

Local groups seek others to march for cities

By Wayne Peal
staff writer

Marching under the banner "Jobs, Peace, Justice," they hope to add something sorely missing from this year's presidential campaign: a serious discussion of issues facing urban America — made even more urgent by the violence triggered following the verdict in the Rodney King trial.

Members of a variety of local groups plan to attend the national, Save Our Cities march Saturday, May 16 in Washington, D.C.

They hope to focus attention on a variety of issues, ranging from jobs and housing to education, crime, drugs and the environment.

"Thus far, this campaign has been about character — who Bill Clinton did or didn't sleep with and whether George Bush was telling the truth about his involvement in Iran/Contra," said Stewart Watts of the area

SANE/Freeze office in Ferndale. "We'd like to see a return to the issues."

The national SANE/Freeze office is helping to coordinate the event. Best known for its nuclear freeze campaign a decade ago, SANE/Freeze is now campaigning for a reduction in the nation's military budget.

"WE'RE SEEKING a 50 percent reduction in military spending over the next five years," Watts said. "We want to see this money put to other use."

Other participating groups may or may not share that goal, but they all agree America's cities are in trouble. They also agree that the White House and Congress are doing too little to help.

"We'll tell them it's time for a peace dividend," said Jean Prokopow of West Bloomfield. A member of WAND — Women's Action for

New Directions — Prokopow not only plans to march but also to lobby legislators.

Congressional Lobby Day, a companion event, is set for May 15.

Democratic Party presidential contenders Bill Clinton and Jerry Brown are among rumored attendees at the next day's march.

President Bush may be less welcome. A march flier decries "the policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations" for "devastating our communities."

THE MARCH is sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. It has been endorsed by the Wayne County Commission and individual elected officials. In Inkster, Berkley and other communities.

While elected leaders from suburban Wayne and Oakland counties haven't issued endorsements of their own, dozens of suburbanites are expected to attend.

At least three busloads of people are expected to leave from the local area, said event coordinator Maggie Tyson of Birmingham.

"We're expecting to bring people from all over metro Detroit," she said.

Ethel Schwartz of Southfield, a member of the Gray Panthers, said

her organization strongly backs the march.

"We're not just about seniors," she said. "Our motto is 'Age in Action' and we see this as a way to get involved."

Despite the widely-publicized polarization between Detroit and its suburbs, local participants say a re-

newed city will boost the entire region.

"Certainly, Detroit should be at the forefront of any change in national priorities," Prokopow said.

Additional information on the march and Congressional Lobbying Day is available by calling SANE/Freeze, 548-3920.

Loans available to help home-buyers

Prospective Oakland County home buyers who have not been able to qualify for a mortgage may be eligible for the Michigan Initiative Loan Program.

The program allows people to qualify for mortgages even though their personal income level is 15 per-

cent below that usually required for a standard mortgage.

The state-wide loan program includes ownership education counseling for home-buyers, a 5 percent down payment and flexible credit terms. The maximum income limit for Oakland County home buyers is

\$51,250.

Counseling sessions will be held at the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency, 196 Oakland Ave., Pontiac. Sessions begin Monday, May 18.

To register, or for additional information call housing program coordinator I.J. Bernard, 858-5183.

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