



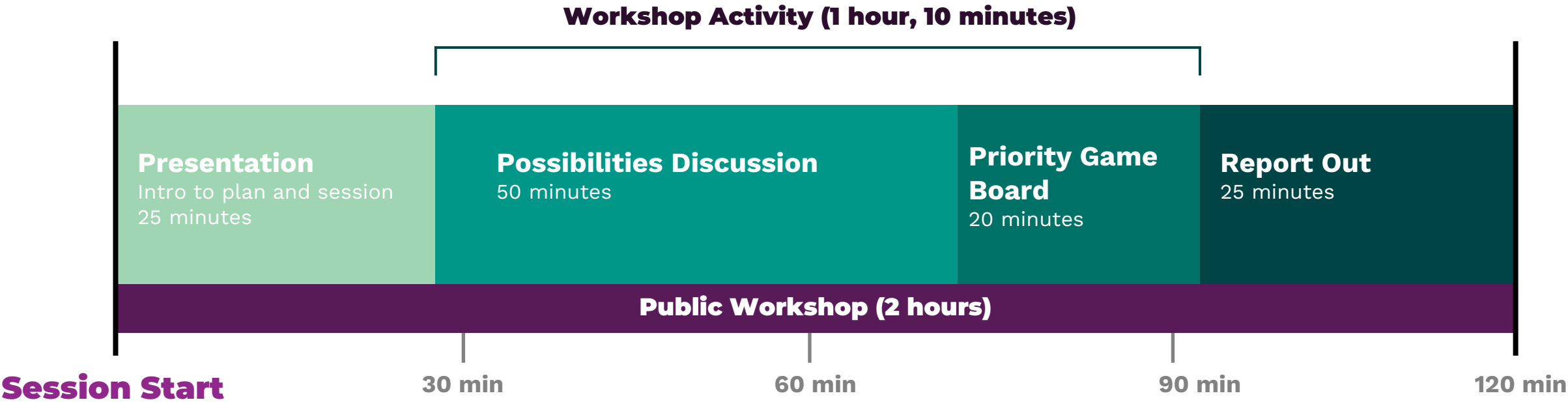
# Open Space & Environment

## Plan Detroit Futures: Possibilities & Realities

April 2025



# Our Session Today



# Goals for Today

## **Review**

where we are in  
the Plan Detroit  
process and  
what we have  
learned so far

## **Discuss**

different policy  
approaches for  
housing and  
neighborhoods

## **Prioritize**

which  
approaches  
would work best  
for Detroit

## **Share**

learn what other  
tables were  
discussing

## What is Plan Detroit?

**Plan Detroit is a roadmap for future development and change in Detroit.**

It looks at where **we are now**, what we **hope to be** in the future, and what land use policies and actions are **needed to achieve** that future vision.





## What is Plan Detroit?

**Detroit's last Master Plan was completed in 2009, and the City has changed a lot since then.**

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act recommends that cities review their master plans every 5 years.





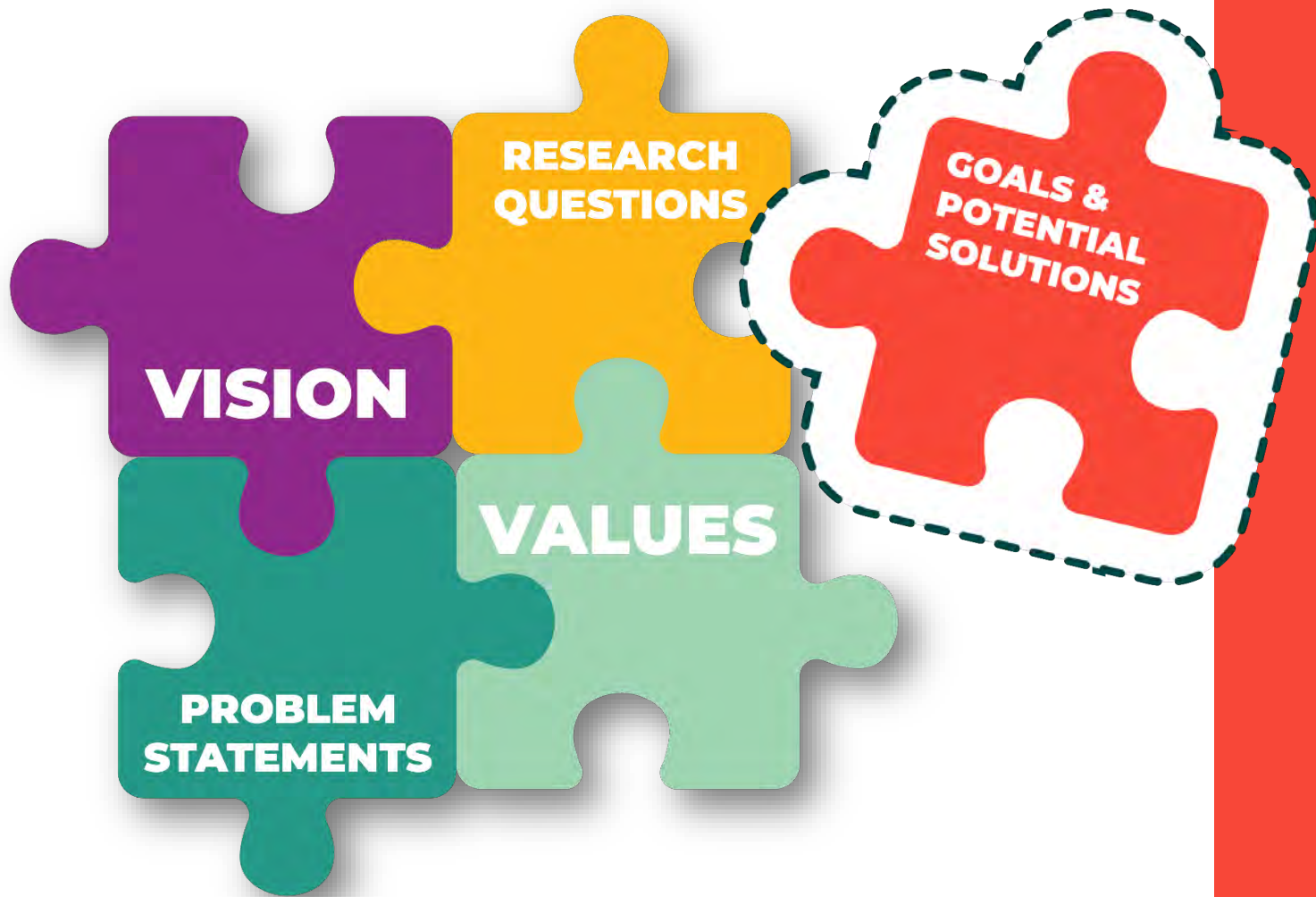
## How will Plan Detroit guide future decision-making

- Doing **detailed analysis** of opportunities and challenges related to Detroit's people, infrastructure and economy
- **Learning from you** about priorities and experiences to shape policy decisions that reflect community needs
- **Coordinating with existing businesses**, government offices and community leaders



# Our Journey





We're building  
Plan Detroit  
**piece-by-piece**  
with **YOUR**  
**input!**

Help us complete the picture.



Today's discussion is **one of 5 workshops** that are taking place this week.

April  
12<sup>th</sup>

Housing &  
Neighborhoods

Start time: 10 AM



April  
12<sup>th</sup>

Open Space &  
Environment

Start Time: 1:30 PM

April  
14<sup>th</sup>

Arts & Culture

Start Time: 5:30 PM

April  
15<sup>th</sup>

Mobility

Start Time: 5:30 PM

April  
16<sup>th</sup>

Jobs &  
Economy

Start Time: 5:30 PM

Go to **plandetroit.com** to register for another session you are interested in.



# WHAT WE LEARNED FROM YOU!



We asked  
Detroiters to fill in  
the blank.

**In 20 years,  
Detroit will  
be\_\_\_\_\_.**

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Detroiters to fill in  
the blank.

**In 20 years,  
Detroit will  
be\_\_\_\_\_.**





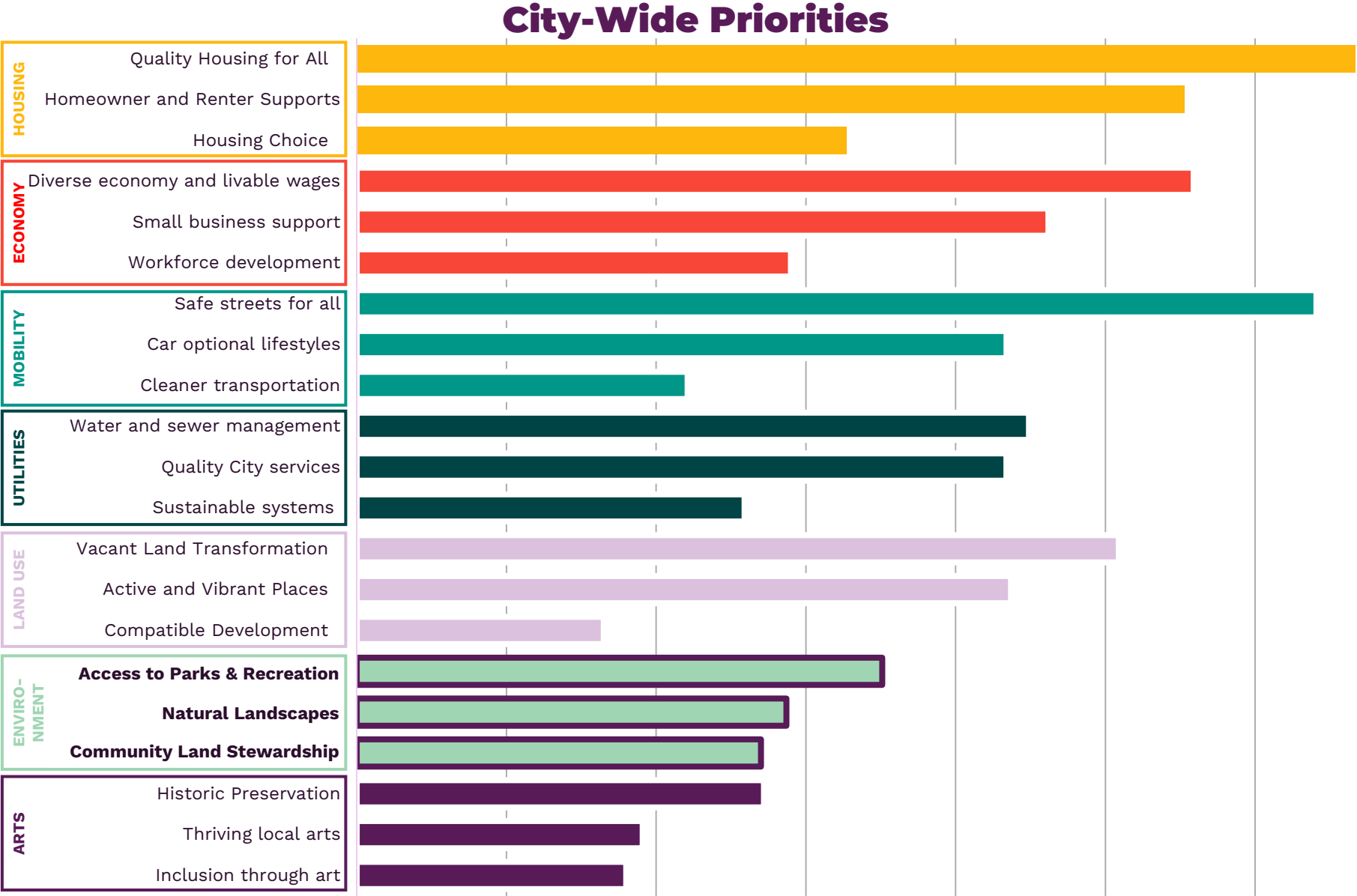
# The top topics we heard the most were

1. Prosperous
2. Community-driven
3. Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive
4. Vibrant
5. Safe



We asked Detroit what their top priorities were.

The three Open Space & Environment cards were selected 908 times.



# **Detroit will be a city of choice and opportunity.**

While Detroit may not be a city of choice and opportunity for all yet, we know there is incredible potential in our vibrant neighborhoods, rich culture, and innovative spirit.

Over the next 20 years, we will build on these strengths to continue to create a city that offers a higher quality of life that attracts people to live, work, and play here, and delivers greater prosperity for those who stayed and those who will choose to call Detroit home.



## **Vision & Values**

**Resilience**

**Equity**

**Innovation**

**Solidarity**

**Legacy**



# WHAT WE KNOW IS HAPPENING





## **Access to parks and open space is improving, but bus access could be better**

80% of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, but gaps remain.

Only 60% of residents are within a 20-minute bus ride of a recreation center.



# Health impacts and environmental risks hit differently

Environmental issues include **air quality concerns, urban heat island effect, and flooding.**

They continue to **affect Detroit neighborhoods differently**, with some communities facing greater environmental stresses than others.

For example, tree coverage ranges dramatically from 37% in some districts to just 15% in others.





**These natural spaces help support a strong ecosystem and help manage rainwater, but my favorite part is how pretty they make the city!**

# **We have a wealth of natural resources**

Not only is there the Detroit River, but there are also 12,800 acres of important wetlands, streams, and other waterways to protect in Detroit.



# Climate challenges require innovative approaches

Flooding risks affect some areas more than others.

Vacant land could help surrounding areas better adapt to the climate.

Ecological benefits remain unrealized in many open spaces.





# Vacant spaces can be community assets, not burdens

Detroit has many vacant properties—some are concentrated but others are scattered throughout otherwise occupied blocks, making service delivery inefficient and affecting neighborhood cohesion.

Community-managed spaces show potential but require resources.





# LET'S CHAT ABOUT **DETROIT'S POSSIBILITIES**

*How can Plan Detroit create the change we need to see?*



# Opportunities & Challenges

## Challenge

**Creating parks that can be designed, constructed, maintained, and staffed with limited resources.**

**Identifying which vacant land reuse strategies are most appropriate for different neighborhoods**

**Navigating solutions for our climate, health, and environment inequities**

## Opportunity

**Tying our parks improvements and our mobility improvements gets us closer to our goal of having everyone within a walk of a park or ride of a recreation facility.**

**Preserving our natural systems and waterways so we live in a healthier environment.**

**Investing in Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) to prevent the impacts of flooding on our homeowners**

## Our Mission

**Get more people walkable access to parks.**

**Make more people within a 20-minute ride of recreation centers.**

**Continue to preserve our vast natural resources.**

**Integrate public health concerns to address air quality, heat islands, flooding, and more**

**You are  
experts on  
your  
neighborhood  
and daily  
experiences!**

## **Help shape Detroit's future policies and goals!**

- Discuss different Possibilities – the tools we can use to make Plan Detroit a reality
- Consider how they might work in different neighborhoods
- Prioritize which Possibilities should be included in Plan Detroit
- Identify what needs happen for that possibility to work well

# Now We Want to Hear From You

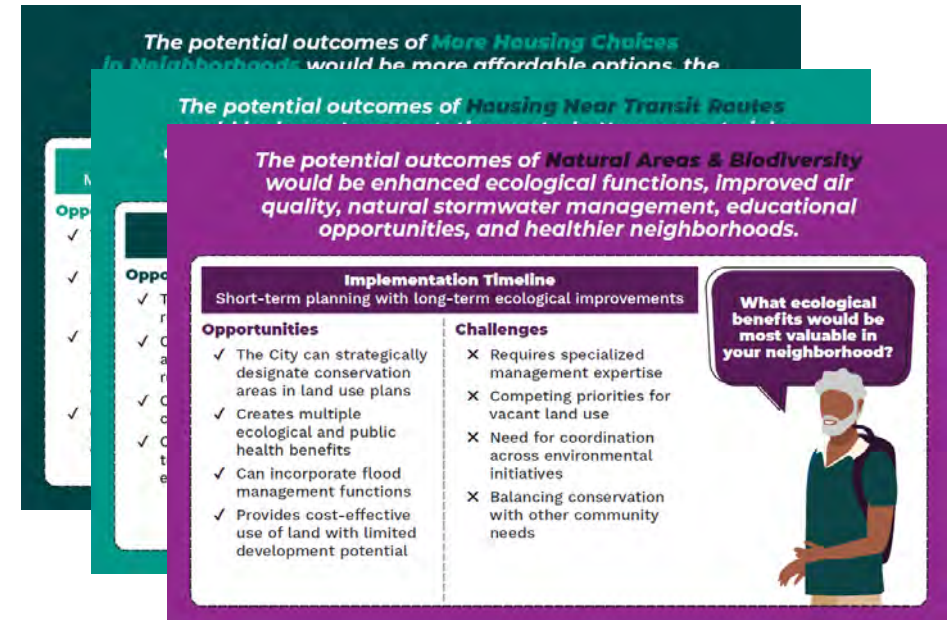
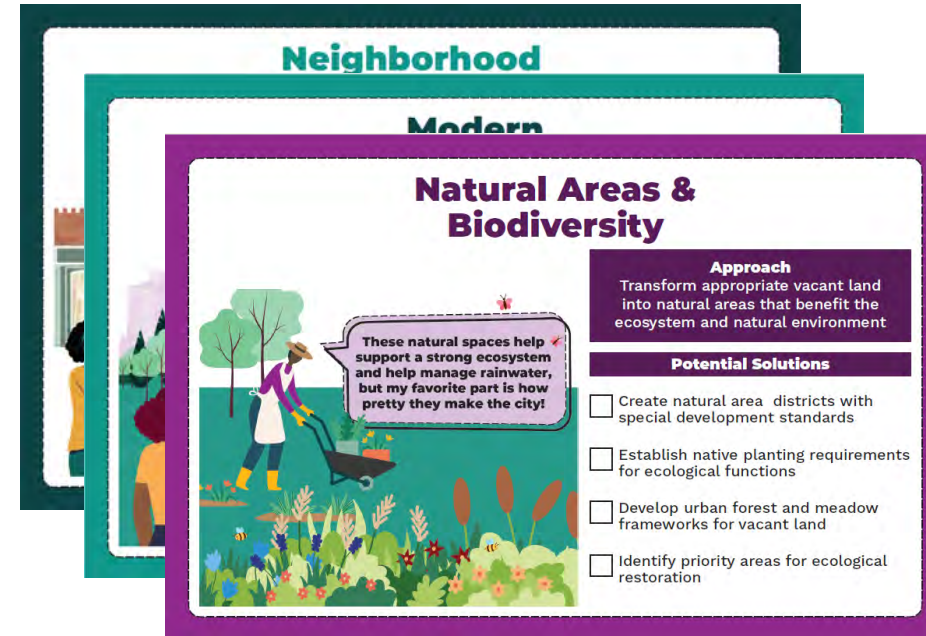




# Possibility Cards Activity

You'll explore cards with ideas like:

- Expanded Green Infrastructure Network
- Neighborhood-managed Open Spaces
- Environmental Protection Buffer Areas
- High Quality Parks & Recreation Facilities
- Climate-Ready Neighborhood Strategies
- Natural Areas & Biodiversity
- **Plus:** Create your own policy ideas!



**These possibility cards are conversation starters, not final policies.**

They present **different approaches** to challenges in Detroit and help us understand what **types of solutions** Plan Detroit can address.

They're designed to spark discussion about **what might work best** in your neighborhood and across the city.



**There are  
two activities  
for today's  
discussion!**

## **Discuss the Possibility Cards**

- What would make these ideas work?
- What concerns do you have?
- Share your own ideas!

## **Vote on Which Ideas You Prefer**

- "We like this idea!"
- "This works for some neighborhoods, not all"
- "This won't work in Detroit"
- "We'd like to add this new idea!"



# Let's play!







# LET'S START WITH **THE POSSIBILITY CARDS**



# Begin Your Conversation with Card #1

What would need to be in place for this to work well?

What questions or concerns do you have about this approach or the potential solutions?

## Expanded Green Infrastructure Network

The plants that have been added really help to slow the runoff and prevent too much pooling when it rains. I think we've been spared some major flooding!

### Approach

Build an integrated network of green infrastructure that manages stormwater, provides ecological benefits, and connects greenways

### Potential Solutions


- ☐ Prioritize implementation of planned greenways from existing City plans
- ☐ Create requirements for green infrastructure along key corridors
- ☐ Designate “green streets” with enhanced stormwater features
- ☐ Leverage vacant land strategically to connect existing parks & open space

# Time for Card #2

What would need to be in place for this to work well?

What questions or concerns do you have about this approach or the potential solutions?

## Neighborhood-Managed Open Spaces



**Approach**  
Creating a structured framework for community stewardship of vacant land and open spaces

**Potential Solutions**

- ☐ Establish clear criteria for prioritizing community-managed sites
- ☐ Create pathways for long-term community control with defined responsibilities and support
- ☐ Develop tiered maintenance standards based on organizational capacity
- ☐ Match appropriate projects to community group capabilities




# Let's Move On to Card #3

What would need to be in place for this to work well?

What questions or concerns do you have about this approach or the potential solutions?

## Environmental Protection Buffer Areas



**Approach**  
Create buffer areas between industry and highways and homes to reduce environmental and health impacts

**Potential Solutions**

- ☐ Establish transition zones between industrial and residential areas
- ☐ Require enhanced environmental standards along highways
- ☐ Update ordinances for truck route restrictions near residential areas
- ☐ Implement screening and setback requirements for industry near sensitive areas



# Time to Talk About Card #4

What would need to be in place for this to work well?

What questions or concerns do you have about this approach or the potential solutions?

## High Quality Parks & Recreation Facilities



The illustration shows a person with short brown hair, wearing a purple shirt and dark overalls, standing on a sidewalk and looking at a green sign. The sign is attached to a black pole and has a speech bubble shape. The sign reads: 'Wow, I love all the amazing park improvements I'm seeing across the City! I can't wait for my neighborhood park to be improved!'. To the left of the sign is a blue building with 'TIREMAN AVE.' written vertically on it. The background shows a green lawn and some trees.

**Approach**  
Improve Detroiters' health and quality of life through investment in high-quality parks and recreation facilities


**Potential Solutions**

- ☐ Align zoning with Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan priorities
- ☐ Create standards for buildings facing parks to enhance safety
- ☐ Prioritize pedestrian connections to neighborhood parks
- ☐ Continue to expand public access to the Riverfront

# Now It's Time for Card #5

What would need to be in place for this to work well?

What questions or concerns do you have about this approach or the potential solutions?



**Climate-Ready Neighborhood Strategies**

**Approach**  
Develop standards that help residents withstand extreme weather events and reduce climate impacts

**Potential Solutions**

- ☐ Establish climate resilience overlays in areas vulnerable to flooding or heat
- ☐ Create development guidelines for flood-prone areas
- ☐ Leverage existing City programs to expand access to energy efficiency programs and electrification upgrades
- ☐ Use vacant land for climate functions including green infrastructure and green energy

**Elevating our rec center's HVAC equipment helped save it from getting ruined the last time we had a flood**




# Getting Close – Let's Chat About Card #6

What would need to be in place for this to work well?

What questions or concerns do you have about this approach or the potential solutions?

## Natural Areas & Biodiversity



These natural spaces help support a strong ecosystem and help manage rainwater, but my favorite part is how pretty they make the city!

**Approach**

Transform appropriate vacant land into natural areas that benefit the ecosystem and natural environment

**Potential Solutions**

- ☐ Create natural area districts with special development standards
- ☐ Establish native planting requirements for ecological functions
- ☐ Develop urban forest and meadow frameworks for vacant land
- ☐ Identify priority areas for ecological restoration

# Do You Have Other Ideas?

What possibilities are missing that should be considered?

## **Additional Possibilities to Consider**

**What is your idea?**

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**How might this idea take shape in your neighborhood?**

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**What would the outcome of this be?**

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# NOW LET'S THINK ABOUT **THE PRIORITIES**



# Help Us Understand What's Important!

Place your cards on your priority board!

### Expanded Green Infrastructure Network




The plants that have been added really help to slow the runoff and prevent too much pooling when it rains. I think we've been spared some major flooding!

**Approach**  
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**Potential Solutions**

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- ☐ Leverage vacant land strategically to connect existing parks & open space

### Neighborhood-Managed Open Spaces




We've been caring for this vacant parcel for years, I'm glad our efforts are officially recognized

**Approach**  
Creating a structured framework for community stewardship of vacant land and open spaces

**Potential Solutions**

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- ☐ Match appropriate projects to community group capabilities

### Environmental Protection Buffer Areas



All these trees and plants really help reduce noise from the highway

**Approach**  
Create buffer areas between industry and highways and homes to reduce environmental and health impacts

**Potential Solutions**

- ☐ Establish transition zones between industrial and residential areas
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### High Quality Parks & Recreation Facilities




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**We like this idea!**




**We like this idea for some neighborhoods, but not others.**



**We don't think this idea will work in Detroit.**



**We'd like to add this idea!**



A photograph of a group of people at an event, overlaid with a teal-to-purple gradient. In the background, a sign reads "ACC YOUTH CENTER". A woman in the center is speaking into a microphone. Other people are seated around her, some looking at papers. A man in a suit stands in the background on the right.

**Share out!**



A photograph of a community meeting or town hall. In the foreground, several people are seated, looking towards the right. A woman in the center is speaking into a microphone. To her right, another woman is looking at a piece of paper. In the background, a man in a suit is standing. A large sign on the wall reads "ACC YOUTH CENTER". The image has a green and blue color overlay.

**What's Next?**



# Upcoming Sessions

Please join us here at the Joseph Walker Williams Community Center for upcoming sessions:

## Arts & Culture

Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup> | 5:30 – 7:30 pm

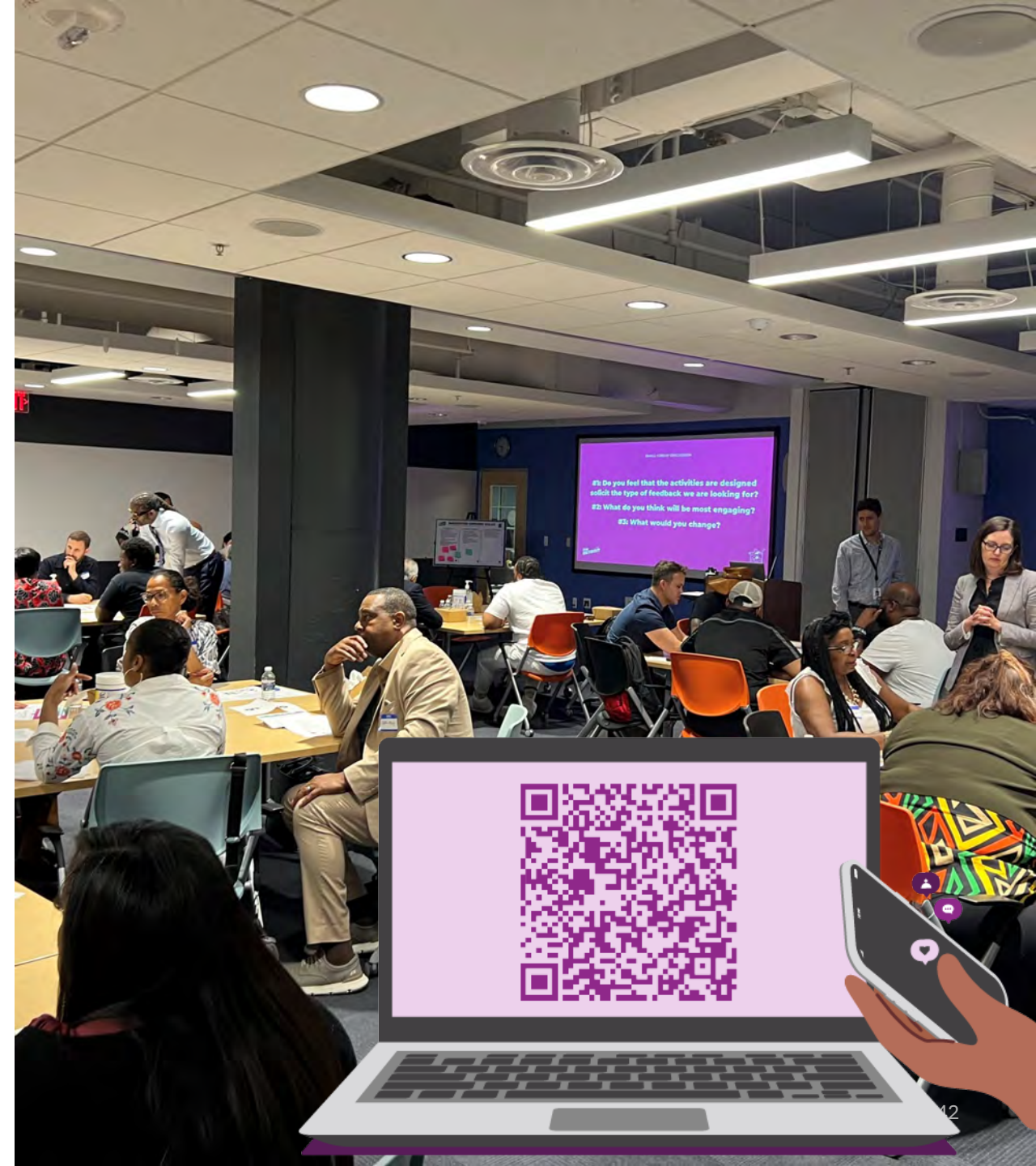
## Mobility

Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> | 5:30 – 7:30 pm

## Jobs & Economy

Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> | 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Go to **plandetroit.com** or scan the QR code to learn more and get involved!



plan  
**DETROIT**

