

# Planning: Neighborhood groups want role in remaking Detroit

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troit 1950. That's a huge mindset shift."

The perception, Goddeeris said, has been that CDOs would violently reject such a plan, not offer to work with the city and foundations.

Maggie DeSantis, president of the **Warren/Conner Development Coalition** and a member of the CDAD board, said that the group has been invited to present the report to area foundations and to the city's Planning and Development Department.



DeSantis



Rapson

"My sense is that the city is eager to incorporate all of this really good work that is being done by CDAD, by all of these other organizations in city of Detroit," said Rip Rapson, president of the Kresge Foundation.

"But there needs to be a unified, coherent, intentional way of coming at the question of land use planning, so this will fit almost without question into the broader efforts. But I think what the city is embarked on is an effort to pull these multiple efforts, all of high value, into a single process."

It's important for CDOs, which work closely with the city's neighborhoods, to take a role in defining the future of Detroit, he said.

DeSantis said the plan recognizes that the city's neighborhoods are not homogeneous, that within each area may exist a range of viability and the potential for multiple land uses.

## Demographer: Numbers key to shaping city's future

BY NANCY KAFFER  
CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Kurt Metzger knows how many city workers are Detroit residents, how the makeup of the east side's ethnic communities has shifted over time, and which Detroit neighborhoods have suffered the greatest losses in population and housing stock.

For years, he's been the metro area's go-to guy for meaningful demographic analysis or soundbite statistics.

Now, with funding for the re-named **Data Driven Detroit** and a mission to create a city-centric data clearinghouse, Metzger is poised to be a key player in shaping Detroit's future.

As the city and its nonprofit and foundation community move toward developing a plan for resizing the city, data is key.

Without in-depth knowledge of neighborhood characteristics, or indicators, it isn't possible to make good decisions about long-term land use.

In 2008, Metzger received about \$1.8 million from the Troy-based **Kresge Foundation** and the Detroit-based **Skillman Foundation** to fund a data clearinghouse for three

years. Last year, he launched the **Detroit Area Community Indicators System** — a name Metzger is discarding in favor of **Data Driven Detroit**, or **D3**.

Metzger envisions the data clearinghouse — a work in progress that he estimates will cost roughly \$500,000 — as an online neighborhood reporting system, an extension of a parcel survey D3 undertook last year.



Metzger

"Such a system would be built from our parcel survey work that would be expanded to look at residential, commercial and industrial parcels and structures," he said.

"These would be layered with land value, land use, sales and foreclosure data ... overlaid by demographic, health, public safety and additional information that would allow all parties — from block club to philanthropy — to understand what is on the ground and how we make an impact. Such a structure would inform all

efforts in Detroit."

Members of the community — from residents to nonprofits to the city to philanthropic organizations — could update the system, making it an evolving, up-to-date pool of information.

It's something Detroit has never had, say those involved in neighborhood work.

The system could be built into a larger regional database that would allow for the development of detailed regional data, Metzger said, and also be used to benchmark the Detroit region with other parts of the country.

Metzger got his start with the **U.S. Census**, serving in local and regional posts in his native Ohio, moving to Detroit in 1975.

Since then, he's worked at **Wayne State University** and the **United Way of Southeastern Michigan** before starting D3.

Collecting data, though he's done plenty of that, isn't his favorite part of the job. It's using the information to describe real people and real neighborhoods — and to see how applied data can effect positive change.

With the data D3 can provide, the city can be much more competitive in the quest for federal

dollars and grants from national foundations, Metzger said.

All parties involved in the discussion about resizing Detroit — the city, the foundations and the nonprofit community — have said that data-driven, transparent decisions are necessary to achieve community buy-in.

Maggie DeSantis, president of the **Warren/Conner Development Coalition** and a board member of **Community Development Advocates of Detroit**, said accurate data is crucial to implementation of a recent CDAD draft plan for land uses in Detroit.

"What this document suggests is that we use indicators (to determine land use)," she said. "Right now there's no parcel mapping of commercial corridors, (no information about) what is the level of community organization and involvement in various neighborhoods. Some of this data is available, some is currently unusable, some is not gettable, some we don't have yet, and some you can't get politically."

D3, she said, stands to be a valuable tool in collecting such information.

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That's why it's essential to compile neighborhood benchmarks, or indicators, that quantify factors like the quality of a neighborhood's housing stock, its population density over time, infrastructure and involvement or engagement of a CDO or neighborhood association. (See related story above.)

And decisions about which neighborhoods should be encouraged to grow as village hubs,

which mix commercial and residential use in a walkable urban neighborhood, or which should return to a natural state as public parkland within the city, should be driven by data, DeSantis said.

The next step, she said, is to finalize the draft report.

The framework, said Tim Thorland, executive director of **Southwest Solutions** and chair of the CDAD board, could be used as a

guidepost once a land use plan is completed and neighborhood data is compiled.

"There's more meat to what we're talking about than a land use strategy," he said.

DeSantis said that a key question for CDAD was what role community development organizations would play in a smaller Detroit.

For each of the nine land uses,

the task force attempted to define the role a CDO could play in bolstering a commercial, mixed use, residential, natural or industrial neighborhood.

"We understand our roles will change," she said. But as the groups that work most closely with the city's neighborhoods, "we have to have a role."

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# Film: Some projects in slow motion amid casting for incentives

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Royal Oak and Hollywood producer Jeff Stern have funded the company's growth in large part "out of operations," since relocating to Michigan from Los Angeles in 2008.

"It's still about money," he said. "I'm not personally familiar with all the details of the projects in Pontiac or (Unity Studios in) Allen Park, but my understanding is that for projects of that size an issue tends to be lining up financing."

Spilman said S3, which also handles film equipment rental at its Ferndale headquarters and some financial assistance to production companies through its **Michigan Film Finance** subsidiary, also has stayed small.

Many of the projects that pass through its doors are modestly funded studio or independent projects, often with \$5 million to \$10 million budgets, that can take full advantage of Michigan film incentives since none of their directors or actors would exceed the \$2 million cap on the incentives.

S3 studios includes one 25,000-

square-foot stage, 10,000 square feet of furnished office space, post-production facilities, a screening room and other film production support at the Madison Heights location.

By comparison, Raleigh Studios Michigan proposes at least seven sound stages in a 185,000-square-foot building it will erect along with renovating an existing 368,400-square-foot building in Pontiac.

With 45-foot-high interior ceilings and up to 90,000 square feet within a single sound stage under the Pontiac plan, the Raleigh site could conceivably handle much bigger film projects.

"In the short term, we probably won't see as many of the 'Red Dawn' kind of productions coming with \$50 million or more budgets looking for a large-sized studio and make lots of explosions," Spilman said.

"We wanted to make the size of our studio suited to the size and budgets of productions that can make the most of Michigan's incentive programs."

“It's important to be able ... to expand the credits to commercial and other work.”



Adler

Mark Adler,  
Michigan Production Alliance

Mark Adler, director of the Novi-based **Michigan Production Alliance**, a Novi-based trade group that lobbies on behalf of the state's film industry, said the caps on compensation under Michigan's incentives law could draw smaller productions at first, but in time it could attract more and larger projects like the "Red Dawn" remake due out in November.

He also predicts Raleigh, S3 and other local companies that lease

space to production companies will eventually have to develop a mix of customers, including commercial production, to succeed.

"That's just what it's going to mean to be a studio in Michigan. Raleigh is not going to be entirely Hollywood-focused on large movies for wide release," he said.

"There's going to be a need to do television, corporate production work, commercials and smaller projects as part of a successful business model. That's why it's important to be able at some point to expand the credits to commercial and other work."

Partners in Michigan Motion Picture Studios include Hollywood-based **Raleigh Studios**; A. Alfred Taubman and the Taubman family; **Walbridge Aldinger** CEO John Rakolta; a trust for Nelson Ventures' CEO Linden Nelson; and **William Morris Endeavor Entertainment L.L.C.**, the company created last year by the merger of William Morris Agency and Endeavor Entertainment.

Ari Emmanuel, co-CEO of

William Morris Endeavor and brother of White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel, is also one of the project backers.

The partners expect to sell between \$23 million to \$28 million to help fund the project, with \$18 million of the bonds to be insured by the **State of Michigan Employees Retirement System** and the other \$5 million to \$10 million in unsecured bonds to be purchased directly by the project backers or their immediate families.

Of the remaining \$32 million, Michigan Motion Pictures expects to be reimbursed \$3.8 million for infrastructure improvements at the site through an allocation to the city of Pontiac under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Another \$11.1 million will come in Michigan film infrastructure tax credits and \$15.1 million from the federal New Market Tax Credits Program for investors in a commercial or mixed-development project in low-income areas.

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