



Media Contact: Stephanie Baron

313.967.1039

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Community Leaders Support Wayne County Executive's Proposed \$40 million HUD Projects

Wayne County Commission expected to vote, approve projects at Thursday meeting

WAYNE COUNTY, MI– In a community development proposal submitted to the Wayne County Commission last week, Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano described many HUD funded projects the County hopes to complete. One potential beneficiary, Jim Richter of the Michigan Research Institute for Stem Cell Development and Commercialization, along with Bishop P.A. Brooks and Commissioner Joseph Palamara, all voiced their support to over 50 community representatives Wednesday morning.

In all, Executive Ficano is requesting the Wayne County Commission approve a bundled package of federally funded community development projects worth over \$40 million. The Commission is scheduled to vote on the proposal June 17 at 10 a.m. Many community groups are expected to show support for the proposed developments, including representation from the Michigan Honor Guard in support of the \$4.5 million Veteran's support services center in Detroit.

"I strongly urge the Wayne County Commission to approve the proposal with all deliberate speed and consideration," said Ficano. "This package of proposals will positively impact our communities through public/private partnerships, empower our non-profits, private developers and individuals with the tools necessary to revitalize neighborhoods eliminate blight and stimulate local economic growth."

The community development proposal represents unprecedented partnerships between local governments, Wayne County, the state and federal government, private developers, non-profits and private citizens.

The funds comprise \$25.9 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), \$12.8 million in HOME, \$1.5 million in Community Development Block Grant-R (CDBG-R) and \$700,000 in CDBG special project monies.

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All the monies, which came from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), must meet federally regulated eligibility criteria and must benefit low- to moderate-income persons.

Among the many community development projects are:

- \$800,000 regional recreation center in northwest Detroit
- \$4.5 million to construct a transitional housing, supportive services and emergency shelter project for both male and female veterans in Detroit
- \$400,000 to demolish blighted structures in Wyandotte
- \$750,000 to help construct new YWCA in Inkster
- \$2,000,000 athletic center/complex in Melvindale that will house basketball courts, locker rooms, baseball diamonds and other features
- \$1,250,000 to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes in River Rouge and Ecorse
- \$500,000 to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes in Garden City
- \$900,000 to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes in Hamtramck (R-31 lawsuit)
- \$1.2 million to purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes in Grosse Pointe Park,
- \$1.4 million to help construct transitional housing in the city of Wayne for victims of domestic abuse
- \$1.5 million to help construct an emerging adult stem-cell business incubator project in Plymouth Township

“No community in Wayne County has been immune to Michigan’s struggling economy,” Ficano said. “The projects the partnership worked to put together target many of the hardest hit areas in the county, from eastern Wayne County, to western Wayne, to Downriver.”

“There is a sense of urgency here with this package of community development proposals,” said Turkia Mullin, chief development officer for the Economic Development Growth Engine. “I commend my staff and its undiminished commitment to this project and for reaching out to build relationships and new partnerships for the good of Wayne County.”

Vice-Chair of the Wayne County Commission, Keith Williams, said the collaboration between the county executive and commission on these community development projects is the right direction.

“When we can allocate resources for the betterment of our communities and neighborhoods, it’s a wonderful thing,” he said. “Bob Ficano is a county executive who understands the importance of economic development for both urban and suburban communities.”

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