

Comprehensive planning for E. Jefferson corridor improvements begins

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[Giffel Webster Engineers](#) and [ASTI Environmental](#) hosted a breakfast on June 5 to begin moving towards a comprehensive vision for Jefferson Avenue in Detroit. Invitees included neighborhood stakeholders, such as [Jefferson East Business Association](#) and [The Villages CDC](#), and other interested parties such as [Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance](#) and [Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan](#) (CFSEM).

Scott Clein, an associate at GWE, was motivated to start the conversation after participating in charettes for the area that CFSEM hosted with noted transportation planner Ian Lockwood. "He came up with high level concepts, ideas of what Jefferson could be," says Clein. "I wanted to see if we could do something to keep those ideas that the Community Foundation helped foster from remaining just ideas."

Clein is hoping the breakfast is a first step in creating an action plan for the entire corridor from downtown to Grosse Pointe. "It's a very wide roadway, some of it has a boulevard and some of it is not a very people-friendly place," he says. "It suffers from the ills that other major streets that developed in Detroit [are suffering from]."

From a transportation perspective, Clein explains that the street's width is no longer necessary because of the freeway system, and could be used in other ways such as for non-motorized transportation and increased on-street parking.

The studies necessary to effect this type of wholesale change are most efficiently and economically performed at once for the whole corridor rather than in pieces, and collaboration would also provide an opportunity ensure that all individual efforts are cohesive. Unique needs for different neighborhoods -- such as wider sidewalks in a business district -- would also be taken into consideration in the planning process.

Clein says the short-term goal will be to obtain funding for a Jefferson Avenue Framework Plan so that the City of Detroit and MDOT will have hard engineering to consider when each organization tries to move forward on their own improvement plans. "This will make the lives of individual groups 100 times easier," he says. "The debate is then simply, 'How do we find money?'"

Source: Scott Clein, GWE
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