

DETROIT People's PLATFORM



detroitpeoplesplatform.org



NEWS
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PeoplesPlatform

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LANSING WATCH!

The end of the year session, between the November election and the holiday break, or lame duck session, is a period where legislators attempt to push through bills quickly.



In Lansing: Dan Gilbert making public comment in support of a bill that will allow employers to deduct and keep employees payroll taxes

Last year during lame duck, the so-called "Transformational" Brownfields Plan bills died in committee.

"This legislation would allow a business that creates jobs to keep the taxes it withholds from employees' paychecks. The taxes employees pay to fund government services like roads, schools, public safety and social services would be diverted directly into their employer's pocket."

Detroit Free Press
Nov. 30, 2016
tinyurl.com/z6dpsve

Platform members and supporters shared these bills with friends, family and community across Michigan and made calls to Lansing. We will continue to watch Lansing this year and anticipate that these or similar bills will be reintroduced. Please stay in touch with Detroit People's Platform for continued updates. **The Detroit Peoples Platform App** is available in the app store and google play.

Proposal A and Proposal B from last November's ballot.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS MOVEMENT UPDATE

Last November Detroiters voted for Proposal B and, while not legally binding like Proposal A would have been, Detroit has become the first city in the nation with a city-wide Community Benefit Ordinance.

Proposal A would have created a mandatory process, triggered for any proposed development above \$15 Million dollars, between developers and community members ending in a legally enforceable agreement between the parties. Proposal B is a community benefits ordinance in name only. Proposal B, triggered at proposed developments above \$75 Million dollars, contained no required outcome of a legally binding agreement or true engagement.

Backed by corporate interest, opponents of Proposal A spent what is believed to be upwards of \$1.5 Million dollars on a campaign based on manufactured economic fears. Those opposed to Proposal A also succeeded in alienating us from some of our traditional allies and trade and labor groups.



Despite this on November 8th, close to 100,000 Detroit Voters came out in support of Proposal A (46% total yes votes), and more than 114,000 Detroit Voters came out in support of Proposal B. Detroit voters clearly stated their desire for some kind of community benefits ordinance.

***Detroiters deserve
ACCOUNTABILITY
INCLUSION &
TRANSPARENCY
around changes in
our infrastructure and
development projects
in our communities. We
will continue to organize
and fight for strong
community benefits.***



HOUSING CRISIS!

Why Detroit needs a Housing Trust Fund!

The Problem

City government is executing a “revitalization” of Detroit that is actually based on mass removal of existing residents and incentivizing new residents and businesses to move in. This revitalization plan is based on selective investment and disinvestment. Specifically, the city has determined that most neighborhoods are no longer “viable” which is to say that these neighborhoods and the people who live there cannot be saved—the city government has said it cannot afford to meet their needs/fulfill its role.

Instead, several areas—mostly along key commercial corridors such as East Jefferson, Livernois & 6 Mile, West Grand Boulevard, Woodward, and Vernor—have been identified as “strategic areas” that will receive the bulk of new investment and improved city services (see “Toward Inclusive Growth,” Detroit Corridor Initiative, 2015). These strategic areas happen to be, on average, wealthier and whiter than those areas of Detroit that Detroit city government has decided to withhold investment in services from. We are, once again, being asked to accept that there will be neighborhoods and residents that will win at the expense of the others, who will lose. We must tell our elected officials, at City Council sessions, in the mayor’s office, and in special committee hearings, as well as at the DEGC and Detroit Future City that this is neither necessary nor acceptable.

Our Commitment

We are asked to believe that there are no alternatives, and that the present prioritization of wealthy developers’ ability to make profit over residents’ ability to remain in Detroit, participate in governance, and receive decent services is not only inevitable but correct. We assert, however, that there are many alternatives, that we have the resources we need to see them succeed, and that we must protect and maintain current Detroiters’ rights to remain, reclaim, and rebuild Detroit in our own image and according to our neighborhoods’ needs. We will continue to organize for a Detroit that remains majority African American; that practices development without displacement; that facilitates community control of land and permanently affordable housing; and that is governed by its people and for the benefit of all of its people, especially those with the greatest need. Detroit is not a merely a geopolitical entity—it is a people, a culture, and a history. It cannot and does not deserve to move forward without those who have labored and planted our lives here.

A Solution - Establish a Housing Trust Fund

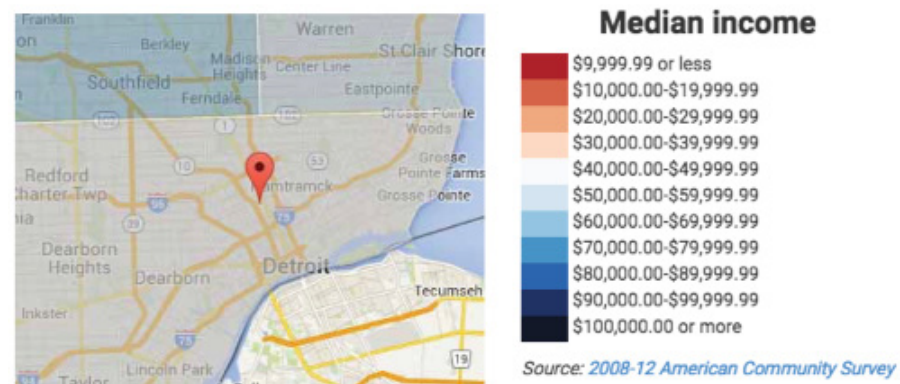
We support and are organizing around the establishment of a fully funded housing trust fund with dedicated revenue for the creation, preservation, or operations of permanently affordable housing for those making 30% AMI or below (\$20,070 or less for a family of four). Why that income bracket? Because one in three (33% of) Detroiters are members of households who make \$20,070 or less each year and because this group has fewer affordable housing options than any other group in Detroit, and is also larger than any other group (representing 40,000 households) in Detroit (See Detroit Inclusionary Housing Plan & Market Study: Preliminary Inclusionary Housing Feasibility Study, August 2016, HR&A).

While we are committed to improving all Detroiters’ economic situation through equitable employment and redistribution of wealth, we know that for the time being, there are 40,000 families who cannot wait for city leaders to create a better economic situation. Families need affordable housing right now. This new housing needs to be permanently affordable because we know that there will always be a need for affordable housing. Equity and long term economic success are undermined by dwindling affordable housing or the ‘flipping’ of affordable units to market-rate.

A housing trust fund can be a mechanism to grow the pie for everyone’s benefit, so the city gets more revenue (perhaps through a real estate transfer tax) and can better address the affordable housing crisis that threatens thousands of women and children. It is the city’s responsibility to find more revenue for Detroit’s most housing-insecure residents and a housing trust fund is a tool that they need.




**One in three (33%)
of Detroiters
are members of
households
that make \$20,070
or less each year.**



Currently Area Median Income is used to determine affordable housing criteria. In this case for Detroiters, “area” is defined as Wayne County. **We will use the location on the map to illustrate the importance of using a more localized median income.**

Caution!

Affordability depends on who’s definition of ‘Affordability’ you are using.





TRANSIT GENTRIFICATION

In the months leading up to the November 8th election day, we've spoken to a few bus riders on the Woodward #53 bus line, and at the Rosa Parks Transit Center to get a general idea of what transit riders thought about the M1-Rail streetcar project and the upcoming RTA vote. Many bus riders associated the streetcar project directly to the RTA ballot proposal. If they didn't know what the RTA was proposing to build in the city, they definitely were aware of a connection between the QLine and the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan. The RTA was slated to take over the QLine in 2027, according to their finalized Regional Master Transit Plan. Further, bus riders along Woodward #53 route complained about long bus waits, constantly moving bus stops, lack of public notice regarding any changes with bus service along Woodward, elderly and individuals with disabilities being passed up, overcrowded buses, and the fact that what many describe incorrectly as a "streetcar" does not cross 8 Mile Road into Oakland County, and will only travel along a 3.3-mile route.

The bus riders we've spoken to view the QLine as a "streetcar to nowhere" or "another People Mover." These comments speak to the increasing transit divide, driven by economic gain for the "few" vs the transit needs of the many. This transit divide is also accompanying the gentrification and displacement occurring in midtown/downtown. You do not need to be a transit expert to see that the QLine does not represent public transit, nor does it benefit the majority of the bus riders living in Detroit. **The QLine project is a prime example of "transit gentrification" and highlights the growing disparity in mobility options in Detroit.**

There is a growing emphasis on public-private partnerships that over-promise and often under deliver in terms of addressing the needs of community and the QLine represents such an effort. According to Crain's Detroit Business, the QLine used \$74.2 million of public funding from local, state, and federal sources. Additionally, \$52.9 million from the US Dept. of Transportation and

Michigan Dept. of Transportation was used for reconstruction of Woodward for the purpose of building the QLine. This is public funding that could have addressed the 30 minute to 1hr wait times that are common on many of the bus routes that travel into Detroit neighborhoods where transit options are limited.

Yet our public funds have been invested in the "modern streetcars" that will travel along the QLine route. The cars will have heated stops with corporate branding; rails that are snow plowed; Wi-Fi internet in the cars, and more bike racks than are typically offered on DDOT buses. **This situation goes well beyond an example of transit gentrification, in 2017, this is transit injustice!** Many who are not part of the new Detroit demographic are likely to disappear from Woodward Ave below the Boulevard. North End residents got a maintenance station for the Q Line in their neighborhood but not a Q Line stop. You cannot board the streetcar in the North End.

We believe the future of the Woodward #53 bus route is in jeopardy for several reasons. With the QLine slated to be in operation in Spring 2017, the Woodward #53 bus will compete for curb space and customers, so it may be diverted to Cass St. or John R., to be rerouted back to Woodward north of Warren or the Boulevard. Even transit decision-makers at the RTA/DDOT are unclear about the future of the Woodward #53, but they believe that the re-routing of the Woodward line is necessary. Any parking along Woodward, curbside and along the QLine track is illegal and car drivers could be ticketed up to \$650 for parking along the route. Increasingly, the future of Woodward is being transformed from Detroit's main thoroughfare to a pedestrian/walkable/bike route that will disrupt public transit for a majority of bus riders in the city. Bus riders living in the North End neighborhood (north of West Grand Boulevard) are either forced to walk past the Boulevard to board the QLine, or will be "encouraged" to ride the re-routed Woodward 53.

The conclusion is that in 2017 public transit in Detroit is likely to be more segregated by race and class. How long will riders have to wait for their route become a priority for improvements? We are cautious to celebrate any expansion or so called transit improvements, if it does not include the majority of Detroiters that use public transit for school, work, recreation, shopping, or medical needs – then we will delay the celebration until ALL Detroiters have access to a fair and just public transit system.



THE QLINE PROJECT IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF TRANSIT GENTRIFICATION AND HIGHLIGHTS THE GROWING DISPARITY IN MOBILITY OPTIONS IN DETROIT.

WHAT IS THE DETROIT PEOPLE'S PLATFORM?

The People's Platform is a broad network of Detroit-based social justice organizations, activists, and residents committed to bringing about just transformation in economics and social dynamics through popular education, celebration, and organizing. We use data, analysis, advocacy, media and organizing to protect and increase participation in the democratic process and to demand that state and local decision makers consider racial equity and economic justice in their planning, funding, and policy making decisions.

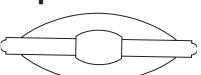
We believe that each and every Detroiters has a voice in deciding the future of the city. **Join us, visit detroitpeoplesplatform.org or call 313.338.9396**

The People's Platform NEWS is published to support the ongoing work of the organizations and residents committed to the **People's Platform.**

Building Movement Detroit
buildingmovementdetroit.org
detroitpeoplesplatform.org



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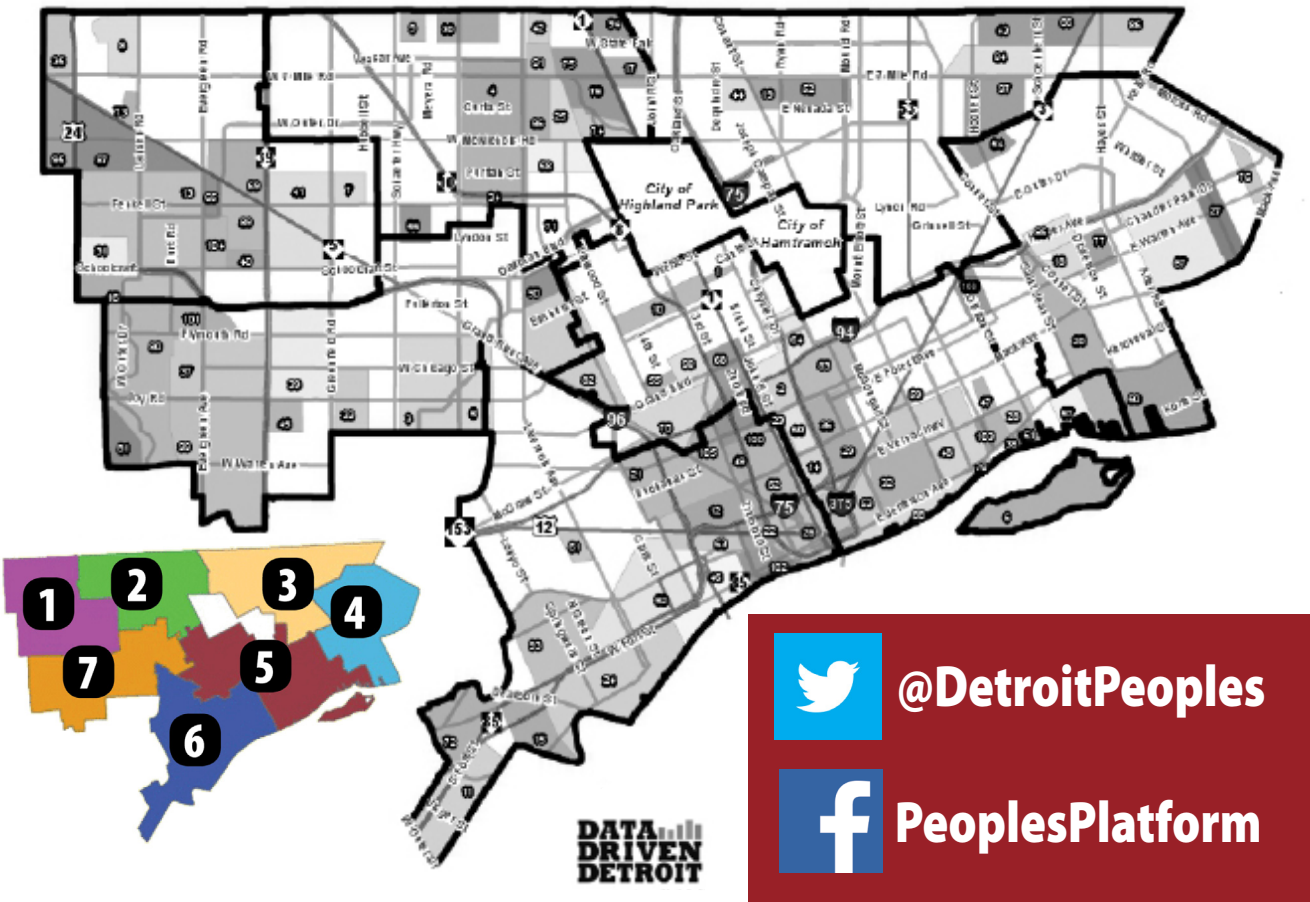
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SAVE THE DATE and
MAKE A PLAN TO

VOTE

PRIMARY ELECTION
Tuesday Aug. 8th

- 1. Know your district
- 2. Attend candidate forums
- 3. Demand accountability from elected officials

2017

Lack of participation in the primary means that a small number of Detroiters, typically already engaged in politics, choose who will run in the general election.

August 8th Primary Election

The primary election narrows the field of candidates before the general election in November. Out of all the candidates running the candidates with the most votes move to the general election. Voter participation in the primary elections are extremely important but often suffer from low voter turn-out. Lack of participation in the primary means that a small number of Detroiters, typically already engaged in politics, chose who will run in the general election. While it can be overwhelming, by learning about candidate before the primaries Detroiters greatly increase our opportunity to elect officials that better represent and are accountable to the people who elected them rather than status quo candidates.

Looking Ahead: Redistricting

Redistricting is the way in which we adjust the districts/district maps that determine who represents us in the U.S. Congress and State Legislature. These maps play a huge role in how we are represented on a state and federal level. When drawn unfairly these maps create a government which is not reflective of the majority of voters.

In the coming weeks Detroit People's Platform will conduct community education forums about the Redistricting Education Project.

REMEMBERING THE REBELLION

The People's Platform will be recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Detroit Rebellion by sharing reflections from Platform Members. It is vital that we lift up this part of our history as Detroit is still living through the events that unfolded in 1967. The resulting economic, political and social conflict between the white suburbs and our majority black city evolved into Emergency Management and Bankruptcy. Join our **Remembering the Rebellion** conversation #Remember67 #DetroitPeoples

REMEMBERING Detroit '67 THE REBELLION

1967
"The police were the riot, the people were rebelling against a long tortured history of racial segregation in our neighborhoods, against Mayor Cavanagh, who we helped elect, because he didn't address housing and police violence; and against de-industrialization as manufacturing plants moved to the suburbs without the transit needed for Detroiters to get to jobs. Those were the undercurrents."

#Remember67

2017
"Now we have massive water shut offs. In addition to the foreclosure crisis and the impact of emergency management and bankruptcy, the undercurrents in 2017 include hostility within the black community over water shut offs and inequity in water rates between the city and suburbs with a 40% rate increase in Detroit over 4 years. These are some of the undercurrents not being addressed today."

#DetroitPeoples

George Gaines
Lifelong Detroit, Former Deputy Director, Detroit Health Department, Founding Member of the Detroit People's Platform Action Council.