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**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 808  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone 313•224•1339  
www.detroitmi.gov

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Honorable Mary Sheffield, Council President  
FROM: Antoine Bryant, Director, Planning and Development Department (PDD)   
DATE: October 28, 2024  
RE: Community Outreach Report for the Citywide Historic Preservation Plan

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Below is a detailed description of the community outreach efforts led by the Planning and Development Department (PDD), with assistance from the Department of Neighborhoods (DON).

**1. How many meetings have occurred or will occur?**

Engagement for the Community Outreach Ordinance (COO) was comprised of two public meetings, as required for Class B Neighborhood Proposals. The following two public meetings were held virtually and noticed per the COO notification requirements:

**COO ENGAGEMENT PUBLIC MEETINGS**

1. **Meeting 1** was held via Zoom during a special PDD meeting on Thursday, October 17, 2024, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Fifty-eight people attended this meeting including City staff, block club leaders and residents from all seven Council districts.
2. **Meeting 2** was held via Zoom during the citywide DONcast meeting on Monday, October 21, 2024, from 5:00p to 5:45 p.m. Approximately 120 people attended this meeting including City staff, block club leaders and residents from all seven Council districts.

At the meetings, PDD gave an overview of the City of Detroit's existing policies pertaining to historic preservation and why PDD believes a comprehensive, citywide plan is warranted and timely. PDD summarized the Request for Proposals (RFP) timeline, the goals of the planning process, the role of the consultant to be hired, and the cost and scope of the proposed contract. At the conclusion of the presentation, attendees provided feedback on the proposed contract and were encouraged to email PDD staff at [historicplan@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historicplan@detroitmi.gov) to provide additional comments and keep informed of future community engagement events and opportunities to review and comment on draft deliverables. A comprehensive summary of the feedback provided at both meetings is listed below.

## 2. How were people notified, or will they be notified?

Both COO meetings, **Meeting 1: October 17, 2024** and **Meeting 2: October 21, 2024** were noticed in compliance with the Community Outreach Ordinance. The COO notice for *both* meetings was distributed and posted as follows:

- Shared with Detroit City Council Members and staff via email on October 4, 2024.
- Distributed via GovDelivery to members of the public and members of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) for Districts 4, 5 and 7 on October 4, 2024.
- Advertised via TV Channel 10 (Comcast) on October 4, 2024.
- Advertised via the City of Detroit's and PDD's social media channels on Facebook and Instagram on October 4, 2024.
- Announced at the Historic District Commission meeting on October 9, 2024.

## 3. What questions/concerns were raised by the community and how does the Department plan to address those concerns?

3. **Meeting 1:** The questions and concerns from the community were as follows:

1. *Question:* Is there a timeline for when the consultant/contract will begin and how will it be integrated into the Master Plan of Policies?

*Answer:* Currently, we are in the procurement process. We anticipate submitting the contract/consultant to the Detroit City Council within a few weeks. The process to collect recommendations will begin immediately upon approval of the contract. The Master Plan process is also a two-year process and the first half of our process will run congruently to prepare recommendations for historic preservation to be included in the Master Plan.

2. *Question:* Once the consultant has completed their research, will the public have the opportunity to review a draft of the proposed recommendations and provide feedback?

*Answer:* We will collaborate on a robust community engagement strategy with the consultant. However, we do anticipate ample opportunities for community engagement. Additionally, we encourage interested residents/community groups to invite PDD to their meetings by emailing [historicplan@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historicplan@detroitmi.gov).

3. *Question:* What are the threshold requirements for the plan? What criteria are you looking for to bid for this contract?

*Answer: PDD received proposals from several qualified firms and have selected consultant subject to City Council approval.*

4. *Question:* Did the public have the opportunity to provide input on the consultant prior to City Council submission?

*Answer: The necessity and scope of work for this contract is based on feedback received during various public engagement meetings with residents, historic preservationists and the Historic Designation Advisory Board. The City's rules related to procurement prohibits departments from involving the public in the process of selecting the vendor; however, we remain committed to involving the community in all aspects of this process.*

5. *Question:* Will the community – especially those in urban gardening – have the opportunity to leverage some of the state historic preservation dollars?

*Answer: The plan is focused primarily on developing policies related to the continued use of buildings; however, there is an opportunity to consider natural landmarks that have a significant historic value. PDD welcomes the opportunity to further discuss this via email at [historicplan@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historicplan@detroitmi.gov).*

6. *Question:* What power does PDD have to prevent the teardown/destruction of current historic buildings?

*Answer: The primary tool that the City uses to prevent the destruction of historic buildings is through historic district designation that is approved by City Council.*

7. *Question:* I am thrilled to learn more about this project. As a veteran and member of the Brodhead Armory Association, one of the historic buildings that is dear to my heart is the Brodhead Armory. The Association is in the process of raising funds to save the building because the organization is vehemently in opposition to current plans to demolish the building. I will be in touch to discuss how we can restore the building to its former glory and to create a development dedicated to veterans.

*Answer: This planning process will not focus on individual buildings or neighborhoods; however, we are interested in hearing your thoughts on developing policies that impact these buildings. Residents are encouraged to reach out to the department at [historicplan@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historicplan@detroitmi.gov).*

8. *Comment:* In terms of a historic plan, it is better late than never although it is disappointing that this policy was not in place prior to the destruction or sale of historic buildings like the State Fair Grounds, Brodhead Armory. I am disturbed

about the City's policy regarding the sale of historic buildings. We should put a halt on demolition of city-owned historic buildings.

*Answer: PDD recommends reaching out to the Demolition Department to discuss changes in policies regarding demolition of city-owned historic buildings. Additionally, PDD recommends that the resident remains involved in the process.*

9. *Question:* Can I clarify the need for the plan? I am concerned about this receiving federal funding.

*Answer: PDD has determined that this is important because there are buildings that are valued in the community but aren't deemed historic. We want to establish a policy to allow for these buildings to be preserved. Additionally, this is required per the Programmatic Agreement we have with the state and the federal government.*

10. *Comment:* Why can't residents attend the Master Plan of Policies Advisory Group meetings where there are more in-depth conversations about historic preservation?

*Answer: The focus of this COO meeting is to discuss the Historic Preservation Plan contract. While there are potential opportunities to discuss historic preservation during the Master Plan process, we are required by ordinance to keep the discussion centered around the proposed contract mentioned in the COO notice.*

11. *Question:* Are the areas already identified or will this be a city-wide policy?

*Response: We are looking to develop a city-wide policy noting that some policies might be more specific to certain communities than others.*

12. *Question:* I missed the beginning of the meeting. Can I get a copy of the plan emailed to me?

*Answer: Residents requesting a copy of the presentation/plan should email [historicplan@detroitmi.gov](mailto:historicplan@detroitmi.gov).*

13. *Question:* As the data is collected, will the information be available to the public? How will it be archived and made accessible once the project is complete? Perhaps interfacing with the State Historic Preservation Office database? When will these plans roll out?

*Answer: Part of the scope of the contract will include a public facing website. The name of the website has yet to be determined; however, our consultant will help develop a website which will house the draft proposals.*

14. *Question:* Is the public able to purchase a building or home in a historic district?

*Answer:* We welcome the opportunity to assist you with your inquiry. Please contact Tim Boscarino at [timothy.boscarino@detroitmi.gov](mailto:timothy.boscarino@detroitmi.gov) so we can connect you with the Real Estate Division.

15. *Question:* Are we looking at preservation of the trees, minerals and animals in the area? How in-depth will the study be?

*Answer:* When we speak of historic preservation, we are talking about buildings that are old and hold historic significance. However, we are willing to discuss minerals, animals and tree canopies offline.

4. **Meeting 2:** The questions and concerns from the community were as follows:

1. *Question:* What is the status of Jefferson-Chalmers in terms of historic designations? We are interested in more historic districts in that area.

*Answer:* Historic districts in that vicinity are Maheras Park and the Jefferson-Chalmers Business District. Changes to buildings and landscapes in these areas must be approved by the Historic District Commission. Please contact PDD by email and we will connect you with the Historic Designation Advisory Board, the body that handles requests for additional historic districts.

2. *Question:* There are several historic places in 48217 such as the Fort Street Bridge Park and the railroad viaduct near Fort Street and Pleasant Street; would these qualify to be designated as historic districts?

*Answer:* The National Register of Historic Places, a federal program that is not managed by the City of Detroit, includes the viaduct and many other places around the city, but this federal status does not protect these places. If you interested in designating these areas as City of Detroit historic districts, please contact the Historic Designation Advisory Board staff.

3. *Question:* Are there incentives to assist with the upkeep of historic properties?

*Answer:* There is a state tax credit that applies to rehabilitation of buildings in the city's historic districts and a federal tax credit that applies to rehabilitations buildings that are on the National Register of Historic Places; these credits apply

*in a very limited number of situations that meet certain criteria. There are no general incentives specifically for ongoing upkeep or maintenance. The Historic Preservation Plan will look into the possibility of creating additional kinds of incentives.*

4. *Comment:* The Masjid Wali Mohammad is a historic district but the nearby streets are in disrepair; areas surrounding historic districts should be better maintained.

*Answer: This comment, and all comments received during this meeting, will be shared with the consultant to be considered during this planning process.*

5. *Comment:* The team working on the Historic Preservation Plan should talk to the current historic neighborhoods coalition to get their opinion on how current city processes are working, or not working, in historic districts. There is no effective mechanism for reporting blight; the functionality of the Improve Detroit app should be expanded to cover blight issues and there is no reliable email address to contact the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department regarding blight.

*Answer: We are taking note of all concerns expressed during this meeting and our consultant will research them further. We are happy to set up a stakeholder meeting with any historic neighborhood organization that wants to share its concerns with us.*

6. *Question:* It seems that there are many vacant buildings in historic districts and either private sellers are pricing them too high or the City is reluctant to sell them. Also, are there any incentive programs for upkeep of historic properties? There are property owners who have held on to properties for 15 years and not maintained them and they are now in severe disrepair, and yet it is difficult to buy these properties.

*Answer: We can put you in touch with the Housing and Revitalization Department; they manage several assistance programs. However, there is no program specific to historic buildings. The Historic Preservation Plan will explore the possibility of creating such programs. For properties within historic districts you can report inappropriate work and cases of severe neglect to the Historic District Commission through the Improve Detroit app or website. Any blighted building, whether in a historic district or not, may be reported to District Managers and Deputy District Managers.*

7. *Comment:* There is no mechanism in the Improve Detroit app to report blighted buildings and the District Managers are not responsive.

*Answer: PDD and our consultant will continue to look into these issues as the process commences.*

8. Question: How can I see if a particular address is in a historic district?

*Answer: There is a map and search tool at <https://detroitmi.gov/webapp/local-historic-district-map>. This website also includes reports written by the Historic Designation Advisory Board on the history and significance of each district.*

9. Question: What is the status of Historic Fort Wayne? Is there a plan to fix some of the historic buildings?

*Answer: Historic Fort Wayne is a City of Detroit historic district and it is also on the National Register of Historic Places. The General Services Department completed a plan to strategize for the future of Historic Fort Wayne in 2020. The plan is available at <https://www.historicfortwayne.org/>.*

**4. Was there any written feedback received, including letters, comments, or reports from residents, businesses, neighborhood groups, or an established Community Advisory Council?**

Two individuals contacted PDD by email to ask if it was too late to be considered as a potential consultant. PDD responded that the RFP deadline has passed and recommended that the individual register with the Office of Contracting and Procurement to be made aware of future opportunities. One resident emailed PDD asking to be informed of any future meetings.

We would be happy to answer any additional questions. Answers to above questions and comments were answered during the presentations or as a follow-up in this report.

CC: Detroit City Council  
Dara O’Byrne, Planning and Development Department  
Marcell Todd, City Planning Commission  
Marc Siwak, Planning and Development Department  
Garrick Landsberg, Planning and Development Department  
Timothy Boscarino, Planning and Development Department

Jennifer Ross, Planning and Development Department  
Edwina S. King, Planning and Development Department  
Malik Washington, Mayor's Office  
Louise Jones, Clerk's Office



**From:** [historicplan](#)  
**To:** [Edwina King](#)  
**Subject:** email 1  
**Date:** Friday, October 25, 2024 4:15:29 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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**From:** Brandon Gabler <Brandon.Gabler@swca.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 7, 2024 2:31 PM  
**To:** Procurement Inthecloud <procurementinthecloud@detroitmi.gov>  
**Cc:** historicplan <historicplan@detroitmi.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RFP NO. 184594: Citywide Historic Preservation Plan

Hello,

The below information was brought to our attention, and it reads as though an RFP for the consultant to develop the preservation plan is still forthcoming; however, the only information I can find on the City's site is from April, stating the bid was due May 1 (for the subject RFP number).

Can you please clarify if there is still a pending RFP or if the language in the graphic below stating that the Planning and Development Department "will hire a consultant" is inaccurate and that these meetings are informational only?

Thank you!  
Brandon

[Public Notice Historic Preservation](#)



Join Zoom Meeting -

Brandon M. Gabler, PhD, RPA | he, him, his  
Strategic Growth Director—[Great Lakes/Midwest](#)

SWCA Environmental Consultants  
13 N Washington St., Suite 676  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197  
C +1.571.488.5912  
[brandon.gabler@swca.com](mailto:brandon.gabler@swca.com)



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**From:** [historicplan](#)  
**To:** [Edwina King](#)  
**Subject:** email 3  
**Date:** Friday, October 25, 2024 4:17:14 PM

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**From:** Fixed <313fixed@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 17, 2024 5:38 PM  
**To:** historicplan <historicplan@detroitmi.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Historic interest Jefferson Chalmers and Eastside Detroit

Hey there I'm a WMBE licensed General Contractor with structural expertise- also a long time Jefferson Chalmers resident and my dad was born above Marshall's Bar on Jefferson =)

I'd like to be kept in the loop with news and events

Thanks for hosting the seminar

Kiya  
(313)626-1101