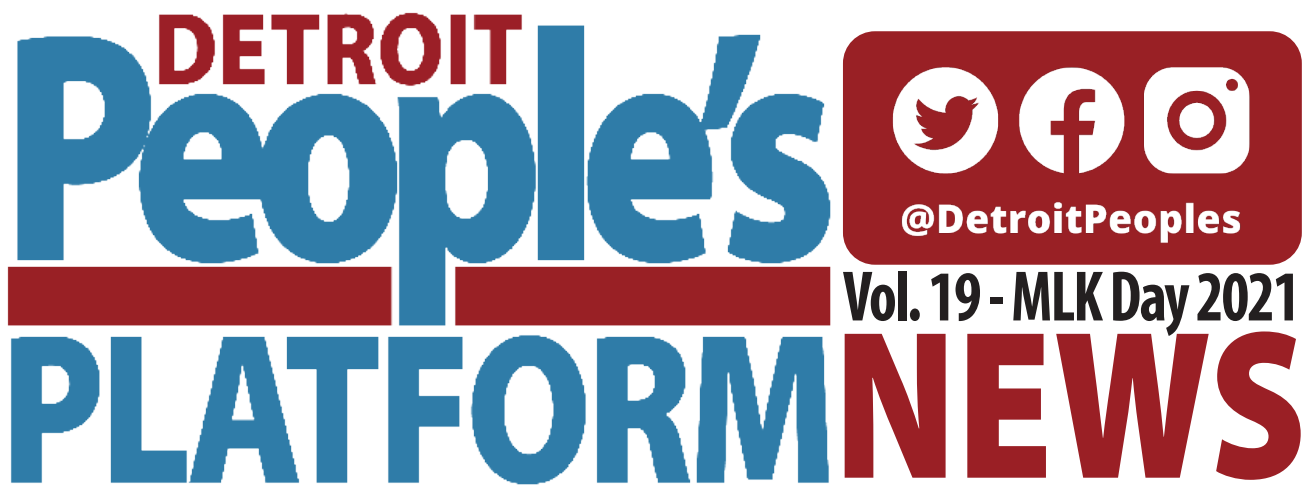
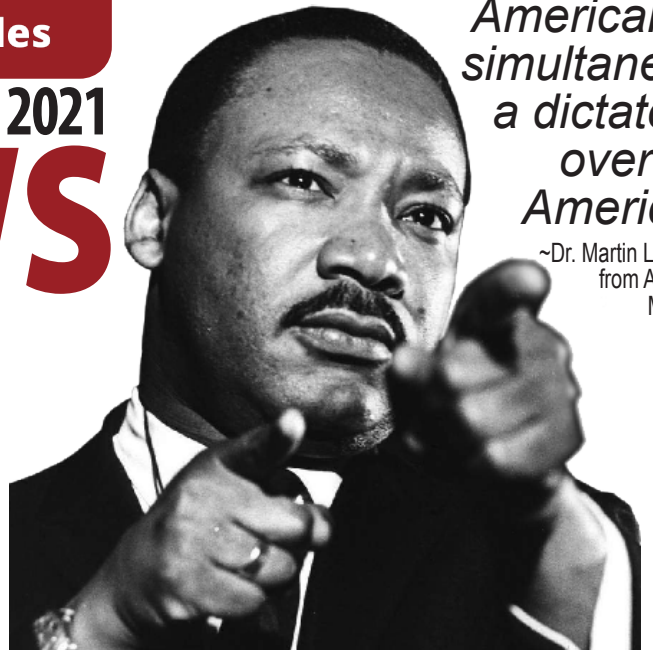


FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY!



"...we must face the hard fact that many Americans would like to have a nation which is a democracy for white Americans but simultaneously a dictatorship over black Americans."

*~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
from America's Chief Moral Dilemma*



DETROITERS, TIME TO FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY FOR OURSELVES!

We now stand in the wake of what is likely to be judged the most consequential election of our times, the November 2020 presidential election. It is an election where majority Black Detroit voters showed up and voted in numbers sufficient enough to deliver Michigan, one of the critical swing states.

Following November 3rd calls went out across the nation congratulating majority Black Detroit and other urban Black voters for delivering on behalf of democracy and saving the nation from full blown white supremacy and authoritarianism rule. And just two weeks ago, the win in Georgia, fueled by the leadership of Black women and a multicultural grassroots coalition, flipped the US Senate paving the way

for what many of us hope will be an opportunity to win more progressive policies that benefit Detroiters and their neighborhoods.

At no time has the power of Black leadership and Black voters been more prominent. Without a doubt Black Americans have played and continue to play a critical role in safeguarding democracy for all.

This year, in August and November, Detroiters will head to the polls to elect the governing leadership of the nation's largest majority Black city. We will also vote on the newly revised Charter, the constitution for Detroit. The urgent question now is will Detroiters show up and fight for democracy for ourselves.

What does FIGHTING for democracy look like for Detroiters in the era of Black Lives Matter?

For those committed to building a racially just and equitable Detroit it means:

- We **CENTER** the needs of majority Black Detroiters
- We **ORGANIZE**
- We make the **COMMITMENT** to hold public officials **ACCOUNTABLE** for their actions and votes during the past four years
- We **BUILD** and **WIELD** **COLLECTIVE POWER** with our **VOTE**
- We **ELECT** leaders that share our **VISION** and **VALUES**

In the coming weeks DPP will publish an accountability score card for voters to use in the August and November 2021 elections to evaluate the performance of our public officials in the following priority areas:

- COVID response
- Affordable Housing
- Economic development and neighborhood improvements
- Access to basic city services
- Public Transit
- Quality jobs
- Budgeting

In addition, to help educate Detroit voters, DPP will publish the available voting record of those running for office so that voters can have a ready reference to analyze.

When we center Race and Racial Equity ALL Detroiters Benefit

DETROIT
People's
PLATFORM

Benefit



@DetroitPeoples

Transit Update facebook.com/groups/transittalks



65 YEARS LATER, ESSENTIAL BUS RIDERS FACE DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLATION OF OUR HARD-FOUGHT CIVIL RIGHTS.

December 5th, 2020 marks the 65th anniversary of the arrest of Rosa Louise Parks, who refused to give up her seat to a white man and move to the back of the bus. Mother Rosa Parks, as one of many courageous Black women who were fined and arrested, sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a movement that would last 381 days. The Black community mobilized in dangerous defiance of the Jim Crow power structure through a variety of tactics including direct action sit-ins and marches; walking and organized car pools for essential bus riders who had traditionally relied on the public bus as their primary means of transportation.

This mass and collective protest was about the right to public access in various institutions and accommodations – including public transportation. Although not named at the time, the movement was rooted in racial justice and racial equity.

This set of coordinated actions eventually resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that includes Title VI – which forbids discrimination based on race, skin color, nationality, and origin, for all public transportation systems in the United States.

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Continued from the Cover

TRANSIT 65 YEARS LATER

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King taught us that power is the ability to get something done and has two forms, “authority”(power over) and “power-with.” Often we define authority as the only form of power, where authority asserts the right to demand certain actions or behaviors within systems or structures. However,” power with” is the collective, mass power that is built by community through a set of actions or behaviors.

In response to the national racial justice uprising in protest of the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Aubrey, Council President Pro Tempore, Mary Sheffield and Council Member and Raquel Castaneda-Lopez convened a table of community organizers, activists, researchers, leaders of various organizations and coalitions, including the Detroit People’s Platform Transit Justice Team to form the Racial Justice Task Force. Again, drawing on the history of movement building and the collective wisdom and lived experience of community members, the task force succeeded in drafting recommended revisions for the 2018 revised City Charter (the constitution for the city) that includes a Detroit Bill of Rights.

The Detroit People’s Platform Transit Justice Team representing the interest of the 87% Black ridership in Detroit, led the advocacy for a Passenger Bill of Rights, Low-Income Bus Fare Program, and a new Transportation Advisory Commission – with input into the mandated 5-year Master Transit Plan and budget oversight of the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Q-line, and the People Mover. Should our revised City Charter pass, it will codify the right to public transportation for all Detroiters including protections for individuals without income to have access to public transit. More importantly, the recommended revision prevents any merger, sale, or privatization of our public transportation system – without consent of Detroiters. This is a momentous win for essential bus riders and all Detroiters!

Developers vs. The Civil Rights Act – Title VI

However, in 2021 Detroit’s essential bus riders continue to face civil rights challenges with the most recent example of the rushed privatization of the State Fairgrounds and the proposed relocation of the State Fairgrounds transit center. The Transit Justice Team and a coalition of over 25 individuals and organizations, such as Warrior’s on Wheels disability group, State Fairgrounds Development Coalition, Equitable Detroit Coalition, concerned community members and essential riders organized and fought for a Title VI public hearing on November



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13th, 2020. After concerns were raised that DDOT bus riders and members of the disability community were denied their due process as defined in the 1964 Civil Rights law regarding public transit protections. Prior to the Transit Justice team and bus rider organizing effort, DDOT had failed to comply with Title VI stipulations and the concerns of bus riders were ignored.

Triggered by the city of Detroit’s proposed sale of the State Fairgrounds to the Hillwood / Sterling Development Group, the Transit Justice team led the call demanding for and WON that DDOT conduct a formal public hearing to receive input from bus riders on the impact of the proposed Amazon development on transit services. In addition, the Transit Justice team also demanded and WON that DDOT publish the Equity Analysis to determine if Black and people of color are more likely to experience disparate impact as a result of the transit center relocation.

At the time of this writing, the developer has begun to break ground for construction. In honor of the work that begun 65 years ago, the Detroit People’s Platform and the Transit Justice Team remain committed to the fight for transit justice in the nation’s largest majority black city.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF MUNICIPAL BUDGETS



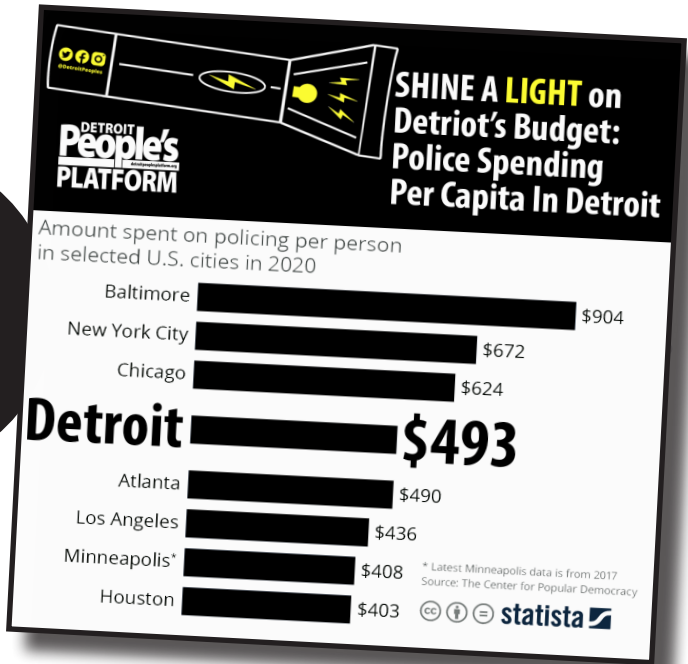
The budget decisions of cities like Detroit have not always looked the way they look today. Most cities—big and small—now have budgets that are weighed down and constrained by massive debt and police expenditures while spending on services like education, recreation, and affordable housing are cut to the bone or eliminated altogether. This was not the case just 50 years ago. From 1940 to 1970, cities, while not perfect, were not drowning in debt and disproportionately high law enforcement costs. There tended to be stronger and adequate investment in social programs and public goods under the rubric of government. For example, during this time, New York City and many other localities provided free college tuition to its residents . Youth and family services were important features in the budget.

However, this type of service-centered municipal management began to disappear in the 1970s, shifting to an entrepreneurial business-centered model. This change occurred in response to the federal government dramatically decreasing funding to cities (and States) at a time when cities were feeling the full brunt of deindustrialization and job loss, economic disinvestment and heighten suburbanization and white flight fueled by racism. The loss of a strong and reliable tax base resulted in tighter budgets with cuts to city services and programs.

By the end of the 1970s, cities were largely Black, poor, and without the social programs that once existed to combat poverty . Hopes of addressing these social issues thru the lens of racial and economic justice are cast aside. Instead, the solution to manage the growing social problems of urban areas was to incarcerate masses of economically disenfranchised Blacks, leading to the ballooning of police spending . Today Detroit’s police department has a \$300 million price tag, one of the most expensive in the country.

This new entrepreneurial model then begins to offer up the city itself as a commodity where public land, infrastructure and services are up for sale to the highest bidder which means private investors. The narrative becomes that private business entities can organize and deliver programs and services better and cheaper than government. Therefore, attracting private investments becomes the life blood for economic survival in a city like Detroit.

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
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In Detroit, the administration and city council argue to Detroiters this strategy is the only way for Detroit to compete and win in the game - to award huge tax breaks and public subsidies to the investor class. Ideally, the revenue generated by these investments include property and corporate and income taxes and are hyped as improving Detroit's bottom line.

The problem is this strategy more often than not backfires on Detroiters since we don't get the full benefit because the investors and corporations rarely pay their fair share therefore leaving huge gaps in the city budget. Taxes are often diverted from the city's general fund for years. For example In 2012, a year before Detroit's bankruptcy, Detroit is a city strapped with \$20 billion in debt in spite of giving away tens of millions in tax breaks to corporations annually. In 2021, and just ahead of the coming budgeting process, the administration and certain city council members are warning Detroiters to expect significant cuts in programs and services in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and revenue shortfalls. However, understanding what informs how budgeting decisions are made,



Detroit People's Platform will continue to challenge this narrative and instead call for a 2021 budget that centers the well being of our neighborhoods and families. Join us to learn how you can become active in fighting for a Budget for the Common Good.

FIAT CHRYSLER UPDATE *Continued from back cover*

The reduction of emissions at the Warren plant made to increase emissions in Detroit and the need for baseline monitoring before production begins were issues Fiat Chrysler failed to address.

Former administration representative, Arthur Jemison, agreed on the record that there is a problem with the housing funding and agreed to meet with the NAC to revisit the issue of the \$15k for home repairs. Beniteau Residents have been organizing around this for nearly two years and we

DETROIT'S HOUSING CRISIS, WHERE'S THE PLAN? *Continued from the Back Cover.*

The perception that the housing crisis is limited to low income residents does not square with the complaints heard from others including middle income earners. In Detroit individuals face a rental market where requirements are stiff. Not only are many rental rates beyond the recommended 30% income threshold, but applicants must give evidence of a pristine credit record, absence of any criminal history and have upfront money in the thousands of dollars for move-in cost. On the flip side, those interested in purchasing a home encounter a different set of barriers with buyers often being forced to "bid up" on the purchase price – a practice reminiscent of conditions just before the housing crash a decade ago.

The city's commitment to developing a response to the housing crisis is insufficient having over relied on real estate speculators and their market philosophy to address the housing gap. This strategy allows the city to award millions in public tax abatements for luxury housing units with a minor requirement for affordable units based on income levels that lock out the average Detroiters. Promoted as mix used development, these models are pitched as creating desirable high density and walkable communities alongside vibrant commercial corridors.

However, a real criticism of this housing development model is that it is driven by real estate developers with a focus on profit. As a result, it does not offer realistic housing options that make sense for most seniors, households with young children, and those with disabilities. Right now ten (10) Detroit neighborhoods have been selected for this development model that are outside of downtown/midtown and are earmarked for increased public and private investment. These neighborhoods are also attracting a younger, wealthier and whiter population.

want to thank them for their leadership and recognize their endurance in this struggle through a global pandemic.

We need the Neighborhood Advisory Council to step up and demand the administration follow through with additional home repair funding for Beniteau and impact area residents. While these Annual CBA Updates are one of the few ways for residents to question developers, like Chrysler, they seem reduced to a check on the box,

Because affordable, accessible and quality housing is critical to the health and well being of all Detroiters, we deserve a transparent housing plan that centers the needs of residents and is driven by capable public officials who are accountable to community, not for-profit developers.

In the face of COVID recovery, in the coming months the Detroit People's Platform will call for our public officials to adopt the following housing policy reforms to create better housing outcomes:

- **Increased funding for the Housing Trust Fund**
- **Adoption by ordinance of a Detroit specific affordability formula**
- **A Housing plan that includes a carve out for permanently affordable housing units across household types**
- **Better transparency with annual reporting requirements from Housing and Revitalization Department**

Please follow us for ongoing updates about how to organize with us to WIN homes for all!



a face to face moment with impacted residents to withstand rather than truly engage in. We will continue to stand with residents who challenge Fiat Chrysler, the administration and city council for a new FCA CBA.



FIGHT FOR DETROIT!



WHERE'S THE PLAN?

Detroit, the nation's largest majority Black city at one time enjoyed the designation as having one of the highest rates of Black home ownership in the nation. Yet, today Detroit is a majority renter's city and finds itself in a housing crisis. Detroiters have experienced high rates of foreclosure and the majority of Detroit renters are extremely rent burdened, paying more than 50% of their monthly income for housing. In addition, the COVID -19 pandemic has only exacerbated the housing crisis given the disproportionate impact of COVID on Black Detroit and the deepening unemployment crisis.

With the expiration of the statewide COVID eviction moratorium, according to the University of Michigan Poverty Solutions, roughly 4500 eviction cases have been filed in 36th District court between mid-August and November 2020. These numbers, however, fail to identify the additional households that self-evict because they lack legal and financial resources to challenge the eviction in housing court. Households with children face extraordinary housing challenges as the naturally occurring affordable housing sector continues to shrink.

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THANK YOU FOR JOINING THE HOUSING IS THE CURE! TELETHON



The DPP Housing Telethon Photos: Pamela Dawson sharing Councilmember Tate's Support, Our amazing volunteers made their call goal while observing social distancing guidelines. DPP organizers Kea Mathis and Renard Monczunski on a Facebook livestream from NW Detroit.

On January 13th, Detroit People's Platform joined with our national partners Right to the City and organizers in 14 cities to **STOP EVICTIONS** and **SAVE LIVES**. DPP volunteers made calls through the day, were live on FB from Detroit neighborhoods and received support from elected officials.

FIAT CHRYSLER UPDATE



On Monday Dec. 7th, the city of Detroit hosted the Fiat Chrysler (FCA) Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) Annual Update. The meeting was well attended and many of the issues with the project were brought into the discussion. Residents and public officials questioned the jobs numbers, the environmental racism inherent in the project and the issue of home repair funds for the closest neighbors to the project.

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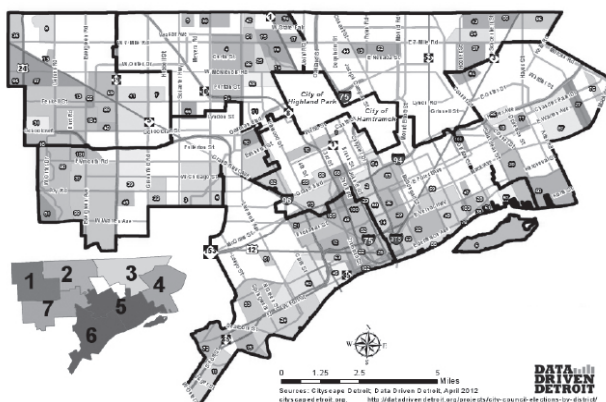
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Our conclusion remains that the 5,000 NEW jobs are still in question. It is a disingenuous cover-up to focus on the promise of future jobs rather than the present injustice that residents living on Beniteau and the impact area are dealing with every day.

Continued on Page 3

FOLLOW US AND GET INVOLVED!



WHOSE AIR?

OUR AIR!

SMELL THAT?

TELL EGLE



Point a phone camera here to
COMPLAIN
Web: 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.