

City of Detroit
CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL PRESIDENT BRENDA JONES

April 8, 2019



Dear Detroiters,

As we approach the end of the 2019 - 2020 Budget Approval cycle, I am pleased to announce that Detroit City Council and the Mayor's Administration have collaborated to present the fourth consecutive balanced budget for the City of Detroit. This is our first independent budget review in six years, occurring as the Financial Review Commission is in its first year of dormancy after emergency management, bankruptcy and the Plan of Adjustment.

I would like to thank all who were involved in presenting, reviewing, analyzing and confirming Detroit's \$2.1B budget. Along with my colleagues on Council and our staffs, I applaud the work of Mr. Irvin Corley, Fiscal Analysis Director of our Legislative Policy Division (LPD) and his team of financial professionals, who worked along with Acting CFO David Massaron and Budget Director Tanya Stoudemire to ensure funds were assigned to the appropriate accounts that will provide the services to improve the quality of life of all residents and stakeholders.

I would also like to thank my Senior Policy Manager, Ms. Jasmine Barnes, who managed the budget hearing agenda and worked with Ms. Stephanie Washington, Mayor's Liaison to Council, to ensure activities flowed smoothly. Special thanks to the department heads who testified before Council, often answering difficult questions and providing countless amounts of data. Finally, I thank the citizens who attended meetings, asked questions, provided suggestions and participated in public comment to engage in the process.

This year was groundbreaking on several levels: In my second term as Council President, I presided over 44 departmental budget hearings in the four-week process; Along with my at-large colleague, Councilmember Janee Ayers, I introduced a budget survey process to identify constituent spending priorities. This process featured an at-large community-inclusion budget presentation and listening session to promote greater engagement and maximize community feedback.

Additionally, Council took several actions to reinforce and improve service delivery of city departments, including:

- A \$45M contribution to the Retiree Protection Trust Fund to ensure that pensioners that have already suffered a significant loss due to the City's bankruptcy will not be impacted financially by a collapse of the current pension system
- During the record turnout for the community-inclusion budget meeting, Council heard a number of community members declare affordable housing as a priority. As a result of the community's input and comments, over \$3.6M was appropriated towards affordable housing by Council. Additionally, the approved budget represents strong investment into the monitoring of compliance for fair housing, affordable housing, and tax incentive programs to ensure that developments are beneficial to the residents of the City of Detroit by providing access to employment and affordable housing for residents and returning citizens
- Public Safety proved to be a main priority of residents per survey results, so \$7M additional dollars were added to the Detroit Police Department to enhance public safety operations
- The City of Detroit spends millions outside of the City on contracts with non-Detroit based businesses. As a result, the approved budget includes funding for a Detroit-based business coordinator and funding to support outreach and education efforts to prepare and enhance Detroit-based business as well as Detroit residents for contracting and employment opportunities utilizing City of Detroit taxpayer's dollars
- A \$5.25M investment into tree removal and replanting with a purchase of new equipment, employee training and enhancement of the aggressive strategy to remove 10,000 dangerous trees within 3 years
- Significant investment into the Buildings, Safety, Engineering, and Environmental Department for inspection and monitoring of rental unit compliance and environmental compliance to ensure that residents are able to have access to a safe living conditions in their neighborhoods and homes
- Investment in neighborhood beautification through the General Services Department for graffiti removal, planting of flowers and cleaning bus shelters and over a dozen commercial corridors
- Continued investment in Community Development Block Grants to support various community services such as homeless shelters, youth employment, senior home repair, warming centers, and many other community services
- An increase in Department of Public Works funding for the installation of 400 new residential speed "bump" cushions, a major spot road repair program, and a waste management monitoring policy to address trash collection and ensure that issues are solved quickly

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL PRESIDENT BRENDA JONES

With the expiration of Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) dollars and demolition activities/authority returning to the City of Detroit, I will advocate for strong legislative oversight and funding to invest in environmental monitoring. Moving forward, I will also advocate for funding to prioritize foreclosure prevention over demolition to ensure residents are given the opportunity to remain in their homes. I look forward to working with the Administration to identify ways to meet these goals

During this budget process, my objective was to increase community engagement and outreach. This is essential for all planned and future activities, including strategic neighborhoods, bike lanes and neighborhood investment. Engagement will ensure that all residents have a voice in the development of their communities. Community inclusion and engagement must be cultivated, therefore the legislative body and the administration have agreed, jointly, to host an informational conference to actively engage the community in budget prioritization prior to the development of the budget, as well as the inception of an Executive Session process in January to allow those priorities to be discussed and presented for the upcoming fiscal year. Also, I look forward to working with residents to draft a strong community engagement and outreach ordinance that sets a standard for community inclusion in all matters related to city governance.

Although some concerns exist with annual revenue collection, looming pension obligations and service-delivery allocation, we will closely monitor spending and continue to stress fiscal responsibility at all levels. As the annual budget must coincide with a four-year financial plan, we are optimistic that this budget will support Detroit's turnaround efforts, improve our neighborhoods and work to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Best regards,



Brenda Jones, Council President
City of Detroit