

## DETROIT CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

### PROPOSAL/ISSUE REVIEW SUMMARY

**ISSUE NUMBER:** GDS 6

**ISSUE CATEGORY:** Government Department & Services

**SOURCE:** Mayor, January 2010 *“Report on the Impact of the Detroit City Charter on City Service Administration”*

**RELATED CHARTER SECTIONS:** Article 6, Ch. 6 (Environmental Affairs)

**RELEVANT ORDINANCE SECTION:**

**RELEVANT LAW(S):**

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**ISSUE/PROPOSAL STATEMENT:** Eliminate Environmental Affairs Dept. allowing its functions to be done by other related departments.

**RATIONALE:** “The Environmental Affairs Department was added to the Charter taking effect 1997 as a staff department. Its functions include developing environmental policy; coordinating compliance with environmental laws; implementing emergency response programs; providing technical support to other city agencies; promoting remediation and sustainable development; and providing public education.

For the most part, this department has not in its brief tenure operated as a staff department in terms of advising or regulating the operations of field service departments. Its accomplishments have been more in the areas of redevelopment and regulating the city’s physical environment – both activities that are undertaken already in Planning and Development, Public Works and other city departments. As written, the goals are so vague as to leave ambiguous the specific services expected of the department. Further, part of its mandate exceeds the geographic boundaries of the city, and thus, exceeds the city’s control.

The 1974 Charter recognized the objective of protecting the environment, but did so in combination with the functions of the Public Works Department (as the “Environmental Protection Department”). If environmental functions were not codified in the Charter, or recognized as an executive department, there would be more flexibility about carrying them out perhaps through a number of relevant activities already found in such departments as Law, Planning and Development, or Public Works.” – *Mayor’s Report on the Impact of the Detroit City Charter on City Service Administration, p.2-3.*

**ANALYSIS:**

**DISPOSITION/COMMISSION ACTION:**

**NOTES:**