




MEMORANDUM

TO: Council President Pro Tempore James E. Tate Jr.

FROM: Tammy Daniels, CEO, Detroit Land Bank Authority

THRU: Budget Finance & Audit Standing Committee 

DATE: March 25, 2025

RE: FY 2025-26 Detroit Land Bank Authority Budget Questions

1. What new revenue-generating initiatives is the DLBA considering to offset the anticipated decrease in funding during this budget cycle?

RESPONSE: Land bank staff recently completed work on *The Next 5*, a new strategic plan for the organization. Based on in-depth research, extensive public engagement and interviews with experts in the field, the plan includes several recommendations aimed at diversifying and expanding the organization's funding. While some recommendations remain slated for development in future years, staff have accelerated many of these efforts in light of the recent cut to City support. While staff are optimistic about the potential of all these efforts, staff do not anticipate that, even collectively, make up for the loss in City support.

This budget cycle, staff have begun working on new initiatives to improve collection of statutory revenue, forging new relationships with philanthropic funders, exploring new property sales programs, and efforts to add value to existing properties and listings.

- Statutory Revenue - Staff have begun working with at the City of Detroit Office of the Chief Financial Officer to ensure properties sold by the land bank are on correctly on the specific tax roll.
- Philanthropic Funding – Staff have begun engaging with local philanthropic funders to solicit support for the land bank's programming, from occupied home repair to greenspace activation.

- New Sales Programs – Recently, staff began outlining possible new programs aimed at developing new pathways for residents to purchase property from assembled green spaces and vacant homes.
 - Adding Value to Properties– Staff are currently evaluating opportunities to improve the utility of vacant land through site assembly, parcel modification, rezoning, and other administrative predevelopment activities.
2. How does the DLBA plan to enhance collaboration with other city departments to maximize resource utilization and achieve common goals within the constraints of the Mayor’s proposed budget for the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA)?

RESPONSE: Land bank staff work closely with counterparts at City departments regularly and aim to expand and strengthen these relationships in the coming year. This coming year, staff anticipate working closely with the Department of Innovation and Technology to explore electronic marketing of properties, partnering with City Planning Commission to address outdated zoning, working with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer to address erroneous delinquent taxes, coordinating with the Department of Public Works and General Services Department to address property maintenance concerns, and the Buildings, Safety Engineering, Environmental Department to address dangerous buildings, the Construction & Demolition Department on property demolition and securement, and finally the Housing & Revitalization Department to support infill housing strategy.

3. How does the DLBA plan to align its property disposition strategies with major economic development projects in Detroit to ensure community benefits and sustainable growth?

RESPONSE: Staff are actively involved with major economic development projects across the city, from the Office of Sustainability’s Solar Neighborhoods project, and Housing & Revitalization Department’s Choice Neighborhoods project to the Planning & Development Department’s Future of Health project and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department’s Brightmoor Stormwater Improvement Project. In each case, staff have been closely involved with the project, making extensive contributions of staff time and property in hopes of realizing community benefits, sustainable growth, and other positive outcomes. Through these projects, the land bank’s efforts supported affordable housing development in North Corktown, the creation of a community land trust in Northwest Goldberg, the creation of green stormwater infrastructure in Brightmoor, and the provision of community benefits and development of solar energy infrastructure in five neighborhoods across the city. As these projects move from planning to implementation, staff are also exploring opportunities to ensure equitable resident access to surplus land newly released for sale by City planning staff

4. What training programs are in place to ensure staff are equipped to meet evolving organizational needs?

RESPONSE: The DLBA offers a comprehensive training program to new staff as well as ongoing training opportunities for existing staff. A brief outline of the DLBA offerings include:

A. Onboarding and Orientation

- **Structured Onboarding:** New employees are provided with a comprehensive orientation and departmental onboarding that introduces the company's culture, policies, and role-specific expectations.
- **Early Skills Training:** In late spring the DLBA will launch additional offerings to include targeted training to quickly bring them up to speed with their job responsibilities and essential tools.

B. Continuous Professional Development

- **Ongoing Learning Opportunities:** Continuous training programs—ranging from in-person workshops and seminars to online courses and webinars—to keep staff updated on the latest industry trends, technologies, and best practices.
- **Certification Programs:** DLBA supports certification courses in relevant technical or managerial areas to ensure that employees' skills remain competitive, and industry recognized. (Talent Detroit and LinkedIn Learning)

C. Leadership and Management Training

- **Leadership Development Programs:** Leadership meetings and trainings designed to groom leaders through mentoring, coaching, and structured development plans.
- **Management Workshops:** Current managers may receive training focused on strategic decision-making, conflict resolution, and team building to drive organizational effectiveness.

D. Digital and Soft Skills Enhancement

- **Technology Training:** With rapid technological change, DLBA ensures that staff has digital skills training to ensure that staff can effectively use new software, tools, or platforms.
- **Soft Skills Development:** Training in communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and adaptability helps staff work effectively in dynamic, team-oriented environments.

E. Cross-Functional Learning

- **Job Rotation and Cross-Training:** Training that allows employees to work in different departments can broaden their understanding of the organization and foster innovation.
- **Mentorship and Coaching:** This summer, the DLBA will launch a program that will pair less experienced staff with seasoned professionals to create a pathway for learning and career development.

F. Customized and Strategic Training Initiatives

- **Tailored Learning Paths:** DLBA goal planning creates frameworks and performance assessments to design personalized training plans that address individual strengths and areas for growth.
- **Alignment with Strategic Goals:** This pairs with Goal Planning and is aligned with the organization's long-term vision, such as digital transformation and managerial development, ensuring that the workforce evolves with organizational priorities.

G. Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

- **Regular Assessments:** Continuous evaluation through feedback surveys, performance reviews, and skills assessments ensures that training initiatives remain effective and relevant.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Feedback is used to refine and update training content, making sure that learning initiatives keep pace with industry developments and internal changes.

Overall, these training programs are part of a comprehensive Learning and Development strategy aimed to not only address current needs but also anticipate future challenges. By investing in a diverse range of training opportunities—from technical skills and digital literacy to leadership and soft skills—the trainings ensure DLBA employees are knowledgeable and ready to contribute to the company's evolving goals.

5. How does the proposed funding support the maintenance and prioritization of blighted properties around schools, community centers, places of worship, etc.?

RESPONSE: As outlined in the draft version of the proposed MOU, the DLBA will work in conjunction with the City of Detroit to prioritize maintenance around blighted properties, schools, community centers and places of worship. In FY24 and FY25, the DLBA maintenance team has worked collaboratively with GSD, to strategically coordinate maintenance efforts in these targeted areas. The DLBA will make every effort to continue this effort, and strategically allocate resources to support residents.