



# Wel **East Grand Boulevard Community Engagement Kickoff Focus Group** come

April 6, 2021



Website:

[VanguardDetroit.org](http://VanguardDetroit.org) / [fb.com/VanguardCD](https://fb.com/VanguardCD)

Social:

This session will be  recorded for internal documentation purposes.

# Agenda



- ❑ **Introductions**
- ❑ Zoom Room Rules
- ❑ Project Overview & Givens
- ❑ Review Roles + Responsibilities
- ❑ What We've Heard
- ❑ **Q&A**
- ❑ **Discussion!**
- ❑ **Conclusion: How to Stay Engaged**

# Intros



spackman  
mossop  
michaels

## Activity:

**Share** your name, affiliation, and one word to positively describe East Grand Boulevard.

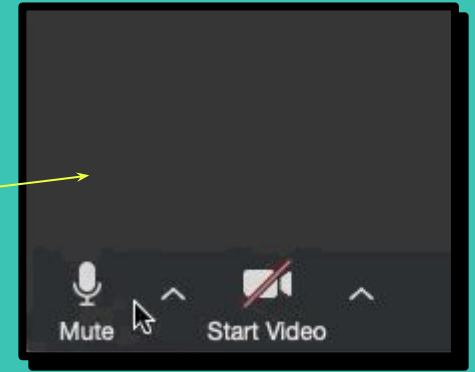
East Grand Boulevard Community Engagement  
Kickoff Focus Group

## Notes

- Julia K, DCDC - “growing”
- Monica E, Vanguard - “opportunity”
- Charles C, DCDC - “excitement”
- Pamela M, Vanguard - “promenade”
- Andy K, Good Done Daily - “constellation”
- Rod P - “vibrant”
- Nicole P, Banner Sign Company - “under utilized”
- Marja F, Vanguard - “destination”
- Ralph G - “iconic”
- Allison Y, DCDC - “cultural”
- Barry B, City of Detroit General Services Dept - “awakening”
- Gustavo S, City of Detroit, DPW - “safety”
- Lisa T - “gateway”
- Ingrid D, St. Philip’s Lutheran Church - “historic”
- Calvin J - “futuristic”
- Halima C, North End resident/artist - “legacy”
- Cornelius H - “music”
- Natasha T, Oakland Avenue Urban Farm - “cultural-legacy”
- Kay - “gratitude”
- Mikki G - “great, awesome, magnificent” :)

# Housekeeping

- ❑ **Mute your video** if you're not talking.
- ❑ In the discussion, **share the mic**. We want to hear from everyone on the call!
- ❑ We are here to talk about the East Grand Boulevard Streetscape. We will have a **“parking lot”** slide for thoughts and comments not related to the boulevard.
- ❑ **Thank you** in advance for participating in this focused conversation!



How to Mute



# Parking Lot

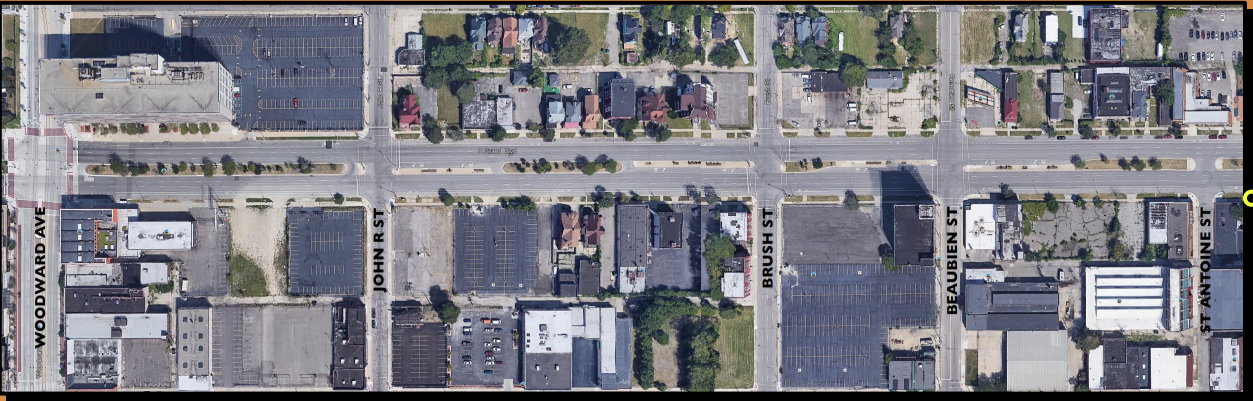
Extra thoughts go here!

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# Project Overview & Givens



# Project Overview & Givens



- ❑ Vanguard was granted funding from the Knight Foundation to design and implement the East Grand Boulevard Streetscape Improvement, which has a **3-year timeline**.
- ❑ This project will be informed by **past** planning efforts in the North End.
- ❑ The project **will not involve** reconfiguring the sidewalks or lanes.
- ❑ **The streetscape improvement design will include the following pieces:** banners, seating and planters along the sidewalk, plantings in the median, and artistic crosswalks, trees, shrubs, bike racks, and wayfinding, and a piece of public art that will also be a community identification sign.

# Project Overview & Givens



(Cont.)

- ❑ The community identification sign that will be located on East Grand Boulevard and Woodward will be **designed by Carlos Nielbock** who is a partner with the Oakland Avenue Artist Coalition.
- ❑ The project's community engagement process will include both **businesses and resident voices**.
- ❑ The project will be coordinated with Vanguard's Main Street Program and have a clear identity.
- ❑ **City will be involved in the project** to ensure the streetscape improvement design is able to be funded and implemented. For example, there is not currently funding for new light pole installation because Covid-19 affected funding for several years.



# Roles & Responsibilities



1. **Attend All Focus Groups:** It is critical that each individual attend all workshops to provide continuity to the process. Our second focus group will be in mid-June.
2. **Represent Broad Community Stakeholders:** Represent the general interests of your stakeholder group(s) while participating in the workshops. Each participant will be responsible for communicating what was discussed in the workshops with their larger stakeholder group and bringing input back to the group.
3. **Provide Critical Feedback:**
  - Make sure information produced is contextually accurate and relevant.
  - Make sure designs represent the ideas discussed during previous workshops.
  - Provide general support for the design direction.

# What We've Heard

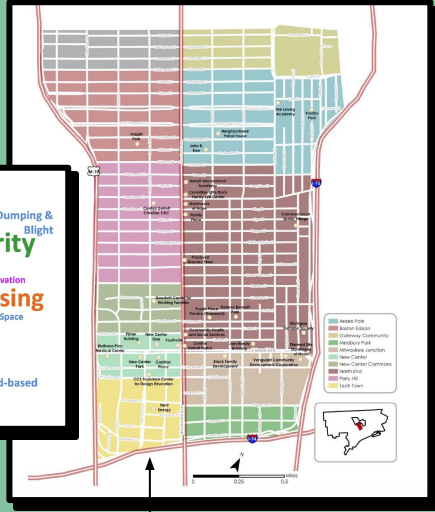


The East Grand Boulevard Streetscape Transformation has been going on for 10 years!

## Building on the past + present neighborhood projects:

- ❑ Grand Woodward Quality of Life Plan, **2012**
- ❑ Central Woodward North End Collaborative, “Neighborhoods Moving in a New Direction”, **2009**
- ❑ Milwaukee Junction Small Business Incubator Study, **2006**
- ❑ Neighborhoods NOW Central Woodward Plan
- ❑ Next Detroit Neighborhood Initiative
- ❑ North End Central Woodward Strategic Plan, **2010–2013**
- ❑ Main Street Program, **2021**

# What We've Heard



Community need **word cloud** and **asset map** from *Grand Woodward Quality of Life Plan*

## The reports touched on common themes:

- ❑ Business attraction and retention
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Employment and entrepreneurship
- ❑ Housing and vacant land
- ❑ Safety and security
- ❑ Neighborhood beautification
- ❑ Technology

**“Beautification, in its various applications, enhances residential amenities, adds value to existing assets, invokes the artistic heritage of the community and raises the self-esteem of the neighborhood and its residents.”** – CW/NE Collaborative, *Neighborhoods Moving in a New Direction*

# Q&A



East Grand Boulevard Community Engagement  
Kickoff Focus Group

## Notes

- Are slides sharable? (Notes will be shared - uploaded to Vanguard website)
- What is the commitment for folks attending the two meetings? (To spread the words to the community, sharing survey link to get to as many people as possible, communicating back to the meeting, reflective of peoples' voices)
- Second focus group is to respond to the design
- How far North will the project extend? (About a block, but only focusing on the blvd itself)
- Are there any other focus groups involved with infrastructure, decor, or facade? (Not to our knowledge, Detroit list has been in contact on facade, Lisa can speak more towards Woodward improvement. Lisa - yes, facade improvement work on EGB, we will talk more about that on Main Street)
- Has any of the past designs been implemented? (Yes, the past studies were focused on business extension and retention. Monica - for EGB, back in 2009-2010, there was support from the Knight Foundation to plant trees in the median you see now. It is an attempt to complete a previous plan)
- Has past work/plans been reviewed for effectiveness? Some of the trees on Brush and turnaround on the blvd, there has been accidents. How much of that has been reviewed? (We are reviewing the old plans, walking on entire blvd for notes. Things grow but starts to block views, we are looking towards the lens of safety, and other amenities, how those are fitting in, if some things are going away)
- I'm wondering about recommendations for policies: wherever there's seating/public spaces. Increased policing in areas of seating, how can we have a safe and inviting place for all of our children and everyone? (We try to make sure the spaces designed are equitable, some of the social aspects on how folks gather, use social space. It is one of the lens that we are focusing in for this project)
- Is there a designer focused on safety-environmental design. Not exactly police-centric but about sightlines and safety? (We will be looking at that, so sightlines are open, creating spaces that are open and inviting and ensuring we are safe all the time; working through with you all and consultants on the time) One of your asks for CPTED should be centered on crime-prevention. (Monica - we will bring that up and they were invited to participate and make sure they are part of the next meeting)
- Wayne State Public Department too!
- Sidewalks and lanes are not part of the focus group, are there talks or visions of East Grand? Reducing the size of the lanes? Future possibilities (Lisa - those are some of the pieces of the Main Street program, all that is part of the program; foot traffic. Pam - for 2021, there aren't resources available for this project now)
- I would like to see the traffic control lights on Beaubien, there are no traffic control...accidents in the last few months.

# → Discussion



Looking West



Looking East

## Imagine you are on the boulevard:

What are you doing? Are you driving, walking, biking? Where are you headed? What are the things you are seeing? (What songs playing in your earbuds?)

- Driving down the blvd, my trip to the blvd is very short. I see people seeing outside on the coffee shop, the igloos. Thinking about the seatings (bigger). When leaving, I see people walking, a lot more traffic in the late afternoon. Activities from church, people getting food, going back and forth to Goodwill, walking.
- I drive to the blvd, I feel a sense of majestic, may not look royal but it does feel that way. Regal feeling. The size is imposing but there is a lot of missed opportunities.
- I go down west to east, around on the evening, it is a different place in the evening. The gallery opens open, it is lively, lights comes on. Businesses are open there not in the daytime. Vibrancy going on not in the daytime.
- Intersection of arts and culture on the blvd. They had a youth programming bringing the graffiti work on the blvd, the art really stands out to me.
- What you can't see is the genius that is housed, there is so much magic on this section of the blvd. Invented Motown and techno, I'm usually driving. Parks, I don't eat much red meat, but I'll stop by. Sensitive to other people coming in and capitalizing on that legacy, where the previous folks not being part of the legacy. Working on the QR-code, wayfinding for linking up the blvd.
- I drive from the freeway to Beaubien, I don't see a lot of the stuff, I frankly did not know these things were there! (Charles - We see different things, one of the best ways is to take a quick walk down the blvd. Take a few notes, send it to us, we will use that input)
- I think about our social gatherings after church on sundays. I see in the future, we just leave our cars in the parking lots, and stroll together to places of entertainment, restaurants, playgrounds. Uses right in the community.

# → Discussion

**When you are walking, biking, or driving down the boulevard how do you want the boulevard to feel?**

What should the vibe of the street be?

- Social 🗺️ gatherings, easily stroll through, places to eat
- WJZZ, we had a building on the blvd back in the day. I think about 🎵 music, it would be nice to hear music, to utilize street 🎸 musicians, to feel that vibrancy. There was still that energy, rough, but energy was there. Visual art 🎨, there should be more sound. Using that in the restaurants, can be heard on the streets. Walking 🚶 down the street, everything closed up, you can still hear the music. Great to have more of that available to everybody. Submerge. From the blvd and Woodward. Trumpet 🎺 player on Sundays. Free concert :) So many musicians in Detroit under utilized. Open the door to that and folks would be eager to share their gifts to the neighborhood. (Playing on the patio, near the mural)
- I would love to see open markets. People being able to support local businesses, may not have the commercial aspect. Walking to eateries 🍷, retail, arts 🎨, DIA 🏛️, historical museum, multicultural, open concerts in parking lots. To use that space to give capital to the community and engage in. (How can EGB be the same to have many art events happening?) Our version of “Arts Eats and Beats”!
- I'd like to see more activities on the blvd. A lot of vacant storefronts 🏠, I like to see it occupied, to bring people. During the pandemic, finances 💰 gets tough. More buildings not occupied could be opened up to bring in small businesses. I'd sure like to see some action
- We have aging congregation, trolleys 🚋 so we can drop people off. Can help people get in and out, circulation within the community.
- Looking at the blvd as a tributary to all the projects. It is a long walk 🚶. There are so many businesses off the blvd. So how to use the design to inform and invite folks. I have a bunch of cousins, who gave invitations 📧. Variety of things to different age groups. How do we make a design so young people are not seen as threats or suspicious? Everyone can just BE. (Where are the 🗺️ wayfinding signs to highlight existing assets there?)
- At Oakland and Hastings. Something off of each of them. (Using intersections as info-sharing)

# → Discussion

## We know that the North End has a rich history.

How, if at all, should this be recognized in the boulevard streetscape?

- Rich history
- One of the reasons for “history” response, the North End is a Very special place. People from who grew up on the North End, moved out are still together. There is a bond, a lot of people not living there but grew up there. That can be tapped somehow as a human resource gathering
- I would love to see a “walk of fame” 👤, North End products/icons, getting to honor those persons, preservation of history.
- I love that the Boston Edison district has the educational plaques in place. So if have a statement that says “Hey, this is East Grand”, even a map 🗺️, a resources or a guide. I think they can appreciate the beauty, culture and community, but not aware of the GEMS 💎, the people who have been here all of their lives. I want people to know the depth of the area in where they are. (How can it be celebrated?)
- Beautifying the North End and the blvd 🏡 One of the biggest gems on the North End is Mr. Gordy 🎸, Aretha Franklin 🎤, Smokey Robinson. “That street was booming!” - My grandpa. There’s musical hits and history on the North End. Get Mr. Gordy! (Michael Banks - 3000 EGB) We have the techno music.
- A cool way to speak to the history of North End to be interactive, could be kiosks, internet-based, touch-screens. An area where people can touch the screens to find out what’s going on, what are the businesses, etc. (Providing internet hubs while out)
- Another way to preserve and evoke history is using symbols. Music notes 🎵 in places, same thing with automobiles 🚗 are wheels. Milwaukee Junction, universally evoke those feelings for people. (Wayfinding signs for depth, seeing symbols to tell you about the place without always reading)
- In some cities or communities, there might be a miniature car 🚗 that is reflective of the community. I was wondering if that’s what you mean (If all the wayfinding signs have wheels on them for example, Bronzeville in Chicago, a wide median of statue playing instruments. I didn’t know the neighborhood but I learned that they have a musical history. Symbols are immediate, they hit you right away)
- One of the things I thought of with the last slide is greenspace, 🌳 it’s important. 🎵 Music and history. History so it is forward-thinking, make it an attraction and interactive. An art piece that can make music, something that chimes or Creates sounds. Make some really cool pieces, can be interactive to the auto industry. Can include the young, old and everyone in between.
- I know Halima is doing some works on the QR codes 📱, that is a good simple way to put things together. I’m thinking its a convenient way to share a lot of information without taking a lot of space. On the corner of Beaubien was a place for the graphics, photos 📷 of cars for advertising. Idea of using photographs was revolutionary. The whole innovation was started on that blvd. That history can be talked about, do a lot of good.
- In our alliance meeting, something that come out is preservation and keeping the arts, stories, history up to date. We have historians in the city, so walking by and scanning 📱 it, you can learn about it from the site. “On this ground, this thing happened”. We are working on having 20 things to go. (We will coordinate with the storytelling and collaborate)



# Discussion

**We've heard that walkability is a priority for the North End.**

What would encourage you to walk to or down the boulevard?

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# → Discussion

## **Part of the process is identifying the location of a series of benches and planters.**

Where on the boulevard would you want to spend time enjoying these seating areas?

- Every intersection can be an interaction that can happen
- The #1 thing is to decrease the blockage in the median, get that stuff cleared away. It'll make it easier for people to move around and not get harmed. If there's flowers on the ground, that's different. But no trees or bushes, those have to go.
- I'm dubious on the foot traffic getting to a seating place on the blvd. Traffic goes very fast on there. There are no traffic controls. I can see slower, older people getting run over. There are numbers of bus stops there where seatings would be appreciated.
- I live on the blvd, DO NOT put them on the middle of the blvd. Is it not safe for people to turn. And put the traffic light back on Beaubien blvd. Cut down the trees. There are lots of accidents, one time they almost ran through my fence. They never finished the dang bike lane. People open their door and people with their bikes coming. I know it's more of a city issue...
- If Michigan lefts were implemented, forcing people to make a MI left.
- There are some mirrors in Europe that are used for blind corners. If there's racing going on at night, lot of cars.
- A lot of great buildings were torn down to put parking lots with barbed wire...looks like a prison. If there's construction being down, there's temporary murals. If planters or landscaping can address some of that. We put efforts in other things, but we have all these fences, these might distract the work being done (Lisa - Those points are more suited for the Main Street discussion)
- It would be great to have multi-faceted benches that are functional for planters and maps/wayfinding

# Bird's-Eye of the Boulevard



## Key

- Bench: 
- Planter: 
- Trees: 
- Landscaping: 



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# Bird's-Eye of the Boulevard



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# → Discussion

## **Good Done Daily will be working to develop a visual identity for East Grand Boulevard that will result in a logo, banners, etc.**

When you think of your community, what kinds of images, icons, symbols, or colors come to mind? Be as visual or descriptive as you want. Anything goes! 🤖

- I say Detroit tough! People stayed, that's how you market it. The people that did not give up, people that saved the neighborhood. People stayed and kept the community going. There are things in the North End, they should be honored "thank you for staying", so people don't forget. Different families projected on buildings. My wife's family (stand out), lot of people deserve a thank-you. Keeping the small stores, churches going. All that stuff got eliminated off of Woodward...I want all the stuff that was on Woodward; it's getting gentrified. If you forget all the people who stayed here and toughed it out and you try to clean it all up it won't be right; you'll lose the spirit and people will leave.
- I'm not sure how to describe it in art terms. I feel like this neighborhood never gave up. They went through the worst of the worst; crack, running I-75 right up Hastings; every time Black people do something, they run a freeway through it. Give the people their just do; that's what people are fighting for over here. Development looks like an eraser. Without a conscious effort to recognize the great people who came from this neighborhood and all the great, great people who stayed...I think it's a travesty. Hip hop in Brooklyn but there's no hip-hop museums (missed opportunities).
- There's a microcosm of what's going on. There's power differences, and geniuses on this call. People are putting their hearts, crafts, and what they want to see in the neighborhood on this call.

# How to Stay Engaged

- ❑ Want to receive project updates? Email Monica at **medmonds@vanguardcdc.org** to be put on our email list!
- ❑ If you want to inform the East Grand Boulevard visual identity (brand), contact: Andy at **andy@gooddonedaily.com**, or sign up for a virtual design workshop at: **eastgrandblvd.com/brandworkshops**. Can't make it to a workshop? Fill out our design survey at: **eastgrandblvd.com/brandsurvey**
- ❑ If you want to inform the artistic community sign, contact: Lisa Tucker at **ltucker@vanguardcdc.org**
- ❑ Please share the Community Survey with your constituents: **eastgrandblvd.com/survey**

Website:

Social:

**VanguardDetroit.org** / **fb.com/VanguardCD**

Photograph this with  
your phone to visit the  
*Community Survey!*



# Thank you!

## Project Partners:



spackman  
mossop  
michaels

Website: [VanguardDetroit.org](http://VanguardDetroit.org) / Social: [fb.com/VanguardCD](https://fb.com/VanguardCD)

This project is being led by Vanguard CDC and supported and led by community stakeholder voices.