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Exclusive Report

Integration will take decades

Despite glimmers of hope, barriers remain formidable

By Ron French / *The Detroit News*

Will the Metro Detroit of our children be viewed in black and white?

The racial divide that has shaped lives in Detroit and its suburbs may take decades to change.

Inside today, The Detroit News publishes the last installment of "The Cost of Segregation," an examination of the price we pay for living separately. Earlier installments have focused on the causes and costs of segregated housing.

Today, The News looks at the city's future and what Detroit must do to lose its title as the segregation capital of America.

Losing that title won't be easy. Other cities have spent decades addressing a problem that Detroit and its suburbs have ignored. Historic living patterns change slowly, and much rides on the revitalization of the city of Detroit.

Yet there are glimmers of hope: Several suburban communities have the potential for becoming racially stable. A continued growth of the Hispanic population may aid integration. And Detroit's new mayor considers integration a key to a Detroit comeback.

"I'm encouraged," said Evelyn Stein, 57, a black Detroiter who is moving soon into a new housing development in the city. "I'd like to see everybody, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, living in these places."

Public discussion on segregation

If you'd like to participate in a town-hall forum on the issue of segregation call (313) 222-2716, (313) 222-2717 or go to The Detroit News Web site, detnews.com and click on the segregation icon. Include your name, age, city, phone number and e-mail address if you have one.

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