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TO: Neil A. Barclay, J.D., President & CEO
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: March 12, 2025

RE: 2025-2026 Budget Analysis

Attached is our budget analysis regarding your agency's budget for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year.

Please be prepared to respond to the issues/questions raised in our analysis during your scheduled hearing on **Friday, March 14, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.** We would then appreciate a written response to the issues/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 budget analysis.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

DW:vc:sj

Attachments:
Issues and Questions
CWM FY 26 Budget Pages

CC: Councilmembers
Auditor General's Office
Jay Rising, Chief Financial Officer
Tanya Stoudemire, Chief Deputy CFO-Policy & Administration Director/Interim Budget Director
Donnie Johnson, Deputy Budget Director
Andre Blair, Agency CFO
Doug Ortiz, Budget Analyst
Malik Washington, City Council Liaison, Mayor's Office

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (Non-Departmental 35)

FY 2025-2026 Budget Analysis by the Legislative Policy Division

The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History ("The Wright"), located in Detroit, Michigan, provides research, compilation, presentation, publication, and dissemination of knowledge relating to the history, growth, development, heritage, and culture of people of African descent and the human struggle for freedom. Additionally, The Wright provides a means of collecting and restoring artifacts and other source material to be used in research on the history of the people of African descent.

For financial reporting purposes, The Wright is a component unit of the City of Detroit, Michigan (the "City") because the members of The Wright's Board of Trustees are appointed by the City's mayor and the City provides financial support to The Wright¹.

Institutional Goals¹

1. **Center Detroit:** Place Detroit at the forefront of a national (and international) dialogue regarding the profound influence of African American history and culture;
2. **Be a Leader in the Field:** Lead in the creation, distribution, and exhibition of world-class programs characterized by aesthetic excellence, technological innovation, and relevancy to current events;
3. **Mentor Museum Professionals:** Train and mentor people of color for careers in the curation, administration, and financial management of first voice institutions around the world;
4. **Preserve Institutional Vitality:** Ensure the long-term financial sustainability of The Wright;
5. **Embrace Sustainable Practices:** Embrace environmentally sustainable systems and practices in all aspects of The Wright's institutional programs and culture.

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History Budget Summary

The Mayor is recommending a \$2,600,000 General Fund Contribution (Subsidy) to the Detroit Historical Society for FY 2026 in the Non-Departmental Budget (**Page B35-3**), in Appropriation **26350 - Cultural Institutions Support**, Cost Center **350290 – Charles Wright Museum of African American History (Page B35-16)**. The recommended Contribution (Subsidy) of \$2,600,000 to the Society remains unchanged from FY 2025.

In March 2025, a budget fund request was made on behalf of the Charles Wright Museum of African American History for facility improvements. The request was submitted to the City of Detroit City Council for approval. To date, a decision from the City Council is still pending.

Issues and Questions:

1. Please briefly explain the Museum's new expenditure initiatives, new capital funding requests, operational reform and savings proposals, and new revenue initiative(s)/proposal(s) to be implemented in FY 2026.
2. Please provide the Museum's FY 2025 budgeted and actual positions. Please explain the Museum's plans to fill any vacancies.

¹ [2023-24 CWM Annual Financial Statement](#)

3. Please provide the Museum's FY 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets.
4. Please provide the Museum's FY 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets, if available.
5. In reviewing the 2024 Budgetary Comparison Schedule in the 2024 Audited Financial Statements², it appears there was a 516.93% decrease in Actual Contributions received (\$834,787) than Budgeted (\$5,150,025). Additionally, it appears there was a 538.35% decrease in Actual Special Events and Other Revenue received (\$254,034) than Budgeted (\$1,621,627). Can you please explain where these decreases may have come from? Has the FY 2025 Budget been adjusted to reflect these Revenue decreases? Have other Revenue sources been identified to compensate for these decreases?
6. In reviewing the Capital Assets Activity in the 2024 Audited Financial Statements³, it appears Building and Improvements increased by \$17,394,850, from \$5,535,030 in FY 2023 to \$22,941,793 in FY 2024. Can you please outline what makes up the \$17,394,850 increase to Building and Improvements? Please provide the source of funding for this increase in Improvements.
7. Please explain the facility improvements needed for the Museum. What are the estimated costs for the improvements? Will the improvements be completed in FY 2026?
8. Has the Museum received any contributions from the State of Michigan for FY 2025 for general operating and programming support? Does the Museum anticipate any contributions in FY 2026?
9. Can you provide a status on the multi-year mechanical systems replacement and upgrade? Which project phase is the Museum in? When does the Museum anticipate being complete with all eight project phases?
10. House Bills 4177, 5817 & 5818, would allow history museums in Detroit to seek a property tax millage from Wayne County and Oakland County. However, it appears this legislation is being held up by the current Michigan legislature that started in January 2025. Please explain how the Wright Museum's operations would be impacted if this legislation is stalled and not passed by the Wayne County and Oakland County voters.
11. In reviewing the 2024 Audited Financial Statements, there are new major exhibitions scheduled for 2025: Gems from the Wright Museum, Paul Collins: The Traveling Artist, and 60th Anniversary Art Exhibition⁴. Have these new major exhibitions occurred in FY 2025? If so, did the Museum receive a high volume of visitors for these exhibitions? If these exhibitions have not yet occurred, when will they in FY 2025?
12. In addition to the new 60th Anniversary Art Exhibition, how will the Wright celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2025 with the Citizens of Detroit?
13. Is the Museum planning for any major events and exhibitions in FY 2026?

² [2023-24 CWM Annual Financial Statement](#)

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

CITY OF DETROIT
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT
FINANCIAL DETAIL BY DEPARTMENT, FUND, APPROPRIATION, & COST CENTER - EXPENDITURES
DEPARTMENT 35 - NON-DEPARTMENTAL

Department # - Department Name					
Fund # - Fund Name		FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028
Appropriation # - Appropriation Name		Adopted	Mayor Proposed	Forecast	Forecast
Cost Center # - Cost Center Name					Forecast
35 - Non-Departmental		198,484,062	248,249,628	209,566,662	218,915,212
1000 - General Fund		183,962,521	242,983,628	204,184,662	214,337,212
25350 - Board of Police Commissioners		4,581,541	4,046,753	4,117,038	4,188,675
350002 - Board of Police Commissioners		4,581,541	4,046,753	4,117,038	4,188,675
26350 - Cultural Institutions Support		6,586,000	5,100,000	5,151,000	5,202,510
350093 - Detroit Historical Museum		1,000,000	1,000,000	1,010,000	1,020,100
350095 - Zoo Operations		2,436,000	1,200,000	1,212,000	1,224,120
350097 - Eastern Market Corporation		550,000	300,000	303,000	306,030
350290 - Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History		2,600,000	2,600,000	2,626,000	2,652,260
26351 - Blight Remediation Projects.		10,500,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	7,000,000
350014 - Land Bank Operations		10,500,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	7,000,000
26352 - Solid Waste Services Support		3,388,315	17,074,650	19,274,014	20,137,415
350079 - Solid Waste Contribution for Operations		3,388,315	17,074,650	19,274,014	20,137,415
27350 - Special Services		1,633,775	1,564,640	1,583,469	1,602,652
350370 - Project Clean Slate Operations		1,567,775	1,564,640	1,583,469	1,602,652
350372 - Reparations Task Force		66,000	-	-	-
27351 - Transportation Services Support		90,726,203	111,044,567	108,600,642	110,184,735
350040 - DTC Contribution for Operations		6,500,000	7,450,000	6,565,000	6,630,650
350080 - DDOT Contribution for Operations		78,523,185	97,906,791	96,290,988	97,751,985
350081 - DDOT Contribution for Legacy Debt		1,363,410	1,346,476	1,359,941	1,373,540
350090 - Airport Contribution for Operations		4,039,608	4,041,300	4,081,713	4,122,530
350140 - Detroit Port Authority		300,000	300,000	303,000	306,030
27352 - Community Programs Support		1,000,000	500,000	505,000	510,050
350230 - Childhood Education & Enrichment Support		1,000,000	500,000	505,000	510,050
28351 - Board of Ethics		682,960	591,195	601,233	611,458
350165 - Board of Ethics		682,960	591,195	601,233	611,458