

Detroit Voters Overwhelmingly Approve Proposal R, Which Would Create a Task Force on Reparations

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by [Laura Herberg](#) | Nov. 3, 2021

Image credit: [Sarah Williams](#)

Detroit City Council President Pro Tem Mary Sheffield introduced the resolution that put Proposal R on the ballot. Now that the proposal has passed, she will create and chair a task force that will also include non-city council members.

Detroit voters passed Proposal R with overwhelming support. That means the city will move forward with a reparations committee to recommend housing and economic development programs to account for historical discrimination against Black Detroiters.

Reparations are a way to compensate people who have been wronged. The concept is often associated with making amends for slavery.

Detroit City Council President Pro Tem Mary Sheffield introduced the resolution that put Proposal R on the ballot. Now that the proposal has passed, she will create and chair a city council reparations task force that will also include non-city council members.

As for what kinds of reparations the group, once established, might recommend, Sheffield says, “We’ve talked about things around education, business loans and housing, helping with home ownership.” But, she says, those details are really up in the air at this point. She wants the ideas for reparations to come from the community. “I want this to be driven by what those who have been impacted feel, and begin to have those conversations versus it coming from the top down, us telling the community what we want.”

Sheffield says the idea of direct cash payouts is not off the table.

With 77% of Detroit’s population identifying as Black in the 2020 Census, Detroit may be the city with the largest proportion of Black residents to begin to work toward reparations. Other places have included California; Asheville, N.C.; and Evanston, Ill.

Detroit voters also approved Proposal E, which decriminalizes personal possession and therapeutic use of entheogenic plants by adults.

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