

White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Accomplishments in Detroit

The Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) supports President Obama's agenda to make historic investments to build ladders of opportunity for those working hard to make it to the middle class and to partner with communities that were hardest-hit by the recent recession. Under SC2, communities **including Detroit, MI** have received intensive technical assistance from federal inter-agency teams (Community Solutions Teams) that have worked alongside the mayor in City Hall to support the community's vision for economic development. SC2 has been working in **Detroit** to increase coordination and provide expertise around a number of ongoing priorities related to economic development, housing, land use, transit, education and public safety.

In September of 2013, the Obama Administration reaffirmed its commitment to Detroit, announcing a series of efforts and an even deeper collaboration with the City, State and local partners as Detroit works to regain its financial footing. The SC2 Initiative continues to support this effort in a number of ways.

Key ongoing initiatives include:

- The Department of Transportation is working with the city and the M-1 Rail investors to facilitate partnerships and lay the groundwork for a light rail system along the Woodward Corridor. **M-1 Rail** is supported by a consortium of Detroit-area corporate business ventures, foundations, and **public and private institutions that are committing more than \$100 million in funding** to build and operate a 3.3-mile modern streetcar system on Woodward Avenue, the region's primary north-south thoroughfare. DOT is committing \$25 million towards construction of the project. The light rail will link downtown Detroit, the region's largest employment center, with the rapidly developing Midtown and New Center neighborhoods to the north.
- The SC2 team has played a central role in developing Michigan's new **Regional Transit Authority (RTA)**. Before establishing the RTA, Southeast Michigan was America's largest metropolitan area without a regional transportation authority despite numerous attempts. Legislation had been introduced 23 times since the 1970s without any success. The Department of Transportation provided technical assistance to the Michigan Governor's Office on the RTA legislation and the various aspects of creating a new transit organization, including establishing a resource group of regional transit agency executives from across the United States to provide advice. The RTA will help resource, coordinate and improve transit options for residents in Detroit and the surrounding counties.
- Detroit Housing Commission received a **\$6.5 million dollar emergency grant from HUD to demolish the Frederick Douglass Homes** – a vacant public housing development spanning over 18 acres, which has long been a symbol of blight and haven for serious crime in the City of Detroit. Demolition began in September 2013 and HUD continues to provide expertise and advice.

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- Assisted the city in working with the Department of Justice to **repurpose funds under an existing Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant to retain approximately 108 officers** that were in jeopardy of being laid off. The COPS program supports the City's larger ongoing efforts to reduce violent crime.
- Worked with the Department of Justice through the **National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention** and, through the Department's **Community-Based Violence Prevention Program**, the city was awarded a grant of \$1.5 million that will support Detroit's **Operation Ceasefire** project, which aims to combine statistical information and street knowledge to identify where to concentrate antiviolence efforts, intervene in violence, and change community norms regarding violence.