



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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To: David Whitaker, Director, Legislative Policy Division
From: Alexa Bush, Director Planning & Development Department
Date: March 17, 2025
Re: **Responses to 2025-2026 Budget Analysis**

Please find below responses to your questions sent on March 11, 2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Planning & Development Department (PDD).

- 1. Please briefly explain HRD's new expenditure initiatives, new capital funding requests, operational reform and savings proposals, and new revenue initiative(s)/proposal(s) to be implemented in FY 2026.**

At this time, PDD has proposed no new initiatives for FY 2026. Staff is focused on completing several significant undertakings, including an update of the City's Master Plan of Policies, land planning along the I-375 corridor and the first citywide Historic Preservation Plan.

- 2. Please provide which appropriation/cost center the new initiative(s)/proposal(s) is impacting in FY 2026.**

No new appropriations are needed at this time to continue work on existing initiatives.

- 3. There are 39 General Fund positions recommended for FY 2026, which 1 position less than the 40 General Fund positions adopted for FY 2025. Please explain the need for the position reduction for FY 2026.**

The decrease reflects the current 39 positions plus one position whose funding is supported by a CHOICE grant.

- 4. It appears there are no budgeted expenditures for the 1 Non-General Fund position and 1 ARPA position. Please explain the need for these positions. Does PDD plan to keep this position filled? If so, what funding sources will be used to fund this position for FY 2026 and onward?**

PDD's Non-General Fund position was filled by the promotion of a PDD Planner in 2021 to help manage the implementation of CHOICE funds in the Corktown area. That funding continues to support this position until February 2028, when we envision the planner will return to regular PDD staffing status.

The ARPA position was filled in 2022 to manage real estate transactions that support neighborhood planning in areas adjacent to the Joe Louis Greenway. There is sufficient ARPA funding to support the work of this position until July 2026, when we envision the employee will be offered continued employment under regular status in a sister department.

5. **Please explain why there is an expenditure increase of \$285,317 in appropriation 29430-PDD Administration, Cost Center 433100 – Planning & Development Operations, from \$5,257,194 in FY 2025 and \$5,542,511 in FY 2026.**

This 4.3% operating budget increase reflects the restoration of turnover savings that were incorporated in FY25's budget. In FY26, all of our positions will be filled, so this funding will be needed to support all 39 positions.

6. **Please explain why there is no budget for Other Expenses in the proposed FY 2026 budget (B43-7).**

PDD will continue to work with the Budget Department to support any travel and training needed in the coming fiscal year. Realignment of funds may be necessary to support the travel and training line item.

7. **Please provide an update on the completion of the Master Plan of Policies. Is PDD on track for completing the planning process by Q4 2025? Does PDD anticipate the need for additional funding to complete the Master Plan of Policies beyond FY 2025?**

PDD does not anticipate the need for additional funding to complete the Master Plan of Policies. PDD does intend to request a contract time-only extension for our primary consultant contract to better align with our secondary (CDBG-DR funded) contract, with both contracts and the final Master Plan expected to be completed in Q2 2026. This request will come before City Council after the budget cycle.

8. **Did PDD meet the FY 2025 targeted number of the Framework Plans for the East (District 3&4), Central (District 5&6), and West (District 1, 2 &7) Regions? What is the targeted number for FY 2026?**

PDD does not target a number of Framework Plans to be started or completed in a given fiscal year. Rather, we prioritize new plans based on community needs, mayoral- and CBO-driven initiatives, and available funding. The end date of each study is set independently and determined by the particular needs of the community.

9. **Please provide an update on the Community Benefits Ordinance implementation. Are there improvements, if any, planned to better implement the Ordinance for FY 2026?**

PDD utilizes a multilayered approach to implement the fifteen (15) projects that are subject to the Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO). First, we meet regularly with various departments to discuss enforcement of the provisions outlined in their respective CBAs. These meetings allow us to address community benefits agreement (CBA) enforcement concerns in real time and assists CRIO with the completion of their biannual CBO reports. Additionally, and at the request of the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), we work with the Law Department to convene the Enforcement Committee to address

formal complaints related to the CBA. For our ongoing CBO projects – Fisher Body 21, The District Detroit, The Future of Health and Hotel at Water Square – we work with the NAC to plan the statutory annual meetings and facilitate conversations between the NAC and the Developer where NAC input is a required provision in the CBA. Finally, we maintain constant communication with the NAC related to tax abatements, construction, groundbreakings and any information applicable to their project.

We view the CBO as a living and breathing document. Understanding that we have great interest in our CBO process, we welcome suggestions from interested parties on ways to improve effectiveness and implementation while maintaining the spirit and intent of the ordinance. Additionally, we met with municipalities and interested parties throughout the state and nation to discuss our ordinance, best practices and examine ways to improve our process through policy changes. Finally, our Legislative Affairs and Equitable Development Division, which houses the CBO, plans to launch a CBO educational series in collaboration with several City departments (CRIO, HRD, JET and the Law Department), DEGC and external stakeholders in FY 2026. This series will serve as an excellent opportunity to inform and engage residents (especially those not residing in an area/district that has a CBO Tier 1 project) about the history of the ordinance, qualifiers for a Tier 1 and Tier 2 CBO project, the NAC, CBO process – including approval by the City Council and CRIO’s enforcement process once the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is approved. We look forward to sharing more details in the immediate future and look forward to continued engagement and collaboration between your offices, City Council’s Legislative Policy Division, the Equitable Development Task Force and other interested parties.

10. Were there any historic structures and assets under PDD purview identified to date?

PDD does not have any historic structures or assets under its purview. Part of PDD’s responsibilities is supporting the Historic District Commission, which provides oversight of the 150+ local historic districts throughout the city. In addition, the Historic Designation Advisory Board (a part of the Legislative Policy Division) is responsible for surveying and identifying historic properties citywide, for both local designation and National Register purposes.

11. Please provide an update on the citywide Historic Preservation Plan. Is there additional work needed for FY 2026. Does PDD anticipate the need for additional funding to complete the Historic Preservation Plan?

PDD started the Historic Preservation Plan in February 2025 and the plan is currently fully funded with the contracted work extending into FY26.