



# Safety & Belonging Work Group Meeting #4

Children & Youth Community Plan  
May 28, 2026





# Today's Purpose

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To review and synthesize what we have learned through the Safety & Belonging ecosystem mapping process, connect this work to existing citywide efforts, and begin thinking about which strategic direction(s) are most ready for coordinated action in the next Children & Youth Community Plan (CYCP).



# Agenda

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1. Welcome, Introductions, & Purpose of the Work Group
2. Where We've Been & What We've Done So Far
3. Where We're Headed
4. OSTP Landscape Study Presentation with Caitlin
  - a. Group Discussion: *How can CYCP partners and this work group help strengthen and support ALX Beyond's work?*
5. Ecosystem Mapping Synthesis: What Are We Learning?
6. Next Steps



# WELCOME

## **Introductions & Overview**



# Where We've Been & What We've Done So Far





# How We Got Here:

## Youth Needs Assessment & Follow-Up Engagement with Youth

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Between Fall 2024-Fall 2025:

- **90 youth and adults** were trained to engage
- **1,800+ middle and high school students** through
- **137 Youth Listening Sessions**
- Youth analyzed data, identified root causes, and proposed solutions

This work will shape the next Children & Youth Community Plan (CYCP). It's updated every five years to guide citywide efforts around shared goals, align partners, and advance equity.





# Timeline

## Fall 2024-Summer 2025:

Conducted Youth Needs Assessment

## Fall 2025:

- CYFCC used a rubric to select the top 3 priorities for the next CYCP. They then shaped the results for each priority area
- Engaged 700 more youth in conversations about the priority areas, root causes, & solutions
- Developed strategic directions based on youth engagement

## Winter 2026:

- Looked for opportunities to align with & strengthen existing initiatives or Plans
- Began shaping, coordinating, or advancing emerging implementation efforts

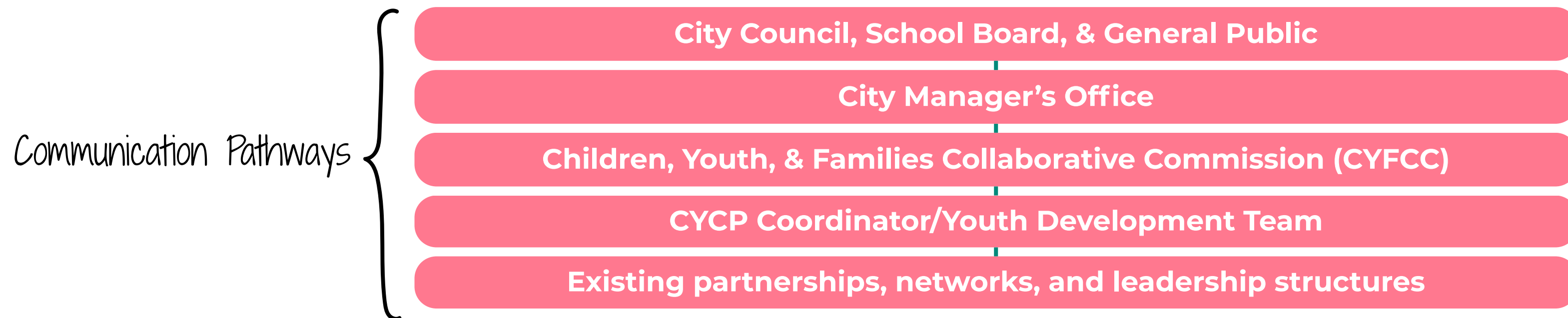
## Spring 2026:

- Launched Safety & Belonging Work Group.
- Developed a shared understanding of the problem, root causes, and vision
- Explored research on what works to improve conditions
- Mapped our Safety & Belonging Ecosystem & analyzed existing efforts





# Children & Youth Community Plan (CYCP)'s Communication Pathways & Implementation Structure

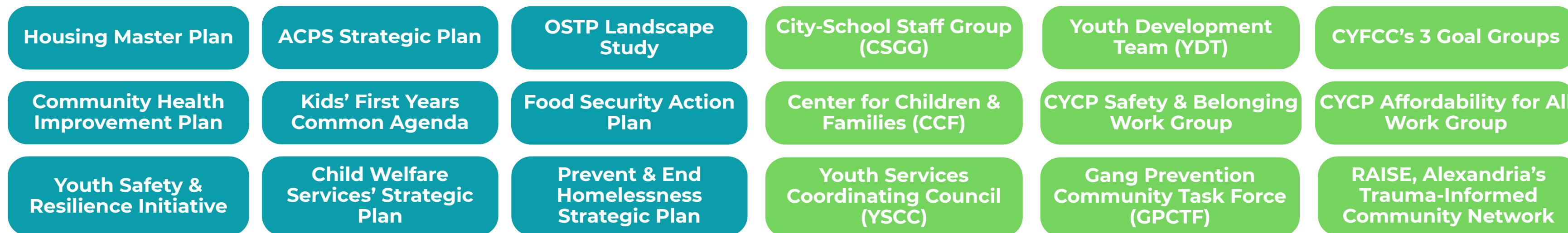


## Approach for Developing the next CYCP

Approach #1: Look for opportunities to align with & strengthen existing initiatives or plans



Approach #2: Help shape, coordinate, or advance emerging implementation efforts





# Role of This Work Group

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## We will:

- Understand the current situation using youth voice, data, and research
- Align existing efforts across partners
- Identify long-term strategic direction & realistic Year-1 actions
- Draft an action plan that will be included in the CYCP



# Where We're Headed





# Work Group Arc

| Meeting # | Shared Understanding                                      | Map Existing Efforts                                                                       | Synthesize                                                                                                                                             |           | Select Direction, Prioritize & Design Actions                                        | Finalize & Commit                     |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| When      | Mar 2025                                                  | Mar 2026                                                                                   | Apr 2026                                                                                                                                               | May 2026  | Jun 2026                                                                             | Summer                                |
| Purpose:  | Ground ourselves in the problem, root causes, and vision. | Avoid duplication and surface strengths. Look at student recommendations & research packet | Review and synthesize what we have learned through the Safety & Belonging ecosystem mapping process and connect this work to existing citywide efforts |           | Choose a long-term direction & 3-5 actions to accomplish in Year 1 of implementation | Prepare the action plan for the CYCP! |
| Outcome   | Clarity about scope                                       | Research Packet & Landscape Map                                                            | Complete confusion                                                                                                                                     | Synthesis | Draft action plan                                                                    | CYCP-ready content                    |



# OSTP Landscape Study Presentation with Caitlin

*How can CYCP partners and this work group help strengthen and support ALX Beyond's work?*



# How CYCP Partners Can Support ALX Beyond

## **Improve Awareness & Navigation**

- Promote Program Locator
- Share opportunities through existing networks
- Strengthen school/community communication channels

## **Strengthen Workforce Development**

- Expand trauma-informed training
- Share professional learning opportunities
- Facilitate peer learning across providers

## **Improve Coordination**

- Bring OSTP opportunities into existing coordination structures
- Align communications efforts

## **Advocate for System-Level Supports**

- Shared-use agreements
- Funding
- Transportation solutions
- Equity-focused expansion

## **Questions:**

- What would you add?
- Where do you see your organization contributing?



# **Ecosystem Mapping Synthesis: What Are We Learning?**



# What Are We Learning Across the Entire Safety & Belonging Ecosystem?

## Strengths



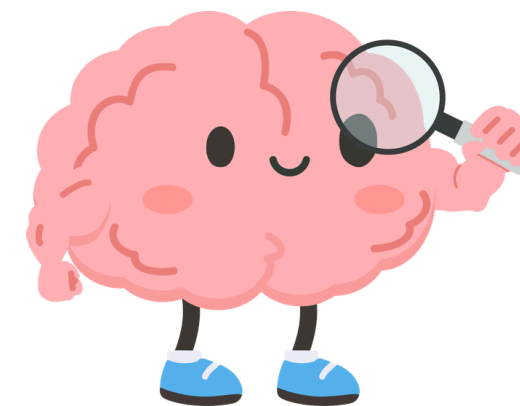
- Alexandria has extensive youth-serving infrastructure
- Strong partnerships and leadership structures exist
- Many youth-led opportunities already exist
- Multiple initiatives are already working toward similar goals

## Challenges



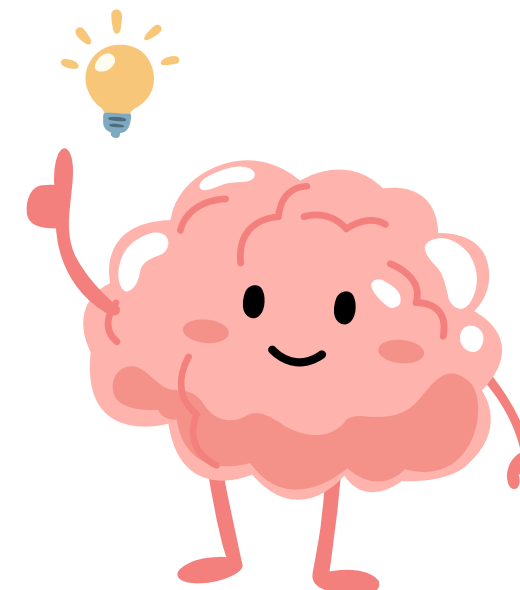
- Youth and families still experience the system as fragmented
- Navigation depends heavily on trusted adults and informal relationships
- Awareness and transportation barriers limit participation
- Access is uneven across schools, neighborhoods, and populations

## Cross-Cutting Themes



- Trusted adults matter
- Coordination matters as much as creating new programs
- Many opportunities involve connecting existing efforts rather than creating new ones

## Emerging Opportunity



- Move from isolated programs to connected pathways.



# Analysis of our board: Strengthening Relationships

Youth need more intentional pathways connecting them to caring adults and opportunities over time

## What we have (areas of alignment)

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- Lots of adults who care about young people.
- Mentors, coaches, club advisors, teachers, youth workers, and peer leaders.
- Many opportunities for youth to connect and belong.

## What's getting in the way (Gaps & Fragmentation)

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- Some youth have many connections while others have very few.
- Youth often need an adult to help them find opportunities.
- Programs aren't always connected to one another.

## What we could do (Opportunities)

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- Make it easier for youth to move from one supportive relationship or program to another.
- Help trusted adults connect youth to additional opportunities.
- Build a stronger "web of support" around youth.



# Analysis of our Board: Strengthening Skills

We're teaching similar skills in many places, but we're not always reinforcing them together.

## What we have (areas of alignment)

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- Schools, clubs, mentoring programs, and prevention programs all teach important life skills.
- Youth have many chances to learn communication, leadership, and conflict resolution.

## What's getting in the way (Gaps & Fragmentation)

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- Different programs teach these skills differently.
- What youth learn in one setting may not be reinforced elsewhere.
- Online conflict is growing faster than our prevention efforts.

## What we could do (Opportunities)

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- Use more shared language and approaches.
- Expand peer-to-peer leadership and prevention efforts.
- Help adults reinforce the same skills across settings.



# Analysis of our Board: Promoting Mental Health

Mental health supports exist, but finding the right supports can be confusing

## What we have (areas of alignment)

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- A lot of mental health resources.
- Strong school and community partnerships.
- Growing awareness of mental wellness.

## What's getting in the way (Gaps & Fragmentation)

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- Youth and families often don't know where to go.
- Services can feel overwhelming or hard to access.
- Stigma, transportation, language, and cultural barriers still exist.

## What we could do (Opportunities)

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- Make the system easier to understand.
- Strengthen referrals and warm handoffs.
- Invest more in prevention, belonging, and connection—not just crisis response.



# Analysis of our Board: Strengthening Opportunities

Alexandria has a lot of opportunities, but access depends too heavily on awareness, transportation, and adult connectors

## What we have (areas of alignment)

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- Clubs.
- Sports.
- Jobs.
- Leadership programs.
- Mentoring and volunteer opportunities.

## What's getting in the way (Gaps & Fragmentation)

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- Youth can't participate in opportunities they don't know about.
- Transportation remains a major barrier.
- Access often depends on whether an adult helps make the connection.

## What we could do (Opportunities)

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- Improve outreach and awareness.
- Make opportunities easier to find.
- Create clearer pathways from one opportunity to the next.
- Support ALX Beyond's existing work.



# Analysis of our Board: Strengthening Systems

We have many bodies that meet and talk well, but coordinating action together is still hard.

## What we have (areas of alignment)

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- Strong partnerships.
- Many groups focused on youth well-being.
- Growing commitment to prevention and youth voice.

## What's getting in the way (Gaps & Fragmentation)

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- Coordination doesn't always lead to action.
- Systems still rely heavily on individual champions.
- Youth and families often experience services as disconnected.

## What we could do (Opportunities)

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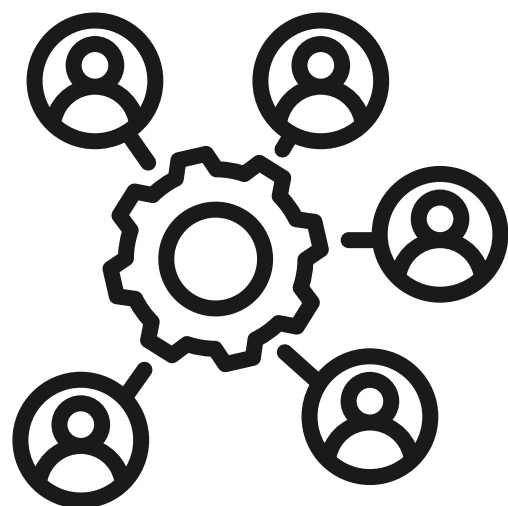
- Strengthen communication and referrals across organizations.
- Build more consistent ways of working together.
- Focus on connecting existing efforts instead of creating new ones.



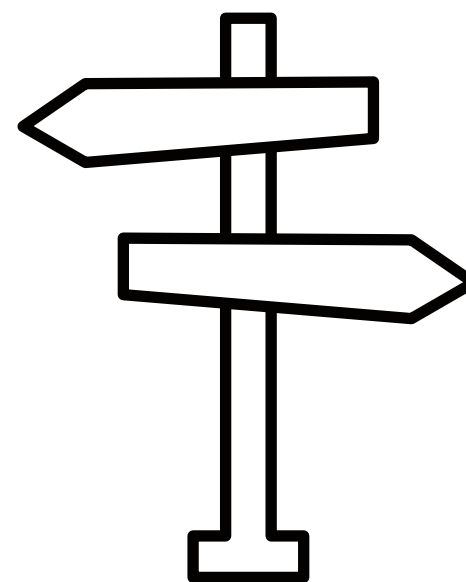
# Patterns Appearing Across All Five Strategic Directions



Alexandria has many programs, partnerships, youth leaders, and caring adults.

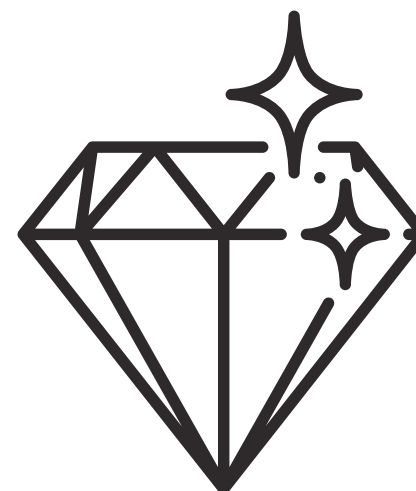


Our challenge is helping youth and families experience our efforts as a connected system rather than a collection of separate opportunities.



We struggle with:

- Navigation
- Awareness
- Referrals
- Transportation
- Consistent implementation
- Cross-system coordination



CYCP's greatest value may be helping existing efforts become more connected, coordinated, and easier for youth and families to navigate



# Reflection Questions

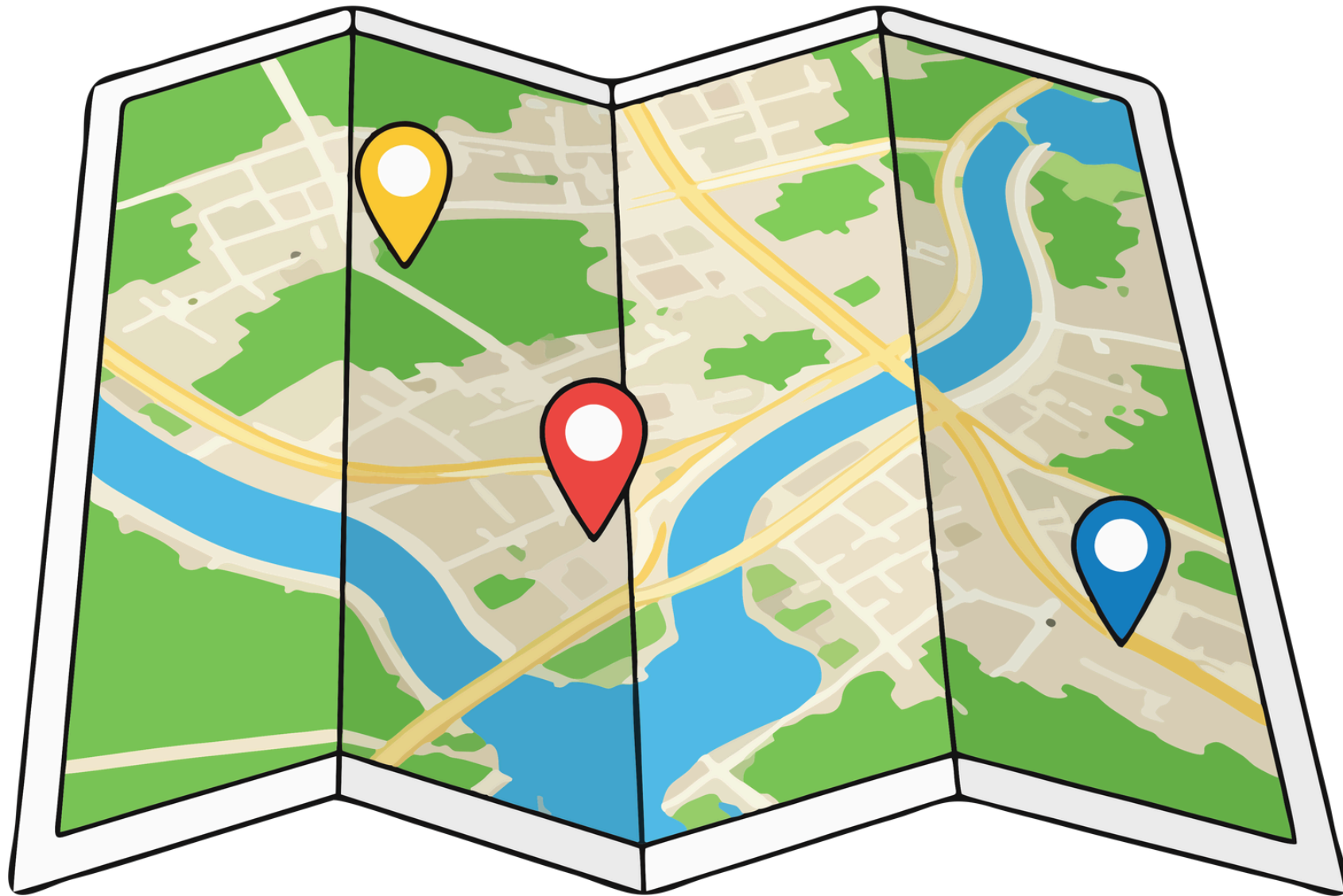
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- Did anything surprise you?
- Where do you see the greatest opportunity for coordinated action?
- What feels most ready for action in the next year?



# Next Steps





# Next Steps

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- **Reflection:** Over the next month, consider which strategic direction feels most ready for coordinated action and where this work group can add the greatest value.
- **Then next month:**
  - Strategic Direction Selection
  - Year-1 Action Planning