

ADVERTISEMENT

Freep.com • Weather • Jobs • Cars • Real Estate • Apartments • Shopping • Classifieds • Dating



Emails | RSS | Text Me Freep | Mobile

Subscribe to the Free Press | Manage My Account | Place an Ad | Contact Us

Search Detroit: All Local news, jobs, cars, homes, things to do & see... Go

- LOCAL NEWS
- NATION/WORLD
- SPORTS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- BUSINESS
- AUTOS
- FEATURES
- TRAVEL
- OBITUARIES
- OPINION

TWIST

Freep.com » News » Detroit

# Kilpatrick's neighborhood plans met with zeal and doubt

## Affordability is a concern

May 17, 2007

BY SUZETTE HACKNEY  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Detroiters appeared ready to embrace Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's ambitious neighborhood improvement plan as it was publicly unveiled Wednesday.

But many questioned whether the city could come up with the money.

ADVERTISEMENT

Kilpatrick has pledged \$125 million in tax dollars over five years to fund the Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative and is seeking \$100 million from nonprofit foundations and additional money from bonds and grants to help revitalize six neighborhoods in the city.

Others said they hoped the proposed changes -- beefed-up police presence, cleaner streets, demolished abandoned homes and new retail and housing development -- would be substantial enough to be noticed.

Kilpatrick or his staff members introduced the plan in each community Wednesday, with the pomp and circumstance of a parade. In the Brightmoor neighborhood, for example, Deputy Mayor Anthony Adams jumped on a backhoe to tear down a long-abandoned house. In the Osborn community, a marching band and choir got the crowd rocking.

Turnout was mostly low, as rain showers seemed to follow the gatherings from site to site. Still, those who came listened and watched, anxious to hear what good fortunes would fall on their neighborhoods.

### East English Village

Residents of this east-side neighborhood, chock-full of stately brick homes but worn business corridors, hailed the initiative as a sound plan to shore up their community.

They said city officials particularly listened to their concerns about the need for a more visible police presence to deter petty crime.

Within a month, those patrols will begin on Mack, Harper and Warren.

Break-ins target the handful of vacant homes in the neighborhood, in which thieves strip out raw metals, said Tim Ossman, 55, a 17-year resident of the neighborhood.

The patrols "will reassure the neighbors, reassure the community and hopefully perpetuate and support people moving back into the city," he said.

Bill Barlage, president of the East English Village Association, said the city's initiatives match the neighborhood's needs.

The plans to provide loans to small businesses, issue facade improvement grants and work to identify businesses that the market would support are key, Barlage said.

- Email This Story
- Printable Format
- Forums
- RSS
- A+ A- RESET
- Homepage

### PHOTOS

Click thumbnails to zoom



(REGINA H. BOONE/Detroit Free Press)

Deputy Mayor Anthony Adams speaks in the Grand River/Greenfield community. Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick or members of his staff introduced the plans in each area.



### RELATED STORIES

- [Blighted Brightmoor has most need](#)
- [Changes expected to get started soon](#)

### RELATED NEWS FROM THE WEB

- [Jackson, MI](#)
- [Detroit, MI](#)
- [Detroit Metro](#)
- [Discuss Detroit Metro](#)

Powered by [Topix.net](#)

### REAL ESTATE - sponsored by [Centex Homes](#)



#### HOMES FOR SALE

• Search New Construction and Existing Homes across metro Detroit and Michigan.

- Mortgage rates from lenders nationwide.



#### RENTAL PROPERTIES

• Find apartment communities, corporate housing, and senior living developments.

### SHOPPING



Find the best sales and deals at major retailers near you. [Start Shopping!](#)

"We are a solid neighborhood," he said. "We need solid businesses."

**Osborn**

In the Osborn community, a pep rally for the neighborhood initiative was held in the Brenda Scott Middle School, complete with the school's marching band, its choir and a surprise guest -- the Rev. Al Sharpton.

Sharpton, in metro Detroit for another event, attended the rally after Kilpatrick called and requested his support.

"This is something the mayor committed to when we were here for his re-election," said Sharpton, praising the mayor for paying attention to neighborhoods outside of downtown. "I know what it means to grow up in the projects, and I know what it feels like to be neglected."

The school was a fitting place for photo ops in a neighborhood that has one of the highest concentrations of children in the state. The initiative in Osborn is going to focus on creating a five-year recreational strategy in the area.

**Brightmoor**

Residents here, arguably the most blighted area, watched as Adams demolished the house. Kilpatrick has pledged that residents will see a marked increase in the removal of abandoned buildings almost immediately.

Still, residents vacillated between skepticism and hope.

"I love this neighborhood to death, but I've watched it go down," said Lorita Jackson, 49, who has lived there for 15 years. "I'm happy they're here, but are they going to do the job they say they're going to do? I hope and pray this is a real start."

The Rev. Jerome Warfield Sr., pastor of Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, said Brightmoor historically has been a place of new beginnings, where the working class moved from the South to work in factories. It will again become that place, he said.

"Brightmoor cannot be what it ought to be until the city of Detroit is what it ought to be," he said. "But Detroit cannot be what it ought to be until Brightmoor is what it ought to be."

**Grand River/Greenfield**

Walt Watkins, cochair of Next Detroit, speaking about the initiative, said, "It's not an overnight thing. It will take time, but there is no better time than now."

Adams told residents they should immediately see increased police presence and a revitalized commercial strip at the Grand River and Greenfield area.

Anthony Johnson, 42, who was trying to hop on the bus in front of the former Montgomery Ward building, is unemployed and a lifelong resident of the neighborhood. He said he thinks the five-year plan to revitalize the area is too long. He also questioned why the city waited for the area to deteriorate.

"It's been going down here for years. It might have cost less to do something earlier, but all we can do is try. It's not like we've got anything to lose. How much worse can it get?"

**7 Mile/Livernois**

City crews worked here to trim trees and plant seedlings along the 20000 block of Renfrew in Green Acres.

The buzz of saws echoed in the background as Kilpatrick promised the small group of residents big changes in their neighborhood.

"I stay in Detroit because I have faith in Detroit," said Richard Carson, a consultant for nonprofits who lives in Sherwood Forest, which abuts Green Acres. "This is important because I think people see some momentum. Before, there was no perceived momentum."

Kim Tandy, a Sherwood Forest resident who is the volunteer liaison between the community and the city on the neighborhood initiative, said changes are happening already. She said 11 community groups in the five neighborhoods that make up the 7 Mile/Livernois area have surveyed their members to see what they want in their business district. She also is working with the city to try to attract a national retailer and move the Barnes & Noble bookstore that is at the University of Detroit Mercy campus to Livernois Avenue.

"We want to make it pedestrian-friendly," Tandy said. "We want a Birmingham kind of feel."

The most immediate changes on the boulevard will be landscaping, tree planting, more lighting and a revamped median to better accommodate traffic, she said.

**North End**

The newly fenced and landscaped lot on the corner of Oakland and Westminster in North End was the site of the city's kickoff to plans for the neighborhood initiative program in that community.

The mayor, his chief of staff Christine Beatty and businessman Dave Bing spoke at the unveiling of the city-owned lot.

The lot is the first to be improved in the North End under the initiative's plan to clean up city-owned lots for community gardening and maintenance, until they are developed.

Some North End residents who attended Wednesday voiced skepticism that the program will provide affordable

**SITE INDEX**

- NEWS
- Front
- Community
- Metro
- Detroit
- Wayne
- Oakland
- Macomb
- Michigan
- Nation/World
- Roadwork & Traffic
- Weather
- Obituaries
- Death
- Notices

**SPORTS**

- Front
- Scores
- Lions/NFL
- Red Wings/NHL
- Tigers/MLB
- Pistons/NBA
- Shock/NBA
- U-M
- MSU
- Colleges
- Preps
- Outdoors
- Olympics
- Auto Racing
- Golf

**Free Press Bookstore**

Click here for sports books and posters, sports wearables, cookbooks and more!

**HEALTH & FITNESS MAGAZINE**

**SELECT A HEALTH TOP**

**MICHIGAN COLLEGE GUIDE**

Advertising Supplement

Seeking the right college?

- View the Complete Directory
- View Northern Region
- View Eastern Region
- View Western Region
- View Central Region

**MORE ON FREEP.COM**

**Most Popular:**

- MITCH ALBOM: Lucky Ducks?
- Bush caught driving without a seat belt
- City reaches deal to get bus drivers back to work by Thursday
- Detroit Free Press - www.freep.com - Video: Mike Wendland
- RESIDENCY AND TUITION: Michigan man? U-M says no

**Latest Updates:**

- Invasive creatures have put lakes in crisis, coalition says - 2:14 pm
- House gets tough on gas price gougers - 2:02 pm
- We've got you covered for matinee vs. Angels - 1:57 pm
- DPS launches effort to keep students - 1:51 pm
- Bush caught driving without a seat belt - 1:42 pm

**Hot Careers**

- VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR Find a Job Today!
- -> Coast to Coast - Out of State Opportunities
- - Engineering
- - Healthcare
- - Info Tech
- - Education
- - Manufacturing
- - Sales/Marketing
- - Finance/Accounting
- - Shipping/Distribution
- Pharmaceuticals Specialist
- Project Controller
- Nursing Positions
- Quality Control Intern
- Maintenance
- Leasing Agent
- 911 Dispatcher
- ->CAREER TRAINING - FIND OUT MORE<-

BUY A LINK HERE

housing for existing residents.

"They're putting up all these houses, but they're not affordable," said Robert Holmes, a longtime North End resident.

Shenita Perkins, 24, also doubted the plan's motives. Not only can people not afford a \$150,000-\$200,000 home, but "they can barely find jobs," she said.

Delores Bennett, head of the King Block Club and North End Improvement Association, spoke alongside Bing and Kilpatrick, supporting the plan wholeheartedly.

She urged naysayers to join committees and become involved in the program.

So far, Bennett said, the plan addresses most of the feedback residents gave city officials in neighborhood meetings last year. For the items it does not address: "We can work on it."

Contact **SUZETTE HACKNEY** at 313-222-6614 or [shackney@freepress.com](mailto:shackney@freepress.com). This article also was reported by staff writers Marisol Bello, Ruby L. Bailey, Naomi R. Patton and Zachary Gorchow.

## RECENT COMMENTS

[Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

**renren**

I just can't picture North End and Grand River being anything more than what they are. Grand River has looked, for decades, like a nuclear bomb went off in the middle of it destroying all living life (except the roaches that remain) within a "x" radius. And North End-- its obvious, nothing really has to be said. Its the back-uped sewage in a human cesspool. I think the money could be used more wisely in neighborhoods that have a better potential for improvement and more of a chance to remain that way. Wasting it on Grand River and North End is just flushing it down the toilet.

Posted: Fri May 18, 2007 10:08 pm

**rosado**

Steve-o is at it again. I don't understand why people from the suburbs need to move back to make it good again. Steve your admitting that the people that live there now currently do not have what it takes to turn it around and you are blaming those that have left for your troubles. Which is it Steve, is it lack of leadership? not enough free things in life?, are you to lazy to cut your lawn and take out your garbage? Teach you not steal from my neighbor or covet my neighbors possessions? Last I checked Steve there are other water treatment plants and such that are not within the city like the one right on the border of Dearborn and Detroit on W. Warren. If anything Steve the infrastructure in Detroit and older neighborhoods are failing they are the oldest. Not everybody in the suburbs has city water either smart one. The way I look at Steve in life everything completes a full circle and that is what will happen in Detroit. Good infrastructure, good schools, solid economic prosperity has turned into a rotted out city, that will be bankrupt and need a bail out from big brother and once the people like steve's kind die out and there truly is nothing but a parking lot that is when the city will reemerge. Until then Steve you can have it and your water.

Posted: Thu May 17, 2007 2:10 pm

**tony01**

Its a good question where there get there money from.  
The city has none they say.

I guess its people who live outside of Detroit who will pay but have no say in anything.

The people if Detroit made it that way over the last 40 years because there told to be mad over something insted of picking themselves up and over comeing like everybody else.

I just hope We dont pay for it. Its kind of like a child. If you dont make them take resposibly for there actions the'll do it again and again.

I myself Hate that city and dont think any money should come from the suburbs.  
They hate us anyways.

Posted: Thu May 17, 2007 2:04 pm

**skycap**

I'm thinking, based upon the posts, that there is far more doubt than zeal.

Posted: Thu May 17, 2007 1:07 pm

**littlegiz**

Hey Steve- get a grip! Where did you ever get the idea that the suburbs were "ripping off" the city of Detroit? Lets face it, if it wasnt for the dreaded suburbs, Detroit would be a ghost town. There is no reason for anyone to have to put up with trash, bad schools, crime, abandoded houses, killings..... My family moved to Detroit in the 1880's and moved out in 1956 when my grandparents got tired of houses burning on their street and theft in the neighborhood. The church that my family belonged to for over 70 years was "given away" to a local community group because the pastor and parishoners were tired of being mugged and having their cars broken into. I am sure that you dont care about this but it broke my heart to leave the church where my child was baptized because of thugs! The water comes out of the Detroit River, which does not belong to the City of Detroit! Several municipalities have their own water treatment systems and I guarantee you that if the suburbs dropped out of the Detroit water system, the whole department would go bankrupt in a few years. Kwame is too busy being a HIP HOP mayor and going to

expensive spas to worry about the citizens of Detroit. The suburbs subsidize all kinds of things in the city and you know it. 😊

Posted: Thu May 17, 2007 12:36 pm

[Post a Comment](#) [View All Comments](#)

Partners: Jobs: [CareerBuilder.com](#) • Cars: [Cars.com](#) • Apartments: [Apartments.com](#) • Shopping: [ShopLocal.com](#)

[Customer Service](#) [Terms of Service](#) [Send feedback](#) [Subscribe Now](#) [Jobs In Journalism](#)

Copyright ©2007 the Detroit Free Press. All rights reserved. Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Rights](#) (Terms updated March 2007)

[USA Today](#) [USA Weekend](#) [Gannett Co. Inc.](#) [Gannett Foundation](#)