The papers of the Detroit Economic Development Corporation were placed in the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in February of 1983, and were opened for research in June of 1989.

The Detroit Economic Development Corporation (DEDC) had its roots in the Downtown Stadium Working Group (DSWG), an organization started by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce in October, 1969, to begin the planning for a downtown stadium. The DSWG was funded by promissory notes issued to Detroit area businesses and corporations.

In the late 1960's a consensus emerged among Democrats and Republicans, city and outstare interests, business and labor that downtown Detroit needed a stadium to house the Detroit Tigers baseball team and the Detroit Lions football team, to revitalize a decaying area of the city.

Michigan state senator Sander Levin, a democrat, proposed such an idea to both John Fetzer, owner of the Detroit Tigers, and William Clay Ford, owner of the Detroit Lions. The Chamber of Commerce appointed a number of prominent civic and business leaders to the newly formed DSWG. Robert Sweany was named executive director.

In July, 1970, with backing from republican governor William Milliken, the Michigan State Legislature created the Wayne County Stadium Authority (WCSA). Michael O. B. Cherry, a Detroit banker who had served as advisor to the DSWG, was named executive director.

the WCSA began negotiations for land on a riverfront site, entered into negotiations with Fetzer, Ford and Bruce Norris, owner of the Detroit Red Wings, hockey team, and began to raise the $126 million needed, in bonds, to be repaid over forty years, to finance the stadium.

It had the help of a number of private groups, including the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, Detroit Renaissance, and the Stadium Center Development Corporation.

In 1972, two different groups, claiming to represent area taxpayers and municipalities, challenged the legality of the bond issue in court. One group lost in Federal Court, but the other prevailed before the Michigan State Supreme Court in June, 1972.

The court ruled against the WCSA on a technicality. Over the next two years WCSA sought alternatives to overcome court objections in order to build a riverfront stadium.

But time, money and Pontiac, Michigan finally caught up with the WCSA. The devastating inflation of the early 1970s eventually made the cost of a large stadium prohibitive. City fathers in Pontiac, a small city north of Detroit,
convinced Ford, who was always skeptical about a downtown stadium site, to move the Lions to their 80,000-seat domed stadium that opened in the fall, 1975.

Ultimately, the Tigers worked out an agreement with Detroit that led to the refurbishing of an aging Tiger Stadium. Some of the riverfront land set aside for the stadium was used by Max Fisher to build luxury high-rise apartments. The remainder of the land was used to build Joe Louis Arena, a 20,000-seat, all-purpose facility that is now home to the Red Wings, rock concerts, circuses and conventions, including the 1980 Republican Convention.

The Detroit Economic Development Corporation records reflect the planning and negotiations for a downtown Detroit stadium from 1969 to 1973 and the legal entanglements which eventually led to the demise of the project.

Some important subjects in the collection are:

Architectural Studies and Proposals
Bond
Sales Land Purchases
Legal Battles
Tenant Negotiations

Among the important correspondents are:

Adams, Thomas
Ashcraft, Thomas
Bohn, Daniel
Bursley, Gilbert
Cherry, Michael
Fetzer, John
Fisher, Max
Gehrke, Hans
Gribbs, Roman
Levin, Sander
McCabe, Robert
Martin, G. Merritt
Milliken, William
Norris, Bruce

Osztowicz, Richard
Parson, Don
Pelham, Alfred
Saunders, Nelis
Sweaney, Robert

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Correspondence, minutes and charts, budgets, land studies, notes, of the DSWG. The selection of architects and engineers for the project is begun in this series. Arranged alphabetically.

Series II, Stadium Planning, 1970-1974, Boxes 2-7:
Correspondence, minutes and charts, budgets, the change of group from DSWG to the Wayne County Stadium Authority (WCSA) are covered in this series. Ways of financing the stadium are covered, also information regarding potential tenants, plans and proposals by architects, contracts and agreements. Arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

Series III, Funding the Riverfront Stadium, 1970-1974, Boxes 8-10: This series covers the crucial funding of the new stadium with promissory notes and bond sales. Also included is proposed legislation for a Hotel/Motel Tax as a possible source of revenue. The change from the Wayne County Stadium Authority to the Stadium Center Development Corporation (SCDC) is covered in this section. Arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

Series IV, Lawsuits and Afterward, 1972-1976, Boxes 11-12:
The lawsuits Alan vs. WCSA and Havstad vs. WCSA, from beginning to end are covered. There is correspondence from the attorneys and various principals involved, clippings and legal documents. The final correspondence is from the SCDC to its financial backers, informing them of the demise of the projected stadium and the end of their financial commitment. Arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

Non-manuscript Material:
Several photos relating to the architects' renderings of the Riverfront Stadium, the principals, Pontiac Stadium Site, downtown Detroit and its riverfront. Also included are schematic drawings, and an editorial cartoon. These have been placed in the Archives Audio Visual Collection.

Series I
Downtown Stadium Working Group, 1969-71
Boxes 1-2

General correspondence, minutes and charts, budgets, expense accounts, land studies, organizational notes and correspondence between principals and political leaders. The selection of architects and engineers to design and build the stadium is begun in this series. Arranged alphabetically.

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6. Cancelled Promissory Notes, Mar 1971
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15. Executive Committee correspondence, Jun 1970
16. Final Dome Stadium Study, Jan 1971
17. Financial Committee Meeting, Mar 1970
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3. Formation & History; memos, Oct 1969–Aug 1971
5. "                           ", Apr-Sep 1970
6. Initial Meetings; Fin. reports; corres.; memos, Dec 1969–Jan 1970
7. Land Use; Parking & Traffic; reports & studies, Mar-May 1970

Series II
Boxes 2–7

General correspondence, minutes and charts, budgets, expense accounts and correspondence between members of the Wayne County Stadium Authority (WCSA) and potential tenants. This series includes formal presentations by potential architects, contracts and agreements, employment policies, various plans for financing the Riverfront Stadium, insurance coverage, selection of the architects and engineers, land purchases and information relating to other stadia across the country. There are surveys, charts, plans, an Economics Impact Summary, cost analyses and clippings in this series as well as correspondence relating to the negotiations with the Detroit Tigers baseball team, the Detroit Lions football team, and the Detroit Red Wings hockey team. Arrange alphabetically and chronologically.

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4. Bills; invoices, Mar-Nov 1971
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8. Cherry, Michael, expense account, Apr 1971-Mar 1972
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9. GDCC Directors; corres.; finances; memos, Apr 1973-Feb 1974
10. GDCC Newsletter, Apr 1970-May 1972
12. GDCC Support, 1971
13. Insurance--applications, policies, bonds, corres., Feb-Mar 1971
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10. Stadium materials & suppliers, ca. 1972
11. Stadium plan proposal by WCSA, 15 Sep 1971
12. Stadium relocation; corres.; memos; plans, Apr 1971-May 1972
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14. Stadium site potential; memos; plan, Nov 1971
15. Sweaney, Robert, expense account, Jan 1970
16. "; memos, Feb-Dec 1971
19. Utilities; corres.; plans, Mar-Jun 1972
20. " & zoning; corres.; memos, Feb 1972
21. WCSA/Architect agreement, Apr & Jun 1972

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This series covers the vital topic of Bond Sales to finance the Riverfront Stadium. The finances, legal ramifications, sales ordinances, intent to issue, and actual sales, including copies of the various bonds themselves. As well as bonds, from idea to execution, are the numerous promissory notes issued to many leading individuals and institutions as well as local companies in the metropolitan Detroit area. Legislation regarding a Hotel/Motel tax is also discussed. This is the period when the organization changes its name from WCSA to the Stadium Center Development Company (SCDC). The series is arranged alphabetically and chronologically.

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