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TO: The Honorable City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: December 22, 2022

RE: **Legislative Policy Division Community Outreach Ordinance-
District Community Budget Priorities Virtual Forum Report**

On October 20, 2020, the City of Detroit enacted the Community Outreach Ordinance to demonstrate the city's commitment to community outreach that promotes transparency and accountability and ensures community awareness on legislation, contracts, agreements, and resolutions related 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, and City-Wide Non-Motorized Urban Transportation plan, and City-Wide Park Improvement Plan, and ballot initiatives that are led by either the administration or City Council.

Included in the City-wide Proposals process is the requirement of the ordinance that 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. This report will detail the results of the community engagement from the City-wide Community Budget Priorities Forums held throughout the month of October 2022, in each City Council district¹.

Background

¹ Per the Community Outreach Ordinance, the City Council will appoint a liaison from the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) to monitor the community outreach process set forth in the ordinance to provide updates to City Council.

In accordance with the Community Outreach Ordinance passed in 2020, community meetings were held in each council district during the month of October 2022. Hosted by the Department of Neighborhood’s District Managers, City Council members representing each district and at-large City Council members met with their constituents virtually via Zoom. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss and determine constituents’ priorities for the upcoming FY 2023 – 2024 city budget. The meetings were facilitated by the District Managers and staff; in attendance were City Council Members, their staff and OCFO Office of Budget staff. Attendance at these district’s zoom meetings averaged upwards 100 participants, inclusive of city personnel. OCFO staff estimated on average 20 to 30 Detroit residents, non-city personnel attended the meetings.

The OCFO Office of Budget, Director and Deputy Director alternated as presenters for these district meetings. Discussions began with a brief overview of the budget process and timeline, followed by an outline of pertinent details of the current FY 2023 budget, and ended with questions from the community. The District Managers facilitated an interactive discussion on the community’s priorities. The interactive discussion involved polling questions and an open discussion on the community’s vision for the city.

The OCFO Office of Budget, is in process of “preparing the Mayor’s Recommended Annual Budget for the city’s programs, services and activities in the upcoming fiscal year, July 1, 2023, thru June 30, 2024. The Recommended Annual Budget will be presented with the Four-Year Financial Plan to the Detroit City Council on March 7, 2023, for their review and adoption. The Mayor’s Recommended Annual Budget is an estimated \$2 billion proposal, including an estimated \$1 billion of general fund activities.”

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer approached this year’s community forums with the idea to improve communications between residents and the city. To begin the process and in compliance with the City Charter, the Office of Budget held to two Public Budget Meetings (Part I and II) on October 3 and October 10, 2022. The next step in this process improvement was to advance the dates on the community forums. The District Community meetings, previously held in January were immediately held after the two public budget meetings while the information was still fresh. The administration expressed a desire to receive public comments earlier in the budget process for consideration. The Public Budget meetings were well attended with both residents and city staff present. Part I meeting included presentations from the General Services Department, Department of Public Works, and the Detroit Water & Sewerage Department. Part II Public Budget meeting included presentations from Fire, Health, Police and Public Lighting Department/Public Lighting Authority. Residents were able to ask questions and comment on many of the issues that were discussed in the subsequent District Community meetings. On further review, there were less budget process inquiries during the District meeting; this we may assume was due to this advance in the district meeting schedule and the coupling of these two processes.

Below is a brief outline of some of the citizen’s issues discussed during the Public Budget meetings.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Receive budget presentation in advance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tree removal, trimming, debris pick-up</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Right to Counsel funding</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why is property tax over taxation not included in the budget?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Resident involvement in the decision making on how to utilize budget surpluses</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Detroit Land Bank issues</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How DWSD rates determined. Make rates available to the public.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alley cleanup- block clubs’ participation-communication</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Neighborhood water line replacement</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Street cleaning outside of downtown</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fire hydrant maintenance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PLD substations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Budget funds for sewer grate repairs</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prioritizing Police runs- how do they measure success.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Funding for small businesses</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Health Dept services in the neighborhood</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Funding for middle class seniors home repair</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illegal dumping – budget by district, cameras</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Status of Demolition budget</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve Detroit services app</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Police- Mental Health issues</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illegal parking issues in the neighborhood</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Police funding</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve communication on budget issues</i>

The District Community meetings began with a ten-minute brief overview of the budget followed by three interactive questions. New technology was implemented for the interactive segment of the meeting. Participants were able to respond to the three pre-selected questions using the Slido app., through the Zoom chat function and the Zoom raise hand function. The Slido app allowed participants to respond using brief phrases and the District Manager provided an opportunity for residents to verbally expand on their responses. The questions presented to participants were:

1. What would you like to see prioritized in the budget?
2. These are the priorities that we have heard from your district. How would you rank these priorities?
3. What would you like to see or experience in our city?

Results Overview

Again, concerns relating to housing: affordable housing, home repair grants, and home ownership opportunities ranked high in participants priorities. Numerous comments focused on the need for assistance to secure and maintain home ownership for residents of the city of Detroit. Certain groups were specifically identified for increased assistance: disabled citizens, and seniors. Residents voiced their thoughts on the definition of affordable housing; that it is not the same as low-income housing, the Area Median Income (AMI) and other eligibility issues. Also, raised was the desire to expand the income limits on the home repair program eligibility.

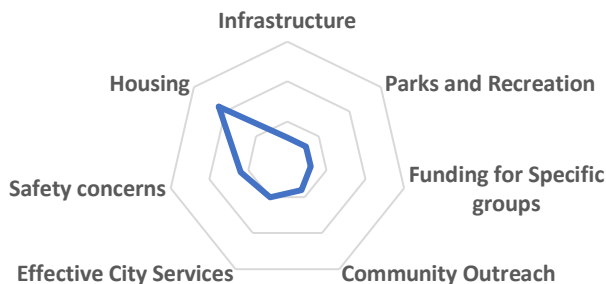
Earlier this year, resident's comments focused less on the shifting of police funding and more on increasing safety in the district. This trend continued in the October meetings with safe neighborhoods and providing safe spaces for children to play being top concerns. Funding to assist residents with flooding issues and other DWSD infrastructure repairs was discussed, with residents requesting funding for infrastructure improvements and permanent solutions to recurring residential flooding.

Residents voiced numerous concerns about the lack of responsiveness by city departments to their complaints. Residents shared examples of poor city services and their inability to reach city departments for resolution on issues such as fallen trees, trash removals, abandoned cars, etc. Accountability is a high priority. Residents want homeowners and businesses to be held accountable for maintaining their properties. They want the city to carry out its responsibility to enforce city ordinances regarding these matters. As in previous years, issues with the Detroit Land Bank properties were discussed.

Improving the city's Community Outreach is a top concern as resident continue to voice a disconnect between their priorities and actual city expenditures. Residents expressed a desire to be included in the city's decision-making process on projects within their districts, on the budget for programs and services and on how surplus funds are spent.

Citizens who participated in the process were without a doubt engaged and able to effectively voice their requests and concerns. However, discussion still lacked the desired and necessary input from a large segment of our community. This is illustrated by the low estimated average number of non-city employed participants, 20- 30 residents, as compared to the population of each district, approximately 90,000. We recognize that community outreach, just what it entails, and how it is conducted is actively being redefined as we slowly emerge from the pandemic. But for this process to achieve its full potential, expanding the outreach is essential. Further inclusion of faith-based organizations, fraternities, sororities, and professional organizations could assist in gaining more ideas, suggestions, and experiences from a broader cross section of our community.

Districts Top Concerns



This year's top priorities- all districts

Housing programs: affordable housing, home repairs, home modifications and other housing support.

Safe Neighborhoods: increased police patrols -visibility, speeding issues, noise complaints, safe outdoor space for children, mental health concerns

Effective City Services: trash pick-up, blight removal, clean city, tree trimming, other city services.

Community Outreach: inform and engage the community, include issues with the budget/ city-wide communications, inclusion in the decision-making process.

Funding for specific groups:

services for the disabled, seniors, and youth services.

Parks and Recreation: more funding for green spaces, recreation activities. **Infrastructure:** address flooding issues and other DWSD concerns, streets, and roads improvements.

Results by District

District 1- Thursday, October 27, 2022

Hosted by: Karla Williamson, District Manager; City Council Member: James Tate, President-Pro Tem
OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Steven Watson, Budget Director

Issues regarding Affordable Housing was the primary concern of District 1. As in the January 2022 forum, funding for home repairs, fixing property of the Detroit Land Bank (negligence), the need to fix or demolish vacant homes were discussed. One participant inquired about any alternative home repair programs for those over the income threshold whom she referred to as the “missing middle”. Safety concerns, especially for children playing outdoors is a high priority for District 1. Community Outreach was defined as the city connecting directly with the neighborhoods on service needs and education. One resident thought the city need a systemic way to get things done in the city. Residents voiced a vision for the city that included alternative modes of development that encourages collective ownership. One resident wants the city to focus on the city’s youth and young adults. One resident would like to see less tax incentivized development and more public investment in neighborhoods, not just Midtown and downtown. Another resident envisioned a safe, clean, fun city.

District 1 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Affordable Housing	1	Housing: Affordable housing, home repair programs, accessible housing, and home modification programs
2	Safe Neighborhoods	2	Safe Neighborhoods, increase visibility of police
3	Home Repair		Safe Outdoor Space for Children
4	Safe Outdoor Space for Children	3	Community Outreach
5	Community Outreach	4	Housing: Detroit Right to Counsel
		5	Parks and Recreation improvements

District 2- Tuesday, October 11, 2022:

Hosted by: Kim Tandy, District Manager; City Council Member: Angela Whitfield- Calloway

OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Steve Watson, Budget Director

Polling question 1 generated multiple responses with the dominant response being home repairs. Other responses included green infrastructure, increased police presence in the neighborhoods, minority businesses and neighborhood commerce, public health, and improved city services. As in the January 2022 forum, the need to fund the Right to Counsel was discussed. Increased funding for the Detroit Public Library, transportation, infrastructure improvements and mental health were also discussed.

One resident, in response to Polling question 3 envisioned skate parks in all districts. Others would like to see more tiny homes, investment in city neighborhoods and more grocery establishments.

District 2 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Safe Neighborhoods	1	Safe Neighborhoods/ Missing Children notification program/ Mental health services
2	Effective City Services	2	Community Outreach- transparency, allocation of services, district equity/tax abatement data/ Prioritize Long-time residents in programs
3	Neighborhood Investment	3	City Services
4	Home Repairs	4	Housing: Detroit Right to Counsel
5	Mental Health	5	Housing Issues- affordable housing, home repairs
6	Community Outreach		Infrastructure improvements
7	Detroit Right to Counsel		Poverty Elimination programs
			Transit Improvements

District 3- Tuesday, October 25, 2022:

Hosted by: Kayana Sessions, District Manager; City Council Member: Scott Benson

OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Janani Yates, Deputy Budget Director

Priorities for District 3 include various housing issues- affordable housing, home repair, low-income housing, as well as public safety issues, tree trimming and other city services. Community engagement – civic literacy, veteran services, transit improvements, jobs for youths and environmental concerns were raised. A resident wanted to know what did the Neighborhood Police Officers do? Residents desired to see more education and enforcement of invasive species trees, especially in the transformed green spaces. Other thoughts included more green space and housing intermixed. One resident would like to see increased community involvement where community organizations collaborate and unite to support one another and have the ability to apply for shared grants. Other visions for the city included a shared budget that equally gives every community opportunity; “safe days and nights” where crime complaints are handled promptly; family friendly communities; promotions to attract other ethnic groups to the city. To expand on this vision, residents would like to see thriving and viable – sustainable communities with businesses, amenities, a vibrant environment with traffic and food.

District 3 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Safe Neighborhoods	1	Community Outreach- updates, transparency, block club funding
2	Jobs/Workforce	2	Parks and Recreation
3	Affordable Housing	3	Detroit Right to Counsel
4	Parks and Recreation		Housing programs- landlord/tenant education, assistance, affordable housing, home repair
5	Housing Programs	4	Safe Neighborhood programs- safety, cameras
6	Community Outreach	5	Jobs/Workforce
			Detroit Public Library funding

District 4- Tuesday, October 25, 2022:

Hosted by: Errin Harris for Dennis Perkins, District Manager; City Council Member: Latisha Johnson
 OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Steve Watson, Budget Director

Housing issues- Affordable housing and home repair were the top concerns for the first question regarding district priorities. Other participants responding via chat indicated their priorities were: infrastructure upgrades; climate resilience, recreation; economic development, public transportation, public health – air quality issues and safe routes for children to schools, recreation centers/libraries. Residents wanted a true partnership between the city and other stakeholders (CDO/businesses/churches), funding for the Housing Trust Fund and more funding for mental health services. Responding to question- 3, district residents want more restaurants in the Jefferson-Chalmers area; ease of small business starts; clean neighborhoods- no litter in parks; walkable- bikeable neighborhoods; and better mental health services. Other questions raised during the meeting were: what is the current balance of Detroit pre-bankruptcy debt and the city’s strategies to retire this debt; and will retirees be made whole from the bankruptcy cuts. Infrastructure improvements specifically for alleys and lead pipe replacements, reliable, accessible transit options- other than buses; and stronger code enforcement were also discussed. One resident voiced a desire to see a police residency policy in Detroit. District residents still feel that there is a lack of transparency in communications from the city- budget and other financial information.

District 4 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Infrastructure – Flooding Issues	1	City services including commercial buildings demolition/trash/blight
2	Affordable Housing	2	Community outreach- understanding the budget
3	Effective City Services (demo, trash pickup, blight removal)	3	Flooding and Infrastructure Issues
4	City Code Enforcement	4	Detroit Right to Counsel
5	Community Outreach around Budget	4	Parks and Recreation
6	Parks and Recreation	5	Housing issues
			Safe Neighborhoods- speeding issues

District 5- Tuesday, October 19, 2022:

Hosted by: Melina Howard, District Manager; City Council Member: Mary Sheffield, President
 OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Steve Watson, Budget Director

As in the January forum, numerous concerns were raised on housing: affordable housing, home repairs- and increased home ownership programs. Discussion continued with infrastructure issues related to the 2021 flooding-improvements and assistance (for flood damages), other infrastructure improvements, illegal dumping, and alleyway improvements. Issues concerning property tax relief and support for small businesses were also discussed. Things that residents would like to see or experience in the city include small business support/grants, property owners being held accountable for the upkeep of their property, environmental issues- rodent control, more green spaces/green initiatives, large retailers in the neighborhood, more police in the neighborhoods, accessible public transit, and more money for community groups/block clubs. Better communication between the city and residents which include education and advisory services for homeowners, streamlined community assistance, transparency, and accountability in responding to citizen inquiries and complaints.

District 5 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Home Repair	1	Home repair, home ownership programs, affordable housing

2	Infrastructure Improvements	2	Community outreach- city budget function, transparency
3	Effective City Services	3	Improve city services, grass cutting, demolition
4	Affordable Housing	4	Infrastructure improvements, assistance for flooding, other DWSD issues, streets/roads
5	Community Outreach	5	Property Over taxation- compensation
6	Small Business Support		
7	Home Ownership Programs		

District 6- Thursday, October 20, 2022:

Hosted by: Eva Torres, District Manager; City Council Member: Gabriela Santiago-Romero

OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Janani Yates, Deputy Budget Director

The primary issues in District 6 were housing- affordable housing, home repairs, and demolition of blighted houses. Other priorities are transportation improvements including accessible bus stops, blight/illegal dumping, and infrastructure improvements to prevent flooding. Walkable communities, more police patrols in the neighborhood and more lights on residential streets were also raised as priorities. Also raised as a concern by residents was the Detroit Land Bank Authority blighted property and the red tape to get a resolution on these properties.

In response to the question, “what residents would like to see or experience in our city”, one resident said motion sensor solar lighting in the alleys. Another would like to see more community-based health centers to aid in preventive, mental and sexual health. One resident would like to add at least three libraries and two recreation centers to the neighborhood. Others discussed the lack of home repair programs for those over the income limit and would like to see programs for those with incomes over \$65,000. Some envisioned a livelier city with more events held in Spirit Plaza, a more vibrant downtown with more events/activity and more public spaces and gathering spaces without cars.

In comparing year over year results, we note housing issues were the primary concerns for District 6 replacing Community Outreach issues.

District 6 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Home Repair	1	Community outreach- services for seniors, disabled; benefits for long-time residents, disproportionate benefits
2	Affordable Housing	2	Affordable housing, home repair programs
3	Transit Improvements	3	Detroit Right to Counsel
4	Address Blight and Illegal Dumping	4	Transit improvements
5	Services for Seniors	5	City services - blight, dumping
6	Right to Counsel		

District 7- Wednesday, October 26, 2022:

Hosted by: Mona Ali, District Manager; City Council Member: Fred Durhal, III

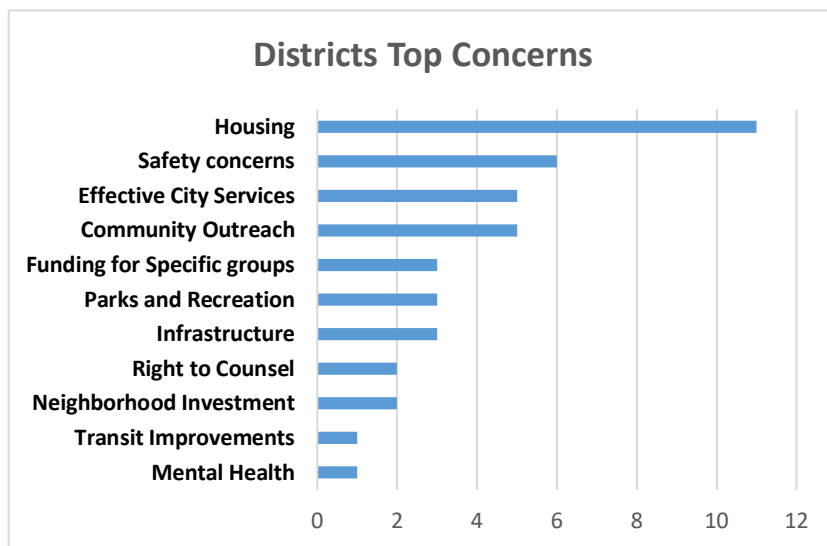
OCFO- Office of Budget Presenter: Janani Yates, Deputy Budget Director

In comparing year over year results, we find District 7 primary concerns focused on the city’s most vulnerable population: the disabled and seniors. Providing housing support and other needed city services for this population ranked high. Concerns on educating district residents on the budget, a top concern last year fell out of the top 5 priorities this year. Other priorities raised were environmental concerns, jobs, home repairs, safety issues and health and wellness. Some concerns expressed by residents include restitution for Detroit Retirees, home repair for low

income and seniors, pool facilities for residents with special needs; infrastructure improvements- flood assistance and affordable housing. One resident raised a question on the percentage of community involvement that is added to the budget. Some items that residents would like to see the city fund: provide incentives, low interest loans to help mitigate rent increases; provide incentives to employers to assist with housing rents and/or purchases; and to provide incentives to employers to locate higher paying jobs in Detroit. One resident would like the city to consider building one therapeutic pool for aquatic wellness services. Residents want to be involved in the decision-making for street modifications; residents complained that narrowed streets resulted in more accidents. Residents would like to see more retail stores in the city; more police patrols in the neighborhoods; event and community spaces for gatherings; updating neighborhoods to be more attractive and inviting, like the suburbs. Grocery stores in the city should have the same quality foods as those outside the city. Another resident would like the city to upgrade traffic signals to mass arms for uniformity and beautification.

District 7 Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October-2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Funding for Residents with Disabilities	1	Community outreach- funding for disabled resident services, community agreements
2	Housing Support for Seniors	2	Housing support for seniors and disabled
3	Safe Neighborhoods	3	Safe Neighborhoods- add cameras, abandoned vehicles
4	Infrastructure – flood assistance	4	Parks and Recreation
5	Parks and Recreation	5	Infrastructure - flood assistance

CONCLUSION



Results All 7 Districts

This chart displays the results compiled from the virtual Community District meetings held this October 2022. Concerns/ issues/ priorities were segmented and ranked into 11 categories. This chart shows the outcome of rankings for each category (ranked from lowest to highest priority).

In reviewing year over year results, we observed overall concerns remain similar with a shift in the top 5 priorities. Community focus continue with housing needs- affordable housing, home repair programs and housing needs for specific groups. Infrastructure improvements due

to city-wide flooding in 2021 remains a topic of discussion.

ALL DISTRICTS Year over Year Comparisons			
Rank	October -2022 Issues-Concerns	Rank	January-2022 Issues-Concerns
1	Housing Programs	1	Community Outreach
2	Safe Neighborhoods	2	Housing Programs
3	Effective City Services	3	Safe Neighborhoods
3	Community Outreach	4	Detroit Right to Counsel
4	Funding for Specific Groups: Disabled, Seniors	5	Infrastructure Improvements
	Parks and Recreation		
	Infrastructure Improvements		

Recommendation

Relative to the public input sessions, it would be beneficial to connect programmatic impact or performance output with budgetary decisions. The Legislative Policy Division issued a report (May 1, 2020) on a review of Outcome Budgeting. The LPD review identified that “Outcome Budgeting appears to have some merit, it can make government programs more result oriented, instead of outlay oriented. It can better measure outcomes of government program and services to determine whether the money spent meet certain goals and objectives; it can provide a performance measurement tool that helps in a) better service delivery, b) decision-making, c) improving program effectiveness, d) make budgets more cost-effective, e) add accountability and f) aid better management.” The Duggan Administration proposed to implement a pilot project focused on outcome budgeting for three departments: General Service Department (GSD), the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIt), and the Detroit Fire Department (Fire). An update on this pilot project and ongoing efforts to demonstrate how citizen input informs budget recommendations would be beneficial for City Council’s consideration relative to aligning priorities with budgetary allocations, as well as provide valuable feedback to those who have offered their recommendations.

In accordance with the Community Outreach Ordinance, the administration will provide City Council a report detailing the itemized concerns raised by the impacted neighborhoods during the community outreach process and a proposed method to address each of those concerns. LPD understands this report will accompany the Mayor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2023- 2024 Budget and FY 2025 – 2028 Four Year Financial Plan scheduled to be presented to City Council on March 7, 2023.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

cc: Jay B. Rising, Chief Financial Officer
Tanya Stoudemire, Chief Deputy CFO
Steve Watson, Deputy CFO/Budget Director
Janani Yates, Deputy Budget Director
Gail Fulton, Council Liaison, Mayor’s Office