



# DETROIT FUTURE CITY **STRATEGIC PLAN**

2017-2021

# INTRODUCTION

A young boy with dark skin and short hair is captured in mid-air, jumping over a brick wall. He is wearing a dark t-shirt and patterned pants. The background shows a row of brick houses with multiple windows and doors, suggesting an urban environment. The entire image has a blue tint.

In 2010, an ambitious effort was launched to re-imagine a better future for Detroit.

The Detroit Future City framework developed a series of ideas, strategies and approaches on how to best use our abundance of land, create job growth and economic prosperity, ensure vibrant neighborhoods, build an infrastructure that serves citizens at a reasonable cost and maintain a high level of community engagement that is integral to success.

The DFC Strategic Framework articulates a shared vision for Detroit's future and recommends specific actions for developing a vibrant and sustainable city.

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# DETROIT FUTURE CITY

Detroit Future City, as a formal organization, was created to champion the framework as a living document, help Detroiters understand and access the plan and coordinate targeted projects and partnerships to implement the strategies espoused in the plan.

The 2017-2021 DFC strategic plan crystalizes the strategies the organization will lead to move the framework forward. The strategic plan focuses on four key areas driven by key principles and shared values.

## Land Use and City Systems

DFC will design and implement strategies to address vacant lots at the neighborhood level, advance the design of a City-wide open space plan and identify options for holding land for future public purposes for development. We will also connect residents to green storm water infrastructure investments, resiliency improvements and to participate in future land use decision-making.

## Community and Economic Development

DFC will lead the design of a city-wide service delivery system to address the development and management of the City's growing single family rental housing stock, support the city's commercial corridor revitalization strategy and develop pioneering approaches for the adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial sites.

## Keeping the DFC strategy fresh and relevant

DFC will continue to engage the broader community, promote new ideas, bring best practice research and innovative approaches that keeps the framework integral to Detroit's growth.

## Organizational capacity

This strategy also invests in DFC's organization capacity and secure the resources necessary to achieve our mission.



# PRIORITY AREAS



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CORE PRINCIPLES

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Align and connect to the City's neighborhood engagement infrastructure for community engagement.

Connect Detroiters to DFC innovation and strategies through the city and non-profit organization network.



## RACIAL EQUITY CORE PRINCIPLES

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Ensure that DFC programs, policies and strategies equitably benefit people and businesses of color and connects them to the mainstream economy.



## SHARED VALUES

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Create shared value relationships with the City and other key stakeholders which will shape DFC's role in the revitalization of Detroit.

**We are excited about our new strategic plan and the opportunity to make Detroit Future City a reality!**

# MISSION AND CORE VALUES

## MISSION STATEMENT

DFC is committed to advancing the quality of life for all Detroiters. We accomplish this in partnership with residents, public and private stakeholders through evidence-based strategies to promote innovative land use, sustainable infrastructure, and economically vibrant Detroit neighborhoods.

## CORE VALUES

Aspirational: Steward of the Detroit Future City long term vision for Detroit.

Transformative: Bring innovative practices, policies and systems to the revitalization of Detroit.

Inclusive: Integrate civic awareness and community participation into DFC initiatives.

Equitable: Ensure racial equity is a cornerstone to the development of the City.





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# LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY

“Landscape has enormous potential to structure or foster social and cultural relationships through adapted and productive ecologies that will give rise to a new urban form.” - Detroit Future City

## Overview:

There are over 120,000 vacant lots within the city of Detroit. While there is movement to create an integrated open space network within the city of Detroit, there is still much work to do to connect residents with the benefits of open space within the city.

DFC will help connect Detroiters with others working towards a future of local resiliency. This will be done through the continued convening a broad base of stakeholders as part of the Open Space Working Group.

Building toward implantation of an open space network the engagement of residents is an integral part of the process and the creation of a green culture shift can lead to a more informed and engaged public on the benefits of open space in the city of Detroit.

DFC is working toward a future where residents and institutions are actively involved with stewarding the city's vacant land into an integrated open space network that will help make Detroit the greenest city in America. To better outline this future a 'Green Innovation Team', composed of local and national experts, will be convened to advise and identify opportunities and needs to create the greatest benefits for residents.

## Goal:

- **Open Space:** Advance Open Space as a land use in Detroit by:
  - Influencing or enacting at least one (1) policy change
  - Identify public/private partnerships (at least one large partnership in a specified innovation area)
  - 2-3 publications on green stormwater and open space

## Strategies:

### Year One

- Conduct research related to open space plan implementation
- Convene Open Space Working Group to support the open space planning process, member led research/initiatives and community engagement

### Years Two and Three

- Green Culture Shift – Campaign to change perceptions and encourage widespread implementation of Public Lands Framework Plan and Sustainability Action Agenda by all stakeholders
- Convene 'Green Innovation Team' to help guide and identify future strategy.

### Years Four and Five

- Execute strategies that emerge from best practice research or land use studies.

# LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY

“Landscape has enormous potential to structure or foster social and cultural relationships through adapted and productive ecologies that will give rise to a new urban form.” Detroit Future City

## Overview:

Water is a flashpoint topic as concerns rise over quality, costs, and extreme weather events leading to drought in some areas and flooding in others. These challenges are complex, and in Detroit are further complicated by the water system’s crumbling infrastructure.

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) and Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO) pollute local rivers several dozen times per year on average, far in excess of state and national clean water standards. Heavy rainfalls also cause flooding, which shuts down roads, damages personal property, interrupts business, and threatens human health and safety.

As DWSD updates their billing system to distribute the cost of drainage across the city based on imperviousness acreage, there is the opportunity to mitigate a portion of the drainage fee by implementing green stormwater infrastructure. DFC will promote implementation of GSI as a component of an integrated open space network. Business owners, non-profits, faith based organizations and residents can play a pivotal role in diverting stormwater from the CSO system which has the potential to prevent basement flooding and provide co-benefits for their community. DFC will take an active role to ensure the most vulnerable neighborhoods and residents are prepared to participate in these solutions.

## Goal:

- **Green Stormwater Infrastructure:** Achieve a common goal among the eco-system of Detroit NGOs to reduce stormwater overflows:
  - Quantifiable amount of gallons of water reduced from the system (combined stormwater/sewer overflow system)
  - 2-3 publications on green stormwater infrastructure and open space
  - Quantifiable measurement of the economic impact of GSI
  - Design and implement a new financing strategy for triple bottom line benefits

## Strategies:

### Year One

- Establish partnership with the Nature Conservancy for convening Blue Green Infrastructure Working Group
- Lead ‘Land+Water Works’ Campaign to educate residents on the stormwater fees and promote GSI implementation

### Years Two and Three

- Publish a report that quantifies the impact of GSI on the city and residents
- Partner with the City of Detroit and the Blue Green working group to identify and map the co-benefits of stormwater management.

### Years Four and Five

- Execute strategies that emerge from best practice research or land use studies.

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# LAND USE AND SUSTAINABILITY

**“Landscape has enormous potential to structure or foster social and cultural relationships through adapted and productive ecologies that will give rise to a new urban form.” Detroit Future City**

## Overview:

The Detroit Future City Field Guide to Working with Lots is a capacity building tool to better connect Detroit residents, businesses, and institutions to resources and to each other to learn, collaborate, and better practice land stewardship in Detroit.

The Field Guide supports several imperatives in the DFC Framework by empowering Detroiters with the knowledge to create an innovative open space network, green infrastructure, economic development, and better quality of life in Detroit neighborhoods.

People and land are two of Detroit’s most precious resources. DFC will help connect Detroiters with information, inspiration, and others working towards a future of local resiliency. This is a future where residents and institutions are actively involved with the stewardship of Detroit’s land. DFC will refine and build the resources in the Field Guide to ensure it continues to be relevant and of value to multiple audiences.

## Goal:

- **Capacity Building:** Build capacity across sectors to scale vacant land transformation
- Agree upon goal number of repurposed vacant lots and aggregate their impact line benefits

## Strategies:

### Year One

- Provide Field Guide Mini Grant implementation support
- Publish report on vacant land transformation and productive plantings
- Link DWSD stormwater credit system to Field Guide designs

### Years Two-Five

- Create a monitoring plan for installations
- Develop additional Field Guide to Working with Lots designs and update existing designs to address emerging land issues
- Identify creative funding mechanisms to implement green infrastructure improvements



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“Supporting and investing in a strong civic and cultural fabric creates an enduring asset for Detroit’s long-term development and prosperity.” - Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan, Page 321

## Overview:

Civic engagement is the open and on-going two-way dialogue among all stakeholders. Civic engagement is people working together and talking together to move forward together. It entails transparency, accountability and mutual trust. The many valuable forms of civic engagement drove the strategies in the DFC Framework.

Civic engagement yields lasting benefits. Connecting residents to the policy and land use decision-making process will allow the city’s revitalization to be inclusive and equitable for all Detroiters. Such engagement does not just happen. It will require deliberate and targeted investments by DFC and its partners to ensure Detroiters fully participate in and benefit from advancements in the City’s economic recovery.

## Community Engagement Goal

Connect, educate and engage Detroiters to participate in and advance land use policy and vacant land transformation.

## Strategies:

### Year One

- Build internal communications capacity to connect Detroiters to DFC vacant lot transformation strategies.
- In partnership with City and Non-profit network, create a community engagement design subcommittee of the open space working group to develop a clear strategy for engaging Detroiters in land use policies, plans and ownership vehicles.
- Work with community partners to create a network of volunteers and trainers to increase the technical capacity of residents to bring alternative land use strategies to scale.

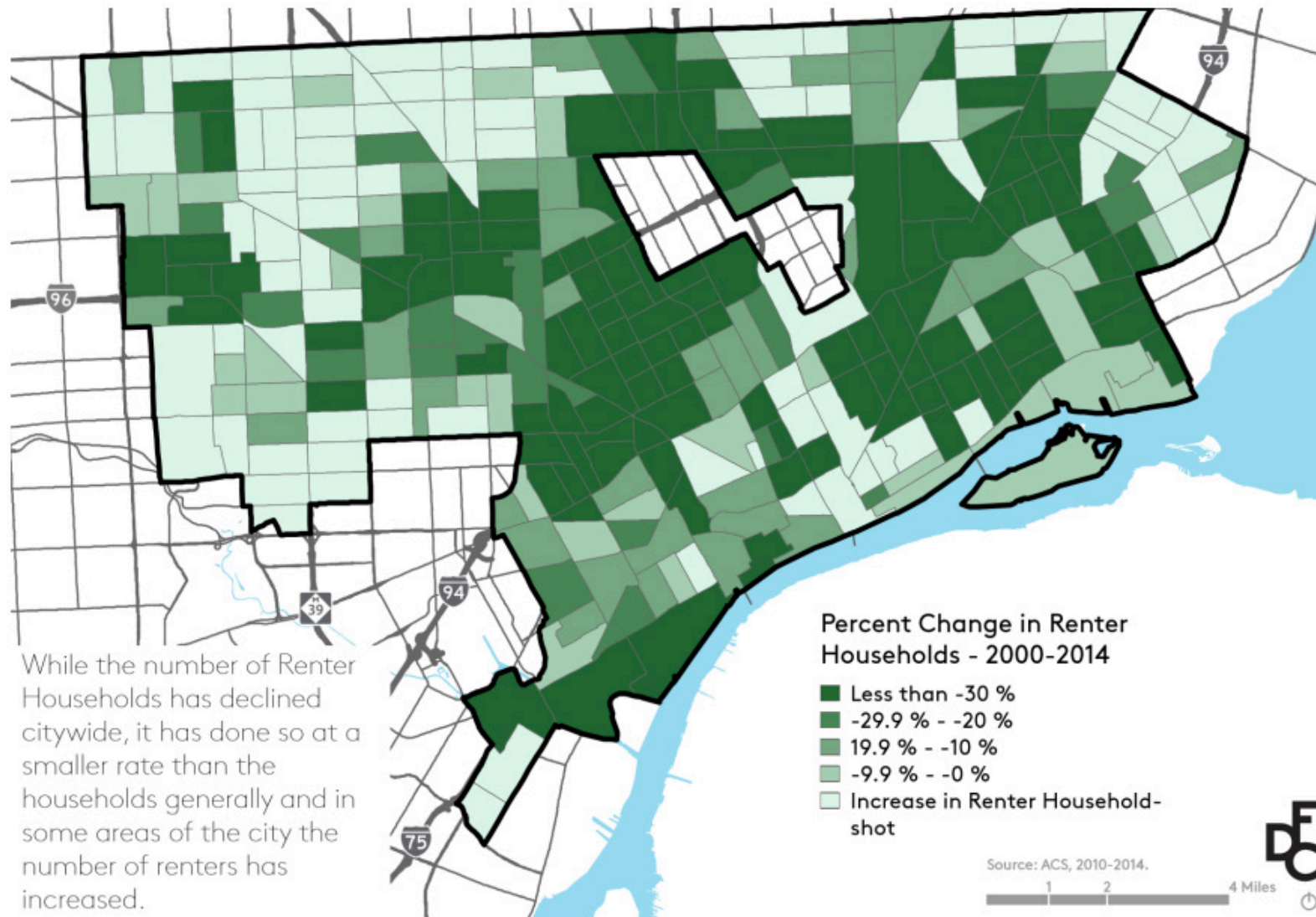
### Years Two-Five

- Develop a speakers’ series to educate and inform residents, civic leaders and elected officials about the regional impact of land use policies.
- Design an accessible tool to educate communities on the impact of land use and open space policies, help make informed decisions and participate in community planning.
- Implement a communications strategy including community forums, modeling and dissemination of information.
- Create at least two white papers on regional land use issues.



# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The crisis of affordable housing over the next generation will be concentrated among renters. At the center of this crisis are low-income people of color living in urban areas.



# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**“Nowhere is the need for Detroit’s quality of life to improve more evident than in its neighborhoods, where people live their lives, and plan for their futures.” - Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan, Page 213**

## Overview:

Thriving contemporary cities are hallmarks of diversity, including employment options, income, ethnicity, social interests and individual expertise. Within this context, Detroit must provide a diverse array of housing types to appeal to a range of people and households.

At the height of the automotive boom within Detroit and its region, the single family home came to dominate the city’s housing spectrum creating unprecedented levels of homeownership. Over the last fifteen years, the pace of decline increased with continued population losses and the doubling of vacant housing units. The financial crisis and market conditions resulted in thousands of tax foreclosed homes, abandonment and vacant properties and many more families with a need for high quality rental housing.

Although homeownership is a critically important strategy, the single family rental market must also be addressed since its viability has a direct impact on the quality of life in Detroit neighborhoods. While some signs of resurgence are being measured, including notable market demand for multi-family housing, Detroit’s abundance of unused single family properties continues to create tremendous burdens in our neighborhoods.

The dramatic change in housing stock from homeownership to rental, the lack of a coordinated and regulated system to support tenants, landlords and property managers (for-profit and non-profit), and the opportunity to create an intentional wealth building strategy for middle-income residents to own and rent property requires a well-honed service delivery system. DFC will work with a cadre of partners to build an effective network and system to support the rehabilitation, ownership and maintenance of single family rental homes.

## Single Family Rental Housing Goal

Build a service delivery system to develop, manage and improve the quality of existing single family rental properties by 12/31/21.

## Strategies:

### Year One

- Conduct an analysis of the single family (one-two units) rental industry including market data analysis, demand, costs, financing options and best practices.
- In conjunction with neighborhood revitalization partners, commission a study to build the service delivery system for developing and owning single family rentals. Work closely with the City to align efforts with neighborhoods targeted for focused investment.
- (CE) Convene stakeholders comprised of government, community development corporations, residents, community development financing institutions and housing support agencies to develop a more effective service delivery system.
- (RE) Identify incentives and better processes for small developers to own and operate single family housing.

### Years Two-Five

- Implement recommended strategies.



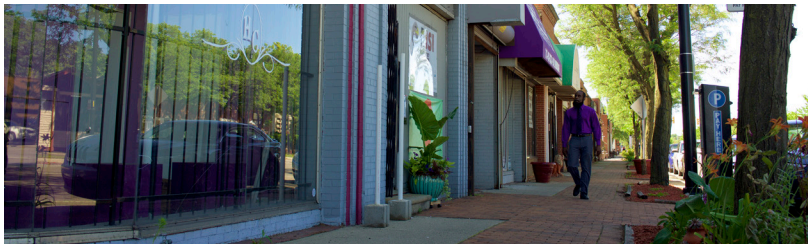
# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“Urban mixed Use districts are the hubs of a regional transit network that can connect the city to the larger region, state and Detroit Metropolitan airport.” - Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan, Page 220

## Overview:

Urban mixed-used neighborhoods seek to leverage employment districts to create higher density, mixed-used residential communities. Growth in these areas builds on the economic engine of medical centers, universities, industry and corporations to catalyze future residential, retail and economic development. The character of these districts is shaped by the major cultural and institutional assets within them, including high quality parks and public spaces, museums, theaters, stadiums, schools and commercial corridors.

The City has targeted several commercial districts for significant investments. Key to the success of these districts is the infrastructure and network that supports retail and businesses, provides a safe and welcoming environment for visitors and ensures long-term sustainability. In support of the City’s walkable neighborhood investment strategy, Detroit Future City will promote and support innovative commercial corridor design, land use concepts and network support systems that ensure longterm viability. It is also important to increase minority owned retail in commercial corridors.



Corporate F/A/C/T/S

## Commerical Corridor Goals

Reinstitute the city-wide commercial corridor initiative to activate targeted corridors as economic anchors by 12/31/21.

## Strategies:

### Year One

- Develop a white paper on commercial corridor market opportunities, adaptive reuses and sustainability requirements including integration of open-space design.
- (CE) Develop a field guide on the adaptive reuse of mid-size small properties as anchors on corridors with partners such as Public Building and Partnership for Building Reuse.
- (CE) Convene stakeholders to develop a support system for commercial corridors and implementation of vacant lot designs.

### Years Two-Five

- Implement recommended strategies.
- (RE) Facilitate partnerships that increase MBE retailers in commercial corridors.

City wide 47 % of Detroit’s commercially zoned parcels are structure free; 13% are a vacant building. Nearly 62,000 firms located in Detroit; 50,000 are minority owned. Only 6,800 have employees; 1,435 or 21% are minority owned; of retail firms, only 11% are minority owned.

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**“Vacant industrial buildings, at times historic in character, provide space for economic, creative or productive reinvention.”**

**- Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan, Page 223**

## **Overview:**

Detroit’s vacancy, including that of industrial sites, is often seen as an overwhelming liability, but it may actually be part of a remarkable opportunity for transformation. Where the expanse of vacant land and vacant structures is considered too large for conventional reinvestment and reutilization strategies alone, an array of innovative programming opportunities may provide a new vision.

Detroit Future City will work with local, state and national partners to consider new futures for obsolete industrial sites that may yield results with global importance. From food production and food security, to energy generation, to alternative green and blue infrastructure, Detroit has the opportunity to emerge as a leader in land and building reutilization and urban transformation.

## **Obsolete Industrial Sites Goal**

Design pioneering approaches for the adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial sites by 12/31/21.

## **Strategies:**

### **Year One - Three**

- Create an adaptive reuse development prospectus for key industrial sites. Ensure resident engagement is integrated into adaptive reuse designs.
- Research funding availability and ownership models for adaptive reuse of obsolete industrial sites and facilities throughout Detroit.

### **Years Four - Five**

- Identify corporate partners and capital to begin execution of an adaptive use of one or more obsolete industrial sites.



# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**"When transformation is achieved in neighborhoods, by all appearances they will be competitive with their regional peers, but the means and methods to have achieved their transformation will be different." - Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan, Page 221**

## Overview:

The Neighborhood Element of the Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan promotes strategically repositioning Detroit neighborhoods into five types: Urban Mixed Use, Urban Live+Make, Urban Green, Traditional and Alternative Use. Associated with each neighborhood type is a series of strategies organized around addressing the quality of life issues specific to that neighborhood intended to help neighborhoods achieve their vision for a vibrant and more sustainable future.

As neighborhoods plan for their future, Detroit Future City will provide technical assistance, training and best practice research to help residents and community planners use the concepts in the Framework to develop a long-term, sustainable neighborhood.

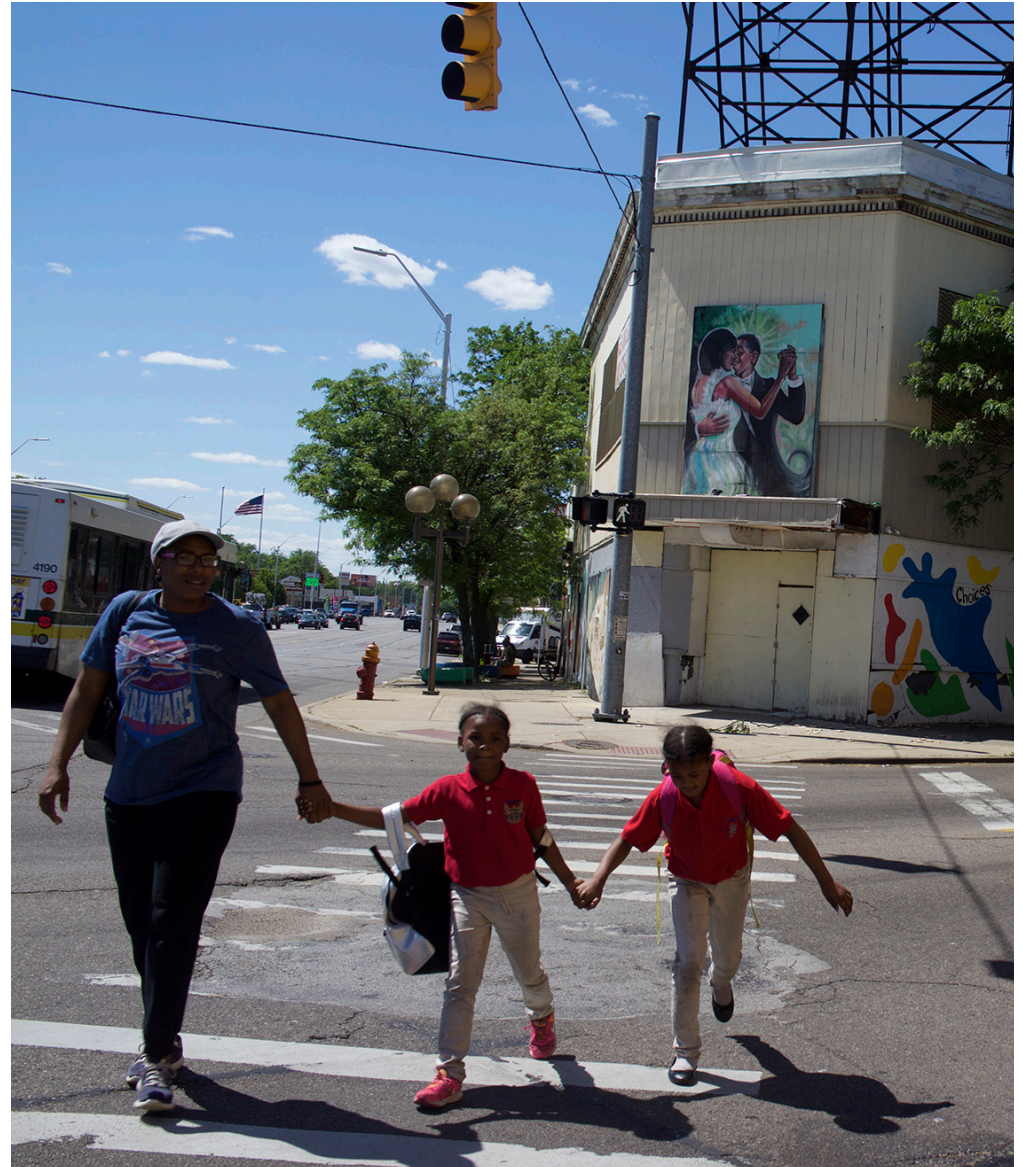
## Neighborhood Planning Goal

(CE) Provide technical assistance to at least six community-based planning and neighborhood improvement efforts by 12/31/19.

## Strategies:

### Year One - Five

- Educate and participate with planning agencies such as the City, CDAD and CDCs as well as residents on innovative ways to integrate concepts espoused in the DFC framework into community planning efforts.





# ORGANIZATION GOALS

## Overview:

Detroit Future City is embarking on an ambitious journey to ensure the ideas, strategies and approaches as described in the framework are kept relevant and implemented. To ensure the DFC vision comes to fruition requires a commitment to a series of strategic actions, a strong, diverse Board, talented and staff and a commitment to excellence. The organizational goals and strategies are designed to hold DFC accountable to Detroiters that are counting on our success.

**Goal: Business Plan:** Develop and begin to implement five-year plan and fund development strategy by 12/31/16

### Strategies:

#### Year One

- Identify key stakeholders, partners and funders that will influence and help finance the plan.
- Develop a fund development strategy to finance the plan.
- Integrate racial equity and civic engagement outcomes in the five-year business plan.

#### Years Two-Five

- Work with the Board of Directors to review and update the five year business plan annually.
- Conduct an ethnographic market analysis to fine-tune the racial equity strategies.

**Goal: Board and Staff:** Organize the staff, board and civic committees to execute and govern the strategic plan by 12/31/17.

### Strategies:

#### Year One

- Continue to analyze gaps in Board representation to maintain balance. Increase the number of Board members to 18 (including three executives and two community members).
- Organize the Board by committees in alignment with the strategic plan.
- Elect officers and committee chairs. Establish Board goals. Recruit non-board members to serve on programmatic committees.
- Develop a staffing plan required to implement the strategy; update annually.

**Goal: Progress Updates and Future Planning:** Keep the DFC framework relevant and the organization at the forefront as a thought leader.

### Strategies:

#### Year One

- Integrate Impact Detroit activities with strategic plan.
- Create a dashboard to track and evaluate implementation.

#### Years Two-Five

- Publish progress report; update existing conditions.
- Develop a series of supplemental guides to further update conditions, advance the framework, adopt innovations, address new challenges or take advantage of new opportunities.