GRAND RAPIDS

Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Strategy

May 2019

DRAFT

CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

HR&A Analyze. Advise. Act.

NELSON NYGAARD

INTERBORO

1 Context

2 Defining Equitable Development and Mobility

3 Community Engagement Approach

4 Next Steps

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Grand Rapids is a nationally competitive city well positioned to capitalize on recent growth.

Medical Mile

Corporate Anchor Growth

3.8%
Population Growth
(2010-2017)
American Community Survey

26.5%
Job Growth
(2010-2018)
EMSI

2000
Units Completed or Constructed in DT
(2017)
City Journal

56%
Reduction in Downtown Office Vacancy Rate
(2012-2018)
Colliers International

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Regionally, Grand Rapids stands out in the Midwest as a top-performing city based on its exceptional economic growth.

29th

Best-Performing City in the U.S.

Milken Institute 2018

1st

Best-Performing City in the Midwest

Milken Institute 2018

7th

Fastest-Growth Economy in the U.S.

Forbes 2018

36%

Wage Growth

(2011-2016)

24%

High Tech GDP Growth

(2016-2017)

129

Out of 200

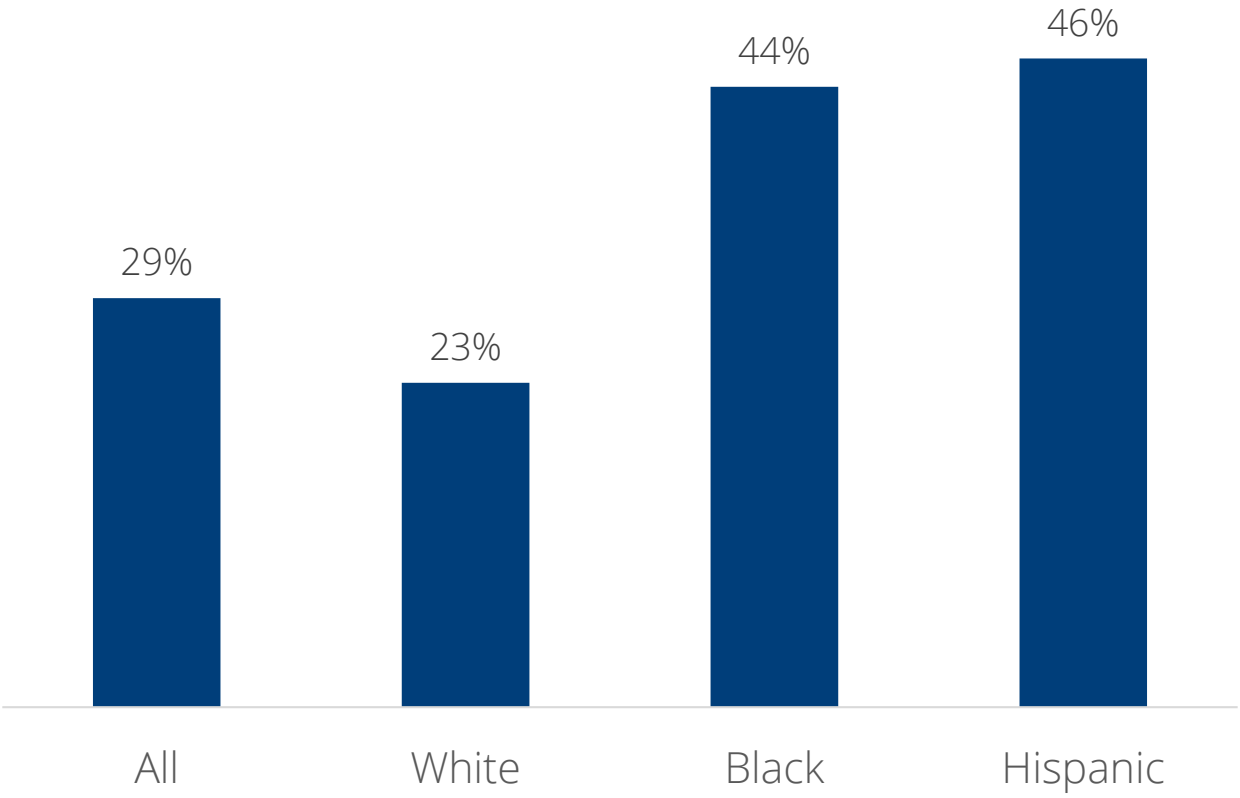
High Tech GDP Concentration

(2017)

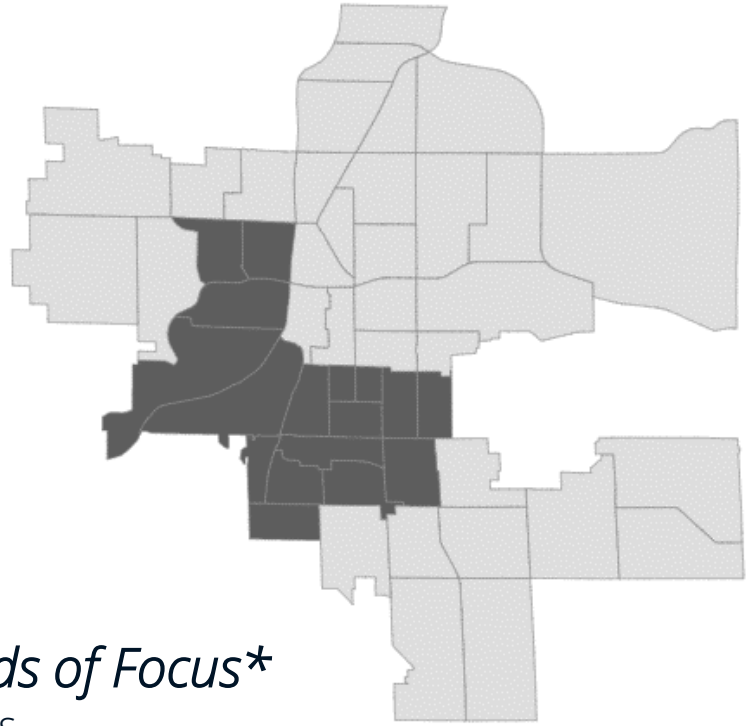
Source: Milken Institute

Despite the City's recent growth, there are economic disparities among residents that reflect differences in racial background and neighborhood.

Percent of the Population Below 125% of the Poverty Level, 2017



Source: American Community Survey, 2017



*17 Neighborhoods of Focus**

- *High Poverty Rates*
- *High Unemployment*
- *Low rates of educational attainment*

** as determined by the Kellogg Foundation's 2016 research*

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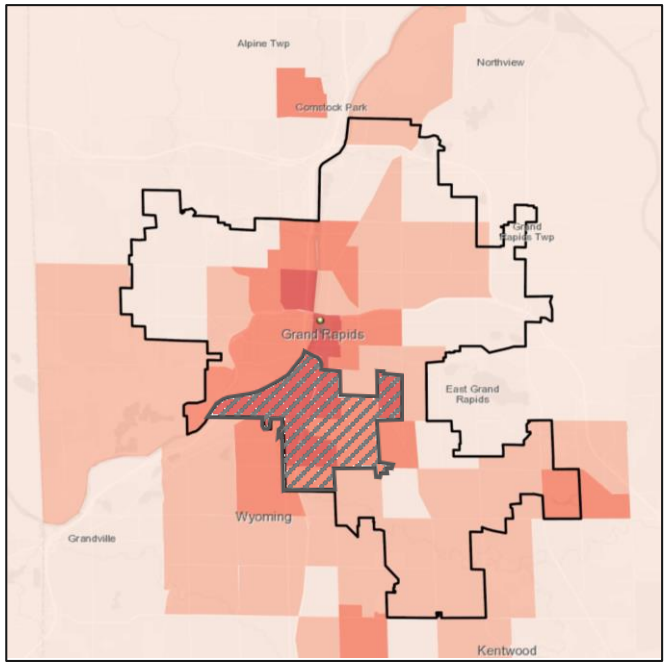
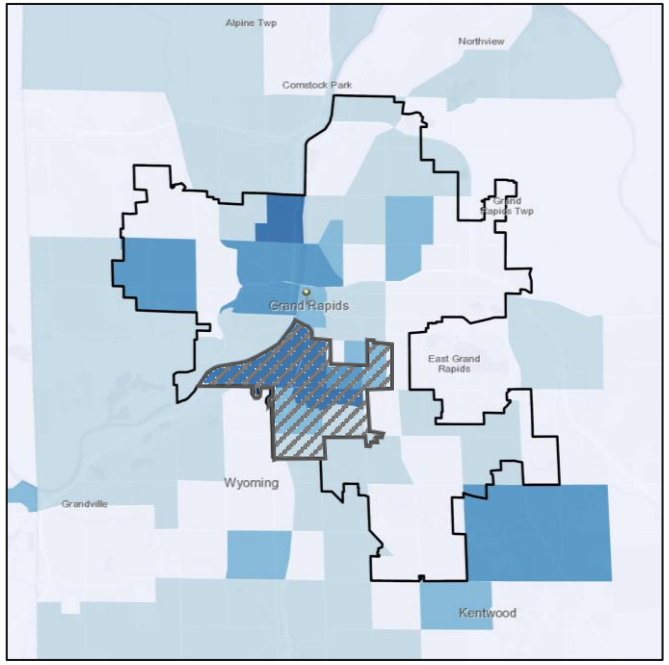
Historic patterns of segregation and disinvestment have further exacerbated economic outcomes and disparities.



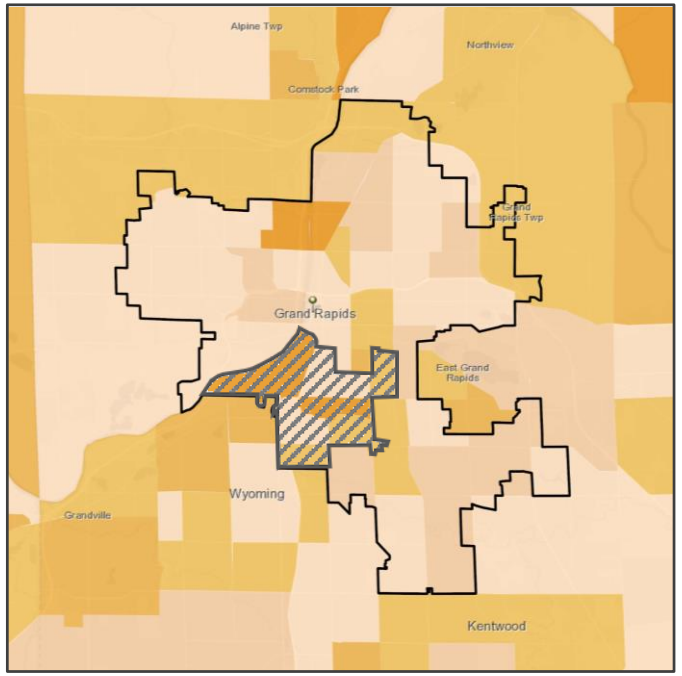
Percent of Households Below Poverty Line by Census Tract, 2017

- 65% to 76%
- 38% to 65%
- 23% to 38%
- 11% to 23%
- 1 to 11%
- 76% or more people of color



Percent of Households Without a Vehicle by Census Tract, 2017

- 15% to 20%
- 8% to 15%
- 5% to 8%
- 2% to 5%
- 0 to 2%
- 76% or more people of color



Average Travel Time to Work by Census Tract, 2017

- 24 to 28 minutes
- 22 to 24 minutes
- 19 to 22 minutes
- 8 to 19 minutes
- 0 to 8 minutes
- 76% or more people of color

Source: American Community Survey 2017, ESRI

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Grand Rapids needs an economic development and mobility plan that will address inequalities while building on recent investment and enhancing accessibility for all.

5 PILLARS

Business Development

Real Estate Development

Neighborhood Business Districts

Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Mobility

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Our team will work with the Steering Committee to develop the Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Plan and a robust Community Engagement Plan.

HR&A Analyze. Advise. Act.

Economic Development

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Our work will result in several plans that will guide and inform equitable growth.

Vision Zero Action Plan

Detail existing conditions for transportation safety in Grand Rapids

Parking Strategy Analysis

Develop potential parking solutions based on existing and planned conditions

TDM Framework

Report on existing conditions on commute patterns and costs

Community Engagement Plan

Generate feedback, input and buy-in from residents

Cultural Change Management Plan

Assess the barriers to workforce diversification and develop solutions

Equitable Economic Development & Mobility Plan

Deliver final strategy detailing findings from analysis and engagement, and articulating an action plan for implementation

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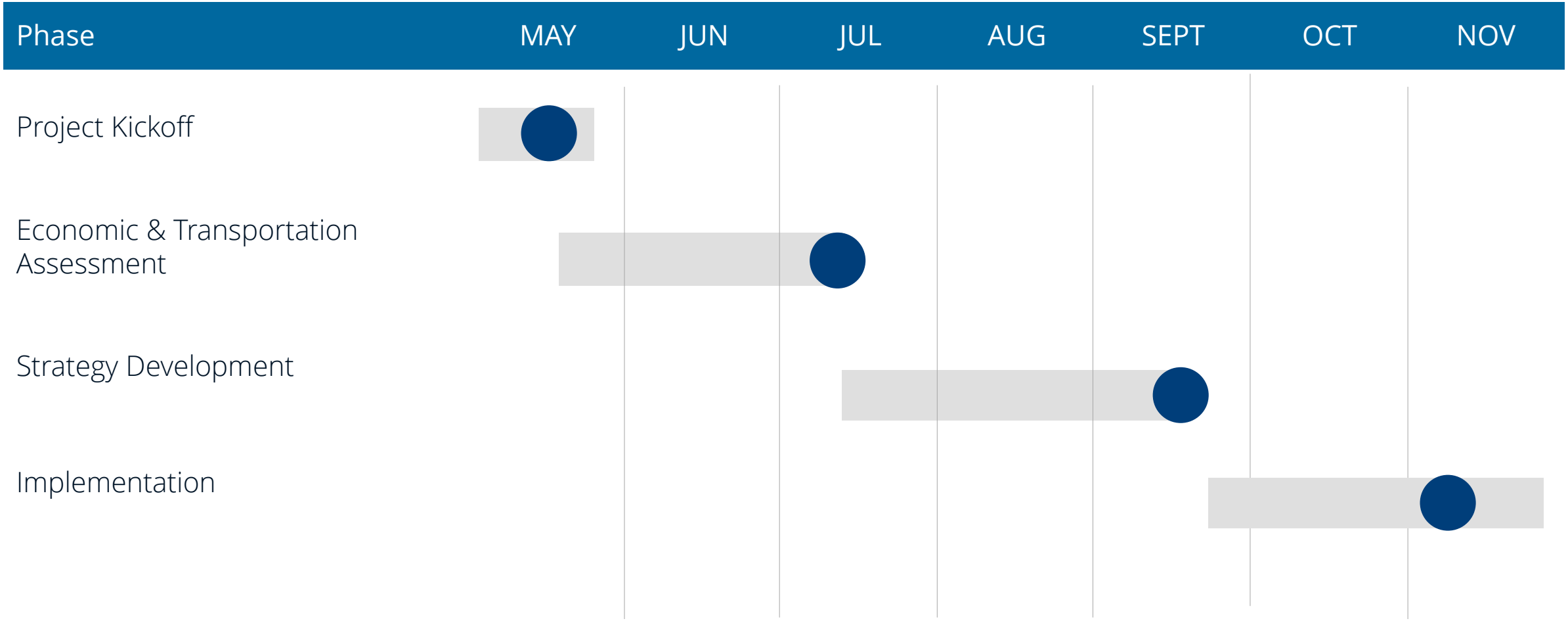
Over the next eight months, we will lead Grand Rapids through a strategic development and engagement process.



Steering Committee Meeting

1 Context

2 Defining Equitable Development and Mobility

3 Community Engagement Approach

4 Next Steps

Over a five-month process, the City of Grand Rapids developed its first strategic plan, which explicitly calls out equity as part of its guiding values and principles.

GRAND RAPID'S CORE VALUES

Accountability: Always acting with integrity and transparency and being responsible for what we do and say.

Collaboration: Working together in partnership with others.

Customer Service: Professionally serving those who live in, work in or visit the city; providing respectful, excellent, high quality service and assistance before, during and after the person's interaction with the City.

Equity: Leveraging City influence to intentionally remove and prevent barriers created by systemic and institutional injustice.

Innovation: Challenging how things have been done before; fulfilling community needs by offering new ways to serve our customers and enhance operations; being nimble, self-aware and open to feedback.

Sustainability: Ability to be maintained; making decisions with an understanding of how those decisions will impact the environment, people and communities, and finances, both today and in the future.

The Steering Committee's work will be guided by equitable values and principles.

Equity is the condition that exists when one's **outcomes are not determined by one's race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual or gender orientation, or zip code of residence**.

The Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Strategic Plan will develop specific goals and strategies that recognize current disparities and barriers to access and will **utilize targeted approaches to seek to dismantle those disparities and barriers to create equitable access to opportunity**, which may include refinements to current programs to create more equitable outcomes.

— *Grand Rapids Equitable Economic Development & Mobility Strategic Plan Steering Committee February 12, 2019*

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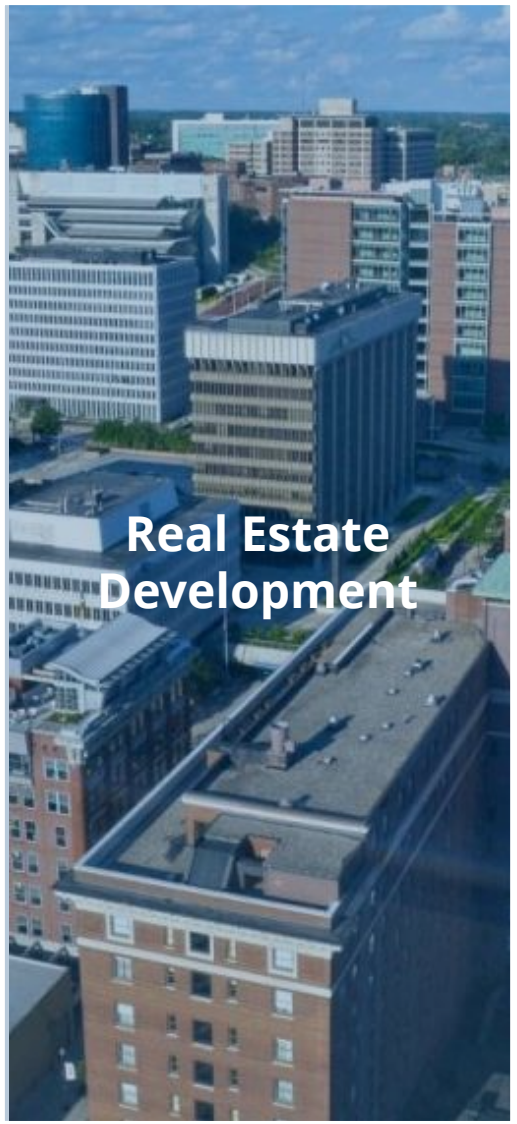
The Equitable Economic Development and Mobility Strategic Plan will address 5 pillars with an lens of equity.



Pillar 1: Business Development

Traditional Approach

- Focus on business attraction
- Defining Success:
  - Total jobs created
  - GDP growth
  - Aggregate investment

Equity Approach

- Focus on addressing disparities
- Defining Success:
  - Income growth for low-income populations
  - Alleviate the racial wealth gap
  - Target City incentives to support local and small businesses

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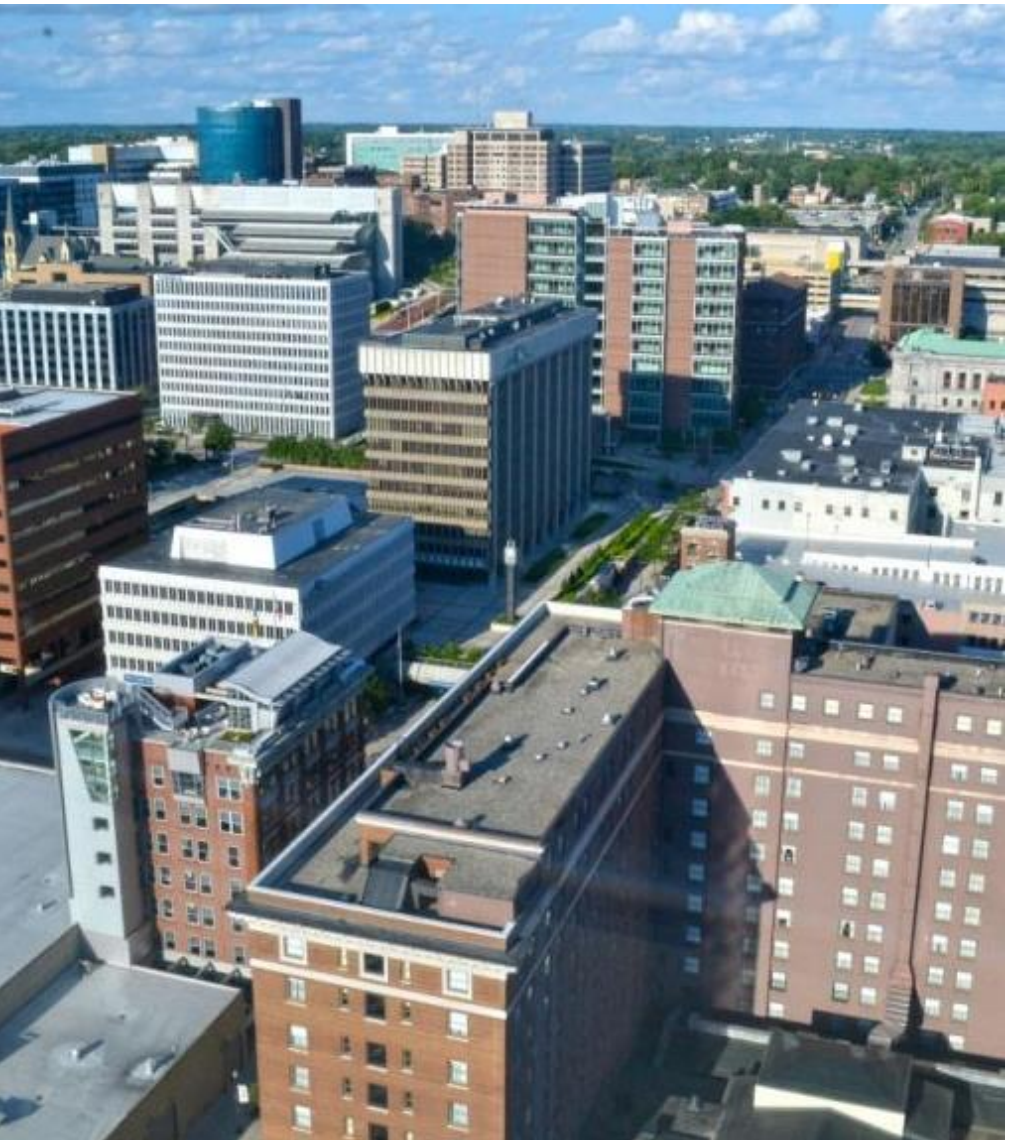
Pillar 2: Real Estate Development



Traditional Approach

- Focus on market growth
- Defining Success:
  - Private investment leveraged with public capital
  - Square feet built and absorbed

Equity Approach

- Focus on expanding access and ownership
- Defining Success:
  - Access to capital (public and private)
  - Increase property ownership among legacy populations
  - Community-based process

Pillar 3: Neighborhood Business Districts

Traditional Approach

- Focused on growth in spending
- Defining Success:
  - Improvement District tax revenues & expenses
  - Streetscape improvements made

Equity Approach

- Focused on community well-being
- Defining Success:
  - Public input from businesses, residents, and other stakeholders
  - Protection against displacement of legacy and minority-owned businesses
  - Resources for small businesses
  - Delivery of infrastructure and amenities for underserved populations

Pillar 4: Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Traditional Approach

- Focused on formal and higher education
- Defining Success:
  - Patents filed
  - Venture capital invested
  - Degrees awarded

Equity Approach

- Focused on talent development
- Defining Success:
  - STEM educational achievement in K-12
  - Affordability of entrepreneurship and access to resources for start-ups
  - Access to workforce training for high-tech jobs and career pathways
  - Support attainment of livable wage employment

Pillar 5: Mobility

Traditional Approach

- Focused on Return-on-Investment and efficiency
- Defining Success:
  - Miles of transit routes planned or built
  - Public and private dollars spent
  - Parking availability
  - Growth in transit ridership and revenues

Equity Approach

- Focused on improving safety and access
- Defining Success:
  - New connections to jobs, services and amenities
  - Reduction in transportation costs and time
  - Health and safety indicators in communities of concern

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Defining key terms will enable the Committee to form a shared understanding and develop clearer goals.

What is your vision of an equitable economy in Grand Rapids?

1 Context

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Twenty-first century cities need a highly engaged citizenry, and institutions to support equity, especially in the context of rapid growth and change.

Equitable community engagement is both a ***means*** to a creating a successful project **by providing ideas and input** on the realities of city life and feedback throughout the process...

..and an ***end***, through **building an engaged community** and establishing engagement infrastructure that can help the City implement its strategic goals and initiatives while staying accountable.

Successful community engagement ensures equitable participation by creating processes that inform residents and allow them to easily provide input.

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The type of community engagement used will vary depending on the intended audience, goal, and timing of engagement.

Audience

Whose voices are heard?

Goal

What is the desired outcome of engagement?

Project Phase

When should engagement take place?

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A variety of community engagement methods can be tailored to meet the needs of the five pillars of the plan and collect input from a diverse range of groups.

mobile engagement station

CITY LENS

FIVE VIEWS ON CENTRAL SQUARE

A walk around the same block with five different people can feel like a walk around five different blocks. What is unremarkable or even invisible to one person might be of great importance to another. What is beautiful to one person might be another person's eyesore. For each issue of *Envision Cambridge Newsletter*, we will walk around the same block with different people to see the city through different eyes. In this issue, we walk around Central Square with five Central Square residents. ***Check out the map on the facing page.***

Pauline Paris
Resident of Central Square area since 1932

Member of Cambridge Senior Center for the past 19 years

Pauline, who turns 84 in April, has lived in the Central Square area her whole life. She now lives in the Housing for the Elderly on Essex and regularly visits the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center (which she loves!), where we met to talk about how the neighborhood has changed. She reminisced about her favorite stores: Emile Buses, Jo-Ann, Bill's Fish Shop, and Harvard Donuts. "There are no places to shop for clothes anymore. And no department stores like Woolworth's," she remarked. Even so, she finds Central to be a "happy place" today, with many places to visit, restaurants to eat in, and events to attend.

Geeta Pradhan
President of Cambridge Community Foundation since 2015

Organization located at 99 Bishop Allen Drive, founded in 1916

Geeta is president of the Cambridge Community Foundation, whose building is in the heart of Central Square. For Geeta, Central Square represents everything that makes a great city, including ethnic and economic diversity, a vibrant cultural scene, and an active street life. Yet she is most concerned about the future of this diversity in the face of new development. Some of the most cherished cultural spaces—like the Dance Company and Out of the Blue—are very vulnerable to gentrification. She hopes to preserve the "soul of Cambridge" while celebrating Central as a historic and cultural district.

Louis
Artist and street vendor, selling his paintings in Central Square for 30 years

Lives in a homeless shelter in Boston

Louis has been coming to Central Square from Boston one day a week for the past 30 years. He carries two suitcases and sells color reproductions of his paintings. He thinks that Central Square is a nice place with nice people. I tell them about my paintings, but not everyone can understand what they are." Louis wishes there were more public restrooms around town and swears that "There's nothing better than a coffee and a donut at Dunkin' Donuts here." He used to play the drums in pubs around the neighborhood and know all of the managers and jazz players.

Carla Ferrer Llorca
Lives on Western Avenue since October 2015

Student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, originally from Spain

Carla is a 25-year-old student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She moved into the Central Square area shortly after she arrived from Alicante, Spain. Sometimes she feels uncomfortable going through Central at night when she gets home from school and wishes there were more light. Coming from a busy seaside city, she misses the urban intensity, although she appreciates the lively street life in the neighborhood and says that "there are always interesting things happening here." Carla enjoys the dance clubs and studios in the Square and regularly attends them for salsa classes and parties.

Zane
Eight-year-old resident of Central Square

Aspiring geologist and advocate for cleaner sidewalks, new buildings, and playgrounds

Zane is eight years old and has grown up around Central Square. Running down the grassy hill in front of the City Hall and playing over the stairs of the Post Office. However, he declares he is now too mature to run around stairs. He still indulges in climbing up the benches on the sidewalls of Mass Ave. He also likes to ride his bike along the sidewalk in summer and longs for safer bike lanes when he is old enough to take on the streets. He is fond of the Lafayette Square area and wishes there were more places with flower beds, parks, and playgrounds. He loves Central because he loves to hear many people talking.

F1: Envision Cambridge Newsletter

PUBLIC SPACES: THE PLACE

Why do we love Lafayette Square?

SO MANY GREAT PUBLIC SPACES, BUT WHAT MAKES THEM WORK?

For each issue of *Envision Cambridge Newsletter*, ***Ricardo*** we will analyze a popular public place to find out what makes it tick. In doing this study, we hope to gain insights into what we can do to create public spaces that work better.

For our first issue, we looked at Lafayette Square at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Sidney Street, where a gas station once stood. On any off part of Main Street to vehicular traffic (if the weather is traffic, but what sets it apart from cooperating), you will find many other projects of this type: the people outdoors enjoying the plaza, sensitive design of the plaza itself, sitting along the planters or at. It does not attempt to differentiate one of the many outdoor tables itself from its surroundings in any provided for the public. Many major way, as some new urban

Are having conversations with places do, or make a bold design 1) I'm working for a friends and family as they enjoy statement. It successfully blends company that picks up ice cream or food from one of the into the urban context that already food and delivers it. So, restaurants flanking the square or eaters while subtly making its own I'm just here waiting on an while waiting patiently for a table contribution. order from Café Luna and inside. Others take in a moment then I've gotta run.

alone: studying for class, reading Our team went out on a nice, sunny a book, or checking email on their day to ask the people handing out 2) Yeah, it's a nice place phones. Those walking by the at Lafayette Square the following to sit. It's a little cold now, square enjoy a brief opportunity to people-watch, well aware that but in the summertime I'm they are likely being watched sure this is a great place in return. Indeed, one of the reasons Lafayette Square is such a successful urban space is that it caters well to all of these types of users simultaneously, providing many options for each group to interact with the plaza and, potentially, with each other.

1) What brought you here today?

2) What do you think of this square?

Vincent

1) I was trying to get some tickets to a rock concert over at the Middle East that was sold out. So, I gave up and now I'm just spending my time waiting for the concert to start. Maybe I can get some tickets when people start showing up.

2) Yeah, it's a good place. A lot of people walking, and it looks safe.

Doug & Kevin

1)We just had brunch here at Desi Dhaba. It was beautiful outside so we sat here to enjoy the sun.

2) I personally like the space and frequent this area a lot, even though I don't live here. I just think it's a nice space—the centrality of it and just the way it's laid out. It's like the heart of Cambridge right here. I don't think there's too many places that look like this around here. There's an openness to the architecture. The buildings are just your ordinary, mom-and-pop small buildings so you don't feel overwhelmed—you're just like this important person enjoying the sun. It's the kind of place where people just congregate and have a good time.

1)We went to the MIT Museum and we were just looking for something to do and we stumbled upon a little bit of fresh air. We saw some young people, and it looked like somewhere nice to sit for a while.

2)If you look around, you've got the old and the new architecture here. The seating was very nice. That orange thing is a little strange, though. It's kind of corny and it doesn't really fit in.

Nkotha & James

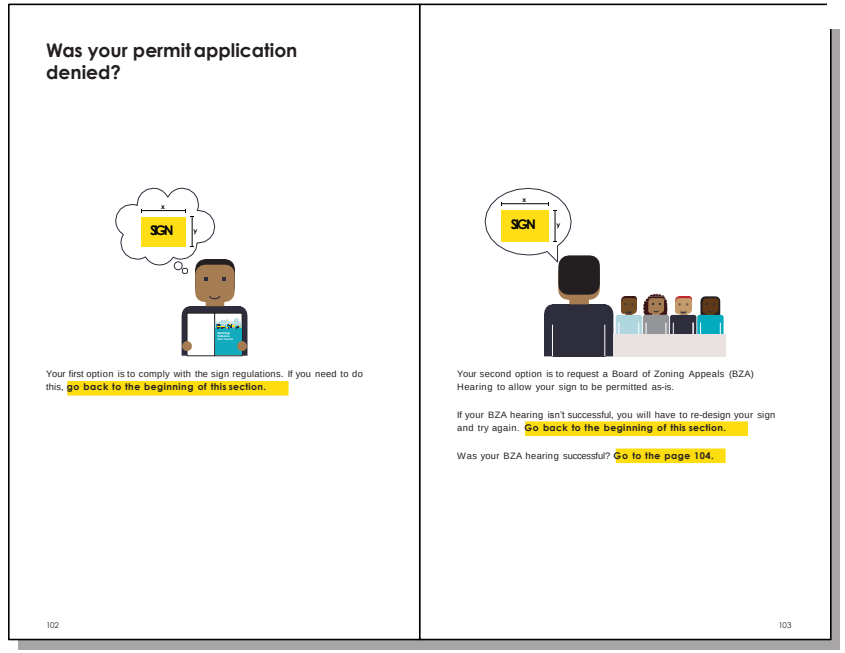
1)We went to the MIT Museum, had lunch, and just got some ice cream. It's a nice day—nice and sunny out— and this looked like a nice place to sit.

2)It worked for us! It's certainly welcoming and convenient for everybody here. And it's pretty nice, especially Toscanini's.

Ted & Maxine

F2: Envision Cambridge Newsletter

communications



Was your permit application denied?

Your first option is to comply with the sign regulations. If you need to do this, **go back to the beginning of this section.**

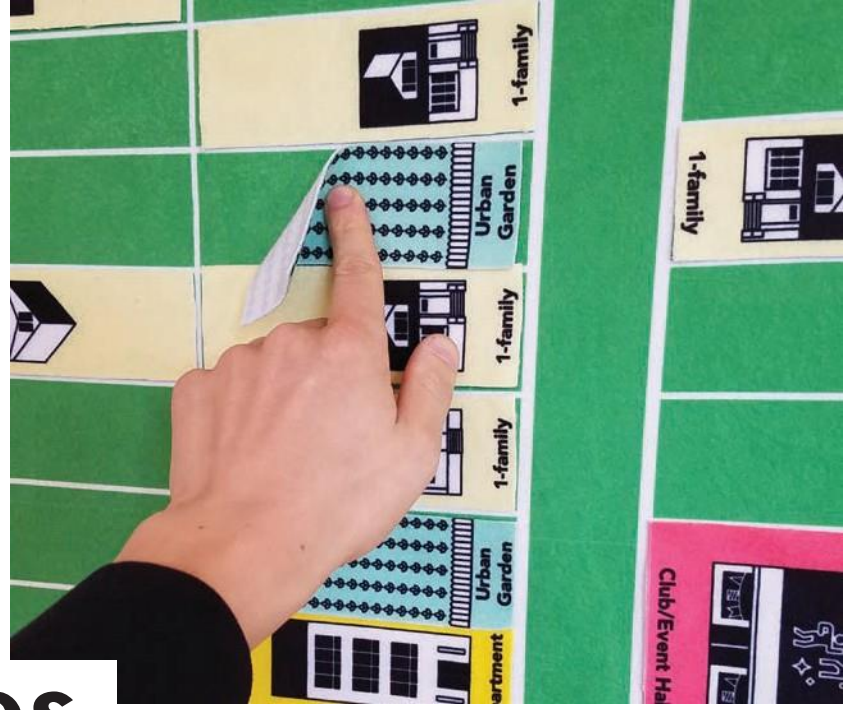
Your second option is to request a Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Hearing to allow your sign to be permitted as-is.

If your BZA hearing isn't successful, you will have to re-design your sign and try again. **Go back to the beginning of this section.**

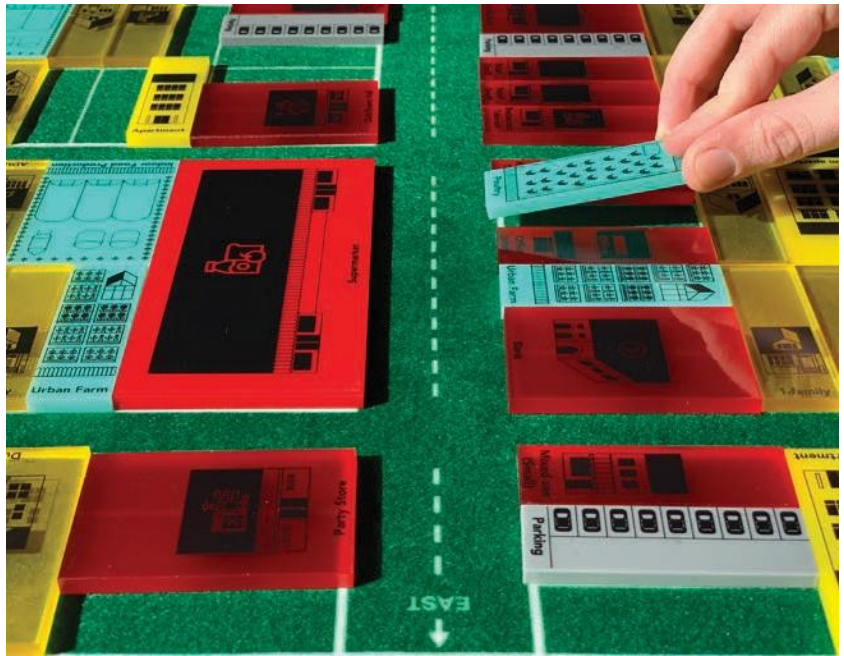
Was your BZA hearing successful? **Go to the page 104.**

102

103



hands-on activities



workshops, focus groups, &surveys

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Audience | Whose voices are heard? How can we build an inclusive process to engage with frequently overlooked communities?

	Surveys	Focus Groups	Communication	Mobile Engagement	Public Workshops	Online Tools	Hands-on Tools	On-site Events
Leaders & Interest Groups	●	●						
Engaged Community	●		●		●	●	●	
Hard-to-Reach Groups	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

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Goal | What is the desired outcome of engagement?

	Surveys	Focus Groups	Communication	Mobile Engagement	Public Workshops	Online Tools	Hands-on Tools	On-site Events
Listen & Gather Input	●			●	●	●	●	●
Evaluate Ideas		●			●		●	●
Educate & Empower			●	●	●	●	●	●

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Timing | At what points in the planning process should engagement take place?

	Surveys	Focus Groups	Communication	Mobile Engagement	Public Workshops	Online Tools	Hands-on Tools	On-site Events
Existing Conditions	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Strategy Development		●			●		●	●
Implementation			●		●	●		●

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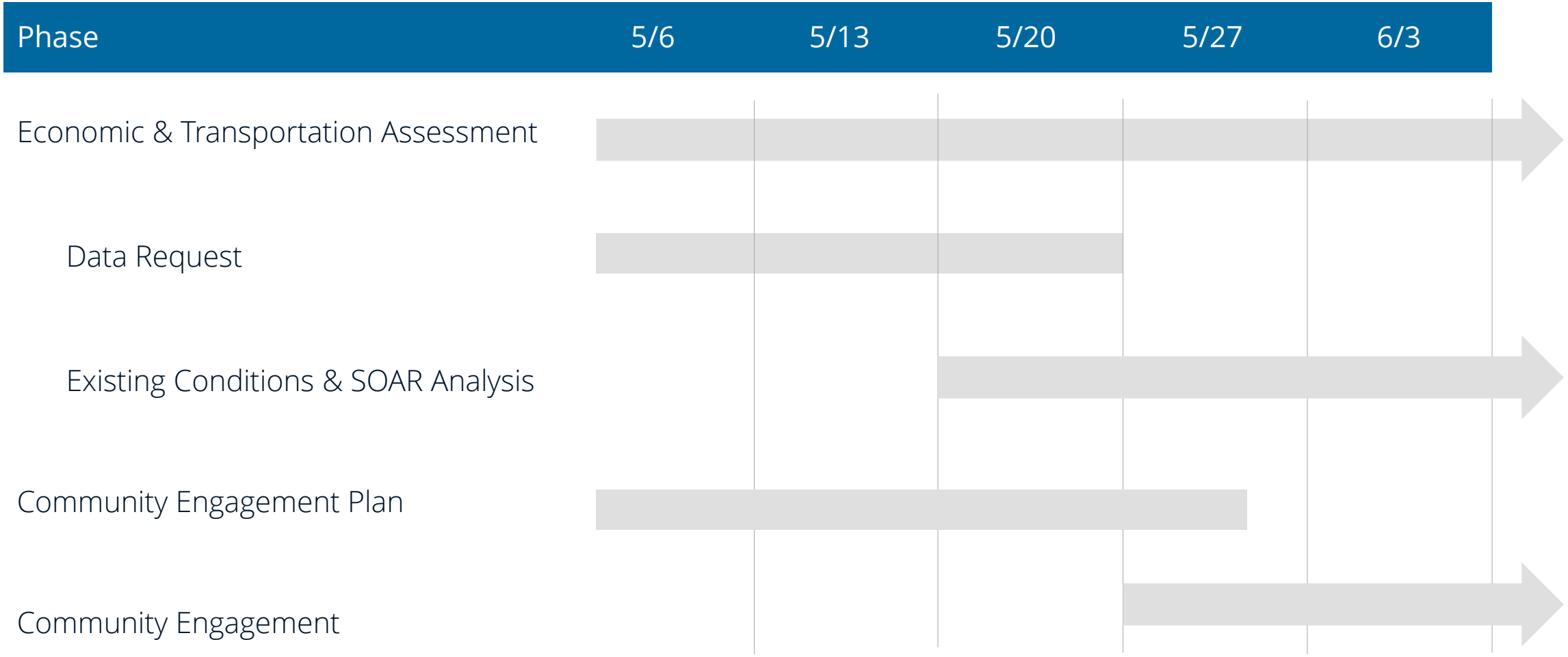
Over the next month, our team will work on advancing the community engagement plan and evaluating existing conditions.



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At the next Steering Committee meeting on July 10, the team will bring its analytical findings to guide the Steering Committee in selecting initial strategies.

Steering Committee
Initial Strategies

Existing Conditions
Assessment

Best Practices

Strengths
Opportunities
Aspirations
Results

SOAR Analysis

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