

# A Black Detroit Mayor:

☐ Would Be Antagonistic To The Suburbs

☐ Could Get Along With The Suburbs

(Pick One)

By HENRY J. TEUTSCH

## DETROIT

Richard Austin is not the only candidate for mayor of Detroit who is black. But of all the black candidates, he is predicted to have the best chance of winning.

Austin is pitted against three major political pros—Wayne County Sheriff Roman S. Gribbs, businessman Walter Shamie, and Councilwoman Mary Beck.

A county auditor, Austin, 56, is seeking a job that is doubly troublesome. Not only does it mean running a huge city, but it also means maintaining workable relationships with suburbs. Austin's race may complicate that.

**THE SUBURBS HAVE** been at odds with Detroit for many years, and the intensity of differences has been heightened because so many Detroiters have fled the city to the suburbs.

The Observer Newspapers interviewed Austin recently in his Detroit City-County Building office and got his views on issues that affect the suburbs.

Austin was a Constitutional Convention delegate in 1962-3, and that year he served as Democratic co-chairman of an Apportionment Commission that reshaped legislative districts on a "one man, one vote" basis.

In 1964 he ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination for Congress in the first district. John Conyers won that race to become Michigan's second Negro congressman.

**QUESTION:** Over the years, Detroit has provided services on a metropolitan basis — water is the best example. Do you see any area in which the suburbs might, in the future, be accepting other services from the city? Would you support a water rate hike in suburban communities currently on Detroit water?

**AUSTIN:** I believe that every user of water should pay his fair share of the cost of operating, maintaining and improving the water system. However, I don't feel that a water user should be called upon to pay for other city services in a fee that is disguised as a water rate.

I, at the moment, am not aware that water users have been asked to pay for a part of the cost of city government.

**QUESTION:** What do you plan as an answer to Detroit's growing financial crisis? Will you want to raise the income tax on commuters? Will you seek authority to impose excise levies? Or is state aid the answer?

**AUSTIN:** I believe state aid is the big answer. However, the city should have more taxing authority than it has at the present time.

At one time, the city, under its charter, had the authority to levy an income tax and excise taxes. The Michigan Legislature has preempted the right of the city to set its own rate, even on the income tax, on both residents and non-residents and has virtually taken away from the city the power to levy excise taxes without the permission of the legislature.

I feel that the power should be restored to the city. How the power should be used, of course, is another question. But I do feel that a charter city should have the authority to raise whatever revenues it feels necessary to pay for the cost of government.

**QUESTION:** Does this include taxing suburban people who work in the city?

**AUSTIN:** Yes. We now levy a tax on non-residents who earn money in the city, and I think we need to look very closely at the rates that are being charged to non-residents in relation to that being charged to residents.

And, if we find that there is an inequitable arrangement here, we ought to correct it. Incidentally, in regard to state aid it is my feeling that state aid should be distributed to local units of government more on the basis of need than on the basis of straight population.

I believe this is true for school support as well as for support of local units of government. This is a departure from the system that is now being followed, because in the financing of the public schools, the school aid fund that is defined to give each child approximately the same number of dollars for education doesn't work perfectly.

We know that the tax base of each community varies. As a rule the children who are economically, socially and culturally deprived, who need the most help, are generally found in communities with a low base and as a result they don't get as many dollars

as some of the more affluent communities, and yet they are in need of more attention.

I'm inclined to believe, also, that some element of state aid, too, should be distributed to local units of government. The state does have the constitutional power to levy taxes. The local units don't have the power and, I think, the taxes are collected easier at the state level because we don't have the geographic, jurisdictional boundary lines that cause so much trouble when you're trying to collect taxes at the local level.

So we should lean more on the state for the collection of taxes and then distribution to local units of government on the basis of need rather than straight population.

**QUESTION:** Do you consider the suburbs "a white noose around the city's neck"? Would you like to see the suburbs racially integrated? If this were to happen, wouldn't this integration dilute your vote and wouldn't you lose your base of support?

**AUSTIN:** I don't consider the suburbs a white noose around my neck. In fact, I'm not even sure that I quite understand the term.

I feel, however, that all of our communities should provide for a housing pattern which will permit anyone who resides in the metropolitan area to live wherever he pleases or chooses, or wherever he can afford to live.

I don't believe we should have restrictive covenants, which, of course, are illegal, or that we ought to have restrictive devices that prevent people from moving about freely in the metropolitan area.

And, until we have that arrangement, there are going to be tensions in communities. One way to relieve tension, of course, is to open the community up so that people generally will have the freedom to move wherever they want, and this is not a black-white thing. I'm talking about people generally should have the right to move wherever they choose to.

Now, as for diluting power, I'm not quite sure I understand that because I am personally running as a candidate for mayor to serve all the people of Detroit.

It is true my face is black, but I don't expect to be a mayor for the black people of Detroit alone. It is my intention to serve all of the people and the programs I am promoting are designed to show my interest in all the people and not just black people.

**QUESTION:** A consulting firm to the Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) has recommended it purchase about eight bus companies from the metropolitan area and incorporate the lines into a service for the entire area of Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. As mayor, would you be willing to sell the DSR (Detroit bus line) to SEMTA for this?

**AUSTIN:** I believe we should have a public transportation system that affords services throughout the metropolitan area without the kinds of restrictions that governmental, jurisdictional boundary lines impose.

There are many people who cannot afford the luxury of private transportation and have to rely on public transportation to get to their places of employment and back, to do their shopping, and even to get to the cultural centers.

It is my feeling that all of us have the responsibility of seeing to it that those who cannot afford luxurious travel have public transportation that is convenient, that is effective, and that will get people wherever they want with the minimum of inconvenience.

Many people live in the city and work in the suburbs. They should be able to get to their places of employment by way of public transportation where necessary and, of course, where the reverse is true.

I will be inclined to a merging of these transportation systems where we have one large, effective system. But I want to make absolutely certain that everyone will have access to it.

**QUESTION:** The Detroit planning department has recommended the city build a satellite city at the now closed Maybury Sanatorium in Northville and build low income housing at the site. Will you support this plan?

**AUSTIN:** To be very honest, I don't know enough about the plan to offer any support for it or oppose it. I would want to know more about it before I offer an opinion.

**QUESTION:** Do you have any second thoughts on the apportionment districts your 1963 commission set up? Many outsiders say the districts are statistically perfect but are very difficult to campaign in because of the way they meander.



RICHARD AUSTIN: I don't care for the suburbs a white noose around my neck.

**AUSTIN:** Well, I have no second thoughts about them because all of the trends of our court decisions since that plan was drawn tend to support the concepts that were followed in the drafting of the plan.

It's true, where we ignore to some extent governmental jurisdictional boundaries, we complicate the election process a little for the one who has to campaign. But at least we know that when a person has been elected from the district, he represents the same number of people that another legislator or another member of that legislative body represents.

**QUESTION:** What are the issues that you're going to campaign on and do any of them relate directly to the suburbs?

**AUSTIN:** I am campaigning on what I consider to be the major issue and that is that too many people no longer think of the city as the best place in which to live. And people who have the ability and the mobility — this usually includes middle and upper income families, younger families and mostly white families — are leaving the city and moving into the suburbs.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Monday 8     | Dalmation Club Meeting<br>Community Room 8 p.m.   |
| Tuesday 9    | LADIES DAY. Cinema 1, free movie, coffee, prizes. 9:30 a.m. coffee, 10 a.m. showtime. Weight Watchers in Community Room — 12:15 and 7:30 p.m. |
| Wednesday 10 | Colonial Senior Citizens, Community Room, noon. Parents Without Partners Community Room, 8 p.m.   |
| Thursday 11  | Weight Watchers, Community Room, 10 a.m. German Shepherd Club, Community Room, 8 p.m.   |
| Friday 12    | Marine Recruiters in Mall.  |
| Saturday 13  | Coin Show in Community Room 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Auction at 4 p.m.   |

## ENROLL NOW FOR CRAFT CLASSES IN LIVONIA MALL COMMUNITY ROOM

starting September 18, every Thursday, through November.  
Rasim work, Christmas gifts, decorations, with instructor Kay Petric. Classes 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. First Class... all material furnished. Ten-week course in handicrafts for \$10.

Enclosed is \$10 for 10-week course.

Name..... Phone.....

Address.....

Mail to:

Livonia Mall Merchants Association

29514 Seven Mile Livonia, Michigan

48152

(co-sponsored by Parks and Recreation of Livonia)

There's always something going on at...

LIVONIA MALL

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

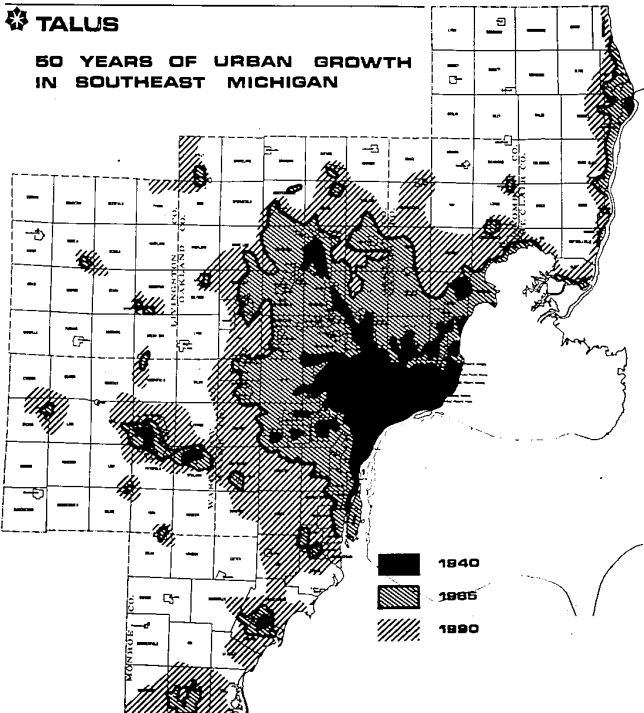
7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY

7 MILE AT WOODBURY



SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN'S growth has stemmed in a radial pattern from Detroit during the last half of the 20th century. Population increased from 2.6 million in 1940 to 4.4 million in 1965, and is expected to swell to 6.9 million by 1990.

The amount of urban land increased from 260 square miles in 1940 to 802 square miles by 1965, and more than 1,800 square miles by 1990 (Source: Transportation and Land Use Study)