

FITZ FORWARD >>

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For immediate release

Fitz Forward Announces Neighborhood Development Plan for Detroit's Fitzgerald Neighborhood

DETROIT – **Fitz Forward** is honored and excited to announce that it has reached an agreement with the Detroit Land Bank Authority to acquire, reimagine and redevelop more than 300 parcels of land within the Fitzgerald neighborhood in northwest Detroit.

The project calls for the rehabilitation of more than 100 homes, the installation of green infrastructure, the development of a strong food ecosystem on 200 parcels, and the deconstruction of structures that cannot be saved – all geared toward the development a world-class neighborhood that both current and future residents can be proud of.

The Fitzgerald neighborhood sits between the University of Detroit-Mercy and Marygrove College, two proud educational institutions. The neighborhood buttresses a large number of strong neighborhoods and is adjacent to Livernois Avenue, a historic commercial corridor. Fitz Forward and the City of Detroit plan to reinvigorate this neighborhood through public and private investment, with a focus on implementing a holistic sustainability program that includes well-designed housing, improved safety and security, urban agriculture, green infrastructure, local workforce development, and increased neighborhood connectivity.

The Fitz Forward team is led by developers **Century Partners** and **The Platform**. Our development plans include repairing and remodeling vacant historic homes, increasing opportunities for neighborhood land and commercial business ownership for current residents, deconstructing homes while enlisting the talent of

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neighborhood residents, and providing training and building opportunities for Detroit-based local contractors to rehabilitate homes.

Century Partners was co-founded by Andrew Colom and David Alade. The Platform's co-principals are Peter Cummings and Dietrich Knoer.

"Andrew and I moved to Detroit with the express purpose of providing high quality housing and resources to the neighborhoods of the city, areas that may have been overlooked during Detroit's nascent revitalization narrative," Alade said.

"In many ways, we see the Fitzgerald development as the natural evolution of the work Century Partners is already doing in the city's neighborhoods, but on a much grander scale with a broader array of institutional and community support.

"We have spent nearly a year planning and communicating with neighborhood residents. We are confident we have the right team assembled to work side by side with the Fitzgerald residents to deliver a world-class development, and we welcome the best, the most inspired ideas and partners from inside and outside Detroit to join us. Now it's time to get to work."

Knoer and Cummings have been busy working to redevelop the New Center and Milwaukee Junction – including major renovations to the iconic Fisher and Albert Kahn buildings – but they are also committed to improving the city's outer neighborhoods. Fitz Forward is the latest, following projects in Islandview and Brightmoor/Old Redford.

"This could be the most important project we've taken on yet in terms of working toward a stronger Detroit," Cummings said. "This is a game-changer not just for the Fitzgerald neighborhood and Detroit, but for other cities in our country. Our success will show other cities how they can bring new life to historic neighborhoods. It is an honor and a privilege to work with Century Partners and Mayor Mike Duggan's administration on such a visionary and transformational project."

Fitz Forward plans to create affordable buying opportunities for everyone, including first time home-buyers, as well as high quality affordable and market-rate, single-family rental housing. Through a partnership with **Green Collar Foods**, the development will pioneer a neighborhood based vertical agricultural innovation campus and leafy green indoor grow business. Finally, in collaboration with our productive landscape partner, **Building Community Value**, we plan to prepare vacant lots for local food production, as well as build and weave meadows, orchards, groves, and pocket parks throughout the neighborhood.

"Few things are more important than access to fresh, quality food," said Chase Cantrell, founder of Building Community Value. "We are excited to be at the forefront of creating a 21st century Detroit neighborhood, where urban farming and gardening is encouraged on almost each street. By keeping the real world needs of Fitzgerald residents at the core of our process, we are dedicated to reimagining vacant space in both a creative and holistic manner by developing with the

community in a manner that strengthens its assets and preserves its unique cultural history and essence."

Added Ron Reynolds, co-founder of Green Collar Foods: "Detroit is a remarkably diverse city with a deep and rich history in urban agriculture. We look forward to announcing our expanded vision for GCF Detroit in the coming weeks."

Fitz Forward will create a nonprofit organization to develop a neighborhood association and work with local block clubs to connect and improve the safety and security of their neighborhood. Additionally, the nonprofit will facilitate grant funding for Detroit police officers to buy homes in the development, provide access to homebuyer education and down-payment assistance programs, and develop a free wireless infrastructure for the neighborhood, among other innovative place-based solutions. A portion of the development will offer high quality, affordable homes for sale and rental housing for qualifying households that earn between 50% and 80% of the area median income.

"Residents in neighborhoods are still there because they want to, not because they couldn't find a way to leave. In other words, the best families stayed to honor and maintain their neighborhood community. In cooperation with the neighbors, the Mayor's office and our partners, David and Andrew, we have a unique opportunity to strengthen the community by developing vacant lots into useable green space and rehabilitating existing housing structures. This could be a blue-print for many other neighborhoods in our city," said Knoer of The Platform.

Fitz Forward and its implementation partners firmly believe in the transformative ability of strong public-private partnerships to instigate catalytic local neighborhood development.

"We are honored to be recommended by the City of Detroit to launch a new paradigm for inclusive development within the city's neighborhoods," said Colom of Century Partners. "We are also incredibly excited to work with the people of Detroit to show the world that development can be done differently, to showcase the Detroit way to do a comeback."

About Fitz Forward:

The Fitz Forward development team was assembled in response to the Fitzgerald Revitalization Project, an initiative led by the City of Detroit to stabilize and strengthen a neighborhood by transforming publicly owned vacant land and buildings into community assets. Rather than work on one lot at a time, the project is focused on holistically addressing every publicly owned vacant building and lot at once for maximum impact and effectiveness in that community. All media requests can be made by contacting info@fitzforwarddetroit.com.

About Century Partners:

Our mission is to facilitate holistic revitalization through sustainable residential housing development that embraces grass roots community outreach and the power of creative place-making.

About The Platform:

The Platform is a real estate development company focused on creating community with an urban lifestyle and established with one goal: to be a driving force in Detroit real estate development. This focus is fundamental and intrinsic to how we operate. It is an imperative outlook for revitalizing neighborhoods, inspiring the next generation and most importantly, it is the reason we are making Detroit better.

About Building Community Value:

Building Community Value is an organization inspired by the rich history embedded in Detroit's many neighborhoods. Its primary goal is to spur catalyst commercial real estate developments outside of the city's central business district to provide residents in predominantly African-American communities greater access to service and product offerings that reflect their needs.

About Green Collar Foods:

Green Collar Foods (GCF) is a simple, yet influential controlled environment agriculture (CEA) business model designed for society's most promising, yet challenged, inner-city environments. GCF is focused on empowering its business partners with the agricultural, commercial & technological tools required to successfully produce specialty crops that yield sustainable businesses.