

# DETROIT VOTES!

## DETROIT People's PLATFORM NEWS

Vol. 18 - Election 2020



**TAKE ACTION ON YOUR PLAN TO VOTE!**

**TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3**



Michigan Voter Information Center  
michigan.gov/vote

### TIME TO LISTEN!



**Majority Black Detroit Talks** is our new live "show" in which Detroit Residents from all walks of life speak on Detroit specific issues. Think TED Talks-like, but better. Watch on all our social media channels @detroitpeoples

### THE FAILED COMMUNITY BENEFITS ORDINANCE MUST BE AMENDED

The way the current Community Benefits Ordinance is being implemented is failing residents and favoring developers, their private economic and family wealth building goals.

An amendment package is being held up in City Council's Planning and Economic Development Committee where Council Members James Tate, Scott Benson and Gabe Leland are in control. All three council members backed putting the weaker CBA on the ballot in 2016. Four years later looks like they may be on track to repeat that behavior.



**James Tate, District 1**  
313-224-1027 – @CouncilmanTate  
councilmembertate@detroitmi.gov

**Scott Benson, District 3**  
313-224-1198 – @Scottinthe3rd  
bensons@detroitmi.gov

**Gabe Leland, District 7**  
313-224-2151 – @GabeLeland  
lelandg@detroitmi.gov

**EQUITABLE DETROIT**  
THE CITYWIDE COMMUNITY BENEFIT COALITION

**IT FAILS RESIDENTS AND FAVORS DEVELOPERS**

**CONTACT TATE, BENSON & LELAND NOW!**

### WE DEMAND REAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS. WE DEMAND AN END TO LARGE CORPORATIONS USING OUR TAXES FOR THEIR PROJECTS!

Detroit City Council must move the CBO Amendments to a Vote.

### MUST HAVE AMENDMENTS!

- Lower the threshold on large scale projects to \$50 Million
- Neighborhood Advisory Council Chair to Enforcement Committee
- Lower the Tier 2 Development Project threshold to \$300,000
- Increase the number of meetings between the developer and the residents
- Expand Notification to Project Impact Area
- Essential Documents to Neighborhood Advisory Council within 72 hrs
- Enforcement Mechanisms, including but not limited to claw-backs
- Restructure the Neighborhood Advisory Council
- Increase Transparency – No Conflict of Interest/Effort
- Assess the Project's Impact on Quality of Life
- Require Creation of a Legally Binding Community Benefits Agreement

### PROPOSAL

# N



Web: [Point a phone camera here to bit.ly/ReadProposalN](http://bit.ly/ReadProposalN)

### WHAT IS IT?

Also called the "Neighborhood Improvement Plan," Proposal N is an initiative on the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election ballot for Detroit residents. Promoted by Mayor Duggan, this plan would allow the city to borrow \$250 million in "Neighborhood Improvement Bonds" to be spent on:

- preservation and rehabilitation of vacant houses,
- demolition of abandoned houses that cannot be saved, and
- other "blight remediation activities."

**Have Detroiters been advised which neighborhoods will be targeted for these demolition and rehabilitation projects?**

### WHAT'S A BOND?

A municipal bond is a way the city borrows money to pay for spending on city services and programs. Typically these investments are paid back through a millage—a tax on property owners in the city. Not only the face value of the bonds has to be paid back but interest costs as well. So this is called a \$250 million bond—but with interest, Detroiters could end up paying as much as \$420 million.

(Continued on the Back)

### Unfair Deal at the State Fairgrounds

**Over Promising to Developers Under Performing for Detroiters**



The State Fairgrounds looks like **another deal gone bad.**



**THIS DEVELOPMENT WILL FORCE THE RELOCATION OF THE EXISTING STATE FAIRGROUNDS TRANSIT CENTER**

Learn more on Pg. 3

**THEY NEED TO READ THE "RACIAL AND ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES FOR NEGOTIATING CBAS WITH DETROITERS" ON PG 2!**

## DETROITERS NEED A DEFINITION OF HOUSING AFFORDABILITY THAT WORKS FOR THEM

The Detroit Affordable Housing Task Force advanced the first step in establishing a local AMI (Area Median Income) by WINNING approval of a City Council Resolution on July 28, 2020. The resolution acknowledges that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) AMI calculation for the city of Detroit is too high and prevents access to affordable housing by those most in need of affordable housing. It also encourages city officials, developers, funders, philanthropy and all others involved with the production of housing, to use a local Detroit AMI calculation when developing and funding affordable housing. The resolution was unanimously approved by City Council. In the coming weeks the Affordable Housing Task Force will ramp up its advocacy efforts to continue to implement a more fair and just affordable housing policy for majority Black Detroiters.

Area Median Income, or AMI, is a number that represents the amount of income in a geographic area usually a metropolitan area like Detroit and surrounding communities. The AMI number is the income level that divides an area population in half. This means half of

the area's population has income above the AMI amount, and half of the area's population has an income level below the AMI amount.

HUD calculates the area median income for metropolitan statistical areas and non-metropolitan counties using data from the American Community Survey. HUD uses these AMI calculations to create rules for who can access affordable housing programs and the distribution of funding. The HUD AMI calculation is also often used by local governments in important decisions regarding planning and funding housing in the local community. For example, many cities use HUD's AMI calculation to help determine how much their residents can afford to pay for housing and if assistance or special programs are needed to make housing more affordable.

Metropolitan statistical areas can cover many cities across several counties. This means that HUD AMI calculations are not determined by the incomes of only Detroiters. Detroit's HUD AMI includes incomes from Warren and Livonia, two of the highest income communities in Southeast Michigan. As a result, the HUD AMI calculation is almost double the actual median income for the city of Detroit. HUD has calculated the AMI for Detroit at \$62,800 for 2018. However, the actual median for Detroit residents (using only the income of residents living within the city) is about half this amount, approximately \$31,000 per year.

## WHAT IS RIGHT TO COUNSEL?

The affordable housing rights movement has been growing across the nation in recent years. This movement is centered in racial and economic equity. One tool in the fight for housing rights is the movement to create a Right to Counsel in Eviction Proceedings. This right would guarantee all tenants legal representation when a landlord sues them for eviction. This right would increase housing security and advance racial and economic equity in housing.

Residents are also provided security in the form of stable housing when they are right-holders. The creation of a right to counsel reinforces tenant dignity and respect by shifting power to the right holder. Property rights are a powerful force in the legal system. This is a benefit to landlords, the property owners. Providing tenants a right to counsel redistributes power in the housing court system to move towards equity.

In 2018, Detroit City Council began discussions around Right to Council legislation. A potential Right to Counsel Ordinance would give Detroiters facing eviction the right to have a lawyer defend their case in 36th District Court. Tenants would have to make below a certain income cap to qualify for the no-cost legal representation. The COVID-19 pandemic has made housing security more critical than ever before.

**Sources:**  
Scherer, Andrew, "WHY A RIGHT: The Right to Counsel and the Ecology of Housing Justice" (2016). Impact Center for Public Interest Law, Book 17  
Heidi Schultheis and Caitlin Rooney, "A Right to Counsel Is a Right to a Fighting Chance: The Importance of Legal Representation in Eviction Proceedings." Center for American Progress, October 2, 2019.  
Joel Kurth, "One in five Detroit renters face eviction. Time to call in the lawyers?" Bridge Magazine, March 2019. <https://www.bridgemi.com/detroit-journalism-cooperative/one-five-detroit-rentals-face-eviction-time-call-lawyers/>

Joshua Akers and Eric Seymour, "Stopping the Eviction Machine: Neighborhood Instability and Blight in Detroit's Neighborhoods", Poverty Solutions, October 2019.

In Detroit, the 36th District Court has over 30,000 tenants face eviction every year. Most of those tenants are low-income. Less than 5% of tenants facing eviction in Detroit do not have legal representation. In most of these cases, the landlords win and tenants are forced to either pay hefty fees or find a new place to live. (Kurth) More than half of tenants in eviction cases don't even show up for court and many self evict. However, when tenants have legal representation, over 50% of eviction cases are resolved by agreements with the landlord rather than proceeding with eviction. (Akers and Seymour)

People's Platform NEWS is published to support the ongoing work of the organizations and residents committed to the Detroit People's Platform [detroitpeoplesplatform.org](http://detroitpeoplesplatform.org)  
@DetroitPeoples PeoplesPlatform  
We're proud the People's Platform NEWS is printed in a Union Shop!

When housing is created for low income residents using an AMI that is too high, the housing is not affordable for the residents it is meant to serve. The majority of Detroiters are renters. Right now the city of Detroit officials will often set aside tax abatements for developers who will offer rental rates at 80% AMI. Right now 80% AMI for a family of 4 is \$78,500. As a result, the average housing costs in Detroit is out of reach for the majority of renters and displacement of Detroit families continue to increase.

Affordable housing in Detroit must use a local AMI that is calculated using only the incomes of residents that live within the geographic boundaries of the city. A local Detroit AMI must be created and implemented by the city officials to guide the creation and funding of all affordable housing in the city. Without this critical change in housing policy, the programs created to advanced affordable housing are doomed to fail for those who are most in need.

**Sources:** Michigan League of Public Policy- <https://mlpp.org/detroit-the-evolution-of-a-housing-crisis/>  
HUD- <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Assessment-of-Small-Area-Median-Family-Income-Estimates.pdf>

## We Support the Bill of Rights for Majority Black Detroit

- Right to Water and Sanitation
- Right to Environmental Health
- Right to Safety
- Right to Live Free from Discrimination
- Right to Recreation
- Right to Mobility
- Right to Housing
- Right to Fulfillment of Basic Needs

#DETBillofRights

## RACIAL & ECONOMIC JUSTICE PRINCIPLES FOR CORPORATIONS NEGOTIATING COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

**Preamble**  
*Detroit is the largest Majority Black City in the country, with the intention of celebrating and preserving that distinction. Historic residents have stayed when others left, but nevertheless remain marginalized and mis-represented in democratic processes. We are denied meaningful voice over the policies that impact our lives.*

*The name George Floyd has come to symbolize the cumulative effects of four-hundred years of racism in America. The violence of police brutality is physical and structural. Other aspects of racialized violence are also structural, as revealed by the health disparities of Covid-19. The systematic disinvestment in cities like Detroit is yet another form of structural violence, as is the diversion of public resources to subsidize private economic development. During the past decade corporations doing development in Detroit by our estimates have been awarded nearly \$1.5 billion dollars in tax abatements (mostly concentrated in the downtown business district). And yet, Detroit remains one of the nation's most impoverished cities. It is obvious that majority Black Detroit is not benefitting from these public investments.*

## COVID PANDEMIC AND ESSENTIAL BUS RIDERS

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, earlier this year, essential bus riders woke up to a late morning announcement that the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) bus service had been suspended by the Mayor due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency declaration and initial confirmed cases in Michigan. The abrupt shut down of our bus service left thousands of bus riders stranded across the city, having to make costly alternative choices, or forced to walk, call relatives, miss work, appointments and other essential purposes for riding the bus.

The Transit Justice Team acted swiftly to draft a letter to the mayor demanding the restoration of DDOT bus service with the following COVID safety precautions put in place:

- Sanitation plan for all buses
- Safe boarding practices including reserved space in the front of the bus for disabled bus riders – while all other passengers board and exit the rear entry
- Face mask provided free-of-charge to bus riders who did not have one.
- Suspension of all fares

Essential bus riders from across the city led the organizing effort including calls to the mayor and city council, with one message – ensure

## AMAZON DEVELOPMENT DEAL THREATENS RELOCATION OF STATE FAIRGROUNDS TRANSIT HUB

The City of Detroit and the Hillwood/Sterling Development Group created an agreement to sell 142 acres of city-owned land at the former Michigan State Fairgrounds, including the State Fairgrounds Transit Center located along Woodward Avenue between State Fair and 8-Mile Road. This development will force the relocation of the existing State Fairgrounds Transit Center to an area somewhere in the vicinity of the current Gateway Plaza yet-to-be defined and agreed upon by the City of Detroit and the developers.



COVID safety precautions and preserve DDOT bus system as an essential service for Detroiters. This was such a critical and early WIN for essential bus riders in the face of the COVID pandemic. Once service was restored, during the Governor's "Stay Home Stay Safe" declaration, some majority Black essential bus riders report while traveling or waiting to board the bus, having been stopped and questioned by the police about reasons for travel. Questions also included whether the rider's travel was "essential" and some report being asked to produce documents to provide proof that the travel was "legitimate". Riders called the stops and interrogations as unconstitutional and declared their civil rights were being violated. If these reports can be validated, it is another example of the added risk essential bus riders face in majority Black Detroit.

The development project is a proposed sale of public land to private developers, with the intention of establishing and Amazon Distribution Warehouse Center on the site. The warehouse is intended to employ 1200 workers.

What is most concerning is that the eight years of work led by the State Fairground Community Coalition creating plans for a sustainable economic development project for the fairground site were overlooked. Also, the voices of bus riders, community members living near the development site, disabled individuals, and senior citizens who depend on these six (6) bus routes had no awareness of the proposed change in service location and no input in the planning decision regarding the location and design

## CITY OF DETROIT CHARTER REVISIONS TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT PUBLIC TRANSIT

Detroit People's Platform Transit Justice Team organized and held a series of discussions with bus riders and local community organizations to gather information for recommendations to improve Detroit's public transit system (DDOT). This community input is designed to inform the recommendations for presentation to the Detroit City Charter Revision Commission. In March 2020, the transit justice team presented the initial set of recommendations to the Commission.

These proposed amendments to the City Charter would enshrine a Passenger's Bill of Rights, a Low-Income Fare Program and a DDOT Advisory Council in the new city charter. The DDOT Advisory Council would have the following responsibilities:

- DDOT budget oversight
- Be a representative body that is reflective of DDOT ridership in Detroit
- Make policy recommendations that address customer relations bus service affordability and reliability.



of the proposed new "North Transit Center" In addition to the privatization of this public land, bus riders will be subjected to increased surveillance and policing with the addition of Amazon's private security force. As of the writing of this article, no formal environmental impact study has been submitted for public review and concerns about the potential health impacts of exposure to increased vehicular and truck traffic have gone undocumented. The transit justice team has submitted a letter to DDOT Director Oglesby raising concerns about the proposed development and implications for Detroit essential bus riders.



Point a phone camera here to

Read the Letter: [bit.ly/DDOTLetter](http://bit.ly/DDOTLetter)

**Be transparent.** Be forthcoming and timely with information and honest about your plans and intentions. Engage community early, not after all decisions are made.

**Engage authentically in the process.** Negotiating Community Benefits Agreement (CBAs) is not a check box activity. The Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) process is an opportunity for building racial equity.

**Take the time needed to do it right.** Racial equity cannot be rushed. There is nothing in the Detroit's Community Benefits ordinance that prevents a corporation from spending more time in the negotiating process than designated.

**Act in good faith.** Acting in good faith requires a commitment to good will and the exercise of best efforts, an admonishment against forms of opportunistic and exploitive behavior and clear standards of accountability towards the community.

**Commitments to Racial Equity as a Process.** Respect the community. The community has deep expertise that others lack, particularly about the impact of development on the neighborhood and the needs of the people.

**Commitment to Racial Equity as Substantive Outcomes**  
Commit to a fair rate of community return on the public investment. Outcomes of Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) should reflect the principle of reciprocity. Community Benefits should meaningfully correspond to the size of the public subsidy. Commit holistically to enhancing the quality of life in the Detroit neighborhoods along a number of dimensions – environment, housing, education, employment, recreation and youth and senior services.

**Commit to do no harm.**  
Commit to accepting the Community Benefits Agreement as binding and agree to forfeit the value of the public subsidies if the conditions of the Agreement are not met. Racial equity is achieved when race no longer determines one's socioeconomic conditions. Corporations should commit to using Community Benefits Agreements to support quality developments in the neighborhoods they are subsidized to invest in so that these neighborhoods will look like the neighborhood that their executives go home to at the end of the day

# MAJORITY BLACK

## WHOSE AIR? OUR AIR!



Point a phone camera here to  
**COMPLAIN**  
Web: [bit.ly/AirComplaint](http://bit.ly/AirComplaint)  
Call: 313.456.4700

Along with FCA's expansion there has been an increase in industrial development - **REINDUSTRIALIZATION** across the city. This increase has prompted concerns about the cumulative health impact of toxic emissions and waste storage and disposal on Detroiters.

HEY FCA!  
MAKE OUR  
HOMES SAFE  
TO LIVE IN!

**Fiat Chrysler (FCA) Update:** FCA still refuses to meet with the residents directly impacted by their expansion. Fiat Chrysler has applied for yet another air quality permit to refurbish an old paint line for their expansion.

**INCREASED POLLUTION** - FCA claim they are doing more than enough but they could reduce facility emissions more with improved air pollution control technology. **EXISTING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS** - Residents around FCA have high asthma rates and respiratory illness. Many of the pollutants released may make them more vulnerable to COVID-19. **EXTREME PUBLIC FUNDING** - Nearly 50% of the project is subsidized with public tax abatements.

Potential for FCA to Emit  
VOCs & other pollutants  
**1000s of TONS**  
form OZONE & contribute to ASTHMA  
of pollutants every year

Before COVID-19  
**7.3% of Deaths**  
in Wayne County  
From AIR Pollution

Public Investment \$  
**\$420 Million**  
on a  
**\$900 Million**  
Private Project

**ORGANIZEFOR**

To: **Michael Manley, CEO, Fiat-Chrysler Automobiles**

**Tell Chrysler that Detroit residents need environmental health protections now!**

The Justice for Beniteau - Clean Air For All Campaign has received national support from Color of Change - [bit.ly/stopfcnow](http://bit.ly/stopfcnow)



## WHAT IS PROPOSAL N?

**If I want blight addressed, isn't this a good plan?**

The Mayor is making claims that the fund will be used to fix about 8,000 vacant homes and demolish another 8,000 that can't be saved. The Mayor says Detroit based companies and companies that employ Detroiters will get "preference" in allocating the contracts for the demolition work. But there's no legal provision to enforce these promises—they're just "goals."

In the previous demolition project when the city selected firms to contract for \$148 million worth of federally funded demolition, African-American companies received only 16% of the contracts.

[detroitnews.com/story/opinion/2020/07/20/Bankole-duggan-doesnt-have-detroit-trust-second-bond-proposal/5457958002/](http://detroitnews.com/story/opinion/2020/07/20/Bankole-duggan-doesnt-have-detroit-trust-second-bond-proposal/5457958002/)

This whole idea sounds familiar. Earlier this year, Mayor Duggan's administration tried to get these bond projects approved just by getting City Council to approve them. Council balked after about 500 Detroiters came to the public meeting to object to that proposal.

The argument for this bond says it will keep property taxes at current levels—yet Detroit property owners may in fact be due for a property tax decrease. In addition, investigative reporting has shown that in the recent past, Detroit property owners were overtaxed by at least \$600 million.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

"We've long known that pollution takes its greatest toll on the health of Black communities, who are often left with few resources or recourse. That has never felt clearer than in the middle of a global pandemic, as politicians, corporations, and the healthcare system

alike continue to make decisions that mean that Black people are contracting and dying of COVID-19 at higher rates than almost every other group in the country. Chrysler's leadership, which has managed to find a way to offset increased emissions in its suburban plant, but has failed to provide a clear plan for how it will handle the increase in emissions in a neighborhood that is majority Black, is no exception." - Color of Change Petition - **Sign: [bit.ly/stopfcnow](http://bit.ly/stopfcnow)**

JEFFERSON  
CHALMERS  
COMMUNITY  
ADVOCATES

## NEWS

[facebook.com/JeffersonChalmersCA](https://facebook.com/JeffersonChalmersCA)

## DEVELOPMENT IN JEFFERSON CHALMERS BRINGS UP QUESTIONS

Development in Jefferson Chalmers has been getting a great deal of media coverage. **Jefferson East Inc.** and **East Jefferson Development Co.** have released their master plan and it leaves many residents concerned. The use of a nearly all white design team to create the plan has been raised by residents and inadequately addressed by JEI leadership. Jefferson Chalmers Community Advocates have been attempting to get answers to these important questions. **JCCA** are organizing with their neighbors around these and other concerns.

## Dear JEI & EJDevCo,

1. If JEI & EJDevCo can rebuild the Lenox Center why not rebuild Maheras?
2. Residents questioned who will we communicate with or who is responsible for rebuilding the Lenox Center?
3. Have the Lenox Center and Maheras been surveyed for best location to avoid flooding risk?
4. From your perspective define community engagement?
5. How can Jefferson Chalmers residents be assured that survey responses came from Jefferson Chalmers residents and businesses?
6. What is the residential population according to your records of Jefferson Chalmers Community? Based on your population data what would you project the capacity of the center to be?
7. Why is the Mayor's chief of staff a member of the board of directors for JEI? Isn't this a conflict of interest?
8. What is JEI & EJDevco's specific roll in the development of Lenox Center & AB Ford Park?
9. Who will be responsible for the Lenox Center if project has multiple partners?