



MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE
CONVENTION 2024
WELCOME!

Thriving Communities Deep Dive

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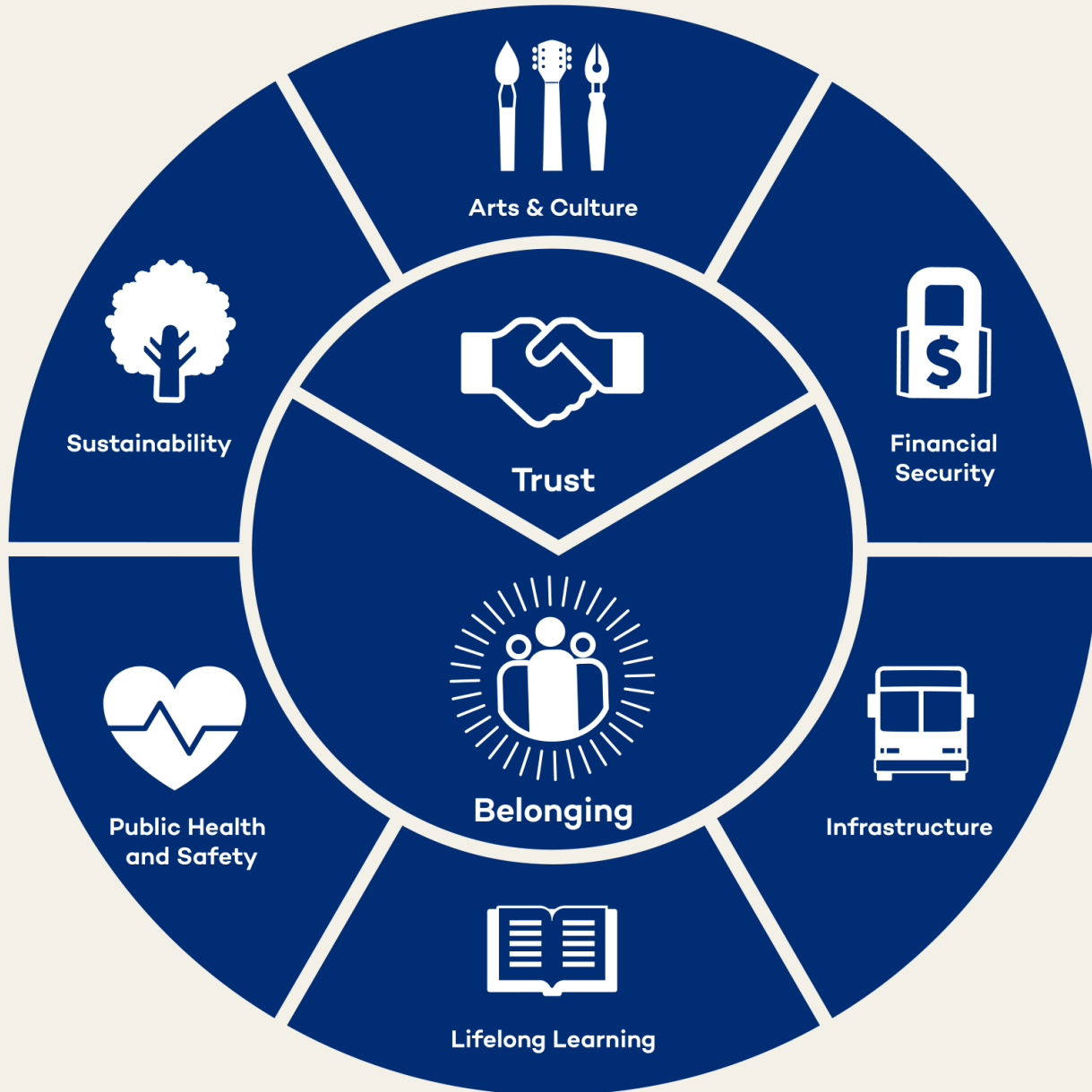
Agenda

- Brief recap of 'An Honest Look at Michigan's Thriving Communities'
 - What Is Thriving Communities and why is the League talking about it?
- The Thriving Communities Tools
 - The Scorecard
 - The Equalizer
- Community-Based Exercises
 - Community Mapping
 - Equalizer Scenario Exercise



What is thriving communities?

- **“Thriving Communities” is an evolution of our continuing placemaking work.** It journeys beyond the headlines and leans on the multi-faceted successes of placemaking and community building.
 - Our interest in defining the characteristics of thriving communities and charting a path forward for policy makers **builds on the League’s 125-year legacy of impactful advocacy, practical education, and inspiring work.**
 - We are crafting ‘thriving communities’ strategies that will provide guidance for civic leaders and public policy makers at all levels of government.
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Creating thriving communities

A thriving community embodies connection, accessibility, and opportunity for its residents. It fosters a mindset of inspiration and optimism among leaders, prioritizing trust and belonging in everyday municipal decisions.

It is **placemaking**,
it is **community wealth building**,
it is **growing Michigan together**,
it is **resilience**.



Why the focus on us?

- The League and our members are the right people to lead this reframing.
- **We are the best in the state (and in the nation) on talking about and doing placemaking.**
- **You (our members) are *the conveners of place, and the stewards of your communities*: you are already doing inclusive community building.**

Pillars of a Thriving Community

- **Public Health and Safety:** Meets individuals' needs to feel safe and secure, providing effective response and reducing exposure to harm.
- **Infrastructure:** Encompasses fundamental facilities, services, and systems serving an area's economy and population.
- **Financial Security:** Ensures fiscal health at the municipal, institutional, commercial, familial, and individual levels, fostering economic resilience and sustained prosperity through economic and community development.
- **Sustainability:** Manages natural resources and supports environmental stewardship to ensure long-term harmony between the built and natural environment, leveraging them as public assets.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Recognizes education and training as a continuous journey from early childhood through adulthood, encompassing K–12 education, post-secondary pathways, and ongoing opportunities for adult learners, teachers, and mentors of all ages.
- **Arts and Culture:** Respects, celebrates, and recognizes cultural identities, traditions, historical contexts, and creative outputs as critical assets that strengthen the social fabric of a community.
- **Trust and Belonging:** Anchors and connects: emphasizing trust in neighbors, community leaders, local governments, and other partners; building the connection between community members and the places they inhabit; offering participatory agency to enhance access to resources and social networks.

Why do we need to talk about ‘thriving’?

Michigan is having big conversations right now about its future. Our communities need to be front and center in the state’s strategy.

How data reflects the decisions we’ve made about ‘place’ and how we can improve.

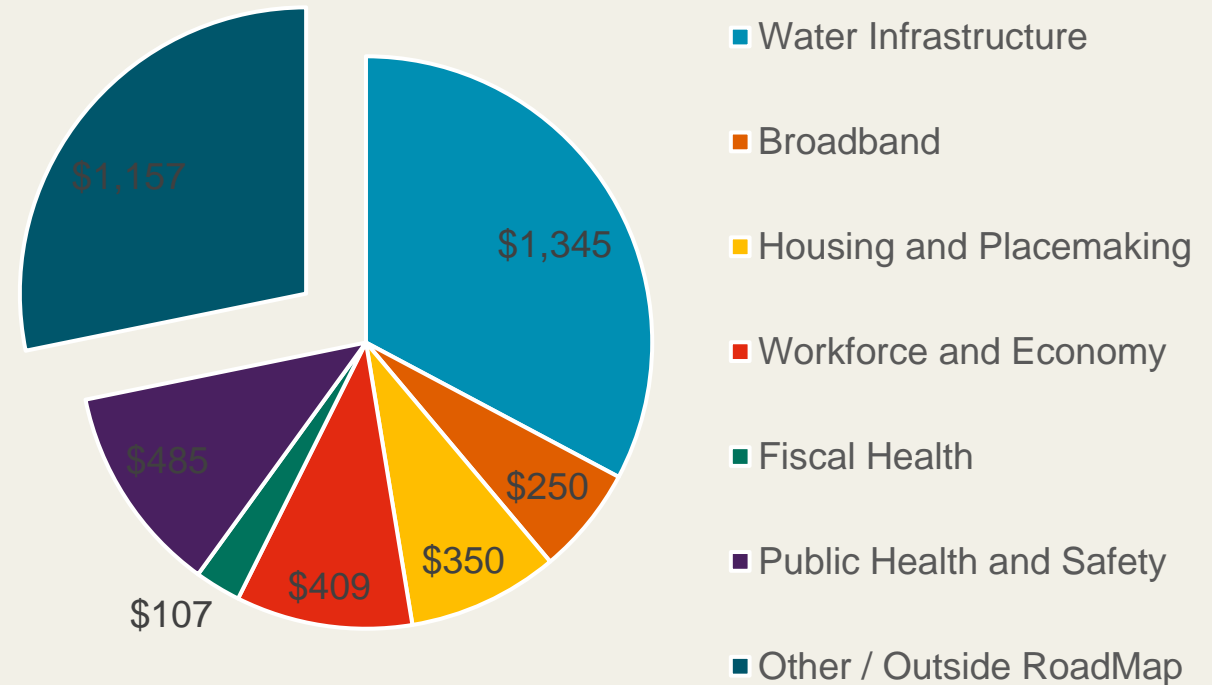
- Data influences policy.
- State policy influences how we can act locally.

When we bring people together, we succeed

Coalition for Strong and Prosperous Michigan brought consensus from many partners to advocate for investing in what local communities needed.

In the first year of ARPA spending, Michigan invested 72%—nearly \$3 Billion—of its state ARPA allocation in priorities our coalition had outlined.

Michigan's First Year of ARPA Investment
(millions)



Tools to support a ‘thriving communities’ strategy

The Scorecard: This state-level tool evaluates how well Michigan is doing in supporting community well-being. It provides state policymakers with clear data that shows the important role of local governments.

The Equalizer: This locally-focused tool helps community leaders discuss priorities and show the outcomes of their decisions. It highlights the various challenges and opportunities that can either help or hinder a community’s ability to reach its goals, which are part of Community Wealth Building.



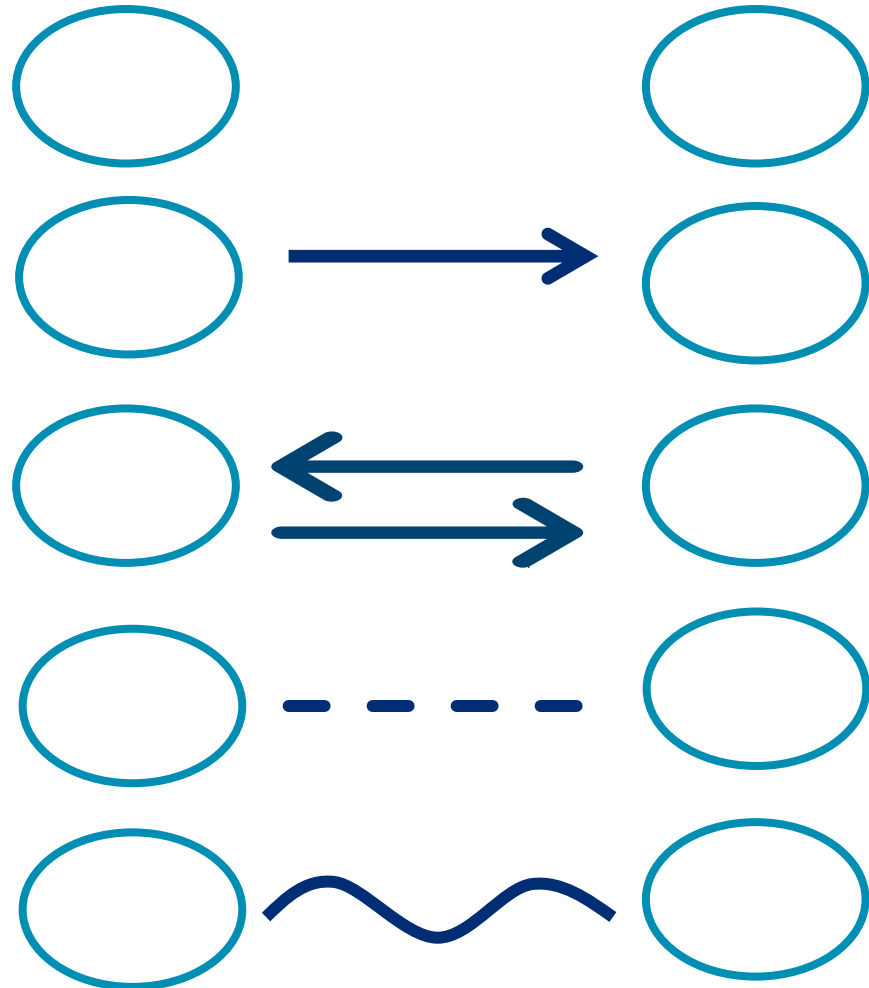
Exercises

- Community Mapping Exercise – 15 mins
- Equalizer Scenario Exercise – 15 mins
- Discussion



Capturing the Scope of Your Community

- Next, we'll work on mapping out your partnership network within the municipality
- This exercise will help you identify key partners, influencers, and stakeholders throughout the community
- As leaders, understanding your network helps you assess opportunities and tradeoffs and build towards bigger successes



No connection

A healthy one-way connection

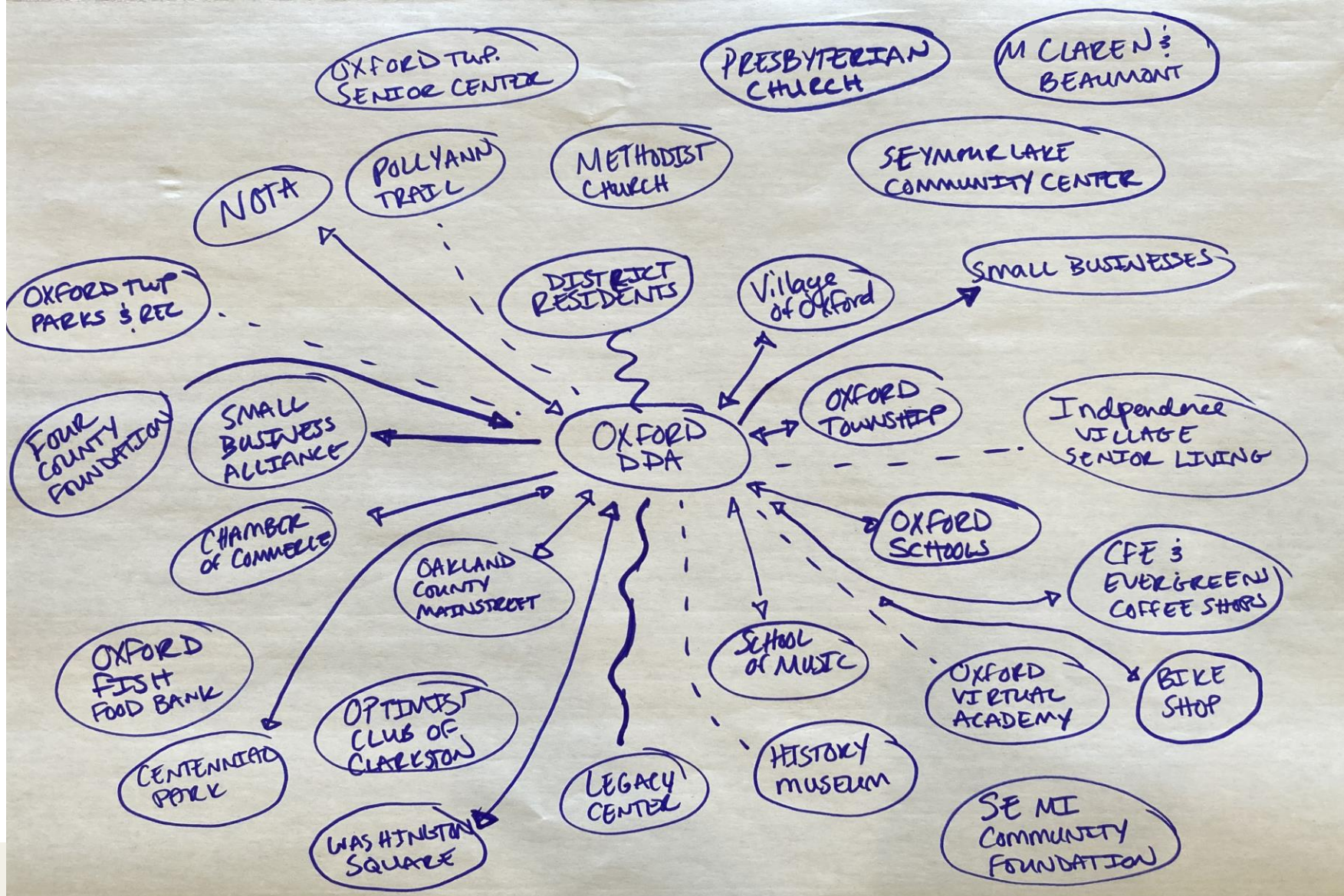
A healthy two-way connection

A broken connection

A tenuous connection

Community Partnership Mapping

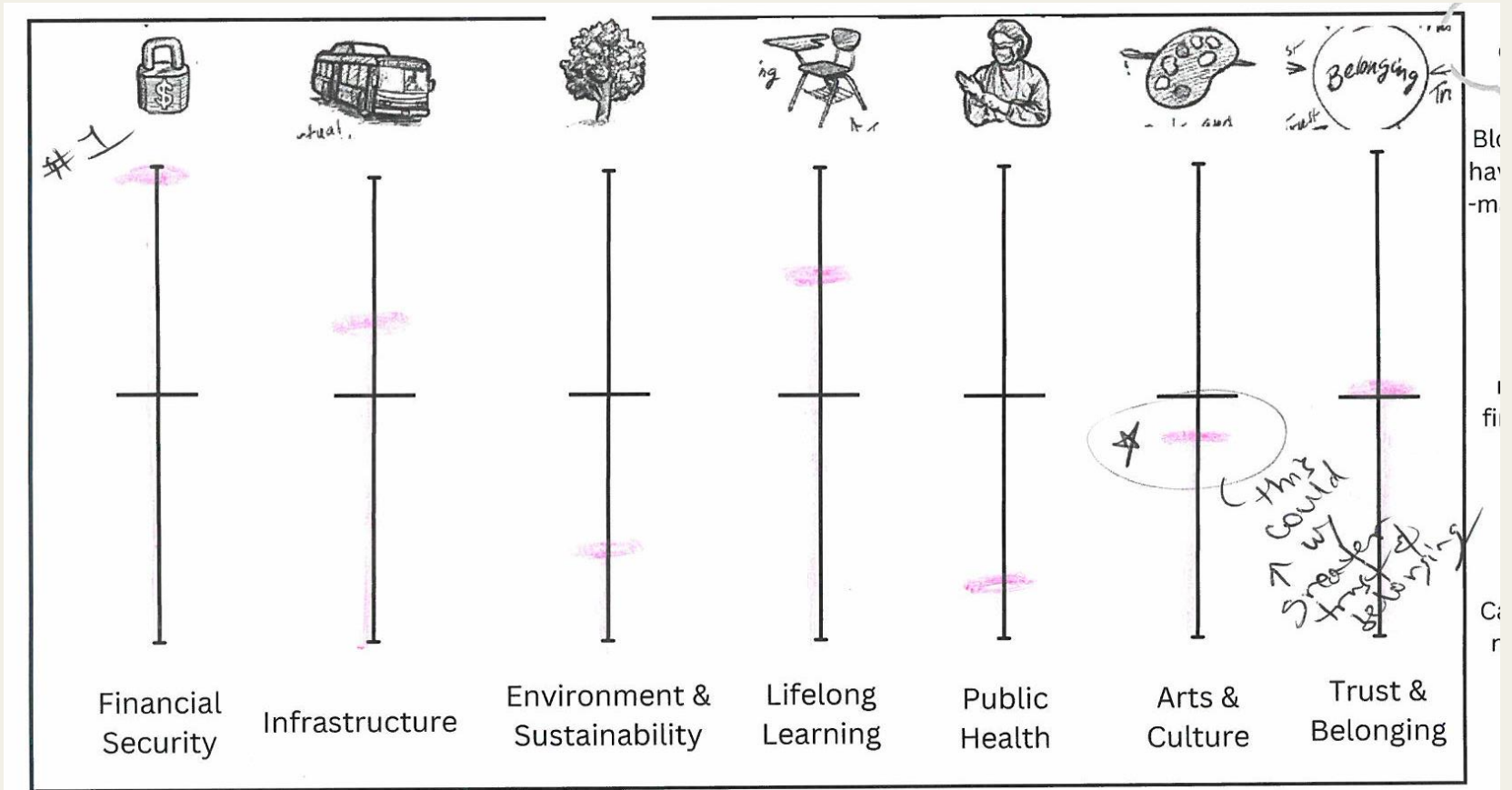
- Draw a map of potential partners (organizations, stakeholders, constituency groups) in your community.
- Identify if you/your local government have strong, weak, or no relationships with these partners.
- If you/your municipality doesn't have a connection, does someone else on your map have one?
- Think outside the box! Try to include places and organizations that people different from yourself might find important.



Exploring the Equalizer – What's your 'place frequency'?

In our next activity, we'll first make an informal measurement of where your community registers across the pillars we've discussed.

Think about your municipality, and what influences the frequency in each area. Consider all factors – celebrate your successes, but also be honest to which areas your community can improve.



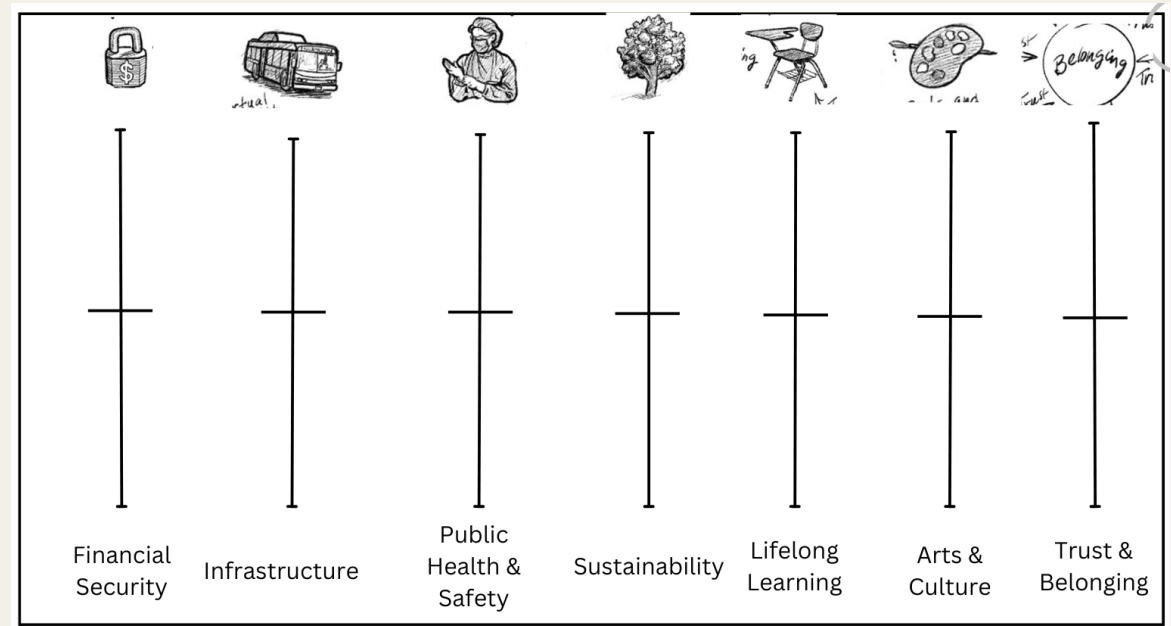
Exploring the Equalizer – Scenario

A new housing development is proposed that would add a mix of senior-oriented apartments and modestly-priced for-sale townhomes.

The development would replace both a vacant and blighted gas station, and the wooded lot behind it.

The developer has requested a 30-year TIF to cover costs of brownfield remediation and to keep housing prices affordable.

The project would make pedestrian improvements at a busy intersection, and would also address some long-standing stormwater problems.

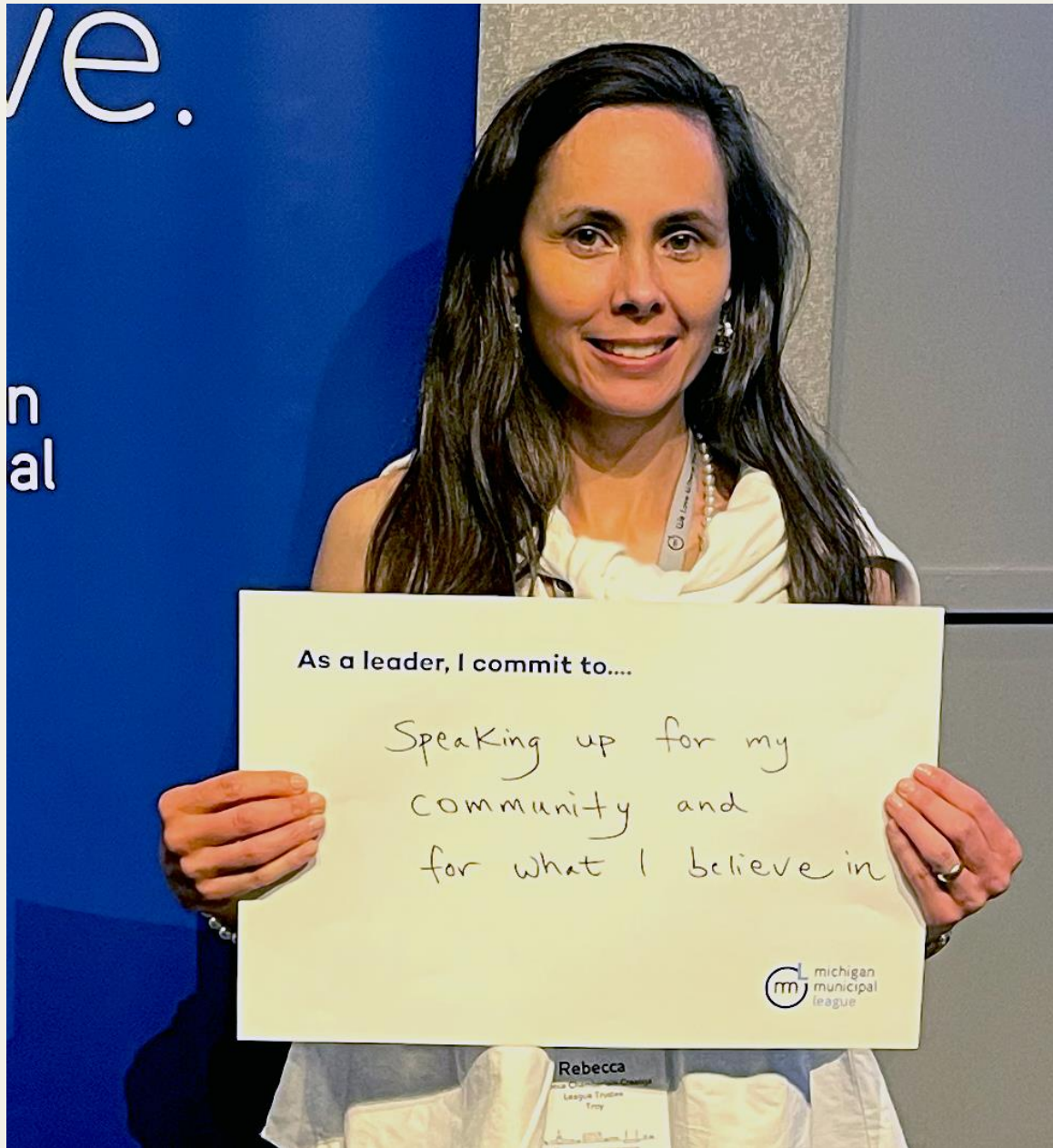


Exploring the Equalizer – Housing Development

Things to consider:

- Which levels would this project move from baseline for our community, and in what direction?
- How does that help us plan, or to discuss a decision that we've made?
- Are there ways we could coordinate with the developer or other stakeholders to mitigate some of the potential downsides?

Discussion



What's next?

Building out scorecard for new legislative session: benchmarking Michigan against other states

Compiling more data and tools that you can use in local conversations

Showing how all of our work supports thriving in our communities, and builds the future for Michigan.



Reach out to us

How do you want to see this work develop, and what would help you build those networks in your community?

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