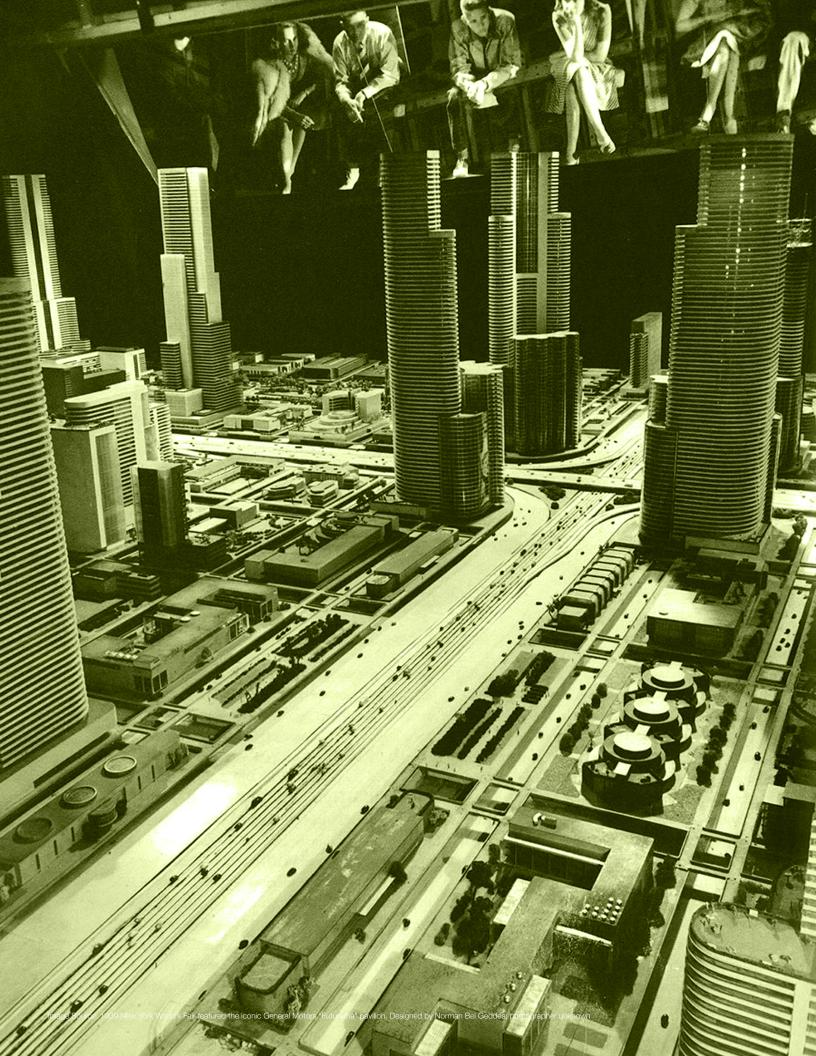




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# I Executive Summary

## Introduction

"...we can't ignore the basic truth that some of the planners and politicians behind those [transportation] projects built them directly through the heart of vibrant, populated, communities -- sometimes in an effort to reinforce segregation. Sometimes because the people there had less power to resist. And sometimes as part of a direct effort to replace or eliminate Black neighborhoods... There's nothing sacred about the status quo. These highways, roads, and railways are not rivers, lakes, or mountains, they're not divinely ordained. They're decisions. And we can make better decisions than what came before."

Secretary Pete Buttigieg Secretary, US Department of Transportation Remarks on Launch of Reconnecting Communities Program, Birmingham, Alabama, June 2022

#### How does a community define urban revitalization?

For some this question evokes trepidation rooted in memories of past ambitions for change that disrupted and displaced whole communities, including people and businesses, in the name of urban transformation. And for others, transformation represents the promise of an opportunity to reimagine the city in a manner that reconnects, restores and repairs these past harms. The gulf between a community's trepidation and fear of transformation versus its promise of hope is not to be underestimated. Bridging this gap of understanding and expectation requires the community to trust in the process and each other. It requires the meaningful participation of citizens together with all stakeholders involved in the planning, design, implementation, and governance of revitalization and redevelopment.

Detroit has a long history of urban transformation. Home to early innovations in transportation mobility, Detroit has always pioneered explorations and advancements in how we move to, through and within the city. The General Motors Futurama exhibit of 1939-40 imagined that cities in the 1960s would be defined by automated highways connecting cities to the expanding suburbs. By 1956, the Federal Highways Act enabled this vision to be realized through the destruction of inner-city neighborhoods across the country. Detroit became home to the first urban highway system by clearing African American and immigrant neighborhoods, residents and businesses, reducing the city's downtown population by half. While the vision created harmful economic and community outcomes, it was driven by innovation, rooted in a clear set of values and aspirations for the future.

Through the I-375 Reconnecting Communities project, Detroit once again has an opportunity to redefine innovations in urban mobility, but this time rooted in a set of values that respond to the weight of the past, the push of the present, and the pull of the future.

#### Weights of the Past, include:

- *Urban Renewal:* Dislocation of people, businesses and places
- Depopulation and Disconnection: Loss of community
- Economic Sprawl: Loss of employment and business

#### **Push of the Present, includes:**

- Racial Inequity: Persistent economic disparity
- Funding Catalysts: Federal and state infrastructure funding
- Reinvestment Opportunity: Real estate development growth

#### **Pull of the Future, includes:**

- Restorative Economic Justice: Repairing past harms and preventing future harms
- Population Retention and Growth: Growing the city's population
- Climate Adaptation: Responding to changing climate and new technologies

Urban Renewal Depopulation + Disconnection Economic Sprawl WEIGHTS
OF THE PAST

**PUSH** OF THE PRESENT

Racial Inequity Funding Catalysts Reinvestment Opportunity

Restorative Economic Justice
Population Retention + Growth
Climate Adaptation

**PULL** OF THE FUTURE

# **I-375 Reconnecting Communities**

#### The Project to Date

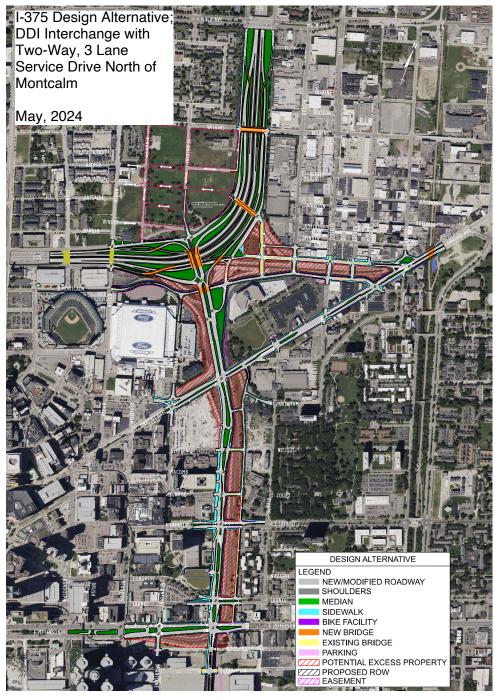
The I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project is an initiative of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to convert the depressed I-375 freeway and the Gratiot connector in Detroit, and open a new at-grade boulevard between I-75 through Downtown Detroit and the Detroit Riverfront. The project will also create a new interchange design at I-75 to access the new boulevard. MDOT's stated goals for the project include addressing outdated interchange design and deteriorated bridges, improving connectivity, and addressing existing and future transportation needs for all users. In addition, this project intends to reconnect neighborhoods including Lafayette Park, Eastern Market, and Downtown Detroit that suffered harms by the original construction of the I-375 freeway, completely destroying the historic Black neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. While the I-375 project has been associated with values of the USDOT Reconnecting Communities program- a first-of-its-kind federal initiative to reconnect communities that were fractured by past transportation infrastructure decisions – it is not funded by the program.

Several phases of study of the project have been completed including the official Planning Environmental Linkages (PEL) report process between 2014-2016 that explored and proposed six different alternatives for addressing the deteriorated condition of the highway by either reconstructing or removing it. This work was followed by six years of technical analysis, including the Environmental Assessment (EA), the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and the Interchange Access Change Request (IACR). MDOT launched the design development phase of the project in 2022 and in Fall of 2024 selected a progressive design-build contractor.

Critical to this project is an acknowledgment and recognition of the role that previous public sector actions had in the destruction of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods and the displacement of their residents. Prior to construction, MDOT will also develop a Community Enhancements Plan, which, as outlined in the FONSI,

will look to provide specific strategies that address the historic social and environmental impacts of the original construction of I-375. MDOT intends for the enhancements to be developed with the leadership of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) and through a process that will actively engage the community. The Community Enhancement Plan is intended to include a variety of strategies including items such as historic monuments, plaques/markers, interpretive signs at significant locations, a documentary production or publication, a lecture series, a museum installation, or other similar ways to acknowledge the former neighborhoods.

Prior to construction MDOT will also create an Aesthetic Design Guide and a Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plan that will be implemented during construction to minimize impacts on local businesses. In parallel with MDOT's remaining design phases of work, the City of Detroit Department of Planning and Development (DPD) will lead a nine-month process to create a Land Use Framework for the project area intended to inform a policy on recommended uses for the new land created by the removal of the I-375 highway that will no longer be needed for transportation purposes.



MDOT's May 2024 Design Alternative

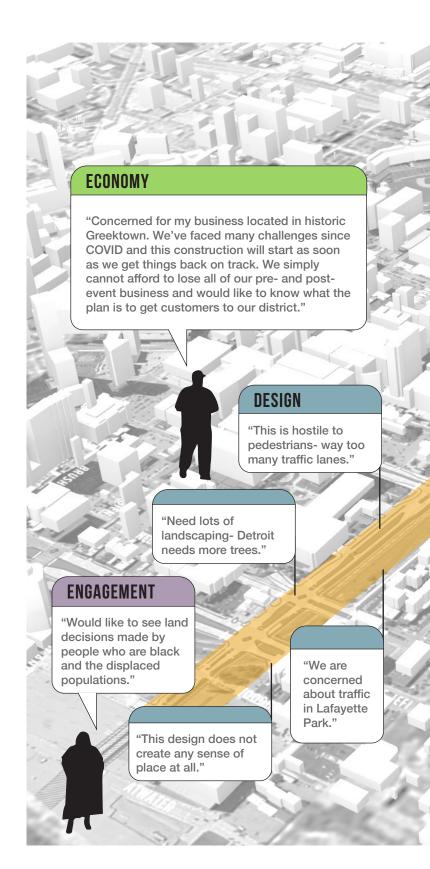
# Community Comments

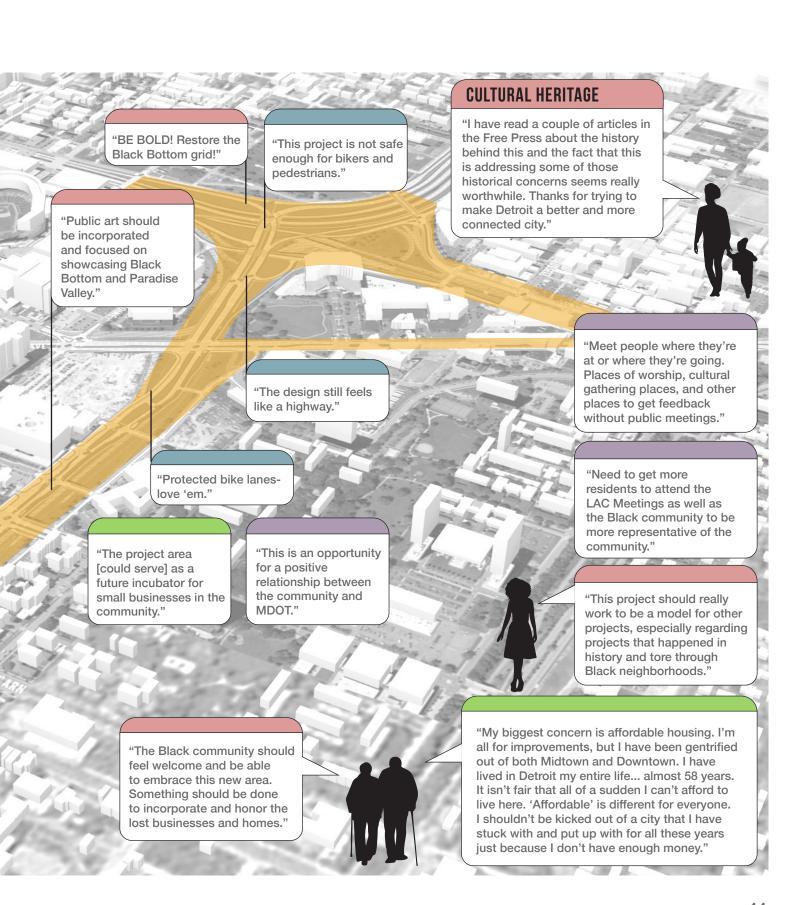
As part of the MDOT design development process, a number of public and advisory committee meetings have been conducted in an effort to involve community residents and businesses located in the project area. While there has been overall community support over the past year, questions and concerns about MDOT's 2023 boulevard and interchange design have left many in the residential and business community skeptical that the project would deliver on its promise of safety and reconnection.

MDOT has been making efforts to respond to these concerns. Most notably, after hearing concerns from community members about the number of lanes in the boulevard, MDOT collected new post-pandemic traffic data to determine if a reduction in lanes was feasible. This new data supported a reduction in the number of lanes in the boulevard, and MDOT has put forth a new proposal for the boulevard reflective of this. However, many in the community still feel that these responses and the resulting refinements fall short of fully addressing issues of better pedestrian safety, environmental sustainability, community engagement, addressing historic harms and creating an inviting sense of place.

A review of public comments collected during MDOT's 2023 public engagement events reveal that the community overall is and remains enthusiastic about the removal of the highway. However, there remain a number of concerns that affect safety, connectivity, transparency of communications and engagement and earnest strategies for reparative and restorative outcomes, including construction mitigation, gentrification and affordability. Four major categories emerged as key themes:

- **Design:** Excitement for opportunity; desire for improvements to connectivity and public realm design
- **Economy:** Excitement for opportunity, and fear around short and long-term community impacts
- **Cultural Heritage:** Desire for a reparative framework
- **Engagement:** Desire for improvements to current MDOT Community Engagement process





# **Peer Review Scope and Process**

#### Why A Peer Review

Given the groundswell of community conversations and remaining concerns about the project, the Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP), advocating on behalf of its stakeholders, believed it was important to explore different opportunities to support the I-375 project while making sure it was in alignment with community concerns.

DDP, with support from the Kresge Foundation, obtained agreement from MDOT and the City of Detroit to conduct a modified Peer Review analysis of the design and engineering work done to-date, propose a recommendation for possible refinements, reveal opportunities for long-term reconnection and land redevelopment for the Greater Downtown, and propose strategies for construction mitigation. DDP, working alongside MDOT and the City of Detroit, obtained additional resources and expertise to advocate for a truly reconnective and restorative design for the new boulevard and interchange. For this work, DDP assembled a team of consultants including:

- urban american city (urbanAC), specializing in urban design and planning
- Toole Design Group, specializing in mobility and transportation
- HR&A Advisors, specializing in real estate and economic development

The I-375 Peer Review was conducted between December 2023 - November 2024 and has been summarized in three reports:

• Part I: Opportunity outlines the possibilities that can be realized when the removal of the highway is understood as a catalyst for the reconnection, repair and restoration of a walkable urban core that removes the economic moat around Downtown, reestablishes walkable urban streets and creates development opportunities for housing, cultural heritage and inclusive land and business ownership.

- Part II: Evaluation provides a detailed summary of the Peer Review of the MDOT 2023 Preferred Alternative design and 2024 refinements developed by MDOT in response to updated traffic counts and Peer Review feedback.
- Part III: Mitigation provides a framework of construction impact considerations and related strategies to help minimize environmental and economic impacts on the local residential and business community.

#### **Peer Review Scope**

To date, the MDOT design process has been divided into discrete and sequential scopes with the 30% road design preceding the framework, land use and community enhancements plans which will be integrated into the project after the progressive design-build contractor is hired. Some believe the linear and bifurcated nature of these scopes of work have made it difficult to understand the larger vision for Downtown mobility, future land use and development, and potential reparative outcomes.

In contrast, the Peer Review team adopted a holistic approach that examined road design, land use and development, and reparative outcomes simultaneously. This allows for clear analysis and testing of how desired land use and development needs should influence and support the new street network in addition to accommodating area transportation needs. The peer review design process undertook three phases:

1. Discovery: Included research on the historic and current trends of land use, development, local economy, jobs and businesses, population demographics and cultural histories; and critical analysis of MDOT 2023 Preferred Alternative for boulevard and interchange design (including transportation engineering and urban design). From this initial review, the team created guiding principles that grounded subsequent phases.

#### 2. Evaluation/Testing Alternative Design Criteria:

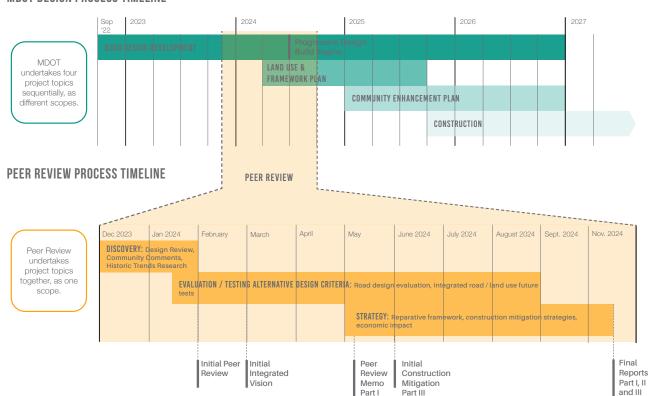
Included evaluating the proposed street and interchange design in relation to three possible land use and development concepts that address a set of guiding principles and design for reconnection, reparative and restorative outcomes. The team also tested alternative design criteria for the boulevard and interchange design, informed by different land use scenarios.

**3. Strategy:** Included assessing the potential economic impacts of the project, during and after construction, together with compiling potential construction mitigation strategies designed to lessen displacement and significant economic loss. The team created recommended strategies for the road design, land use, and construction mitigation.

#### Part 1: Opportunity Report

This report summarizes the work the Peer Review team conducted to illustrate the alternative possibilities for I-375's future and trajectory. Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the lost histories of people, places, economies and cultures removed during urban renewal, suburban outmigration, and the construction of the downtown highway system. Chapter 3 outlines Detroit's urban highway history and makes a call for the City to chart a larger vision for the future of highways in Downtown. Chapter 4 illustrates how the principles outlined in Chapter 2 and 3 can guide different land use futures. Finally, Chapter 5 illustrates how applying restorative, reparative, and reconnective principles to the roadway and interchange designs can create new alternatives that advance greater social and economic equity, reduce air and noise pollution, decrease energy consumption, and improve public health.

#### MDOT DESIGN PROCESS TIMELINE



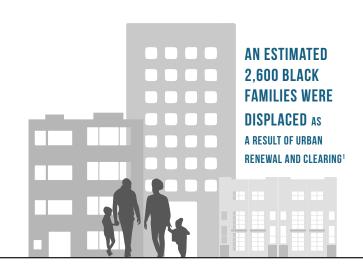
# Reconnect, Repair, Restore Principles

The Peer Review team began with a deep interrogation of I-375's history of disconnection and displacement that includes urban renewal. From this work, the team created eight reconnect, restore, and repair (R3) principles to redress the harm that was inflicted on place, people, economy, and culture. These R3 principles grounded the team's analysis, evaluation and proposals for improved

reconnection, restorative and reparative outcomes. By applying the R3 principles to alternatives for the boulevard/interchange design, land use futures, and construction mitigation the project can provide benefits for:

 The City of Detroit: By centering these principles in the design of the roadway/interchange, not only can the urban-scale street grid be restored, but it also can





## **PLACE**



# URBAN GRID & HUMAN SCALE

Restore and reconnect the urban street grid, creating a more livable, walkable and vibrant Downtown core.



#### LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIVITY

Reconnect the lost street connections removed by the I-375 project to restore the connections between neighborhoods.

## **PEOPLE**



# POPULATION GROWTH & RETENTION

Repair residential displacement by providing new housing to grow the population. Mix of uses and a well-connected urban fabric will help retain that population.



# BLACK DETROIT MIDDLE CLASS

Restore a Black middle class by creating a mix of housing types (including mid-rise and townhouses).

- provide restorative economic impacts after years of business and residential out-migration.
- I-375 Project Area Neighborhoods: Economic benefits for neighborhoods can be maximized if the highway removal creates excess land parcels that can accommodate a range of land uses and development densities.
- Plack Detroiters: When applying R3 principles to the project design, impacts can center the needs of Black Detroiters and families who were displaced by the I-375 highway construction by creating development that makes Black cultural heritage more visible and ensures economic participation by Black Detroiters in all aspects of real estate and economic development.



# OVER 50 ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURAL VENUES LIKELY EXISTED AT

ITS HEIGHT IN THE PARADISE VALLEY AND BLACK BOTTOM



## **ECONOMY**



# BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Repair and restore the loss of area businesses and minimize future harm due to



# BLACK WEALTH & OWNERSHIP

Repair the ability for Black residents (past, present and future) to access wealth creation opportunities.

## **CULTURE**



# LOCAL IDENTITY 8 PLACEMAKING

Restore the vibrancy that used to exist in the project area through a reconnected street grid and a mix of uses.



# BLACK CULTURAL PLACEMAKING

Repair and honor cultural legacy by creating opportunities for Black culture, genius, and entrepreneurship to thrive.

# Improving Boulevard and Interchange Design

The lingering scar of urban renewal is not the only damaging legacy of highways. Communities adjacent to highways are now subjected to constant high speed, high-volume traffic that often creates noise pollution, air pollution, safety problems, and more highway-centric land development. The overabundance of highway access, which is driven by the pattern of auto-centric development, increases car-dependency and creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bikers due to a lack of connected streetscape infrastructure.

Conventional planning assumptions used by engineers and rooted in the auto-centric standards that created the highway system, rely on the assumption that reduction in roadway capacity cannot be made to a given street without creating delays for motorists beyond an acceptable threshold. However, contemporary multi-modal concepts of mobility (that also consider walking, biking and public transit) believe that planning for traffic reduction is a more appropriate planning approach to adopt when removing highways from the urban core. The concept of traffic reduction assumes that traffic volumes are self-adjusting and can be reduced on any given thoroughfare through a variety of interventions, including the distribution of traffic across multiple avenues to avoid delays. With a reconnected street network, people will have multiple options to reach their destinations.

When evaluating the current MDOT design and proposing alternative solutions, the Peer Review team adopted urban scale, multi-modal design standards of mobility that are in alignment with the R3 principles. The team's boulevard and interchange alternatives, analysis, and recommendations for improvement illustrate how a well designed roadway can ensure and support reparative, restorative and reconnective benefits for all Detroiters.

#### **Key Recommendations include:**

Restore pedestrian-scaled local street network to achieve greater reconnective and reparative goals.

- 1. Reset design criteria using an urban core design standard
- 2. Design the boulevard for people and vibrant street life, rather than high-speed vehicles.
- 3. Put trees where people are. Consider eliminating the median in favor of enhancing pedestrian spaces.

Ensure that excess land created by the project maximizes existing and new land development and value.

- 4. Get the design of the interchange right explore an urban proximate interchange to better reconnect the street grid.
- 5. Treat the new street created closest to Lafayette Park as more equal to the Boulevard rather than back-door service drives.

#### **Design Proposed by MDOT in 2024**

MDOT 2024 Boulevard Section



MDOT 2024 Interchange<sup>1</sup>



MDOT 2024 West Boulevard<sup>1</sup>

#### Design Proposed by Peer Review in 2024



Peer Review Boulevard Section



Peer Review Interchange<sup>1</sup>



Peer Review West Boulevard<sup>1</sup>

# Testing Land Use and Economic Impact Scenarios

In response to the project's broadest goals to reconnect, repair and restore, the Peer Review team looked at testing different land use scenarios alongside new proposed boulevard and interchange design alternatives.

The land use scenarios that the team tested - Living Greater Downtown, The Cultural Heritage District, and the Sports + Recreation Destination - explore three "what if" scenarios prioritizing three different land use drivers that produce distinct economic and reparative, restorative, and reconnective outcomes and benefits for the City of Detroit, the greater Downtown neighborhoods, and Detroiters harmed by urban renewal. The land use and economic impact "tests" are not fully developed land use propositions, but instead are "concepts" intended to inform MDOT and the City of Detroit's land use framework plan effort on how the excess land created by the removal of I-375 can generate jobs, tax revenue, population retention and growth, opportunities for business and homeownership and a restored and vibrant urban character. The scenarios are informed by the team's Discovery phase research including an examination of land use, real estate development, economic, cultural and demographic existing conditions, decennial trends and market projections (refer to pages 60-63).

All three land use and economic impact scenarios aim to achieve the following goals:

- 1. Replace the density of housing units lost by urban renewal and highway constriction
- 2. Grow and retain residential population
- 3. Provide a mix of housing options that retain and attract the Black middle class
- 4. Generate positive city and state tax revenue
- 5. Return economic vibrancy to Greater Downtown
- 6. Produce positive job growth
- 7. Create an urban character that celebrates Detroit and the legacy of Black Culture in Detroit



#### Land Use Scenario 1: Living Greater Downtown

"What if Detroit aimed to replace all of the housing lost in Black Bottom, inclusive of housing choices for a broad range of household incomes and compositions?" This scenario prioritizes residential land uses at varying densities, compatible with existing conditions and development trends in Brush Park, Lafayette Park and Downtown.

ECONOMIC IMPACT		
600	DIRECT, INDIRECT, & INDUCED JOBS	
\$28M	TOTAL Earnings	
\$76M	TOTAL ECONOMIC Output	
3,250	HOUSEHOLDS	
\$5.1M	DETROIT Income tax	

REPARATIVE IMPACT		
3,247	HOUSING UNITS	
800	MIDDLE-CLASS Housing Units	
798	AFFORDABLE Housing Units	
184k	GSF OF RETAIL / Commercial maker Space	



#### Land Use Scenario 2: The Cultural Heritage District

"What if Detroit aimed to strengthen Downtown as the region's epicenter for arts, culture and entertainment venues, while honoring and celebrating the area's storied history of Black cultural entertainment and Detroit's contributions to new music genres?" This scenario prioritizes a north-south spine of cultural heritage sites and creates a lively Montcalm Street connecting the sports district to Eastern Market's entertainment and dining options.

# \$54M TOTAL ECONOMIC OUTPUT 2,490 HOUSEHOLDS \$4.5M DETROIT INCOME TAX

REPARAT	REPARATIVE IMPACT		
386k	GSF OF Commemorative Space		
1.8	ACRES OF NEW Public Open Space		
176k	GSF OF RETAIL / Commercial Maker Space		

#### Land Use Scenario 3: The Sports + Recreation Destination

"What if Detroit expanded its professional sports campus to also include a regional destination for intramural sports, community recreation and festivals?" This scenario accommodates potential plans to expands the sports campus in a manner that also provides the larger Detroit community, and the Greater Downtown neighborhoods specifically, with much needed publicly accessible green space, tree canopy, and recreational facilities.

ECONOMIC IMPACT		
2,585	DIRECT, INDIRECT, & INDUCED JOBS	
\$100M	TOTAL Earnings	
\$219M	TOTAL ECONOMIC Output	
1,075	HOUSEHOLDS	
\$2.9M	DETROIT Income tax	

REPARATIVE IMPACT			
5.9	ACRES OF NEW Public Open Space		
1.1m	GSF OF SPORTS / Entertainment		
130k	GSF OF COMMERCIAL Maker space		

## **Conclusions**

The I-375 Reconnecting Community project can and should be more than an infrastructure project. It signifies more than just the reconstruction of roadways; it represents the opportunity to reconnect the historic street grid of Detroit and adjacent Downtown neighborhoods as well as the opportunity to repair and restore communities harmed by current and past urban development practices. By defining and incorporating progressive and equitable design and planning principles, the project and Detroit can be among the first in the nation to model how highway removal efforts can truly catalyze reparative economic outcomes. It is a once-in-a-generation chance to revitalize the community, drive business growth and foster a more vibrant and interconnected Detroit.

For over 60 years, the construction of the I-375 freeway has been emblematic of urban renewal efforts that resulted in the displacement and disruption of the thriving Black neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. As Detroit embarks on this endeavor, project partners must be mindful to not repeat past mistakes but instead recognize this opportunity to rectify past harms and forge a new path that prioritizes community connection, inclusivity, and economic revitalization - aiding the trajectory of making Downtown Detroit a place for Detroiters and the region to live, work, and play.

The I-375 Reconnecting Communities project is at a critical moment of design development. MDOT is currently working on completing the remaining Boulevard and Interchange design phases for the project alongside the City's Zoning and Land Use Study. The Peer Review team's process of testing alternative roadway/interchange designs, land use scenarios and economic and reparative impact has unearthed several near- and long-term opportunities that can inform how project partners and the community can maximize restorative, reparative and reconnective impacts and outcomes created by the removal of the highway.

The research, analysis and alternatives provided in this Part I: *Opportunity* report, as well as Part II: *Evaluation* and Part III: *Mitigation*, should be understood as advisory and used by project implementation partners and the community at large in their respective efforts to improve project design, avoid and mitigate against harmful outcomes, and maximize the highest quality of life, environment and inclusive economic return. The findings summarized in this report affirm the I-375's Reconnecting Communities project potential to facilitate positive economic value, improve urban character and connectivity, and celebrate and reestablish a new interpretation of the people, place and cultural histories lost.

This is more than a transportation project and needs a comprehensive and integrated planning approach to realize the mobility, economic and cultural opportunity at hand for Detroit and Detroiters (past, present and future), and should include the following five elements:

- 1. A Mobility Vision and experience that plans for an urban-scaled "Detroit-centric" public realm that provides pedestrians, cyclists and motorists with a safe and convenient mobility experience both during and after construction.
- Restore a walkable urban street grid. Repairing
  the scar of the highway creates an opportunity to
  restore Detroit's historic urban form in a manner
  that may not completely replicate the historic grid,
  but should eliminate suburban-scaled streets,
  intersections and interchanges and replace them
  with safe, pedestrian-scaled, climate resilient
  streets that support active public life.
- Plan now for the future of mobility in Downtown Detroit. The pipeline of upcoming highway infrastructure investments in and around the Greater Downtown present an opportunity to look more comprehensively at the decommissioning of additional parts of the interstate system in a manner that is more economically sustainable for the city and state.

- 2. A Reconnect, Repair, Restore
  Agenda that articulates clear and shared definitions, goals, desired outcomes and metrics for measuring progress and impact during design, construction and long-term development phases.
- Develop a Cultural Heritage plan that elevates and integrates the cultural histories of Black Detroit, Black Bottom and Paradise Valley that represents both what has been lost, and elevates what still remains into the physical design and programming.
- Develop land use and zoning frameworks that can catalyze the market. The design of the new boulevard and interchange should be done in a manner that creates land parcels with the greatest development flexibility to respond to market conditions over time. Properly sized excess parcels with appropriate street access can maximize future land values, increasing their potential to produce revenue that supports inclusive community investments, ownership models, and wealth creation.
- Leverage development and growth potential of excess land to support the expansion and growth of Black-owned businesses, land ownership development and procurement. Benefits from reparative economic (wealth building) strategies may be as significant, if not more so, than direct fiscal and economic benefits in this project. Strategies for land ownership and development should generate a distinctive neighborhood character, help drive neighborhood desirability, and fuel the market for all types of development.
- Retain and attract the Black middle class.

- 3. A Land Development Strategy that promotes land uses that can catalyze the market and ensures that Black Detroiters are in positions of leadership and decision-making in the ownership, governance and development of public excess land to produce material equity and create wealth.
- Development and absorption is a long-term proposition. While there is a healthy pipeline of development projects projected over the next several years, there still remains a large amount of vacant land and underutilized buildings in the Greater Downtown area. The ultimate land use and zoning plan for the area should include a phasing strategy that builds a near-term demand with land uses and densities that can accelerate the market and reflects likely absorption potential over the next 10-30 years.
- Restore the area as a residential mixeduse neighborhood with upwards of 2,600 new housing units. More diverse housing and non-office development will not only appeal to a broader range of Detroiters, but also will expedite land absorption, in lieu of early phases of high-rise housing and commercial development.
- Interim land management, maintenance and activation strategies will be critical. Before completion of the boulevard and interchange, public and civic leaders should work to establish a plan for maintaining a high level of care, beautification and vitality on the excess land parcels until the sites are ready for development, as well as long-term maintenance plans for new public space.

- 4. A Community and Economic Impact Commitment that sets a goal of "zero displacement" by analyzing and understanding the potential positive and negative economic and community impacts during and after construction.
- Make a plan to maintain economic and community vibrancy during construction. It will be critical to mitigate potentially negative environmental and economic impacts from construction to preserve the business and community assets within the Greater Downtown project area. (See Part III: Mitigation report.)

5. A Community Participation
Commitment that utilizes intentional and thoughtful large- and small-scale dialogues and co-creation activities with communities and residents (past and current) to build awareness of the project and inform the long-term development vision.

 Support community, nonprofit and philanthropic convening and capacitybuilding efforts that bring Downtown, Lafayette Park, Eastern Market and Midtown communities together to develop and advocate for shared concerns, goals and visions.

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# II Honoring What Was Lost

# Defining Reconnect, Restore, Repair

After World War II, Detroit's economy shifted and triggered decades of urban decline, starting in Downtown. As the automobile industry decentralized, in-town companies and workers migrated to cleaner and safer suburbs, all facilitated by public policies and financing incentives that enabled business and white families to flee the inner city with ease. These early trends, followed by the explosion of automobile production and the interstate highway system, launched widespread disinvestment in communities of color. Urban renewal efforts and the construction of I-375, beginning in the 1950s, disrupted and displaced the once-thriving Black neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, significantly reducing the residential population of Downtown. The highways created a "moat" around Downtown and have come to signify much more than just a piece of infrastructure; they symbolize the weight of area's disinvestment history.

Expanding public knowledge of these histories is now spurring movements for reparative urban planning and investments, exemplified by the Reconnecting Communities federal grant program. Transportation infrastructure projects are providing transformational opportunities for cities to reconnect and repair the harms of urban renewal, restore neighborhood identity, and revitalize local economies.

The removal of the I-375 freeway can and should be more than just a roadway project. This is an opportunity for the city of Detroit to address the harm inflicted in the past, and forge a new future - one that prioritizes community connection, inclusivity, and economic revitalization - supporting the trajectory of making Downtown Detroit a place for Detroiters and the region to live, work, and play.

Prior to analyzing and testing the different boulevard, interchange, and land use design opportunities available within the I-375 project, the Peer Review team developed a set of definitions and principles to establish a shared language and guiding intentions. This process was guided by the thoughtful local restorative and reparative work

done in the Detroit community. In 2023, Detroit Future City published a report, "A Call for Reparative Investment in Black Bottom | Paradise Valley," calling for reparative investments to reverse the immense loss of Black wealth, culture, and community that occurred in the name of urban renewal, including the loss experienced as a result of the destruction of the historic Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup>

This work informed the following working definitions:



#### **Reconnect** = to reunite

Physical design of a human-scaled urban street and block grid that reestablishes linkages and access to neighborhoods, services and amenities



#### **Restore** = to return

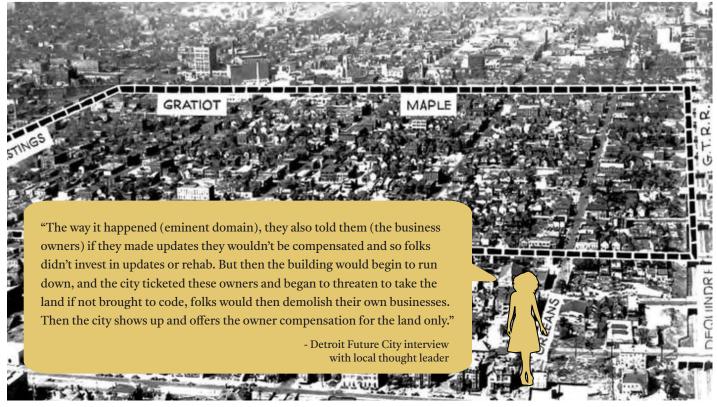
Positive results that "remedy" harms for individuals and communities using restorative processes



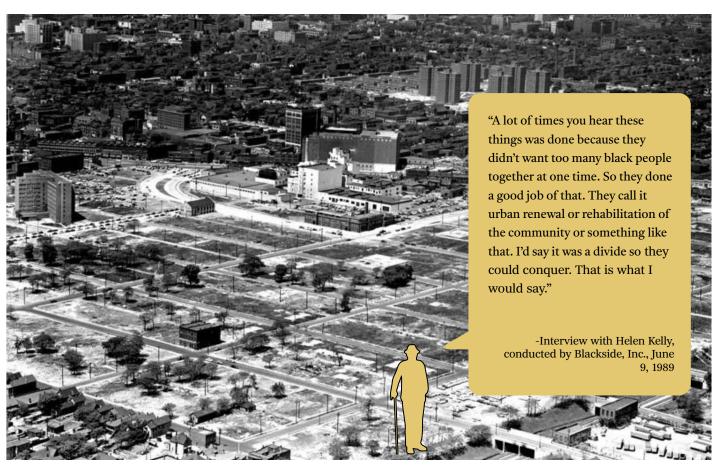
#### **Repair** = to correct

People affected by past harm participate in how future investments are made to produce reparative outcomes

These three aspirations work in concert to address the harm that was done by the I-375 highway construction and the legacy of urban renewal. These definitions, as well as the principles we present in this chapter, should be seen as a starting point. It will be up to the Detroit community to create its own shared definitions and values to further guide the I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project and the related zoning and land use plan for the area.



Black Bottom Before Demolition



Black Bottom After Demolition

# **Detroit's Urban Mobility Legacy**

#### A Shift to Car Culture

The era before highway construction and subsequent widespread suburban sprawl was the pinnacle of the City's economic activity, population, and vibrancy as one of the great American cities of the 20th century. However, by the mid-1940s, city leaders and the automobile industry believed the street grid system was becoming insufficient to support the mobility needs of the city and the growing shifts of suburban housing choices. The City of Detroit's 1946 Proposed System of Trafficways plan under the heading "Outmoded Trafficways" stated, "It is high time for us to recognize that our patched-up, made-over, hand-medown system of streets and highways no longer fits. The automobile has grown up and needs a tailor-made suit." 1

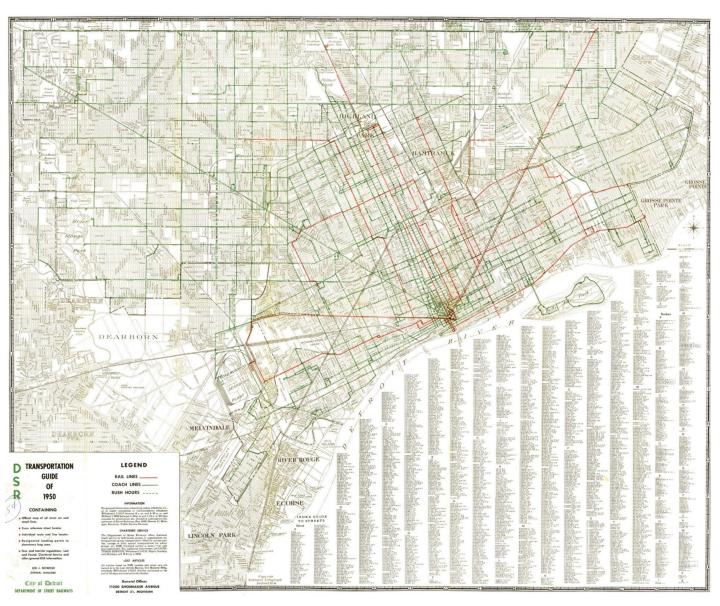
Prior to the construction of the interstate system, Detroit's robust local street grid, including its famous Gratiot, Woodward, and Michigan radial avenues, supported a peak population of 1.85 million people and their daily transportation needs.<sup>2</sup> During the next decade and specifically between 1950-1964, Detroit would launch the construction of an extensive highway system throughout the city.



Detroit Woodward streetcar, 1930



Suburban household, 1950s



Detroit's Transportation Guide of 1950

# The Timeline of Redevelopment + Loss

# The Impact of Urban Renewal and the Federal Highways Act

Detroit's modern network of 105 miles of high-capacity arterials and urban interstates dismantled the tenants of easy walking and biking, well-connected transit, and low private vehicle usage, all standards cities around the world today strive for. After World War II, a new generation of transportation engineers and city leaders were focused on accommodating private vehicles and reshaping cities through Urban Renewal programs. Motivated by racial fears and the desires to remove substandard housing units from the city and prevent prospective white homebuvers from moving to the suburbs, city officials began identifying areas that would be prioritized for "slum clearance" and double as opportunities to install urban interstates and thoroughfares according to its 1946 plan. The original plan for the I-375 and Lafayette Park site, which, was predicated on the intentional removal of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, predated the federal funding available for such efforts and was the first urban renewal project completed in the City of Detroit. Today, I-375 interstate is the shortest interstate in the entire United States, running only 1,062 miles connecting I-75 to the Detroit Riverfront.



#### 1956

Phase 1 clearing areas covered much of Black Bottom and a block of Paradise Valley

# Timeline of Urban Renewal, Redevelopment, and Displacement

#### 1946

Mayor Jeffries asks Common Council to demolish Black Bottom for urban renewal

#### 1949

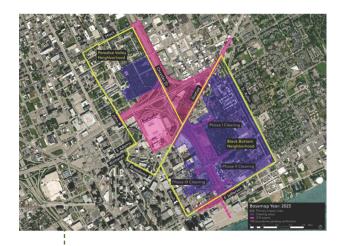
President Harry Truman passes the 1949 Housing Act known commonly as the "slum clearance and urban redevelopment" bill which provided funds to cities for slum clearance. There were two components to this: clearance and building new low-rent housing for displaced people

#### 1950

Mayor Cobo is elected and accepts the money for clearance but rejects the money to build new affordable housing specifically for those displaced during the clearances phase



**1961**Phase 2 clearing areas covered much of the remainder of Black Bottom to the south



2023
Subsequent redevelopment projects cleared most of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley with very little historic fabric remaining today

#### 1956

President
Eisenhower
signs into law
the Federal Aid
Highway Act
authorizing 25
billion dollars
to create
41,000 miles
of highway
between 19571969

#### 1956

Mayor Cobo uses funds provided by Federal Aid Highway Act to accelerate clearance of the remaining buildings, providing little compensation to existing residents and business owners; Ground is broken on Lafayette Pavilion, the first of multiple high rises that anchored the New Lafayette Park neighborhood

I-375 construction begins

1959

#### 1963

New developments consolidated under the name Lafayette Park

#### 1964

The Detroit portion of the Chrysler Freeway and the I-375 connector is completed

#### 1999-2001

Ford Field construction, which destroyed the last few buildings formerly part of Black Bottom

# **Lost Community**

#### **Black Population Loss**

Near East Side was a way station for migrants to Detroit throughout Detroit's early history – first European immigrants and later African Americans during the Great Migration. The area became known as one of the few neighborhoods where African Americans were welcome in the city. Black Bottom and Paradise Valley were two historically Black communities that were inextricably tied together. Black Bottom was a working-class community known for its dense population and received its name because of the rich black soil that used to be found in the area. Paradise Valley was known for its concentration of businesses and entertainment venues.

The I-375 construction resulted in unthinkable losses for those living in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, including residential population displacement for many Black Detroiters. Between 1914 and 1920, Detroit's Black population rose from 5,751 to 41,532. By 1930, there were 120,066 Black residents reported in the City of Detroit, most who were settled in a 30-square-block area east of Woodward Avenue. The University of Richmond estimates that ~2,600 families were displaced from Black Bottom alone.

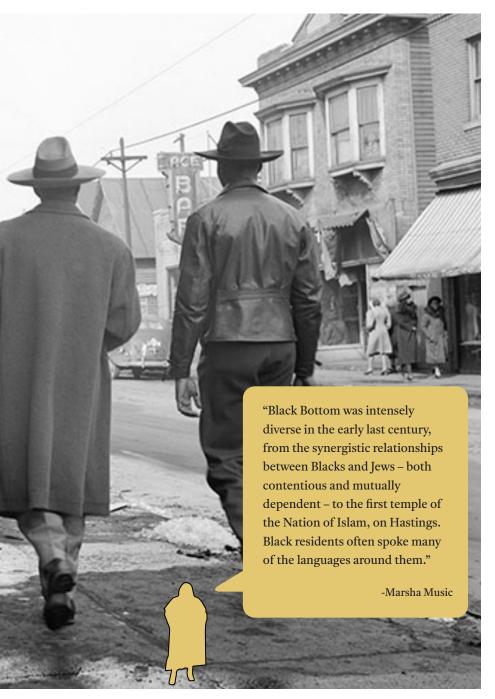
43K+
DISPLACED RESIDENTS

70%
DISPLACED RESIDENTS
WERE BLACK

2,600 DISPLACED FAMILIES



Residents walking in Black Bottom's business district, 1942





Gallerist Dell Pryor and her friends at the Flame Show Bar in Paradise Valley



Three boys in front of a five and dime store, 1930s-40s



Salesman and boy on Black Bottom's commercial streets

## **Lost Places**

#### **Demolition of Homes and Businesses**

Highway construction also required the demolition of homes and buildings that existed in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley were cleared, erasing the legacy of these structures.

Hastings Street was the neighborhood's central commercial street in the 19th and 20th century, with a vibrant mix of businesses supported by a growing residential population in the surrounding neighborhoods who lived in a mix of housing types including modest bungalows and shotguns, and grander two- to three-story apartment buildings.



Hastings Street looking north from Mack and St. Antoine in 1959

Two-story brick house at 1532-1534 Howard, 1956

"For me, regardless of recompense, nothing can make me "unsee" my father's years of loss and despair, that began with the movement of his shop from Hastings Street."

-Marsha Music



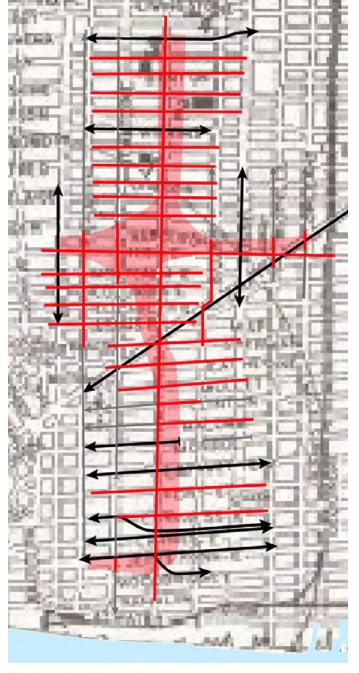
10k+
STRUCTURES
DEMOLISHED

#### **Detroit's Historic Urban Grid**

Detroit's Near East Side was an unofficial geographic district with indistinct boundaries that encompassed a narrow strip, maybe 10 blocks wide and 30 blocks long, just east of downtown. Its dual spines, Hastings and St. Antoine Streets ran its entire length from the Detroit River to Grand Boulevard. The construction of I-375 altered the street grid in Downtown, removing critical connections, creating dead ends and disconnecting neighborhoods. This made getting around the Downtown in any way other than a car less safe and easy. It also established an auto-centric mobility philosophy that would remain for decades to come.

"[There were] very crowded conditions in Black Bottom. In Black Bottom, people lived, often more than one family in a place. People came here from the South and they would offer their cousins or other people to come stay there to get their feet on the ground. Some said, 'It might be horrible, but it's my horrible, it's my home.' But it wasn't all horrible. There were parts of it that were more bedraggled than others. You had homes that were here that people maintained at a certain middle class order no matter what. It was a mixture of things."

-Marsha Music



Historic crossings that were lost

28
CROSSINGS
LOST

35

# **Lost Economy**

#### **Black Businesses and Wealth**

Part of Black Detroit's wealth and cultural history was lost through the destruction of the social and cultural mecca that existed in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. Many businesses were displaced, and those that were not directly cleared due to construction lost patronage due to the residential displacement, which led many to shutter their doors. The clearing of these businesses resulted in wealth being stripped from many Black families and reduced their ability to pass wealth through familial assets.

As one former resident [researcher] recalls, "In 1920, Blacks owned nearly 350 businesses in Detroit, almost all were located within the boundaries of Black Bottom. The community had 17 physicians, 22 lawyers, 22 barbershops, 213 dentists, 12 cartage agencies, 11 tailors, 10 restaurants, 10 real estate dealers, 8 grocers, 6 drug stores, 5 undertakers, 4 employment centers, a few garages and a candy-maker.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Downtown Economic Decline**

A decade prior to urban renewal efforts, the city's overall economy was shifting. As the wartime economy came to an end, industrial cities like Detroit experienced massive job losses in manufacturing and logistics. Lack of household and city revenues facilitated rapid decline of the Downtown core and adjacent neighborhoods. As a result, aided by federal highway and home loan programs, businesses left the Downtown; shopping and entertainment establishments closed; families left the city. And by 1956, the public streetcar system that connected Downtown to surrounding neighborhoods was completely replaced by buses.

300+

BLACK-OWNED

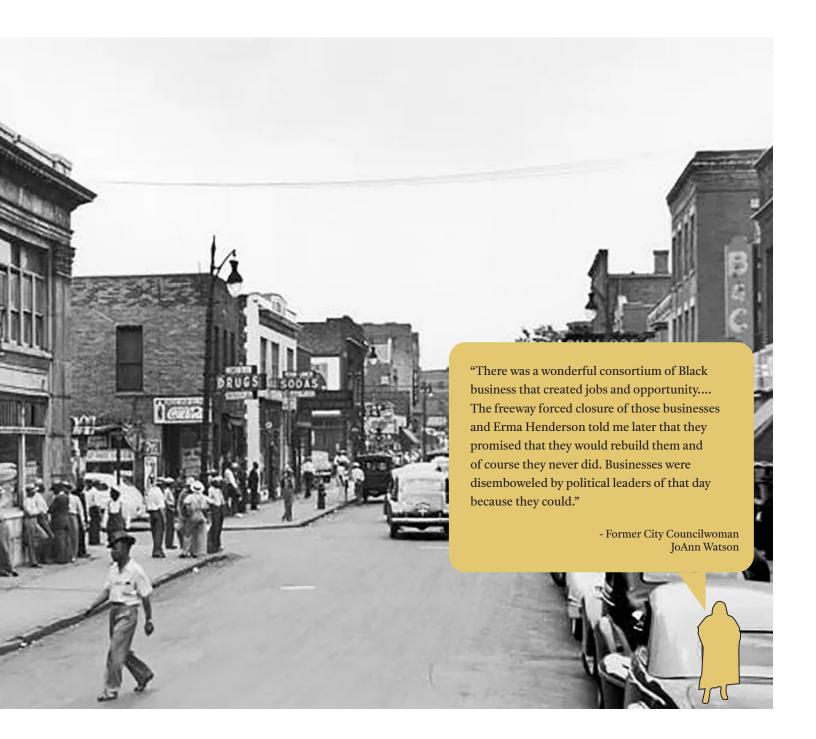
BUSINESSES

DISPLACED

BLACK BOTTOM /
PARADISE VALLEY
ENTERTAINMENT
VENUES DISPLACED



Paradise Valley, 1942



# **Lost Culture**

#### **Black Culture and Traditions**

The construction of I-375 also destroyed a thriving cultural fabric, a sense of community and connectedness. Paradise Valley was the center for Detroit's Black community, a jazz mecca that was known for its rich nightlife, arts and poetry. Together, these neighborhoods had a density of cultural and economic assets. Local researchers count over 50 Black cultural and entertainment venues dotted the Paradise Valley and Black Bottom neighborhoods. The loss of these historic buildings, as well as the cultural legacy that they produced, is immeasurable.

While researchers have been able to capture and quantify some of the cultural loss, it cannot be overstated that much of this loss can now only be recorded by collecting oral histories and personal artifacts of legacy residents, business operators and patrons.

"Many fond memories have come flooding back in my mind. There were many Black-owned hotels back then, but none with the elegance and social significance of the Gotham. Everyone with any celebrity, stature, or social significance stayed at, met or dined at the Gotham... It is sad the Black ownership of hotels and elegant restaurants have been drastically reduced. John White blazed a trail of class, integrity, elegance and style. He was respected by all who knew him. He is still unequaled today."

- Marla Gibbs





Paradise Theater





Jazz ensemble, the Ted Buckner Band, onstage at Paradise Valley's Three Sixes club



A crowd at the B&C Club in Paradise Valley



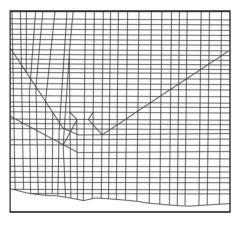
# III Redesigning Mobility

# Greater Downtown Mobility Network

The I-375 Reconnecting Communities project, together with other area infrastructure investments, creates a tremendous opportunity to develop a mobility vision to guide the future of transportation in and around Downtown.

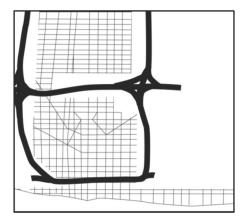
As businesses emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, people are moving to Downtown and nearby neighborhoods and more people are walking and biking. The City has an opportunity to create a new, forward-thinking vision. This vision should reconcile the City's mobility history with its present, acknowledging the many problems associated with auto-centric design including noise and air pollution, depressed land values, and inequitable outcomes for people who do not own a personal vehicle.

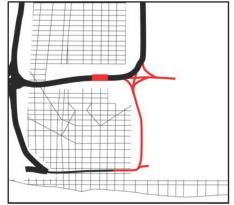
Detroit also has an opportunity to reconcile its urban form by considering design and investment strategies that either repair or replace aging infrastructures in a manner that reconnects neighborhoods while also addressing the intersecting challenges of high traffic-related fatalities, climate change, racial segregation, and more. The removal of I-375 creates an opportunity for Detroit to write a new urban mobility chapter that can advance greater economic and social equity, reduce air and noise pollution, decrease energy consumption, and improve public health.

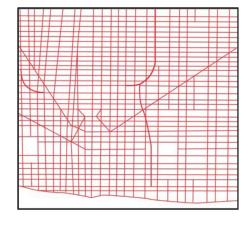


# Historic Urban Grid

Detroit's street grid has evolved over time, starting with Native American trails, transforming to a formal grid and radial boulevard plan implemented in phases as the City grew. This street network served Detroit during its period of peak population of nearly 2 million people up until the 1950s.







# Nation's First Urban Highways

By the end of the 1950s, the street network in the Greater Downtown area was severely fractured by the construction of the first urban limited-access highways, as well as the dislocation of vital businesses and housing that were owned and occupied by Black Detroiters. The highways of this era prioritized efficient and fast vehicular travel between the suburbs and Downtown over the need for maintaining local circulation.

# Retain and Replacement Projects

More than 50 years after the first wave of urban highway construction, much of the infrastructure is aging and needs investment. There is a generational decision about Detroit's future being made now, as the City considers what parts of this network should be retained, and what should be changed.

# Is an Urban Restoration Vision Possible?

Ultimately, hundreds of millions of dollars are made available to repair and/or remove existing highway infrastructure. An overall vision for Downtown Detroit is needed so these investments are not done piecemeal, but as part of an inclusive vision for the city and region. A long-term vision for a highway-free downtown Detroit might be possible by planning for this generational shift today. With a fully reconnected street network that supports all modes of transportation, access and mobility, the City's overall economic, health and quality of life and neighborhoods could be tremendously improved.

# Adopting New Standards for Urban Mobility

# The Problem of Highway Design Standards in the City

The lingering scar of urban renewal is not the only damaging legacy of highways. Communities adjacent to highways are now subjected to constant high speed, high-volume traffic that often creates noise pollution, air pollution, safety problems, and more highway-centric land development. The overabundance of highway access, which is driven by the pattern of auto-centric development, increases car-dependency and creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bikers due to a lack of connected streetscape infrastructure.

The interstate highway system fosters high-speed motorist behavior that spills over to local streets adjacent to highway interchanges and contributes to a culture of speeding, weaving, and safety problems. All of this contributes to a negative sense of place, and creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bikers with a lack of connected streetscape infrastructure.

To construct I-375, there were no travel demand models akin to today's processes that justified the creation of the interstate. Rather, the creation of the interstate was spearheaded by federal public policy and city officials who believed they were ushering in the future of the American City - vehicle ownership and a mentality of "if we build it, cars will come." Today, political will is needed once again - but this time must be balanced with broad community participation and support, and centered on urban design standards for multi-modal mobility.

# Rebuilding a Culture of Walkable Urban Streets

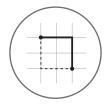
The planning process to remove an interstate highway and repair the urban street grid system must consider how vehicles carrying people and goods move to and within the city. Conventional planning assumptions used by engineers and rooted in the auto-centric standards that created the highway system rely on the assumption that changes cannot be made to a given street unless they will not create delay for motorists beyond an acceptable threshold. The process traffic engineers use to assess this threshold is based on conventional travel demand models. These models estimate future motor vehicle volumes and delay based on factors like travel time, population, employment, and trip patterns based on past travel behavior.

However, contemporary multi-modal concepts of mobility that also consider walking, biking and public transit believe that traffic reduction is a more appropriate planning approach to adopt when removing highways from the urban core. The concept of traffic reduction assumes that traffic volumes are self-adjusting and can be reduced on any given thoroughfare through a variety of interventions, including the distribution of traffic across multiple avenues to avoid delays.

Cities around the country and the world have implemented safety, mobility, and placemaking designs that required and achieved traffic reduction to great success - such as San Francisco and West Palm Beach (see pages 46-47). Many of these designs look like traditional streets rather than the wide arterials of the 1970s and 80s, harkening back to a time when many more Americans rode a bicycle, vehicles moved slowly, and pedestrians mingled on wide sidewalks. In many cases, these designs were implemented despite travel demand models that predicted widespread congestion and unacceptable delay. Traffic reduction teaches us that human behavior naturally adapts to changing conditions, and traffic volumes are adjustable across districts, downtowns, and cities. However, this concept is not acknowledged in conventional traffic engineering practice.

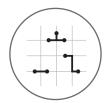
Traffic reduction posits that the public will naturally adapt quickly to new changes in street layout and capacity. There are a variety of ways people adjust, shown below:

#### TRAFFIC REDUCTION METHODS



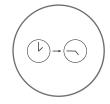
**ROUTE CHANGE** 

Some drivers will choose a different route for their trips.



TRIP LENGTH CHANGE

As businesses develop and the local economy strengthens, some people will find more of what they need closer.



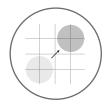
TIME SHIFT

Some drivers will change the timing of their trips.



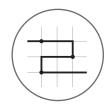
TRIP SUBSTITUTION

Substituting a transportation trip with another service that does not require transportation, like an online/virtual meeting or product.



**PROXIMITY SHIFT** 

Trip length is generally a consideration when households move.



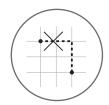
TRIP CHAINING

Some drivers will bundle trips that were previously separate.



#### **MODE CHANGE**

Some drivers will walk, bike, or take transit for short trips.



#### TRIP ELIMINATION

Some trips will be eliminated entirely. For example, some people will exercise in their neighborhood rather than drive to the park or gym.





# **Case Study**

# San Francisco's Unplanned but Successful Highway Removal

Location: San Francisco, CA

In 1988, more than 100,000 cars a day used the Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco. The highway was destroyed in the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989 and, following a lengthy debate, was not rebuilt. Regional traffic models predicted terrible traffic congestion without the highway, and initially after the earthquake, there was increased traffic congestion. This congestion was short-lived as people adapted quickly. Some motorists used other streets, and some used transit instead. Eventually, in place of the highway, a boulevard was built with a streetcar line in the center. New housing and businesses were built in the formally cardominated area. Contrary to what the model projected, congestion did not increase, even though trips increased. This is because many of the trips were multimodal or shorter.





# Case Study West Palm Beach Arterials

Location: West Palm Beach, FL

In the 1990s, arterial streets in West Palm Beach were congested, despite past widenings and other changes to increase motor vehicle speeds. The downtown and neighborhoods alike were facing disinvestment, with high vacancy rates. The City reversed these trends and attracted significant investment, infill housing, and commercial development through road diets on arterial streets, traffic calming, and placemaking. At the time, to remove lanes on arterials, City planners were at odds with Palm Beach County and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The regional traffic model predicted catastrophic congestion if the arterials were narrowed and new buildings were constructed to attract even more trips. However, in reality, after the road diets were installed, new workers and residents could access what they needed without driving long distances. The arterials began to attract even more high-quality development that further reduced long trips.

Image Source: [Left and Right] Google Earth Pro

# **Current and Future Mobility Investments**

# **Detroit's Near-Term Pipeline of Mobility Investments**

Detroit can once again be an urban mobility pioneer, but this time for transformative and reparative highway removal. By getting it right now, I-375 may not be the city's last highway removal.

The one-mile I-375 interstate was deemed practical to remove because of its degrading condition, but it is only one in a long list of transportation infrastructures in need of repair or replacement. Most of MDOT's infrastructure in Detroit, including 1960s era bridges, streets, drainage, and other critical infrastructure, is at a point of requiring significant repairs that will have implications for I-75, M-10, I-94, and other major routes.

Over the next 10-20 years, American cities like Detroit will continue to push towards safer and expanded multi-modal choices for residents - making it even more important to rethink the strategies around infrastructure investment. Highway removal will be an increasingly compelling alternative for DOTs who are faced with insurmountable expenses to maintain and rebuild infrastructure, and the pressure to reconnect communities, repair past harms, and rebuild street grids through highway removal will continue to grow.

# A New Generational Opportunity for Transformative Mobility

A long-term mobility vision plan for even the 2.5 square miles that ring the Greater Downtown Detroit would catalyze the current list of upcoming near-term repair projects for I-75 and M-10 into a modern multi-modal system that promotes a safer, pedestrian-oriented system of urban streets. In the short term, these improvements can increase ridership and help uplift the standards of maintenance and active transportation provision in public works projects across the city. In the long term, by analyzing a Greater Downtown Detroit future without highways, circulation can be improved, barriers can be eliminated, and health outcomes could be improved. This approach produces enormous cost savings, which could then be used to improve multi-modal options such as expanding the QLINE, Bus Rapid Transit, a network of separated bike lanes, and other investments designed to foster the health and well-being of Detroiters.

Cities across the country have adopted quick-build mobility plans with similar effect, resulting in 5-10 years of focused investment into culture change, low-cost street redesigns, and repairing immediate safety concerns. Detroit has an opportunity to align its current portfolio of highway and bridge repair projects with its multi-modal corridor plans to reconnect disconnected neighborhoods and prioritize investment in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. A mobility vision plan can lay the groundwork for future highway removals and better articulate the relationship between today's infrastructure and the needs of the future.



**41** GOOD (7-9 RATING)

**94** FAIR (5-6 RATING)

19 POOR (O-4 RATING)

MDOT and Local Bridge Conditions (2023)

Image Source: MDOT Bridge Dashboard

# Mobility Design Considerations

While MDOT has made significant improvements to the design scheme over the course of the Peer Review process, including reduced number of travel lanes and reduced design speeds, the Peer Review team believes the MDOT 2024 Revised Alternative misses some opportunities to restore "local streets for local trips" travel patterns. Additionally, the current interchange design reinforces both the barrier created by I-75, and a suburban model of traffic movement. The Peer Review advises city leaders to develop a vision of urban mobility and redefine the role of highways in Downtown Detroit's future transportation network. Proposed recommendations include:

- 1. Revise the interchange design per the Peer Review Recommended Interchange and Boulevard Layout, where ramps of one or two lanes connect to different streets. This design disperses traffic so that no street is overloaded and reinforces a transition from highway to urban street driving speeds and behavior.
- 2. Embrace Streets for People as a guidance document for Detroit's future street network and implement in the design of both the I-375 Boulevard streets and the cross-streets that will intersect the boulevard.



MDOT's 2023 Design Alternative

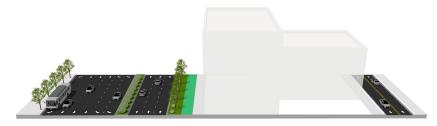


MDOT's May 2024 Revised Alternative



Peer Review November 2024 Recommended Interchange and Boulevard Layout\*

- 3. Restore and reconnect the street network. The revised interchange design will make additional connections over I-75 possible, which will result in dramatic improvement of the pedestrian network and circulation in the project area. This will also help increase the level of traffic dispersion and maximize the use of the existing city street network for circulation.
- **4. Further reduce boulevard width** by adopting more flexible traffic level of service standards and promoting increased traffic diversion to local
- streets in order to shorten pedestrian crossing distances. In addition, eliminate the median in favor of enhancing pedestrian spaces and creating more green spaces.
- 5. Design the street along the eastern edge of the right-of-way to provide continuous mobility and circulation between I-75 and Jefferson, reduce pressure on the western boulevard, and offer parking adjacent to the newly created parcels.



Section A. MDOT's 2023 Design Alternative



Section B. MDOT's 2024 Revised Diverging Diamond Alternative



Section C. Peer Review Full Proximate Interchange Proposal

# **Interchange Today**



View of existing interchange looking west towards Ford Field



View of existing interchange looking southwest towards Ford Field

# **Proposed Interchange Design**



View of MDOT 2024 Revised Diverging Diamond Alternative on Montcalm Street looking west towards Ford Field<sup>1</sup>

# **MDOT Interchange**

The proposed MDOT interchange of the boulevard and I-75 has been designed as a "system-to-system" interchange, treating the boulevard as a principal arterial, oriented to providing mobility for cars, rather than as an urban arterial street, which provides for both mobility and placemaking. The design purposefully forces all traffic exiting I-75 onto the boulevard and provides few connections to other proximate areas. This requires an excessively large bridge overpass to provide all the highway-to-arterial movements, which in turn increases cost and complexity for construction. The 2023 MDOT proposal uses a modified single point diamond design and has since been refined in 2024 to utilize a diverging diamond design approach. This configuration, similar to interchanges typically found in suburban, auto-oriented settings, including Big Beaver Road in Troy. Ml. is not an intuitive traffic pattern, and generally is not used in downtown areas.



View of Peer Review Full Proximate Proposal on Montcalm Street looking west towards Ford Field<sup>1</sup>

# **Peer Review Interchange**

The Peer Review proposes an alternative interchange design that provides many more connections to streets proximate to the highway. There are more ramps to enter or exit I-75, which increases the opportunities for traffic dispersion and improved access to the surrounding neighborhoods that were historically separated by the highway. The interchanges have simple on- and off-ramps that are intuitive and appropriately scaled for a downtown context. The highway movements are simplified, so that the highway itself requires less space, and fewer retaining walls, reducing construction complexity and costs. This allows greatly improved connectivity and a greater restoration of the street network, better connecting the Brewster-Douglass and Brush Park neighborhoods to the rest of downtown. The Peer Review proposes a new detailed traffic model be developed using the same modeling program SEMCOG used for the MDOT proposal to further confirm ramp locations, number of lanes and traffic signalization.

# I-375 Today



View of existing Chrysler Service Drive looking north from Larned Street



View of existing Chrysler Service Drive looking south near Monroe Street

# **Proposed Boulevard Design**



View of MDOT 2024 Revised Diverging Diamond Alternative looking north from Larned Street<sup>1</sup>



View of Peer Review Full Proximate Proposal looking north from Larned Street<sup>1</sup>

#### **MDOT Boulevard**

While MDOT has made significant improvements to the Boulevard design over the course of the Peer Review process, including reduced number of travel lanes and reduced design speeds, the Peer Review team believes there are additional areas for improvement. Medians provide a safety function for vehicles at higher speeds, and for pedestrian refuge where there are long distances between signalized crossings. However, safety can be better achieved here with narrow, lower speed streets and shorter pedestrian crossings. Pedestrians are safest in places where there are a lot of people walking, so creating a street that is comfortable and appealing for walking will make it safer for pedestrians as well. The MDOT boulevard provides an overly wide sidewalk on the west side for "placemaking" in a context that does not align with existing land uses. More evenly propositioned sidewalks on both the western and eastern boulevards is more appropriate. The MDOT boulevard does not currently provide on-street parking which will limit the access to the redeveloped area.

#### **Peer Review Boulevard**

Several possible schemes were evaluated in the Peer Review, and these may evolve with further refinement in concert with urban design development and community input. All recommendations for the restored boulevard prioritized pedestrian and non-motorized access and safety, and urban design elements including parking, sidewalk widths and locations of bike lanes, to further promote the City of Detroit's Streets for People principles. The ultimate Peer Review recommendation was for the Boulevard to have three lanes of traffic south of Gratiot Street, parking adjacent to the newly created parcels, and sidewalks with planted amenity zones on both sides. The street created east of the Boulevard is recommended to be two to three lanes of traffic, parking adjacent to the newly created parcels, one-directional bike lanes and sidewalks with planted amenity zones on both sides.



# Testing Greater Downtown Land Use Futures

# A Greater Downtown For All Detroiters Past, Present, Future

# **An Integrated Vision**

City leaders and the community of resident, business, nonprofit and philanthropic partners have the opportunity to guide planning, policy, investment, market creation and reparative outcomes through the I-375 highway removal project. By establishing a shared and integrated mobility and land use vision for the Greater Downtown, this infrastructure investment can set a new national model for reconnecting communities by restoring the urban fabric and cultural heritage of lost neighborhoods. Additionally, if done right, the removal of I-375 positions the Greater Downtown neighborhoods for inclusive economic growth, stabilization and preservation, including:

- Reparative and restorative business, job and population retention and growth
- Housing choices across all household income levels
- The preservation and restoration of local Detroit and African American cultural identity and amenities

The Peer Review team's approach to reviewing, analyzing and preparing guiding principles, evaluation frameworks and testing conceptual visions for the Greater Downtown insisted on marrying design studies for the new street network with an understanding of neighborhood conditions and market trends that could best inform scenarios for future land use and development. This integrated approach was also rooted in a set of reconnect, repair, and restore quiding principles used as an evaluation framework for assessing each scenario's impact on reparative and economic outcomes. The principles and land use tests in the report were informed by a careful review of Detroit community comments collected by MDOT and the City of Detroit expressing their aspirations, goals and concerns for how the removal of the highway could produce the best possible outcomes for Detroit and Detroiters, past, present and future.

# The Neighborhood Diversity of the Project Area

The I-375 Reconnecting Communities project sits adjacent to eight Greater Downtown neighborhoods including Downtown, Greektown, Brush Park, East Riverfront, Eastern Market, McDougall-Hunt, Lafayette Park, and Elmwood Park. Together, these neighborhoods represent the strongest employment, medical, food and entertainment center in the region, as well as some of the city's most stable Black, racially diverse and mixed-income communities. Today, the area is growing in residential population at a rate faster than the city overall.

In the recent decade, the Greater Downtown has benefited from significant new development, expanding its mix of retail, commercial, and residential development including new homes on vacant land and in converted office buildings and activating local streets with new ground-floor, locally-owned shops and dining options. Redevelopment in the Downtown and Brush Park is creating new housing and amenities to retain existing and attract new residents to the city core. Additionally, historic residential neighborhoods like Lafayette Park, Elmwood Park and McDougall-Hunt, one of the oldest historically Black neighborhoods in Detroit, provide affordable and stable housing options for a range of households, including long-standing Detroit families and homeowners.

Regional destination neighborhoods like Greektown and Eastern Market offer vibrant authentic Detroit amenities. Greektown, a destination for its entertainment district and nightlife, and Eastern Market, a destination for food, businesses, arts and culture, attract an eclectic and diverse range of visitors from across the city, region and the state. The East Riverfront is home to the beloved and active 3.5-mile Riverwalk that supports daily recreation, events and programming along the Detroit River for Detroiters who come from all over the city to enjoy views, festivals and community celebrations.









**27,846** RESIDENTS

30% 58% BLACK

\$27,846
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD

**44**. Median

INCOME

AGE



34,000 DAILY WORKERS

**76,000** DAILY VISITORS







Data Sources: Detroit's Census Hub; Downtown Detroit Partnership's Annual Report: Image Sources: [Top Left] https://www.clickondetroit.com/community/2023/07/27/10-things-to-do-this-weekend-in-metro-detroit/; [Top Middle] www.knowdetroit.com/eastern-market-flower-day/; [Top Right] Detroit Future City https://detroitfuturecity.com/what-we-do/the-center-for-equity-engagement-and-research/; [Bottom Left] Cadillac Square, Curbed; [Bottom Middle] Heidelberg Project, Michelle and Chris Gerard; [Bottom Right] www.flickr.com/photos/healthiermi/27836424814/in/photostream/

# **Current Market Conditions**

# **Current Market Trends Should Guide Future Reparative Development**

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent shutdown, these Downtown neighborhoods were experiencing strong population, business and job growth. Over the last two years coming out of the pandemic, these neighborhoods are beginning to recover with residential leading this growth - Downtown population growth is now outpacing the City of Detroit at large. Part of this residential growth can be attributed to the diversity in housing options that these neighborhoods provide, including single-family detached, single-family townhouse, reuse low-rise, multifamily mid-rise, and mid-rise and historic office tower conversions to residential.

However, while Downtown neighborhoods near I-375 are diverse, the neighborhoods are gentrifying and losing Black households. Between 2012 and 2022, within the project area, households earning over \$150K grew 500% while households making below \$35K fell by 20%. While overall there was a growth in households during this time, there was a loss of 200 Black households. Additionally, the rise of remote work has created an uncertain future for the recovery of office building leases, occupancy and the density of daytime commuters, workers and shoppers.

Within this context of neighborhood change, the I-375 Reconnecting Communities project offers a unique opportunity to both enhance the quality of life of current residents and workers as well as provide new opportunities for populations seeking to return to Detroit, including descendant families who were displaced from the areas and newcomers to the city. Through a two-pronged approach of (1) leveraging market trends currently driving vitality in Greater Downtown and (2) reconnecting, repairing, and restoring the missing economic, cultural and social infrastructures needed to support a healthy community, Detroit can use this highway removal project to realize more equitable and just redevelopment than they were able to 70 years ago.

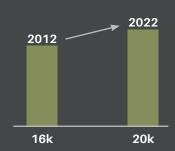
Key market findings include:

- Detroit's population is growing downtown.
  Residential population growth Downtown outpaced
  the city overall between 2012 and 2022. However,
  the number of Black households declined Downtown
  between 2017 and 2022.
- **Detroit's most diverse neighborhoods.** Greater Downtown is becoming more diverse, but gentrifying. Households earning more than \$150k per year grew 500% between 2012 and 2022, while households earning less than \$35k decreased by 20% over the same period.
- African American homecoming. Black middle class wants to return to Detroit but needs more options.
- Work is changing. Jobs based Downtown do not necessarily translate to workers commuting Downtown due to a shift to hybrid and remote work.
- Office is not a driver of real estate demand. Future office to residential conversions may absorb demand for high-rise residential.
- More diverse housing products are needed. The Black middle class seeks diverse housing products based on their age and household size and current inventory does not sufficiently meet demands.
- Detroit already has momentum. Hospitality, public realm programming and unique local retail activate downtown by leveraging assets to attract residents and visitors, backfilling the lost office worker population.
- Make the market! Despite a growing development pipeline, Greater Downtown is rich with vacant land that requires significant subsidies for real estate development, meaning careful planning is needed to create real estate value.

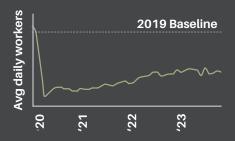
# **What's Driving Greater Downtown Vitality**

# **RESIDENTS**

(not workers) will drive Downtown population growth



Growth in I-375 Downtown Neighborhood Population<sup>1</sup>



**Daily Workers** Downtown since 2019<sup>1</sup>

# **VISITORS** are coming back strong

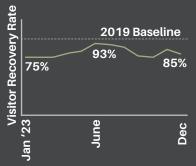








Increase in revenue per hotel room has recovered and grown since COVID2



Visitor Recovery of I-375 Downtown Neighborhoods during the summer<sup>2</sup>

# **A SHARED VISION FOR DOWNTOWN**

driven by recent neighborhood frameworks and district plans



Recent neighborhood framework plans

# **RECENT DEVELOPMENT**

with a strong pipeline of development over the next decade

Development pipeline of investment3



SF of new development in Downtown & midtown since

# **LOWER TRAFFIC DEMAND** post-COVID



Morning peak hour traffic is now

of pre-pandemic traffic volumes4

# What's Missing in Greater Downtown

# **MORE HOUSING OPTIONS**

are needed for middle-class households and families

71%

of households in Greater Downtown cannot afford the median rent<sup>1</sup>



# GREATER RACIAL & INCOME DIVERSITY

of new residents choosing to live Downtown



**20%** 

of the City's households are Black middle-class<sup>2</sup>

the car still rules, and large areas lack

QUALITY OPEN SPACE

**30**%

of land Downtown is devoted to parking



# ADDRESSING HEAT MITIGATION

to combat heat island effect

86%

of Detroiters live in areas with a 8°F or higher increase due to heat island effect. The greatest temperature increases are in Downtown<sup>3</sup>



# RESTORING A WALKABLE NETWORK

To reconnect Downtown to surrounding neighborhoods

**17** 

Highway overpasses connect the downtown core to the surrounding neighborhoods

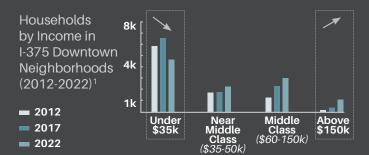


# **What We Need** to Balance

# Retaining MIDDLE-CLASS POPULATION



with a MARKET trending towards HIGH INCOME HOUSEHOLDS



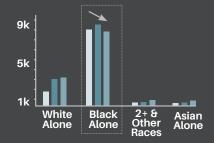
# Retaining BLACK POPULATION



in a GROWING and DIVERSIFYING NEIGHBORHOOD

Households by Race in I-375 Downtown Neighborhoods (2012-2022)<sup>1</sup>

- **2**012
- **2017**
- **2022**



Retention and growth of RETAIL & GROUND FLOOR BUSINESSES



with INTERRUPTIONS
DUE TO
CONSTRUCTION

Development of

**30 acres** 

of NEWLY CREATED VACANT LAND



with a MARKET reliant upon SUBSIDIES

New PUBLIC LAND, PARKS, & PUBLIC SPACES



with MANAGEMENT and MAINTENANCE COSTS

# Realizing Reparative Economic Impacts

# A Design that Maximizes Economic Impacts

The I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project has real potential to create reparative economic benefits for the Detroit community with a restored mobility network that improves pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular mobility and creates well-sized blocks to attract and support new development. A careful review of the MDOT 2023 Preferred Alternative boulevard and interchange design revealed that the scheme did not maximize the development potential of the excess land created by removing the highway. The design's excessively wide boulevard and interchange, configuration of new parcels, and relationship of new development parcels fronting high-speed streets would limit parcel development capacity, market viability, and desirability for real estate investment. Of the 16 parcels created by the 2023 scheme, 9 (56%) had limited development capacity due to small parcel width. Of the 21 parcels created by the 2024 scheme, 7 (33%) had limited capacity due to small parcel width. By failing to capitalize on the redevelopment potential of new parcels, the design hinders the long-term potential to support and attract new residents and workers that will add to the vibrancy of the area, generate new spending, and support job creation in the I-375 Downtown neighborhoods.

The Peer Review developed recommendations for the interchange and boulevard that restore more of the historic urban grid of Detroit. As a result, this creates more developable land parcels that can accommodate a broader range of land uses and building types and achieves greater community reconnection, reparative and restorative goals and inclusive economic impacts.

Preliminary economic and fiscal impacts for the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan were generated for three land use and development concepts. The analysis estimates potential gross impacts at stabilization, assuming full build-out of each concept but does not establish a rate of absorption. The intent of this analysis is to inform the remaining MDOT design phases of the boulevard and interchange, as well as the City of Detroit's Zoning and Land Use Study.



# **Employment**

The number of jobs (both full- and part-time) in the area of analysis



# **Earnings**

Includes wages and benefits received by workers and income received by independent proprietors and contractors in the area of analysis



## **Average Earnings**

The average earnings is calculated by dividing the total earnings by the total employment



#### **Economic Output**

The total value of production across all industries. It is equivalent to the aggregate spending in the area of analysis

# **Economic Impacts**

# for the CITY OF DETROIT

through increased tax revenue and job creation

\$1-3B Total ECONOMIC OUTPUT in the city



Up to **\$11M** 

ONE-TIME INCOME TAX REVENUE

from construction



Up to

\$5M

ONGOING INCOME TAX REVENUE from jobs created

in the area once fully built out



2,580
TOTAL JOBS created in the city

for GREATER DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

with more business opportunities, housing options, and by restoring the historic urban character of Paradise Valley

**130k SF** 



**COMMERCIAL AND MAKER SPACE** 



6 acres of

Up to **3,250** HOUSING UNITS



for **DETROITERS** by attracting more residents across all income levels

1,600



**NEW MIDDLE-CLASS AND AFFORDABLE UNITS** 

Up to

3,250

**NEW HOUSEHOLDS** 



# **Testing Land Use Methodology**

The Peer Review study of three distinct land use futures is intended to explore how the design of the boulevard and interchange can better support the viability of future development. These "test" concepts are not meant to represent a final land use and development proposal, but instead are intended to test how three distinct development and urban character drivers could produce different economic and R3 impacts and outcomes. For this work, economic impacts are measured by population attraction, diverse housing options for mixed-income households, job and business growth and tax revenue generation. The following observations and attitudes guided the tests:

- Build from investments that are creating a unique Downtown experience to drive the next era for Detroit and Downtown.
- Incorporate land uses that attract visitors for sports, entertainment, shopping, and recreation to replace the loss of office workers given the shift to remote work.
- Provide diverse housing products to retain and attract the Black middle class.
- Ensure new development parcels are of a scale that can accommodate a flexible range of land uses and densities that can attract investment in the near- and long-term.

In response to the Peer Review goals to reconnect, repair and restore, the land use concepts also tested what it would mean to repair and/or restore aspects of the lost community's population density and diversity; businesses and entrepreneurs; or cultural and entertainment liveliness, while also leveraging the strengths of Downtown's growth in residential population, and increases in sports and entertainment venues, visitors and revenues.

Each of the three land use futures tests a different "what if" scenario prioritizing three different land use drivers (residential, cultural heritage and sports + recreation + open space) to produce and compare different economic and R3 impacts. Key assumptions and considerations include:

- These are land use tests, not urban design schemes, to determine the impacts of prioritizing distinct land uses. The City of Detroit's Zoning and Land Use Study will ultimately determine the appropriate and likely mixed-use scenario that best meets the needs of the community and market conditions.
- All land use concepts tested assume the Peer Review proximate interchange design.
- Concepts only test future land uses on the excess land created by the highway removal, and not on adjacent privately-owned land or other "soft sites."
- R3 focus. The overarching intent is to extract R3 benefits regardless of scheme.
- All impact analyses assume full buildout, but do not make assumptions about the timeline of absorption or phasing.
- Concepts explored different combinations of land uses, but are not based on "highest and best use" or financial feasibility tests.

# **Key Definitions and Assumptions**

Middle Income Annual household income of \$60-\$91k (80-120% Area

Median Income)

Middle Income Housing product created to appeal and be affordable **Housing Units** 

to middle class households.

Affordable Housing Units

Housing products that are affordable, meaning the occupant does not have to allocate more than 30% of their income to housing costs, for a household earning 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less, equivalent to \$40k for a household of two in 2023.

For the three Land Use Futures, 20-25% of the Multifamily units are considered Affordable Units.

# **Land Use Test Typology Assumptions**

High-rise Residential	11-12 stories (1-3 parking, 9 residential)	1000sf/unit
Mid-rise Residential	6-7 stories (1-2 parking, 5 residential)	1000sf/unit
Townhouses	3 stories	2000sf/unit
Parking	1 parking spot per residential unit	

# **Land Use Scenarios**

# Land Use Scenario 1: Living Greater Downtown

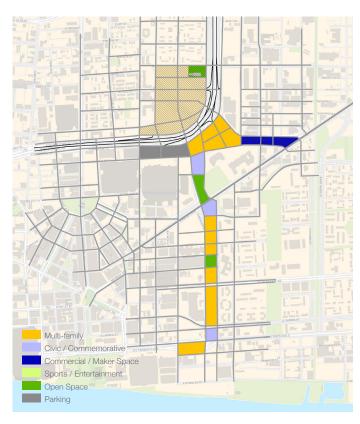
"What if Detroit aimed to replace all of the housing lost in Black Bottom, inclusive of housing choices for a broad range of household incomes and compositions?" This scenario prioritizes residential land uses at varying densities, compatible with existing conditions and development trends in Brush Park, Lafayette Park and Downtown.

# Land Use Scenario 2: The Cultural Heritage District

"What if Detroit aimed to strengthen Downtown as the region's epicenter for arts, culture and entertainment venues, while honoring and celebrating the area's storied history of Black cultural entertainment and Detroit's contributions to new music genres?" This scenario prioritizes a north-south spine of cultural heritage sites and creates a lively Montcalm Street connecting the sports district to Eastern Market's entertainment and dining options.

# Land Use Scenario 3: The Sports + Recreation Destination

"What if Detroit expanded its professional sports campus to also include a regional destination for intramural sports, community recreation and festivals?" This scenario accommodates potential plans to expands the sports campus in a manner that also provides the larger Detroit community, and the Greater Downtown neighborhoods specifically, with much needed publicly accessible green space, tree canopy, and recreational facilities.



# 1: Living Greater Downtown

ECONOMIC IMPACT		
600	DIRECT, INDIRECT, & INDUCED JOBS	
\$28M	TOTAL Earnings	
\$76M	TOTAL ECONOMIC Output	
3,250	HOUSEHOLDS	
\$5.1M	DETROIT Income tax	

REPARAT	REPARATIVE IMPACT		
3,247	HOUSING UNITS		
800	MIDDLE-CLASS Housing Units		
798	AFFORDABLE Housing Units		
184k	GSF OF RETAIL / Commercial maker Space		



# 3: The Sports + Recreation Destination

# 2: The Cultural Heritage District

#### **ECONOMIC IMPACT** DIRECT, INDIRECT, 1,390 & INDUCED JOBS TOTAL \$54M **EARNINGS** TOTAL ECONOMIC \$131M OUTPUT 2,490 HOUSEHOLDS \$4.5M DETROIT **INCOME TAX**

REPARATIVE IMPACT		
386k	GSF OF Commemorative Space	
1.8	ACRES OF NEW Public Open Space	
176k	GSF OF RETAIL / Commercial Maker Space	

# **ECONOMIC IMPACT** DIRECT, INDIRECT, 2,585 & INDUCED JOBS TOTAL \$100M **EARNINGS** TOTAL ECONOMIC \$219M OUTPUT 1,075 HOUSEHOLDS \$2.9M DETROIT

**INCOME TAX** 

REPARATIVE IMPACT		
5.9	ACRES OF NEW Public Open Space	
1.1m	GSF OF SPORTS / Entertainment	
130k	GSF OF COMMERCIAL Maker space	

# 1

# **Living Greater Downtown**



# Intention

"What if Detroit aimed to replace all of the housing lost in Black Bottom, inclusive of housing choices for a broad range of household incomes and compositions?"

This scenario prioritizes residential land uses at varying densities, compatible with existing conditions and development trends in Brush Park, Lafayette Park and Downtown.

#### Goals

- 1. Reconnect former Black Bottom neighborhoods
- 2. Enliven Gratiot Avenue
- 3. Attract middle class back to Detroit
- 4. Reconnect, Repair, Restore outcomes

# LEGEND High-rise multi-family Mid-rise multi-family Sports / Entertainment Townhouses Open Space Civic / Commemorative Parking

# **URBAN CHARACTER INSPIRATION**







**Pearl District** 

Portland, OR







Kendall Yards Spokane, WA







St. Elizabeth's

Washington, DC

# SITE PLAN & AREA CALCULATIONS

# TOTAL DEVELOPMENT

**5,464,370** GSF

**125** Acres

20 Blocks

90 Buildings

#### **RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

# By typology

1,060 High-rise

**2,134** Mid-rise

53 Townhouse

3,247 Total Units

#### By pricepoint

798 Affordable

800 Middle income

1,649 At-market

3,247 Total Units

#### MIXED USE GSF

**130,365** Commercial

**54,692** Retail

#### CIVIC SPACE GSF

**221,004** Civic

#### SPORTS / ENTERTAINMENT

0 Sports

0 General

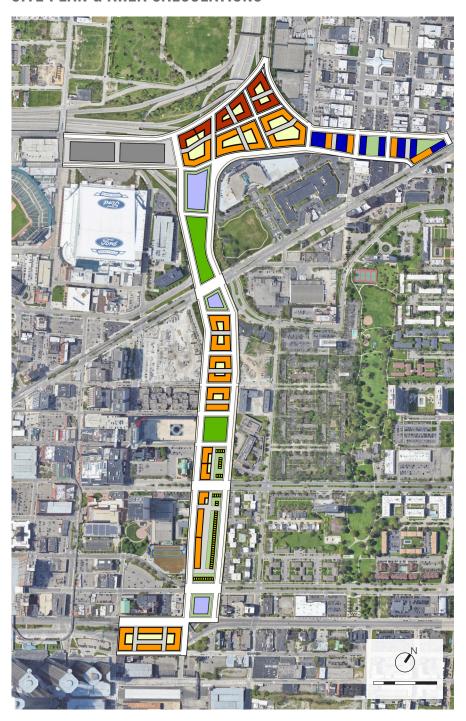
#### **OPEN SPACE ACRES**

2.9 Open Space

# PARKING

**3,656** Resi Spots

1,861 Sports Spots



## **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

ECONOMIC IMPACT	BY THE N	UMBERS
	600	DIRECT, INDIRECT, & Induced Jobs
	\$28M	TOTAL EARNINGS
ANNUAL ECONOMIC Impact in City of Detroit	\$76M	TOTAL ECONOMIC Output
CITY OF DETROIT	3,250	HOUSEHOLDS
	\$5.1M	DETROIT INCOME Tax
\$ %	\$9.3M	MICHIGAN INCOME Tax
GROSS ANNUAL Tax revenue	\$6.3M	MICHIGAN SALES Tax
	\$20.7M	TOTAL TAX Revenue

## **REPARATIVE IMPACT**

REPARATIVE IMPACT	BY THE NUMBERS	
##* <b>-11</b>	3,247	Original I-375 construction displaced over 2,600 families from Black Bottom
POPULATION GROWTH & RETENTION	HOUSING UNITS	Scenario replaces and exceeds estimate of housing units cleared by original I-375 construction
BLACK DETROIT MIDDLE-CLASS	800 MIDDLE INCOME HOUSING UNITS 798 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS	Creation of diverse housing product creates opportunity to attract the Black middle-class back
BLACK WEALTH & OWNERSHIP	184k GSF OF RETAIL / COMMERCIAL MAKER SPACE	Retail and commercial / maker space creates opportunities to grow Black employment and entrepreneurship

## **BENEFITS & TRADEOFFS**

BENEFITS	TRADEOFFS
<ul> <li>Promotes population growth and retention</li> <li>Provides opportunities for individual and collective homeownership</li> <li>Encourages land reserved for novel ownership models including land trust and public benefit corporation community investment vehicles (CIVs)</li> <li>Generates tax revenues and potential value capture to support future reparative investments in business and residential production and ownership</li> <li>Accommodates a diverse range of for a wide range of market rate, affordable and middle income housing types to meet different needs in support of growing and retaining the residential population in Detroit</li> <li>Enables reparative economic outcomes for individual households and community entities by expanding opportunities for wealth building through land and homeownership</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>All development types will require subsidies</li> <li>A focus on residential uses creates fewer direct, indirect, and induced jobs than some commercial programs may support</li> <li>Dedicating majority of developable land to residential ties absorption to residential demand over many years</li> <li>Prioritizing homeownership may produce a slower rate of creating household wealth</li> <li>Produces fewer permanent jobs and sales tax revenue</li> </ul>

## 2 The Cultural Heritage District



#### Intention

"What if Detroit aimed to strengthen Downtown as the region's epicenter for arts, culture and entertainment venues, while honoring and celebrating the area's storied history of Black cultural entertainment and Detroit's contributions to new music genres?"

This scenario prioritizes a north-south spine of cultural heritage sites and creates a lively Montcalm Street connecting the sports district to Eastern Market's entertainment and dining options.

#### Goals

- 1. Extend the cultural / entertainment district
- 2. Inspiration
- 3. Reconnect, Repair, Restore outcomes

# LEGEND High-rise multi-family Mid-rise multi-family Sports / Entertainment Townhouses Open Space Civic / Commemorative Parking

## **URBAN CHARACTER INSPIRATION**







**Destination Crenshaw** 

Los Angeles, CA







**August Wilson African American Cultural Center** 

Pittsburgh, PA







**International African American Museum** 

Charleston, SC

## SITE PLAN & AREA CALCULATIONS

## TOTAL DEVELOPMENT

**4,602,056** GSF

**105** Acres

20 Blocks

89 Buildings

## **RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

## By typology

0 High-rise

**2,437** Mid-rise

53 Townhouse

2,490 Total Units

## By pricepoint

487 Affordable

784 Middle income

1,219 At-market

2,490 Total Units

## MIXED USE GSF

**130,365** Commercial

**46,131** Retail

#### CIVIC SPACE GSF

**386,566** Civic

#### SPORTS / ENTERTAINMENT

0 Sports

0 General

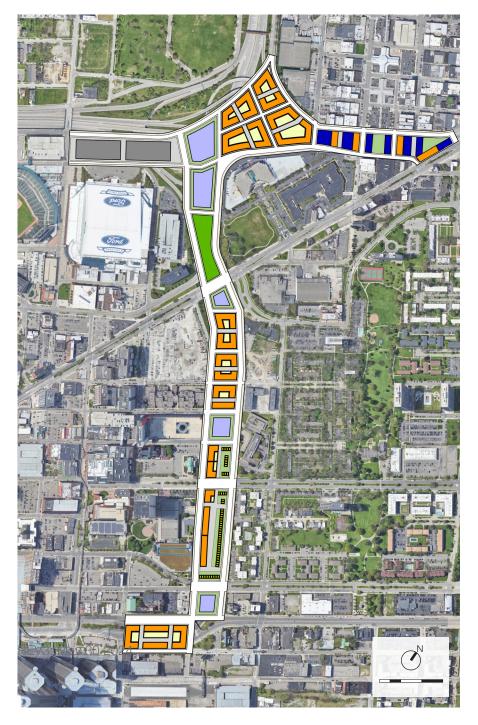
## **OPEN SPACE ACRES**

1.8 Open Space

## PARKING

2,520 Resi Spots

1,861 Sports Spots



## **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

ECONOMIC IMPACT	BY THE N	UMBERS
	1,390	DIRECT, INDIRECT, & Induced Jobs
	\$54M	TOTAL EARNINGS
ANNUAL ECONOMIC Impact in City of Detroit	\$131M	TOTAL ECONOMIC Output
CITY OF DETROIT	2,490	HOUSEHOLDS
	\$4.5M	DETROIT INCOME Tax
\$%	\$8.4M	MICHIGAN INCOME Tax
GROSS ANNUAL Tax revenue	\$7.8M	MICHIGAN SALES Tax
	\$20.6M	TOTAL TAX Revenue

## **REPARATIVE IMPACT**

REPARATIVE IMPACT	BY THE NUMBERS	
	386k	Creation of a <i>cultural corridor</i> and sites of commemorative space that center and celebrate Black Bottom and Black history
BLACK IDENTITY & PLACEMAKING	GSF OF COMMEMORATIVE SPACE	Entertainment space gives opportunity to restore cultural mecca that was Paradise Valley
LOCAL IDENTITY & PLACEMAKING	1.8  ACRES OF NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	Creation of cultural corridor helps to <i>restore the urban character</i> that once existed in Paradise Valley and create a destination for Detroit
BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH	176k GSF OF RETAIL / COMMERCIAL MAKER SPACE	Opportunities to grow business and employment / Black entrepreneurship

## **BENEFITS & TRADEOFFS**

BENEFITS	TRADEOFFS
<ul> <li>Prioritizes more land be held in public, quasi-public and/or community ownership for cultural, civic and other public uses</li> <li>Builds community, civic and cultural institutions, public spaces, and spaces for commemoration and memorials</li> <li>Amplifies and makes visible Detroit's cultural identity</li> <li>Bolsters and celebrates the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley cultural legacy</li> <li>Creates public and cultural amenities that may expedite absorption of residential and other uses while minimizing vacant land area that needs to be maintained until district absorption is complete</li> <li>Increases cultural draw to downtown Detroit, which can strengthen the appeal to hybrid office workers and grow downtown activity and the real estate market</li> <li>Creates direct, indirect, and induced jobs</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Requires higher public sector costs for maintenance and management to support cultural, civic and public uses</li> <li>Requires nonprofit and philanthropic financial and operational resources</li> <li>Creates the greatest amount of land that is likely to be tax-exempt, specifically civic and commemorative uses</li> <li>Provides fewer housing options and units than the Living Greater Downtown scenario, however, the housing program is in line with market trends in downtown Detroit and adjacent neighborhoods</li> <li>Generates less tax revenues and potential value capture to support future reparative investments in business and residential production and ownership due to amount of tax-exempt land</li> </ul>

## 3

## **The Sports + Recreation Destination**



## Intention

"What if Detroit expanded its professional sports campus to also include a regional destination for intramural sports, community recreation and festivals?"

This scenario accommodates potential plans to expands the sports campus in a manner that also provides the larger Detroit community, and the Greater Downtown neighborhoods specifically, with much needed publicly accessible green space, tree canopy, and recreational facilities.

#### Goals

- **1.** A campus for local, regional, and national sports and recreation
- 2. Maximize residential density on the Boulevard
- 3. Reconnect, Repair, Restore outcomes

# LEGEND High-rise multi-family Mid-rise multi-family Sports / Entertainment Townhouses Open Space Civic / Commemorative Parking

## **URBAN CHARACTER INSPIRATION**







SunTrust Park Development Atlanta, GA







**Entertainment & Sports Arena** 

Washington, DC







Brooklyn Bridge Park New York, NY

## SITE PLAN & AREA CALCULATIONS

## TOTAL DEVELOPMENT

**3,292,733** GSF

75 Acres

15 Blocks

**71** Buildings

## **RESIDENTIAL UNITS**

## By typology

0 High-rise

**1,029** Mid-rise

45 Townhouse

1,074 Total Units

## By pricepoint

206 Affordable

309 Middle income

514 At-market

1,074 Total Units

## MIXED USE GSF

**130,365** Commercial

0 Retail

#### CIVIC SPACE GSF

**49,148** Civic

#### SPORTS / ENTERTAINMENT

**953,691** Sports

**49,236** General

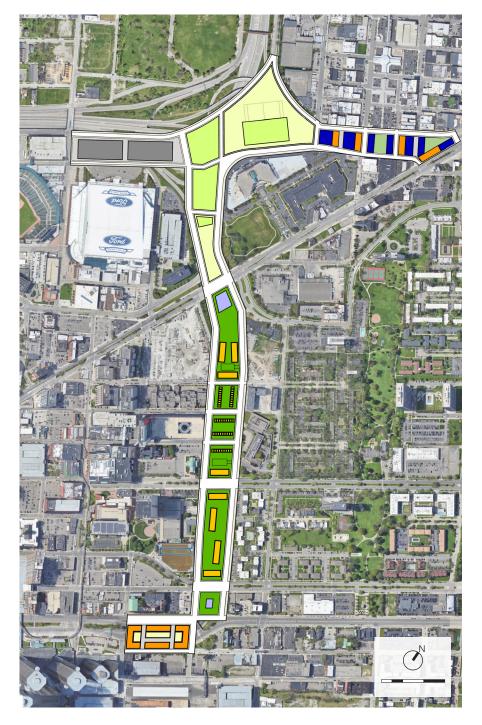
## **OPEN SPACE ACRES**

5.9 Open Space

## PARKING

1,280 Resi Spots

1,861 Sports Spots



## **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

ECONOMIC IMPACT	BY THE N	UMBERS
	2,585	DIRECT, INDIRECT, & Induced Jobs
	\$100M	TOTAL EARNINGS
ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IN CITY OF DETROIT	\$219M	TOTAL ECONOMIC Output
CITY OF DETROIT	1,075	HOUSEHOLDS
	\$2.9M	DETROIT INCOME Tax
\$ ,	\$6.2M	MICHIGAN INCOME Tax
GROSS ANNUAL Tax revenue	\$43.5M	MICHIGAN SALES Tax
	\$52.6M	TOTAL TAX Revenue

## **REPARATIVE IMPACT**

REPARATIVE IMPACT	BY THE NUMBERS	
IDENTITY & PLACEMAKING	<b>5.9</b> Acres of New Public Open Space	Creation of new public open space is an opportunity to showcase Detroit to locals and visitors, and center and celebrate Black Bottom and Black history
BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT GROWTH	<b>1.1m</b> GSF OF SPORTS / ENTERTAINMENT	Sports / entertainment district will bring tourism, and employment opportunities, and opportunity to restore cultural / social aspect of Paradise Valley
BLACK WEALTH & OWNERSHIP	130k GSF OF COMMERCIAL MAKER SPACE	Employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for Black residents and others

## **BENEFITS & TRADEOFFS**

BENEFITS	TRADEOFFS
<ul> <li>Prioritizes attracting more visitors to the area that support small business activity nearby, which could provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to start businesses as well as add to the existing draw to Downtown Detroit</li> <li>Maximizes land for greatest amount of increased sales taxes</li> <li>Encourages increased visitors and visitor spending in the Greater Downtown</li> <li>Creates more direct, indirect, and induced jobs than the other scenarios</li> <li>Generates the greatest amount of taxable spending at area businesses and thus greatest sales tax revenue to the City and State among the three scenarios</li> <li>Generates the greatest amount of public open space</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Creates land that is tax exempt</li> <li>Retains a superblock structure</li> <li>Requires ongoing public and/or public/private maintenance and operations</li> <li>Creates the fewest number of housing units and marginally fewer townhomes than the other scenarios, meaning less potential to support wealth building through homeownership</li> <li>Creates an urban design character most different from the historic residential, cultural and entertainment identity of the area prior to the highway</li> </ul>



## V Opportunity to Reconnect, Restore, Repair

## A Reconnect, Restore, Repair Framework

The I-375 Reconnecting Communities Project has been associated with the expectation that the completion of a new boulevard and interchange will yield outcomes that are reparative, restorative and/or reconnecting. However, the community as a whole has not yet landed on a shared set of goals for these outcomes, nor is their shared agreement that these are the outcomes the project can or should fulfill.

The Peer Review scope, in total, sought to demonstrate that in fact the removal of I-375 and its planned new boulevard, interchange and excess land can produce

reconnection, reparative, and restorative (R3) outcomes before, during and after the construction completion. In the Executive Summary and Chapter 2 (see pages 14-15 and page 26 respectively), definitions and eight principles have been articulated, that guided the team's analysis, evaluation, testing, and recommendations for how these R3 outcomes can be realized through improvements to people, places, economic vitality and cultural production.

In this report, and throughout the Part II and III reports, examples of processes, strategies, urban planning/design

## **PLACE**

URBAN GRID + HUMAN SCALE Local Neighborhood Connectivity

Streetscapes

Urban Form + Land Use

**Environment + Climate Mitigation** 

## **PEOPLE**

POPULATION GROWTH + RETENTION BLACK DETROIT MIDDLE-CLASS

**Anti-displacement** 

Affordability

**Housing Incentives** 

recommendations, and programs have been highlighted to illustrate the many ways the advancement of reconnection, reparative or restorative outcomes can be achieved.

In this chapter, the Peer Review team identifies an initial 14 possible approaches to reconnecting, repairing and restoring communities, places, economies and cultural heritage (see diagram below). For each of these approaches, the team has identified different strategies that could be implemented and precedents for those different strategies. These outlined strategies and approaches are

meant to be a starting point, to be further refined through a more robust process with the Greater Detroit community.

The intention of this chapter is not to see the three Rs as an absolute return to past – that is just not possible and in some cases, not desirable – or as simply a financial payout for past harms. Instead, the goal is to embrace a broader range of possibilities for restoration, reconnection and repair that includes the reuniting of neighborhoods, reconnecting the street grid, and returning land for housing, businesses, jobs and family wealth building.

## **ECONOMY**

BUSINESS + EMPLOYMENT GROWTH
BLACK WEALTH + OWNERSHIP

**Business Development + Support** 

Entrepreneurship

Land Disposition, Ownership + Governance

**Procurement** 

Workforce

## CULTURE

LOCAL IDENTITY + PLACEMAKING BLACK CULTURAL PLACEMAKING

Narrative + Communications

**Community Engagement** 

Commemoration, Memorials + Signage

## **PLACE**

## URBAN GRID + HUMAN SCALE Local Neighborhood Connectivity

	Streetscapes		
	Strategies	Precedents	
1.	Improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure	<ul> <li>Mandela Parkway, Oakland, CA: Completed 1.3 mile boulevard and park replacing a highway and reconnecting a formerly bisected community.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Rochester Inner Loop, Rochester, NY: Partially completed series of sunken highway removal projects creating at-grade streets and new developable land.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	
2.	Create Vibrant Walkable Street Life	Streets for People Plan, Detroit, MI: Detroit's 2021 initiative to make it easier and safer for all Detroiters to be mobile throughout the city. <sup>3</sup>	
3.	Consider TIF funding district for infrastructure improvements	Park East Corridor, Milwaukee, WI: Completed highway removal project that created at-grade streets, a reconnected grid, and new developable land. <sup>4</sup>	

Urban Form + Land Use		
Strategies Precedents		Precedents
Explore strategies that reconstrated grid and seek to restore grid		<ul> <li>Mandela Parkway, Oakland, CA: Completed 1.3 mile boulevard and park replacing a highway and reconnecting a formerly bisected community.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Olson Memorial Highway, Minneapolis, MN: Potential highway removal project.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>
Plan for flexibility in land uses opportunities for housing, ecoopportunity, and public space	onomic	<ul> <li>Reimagining I-94, Minneapolis, MN: Report advocating for the conversion of a highway into at-grade streets and new developable land.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>

Environment + Climate Mitigation	
Strategies Precedents	
Prioritize street trees, green space, blue/ green infrastructure, and environmental equity	<ul> <li>Destination Crenshaw, Los Angeles, CA: In-progress 1.3 mile open-air museum dedicated to celebrating the history and culture of Black LA.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>Mandela Parkway, Oakland, CA: See above.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

#### **Streetscapes**

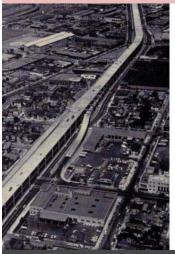


## Precedent Park East Corridor

Location: Milwaukee, WI

The Park East Freeway was an elevated highway that cut through the heart of the city, alienating downtown from Milwaukee's north side. In 2002 the freeway was demolished, and opened up 24 acres of land for economic development. The grid lost to the footings of the Park East was restored, improving traffic and access to downtown. A redevelopment plan was established which included a 28 acre TIF to fund infrastructure improvements and a block-by-block form based code for future development. Between 2001-2006 the area has seen a 45% growth in average assessed land values in the Park East TIF district.

#### **Environment + Climate Mitigation**





## Precedent **Mandela Parkway**

Location: Oakland, CA

In 1989, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake caused the collapse of the Cypress Street Viaduct. This tragedy gave way to an opportunity to repair the harm that the freeway had inflicted on West Oakland's urban form and population. The highway was relocated and along the previous route a four lane boulevard with a wide green median was built. The 1.3 mile parkway united the two sides of West Oakland for pedestrians, and provides amenities that support walkable, healthy communities. The creation of the parkway also provided several health and environmental benefits. For instance, the air has become significantly cleaner for residents including a 38% decrease in nitrogen oxide level and a 25% decrease in annual black carbon levels.

## **PEOPLE**

## POPULATION GROWTH + RETENTION BLACK DETROIT MIDDLE-CLASS

	Anti-displacement Anti-displacement			
	Strategies	Precedents		
1.	Create a robust set of construction mitigation policies and programs	<ul> <li>St. Paul Green Line, St. Paul, MN: In-progress light rail project connecting Downtown Minneapolis to Downtown St. Paul.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Los Angeles Metro K Line, Los Angeles, CA: Completed light rail project.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Greater DC Purple Line Corridor, Washington, DC: In-progress light rail project.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>		
2.	Create cross jurisdictional working groups and initiatives to implement anti-displacement strategies	<ul> <li>Reimagining I-94, Minneapolis, MN: Report advocating for the conversion of a highway into at-grade streets and new developable land.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Initiative, Minneapolis, MN: Project running in parallel with a transit extension project to mitigate displacement.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>		

Affordability			
	Strategies	Precedents	
	eate affordable housing requirements for v development	<ul> <li>Rochester Inner Loop, Rochester, NY: Partially completed series of sunken highway removal projects creating at-grade streets and new developable land.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	
and land sma	oritize inclusion of affordable residential decommercial spaces on publicly owned d. Consider requiring set asides for all businesses and affordable housing, well as rent restrictions for development publicly owned land	• Five Wounds Urban Village Plan, San Jose, CA: Consolidated framework plan for four neighborhoods centered around a future transit station. <sup>7</sup>	

Housing Incentives			
Strategies Precedents			
Fund/program that gives financial support to Black residents in the project area	The Local Reparations Restorative Housing Program, Evanston, IL:  Reparations program that offers direct funding for eligible Black residents. <sup>8</sup>		

## **Housing Incentives**



#### **Precedent**

## The Local Reparations **Restorative Housing Program**

Location: Evanston, IL

In the summer of 2019, the Evanston City Council took action to address the historical wealth and opportunity gaps that African American/Black residents of Evanston experienced, through a housing program that would incentivize former Black residents and their descendants to buy land in Evanston. The Local Reparations Restorative Housing Program claims to redress 50 years of housing discrimination by offering Black residents up to \$25,000 for down payments, mortgages, or home repairs. All Black residents who lived in Evanston between 1919 and 1969—or who are direct descendants of someone who did—were eligible for the program.<sup>2,3</sup> Sixteen of the 600+ applicants were chosen in a lottery. With a total budget of \$400,000, this housing program was the first initiative launched through the City's \$10 million reparations fund.4

## **Affordability**





## **Precedent Inner Loop**

Location: Rochester, NY

A shrinking population made the inner loop a highly underutilized highway. After the Rochester 2010 plan proposed highway removal, enthusiastic leadership of a mayor and the community led to the conversion of the highway to a boulevard. In 2017, the highway was brought to grade and created a two-lane complete boulevard with street parking and bicycle lanes. This project spurred new development, and created ~500 units of affordable housing, more than half of which are affordable at or below 60% AMI.

## **ECONOMY**

## BUSINESS + EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BLACK WEALTH + OWNERSHIP

	Business Development + Support				
	Strategies	Precedents			
1.	Develop cohorts that target developing and preparing small businesses as retail and commercial spaces are proposed and constructed to align graduates of the program with tenanting efforts	<ul> <li>Tulsa I-244 Planning Study, Tulsa, OK: Study for a highway removal.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>			
2.	Create technical assistance pathways within City departments for small businesses to navigate barriers to growth such as City licensing, permitting, code enforcement, street maintenance, accessing program funds, and more	Technical Assistance Pathways, St Paul, MN: The city staff direct business owners to specific phone number and email for business resources.			
3.	Create a Small Business Anti-Displacement Acquisition Fund for businesses that want to purchase space or need access to "non-operation" capital	Ownership and Opportunity Fund, Minneapolis, MN <sup>2</sup>			
4.	Create a Historic Business Designation Program to provide financial assistance, legal protections, branding/marketing, and/or technical assistance to businesses that meet defined criteria such as tenure, business size, and/or ownership status	Legacy Business Program, Austin, TX <sup>3</sup>			
5.	Consider financial incentives for landlords who extend leases for 10+ years on comparable terms to historic businesses	Legacy Business Program, San Francisco, CA <sup>4</sup>			

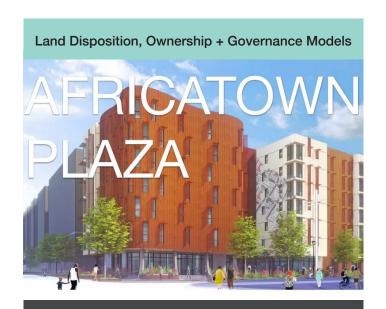
Entrepreneurship			
Strategies Precedents			
Fund a program that gives financial support to Black entrepreneurs in the project area		<ul> <li>Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend: provides each resident with an equal share of oil earnings annually.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	
2.	Partner with existing local program providers to offer training and resources to entrepreneurs and small business owners in the area, focusing on creating and growing Black businesses	<ul> <li>Detroit Means Business: small business support hubs.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>Motor City Match, Detroit, MI: connects new and expanding businesses with services and space to grow.<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>	

	Land Disposition, Ownership + Governance Models				
	Strategies	Precedents			
1.	Consider the creation of a Community Investment Trust (CIT) to preserve affordability, advance community-led development, and grow homeownership	<ul> <li>Detroit Justice Center: Operates two CIT's in Detroit's North End.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Market Creek Plaza: Development and tenanting led by community in San Jose, CA<sup>2</sup></li> <li>East Portland CIT: Community Investment Trust with approximately 26 to 30 businesses and nonprofit tenants.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>			
2.	Develop a fund to support the development of CITs, and real estate-based cooperatives, including grants and technical assistance for predevelopment and construction of commercial or residential properties. Identify partners to support individuals interested in real estate-based cooperatives	<ul> <li>LOCAL Fund: Supports worker and real estate investment cooperatives in St Paul, MN.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>Shared Roof: A cooperative apartment complex built in Seattle, WA.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>			
3.	Create a Community Investment Vehicle for excess land so that Black residents and descendants can own and build wealth from the land	<ul> <li>NICO: Real Estate Investment Trust in Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>Africatown Land Trust: Land Trust in Central District of Seattle.<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>			
4.	Fund a program that gives financial support to BBPV former residents / descendants that want to return	Rondo Inheritance Fund: Affords low-income families from St Paul's Rondo neighborhood to rebuild wealth through homeownership.  The local Rondon			
5.	Fund a program that gives financial support to Black entrepreneurs who want to revive businesses from Hastings Street	<ul> <li>The Local Reparations Restorative Housing Program, Evanston, IL: (See page 88)</li> <li>Alaska's Permanent Fund Dividend: (See Page 90)</li> </ul>			
6.	Explore creating a Community Restoration Fund	<ul> <li>Akron I-59 Inner Belt's "Reconnecting Our Communities", Akron, OH: A sunken highway removal projects that will create at-grade streets and new developable land.<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>			

## **ECONOMY (continued)**

Procurement				
Strategies	Precedents			
1. MWBE Contract requirements	<ul> <li>Mandela Parkway, Oakland, CA: Completed 1.3 mile boulevard and park replacing a highway and reconnecting a formerly bisected community.<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>			
2. Construction Training programs and Job P	<ul> <li>11th Street Bridge Park Equitable Development Plan,         Washington, DC: Plan for a highway-to-urban-park conversion.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Destination Crenshaw, Los Angeles, CA: In-progress 1.3 mile open-air museum dedicated to celebrating the history and culture of Black LA.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>			
Release RFQ (Request for Qualifications) f plan team with experience that aligns with areas identified in this research	3			
Design a transparent and community-enga selection process	ged			
Apply inclusive procurement practices dur and construction as well as ongoing opera	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3			

	Workforce			
	Strategies	Precedents		
1.	Set an ambitious local hire goal (50%+) for construction jobs and apprenticeships, as well as post-construction employment	<ul> <li>11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park Equitable Development Plan, Washington, DC: See above.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Destination Crenshaw, Los Angeles, CA: See above.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>		
2.	Construction Training programs and Job Pipelines			
3.	Support and facilitate programming that builds the capacity of local artists, especially emerging artists and youth	11 <sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park Equitable Development Plan, Washington, DC: See above. <sup>2</sup>		



# Precedent Africatown Community Land Trust

Location: Mobile, AL

Africatown Community Land Trust's mission is "to acquire, develop, and steward land in Greater Seattle to empower and preserve the Black Diaspora community," and works towards community ownership of land in Seattle's Central District. The land trust was formed following a historic inclusive development agreement reached on the Liberty Bank Building in 2016. The Africatown Land Trust was identified as the proper vehicle to hold the Africatown ownership interests in the Liberty Bank Building and the Firestation 6 and other properties.

#### Workforce



## Precedent **Destination Crenshaw**

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Destination Crenshaw is a reparative development project that will transform a 1.3-mile stretch of Crenshaw Boulevard from an area that has long deserved economic investment, into a thriving commercial corridor linked by community spaces, pocket parks, and hundreds of newly planted trees. The project is designed to spur economic development - with a focus on local hiring and robust small business support. The project will create a pipeline of work and jobs for Black talent in the construction industry, support Black entrepreneurship, and promote Black creative talent through cultural programming.

## **CULTURE**

## LOCAL IDENTITY + PLACEMAKING BLACK CULTURAL PLACEMAKING

Narrative + Communications				
Strategies	Precedents			
Create grant programs to support local artists who look to tell the story of history and past harms to the public through different mediums	<ul> <li>Rondo 56, St. Paul, MN: Stage show telling the story of a neighborhood displaced by a highway.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>The Story of the BQE, New York, NY: A documentary film about those impacted by the BQE subway infrastructure.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>			
Create grants to support local artists who look to tell the story of history and past harms to the public through different mediums	Africatown Design Competition, Mobile, AL:     Competition to tell the story of a settlement created by formerly enslaved Africans. <sup>3</sup>			

Community Engagement				
Strategies	Precedents			
Create inclusive engagement processes where Black and legacy residents can express their wants/needs/dreams	11 <sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park Equitable Development Plan,     Washington, DC: Plan for a highway-to-urban-park			
2. Provide tools to support impacted communities with grief	conversion.4     Blue Line Extension Anti-Displacement Initiative,     Minneapolie, MN Project rupping in parallel with a transit.			
3. Undertake a more comprehensive effort to document the loss	Minneapolis, MN: Project running in parallel with a transit extension project to mitigate displacement. <sup>5</sup> • Akron I-59 Inner Belt's "Reconnecting Our			
4. Launch a parallel reparative process	Communities", Akron, OH: A sunken highway removal			
5. Connect what happened/is happening here to the city's story	projects that will create at-grade streets and new developable land.6			
6. Link up with like-minded cities for a community of practice				
7. Create a more consistent communications framework				
8. Hire a master plan team with deep engagement capacity				
9. Adapt the Advisory Group process to support the process				
10. Partner with youth/advocates to advance a youth strategy				
11. Leverage events as a channel for master plan engagement				

Commemoration, Memorials + Signage				
	Strategies	Precedents		
1.	Create commemorative spaces through public art and installations to honor those that were displaced	<ul> <li>Chouteau Greenway Framework Plan, St. Louis, MO: Plan for a 20-mile urban greenway knitting together multicultural destinations and neighborhoods.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Destination Crenshaw, Los Angeles, CA: In-progress 1.3 mile open-air museum dedicated to celebrating the history and culture of Black LA.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>		
2.	Create an African American Cultural District	<ul> <li>Akron I-59 Inner Belt's "Reconnecting Our Communities", Akron, OH: See previous page.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>		
3.	Commission local artists to create signage honoring project area's history and culture	<ul> <li>San Diego Black Arts + Culture District, San Diego, CA: Program to design banners to unify a cultural district.<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>		

#### Narrative + Communications



## **Precedent Africatown Design Competition**

Location: Mobile, AL

In 2023, the Africatown International Design Idea Competition was launched to help tell the story of Africatown - a settlement just outside Mobile, Alabama built by formerly enslaved Africans from modern day Benin after the Civil War. The competition assembled a group of Black architects, historians, archaeologists, and activists to convey Africatown's history through architecture, storytelling, and community building.

#### Narrative + Communications



## Precedent **Rondo '56**

Location: St Paul, MN

Through historic photos, spoken word and song, the stage show Rondo '56 tells the story of the Rondo neighborhood that was displaced by I-94. One of the performers, Rambo, feels as if he and the other singers play the role of contemporary griots, the African storytellers. He told the Star Tribune "We are the keeper of history through song. I think [this show] is medicinal. Music opens and heals the wounds at the same time."<sup>4</sup>

## A Well Designed Boulevard Can Ensure Reconnect, Restore, Repair (R3) Benefits

The removal of I-375 and its new boulevard, interchange and excess land can produce reconnecting, reparative, and restorative outcomes. See below for an example of how a well-designed boulevard can ensure those benefits.



Repairing loss of Black cultural identity through commemorative streetscapes and signage commissioned from local artists



Restoring Detroit urban ecology and public health through Detroit-centric green streetscapes that provide shade trees and bioswale storm water management



Restoring neighborhood economy by providing space for locally-owned businesses



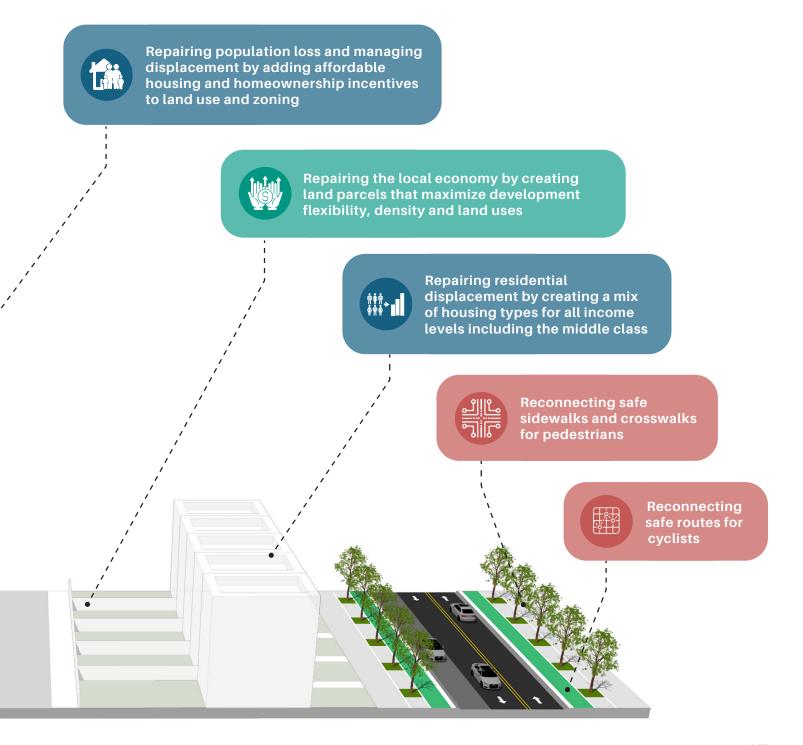
Reconnecting citywide mobility by leaving room for future transit possibilities



Restoring a vibrant public realm that supports ground floor uses with well-scaled sidewalks, street furnishings, and on-street parking







# Appendix A: Greater Downtown Neighborhood Profiles

## DOWNTOWN



Downtown district contains lots of retail, a mix of commercial / residential and lots of new development over the past decade.











**10,141** RESIDENTS

28%

BLACK

34 MEDIAN AGE

**54%** 

90% 10% FAMILY

\$56,976

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

98% RENTER 2% OWNER

**54%** COLLEGE

21% SOME COLLEGE

- More racially mixed households relative to other project area neighborhoods
- Predominantly non family households
- Predominantly renters
- Larger proportion of high-income households relative to other project area neighborhoods

## **GREEKTOWN**



Commercial and entertainment district, historic Greek immigrant community





3,887
DAYTIME POPULATION

4,050
DAILY
WORKERS

93 BUSINESSES

14,000
DAILY CASINO VISITORS

OF WORKERS ARE
EMPLOYED IN FOOD
& ACCOMODATIONS
SECTOR

## **BRUSH PARK**



Brush Park historically was an affluent neighborhood, which went through decline in the late 19th / early 20th century. It contains Victorian mansions and new development.











RESIDENTS

**52%** 

BLACK

NON-FAMILY

MEDIAN AGE

36%

WHITE

FAMILY

**70%** 

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

RENTER

30% OWNER

COLLEGE OR GRAD

13% SOME

COLLEGE

More racially mixed households relative to other project area neighborhoods

- Predominantly non family households
- Predominantly renters
- Larger proportion of high-income households relative to other project area neighborhoods

## **EAST RIVERFRONT**



Recently redeveloped Riverwalk includes parks, retail shops, hotels and the Renaissance Center.











2,532 RESIDENTS

38.1 MEDIAN AGE

39% **48**% BLACK WHITE

74% NON-FAMILY **26%** FAMILY

\$75,847

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**81%** RENTER

**19%** OWNER

COLLEGE **OR GRAD** 

16% SOME COLLEGE

- More racially mixed households relative to other project area neighborhoods
- Predominantly non family households
- Predominantly renters
- Larger proportion of high-income households relative to other project area neighborhoods

## EASTERN MARKET









DAYTIME POPULATION

**192 BUSINESSES** 

PERMANENT **EMPLOYEES IN FOOD BUSINESSES**  **SHOP IN FASTERN MARKET ANNUALLY** 

## LAFAYETTE PARK



Residential area of around 5,000 people, known for the Mies van der Rohe residential district with postwar modernist houses and high rises.











4.351 RESIDENTS

47%

BLACK

55.2 **MEDIAN AGE** 

37% WHITE

**82% 18%** NON-FAMILY FAMILY

\$53,246

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**75%** RENTER

**25%** OWNER

63% COLLEGE **OR GRAD** 

**18%** SOME COLLEGE

- More racially mixed households relative to other project area neighborhoods
- Predominantly non family households
- Predominantly renter households
- High proportion of bachelor/graduate degree holders

## **MCDOUGALL-HUNT**



One of the oldest historic Black neighborhoods in Detroit with turn-of-the-century homes. Also home to the outdoor art installation The Heidelberg Project.











RESIDENTS

45.5

MEDIAN AGE

83% 8% BLACK WHITE

46% **54%** NON-FAMILY FAMILY

\$33.985

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

**50%** RENTER

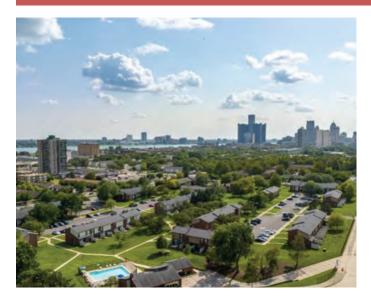
**50%** OWNER

COLLEGE

SOME OR GRAD COLLEGE

- Predominantly Black households
- Relatively more family households than other project area neighborhoods
- Even split of renters and owners, but more homeowners in this neighborhood relative to other project area neighborhoods
- Neighborhood has relatively more lower-income households than other project area neighborhoods

## <u>ELMWOOD PARK</u>



Small community filled with a diverse mix of condo, coops, townhomes and apartment buildings.











7.694 RESIDENTS

**MEDIAN AGE** 

91% 4% WHITE BLACK

63% NON-FAMILY FAMILY \$26.927

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

81% RENTER

**19%** OWNER

COLLEGE **OR GRAD** 

SOME

**COLLEGE** 

- Predominantly Black households
- Relatively more family households than other project area neighborhoods
- Predominantly rental households
- Neighborhood has relatively more lower-income households than other project area neighborhoods

