



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mary Sheffield, Council President
FROM: Alexa Bush, Director, Planning and Development Department (PDD) 
DATE: May 27, 2025
RE: Community Outreach Report for the Denby-Whittier Neighborhood Framework Plan

Below is a detailed description of the community outreach efforts led by Planning and Development Department with assistance from the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Media Services Department, the Detroit City Council and the District 4 Community Advisory Council (CAC).

1. How many meetings have or will occur?

Engagement for the Community Outreach Ordinance (COO) was comprised of three (3) public meetings, with two (2) as required for Class B Neighborhood Proposals, and an additional meeting to accommodate residents unable to attend the evening meetings. The following three public meetings were held virtually and noticed per the COO notification requirements:

COO ENGAGEMENT PUBLIC MEETINGS

- **Meeting 1** was held via Zoom during a special PDD meeting on Wednesday, May 7, 2025 from noon to 1p. Twenty (20) people attended this meeting, in addition to City staff (3), a member of the District 4 Community Advisory Council (CAC), and a representative from the Office of Council Member Latisha Johnson.
- **Meeting 2** was held via Zoom during a special PDD meeting on Wednesday, May 7, 2025 from 6p to 7p. Nine (9) people attended this meeting, in addition to City Staff (3), a member of the District 4 Community Advisory Council, and a representative from the Office of Council Member Latisha Johnson.
- **Meeting 3** was held via Zoom during a special PDD meeting on Thursday, May 9, 2025 from 6p to 7p. Twelve (12) people attended this meeting, in addition to City Staff (3), a member of the District 4 Community Advisory Council, and Council Member Latisha Johnson who represents Detroit City Council District 4.

2. How were people notified, or will they be notified?

All three (3) COO meetings, held on May 7 (Meeting #1 at 12 PM and Meeting #2 at 6 PM) and May 8 (Meeting #3 at 6 PM), were noticed in compliance with the Community Outreach Ordinance. The COO notice for *all* meetings was distributed and posted as follows¹:

- Shared with Detroit City Council members and staff via email on April 22, 2025.
- Distributed via the City of Detroit's GovDelivery to members of the public and members of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) for District 4 on April 22, 2025.
- Distributed via the Denby-Whittier Framework Plan Gov Delivery on April 22, 2025.
- Distributed via the Planning & Development Department's website on April 22, 2025.
- Advertised via TV Channels 10, 22 and 68 (Comcast) on April 22, 2025.
- Advertised via the City of Detroit's and PDD's social media channels on Facebook and Instagram on April 22, 2025.

3. What questions/concerns were raised by the community and how does the Department plan to address those concerns?

- **Meeting 1:** The questions and concerns from the community were as followed:

Comment: I mean it sounds like you already have proposal reviews. It seems I'm a little confused to what's needed from us if you already have proposals reviewed?

Response: The purpose of this meeting is to give you an opportunity to see where we are to evaluate the consultant team to assist with executing the contract. This is not a planning meeting noting that those meetings won't start until after the summer upon City Council approval.

Question: What is going to be the budget for all the projects? What is the final number for what we can do because \$330,000 will not go far.

Response: Due to City of Detroit Office of Procurement guidelines, we are prohibited from sharing the budget during this presentation. However, we can share that \$330,000 is allocated towards the execution of this study.

Question: Can you give clarity on what your actually doing? Or you doing already have proposals?

Response: We do not have proposals for this contract. We are soliciting feedback from the community on the proposed Denby-Whittier Framework Plan contract. The feedback received from the meetings will be included in a report that will be submitted to the Detroit City Council. This report will help City Council make an informed decision about the merits of the contract while centering the feedback received from the community.

¹Note: the information was reshared via the aforementioned methods on May 5, 2025.

Question: What's being proposed do be done in this area? Or will that be determined after a contractor is selected? I'm unclear on what the contract is going to entail.

Response: The contract will allow the consultants to help PDD conduct meetings, research and gather intel based on the information shared in the presentation.

Question: Will this slideshow be shared out?

Response: Yes. All materials will be available on our website, www.detroitmi.gov/denbywhittier.

Question: Is it one of the four [pillars] or a bit of each?

Response: We will cover all the pillars (housing and neighborhood stabilization, commercial and economic development, environmental and public realm & streetscapes and mobility) during this framework plan. Housing and neighborhood stabilization will explore opportunities for housing and vacant land redevelopment. Commercial and economic development will explore opportunities for commercial and small business development. Environment & the public realm will explore opportunities for public space improvements and climate mitigation. Streetscapes & mobility will explore opportunities for safety improvements and multi-modal connectivity.

Comment: This assessment started in 2021...during covid and was discontinued.....will that be the base to start from or are we starting from ground 0?

Question: Can you explain what the \$330,000 contractors will be doing for clarity?

Response: For our planning work, we typically engage external consultants to supplement PDD's work in addition to helping to facilitate meetings, working with PDD to align our community partners and providing specific technical analysis. This is included in the contract scope and aligns with the four pillars driving the plan.

Question: How is the anchor investor determined? Like for G7 it was 5th 3rd, East Warren was Blue Cross Blue Shield, etc.

Response: We do not have a defined or dedicated investor or source of funds at this time.

Question: How are the investors being selected?

Response: As previously stated, we do not have an investor at this time.

Question: When will we hear from you again?

Response: There are two additional COO meetings scheduled with members of the community. Additionally, feel free to sign up for our newsletter and contact us at denbywhittier@detroitmi.gov.

Question: Can you put the website in the chat?

Response: The website www.detroitmi.gov/denbywhittier was placed in the chat.

Comment: I really thought that there would be more people from District 4 within the Denby-Whittier neighborhood, but I know that there are two additional meeting options. What I'm going to do is send out an appeal this afternoon for additional residents to join the remaining two sessions because I think it's important even though some of the details that may have been expected. I think it's important for residents to know that this is part of the process of engaging the residents because many times we hear through the Administration, the Master Plan Advisory Group and at City Council that the residents say they didn't know anything about it or the process. Well, this is part of the process and is a way to get briefly engaged without sitting through two-, three-, and four-hour meetings not knowing anything. We have the three principal individuals to make direct contact with about this particular process. Thank you so much again.

Response: Thank you for your comment. There are two additional opportunities to learn about the plan so feel free to reach out to neighbors, businesses in the footprint or those interested in the Denby-Whittier neighborhood. We want to receive their input as we begin to talk about planning for this community. Thank you for uplifting this point and for your continuous advocacy.

- **Meeting 2:** The questions and concerns from the community were as follows:

Question: "What is Class B? I really don't understand the COO.

Response: Per the Community Outreach Ordinance, certain city-led projects/initiatives require community engagement prior to City Council approval. Neighborhood Framework Plans are considered Class B projects and requires PDD to host two meetings to solicit feedback from residents. Upon completion of the two meetings, PDD will submit an engagement report prior to City Council's consideration of the Denby-Whittier contract.

Question: How many participants on the call are residents?

Response: There are fourteen (14) residents on the call.

Question: Where can the public review the reports submitted to City Council?

Response: All information from this meeting including the presentation, the recording and the report will be published on our website, www.detroitmi.gov/denbywhittier.

Question: Is the contract that's being submitted to City Council available for review?

Response: We will share the request for proposals (RFP) related to this contract. Per the Office of Procurement, we are unable to publicly disclose the potential vendor prior to submission to City Council.

Question: What happens after tomorrow's input meeting?

Response: We will upload all relevant documents including the RFP, presentation, recordings and reports on the Denby-Whittier website. Additionally, we will submit the report and the contract to City Council. We will update the community once the items are submitted.

Question: Is RFP on your [planning] site?

Response: We will place the RFP on the Denby-Whittier website.

Comment: I am happy to see after the email I sent about tonight's meeting that there are some individuals representing Moross/Morang, Outer Drive/Hayes. I do know that a lot of people thought that this framework plan didn't include their communities due to the name [Denby-Whittier] of the plan. And to the caller – yes, the majority of people on this call are residents in the four neighborhoods.

Comment: I missed the four communities in this framework. I graduated from Finney High School and I'm excited to participate in this process. I experienced a framework plan in the Gratiot-Seven Mile area as a Regent Park resident, and it was amazing! The energy, the synergy, the connectedness that we still have with multiple organizations... My godmother still lives in District 4, and I know that many of the employees are Detroiters as well so that makes it more amazing! I'm looking forward to seeing what we will accomplish.

Response: Thank you for your comments. The plan area is 2.36 square miles and bounded by Kingsville St. to the north, Hayes Rd. to the west, Kelly Rd. and Harper Ave. to the south and I-94 to the east.

Question: Why hasn't there been a framework plan for the western portion of Outer Drive-Hayes neighborhood?

Response: For future neighborhood planning initiatives, we encourage you to contact PDD as well as your elected officials to inform to express your desire for a planning study. While we endeavor to ensure that every neighborhood has a framework plan, budget constraints prevent us from doing so. We are here because this community individually and collectively advocated for this framework through their elected officials and PDD. Additionally, we have a multi year plan that extends into 2027 to allow planning work for our neighborhoods.

Comment: I am questioning how such an impactful initiative as the Solar Neighborhood was conducted and approved.

Response: The solar neighborhoods were places where the communities had to opt-in. Similarly, we are encouraging residents to speak up and participate in the process.

Question: Can you start putting the map on the materials moving forward so we a[r]e clear on boundaries?

Response: Yes, we will. Additionally, the map is on the Denby-Whittier Framework Plan website.

Question: Can we coordinate this outreach with official block clubs?

Response: Yes, we are working with the Department of Neighborhoods for the Denby-Whittier Framework Plan. Additionally, we are hosting a series of informational sessions.

Question: Who is D4 DON?

Response: Nicholas Barnes and Ebony Deberry are the District and Deputy District Manager for D4.

- **Meeting 3:** The questions and concerns from the community were as follows:

Question: I'm with Business Club of Detroit and I have a couple of questions in reference to the Denby Whittier framework. Have we had any studies done in reference to the phase we are in?

Response: We endeavored to do a neighborhood framework plan in this area in 2021; however, we had to pause our efforts. Since that time, we were able to have a lot of conversations with the community. Much of that feedback helped to inform the scope of work that built the request for proposals that we noted will be shared with everyone. Those who responded to the RFP are able to build their teams if they see fit so that they may provide a response to the scope of work that can best accomplish the goals.

Question: [With] regards to the scope of work, have there been any preferred community organizations selected in reference to the City approval for prospective firms that we be helping the evaluation criteria?

Response: Due to the City's rules regarding procurement, we are unable to disclose the vendor at this time. We plan to share the RFP that was sent to all interested firms and publicly available via the appropriate channels. At the conclusion of this meeting, we will submit a report to City Council which contains all of the feedback from this meeting and the previous two (2) meetings. Once OCP formally submits the name of the vendor to City Council, that's when the information regarding the proposed vendor will be made public.

Question: Were there any subcontractors?

Response: How our team/framework plans typically work – we have dedicated planning staff [for this project] Sherelle [Streeter] will be the project manager for the neighborhood framework planning process so she will be your main point of contact and will oversee the project team that will ultimately be working with us upon Council

approval. Once this happens, you'll have an opportunity to meet the full team, and we will kick this project off hopefully in the summer of 2026.

Question: Are office hours for OCP changing? It seems like it's difficult re: engagement and I'm not sure if it's the actual system. Is there a possible way that I can do one-on-one with members who have intellectual property or things of the nature that may be sensitive, architectural designs and when we have the cyber security concerns? With ADA compliance concerns, [can we] manifest other accessibilities with those who are not computer-literate enough to do the to the whole assessment themselves?

Response: We will have a variety of ways that people will be able to engage in this process. We will have a virtual platform, four core communities that typically happen over the course of the planning process. We will look for a location that is central to the Denby Whittier area and will look for an accessible gathering space that has ADA and multi-mobility options that is comfortable and safe. We are looking at in person for the bulk of our meetings, but we will host meetings virtually. We will also host office hours, which will be a mix of in person and virtual meetings – so there'll be plenty of ways for people to plug in the ways that best serve them. We will explore all those options with the planning team during onboarding.

Comment: I'd like to thank the community members from Moross and Morang, Outer Drive and Hayes that came on the session yesterday and today. It's so important to get involved, to know what's going on and that you'll be able to give your input because it does affect your community directly. But you all are going to get additional ideas and based on discussions that I've had with you all, and have heard at your meetings, you'll be able to get an idea of just how some of these things happen in the city. It's citizens voicing their concerns and bringing up their issues and for improvement instead of us sitting idly saying "well what about us?"

Question: What is the Community Advisory Council's [CAC) role in helping the promotion or the outreach in these projects?

Response: The COO instructs the established CACs to share information for outreach for our particular districts and our communities to try to bring attention to the residents of what's going on.

Question: Can you give a brief overview of/summary of everything?

Response: PDD provided the caller with a brief summary of the meeting including next steps. Additionally, the caller was instructed to reach out if they had additional questions.

4. What is being done to address the concerns of the community?

During each COO meeting, Planning and Development Department (PDD) staff responded to each question in real-time. If participants needed additional clarification, PDD staff requested that they ask a follow-up question. Based on the feedback received, it is our understanding that all inquiries were sufficiently addressed. Additionally, the Request for Proposal (RFP) and presentation slide deck, were added to the Denby-Whittier webpage, as communicated during the meetings.

For questions or feedback that arise after the COO Meetings, participants were directed to contact the PDD Project manager at denbywhittier@detroitmi.gov or 313-224- 1295. In addition they were encouraged to sign-up for the Denby-Whittier newsletter at bit.ly/dwnews25 and visit the Denby-Whittier webpage at bit.ly/denbywhittier to stay up-to-date with the planning process.

5. Was there any written feedback received, including letters, comments, or reports from residents, businesses, neighborhood groups, or an established Community Advisory Council?

Aside from what was listed above (question #3), there were not any additional questions or concerns received. In general, the Denby-Whittier community expressed excitement for the proposed, forthcoming neighborhood framework plan. Below is a list of comments received (unedited):

- “Good afternoon,Walk In The Spirit Ministries, excited about being present.”
- “Greetings Everyone from Pastor Alonzo Bell! I’m excited that this is finally happening - God Bless You guys!”
- “Great Communities Now onboard!!”
- “Great kick off... 👍 ”
- “Great Introduction meeting”
- “I am so excited and ready to roll up my sleeves alongside you all!”
- “[Y]es yes excited!!!”
- “[G]ood presentation. thanks for taking the time to answer our questions!”

We would be happy to answer any additional questions.

Detroit City Council
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