



**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

To: Angela Whitfield-Calloway, District 2 Council Member
From: Alexa Bush, Director, Planning & Development Department *AB*
Date: March 14, 2025
Re: **Responses to 2025-2026 Planning & Development Budget Analysis**

Please find below responses to your questions sent on March 09, 2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Planning & Development Department (PDD).

1. **Recently, City Council approved land sales to Perfecting Church west of the State Fair Solar Farm project. What can be done east of the State Fair Solar project to attract residential development and stabilize the neighborhood?**

The City has a variety of tools and strategies that focus on neighborhood stabilization, including blight-to-beauty programs, housing programs in HRD, and vacant land programs at the DLBA. Council staff can work with the Department of Neighborhoods to better direct community groups, residents, and neighborhood stakeholders to these existing resources and programs to implement projects in the neighborhood.

2. **The Higginbotham project in District 2 had its groundbreaking ceremony. How can PDD assist the developer extend his reach to repair and assist single-family residential units in the area?**

PDD does not typically get involved in the specifics of housing development but instead would defer to HRD to better understand the interest and capacity of the developer to determine if there is an opportunity for single-family repair in the area.

Additionally, the LIVE6 Alliance and the developer of Higginbotham have recently been awarded a grant from the MEDC for housing repair for qualified individuals. Contacting the LIVE6 Alliance would be the best way to get more information and further details about this program.

3. **The DLBA has scattered lots in District 2. If a neighborhood association would like to purchase all the vacant lots in its area and create a neighborhood land conservancy, how would the PDD be able to assist? Please note that many neighborhood land conservancies hold the land for future affordable housing projects to combat the effects of gentrification.**

PDD would work with DLBA and the Department of Neighborhoods to share information about the capacity needed to maintain vacant land to ensure neighborhood associations have the resources and experience to maintain the land and the expertise and capacity to develop affordable housing in the future. PDD can help evaluate the suitability of that land and the proposed development from a master plan and land use perspective, and work with HRD to understand housing needs, policy, and financing that may be germane to such a proposal.

- 4) How does PDD partner with the DLBA and HRD to promote neighborhood stabilization? In District 2, can this partnership be focused on the Greenfield neighborhood near Coffey School? Can the partnership be focused on the Fenkell/Meyer area near the Bethune School site?**

In PDD's neighborhood planning efforts, we work with the community to identify strategies to promote neighborhood stabilization, in coordination with DLBA, HRD, DON, and GSD. Through engagement with the community, we better understand the specific needs of the community and can then pair those needs with existing City resources or programs or identify the need for additional funding. We do not currently have planning projects in the Greenfield neighborhood or the Fenkell/Meyer area. Council staff can work with the Department of Neighborhoods to better direct community groups to these existing resources and programs to support these community outcomes.

- 5) Can PDD work with the Greenacres Woodward Civic Association (GWCA) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to develop a bike lane on the west side of Woodward Avenue from Eight Mile Road to McNichols that will feature a welcoming plaza at the southbound Woodward Service Drive and the eastbound Eight Mile Road Service Drive? What would be the estimated cost of the welcoming plaza? How could the cost of the plaza be shared with MDOT?**

MDOT is currently working on a Woodward Corridor Plan, which is the first step to engaging the community, planning and designing the corridor. The M-1 (Woodward Avenue) Corridor Plan will help establish a comprehensive vision for the corridor that balances the needs of all users and provides a strategic approach for future MDOT investments along the corridor. PDD and DPW are staying engaged in the process.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/projects-studies/studies/additional-studies/m-1-corridor-plan>

- 6) What is the status of the Grixdale neighborhood plans? Please describe the community outreach and give a brief description of the draft plan.**

PDD completed the community engagement process for the Grixdale Framework Plan on March 1, 2025. The engagement process included over 10 meetings with community residents as well as local community groups. These meetings were in person so we might gather information directly from residents. We also included on-line surveys during the process to enable other types of community input.

We expect to have the plan completed by June, working to incorporate all the community feedback on the draft plan and finalizing the implementation strategy in collaboration with different City departments charged with implementation. In brief, the plan strives to take the existing amenities of the neighborhood and strengthen those amenities while connecting them to potential new opportunities in the short term (2-3 years), mid term (3-5 years), and long term (5-10) where feasible and as budget allows within the following categories: Open Space, Mobility, Housing and Economic Development.

7) What is the status Master Plan outreach program? Please give a brief description.

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 our engagement results so far to identify additional needs for targeted outreach and engagement to be carried out 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 we offer 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 of 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.