



**FERNDALE**

City Clerk's Office  
300 East Nine Mile Road  
Ferndale, MI 48220  
248.546.2525 ext. 1  
www.ferndalemi.gov

## City of Ferndale Temporary Mayoral Appointment

To be considered for a temporary appointment as Mayor of the City of Ferndale (approximately September–December 2019), please complete the following application. Resumes and/or letters of intent are encouraged and can be **attached to the form using the button on the left**. Applications will be accepted August 19–September 3, 4 p.m. City Council will review applications and are expected to make an appointment at their regular September 9 meeting.

<b>Name:</b> Melanie Piana	
<b>Home Address:</b> 387 West Lewiston Ferndale, MI 48220	<b>Work Address:</b> 300 Riverfront Drive, Suite 5250 Detroit, MI 48207
<b>Home Phone:</b>	<b>Work Phone:</b> 313-314-2681
<b>Cell Phone:</b> 248-210-8645	<b>Email:</b> melpiana@gmail.com
Minimum <b>two-year</b> Ferndale residency is required for this position. <input type="checkbox"/> I am a Ferndale resident. If so, for how many years? _____	

**Describe experiences you have had that led to your desire to serve the City.**  
See Cover Letter and Resume.

**Provide a brief biography including your skills, background and expertise, as well as involvement in the community, professional or other non-profit organizations that are specifically applicable to this position.**  
See cover letter and resume.

**Employment:** List your three most recent employment experiences.

Dates	Company Name / Location	Position	Job Description
5/1/2016-Present	Jefferson East, Inc.	Chief Operating	
8/1/2013-4/30/2016	Downtown Detroit Partnership	Engagement	
4/1/2004-6/1/2013	Michigan Suburbs Alliance	Deputy Director	

**Education:** List your three most recent educational experiences.

Educational Institution / School	Degree Received	Area(s) of Study
Harvard University	Certificate in Leadership	Local and State Government
Wayne State University	Masters in Urban Planning	Urban Planning
Albion College	Bachelor of Arts	Communications and German

**Important Public Records Information:** All information submitted in this application is public information and subject to disclosure in response to a public records request made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. Please contact the City Clerk at 248-546-2381 if you have any questions or concerns about the disclosure of specific information.

**Truth and Accuracy:** I certify that the information contained on this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all information disclosed on this form will be available to the public as part of a Freedom of Information Act request.

eSigned via [SeamlessDocs.com](http://SeamlessDocs.com)  
*Melanie Claudette Piana*  
 Key: 4ac55a89757b6a2b06a171be600c8f06

09/02/2019

Applicant's Signature

Date

# Melanie Piana

## FOR FERNDALE MAYOR

387 West Lewiston | (248) 210-8645



[pianaformayor@gmail.com](mailto:pianaformayor@gmail.com)

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September 1, 2019

Ferndale Acting Mayor and City Council  
300 East Nine Mile Road  
Ferndale, MI 48220

Dear Honorable Acting Mayor and City Council:

It's been an honor and privilege to represent the voices of our citizens as a city council member. In May 2019, I announced my candidacy for the two-year mayoral term, and I am on the November 5 election ballot. I enthusiastically submit my application for the temporary mayor position in response to council's current circumstance.

In 2009, when I ran for office for the first time, I informed voters that I would apply my professional experience and background as an urban, community and economic professional to the role on council. For over 15 years, I've dedicated my career to serving the community through local nonprofit work representing underserved populations and older, urban communities. My personal values and passion is about building inclusive and equitable cities and neighborhoods. Our city and our residents have been a beneficiary of my life's work.

I have 10 years of local elected experience and deep understanding of how our community works and how we achieve results through problem solving in partnership with our residents, businesses and partners.

Select highlights of my experience and achievements include:

- Led engagements with over 40 Michigan communities, built coalitions across public and private sectors, championed regional ballot initiatives, initiated innovative partnerships and redevelopment programs.
- Directed nonprofit organizational operations, strategic communications and event management, program management, human resources, fund development; leading up to 15 staff members and over 75% growth in philanthropic revenue for place-based nonprofits.

- Expertise in municipal government and urban policy areas, including civic engagement, transportation, affordable housing, municipal finance policy; placemaking and downtown development.

I haven't done the above alone; rather I have been helped by listening and collaborating with many others, including the members of this community and council. I am well prepared to offer these strengths—and many others—to make a significant impact as our next mayor.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie C. Piana".

Melanie Piana

**Background on Melanie Piana**  
**Candidate for Ferndale Mayor, November 5, 2019**  
**Temporary Mayor Position Applicant**

**Ferndale City Council Achievements**

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- Electoral History: top vote earner (2009, 2013, 2017) on the City Council; served twice as Mayor Pro Tem.
- Champion for housing affordability including preservation of existing housing. Initiated [Ferndale's new inclusive housing policy](#) for new construction projects and focused on housing as part of the master plan. Featured in the [Urban Institute's Southeast Housing Future housing study](#) and participated in their focus groups to give insights to Ferndale's changing housing market.
- Has championed the city's intentional focus on diversity, equity and inclusion and welcoming community so everyone feels they belong in Ferndale and can be who they are.
- Champion of Ferndale's sound fiscal management, [reduced taxes twice](#), giving citizens a clearer and more [transparent plan for how their tax dollars](#) are funding essential programs and services.
- Supported the transition to a three-year forecasted budget that aligns with organizational core values, [strategic plan](#), [capital improvements plan](#), [master plan](#), and [parks and recreation plan](#) that states the city's priority investment areas over the next five years.
- Supported and participated in the 2012 exploration and study of a [fire authority merger between the cities of Ferndale and Hazel Park](#) as a way to reduce costs. Secured \$48,000 grant to help off-set the cost for the expert-led study.
- Supported the 2011 and [2015 voter-approved](#) Headlee override millages to avoid significant cuts to services and maintain fiscal municipal health.
- Elected Michigan Municipal League Board President in 2018. [Engaged in advocacy to inform legislators](#) and the business community about the need to reform state funding of local government.
- Supported [Ferndale Police Department's adoption of Obama's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing](#) to strengthen trust and relationships between our law enforcement and community. Supported investment in [rare police department accreditation](#) to set policies that achieve these new standards.
- Supported resident volunteers on the Ferndale Environmental Sustainability Commission to refocus the Commission's purpose and objectives by aligning them with environmental policies and projects.
- Incorporated sustainability and CO2 reduction goals into the Master Plan. Championed the [chicken ordinance](#), [natural landscape ordinance](#), building energy-efficiency projects, solar projects and non-motorized transportation. Supported the formation and hire of the [city's first sustainability planner](#) to accelerate implementation of residential goals.
- Secured [Ferndale as a pilot city for Better Buildings for Michigan](#), a program of the Department of Energy. This program offered loan and grant incentives to our home owners to encourage energy-saving modifications that would save money, decrease energy consumption, and stimulate job growth.

- Championed and passed [Ferndale's Complete Streets policy](#) in 2010 to ensure that our streets become safer for people walking, biking, driving and taking transit. The policy led to a non-motorized plan, [Ferndale Moves](#), recognized by [SEMCOG as the 2019 Regional Showcase Award](#) recipient. The result is over \$23M new private investment over six years, 15 safer pedestrian crossings, 6.1 miles of new bike lanes and 14 miles new bike routes.
- Launched the [Ferndale Small Business Collaborative](#) between the City, Library, School District, Michigan Works, Ferndale Area Chamber and Downtown Development Authority to focus on aligning support for local entrepreneurs and storefront businesses. Partnered with the [Build Institute](#) to provide community small business support and connected the Wayne State University Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program to the Ferndale Area Chamber.
- [Co-founded in 2010 and served on the Woodward Avenue Transit-Oriented Development](#) (TOD) task force, a coalition of elected officials in Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak, Huntington Woods, Berkley and Birmingham to collaborate on economic development and transit advocacy along Woodward.
- Active leadership organizing Woodward bordering communities to advance regional mass transit that led to a [\\$2M alternative transit analysis grant from the Federal Transit Administration](#), awarded to SEMCOG and worked closely with MDOT, SMART, and DDOT and neighboring communities. Represented Ferndale on the [Woodward Avenue Action Associations Complete Streets](#) study for the corridor conducted alongside the Alternative Analysis.
- Represented the City of Ferndale on the Regional Transit Authority's (RTA) Citizen Advisory Committee and publicly supported the 2016 RTA Regional Millage by securing over 50 Oakland County elected officials' signatures. Testified at RTA board meetings in favor of the ballot initiative.
- Co-founded the [Dales Neighborhood Group](#) to build trust and relationships between residents and the [Ferndale Area School District around issues relating to the former Taft school](#).
- Initiated and championed [groundbreaking 12 week paid paternity leave](#) policy for City of Ferndale employees, the first Michigan city to offer this innovative and important policy.

### **Ferndale Boards and Commissions Service**

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	2014 - 2009
Environmental Sustainability Commission	2011 - 2017
Planning Commission	2010 - 2016
City Representative to SEMCOG	2010 - 2015
Board of Zoning Appeals, Appointed Member	2005 - 2010
Ferndale Community Foundation, Board of Directors	2010 - 2014
Board of Zoning Appeals, City Council Liaison	2004 - 2009
Downtown Development Authority, Business Development Chair	2004 - 2009
Downtown Development Authority, Organization Committee Member	2006 - 2009

## Professional Experience

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### **Jefferson East, Inc. (JEI), Chief Operating Officer (current)**

**3 Years**

*Responsible for program management, strategic communications, human resources, IT, fundraising, policy, research, and developing strategies that drive organizational success and program effectiveness for a Detroit place-based neighborhood nonprofit innovating in inclusive neighborhood development.*

- Oversee operations during the formation of a new real estate development corporation, a subsidiary of JEI, to support the nonprofit mission and transition into a shared service model, including 79% in revenue growth, 50% increase in staff and \$180M in real estate projects.
- Lead organizational strategic planning and implementation, and results measurement; support CEO with board of director's governance and relationship management.
- Lead strategic communications that raised organizational profile with funders applying storytelling in digital and print marketing resulting in 50% increase in revenue.
- Collaborate with neighborhood groups, associations, nonprofits, state agencies and city of Detroit departments to cross-support mayoral initiatives and neighborhood innovations.

### **Downtown Detroit Partnership, Engagement Strategist**

**2 Years**

*Largest downtown nonprofit organization that convenes corporate, government and philanthropic support to create a resilient urban core. Led and managed major strategic projects to advance the mission of the organization; hired as consultant to support operations and then hired full-time to lead civic engagement initiatives.*

- Supported the formation of the Downtown Detroit Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) property owner election campaign, securing over 70% "yes" vote from property owners and launched grassroots campaign with storefront business owners.
- Evaluated and initiated Salesforce and Google Apps cloud-service strategy to propel organization forward to better serve team, constituents and partners.
- Led grassroots engagement with downtown retail business owners about BIZ services and concerns related to M-1 RAIL street car construction.
- Managed strategic fund development, grant administration and enhanced corporate and small business membership strategy to increase unrestricted revenue and provide more value to existing members.

### **Metro Matters, Deputy Director (formerly Michigan Suburbs Alliance)**

**9 Years**

*A regional start-up nonprofit designed to bridge the divide between the inner-ring suburbs and the City of Detroit. Executive team member with key role in developing and advancing organizational mission and objectives with the Board of Directors.*

- Pioneered and launched the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification program that streamlined local government development practices in 15 cities located in Metro Detroit. Transitioned the program to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, now administered state-wide.
- Established and managed nonprofit organization's operations including human resources, finance, communications and marketing, policy and procedures and events management.
- Supported policy development and new programs including the Southeast Michigan Regional Energy Office, Better Buildings of Michigan, climate action planning, and transit oriented development and transit advocacy.
- Built partnerships, managed coalition work, and grew organizational network with elected officials, nonprofits, community organizations, and state and federal agencies.

## **Corporate History**

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Early career included development of international projects; project management, client relations, and team leadership experience in interactive web marketing and Tier One automotive supplier serving Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep and Ford.

<b>Integrated Management Systems</b> , Project Planner	2003-2004
<b>Tweddle Group</b> , Project Manager	2002
<b>Ross Roy Communications/Organic</b> , Project Manager	1997-2001

## Awards

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<b>American Institute of Architects Detroit, <i>Honorary Affiliate Community Award</i></b>	2019
<b>Michigan Municipal League, <i>Elected Officials Level I and II Training Award</i></b>	2018
<b>Transit Riders United, <i>Regional Transit Forward Motion Award: Most Effective Public Servant</i></b>	2015
<b>Ferndale Downtown Development Authority, <i>Volunteer of the Year</i></b>	2007

## Boards and Committees

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### National & International

National League of Cities, Transportation and Infrastructure Services Committee	2018 - 2019
Place Making Week in Wuhan, China, UN Habitat Programme	2018
Urban Institute, Southeast Michigan Housing Futures Project	2017 - 2018

### State

Michigan Municipal League, Board of Trustees, Board President	2018 - 2019
Michigan Municipal League Education Foundation, Board Member	2015 - 2017
Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Sense of Place Council	2010 - 2013

### Regional

Oakland County Public Transit Authority, Board Chair	2019
Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Citizens Advisory Committee, Member	2016
SEMCOG Access to Core Services in Southeast Michigan, Task Force Member	2014 - 2015
Data Driven Detroit, Advisory Council Member	2012 - 2015
SEMCOG Redeveloping Commercial and Industrial Corridors, Task Force Member	2012
SEMCOG Executive Committee, Oakland County Municipal Alternate Member	2011 - 2012
Oakland County Transportation Business Roundtable, County Executive Appointee	2010 - 2012
Hamtramck Economic Development Corporation/BRA, Mayoral Appointee	2009 - 2013

## Education, Certificates and Fellowships

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**Wayne State University**, Master of Urban Planning, Graduate

**Albion College**, Bachelor of Arts, Communications & German, Graduate

**Harvard Kennedy School of Government | Senior Executive Leadership Training** 2018  
*Certificate, State and Local Government*

**Southeast MI Council of Government (SEMCOG), *Taubman Fellow to Harvard*** 2018

**Project Management Institute** 2002 - 2021  
*Project Management Professional Certification (PMP)*

**ULI Detroit Larson Center for Leadership** 2013  
*Fellow*

**George Washington University** 2012  
*Certificate, Walkable Urban Development & Place-Based Strategies*

## Professional Affiliations

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American Planning Association  
Project Management Institute (PMI)  
Association

Michigan Association of Planning  
PMI Great Lakes Chapter

Urban Land Institute (ULI)  
Michigan Nonprofit