



Community Engagement for Sustainable Economic Development: An Analysis of the Community Benefits Ordinance in Detroit, Michigan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concept of community benefits has emerged over the past 20 years as a mechanism by which neighborhood residents can advocate for sustainable outcomes benefiting the local community within the development process, often in exchange for public incentives and subsidies. Community benefits agreements (CBAs) are used as contracts between developers, the local government, and community organizations or residents. CBAs can occur as either formal legal agreements or informal commitments, and their purpose is to ensure that any tax incentives or public funds afforded to a developer will yield benefits to the local community. As of January 2018, an estimated 30 CBAs had been completed in cities across the United States.

Grassroots organizers in Detroit began working toward the nation's first Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) in 2014. Voters narrowly approved one of two CBO proposals to promote transparency and accountability in the development process to ensure that large-scale development projects in Detroit benefit and promote economic growth and prosperity for all residents. This CBO proposal was authored by City Council and differs from the community-led CBO proposal in several key respects.

First, the City-led CBO places the City and the developer at the center of the community benefits negotiation process, with community members serving in an advisory capacity, rather than community members and developers working directly in the negotiations process. Second, the community-led CBO proposal would have required a legally-binding community benefits agreement between the community and the developer, which does not exist under the City-led CBO.

The CBO requires developers of large-scale projects in Detroit to work with the local community in order to understand and address major concerns around potential impacts of the development. Under the CBO, this collaboration involves the efforts of the Detroit Planning and Development Department (PDD), the developer, and a specially-formed Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC). City staff facilitate the formation of the NAC and conversations around community benefits through a series of public meetings. Concerns brought forth by the NAC are sent to the City to incorporate into a community benefits agreement (CBA) in collaboration with the developer. CBAs include a plan for community engagement, provision and enforcement of community benefits, and procedures for reporting community benefits violations. The Detroit CBO has now been in effect for over one year, and nine projects have implemented the CBO's framework for community engagement.

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of Detroit's CBO on community engagement practices occurring in development projects in the City of Detroit. This study examined five community benefits negotiations processes: three took place before the enactment of the CBO in 2017 and two that took place using the CBO framework. In partnership with the Detroit-based nonprofit, Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit (D4), four development projects were selected for case studies: the Gordie Howe International Bridge and the Little Caesars Arena (both pre-CBO), and the Herman Kiefer Redevelopment and Downtown Bedrock Developments (both post-CBO). We also researched a fifth community benefits negotiation process, the Flex-N-Gate factory, to better understand the intent and goals of the City-led CBO framework. Data for this study were primarily gathered through interviews with project stakeholders and focus groups with residents living within project impact areas. All qualitative data collected were reviewed, organized, and analyzed in separate case studies before a comprehensive analysis of the four case studies was conducted to delineate major cross-cutting themes emerging from the four projects.

Despite varying in size, scope, and impact, all projects provided four main insights into the community engagement process and how Detroit's CBO affects community engagement in large development projects: (1) Concerns around the representativeness of the NAC, the ability of the NAC to adequately engage with their neighbors, and the resources and information available to NAC members, were ubiquitous across all case studies. The CBO successfully formalizes a rapid process for authorizing community members to speak on behalf of the community, but the rapid NAC formation process is also a potential barrier participation on the NAC, ability for the NAC to conduct outreach to community

members, and ability to thoroughly investigate all issues of concern. (2) NACs tend to work very independently from the City and the developer in learning how to formulate community benefits requests, obtaining information, public outreach, and building momentum for productive discussions. This can be a very steep learning curve, depending on the issues of concern. Better technical and administrative assistance for the NACs is needed in order for the NACs to be well-equipped to formulate effective community benefits requests. (3) Enforcement mechanisms, or the lack thereof, were important in community benefits discussions both before and after the passage of the CBO. Prior to the passage of the CBO, communities entering into discussions about benefits did not know what they could request and if or how they could hold developers accountable to promised benefits. Similarly, we found that even though the CBO contained language around enforcement, the lack of clarity around the enforcement mechanisms and vague language used in community benefits reports were still frustrating to community members operating under the CBO framework. The incorporation of detailed, stronger enforcement mechanisms into the CBO could improve trust and participation in the community benefits negotiations process. (4) We also found that the timing of the community engagement process under the current CBO is key to community satisfaction with the CBA as well as the ability for communities to determine the future of their neighborhoods. The current CBO does not require public engagement in planning and development until after the City and developer have decided to proceed with a development plan. This issue could be improved if public engagement were to occur earlier in the development proposal process, allowing for both the community and the City to contribute to the vision for future development.

Limitations of our research include the dynamic and unique nature of each case study project, the short lifespan of the CBO, and an inability to include all relevant stakeholders in interview and focus group proceedings. Due to limited resources, we were also only able to focus on four cases of community engagement that have occurred in Detroit. Since developments can vary in purpose and impact, this study may not capture the full impact that the CBO has had in Detroit thus far. Future studies may wish to focus on the effectiveness of technical assistance, the skills needed for effective community engagement, and the impact of starting community engagement earlier in the development process.

The CBO has provided communities with a codified platform for community engagement, but it is unclear to what extent the current structure of the NAC has improved public participation or representation. This study supports the provision of additional resources to the NAC process, in addition to other specific recommendations primarily focused on NAC formation and facilitation. This report concludes with a list of recommended amendments to the CBO to improve the Ordinance's facilitation of community engagement in large development projects in Detroit.

INTRODUCTION

This paper contains an analysis of four community benefits negotiations that have occurred in the City of Detroit over the past decade. The purpose of this research is to examine the impacts of Detroit's current Community Benefits Ordinance on public engagement and participation in economic development and decision-making.

Equitable Growth and Economic Development

In order to encourage economic growth, cities may utilize tax abatements and public funds as tools for incentivizing development. When developments occur in low-income or vulnerable neighborhoods, however, they potentially threaten to increase cost of living, worsen public health problems, or displace residents and small business owners.^[i]

The City of Detroit faces economic challenges due to population loss, high vacancy rates, high unemployment, rising inequality, and high poverty rates.^[ii] Post bankruptcy, Detroit has begun to see a resurgence of economic activity and investment, much of which has taken the shape of large real estate development projects. In 2016, a set of over 100 development agreements^[iii] estimated to be worth about \$1 billion in investments^[iv] was announced in the greater downtown area. These development

agreements have resulted in the lowest level of office vacancy rates observed in the city over the last 20 years and the doubling of housing development contracts from 2014 to 2015. The developments are expected to bring white-collar jobs, high-rent housing, and upscale commercial areas, particularly in the downtown core. Job growth thus far has been concentrated in the Central Business District, Lower Woodward Corridor, and the area along the newly revitalized Detroit River.^[vi]

Despite the economic potential of these projects, many Detroiters have been concerned that investments and developments are not being made to benefit all Detroiters equally. Improvements in the downtown core, for example, could possibly raise rents and threaten housing affordability and cause displacement.^[vii] For those residents living in outer Detroit, efforts have been made to include them in the downtown economic activity through partnerships with the state “Michigan Works” job training program and by removing blight in residential areas. However, many residents and local leaders have not seen these opportunities as of equal or sufficient significance in comparison to the public resources provided to developers to incentivize economic investment.^[viii]

Emerging Use of Community Benefits as a Tool

Over the last 20 years, community residents in cities across the United States have become increasingly concerned about economic justice in their neighborhoods. The rise of these issues has built momentum behind the concept of “community benefits.” Community benefits extend beyond the provision of basic goods, services, and economic activity to the city, and include considerations for affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, living wages, local procurement, donations to public schools, local hiring, and public engagement and input.^[viii]

Often, community benefits are captured in community benefits agreements (CBAs). CBAs are contracts between developers, the local government, and community organizations or residents. These documents contain commitments from the developer to provide social, economic, and/or environmental benefits to the community surrounding a proposed development. The purpose of a CBA is to ensure that any tax incentives or public funds used to provide incentives to a developer will yield benefits to the local community. The CBA has been used as a tool to provide a platform for community members who typically feel excluded from the development decision-making process. CBAs are structured differently across the United States; though it is common for a community coalition to work with the local government entity to establish conditions for a CBA to be formed with the developer.^{[ix][x]} Across the United States, CBAs have varied in their ability to empower communities to elevate the concerns and desires of their neighborhoods.^[xi]

CBAs can occur as either formal legal agreements or informal commitments. Additionally, these agreements can be facilitated by local government or by a community organization. In the United States, there have been an estimated 30 CBAs completed in nine states and Washington, D.C. In Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco, multiple CBAs have been completed.^{[xii][xiii]} Despite their use in many American cities, CBAs have historically been characterized by weak enforcement mechanisms and community oversight.^[xiv]

The City of Detroit’s Community Benefits Ordinance

Passed in November 2016 as Proposal B, the CBO in Detroit establishes a framework for collaboration between the Detroit Planning and Development Department (PDD), the developer, and a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), creating a statutory requirement for developers with large economic footprints to work with the community to understand and address any major concerns around the project. Under the CBO, PDD sends a public meeting notice to “impact area” residents living within a 300-foot radius of the proposed development. At this initial meeting, NAC selection takes place. NACs represent the impacted community and are responsible for bringing community concerns to the developer. As mandated by the CBO, the composition of the nine-person NAC includes: two members selected by community residents, four selected by PDD, two selected by at-large City Council Members, and one selected by the Council Member representing the largest portion of the impact area.

The CBO requires one meeting between the NAC and developer. Additional meetings may be convened by a 2/3 vote of City Council. The Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) that result from developer-community interactions in the form of a “Development Agreement” are meant to include a plan for community engagement, enforcement mechanisms to ensure provision of community benefits, a procedure for reporting violations of community benefits to the NAC, and benefits negotiated between PDD and the developer. Thus far, these benefit obligations have included: local hiring plans, affordable housing minimums, environmental harm mitigation, repaving roads, and the inclusion of public art.

Proposal B Revisions

The Detroit CBO has now been in effect for over one year, and nine projects have implemented the CBO’s framework for community engagement.^[xxiii] While many Detroit leaders have touted this process as a step in the right direction, there appears to be consensus among a diversity of stakeholders over the need for revisions to the CBO. In September 2018, City Council Member Mary Sheffield listed the revision of the CBO as a major legislative priority. Community advocacy groups are working with City Council to improve outcomes and include community voice more effectively.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study aims to assess the impact of the Detroit CBO on community engagement practices occurring in four development projects in the City of Detroit. Through research carried out in January–November 2018, this study seeks to analyze best practices of public engagement and community benefits negotiations processes from before the enactment of the CBO (pre-2017), as well as processes that were subject to the framework outlined in the CBO (post-2017).

Research Questions

The goal of conducting this study is to answer the primary question: What has been the impact of the Detroit CBO on public engagement in the community benefits negotiation process and on the outcomes of those negotiations?

Secondary Research Questions Include:

- How have relationships between Detroit officials, developers, and Detroiters changed since the passage of the CBO?
- What is the role and impact of NACs? Have they improved public participation and representation?
- What types of issues are considered when negotiating the terms of a CBA?
- How were needs and benefits agreed upon, defined, and assigned?
- What were the concerns addressed by the CBO process and how effective have the CBAs been (to the degree that some agreements have begun to be implemented)? What resources were required to fulfill some of these terms?

METHODOLOGY

Community Partners

The first three months of the project were dedicated to background research, including formal and informal interviews with community organizations, community benefits activists, and University of Michigan researchers who currently work in the City of Detroit in the areas of community benefits, urban planning, and public health. These interviews informed the development of the research questions and project scope. During this preliminary research we identified a client, the Detroit-based advocacy organization, [Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit \(D4\)](#). D4 helped identify the gaps in knowledge around the Detroit CBO as well as potential opportunities for policy analysis to inform the revisions process for the CBO.

Identifying Development Projects for Case Studies

As of November 2018, nine development projects have undergone the CBO's community engagement process. Prior to the CBO, some CBAs were formed; however, the process to reach these agreements was generally not formalized and did not follow any specific framework. For the purposes of this project, four developments were selected for analysis to capture data on community engagement occurring before and after the establishment of the CBO framework. These four development projects were selected in collaboration with D4. Projects were selected based on the size of the developer's investment as well as the impact area of the project. We were also concerned about the accessibility of NAC and other community members, so we favored recent projects over older projects.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted opportunistically using the snowball method. Stakeholders and key players in Detroit's community benefits conversation were identified with assistance from University of Michigan researchers and D4 staff. Many NAC members and City staff were cold contacted through phone calls and emails with publicly available contact information. Further contacts were made through secondary connections and recommendations from key informants. Based on preliminary conversations, it was determined that there were different definitions of "community" and "benefits" based on the stakeholder's role. An interpretivist approach was therefore adopted, in order to allow interviewees and focus group participants to define their own experiences and points of view on a particular subject.^[xxiii] Interviews were semi-structured to allow the interviewee or participant to dictate what issues were most important to them. Interviewees included NAC members, City staff, City Council members, developers, and residents. Interviews were recorded and transcribed when possible. A total of 37 interviewees participated in our study (10 for the Gordie Howe International Bridge case, six for the Herman Kiefer Redevelopment case, nine for the Little Caesars Arena case, seven for the Downtown Bedrock Developments case, and five for background on the CBO). Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to over one hour. An example of an interview guide is included in Appendix 6.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were included in the methodology to address a concern that arose in devising the interview methodology -- that interviews would be limited in reach and scope, which would leave out certain populations of people also affected by the development projects. Focus groups were intended to be as inclusive of community members as possible. The goal was to counteract any potential bias and reach residents who were not directly connected with the CBA process (i.e. extend data collection beyond NACs, community meeting attendees, or City staff).

Focus groups were conducted for the Herman Kiefer Redevelopment, the Downtown Bedrock Developments, and the Little Caesars Arena. At the request of several community residents and organizers who were concerned about the Delray neighborhood being over-researched, a focus group was not conducted for the Gordie Howe International Bridge project. Focus group guides were created in partnership with Detroit-based co-facilitators from D4 and Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation. Focus group participants were recruited by physically distributing flyers to residences located in the 300-ft radial impact area of each development two to three weeks in advance of each focus group. This radius was the defined impact area for each development project per the CBO.

Focus groups were conducted from September-November 2018. Each participant was compensated with a \$40 gift card and dinner was provided during the focus groups. Focus group venues were selected on the basis of accessibility and availability of public space within the impact area. Each focus group was co-facilitated by one member of the research team and one facilitator from a community-based organization with ties to the neighborhood. The Herman Kiefer Redevelopment focus group was held at Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation, a local non-profit institution. The Little Caesars Arena focus group was held at the University of Michigan Detroit Center. The Downtown

Bedrock Development focus group was held at the Boll Family YMCA. Central Detroit Christian Community Development provided a co-facilitator for the Herman Kiefer focus group, while a D4 staff member co-facilitated the Downtown and Little Caesars Arena focus groups. Focus group proceedings were recorded and transcribed, and an additional research team member took observational notes during each focus group. An example of a focus group guide is included in Appendix 7.

Analysis and Synthesis of Data

Each of the four case studies was led by one member of the research team. Another member of the research team led the review, organization, and analysis of this data by guiding team members through the primary and secondary research questions. Data from each case study were grouped into these primary and secondary research questions. The entire research team then examined the data present and discussed themes emerging across the cases.

Drafts of the case study narratives and themes were presented to interviewees and focus group participants at a community event held in December 2018. This event was meant to allow for those who had contributed their viewpoints on each project to review and validate the initial findings, in order to ensure that data were interpreted accurately. Feedback from participants was incorporated into the final version of this report.

RESULTS

To answer our research questions, we synthesized qualitative data obtained from focus group and interview transcripts with secondary research of existing documents from developers, the City, and local advocacy groups. Although our research focused on development projects that varied in size, scope, and impact, analysis of these cases revealed several common themes around the community engagement process and how Detroit's CBO affects community engagement in large development projects. Full case studies are available in Appendices 1-4 for further exploration of this study's findings.

Design of NACs Does Not Ensure Representativeness and Connectedness

In a general sense, most interviewees and focus group participants spoke favorably of the CBO authorizing NACs as mechanisms to represent community interests. However, this research identified challenges in the implementation of the NAC model that undercut the NACs' representativeness and connectedness to the community.

Representativeness – or the degree to which the NAC accurately reflects the neighborhood it represents – is limited by the required composition of the NACs and by the rapidity with which they are formed. Impact area residents elect just two out of the nine NAC members, the rest of whom are appointed by either the City Council or the PDD. Therefore, less than one-third of the NAC's members are statutorily required to be chosen by the community members they will represent. This was a point of frustration for attendees of the Downtown focus group, who felt at least 50 percent elected representation would be more acceptable. NAC members are introduced and elected at the first community meeting required by the CBO. The process was designed this way to allow community benefits discussions to begin quickly. However, this design may also prevent many community members from participating in the process. Because the initial community meeting is the sole entry point to NAC participation, many community members – particularly those with limited resources -- may be barred from participating if they are not informed that the meeting will occur, are not able to attend the first required community meeting because of work or child care obligations, face a language barrier, etc. In both the Downtown and Herman Kiefer focus groups, participants noted that they were either uninformed of the initial meeting or unaware of its purpose. If community members have only one brief window of opportunity to participate on the NAC, and only two members must be elected, it is difficult to ensure that the NAC will effectively and accurately represent the impacted community.

Once the NAC is formed, the timeline for members to engage with their neighbors – and build connectedness — is short. NAC members may have as little as two months to convene public meetings, conduct research, and engage in outreach to their neighbors before they must develop a set of community benefits requests to be considered by the developer. During this time, these nine volunteers may not have the capacity to hold discussions with residents and relay their concerns, even if that is their goal. The Gordie Howe International Bridge case study gives evidence of the high degree of time and effort that is needed to gather and express community members' concerns. The current timeline outlined in the CBO for community engagement may not allow enough time for NAC members to build connectedness with their neighbors. This is highlighted by the Herman Kiefer and Bedrock focus groups, during which participants noted that they either did not know any of the members of their neighborhood's NAC; or that they were unaware that people with whom they were acquainted were involved with the NAC. It seems likely that this lack of connectedness between the NAC and the broader neighborhood prevented full community engagement.

More Resources and Information Are Needed For NACs To Be Effective

Throughout the four case studies offered here, the importance of a platform for community voice in development decisions was repeatedly emphasized by stakeholders. While the NACs are meant to standardize such a platform in eligible development projects, it is not clear they are able to successfully carry out this role due to a lack of resources and technical assistance. It is important to recognize that NAC members are individuals with varying knowledge of city policies, land and property issues, developer responsibilities, and community benefits. In addition, they have outside obligations that limit their ability to fill these gaps in knowledge. Once volunteers agree to join the NAC, the onus is then on individual NAC members to understand how to navigate the political and legal landscape and obtain information on issues of concern. While some NAC members stated that they became involved in the process because they already had expertise in development and urban planning, this cannot be expected of all NAC members. For example, without a background in affordable housing policy, NAC members may not know how to formulate an actionable request for increased affordability in a new development. In contrast, developers are more familiar with policies and technical language used in planning and development decision-making, and thus have preexisting knowledge about the limitations and possibilities of community benefits.

Without direct technical assistance in accessing the appropriate information from the City or the developer, NAC members may not be able to fully or effectively engage in constructive discussions with the developer. Across the case studies, this imbalance of power and access to information was evident. Multiple NAC members attributed this to difficulty in obtaining information directly from the City. Not having full information and knowledge consequently made it difficult for NAC members to effectively express their concerns and formulate requests for community benefits. Lack of information and training for NAC members seemed to contribute to frustration and feelings of disempowerment. In some instances, NAC members made requests that were either not possible or extremely difficult for the developer to agree to. In response, the developer could deny the request as impossible or beyond their jurisdiction, and the NAC's concern (e.g., affordability of new housing) would remain unaddressed.

City Council Member Castaneda-Lopez emphasized that this lack of resources and technical assistance was a barrier to effective NACs. In response, her staff provides some training and informational meetings help community members understand what sort of benefits they can expect to negotiate for, and what abilities the NAC does and does not have under the CBO. This training system, however, is not accessible to all interested community members because it is a program her office has developed to meet the needs of constituents in District 6. It is not formally included as a feature of the CBO or institutionalized outside of the Council Member's office.

Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms and Vague Language Cause Frustration for Community Members

While the CBO does include provisions meant to support enforcement of community benefits that the developer agrees to, NAC members who were interviewed felt that this was not translating into actual

accountability, particularly in instances where the agreed-upon community benefits were vaguely worded. It is still early to determine how enforcement mechanisms will or will not be applied to the community benefits reports generated under the CBO, but there was a general sense of pessimism among NAC members who were interviewed and focus group participants that community benefits would be delivered in the form in which the NACs had intended. This is partly the result of the vague language used in community benefits reports, and would not necessarily be solved by stronger enforcement mechanisms. For example, participants in the Bedrock focus group pointed out that the developer's commitments to affordable housing were worded in a way that could be interpreted several different ways. Some stakeholders expressed a desire to see the community benefits reports become legally binding documents which developers would be required to uphold.

The Timing of Community Engagement in the Development Process Matters

Across the four case studies, it was clear that quality and purpose of community engagement is impacted by the timing of the engagement process in the overall development timeline. Under the current CBO framework, community engagement is required only after a development agreement has already been made between the City and the developer. This means community members do not have input on many of the larger, fundamental aspects of the development, like where it will be sited, the size of the incentives that will be offered, and/or whether residential development will be included. Community engagement under the CBO is only incorporated in the smaller decisions that come later. Therefore, community engagement, based on the CBO's timeline, can only influence "marginal decisions" in the development process, which was found to be frustrating for both community members and developers. When community engagement begins only after the agreement has already been made between the City and the developer, the community's power to inform the planning and decision-making processes is severely limited.

Data showed that most interviewees and focus group participants were pleased to see economic development taking place throughout the city, but community members still felt that they did not truly have a voice in deciding what types of developments would take place in their neighborhoods. Their concerns and community benefits were secondary to the decisions around shops, restaurants, apartments, public transit improvements that were largely being built for the benefit of non-residents. In the case of the LCA, several focus group participants mentioned that they would have liked the opportunity to decide whether or not they wanted a sports arena and upscale shopping area to be built in their neighborhood. For the LCA and other similar projects, uncertainty around the size of investments and the characteristics of services and amenities included lead both NAC members and community members to feel that their relationship with the developer is on uneven footing from the start.

DISCUSSION

Balancing Speed with the Need for Representativeness

Moving forward, it will be important to consider how timely community engagement can be achieved in the development process, without sacrificing representativeness in engagement efforts. There is a degree of benefit in the CBO's rapid NAC formation process, because uncertainty and delays can cause harm to the community. This was seen in the Gordie Howe Bridge case study as the Delray community underwent several rounds of research, meetings, and organizing over a period of 10-15 years. During this time, uncertainty about what would result from efforts to attain community benefits caused stress and economic difficulty for as uncertainty fueled further disinvestment. The community could have benefitted from a formal schedule for community benefits negotiations. Additionally, developers benefit from rapid NAC formation process because time-sensitive business operations may be hampered by not completing a CBA in a timely manner.

However, expediency could become a barrier to representativeness in the NACs, if only those for whom it is convenient are able to participate. In order to better balance the rapid NAC formation process with the need to conduct deliberate and thorough outreach to the community, it may be necessary to restructure the NAC recruitment and selection period so that there can be more extensive outreach to a

larger pool of applicants. This would better serve community members who wish to participate on the NAC or to learn more about the NAC applicants prior to the vote. An extended recruitment and selection period could also better prepare and inform applicants about expectations.

Better Coordination and Communication Could Improve NAC Effectiveness

Across the case studies analyzed here, it was clear that NACs face significant challenges to forming effective community benefits requests. In the current CBO framework, the City is the primary facilitator, but there is no specific point-person or facilitator who ensures that the NAC has the resources needed to succeed. Multiple NAC members commented that they either did not receive the information and resources they needed to develop community benefits requests, or their requests were not met in a timely enough manner to be useful. Furthermore, there is a significant sense of disconnect between the NACs and the developers because the structure of the community engagement process does not require them to collaborate on forming these requests. This lack of communication does not encourage true collaboration between the developer and the NAC.

Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms Could Improve Trust, Participation

Community engagement is not a passive process – community members must willingly participate for it to be effective. One major obstacle to this could be a lack of trust in a process. If Detroiters express a sense of skepticism that a developer will follow-through on commitments to community benefits, they are less likely to engage in the CBO process. Stronger enforcement mechanisms could therefore serve a purpose beyond ensuring community benefits are delivered as promised. They could also improve trust between community members, developers, and the City. As a result, community engagement could become more authentic and effective.

Timing of Community Engagement

Under the current CBO, community engagement does not need to begin until after the development deal is complete, including City approval of tax incentives and public funds. This may conflict with the goal of elevating community voice in determining development in Detroit's neighborhoods. Community members do not feel sufficiently consulted on the use of tax incentives and public funds, which occurs outside of the official community engagement process. These results suggest that community engagement should begin earlier in the development proposal process so that the community and City both have a voice in considering potential development deals.

LIMITATIONS

This report is limited in its ability to capture the full impact of the CBO and of the various development projects studied. Each project is dynamic and ongoing, meaning their full impact on the surrounding communities will not be known for many years. The CBO is still a fairly new tool for developers, City residents, and City staff. This may have affected its implementation in the Herman Kiefer and Bedrock developments and therefore the data on its impact may also be limited. This analysis also does not allow for comparison of the CBO to other models around the country because Detroit's CBO is the first of its kind in the nation. Finally, the four case studies included in this analysis varied due to the unique nature of each case's size, scope, and impact on its surrounding neighborhood. This impacts the comparability of the case studies. Further information on these limitations is available within each case study.

More research is needed to fully understand the impact of the CBO in Detroit, and the potential impact of similar tools in other communities. Future research may wish to focus on the effectiveness of various forms of technical assistance, what skills are needed for community members to effectively engage in the development process, and the effects of starting community engagement earlier in the development process. Other communities may wish to examine the relative merits of a CBO compared to requiring community benefits through other mechanisms, like in Requests for Proposals.

CONCLUSIONS

Our data supports amendments to the CBO community engagement framework that are primarily focused on NAC formation and experience. While the CBO has provided communities with more formal representation in the development process through the use of NACs, it is unclear whether this structure has improved public participation or representation. NAC members have different levels of preparation to engage in community benefits discussions as well as different levels of support from the City, community organizations, and developers. Our analysis supports the provision of additional resources to the NAC process to improve the quality of public participation and outcomes of the community benefits agreements.

KEY IMPACTS: RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Detroit City Council considers how to refine the Community Benefits Ordinance, improvements in the Ordinance's facilitation of community engagement in large development projects should be considered. The following recommendations are drawn from analysis of successes and challenges in community engagement in the cases of the Gordie Howe International Bridge, the Little Caesars Arena, the Herman Kiefer redevelopment, Bedrock's downtown developments, and the Flex-n-Gate development. Possible amendments to the Community Benefits Ordinance include:

1. **City Council and the Planning and Development Department should begin engaging the community earlier in the development process to build community vision for development.** The quality and quantity of community engagement prior to closing development agreements could potentially inform which developments should receive incentives and public funds.
2. **The Planning and Development Department should partner with the City Council member(s) representing the affected area to extend the outreach and recruitment period leading up to the selection of NAC members to improve representativeness.** To improve representativeness, the NAC selection process should be extended to recruit from as diverse an applicant pool as possible. Participation on the NAC should be accessible, and one of the key barriers to participating on the NAC recognized in our study was the lack of information and familiarity with the process used to form the NAC. Existing community-based organizations and groups should be consulted in the NAC-formation process, in order to strengthen and broaden the City's outreach.
3. **The Planning and Development Department should provide technical assistance and resources to allow NAC members to effectively engage with developers.** NACs need administrative support and information on relevant city policies, processes, and staff roles as well as information about what kinds of benefits they can negotiate for. In some instances, City staff may need to consult with the NAC to ensure they have the necessary information to make feasible requests of the developer, and that their requests effectively address the community's chief areas of concern.
4. **City Council or the Planning and Development Department should designate a facilitator specifically for the community benefits negotiation process.** Having a designated facilitator helps all parties engage more effectively in negotiations. City staff can be valuable facilitators, but facilitation would be strengthened by partnership with a trusted community partner with ties to the neighborhood in question. Local nonprofits, civic groups, and City Council district offices all could help fill this role.
5. **City Council should strengthen enforcement mechanisms to improve community trust.** When community members feel confident that the issues they discuss with developers and the City will be taken seriously and commitments will be fulfilled, community engagement becomes easier and more effective.

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Conceptual image courtesy of Michigan Department of Transportation.

Appendix 1:

Case Study: Gordie Howe International Bridge

NEIGHBORHOOD BACKGROUND

Delray residents have long lived with high concentrations of industrial activity and pollution from sources that include power plants, wastewater treatment, steel manufacturing, oil refining, and other sources.^[i] Over the years, the neighborhood's population has declined from a peak of about 23,000 before World War II to a little over 2,000 in 2016,^[ii] while poverty and unemployment have increased. Delray is divided from most of Detroit by I-75, contributing further to air pollution and noise. Its boundaries are generally thought to include the River Rouge, the Detroit River, Fort Street and I-75, and Clark Street.

As of 2016, Delray's population was estimated to be about 2,229, though that number has declined with the displacement of many households between 2016-2018 to make way for the bridge's construction. The neighborhood is

Comparison to Detroit:

Population: **683,443**

Racial Composition:

79% black

10% white

8% Latino or Hispanic

Poverty Rate: **39%**

Unemployment Rate: **12%**

Median Income: **\$26,249**

largely home to families of color. About 20% of Delray residents are black and nearly half are Latino or Hispanic. About 47% of Delray residents live below the poverty line and the unemployment rate in 2016 was approximately 22%.^[iii] The community is roughly comprised of two census tracts, where the 2016 median household incomes were \$24,438 and \$15,880.^[iv]

As noted, residents of Delray are exposed to high levels of pollution from multiple sources, and the neighborhood will now be split in two by the new 167-acre U.S. port of entry for the Gordie Howe International Bridge, as well as new roadways and reconfiguration of existing roadways to connect the bridge and port of entry to Michigan's Interstate system. The large potential impact that construction and operation of such a project would have on the neighborhood spurred local organizing, years of negotiations with a shifting cast of stakeholders, and ultimately a version of community benefits -- some of which have begun to be delivered, some of which remain undefined at the time of writing -- for Delray from both the City of Detroit and those developing the bridge. Throughout the planning process for the bridge, grassroots organizers in Delray have lead efforts to create channels for community engagement and obtain community benefits for Delray.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Gordie Howe International Bridge is projected to be the longest cable-stayed bridge in North America, providing a new international crossing between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario. The bridge is expected to speed the flow of trade between the U.S. and Canada and provide economic benefits to both nations. It is expected to be one of the largest ports of entry anywhere in North America. Construction of the bridge, Canadian and U.S. ports of entry, and connecting interchanges is estimated to cost \$5.7 billion by the time the bridge opens in late 2024.^[v] The cost of constructing the bridge is being financed by the Canadian government, and as a result, all toll revenue will also be collected on the Canadian side of the crossing until construction costs have been recouped, at which point toll revenues will be divided between both countries.^[vi] In turn, Michigan will be responsible for maintaining its highways and roads that connect to the bridge.

The development of the bridge has been a complex process, involving city, state, and national governments, and is to be constructed under a public-private partnership administered by the [Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority](#) (WDBA), with [Bridging North America](#) (Bridging NA) contracted to build, finance, operate, and maintain the bridge. Advance construction on the U.S. side of the crossing began in July 2018. Reaching this stage required the acquisition of over 600 land parcels by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the demolition of homes, business, and neighborhood institutions like houses of worship. The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Final Environmental Impact Statement for the project expected approximately 257 residential units, 43 businesses, and nine nonprofits, including houses of worship, in Delray to be demolished to make way for the bridge.^[vii]

The project was not subject to the CBO's requirements, both because it preceded passage of

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders in the development of the Gordie Howe International Bridge include:

- U.S. Federal Government
- State of Michigan
- Government of Canada
- City of Detroit, Michigan
- City of Windsor, Ontario
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition (CBC)
- The Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA)
- Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- Bridging North America (Bridging NA)

the Ordinance and because the City land and tax abatement thresholds likely would not have been met. However, it is included as a relevant case study in this report because community engagement and community benefits have played such a significant role in the progression of the project on Detroit's side of the crossing. There are valuable lessons to be learned from the project that can inform future policies regarding community engagement in development.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative data to inform this case study of community engagement in the development of the Gordie Howe International Bridge were obtained primarily through key informant interviews. Interviews were conducted by phone and in-person with residents of the Delray neighborhood and the broader Southwest Detroit community who were involved in negotiations for community benefits through either the Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition (CBC) or the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Advisory Group (CAG), representatives of WDBA, Bridging NA, and Detroit City Council. Information was also gathered via participant observation at public meetings hosted by WDBA and the CBC. Contact information for CAG members and CBC board members was drawn from membership lists provided by the CBC. Additional contacts were made by referrals from University of Michigan faculty and from CAG and CBC members. Information was also gathered from documentation of community engagement by MDOT, WDBA, and the CBC.

RESULTS

The results of this case study are divided into two sections. The first examines the process through which local activists moved toward obtaining community benefits for Delray. The second section examines key themes related to community engagement that arose over those years.

Timeline of Community Engagement and Community Benefits in Delray

Grassroots organizing. As MDOT was completing its feasibility study of different crossing points for the bridge on the U.S. side of the crossing between 2001-2004, Delray community members were split. Residents reflect that opposition to the bridge within the community was divided between those who opposed the bridge coming to Delray altogether, and those who felt that it was only a matter of time before Delray was named as the selected site, and that their best option lay in mitigating negative effects on the neighborhood. As one lifelong community member said, "There was already a lot of disinvestment in Delray. When we organized, we thought, 'ok, this is going to happen and there's no point in fighting something that's coming.'"

Delray community members who felt the neighborhood did not have the political or economic influence to fend off the siting of the bridge in their community began organizing to try to ensure harms were minimized and that some benefits would accrue to the community. Grassroots organizing began to make sure that the community had a voice in the process, whether or not they were invited to have a voice. As a result, the Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition (CBC) was formed in 2008, with the goal of creating a body that could advocate for Delray residents who would face the greatest impacts of the bridge. The CBC sought to bring community members' voices to the Michigan State Legislature, and later Governor Snyder's Administration, the Detroit City Council, and the Detroit Mayor's Office when the State Legislature withdrew support for the project.

Gaining official authority for community engagement. In 2015, a new mechanism for community engagement in the Gordie Howe Bridge planning process was created when the Detroit City Council granted authority to a Community Advisory Group (CAG) to represent and advocate for affected Delray and southwest Detroit residents, businesses, and organizations in negotiations with WDBA

and the State of Michigan. The CBC was empowered by a City Council resolution to form the CAG, and members of the elected CBC Board also sit on the CAG. Both groups are made up of 15 members, and while the CBC is comprised entirely of elected southwest Detroit community members, the CAG has a broader membership and includes Delray's political representatives -- including members representing City Council, the Mayor's office, and the Michigan state legislature -- as well as other local agency and business leaders. Both groups remain active as construction begins in late 2018. As construction on the bridge moves forward, community organizing continues with a focus on accountability, developing programs to deliver community benefits, maintaining communication with the State, WDBA and Bridging NA, and renewed coalition-building to engage residents along I-75 in recognition that many Delray residents have been displaced or chosen to move away.

Community benefits for Delray. The CAG and CBC ultimately won three agreements that are intended to mitigate harms caused to community members by the siting of the new crossing in Delray. First, City Council agreed to requests by the CBC to allocate revenues from an initial land sale to allow for bridge construction to be allocated toward blight removal in Delray. As a result, half of the land sale revenues -- about \$750,000 -- was made available for the removal of dangerous structures in the neighborhood.

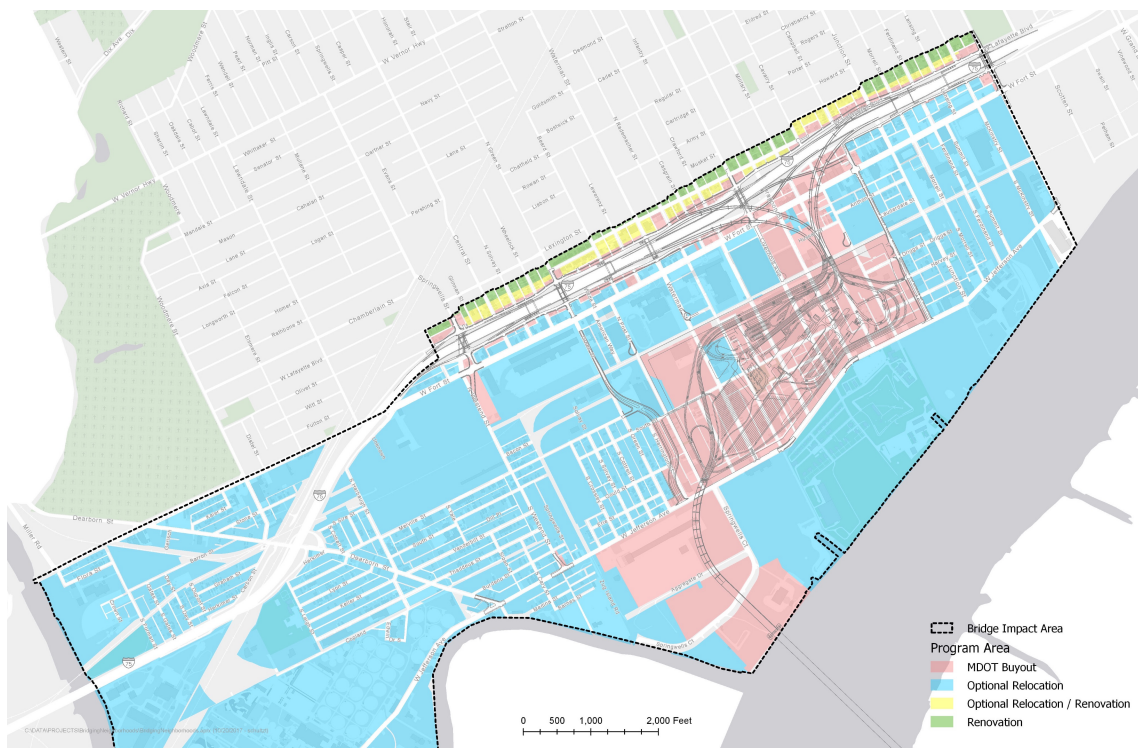
Second, in June 2017, the Detroit City Council approved a benefits package, funded by the sale of public land in Delray where the bridge and its associated infrastructure will be located. The \$48 million dollar package is intended to serve those who are outside the bridge's footprint, but who will still be impacted by its construction and long-term presence. The plan was created in partnership with Mayor Mike Duggan's administration, and led to the creation of the City's \$32 million Bridging Neighborhoods Program. Bridging Neighborhoods includes an Environmental Mitigation Program to offer home mitigation to address noise and air quality impacts from increased truck traffic for homes located within 300 feet of the expanded I-75 Service Drive. It also includes a Home Swap Program, offering owner-occupants of homes within 150 feet of the expanded I-75 Service Drive the option to move to a renovated home owned by the Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) elsewhere in the city. Dozens of Delray residents have signed up to participate in the program, though a CAG member noted the program has been challenged by logistical hurdles, a lack of available Land Bank homes that meet the needs of Delray families, and some program constraints that restrict eligibility. The agreement also includes plans to fund \$10 million in job and training programs, and \$2.4 million for air and health monitoring over 10 years. After years of advocacy, this was considered a significant and tangible victory by advocates.

Third, the 2012 Crossing Agreement signed between Canada and the State of Michigan required the creation of a community benefits plan by the private sector partner who would be in charge of constructing and managing operations of the finished bridge. This partner had not yet been determined at the time, but was later identified as Bridging NA in July 2018. Bridging NA released its formal [Community Benefits Plan](#) for both Windsor and Detroit in September 2018 -- after advance construction had already begun -- and announced that consultation with community members on both sides of the crossing would continue over a six-month period in order to refine the Plan. The value of benefits for the U.S.-side of the crossing is estimated to be \$7.7 million at the time of writing. The four key goals of the Plan as outlined by Bridging NA are:

1. Provide economic opportunities in the host communities;
2. Contribute positively to workforce development programs, thereby improving economic inclusion;
3. Deliver neighborhood improvements; and
4. Ensure clear commitments and accountability from all parties for its delivery.

The Plan also includes an Unintended Consequences Fund of \$5 million (in Canadian dollars, about \$3.7 million in U.S. dollars) to address consequences on either the U.S. or Canadian side of the

crossing that are not otherwise addressed by the project. The Fund will be available during the first five years of bridge operations, following completion of construction.



This map depicts which properties in Delray were directly bought-out by MDOT (red), and which were eligible for relocation or renovation as a result of community benefits offered through the Bridging Neighborhoods Program. Image courtesy of Detroit Bridging Neighborhoods Program, available at <https://bridgingneighborhoods.org/>.

Key Themes Related to Community Engagement

The following are key themes related to community engagement that were identified in the coding of stakeholder interviews.

Concerns of Delray residents. Residents were concerned about whether the bridge's promised economic benefits for the southeast Michigan region would materialize in Delray, or if jobs and investment from the new trade crossing would instead benefit other communities, while its burdens would remain in Delray. Specifically, many residents were concerned about the effects increased truck traffic would have on their neighborhood, including stress on local roads, increased traffic, worsening air quality, and risks to pedestrian safety. Health effects ranked as a top concern for nearly all residents who were interviewed, particularly as Delray is already subject to high levels of pollution from rail and truck traffic and industrial activity. "Concerns I was hearing were about asthma, how will it affect my child's asthma," said one CAG member, who added "I don't think health issues are fully addressed in big projects like this. If they had some kind of concern about peoples' health, they wouldn't build what they build in these neighborhoods." Residents also feared further splintering of their community as the new bridge and port of entry displaced families and quite literally divided the neighborhood. Individuals and organizations worried about ensuring continued access to basic goods and services for those who would remain in the neighborhood. For example, a local health and social services agency was concerned that the development of the

bridge would cut off pedestrian access to their center – a significant concern in a low-income community, where residents may lack reliable access to a vehicle. A community member commented, “For those who are not going to move – what happens? A big bulk of the neighborhood is gone. There’s no stores, they have to go somewhere else to go to the grocery store.”

Hopes of Delray residents. On the other hand, there is also a sense among residents that the bridge could potentially be leveraged as an opportunity to bring investment, jobs, and improvements to the historically disinvested neighborhood. In part, this was due to the regional economic impact the bridge is expected to have. As one community member said, “We’re making a sacrifice for profits... We understand that this is also contributing to progress for this region, and we’ve been a part of that.” In addition to increased trade, the bridge could also bring increased attention to the neighborhood by policymakers and investors, increasing the community’s political and social capital. Regardless of whether the bridge was something residents wanted, its possibility meant more people in power were paying attention to Delray.

Another theme that emerged was a hope for choice. While the bridge eventually became an inevitability for Delray, activists with the CBC hoped to retain some autonomy in whether residents could stay in the neighborhood or leave. Some residents wanted to see the public and private partners involved provide protections and improvements that would allow them to continue living in Delray, while mitigating negative impacts of the bridge’s construction and operation. For these community members, protections from construction dust, buffering from future traffic, and home repairs to insulate against noise and air pollution were important. As one CAG member reported, “For many of my neighbors, they didn’t want to move. This was all they knew, it was home.” These residents were also concerned about obtaining assurances that they would be allowed to remain in their homes and in Delray. Other residents wanted assistance in leaving the neighborhood and in finding homes elsewhere. What united these groups was a hope that they would be able to control whether and how they lived in the shadow of the new bridge.

Role of grassroots-led community engagement in raising residents’ voices. As plans for the bridge progressed, the CBC increasingly served as an intermediary between decision-makers and the Delray community. As part of its advocacy, the CBC regularly held -- and continues to hold -- meetings in the community and participated in survey efforts to learn what Delray residents’ concerns and fears were regarding the bridge, as well as the protections and benefits they hoped to be offered in exchange for the sacrifices they were being asked to make to accommodate the bridge’s development. Members of the CBC gave tours of the neighborhood for decision-makers, and conducted research and surveys, including truck counts, health surveys, and community air monitoring efforts to gather additional information when the group felt official reports were not providing sufficient information. The CBC has also partnered with University of Michigan researchers and the Detroit Health Department to conduct a health impact assessment (HIA) to document any health effects the Bridge may have on nearby residents. A priority for the CBC was ensuring that residents who would be living near the bridge were not forgotten or ignored. Those who lived directly in the bridge’s footprint were bought out by eminent domain, but those on the periphery of the project would not be compensated. These families will potentially be subjected to increased pollution, a drastically changed neighborhood, and may have no financially viable path to leave the neighborhood if their homes lose value. Their concerns were a priority for the CBC.

The importance of a trusted, legitimate community voice. The creation of the CAG and its endorsement by the State, City Council, and Mayor Duggan took many years, and represents a critical event in community engagement in Delray because it allowed for formal inclusion of Delray community members’ concerns and hopes in negotiations about the bridge. The CAG is considered important not only by community members, but also by City and State government figures, WDBA, and Bridging NA. Representatives of WDBA -- a Canadian entity without pre-existing ties to the

Delray community -- see the CAG as a trusted and valid representative of Delray residents, making it easier for WDBA to be responsive to the community. As one representative of WDBA said of the CAG -- with whom WDBA has held monthly teleconferences since 2016 -- "It is helpful for us to have a relationship that serves as kind of the bond between us and the community. I feel like, over time, we've been able to respond more directly to the community because we've had that introduction." A representative of Bridging NA reacted similarly, noting that community groups like the CBC and CGA "understand different community needs and communicate with one voice. Their recommendations are extremely helpful for us." Members of the CAG also saw the group as an important tool for voicing the community's needs and hopes: "It gave us a foot in the door, an established group specifically for community benefits."

Normalization of community engagement in development process. Members of the CAG and CBC also considered it a success that they were able to normalize the conversation around community benefits, both in the context of the Gordie Howe Bridge, and in the broader Detroit community. As one stakeholder in Delray explained, "There was no requirement for community benefits to even be part of the conversation." One CAG member saw Delray's influence in the broader movement to adopt a Community Benefits Ordinance in Detroit: "There weren't that many people talking about community benefits like there are now. I would like to think that our work contributed to this. We were really pioneers in this unique project."

How Would the CBO Have Affected Community Engagement in the Gordie Howe International Bridge?

It has to be said that Detroit's CBO would not have automatically affected the trajectory of the Gordie Howe International Bridge because the crossing was the result of an international agreement signed by the State of Michigan and Canada, and therefore not subject to Detroit's local CBO. Because Delray's struggle for community benefits helped fuel energy for the adoption of the CBO in Detroit, however, it is worth considering how expectations like those outlined in the CBO could have changed the process and outcomes of community engagement in Delray. Although time was an important ingredient in the CBC's efforts to engage with and organize neighborhood residents, the lack of official expectations for community engagement may have contributed to strain on the Coalition's resources and energy.

One key consideration is how a formal process for community engagement and negotiation could have increased community involvement in the earlier stages of planning for the project, reducing uncertainty and long delays for Delray residents. The long, drawn-out nature of negotiations between Delray grassroots activists and -- at various points -- the State, City, and WDBA put a significant strain on Delray community members. "The process became so long, it became hard to keep people engaged," said one CBC member. It was also noted that as more and more people moved out of the neighborhood because their property was bought-out by MDOT, it became increasingly difficult to maintain a coalition to speak for those residents who remained in the neighborhood with limited resources. A significant barrier to community engagement was raised when funding from the Michigan Legislature to support MDOT's engagement of Delray's residents was eliminated in 2011, as the political environment shifted. As a result, MDOT's outreach and engagement in the neighborhood was halted starting in spring of 2011. This left a gap in community engagement efforts until WDBA began its quarterly public meetings in 2015. In the intervening period, the burden of community engagement fell upon the CBC, with fewer resources than had been available under a formalized, required community engagement process.

Economic strain also occurred due to the long delays in addressing community members' concerns. Residents noted an increase in blight and property crimes in their neighborhood as plans for the bridge moved forward, and residents remained unsure about the fate of their homes. Homeowners and landlords could not be sure that it was wise to make repairs to their properties as

long as it remained unclear whether there would be investments in helping current residents either stay or leave the neighborhood. “People tried to hang on to their property, but they weren’t certain whether they would be compensated for repairs. People were waiting while the area had been earmarked for the bridge, with no investment.” Community members noted that arson in vacant homes in the neighborhood also increased.

DISCUSSION

The state of limbo experienced by Delray residents may not have been entirely avoided under the type of process outlined in Detroit’s CBO. However, a case can be made that having a clearer, formalized process for communicating with residents and gathering their input from the beginning stages of the project could have minimized the years of uncertainty that resulted in further decline in the neighborhood. The CAG was not given authority to speak for residents and ask for benefits to the community until 2015 -- three years after the Crossing Agreement was signed and many more years after discussions about the bridge first began.

However, the creation of a body like the CBC or CAG is not accomplished overnight, and it took a significant amount of time and energy for the groups to be able to speak effectively for the community. This kind of intensive coalition-building and community organizing is not currently accommodated by Detroit’s CBO, with its quick timeline for forming a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC).¹ It can be argued that existing community groups, like block clubs, should be leveraged in efforts to truly engage the community, whenever possible. Existing groups may have the advantage of having stronger and broader ties to the community than an NAC that is formed quickly. In the case of the Gordie Howe Bridge, all parties involved, including the developer, generally agreed that the CBC and CAG were important and useful entities because they had a broad reach within the community.

Additionally, it is possible that neighborhood representatives may need more time and resources than is currently required by the CBO to gain a sense of their neighbors’ hopes and concerns, and communicate those hopes and concerns to a developer. While the journey to community benefits in Delray was exceptionally long, that additional time allowed for many more meetings with WDBA, more open communication, and the building of relationships between WDBA and the community. A challenge to consider for future policy changes will include weighing the importance of extra time to allow for effective community engagement with the need to avoid the kind of drawn-out uncertainty that plagued Delray.

LIMITATIONS

There are limitations to our analysis of community engagement in development of the Gordie Howe International Bridge. Consultation with community members over the shape of the final Community Benefits Plan from WDBA and Bridging NA is still underway, so we cannot be sure what the Plan will contain. Additionally, because the bridge is such a large and long-term project, the full impact of the project -- or any community benefits -- on community members will not be known for several more years.

We were limited in our ability to gather data directly from Delray residents and the methodology of this case study differs from the other case studies included in this report due to the unique context surrounding the Gordie Howe International Bridge. This was because many residents have already left the neighborhood, or even the city, and are now difficult to locate. We were also compelled to limit our imposition upon community members in our data collection because the neighborhood has

¹ For an explanation of Neighborhood Advisory Councils, see preceding section of report.

already been subject to a significant amount of research from various parties. Several stakeholders spoke to a sense that their neighbors were being “researched to death,” and further demands upon them for our own research would contribute to the problem of “research fatigue.” For this reason, no focus group was held in the Delray neighborhood, unlike the other case studies included in this report.

CONCLUSIONS

A project the size and scale of the Gordie Howe International Bridge is a rare occurrence. Because this type of project is not “development as usual” for any community, it also offers an opportunity to re-examine the way in which development usually occurs. Grassroots activism in Delray changed expectations about community involvement in the development process. Community benefits were a novel idea when plans for the Gordie Howe Bridge first surfaced, but were codified in the Detroit Community Benefits Ordinance by the time ground was broken in Delray. The extensive efforts of community groups to incorporate residents’ voices in the development process offer a useful case study as policymakers continue to consider how engagement can be used -- and required -- to ensure more equitable development.

Key Lessons Learned From the Gordie Howe International Bridge Case Study:

- A clear, structured process may allow community engagement earlier in the development process, and could prevent prolonged uncertainty that causes further harm to the neighborhood.
- A trusted, legitimate community representative -- in this case, a Community Advisory Group -- helps the community negotiate on its own behalf and makes negotiations easier for developers. Coalition-building and existing ties to the community are key elements to creating and maintaining a trusted, legitimate body to represent the community.
- Official authority and recognition from government can be important in supporting grassroots efforts to advocate on behalf of community members who will be negatively impacted by a development project.

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Image courtesy of District Detroit.

Appendix 2: Case Study: Little Caesars Arena

DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

The initial planning steps in the development of the Little Caesars Arena (LCA) took place in May 2012, when the Detroit Red Wings hired HKS, Inc. and NBBJ to design a new arena for their team.^[i] It was proposed that the new arena would be owned by the [Downtown Development Authority](#) (DDA), with the land to be leased to [Olympia Development of Michigan](#) (ODM) rent free for at least 35 years. In this arrangement, ODM was to have full operational control of the arena, meaning revenue from game tickets, parking, concessions, souvenirs, and any potential naming rights deals would not be subject to revenue sharing with the City of Detroit.^[ii] This arrangement differed from ODM's lease agreement for the former Joe Louis Arena, in which ODM was required to pay a \$252,000 annual use tax and \$25,000 in monthly rent; and the City collected a 10% ticket tax for Joe Louis events, a 10% surcharge on concessions, and a 7% surcharge on suite sales.^[iii]

In December 2012, ODM announced its intention to develop a new district in Detroit, surrounding the LCA. The idea was to locate the proposed arena in the middle of a 50-block, mixed-use entertainment center, comprised of offices and residential facilities and known as "[The District Detroit](#)." Through the project, ODM planned to fund the refurbishment of public infrastructure

around the district, including street lighting, sidewalks, and pavements.^[iv] The cost of the project, including the LCA and its surrounding district, was initially estimated to be \$650 million, with \$284.5 million to come from public financing.^[v] The DDA officially announced the location of the new Detroit Red Wings arena and the entertainment district in June 2013. On June 24 the Michigan Strategic Fund then approved the DDA's request for \$650 million in funding. On February 4, 2014, the land transfer of 39 vacant parcels just north of the downtown area was approved for \$1 by Detroit City Council in a 6-3 vote.^[vi]



For safety, MDOT is closing the right lane on southbound M-1 (Woodward Avenue) adjacent to Little Caesars Arena during downtown Detroit events. During this event lane closure, right turns from southbound Woodward Avenue onto the southbound I-75 service drive will be prohibited, in addition to right turns already prohibited at Sprout and Henry streets. The suggested detour for the southbound I-75 service drive is the northbound I-75 service drive to the crossover at John R Street. Motorists can use Montcalm Street, Elizabeth Street, or Adams Avenue to access Cass Avenue and adjacent parking.
 Fox Garage off Montcalm Street from Woodward Avenue or from the northbound I-75 service drive, just east of Park St.
 *PARKING FACILITIES NOT LABELED AS GARAGES ARE SURFACE PARKING LOTS
 *Ride Share presented by UBER

District Detroit map image courtesy of Olympia Entertainment, available at (<http://www.olympiaentertainment.com>).

By May 2017, total development costs totaled \$862.9 million, with \$324.1 million coming from public obligations including:

- \$34.5 in property taxes captured by the DDA between 2010 and 2014,
- \$250 million in tax-exempt bonds originally issued by the DDA in 2014,
- \$34.5 million in additional DDA bonds issued in 2017, and \$4.85 million in closing costs and debt service reserves.^[viii]

The DDA will also be responsible for reimbursing \$74 million to ODM, if ODM follows through on a commitment of at least \$200 million in additional development surrounding the LCA within five years of its completion.^[viii]

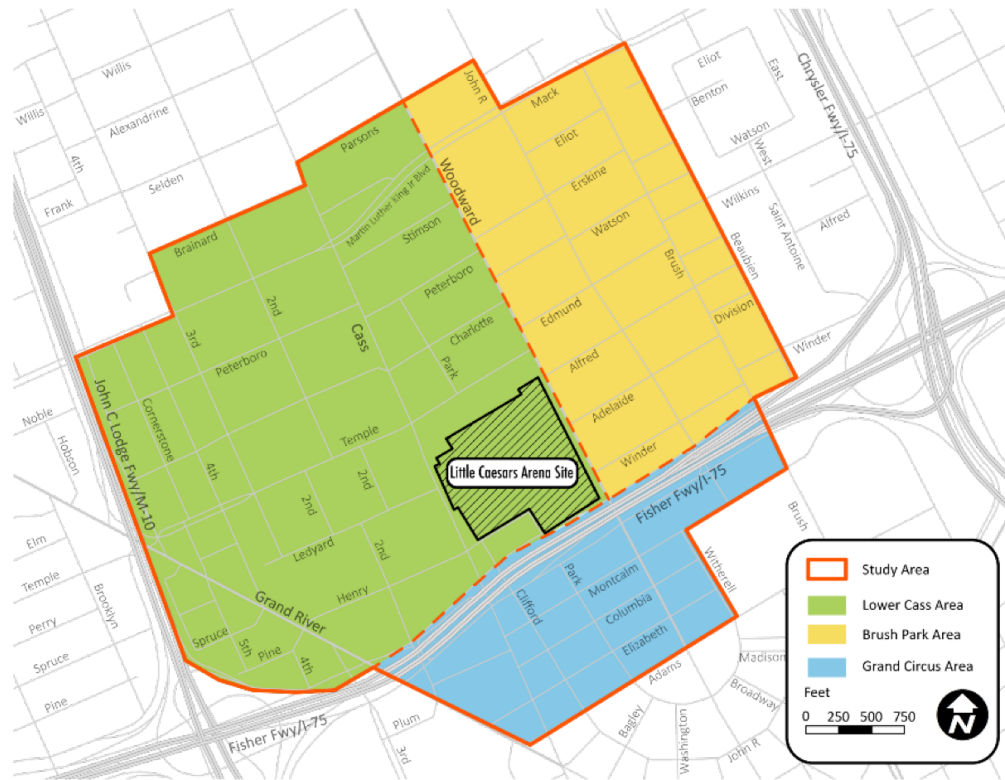
NEIGHBORHOOD BACKGROUND

The combined projects are now sited in the Lower Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods of midtown Detroit. Geography in and around the Arena has been designated officially as the “Catalyst Development Area” (CDA), depicted in the map on the following page of this report. As of 2015, the total population of the CDA was estimated to be 3,511. Census data from 2010 identified 77.3% of the population as black or African American 17.8% as white, and the remaining 5.1% as Asian, Native American, and Pacific Islander. In

Comparison to Detroit:

- Population: **683,443**
- Racial Composition:
 - 79% black**
 - 10% white**
 - 8% Latino or Hispanic**
- Poverty Rate: **39%**
- Unemployment Rate: **12%**
- Median Income: **\$26,249**

2015, annual median income across the Lower Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods was \$21,128, with 49% of households living below the poverty level and 7.8% of the population being unemployed. [1].[ix]



Little Caesars Arena Catalyst Development Area. Map image courtesy of JFM Consulting Group.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this case study were collected via primary and secondary sources, including news articles, press releases, public reports, a community needs assessment for the CDA, stakeholder interviews, and a focus group meeting. As the LCA had already been completed at the time of the research project, much of the background information was chronicled through news reports that had been updated throughout the development process.

Stakeholders to be interviewed were initially selected based on the research team’s perceptions of those individuals who were most directly involved in the planning, development, and community engagement processes for the LCA. Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit (D4) staff also offered insight on relevant individuals and organizations to be contacted, and additional stakeholders were interviewed by recommendation. A total of 11 stakeholders were interviewed for this case study, including NAC members, nonprofit staff members, and consultants. Data were also generated through general interviews with City Council Members and other City of Detroit staff

¹ Data were collected from the United State Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. Data were accessed via Social Explorer on March 1, 2017 by JFM Consulting Group.

members that were not project-specific. Sample stakeholder interview questions are included in Appendix 2.

The focus group was comprised of 13 community representatives living within a one-mile radius of the LCA. These participants were of a diversity of ages, races, occupations, and genders. Participants had lived in the CDA for varying lengths of time, and many had experience working in the community in various roles, including as apartment building managers. Focus group recruitment was done via door-to-door flyering of homes and apartment buildings located within the CBO-defined 300 ft. impact area of the LCA. The focus group was held at the University of Michigan Detroit Center, and was co-facilitated by members of the research team and a community organizer working for D4. The focus group facilitation guide is included in Appendix 3.

RESULTS

The results of this case study are divided into three sections. The first examines the process through which local activists moved toward initiating a process for community engagement in the Lower Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods. The second and third sections examine key themes related to community engagement that arose over those years.

Timeline of Community Engagement Process & NAC Formation

As the location of the arena in lower Cass Corridor became increasingly likely, seven Cass Corridor residents began meeting informally to talk about the project. Meetings centered around how the project could be carried out more humanely, how the project could be as beneficial to the neighborhood as possible, and what questions the residents had about the development. This group began to mobilize as the [“Corridors Alliance”](#) and included residents, small business owners, architects, and community organizers.

The initial efforts of the Corridors Alliance spurred the framework for a formalized process for community benefits in Detroit. In a statement to the City of Detroit, the Corridors Alliance expressed many concerns that the community had regarding the development of the LCA. While this group was not able to bring about any specific target outcomes related to these concerns, their efforts did encourage the approval of a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) to advise the development. City Council unanimously approved the formation of an NAC in order to increase Detroiters’ input on the proposed arena and entertainment center. Prior to the committee’s formation, District 6 Council Member Raquel Castaneda-Lopez’s office hosted multiple sessions for community brainstorming and knowledge sharing. In these meetings, community members devised the “asks” they wanted to make of the developer, and gave input that informed the size and shape of the NAC.

Note: The LCA’s Neighborhood Advisory Committee was formed with the same intention – to represent community interest – as the “Neighborhood Advisory Council” formed for other development projects that fall under the CBO. In the case of the LCA, however, the NAC was not subject to the same membership composition as is outlined in the CBO, and the NAC election process was also not mandated to occur in any particular way. While City Council did approve the creation of the LCA’s NAC, Council Member Castaneda-Lopez’s office took full responsibility for the hosting of community meetings and the NAC election process. All other efforts were grassroots organized.

Council Member Castaneda-Lopez’s office also coordinated implementation of the NAC. An informational email was sent out to all community members who had attended the previous “brainstorming” meetings, calling for applications. Interested applicants were asked to send in a resume and cover letter. It was specified that committee members would have to either live or

operate a business within a quarter-mile radius of the development. All community members present at the election meeting were allowed to vote. In total, nine members were elected to the NAC, and an additional three were appointed by City Council after interviewing for an appointed position. All members were expected to serve on the NAC for its five-year duration.

In July 2014, at the request of the developer, the NAC submitted a “wish list” of design aspirations for the project. The NAC had generated this report through a series of twice-monthly meetings. The report included recommendations for construction and design, employment and small business, housing and historic preservation, and traffic, parking, and public safety. After construction began, the NAC continued to meet regularly in order to internally discuss the project. As the members heard concerns about the project or questions about its progression from neighborhood residents, they brought those issues forward. The NAC communicated these issues in meetings with the developer, during which time the developer would also provide updates on the project to the NAC. City Council representatives were present at some of these meetings, though not all of them. As the project neared completion, the NAC and the developer did not meet as regularly in-person, but rather through email correspondence or through the use of written reports. The developer would also notify the NAC of project updates that were to be communicated to the public in upcoming press releases.

The construction of the LCA was completed in the summer of 2017, and the Arena opened its doors officially on September 4. The District Detroit has not yet been completed, though pre-construction plans are in development and have been communicated on the District Detroit and ODM webpages. The NAC still meets on a regular, monthly basis in order to continue discussions regarding how the project can benefit the surrounding Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods. The developer and the NAC have not continued regular correspondence between them.

Note: In addition to community feedback on the project that was communicated through the NAC, such information was also solicited through a community needs assessment prepared by JFM Consulting Group for the DDA. City Council required the DDA to perform this assessment as a part of the development process, since the DDA owned the land on which the LCA was being developed. The assessment was done in 2017, with the intention of being able to inform decisions regarding the planning and development of the District Detroit. Through the assessment, community data were collected via a 31-question stakeholder survey, a focus group meeting with residents, workers, and business owners in the area, and in-depth interviews with business owners, area developers, and community leaders. Topics addressed in the assessment included the following:

- Existing physical and socio-economic conditions of the Cass Corridor and Brush Park areas
- Stakeholder anticipations and hopes for positive impacts that could result from the LCA and other new development in the area
- Stakeholder anticipations of adverse impacts that could result from the project
- Strategies for sustaining stakeholder engagement with the DDA, City Council, and others as future development opportunities are identified.

Themes Emerging from Focus Group Proceedings

Uncertainty and a lack of information instilled fear. In the LCA focus group meeting, many participants expressed that they had not known what was being proposed to be developed for a long time. Many people were worried about where the arena was going to be built, as well as whose residences were in jeopardy of being bought out. Some residents understood that more information was available on the Internet, such as proposals and news updates; but not all residents thought to seek out that information on their own. No focus group participant was aware of any direct notice

about the development that had been distributed to local neighbors.

Scale and impact spurred concerned. After coming to know that a new arena for the Detroit Red Wings was to be built, residents became concerned with the scale of the development and the corresponding impact that it would have on the Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods. Many residents feared their rents getting raised to unaffordable levels, and those increases leading to displacement. There was a lot of uncertainty regarding new apartment buildings and for whom they were going to be built, as well as which statistics were going to be used for determining the median income level for affordable housing. Other chief concerns of the community included parking, trash, and pollution impacts that could result from big

“A lot of people got scared because they didn’t know what was going to happen to their homes and where they were going to go. A lot of folks were asking, ‘Are they going to buy my building and put me out? Where am I going to go?’” –Focus Group Participant

“I didn’t get a chance to hear anything about any meetings or anything; but by word-of-mouth I started to hear about things that were going on...by neighbors in the building that I have a tendency to bump into I would hear things like, ‘Hey! Did you hear that they’re building an arena?’ And I would say, ‘An arena for who?’” –Focus Group Participant

events being held at the LCA, and the developer’s previous record with historic preservation in the neighborhood. Lastly, some community members also expressed concern about the amount of money the City seemed to be spending on the project, and the lack of accountability for all of the benefits that the developer was promising to bring about in the community.

Plans for development received with excitement. Despite the aforementioned concerns, many residents were also excited about the LCA’s development, and were eager to see what would happen with it. A lot of residents shared hope that the project would bring an economic boom to the city, in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Residents were excited that the project would herald in a “new Detroit,” which would give visitors a reason to come into Detroit and residents a reason to move back to the downtown area. One aspect of the project that seemed particularly motivating was the opportunity for more amenities and jobs to come to the area.

“It was a new Detroit. I was excited to hear about things happening in Detroit, because growing up I never would have thought that I would choose to live in Detroit.” –Focus Group Participant

Lack of community involvement weakened communication process. When asked to comment on the communication process during the LCA’s development, many focus group participants expressed a need for there to have been more involvement from the community. None of the focus group participants were aware that an NAC had been formed in order to negotiate with the developer on their behalves. While some residents were familiar with select individuals serving on the NAC, they realized neither the role of those individuals on the NAC nor the process by which those individuals had come to be elected or appointed to the committee. As such, many residents indicated not having the opportunity to speak with NAC members about their concerns with the project.

“We need more people in the community helping actively, you know, with communication and notice.”
–Focus Group Participant

“I didn’t even know that they sat on the [Neighborhood] Advisory Committee.”
–Focus Group Participant

All focus group participants reported not being previously familiar with the “wish list” of design aspirations that the NAC had delivered to the developer in the planning stages of the project. However, when shown the document for the first time at the focus group meeting, most participants were satisfied with the design aspirations that it detailed. There was agreement around articles of the document that specifically mentioned the needs for increased public

safety and walkability in the CDA. Many focus group participants felt that not enough attention had been given to protecting the right of neighborhood residents to park their vehicles adjacent to their apartment buildings, however.

Construction delays have been poorly communicated, continue to degrade community trust.

Today, the delayed construction of the District Detroit and a lack of communication about its progress have caused many residents to have a poor perception of the developer. Additionally, current plans for the District Detroit include mostly bars and restaurants, with little to no amenities or services that people living downtown need, such as grocery stores. Residents who own cars are also dissatisfied with the extent to which parking has been impacted by the project, since they can no longer park in areas where they were previously able to do so for free for many years. Concerns with new traffic laws and the number of parking lots that have been constructed around the LCA have similarly caused residents to feel as though both the LCA and the District Detroit were designed only for those people coming into the city from the suburbs for an event at the Arena. Consequently, many residents have grown increasingly distrustful of the developer and the developer's motivations for the project.

"There's nothing happening with all of the other stuff they [the development company] said they would do. They made their money on the Stadium, and nothing else is happening with the development there now." –Focus Group Participant

"This is our neighborhood...so why is it that all of a sudden we can't park in front of our own big complex apartment? Some of my friends have been there for 20 years." –Focus Group Participant

Residents recognize and celebrate Detroit-wide impacts. In contrast to their concerns regarding how the development of the LCA has impacted the Lower Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods, many community members have noticed how the development has benefited Detroit at-large. Many of these benefits have included the greater availability of jobs in the area, more attractions that entice people to come into the city, a safer feel to the downtown area and security measures that make it possible to walk anywhere at any time, and less blight plaguing the city. Additionally, some Cass Corridor and Brush Park residents have previously worked for the family that owns ODM, and truly believe that they are working hard to do good for Detroit.

"It [the LCA] is a good thing for work. It's a lot easier to find a job down here [in lower Cass] now than it was maybe 5 or 6 years ago, so that's a good thing." –Focus Group Participant

"We do need an economic boom, and I do think that that [the LCA] is helping the city in that way." –Focus Group Participant

Memories of LCA process inform recommendations for the future.

During the focus group meeting, participants were also given an overview of the community engagement process that is mandated by the CBO. Participants were asked to consider that process in regard to their own experience with the LCA's development. Participants expressed concern with public notice methods; and those living in apartment buildings were particularly concerned with how public notice could be ensured for all

"I would think that it would matter if the residents on the committee are former residents or still live there." –Focus Group Participant

"I don't think my building would have gotten notice about this project, not being within 300 ft... But that's really too close, for the amount of people a project is going to impact. Three hundred ft. is not enough radius to notify people." –Focus Group Participant

residents. The makeup of the NAC and strong neighborhood representation were therefore considered to be important means by which adequate community engagement could be protected.

Themes Emerging from Stakeholder Interviews

Neighborhood Advisory Committee comprised of diverse interests. Those that were elected to the NAC desired to serve for a variety of reasons. Some individuals were concerned with how the development process had begun, while others were concerned with specific issues and impacts related to both the construction process and the final arena product. Similar to the original intentions of the Corridors Alliance, some NAC members wanted to make sure that any development happening in the neighborhood “happened right.” A few members believed they had specific skills and expertise to contribute to the committee; and other members wanted to be able to directly advocate on behalf of the more vulnerable communities their organizations serve.

“Initially, we knew that there was going to be little information. But over time, there was less and less information available, when it would seem that there should be more available. The lack of information and insufficient information made it very difficult for us to give advisements [to the developer].” –NAC Member

Lack of clarity weakened NAC impact. Lack of clarity on the project also affected the NAC’s negotiations, however. Many NAC members indicated having only a limited understanding of what the development was going to entail during their early conversations with the developer. They noted that the developer was initially willing to listen to their concerns; but that their uncertainty around the

project meant that they could not as clearly or specifically communicate their input on the project. Additional difficulties arose from the fact that only one representative from the development company attended the NAC meetings, and the person in that particular role has changed many times throughout the NAC’s duration. This lack of consistency has severely limited the NAC’s ability to establish a firm and workable relationship with the developer.

NAC members felt constricted in their roles. Many NAC members that were interviewed expressed disappointment with the City’s response to the developer’s limited efforts to adequately engage the community. Some NAC members perceived City Council to have taken a hands-off approach to the work of the NAC, and to not have actively bolstered the NAC’s potential to be an effective institution. Many NAC members indicated that the City Council could have served them better by having a stronger and more frequent presence at their meetings with the developer, in order to have provided oversight to the proceedings of the meetings and to have facilitated dialogue between the two groups.

Employment outcomes demonstrate shortcomings of process.

The developer’s failure to employ Detroiters in 51% of all project construction jobs has been cited as an area of concern in which the NAC particularly would have advocated for City Council to intervene. According to a pre-existing mayoral executive order applicable to any development project that either receives a brownfield tax abatement or purchases land from the City below market rate, the developer would have been expected to give 51% of all LCA construction jobs to Detroit residents and 30% of all construction contracts to Detroit businesses. By July 2016, however, only 41% of the construction workers were Detroit residents. As that percentage only continued to drop, the developer was fined \$675,000 for failing to meet the specified employment target; and in total, the contractors paid

“The City knew, the developer knew, and others knew that the Arena was going to be developed years before anyone else knew—along with that, they all knew that the people of Detroit did not have the necessary skillsets for hiring. Training and preparing of workers in Detroit should have happened years prior. A project this size could have been prepared for better, if its ‘benefits’ were intentional.” –NAC Member

\$553,000 into a job training fund.^[x] When asked about their perspective on this outcome, many NAC

“The required [employment] order was, after all, required...and it’s more important to remember that they [the developer] did not follow through with it. They [the developer] did not take responsibility for properly training Detroit residents. It seemed as though they would have rather paid the fines than have brought about the benefits.” –NAC Member

members explained that the developer did not have a choice in signing the executive order, as it was mandated for them to do so; however, most NAC members were not surprised that the developer had not been able to meet the target. According to the NAC members interviewed, not enough effort was put forth by either the developer or the City to ensure that enough skilled Detroiters would be available to fill all of the new jobs created. It was therefore inevitable that the 51% was going to be an unreachable employment target, and that there was going to be no practical mechanism for enforcing it.

Structuring of NAC weakened overall impact. Many NAC members remain uncertain as to how much impact their collective work ended up having on the development of the Little Caesars Arena. They feel as though they tried to make a difference; but that their efforts were limited by the structuring of the committee. For example, all of the money that was put into the NAC for outreach purposes such as printing and distributing written materials came directly from the members of the NAC. This lack of structured support severely constricted the committee’s capacity for fully engaging the Cass Corridor and Brush Park communities. Additionally, there were few guidelines for NAC participation and engagement, which resulted in many members not being able to fully commit the amount of time that was necessary to achieve all goals and tasks. Oftentimes the NAC meetings did not have quorum, which made it difficult for the members to vote on decisions and matters that would move their negotiations with the developer forward. To the extent that the NAC accomplished any of its goals, a few members attribute those outcomes solely to the knowledge and passion of key leaders within the NAC.

“We tried [to have a positive impact on the neighborhood], but you have to remember that that NAC is comprised of individuals who have other jobs, who are not being paid to do this, who have a lot of other responsibilities.” –NAC Member

Positive outcomes to take forward. Many NAC members identify the construction phase as the outlet by which they were able to have the most impact on the LCA’s development. When they expressed the community’s concerns regarding street cleaning, traffic, and noise to the developer, many NAC members felt that the developer was responsive to their attempts to negotiate those issues. Other challenges that NAC members reported observing included degraded air quality from building demolition, and sidewalks being blockaded in order to prevent pedestrian access. While construction was happening, NAC members reported going back and forth with the developer with a lot of questions.

“If we really can really band together and do things right, now [post-construction] is our best opportunity.” –NAC Member

“I have since gotten involved with other efforts and organizing work of different organizations because I have become more aware of the necessity for them [through the relationships I have made on the NAC].” –NAC Member

Beyond the LCA, NAC members can articulate the positive impact that the institution of the NAC has had on the Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods as a whole. The experience of serving on the NAC raised many members’ awareness of other members’ work, and gave new insight into the concerns of other community members. Another member added that the presence of the NAC has contributed to more formal gatherings occurring within the community. Looking ahead to the NAC’s final year of functionality, many members believe

that their efforts can continue to put pressure on both the developer and the City to make a difference in the project's post-construction phase. Specifically, the NAC is currently working to put pressure on ODM and the City to save a number of historic buildings in the area.

DISCUSSION

The construction of the LCA highlights the immense potential impact that community engagement has on large-scale development projects in Detroit. Through their initial efforts, the Corridors Alliance brought attention to the issues of community benefits and how development can positively impact surrounding neighborhoods. The support of City Council, and particularly Council Member Castaneda-Lopez and her District 6 Office, was then essential for a Neighborhood Advisory Committee being both formed and utilized as a part of the process. The NAC paved the way for developer-community negotiations, and demonstrated how it can be possible for the community to be a part of development planning and decision-making.

These incremental successes were key to the community benefits movement in Detroit; and it is likely that the 2016 CBO ballot initiative would not have gained as much momentum without them. At the same time, however, it is also likely that a more formalized process that included more structured support for the NAC could have produced better outcomes for the LCA. In speaking with NAC members, it is clear that the lack of an engagement "roadmap" made it difficult for the NAC to communicate with the developer. Neither party seemed to understand what their interactions with one another were supposed to look like, and there was ambiguity around the negotiation process and what it was intended to produce. If such a process had been anticipated from the beginning, however, the developer might have been better prepared to consult and communicate with the NAC throughout the planning, construction and post-construction periods of the project. The NAC members may also have been better prepared to seek resources and information pertinent to the project and necessary for successful negotiation.

A formalized process could have given more authority to City Council to ensure the creation of the NAC and the writing of a Community Benefits Agreement. In the case of the LCA, these assurances may have aided the NAC by giving members the ability to seek assistance from City Council when the developer failed to directly and transparently answer questions raised by the NAC. The fact that the mayoral executive order was ineffective in meeting employment targets especially left many NAC members feeling distrustful of the process and discouraged in their roles. This example provides a strong argument for benefit enforcement measures to be included at the forefront of the CBO, not only as a means for protecting those benefits, but also as a way for keeping the NAC engaged in the process.

Additionally, the City can provide more support to the NAC as a whole by more clearly delineating the rights and responsibilities of committee members. In the case of the LCA, NAC members likely could have better served Cass Corridor and Brush Park residents at-large throughout the life cycle of the LCA's construction, if they had had a better idea of what their roles on the NAC were meant to entail. In turn, this would have allowed for more residents to have had a viable outlet for voicing their concerns about the project.

Lastly, a clear process of community engagement also would have specified a means for public notice of the project to occur. While Council Member Castaneda-Lopez's office did put forth a substantial amount of effort mobilizing as many community residents as possible, focus group feedback informs us that some motivated neighbors were still unaware of any formal community meetings being held to discuss the project. If more information about the LCA project and associated community meetings had been publicly available, Cass Corridor and Brush Park residents would have become more aware of the project earlier.

LIMITATIONS

The LCA case study is unique in that the development sought to create a new district in Detroit, distinguishing the Lower Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods from the downtown and midtown areas that they sit between. In some ways this aspect of the project made it difficult to determine a complete list of people to engage in the interview process, since the geographic bounds of the project were quite confined. Additionally, since the LCA's development began in 2013, people have both moved away from the CDA and moved into it, resulting in a mix of long-term and new residents. It is therefore possible that some focus group participants were not yet living in the CDA when the planning and development of the project first originated.

While efforts were made to interview representatives from all key stakeholder groups, we were not able to engage all stakeholders relevant to the LCA project in this case study. When available, news articles and reports were used to fill information gaps; however, accurate and holistic perspective may still be missing. For example, because stakeholders from Olympia Development of Michigan and the Downtown Development Authority were not interviewed due to a lack of response to efforts to contact them, information on the development background was collected solely through media releases. Lastly, some of the data analyzed in this case study were generated from interviews in which we did not ask the interviewee to evaluate the LCA project specifically; therefore, some analysis of the LCA community engagement process was extrapolated from interviewee perceptions of the community engagement process more generally.

CONCLUSIONS

In analyzing the community engagement process that took place during the development of the LCA, it is clear that most community concerns arose from a lack of understanding of the scope of the project. No community members interviewed as a part of this case study were explicitly against the LCA's development; many were, in fact, hopeful that the LCA would bring about a number of benefits to the City of Detroit. Neighborhood residents were concerned about the impact of the project on the surrounding Lower Cass Corridor and Brush Park neighborhoods, however; and the lack of communication about the project from the developer only heightened those concerns.

The NAC worked hard to negotiate with the developer, but minimal guidance as to how the committee should have been structured and governed weakened the capacity of the NAC to achieve all of its aims. This disconnect was apparent in speaking with LCA NAC members, many of whom believe that they could have accomplished more of their goals, if only they had not been so constricted in their roles. This idea of the NAC being limited in its reach was corroborated by the neighborhood residents who participated in the case study focus group, as none of them were previously familiar with any formal group that was supposed to be advocating on their behalves.

Key Lessons Learned From the Little Caesars Arena Case Study:

- The community benefits process would have been enhanced for stakeholders working from all sides of the development, through a more formal process of community engagement.
- Clear expectations regarding what the process should have looked like, including outcomes of engagement, would have enabled each stakeholder group to better understand both their role and the role of other groups in the planning and development stages.
- The grassroots nature of the LCA's engagement efforts was critical for starting the conversation around community benefits in Detroit, and so future project negotiations should streamline and strengthen the procedures by which residents can participate in neighborhood development planning.

- Benefit enforcement measures should be included at the forefront of the CBO, in order to ensure community benefits are upheld, and to keep all stakeholders invested in the community engagement process.

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Image courtesy of Curbed Detroit.

Appendix 3:

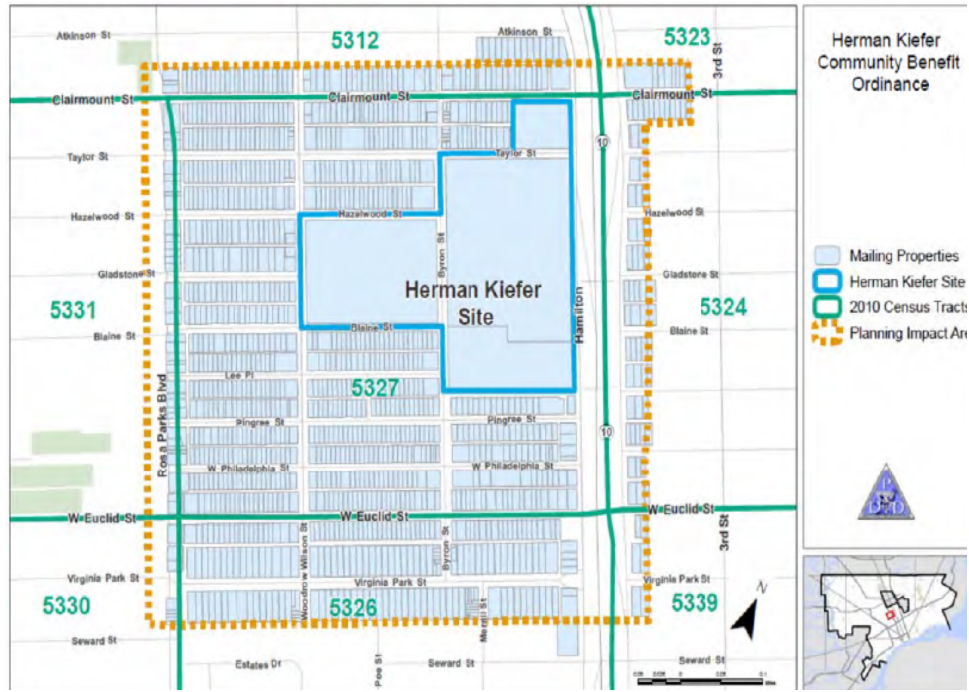
Case Study: Herman Kiefer Redevelopment

NEIGHBORHOOD BACKGROUND

The Herman Kiefer complex, including the two former Detroit Public School buildings, Hutchins Intermediate School and Crosman Elementary School, has occupied a central place in the surrounding Virginia Park neighborhood for over a century. Before closing in 2006 and 2009 respectively, Crosman Elementary and Hutchins Intermediate offered not only central school locations in the neighborhood, but also recreation in the form of swimming pools, basketball courts, and maintained open space. As Detroit faced bankruptcy, the Herman Kiefer hospital complex closed in 2013, after over a century of operation as a public health hospital in the community and later as the site of the Detroit Health Department. The closure of the schools and Herman Kiefer hospital complex, combined with growing residential vacancies in the surrounding neighborhood left opportunities for looting and vandalism.^{[1][2]}

Over the years, the population of Virginia Park surrounding Herman Kiefer has decreased and poverty as well as unemployment have increased. Census tract data of tracts 5327 and 5326 were

used to assess the following information about Virginia Park neighborhood. Virginia Park is a predominately African American neighborhood with 2,900 residents, 86% of whom identify as black or African American.^[iii] The median annual household income of Virginia Park was approximately \$26,000 in 2016.^[iv] While this median income is similar to Detroit's overall median income, approximately 37% of all residents of Virginia Park live below the poverty level. The unemployment rate for census tract 5327 immediately surrounding the Herman Kiefer complex is approximately 21% and for census tract 5326, the unemployment rate is 13%.^[v] The vacancy rate of residential structures for census tract 5327 is approximately 56% and for census tract 5326 approximately 27%.^[vi] Notably, some blocks in these census tracts have less than 10% occupancy.



This map depicts the impact area for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment site. Image courtesy of the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department, available at <https://detroitmi.gov/document/herman-kiefer-community-benefits-report>.

Comparison to Detroit:

- Population: **683,443**
- Racial Composition:
 - 79% black**
 - 10% white**
 - 8% Latino or Hispanic**
- Poverty Rate: **39%**
- Unemployment Rate: **12%**
- Median Income: **\$26,249**

DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

In 2015, plans for redevelopment of the Herman Kiefer site, including the two vacant schools, was announced for mixed-use as a residential, commercial, and business center by Herman Kiefer Development (HKD), owned by New York developer Ron Castellano.^[viii] In the summer of 2017, the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project was one of the first development projects to go through Detroit's new Community Benefit Ordinance (CBO) process. At over \$75 million in investment cost, the Herman Kiefer redevelopment site is considered a Tier 1 project under the CBO. The site was acquired for \$925,000 with annual investment minimums of \$1 million per year for the first five years and \$2 million for years six through eight with benchmarks of 35% activation with minimum \$20 million investment at five years and 80% activation with minimum \$75 million investment at eight years.^[viii] The impact area as defined by Detroit's CBO for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project spans from Rosa Parks Blvd to just across John C. Lodge Freeway (east and west boundaries) and from Clairmount to Virginia Park St on the north and south boundaries, encompassing more than half of the Virginia Park neighborhood.

As one of the first projects triggering the CBO process in Detroit, this project highlights the potential benefits of a formalized community engagement process by the City and the developer to mitigate any negative impacts of development on the existing community. The CBO results in the publication of a CBO report for each development project. For the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project, the CBO report published by the Planning and Development Department (PDD) accurately documents the community's concerns regarding the redevelopment of the Herman Kiefer complex, according to community members in our focus group. This illustrates the potential of a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) as a mechanism of the CBO to capture and represent the community's concerns. However, the lack of a binding final agreement regarding community benefits has generated uncertainty regarding community benefit outcomes as well as the enforcement process for the proposed community benefits, revealing less than concrete outcomes of the CBO process.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this case study included six key informant interviews with Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) members involved with the CBO process, representatives from Herman Kiefer Development, and community leaders from [Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation \(CDC\)](#), a nonprofit with a long history of providing community services in the Virginia Park neighborhood located adjacent to the Herman Kiefer site. Contacts at D4 shared contact information of one NAC member and a leader at CDC. These contacts connected us to the other stakeholders interviewed. Sample stakeholder interview questions are included in Appendix 2. The [CBO report for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment process](#) was also used to obtain data about the CBO process for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project.

A focus group with 15 neighborhood residents was held to obtain data on community views of the CBO engagement process and evaluate the community benefit outcomes enumerated in the CBO report. Recruitment for the focus group was obtained through door-to-door flyering within the development project's impact area, as defined by the CBO. The focus group was held at CDC and co-facilitated by a CDC staff member on a Thursday evening in September 2018. See Appendix 3 for a sample of the focus group script.

RESULTS

Perspectives of Community Members

Hope for new opportunities in the community. In the focus group, many hopes regarding the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project were brought up. Community members were hopeful for a community gathering space, accessible and affordable retail and grocery outlets, restaurants, a library, apartments, and job opportunities for youth in the neighborhood. Other hopes for the development space included daycare facilities for children and youth programming in the form of mentorship and counseling services. Residents had heard of several potential development uses for the space from word-of-mouth and contact with the developer, including a skate park, hotel, retail outlets, apartments, and a trade school.

"I was hoping maybe malls, apartment buildings, retail, a nice grocery store ... and some kind of facility for children."
-Focus Group Participant

"There's no community gathering space really. And I guess the hope would be that Herman Kiefer would become that, whether it's the shops, or the skate park, or the hotel."
-Focus Group Participant

Uncertainty incites fear of displacement within the community. Concerns about the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project included ways in which the neighborhood might change and displace current residents. Other concerns voiced were in regard to communication issues with the City and

“I think I am concerned with the development that it would not be something that actually benefits the community and instead we'll just bring new people in... people with a lot more money who want these fancy apartments and all these fancy stores, and it won't actually be a place for the community.” –Focus Group Participant

general confusion about what was happening with the Herman Kiefer complex. Focus group participants agreed that they were frustrated with communication from the City regarding recent nuisance and abatement violations and a perceived increase in these violations since the development project began.

Land Bank transparency issues seed frustrations. The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) was a topic of significance in both stakeholder interviews with NAC members and within the focus group of community members. NAC members and community members were frustrated by what they saw as a lack of transparency when dealing with the DLBA. Residents that we spoke to in Virginia Park had been maintaining side lots adjacent to their own properties, with the hope of ultimately purchasing the land from the DLBA, as well as to reduce blight in their neighborhood and provide a safe area for children to play near their homes. Community members reported attempting to purchase adjacent side lots, but were told the property was unavailable by the Land Bank, only to later find out that the property was owned by HKD. Focus group participants reiterated this call for transparency in land availability from the DLBA.

“Community members reached out [to the Land Bank] and were not able to purchase side lots...they found out later that land was tied to the developers...Community members had been maintaining property and received no credit or rights to the land. The Land Bank needs to communicate land availability, not wait and hide from residents.” –Focus Group Participant

“When it [the City] had the side lot program going on everybody else was allowed to buy their lots for \$100, and they would not let us buy our lot. So then I had to apply and do this application over a year ago and I haven't heard nothing...We haven't received anything.” –Focus Group Participant

Increase in nuisance and abatement citations from City. Residents from the focus group also expressed frustration over an increase in citations from the City for nuisance and abatement violations, some for side lots that they did not own. Similarly, NAC members brought up the increase of citations in the neighborhood since news of the HK redevelopment project.

“It's just a hassle. And at a point, you just, you wanna be like, "Forget it." And then at the same time, it's just... Well, I'm not paying this ticket... It's [the side lot] not even mine! It's frustrating...” –Focus Group Participant

“The citations are going up for those who don't have their houses painted and grilling on the front...and garbage cans out.” –Focus Group Participant

Detroit Land Bank Authority's Side Lot Program:

The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA), managed by the City of Detroit, promoted the sale of adjacent side lots for \$100 to residents starting in 2014 in order to reduce blight in neighborhoods and encourage local purchasing of land within the city. According to the DLBA website, requirements of the side lot program are as follows:

- Applicants must own the house adjacent to the side lot
- Applicants cannot have any overdue taxes
- Side lots are to be sold on a first come, first served basis
- Preference will be given to the neighbor that has maintained the lot
- Applicants will be reviewed within three business days
- Residents who purchase side lots are expected to pay the annual property taxes on the side lot(s)

Retrieved from <https://buildingdetroit.org/rules>

“Yeah, I think we got flyers maybe late spring last summer. But it was confusing... It seemed like there were three different parties that were presented at those meetings.” –Focus Group Participant

Public notice & communication limited awareness of the CBO process.

As required by the CBO process, the City mailed public notices via a flyer for the first public meeting in the CBO process to the 520 residential addresses within the defined impact area of the

Herman Kiefer redevelopment project, which was held on February 27th, 2017.^[ix] Door-to-door flyering of the impact area by the Department of Neighborhoods also took place, as well as social media outreach and outreach via email lists. Approximately one-third of the focus group participants recalled receiving a flyer with the public notice regarding the initial public meeting. Two focus group participants who remembered receiving flyers mentioned being confused by the details of these meetings due to the number of parties presenting at the initial public meetings. This was due to the fact that the Herman Kiefer redevelopment was only one of the subjects of these initial public meetings – the Rosa Parks-Clairmount Study was another main topic on the meeting agenda. At the initial public meeting, 180 members of the public attended, of which 43 were residents living within the impact area.^[x] The meetings were open to any members of the public. Outreach for the following two public meetings was conducted through email lists as well as outreach by NAC members.

“Last year they were three meetings that were held, and they distributed one flyer that listed the three meetings. Unless you were a person that holds onto things...that caused the lack of observation.” –Focus Group Participant

No one at the focus group recalled receiving an email or hearing about the meeting through social media and many of the residents at the focus group were not aware that the public meetings had taken place. One resident reported calling City Council Member Sheffield’s office for updates regarding the public meetings. Many focus group participants had direct contact information for the developer including phone and/or email address. Contact information from the developer was obtained through in-person contact between residents and the developer in the neighborhood and was not publicly available to other residents. Only one focus group participant was aware of the City website with information pertaining to the public meetings and CBO process. Three focus group participants were aware of the CBO process occurring for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project.

“I’ve been receiving flyers on my door. But at the same time, I would call City Councilwoman Mary Sheffield’s office every so often.” –Focus Group Participant

CBO report presented an accurate record of the community’s concerns. At the focus group, an abbreviated version of Section VII -- Proposed NAC Community Benefits and Developer Response -- from the published CBO report for HKD was shared with participants to assess the accuracy of the report in the eyes of the community. The community concerns documented in the report based on feedback from the NAC included housing affordability, local job creation, blight, Land Bank transparency issues, and increased taxes.^[xi] Participants from the focus group agreed that these documented concerns were reflective of their concerns – most of these concerns were brought up in the focus group before the summary of the CBO report section was shared, as outlined earlier in the results.

A lack of community awareness regarding the NAC’s role. When focus group participants were shown a list of NAC members, over half of the residents recognized at least one NAC member’s name. However, only one resident said that they knew that the individual(s) they recognized was on the NAC. This focus group participant had attended NAC meetings and shared concerns about how effective the NAC was as a tool to engage the neighborhood given the limited role the NAC was perceived to play under the CBO.

“There's people on here that, you didn't know they was on here.... You may see them and you just didn't know they was on the board, they don't advertise it or communicate how hard it is, 'and I'm trying to bring your neighborhood back' or 'I'm doing this,' so how do you know to go to them if you don't even know they're on the board?” –Focus Group Participant

“With the Ordinance only requiring one meeting between the developer and the NAC, I question even whether it's worthwhile to reach out to these folks, or if they're just as much in the dark as anybody else, because the way the CBO is structured, there is not anything technically legally binding the developer to do anything that the community wants anyway.” –Focus Group Participant

NAC Perspectives

Lack of definition, support, and clarity for the role of the NAC frames CBO process as formality. One recurring theme brought up by NAC members who were interviewed was that the CBO process felt like a “formality” for the HKD site, largely due to the timeline of the community engagement through the NAC process occurring late in the development process. The role and responsibilities of the NAC were unclear. One NAC member stressed the need for a “formal letter of appointment for NAC members” that outlined the role, responsibilities, and expectations and included mechanisms for holding NAC members accountable to the community. Perceptions of the NAC from focus group participants outlined in the previous section echo the idea that the role of the NAC is unclear within the community. According to NAC members interviewed, there was an overall lack of training for NAC members to help them understand the process in which they were engaged. One NAC member explained that there should be a training or orientation for NAC members to present “realistic expectations for the [CBO] process and an understanding of their authority,” as well as a more structured outreach process to neighborhood constituents. One suggestion was that NAC members could be assigned “a specific subset of the community” that they would represent, and with whom they would communicate to capture community-generated concerns. “Each member should own an area in the community.”

The burden of serving on the NAC. The commitment to serve on an NAC can be difficult for a number of reasons, according to NAC members from the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project. One NAC member described the process of serving on an NAC as “long and arduous.” This was connected to the significant amount of time NAC members are expected to volunteer to the CBO process, all while juggling work and family commitments. One NAC member explained the time commitment can be “prohibitive” due to weekly time obligations of several hours to communicate with other NAC members and attend NAC meetings.

A lack of accountability and process for maintaining NAC membership. Although nine NAC members were elected for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project, interviewed NAC members explained that only five were ever actively involved in the NAC meetings and public engagement after election at public meetings. By November 2018, only four NAC members were active, of which only one was publicly elected, according to an interview with an active NAC member. This NAC member explained, “there's no process for selecting new NAC members if people drop out along the way...for a 10-year project like Herman Kiefer, it would be very difficult to maintain a full NAC.” This theme of a lack of accountability was brought up in interviews with other NAC members who felt that there should be a process to replace NAC members who are unable to fully participate in the NAC, and that such a process should ensure new NAC members are elected from the community to preserve the group's ability to represent the neighborhood. NAC members were concerned that a dwindling NAC would fail to represent the community and, if the NAC is to enforce

any community benefits associated the redevelopment, there would be few members left to do so for the duration of long-term development projects like Herman Kiefer.

NAC selection raises questions regarding the validity of the public meeting process. Other feedback from NAC members focused on a perceived lack of transparency and organization regarding communication with NAC members and the structure of the public meetings open to the public. Because the public meetings are open, there is no confirmation of residency amongst participants. An NAC member explained, “some people there just owned property and did not live there full-time.” Because the Herman Kiefer public meetings also covered the Rosa Parks-Clairmount Study project -- an unrelated City parks revitalization project also happening in the neighborhood -- the meeting agenda was very full. One NAC member noted that many attendees were not there to discuss matters related to the Herman Kiefer project due to the full meeting agenda at the initial public meeting. These issues with the public meeting process were of particular concern given that the NAC members are selected in the initial public meeting. Area residents nominated a pool of candidates and elected two members, while the other seven members are appointed from the pool of nominees by various City officials at the first public meeting for the redevelopment project.

Unclear communication mechanisms undermine CBO process. Lack of transparency came up repeatedly regarding City communication with NAC members when additional information regarding the development project was requested. One NAC member brought up a recent NAC meeting from the summer of 2018 and reiterated “no new information was shared...only generic information was offered, not specific plans. No development agreement or enforcement mechanisms have been shared with the NAC.” Multiple NAC members brought up struggles in following-up with the City for more details regarding final agreements between the developer and the City. They were unable to receive updates on the community benefits process or documentation of what additional residential properties the developer had purchased in the neighborhood. One NAC member suggested that a list of required documents be shared with the NAC at the beginning of the CBO process as well as a timeline for when these documents will be provided to the NAC to improve transparency of communication to the NAC.

“No formal agreement has been made by the developer to the City about what will be done for the community...the NAC has been kept in the dark in general.” –NAC Member

Murky enforcement mechanisms perpetuate uncertainty. As of 2018, the most up-to-date document regarding community benefits for HKD can be found in a subsection of the final CBO report, Section VII -- Proposed NAC Community Benefits and Developer Response, which was published in June 2017. The final CBO report references a Development Agreement that is to be disseminated to the community through NAC members, but no NAC members were aware of a final Development Agreement outlining specific details of community benefits or any enforcement mechanisms having been provided to them by the City. In the last NAC meeting of 2018, the idea of dissolving the NAC into another form was brought up by the City and developer, perhaps in the shape of a community organization or nonprofit, as reported by two NAC members in attendance. This suggestion was confusing to these NAC members, who didn’t understand how this would fit into the CBO or enforcement process for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment.

Developer Perspective

Support for the CBO as a formal community engagement process. Representatives from Herman Kiefer Development (HKD) felt that the CBO process and report formalized their intentions of community benefits within the neighborhood. When asked if HKD has any formal or informal community engagement policy, HKD explained that they have an informal community engagement process. This process includes public meetings advertised through door-to-door flyers and public

posting of HKD contact information and hiring information within the community. Stated goals of community engagement by the developer for the Herman Kiefer project include encouraging dialogue to ease any tensions, getting to know the neighborhood, outreach to stakeholders and community organizations, and local hiring.

Developer communication on a binding legal agreement and the Detroit Land Bank Authority.

The representative from HKD mentioned a formal, binding agreement laying out the community benefits that HKD will provide, though such a document was unknown to NAC members. A similar contradiction surfaced in relation to communications between the developer and the NAC about the DLBA. The HKD representative stated that information including a full listing of the DLBA's property in the neighborhood was provided to the NAC. The HKD representative emphasized that "DLBA side lots were purchasable by adjacent neighbors until 90 days after [HKD's] option term started in February 2018. This deadline was communicated to the community in multiple meetings, flyerings, and through door-knocks." No NAC members interviewed mentioned this information being provided and community members in the focus groups seemed unaware of these communication efforts.

Timeline for the CBO process occurs too late. The notion that the timeline of the CBO process "was off" came up in interviews with HKD. This was largely due to the fact that the City and HKD had already negotiated many details of the Herman Kiefer redevelopment in 2014-2015, years before the CBO process began in June 2017. An HKD representative said that it would "make sense for the City to start the conversation [i.e. the formal CBO engagement process] before a deal is negotiated." The HKD representative emphasized that the timing of the CBO's passage uniquely affected its application to the Herman Kiefer redevelopment negotiation process. Because the Ordinance went into effect after negotiations for the HKD site had occurred with the City, the timeline for community engagement in Virginia Park was particularly delayed.

DISCUSSION

Detroit's CBO formalized an engagement process between the developer and community, facilitated by the City. In the case of this development project, most community members were unaware of the CBO process and only 43 residents of the impact area attended the initial public meeting in which selection of NAC members took place. Thus, the strength of the NAC as a mechanism of recourse or communication between the community and the City/developer was limited. The lack of technical support and clarity for NAC members regarding their responsibilities likely contributed to the lack of a clear and defined role for NAC members within their community. Community members did not identify NAC members as points of contact regarding questions or concerns for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment.

Despite the communication issues between the NAC, City, community, and developer, the concerns raised by the NAC and documented in section VII of the CBO report were largely reflective of the community's concerns regarding the development project. Thus, despite a lack of clarity regarding the role of the NAC, NAC members were able to aptly represent the concerns of the community. This highlights the potential of an NAC to represent the community in communication with the City/developer. However, because community members are unaware of NAC members or their role, the NAC has been unable to serve as a point of contact for any individuals' concerns or questions that arise throughout the development process. Community members noted other stakeholders – the developer and City council members – rather than NAC members as their primary points of contact for the development process.

NAC members repeatedly expressed difficulty in obtaining details on the final development agreements regarding community benefits and enforcement mechanisms from the City. This again highlights a lack of clarity about the role of the NAC that contributed to a perceived lack of

transparency in the development process. This lack of transparency was brought up in the focus group of community residents, as well as by NAC members. While some community members had the contact information of the developer and City leaders, there was a high degree of uncertainty about what would actually happen with the development project in the neighborhood. Notably, issues with the DLBA and an increase in nuisance and abatement violations served as a backdrop framing a lack of transparency and overall uncertainty within the neighborhood. While these issues predated the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project, NAC members and residents felt that the development project complicated side lot purchases and was associated with an increase in violations issued by the City. These negative associations influenced community members' overall perceptions of the development project—as well as bolstered anxiety about community displacement as the project attracted a more affluent population to the neighborhood.

The final theme highlighted in this case study is the idea that the timeline for the CBO process should have begun earlier in the development process. Both the contact for the developer as well as NAC members noted the CBO process began late in the development process, after the City and the developer had already gone through a negotiation process. While this may have been due to the timeline of the CBO's passage in late 2016 and the original announcement of the development project in 2015, it underscores the importance of engaging the community earlier in the process for the benefit of the developer as well as the community. Additionally, under the current text of the CBO, the required community engagement process is triggered once developers already strike a deal with the City, either meeting the \$75 million project size minimum or the \$1 million minimum in either tax abatement or City land sale transfer. Thus, it is unclear whether or not the timeline of the CBO's passage or the CBO process itself affected the delayed timeline for formal community engagement regarding the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project.

LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this case study is the limited scope of stakeholder interviews. Not all NAC members were able to be interviewed. While we spoke with three NAC members and contacted the other NAC members through an email message forwarded by another NAC member, we were not able to conduct extensive interviews with all NAC members. One NAC member explained that there was fatigue among members due to the already long and extensive commitment of serving as an NAC member. Given recent communication issues with the City regarding updates on final community benefits agreements as well as enforcement mechanisms, this NAC member explained that many of the other members were likely not willing or not able to commit more time to the topic of the Herman Kiefer redevelopment.

Another limitation was that the focus group, while providing extensive qualitative data, may not be completely generalizable to the community at large due to its size of 15 neighborhood participants. Some of the discussion topics covered in the focus group related to community engagement relied on memory of focus group participants and, given the lapsed time since the public notice in early 2017, recall bias may have impacted the data. Finally, the Herman Kiefer redevelopment project is still underway and it is unclear what community benefits will ultimately occur as a result of the CBO process.

CONCLUSIONS

The Herman Kiefer redevelopment project illustrates the potential of a Neighborhood Advisory Council, selected through a formalized process, to represent the concerns of community members to the City and developer. However, the CBO process for the Herman Kiefer redevelopment did not end in finalized or legally binding community benefits, nor is such a product required under the CBO. As one of the first development projects to go through Detroit's CBO process, the project

highlights key areas for improvement of the formalized community engagement process to ensure equitable development.

Key Lessons Learned From the Herman Kiefer Redevelopment Case Study:

- NACs formed through the CBO process offer an opportunity to represent the interests and concerns of the community. However, community members at large are currently unaware of the role of the NAC as a community liaison, limiting the ability of the group to serve as a point of contact between the community, City, and developer.
- Uncertainty around the details of a development project can lead to anxiety about displacement in communities. More transparent information about the details of a development project as well as proposed community benefits could reduce anxiety related to uncertainty in a community.
- Currently, the timeline for a formal community engagement process occurs after a development project has already been negotiated with the City. This can lead to a sense that community engagement is no more than a formality.
- The lack of a legally binding agreement between the developer, City, and community can generate frustration among the community and disempower NAC members, dissuading them from continued advocacy on behalf of their community.

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Conceptual image courtesy of CBS Detroit.

Appendix 4:

Case Study: Downtown Bedrock Developments

NEIGHBORHOOD BACKGROUND

The J.L. Hudson's store was constructed beginning in 1911 and was a feature of downtown Detroit for decades; it occupied an entire city block of Woodward Avenue and once held the title of tallest department store in the world. It was the flagship store for the Hudson's chain and was considered to be symbolic of the economic engine of the city up through its controlled demolition in 1998.^[i]

A few blocks to the west, the Book Building was constructed beginning in 1916 and construction was supplemented with the Book Tower beginning in 1924. The two have been iconic features of the city's skyline since. Both served as mixed-use commercial space and the buildings were eventually listed in the National Register of Historic Places since 1982.^[ii] In the nearby Monroe Avenue Historic District, the National Theater has stood since its construction in 1911 and bears its iconic terracotta façade with Pewabic tiles. It too was added to the Register in 1975.^[iii] Both the

Book and the Monroe developments have stood neglected and in disrepair after years of vacancy.

The population of the surrounding downtown Detroit neighborhood is estimated to be nearly 4,000 people. The demographic breakdown is 52.1% black, which is a significantly decreased percentage relative to the rest of Metropolitan Detroit. The median annual household income is \$31,000 with the top 20% of households earning approximately \$141,000 and the bottom 20% earning approximately \$7,000.^[iv]

Comparison to Detroit:

Population: **683,443**

Racial Composition:

79% black

10% white

8% Latino or Hispanic

Poverty Rate: **39%**

Unemployment Rate: **12%**

Median Income: **\$26,249**

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Within the past few years, businessman Dan Gilbert's development company, Bedrock LLC, has received approval on several large-scale redevelopment projects at the sites of these former landmarks. The Hudson's site is set to become a mixed-use space including residential, retail, and office units; notably, this is slated to be the tallest skyscraper in the city. Book Tower is slated for a rehabilitation that will transform it into mixed-use commercial and residential space alongside a hotel. Monroe Block will become both public space and mixed-use, with residential, retail, and office space.

Combined, these projects account for a roughly \$2 billion investment in reshaping the city's skyline, and Bedrock LLC has received a \$618 million tax incentive plan from the City of Detroit. For each specifically, Bedrock LLC proposed to spend an estimated \$900 million on the Hudson's site, \$830 million on the Monroe Blocks, and \$313 million on the Book projects, and has sought more than the \$1 million in City taxes over the term of the abatement for each.^[v] These projects met the Tier 1 minimum threshold of \$75 million investment under the CBO, and have thus triggered the Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) process. Notably, the Hudson's site has undergone one individual CBO process, but the Book Building, Book Tower, and Monroe Block projects were all combined in a second community benefits process.^[vi] This case study seeks to analyze the results of these processes through the perspectives of the various stakeholders they have engaged, and to provide insight into their successes and ongoing areas of improvement.

METHODOLOGY

This case study was carried out using in-person and phone interviews with various stakeholders involved in the CBO process, including NAC members, as well as a focus group with residents in the impact areas of the development projects. Advisors at Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit (D4) shared contact information for one NAC member. Others were contacted using the official list provided in the publicly available CBO report and finding members who were accessible to contact via LinkedIn. This same report was used to obtain data about the CBO process for both the Hudson's site and the Book/Monroe projects. Sample stakeholder interview questions are included in Appendix 2.

A focus group was held for downtown neighborhood residents to obtain data on community views of the CBO process and to evaluate the community benefit outcomes enumerated in the CBO report. Recruitment for the focus group was conducted through flyering of various apartment buildings and public spaces within the impact area as defined by the CBO. The focus group was held at the Boll Family YMCA in downtown Detroit and co-facilitated by a community organizer employed by D4. Eleven residents attended the focus group. The focus group outline is included in Appendix 3.

RESULTS

The results of this case study are divided into two sections. The first examines the process through which the Neighborhood Advisory Councils (NACs) were formed and the CBO reports were generated for the Book, Monroe, and Hudson's projects. The second section examines key themes related to community engagement and the community benefits process that have arisen throughout the beginning stages of the projects.

Community Engagement in the Development Process

Formation of the NAC and generation of the CBO report.

As required by the CBO process, for each project, the City mailed public notices for the first public meetings in the CBO process to approximately 3,000 residential addresses within the defined impact area. Impact areas included census tracts 5207 and 5712 with borders defined by the Planning and Development Department (PDD) as follow: I-75 to the north, I-375 to the east, Jefferson Avenue to the south, and the John C. Lodge Freeway to the west.

The initial public meetings for the Hudson's site were held on September 18th and September 24th, 2017, and 30 residents attended one or both meetings. Of these, 25 were recorded as residing within the defined impact area. The initial public meeting for the Book and Monroe projects was held on August 21, 2017, and 50 residents attended. Of these, 26 were recorded as residing within the defined impact area. At these initial meetings, the participants nominated and elected two community members to serve on the NAC. These two were joined by seven others who were directly appointed by City officials. Over the course of six weeks following, the two NACs each held public meetings with representatives from Bedrock LLC and officials from the City of Detroit, and each generated a CBO report including NAC recommendations and developer responses to those recommendations.^{[ix][x]}



Impact area for downtown Bedrock projects. Map image courtesy of the City of Detroit, available at <https://codstaging.detroitmi.gov>.

Perspectives from the NAC

Support for a formal community engagement process indicates success. Interviews with elected and appointed members of the NAC indicated there were parts of the process that worked well. Members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to get exposure to the developer and voice their concerns. One suggested that, in the past, Detroit has “not always kept its promises” to

“NAC meetings were most helpful in community education and liaising, formulating and communicating the construction timeline, and communicating prospective plans like food courts and observation decks.”
–NAC Member

its residents, and thus the CBO process was a step in the right direction for maintaining accountability to the community. It was recommended that the City and developer build on this trust by maintaining a dialogue with communities even when not in the midst of a project. Another recognized the time commitment these meetings required of all stakeholders – from the City, the community, and the developer – and noted that it was a testament to stakeholders’ dedication to the process that everyone was willing to devote hours to each of these meetings. The process was viewed as an opportunity not only to create dialogue between the stakeholders but also as an opportunity for

Bedrock to promote its current involvement in the community, including its affordable housing initiatives and work supporting local students.

Some of the meetings involved the solicitation of experts to join as guests and explain some of the more complicated aspects of the development to the community members that might otherwise be misunderstood. Topics included area median income and affordable housing, federal Section 8 vouchers, and the recent Brownfield Redevelopment Financing legislation. These expert-led sessions were viewed very favorably as opportunities to apprise the NAC of the relevant facts and create informed dialogue regarding the development process.

An abbreviated timeline and limited technical support present challenges. Despite some perceived successes, there were many areas in which NAC members had concerns. One significant issue was the condensed timeline. NAC members reported that the six-week timeline was too short for members to interface with their neighbors such that their input and representation on the Council would reflect the broader views of their communities. It was members’ goal to become “informed citizenry and be the liaisons for the relations with Bedrock,” but this was hindered by the abridged timeline of their involvement. The issues with timeline were intensified by the fact that their involvement occurred late in the process, after many major development decisions had already been made. There was no opportunity for community involvement in the pre-design or pre-development phases. Moreover, the NAC was a volunteer position on behalf of the City’s PDD – its members often held full-time jobs. Feedback indicates that the demands of the position were too intensive in the abbreviated timeframe to facilitate the community dialogue desired.

Furthermore, this first issue was exacerbated by the absence of proper technical assistance for NAC members or the public meeting participants, such that the limited meeting time was not always the most productive. There was minimal training offered on the principles of the CBO or on familiarizing all parties in what types of benefits could and could not be expected. The absence of a more comprehensive orientation exacerbated an already unequal playing field in which “seasoned developers discussed familiar topics with laypersons,” many of whom had no background in the topics at hand. Significant portions of meetings were spent discussing issues tangential to the intended agenda and beyond the scope of the NAC. One NAC member’s major concern was “the amount of energy devoted to things that have already been determined.” Interviewees endorsed that time was spent re-litigating decisions that had already been made, including architectural designs, tax incentives, and budgetary concerns. Other community concerns often centered around issues well outside of Bedrock’s purview. The meetings were often largely unstructured without an agenda and “no judge with a gavel keeping anyone on track.”

“Their [appointed NAC members] presence served to ensure that meetings adhered to the intent of the CBO to move projects forward, not to thwart their advancement or undermine the work that had already been done.” –NAC Member

In the same vein, several NAC members noted that political concerns often hampered progress in

these meetings. In the setting of the deeply divisive battle over the CBO proposals on the ballot, these meetings often became another arena in which to resurrect the 2016 electoral debate over Proposal A vs. Proposal B. One member stated, “some people come in with a strong political viewpoint and want to use this [the NAC] as a political roadblock.” On the opposite side of the aisle from the activists were some NAC members who were selected by City officials. Perspectives from those present indicated that they didn’t always represent a community agenda so much as the agendas of the officials who selected them. This served to seed discord surrounding many issues, especially at the Book/Monroe meetings, in which there were contentious discussions regarding the preservation of the National Theater.

Perspectives from the Community

Hopes for the development. Focus group attendees discussed several hopes for the downtown development projects. These included excitement regarding the prospect of increased jobs for Detroiters and economic development for local businesses. One individual explicitly expressed hope for the employment of the local professional class – including designers, architects, and business people – alongside the local laborers. Participants expressed nostalgia for some of the old iconic buildings like Hudson’s and were hopeful these new projects could become staples of the Detroit skyline. Others suggested they were looking forward to the development of residences and commercial spaces that promote co-existence across socioeconomic groups, as opposed to further segregation of upper-, middle-, and lower-income Detroiters.

“I’m hoping for something as good as the old Hudson, a center point in the city.”
–Focus Group Participant

Concerns for the development. Several concerns brought forth by the focus group centered around the continued gentrification of the downtown neighborhood. Residents levied critiques of overt economic racism that these projects elicit, in which long-standing black residents are displaced by more affluent outsiders. There was significant anxiety expressed regarding whether there will be room for these residents in the new downtown environment. Some focus group participants suggested that black residents of Detroit were not receiving any of the economic benefits that the development projects brought forth and would not see increases in job opportunities. Moreover, one member brought forth the concern that black businesses were not

“I use the word ‘infiltration’ because that’s how it feels. At first a couple of my colleagues and I were excited, thought it would mean more work for local businesses. A lot of African American professional businesses are not being involved like we thought they would be, since we’re already here. It seems like racism, economic racism. That’s my world, in my face.” –Focus Group Participant

getting new contracts or business and that the black professional class was not seeing benefit from the downtown developments. There were also concerns about the continued affordability of housing and retail goods. In the past, trust with developers was eroded due to decisions that resulted in the eviction of vulnerable populations in the downtown/midtown area. Many recalled the displacement of seniors and low-income tenants from “The Albert,” a Section 8 housing unit, after it was sold to a new developer. Lastly, focus group participants expressed concern about reduced parking availability downtown and worried that these new projects might exacerbate the shortage.

Views on the CBO process and outcomes. None of the focus group participants recalled receiving a flyer or hearing about the CBO process as it was underway. Residents attested to hearing about the downtown developments in the news or learning about the projects because they saw the construction begin. No participant recognized any of the names of the NAC members listed or recalled being contacted by any of them. Upon presentation of the NAC make-up, there was frustration expressed regarding the limited number of elected representatives on the NAC (two out of nine members), and participants suggested that at least 50% representation would be

acceptable.

When presented with the outcomes of the reports and Bedrock's responses to the NAC recommendations, focus group participants highlighted key areas that they felt were inadequately addressed. One such area was the issue of affordable housing and its reliance on area median income as a measure of affordability. Focus group members appreciated that Bedrock was providing 20% affordable housing portfolio-wide, but they took issue with the developer's unwillingness to commit to providing this 20% within each building. There were concerns levied that this policy would engender the "re-formation of the projects" and displacement of lower-income residents out of the downtown neighborhood.

Other concerns centered around jobs and wages, and, in particular, the absence of any commitment by the developer to provide contracts to local black businesses. One member felt that the professional class of Detroit did not stand to benefit from the 51% local hiring policy as it was written. Participants endorsed ongoing concerns regarding job creation and the payment of living wages, which they did not feel were adequately addressed by the CBO report.

DISCUSSION

The Bedrock projects were among the first to fall under the purview of Detroit's CBO. As such, they provide important insight into how well the process is functioning and where improvements could be sought. The recruitment efforts and advertising for the initial public meetings were limited such that community members reported that they did not recall being made aware of the opportunity to participate in the process. Those members of the public that did hear about the meetings may not have been completely representative of the residents at large, and thus may not have reflected the views and opinions of the greater community. In addition, the small percentage of the NAC that was elected from the community versus appointed by the city may have further hindered the opportunity for accurate representation of community views.

The areas of concern brought forth in the CBO report were appreciated by focus group participants who cited affordable housing, preservation of historic architecture, and local hiring policies among other topics. Despite this, some of the developer's responses to these issues were read as inadequate or even evasive by community members. Many responses indicated that areas of concern were either outside of the developer's purview, had not yet been addressed, or had already been decided. This undermined the power of the NAC and led many community members to wonder whether their will could actually affect change.

From the NAC's perspective, the CBO process was an opportunity to get exposure to and answers from the developers. With this in mind, the CBO did make strides in engaging the community in their local development projects. There were logistical issues that made the role of the NAC more challenging, however. The timeline for the process was too condensed to allow for NAC members to properly engage with and hear from their community members in order to best represent their views in the meetings. The role of the NAC was demanding and time-consuming and it limited the participants to those persons whose schedule could accommodate the intense workload. Moreover, members reported that the lack of sufficient orientation to the principles of the CBO and the expectations of community benefits made the meetings less productive.

Finally, meeting participants reported a general absence of structure or accountability in the meetings leading to tangential topics of conversation that fell outside the purview of the CBO. The meetings did not have a facilitator and thus the stakeholders were left to their own devices to rein in the discussion to agenda items. Particularly in the setting of public meetings, this lack of structure can handicap the process from moving efficiently toward effective community engagement.

LIMITATIONS

The major limitations of this case study lie in the representation of stakeholders. Attempts to contact representatives from the developer were unsuccessful, thus the study lacks this perspective. NAC members provided insight into their experiences as elected or appointed parties, but the study would serve to benefit from greater representation of views. While the listing of NAC members for both the Hudson's site and the Book/Monroe projects are available online, this list does not include contact information. As such, connection with NAC members was limited to those who we were able to find and contact via online public profiles, e.g. LinkedIn, or those with whom we were connected through our partners at D4.

Another limitation exists in the representativeness of the focus group. Focus group recruitment was advertised via flyers in residences and public spaces in the impact area, and those individuals who attended all did so by contacting us through phone, text, or email. This necessary self-selection may bias some generalizations regarding the entire downtown community based on the results of the focus group.

CONCLUSIONS

The Bedrock projects provide insight into the early successes and challenges of Detroit's CBO process. The NAC meetings were a valuable opportunity for a community member to meet with and hear from a major developer and ultimately be given a platform to speak about the changes to their local communities. Further evolution of the process may seek to strengthen the CBO and ensure that community issues are adequately heard and addressed by this process.

Some of the Issues Inherent In the Process Include:

- The protracted timeline of the CBO process.
- Minimal orientation and technical assistance for NAC members.
- Limited community engagement afforded by the constraints of the NAC position.
- Limited representation on the NAC of elected community members.

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Appendix 5: Summary of CBO Process



CBO DEFINITIONS:

City Council Liaison: a City Council appointee who monitors the NAC community engagement process and provides updates to the City Council.

Development Agreement: an agreement between the city and developer that sets the terms of public support for a project.

Enforcement Committee: a group of four or more city officials who decide whether the developer is in violation of any CBO processes or agreements.

Impact Area: the census tracts or block groups that overlap with the area of development, as well as areas identified by the Planning Director.

Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC): a group of nine community members who communicate residents' concerns about a development project to the developer and city officials.

How can individual community members get involved?

- Attend public meetings with the NAC and/or city officials to express concerns
- Report potential violations to the NAC and Enforcement Committee

How can organized community groups get involved?

- Become a member of the NAC as a member of an established community organization can help guide the process
- Work with the developer to enter into a voluntary Community Benefits agreement or contract with the community to provide legally binding community benefits. The CBO allows this as long as it does not conflict with the City's interests

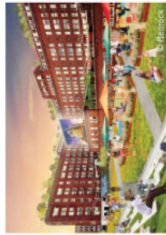
LEARN MORE ABOUT
the City of Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance and Projects:
tinyurl.com/DetroitCBO



www.MetroDetroitD4.org
info@MetroDetroitD4.org

Detroit CBO in Action:
Examples of Tier 1 Projects in Detroit

Herman Kiefer Development, LLC: An adaptive reuse and renovation project of the former Herman Kiefer hospital complex. The project includes the former Hutchins and Crosman School buildings, as well as over 500 residential properties. This Tier 1 project is projected to cost \$143 million for renovations, and is slated to receive \$27.8 million in tax increment financing. In addition, under the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA), the redevelopment area will be eligible for a property tax freeze for 1-12 years.



Midtown West: this project will convert the former Wigle Recreation Center into a mixed use development with public space attached. The structures will include 335 residential units, 160 of which will be for sale. .36 of the 175 rental units will be affordable at 80% AMI. The project also will have 8,000 sq.ft. of retail and 1 acre of public open space. The Tier 1 project is projected to cost over \$77 million and receive public subsidies.



PROJECTS CAN "OPT IN" TO THE CBO

Recent projects such as the Detroit Pistons Performance Facility & Headquarters and the Detroit Free Press Rehabilitation Development do not count as Tier 1 projects. However, the developers have opted to take part in the NAC process. The Pistons project will cost \$32-55 million, and the performance facility, headquarters, and Arena improvements will receive a subsidy of \$34.5 million. The Detroit Free Press project will cost an estimated \$69 million and receive a subsidy of \$7 million in brownfield tax credits.

**DETROIT'S
COMMUNITY BENEFITS
ORDINANCE**

what it is & how it works



Furthering Equitable Development

In November 2016, Detroiters voted the Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) into law.

The CBO applies to large development projects that receive public subsidies from the City. Under certain circumstances, developers must negotiate a community engagement process through the City's Planning Department and make recommendations to address the negative effects of a project. Detroit is the first major American city to mandate a community benefits process for publicly subsidized developments.

Which projects fall under the CBO?

The CBO regulates publicly supported developments at two levels.

TIER 1 PROJECTS cost \$75 million or more AND receive at least \$1 million in City land or tax abatements. The developer and city officials must complete a community engagement process to hear and address community concerns.

TIER 2 PROJECTS cost between \$3 to \$75 million AND receive \$300,000 or more of City land or tax abatements. Developers of these smaller projects are only required to hire and train Detroit residents and to mitigate the negative effects of the project on the surrounding neighborhood.

IMPACT AREA
Impact Area is the portion of Census Tracts) or block groups that include the project, as well as any additional areas as determined by the Planning Director.

However, public notice gets sent to residents only within 300 radii feet of the project. For the Pistons development, there were 3,136 people living in the Census Tract, but only 900 people were actually notified of the public meeting.

Pistons CBA, City of Detroit, PDD

The CBO Process: Neighborhood Advisory Councils

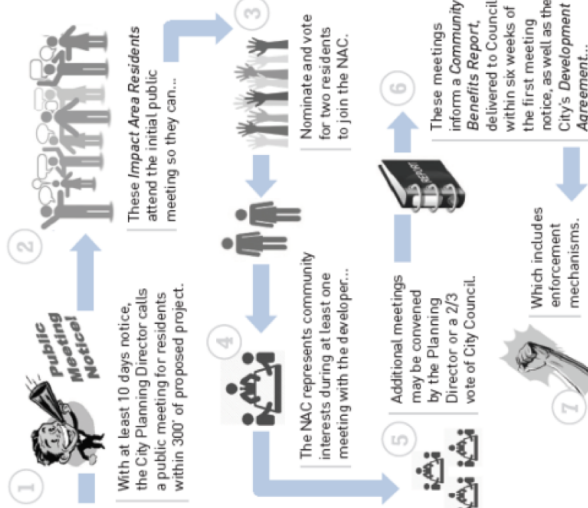
Tier 1 development projects center around the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC). NAC members must be over 18 years of age and live within the Impact Area (includes the census tracts or block groups that are a part of the development project and any additional areas determined by the Planning Director)

The NAC represents the community by reviewing development plans, sharing concerns, and reporting violations. Any actions taken by the NAC requires a majority vote by all members. The nine members must be residents of the Impact Area and are nominated by its residents.

Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) Breakdown:

NOTE: If the Planning Director receives fewer than nine nominations, residents of the Council Districts that overlap with the Impact Area may be nominated.

How Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) Works



The CBO Process: Enforcement Committee

Apart from the NAC process, the Planning Director and developer enter into a development agreement regarding land transfers or tax abatements and community concerns.

Under the CBO, it must include a community benefits provision that spells out enforcement mechanisms, procedures for community members to report violations to the NAC, and a timeline for the developer to submit Annual Compliance Reports. The Planning Director facilitates at least one meeting a year between the NAC and the developer to discuss the project.

The City selects an Enforcement Committee of four officials, responsible for providing bi-annual compliance reports to the City Council and NAC, and for assessing potential violations by the developer.

If the NAC believes the developer violated the Community Benefits Provision, it can submit a written report to the Enforcement Committee. The Enforcement Committee has 21 days to investigate and determine how to respond. If the NAC disagrees with the committee's response, it can send notice to the committee. The Enforcement Committee must respond within 14 days.

If still dissatisfied, the NAC can petition City Council to schedule a hearing. If the City Council chooses to hold a hearing and rules in favor of the community, the Enforcement Committee must submit monthly reports to Council and the NAC regarding compliance and mitigation actions. The City Council will pass a resolution when the developer comes into compliance with the community benefits provision.

Appendix 6:

Sample Interview Guide

Sample Interview Guide (Gordie Howe International Bridge)

Note: These questions serve as a sample of the questions that were asked in semi-structured stakeholder interviews. These questions are tailored to the context of the Gordie Howe International Bridge in Delray. This sample guide is not exhaustive. Questions are organized by relevance to different stakeholders in the Gordie Howe International Bridge case study.

Questions for Bridge Authority/Developer

What is your role/how long have you been in this role?

Does your organization have a standard process for gaining feedback and addressing concerns from community members?

- Can you describe that process?
- What results have you seen?

How does your organization engage with/respond to community concerns about the development of the bridge?

- Do your current practices look different today than they did in 2012 when the authority was formed?

What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of creating a standard process for engaging with community members in large development projects?

- Benefits/drawbacks of a City creating a standard process vs a developer or authority creating a standard process?

What aspects of community engagement do you feel have been effective in this project? How do you think outreach and engagement with the residents of Delray might have been improved?

Community Organizations/Neighborhood Residents

How did you get involved in the Gordie Howe International Bridge project?

From your perspective, what were/are the main concerns of residents in Delray?

- Do you think those concerns will be sufficiently addressed by the community benefits package provided by the City and by the community benefits plan proposed by the developer?
 - Why/why not?

How did you see government officials and the bridge authority include residents and community members in the decision-making process regarding the bridge?

- Do you have examples of how this was been done well? How you think it could have been improved?

What made it easy or difficult to express you and your neighbors' concerns? To have those concerns addressed?

If familiar with the CBO (To what degree are you familiar with Detroit's CBO, known as Proposal B?) – How do you think the CBO might have changed Delray's experience with negotiating for community benefits?

City Stakeholders (ie: City Council)

What has been your involvement in the Gordie Howe International Bridge project?

What concerns have you heard from community members about the bridge?

To what degree do you think community members have been represented in decisions about the bridge? In what ways have they been represented?

What challenges exist to including community members' feedback and voices into projects like this?

- Does the CBO help with any of these challenges?

What do you think the role of the City is in making sure that residents' concerns are addressed by a developer?

Appendix 7:

Sample Focus Group Guide

Focus Group Guide (Little Caesars Arena)

Background for Moderator

Primary Research Question:

What has been the impact of the Detroit Community Benefits Ordinance on public engagement in community benefits negotiation processes, and on the outcomes of those negotiations?

Secondary Research Questions:

CBA Process

- How have relationships between Detroit officials, developers, and Detroiters changed since the passage of the CBO?
- What is the role and impact of the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) in community benefits negotiations taking place after the adoption of Proposal B?
- Who is recruited and elected/selected to be a part of the NAC? Who is left out/not represented? Who do NACs represent?
- What issues are considered when negotiating the terms of a community benefits agreement? (compare the terms negotiated prior to the adoption of Proposal B with those negotiated afterward)

Outcomes of CBA Negotiations

- Prioritizing needs: How were benefits agreed upon?
- Defining needs and benefits: What are “benefits”? Who receives them? How are needs determined?
- What were the outcomes of the CBO report and how effective have they been (to the degree that some agreements have begun to be implemented)? What resources were required to fulfill some of these terms? Do the community concerns in the CBO report match the concerns of the community?
 - Environmental benefits?
 - Economic benefits?
 - Social Benefits?

Registration Guide:

- Make sure person is on our RSVP list. If someone shows up who is not on the RSVP list, tell them that they can wait to see if we have any openings for an incentive if we have a no-show on our RSVP list. They are welcome to attend, but we only have a limited number of incentives to offer. (17 have been purchased for this focus group)
- Review forms to sign for recording the group
- Review procedure for collecting incentive at the end/have participant fill out incentive form
- Pass out handouts
- Explain that they are free to help themselves to a meal and that the discussion group will convene at 6:30.

Introduction

- Thank you for joining us for this conversation today.
- Before we get started, I want to ask about recording this conversation. We would like to record this conversation so that we don't miss any important details that you share, but all information will be kept anonymous. No one's names will be used in our final report. Does anyone have an issue with this? We also would like to ask that only one person speak at a time so that everyone can be heard in the recording. Great!
- Everyone will receive their gift card at the end of the conversation tonight.
- My name is Karen Goldberg and I am a student studying in the field of environment and sustainability. This is Jeffrey Jones (*have Jeff introduce himself*). Neither of us work for the City or for Olympia Development. Jeff works with a non-profit called D4 - Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit - and we are interested in learning more about the way a new ordinance has impacted the development process in your community. Jeff has partnered with us to host this conversation so that we can hear all of your opinions on the public communication process that was supposed to have taken place when the Little Caesars Arena was being developed.
- You are all here today because you have expressed an interest in sharing your opinions on the Little Caesars Arena development, as it has related to your neighborhood.
- We want to hear your opinions so we can find out how development projects like this one can make neighborhoods better places for the people who already live there and how negative impacts can be avoided.
- Your opinions will be used anonymously (that is, no one's names will be used) in recommendations we make for city leaders here in Detroit and in other communities.
- First, we want to lay out some ground rules together for our conversation. An example of a ground rule is that there are no right or wrong answers. (*Write any ground rules on a blank flip chart*)
- What ground rules would you all like to have for this discussion?
 - o Great, thanks everybody for the suggestions. I also have a few more to add that could be helpful, if you all don't mind.
 - No right or wrong answers
 - Not everyone may agree with each other, but we will all listen respectfully to each other, we agree to disagree
 - Moderator will guide discussion, but hope everyone will treat it as a conversation
 - Everyone's opinions are important and we'd like to hear from everyone tonight
 - Any questions or suggestions for additional ground rules?
 - Do we all agree on these ground rules?
- Because our time is limited and we want to respect the time you have given us, we don't want to stray too far off topic. Lots of ideas and questions could come up that will be important, but that we can't address tonight. When that happens, we'll put those ideas and questions in the "parking lot," by writing them on this sheet. If we have time at the end, we'll come back to those.

Housekeeping:

- Review agenda for the day (*posted for easy reference*)
- Restrooms can be found here ([point to restrooms](#)). Please feel free to grab any refreshments or snacks during the meeting and use the restroom as needed.

Icebreaker:

[Write icebreaker on large flip chart]

In pairs with the person sitting next to you, find out this information from your partner. We're going to ask you to introduce your partner after 5 minutes.

- Name, neighborhood, how long you've lived there, favorite part of living in the neighborhood
- Okay, let's go around the room and introduce our partners.

Brief Explanation of CBA and Negotiation Process (*Reference handout for this*)

In 2016, Detroiters voted to pass an ordinance that outlined the steps developers have to take to communicate with a community when building in their neighborhood. This process is meant to ensure that people already living in the community receive some benefits from the development project. It is important to note that this ordinance was passed after the time of the Little Caesars Arena development, however. In this case, our goal is to understand the process that was used for developer-community engagement before the ordinance mandated such engagement.

The basic steps of the ordinance-approved process are outlined on this handout.

1. Public notice to residents living within the impact area (300 feet) of a development project.
2. Public meeting and election of a "neighborhood advisory committee" made up of impact area residents.
3. Neighborhood advisory committee meets at least once with developer to represent the community's opinions about the project and its impact on the neighborhood.
4. All meetings with the neighborhood advisory committee inform a "Community Benefits Report" written by the City that discusses what the developer will do to benefit the community. We will discuss this report later on in our conversation.

This exact process was not necessarily used for the Little Caesars Arena development project, because the Arena was developed before the Ordinance was passed. However, we want to get your thoughts on other similar actions that may have been utilized during the Arena's development, and how well they worked for your neighborhood. Do you have any questions?

Topics and Questions:

Topics we will cover tonight include thoughts you might have had about the Little Caesars Arena during its development phase, thoughts you may have about the development now, what you've heard about how the project was supposed to impact the neighborhood, and the steps Olympia Development and the City took to engage the community about the impact of the project.

General Thoughts/Perceptions of the Project

- Prior to its development, what do you remember having heard about the Little Caesars Arena project?
 - How did you hear about the project? What is happening to the development?
 - [Ask if no one mentions] - Did you receive a notice about the development?
 - *[Follow up probes]* - Would you please say more about that point? Could you provide an example?; Does anyone else have a similar opinion? Different opinion?
 - *[If people start to ask a lot of questions about what is happening now, explain that you are not the developer and do not have answers about everything that was/is planned for the project, but that you can send them information about what the developer has communicated to the public so far]*

Turn to a neighbor and discuss these two questions for a few minutes:

[Write these questions on a flip chart]

- When it was first proposed, what were your hopes and concerns about the project?
- In the stage that it is now, what are your hopes and concerns about the project?

Let's all discuss this together now. *[Write answers on flip chart]*

- What are some of the hopes you discussed?
- What are some of the concerns you discussed?
- How have these hopes and concerns changed from the first proposal of the project to now?
- Is there anything else you would like to add to these lists?

Perceptions of developer/how developer interacts with neighborhood

- What have you heard about the company that was in charge of developing the Little Caesars Arena, Olympia Development?
- How would you describe the continued impact of the developer in your neighborhood now?
- What would you do if you had a concern about how the project is affecting the neighborhood or wanted to contact the developer?

CBA Process/Outcomes of NAC

Through an agreement between the developer and the City, a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) was created for the project. Members of this committee include some of your neighbors as well as people representing the City.

- Do you know anyone who is a member of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)? *[Show participants a list of NAC members]* ○ If yes, what, if any, conversation did you have with them about the project in its development phase?
- What, if any, conversations have you had with them since the development of Little Caesars Arena? *[Remind participants that the NAC was formed for 5 years and thus is still in effect today, if there is confusion regarding current engagement]*
- Where have you heard conversations about the Little Caesars Arena development?

We are passing out a summary of the report made by the city that shows the community concerns and the developer response to those concerns. This was created based on the meetings the Neighborhood Advisory Committee had and their ideas. We are going to go over this report with you and then have a group discussion.

[Read through the [summary of report](#) and give handout to participants]

Pair/Share Activity (Karen will be organizing notes for the closing [section](#))

Now, turn to your neighbor and discuss your first reactions to this report. We'll ask you to share your thoughts after a few minutes of discussing in pairs.

Okay, let's all talk about this report together.

- What were your first reactions?
- Is anything missing from the concerns or response that you would like to see? (If yes, then what would you like to see?)
- What questions or comments do you have about this report?

Closing

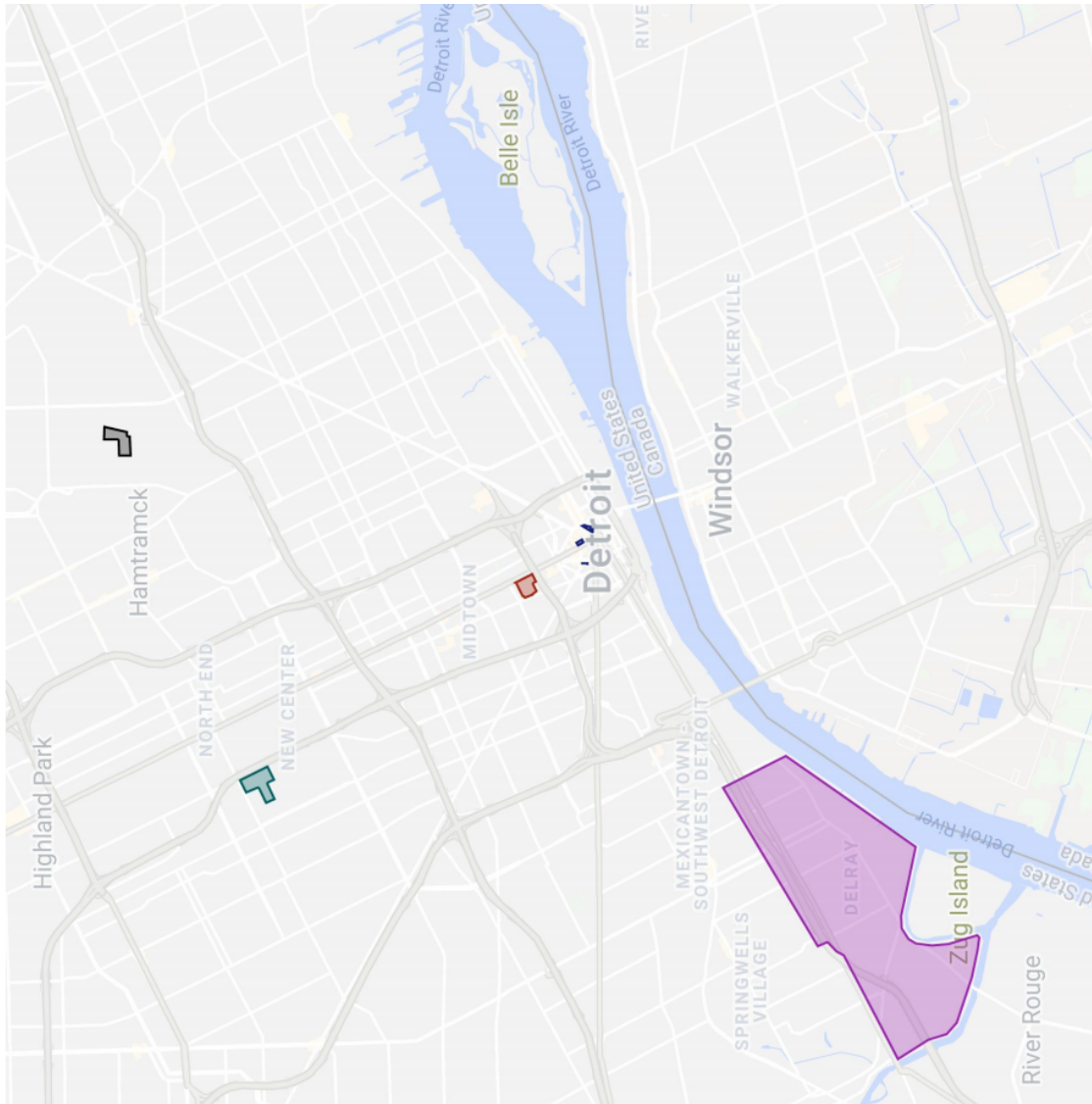
- **Summarize topics and discussion, ask if anything is missing**
- Does this [sound](#) right?
- Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn't?
- Thank you all for coming and sharing your thoughts with us tonight. We will be using your input to make recommendations to the City of Detroit to strengthen the Community Benefits Ordinance that we discussed to improve community engagement and outcomes.
- We will share a final copy of our report with all of you over email and will also invite all of you to an event in late November/early December where we will present our report to anyone in the community who has shared their opinions and feedback with us.
- If you have any follow-up questions or comments, please contact us at detroitcommunitybenefits@gmail.com. We are sending everyone home with our email address on a sheet of paper. Thank you!

Appendix 8:

List of Development Projects Affected by CBO (As of November 2018)

Project	Developer	Description of Development
Cass and York, Lot 1, and Fisher Building (In Progress)	The Platform LLC	1.85 acres; mixed use developments (office, residential, retail, grocery, parking); interior improvements to Fisher Building
Michigan Central Station Development (In Progress)	Ford Motor Company	Rehabilitation of Michigan Central Station to create an innovation hub (1.2 million sq. ft. of office, retail, parking, and residential space)
Book Building and Tower and Monroe Blocks	Bedrock LLC	Bedrock is reaching out to the community to receive input on two projects, the Book Building and Tower as well as the Monroe Blocks
Wigle: Midtown West	PDH Development Group	Transforming 901 Selden - the former site of the Wigle Recreation Center
Pistons Complex	Henry Ford Health System and Detroit Pistons	Henry Ford Health System and the Detroit Pistons will collaborate on the design and construction of state-of-the-art training, rehabilitation and sports medicine complex in New Center at 690 Amster
Lafayette West	<u>Ginosko</u> Development Company (GDC)	<u>Ginosko</u> Development Company (GDC) is reaching out to the community to receive input on the Lafayette West Development, a proposed master-planned <u>5.2 acre</u> community integrated into Lafayette Park.
Hudson	Bedrock LLC	Former J.L. Hudson's Department Store, a two-acre site in the heart of downtown Detroit bounded by Woodward Avenue, Gratiot Avenue, Grand River Avenue, and Farmer Street
Herman Kiefer	Herman Kiefer Development, LLC	Reuse and renovate the Herman Kiefer hospital complex and the former Hutchins and Crosman school buildings
Detroit Free Press Rehabilitation	Bedrock LLC	Rehabilitation of the historic Detroit Free Press Building, located at 321 W. Lafayette

Appendix 9: Map of Case Studies



- Monroe Blocks (Bedrock)
- Book Tower and Building (Bedrock)
- Hudson's (Bedrock)
- Herman Kiefer Redevelopment
- Flex-N-Gate
- Little Caesars Arena
- Bridge (Impact Area)

Appendix 10:

List of Acronyms

- Bridging NA:** Bridging North America
- CAG:** Delray Community Advisory Group
- CBA:** Community Benefits Agreement
- CBO:** Community Benefits Ordinance
- CBC:** Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition
- CDA:** Catalyst Development Area
- CDC:** Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation
- DLBA:** Detroit Land Bank Authority
- D4:** Doing Development Differently in Metro Detroit
- HKD:** Herman Kiefer Development
- LCA:** Little Caesars Arena
- MDOT:** Michigan Department of Transportation
- NAC:** Neighborhood Advisory Council (as created by the Community Benefits Ordinance)
- NAC:** Neighborhood Advisory Committee (used for the Little Caesars Arena project only)
- ODM:** Olympia Development of Michigan
- PDD:** City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department
- WDBA:** Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority