25TH STREET ACTIVATION PROJECT

OCTOBER 20, 2026

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Interim Director of Economic Development

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Executive Director, The Better Block Foundation



Agenda

- Project Background
- Better Block Proposal
- Staff Recommendation
- Questions

Project Timeline



March 2022
Fire Station #6 opens on 25th St.

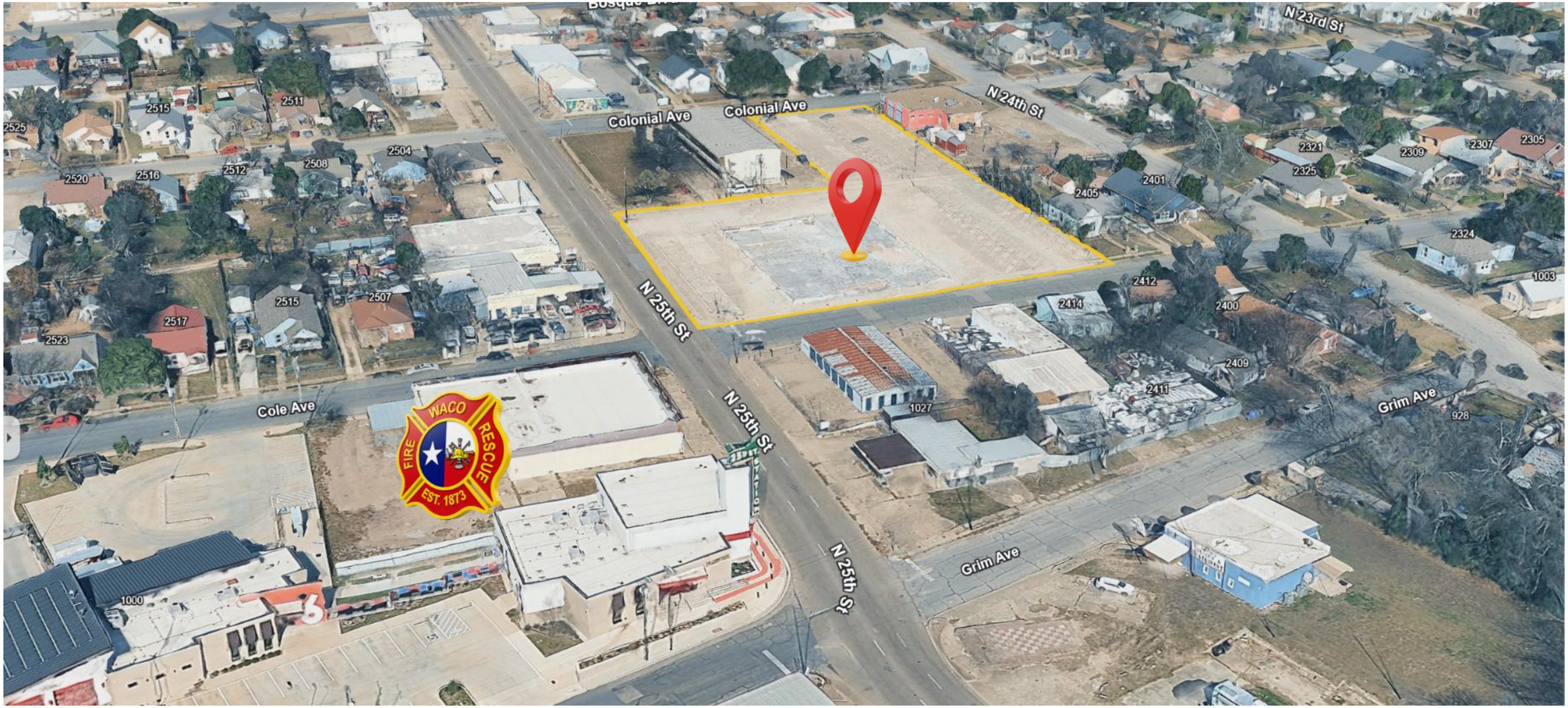
October 2023
25th St. Corridor Study begins

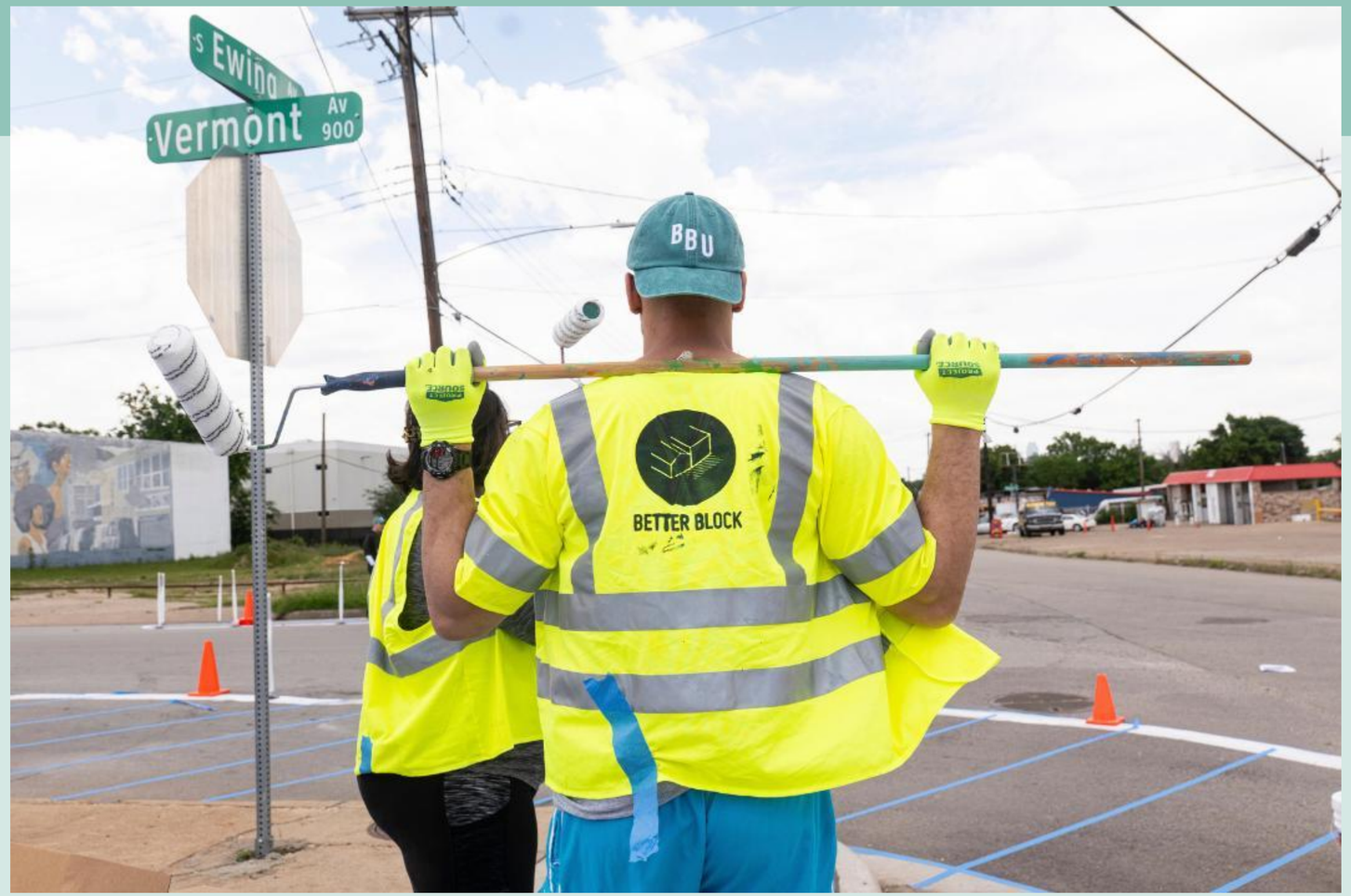




May 2026
The City acquired the property at 2423 Cole Ave.

Project Location



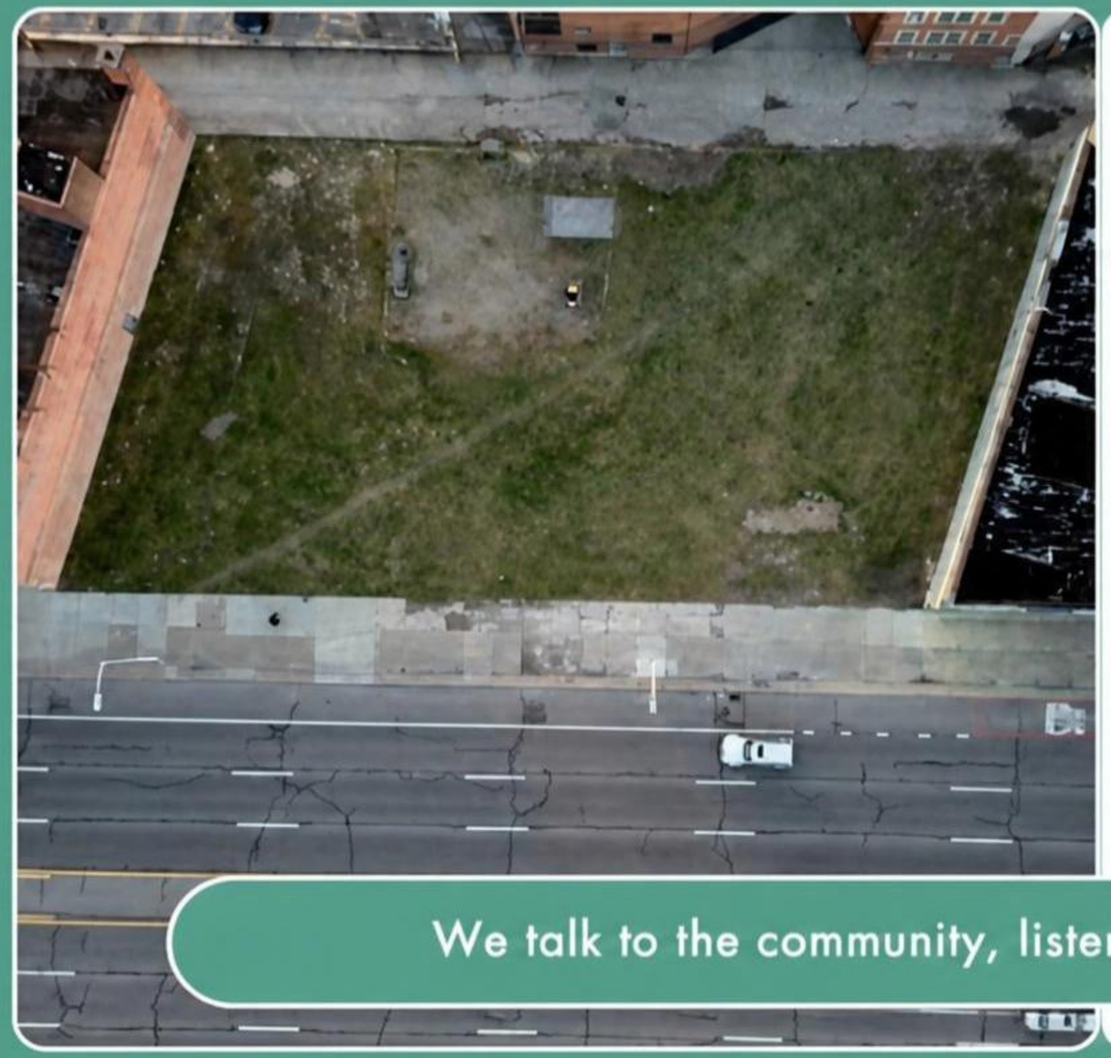


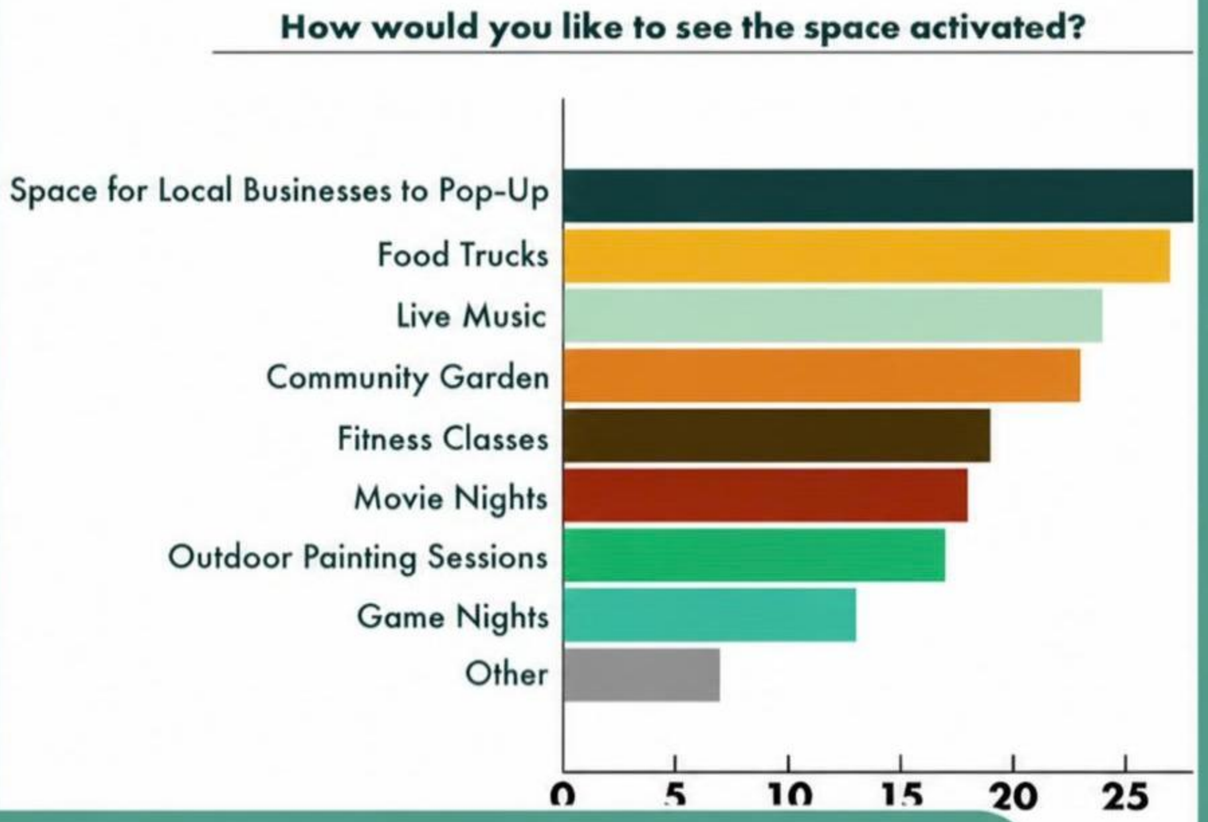
BETTER BLOCK



The Better Block Process

DAY 1-30: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK





We talk to the community, listen to their needs, and gather ideas.

DAY 31-60: DESIGN

BLOCK MAP



DESIGN 1



We design based off of the community's feedback and existing infrastructure.

2024 | DETROIT, MI

DAY 61-116: FABRICATION AND PLANNING





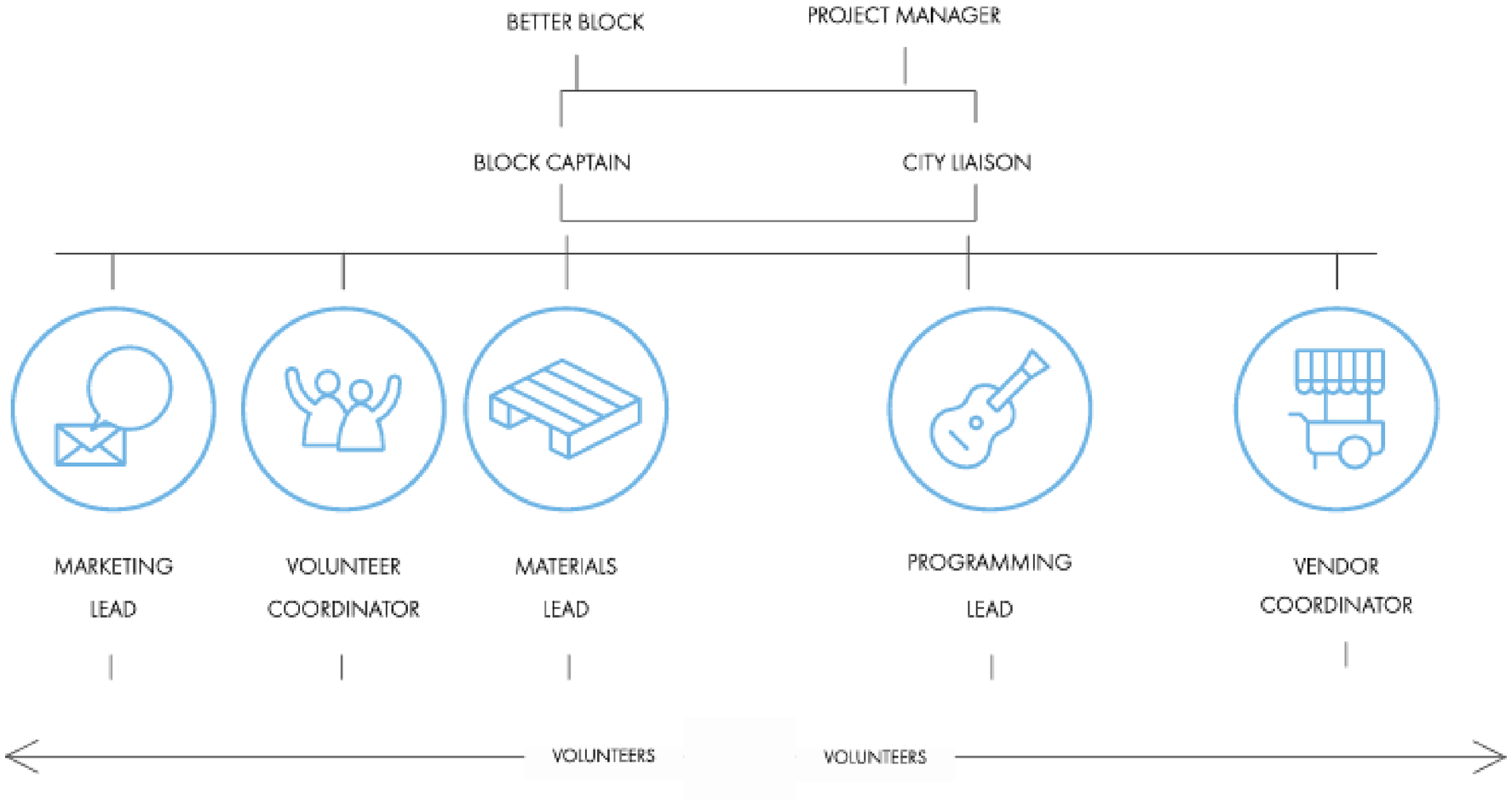
We collaborate with local vendors, organizations, and start to bring the project to life.

2023 | QUINCY, WA

2024 | DETROIT, MI

ORGANIZE

ESTABLISH YOUR TEAM



DAY 117-120: IMPLEMENTATION

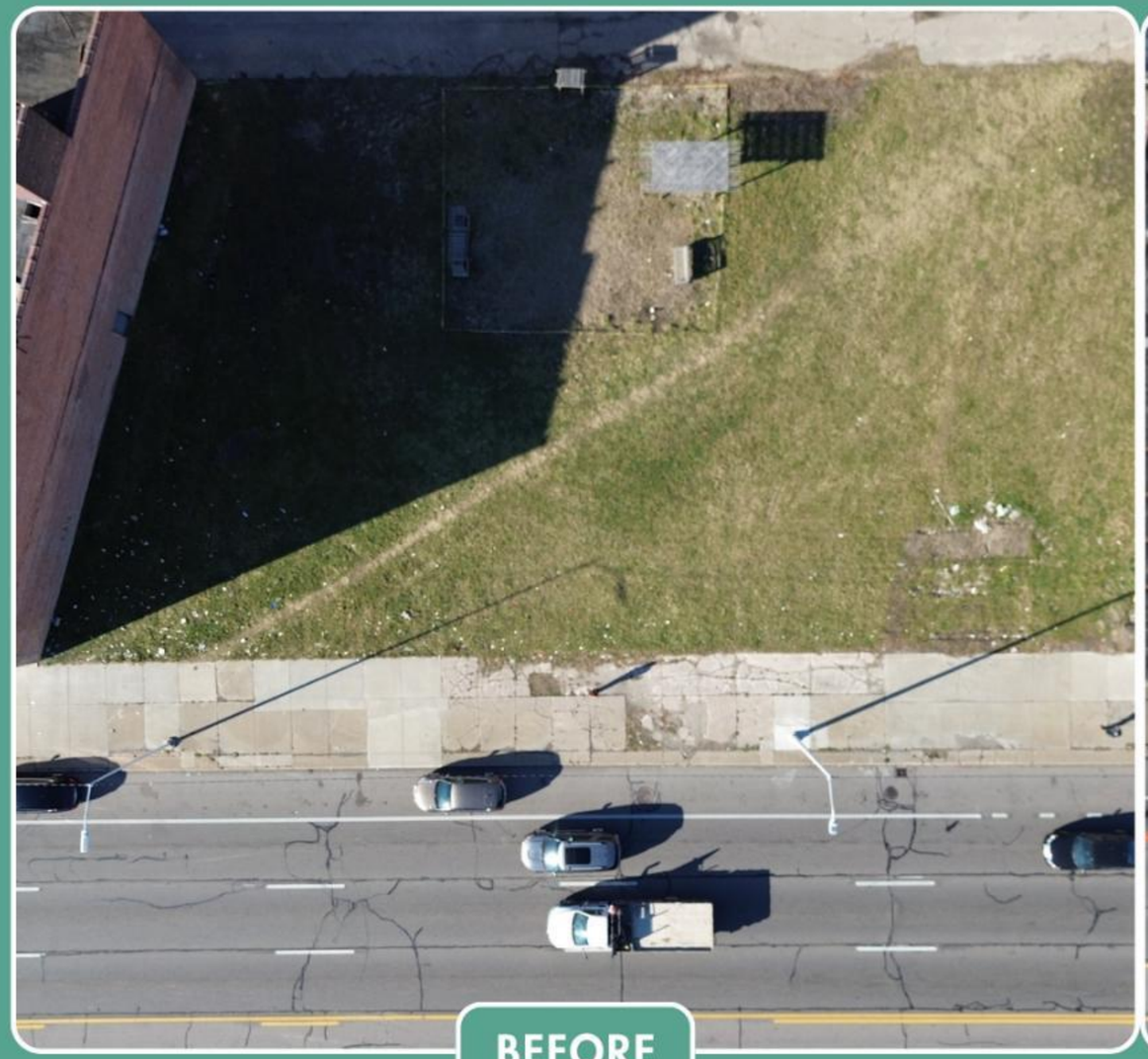




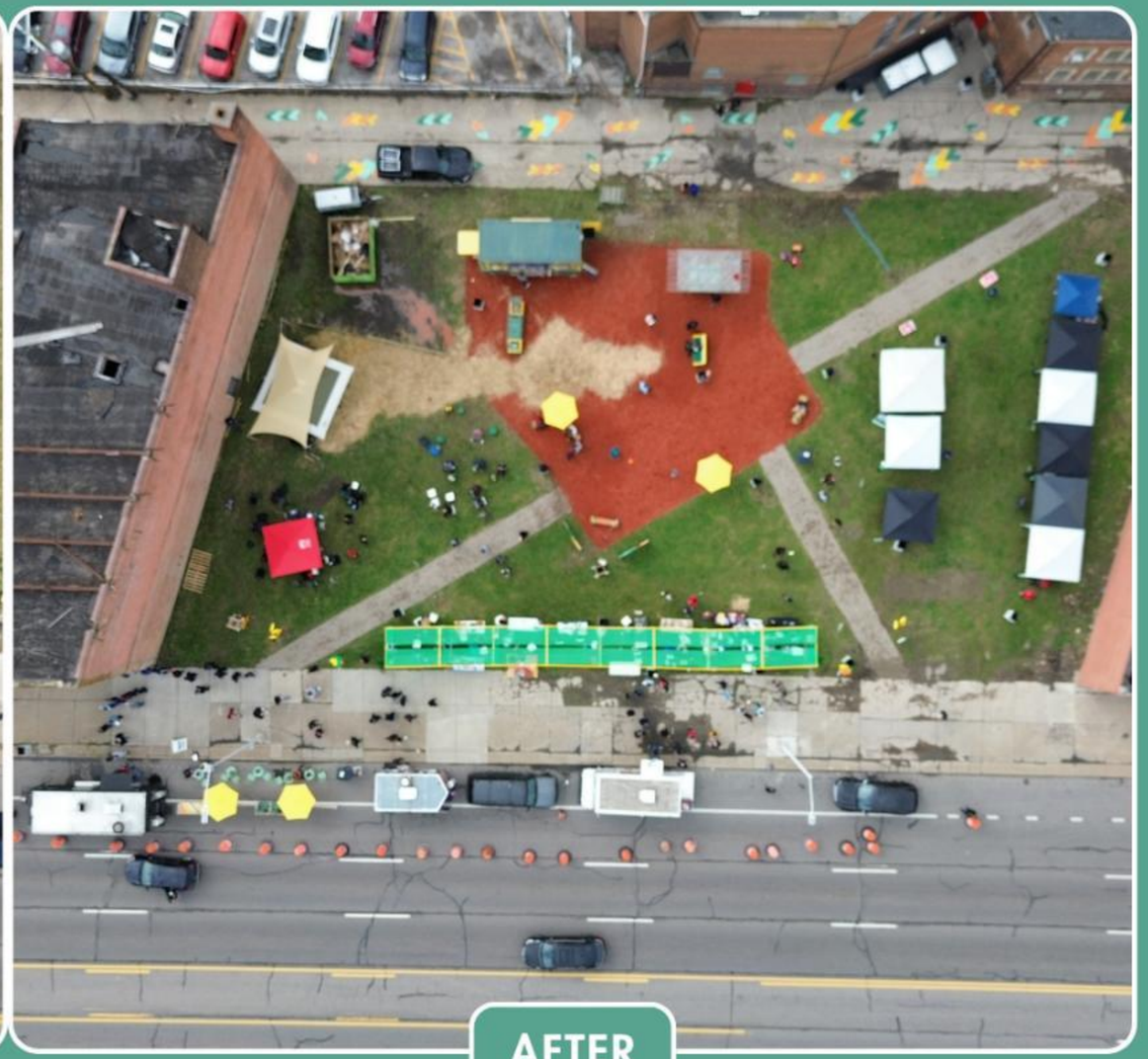
Together with volunteers, we paint and build the space in 3 days.

2024 | DETROIT, MI

TRANSFORMATION



BEFORE



AFTER

2024 | DETROIT, MI

DAY 120: DEMONSTRATION



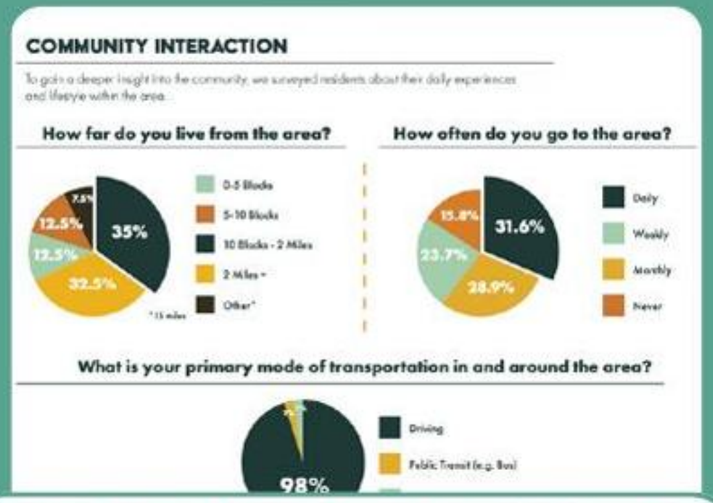


We showcase the space and demonstrate its potential.

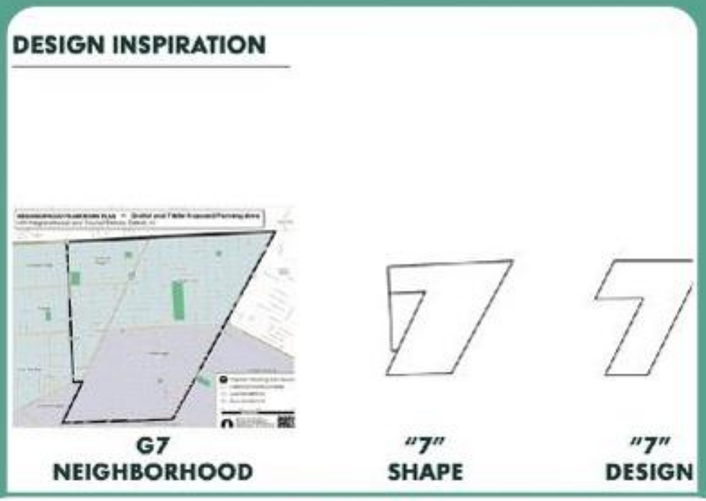
2024 | DETROIT, MI

FINAL REPORT

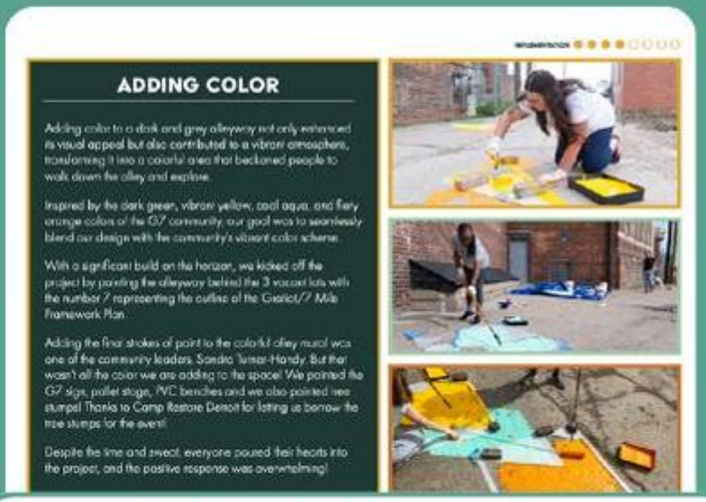
[Link to Detroit G7 Final Report]



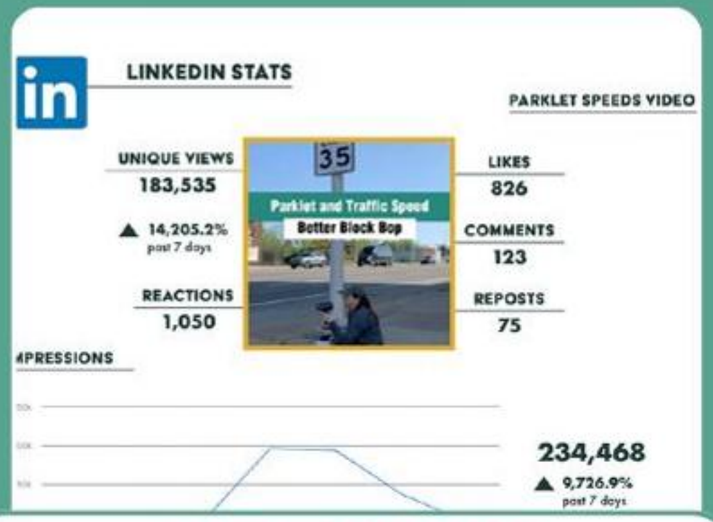
PRE-PROJECT SURVEY RESULTS



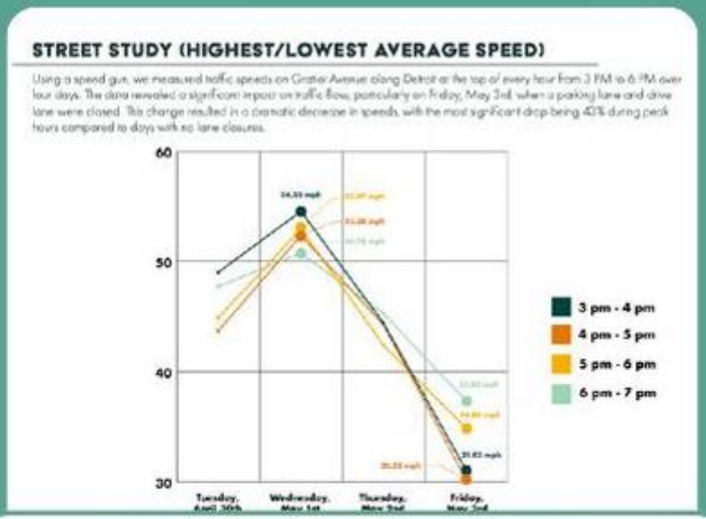
DESIGN



IMPLEMENTATION



INSTA-INSIGHTS



FEEDBACK/RESULTS



RECOMMENDATIONS

PROJECT IMPACT: ONE YEAR LATER



HELPED SECURE A

$24M

STATE GRANT TO FUND PERMANENT SAFETY INTERVENTIONS

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

OUTCOME Helped secure a $24 million state grant for permanent corridor safety improvements.

SHIFT The conversation changed from debating market viability to prioritizing the site as a permanent hub for community life.

THEME Transportation, Economic Development

An Open-Source Design Library for Building Better Blocks

BETTER BLOCK

wikiblock






















Map
Satellite
Ottawa
SOVA Better Block in a Box
United States
San Francisco
Las Vegas
Los Angeles
San Diego
Houston
Miami
Gulf of California
Gulf of Mexico
Mexico
Mexico City
Cuba
Dominican



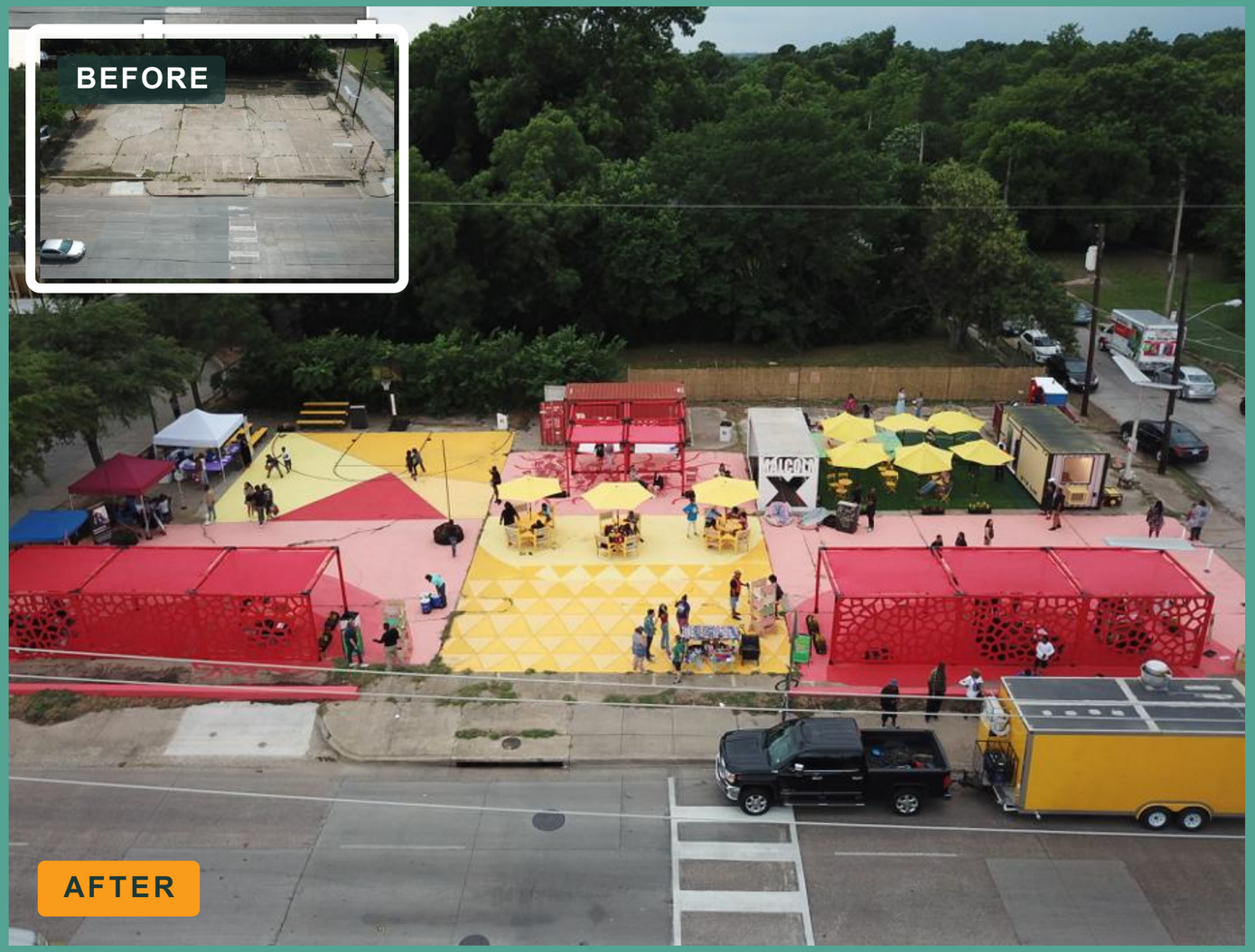

Movie Screen
Cafe Sets
Kids' Games
Lawn Chairs
Blankets
Air Chairs
Beer Garden Tables
Light Poles
Umbrellas


SPEED LIMIT 15





Public Safety



CRIME REDUCTION

In 2022, we worked with Child Poverty Action Lab on a 3-month demonstration on Malcolm X in Dallas. We worked with the community to design a flex space, and then CPAL and the community activated it for 3 months to measure impact. Here are the results, as reported by *D Magazine*.

55% is the amount that overall crime was reduced in the tract during the 3-month engagement.

20% the amount of decrease in arrests.

212% the amount that violent crime was reduced.

From 1 to 463

This tract was considered the most dangerous in terms of gun violence before the project, and 463rd after the project.

Street Safety



We re-striped this crossing with a community-painted mural to slow drivers and protect people on foot, then measured how traffic behaved at the stop sign. We were able to take this data to the Councilmember, and the changes were made permanent.

23% more vehicles stopping at the stop sign — before, half the motorists rolled through

7.63% overall reduction in vehicle speeds through the intersection.

“It saves lives.”

10-year-old neighbor when he asked what he thought of the changes.

Downtown Revitalization



We counted occupied versus open spaces across multiple times of day before installing a 3-month demonstration. The lots were never close to full. Thus, we had validation to remove 30 parking spots and reallocate them to people. Then we tested.

3 During the 3 months, only three complaints were received about parking, one of which was resolved by having a dumpster removed.

It’s hard to find parking in great places.

Economic Development



We slimmed an oversized roadway into a people-first main street. The same interventions that calm traffic also create the conditions local businesses need to thrive.

- **$62 million** public school investment post-project.
- **$1 million** in street improvements, a permanent road diet, and the formation of a Community Development Corporation.
- **13 new businesses launched and 14 updated facades** five years post-project.

People on foot spend locally

A walkable street keeps shoppers on the block longer — turning foot traffic into sales for neighborhood businesses.



$700 MILLION IN IMPACT

73% OF PROJECTS MADE PERMANENT

ACROSS 145 PROJECTS IN 59 CITIES

Waco Better Block

The concept:

- 120-day planning process
- Up to 12-Month Pilot
- Location: 2423 Cole Avenue with traffic calming

BETTER BLOCK

Overview

Waco Better Block

A FLEXIBLE COMMUNITY SPACE AND MODEL BLOCK FOR THE 25TH STREET CORRIDOR

This Better Block demonstration transforms 2423 Cole Avenue into a flexible public space while using the surrounding block to test safer streets, support local businesses, and build momentum for broader corridor investment.

FLEXIBLE SITE ACTIVATION
The city-owned property becomes a community destination for potential active play, markets, vendors, performances, seating, and everyday gathering.

MODEL BLOCK
Temporary public-realm improvements around the site demonstrate the vision of the 25th Street Corridor Plan and create momentum for future TIF and façade investments.

TRAFFIC CALMING
A street demonstration tests safer speeds, shorter crossings, on-street parking, and a more comfortable connection between the site and nearby businesses.

Better Block Site: 2423 Cole Avenue





A CORRIDOR DESIGNED FOR PEOPLE



Potential curb extensions at intersec-

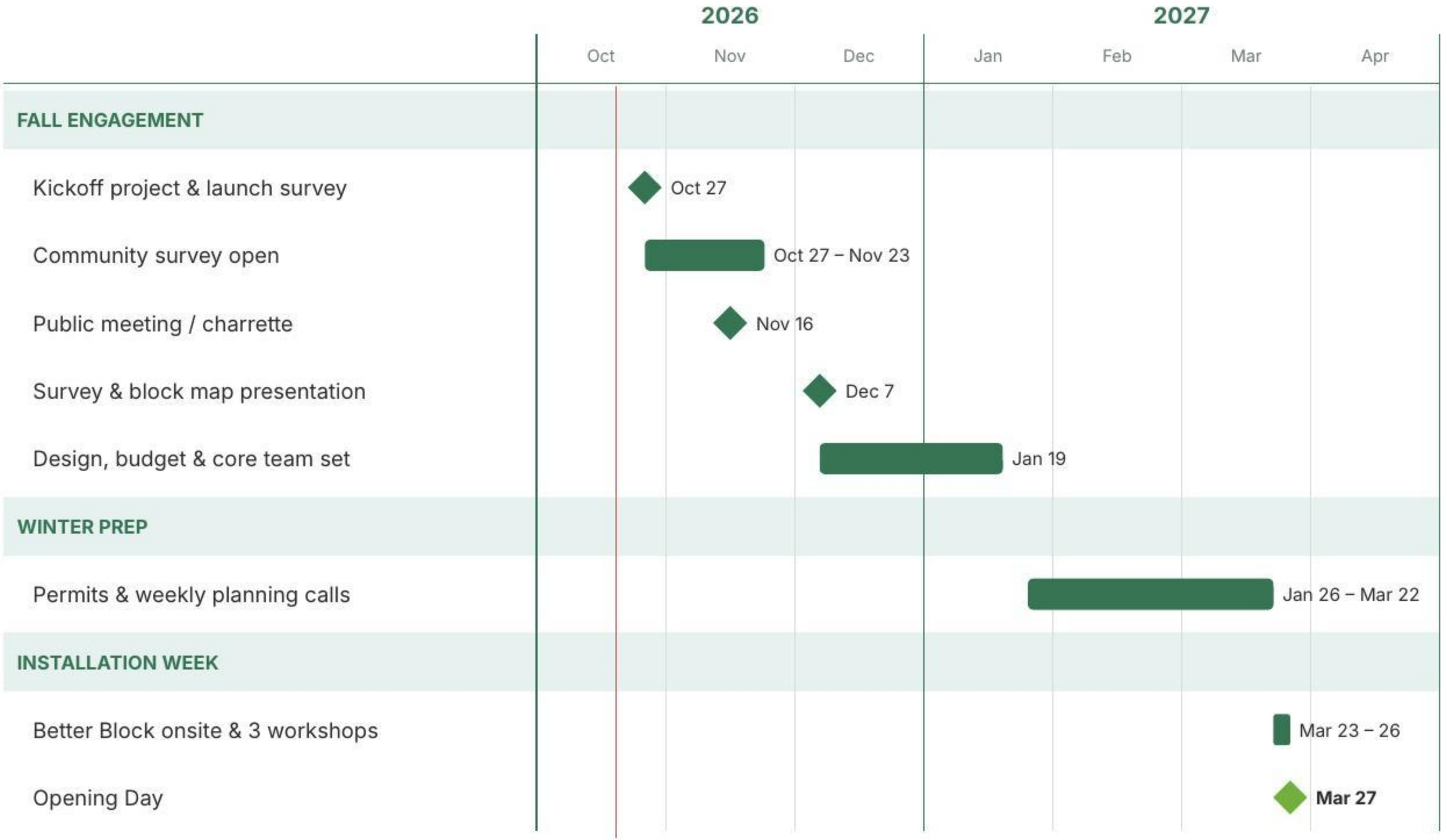


Potential reconfiguration of roads



Data gathering and analysis of pilot

Proposed Timeline



Site activation continues for up to 12 months after Opening Day (through March 2028).

Proposed Budget

Budget Category	120-Day Planning & Up to 12-Month Installation
Community Engagement & Marketing	$19,500
Design & Project Management	$40,000
Installation, Workshops & Travel	$25,000
Project Materials & Equipment	$60,000
Reporting & Evaluation	$5,500
Ongoing Activation & Maintenance	$36,000
Removal & Site Restoration	$10,000
TOTAL	**$196,000**

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

On September 18th, the TIF #4 Board unanimously recommended approval of TIF #4 funding for the 25th St. & Cole Ave. Activation Project in an amount not to exceed $196,000, with the Better Block Foundation serving as the lead organization.

- Better Block will:
  - Lead a 120-day community engagement and site activation process
  - Deliver a culminating community demonstration event
  - Support a 12-month activation period
  - Provide recommendations to help inform future permanent improvements to the site

QUESTIONS