




**PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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

Phone 313•224•1339
www.detroitmi.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mary Sheffield, Council President
FROM: Alexa Bush, Director, Planning and Development Department (PDD) 
DATE: November 13, 2025
RE: Community Outreach Report for the Detroit Boatworks Maritime Hub Development

Below is a detailed description of the community outreach efforts led by the Planning and Development Department (PDD) with assistance from the Department of Neighborhoods (DON).

1. How many meetings have or will occur?

Engagement for the Community Outreach Ordinance (COO) was comprised of two public meetings, as required for Class A Neighborhood Proposals. The following two public meetings were held virtually and noticed per the COO notification requirements:

COO ENGAGEMENT PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. **Meeting 1** was held via Zoom during a meeting hosted by PDD on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, from 5:00p to 6:00p. Three people attended this meeting including City staff, block club leaders and residents from the impacted neighborhoods.
2. **Meeting 2:** was held via Zoom during a meeting hosted by PDD on Thursday, November 6, 2025, from 5:00p to 6:00p. Eleven people attended this meeting including City staff, block club leaders and residents from the impacted neighborhoods.

At the meetings, Matt Walters gave a comprehensive overview of the Detroit Boatworks Maritime Hub Development including the proposed use and cost of the land transaction. At the conclusion of the presentation, attendees provided feedback on the proposed land transaction and were encouraged to submit additional feedback at economicdevelopment@detroitmi.gov. A comprehensive analysis of the feedback is listed below.

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

Both COO meetings, **Meeting 1: November 5, 2025 and Meeting 2: November 6, 2025** were

noticed in compliance with the Community Outreach Ordinance. The COO notice for *both* meetings was distributed and posted as follows:

The flyer is titled "PROPOSAL" and "Detroit Boatworks Maritime Hub Development". It is a "Notice of Public Outreach" from the City of Detroit. It invites the public to give input on the following proposal. It provides details for two Zoom meetings: Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 5:00 PM and Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 5:00 PM. It also provides an administrative summary and an online feedback link. A small box at the bottom left provides information on how to schedule these services.

CITY OF DETROIT
Notice of Public Outreach

You are invited to give input on the following proposal.

PROPOSAL
Detroit Boatworks Maritime Hub Development

OUTREACH DETAILS

Join Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 5:00 PM
<https://bit.ly/25tDean>
Meeting ID: 853 782 0871
Passcode: 808224

Thursday, November 6, 2025, at 5:00 PM
<https://bit.ly/25tDean>
Meeting ID: 853 782 0871
Passcode: 808224

Dial in for all meetings:
312-626-6799 or 267-831-0333

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

The Detroit Boatworks project is a community-focused public marina development that will feature new boat slips along the canal, a 47,000-square-foot facility for boat service and storage, and retail spaces dedicated to Detroit-based, maritime-related businesses. Located at 2 St. Jean, this \$10 million investment will enhance and complement public access to the waterfront and will serve as a valuable amenity for residents of the Marina District. The project will create approximately 25 new jobs and include approximately 115 parking spaces to support its various uses. Beginning in spring 2026, the Developer commits to the construction of a \$2.5 million seawall, environmental remediation of the site, a 15-year restriction requiring continued marina use and development of youth sailing and boat-related activity programs in collaboration with the City of Detroit. The sale price is \$400,000.

ONLINE FEEDBACK

Submit any feedback related to this project to economicdevelopment@detroitmi.gov.

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 at (313) 224-4950, through the TTY number 711, or email enr@detroitmi.gov to schedule these services.

- Shared with Detroit City Council Members and staff via email on October 24, 2025.
- Shared with the District 5 Community Advisory Council on October 24, 2025.
- Distributed via GovDelivery to members of the public October 24, 2025 and November 5, 2025.
- Advertised via TV Channel 10 (Comcast) on October 24, 2025-November 5, 2025.
- Advertised via the City of Detroit's and PDD's social media channels on Facebook and Instagram on October 24, 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 follows:

1. *Question:* My primary interest is construction - representing the electrician's union. What can I do or what information do I need to pass to my contractors so that they can bid on this project, any electrical work? I'm assuming that there'll be....

Answer: The majority of this project will be a union-based. The owner of the business is a 65-year-old man who owns a foundation subcontracting business that is union-based so he prioritizes union work. Feel free to reach out to share my information.

2. *Comment:* I have a comment since no one is speaking, thank you Ms. King for always keeping me on top of things that's going on.

Answer: You're so welcome! I know your work as a CAC (Community Advisory Council) member is super important and help get the word out to the community so I appreciate your comment. Thank you so much.

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

Question: Thank you for the presentation, Ms. King and Mr. Walters. I just so happen to be a homeowner on the canal and I have a few concerns. You mentioned that this is a public marina so people would rent for intermittent times. It's a very high-trafficked area. What are you proposing since there's going to be other commerce there? If there's a bar there, that means there's going to be increased traffic late at night in that area? What's being proposed to mitigate that traffic? St. Jean is a very narrow street as is and that would be one of my concerns. it was very well done. Additionally, I am concerned about my backyard becoming a whole marina with people hanging out and doing their thing. That's not necessarily you know the space and the place that I imagined to live. What is the mitigation plan for privacy and noise reduction?

Answer: We are going to have hours of operation because we want to prevent noise in the morning. As stated at the City Planning Commission [meeting], we will not have any loud noise before 8a and will close around 8:30p. Going back to the site plan, we will have ample parking on site which will contain our traffic and reduce cars backed up on St. Jean. Additionally, we will not have short-term leases but long-term leases for the slips. We will manage the site in a very conservative way. No partying on boats as our demographic is meant mostly for sailboats. No big yachts or boats that have an area to party. For the most part, this space will be for boat maintenance and boat repair. We will allow people to rent space; however, this is not meant to be an extremely activated site but valid concerns and I appreciate it.

Question: Thanks for the presentation last night and thanks again for showing up for this second meeting. I didn't get to hear the entire presentation last night but tonight I'm hearing that there's some toxic metals, some heavy metals that are in the land. Have you done soil testing and what are the results?

Answer: Yes, the City when they marketed the site did a Phase 2 environmental test and found arsenic, mercury, lead, asbestos and other toxic environmental contaminants that are in the soil.

Question: What is the plan to clean the site?

Answer: We will work with EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes and Energy) and the City of Detroit Environmental Division and BSEED (Buildings, Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department) to remediate the site to make sure that those environmental contaminants are not exposed any longer.

Question: What was there originally to contaminate the soil like that? What was the original building?

Answer: There was a rail line that came down through this area and onto this site and freighters used to come into this canal, load containers that would go north to industrial sites.

Comment: Please follow up with EGLE and keep the community aware of what's going on. Protect the workers who are working on that site who are creating a cap and stripping the land of 18-24 inches of soil. How far does it go? Just protect the waterways, protect the land and do what's right.

Answer: It depends on the site, where exactly it's located so that will be assessed. Yes, we will protect the natural resources.

Question: I am not a homeowner on the canal; however, my daughter and son-in-law live there. We do share ownership of a boat and it's right at the end as she stated. I am concerned. I don't think it's really been fully addressed about the intensity of the traffic on the canal that will result from the increased number of slips. To my knowledge, when I was listening to see what the response was to that, I remember Mr. Morgan was there and we talked about the space. How far are you extending into the canal? I'm concerned that it's going to be more challenging to navigate.

Answer: There is 100ft of public easement for the Morgan Estates boats to traverse the canal. None of the slips will go into that public easement. In our opinion, there's more than enough room for boats to traverse up and down the canal. We don't anticipate having 10 boats all going out at one time. Additionally, we will have employees working for the business that will manage how many boats can go out at once. We will commit to managing the boats that leave the slips and will make sure that there's no more than one or two boats leaving at a time. We are Detroiters, plan to be great neighbors and increase the value of homes in the Morgan Estates community.

Question: I am a boater in the area of a marina next door. The marina is in a bit of disrepair at the moment – the actual street itself leading to the boat launch and all the way to the first street leading out the marina. I’m wondering what – if anything – in the plan includes improvements for that street because it’s going to double or triple the amount of traffic on there. There’s going to be additional boats with trailers in addition to everything that’s going on to the boat launch and heavy construction trucks. Is there anything infrastructure improvement for the street itself?

Answer: That's a great question! I have a great relationship with the DPW [Department of Public Works] and I can work with Edwina [King] from Planning and Development and Amanda [Elias] from the Mayor’s office who are on this call to request DPW to fix the street so that it can withstand the current traffic.

Question: I've lived here long enough to see the blight and have a great relationship with being able to store our own vessel at the Goat Yard marina. This summer, I’ve seen more sailboaters utilize the canal and I just don’t see the same relational transaction. I would hope that we could have continued discussion and dialogue around what that looks like because it’s our serene space.

Answer: I would love to get your information and meet with you.

Question: What is the timeline for the completion of this project?

Answer: Completion is scheduled for early 2028.

Question: New seawalls being drawn out that will not interfere as you are letting us know without any navigating that will impact residents in Morgan Estates.

Answer: That is correct.

Question: Will there be restaurants and the like going on that side?

Answer: We've proposed a small bar and grill – not heavy restaurant use – but a small bar and grill. If the community comes back and says we don’t want it then we’re not going to do it.

Question: Okay, I would like to access the restaurant and those amenities with my own vessel. Is there a membership required to do so?

Answer: No. This is a public facing business and not a private club. No membership required.

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

We received four letters of support from businesses, residents and other community stakeholders. These letters are attached to this report.

We would be happy to answer any additional questions.

CC: Detroit City Council
Matt Walters, Goat Yard, LLC
Dara O’Byrne, Planning and Development Department
Edwina S. King, Planning and Development Department
Marcell Todd, City Planning Commission
Kimani Jeffrey, City Planning Commission
Amanda Elias, Mayor’s Office
Malik Washington, Mayor’s Office
Louise Jones, Clerk’s Office



October 29th, 2025

City of Detroit City Council
2 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear City Councilmembers,

Community Treehouse Center Detroit is a strong supporter of environmental cleanups and transforming blighted land into usable spaces that benefit the community, visitors, and local businesses.

The Detroit Boatworks project on St. Jean represents an important opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of Detroit's East Side and strengthen the city's boating district. The site at 2 St. Jean has been vacant for decades and suffers from environmental contamination. This project will not only address these issues but also turn the parcel into a productive, public-serving asset.

We fully support Detroit Boatworks and respectfully ask that City Councilmembers do the same so our boating industry can continue to grow, creating new jobs and opportunities for our community.

Sincerely,

Tammy Black
Founder/CEO
Community Treehouse Center Detroit
P:313-903-0639 F: 313-926-6431



<https://www.instagram.com/manistiquecommunitytreehouse>
Website: www.manistiquetreehouse.org
"Holistic Community Empowerment"

July 23rd, 2025

Marcell Todd
City Planning Commission
2 Woodward Ave., Suite 208
Detroit, MI 48226

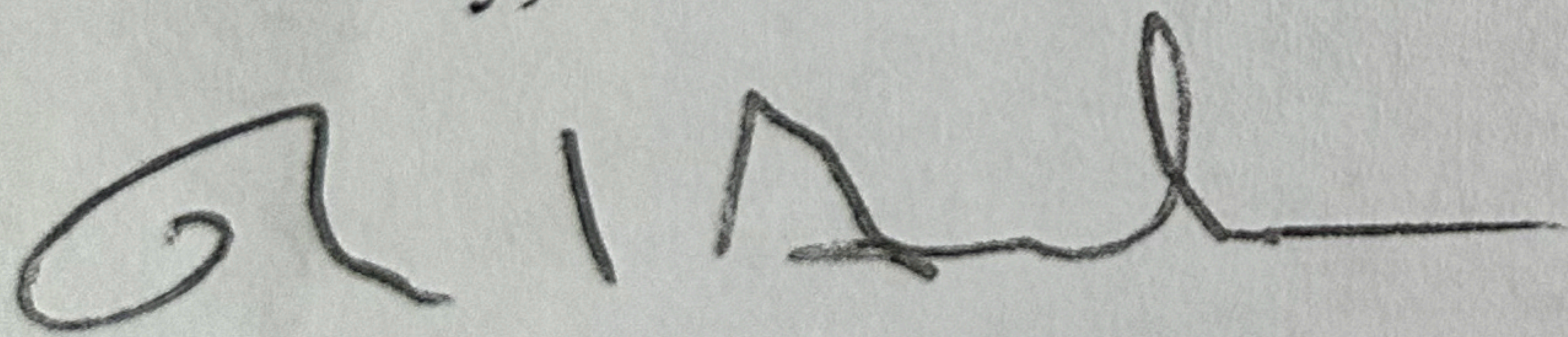
RE: 2 St. Jean Rezoning

Dear Mr. Todd

The Morgan Estate Homeowner's Association board has recently met with the Detroit Boatworks team and reviewed their plans for the 2 St. Jean parcel across the canal from our community. The board has unanimously voted in support of this project because of the improvement and investment that it brings to the site while also providing new maritime amenities to this area. We understand that the project and project team are currently going through a rezoning process and we appreciate that the site is being zoned away from heavy and intensive industrial use and towards a more business friendly zoning classification that allows for a marina.

The HOA board is in support of this project and its intended use for the 2 St. Jean property.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Gamble', written in a cursive style.

Rory Gamble

President

Morgan Waterfront Estates Homeowner's Association



November 6th, 2025

City of Detroit City Council
2 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear City of Detroit Councilmembers,

The Detroit Boatworks project on St. Jean would be a great addition to the Marina District on the East Side of Detroit. There are many benefits that come with this project including 1,000 feet of new seawall, on site environmental clean-up - making the site safer for the nearby residents, and a downzoning away from the M4 zoning classification that is also nearby single family housing.

The Detroit riverfront is one of the strongest assets of our community and adding boating and maritime uses only strengthens the riverfronts positions. The Detroit Boatworks project will bring new job opportunities for Detroiters and also expand an existing Detroit based business that is adjacent to the 2 St. Jean City owned property.

The Jefferson East Inc. organization support this project and hopes that the Detroit City Council will also provide its support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua R. Elling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joshua R. Elling
Chief Executive Officer

Eric & Maureen Miller

98 Sand Bar Ln
Detroit, MI 48214
10/1/2025

Detroit City Council

2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 1340
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Council Members,

My wife and I would like to sincerely thank the Detroit City Council for holding the recent forum that allowed residents to voice concerns regarding the nearby development project near Sand Bar Lane. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate and to have our perspectives heard.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to Mr. Matthew Walters and Mr. Hanson Bratton, with whom we met directly to discuss the project's impact on our home. During this meeting, the following concerns were satisfactorily addressed:

1. **Security** – As our property backs up to the project, a fence will be installed behind the trees and along the canal wall to impede traffic onto our property.
2. **Noise and business hours** – Respect for homeowners will be observed with construction and business activity not starting prior to approximately 8:00 a.m. (understanding that minimal activity may occur beforehand) and concluding prior to 11:00 p.m.
3. **Property value review** – Based on the scope of work and anticipated community beautification, including the removal of blight, home values are expected to appreciate.
4. **Skyline view** – The project will not impede the current view of the Detroit skyline from our property.

We are grateful for the thoughtful consideration of these matters. Thank you again for your leadership and for creating space for residents to be engaged in meaningful discussions about the future of our community.

Respectfully,



Eric Miller