



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero

THRU: Council Member Mary Sheffield, Council President

FROM: Tammy Daniels, Chief Executive Officer, Detroit Land Bank Authority

DATE: Friday, March 24, 2023

RE: Detroit Land Bank Authority FY 2023-24 Budget

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Council Member Santiago-Romero,

Please find below, our response to the following questions and concerns:

- 1. City Council recently approved FY 2022 -2023 Supplemental Appropriations and Transfers that included a \$2,000,000 citywide blight survey. Please provide a detailed description of the blight survey. a. What's the timeline of the survey? b. How can the city utilize the findings of the completed survey?**

This spring, staff plans to launch a 2-year citywide survey of neighborhoods to identify blighted vacant structures, and to refer those structures to the existing blight resources at the Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department, the Demolition Department, the Detroit Land Bank Authority's nuisance abatement program, as well as the General Services Department. Staff expect the survey to ensure that all vacant blighted structures are being addressed by a department through code enforcement, nuisance abatement, or demolition, for example and also help departments detect conflicts between programs.

- a. The land bank has a posting for a Survey Manager to oversee the day-to-day activities of the project, and staff are finalizing the IT infrastructure necessary to record and track survey data over the next two weeks. Staff expect to have surveyors onboarded, trained, and surveying this summer.
- b. Staff are working with colleagues at the Department of Innovation and Technology to ensure that city staff have ready and real-time access to survey findings. Staff expect the survey data to be useful to many city staff. For staff working on blighted property response including staff

at City Law, BSEED, the Demolition Department, DOIT, and GSD, among others the data will allow City staff to prioritize work and understand aggregate need. For City staff working to understanding the city and its neighborhoods including the Housing & Revitalization Department, Department of Innovation and Technology, and Planning & Development Department the survey data will be a powerful tool to understand the needs of neighborhoods. Staff expect a key duty of the incoming Survey Manager to develop metadata and conduct trainings for city colleagues on how to access, utilize, and interpret these data.

**2. Last year, the Detroit Land Bank Authority indicated that it was developing a 5-year strategic plan. Please provide an update on the strategic planning process.**

Working with the Center for Community Progress, the DLBA engaged key community stakeholders, City partners, Councilmembers and Council staff, as well as similar organizations around the country, to develop a strategic framework for the DLBA last year which clarifies key focus areas for the organization looking forward. A continued strategic planning process with robust engagement is needed to inform the five-year strategic plan for the organization, complete with a formally adopted vision, mission, goals, and metrics to measure progress and position DLBA as a global leader in vacant property management and revitalization. Staff have been working to initiate work on the four pillars of the framework: (1) Communication and customer service, (2) Partnerships, (3) Programming, and organizational development, and (4) Funding while also pursuing philanthropic support for a more comprehensive strategic planning process. Staff anticipates an award decision from the Kresge Foundation soon and expect to publish an RFP for a strategic planning and engagement consultant this spring. Staff expect the ambitious engagement strategy and planning process to last through the end of the year, and to publish a formal plan in 2024.

**3. It was noted last year that there was a “gaping hole” for marketing and communications to promote programs. What has been done to improve community awareness of DLBA programs?**

The DLBA has expanded in-person engagement opportunities and has participated in more than **130** community engagement events since the start of the 2023 fiscal year, July 1, 2022 to increase the community awareness of DLBA programs. The DLBA has also added the following outreach initiatives:

- Added a Community Initiatives Program Manager, London Scott, to our Communications & Engagement team to lead virtual and in-person programming and coordinate scheduling of DLBA representation at events such as block club meetings, City Council-led community events, Department of Neighborhoods events, Community Partner events, and more.
- Improved direct communication with City Council through our Liaison Dwayne Barnes who was hired in May 2022. His efforts have provided Council and Council staff a direct contact with the DLBA to escalate constituent concerns, coordinate DLBA presence at Council-led events, and share DLBA program information.
- Hosted Lunch & Learn series geared toward improving City Council staff and City partner awareness of DLBA programs, highlighting common community concerns including Compliance, maintenance, Vacant Land Reuse programs, and Salesforce.

- Launched a Buy Back media event during the summer of 2022 highlighting our graduates and promoting awareness of the program.
- Launched Constituent Services office hours with our Constituent Services Liaison, Antonisha Smith, as an opportunity for residents with questions/concerns, particularly those with more complex issues or those requiring more hands-on assistance, to meet with the DLBA face-to-face and receive personalized attention and inquiry escalation.
- Re-launched free and public Open Houses for DLBA Auction properties. Open Houses are promoted on our website, [buildingdetroit.org](http://buildingdetroit.org), and on the DLBA's social media channels to alert residents to upcoming sales and opportunities to tour the properties before bidding.
- Created new DLBA flyers and brochures to distribute to residents at meetings and events to provide up-to-date information about a variety of programs and opportunities.
- Ongoing refresh of DLBA website content to make program and policy information as transparent, accessible, and current as possible.
- Created "how-to" tutorial videos for the DLBA's website and social media channels to help residents navigate buying processes.
- Launched Procurement Office Hours to provide hand-on assistance to local small business owners interested in becoming contractors or vendors with the DLBA for the organization's RFPs and RFQs in areas from maintenance to construction.
- Continued to host virtual events on general DLBA program information as well as virtual house tours of current Rehabbed & Ready listings.
- Launched monthly community meetings with DLBA executive leadership, where individuals who have complex issues can meet, ask questions and get a resolution.
- DLBA's monthly appearance on "Detroit in Black and White" radio show on 910 am to highlight DLBA programming and purchase opportunities.

4. **During a presentation, it was shared that DLBA had improved on several metrics related to customer service. a. What are the target metrics for the upcoming fiscal year?**  
**b. Does the department have sufficient funds and staffing levels to achieve the target metrics?**

The DLBA is working to consistently maintain monthly call answer rates at or above 90%; monthly call abandon rates at or below 10%; monthly average call wait times at or below 5 minutes. All metrics are based upon the current monthly average of 5,175 calls. We are adequately staffed given the current DLBA programs, However, the DLBA is working on the development of new programs which once launched may result in higher call volumes, and reevaluating staffing needs would be necessary.

- 5. Are you planning to implement any additional programs in the upcoming fiscal year?**  
**a. Are there any plans to expand any of the existing programs in the upcoming fiscal year?**

Taking the questions in reverse order, in terms of expanding existing programs, the DLBA hopes to achieve the following in the upcoming fiscal year:

- Relaunch of in-person side lot fairs and building block events to reconnect with the community and constituents.
- Cultivate partnerships to leverage support services to expand occupied property programming.
- As mentioned in question number 2 above, two of the pillars referenced in the strategic plan framework were programming and funding. The DLBA is always keen on introducing new programs each year, with appropriate funding to staff these initiatives. A few ideas the DLBA is exploring are:
  - Using ARPA funding to rehab multifamily units for the benefit of affordable housing
  - Providing DLBA housing inventory to support the City's Community Development Organization (CDO)/Nonprofit ARPA funded housing rehab initiative
  - Creating a fenced lot initiative to address the numerous DLBA lots that have been fenced by neighbors

Of course, the DLBA will also continue to use the strategic planning process to discover other programming goals for the organization.