Our Neighborhoods

Jefferson East, Inc., serves residents, business owners and other stakeholders along Detroit’s East Jefferson corridor and its five adjoining neighborhoods.

Our Donors

We want to share our heartfelt appreciation for the generosity, commitment and support our donors show every day to make Jefferson East, Inc.’s work possible.

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MESSAGE FROM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It’s been quite a year: Jefferson East, Inc. is now directly driving real estate development along East Jefferson Avenue. Our new development arm – the East Jefferson Development Corporation (EJDevCo) – was launched to help us create even more opportunities for equitable and inclusive development. Incentives for local hiring, local contracting requirements and the inclusion of deeply affordable housing choices are defining our efforts to develop inclusive neighborhoods.

EJDevCo is creating a model of neighborhood revitalization and community development that is new to the city of Detroit and that will allow us to continue our ongoing evolution as one of the city’s premier community development organizations. Our model embraces growth while at the same time works to ensure that growth is broadly shared and spread. Over the past year, we have made investments to hire new talent, mature our internal systems and grow existing programs that are helping us support more of our residents, business owners and stakeholders. Our strong partnerships with the city of Detroit, the Strategic Neighborhood Fund and our development partners continue to evolve in new and exciting ways.

Eighteen months ago, JEI began to work with Mr. Lester Gouvia to help him move from a wildly successful food truck to an 80-seat brick-and-mortar restaurant, Norma G’s Caribbean Cuisine. With support from the City of Detroit, the Kresge Foundation, JP Morgan Chase and numerous others, we were able to transform our old office into the first full-service restaurant to be located within Jefferson Chalmers in more than 30 years. The restaurant currently employs more than 15 neighborhood residents.

This real estate project was the first major redevelopment project our team successfully executed. Look forward to even more ground breakings and ribbon cuttings in 2019!

Thank you to our board of directors, the JEI and EJDevCo team, funders, partners, residents and volunteers who have helped us further our mission of growing Detroit’s East Jefferson corridor and adjoining neighborhoods in an inclusive manner.

John W. Stroh III  Joshua R. Elling
Chairman  Chief Executive Officer
DRIVING EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

EAST JEFFERSON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
YEAR 2: GETTING AHEAD OF GENTRIFICATION

Driving economic growth that benefits our urban neighborhoods, addresses systemic barriers to small business development, and builds equitable and inclusive neighborhoods has always been central to JEI’s mission. For the past decade, JEI has made great strides in improving the conditions for economic growth: reducing the crime rate, tackling neighborhood blight, improving infrastructure and stabilizing home ownership. This has led to increased investment activity throughout the east Jefferson corridor.

In late 2016 JEI created its own development arm, East Jefferson Development Corp. (EJDevCo), to both directly drive development and ensure that this growth benefits a majority of eastside Detroit residents. EJDevCo is charged with fostering economic growth – either as a direct developer or in partnership with others – in accordance with JEI’s principles that prioritize inclusive neighborhood development. These principles include providing lower lease rates for startup business owners; creating new job opportunities for area residents; fostering workforce development for local contractors; offering more mixed-income and affordable housing-unit choices; and supporting affordable menu options that reflect the neighborhood.

Our inclusive neighborhood development principles are designed to counter some of the challenges economic growth poses to low-income communities: displacement, rising rental costs and a feeling that the neighborhood is “no longer for us.” JEI and EJDEVCO collaborate to directly promote inclusive and equitable redevelopment, incubate minority and women-owned businesses, and help keep long-time Detroiters in their homes.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Because JEI is the sole investor in EJDevCO, any profits earned by its real estate development activities are donated back to JEI to support its core neighborhood improvement programs and services.
Welcome to the Neighborhood, Norma G’s!

After 30 years without a full-service restaurant, a long-awaited amenity has returned to the Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood. With a vision of honoring his Trinidadian heritage and love of his mother’s cooking, Lester Gouvia, opened the doors of Norma G’s Caribbean Cuisine ready to serve the neighborhood.

Over the course of 18 months, JEI’s economic development team helped Lester navigate city processes, including permitting, managing contractors, obtaining a liquor license and seeking approvals from the historic commission in order to complete the project. From the beginning, Lester embraced JEI’s inclusive neighborhood development principles, which included a flexible lease rate and terms that supported the hiring of local residents and enabled him to pay them above-average wages. Of the 15 contractors used during construction, 12 came directly from the surrounding neighborhoods.

Now residents can stay within their neighborhood, walk to a sit-down restaurant and have a great meal.
Coming Soon:
Alma Kitchen & Future JEI Headquarters

Alma Kitchen is ready to introduce its unique fusion concept to the Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood. Owners Gary Mui and Alicia Sanchez, who have worked together for more than 15 years, integrated their respective Chinese-American and Mexican-American heritages into their culinary approach. Gary, a Detroit-area native, is an executive chef with extensive experience in some of metro Detroit’s top restaurants.

The Kresge Building is owned by JEI and our partner TechTown recommended this neighborhood as an excellent location for Alma Kitchen.

And eager to return to the neighborhood, JEI will locate its new headquarters in the building’s rear portion. The property’s full renovation will include restoration of the historic facade, re-opening of windows along the property’s western face and construction of a green parking lot.

“We chose to locate in the historically rich Jefferson Chalmers district because we wanted to be part of a community. Not only to contribute financially, but let’s get to know lives and worlds different from our own.” — Gary Mui, co-owner, Alma Kitchen

TOTAL INVESTMENT
$2,014,742

2,300 SF OF RESTAURANT SPACE
3,500 SF OF OFFICE SPACE

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Local hiring incentives tied to lease-rate reduction
Affordable menu items
Higher server wages
Local contractor hiring

PARTNERS
Tech Town
City of Detroit
MSHDA
JP Morgan Chase
Kresge Foundation

EXPECTED COMPLETION
Summer 2019
New Affordable & Market Rate Housing

**IDAO & MARLBORO BUILDINGS**

JEI’s first partnership with a private developer began in 2016. Shelborne Development owns strategic properties within the Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood, and brings a long and successful history of affordable housing development. Rising construction costs and an increased demand for more affordable housing prompted JEI and Shelborne to restructure the project in order to allow for the inclusion of additional deeply affordable units. JEI was also able to obtain additional support to construct two green parking lots, which will manage storm-water runoff as well as provide additional parking for residents and retailers.

**TOTAL INVESTMENT**

$5,421,834

**INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT**

- 23 mixed-income units
- 12 affordable units at 50-60% AMI
- 11 market-rate units
- 2 green stormwater parking lots

**EXPECTED COMPLETION**

Fall 2019

**PARTNERS**

Shelborne Development
Enterprise Community Partners
City of Detroit
THE VANITY BALLROOM

Closing a $4.8 million unserviceable debt gap on a $12 million redevelopment project for one of Detroit’s most iconic and historic ballrooms is no easy feat. But that is the complex task JEI is tackling as it works to restore the Vanity Ballroom to vibrant life.

In collaboration with the City of Detroit, JEI is in the process of stabilizing the Vanity Ballroom’s roof and structure, while working through complex financing structures to bring this building back to productive use. In addition, the JEI team is actively recruiting retail businesses to locate in the building.

JEI has secured the building with an artistic board-up, thanks to a MSHDA Neighborhood Advancement Program place-making grant. Neighborhood residents defied a hot, steamy day to pitch in to paint and secure the building in a manner that reflects the property’s deep artistic heritage.

In addition, JEI received a $70,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council of Arts and Cultural Affairs to produce “Jazzin’ @ the Vanity.” This festival will document the Vanity Ballroom’s oral history, engage local artists to create mixed-media installations around that history, engage local residents to craft a vision for the structure’s reuse and present performances by world-class jazz and blues artists.

“An Art Deco masterpiece like the Vanity Ballroom deserves to be revered for its beauty. It will be wonderful to have this iconic piece reflected of our neighborhood’s history restored. I could not be happier to have worked alongside members of JEI to help the Vanity Ballroom begin its restoration journey.”

— Tyler O’Brien Whitesides, volunteer & Jefferson Chalmers resident

Ready for Its Comeback

TOTAL INVESTMENT NEEDED

$12,000,000

UNSERVICEABLE DEBT GAP

$4,800,000
Green Infrastructure & Affordable Housing

“The community project taking place in the area is not only about building physical structures, but it is also about building the people in the community.”
— Pastor Barry Randolph, The Church of the Messiah

“The Platform trusted in JEI’s reputation, development experience, and knowledge of Detroit. Their connection to the neighborhoods they serve gave us confidence that the community’s voice would be incorporated in our development.”
— Dietrich Knoer, President & CEO, the Platform

The Islandview Neighborhood Redevelopment Project

**MANSION & ANNEX**

In February 2018, EJDevCo and the Platform convened more than 50 Islandview residents at the Church of the Messiah for a conversation about a new multi-property redevelopment project, proposed for the Boulevard just north of Jefferson. The Platform brings its deep development expertise and capital to lead this project; as an equal project partner, EJDevCo is able to utilize philanthropic support to offset the cost of building affordable housing, green stormwater infrastructure and business incubation infrastructure. Based on resident feedback, this project will provide deeply affordable housing, the adaptive reuse of historic structures, and the creation of family-style townhomes that will make this development multi-generational.

**TOTAL INVESTMENT**

$11,100,000

**PROJECT DETAILS**

- 6 buildings (five historic and one new construction)
- 41-50 multi-generational units
- 50% affordable units at 30-80% AMI
- 2 for-sale condos
- 1,500 square feet of community retail space

**INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IMPACT**

- Up-front resident engagement to guide project design
- Deeply affordable housing
- Green stormwater infrastructure
- Small business support and incubation of community retail
In 2014, thousands of households in Jefferson-Chalmers experienced significant basement flooding when more than six inches of rain fell in less than four hours. The massive storm water runoff from this event overwhelmed Detroit’s combined sewage overflow (CSO) system. As JEI helped hundreds of residents file damage claims, we realized that we must find new solutions to reduce our residents’ vulnerability to these types of extreme weather events.

To lessen the burden on Detroit’s overtaxed CSO system, JEI is constructing four green parking lots around our development projects that will remove more than 850,000 gallons of storm water runoff each year. Working within DWSD’s green infrastructure guidelines, JEI is installing beautiful bio-retention plantings, permeable pavement and aggregate retention infrastructure that will keep storm water out of the sewer system and out of residents’ basement.

The project is a good example of how green storm water management solutions can be applied to neighborhood commercial districts and adaptive reuse projects.
Financial Empowerment & Wealth Building

Roof repair, lead-paint abatement and structural improvements such as front-porch stabilization are common needs throughout JEI’s service area. In response, each year JEI assists more than 60 homeowners in applying for the City of Detroit’s available 0% home repair loan. Our housing team provides services throughout the application and submission process.

While many homeowners are approved for a loan, many others are denied because of low credit scores and high debt-to-income ratios. This year the housing team expanded services to enhance individual credit counseling and provide community financial literacy workshops to improve loan acceptance rates. The team assists individuals throughout the year, checking on their progress and connecting them to additional resources and partners.

So JEI connected Mr. Laviolette to a new housing partner, Rebuilding Together, a national nonprofit focused on repairing homes. The organization provided volunteer assistance to install new laminate flooring in Mr. Laviolette’s kitchen, patch and paint walls in the living room, clean gutters and improve the front yard landscaping.

JEI’s housing team is committed to connecting Detroit residents to additional resources and partners to help them build wealth and remain in their homes.
**Creating a Welcoming Environment**

**CLEAN PROGRAM**

JEI continues to position the East Jefferson corridor as a great place to invest by raising private donations to keep the sidewalks clean and tidy. Our Clean Ambassadors pick up litter, empty trash bins and assist motorists and pedestrians throughout the corridor.

Storefront businesses have taken notice—the Post, located on Kercheval in Jefferson-Chalmers, requested a JEI trash can in front of its business shortly after it opened. In response, JEI expanded additional cleaning services and trash-can services on Alter, Kercheval, Freud, St. Jean and other gateway streets.

**RIVERTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

JEI, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy and the Downtown Detroit Partnership are collaborating to maintain a clean and safe environment in the Rivertown neighborhood. Since 2013, JEI has invested more than $640,000 to fund additional police patrols, as well as the cleaning of sidewalks and side streets in order to keep them litter-free. And the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy raises $800,000 annually from private donors to maintain the beautiful Detroit Riverwalk.

Rivertown property owners are exploring the feasibility of forming a Rivertown Business Improvement Zone (RBIZ) to provide long-term sustainable funding for these enhanced services. As the neighborhood grows with new housing and retail space, more people will visit the Riverwalk and demand for a higher level of services will increase. A decision on whether to pursue the RBIZ will be made in early 2019.

**$933,000 RAISED ANNUALLY THROUGH PRIVATE DONATIONS**

**PARTNERS**

Downtown Detroit Business Improvement Zone
Downtown Detroit Partnership

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<th>115 trash bins maintained</th>
<th>100 motorists assisted</th>
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<td>52 tons of trash removed</td>
<td>116 instances of graffiti removed</td>
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<td>614 pedestrians assisted</td>
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Thanks to the groundbreaking safety work of JEI and our partners, crime rates fell more than six percent within JEI’s service area. Several major crime categories witnessed double-digit declines. Assaults fell by 16 percent and motor vehicle thefts dropped more than 21 percent. Our support for additional police patrols, neighborhood safety interventions and the work of Domestic Violence Advocates continues to help make the East Jefferson corridor and its neighborhoods some of the safest places in the city of Detroit.

“Over the past five years, the engagement with the monthly JEI CompStat meetings has resulted in valuable insight and information both for my community and for me as an individual. The neighborhood safety has changed dramatically in a short time, with the extremely accessible support of the DPD through their off-duty police patrols.”

— Leslie Ann Pilling, Rivertown resident and owner, Presence II, Inc.

The largest single violent crime category within JEI’s service area continues to be domestic violence.

To reduce incidents of domestic violence, JEI, through its partnership with Wayne State University’s Center for Urban Studies, funds two Domestic Violence Advocates (DVAs), who are embedded within the 5th and 7th Precincts. DVAs assist victims of domestic violence with recovery resources, provide connections to counseling resources and issue personal protection orders (PPOs) against the perpetrators of the assaults.

Each of our highly trained advocates work closely with police officers and domestic violence survivors to help increase safety and empower survivors. JEI subsidizes the cost of issuing PPOs that result from the DVAs’ work.
In 2004, JEI began convening residents to get their input into ways to change the east Jefferson street configuration to make it safer for pedestrians, increase mobility options and bolster neighborhood commercial districts. This work was expanded in 2010 when JEI worked with stakeholders to complete a redesign concept for all east Jefferson – from Alter Road to I-375. Additional JEI work and engagement helped convince the city of Detroit that a lane reduction of east Jefferson was possible and that protected bike lanes were an easy way to narrow the street to calm traffic.

In 2015, JEI and the city of Detroit raised more than $900,000 to construct the first phase of streetscape improvements in Jefferson Chalmers which included the first protected bike lanes in Michigan. JEI then brought renowned urbanist Gil Penalosa to Detroit for a week of events on street design and bike infrastructure that were attended by more than 5,000 Detroiters. The organization was simultaneously working with Planning Director Maurice Cox to introduce the concepts to Mayor Duggan and this work led to the commitment to try an interim design on east Jefferson that would calm traffic, enhance transit, and bring protected bike lanes to its entire length.

And this year, the City has completed a 6.7-mile redesign of east Jefferson Avenue, with lane reductions and the installation of protected bike lanes. Additional elements include enhanced pedestrian crossings, traffic-calming intersection treatments, pedestrian refuge islands and improved bus stops. These improvements were closely followed by city led improvements to bus service and frequency along east Jefferson.

JEI’s decade long leadership and vision, coupled with a strong partnership with the City of Detroit, has transformed east Jefferson from a sea of traffic to multi-modal corridor that improves the quality of life for Detroit residents.
MISSION

Growing Detroit’s east Jefferson corridor and its adjoining neighborhoods through facilitative leadership, collaborative partnerships and innovative and impactful programming.

VISION

Detroit’s east Jefferson corridor and its adjoining neighborhoods are a regionally competitive and business-friendly neighborhood district with equitable economic opportunities for residents and businesses.