

From: [1300 BOD Secretary](#)
To: [Historic District Commission \(Staff\)](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lafayette steam line
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 6:20:31 PM

Please post the attached on your site with the other comments on the steam line.

Thank you,

Ed Broutin

Secretary, 1300 Lafayette co-op board of directors

Our Cooperative is aware and appreciative of the historic nature of our neighborhood. We are also sensitive to the fact that our highrise and Lafayette Park exist on land where Detroit's Black Bottom, a historic Black community, flourished before it was destroyed by the city in the name of urban renewal, using the tool of eminent domain.

In 2023, 1300 experienced a catastrophic failure of our boilers. After extensive research, we learned that steam was the original method of heating our building and that the underground steam pipes installed in 1962, could still service us. This was three years after the Mies Van Der Rohe townhouses were built, and right before our highrise went up in 1963.

We were exhilarated to discover that returning to steam would also be the most efficient, economical and green solution we could provide to guarantee reliable, affordable heat and hot water for our 580 shareholders, some of whom have called 1300 their home for over half a century.

We learned that reconnecting to distributed steam involves placing a brand new, smaller circumference pipe inside of the original steam pipe. This process requires digging to unearth those old pipes. After this temporary inconvenience, we understood that the landscape of all impacted areas would be completely restored to their original states. It was our understanding that nothing of any historic nature will undergo any permanent changes or damage.

In response to the concerns raised by our neighbors, Detroit Thermal has relocated the manhole covers to be positioned even farther from the playground. For the official record, the playground was never in the path of any of the work, but with heightened sensitivity to this area, the work path now travels even farther from it.

The miscommunication and inaccuracy over the details of this project are unfortunate. However, we understand the basis for the concerns raised. At the same time, we regret that communication was not more proactive and we share that responsibility with Detroit Thermal and its subcontractors. Please know that 1300 will do everything possible to keep communication channels open, assure minimal inconvenience to our neighbors, and maintain the historic integrity of Lafayette Park.

We would ask that the Commission grant a work permit to Detroit Thermal and we are open to any other requests related to historic preservation for this project .