City of Toledo

Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative: Innovation Track

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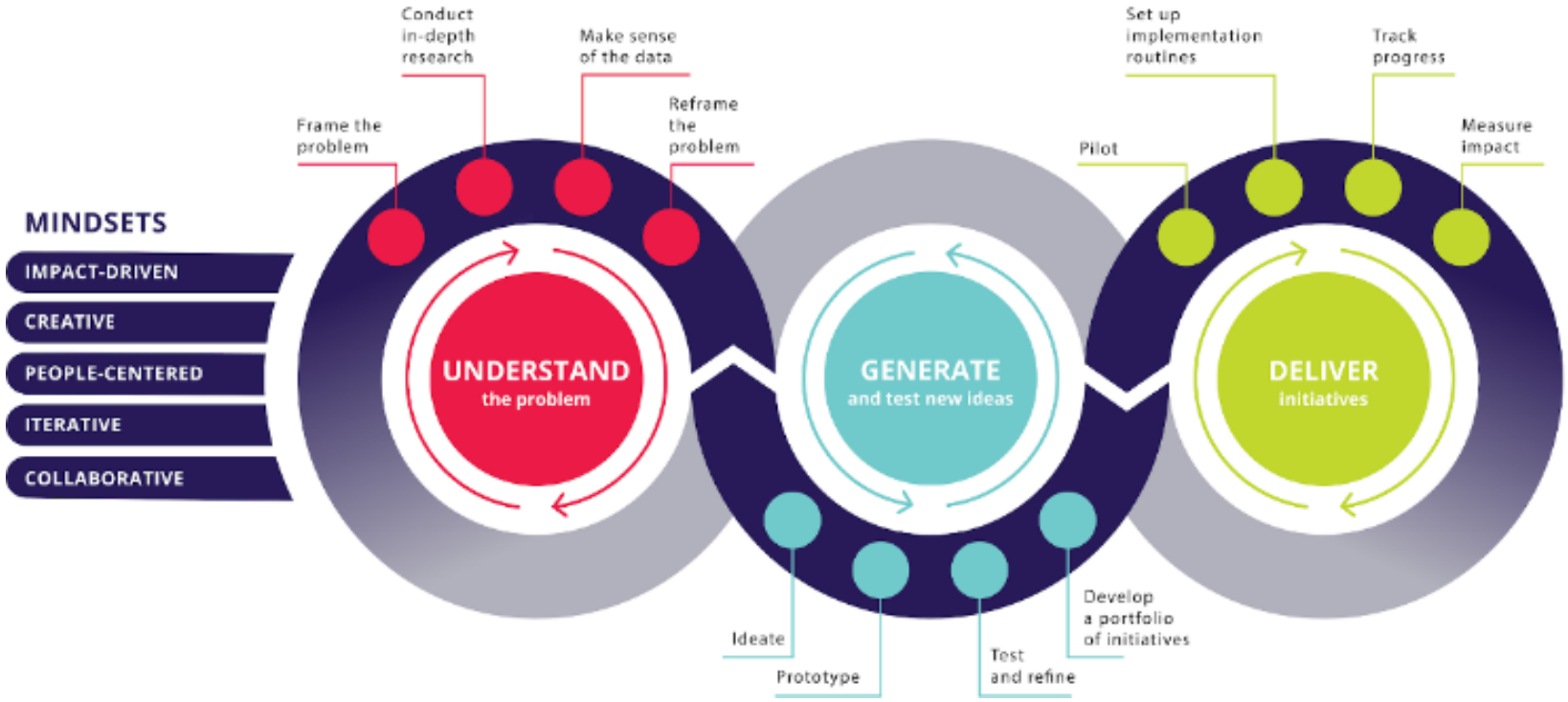
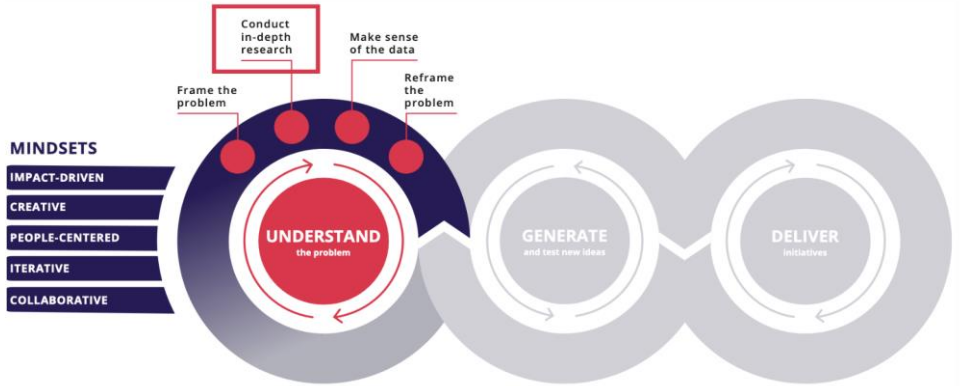
City Leadership Initiative

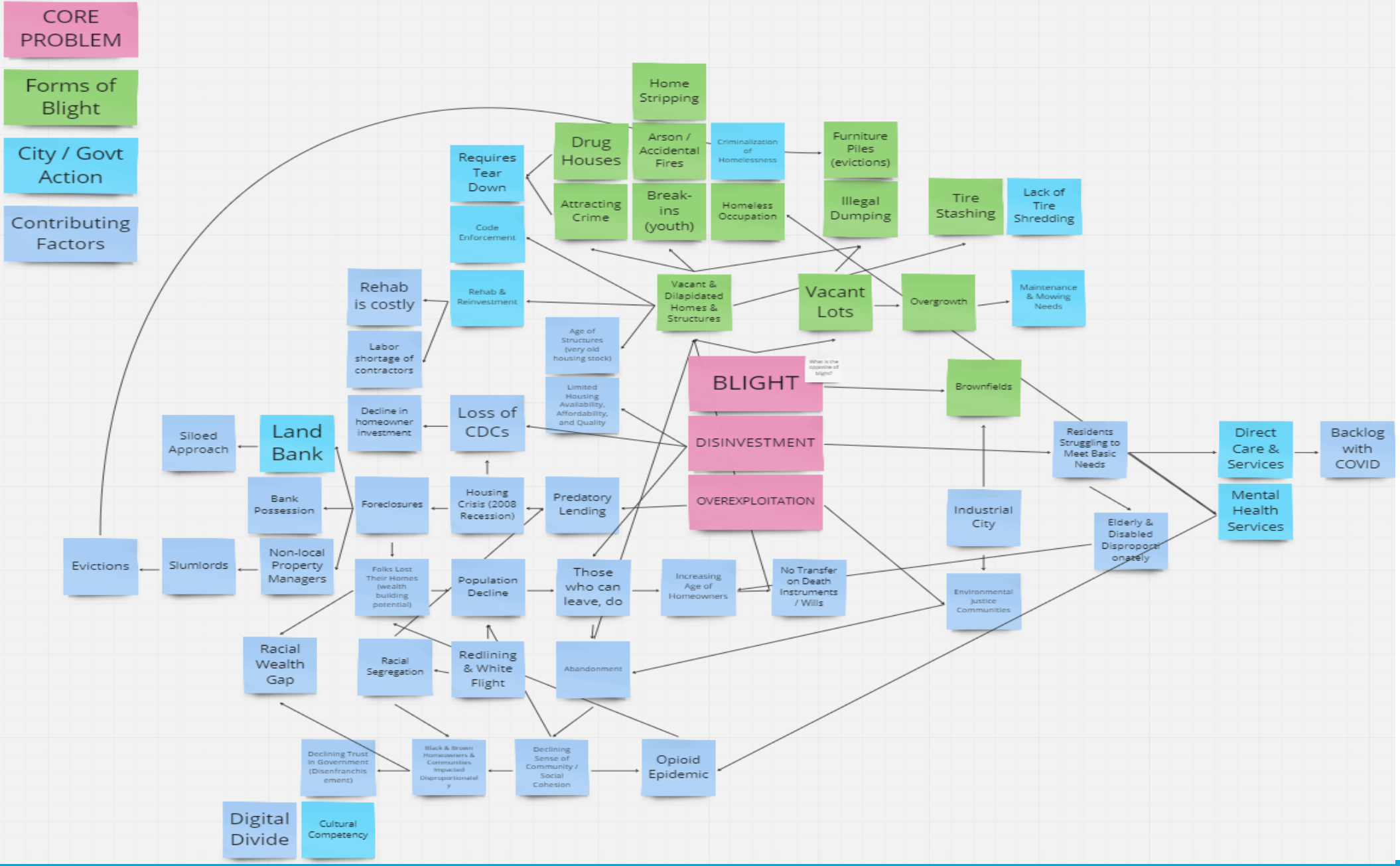
Where We've Been



Understand Phase

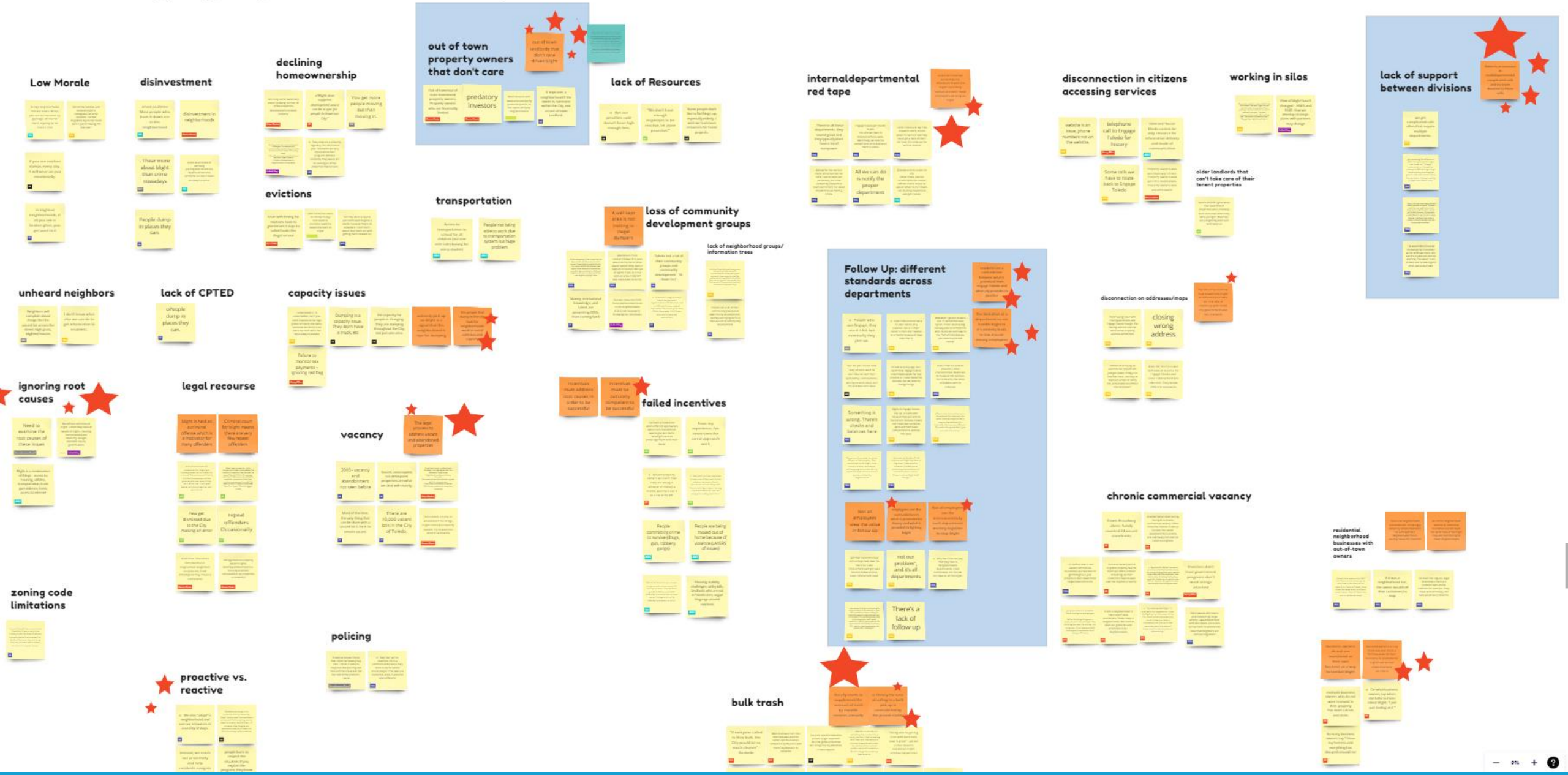


- Interviewed over 25 different stakeholders
- **Residents:** landlords, renters, contractors, scrappers, neighborhood leaders, senior groups and more
- **Public Sector:** Housing Court, Land Bank, Health Department, City Code Enforcers, Economic Development, City Council, TPD, TFD, Building Inspectors, Urban Beautification team members
- **Service Providers**: Republic Services, United Way, Toledo Fair Housing, ABLE, Toledo Homelessness Board


CORE PROBLEM
Forms of Blight
City / Govt Action
Contributing Factors
Home Stripping
Drug Houses
Arson / Accidental Fires
Criminalization of Homelessness
Furniture Piles (evictions)
Requires Tear Down
Attracting Crime
Break-ins (youth)
Homeless Occupation
Illegal Dumping
Tire Stashing
Lack of Tire Shredding
Code Enforcement
Rehab is costly
Rehab & Reinvestment
Vacant & Dilapidated Homes & Structures
Vacant Lots
Overgrowth
Maintenance & Mowing Needs
Labor shortage of contractors
Age of Structures (very old housing stock)
BLIGHT
Brownfields
Limited Housing Availability, Affordability, and Quality
Decline in homeowner investment
Loss of CDCs
DISINVESTMENT
Residents Struggling to Meet Basic Needs
Direct Care & Services
Backlog with COVID
Siloed Approach
Land Bank
Bank Possession
Foreclosures
Housing Crisis (2008 Recession)
Predatory Lending
OVEREXPLOITATION
Industrial City
Mental Health Services
Elderly & Disabled Disproportionately
Evictions
Slumlords
Non-local Property Managers
Folks Lost Their Homes (wealth building potential)
Population Decline
Those who can leave, do
Increasing Age of Homeowners
No Transfer on Death Instruments / Wills
Environmental Justice Communities
Racial Wealth Gap
Racial Segregation
Redlining & White Flight
Abandonment
Declining Trust in Government (Disenfranchisement)
Black & Brown Homeowners & Communities Impacted Disproportionately
Declining Sense of Community / Social Cohesion
Opioid Epidemic
Digital Divide
Cultural Competency

What is the City's role?

What is driving blight? (behaviors/incentives)



1

Feeling of Helplessness

Residents don't know what is happening with their reported blight issue and they feel they don't have a mechanism to check.

If residents are not kept informed, they won't know if anyone is working on it and may feel ignored, not valued, and they may lose hope in the process.

Residents may use self-help measures, devalue the process, and give up entirely.

2

Coordination of Services

Multiple departments and agencies are responsible for addressing concerns related to blight but there is little to no coordination of services.

Individual providers feel a sense of missed opportunity and lack of agency because not all of the aspects of blight can be addressed by one agency.

Service providers may feel more empowered and committed to resolving residents' issues if there were a mechanism for coordination.

3

Equitable blight response

While low-income and minority communities harbor the majority of abandoned properties in their neighborhoods, the city does not invest and focus strategies around making these abandoned properties an opportunity, as they do in middle- and upper-class communities.

Because they have a large number of abandoned properties that are not cared for and not focused on, the neighbors internalize this and feel not valued or cared for, this frustration makes them turn within secluding themselves from their neighborhood and the social fabric of the neighborhood breaks down which leads to blighted abandoned properties and illegal activities.

This creates more barriers for low income and minority communities to organize and utilize the abandoned properties as opportunities.

4

Blight begets blight

Toledo faces a big challenge with mitigating blight

Blight management feels like taking 1 step forward and 10 steps back

It doesn't appear that the City will handle the situation long term, and our current process is not transparent, and residents are not confident in the resolution.

Communication with residents and employees

City government is inaccessible to residents and there is a lack of personal engagement between residents/neighborhoods and City government.

Residents feel unheard and unseen by the City and disengaged from resources.

This creates hopelessness, apathy, and even some residents becoming numb to the issue.

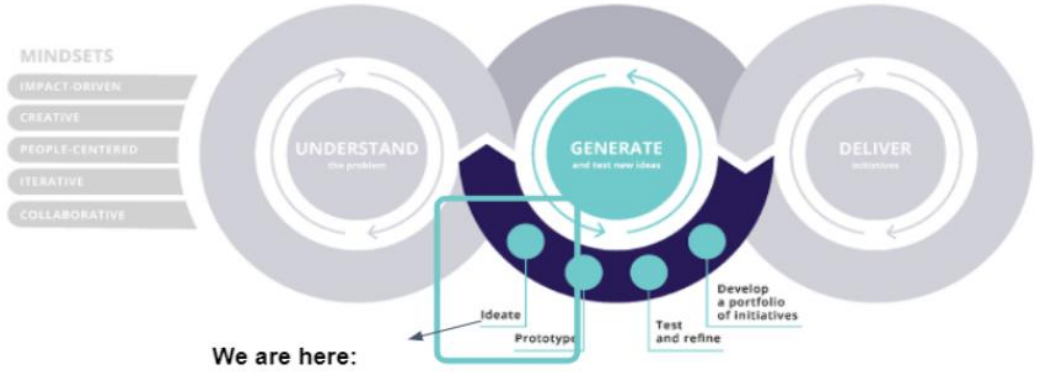
Reframed Problem Statement

The problem is… that decades of disinvestment have led to troubling blight across Toledo neighborhoods, with low-income communities saddled with the majority of abandoned properties and disparate impacts on their quality of life. To date, the City's efforts to address blight have been ineffective due to a lack of coordination, communication, and equitable prioritization of resources.

The problem is for… members of our community who are directly impacted, as well as the employees and program providers working to make a difference, who are losing confidence that real progress will be made on the issue of blight.

This is a problem because… This lack of hope creates feelings of helplessness and frustration in Toledoans. Without more coordinated, visible, equitable, and proactive action, Toledo's efforts to fight blight will continue to be ineffective.

Generate Phase



- **Ideation Sessions: internal stakeholders and resident session**
- In April we did an internal ideation session with leaders in our organization and throughout the city
- At the library we hosted our resident ideation session of Toledo Ambassadors, neighborhood groups, Engage Toledo callers, City Council members, church leaders, and more

How might we...
-Rebuild the social fabric of neighborhoods?
-Provide diverse forums to engage w/residents, show
+ build trust?
-Instill confidence in residents that the city is investing in
understandable, visible, tangible long-term solutions?
-Embrace a spirit of collaboration + fellowship?

EXIT

IDEATION CO-DESIGN SESSION Idea Bank

1. How might we orchestrate our services to replicate the efficiency of an operating room?

2. How might we offer a personalized follow up to residents when reporting blight?

3. How might we make tracking your blight issue/complaint as easy as tracking your Amazon order?

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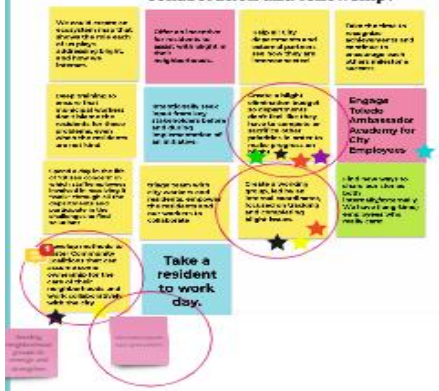
4. How might we embrace a spirit of collaboration and fellowship?



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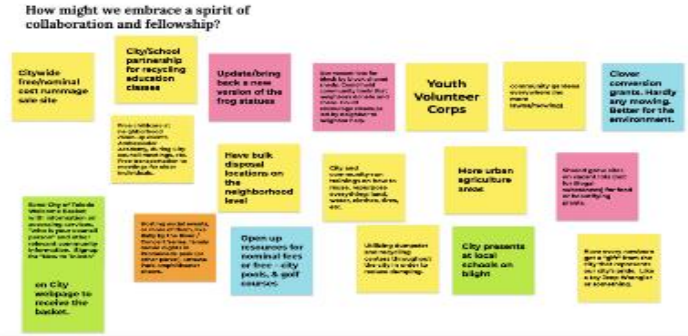

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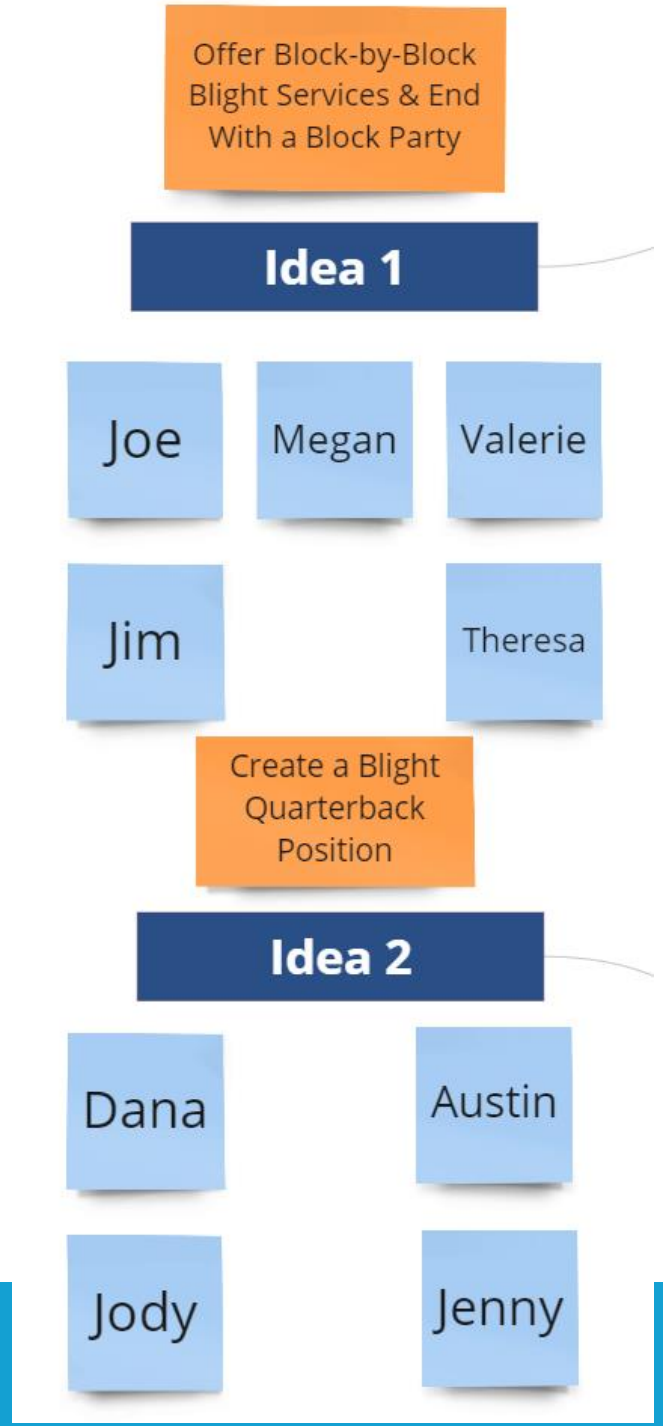
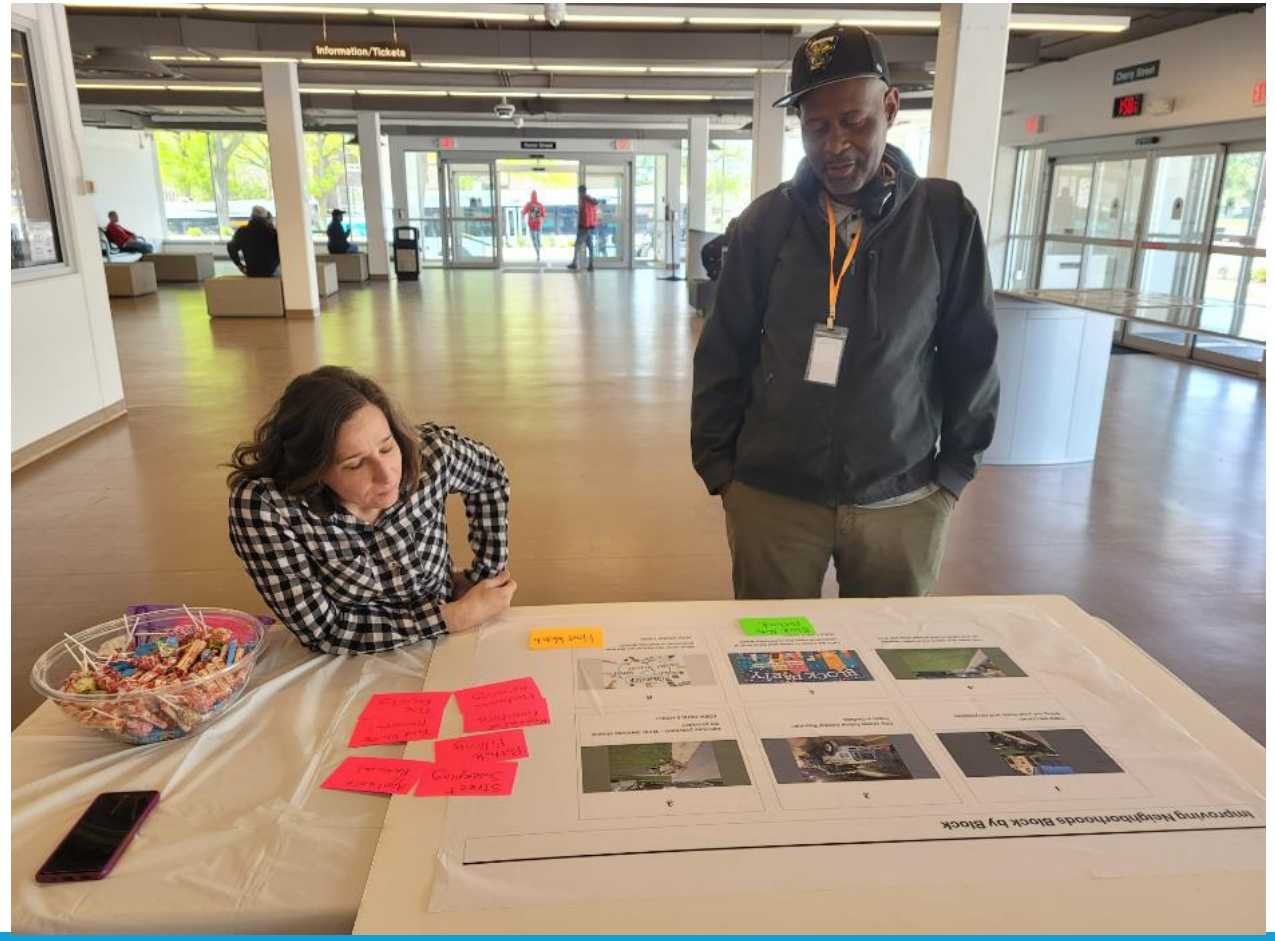

Offer Block-by-Block Blight Services & End With a Block Party
Idea 1
Joe
Megan
Valerie
Jim
Theresa
Create a Blight Quarterback Position
Idea 2
Dana
Austin
Jody
Jenny

Block by Block Blight Clean-up

Generate Phase: Prototypes included storyboards, ideas cards and a simulation

- Conducting prototype testing at the Downtown Tarta Hub
- Blight vs. Clean-up
- Items to collect (scrapper info)
- Accessibility and wrap around services.



Block by Block Blight Clean-up

- Block and Neighborhood selection
- Information sharing with residents
- Pre-assessment of area
- No limitations on items
- Clean Toledo Blight and Cops and Cones

Toledo Police
To Protect
Soft Serve
Cool
Toledo

Block by Block Blight Clean-up:

- Residents appreciated that the crews didn't have limitations on what they could collect and that the personalized interactions allowed for more accessibility - allowing for the pick-up of items that people couldn't lift and needed additional help with.

- Due to the test, the team shifted their system away from picking up individual items to more holistic support and a customized approach.

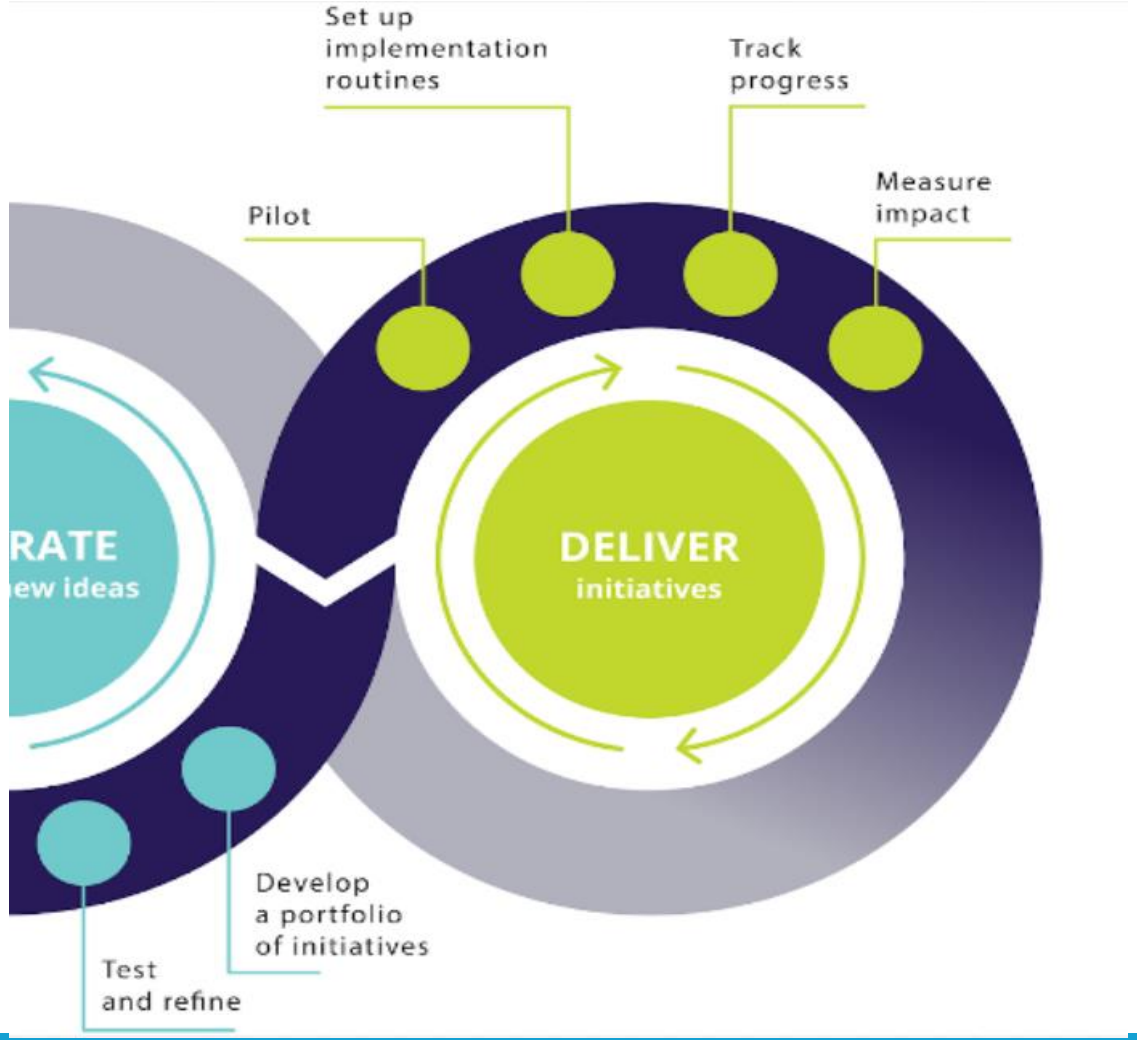
Blight Coordinator (Quarterback) Position

Generate Phase: Individual Interviews for Feedback; Prototype the Process

Blight Coordination Group Test

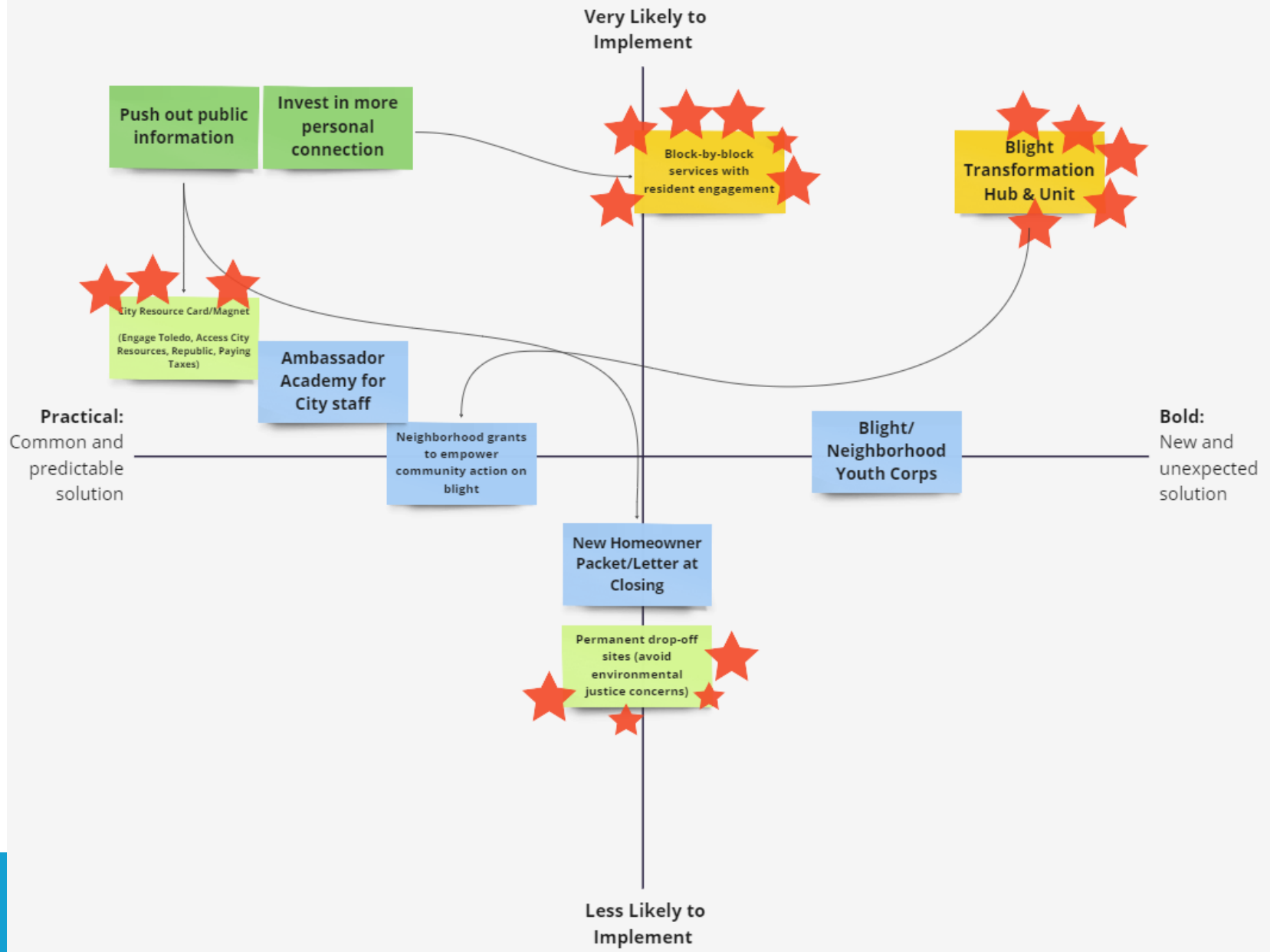
Land Bank, Republic Services, Health Department, Engage Toledo, Code Compliance, DPS and Urban Beautification

The Deliver Phase



Final Portfolio of Initiatives

uctions: *Copy and paste your final ideas from the previous exercise and plot them on the 2x2.* ***At the end, turn the 3 ideas you are most likely t on in the next 12 months green.***



Pilot: Block by Block Services With Resident Engagement

1. Identify 4-5 city blocks using available data

2. Pre-Assessment – Identify individualized service needs which may include: mowing, litter collection, pothole filling, brush collection, information distribution.

3. Clean-up – Remove blight, connect with residents, complete in-depth assessment for follow-up services which may include forestry, sidewalks, code compliance, etc.

4. Create work orders for identified follow-up services

CITY OF TOLEDO
NEIGHBORHOOD BLIGHT CLEAN-UP

EUCLID AVE
BETWEEN STARR AND NEVADA

City of Toledo crews will be in the area above collecting blight items. Items accepted include bulky items and refuse (including appliances). Please place your items at the curb for pick up. Volunteers will be available to assist residents with getting items to the curb.

Please do not put items out to the curb before June 14th

COPS AND CONES WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE
TPD Cops and Cones Ice Cream Truck will be out and about giving out free ice cream.

THURSDAY, JUNE 15TH
1P-3P

QUESTIONS?
CALL ENGAGE TOLEDO
419-936-2020

TOL City of Toledo

Bulk Collection Waste Removal City Services

419-936-2020

City of Toledo

Blight Transformation Task Force
Step One: Property Data Hub

- Municipal property data currently exists in different city and county departments, federal and state government agencies, various community organizations, and most all within different software systems that do not interface with each other.

- Building an interactive parcel-based data tool that aggregates all property data in Toledo from Cityworks, Water Utilities Data (SAP), Permit Data (Accela/Opencounter), Auditors Office Property/Tax Data (AREIS), Treasurers Office, Landbank Database, Plan Commission, Health Department, Housing Court/Prosecutor/Sheriffs Office (Foreclosures), Demolitions, Code Compliance, Republic Services, Toledo Edison, Columbia Gas, NWO Realtors Association, USPS, Census Data and more, will allow city departments, appropriate stakeholders, and possibly residents, the ability to organize, search, view, extract, filter and analyze up to date property data in any way conceivable.

Tolemi

BuildingBlocks is a map-based application that connects and updates data held in different systems and formats across departments & agencies. Staff and partners can find the answers they need in seconds, run advanced spatial analysis, and automate reports in a single interface.

Midwest Cities That Use BuildingBlocks

Cincinnati, OH

Akron, OH

Summit County, OH

Montgomery County, OH

Indianapolis, IN

Pittsburgh, PA

Louisville, KY

Racine, WI

Rockford, IL

St. Louis, MO

Charleston, WV

Buffalo, NY

Battle Creek, MI

Fishers, IN

Toledo Property Data Hub

- Will allow the city and its departments to invest resources in a more targeted manner, where data shows it will be most effective
- Will allow departments to measure the success of programs and specific investments in a given area at a given time
- Will assist the city in future grant applications as a tool to more easily extract and present our civic data

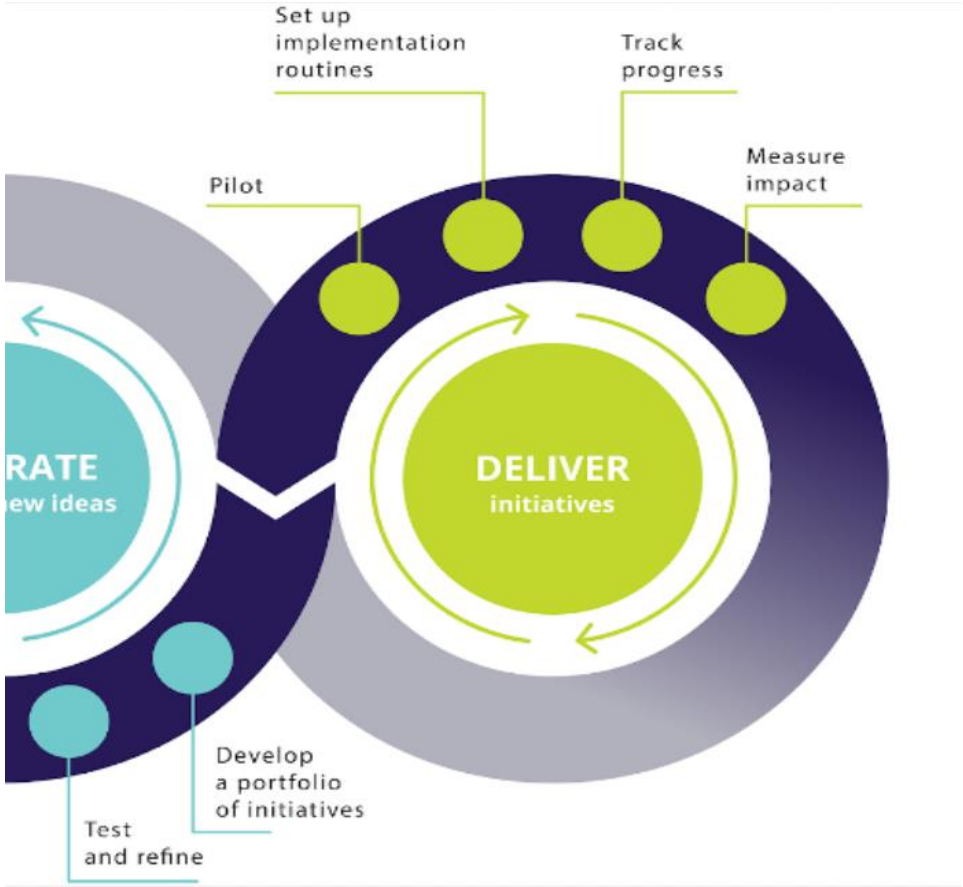
Blight Transformation Task Force

- Once the property hub is built, bring all partners involved in blight together regularly around the data tool to build action plans. This will allow the city to coordinate with its partners to deploy resources early and proactively.

- Long term, the task force will be able to remediate problem properties earlier, identify opportunities for redevelopment, help property owners navigate the system (courts, legal, code enforcement, rehab), and help restart CHDO's and community development organizations to return more lots back to the neighborhoods for productive use.

Going Forward

- IT Data Analyst/Blight Coordinator position
- Estimated 6 months to build Data Hub
- Train departments and to use Tolemi
- Clean Toledo coordinator of service delivery
- Build the working groups for the Task Force



Holy
Toledo

City of Toledo

Thank you.

toledo.gov