



Corridor News

Study Committee

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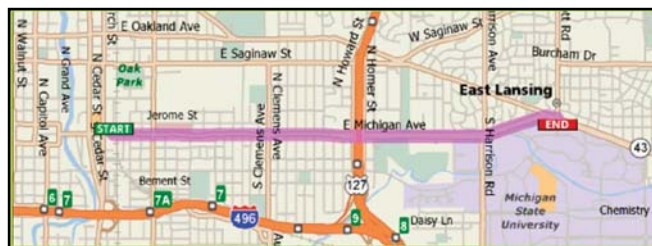
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Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority Study Committee

The Michigan Avenue corridor that links downtown Lansing with downtown East Lansing is an important transportation artery - a critical link between our downtowns and the State Capitol and Michigan State University. Improving Michigan Ave will result in connecting a multitude of important employers and cultural resources into a distinctly cohesive and welcoming district. The cities of Lansing and East Lansing along with Lansing Township have formed a study committee to launch a joint effort that will result in improvements to the Michigan Avenue Corridor. The Study Committee is conducting a planning and information gathering process to help form a Corridor Improvement Authority for Michigan Avenue. The goal is to improve the environment for businesses and neighborhoods between the capitol building of Michigan and the campus of Michigan State University. We hope to unify the corridor in a way that reflects its status as one of the most vital and important passageways in the state of Michigan.



Being in the beginning stages of the planning process, the committee still has much more work to do recommendations can be made. So far, two public workshop has been held at the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development. The first public workshop focused on identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Michigan Avenue. A second public workshop included a visioning session where residents and stakeholders were asked to voice their opinions on what they would like to see the corridor become, with a focus on long-term visions. The third and final public meeting is scheduled for October 2nd where we will ask residents to contribute to creating goals for the Michigan Avenue corridor. Once the public workshops are concluded, the Study Committee will begin the process of drawing up formal recommendations to be presented to the Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority and the planning process for aesthetic and infrastructure improvements will begin.

The Next Public Workshop

The public is invited to attend the third workshop held by the Study Committee. Team members will present draft goals and be available to answer questions.

We want to hear your ideas and we hope to see you there!

October 2nd from 5-7pm
at

MSU Center for Economic and
Community Development Center

1615 E. Michigan Ave
in Lansing

Our Purpose

The cities of East Lansing and Lansing along with Lansing Township propose to explore implementation of a Corridor Improvement Authority for Michigan Avenue so that the businesses and neighborhoods that link our region's greatest landmarks and destinations, the capitol building of Michigan and the campus of Michigan State University, may be improved to reflect one of the most vital and important passageways in the state.

While we are still in the beginning stages of the planning, some corridor improvements might include,

Beautification - landscaping, street lighting, façade improvements, and the additional of benches and trash receptacles.

Access and Healthy Neighborhoods - walk able and biking friendly trails and sidewalks that include bike parking and accessible pathways.

Infrastructure Improvements - including burying of overhead utilities, improving storm water management and increased infrastructure maintenance.

Promotion - way finding signs and other physical improvements that help define the character of the corridor and make it a more user-friendly destination.



Photos: Business storefronts along Michigan Avenue

The Team Behind the Project

The Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement project is a collaborative regional project with many stakeholders involved in the planning process.

They include,

City of Lansing

City of East Lansing

Lansing Township

Michigan State University



Get Involved!

The committee would like as much public input as possible on this project and believe that input is vital to the success of its planning process. Please visit us at www.michiganavecorridor.com and participate in our online survey about Michigan Ave! We want to hear from you! Please note: All calls and correspondence will be answered by project team members and noted for project record.



How to contact us!

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The Act that Makes it all Possible

The Corridor Improvement Authority Act (CIAA), a new tool authorized by the State of Michigan, allows a multi-municipality Authority to capture new taxes on a single corridor, in this case, Michigan Avenue. The proposed Michigan Avenue Corridor district would stretch from the railroad tracks next to Clara's Restaurant on the west to where Michigan Avenue meets Grand River Ave on the east and up to 500 feet of depth on each side of Michigan Avenue. The Authority can be funded through bonds as well as directly through Tax Increment Financing, or TIF. A TIF district is an area where future tax growth (new taxes) will be captured by the TIF district for implementation of improvements within that district. Tax Increment Financing is used for public infrastructure improvements, such as burying utilities, streetscape improvements, signs, landscaping, design, and organizational development. The duration of the TIF is determined by the goals and costs of the proposed improvements. Goals for the corridor will be created by the stakeholders in the corridor area and improvements in the corridor will be paid for by the new taxes realized from new development within the corridor. We are currently still in the early stages of planning for long term improvements.

The Next Steps

- 1) Study Committee creates Conceptual Development Plan (CDP)
- 2) Review of CDP by all three participating municipalities
- 3) Formation of the Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA)
- 4) CIA creates Development plan
- 5) CIA implements finance plan
- 6) Implement improvements from Development plan

Current Photos of Michigan Avenue Corridor



Top Left: 2000 Block of Michigan Ave
 Bottom Left: View of Clemens and Michigan Ave Intersection
 Bottom Right: Local business
 Top Right: Church of the Resurrection School



The first public workshop was held on August 14, 2008. At this meeting, Staff and the Study Committee conducted a SWOT (Strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the Michigan Avenue corridor. The goal was to hear what the residents and stakeholders thought about Michigan Avenue and what could be done to improve the corridor in the future. Michigan Avenue was split up into 6 sections and participants were divided into groups and were asked to contribute their thoughts and visions as they rotated to all 6 sections. The results of the SWOT analysis are included below.

Station 1 – Grand River to Harrison

Strengths

- MSU
- Boulevard width
- Walkable
- Green areas
- Residential neighborhoods- safe
- Gateway to campus
- Traffic volume = good for business
- Historic residential district
- Billboard
- Strong neighborhood associations

Weaknesses

- MSU – no TIF value
- Boulevard – cars only
- How many TIF \$ due to economy?
- Traffic- speed, too much volume
- Difference Lansing vs. East Lansing roadway
- Businesses don't have street appeal
- Brody Complex
- Ease of traffic exiting businesses
- Retail set too far back – less pedestrian appeal
- Billboard
- Residential area under lit
- QD façade
- Unsafe pedestrian crossings
- Beal entrance/merge onto Michigan Ave
- 24/7 corner store facade

Opportunities

- Connect corridor with transportation
- Number of people = more business opportunity
- Open up views to river
- Canoe launch
- Dollar redevelopment
- Integrate students into community
- Tie together the hodgepodge of buildings
- Banner – dramatic- between Lansing and East Lansing announcing MSU/East Lansing
- Reconfigure Michigan Ave
- Redevelop Harrison Ave intersection/bus

Threats

- Vision may become too political and not community based
- Floodplain

Station 2 – Harrison to Clippert**Strengths**

- Golf course
- Traffic
- Boulevard
- Skate park
- Student housing
- Senior housing
- Expressway access
- Frandor businesses shopping
- Gateway to both cities
- Parks/greenspace
- Diversity of housing
- Transportation

Weaknesses

- Economy
- 3 lanes – difficult for pedestrians
- Distance between businesses
- Frandor parking lots
- Closed golf course
- Floodplain – regulations
- Multiple municipalities
- Closed Silver Dollar
- Empty building in Frandor and huge parking lots are empty
- Frandor's backdoor
- Auto dominated
- Interchange needs improvement
- Lacks sense of space
- Lacks a coherent plan
- Lacking connections between housing and retail
- Not pedestrian friendly
- Lack of regulated buffers and transitions
- Feels empty- nothing happening
- Expressway acts as a barrier
- Lacks identity- separates cities and no man's land

Opportunities

- Pedestrian bridge – more walkable
- Golf course property
- Visibility – signage for assets
- Silver Dollar site redevelopment
- Frandor + site redevelopment
- Influence multiple municipalities
- Gateway signage
- Connect into river trail
- Improve interchange and eliminate at Saginaw and expand at Kalamazoo
- Signage at freeway
- Center/Gateway
- Reconfigure Frandor frontage
- Greenspace
- Rain gardens associated with storm water solutions
- Reuse golf course site – more active and vital
- Mask interstate – less visible
- Fill in empty space with more buildings
- Improve walks
- Add benches
- Add green space in parking lots
- Shared use of parks
- North end of Central Park (1000 acres of contiguous public land)
- Retail to support housing
- Opportunities to redevelop car lots
- Sell golf course and make money

Threats

- Floodplain
- Loss of Kircher Park/Ball parks
- Loss of golf course
- Loss the Raney Park ball park
- Cost of storm water improvements
- Separation of storm/sanitation sewers

Station 3- Clippert to Fairview

Strengths

- Foot traffic
- Neighborhood pedestrian traffic
- Access to US 127
- Strong neighborhood organizations on north side and emerging on south side
- Taco stand at Francis
- Lansing Civic Players

Weaknesses

- No identity/consistent arch design
- Non conforming/blighted properties
- Floodplain/floodplains regulations
- Speediness of Michigan Ave at US 127
- US 127 and Michigan Ave - not NMT friendly
- Older buildings
- Low occupancy
- Re-use/retrofit home
- Expensive of converting residential to commercial properties
- Homer/Clippert is ugly and dangerous
- Side of lots (50' to 60')
- Neighbor awareness
- Ash trees (sidewalks)
- Intersection Detroit (traffic)
- Confusing and little signage
- Michigan turnaround
- Sidewalks are cracked, buckling, or there is no sidewalk
- Facades
- Trash/lack of trash receptacles
- Signage and way finding
- Crime

Opportunities

- Make US 127 area more attractive
- Murals, vegetation, make it interesting
- Trash receptacles/street furniture
- Cultural events and venues, theaters and galleries
- Flowers/trees
- US 127 Gateway
- Residents supporting commerce
- Ripe for redevelopment
- Assemble land in floodplain and redevelop
- Improved interchange and make it the focus – Kalamazoo Ave Exit
- Places to eat outside
- Signage, create sense of place
- “Tie” 2 communities together
- Houses waiting for redevelopment (‘cheap on the street’)

Threats

- Resident/community uses adjacent (zero parking behind commercial properties)
- Parking (where to put it?)
- Potential to make too walkable

Station 4 – Fairview to Holmes/Clifford**Strengths**

- Buildings with zero setback
- Vacant buildings
- Bancroft flower structure (soup spoon)
- 2000 block
- Parking behind destination
- Unique shops and housing above
- Fabianos
- Cohesive
- Busy/Density and both sides of street
- Proximity to hospital
- Well organized neighborhoods groups
- Proximity to bus stops, neighborhoods, and businesses
- Lots of walking traffic
- Available façade improvement
- Underground infrastructure improvements done
- Spa arriving
- Historic zone resurrection

Weaknesses

- Parking lots in front of buildings
- Rules against perpendicular signage
- Sidewalk disrepair/uneven sidewalks
- Few bike/scooter racks
- Sign ordinance – signage
- Lack of continuity (‘different looks’)
- Loses pedestrian friendliness as approaches Holmes
- Older buildings
- KFC – Little buffering to neighborhood
- Small lot sizes – limits business opportunities
- Metered parking
- Trees need trimming/obstruct buildings
- Limited traffic – limited occupancy- limited money for improvements
- Dangerous corner at Faibianos
- Filling Station at Marshall
- Too much pavement

Opportunities

- To do more like the 2000 block
- Underground utilities (aesthetics)
- Vacant buildings can be improved
- Benches and public amenities
- Cater/enhance public transportation
- More tasteful/artful signs (sign ordinance enforcement)
- Tie together all the corridor has (unified)
- Attracting new businesses
- Housing on top
- Brownstones
- More local businesses
- Outdoor seating
- Appropriate buggering
- More trash receptacles/beautification
- Façade improvements (\$\$)
- Seed money to increase leasability
- Replicate 2000 block – parking behind
- Increase ‘business sense’
- Synergies between businesses (Gone Wired & Roma’s?)
- Expand 2000 block
- Capitalize on concentrations of ethnic groups, etc
- ‘Soften’ pavement
- Space behind could be organized
- Walls/décor to shield parking lots
- Smart planned growth of Sparrow
- Reroute some traffic
- Take advantage of key historic buildings (1400 block)
- Unified ‘motif’ of historic colors

Threats

- Signage rules
- Vacant buildings - disrepair
- Not biker/walker friendly
- Uneven sidewalks
- Environmental contamination risk from utilities
- Business decisions relocating
- Little buffering between KFC (e.g.) and neighbor hoods

Station 5- Holmes/Clifford to Pennsylvania

Strengths

- Close to road
- Bridge is ‘welcoming arch’
- Well groomed
- Sparrow improvements/Facades = +++
- Ronald McDonald
- Streetscape = +
- Crosswalks = +
- Security
- Medical district = +++

Weaknesses

- Kids/pedestrian/safety crossing
- Rite Aide
- Bicycle lanes/corridor
- Lack of signage
- Benches
- Linkages/parking/walking
- Former Gas Station on Holmes
- Sparrow Bridge Boondoggle

Opportunities

- Fix up Holmes/Michigan former gas station
- Bank building
- Bus enhancement
- Review of Route 1 – ‘user friendly’ and more needs (7.5 minutes vs 10 or 15min)
- Review of Diverter on Holmes/Eureka
- Start/street/staff (eligible word) parking
- Long term planning regarding more mix use vs medical corridor
- Dead zones and spacious ramp/Holmes St

Threats

- Sparrow parking expansion? Where?
- Old Pattengill – what use?
- Sparrow owned homes?
- Sparrow’s domination/process

Station 6– Pennsylvania to Rail Road Tracks**Strengths**

- Close to downtown
- Pedestrians
- Capitol, River and outside dining
- Rain garden, developed proximity to downtown
- Beautification
- Light poles
- Paramount smell
- Proximity to night life

Weaknesses

- Abandoned properties, parking, underground parking
- Waiting for train
- Bike paths on grade with street
- Intersection at Pennsylvania
- Directional signage –way finding
- Not enough ‘major’ bus stops
- Too many offices – empty after 5pm
- Paramount smell
- Proximity to low income areas
- Rail Road

Opportunities

- Public transportation
- Living Space
- Retail
- Connections to other areas
- Parking in back
- Connection to River Trail
- Connecting to attractions
- Kiosks
- Sign ordinance-perpendicular signage
- Alley on 600 block
- Bike racks and benches
- Street level aesthetics
- Homeless education
- Pierre Marquette
- “Announce the River Trail”
- Pedestrian Bridge on River
- Crosswalks
- Connecting to Museum Drive

Threats

- Construction/congestion
- Perception of crime
- One way street
- Less redevelopment opportunities
- Sparrow’s growth
- Anything with setbacks
- Rescue Mission
- Mobile Station
- Dollar Stores façade
- Industrial feeling uses – automotive
- Proximity to downtown – City Hall
- Sparrow – threat to spread east
- Vulnerable economics to business sense – 2000 block

At the second workshop, held on August 26, 2008, there was a lively discussion of the vision for the entire corridor. The comments and suggestions included, greening of the corridor, adding more innovative transit options, creating a lake at the golf course, adding infill brownstones or mixed-use buildings among other ideas. That discussion was followed by a discussion of specific visions for segments of the corridor. Notes from those discussions are shown below.

Station 1 & 2 from Grand River Ave to Clippert

- Does Michigan Ave function on both sides?
- More main traffic
 - Lanes to the south
 - Buffer the houses to the north
- Harrison intersection reconfigure for new development
- System/functionality of bike lanes
 - Bike lanes between in the 3 cities
- Circulation and connection to retail (Frondor)
- Connection potential between Ranney Park/Red Cedar golf and Kircher Park/River Trail
- Design standardization
- Transit

Station 3 & 4 from Clippert to Holmes/Clifford

- Intersection improvements
 - Pavers/crosswalks
 - Colorful
 - Safe= visible
- Short mid block medians
- Enhance density
- Enhance the grass areas on US 127
 - Flowers, signs, art, lighting, murals, planters
- New attractions
- Pocket parks
 - Benches, next to Bancroft
 - Mexico To Go area
- Landscape/hardscape
 - Improve parking areas and facades
- Bike parking- between Fairview and Clemons
- People friendly with outdoor dining
- Improve east 3 blocks
- Bike paths
- More parking back or add wall or veg screen
- More urban looking facades
- Use recycled materials to make colorful sidewalks
- More flowers and trees- well kept
- Store w fresh foods
- Street vendor area
- Entertainment – music vendors
- Umbrellas- people on sidewalks

Station 5 & 6 from Holmes/Clifford to Railroad Tracks

- Health and wellness district
- Mid scale (transition)
- Retail/living
- Pocket parks with play areas
- Opportunities for small business development
- Creative transition/reuse
- ‘entertainment alley’ – home to Basso business
- Location for jobs- live and work
- Connect node to rest of avenue
- Homogeneous or not? Up not over
- Sparrow more integrating to community
- Attending to neighborhood as market
- Block by block attention to commercial/residential boundary