exist in relative abundance, work together, and are evenly distributed among community members, places are said to possess high degrees of community wealth. In this comparatively "next systems" view, wealthy communities are not necessarily those where income or property values reach the highest of heights; rather, they are the communities that are characterized by: (1) **livability** (high quality of life for all residents); (2) **sustainability** (ecological health and integrity); (3) **equity** (even distributions of resources, wealth, and (dis)amenities); and (4) **economic vibrancy** (good jobs that pay living wages for all members of the local labor force).[41]

Having presented the CCF's overarching vision of community wealth (Fig. 1), the constituent forms of capital that contribute to that wealth are defined as follows:

FIGURE 1

The community capitals framework (CCF) [Source: Flora et al. (2018)[42]]



1. NATURAL CAPITAL is the air, water, land, terrain, weather, and biodiversity that both support and put limits on all life.

2. CULTURAL CAPITAL is the shared worldview of a group of people. It gives identity to, and defines the appropriate and expected behaviors for, members of a social group.

3. HUMAN CAPITAL is the set of individual attributes (e.g., health, education, skills) that contributes to an individual's ability to earn a living and contribute to society.

4. SOCIAL CAPITAL is the concatenation of social networks and their norms of mutual trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action.

5. POLITICAL CAPITAL is the ability of groups with shared values to influence decision-making and the distribution of local resources in accordance with group values.

6. FINANCIAL CAPITAL is the savings, income, tax revenues, credits, grants, and other, generally monetary, resources within a community.

7. BUILT CAPITAL is human-constructed infrastructure.[43]

According to Flora and her colleagues, these seven forms of capital are all interlinked and subject to positive feedback effects.[44] Consequently, depletion of one capital stock may lead to depletion in one or more other capital stocks, as is often the case in postindustrial, "shrinking" cities.[45] Likewise, uncoordinated and scattershot investments that do not leverage the connections between the seven types of capital—for example, a subsidized development project geared toward outside interests, like those of the "creative class," rather than toward existing residents[46]— are unlikely to fit in with, and meaningfully increase broadly shared wealth within, targeted communities.[47]

The other side of this story is that well-designed, strategic investments into multiple community capitals might be capable of Erasing Red Lines, or reversing "vicious cycles," of neighborhood decline.[48] Toward that end, the second key difference between the mental models of conventional economic development and community development lies in their means, or their preferred intervention strategies. Whereas conventional economic development prioritizes investments into financial and built capital stocks—often without regard for how those investments might (not) influence or interact with other, less tangible stocks of capital[49]—community development recognizes that financial and built capital assets only build community wealth when local residents have the power and capacity to work together to decide how those assets should be used.[50] In other words, community development puts less tangible capital assets on relatively equal footing as more tangible assets; and its interventions strive to invest in all of these capital stocks in ways that build on one another in pursuit of upwardly spiraling, collective community wealth.[51]

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The remainder of this report relates a case study of a multipronged community development effort in Buffalo, NY that is now, following a substantive overhaul, arguably consistent with this aim. Critically, as a City-run initiative, the case study demonstrates that local governments have the ability to design, or creatively redesign, programs in ways that (1) replace business-as-usual mental models of conventional economic development with those of community development, and, in doing so, (2) prioritize the production of community wealth over the accumulation of private capital.

Case Study: Buffalo, NY Operation Clean Sweep

The City of Buffalo, NY operates a "clean sweep" program in which the local government makes multiple sequential and coordinated investments into targeted areas, on a block-by-block basis.[52] The program was first created in name in 2001, and it involved dispatching law enforcement officers and other officials to selected neighborhoods, unannounced. Among other things, officers knocked on doors and asked for permission to inspect houses. While secondary aspects of the program involved cleaning vacant lots, collecting trash, and installing smoke detectors, the strong law enforcement presence and top-down nature of the clean sweep was described by the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) as "warrantless searches" and an "overzealous exercise of police power."[53] Local observers called it a "heavy-handed fishing expedition,"[54] and residents who experienced clean sweeps later wrote that they felt intimidated and considered the events to be invasions of privacy.[55] Despite these critiques, some residents warmed to the effort, claiming that the sweeps encouraged people to become engaged in their neighborhoods.[56]

While impressions of the outcomes from the early sweeps were therefore mixed, there was wider agreement that the top-down process of the program was flawed and inappropriate.[57] For that reason, in 2006, newly elected Mayor Byron Brown began overhauling the operation to make it more of a community-based initiative. In his first year in office, Brown experimented with the clean sweep process by adding new components and involving local block club leaders and community-based organizations from the outset.[58] New features included distributing information on "employment opportunities, job training, drug rehabilitation programs and other human services."[59]

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The success of these 2006 experiments resulted in a permanent program expansion in 2007, in terms of both the number of clean sweeps completed annually and the number and diversity of partners involved in each sweep. While local nongovernmental leaders voiced ongoing concern early in Brown's tenure about the "surprise" nature of the sweeps and the continued involvement of law enforcement,[60] residents appeared to have few complaints about the program by the end of Brown's second year in charge. According to Brown, residents embraced (and continue to embrace)

the initiative because it empowered (empowers) them to get involved in community life.[61] As the program grows and evolves, residents continue to offer positive feedback, remarking in recent years that "we need [the clean sweep]",[62] and that it is "a good thing" that helps to stabilize neighborhoods.[63]

With these points in mind, what does the new clean sweep program do? According to observers:

> "[o]n a given day, [teams]…remove litter, debris and graffiti; fill potholes; prune trees; mow overgrown lots; repair street lights; set rat traps; and seal vacant houses. They provide employment and health care services, install smoke detectors, check that housing codes are being met, establish neighborhood watch programs and create relationships with community members. Volunteers pass out oral hygiene bags and test blood pressure. Even utility providers participate".[64]

Moreover:

> "[f]ollowing each sweep, a…[t]eam revisits each block and an extensive after-care program goes into effect. During sweeps, residents are questioned if there are any other issues where they could use assistance. After the sweep, the Division analyses this data to determine additional ways that the city can provide support. The Division also works with residents…after a sweep to establish block clubs and neighborhood watches to give ownership and a sense of pride back to the revitalized community."[65]

Starting in 2018, additional features were integrated to help "[strengthen] community-police relationships" and build trust between communities and law enforcement.[66] Among other things, police officers now team with nonprofit representatives to engage residents—especially children—in soccer games and music-filled cookouts as clean sweep activities unfold on their blocks.[67] These events give officers opportunities to connect personally with folks in the neighborhood, which, according to one police lieutenant, "open[s] the door" for productive two-way communication and collaborations between residents and the police going forward.[68]

Community events give officers opportunities to connect personally with folks in the neighborhood...

Based on the above descriptions, it is reasonable to argue that a Brown-era clean sweep invests, in various ways, into all seven forms of community capital from the CCF (Fig. 1). For instance:

- beautifying the urban commons by removing litter and overgrowth from vacant lots and pruning trees in public rights of way are investments into natural capital;
- mending relationships between communities and the police, as well as promoting the importance of monitoring neighborhood activity and reporting issues—both of which demonstrate to residents that they can contribute to community-based governance—constitutes an investment into cultural capital;
- providing employment resources and healthcare services are investments into human capital;
- working to set up neighborhood watches and block clubs facilitates the creation of social capital;
- sending teams of public decision-makers—including the Mayor himself—door-to-door to listen to residents' concerns can give those residents a stronger voice in government, which may enhance the community's political capital;
- distributing resources to residents, such as smoke detectors and health screenings, may indirectly affect their financial capital, insofar as they receive benefits without having to purchase the goods or services on their own; and
- removing graffiti from buildings and signs, repairing streetlights, filling potholes, and sealing vacant houses are evident investments into the neighborhood's built capital.

Unlike Low Road government interventions in distressed neighborhoods that focus exclusively on financial and built capital—e.g., fines for blighting conditions and tax incentives for development projects—the revamped clean sweep at least implicitly embraces a need for strategic investments into multiple, interdependent dimensions of community wealth, particularly the nonmonetary and the intangible. What is more, these investments are made simultaneously, and are then followed-up by additional post-intervention attempts to cultivate local social, cultural, and political capital.

Mayor Byron Brown and Buffalo Police participating in 'Coffee with a Cop' day.

In short, whereas the clean sweep started as a top-down, command-and-control exercise of police power that sanctioned unwanted behaviors through monetary fines and related punishments,[69] it ostensibly became a more bottom-up community development initiative aimed at integrating disempowered residents into an ongoing process of community wealth-building.[70] Out with the old [system], in with the next system.

Outcomes: Changes in Crime and Blight (Warning: Contains Technical Content)

The description from the previous section tells a nice story, but where is the evidence that the clean sweep program is building community wealth?

To begin answering this question, observe that the City's self-proclaimed, one-line mission for the clean sweep is "to eliminate blight and further reduce crime to record lows, while providing needed social services."[71] It is therefore useful to start by examining the extent to which clean sweeps decrease blight and crime, and to engage with the importance of decreasing crime and blight for community wealth. With respect to the latter, there is convincing empirical research to suggest that neighborhood crime levels, and localized fears of crime, are linked to poor mental and physical health, as well as lower quality of life.[72] In other words, high levels of crime are drains on community wealth and well-being. The same goes for high levels of blight. Namely, research shows that increases in blight, where blight is an indicator of disinvestment into a place's built capital,[73] tend to correlate with decreases in financial[74] and social[75] capital. With fewer capital assets with which to combat the spread of blight, the phenomenon grows and places further strain—and downward pressure—on a community's various assets.[76] In that sense, strategies designed to concurrently (1) stop blight from spreading within a community, and (2) remove existing conditions of blight from the community, have the potential to eliminate critical feedback effects that lead to downward spiraling in community wealth.[77]

...high levels of crime are drains on community wealth and well-being.

That's all a long way of saying: blight and crime are barriers to community wealth-building, and eliminating them or substantially reducing their footprints can facilitate growth in various forms of community capital. In other words, while eliminating blight and

crime might not build community wealth directly; doing so creates enabling conditions for wealth-building. Likewise, when residents are included in the process of eliminating blight and crime, as is the case with the revamped clean sweep, it is possible that the social connections forged and/or the information gained during that process might serve as new sources of community wealth moving forward.

So…has the new clean sweep program been successful at reducing crime? Maybe, but it's difficult to say for sure.

According to City officials, the clean sweep has played a meaningful role in reducing the City's overall crime rate. Since the program was taken over by the Brown administration, crime in the City dropped by more than 25 percent. In 2015, the information technology publication Computerworld recognized Mayor Brown and the City with a "Data + Editors' Choice" Award, citing the apparent link between the revamped clean sweep program and crime reduction in Buffalo.[78] However, it must be remembered that correlation does not equal causation, and that not all neighborhoods have experienced drops in crime.[79] Still, observers note that the City's use of 911 calls and related data sources[80] to target clean sweep interventions has helped to put more "eyes on [targeted] street[s]" in ways that might be alleviating issues of crime in some neighborhoods.[81]

What about blight reduction? Here it is possible to say a bit more about impacts thanks to available metrics and prior research. According to Cities of Service, a granting organization that recognized Buffalo for its commitment to citizen engagement in 2015, the clean sweep program has removed more than 15,000 square feet of graffiti to date.[82] Further, in any given year, the program invests more than 6,000 volunteer hours into beautification projects that impact well over 5,000 properties annually,[83] resulting in significant debris removal, lot clearing, and landscaping. In these respects, it is undeniable that the clean sweep eliminates blight from targeted blocks during the interventions. However, to what extent are these efforts sustainable?

According to two empirical studies that looked at the first full year of the revamped clean sweep program (2007) in two City planning communities, the likelihood of new property code violations—where property violations are commonly adopted as indicators of

disinvestment or blight in quantitative research[84]—in targeted areas dropped significantly relative to comparable locations.[85] Specifically, at the individual parcel level, properties that were exposed to clean sweeps were about half as likely to be cited for new property code violations in the year after a clean sweep compared to all other parcels in the same City planning community, after controlling for housing tenure, prior violation history, and a handful of block-level attributes. At the face block-level, the rate of code violations per 100 parcels in clean sweep areas before the interventions in one City planning community was 3.6 per 100 parcels, compared to 1.9 violations per 100 parcels in a statistically-matched "control group" of face blocks in the same community. In the year following the sweeps, the violation rate in the targeted blocks fell to 3.0 per 100 parcels, whereas the rate in the control group climbed to 4.5 violations per 100 parcels. The net "treatment effect" of the clean sweep, researchers estimated, was therefore a meaningful swing of 3.2 violations per 100 parcels.[86] In less jargony terms, the clean sweep appeared to reduce the presence and spread of blight on targeted blocks in at least two City planning communities, even as blighting conditions increased in surrounding areas.

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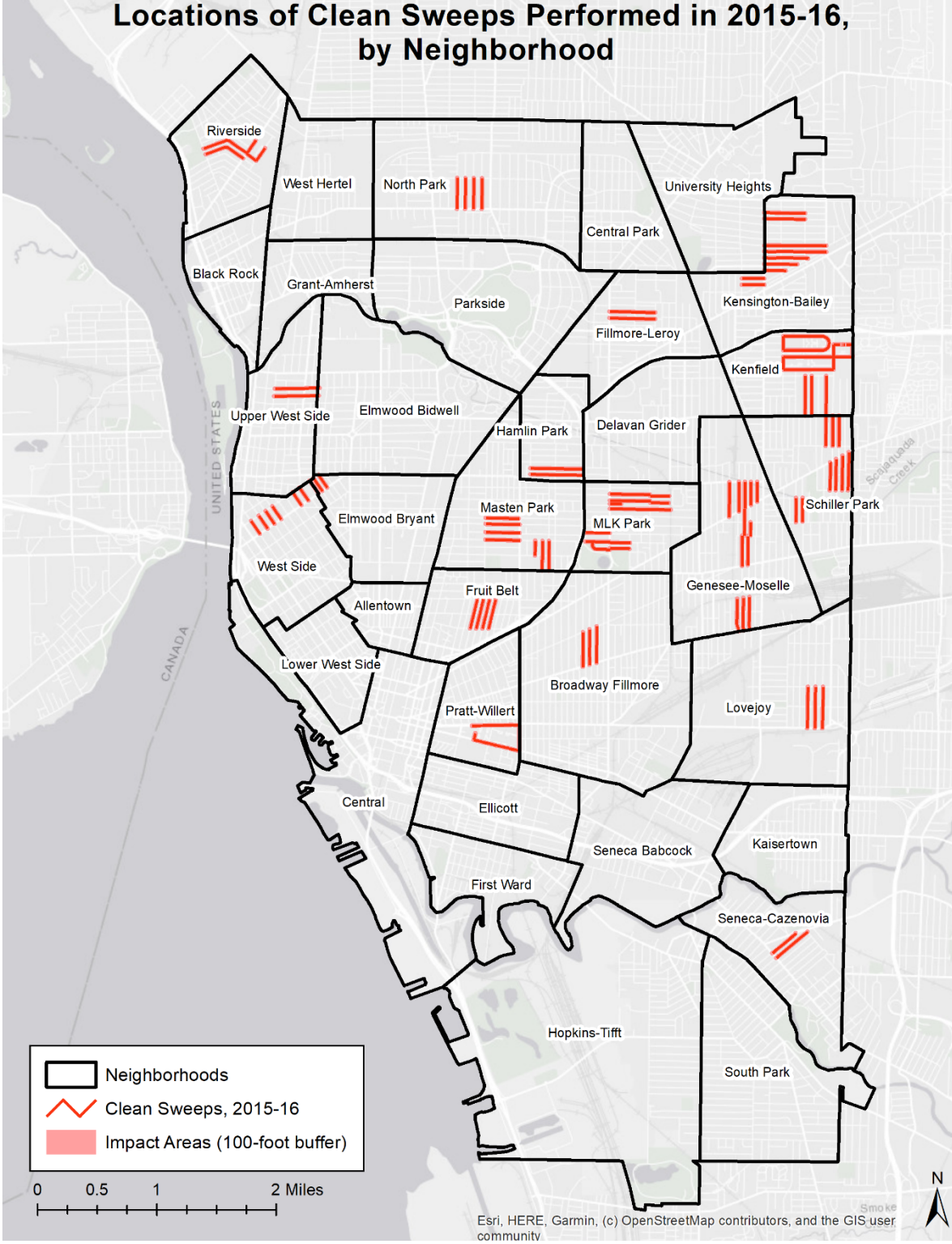
That being said, the foregoing empirical evidence comes from analyses of clean sweeps that were carried out in 2007. Are the sweeps still performing these blight-reduction functions?

While there are no published studies at present that look at more recent clean sweep impacts on blight, the City of Buffalo, through its Open Data portal,[87] currently provides geographic data on clean sweeps[88] and calls for service placed through its non-emergency 311 system.[89] With respect to the latter, 311 "provides [residents] with fast, centralized access to city services", and allows them to "[r]egister complaints, get information, and access non-emergency police services."[90] Accordingly, it is possible to integrate the two datasets to study resident complaints before and after the most recent clean sweeps for which data are available. In cases where clean sweeps are linked to reductions in blight-related complaints, there may be additional—and more up-to-date—evidence for the impacts of the program. Toward that end, Figure 2 maps the locations of all clean sweeps that were performed in 2015-16, which is the latest time period for which clean sweep data are available on the City's Open Data portal. In total, 19 of the City's 35 planning neighborhoods received at least one sweep between 2015 and 2016. [91]

FIGURE 2

Clean sweep locations, 2015-16 (note: sweep locations are shown as street centerlines; a 100-foot buffer was applied to those centerlines to identify parcels that were impacted by a sweep)



In order to explore the possibility that the clean sweeps shown in Figure 2 were associated with reductions in blight-related complaints,[92] it is necessary to define the latter term. For the purposes of this report, eight complaint types from the 311 dataset were deemed to be relevant to blight:

- Building maintenance complaints
- Graffiti complaints
- Housing violation complaints
- Illegal dumping (unspecified location) complaints
- Illegal dumping (curb) complaints
- Illegal dumping (private property) complaints
- Illegal dumping (street) complaints
- Quality of life complaints

Table 1 summarizes the before-and-after blight complaint rates per 100 parcels, by location on a clean sweep block, for all 19 neighborhoods where clean sweeps were conducted between 2015 and 2016 (Fig. 2). Overall, the results are mixed and subject to different interpretations. Namely, in roughly half of the neighborhoods, blocks that received clean sweeps experienced what can be termed a negative "treatment effect" in their rates of blight-related complaints—that is, the rate at which residents registered blight complaints in clean sweep blocks decreased relative to other blocks in their same planning neighborhoods. Thus, to the extent that fewer complaints mean fewer blighting conditions on the ground, the negative values in the "Treatment Effect" column might be interpreted positively—i.e., the clean sweeps helped to reduce blight, a major barrier to wealth-building, in some neighborhoods.

Consistent with the earlier findings, then, it is possible that clean sweeps were linked to blight reductions in nine of nineteen neighborhoods. What about the other ten neighborhoods? Here, admittedly, the interpretation is a bit trickier. On one hand, the positive values in the "Treatment Effect" column in Table 1 mean that the rate at which residents registered blight complaints in clean sweep blocks increased relative to all other blocks in their respective planning neighborhoods. Using the same logic as

...it is possible that clean sweeps were linked to blight reductions in nine of nineteen neighborhoods.

above, that result could mean that conditions of blight became relatively more severe in clean sweep target areas after the intervention—far from a positive, wealth-building outcome. On the other hand, higher complaint rates could plausibly occur if pre-existing blighting conditions, which had gone unreported, were eventually reported by residents after they participated in a clean sweep. Such circumstances might play out if residents previously felt disempowered—e.g., they felt that reporting an issue would not lead to resolution—or if they were unaware of the processes and channels available to them for registering complaints. If clean sweeps had a hand in increasing resident participation in local governance in this way, then even without evidence of blight reduction, the interventions could be interpreted as having made a positive impact on community wealth. After all, recall that community development is about integrating disempowered residents into local political and economic affairs (see above).

That being said, it is not possible to infer from Table 1, at least conclusively, that resident participation in the ten neighborhoods increased as a result of the clean sweep. For that reason, the next subsection looks to a different metric of civic participation: voting in local elections. Prior to moving on, however, it is worth noting here that, based on the data and literature reviewed in this section, there is mixed, but largely affirmative, evidence that the revamped clean sweep initiative is reducing barriers to wealth-building (namely, crime and blight) in targeted areas.

...there is mixed, but largely affirmative, evidence that the revamped clean sweep initiative is reducing barriers to wealth-building (namely, crime and blight) in targeted areas.

TABLE 1: RATE OF BLIGHT-RELATED COMPLAINTS (PER 100 PARCELS) BEFORE AND AFTER RECENT CLEAN SWEEPS*

	BEFORE			AFTER			RESULTS	
NEIGHBORHOOD	SWEEP	NO SWEEP	DIFFERENCE	SWEEP	NO SWEEP	DIFFERENCE	TREATMENT EFFECT**	CHANGE IN BLIGHT COMPLAINTS
Broadway Fillmore	11.17	9.57	1.60	10.28	8.19	2.10	0.50	Slight relative increase
Elmwood Bidwell	11.11	18.96	-7.85	27.78	11.35	16.43	24.27	Large relative increase
Elmwood Bryant	14.22	11.17	3.05	11.28	9.29	1.99	-1.06	Slight relative decrease
Fillmore-Leroy	19.41	17.98	1.43	21.73	18.45	3.28	1.85	Slight relative increase
Fruit Belt	7.49	6.33	1.16	9.47	8.09	1.38	0.22	Slight relative increase
Genesee-Moselle	12.77	12.79	-0.02	9.65	9.96	-0.31	-0.29	Slight relative decrease
Hamlin Park	16.74	17.94	-1.20	26.15	15.89	10.26	11.46	Large relative increase
Kenfield	19.29	13.77	5.53	23.51	15.38	8.13	2.60	Slight relative increase
Kensington Bailey	15.57	13.98	1.59	18.16	16.02	2.14	0.56	Slight relative increase
Lovejoy	18.78	14.43	4.35	23.32	16.18	7.14	2.79	Slight relative increase
Masten Park	8.16	8.35	-0.19	13.56	8.32	5.24	5.43	Slight relative increase
MLK Park	18.70	8.69	10.01	16.24	8.94	7.30	-2.71	Slight relative decrease
North Park	15.32	9.47	5.85	10.48	9.15	1.34	-4.51	Slight relative decrease
Pratt-Willert	41.67	8.09	33.58	25.00	8.09	16.91	-16.67	Large relative decrease
Riverside	16.60	16.18	0.42	10.55	20.07	-9.53	-9.95	Large relative decrease
Schiller Park	16.25	14.49	1.76	16.47	13.65	2.82	1.06	Slight relative increase
Seneca-Cazenovia	17.19	12.09	5.10	12.81	13.30	-0.49	-5.58	Slight relative decrease
Upper West Side	33.50	16.58	16.92	33.25	19.65	13.60	-3.33	Slight relative decrease
West Side	22.67	18.14	4.53	14.44	12.34	2.11	-2.42	Slight relative decrease

***"Before" refers to the two-year annual average complaint rate (per 100 parcels) immediately prior to the clean sweeps (2013-14), and "after" refers to the two-year annual average complaint rate (per 100 parcels) immediately after the sweeps (2017-18)**

****The "treatment effect" is the difference in the before-and-after differences between blocks that received a clean sweep and all other blocks in the planning neighborhood. "Large" is arbitrarily defined as a change of at least +/-10 violations/100 parcels**

Outcomes: Changes in Political Participation (Warning: Contains Technical Content)

Political participation, especially in local elections, is regularly linked with the concept of local social capital (Fig. 1). While scholars have variously and inconsistently considered voter turnout to be both an indicator[93] and an outcome[94] of social capital, the broader and more pertinent point is that local electoral participation is an observable form of civic engagement. Voting shows an interest in local affairs and a concern for the future of the place in which a voter lives. In that sense, regardless of whether it is cause or consequence, local electoral participation is inextricably linked with the intangible forms of capital that contribute to a community's wealth (see Fig. 1). Accordingly, it is useful to investigate possible associations between clean sweeps—as prospective wealth-building community development interventions—and local voter turnout.

Voting shows an interest in local affairs and a concern for the future of the place in which a voter lives.

Figure 3 presents the results of a statistical analysis that looked at voter turnout in the local general elections immediately before (2013) and after (2017) the 2015-16 clean sweeps (see Appendix for technical details of the analysis). To examine the possible effects of the clean sweeps on turnout, data on registered voters were geocoded so that each voter was represented as a point on a map based on their home address. Registered voters located in clean sweep impact areas[95] were then compared to all other registered voters in their respective planning neighborhoods. Using these data, the analysis computed the probability that a given voter would participate in the 2013 and 2017 City of Buffalo municipal elections. Only voters who were eligible to vote in both of these elections were included in the analysis. The results suggest that turnout probability changed meaningfully in nine of the 19 neighborhoods where clean sweeps were performed. The change was positive in five of those neighborhoods (i.e., the clean sweep appeared to increase turnout probability) and negative in the remaining four neighborhoods (i.e., the clean sweep was associated with a drop in turnout probability). Table 2 summarizes these results using the same format that was employed for the blight complaint analysis in the preceding section.

The pattern of changes in local turnout probability for voters on blocks that received clean sweeps relative to all other voters in their planning neighborhoods may help with interpreting the mixed results from the blight complaint analysis above. In particular,

comparing the results shown in Figure 3 and Table 2 with those from Table 1 reveals that in the five planning neighborhoods where clean sweeps were linked to large relative increases in voting probability (Table 2), resident-initiated blight complaints also increased (Table 1). Thus, the earlier interpretation that some clean sweeps might have been linked with greater resident propensity to report neighborhood concerns to the City's 311 call center appears to hold water. That is, the fact that both blight complaints and voter participation increased in certain clean sweep target areas, relative to their surroundings, appears to suggest that residents who were exposed to clean sweeps became more active in local governance[96] following that exposure. Stated more simply, in at least five of Buffalo's planning neighborhoods, there is convincing circumstantial evidence that clean sweeps led to sustained increases in resident civic participation.

In at least five of Buffalo's planning neighborhoods, there is convincing circumstantial evidence that clean sweeps led to sustained increases in resident civic participation.

As for the four planning neighborhoods where residents who were exposed to clean sweeps became notably less likely than their neighbors to vote in local elections (Table 2), the waters are once again muddy. Three of those four neighborhoods experienced relative drops in blight complaints compared to their surroundings (Table 1), while one neighborhood (Hamlin Park) saw blight complaints increase. For the latter, growing blight complaints coupled with lower odds of voting could plausibly indicate dissatisfaction with responses to complaints. In other words, if residents are registering more and more complaints but feel that the complaints are not leading to desired results, then they might lose confidence in local government and abstain from voting. Such a possibility warrants investigation that goes beyond the scope of this report. For the other three neighborhoods, where clean sweeps were associated with fewer blight complaints and lower turnout probabilities, an opposite scenario might be unfolding. Namely, it is possible that the clean sweeps and their follow-up activities led directly to less blight in the neighborhoods, which, in turn, might have appeased local residents. If such pacification occurred, then residents might have been less motivated to vote. Once again, such a possibility is outside the bounds of this report and requires follow-up investigation.

Note: only voters who were residing at the same address and eligible to vote in both elections were included in the analysis to better isolate the effects, if any, that the clean sweep might have had on local residents. In other words, all voters included in the analysis were living on the targeted blocks at the time of the clean sweeps, and their local voting behavior was observable both before and after their exposure to the sweeps.

FIGURE 2

Changes in local turnout probabilities, by neighborhood, following clean sweep interventions

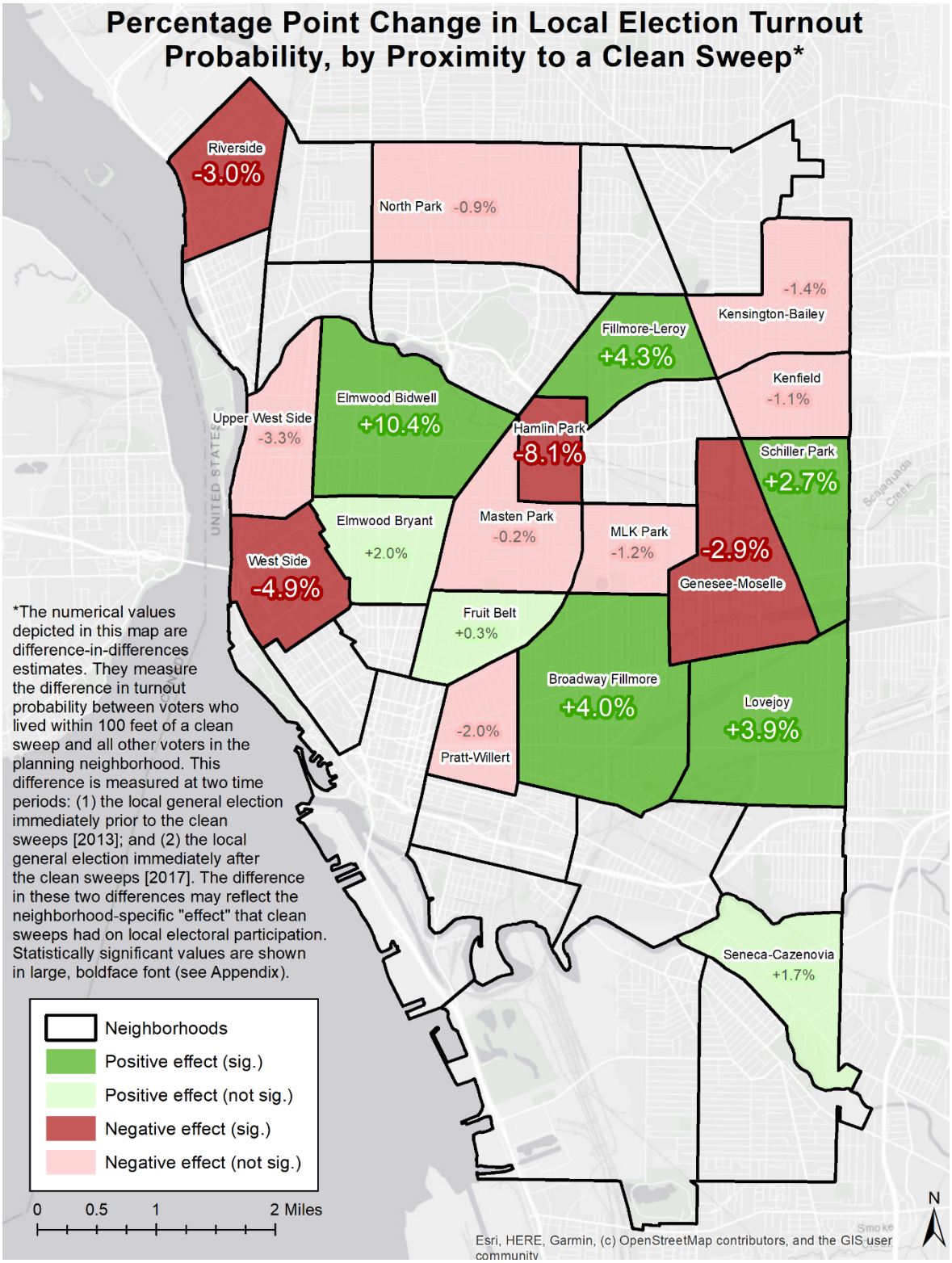


TABLE 2: EXPECTED PROBABILITY OF VOTING IN A LOCAL ELECTION BEFORE AND AFTER RECENT CLEAN SWEEPS*

	BEFORE			AFTER			RESULTS	
NEIGHBORHOOD	SWEEP	NO SWEEP	DIFFERENCE	SWEEP	NO SWEEP	DIFFERENCE	TREATMENT EFFECT**	CHANGE IN BLIGHT COMPLAINTS
Broadway Fillmore	16.3%	27.9%	-11.5%	22.0%	29.6%	-7.6%	**4.0%**	Large relative increase
Elmwood Bidwell	10.6%	34.1%	-23.4%	35.7%	48.7%	-13.0%	**10.4%**	Large relative increase
Elmwood Bryant	16.1%	37.1%	-21.0%	29.3%	48.3%	-18.9%	2.0%	Slight relative increase
Fillmore-Leroy	35.3%	30.7%	4.7%	38.5%	29.6%	8.9%	**4.3%**	Large relative increase
Fruit Belt	32.1%	31.7%	0.5%	36.2%	34.4%	1.8%	1.3%	Slight relative increase
Genesee-Moselle	24.2%	24.3%	-0.2%	21.2%	24.4%	-3.1%	**-2.9%**	Large relative decrease
Hamlin Park	30.8%	35.2%	-4.4%	27.6%	40.1%	-12.5%	**-8.1%**	Large relative decrease
Kenfield	22.2%	25.7%	-3.5%	25.1%	29.7%	-4.6%	-1.1%	Slight relative decrease
Kensington Bailey	23.2%	27.9%	-4.7%	27.2%	33.3%	-6.1%	-1.4%	Slight relative decrease
Lovejoy	21.7%	24.3%	-2.6%	28.1%	26.7%	1.3%	**3.9%**	Large relative increase
Masten Park	32.0%	29.8%	2.2.%	34.7%	32.7%	2.0%	-0.2%	Virtually no change
MLK Park	27.0%	28.0%	-1.0%	27.0%	29.2%	-2.2%	-1.2%	Slight relative decrease
North Park	27.3%	31.6%	-4.3%	41.1%	46.3%	-5.2%	-0.9%	Virtually no change
Pratt-Willert	27.5%	34.6%	-7.1%	29.7%	38.8%	-9.1%	-2.0%	Slight relative decrease
Riverside	16.4%	21.0%	-4.6%	17.9%	25.5%	-7.6%	**-3.0%**	Large relative decrease
Schiller Park	18.3%	23.1%	-4.8%	24.5%	26.7%	-2.1%	**2.7%**	Large relative increase
Seneca-Cazenovia	26.0%	26.1%	0.0%	37.8%	36.1%	1.7%	1.7%	Slight relative increase
Upper West Side	28.6%	21.2%	7.4%	31.5%	27.3%	4.2%	-3.3%	Slight relative decrease
West Side	19.5%	23.9%	-4.4%	22.6%	31.9%	-9.3%	**-4.9%**	Large relative decrease

***"Before" refers to the local election immediately prior to the clean sweeps (2013), and "after" refers to the local election immediately after the sweeps (2017)**

****The "treatment effect" is the difference in the before-and-after probability differences between blocks that received a clean sweep and all other blocks in the planning neighborhood. "Large" is defined as statistical significance at an 80% confidence level or better (denoted with bold text)**

In Conclusion…Instructive Inconclusion

The evidence summarized in the preceding sections makes it clear that the revamped clean sweep program in Buffalo, NY is no cure-all for spatial inequality. While there are documented examples of the intervention reducing blight in some neighborhoods,[97] and potentially increasing civic participation in others (see above), such outcomes have not occurred evenly or uniformly across all clean sweep target areas. Still, even in cases characterized by inconclusive empirical results, valuable and instructive policy implications can emerge—and this case is no exception. Indeed, above and beyond the scattered signs of wealth-building and removal of barriers to wealth-building identified in the data, the clean sweep case ably demonstrates that local governments can break out of policy inertia to radically transform existing programs, in the here and now, in ways that supplant Low Road goals of private capital accumulation with High Road goals of upwardly spiraling community wealth. Specifically, recall that the clean sweep program began as a top-down effort to sanction unwanted phenomena, especially physical blight and decay, that make some urban communities "difficult to develop."[98] It was seen at the time as an "overzealous exercise of police power"[99] that met with resident fear[100] and backlash.[101] Since that time, however, inclusion of community-based organizations (among other entities) and a greater focus on process has transformed the clean sweep into a celebrated intervention[102] that aims to build public trust,[103] empower local residents,[104] and invest simultaneously into multiple forms of community capital.[105] What, if any, lessons can this transformation offer public officials and change-makers beyond the boundaries of this specific case?

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Lessons for Practice

To reiterate, Buffalo's clean sweep is not a panacea, nor is it an unambiguous success story in community wealth-building and/or systems-change. It is, however, an example of a local government taking an incremental step away from pro-growth, business-as-usual policymaking, and toward a pro-community, "next system" where public resources are invested in local assets rather than used as bait to lure outside economic interests into a neighborhood. Such an incremental step shows a willingness and ability to replace—or at least modify—deeply entrenched mental models that guide public decision-making. This section argues that there are at least five

interrelated spheres in which the City of Buffalo seemed to make these modifications in order to overhaul the clean sweep program. Collectively, these five changes can serve as loose guidelines for revamping existing local government policy instruments in and beyond Buffalo. Figure 4 provides a graphical summary of these guidelines at the end of this section.

Philosophy: Market-Fundamentalist ⟶ Interventionist

At the core of what is sometimes termed the "American model of urban development" is a pro-market philosophy that sees local governments as competitors that attempt to "win" private development projects. In this view, local governments take on the role of place champions, seeking to promote their cities and—when necessary—hand over public resources (e.g., subsidies or tax incentives) in order to attract development.[106] Aside from these entrepreneurial activities, local governments are said to show preference for market-based outcomes—that is, they prefer a "hands-off" approach that allows the market to dictate development patterns.

In contrast to the "hands off" philosophy of economic development, the "hands on," or interventionist, philosophy of community development holds that inequity needs to be stamped out with action. In this view, it is not enough to simply cite or fine activities that contribute to neighborhood distress (e.g., blight) and then wait passively for wealth to build. Rather, it is necessary to actively build community wealth and to empower residents to do the same. The clean sweep program underwent this shift in philosophy when it changed hands to a new Mayoral administration that now uses it to "combat hopelessness in the city's most challenged neighborhoods by showing [residents] that the government…is actively working to improve their lives."[107]

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Goals: Private Capital ⟶ Community Wealth

One of the most common justifications for aggressive command-and-control enforcement of property codes is that substandard property conditions (i.e., blighting factors) reduce nearby property values. Diminished property values, in turn, make neighborhoods less likely to attract private (re)investment. When a neighborhood's

image is corrupted in this way, incentives to maintain property are lowered ever further, which leads to growing levels of blight over time. By strictly enforcing property codes, governments aim to fend off these vicious cycles, protect property values, and, in doing so, create supporting conditions for property (re)investment and (re) development.[108] In other words, the goal is to facilitate the increase of private property values. A neighborhood is seen as a mere collection of its parts, and the summed total of property values within the neighborhood is the target variable to be maximized.

Shifting away from this goal of private capital accumulation, the overhauled clean sweep program now seemingly works toward a goal of collective community wealth-building. As argued above, the intervention implicitly makes investments into all seven forms of community capital (Fig. 1). In that sense, neighborhoods are greater than the sums of their parts—they are characterized by visible and latent assets, which, when connected, reinforced, and mobilized, have the potential to affect positive, lasting, sustainable community change. This latter observation leads directly to the third fundamental shift in urban policy mental models.

...neighborhoods are greater than the sums of their parts—they are characterized by visible and latent assets, which, when connected, reinforced, and mobilized, have the potential to affect positive, lasting, sustainable community change.

Community Assets: Absent ⟶ Latent

Conventional approaches to economic development[109] and urban planning[110] tend to be technocratic and "rational." That is, they diagnose "problems" and seek to implement expert-devised "solutions" to those problems in purportedly neutral and objective ways. Mid-20th Century urban renewal was an extreme example of this sort of "evangelical"[111] approach to urban governance. In cities throughout the U.S., local governments declared entire neighborhoods to be blighted—effectively devoid of assets—and ordered that they be razed and replaced with more "modern" developments.[112] Whereas contemporary development strategies do not go quite this far, it is still common practice to diagnose some neighborhoods as lacking assets and needing external assistance.

As argued above, the desire to assist local communities (an interventionist local government philosophy) can play an important role in building community wealth. However, if that external assistance is foisted on local communities that do not want it, or if it steamrolls over community voices in pursuit of "expert" solutions (somewhat literally, in the case of urban renewal), then

that intervention might end up subtracting from—rather than adding to—community wealth. Arguably the most effective way to avoid such an outcome is to acknowledge that all communities, no matter how "distressed" they might appear to be to "experts," possess varying degrees of at least seven types of community assets (see Fig. 1). Far from seeing places as devoid of assets and in need of external investments, an asset-based approach to community development takes the position that communities' internal assets might be obscured from view, but they are there. Successful interventions will connect, build on, and mobilize those assets, rather than try to substitute for or replace them with outside investments. By reallocating significant time and resources toward involving residents in sweeps and attempting to create and support the functioning of local block clubs (especially after initial interventions), the revised clean sweep program supplanted earlier assumptions that neighborhoods lacked internal ability to solve problems with notions that better connections between residents, as well as between residents and local government, can unleash the neighborhood's latent internal capacity to effect positive community change.

Successful interventions will connect, build on, and mobilize those assets, rather than try to substitute for or replace them with outside investments.

Orientation: Outcome ⟶ Process

In addition to its common assumption that certain neighborhoods lack assets and therefore require outside experts to craft and implement solutions to local problems, rational, technocratic policymaking tends to prioritize outcomes over process, or ends over means. Put differently, what matters is that the expert-prescribed solution gets implemented, not how the implementation occurs.

Prior to its overhaul, Buffalo's clean sweep program was critiqued on multiple occasions for its implementation process. One resident was quoted as saying that while she thought the City should intervene and clean up her neighborhood, "because [the neighborhood is] poor, [City officials assume they] don't have to do it the right way."[113] Other community leaders noted that the intervention would only be successful if it were not a "one-time thing", but instead a "year-round effort" (which, at the time, it was not).[114] Legal experts observed that the sweep employed "police-state tactics" that disrespected[115] and intimidated minority residents.[116] Yet, despite these critiques, City officials maintained that the clean sweep's "crack down on

quality-of-life problems" was improving targeted neighborhoods and ultimately worth what one Council Member called "a little inconvenience for three hours."[117] In other words, the non-expert residents and observers who disagreed with the process should nonetheless be satisfied because the program was delivering its intended results.

When the clean sweep program was taken over by the Brown administration in 2006, some observers voiced holdover concerns about the "surprise" nature of the events and the lack of authentic public participation.[118] Since that time, however, the administration has made and continues to make strides toward a more inclusive and democratic clean sweep process. The program now dedicates substantive City staff time to after-action efforts in clean sweep communities aimed at building local social and political capital. In addition, the City now seeks initial buy-in from existing block clubs and neighborhood associations, and works closely with these groups to carry out sweeps.[119] Most recently, the City has instructed the police officers involved in sweeps to wear less intimidating, dressed-down uniforms "similar to…bike patrol attire," and to engage more often and on friendlier terms with residents of targeted blocks.[120] As part of that engagement, officers, who now play soccer with neighborhood children during sweeps, have volunteered to hold "weekly soccer clinics that would bring the same…officers to the same locations on a regular basis"—"something the kids [can] count on and look forward to," according to recent media coverage of the program.[121] While results still matter, the City has taken great strides to make sure that the means are at least as important as the ends.

...the City has taken strides to make sure that the means are at least as important as the ends.

Residents: Subjects ⟶ Local Experts

The shift in orientation from "only outcomes matter" to "outcomes need to be created by an appropriate process" overlaps with the fifth and final instructive shift examined in this section: the shift from a conceptualization of residents as non-expert subjects to one of resident as local experts who are potential partners in community governance.

Rational, technocratic planning and policymaking tends to assume that residents lack both the specialized knowledge and the capacity to effect positive community change. Too often, residents are assumed to be unaware of what is in their own best interests, and

to be altogether uninterested in participating in public affairs. At the same time, non-participation in events such as public forums or meetings of a local legislative body is conflated with acquiescence and wholesale agreement with top-down characterizations of local problems and preferred solutions.[122] For example, in the early history of the clean sweep, officials made claims like "most [residents] were pleased" with the intervention,[123] despite direct contradictions from residents who say they were neither interviewed nor asked about their opinions, and who felt violated by the events.[124] Complaints were written off by City officials as coming from "the same people who have contributed to many of the problems…in the first place," essentially rendering all complaints invalid.[125] In other words, the City knew what was best for the neighborhood, regardless of what the residents said.

An alternative view of residents sees them as the foremost experts on local neighborhood conditions in light of their lived experiences. It sees residents not as un- or dis-interested in public participation, but as facing multiple, uneven and intersecting barriers to civic involvement. Instead of prescribing what is best for these residents and their neighborhoods (and proscribing what isn't), "next system" planning and policymaking turns its attention toward aggressively removing participation barriers in order to learn as much as possible from resident-experts about the assets and challenges that are present in their communities—and to understand how existing assets might be reinforced and mobilized to overcome resident-identified challenges. Although it still has plenty of room for improvement, the revamped clean sweep program has placed increasing emphasis on bolstering resident participation and partnering with residents to enhance quality of life in targeted neighborhoods. New commitments to repeated, face-to-face interaction with residents in their neighborhoods following clean sweep interventions[126] has the potential to build public trust and confidence in government, and to identify strategies for reducing barriers to resident participation in broader community affairs.[127] To be sure, recall from above that there is preliminary evidence of growing civic participation in some—but not all—of the communities where recent clean sweeps have taken place.

In this view residents are seen as the foremost experts on local neighborhood conditions in light of their lived experiences.

	THE LOW ROAD	THE HIGH ROAD
PHILOSOPHY	• Hands-off • Market based • Promotes competition	• Hands-on • Interventionist • Promotes cooperation
GOAL(S)	• Private capital accumulation • Economic growth	• Collective wealth building • Community development
ASSETS	• Absent from distressed communities • Need to come from the outside	• Latent, present in all communities • Available to be connected, reinforced, and mobilized
ORIENTATION	• Oriented toward desired outcome • End more important than means • Technocratic and expert-driven	• Process-oriented • Means of equal or greater importance than ends • Democratic and inclusive
RESIDENTS	• Subjects; clients; non-experts • Uninterested in active public participation	• Local experts and potential partners • Faced with multiple, intersecting barriers to participation

FIGURE 4 Changing systems as changing lanes: Five exits off the Low Road

In sum, by retooling them to feature (1) democratic and inclusive participatory processes, wherein (2) residents are treated and engaged as respected local experts who (3) live in communities that contain visible and latent stocks of at least seven types of local assets (Fig. 1), (4) public interventions that (5) set goals of building collective community wealth via consensual and context-sensitive means are well-positioned to effect positive community change—even in neighborhoods that appear to experts to be distressed.[128] Figure 4 summarizes these High Road—or "next system"—guiding policy principles for Erasing Red Lines, and pushing back against persistent patterns of spatial inequality, wherever they exist.

CONCLUSION

It would be easy to point fingers and assign blame for persistent Red Lines of urban decline to the powerful 1930s and 1940s policymakers and financial professionals who actually drew some of those lines, and who therefore helped to create and reinforce gulfing patterns of spatial inequality across the United States[129]…but doing so fails to engage with deeper systemic issues that allowed those "powerful" interests to accumulate and exercise disproportionate shares of power in the first place. Put differently, trying to figure out whether to fault the captain or the builder from the deck of a sinking ship is not going to change one's immediate circumstances. Finger-pointing might feel good, but it won't rescue any of the passengers from going under water. The challenge thus becomes one part thinking outside of the system that generated the problem; and one part prefiguring a "next system," in the here and now, with available resources. (That deck chair might not be a boat, but if it allows us to stay afloat until we successfully devise a way to make it to shore, then let's use it.)

While leading community-based organizations are prefiguring a more democratic and equitable economy in specific locations through radical transformations to social spaces such as housing and work,[130] local governments often appear to be behind the curve, locked-in to policies and programs that prop up the status quo. The clean sweep program in Buffalo, NY offers an emerging example of how local governments can break this stasis, and substantially overhaul an existing policy program to focus not on economic growth or increasing private property values; but on investing into multiple, tangible and intangible streams of collective community wealth (Fig. 1). Although the program retained its original name and some of its original intent, meaningful shifts in philosophy, goals, orientation, and views of residents and community assets (Fig. 4) have seemingly helped the clean sweep to win broader public acceptance, reduce barriers to community wealth-building, and make substantive connections between and investments into different forms of community capital. The true test going forward will be for the City—and for local governments across the map—to embrace these shifts in all aspects of program development, implementation, and evaluation. Occasional incremental steps toward next systems are welcome departures from the status quo; but truly walking the High Road is a constant uphill march that is sure to come to an unceremonious end unless we figure out how to make the journey as a society, supporting and encouraging one another along the way.

Appendix

All of the original analyses performed in this report relied on data available from the City of Buffalo's Open Data Portal (https://data.buffalony.gov/ [refer to notes 87-91]) and the New York State (NYS) Board of Elections (BOE) (https://www.elections.ny.gov).

To perform the analysis of voter turnout, a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request was made to the NYS BOE in August 2019. That request produced a database of all voters in New York State that included registered voter addresses and voter histories. Using mailing addresses, 301,0126 voter records were successfully matched to the City of Buffalo boundaries via a geocoding process in Esri ArcGIS 10.7.1. The next step was to reduce the dataset to only those voters who were (1) actively registered and eligible to participate in both local general elections of interest (2013 and 2017), and (2) located in a

City planning neighborhood where a clean sweep was performed between 2015 and 2016. In total, 70,672 voter records satisfied these criteria. Table A1 breaks those voters down by their home planning neighborhood and location relative to a 2015-16 clean sweep.

TABLE A1: COUNT OF VOTERS INCLUDED IN THE STATISTICAL ANALYSES, BY PLANNING NEIGHBORHOOD

NEIGHBORHOOD	BOCK DID NOT RECEIVE A CLEAN SWEEP	BLOCK RECEIVED A CLEAN SWEEP	TOTAL
Broadway Fillmore	4,387	161	4,548
Elmwood Bidwell	5,784	23	5,807
Elmwood Bryant	4,470	83	4,553
Fillmore-Leroy	2,185	219	2,404
Fruit Belt	1,287	202	1,489
Genesee-Moselle	2,877	414	3,291
Hamlin Park	2,258	472	2,730
Kenfield	2,569	1,192	3,761
Kensington Bailey	5,559	989	6,548
Lovejoy	2,468	255	2,723
Masten Park	2,883	507	3,390
MLK Park	1,564	653	2,217
North Park	7,964	477	8,441
Pratt-Willert	1,918	260	2,178
Riverside	3,303	319	3,622
Schiller Park	3,146	847	3,993
Seneca-Cazenovia	3,358	201	3,559
Upper West Side	2,038	232	2,270
West Side	2,890	258	3,148
TOTAL	62,908	7,764	70,672

The purpose of analyzing voter turnout only for those registered voters who were eligible to participate in both local elections was to try to isolate the influence of the clean sweeps on political participation. That is, studying the same pool of voters before-and-after the clean sweeps reduces (but certainly does not eliminate) the possibility that changes in turnout were caused by unobservable voter attributes, given that many of the same unobservable attributes are likely to be present at both time periods.

Given the samples described above, the analysis drew on instructive literature from housing economics to design and estimate statistical models of voter turnout. Specifically, housing researchers have long

found that home prices tend to be predicted more accurately when they are estimated using submarket-specific models based on boundaries delineated by local experts, as opposed to global/citywide models or even multilevel models that leverage predefined submarket boundaries.[131] Insofar as the City of Buffalo has carefully mapped out planning neighborhood boundaries that group together similarly situated geographic spaces within the City,[132] these boundaries were used to create and estimate 19 separate binary logistic regression models of turnout using a difference-in-differences (DiD) design. The binary dependent variable in each model took on a value of 0 if a registered voter did not participate in a given election and 1 if the voter cast a ballot in the election. Following a common regression-based DiD design, there were three explanatory variables in each model. The first variable was time, which took a value of 0 to represent the 2013 general election ("before" the clean sweep) and a value of 1 to denote the 2017 general election ("after" the clean sweep). The second variable took on a value of 0 when a voter's residence fell outside of a block that received a clean sweep between 2015 and 2016, and a value of 1 if a voter's residence was part of a clean sweep block. Finally, a multiplicative interaction term between the time and clean sweep variables was included in each model to represent the treatment effect,[133] or the possible partial effect of the clean sweep on turnout probability.

Because logistic regression coefficients are difficult to interpret, the "Zelig" package for the statistical software platform R[134] was used to estimate the expected turnout probabilities presented in Table 2 from the main text of the report. These estimations were computed by setting each explanatory variable to the value of interest (e.g., time=0 and sweep=0 for expected turnout probability in non-clean-sweep locations in the 2013 general election) and taking 1,000 simulation draws from each neighborhood-specific model. The expected values from each of these simulations were then used to compute the differences, and difference-in-differences, shown in Table 2. Differences described as "large" in Table 2 are those for which zero was not included in the 80% confidence interval of the DiD estimate (i.e., there is evidence to expect that the "treatment effect" from the clean sweep is meaningfully different from zero).

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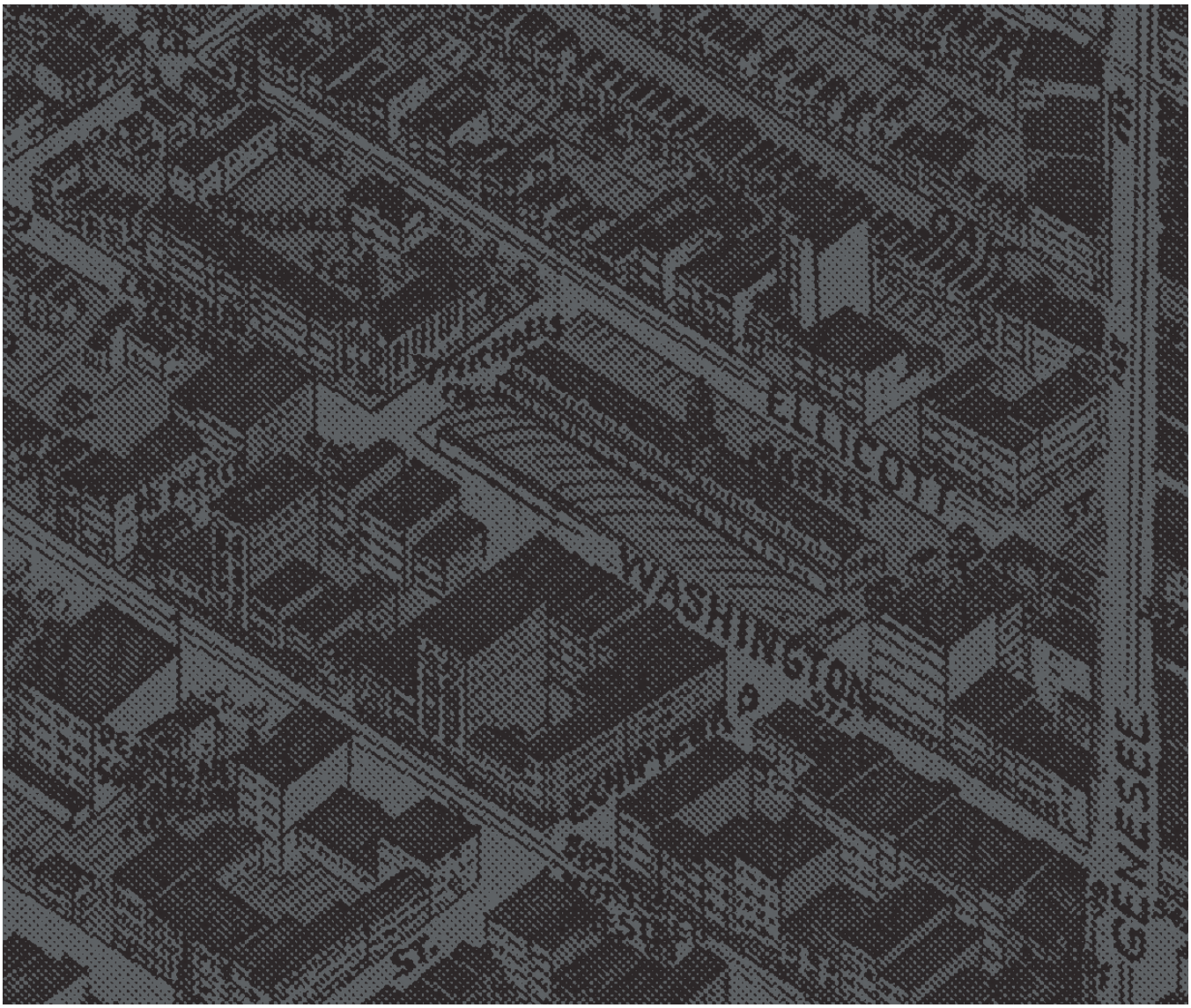

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