

Make a plan
to **VOTE**
November 2nd

PEOPLE POWER PROGRESS!

DETROIT
People's



Vol. 20 - September 2021

PLATFORM NEWS

PROPOSAL P: THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY



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.

Continued on pg 2.

Detroiters have a right to a city government that puts the needs and priorities of it's residents first. We demand a return to a deeper form of democracy in Detroit, a democracy where the people hold political power and elected representatives sit in service to the common good.

SAVE THE DATE!

Pro-Democracy

Rally

for Majority Black
Detroit

Friday, October 1st

5:30 - 7:00 pm

7700 Second Ave @ Pallister

EMERGING RENTERS MOVEMENT IN DETROIT

Detroit People's Platform Renters' Rights & Housing Justice

Workshops are grounded in the framework of organizing for justice and people power in order to improve our collective wellbeing. For example, the Renters' Rights Workshop is facilitated by a community leader who is also a renter. The material shared in the workshop includes a historical understanding of the housing crisis in Detroit, tools for organizing and understanding the collective power of renters and mapping a plan for change.

Past organizing successes for renters in Detroit include winning longer lease terms to stop displacement of families in a local housing complex turned market rate; working with national allies to win congressional support for extended eviction moratorium; and renters drafting revisions to expand housing affordability in the revised Detroit City Charter.

Continued on pg 2.

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.

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.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Continued from cover.

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 from the city's general treasury because of the massive tax abatements awarded by the city. Further, the narrative exposes how the opposition discounts 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 loss in the wake of the defeat of Proposal P. How we as a community pivot from this setback will define the future for us and generations that follow.

RENTERS MOVEMENT



Join the Detroit Renters Movement!
Contact the Housing Justice Team
@DetroitPeoples on social media.

Continued from cover.

The portrayal of housing security for Black Detroiters is inaccurate with ever increasing rents and utility cost. We face an even harder task of locating quality housing for families. **We know that the root cause for the growing housing crisis in Detroit is at the systemic level.** Housing has become a feeding ground for real estate speculators.

Q: If foreclosures and evictions are the fault of an individual homeowner or renter, why do we see the devastation all across the Detroit and other urban areas where significant numbers of working and low-income individuals and families live?

Housing shortages, as a result of foreclosures and evictions, increasingly are being accompanied by climate events like flooding, excessive heat, and power outages. Promoting homes that are safe and healthy enough for our families to live in must be a priority as well.

The Housing Justice Team organizes around justice 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 renter and low income home 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.

MASS DISPLACEMENT IS INTENTIONAL AND DRIVEN BY PUBLIC POLICIES.

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TRANSIT: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS & PRIORITIES

The Detroit People's Platform – Transit Justice Team recognizes the American Rescue Plan Act as a crucial opportunity to address on-going disparities that essential bus riders in the City of Detroit continue to experience.

Despite the emergency investments from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and the Corona Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), both of which maintained safe fare-free service from the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 until March 2021, essential bus riders still endure disparities with our system.

Families and individuals in majority Black neighborhoods along underserved routes due to long wait times still do not have reliable, on-time access to healthcare, work, education, grocery stores, public and social services, and personal appointments. Inadequate and infrequent evening and weekend bus service, and "no-show" buses that do not adhere to scheduling make it nearly impossible to get anywhere on time.

The Transit Justice Team advocates for equitable funding for operational and capital expenses - increased investment in neighborhood bus routes, investments in bus stop seating and shelters, and a low-income fare policy that will ensure transit is affordable for families and individuals that have an income up to 200% of the federal poverty income level.

The disparities in bus service existed long before the coronavirus pandemic and was rooted in systemic racism and structural inequities in funding that as resulted in unreliable service to left-behind neighborhoods with negative impacts on essential riders' ability to travel across the city. For many years, our demands for increased and equitable public transit funding went ignored or disregarded due to austere budgeting and not prioritizing public transit.

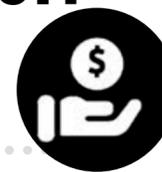
The Transit Justice Team's recommendations are aligned with the following **Detroit People's Platform-American Rescue Plan Guiding Principles:**



- Demonstrate commitment to racial equity and inclusion in prioritizing needs and investments.
- Prioritize investment in neighborhoods left-behind by revitalization strategies and that also experienced higher rates of COVID-19.
- Commitment to invest in the commons: recreation centers, parks, libraries and broadband internet access to improve the quality of life for families at or below \$30,894.
- Transparent and accessible budgeting data that is routinely shared with Detroiters.
- Monitoring and evaluation of ARP expenditures and allocations with bi-annual reporting.
- Organize and plan to engage with public officials about the American Rescue Plan.

Read DPP's- American Rescue Plan Funding Principles: detroitpeoplesplatform.org/economic-justice/arp-funding-principles/

A NEW YEAR: THE MAKING OF A DETROIT PEOPLE'S BUDGET



The recent City budgeting process highlighted the widening gap between community voice and the policy decisions of our elected officials. Time and again, Detroiters have asked for basic, fundamental investments in human infrastructure like affordable housing, transportation, libraries, and parks. These same demands were made by residents during the city budgeting process last year. Unfortunately, the City failed in that regard and instead rolled out a budget that did not prioritize the voice and needs of Detroiters.

Moreover, during this recent budget cycle, Detroit approved a plan to spend \$826 million in federal stimulus from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). With nearly a billion dollars, Detroit could have made huge investments in community priorities but, again, failed to do so. No money was set aside to concretely establish more affordable housing units in Detroit and relatively

little money was put toward home repair and park improvement. The process was unnecessarily rushed which and now the entire \$826 million has been budgeted for the next four 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 community gets! The first major event in the budget planning cycle is the Revenue Estimating Conference in September.

In this public meeting, the city will lay-out how much revenue it expects to bring in for the year. These projections will set the bar for how much money can be spent and distributed to each department. It is also an opportunity for residents to speak with key city budget makers like the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Budget Director, and Deputy Chief Financial Officer.

In October, residents should be on the lookout for the Community Budget Priorities Survey. With this community outreach initiative administered by 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, CFO, City 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. With 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 outlined above will strengthen the possibility of producing a budget that works for the people: A Detroit People's Budget.

Recommended Priorities for ARP Transit Funding

- We recommend \$10 million be invested into the Low-Income Fare Program that will reduce fares by 75% for individuals and families up to the 200% federal poverty level. This will expand the qualifications for reduced fares to families and individuals experiencing homelessness, no to low-income households, returning citizens, and veterans.
- (DDOT) recommendations outlined in their Low-Income Fare Analysis
- Increased investments in neighborhood routes that connect with main-corridor bus routes "Connect-10" and 24-hour bus lines.
- Increase free public restroom access beyond downtown Detroit
- Improved access to sanitation post COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the health of bus riders
- Improvements in Customer Service and Communication with Riders
- Funding for 24/7 access to all transit centers
- Expanded call-center hours for evening and weekend hours
- Enhanced Public Transportation Infrastructure and Safer Streets
- Traffic Signal Priority for buses for rapid transit
- Bus-only/transit street lanes - Larned St. Pilot
- DDOT and SMART Routes need priority to get through and out of downtown Detroit
- Improved connections between east and westbound bus routes
- Increased funding for DDOT driver retention and pay incentives and trainings.
- **No ARP funds allocated to the Qline**
- Inventory and improvement of existing bus stops and shelters to make them accessible and compliant with the American Disabilities Act.
- Public Restrooms at Transfer Stops
- Bathroom network developed with wayfinding signs to identify nearby bus stops
- Increase free public restroom access beyond downtown Detroit
- Improved access to sanitation post COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the health of bus riders
- Improvements in Customer Service and Communication with Riders
- Funding for 24/7 access to all transit centers
- Expanded call-center hours for evening and weekend hours
- Enhanced Public Transportation Infrastructure and Safer Streets
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CLIMATE CHANGE & DETROIT

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."

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM
STELLANTIS
FCA FIAT CHRYSLER Jeep
IN THE NATION'S LARGEST MAJORITY BLACK CITY

Beniteau

SMELL THAT? TELL US!
Along with the FCA/Stellantis 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, waste storage and disposal on Detroiters. **If you smell something, say something and complain.**

Point a phone camera here to
COMPLAIN
Web: bit.ly/AirComplaint
Call: 313.456.4700

MAPS + DATA

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.



WATER SHUTOFFS

- Water Shutoffs are a way to grab land and displace residents.
- Privatization of water means lack of accountability and transparency.
- Water is a human right
- Displacement of people for multiple ends, industrial or redevelopment.

FORECLOSURES

- Relationship between Strategic Neighborhoods and Foreclosures.
- Process of who is receiving help and who is not. These areas are the most economically vulnerable.
- Loss of Black wealth, transition from Black home ownership to renting.

EVICTIONS

- Evictions are displacement and a tool of gentrification;
- There are evictions throughout the city, but the ones in midtown and downtown are done as part of economic development.
- The evictions that we see in neighborhoods are an outcome of social and economic divestment.
- Detroit has some of the highest per capita eviction rates in the nation.
- Increased speculator investment in rental properties.



Strategic Neighborhoods

- These are areas of reinvestment as defined by the city administration.

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

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!

In the last 8 years Detroiters 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 Detroiters have not benefited from the city's so-called economic comeback and revitalization.

