

A NOTICE TO “THE HUB DETROIT” READERS

The HUB Detroit has performed a valuable service bringing into focus the status of the State Fairgrounds and its projected future. There are two articles – the cover story featuring Marvin Beatty, one of the principals of Magic Plus LLC, and a separate story about the efforts of the grassroots State Fairgrounds Development Coalition (SFDC) and its META Expo alternative (see p. 24).

The glowing report about the Magic Plus LLC – beginning with the frontpage headlines, “Magical Transformation,” and “\$1 billion vision” is, however, undeserved.

While we can agree that building a big-box strip mall and paving lots of parking lots on vacant land can be described as “transformational,” the Beatty/Ferguson plan for the historic site is truly not. On the contrary, Detroit City Planner Maurice Cox – who is not mentioned in the article – has publicly stated that **the Magic Plus LLC plan may have played well in the 1990s, but is not suited for the 21st century.**

Marvin Beatty is quoted as saying, “Detroiters deserve the same neighborhood amenities as residents of the suburbs.” Unfortunately, Beatty is not paying attention to what’s happening to the suburban shopping malls, which are witnessing a massive wave of closures of retail outlets including anchor stores like Macys and Penneys, across the country. Shopping patterns are changing. The consumer model that Beatty is proposing will be obsolete by the time his stores open, whenever that will be.

Beatty and Ferguson are years behind on the Development Agreement timeline signed with the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, which required completion of all requirements, including financials, over two years ago. Ferguson in a recent WDET piece by Amy Miller is already signaling that they won’t make a newly-aired June 2018 deadline either.

The proponents of the META Expo vision explored in the article titled, “Citizens organize around former Fairgrounds’ future,” believe that the standard for Detroiters to look up to should not be a suburban mall. The historic, iconic 163 acres can, with a plan that is truly visionary, catapult Detroit (and especially “Uptown”) into a 21st century world class venue incorporating the best Michigan has to offer in Technology, Energy and Agriculture.

The META Expo concept, as the HUB article explains, visualizes the Fairgrounds as a destination with all the amenities included in the Magic Plus LLC plan, but in an urbane, high density mixed use setting, less dependent on the automobile, and complete with a multi-modal transit hub.

We urge readers to read the articles, and to contribute your thoughts and aspirations for what the Fairgrounds should be. This opportunity will only come once. Let’s get it right!

Go to the link in the article about the SFDC Coalition and fill out a survey:

<http://www.thehubdetroit.com/citizens-organize-around-former-fairgrounds-future/>

See **www.mifairgroundsfuture.org** and “**The Future of the Michigan State Fairgrounds**” on facebook.

Email the Coalition at **sfdcmichigan@gmail.com**

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