

## **MEETING MATERIAL ADA/ACCESSIBILITY SUMMARY**

### PLAIN TEXT DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

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#### MEETING PRESENTATION

This presentation provides an overview of the I-375 Project, including project updates, community engagement efforts, design concepts, and strategies for future development. It explains how community input is being incorporated into planning decisions and highlights opportunities for continued participation.

The presentation begins with an introduction to the project and an overview of the meeting structure, which includes a formal presentation, a question-and-answer session, and opportunities for attendees to review informational boards and provide feedback. Key topics include community strategies, history and culture, and urban design concepts.

A central theme of the presentation is partnership with the community. Project partners emphasize a commitment to co-creating strategies, shaping project priorities, and supporting cultural heritage and place-making initiatives. Community input is identified as essential to the project's success and ongoing development.

The presentation outlines the project's phased implementation. Phase I focuses on storm sewer construction between the Detroit River and Jefferson Avenue. Phase II includes replacing the existing I-375 freeway with a new surface-level boulevard and reconstructing key roadways. Phase III involves future planning and construction of the I-75 interchange north of Gratiot Avenue.

A timeline of community engagement activities describes how input has been gathered through Local Advisory Committee meetings, youth engagement, and public meetings from late 2025 through 2026. These efforts focus on developing equitable development strategies, exploring urban design concepts, and identifying community priorities for future investment.

The presentation summarizes key community strategies identified through engagement. These include housing initiatives such as homeownership support and mixed-use development; health and wellness improvements such as open

space, tree canopy, and public amenities; workforce development through training and hiring opportunities; and small business support, including prioritizing Black-owned and legacy businesses and providing financial assistance during construction.

Additional strategies focus on improving adjacent neighborhoods through housing stability, environmental improvements, access to services, and economic opportunities. Recommendations include community ownership models, home repair programs, green infrastructure, and better access to businesses through transportation improvements.

The presentation also highlights the importance of history, arts, and culture within the project area. Community feedback emphasizes the significance of places such as the Detroit Riverfront, Eastern Market, and the Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center, as well as the lasting impact of the Great Migration and the displacement caused by the original I-375 construction. These elements inform current efforts to restore a sense of belonging and connection.

Placemaking concepts are introduced to describe how the future environment should support a range of experiences. These include spaces to celebrate through events and music, engage through economic activity, relax in parks and seating areas, learn through cultural and historical storytelling, and connect through accessible streets and pathways. Special emphasis is placed on creating inclusive spaces for people of all ages and abilities, including children, families, and older adults.

Feedback from youth participants and the Local Advisory Committee highlights priorities such as creating welcoming spaces, supporting intergenerational connections, honoring music and cultural expression, improving mobility for pedestrians and people using mobility devices, and providing opportunities for rest and reflection.

The presentation further outlines a vision for urban design that includes dedicated public open space, integration of public art and history, safe and multimodal streets, and a mix of land uses. It notes that Detroit currently has limited access to park space and sets a goal of increasing open space within the project area,

including approximately one acre in the initial phase, as part of a broader connected network of public spaces.

Finally, the presentation describes opportunities for continued community involvement through interactive activities, including reviewing story boards, providing feedback on design concepts, and participating in discussions about priorities, timelines, and partnerships.

Overall, the presentation communicates a vision for transforming the I-375 corridor into a more connected, inclusive, and culturally meaningful space, guided by community input and focused on equitable development, accessibility, and long-term neighborhood revitalization.

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### COMMUNITY STRATEGIES BOARDS

These boards present community-informed strategies for how to use approximately nine acres of excess land created by the I-375 project and how to support nearby neighborhoods affected by construction and long-term changes. The content reflects priorities identified through community engagement and focuses on improving quality of life, economic opportunity, and cultural preservation.

The boards organize potential strategies into major focus areas, including housing, health and wellness, workforce development, small business support, and arts and culture. These strategies are ranked by level of priority—high, medium, or low—based on their perceived importance and potential impact on the community.

Housing-related strategies emphasize increasing access to homeownership and maintaining long-term affordability. Proposed actions include developing mixed-use housing, supporting community ownership of land and housing units, providing down payment assistance, and investing in home repair programs. These approaches are intended to help residents remain in the area and benefit from future development.

Health and wellness strategies focus on improving environmental conditions and access to public amenities. Recommendations include creating parks and recreational spaces, installing tree canopy and green infrastructure, and providing

public facilities such as restrooms, seating, and water fountains. Additional strategies address environmental impacts by proposing stormwater infrastructure, air quality improvements, and systems for monitoring and responding to community concerns.

Workforce development strategies highlight the importance of connecting residents to employment opportunities created by the project. These include hosting hiring fairs, offering paid construction training, and building partnerships with schools and unions to create long-term career pathways. The goal is to ensure that local residents benefit directly from project-related jobs during and after construction.

Small business strategies focus on supporting existing businesses and encouraging new economic activity. Recommendations include prioritizing Black-owned and legacy businesses in new developments, providing direct financial assistance to businesses affected by construction, and creating temporary activations to maintain visibility and revenue. Improvements to transportation access and parking are also suggested to help customers reach local businesses.

Arts and culture strategies emphasize preserving and celebrating the history of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. Proposed ideas include creating cultural corridors with trails, murals, sculptures, and interpretive elements; installing kiosks with historical information and digital content; and supporting community-driven public art projects such as collaborative murals and storytelling installations. Additional concepts include a “street museum” and art-focused public events that bring history into everyday spaces.

The boards also highlight broader community-focused investments, such as the development of community or cultural centers, exploring community-owned business models, and improving communication through wayfinding and signage. These strategies are intended to strengthen neighborhood identity, improve access to resources, and foster inclusive development.

Overall, the boards present a range of interconnected strategies designed to guide future land use and community investment. They emphasize equitable development, support for existing residents and businesses, and the importance of

# THE 375 PROJECT

## APRIL 2026 OPEN HOUSE



honoring local history while creating new opportunities for growth and community well-being.

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### URBAN DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM BOARDS

These boards describe the urban design vision for the I-375 project area and outline how future development can create a connected, people-centered public realm. The content explains how land use, infrastructure, and neighborhood history can be integrated to create a cohesive identity and a strong sense of place for residents and visitors.

The boards introduce the concept of “urban design nodes,” or key locations within the project area that offer opportunities for community activity and identity. These nodes include areas such as Eastern Market/Gratiot, Lafayette, Clinton/Nicolet, and Jefferson/Larned. Each location is intended to serve a different role, such as a neighborhood connector, gathering space, or gateway into the district.

Community input plays a central role in shaping the plan. Members of a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) identified preferred locations for investment and described how people should experience the area. Five types of experiences are emphasized: celebrating through festivals and events; engaging through economic opportunities like small businesses and vendors; relaxing in parks, plazas, and gardens; learning through public art and historical interpretation; and connecting through streets, sidewalks, bike routes, and transit.

A major focus of the boards is the creation of a connected network of public open spaces. These spaces are intended to include plazas, parks, gathering areas, and pathways that link neighborhoods to each other and to the Detroit River. The plan recognizes that access to parks in Detroit is limited and unevenly distributed, particularly in lower-income and historically Black neighborhoods. To address this, the proposal includes increasing dedicated open space and creating a distributed network of smaller, connected places rather than a single large park.

The boards also describe how public art and historical storytelling will be incorporated throughout the area. Artists will be selected to create installations that reflect the history and cultural significance of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. These artworks may be located at key entry points, gathering spaces, and

along pedestrian routes, helping to reinforce neighborhood identity and ensure that history is visible and accessible in everyday spaces.

Street design is another key component of the plan. The boards outline a “streets for people” approach that prioritizes walking, accessibility, and safety for all users, including people using wheelchairs and other mobility aids. Streets are envisioned as multi-modal corridors that balance pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle use while emphasizing comfort, safety, and visual quality. Different street types—such as boulevards, connectors, and neighborhood streets—are defined by their character and role within the community rather than solely by traffic capacity.

The plan also proposes strengthening connections between neighborhoods through improved street networks and pedestrian routes. Enhanced intersections, sidewalks, and public spaces are intended to make it easier and safer to move through the area while fostering social interaction and economic activity.

In addition, the boards describe a future vision for land use and development. The area is planned as a mixed-use environment with a combination of housing, retail, workplaces, and civic spaces. Active ground-floor uses, such as shops and community facilities, are encouraged to create lively streets and increase safety through visibility and activity. Housing is intended to serve a diverse population, supporting an inclusive and vibrant community.

Overall, the boards present a concept for transforming the I-375 corridor into a vibrant, accessible, and people-focused environment. By combining public open space, art, transportation improvements, and mixed-use development, the plan aims to create a place where people can gather, move easily, learn about local history, and participate in community life.

### HONORING AND CELEBRATING HISTORY BOARDS

These interpretive boards share the history and cultural importance of Detroit's historic Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods, focusing on the area impacted by the I-375 corridor. The content is organized around themes identified through community engagement, including immigration and integration, Black-owned businesses, the effects of urban renewal, arts and culture, and the diversity of religious life.

The boards include a historical timeline covering the early 1800s through the mid-20th century. This timeline describes the presence of Indigenous communities, specifically the Anishinaabe and Wyandot peoples, followed by successive waves of immigrants including Irish, Jewish, Italian, Greek, Middle Eastern, and Asian communities. It also highlights the Great Migration, during which African Americans moved to Detroit in large numbers and established strong residential, cultural, and economic networks in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley despite facing segregation and housing discrimination.

Descriptions of key locations north and south of Gratiot Avenue highlight important community institutions and gathering places. These include the Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center, which served as a library and later a community hub; the Castle Theater, a major entertainment venue and meeting place during segregation; Club El Sino, a popular jazz club; and Eastern Market, a long-standing public marketplace shaped by the city's diverse populations. Other sites include schools, churches, pharmacies, and neighborhood businesses that supported daily life and community development.

The boards place special emphasis on Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurship. Featured examples include Barthwell Pharmacy, a major drugstore chain that served the community; Joe's Record Shop, an important site for Detroit's music scene and early recordings; Mercy Hospital, one of the first hospitals in Detroit to provide care for African American patients; and restaurants and small businesses located along Hastings Street. These stories illustrate how Black residents built economic opportunity and provided essential services in the face of systemic barriers.

A significant portion of the content addresses the impact of urban renewal and infrastructure projects. The construction of Interstate 375 and the development of Lafayette Park in the mid-20th century resulted in the demolition of homes, businesses, and institutions in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. Families and business owners were displaced, often with little notice, leading to long-term social and cultural disruption. The boards also reference related historical events, such as the 1943 Detroit uprising, to provide context for racial tensions and structural inequities during that period.

The boards further highlight the rich cultural life of the neighborhoods. They describe music venues, artists, and organizations that contributed to Detroit's legacy in jazz, gospel, and the arts. Locations such as Paradise Valley are presented as vibrant cultural centers where music, nightlife, and social life brought together diverse audiences. Community organizations such as the YMCA and YWCA are also noted for providing social services, education, housing, and recreational opportunities for residents.

In addition, the boards describe the diversity of religious institutions that served the area. These include Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the oldest Black congregations in the city; Temple Beth El, Detroit's first Jewish congregation; and early meeting spaces for the Nation of Islam. These institutions played important roles in spiritual life, community organizing, and social support.

Overall, the boards communicate how generations of residents and immigrants contributed to the development of a vibrant, multiethnic community. They also document how large-scale urban change altered the physical and social landscape, while emphasizing the lasting cultural memory, resilience, and influence of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley on Detroit today.