



East Pointe goes urban, walkable with downtown plan

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[East Pointe](#) is finishing plans to hug its urban past. Rochester Hills-based [Giffels-Webster Engineers](#) is presenting its plans to reinvigorate the inner-ring suburbs downtown with city officials. The idea is to recreate the walkable, urban-feel of that section of Gratiot Avenue and 9 Mile Road, making it a vibrant gateway into Macomb County, much as downtown Ferndale is to Oakland County.

"It brings it more to a human scale," says Scott Clein, project executive for the Gratiot Avenue Corridor Study, the program that looks to lay the ground work for the revival of Eastpointe's downtown.

The plans call for putting Gratiot on a diet by turning a lane on each side of the thoroughfare into parallel parking spaces and maintaining the center boulevard. Bump outs will go at the intersections to protect the parked cars and make the road easier for pedestrians to cross.

The sidewalks will be expanded to make room for more pedestrians and non-motorized traffic, like bicycles. Rain gardens will be also be incorporated into the sidewalks and bump outs to help curtail rainwater runoff. More greenery (trees and shrubs) and a decorative sign at the entryways to downtown are also planned.

"Something more substantial than your standard welcome to East Pointe sign," Clein says.

Hopefully, when all of these improvements are said and done, it will mean a more vibrant, urban downtown. There is still quite a bit of work to be done.

East Pointe's downtown once flourished in the early 20th Century. However, urban renewal and the dominance of the automobile slowly but steadily eroded the downtown until it became the suburban, strip-mall-style business district it is today.

Source: Scott Clein, project executive for the Gratiot Avenue Corridor Study

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