



# 9 MILE

## STRATEGIC CORRIDOR PLAN

City of Eastpointe, Macomb County, Michigan



## Acknowledgments

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In particular, we acknowledge the efforts of:

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Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)

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*Prepared with the assistance of*





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# THE VISION



## Welcome!

The City of Eastpointe is committed to providing its residents with safe and equitable mobility and to promoting an active and vibrant business environment. One of the goals of the city’s adopted 2040 Master Land Use Plan (“Plan 2040”) is to address mobility and access, and to foster economic growth and quality of life enhancements along 9 Mile Road.

During the Plan 2040 public engagement process, citizens prioritized the need to revitalize 9 Mile into a true ‘Main Street’ for the community: a safe, walkable, and vibrant mixed-use corridor.

### **IMPLEMENTING EASTPOINTE’S 2040 MASTER PLAN**

To implement this vision for 9 Mile, the city, in partnership with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), developed this Strategic Corridor Plan for 9 Mile Road, from the western boundary with the City of Warren, to Kelly Road.

### **STUDY AREA IMPORTANCE**

The 9 Mile corridor runs approximately 2.5 miles within the city limits, and is not only a major east–west connector in Macomb County and beyond: the corridor is a significant thoroughfare within the city and home to a number of residents, businesses, and agencies. Over 4,300 households alone are within a ¼ mile distance of 9 Mile, which highlights the importance for it to be a walkable and local-serving corridor.



## ADVANCING REGIONAL & STATE PLANS

This strategic plan not only builds upon the city's adopted 2040 Master Plan, it also will aid to further implement and advance the a number of regional and state plans, including:

### Bicycle & Pedestrian Mobility Plan for Southeast Michigan

Advances the regional policy to "expand and enhance bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure" to connect regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridors:

- » The 9 Mile corridor in Eastpointe is a portion of the Pinckney to St. Clair Shores corridor, which includes areas with high bicycle and pedestrian demand areas. 9 Mile Road has the highest utilized east-west SMART bus route connecting pedestrians and bicyclists in Macomb and Oakland Counties (Route 710, which runs along 9 Mile between Southfield and St. Clair Shores).
- » The Detroit to Port Huron runs along Gratiot in Eastpointe and intersects the 9 Mile Corridor.

### Southeast Michigan Traffic Safety Plan

Promotes the regional safety policies of:

- » **Policy #5:** Incorporate elements of complete streets and green streets.
- » **Policy #6:** Increase connectivity and accessibility for all modes of the transportation system to core services.

### Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan

Promotes complete and green streets to achieve multiple desired outcomes, specifically by increasing the tree canopy in Eastpointe and elsewhere in the southern portion of the county.

### Access to Core Services in Southeast Michigan

Promotes the following overarching regional policies:

- » Coordinate with...stakeholders, including local governments...to improve accessibility and address identified challenges and gaps in accessibility.
- » Encourage a mix of land uses to combine housing, jobs, and core services within convenient travel times.
- » Encourage infill development in infrastructure supported areas, especially in areas near and along transit corridors, employment centers, and core services locations.
- » Incorporate elements of complete streets that ensure that roadways are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
- » Encourage and support development of age-friendly communities.

### Partnering for Prosperity: Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan

Consistent with the Community Asset strategies of 'Strengthening Quality of Place' and 'Enhancing Transportation Connections'.

### Mobilize Macomb

9 Mile is identified in the Mobilize Macomb Plan as an east to west network gap and a priority link to connecting Jefferson Avenue and the Detroit River, to Oakland County and the Iron Belle Trail.

## DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE, HOLISTIC PLAN

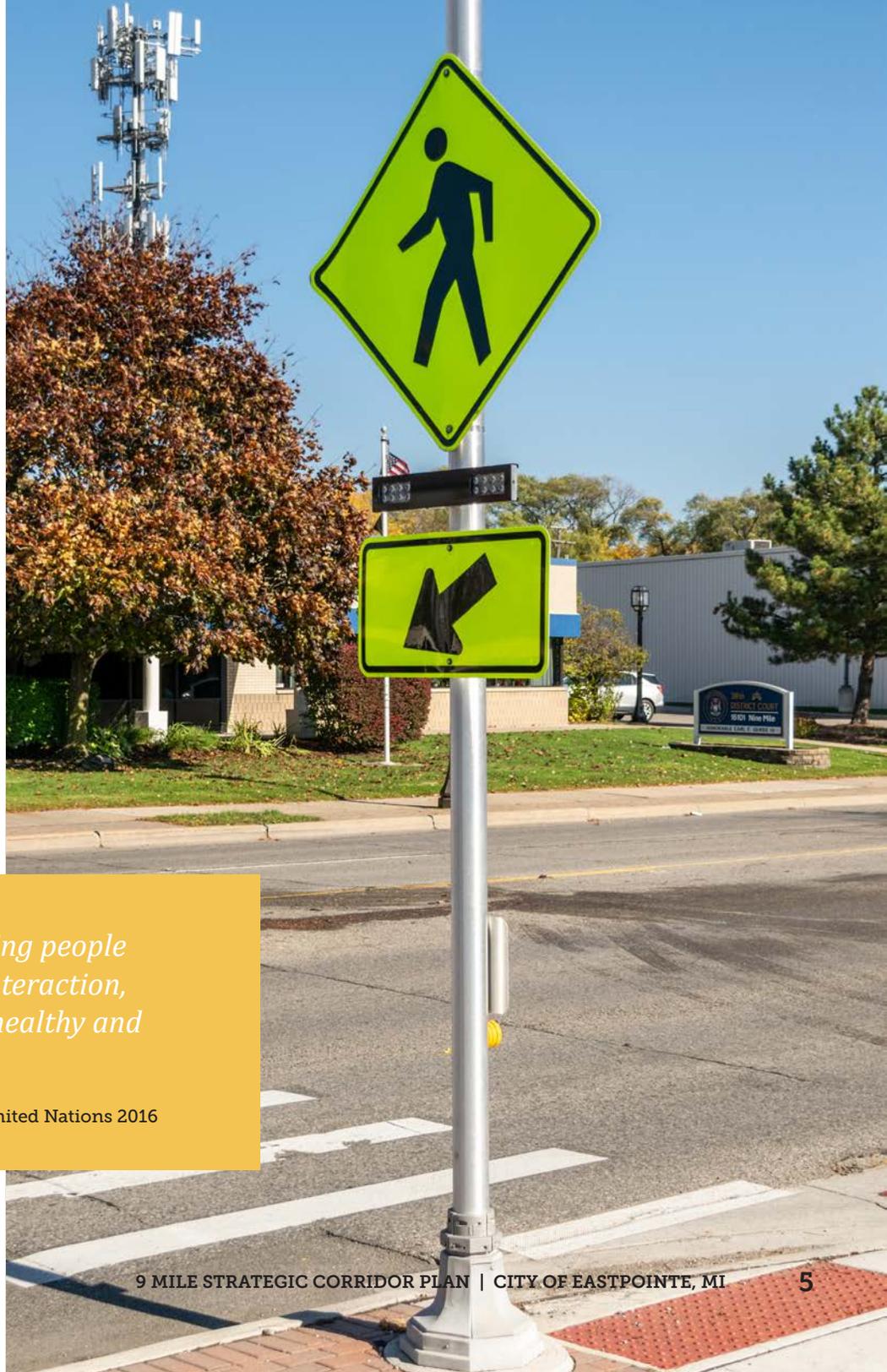
Eastpointe's approach to such a corridor plan is holistic—in order for 9 Mile to reach its potential, it requires an inclusive plan that addresses all functions of the corridor:

- » A safe place for walking, bicycling, and utilizing public transit, where pedestrian comfort is prioritized.
- » A functional streetscape that incorporates progressive green infrastructure and the urban forest.
- » Improvements to future land uses and zoning ordinance provisions to incentivize and attract new, high-quality development and redevelopment.
- » Placemaking strategies for gateways, transitions, and nodes to provide visual cues to people arriving on foot, by bike, by car, or by transit and to create new civic and gathering spaces for a healthier community

This plan thoroughly examines pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and parking deficiencies to be corrected, along with opportunities, to enhance the user experience for all modes, and promotes private reinvestment along 9 Mile Road.

*“Transport is not an end in itself, but rather a means allowing people to access what they need: jobs, markets and goods, social interaction, education, and full range of other services contributing to healthy and fulfilled lives.”*

— Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development, United Nations 2016





## Goals & Objectives

Future successes along the corridor are dependent on the implementation of the vision articulated by the community, especially those who have traditionally been under-represented during planning processes. This new shared vision and goals are the foundation for redevelopment and future investment for years to come.

The following five goals and supporting objectives were developed as a result of the extensive public engagement conducted by the city (see Chapter 3: The Community Voice) for full results.



## #1 Equitable Mobility & Accessibility

Invest in a safe and accessible multimodal transportation network to improve connectivity, to and throughout the 9 Mile corridor, for pedestrians, bikers, transit riders, and motor vehicle users.

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Provide for Complete Streets on all roadways, emphasizing safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all ages and abilities.
- B. Improve circulation and access management of the street network through curb cut consolidation (i.e., reduce the frequency and width of curb cuts) and locate curb cuts as far as possible from street intersections.
- C. Improve bike infrastructure and support its culture.
- D. Provides choices for all users by expanding multimodal access at transit stops.
- E. Improve the transit experience by upgrading public transportation facilities and conditions (i.e., frequency, consistency of routes).
- F. Enhance the safety of pedestrians by implementing measures such as reduced crossing widths (to make intersections safer and easier to navigate) and add pedestrian infrastructure (e.g., refuge islands, seating areas, etc.).
- G. Consider vehicular parking and curbside / drop off needs in the short term and in the future, including potential impacts of autonomous vehicles.



## #2 Sustainable Green Spaces & Places

Support the implementation of green infrastructure that will promote air quality improvement, greenhouse gas reduction, and water conservation while simultaneously creating healthy and vibrant places for people to gather, improving both the physical and mental health of community members.

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Reduce the total amount of paved, impervious surfaces.
- B. Maximize infiltration and reuse of stormwater and reduce street water runoff.
- C. Encourage walking and improvements in air quality, by integrating land use and transportation planning to help reduce reliance on the automobile.
- D. Increase the urban forest (tree canopy), both within the public streetscape (rights-of-way) and on private property.
- E. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, other air pollution, and energy consumption.
- F. Develop green infrastructure standards and raise awareness of the benefits with property owners.



## #3 Attainable Housing

Encourage the development of Missing Middle Housing and address the needs for quality and affordable housing to maintain Eastpointe's diverse population.

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Ensure new residential developments respect the existing walkable block structure of the city and incorporate pedestrian design elements and architecture that are conducive to vibrant, safe streets (e.g., entrances fronting the street, parking located in the rear yard, etc.).
- B. Protect existing neighborhoods from redevelopment through screening and buffering at transition areas.
- C. Integrate usable, public green space and amenities into new, denser residential developments.
- D. Provide for a diversification of housing types (e.g., townhouses, live/work units, micro-unit apartments, etc.) for all income levels.
- E. Redirect more intensive growth (in regards to denser residential uses along and above ground floor commercial/office spaces), to select nodes on the corridor.



## #4 Resilient Economies

Promote innovative economic development strategies to enhance the city's tax base and provide desirable employment, goods, and services throughout the 9 Mile corridor.

### OBJECTIVES

- A. Incentivize high-quality, mixed-use developments that increase the tax base.
- B. Improve roads, utilities, and other public infrastructure to support private reinvestment, including shared parking facilities and streetscape enhancements.
- C. Design new structures to be flexible spaces—that is, to easily accommodate other land uses in the future (e.g.: minimum ceiling height clearances for the first floor).
- D. Address vacant property, buildings, and blighting influences.
- E. Partner with and educate local developers and companies to attract and retain businesses and employees, and to expand / redevelop in a way that is consistent with this vision for the corridor.
- F. Market the opportunities available in the corridor as desirable places for investment and valuable businesses and mixed-use locations; this includes viewing the reuse of vacant or underutilized parking areas as potential new, active spaces.
- G. Require high-quality, timeless building materials in all new construction.



*These five goals link equitable transportation decision making to positive social, economic, environmental, and land use impacts.*

## #5 Healthy Communities

Support development policies that aim to increase the quality of life for residents—9 Mile will not simply link destinations; it will be a destination in itself, and utilized for social gathering, exercising, and relaxing. Maintain Eastpointe’s transparent, effective, and proactive municipal leadership to ensure an inclusive, healthy, and safe community for all.



### OBJECTIVES

- A. Encourage people to travel by walking, bicycling, and transit, and to drive less by attracting a greater mix of neighborhood serving uses along the corridor.
- B. Enhance the streetscape to make walking and biking a more enjoyable and safe experience for all users, promoting exercise.
- C. Increase and enhance civic spaces and encourage human interaction (through both formal spaces, such as programmed spaces and events, and informal gathering areas).
- D. Incorporate wayfinding signage, public art, and other placemaking elements to foster a greater sense of place and corridor identity.

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**9 MILE TODAY**



## The Corridor Today

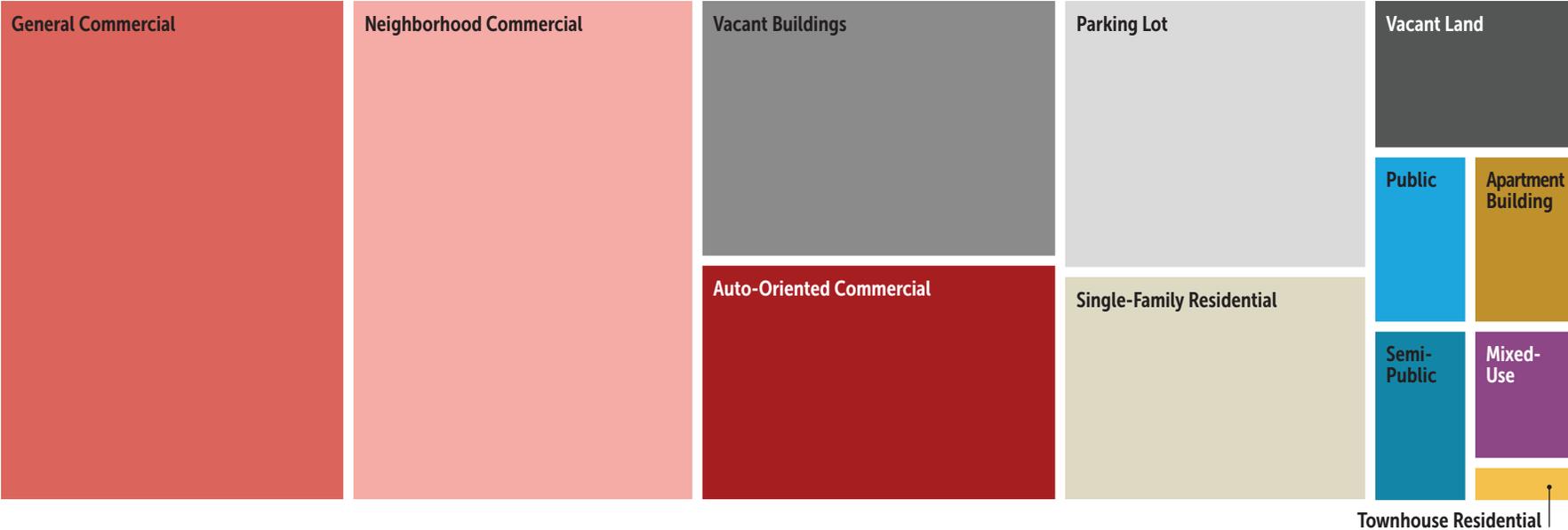
Presently, 9 Mile Road is a heavily used corridor by pedestrians, transit riders, and personal vehicles. Classified as a minor arterial, 9 Mile contains a mix of land uses that demand various modes of transportation—from the Eastpointe High School to senior living facilities, local businesses, and other employment opportunities.

**OVERVIEW**

In general, the corridor is a horizontal mixed-use district that is home to several important Eastpointe civic institutions, including the Police Department, the 38th District Court, the Fire Department, and public spaces such as the Eastpointe Community Garden. Despite these civic uses, the majority (96%) of parcels are privately owned. There are very few residential parcels along the corridor, but immediately abutting the parcels fronting on 9 Mile are dense single-family neighborhoods. In general, lot sizes are small, and buildings stay at one- or two-stories. There are exceptions to this: some larger lots have accommodated greater parking and taller buildings; these often exist near the Gratiot Avenue and Kelly Road intersections of 9 Mile.

Two major thoroughfares bifurcate 9 Mile: Gratiot Avenue and I-94 (East Edsel Ford Highway); the character of these intersecting roads has influenced the surrounding land use of the corridor. Gratiot Avenue, a major Detroit metropolitan connector, highlights a point of transition from an area of less density, west of Gratiot Avenue, to an area that begins to experience greater commercial uses, east of Gratiot Avenue. Land uses near Kelly Road consist of the greatest densities of general and auto-oriented commercial uses, as if to serve highway (regional) users more than local residents.

**Figure 1. Existing Land Uses, 2021—Frequency of Parcels**





*Above and to the left: Examples of the existing mix of auto-oriented commercial uses on the corridor.*

## Existing Land Use Patterns

In 2021, an on-site, parcel-by-parcel inventory and analysis was conducted to document the existing land uses on 9 Mile Road. Building characteristics and built environment conditions were recorded and incorporated into a GIS dataset for further analysis.

The following section summarizes the results of the inventory and analysis.

Map 2. Existing Land Uses, 2021



## COMMERCIAL USES

- Neighborhood Commercial.** These uses occur steadily throughout 9 Mile and often consist of local restaurants, barbershops, beauty salons, liquor stores, and convenience stores.
  
- Mixed-Use.** Mixed-use areas are characterized by parcels with a diversity of commercial uses, or in a few occasions, residential units above ground floor commercial space. This land use, mostly existing west of Gratiot Avenue, does not commonly occur along the 9 Mile corridor today.
  
- General Commercial.** These uses occur throughout the corridor, with greater frequency near Kelly Road, and largely consist of national fast-food drive-throughs and convenience store and drugstore chains.
  
- Auto-Oriented Commercial.** These uses often attract a regional clientele and are vehicular based, e.g.: auto-repair shops, gas stations, car washes, etc. Auto-oriented commercial uses occur at higher rates east of Gratiot Avenue, towards Kelly Road.

*While Eastpointe (as a whole) is a predominately single-family residential community; the community-wide survey highlighted the need for attainable housing.*

*As in many communities, it can be assumed that various housing options on the spectrum of affordability are needed; especially, close to transit options for those who can't afford the additional costs of motor vehicle transportation.*

## RESIDENTIAL USES

- **Single-Family Residential.** Single-family residential uses occur sporadically throughout the corridor, with the greatest occurrence west of Gratiot Avenue.
- **Townhouse Residential.** Townhouse units only occur once on the corridor, near the western portion of 9 Mile that is less dense and home to greater residential uses. These townhouses are characterized by an insular design, with unit entrances facing inwards to a centralized parking lot.
- **Apartment Building Residential.** These uses take the form of traditional 'garden style' apartment buildings with deep setbacks from the roadway, little to no outdoor community space, and an inward design that does not speak to the surrounding community spaces or amenities. Apartment buildings most commonly exist near the Gratiot Avenue and 9 Mile intersection.

## PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC USES

Both public and semi-public uses are generally concentrated near the Gratiot Avenue and 9 Mile intersection:

- **Public.** These take form as the Eastpointe High School, Police Department and 38th District Court, Fire Department, and the community garden.
- **Semi-Public.** Semi-public uses are primarily religious institutions that are characterized by their street-facing entrances and large parking lots.

## PARKING

- **Parking Lots.** This classification includes parcels that are used exclusively for parking, either as a stand-alone use or in association with an abutting parcel. Overall, there is a significant amount of parking lots dispersed along the corridor. Most of the lots used for parking appear to serve a nearby public/quasi-public use or are surface lots for nearby commercial uses, but are not designated public parking areas.

## VACANT USES

- **Vacant Buildings.** Several vacant buildings exist along the corridor, often occurring in clusters. A number of these structures raise no major indicators of dilapidation, indicating a strong potential for re-occupancy and redevelopment. Other structures in poor condition offer an opportunity for a new, 'ground up' project.
- **Vacant Land.** Most vacant land uses occur between Gratiot Avenue and Kelly Road and largely consist of maintained, grassy lots that are fenced in.

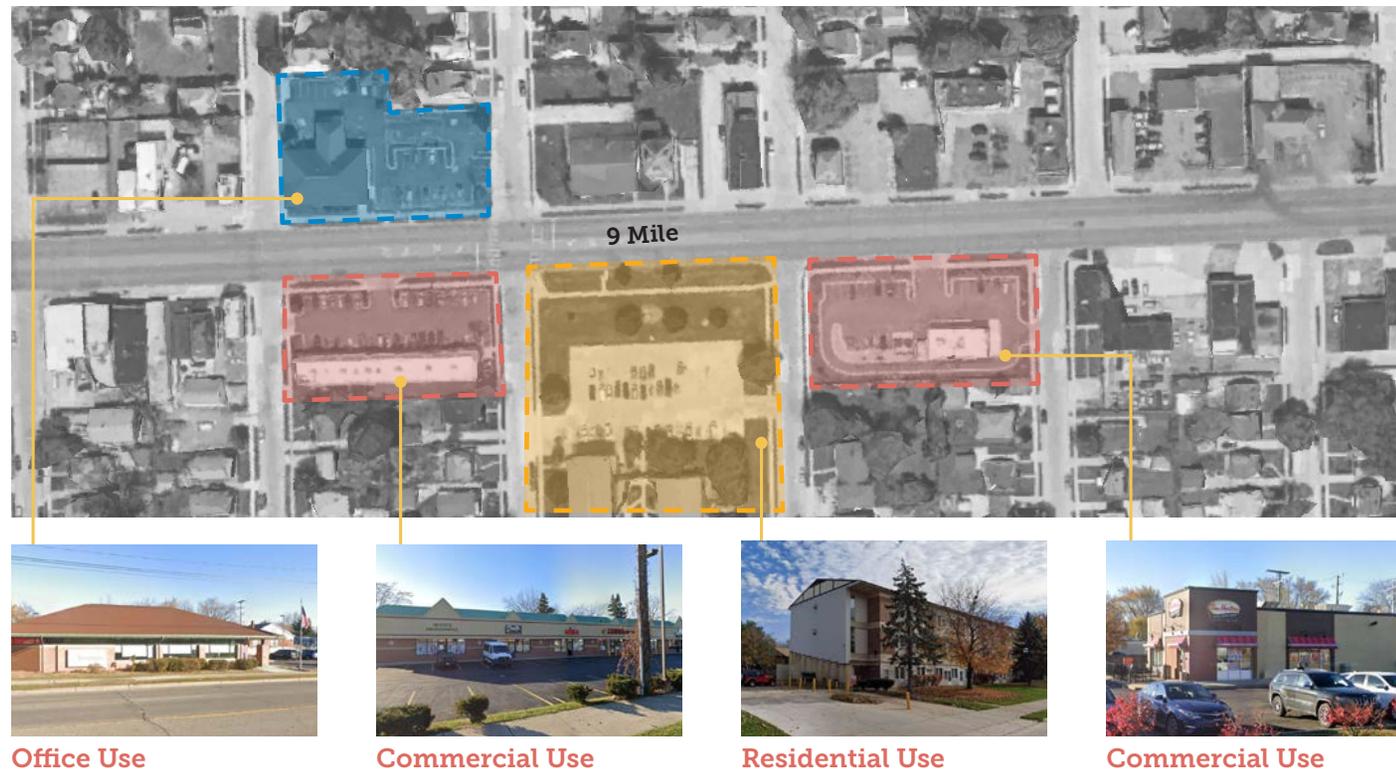
## PLANNING FOR A VERTICAL MIX OF USES

While there is a horizontal mix of uses along the corridor today (Figure 2), there is an opportunity to create a vertical mix moving forward. The development pattern of mixed-use vertical uses is preferred for a variety of reasons:

- » Increases the taxable value;
- » Increases in the vibrancy of an area (creating a critical mass);
- » Increases the daytime population; and
- » Brings people closer (spatially) to goods, services, and transportation.



**Figure 2. Current Land Use Configuration: Horizontal Mix of Uses**



*Above: An example of residential and office uses above the first floor ensures that the most active uses (commercial, recreational, etc.) remain at the pedestrian level.*

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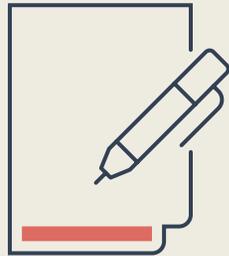
THE COMMUNITY'S VOICE

11



*One-on-one stakeholder interviews (virtual)*

638



*Responses to the community-wide survey*

18



*Corridor businesses surveyed*

## The Public Process & Community Involvement

Public engagement was crucial to this planning process and involved three primary audiences: the businesses who currently operate on a day-to-day basis along the corridor; residents on and within walking distance to 9 Mile; and key stakeholders whose policies and actions impact the future success of the corridor.

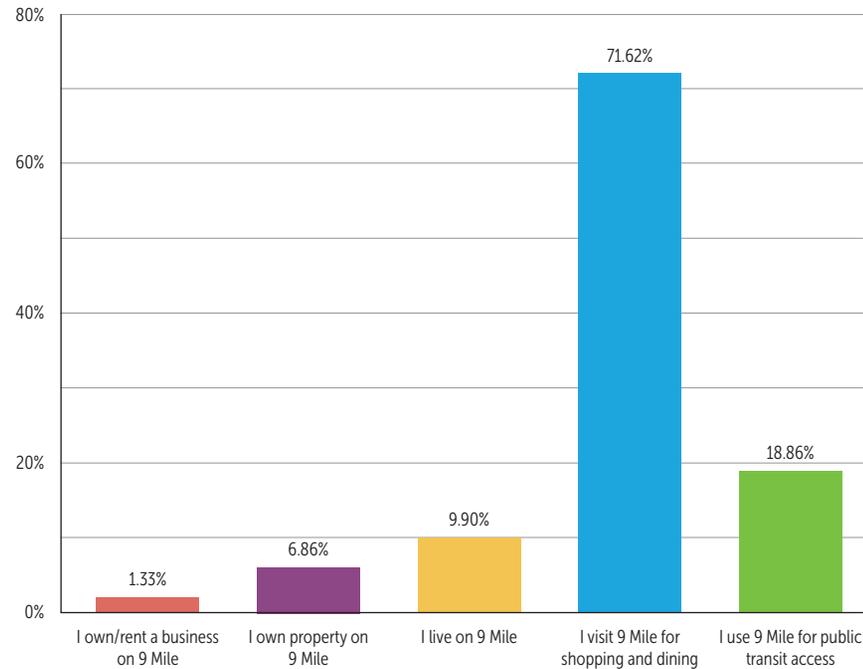
### BACKGROUND

Input was gathered through several methods, including a community-wide survey which asked for broader input on how to improve the 9 Mile corridor. The survey concluded on March 31, 2021 and successfully received over 600 responses. While the survey was publicized on social media to the entire Eastpointe community, invitation letters for the survey were also directly mailed to all residences within a ¼-mile (walking distance) of the corridor. A separate, business specific survey was also mail to all businesses along the corridor and the city provided in-person check-ins to received feedback and further promote survey participation.

One-on-one interviews were also conducted with a number of stakeholders who were identified by the city as crucial partners.

Lastly, the Planning Commission reviewed elements of this plan and provided their input on challenges and opportunities facing the corridor at several public meetings in 2021. Key findings are presented on the following pages.

**Figure 3. Relationship to 9 Mile**

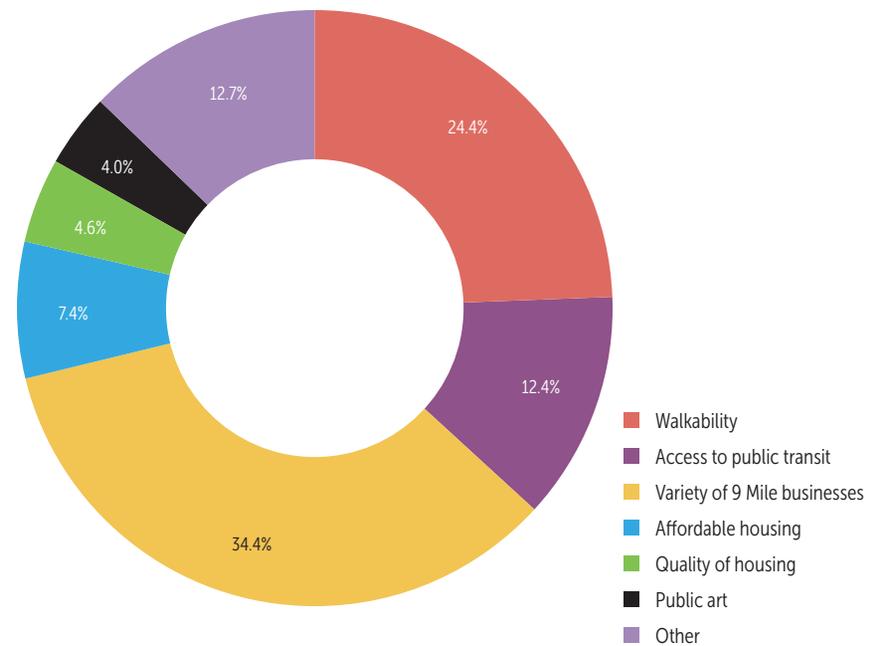


### COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY RESULTS

This first section details the results of the community-wide survey:

The majority of survey respondents indicated their relationship with the 9 Mile corridor as a destination for shopping and dining (71%). While only 10% of survey respondents indicated that they actually live on 9 Mile, it is important to note that the majority of residents who responded indicated that they live within, at most, five (5) blocks from 9 Mile Road.

**Figure 4. Favorite & Least Favorite Aspects of the Corridor**



The most favorable (current) aspect identified for 9 Mile by the public is the variety of businesses offered (34%). This was also expressed in the Business Survey: the mix and variety of businesses was seen as one of the most positive aspects of the corridor.

The least favorable (current) aspects of 9 Mile include the availability of affordable housing (11%), the quality of housing along the corridor (7%), and the presence (lack thereof) of public art (6%).



*“Smaller businesses in Eastpointe, on 9 Mile especially, would get noticed more if their buildings and signs were cleaned, repainted, or updated. Good graphic design goes a long way with logos and bringing people in.”*

*“Require businesses to maintain city standards. No crazy colors or lights (even for party stores). Use an artist to decorate the city to make things trendier and make it a place where young professionals want to be.”*

*“Create uniformity of some sort... it looks too busy, unkempt. I think the appearance would be more welcoming with consistency in colors/style of signs for instance. It is not ‘small town’ in appearance.”*

**Table 1. Satisfaction with the Current Corridor Conditions**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
Types and diversity of businesses	4%	31%	25%	4%
Grocery store / food market options	3%	24%	39%	10%
Hours businesses are open	6%	52%	5%	1%
Parking	4%	39%	21%	4%
Sidewalks	6%	45%	11%	2%
Bike lanes	6%	11%	26%	15%
Green space	3%	13%	35%	14%
Public art	4%	13%	34%	12%
Safety as a pedestrian	2%	23%	31%	11%
Condition of bus stops	3%	14%	19%	5%
Frequency of bus stops	3%	15%	6%	2%

*Eastpointe needs businesses that draw outside people into the city—micro-brews, winery, distillery, etc.—something for people to come and enjoy!*

Regarding the current business environment, respondents were most satisfied with the hours that businesses are open and the sidewalk network, and to a lesser degree, parking along the corridor. Conditions that were flagged as unsatisfactory including the availability and variety of grocery stores / food markets, and the amount of green space, and the lack of bike and transit infrastructure.

No conditions were rated as ‘very satisfied’, reinforcing the level of potential there is to improve the corridor.

## Suggested Improvements from the Public:

- » Beautify the strip with more greenery and seasonal flowers. Make it more attractive (more of a downtown look) to draw more community-based gatherings.
- » More garbage cans and signs asking people to be responsible with trash.
- » Upgrade the front of buildings to make them more visually appealing; demolish buildings that are vacant.
- » Make the intersection of 9 Mile and Gratiot Avenue more appealing and entertaining as it's the center of downtown Eastpointe.
- » More green space, and add trees, flowers, park benches, lighting, bike racks, a farmers market, etc.
- » 9 Mile feels more like a highway and could be redeveloped to enhance the “downtown” feel (improved pedestrian, bike access, additional crosswalks, landscaping, eliminate/reconfigured surface car park lots, etc.).



*“Integrate solar powered LED lighting and cell phone charging [into bus stops].”*

*“I would like to see pull offs for the buses to stop congestion and the flow of traffic.”*

*“Develop a way to purchase transit tickets or passes (electronically) for safety, speed, efficiency, and tracking.”*

*“Trash receptacles near bus stops and parking lots are badly needed.”*



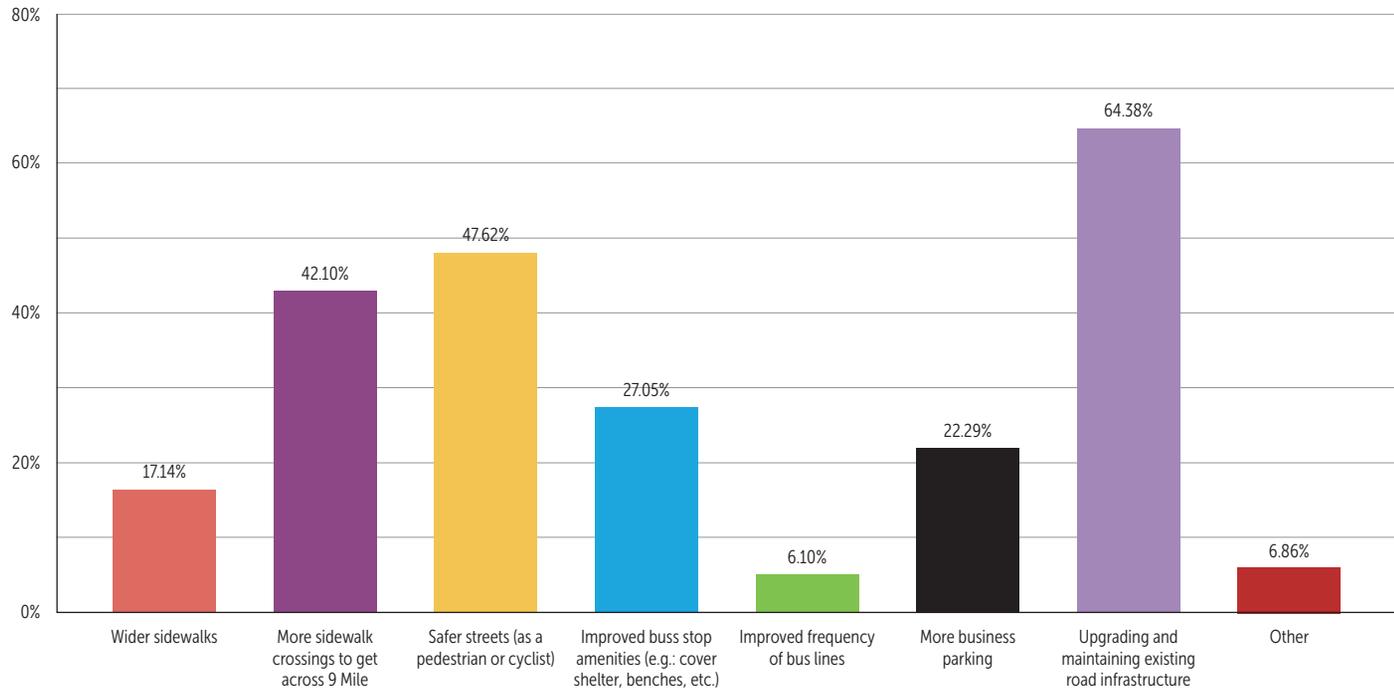
### **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

When asked if they could change one aspect about 9 Mile, responses largely centered around improving the streetscape by establishing design standards and incorporating placemaking, increasing the diversity of businesses, and improving traffic flows. To a lesser extent, respondents asked for greater policing.

The top three identified improvements along the corridor consisted of improving landscaping and supporting beautification (71%), designing outdoor gathering places (49%), and establishing safer sidewalks and crosswalks (47%).

These results were similar to the improvements prioritized by those who participated in the business survey—beautification, a sense of identity, and creating a sense of arrival were reoccurring comments.

**Figure 5. Greatest Transportation Priorities**

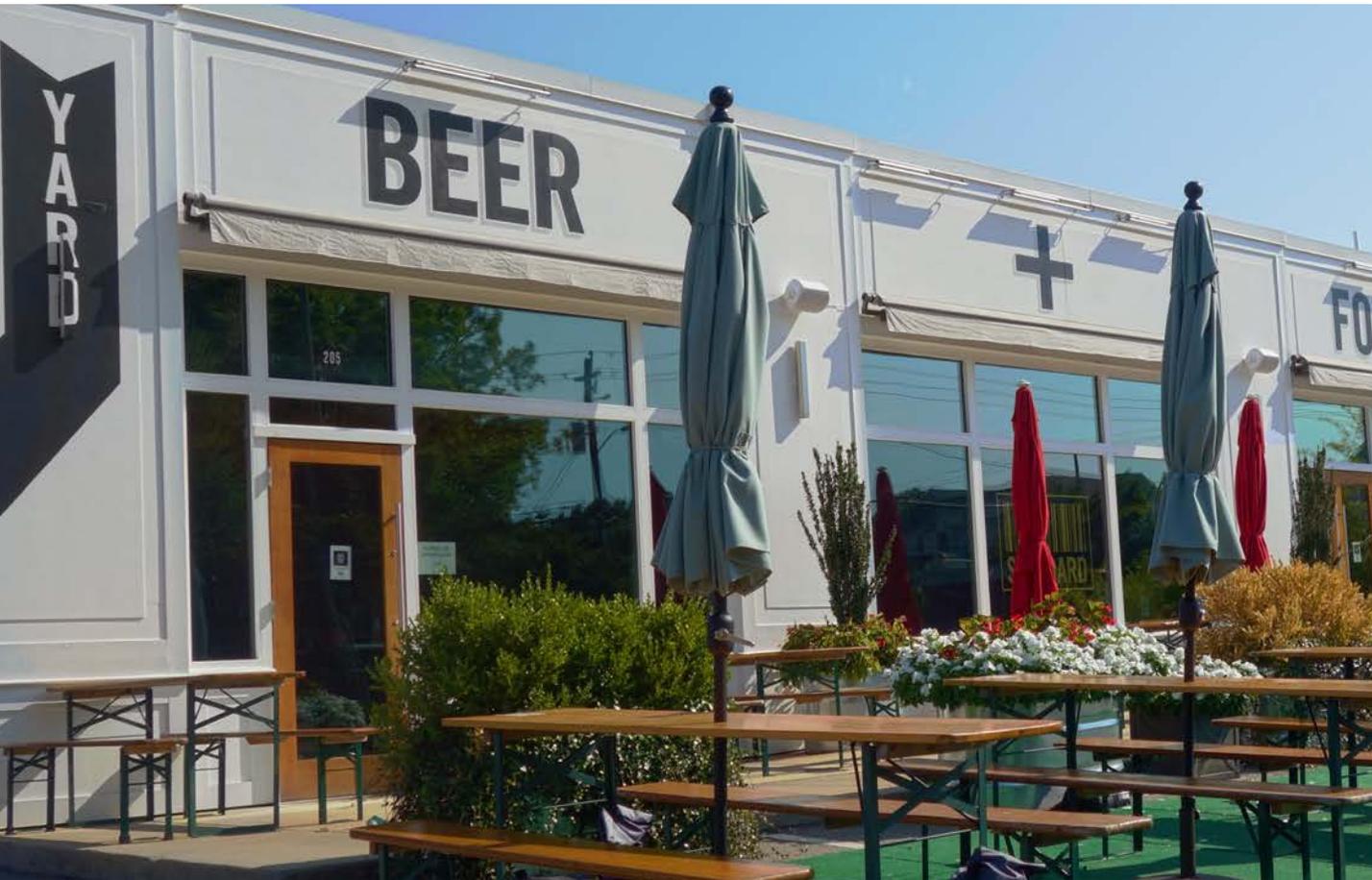


Currently, the overwhelming mode of transportation to access the corridor is to drive (97%), only 5% of respondents indicated they take the bus, 22% ride their bikes, and 45% walk to the corridor.

While, 27% of respondents indicated they have never walked or biked on 9 Mile, approximately, 12% of respondents walk the corridor more than once a week, 12% monthly, and 27% once or twice a year. Approximately 20% walk and bike along the corridor bi-weekly, but the majority of respondents do not feel it is safe.

The greatest identified transportation priorities for 9 Mile were to upgrade and maintain existing road infrastructure (64%), establish safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists (48%), and construct more sidewalk crossings (42%).

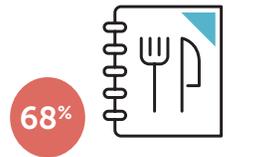
Of the suggested public transit improvements, participants advocated most for the addition of trash and recycling cans (66%), lighting (59%), and covered shelters (55%). Such amenities make public transit as a means of getting to a destination, for both work and play, a feasible and effective mode of transportation.



**Top 5  
Desired New  
Developments**  
*New development  
and uses that  
were identified  
as most favorable  
(receiving more than  
approximately 50%  
of all votes) for the  
corridor include:*



*Farmer's  
Market*



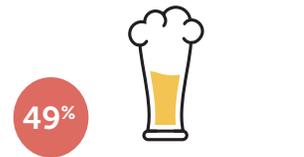
*Sit-down  
Restaurant*



*Outdoor Seating  
for Dining*

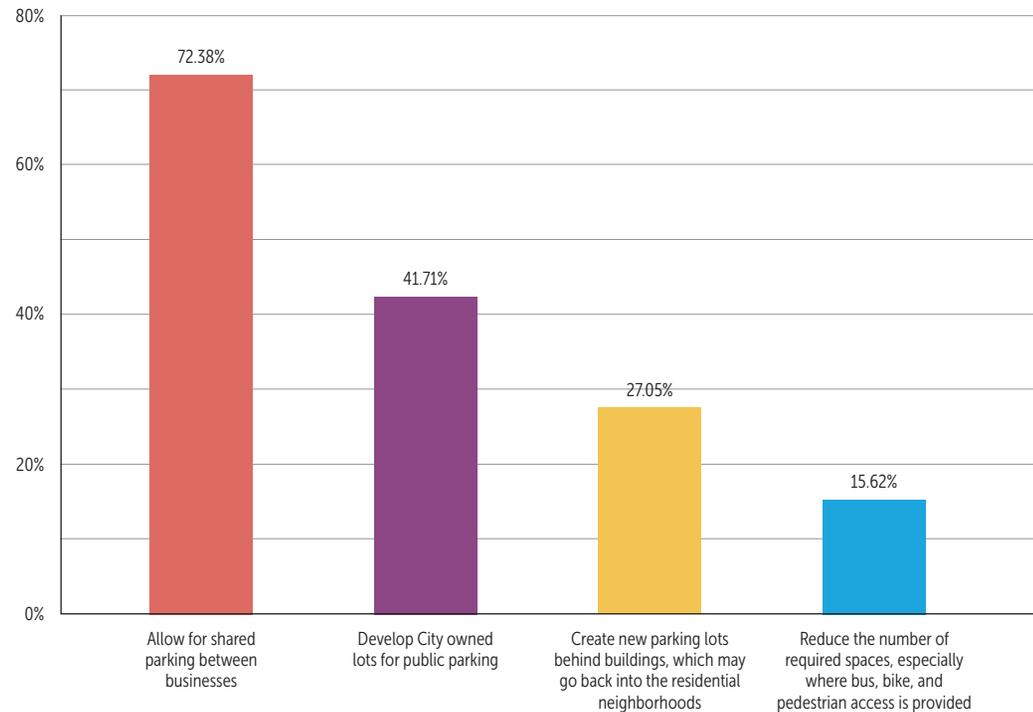


*Parks and  
Green Space*



*Breweries and  
Distilleries*

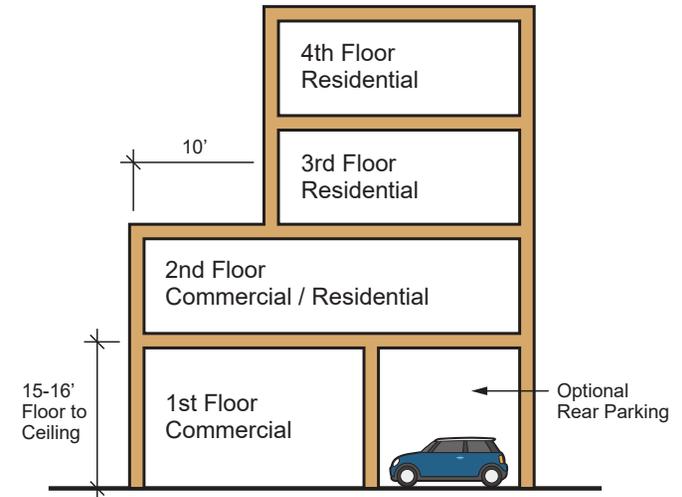
**Figure 6. Parking for New and Expanded Uses**



### Parking and Auto-Oriented Uses

Respondents were also asked questions regarding design and zoning standards for development. When asked how to treat existing car-oriented businesses (e.g., gas stations, auto repair shops, car washes, etc.) 51% of respondents prefer to allow these existing businesses to continue, but to prohibit any new or future car-oriented businesses. To a lesser extent, 27% of respondents supported allowing the uses by special land use, and 21% supported allowing the uses by right.

In regards to parking for new and expanded businesses, an overwhelming 72% of respondents support shared parking between businesses, whereas only 15% support a reduction to the number of required parking spaces for businesses. Approximately 40% support a shared, city-owned public parking lot.



### Building Heights

When asked about permitting taller building heights along the corridor, a significant number of respondents (44%) indicated that no more than two-stories should be permitted. However, 28% did support taller buildings at key locations (such as at major intersections).

When pressed with the maximum appropriate height for buildings, 60% supported a maximum height of three-stories. Four-story buildings were found appropriate by only 21% of respondents, and only in certain circumstances, such as a mixed-use building with residential on the upper floors.



*For external improvements (those which the local business does not have direct control over), the top desired areas to enhance are:*

1. Amount and quality of landscaping
2. Streetlights
3. Reduce crime
4. More foot traffic
5. Mix of uses
6. Reduced traffic speeds

## **BUSINESS SPECIFIC SURVEY**

Along the 9 Mile corridor, 18 businesses participated in this survey, representing a cross section of the various existing commercial offerings including office, retail, automotive, healthcare, the food industry, and professional services. While some businesses are long-time establishments on the corridor (dating back to 1953), several businesses have more recently opened in the past couple years. These more recent establishments cited their decision to open on 9 Mile due to the fact that the location was close to home, accessible to nearby communities, and in a safe location.

### **Business Demographics**

The majority of businesses along 9 Mile are single-location (only two businesses had additional locations) and typically employ ten or less individuals. Five (27%) are minority-owned enterprises and four (22%) are women-owned enterprises. Approximately 70% of these businesses own their building.

### **Challenges & Desired Uses**

The greatest challenges that were noted as facing their business were improving / maintaining the property and recruiting / retaining employees. Alley repair, the need for beautification, the amount of parking, and the lack of foot traffic were also listed obstacles. Exterior renovations were listed as one challenge for the building itself—streetscape design was also noted as an opportunity to spur corridor identity with branding and marketing.

The addition of arts and cultural establishments, restaurants and coffee shops, and live/work buildings were noted as highly desired by existing businesses as future complimentary uses to the corridor.

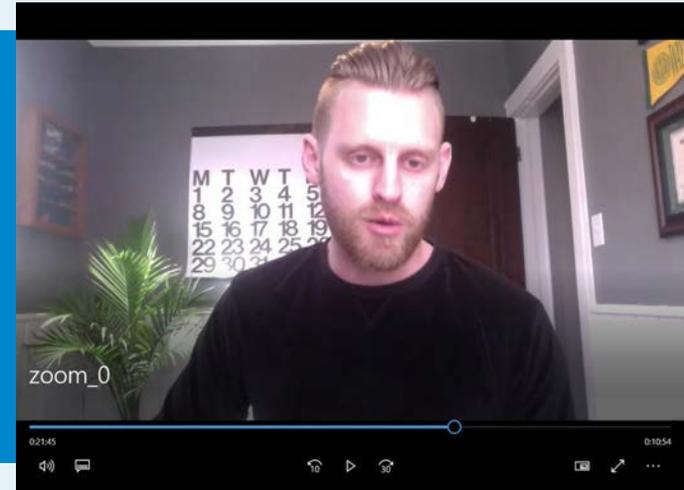
### **Transportation**

Almost all employers drive a personal vehicle to work, however, business owners noted that customers arrive by a number of modes of transportation, including 30% as walk up traffic.

For customers that do drive their personal vehicle, 72% were noted as parking within the business's designated parking lot, with others parking in adjacent lots, or along residential streets.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

One-on-one (virtual) interviews were conducted with a number of vested entities along the corridor, including the Downtown Development Authority, the Eastpointe Community Gardens, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), SMART, and the Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Department.



Common themes and their relevance to planning topics for the corridor include:

- » Widen sidewalks and provide more frequent pedestrian crossings and better lighting for safety. Bus stations needs to be enhanced, but not at the expense of the business they are in front of.
- » Elevate community assets and the arts and cultural scene (e.g.: add Community Garden as a destination on the city's website). Find opportunities to add green space, public art, and expand the tree canopy to beautify the corridor.
- » Major intersections along 9 Mile should be welcoming and the uses should inherently attract walkers (e.g.: local coffee shop, as opposed to uses such as gas stations).
- » Slow and better control traffic; encourage uses such as bookstores, breweries—places where people linger and want to gather.
- » Demolish vacant buildings and construct new mixed-use structures (up to the right-of-way line) to set an example for future projects.
- » Make commercial signage perpendicular to 9 Mile.
- » Support economic development endeavors and market the corridor as a destination.



*Right: Screenshots of several of the virtual stakeholder interviewees, 2021.*



*“I travel on 9 Mile often (for banking, shopping, access to the post office and library, etc.) and I visit the Community Garden often during the season.”*

## Exercise: the “Stickiness” of 9 Mile

The “stickiness” of an area refers to how long people stay in one space; it is a measure of what elements or assets exist in a specific geographic area that make people want to stay.

Comfortable places encourage people to linger and to patronize other businesses and restaurants, and provides for increased safety with more “eyes on the street”. If the goal is to encourage a lively, vibrant street full of people and activity, it first needs to be made comfortable and safe to walk and bike along, and to offer a variety of attractive destinations.

### COMMUNITY ASSETS

During the planning process, the Planning Commission and the public provided feedback on what community assets along 9 Mile offer “stickiness” today. Community assets can be cultural and historic assets, public and semi-public institutions, as well as important destinations that serve the needs of the local population. Specifically they responded to the following questions:

- » What are existing assets that should be maintained or enhanced?
- » What makes 9 Mile a destination? Why do you visit the corridor?
- » What changes could be made to the corridor that would encourage you to visit in the future?

Based on these discussions, existing assets along the corridor are identified in Map 3, and notably include the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Hall, the Eastpointe Community Garden, and long standing businesses such as the East Detroit Bakery. In addition to those assets, local restaurants were also mentioned as important destinations that add to the social scene, such as Milestone.



**Community Gardens**



**East Detroit Bakery**



**Eastpointe High School**



**Fire Department**

**Key**

- 📍 Civic Institution
- 📍 Grocery / Market / Pharmacy
- 📍 Public Art
- 📍 Public Open Space / Recreation
- 📍 Religious Institution / Non-Profit
- 📍 School

**Map 3. Community Assets, 2021**



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# THE STREETScape



## Complete Streets Primer

Complete Streets aim to ensure safe, comfortable, and convenient access to destinations regardless of age, ability, race, or ethnicity. The National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC) was established in 2004 in response to the staggering data on poor health and dangers facing pedestrians. Today, the NCSC has encouraged over 1,600 complete streets policies worldwide by setting the guidelines to re-center people and place in the design of streets.

### BACKGROUND

In Michigan, Governor Granholm signed the Complete Street bill (PA 135) into law in August of 2010. While the act does not require municipalities to adopt a Complete Streets policy, the act does require MDOT or any road commission to consult with municipalities during the planning and design of projects in their respective jurisdiction.

***“Complete Streets are for everyone.***

***They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, bicycle to work, and for buses to run on time.”***

- National Complete Streets Coalition (NCSC)

## COMPLETE STREETS COMPONENTS

The following 12 components are basic elements of Complete Streets and each play a relevant part in the redesign of the 9 Mile corridor:

- 1. Accessibility for All.** Universally accessible sidewalks and crossings, paved with materials that have traction, will ensure the city is truly welcoming to all. It is critical to plan for mobility impairments, but also visual and cognitive impairments.
- 2. Connectivity of the Street Network.** With blocks built to comfortable walking dimensions, a well-connected grid system allows for people to take shorter trips, reduces vehicle miles traveled and omissions and allows for more effective emergency responses.
- 3. Active Streetscapes.** Mix interactive uses within each district. Transparent building facades with residential and office uses above the first floor ensures the most active uses are kept at pedestrian levels. Incorporation of outdoor WiFi attracts greater usership. Public spaces and civic institutions should also be incorporated where possible.
- 4. Green Infrastructure.** Incorporation of landscaping that is both mindful of native plantings and stormwater management will create environmental benefits and provide spaces for respite. Complete Streets also respect existing natural features and ecological systems.
- 5. Intersection Design.** Tailor the street design at intersections to increase safety of all users—this includes treatments for crosswalks, curb extensions and pedestrian islands, as well as access management and signalization timing.
- 6. Bicycle Facilities.** Beyond bike racks, incorporation of bike lanes or other user demarcation, and amenities such as bike shelters and repair stations, are important to consider.
- 7. Traffic Calming.** Design treatments that are applied to a street to slow traffic, reduce fatal injuries and improve overall safety. Such ‘self-enforcing’ measures include creating entrance features (landscaping, architecture, etc.), applying a road diet (either reducing the number of travel lanes or reducing the width of lanes), and adding on-street parking, speed tables, bike lanes, textured / colored pavement markings, etc. Any traffic calming measures are not intended to diminish the street network.
- 8. Street Furniture.** Benches, bins, bollards, art installations, sidewalk dining, transit shelters, and bike racks are a few examples of additions that can provide a comfortable environment that holds strong staying power.
- 9. Pedestrian-Scale Lighting.** Various lighting styles not only provide utility and a sense of safety but creates an ambiance that helps create unique community character.
- 10. Signage.** Proper and ample signage will inform users of important safety notices, especially for youth.
- 11. Surface Types.** Being intentional with permeable surface materials will aid in stormwater run-off and provide grip for safe walking areas.
- 12. Public Transit Routes and Accommodations.** Connections made with other transportation modes is key, public transit should be fully integrated into the network. Best practices also include the location and placement of stops, with accessible crossings, signage and amenities. The location and frequency of stops can greatly influence behavior / mode choice.



*“Improve the look and feel of the street. The speed limit is too fast and it’s too dark at night (especially at crosswalks).”*

*“It would be nice if the sidewalks were pushed further back from the road.”*

*“More crosswalks and better timing of the traffic signals for access to 9 Mile from the side streets.”*

*“Add public art, wider sidewalks, and bike parking.”*

## HOW DOES 9 MILE SCORE?

Table 2 provides an evaluation of each of the 12 Complete Streets elements and how the 9 Mile corridor currently fairs. In many respects, the corridor today falls short of meeting the objectives of these 12 elements.

There is a strong correlation between people having the ability to safely walk in their communities and living healthier lives. Designing a better 9 Mile corridor, with equity in mind, can ensure a future of combating health and safety disparities, while promoting a more vibrant and connected community for all. Table 2 highlights the opportunity to improve the current conditions with the reconstruction of 9 Mile.

**Table 2. Complete Streets Evaluation – 9 Mile Today**

Component	Exceed	Pass	Fail
Accessibility for All			●
Connectivity of the Street Network	●		
Active Streetscape		●	
Green Infrastructure			●
Intersection Design		●	
Traffic Calming		●	
Street Furniture			●
Bicycle Facilities			●
Pedestrian-Scale Lighting			●
Signage			●
Surface Types			●
Public Transit & Accommodations		●	

# The Public Realm

As a well-used and traveled corridor, the 9 Mile public realm—or street life—has grown to prioritize motor vehicles over people. As a result, the corridor is characterized with an excess of curb cuts, a lack of greenery, and limited space for social interaction. Changes to the streetscape (the public rights-of-way) with the reconstruction of 9 Mile Road is one of the city’s largest opportunities to revitalize the corridor and lay the foundation for future economic growth.

## THE STREET NETWORK & CONNECTIVITY

The current road network is primarily designed to facilitate private vehicular traffic, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for 9 Mile are illustrated in Map 4, reaching approximately 23,000 vehicles each day. While this volume of vehicles is greater than other segments of the 9 Mile corridor (e.g.: approximately 10,000 AADT in downtown Ferndale), there are a number of characteristics along Eastpointe’s segment of the corridor that offer the foundation and opportunity to better to calm traffic, to maximize the safety of vehicles, pedestrians and public transit users, and to develop a corridor that offers the community more than simply moving vehicles through it. The following streetscape conditions can be capitalized on and enhanced in future developments.

Map 4. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), 2020





*Above (top to bottom): Example of an improved intersection crosswalk; example of a curb extension (“bump out”) that also creates additional on-street parking; and an existing alleyway off 9 Mile.*

## Grid Network

Older, “first-ring” communities of Detroit were often developed following a grid street system, with neighborhood blocks that were sized to facilitate walking, designing for both the vehicle and pedestrian. A grid system (as compared to a system of culs-de-sac and dead end streets) creates a hierarchy of roads to best manage traffic flows, and is beneficial for a number of reasons:

- » Shorter, more efficient trips can be made;
- » Vehicle miles reduced (reducing omissions); and
- » More effective access and routes for emergency responses.

Eastpointe was fortunate to have been primarily constructed with this street grid, and to have maintained this network over the years. The closure of future streets is not recommended and larger developments should integrate into the existing street network with connections to the surrounding system.

## Right-Sized Blocks

The connected block system of Eastpointe already lends to a walkable environment that can be further enhanced. Most blocks along the corridor range between 220 and 250 feet, with some larger blocks closer to 300 feet in length. This range is acceptable for a pedestrian environment. When larger redevelopment occurs, such as the Grafton Townhomes, neighborhood scale blocks should once again be created and not ‘supersized’.

## Alleyways

Eastpointe is also fortunate to have dedicated public alleys that separate many of the commercial blocks from the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The vacation of alleyways is not recommended and should be utilized for access to dedicated employee and/or resident parking. The “greening” of alleyways is also an opportunity for the city with future redevelopment projects.

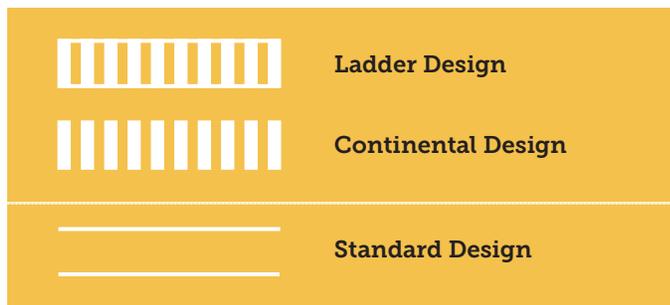
## Intersections & Crossings

Many intersections along 9 Mile do not have well delineated and signed crossings. Most often, pedestrian crashes occur when a person is crossing a road and the most common crash type is a conflict between a crossing pedestrian and a turning vehicle at an intersection. The location and frequency of stops can greatly influence pedestrian behavior and mode choice.

The following are best practices to consider in the 9 Mile Road reconstruction:

- » Install advanced yield / stop signs crosswalks.
- » Use ladder or continental crosswalk designs (these are the most visible, as compared to the standard, due to the low angle of vehicles approaching them).
- » Integrate colored pavements at controlled intersections.
- » Reduce crossing widths with curb bulb outs (creating additional formal on-street parking at the same time).
- » Any pedestrian refuge islands should contain low plantings and tall trees to increase visibility.

Figure 7. Crosswalk Design Comparison



*“Walking / biking along 9 Mile is not a pleasant experience as currently structured. Sidewalks are narrow with numerous curb cuts. Biking is not safe on 9 Mile.”*



*“Crosswalks designated in the street and signage would be great. There is significant distance from light to light. Crossing at a corner is dangerous and I walk the neighborhood often.”*

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management is necessary to ensure safe, efficient travel for all users of the street. Managing access resolves conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles. Management is particularly important to the safety and convenience of 9 Mile as a pedestrian corridor. Currently, the average curb cut separation on 9 Mile is 30 feet (in comparison, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) recommends a 245-foot curb separation for 35-mph roadways).

Many of these access management best practices are most effectively implemented through zoning changes.

### Access Management Principles for 9 Mile:

1. Limit the number of driveways.
2. Separate driveways and conflict points.
3. Prioritize shared interconnection between sites.
4. Maintain interconnections between adjacent sites to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow.

- Adapted from MDOT Michigan Access Management Guidebook

Figure 8. Existing Access Management Challenges

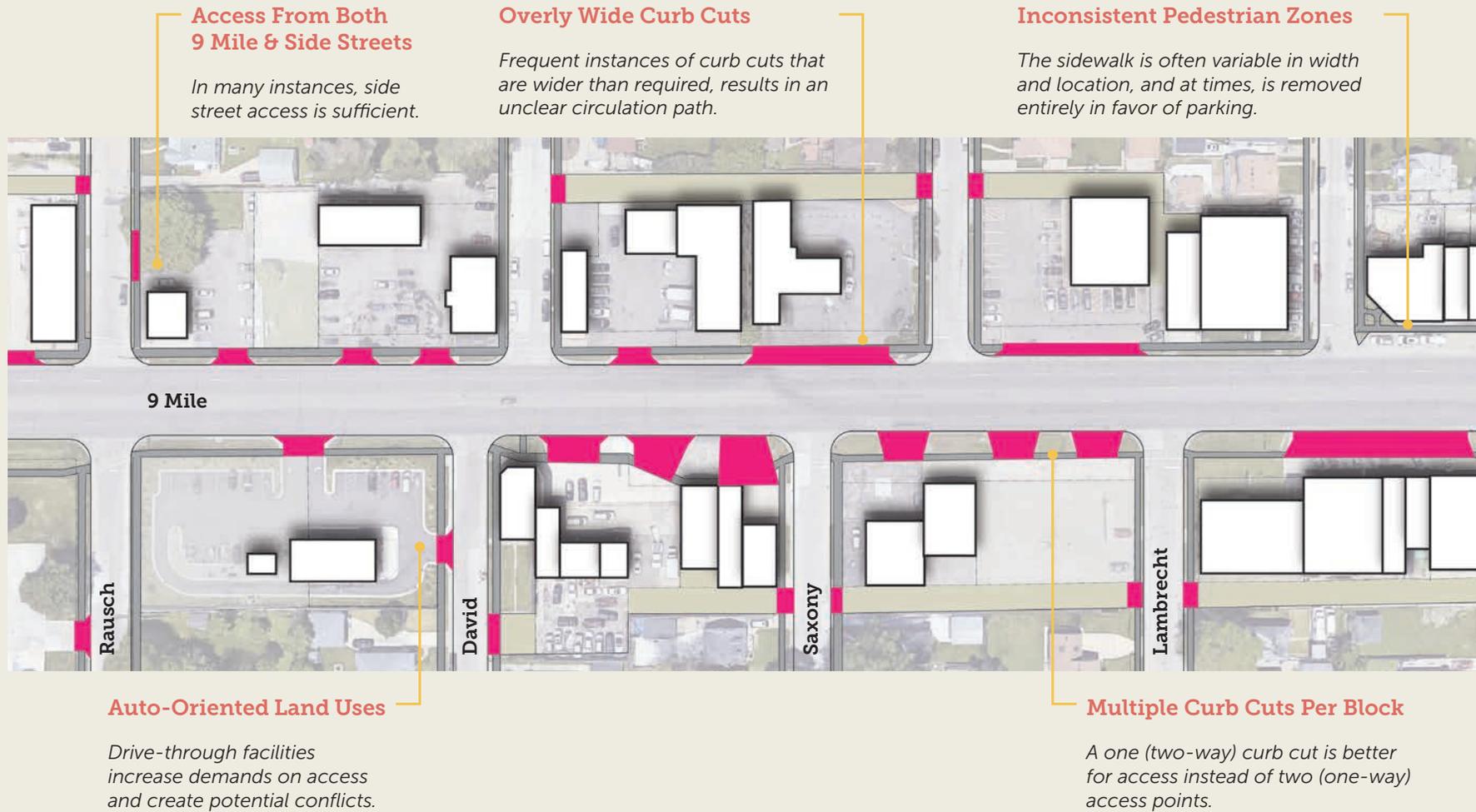


Above: Curb cuts that are too wide create large swaths of sidewalk that are dangerous to pedestrians. To improve the character of the corridor, to provide for spaces for beautification, to make it safer for pedestrians, and to expand the amount of space for uses such as outdoor dining, proper access management along 9 Mile has the potential to make a significant difference.



Above: Too many curb cuts on a single block creates the potential for conflicts, slows traffic, and is an unpleasant pedestrian environment. Vehicular-oriented uses such as drive-throughs only exacerbate this problem.

**Figure 9. Existing Access Management Challenges**





*Above (top to bottom): While a tree lawn does exist in some areas (the space between the sidewalk and the curb), there are often no trees or street furniture to create a visual (and physical) barrier between a pedestrian and moving vehicles; most pedestrian amenities are located near the Gratiot Avenue intersection.*

## Modes of Mobility

Walking is the most basic mode of transportation, yet it is not the first mode of transportation often thought of in roadway and streetscape design. Planning for walkers, especially the youth and elderly, will ensure the 9 Mile corridor is welcoming to all.

### THE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

#### Sidewalks

Dedicated five-foot sidewalks run along almost every block within the 9 Mile corridor and connect into most neighborhood side streets. However, the sidewalk width and separation from the roadway differs drastically, at times even block by block. This inconsistency, coupled with the lack of pedestrian-oriented amenities (e.g., benches, trees, active frontages, etc.), leaves pedestrians feeling at times unsafe and unprotected, if not unenjoyable.

#### Bike Facilities

Currently, no dedicated or shared bike lanes exist along 9 Mile, although bicyclists do ride on the sidewalk. Similar to the thought of driving a vehicle, a key factor in one's use of a bicycle as a means for transportation is the availability and type of secure parking at the end destination. These bicycle facilities are more than simple bike racks, they include amenities such as covered shelters and repair stations.

Bicycle parking is flexible in that it can be installed in an existing vehicular parking spaces in instances where space within the streetscape is limited. In general, 12 bicycle racks occupy the same space as one vehicle would.

## Street Furniture

Seating areas, trash / recycling bins, art installations, and lighting are just a few examples of street furniture that provides a comfortable pedestrian environment and adds a unique character. The following are recommendations for street furniture along the corridor:

- » Pedestrian-scale lighting should be decorative (similar to the street light posts within the DDA District). The existing 'cobra' style, commercial lights should be replaced where possible with the streetscape reconstruction. New developments should provide decorative building mounted lights (i.e., not simple wall packs) and prioritize lighting for pedestrian access points / areas. For streetlights, poles should be located at least 10 feet from full growth tree canopies, be a maximum height of 14 feet, and be spaced approximately 50 feet on-center.
- » Benches should be dispersed throughout the corridor and always provided at transit stops. While the bench is recommended to be metal, the seat itself should be a composite material that is more conformable for all seasons of weather in Michigan.
- » Bicycle parking should be placed along the corridor to encourage ridership. The majority of bicycle parking will be for short-term use, but long-term parking should also be considered in some locations to enable bicycling commuting (e.g.: at transit stops, civic uses, etc.).

## PARKING

Similar to the variable width and location of the sidewalks, building setbacks and the location of parking areas also vary from parcel to parcel, and block to block.

The majority (65%) of buildings are setback 15 feet or greater, however only 35% of parcels have usable front-yard parking areas. Front yard parking areas create a number of conflict points, both for pedestrians and for moving traffic; as sites are redeveloped, front yard parking should be re-purposed for landscaping, pedestrian spaces, or new building footprints. There are no on-street parking facilities and often, businesses do not make use of shared parking lots to their full extent.

Many of the current blocks and buildings have pedestrian oriented characteristics that already lend to rear parking and smaller front yard setbacks, which is the recommended treatment moving forward. Where possible, alley-accessible parking for employees and residents of a mixed-use building should be maximized.

*“Eliminate parking on 9 Mile and move it to behind the businesses allowing wider/walkable sidewalks.”*



*“Parking over the sidewalk blocks a driver’s vision of on-coming traffic.”*

*“Eliminate / re-purpose surface parking lots. No additional surface parking lots street facing.”*

*“More crosswalks going across 9 Mile, so people don’t have to cross on their own.”*

*“Slow down traffic.”*

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

The regional public transportation provider SMART, operates the 710 Bus Line along 9 Mile. It's important to note that this transit line (Route 710) is the busiest crosstown route (4th busiest in the entire SMART network) and is often used to connect with SMART's busiest route (Gratiot Avenue), providing essential transportation throughout Macomb County, but also to Oakland and Wayne Counties.

Route 710 has a total of 22 bus stops along this stretch of 9 Mile (both east and west bound). These existing bus stops are often very basic, consisting only of signage and are not ADA-compliant. Of these stops:

- » 14% have covered shelters
- » 57% have a paved, 5-foot walkway
- » 29% have no walkway or amenity



Above: Example of an existing transit stop with no amenities.

Map 5. Smart Bus Routes & Stops, 2021



Figure 10. Recommended Transit Enhancements

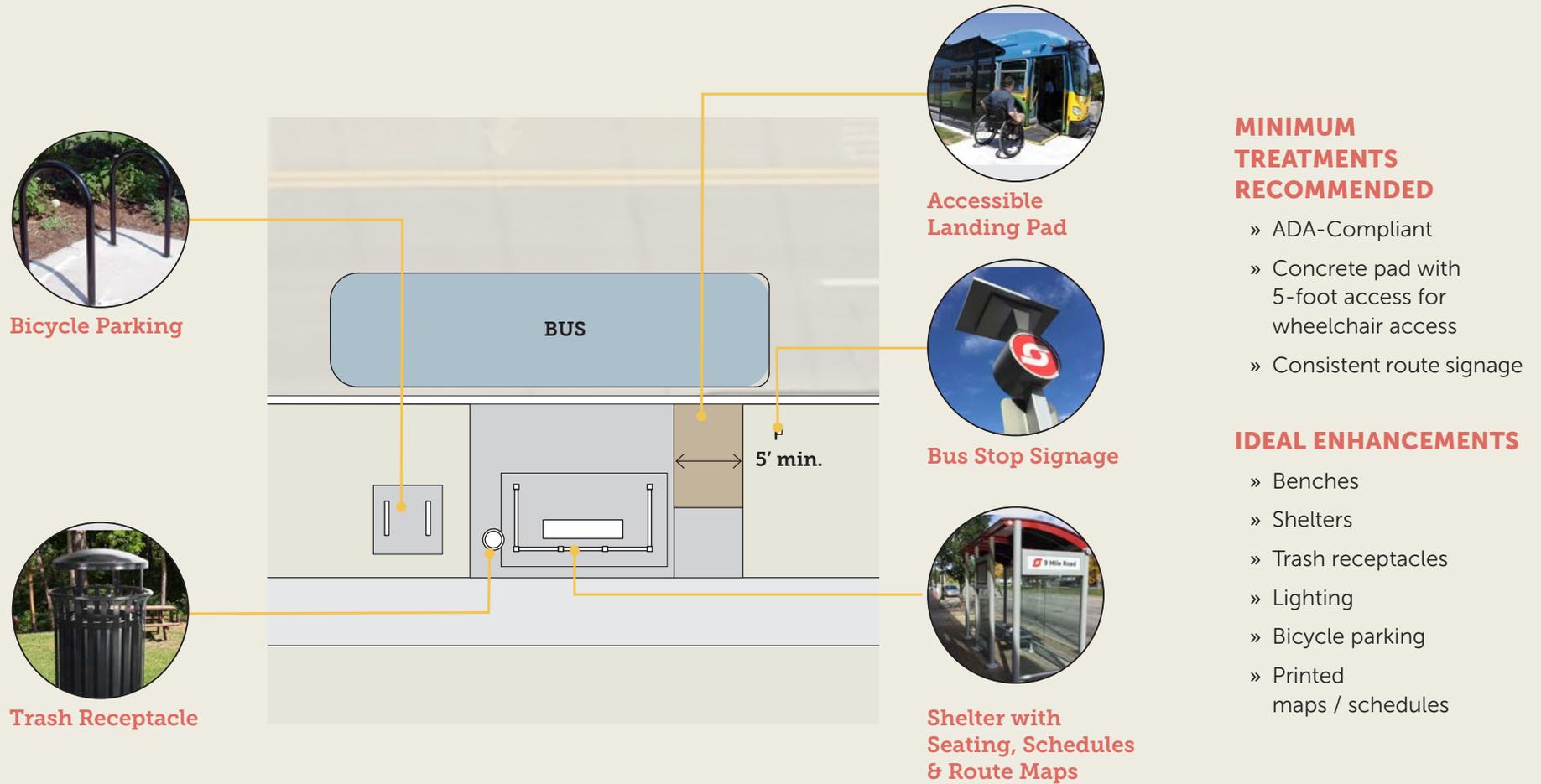


Figure 11. Frequency of Landscape Features, 2021



• Tree Lawns—36% of all Parcels



• Private Yard Landscaping—23% of all Parcels



• Street Trees (within the public rights-of-way)—9% of all Parcels



# Green Infrastructure & the Urban Forest

## STREET LAWNS & PRIVATE LANDSCAPING

Approximately 36% of parcels on the corridor have some form of a street lawn. This often takes the form of a four-foot-wide grass area along the entire frontage of a parcel or it may only consist of a small patch of grass in one portion of the parcel. Many areas of the corridor consist of a concrete “tree lawn” that could easily be improved.

Only a few lots observed were landscaped or buffered from the adjacent neighborhoods with landscaping or greenbelts. Protection of adjacent single-family homes from the impacts of traffic, headlights, and other related nuisances should be a priority to address with new landscaping.

## STREET TREES

Less than 10% of all parcels on 9 Mile have street trees, of which many include municipal owned parcels. To a lesser extent, street trees are visible west of Gratiot Avenue, where residential uses are more prominent.

## IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Corresponding to the lack of greenery, almost all developed sites are covered by 80% or more impervious surfaces. An unusual amount of this impervious surface comes from excess pavement in front of businesses, enlarged curb cuts, and surface parking lots (as opposed to building footprints). There is a significant opportunity to reduce the total amount of impervious surfaces with both the reconstruction of 9 Mile and zoning provisions for landscaping.

*“Harmonize the look of the corridor with landscaping and greenery. I love the idea of pocket parks, fountains, benches, artwork, etc.”*



*“Make 9 Mile more health conscious and environmentally friendly. Let’s lead Macomb County into being the first to set the tone for greenspace.”*

*“Require businesses to provide and maintain landscaping.”*

*“Trees, thousands more! It’s a barren landscape.”*



*Left: Example of an existing 9 Mile business that provides excellent private landscaping—both trees and ornamental foundation plantings.*

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# ZONING PLAN

*Recommended zoning ordinance amendments for 9 Mile are designed to foster an inclusive, safe, sustainable, and active corridor that is reflective of its unique character.*

## A Need for Modern Regulations

Eastpointe’s current zoning code does not directly encourage the type of private investment that is supportive of an accessible and safe pedestrian-oriented environment for 9 Mile.

To rectify this, the following section outlines recommended zoning updates, changes in land use, and design guidelines that are known to support walking, biking, and transit, and that will promote economic development. These recommendations will make it easier to coordinate future development and redevelopment on various sites.

**Map 6. Existing Zoning Districts, 2021**



## ZONING ALONG THE CORRIDOR TODAY

Parcels along 9 Mile are zoned a mix of different residential and commercial districts:

- » R-1, One-Family Residential
- » RM-1, Multiple-Family Residential
- » OS-1, Office Service
- » B-2, Downtown
- » B-3, General Business
- » P-1, Vehicular Parking

These zoning districts are relatively singular, in that they do not accommodate a mix of uses within each classification. There are also several uses that are permitted within these zoning districts that are at odds with the stated vision for the 9 Mile corridor, including:

- » Adult entertainment establishments
- » Auto repair shops
- » Car washes
- » Drive-through uses (including restaurants)
- » Gas stations / oil change shops
- » Gun ranges
- » Self-storage facilities

While these uses may be appropriate in other areas of the city, they do little to further the redevelopment of 9 Mile into a vibrant, pedestrian oriented, neighborhood serving corridor.

*“Bars restaurants, specialty stores, shopping, coffee shops, etc. would be great.”*



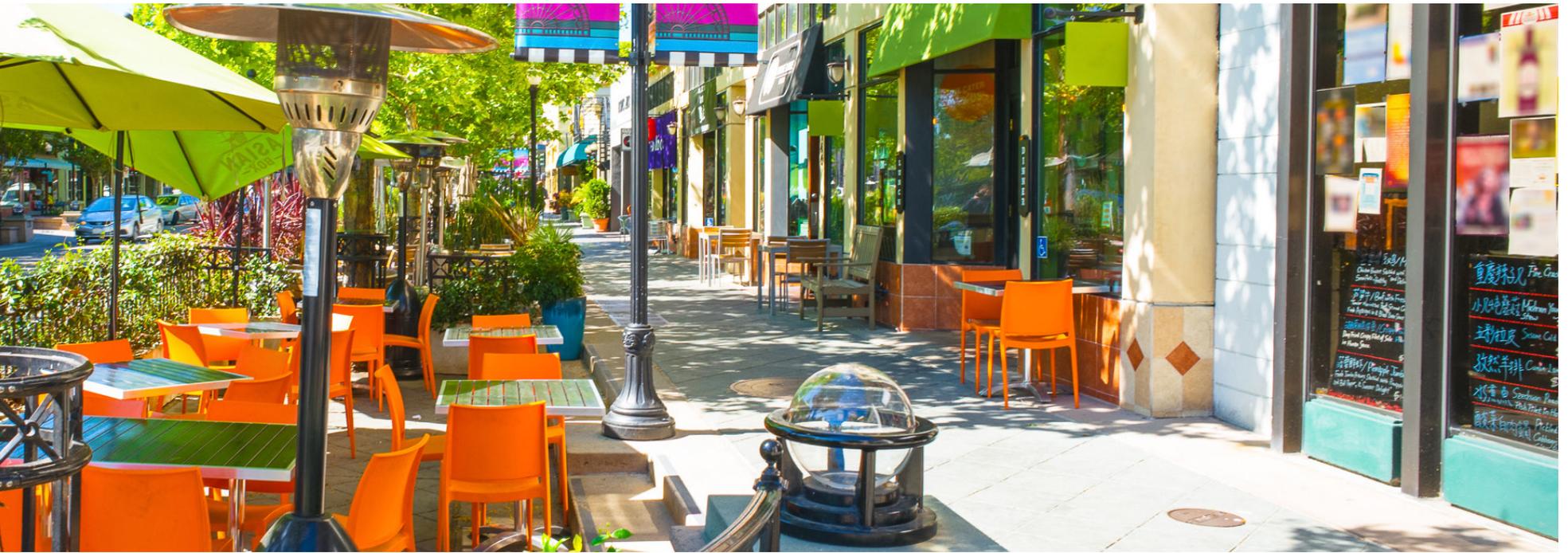
*“I think near the “downtown Eastpointe” area would be ideal for multiple-family story housing, on the higher end scale, with businesses/restaurants on the ground floor.”*

*“Don’t allow any more auto related business; make it feel less industrial, and more fun!”*

*“More outdoor dining areas, a small space to eat or drink outside a business would be great. More art outside of buildings would be beautiful as well.”*

*“I would like to see sit-down restaurants/breweries.”*

*“There are too many Family Dollar and Mini-Storage type businesses near 9 Mile. These businesses do not provide products that we need, and they are poor job creators.”*



*These recommended zoning standards should apply to all new construction that requires site plan review. Existing buildings could come into gradual compliance with the new regulations through smaller building additions or with a change of use.*

## Zoning for Change

To create consistency along the corridor, a new zoning designation should be crafted and applied to all the parcels fronting 9 Mile Road from Kelly Road to the western municipal boundary.

## DEFINING A NEW, MIXED-USE DISTRICT

The first step in implementation is to create a new mixed-use zoning district, for instance:

*“The Main Street Mixed-Use District is intended to permit small to medium scale mixed-use development that encourages pedestrian, bicycle, and transit uses as a means of accessing and supporting these developments. This includes a diversification of uses, such as commercial, office, recreation, civic, and residential to enhance the vitality and appeal of the corridor. This District further intends to protect the integrity of the surrounding residential uses by the installation of landscaping, buffers, etc.”*

Within such a new mixed-use district, there are several land uses that are recommended to be permitted by right and by special land use (Table 3). Additionally, the permitting of temporary and seasonal uses and structures (such as outdoor seating, food trucks, mobile vendors, etc.) with administrative review only is recommended.

Table 3. Recommended Land Uses

### Permitted Uses by Right

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Animal grooming / vet clinics (no boarding)                       | 11. Brewpub / craft distillery, with tasting rooms, retail, restaurant   | 20. Home business / occupations  |
| 2. Apartment buildings (up to 8 units)                               | 12. Child care centers   | 21. Indoor / outdoor recreation and fitness facilities                                   |
| 3. Art / music / dance studios and galleries                         | 13. Civic institutions (e.g.: post office, police and fire stations, but not including service or storage yards) | 22. Libraries, museums, and the like   |
| 4. Artisan maker spaces  | 14. Coffee shop / cafes  | 23. Medical, dental and physical therapy offices, clinics, laboratories and similar uses |
| 5. Assisted living facilities  | 15. Community gardens  | 24. Offices  |
| 6. Attached dwelling units (3-8 units): triplex, fourplex, townhouse | 16. Dwelling units in a multi-use building (up to 8 units)   | 25. Outdoor dining / cafes   |
| 7. Bakery, wholesale   | 17. Farmers market   | 26. Personal service establishments  |
| 8. Bars  | 18. Financial institutions   | 27. Restaurants  |
| 9. Bed and breakfast   | 19. Garden centers   | 28. Retail (including furniture and household)   |
| 10. Bicycle-sharing facility   |  |  |

### Special Land Uses

- |   |  |                                    |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Business, trade, and technical schools | 4. Lodge, private club, banquet hall     | 7. Private parking lot / structure |
| 2. Catering facility                      | 5. Multiple-family residential, >8 units | 8. Religious institutions          |
| 3. Liquor store                           | 6. Printing and publishing               | 9. Transit exchange                |



*Above (top to bottom): Example one-story and three-story buildings that define the “street wall” and add visual interest to the streetscape.*

## Other Design-Based Zoning Considerations

In addition to the recommended uses for the new, mixed-use zoning district, a handful of design-based considerations are also recommended for any new construction. Infill and increment changes on sites should seek to incorporate these best building, facade, public realm, and transportation standards where feasible. Straightforward requirements will provide property owners and developers with a clear guidebook for building improvements and new construction.

### **BUILDING CONFIGURATION & FACADE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Minimum Building Height**

Buildings should be a minimum of two-stories in height. To encourage future adaptive reuse and flexibility of the space, floor to ceiling heights should be a minimum of 16 feet (for the first floor). Buildings exceeding the maximum height of three-stories / 40 feet should be allowed with special land use approval, up to a maximum height of 50 feet. The additional fourth-story should be setback by a minimum of 10 feet.

#### **Street Entrance Orientation**

Buildings should have their functional, primary entrance oriented onto 9 Mile. Additional entrances should be oriented to a parking area, alley, or side street. Entries should be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with architectural elements and details such as roof overhangs, awnings, recessed entries, lintels, and similar design features.

For buildings with more than one tenant, the building design of each storefront should be generally uniform and consistent in architectural treatments.

## Establish Minimum Build-to-Line

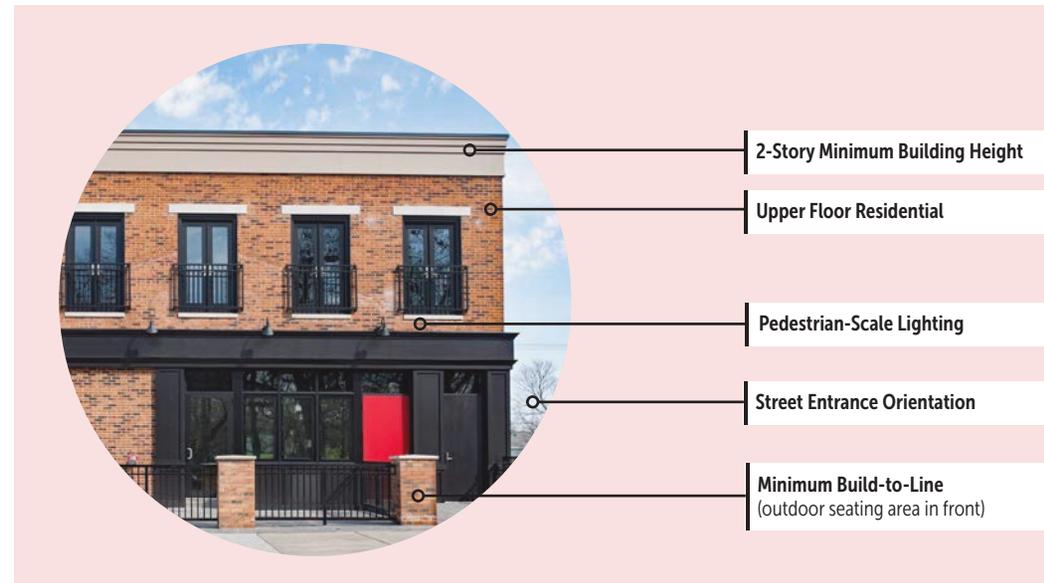
Structures should be setback no greater than 10 feet from the street right-of-way in order to define the “street wall.” Where the proposed setback is 10 feet, the area should be designed for usable, pedestrian space (such as outdoor seating, bike racks, etc.), or foundational landscaping.

To provide flexibility, it is recommended that the Planning Commission could grant exceptions for setbacks greater than 10 feet, where conducive to additional private or public open space and similar amenities. These setbacks should include elements (e.g., a knee wall, fencing, landscaped hedge, etc.) that continues to hold the “street-wall,” even if the building footprint itself is set back.

## Active, Street-Facing Façades

No blank walls should face the public street, sidewalks, or other public spaces, including parking areas. Elements such as windows, doors, columns, changes in material, and similar details should add visual interest. For non-residential uses on the ground floor, windows and doors or other openings should comprise at least 60% of the total building length. The use of spandrel (fake) windows are not encouraged.

Figure 12. Example of Building Configuration & Design Best Practices

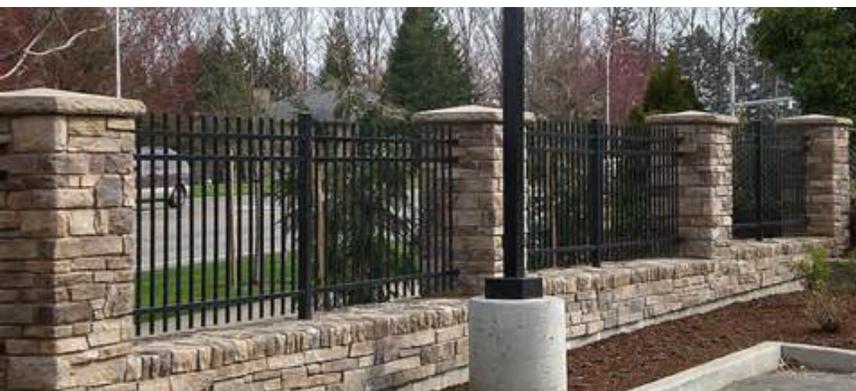
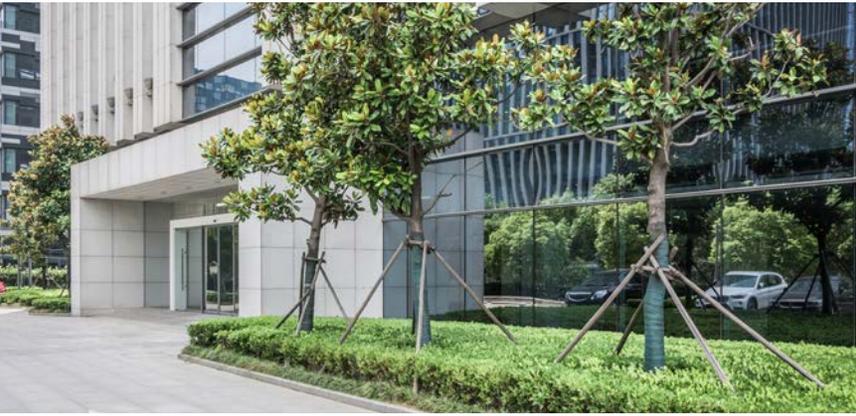


## RECOMMENDED DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

The following dimensional standards in Table 3 are also recommended for the mixed-use district:

Table 4. Recommended Dimensional Regulations

Standard	Requirement
Front Yard Setback	10-foot maximum (or greater with Planning Commission approval)
Side Yard Setback	0 feet
Rear Yard Setback	20-foot minimum (where the rear yard includes a public alley, the public alley width shall be included in the required rear yard setback)
Maximum Building Height	3-stories, 40-foot
Additional Building Height Permitted	Buildings exceeding the maximum height of 3-stories / 40 feet should be allowed with Special Land Use approval, with a maximum building height of 50 feet (the additional story should be setback by a minimum of 10 feet)



## **PUBLIC REALM RECOMMENDATIONS**

Green spaces, landscaping, and open spaces can enhance the walkability and livability of the corridor, thereby supporting property values along 9 Mile. They also support the business environment by strengthening the local market.

### **Landscape Minimums**

Establish clear standards for what type and quantity of landscaping is necessary and where it is recommended to be located, to assist developers to best design their site early on. This includes standards for residential green space (e.g.: a minimum common green space square footage per unit) and landscaping for commercial uses (e.g., bioswales in surface parking lots). Encourage green infrastructure techniques, such as porous asphalt and concrete pavers, by allowing them to count towards the minimum greenspace requirement, along with green roofs.

### **Foundation Landscaping**

Require landscaping along at least 30% of the front foundation of a building to soften the appearance. This could also be accomplished with landscaped planters.

### **Encourage New Public Spaces & Places**

Incentivize the expansion of the public realm and public amenities by offering a residential density bonus and/or require minimum plazas / public art installations when triggered by certain developments (e.g.: over an established number of residential units).

### **Green Infrastructure**

Provide standards for environmentally sensitive design to protect and enhance water and air quality and the community's health. This includes the incorporation of native species in landscaping arrangements, the optimization of natural light penetration into buildings, green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, etc.

Figure 13. Green Infrastructure Possibilities as a Result of Zoning Ordinance Modifications

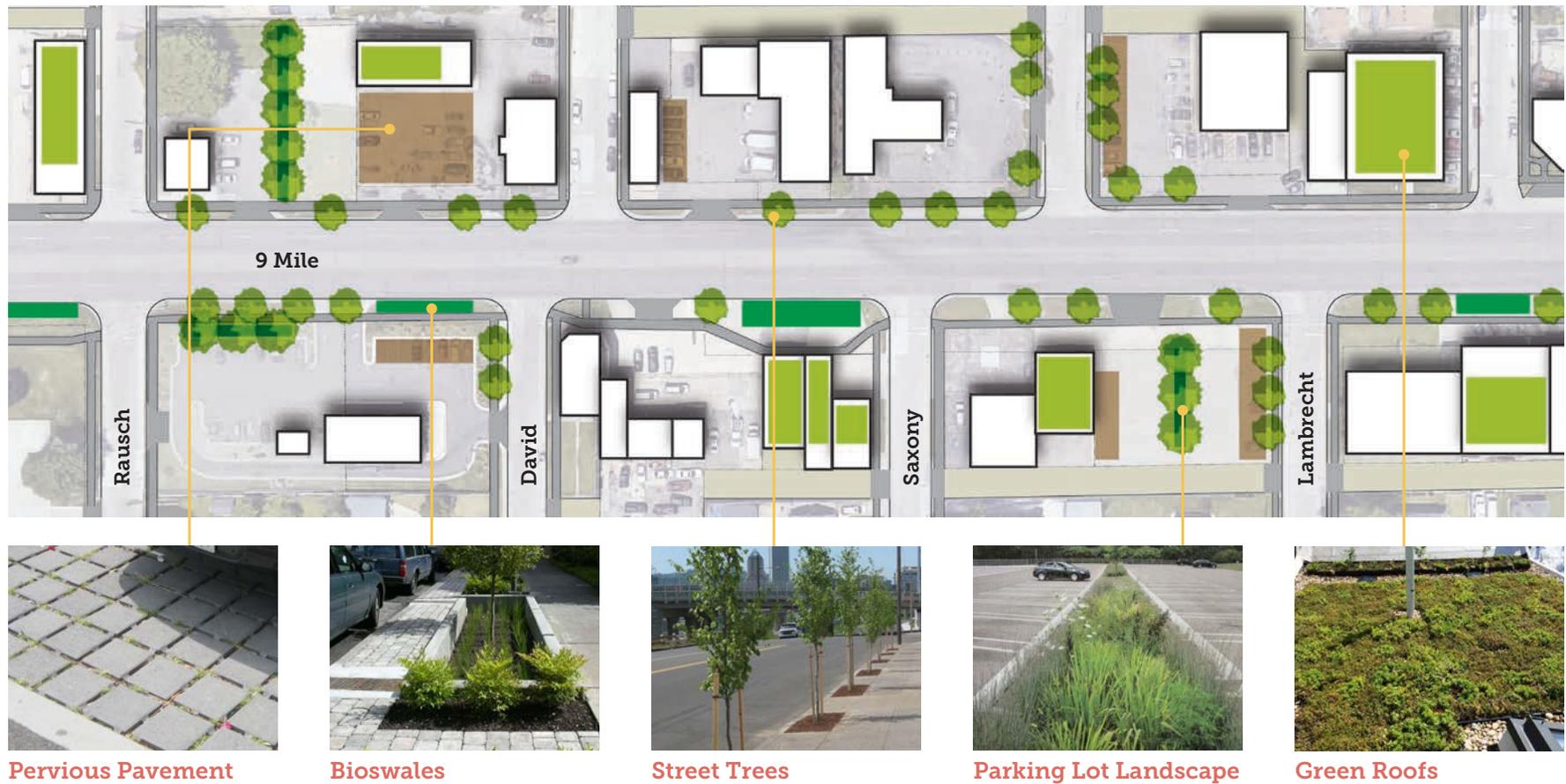
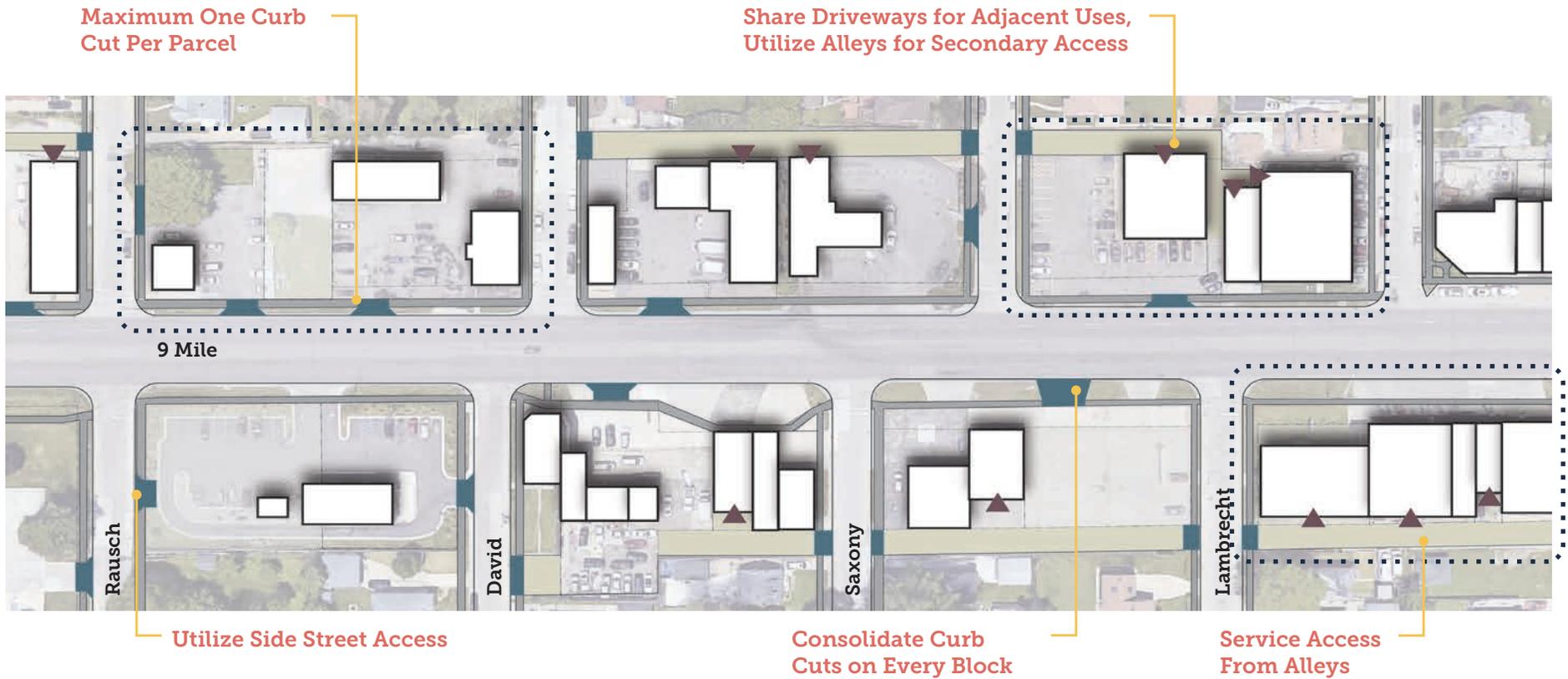


Figure 14. Best Practices for Access Management (that are possible with zoning ordinance amendments)



## TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporating the following pedestrian-oriented development standards and flexible parking and access strategies can decrease the overall parking demand and provide for greater, safer access to businesses.

### Right-Size Parking Standards & Shared Parking

Review all parking minimums to ensure the standards reflect current best practices (e.g.: 1 parking space per 350 square feet of floor area for commercial uses is recommended; currently the Ordinance requires one parking space per every 200 square feet of commercial floor area). Parking should also be restricted to the rear- or side yards.

Encourage shared parking lots by working with property owners on a standard shared parking agreement.

### Parking Lot Screening

Side yard parking and existing front yard parking should be screened with landscaping, or a decorative low wall (no higher than 36-inches). Building walls should be extended where possible to maintain a cohesive appearance.

### Bicycle Parking

Require that bicycle parking be provided when a threshold of on-site vehicular parking spaces are required. Develop a typical standard detail of the bicycle facility for corridor uniformity and locate them strategically near bus stops, residential developments, and other points of interest /gathering.

### Access Management

Currently, the Ordinance does not prescribe access management provisions (except for a couple instances where a 60-foot setback from a curb and an intersection is required). The following zoning standards will improve access and safety along the corridor:

- » Limit driveways to one per parcel, and require side street access where practical.
- » Consolidate driveways (two-way instead of two, one-way drives).
- » Remove curb cuts where alley service access is available.
- » Require continuous, sidewalks across driveways (minimum 5 feet, <2% cross slope).
- » Encourage shared access points and cross access agreements between adjacent sites.
- » Limit the width of all driveways (18 feet maximum for two-way traffic).



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# STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

# Moving Forward, How Does 9 Mile Evolve?

Change starts with the city laying the foundation for reinvestment to occur. This is primarily triggered by the 9 Mile Road reconstruction and redesign of the public realm, which will improve safety, access, and mobility options. While changes to the roadway itself may have engineering limitations, the zoning and building design recommendation of this Plan offer self-enforcing strategies that can calm traffic and place greater attention onto all users of the corridor.

In addition to the streetscape, other changes to 9 Mile will be incremental over time; that is, gradual compliance with the vision of this Plan, such as a new use in an existing building or a small addition (either horizontally or vertically). Changes to the natural environmental (both on private property and within the public realm) will also be impactful.

Finally, significant redevelopments on the corridor (such as infill projects, or the complete demolition of a structure and new construction) offer the largest opportunities for full compliance with the vision of this Plan.

## Phase 1

**2022:** The first phase of reconstruction begins at Eastpointe’s western municipal boundary (Beachwood) and continues east to Gratiot Avenue.

## Phase 2

**2023:** Phase 2 runs from Gratiot Avenue east to Tuscany.

## Phase 3

**2024:** The final stage is planned from Tuscany, east to Kelly Road.

Map 7. Phases of Corridor Reconstruction



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

Figure 15 illustrates the potential for both infill redevelopment and adaptive reuse of an existing structure. This block (south side of 9 Mile, between Saxony and Lambrecht) represents a typical sized block (228 feet by 100 feet) that is currently underutilized.

The inspirational images below represent redevelopment scenarios for the block: the new mixed-use building could accommodate +/- 2,800 SF of retail (8 parking spaces) and +/- 6, 2-bedroom residential units (approximately 1,000 SF each) with 9 parking spaces, including 5 covered spaces.

### 1 Outdoor Dining / Flexible Pop-Up Space



### 2 New Construction: 3-Story, Mixed-Use

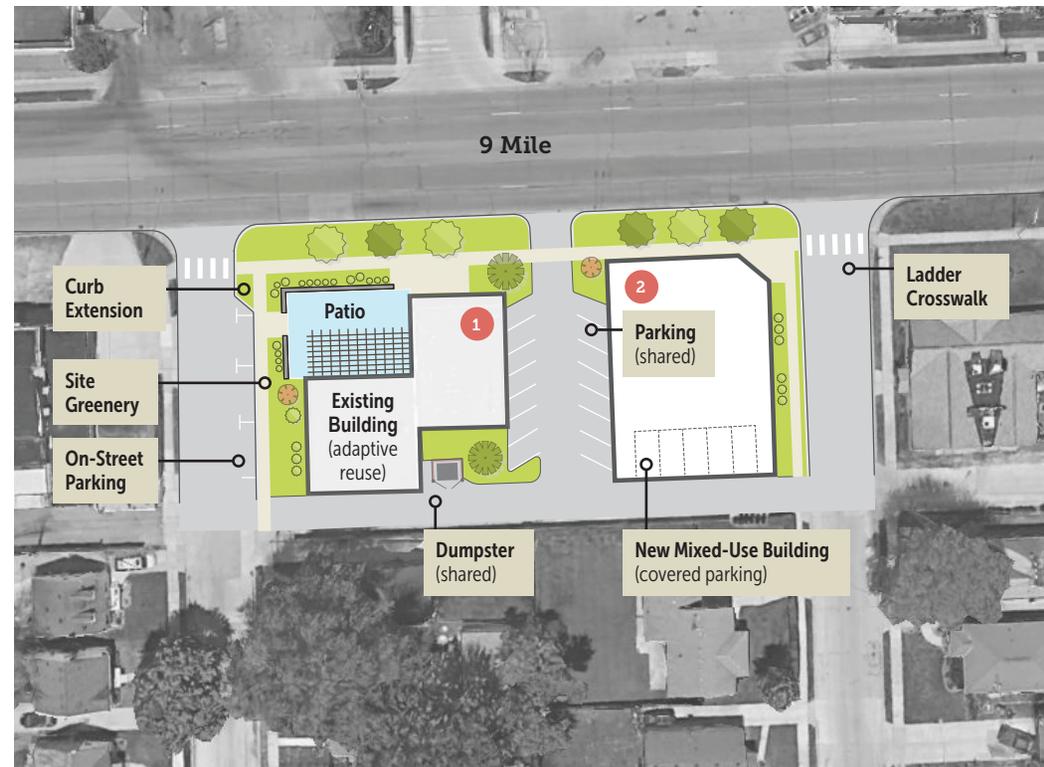


Figure 15. Redevelopment Scenarios



Left: Existing block conditions.

Below: Potential redevelopment configuration.





## Implementing the Vision

This Strategic Action Plan outlines a variety of policy initiatives and projects that can aid in transitioning the 9 Mile corridor into a more special and distinctive place. This includes programs to improve public infrastructure and enhance streetscapes, as well as implementing projects that more directly lead to new private business investments and an increase in the tax base.

# Strategic Action Plan

Generally, the projects, policies, and initiatives described in Table 5 on the following page will be undertaken over a period of 10-years and are intended to remain slightly flexible to permit Eastpointe to respond to funding, private investment, and land opportunities as they become available.

## PHASING

The recommended actions within each phase are not mutually exclusive to one phase or another, however Table 5 does propose a sequence of timing for implementation with three phases:

- » **Phase 1:** 2022–2023
- » **Phase 2:** 2024–2026
- » **Phase 3:** 2027–2032

Within each phase are also recommended priorities levels (low, medium, and high) for the city to evaluate (at a minimum) on an annual basis.

## PARTNERS & FUNDING

The primary responsible party for leading the project or policy is identified, with potential partners listed in the adjacent column—these are entities whose support will likely be needed in order to fully realize the action item. The Action Plan further identifies which of the established five goals of this plan each of the proposed projects or policies supports by its accomplishment. Funding for these recommendations is anticipated to come from a variety of sources, including the city’s general fund, grants, donations, and private investment.

*“Keep the area family oriented—parks, recreation centers, playgrounds, farmers markets, community gardens, etc. This was always a great area to raise children and build a family—it would be nice to keep that in mind while expanding within the community.”*



*“Make it pedestrian/bicycle friendly and give people a variety of business and services so they want to spend time and money. A community theatre or type of small family-oriented music venue would be great.”*

*“I would like to see more commercial space occupied by family-owned businesses of all kinds.”*

**Table 5. 10-Year Strategic Action Plan**

Project Name	Priority Level	Lead Party	Potential Partners	Goal Realization				
<b>Phase 1: 2022-2023</b>								
Zoning Code Amendments	high	PC	CC	●	●	●	●	●
Tree Planting Program	medium	CA	BEA, BO, MC		●		●	●
Community Business Outreach	medium	CA	BO, MEDC				●	●
Foster Corridor Partnerships	medium	CA	all	●	●	●	●	●
Shared Access Easements	high	CA	BO, PC	●			●	
Improve Access to Parking	medium	CA	BO, PC	●			●	
<b>Phase 2: 2024-2026</b>								
Wayfinding, Focal Areas & Gateways	medium	PC	BEA, BO, CA, CC, DDA, DTE	●	●		●	
Vacant Building Reduction Initiative	high	CA	BO, CC, CS, MEDC				●	●
Façade Improvement Program	high	PC	BO, CA				●	
Public Art & Design Accents	medium	CA	BEA, BO, CS, DDA, ECS, MC		●		●	
Green Infrastructure Pilot Program	low	CA	CC, MC, PC		●			●
Street Furniture & Amenities	high	CA	BEA, DDA	●	●	●	●	●
Shared Dumpster / Loading Program	low	CA	BO, PC				●	
<b>Phase 3: 2027-2032</b>								
Placemaking: Public Parks & Civic Spaces	medium	CA	BEA, BO, CS, DDA, DTE ECS, MC, MEDC, PC	●	●	●	●	●
City-Wide, Non-Motorized System	medium	CA	CC, MC, PC, SEMCOG	●	●	●	●	●
Redevelopment Assistance	high	CA	BO, CC, MEDC, PC			●	●	
Public Transit Enhancements	high	CA	MC, MDOT, SMART	●				●

**Key**

Goal Realization:

- Equitable Mobility & Accessibility
- Sustainable Green Spaces & Places
- Attainable Housing
- Resilient Economies
- Healthy Communities

Stakeholders:

- BEA Beautification Committee
- BO Business Owners
- CA City Administration
- CC City Council
- CS Community Stakeholders
- DDA Downtown Development Authority
- DTE DTE Electrical Company
- ECS Eastpointe Community Schools
- MC Macomb County
- MDOT Michigan Department of Transportation
- MEDC Michigan Economic Development Corp.
- PC Planning Commission
- SEMCOG SE Michigan Council of Governments
- SMART Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation

# Project & Policy Descriptions

The following sections contain a brief narrative for each project and policy by phase of implementation. Actions recommended in this near term (Phase 1) are smaller, visible enhancements to the corridor that the city can immediately focus on.

## PHASE 1: 2022—2023

### Zoning Code Amendments

Develop and adopt a mixed-use zoning district for the corridor to create consistency and incentivize the types of uses desired by the community. This would implement the recommendations of Chapter 5: Zoning Plan, which includes standards for allowable uses and dimensional provisions, and other design best practices for building placement, facade design, public realm treatments, and transportation.

### Tree Planting Program

Within the public rights-of-way (i.e., the tree lawn between the sidewalk and the curb), the city should offer a phased tree planting program, with trees spaced approximately 30 feet on-center. A diversity of native, street trees are recommended to avoid disease and to thrive in future climate changes.

### Shared Access Easements

Develop a private property easement program to incentivize shared drive approaches (access) between businesses on the same block.

### Community Business Outreach

Host forums, inviting 9 Mile businesses to participate and share their plans and long-term interests for their property. This is an opportunity for the City Administration to also share their goals and priorities for the corridor, to form partnerships with property owners, and to raise awareness about available programs and initiatives.

### Foster Corridor Partnerships

Spearhead regular joint meetings and develop a cooperative framework with Macomb County, SMART, St. Clair Shores, Warren, and other corridor stakeholders for the planning, cooperation, and implementation of joint programs, grants, initiatives, and public improvements. This could extend beyond 9 Mile, to other entry points of the city, and to transition areas with other communities.

### Improve Access to Parking

Work with private property owners to create shared parking areas with maintenance agreements and/or identify and construct public parking lots. Uniform parking signage should also be installed to designate where public or private parking is available.



*Above: One of the many beauties of public art is how flexible its design can be integrated into the streetscape and built environment, either temporarily or permanently (e.g.: bus shelter design, murals, etc.). Public art is also an effective activity to engage residents (especially youth).*

## PHASE 2: 2024—2026

### Wayfinding, Focal Areas & Gateways

At focal areas and gateway entrances along 9 Mile, plan, design, construct, and install wayfinding signage, hardscape elements (e.g.: decorative pavements, low walls or other gateways elements) and landscaping. Such aesthetic improvements give a consistent image to 9 Mile's entrances and create a greater sense of place.

### Vacant Building Reduction Initiative

Create incentives to reduce and discourage vacant buildings, recognizing that the corridor is home to several empty structures; if these sites were redeveloped or reoccupied, they could support existing and future developments. Initiative tasks include the physical clean-up, repair, or removal of blight, targeted code enforcement, and creating programs to educate property owners on property maintenance and ordinance compliance. Creating an inventory of the vacant structures / lots and assisting with marketing materials is another approach. Compliance with land use, health and safety ordinances, and codes is important to keeping 9 Mile a welcoming, desirable place to live, invest, and do business in.

### Façade Improvement Program

Develop a façade improvement program (beyond the DDA's facade program) to encourage owners and tenants to upgrade their properties, thus adding to the overall value of the area. Eastpointe may offer small loans or forgivable grants for the architectural design of building façades and for the construction of such improvements, subject to adopted design guidelines and criteria. Additional program activities could include replacement of nonconforming signs, shared dumpster enclosures, etc. Assistance could also be offered for soft costs, such as reduced city permit / inspection fees, assistance with the permitting process, and sharing of architectural services / preferred sign vendors (who are already familiar with Eastpointe's architectural and sign standards).



Left: Temporary uses such as this pop-up farmers market is a low-cost way of attracting underutilized spaces (e.g.: a vacant parking lot).

### Public Art & Design Accents

Allocate funds for beautification and curb appeal enhancements along 9 Mile, side streets, and alleyways including banners, murals, sculptures, accent landscaping (shrubs, seasonal flowers, planter boxes, etc.) and seasonal decorations. Public art offers a host of opportunities to create a unique identity for the corridor, one that reflects those who live, work, and play in the Eastpointe community.

### Street Furniture & Amenities

Develop a palette of coordinating street furniture and install benches, trash and recycling bins, etc. at planned locations. Dual trash / recycling bins and benches should be spaced so that at least one is located on every block and every transit stop. Street lighting should be pedestrian in nature and replaced during the planned streetscape reconstruction project, in partnership with DTE.

### Green Infrastructure Pilot Program

To increase awareness of green infrastructure and its benefits, the city could implement a pilot (demonstration) program on either city owned property or in partnership with a local property owner or the school district. This could include green infrastructure such as a rain garden, green roof, solar panels, etc. with dedicated signage.

### Shared Dumpster / Loading Program

Develop and implement a shared dumpster and loading zone program for blocks with more than one business / property owner.

*“More art, landscaping, aesthetics. Let’s be different than any other Macomb County community. The community is full of hard working and creative individuals.”*



*“I would love 9 Mile to be a gathering spot for entertainment, food events, and family gatherings. How about having pop up restaurants once a month to drive new and fun events to the city?”*



*Above (top to bottom): Example of placemaking in a commercial setting; existing vacant property that could benefit from redevelopment assistance.*

## PHASE 3: 2027—2032

### Placemaking: Public Parks & Civic Spaces

Create public open spaces and gathering spaces, as available. This may include public easements / public maintenance agreements within a new private development if such space is offered as a community benefit. Such spaces could serve as a location for events, civic activity, and city promotions, as well as enhancing the value, appearance, and quality of the environment. Other activities include assistance with the design, construction, and promotion of areas and facilities to be used for open space, recreation, public events, and gatherings.

### Redevelopment Assistance

To help stimulate new private investment and increase the tax base, Eastpointe could provide aid in the form of public improvements and funding for technical expertise such as:

- » Preparation of a design plan for the potential reuse of a site to optimize its potential.
- » Assistance with the costs of public infrastructure, streetscape, and other public improvements.
- » Preparation of a Request for Development Proposals and soliciting of developers.
- » The commission of market studies to better enable the city to attract appropriate redevelopment by identifying demand for retail, office, commercial, and housing uses.

### City-Wide, Non-Motorized System

Develop a marketing program to encourage non-motorized use in the corridor and illustrate how the 9 Mile corridor connects to other community assets and destinations. This could eventually include a bike share program in the long-term.

### Public Transit Enhancements

Assist with improvements for existing and planned transit infrastructure, such as:

- » Construction of bus turnout lanes and the associated removal and/or replacement of curbs, gutters, and bituminous paving.
- » Autonomous driving technology and improvements.
- » Construction of shelters, landing pads, and transit stops and the installation of benches, trash cans, bike racks, pedestrian crossing signals, signs, etc.
- » Development of a policy for ride sharing loading and adjust as necessary to reflect changes in autonomous vehicles.
- » Partnerships with Macomb County and other entities to expand / enhance ridership.



## Measuring Success

Throughout the implementation of this plan, it is recommended that Eastpointe track its progress, and share the results with the community.

The city should continue to review and analyze the data to re-evaluate implementation strategies and to celebrate milestones and accomplishments. Table 6 contains a list of possible performance metrics for future evaluation, grouped by the five established goals of Chapter 1.

**Table 6. Potential Performance Metrics for Continued Evaluation of 9 Mile**

Goal	Annual Performance Metric
<b>Equitable Mobility &amp; Accessibility</b>	
●	Number of improved transit stations.
●	Number of curb cuts eliminated / reduced in width.
●	Number of pedestrian and vehicular crashes.
●	Number of bicycle infrastructure facilities added.
●	Number of shared parking areas established.
<b>Sustainable Green Spaces &amp; Places</b>	
●	Number of new street trees planted.
●	Number of new open spaces / civic spaces created.
<b>Attainable Housing</b>	
●	Number of new housing units constructed.
●	Type of unit / housing style diversity.
●	Number of new businesses that support the local residential population (e.g.: grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.)
<b>Resilient Economies</b>	
●	Financial investment of new construction.
●	Number of businesses participating in the facade improvement program.
●	Change in taxable value.
●	Number of new jobs created.
●	Number of structures demolished or rehabilitated.
<b>Healthy Communities</b>	
●	Number of businesses and stakeholders engaged with the city through formal channels.
●	Number of new private outdoor dining areas established.
●	Number of new or enhanced public art pieces.