

Let's Build More Housing, Detroit



**Opportunity
Rising**

October 2025

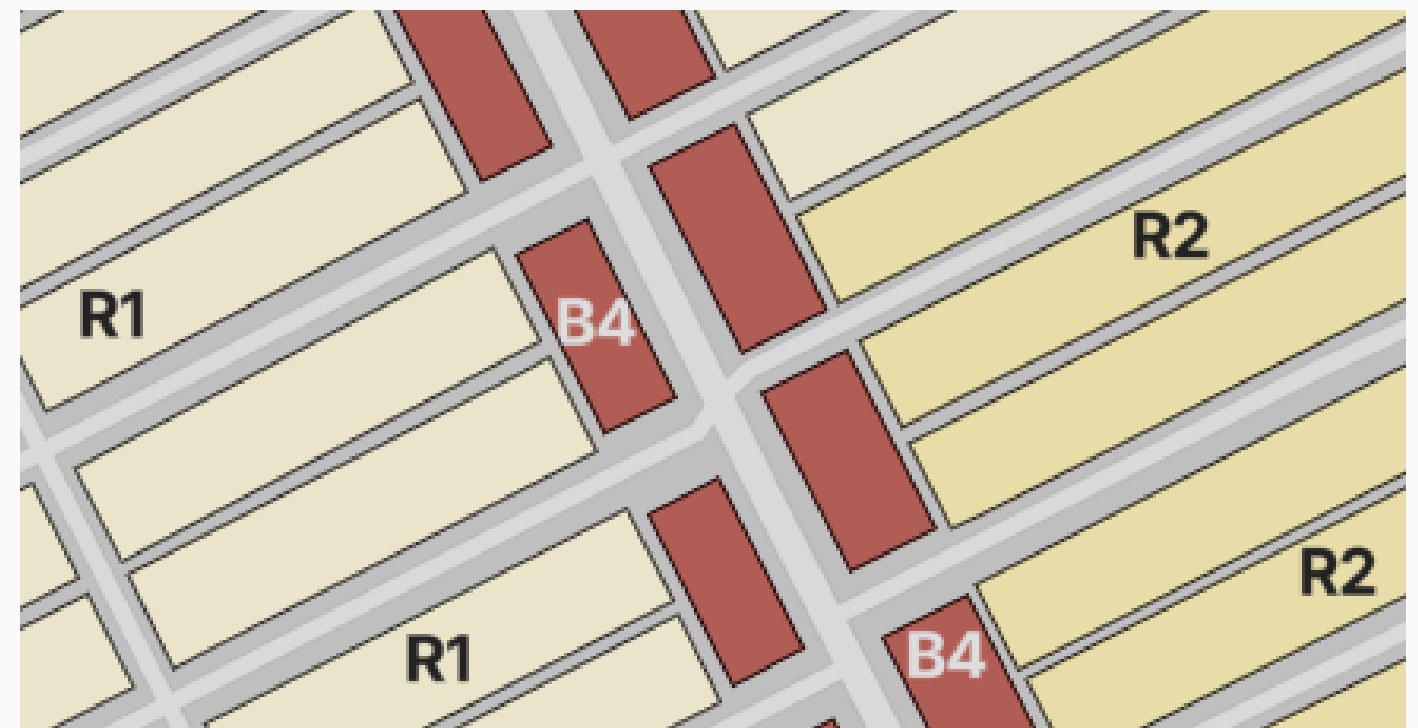
Level Set: Things to Consider & Think About

1. What does your neighborhood need and what do the other 200+ neighborhoods need in the city of Detroit?
2. How many different living situations and circumstances can you think of and do we have the housing to meet all needs and income levels?
 - Single mother with children, Married couple with no children, Seniors who don't want to deal with steps, College Students, Returning Citizens, Families who live together, etc.
3. These proposed changes should be viewed as a tool not the answer to all issues or the silver bullet. The proposal is Restorative in nature.
4. I want you to think about your own life and how your housing needs have changed for you and your family over the years. No one should have barriers that prevent them from living in any of the 200+ neighborhoods in the city of Detroit.

What is Zoning?

Zoning governs how buildings can be built & used

- Every lot is in a zone
- Every zone has its own rules



Zoning Sets Rules for Many Aspects of the City's Housing

1. What kind of housing can be built in your neighborhood?
 - Single-family, duplex, small apartments, large apartments
2. How large is that housing?
 - Height, size
3. How does the neighborhood feel?
 - Close-knit neighborhoods like 1900s – 1940s
 - Suburban-style neighborhoods with far-apart homes



We're Proposing Zoning Updates To:

- 1) Increase Housing Supply & Reduce Price Pressure**
- 2) Level Playing Field for Residents & Small, Local Developers**

Detroit Needs To Build More Housing To Protect Long-time Residents From Rising Prices

Detroit leads the state in population growth, adding nearly 7,000 residents last year, but housing growth did not keep up

If housing is scarce, it pushes prices up & risks displacement of long-time residents

- 2,700 – 3,500 new units needed per year
- 1,600 new units created per year

We need to build at least 1,100 more units per year

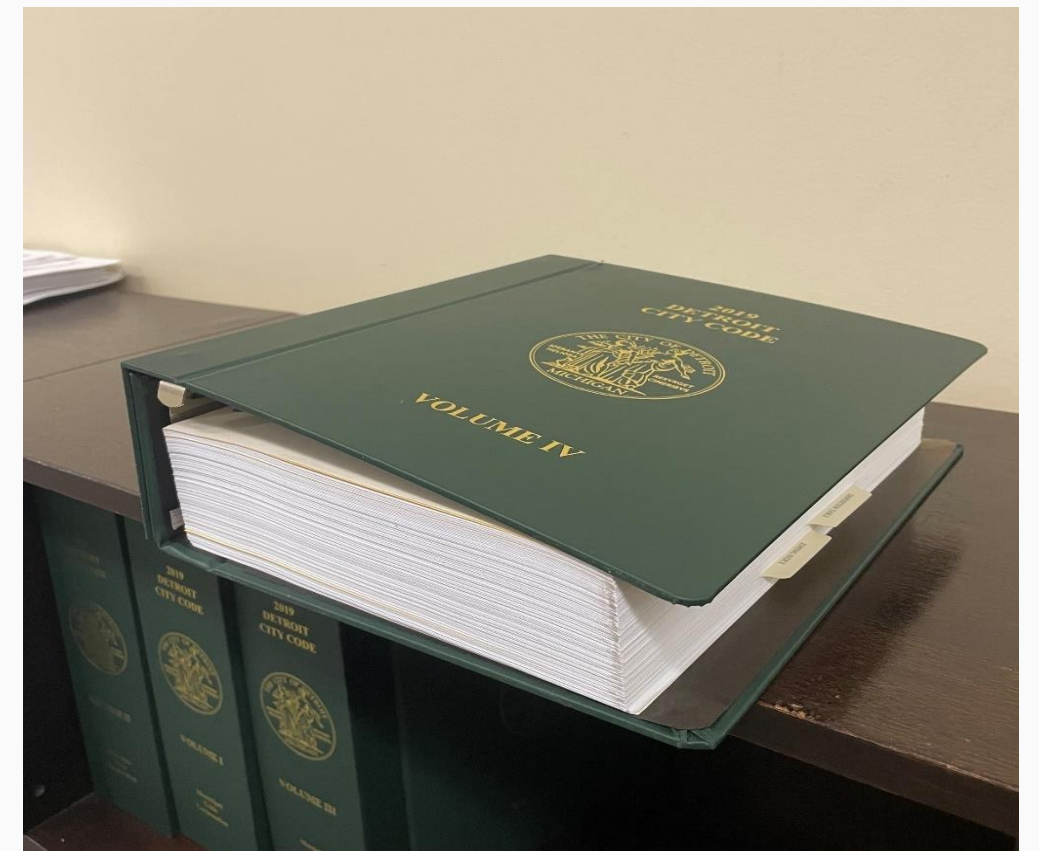


Updating Zoning Can Level the Playing Field

Current rules are complex & restrictive. Most housing projects require special approval. Puts small local developers at a disadvantage.

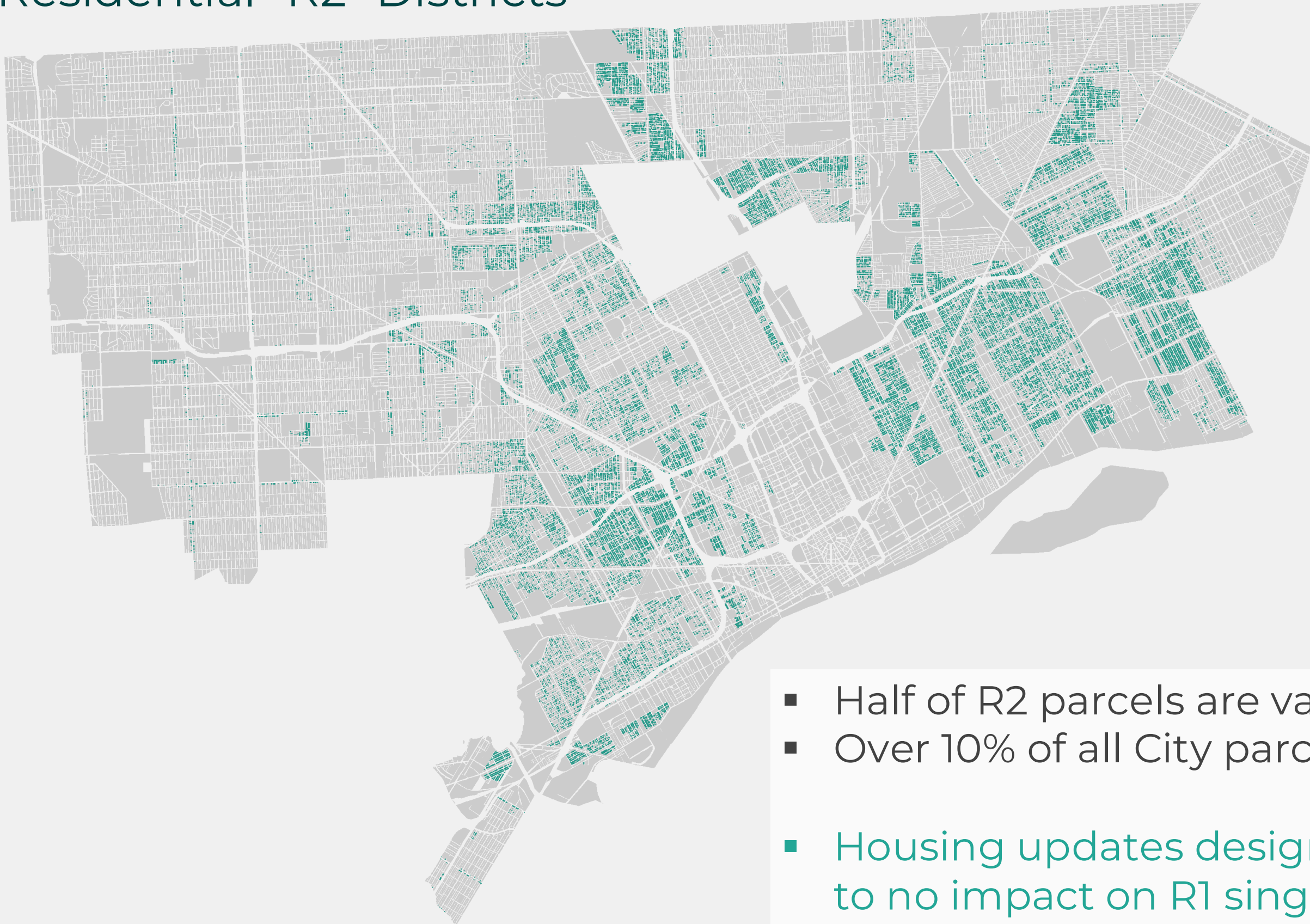
- Big developers can hire consultants & attorneys to:
 - Navigate complicated rules
 - Seek special approvals & exemptions
- Small developers, often working in the neighborhoods, don't have same resources
- Changes can level the playing field

*Detroit's **936** Page
Zoning Code*



What Parts of the City Do These Housing Updates Affect?

Residential “R2” Districts



- Half of R2 parcels are vacant
- Over 10% of all City parcels are vacant R2
- Housing updates designed to have little to no impact on R1 single-family districts

District 2: Which Areas Do Housing Updates Cover?

81% zoned R1
18% zoned R2

R2 Zoning

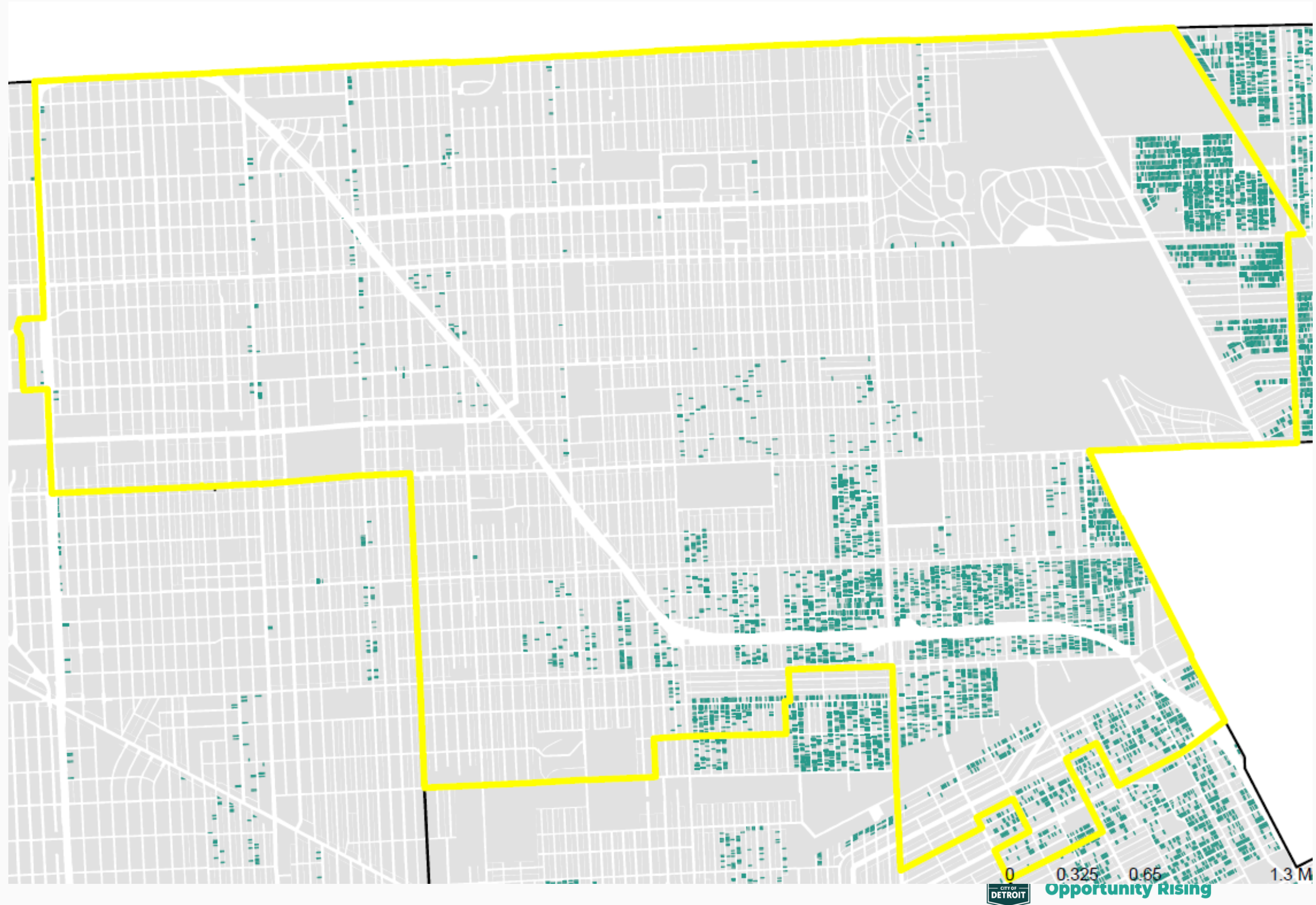
Most of:

- Penrose
- Pilgrim Village
- Dexter-Fenkell

Parts of:

- Grixdale Farms
- Fitzgerald
- Martin Park
- Oakman Blvd.

District 2 Parcels Zoned R2



Key Updates Proposed

- 1 Expand the types of housing that can be built in R2: triplexes, quads, townhouses
- 2 Allow more units to be approved in R2 only after public hearing
- 3 Allow accessory dwelling units in R2 – R6
- 4 Make it easier to rebuild houses on vacant lots
- 5 Allow apartments on commercial corridors
- 6 Offer more flexibility on the size of parking lots

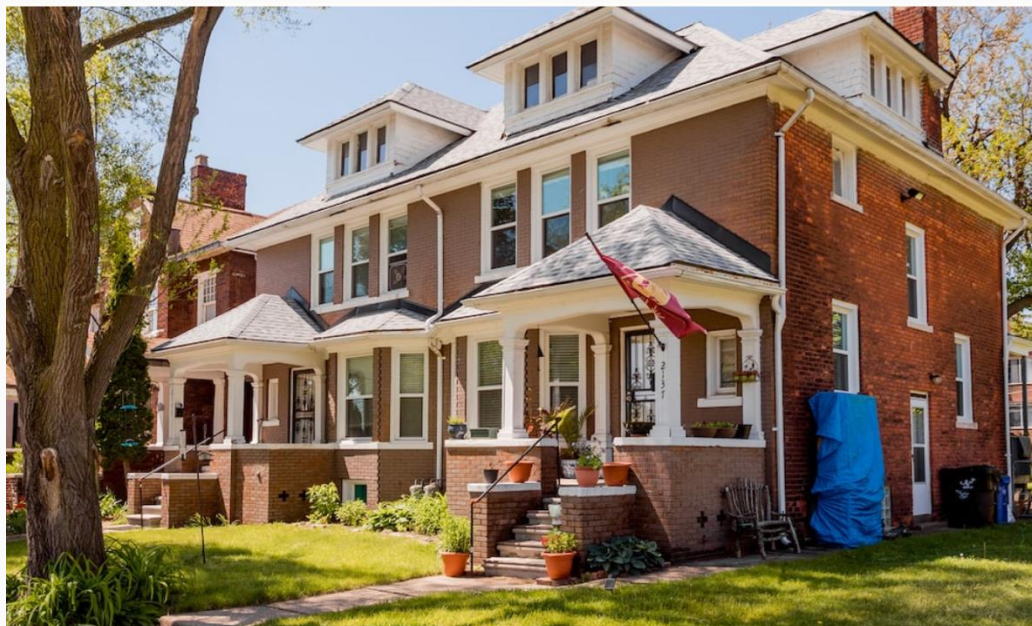
	No impact on R1
	Designed to have minimal impact on R1
	Impacts certain areas as noted



1 Build More Housing By Expanding Allowable Types in R2

- Before current rules took effect, triplexes, fourplexes, and townhouses were commonly built in R2 zones; over half of fourplexes in the City are in R2
- Now, these homes require special approval from the City to build
- Proposal: Allow them to be built again without special approval in R2 (i.e., by-right)

Current: Single Family or Duplex



Proposed: 3 to 4 Unit



Proposed: Townhouse



2 Allow More Units in R2 Only After Public Hearing

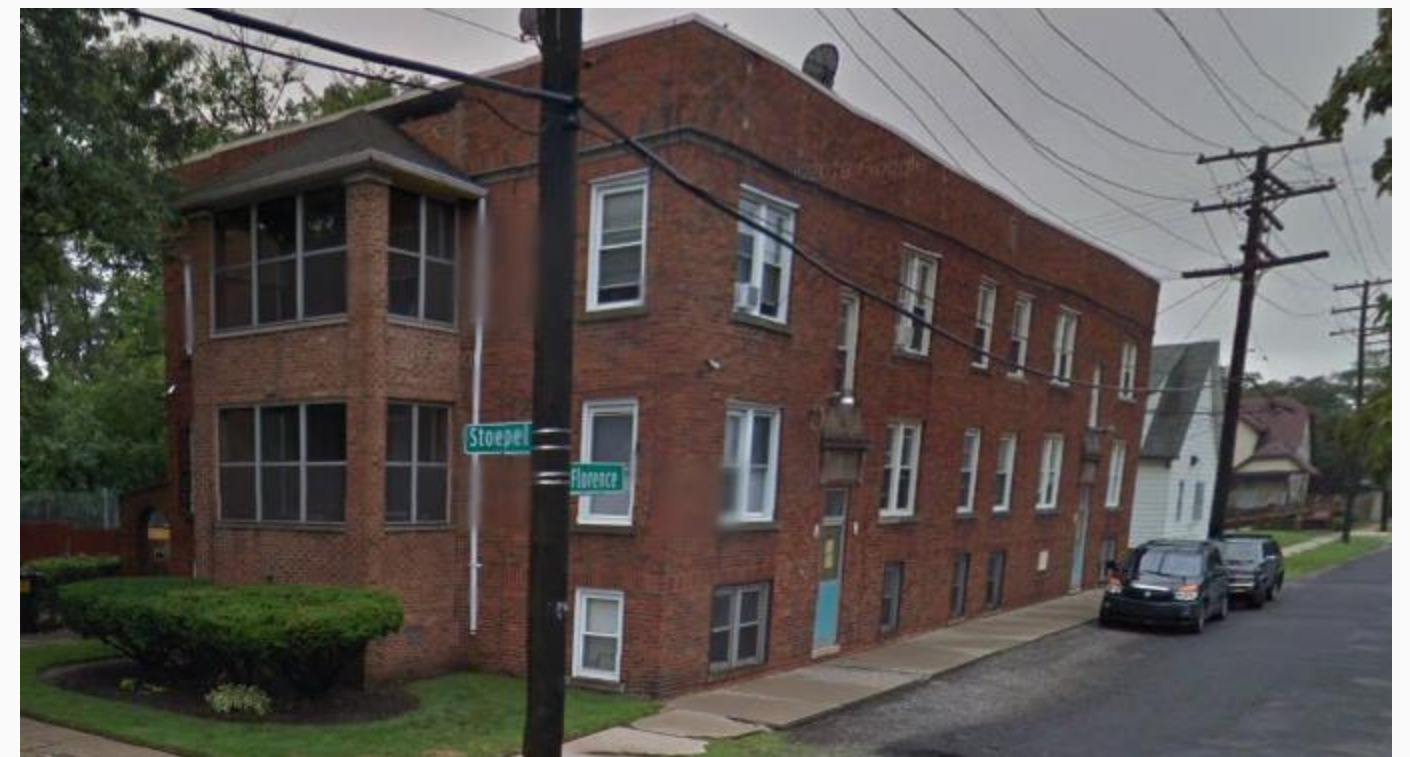
- “Conditional” zoning allows certain homes to be built only after a public hearing where neighbors can weigh in
- Proposal: allow up to 12 units to be approved only after public hearing

Current: Up to 8 units can be approved



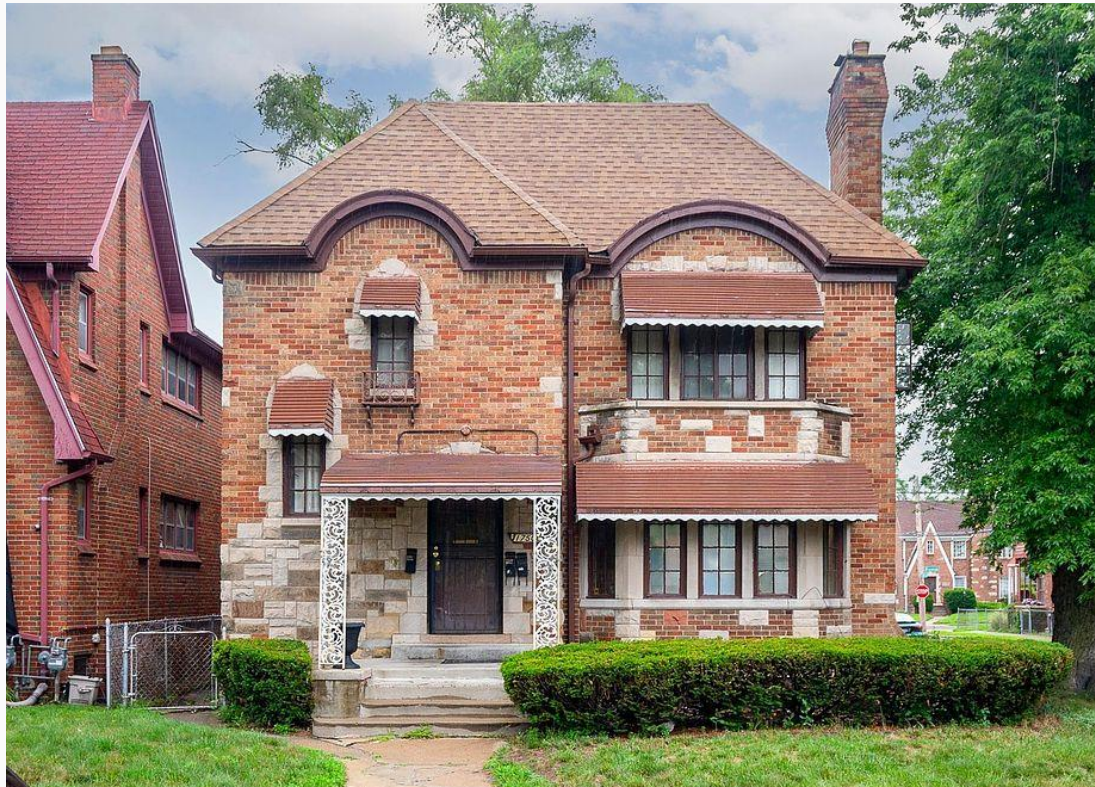
Fitzgerald, 8 units

Proposed: Up to 12 units could be approved; max. of 2 – 3 stories tall



Fitzgerald, 11 units

Examples in District 2 on R2 Lots



Bagley, 3 units



Martin Park, 5 units



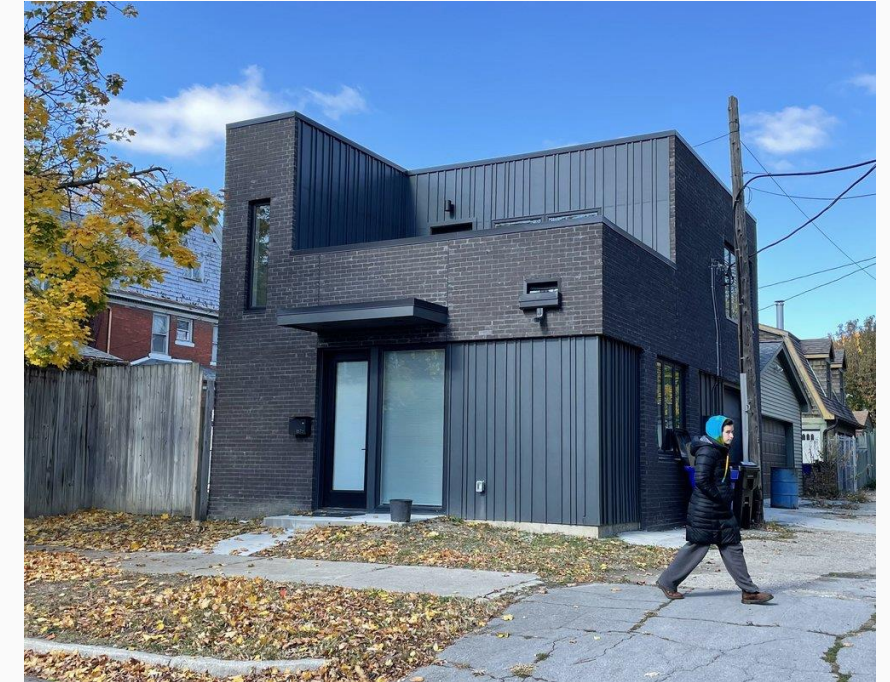
Oakman Blvd. Community, 6 units



Oakman Blvd. Community, 4 units

3 Allow Accessory Dwelling Units in R2 – R6

- “ADUs” are independent dwellings in the backyard, detached from main house (e.g., carriage house)
- Currently barred in R2, and in R3 – R6 requires special City approvals (i.e., variances)
- Proposal: allow ADUs in R2 - R6*
- Rationale:
 - Offers diverse housing options: in-law suites, family members, lower-cost options
 - Ability of residents to build infill



*ADUs are currently – and would remain – barred in R1

4 Make it Easier to Rebuild Vacant Lots

54% of R2 lots are vacant: we're trying to help blocks like this:



Grixdale – Havana St.



Dexter-Fenkell – Parkside St.

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Bethune Community – Birwood Ave.



College Park – Biltmore St.

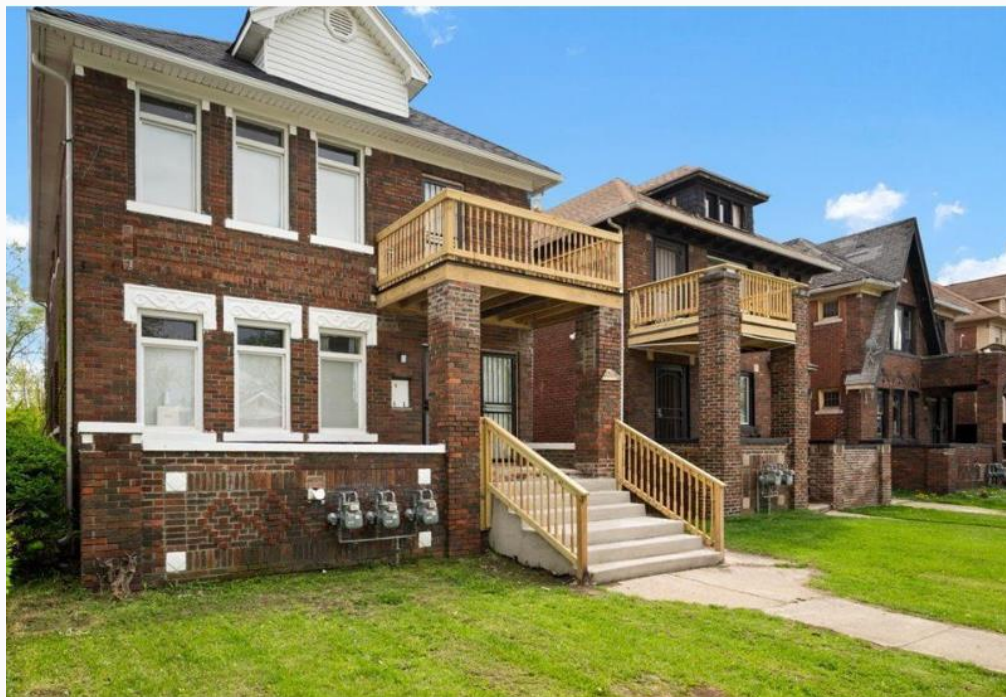
4 Make it Easier to Rebuild Vacant Lots

Current: rules on the sizing and spacing of homes make it difficult to rebuild homes on vacant lots; typically requires special approval (i.e., variances)

Proposal: make it easier to rebuild by allowing size, spacing, and housing types that match earlier homes in the neighborhood*

- Over 25,000 side lots have been sold to Detroiters

Existing Homes with Sizing Requirements Like Proposal



Newly Built Homes Like Proposal



*Most impact in R2 – R6 neighborhoods; designed to have very minimal impact on R1, no impact on large lots and historical districts

4 Make it Easier to Rebuild Vacant Lots

Proposal:

- Applies only to lots below the min. size or width (5,000 sq. ft. or 50 ft. wide)*
- Designed to clarify rules and provide modestly more flexibility, especially in areas of high vacancy

R1 Current & Proposed: Rebuilding on Vacant Lots		
	Current (43 x 100 lot)	Proposed
Housing Allowed	Single family only	Single family only
Side Setback	10.5 feet	10 feet
Front Setback	Must match neighbor or 20 feet if no neighbor	Must match neighbor or 10 feet if no neighbor
Rear Setback	30 feet	20 feet
Lot Coverage	45%	60%

*In historic districts, Historic District Commission makes decision on whether buildings appropriate, regardless of any change to City setbacks

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R2 Current & Proposed: Rebuilding on Vacant Lots		
	Current (43 x 100 lot)	Proposed
Housing Allowed	Single family only	Any type allowed in zone
Side Setback	10.5 feet	6.5 feet for single family
Front Setback	Must match neighbor or 20 feet if no neighbor	Must match neighbor or 10 feet if no neighbor
Rear Setback	30 feet	20 feet
Lot Coverage	45%	60%

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5 Allow Apartments on Commercial Corridors

- Currently: special City approval needed to build housing on commercial corridors
- Proposal: allow apartments on commercial corridors, including mixed-use or residential only
- Rationale:
 - Gives residents different options & more housing
 - More residents on corridors = more small business customers & thriving corridors
 - 500+ of these buildings already exist in B2, B4

B4: LaSalle Gardens



B2: McDougall-Hunt



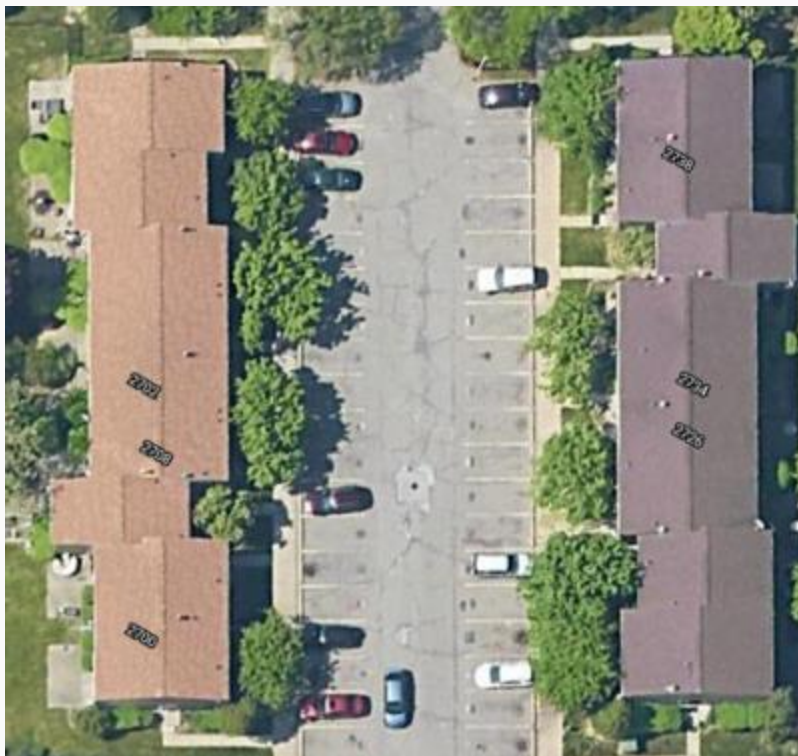
6 Give Flexibility on Parking Lot Size in Targeted Cases

Current: zoning mandates a large parking lot for each building – but money & land used to build lot reduces what can be used for housing or small businesses

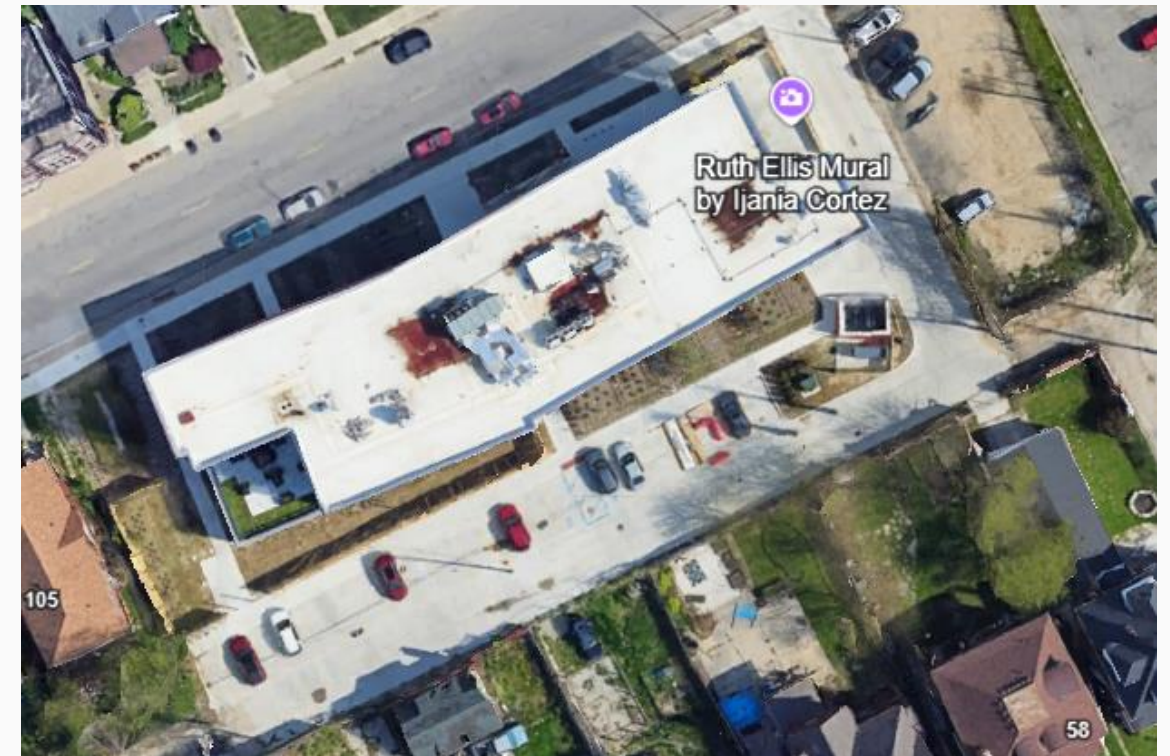
Proposal: give more flexibility on parking lot size for:

- Small businesses
- Multiple businesses to share a lot
- Projects with sensible alternative approach
- Multi-family housing (standardize requirements citywide to match current law in most areas)

Current Approach

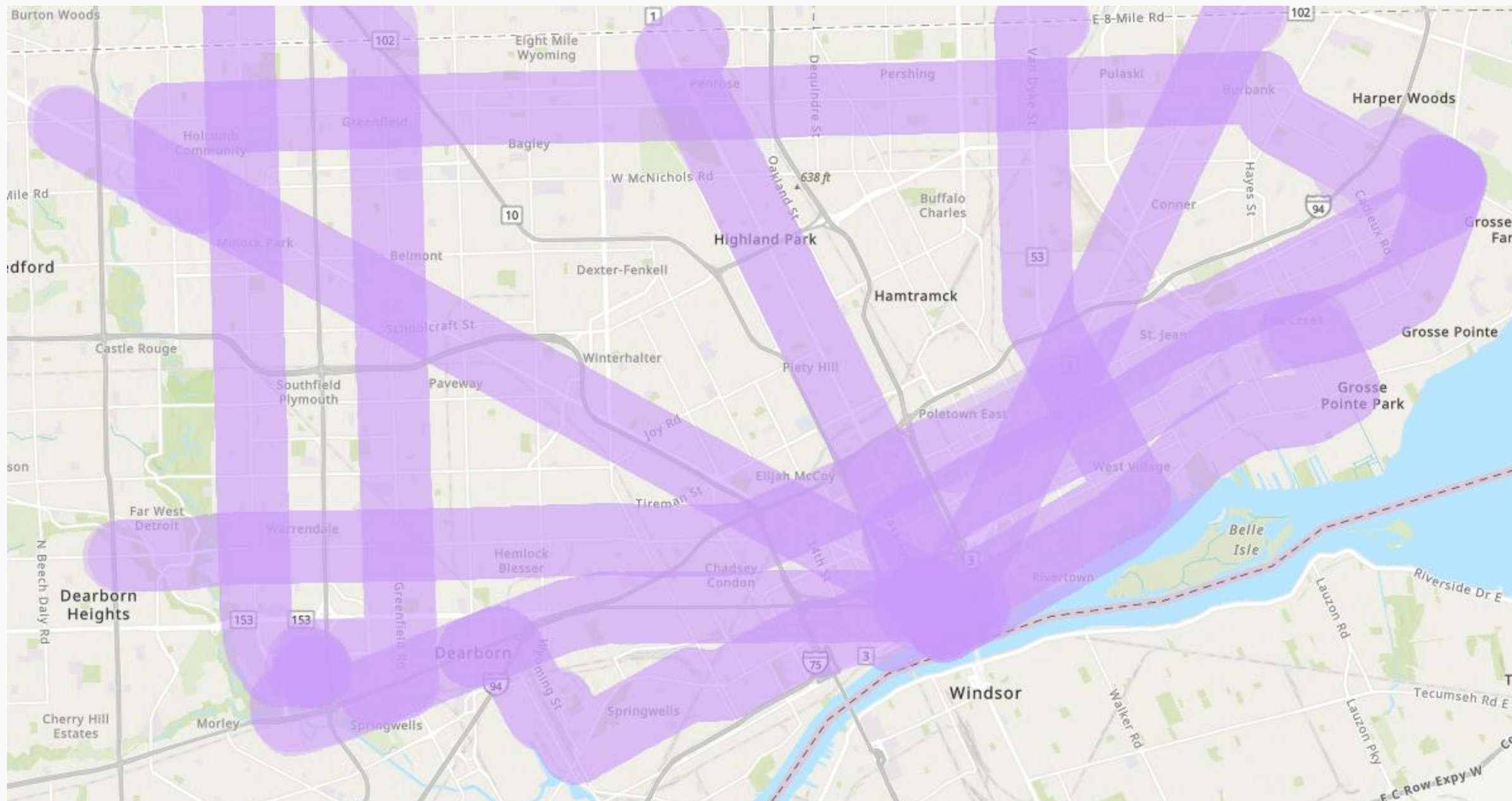


Proposed Approach



6 Give Flexibility on Parking Lot Size in Targeted Cases

Proposed parking level for multi-family housing is already in effect in areas colored pink on map.



Process & Timeline

Proposal seeks to enact key recommendations from Zone Detroit in early 2020 and Neighborhood Framework Plans developed from 2016 to Present

2025 Process	
July – Sept.	14 community meetings: citywide, by district, and by neighborhood
	3 public meetings at City Planning Commission
	19 letters of support from non-profits, advocates, builders
Oct. 2	1 public meeting at City Planning Commission; recommended for approval
Oct.	9 more community meetings
Nov.	Seeking City Council public hearing & vote