

# WEST JEFFERSON

CORRIDOR PLAN



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## CORRIDOR PLAN

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- Councilwoman Patty Campbell
- Councilman Daniel Cooney
- Councilman Derek Perry
- Councilman Percy Pierce
- Councilwoman Tina Miller-Laginess
- Constable Jonathan Holy
- Constable Dennis Shiels

## River Rouge Administration

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- Mayor Pro Tem Darcel Brown
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ALBERT B. BUDAVAY CIVIC CENTER CITY OF ECORSE

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# **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

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# INTRODUCTION

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West Jefferson Avenue is a vitally important corridor for the cities of Ecorse and River Rouge. For approximately 3.5 miles, it is the primary north/south commercial route through the two communities, shaping and connecting their centers. West Jefferson Avenue provides regional connections for land uses varying from the more downtown character near Coolidge Highway in River Rouge; to a heavy industrial presence, scattered lower density retail, restaurants, and automotive related uses; to Dingell Park with beautiful passive Detroit River views; and waterfront recreation uses at the south end in Ecorse. Residential neighborhoods touch the corridor throughout. West Jefferson is also an important transportation connection between Downtown Detroit and the Downriver region's waterfront communities.

The significance of West Jefferson Avenue is widely recognized in the community and economic development plans, policies and initiatives of both cities. These include the cities' adopted master plans and recreation plans, the 2017 Downtown Plan for River Rouge (supported by the State of Michigan through its Rising Tide Initiative), and the River Rouge West Jefferson Avenue Corridor Plan (draft 2016), the Envision Ecorse Strategic Plan, and others. In addition, River Rouge's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) district and its Economic Development Corporation (EDC) are along West Jefferson Avenue.

While past efforts to redevelop portions of the corridor have a mixed record, there is now a clear need and desire for transformative change, supported by a favorable economic climate and expected major positive influences like the new international bridge that make significant transformation more feasible.



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for the cities of Ecorse and River Rouge to foster collaboration on redeveloping the corridor, realize opportunities, and ensure success.

## FOSTER COLLABORATION

Ecorse and River Rouge are proud, tight-knit communities. Each has endured tremendous challenges, including financial crisis. Each suffers from long-term blight and disinvestment along West Jefferson Avenue, and decades-long loss of manufacturing jobs at major industrial facilities along the Detroit and Rouge River waterfronts. Separately, each city has a strong history of resilience and redevelopment planning.

In today's world, working cooperatively as a larger whole is essential for success – roads should unite communities and land uses. The cities have begun to partner on some recent endeavors, such as the successful West Jefferson Avenue Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant application for one of the first protected bike lanes in the State of Michigan outside of Detroit. The cities also worked together to negotiate with industrial giant US Steel, ensuring that the corporation's requests for incentives and the benefits of US Steel's proposed investments would be fair to each and in a positive position for the future. The West Jefferson Corridor Plan outlines strategies to capitalize on these successes and continue the spirit of collaboration between the cities.

## REALIZE OPPORTUNITIES

Years of economic decline created challenging market realities in many economic sectors including industrial, residential, and commercial uses. In spite of those challenges, city residents have persevered and many neighborhoods have been maintained as friendly and valued places. Also, West Jefferson Avenue and the two cities are well positioned in the region for the next chapter of development; they are close to the new international bridge connection with its expanded traffic and commerce, have convenient access to Interstate 75, are near emerging markets in Wyandotte and Detroit, and have inventories of redevelopment-ready property.



The Detroit, Ecorse and Rouge rivers offer considerable recreation and quality of life opportunities. Ecorse and River Rouge are actively looking for creative solutions to their vexing economic concerns.

The West Jefferson Corridor Plan provides a new shared vision. Its goals will be the foundation for redevelopment and possible future funding. Further, the Plan and its implementation will be a rallying point, stimulating renewed energy and focus on West Jefferson Avenue.

## ENSURE SUCCESS

The existing conditions along West Jefferson Avenue are very similar to those that existed prior to other successful multi-jurisdictional corridor transformation efforts. The West Jefferson Corridor Plan focuses on creating a sustainable model for implementing the plan by evaluating strategies that have worked around the region. Four models evaluated include: the 8 Mile Boulevard Association, covering 3 counties and 13 communities, the

Woodward Avenue Corridor through Wayne and Oakland counties, Ann Arbor Road in Plymouth and Plymouth Township, and the Grand River Avenue Corridor through Farmington and Farmington Hills.. These are just a few examples of communities that came together to form a shared vision with goals and strategies, agreed on a plan, and then created an entity to spearhead implementation.

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## PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

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The West Jefferson Corridor plan is not the first project on which the cities of River Rouge and Ecorse have collaborated. Indeed, these municipal neighbors have worked on multiple joint projects before, and are currently implementing another joint project to repave and to install bicycle lanes along West Jefferson Avenue in both communities, using state funding from the Transportation Alternative Program.

Other previous plans were reviewed in order to understand better what needs and wants both Ecorse and River Rouge have along West Jefferson Avenue. This way, goals and objectives from previous plans can be incorporated into this current Corridor Plan, as well as other plans in the future.



## **ENVISION ECORSE**

This plan, published in 2011, was written during the midst of the Great Recession. At the time, Ecorse had been assigned an Emergency Financial Manager by the State of Michigan to manage the City's finances. The plan was based on extensive public participation, and discussed various needs and desires of the community, including, among others, city government, physical street design, and transportation options. The Detroit Riverfront and the West Jefferson corridor were designated as boons to the overall quality of life in Ecorse. Municipal officials, city residents, the Michigan Municipal League and various nonprofit partners came together to highlight existing issues, as well as to propose ideas that would make Ecorse a thriving community by the year 2030.

## **ECORSE MASTER PLAN**

Ecorse's most recent Master Plan, completed in 2015, identified various demographic and socioeconomic factors that have impacted the City. This document identified various existing land uses, including residential,

commercial, industrial, public and recreation uses, among others. It identified potential redevelopment and infill opportunities at sites throughout the City. Some of the suggestions provided in this Plan included existing vacant land being repurposed for other uses. It highlighted problems that pedestrians and bicyclists have when travelling throughout the City. The plan offered potential remedies to these transportation issues, and offered areas of collaboration with other jurisdictions to make a larger, regional impact.

## **RIVER ROUGE MASTER PLAN**

The most recent Master Plan for the City of River Rouge was adopted in 2017. The plan highlighted the community strengths of River Rouge, as well as indicators of existing and future economic challenges. Most notably, the plan offers an in-depth look at many of the urban corridors throughout River Rouge. The West Jefferson corridor is considered to be the main street that connects all of the other arterials in the City. An economic profile of River Rouge, prepared as part of the Master Plan, offers suggestions

to remove barriers to job creation and retention. Lastly, the Master Plan examines a number of potential redevelopment sites that could be used to stimulate economic activity throughout the City.

## **RIVER ROUGE WEST JEFFERSON CORRIDOR PLAN**

The River Rouge West Jefferson Corridor Plan sought to document existing conditions along West Jefferson Avenue within the City. In addition, the plan, published in 2018, envisioned how the corridor could look in the future. This plan was written to analyze economic opportunities coming from the statewide Iron Belle Trail, as well as the new Gordie Howe Bridge connecting Windsor and Southwest Detroit. The plan investigated existing infrastructure and community resources within River Rouge. This West Jefferson Corridor Plan received community input as to what they wanted to see on the corridor. Based on community input and existing conditions, the plan set goals for future planning, development and transportation objectives in residential, commercial and industrial zones.



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# CORRIDOR INVENTORY

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## METHODOLOGY

The site inventory maps were created from data collected in field observations on two weekdays in June, 2019. The data collection methods primarily involved windshield surveys, and - to a lesser extent - walking surveys. The analysis focused on whichever side of the road was to the right, for ease of parking and recording data. The first day surveyed northbound, collecting data on the east side of the road, and the second day southbound, collecting data on the west side of the road. Since the data was identified by side of the road, the resulting maps were created to show data for one unique side of the road.



The data collected was divided into two categories: existing land use and physical conditions. The existing land use category contained variables that were strictly binary: either it existed on that major block, or it did not. The specific kinds of land uses were taken from recent existing land use maps created for both Ecorse and River Rouge, combined, and then filtered to avoid redundancy. The final list of land uses was as follows: central business district, civic uses, heavy industrial, light industrial, multiple-family residential, off-street parking lot, other commercial, recreation, single family residential, surface parking lot, two family residential, and vacant lot. “Off-street parking lot” denotes parking

present on a parcel with another use on it, whereas “surface parking lot” denotes an entire parcel dedicated to parking.

The second category was physical conditions. The variables in this category were not strictly binary, and thus some of them used unique classification scales. The various physical conditions observed are as follows, with their respective analysis categories:

Billboards, Business Signs, Driveways	Present / Not Present
Lighting	Good / Fair / Poor
Non-Motorized Access Problems, Open Storage, Other Public Areas	Present / Not Present
Parcel Setbacks	Zero / Shallow / Deep
Parcel Size	Small / Medium / Large
Sidewalks	Good / Fair / Poor
Site Accessibility	Good / Fair / Poor
Site Landscaping	Present / Not Present
Street Crossings	Poor / None
Street Parking , Utilities, Vacant Buildings, Vacant Land	Present / Not Present



Taking data on a block-by-block basis was determined to be unnecessary, so “major block” units were created. These were defined as several blocks between larger/more prominent streets and political boundaries. From south to north, the major blocks were: Wyandotte/Ecorse city limit to Mill Street; Mill Street to Southfield Road; Southfield Road to West Outer Drive; West Outer Drive to Salliotte Road; Salliotte Road to Visger Road; Visger Road to the Ecorse/River Rouge city limit; Ecorse/River Rouge city limit to Abbott Avenue; Abbott Avenue to East Great Lakes

Street; East Great Lakes Street to Maple Street; Maple Street to Coolidge Highway; Coolidge Highway to Francis Riopelle Avenue; Francis Riopelle Avenue to Marion Avenue; and Marion Avenue to the River Rouge/ Detroit city limit.

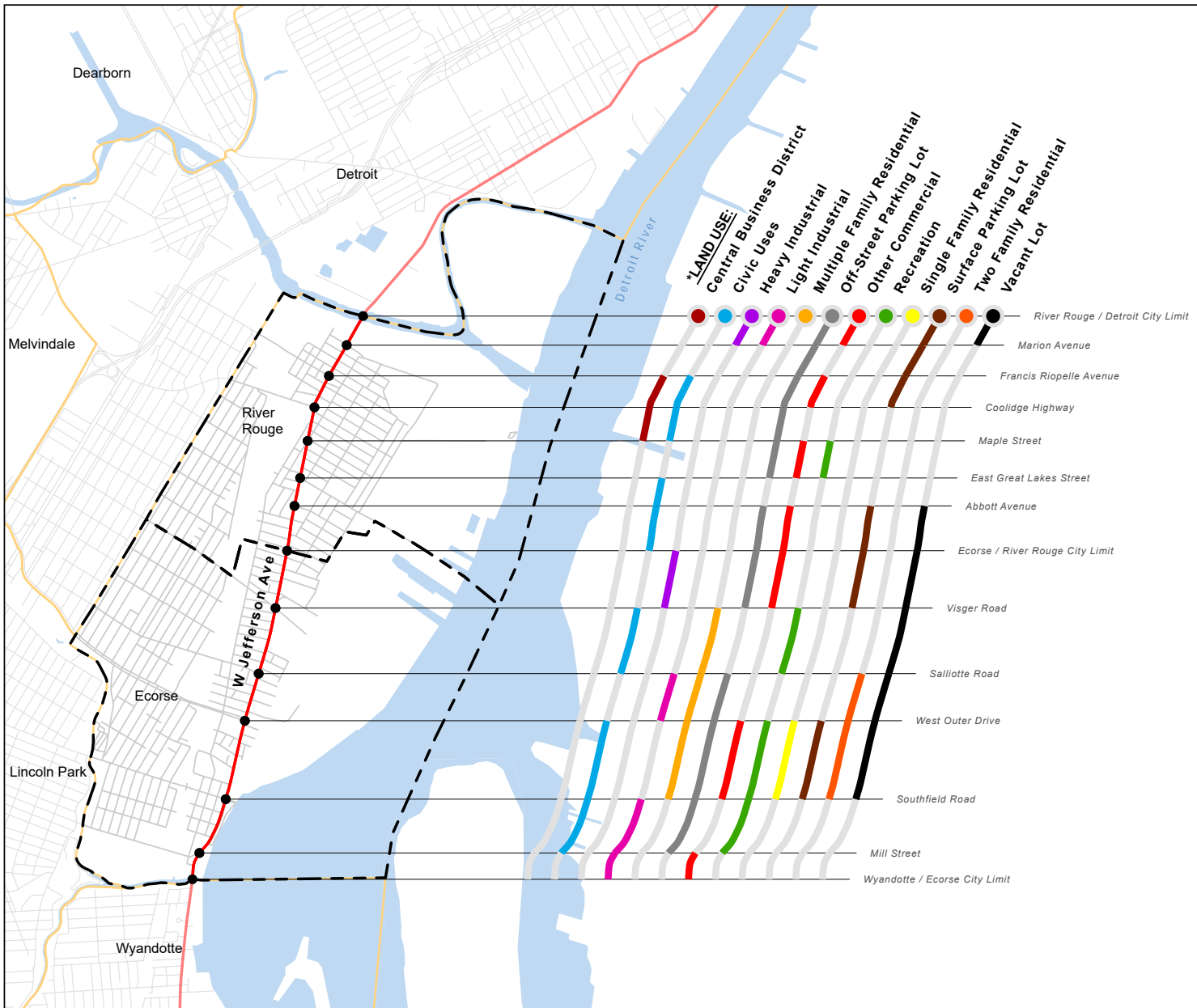
After having set up these parameters, the data was collected for each of the major blocks. Additionally, photos were taken of key points of interest found in each major block, or of properties representative of much of the corridor.

After collecting the data, it was reviewed for clarity purposes on the maps. For example, “mobile home park” was a land use category that did not appear on the entire route. Thus, that category was removed to save space for other, more meaningful data to be represented.

# East Side Existing Land Use

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
 Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

June 18, 2019



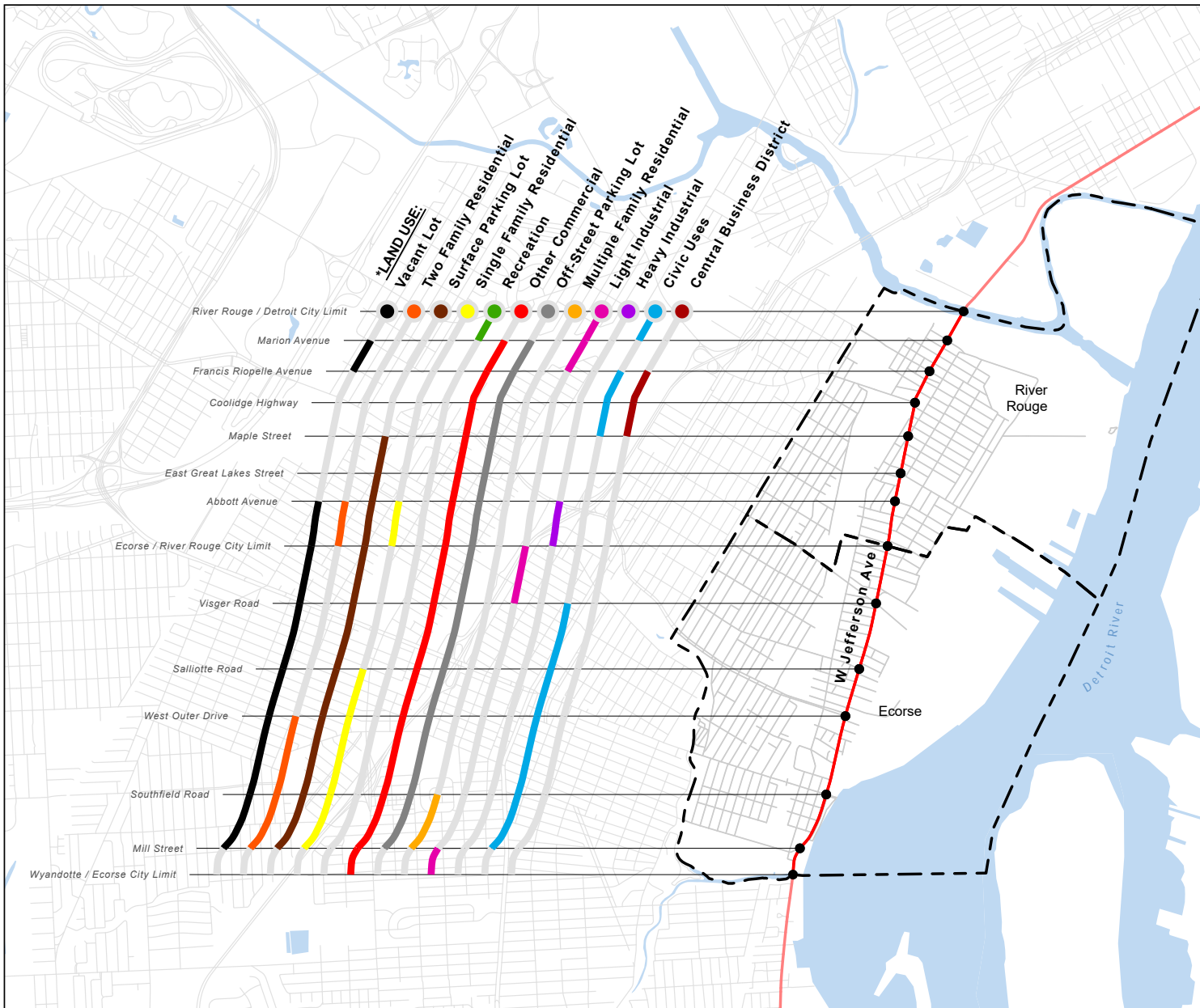
**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Sources: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a;  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.  
 Land Use Data Source: McKenna, June 2019.



# West Side Existing Land Use

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
 Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

June 18, 2019



## Legend

- City Boundaries
  - West Jefferson Ave
  - Other Roads
  - Bodies of Water
- \*Colors indicate the presence of specified land uses.

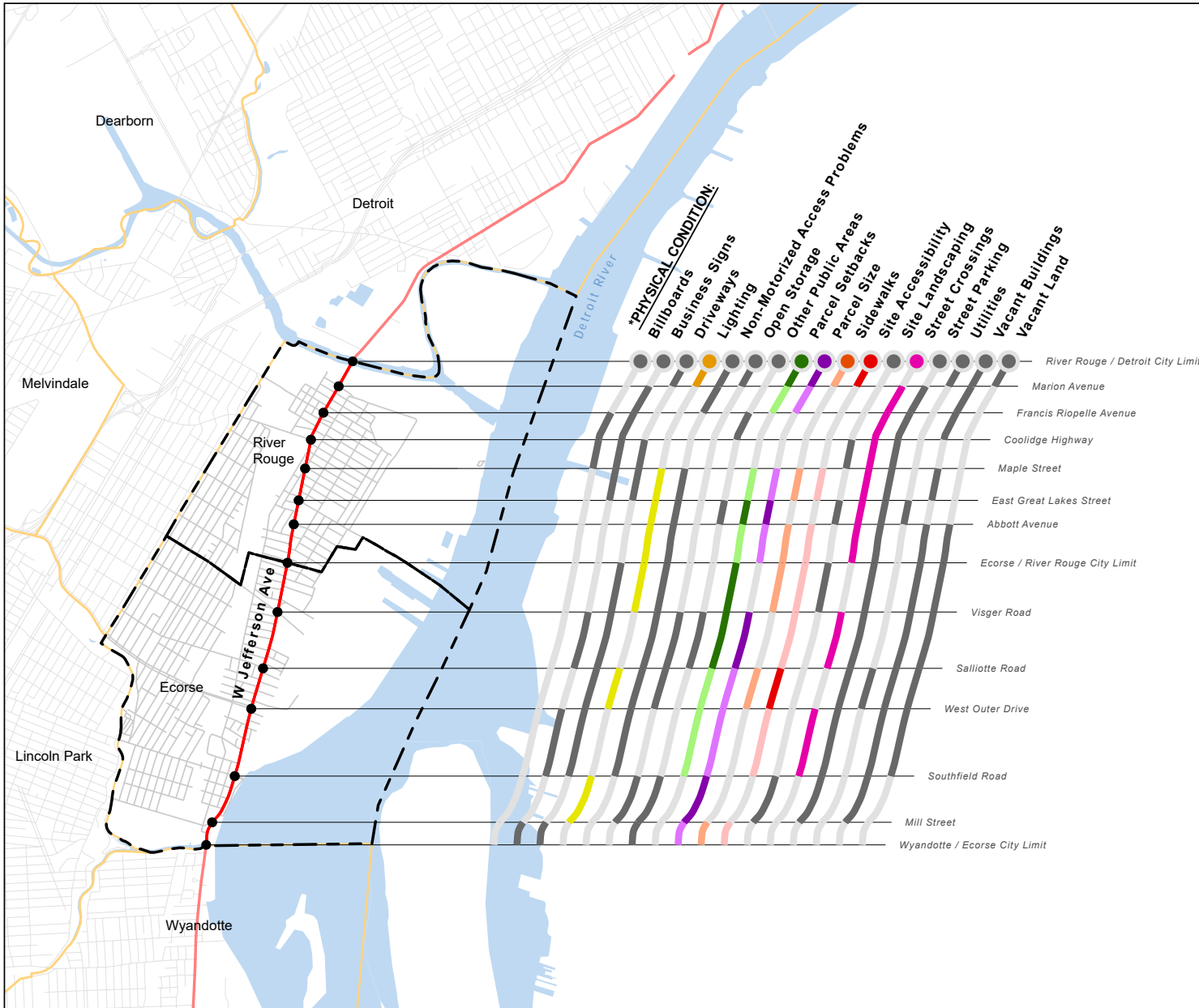
SOURCES  
 Basemap Sources: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a;  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.  
 Land Use Data Source: McKenna, June 2019.



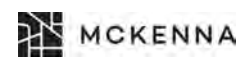
# East Side Existing Physical Conditions

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
 Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

June 18, 2019



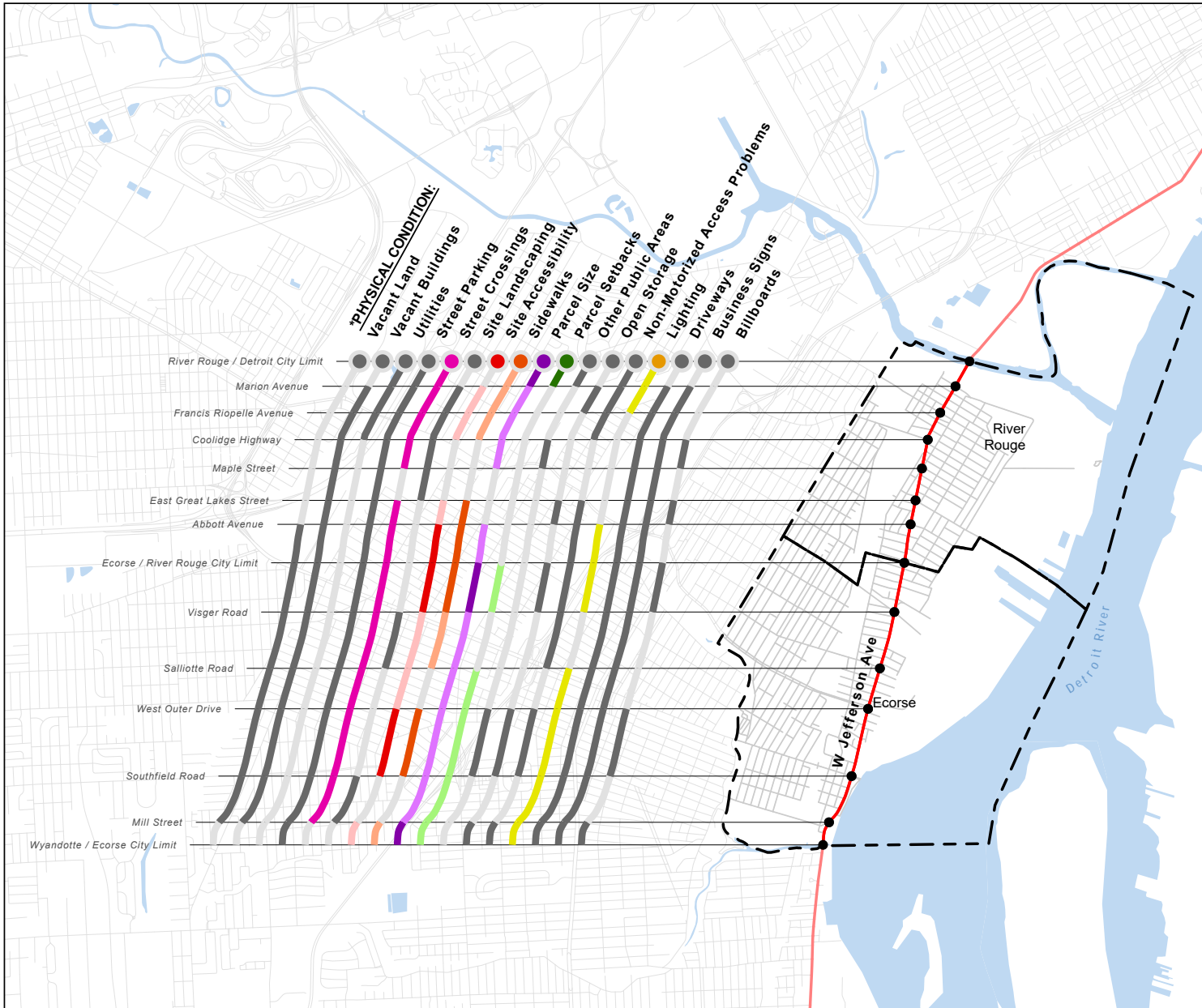
**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Sources: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a;  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.  
 Land Use Data Source: McKenna, June 2019.



# West Side Existing Physical Conditions

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
 Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

June 18, 2019



## Legend

- City Boundaries
- West Jefferson Ave
- Other Roads
- Bodies of Water

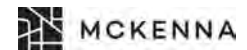
\*For categories in grayscale, dark grays indicate presence of physical condition.

For categories in color, darker colors indicate ratings to the right, shown below, in parentheses:

- Street Crossings (none / poor)
- Site Accessibility (good / fair / poor)
- Sidewalks (good / fair / poor)
- Parcel Size (small / medium / large)
- Parcel Setbacks (zero / shallow / deep)
- Lighting (good / fair / poor)



**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Sources: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a;  
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.  
 Land Use Data Source: McKenna, June 2019.



## KEY FINDINGS

The results of the corridor inventory, as well as the demographic and economic analyses of the West Jefferson Avenue corridor, suggest that while many of the existing land use conditions differ between River Rouge and Ecorse, there are nevertheless many common traits between the two communities. The data that was gathered along the West Jefferson corridor will enable both the cities of River Rouge and Ecorse to quantify what is currently existing along the corridor for future use and transformation.

### EXISTING LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

There was a noticeable difference in existing land uses on the east and west sides of the road. Part of this difference is due to the fact that the east side of the corridor is adjacent to either the Detroit River or established heavy industrial sites. Therefore, there is less space for residential or commercial development than on the west side. This is true in both River Rouge and Ecorse.

Both sides of the street had many vacant parcels and surface parking lots. These ranged in size from “small” to “large”, and were adjacent to residential, commercial and industrial properties. The only exception to this pattern is on the east side of West Jefferson Avenue through much of River Rouge, where many of the vacant parcels are not empty, but rather are used as parking for existing buildings. Of the east side parcels that are being used, much of the land is low-density commercial, industrial

and recreational uses. By contrast, civic, commercial and residential uses are more prevalent on the west side. There is plenty of opportunity for redevelopment on both sides of the corridor.

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The inventory also exposed important information about the physical conditions along West Jefferson Avenue. Both sides of the corridor had ample street parking. While there were street crossings, most pedestrians would likely not feel comfortable or safe trying to get to the other side. Just like with the Existing Land Use Characteristics, there was a marked difference in existing physical conditions between the east side of the street and the west side of the street.

The east side of the corridor had more issues with pedestrian access, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, more vacant lots. Moreover, the majority of parcels were either ranked “small” or “medium” in size on the east side of

West Jefferson, and setbacks were considered to be either “shallow” or “deep.” Additionally, many of the east side parcels contained vacant buildings or were undeveloped. These findings could suggest that the many of the existing buildings in both River Rouge and Ecorse could have previously been residentially used, whether or not they were still standing or were still being used for housing.

On the other hand, the west side of West Jefferson, while containing just as much vacant land and buildings as the east side, ranked significantly better in site accessibility. Most of the major blocks have “good” and “fair” site accessibility. In addition, the majority of the sidewalks along the corridor were ranked “good” or “fair.” By contrast, most of the sidewalks and site accessibility on the east side was ranked as “poor” or “fair.” Despite the high number of vacant buildings and empty parcels along the western part of West Jefferson Avenue, much of the visible existing infrastructure could support redevelopment along this side of the corridor with little upgrading.

## **OTHER OBSERVATIONS**

Two unexpected aspects were the differences in the presence of lighting and in the number of billboards and business signs on the two sides of the road.

The lighting on the two sides of the corridor was significantly different. Although the majority of the lighting of both sides were ranked “good” or “fair”, the majority of the “good” lighting on west side of the corridor was located in Ecorse. By contrast, the majority of “good” lighting on the east side of West Jefferson Avenue was located in River Rouge. This can be explained by the amount of industry on the east side the corridor in River Rouge and the presence of the Detroit River in Ecorse; the majority of the areas that might require lighting are on the opposite sides of these landmarks. In any case, the lighting along West Jefferson generally appeared relatively new, and there were no significant areas that would be dark at night.

The amount of business signs and billboards were significantly greater on the west side of the street than on the east side. This pattern has two possible explanations.

The first is that there is more industrial and public land on the east side of the corridor than on the west side. The presence of the U.S. Steel manufacturing plant and Dingell Park along the Detroit River might limit the amount of space used for public advertising. Another possible explanation is that, since all routes from the corridor to major regional expressways head west, advertisers could better capture driver attention.





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## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

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The Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge each have long, unique, and storied histories. However, both cities have lost a significant number of residents since their population peaked over half a century ago. The following demographic information can help explain where both cities are today and provide context to positions for future evolution.

In many ways, the demographics of the Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge are quite similar to one another. The shrinking nature of both communities, as well as their younger, majority female, and ethnically diverse populations, presents opportunities for transforming the West Jefferson Corridor in ways that are family-friendly, promote community spirit, and encourage new residents to call River Rouge and Ecorse home.

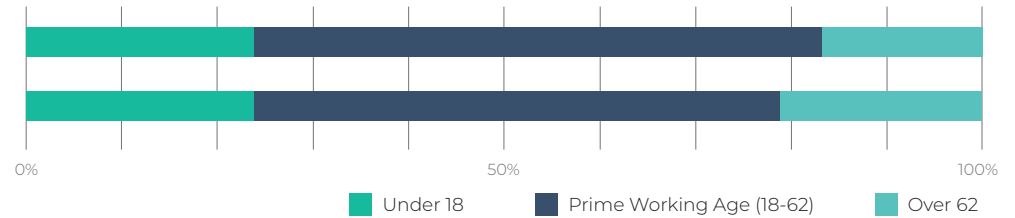
## AGE

### River Rouge

Median Age: 34.9

### Ecorse

Median Age: 39.1



Source: 2017 ACS

River Rouge is statistically a relatively younger community than Ecorse. According to the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), the median age of River Rouge residents is 34.9 years old, which is younger than the median age of Wayne County (38 years old), and that of the entire State of Michigan, which has a median age of 39.5 years. Furthermore, 24.2% of River Rouge residents are under the age of 18. By contrast, only 17.7% of residents are over the age of 62.

By contrast, Ecorse residents are – on average – older than residents in many neighboring communities, but similar in age to the average Wayne County and State of Michigan resident. The median age of Ecorse residents is 39.1 years old. However, there are still more residents of Ecorse who are under 18 years of age (24.5%) than those who are over 62 years old (20.4%). Therefore, although the median population of the city as a whole is older than that of River Rouge, there is a robust population of younger residents within Ecorse.

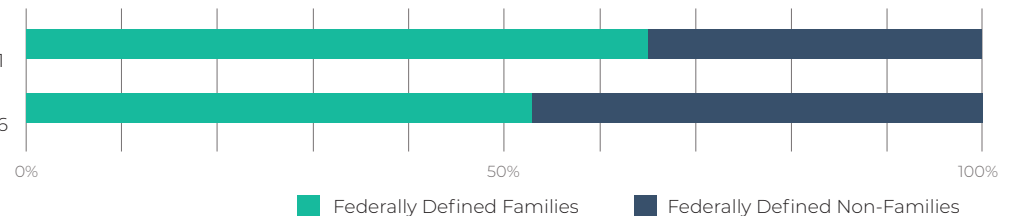
## FAMILY MAKEUP

### River Rouge

Total Households: 2,821

### Ecorse

Total Households: 3,696

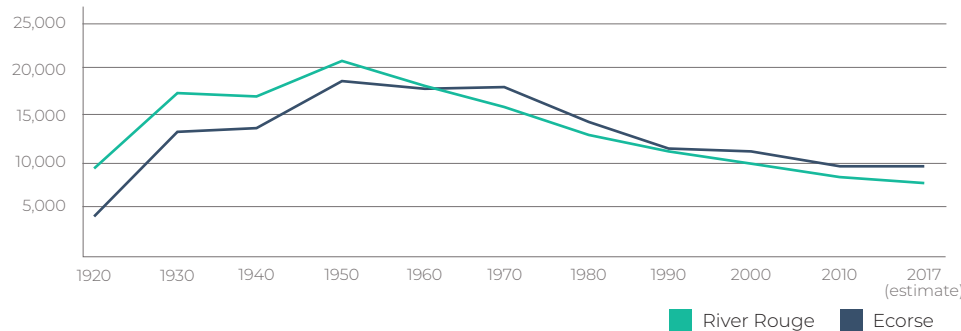


Source: 2017 ACS

The amount of federally-defined family and non-family households are about even in Ecorse (53.4% and 46.6%, respectively). On the other hand, in River Rouge, out of the 2,821 households that were counted, 65.1% live in what the Census considers a family household, while the remainder (34.9%) live in non-family households.

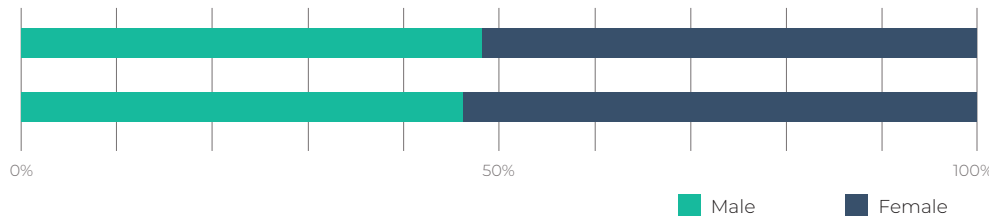
## GENDER, POPULATION AND RACE

### Population 1920 - 2018



### River Rouge Gender

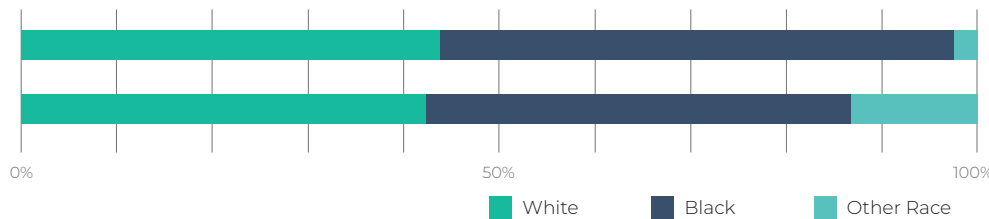
### Ecorse Gender



Source: 2017 ACS

### River Rouge Race

### Ecorse Race



Source: 2017 ACS

Both Ecorse and River Rouge are shrinking communities. The population of Ecorse is 9,321 according to the 2017 ACS, down from its peak population of 17,948 in 1950. Ecorse is significantly more female than male (54% versus 46%). However, it is effectively a biracial community: 42.1% of residents identify as White, while 44.1% identify as African-American, and 13.8% identify with another race or multiple races.

The City of River Rouge has a population of 7,559 according to the 2017 ACS. This number is significantly smaller than its 1950 peak of 20,549 inhabitants. In addition, there are currently more females (51.6%) than males (48.4%) living in River Rouge. The City is, moreover, majority African-American: 52.8% of residents identify as Black, 44.5% identify as White and 2.7% identify as being of another race or of multiple races.

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	RIVER ROUGE	ECORSE
Percent Prime Working Age (18-62)	58.1%	55.1%
Median Household Income	\$29,671	\$23,556
Median Family Household Income	\$30,489	\$32,763
Median Non Family Household Income	\$22,574	\$17,214

Source: 2017 ACS

A majority of River Rouge residents (58.1%) are within the prime working ages of 18 and 62. Although this statistic is important for demographic purposes, it does not indicate the number of River Rouge residents who participate in the workforce. Nevertheless, the economic data that is available for River Rouge reveals important information. The overall median household income for River Rouge is \$29,671. Furthermore, family households had a significantly higher median household income than non-family households, \$30,489 versus \$22,574, respectively. This statistic is not surprising, since the majority of households in River Rouge are considered to be family households.

By contrast, the median household income of Ecorse is \$23,556, which is closer to the median household income of both families (\$32,763) and non-families (\$17,214) living within the city. Just like in River Rouge, these demographic datapoints can provide important insight into the economic needs that the residents of Ecorse may find important when imaging the future of the region.

  
*River  
Rouge*  
WHERE  
HARD  
WORK  
LIVES

COOLIDGE

NO  
TURN  
ON R  
7AM-4  
SCHO  
DAY

RIVER ROUGE  
CIVIC CENTER

02

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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A scenic view of a marina on the Detroit River. In the foreground, a wooden dock with white pilings extends into the water. A white boat is moored at the dock. In the background, a large barge is visible on the water, and a line of trees marks the far shore. A teal-colored rectangular overlay covers the right side of the image, containing the title and text.

## VISION STATEMENT

West Jefferson Avenue in the Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, Michigan is a renowned, successful model of how two cities and their stakeholders - working in partnership - create an outstanding place. “The place to be” on the Detroit River, West Jefferson Avenue attracts residents, businesses and visitors from all over the region because of its desirable well-kept neighborhoods, thriving downtown centers, strong business and industrial economy, and riverfront activity, views, and context-sensitive development. It is a truly beautiful main street that accommodates pedestrians and multi-modal travel, with parks, trails and recreational opportunities that celebrate the cities’ river and industrial heritage.

# GOAL 1

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## Improve the Design and Appearance of the Corridor.

### OBJECTIVE 1.1

Transform West Jefferson Avenue into an attractive main street connecting Ecorse and River Rouge.

#### >> STRATEGIES

1. Create a consistent, recognizable pattern of streetscape and architectural design improvements.
2. Work together to develop, adopt and implement consistent site and design standards, infrastructure, and improvements that promote the creation of a distinct “sense of place”.
3. Develop and implement a corridor activation program with a keen focus on attractive and corridor-specific public space beautification components.
4. Distinguish character areas, nodes and different use zones along the corridor to give it interest and identity.
5. Plan for and promote a balanced mix of compatible land uses.
6. Consider creating a special corridor zoning district for the two cities, with uniform shared standards and requirements.



## OBJECTIVE 1.2

Make West Jefferson Avenue more pedestrian-friendly, including safe and accessible sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Upgrade lighting along the corridor, including adding pedestrian-scale lighting at regular, recognizable intervals.
2. Install new sidewalks and repair existing sidewalks, as necessary to create a complete safe walkway through the entirety of the corridor.
3. Study whether lowering the speed limit from 35 mph within the downtown portions of the corridor makes sense.
4. Use street landscaping and/or other design features to give a sense of protection for pedestrians, including maintaining on-street parking.
5. Install regular marked and signaled crosswalks.



## OBJECTIVE 1.3

Create an inviting, walkable streetscape.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Consider adding landscaped medians or similar features.
2. Install and maintain planters or pockets of plantings.
3. Plan for, install, and provide for ongoing maintenance of street trees.
4. Emphasize key intersections, nodes, or focal areas with decorative pavement and/or other features.
5. Incorporate street furniture on a select basis. Consider developing a program with incentives and design standards that encourages property owners to install and maintain corridor street furniture.
6. Design improvements to be low maintenance and durable for practical upkeep.
7. Support installation of public art at prominent locations along the corridor. Consider commissioning works from local artists, participation in the Detroit Institute of Arts program for art in the community, or similar programs through the Michigan Council for the Arts and Community Affairs (MCACA) or the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).
8. Encourage provision of basic amenities like bathrooms, drinking fountains, and trash cans to improve the public's experience at public use sites along the corridor.
9. Incorporate corridor design elements that reflect and respect the culture, history and industrial legacy of Ecorse and River Rouge.

## OBJECTIVE 1.4

Improve property maintenance along the corridor.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Conduct regular building and code inspections and consistently take appropriate enforcement actions.
2. Encourage businesses and residential uses to keep their properties clean and maintained to current standards and codes. Educate the public on zoning and code requirements.
3. Consider creating and implementing a façade improvement program with small grants and/or other incentives for building improvements.
4. Ensure that the maintenance and quality of public facilities is consistent with or better than that required for private facilities.

## OBJECTIVE 1.5

Eliminate blighted, abandoned, vacant and obsolete properties along the corridor.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Inventory the stock of blighted, abandoned or obsolete buildings and be proactive in enforcing clean-up, repair, or removal as appropriate.
2. Work toward productive, compatible reuse of vacant, abandoned, obsolete and/or blighted sites deemed appropriate for restoration.
3. Work toward removal of blighted structures and redevelopment of abandoned or obsolete buildings and sites deemed inappropriate for restoration.
4. Work with MSHDA, HUD, and other partners to promote construction of affordable housing that is attainable to multiple population segments (Note: affordable means in comparison to higher prices in Detroit and elsewhere, not necessarily subsidized housing).
5. Offer incentives for renovation and rehabilitation of abandoned housing, including using brownfield or other State tools and incentives.
6. Obtain and maintain Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

## OBJECTIVE 1.6

Incorporate waterfronts into existing and future development – recognize the role that the Detroit and Rouge Rivers and Ecorse Creek play as key image features and community assets.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Incorporate riverwalks or other context-appropriate pathways and access, aesthetic improvements, and cultural features along the Detroit, Rouge and Ecorse riverfronts.
2. Work with landowners to acquire underutilized sites along the Detroit River for possible redevelopment that takes advantage of the riverfront. Such development could be a hotel, restaurants, entertainment, conference facilities or other compatible uses.
3. Preserve open space and views along the Detroit riverfront as practical for public benefit, balanced with the need for and desirability of appropriate private development.
4. Undertake marketing and business attraction efforts focusing on specific businesses that enhance the character and use of the waterfront.
5. Review zoning and other ordinances to ensure they provide for the desired waterfront uses.
6. Expand recreation opportunities along and connected to the riverfront.

# GOAL 2

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## Foster Collaboration and Promote the Corridor

### OBJECTIVE 2.1

Work together to create a positive image of the West Jefferson corridor with increased recognition and influence in the region.

#### >> STRATEGIES

1. Establish a new ongoing intercommunity governmental authority, association or similar entity for the corridor. This entity will focus on corridor issues, promote and implement improvement activities, conduct marketing and recruitment, identify opportunities and obtain funding, all in service to becoming the future identity of excellence along West Jefferson Avenue.
2. Regularize coordination and cooperation between the two cities by means such as joint meetings, joining together for more efficient provision of select services, and similar. Take advantage of opportunities to jointly pursue grants and other funds for competitive advantage.
3. Undertake a program of marketing, logo development, and branding for the corridor – all the while recognizing the separate identities of the two cities.
4. Secure and effectively administer funding to accomplish corridor projects and activities.

## **OBJECTIVE 2.2**

Conduct marketing and outreach to promote the new and improved West Jefferson corridor.

### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Prepare a marketing plan to organize and prioritize complementary efforts of public and private entities both within and outside the corridor area.
2. Use the area's history and cultural heritage as a draw. Include promotion of industrial tourism in recognition of the industrial and river legacy of the community.
3. Regularly communicate with corridor stakeholders to maintain engagement via e-newsletter, social media, and other means.

## **OBJECTIVE 2.3**

Gather people for corridor improvements, events and pride.

### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Find ways to engage young people in the corridor and their community, partially as a means of retaining young residents as they age and make life / investment decisions.
2. Expand planning outreach to students in government/civics classes, encouraging student projects that focus on particular elements of the corridor, or holding competitions for corridor design features like banners or murals. Winning ideas could be implemented.
3. Organize community and business events for the corridor, such as special community cleanup days, spring planting days, music or other small festivals, contests for best-looking business, and similar.
4. Consider an annual community gathering to celebrate public and private accomplishments along the corridor. Publicize success!

# GOAL 3

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## Enhance Greenways, Public Spaces and Sustainability

### OBJECTIVE 3.1

Increase active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors during all seasons.

#### >> STRATEGIES

Expand water trails, access, and viewing along the Detroit and Rouge Rivers, and Ecorse Creek, to promote varied recreation opportunities.

1. Link the corridor to parks, schools, and significant public and private spaces via non-motorized pathways
2. Collaborate with the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge regarding Mud Island to explore the potential for tourism, scenic and other local value. Address whether any access is feasible that would allow residents and visitors to better experience the wildlife.
3. Update and renovate existing waterfront access points, such as Belanger Park in River Rouge and the Ecorse municipal boat ramp, and support new access including the planned Ecorse and River Rouge kayak launches.
4. Respect, maintain and improve Dingell Park as a regionally important corridor resource for recreation and image.

## OBJECTIVE 3.2

Expand on existing river walks and explore other opportunities to increase public access to the Detroit River along West Jefferson.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Participate in the Trail Town initiative (water trails) in River Rouge (with a possible expansion to Ecorse) for connections to other Downriver cities and grant possibilities.
2. Leverage the Gordie Howe International Bridge construction observation community benefits grant at Belanger Park in River Rouge for additional placemaking opportunities to be linked to the corridor.
3. Evaluate and adapt successes implemented at iconic riverwalks and development experiences in other communities. For example: San Antonio, Texas; Naperville, Illinois; Windsor and Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada.
4. Support a potential non-motorized pathway around the soon to-be-decommissioned DTE Energy power plant. This could involve collaboration with DTE and non-profit partners, such as the Friends of the Rouge.
5. Require developers to include trail connections and riverwalk extensions as appropriate, in conjunction with new construction, development, or expansions.



### **OBJECTIVE 3.3**

Connect the corridor to regional non-motorized trail systems.

#### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Consider connecting to the Joe Louis Greenway. The cities of Detroit and Wyandotte have indicated that they would be open to collaboration to make this happen.
2. Continue to support the ongoing improvements to connect the corridor with the nearby statewide Iron Belle Trail.

### **OBJECTIVE 3.4**

Plan for the impacts of climate change on all activities and development along the corridor.

#### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Consider future water levels, potential changing shorelines, setbacks and more extreme weather when designing improvements.
2. Promote energy efficiency by using energy-efficient lights and fixtures, design with natural light and shade in mind, using native plants where reasonably feasible, and similar actions.



# GOAL 4

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## Promote Business and Economic Development

### OBJECTIVE 4.1

Work to develop and enhance the corridor area so as to increase tax base and improve the fiscal status of the cities.

#### >> STRATEGIES

1. Develop strategies, programs and incentives to attract investment and development, such as various small business tax breaks, brownfield redevelopment assistance, expedited permitting and review processes, etc.
2. Identify and utilize resources of State, County, Federal, non-profit, and foundation funding entities to optimize benefits to the corridor and communities.
3. Capitalize on the appeal of the Detroit River and target residential, recreation, lodging, conference, entertainment and other community-building uses for development and redevelopment sites.
4. Pursue development of corridor opportunity areas into uses as described in this Corridor Plan.
5. Prepare and maintain an inventory of available buildings and sites.
6. Attract a major grocery store to the corridor.



## OBJECTIVE 4.2

Market the opportunities available in the corridor as desirable places for investment and valuable business and residential locations.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Ensure that the corridor and properties within it are included as part of State and regional programs to market Michigan and the Metro Detroit area.
2. Collaborate with local companies to find out why they chose to locate and stay in Ecorse and River Rouge.
3. Collaborate with organizations like the Downriver Communities Conference, MEDC, Detroit Regional Partnership, Wayne County, SEMCOG, and other business attraction strategies.
4. Establish monthly “round-tables” with business leaders and elected officials for mutual benefit and cooperation.

### **OBJECTIVE 4.3**

Recognize and capitalize on economic opportunities created by the new Gordie Howe International Bridge.

#### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Initiate economic development and business assistance programs to make Ecorse and River Rouge attractive and affordable locations for cross-border commerce and investment.
2. Identify potential sites for redevelopment/development/reuse (including the opportunity sites in this plan) and work to make them ready for investment.
3. Prepare planned commercial and industrial areas with necessary infrastructure to support the additional traffic and spin-off uses expected from the new international travel corridor.

### **OBJECTIVE 4.4**

Partner with local developers and companies to attract and retain businesses and employees.

#### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Consult and work with businesses to facilitate projects and activities that support workers' needs and comfort (including temporary or contract workers), like identifying safe parking locations, partnering for shuttle bus service to and from project sites, and attracting restaurants and other services to encourage workers to stay in the area at lunch or after work.
2. Target attraction of a better hotel that would be suitable for business use in the area.
3. Consider implementing programs that incentivize community support of local businesses. An example is the "Corridor Dollar" program in Wyandotte's downtown.

# GOAL 5

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## Protect Existing and Expand New Housing Options

### OBJECTIVE 5.1

Encourage population growth in the communities.

#### >> STRATEGIES

1. Plan locations for and support creation of a variety of housing types to address the needs of varied age groups (young professionals, young families, seniors, active empty-nesters).
2. Collaborate with and assist potential residential developers to identify funding programs, such as State and Federal grants and incentives to increase the housing stock.
3. Market the residential availability and affordability in Ecorse and River Rouge to potential buyers who are being priced out of booming redevelopment areas in the City of Detroit, and from out-of-region.
4. Locate possible sites for land assembly and attract developers to undertake new residential redevelopment, including land with river frontage, views or access.

## OBJECTIVE 5.2

Encourage varied context-appropriate housing types, densities and designs attractive to all segments of the population for community demographic stability and sustainability.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Collaborate with local businesses to consider construction of temporary workforce housing that it is folded into the context of existing neighborhoods.
2. Identify locations for housing above businesses, missing middle housing options, townhouses, and other unit types.



# GOAL 6

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## Improve Infrastructure and Transportation

### OBJECTIVE 6.1

Improve roads, utilities, and other public infrastructure along the corridor to support quality of life and economic development.

#### >> STRATEGIES

1. Evaluate availability, adequacy for planned uses, and functioning of public utilities – water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management.
2. Design and implement green infrastructure options for sustainability and community resiliency.
3. Coordinate with providers to find ways to improve telecommunication and digital infrastructure as needed for 21st Century commerce and living.
4. Continue to support the West Jefferson Avenue non-motorized improvements under construction and consider future expansion of those improvements to support future development.
5. Study and determine whether a road diet within select portions of the corridor makes sense.
6. Continue to work with jurisdictional partners such as Wayne County and SEMCOG to ensure that road extensions and improvements are compatible with the corridor vision, goals and plans.

## OBJECTIVE 6.2

Improve transportation options along the West Jefferson Corridor - accommodate motorized and non-motorized methods of public and private transportation within a manageable, coordinated system.

### >> STRATEGIES

1. Coordinate with SMART for a direct bus connection to Detroit (FAST), possibly in partnership with other Downriver communities.
2. Collaborate with Wyandotte to facilitate expansion of MoGO bikeshare program along the corridor.
3. Consider establishing a water taxi service between various Downriver communities.
4. Work with residents and the public transportation agencies to expand the senior rider program.





### **OBJECTIVE 6.3**

Repair deteriorating infrastructure as needed to support current and future uses.

#### **>> STRATEGIES**

1. Inventory the condition of existing infrastructure and prioritize repair.
2. Plan for repair and replacement in the cities' Capital Improvement Plans.
3. Research and obtain appropriate grants, and identify other funding as needed.







03

# FRAMEWORK PLAN

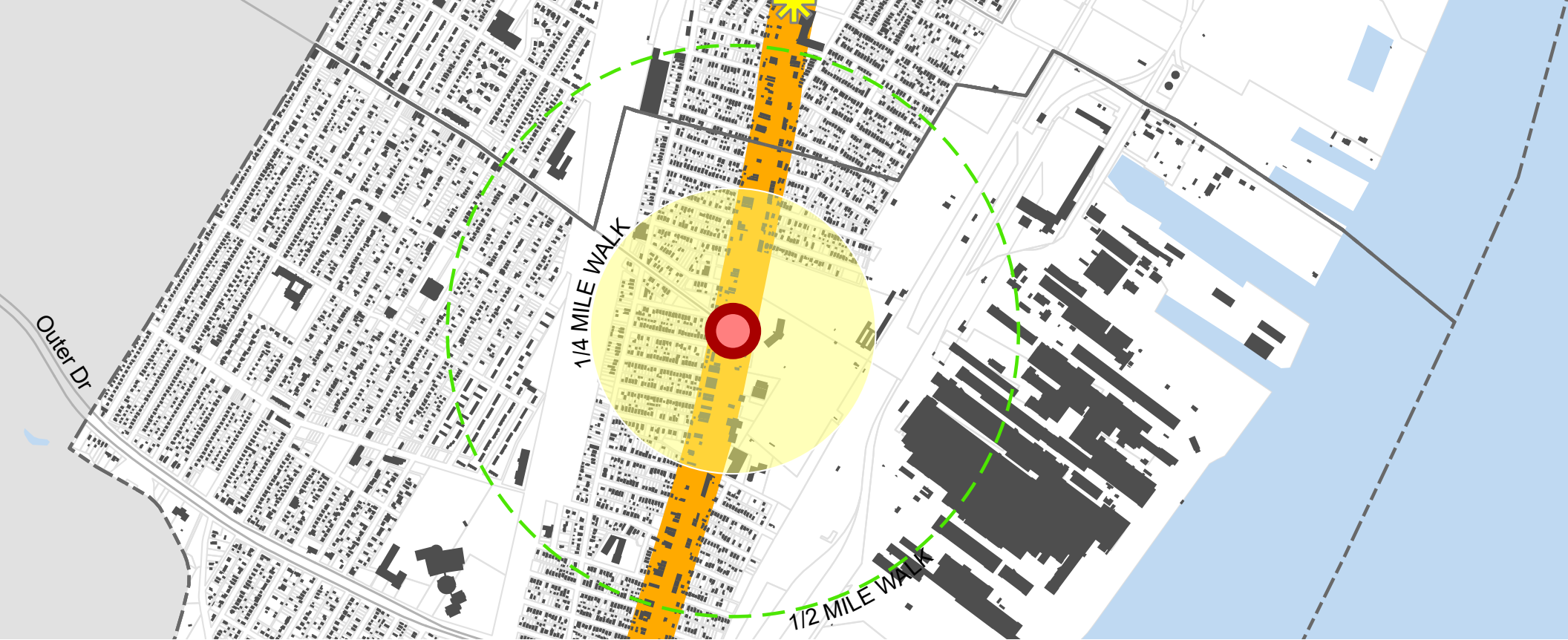
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# DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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An improved identity for the West Jefferson Avenue Corridor will be created by enhancing the qualities of the streetscape through a high-quality built environment characterized by infill development with buildings oriented on the right-of-way line to match the historic development pattern. The focus for the West Jefferson redevelopment will prioritize safe accessible pedestrian access, traffic calming measures, on street parking, street furniture, seat walls, lighting, public art, trees and plantings. The rhythmic placement of the streetscape elements establishes a cohesive streetscape setting.



The overarching goal of the proposed Development Framework for the West Jefferson Corridor promotes pedestrian safety, accessibility and a unified design treatment. The new West Jefferson Bikeway features narrow travel lanes to provide ample room for bikeways and for on street parallel parking to reinforce the Cities' commitment to introducing traffic calming measures and improving biking and pedestrian access.

Moving forward, the streetscape enhancements will focus on retrofitting the

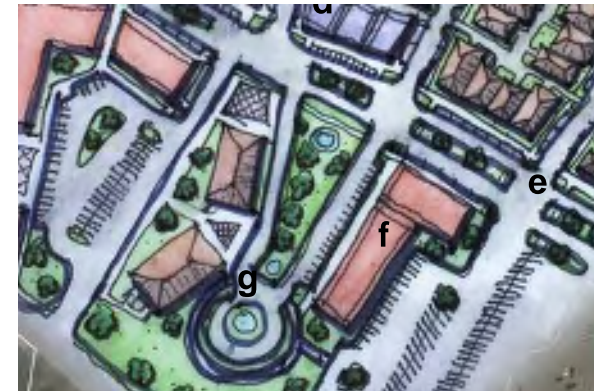
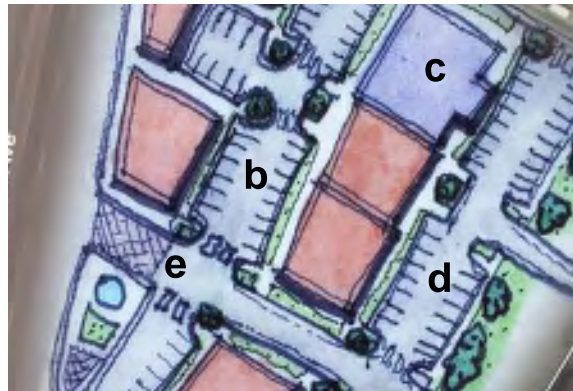
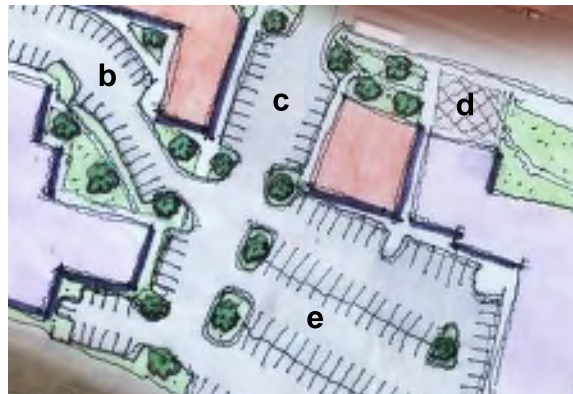
existing development pattern along the corridor and transition to a Modern Boulevard area between Abbott Avenue and the Rouge River Bridge that centers on a redevelopment infill around River Rouge downtown and City Hall. South of Abbott Avenue, the Jefferson corridor is slightly more constrained and will take on the design character of a Multimodal Avenue. This section of the corridor will feature two other prominent nodes; the intersection of Visger Road and the intersection of Southfield Road. The development of the streetscape in these two

areas predominantly retrofit and enhance the existing development pattern with the emphasis on redevelopment of two sites of more than 20 acres, connections to workforce housing, and the riverfront.

Many of the enhancements noted in the Design Framework are also recommended for installation along the entire corridor to foster a unified aesthetic from Wyandotte, through Ecorse and River Rouge, to Detroit.

## DEVELOPMENT NODES

In the three development nodes along West Jefferson Avenue, pedestrian priority should be established through traffic calming, frequent and safe crosswalks, landscape islands and crossings.



## Node 1 – Downtown River Rouge

The Downtown River Rouge node should be developed to incorporate the following design features, which are shown on the River Rouge, City Hall concept plan and the River Rouge, Haltiner concept plan. The Downtown River Rouge Node is a priority for redevelopment along the West Jefferson Corridor.

- Street trees
- Small pocket park w/ feature
- Infill mixed use
- New parking lot
- Access management



## Node 2 – U.S. Steel Entrance

The U.S. Steel Entrance node should be developed to incorporate the following design features, which are shown on the U.S. Steel Entrance concept plan. The U.S. Steel Entrance node is the second highest priority for redevelopment along the West Jefferson corridor in the City of Ecorse.

- Street trees
- Infill Commercial / Office
- Residential infill
- Full service hotel
- On-street parking
- Civic building
- Branch library
- Job incubator





### Node 3 - Dingell Park Area

The Dingell Park node should be developed to incorporate the following design features, which are shown on the U.S. Steel & Dingell Park Area concept plans. The Dingell Park Node is the highest priority for redevelopment along the West Jefferson Corridor in the City of Ecorse.

- Street trees
- New riverfront park
- Market/vendor spaces
- Ferris wheel and marina
- Residential infill
- New parking areas
- Residential tower apartment buildings
- New and renovated mixed use
- On-street parking





Example gateway and transition elements from Wyandotte.

### **GATEWAYS AND TRANSITIONS**

Gateway signs and features can be used at the entrances to the cities and at transitions between corridor types. Prominent gateway features, public art, and bump outs are recommended particularly in the 1/4 mile target areas around each development node.

### **1/2 MILE WALK AND BIKE AREA**

The development nodes along West Jefferson are spaced to promote walking and biking from the surrounding neighborhoods.

### **1/4 MILE TARGET DEVELOPMENT AREA**

A target area for development of 1/4 mile from each intersection is appropriate for mixed use and commercial infill densities. This focus area will help to establish a unique identity for each node.



# W. Jefferson Corridor Design Framework

Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, Michigan

November 1, 2019

## Legend

City Boundaries

Development Nodes

River Rouge Downtown

U.S. Steel

Ecorse Riverfront

Gateway

Transition

Corridor Typology

Modern Boulevard

Multimodal Avenue

0 500 1,000  
Feet



SOURCES - Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019, McKenna 2019.

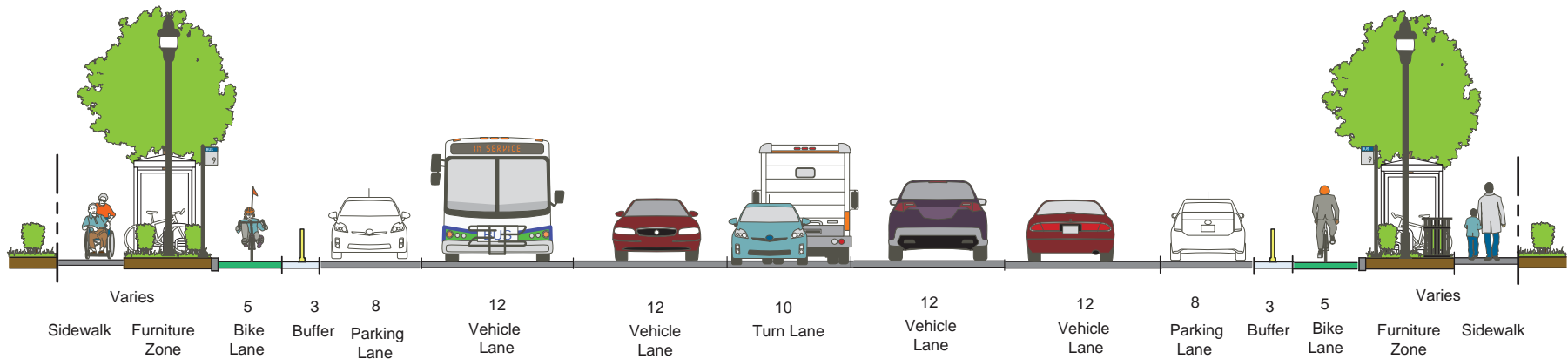
**MCKENNA**

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# WEST JEFFERSON CORRIDOR TYPOLOGIES

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The design of West Jefferson's roadway and streetscape - the public realm – utilizes a context appropriate to integrating user needs with land use transitions, called Street Typology. A focus on roadway characteristics, such as traffic volume, speed and functional classification, is less effective at achieving a complete network than a contextual approach based on people and places.

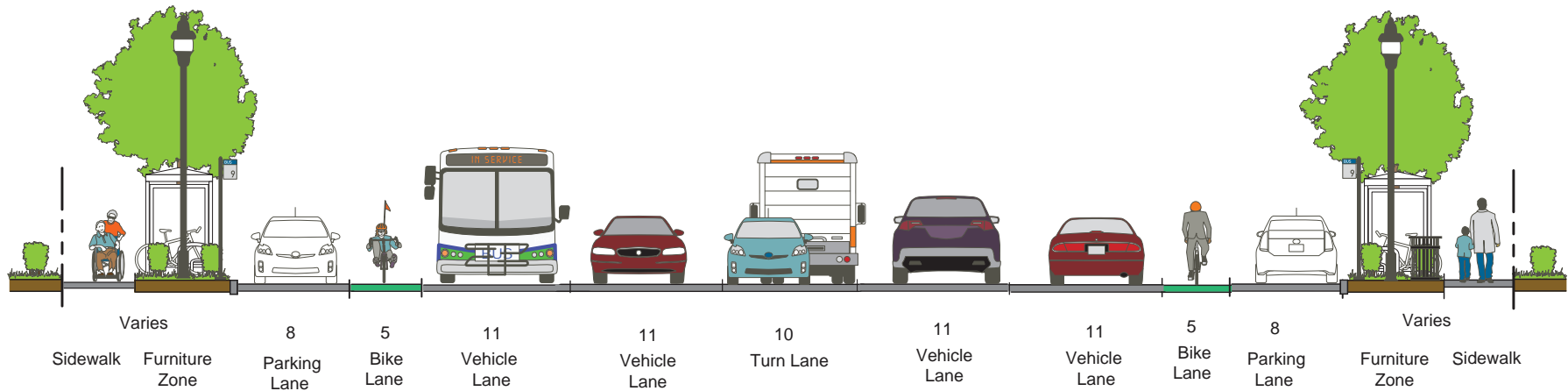


Each planned Street Typology has its own particular feel and role to play within the transportation and land use systems. Currently, the corridor may seem to have developed haphazardly and without a cohesive vision and areas may seem to blend together without intentional urban design. However, there are common elements between segments to build upon, like the similarity of building types and setbacks, and consistency in the desired land use patterns. Three nodes along the corridor are places to prioritize for reinvestment in the corridor. Between these focal points, gateways other design elements are used to create

transitions between street types. While elements like landscaping and identity signs are recommended to be consistently utilized along West Jefferson, areas like the Downtown River Rouge node and the Dingell Park node are recommended for more substantial investments in hardscaping, pedestrian crossings, medians, street furniture and off-street parking. In the minds of visitors and residents alike, West Jefferson will have entrances to each distinct area, a central district, and a unified character. The Street types recommended are Modern Boulevard and the Multimodal Avenue.

## MODERN BOULEVARD

Corresponds to locations intended to become the central place on the West Jefferson corridor in River Rouge, centered on the City Hall site and the intersection of Coolidge Highway. The Modern Boulevard will run between Abbott Avenue and the Rouge River Bridge. The Modern Boulevard area is the priority for transformative change in the development pattern, largely driven by infill opportunities for missing middle housing throughout the City.



## MULTIMODAL AVENUE

Corresponds approximately to the areas from the Ecorse River Bridge on the west side of Ecorse to Abbott Avenue in River Rouge. These areas will be designed to continue support of commercial business, neighborhoods, and large-scale redevelopments. Aesthetic enhancements shall include complete streets elements to improve walkability. The Dingell Park node at the intersection of Southfield Road is a target for walkable infill.

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND GRID RETROFIT

Another way to improve pedestrian and traffic circulation along West Jefferson is through the application of access management. Access management reduces the number of points of access to the street from adjacent properties. This benefits pedestrians by reducing the number of points along a sidewalk where they may encounter a vehicle, and it benefits vehicular circulation by reducing the number of points for other vehicles to enter the street. Cross access should be required on West Jefferson and the total number of driveways should be reduced as sites are redeveloped. When possible, connecting new development to existing roads parallel to West Jefferson is recommended to enhance the system and improve multimodal access. Examples of access management and grid retrofitting are illustrated on the concept plans.



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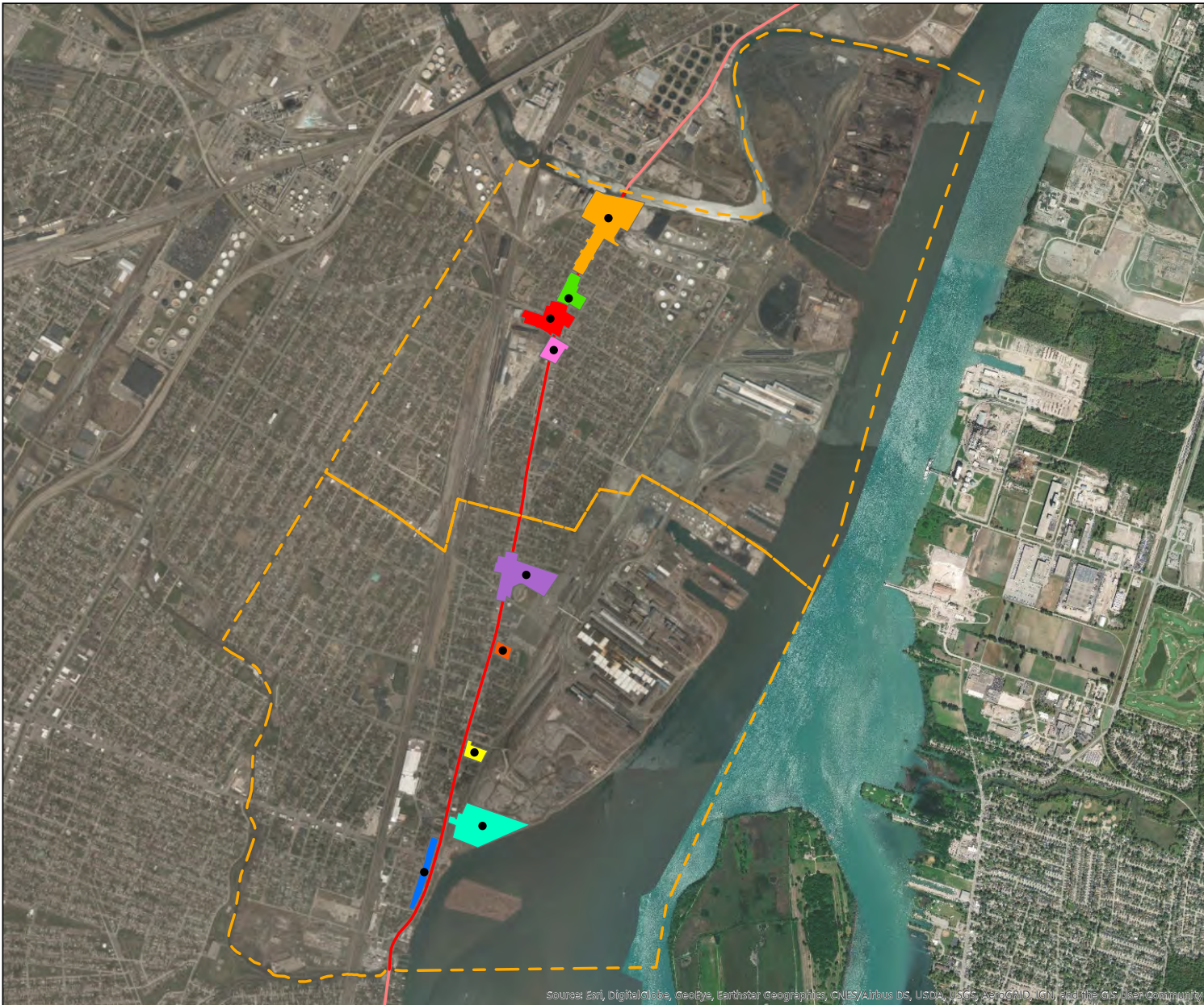
# OPPORTUNITY SITES

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Opportunity sites are locations along the West Jefferson corridor identified as having potential to serve as a model redevelopment site for the revitalization of the corridor. The sites have several common qualities. Generally, the sites are located at geographically-advantageous positions along the corridor, such as at the confluence of major thoroughfares or in close proximity to existing or anticipated centers of economic activity. Most sites include a high potential for new development, whether that be from the quality of existing buildings or activities, the absence of physical obstacles to development, the sheer size of available property, or the ownership of the property by stakeholders in this project. Finally, proximity to natural and recreational features, such as open space or waterways, was a key factor in choosing the opportunity sites. In the following section, each opportunity site's key advantages are described in detail.

After these sites were chosen, the highest-priority opportunity sites and concept plans were developed. After deliberation, site concepts for the Downtown River Rouge, West Jefferson Avenue and Haltiner, U.S. Steel Entrance, U.S. Steel Riverfront Development, and Detroit River View sites were created for illustrative purposes.





# Opportunity Sites Overview

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
 Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

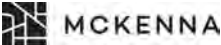
November 1, 2019

### Legend

- City Boundaries
- West Jefferson Avenue
- Opportunity Sites**
- Northern West Jefferson Industrial/Commercial
- Second-Floor Residential
- Downtown River Rouge
- West Jefferson and Haltiner
- U.S. Steel Entrance
- Ecorse City Hall Commercial
- Outer Drive
- U.S. Steel Riverfront Development
- Detroit River View Redevelopment



SOURCES  
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
 Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019, McKenna 2019.





## **NORTHERN WEST JEFFERSON INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL**

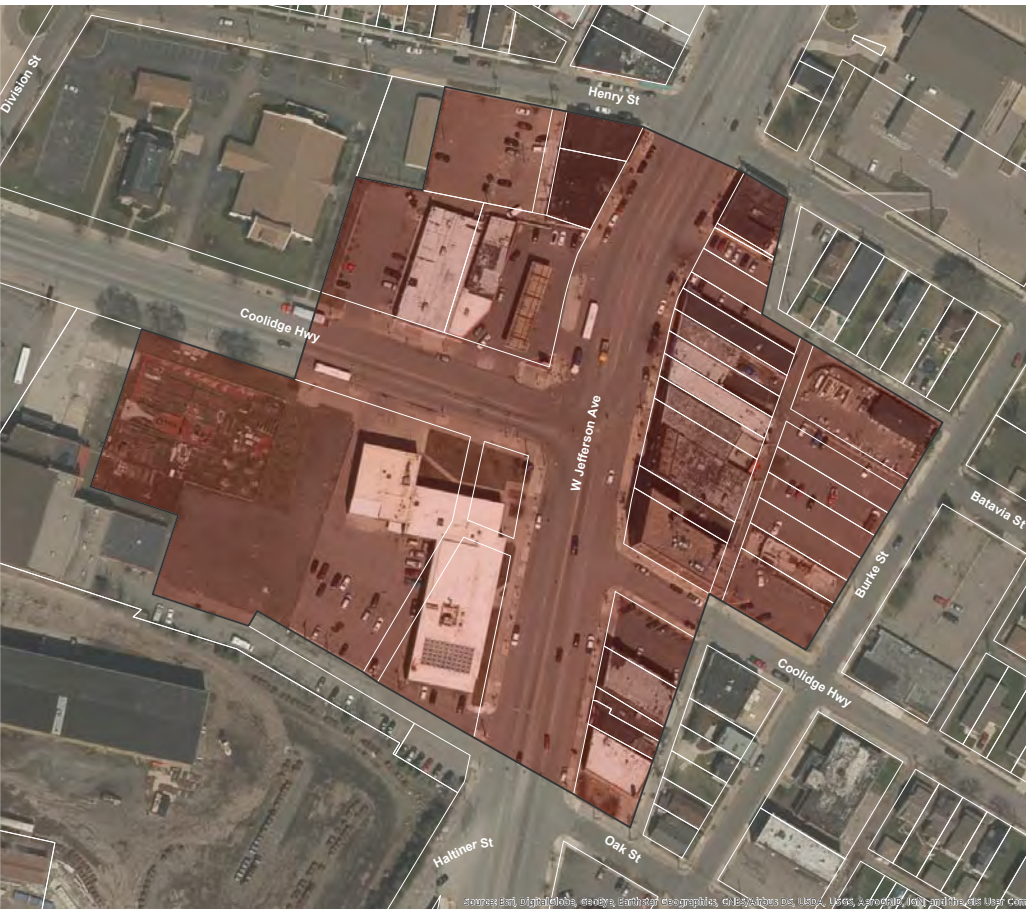
This site is the most northern section of the corridor and the parcels surrounding it. The site is located adjacent to the Rouge River and the Detroit city limits. The primary advantage of this site is the suitability for industry and potential office space in light of the construction on the Gordie Howe International Bridge between the United States and Canada only a few miles away. Contractors and subcontractors working on the project will likely need office space nearby, as well as restaurants and other commercial retailers to support the workers, and the availability of work space in River Rouge may make the site a hot commodity in the coming years.



## SECOND-FLOOR RESIDENTIAL

The Second-Floor Residential site is located just south of the Northern West Jefferson Industrial/Commercial site, stretching down to Coolidge Highway in downtown River Rouge. The key advantage of this site is its proximity to downtown River Rouge and the presence of existing or potential second-story residential units. Renovating or upgrading existing housing along the West Jefferson corridor is important in growing the populations and appeal of Ecorse and River Rouge, as well as providing the tax and consumer base to support economic development efforts nearby and in the cities as a whole.





## **DOWNTOWN RIVER ROUGE**

Downtown River Rouge is located primarily around the intersection of Coolidge Highway and West Jefferson Avenue. It is the most distinctive existing node along the corridor. The main strengths of this site are its number and density of historic buildings, as well as the existing civic functions around River Rouge's city hall. The site largely benefits from its recognizability as an existing node.

# RIVER ROUGE, CITY HALL – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

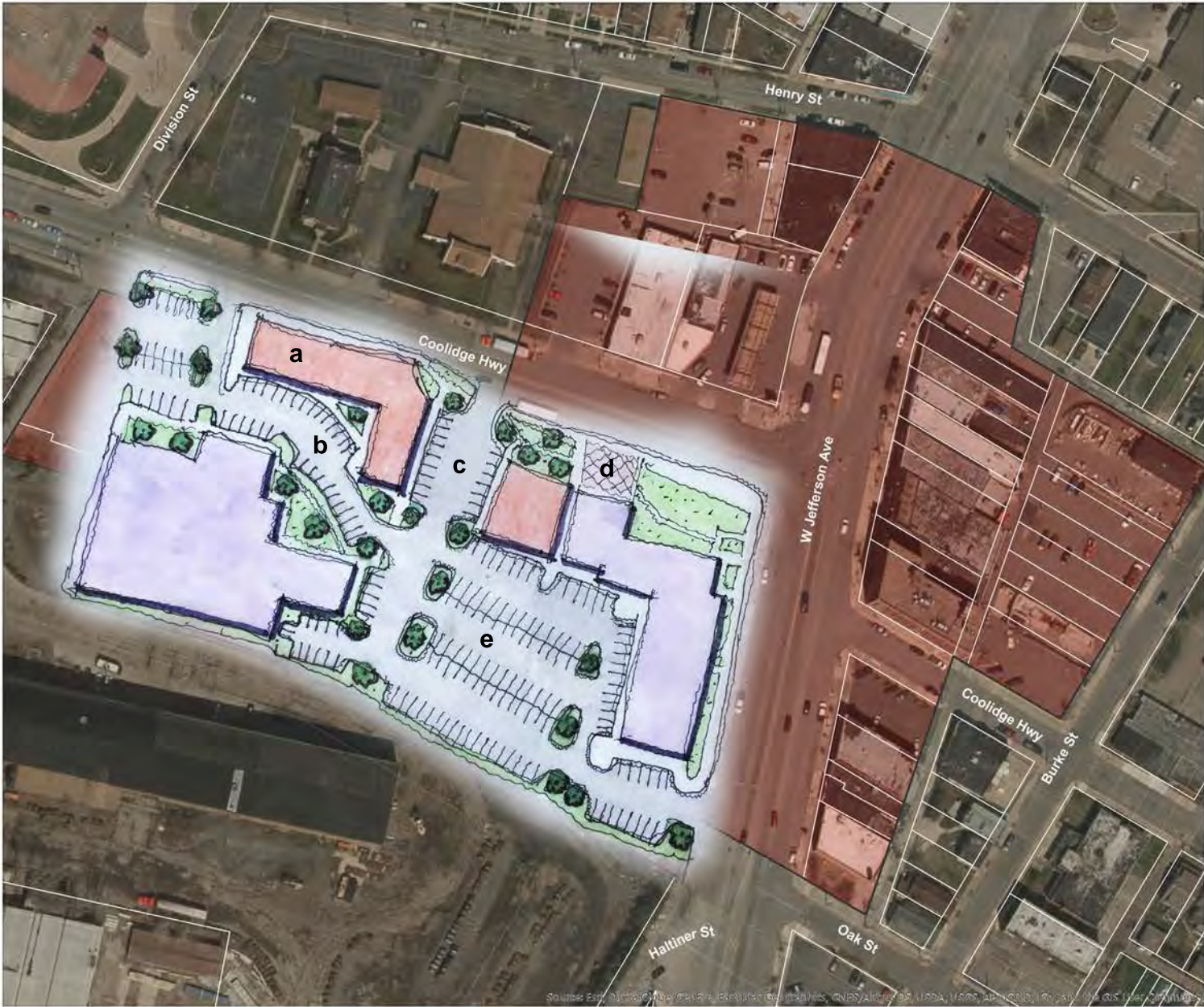


Existing

Mixed Use

Civic Use

Residential



# Downtown River Rouge Concept Plan

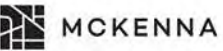
West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

August 30, 2019

- a** Mixed Use - 50,000 to 60,000 sq. ft.
- b** New Parking - 100 to 120 spaces
- c** Improved Access
- d** Improved Fire station entrance
- e** Improved City Hall parking area



SOURCES  
Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019, McKenna 2019.









## WEST JEFFERSON AND HALTINER

This site is located at the intersection of West Jefferson Avenue and Haltiner Street, which creates an acute angle and a triangular development pattern around it. Much of the existing development includes surface parking, which could be developed into attractive housing and retail. The proximity to downtown River Rouge and its existing single- and multi-family housing makes the Haltiner site a clear location for developing new “missing middle” housing along the corridor. Additionally, the unique road geometries of the site can allow for interesting new public spaces on and along existing roadways.

# RIVER ROUGE, HALTINER – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Existing

Mixed Use

Civic Use

Residential



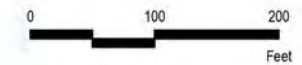
# West Jefferson and Haltiner Concept Plan

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

August 29, 2019

## Legend

- a** Mixed Use - 60,000 to 72,000 sq. ft.
- b** Parking - 125 to 150 spaces
- c** Civic use
- d** Connected alley with parking
- e** Woonerf Plaza



**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
 Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019; McKenna 2019.







## U.S. STEEL ENTRANCE

Located at the entrance to U.S. Steel's operations in Ecorse and River Rouge, this is a large, currently open lot that has a lot of potential. The site is just south of the border between River Rouge and Ecorse. This opportunity site is bounded currently by commercial, residential, and industrial uses, which makes this an already appropriate space for mixed-use development. U.S. Steel's and nearby employment centers' workers may benefit from living in close proximity to their place of work.

# ECORSE, U.S. STEEL ENTRANCE – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Existing

Mixed Use

Civic Use

Residential

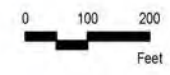
# U.S. Steel Entrance Site Concept Plan

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

June 26, 2019

## Legend

- a** Mixed Use - 100,000 to 120,000 sq. ft.
- b** Parking - 300 to 400 spaces
- c** Townhomes - 33 units
- d** Civic uses
- e** Bungalow courts - 25 units
- f** Full service hotel
- g** Civic green with public art
- h** Hardscape plazas with public art



**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
 Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019, McKenna 2019.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar (Earthstar), CNES, Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



## **ECORSE CITY HALL COMMERCIAL**

This site, located just south of Ecorse City Hall, and is currently occupied by commercial businesses. The site can take advantage of its adjacency to City Hall and its abundance of parking and lightly developed space to grow into a commercial hub for Ecorse.





## **OUTER DRIVE**

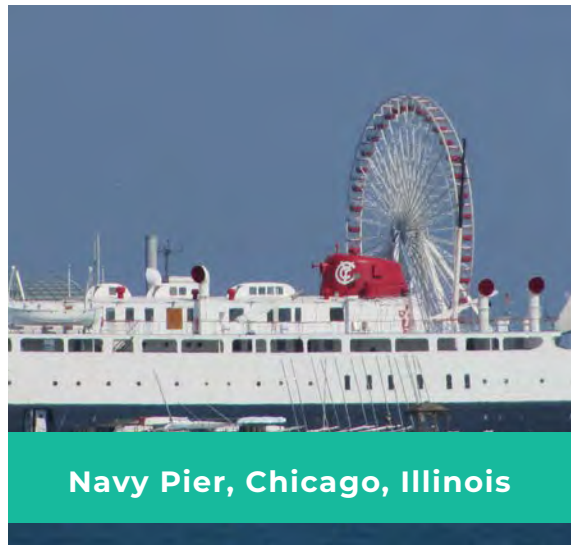
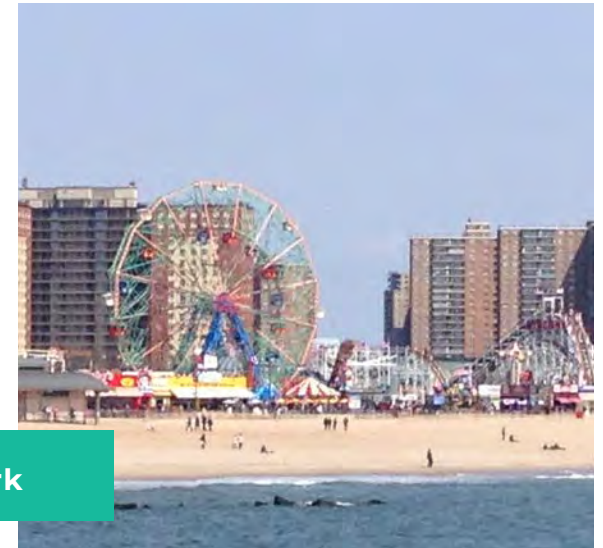
This site is on the east side of West Jefferson Avenue at the intersection with Outer Drive. The site is a large undeveloped parcel that was formerly an entertainment center, such as, perhaps, a movie theater. Building on the site's history and taking advantage of the major thoroughfares next to it makes sense for this node, which additionally has a large amount of open space, allowing for many interesting potential developments.

## WATERFRONT FERRIS WHEEL

A waterfront Ferris Wheel is recommended at a new Dingell Park Pier on the riverfront US Steel site. A prominent landmark like this will both solidify the place as an important destination in the region but also provide a much needed viewing opportunity to attract patrons of industrial tourism and the natural features of the river and Mud Island.



Coney Island, New York, New York



Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois





## U.S. STEEL RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

This site likely has one of the highest potentials for transformative development among these opportunity sites. Located just north of the intersection of West Jefferson Avenue and Southfield Road, this currently underutilized parcel has the potential to build on the existing greenspace at Dingell Park and increase accessibility to the Detroit River. The parcel is approximately 24 acres in size and could be used for a variety of mixed-use, commercial, residential, recreational, and entertainment purposes. This would likely be an attractive place to live, as residents could enjoy proximity to and views of the Detroit River.

# ECORSE, U.S. STEEL RIVERFRONT – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Existing

Mixed Use

Civic Use

Residential



# U.S. Steel Riverfront Site

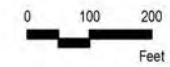
## Concept Plan

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
 Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

August 29, 2019

### Legend

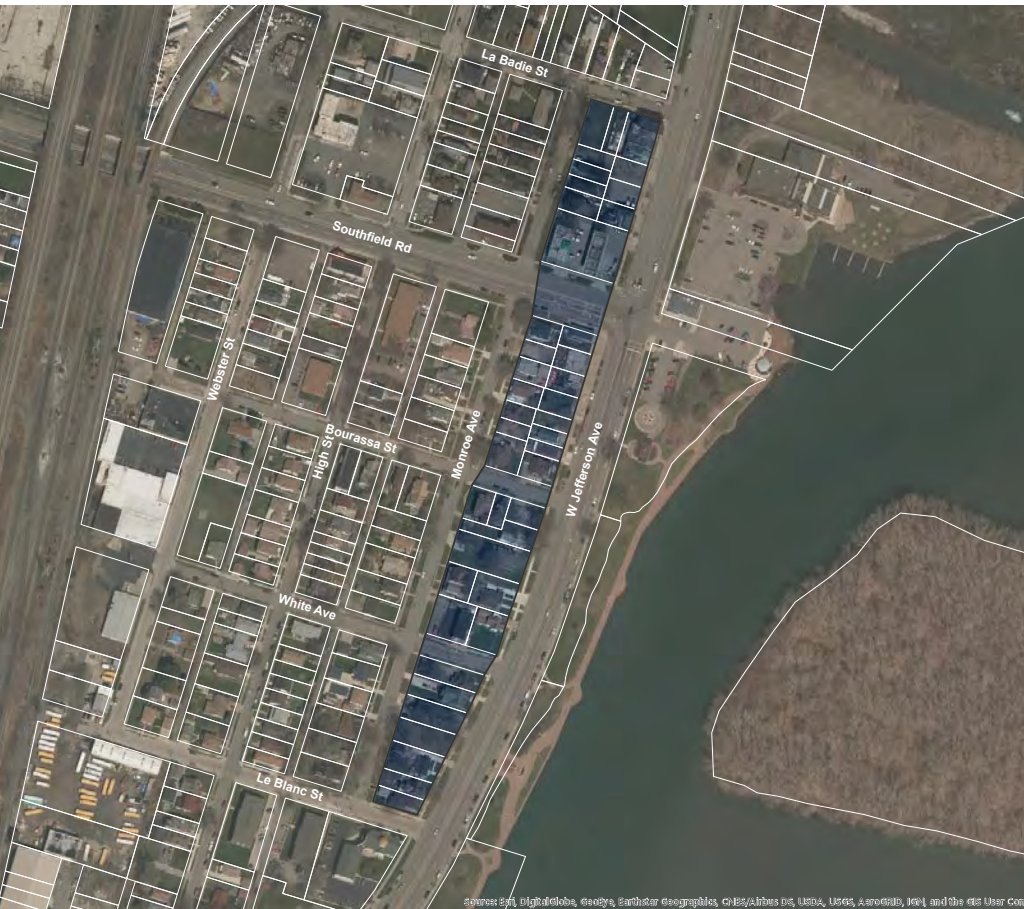
- a** Residential Riverfront Towers
- b** Mixed Use - 48,000 to 60,000 sq. ft.
- c** Parking - 400 to 500 spaces
- d** Townhomes - 34 units
- e** Riverfront park with public art
- f** River-access residential lots
- g** Pier with vendor spaces
- h** Public marina / ferry service to Mudd Island
- i** Ferris Wheel



**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a.  
 Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019. McKenna 2019.



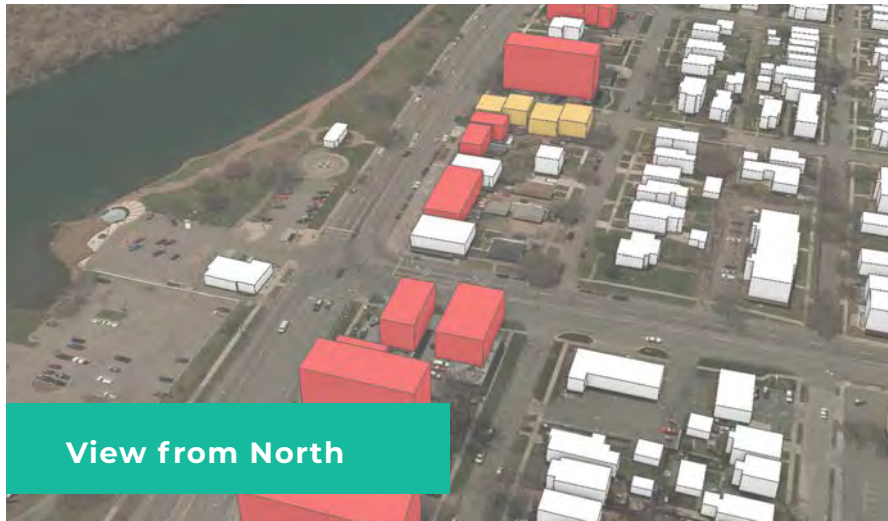




## DETROIT RIVER VIEW REDEVELOPMENT

Located across from Dingell Park, on the west side of West Jefferson Avenue, is low-density housing with views of the Detroit River and Mud Island. This would be a natural spot for higher-density housing, to grow the population along the corridor and increase accessibility to the recreational opportunities along the Detroit River. Partnership with the Detroit River National Wildlife Refuge may allow the public to access Mud Island for recreational purposes as well.

# ECORSE, DETROIT RIVER VIEW REDEVELOPMENT – CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Existing

Mixed Use

Civic Use

Residential



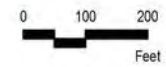


# Detroit River View Redevelopment Concept Plan

West Jefferson Avenue Corridor  
Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge, MI

August 29, 2019

- a** Residential Riverfront Towers
- b** New Mixed Use - 36,000 to 48,000 sq. ft.
- c** Parking - 250 to 350 spaces
- d** Townhomes - 34 units
- e** Pocket Park
- f** Preserved Residential Housing
- g** Preserved Mixed Use



**SOURCES**  
 Basemap Source: Michigan Center for Geographic Information, Version 17a  
 Data Source: Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge 2019, McKenna 2019.





04

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

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# DESIGN PRECEDENTS

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## Amherstburg, Ontario

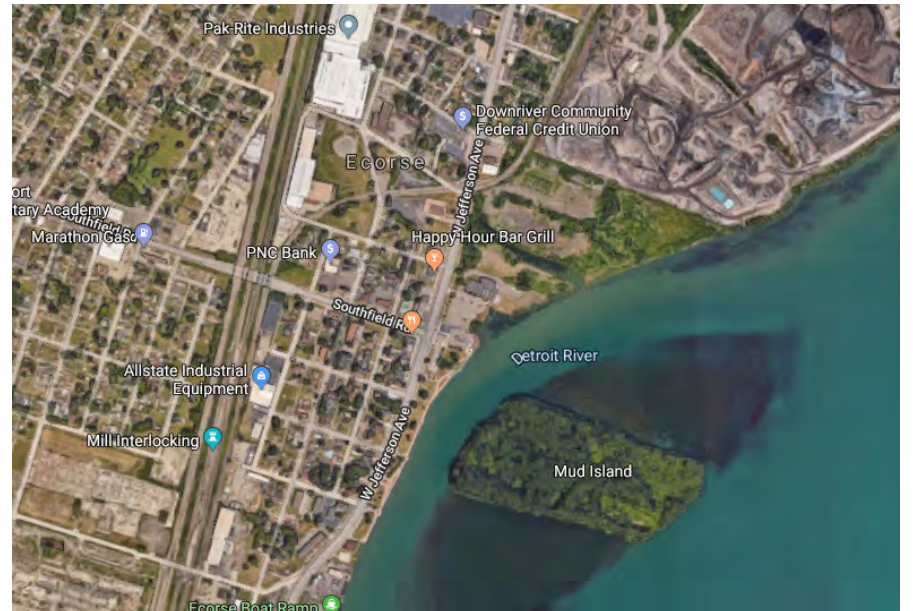
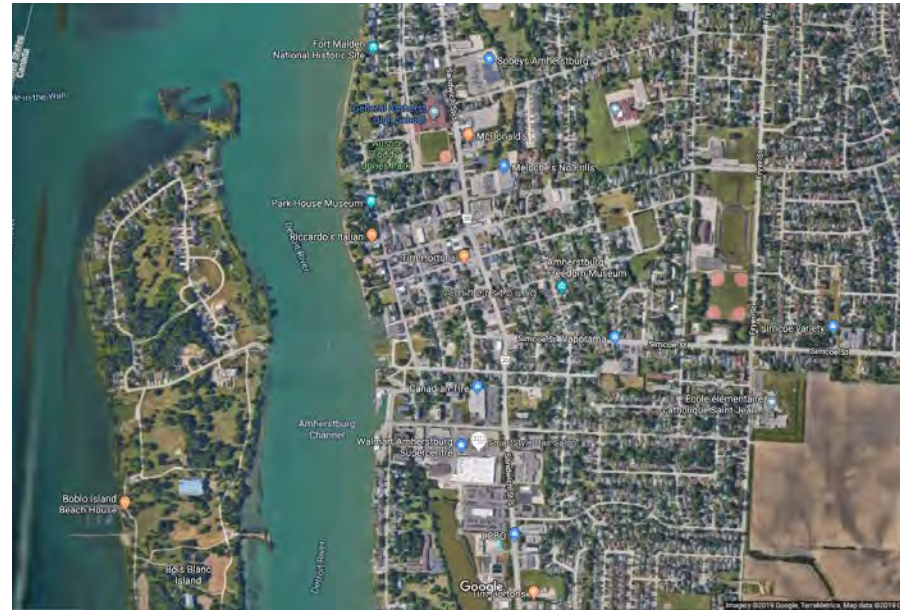
Only about 10 miles from Ecorse and River Rouge is the small town of Amherstburg, Ontario, which has taken full advantage of its position on the Detroit River. The town is located across from Boblo Island, former amusement park and day trip destination for Metro Detroiters and Canadians alike. Many newly-built or remodeled houses line the Detroit River in Amherstburg. Residents benefit from beautiful sunsets and river access, with most houses owning docks out into the river. Moreover, the town's colonial British past is celebrated and preserved. The riverfront in Amherstburg is well-kept and manicured, with gardens boasting multitudes of flowers, including a large collection of rhododendrons and azaleas. The pathways are paved with bricks and monuments, while trees and benches along the paths ensure that visitors are comfortable. Downtown Amherstburg has seen an influx of development in recent years, with new dense housing options and new cafes opening a few feet from the river. The narrowing of the river between Boblo Island and Amherstburg's riverfront creates a quainter feel that could be replicated between Ecorse's riverfront and Mud Island.





Amherstburg, Ontario





## Uptown Bay City, Michigan

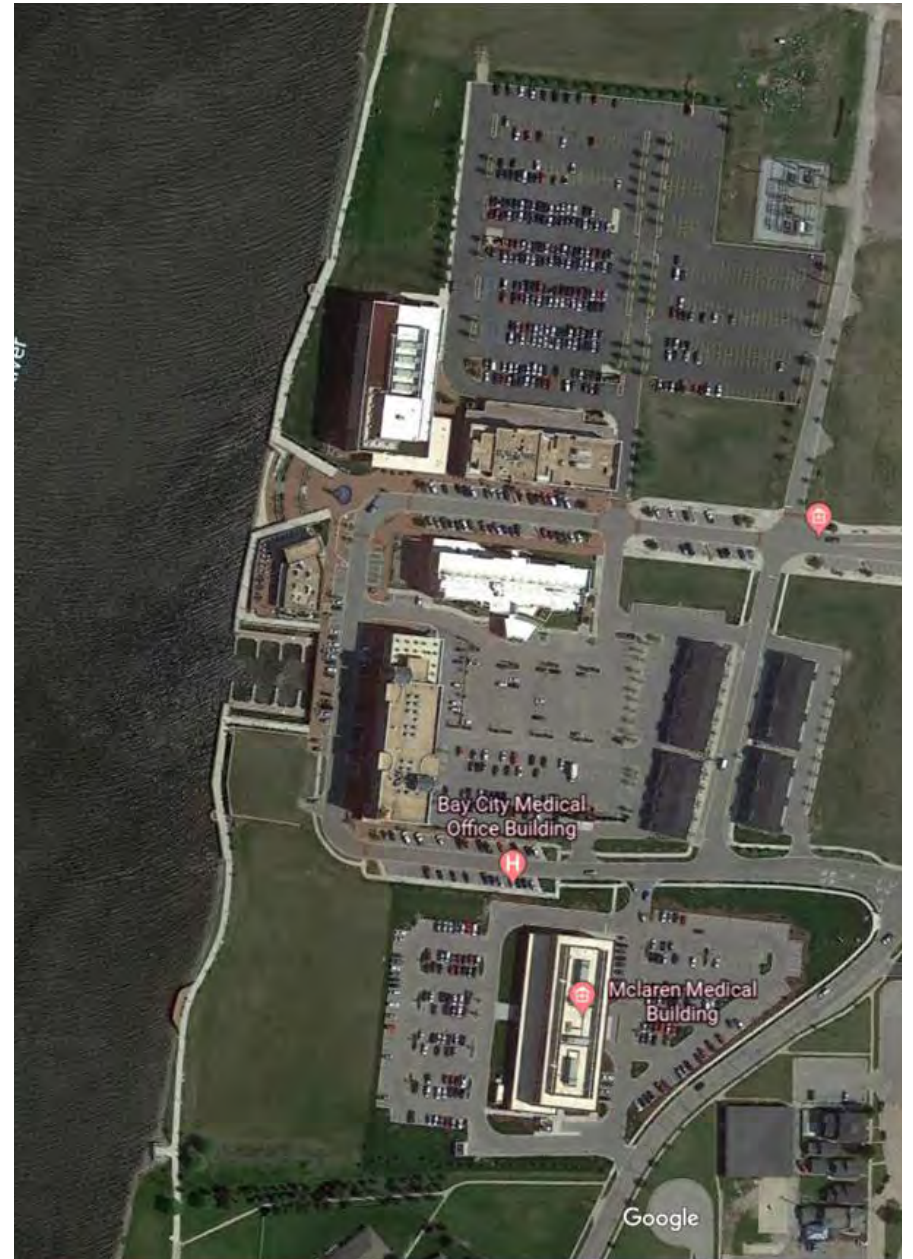
Located on a 43-acre brownfield site, Uptown Bay City is a large-scale riverfront redevelopment. Uptown is just south of the existing Bay City downtown, which also has seen historic buildings redeveloped with an inflow of economic development. The Uptown Bay City development has included restaurants, medical and business offices, a hotel, and medium and high-density residential areas. A new grid road system has been built from scratch, providing ample pedestrian space, with landscaped areas and benches, as well as new angled street parking. The development has also taken advantage of its riverfront setting with connection to riverfront paths. New docks were included in the development to create boat access directly to the area. The March 2019 phase two of Uptown Bay City was approved by the Planning Commission, which will help create a pedestrian-friendly connection between Uptown and downtown Bay City. Some of these successes may be replicable on industrial lands in Ecorse and River Rouge.







## Uptown Bay City, Michigan



2018



2011



1998

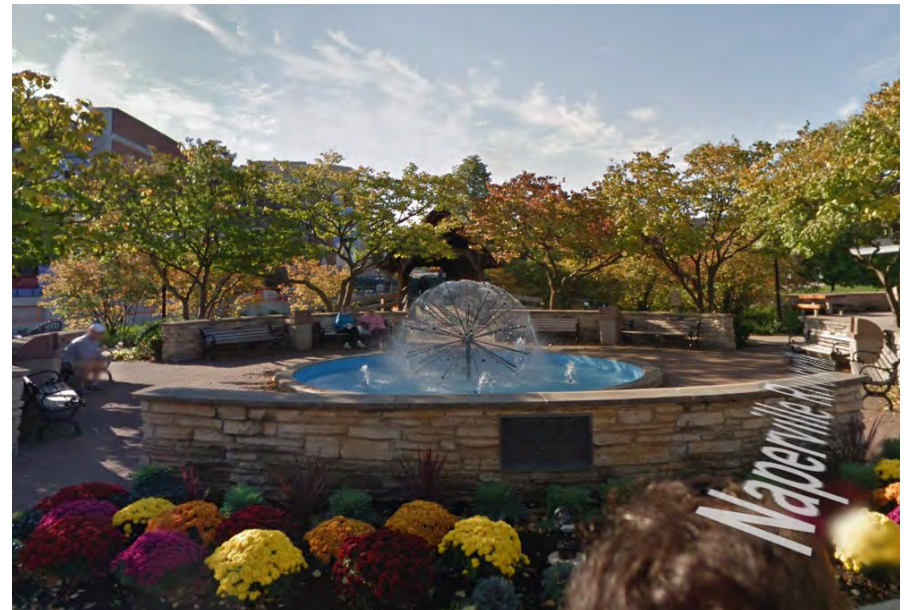
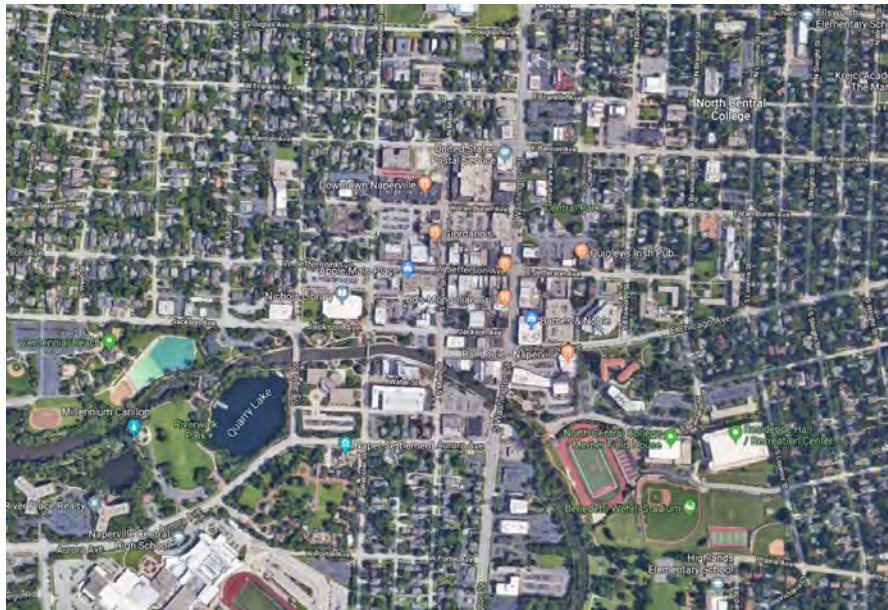
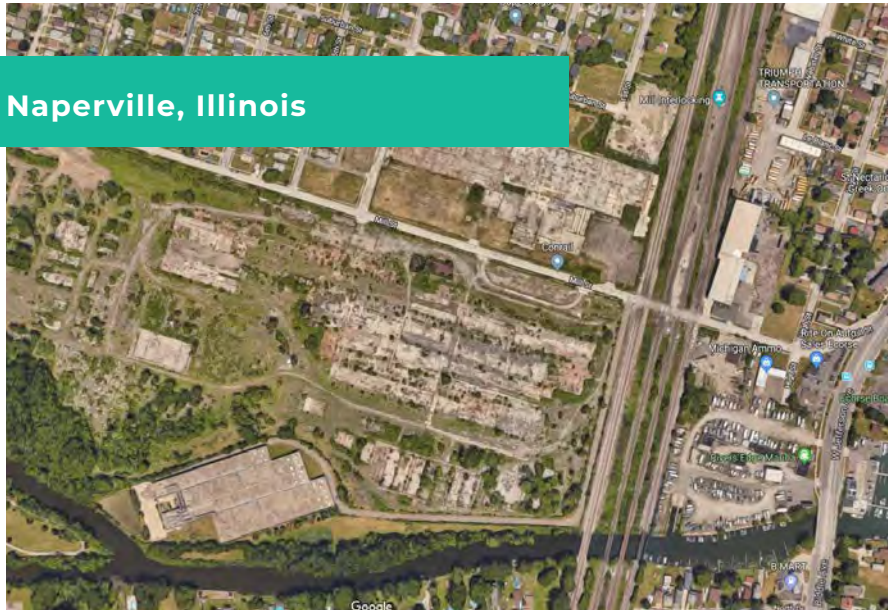


## Naperville, Illinois

Naperville, Illinois, is a suburb of Chicago with its downtown located adjacent to the DuPage River, along which the city has built an impressive riverwalk. The riverwalk was completed in the 1980s. Along the riverfront, brick pedestrian paths wind along art and fountain installations. New economic development along the riverfront includes numerous restaurants and bars, along with hotels and event space. The City of Naperville provides free parking in the downtown structures. Adjacent to the river just a little farther from downtown is a large field by the Millennium Carillon, a large bell tower from which people can climb to take in views of surrounding areas. The field works as open space in the summer months, and doubles as a sledding hill in snowier times. On the opposite side of the river is Centennial Beach, a public swimming facility oriented towards Naperville residents. One possible location for Naperville-like development could be in the large formerly industrial property south of Mill Street and bounded by the Ecorse River.



# Naperville, Illinois





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# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

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The following general architectural standards should be required for developments along West Jefferson Avenue within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of the development nodes and encouraged within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. Further, the cities should consider an architectural review process during site plan approval for new developments on West Jefferson.

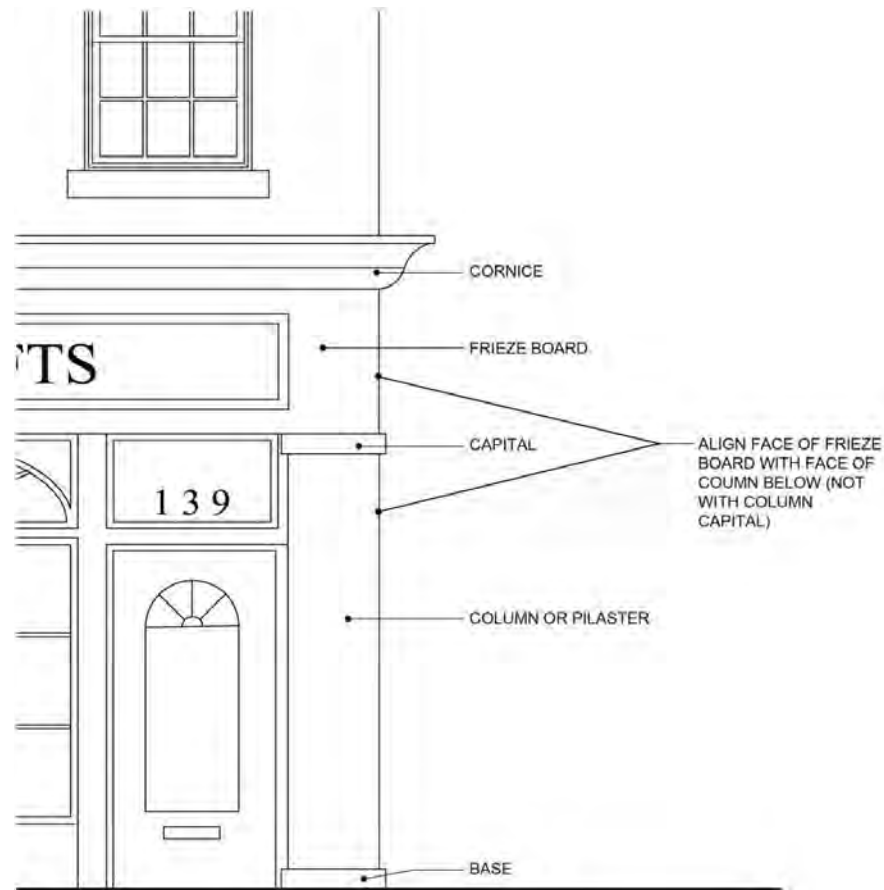


## General Architectural Guidelines:

1. Storefronts shall be located at grade-level and consist of minimum 60% glass (between 2' and 10' above finish grade or sidewalk) and doorways (main entrances) recessed minimum 3'-6". Refer to Exhibit 4, Mixed-Use Architectural Standards (ground floor level), for additional storefront requirements.
2. Exterior finish materials on all facades shall be limited to brick, cut stone, wood siding or shingles, cementitious siding or shingles, and/or Portland Cement stucco (no E.I.F.S. or other synthetic stucco or rusticated elements).
3. All window glass shall have a minimum transparency of 80%.
4. Wall materials may be combined on each facade only horizontally (one above the other, not side-by-side), with the heavier material below the lighter.
5. Use fine and smooth textured surfaces when using materials such architectural pre-cast concrete, textured block or stucco for exterior cladding.
6. Allow any natural color of primary materials such as stone or brick to dominate the majority of façade surface as its base color.
7. Use accent colors for elements such pilasters, horizontal bands, cornices and window frames to complement the shade of the base color.
8. Flat roofs shall be enclosed by parapets a minimum of 42 inches above the roof surface, or as required to conceal rooftop mechanical equipment.
9. All wall openings, including porches, galleries, arcades and windows (with the exception of storefronts) shall be square or vertical in proportion.
10. Excluding storefronts at grade, wall openings shall be punched thru an opaque façade and not exceed 50% of the total building wall area, with the façade corresponding to each structural bay calculated independently.
11. Doors and windows that operate as sliders are prohibited along frontages.
12. Pitched roofs, if provided, shall be symmetrically sloped no less than 5:12, except that roofs for porches and attached sheds may be no less than 2:12.
13. Balconies and porches shall be made of painted wood or decorative iron or steel.
14. Employ a minimum 11'-0" and a maximum 15'-0" height between finish grade and/or sidewalk surface at the primary frontage of the building and the second-floor finish floor line. Employ a maximum 10'-0" floor to floor height between upper floors.
15. Flat-roofed buildings should have a base, "shaft", and "capital" similar to that of a column. A building base can be created minimally with the use of storefronts while a building "capital" can be achieved with the inclusion of a building cornice line (the "shaft", in this case, is merely implied by the remaining body of the building itself). See Exhibit 1 – Mixed-Use Architectural Standards for an example of a flat roofed building with a base, "shaft", and "capital".

16. Set storefront window frames 15 to 30 inches above the finished grade to provide durability and to accommodate traditional main street building features, such as base panels, sills, and display windows.
17. Recess all window frames (including at storefronts) 4" to 8" to provide a shadow line and accentuate exterior wall thickness and, correspondingly, employ exterior wall thicknesses sufficient to do so.
18. Include operable windows on upper level façades.
19. Provide awnings or building overhangs to shade inoperable windows.
20. For storefront and display windows along frontages, provide and maintain at least 80% of the storefront and display windows as free from visual obstructions such as signs, logos, advertisements, window screens, security grille, blinds or window covering.
21. Allow awning and canopy materials such as canvas, metal or glass. Vinyl and plastic are unacceptable materials for awnings and canopies.
22. Internally illuminated awnings are unacceptable.
23. Use awning to define individual storefront openings. The continuation of awnings along blank walls is not permitted.
24. First floors not associated with storefronts (or contiguous with lobbies) should be elevated minimum 18" above finish exterior finish grade.
25. Sloped roof materials may include slate, terra cotta, cedar shingles, standing seam, dimensional (or solid dark green, dark red, or dark grey) asphalt shingles.

**Exhibit 1:** Frieze Board Location (for roofs and upper floors that are supported by, or appear to be supported by, columns or pilasters).

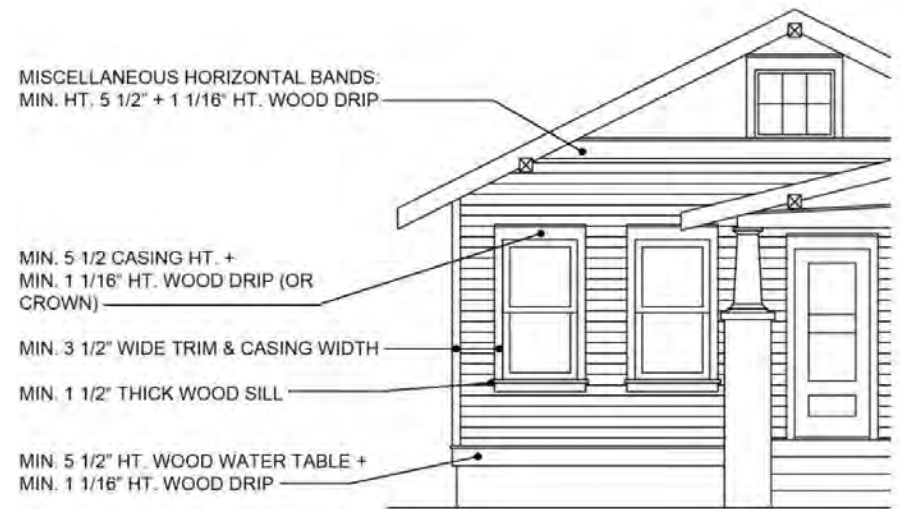


**Exhibit 2:** Masonry construction window treatments.





**Exhibit 3:** Non-Masonry construction window treatments and building trim.



**Exhibit 4:** Mixed Use Architectural Standards.





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## STREETSCAPE GUIDELINES

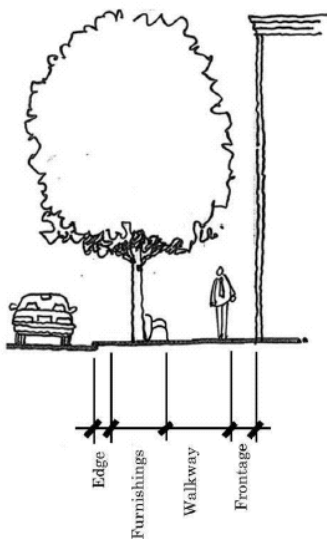
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The pedestrian zone (or public frontage) is considered to be the area between the curb and the edge of the right-of-way, and, in areas with shopfronts, should allocate component areas each for sidewalks, landscape plantings, street furniture, and other pedestrian-scale uses and amenities. The treatment of the pedestrian zone determines the character of the street, and the quality of the public realm within the right-of-way. Streets are the most common public space in the city, and must be designed to be welcoming and accommodating for pedestrians as well as motorized traffic. Additionally, sidewalks need to facilitate pedestrian access to retail uses and promote urban vitality downtown and elsewhere.

Therefore, the pedestrian zone corresponding to Shopfront Private Frontage Types along the West Jefferson Corridor should contain four distinct areas:

- An edge area that allows car doors to open freely and accommodates parking meters and streetlights;
- A furnishings area that accommodates amenities such as landscaping, planters, and sidewalk furniture;
- A walkway area where pedestrians can walk; and
- A frontage area adjacent to the building.

The following Figure illustrates the four areas of the pedestrian zone:



Accordingly, the following associated sidewalk design recommendations are intended to create an inviting public space alongside city streets and should be incorporated into the thoroughfare regulations in the West Jefferson Corridor for public frontages corresponding to shopfront private frontage types:

**Pedestrian zone width.** The pedestrian zone should have a minimum width of ten feet. A lesser width may be appropriate in constrained areas, and a larger width is appropriate along major streets.

**Edge area.** The edge area should have a minimum width of 2.5 feet, and should remain clear of obstructions to permit the doors of parked cars to open freely. Streetscape elements such as parking meters, streetlights, traffic control signs, and tree grates may be located in the edge area. The edge area may be paved or, if a landscaped furnishings area (or street lawn) is included, it may be combined with that.

**Furnishings area.** The furnishings area accommodates amenities such as street trees, planters, and sidewalk furniture. The furnishings area can be paved (with street trees located in tree grates) or it may be landscaped with a street lawn. Outdoor eating areas, sidewalk cafes, or other similar uses associated with a use in a building

directly adjacent may be located in the furnishings area (if it is paved). The furnishings area should have a minimum width of five feet.

**Walkway area.** The walkway area is the basic sidewalk area where pedestrians walk. The walkway area must maintain a five-foot wide clear path free of obstructions at all times to permit free pedestrian travel. No permanent structures, landscaping, lawn, or uses may be located in the walkway area.

**Frontage area.** The frontage area is the portion of the pedestrian zone adjacent to the edge of the right-of-way (building façade). The frontage area is an optional area, but may be used for street furniture or other uses accessory to the use within the building adjacent. When a building is constructed at the lot line, the frontage area should have a minimum width of eighteen inches to accommodate merchandise for sale and/or flower pots.

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## NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

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Along the West Jefferson Corridor in Ecorse and River Rouge are adjacent neighborhoods of a traditional type and character. These neighborhoods serve as a large portion of the “local market” for current and future uses of land along West Jefferson; indeed, neighbors are customers, and increased residential development will create an increased customer base for retail and services along West Jefferson.

Successful and strong neighborhoods contain the following characteristics; the “Neighborhood Elements” table presents aspirational goals for the continued and improved sustainability and success of Ecorse and River Rouge’s residential areas.





## NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTS

The ideal, walkable neighborhood includes:

- A center, where public and local institutional uses such as community centers are located.
- Edges, which are meant to provide definition and connection, not exclusion
- A mixture of housing types designed to help ensure social diversity
- A mixture of functions, especially a school, parks, and local shopping
- A hierarchy of streets separating local and through traffic, but also providing connections across edges

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# MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING TYPES

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“Missing middle housing” is a range of medium-density housing types that fill a void in many Midwestern communities. The West Jefferson Corridor, and the neighborhoods lining it, are appropriate for missing middle housing development. Below are example housing types that may be appropriate depending on feasibility, design, and site and context limitations along the West Jefferson corridor.

Data and images source: Opticos Design at [missingmiddlehousing.com](http://missingmiddlehousing.com)



The Smart Growth Network (SGN), in its National Conversation on the Future of Our Communities, 2013, wrote that Missing Middle housing types “are classified as missing because very few have been built since the early 1940s due to regulatory constraints, the shift to auto-dependent patterns of development, and the incentivization of single-family home ownership”. The eight defining characteristics associated with the missing middle that are crucial for successful development (economically, socially, and contextually), include:

### Walkable Communities

According to SGN, the most important characteristic of missing middle housing is that it must be built in walkable urban areas close to services and amenities such as restaurants, markets, and work.

### Medium Density but Lower Perceived Densities

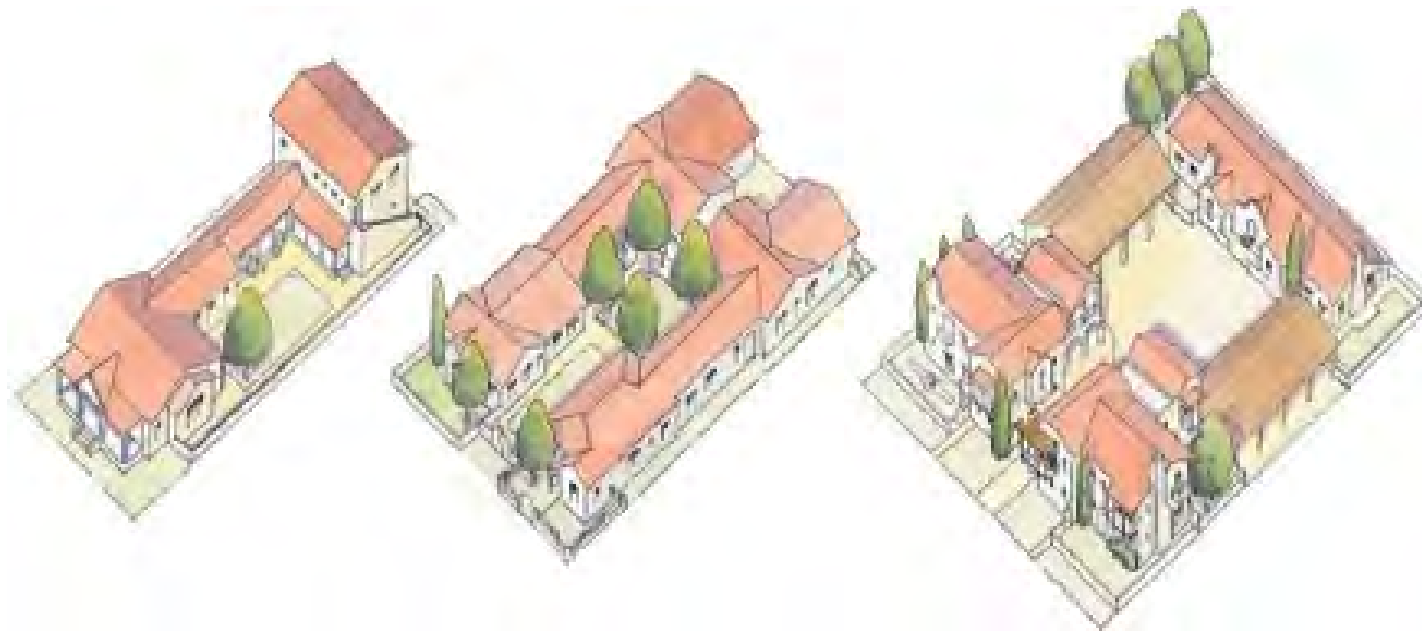
SGN notes that perception and design is key when it comes to the perceived densities of missing middle housing. In short, those missing middle housing is typically medium density (16 dwelling units/acre to 35 dwelling units/acre), context-sensitive design and small building footprints help the densities feel more tenable to existing residents and neighbors.

### Small Footprint and Blended Densities

Densities should be blended and small-to medium-sized building footprints maintained for ideal urban infill sites, “even in older neighborhoods that were originally developed for single-family homes but have been planned and often zoned to evolve with slightly higher densities”, according to SGN.

### Smaller, Well-Designed Units

Many urban experts believe that a common mistake of architects and builders that has resulted in obsolete denser housing types is the impulse to force typically suburban unit and building types into the urban core. SGN advocates for smaller, better-designed units to help keep costs down and widen the



affordability of housing in urban cores.

### **Off-Street Parking Does Not Drive the Plan**

Since missing middle housing is best built in walkable environments, there is often a need for less parking than even zoning standards call for. When large parking areas are built, “the buildings become inefficient from a development potential or yield standpoint and can shift neighborhoods below the 16-dwelling unit/acre density threshold”. The 16-dwelling unit/acre density threshold is the point at which a neighborhood generally can support public transit and streets where walkable services and retail become viable.

### **Simple Construction**

Simple construction methods support two important pieces in the missing middle housing equation – profitability for the developer and affordability for the purchaser.

### **Creating Community**

With the common spaces typical of many of the forms of missing middle housing, such as courtyards and bungalow courts, there is the opportunity for neighbor interaction and community-building often greater than with traditional single-family and high-rise apartment development.

### **Marketability**

The marketability of many of the missing middle housing types is key to their success in a competitive market. Adding to the attractiveness of many of the forms is the ability to provide a scale and experience similar to single-family homes. For example, when occupants enter from a front porch with a dedicated entrance, rather than sharing interior common space entrances in typical apartment buildings.

### Duplex: Side-By-Side

Side-by-side duplexes require lot sizes that are typical along the West Jefferson corridor (55-75 ft. wide by 100-150 ft. deep). Typical unit sizes range from 600 sq. ft. to upwards of 2,000 sq. ft., depending on the context and the market. These housing units are able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); between two and three on-street spaces should be provided per unit.



### Duplex: Stacked

Stacked duplexes require the same lot sizes as side-by-side duplexes, which are typical along the corridor (55-75 ft. wide by 100-150 ft. deep). Typical unit sizes range from 600 sq. ft. to upwards of 2,000 sq. ft., depending on the context and the market. These housing units are able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); between two and three on-street spaces should be provided per unit.



## Bungalow Court

Bungalow courts require larger lots than duplexes, with minimum requirements of 100 ft. by 100 ft. (ranging from between .25 and .5 acres per site) and are a more dense development type, usually containing between five and 10 units in one court. Typical unit sizes have a smaller range than duplexes, and are usually between 500 and 800 sq. ft. These housing units are also able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); between five and seven on-street spaces should be provided per development, dependent on the number of units.



## Fourplex

Fourplexes require lots of a similar size, and are developed within footprints very similar to duplexes, with minimum lot requirements of 60 ft. by 100 ft. Typical unit sizes range from 500 to 1,200 sq. ft. These housing units are also able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); two to three on-street spaces should be provided per unit.



## Small Multiplex

Small multiplexes are medium-sized structures consisting of five to 10 side-by-side or stacked dwelling units. Entryways are typically provided with one shared entry, or have individual entries along the front. Lot requirements are a minimum width of 60 ft. by a minimum depth of 100 ft., though larger lots may contain more units. Typically, there are between six and 10 units per multiplex, each between 500 and 1,200 sq. ft. in size. These housing units are also able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); two to three on-street spaces should be provided per unit.



## Townhomes

Townhomes are already present along the West Jefferson corridor in Ecorse, and are appropriate along the corridor. These are small-to medium-sized structures consisting of between two and eight attached single-family homes placed side-by-side. These housing units are able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); two to three on-street spaces should be provided per unit.





## Live/Work

Live/work spaces are small to medium-sized attached or detached structures consisting of one dwelling unit above or behind a flexible ground-floor space for residential, service, or retail uses. The home space, as well as the “work” space, are owned by one entity. Again, these housing units are able to be parked by on-street parking spaces (which may require a local code adjustment); two to three on-street spaces should be provided per unit.





# **ACTION PLAN**

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# ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

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The Action Plan outlines the goals, objectives, and actions for Ecorse, River Rouge, and others to pursue in order to implement the West Jefferson Corridor Plan. Each goal and subsequent set of objectives and actions corresponds with a chapter of this Plan. Many of the various strategies and actions in the West Jefferson Corridor Plan have come from previous plans, including the Master Plans for both cities, the River Rouge West Jefferson Corridor Plan, and the strategic plan “Envision Ecorse”. However, many of those strategies and actions have not been implemented. Moreover, because many of the goals of this plan are similar to, and continuations of goals from previous planning efforts, the recommended strategies and actions have been updated to reflect past efforts and current conditions along the Corridor. An approximate timeline, as well as potential partners and funding sources in order to implement these strategies and actions, has also been created as part of this Plan.



One of the major goals for this plan is to improve the design and the appearance of the West Jefferson corridor. Many of the objectives created in order to meet this goal could be accomplished in the immediate or short term. Furthermore, a lot of these strategies and actions could be considered of a high, or even urgent, priority. The implementation of these strategies and actions will improve the physical appearance of the West Jefferson corridor. Additionally, the implementation of the shorter-term strategies will allow for successful completion of longer-term actions. The City Councils and the Planning Commissions of both cities could be the catalysts for implementing

these actions for corridor beautification. Potential funding sources include, but are not limited to, general fund monies and grants from other public, private and non-profit sources.

Another important group of strategies addresses the importance of cross-community collaboration to meet joint goals. One such goal, for example, is to enhance public greenways and expand non-motorized transit options through both communities and the rest of the region. The actions required to achieve this goal cannot be implemented by one city or governmental body alone. Instead, both Ecorse and River Rouge will need to collaborate with each

other, with private sector partners in both cities and with other agencies such as Wayne County, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and other, nearby Downriver communities, in order to implement the strategies and actions necessary to achieve this goal. An added benefit to cross-community collaboration is that the added regionalism will allow both River Rouge and Ecorse to benefit from positive changes happening throughout Southeast Michigan. Formation of a new, joint city organization for the West Jefferson corridor, as recommended, will enhance cooperation and facilitate success.

“These actions highlight that the desire for a high quality of life among its residents is a critical part of the long-term economic development in both Ecorse and River Rouge.”

Furthermore, the strategies and actions recognize the importance of economic development as desired outcomes of this Plan. These actions highlight that the desire for a high quality of life among its residents is a critical part of the long-term economic development in both Ecorse and River Rouge. To this end, many of the strategies and actions seek to promote economic vitality across the West Jefferson corridor. In particular, some of these economic development strategies and actions recognize the importance of River Rouge and Ecorse as communities set to be transformed by the new border crossing across the Detroit River. The Gordie Howe International Bridge will be a major transformer in the economies of many Downriver communities. The economic development strategies and actions contained within this plan seek to proactively prepare both Ecorse and River Rouge for the arrival of the new international bridge, and suggests that both cities work together, as well as collaborating with agencies from the State of Michigan and private-sector partners. Some of these presented actions are more short-term

solutions to existing issues, while others are more long-term solutions. By planning ahead, both River Rouge and Ecorse can become hubs for transborder industry and commerce, and thus promote a model for long-term economic success.

Other goals and actions seek to ensure that existing housing options are protected along the West Jefferson corridor, and that new housing options are promoted and expanded in both cities. Both River Rouge and Ecorse recognize the importance of repopulation as an indicator of their long-term success. Furthermore, much of the West Jefferson corridor in both communities has empty and blighted buildings. If these structures were to be reoccupied, they could serve as a cornerstone for urban revitalization. The goals and strategies recommend that the cities, and the single authority or association that they seek to form, collaborate with existing private-sector partners and with each other, to rehabilitate and repurpose existing buildings for various types of housing, as well as to make sure that those who choose to live along the corridor can do so, regardless of income.

Lastly, another important goal of this Plan is to improve existing infrastructure along the West Jefferson corridor, such as water, sewer, electric and gas infrastructure, and to improve public transportation options in both Ecorse and River Rouge. Some infrastructure improvements can be done more immediately and will have long-lasting positive effects for both cities. Furthermore, by improving essential infrastructure, both Ecorse and River Rouge will be better equipped to attract private sector investment to the corridor. To this end, the strategies and actions that have been prepared intend to provide immediate, short-term and medium-term solutions to these issues. Moreover, these strategies and actions intend to promote environmental sustainability, thereby helping preserve the natural waterways (the Detroit, Ecorse and Rouge Rivers) that flow through the area and are an important part of the character of both cities. The actions also intend to promote cooperation with other governmental agencies, such as SMART, Wayne County, and the State of Michigan.



## KEY

PRIORITY	
<b>1</b>	Urgent (Immediate)
<b>2</b>	High (Important)
<b>3</b>	Near Term Priority
<b>4</b>	Long Term Priority

TIME FRAME	
<b>A</b>	Immediate Term (<12 Months)
<b>B</b>	Short Term (12-24 Months)
<b>C</b>	Medium Term (24-48 Months)
<b>D</b>	Long Term (>48 Months)

PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	
<b>EE</b>	Envision Ecorse
<b>EMP</b>	Ecorse Master Plan
<b>RRMP</b>	River Rouge Master Plan
<b>WJCP</b>	River Rouge West Jefferson Corridor Plan

PARTNERSHIPS	
<b>CC</b>	City Councils
<b>CM</b>	Community Members
<b>DDA</b>	Downtown Development Authority
<b>IND</b>	Industrial Partners U.S. Steel, Praxair
<b>MDOT</b>	Michigan Department of Transportation
<b>PC</b>	Planning Commissions
<b>SOM</b>	State of Michigan Excluding MDOT
<b>UC</b>	Utility Companies DTE Energy, GLWA, etc
<b>WC</b>	Wayne County
<b>WCRC</b>	Wayne County Road Commission

FUNDING SOURCES	
<b>SOM</b>	State of Michigan
<b>GF</b>	General Fund
<b>GM</b>	Grant Money
<b>PS</b>	Private Sector
<b>PPP</b>	Public/Private Partnership
<b>TIF</b>	Tax Increment Funds

The Action Plan outlines the goals, objectives, and actions for the Cities of Ecorse and River Rouge and others to pursue in order to implement this Plan. Each goal and subsequent set of objectives and actions corresponds with a chapter of this Plan. The goals of the Action Plan are to:



## Goal 1: Improve the Design and Appearance of the Corridor

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 1.1: Transform West Jefferson Avenue into an attractive main street connecting Ecorse and River Rouge</b>						
Action 1.1.1	Create a consistent, recognizable pattern of streetscape and architectural design improvements.	EMP EE WJCP	3	B	CC, PC, DDA	GF, GM, TIF
Action 1.1.2	Work together to develop, adopt and implement consistent site and design standards, infrastructure, and improvements that promote the creation of a distinct "sense of place".		2	B	CC, PC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM, TIF
Action 1.1.3	Develop and implement a corridor activation program with a keen focus on attractive and corridor-specific public space beautification components.		2	C	CC, CM, PC, DDA	GF, GM
Action 1.1.4	Distinguish character areas, nodes and different use zones along the corridor to give it interest and identity.		4	C	CC, CM, PC, DDA	GF, TIF
Action 1.1.5	Plan for and promote a balanced mix of compatible land uses.		2	A	CC, PC	GF, GM
Action 1.1.6	Consider creating special corridor zoning district standards for the two cities, with uniform shared standards and requirements.		4	B	CC, CM, PC	GF
<b>Objective 1.2: Make West Jefferson Avenue more pedestrian-friendly, including safe and accessible sidewalks and pedestrian crossings</b>						
Action 1.2.1	Upgrade lighting along the corridor, including adding pedestrian-scale lighting at regular, recognizable intervals.	EE	4	D	CC, WC, DDA	GF, TIF
Action 1.2.2	Install new sidewalks and repair existing sidewalks, as necessary to create a complete safe walkway through the entirety of the corridor.		2	C	CC, WC, WCRC	GF, GM, SOM, TIF
Action 1.2.3	Study whether lowering the speed limit from 35 mph within the downtown portions of the corridor is feasible.		4	C	WCRC, MDOT	GF, SOM
Action 1.2.4	Use street landscaping and/or other design features to give a sense of protection for pedestrians, including maintaining on-street parking.		2	C	CC, DDA	GF, TIF
Action 1.2.5	Install regular marked and signaled crosswalks.		2	C	WCRC	GF, SOM
<b>Objective 1.3: Create an inviting, walkable streetscape</b>						
Action 1.3.1	Consider adding landscaped medians or similar features.	EE WJCP	4	C	CC, PC, DDA	GF, GM, TIF
Action 1.3.2	Install and maintain planters or pockets of plantings.		2	A	CC, DDA	GF, GM, TIF
Action 1.3.3	Plan for, install, and provide for ongoing maintenance of street trees.		2	B	CC, DDA	GF, GM, TIF

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
Action 1.3.4	Emphasize key intersections, nodes, or focal areas with decorative pavement and/or other features.	EE WJCP	2	B	CC, CM, DDA	GF, GM, TIF
Action 1.3.5	Incorporate street furniture on a select basis. Consider developing a program with incentives and design standards that encourages property owners to install and maintain corridor street furniture.		3	B	CC, CM, DDA	GF, GM, TIF
Action 1.3.6	Design improvements to be low maintenance and durable for practical upkeep.		2	B	CC, CM, DDA	GF, GM, TIF
Action 1.3.7	Support installation of public art at prominent locations along the corridor. Consider commissioning works from local artists, participation in the Detroit Institute of Arts program for art in the community, or similar programs through the Michigan Council for the Arts and Community Affairs (MCACA) or the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).		2	A	DDA	GM, SOM
Action 1.3.8	Encourage provision of basic amenities like bathrooms, drinking fountains, and trash cans to improve the public's experience at public use sites along the corridor.		2	B	CC, CM, DDA	GF, PPP, TIF
Action 1.3.9	Incorporate corridor design elements that reflect and respect the culture, history and industrial legacies of Ecorse and River Rouge.		2	B	CC, CM, PC, DDA	GF, GM, PPP, TIF
<b>Objective 1.4: Improve property maintenance along the corridor</b>						
Action 1.4.1	Conduct regular building and code inspections and consistently take appropriate enforcement actions.	EMP	1	A	CC	GF
Action 1.4.2	Encourage businesses and residential uses to keep their properties clean and maintained to current standards and codes. Educate the public on zoning and code requirements.		1	A	CC, CM	GF, PS, PPP
Action 1.4.3	Consider creating and implementing a façade improvement program with small grants and/or other incentives for building improvements.		3	C	CC, DDA	GF, PS, PPP
Action 1.4.4	Ensure that the maintenance and quality of public facilities is consistent with or better than that required for private facilities.		2	B	CC	GF, PS, PPP
<b>Objective 1.5: Eliminate blighted, abandoned, vacant and obsolete properties along the corridor</b>						
Action 1.5.1	Inventory the stock of blighted, abandoned or obsolete buildings and be proactive in enforcing clean-up, repair, or removal as appropriate.	RRMP	1	A	CC, CM PC	GF
Action 1.5.2	Work toward productive, compatible reuse of vacant, abandoned, obsolete and/or blighted sites deemed appropriate for restoration.	EE	1	A	CC, CM PC	GF, GM

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
Action 1.5.3	Work toward removal of blighted structures and redevelopment of abandoned or obsolete buildings and sites deemed inappropriate for restoration.	RRMP EE	1	A	CC, CM PC	GF, GM, SOM
Action 1.5.4	Work with MSHDA, HUD, and other partners to promote construction of affordable housing that is attainable to multiple population segments (Note: affordable means in comparison to higher prices in Detroit and elsewhere, not necessarily subsidized housing).		3	B	CC	GF, GM, SOM
Action 1.5.5	Offer incentives for renovation and rehabilitation of abandoned housing, including using brownfield or other State tools and incentives.		3	C	CC, WC	GF, SOM
Action 1.5.6	Obtain and maintain Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) certification from the MEDC.		2	A	CC, PC	GF, SOM
<b>Objective 1.6: Incorporate waterfronts into existing and future development--recognize the role that the Detroit and Rouge Rivers and Ecorse Creek play as key image features and community assets</b>						
Action 1.6.1	Incorporate riverwalks or other context-appropriate pathways and access, aesthetic improvements, and cultural features along the Detroit, Rouge and Ecorse riverfronts.	RRMP EMP EE	4	D	PC	GF, GM, PS, PPP
Action 1.6.2	Work with landowners to acquire underutilized sites along the Detroit River for possible redevelopment that takes advantage of the riverfront. Such development could be a hotel, restaurants, entertainment, conference facilities or other compatible uses.		2	C	CC, CM, DDA, IND	GF, GM, PS, PPP, TIF
Action 1.6.3	Preserve open space and views along the Detroit riverfront as practical for public benefit, balanced with the need for and desirability of appropriate private development.		1	D	CC, CM, PC	GF, GM, PS, PPP
Action 1.6.4	Undertake marketing and business attraction efforts focusing on specific businesses that enhance the character and use of the waterfront.		4	D	CC, CM, DDA, IND	GF, GM, PPP
Action 1.6.5	Review zoning and other ordinances to ensure they provide for the desired waterfront uses.		3	B	CC, PC	GF
Action 1.6.6	Expand recreation opportunities along and connected to the riverfront.		4	C	CC, CM, DDA, IND	GM, PPP

## Goal 2: Foster Collaboration and Promote the Corridor

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 2.1: Work together to create a positive image of the West Jefferson corridor with increased recognition and influence in the region</b>					
Action 2.1.1 Establish a new ongoing intercommunity governmental authority, association or similar entity for the corridor. This entity will focus on corridor issues, promote and implement improvement activities, conduct marketing and recruitment, identify opportunities and obtain funding, all in service to becoming the future identity of excellence along West Jefferson Avenue.	RRMP EE	1	A	CC	GF, GM
Action 2.1.2 Regularize coordination and cooperation between the two cities by means such as joint meetings, joining together for more efficient provision of select services, and similar. Take advantage of opportunities to jointly pursue grants and other funds for competitive advantage.		1	A	CC, DDA	GF, GM
Action 2.1.3 Undertake a program of marketing, logo development, and branding for the corridor – all the while recognizing the separate identities of the two cities.		2	B	DDA	GF, GM
Action 2.1.4 Secure and effectively administer funding to accomplish corridor projects and activities.		1	A	DDA	GF, GM
<b>Objective 2.2: Conduct marketing and outreach to promote the new and improved West Jefferson corridor.</b>					
Action 2.2.1 Prepare a marketing plan to organize and prioritize complementary efforts of public and private entities both within and outside the corridor area.	EMP EE	3	B	CC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM
Action 2.2.2 Use the area's history and cultural heritage as a draw. Include promotion of industrial tourism in recognition of the industrial and river legacy of the community.		1	B	DDA	PPP
Action 2.2.3 Regularly communicate with corridor stakeholders to maintain engagement via e-newsletter, social media, and other means.		2	B	DDA	PPP

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 2.3: Gather people for corridor improvements, events and pride</b>					
Action 2.3.1 Find ways to engage young people in the corridor and their community, partially as a means of retaining young residents as they age and make life / investment decisions. Expand planning outreach to students in government/civics classes, encouraging student projects that focus on particular elements of the corridor, or holding competitions for corridor design features like banners or murals. Winning ideas could be implemented.	EMP EE	2	B	CC, DDA, IND	PPP
Action 2.3.2 Organize community and business events for the corridor, such as special community cleanup days, spring planting days, music or other small festivals, contests for best-looking business, and similar.		1	A	CC, DDA, IND	GF, PS, PPP
Action 2.3.3 Consider an annual community gathering to celebrate public and private accomplishments along the corridor. Publicize success!		2	B	CC, DDA, IND	GF, GM, PS, PPP



### Goal 3: Enhance Greenways, Public Spaces, and Sustainability

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 3.1: Increase active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors during all seasons</b>						
Action 3.1.1	Link the corridor to parks, schools, and significant public and private spaces via non-motorized pathways.	EMP EE	4	D	CC, WC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM, TIF
Action 3.1.2	Collaborate with the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge regarding Mud Island to explore the potential for tourism, scenic and other local value. Address whether any access is feasible that would allow residents and visitors to better experience the wildlife.		4	D	CC, IND, WC	GF, GM, SOM
Action 3.1.3	Update and renovate existing waterfront access points, such as Belanger Park in River Rouge and the Ecorse municipal boat ramp, and support new access including the planned Ecorse and River Rouge kayak launches.		2	B	CC, IND, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 3.1.4	Respect, maintain and improve Dingell Park as a regionally important corridor resource for recreation and image.		2	B	CC, DDA, IND	GF, GM, SOM, TIF
<b>Objective 3.2: Expand on existing river walks and explore other opportunities to increase public access to the Detroit River along West Jefferson</b>						
Action 3.2.1	Participate in the Trail Town initiative (water trails) in River Rouge (possible expansion to Ecorse) for connections to other downriver cities and grant possibilities.	EMP EE	3	B	DDA, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 3.2.2	Leverage the Gordie Howe International Bridge construction observation community benefits grant at Belanger Park in River Rouge for additional placemaking opportunities to be linked to the corridor.		4	D	SOM, WC	PS, COM
Action 3.2.3	Evaluate and adapt successes implemented at iconic riverwalks and development experiences in other communities. For example: San Antonio, Texas; Naperville, Illinois; Windsor and Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada.		3	C	CC, DDA	GF, PPP, TIF
Action 3.2.4	Support a potential non-motorized pathway around the soon to-be-decommissioned DTE power plant. This could involve collaboration with DTE and non-profit partners, such as the Friends of the Rouge.		4	D	CC, UC, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 3.2.5	Require developers to include trail connections and riverwalk extensions as appropriate, in conjunction with new construction, development, or expansions.		4	D	CC, PC	GF, PS

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 3.3: Connect the corridor to regional non-motorized trail systems</b>						
Action 3.3.1	Consider connecting to the Joe Louis Greenway. The cities of Detroit and Wyandotte have indicated that they would be open to collaboration to make this happen.	RRMP EE	4	D	CC, SOM, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 3.3.2	Continue to support the ongoing improvements to connect the corridor with the nearby statewide Iron Belle Trail.		2	D	SOM, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
<b>Objective 3.4: Plan for the impacts of climate change on all activities and development along the corridor</b>						
Action 3.4.1	Consider future water levels, potential changing shorelines, setbacks and more extreme weather when designing improvements.	N/A	4	D	CC, SOM	GF
Action 3.4.2	Promote energy efficiency by using energy-efficient lights and fixtures, design with natural light and shade in mind, using native plants where reasonably feasible, and similar actions.		2	D	CC, PC	GF



## Goal 4: Promote Business and Economic Development

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 4.1: Work to develop and enhance the corridor area as to increase the tax base and improve the the fiscal status of both cities</b>						
Action 4.1.1	Develop strategies, programs and incentives to attract investment and development, such as various small business tax breaks, brownfield redevelopment assistance, expedited permitting and review processes, etc.	None	2	B	CC, SOM, WC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 4.1.2	Identify and utilize resources of State, County, Federal, non-profit, and foundation funding entities to optimize benefits to the corridor and communities.		1	A	CC, IND, SOM, WC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 4.1.3	Capitalize on the appeal of the Detroit River and target residential, recreation, lodging, conference, entertainment and other community-building uses for development and redevelopment sites.		2	C	CC, CM, IND	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 4.1.4	Pursue development of corridor opportunity areas into uses as described in this Corridor Plan.		2	C	CC, CM, DDA, IND	GF, GM, SOM, PPP, TIF
Action 4.1.5	Prepare and maintain an inventory of available buildings and sites.		1	B	CC, DDA, PC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 4.1.6	Attract a Kroger or similar major grocery store to the corridor.		4	D	CC, DDA	GF, PPP, TIF
<b>Objective 4.2: Market the opportunities available in the corridor as desirable places for investment and valuable businesses and residential locations</b>						
Action 4.2.1	Ensure that the corridor and properties within it are included as part of State and regional programs to market Michigan and the Detroit metro area.	RRMP EE	3	B	SOM, WC, DDA	GF, SOM, PPP
Action 4.2.2	Collaborate with local companies to find out why they chose to locate and stay in Ecorse and River Rouge.		2	A	DDA, IND	PS, PPP
Action 4.2.3	Collaborate with organizations like the Downriver Communities Conference, MEDC, Detroit Regional Partnership, Wayne County, SEMCOG, etc. for business attraction strategies.		3	B	CC, SOM, WC	GF, GM, PPP
Action 4.2.4	Establish monthly "round-tables" with business leaders and elected officials for mutual benefit and cooperation.		3	A	CC, DDA, IND	GF, PPP



OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 4.3: Recognize and capitalize on economic opportunities created by the new Gordie Howe International Bridge</b>					
Action 4.3.1 Initiate economic development and business assistance programs to make Ecorse and River Rouge attractive and affordable locations for cross-border commerce and investment.	N/A	2	D	WC, SOM, DDA	SOM, PPP
Action 4.3.2 Identify potential sites for redevelopment/development/reuse (including the opportunity sites in this plan) and work to make them ready for investment.		2	B	CC, SOM, WC, DDA	SOM, PPP, TIF
Action 4.3.3 Prepare planned commercial and industrial areas with necessary infrastructure to support the additional traffic and spin-off uses expected from the new international travel corridor.		4	D	CC, SOM, WC, DDA	SOM, PPP, TIF
<b>Objective 4.4: Partner with local developers and companies to attract and retain businesses and employees</b>					
Action 4.4.1 Consult and work with businesses to facilitate projects and activities that support workers' needs and comfort (including temporary or contract workers), like identifying safe parking locations, partnering for shuttle bus service to and from project sites, and attracting restaurants and other services to encourage workers to stay in the area at lunch or after work.	RRPM EE	3	B	DDA, IND	GF, PS, PPP, TIF
Action 4.4.2 Target attraction of a better hotel that would be suitable for business use in the area.		3	C	DDA, IND	PS, PPP, TIF
Action 4.4.3 Consider implementing programs that incentivize community support of local businesses. An example is the "Corridor Dollar" program in Wyandotte's downtown.		4	D	DDA	GF, PPP



“ Both River Rouge and Ecorse recognize the importance of repopulation of the West Jefferson Corridor as an indicator of their long-term success.”

## Goal 5: Protect Existing and Expand New Housing Options

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 5.1: Encourage population growth in the communities</b>						
Action 5.1.1	Plan locations for and support creation of a variety of housing types to address the needs of varied age groups (young professionals, young families, seniors, active empty-nesters).	RRMP EMP	2	B	CC, CM, PC	GF, PPP
Action 5.1.2	Collaborate with and assist potential residential developers to identify funding programs, such as State and Federal grants and incentives to increase the housing stock.		3	B	CC, CM, IND, PC	GF, PPP
Action 5.1.3	Market the residential availability and affordability in Ecorse and River Rouge to potential buyers who are being priced out of booming redevelopment areas in the City of Detroit, and from out-of-region.		3	C	CC, DDA, IND	GF, PPP
Action 5.1.4	Locate possible sites for land assembly and attract developers to undertake new residential redevelopment, including land with river frontage, views or access.		3	C	CC, DDA, IND	GF, PPP, TIF
<b>Objective 5.2: Encourage varied context-appropriate housing types, densities and designs attractive to all segments of the population for community demographic stability and sustainability</b>						
Action 5.2.1	Collaborate with local businesses to consider construction of temporary workforce housing that is folded into the context of existing neighborhoods.	RRPM EMP EE	2	C	DDA, IND	PC, PPP, TIF
Action 5.2.2	Identify locations for housing above businesses, missing middle housing options, townhouses, and other unit types.	WJCP	2	B	CC, IND, PC	GF, PPP

## Goal 6: Improve Infrastructure and Transportation

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 6.1: Improve roads, utilities and other public infrastructure along the corridor to support quality of life and economic development</b>					
Action 6.1.1	EE	1	A	CC, UC, WC, MDOT, DDA	GF, GM, PPP, TIF
Action 6.1.2		2	C	CC, UC, WC	GF, SOM
Action 6.1.3		2	C	CC, UC, WC	GF, SOM
Action 6.1.4		1	A	CC, MDOT, UC, WC, DDA	GF, SOM, TIF
Action 6.1.5		3	B	MDOT, WCRC	SOM
Action 6.1.6		3	B	CC, IND, SOM, WC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
<b>Objective 6.2: Improve transportation options along the West Jefferson Corridor--accommodate motorized and non-motorized methods of public and private transportation within a manageable, coordinated system</b>					
Action 6.2.1	RRPM EE	4	D	CC, DDA, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 6.2.2		3	C	CC, DDA, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 6.2.3		4	D	CC, DDA, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP
Action 6.2.4		3	C	CC, DDA, WC	GF, GM, SOM, PPP

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS		PREVIOUS PLANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERSHIPS	FUNDING SOURCES
<b>Objective 6.3: Repair deteriorating infrastructure as needed to support current and future uses</b>						
Action 6.3.1	Inventory the condition of existing infrastructure and prioritize repair.	EE	3	B	CC, CM, PC	GF, SOM
Action 6.3.2	Plan for repair and replacement in the cities' capital improvement plans.		3	B	CC, CM, PC	GF, SOM
Action 6.3.3	Research and obtain appropriate grants, and identify other funding as needed.		2	B	CC, PC, DDA	GF, GM, SOM, TIF



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## ORGANIZATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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Future successful development of the West Jefferson corridor as envisioned in this strategic vision plan, will depend in large part on the ability of the two cities to attract private investment along with state, federal and foundation grants and other funding. To do so most effectively, the cities would benefit from making a long-term commitment by partnering to form a single association or authority that spans the length of West Jefferson Avenue. This new entity would become the new brand for the corridor, create an attractive positive image, make the area more competitive and foster greater respect for both cities. By working together, Ecorse and River Rouge can multiply the impact of their limited resources and ensure that the cities are part of significant state and regional economic development decision-making.



The new West Jefferson Avenue association or authority should have the ability to:

- Obtain grants and other funding
- Administer programs
- Conduct initiatives
- Implement public improvements consistent with the Corridor Plan
- Perform other functions that benefit the corridor, as designated by the cities

## **COMPARISON OF CORRIDOR ORGANIZATIONS**

The table below describes several successful multi-community corridor organizations in Southeast Michigan, including non-profit multi-community associations, a two-community Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) created by an interlocal agreement, a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) that was envisioned as a joint DDA, and a multi-neighborhood community development organization. This comparison identifies key characteristics and gives insights as to the strengths and weaknesses of each organization as a cooperative entity, and will inform our recommendation for the type of organization that would best facilitate transformation of the West Jefferson corridor in Ecorse and River Rouge.



MUNICIPALITIES	GOVERNED BY	ORG. TYPE	POWERS & PURPOSE	PROJECT EXAMPLES	FUNDING SOURCES	STAFF	COMMENTS
<b>8 Mile Blvd. Association M-102, 8 Mile Road (27 miles)</b>							
<b>16 Total</b> 13 communities & 3 counties	<b>Board of Directors</b> 30 members including the chief elected officials of all member municipalities, Director of MDOT, & diverse group of private sector reps.	Nonprofit Corporation 501(c)(3)	Connects businesses, communities & people. Advocates & promotes the 8 Mile corridor. Coordinates & conducts projects to beautify & improve corridor & encourage new investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual clean-up &amp; beautification</li> <li>Artist murals, tree planting, art installations</li> <li>Annual leadership luncheon</li> <li>Shared code compliance</li> <li>Design guidelines</li> <li>Façade improvement grants</li> <li>Perennial gardens &amp; ID signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Dues</li> <li>Grants</li> <li>Donations</li> </ul>	Director, Full Time**	Currently being restructured to reduce costs. Dues (which haven't been increased since 1992) will support administration & operating costs; other projects will be discontinued until they are made self-supporting or other funds are found.
<b>Woodward Avenue Action Association M-1, Woodward Avenue</b>							
11 communities	<b>Board of Directors</b> 34 members (political & business reps. from 11 member communities; advisory members from MDOT, MEDC, SMART, Wayne & Oakland Co.)	Nonprofit Corporation 501(c)(3)	Joint promotion & marketing; obtain & leverage grants for planning, physical improvements & economic development; beautification assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration on Woodward Ave. Dream Cruise</li> <li>Obtained All-American Road &amp; National Scenic Byway designations</li> <li>Prepared transit-oriented design study</li> <li>Partial funding for M-1 Rail/Woodward reconstruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Dues</li> <li>Grants</li> <li>Donations</li> </ul>	Not currently staffed	This organization is not active at the present time.
<b>Grand River Corridor Improvement Authority, CIA M-5, Grand River Avenue</b>							
<b>2 cities</b> Farmington & Farmington Hills	<b>Two Boards working as one</b> 7 members from each city, including chief executive officials (total 14 members)	Each city created a CIA, then entered into interlocal agreement to act as a joint CIA	Full range of CIA statutory powers: plan & execute public improvements to eliminate causes of decline; get grants; buy/own property, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct streetscape improvements</li> <li>Relocate utilities</li> <li>Improve road crossings, add traffic signals</li> <li>Develop shared-use trail</li> <li>New zoning &amp; design standards for corridor</li> <li>Façade &amp; sign grant program</li> <li>Business retention &amp; recruitment program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TIF</li> <li>Grants</li> <li>Donations</li> </ul> <p>*SAD proceeds or revenues from property it owns.</p>	Each city designated responsible staff for part time assistance.	The 2 cities worked together on a corridor vision plan. 2 CIAs were created & joined via an interlocal agreement. PA 57 of 2018, Recodified TIF Act & PA 7 of 1967 Urban Cooperation Act

MUNICIPALITIES	GOVERNED BY	ORG. TYPE	POWERS & PURPOSE	PROJECT EXAMPLES	FUNDING SOURCES	STAFF	COMMENTS
<b>Ann Arbor Road – Plymouth Township DDA Old M-14, Ann Arbor Road</b>							
<p><b>Proposed as 2 municipalities</b></p> <p>Plymouth City &amp; Plymouth Township. Ultimately only Township participated.</p>	<p><b>DDA Board</b></p> <p>9 members total, includes chief executive</p>	<p>Originally proposed as Joint DDA using existing City DDA &amp; new Township DDA, joined under a municipal cooperation act.</p>	<p>Full range of DDA powers: plan &amp; execute public improvements to eliminate causes of decline; get grants; buy/own property, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streetscape design &amp; installation</li> <li>Banners</li> <li>Design &amp; zoning regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TIF</li> <li>Grants</li> <li>Donations</li> </ul> <p>*SAD proceeds, millage, or revenues from property it owns.</p>	<p>Reimburses Twp. for part-time assistance of Township Planner &amp; Treasurer</p>	<p>Former PA 197 of 1975; replaced by PA 57 of 2018</p>
<b>Jefferson East, Inc. (JEI) East Jefferson Avenue</b>							
<p><b>One city = Detroit</b></p> <p>(contains 5 neighborhoods)</p>	<p><b>Board of Directors</b></p> <p>31 members representing major corporations &amp; corridor entities</p>	<p>Non-profit neighborhood community development organization.</p>	<p>Collaborative planning; housing &amp; neighborhood services; assistance to keep corridor safe &amp; clean; support for small business &amp; economic development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attraction &amp; assistance to get new restaurants</li> <li>Partnership to get 46 units of new affordable &amp; market-rate housing</li> <li>Construction of green infrastructure</li> <li>“Clean Ambassadors” pick up litter, empty trash bins &amp; assist people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Funds</li> <li>Grants</li> <li>Donations</li> <li>Revenues</li> </ul>	<p>8 staff members between both orgs</p>	<p>Began as the Jefferson East Business Association; became JEI in 2013.</p> <p>In December 2016, created a for-profit subsidiary, East Jefferson Development Corporation, that does real estate development in support of the organization's mission.</p>

**Notes:**

\* Potential sources of funding that are not currently being used by these organizations.

\*\* Chairman of the 8 Mile Blvd. Board of Directors said that in order to make a multi-community organization successful, it is essential to have strong and skilled leadership to handle the inherent complexities.

\*\*\* There are different legal criteria for forming each type of organization.



The oldest and probably best-known organization reviewed is the 8 Mile Boulevard Association, formed as a non-profit corporation of the 13 communities that border 8 Mile Road in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties. When it was formed this organization was ground-breaking in the amount of inter-governmental cooperation it represented. The 8 Mile Boulevard Association has achieved tremendous positive recognition for the 8 Mile Rd. corridor, and spawned physical improvements, improved maintenance and better appearance along its route. However, after 20+ years of existence, the 8 Mile Boulevard Association is undergoing a refresh, restart

and re-prioritization of its efforts. Similarly, the Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3), an 11-community inter-governmental corridor organization is also refocusing its scope. WA3 is not currently active other than volunteer efforts by some of its officers, and has no staff. Representatives of these two organizations suggested that the size, form and scope of activities undertaken by these large multi-governmental cooperative corridor associations may have expanded beyond what the member communities believe is beneficial from a financial and functional perspective. In any event, since River Rouge and Ecorse are only two communities, they do not need the extent of administrative

assistance and complexity that characterizes such large organizations.

Jefferson East, Inc. (JEI) is likewise not the best model for Ecorse and River Rouge. It is located in a single city, Detroit and targets a five-neighborhood district along East Jefferson Avenue. As a community development organization, its mission and scope go beyond economic development, to include human services, housing and other assistance, and requires a large staff to execute. Many of those functions are already handled by other agencies in the Ecorse and River Rouge area.



The DDA and CIA models have several advantages for the needs of the West Jefferson corridor in River Rouge and Ecorse, as follows:

1. DDAs and CIAs have a long history of success in many Michigan communities.
2. Both DDAs and CIAs are created and their members are appointed by City Council, giving the resulting organization the credibility of the municipal government.
3. DDAs and CIAs are public boards dedicated solely to the improvement of the properties within their districts, in this case, the West Jefferson corridor.
4. The powers, structure, membership and processes for forming DDAs and CIAs are prescribed by Michigan PA 57 of 2018, the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act. There is no need to “recreate the wheel”.
5. DDAs and CIAs offer more options for funding public improvements and projects than the non-profit corporation models examined. If the cities chose, either a DDA or a CIA can utilize tax increment financing as a source of funds for public improvements that benefit the district. While the city councils may elect to not use TIF as a funding technique right away (or at all), it is beneficial to have that tool available. In addition, a DDA or a CIA can be the beneficiary of special assessments levied by the respective city for public purposes. If approved by its City Council, a DDA may also receive the proceeds of a limited millage (not exceeding 2 mills) for DDA administrative purposes.

## **RECOMMENDATION OF ORGANIZATION FORM**

While there are many similarities between a Downtown Development Authority and a Corridor Improvement Authority, this Plan recommends that the cities partner to create a joint DDA to become the new West Jefferson Corridor organization. The West Jefferson Avenue corridor is the essential downtown of Ecorse and River Rouge. If established, a new West Jefferson Joint DDA board will have the ability to plan and implement physical improvements and assist with redevelopment as envisioned in this Plan. Further, a Joint DDA Board composed of each city's DDA as appointed by the two City Councils, will demonstrate the cities' commitment to the core identity of West Jefferson Avenue and the interlinked future of the communities.

In addition, River Rouge already has a DDA that can be incorporated into a joint West Jefferson Corridor DDA. The River Rouge DDA district contains the city's portion of West Jefferson Avenue, and has an existing Development Plan and TIF Plan (adopted in 2000, running through 2028). Ecorse will need to create its own DDA to become part of a joint West Jefferson DDA with River Rouge, but having the River Rouge organization in place simplifies the overall process.

Although a Corridor Improvement Authority might seem to be the first choice, the zoning and percentage of ground floor classified as commercial real property along West Jefferson is not a good fit for the criteria that must be met for a CIA. In the case of West Jefferson, a joint DDA is a better approach.

## **LEGAL MECHANISM**

PA 57 of 2018, the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act (Section 203(6)) allows a city that has created a DDA to enter into an agreement with an adjoining municipality to jointly operate and administer those authorities under an interlocal agreement pursuant to the Urban Cooperation Act of 1967. This is the approach that other communities have used successfully to create a joint DDA. So, while each city must have its own DDA as a distinct legal entity, the interlocal agreement allows the DDAs to partner, administer and implement projects together consistent with their shared goals and priorities. The interlocal agreement also lays out the rules of operation and requirements for the two DDAs when they come together to meet and function. The process described below will result in a joint West Jefferson DDA under the interlocal agreement model.

## NEXT STEPS AND PROCESS

The recommended process and a sample schedule to create a West Jefferson joint DDA Board is outlined below. This proposed timeline is provided for consideration and planning purposes; of course, it be refined consistent with the cities' wishes.

If the cities wish to be able to use TIF to assist with funding joint West Jefferson corridor projects, each city's DDA must have its own TIF and Development Plan adopted and in place. Therefore, the steps in the sample schedule include the option of preparing (or in River Rouge's case, updating) TIF and Development Plans during the time that the Ecorse DDA is being created. That way the newly created joint DDA Board can begin all of its work as soon as possible. However, the West Jefferson joint DDA can begin its mission and undertake projects with or without those plans.

ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	EXAMPLE TIMEFRAME
1. Ecorse and River Rouge City Councils accept and endorse the West Jefferson Corridor Plan at a joint meeting. They direct staff and consultants to proceed with the required actions to form a joint West Jefferson Corridor DDA.	Ecorse & River Rouge City Councils	October 2019
2. Start-up Actions and Feasibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify proposed DDA boundaries and review River Rouge DDA boundaries.</li> <li>• Locate at least 2 parcels within the proposed Ecorse DDA district with decline in property values.</li> </ul>	Staff & Consultants	October 2019
3. Ecorse City Council adopts Resolution of Intent to create a DDA. The resolution also establishes the City Council public hearing date.	Ecorse City Council	November 2019
4. Notice of Ecorse City Council's public hearing is published, posted and distributed in accordance with State Law (between 20 and 40 days before the public hearing). Notice of public hearing must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• printed 2x in a newspaper of general circulation,</li> <li>• mailed to all property taxpayers of record within the proposed district,</li> <li>• certified mailed to the governing body of each taxing jurisdiction that would be subject to TIF capture by the DDA, and</li> <li>• posted in 20 conspicuous and public places in the proposed DDA district.</li> </ul>	Ecorse City Clerk	November/December 2019
5. Public hearing on creation of Ecorse DDA held by City Council.	Ecorse City Council	December 2019
6. 60-day waiting period for potential taxing jurisdiction opt-out begins. All taxing jurisdictions that would be subject to future tax increment capture by the proposed Ecorse DDA have the option to opt out of that capture during this time. During the 60-day period, the DDA cannot be formally established, but the Interlocal Agreement can be refined.	Staff & Consultants	After December Public Hearing

ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	EXAMPLE TIMEFRAME
7. If the City Councils wish their DDAs to use tax increment financing to pay for any future DDA projects, work can be done during this time on the Development Plans and TIF Plans. Staff and consultants would prepare a draft Development and TIF Plan for the Ecorse DDA and draft revisions to River Rouge's Development and TIF Plan to consistently reflect the recommendations of the West Jefferson Corridor Plan.	Staff & Consultants	December/February 2020
8. 60-day period for taxing jurisdiction opt-out ends.	Staff & Consultants	February 2020
9. Ecorse City Council adopts ordinance establishing the Ecorse DDA, setting its boundaries and appointing members. Ordinance is filed with Secretary of State and published in newspaper.	Ecorse City Council	February 2020
10. <b>First meeting of new Ecorse DDA.</b>	Ecorse DDA	February/March 2020
11. Both City Councils approve an Interlocal Agreement under PA 7 of 1967 to jointly administer & operate their DDAs as the West Jefferson Corridor DDA. The Interlocal Agreement describes the membership, officers, meeting frequency, purpose and intent, functions, etc. of the joint DDA.	Ecorse & River Rouge City Councils	February/March 2020
12. <b>West Jefferson Joint DDA Board 1st meeting</b> At this meeting the Board members should review their procedures, powers and purposes as established by the Interlocal Agreement. The Joint DDA Board should review the Corridor Plan and prioritize projects for their first year's efforts. *If Development and TIF Plans are being prepared, the Board may also wish to review each DDA's respective drafts during this meeting to coordinate projects.	Ecorse and River Rouge DDAs/ West Jefferson Joint DDA Board	March 2020

ACTION	WHO RESPONSIBLE	EXAMPLE TIMEFRAME
13. <b>Optional*</b> Ecorse and River Rouge DDAs meet, recommend approval and set dates for public hearings on their Development and TIF Plans. Coordinate timelines, notices and hearing dates with the objective of facilitating joint implementation of projects.	Ecorse and River Rouge DDAs	April 2020
14. <b>Optional*</b> Notice of public hearing for Development and TIF Plans is published, posted and distributed in accordance with State Law. The notice must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• printed 2x in a newspaper of general circulation, the 1st not less than 20 days before the hearing,</li> <li>• mailed to all property taxpayers of record within the DDA district, not less than 20 days before the hearing,</li> <li>• certified mailed to the governing body of each taxing jurisdiction that would be subject to TIF capture, not less than 20 days before the hearing, and</li> <li>• posted in 20 conspicuous and public places in the proposed DDA district, not less than 20 days before the hearing.</li> </ul>	Ecorse and River Rouge City Clerks	April/May 2020
15. <b>Optional*</b> Public Hearing and Adoption of DDA and TIF Plans by DDAs and City Councils. We recommend that each City hold a joint meeting of its DDA and City Council so that the plans are approved by both the same night.	Ecorse and River Rouge City Councils and DDAs	May/June 2020
* Steps marked Optional relate to preparation and adoption of Development and TIF Plans. They only apply if the communities decide they want to be able to use Tax Increment Financing to help pay for projects.		
** If the communities decide to have their DDAs prepare and adopt Development and TIF Plans, Development Area Citizens Councils will most likely have to be formed. This must take place at least 90 before the public hearings on the TIF and Development Plans.		

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November, 2019

