

# Getting started

This guide is one of five packets on how to buy publicly owned land and create land based projects in Detroit. Download these resources at [www.DetroitMi.gov/Land](http://www.DetroitMi.gov/Land) or pick up at 2 Woodward Ave.

1. Getting started	2. Check land zoning	3. Purchase land	4. Permitting
Plot Plan, Site Design, and Maintenance Guide			

### Read on if you...

- + Want to buy land for a land based project
- + Have land and/or need to complete your permit to protect your rights as a property owner

### Inside you will find...

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### What is a Land Based Project?

A land based project uses land for activities such as urban agriculture, gardening, or beautification, whether for profit or community activation.

### Have questions or need help?

Call the **Development Resource Center** at: 313-224-2372

### Costs and time, at a glance

The current zoning of a property is one of the most important things to find out before you start. Learn more about this in **Packet 2. Check land zoning.**

If your project is “by right”

Estimated Timeline for Purchase: 2-3 months

Minimum Cost for Permit: \$150 

Estimated Timeline for Permit: 25 days

If your project is “conditional”

Estimated Timeline for Purchase: 4-6 months

Minimum Cost for Permit: \$1,160 + \$150 

Estimated Timeline for Permit: 13 weeks





## 1. Getting started

Start by visiting [detroitmi.gov/land](http://detroitmi.gov/land) to review project resources

## 2. Check land zoning

Start here if you already have land and need a permit!

Learn what kinds of land based projects are allowed by right on your property

Skip to step 4. Permitting if your project is allowed by right and you already own your land

Start here if you want to buy land from the City or the Detroit Land Bank Authority!

Go to [www.DetroitDevelopment.org](http://www.DetroitDevelopment.org) and use the map to identify public property that is for sale + consider the zoning rules

Learn how to find a property where your project is allowed by right

START IN NOVEMBER (OR EVEN EARLIER) SO YOU CAN BUILD YOUR PROJECT IN THE SPRING!

## 3. Purchase land



Fill out the Property Purchase Application

DBA /DLBA reviews application for completeness and availability of parcels

Negotiate price of land + confirm if your project is by right, not allowed or conditional



MONTHS

If your project is by right, finalize purchase, close with restricted deed, and file a Property Transfer Affidavit with the Assessor's Office.

2-4

WEEKS

City review period

4-6

WEEKS

City review period

CITY WILL HELP CHECK YOUR ZONING AND WHETHER YOUR PROJECT IS BY RIGHT, CONDITIONAL, OR NOT ALLOWED



If your project is not allowed, meet with City Planning Commission to learn about your options

### City review period details

DBA/DLBA review

DBA/DLBA review with City department partners

Final approval DLBA Board and/or City Council



WEEKS

If your project is conditional, prepare and submit Special Land Use Application to BSEED

# Land Based Projects: A Path to Purchase, Permit and Design

## Process map

### KEY

BSEED = Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department


DLBA = Detroit Land Bank Authority

DBA = Detroit Building Authority

 = Purchaser pays fee

 = Purchaser fills out a form

 = In-person visit required

 = Estimated time for this step  
WEEKS

If your land use is conditional, go to the conditional path of step 3. Purchase land

Select property where your project is allowed by right

Start step 3. Purchase land



YOU MAY WANT TITLE INSURANCE, SOIL TESTS, ETC.

### 4. Permitting



If you own the land already, start step 4. Permitting

   30 DAYS  
BSEED holds Special Land Use hearing

    
Finalize purchase, close with restricted deed, and file a Property Transfer Affidavit with the Assessor's Office.

Start step 4. Permitting

BSEED approves your project with conditions that may exceed standard zoning ordinance requirements

YOU MAY NEED INSPECTIONS FOR TITLE INSURANCE, SOIL TESTS, ETC.

## Inform and engage your neighbors

Community engagement can provide you with a supportive team before the project starts running and can help you protect, sustain, and grow your project.

### Ways to communicate

- ❑ Reach out before you get started and when there are big project changes.
- ❑ Knock on your neighbors' doors and talk with them about your project. Leave a flyer or a letter with your neighbors who do not answer with information on how to reach you.
- ❑ Communicate why you are doing the project, what responsibilities neighbors can expect from you and your project, and what benefits the project brings to the community.
- ❑ Put a sign up on your project site with the name and contact information of project leaders so neighbors can contact you first instead of calling the City to express concerns.
- ❑ Other good information to put on your sign includes whether people are welcome to enter or take produce.
- ❑ It may help to visit at different times of day to catch people with different schedules or to hold set "office hours" each week when people know they can stop by.
- ❑ Keep in mind that some people may struggle with written communication. Try to find ways to be available in person to talk.

### Other ways to reach out

- Post on [www.NextDoor.com](http://www.NextDoor.com) or share your event on the City's [www.TheNeighborhoods.org](http://www.TheNeighborhoods.org) website.
- Sign up for communications from your City Council member and District Manager from the Department of Neighborhoods at [www.bit.ly/2NrWCjg](http://www.bit.ly/2NrWCjg)
- Visit local businesses or nonprofits.
- Join local groups.

### Consider sharing your space

- Throw an opening celebration (big events may need special permits).
- Give a walking tour of your project.
- Teach others how to do similar projects or to incorporate good practices in their own land.
- Host a garden clean-up, tilling, or planting with neighbors and volunteers.

### Keep in mind that even though you have a great idea, some people may have concerns about having your project next door

- Take the time to tidy up, greet people, and be respectful of quiet hours.
- Ask your neighbors what worries they have early on, and make sure to address them.
- Ask your neighbors if there are benefits they would like to see from your project. Showing your neighbors the perks of having your project nearby can go a long way.

## Communicating with your neighbors is sometimes required

### Requirements from the Urban Farming Ordinance

*IF* your land based project is

- An urban garden (agriculture less than or equal to 1 acre in size) that was permitted on a conditional use basis, OR
- An urban farm (agriculture more than 1 acre),

*THEN* you must provide your name, address, and telephone number at least 30 days before you start doing site work to neighboring property owners or tenants and/or the first nearest property owner or tenant.

### Even when it's not required

Talking to your neighbors in the early stages of your project can help it be successful in the long term.

Most people appreciate a heads up in advance when changes will happen nearby. They may have project ideas of their own, want to help out, or have some specific concerns you can address.

Building relationships with your neighbors is a good practice, especially for land based projects.

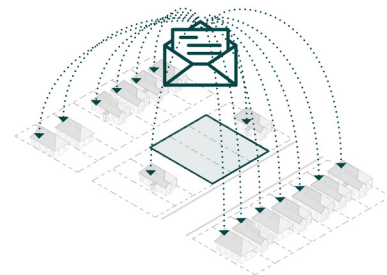
### Requirements as part of the Special Land Use Hearing Process

*IF* your land based project will require a Special Land Use Hearing in order to receive a permit,

*THEN* the City will send a letter to all addresses within the required radius of your project and post hearing information on property, no less than 15 days prior to your scheduled hearing date.

The letter includes:

- Your project's address
- The time, date, and location of your hearing
- Your/your organization's name
- A brief description of your project and proposed use
- **An invitation for them to express their opinion of your project; they can do this in writing before or after the hearing, or by attending the hearing.**



More details on conditional land uses and the City's Special Land Use Hearing process are in **Packet 4. Permitting**. Visit [www.detroitmi.gov/land](http://www.detroitmi.gov/land) to download or pick one up at 2 Woodward Ave.

## Overview of resources that show the path to buying publicly owned land and creating land based projects in Detroit

Download these resources at [www.DetroitMi.gov/Land](http://www.DetroitMi.gov/Land) or pick up at 2 Woodward Ave.

### 1. Getting started

Map of the process to purchase, permit, and design land based projects in Detroit

Tips on engaging your neighbors

Overview of the contents of all the informational packets and guides created for this project

### 2. Check land zoning

Understanding what zoning means for your project

Matching your property and project

How to look up publicly owned property online

### 3. Purchase land

How to prepare for purchasing properties owned by the City or Land Bank

How the City and Land Bank sell land

Instructions for completing the Property Purchase Application

### 4. Permitting

A list of the different types of permits and projects that require permits

Conditional use process explanation

How to get a permit for multiple parcels

### Plot Plan, Site Design, and Maintenance Guide

How to draw a Plot Plan for purchase or permit applications

Site Design Guide on zoning requirements and best practices

Maintenance guide