



# ALL HANDS ON DECK

**The Detroit Regional Partnership's Innovative Solution to  
Facilitate Industrial Development**

**The Detroit Region's Industrial Development Toolkit  
MEDA Summit August 6, 2026**

# Welcome MEDA Summit Attendees!



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Detroit Regional Partnership  
VP, Real Estate



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Progressive Companies  
Senior Planner

# Agenda

- 1** Why the Toolkit?
- 2** Creating the Toolkit
- 3** Who is the Toolkit for?
- 4** How the Toolkit Works
- 5** Where We Go from Here
- 6** Q & A



# Why the Toolkit?

“

Where the VIP program focuses on site readiness, this toolkit expands that work to help communities understand what modern manufacturing is, and how they can be better prepared to leverage opportunities that can lead to good paying jobs, a sound and reliable tax base, improve their bonding capacity and contribute to a high quality of life.

”

# Why the Toolkit was Created

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- DRP prepared 100+ industrial-zoned sites for modern industry – Toolkit is the next step/extension
- Empowering communities – A "voice and a choice" Modern industry and how to capture its benefits — jobs, tax base, quality of life
- Local leaders' **foundational resource** to evaluate, attract industrial projects, while demystifying the approvals process
- The first resource of its kind in the country, positioning the Detroit region for future competitiveness

**VIP by DRP has supported site readiness for over 100 properties,  
now we're turning our attention toward readying communities**



# What Is Modern Industrial?



## OLD INDUSTRY

Loud, dirty, physically demanding — the plants our parents and grandparents worked in. That picture is decades out of date.



## INDUSTRY 4.0 TODAY

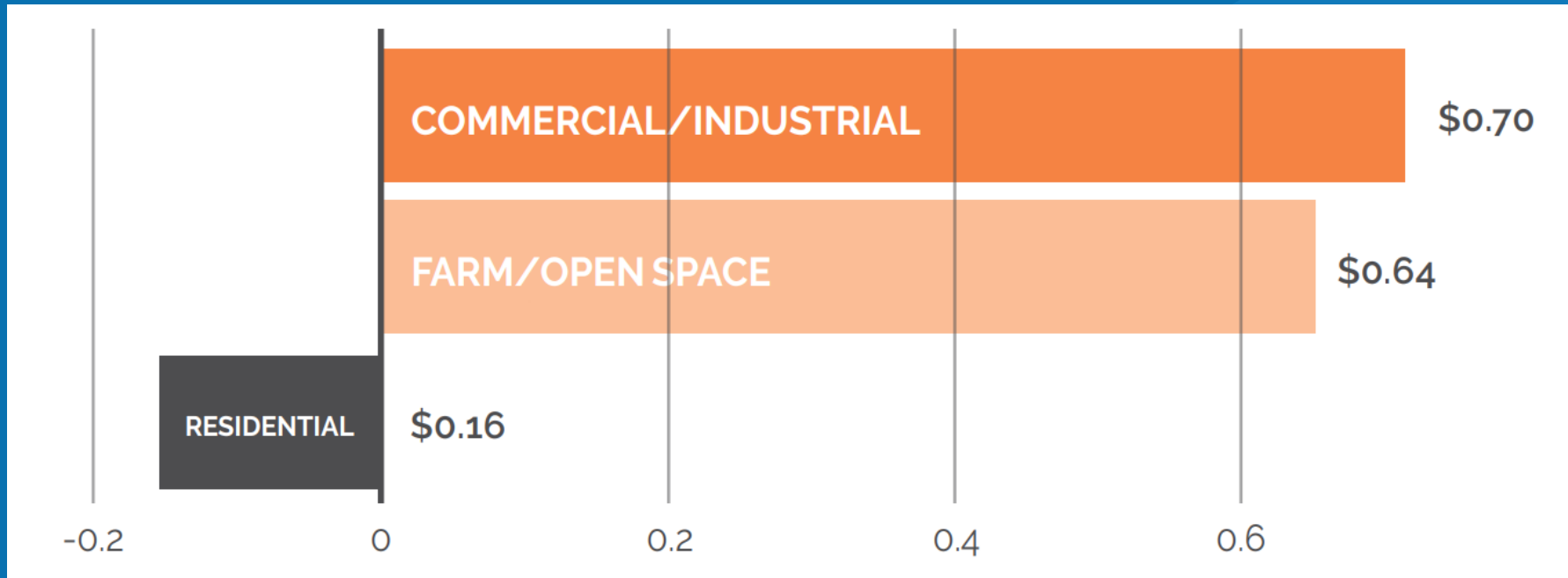
Clean, high-tech facilities run on sensors, robotics, AI, and digital twins — faster, more precise, safer, and less wasteful than the heavy industry of the past.

*Different footprints and different impacts — understanding those differences is where informed decisions start.*

# Why is Modern Industrial Important?

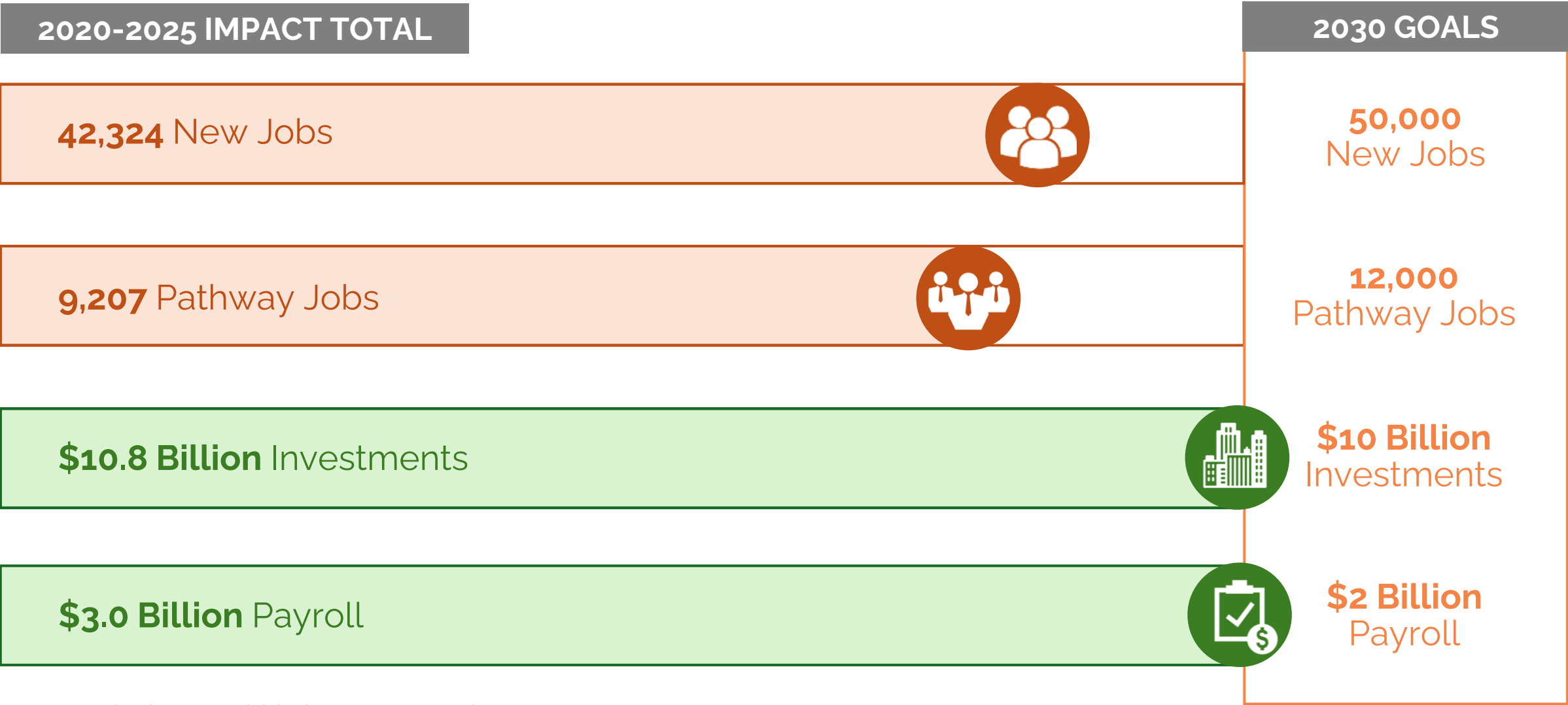
## NET FISCAL BALANCE, BY LAND USE

Surplus or deficit per \$1.00 of revenue collected



*A balanced budget needs a mix of uses, and industry is the use that runs a surplus large enough to subsidize everyone else.  
A strong industrial tax base helps make everything else affordable.*

# Detroit Regional Partnership's Impact



*Note: Supported numbers are not included in the DRP project impact totals.*

# Creating the Toolkit



Warner Norcross + Judd LLP



# The Process

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## Stakeholder Engagement



### Defining the Approach

Focused the approach of the toolkit and define success

## SME Review Of Tools & Content



### Getting it Right

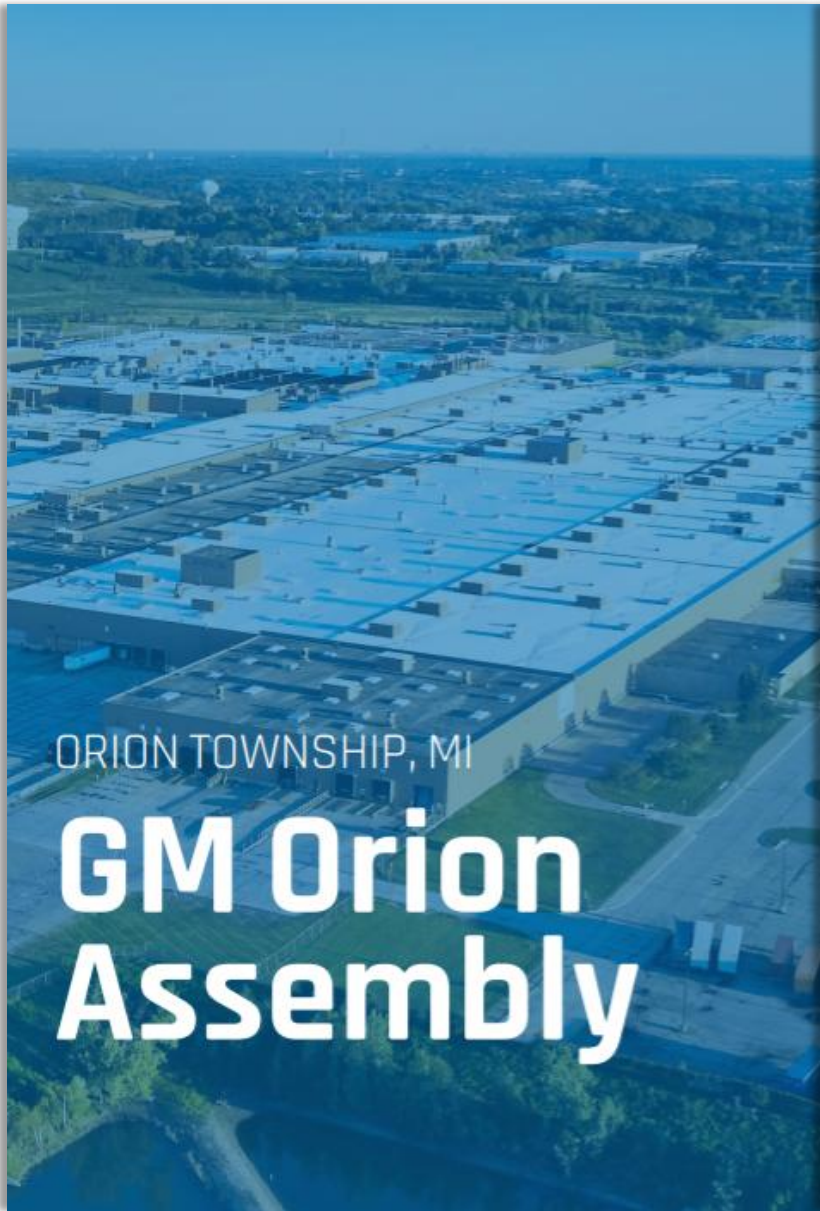
SME's that span the public & private sector with Michigan specific experience

## Case Study Support



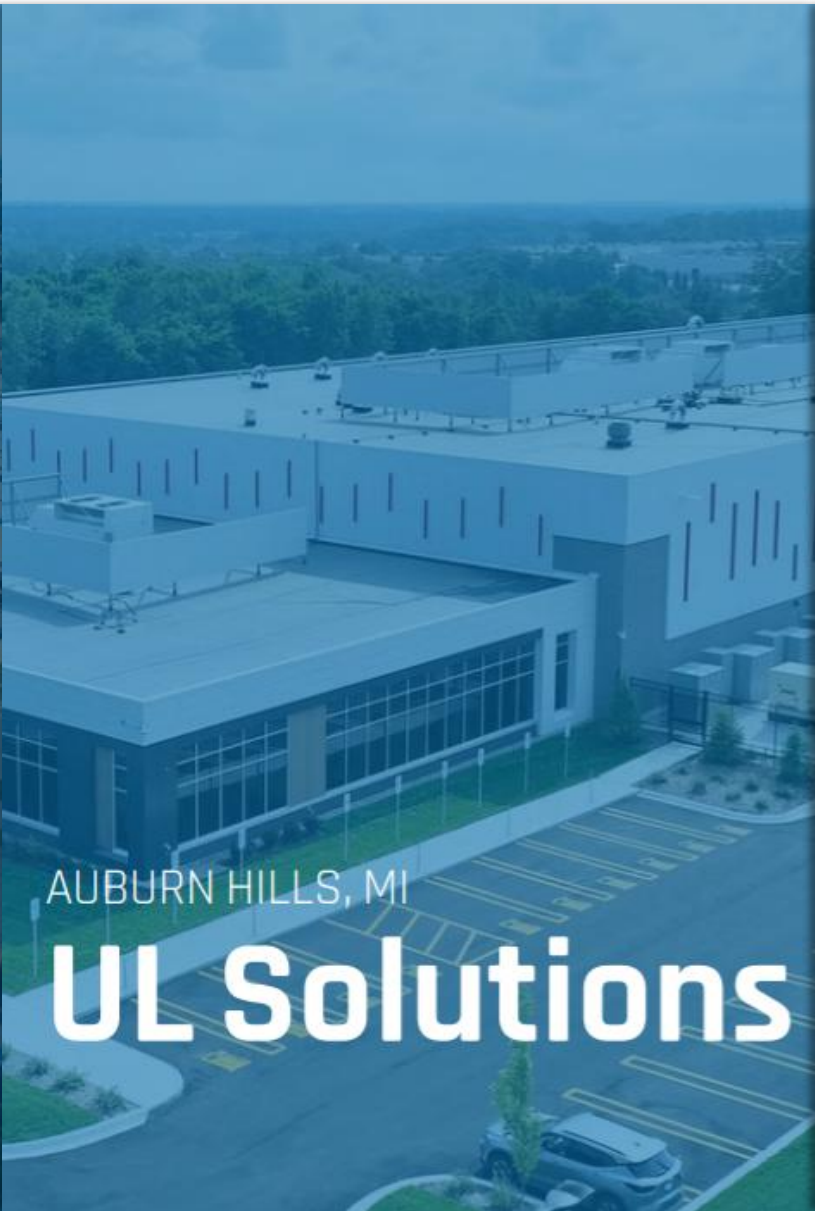
### Making it Real

Owners, communities, and stakeholders shared their experiences on projects



ORION TOWNSHIP, MI

# GM Orion Assembly



AUBURN HILLS, MI

# UL Solutions



NOVI, MI

# Berkshire E-Supply

# Who is the Toolkit for?

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS

**Caught between a rock and a hard place.**

- High expectations/barriers to success
- Mounting community opposition and misinformation
- Challenging business environment

## DEVELOPERS & OWNERS

**Good at building things, not always good at process and managing local politics.**

- Shifting entitlement and permitting process
- Limited and changing state support
- National economic uncertainty

## LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Faced with what feel like zero-sum options when it comes to significant industrial developments.**

- “No or recall” dynamic
- Unlimited ability for anyone to do “research” that supports their claim or opinion
- Threat of state pre-emption of local control

## MUNICIPAL STAFF

**Working with limited capacity and outdated policies.**

- High rates of turnover and limited capacity in technical positions
- Lack of experience working on major industrial projects
- Constrained municipal budgets

# Practical Applications

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1. Dispel myths about industrial development
2. Educate elected and appointed officials
3. A ***proactive*** roadmap to industrial development

# How the Toolkit Works

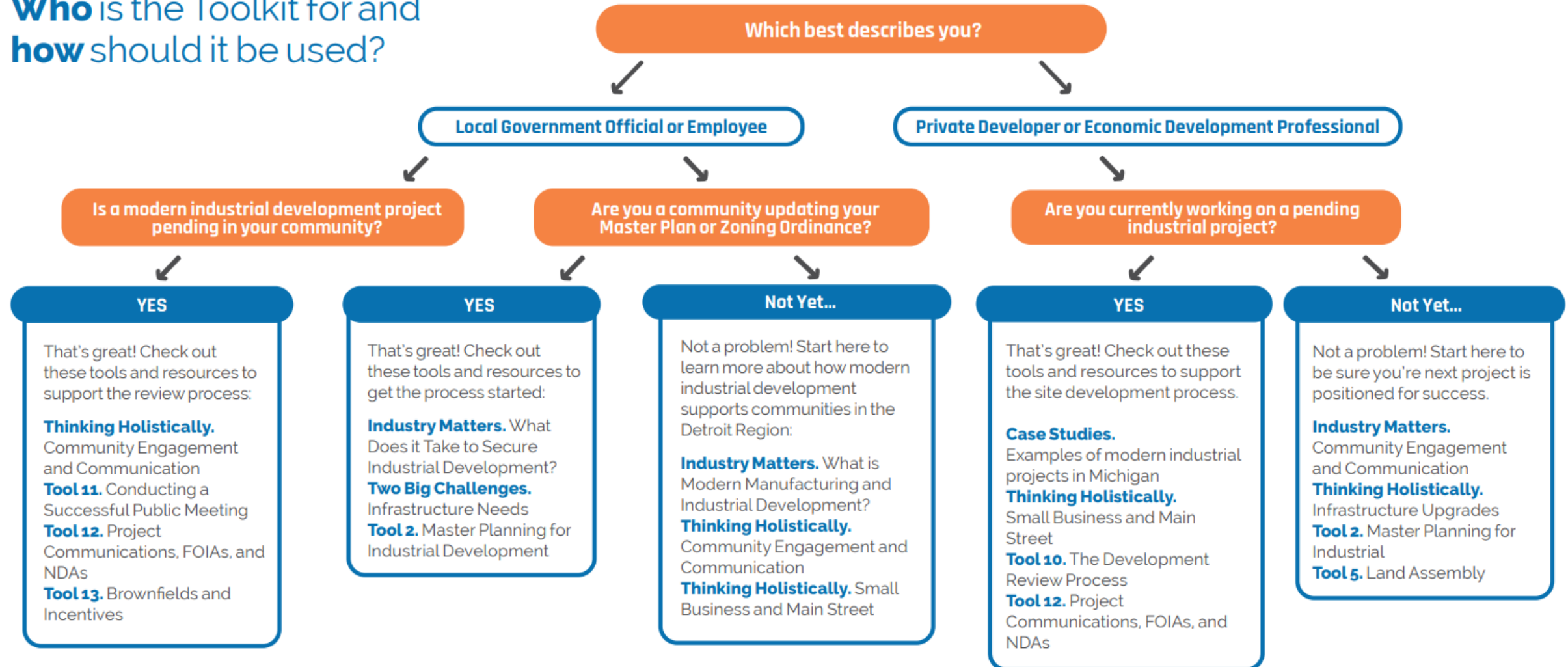
# Toolkit Content

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- 1. Industry Matters:** Modern Industry, FDI & Securing Industrial Development
- 2. Case Studies:** 5 Industrial Projects in Michigan
- 3. The Two Big Challenges:** Community Engagement & Infrastructure
- 4. Technical Guidance:** The 17 Tools
- 5. Thinking Holistically:** Quality of Life, Housing, Small Business, Workforce, & Infrastructure

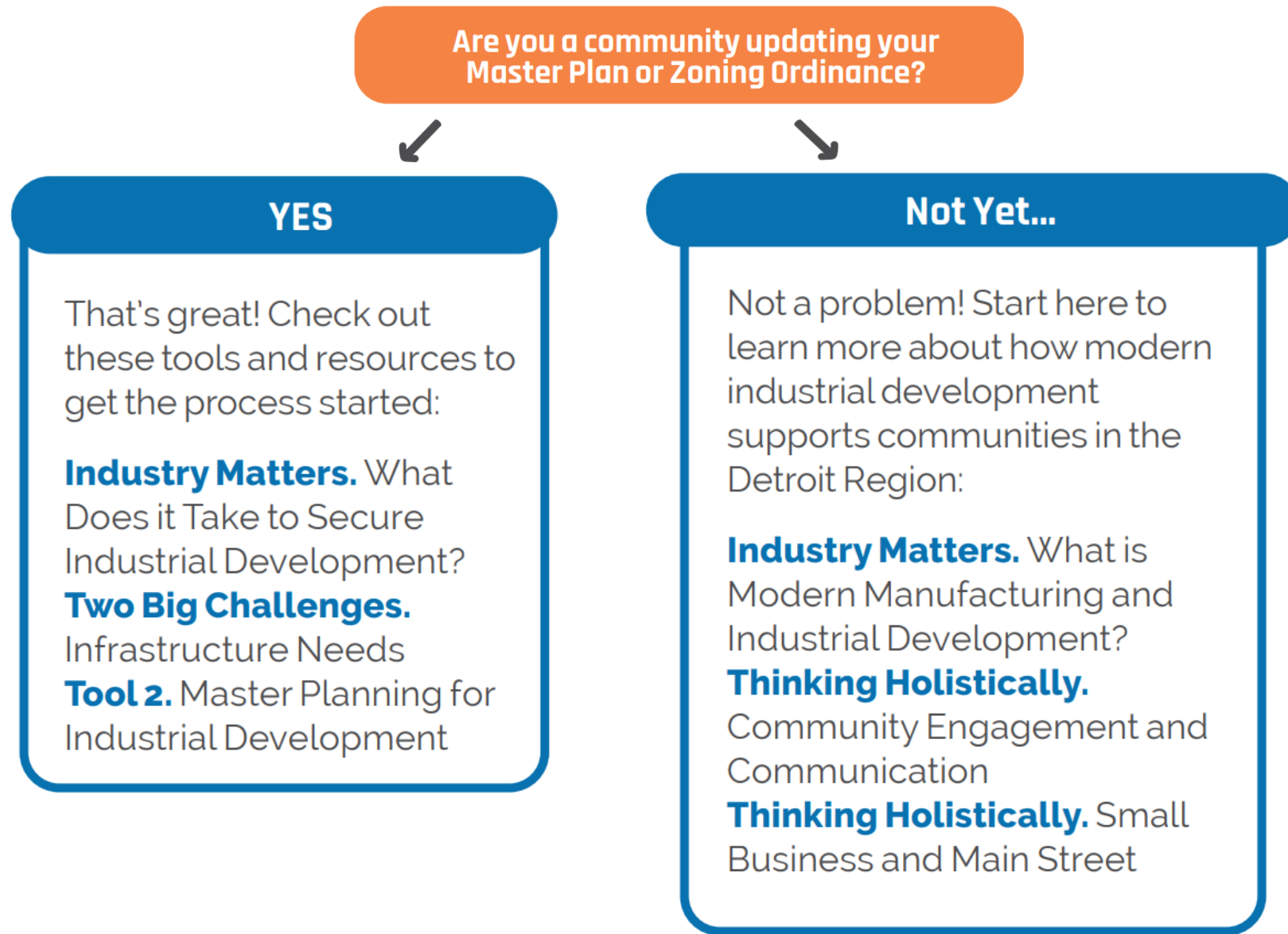
# Decision Tree

**Who** is the Toolkit for and **how** should it be used?



# Decision Tree Example

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# Self Assessment

## Where does **your** community stand?

A 15-question diagnostic for Michigan communities preparing for industrial development.

### HOW TO USE

Answer honestly—where you are today, not where you want to be. Total your score, then turn to the diagnosis to find the chapters to read first.

### SCORING

1 POINT

Not yet

2 POINTS

Working on it

3 POINTS

In place

### A. VISION & DIRECTION

>> Total Vision & Direction Points =

1 Our comprehensive master plan is less than 5 years old and the future land use map identifies locations for industrial development with a sufficient amount of acreage to create a viable development project. (*Master Planning for Industrial*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

2 We understand what modern industrial development typically needs: types of buildings, workforce, supplier proximity, acreage, etc. (*What Is Modern Manufacturing and Industrial Development*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

3 Our zoning ordinance provides flexibility when regulating various types of modern manufacturing uses based on performance rather than "light" and "heavy" classifications. (*What Is Modern Manufacturing and Industrial Development*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

### B. TOOLS & POLICY

>> Total Tools & Policy Points =

4 We have an officially-adopted IFT (PA 198) policy with clear criteria for term length. (*Brownfields and Incentives*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

5 We have an active Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, and we have considered whether an LDFA fits our community. (*Brownfields and Incentives*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

6 We have written community benefits expectations an applicant would see before they apply. (*Community Benefits*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

### C. PROCESS & CAPACITY

>> Total Process & Capacity Points =

7 A developer can get a clear, accurate timeline from us before they submit. (*Development Review Process*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

8 Our zoning is based on current industrial uses — rezonings and PUDs are rare exceptions, not the default path. (*Industrial Zoning District Guidelines; Rezoning and PUDs*)

- 1 Not yet
- 2 Working on it
- 3 In place

# Self Assessment Continued

## D. INFRASTRUCTURE & SITE CAPACITY

» Total Infra. & Site Capacity Points =

- |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>9</b> We have a documented inventory of utility capacity (water, sewer, power, broadband) on our industrial sites. <i>(Infrastructure Needs)</i> | <b>10</b> We have evaluated freight, rail, and transportation access for our industrial sites. <i>(Infrastructure Needs; Site Readiness and Feasibility)</i> | <b>11</b> Our capital improvement plan addresses known infrastructure constraints on industrial sites. <i>(Infrastructure Needs)</i> | <b>12</b> We know which two or three sites a site selector would actually consider, and what could disqualify each. <i>(Site Readiness and Feasibility)</i> |
| <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                    | <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                             | <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                     | <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                              | <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                                       | <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                               | <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                   | <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                            | <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                    | <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                           |

## E. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

» Total Community Engagement Points =

- |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>13</b> We engage residents on industrial development priorities BEFORE specific projects emerge. <i>(Community Engagement and Communication)</i> | <b>14</b> We have successfully run a public meeting on a controversial development topic in the past two years. <i>(Conducting a Successful Public Meeting)</i> | <b>15</b> We have a practice for keeping residents informed during construction on major industrial projects. <i>(Communicating During Construction)</i> | <b>16</b> We coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions (425 agreements, aligned IFT policies) AND stay in regular contact with our existing industrial employers. <i>(425 Agreements; Annual Business Retention)</i> |
| <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                    | <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                                | <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                         | <b>1</b> Not yet                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                              | <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                                          | <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                                   | <b>2</b> Working on it                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                   | <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                               | <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                        | <b>3</b> In place                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## DIAGNOSIS

Add up your cumulative points from your totals for sections A-E of this quiz. Your points will place you in one of the four categories below!

**YOUR SCORE:**  **/30 POINTS**

### Reactive **0 to 10 points**

Your community responds to projects as they arrive. Start with foundation work before the next prospect calls.

**Start here:** *What Does It Take to Secure Industrial Development; Master Planning for Industrial; What Is Modern Manufacturing and Industrial Development.*

### Emerging **11 to 20 points**

Real pieces are in place. Your gaps are typically in written policy, infrastructure planning, or proactive engagement.

**Start here:** *Brownfields and Incentives; Infrastructure Needs; Community Engagement and Communication.*

### Strategic **21 to 26 points**

You are shaping deals rather than chasing them. Next gains come from regional coordination and deeper engagement craft.

**Start here:** *425 Agreements; Annual Business Retention Check-Ins; Conducting Exploratory Meetings.*

### Sophisticated **27 to 30 points**

Among the best-prepared communities in Michigan. Your edge is staying ahead of the next wave.

**Start here:** *What Is Modern Manufacturing and Industrial Development; What Is Foreign Direct Investment; Site Design*

# Technical Guidance

## 17 Tools

### SECTOR



The Public Sector



The Private Sector

### PHASE



Pre-Project



Project Commencement



Construction/Post-Construction

### Industrial Visioning and Planning



1. Roles, Responsibilities and Process ●○○



2. Master Planning for Industrial ●○○



3. Conducting Exploratory Meetings ●○○



4. Facilitating an Effective Open House ●●○



5. Land Assembly ●○○

### Opportunity Assessment and Site Readiness



6. Site Readiness and Feasibility ●○○



7. Industrial Zoning District Guidelines ●○○



8. Rezoning and PUDs ●○○



9. Site Design ●●○

### Approvals and Partnerships



10. The Development Review Process ●●○



11. Conducting a Successful Public Meeting ●●○



12. Project Communications, FOIAs, and NDAs ●○○



13. Brownfields and Incentives ●●○



14. Community Benefits ●○○



15. 425 Agreements ●○○

### Implementation



16. Communicating During Construction ●●●



17. Annual Business Retention Check-Ins ●●●

# Zoning & Review Scenario

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## Scenario

- A developer is ready to submit site plans for an industrial zoned site

## Tools

1. Roles, Responsibilities & Process
2. The Development Review Process
3. Conducting a Successful Public Meeting

# Roles, Responsibilities & Process

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**This tool provides a concise overview of who does what and how an industrial site moves from idea to reality.**

- The various roles involved in industrial projects differ from commercial or residential development



LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT



THE GENERAL  
PUBLIC



REGIONAL &  
BUSINESS  
PARTNERS



STATE OF  
MICHIGAN



UTILITY  
PROVIDERS



DETROIT  
REGIONAL  
PARTNERSHIP  
(DRP)



PLANNING,  
ENGINEERING,  
DESIGN, &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CONSULTANTS



DEVELOPERS



END USERS

# The Development Review Process

**The development review process involves permitting by a range of disciplines and authorities that vary by unit of government.**

- Well-tested best practices that can be employed by municipalities and developers that may help to streamline the process and avoid unnecessary delays



Informal discussions with staff and preliminary review of project concept.



Formal site plan and other zoning approvals.



Building plan and fire marshal review and approval.



Inspections and permitting by various trades.



Inspections and permitting by other agencies with jurisdiction.



Final Certificate of Occupancy (CofO) permit.

# Conducting a Successful Public Meeting

**This tool provides guidance for communities and developers on how to complete a successful public meeting during the project review process.**

- How to successfully prepare for, conduct, and follow-up for a public meeting
- Navigating projects that generate controversy and elicit a significant amount of public comment.



# Where We Go from Here

# Toolkit Rollout

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**August**



## **MEDA Summit**

Exclusive Launch to  
MEDA Members

**October**



## **Toolkit Road Show & Website**

Michigan Association of  
Planning Panel

Dedicated Toolkit Webpage  
on DRP's website

**November/  
December**



## **Michigan Planner Magazine**

DRP Sponsored Issue  
discussing the Toolkit

**We want to hear from Communities (NOW) Email:**

**[Toolkit@DetroitRegionalPartnership.com](mailto:Toolkit@DetroitRegionalPartnership.com)**

**More to follow! Check back on the exclusive webpage hosted on DRP's website**

Launch the  
Toolkit:



# Thank You!

**A special thanks to our local experts.** The Industrial Development Toolkit was reviewed by local partners and subject matter experts; their insights shaped the refinement of the tools provided in the Technical Guidance portion of this plan. We thank our partners for their support in crafting tangible, useful, and effective tools in the advancement of industrial development in the Detroit Region.

**Ron Akers:** Van Buren Township

**Tyler Bailey:** City of Flint

**Luke Bonner:** Bonner Advisory Group

**Kurt Brauer:** Warner Norcross + Judd LLP

**Cristia Brockway:** City of Farmington Hills

**Greg Burkart:** Walbridge

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**Dan Cassidy:** SME-USA

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**Jazmine Danci:** Downriver Community Conference

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**Brittney Hoszkiw:** City of Detroit

**Naheed Huq:** The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments

**Patrich Jett:** Colliers

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**Chad Young:** Mundy Charter Township