

REVISED - 9/8/2025

ADDRESS: 4310 W. VERNOR (CLARK PARK), 1000 SCOTTEN, 1011 HUBBARD, AND ADJACENT RIGHTS-OF-WAY ALONG WEST LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD

APPLICATION NO: HDC2025-00516

HISTORIC DISTRICT: HUBBARD FARMS

APPLICANT/OWNER: CITY OF DETROIT, GENERAL SERVICES DIVISION

DATE OF STAFF SITE VISIT: 8/26/2025

DATE OF PROVISIONALLY COMPLETE APPLICATION: 8/18/2025

SCOPE: ESTABLISH JOE LOUIS GREENWAY/TRAIL TO INCLUDE THE INSTALLATION OF PAVED PATHWAY; LANDSCAPING, SIGNAGE, LIGHT FIXTURES, AND OTHER AMENITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The portion of the Joe Louis Greenway project which is located within the Hubbard Farms Historic District and is the subject of the current application extends linearly along West Lafayette Boulevard, between West Grand Boulevard and Clark Street. The portion of the project area between West Grand Boulevard and Fairbanks street includes a paved roadbed and concrete sidewalk which is abutted by early 20th century single and multiple family residential development. Specifically, per the applicant, the public right-of-way (ROW) within this portion of the project area includes the following (typically):

- Two, 22 1/4'-wide, paved drive lanes
- The north side of the street includes a 10'-wide planting strip, a 25 1/2"-wide planting strip, and a 6'-wide concrete sidewalk
- The south side of the street includes a 2 1/2' wide planting strip, a 5'-wide planting strip, and a 6'-wide concrete sidewalk

The project area which extends west past Fairbanks to Clark Street is located to the extreme south portion of the parcels at 1000 Scotten (the Earhart Elementary-Middle School) and 4310 W. Vernor (Clark Park). An service drive for the Fisher Freeway is directly to the south of the project between Fairbanks and Clark Street.



Easternmost boundary of the project area (the intersection of W. Lafayette and W. Grand Boulevard), facing southwest along W. Lafayette. Photo by HDC staff, taken on 8/26/2025



Facing northwest from the intersection of W. Lafayette and Vinewood Street. Photo by HDC staff, taken on 8/26/2025



Facing west along W. Lafayette from the intersection of W. Lafayette and Hubbard Street towards the parking lot at 1011 Hubbard. Photo by HDC staff, taken on 8/26/2025



Facing northwest along W. Lafayette towards its intersection with Fairbanks and the southern portion of the parcel at 1000 Scotten. Photo by HDC staff, taken on 8/26/2025



Facing northeast along W. Lafayette from its intersection with Scotten towards the southern portion of the parcel at 1000 Scotten. Photo by HDC staff, taken on 8/26/2025



Facing southwest along the W. Fisher Highway access road from its intersection with Scotten towards the southern portion of the parcel at 4310 W. Vernor (Clark Park). Photo by HDC staff, taken on 8/26/2025



Facing southeast along the Fisher Highway service drive from its intersection with Clark Street towards the southern portion of the parcel at 4310 W. Vernor (Clark Park). This is the western terminus of the project greenway within the district.



Portion of the greenway/trail which extends through the Hubbard Farms Historic District. Image by the applicant

PROPOSAL

Per the current submission, the applicant is seeking the Commission's approval to extend a paved trail and install associated amenities along W. Lafayette Boulevard between W. Grand Boulevard and Clark Street. Specific work items include:

- New paved pathways and marking of existing pavement throughout
- New signage and lighting throughout
- New amenities such as benches, water fountains, bike racks, fencing, and trash bins at 4301 W. Vernor
- Plastic lane delineators along W. Lafayette, between W. Grand Boulevard and Hubbard Street
- New landscaping at 4301 W. Vernor and 1000 Scotten, to include trees and gardens
- 30' native deciduous trees, meadow seeding, and turf along the route

STAFF OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCH

- The Hubbard Farms Historic district was designated in 1993
- Staff notes the following regarding the proposed:
 - The project area is at the southern end of the historic district, adjacent to the Fisher Freeway and will be primarily located within the public right-of-way, within existing non-historic age street bed and sidewalks.
 - ⊖ The portion of the pathway that will be established at 4301 Clark is located in the far southern portion of the park, outside of the park fencing in an area where an "informal" footpath currently exists. That portion of the park is dominated more active/recreational uses and includes non-historic amenities such as a baseball field, batting cages, and playground equipment. The establishment of the pathway at this location, to include the proposed new amenities, signage, and landscaping, will not result in the removal of historic features that characterize the park and/or historic district. **Staff does question**

~~the compatibility of the proposed replacement of the existing non-historic chain-link fencing with 4'-0" high "vinyl fencing" at this location as vinyl is not an appropriate material for fencing within an historic district with an early 20th century period of significance. The proposed new 4'-0" high, vinyl coated, chain-link metal fencing is appropriate/is in keeping with the aesthetic of the existing black chain link fencing that surrounds the park as the vinyl coating presents as a black finish color while maintaining element's appearance a metal chain-link fence. The extension of the pathway though the southern edge of 1000 Scotten will result in the regrading/flattening of the berm at that area and the removal of two, 20' honey locust trees. While berm at the parcel is mentioned in the district's Elements of Design, it an historic feature as the existing school building and landscaping/bermed area were added to the current parcel between 2009 and 2011. Also, the two trees proposed for removal will be replaced with 30' native deciduous trees. Finally, a new garden and meadow seeding will be planted at this location.~~

- Staff recommends the approval of the project because it will not result in the removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize the district

ISSUES

- ~~Vinyl fencing is incompatible with the historic character of the district. A more appropriate material/design should be specified. A metal chain link fence/a fence which matches the existing would be acceptable. None~~

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Section 21-2-78, Determinations of Historic District Commission

Recommendation 1 of 1, Certificate of Appropriateness Establish Joe Louis Greenway/trail to include the installation of paved pathway; landscaping; signage; light fixtures and other amenities

Staff recommends that the proposed work will be appropriate according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Hubbard Farms Historic District's Elements of Design. ~~with the following conditions:~~

- ~~The new fencing proposed for installation at the south end of 4301 W. Vernor shall not be vinyl. Rather, the fence shall be a black chain link fence to match the existing, or other compatible material/design subject to HDC staff approval~~