

# INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING ADAPTIVE REUSE

Giving new life to Detroit's institutional buildings:  
The anchors of culture, character, and fabric of our neighborhoods



WHAT ARE WE CONSIDERING:

**Code amendments to allow the reuse of public, civic, and institutional buildings**

BEFORE



3396 Vinewood

AFTER



# ADDING ADAPTIVE REUSE OPPORTUNITIES

- Child caring institution
- Educational Institution
- Fire or police station, post office, courthouse, and similar public building
- Library
- Mortuary or funeral home
- Museum
- Religious institution
- Religious residential facility
- Residential-area utility facilities, public
- School, elementary, middle/junior high, or high
- Utility, basic



# WHY...

- Supports new housing efforts
- Expedites investment as an individual rezoning for each institutional building burdens each proposal with time and money spent
- Allows a variety of redevelopment options to accommodate the unique challenges of adaptive reuse
- Promotes redevelopment activities that serve the day-to-day needs of local residents
- Reduces annual demolition costs by making it easier to reuse institutional anchors within residential communities
- Supports neighborhood investments with increased redevelopment opportunities

*The New York Times*

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## For Sale: Hundreds of Abandoned Churches. Great Prices. Need Work.

As church congregations across the United States wither and disappear, the buildings they leave behind are becoming private homes.

# FOSTERING SUCCESS





**BEFORE** – 609 E. Kirby



**BEFORE** 2220 Gratiot



**AFTER**



**AFTER**



BEFORE 10103 Kercheval Ave



BEFORE 3506 Gratiot



AFTER



AFTER



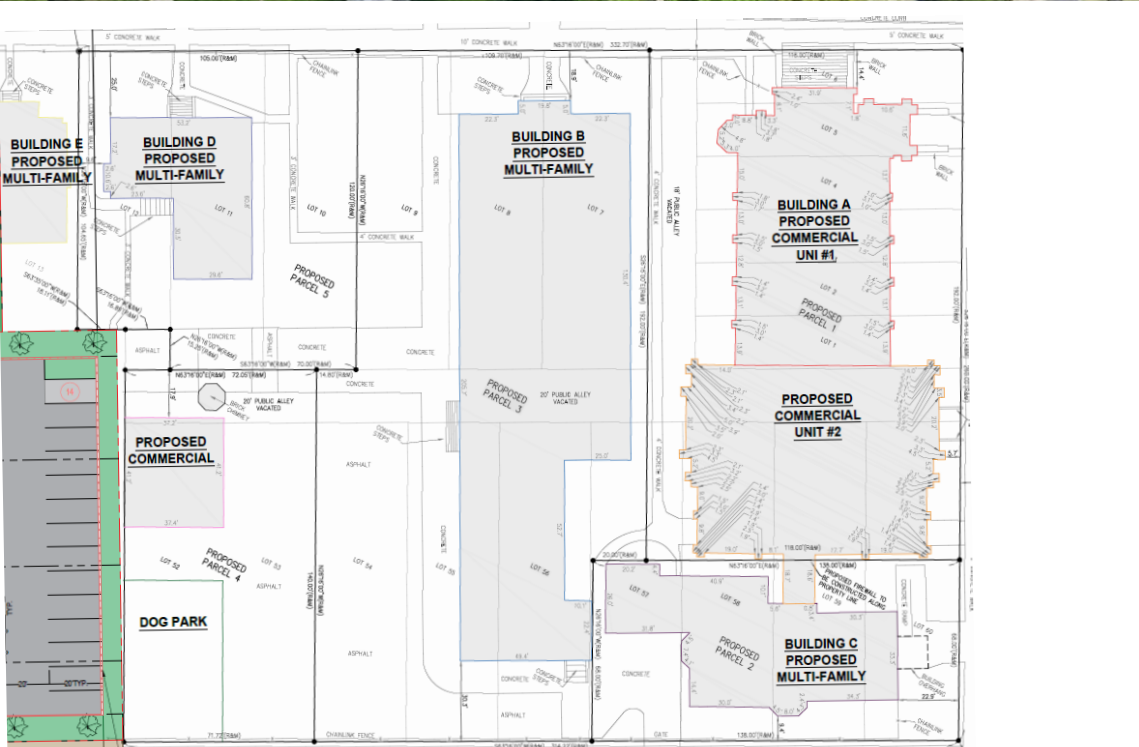
# ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR REZONING

St Agnes Church was recently rezoned from R3 to SD1 buildings to be redeveloped as:

residential,

cultural center,

and office



## **13300 Syracuse Transfiguration School**

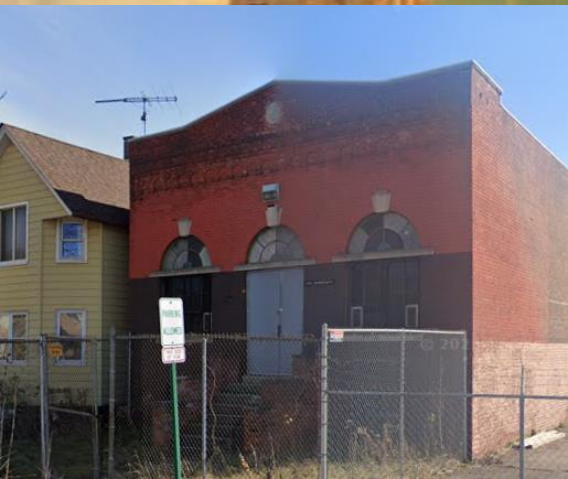
The former school has been redeveloped into 19 low-income apartments.

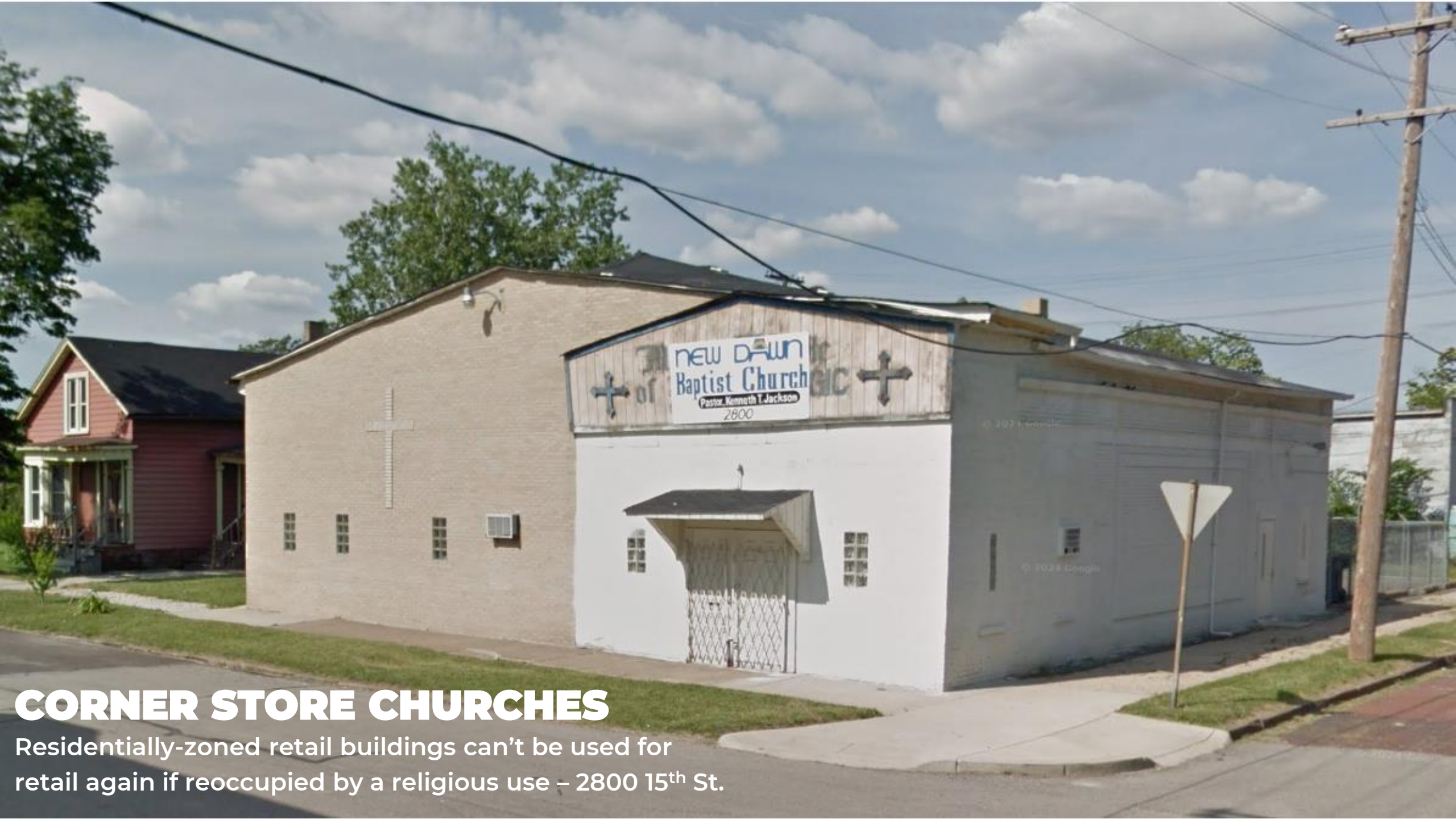
This redevelopment is permitted (conditionally) under our current School Building Adaptive Reuse Ordinance



## Surplus PLD Stations

These former utility buildings are zoned R2 (4829 Lawton St.) and R3 (532 Custer).





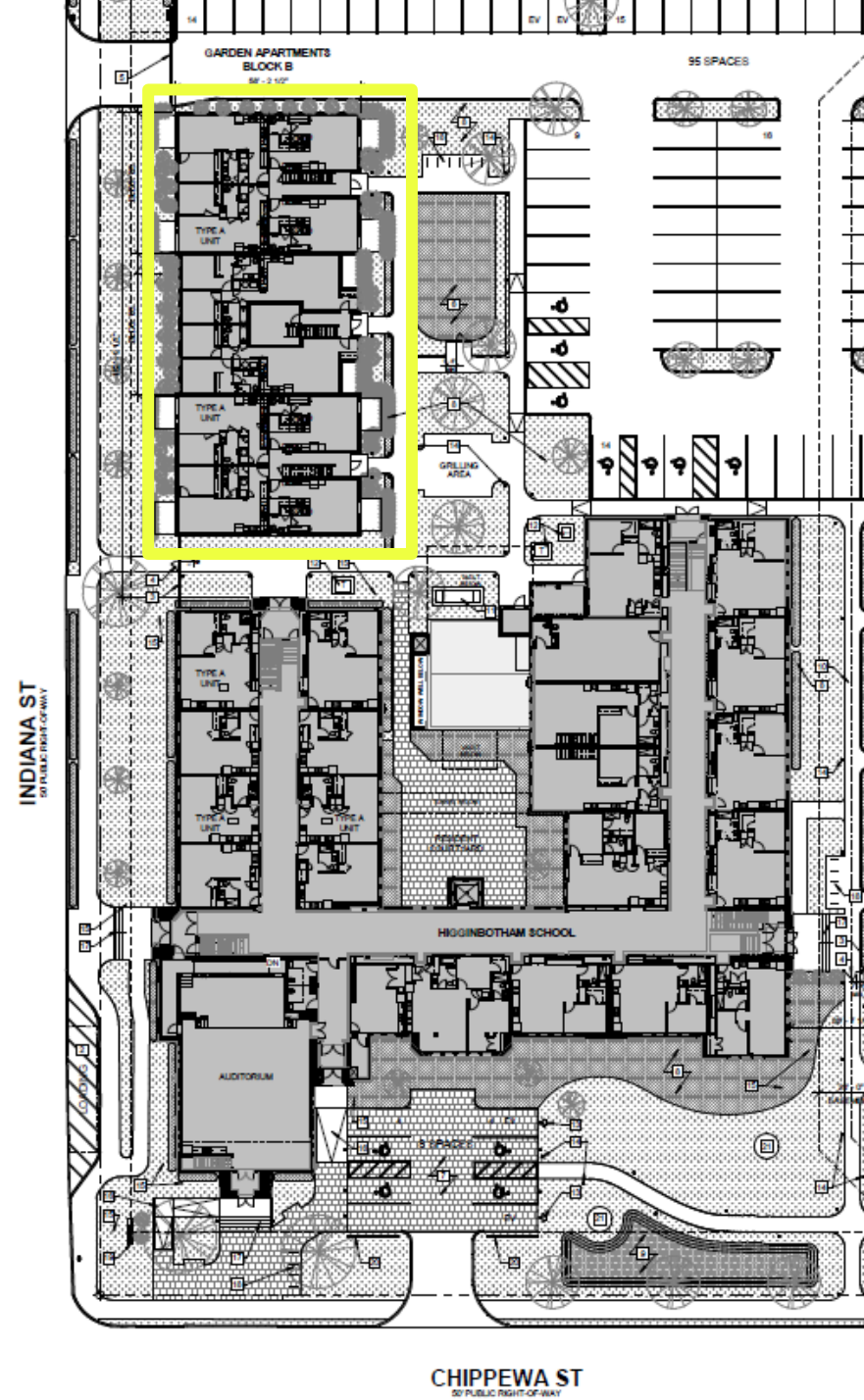
# CORNER STORE CHURCHES

Residentially-zoned retail buildings can't be used for retail again if reoccupied by a religious use – 2800 15<sup>th</sup> St.

# NEW RESIDENTIAL ON THE SITE



Higginbotham school  
2019 Wisconsin St., Rezoned from R1 to R3



# SUPPORT NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS

Lewis College of Business  
(17334 Meyers)

Required rezoning from R1 to R3 to permit new residential development.

Ordinance would permit  
without a rezoning



# 50 Conditional Uses, such as:

⚠ All Require a Special Land Use Hearing

## Residential & Institutional

- Apartment
- Apartments (new construction on sites)
- Neighborhood center for non-profits
- Child caring institution and adult day care
- Dance, art, or cooking school
- Assisted living
- Educational institution

## Commercial

- Nail salon
- Barber/beauty shop
- Bake shop
- Restaurant without a drive-thru
- Office
- Small brewpub or bar (<3,000 sf)
- Art Gallery
- Retail

## Manufacturing

- Clothing, leather good, & jewelry mfg
- Food catering establishment
- Trade service (plumbing, HVAC, cabinet shops)
- Food product mfg/processing (excl. meat or slaughtering)
- Candy mfg.
- Public storage facilities

# HOW...

## Guiding principles for Institutional Adaptive Reuse in neighborhoods:

- Will add to the vibrancy of the neighborhood
- Fulfills the day-to-day needs for good & services of the surrounding community
- Creates opportunity for employment for those within the neighborhood
- Won't create burdensome traffic
- Local community gets say in the process




# OTHER PROVISIONS

- Parking and Loading reduction of 50% and can be located up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away
- Encourage preservation by requiring >75% of the building be retained

# TACTICAL PRESERVATION

A building reuse strategy focused on the **partial and incremental** reuse of existing buildings through a Buildings & Safety (BSEED) process to ensure that the properties can be activated in a safe, efficient, environmentally sound, aesthetically responsive manner via modifications to development standards.

**13000 DEQUINDRE STREET**



**TOTAL BLDG. SF: 100,765 SF**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE: 43,000 SF** } **43%**  
reactivated in first phase

**EST. REHAB COST: \$8 MILLION**  
**EST. MOTHBALL COST: \$1.5 MILLION**  
**TOTAL EST. COST: \$9.5 MILLION**

**16119 E WARREN AVENUE**



**TOTAL BLDG. SF: 4,500 SF**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE: 4,500 SF** } **100%**  
reactivated in first phase  
(Entire building activated but only 25% of block act.)

**EST. REHAB COST: \$850,000**  
**EST. MOTHBALL COST: NA**  
**TOTAL EST. COST: \$850,000**

**21533 GRAND RIVER AVENUE**



**TOTAL BLDG. SF: 8,500 SF**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE: 4,250 SF** } **50%**  
reactivated in first phase

**EST. REHAB COST: \$790,000**  
**EST. MOTHBALL COST: \$110,000**  
**TOTAL EST. COST: \$900,000**

**2550 COPLIN STREET**



**TOTAL BLDG. SF: 86,000 SF**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE: 21,500 SF** } **25%**  
reactivated in first phase

**EST. REHAB COST: \$4 MILLION**  
**EST. MOTHBALL COST: \$1.7 MILLION**  
**TOTAL EST. COST: \$5.7 MILLION**

**Step 0** If Needed—Make Safe Permit

**Application Items should include:**

- Scope of Work
- Any Site Work
- Footing Stabilization
- Zoning Details
- Fire Concerns

If needed to enter the building for deeper analysis. Size of space, proposed uses, Occupancy, Temporary or Permanent? Expand/future Phases

**Buildings, Safety Engineering & Environmental Department**  
 2 Woodward Ave.  
 Suite 409

**Step 1** Intake Form Application

**Application Scope Items to be review for eligibility to Include:**

- Intended/Desired Use (s)
  - Current Zoning
  - Total Building Area
- Percentage of Building Intended/Desired or Activation
  - Project Narrative
- Estimated Time Frame/Schedule of Activation (s)
- Preliminary Plan Review (PPR)

**Phone Numbers:**  
 Property Maintenance: (313) 628-2451  
 Plan Review/Permits: (313) 224-0297

**Step 2** Get Started

**Actual Building Permit Application**

Depending on results of Intake Application, Site Plan review and/or Special Land Use may be required

Projects that has more than **5,000** square feet of gross floor area and/or land, except that, on land zoned M1, M2, M3, M4 or M5, the threshold for industrial uses shall be 50,000 square feet of gross floor area and or land;

Applications for proposed permitting that meet any one or more of the applicability criteria in this section shall be reviewed through the Tactical Preservation process. Developments that do not meet any of the applicability criteria in this section shall be reviewed by the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department through its standard permitting process.

# WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?





**INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS ARE THE ANCHORS OF NEIGHBORHOODS**  
**ALEXANDER MACOMB ELEMENTARY**



**2009**





**AS THESE ANCHORS GO,  
SO GOES THE NEIGHBORHOODS**  
ALEXANDER MACOMB ELEMENTARY



**2018**





**ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THESE ANCHORS  
CAN PRESERVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD FABRIC  
ALEXANDER MACOMB ELEMENTARY**



**2024**



# **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**



# Who we've engaged so far...

- City Council members
- Architects and developers focus group
- DPSCD management
- DON's meetings & 1 City-wide meeting
- D2 Council Member district meeting
- 1 real estate conference
- Invited private owners of churches and schools to meetings via letter

- **Majority of feedback supportive**
- **2 resident with concerns**

# Amending Adaptive Reuse Ordinance

- For Schools, Libraries, Fire or police stations, Post offices, Courthouses, Religious or Utility buildings
- Adds commercial use options to these Institutional Buildings when zoned Residential (typically R1 or R2)

Will also allow:

1. Tactical Preservation: occupying a smaller footprint of a larger building
2. Reduction of parking requirements for reuse
3. Allows new construction multifamily when school or building is preserved

ENGAGEMENT

LEGAL REVIEW

Jan. – Apr.

May – June

June - July

Sept- Oct

PLANNING COMMISSION

COUNCIL  
HRG. AND  
VOTE

- Developer stakeholder discussion: Mar 2025
- Resident stakeholder discussion: Apr 2025
- Council Briefings: Mar/Apr 2025
- DONCast Meetings: Apr 2025

ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR A REZONING



Supports new housing efforts

Removes need for an individual rezoning for each institutional building

Provides more redevelopment options to accommodate unique challenges of adaptive reuse

Promotes redevelopment options that serve the day-to-day needs of local residents

Supports neighborhood investments by increasing redevelopment opportunities

May reduce annual demolition costs by offering more opportunities to reuse institutional anchors



The Planning and Development Department and City Planning Commission invite you to attend the...

## ADAPTIVE REUSE ORDINANCE MEETINGS

The City of Detroit is making it easier to redevelop former schools, churches, and similar buildings into residential, commercial, or maker spaces—without rezoning!

JOIN OUR VIRTUAL DISTRICT  
MEETINGS TO LEARN MORE!

**D4** APRIL 15  
@ 5 PM

**D6** APRIL 17  
@ 5 PM

**D2** MAY 13  
@ 6 PM

**D1** MAY 22 @  
5:30 PM

**D7** MAY 28  
@ 5 PM

**D3** JUNE 27  
@ 6 PM

**D5** JUNE 18  
@ 6 PM

**Meeting Link:** [CityofDetroit.zoom.us/j/3631409738](https://www.cityofdetroit.zoom.us/j/3631409738)

**For more information visit:** [www.detroitmi.gov/adaptivereuse](http://www.detroitmi.gov/adaptivereuse)

With advance notice of seven calendar days, the City of Detroit will provide interpreter services at public meetings, including language translation and reasonable ADA accommodations. Please contact the Civil Rights, Inclusion and Opportunity Department (CRIO) at 313-224-4950, through the TTY number 711, email [crio@detroitmi.gov](mailto:crio@detroitmi.gov), or visit [www.detroitmi.gov/crio](http://www.detroitmi.gov/crio) to schedule these services.



# THANK YOU!



**Kimani Jeffrey**  
**City planner**

City Planning Commission  
[jeffreyk@detroitmi.gov](mailto:jeffreyk@detroitmi.gov)  
(313) 224-6376

**Greg Moots**  
**Lead planner**

Planning and Development Department  
[greg@detroitmi.gov](mailto:greg@detroitmi.gov)  
(313) 224-1358

Visit [www.detroitmi.gov/adaptivereuse](http://www.detroitmi.gov/adaptivereuse)  
for more information.

**Category****Use****Category****Use****Residential Uses**

- Assisted living facility
- Child caring institution
- Convalescent, nursing, or rest home
- Loft
- Apartment (new construction may be permitted on site)

**Retail, Service and Commercial Uses**

- Office
- Printing shops
- Radio or television station
- Recording studio or photo studio or video studio
- Recreation, indoor commercial and health club
- Restaurant without drive-up
- Dance, gymnastics, music, art or cooking school
- Shoe repair shop
- Retail store without drive through
- Veterinary clinic for small animals
- Youth hostel/hostel

**Public, civic, and institutional**

- Governmental service agency
- Educational institution
- Adult day care center
- Boarding school and dormitory
- Child care center
- Library
- Museum
- Neighborhood center, non profit

**Manufacturing and Industrial Uses**

- Confection manufacture
- Food catering establishment
- Jewelry manufacture
- Lithographing and sign shop
- Low-impact manufacturing or processing
- (Limited) Low/Medium-Impact manufacturing or processing
- Trade services, general
- Wearing apparel manufacturing
- Public storage facilities

**Retail, Service and Commercial Uses**

- Animal grooming shop
- Art gallery
- Bake shop, retail
- Bank without Drive-up
- Barber or beauty shop or Nail Salon
- Bed and breakfast inn
- Body art facility
- Brewpub or microbrewery
- Business college or commercial trade school
- Dry cleaning, laundry or laundromat
- Bar
- Medical or dental clinic, physical therapy or massage clinic

**Agricultural Uses**

- Aquaculture
- Aquaponics
- Hydroponics

# Financing Tools

## Quick Links:

- <https://www.afterschooldetroit.com/resources>
- <https://www.motorcitymatch.com/>
- <https://www.degc.org/tax-incentives>
- If your building qualifies, <https://www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/programs-and-services/historic-preservation-tax-credits/>

## Quick contacts:

- DEGC / DBRA – brownfield, OPRA & CRA district setup, Motor City Match/Re Store
- City Housing & Revitalization Department – DHFF, SNF, HOME/CDBG NOFAs, NEZ certificates
- MEDC Community Development – MCRP & RAP
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) – state historic credit and federal HTC