Detroit’s population plummeted from over 1,800,000 residents in 1950 to fewer than 700,000 residents in 2014. The significant and sustained loss has resulted in over 78,000 buildings in the city that are either already blighted or at-risk of being blighted in the near future. Since Mayor Duggan’s election in 2014, nearly 13,000 buildings have been razed in hopes of removing the blighted structures will yield (1) increased property values in demolition areas and (2) reduced crime in those areas. While preliminary evidence suggests modest property value increases in these areas, the latter outcome has yet to be empirically assessed. Our study examines whether improvements in community safety have followed the thousands of demolitions and tens of millions of dollars that have been spent on Detroit’s blight problem in recent years. Using data collected and maintained by the City of Detroit, the current study explores the impact of mass-scale home demolitions on neighborhood crime rates in neighborhoods throughout the city.

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