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**PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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**To:** Latisha Johnson, District 4 Council Member  
**From:** Alexa Bush, Director, Planning & Development Department *AB*  
**Date:** March 14, 2025  
**Re:** Responses to 2025-2026 Budget Analysis

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Please find below responses to your questions sent on March 10, 2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Planning & Development Department (PDD).

1. **Since 2017, there have been several development projects that have gone through the Community Benefits Ordinance process. One of the most common critiques we hear at City Council is that the process of establishing the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) and reaching a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is not completed in an adequate timeframe.**
  - a. **Has the Planning and Development Department considered exploring ways to slow down or extend the process to ensure that NAC members and residents in the impact area have a clear understanding of real estate data/development, tax abatements, proformas, and other relevant information including a review of other CBAs emphasizing examples of what has been or can be negotiated for the benefit of the community?**

Pursuant to Sec. 12-8-3 of the 2019 Detroit City Code, the Planning Director shall hold no fewer than six (6) public meetings, subsequent to the seating of the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), in the impact area as defined in Section 12-8-2 of the Code, unless a majority of the Neighborhood Advisory Council vote to waive one or more of the required meetings.

We understand that the majority of individuals who serve on the NAC are first-time participants and have varying familiarity with the tax abatement process, complex real estate transactions, and negotiations. To ensure that the NAC is empowered to successfully perform the duties as outlined in the ordinance, we facilitate a robust orientation with the NAC prior to their first meeting with the Developer. This orientation covers topics such as communication (internal and external), best practices for creating an *effective* community benefits package, NAC organizational and meeting structure and the City's Ethics Ordinance (effective with our next CBO project); and we share reference materials from internal and external subject-matter experts on our CBO process.

To further support the NAC, we connect them with members who have served on previous NACs to share first-hand what the process entails. During the CBO process and at the request of the NAC, we facilitate additional meetings with CRIO, the Law Department, DEGC and other parties deemed necessary to ensure that the NAC is able to perform their duties in a timely and efficacious matter.

We remain committed to implementing this process in a manner that is community centered, while executing the spirit and letter of the law. We welcome suggestions from the community and this Body to ensure that the community continues to benefit from this ordinance.

**b. Does PDD have the funding and capacity to do a series of workshops around the CBO/CBA process for potential NAC members and residents across Detroit?**

We appreciate the interest in the CBO process and are excited to educate residents about the process from inception to implementation. Through our Legislative Affairs and Equitable Development Division, PDD plans to launch a CBO educational series in collaboration with several City departments (CRIO, HRD, JET, and the Law Department), DEGC, and external stakeholders beginning in FY26. 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 your Honorable Body 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 to continued engagement and collaboration between your offices, City Council's Legislative Policy Division, the Equitable Development Task Force and other interested parties.

**2. Last year, the Planning and Development Department began the process of updating the Master Plan of Policies. Please outline the community engagement conducted thus far and future plans for community engagement.**

We kicked off community engagement for the Master Plan with an online Visioning Survey in April 2024 to gauge residents' current attitudes and future aspirations for Detroit. Over 1,800 people responded to the survey.

We then took our engagement to the neighborhoods with our City Voices Tour, completing 60 pop-ups from July to October 2024 all across the city. This strategy was designed to meet people where they already are and expand our reach beyond our highly engaged residents by popping up at existing events, programs, and locations around Detroit. To make pop-ups easy to find, we partnered with the Department of Neighborhoods, City Council offices, City departments, the Detroit Parks Coalition, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation Small Business Liaisons, local businesses, and community organizations including E. Warren Development Corp. and Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance. During the City Voices Tour, we engaged over 2,800 Detroit residents and other stakeholders through fun and interactive activities focused on getting public feedback around vision, values, and planning priorities.

We are about to launch our next round of community engagement, starting with five in-person public policy workshops, a virtual public policy workshop, and a youth summit in April. Future engagement is anticipated to include three rounds of district-by-district community meetings and three open houses. PDD is currently assessing engagement results so far to identify additional needs for targeted outreach and engagement by our department.

In addition, we have a regular outreach strategy that includes our project website (plandetroit.com), newsletter (over 2,400 subscribers), social media, flyer drops, bus ads, and offering quarterly updates at the Department of Neighborhoods monthly meetings, City Council Formal Session, and City Planning Commission. In addition, we are as responsive as possible to requests to share information about the Master Plan at existing meetings like the Equitable Development Task Force, Green Task Force, Detroit Future City, and Detroit Neighborhoods Forum. In total, we've attended 44 meetings to share information about the Master Plan with Detroit residents and other stakeholders, excluding meetings with City departments or other partner agencies (e.g., DLBA, DEGC, DBA), and are actively looking at ways we can increase this type of outreach.

Finally, we have convened the Master Plan Advisory Group five times and will continue to convene them regularly throughout the remainder of the project.

**3. How is the Planning and Development Department working to engage specific populations like youth, seniors, those who are differently abled, and unhoused persons in not only the Master Plan of Policies but all neighborhood planning processes?**

PDD is proactively working to engage diverse stakeholders throughout the Master Plan of Policies process. Starting with our Master Plan Advisory Group, we worked to ensure a variety of demographics are represented in the group, considering race, age (ensuring both under 25 and over 65 were represented), gender, parents with children, as well as geographic distribution. For our City Voices Tour, we specifically targeted events for youth (such as those at the Downtown Detroit Boxing Gym Detroit, Rec Center Summer Camps for Programming for youth), seniors (such as Strides for Seniors and Senior Olympics events), as well as participating in a few food-distribution events to target some of our most vulnerable populations.

As we move into the second phase of our planning process focused on drafting policies, we are planning a Youth Summit in April. The Youth Summit will be an opportunity for high school students to engage in providing feedback on policies in a fun and engaging event. We are providing transportation during the school day and hope to attract about 200 youth. In this second phase of the planning process, we will also be hosting a series of stakeholder meetings with key groups, such as those who are differently abled and unhoused persons.

In all of our planning processes, we develop and engagement plan to identify a strategy to best reach residents with all kinds of backgrounds and lived experiences and develop tools and outreach tactics based on the demographics and needs of the community.

4. **Within the upcoming Master Plan of Policies or other neighborhood plans, has PDD considered or plan to make recommendations around how we can mitigate crime through design along commercial corridors?**

For the Master Plan of Policies, we have not yet begun drafting policies, but we have heard about the importance of commercial corridors in our community engagement, including the importance of having safe and attractive corridors. High-level policies related to strengthening our corridors are likely to be included in policy drafting. We also continue to plan for specific commercial corridors in our neighborhood planning efforts and commercial corridor action plans, and we continue to lift up CPTED principles in this corridor specific work.