



Meet the candidates: Who is running to represent Detroit

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BridgeDetroit 2025 Voter Guide: How to participate in elections

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Family is tougher than fire: Inside the fire stations of Detroit

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Cover Photo: Detroit Fire Department Engine Co 56, Ladder 18 responds to a vehicle fire between residential dwellings at 18018 Buffalo St. on December 10, 2024. (Quinn Banks/ Special to BridgeDetroit)

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Who We Are

BridgeDetroit launched in 2020 as a daily news and engagement organization. The purpose: To build deep connections with Detroiters and provide critical journalism that helps residents better understand and participate in their civic lives.

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Letter from the Engagement Editor:

What up doe!

For the first time in 12 years, Mike Duggan won't be a candidate for Detroit mayor. This means the city's political future is up for grabs. Residents will need critical information about candidates and issues before they make electoral decisions in 2025.

That's why BridgeDetroit, in collaboration with the wonderful folks at Detroit is Different, launched a podcast and content channel that focuses on the policy questions and implications that should be shaping the races for mayor, city council and other posts. It's called Detroit Next.

The podcast is hosted by BridgeDetroit City Hall reporter, and fellow Central Michigan University alum, Malachi Barrett and BridgeDetroit Executive Advisor and Co-Founder Stephen Henderson. I'm directing and executive producing the show alongside Khary Frazier, Executive Director of Detroit is Different.

The show is about the elections, but it's also about the various issues Detroiters face on a daily basis and the ways that public policy might address them. Some of these issues include over-assessed property taxes, equitable use of public resources, sustainable city-led initiatives, the tensions between the downtown business community and the rest of the city, and much more.

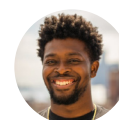
You can find all of the Detroit Next content on youtube.com/@bridgedetroit, on BridgeDetroit.com, our accounts on Facebook, X, Mastodon, BlueSky, Instagram, TikTok as well as the social media platforms managed by Detroit is Different.

Prefer an audio version? Don't worry, we've got you covered. Subscribe to the podcast at DetroitNext.Podbean.com and wherever you get your podcasts.

Want alerts when a new episode lands? Subscribe to the BridgeDetroit newsletter by going to bridgedetroit.com/subscribe and setting your preferences.

We also want to hear from our audience regularly. So tell us what issues you'd like us to cover on the podcast and what questions you have about this moment in Detroit's history! Email us at info@bridgedetroit.com or leave us a voicemail at (313) 284-6407.

Thank you for reading, watching and listening!



Bryce Huffman
Engagement Editor, BridgeDetroit

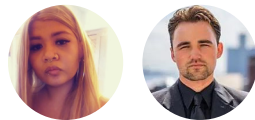


NEWS FOR DETROITERS



Buses arrive at the Rosa Parks Transit Center in Downtown Detroit.
Credit: Eleanore Catolico, Special to BridgeDetroit

DDOT is planning to improve bus frequency. Here's how



By Eleanore Catolico and Malachi Barrett

The proposed changes come as the city boosted the Detroit Department of Transportation's budget by \$20 million

Once summer strikes, city bus riders will see transformations poised to revamp their traveling experiences: more frequent bus pick-ups along some major roads and stops to chain grocery stores.

The Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) previewed proposed service changes during a recent public hearing—an opportunity for folks to offer feedback before changes go into effect on June 23—at the Rosa Parks Transit Center in downtown Detroit.

The new service plan fulfills a slice of the vision mapped out in DDOT Reimagined, a blueprint to boost mass transit in the city,

DDOT noted. Construction on the East Jefferson enhanced corridor project, which will add boarding platforms at 21 bus stops, is expected to begin this spring.

At the hearing, some commenters showed strong support for the increases in bus frequency, although others characterized the realignments of “lifeline” routes as disruptive to their job commutes and their ability to travel to critical destinations.

Improving frequency, or how often a bus is scheduled to arrive at a stop along a specific route—which can determine wait times—is one of the primary demands of the city's transit advocates to reform the system's services, along with ensuring DDOT buses are reliable and on time.

Part of the advocates' calculus to improve bus services includes a boost to DDOT's funding.

In April, Mayor Mike Duggan signed a \$3 billion budget after it was authorized by the City Council. The spending plan

includes a \$20 million increase for the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), \$209 million total, plus \$2.7 million in surplus funding from the previous fiscal year.

Activists with Transportation Riders United and the Detroit People's Platform rallied to “double DDOT” funding in the next five years. They urged the City Council to start by adding \$16 million to Duggan's \$20 million budget increase for the department. It didn't happen, but Joel Batterman, campaigns manager for TRU, said there's still room to celebrate.

“While we didn't get the additional \$16 million we wanted from council, we believe our advocacy helped spur the \$20 million boost to DDOT funding in the mayor's budget proposal,” Batterman said. “We'll be back next year, aiming to build on this year's progress and win the transit system that Detroiters deserve.”

DDOT Director Robert Cramer said the full DDOT budget will help cover quarterly increases in service improvements, offer free rides on election days, hire more drivers and mechanics, replace and expand bus shelters, and widen the availability of paratransit service for residents with disabilities. Surplus funding includes \$2 million to install additional bus shelters, \$673,000 to replace 50 bus seats, and \$50,000 to study the city's paratransit service.

“I really think the residents are going to see the changes in the experience and the service, based on the investments already in the \$20 million,” Cramer said during an April 3 budget hearing.

Duggan administration officials said the extra \$16 million couldn't be used to put more buses on the street because buses take two years to be delivered and DDOT lacked a plan for the funding.

“The key to this is the new buses,” Duggan said during his budget presentation in February. “We have bought 45 new buses, they are scheduled to start coming in late summer through the end of 2025. This is going to allow us to put the service on the road. Today, we are running 178 buses a day. When all the buses come in, we'll be running 220 a day.”

Stephen Boyle echoed concerns about eliminating part of the Dexter route's northern reach.

“I was looking at possibly getting a night job in the suburbs, and it would have been my lifeline,” Boyle said. “I have to rule out being employed outside of Detroit.”

Taxi driver and transit activist Michael Cunningham described several aspects of the new service plan as signs of positive progress. “I love to see changes. I love to see things getting better,” he said.

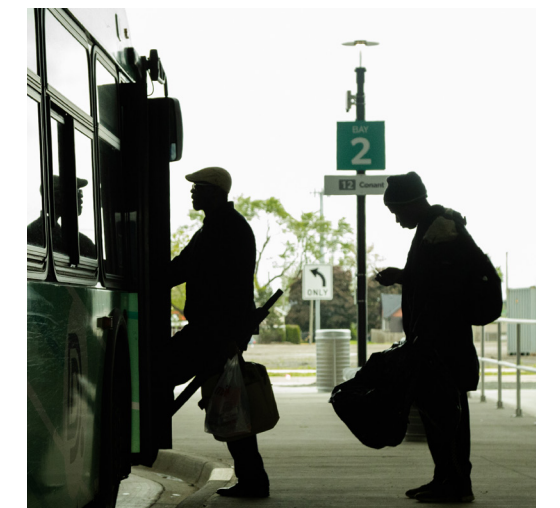
But, the loss of service along one route would dramatically shrink Zander Byrd's mobility choices. The 23-year-old Detroiters expressed the most emphatic opposition.

“I am disabled and have used the Russell line from where Outer Drive and Van Dyke meet as a lifeline for years to commute to work and access the wider east side community and Hamtramck,” they read aloud from a prepared, written speech. “This proposed change would make it much more difficult than it already is for me to access the parts of the city Russell would otherwise get me to without issue.”

Byrd said they know plenty of people rely on this stretch of service on Outer Drive: residents who travel to Joe Randazzo's fruit market to buy fresh produce and Pershing High School students who visit the local recreation center.

And Byrd doesn't have a car right now. Byrd said this change would hurt northeast Detroit and them.

“Driving is a difficult thing for me. It's scary sometimes. The bus is a lifeline,” Byrd told a reporter after the hearing finished and the room emptied. “It's either this or nothing.”



Riders board a bus at the Jason Hargrove Transit Center in Detroit.

Credit: Quinn Banks, Special to BridgeDetroit

Proposed DDOT route changes:

3-Grand River: Daytime frequency would improve to every 10 minutes during the weekdays and every 15 minutes on weekends.

9-Jefferson: The end of the line will now extend to Mack and Alter, where an ALDI supermarket is located, with routing via Alter, Charlevoix, Chalmers, and Mack. The route will no longer serve the SMART transfer point at Jefferson and Lakepointe.

16-Dexter: Improve frequency to every 15 minutes during the daytime on weekdays; Improve frequency to every 20 minutes during the daytime on Saturdays and Sundays; Extended via Outer Drive to Old Redford Meijer. Service on Greenfield to Northland Drive will be removed; 16-Dexter would also be rerouted to pass in front of the University of Detroit Mercy campus (Puritan-Livernois).

10-Greenfield: Improve frequency to every 15 minutes during the daytime on weekdays and every 20 minutes during the daytime on weekends

12-Conant: Will be replaced by 52-Chene at Jason Hargrove Transit Center; The northern end of 12-Conant would continue to a new end-of-line at Winchester and Conant via Nevada, Ryan and E. Outer Drive

32-McNichols: Will serve Mack and Moross transfer point at all times via existing nighttime extension; Buses would arrive every 30 minutes during the daytime on weekdays.

40-Russell: The northern end-of-line will be relocated to Conant and E. Winchester, no longer serving Outer Drive east of Ryan Rd.

52-Chene: Buses would arrive every 35 minutes during peak times on weekdays and every 45 minutes midday; Realigned to serve Jason Hargrove Transit Center via Conant, State Fair Avenue, and Woodward, removing service from Nevada and Van Dyke; Realigned between Milwaukee and Canfield to operate on Russell and serve the new Justice Center.

67-Cadillac/Harper: Buses would arrive every 35 minutes during peak times on weekdays and every 45 minutes at midday.



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Meet the candidates: Who is running to represent Detroit

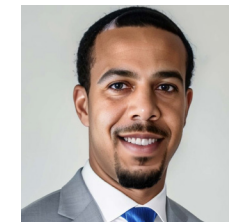
For the first time since he won the role 12 years ago, Mike Duggan will not be on the ballot for Detroit mayor. His term expires at the end of 2025, opening up a competitive contest to succeed him.

Voters will make their preferred choice from the wide field of candidates in the Aug. 5 primary. The top two vote-earners will move on and face off in the Nov. 4 general election.

Other races are being held for city clerk, all nine City Council seats, the Board of Police Commissioners and community advisory councils.

Here are the candidates who have filed to run for mayor:

Jonathan Barlow – Businessman



Barlow, a venture capitalist, tech entrepreneur and political agent, has tried to set himself apart from others, repeatedly calling himself the “only innovative candidate” in the race.

In his 11-page policy plan for the city, Barlow proposes tax incentives for businesses that hire residents and locate in the city, a \$500 million public-private business growth fund, autonomous shuttles, training programs for advanced manufacturing and technology jobs, rent stabilization programs, homeless resources and the establishment of community land trusts.

James Craig – Former Chief, Detroit Police Department



Craig launched his campaign by outlining his record at the Detroit Police Department, saying he improved response times, homicide clearance rates and opened new police stations. Craig said he would “double down” on neighborhood safety and prioritize community policing as mayor.

In addition to leading the police department in Michigan’s largest city for eight years, Craig was also a leading GOP candidate for governor in 2022 before fraudulent signatures on campaign paperwork derailed his campaign and a U.S. Senate hopeful last year.

Fred Durhal III – Detroit City Council member



The former state lawmaker and first-term council member from District 7 says he is running to bridge the gap between corporate interests and community needs. He previously served two terms in the state House of Representatives and was a community liaison for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

Durhal’s platform includes a focus on commercial corridors and continuing to build small businesses that help residents build generational wealth. He’s also pitched a regional transit system based in Detroit, emphasizing a need for more investment and partnerships with neighboring communities.



Joel Haashiim – Businessman

Haashiim is running for Detroit mayor as a critic of the status quo. The businessman says voters should pick a candidate who is independent of corporations that don't benefit them.

Haashiim says he wants to give residents more say in land use planning by restoring Citizens' District Councils. They were established to address inequities stemming from "urban renewal" projects that displaced Black neighborhoods. City agencies couldn't approve development without consulting with councils that represented residents from the surrounding area.



Saunteel Jenkins – former CEO, the Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW)

Jenkins is campaigning on a platform of economic development, job opportunities for Detroiters, public safety, public transit and access to public services for everybody. She calls it "creating opportunities from cradle to career" and that the "mayor and the schools should be tied at the hip."

Jenkins is also a former City Council president but left the position in 2014 to lead The Heat and Warmth Fund where she spent a decade as CEO, helping low-income families pay utility bills and improving energy efficiency in older homes.



Solomon Kinloch – Senior pastor, Triumph Church

Congregants confiding that they've felt ignored by government leaders is part of the reason why Rev. Solomon Kinloch says he decided to run for mayor in 2025. He's seeking to unite corporate, nonprofit and community leaders around fixing Detroit's biggest problems. Yet, Kinloch said he has no plans to step down from his role at the helm of a 40,000-member network of churches across the metro region.

He plans to release a four-year plan that outlines his ambitions for a prospective first term: Building new grocery stores to "end food deserts," creating 10,000 units of affordable housing, supporting workforce training for \$35 per hour jobs and launching the "greatest" downpayment assistance programs in Detroit's history.



Todd Perkins – Attorney

Perkins launched his 2025 mayoral campaign as a neighborhood champion and self-made CEO who would create partnerships between corporations and communities. Perkins has said he wants to work closely with neighborhood leaders, identifying "who runs this block" and coordinating local organizations and the Detroit Police Department to address safety issues. He has advocated for more affordable housing, reducing taxes for residents and businesses, supporting schools, expanding community centers and developing mass transportation networks. He's also criticized the overuse of tax breaks to attract development.



Mary Sheffield – Detroit City Council President

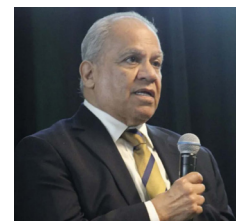
In her role as council president, Sheffield has had to carefully navigate decisions on offering massive tax breaks to secure developments that, in turn, create jobs and eventually new revenue for city services. Sheffield has often said she's not against development but needs to see real benefits for residents in exchange for subsidies. She opposed a version of Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance that was backed by Duggan and approved by voters. Sheffield worried about the enforcement of community investments negotiated by residents and developers under direction of the city. One of Sheffield's first decisions on the council was to transfer city land to the Downtown Development Authority to build Little Caesars Arena. Sheffield said it was the right decision because the city needs new jobs.

Sheffield launched her campaign in December by proposing an entertainment tax or a ticket surcharge at the entertainment venues of downtown, an idea to generate income for the city and reduce resident taxes by taxing visitors to the city.



DaNetta Simpson – Two-time mayoral candidate

In previous campaigns, Simpson ran on a platform of ending water shutoffs for residents, revitalizing neighborhoods and building affordable housing.



WRITE IN: Rogelio Landin – political advocate

Landin, a community activist and businessman, is running as a write-in candidate after failing to collect enough nominating petition signatures to make the primary ballot.

Here are the candidates who have filed to run for City Council:

District 1:

- James Tate (incumbent)

District 2:

- Roy McCalister Jr.
- Harriet Scott
- Angela Whitfield Calloway (incumbent)

District 3:

- Cranstana Anderson
- Scott Benson (incumbent)

District 4:

- Latisha Johnson (incumbent)

District 5:

- George Adams Jr.
- Willie Burton
- Michael Hartt
- Ester Haugabook
- Tatjana Jackson
- Renata Miller
- Michael Ri'chard

Candidates for Board of Police Commissioners

District 6:

- Tyrone Carter
- Gabriela Santiago-Romero (incumbent)

District 7:

- Denzel Hines-McCampbell
- Bobbi Johnson
- Karen Whitsett
- Regina Willis-Ross

At-Large:

- Levan Adams
- Janee' Ayers
- James Harris
- Shakira Hawkins
- Gary Hunter
- Valerie Parker
- Mary Waters (incumbent)
- Coleman Young II (incumbent)

District 1:

- No candidates

District 2:

- Lavish T. Williams

District 3:

- No certified candidates

District 4:

- Scotty Boman

District 5:

- No certified candidates

District 6:

- Garrett Burton
- Lisa Carter (incumbent)

District 7:

- Victoria Camille

Incumbent Janice Winfrey is the only candidate for the position of City Clerk to be certified. There were no certified candidates for Community Advisory Council. Positions are open in districts 4,5 and 7.



BridgeDetroit 2025 Voter Guide: What jobs are Detroiters voting to fill

MAYOR

Number of spots: 1 total, 1 up for election

Term: 4 years

Term limits: None

Compensation: \$224,572 by July 2025

Role: The mayor is the chief executive of the city of Detroit and is accountable for the executive branch of the government. These duties include:

- Develop and execute a vision for the city
- Act as a conservator of the peace of the city and administer oaths and take affidavits.
- Appoint and manage deputies, department directors and other key personnel who oversee the operations of the city
- Hold at least one community meeting in each of the non at-large districts and a city-wide community meeting
- Manage the preparation, amendment, administration, and financial reporting of the city budget.
- Represent the city on a world stage
- Champion city initiatives
- Communicate with the public

CITY COUNCIL

Number of spots: 9 total, 9 up for election

(1 from each of 7 districts and 2 chosen at-large)

Term: 4 years

Term limits: Two positions, City Council president and president pro tempore, are elected from within the body at the beginning of each new session and last for four-year terms.

Compensation: For council members: \$106,231 by July 2025; for council president: \$111,647 by July 2025

Role:

- Act as the legislative body for the city
- Operate at least five committees:
 - Budget and Finance
 - Neighborhood and Community Services
 - Human Resources
 - Law and Public Safety
 - Planning and Economic Development
- Any other committee the council deems necessary
- Adopt the city budget
- Pass ordinances and resolutions, including those to meet a public emergency
- Make investigations into the affairs of the city and the conduct of any city agency.

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For more information on the 2025 elections in Detroit, visit <https://www.bridgedetroit.com/election-2025>

- Subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and require the production of evidence in any matter pending before it or any of its committees.
- Approval of mayoral appointments of the Chief of Police, Fire Commissioner, Director of Planning and Development, Director of Human Resources and Corporation Counsel
- Oversee city property, including approving any property sales or disposal or new purchases of property
- Setting sewer and water rates as well as other general tax and service rates
- Overriding a mayoral veto
- Setting the council agenda for its meetings
- Representing their respective districts and the interests of residents
- Working with the community to understand local issues and get feedback

CITY CLERK

Number of spots: 1 total, 1 up for election

Term: 4 years

Term limits: None

Compensation: \$106,231 (as of July 2025)

Role:

- Keep all papers filed in or pertaining to the Office of the City Clerk
- Keep the corporation seal of the city
- When requested, certify, under the corporate seal, copies of all papers and records for the office
- Administer oaths
- Take affidavits
- Maintain reasonably accessible voter registration sites throughout the city on a year-round basis

- Serve as City Council's clerk and keep a record of all its ordinances, resolutions, and other proceedings and perform other such duties as it may provide
- Exercise other powers and duties as provided by law, the City Charter or ordinance.

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Number of spots: 11 total, 7 up for election (Four members of the Board shall be appointed by the mayor)

Term: 4 years

Term limits: None

Compensation: Elected members shall not be entitled to salaries, retirement benefits, health benefits or other fringe benefits

Role:

- Establish policies, rules and regulations in consultation with the police chief and with the approval of the mayor
- Review and approve the departmental budget before its submission to the mayor
- Receive and resolve any complaint concerning the operation of the Detroit Police Department and forward all allegations of criminality to the appropriate internal or external law enforcement agency for further investigation
- Act as the final authority in imposing or reviewing discipline of police department employees
- Make an annual report to the mayor, the City Council, and the public of the police department's activities during the previous year, including the handling of crime and complaints. The Board may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony, and require the production of evidence

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Number of spots: 7 total, 3 up for election

(5 from individual districts, 1 youth member between 13-17, 1 senior representative)

Term: 4 years

Term limits: No more than two consecutive 4-year terms. The youth member cannot be reelected if they are older than 17.

Compensation: Unpaid (must hold public meetings at least four times per year)

Funding: Community Advisory Councils shall receive no

appropriations from city funds, but may accept donations or grants in accordance with state, federal or local laws.

Role:

- Communicate local district concerns to the City Council
- Community problem solving by meeting with different groups, agencies, businesses and residents
- Disseminating information to groups, agencies, businesses and residents on social and physical plans for the districts areas.
- Providing advice to community representatives and City Council on major issues within the council district, including housing development, commercial blight, safety and security, economic and community development, employment opportunities, code enforcement and environmental conditions.
- Assisting the community in understanding the City Charter and Master Plan.
- Meet annually with the mayor and City Council on issues affecting the district.

BridgeDetroit 2025 Voter Guide: How to participate in elections

2025 is a critical election year for residents of Detroit.

For the first time in 12 years, Mike Duggan won't be a candidate for Detroit mayor. The city's political future is up for grabs, and residents will need critical information about candidates and issues before they make electoral decisions in 2025.

In addition to a new mayor, Detroit voters will select an entirely new City Council slate following redistricting, seven members of the Board of Police Commissioners, the city clerk, three community advisory council members and potentially ballot proposals.

All candidates for elected office must be residents of Detroit and must maintain their principal residence here for one year at the time of filing for office and must remain a resident throughout their tenure in office. For City Council, Board of Police Commissioner and Community Advisory Council, the candidates must be residents in the districts they are running to represent.

Key dates to know:

April 22: Filing deadline for candidates.

April 25: Withdrawal deadline for candidates.

July 25: Write-in candidate deadline for the primary election.

July 26: Nine days of early voting begins for the primary election.

Aug. 5: Primary election: Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Voters in line at 8 p.m. can still cast ballots.

Oct. 24: Write-in candidate deadline for the general election.

Oct. 25: Nine days of early voting begins for the general election.

Nov. 4: General election: Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. Voters in line at 8 p.m. can still cast ballots.

Who oversees elections?

In Wayne County, that would be [Wayne County Clerk Cathy Garrett](#)

The clerk's office is located at 2 Woodward Ave., City-County Bldg Rm 502, Detroit, Michigan 48226-3463

Phone: (313) 224-5525

Fax: (313) 224-6424

Email: jredmond@waynecounty.com

In Detroit, [City Clerk Janice Winfrey](#) oversees elections.

The clerk's office is located at 2978 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, Michigan 48235. It is open from 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Monday - Friday.

Phone: (313) 876-0190

Fax: (313) 224-1466

Email: winfreyj@detroitmi.gov

Am I registered to vote?

Scan here to check your voter registration status or call your local clerk.



Before Election Day, check to make sure your voter registration is accurate. You can correct your address on your voter registration online or by mail up to two weeks before an election or visit your clerk's office to provide official proof of residency up to and on Election Day.

How can I register to vote?

Michigan voters are encouraged to register as early as possible before an election. Methods and requirements for voter registration depend on the following deadlines:

If there are 15+ days before an election, voters can register online, by mail, or in person.

Within 14 days of an election, and on Election Day, voters may only register by visiting their local clerk's office to register in person with proof of residency documentation.

Voters can check their voter registration status and look up their local clerk information at Michigan.gov/Vote.

Register using a printable registration form: You may register to vote using a translated, printable voter registration form. You can register using a printed registration form if:

You have either a valid state of Michigan ID or Driver's License or the last 4 digits of your social security number (only one is required).

- You are at least 17.5 years of age
- You are not within 14 days of an Election Day



Scan here for a printable voter registration form

Register in person at your clerk's office: You can visit your local clerk's office to register to vote in-person. Within 14 days of an election, you must register in-person at your local clerk's office and must present proof of residency. Proof of residency is an official document listing your full name and current address, and may include a bank statement, a valid MI driver's license or ID, a lease, or a utility bill.

Source: Michigan Secretary of State

Combatting misinformation

Unfortunately, there are bad actors out there who like to take advantage of election time to spread disinformation (information that is untrue) and misinformation (information that is untrue and deliberately harmful).

This can apply to the candidates themselves, campaigners at and off polling sites, ads, robocalls and more.

Michigan officials are aiming to deter "deep fakes" in political campaigning as artificial intelligence becomes more convincing.

Laws require disclaimers on any campaign ads or political content that were digitally altered using AI. Failure to do so could lead to stiff criminal penalties. Supporters of the changes feared if left unchecked, such content could be used to spread false information in a way that influences election results.

If you get a robocall, receive literature at your house or hear a political ad and you are unsure if it is accurate information about candidates or issues, there are several reputable sources you can turn to.

BridgeDetroit (bridgedetroit.com), our sister publication Bridge Michigan (bridgemi.com/michigan-government/2024-michigan-voter-guide) and the local chapter of Votebeat (votebeat.org/michigan) strive to provide nonpartisan information. You can also visit Ballotpedia (ballotpedia.org/Michigan) for candidate information and voting records. The League of Women Voters of Michigan (lwvmi.org) is also a reputable source for nonpartisan election information.

The general rule to take: If something sounds too good to be true or uses "absolute" language like "never," "always," etc, it's worth fact-checking. Issues are rarely so black and white.

If you encounter what you believe to be misinformation, you can report it to the state by emailing misinformation@michigan.gov



EARLY VOTING

Local clerks are required to provide at least nine days of early voting for eight hours a day ahead of statewide elections, starting the second Saturday before an election until the Sunday before the election.

Early voters this year will experience the voting booths, poll workers and "I Voted" stickers synonymous with Election Day. They'll also get to personally feed their ballot into a tabulator that will count it.

Clerks can allow longer periods of early voting if they choose, as the proposal and subsequent implementation laws allow for up to 29 days of early voting for statewide elections.

In Detroit, you can vote in person at the Detroit City Clerk's office or at an Early Voting Site.

When you vote at an Early Voting Site, your voting experience will be similar to that of voting at a polling place on Election Day. You will complete your ballot, place it in a secrecy sleeve, and then deposit it into the voting tabulator.

All Early Voting Sites below will be open July 26 - Aug. 4 for the primary and again from Oct. 25 - Nov. 3 for the general.

Locations:

Department of Elections,
2978 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, Michigan 48202.

Clark Park,
1130 Clark, Detroit, Michigan 48209.

City Clerk Office,
2 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Ste 106, Michigan 48226.

Christ Temple Baptist Church,
10628 Plymouth Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48204.

Butzel Family Center,
7737 Kercheval, Detroit, Michigan 48214.

Adams Butzel Recreation Center,
10500 Lyndon, Detroit, Michigan 48238.

Palmer Park Community Center,
1121 Merrill Plaisance St., Detroit, Michigan 48203.

WCCCD Eastern Campus,
5901 Conner, Detroit, Michigan 48213.

Northwest Activities Center,
18100 Meyers Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48235.

Fanwell Recreation Center,
2711 E Outer Dr., Detroit, Michigan 48234.

WCCCD Northwest,
8200 W. Outer Dr., Detroit, Michigan 48219.

Kemeny Recreation Center,
2260 S. Fort St., Detroit, Michigan 48217.

Heilmann Recreation Center,
19601 Crusade, Detroit, Michigan 48205.

Greater Grace Temple,
23500 W. Seven Mile Rd., Detroit, Michigan 48219.

Source: City of Detroit

INSERT BALLOT HERE

How does absentee voting work?

Apply for an absentee ballot:

Every registered voter in Michigan can vote using an absent voter (AV) ballot. To request an AV ballot, you must complete and submit an Absent Voter Ballot Application.

Options for completing an Absent Voter Ballot Application:

Complete and submit an application online using a browser featuring an auto-translate feature.

Call your city or township clerk and ask that a printed application be mailed to you.

Download a printable, translated application to return by mail or in person to your local clerk or township.

In-person at your designated local clerk's office.

Completed applications must be received by your designated clerk via mail, email or dropped off in-person by 5:00 p.m. the Friday before Election Day.

Completing and returning your absentee voter ballot:

After submitting a completed application, a ballot will be mailed to your address. Your absent voter ballot may also be issued in-person while visiting your designated local clerk's office within 45 days of election day. Returned your completed absentee ballot to your designated absentee ballot dropbox or by hand to your city, township, or village clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Options for returning a completed absentee voter ballot:

Hand-deliver your completed ballot to your designated local clerk in-person.

Mail your completed ballot to your designated local clerk (not recommended within two weeks of Election Day).

Use your designated clerk's drop-box location.

Drop-box information and locations:

Every Michigan municipality is now required to have at least one secure ballot drop box for absentee voters in future elections, with an additional drop box for every 15,000 registered voters. You can drop off your absentee ballot at these drop box locations throughout the city. All are available 24/7.

View locations at Michigan.gov/Vote 



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Family is tougher than fire

Inside the fire stations of Detroit

BridgeDetroit contributor Quinn Banks spent several months in 2024 embedded in city fire houses, sharing in the culture, shadowing Detroit's first responders on emergency runs, battling fires and the quiet moments in between. He spoke with about a dozen employees within the ranks of Detroit's Fire Department.



Above: Detroit Fire Department Engine Co 56, Ladder 18 responds to a vehicle fire between residential dwellings at 18018 Buffalo St. on December 10, 2024.



Above: (From left) Detroit firefighters Dakota Perkins, Darnell Rogers and Katie Riley.



Above: Firefighter Michael Hall preps a meal for Engine 60.



Above: Detroit Fire Department Battalion Chief Brian Cross joined DFD in 1992. He's at the department's Station 6 on Russell Street.

Below: Detroit EMS service member Michael Mishler brings a patient to Ascension St. John on Detroit's east side.



Above: Sgt. Tim Carter joined Detroit's Fire Department in 2001 and fought fires alongside his father who retired in 2007. Carter said the comradery among members of the department is invaluable, "this job is just a fraternity where we get to fight fires."



Above: Detroit Fire Department Engine 56, Ladder 18 and other units respond to a vehicle fire between residential dwellings at 18018 Buffalo St. on December 10, 2024.



Diners joke and laugh while enjoying breakfast at The Clique.
Credit: Valaurian Waller, Special to BridgeDetroit

HOT CAKES, HOT TAKES

The Clique, Detroit's iconic diner, welcomes all



Jena Brooker and Valaurian Waller

Tucked beneath the glassy facade of an east side motel surrounded by the buzz of Jefferson Avenue sits a Detroit institution.

For over half a century, the Clique has been an unassuming gathering place for a loyal community crowd from all walks of life. Visitors line up at dawn for its signature, made-from-scratch dishes: silver dollar pancakes, corned beef omelets and flat-top grilled cinnamon rolls.

From politicians to rappers, athletes and neighborhood residents, the Detroit staple is a space where people of all economic classes and races come together. Despite ownership changes and ongoing challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, the tiny city gem has endured. It continues to thrive, one bottomless cup of coffee and stack of pancakes at a time, in a segment of the

restaurant scene where food made with real ingredients and shared with good company and conversation are what truly matter.

The Clique has been a hangout for Eugene Jones since his teenage years.

"The love is in the food; that's what keeps us coming back," Jones, now in his 50s, told BridgeDetroit during a recent visit with his brother.

"The Clique has been a cornerstone for the city of Detroit for quite some time," he added over a plate of pecan pancakes.

Nancy Kaffer, a longtime columnist and editorial page editor for The Detroit Free Press, has regularly visited the Clique – a haven for civil and political leaders – for at least the last eight years.

"They have the best pancakes in the world, and it's convenient," said Kaffer, who returns weekly for a standing date with her best friend. Kaffer said the reliable diner is

her go-to spot when entertaining out-of-town guests.

Sitting at the counter just inches from the stovetop, flat griddle and fry station, Kaffer and her friends watch the food being prepared. They are mesmerized by the sheer volume of eggs, hash browns and other items the cooks crank out for the packed dining room.

"It's almost poetic," she said.

In fact, the Clique has inspired at least one poem.

Spirit of Detroit awardee and Emmy award-winning poet Joel Fluent Greene penned an ode to the diner in a poem as unassuming as the diner itself:

**When that light skinned cook dude
Be @ The Clique
I rejoice in my belly
Breffist now LIT!
Don't usually use lit
But it is what it is
When the salmon croquettes
Is seasoned and thick**

"The Clique deserves the words since it's such an institution in our city," said Greene. "I've definitely seen cool Detroit creatives and people I deeply respect there over the years."

Local food influencer Carlos Parisi called the Clique "one of the last diners of its kind left in the city" that isn't a Coney Island or a ham shop. He has a Clique tradition of his own: taking people there for a birthday breakfast.

"I love that place. It's a place of celebration," said Parisi. "If you want something a little extra, unique, we go to the Clique."



A patron checks over the menu, deciding what to eat for his early morning breakfast at The Clique.

Credit: Valaurian Waller, Special to BridgeDetroit

'We lost a lot of people'

But the local treasure, like many small businesses, hit a wall during COVID-19.

Vincko Gjokaj, an immigrant from Montenegro, bought the Clique about 17 years ago and said he felt like "a king on top of a mountain" before the pandemic.

"Since COVID, I would say 'king that fell off the cliff,'" he said.

"When I was a young kid in my old country, I never dreamed of making as much money as I made during the four years before COVID. I really did good, and I really honestly tried to help everybody around here, my employees and all that," said Gjokaj, who said he pays his cooks \$27 an hour.

The effects of the pandemic were worse than the Great Recession and Detroit's bankruptcy, said Gjokaj.

"This was a lot more difficult for me than the recession in every which way," he said. "It was brutal."

At the onset of the pandemic, the diner, which had been open daily, closed completely for three months, forcing Gjokaj to take out an economic disaster loan of \$120,000 with 4% interest. Eventually, he reopened three days a week but struggled to serve customers without consistent staffing. Meanwhile, food prices soared. To cut operating costs, he reduced the menu, removed the beloved meatloaf, 12-hour slow-cooked roast beef and many sandwiches.

Focused on survival, Gjokaj said he couldn't keep up with maintaining the diner's greenhouse vibe. Empty planters now line the ceiling to the curiosity and slight disappointment of visitors. Although customers sometimes inquire, the plants haven't made a return because the daily work of caring for them is "another extra thing to do," Gjokaj said.

For the first time, Gjokaj also had to navigate consumer credit card fraud, which he said cost him around \$7,000. As a result, he switched to a cash-only operation for several years, which cost him even more customers since about 70% had been paying by card. Every day, he said, he would watch festival goers, tourists and other potential visitors turn and walk out the door when they learned the restaurant wasn't accepting credit or debit cards.

"We were really struggling to pay our bills and, on top of that, you get enough fraud – it was really tough," he said. "We lost a lot of people."



The exterior of The Clique Restaurant, located on E. Jefferson.
Credit: Valaurian Waller, Special to BridgeDetroit

Challenges ahead

Although he's celebrated some gains over the last year – expanding hours and reinstating credit and debit card payment options – Gjokaj is still uncertain about the future of the business he admits isn't quite what it used to be.

"Even so many years after COVID, I really never recovered fully business-wise," he said.

The business has struggled with staffing and lost clientele who worked in the Detroit Renaissance Center and downtown before remote work became a common practice, Gjokaj said.

Kyara Jones, 35, said she's been going for two decades and intends to stay loyal.

"If you think about downtown breakfast, you think about the Clique," said Jones on a typically packed Friday morning. The menu item that draws her in is the grits, and so does the consistent service.

"It's actually a staple, no matter if you're coming from Canada – people will literally come over just for the food," she said.

Gjokaj said if it weren't for his two kids, who helped out in the restaurant, the businesses likely would've been gone by now.

"The good thing is, we are still here. I still have a family. A lot of people lost their family, lost their business. So I'm good, and things are improving." 🍴

If you go:

The Clique,
1326 E Jefferson Ave.
is open Monday through Saturday,
7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Doors close at 2:30 p.m.



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for DETROIT CITY COUNCIL & BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

SCHEDULE FOR ALL EVENTS (NOTE: You must RSVP to attend!)

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm: Refreshments • 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm: Structured Question & Answer Period
7:15 pm - 8:00 pm: Networking with Candidates

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND LOCATIONS

DISTRICT ONE • Monday, May 12, 2025
Artists Village Detroit
17336 Lahser Road • Detroit, Michigan 48219

DISTRICT THREE • Monday, May 19, 2025
Osborn High School
11600 E. Seven Mile • Detroit, Michigan 48205

DISTRICT FIVE • Wednesday, June 18, 2025
Eastern Market - Shed 5
2810 Russell Street • Detroit, Michigan 48207

DISTRICT SEVEN • Wednesday, July 9, 2025
Brennan Recreational Facility @ Rouge Park
21415 Plymouth Road • Detroit, Michigan 48228

DISTRICT TWO • Thursday, May 15, 2025
The Raw Space
8420 W. McNichols Road • Detroit, Michigan 48221

DISTRICT FOUR • Thursday, June 12, 2025
Eastside Community Network
4401 Conner Street • Detroit, Michigan 48215

DISTRICT SIX • Thursday, June 26, 2025
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation
1211 Trumbull • Detroit, Michigan 48216

AT-LARGE • Wednesday, July 16, 2025
Eastern Market Shed 5
2810 Russell Street • Detroit, Michigan 48207

BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS • Monday, July 21, 2025
Eastern Market - Shed 5
2810 Russell Street • Detroit, Michigan 48207

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