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TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: David Whitaker, Director
Marcell R. Todd, Jr. Director CPC
Legislative Policy Division Staff

RE: “Community Planning Input Resolution” Request from Council Member Mary Waters’ office

DATE: October 3, 2022

Council Member Mary Waters requested (attachment A) the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) to work on the following request:

“Our office would like the Legislative Policy Division to work on compiling information on the best way to write an ordinance to: Expand community input into local development projects by ensuring that all areas of the City have planning studies conducted before development projects commence. Ensure that any existing ordinances are updated to align thresholds to encompass more developments in the City.”

LPD/City Planning Commission (CPC) staff understands the primary concern that Council Member Waters would like to address is the perceived/real inequity created by the development of neighbor plans in select areas of the City.

In response to this request, this report provides an overview and analysis of the following three topics related to the request:

- I. Summary of current community input for development projects
- II. Summary of the citywide plans
- III. Summary of past, present and future planning studies

I. SUMMARY OF CURRENT COMMUNITY INPUT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Summary of Public Hearing Requirements

Besides having public comment as part of all City Council meetings, the City is required to notify surrounding property owners and community groups for various types of reviews. These notifications are required by State Law and also codified in the City Code. These requirements for community input are summarized below.

For conditional land use hearings at the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department (BSEED), for hearings at the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA), and for zoning map and text amendments at the City Planning Commission (CPC) for Historic designations at the Historic Designation Advisory Board and City Council, the following are required:

- A public hearing is required
- Notice of the hearing must be provided in a newspaper of general circulation
- Notice of the hearing must be sent to the owner and occupant of the subject property and all persons to whom any real property is assessed within 300 feet of the premises or with the proposed historic district for HDAB.
- Notice must be sent at least 15 days, (14 for HDAB) prior to the hearings at BSEED, BZA, and CPC and at least 5 days prior to hearings at City Council
- Notice must be sent to all community organizations registered with BSEED, the boundaries of which are located within 300 feet of the premises in question

Summary of the Community Outreach Ordinance (COO)

As stated in a past LPD report, on October 20, 2020, the City of Detroit enacted the COO to demonstrate the city's commitment to community outreach that promotes transparency and accountability and ensures community awareness on legislation, contracts, agreements, and resolutions. The COO relates to various City-Wide Proposals and Neighborhood Class A-D Proposals as defined by the ordinance. A "City-Wide Proposal" includes all initiatives considered by City Council relating to the Mayor's annual recommended budget, bond proposals, the City-Wide Non-Motorized Urban Transportation plan, and City-Wide Park Improvement Plan, amendments to the Master Plan and ballot initiatives. Prior to submitting a City-Wide Proposal to City Council for consideration, a representative of the administering department in collaboration with the Department of Neighborhoods, will hold one outreach meeting in each of the seven City Council districts.

Summary of the Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO)

In November of 2016, Detroit voters approved Proposal B effectuating the enactment of the City of Detroit's CBO Ordinance No. 35-16. The expressed purpose of this Ordinance is to garner "*outreach and engagement that promotes transparency and accountability and ensures development projects in the City of Detroit benefit and promote economic growth and prosperity for all residents.*" The law that requires developers to proactively engage with the community to identify community benefits and address potential negative impacts of certain development projects. The CBO applies when a development project:

- Is \$75 million or more in value
- Receives \$1 million or more in property tax abatements OR
- Receives \$1 million or more in value of city land sale or transfer

When a project meets one or more of these requirements, the city organizes community meetings over a three-month period to introduce the project to the impacted residents, determine potential impacts of the project and establish benefits for the community.

Summary of Community Advisory Councils

As established by the City Charter, the purpose of these Community Advisory Councils is to improve citizen access to city government. CAC's are the only elected body in Detroit government to be created by petition. Presently, the City has CAC's in District 4, 5, and 7. Powers and duties of the CAC's include:

- Communicating to City Council the concerns of groups, agencies, businesses and residents within its districts with respect to the delivery of programs and services.
- A community council may require that the City Council representative receive prior consultation from the CAC on all issues which relate exclusively to that district.
- Communicating to City Council the concerns of groups, agencies, businesses and residents within its districts with respect to the delivery of programs and services.

Ideas to Improve Public Hearing Requirements

- For a long time, the City has used the Detroit Legal News as its newspaper of general circulation; continuing using the Detroit Legal News has benefits in that it is the long-standing paper used by Detroit – it is generally known. LPD/CPC staff understands other papers, such as the Detroit Free Press, were discontinued during the newspaper strike of 1995 to 1997 to show solidarity with the strikers. Posting in newspapers in addition to the Legal News would require additional resources.
- Michigan recently passed legislation (May 2022) requiring Michigan newspapers to post notices of public meeting in a manner that is free to everyone (one doesn't need a subscription to read the notice); however, local governments posting the notices are required to purchase space in the newspaper. Detroit should explore its posting policy in light of this new legislation.
- The City is continuing to rely more and more on social media, including GovDelivery, email blasts, etc. Expanding the City's use of social media to inform citizens of pending projects should be explored.
- Various City departments use lists/databases of community organizations; it is important that these lists be up-to-date and regularly shared with all relevant City departments to more effectively utilize these resources.
- Due to the added costs and potential dilution of the pool of public testimony LPD/CPC staff does not favor at this time, formally expanding the 300-foot boundary across the board for all circumstances, but rather as may be warranted on a case-by-case basis, and also favors exploring/improving the other mechanisms as listed above.

II. SUMMARY OF THE CITYWIDE PLANS

Background Regarding the Detroit Master Plan of Policies

Most cities in Michigan, as allowed by State law, have drafted Master Plans to guide development. The Master Plan is a planning document used to establish a vision and set of goals for the long-term conservation, growth, and development of a municipality. The Master Plan is a living document that is updated via amendment or may be comprehensively revised every 10 to 20 years in response to changing factors or to develop a new direction.

As stated in Sec. 8-104 of the City Charter,

“The Master Plan shall be a set of guidelines to assist the Mayor and others in proposing, and the City Council in evaluating and implementing, specific proposals for the total development of the City and its residents”.

Also stated in Sec. 8-101 of the City Charter,

“The Mayor shall propose and the City Council shall approve, with the modifications it deems necessary, a Master Plan of policies for the social, economic, and physical development and conservation of the city, and the full range of transportation, access and mobility options”.

The current City Master Plan of Policies was drafted by P&DD starting in 2003, with input from the community, and approved by the City Council in 2009. The current Master Plan with text and maps can be accessed on P&DD’s website. As listed on P&DD’s website, the text is organized into 17 elements. The geographic organization is based on the 10 clusters established as part of the 1997 Community Reinvestment Strategy initiative. Within the 10 clusters are smaller geographic areas based on the sub-sectors established in the 1992 Master Plan of Policies. The Plan contains future general land use maps that do not address small-scale situations (less than 10 acres).

As reported in a recent report by CPC staff to City Council, at present there is no comprehensive effort by the Administration to revise the City’s Master Plan. P&DD has advanced amendments to the master plan on an as needed basis in response to rezonings, development proposals and policy changes. In light of the \$2 Million Your Honorable Body added to P&DD’s budget for a Master Plan update, the administration is presently determining how to proceed.

Detroit Future City Detroit Strategic Framework Plan

The Detroit Strategic Framework was developed under Mayor Dave Bing’s Administration in 2012 to provide a 50-year vision for the City. It emerged from the Detroit Works Project launched in 2010. The Detroit Works Project included a long-term planning initiative that included a 24-month planning and civic engagement process that resulted in the Framework Plan. The long-term planning initiative was led by a Mayor-appointed steering committee of 12 civic leaders representing business, philanthropy, community, faith-based institutions and government. The Detroit Economic Growth Corporation managed the initiative.

In 2015, the Detroit Future City (DFC) was established as a non-profit to help implement the Framework. The DFC’s website indicates its role is to steward equitable implementation of the Framework recommendation by providing accessible information to Detroiters, informing and guiding decision-makers’ initiatives and projects, and convening a broad range of stakeholders to better coordinate and align their work.

Ideas to Improve Citywide Plans

- The DFC plan was developed under a previous Administration; the DFC non-profit continues to provide valuable work to create a more equitable and sustainable city for all; LPD staff recommends a continued dialogue between City staff and the DFC non-profit regarding Citywide plans and initiatives.
- Based on a recent request from Council Member Johnson’s office, on March 29, 2022, City Council passed a resolution in which the Detroit City Council urged the Administration to capitalize upon the products of recent past studies, assess the City’s current conditions and begin

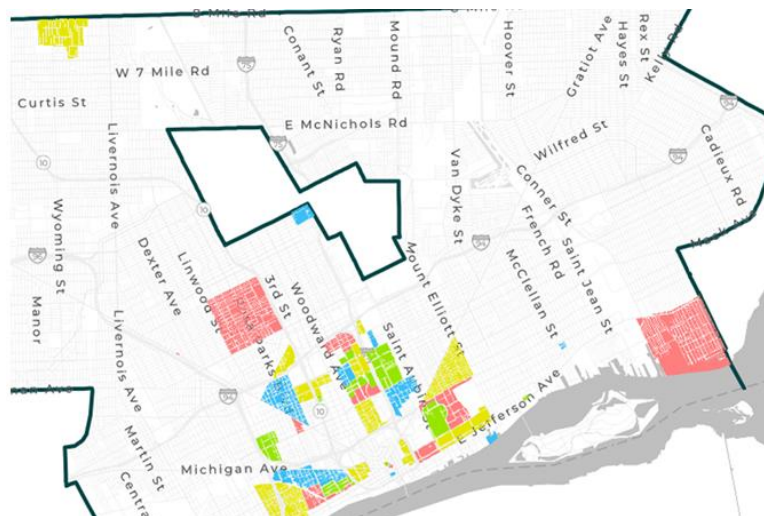
to proactively engage in regular and intentional efforts to update the City's Master Plan of Policies.

III. SUMMARY OF PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE PLANNING STUDIES

Below is a brief summary of past, present, and future neighborhood plans in Detroit. While the Master Plan provides the statutorily required overall vision for the city, these plans provide a more detailed study of specific geographic areas.

City Urban Renewal Plans

Under the Michigan Blighted Area Rehabilitation Act, the City was required to create Development Plans for how those areas should be redeveloped. Although urban renewal planning was and still is controversial, these plans were an important part of the Detroit's planning history. From 1957 to 1981, the City created 38 districts, which are shown on the map below.



Most of these urban renewal areas, surrounded the Central Business District. The districts have a range of sizes from a few blocks to much larger areas, such as Jefferson-Chalmers. Each area was represented by a Citizens District Council made up of area residents, landowners and businesses which gave input on the plans and development proposals in their areas. In 2014, during the City's bankruptcy proceedings, the City's Emergency Manager repealed the then 25 District Areas, and thus these plans are no longer in effect. However, the former plans are an important reference for urban renewal areas (some more successful than others) with then Citizens District Council input.

Ideas Regarding Urban Renewal Plans

- Even though the urban renewal plans are no longer binding, it is important for City staff to be aware of these plans and incorporate any beneficial elements that should be considered with any new planning efforts.
- An accessible database including GIS maps of these urban renewal plans is needed.

Community Initiated Planning Studies

LPD staff is aware that over at least the past 50 years, various neighborhoods have initiated their own planning studies. Detroit has a long history of grass roots groups and local non-profits drafting their own

neighborhood-initiated planning studies; some were done to empower residents, some were done to counter City policies, some were done to fill the vacuum of lack of City plans, and some were done to guide the neighborhood's own funding decisions. Some of the more groundbreaking or significant plans are listed below:

- The Grass Roots Organization of Workers (GROW) created in the early 1970's for the area near Warren and I-96
- The Core City Neighborhood Revitalization Plan created in 1985 for the general areas from Michigan Ave. to I-94 and Grand River to West Grand Boulevard
- The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) created in 2012 by Eastside Community Network in collaboration with residents and technical advisors for the lower east side
- The Woodbridge Neighborhood Development & Design Guidelines drafted in April 2020.

Ideas Regarding Community Initiated Planning Studies

- It is important for City staff and Council to be aware of past, pending, and future community-initiated plans to incorporate their recommendations where needed.
- An accessible database including GIS maps of these plans for all city staff is needed.

P&DD Planning Studies

P&DD under the Mayor Duggan Administration has focused on both 1) Citywide Planning Initiatives and 2) Neighborhood Framework Planning Studies. LPD/CPC staff understands that some of the Framework Plans are funded by Detroit's Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF), which is an effort by City and non-profit and private sector partners to stabilize neighborhoods and attract new residents.

P&DD Citywide Planning Initiatives

P&DD's website indicates that Citywide Planning Initiatives are needed to guide major development impacting multiple neighborhoods. Examples of these Citywide Planning Initiatives include the Detroit Historic Vacant School Property Study, the Greater Downtown Area Bicycle Network Plan, and the Joe Louis Greenway (JLG) Framework Plan. Note that this mirrors the purpose that a master plan is to serve. However, the level of detail and engagement is intended to support and encourage immediate development activity.

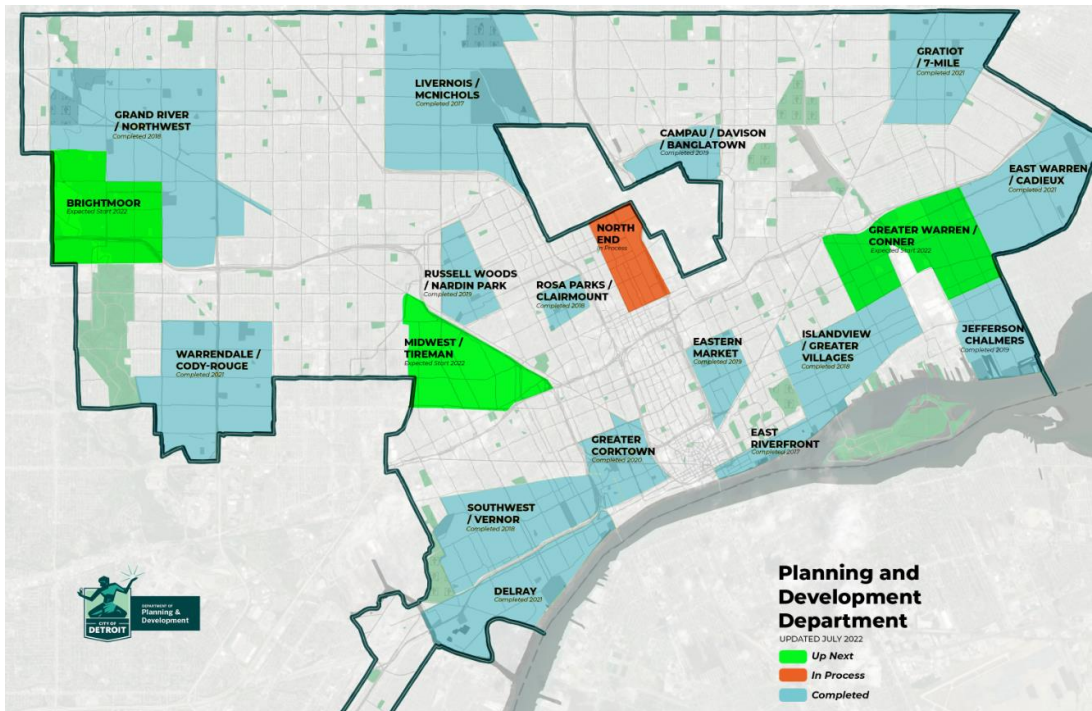
For example, P&DD recently completed the Joe Louis Greenway Framework Plan which is now guiding the Joe Louis Greenway Neighborhood Planning Study. Below is a map of the JLG Neighborhood Planning Areas now being studied.



P&DD Neighborhood Framework Plans

According to P&DD’s website, the neighborhood framework plan is a city-led initiative to build vibrant and growing neighborhoods in Detroit. The framework plans guide investment to improve core public assets in four (4) focus areas—parks & greenways, mixed-use and multi-family development, commercial corridors, and neighborhood stabilization.

P&DD indicates the neighborhood framework planning process typically takes place over 12-18 months. Once planning concludes and recommendations are finalized with the community, implementation of selected projects typically occurs within a 3-5 year timespan. The map below on P&DD’s website shows completed, in progress and up next neighborhood framework plans.



Neighborhood Framework Plans Completed and Upcoming

P&DD has divided its department into the East, Central and West Design Regions. Below is a table listing the neighborhood framework plans by region and the completion status.

EAST	STATUS
Campau-Davison-Banglatown	Completed 2019
Jefferson Chalmers	Completed 2019
East Warren/Cadieux	Completed 2021
Gratiot/7 Mile	Completed 2021
Greater Warren/Conner	Start 2022
CENTRAL	
East Riverfront	Completed 2017
Rosa Parks/Clairmont	Completed 2018
Islandview / Greater Villages	Completed 2018
West Vernor/Southwest	Completed 2018
Greektown	Completed 2019
Eastern Market	Completed 2019
Greater Corktown	Completed 2020
Brush Park	Completed 2020
Delray	Completed 2021
Midwest/Tireman	In process
The North End	In process
WEST	
Livernois McNichols	Completed 2017
Grand River Northwest	Completed 2018
Russell Woods/Nardin Park	Completed 2019
Warrendale Cody Rouge	Completed 2021
Brightmoor	Start 2022

As shown on the map and in the table, there are over 20 Neighborhood Framework Plans. LPD/CPC staff thinks these plans, which take time and resources, are generally well-done intensive studies that have active community outreach. P&DD uses these plans as a guide for implementation of infrastructure improvements, such as park and road improvements, and sales of city-owned land for redevelopment projects. Unlike with recent previous Administrations, P&DD is using resources to engage the community to strategically create community plans. As noted earlier, while the Master Plan covers the entire City, one challenge is that a good portion of the City is not covered by these recent planning studies. Other challenges include when an area is changing from one type of character to another, such as the jail complex moving out of downtown, or an industrial area becoming mixed-use, etc.

Ideas Regarding Neighborhood Framework Plans

- It is important that the various city departments are informed of the framework plans when considering land sales, block grant funding, etc.
- It is important that funding be continued and expanded for developing these framework plans so all needed areas of the city can be included.
- It is important for recommendations and findings of these neighborhood plans be presented to Council and any necessary rezoning and Master Plan amendments be initiated in a timely manner.

CONCLUSION

This report provides background information regarding current community input for development projects, a summary of the Citywide Plans, and a summary of past, present and future planning studies. Some of our major findings include:

- Some Development projects, usually small to mid-size, are able to proceed without major engagement because they are consistent with applicable regulations and no City approvals are needed beyond use and construction related permits
- Community input is mandated for most development projects via various State Laws and local provisions.
- P&DD has initiated over 20 neighborhood planning studies. LPD/CPC staff assumes more planning studies will be added each year based upon available funding and strategic approach. Many parts of the city have been covered, but there are some areas that do not have recent planning studies and could benefit from a Master Plan amendment/revision or a more detailed neighborhood framework plan.
- Detroit City Council recently passed a resolution urging the Administration to capitalize upon the products of recent past studies, assess the City's current conditions and begin to proactively engage in regular and intentional efforts to update the City's Master Plan of Policies, and
- More resources will be needed to ensure good neighborhood-based planning studies are continued and expanded.

It does not appear that any new local ordinance is needed to require or encourage community planning and engagement efforts, but rather an understanding of what is already in place and the will and resources to follow through. As we have indicated in the past the Master Plan is the governing document. If it is maintained, utilized and referenced as such the various activities described above are seen as carrying it out, or leading toward its amendment or revision. When the Master Plan is properly engaged it serves to address some of the perceived and real inequity because it applies City-wide.



CITY OF DETROIT

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

MEMORANDUM

TO: David Whitaker, Legislative Policy Division
THROUGH: Mary Sheffield, City Council President
FROM: Mary Waters, Councilmember, At-Large
RE: Community Planning Input Resolution

SUMMARY:

Our office would like the Legislative Policy Division to work on compiling information on the best way to write an ordinance to:

Expand community input into local development projects by ensuring that all areas of the City have planning studies conducted before development projects commence. Ensure that any existing ordinances are updated to align thresholds to encompass more developments in the City.

DEPARTMENTAL CONTACT:

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Position: Policy and Communications Analyst