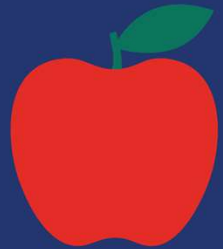




# MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE **CONVENTION2025**





# Thriving Communities

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Membership Engagement

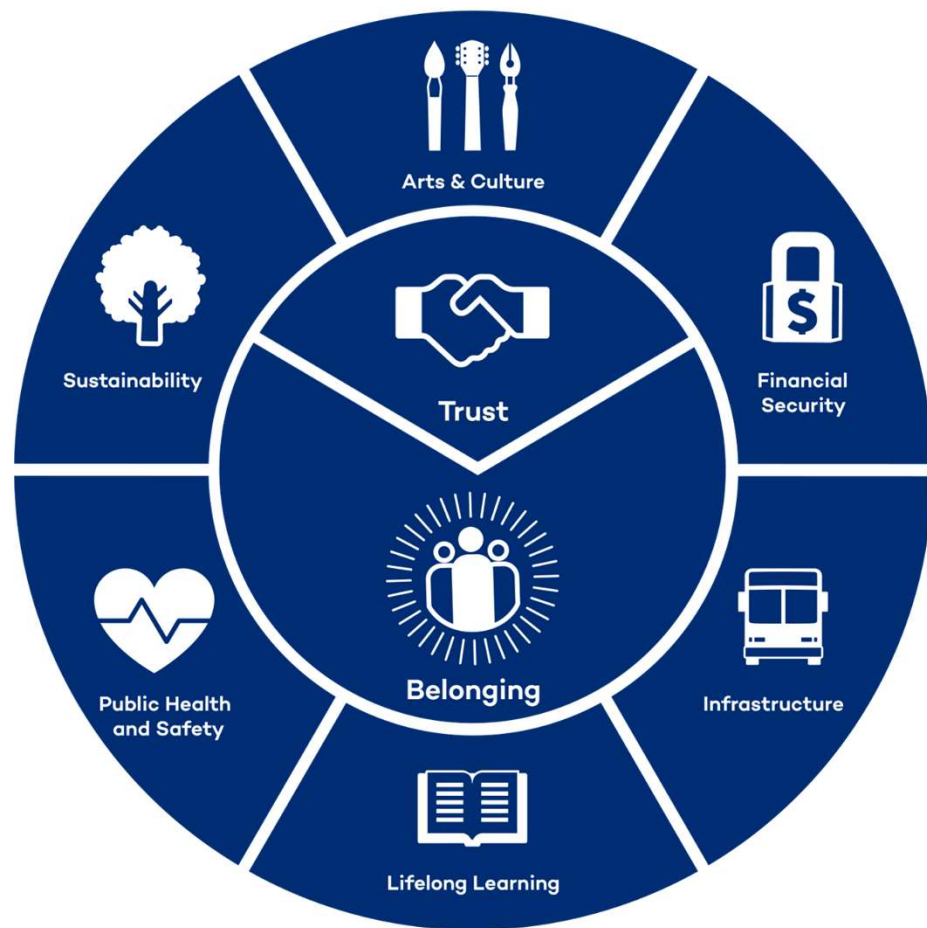
# Overview

- Why Thriving Communities matter
- The League's Thriving Communities framework
- Tools to support local engagement
- Success in action: how communities are using these ideas
- State-level advocacy and policy coordination
- Closing: calls to action



**Emerging from challenge,  
moving towards thriving**





## Creating Thriving Communities

Thriving is **placemaking**,  
it is **community wealth building**,  
it is **growing Michigan together**,  
it is **resilience**.



# Local government can lead, but can't go it alone

Local government has important tools, but not the complete set needed.

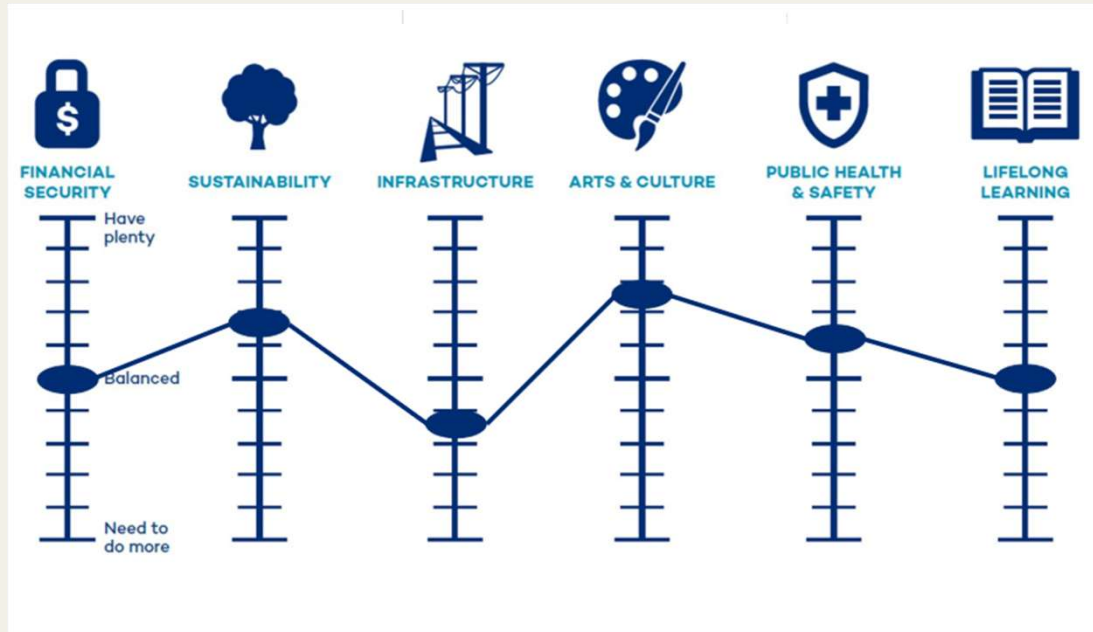
But—you are *the conveners of place, and the stewards of your communities*: you can bring people together to do inclusive community building and move towards thriving.





## Tools to support local engagement

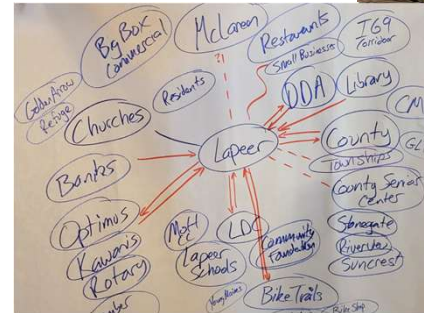
# The Equalizer: Finding Your Frequency



- This locally-focused tool helps leaders *discuss priorities* and *holistically evaluate* where their community stands in each focus area.
- Metaphor of an equalizer: adjusting various *levels* to get your desired *frequency*.



## Community Partnership Mapping Exercise



# The Equalizer Analysis Tool for Policies, Projects & Initiatives



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## The Equalizer Analysis Tool for Policies, Projects & Initiatives

**Description:** Building from The Equalizer, this tool gives you a clear, step-by-step process to assess the impact of any local policy, project, or initiative. Using the focus areas and your community's established "frequency" from The Equalizer, you'll explore key trade-offs, identify factors that affect trust and buy-in, and pinpoint strategies to boost community alignment and success.

**Instructions:**

1. Identify the policy, project, or initiative.
2. Identify the focus area that will be the most impacted on your Equalizer tool.
3. Next, identify the different groups that would also be impacted by this policy, rule, or initiative. You can use stakeholders identified in the [Community Partnership Mapping Exercise](#).

### Worksheet


Policy, Project, or Initiative: \_\_\_\_\_

Which is intended to: \_\_\_\_\_

If this is replacing something, that was originally intended to: \_\_\_\_\_

The focus area most directly impacted is: \_\_\_\_\_

The stakeholders who are involved or impacted include: \_\_\_\_\_



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Focus Area	What are the main gains/losses that influence the levels of this area?	Which stakeholders will be most impacted by these tradeoffs?
<b>Financial Security:</b> Ensures fiscal health at the municipal, institutional, commercial, familial, and individual levels, fostering economic resilience and sustained prosperity through economic and community development.		
<b>Infrastructure:</b> Encompasses fundamental facilities, services, and systems serving an area's economy and population.		
<b>Public Health &amp; Safety:</b> Provides effective response and reduces exposure to harm, increasing physical and mental health and safety, supporting access to housing, food, and health care, and reducing disparities in quality of life.		
<b>Sustainability:</b> Manages natural resources and supports environmental stewardship to ensure long-term harmony between the built and natural environment, leveraging them as public assets.		
<b>Lifelong Learning:</b> Recognizes education and training as a continuous journey from early childhood through adulthood, encompassing K-12 education, post-secondary pathways, and ongoing opportunities for adult learners, teachers, and mentors of all ages.		
<b>Arts &amp; Culture:</b> Respects, celebrates, and recognizes cultural identities, traditions, historical contexts, and creative outputs as critical assets that strengthen the social fabric of a community.		



## **Success in Action:** How Communities Are Using The Tools



# Different Settings of Application

- Thriving Communities tools work well in a variety of audience settings:
  - Large group settings and individuals from varying backgrounds—**Michigan State University**
  - Small groups / specialized interests—**City of Berkley**
  - Small groups / coordinated responsibilities—**Michigan Daily / U of M**
  - Among individuals with distinct responsibilities—**City of Ferndale**
  - Groups with individuals representing different communities—**Elected Officials Academy** and **Michigan Association of Mayors**

# Using Interactive Tools to Amplify Engagement

 What Makes A Community Thrive?

Wordcloud Poll 98 responses 50 participants

Share



From the tradeoffs you've uncovered, do you see this proposal influencing Trust & Belonging throughout the community? If so, is it increasing or reducing, and why?

Open text poll 12 responses 12 participants

Share

Anonymous

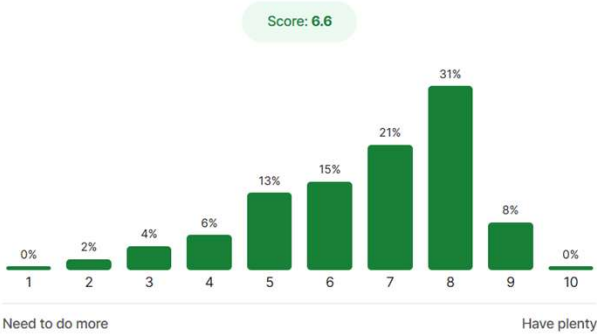
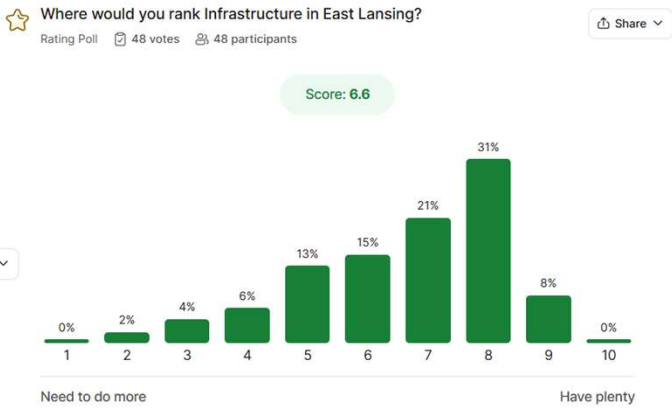
Those that trust the people in government will continue to trust them until you give them a reason to change their perspective. Those whose trust has already been lost may never be regained no matter the clear, factual, concise information that is provided.

Anonymous

I do not see the proposal as positively influencing trust and belonging. Trust and belonging comes from how the city staff and citizens work with each other. Respect is needed. Vast improvement is needed.

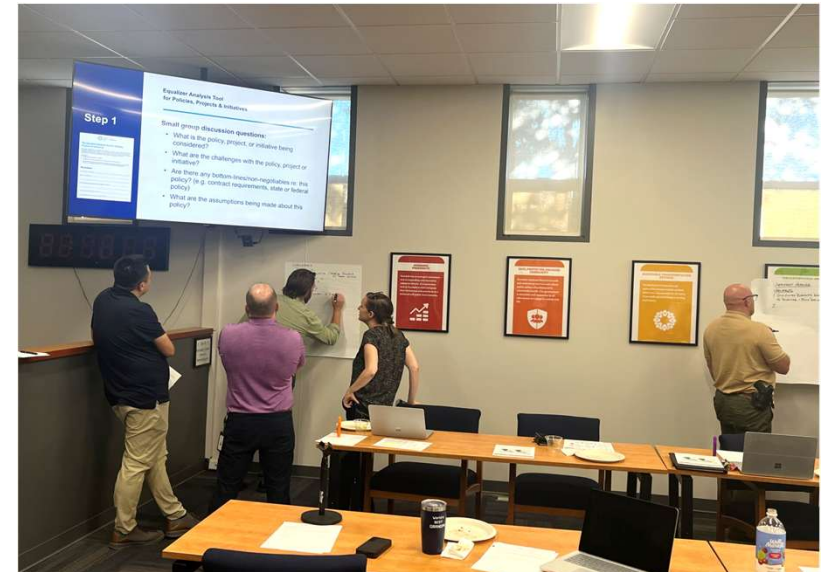
Anonymous

Trust in our city government was questionable throughout the campaigns. Keeping promises and effectively communicating our needs will be necessary to get bonds approved in the near future.



# The Equalizer Analysis Tool: City of Ferndale

- Ferndale recently used **The Equalizer Analysis Tool** to evaluate the impacts of implementing their successful Headlee Override
- Change in focus area "levels" impacts overall "frequency" illustrated through **The Equalizer**
- Concept of "tradeoffs" and how they will be experienced by the community
  - *Tradeoffs will be experienced differently by different members of the community*
  - *Must feel "worth it"*
  - *Importance of **Trust & Belonging***





## Slide 14

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- HR1** What do we think about a simulated visual of the chart page to show the comparison aspect of the tool?  
[@Murph] @Margaret? Or would be suited on a different slide?  
Herasanna Richards, 2025-09-15T13:11:32.745
- RM1 0** Just showing part of the page filled in to show the kind of thinking we're encouraging with this? If you have an example or want to mock one up, yes I think that would be a good add.  
Murph, 2025-09-15T14:26:59.521
- MM1 1** [@Murph] [@Herasanna] - agreed, i think it could be a good way to highlight our work in Ferndale  
Margaret Mooney, 2025-09-15T17:53:39.716

# The Equalizer Analysis Tool

- Concept of "tradeoffs" and how they will be experienced by the community
- All decisions, policies, and programs will influence the focus area levels and impact community stakeholders (residents, local leaders, partners, etc.)
- This example from Ferndale shows how implementing the Headlee Override will serve the community in specific goal areas and the impact on overall community "frequency"
- *Stakeholders impacted: everyone!*

What are the main gains/losses that influence the levels of this area?

Which stakeholders will be most impacted by these tradeoffs?

## Financial Security

↓ Staff ↓ Services

Staff | Residents

## Infrastructure

Everyone - poor reputation  
↓ means lack of visitor residents

Everyone

## Public Health: Safety

↑ Services - Drunk in City  
Economic | Health | Community

Everyone

## Sustainability

↓ Footprint - ↑ reputation  
Balance Development w  
green space

Everyone

## Lifelong Learning

Recreational programming  
Public Safety Education

## Arts: Culture - Soul

Events  
Public Arts

# Thriving Michigan: Pushing for State Action





# Once again: local government can't go it alone!

Thriving Communities is a way for us to talk about why local government—and the work that you do—matters for Michigan.

Michigan cannot thrive and prosper if our communities are suffering: the state needs to support local success.

- **Short-term:** Legislative Priorities
- **Medium-term:** Thriving Michigan benchmarking report
- **Long-term:** Trends / futuring, scenario planning, other?

# 2025-26 Legislative Priorities

**01** Creation of a Revenue Sharing Trust Fund

**02** Addressing the Interaction Between Headlee and Proposal A

**03** Creating a Neighborhood Roads Fund

**04** Continue Funding for the Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) Program

**05** Implementing an Employer Housing Tax Credit

**06** Protecting Locals' Ability to Regulate Short-Term Rentals

**07** Enacting the Michigan Mobility Trust Fund

**08** Codify the Process for Implementing a Stormwater Utility



The League's 2025-26  
Legislative Priorities to  
**Foster Thriving  
Communities**

We love where you live.



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2025**

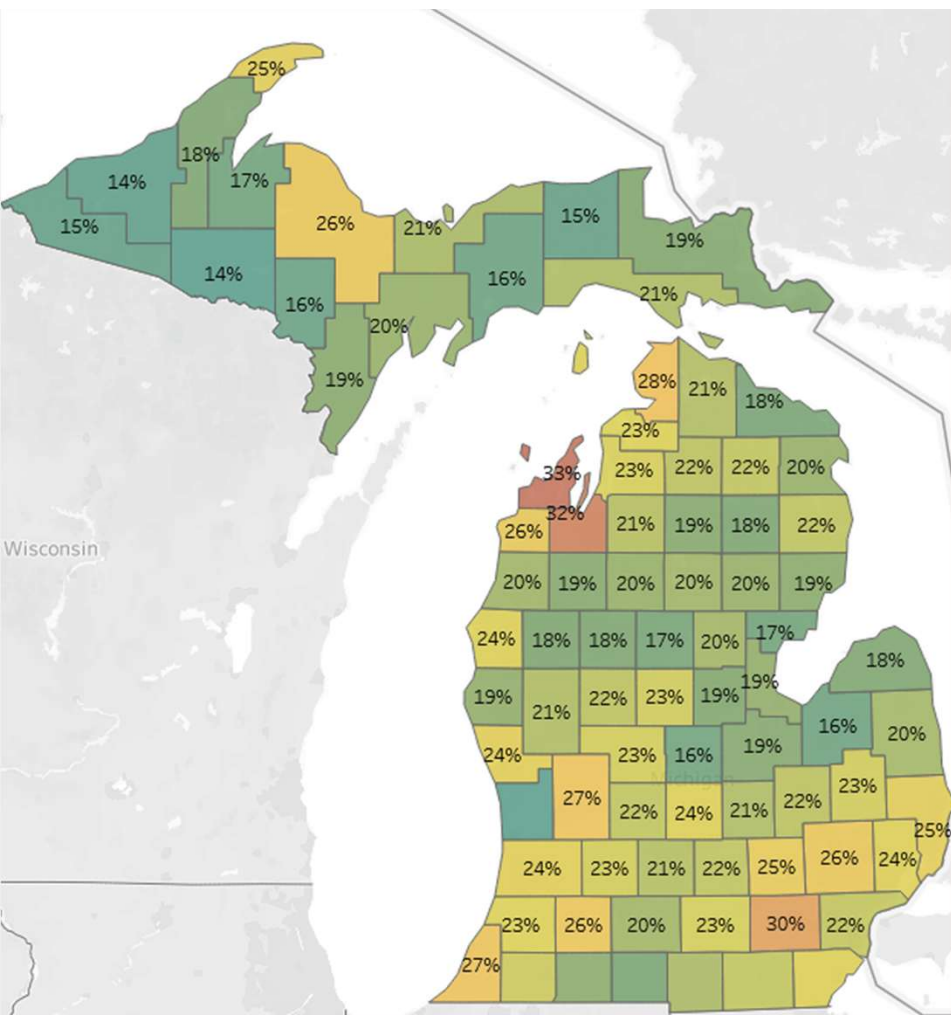
# Benchmarking Michigan

“Thriving Michigan” series of issue briefs on the thriving communities focus areas under development over the course of 2025

- Declare priorities for the state
- Show importance of local government role
- Lay out our expectations for Lansing
- Revisit in future years







Estimated median monthly mortgage cost as percent of median monthly income

Sources: National Association of Realtors, US Census Bureau

- Cross-cutting issues: Housing
- Show broad patterns:
  - Housing as community infrastructure
  - Cost of housing as financial security factor
  - Condition of housing as public health & safety
  - Relationship of housing to schools, child care
- Emphasize locally-led solutions

# A Thriving Future?

What trends, technologies, social or environmental changes will affect our communities?

Pandemics, heat waves, housing market crashes, data centers & deepfakes, AVs and drone taxis

How do we anticipate and navigate these—how do we steer towards thriving and resiliency rather than just do damage control and disaster management?





## **What's Next** (and how you can help)



# Local leaders (that's you) are key to Thriving Communities

- Learn more about the framework and tools through the League's Learning Management System: **[learn.mml.org](https://learn.mml.org)**
- Try the tools in your community and let us know how you're using them
- Connect with us for support in thinking through how to bring this work to your community
- Give us your feedback on what makes a Thriving Michigan, and where we should be making those connections from local action to state advocacy







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