On August 3rd 2021, the proposed revisions to the City Charter (Proposal P) were defeated in a turnout of only 14.29% registered voters. Reports from those canvassing in the final days leading up to the election reported that many voters were casting their vote in response to the “Vote No on Proposal P” campaign. Fueled by corporate backed and dark money resources, the opposition to Proposal P drove messages of fear delivered by so-called trusted messengers. The oppositional campaign labeled Proposal P as a “problem” and its potential passage as a threat to Detroit’s fiscal stability with individual harm to elderly pensioners. The return of emergency management and bankruptcy recalled the narrative and stigma of failed Black leadership from which many Detroiters have sought to distance themselves.

Yet, few voters were able to articulate what was actually being put forth by Proposal P and the proposed Charter revisions. Dubbed the People’s Charter, one of the primary goals of the City Charter revisions was to return city government to its’ original mission to exist as a service organization with the primary goal of meeting the needs of its residents. The proposed revisions were created and driven by a two (2) year grassroots and democratic movement intended to shift Detroit towards a more fair and racially just city. The vision is to rebuild the power of residents and embed progressive policies into our city’s charter.

The Promise of Proposal P
Proposal P would have included policies that support residents left behind by bad decisions made during Detroit’s so called turn-around and economic recovery. The community under the leadership of the Charter Revision Commission put forth the following policies to be included in the revised Charter:

- A water affordability plan
- A city Internet (broadband network)
- A Fair fare for bus riders
- Provisions for truly affordable housing
- A stronger Community Benefit Agreement Ordinance
- A more accountable and transparent Board of Police Commissioners
- An Environmental Justice Office and Commission
- An Office of Disability Affairs
- Support for people over assessed on their property taxes
- Protection of immigrant rights
- Protection of Detroiters civil rights and privacy
- Protection of labor rights and responsible contracting

What is apparent is the extent to which the proposed revisions would address many of the racial inequities Detroiters face on a daily basis. These existing and long standing inequalities are fueled by misplaced priorities and public investments that harm our quality of life and contribute to poor conditions in our neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS ORDINANCE UPDATE
On Sept. 7th 2021, Detroit City Council voted on and passed amendments to the Community Benefits Ordinance. The amendments fall short of community demands for stronger and legally binding Community Benefit Agreements on large development projects that use public funding and resources.

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Cries from the opposition about the financial cost of proposed revisions were proven to be exaggerated under close and more objective examination. These claims of fiscal calamity ring hollow when judged alongside the millions of dollars of corporate taxes diverted annually by the city’s general treasury because of the massive tax abatements awarded by the city. Further, the narrative exposes how Black Detroiters suffer the consequences of the “cost” incurred by Detroiters who lack some of the most basic protections and amenities. Protections and amenities that are common in many cities across the nation.

Elections do have consequences as the political class often reminds us. The reality however, is that the consequences are not shared equally, especially the negative ones. Majority Black Detroit suffered a huge lost in the wake of the devastating pandemic, yet never before have Black Detroiters been so ignored.

The Housing Justice Team organizes around centered and sustainable solutions that protect those most vulnerable to housing insecurity and displacement in majority Black Detroit. Centering race, advocating for increased funding for public policies like the Housing Trust Fund, and revising housing policies that expand protections for homeowner and tenant owner protections are the focus of our renters movement organizing. We have found that most people agree that everyone deserves to live in a safe, accessible, and affordable home.

• Transparent and accessible budgeting process outlined above will strengthen account for possible changes in the upcoming years. The rushed spending plan failed to account for possible changes in political leadership with the upcoming November 2nd general election in addition to community priorities that may emerge in the next few years.

The new budget planning cycle for fiscal year 2022-2023 (which will go into effect July 1, 2022) is now underway. Knowing how and when to engage during the budget planning process is an important step in getting community voices heard and closing the gap between what the community wants vs what the government gets! The first major event in the budget planning cycle is the Revenue Estimating Conference in September.

In October, residents should be on the lookout for the Community Budget Priorities Survey. With this community outcomes survey, the City, residents will be able to identify services and programs they want funded with our public tax dollars. The survey allows residents to put their demands on paper and into the public record.

From December 2021 to February 2022, the Budget Director and City's department heads, and the Mayor elected in the upcoming November election, will work together to finalize the budget. During this time, residents should be in contact with these budget makers to make sure the final budget reflects with community needs and priorities. The mayor will publicly present the details of that budget in March 2022. This public event presents another opportunity to hold the administration accountable for budget decisions that do not serve the needs of the community.

Finally step in the budgeting process includes the presentation of the Mayor’s budget in March to city council for approval review and approval. Over the course of about three weeks, council will hear from each City Department, ask questions, and propose budget revisions. This process, City Council has the power to amend the Mayor’s budget. Thus, if the mayor’s budget does not reflect the interests of the community, residents should direct their City Council member to make changes to the budget so that it does.

By June 2022, the city will have an approved budget for the next fiscal year. Staying engaged in the budgeting process online will strengthen the possibility of producing a budget that works for the people. A Detroit People’s Budget.
At Detroit People’s Platform we believe that Climate Change is real and that organizing led by impacted, frontline communities and public policy that meets their needs and demands are vital to Detroit’s survival as the nation’s largest majority Black City. The recent flooding, electrical failures and air quality alerts in Detroit are all connected to changes in our environment. The failure of leadership to take action and protect us from these dangers has made many of us more vulnerable.

Rather than invest in neighborhood and infrastructure improvements, many of our leaders and elected officials continue to support policies that divert revenue and resources that could address these threats. More often than not private developers are the beneficiaries of these investment priorities.

Read: truthout.org/articles/louisiana-activists-mobilize-to-prevent-shock-doctrine-policies-in-wake-of-ida/
Read: cooperationjackson.org

In the case of FCA/Stellantis on the East Side, over $400 million in tax abatements and capture is being awarded to a multi-billion dollar global corporation. They are using our own resources and tax dollars to increase air pollution, further contribute the public health crisis and climate change. Rather than address climate-related threats to our infrastructure and quality of life, decision makers are making it worse.

A recent article from Truthout.org quotes Kali Akuno from Cooperation Jackson in Mississippi: “The same political will that was exhibited in March 2020 when the governments of the world shut the global economy down because they were responding to a global pandemic, demonstrated that the political will to act with expediency can manifest in global change immediately,” Akuno said, emphasizing that this kind of dramatic action is necessary to avert the most catastrophic impacts of global warming.”

Detroit People’s Platform have been taking a deeper dive into data and how it is used to inform redevelopment in Detroit. Please continue to visit detroitpeoplesplatform.org as we expand our data sets and analysis.

Q: How do these areas experience Water Shutoffs, Foreclosures and Evictions differently?

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!
In the last 8 years Detroiter have experienced the impact of policy that favors developers and “turn around” strategies. These strategies have failed many neighborhoods. These DATA MAPS confirm that many Detroiter have not benefited from the city’s so-called economic comeback and revitalization.