

# CITY OF JACKSON

OFFICIAL CITY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2024

## 100 HOMES PROGRAM BUILDING NEW HOUSES ON VACANT CITY LOTS

100 new homes will take shape on vacant lots in the coming years, and Katlyn Nagy will be the first person to call one of them home.

“I feel like this program is making the American dream achievable again when it otherwise wouldn’t be for me,” Nagy said.

Nagy, an English teacher who currently rents in Ann Arbor, heard about the City of Jackson’s 100 Homes Program from a co-worker at South Central Michigan Virtual School.

“I knew I wanted to live in the area but wasn’t sure if I could afford it. The process was super easy,” Nagy said.

Launched in fall 2023, the 100 Homes Program will help build 100 new single-family homes on vacant City-owned lots.

The program is fueled by \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan funds.

It provides \$25,000 in down payment assistance for income-qualified home buyers.

After meeting initial



Katlyn Nagy in a front of a new home under construction on S. Mechanic Street.

qualifications of the program, the buyers work with a mortgage company of their choosing.

After funding is secured, City staff connect them with builders and a lot is selected.

There are three plans buyers can choose from, which are a mix of one and two story houses, with up to three bedrooms and one and a half baths.

All home prices are capped at \$175,000 to

make them affordable.

100 Homes Coordinator Cory Mays says as of early Dec. 2023, 200 applications have been submitted.

“People are excited we have this money to provide and the home prices are at a great level. This big response really shows the need that exists in Jackson for new single-family homes,” Mays said.

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## MLK CORRIDOR AUTHORITY IMPROVING SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

After a busy 2023, the MLK Corridor Improvement Authority (MLKCIA) is getting ready for another productive year of improving Jackson's south side.

The MLKCIA is made up of properties along S. MLK Drive, Prospect Street, S. Cooper Street and the MLK Equality Trail.

A portion of taxes are captured from these areas and used to reinvest in the neighborhood.

This does not bring any additional taxes to residents.

Neighborhood improvements kicked off in May with a community cleanup.

Residents and City staff worked together to remove litter, old fencing, unused

retaining walls, trees, and brush from properties to improve the corridor's look.

A second cleanup was held in Sept.

Through the summer, the MLKCIA collected responses to a survey that engaged residents on what kind of improvements they'd like to see in the neighborhood.

To ensure local businesses are connected to resources, the MLKCIA hosted two Business Resource Fairs in July and Nov.

Furthering the goal of bolstering businesses, the MLK Corridor Entrepreneurial and Real Estate Fund launched in Nov.

This program is awarding up to \$50,000 in grants to businesses who need a



Volunteers cleaning up S. MLK Drive during a MLKCIA event.

boost to grow.

MLKCIA board member George Brown says authority leaders are encouraged by the community's support.

"Our work is just getting started. Plans will continue in 2024 to revive the south side by caring for our public spaces, providing new

housing and developing more businesses in the corridor," Brown said.

Learn more about the MLKCIA by visiting their new website, [mymlkia.org](http://mymlkia.org).

You can also get frequent updates by following the MLKCIA on Facebook and Instagram.

## OPTIMIST PARK RESHAPED

Residents are now enjoying new features in a neighborhood park following a big investment from the City of Jackson.

Optimist Park was reshaped in 2023 due to the sale of vacant commercial property along N. West Avenue.

The construction project brought a new basketball court, playground, walkway

and parking to this north side park.

\$1.5 million from the property sale was used for the park construction project, along with upcoming renovations to the Boos Recreation Center on Jackson's east side.

More fencing, a swing set and additional landscaping will be added in spring 2024.



The new Optimist Park on N. West Avenue.



## CITY COUNCIL STARTS NEW SESSION WITH TWO NEW MEMBERS

### MAYOR

Daniel Mahoney

### COUNCIL

	Ward
Arlene Robinson	1
Freddie Dancy	2
Angelita V. Gunn	3
Conner Wood	4
Shalanda Hunt	5
Will Forgrave	6

### CITY MANAGER

Jonathan Greene

### IMPORTANT DATES & MEETINGS

**Friday, Dec. 22 & Monday, Dec. 25**  
City Hall Closed for Christmas

**Monday, Jan. 1**  
City Hall Closed for New Year's Day

**Monday, Jan. 15**  
City Hall Closed for MLK Day

**Wednesday, Feb. 14**  
City of Jackson's 167th Birthday

**Monday, Feb. 19**  
City Hall Closed for Presidents' Day

**Tuesday, March 19**  
First Day of Spring

*Winter 2024 City Council and Board/Commission meeting dates available in the Calendar section of the City website*



**Conner Wood, Ward 4**

The Jackson City Council is starting a new session with new members following a recent election and appointment.

The Nov. General Election saw the re-election of Daniel Mahoney as Mayor, along with Freddie Dancy (Ward 2) and Will Forgrave (Ward 6) retaining their City Council seats.

Conner Wood was elected to represent Jackson's Ward 4 on the City Council.

This is Councilmember Wood's first elected office after previously serving on City's Planning, Environmental, Charter Review and Election commissions.

Another new face on the City Council is Shalanda Hunt.

Hunt was appointed by the City Council to temporarily represent Ward 5 following the resignation of former Councilmember Karen Bunnell last fall.

Councilmember Hunt is a lifelong



**Shalanda Hunt, Ward 5**

Jackson resident and is Vice President of the Jackson Public Schools Board of Education.

A special election to fill the Ward 5 seat will take place later in 2024.

In spring 2023, the City Council decided to switch City elections from odd-numbered years to even years to increase voter turnout and save funds.

This means Mayor Mahoney will serve a three year term and Dancy, Wood, and Forgrave will have their seats for five years.

Oaths of Office were taken at the first council meeting in Dec.

Also at their first meeting, the council voted to make Councilmember Dancy Vice Mayor and Councilmember Wood Chief Parliamentarian.

The Vice Mayor serves in the absence of the Mayor.

The Chief Parliamentarian ensures council rules and procedures are followed during meetings.





## Message from the Mayor

**Daniel Mahoney**

Dear Citizens of Jackson,

I am deeply honored and grateful for your trust in re-electing me as the Mayor of our beloved city. Your support is a testament to our shared commitment to the prosperity and well-being of Jackson.

Congratulations to Councilmember Freddie Dancy and Councilmember Will Forgrave on their well-deserved re-election victories. Their dedication to public service is commendable, and I look forward to continuing our collaboration for the betterment of Jackson.

A warm welcome to newly-elected Councilmember Conner Wood and newly-appointed Councilmember Shalanda Hunt. Your willingness to serve our community is inspiring, and I am confident that your fresh perspectives will contribute significantly to the growth and development of our city.

As we embark on another term, let us unite in our efforts to make Jackson an even better place to live, work, and thrive. Together, we can address challenges, embrace opportunities, and build a future that reflects the spirit and resilience of our community.

Thank you, Jackson, for your ongoing support. I am excited about the journey ahead and honored to serve as your Mayor.

Sincerely,  
Daniel J. Mahoney  
Mayor of Jackson

## Continued: 100 HOMES PROGRAM



A new home under construction on W. Ganson Street.

Even before pouring its first foundation, the 100 Homes plan is spurring a housing boom in Jackson.

By the end of 2023, six new single-family homes were constructed by private builders and sold on the open market, with seven more awaiting approval.

“Strengthening neighborhoods, growing our population and boosting the local economy will happen with this program. The impact of 100 Homes is going to be huge,” Mays said.

The first round of home construction is set to begin this winter, with the program lasting through 2026.

City staff are still accepting applications from potential home-buyers through the 100 Homes section of the City website, [cityofjackson.org](http://cityofjackson.org).

“The hope is that this is not a one-off program and this positive momentum can continue,” Mays said.

Nagy is finalizing the house type and lot location for her first house.

“The program opens up homeownership for a wider demographic of people who may not be able to purchase a home. It sets up that long-term investment and generational wealth,” Nagy said.

Noticing Jackson’s progress in recent years, she’s looking forward to calling the City home.

“All of my students are from this area and I’m excited to learn more about where they come from and use that experience to enrich their learning experience,” Nagy said.

# COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## NEW CENTRAL CAMPUS IN CITY FOR JACKSON COUNTY ISD

When the Jackson County Intermediate School District (JCISD) set out to find a central location to improve services, they looked to the heart of the Jackson area.

“The City of Jackson is geographically in the middle of the county, allowing for more efficient bussing and staffing to serve students,” said Superintendent Kevin Oxley.

Leaders didn’t have to look long before they found the perfect opportunity in the City, the former Frost Elementary School on S. Wisner Street.

Closed and facing demolition, district leaders saw the school as a solution for both JCISD and Jackson Public Schools (JPS).

JPS saved the projected \$1 million they would have spent on demolition and put it toward other facility renovations.

“JCISD was able to solve our facility problems by renovating the 125,000 square foot facility for a fraction of the cost of what building a new facility would take. This was truly a win-win-win for JPS, JCISD and county taxpayers,” Oxley said.

Following a \$1 purchase from JPS in 2021, the ISD

launched renovations to make the building a modern and accessible space.

In fall 2023, students were welcomed to the new Central Campus for its first full school year.

The rejuvenated facility offers a wide range of special education services for students ages 3 to 26, along with early childhood education.

Maureen Keene, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Special Education, says students are also learning outside the building.

“It allows us to take advantage of the bus line to teach our students to use public transportation, as well as makes local businesses more accessible to provide real life educational opportunities for our students,” Keene said.

Oxley says support from the community has helped make the new Central Campus a success.

“The City worked with us on appropriate traffic flow and Jackson County Parks helped by allowing us to park at The Cascades during construction. The intergovernmental cooperation was greatly appreciated,” Oxley said.



New front entrance to the JCISD Central Campus on S. Wisner Street.



Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder learn in a new classroom.



Teacher guides visually-impaired students in making a blanket.

## PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER

When winter weather hits Jackson, crews from the Department of Public Works (DPW) are out in salt and plow trucks making sure streets are safe for drivers.

The DPW targets major streets and emergency snow routes first, then clears neighborhood streets.

When there is a snow or ice event, the City of Jackson asks residents to please remove parked vehicles from streets so crews have enough space to safely clear roadways.

Residents should also be prepared for a Winter Weather Emergency.

An official Winter Weather Emergency declaration from the City means residents are asked to remove parked vehicles, or in some extreme cases, stay off streets entirely until they can be cleared.

If streets are blocked by downed trees and wires, City crews often have to wait for utility companies to address the problem before the street can receive attention.

The City will inform residents about these emergencies through local media outlets, the City website, social media, and the CodeRED mass communication system.



DPW crews clearing streets during a snow event.

## NEW SURFACE, LIGHTING FOR PEDESTRIAN TRAIL



Residents Evan Hendershot (left) and Ian Wilson (right) walk their dog Lleyton on the new section of the MLK Equality Trail.

A new surface and lighting are improving the experience of using the MLK Equality Trail.

Construction wrapped up in Nov. on the City's main pedestrian trail.

Using State and local funds, the trail section from W. Prospect Street to S. West Avenue received a new 12 foot wide concrete path, replacing an aging asphalt surface.

The path was widened to allow for safer sharing, but also bring it up to modern standards and make it more assessable to people with disabilities.

Intersections with W. Prospect Street, Fourth Street and S. West Avenue were made safer by installing new sidewalk ramps and

warning lights to alert drivers.

The Parks and Recreation Department has secured State and Federal funds to reconstruct 2 miles of the 2.8 mile trail.

In 2024, trail sections from S. MLK Drive to W. Prospect Street and S. West Avenue to the Optimist Rest Shelter will see construction.

Light installations along the trail were completed in summer 2023.

Also funded by a State grant, 62 LED lights were placed along the path from W. Prospect Street to Weatherwax Drive.

The entire length of the trail now has lighting.

This improves safety and allows residents to use the path more frequently during the darker months of the year.