

What's Next?

Join us as we work to improve quality of life in #SwDetroit!

#SwDetroit will be ready for the developments happening in our neighborhood. Our residents will be prepared to take advantage of all of the opportunity that comes from this. With your help, CoC's work will continue, stronger and more sustainable than before.

A targeted campaign that we continue to organize around is the systemic change in public education. With our Education Alliance, we are working on our Chronic Absences Campaign in which we seek to create a city-wide message of the importance of kids not missing more than 10 days of school a year: excused or unexcused.

We are unique because of our diversity, culture, complexity and proximity to an international border. We will leverage these strengths as we organize, lift our voices, and build power to bring high level jobs and environmental protection to our neighborhoods.

We have learned lessons from our work mobilizing #SwDetroit and are ready to share our model with other communities across the city, and across our nation.

Acknowledgements

Safety Alliance: Detroit Police Department, District 6 Detroit Neighborhood Police Officers, Mayor Mike Duggan's Office of Neighborhoods, Springdale Woodmere Block Club, Urban Neighborhood Initiative, Federal Bureau Of Investigation (FBI), Detroit Southwest Pride, Detroiters Helping Each Other, Detroit Southwest Essential Element Team (DSWEET), Southwest Detroit Business Association, Americorp Urban Safety Initiative (AMUS), West Vernor Civilian Patrol Group, Office of Wayne County Rep. Ilona Varga, Crime Stoppers, Detroit Department of Transportation (D-DOT), Detroit Public Schools Police.

Education Alliance: Detroit Hispanic Develop Corporation (DHDC), Mercy Education Project, Partnership for Youth, Michigan State House Rep. Stephanie Chang, Detroit City Council Woman Raquel Castaneda-Lopez, Partnership For Youth, Community in Schools, Southwest Solutions, Taking Action por Nuestra Niños, Urban Neighborhood Initiative, The Original United Citizens of Southwest Detroit, Delray Neighborhood House, 482Forward, Matrix Vistas Nuevas Head Start

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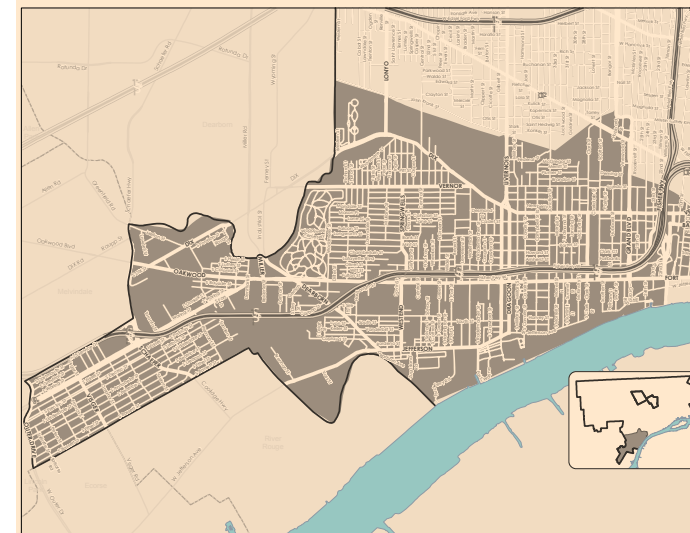
Impact Statement

Congress of Communities (CoC) Southwest Detroit Neighborhoods



Community Goal

Connecting Communities & Launching Leaders



Over 10,000 residents, youth and stakeholders participated in a 3-year planning process that led to the creation of Congress of Communities (CoC). CoC is the resident-led organizing and advocacy agency in #SwDetroit that works to facilitate solutions around the chaos that's plaguing our neighborhoods. Our work is focused on making positive changes in Education, Safety, Workforce Development, and Youth Opportunity. Through the downfall of Detroit in 2008, #SwDetroit's voice was at the table helping Detroit solve its problems. We fought for our schools to be open, we created accountability for charter schools, and decreased crime. CoC was a pivotal force at the right time. Today, the power of our leaders is greater than ever. Over 300 parents, youth, and residents are change agents in our community - meeting with legislators in Lansing and City Council and forming spin-off organizations that get things done. We are "Community Empowered!"

"Congress of Communities was the first club I joined that helped me open up - then I was able to join more clubs at my school because I wasn't scared. I just loved it and couldn't stop!"

Youth Leader

Maria Salinas, Executive Director



Our Mission:

The mission of CoC of Southwest Detroit Neighborhood is to provide leadership and facilitate collaboration of residents, youth, and stakeholders to foster a vibrant and sustainable community.

Our Impact



When We Get Together, Change Happens!

Safety Alliance

Since 2010, a group of residents, youth, and police meet monthly to problem-solve neighborhood safety issues.



#SwDetroit residents created safer neighborhoods by changing their attitudes and habits towards safety. In partnership with Detroit Southwest Pride, Peace Marches mobilize **100's** of residents each year to protest violence.



Since 2013, the West Vernor Patrol group activated **30** Safety Patrol members.



Facilitated creation of Detroit's first resident-led Safety Hub in 2016.

"I have connected and met with others to come together in unity. Our teamwork makes the dream work."

Adult Leader



42%

decrease in crime between 2008-2015 in #SwDetroit

Education Alliance

Since 2012, the Education Alliance convenes parents and community stakeholders to collaborate on ways to improve education in the following ways:

Support for bilingual staff in schools

60

parents rallied to fight for bilingual clerks

250

Civil Right violation forms gathered between 2012-2016 to file a class action suit in partnership with DHDC



Created a system for opening, closing, and transitioning schools.



9 schools impacted



150 students transitioned out of closing Phoenix Academy



Facilitated partnerships to create lasting change



Snyder's Pathway to Potential program placed DHS social workers in **5** schools and cleared abandoned houses within 5 blocks of these schools



482 Forward, a citywide education organizing entity, organized **40** parents & youth in Lansing to address damaging education bills (2016)



The Say & Play initiative engaged over **20** Early Head Start centers.

Uplifting Resident Voice Through Leadership Development

Taking Action Por Nuestros Niños (TANN)

is an organized task force of resident leaders who partner with schools and parents to improve safety and education for our youth.



30 Spanish-speaking parents engaged



50 abandoned houses cleared since 2014



22 TANN members supported in obtaining legal citizenship status



3 layoffs of bilingual school staff prevented by organizing rallies

"Youth need an adult to help push them and make sure their voices are being heard. That's what you need. Strong adult allies that will really promote youth voice."

Youth Leader

Youth Council

has trained and supported Latino youth, ages 13-18, to become confident future leaders of #SwDetroit.

active members: 15

alumni: 38

150

youth attended Annual Youth Summit from 2010-2013



20 youth connected to career-focused jobs each summer

200

youth provided tutoring services in 2015 via youth-created program, "Owning It | Our Education"



Youth-organized tours with Detroit City Council and national foundations showcase youth-driven work and youth perspectives on Detroit. Engagement:

political officials: 8

foundations: 40

A Seat at the Table

Let's Talk is a collaborative forum on the changes in our neighborhoods focused on promoting communication and building trust.

2016

Convened a resident and stakeholder table to strategize on how to repurpose a closed school building.

2014

Youth-organized "Listen Up" forum engaged **60** youth and **40** community leaders to share feelings about a violent youth shooting.

Each follow up meeting engaged over **100** residents to educate the community about Community Land Trusts and strategies to fight for Community Benefit Agreements.

2013

First forum engaged over **150** residents across #SwDetroit to break down barriers, bring people together, and discuss gentrification.

Policy Advocacy & Activism

We have advocated for community benefits around new developments in #SwDetroit to guarantee jobs for our residents. Our resident leaders have been able to influence and negotiate with partners who attempt economic and industrial developments. For example, in partnership with DDOT, we added a second bus to the Vernor Bus line (2015). We also travel to Lansing to fight Anti-Community Benefits bills that would prevent our residents from making key decisions for their neighborhoods.

