



City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

MARY SHEFFIELD
CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT
DISTRICT 5

MEMORANDUM

TO: Trisha Stein, Chief Strategy Officer, Mayor's Office
FROM: Mary Sheffield, President, Detroit City Council
DATE: July 15, 2024
RE: Request Regarding Neighborhood Solar Initiative Questions

I am requesting answers to the following questions regarding Detroit's proposed Neighborhood Solar Initiative:

1. Which, if any, other solar energy designs were considered? How were farms determined to be the best option?
2. What will happen to the solar panels after this project ends? How will they be discarded? What is our plan to offset municipal energy after the project's expiration?
3. Why was public land chosen instead of approaching private commercial vacant landowners?
4. Was vacant land at Coleman Young Airport considered for a solar farm? If not, why? Have any former industrial sites been considered?
5. What data can be provided to show the impact these installations will have on surrounding home values? How have property values been affected in other comparable municipalities with solar fields?
6. What efforts are being made to ensure that we don't lose residents who are being relocated?

7. Given the trends of increased population and homeownership, why does the administration choose to implement solar farms on viable land that could be used for infill housing, as opposed to placing panels on municipal buildings, DPSCD buildings, parking lots or other structures?
8. What research and studies have been completed to justify the placement of the solar farms in these specific areas?
9. The City currently has an open contract to develop a Master Plan, why does this project need to be installed prior to the completion of the Master plan? Does the City anticipate compliance or conformity with the developed Master Plan?
10. The solar installation is proposed to be implemented on 100-200 acres of land, in order to provide a greater energy efficiency in 127 municipal buildings, how much acreage does the city have of vacant industrial land? Were industrial sites considered for implementation?
11. How many residential houses can fit on the 100 acres of land proposed to be used in the first phase of solar farm installation?
12. How many homes were owner-occupied, or rented within the boundaries of the proposed installation? How many residences are choosing to sell their homes to the City, so that the project can be completed?
13. Please provide a rendering of what the proposed sites would be like visually, if implemented.
14. Were windmills considered as a source of clean energy. If so, why were they not chosen?
15. Is there any concern about creating heat islands in the surrounding neighborhoods? What data can be provided on the local climate changes that residents may experience? Please provide any available environmental impact assessment done in preparation for this project.
16. What would be the impact of any potential damage due to weather conditions (hail, tornadoes, etc.)? Do damaged panels create any threat to the safety of residents? Are these panels covered under any warranty? What kind of maintenance plan is to be implemented for the farms?
17. Please share any potential noise pollution that could occur as a result of this installation, even minimal levels.
18. Please outline any proposed Community Solar legislation at the state or federal level, and the impacts they could have on the scope of this project.

19. Please share any other urban areas that have had a solar installation of this size in their neighborhoods.
20. How much do Lightstar and DTE expect to profit annually in return for this major expenditure on their behalf. Please share any possible profit source.
21. What technology exists that would allow the City of Detroit to cut the middle man and directly power our buildings? Was this considered? If so, why was it not decided on?
22. Please provide a cost-benefit analysis for this project. This should include the potential tax revenue loss, the consequences of not meeting or exceeding the target 33MW, and any additional factors related to this project.
23. Have you made contact with all owners of private vacant homes and lots? There has been a history of abandoned homes in Detroit. How many of these privately vacant homes and lots are slated to be condemned without us hearing back from the owner?
24. For all phase one privately owned vacant lots, what are the uses of these lots? Are there any community gardens or other neighborhood projects that will be removed?
25. How can we accurately estimate the value of the credit placed on our energy bills if it hasn't ever been calculated before? How can Council make an informed decision with the total cost being unknown and unestimated?
26. How does the profit DTE is slated to make from the solar renewable electricity compare to the amount that the city will no longer be paying for their electric bills?
27. Is it common practice for municipalities to continue using their existing energy sources and offset them with solar projects? Are there other municipalities that directly use clean energy?

If you have any questions, please contact Yvonne Ragland from my office at yvonne.ragland@detroitmi.gov. Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and response.

Cc: Honorable Colleagues
City Clerk