REVITALIZING 8 MILE

Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

Wayne State University

Graduate School

Revitalizing Eight Mile Capstone
in Collaboration with Eight Mile Boulevard Association

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Capstone Contributors

Master of Urban Planning Candidates

Arieona Branch
Justin Curry
Vanessa Greco
Salim Huerta
Catherine Jackson
Shenai Jackson
Paridhi Jain
Katy Lydon
Grayson Moore
Connor Pierce
Krista Stribling
Anya Tipton
Sheree Walton

In conjunction with

Dr. Rayman Mohamed | Wayne State University
Stephen Lindley | 8MBA

Special Thanks: Kyle Bryce | City of Ferndale; Roger Caruso | City of Ferndale; Terry Croad | City of Southfield; Khalil Ligon | City of Detroit; Todd Scott | Detroit Greenways Coalition; James Van Steel | MDOT; Dave Walker | City of Detroit

This project is supported by the MSU Regional Economic Innovation grant provided by the United States Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration, with additional support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The opinions expressed in the statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are the authors' sole responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the views of Michigan State University or any federal or state agency.

INTRODUCTION

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

"Many jurisdictions begin, end and overlap on Eight Mile, complicating services such as public transit. Its reputation as a divider between Detroiters and suburbanites also fuels socioeconomic inequality. The Eight Mile Boulevard Association exists to address this problem through collaboration while achieving tangible progress."
https://www.eightmile.org/20_years

Introduction

The Eight Mile Boulevard Association (8MBA) serves as a vital link between stakeholders along Eight Mile Boulevard, spanning Detroit, Macomb, and Oakland Counties. This plan addresses initiatives aimed at enhancing economic competitiveness on both sides of the border. The diverse jurisdictions along Eight Mile complicate services such as public transit, a challenge the 8MBA aims to solve through collaboration and tangible progress.

Founded in 1993 by a coalition that included the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (formerly the Greater Detroit Economic Group), and thirteen communities along with three counties bordering Eight Mile Road, the 8MBA has made progress through strategic action and community collaboration (Eight Mile).

While often seen as a dividing line, Eight Mile has a rich history as a connector for our region, state, and nation. Known historically as "*Baseline Road*," Eight Mile was designated as the baseline upon which the Northwest Territories were mapped under the Land Ordinance Act of 1785. It runs east to west from lake to lake, continuing west past Michigan to form the state line between Wisconsin and Illinois. Eight Mile served as the measuring point for Michigan's township range numbers and other mile roads, acting as the east-west axis for our state and the common border for various communities, counties, and state agencies (Eight Mile).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

Executive Summary

This report outlines guidelines for 8MBA and its members to implement in order to revitalize the Eight Mile corridor, spanning Detroit, Macomb, and Oakland Counties. The proposed multi-pronged economic development plan aims to enhance economic competitiveness and improve quality of life along the corridor. The guidelines are organized into three categories: *Economic Development* and *Land Use*, *Mobility*, and *Design*. Objectives for each category are detailed below.

Economic Development and Land Use

- Increase cohesion across community borders
- Minimize economic inequality and increase access to schools, healthcare, food and other necessities
- Promote 8 Mile Road as a destination

Mobility

- Improve corridor safety for all users
- Increase corridor access for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improve transit functionality and comfort

Design

- Promote continuity along and across the corridor
- Improve aesthetic beauty and character
- Increase community pride and investment

Following the identification of the above categories as well as the guidelines found in this report pertaining to each of them, nodes along the corridor were selected to serve as case studies for how these guidelines could be applied. Nodes are intended to be representative of a number (but not all) of the 8MBA member communities and to showcase the variety of circumstances found along 8 Mile Road. The selected nodes and a brief summary of what makes them unique are as follows:

Lahser Road

EXISTING CONDITIONS	PROPOSALS
● Close proximity to Sam's Club, roller rink, senior care center, and multi-family housing ● Vacant CVS building at the intersection ● 54 crashes at the intersection in 2022	● Add right turn bump outs for pedestrian and bicycle visibility ● Complete the red brick marked crossings ● Install a pedestrian crossing near Sam's Club ● Consider a community center for the vacant CVS building

Wyoming Avenue to Livernois Street

EXISTING CONDITIONS	PROPOSALS
● Close proximity to Kroger, Aldi, and Ferndale High School ● Historic significance as The Avenue of Fashion ● Existing bike lanes at Livernois ● 146 crashes in this area in 2022	● Encourage development at vacant 1600 W 8 Mile ● Create a food-based micro-district including the existing grocery stores along with a proposed food hall and community garden ● Facilitate facade improvements for aging buildings ● Improve screening, landscaping, and pedestrian experience along street-facing parking lots

John R Street

EXISTING CONDITIONS	PROPOSALS
● Striking racial and income disparities at this node ● Inadequate bus infrastructure ● Numerous vacant parcels commercial and residential	● Explore a 5-year phased mixed-use overlay district ● Utilize adjacent federal opportunity zones ● Expand entertainment and community building opportunities ● Coordinate with Pop-Up Hazel plans and encourage connection across 8 Mile between Detroit and Hazel Park ● Improve bus infrastructure including shelters, benches, and a dedicated in-stream bus stop

Van Dyke Avenue

EXISTING CONDITIONS	PROPOSALS
● Active but underutilized retail plazas ● Active construction improvements to the roadway, crosswalks, and Iron Belle bike trail ● 40 acres of vacant commercial space	● Implement a Bel-Air Neighborhood Center development at 9900 8 Mile to reinstate valuable neighborhood business that has been lost in this area ● Increase density of affordable housing ● Incorporate public art as a gateway between Warren to Detroit ● Establish a Mobility Hub at Bel-Air Neighborhood Center, servicing DDOT and SMART transit routes ● Improve connection to the Iron Belle Trail and Conner Creek Greenway

Gratiot Avenue

EXISTING CONDITIONS	PROPOSALS
● Dangerous intersection for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles alike ● Active retail facilities and restaurants around the intersection ● 53 crashes in this area in 2022	● Install sidewalk level bike lanes and bike boxes ● Improve pedestrian crosswalks and signal timing ● Develop a Multimodal Transportation Hub at 15205 8 Mile

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

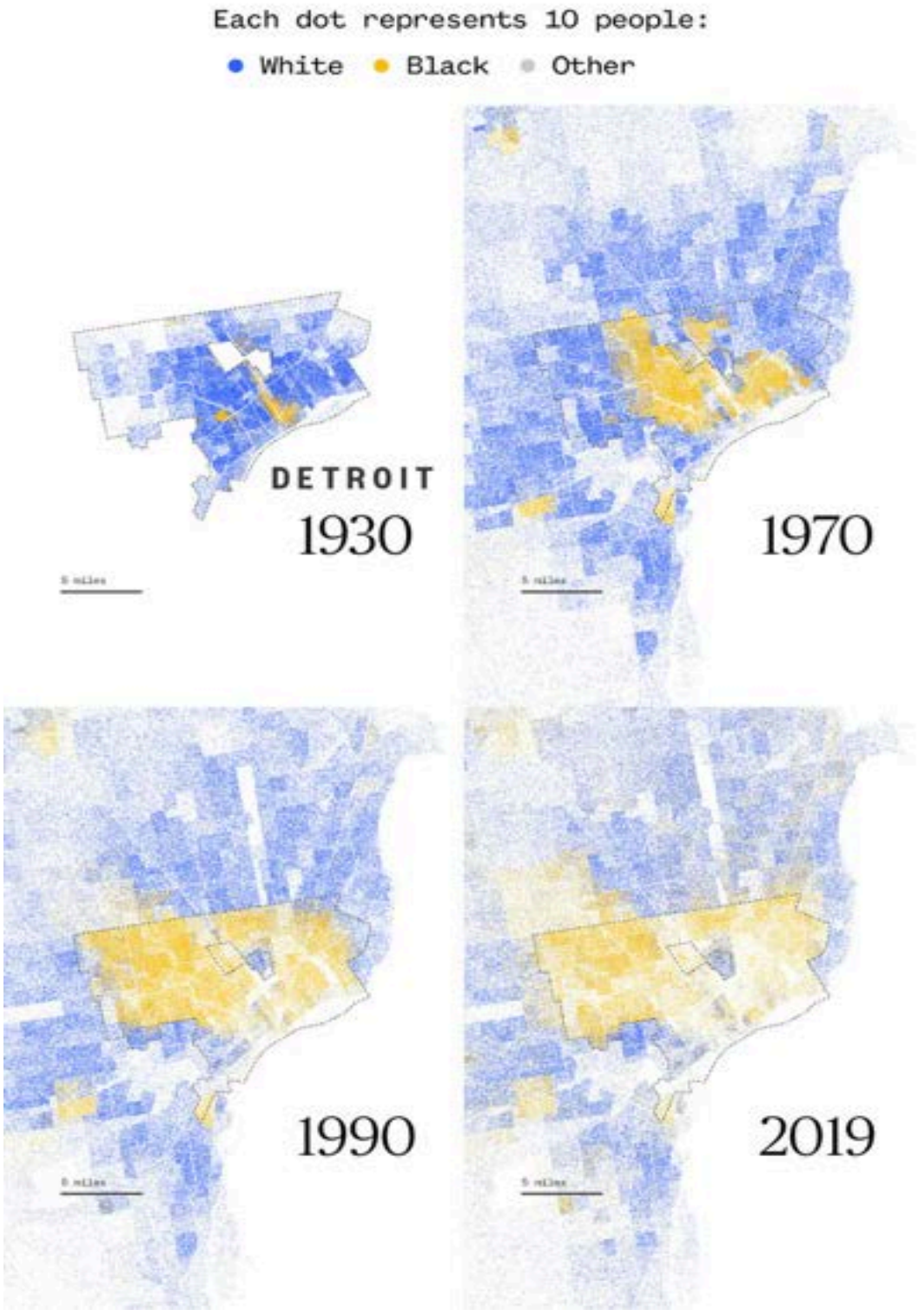
REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

REVITALIZING 8 MILE - Connecting Communities



Source: Bridge Michigan, 2021

8 MILE CORRIDOR

Historical and Racial Context

Eight Mile Road has historically served as a racial barrier dividing majority-Black Detroit from the city's white inner-ring suburbs. During the early to mid-20th century, policies such as redlining by banks and real estate agencies systematically prevented Black residents from buying homes in certain neighborhoods, particularly those north of 8 Mile Road. These practices were reinforced by federal housing policies and local ordinances, which promoted residential segregation. Moreover, the neighborhoods south of 8 Mile Road experienced significant economic decline after the deindustrialization of the 1970s and 1980s, when manufacturing jobs left the city. White-collar jobs and commercial investment, in turn, moved to the suburbs north of 8 Mile Road. At the same time, many white residents moved from Detroit to the suburbs in a phenomenon known as "white flight" in search of new housing developments, better schools, and the avoidance of Detroit's growing Black population after the Great Migration.

South of Eight Mile Road and west of Livernois Avenue, the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood in Detroit, was the hallmark of Black home ownership and community building in the early 20th century. In the 1920s and 1930s, this neighborhood symbolized promise and opportunity for Black families seeking home ownership and economic stability. This historic neighborhood, which began as a settlement for over 1,000 Black Detroiters who purchased farmland and built homes between 1900 and 1920, reflects a significant chapter in Detroit's complex history of redlining and housing discrimination. The 8 Mile Wall, constructed in 1941, helped solidify the 8 Mile corridor's reputation as a physical, social, racial, and psychological barrier between Detroit on the south, and the various suburbs on the north. This divide resurfaced again in 1973 when the City of Detroit's first African American mayor Coleman Young's "widely misconstrued comment" that told criminals to "hit Eight Mile Road'' resulted in a long-standing feud between Mayor Young and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and impeded efforts to work cooperatively along the corridor.

In recent history, a number of Detroiters have voiced concerns about racial profiling in the suburbs adjacent to 8 Mile. Some Black citizens avoid crossing the 8 Mile "barrier" for fear of being profiled; a number of Black residents have reported being stopped by law enforcement while walking and/or riding a bike. Suburbanites perceive the south side of 8 Mile (Detroit) as violent, unsafe, and crime ridden.

Despite facing numerous challenges, including the construction of the Eight Mile Wall in 1941—an imposing barrier meant to segregate evolving Black communities from new white developments—the residents of Eight Mile-Wyoming have continuously strived for economic and social advancement. Efforts are also underway to address some of the financial disparities as it relates to infrastructure. MDOT is currently spending $50 million for infrastructure improvements between Woodward and Van Dyke, impacting 4 communities, Detroit, Ferndale, Hazel Park and Detroit. I-75 improvements are also underway.

PART I: DESIGN GUIDELINES

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/LAND USE GUIDELINES

Existing Land Use Conditions and the Development Market

The M-102 corridor, known as 8 Mile Road, serves as a crucial boundary between Detroit and its northern suburbs, exhibiting diverse land use patterns. This arterial route traverses various municipalities and neighborhoods, reflecting its historical and economic importance. The corridor features a mix of commercial, residential, and industrial developments, including shopping centers, strip malls, large retail stores, dining establishments, single-family homes, apartment complexes, and condominiums. Additionally, light industrial facilities, warehouses, distribution centers, and manufacturing units contribute significantly to the local economy. Public and institutional facilities like schools, healthcare centers, and municipal buildings are also present.

Source: Getty Images https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/videos/8-mile-road

Zoning along 8 Mile in Detroit varies from predominantly commercial and mixed-use areas to residential and industrial zones. The commercial zones are designed to accommodate retail and food businesses, while mixed-use areas allow for a combination of residential, commercial, and office uses. Industrial zones typically support manufacturing and large-scale operations, with varying restrictions based on proximity to residential areas.

Despite recent developments, socio-economic disparities hinder community cohesion and development. Economic inequalities, limited access to quality healthcare, inadequate housing, poor road design and transit gaps, aging infrastructure, and environmental concerns are key challenges. These issues highlight the need for continued planning and revitalization efforts along this corridor.

Land Use Planning and Equitable Development

Effective land use planning is essential to promote balanced development and address the socio-economic challenges of the 8 Mile Corridor. Integrating business incubators, wellness centers, and homeless shelters into the existing urban fabric is necessary. Incorporating green spaces, recreational areas, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure can enhance the quality of life and encourage community engagement. The development plan should strategically place these facilities to maximize accessibility and impact while considering current land use patterns and zoning laws. Most importantly, the goal is to create and maintain inclusive and accessible community spaces.

Connecting Corridor Communities North and South of 8 Mile

Uniting the communities across 8 Mile Road through constructing multi-use developments, creating an urban park network, and establishing wellness centers and business incubators will create a healthier, more prosperous, and cohesive region. Identifying specific nodes for commercial, housing, and workspaces is key to focusing economic revitalization efforts. By addressing health, housing, and economic disparities, we can foster a stronger, more resilient community that thrives together. This proposal calls for collaboration, investment, and a shared vision for a brighter future for all residents across 8 Mile Road.

OBJECTIVES

Economic Development

Stimulate local economies by fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses through business incubators offering mentoring, access to funding, and other essential resources. Successful businesses contribute to the tax base, improving public services and infrastructure.

Enhance Quality of Life

Improve residents' physical and mental well-being through accessible wellness centers providing comprehensive health services and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Expand Social Services

Provide immediate relief and long-term solutions to homelessness through well-equipped shelters and support services, including job training, substance abuse counseling, and housing assistance. Comprehensive services address the root causes of homelessness. *Reducing homelessness improves the overall community safety.*

Community Unity

Bridge the socio-economic divide across 8 Mile Road, creating a cohesive community through collaborative efforts and shared initiatives.

Promote 8 Mile Road as a Destination

Market 8 Mile Road as a tourist destination, highlighting its cultural, historical, and economic significance to contribute to the local economy.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Land Use and Working with Key Players in Economic Development

Effective land use and stakeholder engagement in the 8 Mile Corridor are guided by core values of sustainability, inclusivity, collaboration, and transparency. These values ensure environmentally sustainable practices and inclusive benefits for all community members. A collaborative approach involving local government, businesses, community organizations, and residents, combined with transparent decision-making, builds trust and supports adaptive, innovative solutions to development challenges.

Strategies for Leveraging Economic Development Values

To implement these values, the strategy focuses on optimizing land use through mixed-use developments, adaptive reuse of vacant properties, and green infrastructure. Public-private partnerships are fostered with investment incentives and collaborative forums. Business growth is supported via incubators, funding access, and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, community well-being is enhanced by developing wellness centers, integrating green spaces, and providing support services for vulnerable populations. These strategies aim to empower local entrepreneurs, promote equity, build resilient communities, and drive sustainable economic growth.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Identifying Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders include local government officials, community leaders, business owners, non-profit organizations, healthcare providers, and residents. Engaging these stakeholders is essential for successful planning and implementation.

Methods for Stakeholder Engagement

Effectively leveraging social media, websites, and online promotion opportunities can significantly enhance community engagement with the 8 Mile Boulevard Association.. Current engagement methods such as public meetings, workshops, focus groups, and surveys provide stakeholders with a voice in the planning process and ensure active involvement in implementation. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and LinkedIn can amplify these efforts by raising awareness, sharing engaging content, live streaming events, and creating feedback channels. Websites serve as central hubs for information with dedicated project pages, interactive maps, resource libraries, and contact forms. Additionally, email newsletters, online advertisements, and community forums can be used to promote participation and keep the community informed.

Incorporating AI into community engagement strategies can further enhance these efforts. AI-powered chatbots can provide instant responses to common questions on websites and social media, while sentiment analysis tools can help gauge community sentiment and identify key concerns. Predictive analytics can forecast community needs and trends, informing planning decisions, and personalized content delivery can tailor communication to individual interests. To effectively implement AI, it is important to clearly define objectives, choose the right tools, ensure data privacy, and provide training and support for both staff and community members. By integrating these digital strategies, urban planning efforts can become more inclusive, responsive, and effective in meeting the needs of the community.

STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

Business Incubators

Objectives:

Including business incubators in a master plan for the 8 Mile corridor is a strategic decision with numerous benefits that can drive economic and community development. The 8 Mile corridor has historically faced economic challenges, including disinvestment and underdevelopment. Business incubators can act as catalysts for revitalization by attracting new businesses, creating jobs, and attracting additional investment. Incubators often lead to the establishment of new businesses that contribute to the economic base of the area, creating a multiplier effect that benefits the broader community. Furthermore, job creation is a critical need in economically challenged areas like 8 Mile Road. Business incubators can directly generate employment opportunities by boosting startups and supporting business growth. Incubators also facilitate workforce development by offering training programs and connecting residents with employment opportunities in emerging industries.

Source: Incubator at Sasaki Celebrates Grand Opening

Detroit BizGrid has created a virtual tool offering guidance on the area's existing incubators and other Business Support Organizations.

Implementation:

Foster incubator growth in two primary industries:

1. Manufacturing and Hardware Incubators: Detroit's historical strength in manufacturing and automotive industries positions it well for a resurgence in these areas, especially along the 8 Mile corridor which features countless auto-oriented businesses. Incubators that support startups in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and hardware innovation can leverage existing skills and infrastructure. These incubators could offer resources like prototyping labs, production facilities, and technical mentorship. These incubators would build on Detroit's industrial legacy, stimulate local employment in high-tech manufacturing roles, and boost local supply chains.

2. Tech and Innovation Incubators: Southeast Michigan's growing tech scene presents a significant opportunity to foster startups in software, digital media,

and emerging technologies. These incubators can provide critical support in areas such as coding, business development, and networking. Investment in tech incubators would attract skilled tech professionals and entrepreneurs, create a bedrock for tech startups to thrive, and position the corridor for long-term economic growth through tech-driven businesses.

These incubators should be established in strategic locations, offering mentoring and resources while collaborating with local universities and industry experts. They should also encourage community participation.

Wellness and Community Centers

Objectives:

Source: Health and Wellness Center | Architect Magazine

Introducing wellness centers along the 8 Mile corridor in Detroit can address several critical needs and provide numerous benefits for the community. The 8 Mile corridor, like many underserved areas, may be at risk of significant health disparities, including higher rates of chronic diseases and limited access to quality healthcare. Preventive care is imperative for reducing the incidence of chronic diseases and improving long-term health outcomes, especially in areas where residents may not have easy access to preventive services. Furthermore, wellness and community centers can serve as community hubs that foster engagement and social interaction, which are important for building strong, connected communities. Incorporating wellness centers into community development plans aligns with broader goals of creating healthier, more vibrant neighborhoods. Eight Mile Road does currently feature a number of “wellness centers”; however, they are primarily targeted towards the sale of marijuana products. The wellness centers recommended here are different concepts but include no drugs at all. The centers proposed are mainly for the health and safety benefits for the people in the community.

Existing wellness and community centers near the corridor include New St. Mark Family Life Center, Johnson Recreation Center, Joe Louis Playfield, Team Wellness Center, CNS Healthcare, Advantage Health Centers, and Motor City Center for Hope. Very few of these are directly on 8 Mile, and are therefore unable to serve a large scope of residents along this corridor, demonstrating the need for additional centers.

Implementation:

1. Identify properties along 8 Mile that are easily accessible via public transportation and have sufficient space for wellness activities.

2. Tailor the wellness centers to address the unique health needs of residents along the 8 Mile corridor by collaborating with local entities such as the Detroit Health Department, CNS Healthcare, Wayne State University's medical programs, and nearby hospitals like Sinai-Grace Hospital.

3. Offer services that address prevalent issues identified in a community needs assessment, such as diabetes management programs, mental health counseling, and substance abuse treatment.

Social Services and Support for the Unhoused

Source: Regional Partnership: How to Address Homelessness Differently - Western City Magazine

Bringing social services and support for the unhoused to 8 Mile is essential for addressing the immediate needs of vulnerable populations and fostering community well-being. The corridor, being a significant and visible area, presents an opportunity to centralize support services, ensuring accessibility for those in need while contributing to broader revitalization efforts. By integrating these services, we can promote safety, health, and long-term stability, ultimately creating a more inclusive and resilient community.

Objectives:

1. Ensure access to essential services such as food, shelter, and medical care for the unhoused population along the 8 Mile corridor.

2. Promote Housing First programs that prioritize providing stable housing before addressing other issues, fostering a supportive environment that integrates unhoused individuals into the community and reduces stigma.

3. Create accessible hubs for essential services and support for the unhoused.

Implementation:

1. Identify strategic locations along the 8 Mile corridor for service centers, ensuring they are easily accessible by public transportation.

2. Work with local shelters, churches, and community groups to identify and engage unhoused individuals, offering information about available resources.

3. Launch campaigns to inform the broader community about the services available and encourage community support and volunteerism.

4. Partner with local educational institutions and workforce development organizations to offer job training, skill development, and educational opportunities, complementing the efforts of Housing First programs.

Mixed-Use Development

Source: Woodward West - Apartments in Detroit, MI

Mixed-use development on 8 Mile is essential for revitalizing the corridor by integrating commercial, residential, and recreational spaces, which stimulates economic growth and enhances community livability. This approach creates vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that attract businesses, support local economies, and improve the quality of life for residents. Additionally, mixed-use development promotes sustainability and efficient land use, contributing to the overall revitalization and resilience of the area.

Objectives:

1. Encourage a blend of residential, commercial, and industrial uses to create dynamic spaces.

2. Create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods that offer a range of amenities and services, improving the quality of life for residents.

3. Design spaces that facilitate social interactions and community engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion.

4. Incorporate mixed-income, multi-family housing into multi-use developments to expand housing options for families of all sizes and income levels.

Implementation:

1. Modify zoning codes to allow for mixed-use buildings that combine apartments, retail shops, and office spaces, ensuring compatibility with existing land uses and community needs.

2. Collaborate with local business associations, neighborhood groups, and property owners along 8 Mile to identify priority development areas and gather input on community needs and preferences.

3. Offer targeted financial incentives such as tax credits and grants for developers who invest in mixed-use projects on 8 Mile, with a focus on affordable housing and community amenities.

4. Regularly review and adjust development strategies based on performance data and community feedback to ensure that mixed-use projects continue to meet the needs of the 8 Mile area effectively.

5. For mixed-use residential projects, increase the number of two- or more bedroom units in the building design to accommodate larger families, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Annual 8 Mile Festival

Objectives:

Develop an annual festival celebrating Metro Detroit's rich cultural heritage and economic potential to revitalize the corridor, boost the local economy, and foster community pride. This festival can generate significant revenue for local businesses by attracting visitors who will shop, dine, and stay in the area. This will create job opportunities and inject much-needed capital into our local economy. The festival serves as an opportunity to showcase Southeast Michigan's many amenities and cultural contributions.

Implementation:

Assemble a diverse planning committee representing local businesses, residents, artists, and community leaders. Include and feature existing music venues and restaurants along the corridor, as well as food trucks from Detroit and neighboring municipalities.

Organize festival logistics and infrastructure, such as permitting and finding suitable locations for stages, tents, restrooms, etc. Consider the feasibility of limiting car traffic to one direction on 8 Mile while allowing festival activities to take place on the opposite side.

Market 8 Mile Road as a Food Corridor

Currently, the stretch of 8 Mile Road between Southfield and Harper Woods features at least a dozen grocery stores. The corridor also features countless storefronts serving

iconic Detroit cuisine, such as pizza, coney dogs, and soul food. While these types of restaurants are integral to Detroit's identity and should remain so, 8 Mile lacks restaurants and storefronts providing healthier food alternatives.

Objectives:

Market 8 Mile as a food corridor. This will stimulate economic growth by attracting new food-related businesses and encouraging investment in the area, which can generate jobs and increase local revenue. It will also enhance the corridor's reputation and visibility as a destination for unique and high-quality food experiences, drawing visitors and boosting foot traffic to the area.

Sidewalk and crosswalk near Foodland Grocery on 8 Mile Road (Southfield, MI). Source: Google Earth, 2024.

Implementation:

1. Encourage the availability of healthier food alternatives along 8 Mile Road.

2. Transform vacant storefronts into vibrant local food vendors and provide incentives for entrepreneurs to establish new eateries. Use vacant storefronts temporarily as pop-up markets or food stalls to generate interest and test market viability, thus attracting permanent tenants and creating a buzz in the area.

3. Create a "food trail", mapping a walking route connecting various food destinations along 8 Mile Road.

4. Highlight iconic Detroit cuisine, such as pizza and coney restaurants, alongside healthier options.

5. Improve walkways and pedestrian safety near food establishments.

6. Consider outdoor seating areas and green spaces.

7. Create food-focused business incubators that provide resources and support for new and emerging food businesses. Offer assistance with leasing, marketing, and navigating regulations.

8. Provide guidance and assistance with obtaining the necessary licenses and permits to operate commercial kitchens and food businesses. Offer workshops and resources to help entrepreneurs understand regulatory requirements.

MOBILITY GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Current Conditions

Currently, the right-of-way for 8 Mile Road is 200 feet. The road has four lanes of traffic in each direction totaling 12 feet each. The central median varies from roughly 55 feet to 70 feet across the length of the corridor. Often, an additional left turn lane will be added on one side of the road, cutting into the median. Along some portions of the corridor, street parking is provided. The sidewalk along the corridor is inconsistent. At some points, there is a wide sidewalk separated from the road with a grassy median. At other points, there is no sidewalk at all.

The 8 Mile, I-75 section of the corridor is in declining condition and will be subject of future construction to repair and replace the roadway. MDOT is completing a feasibility study that will determine an updated design to replace the current structures. This redesign and construction should take place over the next five or more years. Potential design options include a diverging diamond interchange, standard diamond interchange, or single point interchange. All three options would create a need for extensive traffic rerouting and pose travel restrictions on pedestrians. The replacement of this interchange should encourage the focus to move to developing surrounding points of the corridor which will see an increase in traffic during and after construction. Recommendations for smaller updates include: road narrowing, increased bike and pedestrian crossings (with ADA universal design), and improvement of public transit. Enhancing mobility for all forms of transit should remain the focus of 8 Mile community improvements.

Lanes

The number of lanes in each direction should be reduced from four to three. This will bring the total number of lanes along the corridor to six lanes. Current lane widths should be reduced from 12 feet to 10 feet.

This road design aims to maximize impact with limited funds by using low-cost infrastructure such as flexible delineators and paint until funding is secured for more permanent infrastructure. A parking lane and bike lane can be installed along either side of the road. This will decrease speeding and increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

Bike Lanes and Bicyclists

Data from the 2020 Michigan Crash Facts reveals that of the 1,235 bicyclists involved in motor vehicle crashes, 38 bicyclists were killed in 37 fatal crashes on Michigan roadways. There were an additional 933 bicyclists injured according to police

reported traffic records. The majority of crashes involved male cyclists (936), with 276 reported for female cyclists. Thirty-two (32) males were killed compared to 6 females although gender was not reported for 23 cyclists. The majority of bicyclist crashes occur during daylight hours (970). Peak hours for bicyclists involved crashes and fatalities were from 4:00-4:59 p.m. (124 and 5 respectively). Alcohol also played a role in the 38 bicyclist fatalities; five (13.2%) were the result of a had-been drinking crash and four bicyclists had been drinking. Youth's overall fatality rate was 2.6%. Adults ages 21-64 accounted for 23 (60.5%) of the bicyclist fatalities, and 12 (31.6%) fatalities occurred in the age group 65 and over. The State of Michigan reported 24 bicyclists fatalities in 2023, a decrease from the 36 reported in 2022. Despite this, the need for ongoing safety measures is important.

This plan calls for the provision of bike lanes along the 8 Mile Corridor. Due to limited space, these cycling facilities will be one-directional, going with the flow of traffic, and be a minimum of 5 feet wide. Bike lanes shall be separated from drivers through the provision of a buffer with flexible delineators. These cycling facilities shall fall within the footprint of the removed lane.

Bike boxes bring cyclists to the front of a traffic queue to increase the visibility of cyclists at intersections and give through-bound cyclists priority over right-bound traffic. Conflict points between cyclists and right-turning traffic should be minimized. Turning movements at each intersection should be analyzed to determine whether cycling traffic should remain along the curb or cross right-turning traffic. Where cycling lanes are provided at cross streets, left turns for cyclists should be facilitated, either through bicycle queuing boxes or a protected bicycle junction.

Figure 01

Bike Boxes | National Association of City Transportation Officials

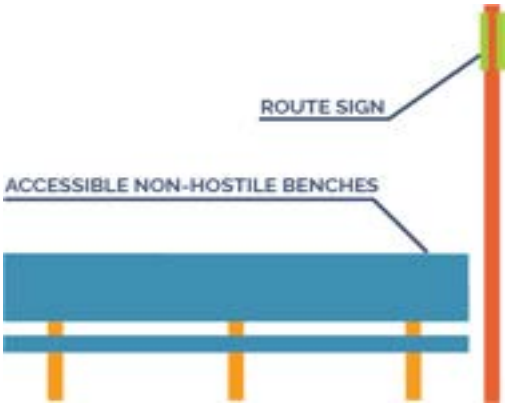
Example of sidewalk-level separated bike lanes; Livernois Avenue Streetscape in Detroit

Bus Infrastructure

The existing bus infrastructure along 8 Mile provides little protection or amenities for passengers while they wait. However, regional transit providers, including SMART and DDOT, have published plans to improve and expand transit services in Metro Detroit, and the supporting infrastructure should reflect these planned investments. Therefore, a minimum level of comfort should be expected for riders while they wait.

All bus stops should be outfitted with a bench for passengers. This will help to better identify stops because street furniture provides more visual weight than a stand-alone sign. These bus stop benches should be made available to all, and therefore, should not include mid-point breaks which compromise comfort and accessibility.

Figure 02



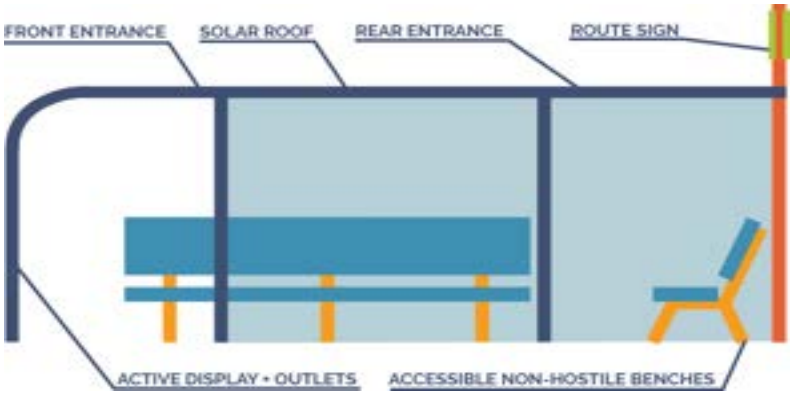
Expanding bus stop amenities at key locations beyond the minimum addition of benches would drastically improve rider experience. The 2024 DDOT Reimagined plan offers a glimpse of how bus shelters can be improved by creating a stratified system of bus stops based on the number of connections and their importance to the overall transit network. DDOT breaks these down into four main categories: transit centers, connection corners, bus stops, and mobility hubs. This plan offers a strategy for improving vital stops throughout the City of Detroit and surrounding communities, and

therefore, it is important that any changes made to transit waiting areas on 8 Mile are in line with the DDOT Reimagined plan.

Detroit's second major transit center was recently opened within the study area near the corner of Woodward Avenue and 8 Mile in the State Fairgrounds area. The Jason Hargrove Transit Center will serve as an anchor for DDOT and SMART bus routes that service the 8 Mile corridor. However, the transit center should have better connectivity with its surroundings. For example, the station would benefit from pedestrian connections with the neighboring Meijer grocery store and shopping center. Additionally, the 8 Mile corridor is long enough that it could potentially support another transit hub in the future. The RTA, SMART, and/or DDOT should conduct a feasibility study for identifying the site of an additional transit center on 8 Mile. Any future transit centers along the 8 Mile corridor should emphasize minimal setbacks as well to facilitate better walkability surrounding the transportation hub. Transit centers should feature proper signage and welcoming landscaping to make them easily identifiable by pedestrians. Additionally, transit centers should feature restroom facilities, seating areas, and vending or food service options.

Throughout the 8 Mile corridor study area, there are bus stops that provide access to over two dozen DDOT and SMART bus routes. These intersecting bus lines allow transit-dependent residents to access employment and education opportunities as well as vital services throughout Southeastern Michigan. Therefore, the 8 Mile corridor needs to prioritize the construction of shelters on connection corners to facilitate comfortable bus transfers for transit riders. These connection corners should include enclosures to protect passengers from inclement weather. They should also include digital monitors to provide updated route information to help riders make informed decisions about their trips. These connection corners should have ample seating and electrical outlets for passengers to charge their devices. The electrical demands of the connection corners can be offset by solar panels on the roofs of the shelters. The diagram below shows an example of one of these structures.

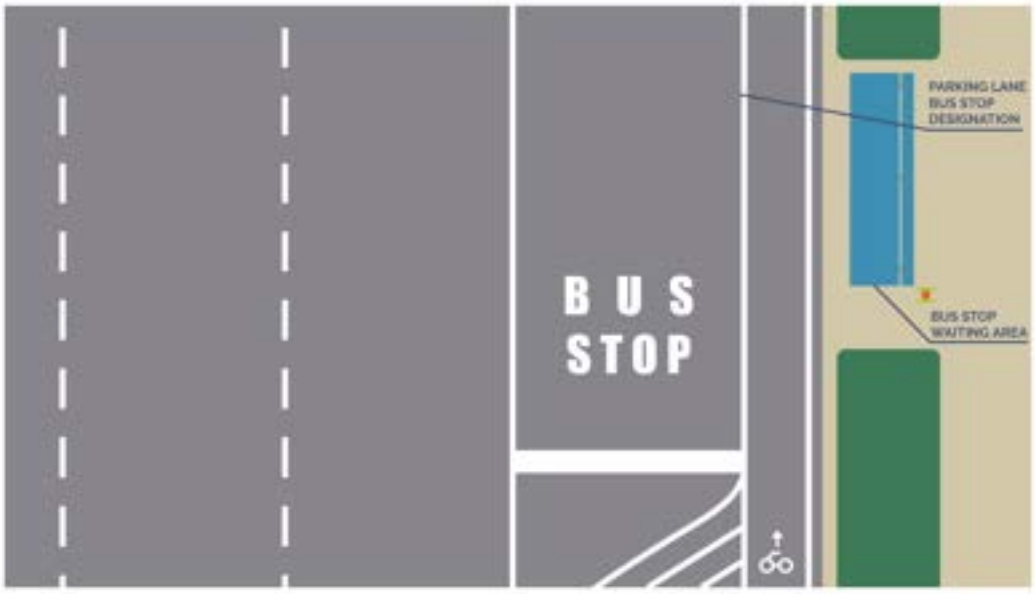
Figure 03



Placing bus stops close to major pedestrian crossings, whether that be at standard intersections or at designated mid-block crossings between intersections, would

increase non-motorized mobility. These stops should also be symmetrical to simplify wayfinding for riders. When stops are placed across the street from one another, it limits confusion for transit passengers. To further identify bus stops for drivers on the road, the right lane should be painted in front of the stop. This can allow drivers to more easily prepare for going around buses as they approach a stop. The placement of bus stops along 8 Mile should also encourage multi-modality and micro-mobility. This can be done by including bike racks at major bus shelters and co-locating MoGo bike share stations at connection corners, bringing the service to new communities. The figure below shows how bus stop waiting areas should exist within the broader streetscape.

Figure 04



All current bus routes that service the 8 Mile corridor are standard municipal bus services. Although DDOT is planning to introduce “Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lite” service updates to a number of existing routes, the #17 8 Mile route–which runs along much of 8 Mile–was not earmarked for BRT improvements in the DDOT Reimagined plan. SMART and the RTA also do not have plans to introduce BRT along 8 Mile, making it unlikely to be added to the corridor in the near future. However, DDOT identified the #17 8 Mile route as one of its priority routes for receiving more buses and drivers to improve transit frequency. Taking these plans into consideration, it is important to build transit infrastructure improvements to accommodate and encourage higher frequency bus services. Additionally, we recommend that the bus route #17 along 8 Mile should be extended to include the entirety of the 8 Mile corridor. DDOT Reimagined illustrates that the agency intends to extend its services beyond the Detroit city limits. The 8 Mile corridor would be a perfect opportunity to improve services that reach neighboring communities by extending existing transit lines.

Bus Stop Design Considerations

Accessibility Standards

Compliance: Ensure compliance with the Michigan Barrier Free Design Law, P.A. 1966 as amended, the 2009 ICC/ANSI A117.1 standard as referenced from Chapter 11 of the 2015 Michigan Building Code, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design for accessible routes, ramps, tactile warnings, and audible announcements.

Universal Design: Incorporate features like low-floor buses, wide doorways, and easily accessible boarding platforms for people of all ages and abilities.

Safety Standards

Lighting: Provide adequate lighting throughout the station, including platforms, waiting areas, and pedestrian pathways, to enhance security and visibility.

Surveillance: Install security cameras and emergency call boxes near bus shelters to ensure bus passenger safety, deter criminal activity, and promote usage.

Clear Signage: Use clear and visible signage for wayfinding, bus schedules, safety instructions, and emergency exits.

Comfort Standards

Shelter and Seating: Provide sheltered waiting areas with sufficient seating, protection from the elements (rain, wind, sun), and heating/cooling where appropriate.

Amenities: Include amenities such as restrooms, drinking fountains, charging stations, and vending machines.

Cleanliness: Maintain a high standard of cleanliness with regular maintenance and cleaning schedules.

Efficiency Standards:

Real-Time Information: Offer real-time bus arrival and departure information via digital displays and mobile apps.

Efficient Layout: Design the station layout to facilitate easy movement of buses and passengers, minimizing congestion and wait times.

Multi-Modal Integration: Integrate with other modes of transportation (bike racks, ride-sharing zones, pedestrian paths) for seamless connectivity.

Environmental and Sustainability Standards

Energy Efficiency: Use energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems, and consider renewable energy sources like solar panels.

Green Building Practices: Incorporate sustainable building materials, green roofs, and rainwater harvesting systems.

Waste Management: Provide adequate recycling and waste disposal facilities to promote environmental responsibility.

Aesthetic and Community Standards

Aesthetic Design: Ensure the design is visually appealing and integrates well with the surrounding community.

Public Art: Incorporate public art to enhance the station's visual appeal and cultural significance.

Community Engagement: Engage with the local community during the design process to address their needs and preferences.

Technology and Innovation Standards

Wi-Fi Access: Provide free Wi-Fi access to passengers.

Smart Technology: Implement smart technology for efficient energy management, security monitoring, and passenger information systems.

On-Street Parking

Currently, the on-street parking along 8 Mile is informal, inconsistent, and dangerous. Along portions of the road, designated parking spaces are cut into the curb to indicate where drivers should park. However, along other portions, the entire street width is extended to add an additional parking lane. Often empty, this lane can act as a fifth lane of traffic, and encourage drivers to speed. Due to the high speeds and traffic volumes along 8 Mile, on-street parking should be removed entirely.

Speed Limits

Effective speed limits are a key aspect of improving safety and reducing accidents. Currently, the speed limit along most of 8 Mile is 55 miles per hour. However, the lack of speed limit signage along the corridor is an issue that contributes to high levels of speeding. According to the FHA (Federal Highway Association), speed limits frame drivers expectations. Properly set speed limits provide a safe, consistent, and reasonable speed to protect drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists along the roadway.

MDOT and the State Police jointly set speed limits. A consistent speed, whether lowered or remaining at 55 mph, should be implemented to improve clarity.

Speed Feedback Sign. (Source: Richard Drdul)

Speed feedback signs can be a useful tool for motorists. These signs should be restricted to selected locations for optimal effectiveness.

Slow-down signs help improve safety by reducing speed as motorists approach busy pedestrian crossing, at schools, road construction areas, etc. Strategically placed signage such as this along 8 Mile can improve overall road safety as speeding is a major factor in traffic accidents.

Signage

Wayfinding and street signage is vital to a cohesive system that will guide people along the corridor and minimize confusion. They can also assist 8MBA with sharing its branding, values, and available amenities and provide direction to hospitals, parks, and tourist designations. The strategic placement of wayfinding signage at intersections and freeways is vital. Clear, understandable signage of street names, maps, historical markings, and communities can assist people in reaching their destination. When signage is reflective, it can be seen at night and during adverse

weather. Additionally, street signs should be located on every corner and should not be obscured.

User-friendly, easily understood pedestrian signs

Pedestrian Crossings

Creating safe pedestrian crossings along the 8 Mile corridor will require a multi-faceted approach to make them more user-friendly, easily identifiable, and accessible. This involves a combination of defensive driving strategies, infrastructure improvements, and community engagement efforts necessary to successfully manage pedestrian crossings safely, especially at major connection corners and busy intersections along the corridor.

Pedestrian leading intervals should be used at busy intersections. This allows pedestrians to begin walking before vehicles go, increasing visibility. Due to the long crossing distance on 8 Mile, walk times should also be extended to allow pedestrians to cross in one cycle.

Medians should be used as pedestrian islands at crossings. These islands will allow for additional protection as they act as a buffer from cars. The medians should also contain a place to rest while crossing. When pedestrians are only focused on crossing a section of road at a time, they are more likely to pay attention to oncoming traffic, and more likely to be seen by motorists as well. These medians also allow for the installation of additional pedestrian signage and lighting, to add to the protections against traffic.

To encourage pedestrians to safely cross between intersections, signalized midblock crossings should be installed at select points to allow for pedestrians to cross safely from one side of the roadway to the other. These crossings would only be activated in the presence of a pedestrian. These crossings should be installed in areas along the corridor where intersections are spaced a mile or more apart and in areas with a higher density of motor or pedestrian traffic. Motorists should expect to experience only minor delays, as the crosswalks only signal when activated.

Almost 18% of Detroit residents have disabilities according to ACS. Data was not available for Oakland County, but 9.6% of Macomb County residents under 65 have a disability. This populace faces barriers on many levels: inaccessible buildings, uneven and rundown sidewalks, lack of ramps, insufficient curb cuts for those who are wheelchair bound. Public transportation barriers include buses that may or may not have operating ramps that leave them stranded at bus stops or if operational, there may be inadequate seating. In 2021, the City of Detroit established the Office of Disability Affairs to serve over 117,000 residents with disabilities by transforming Detroit into a more welcoming, inclusive and universally accessible city. Their goal is to increase independence, opportunities, community participation, safety and wellness for persons with disabilities and to ensure inclusion, representation, and equity as employment, programs and services through disability awareness and ADA compliance.

For mobility, this includes:

- Improve sidewalk conditions (repair, increase number of curb ramps)
- Increase accessible parking spaces
- Ongoing disability training for transit operators
- Services for disabled include reduced fare,
- Paratransit services are for qualified individuals unable to independently board, ride and/or disembark from a ramp-equipped fixed route bus due to a functional limitation, verified by a professional familiar with the applicant's limitations. It services people with disabilities in Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park residents and delivers transportation options to individuals with disabilities for qualified applicants who complete the application process and cost $2.50.
- Accessibili-D free autonomous shuttle pilot launched in June 2024 for older adults that will run through 2025 with 68 initial routes covering an 11-square-mile area in southeast area of city with future expansion plans and include:
    - Three autonomous vehicles, including two wheelchair-accessible ones, will offer scheduled and on-demand rides to essential destinations, bookable via a mobile app or phone number, with operational hours spanning weekdays and weekends. Eligible residents must complete an Expression of Interest form to sign-up.

Oakland and Macomb counties offer SMART and MyRide2. SMART offers a range of transportation options for people with disabilities and seniors, while MyRide2 assists seniors and those with disabilities find alternate transportation options. Oakland and Macomb counties SMART and MyRide2. SMART offers a range of transportation options for people with disabilities and seniors, while MyRide2 assists seniors and those with disabilities find alternate transportation options. Oakland County also offers People's Express to provide safe, reliable public transit—but only to certain counties, none of which are on the 8 Mile corridor. Macomb utilizes RTA of Michigan that offers transportation options to seniors and those with disabilities through Mobility Manager. Residents who are visually and hearing impaired lack sufficient audio or visual aids such as Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS).

Install APS at traffic lights at pedestrian intersections. APS communicates information about the pedestrian phase to pedestrians with visual and/or hearing disabilities. They include audible tones, speech messages, detectable arrow indicators, and/or vibrating surfaces. Pushbuttons are used to activate APS features such as (speech messages, detectable arrow indicators). APS also allows pedestrians with disabilities to move about, participate in and enjoy open spaces and make pedestrian crosswalks safer for them. The combination of these two techniques at high intensity intersections will provide greater protection for pedestrians without interrupting the flow of traffic for motorists.

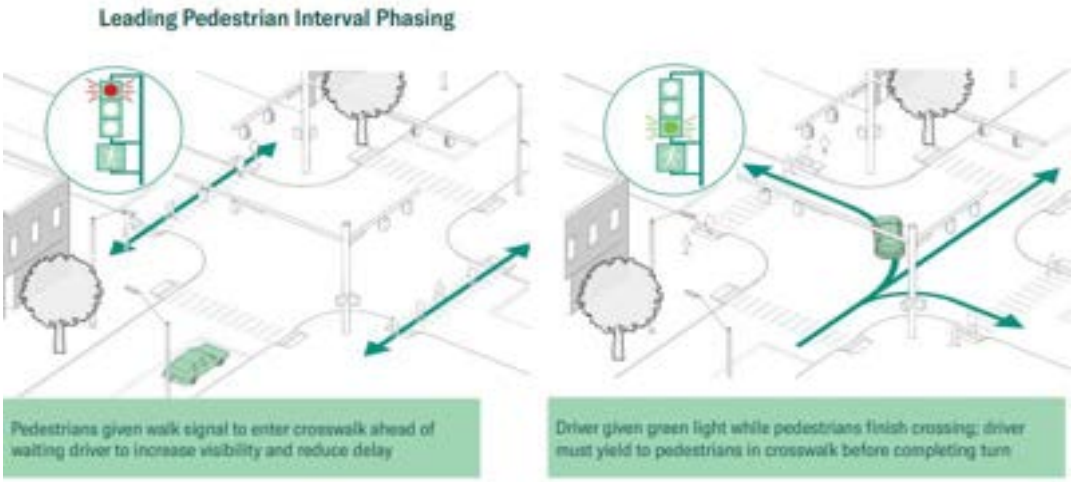
Banning right turns on red at busy intersections can enhance pedestrian safety as motorists do not always check for pedestrian foot traffic or cyclists when turning right.

Visually and physically narrowing the roadway with bump outs contributes to pedestrian safety. The addition of curb extensions will increase pedestrian visibility and shorten crossing distances. Placed at intersections or mid-block, they can also reduce the time pedestrians spend at crosswalks. Bump outs also discourage illegal parking at crossings and bus stops. Bump outs can also be made of temporary materials, such as bollards, to reduce upfront costs.

Figure 05 Gateway Bump Out at Intersection

Source:
https://nacto.org/wp-content/themes/sink_nacto/views/design-guides/retrofit/urban-street-design-guide/images/gateway/gateway.png

Figure 06



Source: City of Detroit 2021

All crossings should be marked, either with highly visible zebra crossings or by using different materials. These methods indicate to drivers to watch for pedestrians, and thus increase safety at crossings.

Figure 07

Source: SFP Design Guideline Rendering, City of Detroit 2021

Street Lighting

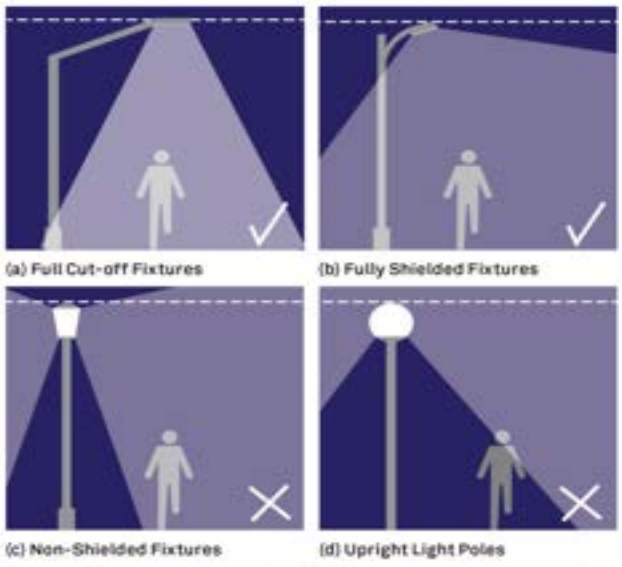
Figure 08

Source: Design Global

Full cut-off light fixtures are essential in reducing light pollution, which helps preserve the night sky and support nocturnal wildlife by minimizing artificial light intrusion. They also enhance visibility and safety by directing light precisely where it's needed, reducing glare, and improving illumination on roads and pathways.

Additionally, full cut-off fixtures are energy-efficient, as they prevent light wastage, leading to cost savings and a smaller environmental footprint. For optimal lighting coverage, it is recommended that public light poles be spaced between 2.5 to 3 times their height apart. This spacing ensures uniform illumination and maximizes the efficiency of full cut-off light fixtures.

Figure 09



Temperatures, Colors, and Ambience

We recommend a consistent approach to color temperature is applied throughout the corridor, with different color temperatures signifying different users or types of travel. 3000 Kelvin (K) is recommended for pedestrian paths and 5000K for vehicular paths. Utilizing warmer lighting where pedestrian paths are will help create a more inviting space.

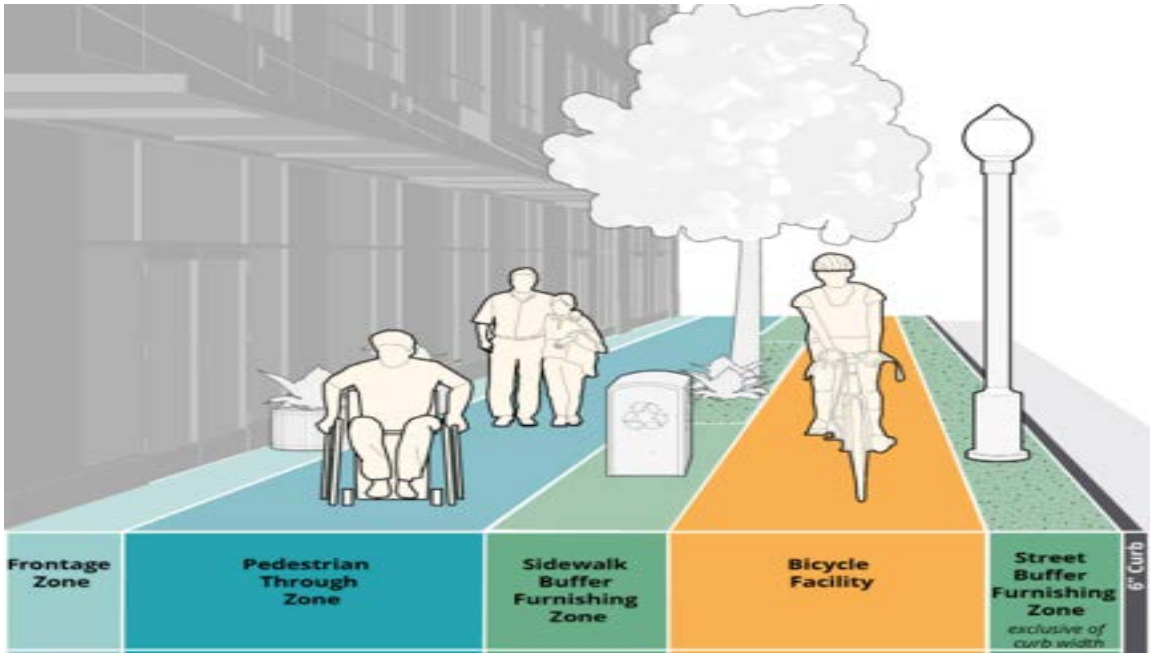
Source: Global Design

Sidewalks

Size/ADA Compliance/Continuity

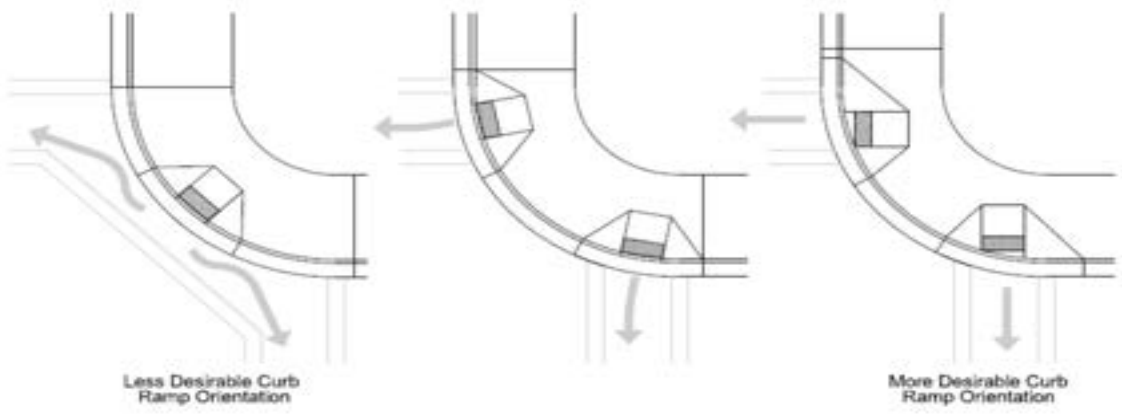
For the 8-Mile corridor, utilizing a wider sidewalk that is able to accommodate high pedestrian traffic is key. This can be done by increasing sidewalks to have a minimum of eight to ten foot wide sidewalks, which are also more than ADA compliant. Additionally, a landscaped buffer or patch between the sidewalk and the roadway should be incorporated to enhance safety, provide aesthetic appeal, and contribute to environmental benefits such as stormwater management. This buffer zone can also serve as a space for street trees and other greenery, creating a more pleasant walking environment.

Figure 10



Curb ramps along the corridor must be designed with attention to accessibility, ensuring compliance with the ADA. This includes incorporating tactile paving and detectable warning surfaces to aid vision-impaired individuals, as well as maintaining smooth, gentle slopes to accommodate wheelchair users. Properly designed curb cuts enhance safety and accessibility for all pedestrians, creating a more inclusive urban environment.

Figure 11



Continuity of sidewalks along the 8 Mile corridor is essential for seamless pedestrian movement. Sidewalks should maintain a consistent width throughout the corridor to ensure uniformity and predictability for users. Additionally, space must be allocated for snow storage to keep pathways clear and safe during winter months.

Source: CDOT Roadway Design Guide 2023

DESIGN STANDARDS

One of the most important factors for community satisfaction is a perception of beauty and aesthetic character. These attributes attract people to an area leading to increased foot traffic, business patronage, and an overall boost to the local economy. Increased foot traffic can also have the benefit of decreasing crime in areas where this is a concern. One major challenge facing 8MBA is the large number of communities and jurisdictions along the 8 Mile Road corridor. The following section proposes design guidelines that, if adopted or implemented by all 10 member communities, would help create continuity along and across the 8 Mile corridor. Furthermore, this would promote beauty and aesthetics that could help make 8 Mile Road achieve its full potential as a bustling and vibrant regional boulevard.

Landscaping

Incorporating multipurpose landscaping and green infrastructure elements into all future developments or significant renovations can greatly reduce the burden on existing infrastructure networks by providing a sustainable, low-maintenance alternative to urban stormwater management. Further, utilizing low-impact development (LID) techniques can produce an array of multifunctional urban landscapes and infrastructure features (i.e. green roofs, streets, parking, sidewalks,

collection/conveyance systems, and green space) that detain, retain, naturally filter, absorb, and/or direct water flow at the source. These plants should be selected for their ability to handle urban stressors, including pollution and road salt.

Detroit and many inner-ring suburbs still utilize a combined sewer system, which are prone to flooding. Installing GSI would reduce the amount of water entering the combined sewer system and prevent overflow into our major waterways, namely Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River. Additionally, unconventional landscaping and infrastructure strategies can enhance urban biodiversity and remove pollutants from the air which can improve the health of the region, its residents, and its ecosystem. Ultimately, establishing landscaping guidelines will create a cohesive identity and unified vision along the 8 Mile Corridor.

Example: Bioretention practice on Oakman Boulevard in Detroit's Aviation Subdivision.

General Requirements

Plant Material Standards:

At least 60 percent of the landscaped area must contain hardy and drought-tolerant species (such as native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs) to help minimize water usage and maintenance. Invasive species are strictly prohibited.

Native Plant Varieties in Southeast Michigan (from MSU - Southern Lower Peninsula Native Plants & MSU - Smart Gardening: Trees and Shrubs Suitable for Michigan Landscaping):

Low-lying Plants:

1. Butterfly Weed (Asclepias tuberosa): A drought-tolerant perennial that produces bright orange flowers and supports pollinators, especially monarch butterflies.
2. Wild Geranium (Geranium maculatum): A spring-blooming plant with pink to purple flowers, ideal for shaded or partially shaded areas.
3. Little Bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium): A grass that provides excellent erosion control, turns reddish-bronze in the fall, and remains attractive throughout the winter.

Shrubs:

1. Ninebark (Physocarpus opulifolius): A versatile shrub with peeling bark, white to pinkish flowers in late spring, and vibrant fall color.
2. New Jersey Tea (Ceanothus americanus): A compact shrub with fragrant white flowers that attract numerous pollinators and are drought-tolerant.

Trees:

1. Serviceberry (Amelanchier spp.): A small, multi-stemmed tree with showy white flowers in spring, edible berries in summer, and excellent fall color.
2. Redbud (Cercis canadensis): Known for its stunning pink flowers that bloom on bare branches in early spring and heart-shaped leaves that turn yellow in fall.

Green Infrastructure Plants:

1. Swamp Milkweed (Asclepias incarnata): Ideal for rain gardens, it thrives in wet conditions and attracts butterflies.
2. Blue Flag Iris (Iris versicolor): A water-loving plant with striking blue flowers, suitable for bioswales and rain gardens.
3. Prairie Dropseed (Sporobolus heterolepis): A grass that forms dense tufts, useful for erosion control and creating visually appealing landscapes.

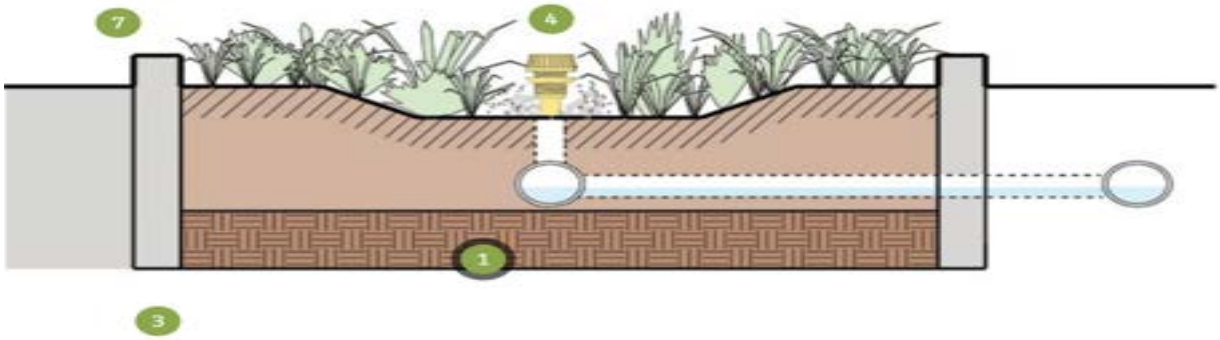
Public Spaces, Medians, and Rights-of-Way:

Figure 12.1

Low-lying plant varieties not exceeding 3 feet in height, shall be planted along sidewalks, roadways, medians, and rights-of-way to allow an unobstructed view to ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists alike. Plants must adhere to transmission line height restrictions.

Source: Nacto

Figure 12.2



Source:Nacto

Buffering and Screening:

A vegetated landscape buffer or screening wall is required between all residential and non-residential land uses. Hedges, fences or walls are required to screen parking lots, dumpsters, and utility areas from public view. To screen uses from the roadway, a combination of native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses are preferred to rigid berms and rows of evergreen trees. Building setbacks and landscape buffers should be designed as naturalized green spaces, incorporating sustainable stormwater management features and creative use of vegetation.

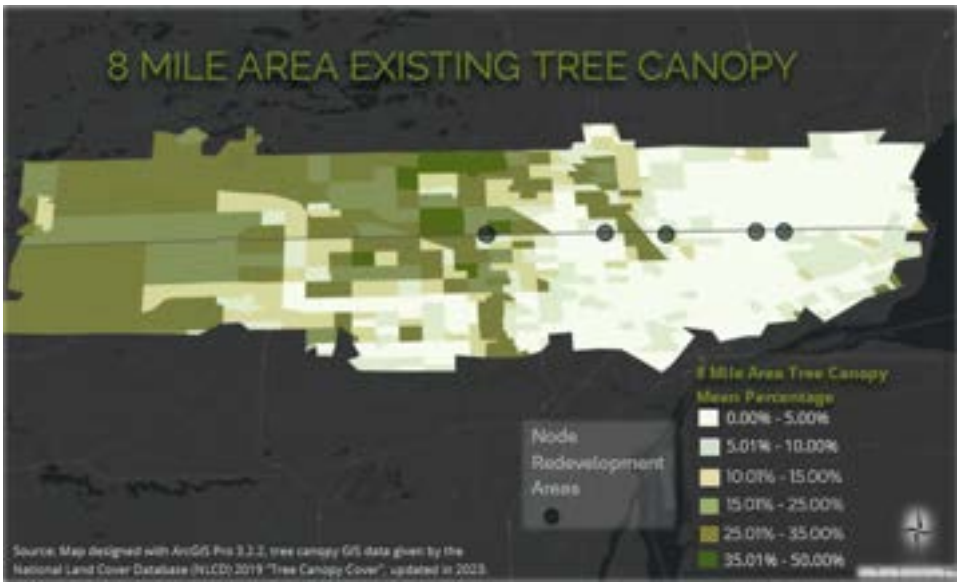
Residential Properties:

At least 40 percent of the site of a single- or two-family residential property shall be unpaved, permeable open space. All open space shall be landscaped with live plant materials or permeable hardscape, and properly maintained; landscaped treatments shall not exceed 3 feet in height.

Parking Lot Internal Landscaping Guidelines:

Transforming auto-oriented commercial corridors into pedestrian friendly spaces that enhance community character requires reducing parking requirements and creating landscaped separation between cars and pedestrians. Approved materials for parking lot internal landscaping include a mix of canopy deciduous trees, subcanopy trees, shrubs, groundcovers, native grasses and/or perennials.

Each parking lot landscape island shall have: (1) A minimum of two-hundred (200) square feet in area. (2) A minimum of two-hundred (200) square feet in unpaved area per tree planted in an island. (3) A minimum dimension of ten (10) feet in width from back of curb to back of curb. (4) A minimum of three (3) feet between the back of a curb and a tree trunk.



Tree Planting and Urban Forestry:

A well-established tree canopy coverage can intercept rainwater from traditional greywater systems, provide shade to pedestrians, and improve air quality. Increasing the tree canopy along roadways and within green buffers (the area in between the sidewalk and the curb or edge of pavement) will not only reduce stormwater runoff, but will also lower temperatures and enhance urban aesthetics.

Trees are to be located at least ten (10) feet away from utility structures including catch basins and manholes, and should be at least five (5) feet away from underground utility lines whenever possible.

Low-Impact Development (LID) and Green Infrastructure Features

Source: Lot 7 Infiltrating Bioswale

The public land along the corridor offers opportunities for green infrastructure projects. Rain gardens and bioswales can be installed in parks, alongside sidewalks, and in parking lots to manage stormwater. These features not only reduce runoff and improve water quality but also enhance urban biodiversity by providing habitats for pollinators and other wildlife. Native landscaped areas can help mitigate the urban heat island effect. Detroit's current approach to green infrastructure emphasizes capturing and utilizing stormwater within the landscape, reducing the burden on the region's sewer system.

Bioretention Cells (Rain Gardens):

Shallow spaces built below the existing grade that are lined with permeable substrates and filled with water-tolerant plants to collect precipitation or runoff from impervious surfaces and allow for slower infiltration and filtration of water. Suitable for use along sidewalks, medians, roundabouts, in parking lot islands, and residential properties.

Typical Grayling Rain Garden, July 2007
Source: Huron Pines

Vegetated Swales and Bioswales:

Source: Low Impact Development Center, Inc.

Linear, planted channels constructed along roadways, parking lots, and/or sidewalks to provide a natural conveyance route for stormwater runoff. These planted channels allow for natural infiltration of the stormwater which slows the velocity and improves the quality of water that ultimately enters gray infrastructure systems.

Pervious Pavements:

Source: DFC Lot Designs

Permeable materials allow water to infiltrate the ground, rather than running immediately into the street and overwhelming the region's sewer system. Additionally, the gravel sub-base and geotextile fabric work in tandem to prevent automotive related runoff from draining directly into the soil. Ensure permeable pavers have an infiltration rate of at least 5 inches per hour.

Pervious Strips:

Source: NACTO Street Design Elements - Pervious Strips

These long, linear landscaped areas (or linear areas of pervious pavement) retain and slow runoff. Previous strips can absorb some runoff, but to a much lesser extent than bioswales, conditional to the underlying subsurface soil conditions. Previous strips offer an inexpensive first step in urban stormwater management, but may not provide full capacity for treatment of a street's water quality event.

Stormwater Detention Credits: Include within detention calculations for 100-year storm requirements. When exceeding these requirements, create additional incentives such as parking flexibility to facilitate site design with increasing numbers of LID Low Impact Development Features.

Community Greening Programs Along 8 Mile Corridor

Maximizing green space by development of community greening programs will help to raise the overall quality of life and public health for all residents living around the 8 Mile Corridor. By implementing inclusive community greening programs along 8 Mile, 8 MBA can improve the overall aesthetic value of the corridor and create space for a variety of community connections, engagement, and resource sharing for local residents and stakeholders.

8 MBA Host Annual Tree Plantings

- Work with DNR to conduct tree study to identify areas along 8 Mile in need of improved tree canopy.
- Create GIS map for location and identification of areas along 8 Mile recommended for tree plantings. Create a data dashboard to track locations of plantings and update GIS map yearly.
- Apply annually for eligible grants to fund community tree planting initiatives.
- Build a community volunteer database for annual tree plantings.
- Partner with Greening of Detroit for technical support with scheduled community tree planting days.

8 MBA Develop Community Wide “Adopt-A-Median” Program

- Recruit local stakeholders and businesses for fundraising and coordination of lawn maintenance for medians along 8 Mile
- Open up program for 8 Mile community residents to adopt a median for plantings of native plants, perennial flowers, vegetation, trees, mulching, and seasonal maintenance such as weeding
- Construct green stormwater infrastructure and bioswales within medians and bump outs.
- Apply annually for federal and state funding available for GSI and community beautification. Utilize resource sharing between businesses and municipalities to fund tools, plants, trees, and mulch for community residents enrolled in Adopt-A-Median program.

Maximize Long Existing Vacant Greenspace: “Design-A-Park” Program

- Work with local stakeholders and interested community municipalities to develop “Design-A-Park” program.

- Identify vacant greenspace along the corridor for construction of pocket and small-scale linear parks for community engagement and connection.

- Work with community block clubs to identify park themes for ideal community usage. Install street furniture, native plantings, community gardens, bioswales, GSI, and/or art-themed spaces to make the 8 Mile corridor more aesthetically pleasing.

- Work with community block clubs to recruit volunteers or park adoptees for responsibility of park maintenance and upkeep

- Apply annually for state and federal grants for financial support for park construction, resources, and upkeep.

Strategies for Developing Community Greening Programs

Community and Municipal Collaboration

- Host community engagement activities to obtain feedback from residents, local stakeholders, and municipalities along the 8 Mile Corridor for park design and themes.

- Form a working group with representatives from each of the 8 Mile Association municipalities and community block groups for programs planning and initiatives, information sharing, and ensuring program connectivity.

Public and Private Partnerships

- Foster partnerships between public entities and private developers to share the costs and benefits of infrastructure development and maintenance.

Zoning/Special Land Use

- Work with local municipalities to seek permission and location identification for tree plantings , and the usage of publicly owned vacant land for park infrastructure or seek changes/amendments to current zoning for parkland use in designated priority areas.

Installation and Maintenance

Transitioning to Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) and ecological landscaping practices is a necessary, but often costly endeavor. Landscape installation and maintenance along the 8 Mile Corridor is a critical issue. Clear delineation of responsibilities between municipalities, business owners, and MDOT is essential. Further, establishing training programs for proper installation and maintenance of

GSI and ecological landscaping is crucial for the success and longevity of alternative stormwater management projects. Partnering with local organizations can minimize installation and maintenance costs, provide job training in native landscaping and GSI practices, and support Community Greening initiatives (like the proposed "Adopt-A-Median" and "Design-A-Park" programs).

Potential partners include:

- **Adapt: Community Supported Ecology** is a nonprofit promoting ecological connections between people and the land through the community co-creation of native plant and perennial food landscapes. Adapt focuses on sustainability and the restoration of native plant habitats, supporting projects through public fundraising, education, and volunteer efforts.
- **The Greening of Detroit** is a non-profit that aims to improve the quality of life for Detroiters by planting trees, providing job training, and educating youth about the natural environment. They collaborate with communities to install and maintain ecological landscapes.
- **Detroit Future City Land + Water WORKS Coalition** helps Detroit residents become better stewards of the land and environment. They support sustainable land and water use practices, and educate residents about GSI opportunities.
- **The Nature Conservancy in Detroit** employs nature-based solutions to stormwater management to minimize the strain on combined sewer systems, reduce street and basement flooding, and lower the amount of pollutants entering our waterways.

Other organizations that work on green infrastructure in Detroit include:

- Detroit Future City
- Detroit Greenways Coalition
- Detroit Office of Sustainability
- Detroit Water and Sewerage Department
- Eastside Community Network
- Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation
- Sierra Club Great Lakes Program
- Wayne State University - Healthy Urban Waters

Conclusion

The establishment of corridor-wide landscaping standards is critical for consistency and visual cohesion. These standards should specify plant species, height restrictions, and maintenance practices. Several reputable organizations, such as the DNR or Michigan State University have helpful lists to begin the outline for this particular corridor.

FENCING

Establishing fencing standards along 8 Mile Road requires a balanced approach that prioritizes safety, security, aesthetic appeal, and regulatory compliance. It is important to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses and create a shared identity across the 8 Mile corridor. Collaboration between city officials, urban planners, property owners, and community stakeholders is essential to develop and implement effective fencing guidelines that meet the diverse needs of the corridor while preserving the character and integrity of surrounding neighborhoods. Regular monitoring and enforcement of fencing standards are also critical to ensure ongoing compliance and maintenance of fencing structures. Key considerations and potential fencing standards for properties along this corridor are as follows:

Safety and Security

A fence, landscape treatment, privacy screen, or screen wall constructed within a ten-feet radius of the intersection of a driveway or parking lot exit and any public right-of-way must allow a motorist or pedestrian an unimpeded view of the public right-of-way when entering or exiting the driveway or parking lot. The right-of-way must also be visible for at least 10 feet on both sides of the driveway or parking lot exit, with visibility being judged from thirty (30) inches above the surface of the right-of-way.

No portion of a fence, landscape treatment, privacy screen, or screen wall may be positioned on, protrude into or over, or otherwise occlude an easement, alley, roadway, sidewalk, or other public property without the direct consent of the city.

Aesthetic Considerations

Architectural Harmony: Encourage fencing designs that complement the architectural style and character of surrounding buildings and neighborhoods, enhancing visual coherence.

Green Screening: Require landscaping along fencing lines to soften visual impacts, enhance privacy, and promote ecological resilience, with options for shrubs, vines, or decorative plantings.

Buffer Zones: Establish buffer zones between fencing and adjacent properties to accommodate landscaping features and create visual transitions between different land uses.

Durability and Sustainability

Height and Scale: Fences on properties lawfully used for residential purposes shall not exceed five feet in height, except for fences abutting a nonresidential use, which shall not exceed eight feet in height. Whenever possible, limit fencing heights to ensure compatibility with surrounding vegetation and wildlife habitats, avoiding visual dominance and obstruction of scenic views.

Non-Obtrusive Profiles: Encourage low-profile fencing designs that minimize visual impact without sacrificing necessary separation and security.

Materials and Finishes: Fences should be constructed with materials that are durable and low-maintenance including: wood, stone, metal (aluminum, steel, chain link, and wrought iron), recycled composite, or native/ drought-tolerant plants. Require corrosion-resistant coatings or treatments for metal fencing materials to prevent rust and deterioration over time.

Maintenance Requirements

Regular Inspection: Implement requirements for property owners to conduct regular inspections of fencing structures and promptly address any damage or deterioration.

*Repair and Replacemen*t: Establish guidelines for timely repair or replacement of damaged or deteriorated fencing to maintain visual integrity and property values.

Regulatory Compliance and Enforcement

Zoning Regulations: Incorporate fencing standards into municipal zoning ordinances and development regulations to ensure compliance with citywide guidelines.
Permitting Process: Require permits for new fencing installations or modifications to existing fences to ensure adherence to established standards and codes.

Code Enforcement: Conduct periodic inspections by city officials to verify compliance with fencing standards and address any violations or non-compliance issues.

Penalties: Implement penalties or fines for property owners who fail to comply with fencing regulations or maintain their fencing structures in accordance with established standards.

PARKING

Off-street Parking

Rear Parking: Mandate that all off-street parking be located behind buildings, with access provided via alleys or side streets.

Circulation & Layout

Minimum Lane Width: Vehicular lanes in parking lots should have a minimum width of 24 feet for two-way traffic and 12 feet for one-way traffic.

Turning Radius: Design turning radii to accommodate the largest expected vehicle, typically a 25-foot radius for emergency and passenger vehicles.

Pedestrian Pathways: Designate interior pedestrian pathways with a minimum width of 6 feet, and a minimum of 8 feet along the front setback. Require pathway connections around the building perimeter to crosswalk islands. Provide a uniform preference for contrasting materials and colors for walkway visibility. Minimize pedestrian foot traffic through parking lots without adequate space to separate vehicles and pedestrian pathways.

Bicycle Parking

Rack Spacing: Bicycle racks should be spaced a minimum of 3 feet apart to allow easy access. Require more than 1 bicycle rack on sites with buildings containing a total occupancy load of at least 150 people.

Proximity to Entrances: Place bicycle parking within 50 feet of main building entrances.

Covered Bicycle Parking: Provide covered bicycle parking spaces for new construction sites.

Shared Parking

Parking Study Requirement: Require a parking demand study of current vehicle parking counts for new construction mixed-use developments to determine appropriate shared parking ratios. Require parking justifications for existing building projects dependent on occupant load, peak operating hours, employee counts, customer/visitor volume, tenant mix, share parking agreements, parking frequency data, transit availability, pedestrian accessibility measures, bicycle use measures, valet services, time-limited parking, and land banking. The intent being to encourage reductions of one's parking requirements.

Shared Parking Agreements: Implement, encourage, and promote legal binding agreements between property owners to formalize shared parking arrangements.

Land Banking

Future Development Area: When a site exceeds 2 acres permit a designation of 20% of the required parking lot area for potential future development.

Interim Uses: Allow temporary uses such as food trucks, farmers markets, or community events on land banked areas.

Land Banking may be converted to necessary parking after demonstrated need is prevented and approved by the Planning Commission.

Stock of Underutilized Lots

Inventory Update: Update the inventory of underutilized lots annually to identify opportunities for redevelopment. Hold Public forums and maintain an open online comment forum year-round for public input into the development desires of the public. Utilize MiPlace Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Sitemap | MiPlace to identify potential development sites in member communities.

Parking Lot Repurposing Incentives: Provide incentives such reduced permit fees, administrative approval, and administrative allowances if documented justification is provided for all building form zoning standards for property owners who repurpose underutilized parking lots under the floating overlay Parking Lot Repurposing Zoning District.

Interior Walkways & Paths

Walkway Width: Interior walkways should be a minimum of 6 feet wide.

Parking Allowances Administratively & by Planning Commission

Administrative Adjustments: Permit administrative allowances for up to a 40% reduction in parking requirements if supported by a parking study or parking justification as applicable. Permit allowances administratively based on zoning administrator determination for parking reductions up to 20%.

Planning Commission Review: Allow Planning Commission approval for reductions greater than 40%, if supported by a parking study or parking justification as applicable.

Electric Vehicle Parking

Allow EV Parking spaces by right for any development through building permit approvals only.

Require the greater of either 10% of spaces or 5 total spaces to have EV ready conduits for any site improvements to parking or existing building redevelopments that modify the building footprint.

*EV Station*s: The immediate surrounding areas should facilitate future investment into climate adaptable and sustainable station design for the EV spaces. This may include weatherproofing, solar integration, temperature control systems, battery storage systems, grid reactive technology, and protective canopies.

BUILDING FORM

Form Based Code Differentiation

Overlay Zone: Establish a floating overlay zone that differentiates requirements for existing buildings versus new constructions. To create built environment allowances for existing buildings and encourage adaptive reuse. Although a novel concept it will incentivize adaptive reuse and set clear design standards for new construction.

Establish a floating overlay Parking Lot Repurposing Zoning District that removes setback requirements and building form non-conformities for sites that have repurposed or provided in-fill development within demonstrably underutilized parking lots.

Adaptive Reuse Incentives: Provide incentives for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as administrative and planning commission powers to provide allowances in reduced parking requirements and expedited permitting for qualifying mixed-use projects. Establish flexible mixed-use zoning where appropriate along the 8-mile corridor standards to permit industrial, commercial, and office conversions to residential.

New Office construction may only be permitted if easily convertible to ground floor commercial and upper floor residential use. Including a minimum 60 foot base plate that permits double loaded corridors, energy, ventilation, and lighting requirements for Multi-Family residential.

Transparency

Ground Floor Transparency: Require that at least 50% of the front yard ground floor facades facing the right of way be transparent for new construction. Require 40% of the front yard ground floor facades facing the right of way be transparent for existing buildings. Require 30% for side yard facades.

Upper Floor Transparency: For upper floors, require at least 30% transparency for facades facing the right of way to maintain a visual connection with the street.

Height

Maximum Heights: Set maximum building heights at 4 stories or 50 feet in areas adjacent to residential zones, with flexibility for commercial uses based on zoning allowances up to 6 stories. Zoning allowances should provide protection from amassing properties adjacent to single-family residential districts.

Building Material

Material Standards: Mandate the use of high quality, durable materials such as brick, stone, or fiber cement siding for all building facades. EIFS is not permitted. Material specifications should have a warranted life time exceeding 35 years and not easily deteriorate under extreme weather conditions especially rot, mold, moisture accumulation, and water damage generally. Demonstrated proof of the utilization of natural building materials and the elimination of synthetic polymer materials will allow a 50% transparency reduction.

Sustainability Criteria: Encourage the use of recycled or sustainable materials by providing density bonuses and setback allowances of up to 30 feet.

Renewable Initiatives

Permit density bonuses and administrative approval rights to all developments that incorporate shared energy infrastructure utility easements, small battery storage systems, grid reactive utility upgrades, solar panels, rooftop wind turbines, geothermal systems, and green roofs. These bonuses should include height bonuses, FAR floor area ratio bonuses, setback allowances, architectural feature flexibility, parking standard allowances, and others deemed beneficial.

Form a voluntary sustainable development committee with no application cost that can work across jurisdictions to aid in streamlining sustainable standards per LEED, and other prominent sustainable building certifications include BREEAM, WELL, Green Globes, Living Building Challenge, Energy Star, NGBS, ISO 14001, SITES, Fitwel, and Passive House. These certifications focus on various aspects of sustainability, such as energy efficiency, human health, environmental impact, and sustainable site development, providing comprehensive frameworks to enhance the environmental performance of buildings. For new construction sites that are already developed as EV ready, create a standard within the new construction floating zone to complete EV spaces on the site and integrate their design with the new building design. Provide award recognition for volunteers and offer variances for properties that comply with sustainable development standards.

Setbacks

Setback Requirements: Setbacks should be 0 ft, or minimized, except for properties adjacent to single-family residential districts. Require a 10-foot set-back for any building exceeding 2 stories when buffering single-family residential properties. Require a maximum 10-foot set-back to right-of-ways with administrative allowances up to 25-feet if the exterior layout provides human scale design.

Flexible Setbacks: Allow for variations in setbacks up to 10 feet to accommodate front yard outdoor seating, Low Impact Development Landscaping, and public art installations.

Architectural Character/Features

Facade Articulation: Require facade articulation such as recesses, projections, and varying materials at intervals of no less than 15 feet and no more than 30 feet.

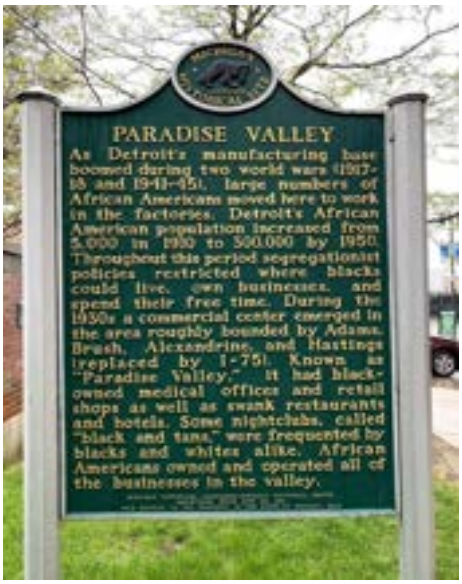
Roofline Variation: Mandate variation in rooflines for buildings longer than 40 feet to break up the visual mass, at intervals of 20-25 feet at minimum.

Entrance Design: Ensure primary building entrances are clearly defined and oriented towards the street, using features such as canopies, awnings, or prominent architectural elements. Permit projections beyond the building setback line within the front setback of up to 5-feet.

PLACEMAKING

Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is an invaluable tool to capture the heart and soul of the communities along 8 Mile Road.



Recommendations: This plan aims to engage residents to determine which places/spaces along 8 Mile have historical significance and value. This will allow 8MBA, municipalities, and stakeholders to partner with developers, local community groups, museums, and historic preservation societies to enhance and highlight those places.

Furthermore, we recommend creating tours focusing on music, entertainment, civil rights, and social history. Potential partners for these programs include: Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Detroit Historical Society, Michigan Historical Commission, Detroit Experience Factory, Detroit Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship (ACE) Office.

Communities should also encourage adaptive reuse of existing and historic buildings for commercial, residential, or community uses.

Example: The Lucas in Boston is a church repurposed into an apartment building.
Source: [The Lucas - Boston]

Example: The Boyle Hotel - hotel in Los Angeles, first floor shops restored and hotel remodeled for affordable housing units.

Source: Boyle Hotel Before and After

When historic structures are unable to be reused, salvage cornerstones or other specific building elements for future construction projects.

Example: Cornerstone salvaged from a church that burnt down in Toledo, Ohio

Source: Cornerstones Toledo Now Faith Worship Center

Example: The White Horse Inn - restaurant in Metamora, MI where wood paneling from the historic restaurant was salvaged and used in the creation of this bar in a complete remodel of the restaurant

Source: Trip Advisor

Existing historical markers on or near 8 Mile Road include: Botsford Inn, Carver Elementary School, Eight Mile Wall, Michigan's First Tri-Level Intersection, Bishop's Residence, Seabiscuit, The Michigan Stove.

Source: Carver Elementary School Historical Marker Database

Objectives:

Identify locations with cultural significance and introduce historical markers with a brief synopsis of the location to educate visitors.

Implementation:

1. *Music and Entertainment*: Emphasize 8 Mile Road's connection to Detroit's music history, particularly hip-hop (i.e. Eminem's childhood home) and jazz (i.e. the iconic Baker's Keyboard Lounge). Offer guided tours that explore key locations, such as music studios, iconic venues, and notable murals.

2. *Civil Rights and Social History*: Highlight 8 Mile Road's role as a historical dividing line between different racial and socioeconomic groups. Develop tours and historical markers that educate visitors on its significance in the civil rights movement and its impact on urban development.

Potential partners for Placemaking programs: Detroit Historical Society, Michigan Historical Commission, Detroit Experience Factory, Detroit Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship (ACE) Office, and local community groups.

Public Art

Public Art adds to the aesthetic beauty and character of places and allows particular community attributes to be highlighted and showcased. It can also make pedestrian access to places that have been traditionally auto-centric a more pleasant experience.

Recommendation:

Incentivize developers to use art to make the pedestrian facing areas of their property more beautiful and more pedestrian centric.

Example: Red Pole Park in Southfield, MI.

Source: Red Pole Park

Example: Rendering of the Sounds of Detroit art installation proposed for Cass Avenue in Detroit which would partially shield pedestrian space from the highway underneath.

Source: Cass Avenue Bridge

Additional Examples:

Book Tower: One of the most recognized buildings in Detroit, the Book Tower, originally designed by Louis Kamper in 1926, has undergone an extensive renovation by Bedrock Detroit. The project includes restoring the building's historic features, such as the ornamental cornice and art glass skylight, and converting it into a mixed-use space with residential units, hospitality, retail, and office spaces

Jennings Memorial Hospital: This historic hospital in Detroit, constructed in the 1920s with additional expansions in 1949 and 1961, is being converted into senior housing apartments by Rohde Construction. The project involves transforming the 62,000 square-foot building into 46 apartments, preserving its historic significance while providing modern housing solutions

Capitol Park: Located in downtown Detroit, Capitol Park is undergoing significant revitalization efforts. The area, historically significant as Michigan's first capitol building site, is being redeveloped to include residential, retail, and office spaces. Key projects include the renovation of the David Stott Building and the Farwell Building, bringing new life to previously vacant structures and enhancing the pedestrian experience

The A. Alfred Taubman Center for Design Education: Formerly the Argonaut Building, this structure was home to General Motors' design operations. It has been repurposed by the College for Creative Studies into an educational facility, housing an art-focused charter high school and CCS's undergraduate and graduate programs. This project highlights the building's historic architecture while providing modern educational facilities

Outdoor Adventure Center: The former Detroit Dry Dock Globe Building, dating back to the late 1800s, has been transformed into the Outdoor Adventure Center by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This adaptive reuse project includes recreational activities and exhibits, contributing to the broader revitalization of Detroit's East Riverfront District

West Side Nodes

PART II: CASE STUDIES

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

8 MILE LAHSER ROAD INTERSECTION

Existing Conditions

The Lahser and 8 Mile node is located along the border of Southfield and Detroit. This node includes light industrial, commercial, and residential land uses. This blend of uses makes the intersection a focal point for improving economic activity and community life.

Demographics near the intersection of Lahser and 8 Mile are similar to those elsewhere along the 8 Mile corridor. There is low population density with an average household size of 1.67, and an average vacancy rate of 10.2%, controlling for the outlier, Block 4. The table below depicts the 2020 demographics of the four census block groups that meet at the intersection of Lahser and 8 Mile.

Table 01

Lahser & 8 Mile Demographics						
	Location	Total Population	Total Households	Household Size	Housing Units	Housing Vacancy Rate
Block 1	Southfield	635	357	1.78	387	7.8%
Block 2	Southfield	83	60	1.38	60	0%
Block 3	Detroit	727	357	1.86	459	22.2%
Block 4	Detroit	2	0	0	2	100%

Source: SEMCOG

The main building types that fall within a one-mile radius of the 8 Mile and Lahser intersection are office, retail, and industrial. This is depicted in Figure 13 below. The buildings along 8 Mile are mainly commercial and light industrial in function. However, there are several multi-family homes along 8 Mile. There are many single-family homes located several blocks to the south of the intersection. Some key spatial factors of this node include:

- **Light Industrial Presence**: The Southfield area near this node houses a concentration of light industrial facilities. These contribute to the economic base and provide employment opportunities.

- **Redevelopment Opportunities**: A vacant CVS store stands as the prime candidate for redevelopment at this node, offering the potential for community-centered projects.
- **Recreational Facilities**: The area includes a roller rink, adding to the recreational options available to residents.
- **Senior Care and Housing**: A senior care center and multi-family housing structure contribute to the need for improved pedestrian infrastructure to contribute to safety and connectivity around this intersection.
- **Retail Anchor**: The nearby Sam's Club provides access to groceries for surrounding residents.

Figure 13

The 8 Mile corridor has some of Michigan's most dangerous intersections, which should be strongly taken into consideration when planning for node improvements. In 2022, there were fifty-four (54) crashes at the intersection of 8 Mile and Lahser. While many of these crashes resulted in minor or no injury, several resulted in severe injury or death. Over the past 10 years, a total of eight fatal and serious crashes have occurred on 8 Mile near Lahser. As seen in Figure 14 below, many of these crashes took place within the intersection itself, particularly as drivers are turning right. The intersection has an annual average daily trip (AADT) between 10,000 and 40,000. This high number of daily motor vehicle traffic supports an increase in pedestrian safety as previously suggested in other areas along the 8 Mile Corridor.

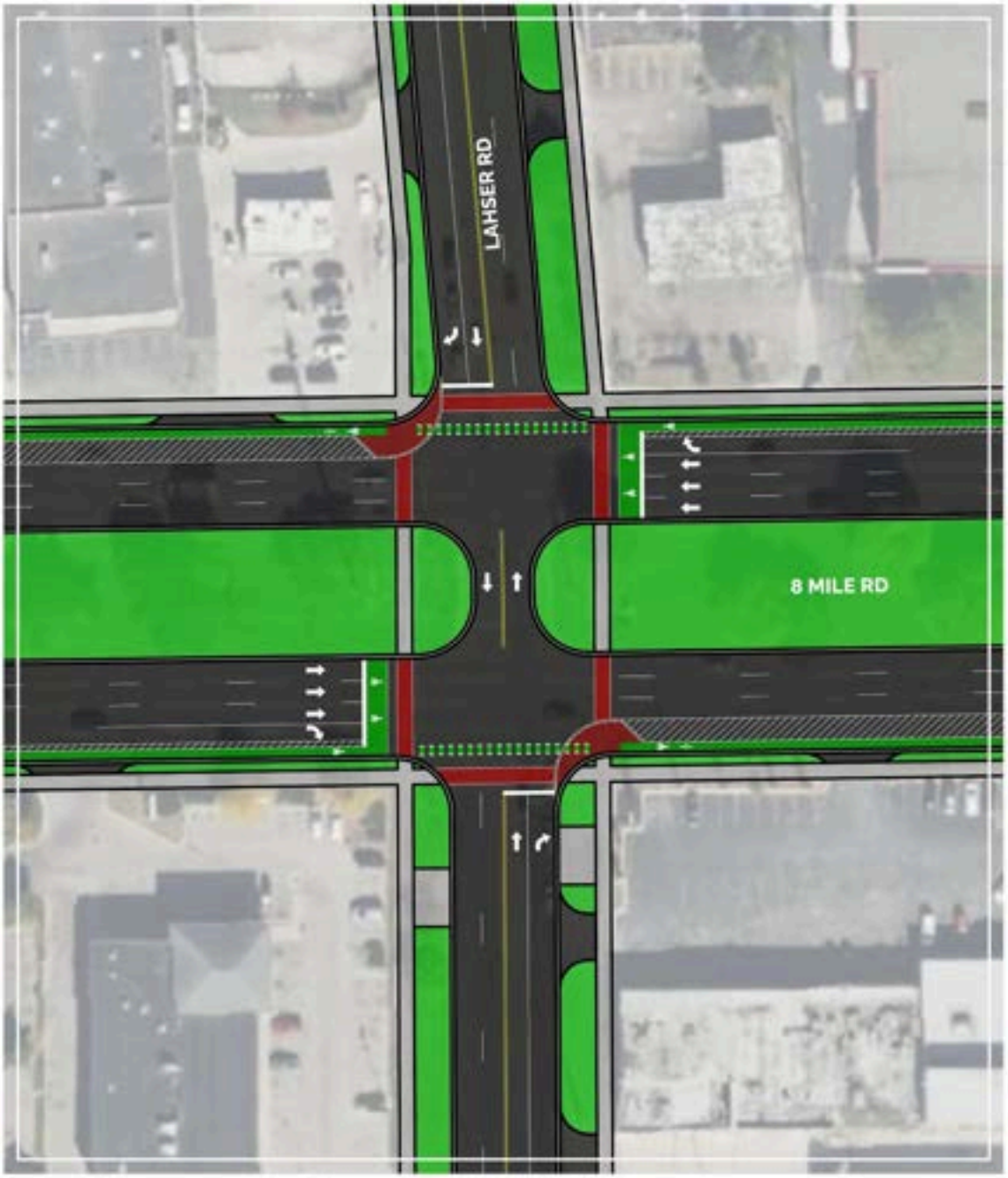
Figure 14. Lahser and 8 Mile Serious and Fatal Crashes, 2013-2022.

At the Lahser intersection, 8 Mile contains four lanes of through traffic in each direction. Left-hand turn lanes are added at turnarounds, but the intersection does not have dedicated right-turn lanes. The node represents the only marked pedestrian crossing for miles. A pedestrian would have to walk a mile to the east or two miles to the west before finding another crossing. Red-brick markings denote pedestrian crossings, which is already in accordance with plan guidelines. There are semi-official parking spaces to the east of Lahser; however, the legality of that parking is unclear, leading to confusion for drivers.

Around the Lahser node, the sidewalk is relatively continuous in each direction. The main limitation of pedestrian infrastructure off the Lahser intersection is that there are no pedestrian facilities along 8 Mile across Telegraph, to the west of the intersection. This completely separates pedestrians along 8 Mile on either side of the road. A lack of landscaping along most of the sidewalk creates challenges for pedestrians, while frequent curb cuts make walking a dangerous task. Additionally, there are no cycling facilities near this node. Transit amenities at Lahser are better than most along 8 Mile Road. There are dedicated and marked transit stations for riders, although they have been poorly maintained and no longer provide comfort to passengers.

Proposed Infrastructure

Figure 15



Changes to public infrastructure should be made in accordance with the guidelines set earlier in this plan. Highlights specific to this node include:

- **Bump outs:** The right turning motion on to 8 Mile results in the most pedestrian-related accidents at this node. To improve pedestrian safety, the addition of two bump outs for right-turning traffic off Lahser is recommended. This can be done through temporary bollards that force traffic to take a tighter turn and thus drive slower when turning, reducing the chance of a crash.

- **Marked crossings:** Both crossings across 8 Mile use red-brick paving to improve pedestrian visibility while also giving the intersection a sense of place. This treatment should be extended to the two crossings across Lahser.

- **Bus Shelters:** The existing bus stop on the west side of Lahser provides a spacious area for passengers to wait. This area should include a new, full-sized bench and a larger route sign to improve visibility for riders. The #17 Eight Mile DDOT bus route that services this stop does not intersect with other transit lines, so there is no need to treat this stop as a Connection Corner; however, these modest upgrades can improve the experience of passengers while they wait. The existing eastbound stop at this intersection is located on 8 Mile. This stop should be relocated to the east side of Lahser, directly across from its westbound counterpart. This will provide better bus stop symmetry which helps with wayfinding. Additionally, the area on Lahser provides a more spacious waiting area away from the sidewalk as well as better street lighting. The stop should be outfitted with the same upgrades as the ones detailed above for the westbound waiting area. Municipalities should pay close attention to the amenities at both stops, including benches and trash cans, to ensure that they remain in good condition

- **Pedestrian Crossings:** Several pedestrian crossings could be added near the intersection to increase walkability. Most notably, there should be a HAWK crossing connecting the Sam's Club and Northland Roller Rink. Creating a pedestrian connection between this shopping and entertainment center aligns with the family-friendly approach to development along this node. A pedestrian connection here could allow a mother to drop her kids off at the roller rink, shop at the Sam's Club and adjacent retail facilities, and return, all without using a vehicle. Additional crossings should be added in accordance with plan guidelines.

Economic Development

Community Center

Our primary objective at this node is to transform the abandoned CVS at the into a vibrant community center. This building sits on a 1.29 acre parcel of land that is currently zoned B-4 (General Business District). This center will serve as a focal point for residents of nearby neighborhoods and housing complexes, offering a wide range of recreational, social, and educational opportunities. Moreover, the conversion of an abandoned building into an active community center helps to eliminate urban blight, improve facades along the corridor, and contribute to the neighborhood's overall aesthetic and functional improvement.

Source: Vanessa Greco

The former CVS site, located within close walking distance of two densely populated residential neighborhoods, a healthcare complex, a senior living facility, and the Northland Roller Rink, would cater to diverse community needs. Potential amenities–including a workout room, yoga sessions, and substance recovery meetings, among others–would be aimed at improving community health outcomes. Additionally, the community center will address the needs of families by providing play areas, a Boys & Girls Club, and childcare services. Regular bingo sessions may attract residents from the nearby senior living facility.

Source: City of Detroit

Beyond its recreational and social benefits, the center will catalyze economic and cultural development. It will feature food trucks, pop-up shows, art exhibitions, and community events that celebrate local culture and support small businesses, thereby boosting the local economy and enriching the cultural fabric of the community. With these features, the community center could serve as a potential destination for the 8 Mile Festival proposed in this plan's economic and land use guidelines.

Additional benefits and initiatives include:

Educational Opportunities: Educational opportunities may include after-school tutoring programs, educational seminars, and job training workshops. The Farwell Recreation Center on E. Outer Drive in Detroit, for instance, offers weekly ceramics and sewing classes during the summers.

Youth Engagement: With dedicated spaces for after-school programs, sports, arts, and educational activities, the center will be a safe and supportive environment for the youth of the community. This can help reduce juvenile delinquency and promote positive development.

Healthcare Access: Partnerships with local healthcare providers such as the nearby West Oaks Senior Care facility, the DMC Northwest Women's Care Clinic, or the Pediatric Staff PLLC, all located on 8 Mile Road near Lahser, will improve health outcomes along the corridor. Through these partnerships, the community center can offer periodic wellness checks, vaccination drives, and health education programs to the public.

Green Initiatives: Much of this property consists of vacant, ground-level parking. Much of this paved area can be transformed into communal gardens and green spaces to be enjoyed by members of the community center along the lines of the recommended community garden at 20503 Washburn Avenue. The community center may also offer sustainability workshops to promote environmental awareness and healthy living.

Technology Access: Providing free Wi-Fi, computer labs, and digital literacy classes will bridge the digital divide and enhance access to information and technology. The Roberto Clemente Recreation Center on Bagley St. in Detroit, for instance, offers weekly Youth Tech classes. This will also help with providing job applicants and students with resources that can improve their access to opportunities.

Support for the Unhoused: In accordance with this plan's economic development and land use guidelines, the center should offer essential housing services such as directing unhoused community members to temporary shelters, meal providers, and access to social services. Additionally, the center may develop programs, and build partnerships with existing agencies assisting unhoused individuals with transitioning to more stable living situations. Existing homeless service providers and shelters are more centrally located in the downtown Detroit area, collaborating with City of Detroit outreach teams and the *CAM (Coordinated Assessment Model)*, to expand access further west will allow for a great range of service. Expanding services also stands to capture community members who are unaware of current resources and where to find assistance. Proposing a CAM access point in the community center will create a direct link to shelter providers and housing resources for the unhoused. With the recent and indefinite closing of the *MSHDA Homeless Preference Housing Choice Voucher* waitlist, it is imperative to create opportunities for success and

access to assistance for unhoused residents. However the CAM only services residents of Detroit and Wayne county, in order to have complete cross collaboration between cities and including Community Housing Network, the current HARA for Oakland County, will ensure residents form both sides of the corridor are able to seek relevant and necessary shelter and housing placement. This Center could prove to be a motivator for continued collaboration in future service and programming.

Businesses Pop-ups: Hosting weekly pop-up shops for local small businesses will provide local business owners with an opportunity to showcase and sell their products or services, thus supporting homegrown entrepreneurship.

Culinary Variety: Food trucks visiting the site will offer a diverse range of food options highlighting Detroit's many cultures represented in the region, creating a lively atmosphere and supporting local food vendors.

Community Building: By hosting events, workshops, and meetings, the center will foster a sense of community, encouraging residents to connect, collaborate, and support one another.

By including these diverse features and programs, the community center would create a welcoming and inclusive space that meets the needs of all residents, foster community pride, and be a catalyst for positive change in the neighborhood.

Proposed pharmacy redevelopment in Tarentum, PA. Source: Jason Miller (Birmingham)

Encourage Family-Friendly Development

The Victoria Place Apartments, the Northland Roller Rink, an abundance of single-family homes on the north and south sides of the intersection, and the aforementioned planned community center form the foundational elements of a family-oriented corridor. However, like much of 8 Mile Road, this intersection is zoned for general business (B-3 in Southfield and B-4 in Detroit) and light industrial activity (I-L and I-1 in Southfield). General business zoning allows for the operation of automotive services (including gas stations, car repair shops, and car washes), largely contributing to the corridor's hostility to pedestrians. However, this zoning also generally allows for small retail stores, personal services, professional offices, bake shops, and restaurants. Because the bedrock for a family-friendly neighborhood already exists at this intersection, the development of future retailers at odds with this vision (i.e. liquor stores, strip clubs, or car sale lots) should be restricted.

Current commercial uses at this intersection are varied. The strip mall at the southeast corner of this intersection is currently home to a pawn shop, insurance office, beauty supply store, nail salon, fried food restaurant, massage parlor, pharmacy, and appliance store. These retailers are not necessarily at odds with our proposed vision; however, this strip may be expanded to encourage more family-oriented establishments, i.e. ice cream shops, hobby and craft stores, childcare services, or bookstores. This plan recommends slating auto-oriented businesses for redevelopment when reasonable and possibly rezoning from retail to mixed-use in these locations.

Design Improvements

Screening and Landscaping

Eagle Landscaping, with frontage on both 8 Mile and Lahser, provides a great example of the benefits of screening and buffers to improve the pedestrian experience. Creative use of art or artifacts related to a business, like the equipment on display at Eagle, also serve as an advertisement for the business. Lighting can meet both business security needs as well as pedestrian comfort needs at night. While a landscaping supply yard generally might not be the most pedestrian friendly environment, this property shows how streetfront improvements can improve the pedestrian experience as well as serve as a marketing tool for a business. Similar techniques should be used elsewhere along the node and the corridor as a whole–particularly for light industrial land uses.

Parking

Where possible, parking should be eliminated in front of buildings fronting 8 Mile. Northland Roller Rink, the Woodland Arms Apartments, and other establishments have parking available at both the front and rear of the respective buildings. Municipalities should grant parking exemptions to these businesses, requiring only rear-parking. This opens space in front of the buildings to be used for landscaping, outdoor entertainment, etc., benefiting both business and pedestrians.

WYOMING AVENUE TO LIVERNOIS STREET

Existing Conditions

The Wyoming to Livernois node of 8 Mile represents a diverse intersection of light industrial, commercial, and residential activities, which serve as a pivotal hub for economic vitality and community engagement. This area is characterized by a range of land uses and demographic profiles, presenting significant opportunities for strategic development and enhancement.

The one-mile corridor between Wyoming and Livernois encompasses three (3) census tracts and three (3) municipalities: Detroit, Ferndale, and Royal Oak Charter Township. Additionally, with a combined population of over 6,600 residents, the area is well-traveled. The average vacancy rate of the three (3) census tracts is 7.6% with an average household size that is slightly lower than the State of Michigan's 2.46 average at 2.30. Table 02 provides an overview of demographics along 8 Mile between Livernois and Wyoming.

Table 02.

Wyoming Avenue to Livernois Street on 8 Mile						
	Location	Total Population	Households	Household Size	Housing Units	Housing Vacancy Rate
Census Tract 1	Royal Oak	2,374	1,044	2.27	1,106	5.6%
Census Tract 2	Ferndale	1,479	721	2.05	758	4.9%
Census Tract 3	Detroit	2,769	1,068	2.59	1,217	12.2%

Source: SEMCOG

The Northeast corner of this corridor has been deemed an opportunity zone as categorized by SEMCOG. Figure 16 below depicts the surrounding building types along this section of 8 Mile. Along the 8 Mile corridor, most building types are office and retail. The area between Livernois and Wyoming is a blend of commercial, educational, and green spaces. Some notable factors include:

- **Commercial Amenities**: The north side of 8 Mile features several grocery stores, including Kroger and ALDI.

- **Educational Institutions**: Ferndale High School offers the potential for improved community spaces. Additionally, the adjacent vacant space to the south is suited for future redevelopment.
- **Key Landowners**: Current landowners include Axle Holding 2 LLC and Pinecrest Holdings LLC, whose holdings influence development dynamics.
- Figure 16

Eight Mile includes many dangerous intersections which should be highlighted during the corridor planning processes. In 2022, there were an estimated one-hundred and forty-six (146) crashes along 8 Mile between Wyoming and Livernois. Many of these resulted in minor injuries, but a significant amount led to serious injury or death. Over the past 10 years, there have been 29 fatal and serious crashes on this stretch of 8 Mile. As seen in Figure 17 below, many of these crashes took place at the Livernois and Wyoming intersections, but a significant amount took place near Pinecrest, where a left-turning movement is facilitated. With an average daily traffic count between 20,000 and 40,000, special attention should be given to pedestrian safety and increasing the availability of non-motorized modes of transportation.

Figure 17. 8 Mile from Wyoming to Livernois Serious and Fatal Crashes, 2013-2022.

Like much of the corridor, the road between Livernois and Wyoming features four lanes of through traffic in each direction, with additional lanes for right and left turn movements. The one mile stretch features only two full intersections, located at Livernois and Wyoming themselves. These are also the only marked pedestrian crossings. Unlike most of 8 Mile, a left turn movement is facilitated when driving southbound on Pinecrest. While improving the flow of traffic,

this movement also results in numerous crashes, likely because other drivers are not expecting it. Parts of the road along this stretch include roadside parking, but the inadequate signage creates confusion for drivers.. As a result, right-turn lanes are often used for parking.

A continuous sidewalk runs along the south side of the road while the north section is missing a sidewalk at numerous points. Where sidewalks are provided, the pedestrian experience can feel unwelcoming due to the lack of landscaping and shade, as well as the numerous curb cuts that impede safety. While pedestrian amenities are minimal along the stretch, cycling facilities are nonexistent bar bike lanes along Livernois. Transit amenities are also sparse, mainly consisting of stops indicated only by signage and a few poorly maintained shelters.

Proposed Infrastructure

Figure 18

Changes to public infrastructure should follow the guidelines set earlier in this plan. Key highlights specific to this node include:

- **Placemaking Treatment:** The energy going into the Livernois corridor from both Detroit and Ferndale makes it a logical place for placemaking. Rather than zebra crossings this intersection should receive red-brick pavement, typical of placemaking treatment. The node should also receive additional street furniture and wayfinding signage due to higher levels of pedestrian traffic.

- **Bicycle Infrastructure:** Livernois will be one of the few intersections along 8 Mile in which both cross streets have bike lanes. As a result, additional cycling infrastructure should be added to facilitate cyclists turning left at the intersection. Other cycling amenities like bike racks and a cyclist counter could be beneficial near this node to further promote cycling. Similarly, as Pinecrest Drive contains bike lanes a pedestrian and cycling crossing should be provided across 8 Mile to facilitate all movements of cyclists.

- **Simplification of Movements:** The facilitation of left-turning traffic at Pinecrest is out of character with the rest of 8 Mile, leading to a higher number of crashes. To increase safety, this movement should be eliminated, forcing drivers to make a “Michigan left'' similar to what is required at most other cross streets along the corridor. This will simplify movements along this portion of the corridor, increasing safety.

- **Bus Shelters:** Both of the major intersections–Wyoming and Livernois–are the locations of multiple overlapping bus routes. As such, they should be upgraded to Connection Corners with large bus shelters featuring the passenger amenities outlined earlier in the mobility guidelines section of this plan. The remaining stops along this corridor should include benches and clear signage for passengers.

- **Pedestrian Crossings:** Key shopping locations in Royal Oak Charter Township should receive their own pedestrian crossings on 8 Mile to facilitate better walkability and connection between both sides of the road. An additional crossing should be added near Pinecrest Drive to allow for cyclists to cross the road without traveling to a major intersection.

Economic Development

Capitalize on the Avenue of Fashion (Livernois)

Emerging in the 1960s, the Avenue of Fashion was a prominent shopping destination for its independent boutiques. The Avenue thrived as a walkable, anti-mall shopping district. Despite economic challenges during the 80s and 90s, the Avenue has witnessed a resurgence over the past decade, supported by small, African American-owned businesses. The recent completion of road construction on Livernois, featuring wider sidewalks and better parking, presents a unique opportunity to further enhance the district's appeal and functionality.

Source: Detroit Historical Society

This proposal seeks to harness the Avenue's rich legacy while expanding opportunities through diversified business development and light industrial and mixed-use expansions, focusing on key properties such as 19323 - 19331 Livernois. This plan aims to create a vibrant, inclusive economic ecosystem that supports local entrepreneurs, attracts new businesses, and fosters community resilience.

The revitalization of the Avenue of Fashion represents a critical opportunity to honor its historic legacy while embracing future growth and diversity. By focusing on business diversification, light industrial and mixed-use expansion, and robust community engagement, this proposal aims to create a thriving, inclusive economic environment that benefits all stakeholders and ensures the Avenue remains a dynamic and cherished part of Detroit's urban fabric. Neighborhood HomeBase provides a proven framework for community-driven economic development that can extend the benefits of this revitalization throughout the 8 Mile corridor.

Objectives:

- **Diversify Business Offerings:** Introduce a variety of businesses, including technology firms, creative studios, and wellness centers, to complement existing retailers and service providers.
- **Light Industrial and Mixed-Use Expansion:** Develop the B. Siegel Building properties into mixed-use spaces with street-facing retail, light industrial

workshops, and/or loft/housing opportunities that are designed to maximize the natural lighting it already has.

- **Support Local Entrepreneurs:** Provide resources and incentives for local, minority-owned businesses to thrive and grow.

Strategies:

Business Diversification:

- **Incentive Programs:** Establish grants and low-interest loans for startups and small businesses in emerging sectors.
- **Business Incubators:** Create incubator spaces within the Neighborhood HomeBase to support tech startups, artisans, and creative enterprises. Neighborhood HomeBase is a collaborative co-working office space, small business resource center, and community gathering place.
- **Retail Mix:** Attract a diverse mix of businesses to offer a wider range of goods and services, catering to both local residents and visitors.

Light Industrial and Mixed-Use Development:

- **Design Features:** Ensure the design includes ample natural light, open spaces, and sustainable building practices to create a welcoming environment for businesses and customers. Walk out your front door to explore the multitude of options for shopping, services, restaurants, coffee shops, and more up and down the Avenue of Fashion.

Support and Resources for Entrepreneurs:

- **Training and Mentorship:** Offer workshops and mentorship programs to help local entrepreneurs develop business skills.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Organize networking events and business fairs to connect local businesses with potential partners and customers.
- **Marketing Assistance:** Provide marketing and branding support to help businesses reach a broader audience.

Neighborhood HomeBase:

Neighborhood HomeBase on Livernois serves as a collaborative co-working office space, small business resource center, and community gathering place. It stands as a successful model of how integrated community spaces can support business growth and community engagement. By providing essential resources, networking opportunities, and a supportive environment, Neighborhood HomeBase exemplifies the type of development that can be replicated along the 8 Mile corridor to foster similar positive outcomes across the region.

Source: Model D Media

Expected Outcomes:

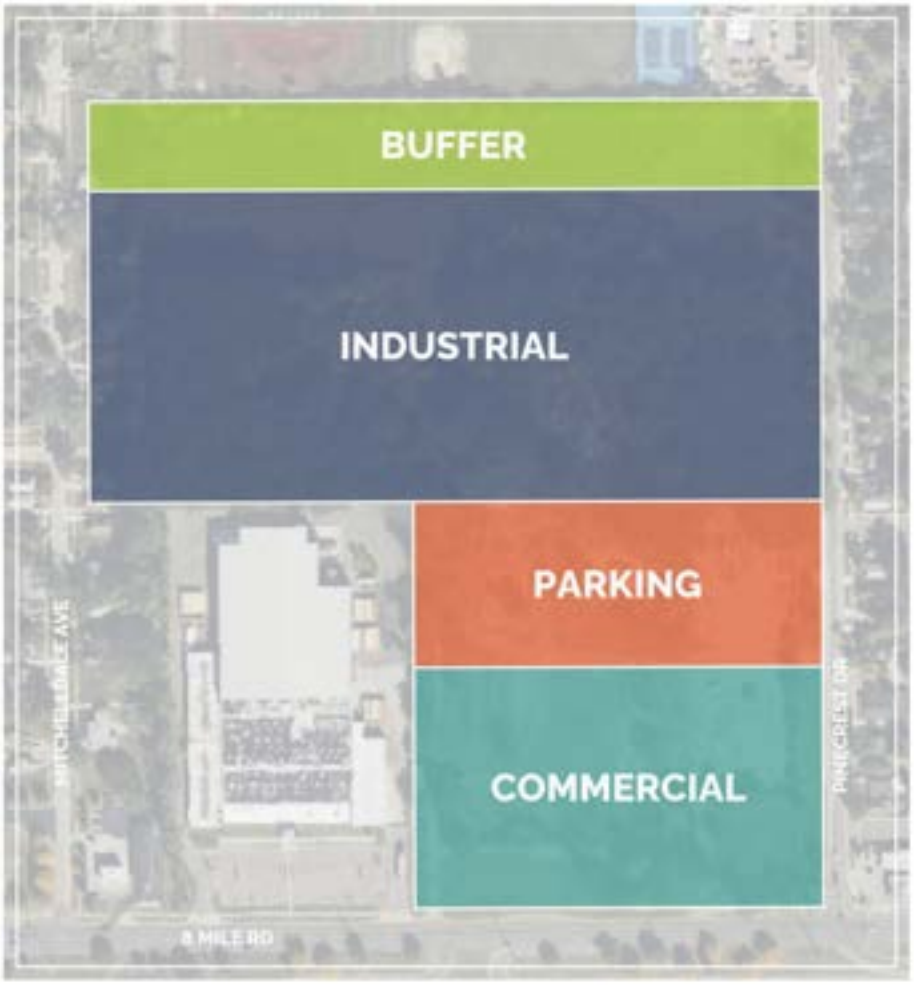
- Increased business diversity and economic activity on the Avenue of Fashion.
- Enhanced physical and social infrastructure that supports a vibrant, inclusive community.
- Strengthened local entrepreneurship and sustained growth of minority-owned businesses.
- Reinforced cultural identity and community pride through engaged public spaces and events.

8896 8 Mile Rd.

A 2,015-square-foot vacant space in a neighborhood center, formerly a dental office, is available for providing personal services to the residents in the area. Located in Royal Oak Township within the metro-Detroit community, the site benefits from its position on the heavily traveled 8 Mile Road. Situated between the communities of Ferndale and Oak Park, Royal Town Center hosts diverse retail services. This location offers practical access to personal service establishments for the local population.

Source: Justin Curry

Industrial Expansion



A 34.8 acre vacant site sits along the border of Ferndale and Royal Oak Charter Township. This site, located at 1600 W 8 Mile, is bounded by the Ferndale High School campus to the north, Pinecrest Drive to the west, 8 Mile to the south, and Mitchelldale Avenue to the east. The site wraps around the current location of the auto parts supplier Detroit Axle, but is otherwise surrounded by residential uses. The city of Ferndale has this area zoned as M-1 Limited Industrial in their current master plan. This zoning not only aims to facilitate the redevelopment of the contaminated site but also seeks to diversify the city's tax base. For these reasons, the site should be used for light-industrial purposes while also providing fronting uses that better serve pedestrians.

Ferndale's zoning code allows accessory retail uses and other select consumer facing uses within M-1 zoning with conditional approval. This allows for a consumer facing use directly off of 8 Mile that will help increase the area's pedestrianization. Parking for this facility can be located behind the structure along with new light-industrial uses located further off the corridor. This allows the site to be used for industrial purposes in accordance with the city's zoning but also aligns with the goals of this plan.

Additionally, two of the three parcels making up the site are currently held by Axle Holding 2 LLC, indicating Detroit Axle may have expansion plans in the works, further supporting expanded use of the site.

Lastly, as the site borders residential and civic uses, a buffer zone of landscaping and shielding should be provided to minimize the impact on residents and students at the high school.

Create “Micro-Districts”

Source: Google Earth (2023)

Source: Anya Tipton

Currently, commercial activity along 8 Mile Road is overpopulated by auto-oriented businesses, which has resulted in a disproportionate amount of land consumption, reduced walkability, and monotonous landscapes. The goal of creating "micro-districts" along a road is to transform typically car-centric corridors into more human-scaled, vibrant, and multifunctional areas that better serve community needs. Specifically, the five blocks along 8 Mile Road between Indiana Avenue and Roselawn Street in Detroit feature numerous older, single-story, street-fronting structures. While some of these parcels host active businesses, such as restaurants and bars, others contain vacant buildings or undeveloped land.

These structures lie directly south of the Kroger/ALDI shopping complex on the north side of 8 Mile, spanning eight city blocks. The existing infrastructure should be leveraged and zoned to create a mini-downtown "micro-district" in this area to spur economic development.

Source: The Daily Tribune

In accordance with the land use and economic development guidelines, we recommend promoting the establishment of nutrition-focused food businesses along these blocks. People are already attracted to this corridor to meet their food needs, whether they are dining at the acclaimed restaurants on Livernois or shopping for groceries at Kroger or ALDI. To capture and extend the

food-based spirit of these grocery and dining establishments from the north side of 8 Mile Road between Wyoming and Livernois to the south side, the following measures are proposed:

8 Mile Food Hall

The block between Ohio St. and Cherrylawn St., on 8 Mile's south side appears to be vacant. On the easternmost part of this block is an empty liquor store and parking lot. The block also features two single-story, vacant structures designed for commercial use. The 0.58 acre site, consisting of five parcels, is currently zoned B-4 (General Business) with acceptable uses including commercial uses of a thoroughfare-oriented nature; i.e. bake shops, art galleries, motor vehicle sale lots, blueprinting shops, etc. Taking inspiration from similar developments in other cities (i.e. St. Roch Market in New Orleans or The Market at Malcolm Yards in Minneapolis), the establishment of a food hall on this block is proposed, featuring local vendors, retail space, indoor dining, and an outdoor patio space behind the structure.

Source: Google Earth (2023)

Source: St. Roch Market

Developing a food hall across from the Kroger shopping complex on 8 Mile Road in Detroit presents a unique opportunity to enrich the local community and catalyze economic growth. 8 Mile Road is a bustling thoroughfare that serves as a vital link between different neighborhoods in Detroit. Introducing a food hall can act as a focal point for community gatherings, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among residents. It can also attract visitors from neighboring areas and shopping complexes, boosting foot traffic and creating a vibrant atmosphere. This not only provides residents with convenient dining options but also introduces visitors to the city's unique flavors and traditions. Furthermore, a food hall provides a platform for these entrepreneurs to showcase their talents without the high overhead costs of a standalone restaurant. This can empower local

chefs, artisans, and food producers, helping them thrive and contribute to the local economy. Reserving partial vendor space for more nutritional products or services is recommended to complement the existing restaurant offerings along 8 Mile Road.

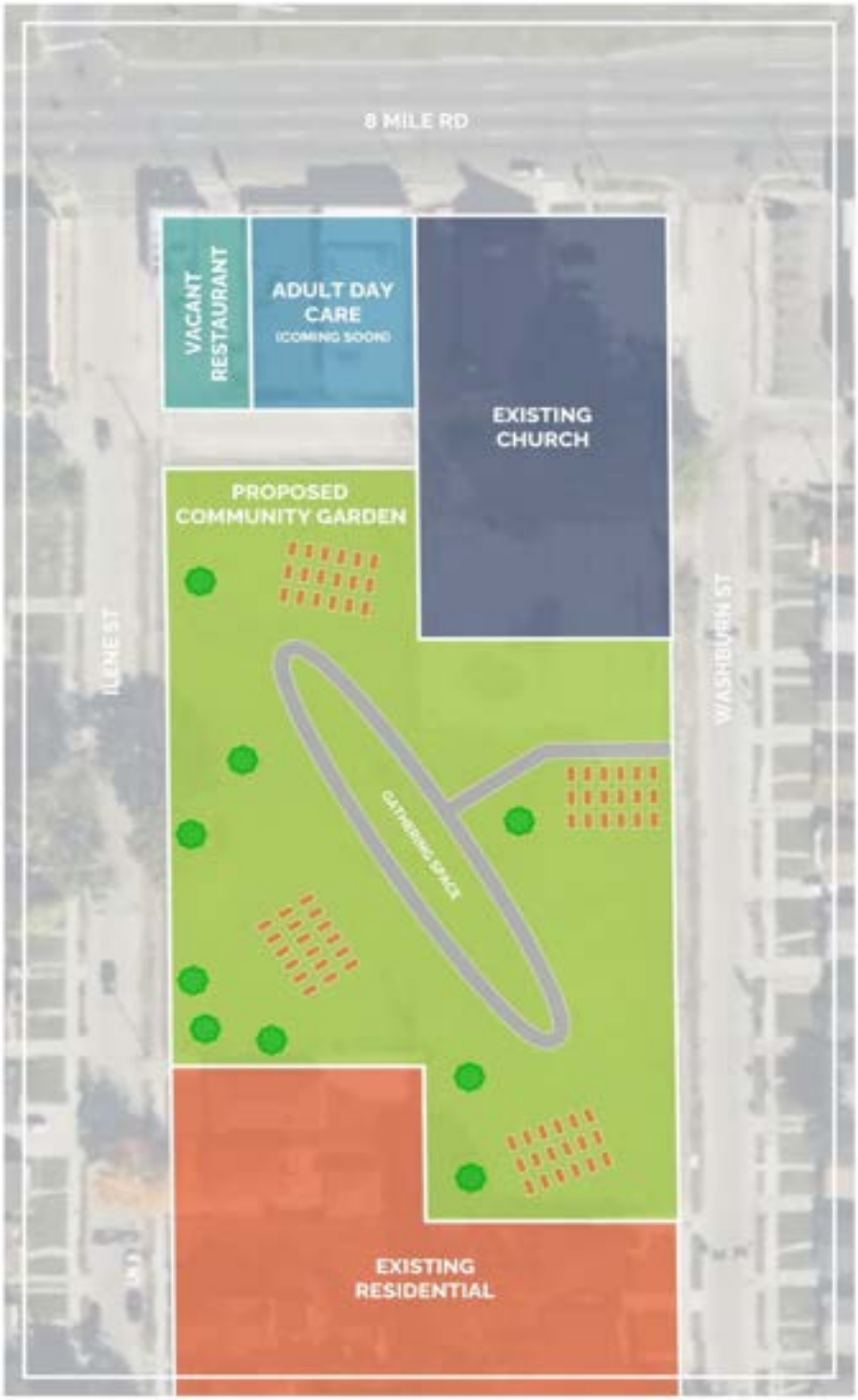
The following image presents a proposal for land use on this block. Rear parking promotes a pedestrian-friendly environment and will encourage foot traffic from nearby businesses.

The proposed design includes existing structures in the layout, thus allowing for adaptive reuse if desired or possible.

Figure 19

Community Garden

Figure 20



A community garden adjacent to Wyoming on 8 Mile, between Ilene Street and Washburn Avenue (*20503 Washburn Ave*), can provide numerous benefits to a residential neighborhood that lacks quality food options. By allowing residents to grow and harvest their fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs, community gardens improve access to nutritious food, contributing to better overall health and well-being and reducing the risk of diet-related diseases. Additionally, these gardens foster social interaction and collaboration among neighbors, strengthening community bonds and reducing social isolation. They serve as hands-on learning environments, offering educational opportunities for people of all ages to learn about gardening, nutrition, and sustainable practices. Economically, growing food can reduce grocery bills, providing financial relief for families. Furthermore, community gardens enhance the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood, transforming unused or neglected areas into vibrant, green spaces and contributing to environmental health by improving air quality, promoting biodiversity, and reducing urban heat islands. Lastly, community gardens can serve as spaces for cultural exchange, where diverse cultural practices and recipes are shared, enriching the community's cultural fabric.

Source: Edible Northeast Florida

10145 8 Mile Rd.

Located at the corner of Ilene and 8 Mile, 10145 W. 8 Mile Rd, Detroit, MI 48221, is a vacant local commercial restaurant, previously known as Chick-N-Kingz. This property, measuring 0.10 acres with a building size of 4,300 square feet, falls under the Local Business and Residential District (B2/R1) zoning. This zoning type supports a mix of small-scale commercial and residential uses,

Source: Google Earth (2023)

including local commercial businesses like retail stores, restaurants, and personal service establishments. The proposal to repurpose the vacant restaurant into a personal establishment aims to complement the adult daycare facility next door, demonstrating an intentional pairing of specific uses within the mixed-use/commercial/light industrial zoning districts. This approach aligns with the vision for the future of the 8 Mile corridor, fostering a vibrant, functional, and aesthetically pleasing environment that supports local business, provides essential services, and enhances the community's quality of life.

Design Improvements

The sites and developments described above would require varying levels of investment in aesthetic design in order to elevate the surrounding areas. The following section outlines some specific improvements that can be made in these locations.

Facade Elevation

8539 W 8 Mile Rd, as depicted in the photos below, serves as a prime example of the transformative impact facade improvements can have on a building. Often, a simple update like a fresh coat of paint can rejuvenate an older, neglected structure and enhance its overall appearance..

For buildings such as the one pictured below, paint, as well as added windows and enhanced entryways in line with the transparency and entryway recommendations in the design guidelines section of this report would increase the pedestrian friendliness and desirability of the block. These improvements can also enhance the character of the streetfront properties to aid in their function as a microdistrict as described in the previous section.

Screening and Landscaping

In areas where street facing parking lots already exist, such as the area in front of Kroger depicted below, additional landscaping and fencing should be used to decrease pedestrian hostility. Increased screening from parking lots as well as the inclusion of bike lanes and parking lanes create a buffer from fast moving traffic, which increases the comfort of both pedestrians and bus riders.

Parking

The abundance of street facing parking lots, particularly on the north side of 8 Mile Rd in this area, make it feel particularly hostile to pedestrians. A number of options can be explored.

Figure 21

1. Encourage infill development and shared parking agreements for big box retail and stripmalls.
2. Explore shared parking agreements with churches and other properties that have varying peak hours.
3. Utilize alleyway parking to allow for additional onstreet development.

Highlight Local Culture

This stretch of 8 Mile Road is in proximity to many locations with cultural and historical significance. In accordance with the land use and economic development guidelines, these locations should be properly demarcated with historical markers. Cultural or heritage sites that are not directly located on 8 Mile Road but are within close walking distance–such as Baker's Keyboard Lounge on Livernois Avenue, the Avenue of Fashion, or the Eight Mile Wall on Birchwood Avenue–should receive wayfinding signs to direct pedestrians and motorists traveling on 8 Mile to these locations.

Source: Bridge Detroit

Source: The Metro Parent

Source: The Detroit News

East Side Nodes

PART II: CASE STUDIES

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

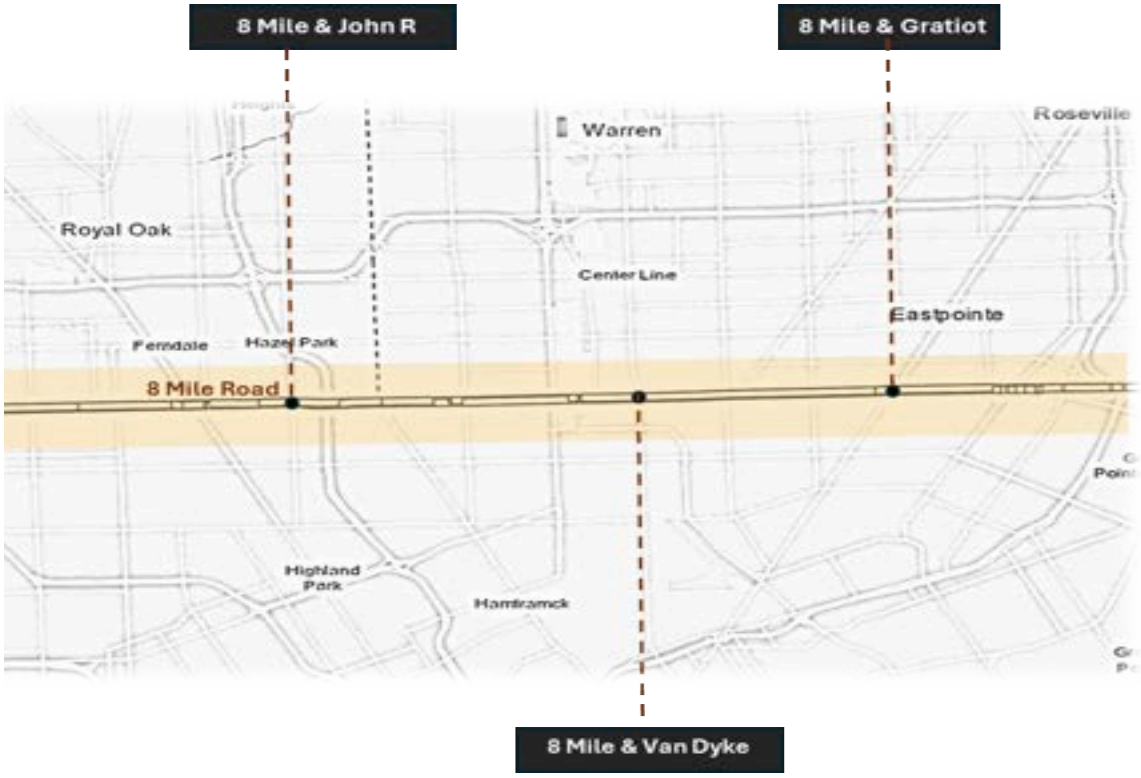
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

East Side Nodes

Figure 22



EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE & MOBILITY

Figure 23

Source: https://maps.semcog.org/CrashLocations

Data released by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety showed crashes involving vulnerable roadway users (i.e, pedestrians and bicyclists) increased by at least 10% in 2023, despite an overall decrease in crashes and fatalities on other Michigan roadways.

- Pedestrian-involved crashes rose by 11%, (2,114 crashes) in 2023
- Pedestrian fatalities increased by 6%, (183 deaths) in 2023
- Bicycle-involved crashes increased by 10% (1,480 crashes) in 2023 and
- Bicyclist fatalities fell by 33%, (24 deaths) in 2023

According to SEMCOG Community Explorer data, thirty four percent of Detroit residents do not own or have access to a vehicle, thus, pedestrians, bikers, and bus riders experience significantly longer travel times to access employment opportunities and amenities. The following heat map shows the average Percentage of Households in Southeast Michigan that do not own cars. The average percentage for Detroiters without a car is 36.1%. Similarly, Hazel Park, Warren, and Harper Woods average 21.4%, with Eastpointe averaging 11%.

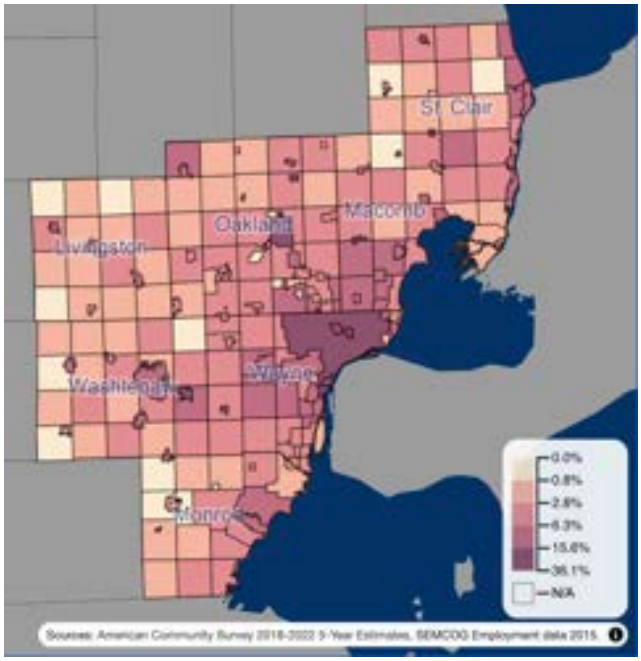
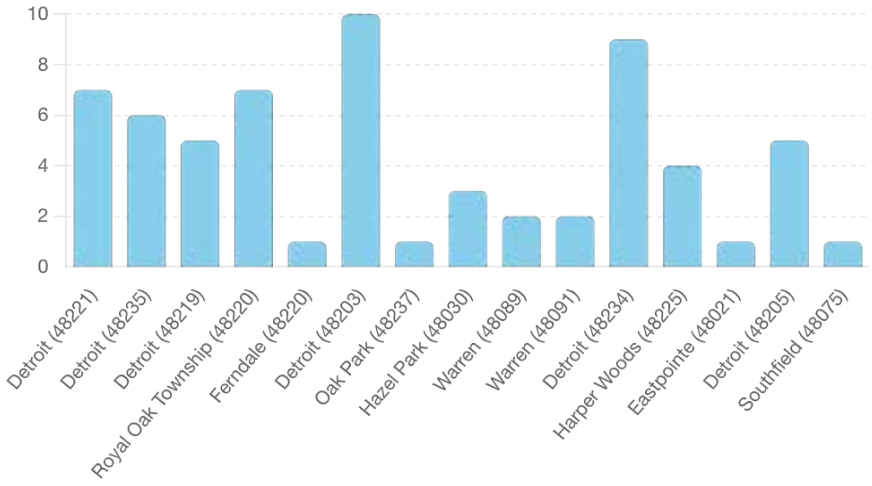


Figure 24

Figure 25



Transit use percentages increase along the southern Detroit side zip codes. Site selection and mobility infrastructure should be designed in order to meet demand and strategically placed infrastructure should be made easily available from both sides of 8-mile.

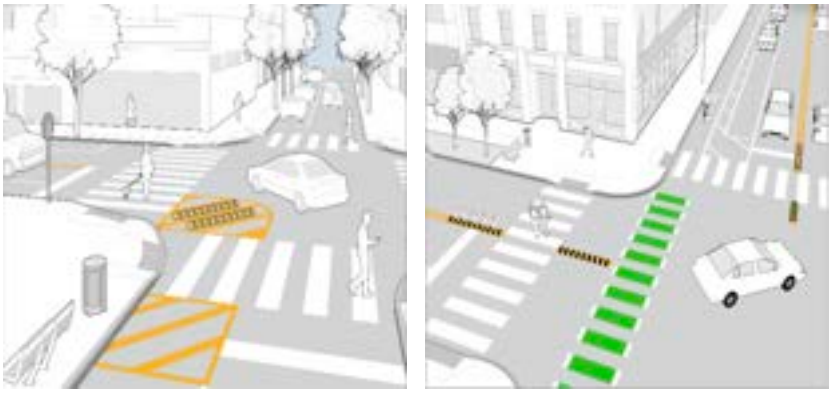
A neighborhood functions best, when all members are able to easily meet their vital needs with minimal inconvenience. Regional cooperation on both sides of the 8 Mile corridor is essential for a successful mobility plan. MDOT continues to conduct extensive roadwork along the 8 Mile corridor, including improvements to various nodes' medians and intersections, to enhance traffic flow and safety. Intersections along the corridor require critical improvements to enhance overall mobility/walkability, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, to reduce traffic crashes and injuries streamline, public transportation, etc. Both DDOT and SMART operate on all three east side nodes.

East Side Nodes - General Infrastructure Recommendations

Key public infrastructure updates for the East Side Nodes, per the guidelines set forth earlier in this plan:

- **Pedestrian Crosswalks:** Zebra pedestrian crossings at all intersections must be heavily-marked, brightly colored, and use reflective MMA paint.
- **Pedestrian Signals:** Pedestrian signals should be placed on automatic recall at all intersections to establish a permanent traffic pattern that prioritizes pedestrians and bicyclists. The pedestrian clearance interval should be increased to 10 seconds in high traffic areas to allow safe passage across these dangerous intersections.
- **No Right Turn On Red:** Banning right turn on red at major intersections along the corridor could improve nonmotorized user safety and mobility.
- **Traffic Calming Measures:** Reduce the number and width of travel lanes wherever possible. Install hardened centerlines between opposing traffic lanes and to force slow left-turning lanes. Employ turn wedges to reduce speed at intersections.

Figure 26



Source: Hardened Centerlines and Turn Wedges – Official Website of Arlington County Virginia Government

Enhanced pedestrian crossings with hardened centerlines, turn wedges, longer walk times, and APS would provide greater protection for pedestrians, without interrupting the flow of traffic for motorists. The goal is to create an accessible and inclusive environment.

8 MILE AND JOHN R

Demographics

There are distinct disparities in demographic characteristics between Detroit and Hazel Park. In the table shown below, Detroit's HHMI of $35,000 is almost 50% below Hazel Park's HHMI of $65,432. There are also fewer households and housing units on the Detroit side of 8 Mile and higher counts of vacant units per tract. Moreover, racial disparities in income are striking, as census tract 5081 indicates residents on the Detroit side of 8 Mile are 81% Black (1,028) and 12% White (157) in comparison to Hazel Park's combined census tracts (1736, 1753), which show this side having a residential population close to 74% White (3914) and 12% Black (653).[1] Historically and currently racial income and wealth gaps between Blacks and Whites are correlated with discriminatory practices in housing (redlining), banking, taxation, and higher education—with higher rates of unemployment and lower wages contributing to disparities in racial income as well (Perry et al., 2024, New Detroit, 2020).[2]

Table 03

John R						
Census Tract	Location	Total population	Median income	Total Households	Total Housing Units	Total vacant units
5081	Detroit	1,271	$35,000	380	679	201
1736	Hazel Park	1,383	$70,150	783	750	53
1753	Hazel Park	3,888	$60,714	1,806	1,797	150

Source: Data given for Detroit and Hazel Park from United States Census Bureau tract map, 2020 Decennial Census, and 2022 American Community Survey.

[1] United States Census Bureau: Census Tract 1753; Census Tract 1736; Census Tract 5081
[2] Perry et al.; New Detroit

Existing Conditions

Figure 27

The area of 8 Mile and John R encompasses the city of Detroit on the southside and Hazel Park on the northside of 8 Mile. Site visits to both areas uncovered a mix of conditions, with both sides of 8 Mile presenting its own set of unique challenges and new opportunities for economic development and land use.

Detroit's side of 8 Mile and John R is located in close proximity to the Grixdale Farms community and neighboring Nolan community. Findings from site visits and data analysis uncovered a significant amount of publicly-owned and privately-owned residential single-family vacant land parcels in neighborhoods surrounding Detroit's side.

Currently, the bus stop near the southeast corner of John R is lacking adequate shelter, seating, and signage. Adults, children, and even persons with disabilities were observed sitting directly on the sidewalk due to the missing bus infrastructure. Despite being in close proximity to new developments such as the Amazon Fulfillment Center, DDOT Jason Hargrove Transit Center, and the Gateway Shopping Center—other than a run down gas station on the southwest corner— there are few retail amenities and food oriented businesses for area workforce and residents to access by foot. On Hazel Park's side of 8 Mile, neighborhoods tend to be dense and intact. Several children were observed playing in the street on E Muir Avenue (near John R), but no existing public greenspace or youth oriented parks were found nearby. Retail amenities for residents include a gas station on the northeast corner of John R and a dine-in coney island on its northwest corner. Parcel analysis of this area uncovered several privately-owned vacant commercial properties, with many in need of modernization, facade improvements, and opportunities for adaptive reuse.[3]

[3] For detailed information see 8 MBA Vacant Parcel Catalog.

Proposed Redevelopment of Nodes

Detroit Redevelopment

The Detroit side of 8 Mile and John R is located within the eastside of Detroit, falling under the jurisdiction of the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department (PDD) West Design Region team. Considering that this area is located on the eastside of Detroit, planning for John R. area redevelopment of nodes should follow the framework of developing commercial and social micro districts outlined by Detroit's East Design Region team for Gratiot G7 neighborhoods within the framework of the 7 Mile and Gratiot Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) plan.[2] The Gratiot G7 framework for developing micro districts can be adapted to fit community needs and priorities outlined in the Detroit West Design Region's "Grixdale Farms Framework Plan.'' [4] Community feedback for economic development on John R and priorities in the Grixdale Farms plan include:

Priorities:

- Housing and Vacancy
- Connectivity
- Open Space
- Economic Development

Community feedback:

- Opportunity for businesses
- Concerns with area crime
- Lack of businesses

Figure 28

[4] Grixdale Farms Framework Plan; Community Feedback;7 Mile and Gratiot SNF Framework

Proposals for economic development and land use on Detroit's side of 8 Mile and John R are designed to link with the priorities of the West Design Region's existing Grixdale Farms plan, support local entrepreneurship, and create space for community connections. These proposals could potentially have the following economic impacts around the area of 8 Mile and John R:

- Inject new tax dollars into surrounding neighborhood areas in need of revitalization and raise property values
- Provide new employment opportunities which will attract and retain workforce talent
- Elevate the quality of life in the overall area surrounding 8 Mile and John R.
- Attract in-commuters traveling through the 8 Mile Corridor
- Create community connections with neighboring residents in Hazel Park

Economic Development and Land Use Proposals

"Creating Vibrant Destination Districts"

Mixed-Use Overlay District

10 E 8 Mile Rd.

Located on Detroit's corner of 8 Mile and John R is a large .38 acre 16,389 sf vacant corner lot and two adjacent privately-owned commercial buildings (10 E 8 Mile). The corner lot sits adjacent to the left of Edwards Kitchen and Bath, and is the former site of the Motor City Kush cannabis business—a site which has remained vacant for approximately 3 years. Currently, there are plans underway to reopen Motor City Kush under the new name Green Cure Wellness Inc. in the building adjacent to the corner lot on John R.

To the right of Edward's is a broad .31 acre 13,153 sf privately-owned vacant (three parcels combined) commercial property, formerly known as A1 Towing Company. Both the shape and scale of this area is well positioned to be developed into a vibrant mixed-use destination district.

Image source: Google Earth

Currently, both commercial properties are privately-owned and vacant, making this a potential area to watch closely—for future investment and node redevelopment. Ideally, 10 E 8 Mile could be redeveloped under the guidelines of a five year phased mixed-use overlay district.

5-Year Phased Overlay District

Strategies

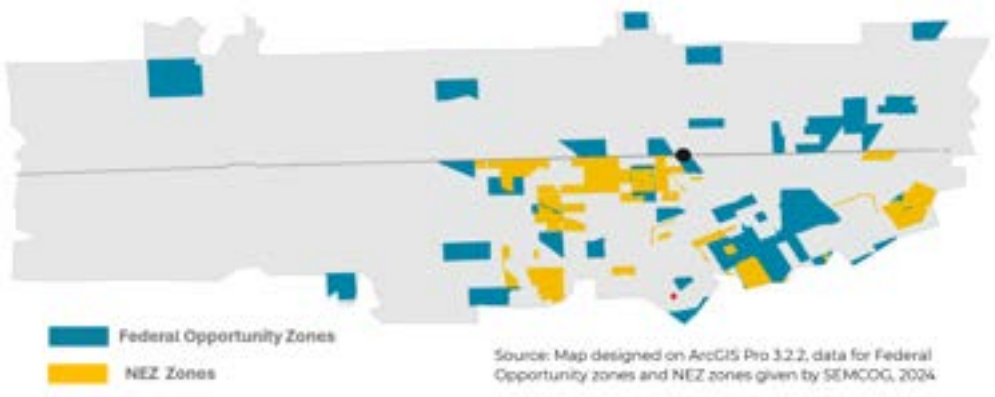
- Meet with existing landowner 8 Mile LLC to learn more on future plans for its vacant corner lot.
- Propose having Detroit's West Design Region team work with 8 Mile LLC to establish a strategic plan for a five year phased mixed-use overlay district.
- Work with Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC) for guidance in planning and implementation of a five year redevelopment strategy and identification of appropriate tax abatements such as "The Commercial Rehabilitation Tax Abatement," which would potentially make developing a mixed-use building more attractive to 8 Mile LLC or developers.[5]

Rendering source: Microsoft CoPilot Designer

Recommendations

- Offer ADA compliant mixed-use and mixed-income residential housing, 60% market rate and 40% AMI
- Reserve first floor retail space for Green Cure Wellness, casual contemporary restaurant, apparel store, and third space such as cafe/deli or modern donut/bagel shop.
- Placemaking signage at 8 Mile and John R
- Solar powered ADA compliant bus shelter and street furniture assembled near the bus stop and mixed-use site.

Figure 29



Utilizing Federal Opportunity Zones

1001 8 Mile Rd. (Opportunity Zone) & 1201 8 Mile Rd.

According to SEMCOG's most recent data, 1001 8 Mile Rd. is located in an area designated as a Federal Opportunity Zone, since opportunity zones can be lucrative and attractive for investors, this site is ideal for redevelopment. Located in close proximity to the new Amazon Fulfillment Center, DDOT Jason Hargrove Transit Center, and the Gateway Shopping Center are two privately-owned vacant commercial land parcels, situated on a combined acreage of 9.14 and 398,138 sf. Both nodes could be developed into community and workforce centered commercial and social spaces—thoughtfully designed to offer a range of ethnically diverse food offerings, entertainment, recreational enjoyment, and dedicated space to support local entrepreneurs.

Recommendations for economic development include:

- Develop 1001 8 Mile Rd. into a "Community Entertainment Multiplex Center" for amenities such as gaming, bowling, laser tag, paintball, birthday and special events space, along with the addition of an adjacent contemporary casual restaurant and bar. Additionally, incorporating community green space and a youth centered park around both commercial developments.
  Figure 30
- To better serve the needs of a growing workforce, community residents, traveling in-commuters, and transit riders, , develop 1201 8 Mile into an indoor and outdoor space for food stalls, with built in community greenspace for connectivity, and dedicated space for local food truck entrepreneurs.

Hazel Park Redevelopment

Economic Development Plan in Support of “Pop Up Hazel”

Elements outlined for Hazel Park’s node redevelopment were coordinated between the East Nodes Capstone group and Hazel Park’s Planning and Community Development Director concerning the city’s future open space project “Pop Up Hazel” on John R near 8 Mile. This proposal seeks to outline a supportive economic and land use plan—centered around the “Pop Up Hazel” project—which aims to develop an open space site for pop-up businesses, potential farmers market, and space for community connections.

The future activation of the “Pop Up Hazel” site could spark new investment opportunities, bridge community connections between Detroit and Hazel Park, and generate interest from in-commuters—resulting in an organically grown vibrant destination district on Hazel Park’s side of 8 Mile and John R.

20848 John R - Adaptive Reuse and Facade Improvements

- 20848 John R is a two structure vacant-commercial site conveniently located across the street from the proposed site for Pop Up Hazel and bike lanes on John R. The overall building is approximately 6003 sf, sitting on .14 acres. Site measurements and location provide an ideal spot for development of a food oriented business, ethnically diverse food stalls, and third space cafe.

- Presently, the appearance of the building facade is dull and dark brown. The elements of this building can be elevated and repurposed with facade improvements, modernization, and aesthetically appealing upgrades such as large front facing windows.

- Hazel Park’s 2024 DDA Facade Improvement Grant should be utilized

to improve architectural features, implement landscaping, and general site improvements.[6] In addition to facade grant resources, small start up businesses interested in being part of a food stall/cafe development nearby Pop Up Hazel, can also apply for support from Oakland Thrive[7] and the Capital Access Program through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, which additionally provides funding resources to small-medium sized businesses.[8]

Marketing and Branding for Pop Up Hazel

For marketing of Pop Up Hazel, consider developing a robust social media strategy 6 months ahead of the project completion date. Utilizing Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and Twitter X to gain followers ahead of Pop Up Hazel's grand opening. A concentrated effort of relaying messaging, updates, and future programming well in advance will ensure community inclusivity, generate interest from a variety of age groups and demographics, and stir excitement and community buy-in long before Pop Up Hazel's opening day.

Rendering source: Microsoft CoPilot Designer

In terms of branding, design two modern placemaking signs, with one placed at the corner of 8 Mile and John R for gateway and wayfinding and a second sign placed at the Pop Up Hazel site. Branding and marketing materials should be compatible with the color scheme and design of placemaking signage to establish a clear identity associated with Pop Up Hazel for the community to become familiar with.

Support for Small Businesses and New Developments

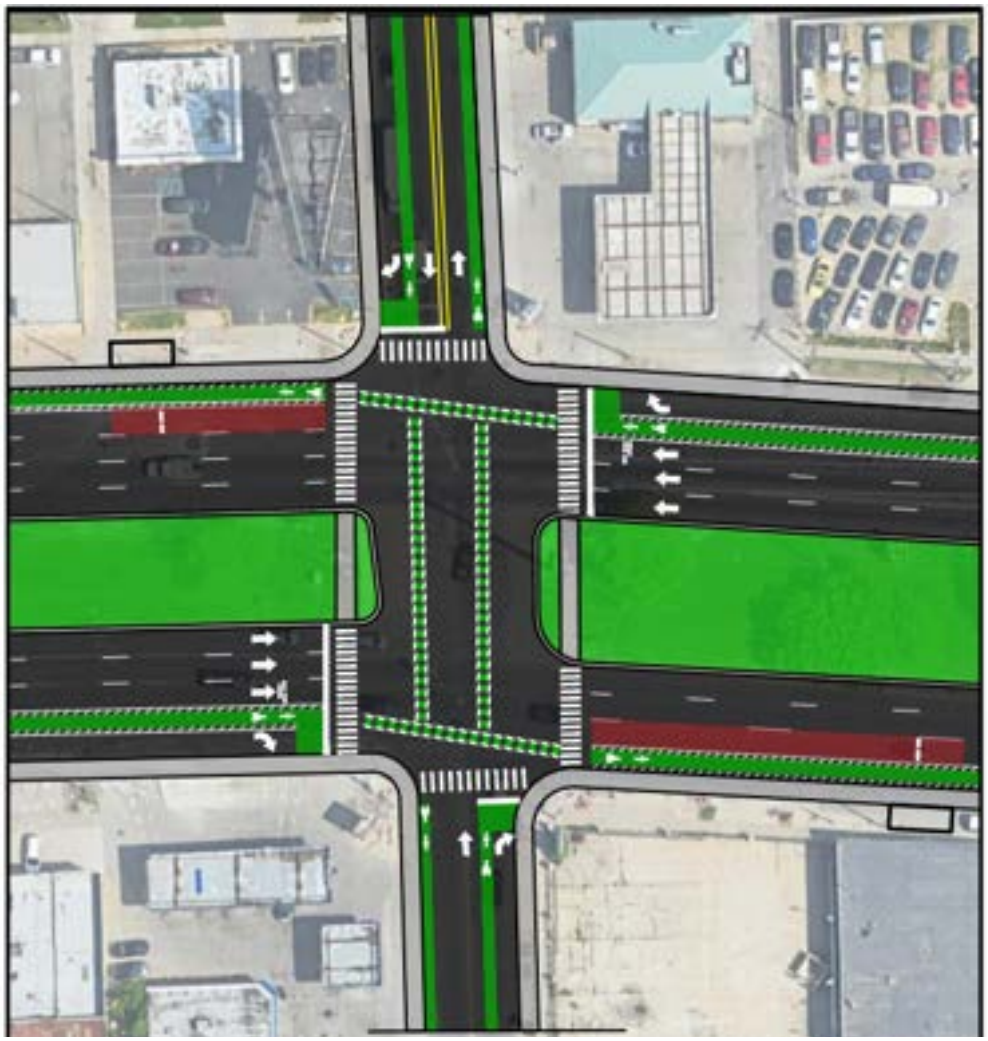
To ensure further development along John R, consider developing a program with support from Oakland Thrive[5]—similar in scope to Invest Detroit and Detroit Economic Growth Corporation— providing wraparound services such as grant or gap funding for new start up businesses and developments in the 8 Mile and John R area. This type of program would help to ensure that small businesses and developments do not run out of capital funding before completing construction or remodeling.

[6] Hazel Park DDA Facade Grant
[7] Oakland Thrive
[8] MEDC Capital Access Program

In addition to gap funding, consider implementation of an annual education series, designed specifically for individuals endeavoring to start small businesses along the John R corridor. Classes could be led by student interns for course credits from Wayne State's Mike Ilitch School of Business or other area colleges within the Metro Detroit region. Classes should include information on accessing small business resources and grant funding through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and other philanthropic organizations such as Oakland Thrive, offering supportive services to small business start-ups in the Metro Detroit Region.

Proposed Infrastructure

Figure 31



Eight Mile and John R is ideally situated to create a convenient, safe, and sustainable mini-mobility hub, complete with 21st century technology, that will connect transit with other mobility modes and community places. The 2024 DDOT Final Reimaged Plan—a framework for improving Detroit's transit system—demonstrates their commitment to "strengthen the regional network by improving connections with SMART both in frequency/span and new hubs with shared bus stops on major corridors." This tier-based system is designed to guide investment in transit service levels, future customers amenity, infrastructure, and technology upgrade.

Currently, inadequate or missing public infrastructure along the 8 Mile and John R Node hinders residents' access to local amenities, suburban jobs, and regional shopping destinations. Further, the sidewalks on all sides of the major intersection need immediate repair to remove hazardous cracks in the pavement, and pedestrian/bike crossings must be in compliance with ADA standards. Collaboration between DDOT and SMART is necessary to improve the quality of service, on-time performance, and customer satisfaction of transit users in Metro Detroit. Collectively, these updates will increase long-term ridership and enhance mobility of transit commuters who know they can expect quality, reliable service from both DDOT and SMART. Finally, including wayfinding signs—i.e., up-to-date information for SMART/DDOT bus schedules, bike routes, and nearby Hazel Park and Detroit amenities—will provide a safer and enjoyable experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users with accessibility in mind.

Hazel Park Side

The John R Road Visioning Study proposed significant changes to the 64' right-of-way at the northside of the intersection of John R and 8 Mile to improve the flow of traffic and safety at the 8 Mile Road intersection. However, the current proposals do not prioritize pedestrian and bike mobility.

We propose the following key improvements:

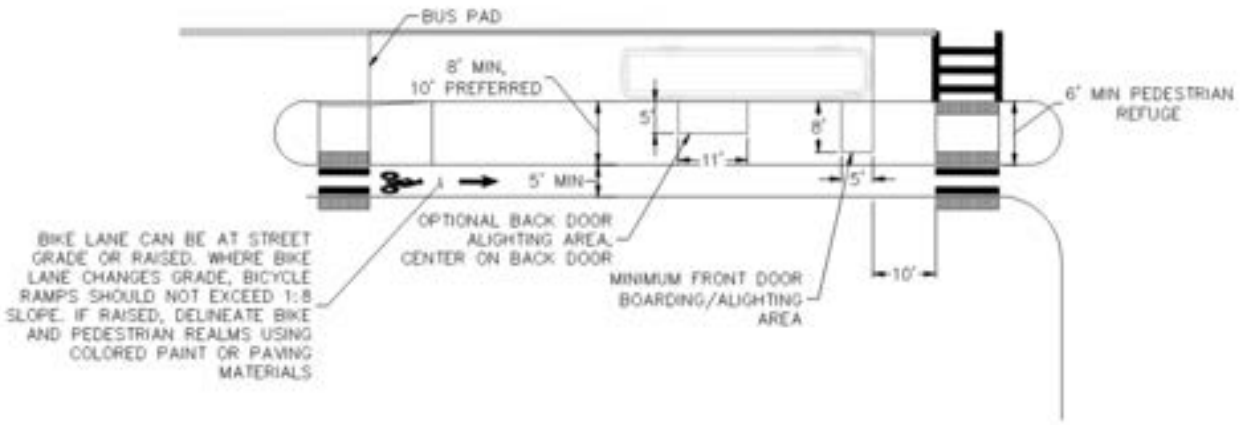
Figure 32

Source: Bike Boxes | National Association of City Transportation Officials

- **Bike Infrastructure:** Install 5' protected bike lanes with a minimum of 1' (landscaped) buffer. Add green bike boxes to bring cyclists to the front of the traffic queue and ensure green bike lanes are visible through the entire 8 Mile intersection. Lastly, include bike parking and repair station at the NW corner to amplify mobility, safety, and accessibility of transit riders and bikers.
- **Bus Shelters:** Convert NE Bus Stop 796 (DDOT Bus 17 and SMART Buses 494 & 495) into Connection Corner with additional street furniture and bike amenities to elevate the overall transit user experience and to allow for smoother transition between transit authorities.
- **In-Stream Bus Stops:** The northernmost west-bound through lane will be marked with "BUS STOP AHEAD" roughly 50' east of the intersection to alert motorists of the upcoming in-stream Bus Stop on the opposite side of John R. Construct a side-boarding island with cyclist through-lane into the design (pictured below).

Photo by Sheree Walton

Figure 33



Source: BCDCOG - Transit and Bus Stop Design Guidelines

- **Pedestrian Infrastructure:** Add two new crosswalks, one at the intersection of Milton and John R and the second at Hayes Avenue, to improve access to amenities on either side of John R.
- **Traffic Calming Measures:** Narrow the travel lanes at the Southern Gateway to Hazel Park to 10’ and install 3’-wide center medians from Muir Avenue north to 10-mile to slow traffic and improve pedestrian and bike safety.

Detroit Side

Public Infrastructure on the Detroit Side of 8 Mile and John R is in poor condition. For example, the sidewalks and rights-of-way are largely concrete with little to no greenery or tree canopy. Further, Bus Stop 819 experiences longer-than-average wait times, insufficient signage, with limited or no facilities to protect the large volume of transit riders (actual photo to the R).

Photo by Sheree Walton

We propose the following critical improvements:

- **Bike Infrastructure:** Install 5’ protected bike lanes with a 1’ landscaped buffer on either side of John R, and add a bike box at SE corner to bring bicyclists to the front of the traffic queue. These updates will allow motorists and cyclists to safely share the road without hindering the flow of motorized traffic, while providing sufficient space for larger trucks and buses. Source: Brasco Solar-Powered Bus Shelter

- **Bus Stops:** Mark the southernmost east-bound through lane with “BUS STOP AHEAD”, roughly 100’ west of the intersection, to alert motorists of the upcoming in-stream Bus Stop on the far side of John R Road.
- **Bus Shelters:** Construct a solar-powered bus shelter on the SE corner (similar to the one located at the Whole Foods on Mack and John R) to provide transit riders with a safe, accessible, well-lit, and highly-visible waiting area. We recommend that 8MBA seeks other corporate partnerships to finance the shelter improvements along the corridor.

8 MILE AND VAN DYKE

Demographics

Table 04

Van Dyke						
Census Tract	Location	Total population	Median income	Total households	Total housing units	Total vacant units
5051	Detroit	2,888	$24,954	1,595	1,441	148
5056	Detroit	4,078	$37,909	1,479	1,794	205
2638	Warren	3,097	$53,100	878	1,232	131
2640	Warren	1,969	$51,203	741	802	84

Source: Data given for Detroit and Warren by United States Census Bureau tract map, 2020 Decennial Census and 2022 American Community Survey.

Existing Conditions

Figure 33

The Van Dyke Node extends from Spencer Ave to the west of Van Dyke Road along the 8 Mile intersection to Hoover Road. Three of the four corners of the main intersection house small retail plazas, and the fourth hosts a standalone retail store. Existing businesses in the Van Dyke Node include Chase bank, autopart stores, a marijuana facility, a beauty supply store, pharmacy, a pawn shop, and many more service-oriented shops. Yet the node is still economically underutilized; several vacant units provide opportunities for economic growth and reinvestment.

Pedestrian infrastructure and multimodal transportation routes are underdeveloped, requiring updates to increase public safety. Current landscaping along the corridor is infrequently maintained, with weeds, overgrown grass, and litter due to ongoing discrepancies in ownership of maintenance responsibility along the various parts of the corridor.

Source: Arieona Branch

Encouraging future development along this node can provide long-term community benefits to the neighborhoods and businesses on both Detroit and Warren sides of 8 Mile Road. As of 2024, the Van Dyke intersection is undergoing infrastructure improvements that include: repaving the roadway and right-of-way, updating pedestrian crosswalks, and continuing construction of the Iron Belle bike trail. These ongoing infrastructure projects aim to enhance the safety and mobility of pedestrians, bikers, and transit riders. Ultimately, the improved walkability makes this node a prime location for multi-purpose, community-focused development.

Economic Development & Land Use

Background

Source: Curbed Detroit

Historically, the Bel-Air Center has been an essential commercial hub servicing the Detroit and Warren communities. The original Bel-Air-Drive-In Theatre opened in 1950 as a single screen, 1,800 visitor capacity drive-in and was later expanded to four screens and 3,000 capacity. In 1986, the drive-in was demolished to make way for the Bel Air Shopping Center. The Bel Air Luxury Cinema replaced the drive-in, and it is the only large-scale movie theater in Detroit today.

Once a bustling center for retail and entertainment, the shopping center is now a large vacant 40-acre lot with a single retail facility that houses Forman Mills, a discounted, warehouse-style chain clothing/shoe store. This land is currently owned

by the Mouroun family, having recently undergone rezoning to a M4 distinction, the current lack of development plan and transparency has sparked an unfavorable community sentiment. Capitalizing on its continued vacancy, and re-establishing the Bel-Air Center as a commercial hub will both service existing residents and draw in new investment capital. Over the last several decades, businesses have slowly left–leaving one single retail location operating in a once vibrant plaza that supported the needs of a diverse community. The Bel-Air Center, with the exception of Forman Mills retail, is a vast, vacant parcel(s) of land. For these reasons, we propose this location to develop the **Bel-Air Neighborhood Center and Van Dyke Corridor Gateway** to kickstart economic growth and development at this node.

Photo Source: Detroit Free Press

Proposed Development: Van Dyke Corridor Gateway

Source: Arieona Branch

The diversification of businesses could create new jobs, and expand public amenities.

Potential developments in the gateway should include

- Restaurants
- Retail stores
- Healthcare Facilities
- Social service
- Facade Updates

Ease of access to resources and services is crucial for residents, as surrounding neighborhoods continue to grow, it will entice new residents seeking employment and housing opportunities within Detroit, and create ease of movement for existing residents. Combined with updates to landscaping, increased maintenance, and updates to Facades the gateway has the potential for growth in community and property value. While each of the corner plazas has a distinct look, updating awnings and signage, parking lot repaving, and general cleanliness are recommended as standard guides for improvement.

Recommendations for Commercial Development:

- **Create Community Anchors:** Reinstating the Secretary of State office, an urgent care facility, or other social service agency to the surrounding plazas. This will be multi-functional as it will increase business diversity, expand career-building opportunities, and return crucial services to the community. Partnering with Detroit at work to install a workforce development and training center to provide employment accessibility services for residents.
- **Reduce Vacancy and Increase Diversity:** The plazas along the gateway have several vacant units. Increasing business density will draw more consumers to the area. The current pawn shop, check cashing office, and dispensary offer little benefit to vital needs, infilling the plaza with sustainable and relevant business is a priority. The node also lacks
- **Increase Walkability to Vital Services:** The ability to access healthcare and vital social services will provide benefits to residents who must have access to transportation to other communities. Van Dyke is a critical intersection for pedestrians, bikers and riders swapping routes between SMART and DDOT. While enhancing the motorist experience on the road is a priority, it can also be a barrier for individuals with circumstances that do not easily allow car transport. Creating a dense and walkable area for residents to fulfill basic needs is essential.

Proposed Development: Bel-Air Neighborhood Center

Figure 34

Bel-Air Neighborhood Center (BANC) would sit upon the 40-acre parcel. While the BANC is a long-term, large-scale development This development would also increase pedestrian activity in the area and encourage vehicles to stop. This could impact retail businesses in the plaza, and draw attention to surrounding businesses along the intersection.

BANC has the potential to create hundreds of new employment and housing opportunities, and open space for recreation. It is recommended to include the following land uses:

- Mixed-income housing
- Workforce Development office offering skilled-trade training (and/or referrals)
- Community resource center
- Retail/commercial businesses

- Transportation hub
- Entertainment (Bel Air Luxury Cinema)
- Community-oriented open space and multi-modal trail
- Light industrial businesses

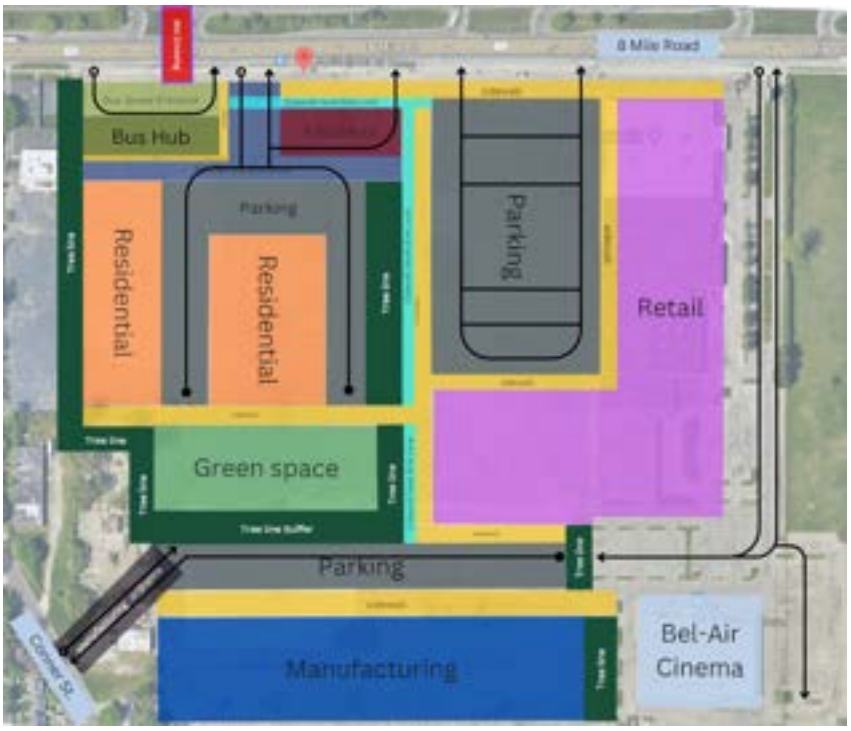


Figure 35

The proposed developments are ideally situated on the busy, well-traveled corridor. The ongoing reinvestment into Detroit will benefit this community and help to entice big box retailers and grocery stores with attached pharmacies to return to the Center.

The nearest stores are Randazzo's, which is on the pricier side when doing one-stop shopping, and often carries specialty items rather than essentials. ALDI, while it is a discount store, is smaller with very little variety, and requires shoppers to bring their own bags or pay for bags, which can be a barrier for consumers, especially those without transportation. A grocery store with a pharmacy located within it is more functionable and valuable to consumers with mobility concerns; customers are able to fulfill their basic needs in one place.

Figure 36

Meijer is a well-known grocery store that has flourished on 8 Mile, and this multiple purpose complex provides many services to the community. Meijer is also in partnership with Culvers, who have several combined locations throughout Michigan. It may be possible to bring in a fast food restaurant or food hall to replace the McDonalds that once existed here. Culvers is a valued restaurant chain with quality meals, and there are not currently any within a 5-mile radius, which increases the likelihood of its success. Another big box store, Target, has stepped away from their midtown development and presents an opportunity to restore their previous location inside the BANC. Currently, there are no Target store locations in Detroit. The average travel time to the closest store is a 25-minute drive, or an even longer bus ride, from the BANC. The Bel-Air Center has a history of offering low-middle budget clothing stores. With both Gabes and Ross breaking ground in Michigan, this would be a prime location to install either retailer. These big box anchors will allow for smaller retailers to come and go over time without threatening the vibrancy and utility of the plaza.

Recommendations for Commercial Development:

- **Encourage Community Investment:** Increase collaboration between current business owners, other stakeholders, and residents to determine the types of development best-suited to this vital site.
- **Increase Businesses with Long-term Benefits:** Discouraging development of additional marijuana dispensaries and focusing on increasing a diverse selection of businesses with long-term capacity to benefit the community. Offer stores with diversity in product, with price points in line with the spending capabilities of the neighborhoods. Install Big Box retailers to act as anchors, and provide widespread accessibility, and provide services currently missing from the community.
- **Encourage High Employment Facilities**: Include light manufacturing to allow for large-scale job creation, while limiting the environmental impact on neighboring residences.
- **Partner with Local Programs:** Create partnerships with local programs to increase community investment, e.g., Motor City Match, and their brick and mortar recipients to increase the number of Detroit-owned small businesses.
- **Create a Vibrant Entertainment District:** Offering restaurants and other entertainment businesses can extend the usage of the plaza into evening hours. This area lacks family oriented entertainment spaces, soft play, arcades, and other entertainment features. Consumers would be drawn not only to the plaza, but the Bel-Air Cinema as well. With increasing entertainment options into neighboring cities, consumers can be drawn back to the corridor.
- **Increase Accessibility:** Bel-Air Neighborhood Center would reduce travel time for those residing in the lower bounds of Warren and northern Detroit. Updated infrastructure would provide added freedom to those with mobility concerns or frequent users of public transportation.

Housing

Residents on the Warren side of 8 Mile have a median income fifteen thousand dollars more than residents of the Detroit side of the node and are less likely to be impacted by the effects a large and profitable commercial development will bring to the area. Increasing the amount of affordable housing will allow residents with lower incomes to avoid displacement and curb the potential effects of gentrification. Single-family homes surround the Bel-Air Center, however introducing a series of affordable mixed-income townhomes, rather than a multi-story complex will provide ample housing and preserve the character and skyline of the existing area. Typical multi-story apartment complexes have few options for larger families since larger units sizes are harder to lease; therefore, developers often limit the number of two-or-more bedroom apartments included in the building design. By introducing townhomes, families are able to have the independence of a home, without the accompanying land sprawl of a single-family residence. This type of housing development can address the current lack of affordable housing, increase access to jobs, incorporate greenspace into a vastly impervious landscape, and attract new residents to Detroit.

Source: Microsoft Copilot 2024

Recommendations for Residential Development:

- **Increase Density of Affordable Housing:** A townhouse complex could be located at the NW corner of the BANC development. This section borders the proposed bus station, provides quick access to transportation, and is within walking distance to food, retail establishments, and employment. The proposed residential development would connect to the plaza via a walking trail surrounded by a green buffer to provide protection, privacy and noise reduction.
- **Prioritize Environmental Resilience and Stability:** The surrounding neighborhood is prone to flooding, installing a treeline buffer, in addition to the proposed green space will also serve to reduce flooding, by increasing absorbent ground space. Developing a focused plan to mitigate future flood risks through green infrastructure will increase the value of the development, and provide needed benefits to the community.

Node Beautification

Public Art & Wayfinding

Source: Moross Greenway

Incorporating art installations and murals into both new development and revitalization projects is a popular way to increase community morale and engagement in Detroit. Hiring local artists and inviting community input contributes to sentimentality of neighborhood projects. Art installations and murals beautify the neighborhood, and the collaborative process creates long-lasting partnerships with local businesses that build community capital.

Creating standalone art pieces or highly-visible murals should be a priority. Incorporating an installation on the median of 8 Mile creates a visual connection between Detroit and Warren sides. For example, The Moross Greenway between Mack and I-94 is a collaboration of art and community beautification efforts. Incorporating this idea into the median along Eight mile will allow for both median clean up and addition of visual place markers. The Greenway Coalition required the assistance of local stakeholders to complete, having this investment across the corridor will also ensure that maintenance is ongoing. Upwards of 30k people drive through the Van Dyke Node each day, and adding art to visible areas will draw attention to passers by and encourage them to stop.

Public Parks & Open Space

Source: Warren City-Owned Property

Currently, neighborhoods in the Van Dyke Node lack sufficient open space and public parks—children can be seen playing basketball in the middle of the streets. We recommend recruiting community members to "Design-a-Park" on the vacant lot at 8045 Rivard St in Warren. The rendering below shows a potential design including green buffers/infrastructure at park edges and along right-of-way, trees and native plants, vegetable gardens, covered seating, additional benches, and a Pervious Basketball Court).

Source: Microsoft Copilot 2024

With the expectation of increased bike ridership and foot traffic along the node, incorporating additional open space into the Bel-Air Neighborhood Center will provide a safe environment for both visitors and residents of all ages to participate in outdoor activities. Additionally, the updates to the existing pedestrian crosswalks and bike lanes, coupled with the proposed mid-block crossings, will create a stronger, more visible connection between Detroit and Warren.

Proposed Infrastructure

Figure 37

Key infrastructure improvements to be considered:

- **Bike Infrastructure:** Modifying the bike infrastructure according to the proposed mobility guidelines would improve non-motorized vehicle mobility throughout the Van Dyke Node. Place bike boxes at the corners to bring bicyclists to the front of the traffic queue.
- **Bus Stops:** The northernmost west-bound through lane and the southernmost east-bound through lane should be marked with “BUS STOP AHEAD” roughly 50’ east of the intersection to alert motorists of the upcoming in-stream Bus Stop on the opposite side of Van Dyke.

Figure 38

- **Mid-block crossings:** Mid-block crossings from Federal Avenue in Warren to the Bel-Air Center in Detroit, and from Spencer Avenue in Detroit to Bus Stop 8603 in Warren would allow bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users to travel safely and smoothly throughout the Van Dyke Node.

- **Trails - Iron Belle and Conner Creek:** Construction of the 2,000-mile Iron Belle Trail is underway, with the finished trail connecting the far western tip of the Upper Peninsula to Belle Isle in Detroit. The Iron Belle bike trail will run south along Van Dyke and connect to the Conner Creek Greenway. Adding a separate bike/pedestrian entrance at the SW corner of the Bel-Air Neighborhood Center would connect the Conner Creek Greenway to the proposed multi-use trail and public greenspace.

Source: Microsoft Copilot 2024

- **Neighborhood Mobility Hub:**
  8 Mile and Van Dyke is a major transfer point between DDOT and SMART with multiple intersecting bus routes. Therefore, the BANC is an ideal location for a DDOT Connection Corner and multi-modal mobility hub that would enhance safety and freedom of movement for transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians without major disruptions to the flow of traffic.

Source: Microsoft Copilot 2024

8 MILE AND GRATIOT - MULTIMODAL MOBILITY PLAN

Existing Conditions

The 8 Mile-Gratiot node is developed with active businesses on all four corners. The corners have robust, thriving retail shops, eateries, and commercial and light industrial businesses. However, the wide intersection on Gratiot and 8 Mile makes it difficult for pedestrians to cross safely from one side to the other. The entire intersection including crosswalks, sidewalks, medians requires crucial infrastructure improvements, and some businesses are in need of facade improvement. It lacks adequate pedestrian lighting along walkways.

Motorists ignore the few speed limit signs and frequently speed through the intersection which threatens pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Pedestrian signage indicating where and when to cross is sparse, and some corners do not have crosswalks connecting Detroit to Warren and Eastpointe.

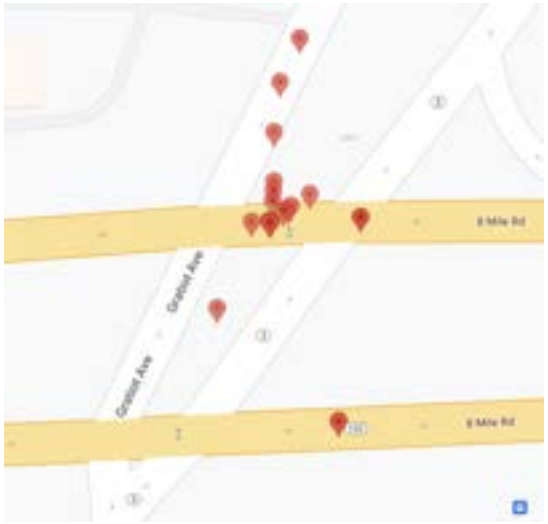
Generally, landscaping at the Gratiot Gateway is not well-maintained, particularly on the Detroit side. To transform this intersection into an aesthetically pleasing, Vibrant

Destination District (VDD), we recommend implementing Community Greening Initiatives and utilizing grant funding for facade improvements.

Based on SEMCOG data, during peak hours traffic counts at this node hit upwards of 20K motorists. SEMCOG crash data for Gratiot show increased accidents and fatalities when compared to other intersections. Safety measures as it relates to mobility and transit must be taken into account when upgrading and improving this node. There were 53 crashes and 11 injuries reported at the intersection in 2022, making it one of the most dangerous along the corridor.

Figure 39

Gratiot pedestrian fatal crash map south side



Gratiot pedestrian fatal crash map north side

The 8 Mile Gratiot corridor would benefit from the complete streets concept as streets are designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users (drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders) and encompass approaches to planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind.

Proposed Infrastructure

Figure 40

MDOT's 5-Year Transportation Program for the Gratiot Gateway includes a number of multimodal mobility solutions to improve safety, mobility, and accessibility for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists at this heavily-trafficked intersection. However, our East Side Multimodal Mobility Plan calls for a revised intersection treatment to maximize connectivity to and from the Multimodal Mobility Hub.

- **Pedestrian Crosswalks & Signals:** Re-paint zebra crossings, install automatic pedestrian signals to establish a permanent traffic pattern that prioritizes pedestrians and bicyclists. Increase pedestrian clearance interval to 10 seconds and ban right turn on red to allow safe passage across 8 Mile and Gratiot.

- **Bike Infrastructure:** We propose an intersection bicycle lane treatment that deviates from MDOT's 5-Year Improvement plan, and incorporates a combined right turn lane/Buffered Bike Lane with merging area that re-integrates into a protected Cycle Track (see images below). In addition, create sidewalk-level bike lanes along Gratiot, and bike boxes to place bicyclists at the front of the traffic queue to improve visibility. Finally, consider creating bike connector routes, along less-traveled arterial roads, to increase safety, mobility, and accessibility.

Figure 41

Source: Buffered Bike Lanes | National Association of City Transportation Officials

Figure 42 Source: Cycle Track Intersection Approach | National Association of City Transportation

- **Bus Infrastructure:** Transforming 15205 E 8 Mile Road, a large vacant parcel at at the NE corner of the Gratiot Gateway, into a Multimodal Mobility Hub would fill the void for transit infrastructure in Macomb County, and improve connectivity for transit users in Detroit, Eastpointe, and other nearby communities.

Figure 43

Figure 44

Source: Microsoft Copilot 2024

LANDSCAPING & GSI

Design Improvements

The medians and right-of-ways along the 8 Mile corridor largely lack greenspace, landscaping, or prominent tree canopy. The few areas with existing greenery are in various stages of disrepair. Regular maintenance and upkeep of landscaping is a challenge due to disagreements over whose responsibility it is, whether it falls on the municipalities, business owners, or MDOT. However, implementing green infrastructure into future design standards presents new employment opportunities for those that receive proper training.

Incorporating green infrastructure elements, like curb extensions and bioswales at major intersections along the 8 Mile corridor will alleviate stress on the existing gray infrastructure by improving soil infiltration rates or redirecting runoff into the GSI.

The introduction of green infrastructure presents new employment opportunities. By training local residents in the maintenance and upkeep of these green spaces, the community can develop a skilled workforce dedicated to sustaining the corridor's environmental health. This approach ensures that the green infrastructure is not only implemented but also maintained effectively over the long term.

The challenge of landscape maintenance along the 8 Mile corridor is a critical issue. Clear delineation of maintenance responsibilities between municipalities, business owners, and MDOT is essential. Further, we recommend installing trash receptacles at all major intersections to reduce litter, and establishing a partnership with local disposal companies to prevent trash from clogging GSI. A coordinated maintenance schedule, leveraging local workforce development programs, and implementing Community Greening Initiatives along the East Side Nodes can mitigate the potential challenges of GSI, ensuring that the green infrastructure remains functional and visually appealing.

CONCLUSION

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

CONCLUSION

Historically, Eight Mile Road has been a symbol of division, exacerbated by policies such as redlining and the construction of the Eight Mile Wall. These barriers created significant racial and economic disparities between Detroit and its suburbs. Despite these challenges, the residents of Eight Mile-Wyoming have continuously strived for economic and social advancement. Today, the Eight Mile Boulevard Association (8MBA) aims to bridge these divides through strategic action and community collaboration, fostering unity and shared prosperity.

The revitalization of Eight Mile Boulevard represents a transformative effort to create a vibrant and cohesive corridor that honors its historical significance while addressing contemporary challenges. This comprehensive plan, developed by the Eight Mile Boulevard Association (8MBA), focuses on economic development, mobility, and design improvements to enhance the quality of life and economic competitiveness along the corridor, spanning Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties.

The plan’s initiatives are tailored to specific nodes along Eight Mile, such as Lahser Road, Wyoming Avenue to Livernois Street, John R Street, Van Dyke Avenue, and Gratiot Avenue, each with unique existing conditions and targeted proposals. From improving pedestrian and bicycle safety at Lahser Road to developing a food-based micro-district between Wyoming Avenue and Livernois Street, and addressing racial and income disparities at John R Street, the plan provides detailed guidelines for transforming these areas.

Recent investments, such as the Michigan Department of Transportation's $50 million infrastructure improvements and ongoing I-75 enhancements, underscore the commitment to addressing infrastructure disparities and promoting equitable development along Eight Mile. This plan not only seeks to revitalize the corridor but also to redefine Eight Mile as a connector rather than a divider, paving the way for a dynamic and connected future for the region.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

REVITALIZING 8 MILE: Connecting Communities

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

8 MILE BOULEVARD ASSOCIATION

July 30, 2024

Mobility Citation Links/Resources

- DDOT REIMAGINED FINAL PLAN
- Detroit Street Design Guide
- Gateway | National Association of City Transportation Officials (nacto.org)
- MI Gov Travel Safety - Road Users
- National Speed Limits in Michigan
- Pedestrian Accommodations at Intersections
- Protesters highlight Detroit area's racial divide on Eight Mile Road (michiganpublic.org)
- https://publications.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org/2020/2020Bicycles.pdf .
- Raised MediansSpeed Limit Strictly Enforced Sign - Slow Signs, SKU: K-9139
- Six Intersection Designs That Actually Prioritize Pedestrians (nextcity.org)
- Smithsonian Mag - A Short History of the Crosswalk
- Speed Limit Basics | FHWA (dot.gov)
- Speed Limit Sign and Placement | FHWA
- Street Signs: Seminole and Mack Streets--Detroit MI | Flickr

Landscaping Resources/Funding Opportunities

Handbooks & Guides

- Detroit Future City - The Land Use Element - The Image of the City
- Detroit Future City - Lot Designs
- Detroit Stormwater Hub
- Low Impact Development Manual for Michigan: A Design Guide for Implementers and Reviewers
- MISIN - Invasive Species Information Catalog
- MSU -Attracting Beneficial Insects with Native Flowering Plants
- MSU - Native Plants and Ecosystem Services

- MSU - Smart Gardening: Trees and Shrubs Suitable for Michigan Landscaping
- MSU - Southern Lower Peninsula Native Plants

Workshops and Training

- EPA Office of Sustainable Communities Building Blocks Program
- EPA Office of Sustainable Communities Greening America's Communities Program
- Green Infrastructure Toolkit: EPA Nonpoint Source Program, USDA National Urban and Community Forestry Program
- National Recreation and Park Association

Financial Incentives - Grants & Funding

- DNR Urban and Community Forestry
- DOD' Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot
- DOT's Pollinator Friendly Practices on Roadsides & Highway Rights-of-Way Program
- EPA Brownfields Grant Program
- EPA's Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants
- EPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program
- Michigan State Grants: Spark Grants, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Natural Resources Trust Fund, Recreation Passport Grant Program
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants Program: Funding for parks in disadvantaged urban communities
- USDA's Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO) Program