



Raquel
Castañeda-
López

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 wholeheartedly support the passage of the Climate Resilience Ordinance and will work with my colleagues to enact this ordinance within the next term. My office is committed to continue working with the members of the Detroit Environmental Agenda to push forward ordinances, development deals, and city initiatives through the budget process to help us reach the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by the year 2050. In addition, my office will work to help create an environmental justice advisory committee.

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: Throughout my first term in office, I have fought for comprehensive community benefits that address more than just job creation, but public health, safety, and quality of life issues. I strongly believe that we must be proactive and address environmental concerns in the planning stages of any development deal, or we will face higher economic development costs and a lower quality of life in the near future.

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) My office has been working to pass legislation that will prevent harmful carbonaceous materials from being stored in the open and reduce fugitive dust in some of the most vulnerable Detroit communities. This ordinance would increase air quality monitoring and strengthen the enforcement of air quality rules. I will continue to work with community partners to advocate for

the passage of this ordinance until enacted. (2) In addition, my office has been working to address the lack of buffering space between residential areas and industry. I hope to introduce legislation that sets standards for buffering space that includes the planting of trees, landscaping, and would require green buffers as part of certain development projects. (3) Lastly, my office has been working to address truck traffic and idling. As part of the community benefits negotiated for the Gordie Howe Bridge, we were able to secure funding to conduct a comprehensive truck traffic study to reduce and remove trucks from neighborhoods.

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: Since the curbside recycling program was launched in the City, my office has worked with Zero Waste Detroit to educate residents about the recycling program. By both door knocking and at all of my community meetings, we work to sign more residents up to recycle. I supported the contract with Green Living Science and will work to reduce or completely remove the fee for residents wishing to enroll in the curb side recycling program.

As it relates to multi-unit residences and commercial entities, my office is committed to ensuring that each new development project include a recycling & sustainability plan. In addition, I am committed to working with the DEA to develop a strategy for phasing in existing businesses and multi-unit residences.

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

A: My office will work with the Office of Sustainability, Detroit Building Authority and the Detroit Landbank Authority to identify additional ways we can increase deconstruction and the recycling of materials. In addition, although the Council does not negotiate contracts, my office will work to ensure that the waste management contracts with Advanced Disposal and Green for Life have strong terms supporting recycling, when and if they are renegotiated.

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: The City should retain ownership of these lands and develop long-term leasing programs which allow and support community groups, urban farmers and neighbors to design and maintain these spaces to meet the respective needs of their unique neighborhoods. My priority for these spaces is to improve residents' quality of life and public health while increasing access to food and access to green and blue landscapes.

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: As a gardener, I wholeheartedly support the re-purposing of a percentage of vacant land to grow produce to help Detroit become a food sovereign city. My office is committed to working with the urban agriculture community and the planning department to help move this vision forward. In the interim, my office is currently working on an ordinance to support the growing food truck industry in the City to help increase access to food, more specifically fresh fruit and vegetables.

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: Sustainable development is a top priority in my office, and I have pushed developers to think about and incorporate green infrastructure into their projects. I am committed to creating a development checklist that is used throughout the City which incorporates green infrastructure and sustainable building practices. The incorporation of green infrastructure and usage of sustainable building practices can help reduce runoff and pollution, and educate consumers.

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: My office has partnered with the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to host community workshops explaining the available credits. My goal is to work with the department to increase the value of these credits and the educational outreach being done to ensure the residents and businesses are informed.