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Climate Resilience Ordinance

The DEA supports passing the Climate Resilience Ordinance, a municipal law that will help the City reduce greenhouse gas emissions incrementally through 2050. This law will help protect residents, especially our low-income communities of color, from impacts of climate change (e.g. extreme weather).

Q: What are your priorities to reduce emissions and lessen the impacts of climate change in Detroit during your term in office?

A: I fully support the Climate Resilience Ordinance as an effective means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. I agree that we can and must reduce the use of gasoline engines and increase the use of public buses, trains, and other forms of shared transit. More importantly we can prohibit idling by diesel trucks and buses, where possible. I've met numerous times with Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, and another area is in new development, where we can challenge architects and developers to retrofit existing buildings and utilize green-design standards in new buildings to incorporate new technologies like geothermal heating and cooling to use less energy for heating and cooling. With my colleagues on City Council, I supported the new solar energy farm in Northwest Detroit that can replace non-renewable fossil fuels like coal and gasoline.

Sustainability & Equity

Sustainable and equitable development requires our City officials to balance public health and environmental needs with economic growth and job creation. When new projects and developments are under consideration, all too often economic interests may outweigh critical environmental concerns, that are likely to decrease the quality of life for residents, especially low-income, people of color, and other vulnerable communities.

Q: As you consider development proposals in your role as an elected official, how would you balance economic interests and environmental concerns?

A: On City Council, I've introduced an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that is chiefly concerned with balancing economic development interests with environmental ones. However, in this boom time our city is currently experiencing, it is important that developers take as many effective measures as possible to reduce negative impacts on communities. These include self-management of stormwater runoff and other waste from development that can harm neighbors. We can also employ responsible measures like eliminating idling of construction trucks in residential areas near new construction, and using wet coating of houses to be demolished as a means of limiting dust and other pollution during the demolition process.

Air

The DEA supports the air quality improvements recommended in the Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments (CA-PHE) Detroit Air Quality Public Health Action Plan:

Q: Share up to three air quality improvements you will work to enact during your term in office. Explain how.

A: (1) We must hold our City's industrial air pollution emitters to the highest possible standards. Companies like Detroit Renewable Energy and Marathon have made some improvements in this regard, but work remains in terms of getting to a point where they are emitting the lowest possible amounts of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and other particulate matter from petcoke and other construction materials. (2) Another area of concern that I will work towards is ensuring that city-operated diesel and heavy vehicles make efforts towards retrofitting and/or replacing older diesel engines, using cleaner fuels, and reducing idling by heavy work vehicles and buses. (3) Most importantly, we need to consistently and forcefully enforce all state and federal air quality regulations. As MDEQ (the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality) has done on numerous occasions with Detroit Renewable Energy and the incinerator, issue tickets and fines to hold companies accountable for polluting the air.

Waste

Recycling brings value back into the waste stream, reduces negative effects of disposal (including toxic emissions, leakages, and lost resources and energy), and creates the potential for new markets. Detroit has an opt-in curbside recycling program limited to single households and residences up to four units. Given your role, share the strategies and policies for waste reduction and reuse you will support in response to the question below.

Q: How will you work to increase recycling options for all residents, including people who live in apartments?

A: I've been a strong proponent of providing free recycling bins to all residents. When the city approved privatizing of waste removal I joined my colleagues in insisting that the contractors educate the public on recycling. I'm also one of the few members who have held a community meeting at Recycle Here! to raise awareness among residents by showing them where it is.

Q: How will you work to increase diversion of waste from the incinerator, for use in industry and commerce?

A: I support all efforts to divert waste from the incinerator, and have met regularly with both the Department of Public Works and Detroit Renewable Energy to explore how we can reduce the tonnage from not just the city, but also our suburban cities that goes to the incinerator.

Land Use and Food Access

The City of Detroit owns 24 square miles of structure-free, vacant land that can be put into private hands for productive use.

Q: What is your top priority for publicly-owned land in Detroit?

A: A top priority of mine is to increase more public housing on some of the public land the city is sitting on. However, I have been very supportive of efforts like the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative and urban farmers like Jerry Hebron and the work being done to raise seafood and other produce by the Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corporation. It's important that we balance the need for locally-sourced, home-grown foods with other needs like housing.

Healthy food and urban agriculture are surely connected in Detroit. Accessing healthy, culturally-appropriate food can be a challenge. Residents depend upon the network of gardens and farms that exist throughout Detroit for sustenance.

Q: Given your role, what would you do to ensure that residents have access to healthy, culturally-appropriate food?

A: I support and will continue to support any efforts to ensure that residents have access to healthy food options.

Water

Detroit is a Great Lakes city. The DEA supports the Detroit Water Agenda, which provides recommendations for ensuring all Detroiters will have access to affordable, clean, safe water to drink and use. It encourages water conservation and endorses effective models of resilient water management, which embrace a basin-wide perspective and integrated planning of urban development, green and gray water infrastructure.

Q: Share up to three Detroit Water Agenda recommendations you will work to enact during your term in office. Explain how.

A: (1) First we must reduce negative impacts like urban runoff and oil and gas leaks in parking lots. (2) Next we need to follow best practices for stormwater runoff and management to allow for better processing of end user supplies. (3) And we need to require sustainable development practices that will insist on developers taking steps to minimize runoff and other pollutants from entering the supply. Despite its many challenges, DWSD (the Detroit Waste and Sewerage Department) has continued to provide some of the highest quality of drinking water in North America.

Green stormwater infrastructure helps manage sewage overflows, reduces basement flooding and builds healthier, more attractive neighborhoods. Residents, businesses, and places of worship can receive stormwater/drainage credits from the City to help build green stormwater infrastructure.

Q: How would you help people build green stormwater infrastructure and access to these credits during your term of office?

A: I've worked closely with DWSD (the Detroit Waste and Sewerage Department) to ensure that residents are educated about rainwater filtration and collections, downspout collection management, and any other measures that will keep their fees low.