



Detroit Department of Transportation
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To: David Whitaker, Director, Legislative Policy Division
From: Robert Cramer, Executive Director, Detroit Department of Transportation
Date: March 25, 2025
Re: **Responses to 2025-2026 DDOT Budget Analysis**

Please find below responses to your questions sent on 3/13/2025, regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Detroit Department of Transportation.

- 1. Please briefly explain the department's new expense initiatives, new capital funding requests, operational reform and savings proposals, and new revenue initiatives/proposals to be implemented in FY 2026. Please provide which appropriation/cost center the new initiative/request/proposal is impacting in FY 2026.**
 - a. New Expense Initiatives**
 - i. DDOT Service Enhancement
 1. Quarterly increases for bus service are planned for FY26 to exceed pre-pandemic levels (200 AM/215+ PM).
 2. The DDOT Service Enhancement will impact the following appropriations and cost centers:
 - a. 27200 - 200280 - DDOT Vehicle Maintenance
 - b. 27200 - 200290 - DDOT Materials Management
 - c. 27200 - 200300 - DDOT Vehicle Operation
 - d. 27200 - 200310 - DDOT ADA Transportation Services
 - e. 29201 -200110 - DDOT Customer Programs & Communications
 - ii. Same-Day Paratransit Service
 1. DDOT will launch Same-Day Paratransit beginning Q4 FY25 in operation from Monday through Saturday from 5am-7pm with an estimated 32,000 annual trips. This service is supported with an RTA grant.
 2. DDOT's Paratransit Enhancement will impact 27200-200310 ADA Transportation Services.
 3. Since DDOT Paratransit assumed administrative functions in January 2023, productivity has improved greatly. The previous contractor's last reported on-time performance rate was 85%. By July 1, 2023, DDOT had achieved a 95% rate, and now currently operates consistently at 99% — one of Paratransit's proudest accomplishments.
 4. Ridership has also exhibited consistent growth since January 2023, with a year-over-year increase of 20%. There are currently over 27,000 registered users for the system. Following a decline in



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2021 and 2022, where ridership numbers dropped as low as 245,941, we have recently experienced recovery and growth. Projections estimate at least 350,000 trips, and possibly as many as 385,000 trips, in 2025, building on 2024's total of 322,210 trips. This sustained growth underscores increased public trust and demand for DDOT Paratransit services, so additional funding was required in FY26 to assist with this.

iii. Bus Wifi

1. Bus Wifi will now be unlimited in FY26. This budget initiative is located in 27200-200170 Building Maintenance.

iv. There are no new DDOT capital and revenue initiatives in the FY26 Mayor Proposed Budget.

b. Please explain the need to budget for DDOT grant matching beginning in FY 2026.

i. DDOT has three (3) grants that require local matches in order to receive federal funding. DDOT has previously had multiple grants that have required a local match, and that have been included in the annual budget. This will be the first year, however, that a new cost center has been created to house them to allow for better tracking of required match expenditures.

2. On page B20-2, Under Goals, Strategic Priorities and Related City Outcomes, please provide an update on Goal#8- Implement a fleet plan that incorporates low to no emission vehicles. Please discuss any changes in new federal policies regarding electric vehicles and the impact on accomplishing this goal.

- a. DDOT is in the process of replacing the model year 2012 diesel buses with diesel hybrid buses. These buses are expected to be in service by Q4 2025.
- b. DDOT was also awarded a FY22 Low-or No Emission grant for \$8,158,194 to receive four (4) electric buses, two (2) plug in chargers, and one (1) overhead charger.
- c. DDOT received the FY24 Low-or-No Emission federal grant award of \$35,894,267 to purchase 21 hybrid, 4 hydrogen, and a hydrogen fueling station. DDOT is expected to receive the diesel hybrid buses by Q4 2026 and Hydrogen buses by Q3 2027.

3. On page B20-5, the FY 2026 Proposed Budget includes 1,200 positions, an increase of 117 positions from the 1,083 budgeted in FY 2025. Please discuss positions increases/decreases in the following appropriations:

- a. On page B20-13 – B20-18: Appropriation 27200- Rider Services increased by a net of 112 positions:
 - i. cc 200170- DDOT Building Maintenance: decreased by 9; reassigned



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to other cost center(s) within the organization. Were there any positions eliminated; will there be any layoffs?

1. No, there were no positions that were eliminated and DDOT is not planning to layoff any of the current staff. Positions that were reassigned to other cost centers were done to make sure the budget matched the internal Departmental restructuring undertaken during FY25.

ii. cc 200280- DDOT Vehicle Maintenance: increased by 26 net; please explain the increase in Electronic Equipment Technician and the Automotive Research Assistance positions and the decrease of 3 in the General Auto Mechanics position.

1. The additional Electronic Equipment Technicians were requested to cover the creation of a third shift at our facilities which will help with efficiency and the reduction of overtime. The additional Automotive Research Assistants will be deployed to our Quality Assurance Research (QAR) team, whose day-to-day responsibilities assist DDOT with extending the life of our vehicles and helping with vehicle downtime. Adding these positions will also help reduce overtime based on current positions having to be utilized in multiple areas. The reduction of budgeted GAM positions was done after review of the current GAM levels, and with consideration of our other critical hiring needs at this time.

iii. cc 200300- DDOT Vehicle Operations: 91 net increases; please discuss the increase in Transportation Equipment Operators (bus drivers) of 63 positions for a total of 690. It appears that the department has reinstituted the Attendance Bonus designation, please discuss. The Transportation Terminal Supervisor position increased in FY 2026 by 12 after a reduction in FY 2025, please explain.

1. The increase request for TEO operators, was based on our internal review of the 3200-3500 planned and unplanned absences we have seen, and the service increases the Department has scheduled for April and June of 2025, where there will be a needed increase of 63 TEO's in order to meet the scheduled service changes. The Attendance bonus has been in place since 2021, and there was no pause. When the FY25 budget was submitted, the Transportation Terminal Supervisor


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position was accidentally cut, even though there were employees on staff already in those positions. The increase to the FY26 budget is to make the budget whole and cover the underbudgeted positions that are filled.

iv. cc 200310- DDOT ADA Transportation Services: net increase of 4; please discuss the increase in the Dispatcher Paratransit 1 and 2 positions.

1. The increase for paratransit positions was to accommodate the significant growth this Division has seen over the last year, and currently the team is running at a deficit with almost 80% of the current dispatch team being eligible for FMLA, which has put a major constraint on the ability of the Division to function properly. Additional staffing will correct this and help reduce overtime.

b. Appropriation 29200- DDOT Administration: cc 200230- DDOT Safety Department: added 11 Service Guards in the current fiscal year and proposes a decrease of 5 in FY 2026; please explain.

- i. The Safety Division was able to utilize a third-party contractor to assist with coverage at our terminals and after a review of the current Departmental needs, we have made a reduction in Safety Guard positions, to allow for the addition of other critical hiring needs at this time. The Safety Department has introduced a new Management position, and Safety Officer position which will help with more efficient Terminal oversight, system safety and assistance with needed video pulls and review. Per the current job description provided by the Union, specific critical functions could not be completed by the Service Guard position.

4. On page B20-5, according to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), the department has 33 vacancies through February 5, 2025.

- a. Please indicate your number of vacancies as of February 28, 2025. What is the total number of bus drivers employed as of this date (the current budget includes 627 Transportation Equipment Operator positions (page B20-15), on page B20-4 in November 2024 the TEO headcount was 514).

TEOs/Operators	
Active	490
Inactive	31



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Out of Service	5
Current Student Headcount	115
Total Number of Vacancies	101

b. Please explain the difficulties in recruiting for certain positions, such as bus drivers, mechanics, executive level positions, etc.

- i. Bus Drivers - We have a sufficient pipeline of candidates.
- ii. Mechanics- See strategy below.
- iii. Executive Level positions - No current difficulties.



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c. What is the strategy for improving recruitment and retention of essential positions?

i. Mechanic Recruitment & Hiring Strategy

1. Enhanced Job Postings & Online Presence
 - a. Update social media with mechanic job postings, including a QR code linking directly to the application.
 - b. Sponsor job postings on Indeed, Transit Talent, and Nextdoor to reach a broader audience.
2. Employee Referral Program
 - a. Create an Employee Referral Program with a potential incentive for the garage that generates the most referrals.
3. Entry-Level Mechanic Opportunities
 - a. Increase hiring of Repair Mechanics to support General Auto Mechanics (GAMs) by handling entry-level tasks.
 - b. Partner with local high schools and colleges with mechanic programs to create a pipeline for Repair Mechanics, allowing them to transition to General Mechanics after probation.
 - c. Collaboration between Wayne County Community College, Detroit at Work, and DDOT to develop talent.
4. Community Outreach & Advertising
 - a. Create and distribute job flyers in local auto parts stores throughout the city.
 - b. Promote job openings across digital platforms:
 - i. DDOT Facebook
 - ii. Talent Acquisition Facebook & Instagram
 - iii. City of Detroit LinkedIn
 - iv. NeoGov
5. Recruitment Events & Job Fairs
 - a. Feature mechanics job opportunities at job fairs, highlighting the benefits of a union-secured job and training on diesel and electric vehicles at DDOT.
6. Interdepartmental Collaboration
 - a. Strengthen communication between DDOT and GSD to develop new recruitment strategies through biweekly brainstorming meetings.



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- 5. On page B20-8: FY 2026 expenditures for Transportation Operation (Fund 5301) increase by 11.5% over the FY 2025 Adopted Budget. Salary & Wages and Employee Benefits increased by 16.5% and 7.8%, respectively; Professional & Contractual account increased by 22.6%; Operating Supplies increased by 15.6% and Operating Services slightly decreased by 1.3% over the FY 2025 budget. Other Expenses increase by 22.6% over the FY 2025 budget. Briefly explain the year-over-year changes in these categories.**
 - a. FY 2026 expenditures for Transportation Grants Fund (Fund 5303) increased by 1.1% over the FY 2025 Adopted Budget. Please explain the increase in Professional & Contractual Services for \$117,330 for FY 2026.**
 - i. The increase in Professional & Contractual Services is due to the budgeting of an annual grant for the MDOT Specialized Services Operating Assistance Program to provide transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.
- 6. On page B20-9: DDOT FY 2026 revenues for Transportation Operation (Fund 5301) increase by 11.5% over the FY 2025 Adopted Budget. Sales & Charges for Services decreased slightly by -.1% and Contributions & Transfers increased by \$19.8 million, 17.1%. Please discuss the year-over-year changes.**
 - a. Grants, Shared Taxes & Revenues in Fund 5303- Transportation Grants increased by \$117,330, .7% and Contributions & Transfers increased by \$69,696. Briefly explain the year-over-year changes in these categories.**
 - i. Grants, Shared Taxes, and Revenues increased due to the addition of the revenue budget for the MDOT Specialized Services Grant, an annual grant.
 - ii. Contributions & Transfers increased due to the addition of the revenue budget of the city cash match required for the annual Unified Work Program Grant from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) that supports various planning activities outlined in SEMCOG's Work Program.
- 7. On page B20- (10-11): Please explain the year-over-year changes in expenditures for the following appropriation-cost centers:**
 - a. Appropriation 27200- 200170- DDOT Building Maintenance, please discuss the \$1.4M (12%) decrease in FY 2027 followed by 1% growth in the forecast years.**
 - i. The decrease in 27200-200170 DDOT Building Maintenance is due to the one-time \$1.4M budget initiative for Bus Shelter Cleanup in the FY26 Mayor Proposed Budget.
 - b. Appropriation 27200- 200300- Vehicle Operation increased 23.7% from \$50.5M**



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to \$62.5M.

- i. The increase in Vehicle Operations 200300 is primarily driven by additional Salary and Benefit costs related to an increase in 91 FTEs.

c. Appropriation 27200- 200310- DDOT ADA Transportation Services increased 20.1% from \$15.5M to \$18.7M. Briefly discuss DDOT's in-house service and external contractual services.

- i. DDOT Paratransit contracts operational services to five (5) service providers. The service providers, Big Star Transit, Checker Transportation, Delray United Action Council, Moe Transportation, and People's Express, provide vehicles and operators who complete the requested trips.
- ii. Administrative services, consisting of customer service, dispatch, customer care, eligibility, and training, are wholly operated in-house by DDOT Paratransit which include the following:
 - 1. Customer service books trip reservations and answers customer inquiries.
 - 2. Dispatch performs system monitoring, facilitates trips, and supplies supplemental support for customer inquiries.
 - 3. Customer care coordinates community outreach initiatives and investigates and responds to customer comments and observations.
 - 4. Eligibility serves as an intake for potential clients who would like to use the service and have returned applications completed by a healthcare professional.
 - 5. Training provides supplemental and passenger assistance training to the Service Providers and in-person system monitoring.

d. Appropriation 29201- 200070- DDOT Management Information Services increased from \$521,288 to \$1.1M in FY 2026; please explain.

- i. The increase in 29201-200070 DDOT Management Information Services from FY25 to FY26 is due largely to an increase in operating supplies. New budget initiatives for operating supplies include an increase to the information technology budget and the migration of Clever Cloud services.

8. On page B-20-10, Appropriation 27200- 200370 DDOT Operations Support- DTC, please discuss the one-year increase of \$950,000 to the People Mover allocation in FY2026.

- a. The increase for the People Mover allocation is consistent with the request made by DTC and presented to Council in their agency budget hearing. DDOT



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agrees with the rationale and justification details and information provided through their agency process including the LPD budget questions.



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9. **On page B20-10, Appropriation 29202- 200160 DDOT Claims Fund (Insurance Premium) – No change to the FY 2026 Proposed budget of \$12 million for this account. However, litigation and damage claims have continued to increase. Please explain the assumptions used to determine adequate funding for this account.**
- The consistent amount budgeted of \$12M is for insurance premiums, not for actual expenses. The Risk Management Office of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer manages all DDOT claims.
10. **Appropriation 29203- DDOT Legacy Liabilities: Briefly describe the expenditures recorded in this appropriation. Please explain the (4.5%) decrease proposed for the FY 2026 budget followed by a less than 1% decrease for the forecast years. Do you have a schedule of payments for this activity?**
- The decrease is primarily due to a reduction in citywide pension liabilities as a result of the switch to level principal amortization and quarterly pension payments. This appropriation also contains funding for DDOT's share of the remaining B Note debt service which declines each year as that debt is paid down.
11. **On page B20-12, please explain the revenue year-over-year changes. Please address the following:**
- Appropriation 27200-200300- Vehicle Operation: Per the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for June 30, 2024, in FY 2024 DDOT collected a total of \$8M in passenger fares, an improvement of \$.3M over the previous fiscal year. How much has been collected to date for FY 2025 in DDOT's Farebox revenues? How do current ridership figures compare with last year? Is DDOT proposing any fare increases/decreases for the forecast period?**
 - As of February 2025, DDOT has collected \$5.4M FY25 year to date. DDOT February 2025 year-to-date ridership is 9.3M. February 2024 year-to-date ridership was 7.7M. DDOT is not proposing any changes in fares at this time.
 - Appropriation 27200-200300- Vehicle Operation: In FY 2024 the city's General Fund contribution to DDOT increased by \$8.6 million to \$74.4M and another \$4.2M in FY 2025 to \$78.5M (excludes \$6.5M to People Mover). The proposed budget includes \$97.9M (excludes \$7.5M for People Mover) in General Fund contributions from the city; a 24.7% increase of \$19.4M.**
 - The \$19.4M increase in the General Fund Contribution is driven primarily by fixed route bus service expansion and expansion of ADA Services.



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- c. **Appropriation 27200-200300- Vehicle Operation: Are there changes in the State formula that may impact FY 2025 or FY 2026 revenues? Will DDOT receive any supplemental ACT 51 tax revenues during FY 2026 and/or the forecast years?**
- i. There are no major changes noted at this time. However, MDOT has indicated that (unless a new road funding package is implemented) the operating reimbursement rate should be assumed to be approximately 26% instead of the original 29%, resulting in a reduction of approximately \$241k in FY26. There are no additional supplemental Act 51 tax revenues anticipated for DDOT for FY26.

12. On page C9, please discuss the negative in FY 2024 actual expenditures of (\$10.9M) in Fund 5301- 29200- 200280- DDOT Vehicle Maintenance.

- a. This negative figure is the result of reclassifying eligible FY24 Payroll and Benefits to Preventative Maintenance Grant – Fund 5303.

13. From the FY 2024 DDOT financial statements: DDOT Net Position improved over the previous fiscal year but continue to remain in deficit position (decreased to -\$44.9M from -\$102.7M in FY 2023). DDOT continues to post operating losses (increased to \$168.6M from \$126.2M in FY 2023) resulting in increased contributions from the city's General Fund and resulting in on-going deficit net position.

- a. **Please discuss how current and proposed operational improvements and capital investments will help address DDOT's continuing deficit position.**
- i. Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) has operated within the budgeted subsidy (i.e., transfer in) from the City of Detroit's General Fund and federal and state grants funding for fiscal 2024. The expectation is that DDOT will continue to be subsidized by the General Fund and these federal and state grants indefinitely.

14. Please provide a brief update on DDOT's capital improvement program.

- a. **What is the status of on-going plans such as bus replacements, Coolidge Terminal construction and various pilot programs initiated in FY 2024 and FY 2025? Please provide funding received to date, funding sources and timelines, if available.**

Project	Status	Project Budget	Funding still Outstanding / Needed	Funding Sources	Timeline
Coolidge Terminal Move Project	Progress continues on structures being enclosed,	\$159.7 million	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State General Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction and Inspection and Testing to occur Winter of 2025.

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	pavement and roofing			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected operations to commence in Spring 2026
Jason Hargrove Transit Center	Grand opening occurred May 2024. Additional features are slated to be completed with the next 10 months.	\$31 million	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Contribution General Fund Bond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed in May 2024. Installation of Passenger Information Signs through December of 2025
Rolling Stock (Replacement) - 45 Hybrid Diesel 40ft Replacing 2012 Fleet	Buses are in the manufacturing phase, with potential deliveries of vehicles starting this calendar year.	\$44 million	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buses are currently in the manufacturing phases First bus deliveries anticipated in Summer of 2025, with subsequent deliveries occurring through the Fall of 2025.
Rosa Parks Facility Improvements	Outreach will begin in April 2025, with input from Public and City stakeholders	\$3 million	\$2.5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Outreach (Spring and Summer of 2025) Design & Engineering (Fall and Winter of 2025) Construction and Renovation: (Entirely of 2026)
Enhanced Corridor - E Jefferson	Selecting construction contractor. Finalizing procurement POs for hardware.	\$1.9 million	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction to begin in Spring of 2025 Several project locations and assets delayed for coordination with DWSD water main project on same corridor Anticipated completion by December 2025
On Board Cameras	Currently in the evaluation phase of the bid process.	\$6 million	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement and Contracting through the Spring of 2025. Stakeholder engagement and planning for 1 month

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					after contract initiation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation, testing and acceptance occurs through the Summer of 2025 to beginning of Winter 2025.
Bus Stop Shelters Phase 1 - 60 Ad Shelters	Construction and installation in progress	\$2,950,000	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In process of construction & Installation, completion estimated by May 30, 2025
Bus Stop Shelters Phase 2 - 100 standard and cantilever	Site selection in process	\$5.4 million	\$4.3 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locations selected by April 2025 • Following location list, begin NEPA, SHPO, and design • Anticipated construction starts October 2025 • Anticipated completion late 2026
Fare Collection System Replacement	Procurement process in contract negotiation stage	\$14.9 million	\$0.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting and City Council anticipated by May 2025 • Anticipated start date of project in June of 2025 • Anticipated completion late 2025
New Non-Revenue Support Vehicles	Acquisition is in progress for current year's purchase. Additional vehicles are in the requirements gathering phase	This year's allocation of vehicle purchases is funded at \$404k out of a total need of \$699k with additional obligation occurring in July of 2025	\$295k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal • State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated receipt of this year's allocation of vehicles in October of 2025 • User requirements and fleet needs assessment occurs through early 2026 after receipt of vehicles. • Procurement of next round of vehicles begins subsequently, with the next procurement process extending into mid 2026.


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Motorola Solutions and DDOT-Control Center/Dispatchers	Planning stages of the project and is dependent on the completion of the Coolidge Project.	\$1.6 million	\$1.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requisition September of 2025. Procurement and contracting to February of 2026 Completion of the Coolidge project in February 2026 Engineering over Spring of 2026. Potential construction and installation over Summer of 2026
Paint Booth - Shoemaker Facility Improvements	Procurement process underway, with bids / proposals being reviewed.	\$2.2 million	\$300k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal State 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement process underway, with bids and proposals currently being accepted. Anticipated start date for architecture and design starting in Summer of 2025.

- b. The recently approved FY 2026-2030 Proposed Capital Agenda included projects funded in-whole or in- part, with city “Pay-as-you-go” (PAYGO) – General Fund dollars: 1. Bus Stop Shelters; and 2. Coolidge Facility Rebuild. Please discuss the amount of funding needed from the General Fund to complete these projects.**

The Capital Agenda estimates \$6,013,000 for bus stop shelters in FY26 and FY27. These shelters are currently funded with existing 5307 federal transportation funds.

The Coolidge Facility Rebuild project budget originally anticipated approximately \$8m in General Fund PAYGO capital funding. However, we have been able to utilize remaining transportation bond proceeds to cover the City’s portion of the project expenses. The vast majority, approximately \$128m, of the project’s budget is covered by existing federal funding.



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- c. How much of the \$31M project cost for the Jason Hargrove Transit Center was funded from the General Fund and/or capital bond funds?**

Aside from the \$7m contribution from Amazon for the project, the remainder was primarily funded with transportation bond proceeds. A small amount of the project was funded via General Fund surplus PAYGO to account for the areas of the transit center that were disqualified from the use of UTGO bonds due to private use restrictions. These are the areas that were built to be leased to non-City of Detroit tenants.

- d. Please discuss The Enhanced Corridor - E Jefferson project shown in the Capital Agenda for \$4.8M in "PAYGO" for FY 2025. Could this project be funded from the city's Street Funds?**

The Street Fund has been completely programmed for existing road plan project. The East Jefferson Enhanced Corridor project will make East Jefferson ready for use as a bus rapid transit corridor.

- e. Please provide an update on DDOT's technology upgrades. What is the status of the on-board camera system?**

The onboard camera system is in the evaluation of bid phase. We anticipate having a decision within the next few weeks and will enter further procurement phases and contract negotiations possibly later this month. We then present it to City Council early this summer and begin stakeholder kickoff as well in the summer.

- f. What is the status of the project to replace or install bus shelters citywide? Is this information available by district?**

DDOT has two projects to install new and replacement shelters across the city. DDOT's "Phase I" project is to install new and replacement shelters with advertisements. These advertisements require more space in the right-of-way, which limits DDOT's ability to place the shelters in many locations. DDOT's "Phase II" bus shelter project is to install new and replacement shelters with a standard shelter design and a cantilever (overhang) shelter for locations with less available space.

DDOT is in the construction and installation process for Phase I – advertisement. Below is a table showing number of shelter installations by district.



Phase 1 Bus Shelters

District	Shelters
1	9
2	10
4	9
5	20
6	5
7	4
Highland Park	3
Total	60

DDOT is in the site selection process for our Phase II – 100 bus shelters – project, and therefore we do not have information available by district.

Signed by:
Robert Cramer
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