

# Land-Based Projects: A Path to Purchase, Permit and Design

March 14, 2019 | MSU Center





# Welcome



Walton's, D3



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# The Project in Context



Presbyterian Community Garden, D7



# What is a Land Based Project?

A land based project uses land for urban agriculture, gardening, beautification and other productive uses, whether for profit or as a community based activity.





# A Continuation of Past Work

- This project recognizes and builds on decades of work by community members who have helped to stabilize and contribute to neighborhoods
- It also reflects the City's deep history and value for this work – from Farm-a-Lot to today





# Mayor Statement, December 10

“Detroit has over 1550 individual, community & school and larger scale commercial gardens and farms. Urban agriculture in Detroit not only provides residents with fresh and locally-grown food, but also brings employment opportunities to the city.”

11:31



It was my pleasure to stand alongside Sen. **Debbie Stabenow** this morning at **Eastern Market** to discuss the 2018 U.S. Farm Bill. Thanks to Sen. Stabenow, the 2018 Farm Bill recognizes urban agriculture, and will support the **City of Detroit's** booming urban agriculture industry.

Detroit has over 1,550 individual, community & school, and larger-scale commercial gardens and farms. Urban agriculture in Detroit not only provides residents with fresh and locally-grown food, but also brings employment opportunities to the city.

Thank you to Sen. Stabenow for all of your hard work with the Farm Bill and your continuous support of Eastern Market. I'm looking forward to seeing how urban agriculture in Michigan will continue to grow.





# Project Outcomes

An **improved process, clearer expectations** and **instructions** for people seeking to purchase and permit land based projects

- Clear expectations – Understand the process, costs and timeline before you fill out an application
- Components of application – Clearer, simpler asks for information, and an understanding of why the City is asking for each item
- Good Neighbor Guidelines that work for leaders of land based projects and neighbors in every neighborhood





# Engagement To Date

## 2018:

- Pre-planning

## January 2019:

- Site Tours
- Focus Group with leaders of land based projects

## February 2019:


- Site Tours
- Focus Groups with leaders of land based projects, technical assistance providers
- Workshop on Process and Good Neighbor issues





# Website & Survey

[www.detroitmi.gov/land](http://www.detroitmi.gov/land)

  
**Land Based Projects Survey**

The City of Detroit is working to improve the process for purchasing and permitting land based projects. In order to make useful improvements, we are seeking input from you to understand your goals, needs and experiences with these types of projects and City processes so far. Your input will directly influence the outcomes of this work.

**WHAT IS A LAND BASED PROJECT?** A project that uses land for urban agriculture, gardening, and other productive uses, whether for profit or as a community-based activity.

**1. What is your land based project? Check all that apply.**

- Urban farm that produces food crops
- I grow on land that is next door to my home (homestead or side lot)
- Community garden with shared plots for different people
- I grow trees, plants, flowers (not for food)
- Orchards with trees that produce fruits or nuts
- Green stormwater infrastructure for drainage (for example: rain gardens)
- Community green space
- Community gathering / event space
- Composting facility (that is, to provide compost beyond just your project)
- Solar energy production
- Art
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How close do you live to your land based project?**

- It's right next door
- On my block
- It's in the neighborhood where I stay
- In a different neighborhood
- I live outside of Detroit

**3. Please tell us a little bit about your land based project, and how you feel it affects the community and the city of Detroit.**

1

## Survey for Land-Based Project Participants

The City of Detroit is working to improve the process for purchasing and permitting land-based projects. In order to make useful improvements with equitable outcomes, we are seeking input from you to understand your goals, needs and experiences with these types of projects and City processes so far. Your input will directly influence the outcomes of this work.

*\* Required*

**WHAT IS A LAND-BASED PROJECT?**

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- Community gathering / event space



# Upcoming Engagement

April 2019: Focus groups

- Preview and test new materials
- Indicate interest **today** on sign up sheets at front table!

Summer 2019: Next Workshop!





# What We Heard

A photograph showing a black metal gate with four horizontal bars, partially open, leading into a dense, green wooded area. To the right of the gate is a large, weathered tree stump. In the background, a white tent-like structure is visible among the trees. The foreground consists of a concrete or asphalt surface with some green weeds and a coiled orange hose.

Beaverland, D1



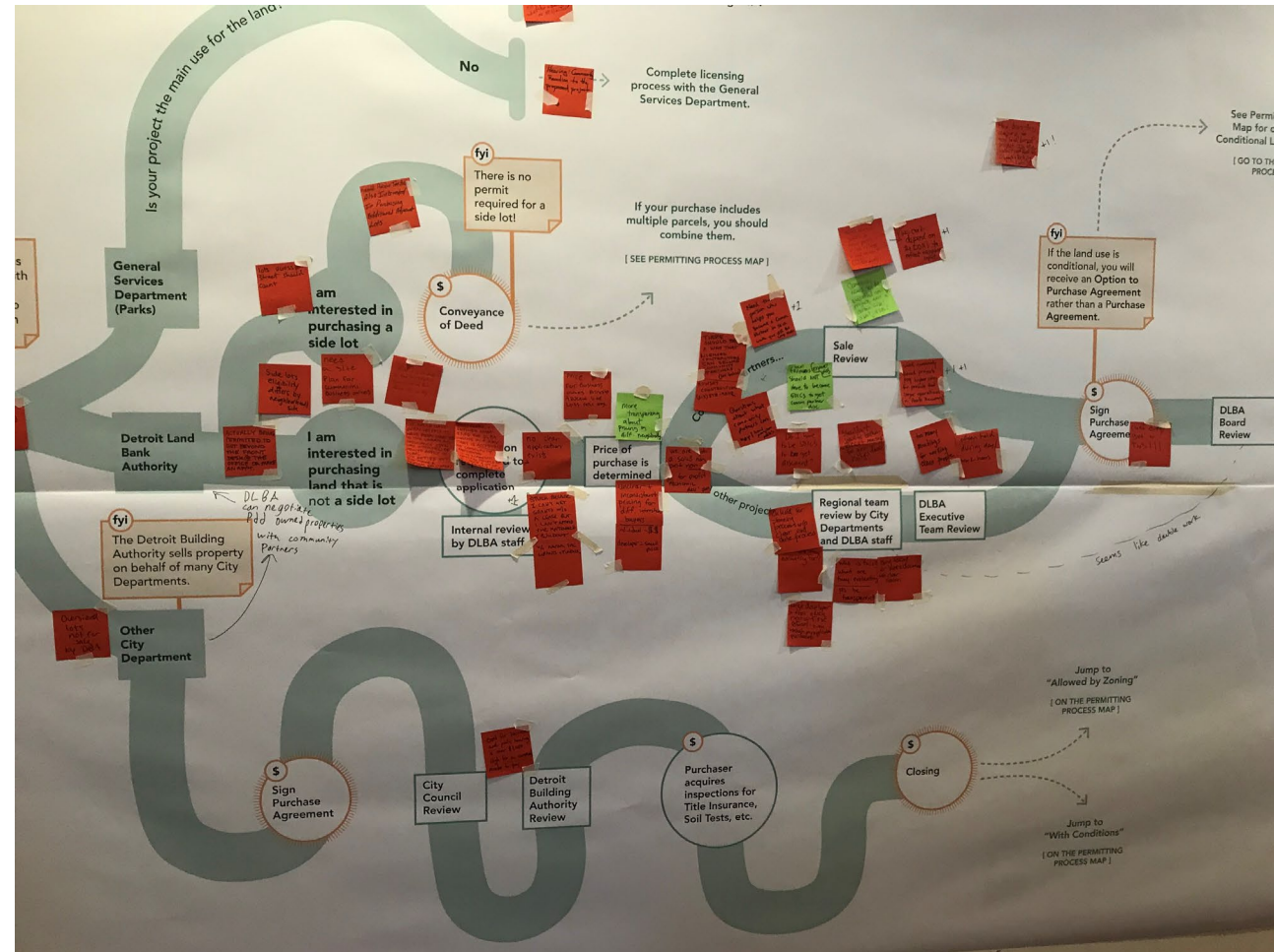
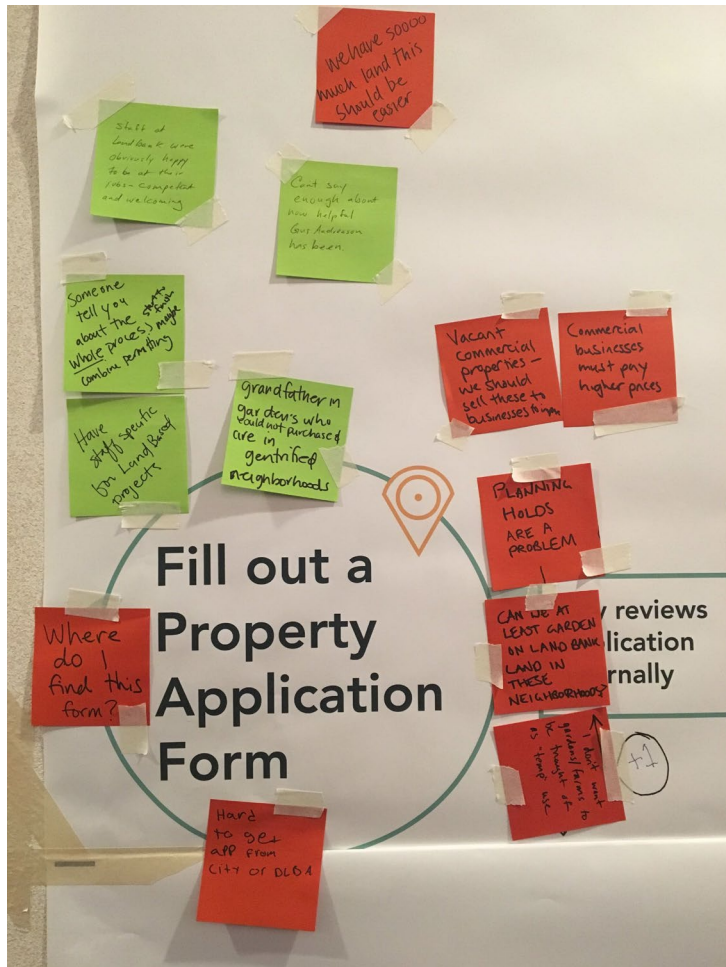
# What We Heard

- Land based projects have been **contributing to Detroit neighborhoods for decades**
- Need to ensure that those who have been doing the work can **stay, grow and thrive**
- Need to ensure that future projects are **good neighbors**





# What We Heard: Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

Being asked  
for more documents  
w/o clear  
reason

Someone  
tell you  
about the <sup>starts</sup> <sup>finish</sup>  
Whole process maybe  
combine permitting

Who is this?  
What are  
they evaluating  

---

pls. be  
transparent.

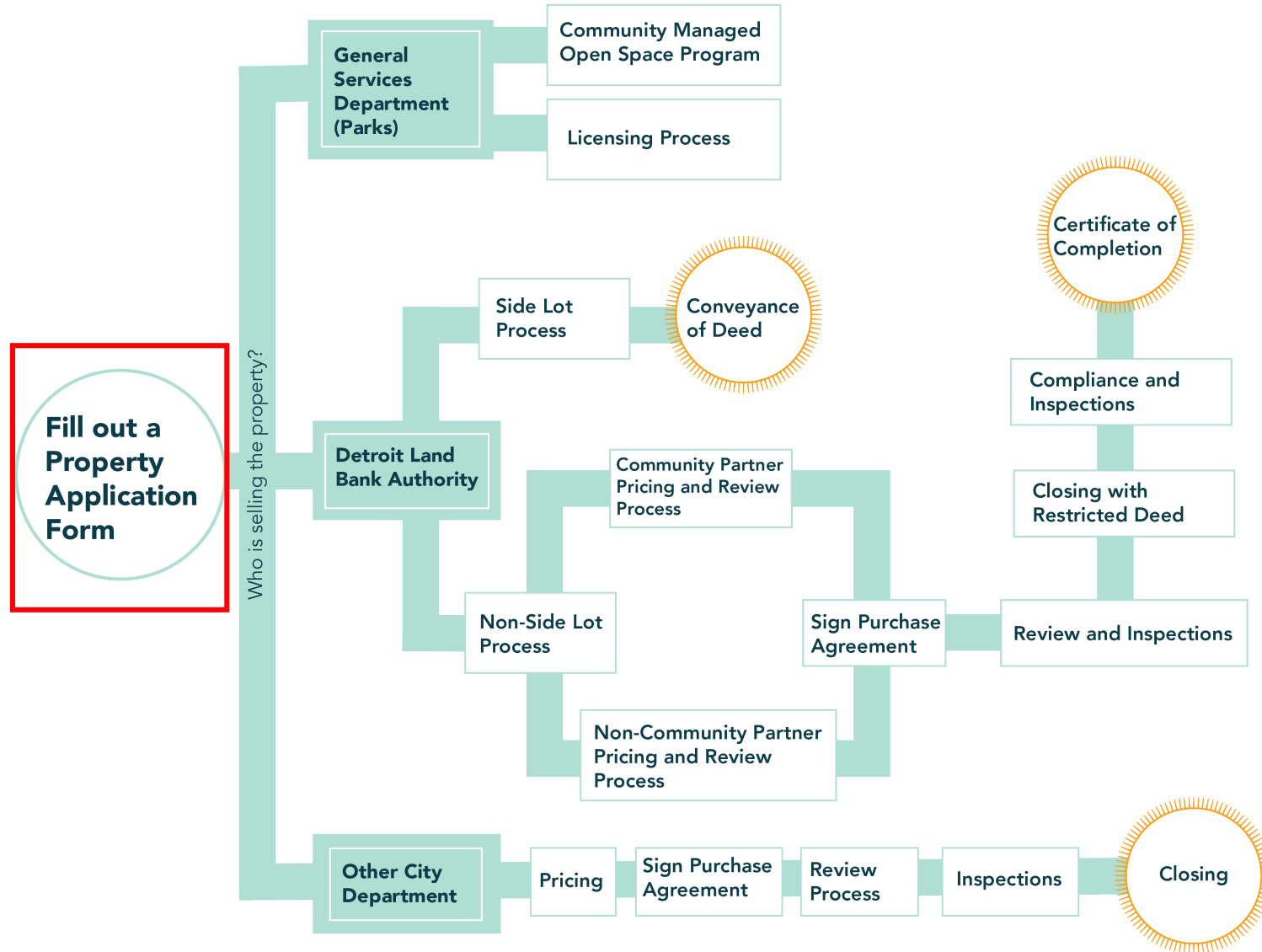
lots of  
\$ \$ \$  
points  
What are  
total est.  
costs of  
purchasing  
property,  
depending on area?

- Need for **clarity** around **expectations** and the City's **decision-making** processes
- A desire to **know important information upfront**, rather than later in the process





# What We Heard: Purchase Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

Fill out a  
Property  
Application  
Form

Where  
do I  
find this  
form?

no clear  
application  
exists  
→

Hard  
to get  
app from  
CITY OF DLBA.

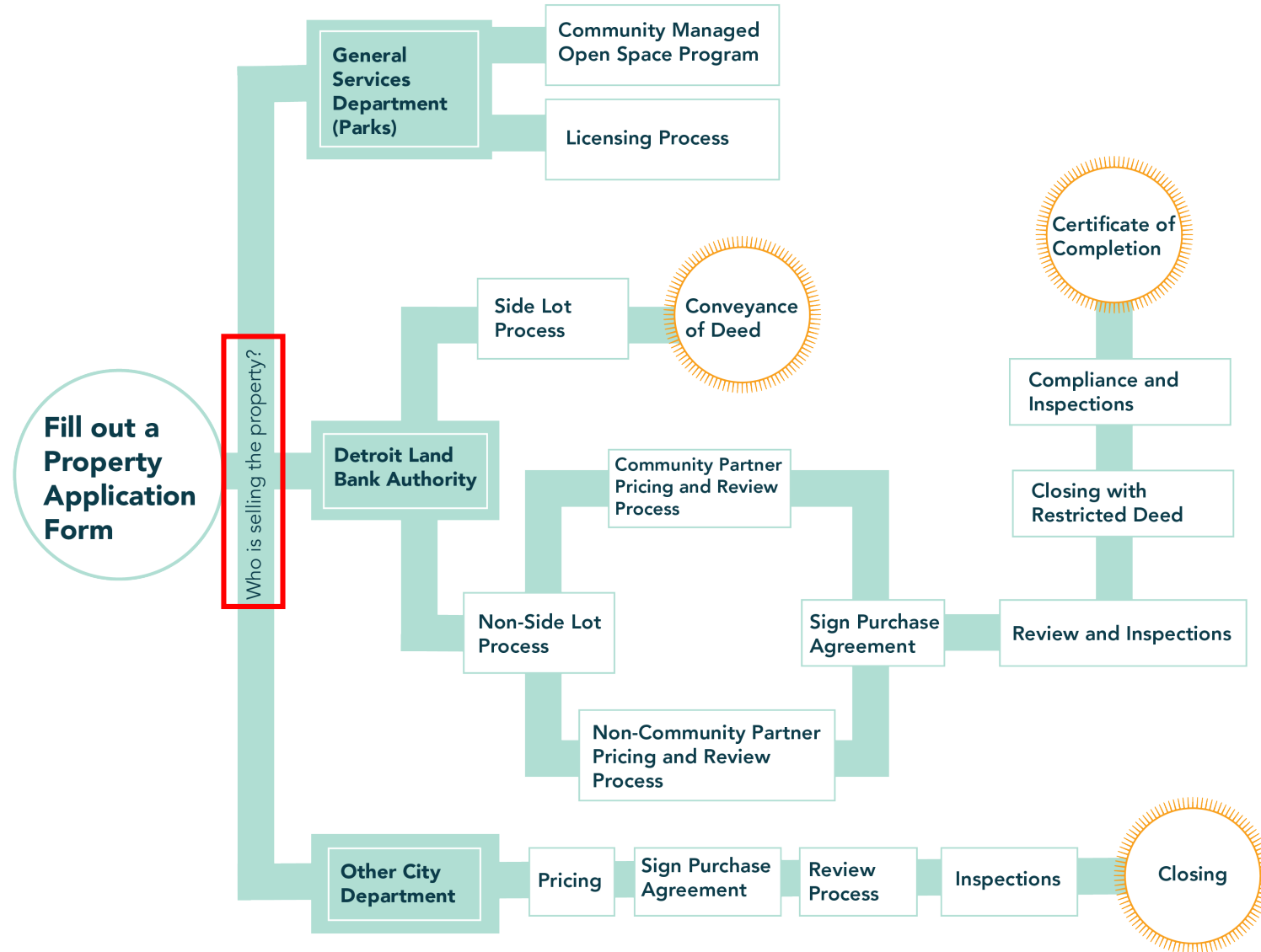
## Application Access

It is unclear where people can find the application to purchase land



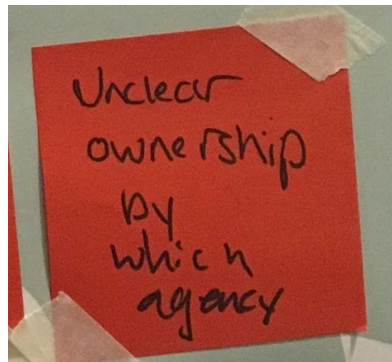
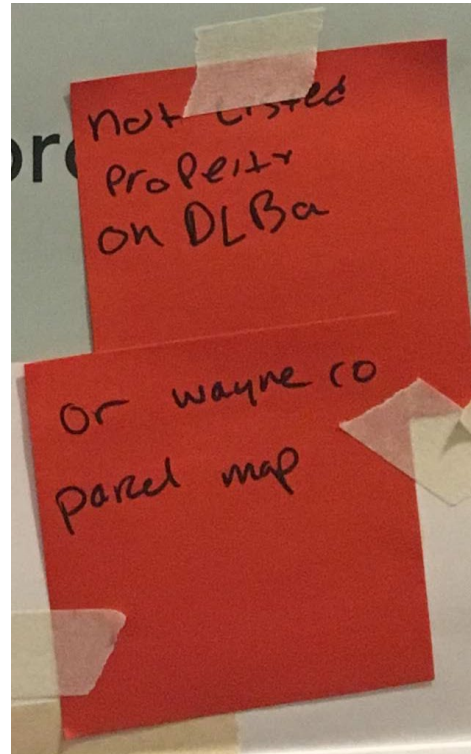
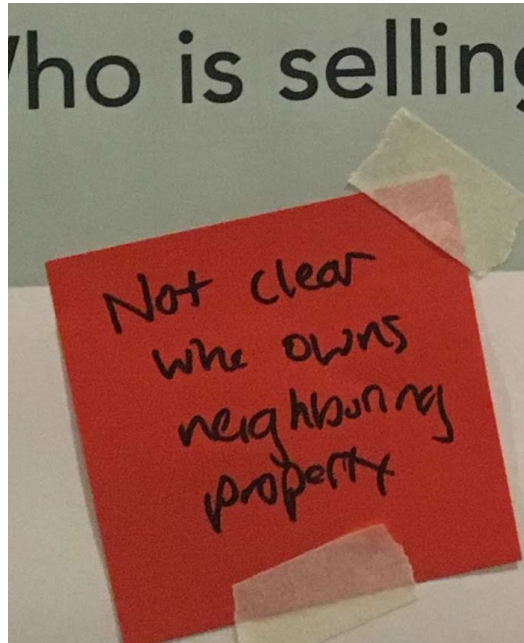


# What We Heard: Purchase Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

Who is selling the property?



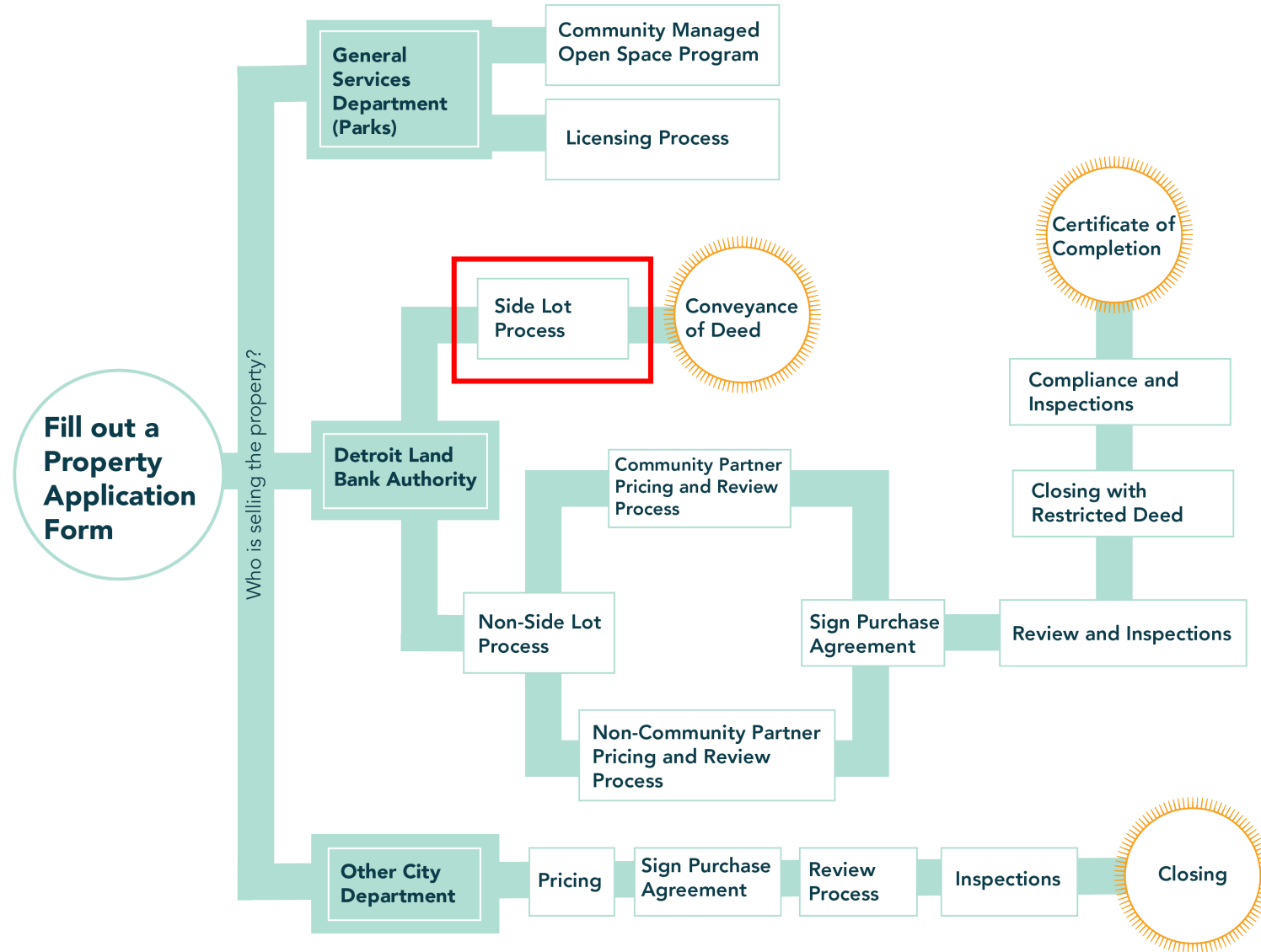
## Property Ownership

Not always clear who owns the property





# What We Heard: Purchase Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

Side Lot  
Process

Side lots  
eligibility  
differs by  
neighborhood  
site

It is  
hard  
for commercial  
owners to  
buy side lots.

lots across  
street should  
count

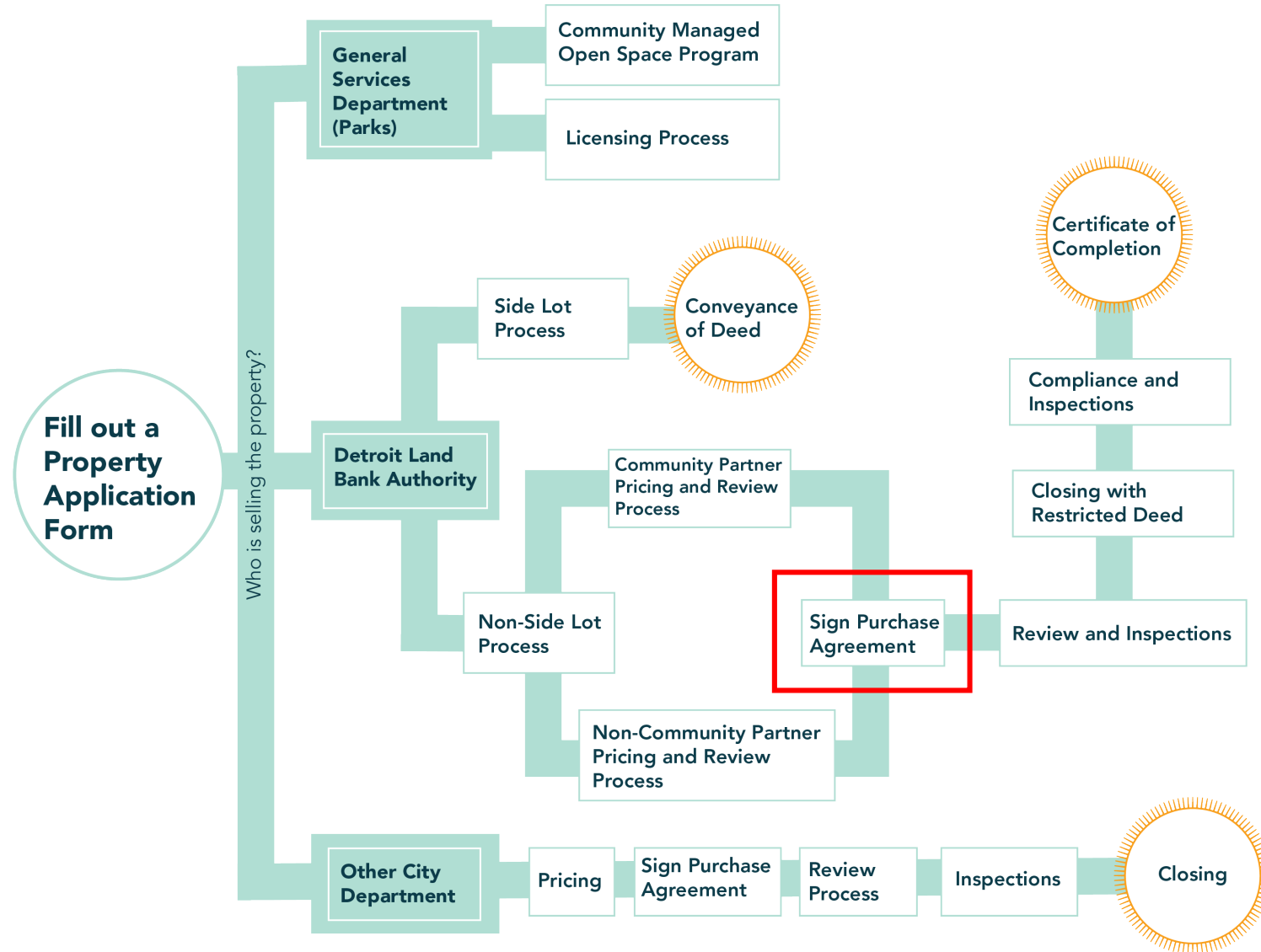
## Side Lot Eligibility

It is not clear who is eligible to buy side lots and what qualifies as a side lot.





# What We Heard: Purchase Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

Sign Purchase Agreement

More transparency about pricing in diff. neighborhoods

Unclear + inconsistent pricing for diff. interested buyers  
individual = \$\$\$  
developer = small price

Small community based projects pay higher rates for parcels than larger operations (ie Hantz Recovery) + | + |

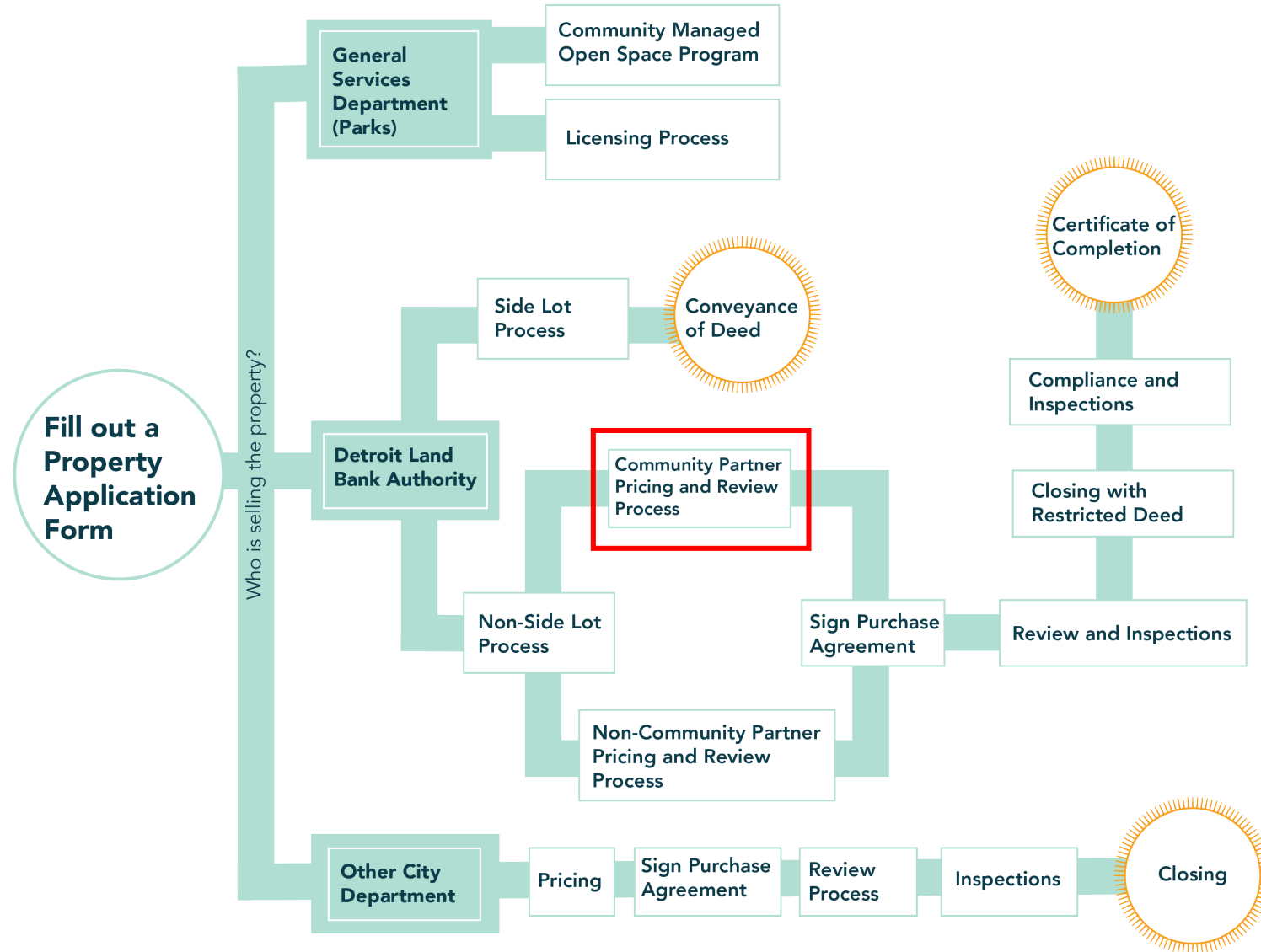
## Pricing

Pricing needs more transparency and consistency across neighborhoods and agencies.





# What We Heard: Purchase Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

## Community Partner Pricing and Review Process

local farmers (expand) deb  
Should NOT  
Have to become  
SOIC3 to get  
Comm partner  
disc

Do I have  
to be SOIC3  
to ~~be~~ get  
discount?

We are not  
a SOIC3 non  
prof non  
for profit  
"economic  
dev" plan

Questions  
about what  
community  
partners can  
buy / how  
program  
works

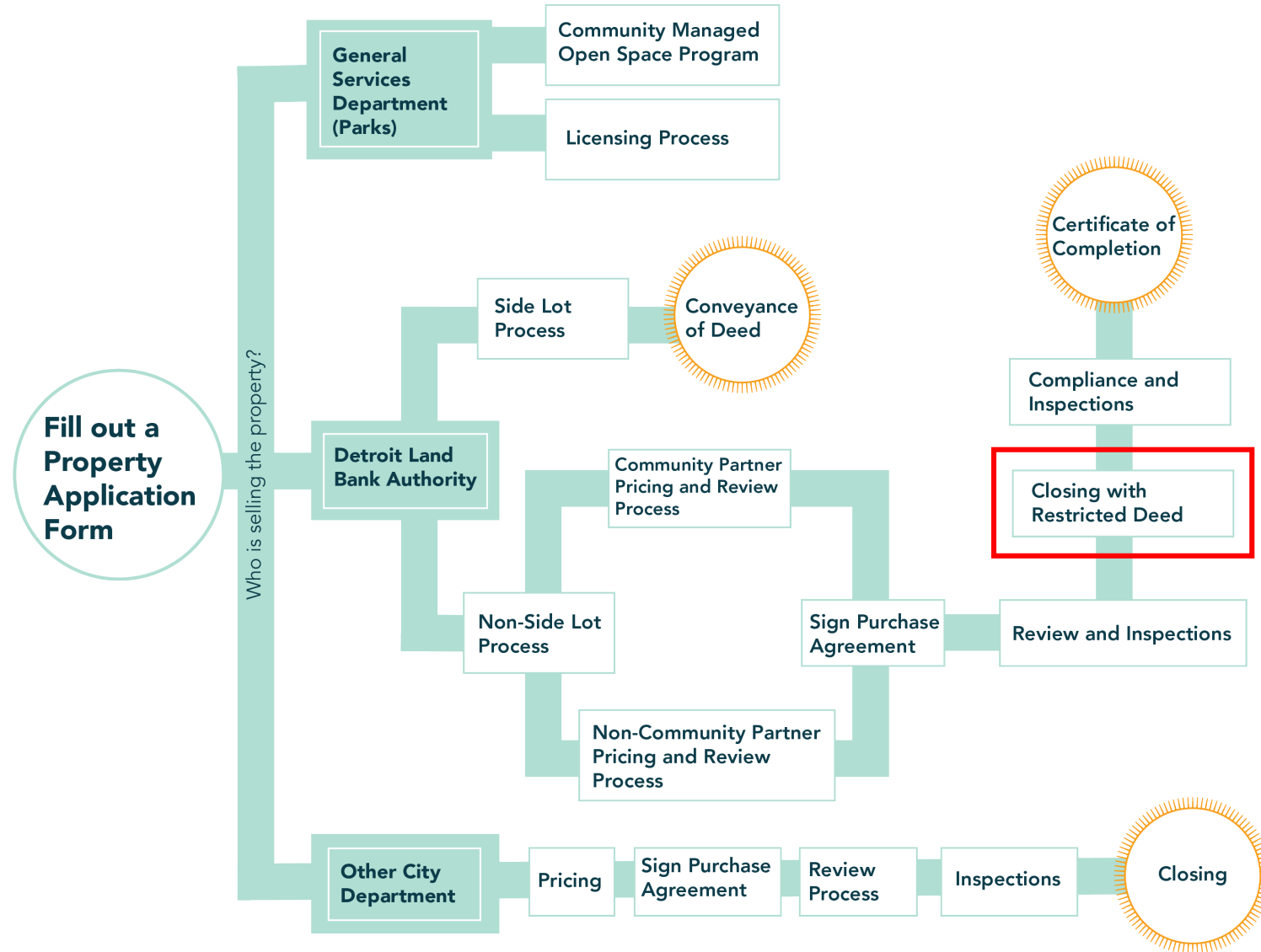
## Community Partners Eligibility

Confusion about eligibility and frustrations around the eligibility criteria for non-profits only. Feeling that community-based for profits should also receive discounts.



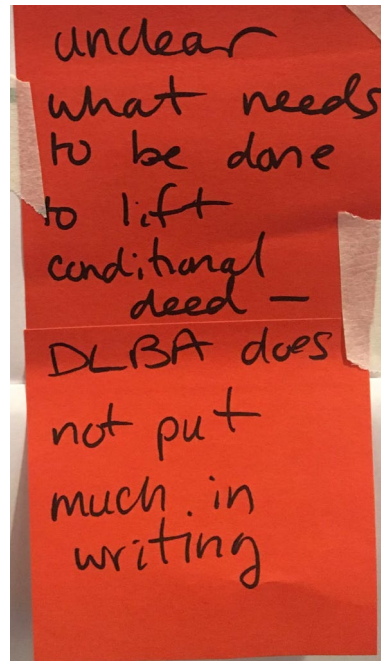
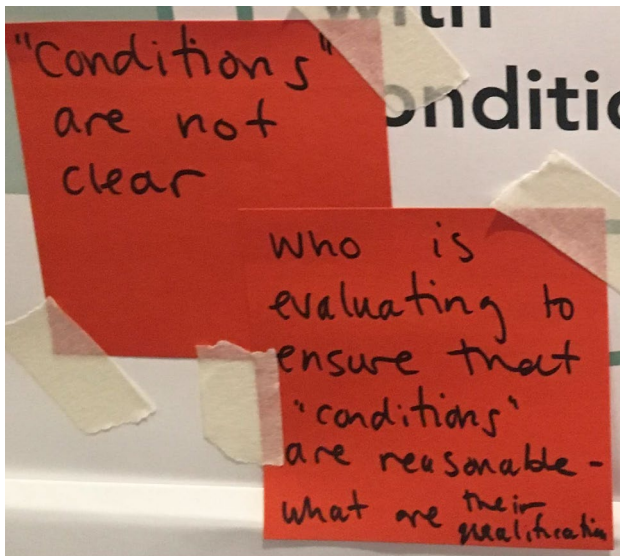


# What We Heard: Purchase Process



# What We Heard: Purchase Process

Closing with  
Restricted Deed



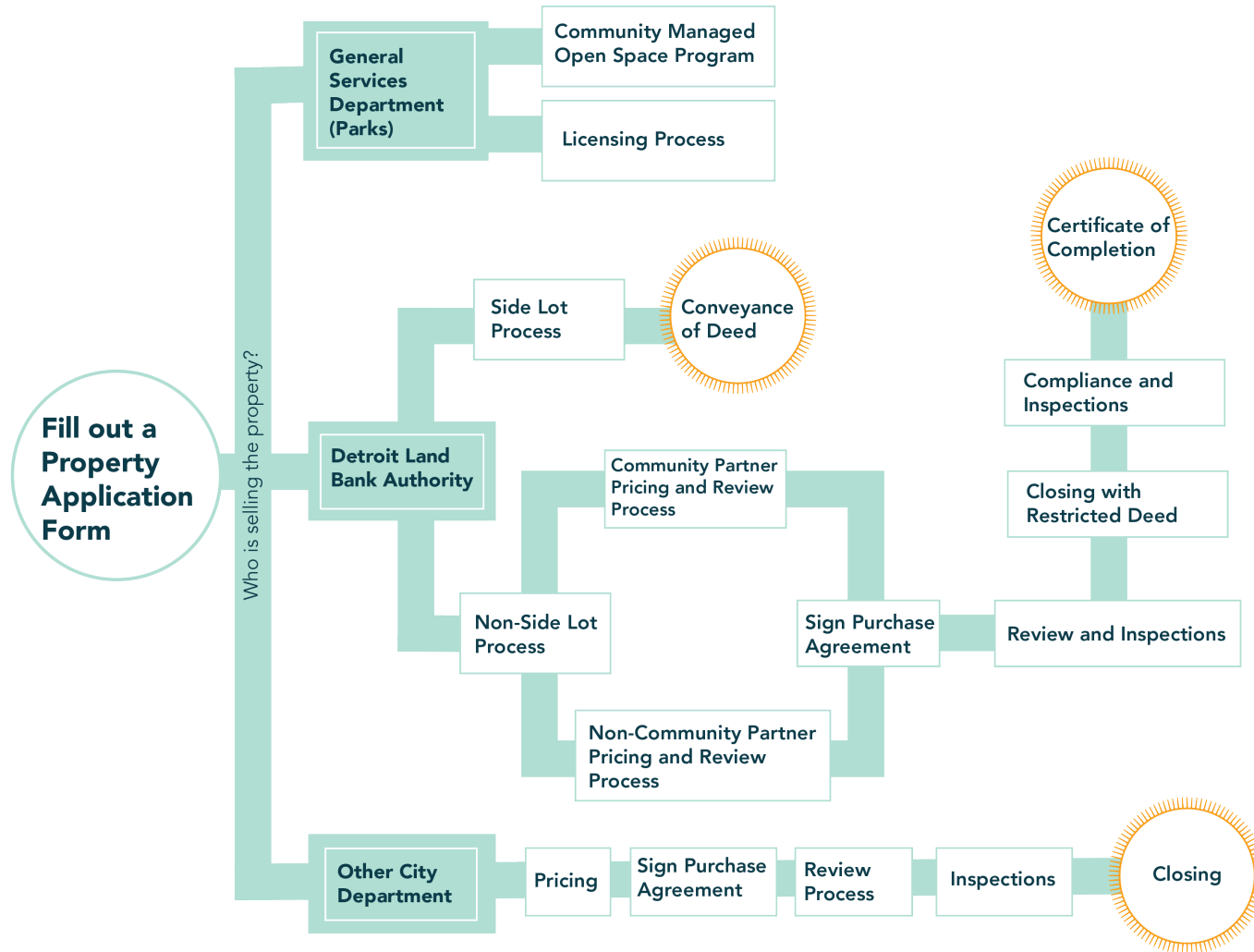
## Conditions of Restricted Deed

Need for clarity around what conditions applicants are to meet under the Restricted Deed





# What We Heard: Purchase Process

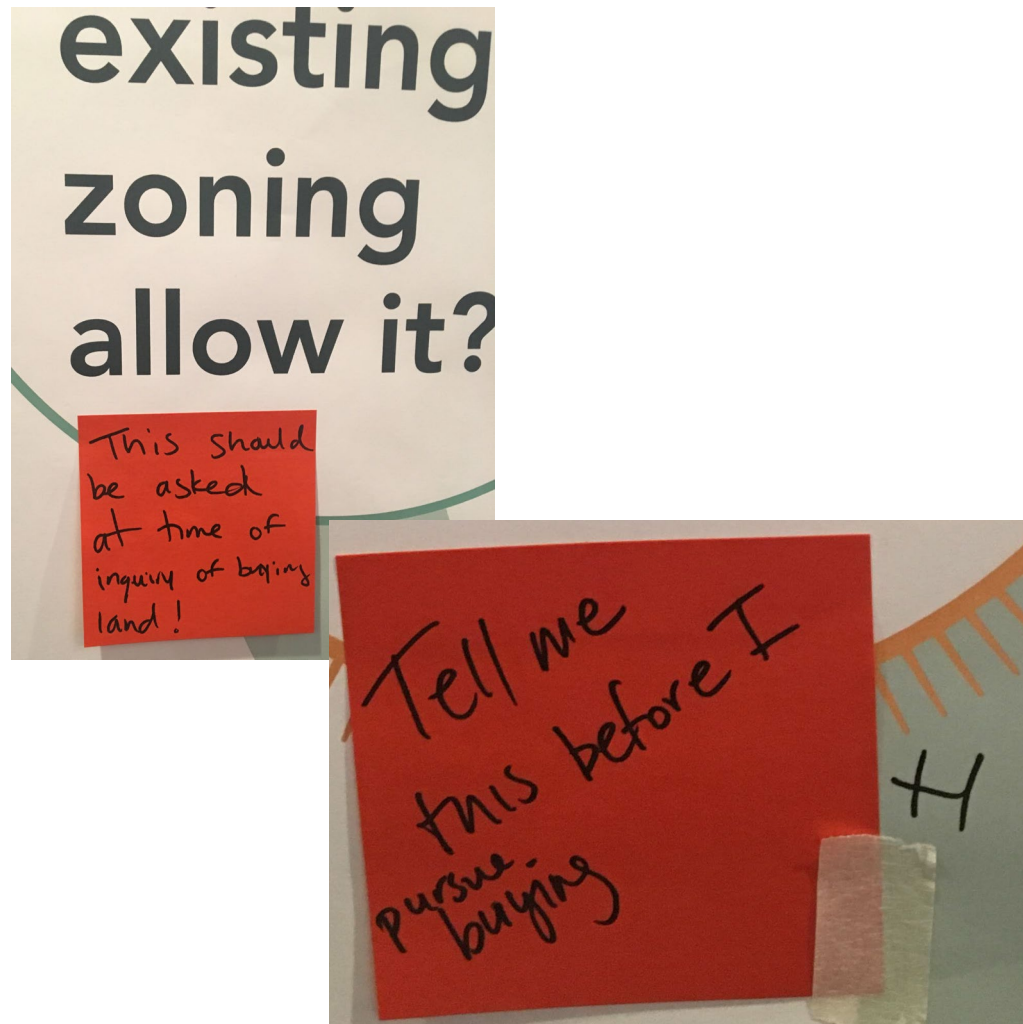


## Other Problems

- Planning holds are a major roadblock
- Meeting times can be during working hours
- Need to clearly communicate value of land based projects and projects need to align with those values



# What We Heard: Permitting Process



Many are unsure why and when a permit is needed

- Registering your change of use protects your rights as a property owner

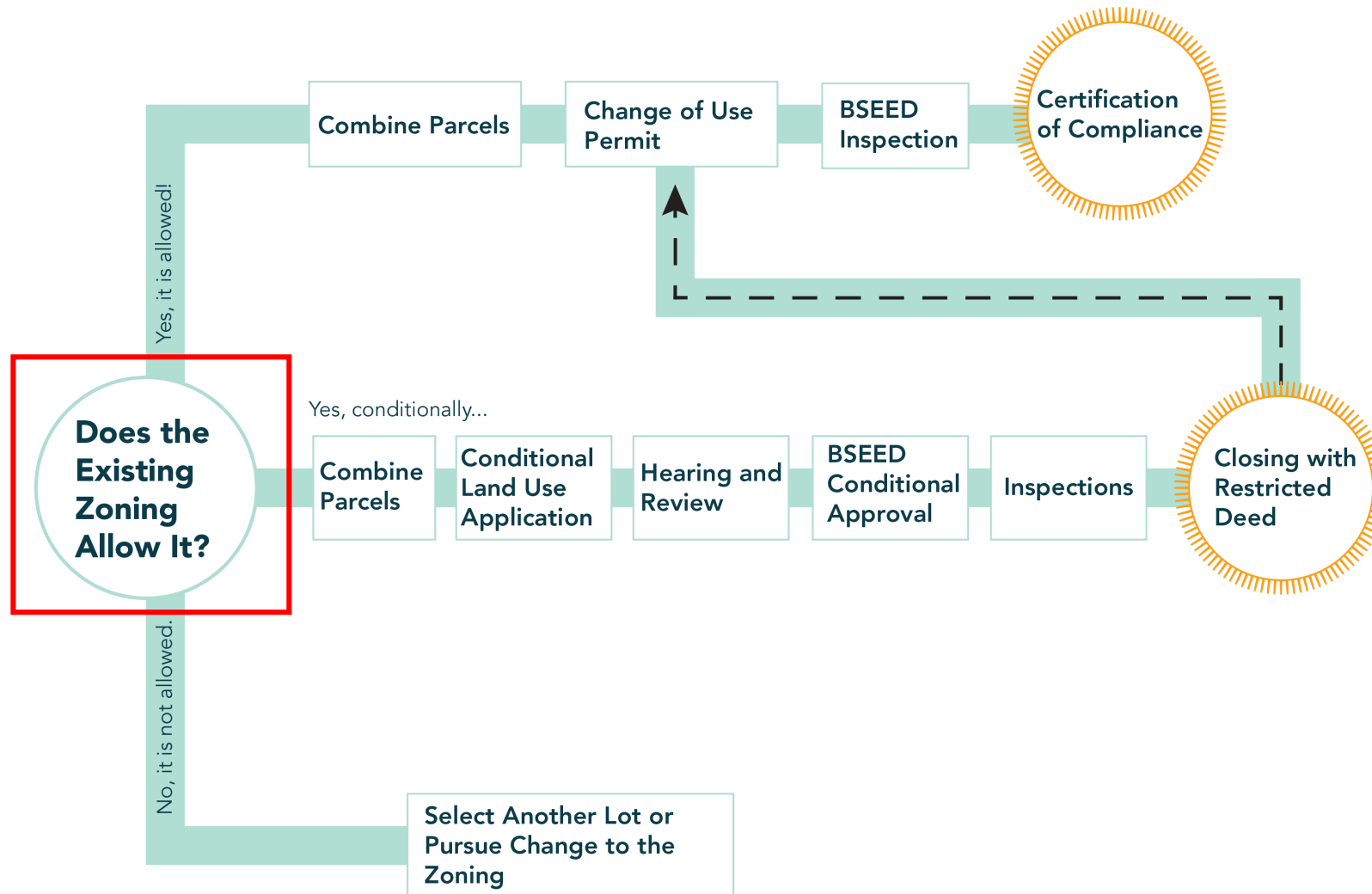
Also a desire to **know important information upfront**, rather than later in the process

- Zoning and land use
- Costs associated with permitting



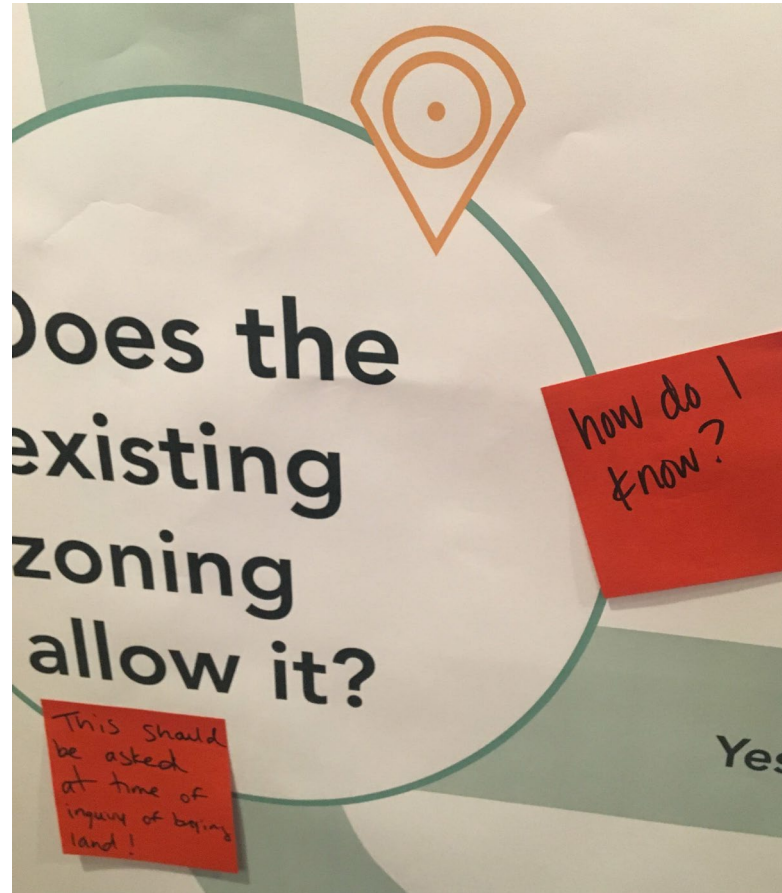


# What We Heard: Permitting Process



# What We Heard: Permitting Process

Does the Existing Zoning Allow It?



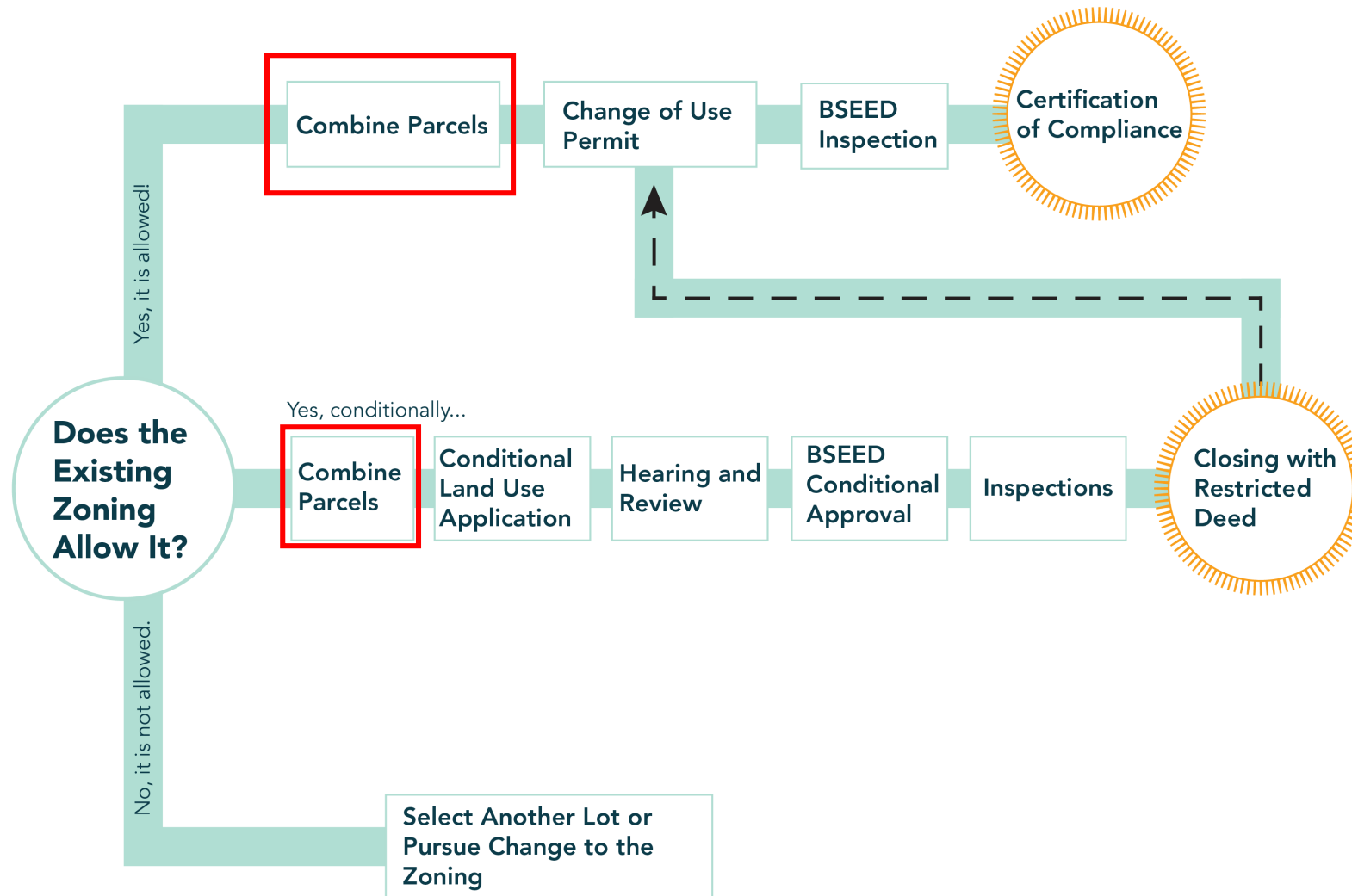
## Zoning

Applicants don't always know what zoning is, how to look up zoning, and how it relates to the type of project they want to do





# What We Heard: Permitting Process



# What We Heard: Permitting Process

Combine Parcels

Combine  
Parcels

was told that DLBA should have combined at time of sale... and then told I had to get a letter from DLBA but DLBA said that I didn't need one. So I'm stuck

Needed an attorney to navigate.

Ability to combine over Alleys & Streets (Both for parcels & singular permit if use is consistent.)

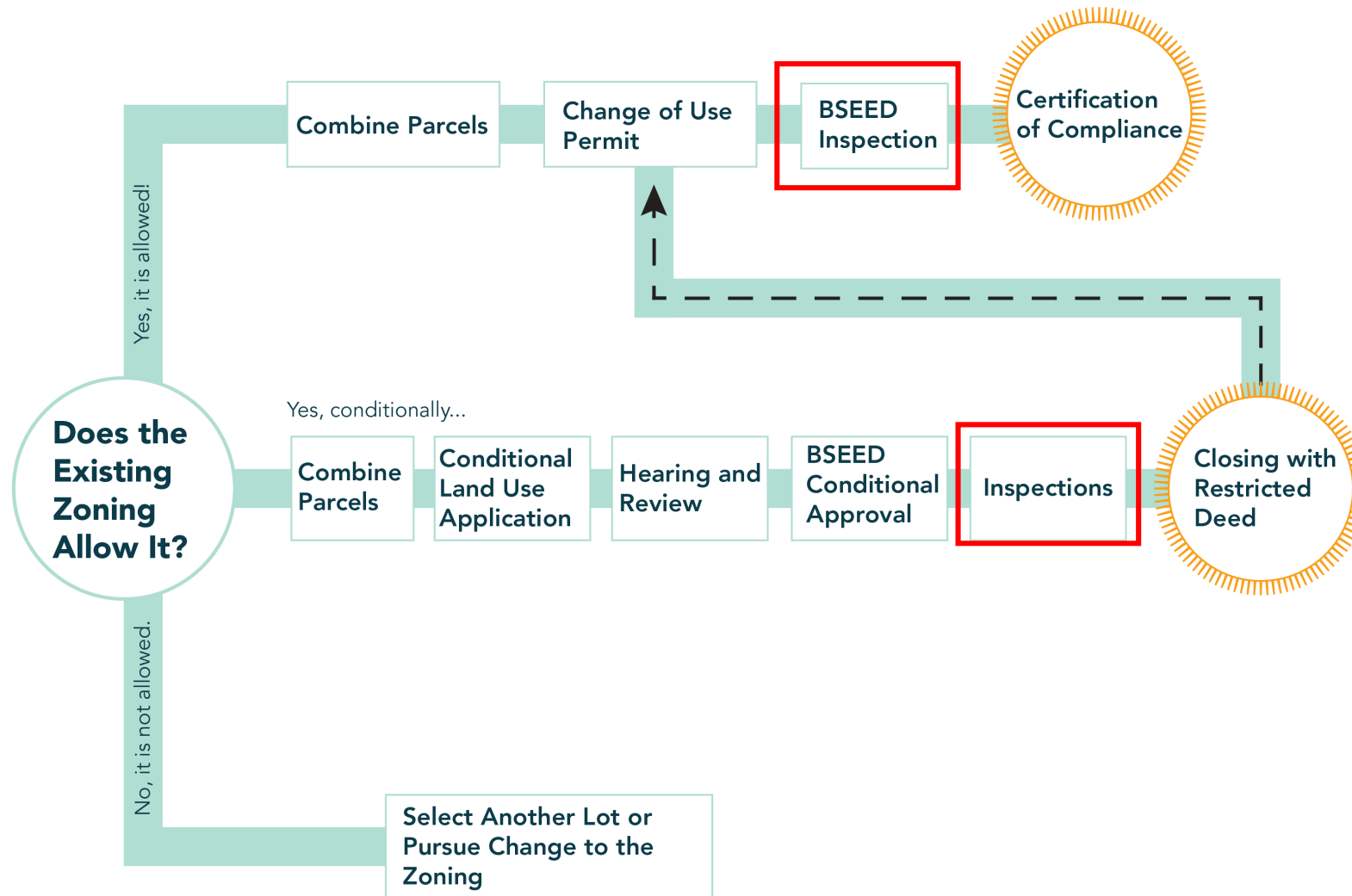
## Combining Lots

Need for clarity on when to combine lots and which lots can be combined





# What We Heard: Permitting Process



# What We Heard: Permitting Process

## Inspections

inspector didn't seem to know what they were supposed to allow

- Scheduled inspection.
- Inspector called day of.
- Inspector did not know what they were inspecting.

## Inspection

Inspectors need more training on how to inspect land based projects



# What We Heard: Good Neighbor Guidelines

## Maintenance

- Value and support maintenance that land-based project leaders are already providing to their neighborhoods
- Provide a clear picture of how to maintain a project
- Share low-cost, low-maintenance options for maintenance
- Different projects have different needs, so requirements must support flexibility





# What We Heard: Good Neighbor Guidelines

## Neighborhood Relationships

- Guidelines will help ensure that land based projects are **good neighbors**: easily understood level of standards for site design, maintenance, operations, neighborhood relationships; reasonable requirements for sweat-equity projects
- Land based projects are already contributing to **neighborhoods in many ways**: employment, education, stewardship and neighborhood upkeep, visibility, security, fresh food access, intergenerational spaces
- **Neighborhood outreach is valuable**: continue to encourage this as a practice for new projects (but not currently required by City)



# Value Statement

Communicates the value of land based projects to the broader public, including current and future neighbors of projects.

- Strengthen neighborhood stewardship
- Provide economic opportunity in neighborhoods
- Host intergenerational gathering spaces
- Contribute to beautification
- Create access to healthy food
- Benefit the environment and the ecosystem
- Provide increased safety through "eyes on the street"
- Allow for cultural expression
- Reinforce neighborhood pride





# Workshop Activities



Coriander, D5



# Activities

## Rotate Through Three Activities:

### Activity A: Value Statement

- Comment on initial phrases and ideas; word cloud

### Activity B: Purchase to Permit

- What we heard; Draft zoning descriptions and visuals for comment

### Activity C: Good Neighbor Guidelines

- What we heard; Draft maintenance and site design visuals for comment

**Check out the reference sheet “What’s Being Worked On”:**

shows where the draft items you’re seeing today fit into the overall project goals



# Thank You!

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