David Whitaker, Esq.
Director
Irvin Corley, Jr.
Executive Policy Manager
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Advisory Board

John Alexander
LaKisha Barclift, Esq.
Paige Blessman
M. Rory Bolger, Ph.D., FAICP
Lisa DiChiera
Eric Fazzini, AICP
Willene Green
Christopher Gulock, AICP
Derrick Headd
Marcel Hurt, Esq.

# City of Detroit CITY COUNCIL

LEGISLATIVE POLICY DIVISION

208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center

Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

Kimani Jeffrey Anthony W. L. Johnson Phillip Keller, Esq. **Edward King Kelsey Maas** Jamie Murphy Latawn Oden **Dolores Perales** Analine Powers, Ph.D. W. Akilah Redmond Rebecca Savage Sabrina Shockley **Renee Short Floyd Stanley** Thomas Stephens, Esq. **Timarie Szwed Theresa Thomas** Ian Tomashik Ashley A. Wilson

TO: Tammy Daniels, Chief Executive Officer

Detroit Land Bank Authority

FROM: David Whitaker, Director

Legislative Policy Division

DATE: March 13, 2024

RE: Detroit Land Bank Authority FY 2024-2025 Budget Analysis

Attached is our analysis regarding the Detroit Land Bank Authority Budget for the City's Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Please be prepared to respond to the questions raised in our analysis during your scheduled hearing on **Thursday**, **March 14**, **2024**, **at 2:00 p.m**. We would then appreciate a written response to the questions at your earliest convenience before or after your budget hearing. Please forward a copy of your responses to the Council members, the City Clerk's Office, and the Legislative Policy Division.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding our analysis. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

#### Attachments:

Issues and questions

cc: Councilmembers

Auditor General's Office

Jay Rising, City of Detroit CFO

Tanya Stoudemire, Chief Deputy Financial Officer Steven Watson, Deputy CFO/Budget Director

Justin Buss, OCFO Budget Analyst

James Williams, Agency CFO Malik Washington, Mayor's Office

#### **Detroit Land Bank Authority**

#### Analysis by the Legislative Policy Division for the City's FY 2024-2025 Budget

Activities and Purpose of the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA)<sup>1</sup>

The Detroit Land Bank Authority (the "DLBA") was created on February 18, 2009 as a Michigan Public Body Corporate. It was created through an inter-local agreement between the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority and the City of Detroit (the "City") pursuant to Public Act 258 of 2003, Land Bank Fast Tract Act, for the purpose of administering land bank programs and functions in the City.

The DLBA's purpose is to exercise the powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of an authority under the Land Bank Act for the benefits of the City of Detroit (the "City") and the State of Michigan. The DLBA endeavors to carry out the powers, duties, functions, and responsibilities of an authority under the Land Bank Act consistent with the inter-governmental agreement including, but not limited to, the power, privilege, and authority to acquire, manage, and dispose of interests in property, and performing all other functions necessary or convenient to implement the purposes, objectives, and provisions of the Land Bank Act and the purposes, objectives, and powers delegated to a City authority under the laws or executive orders.

The DLBA had no demolition activity for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023. The DLBA no longer participates in demolition activities. The DLBA's inventory of property decreased to 71,942 parcels, compared to 74,341 parcels as of the end of the previous fiscal year.

The DLBA is dedicated to returning Detroit's vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed property to productive use.

The DLBA is continually maintaining property and disposing of property in conjunction with a development project or other appropriate use. Most transactions that remove a property from the DLBA's inventory generate revenue for the organization. Examples of these transactions include, but are not limited to, property sales, side lot sales, and special purpose projects.

The DLBA will continue to execute federal, state, and local grants that have a public land component focused on neighborhood revitalization. During earlier years, the DLBA played a key role in implementing several rounds of the federally funded Neighborhood Stabilization Program in conjunction with the City and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority ("MSHDA"). More recently, the DLBA has substantially completed the MSHDA-administered federal Hardest Hit Fund program and has fully closed out the program.

During the current fiscal year (2023), the DLBA experienced a continual decrease in sales. In spite of these factors, the DLBA will continue to focus on sales, as well as neighborhood revitalization by continuing to build relationships with the philanthropic community, seeking to attract foundation grant support to leverage public funds.

Public and Private Partnerships-The DLBA has formed partnerships with local organizations to implement a program providing newly rehabilitated homes in targeted neighborhoods of Detroit. The DLBA received grants of \$665,000 supported by a loan of \$2 million to rehabilitate the housing and alleviate blight in the surrounding neighborhoods. The DLBA also received a loan loss reserve to fill any shortfalls in sales price versus rehabilitation costs. Property rehabilitation has expanded within a multitude of neighborhoods and is funded by operating revenue and City rehabilitation funding. Independent contractors and organizations will rehabilitate the identified properties.

Under Michigan law, the DLBA will receive 50 percent of the specific tax generated on all properties that are sold by the DLBA for five years succeeding the transfer of the property to private owners. The specific tax is equal to the ad valorem taxes that would be generated if the property were not exempt from ad valorem taxation. These funds will be received by the DLBA in the same manner and the same time that the City distributes current tax collections to all

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> DLBA's financial statements as of June 30, 2023 and LPD's memo entitled "Dissolution of DLBA" dated February 1, 2022 (attached) provide the DLBA's activities and purpose information.

taxing jurisdictions for which it collects property taxes. The DLBA budget first realized this revenue source in May 2015.

The DLBA will continue to market its ability to act as a City-wide development tool in areas that are deemed marketable, as well as to increase visibility to support commercial development investments and develop fee-based services, such as title cleansing. The DLBA's long-term strategy is to act as a resource in the City's neighborhood revitalization efforts, aligning its efforts with the City specifically on management of public land, extending relationships with philanthropy, and partnering with community groups to improve Detroit neighborhoods.

The Mayor recommends a general fund subsidy of \$11 M to the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) in FY 2025, the same as for FY 2024 (page B35-16 from Non-Departmental budget-see attached).

- 1. According to the DLBA's annual financial statements as of June 30, 2023, the DLBA has established the Detroit Land Bank Community Development Corporation (the "DLB CDC"). The DLB CDC is a legally separate, tax-exempt component unit of the DLBA. The DLBA has the power to appoint a majority of the DLB CDC's directors, and the DLB CDC was created and operates exclusively to support the DLBA. The financial information of the DLB CDC is included as a blended component unit in the accompanying financial statements. How has the DLB CDC assisted the DLBA thus far? Although the financial information of the DLB CDC is blended with DLBA's financial information, please what level of funding that has been provided to the DLB CDC.
- 2. Please explain the continual need for a \$11 M general fund subsidy when the DLBA's property inventory is decreasing. According to DLBA's 2023 annual financial statements, the DLBA's inventory of property decreased to 71,942 parcels as of June 30, 2023, compared to 74,341 as of the end of the previous fiscal year as of June 30, 2022. In addition, according to the DLBA's FY 2024 second quarterly report, total parcels decreased further to 70,198. Please explain any change in services in FY 2024. What are some of the key budget concerns for the DLBA for FY 2025?
- 3. Please provide FY 2024 budgeted versus actual positions. Does the DLBA plan to fill any vacant positions? What is the level of budgeted positions for FY 2025?
- 4. Since inception of the Prop N Neighborhood Improvement Bond (NIB) program, how many stabilized properties were transferred to the DLBA per year for disposition? How many of these stabilized properties were sold per year to Detroit residents and investors? How were the sales price of these properties determined and are they usually sold at large discounted prices?
- 5. Please provide a copy of DLBA's total FY 2024 budget. Please provide a year-to-date budget analysis, if available. Please provide the total FY 2025 budget, if available.
- 6. Under Michigan law, the DLBA receives 50 percent of the specific tax generated on all properties that are sold by the DLBA for five years succeeding the transfer of the property to private owners. During the FY 2023 budget process, DLBA reported that it received the following amounts in 5/50 property tax revenue: 2019 \$909,526; 2020 \$1,456,898; 2021 \$1,821,942; 2022 \$2,751,734; and 2023 \$879,830 (partial year). How much did the DLBA receive in property tax revenue for full year of FY 2023? What is the budgeted and year-to-date figures for this revenue in FY 2023? What is the projection for FY 2024?
- 7. The following table provides a history of structure sales and side lot sales, by amount and unit, and loss of disposition of property held for resale from DLBA financial statements, data provided during the FY 2024 budget process, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2024 DLBA report:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr of
Properties held for resale	95,242	90,860	86,898	79,688	74,341	71,942	70,198 total properties: 62,501 vacant properties 7,697 structures
Structure sales	\$9.03 M	\$8.60 M	\$8.44 M	\$15.82 M	\$10.25 M	\$9.51 M	Structures
Structure clossings	1812	2636	3391	3343	ψ10 <b>/2</b> 0 1/1	Ψ	
Residential Structures Only	1802	2631	3376	3322			
Side lot sales	\$0.79 M		\$0.67 M	\$1.48 M	\$3.33 M	\$2.51 M	
Lot Closings	2401	4163	2431	5059			
Residential Lots Only	2394	4136	2424	5051			
Loss on disposition of property held for resale	\$(3.67) M	\$(3.45) M	\$(2.99) M	\$(2.78) M	\$(2.40) M	\$(1.47) M	

#### Questions/requests:

- a. Please provide budgeted and year-to-date amount of structure sales and side lot sales for FY 2024, and for the budgeted amount for FY 2025, if available.
- b. Please provide structure closings and lot closings in total, and residential structures only and residential lot only for FY 2022, FY 2023, and projected figures for FY 2024.
- c. Please provide reasons for the decline in structure sales in FY 2023. Is the DLBA looking at creative ways to increase structure sales?
- d. Does DLBA feel it can list all of its structures by the end of FY 2024 for sale? Or is by the end of FY 2025 more realistic?
- e. With 62,501 vacant properties, and with Prop N NIB demolition program creating more vacant lots, is the DLBA looking for more creative ways to increase these sales, both for residents and for economic development?
- f. Has DLBA identified more funding to help more Rehabbed and Ready homes to be made available to low to moderate-income Detroiters?
- g. Please provide the number of vacant homes owned by the DLBA as of March 1, 2024. Does the DLBA anticipate it will be at a point of owning no more vacant homes by the end of 2025?
- 8. According to the DLBA audited financial statements as of June 30, 2023, DLBA has an unassigned fund balance of \$36.2 million. Does DLBA have any future plans to use any of this unassigned fund balance for operations or capital improvements?

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208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center Detroit, Michigan 48226

Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

**Derrick Headd** Marcel Hurt, Esq. Kimani Jeffrey **Edward King Jamie Murphy** Kim Newby Analine Powers, Ph.D. Laurie Anne Sabatini Rebecca Savage Ryan Schumaker Sabrina Shockley Renee Short Dr. Sheryl Theriot Thomas Stephens, Esq. **Theresa Thomas** Ashley A. Wilson

TO: Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director

Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: February 1, 2022

**RE:** Dissolution of DLBA

The Legislative Policy Division (LPD) has received a request to provide a supplemental report regarding the dissolution of the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) as well as answers to questions regarding the City of Detroit's ability to undertake the management, disposition and demolition of the DLBA's property inventory.

As indicated in prior LPD report dated October 18, 2019, the DLBA is created under an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Detroit and the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority (MLB), pursuant to Public Act 258 of 2003, Land Bank Fast Track Act. Under the Second Amended and Restated Intergovernmental Agreement between the City and the MLB (hereinafter the Agreement) the "Initial Term" of the agreement will end on or about December 19, 2023. Pursuant to Section 9.01 of the Agreement, after the Initial Term the DLBA shall continue until terminated by joint action of the Parties; or by the City Council and Mayor withdrawal under Section 9.02 which provides:

Either Party may withdraw from this Agreement after the initial term upon six (6) months' notice in writing to the City Authority and Parties as provided under Section 9.01; provided, however, that withdrawal by the City requires the approval of the City council and Mayor.

Prior to the DLBA dissolution, Section 9.03 of the Agreement provides that the DLBA must wind up its affairs as follows:

- (a) All of the City Authority's debts, liabilities, and obligations to its creditors and all expenses incurred in connection with termination of the City Authority and distribution of its assets shall be paid first.
- (b) The remaining assets, if any shall be distributed to any successor entity unless otherwise agreed by the Parties, provided, however, that approval by the City requires the approval of City Council. In the event that no successor entity exists, the remaining assets shall be distributed as directed by the City unless otherwise agreed by the Parties.

As provided in the Intergovernmental Agreement, if the City Council and Mayor approve the withdrawal from the Agreement, the DLBA would be required to wind up all its affairs. In doing so, all of the DLBA's obligations to creditors and any expenses incurred in undertaking the DLBA's dissolution must be paid first. If no successor exists, the remaining assets shall go to the City unless otherwise agreed by the Parties. Once the remaining assets are distributed, the DLBA would no longer exist.

In addition to the statutory process outlined for dissolution of the DLBA, Council President Sheffield presented a number of questions to be addressed. LPD has attempted to address these questions to the best of our abilities.

• How many properties does the DLBA currently manage, and how many are lots, residential parcels, or commercial parcels?

According to the latest DLBA Quarterly Report for Q2 for 2022, the DLBA's inventory consist of the following:

Total properties: 76,180

Vacant land: 62,822

Residential: 12,789

Accessory: 509

Neighborhood Lots for sale: 19,307

Structures: 13,358

Non-Residential: 60

Side Lots for sale: 9,816

## What is the annual budget for DLBA operations?

According to the submitted proposed annual budget for Fiscal Year 2022, the budget for DLBA operations is \$24,411,831.46. Included in the operations budget are the following revenue streams:

City of Detroit	\$11	,000,000
Grants	\$	160,000
Fee Revenue/Economic Dev	\$	105,750
Side Lot Sales	\$	275,000

Vacant Land Sales	\$ 200,000
Structure Sales	\$6,406,320
House Showing Fees	\$ 11,000
Pre-Inspection Fee	\$ 132,750
5/50 Revenue	\$ 850,000
Interdepartmental Transfer Disp/Ops	\$4,172,711.46
HHF/Property Maintenance Rnds 1-5	\$1,098,300

### • What is the annual cost to the City to maintain DLBA properties?

LPD notes, the DLBA does not have a direct funding source other than the City to pay for operations. For this reason, the City undertook to cover much of the cost of maintaining DLBA properties under the General Services Department. The City appropriates \$3.5 million for the services provided in maintaining those properties.

### • What is the annual contribution of City funds to the DLBA for operations?

As previously indicated the DLBA was not granted a funding stream under its statutory construct. The City has been responsible for providing much of the DLBA's operating budget through a budget appropriation of \$11 million for the 2021 Fiscal Year and the proposed 2022 Fiscal Year.

## • What is the current staffing level at the DLBA?

According to the information provided to LPD during the 2021 budget process, the DLBA reported it had 133 Full Time Employees (FTE's) with 4 current vacancies. At the time the DLBA intended to fully staff all vacant positions during FY21. For FY22, the DLBA is budgeted for 147 FTE's.

# • Prior to the establishment the DLBA, which City department oversaw the maintenance and disposition of residential properties?

According to the information LPD was able to ascertain, prior to the establishment and transfer to City owned properties to the DLBA, the management, sale and disposition of residential properties owned by the City was handled through the Planning & Development Department (P&DD)

According to the 2012-2013 Adopted Budget:

The Planning & Development Department's Housing Services Division responsibilities included but was not limited to, the restoration of vacant foreclosed properties that foster home ownership opportunities<sup>1</sup>. The number of FTEs in the Housing Services Division was 28. The appropriation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Housing Services' Division is responsible for the preservation and improvement to the City's housing stock, through providing grant funding assistance for housing rehabilitation, new construction and lead remediation for low

for the Housing Services Division was \$2,636,993. The P&DD's Real Estate/GIS Division responsibilities included but were not limited to, the procurement, management, and selling of City owned real estate. The number of FTEs for the Real Estate Division was 5. The appropriation for the Real Estate Division was \$580,243.<sup>2</sup>

The designation of dangerous vacant properties and the demolition of residential properties was undertaken by the Building Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED).<sup>3</sup> The Adopted Budget for 2012-2013 did not list any FTEs for demolition administration, however, \$2,928,995 was appropriated.

The maintenance of vacant lots under the City's ownership was provided by the General Services Department (GSD) Grounds Maintenance Division. The Grounds Maintenance Division maintains all city-owned grounds, parks, right of ways, vacant lots and the urban forest. According to the 2012-2013 Adopted Budget the Ground Maintenance Division had 43 FTE's and an appropriation of \$3,117,284.

#### • What was the annual cost to the City?

As indicated above a number of City departments and divisions handled the maintenance and disposition of residential properties under the City's control.

The P&DD had two divisions Housing Services and Real Estate/GIS with a combined appropriation of \$3,217,236.

The BSEED had an appropriation for Demolition administration of \$2,928,995.

The GSD has a Grounds Maintenance Division that maintained all City owned grounds with an appropriation of \$3,117,284.

The total appropriated during 2012-2013 Fiscal Year that may have been available for the maintenance, disposition and/or demolition of residential properties in the City's control was approximately \$9,263,515.

LPD notes, the three City Departments would have better information on how the City handled its inventory of residential properties prior to the establishment of the DLBA. LPD further notes that during the 2012-2013 fiscal year the City was going through financial turmoil and many cuts and reductions were taking place throughout City government.

income, disabled and senior households for rental and owner-occupied properties. In addition, the Division provides funding for new construction and multifamily housing projects, mortgage/down payment assistance, supportive housing and the restoration of vacant foreclosed properties that foster home ownership opportunities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Real Estate Development Division (merger of Development and Real Estate Divisions) is responsible for the procurement, management, and selling of City owned real estate, capital development projects, and the administration of NOF public facility rehabilitation contracts, for the purpose of developing and stabilizing neighborhoods.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Building Safety, Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) description of services as stated in the adopted budget 2012-2013, include "Manage the Demolition process for obsolete, damaged and/or abandoned buildings that pose an imminent danger to the public."

### • How many City employees worked on residential disposition?

As indicated above, the various departments and divisions provided the services regarding residential property maintenance and disposition. According to the Approved Budget 2012-2013 P&DD (Housing Services and Real Estate) had a total of 33 FTE's; The GSD had 43 FTEs for ground maintenance (includes all City owned property) and BSEED showed no FTEs for demolition administration. LPD notes Departments would be in a better position to indicate how personnel was utilized.

#### • How many would be needed to bring residential disposition in-house?

LPD does not have the expertise to ascertain how many FTEs would be needed to bring the residential disposition portfolio from the DLBA back into the City. However, a working group with expertise from the various departments and Human Resources should be able to provide a reasonable projection.

# • Does the City of Detroit have the authority and ability to provide quiet title for properties?

The City has always had the authority to provide quiet title for properties. However, the DLBA has been provided special tools granted under the Land Bank Fast Track Act, MCL 124.759 *Expedited quiet title and foreclosure action; procedure.* The expedited quiet title tools include but are not limited to; the ability to include multiple properties on one petition to be submitted to the court; modified notification requirements; and expedited hearing schedule before the court. These tools enable the DLBA to provide a clear title to purchasers and allows for the properties to be placed back into productive use in a much quicker and more efficient manner than the City or other public or private entities could provide.

## • Could the DLBA continue providing quiet title, but transfer maintenance and disposition of residential properties to the City of Detroit?

Pursuant to the Land Bank Fast Track Act, MCL 124.759, the DLBA must have title to the property in which it seeks to quiet title. The DLBA could not transfer title of the properties to the City and execute quiet title on the properties. However, the City and DLBA could enter into an agreement under which the City would be responsible for maintenance and disposition (sale or demolition) of the residential properties in the DLBA's portfolio. This would be possible unless there are any contractual obligations the DLBA has with another entity to provide those services to which an agreement with the City would interfere.

If we can be of further assistance, please call upon us.

# CITY OF DETROIT BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

# FINANCIAL DETAIL BY DEPARTMENT, FUND, APPROPRIATION, & COST CENTER - EXPENDITURES DEPARTMENT 35 - NON-DEPARTMENTAL

Fund # - Department Name  Fund # - Fund Name  Appropriation # - Appropriation Name	FY2024 Adopted	FY2025 Mayor Proposed	FY2026 Forecast	FY2027 Forecast	FY2028 Forecast
Cost Center # - Cost Center Name				105 704 033	200 021 442
35 - Non-Departmental	173,178,252	205,279,062	189,989,576	196,704,033	200,921,442
1000 - General Fund	166,663,889	181,957,521	186,626,415	193,107,992	197,282,100
25350 - Board of Police Commissioners	3,779,322	4,558,541	3,739,176	3,804,187	3,870,446
350002 - Board of Police Commissioners	3,779,322	4,558,541	3,739,176	3,804,187	3,870,446
26350 - Cultural Institutions Support	4,470,000	5,100,000	5,100,000	5,100,000	5,100,000
350093 - Detroit Historical Museum	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
350095 - Zoo Operations	570,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
350097 - Eastern Market Corporation*	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
350290 - Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History*	2,600,000	2,600,000	2,600,000	2,600,000	2,600,000
26351 - Blight Remediation Projects	11,000,000	11,000,000	11,000,000	11,000,000	11,000,000
350014 - Land Bank Operations	11,000,000	11,000,000	11,000,000	11,000,000	11,000,000
26352 - Solid Waste Services Support		3,388,315	5,261,072	10,018,839	11,094,514
350079 - Solid Waste Contribution for Operations	<b>3</b>	3,388,315	5,261,072	10,018,839	11,094,514
27350 - Special Services	1,905,713	1,567,775	1,585,354	1,603,258	1,621,492
350370 - Project Clean Slate Operations	1,552,713	1,567,775	1,585,354	1,603,258	1,621,492
350371 - Immigration Task Force*	3,000	-	*	( <b>=</b> )	
350372 - Reparations Task Force*	350,000	143	*	6 <del>5.</del>	- 50
27351 - Transportation Services Support	87,678,005	90,471,203	92,153,949	93,085,082	94,026,430
350040 - DTC Contribution for Operations	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000	6,500,000
350080 - DDoT Contribution for Operations	74,368,185	78,168,185	79,856,469	80,764,337	81,682,996
350081 - DDoT Contribution for Legacy Debt	2,456,348	1,363,410	1,346,117	1,330,994	1,314,736
350090 - Airport Contribution for Operations	3,953,472	4,039,608	4,051,363	4,089,751	4,128,698
350140 - Detroit Port Authority*	400,000		400,000	400,000	400,000