



DEXTER RETAIL POP UP

Narrative: Historic District Commission
August 2021

Introduction and Vision

The City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department (PDD), Department of Neighborhoods (DON), the Mayor's Office, and the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) (hereinafter the "City") would like to establish a temporary (4 year) outdoor retail "pop-up" facility (Dexter Pop-Up) for the Russell Woods / Nardin Park study area. The pop-up will be located on Dexter Avenue at the northwest corner of Dexter Avenue and Tyler Street on a city-owned vacant lot (13200 Dexter). It is our hope that this pop-up will invigorate retail along Dexter and help spur future development on the vacant city-owned site where it will be located. The intent of the Dexter Pop-Up is to provide a retail hub for the now very vacant Dexter corridor and to encourage local entrepreneurship, create a social community hub, and host cultural events for the community. The Dexter Pop-Up will embrace this neighborhood, which currently contains diverse levels of occupancy, various economic sectors, historic preservation, and open space issues.

The Dexter Pop-Up will seek innovative ways to provide a diversity of business types, elevate economic vibrancy, and improve the overall retail corridor strategy for the neighborhood as part of the implementation for the Strategic Neighborhood SNF Plan. The operations plan of the Pop-Up should relate to the overall urban design framework and develop a vision for the aesthetic and functional experience of the public space. The plan will provide sustainable landscape, grounds, and vendor management.

These retail strategies should help stabilize property values, create a positive identity, and improve the quality of life for nearby residents. The neighborhood retail facility has the opportunity to be transformational for the Russell Woods + Nardin Park area by not only helping to stabilize and support the existing neighborhoods, but by providing a new model of urban redevelopment while reviving economic markets. It will be a significant community amenity. This specific retail effort should reflect the area's cultural heritage and incorporate community and stakeholder input.

Community Engagement

There has been extensive community engagement during the framework planning effort of Russell Woods / Nardin Park neighborhood. Over 500 community residents, business owners, community groups, and local institutions have been involved in this process. Please find attached a Citizens Guide that describes the type of community concerns and input received during the planning process.

We are currently in the implementation phase and working with the Detroit Building Authority and Detroit Economic Growth Corporation to conduct additional community input before the actual structure has its final touches and is eventually constructed.

Intent

The intent of this initiative is the activation of temporary spaces through the use of a broad range of diverse pop-up retailers, arts ventures, business enterprises, entrepreneurs, gallerists, and other vendors as part of a dynamic neighborhood retail activation strategy. Temporary tenants would ideally include commercial retailers, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and arts/culture-related businesses that will provide the highest quality and innovative approaches to activating spaces in the neighborhood.

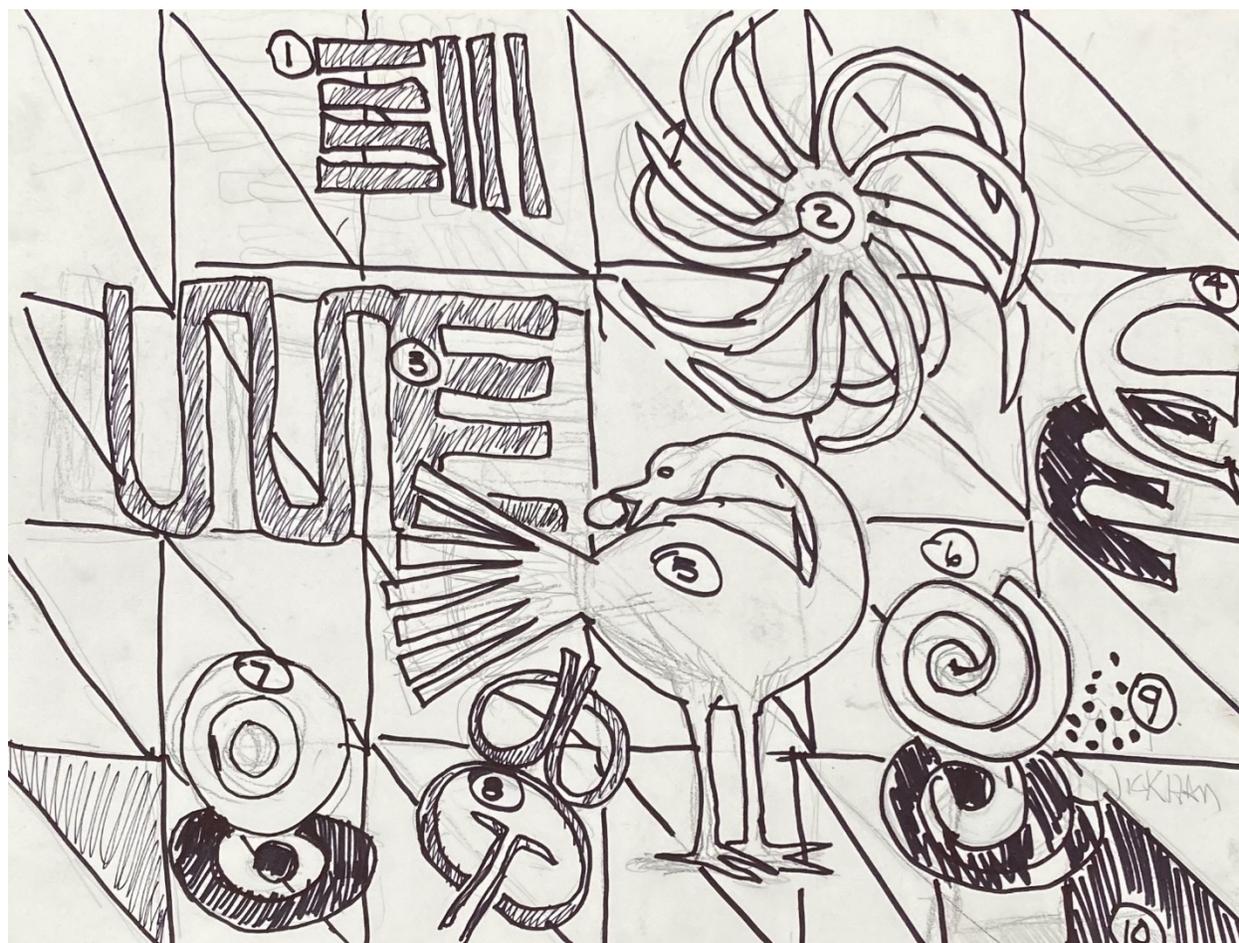
The objective of this pop-up retail initiative is to mimic other successful open-air, market spaces like Detroit Freight Yard and Detroit Shipping Company to generate positive neighborhood activity by introducing and publicizing different concepts, testing the market, serving as advertising for permanent store locations, and clustering similar or complementary vendors to exploit favorable market niches. The Dexter Pop-Up should both foster and encourage the following elements:

- Elevate the aesthetic value of vacant, publicly-owned commercial parcels through a shipping container facility, planting, and maintenance strategies.
- Encourage pedestrian and cyclist connections within the neighborhood to existing and proposed resources, investments, and amenities.
- Create a unique cultural experience embraced by local residents and visitors to the Russell Woods / Nardin Park commercial area by establishing a branded framework for arts installation and programming within the neighborhood retail corridor.
- Discourage dumping on vacant lots.
- Support market for single family rehab.
- Incorporate a targeted strategy for future multi-family and mixed-use housing infill development sites.
- Identify a stewardship plan and potential partners for arts installation and programming.

Mural Design Concept

Olayami Dabls has been a prominent Detroit visual storyteller for over forty-five years. With his art, he brings a vision to create a space for his community to understand the immense power of their heritage. His work utilizes a wide range of materials, referencing African material culture to tell stories about the human condition. Dabls mainly utilizes iron, rock, wood, and mirrors as primary building blocks for his work.

In the mural designed for 13200 Dexter Avenue, Dabls communicates information about himself, his community, and his heritage. Using West African symbolism, Dabls has created images to tell these stories. These images evoke ancestral memory, hearkening back to the language, music, material culture, symbols, graphics, patterns, and textiles of our ancestors. Below is a sketch and description of the symbols Dabls has planned for this mural.



Explanation of Symbols

1. This West African symbol means man and woman.
2. This symbol means, "The eye sees all pain and suffering, yet they remain in their place."
3. This is a symbol of toughness, adaptability, devotion to service, and resoluteness. Translation: "The course of life is full of twisting, ups and down, and zig zags."
4. This symbol represents motherhood, double life, pregnancy, reproductive powers, responsibilities, bearer of light.
5. The mythical Sankofa bird, with its feet firmly planted and its head turned backward. The bird represents one's inherent duty to remember where they

come from, to explore their ancestral history. The egg it holds symbolizes life; the bird must hold the egg firmly enough to keep it, but soft enough to not break it.

6. This West African symbol means everything is connected.
7. This symbol is for our ancestors and all of those who are no longer here.
8. These symbols represent culture, heritage, wisdom, intelligence, knowledge and critical reasoning. "It takes the wise to untie the knowledge bequeathed by one's heritage."
9. These dots are the symbols of all the children that have ever been.
10. This image represents a snake.