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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: (1) To champion renewable energy generation, focus on solar farms based in commercial and industrial zones. I would like to see a project where a large neighborhood could be powered by a solar farm and create replicas as experience dictates. (2) Although state-level action would be needed, I would like to see annual tail pipe emissions that would end smoking exhausts being allowed on the road, as existed in the 1990s. (3) I would pursue the feasibility of converting our fleets to alternative fuel use. At a minimum, phasing in new vehicles with alternative fuels.

I intend to have an environmental policy expert on staff to help guide policy discussion and development.

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: Serving the citizens of Detroit has to be the foundational principle of our local government. Any development has to be measured by whether it is in the interests of Detroit citizens. Sound proposals must balance community concerns and not be an impediment to the community in the area of the development. If public resources are used to aid any project, community benefits that could include soil remediation and air and water quality improvements must be on the table. The unconditional and unreciprocated grants to developers must end.

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: I believe that a Detroit Department of Environmental Quality should be created that coordinates City activity to police and enforce soil, air, water and waste water discharge standards. It would have a substantial community board that would meet

monthly to receive community input on its work. It would develop proposals to reduce toxicity and greenhouse gases in the City and receive appropriate grants to advance projects that further its mission. It would coordinate work with all City agencies that have an impact on environmental issues. Create and enforce air quality standards applied across the City, including zip codes 48217 and 48211.

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: In apartments or large office buildings, put a separate set of recycle containers for each collection category, namely one set for just plastic, one for glass, one for metal, etc. The number of bins per set would be determined by the population size being served. Each population would be educated on the purpose and procedures of the program.

In residential areas, create incentive programs for block clubs and associations to significantly increase the containers used by their neighborhood, using door-to-door queries.

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

A: The obvious first step is to increase recycling, which commercializes the collections.

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: Since we have dismantled so much public housing and have an aging housing stock, we need a public housing enterprise that develops long-term plans for generations of new public and private housing for our rebuilding City. A public/private partnership will be needed to bring this change, and using assembled parcels of public land will reduce costs.

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: Allow use or contribute public land for regional non-profit food co-ops that set standards (i.e. no pesticides) and provide outlets for locally grown agriculture. They could arrange for other products that provide a full range of offerings if not provided in adequate amounts locally. Encourage connections between local growers and the school food program. Such a relationship should include summer youth engagement in agriculture and educational programs in the schools.

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) Stop the massive water shutoffs that undermine public health in our communities. Conduct an in-depth review or audit of water costs to determine why the average water bill has increased five-fold in the last 12 years with a view to reducing the cost of water for all citizens. Making water affordable is essential to public health. Water treatment systems are created to provide a public health service. Taking that service from a large segment of our population has led to increases in communicable disease, as reported by Henry Ford Health System. (2) The City Council must control all water-related charges with an intent to reduce water bills, thus enhancing affordability. Drainage fees have increased 23% on the average homeowner in the last 3 years without explanation. The Council must exercise oversight. (3) Actively monitor Great Lakes Water Authority changes to the DWSD (Detroit Water and Sewerage Depsystem. Some of those changes led to the boil water advisory in the Water Works Park service area in March.

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 would start with those who have large impervious surface areas, as the greatest gains can be realized most quickly at those locations. I would authorize owners to retain their drainage fees in a designated account when a plan for stormwater redirection is approved. The City would also continue its contribution to the approved plan. This would make many more customers able to finance changes to their properties more quickly. The program would be prioritized in areas where basement flooding is most problematic