
LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 16 (COMBINED)

DATE: February 26, 2026

TIME: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Horatio Williams Foundation, 1010 Antietam Ave, Detroit, MI 48207

ATTENDEES: Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Members and Guests, City of Detroit Representatives, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Staff, Quinn Evans and ZGF Staff, HNTB Staff, Downtown Detroit Partnership Representatives, and Kresge Foundation Representatives. **(See Appendix B: Meeting Attendees)**

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MEETING SUMMARY

The sixteenth Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting was a combined meeting with both residents and stakeholders on Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026. This meeting was the second in a series of engagements designed to gather input that will help shape the Community Enhancement Plan. The goal of this meeting was to summarize the discussion from the previous meeting and build on that feedback by beginning to envision where open spaces could be and how they could be used within the project area.

The February LAC meeting began with a brief presentation on the elements of urban design, including the civic public realm, urban design nodes or places within a city that serve as key focal points where activity, movement and visual attention naturally concentrate, and placemaking character and opportunities. Kemba Braynon from Quinn Evans kicked off the presentation by reviewing what was discussed at the January LAC meeting. In January, LAC members participated in an engagement activity and discussed historical events and places in the project area and highlighted what is important to honor, what resonates most with the community and what may be missing. During the activity, members had the opportunity to discuss and share placemaking themes they would like to see

reflected in the 375 project, such as engage, relax and breathe, celebrate, connect, and learn and remember. From the LAC's January discussion, the main takeaways were that people would like to create beautiful spaces, hold space for people and welcome back belonging, provide informal and formal spaces that support stories, and that although a lot has been lost, fragments remain. The project team also began a series of youth engagement sessions where individuals ages 14 to 24 participated in the same exercise as the LAC members did in January. Several LAC members indicated that they may know some youth in the project area who would want to participate going forward.

Steve Lewis from the Quinn Evans and ZGF team then presented emerging ideas of place, discussing different ways peacemaking themes can be used to inform the look and feel of the new boulevard.

The presentation from this LAC meeting is available on the project website, 375Detroit.org.

Following the presentation, LAC members participated in a 90-minute small group activity led by Quinn Evans and ZGF. The small group engagement prompted LAC members to focus on civic open space and how it could be shaped throughout the corridor. People were asked to think about if they think open space throughout the corridor should be consolidated in one place, shared or distributed throughout the corridor. Once that was decided, the LAC focused on how the neighborhood will be experienced and people had the opportunity to discuss locations where they would like to see the placemaking themes discussed in January. The activity prompted meaningful discussions with the LAC about how the new spaces will be used and what needs to be included to create a meaningful and beneficial space for all. **(See Appendix A: Small Group Activity Comments)**



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APPENDIX A: SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY COMMENTS

PLACE YOUR EXPERIENCES - DISTRIBUTED

The four-park pocket option would allow a different program to occur at each park.

We all need to be able to engage with each other. The distributed option would provide more opportunities for engagement.

The four-park option would allow art and culture to be incorporated throughout all parks. We already have parks in the city that reflect the celebration theme.

The distributed option would be better for walkers and runners and provide more opportunities to drink water and find shade on hot days.

We should have a network of curated experiences. It's important to have experiences all throughout the new boulevard.

Four parks would be easier to maintain and will do a better job of supporting development.

There aren't many pocket parks in Detroit, and it's important to make green space easy and quick to get to.

We already have large parks in Lafayette Park. I like the fact that pocket parks are different.

Given the series of parking garages and backdoor uses on the west side of the boulevard, I'm not sure that large public spaces make sense, so the smaller public spaces are preferred by default, but the placement needs further thought and development.

PLACE YOUR EXPERIENCES - SHARED

The shared option, with two different spaces, allow for more things to happen at once and more programmable opportunities.

I like using the full block as public space, but there is nothing framing it. This is a problem up and down the corridor.

PLACE YOUR EXPERIENCES - CONSOLIDATED

The big one park option would be a good idea to have a single destination for visitors.

One large park could be more appealing to bikers in the area.

It seems like this could be a grand park, but it abuts the loading dock – not nice. Seems inappropriate.

We don't need a large park too close to the riverwalk.

I really want a place where folks can relax in between the festivals and walking.

Four parks would be easier to maintain and will do a better job of supporting development.

We already have large, underutilized parks in the neighborhood – Lafayette and Elmwood. I don't want more parks. If we do a park, let's just focus on one.

JEFFERSON AVENUE NODE

There should be places to celebrate and play at Jefferson Avenue due to its proximity to the Detroit Riverfront and downtown.

The riverwalk and downtown Detroit could connect to this node for possible economic development opportunities.

Green space is really needed at Jefferson Avenue.

A museum on the riverfront. Not many cities have museums on their river. It could be an anchor to help draw people from the riverfront.

A music venue/space could be created here, away from the residents of the adjacent neighborhoods of the project to ensure that they are given privacy as well as to ensure they don't get too much noise pollution.

There is a lot of history at Jefferson Avenue that can be leveraged.

Honor history by the waterfront – it was a landing point. There could be a museum about the impact of the auto industry and/or a cultural space with rotating exhibits.

Art-based activities connected to Hart Plaza and the river.

This end of the neighborhood has the least green space. But do we really need more parks in this neighborhood?

Celebrations (festivals/music) should be as far as possible from the residential areas. The Jefferson Avenue Node is well suited due to nearby parking and other event activities.

Pop-up shops for street vendors to empower small business. Concert attendees and partygoers would probably want a space for pop-ups and food trucks.

No park near Jefferson Avenue.

LAFAYETTE STREET NODE

There should be a park with a large water fountain at Lafayette Street for rest and relaxation, and open spaces for people to gather, practice yoga/wholistic sound therapy/soul revitalization.

Lafayette Street node should center pedestrian activity.

This is the most important node to display the story and culture of the area. It also has the opportunity for diverse green spaces.

Connect the community to Greektown along Lafayette Street.

Lafayette Street from Dequindre Cut to Greektown should focus on the residents, connecting places of living to places to enjoy and relax.

Provide engagement at Lafayette Street. It's high traffic, but slow enough for people to stop and shop. It draws not just from neighbors but employees and visitors from other nearby places.

There should be a small platform, like the Campbell Terrace Stage at Dequindre Cut at Lafayette Street or by the church on Jefferson Avenue.

Music programming could help activate the Lafayette Street node, i.e., pop-up band.

Lafayette Street can be a node for bike parking, pop-up kiosks, and adjacent commercial amenities – i.e., a small café with outdoor seating.

Gathering space with murals/art to reflect the area history. Showcase history with an outdoor museum series in the park, i.e., like the Black Bottom Archives display. Provide music in the park.

Mixed use of public space, such as opportunities to engage and relax and breathe, would enable people to stay in the space longer with multiple reasons to be there, i.e., community gardens and farmers market, bike paths, refreshments, etc.

Lafayette Street is a major east/west node for bicyclists.

North of Lafayette Street is the “money spot.”

CLINTON STREET/NICOLET PLACE NODE

There is no pedestrian crossing here, so why would we put a park or public space at Clinton Street/Nicolet Place? It needs to be connected!

The Clinton Street/Nicolet Place node, because it's near the exit ramp, likely isn't the best place for pedestrian activity. Perhaps more passive green space.

Riverwalk users will want a destination or turn around point. Clinton Street could be that.

GRATIOT AVENUE NODE

There should be beautiful murals and safe pedestrian crossings so that we can learn and remember.

Opportunities to celebrate should happen near Gratiot Avenue/Eastern Market, allowing for tailgates and Lions activities. This would also provide privacy for the neighborhoods along I-375.

Flower day at Eastern Market gets overwhelmed with people quickly. The Gratiot Avenue node could be a place where the overflow of Eastern Market visitors could flow to and that space could also become a part of flower day.

Gratiot Avenue is where the businesses are. We should engage and spend our money on Gratiot Avenue.

Without a boulevard redesign, none of these options look conducive to new public spaces, and too many existing parking garages will complicate the identity of the public spaces.

Gratiot Avenue could be very uncomfortable, so we need extra attention at this node for pedestrians and bikers.

Opportunities to engage could capture foot traffic from sports events and Eastern Market.

The retaining wall at Gratiot Avenue should be a mural of Black Bottom/Paradise Valley.

Make a safe space for shared use at the end of the boulevard (Gratiot Avenue) before transitioning to high traffic.

WHERE SHOULD WE INVEST OUR MONEY ON DAY ONE?

On opening day, we should have a Mardi Gras celebration and parade that marches down the new boulevard to celebrate it. There should be gift giving for children, pop-up vendors and space for children to be outside and enjoy the street space for a few days before the boulevard is open to car traffic.

We should have a diversity of music, food and cultural pop-ups in the celebration space to teach and introduce Detroit's children to new things and teach them about their multi-cultural past.

I love the idea of having a weekend without cars on the boulevard to open and celebrate the space.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

Temporary uses for land immediately after the road is built.

Will development be phased once the road is built? Yes, there would likely be some sort of phasing, but it has not yet been determined. The market value capture study will help MDOT get direction on how the excess property could be developed.

Whose scope is it to come up with the day one phasing plan for the excess land? There is part of that work within multiple scopes including consultants working for the city and MDOT.

Some architectural and urban planning guidance would be useful to help the LAC shape their ideas from here.

How will the community be able to hold people accountable after this phase of engagement is complete and the road is built? The role of the LAC will continue beyond construction.

There are still concerns about how traffic will be maintained on Gratiot Avenue and the new boulevard, especially on Gratiot Avenue.

There is a concern that the federal government will be able to come in and change some of the plans that people are working on now.

An entity that will hold MDOT and partners accountable should be created.

Partnerships should be created because ongoing maintenance and operations will be required for the new spaces.

We need an art and culture institution in the area to introduce visitors to the arts and culture of Detroit.

Opportunities for new skill building and cultural resources can honor the past while encouraging innovation in the future of the city.

Opportunities to connect should be everywhere.

We need to acknowledge Native American history in a permanent way – a historic marker, art, something beautiful that shows both what has been lost and what has been given.

The communities and people who were displaced in this area need to be recognized.

Culture and opportunities for face-to-face interactions are the most important things that this project should provide.

Adding new parks would not be a good use of the new boulevard space. My community and I think that public parks in the city are a waste of space.

Public spaces that are accessible for all visitors should be a priority, and include the following: 24-hour bathrooms, water fountains, accessible amenities, no exclusive benches with dividers, and spaces that are holistically inclusive (especially for unhoused individuals).

Can there be water sprinklers/water misting fans throughout the boulevard's new parks, similar to the Detroit Zoo?

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

There needs to be one overarching entity that is created specifically to manage/program the new boulevard space.

Can spaces be designed to be multi-purpose?

Will the phasing of the project include community input? How will the community continue to be informed when the ground is broken and the project progresses?

Will community concerns about living conditions, air pollution due to high inner-city truck traffic be addressed by this space? Will this project improve the environmental quality of life for local Detroiters?

How will this new boulevard be protected, in terms of zoning, from being bought or used for something that would not benefit the Detroit community (such as ICE detainment centers or a new developer's corporate project?).

We need a phasing plan for the boulevard.

The boulevard needs to be a great urban street, connected by wide sidewalks and walkable urban streetscapes.

There should be art at every node.

There should be outdoor workout equipment at each park, or at least some extra amenities for residents, and play equipment for kids in each park (unless one of the parks is a dog park).

Tie immigrant history of Black Bottom to Greektown.

Each park could be different with its own theme/purpose. One could be a remembrance park dedicated to Detroit history, so that people can learn in a natural space.

We need sidewalks unlike Telegraph Road, so people can walk around safely from place to place.

Will the surrounding land value go up? Do not do anything until a market analysis is completed.

APPENDIX B: MEETING ATTENDEES

Project Team

- Divya Iyer, MDOT
- Leslie Love, MDOT
- Jason Garza, MDOT
- Jon Loree, MDOT
- Andrea Wilcox, MDOT
- Evan Forgacs, HNTB
- Dave Langlois, HNTB
- Dan Beard, HNTB
- Steven Griffith, HNTB
- Bradleigh Merrill, HNTB
- Sasha Freeman, HNTB
- Emmy Reed, HNTB
- Kennedy Taylor, Dan's Excavating
- Michael Griffie, AECOM
- Charlie Stein, AECOM
- Stephanie Lopez-Gilmore, Compass Strategies
- Dan Lijana, Lovio George Communications
- Christina Lovio-George, Lovio George Communications
- Kemba Braynon, Quinn Evans
- Sandra Little, Quinn Evans
- Joshua Powell, Quinn Evans
- Megan Zidar, Quinn Evans
- Steve Lewis, Quinn Evans
- Otto Condon, ZGF

Project Partners

- John Sivills, City of Detroit
- Adena Hill, The Kresge Foundation
- James Fidler, Downtown Detroit Partnership

375 Local Advisory Committee (Stakeholder)

- Jim Jenkins, Jenkins Construction
- Ruth Boeder, Christ Church Detroit
- Wilfred Beal, W L Beal & Associates Inc
- Catherine Cheung, Wayne County DPS
- Sam Butler, Doing Development Differently
- Todd Scott, Detroit Greenway Coalition
- Kimle Nailer, Nail-Rite Construction Company Inc.
- Michele Fedorowicz, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
- Allison Bohn, Office of State Senator Stephanie Chang
- Terry Campbell, Office of U.S. Senator Gary Peters
- Ray Smith, The Black Bottom Group

375 Local Advisory Committee (Residential)

- Olga Stella, Navarre Place
- Jennifer Pasha, Bailey Park Neighborhood Development Corp.
- Katrina Watkins, Bailey Park Neighborhood Development Corp.
- Mr. Dee, Grassroots Detroit
- Beverly Watts, District 5 Police Commissioner
- Maria Urquidi, Lafayette Town Houses

Non-LAC Members

- Connie Underwood, Resident
- Yvonne Nelson, Grassroots Detroit
- Martha Calloway, Grassroots Detroit
- Kimberly Faison, Detroit Future City
- Sandra Williams, Resident

**Some non-LAC members may be sitting in for a member at their organization.*

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