

EVERY FOUR YEARS, WE CAN ELECT
LEADERS WHO TAKE ACTION FOR A
CLEANER, SAFER, HEALTHIER DETROIT.

IT'S TIME TO ACT. GET INFORMED.

DETROIT ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA

www.detroitenv.org

JULY 2013



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION ONE

Acknowledgments	4
Introduction	6
Principles	8
Outreach & Engagement	10
Survey Results	12

SECTION TWO

Executive Summary	14
-------------------	----

SECTION THREE: Conditions

Environment & Public Safety	22
Environment, Land & Water	
Infrastructure	30
Environment & Mobility	36
Environment & Economics	42
Environment & Urban Cleanliness	44
Environment & Public Health	46

SECTION FOUR: Recommendations

Clean Air	50
Clean Water	51
Clean Energy	52
Zero Waste	53
Healthy Land	54
Healthy Housing	55
Healthy Neighborhoods	56
Active Transportation	57
Community Benefits	58

SECTION FIVE: Policies

Green Highlights from City Charter	60
Detroit Green Policy Case Studies	61
Suggestions for Detroit Future City	62

SECTION SIX

Glossary of Terms and Resources	64
---------------------------------	----

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Steering & Working Committee

Sandra Yu, Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice

Gloria Rivera, Great Lakes Bioneers-Detroit

Sandra Turner-Handy, Michigan Environmental Council

Todd Scott, Michigan Trails & Greenways Alliance

Matthew Naimi, Recycle HERE!

Simone Sagovac, Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision

Joel Heeres, WARM Training Center

Margaret Weber, Zero Waste Detroit

with technical assistance from

Morgan Robinson and Jeffrey Bross, Data Driven Detroit

We stand on the collective shoulders of Detroit's environmental and environmental justice community.

The organizations and individuals involved in this phase of creating a Detroit Environmental Agenda acknowledge that we work in collaboration with many other organizations and individuals who have a deep commitment to environmental justice and improving the environment in Detroit, and that the Environmental Summit on May 5, 2011, was the the impetus for developing a Detroit Environmental Agenda.

Funded by

Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation

Kendeda Fund

The Detroit Environmental Agenda Steering Committee would like to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions to this effort.

DEA STAKEHOLDER REVIEW

Adrienne Edmonson, Ecology Center/Cass Corridor Neighborhood Development Corporation
Ahmina Maxey, Zero Waste Detroit
Ana Rivera, Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
Betsy Palazzola, Strong Cities, Strong Communities
Dara O'Byrne, City of Detroit Planning and Development Dept.
Donele Wilkins, Green Door Initiative
Eitan Sussman, Keep Growing Detroit
Fernanda Sanchez, Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
Gloria Lowe, 48217/We Want Green Too
Kathryn Underwood, City Planning Commission
Khalil Ligon, Lower Eastside Action Plan
Larissa Carr, State Rep. Rashida Tlaib's Office
Michelle Martinez, Consortium of Hispanic Agencies
Maria Thomas, Detroit Neighborhood Partnership East
Mary Sue Shottenfels, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative
Patrice Green, Oakman Boulevard Community Association
Patrick Geans, Sierra Club
Rachel Wells, ClearCorps/Detroit
Simone Lightfoot, NAACP
Theresa Landrum, 48217
Tia Lebherz, Food and Water Watch/People's Water Board
Tyrone Carter, Original United Citizens of SWD
Vincent Martin, 48217/SWD

DEA PARTNER PLANNING MEETING

Alana White, Midtown Detroit Inc.
Daniel Duane Spikes, Detroit Central Cities Community Mental Health
Erin James, Joseph Tireman Community Council
Gary Wozniak, RecoveryPark
Hannah Kelley, Resident
Irva Faber Bermudez, Detroit Central Cities Community Mental Health
Jim Pappas, Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas Architects
Jessica Pappas, Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas Architects

Karen Hammer, Green Acres Woodward Civic Association
Khalil Ligon, Lower Eastside Action Plan
Ritchie Harrison, Jefferson East Business Association
Rosanna Pardo, Detroit Central Cities Community Mental Health
Sarah Pavelko, Southwest Detroit Business Association
Simone Lightfoot, NAACP
Tom Woiwode, Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

SOUTHWEST DETROIT ENVIRONMENTAL MEETING ORGANIZING PARTNERS

Bridging Communities
Community Health and Social Service Center (CHASS)
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
Original United Citizens of SW Detroit
State Representative Rashida Tlaib
SER Metro-Detroit
Southwest Detroit Business Association
The Greening of Detroit
United Neighborhood Initiative (UNI)
University of Michigan

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Art Center Community Development Corporation
Central District Police Community Relations
Community Action Against Asthma (CAAA) Community Fair
Creekside CDC Annual Meeting
Friends of River Rouge Watershed
Green Acres Woodward Civic Association
Lodge Davison Linwood Oakman Association of Block Clubs
Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) Annual Meeting
Neighbors Building Brightmoor
Oakman Boulevard Community Association
Original United Citizens of Southwest Detroit "Get to Know Your Neighbor"
Osborn Neighborhood Alliance Board Meeting
Restore Northeast Detroit (NED)
Rosedale Park Improvement Association
Warrendale Community Organization

INTRODUCTION



Photo: Molly Newman

Youth on the Edge of Greatness students participate in Lower Eastside Alliance “Greening the Mack” joint summer program.

DETROIT IS A CITY OF POSSIBILITY.

It is the city where the car was invented, developed, and brought to the masses. It is a city of resilient people who represent great diversity and cultural richness. It is a city with valuable natural resources worth preserving. We know how to do, to make, to improve. History has brought us to a moment where Detroit faces tremendous economic, social, and environmental challenges, compounded by the massive exodus of people and capital from the city over the last 50 years. And we continue to be a city of possibility.

The Detroit Environmental Agenda (DEA) focuses on interlinked social, environmental and economic injustices, such as low graduation rates, youth violence, the worst health rankings in the state, inadequate access to transportation, high obesity, lack of access to jobs that provide a living wage, many square miles of abandoned contaminated land depleted of its richness and beauty, toxic air, and polluted rivers and streams.

As citizens of Detroit, we must take the future into our hands. Many have engaged in small- and large-scale efforts throughout the city to educate youth, deconstruct and weatherize homes, create bountiful gardens, clean up rivers, fight air pollution, and clean up and beautify abandoned lots. To expand this important work throughout the city, we must insist that our elected leaders prioritize the interconnectedness of the environmental, social, and economic challenges that our city faces. They must create policies and programs within the city of Detroit, region, and state that benefit all residents.

We require decision-makers who take stands for enforcing the laws that: keep our city clean and safe; mandate departments to work together for smarter strategies that reduce pollution and waste while increasing the quality of service; invest in creating an environment that keeps Detroiters healthier, more productive, more informed, and more employable. We need decision-makers committed to creating city policies and systems that effectively harness the abundant energy and desire to engage that exist in our neighborhoods. By insisting our leaders adopt the right policies, we CAN have a clean environment, healthy citizens, and a strong economy.

Detroiters have crafted the Detroit Environmental Agenda to say “NO MORE” to the unacceptable conditions that exist within our community. Through an online survey and meetings over two years, Detroit residents throughout the city have identified major environmental concerns and proposed solutions in their neighborhoods. This was the start to the process and this living document. The DEA represents the voices of a diverse range of stakeholders in Detroit’s environment, ranging from ordinary citizens to activists, policy wonks to on-the-ground implementers.

Principles guiding the agenda:

- [Ensure environmental justice: protect and involve vulnerable populations in decisions that impact their lives](#)
- [Protect and restore Earth's resources: land, water, air](#)
- [Engage affected residents to understand community needs and potential impacts](#)
- [Leverage the connections between environmental solutions and health, safety, jobs, and education](#)
- [Build on successful models in Detroit and from elsewhere](#)

The Detroit Environmental Agenda provides the tools for conversations that we must have with policy-makers, institutional and business leaders, not-for-profit organizations, and all citizens of the city of Detroit. As we near council by district and mayoral elections, candidates will be asked to respond to this Agenda through a questionnaire. We urge Detroit residents to push for its adoption and implementation once leaders are elected. The presence of the Emergency Manager demands that citizens use the strongest mechanisms of accountability to ensure that the acts of the EM help accomplish the goals. Similarly, the implementation of Detroit Future City requires active engagement so that the citizens and the environment of Detroit will benefit from this massive investment.

The DEA is organized so that the reader can read those sections of interest:

- [In Section 1, we describe the purpose of the report, the community consultation that forms the basis of the report, and present the basic principles that undergird the overall project](#)
- [In Section 2, we provide an executive summary of our recommendations](#)
- [In Section 3, we connect priority issues such as public safety, city infrastructure, and economics to environmental factors](#)
- [In Section 4, we highlight opportunities in existing policy](#)
- [In Section 5, we describe three local policy initiatives, and highlight environmental opportunities in the revised City Charter and Detroit Future City Strategic Framework Plan.](#)
- [In Section 6, we define commonly used environmental terms in a Glossary](#)



Photo: Kirsten Usery

Charles Stokes of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice describes environmental challenges and assets on a citywide Toxic Tour.

Thank you for taking the time to read and engage with the Detroit Environmental Agenda. We hope you see some of your efforts reflected in the document.

The DEA will give you information to talk with your family, your neighbors, your policy-makers and your leaders about the social, environmental, and economic well-being of Detroit. When we all work together, we create a better future.

We can do it.

PRINCIPLES

1. Ensure environmental justice: protect and involve vulnerable populations in decisions that impact their lives
2. Protect and restore Earth's resources: land, water, air
3. Engage affected residents to understand community needs and potential impacts

4. Leverage the connections between environmental solutions and health, safety, jobs, and education
5. Build on successful models in Detroit and from elsewhere

Detroit must recognize the role a healthy environment plays in creating a city where people want to live, work, and raise a family.



Brightmoor Farmway (District 1)
Photo: Sandra Yu



Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice youth monitor water quality at Belle Isle Beach (District 5)
Photo: Sandra Yu



Recycle HERE! Holden location (District 5)
Photo: Matthew Naimi



Milliken State Park at Detroit River (District 5)
Photo: AmericanForests.org

This page is intentionally left blank.

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

480 Survey Responses

503 Reached through Community-hosted Meetings

303 Reached through DEA-hosted Meetings

The Detroit Environmental Agenda project originated from the 2011 Environmental Summit held to share resident and advocate concerns and ideas about the environment with City officials and the Detroit Works Project (now Detroit Future City). Feedback from that event has helped to shape the DEA principles and recommendations.

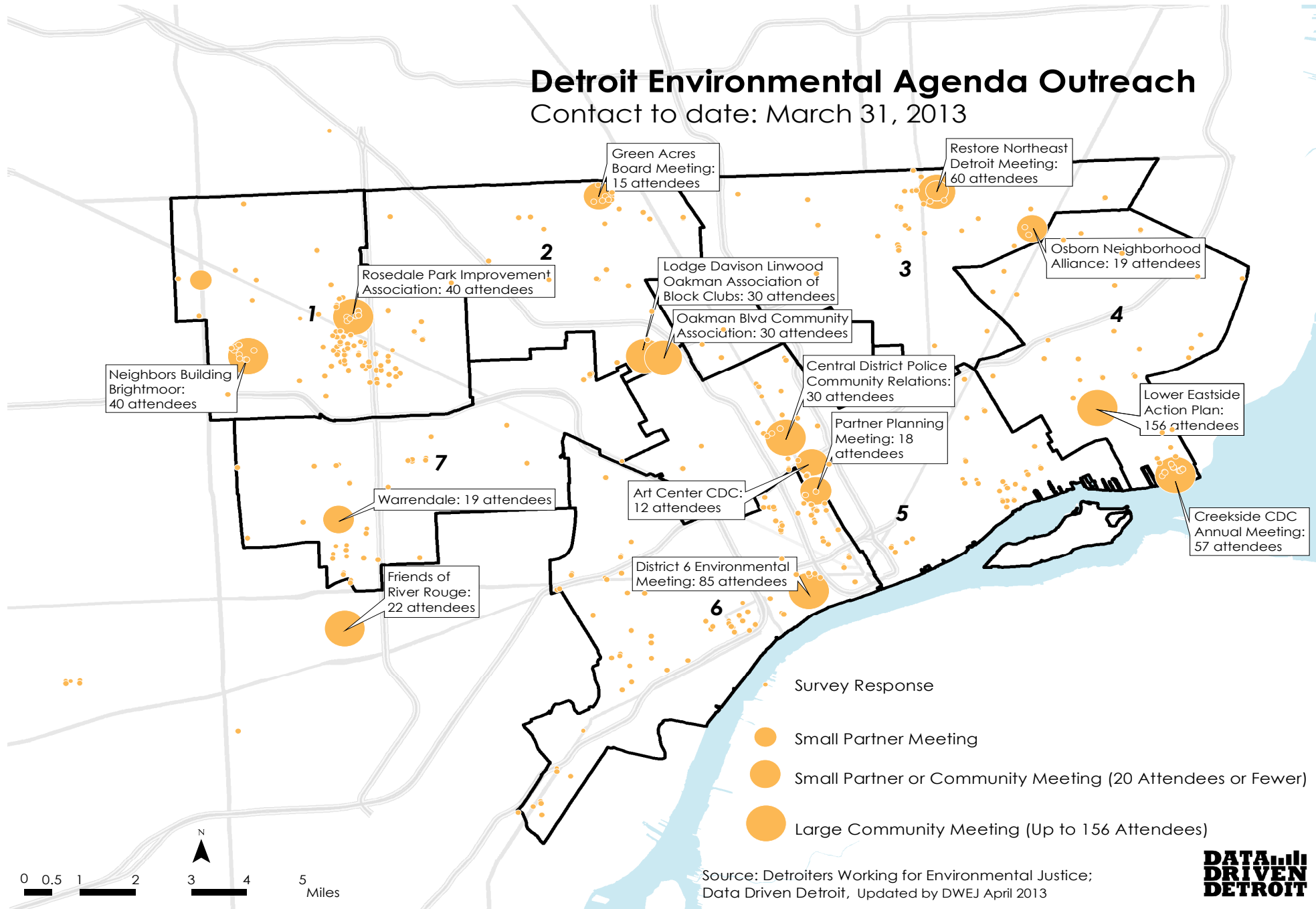
In community meetings and interviews in 2012, residents expressed a common desire for funding and assistance to implement green solutions in their own communities, such as solar lighting for parks, a deconstruction job training program, a tire-recycling company, a green industrial park, and green infrastructure projects.

They also wanted more information and education about environmental conditions, what individual actions they could take to remedy the problem, and how to access city departments for help in resolving the issues, including the appropriate authority and contact information. With land-based issues, residents were greatly interested in recent online interactive tools such as Data Driven Detroit's tax auction map and Loveland Technologies' parcel ownership and tax status map.

While some residents were interested in the details of city policies that could alleviate neighborhood environmental challenges, many more were concerned with seeing tangible improvements in their communities.

Detroit Environmental Agenda Outreach

Contact to date: March 31, 2013



SURVEY RESULTS

The Detroit Environmental Agenda distributed a public survey asking Detroit residents to rate the seriousness of various environmental challenges and solutions in their neighborhoods. Their responses were analyzed by district.

Surveys were distributed and collected in person at neighborhood and block club meetings, and online through community organizations' e-newsletters and websites. We received a total of 480 responses, including 14 from nonresidents. District 1 had the highest number of responses (155), followed by District 6 (93). The fewest number of responses came from District 2 (28).

Respondents were asked to rate 33 different environmental challenges. The possible scores were grouped into "Serious" or "Medium" problem, "Minor" or "Not a problem," or "I don't know."

The overall results were influenced by the high response rate from District 1, as well as our instructions to ask respondents to consider the various issues in their own neighborhood.

The top issues in each district were noted, and 11 issues appeared in at least 4 out of the 7 districts top 10 issues. 7 out of 7 districts rated Crime, Dangerous Structures, and Vacant Land Not Cared For as "Medium" or "Serious" problems. 6 out of 7 districts rated High

Heating Bills and Litter as "Medium" or "Serious" problems. 4 out of 7 districts rated Hard to Get Places Without a Car, Illegal Dumping, Infrequent Buses, No Recycling, No Youth Activities, and Not Safe to Walk as "Medium" or "Serious" problems.

Based on the number of "I don't know" responses in the survey, respondents were least aware of water and soil pollution, as well as the extent of environmental health impacts in their neighborhoods. (Respondents were most aware of transportation challenges and waste issues such as litter and the lack of convenient recycling.) The four issues with the highest number of "I don't know" responses (out of 480 responses) were: fish contamination (154), lead poisoning (129), sewage in rivers (122), and polluted sites (101).

The diagram to the right shows the top 10 issues in each district, ranked by percentage of the district's respondents who rated the issue as a "Medium" or "Serious" problem.

TOP ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

Frequency of ranking in a district's top 10 by percentage of "Medium" or "Serious" ratings

1. Crime (Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
2. Dangerous structures (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
3. Vacant land not cared for (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
4. High heating bills (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
5. Litter (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
6. Hard to get places without a car (1, 2, 4, 5)
7. Infrequent buses (1, 2, 5, 6)
8. Not safe to walk (1, 3, 5, 7)
9. Illegal dumping (2, 3, 4, 7)
10. No recycling (3, 5, 6, 7)
11. No youth activities (2, 3, 4, 5)

ISSUES OF LOWEST PUBLIC AWARENESS

Frequency of "I don't know" responses above 25%

1. Lead poisoning (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
2. Contaminated fish (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
3. Sewage in rivers, waterways (1, 2, 3, 5, 6)
4. Asthma (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
5. Illegal or inappropriate business operations (1, 3, 6, 7)

Top 10 Issues per District

