



FERNDALE

## East Nine Mile, Hilton work expands Complete Streets philosophy

By Joshua Gordon 

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FERNDALE — With the season of outdoor events and festivals kicking into full gear in Ferndale, the construction on East Nine Mile and Hilton roads wrapped up just in time to offer smoother transportation to and from downtown Ferndale.

The East Nine Mile project was slated to be wrapped up before last year's Woodward Dream Cruise event, but high bids forced the project to 2015 after water main work in 2014.

The roughly \$1.6 million project kicked off in April, and workers put on the finishing touches in late July and early August. The project reduced East Nine Mile Road from four lanes to three lanes and added bike lanes on both sides of the road.

Meanwhile, Hilton between Nine Mile and 10 Mile roads was resurfaced, as it already had bike lanes. It now has a coat of green paint on the sides just like East Nine Mile, a feature that acts as a caution for possible crossings of motor vehicles and nonmotorized vehicles on the road.



East Nine Mile Road in Ferndale recently was changed from four lanes to three lanes after studies showed it would not slow traffic and would allow for the creation of bicycle lanes going each direction. (Photos by Joshua Gordon)



Recently completed construction on East Nine Mile and Hilton roads in Ferndale brought green painted sections that act as visual caution signs at places where a motorized vehicle may cross paths with a bicycle lane. (Photos by Joshua Gordon)

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“The city of Ferndale and City Council adopted a Complete Streets and transportation plan, and we made the effort to make sure the roads were equitable for all users,” Community and Economic Development Director Derek Delacourt said. “And we wanted to make sure all users of the system were taken into consideration with any road design. And it was extraordinarily important to make sure it was not only safe and efficient for vehicle transportation, but also bicyclists and pedestrians.”

The decision to reduce East Nine Mile from four lanes to three lanes, essentially having one lane of traffic going in each direction with a left-turn lane, was made after a traffic analysis, City Engineer Scott Ringler said.

“The city had a capacity analysis done with a traffic consultant and looked at traffic volumes at intersections and lengths between the intersections,” said Ringler, who works for Giffels Webster. “The study concluded converting from four lanes to three would provide the same level of service that currently exists. And it allowed for the installation of a bike lane, which is common when going from four lanes to three.”

Delacourt said all of the road’s markings, including those for the bike lanes, were done in accordance with guides that come from the Michigan Department of Transportation. While the green-painted areas are a common practice in other areas of the country, Delacourt said it is relatively new in Michigan.

Along the resurfaced portions of East Nine Mile and Hilton where vehicles may cross the bike path, such as entrances to parking lots, those areas were painted green to act as a visual caution for both parties to be aware of each other.

“Like with any striping or signals, the green paint is to improve safety and make travelers more aware and visible,” Delacourt said. “The markings are improved based on experience and adopted into the most recent guidebooks for best practices. More and more cities that adopt Complete Streets ordinances are doing the upgrading markings.”

Ringler said the only other stretch of road that he is aware of in the area that has similar painted caution zones is on Northwestern Highway.

“These zones are definitely helpful because they identify conflict areas for both bicyclist and motorist,” he said. “Everyone may not agree, but I find it makes things safer.”

The entire construction plan followed the Ferndale Moves program, which outlines preferred options for construction projects to incorporate a more Complete Streets philosophy to make the roads safer for motorized vehicles, nonmotorized vehicles and pedestrians.

Delacourt said the next project that falls under the Ferndale Moves program is construction on Hilton Road from Nine Mile to Eight Mile roads, which should happen within the next year.

“Our goal is to keep adopting our Complete Streets ordinance when doing projects,” he said. “We took the time and effort to make a comprehensive plan to have a network that works for all users, and the city officials and (Department of Public Works) and all departments are following through with that when the opportunity presents itself.”

<http://www.candgnews.com/news/east-nine-mile-hilton-work-expands-complete-streets-philosophy-85593>