

Let's Build More Housing, Detroit



**Opportunity
Rising**

October 2025

Goals of Proposal:

- 1) Increase Housing Supply to Reduce Price Pressure**
- 2) Expand Opportunities for Residents and Small, Local Developers to Build**

Detroit Needs To Build More Housing To Protect Long-time Residents

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

Urgent need to build more housing:

- 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

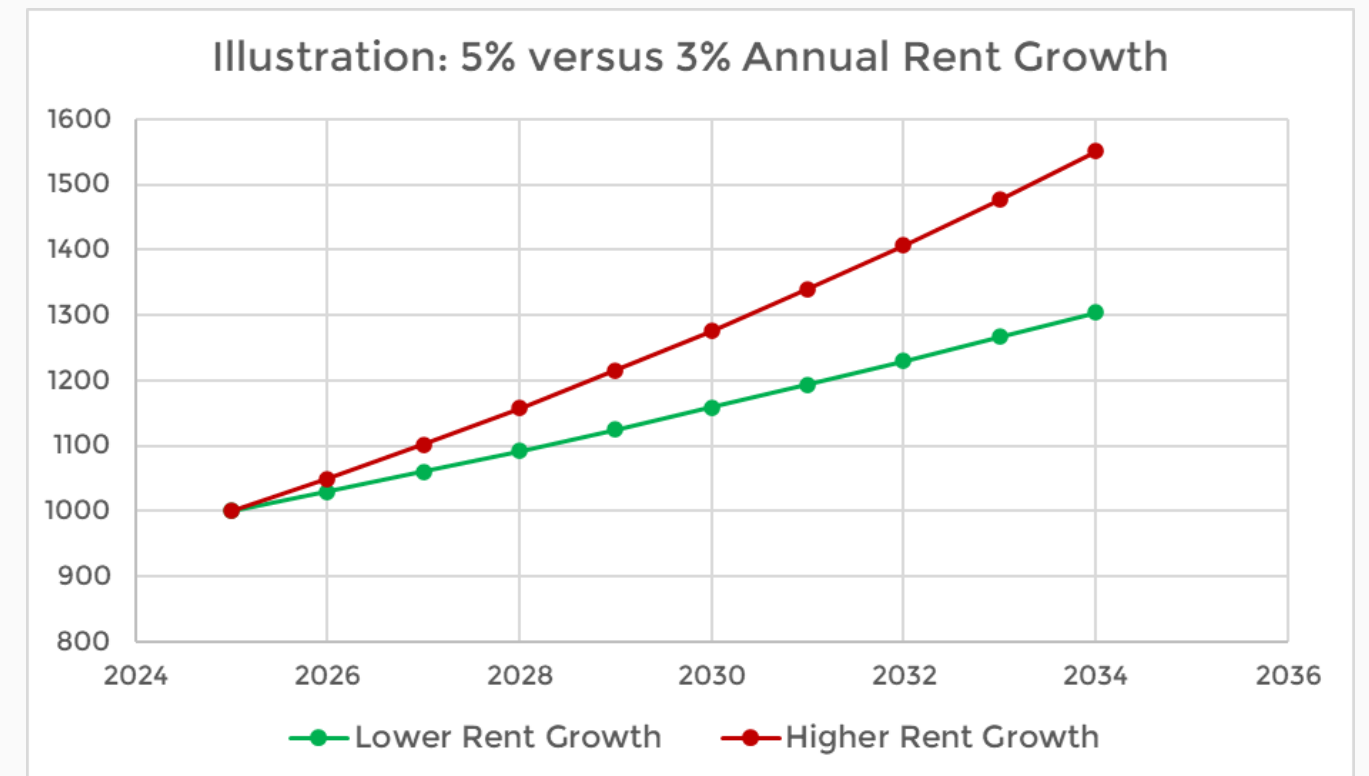


Building More Housing Helps Keep Prices Lower

In cities that don't build enough housing:

- More competition for limited homes
- Rent grows faster
- Families who cannot afford higher rents are displaced
- Homelessness rises

Increasing supply moderates the upward pressure on prices

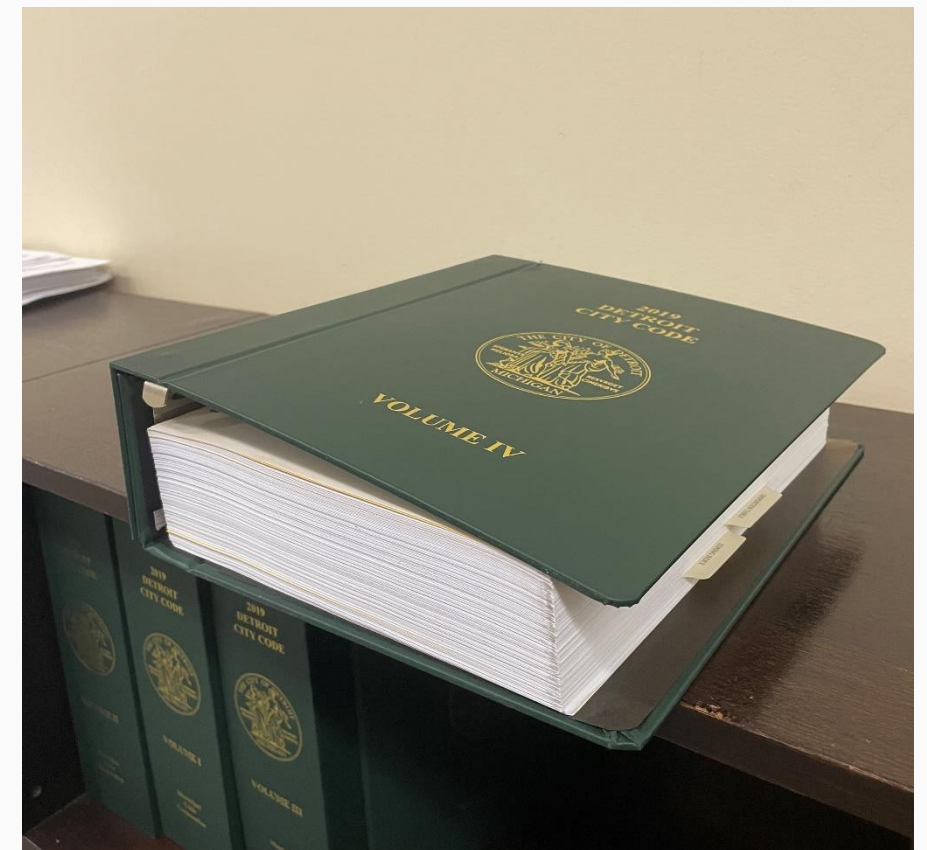


Updating Zoning Can Level the Playing Field for Small, Local Developers

Current rules are complex & restrictive. That puts small, local developers at a disadvantage compared to large, sophisticated ones

- Big developers can hire consultants & attorneys to:
 - Navigate complicated rules
 - Seek special approvals & exemptions
- Many Detroiters don't have the same resources: residents, small or new developers
- Change can level the playing field

Detroit's 936 Page Zoning Code



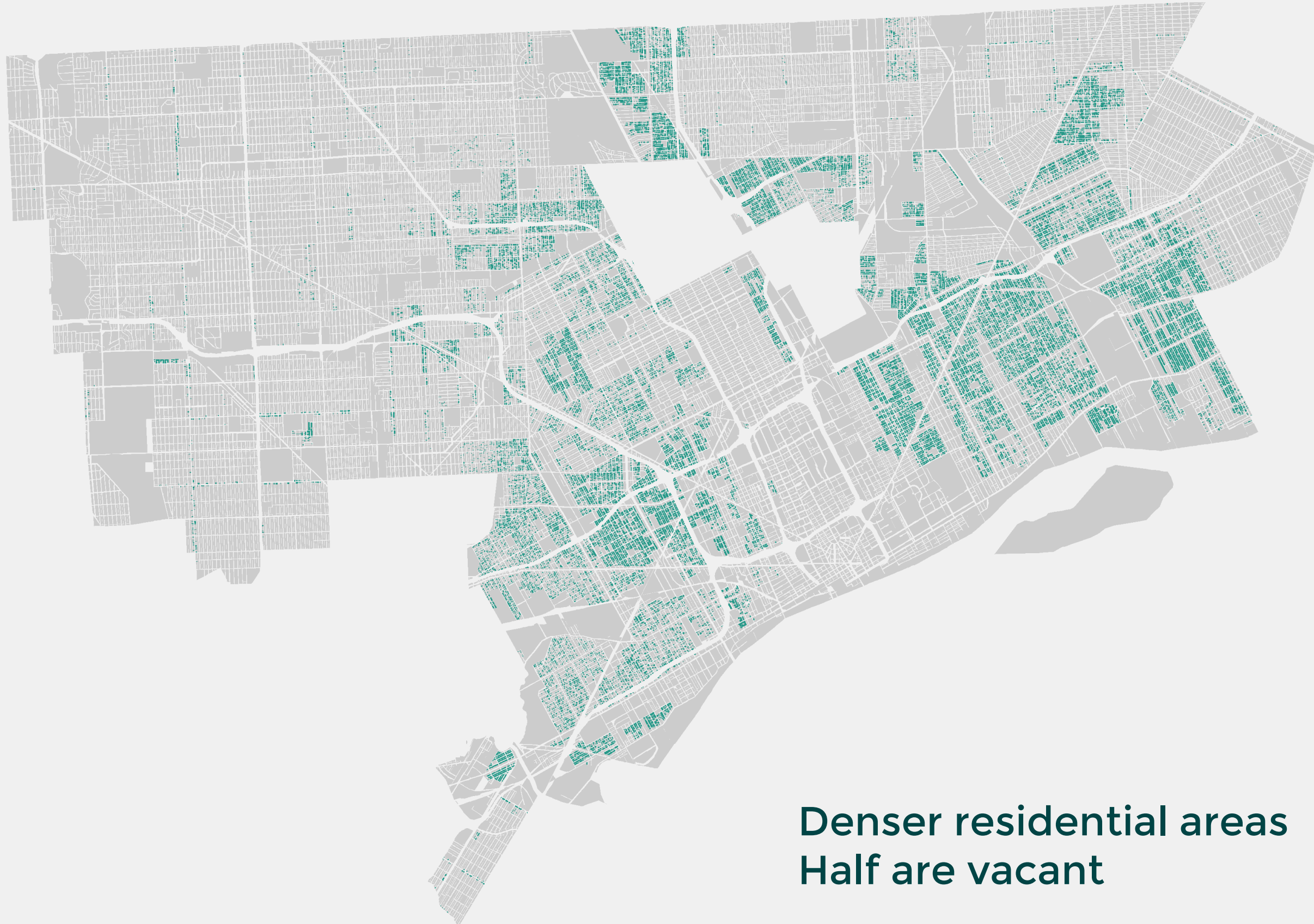
Key Updates Proposed

- 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 Allow apartments on commercial corridors
- 5 Make it easier to rebuild houses on vacant lots
- 6 Offer more flexibility on the size of parking lots



Housing Proposals Primarily Affect R2 Districts

R2 Districts

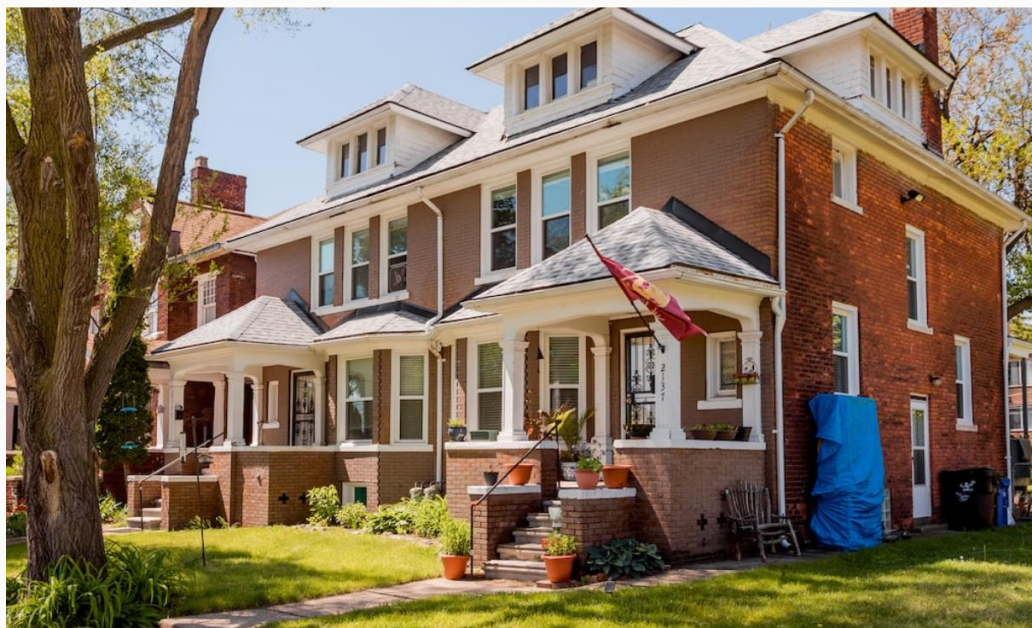


Denser residential areas
Half are vacant

1 Allow More Housing Types in R2

- Before current rules took effect, triplexes, fourplexes, and townhouses were commonly built in R2 zones
 - Over 900 triplexes & fourplexes in R2: half of the total in the City
- Now, they require special approval from the City to build (conditional zoning)
- Proposal: Allow them to be built again without special approval (i.e., by-right)

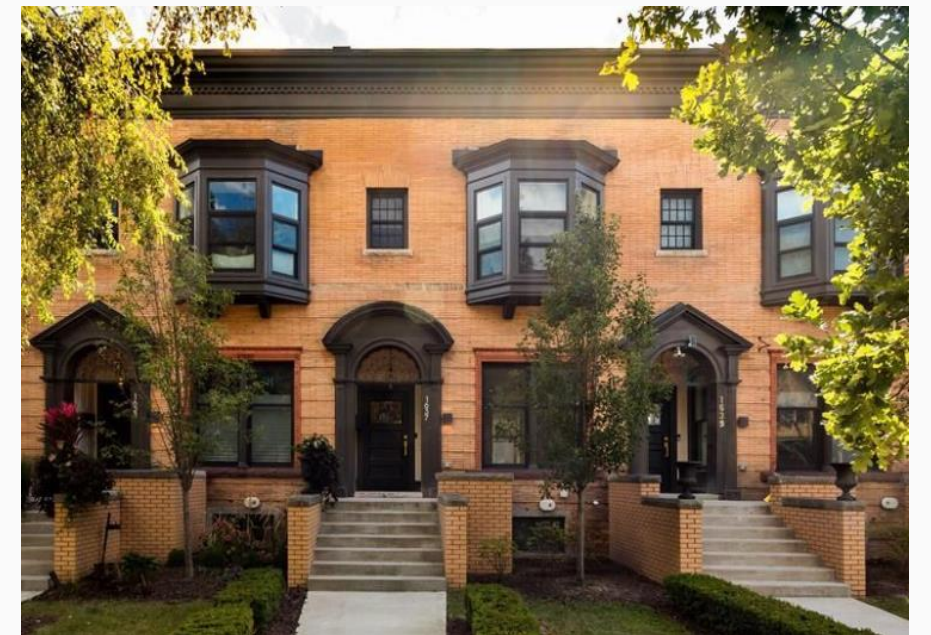
Current: Single Family or Duplex



Proposed: 3 to 4 Unit



Proposed: Townhouse



What Are These Buildings Like?



Dexter Linwood



Hubbard Farms



Woodbridge



East Village



Gratiot-Grand



Central Southwest



Grant



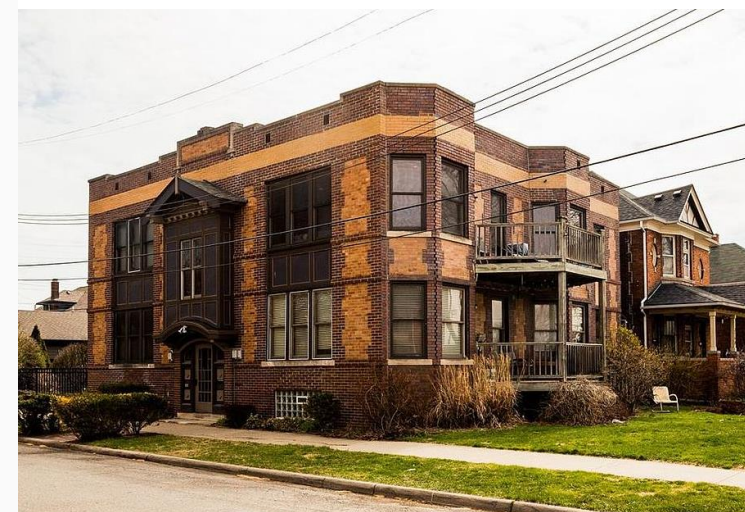
Regent Park



Wade



East Village



Woodbridge



Maple Ridge

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: increase the number of units that could be approved conditionally

Current: Up to 8 units can be approved

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



Springwells, 8 units



Dexter Linwood, 10 units



Virginia Park, 9 units

There are dozens of these buildings already in R2 districts

3 Allow Accessory Dwelling Units in R2 – R6

- “ADUs” are independent dwellings in the backyard, detached from main house (e.g., carriage houses)
- Built in some Detroit neighborhoods before current zoning rules took effect
- Currently barred in R2 & very challenging to build in other districts
- Proposal: allow ADUs in R2 - R6
- Rationale:
 - Offers diverse housing options: in-law suites, family members, lower-cost options
 - Present low-cost infill option for residents



3 Allow Accessory Dwelling Units in R2 – R6

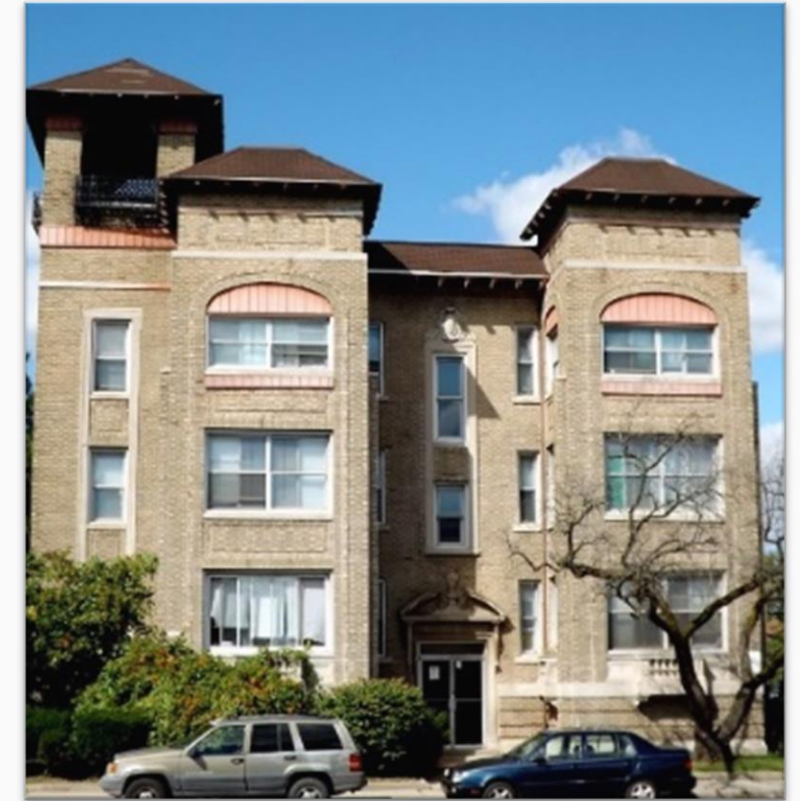
- Approach: pilot ADUs with guidelines erring on side of caution; expand over time if appropriate
 - Only allowed when principal use is single family, duplex, or triplex
 - One per lot, detached from principal building
 - Limited to 1,200 sq. ft. or 60% of floor area of principal residence (whichever less)
 - Limited to height of 25 ft. or principal dwelling height (whichever less)
- Memo submitted on ADU dimensional standards: proposing largely same setbacks as garages



4 Allow Apartments on Commercial Corridors

- 500+ apartment buildings exist on B2 & B4 parcels
- Now require special approval (conditional use)
 - Last year, CPC recommended making mixed-use buildings on commercial corridors by-right
- Proposal: allow residential-only apartments by-right on B2 and B4 parcels (2 – 3 stories max.)
- Rationale:
 - Gives residents more housing options
 - More residents on corridors = more small business customers & thriving corridors
 - Broader vision of mixed use

B4: LaSalle Gardens



B2: McDougall-Hunt



5 Make it Easier to Rebuild Vacant Lots

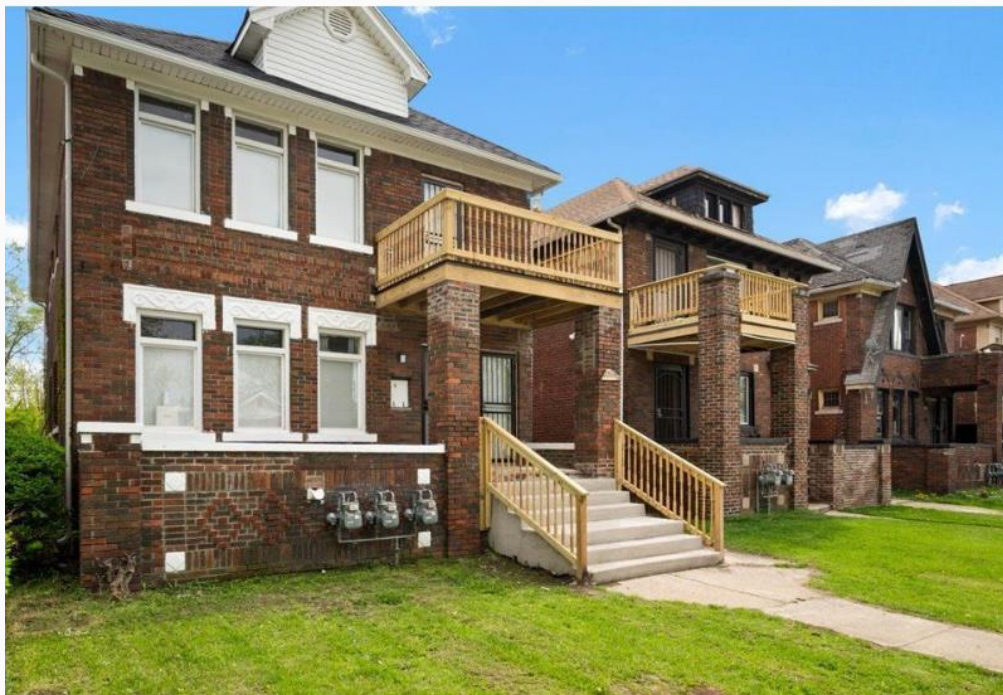
Current: dimensional rules make it difficult to rebuild homes on vacant lots

- Typically requires special approval to build, or can build small single-family home by combining a complex series of exceptions in current code

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

- Affects over 25,000 side lots sold to Detroiters

Existing Homes with Sizing Requirements Like Proposal



Newly Built Homes Similar to Proposal



5 Make it Easier to Rebuild Vacant Lots

Citywide: applies to lots below minimum size or width (5,000 sq. ft. or 50 ft.)

- Most impact for R2 – R6
- Very minimal impact for R1
- Historic District review will continue to apply in all designated districts

	Current (43 x 100 lot)	Proposed
Homes allowed	Single family only	Any type allowed in zone
Side setback	10.5' combined	Sliding scale by lot width, with minimum of 6.5 – 10' combined Larger requirements for R1, larger lots, and for multi-family or townhouses
Front setback	20' – but must match neighbors	10' – but must match neighbors
Rear setback	30'	20'
Height	Typically 35' limit	35'
Lot coverage	45%	60%

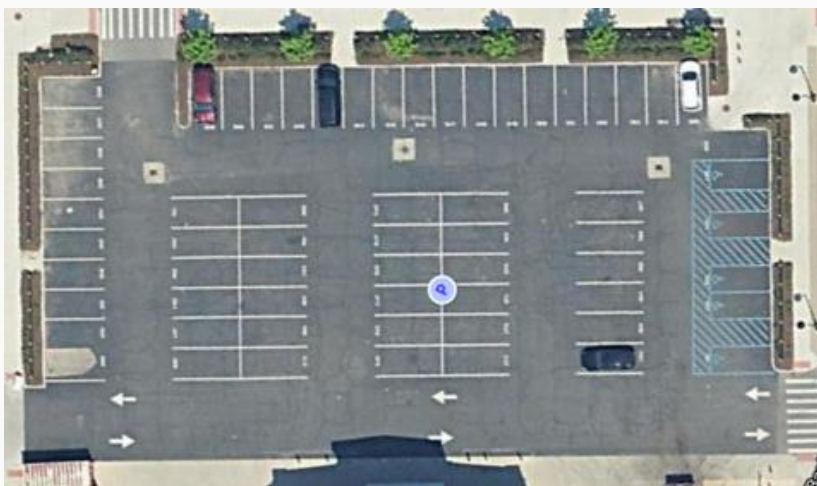
6 Giving Flexibility on Parking Lot Size in Targeted Cases

Current: Zoning often requires that each building have a large parking lot – but the land & money used to build lot reduces what's available for housing

- Each parking space costs \$10k to build; cost gets passed on to Detroiters
 - 1 in 3 families doesn't have a car but still bears this cost
- Some housing projects cannot move forward because parking lot can't fit

Proposal: give more flexibility on minimum parking lot size in targeted cases

- Projects have more choices based on location, clients, needs – and can still build as many spaces as needed

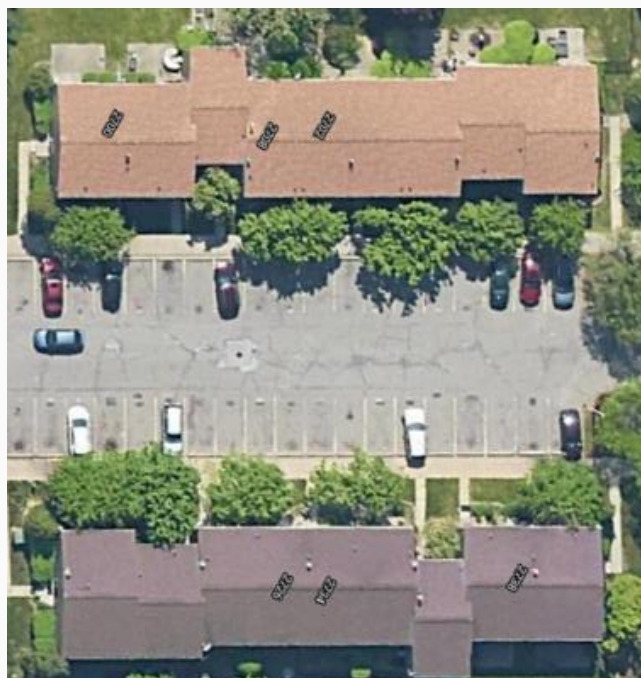


6 Give Flexibility on Parking Lot Size in Targeted Cases

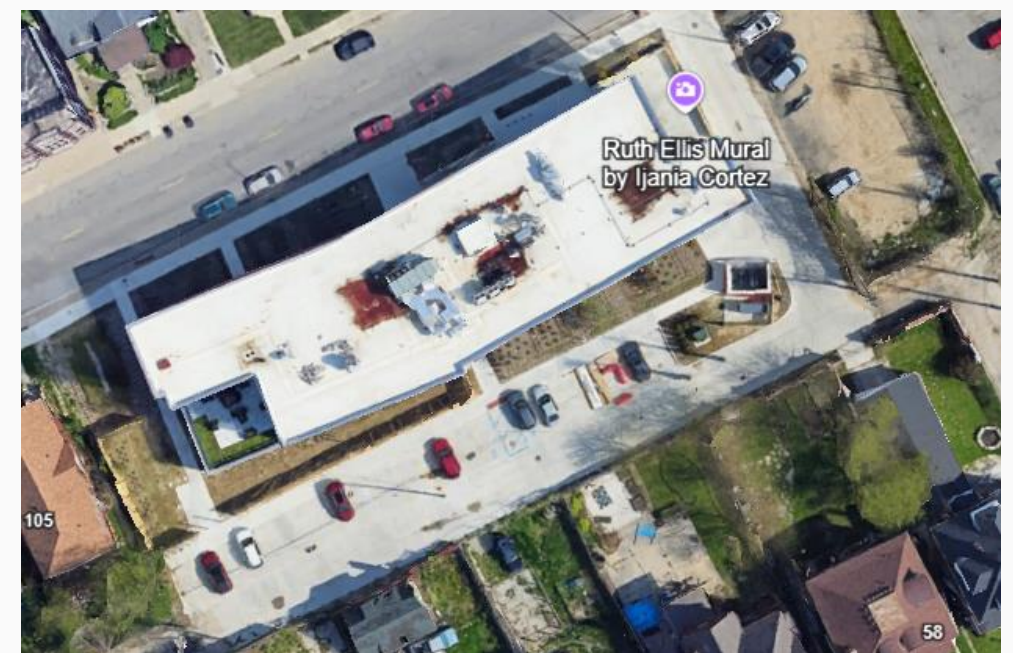
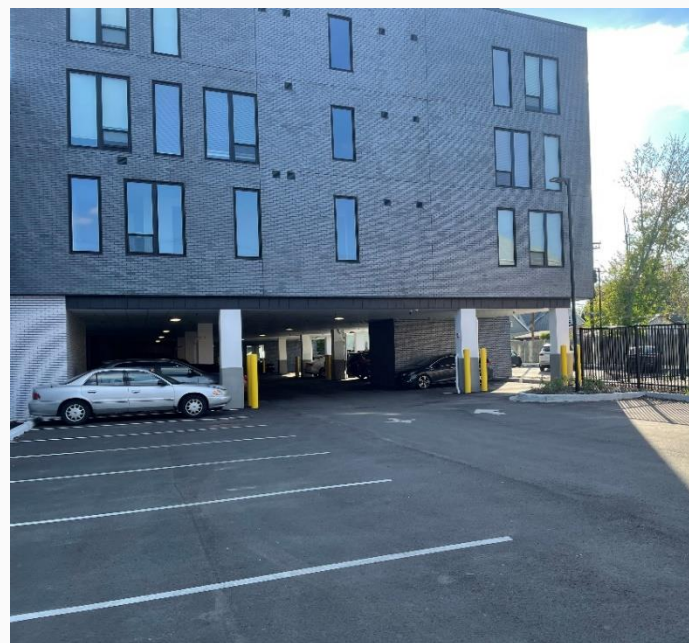
Residential-focused policies

- **Proposal:** Allow 0.75 spaces / unit for multi-family buildings citywide
 - Standardizes multi-family requirement; currently 0.75 spaces / unit near key transit lines and 1.25 / unit elsewhere
- **Proposal:** Allow alternative parking plans to be approved via building permit review for residential, civic & commercial uses (except auto-related)
 - Alternatives could include smaller lots based on resident needs, car sharing spaces, rideshare drop-off, bike parking, or shared lots

Current Approach

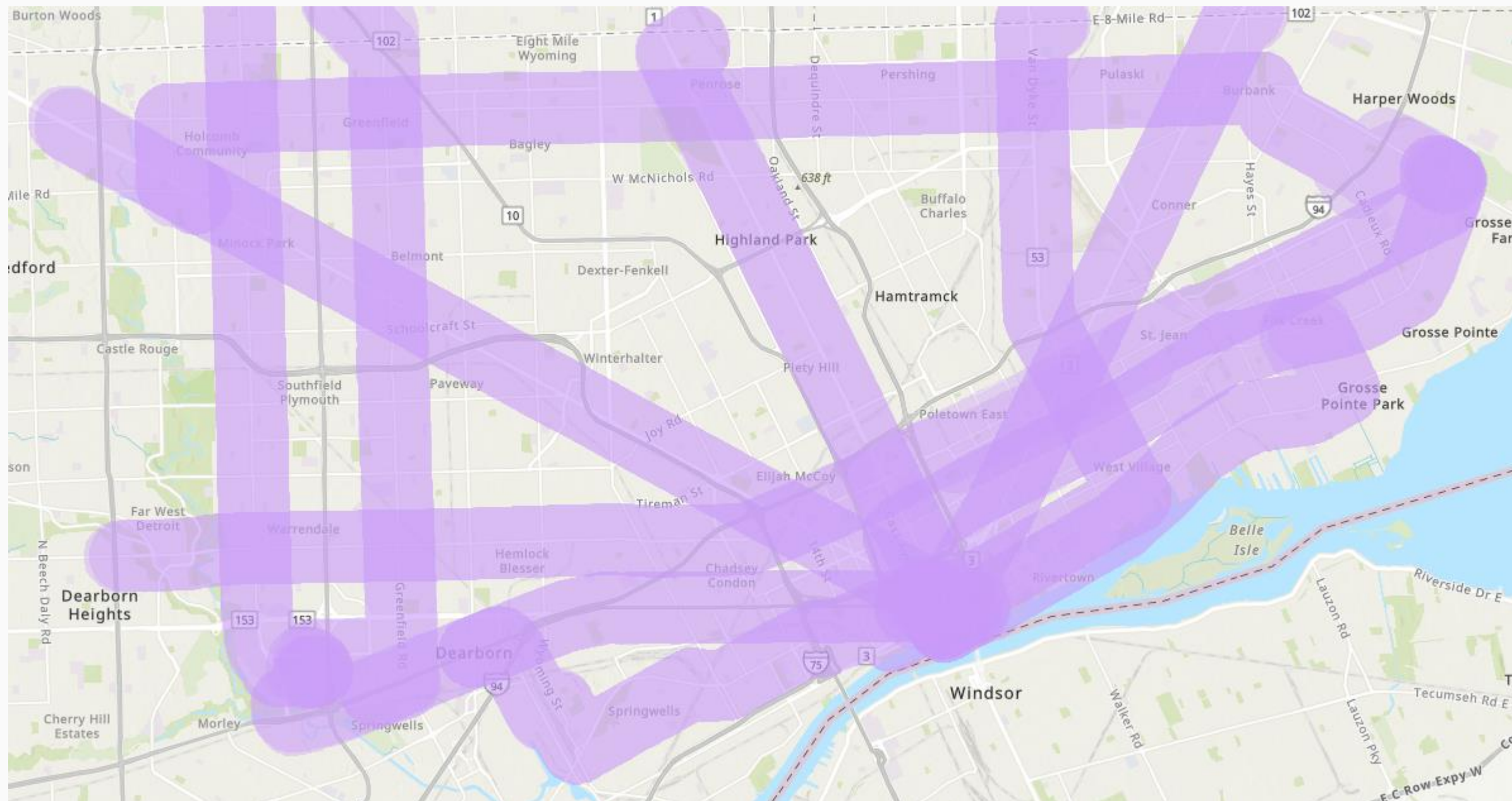


Proposed Approach



6 Give Flexibility on Parking Lot Size in Targeted Cases

Proposed parking level (0.75 spaces / unit) for multi-family housing is already in effect in areas colored pink on map.



6 Give Flexibility on Parking Lot Size in Targeted Cases

Small business-focused policies

- Exempt small commercial buildings up to 6,000 sq. ft. from parking lot size requirements
 - Currently up to 3,000 sq. ft. exempt
- Allow retail & commercial uses citywide to offer parking within 1,320 ft., using a “district approach”
 - Currently allowed in TMSO, SD1, SD2
- Offer discount in parking calculation for small commercial spaces in mixed-use buildings near transit lines
 - Currently allowed in TMSO, SD1, SD2



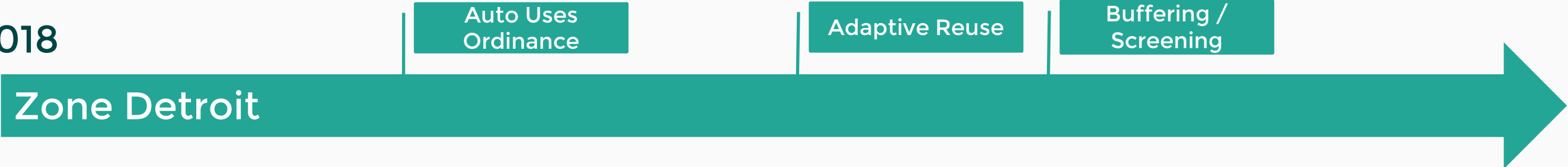
How Does This Proposal Fit With Broader Planning Efforts?

“Let’s Build More Housing” ordinance is a downpayment on passing key policies that align with comprehensive planning efforts

2016



2018



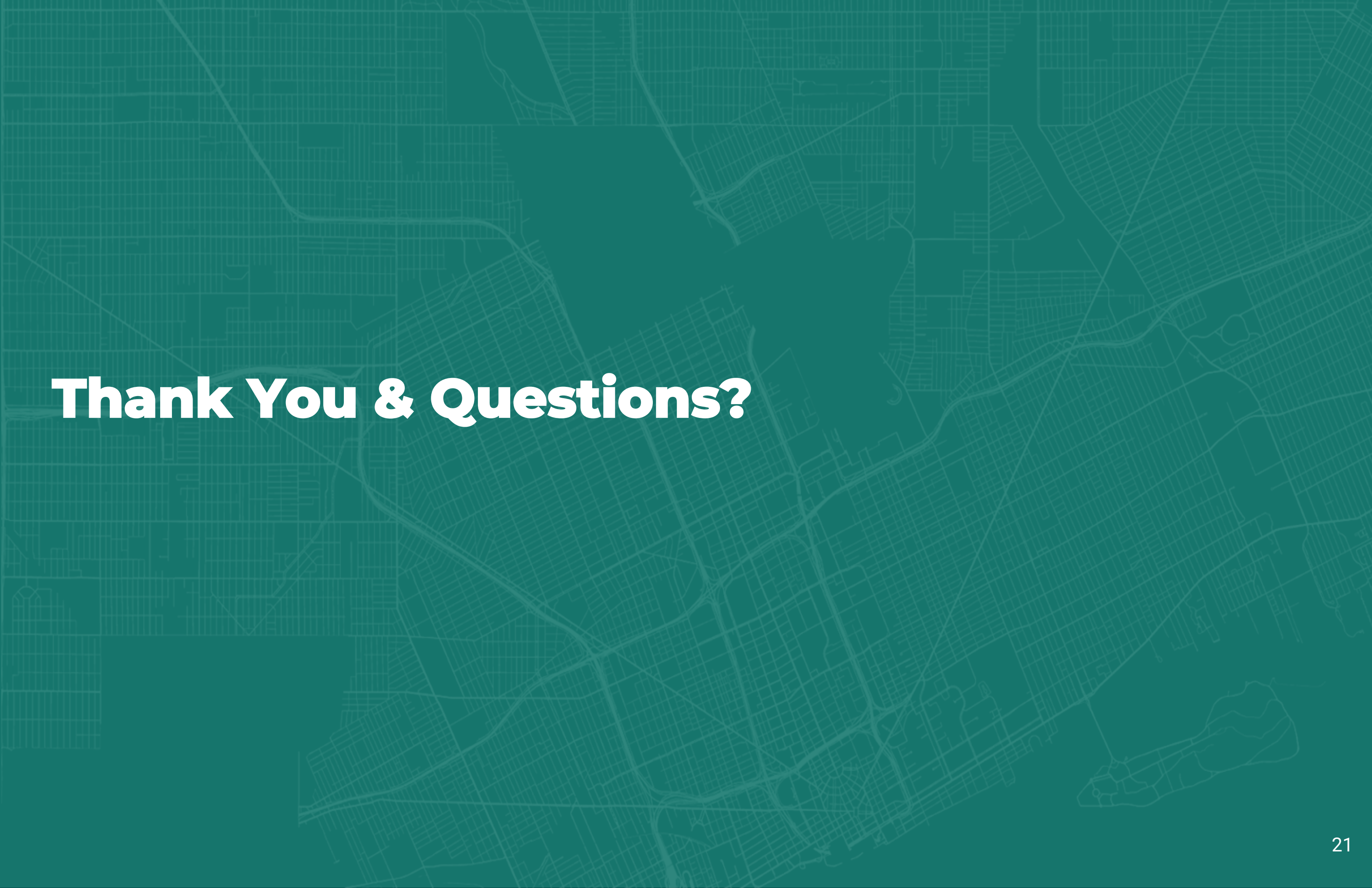
2024



2025



Additional alignment with Detroit’s strategies for affordable housing, transit system, and vacant land use



Thank You & Questions?