



THE GLOBAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

The logo for the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, featuring a faint background image of a person holding scales of justice. The text "DAMON J. KEITH CENTER" is in a gold sans-serif font, and "for CIVIL RIGHTS" is in a smaller gold sans-serif font below it.

DAMON J. KEITH CENTER
for CIVIL RIGHTS

Sustainable Development, Racial Equity, and Public Health in the City of Detroit:

A Report on Detroit's *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* Workshop

February 12, 2016

Alexander Plum, MPH, CHES

The Global Health Initiative at Henry Ford Health System

"Bridging the Global-Local Divide in Academia: Best Practices & Models"

University of Maryland Baltimore

Purpose

- Explore the creative application of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relating public health to the social challenges facing the City of Detroit



Why GHI/Henry Ford?

- Interest in low-cost, “frugal” innovations
- Commitment to CBPR, healthcare research in Detroit
- Detroit’s Sociohistorical Context
 - Post-industrial
 - Structural racism & inequities
 - Privatization (public health, water)

Methods

- One-day Workshop
- 55 attendees
- 4 Breakout Workgroups
 - Hunger and Food Security (SDG 2)
 - Health and Wellbeing for All (SDG 3)
 - Sustainable Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)
 - Urban Development and Safety (SDG 11)



Hunger & Food Security



- Selected Quotes

- “Although government may be able to inform change, the ultimate transformation must come down to the community.”
- “Engaging individuals within communities in addition to producers would ultimately create a more sustainable practice.”
- “Accountability should span from the government-level down to the household because only by holding people accountable on all levels can sustainable change be achieved.”
- “We must build a greater sense of political power and build relationships with the city government, since they are the property owners of the land.”

- Goal: By Oct 2017, establish a Council or Office of Sustainability in the City of Detroit

Health & Wellbeing for All



- Selected Quotes:

- “Rates of both infant and maternal mortality are extremely high in Detroit, predominantly affecting African American women and children.”
- “Detroit’s maternal death rate of 58.7 per 100,000 babies is triple the national average and even higher than the average in Libya.”
- “We need to focus on giving women the right to manage their reproduction, which would allow them to participate more actively in the community, making them gatekeepers for healthcare.”

- Goal: By October 2016, convene an inclusive Public Health Roundtable to (re)establish a comprehensive, holistic, public health infrastructure

Sustainable Water & Sanitation



- Selected Quotes:
 - “Those who are most able to pay the necessary cost for clean water should be held accountable and do so.”
 - Although the Great Lakes Water Authority hosts public meetings, one participant worried that “all action, discussion, and decision-making has already been done ahead of time, so in actuality, there is no open discussion.”
 - “We have a great deal of the country’s fresh water in the Great Lakes, and there is a real need for the stewardship and preservation of this resource.”
- Goal: Residents of Detroit should immediately be provided safe and affordable water.

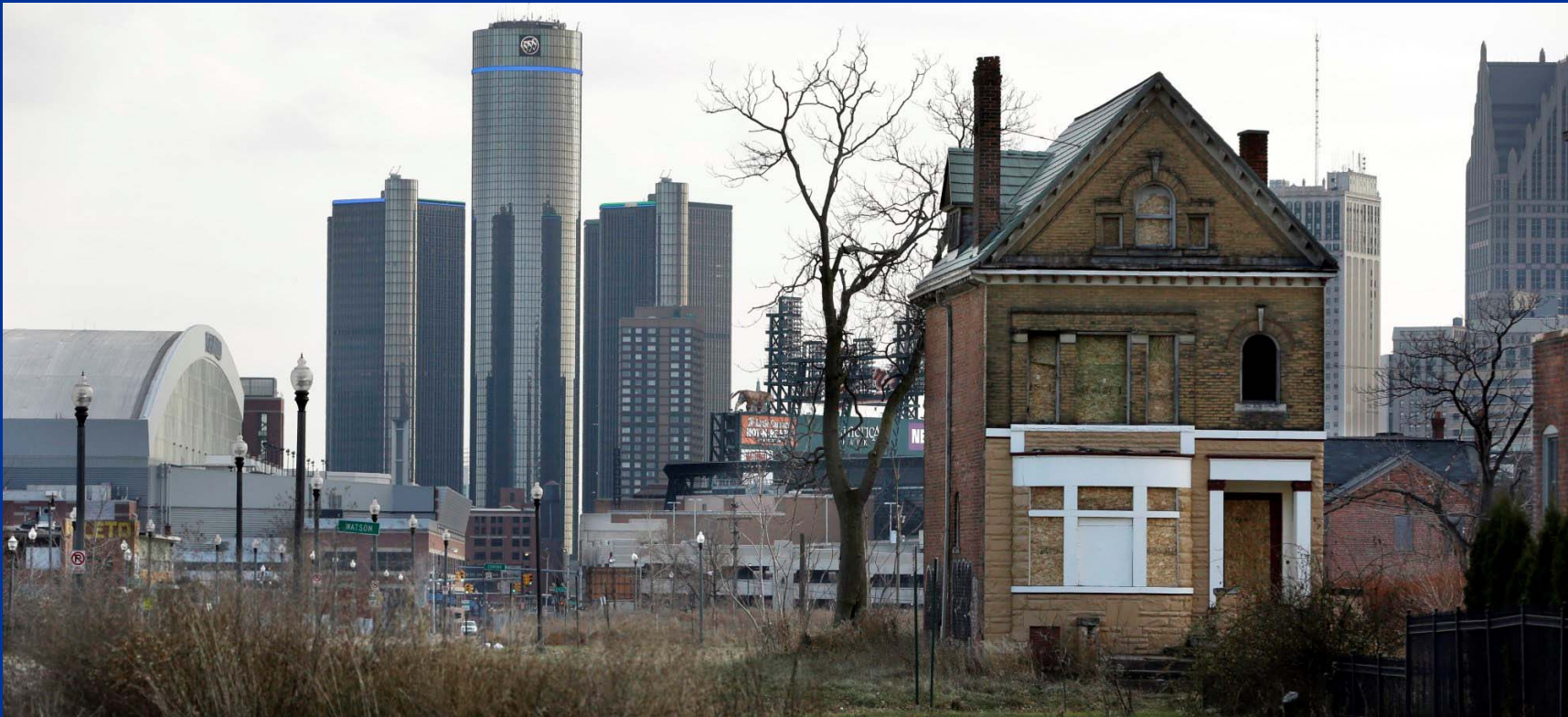
Urban Development & Safety



- Selected Quotes:
 - “Our neighborhoods need to be made safer and more affordable, we need a better transportation system, we need to make sure that Detroiters know what to do in local disasters, and the environmental impact of Detroit itself needs to be addressed more thoroughly.”
 - “Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard Detroit’s majority population to thrive and survive by the elimination of structural racism.”
 - “Detroit needs to ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing for its long-term residents.”
- Goal: By October 2017, implement inclusive urban planning and development processes that educate and empower residents of Detroit’s neighborhoods

Takeaways

- Weak, un-prioritized existing infrastructure
 - *Detroit must (re)build and reclaim a robust public health infrastructure*
- Detroit too often portrayed as vulnerable, powerless
 - *Take pride in resilience and history of organizing*
- Stressed by racialized post-industrialization
 - *Translocalism: Detroit can learn lessons from other cities around the world and vice versa*



Alexander Plum, MPH, CHES
Sr. Program Coordinator, The Global Health Initiative
aplum2@hfhs.org
313.916.2650