

# DESIGN GUIDE: REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING REAL ESTATE AND COMMUNITY

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DESIGN

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DEVELOPMENT

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HOW DESIGN SUPPORTS  
DEVELOPMENT

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DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE,  
WELCOMING, &  
SUSTAINABLE PLACES



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## Strengthening the Built Environment Through Design

**This Guide was produced by Design Core Detroit** as one of a series of Guides to help people understand design and how it can help them be more successful in their endeavors. It seeks to inspire, inform, and advise.

**Design Core is an economic development organization** at the College for Creative Studies that champions Detroit design and stewards the city's designation as the first and only UNESCO City of Design in the United States. Designated in 2015, Detroit is one of 40 cities around the world using design to advance UNESCO's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Member cities share best practices, develop partnerships that promote creativity and the cultural industries, and work to strengthen participation in cultural life and integrate culture into urban development plans.

**This Design Guide embodies Detroit's UNESCO designation** by helping more people understand the value that thoughtful, inclusive design brings to development. Its purpose is to inspire collaboration between designers, developers, and the communities impacted by development projects—leading to healthier, happier communities in Detroit and beyond. Whatever your role or phase in the development process, this Guide is for you.





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Design Guide Rat Estate



## INTRODUCTION

**Design is everywhere. It's in our cars, in our homes, and on our phones. It's on our streets, in grocery stores, and throughout our parks.**

**Design is both beautiful and invisible. It's a series of decisions about color, shape, materials, and spacing, which we see, but also decisions about traffic flow, interaction, and emotions, which we may only feel.**

Done with intention and a community-focused approach, the design of our built environment, from single-family homes and factories, to public libraries and bus stops, creates places and spaces that are not only beautiful, but comfortable, functional, and welcoming for all.

There are professional designers trained to create these spaces, including architects certified to draw plans for buildings or landscapes, and planners who address how all the parts and places of a city work together. There are also experts, like engineers and contractors, trained to bring design into being.

And then, there are those who are inspired to take on these projects in the first place: developers. Development generally refers to the process of taking an idea from concept to reality. In real estate, this means the design and construction or rehabilitation of physical spaces and places.

Often, people embark on development projects because they have a vision or dream for a building or space in their neighborhood or city. Or, they develop property on behalf of a city or community organization charged with protecting the interests of residents.

Developers may want to fix up an empty building to bring it back into use, add value and vibrancy to their community, improve conditions in a neighborhood, or generate personal income, tax revenue, or profit for themselves or the municipality. Whatever the goal, developers ultimately carry the responsibility of managing the process and achieving success.

Whether they are new to development, or have made

a career of it, managing real estate projects means developers will be faced with hundreds of decisions, large and small, throughout the process. Trained designers can add great value and expertise to inform those decisions, and help realize the desired outcomes as efficiently and effectively as possible.

When developers who build or remodel our public and private spaces work closely with designers and current community residents from the very beginning of a project, great things are possible. However, like any partnership, to be truly successful these relationships require work. Through dozens of meetings and focus groups with planners, developers, community stakeholders, and designers, we have come to understand the many challenges experienced throughout the development process.

Developers repeatedly said that designers often don't appreciate the very real financial concerns associated with bringing a project to fruition. For example, since designers are likely not trained to understand or fully appreciate all the nuances of a real estate pro forma, i.e. financial statement, a designer may draw plans that aren't realistic for the project budget and include materials that aren't readily available or are too expensive. This can lead to the process taking longer than expected or requiring many changes, causing construction delays that cost developers money.

Designers, on the other hand, repeatedly said developers don't value the expertise they bring to

the table, and often view design as an afterthought, or something extra that can be cut from the budget to make the numbers work. They are often brought into a project that's already in progress and asked to solve problems that could have been avoided if they'd been consulted from the start. Designers also said developers often want something amazing, but frequently don't have realistic expectations or enough capital to achieve those results.

Residents and stakeholders, in turn, are often frustrated or angered at the lack of inclusion in planning and decision making. When they're not consulted or informed at all, or when they are presented with plans that have already been made and asked to sign off on them, an atmosphere of distrust and hostility surrounds the project. Without the input and support of current residents, projects may stall or even fail outright, which is bad for the developer and investors. Worse, projects get built that don't serve or even displace current residents, leading to gentrification.

We believe these are all problems that can be solved, and that if you plan accordingly and get everyone on the same page, the result will be great buildings and spaces that add value to the communities where they reside. This Guide is intended to help you initiate, develop, and manage relationships with professional designers and other collaborators to the benefit of your real estate development projects, large and small.





## Section 1

# What Is Design?

**12** Design Disciplines

**15** What a Designer Does

**16** Design Principles

**18** Design Solutions

**19** Design Should Inspire

**20** Beyond Aesthetics

**24** Hiring the Right Designer

## When you're finished with this section you will:

1. Have a basic understanding of design, design principles, and different types of design relevant to the built environment.
2. Know what you're paying for when you hire a designer.
3. Appreciate the importance of picking the right designer and know what questions to ask to find the perfect fit.

## Design Disciplines

Design solves everyday problems. It is a broad discipline, inclusive of many types. From this workbook, to the chair you're sitting on, to spaces, offices, and homes, designers shape the way our world works, looks, and feels. The focus of this Guide will be on those design disciplines that most heavily influence the built environment, and in particular, real estate and community development.

### Architecture

Design of buildings and structures

### Landscape Architecture

Design of what's outside the buildings and structures; greenspace design

### Interior Design

The practice of selecting and placing what's inside buildings and structures—colors, materials, ornamentation, and decoration

### Fabrication & Milling

Creating furniture, fixtures, or trim for buildings and structures

### Engineering

(Mechanical, Electrical, Structural, & Civil)

Designing a city or building's systems and structures

### Visual Design

(Graphics, Marketing, & Web)

Crafting the personality of the building or development through branding and storytelling

### Urban Design

The practice of planning cities and the systems and public spaces within them

### Design-Build Construction

A single firm taking on the roles and liabilities of both designer and contractor

#### PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS (RIGHT PAGE)

01. **Architecture** : Element Hotel designed by Patrick Thompson Design. Photo by John D'Angelo.
02. **Landscape Architecture** : Core City Park. A Prince Concepts development, designed by D.I.R.T. Studio. Photo by Chris Miel.
03. **Interior Design** : Alpine Dental Center designed by Reem Akkad. Photo by Carlson Productions.
04. **Fabrication & Milling** : Fabrication photo courtesy Floyd Detroit.
05. **Engineering** : Book Tower renovation. Photo by Rebekah Witt. Courtesy Bedrock.
06. **Visual Design** : New Order Coffee. Brand and graphics designed by Unsold Studio. Photo by Michelle and Chris Gerard.
07. **Urban Design** : Rendering of Bagley Shared Street by Living Lab. Courtesy City of Detroit.
08. **Design-Build** : The Monarch Club. Millwork design and build-out by Virtuoso Design+Build. Interior design by Patrick Thompson Design. Photo by Eric Perry.





## BREAKING DOWN "DESIGN-BUILD"

### Design / Build

Designing and constructing a space from start to finish; often led by a general contractor, not a designer.

### Design / Bid / Build

Often designed by an architect, who manages the general contractor from bidding through completion.

### Design / Build Interiors

Evaluation, pre-design, and build-out of inside spaces, including custom millwork, unique products and features, and value engineering.

Be sure to clarify what's included in your agreements with any contracted professional or firm.

"There are 3 key roles we see designers play that bring significant value to a project from our side of the table: translating design goals / policies of the public into a value-add for the developer, keeping the end use in mind to create a logical / practical space, and being realistic about what is financially feasible."

Sarah Pavelko, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation



## What a Designer Does

In general, designers are highly trained professionals who work across a wide range of mediums to help clients turn their ideas into goods, services, systems, and places. Designers don't just create things that look nice—rather, they facilitate a process to understand the desires, challenges, and opportunities at play in order to create solutions that satisfy both the client and the end user. Whatever process or type of product you're making or changing, the sooner you engage a designer in the project, the better your outcome will be.

This is especially true for the built environment. Architects don't create beautiful, functional, and welcoming buildings by simply coming in at the end to layer on visuals such as paint and materials. From the very beginning of a project, an architect's expertise can save developers time and money, and allow them to meet their goals.

Aside from the building itself, designers play an important role in navigating conversations with the many different players involved in a particular project, including contractors, city officials, and community stakeholders. Architects understand the local context and can help developers make their projects succeed in the specific market.

If the designer of choice is not a licensed architect in a particular state, a project will need to hire an architect of record in addition to a "designer." In situations like this, the "designer" is primarily responsible for the aesthetic, while the architect of record, using their knowledge of local zoning and code laws, takes on the technical portions, stamps the drawings, and assumes liability for the finished product.

### DO I REALLY NEED AN ARCHITECT?

"Though simplistic, a good rule of thumb I give developers is, if you look at your building and can't immediately tell if a wall is load-bearing or not, then you need an architect."

**Nate Barnes, Invest Detroit**

## Licensing

Becoming a professional architect begins with several years of undergraduate and graduate education, followed by years of real work experience as part of the Architectural Experience Program (AXP). After successfully completing the AXP, they take the Architect Registration Examination (ARE), which is more or less the final step, before completing any additional state-mandated licensing requirements. The entire process is highly competitive and can take several years.

Here are just a few ways architects and designers play a role early in the development process:

- 1 Advise on site selection to make sure you can build what you want where you want.
- 2 Explain how to make your space accessible and compliant with local building code.
- 3 Show how to reduce stormwater runoff and avoid costly fees.
- 4 Facilitate community engagement and use feedback to inform the design.
- 5 Select high-quality building materials and finishes that align with the developer's budget.

## Design Principles

This Guide will not teach you how to be an architect or an interior designer, but it will help you understand how these professionals think and respond to the needs of their client—in this case, the developer. Below are some key design principles that are often apparent in the buildings we love.

<b>Balance</b>	Visual symmetry and evenness
<b>Alignment</b>	Placing objects in order in relation to one another
<b>Repetition</b>	Patterns, materiality, and other building characteristics which are repeated
<b>Color</b>	Colors and shades of colors which interact with each other, the space, and the viewer
<b>Contrast</b>	A difference in color, materiality, or other distinct characteristics

### PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS (RIGHT PAGE)

01. **Balance**: The lobby in the Traver Building, A Bedrock property, designed by Pophouse. Photo by Eric Perry.

02. **Alignment**: The Monarch Club. Designed by Patrick Thompson Design. Photo by John D'Angelo.

03. **Repetition**: A bathroom in the David Stott Building. Designed by Patrick Thompson Design. Photo by John D'Angelo.

04. **Color**: Takoi. A Prince Concepts development in Corktown, designed by Ishtiaq Rafiuddin of UNDECORATED. Photo by Chris Miel.

05. **Contrast**: Detroit is the New Black. Designed by Gensler and Donut Shop. Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

"Design is the art of creating a place or environment that is attractive, that respects the context, and that sustains or supports the needs of the users."

**Aimee Zoyes, Zoyes Creative**









## Lumen Green Roof

Photo by Anton Grassl. Courtesy DTE Beacon Park Foundation.

## Design Solutions

Design alone cannot solve the world's problems, but the more we understand and apply it thoughtfully to the things we do and make, the more it reveals itself as a powerful tool to address the complex challenges facing our world, such as social inequity and global health.

Look at how climate change has influenced the way we build. As demand for eco-friendly building grows, and more cities adopt stricter requirements, architects and engineers help developers reduce stormwater runoff with rain gardens and green roofs, increase efficiency through solar panels and smart lighting solutions, and offer other ideas that save energy and money. It's not just the developer, but everybody—and the planet—that wins in this scenario.

Throughout this Guide, we will continue to explore ways in which design and designers can help to make places unique, desirable, and sustainable, while still meeting community needs and the developer's bottom line.



## DFC Rain Garden

Bioretention project in Viola Luizzo Park. Built by the Detroit Water and Sewage Department. Courtesy Detroit Future City.



## Pablo Davis Elder Living Center

Pablo Davis Elder Living Center solar panels. Courtesy Bridging Communities.





### Atwater Beach Shed

Courtesy Detroit Riverfront Conservancy

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## Design Should Inspire

Design done well welcomes and inspires those who visit a space. Development done well inspires people to rent space or purchase the project—at asking price. Effective design for the built environment marries these two needs to encourage curiosity while eliciting a sense of comfort and approachability. Walkable communities where folks can live, work, and play have now become the standard in urban design.



### True North

A Prince Concepts Development in Core City, designed by EC3.  
Photo by Chris Miel.

## Beyond Aesthetics

It is commonly understood that designers are creative people. What is less known is that design actually blends that creativity with technical expertise to solve problems within a set of constraints. In real estate development, those constraints are either set by a client (cost, square footage, uses, etc.) or the larger context (community needs, regional economics, neighborhood geography, local laws, etc.). When designers merge their technical expertise and creativity to solve problems within those parameters, the result is attractive, functional, and appropriate products, services, systems, communications, buildings, and environments that improve daily life for all.







Photo by Paul Taylor Films. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

## Creativity

Words used to define creativity often include original, imaginative, or new. Though those descriptions vary in definition, they nearly all suggest that creativity, like design, is a process, not simply an outcome. To be creative is to see existing things in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to connect previously unrelated ideas, and to visualize relationships between parts, pieces, or places that weren't there before. The creative process is invisible to those who engage with a brand, use a product, or visit a space, but the creativity of designers is felt by the end user.

## Technical Expertise

Design is the look, the feel, and the mechanics. This is the skill, the expertise, and the eye that developers pay for. Designers can see the big picture and visualize a final product, but also know how to navigate all the small decisions along the way that move a real estate project from concept to completion. Since developers want efficient buildings that maximize rentable square footage and minimize operating expenses, it stands to reason they can benefit from that technical expertise.

Architects and engineers can help developers make the most of their budget, while creating efficient, accessible, and code compliant buildings. Designers are able to:

- Suggest how to minimize heat loss and maximize natural light.
- Select mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems that are the correct size for the project.
- Offer creative solutions to reduce costs and remain within the project budget.
- Contribute extensive knowledge of materials and building techniques.
- Understand the ADA accessibility requirements to make spaces "visitable."
- Utilize universal design principles to create spaces that are accessible to the broadest set of end users.
- Suggest physical and visual cues to help manage foot traffic or facilitate connection.
- Ensure safety and structural requirements are met.
- Understand and solve for constraints created by local ordinances and building codes.

## Designing Within Context

Architects and designers can help developers create projects that will succeed in a particular place at a particular time. For example, post World War II, Detroit and many U.S. cities saw a strong middle class that was growing, increasing market demand for accessible family housing. Bungalow design and construction provided a design solution to the housing shortage problem in Detroit and throughout the country.

Today, consumers increasingly want to live in walkable communities, where jobs, goods and services, and entertainment are in close proximity. This is driving widespread demand for housing options in high-density areas. Millennials and baby boomers are the main demographic drivers of this trend. It's the designer's job to understand context and help the developer to build something that responds to current local demand.

Designers and developers must consider not only their target market, but also the existing community and users of the space. Inclusive design is more than being sensitive to community needs. It also incorporates local concerns and identities as an integral part of the design process. Inclusive design uplifts, rather than displaces, the existing culture.<sup>1</sup>

While working on a project, both developers and designers should keep in mind that designing a space that is welcoming to some may in fact not be welcoming to all. Interior design, branding, and marketing can send signals that either resonate with or alienate patrons. If the developer and designer are community outsiders, it becomes even more important to use an inclusive design approach. We will explore this concept further in Section 4.

1. [https://designcore.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DCD\\_COD-Monitoring-Report-2019\\_digital\\_LR-FINAL.pdf](https://designcore.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/DCD_COD-Monitoring-Report-2019_digital_LR-FINAL.pdf)





"Each project has a multitude of parameters that it must meet, and design is the method through which all of these opportunities are solved together to create a cohesive solution."

Brian Moore, Quinn Evans Architects



Rendering of The Old Redford Link in Old Redford, Detroit by Lorcan O'Hertlihy Architects (LOHA).





Owner of House of Pure Vin, Regina Gaines, worked with Christian Unverzagt of MIDTW to design her retail store on Woodward Ave. Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

## Hiring the Right Designer

Trust is a critical factor in all mutually beneficial professional relationships, including those between real estate developers and their project team. That trust is made possible by honest, clear, and reciprocal communication throughout the process. It starts before even entering into a contract. To ensure a successful design collaboration, set clear expectations and hire the right person or firm for the project.

### **STEP 1: Establish a realistic line item in your project budget for design services.**

Designers are professionals and deserve to be paid what their services are worth. As with most service providers, the more you expect them to do, the more you'll likely pay. Attempting to underpay your designer will limit the amount of time they can afford to spend on your project, which can lead to less thoughtful or less innovative solutions and / or Additional Services Rendered (ASR) invoices. ASR costs can be reduced significantly if the designer can afford to create a comprehensive and detailed design from the beginning. This is especially true if your project has complex site challenges, community issues, or budget constraints.

### **STEP 2: Clearly communicate your project needs and scope to identify designers with the kind of expertise and capacity needed.**

Post a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Scope of Work (SOW) to seek bids and start conversations about what you need and expect. Depending on the size of your project, they can range from relatively simple, to fairly complex, but should generally include details about items including budgets and existing constraints.

### **STEP 3: Research firms in your area that work on similar projects.**

Check out their websites or reach out to their references. Invite them to respond to your RFP or SOW, if they have not done so.

### **STEP 4: Identify a few interested and qualified designers based on their responses and your research, and invite them to an interview to determine which share your values, work style, and design philosophy.**

These interviews will help you decide which is the best fit for you and your project.

The exercises at the end of this section let you practice drafting a SOW and interviewing a designer to determine the best fit for you.

**BUT ISN'T DESIGN EXPENSIVE?**

"I would take a great architect with a limited budget over a bad architect with an unlimited budget any day. Great architects have a point of view and lead teams to create spaces that are both function- and design-driven."

**Moddie Turay, City Growth Partners**

"As we often say, anyone can be brilliant on an unlimited budget and with a blank sheet of paper. We seek out designers who are adept at seeing the value of what is already there and building on it."

**David Di Rita, Roxbury Group**

Architects and designers may offer services as a flat fee, as a percentage of construction costs, or on an hourly basis depending on the project. Actual fees depend heavily on local market conditions. Some things to consider are:

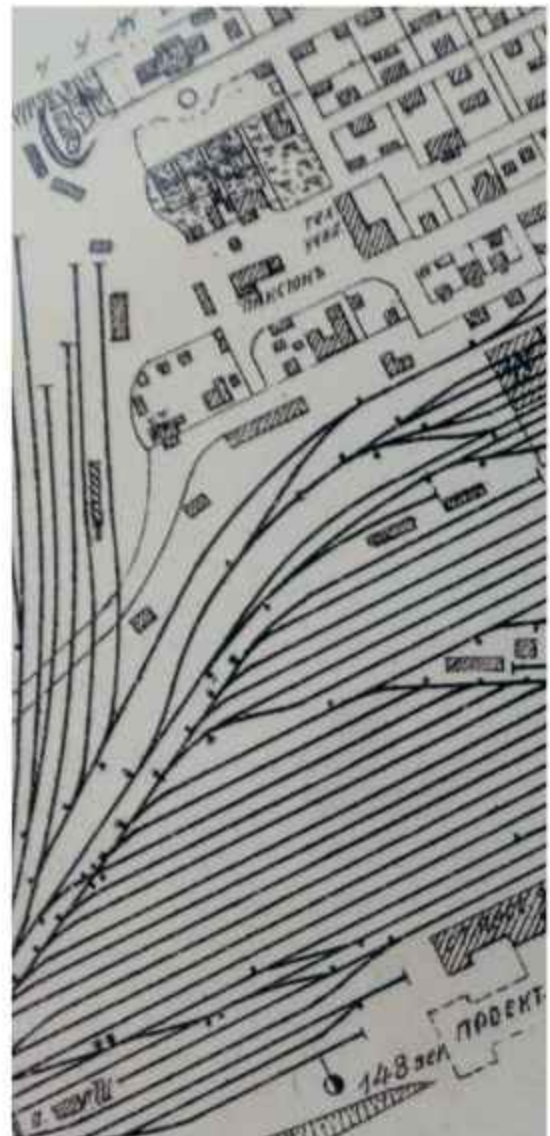
Fees can be influenced by project type, budget, scope, complexity, level of quality, value added, and individual firm brands.

Negotiated payment terms may include incremental distributions based on deliverables or milestone achievements.

Cost also depends on the level of involvement expected and negotiated, and can increase if you include the following in your Scope of Work:

- Design drawings (from schematic to approved for construction).
- Preparation of documents for permit applications.
- Coordination of construction team to ensure everyone knows what to build and how it should be built.
- Supervision of contractors throughout project process.
- Design-Bid-Build delivery.

Photo by Alex Brisbey on Unsplash





## THE VALUE OF DESIGN

"Paying for the best architect for one of our Washington D.C. multi-family projects led to a 10% increase in the unit yield versus the original architect that was commissioned for the project. Their fee increase of \$30,000 paled in comparison to the value created by adding 7 units to the project."

**Devon Caldwell, Inkwell Partners**

"In Minneapolis during the great recession when office space was 'on sale' for the rental market, tenants generally took the opportunity to move into 'better' buildings. The higher quality assets remained well-leased, while the more pedestrian buildings experienced vacancy."

**Elizabeth Kmetz-Armitage, City of Detroit, Housing and Revitalization Department**

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## Investing in Design Is Worth It

One of the biggest complaints often heard from developers about designers is that their proposed idea will take too long or be too expensive. Investing in a good designer will cost money and it does require your time, effort, and communication, but it is always worthwhile. By taking time up front, designers are able to create a better product for the developer that will help them meet target rent or sale prices, avoid costly delays due to regulatory issues, facilitate community participation and feedback, and prevent unanticipated problems that could be avoided with proper research.



Courtesy Capital Impact Partners.

## SCOPE OF WORK

A Scope of Work establishes clear expectations for a project, so all parties understand what work each party will perform and deliver, when it's due, and the agreed upon price.

**Briefly describe your development practice, including your brand and core values, if applicable:**

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**Explain the project for which you are currently seeking design services:**

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**What is the expected end result of your development project? Please check all that apply and include a brief description.**

**Project Use:**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single-Family Home     | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Building<br>(Offices, Retail, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duplex                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Industrial (Small-Scale Manufacturing)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Unit Residential | <input type="checkbox"/> Park   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-Use              |   |  |

**Construction Type:**

- |   |  |                                 |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addition         | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Reuse        | <hr/>                           |

**Description:**

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Provide a timeline for execution and completion of this project. Be sure to include when responses are due, dates for meeting any applicable milestones along the way, and a project deadline. Write milestone dates on the lines for all that apply.

### PROJECT MILESTONES

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bids or Proposals Due
- \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase of Property
- \_\_\_\_\_ Create Project Schedule
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Schematic Design
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Design
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Drawings for Permitting to Secure City Approvals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Close Financing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Construction Documents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize Architect's Involvement in Construction Administration
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Showroom
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open Project

What are the primary priorities you're seeking in the project? Think about what you want your building to be exceptional at and let that guide your selection process. Number in order of importance.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Economic (lowest possible construction costs and simple design)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Low Maintenance (quality construction details and energy efficient design)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inclusive (adheres to inclusive and / or universal design principles)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aesthetic (striking and unique design)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sustainable (design that is good for the environment)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cooperative (created with contractors you regularly work with)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unique (custom design that requires lots of research to create special solutions)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Do you know how much you can afford to spend for the services you're seeking? It can be a range, to leave room for discussion and negotiation, but should be realistic in terms of capacity and the scope of the project. Detail the amount below.

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Describe how you would like designers to respond to your RFP / SOW. Be sure to indicate what you expect them to include in the response, when it's due, and how to submit it.

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Many developers typically ask that a portfolio of relevant prior experience, firm overview (mission / values), firm structure and key staff, anticipated consultants, fee proposal, and project timeline are included. Describe what you would like to see from your designer.

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Add details about your development team's primary point of contact. It is important to include contact information so that interested designers know who to send their proposal to.

**Name**

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**Role**

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**Email**

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**Phone**

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Be prepared to share any additional information that may help the designers understand what you're looking for. This could include attaching examples of existing marketing materials, collateral, your logo, a link to your website, your real estate portfolio, etc.

## Stephanie White Architects – New Client Questionnaire

Designers often also ask some clarifying questions to determine if the project is a good fit for them. Here is an example of a New Client Intake Form from Architect Stephanie White.

# SWA

## NEW CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name

Address

Phone

How did you hear about SWA?

Have you worked with an architect before?

Have you done any kind of renovation or construction project before?

## PROJECT

Is the project a home, multi-family building, or other?

Is it an addition, renovation, or new build?

How many square feet is the project?

Do you have a contractor that you'd like to work with?

What's your desired timeline for construction?

Do you have arrangements for relocating out of your home?

What is your budget for construction?

What is the problem you are trying to solve with your project, or the driving purpose?

What was it about SWA that made you think it would be a good fit?

Would you like to schedule an in-person meeting, where I get to know you, your wants and needs, and take a look at the project and / or your ideas? Based on that information I can write a proposal for my services if we decide to move forward.

## QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWING DESIGNERS

During the interview process, you are trying to determine whether the person or firm:

- Has the expertise and experience you are looking for.
- Can deliver your project on time and within budget.
- Will work with you in a way that's compatible with your needs, personality, and preferences.

**The questions below can help guide your conversation and decide if the designer is the best fit for your project.**

### **What is your design philosophy?**

Here's the chance to talk about the vision this architect will bring to your project. Whatever is important to you should be important to your architect.

- Is your focus on sustainability? Preservation? Cost effectiveness?

### **What is your design process?**

Most architects follow an established path for each project, although that process varies slightly from firm to firm and project to project.

- What process can I expect throughout this project? What are the project milestones?

### **What projects have you done that are similar to this project in type, size, and complexity?**

You want to make sure the architect is comfortable with the size and complexity of the project you're proposing.

- Do you have portfolio examples that are similar?

### **Do you foresee any problems with this project?**

If you're dealing with a difficult site, a limited budget, or other complications, be up front. How the designer reacts to these challenges will tell you whether they're suited for the project.

- How would you solve these problems? Have you had similar experiences in the past?

### **Will I be working directly with you or someone else on your team?**

If it's a large firm, you will want to clarify who will be designing your project, and who your contact person will be.

- What is the experience and style of the person I will be directly working with?

### **How much time will the design process take?**

Be sure the architect has the time to devote to the project and can complete it within your timeline. Remember, the architect can account for their time, but not unexpected delays like a client's indecision or a contractor's scheduling conflicts.

- Will you be available to consult with my contractor throughout the process, if necessary?
- Can I expect a timely response to all inquiries?



**What type or form of design deliverables can I expect?**

The type of deliverable is not an indication of a "better" architect, but if you're more comfortable with one than the other be sure to bring this up.

- Will you present 3D digital renderings of the project or 2D plans and elevations?
- If appropriate for the size of your project, you might also want to ask about Building Information Modeling (BIM) or other types of digital models or presentations.

**Can you provide references for projects you've worked on that are similar to mine?**

The designer may be able to provide professional references from past clients or even show you buildings they have created or collaborated on locally.

- Do you have any work nearby that I could view?
- When you call their references, make sure to ask specific questions. Did this architect save you money? How did he or she handle conflicts? Was the project completed on time? What value did they bring to the project?

**Which parts of the design and development process will you specifically be accountable for?**

Be sure you're clear about which parts of the process you or someone else on your project will be responsible for versus your designer for tasks like securing permits or final certifications. Make sure both of you understand what is expected of the other.

- How will we divide responsibilities? How can I help you complete your tasks on time? What do you expect me to handle?

**Should I expect any additional costs along the way?**

This will help you make sure the designer understands what is included in your Scope of Work and your contract or agreement. This portion of the conversation should include a thorough discussion of budget and costs.

- What extra costs might you predict and why will they occur? How could we avoid these costs? Are there any suggestions you could make to cut costs?

**What is your fee, and how is it structured?**

Don't leave the interview without a firm understanding of what the architect's fees are, what they are based on, and how and when you will be billed.

- Will I pay for all services at the end of the project? Or pay for half at a predetermined midway point?

The information gathered from these questions will help you decide which designer to hire, but you may not want to rely on their answers alone. You should also ask yourself a few questions.

Did they provide honest, thorough answers that were easily understood?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they understand the size, complexity, and scope of your project?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Will they take pride in the project and see it through to the end?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Will they act as a partner and treat you with mutual respect?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you trust them to deliver what they promised on time and within budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Did you have a frank discussion about your budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

## GOOD, BETTER, BEST: WHAT MAKES A GREAT DESIGNER



### **GOOD: Has the necessary expertise to do the job.**

- Possess the appropriate industry credentials and is legally qualified to stamp drawings.
- Creates a building or space that is attractive.
- Can help define the project timeline and budget.
- Can ensure a project is built to code and the specifications set forth in the plans.



### **BETTER: Acts as a partner in the process and is committed to the project goals.**

- Negotiates a transparent and clearly defined Scope of Work and sets realistic expectations.
- Adheres to the timeline and budget and is accountable to the terms of the agreement.
- Speaks the developers language and communicates in a transparent and timely manner.
- Uses an iterative and collaborative approach to planning and problem solving.
- Leads community engagement sessions and advocates for the project at public hearings.
- Has impeccable knowledge of zoning and code laws, and other regulatory requirements.
- Incorporates expertise of current products, building techniques, and design trends.
- Designs functional and creative projects within all constraints.
- Helps manage the timing of construction sequences to save time and money and ensure safe, efficient, and properly maintained building systems, fire ratings, etc.
- Helps developer maximize square footage and add to the value of the property.
- Creates a space that respects the context of the place.



### **BEST: Serves as a facilitator and advocates for development that serves the existing community.**

- Practices and responds to authentic community engagement.
- Advocates for accessibility, inclusion, and sustainable development.
- Final product enhances the community and is accessible and welcoming to all.
- Helps neighborhood retain or increase in value without displacing existing residents.
- Preserves the positive history of a building or place by designing spaces that are supportive of the culture of existing residents.
- Finds solutions to address the needs of multiple constituencies, including the users of the building or space, its neighbors, and the city at large.
- Has a positive and cohesive influence on the built environment.
- Refines the plural voices of the community into a combined, shared objective that also meets the developer's needs.







## Section 2

# Real Estate Development

**37** Who Is a Developer?

**37** Types of Projects

**42** Policy Shapes  
Development

**44** Development Shapes  
a City's Identity

**49** Prioritizing Development  
Outcomes

## When you're finished with this section you will:

1. Understand the difference between traditional real estate development and community development.
2. Learn the different types and scales of real estate development projects.
3. Have an idea of how city planning and policies shape real estate development.
4. Understand the developer's priorities and how designers can help accomplish them.





Now that we understand and appreciate what designers do, let's take a closer look at the development side. Real estate developments come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny homes to international airports, and are created by developers as diverse as their projects.

Just as design happens within constraints, so too does development. Challenges from this perspective include, but are not limited to, budget and financing, contracts, insurance, legalities, and risk management. If designers are able to understand and address these concerns, they will demonstrate their value as a partner and increase their client's return on investment.

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Please Note: This is not a Guide for how to be a developer! If you're looking to learn more about how to become a developer, check out our list of additional resources, beginning on page 155.

## Who Is a Developer?

Developers can be neighborhood residents seeking to improve their communities, private actors looking to profit, or community-based organizations working on long-term sustainability plans. The objectives and priorities of their projects may vary, depending on whether the developer is a business, an individual career professional, or a hobbyist.

### Traditional Real Estate Development

Traditionally, the business of real estate development is led by large, for-profit companies that are motivated by the bottom line. More recently, there has also been a wave of development led by locally owned small and medium developers who often operate with a double-bottom line mentality, considering both personal financial gains and the wider social impact when determining the success of the project.

Development may also be structured as a fee-based partnership, where the land or building owner hires someone else to develop it. Payment can be based on a variety of factors including the percentage of the total project cost, hourly consulting fees, equity or ownership shares, or flat payments for achievement of project milestones.

### Community Development

Nonprofit or low-profit Community Development Corporations (CDCs) approach development holistically, often with a geographic or thematic focus. This type of development takes a people-centered approach that emphasizes the engagement of existing residents. Community development begins with the needs of the area and population the project aims to serve, and then creates projects to support them.

## Types of Projects

### Residential

Develop Detroit North End Project.

Courtesy Christian Hurtienne Architects.



### Retail

House of Pure Vin.

Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.





## Mixed-Use

### Mixed-Use Development.

Designed by Christian Hurtle Architecture. Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.



## Land

### Dequindre Cut Greenway.

Photo by Pravin Sitaraman. Courtesy Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.



## Medical

### Brigitte Harris Cancer Pavilion.

Courtesy Henry Ford Hospital.



## Parks and Recreation

### Mount Elliott Splash Park.

Photo by Marvin Shaouni. Courtesy Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.



## Office

### Pophouse conference room.

Photo by Desmond Love. Copyright Design Core Detroit.



## Hospitality

### Detroit Foundation Hotel.

Designed by McIntosh Paris Associates and Simone Deary. Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.



## Multi-Family

City Modern.

Developed by Bedrock. Photo by Kellin Wirtz.  
Courtesy Bedrock.



## Industrial

Focus: HOPE.

Courtesy Focus HOPE.



## Educational

University of Michigan Research Studio.

Designed by McIntosh Paris Associates. Courtesy University of Michigan.



## Municipal

Spirit Plaza.

Photo by Marvin Shabuni. Copyright Design Core Detroit.



## Adaptive Reuse

Magnet.

A former garage transformed into a restaurant in Core City Park. Developed by Prince Concepts and designed by Ishtiaq Rafiuddin of UNDECORATED. Photo by Chris Miel.



## Historic Preservation

Element Hotel.

A restored neo-Gothic structure in Midtown. Designed by Patrick Thompson Design. Photo by John D'Angelo.





"From my experience, the most successful development projects are those that incorporate the values, thoughts, and past planning efforts of the neighborhoods they reside in. When this is done, many times that neighborhood becomes the champion for that particular development."

Kimani Jeffrey, Detroit City Planning Commission

## Common Projects for Small- and Medium-Scale Developers

### Residential

Homes and Townhomes

- Single-family home
- Two-family flat (upper and lower flat)
- Duplex (2 side-by-side units)
- Fourplex (one building with 4 separate units)



### Small-Scale Commercial and Mixed-Use

Shops and Character-Filled Streets

- Boutique retail
- Small business offices (medical, dental, law, etc.)
- Apartments above shops
- Neighborhood bars and restaurants





### Medium- to Large-Scale Commercial and Mixed-Use

Housing for the Many with Ground-Floor Amenities

- Higher density housing, like one building with more than 4 separate units
- Production or tract housing, which is multiple new homes built in groupings with little or no customization options
- Buildings with amenities (parking structures, fitness centers, club rooms, etc.)
- Apartments or condominiums above commercial spaces
- Light industrial / small-scale manufacturing



### Historic Preservation

Renovating Older Buildings and Restoring Them to Their Original State

- Buildings with special requirements for improvements and rehabilitation
- Buildings within local, state, or national historic districts (some historic buildings may exist outside a historic district; consult the local planning department to verify)
- Buildings that qualify for Historic Tax Credits (an equity source for projects deemed historic by the National Parks Service)



### Adaptive Reuse

Architecture Repurposed and Reimagined

- Existing buildings converted to support new uses that meet current needs (a vacant factory transformed into a food hall, a school converted into housing, etc.)

Note: These projects can be challenging from a regulatory perspective, but new policies like Form-Based Code (see more on pg. 43) are making it easier.





Photo by Jesse Collins on Unsplash

## Policy Shapes Development

Local conditions and markets influence what and how a developer builds. Similarly, federal, state, and city governments must consider protection of existing assets and the goals and needs of constituents when setting policy related to the built environment.

Some regulations may affect specific parcels of land, such as designated wetlands or floodplains. Others relate to economics, like opportunity zones or community benefit agreements. While it's the developers job to understand all of the laws that could impact their plans, budgets, and final products, for the purpose of this Guide we will primarily focus on zoning and code requirements.

Policies affecting what and how things are built can be enacted to address the specific needs or concerns of a community or city. Examples include:

- If an area is struggling with population loss leading to vacant and neglected properties or empty lots, policies that seek to positively address those land use issues will likely be prioritized.
- To encourage bids from a more diverse pool of designers and contractors, policies can be enacted to reduce proposal requirements on public projects.
- Utility regulations and landlord or tenant laws that affect the operating budget of a finished project may influence what gets designed and built.



©Mapbox ©Openstreetmap (From <https://zoning.detroitmi.gov/>)

## Zoning and Code

Cities regulate what and where developers can build through building code, design and construction regulations, and zoning ordinance (which permits or prohibits various land uses in certain areas). Historically, cities took a single-use approach, designating large sections of the city for residential or industrial development only. Building code was equally rigid in its enforcement. This approach can make it difficult to create unique developments such as hybrid live-work spaces for creatives, light industrial spaces, or restaurants repurposed from former industrial spaces. Developers looking to do something “outside the box” could find themselves trapped in a long review process or bounced fruitlessly between city departments, thus forcing them to abandon their idea.

Today, more cities see a demand for mixed-use developments and are adopting a more open-minded approach as to how to reactivate space for today’s needs.

Here are a few examples of newer, more progressive policies being explored in Detroit and elsewhere:

- **Design Standards or Guidelines** — Many cities adopt either design standards (codified regulations) or recommendations (suggestions) to communicate the values and goals of a place. For example, in 2007, Seoul began developing public design guidelines to transform the city from one focused on development and growth, to a community concentrated upon culture and quality of life. Through a collaborative process that brought many stakeholders together, Seoul settled on the following guidelines: public spaces that prioritize pedestrians, cities and streets that are safe and convenient for mobility-impaired residents, and open spaces that improve sight lines and safety.
- **Form-Based Code** — Form-Based Code is an approach to zoning that is growing in popularity. Rather than focus on use (residential, commercial, etc.), this approach prioritizes a final form that is functional and beautiful. This allows for multiple uses supported within a block or single site to create places where people can work, shop, and play close to home.
- **Tactical Preservation** — This approach enables developers to tackle large sites, which are often industrial, in phases. By activating the site in pieces, the developer can begin to generate revenue streams that support the overall costs to complete the project.



## DEVELOPMENT SHAPES A CITY'S IDENTITY

From Art Deco, to Mid-Century Modern, to the present, Detroit is home to jaw-dropping skyscrapers, historic neighborhoods, and industrial giants that speak to the Motor City's roots and capture how community residents lived, worked, and dreamed.

The City of Detroit has a unique cultural and architectural legacy that has evolved over its 319-year history. However, a neighborhood is not just a grouping of buildings. It is also the culture—the sounds, the smells, the looks, and the feels of the space. Detroit has over 120 distinct neighborhoods, each with their own unique culture that is manifested in the local architecture. Every neighborhood in Detroit has its own identity, which has been created as residents engage with their built environment over time. When planning a development within an existing neighborhood, designers and developers need to learn about the land, the people, and the culture of the space they are trying to transform. Projects created in collaboration with the community can amplify the history and voices that comprise a neighborhood's existing identity.

Historic preservation recognizes that we should cherish the places that connect us to our past and make up our unique local character. There are dozens of historic districts in Detroit, within which development is governed by a strict set of regulations to ensure that the integrity of the existing neighborhood is preserved.

**Let's take a closer look at some of Detroit's historic places. →**

"Anytime historic rehab. becomes a challenge, the creative problem solving of design becomes invaluable."

**Brittney Hoskiw, Michigan Economic Development Corporation**

"Start from the perspective of the building."

**Rebecca "Bucky" Willis, Bleeding Heart Design**



### Indian Village

Indian Village was developed in the early 20th century, and has been home to many notable Detroiters, from Edsel Ford to Jack White. Many of the homes were built by prominent architects such as Albert Kahn, Louis Kamper, and William Stratton, and include tilework from Detroit's Pewabic Pottery, one of the nation's oldest ceramic studios.

Photo by Marvin Shaouni.



### Lafayette Park

One of the first urban renewal projects in the country, Lafayette Park is a residential community east of Downtown Detroit that contains the largest collection of residential buildings designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in the world.

Photo by Dante Stella.





## Livernois

Known as Detroit's avenue of fashion, this commercial thoroughfare on the city's Northwest side historically catered to wealthy Detroiters with luxury fashion and world-class entertainment. Today, Livernois offers an eclectic mixture of longtime business owners and newer endeavors including music and entertainment venues, hip restaurants, retail, galleries, and more.

Photo by J Singleton.



## Corktown

Corktown is the oldest existing neighborhood in Detroit, taking its name from County Cork, Ireland, since a large number of Irish immigrants settled there after fleeing the Great Irish Potato Famine in the 1840's.

Photo by Marvin Shaouni.



### Belle Isle

Belle Isle is an island park in the Detroit River bordering Canada. The City of Detroit commissioned American urban park designer Frederick Law Olmstead to work on the development in the late 19th century.

Photo by Dante Stella.



### Eastern Market

One of the oldest continually-operating public markets in the country, Eastern Market is Detroit's hub for fresh food. Over 40,000 people visit each week for the Saturday morning farmers market.

Photo by Desmond Love.





## Prioritizing Development Outcomes

By definition, real estate development implies either significantly changing land or buildings, or creating something new altogether. As various phases of this process depend on one another and often overlap, this adventure is risky, and can get messy and complicated. However, if done right, real estate development can be very rewarding.

While each developer and each project have their own specific goals, at the end of the day, all developers need their finished products to do four things:

- 1 Comply with regulations and requirements.
- 2 Be accepted and recognized as a part of the community. Community impact can include beautification, increased access to amenities, environmental sustainability, or local economic and employment opportunities.
- 3 Attract target end users.
- 4 Achieve financial gains, which can include increased property value and profits, not just to repay investors and debtors, but also to realize a reward for the developer's work and risk.





Atwater Beach. Courtesy Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.

Additionally, individual developers or projects may have other goals, such as solving a social or environmental challenge, that drive decision making and outcomes. Here are a few ways developers may classify priorities and measure success for their projects:

#### Bottom Line

→ financial outcome

#### Double Bottom Line

→ financial outcome

→ social impacts

#### Triple Bottom Line

→ financial outcome

→ social impacts

→ environmental outcomes

"A successful project is one that fills a gap—whether it's in the built environment, or in the local market—and is responsive to the needs of the people who live and work in the immediate area."

**Nate Barnes, Invest Detroit**





Notice, all three bottom line outcome options include financial considerations. Regardless of other priorities, unless a developer can afford to lose money, all projects must "pencil out." This means the cash flow illustrated on the pro forma, or the project's financial statement, must be positive.

From there, developers must ask themselves which of these bottom line outcomes best fits the mission, vision, and goals they've outlined, and how that determination will influence decision making throughout the project. If, for example, the goal is a triple bottom line, then it wouldn't make sense to sacrifice an environmental component such as solar panels because they decrease the overall profit on a project. Bottom lines have to be set and budgeted for at the beginning of the project to ensure a successful outcome.

As the conductor of the entire operation, the developer is the one ultimately responsible for establishing clear priorities and balancing good design with a realistic budget. While guided by careful planning, expertise, and intuition, they also have to respond in real-time to market realities and input from the design, construction, and other professional services teams. This can require a quick decision on one item that may impact another part of the project down the road. This is made easier if the entire project team is on the same page and uses the agreed upon priorities as a decision matrix throughout the project.

For example, opening up a wall during construction may expose the need for updated wiring. This would require a change in the electrical plan and price, which will likely impact the timing and budget of other areas.

As issues like this occur—and they will—developers must be able to quickly and clearly articulate their decisions, and the potential implications, to everyone on the team. They must ensure all of the different players—community, municipality, design and construction teams, and lenders—are in sync throughout the process. Keeping the team aligned and adapting to changing circumstances can be hard, but it helps if the developer has started with a clear definition of success and has communicated that definition to all partners, especially the community. Keep channels of communication open throughout the project, not just in the beginning or at approval time!





The END Studio team preparing for a client meeting. Courtesy Elise DeChard, AIA / Owner + Architect, END Studio.

## PREPARING FOR THE FIRST MEETING WITH YOUR DESIGN TEAM

The design process starts with discovery. To realize your vision and help achieve your goals for the project, the designer needs to fully understand what they are. You can expect a lot of questions about what you need and want, so the entire team can be on the same page about constraints and opportunities in the design. To best prepare for those early conversations, please detail your answers to the questions below.

**What is the intended use of the space(s)? Be sure to include each individual area in and around your building, including any residential or commercial units and outside spaces.**

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**What do you know about the residents, businesses, employees, or customers who will occupy the space(s)? Provide as much detail as you can about your target end user.**

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**What functions will be performed in each space? Will apartments need individual washers and dryers, for example? Will commercial tenants require specific areas or zones for point of sale, food preparation, or employee meetings? Can some of these activities share space?**

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**How much room do you anticipate end users needing for each activity they will perform?**

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Will the space need to accommodate any short- or long-term future plans or changes, such as project phasing, future development, sustainability goals, or evolving tenant needs?

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Which will you use to make decisions and measure the success of this project?

☐

Bottom Line

→ financial outcome

☐

Double Bottom Line

→ financial outcome

→ social impacts

☐

Triple Bottom Line

→ financial outcome

→ social impacts

→ environmental outcomes

What are the primary priorities you're seeking in the project? Think about what you want your building to be exceptional at and let that guide your selection process. Number in order of importance. This should be consistent with your agreed upon SOW.

\_\_\_\_\_ Economic (lowest possible construction costs and simple design)

\_\_\_\_\_ Low Maintenance (quality construction details and energy efficient design)

\_\_\_\_\_ Inclusive (adheres to inclusive and / or universal design principles)

\_\_\_\_\_ Aesthetic (striking and unique design)

\_\_\_\_\_ Sustainable (design that is good for the environment)

\_\_\_\_\_ Cooperative (created with contractors you regularly work with)

\_\_\_\_\_ Unique (custom design that requires lots of research to create special solutions)

Other

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**You can also help your designer begin working on the project by clearly and quickly articulating your vision. Consider bringing the following to the first meeting:**

- Images of what you like and don't like. Use magazines, newspapers, advertisements, and the internet for inspiration. It helps if you can say what you specifically like about the image or specifically what you don't.
- Any pictures, floor plans, or other documentation you have for the property or building, both inside and out. Include specific boundaries of the property and any zoning or site restrictions you may already be aware of. Discuss aspects you would like to preserve or change.

**Share existing assets, documentation, or constraints that are relevant to the design of the project. This could include whether you're still seeking site control, if the building or lot is in a historic district, or anything else that could impact material selection, timeline, or budget.**

**Documents:**

- ☐ Property Survey
- ☐ Legal Property Description
- ☐ As-Built Drawings
- ☐ Geotechnical Reports
- ☐ Environmental Reports
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Information:**

- ☐ Ownership Information
- ☐ Zoning Designation
- ☐ Historic District Designation
- ☐ Sustainable Objectives
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

The documents listed above are required to start most projects, and are the client's responsibility to provide. Prospective developers may not have all of them when selecting a designer, but will have to obtain them eventually. The information items listed above would all be helpful for a prospective developer to be aware of or thinking about prior to hiring a designer, though they can be discussed throughout the process.





## Section 3

# How Design Supports Development

**59** The People Involved

**60** Setting Yourself Up for Success

**62** Phases of the Development Journey

**63** How Designers Support the Development Process

**When you're finished with this section you will:**

1. Have familiarized yourself with the wide range of professionals involved in development.
2. Know how to get your project and your team off to a great start through communication.
3. Be able to anticipate and prepare for potential challenges at every stage of development.
4. Understand the value designers bring to the process.



"Design in real estate development is a way to preserve the positive history of a neighborhood and is pleasing and supportive of the culture of the people."

Patricia Dockery, Stafford House, Inc.

"Building a network of capable design professionals is essential."

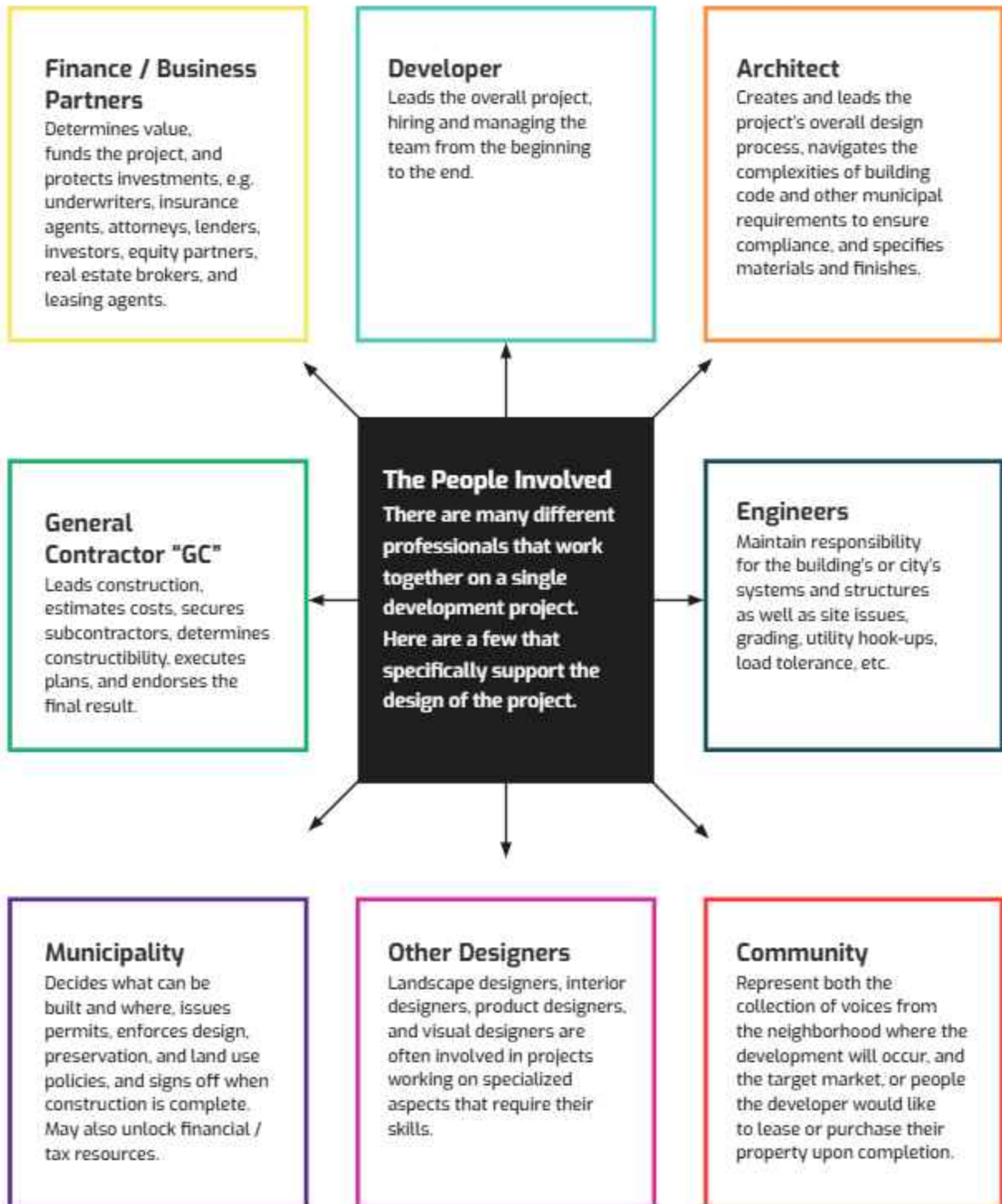
Russell Baltimore, City of Detroit, Planning and Development

Now that we have a solid understanding of design and development, it's time to look at how they interact with one another over the lifetime of a project. Aided—and complicated—by the many people and perspectives on a development team, projects can often take several years to break ground, and still longer to complete, appreciate, and sell.

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While this section breaks down each phase of development as a separate function, in reality, it's nearly impossible to draw clear lines between when one phase is complete and another begins.

This section hopes to provide a bird's eye view of the journey and the people involved in bringing a development to life. Managing the team, while continuously moving your project forward and balancing the very real constraints of time and money is a delicate dance, which the developer must perfect through experience.





## Setting Yourself Up for Success

To start, it's critically important to assemble the right team for each project. You may know a designer or electrical engineer personally, but their area or level of expertise might not be right for the size and scope of your project. It's important to hire professionals with the right experience and capacity who are the right fit for the job. As you gain experience, you will be able to develop a strong go-to network of industry partners to choose from for each project.

Identifying and securing people with the right skill set is only the beginning. Throughout the life of the project, a developer will be tasked with managing the interests and opinions of each member of the team to get the desired results, delivered on time, and within budget. It helps if you can get everyone on the same page before you begin. To set yourself up for success, the importance of the following cannot be overstated.

## Establish a High Level of Trust



Practice open, clear, timely, and transparent communication in all directions.



Ask and encourage lots of questions, and make sure everyone understands the answers.



Share information including goals, budgetary constraints, and milestone deadlines.



Check for clarification whenever you need it.

## Make a Plan and Set Clear Expectations



**Make sure everyone understands the goals and priorities for the project.**

How will the tenants you hope to attract influence decisions about finishes and fixtures? If your goal is a triple bottom line outcome, will those decisions change?



**Draft a detailed Scope of Work for each partner.**

What are the deadlines for milestones along the way? When do changes and overages need to be approved? What is the process for this? (See page 27 for a SOW worksheet.)



**Understand the context of the street, community, and city you're working in, and be sure everyone on the team knows how it relates to their portion of the project.**

Who lives here now? What's the history of the place? How will your project fit in with existing buildings and spaces?

## Establish a Realistic Budget



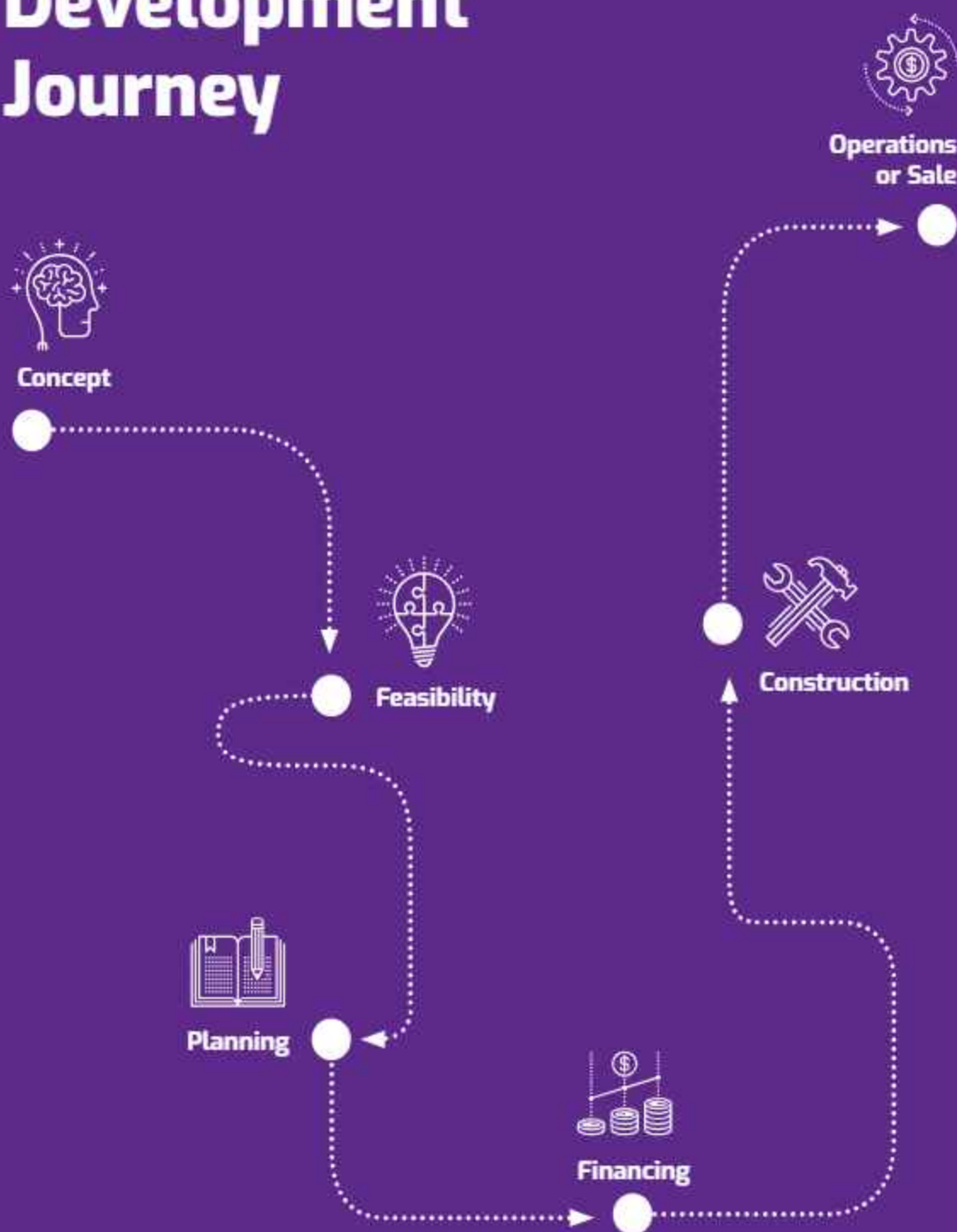
**Understand the difference between budget and cost. Budget is how much money you actually have to spend. Cost is how much money it will actually take to do what you are asking.**

Whether renting or selling, what will you have to charge to meet debt or profit obligations or goals? How do those numbers influence design decisions?

The rest of this section dives deeper into how designers and developers work in tandem throughout the development process to create and construct the type of buildings and spaces we want to live, work, play, and be in. This will help you better understand a variety of perspectives, processes, and practices, and see examples of how they all come together to create inspiring and functional places for all.



# Phases of the Development Journey



### **How Designers Support the Development Process**

The development process is not linear, and phases can overlap and be revisited throughout the process as the project evolves. Throughout every phase, designers can help developers execute a successful project by ensuring compliance, engaging with the community, understanding local context and market demand, and ultimately producing something that will be an asset to the people that live in and around it for years to come. Let's take a closer look at what happens in each phase of the development process and hear from industry experts to better understand how design adds value to the process, and where challenges may arise.





## CONCEPT

### DEVELOPER

The developer has an idea for a project, seeks site control, outlines their goals and target market, estimates costs, and prepares a preliminary site plan.

### DESIGNER

Designers begin to engage with the community, research zoning and code regulations, and produce preliminary site plans and schematic drawings.

## Potential Challenges

- Working with limited information.
- Distrust or contention from existing residents.
- Hiring designers too late to plan around or prevent challenges.

## How Can Designers Help?

- Facilitate community collaboration.
- Conduct market studies.
- Provide ideas for creative and optimal site use.
- Contribute material and technology suggestions.
- Assist with budget estimation.
- Create realistic, feasible plans.
- Consider accessibility and sustainability specifications.
- Assist with communicating vision to municipalities and investors.

In inclusive design, "Highest & Best Use," can be defined as, "a legal use of land that produces the highest economical value, is physically possible, and aligns with a community's goals and values."

Kimani Jeffrey, Detroit City Planning Commission

"The biggest challenge is understanding the full potential of a property. For example, seeing that an old department store can be re-purposed as a mixed-use building by losing square footage to an atrium that brings sunlight to the dark interior of the building."

Lis Knibbe, Quinn Evans Architects

During this phase of design, also known as Schematic Design, architects analyze local zoning and building code to determine the type and size of project allowed on a particular site. If the proposed idea does not conform, they let the developer know how many additional approvals are required, and how much extra time and money this will add to their projections.

On a macro level, designers help visualize how a project will fit within the context of the block, street, neighborhood, and city. On a micro level, they can help demonstrate how lighting, landscaping, furniture, or other elements will create attractive and functional spaces that are appropriate for that context.

End users may be most interested in current trends and performance of the building, but designers can help developers see the building's longevity, and advise on how to build for the future. It's important to consider if what you're building now will resonate with the community in 20–30 years.

## Now Is the Time

- Walk the site and the neighborhood with the entire team early on, especially architects and general contractors. They can help identify hidden structural issues that could cause problems and cost time and money later. As a team, talk through many possible development scenarios to determine the most creative and best use of the space.
- Accessibility, sustainability, social inclusion, and preservation should be discussed from the start to ensure they're included and prioritized in the end product. Designers can help break down fear and misconceptions about cost and other barriers to these goals.
- Begin the community engagement process by sharing drawings or renderings at community events, with residents and businesses, and across social media to get feedback and solicit ideas.
- Seek site control. If you don't already own it, the land or building should be secured (under contract / purchase agreement), which means that you have the right to purchase it. Negotiate as much time as you can to do the due diligence. Legal counsel is key to this step.
- Get a baseline understanding of your costs for the project and the rents or income possible from the finished product. Use your bank and designer as resources during this process.

"The best designers listen, provide you with a menu of options based on what they hear, and walk you through the pros and cons of each."

**Martha Potere, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation**

"Good design processes that set project goals early can help control costs, impact resident health, improve community cohesion and morale, and much more. Design processes that meaningfully engage the community can also create community resilience, an invaluable asset."

**Carrie Niemy, Enterprise Community Partners**



## Which drawings are you getting and what can you do with them?

- Schematic or concept designs are preliminary. The budget estimates derived from them are general assumptions and carry roughly 50% confidence in actual costs.
- Construction drawings on the other hand, which come later, are specific to the building site, get stamped by the city for permit approval, and equate to about 90% confidence in cost.

It's important to understand there are not only legal / liability connotations to the naming of these drawings, but also very practical reasons to clarify which you're requesting, paying for, and getting from your designer(s) at each stage of the development process. These clarifications are important for two reasons:

- Conceptual renderings can be misleading because they show complete visions for a building or space, and each item pictured will not necessarily be included in the final project. These misconceptions can harm the relationship between developer, designer, contractor, and community.
- When financing and investment expectations and decisions about pricing and budget are made from schematic drawings, then the cost based on actual construction drawings is higher, aspects are often cut to meet the original number, and plans may be compromised.

### PRO TIPS

Begin with the perspective of the building or lot itself. Decide if it fits with your plan, budget, and desire for the project. Gather form, massing, and cost estimates first, and then work on the look and feel.

Do not design and develop places and spaces to attract a potential new market while ignoring the interests, needs, and economic realities of people already living there. Show true respect for the people who reside in the neighborhood and help preserve the place in a manner that suits them.

Take advantage of your city's pre-development design review, if available, to understand expectations and address any concerns early on.

\* The City of Detroit Planning and Development Department, for example, offers a Concept Plan Review (CPD) as part of their comprehensive review process.



Courtesy Capital Impact Partners.

### HIGHEST AND BEST USE

"The reasonable, probable, and legal use of vacant land or an improved property, which is physically possible, appropriately supported, financially feasible, and that results in the highest value."<sup>2</sup>

2. [www.duncanbrown.com/highest-and-best-use](http://www.duncanbrown.com/highest-and-best-use)





## FEASIBILITY

### DEVELOPER

**The developer hires experts to verify initial assumptions about legality, market demand, economics, and property condition, then refines their plan accordingly.**

### DESIGNER

**Designers advise on compliance, conduct market analyses, seek input, help communicate vision, and think critically and creatively about what's possible at the site.**

## Potential Challenges

- Working with assumptions and limited information.
- Complications due to delayed community, civic, and partner engagement.
- Community distrust when optimistic early schematic plans are changed.  
*Early schematic plans, which may include every desire of the developer and the community, are often visionary and not always feasible to build and operate in the long run. If they are shared with stakeholders and city officials and then changed, it can erode trust.*
- Funding complications due to disparate property appraisals based on inflated or depressed markets.  
*Disparate property appraisals can impact funding options. In a down real estate market, mortgage lenders and other finance partners, looking only at past and present conditions, may need to be convinced of the economic potential of a project, which may require pre-leasing units.*

"To be a developer with purpose requires a very thoughtful approach to income targeting, spatial planning, public spaces, commercial / retail attraction, and community / event programming. This work requires close collaboration with community organizers and city staff to gather data, forge partnerships, and deliver comprehensive solutions to community needs."

Jill Ferrari, Renovare Development

## How Can Designers Help?

- Conduct customer discovery and community research to ensure the project is appropriate.
- Present new estimates, design details, and material options to adapt to project constraints.
- Help developers improve long-term marketability by thinking strategically about high-level concepts.
- Help developers communicate their vision to investors, city officials, and neighborhood stakeholders.

## Now Is the Time

- Conduct market research and facilitate community engagement to determine local context and market demand.
- Collect and analyze data, including market demographics, income and education levels, and residential and commercial rental and occupancy rates.
- Research regulations and create a plan to receive necessary approvals and maintain compliance.
- Create an estimate of future operating costs and how the building or site will perform.
- Work with a qualified consultant to perform a Phase I Environmental Assessment to determine if the site is safe for the planned use, or if remediation is required. Baseline Environment Assessments (liability protection for new or prospective owners or operators of contaminated property) and Due Care (reasonable efforts to avoid harm to others) may also be necessary, if contamination is discovered.
- Refine timeline, pro forma, and financial projections based on findings from research and assessments. See Appendix 04 for examples of some typical financial statements that make up a real estate pro forma, including Sources and Uses of Funds, Income Projections, and Operation Costs.



### PRO TIPS

You need knowledge of and connection to the space to be successful. Discover what's needed and what the economic condition of that neighborhood can realistically support.

Based on your market research, think of your ideal future tenant and the feasibility and cost of specialized needs they may have like ventilation, temperature control, loading dock angles, electrical wiring, truck access, freight elevators, etc. and plan to build accordingly.

Be sure you have the technical and professional skills available to manage the proposed project to completion.

If you are able to, test your concept with pop-ups and building activations before committing 100% to ensure your idea will work on that site.

You can never do enough due diligence and research. Be prepared for this process to take some time, because it often raises additional questions. Build in a minimum of 90-120 days to study the market and determine if you want to move forward with the project, and use accountants and other consultants and resources. Compare all of your findings to your original projections to determine if the project still makes sense economically.

**"Every question asked up front is one less obstacle later."**

**Anonymous Workshop Participant**

**Ask yourself the following and answer honestly.**

- Can I manage this project financially?
- Do I have the cash, credit, or other financial resources to see it through? If not, who are my potential partners?
- Have I factored in both the development cost and the cost to operate the building post-construction?
- Is my post-construction operating plan realistic?

See the worksheet on the right for more important questions to ask and answer before moving ahead with any project.

## THE DEVELOPMENT TOP 10

Questions developers should ask and answer about their projects before moving ahead.

1. Can the market support this idea and does it make sense?

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2. What populations are we serving and why?

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3. What housing or retail is most needed and how do we attract that?

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4. What are the demographics, including age, income level, and education levels of the area?

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5. What is the competitive business climate like in the area?

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6. What does the existing real estate landscape look like and what's missing?

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7. What are construction costs in the area, including labor?

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8. What is the environmental history and current condition of the property?

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9. What are the daily traffic counts in the area?

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10. How much income can the property realistically produce?

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Data obtained through appraisals and market studies will not sufficiently inform a neighborhood developer on all of these items. Other sources include, but are not limited to: city government, community organizations, residents and community groups, public libraries, and databases including Demographics Now and Business Decision (check what's available through your public library).





## PLANNING

### DEVELOPER

The developer finalizes site control, signs off on the design and construction documents, which specify exactly how the project will be built, refines the budget, prepares funding and incentive appeals, and hires the rest of the team.

### DESIGNER

Designers work closely with contractors, city officials, and the community to finalize building design and determine constructibility. With a clear concept and confidence in its feasibility, they also provide price estimates, apply for permits, and complete the technical construction documents to take to bid.

### Potential Challenges

- Poorly timed or executed hiring decisions or on-boarding processes.
- Friction or distrust among team members.
- Disagreements about the best use of a limited budget.
- Feasibility of unique design elements.
- Conflicting design objectives.
- Conflicts and cost increases due to lack of knowledge about city regulations or processes.
- Attempting to integrate community input into the developer's predetermined design.

"The biggest design challenge during the planning phase is balancing project costs with the ability to finance those costs. This requires that the project maximize revenue production potential, while meeting the requirements of gap funding sources such as historic tax credits, low income housing tax credits, new market tax credits, and others."

Lis Knibbe, Quinn Evans

## How Can Designers Help?

- Design the project to overcome any regulatory constraints.
- Detail improvements to the lot in a site plan.
- Provide renderings that communicate the vision.
- Help developers build relationships with city decision makers and navigate the regulatory process.
- Support the ongoing process of understanding the local context through community engagement.
- Select, design, or build fixtures and finishes that ensure accessibility.
- Advise on structural elements of the site that could affect compliance or future operating costs, like stormwater runoff.
- Create a strong brand identity and marketing assets to attract the target market.
- Provide specific design expertise for a particular project goal, like sustainability or tenants aging in place.

The process to get the necessary approvals from municipal bodies always takes time. Examples of situations that require special permissions and can extend the project timeline even more than usual may include:

- ① The project parcel isn't large enough to incorporate enough on-site parking to meet city zoning requirements.
- ② The parcel isn't zoned for the desired use, building size, or density.
- ③ The site isn't within public entitlement zones or doesn't qualify because of its design or use.
- ④ The site is in a historic or other special zoning district that requires additional layers of approval.

"Developers can leverage designers' expertise in the reconfiguration of a site plan to meet city requirements. Architects can also publicly vouch for the feasibility of a project."

Nate Barnes, Invest Detroit

## Now Is the Time

- **Use the extensive knowledge and experience of designers to ensure people can use and move through the space as intended.** For example, a designer trained in acoustics can advise on restaurant design to ensure the space is not too loud for patrons.
- **Hire tradespeople who live and work in the area.** One way to do this is to connect with a local workforce development group. Some cities require a certain percentage of local labor on large projects, especially if you're seeking government incentives, so this practice is not just good for the community, it's good for business.
- **Work closely with your designers and engineers in this phase,** known as Design Development (DD), to lay out mechanical, structural, plumbing, and electrical systems, and better understand the constraints around budget, availability of material, local climate, and more.

Understand the context of a building or neighborhood from a human and historical perspective.

- How does the project support existing residents' needs?
- Does this plan uplift or displace the current community?
- Are there negative impacts of the project that need to be avoided?

### PRO TIPS

Be adaptive and able to change. Expect roadblocks, but also keep an eye out for new opportunities.

Timing is real, and time is money in development. Make sure to closely manage your time and the timing of the project.

Schedule regular check-in meetings with all team members to stay aligned and aware of roadblocks or opportunities that may exist.

Everything takes longer than expected in the planning and timing of the permitting process, so understand the steps and plan accordingly. These requirements may completely kill or dramatically alter a concept.

A strong brand identity personifies the development, giving it character that distinguishes it from a sea of others. It should protect and uplift the neighborhood's current identity to avoid alienating local residents. Check out Design Core Detroit's "Design Guide: Neighborhood Business," in the resources section to take a deeper dive into how to work with professionals to create an effective brand identity and online presence.







## FINANCING

### DEVELOPER

The developer identifies and appeals to lending and investment partners and researches and applies for local, state, or federal incentives. They then modify their plans accordingly, and secure the cash and other financial resources needed to complete the project.

### DESIGNER

Designers help estimate costs and modify the budget to meet investor demands, adjust designs, and prepare materials to communicate and sell the vision.

## Potential Challenges

- Difficulty proving future economic potential and obtaining financing, particularly in areas where real estate values are inconsistent from block to block.
- Financing challenges due to insufficient owner capital, no record of previous success, or approvals based on the developer's income rather than actual project costs.
- Inability to secure gap funding.
- Project delays due to rigorous local, state, or federal incentive requirements.
- Disruption of capital due to lack of investor and stakeholder confidence caused by project delays, regulatory variance requirements, and more.
- Systems, fixtures, and feature decisions based on current budget pressures that have long-term implications to marketability, revenue, operating expenses, and sustainability.
- Bad pricing and budget decisions based on unrealistic quotes.
- Community distrust if the original concept changes without their input.

"From my experience, most good ideas aren't traditionally profitable in the time-frame and scale needed for financing. Often, financing is only available to people outside the community. We need new ways to measure the success of a project that can incorporate its social value, and more investors willing to work with those projects."

Stephen Barcus, Olde City Builders

## How Can Designers Help?

- Create attractive written materials and drawings that help the developer tell the project's story.
- Propose finishes and construction solutions that will help make the case for realistic budgets and financing, while maintaining project integrity.
- Provide creative solutions for how to make low-cost materials have a high impact visually.
- Propose innovative new materials and / or new ways of building that may lower costs, accelerate the rate of completion, reduce environmental impact, and more.

Constructing a project often requires sums of money the average developer alone cannot float. Up to this point, the developer was likely either relying on personal funds, investors, or a pre-development loan to fund the project expenses. However, moving forward with construction and completing the project generally requires securing additional capital.

This phase may be referred to as "building the capital stack" or "structuring the deal," and generally includes securing some combination of owner investment, debt and equity financing (from traditional banks, credit unions, or Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)), tax abatements, and other incentives. Because investors and equity partners share in the risk and reward of development, and expect the project to bring them financial gains, their involvement often influences design, construction, and programming.

"This is where value engineering really comes into play. Are there places where you can cut costs without compromising the design? Can you create additional revenue opportunities that pay for themselves? Can you incorporate unique features into the project that will help to secure pre-sales or pre-leasing?"

**Mitch Wasterlain, Next Cities Investments**

## Now Is the Time

- Though adaptations are still possible as the project unfolds, developers can avoid surprises by entering this phase with as complete and realistic a budget as possible for development, design, and operations. This means anticipating and accounting for all possible costs incurred prior to becoming self-sustaining, including design services, community engagement, permits, labor, materials, marketing, initial operations, and more.
- Financial support is formalized by either a Commitment Letter or a Letter of Intent (LOI). Once this is secured, the developer can finalize the capital stack, refine the design and construction schedules, and prepare to break ground.
- Accessing tax incentives or other government resources may require the submission of a project impact analysis (see Appendix D1 for an example intake form from Detroit Economic Growth Corporation).

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During this phase, you negotiate with investors, lenders, and public entities for the financial resources needed to realize your bottom line project goals. Revisit your values and be clear about the impact that you want your project to have on the community. The demands of investors, lenders, and public entities will influence design and construction.

For example, investors seeking 19-25% returns may try to steer the project to uses trending in urban renewal, like boutique hotels, but that might ultimately impact community affordability. Lenders may offer only limited financing based on their risk tolerance, forcing you to scale back amenities or components like first floor retail or housing. Public financing or tax incentives may require local hiring, design concessions, or other project changes. Consider how the promises you are making to those providing funding are going to impact the future of the area and its existing residents.

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**NOTE:** While dependent on each other, architecture and development are in two different industries and are rarely brought together in higher education. Most architects aren't taught the financial side of developing spaces in design school, and though developers learn how to make a profit, they aren't taught about design and community, which are equally critical to a project's success. This is just one more reason that the importance of clear and transparent communication, goal setting, and getting everyone on the same page early on in a project cannot be overstated.



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### PRO TIPS

You will need knowledge of and access to money, credit, and other financial resources to complete your project. If that's not your area of expertise, you'll need a partner who has those skills or resources.

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Fluctuations in market conditions, including the availability and costs of material and labor, rent potential, and other factors can impact the project at any stage and must be accounted for in your financial planning. The wise developer will include both a hard and soft cost contingency, or project cushion, in their plans, so surprises don't mean the death of a project. If the developer does not include a contingency initially, lenders will often require it.

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Be sure you understand how income from the property will pay the debt service, as you will need to show reasonable proof of this to attract lenders and investors.



Design Guide: Real Estate

Photo by Sam Dan Truong on Unsplash.

"We typically work with general assumptions in the line item budget derived from similar projects, have a general conversation with a GC to confirm overall hard costs per unit or square foot, then complete the capital stack. We wouldn't get hard bids until we have our financing closer to LOI (Letter of Intent) or terms sheets."

**Jill Ferrari, Renovare Development**



## CONSTRUCTION

### DEVELOPER

The developer secures necessary permits, finalizes the costs, and executes contracts with contractors and trades. The work of building finally gets underway.

### DESIGNER

Designers refine designs to help secure permits, support the bidding process, work with contractors to value engineer the project as needed, and answer any questions that may arise about the design, materials, etc.

## Potential Challenges

- Delays due to permits, inspections, and final approvals.
- Coordinating the schedules of subcontractors.
- Coordinating the timing of utilities and building systems work.
- Selection of unqualified trade and service providers.
- Cutting corners when the project goes over budget.
- Illegal or inappropriately planned staging (storing of equipment and materials).
- Disruptions to neighbors and community.
- Change orders, delays, or additional costs due to:
  - Incomplete construction documents.
  - Delayed, unavailable, or costly materials.
  - Unfavorable weather conditions.
  - Site challenges or hidden conditions.
  - Cost, availability, or inattentiveness of tradespeople.

"Construction administration from designers is essential to a smooth construction process. Good design, and involvement from designers can lead to projects that are under budget and ahead of schedule. And the opposite is true too."

Devon Caldwell, Inkwell Partners

## How Can Designers Help?

- Provide support throughout the subcontractor bidding process.
- Answer any questions, provide additional design details, and ensure the scope of the bid matches what is required.
- Help prepare for meetings with the city or community to secure any necessary variances or other buy-ins.
- Revise and resubmit drawings to receive final permits.
- Lead or help with construction administration and / or oversight of deliverables.
- Respond to contractor Requests for Information (RFI).
- Provide knowledge about the order and timing of the process.
- Provide intimate knowledge of materials (including their current availability and how they will contribute to energy and cost goals).
- Refine the design, sometimes referred to as value engineering, to protect against cost increases and avoid the need to secure additional funding.
- Design signage for the site that communicates what the planned project is, anticipated timelines, and more.

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Variable supply and demand for construction labor and materials has a serious impact on both the timing and cost of a project, particularly in unpredictable markets where many factors can cause costs to swing widely from when the project was estimated.

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## Now Is the Time

- The contractor sends the final construction documents to various trade-specific subcontractors to price out the work. This bidding process refines the budget from the contractor's estimates or per-square-foot prices to real numbers that can be formalized into a contract. Once bidding is complete, the owner has a hard cost (construction cost) to add to the soft cost (professional fees for the architect, attorney, branding and marketing firm, etc.).
- The contractor creates a construction schedule based on knowledge of industry methods and the availability of sub-contractors. From this, the draw schedule is created, which is the timeline that lets the developer and lenders know when the project will need additional funding. As with most aspects of real estate development, changes will occur, so some flexibility is expected.
- Securing necessary permits requires the local government's building department to review the plans for code compliance and safety requirements. Often, the municipality will have questions or concerns that require modification to the drawings. What is permitted is what must be built, so it's important to monitor this closely to ensure accuracy.

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This is where the careful planning, open communication, and establishment of priorities done at the beginning of the project process will help drive decision making, avoid change orders, ensure successful collaboration with the team and the community, and keep everything running smoothly.

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"Design is crucial at this stage in order to ensure that vision becomes reality. Even during construction, design work will continue as new conditions need to be responded to, unexpected roadblocks appear, and materials need to be verified. When left to the contractor, the answer to these challenges will typically result in the easiest or cheapest solution possible. Having a designer involved on your team during construction ensures that any alterations do not compromise the overall design and that the project complies with the original intent."

**Brian Moore, Quinn Evans Architects**

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#### PRO TIPS

Build relationships with qualified freelancers, boutique-size firms, and craftspeople who are willing to work within realistic budgets and still bring high-quality work and good design to small-scale development projects.

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Understand the terms and limits of the contract and carefully monitor your team. If a contractor is billing less than expected, it may mean they're not getting enough done during each billing cycle to finish the job on time. Determining if the contractor is behind schedule at an early date saves time and money in the long run for all team partners.

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Ensure your contractor can and does execute the design as proposed in the stamped and permitted drawings, especially if a new material or technique is being used, so that all inspections will be passed.

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Maintain a contingency fund and expect to spend it.

"Make sure your site is safe and you aren't angering neighbors or doing anything problematic. Additionally, make sure you are available to respond to the architect or contractor if needed. Decisions need to be made in real-time at this stage, and you need to be able to make them."

**Naseem Alizadeh, Bureau for Architecture and Urbanism**



## OPERATION OR SALE

### DEVELOPER

The developer closes out permits, secures a Certificate of Occupancy to legally use the space, and works to sell or lease the space quickly in order to pay back funders and turn a profit. The property management and maintenance phase begins.

### DESIGNER

Designers execute the project's brand through interior design and by developing marketing materials such as signage to attract the intended audience.

## Potential Challenges

- Environmental and financial costs of decisions falling on tenants, the community, and the planet.
- Managing the timing of completion, certification, and tenant needs.
- Difficulty leasing up.
- The condition and aesthetics of adjacent properties and the surrounding community.
- Fluctuations in market conditions, including the emergence of new competition or changing economic conditions.
- Timing and terms of debt agreements now coming due.

## How Can Designers Help?

- Create enticing marketing materials for sales success.
- Stage the sales or leasing office as well as specific units to entice potential occupants.
- Create exterior and interior wayfinding signage.
- Beautify the exterior space with landscaping.
- Protect everyone's investment and position the property as a community asset with solutions that make the space desirable and sustainable.

"Good design helps craft places that people want to be in."

Brian Moore,  
Quinn Evans Architects

"Bad design can exacerbate operational issues and costs. For example, choosing the wrong flooring product that scuffs too easily can double your cost to turn a unit when tenants vacate."

Devon Caldwell, Inkwell Partners



## Now Is the Time

- Construction is complete once permits are closed out and the municipality issues a Certificate of Occupancy. This typically happens once the development has completed all life-safety features such as fire sprinklers, working elevators, etc., and the building is determined to be safe for human occupancy.
- Carefully manage the need to secure early leases with tenant expectations of completion dates. Consider hiring a property management company to take the lead here.
- Continue to encourage partnership and interaction with neighborhood stakeholders to position the project as a point of pride and a long-term community asset.

## Design Sells

A quick lease-up or sale is a sign of a job well done. It speaks to the livability and desirability of the project, which are aspects led by the design team. With waves of new development hitting cities in particular, it is thoughtful design carried out by professional architects, landscape architects, engineers, and interior designers that convince residents to sign with you and not your competitors. A development's financial success is tied to design because design focuses on maximizing the end user's utility and enjoyment of the space.

"At this stage, changing the design is very difficult and expensive. That's why it is so important to take the operation and marketability of the building into consideration on the front-end of the design process."

**Mitch Wasterlain, Next Cities Investments**

**PRO TIPS**

Current and future maintenance are critically important to the longevity of the building or space. Have the facilities and systems adjusted and serviced at regular intervals and ensure property managers receive full training on all the equipment they'll be responsible for.

Take responsibility for the environmental and community impact of each project, rather than ignoring them or allowing them to filter down to residents.

Build experience, culture, and wellness ideals into each development project for a lasting positive impact on the community.

**What does successful development look like?**

The following opinions are summarized from dozens of conversations with designers, developers, municipalities, and community stakeholders.

- The development adds value and contributes to a vibrant and walkable community.
- Neighbors of all ages and abilities are welcome and can access and interact meaningfully with the building or space.
- Green spaces and gathering spaces are included and are welcoming to all.
- Quality grocery, goods, services, and entertainment options are made available by locally owned and operated small businesses.
- The design, development, and operations are all driven by local leadership and take community input into account.
- The project creates opportunities for the local workforce.
- The building or space has minimal negative impacts on the environment.
- Existing residents and businesses are not displaced by new arrivals or rising costs.
- The project fills an identified housing or commercial need in the neighborhood.
- If the project is historic, it is preserved as a treasure for the whole community.
- The finished product protects or enhances the history and existing culture of the area.

"Design impacts a development's ongoing maintenance expenses, including the cost of energy, cleaning, and landscaping. This informs net operating income, which informs price. It's essential for designers to understand the business of buildings in addition to the art of the built environment."

**Elizabeth Kmetz-Armitage, City of Detroit, Housing and Revitalization Department**

# TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

## Thoughts on Site Selection

The process of development often starts with site selection, i.e. choosing the structure, lot, house, or place you want to build on, construct, or remodel. Often, new developers set their sights on a specific area or building first, and then jump through hoops to make their real estate project work. They may visualize the beautiful redesign of a historic building in their neighborhood or the erection of a cutting-edge office building on a vacant lot in the area.

However, falling in love with a place or building before understanding whether it's right for what you're trying to do, or whether what you're trying to do is even allowed on that site, means you'll spend a lot of extra time, money, and resources. In the end, it may also mean what you've developed will never reach its full potential. Recall the old and true adage, "location, location, location!"

Whenever possible, your purpose or desired outcomes for the project should drive the selection, purchase, and design of the lot or structure. For example, if you want to develop a small commercial building near your neighborhood, you need to research the market rate of retail rents in the area to make sure the numbers align. This is especially critical if you're seeking third party funding or investment. You also need to understand what uses are allowed on the blocks or streets you're considering.

If the building you love falls in a commercial area, you may not be able to lease to the friend who sculpts metal or makes wooden furniture as you intended, as these uses may

be considered light industrial and not be allowed without special permission. If you're planning offices or a co-working space, you have to assess if the existing infrastructure, including electricity or broadband, meet the needs of future tenants or if those amenities need to be built in. If so, how much will that cost? These are things you need to know before you sign a purchase agreement or put down a deposit, particularly if you're counting on that designer friend or technology entrepreneur to lease space in your new building.

While it does not address market conditions such as consumer demand or rent tolerance, the Zoning and Code Exercise at the end of this section will help you understand the compliance part of the due diligence process required in thoughtful site selection and design for real estate development projects. It also illustrates the various levels of regulatory approvals required to open your building to tenants or the public and make your vision a reality.

Before residential or commercial tenants can move in, you'll have to acquire a Certificate of Occupancy (COO) from the municipality governing your location. A COO is essentially a stamp of approval for complying with all city- and state-level zoning and code requirements. In addition to zoning compliance, a COO will also require final inspections and approvals of the fire, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and potentially an inspection by the health department, based on existing code regulations.



All of this takes time and should be factored into your plan accordingly. A professional designer is trained to help with these often complicated processes.

To best prepare for your development project, ask yourself or your designer the following questions:

**What will you need to provide the city to obtain the necessary permits and certifications?**

- How long will each step take? How will this affect the timing and budget of your project?

**What are the specific zone allowances for the selected lot or structure?**

- What was the prior use of the space? Did that use comply with the zoning laws?
- Are you changing the use? What additional approvals are required to do that?
- Do the zoning laws for your area dictate what kind of windows or roof you can have?

**What plans or documents are required in order to obtain proper building permits?**

- Is environmental testing and approval required for this site or building? What are the code requirements in your city?
- How many parking spaces and bathrooms are required for this type of building?
- What kinds of signs or awnings are businesses allowed to have in this area?

Your designer can help you interpret these regulations and ensure compliance before you start designing and building. This will ultimately save time and money, increasing profits on the project by increasing the pace of required approvals and eliminating or reducing the need for costly revisions. To get a basic idea of how this process begins, practice with the following exercise.



Brush Park. Photo by Marvin Shaouni.  
Copyright Design Core Detroit.

## ZONING & CODE EXERCISE

Say you want to convert this existing storefront into a new restaurant. Before you can even begin the design process, you need to know the constraints of the site, which are governed by zoning and code.



Image Courtesy of Redbird Detroit.

### Zoning vs. Code

#### Zoning

Each city has specific zoning requirements that regulate the type of structures that can be built, property line setbacks, and parking requirements. There are also special zones for designated areas known as Historic Districts or Business Districts, such as Main Street Overlays, which have more rules that must be followed.

#### Code

The state enforces codes which govern how you build. A few of the many items and systems that codes address are accessibility, fire suppression, and plumbing. The codes are updated every few years and cities adopt them at different times. You will need to check with your city to find out what codes are currently in effect in your area.

## Find Your Zone

Every project must be in compliance with local building, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical code. Go to the city and / or state website for your project location to find the most current to find the most current version of each code rule. Write the year and reference number in the corresponding space here:

Building Code:

Plumbing Code:

Mechanical Code:

National Electrical Code (NEC):

We've included inks to the Michigan and Detroit codes here:

Michigan Code: [https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334\\_10575---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-89334_10575---,00.html)

Detroit Code: <https://detroitmi.gov/departments/buildings-safety-engineering-and-environmental-department/bseed-divisions/construction-inspection/building-codes-ordinances-and-acts>

**Now let's practice with a local example. For this exercise, the project location is 1811 Parker Street, Detroit, MI, 48214. The intended use is a new restaurant.**

1. Use the zoning map on the next page to determine the designation for this site.
2. Is the building in a historic district? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. If yes, do you intend to make changes to the exterior? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Is your intended use for this site permitted (consistent with what's permissible in that zoning district) or conditional (special use granted through a required public hearing)?





## Business Zoning Districts

B1 - Restricted Business District

B4 - General Business District

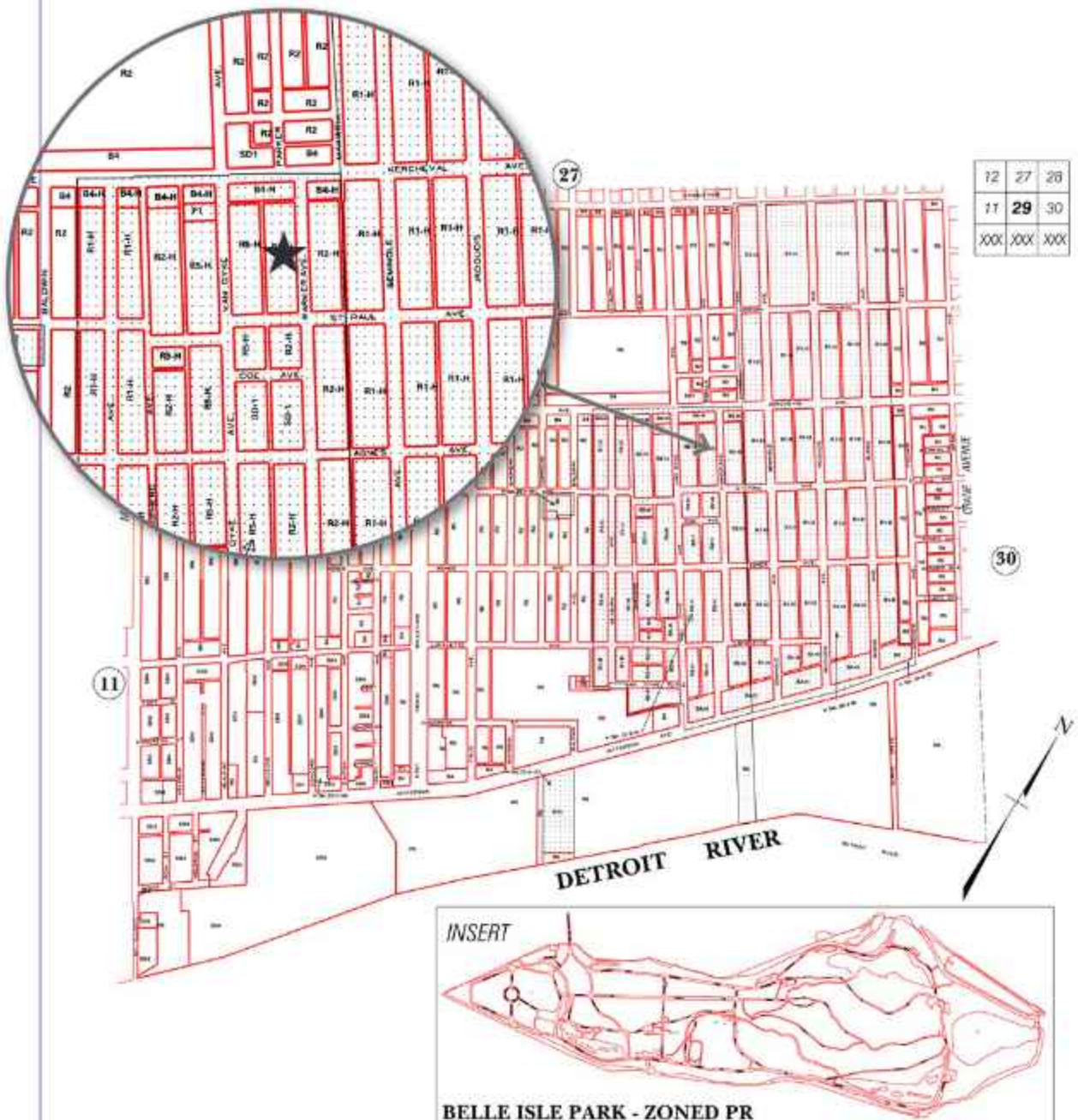
B2 - Local Business & Residential District

B5 - Major Business District

B3 - Shopping District

B6 - General Services District

Note: If there is a "H" after your zone, then you are in a designated Historic District.



# HOW LONG WILL MY PROJECT TAKE?

Our sample project is located in the zone B4-H (Business 4 Historic).



Building permitting takes 2-4 weeks.

Historic District Commission approval takes a minimum of 3 months.

The sample project is located in Zone B4-H (Business 4 Historic). We don't need to make any exterior changes, so we won't have to go through a historic approval process.

1. Approximately how long will permit approvals for the sample project take if we DON'T make exterior changes?

\_\_\_\_\_ Months

2. Approximately how long will permit approvals for the sample project take if we DO make exterior changes?

\_\_\_\_\_ Months

3. How long can you expect permit approvals to take for your own development project(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Months

\*The time frames in this graphic are estimates. Be sure to confirm more accurate time frames with your city.

The timing provided in this graphic is just an estimate and may vary from city to city.  
Be sure to confirm the actual timing for the location of your project.

## WILL YOUR DEVELOPMENT...?

A checklist for determining the long-term success and impact of your development project.

Generate sufficient cash flow	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have low vacancy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Become a lasting community asset	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Prevent resident displacement	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Fill a gap in the market by offering appropriate goods, services, housing, or recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Enhance the character of the neighborhood and promote a vibrant, active environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Contribute to the economic and social stability of the community	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Serve all stakeholders including residents, businesses, and municipalities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Be economically and environmentally sustainable	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Contribute architecturally to the landscape of the place	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Look great and feel safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Use quality construction techniques and materials, and durable finishes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Provide a great user experience for residents and visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Be physically accessible and welcoming to all	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Be appropriately priced for the neighborhood, and accessible for ownership or rental	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No





## Section 4

# Designing Accessible, Welcoming, & Sustainable Places

**97** Universal Design

**110** Sustainable Design

**103** Inclusive Design

## When you're finished with this section you will:

1. Understand how to make your space accessible to a wide range of users.
2. Appreciate the local, historical, and cultural considerations that influence projects, and receive tools and resources to help you engage the community in your planning process.
3. Familiarize yourself with environmental considerations to be aware of when designing your project.

"Representation matters. We must strive for a definition of success centered around the people of the community. Design and development led by residents and other stakeholders can unlock the true potential of the positive social impact inherent in transforming the built environment."

**Monique Becker, Mona Lisa Development**

Buildings do not exist in isolation. Instead, they are built on a block that, together with other blocks, makes a neighborhood, which exists within a community. Neighborhoods and communities are made up of people of all different ages, races, cultures, and abilities, whose collective experience becomes the history and identity of a place. Beyond people and buildings, the natural world is also a unique and sacred part of what makes a place, which we can't afford to ignore.

**Development is most successful when it respects the history and diversity of the place around it, and contributes to it in an accessible, welcoming, and sustainable way. The purpose of this section is to look closer at how design can help you to ensure you are maximizing the number of people who can enjoy your space, minimizing the economic and environmental costs of unsustainable development, and ensuring that people are protected and respected throughout the entire process.**

We'll explore the topics of universal design, inclusive design, and sustainable design—three related, but separate ideas that every developer should consider and discuss with their designer. Tools, guides, and other resources from experts are included to help guide you in your project.





Mount Elliott Splash Park. Photo by Marvin Shaquni. Courtesy Detroit Riverfront Conservancy.

## Universal Design

Features and systems that increase accessibility for a diverse group of people should be included in the design of any project from day one to avoid costly modifications to an existing building. **"Universal design is a framework for the design of living and working spaces and products that benefit the widest possible range of people, in the widest range of situations, without special or separate design<sup>3</sup>."**

The concept of universal design has been around for half a century, but the movement gained traction with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law adopted in the U.S. in 1990, which prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability. Today, ADA guidelines require spaces to accommodate users with a range of physical abilities. This may take the form of ramps instead of stairs, larger bathrooms, and automatic doors, to name a few examples.

**Visitability** is another accessibility term that is more narrow in focus. If a space is **visitable**, it allows people with mobility limitations to visit or live within it, at least temporarily. The key visitable features are

a zero-step entrance (a gradual ramp versus a step), minimum widths for first floor hallways and doorways, and a ground floor bathroom<sup>4</sup>.

Universal design marries ADA and visitability requirements, and then goes even further. **Beyond simply accommodating wheelchair users, universal design appreciates that whether or not we were born with mobility challenges, we are all humans and will inevitably face fluctuating ability, including temporary disabilities such as bone fractures and post-surgery recovery, that need to be supported.** Universal Design allows folks to age in place, a term growing in popular use. As defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, aging in place is "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level<sup>5</sup>."

**Incorporating these principles into the design and development of your project will ensure the building or space is welcoming and available to the widest possible range of people.**

3. <https://www.udl.com/media-room/articles/the-seven-principles-of-universal-design/>

4. <https://www.wbdg.org/resources/visitability>

5. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/terminology.htm>





ADA bathroom at Meta Physica Wellness Center. Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

## Why You Should Care About Universal Design

- Federal and local ordinances may require your space to have certain features to make it accessible to the public.
- Designing spaces that work for people with differing abilities—whether temporary or permanent—also work for able-bodied people and help you to retain long-term residents and broaden your target market.

**About 20%**  
(nearly 57 million) of  
Americans are disabled.<sup>6</sup>

**90%**  
of older adults wish to stay  
in their home as they age.<sup>7</sup>

**10%**  
of the \$214 billion home  
renovation industry is  
dedicated to aging in place.<sup>8</sup>

6. <https://invisibleabilities.org/coping-with-invisible-disabilities/disability-benefits/disabilities-largest-minority-group-us/>

7. <https://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/liv-com/lb190.pdf>

8. <https://www.synergyhomecare.com/agencies/wa/seattle/wa05/blog/posts/2014/5/10/remodeling-senior-spaces/>

## Simple Ways to Incorporate Universal Design Into Your Site



Ensure adequate lighting in hallways, kitchens, and bathrooms



Install dimmer switches for customization and automatic sensors in pathways



Contrast colors of walls, surfaces, and floors to aid perception



Ensure flooring is slip resistant, durable, anti-glare, and easy to maintain



Install lever handles for doors and faucets that can be operable with a closed fist



Build a barrier-free shower with a bench and a heat lamp for fall prevention



## Universal Design Principles

### PRINCIPLE 1

#### Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

- It provides the same means of use for all users; identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- It avoids segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- It ensures privacy, security, and safety are equally available to all users.
- It is appealing to all users.

### PRINCIPLE 2

#### Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wider range of individual preferences and abilities.

- It provides choice in methods of use.
- It accommodates right- or left-handed access and use.
- It facilitates the user's accuracy and precision.
- It provides adaptability to the user's pace.

### PRINCIPLE 3

#### Simple and Intuitive Use

The design makes use easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

- It eliminates unnecessary complexity.
- It is consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- It accommodates a wide range of literacy and language skills.
- It arranges information consistent with its importance.
- It provides effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

### PRINCIPLE 4

#### Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

- It uses different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- It provides adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- It maximizes "legibility" of essential information.
- It differentiates elements in ways that can be described (i.e., makes it easy to give instructions or directions).
- It provides compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

**PRINCIPLE 5**  
**Tolerance**  
**for Error**

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

- It arranges elements to minimize hazards and errors: most used elements are most accessible, and hazardous elements are eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- It provides warnings of hazards and errors.
- It provides fail-safe features.
- It discourages unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

**PRINCIPLE 6**  
**Low Physical**  
**Effort**

The design can be used efficiently, comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.

- It allows user to maintain a neutral body position.
- It uses reasonable operating forces.
- It minimizes repetitive actions.
- It minimizes sustained physical effort.

**PRINCIPLE 7**  
**Size and Space**  
**for Approach**  
**and Use**

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

- It provides a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- It makes reaching all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- It accommodates variations in hand and grip size.
- It provides adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

3. <https://www.udl.com/media-room/articles/the-seven-principles-of-universal-design/>







## Inclusive Design

Inclusive Design is a methodology that helps create places, products, services, and systems that allow more people to participate in society. *Mismatch*, by Kat Holmes, describes the what, why, and how of inclusive design in a straightforward way. Holmes explains that inclusive design helps to reduce the frequency of “mismatched” interactions—experiences with products, places, services, and systems that make people feel left out and prevent them from participating in society.

---

Essentially, what inclusive design aims to do is **INCLUDE** the thoughts, desires, voices, and culture of marginalized people. Consider who is benefiting from the development. The goal of inclusive design is to ensure that all development is **EQUITABLE**.

Like universal design, inclusive design considers physical ability, but it goes a step further to also consider class, race, gender, and historical context in order to look at all of the potential barriers that might prevent someone from being able to comfortably use a space or object. Inclusive design is focused on both the process and the outcome.

---

For a truly inclusive approach, developers and designers must make sure the entire project process is centered around community engagement that is undertaken with integrity, humility, and respect. If people are invested, they are more likely to take pride in the project, advocate for its successful completion, and continue to use the space for years to come.

"Planners and developers need to start with one fundamental question, says Jay Pitter, MES, an award-nominated author and placemaker. Who's not here? When they come to a neighborhood with their ideas, they need to look around the table and see who's not represented. Are the mothers here? The social workers? The elders? The mental health workers? The artists? Asking that question will help the planners bring a range of expertise to the table.<sup>9</sup>"

### Jay Pitter's practice responds to these critical questions by focusing on the following principles:

- ① Design is not neutral; it is fraught with cultural biases and assumptions.
- ② People must be centralized in processes intended to enhance inclusion and equity within spaces and places.
- ③ People are always self-organizing and pushing the conventional bounds of spaces and places—positively respond to this.
- ④ The practice of placemaking requires an embrace of discomfort.
- ⑤ People have varying levels of spatial entitlement informed by their identities and power relations with systems and the world around them.
- ⑥ Bodies are constantly policed and read differently in spaces and places.
- ⑦ All places have a culture of unspoken rituals and expectations.
- ⑧ Notions of safety and belonging have physical, historical, and emotional dimensions—all of these should be equally considered.
- ⑨ The character of spaces and places is shaped by important intangible heritage and untold stories.
- ⑩ Placemaking is an ongoing process predicated on meaningful engagement, equity, and imagination.

9. <https://detroit.curbed.com/2018/6/27/17498678/building-inclusive-future-detroit-jay-pitter-urban-planning>

## How to Facilitate Authentic Community Engagement

### Identify & Connect with Community Leaders and Stakeholders

Work to understand who makes up the community and meet them where they are. While holding a formal community planning session or town hall may seem like the ideal place to connect with the community, the reality is that many people aren't willing or able to attend these events given their already strained schedules or circumstances. Consider engaging with existing social infrastructure (block club meetings, Facebook groups, neighborhood events, etc.) in order to reach a wide variety of people, and make sure you use tactics that make the participation meaningful.

### Facilitate Knowledge Exchange

Community engagement is not simply a chance for developers to present their vision to the community and then receive a response. This should be a process of "authentic knowledge **exchange**, which is one of three modes of knowledge sharing:

**Inform:** Where the 'technical and design team' informs the 'community' of their work or visa versa. This keeps the power in the hands of the informer.

**Feedback:** Where the 'community' provides a response to information presented to them or visa versa. This still keeps the power in the hands of the informer.

**Exchange:** Where knowledge is exchanged by all parties or stakeholders (including technical and design team members) and power begins to be shared."

### Support Open Communication

Consistent communication is key throughout the entire process, not just at major milestones. Community members need to understand how their input is impacting the project, so that they are engaged the entire time, becoming not just participants, but true partners.

### Establish Goals of Engagement

- Understand community needs.
- Discover if the development vision fits within the community.
- Represent the community throughout the entire process.

### Understand Reasons for Community Pushback

- Historically, development may have taken place that was not created in collaboration with the community, and created more problems than it solved.
- Distrust of developers may have formed, especially of those with no connection to the community who have not engaged in authentic outreach.
- Development that is not created with and for the community can lead to displacement of current residents, often black and brown communities, who are pushed out to make way for white and more affluent newcomers.

### How to Respond to Pushback

- Present data that shows how the project will bring value to the community and serve current residents.
- Clarify the reasons for the pushback to start productive, open, and honest dialogue.

\*Adapted from "Guidelines for Leading with Community Engagement by Detroit Collaborative Design Center." See Appendix 03 for full document.



## 8869 Avis, Detroit

### Community Partner/Client:

The Alley Project

### Design Team:

Detroit Collaborative Design Center,  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

This Southwest Detroit project transformed an alley and surrounding vacant lots into an inspirational graffiti art gallery, which connects residents and neighborhood youth to each other as well as to community assets. The goal was to create a space that would support and enhance The Alley Project's mission to bring the neighborhood together. Additionally, the renovation of an existing building into a community center, program headquarters, and leasable tenant area reflects community vision in its planning, execution, and everyday use.

The participatory process engaged key stakeholders—graffiti artists, skateboarders, children, grandparents, and neighbors—and gave them agency and ownership in planning, design, and decision making. This resulted in a community space that directly responds to local culture, needs, and opportunities. The materials and design were informed by the collaborative design process and represent the neighborhood's identity and vibrancy.

For more on this development project, see Appendix 03.





## Why You Should Care About Inclusive Design

- When inclusive design practices are used, **more people can participate**, regardless of their gender, race, cultural background, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or physical capabilities.
- Inclusive design is **responsible design that shows concern for human life** by celebrating and uplifting communities, instead of disregarding and displacing them.
- When inclusive design is used, **everyone's experience in society improves**, encouraging them to use more of the product, place, service, or system.
- **Innovation happens** when designers try to solve problems experienced by a specific group of people and then extend the solution to many (e.g. the touchscreen was originally invented to help people with carpal tunnel use their computer and is now widely used).
- **Retrofit costs decrease** when inclusive design is integrated, because organizations do not need to replace expensive infrastructure in buildings, public spaces, or the digital realm.





Photo by Paul Taylor Films. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

## The Do's and Don'ts of Inclusive Design

- ✓ **DO** engage the community early on. Learn about the land, people, and culture of the community where your development resides.
- ✓ **DO** listen to, learn from, and adjust plans to accommodate the community and local government in order to earn their trust and long-term support.
- ✓ **DO** discuss gentrification with your entire team and what it means in your particular context.
- ✓ **DO** discover what steps your project can take to be sensitive to and respectful of existing community identities.
- ✓ **DO** take into account the cultural biases and assumptions inherent in your design.
- ✓ **DO** understand how your project will be interacted with and experienced by different types of people due to their identities and power relations with systems and the world.
- ✓ **DO** consider the physical, historical, and emotional dimensions of your project to make it safe and welcoming for all types of people.
- ✓ **DO** consider how your interior design, branding, and marketing choices can all send signals that either resonate with or alienate patrons.
- ✗ **DON'T** skip local engagement or hold insincere "listening sessions," to merely satisfy governmental approvals. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to have meaningful engagement with the community.
- ✗ **DON'T** avoid uncomfortable conversations about race, class, gender, identity, and culture and how your project fits within those contexts.
- ✗ **DON'T** erase neighborhood history or culture with incompatible or out-of-touch design.
- ✗ **DON'T** rebrand existing neighborhoods. Instead, brand buildings and projects in a way that amplifies the history and voices that comprise the neighborhood's existing identity.
- ✗ **DON'T** design for the future potential market while ignoring the needs and desires of the existing community.



## Inclusive Neighborhood Development Principles

### Champion Local Hiring

- Ensure >50% of employees come from the site neighborhood or surrounding 4 zip codes.
- Incentivize higher wages (targeting wages that place workers above 60% Area Media Income (AMI) as opposed to minimum wage at 30% AMI).

### Prioritize Local Contracting

- Prioritize using local residents for contracting, targeting >50% on all jobs.
- Ensure construction site security using local residents.

### Create Accessible Price Points

- Approve menu prices that are accessible to neighborhood residents.
- Prioritize neighborhood-based businesses that meet established neighborhood priorities.
- Ensure lease rates are tied to business price points.

### Support Existing Landowners

- Provide resources to existing landowners to fill funding gaps of developments, allowing them to activate property in support of new businesses and jobs.
- Provide a pipeline of new businesses to landlords.

### Provide Affordable Housing

- Provide deeper levels of affordability that target neighborhood demand and prevent displacement of existing residents.
- Ensure >50% of rental rates are below 80% AMI.

### Encourage Long-Term Business Growth

- Offer Right of First Refusal to existing tenants.
- Provide support for eligible business repairs such as abatement, facade repairs, etc.

Adapted from East Jefferson Development Corporation's Inclusive Neighborhood Development Principles. For more on how to facilitate effective community engagement, see Appendices D2 and D3.

"The Obama Building has been defined by our engagement with the community, especially local artists and business owners. In many ways the vision for the project was co-created based on the feedback of local stakeholders, especially with regards to design and ultimately the naming of the project. It is critical that we have these conversations early and often with the community to surface themes and perspectives that are important to them, so that they truly see themselves represented in the work."

**Brandon Hodges, The Platform**

## Sustainable Design

Development has a direct and lasting impact on the environment. According to the United Nations Environment Program, buildings and their construction account for 36% of global energy use and 39% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions annually. Developers and designers cannot ignore the unintended cost to the environment each time something new is built. We should all be more thoughtful about how to develop real estate responsibly.

Whether you're building with renewable materials, installing a rain garden, or investing in alternative energy, there are many ways that design choices can reduce the carbon footprint of your development and improve quality of life for all living things that interact with it.

Sustainable or "green" building practices are recognized through a variety of different standards, certifications, and ratings. Check out the [Whole Building Design Guide](#)<sup>11</sup> to learn more about them and other ways in which the field is working to reduce the environmental impact of building and construction.

## Sustainable Design Principles<sup>10</sup>

### Optimize Site Potential

### Minimize Non-Renewable Energy Consumption

### Use Environmentally Preferable Products

### Protect and Conserve Water

### Enhance Indoor Environmental Quality

### Encourage Long-Term Business Growth

### Optimize Operational and Maintenance Practices

10. U.S. General Services Administration Sustainable Design Principles: <https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/design-excellence/sustainability/sustainable-design>

11. Whole Building Design Guide, <https://www.wbdg.org/>





Underground Infiltration at PizzaPlex. Courtesy Detroit Future City.

## Why You Should Care About Sustainable Design

- Investing in energy efficient solutions—such as solar panels, smart thermostats, or thoughtful window placement to maximize natural light—can save money long-term.
- There is growing demand in the market for more eco-friendly living solutions that reduce carbon emissions and are more in balance with nature.
- Local laws may require you to meet certain energy efficiency standards or penalize you for creating waste such as excessive stormwater runoff that can overwhelm city sewer systems.

## Want to learn more?

- Visit Detroit Stormwater Hub<sup>12</sup> to learn more about green stormwater infrastructure.
- Check out Detroit Future City<sup>13</sup> for toolkits and workshops focused on land use and sustainability.
- Connect with the City of Detroit's Office of Sustainability.<sup>14</sup>

12. Detroit Stormwater Hub <https://detroitstormwater.org/>

13. Detroit Future City <https://detroitfuturecity.com/our-programs/>

14. City of Detroit's Office of Sustainability <https://detroitmi.gov/government/mayors-office/office-sustainability>





## Section 5

# Case Studies

**115** Grace In Action

**118** Allied Media Project's  
"LOVE" Building

**121** Core City Developments

**124** Commonwealth Single-  
Family House Infill

**126** B. Siegel Building

**128** Foundation Hotel

## When you're finished with this section you will:

1. Have heard firsthand the experience of people participating in development in Detroit.
2. See how design aids development across a wide range of project types.
3. Understand potential challenges that may arise in the process and how design can provide solutions.





Courtesy Grace in Action.

**Reading about design in development and how things should work in an ideal world is nice, but how practical is it?** The best laid plans can go terribly wrong when subjected to the harsh realities of bank accounts, red tape, and other limiting factors. So, what does it look like in the real world? The following case studies highlight six local development projects in Detroit to show how designers can help developers to strengthen and successfully create their vision.





## GRACE IN ACTION

What does development look like when young local residents are the ones driving the project? The Grace in Action project shows how the process of inclusive design can lead to more interesting, authentic spaces that serve local needs and desires.

**Developer:**  
Grace In Action

**Architect:**  
Et al. Collaborative of Detroit LLC

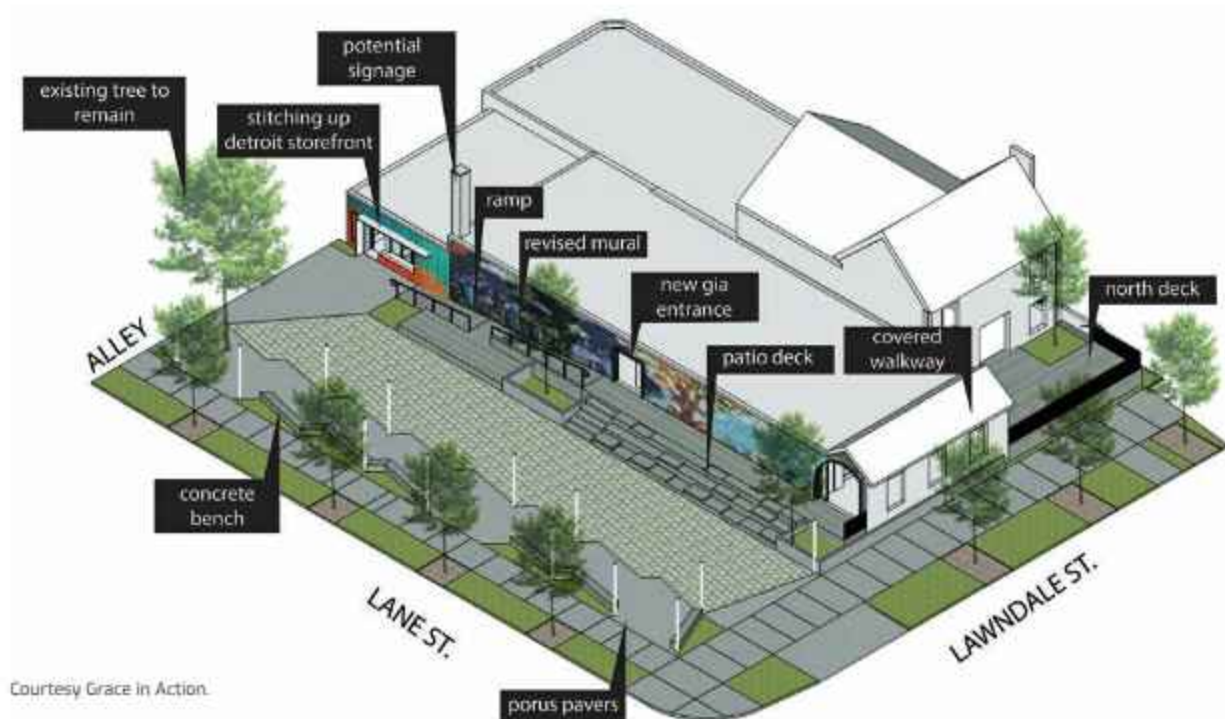
**Contributing Designers:**  
Detroit Collaborative  
Design Center

**Type:**  
Mixed-Use: Business, Retail  
and Institutional (Chapel)  
Adaptive Reuse

**Construction Budget:**  
\$350,000

**Project Timeline:**  
Phased starting in 2017, scheduled  
for completion Fall 2020

Note: This project was under construction  
at the time of publication.



Courtesy Grace in Action.

The Grace in Action (GIA) project transforms an old funeral home that has served as a community center, church, co-working space, and production facility to better support the needs of the current community in Southwest Detroit. Home to many of Detroit's oldest neighborhoods, Southwest Detroit is a dense and vibrant area considered to be the heart of Detroit's Latinx community. Grace in Action Collectives is a community organization located in Southwest Detroit that is home to collectives and cooperatives like Stitching Up Detroit Screen Printing Cooperative, Cleaning in Action Cooperative Detroit, Radical Productions Youth Technology Collective, The Equitable Internet Initiative Southwest, and Grace in Action Church. The exterior and interior renovations include reorganizing and updating the facility, upgrading shared spaces and restrooms, updating for universal design compliance, and the construction of a new public plaza and stage area called Plaza Villalobos.

GIA requested the design leadership of Et al. Collaborative after interacting with the architecture firm on another redevelopment project in the neighborhood. "Architecture can be so complex with giant blue prints and an entirely new language. Working with the DCDC and Et al. helped us to bridge

the gap between creating our community's vision of a functional, beautiful space and the profession and culture of architecture and design," says Meghan Sobocienski of Grace in Action. GIA and Et al. Collaborative engaged in a participatory planning process supported by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC), a multi-disciplinary, nonprofit architecture and urban design firm at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture.

Et al. Collaborative worked with GIA to establish an interview process with key stakeholders that was lead by GIA and Erik Howard of inside Southwest Detroit. Et al. helped formalize the processes and consolidated the results for use by GIA to identify what their different stakeholders wished to prioritize. During the first phase the focus was on the interior of the project. Meetings with stakeholders helped identify programming, community knowledge hearing sessions, and funding to support the process and development as priorities. "Participatory listening and design has always been part of our DNA at Grace in Action," says Sobocienski. "It wasn't until we started working with DCDC and Et al. that we understood the importance of bringing on an entity who could help us translate our communities vision into the complex language of blueprints, renderings, and architecture."





Courtesy Grace In Action.

The DCDC took a prominent role in leading workshops during the second phase, which looped the project back into the larger community master-planning efforts. The initial plaza design from phase one evolved based off of these larger group meetings, including the development of the scope and revisions to the location, materials, and configurations. This type of collaboration ensured a blending of knowledge, and strengthened the relationship of the design team with the community.

Following the development of the exterior, Et al. and the DCDC did a series of presentations including a "Sunday Funday" as well as a "Blessing of the Lowriders" event held on the plaza site by GIA. These events, conducted in both English and Spanish, enabled the designers to update the community on progress while continuing to collect feedback through visioning exercises and other forms of engagement. Strategies were used with a differing scale of participation based on the phase and task at hand. As the project developed, more casual methods such as those described above were used, providing opportunities for the community to give direct input.

The designer's early involvement enhanced the community engagement process and built trust between the design team and community, which endured throughout the evolution of the project. "A goal in the participatory process is to listen and respond to the differing stakeholders' thoughts and needs," says Tadd Heidgerken of Et al. "Because the project slows down, the conversation has the potential to build stronger trust between all the participants, as people can see the direct results of the conversations being had, and have time to comment throughout the process." Through its work, Et al. created consensus towards a long-term goal, helping the residents of Southwest create a vision that reflects all members of the community.





Courtesy Allied Media Projects.

## ALLIED MEDIA PROJECTS "LOVE" BUILDING

What does it mean to make a place truly accessible? The Allied Media Projects "LOVE" Building considered a lot more than just ADA regulations in its approach. This project embraced a collaborative design process to develop a space that serves a diverse group of organizations and the broader community.

**Developer:**  
Allied Media Projects

**Architect:**  
Designing Justice + Designing Spaces  
and Centric Design Studio (now  
acquired by Quinn Evans Architects)

**Type:**  
Mixed-Use: Office (18,000-SF) and  
Retail (9,000-SF)

**Construction Budget:**  
\$5.7 Million

**Project Timeline:**  
September 2020-August 2021  
Note: This project was under construction at  
the time of publication.



Courtesy Allied Media Projects.

The "LOVE" Building will provide long-term office space to organizations dedicated to removing barriers. Specifically, the "LOVE" Building will remove barriers for people with disabilities, people returning from prison or facing legal obstacles, and people using media, art, and technology for social justice. It will also support the brick and mortar operations of Paradise Natural Foods, a deeply-rooted food business that has been removing barriers to healthy, affordable, and delicious food in the Detroit community for nearly a decade. This building will also distribute fast, low-cost internet connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood and provide a convening space for the community that is centrally located, accessible, and wildly beautiful.

The "LOVE" Building will be a resource to the surrounding community through programming and facilities that are accessible to the general public. It will support artists and activists from across the city who are creating works of art to shift dominant narratives, advance policies of equitable development, resist the expansion of prisons and related surveillance technologies, and dream of new systems of safety, education, and otherwise becoming free.

Back in 2015, AMP identified a growing need among their network of projects for an accessible, centrally

located space for offices, training, community meetings, performances, and other events. In June 2018, AMP purchased a building (4731 Grand River) and an adjacent parcel at the border of the Woodbridge and Core City neighborhoods, totalling 27,000-square-feet. AMP began having conversations with close partners including the Detroit Justice Center and Detroit Disability Power, who were also in need of long-term office space.

In Fall 2018, AMP engaged two architecture and design firms, Oakland, CA-based Designing Justice + Designing Spaces (DJDS) and Detroit-based Centric Design Studio (which has since been acquired by Quinn Evans). "DJDS brought expertise in both participatory design and social justice architecture, while Centric brought local knowledge and experience with designing similar multi-tenant "hub" type spaces, such as Tech Town [in Detroit]," says AMP Executive Director Jenny Lee. "DJDS also provided invaluable support to AMP in the development of the overall budget and business model for the project."

Designing Justice + Designing Spaces led participants through a series of exercises to collectively envision the beginnings of a Master Plan for the building and surrounding campus. This included two workshops





Courtesy Allied Media Projects.

focused on visioning (look and feel) and space-planning. These were followed by approximately six meetings over the course of 18 months with all tenant partners to review and provide input on both the concept drawings and design drawings. AMP will continue this process through engagement with the broader neighborhood over the next two years to design public-facing programming, art, and outdoor space. "It's been amazing to work on social justice hubs such as this project by Allied Media," says Sandra Little of Quinn Evans (formerly of Centric Design Studio), who has been responsible for designing a number of multi-tenant spaces in Detroit.

Designing the building to maximize accessibility has been a major challenge throughout the process. In addition to needing a new elevator, AMP learned that the rear half of the first floor was three feet above grade, while the front half was at grade. They considered adding a ramp to the interior or exterior of the building, neither of which was ideal from a universal design perspective. Luckily, tenant partner Detroit Disability Power, which was part of the entire design process, made the suggestion to simply level the floor. Upon investigation by the architects, it was clear that this was an affordable and relatively straightforward solution. The participatory design process helped guide AMP towards solutions like this one.

Having a group of multi-disciplinary partners helped surface crucial insights about what the constituents would need to feel a sense of belonging and joy

within the building. As a result of the master planning process, the team arrived at a vision for AMP's new campus, which will include approximately 18,000-square-feet of nonprofit office space, and another 9,000-square-feet of food, retail space, and publicly accessible community venues for hosting cultural and educational programming.

At the time of purchase, the building was occupied by at least 20 artist studios and office spaces. In order to keep rent low, the previous owners allowed the building to deteriorate significantly. Within the first several months of ownership, AMP received frequent complaints about various hazards. Given the long-term plans for the building to be used as nonprofit office space, and the increasingly unsafe conditions of the building, AMP made the difficult decision to ask all tenants to leave. On top of challenges with rehabilitating the site, the COVID-19 crisis presented a whole host of new challenges to address. "Coronavirus design challenges introduced in the late stages of the project had our team working very closely with the owner to design solutions," says Little. "We are currently working on construction drawings for the exterior redesign of building components, such as windows and a new elevator addition, and our team is starting to discuss interior design ideas for Allied Media's fourth-floor space and spaces for their partner organizations that are going on other floors of the building. Renovating and activating significant industrial structures such as the "LOVE" Building helps to continue positioning Detroit as a new city for innovation."





Core City Neighborhood. Photo by Chris Miel.  
Courtesy Prince Concepts.

## CORE CITY DEVELOPMENTS

In a city where cars are king, why would a developer replace parking lots with a public park? Prince Concepts has a radically different approach than many developers, emphasizing the importance of landscape design as the long-term investment over the structures themselves.

**Developer:**  
Prince Concepts

**Architects & Designers:**  
BIGG Designs  
D.I.R.T. Studio,  
EC3  
Studio Detroit  
UNDECORATED LLC

**Type:**  
Mixed-Use: Retail and  
Community Space

**Construction Budget:**  
Confidential

**Project Timeline:**  
"However long it takes. That's  
the point!"





Core City Park. Photo by Chris Miel. Courtesy Prince Concepts.

We invest in ideas, not a market,” says Philip Kafka, owner of Prince Concepts. “We create places and spaces. A financial return is a non-negotiable consequence, but not the goal. The goal for each of our development projects is to provide a novel and superior product, or a comparable product for a lower cost; our best work does both.” Over the past five years, many of these projects have slowly cropped up in Detroit’s Core City neighborhood, ranging from small and unconventional homes to the transformation of auto shops into restaurants and parking lots into public parks. With projects large and small, Kafka is cultivating many trees, but has a forest-level vision for his development strategy.

In fact, a forest is along the lines of what he wants to create. Kafka recently negotiated an agreement with the City of Detroit to acquire 100 parcels, mainly from the Detroit Land Bank, to slowly transform over the next few years with support from architects Edwin Chan (EC3), Ish Rafiuddin (UNDECORATED), and landscape architect Julie Bargmann (D.I.R.T. Studio).

Despite being a private development, public space and landscape design will be central to the concept.

“From the onset, Philip framed the project approach as thinking of Core City as a park,” says Bargmann. “My interpretation asserts this landscape strategy as creating “parkland,” the distinction being a collection of varied landscape types organized by a strong framework. In a depopulated neighborhood, the challenge set is to construct an identity that embraces the collective open space, one that discards an obsolete dependence upon the household parcel. The opportunity capitalizes on reseeding the fallow ground of assembled properties, to cultivate dense urban constellations that reciprocate with privately shared public spaces. The entire team—developer, architect, and contractor, along with Core City investors—are willing and enthusiastic collaborators in this experiment of regenerative urbanism”.

The lots will be developed primarily into housing with some commercial space, spread out across a largely green area with discrete and landscaped parking lots.





True North. Photos by Chris Miel, Courtesy Prince Concepts.

"We are aspiring to create a seamless and symbiotic relationship between architecture and landscape," says Rafiuddin. "The residential zoning constraints and the existing flora of Core City are ideal to develop this idea. The architectural focus is to create meaningful spaces that inspire ideas and enhance quality of life. The typologies range from large-scale stand-alone units designed for urban homesteaders and clustered mid-scale units designed to inspire community, to small-scale multi-unit structures designed for dwellers desiring a minimal footprint." According to Curbed Detroit, Kafka believes that this kind of landscaped placemaking will serve to create an "inspired" area that matures as it ages. "We put a lot of emphasis on design," he said. "I won't break ground on something until I'm on the edge of my seat and can't wait for it to exist."

The designers behind the work play a critical role in bringing Kafka's vision to life. "We collaborate very heavily with the contractor that we work with, to the point where we don't make a lot of decisions until



we're ready to build, and that's because we don't want to make too much design work," says Rafiuddin. "We want to be flexible as we get bids on material choices, so that we can build faster, or more effectively, or more efficiently." The results are lofty forms that often incorporate simple, industrial materials which, when applied at a large-scale, suddenly look elegant, such as corrugated plastic and World War II era quonset huts.

By taking a chance and investing in areas that are not at peak market rate, Kafka believes that you are less beholden to traditional ROI measures and have more opportunity to invest in ideas or take alternate paths, such as focusing on greenspace over parking lots. "The day you finish a real estate project, it begins to deteriorate. When you plant a tree, it only gets better over time ... but you can't be thinking of it in terms of markets and assets, you have to realize this is a place that you are making, and when you think about it that way, trees are the best thing you can do."





Courtesy Bureau For Architecture & Urbanism.

## COMMONWEALTH SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE INFILL

Architect and urban designer Naseem Alizadeh enjoys the challenge of using lots that traditional developers would pass up, recognizing the contribution design can make is far more valuable. Sometimes, thoughtful, beautiful design by itself, however, is not enough. Even small developers must appreciate the importance of community buy-in to the successful outcome of a project.

**Developer:**  
Naseem Alizadeh, Bureau for  
Architecture & Urbanism

**Architect:**  
Naseem Alizadeh, Bureau for  
Architecture & Urbanism

**Type:**  
Single-Family Residential  
New Construction

**Construction Budget:**  
\$400,000

**Project Timeline:**  
Undetermined  
Note: This project was under construction at  
the time of publication.



Courtesy Bureau For Architecture & Urbanism.

The Commonwealth Single-Family House Infill project includes 2,000-square-feet of conditioned space across three stories, including three bedrooms and two parking spaces. The site was purchased via the Wayne County Property Auction in 2013. Located in Woodbridge, a neighborhood known for its large, character-filled Victorian homes, the site was occupied by a dilapidated and burnt-out shell of a house when purchased. Because the house was outside of the neighborhood's Historic District, and due to the degraded and dangerous condition of the structure, the City of Detroit ordered it to be demolished.

Developing an in-fill project requires a special approach that is hyper-sensitive to how it will fit in with the surroundings, especially in neighborhoods like Woodbridge. "It is important to me that my project is a real contribution to the neighborhood," Alizadeh says. "It is not just about the financial bottom line. It needs to contribute urbanistically and contextually, and it should be architecturally interesting." Even with good intentions, however, Alizadeh ran into a few challenges with the neighborhood along the way.

When the project applied for Site Plan Review, the city required the project to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for lot size, which meant that the neighborhood would be notified and could block the project. At the BZA, the immediate neighbors objected outright, upset that the original structure had been demolished. The BZA did not grant any appeal, nor did they deny it. They asked the team to obtain the neighbors' approval before returning to the BZA. Soon after, the City Planning and Development Department revised their interpretation, granted the Commonwealth project Site Plan Approval, and determined the BZA hearing null and void. As the design and development team had originally assumed, they were allowed to proceed on the basis of the

small lots development rights as per the Zoning Ordinance. However, shortly after this approval, one of the immediate neighbors sued the team for Adverse Possession. More costly delays and mediation finally resulted in an easement being written into the deed.

These delays cost the project almost an entire year, and used up funds that would have been put towards construction. During this process, the designer / developer made a number of adjustments and concessions to the original design in response to feedback from the community. Originally planned as a duplex, the home was converted into a single-family home. The original black bricks were swapped for more traditional red, and greater emphasis was placed on the porch, a prominent feature of Woodbridge homes.

Despite being correct in their technical understanding of the building parameters, if the team could do it differently, they said they would be transparent and consult early on with the neighborhood. While there were some individuals in the neighborhood who were very welcoming and wanted to see new projects come about, the process faced many hurdles because it was centered on technical design instead of being inclusive and community-centered. After overcoming several lengthy setbacks, the project received its Building Permit in August 2019 and construction commenced in September 2019. "For me, professionally, this is not a project that will be featured in architectural journals. It does not "push the envelope" architecturally, which is a shame," says Alizadeh. "But as an architect and urban designer, I am also sensitive to the context of the project. Hopefully, the contribution here is in offering a well thought-out, well constructed, contemporary house that is infill and helps to add to the critical mass that is a prerequisite to sustainable urban living."





Courtesy Curbed Detroit.

## B. SIEGEL BUILDING

When done thoughtfully, and with respect for the local context, development can help breathe new life into community assets, celebrating their history while rethinking their layout to better serve the needs of the community today.

**Developer:**  
Bagley Forest, LLC

**Architect:**  
Quinn Evans Architects

**Type:**  
Mixed-Use Residential  
Mixed-Use

**Construction Budget:**  
\$8.4 Million

**Project Timeline:**  
July 2020



Courtesy Curbed Detroit.

Long ago, B. Siegel was the place for women's apparel in Detroit. This Livernois location, opened in 1948, is one of many reasons why this iconic commercial corridor is known as the "Avenue of Fashion." Today, Livernois offers a variety of established businesses and new endeavors, including entertainment venues, restaurants, retail, and more. Major streetscape investments from the City and a steady wave of investment from the Neighborhood Strategic Fund (NSF) and many others has led to a flurry of development to bring retail, residential, and other amenities to the many vibrant communities along this corridor.

The B. Siegel Project will revitalize the former department store site to create 10 apartment units, 19,000-square-feet of mixed-use space, and 30 spots of underground parking at the Livernois and Seven Mile intersection. It was important to Developer and local resident Matt Hessler that it "follow the rhythm of the existing buildings," as he told Curbed Detroit. The existing B. Siegel building is being maintained as an integral part of the new development. A 10,000-square-foot building on the corner of Seven Mile and Livernois was demolished to make way for the new building. The new construction is certainly more contemporary than the old B. Siegel building—which itself might qualify as mid-century modern. The new structure is connected to the old building to create one composite building. Additionally, a smaller 1940's era 1,500-square-foot building on the south side of the parcel has been incorporated into the new building by continuing the facade across the two. This continuity is also reflected through floor-to-ceiling windows that match the large glass entryway



Courtesy Curbed Detroit.

at B. Siegel. Six of the apartment units are 2-story lofts built into a barrel vaulted roof—a style commonly used in Roman architecture—and incorporate reused wood stair treads from lumber found in the roof structure. While the neighborhood has many local small businesses, there is demand for more retail-ready space. Future tenants such as Brix Wine Bar, Laquered, and Amora Luxe Salon, among others, will add to local offerings. Likewise, in a neighborhood dominated by large single-family homes, smaller and more affordable housing opportunities will provide broader options for residents.

A formally trained artist himself, Hessler understood the importance of engaging a design firm that had experience with creatively reimagining old structures. He didn't think twice about engaging Quinn Evans Architects, having worked with them on past projects including a mixed-use project in Midtown. "I wouldn't think of renovating an old building without [architect] Brandon," said Hessler. "With my first project, I had a very clear vision that he helped to bring to life. With this project, it was more of a collaborative process—I really trusted his team's vision to reimagine this space and add to it in a way that is contemporary but also still feels like it belongs."

As a local resident of Sherwood Forest, Hessler is keenly aware of the importance of creating something that fits within the local context and adds value to the people who live in the community. "Overall, I think the idea of creating truly walkable shopping districts is what we need to do," he said in an interview with Curbed Detroit. "This is a very long play for me," he added. "I plan on owning this for a very long time and want it to be substantial."





Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

## FOUNDATION HOTEL

Formerly the headquarters of Detroit's Fire Department, architects McIntosh Poris Associates embraced the original character and grandeur of the building, using thoughtful design within an impressively modest budget to close the financing gap for this project. Detroit design and creativity is on display thanks to the integration of over 45 local artists and makers who contributed everything from lighting fixtures to wallpaper.

**Developer:**  
Aparium Hotel Group and 250  
Larned, LLC

**Architect:**  
Michael Poris Architects

**Type:**  
Hospitality  
Historic Preservation

**Construction Budget:**  
\$20 Million

**Project Timeline:**  
2012–2017





Photo by Three Lyons Creative. Copyright Design Core Detroit.

While many hotels leave you feeling like you could be anywhere, the Detroit Foundation Hotel is uniquely designed to reflect Detroit. The vision for the hotel was to honor Detroit's past and celebrate the city's future. This inspiration resulted in the commitment to "Repurpose History," by incorporating historically relevant materials from the Fire Department Headquarters and the city into a unique contemporary design that pays homage to Detroit. "There's this richness in the building that we brought out with what we added, and I think that's what makes this project so successful," says Michael Poris of McIntosh Poris.

Originally built in 1929, the architects designed the adaptive reuse and renovation of this former Detroit Fire Department Headquarters into a boutique hotel featuring 100 hotel rooms, a restaurant, bar, lounge, meeting rooms, fitness center, podcast studio, and banquet facility. The project posed many obstacles such as how to connect two historic buildings with a 5-foot floor height variation between levels. Another challenge was maintaining the historic hallways and carving out sufficient space for 100 rooms. The result is a variation of spaces, with 55 different room types and surprises throughout. The existing interior glazed brick, exterior masonry, and terra cotta façades were restored to maintain the building's historic character.

While the original budget was anticipated to be closer to \$30 million, rising construction costs and delays forced the architects to get creative about how to deliver the same impact with 60% of the budget. They worked with a local salvage company to repurpose materials found within the building for reuse including using wood trim for headboards in every room. The building's origins are showcased prominently in the ground floor restaurant lounge and bar, situated in the former fire engine hall. "The Apparatus Room" is the heartbeat of the hotel, providing communal space to socialize, work, eat, and drink.

The owners and architects take great pride in Detroit's entrepreneurial spirit, and are passionate about celebrating the community through arts, events, and food. More than just attracting guests attending the annual auto show, conventions, and other events, the hotel is a destination in itself that creates a clear economic impact by increasing tourism in Detroit. A transformation of the former Detroit Fire Department Headquarters and adjacent Pontchartrain Wine Cellar building, the boutique hotel aims to be the top hotel in the market with authentic inspiration, design, and programming that captures both Detroit's past and future in the design aesthetic.





# Conclusion

## Why We Have the Buildings and Spaces We Have

### The Realities of Development

**Economic:** Developers can only afford to invest what they can pay back, which is based upon what rents or sales prices the final product commands.

**Social:** Designers and developers alike must remember that their plan is only as good as it is practical. It's important to understand the local context, and make sure what you are offering aligns with the needs and desires of the community.

**Political:** Cities control what can be built, how, and where. Failing to follow these rules can result in fines, delays, or prevent projects from happening altogether. At the same time, cities that consider the needs of residents when shaping policy can become examples of how to make accessible, affordable, inclusive, and sustainable spaces.

## How to Get the Buildings and Spaces We Want

### The Impact of Design

**Economic:** While budget realities create parameters around design, they don't have to be limiting factors. Simply put, every part of a project—including design—must make economic sense, but high-level design doesn't always have to come with a high price.

**Social:** Real community engagement will lead to success with current developments and future projects. Inclusive design does not make target markets a thing of the past. Instead, using an inclusive approach ensures the development is the right fit for the existing market.

**Political:** Cities that put the needs of residents first can encourage developers and designers to create accessible, affordable, inclusive, and sustainable places.



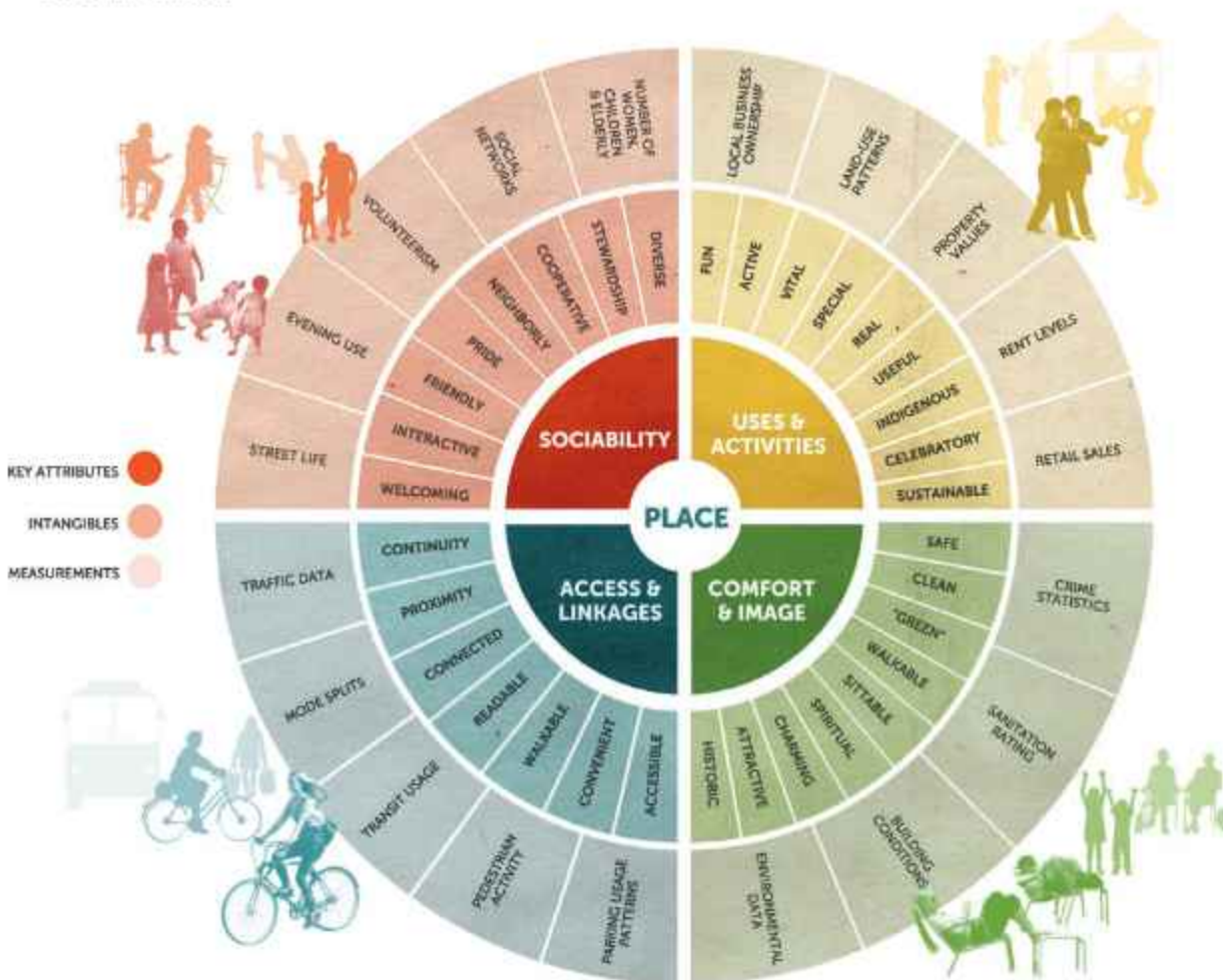
# WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL PLACE?

**Project for Public Spaces (PPS)** is a nonprofit planning, design, and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities<sup>15</sup>.

**They contend that public spaces need 4 qualities:**

- To be accessible.
- To allow people to engage in activities there.
- To be comfortable and have a good image.
- To be sociable, where people meet up and take visitors.

**PPS developed this diagram as a tool for evaluating whether a place meets those criteria.** While it's focused on public spaces, consideration of these elements is also useful in the development of residential properties, as it will ensure they're welcoming and accessible to a wide range of tenants.



<sup>15</sup> <https://placelab.uchicago.edu/ethical-redevelopment>

From the first site visit to the ribbon cutting, designers can help developers to achieve their goals through creative problem solving, technical expertise, and robust experience. It may not be the cheapest or fastest route, but investing in design can prevent developers from making costly mistakes that can hurt their margins or reputation. Engaging an architect early creates value in the form of efficient buildings, maximum rentable square footage, and show stopping facades. When the developer, architect, and contractor work together early and often, the collaborative dynamic strengthens the overall result.

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As proven throughout this Guide, the development of successful spaces and places depends on true collaboration between the developer and the designer throughout every phase of the project.

Now that you've read this Guide, we hope you'll feel more confident hiring a design professional and leveraging their expertise to elevate the value of your project.

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# GLOSSARY

Let's break down the buzzwords.

## A

### **Accessibility / Accessible**

Describes the usability of a space for people of various abilities.

### **Accessory Uses**

Uses of land that are found on the same parcel as the principal use, but are subordinate and incidental (e.g. carriage houses).

### **Affordable Housing**

Projects that receive some level of government subsidy to keep the costs low enough for low-income individuals and families to afford.

### **Adaptive Reuse**

Existing buildings converted to support new uses that meet current needs (e.g. a vacant factory transformed into a food hall).

### **Aging in Place**

The ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.

### **Alignment**

A design principle that describes how objects are placed in relation to one another.

### **American Institute of Architects (AIA)**

A professional association that advocates for the value of architecture and gives architects the resources they need to do their best work.

### **American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)**

A tax-exempt professional body founded in 1852 to represent members of the civil engineering profession worldwide.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

A civil rights law adopted in the U.S. in 1990, which prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability.

### **Architecture**

The practice of designing buildings.

### **Architect of Record**

The licensed architect that stamps the permit drawings and assumes liability for the technical accuracy of the building plans.

### **Architect Registration Examination (ARE)**

Professional licensure examination for architects in the United States.

### **Architectural Experience Program (AXP)**

A real-world work training program required for candidates pursuing an architecture license that lasts nearly 2 years.

## B

### **Balance**

A design principle that describes visual symmetry and evenness.

### **Bottom Line**

A development outcome where success is measured purely based on the financial outcome or profit.

### **Brownfield**

A contaminated property whose redevelopment may be complicated by the presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

### **Build to Spec**

A brand new property that is completed, or nearly completed, before it is sold. The layout, flooring, appliances, and features are chosen by the home builder, not the buyer.

### **Build to Suit**

A manner of leasing property, usually for commercial purposes, in which the developer or landlord builds to a tenant's specifications.

### **Built Environment**

The human-made environment of buildings and other structures.



**Building Code (Code)**

A set of rules that regulate standards for buildings and other structures.

**Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED)**

BSEED enforces construction, property maintenance, environmental compliance, and zoning codes in the City of Detroit.

**Bungalow**

A small single- or double-story house with a sloping roof.

**Buyout**

The time between pre-construction and construction when purchase orders and subcontracts are issued.

**C****Capital Stack**

All of the financial sources for a project comprised of debt and equity.

**Certificate of Occupancy**

A certificate issued by the local government that confirms that the building is code-compliant and safe for human use.

**Change Order**

A modification or change to the agreed upon scope of a contract, usually resulting in an additional fee or cost increase.

**Color**

A design principle that describes how colors and shades of color interact with each other, the space, and the viewer.

**Community**

A group of people that share a common culture, identity, or live in the same place.

**Community Development**

Development that takes a holistic, people-centered approach, beginning with the needs of the area and population and creating projects to support them.

**Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD)**

Advocates for public policies and resources that advance the work of nonprofit, community-based organizations in Detroit neighborhoods who are engaged in physical development designed to revitalize the quality of life in Detroit.

**Community Development Corporations (CDCs)**

Nonprofit or low-profit companies that implement programs, provide services, or engage in development to support the economic growth of a particular area or for a particular group of people.

**Community Development Financing Institution (CDFIs)**

Private financial institutions that lend money to development projects in low-income, disadvantaged areas.

**Community Engagement**

The process of communicating with, learning from, and being responsive to the needs of communities in the areas where development projects are located.

**Conditional Purchase**

An agreement between two parties whereby a buyer's offer on a property is contingent on work being completed before the sales transaction is finalized.

**Constructibility**

A review of design approaches to ensure they are able to be built.

**Construction Administration**

When an architect provides limited oversight of construction to ensure things are being built according to the permitted building plans.

**Construction Bidding**

The process of a General Contractor getting proposals from subcontractors.

**Contract Document**

The written document(s) that define the basis of the contract including both parties' roles, responsibilities, and a detailed description of the work or service.

**Contrast**

A design principle describing a difference in color, materiality, or other distinct characteristics.

**Cultural Competence**

The ability to understand, communicate, and collaborate across lines of cultural difference, which is an important aspect of authentic community engagement.

## D

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**Davis Bacon Law**

A federal law that mandates on-site workers be paid certain wages, benefits, and overtime (also known as "prevailing wage") on all government-funded construction, alteration, and repair projects.

**Design-Build**

A design and construction approach where a single firm is responsible for both the creation of the design and executing or constructing that design.

**Design Development**

When all important aspects of the project are described and refined, with a particular focus on the selection of materials and technical specifications for engineering and construction.

**Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)**

Detroit's lead agency for business retention, attraction, and economic development since 1978.

**Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD)**

The Department that maintains the City of Detroit's water networks, serving more than 200,000 Detroit residential and commercial accounts.

**Developer**

A real estate professional that leads a development project.

**Development**

A real estate project that aims to uplift use and create value in a property.

**Displacement**

When existing and long-time residents can no longer afford to live in an area due to rising rents, mortgages, or property taxes.

**Double Bottom Line**

A development outcome where success is measured based on both financial outcome and social impacts.

**Draw Schedule**

A projection of spending during a project's duration where each "draw" spends down funding for work completed.

**Due Diligence**

The proactive measures developers take (doing research, performing calculations, reviewing documents, procuring insurance, walking the property, etc.) before they actually purchase property.

## E

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**Easement**

A law that gives another person or entity a right to effectively trespass upon or use land that is owned by someone else.

**Engineering****Mechanical Engineering**

- The design of building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

**Electrical Engineering**

- The design of building electrical systems.

**Structural Engineering**

- The design of the building structure.

**Civil Engineering**

- The design of building systems that interact properly with municipal systems such as water and sewerage, roads, bridges, canals, sidewalks, etc.

**Entitlements**

Legal rights conveyed to a property by a local municipality that allow for certain uses and building types.

**Environmental Testing**

Testing that may be required on a site to determine if it is safe for human use.

**Equity**

The value of a property after deduction of the amount owed the lender who holds the mortgage.

**Exit Strategy**

A plan developed by a real estate investor to remove themselves from a real estate investing deal.

## F

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**Feasibility Study**

The assessment and evaluation process of a new project that focuses on the technical feasibility and commercial profitability of completing the work.

**Fee-Based Development**

Development that is led by someone other than the owner of the building or property for a fee.

**Floodplain**

An area that is subject to natural flooding from an adjoining waterway.



## G

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### Gap Financing

An interim loan used to temporarily provide financing for an individual until they can secure a more permanent solution.

### General Contractor

A professional who contracts with the project owner to lead the construction project on behalf of the owner and subcontracts with trade-specific contractors to perform specialized tasks.

### Gentrification

The transformation of neighborhoods from low-value to high-value, typically resulting in the displacement of long-time residents and businesses, and a shift in a neighborhood's identity. Gentrification is a housing, economic, and health issue that impacts a community's history and culture, particularly for racial and ethnic minority groups.

### Grant

A quantity of money given by a government, organization, or person for a specific purpose which, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid.

### Green Roof

A sustainable design feature where the roof is partially or completely covered in vegetation to reduce rainwater runoff into the municipal systems.

## H

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### Hard Cost

A project's construction cost.

### Historic Tax Credits

A federally administered program that serves as an equity source for projects that the National Parks Service deem historic.

### Historic Preservation

Restoring a building in accordance with the United States' Secretary of the Interior's standards that are administered by the government at the federal and state level.

### Home Builders Association (HBA)

An association whose primary purpose is to positively influence the legislative, regulatory, and legal issues that affect the industry, and provide a wide range of member services.

## I

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### Incentives

Financial or other support for a project.

### Internal Rate of Return (IRR)

A financial measure of success that captures total gains over time from when the property is purchased to when it is sold.

### Interior Design

The practice of selecting and placing what's inside buildings and structures—colors, materials, and decoration.

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### Land Acquisition

The process of acquiring land for real estate purposes.

### Land Survey

A map of a parcel that identifies ownership boundaries and land features.

### Land Surveyor

A real estate professional that prepares land surveys.

### Landscape Architecture

Design of what's outside the buildings and structures; greenspace design.

### Lease Agreement

A contract outlining the terms under which one party agrees to rent property owned by another party.

### Lease-Up

The period during which the property is substantially leased.

### Lender

A financial institution or an individual that loans money to a property on the basis of repayment, typically plus interest.

### Letter of Intent (LOI)

A non-legally binding agreement between parties that outlines a deal as the parties understand it.

### Licensure

Governmental granting of licenses for certain professions (e.g. residential builders, architects, retail businesses, etc.).

**Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)**

A tax incentive to construct or rehabilitate affordable housing for low-income households in the United States.

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**M****Market-Rate**

Projects with little to no income restrictions that are priced according to comparable listings in the surrounding geography.

**Michigan Minority Contractors Association (MMCA)**

A 501(c3) organization with the mission of educating, advocating, and economically stimulating the bottom line of its member firms.

**Mixed-Use**

Projects that support a variety of uses, such as retail on the ground floor with apartments above or office space over retail space.

**Modern Architecture**

A style of architecture based upon innovative technologies of construction, particularly the use of substantial amounts of metal, glass, and concrete, that tends to focus on functionality and minimalism.

**Mortgage**

A loan in which property or real estate is used as collateral wherein the borrower receives cash upfront, then makes payments over a set time span until they pay back the lender (usually a bank) in full.

**Multi-Family Development**

Residential projects with more than one unit.

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**N****National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

A United States environmental law that promotes the enhancement of the environment and established the President's Council on Environmental Quality.

**National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)**

An accrediting agency for architectural education in the United States.

**National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)**

A professional organization dedicated to championing diversity within the design professions by promoting the excellence, community engagement, and professional development of its members.

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**O****Operating Expenses**

Recurring costs that are required to run a building and typically include utilities, maintenance, property tax, insurance, etc.

**Ordinance**

A municipal regulation.

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**P****Phase I Environmental**

A report that outlines environmental contamination and liabilities to the developer based on the findings from a site assessment conducted by a qualified environmental consultant.

**Phase II Environmental**

An investigation normally undertaken when a Phase I Environmental determines a likelihood of site contamination, where original samples of soil, groundwater, or building materials are collected to analyze the values of various contaminants.

**Pre-Development**

The early stage of a project that focuses on due diligence, research, and permitting.

**Pro Forma**

A financial document that shows a project's investment potential.

**Product Design**

Design of products.

**Property Condition Assessment**

Due diligence inspections associated with commercial real estate to determine the condition of a property or real estate that the client may be purchasing, leasing, financing, or simply maintaining.

**Property Management Company**

A company that is responsible for rent collection, building maintenance, and supporting an enjoyable living environment for property residents.

**Property Value**

The property's worth as defined by the market.



**Public Subsidy**

A benefit given to an individual, business, or institution, usually by the government, in the form of a cash payment or a tax reduction. The subsidy is typically given to remove some type of burden, and is often considered to be in the overall interest of the public, given to promote social good or an economic policy.

## Q R

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**Rain Garden**

A bioretention method where a collection of deep-rooted native plants and flowers are planted to absorb rainwater.

**Real Estate Attorney**

An attorney who specializes in legal matters related to property, from sale transactions to disputes between parties.

**Real Estate Broker**

A person who represents sellers or buyers of real estate or real property.

**Realtor**

A person who works in the real-estate business, is a member of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, and abides by its Code of Ethics.

**Repetition**

A design principle that describes patterns, materiality, and other building characteristics that are repeated.

**Residential**

A type of project comprised of one to four units to house people.

**Return on Investment (ROI)**

A financial measure of success that analyzes gains or losses relative to money invested.

**Request for Information (RFI)**

A formal request from the contractor to the design team asking for clarification on the drawings.

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**

A document that details a project and its needs, and solicits bids to fill those needs.

**Request for Qualifications (RFQ)**

A document that solicits firms to submit information proving they are an appropriate fit for a project given certain criterion.

## S

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**Schematic Design**

The initial design phase of a project during which the developer and architect set project parameters.

**Site Plan**

An architectural plan, landscape architecture document, and detailed engineering drawing of proposed improvements to a given lot.

**Soft Cost**

Professional costs such as accounting, legal, and marketing fees that a project may incur.

**Sources & Uses**

A financial table that shows project costs and funding sources to match.

**State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)**

A state office that works with the National Park Service to review the modification and preservation of historic buildings to ensure they are done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

**Sustainable Design**

Design aimed at reducing a project's environmental impact.

## T

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**Tax Abatements**

A reduction of taxes granted by the government to encourage economic development.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

An economic development tool used to encourage economic growth and create jobs by allowing developers to pursue projects that they normally wouldn't if they had to fund them on their own.

**Tactical Preservation**

An approach to preservation that explores ways to strategically activate large sites through a phased approach that requires municipal coordination. By activating the site in pieces, the developer can begin to generate revenue streams that support the overall costs to complete the project.

**Target Market**

A group of people with some shared characteristics that the developer aims to attract to lease or purchase their completed project.

**Triple Bottom Line**

A development outcome where success is measured based on financial, social, and environmental outcomes.

X  
Y  
Z

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**Zoning**

Dividing land in a municipality into zones or areas where certain uses are permitted or prohibited.

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**U****Urban Design**

The practice of designing the physical aspects of cities and towns.

**Urban Planning**

The practice concerned with the design and regulation of land and the built environment in cities.

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**V****Value Engineering**

The process of redesigning plans in favor of a cost-saving alternative.

**Victorian Architecture**

An architecture style popular in the mid-to-late 19th century, named for Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom who ruled from 1837–1901.

**Visitable**

A space that allows people with mobility limitations to visit or live in it, at least temporarily. Key features are a zero-step entrance, minimum widths for first floor hallways and doorways, and a ground floor bathroom.

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**W****Walkability**

A measure of how friendly an area is to walking—an important concept in sustainable urban design.

**Walkscore**

A private company that helps people find walkable places to live by calculating the walkability of any address.

**Wetlands**

Land located next to water that has, and will continue to experience, water damage. The land is generally not suitable to build a structure on.



# APPENDIX

# 01

## PROJECT DATA SHEET INTAKE FORM

The information requested on this form will be used by the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation to prepare an impact analysis of your firm or project. Please fill out all required information that is applicable to your firm or project. Incomplete applications will result in a request for the form to be re-completed.

1. Name of Company/Developer
2. Company Location – Street Address
3. Company Location – City
4. Company Location – State
5. Company Location – Zip Code
6. Contact Person Name
7. Contact Person Title
8. Contact Phone Number
9. Contact Email
10. Incentives Requested – Please indicate all incentives that the project is applying for.
11. Are you requesting MEDC CRP?
12. Project Address or Addresses Being Considered
13. Project Zip Code
14. Which City Council District is the project located in?
15. Does the applicant own the property?
16. If not, who owns the property?
17. Please indicate the Planning Area, if any, that the project is located in.
18. Please list the neighborhood the project is located in. A map of Detroit neighborhoods is located here:  
<http://detcogrocorp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=8e1983fe8b474c03a64457065ad68f1d>
19. Please indicate the current zoning of the project's property.
20. Is the property located in a Historic District?
21. Please select the appropriate construction type that most accurately describes the project.
22. Please enter the total estimated amount of building permits and fees to be paid as a result of this project.
23. Is the property currently occupied?
24. If the property is occupied, please indicate the type of tenants that currently occupy the project property.
25. Please provide a brief description of the occupants and the plans for them relative to the proposed project.
26. Please indicate whether you have outstanding blight or other property violations from the City for the subject property of this incentive request, or for any other property owned by you or an affiliated entity in the City of Detroit. Blight violations can be checked here:  
<http://app.detroitmi.gov/dahonline/>
27. Please provide an explanation for any outstanding blight tickets.
28. Please select the appropriate asset class that most accurately describes the project.
29. Please enter the project's total rentable square footage.

30. Please enter the project's total rentable office space square footage. If the project has no office space component, please enter 0.
  31. Please enter the project's total rentable hotel square footage. If the project has no hotel component, please enter 0.
  32. Please enter the project's total rentable industrial square footage. If the project has no industrial component, please enter 0.
  33. Please enter the project's total rentable residential square footage. If the project has no residential component, please enter 0.
  34. Please enter the project's total rentable retail square footage. If the project has no retail component, please enter 0.
  35. Please enter the project's total other square footage. This can include things like storage space, parking, etc. If the project has no additional square footage, please enter 0.
  36. Please enter the total development costs for the project.
  37. Please enter the total acquisition price for the project.
  38. Please enter the total hard construction costs for the project.
  39. Please enter the total soft construction costs for the project.
  40. Please enter the total amount of any additional costs that make up the uses for the project.
  41. Please enter the total development sources for the project.
  42. Please indicate the total amount of sources that are debt for the project.
  43. Please indicate the total amount of sources that are equity for the project.
  44. Please indicate the total amount of sources that are tax credits for the project.
  45. Please indicate the total amount of sources that are grants for the project.
  46. Please indicate the total other sources not mentioned in this form for the project.
  47. Please enter the estimated number of construction employees to be hired to complete the project.
  48. Please indicate whether the applicant or any person or entity holding an interest in the applicant is affiliated with the future commercial tenant(s) of the property.
  49. Please enter the appropriate North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code that best identifies the jobs that will be created by this project.
- To help identify the correct industry code see: <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/sssd/naics/naicsrch?chart=2012>
50. Please indicate the total number of post-construction jobs the developer / applicant is committed to creating at the project. This number should match the number that is eventually submitted on the tax incentive certificate application.
  51. Please indicate the total number of FTE employees anticipated at the project in year one. This should include BOTH the jobs the developer is responsible for creating AND any anticipated tenant jobs.
  52. Please indicate the total number of FTE employees anticipated at the project in year two. This should include BOTH the jobs the developer is responsible for creating AND any anticipated tenant jobs.
  53. Please indicate the total number of FTE employees anticipated at the project in year three. This should include BOTH the jobs the developer is responsible for creating AND any anticipated tenant jobs.
  54. Please indicate the total number of FTE employees anticipated at the project in year four. This should include BOTH the jobs the developer is responsible for creating AND any anticipated tenant jobs.
  55. Please indicate the total number of FTE employees anticipated at the project in year five. This should include BOTH the jobs the developer is responsible for creating AND any anticipated tenant jobs.
  56. Please enter the estimated average salary for the new FTE employees that will be created as a result of this project.
  57. Please enter the estimated median salary for the new FTE employees that will be created as a result of the project.
  58. Please indicate the total number of hotel units for the project. If the project has no hotel component, please enter 0.
  59. Please indicate the total number of new rental residential units in the residential component of the project.
  60. Please indicate the number of units that are market rate out of the total new rental residential units.
  61. Please indicate the number of units that are at 81% to 120% AMI out of the total new residential units.



62. Please indicate the number of units that are 61% to 80% AMI out of the total new residential units.
63. Please indicate the number of units that are 51% to 60% AMI out of the total new residential units.
64. Please indicate the number of units that are at or below 50% AMI out of the total new residential units.
65. Please indicate if the project is requesting a different affordability structure than the 20% at 80% standard required by HRD.
66. Enter a narrative to describe the project, including plans to startup, expand, or locate in the community. This description will be included in the report to the Mayor and to City Council.
67. Please indicate the total number of new for sale residential units in the residential component of the project.
68. Please check the box if the project is competing between Detroit and another location.
69. Please enter the primary competitive location for this project, if applicable. If no alternate location, please enter "Not Applicable".
70. Please complete and attach a project proforma. The standard proforma that DEGC uses to review projects can be found at the following link: <https://www.miplace.org/redevelopment-ready-sites/pro-forma-101/>  
 "You may utilize the MEDC's standard form or provide your own. The submitted proforma must be in a dynamic excel document with working formulas, not hard coded numbers.

71. Please add any additional attachments that would be helpful in reviewing and understanding the project.

For district, include:

- Project renderings
- Photographs of existing site and / or building conditions
- Construction Scope of Work
- If TIF is being requested:
  - TIF projections with the abatement
  - TIF projections without the abatement

#### Certificate Applications (Required):

- Items listed above (if not previously submitted or changes have occurred)
- Construction estimates on contractor letterhead
- Copy of hotel market study (if a hospitality project)

# APPENDIX

# 02

## MY APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Kimani Jeffrey, Detroit City Planning Commission

Engagement is the balance between allowing the freedom of the market and freedom of expression in design to occur, while intentionally incorporating priorities that are identified and framed by the communities in which designers / developers are building. This process partners developers with community stakeholders to produce solutions to the concerns and values of that community, while simultaneously acknowledging the trade-offs and limitations of all proposals. The end goal being consensus-building through a transparent and respectful process.

**What this process may look like a little more in depth:**

- 1 Begins with a standard level of respect through transparency of information, opportunity for authentic dialogue, time for consideration of proposals and ideas, initial research, and inquiry into the community values and desires for development and design. (These factors should be standard regardless of points of contention between entities, as a principle of a respectful approach for entering a community. This approach will also lessen the likelihood of polarization.)
- 2 Allow for community stakeholders to name and frame their issues and values that are most vital to them, using their own terminology and verbiage instead of the "professionals" identifying perceived values and concerns or using language that does not resonate with community stakeholders. Doing so leads to misrepresentation, loss of trust in process, resentment and anger, and ultimately a breakdown in the entire process. Let stakeholders use their own nomenclature to more accurately express their values without it getting lost in translation or discouraging participation. The identification and framing of the concern and values of a community directly impacts what the possible solutions might be.
- 3 There should be an appropriate space where the developer / designer offers solutions to concerns and issues that may be raised by community stakeholders. These solutions essentially become the options being offered as a response to the community stakeholder feedback.



- ④ Once these options are presented in response to concerns raised by community stakeholders, each item should be explored, along with the opportunities, limitations, and consequences of each proposal. The trade-offs of each potential solution or option will expose what the community stakeholders value most and what the realistic capacity is for the developer / designer to execute (e.g. budget, site capacity, timeline, regulations).
- ⑤ Exploring the potential options and opportunities to address concerns of community stakeholders, along with the trade-offs of each, allows the community stakeholders to receive insight into what the realistic capacity and limitations are, and determine their priority. The developer / designer learns what the community stakeholders can or cannot live with, and what their hierarchical values are. Both entities come to hopeful consensus on what the proposed plan of action will be based on a full understanding of the trade-offs. This process is sometimes very tough, but allows all parties to recognize that there are compromises that must be made. When this is implemented in an intentional and thoughtful way, it creates a stronger end product. At the end of an engagement process such as this, there should be less likelihood of animosity between parties, and all should come away feeling that they participated in a meaningful process where their values were truly considered, and ideally their priorities were incorporated. Since a new development equates to a new neighbor, a more agreeable process makes for a harmonious integration into a community for the long-term.

I find that most communities are more receptive to a developer even if all of their requests are not possible to be met, as long as an authentic, non-patronizing, and respectful process has transpired. Allowing a community to see into the inner workings of the development process, the actual resources that are available and limitations that exist, instead of being exclusive, reduces much of the contention that may take place in development. The community's values should be upheld as the guide in the design process, while still allowing for a developer's own expression taking those values into account. This process may take on different forms, timelines etc., but the basic elements lead to good outcomes.

"This methodology is inspired by my training at the Kettering Foundation: Deliberative Democracy Institute cohort program, and is my approach to engagement."

**Kimani Jeffrey, Detroit City Planning Commission**

# APPENDIX 03

## GUIDELINES FOR LEADING WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Dan Pitera, FAIA: Professor & Dean  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

Ceara O'Leary, AIA: Co-Executive Director  
Detroit Collaborative Design Center  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

### Leading from the Side

Meaningful engagement is at the core of effective leadership, mobilizing stakeholders and generating quality design embraced by communities. Through this lens, leadership is an activity that focuses on the way a person works with a community toward a common goal—whether the community is defined as a neighborhood, a business, or another group of stakeholders. Furthermore, it acknowledges shared community leadership through a collaborative process.

Effective community engagement is built upon relationships and trust, which both take time. In turn, engagement leads to solutions that better respond to community context and result in more efficient projects, buoyed by local support. What follows is a field guide for effective community engagement. This set of guidelines outlines principles and practices for working with communities to move toward a process of knowledge exchange where inclusive methods amplify all voices in a design and planning process.

### Civic Engagement vs. Community Engagement

Civic engagement and community engagement are distinctly different activities and must be clearly defined. In short, civic engagement is a system that is larger than a specific project or planning activity. Civic engagement is something that occurs as an integral part of people's day-to-day lives, transforming how they live and engage with social and civic infrastructure. Community engagement—sometimes called participation—is project-based, and essentially begins and ends with the project or process at hand. At the project and practice scale, it is not possible to establish a civic engagement system. Instead, consider how to connect to the existing civic engagement systems present in the community, district, or city.

### Blend Expertise & Build Capacity

A successful community engagement process lies in the many opportunities to interact with a broad range of community stakeholders, to work across silos and boundaries, and to increase the capacity of all community sectors to more effectively engage and partner. Ultimately, the goal is to build confidence across all participants, including design and technical team members, and facilitate the authentic blending of community expertise with discipline expertise (e.g., design, development, planning, etc.). The best solutions lie at the intersection of community and discipline knowledge and expertise.



Using broad-based community participation and knowledge sharing, in conjunction with design strategies and thinking, neighborhood and project results occur that respond to locally defined concerns while energizing the power of residents and stakeholders to engage in future community planning, development, and building design processes, as well as facilitate their own. A robust and meaningful engagement process underscores community ownership in the overall design and development process.

### Define the "Community"

The "community" rarely equals residents only. Who comprises a community is different in every project and process. Communities are not clear and distinct. They can overlap. Just like a group of people who are in the car-loving community may be in separate community subsets when it comes to whether they like the Mustang, Camaro, or Challenger.

Like tiles in a mosaic, each person in a community influences and connects with other people to create a bigger picture of the community. Each person still retains their individual identity, while building larger community impact. The "who" in community (workers, parents, students, teachers, residents, nonprofit leaders, children, business owners, pastors, etc.) bring with them their own individual expertise that can enrich and connect to other people's expertise, creating a more complete strategic system of thinking. When people of varying backgrounds and with varying expertise come together and connect across expertise, creative and unique responses are possible.

Knowing the "who" also begins to identify the existing civic engagement systems that should be engaged to achieve a successful community-engaged project. Often, connecting with existing social infrastructure (block club meetings, Facebook groups, neighborhood park events, etc.) is an effective way to meet people where they are at, rather than add another meeting to their calendars.

### Instigate Knowledge Exchange

Community engagement is the open and ongoing multi-way dialogue between all stakeholders: people talking together and working together to move forward together. What you do not know is a good thing. Let the process guide your thinking. The engagement processes should not be understood as methods to achieve specific and particular predetermined responses or validate what is already thought. They should inspire people, not validate the designer or developer. Allow the process to engage authentic knowledge exchange, which is one of three modes of knowledge sharing:

**Inform:** Where the "technical and design team" informs the "community" of their work or visa versa. This keeps the power in the hands of the informer.

**Feedback:** Where the "community" provides a response to information presented to them or visa versa. This still keeps the power in the hands of the informer.

**Exchange:** Where knowledge is exchanged by all parties or stakeholders (including technical and design team members) and power begins to be shared.

Inform, feedback, and exchange are all forms of sharing knowledge. But when inform and feedback have grown out of a process of exchange, it is a more effective way to build trust, accountability, and transparency. It is our responsibility as the engagement design leaders to synthesize this knowledge exchange, rather than dictating specific knowledge or design ideas.

## Think Beyond the Townhall and the Charrette.

It is important to develop a mosaic of participatory tactics for the mosaic of people who are directly and indirectly connected to the work. Become a part of people's lives; become a part of their agenda. Do not expect people to become part of your agenda. Many people do not have the ability or do not want to attend traditional community planning meetings or town hall events. For example, evening meetings do not work for the people who work nights, have kids to care for, or have long commutes. Also, you will rarely find youth or young adults attending community meetings. It is essential to develop a range of different engagement tactics for different communities that respond to local culture and context.

When you design a creative and thoughtful engagement activity, people will be more open to engage in dialogue. We suggest being creative and to think of two criteria when thinking about tactics that will engage a broad range of people:

1. Be clear about the purpose of the engagement tactics and who they reach. We define two general groupings of tactics: 1. the methods we use to open the process to a wide variety of people and
2. the methods we use to make their participation meaningful. We see this as the difference between:

- Entering a dialogue and
- Engaging the dialogue meaningfully once it is entered.

Look for ways to make everyone's participation meaningful—from the business leader to the nonprofit leader, and from the pastor to the resident down the street. A successful community engagement process lies in the many opportunities to engage a broad range of communities, to work across silos, and to increase the capacity of all community sectors to engage and partner.

## Design Feedback Loops, Engage Throughout, & Document the Process

It is necessary for participatory design and planning to engage throughout the life of the process, not just before major project or process milestones. Meaningful and productive methods of community participation could be understood as a process where communities, developers, and designers work as partners throughout the life of a project. Thinking across the entire life of the process helps consider participatory planning and design as well as participatory implementation.

Inherent in the process of knowledge sharing is consistent communication. Communication should occur before, during, and after all events and activities, contributing to the transparency of the project and process. It is not enough to develop a wide range of engagement tactics, there needs to be visible methods of exchanging information, where participants can see and understand how their engagement impacts the process and project. This feedback should occur at all stages of the process, not just at major milestones. Support feedback loops by developing authentic and clear methods to translate community expertise from anecdotal accounts, to usable and impactful qualitative and quantitative data sets.

Similarly, track the process and update it regularly using participant demographic data gathered from the previous participatory tactics to ensure that the process continues to reach a range of people.





## **Working Together to Move Forward Together**

Whether at the scale of a building, landscape, neighborhood, or city, we already know that if the problems are tough and they have been around a while, then the answers will be tougher still, and the easy answers have most likely already been tested. With this in mind, the people working together through these intense and dynamic issues must be prepared to adapt to change and adjust to unexpected opportunities. The end goal is for the community to work through and find the yet-to-be-found solutions to the tough questions. Effective community engagement is where more people have a stake and ownership in finding and implementing the answers. These community-engaged answers embody creative and collaborative approaches that better meet local needs. To conclude, spaces and places designed through effective engagement can reveal hidden histories and instigate future traditions.

## **8869 Avis, Detroit**

### **Community Partner: The Alley Project**

Ceara O'Leary: Co-Executive Director  
Detroit Collaborative Design Center  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

Dan Pitera, FAIA: Professor + Dean  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

### **Overall Context**

The community-client for this project is a collection of initiatives that promote youth and community development through cultural and place-based initiatives. One of their flagship initiatives transformed a Southwest Detroit neighborhood alley and surrounding vacant lots into an inspirational graffiti art gallery, which connects neighbors and youth to each other as well as to community assets. This project provides an anchor to the alley project through the renovation of an existing 2,400-square-foot building into a community center, program headquarters, and leasable tenant area. This marks the first year-round home to the organization's programs, and reflects community vision in its planning, execution, and everyday use.

## Process

This project is the product of a robust relationship between the client-collaborator, a diverse stakeholder group of neighbors and artists, and the partnering design firms. The project began with a participatory process that engaged key stakeholders—graffiti artists, skateboarders, kids, grandparents, and other neighbors—in project planning and design decision making, resulting in a community space that responds to local culture, needs, and opportunities. A series of community workshops, focus groups, and neighborhood celebrations gave participants the agency and opportunity to guide the design of the building. The spaces and materials resulted directly from the collaborative design process and speak to the neighborhood's identity and vibrancy.

## Outcomes

The design challenge was to create a flexible, accessible, and authentic space which reflected the values of the community. The north facade was removed to create a larger community room, which opens onto an enclosed "front porch" area. The porch is enclosed by geometric-patterned ornamental ironwork screens fabricated by local metalworkers, which reference fences and screens prevalent in the neighborhood, contributing to both security and transparency. The mural, which wraps throughout the building, was designed by a late street artist and completed in tribute by a program alumnus. This space brings the activity of the adjacent alley project to the front of the building and the main corners of the neighborhood. Large windows pop from the west facade for a visual connection to the street and future adjacent park. On the interior, wood finish panels in bold colors and subtle patterns reference the mural and metalwork, and large movable doors allow flexibility of spaces as well as provide functional writable surfaces for meeting notes and impromptu artwork.

## Impact

An organization that aims to build meaningful relationships between neighborhood youth and elders using low-rider car club and street art cultures, the community partner needed a space that would support and enhance their mission to bring the neighborhood together. The architectural outcomes create a community space that both spills out into the neighborhood and welcomes neighbors in. Since opening, the flexible space has served as an events space, artist residency, and performance space, hosting meetings, art workshops, pop-up entrepreneurs, and barbecues. The tenant space houses a partnering photography collective, supporting the overall mission and contributing to the project's sustainability. The community organization's headquarters now have a year-round home.



# APPENDIX 04

## PROFORMA EXAMPLE

### Sources and Uses of Funds

Case Study - Rental As Is					
SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS					
					referenced from other sheet grey cell is used in formula highlighted cell is a formula
USES	Notes		Subtotal		
<b>Real Estate Purchase:</b>					
Land					
Building		\$850,000			
Furniture and Equipment					
			Subtotal	\$850,000	
<b>Rehabilitation Costs</b>					
Building	13620	\$165	\$2,247,300		
Site	allowance	\$60,000	\$60,000		
Fixtures	7	\$3,500	\$24,500		
Architectural/Eng Fees			\$179,784		
				\$2,511,584	
<b>Financing Fee and Interest</b>					
Financing Fees	2.00%	\$25,750			
Permanent Placement Fee	0.75%	\$9,656			
Title/Recording/Survey		\$7,500			
			Subtotal	\$42,906	
<b>Other</b>					
Appraisal		\$2,400			
Environmental Part 1 and Testing		\$7,500			
			Subtotal	\$9,900	
<b>Contingency</b>					
Soft Costs Contingency	5%	\$2,640			
			Subtotal	\$2,640	
<b>Project Costs</b>				\$3,417,031	
Working Capital		\$12,000			
Initial Operating Deficit		\$-00			
			Subtotal	\$12,000	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</b>				\$3,429,031	
<b>SOURCES</b>					
Investor Equity		\$1,892,178			
Historic Tax Credit		\$630,352			
First Mortgage		\$1,267,501			75% loan to value
<b>TOTAL SOURCES = Project Financing</b>				\$3,429,031	
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>				\$-00	





## Operating Costs

This is a partial example of a yearly operating cost.

Case Study - Rehab for Rental										
OPERATING COSTS										
Yearly Expenses										
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year Total	
House and Grounds Expenses										
	Cleaning	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$1,440	
		\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$360	
	Snow	\$150	\$150	\$150				\$150	\$600	
	Permits and Fees	\$0.00	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$550	
	Pest Control	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Replacements and Improvements	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$1,800	
	Tenant Damage & Repairs	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$1,800	
	Waste Removal	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$660	
	House and Grounds Expenses Subtotal	\$655	\$705	\$705	\$555	\$555	\$555	\$705	\$7,210	
Management Expenses										
	Leasing Commissions	\$933	\$933	\$933	\$933	\$933	\$933	\$933	\$11,201	
	Advertising and Marketing	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Accounting	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$2,400	
	Bank Charges	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$300	
	Credit and Collection Fees	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$300	
	Legal Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Manager 5%	\$1,129	\$1,129	\$1,129	\$1,129	\$1,129	\$1,129	\$1,129	\$13,547	
	Office Supplies	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$300	
	Postage and Shipping	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Resident Manager Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Management Expenses Subtotal	\$2,337	\$2,337	\$2,337	\$2,337	\$2,337	\$2,337	\$2,337	\$28,048	
Taxes and Insurance										
	Personal Property Taxes	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Property & Owner Liability Ins	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$8,000	
	Real Property Taxes*	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Taxes and Insurance Subtotal	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$667	\$8,000	
Utilities Expenses										
	Cable/TV	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Electric	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$1,440	
	Gas	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$6,000	
	Internet Service	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Fire Alarm with Phone	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$75	\$900	
	Security Alarm	\$65	\$65	\$65	\$65	\$65	\$65	\$65	\$780	
	Water and Sewer	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$6,000	
	Elevator Maintenance and Inspections	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Utilities Expenses Subtotal	\$1,280	\$1,260	\$1,260	\$1,260	\$1,260	\$1,260	\$1,260	\$15,120	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$4,919</b>	<b>\$4,969</b>	<b>\$4,969</b>	<b>\$4,819</b>	<b>\$4,819</b>	<b>\$4,819</b>	<b>\$4,969</b>	<b>\$58,378</b>	
*for property taxes use 10 Year Cash Flow										
Average Yearly Expense Per Unit										

# RESOURCES

## Toolkits & Resource Collections

### Design Guide: Neighborhood Business

A practical resource for understanding and working with designers to bring your brick and mortar business to life. This Guide covers the basics of brand identity, digital assets, and physical space design, and prepares business owners with what to expect, so they can engage successfully with the professionals that deliver those services.

### Enterprise Community Partners – Design Matters Toolkit

The Design Matters Toolkit supports developers in adopting the three core practices for achieving people-focused design: Mission, Design, and Impact.

### Enterprise Community Partners – Design Matters Resources

Helpful templates, pre-development information, and case studies.

### ADA Design Standards

United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

### AARP Pop-Up Placemaking Toolkit

The Pop-Up Placemaking Tool Kit by AARP and the urban planning firm Team Better Block helps elected officials, planners, policymakers, and involved residents use temporary projects to improve communities for people of all ages.

### Detroit Economic Growth Corporation Open for Business Guide

A comprehensive resource to lead entrepreneurs through the process of properly starting their businesses in the City of Detroit created by DEGC in partnership with Detroit's Lean Six Sigma program.

### EPA Green Infrastructure Design & Implementation

Design manuals, tools, challenges, information on implementation, and homeowner resources from the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

### Aging in Place Home Modifications

Kitchen modifications to help people age in place comfortably and safely.

### Place Lab University of Chicago Ethical Redevelopment

An emerging set of 9 Principles that were drawn from artist-led, neighborhood-based development work on Chicago's South Side. Place Lab, part of the University of Chicago's Arts + Public Life Initiative, has introduced the 9 Principles in their early stages of development in order to share and refine with other willing urban practitioners who believe in spatial equity for cities.

### Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Design Guidelines

Design guidelines created to help ensure that new housing infill is appropriately designed within the context of the existing neighborhood.

### NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association Diversity Resource Center

Diversity and inclusion initiatives by larger real estate companies.

### Detroit Future City Field Guide to Working with Lots

Step-by-step instruction for 38 landscape designs ranging from installation by beginning gardeners to professional contractors. On this website, you can sort through the designs to find one that meets your budget, maintenance level, and experience. The designs address a variety of concerns including stormwater, dumping, and soil quality, and can transform vacant lots into community assets.

### Creating and Preserving Industrial Space: Mission-Driven Development Toolkit

Co-authored by the Urban Manufacturing Alliance and the Association for Neighborhood Development, this toolkit is the newest resource, the first-of-its-kind, to help more communities learn about and implement mission-driven strategies for urban industrial development.



## Articles & Reports

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### **If You Are Serious About Sustainability, Social Equity Can't Be Just Another Add-On**

A 2020 article from Metropolis Magazine that explores the importance of social equity in sustainability efforts.

### **Best Practices for Accessibility Compliance**

A resource that describes overall best practices to achieve compliance with accessibility regulations through the entire project cycle, from concept design through construction completion.

### **Architectural Design Phases**

An article discussing the phases of design as defined by the American Institute of Architects. The five phases of design are a way for architects to break up the work they do into categories for the purpose of making it easy for everyone to understand. The design phases are an outline of the design process.

### **Healthcare: A Cure for Housing (Affordable Housing Practices)**

A resource from the Center for Active Design that identifies ten best practices for investing in affordable housing, drawing from healthcare industry leaders at the forefront of tackling access to affordable housing as a way to impact health.

### **Urban Land Institute Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2020**

A collaboration between PwC and ULI, this provides a forecast on where to invest, which sectors and markets offer the best prospects, and trends in the capital markets that will affect real estate.

### **Universal Design: Creating Better Buildings & Cities for All**

Universal Design examples from around the world.

### **"All About The Jobs"**

Eight mission-driven industrial developers on how their spaces anchor manufacturers and support local economies.

## Podcasts & Radio

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### **Detroit City of Design Podcast Hosted by Olga Stella**

Design impacts everyone, for better or for worse. Each week (for ten weeks), Detroit City of Design Podcast invites designers, changemakers, and the curious to participate in a spirited conversation on how design can be used to create conditions for better quality of life and economic opportunity.

### **BiggerPockets Real Estate Podcast**

Released weekly on Thursdays, BiggerPockets is hosted by Brandon Turner and David Greene. It features off-the-cuff interviews with investors of various backgrounds, niches, and experience levels.

### **The Streets are Planning Hosted By Jermaine Ruffin**

Where urban planning, cities, hip hop, culture, and community development conversations live. The Streets are Planning Podcast highlights the unheard voices, stories, and impact of community leaders working in cities and neighborhoods across the globe.

### **Design Matters with Debbie Millman**

A podcast about design and an inquiry into the broader world of creative culture through wide-ranging conversations with designers, writers, artists, curators, musicians, and other luminaries of contemporary thought.

## Online Learning

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### **University of Michigan Community Engagement Online Minicourse (Free)**

Developed by an interdisciplinary team of content experts from U-M, the Community Engagement: Collaborating for Change Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is designed to help both novices and seasoned practitioners of community engagement work more effectively with communities and organizations, both domestically and abroad.

### **Opportunity Zone Community Impact Assessment Tool**

The Opportunity Zone Community Impact Assessment Tool assesses the potential social impact of a local development project using evidence-based indicators. The tool is available for any stakeholder interested in the social impact of an eligible investment in an Opportunity Zone, whether an operating business, a residential, commercial, or industrial development, or some combination of these types.

## **Books**

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### **The Architecture of Happiness by Alain de Botton**

The Architecture of Happiness is a dazzling and generously illustrated journey through the philosophy and psychology of architecture and the indelible connection between our identities and our locations. One of the great, but often unmentioned causes of both happiness and misery is the quality of our environment: the kinds of walls, chairs, buildings, and streets that surround us.

### **Urban Code: 100 Lessons for Understanding the City by Anne Mikeliet & Moritz Purchauer**

Cities speak, and this little book helps us understand their language. Considering the urban landscape not from the abstract perspective of an urban planner, but from the viewpoint of an attentive observer, Urban Code offers 100 "lessons"—maxims, observations, and bite-size truths, followed by short essays—that teach us how to read the city. This is a user's guide to the city, a primer of urban literacy, at the pedestrian level.

### **Walkable City by Jeff Speck**

Jeff Speck has dedicated his career to determining what makes cities thrive. And he has boiled it down to one key factor: walkability. Making downtown into a walkable, viable community is the essential fix for the typical American city; it is

eminently achievable and its benefits are manifold. Walkable City—bursting with sharp observations and key insights into how urban change happens—lays out a practical, necessary, and inspiring vision for how to make American cities great again.

### **Inclusive Housing by Center for Inclusive Design & Environmental Access**

Inclusive Housing focuses on housing that provides access to people with disabilities while benefiting all residents, and that incorporates inclusive design practices into neighborhood and housing designs without compromising other important design goals.

### **Thanks for the View Mr. Mies: Lafayette Park, Detroit by Danielle Aubert, Lana Cavar, & Natasha Chandani**

Lafayette Park, an affordable middle-class residential area in downtown Detroit, is home to the largest collection of buildings designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in the world. Today, it is one of Detroit's most racially integrated and economically stable neighborhoods, although it is surrounded by evidence of a city in financial distress. Through interviews with and essays by residents; reproductions of archival material; and new photographs by Karin Jobst, Vasco Roma, and Corine Vermeulen, and previously unpublished photographs by documentary filmmaker Janine Debanné, Thanks for the View, Mr. Mies examines the way that Lafayette Park residents confront and interact with this unique modernist environment.

### **The Buildings of Detroit: A History by W. Hawkins Ferry**

First published in 1968, The Buildings of Detroit: A History by W. Hawkins Ferry is the definitive resource on the architecture of Detroit and its adjacent communities, from pioneering times to the end of the twentieth century. Ferry based his impressive volume on thirteen years of meticulous research, interviews with many prominent architects, and hundreds of photos commissioned specifically for the book.



**Smith, Hinchman & Grylls: 125 Years of Architecture and Engineering, 1853-1978 by Thomas J. Holleman & James P. Gallagher**

The story of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates, Inc., is also the story of the building of Detroit and Michigan. This long-established and respected national firm has designed more of downtown Detroit's buildings than any other company while it has made a significant mark on architecture throughout the state. The firm has been based in Detroit since 1855, but Thomas J. Holleman and James P. Gallagher trace its history to Sheldon Smith's early practice of architecture in Sandusky, Ohio, in 1853, making it the oldest, continuously operating architectural and engineering practice in the United States.

**Subdivided: City-Building In An Age Of Hyper-Diversity**

Through compelling storytelling and analysis, Subdivided's contributors—a wide range of place-makers, academics, activists, and journalists—ask how we can expand city-building processes to tackle issues ranging from transit equity and trust-based policing to holistic mental health, dignified affordable housing, and inclusive municipal governance. Ultimately, Subdivided aims to provoke the tough but pressing conversations required to build a truly connected and just city.

**Building the Modern World: Albert Kahn in Detroit by Michael H. Hodges**

Building the Modern World: Albert Kahn in Detroit by Michael H. Hodges tells the story of the German-Jewish immigrant who rose from poverty to become one of the most influential architects of the twentieth century. Kahn's buildings not only define downtown Detroit, but his early car factories for Packard Motor and Ford revolutionized the course of industry and architecture alike.

**The Art of Inequality: Architecture, Housing, and Real Estate**

The Art of Inequality belongs to a long-term research project on architecture, housing, and socioeconomic inequality begun in 2008 by the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture. This "provisional report" extends the project's research into

the real-world impact of cultural imaginaries, offering glimpses into the operating systems that run beneath housing discourse and shape its vocabulary by directing attention to the subtle ways in which architecture—through housing—lays the groundwork for present dilemmas involving inequality, not simply by casting them in concrete, but by concretely laying out their terms.

## Places

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**The Design Museum in London, United Kingdom**

Mission: To build public awareness of design by connecting design with people's lives and passions. To reflect the designer's role at the forefront of social, technological, and environmental change. To serve the design community. Design is a practice, a diverse discipline, infinitely rich in approaches and characters. It is a young discipline, whose role in the world is evolving. Our unique approach to working with designers is to invite them to 'think in public' with us.

**Metropolitan Museum of Design Detroit (MM-O-DD)**

Engaging people with educational enrichment and experiential opportunities into the past, present, and future of the design industry.

## Other

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**Design Core Detroit**

You can access design expertise through the Detroit Design Network, a collaborative group of interdisciplinary designers and agencies with varying degrees of experience. Contact [info@designcore.org](mailto:info@designcore.org) for more information on how to connect with the right professionals for your projects.

**Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties**

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program encourages private sector investment in the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings. It creates jobs and is one of the nation's

most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. The National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service administer the program in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices.

**BlackSpace**

BlackSpace is an interdisciplinary collective, seeking to bridge policy, people, and place with a mission of equity and justice. They strive for environments that recognize, affirm, and amplify Black agency, discourse, and thought.

**Building Community Value**

Building Community Value is a nonprofit, community-based corporation dedicated to implementing and facilitating real estate development projects in underserved neighborhoods throughout the City of Detroit through its Better Buildings, Better Blocks real estate development training program.

**Incremental Development Alliance**

A not-for-profit Alliance of practitioners who train small developers.

**National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)**

A national organization with chapters across the country for the purpose of minimizing the effect of racism in architecture.

**National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) - Detroit**

A professional architectural organization designed to be a conduit of knowledge and experience to the youth and our community.



## Acknowledgments

The Design Guide series is produced by Design Core Detroit to further the understanding of how various design disciplines help solve business and societal challenges. This Design Guide: Real Estate Development was made possible by a grant from JP Morgan Chase.

The process of writing each Guide in the series takes approximately one year and includes multiple workshops, focus groups, and industry reviews to ensure the information is complete and accurate, and addresses the needs of the audience it's intended to serve. This real estate Design Guide grew from two large public workshops, including sessions during Detroit Month of Design and the international include Conference in Detroit, and four industry stakeholder focus groups. Participants from those events are listed on the following page.

An Industry Advisory Council and several service vendors were also involved in the making of this Guide. Design Core wishes to thank everyone involved for their time, expertise, and dedicated contributions.

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Denise Lyles

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Theodore McNeal

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Carrie Niemy

Sean O'Neill

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Giancarlo Pia

Julie Pincus

Nicholas Pohl

Abizer Rasheed

Janice Rembert

Amy Rencher

Gary Ringer

Nicole Rittenour

Keri Roberts

Bernd Ronnisch

Clyde Rowsey

Tanya Saldivar-Ali

Sarah Jo Sauter

John Schoeniger

Alissa Shelton

Gary Shelton

Bobby Smith

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14. City of Detroit's Office of Sustainability <https://detroitmi.gov/government/mayors-office/office-sustainability>
15. <https://placelab.uchicago.edu/ethical-redevelopment>





