

# Broadway Area Narrative

## Quality of Life Values

Basically, Sarah and I are engaged in a personal quality of life initiative centered around our family home. Since we moved to Mapleton-Fall Creek in 2005, we've been working to improve the physical environment as a *tangible first step and signal to others* that we are actively changing the baseline conditions that have allowed blight and crime to prevail for so many years. Our neighborhood revitalization work is based on the proven successful principles of asset-based community development and sustainable urbanism best practices. We are certainly hyper-sensitive to the fact that we are "disrupting" a social order that has existed for generations, and always consider the perspective of our neighbors, especially those we have forged strong relationships with over the years, as we initiate projects that will change the face of our area.

## Personal Commitment & Perseverance

We know that *pace matters*, and like successful traditional investments where wealth accrues slowly, investments in trust-building relationships must also be nurtured over time. Likewise, neighborhood revitalization requires a patient approach, not least due to the difficulties inherent in acquiring distressed property. Careful, metered investment also helps to contain our exposure to various risks. Our acquisition strategy is based on opportunity, but *we do not displace existing residents. Nor are we seeking to gentrify the area or price-out existing residents.* Our long-term objective is to create a more diverse, inclusive neighborhood of choice. To achieve this aspirational goal will take time and perseverance; the decline of Mapleton-Fall Creek took generations... We've lived here for eight years, and we're not going anywhere.

## Responsible Acquisition

*We actively employ our own capital* to complete housing renovation and other projects that are sensitive to both existing residents as well as the neighborhood fabric. We feel that maintaining local control is *preferable to a NIMBY reaction that is generally ineffective at countering "vulture" investment* that relies heavily on the status quo in distressed neighborhoods such as ours. We view acquisition opportunities differently than slumlords, flippers, mortgage fraudsters, tax lien and debt investors, and foreign rental-backed security speculators --- each of whom seek to profit from low-cost distressed properties and vulnerable populations. Each of our acquisitions has broken the toxic cycle of one, sometimes several, of these exploitative investment strategies. Responsible acquisition is the first crucial step toward stabilization.

## Individual Stewardship

Responsible long-term stewardship is the foundation that cements our capital investment and allows us to make forward progress. Upon acquisition, we work to bring each of our properties, both houses and vacant lots, up to our own "community standard" -- a level of aesthetic excellence and ongoing maintenance based on the principles of the "broken window" theory and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED.) Even though *our pace dictates that some houses remain boarded as we tackle multiple simultaneous renovations*, our property maintenance standards send a clear message to our neighbors and the broader community that "this place matters." We have successfully transitioned each of our acquisitions from problem properties that consistently strain City code enforcement and public safety resources into net generators of new property tax revenue.

## Good Neighbors

Our stewardship extends beyond our property lines to include cleaning street gutters and storm drains, removing illegal dumping, and "guerilla" cleanup of properties we do not own. We've also organized several tree planting events in partnership with KIB, as well as annual alleyway cleanups and our own

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unique community tree-trimming and chipping events, dubbed ‘Chip Happens.’ These activities help to rebuild community connections while *tackling persistent neighborhood issues that are often beyond the capacity of the City to address effectively*. Along the same vein, we also developed the Broadway Community Garden (2011) on one of our vacant lots, and leveraged a \$20K Green Infrastructure Grant to install the \$83K+ award-winning Double 8 Foods Rain Garden (2013 Indianapolis Sustainability Award.) These significant volunteer investments have helped to eliminate visual blight, allowed us to form stronger relationships with community stakeholders, and improved the performance of our municipal infrastructure. Increased neighborhood pride helps to secure and sustain both capital and social investments.

### Preservation & Renovation

Our approach to residential renovation exists within a historical preservation framework, and balances the economic realities of a weak housing market with green building best practices. In other words, we're working hard to save old houses and create healthy, energy-efficient, and durable homes in the old neighborhood. Our development and operating proforma *relies on sweat equity investment coupled with rental income*. My background as a general contractor specializing in green historic renovations is a significant factor that contributes to our success, along with our experience managing rental properties. We renovate to a high standard in order to ease our management burden and attract long-term renters who, in this case, will also be our long-term neighbors. Essentially, we are leveraging our skills and experience to make this project work over time, *without outside subsidy*.

### Civic Responsibility

Mapleton-Fall Creek has suffered from years of disinvestment, and we believe that personal, holistic engagement is the key to successful renewal. For Sarah and me, both our personal and professional efforts are intimately inter-connected, and directly aimed toward improving the quality of life in Mapleton-Fall Creek and Indy. We each have a long history of community service, and we continue to advocate and cheerlead to attract new attention, new residents, and new investment to our neighborhood and City. We both continue to serve on various boards, committees, and project groups that are working toward these shared goals, including:

- Mapleton-Fall Creek Development Corporation board (Tyson 2006-2012, ongoing committee service)
- Indianapolis-Marion County Green Commission mayor’s sustainability initiative (Tyson 2007-2009)
- City of Indianapolis DMD Green HOME Program city green affordable housing pilot (Tyson 2007-2009)
- Halloween in the 'hood, open-fire chili party sponsors and organizers (2008- )
- Mapleton-Fall Creek Unity Group neighborhood association coalition (Sarah 2008-2009)
- Mid-North Quality of Life Plan community engagement initiative (2010-2011)
- MFC Neighborhood Association board (Sarah 2010-2012)
- Mapleton-Fall Creek sidewalk assessment (Sarah 2010)
- MFCDC LEED-ND Taskforce chair sustainable neighborhood revitalization (Tyson 2010- )
- Broadway Area Neighbors Group (BANG) email info & advocacy group conveners (2011- )
- Family Development Service (Head Start) board (Sarah 2011- )
- Temple Heritage Center, Inc. historic preservation & adaptive reuse of historic temple (Tyson 2012- )
- Eskenazi Health FQHC board (Sarah 2013- )
- Midtown Economic Council North Midtown TIF advisory board (Tyson 2013- )