

# **NINE MILE: connected**

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THE NINE MILE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PLAN MEANS A GREAT DEAL TO ALEX ALVAREZ, CHARLES BIGGERS, BROOKS COWAN, CRYSTAL MCLAIN, ASHLEY MCCULLOUGH, HANNAH PETERS AND DEXTER SLUSARSKI. IT REPRESENTS THE CULMINATION OF OUR EDUCATION IN WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY'S MASTERS OF URBAN PLANNING PROGRAM. WE ARE PLANNERS WITH DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, EXPERIENCES, VOICES AND IDEAS BROUGHT TOGETHER BY EDUCATION AND LOCALE. THESE DIFFERENCES PROVIDED AN EXPANSIVE DIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL THAT WERE USED TO DEVELOP A UNITED AND COHESIVE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CORRIDOR. WE BELIEVE DEEPLY IN THIS PLAN'S FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTATION AND IMAGINE AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIONARY CORRIDOR FOR BOTH RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. WE BELIEVE IN THE LONGEVITY OF THIS PROJECT AND HAVE CONSCIOUSLY DESIGNED IT FOR THE USE OF BOTH CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT CHALLENGING PLACES AND THEIR EXISTING CONDITIONS CAN LEAD TO NEW CONVERSATIONS, NEW PERSPECTIVES AND NEW BEGINNINGS.



# CONTENTS

## FORWARD

**2**  
FORWARD

## BLUEPRINT FOR HAZEL PARK'S FUTURE

**9**  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**11**  
VISION STATEMENT

**13**  
IMPARATIVE ACTIONS

**14**  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## THE NINE MILE CORRIDOR

**27**  
LIVE+WORK DISTRICT

**31**  
COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

**39**  
MIXED-USE DISTRICT

**43**  
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

## PHASING PROCESS

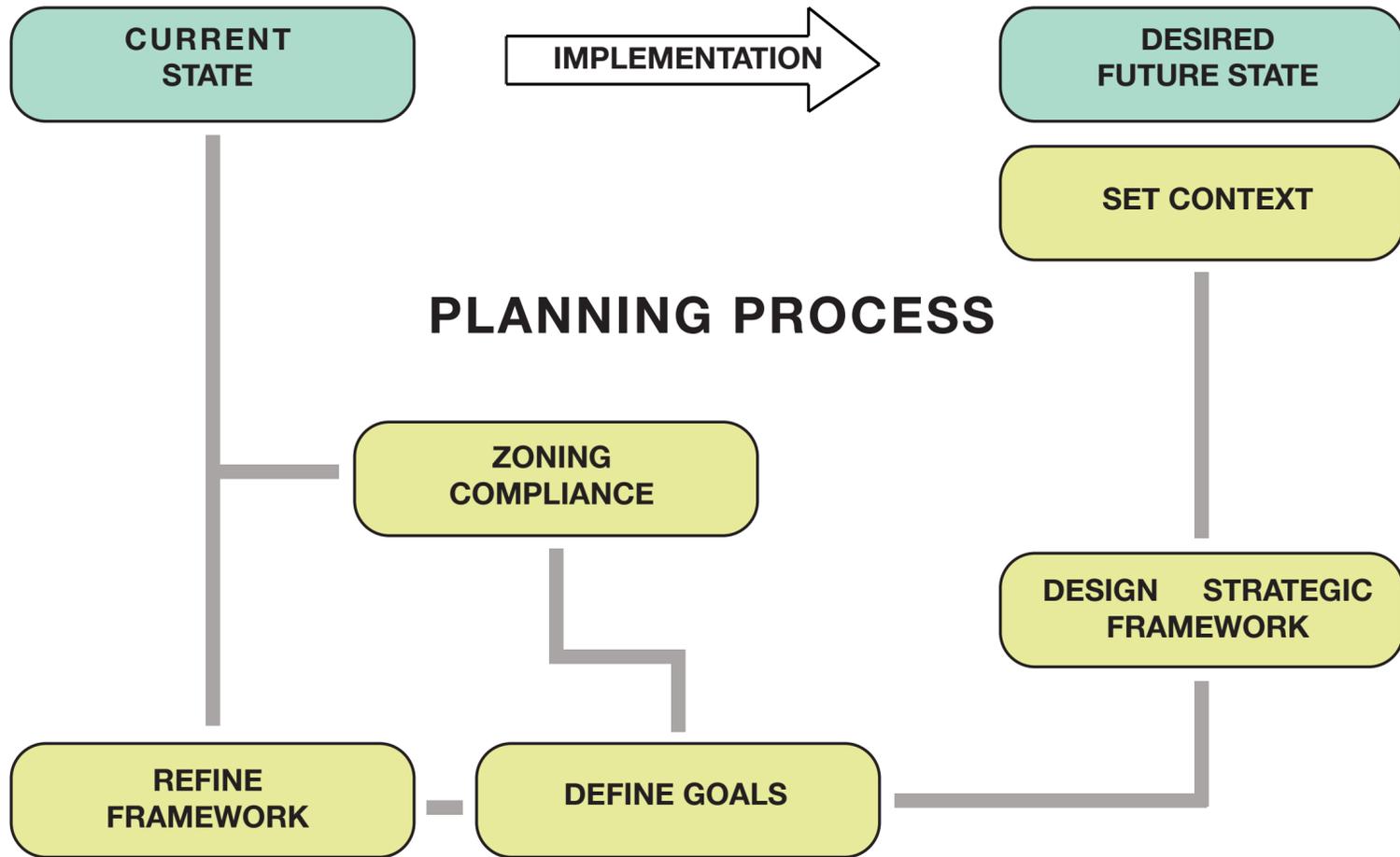
**46**  
PHASING MATRIX

## AFTERWORD

**49**  
HAZEL PARK IN 2030

## HAZEL PARK IS...

- ... the most **DENSELY POPULATED** city in Oakland County.
- ... home to 16,422 **RESILIENT AND HARD-WORKING** residents ready to positively impact their community.
- ... a city of **EXPANSIVE** regional economic assets, including several major thoroughfares home to locally-based industrial, commercial and manufacturing businesses.
- ... recognized statewide for its **CREATIVE** ingenuity.
- ... geographically located among a network of small but **POWERFUL** cities.
- ... rife with unused land poised for **INNOVATIVE** redevelopment.
- ... apt to be one of Michigan's premiere **WALKABLE** downtown destinations.



# FORWARD

## HOW DID WE GET HERE



100+ HOURS



30+ MEETINGS



OVER 1,000+ PHOTOS TAKEN



25 SITE VISITS

This redevelopment plan has been carefully constructed with the residents and visitors of Hazel Park in mind. We started our initial process by identifying the Nine Mile corridor's strengths: we asked ourselves how these strengths should be highlighted throughout the drafting process, even being used to spur change throughout the corridor's weaker areas. Without losing the corridor's industrial legacy and small-town feel, we have proposed three distinct new areas: commercial, mixed used and live-work; in addition, the corridor will retain a large area for industrial businesses. We have also proposed a pedestrian friendly expansion to the bridge over I-75 unlike any other in Michigan. These changes have a specific time frame, broken up into three ranges: immediate, short-term and long-term.

# BLUEPRINT FOR HAZEL PARK'S FUTURE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

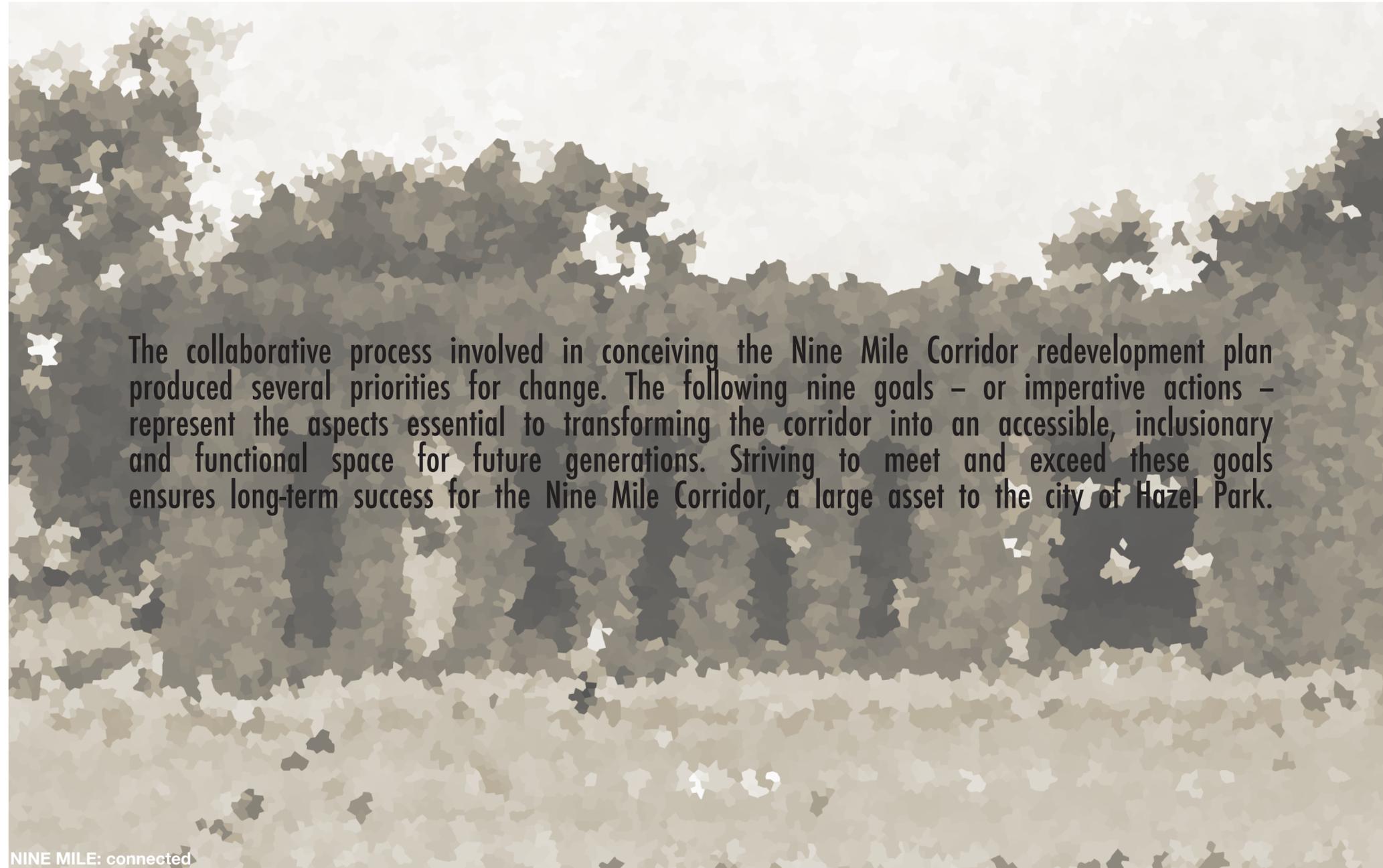
The newly proposed districts have been accompanied by changes to the corridor's aesthetic and functional design, including adding pedestrian crossings and bike lanes, incentivizing new and inviting building facades and altering the city's overzealous requirement for surface parking. Some of the proposed changes are small in scope while others are largely long-term; all will ensure the continued health of the corridor. We believe this plan to be ambitious but attainable. The future of the Nine Mile Corridor begins now.



The vision for this plan is for the Nine Mile Corridor to ultimately become a dynamic, accessible and connective destination. It should provide a powerful draw for investors, residents and visitors, be welcoming and inclusive and serve as an effective linkage to neighboring communities. In addition, the Nine Mile Corridor should be able to stand alone as an illustration of sustainable and walkable design.

## HOW WE ARRIVED AT THIS VISION

Arriving at this vision first required recognizing that Hazel Park has already started its transformation. As of recently, the beginnings of a live-work district have organically come to fruition; residents are pushing for a more modern and walkable downtown. Understanding the Nine Mile Corridor's strengths and weaknesses was one of the most crucial steps taken in constructing a vision statement; how the corridor grows depends on the building blocks already in place. This awareness came from walking the corridor, crossing intersections, counting cars, exploring new areas, taking photos, surveying businesses, measuring streets and sidewalks, examining connections, talking to residents and observing behaviors. The finalized vision statement was eventually born from hundreds of hours surveying, researching, brainstorming and collaborating; the redevelopment plan was constructed in accordance with the vision.



The collaborative process involved in conceiving the Nine Mile Corridor redevelopment plan produced several priorities for change. The following nine goals – or imperative actions – represent the aspects essential to transforming the corridor into an accessible, inclusionary and functional space for future generations. Striving to meet and exceed these goals ensures long-term success for the Nine Mile Corridor, a large asset to the city of Hazel Park.

## IMPERATIVE ACTIONS

1. We must support our current residents and appeal to new residents.
2. We must recognize and appreciate the corridor's strengths and strategically use them to guide current and future improvement projects.
3. We must utilize the redevelopment of the Nine Mile Corridor as a tool to re-energize the local economy, increase job opportunities and strengthen the tax base.
4. We must propose and incentivize new zoning ordinances to fulfill unused potential, enhance long-range sustainability and provide a diversity of land use.
5. We must stimulate and promote a variation of residential densities surrounding the corridor.
6. We must create and foster a welcoming sense of place that is comfortable and safe for everyone.
7. We must pursue a collaborative regional relationship with surrounding communities to ensure the life, health and prosperity of the corridor.
8. We must grant residents with a vested interest the ability to make positive changes to the corridor and aid in renewing their community.
9. We must dedicate ourselves to the implementation of this plan for the future.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



**WALKABILITY**  
A measure of an area's friendliness and adaptation to pedestrians



**CONNECTIVITY**  
The ability of a space to serve as part of an interconnected network of streets, public spaces or cities



**ACCESSIBILITY**  
How easily a space can be reached, approached, entered or used



**SUSTAINABILITY**  
Whether or not a space has the capacity to be upheld and maintained for a long-term future



**FUNCTIONALITY**  
The idea that every piece of a building, street, public space and destination serves a specific purpose and can be used accordingly



**REGIONALISM**  
The recognition that cities are inherently connected by geographic boundaries and that they represent a piece of a much larger puzzle



**INCLUSION**  
The idea that spaces – and the elements within them – are built for everyone

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We were lucky enough to be given this opportunity by the City of Hazel Park and its staff, city council and planning commission. We collaborated with Jeff Campbell, Assistant City Manager for Hazel Park, Rod Arroyo, Clearzoning's President and Transportation Planner and Eric Wilson, Development Manager for Downtown Detroit Partnership. Using this valuable input, we identified core values, imperative actions and project goals and devised a phased implementation plan. We believe that the corridor is unique and in the importance that we capture the essence of its culture. We have thoughtfully prepared a redevelopment plan for the Nine Mile Corridor in accordance with principles that reflect the character of Hazel Park. This plan aims to respect the current integrity of the corridor while improving existing access and linkages, functionality of space, aesthetic design and sustainable infrastructure.

# HAZEL PARK TODAY

A suburb of Detroit established in 1941, Hazel Park is located in the Southeastern most part of Oakland County. Directly adjacent to Ferndale, Royal Oak, Warren and Detroit, Hazel Park's central business district developed as a result of post-World War II suburbanization. The adjacency to I-75 is particularly significant; in 1966, the completion of the freeway through Hazel Park marked its main arterial node. Today, the city stands at 2.8 square miles and is easily accessible by I-696, I-75, Eight Mile, Nine Mile, Ten Mile, Woodward Ave., Dequindre Rd. and John R. The defining boundaries of Hazel Park are Ten Mile (North), Dequindre Rd. (East), Eight Mile (South) and Pilgrim (West).

Within Hazel Park, the main thoroughfares are Nine Mile and John R.; the busiest intersection in the city is where these two roads converge. The Nine Mile Corridor stretches from Pilgrim Avenue (west of the I-75 interchange) to Dequindre. Historically, this corridor has offered primarily industrial and manufacturing businesses along with commercial spaces, retail storefronts and service establishments.

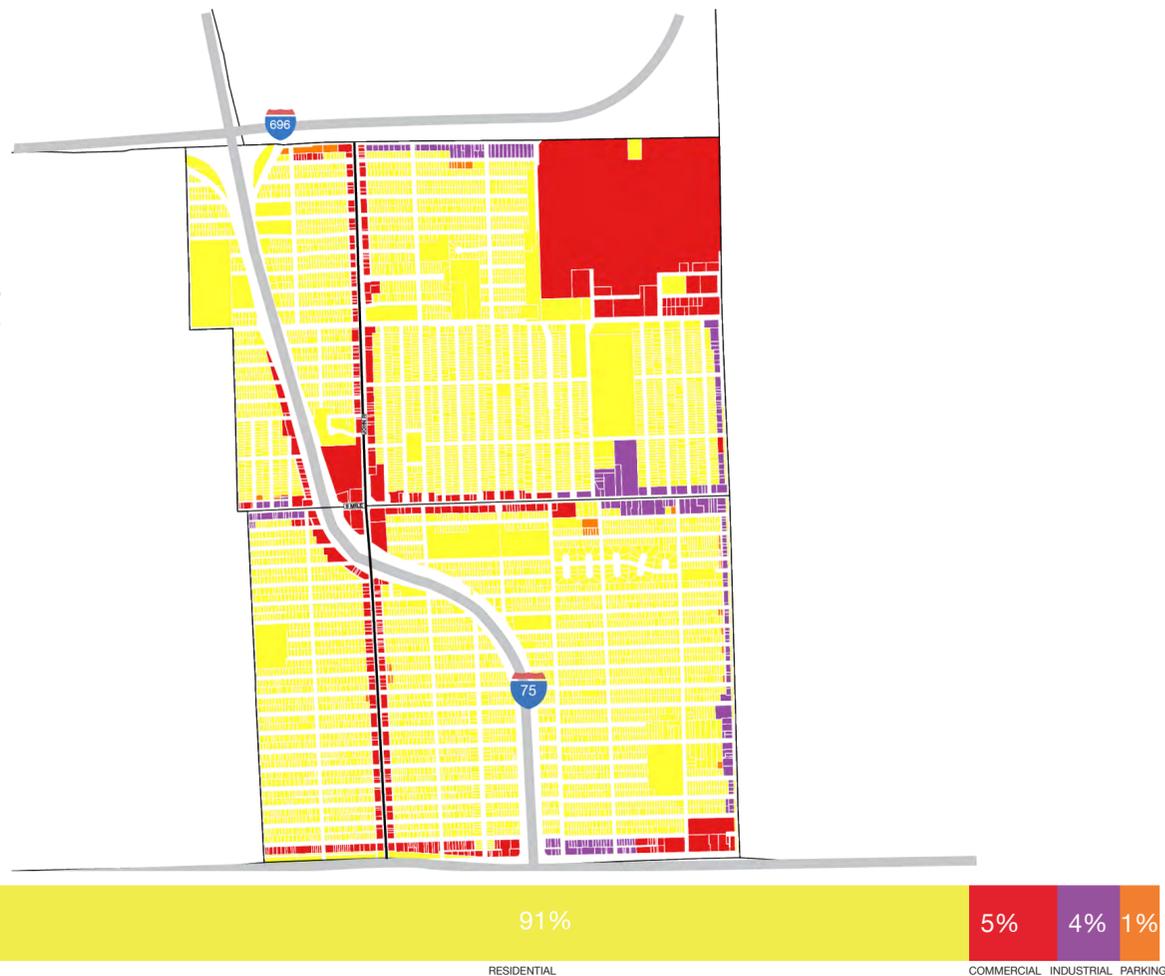
Hazel Park has long been comprised of hard-working, blue collar residents; the businesses along Nine Mile represent this demographic.

With just over 16,000 residents, Hazel Park is a comparatively small suburb of Detroit. These residents largely represent the city's industrial culture: according to the 2010 census, over a third are employed in industry jobs. The median household income in Hazel Park is \$33,095 – lower than the surrounding suburbs of Ferndale, Madison Heights and Warren, but higher than the city of Detroit itself. Hazel Park's median age is 36.1 years. Hazel Park has 6,641 total occupied housing units. Of this number, twice as many are owner occupied (4,271) than renter occupied (2,370). The city's residential areas are fairly dense – over 91% of the city is zoned for residential property. The remaining areas are zoned for industrial and commercial businesses and surface parking. In these residential zones, occupancy rates are steady: 88% of all housing units within Hazel Park are occupied.



# GENERAL LAND USE

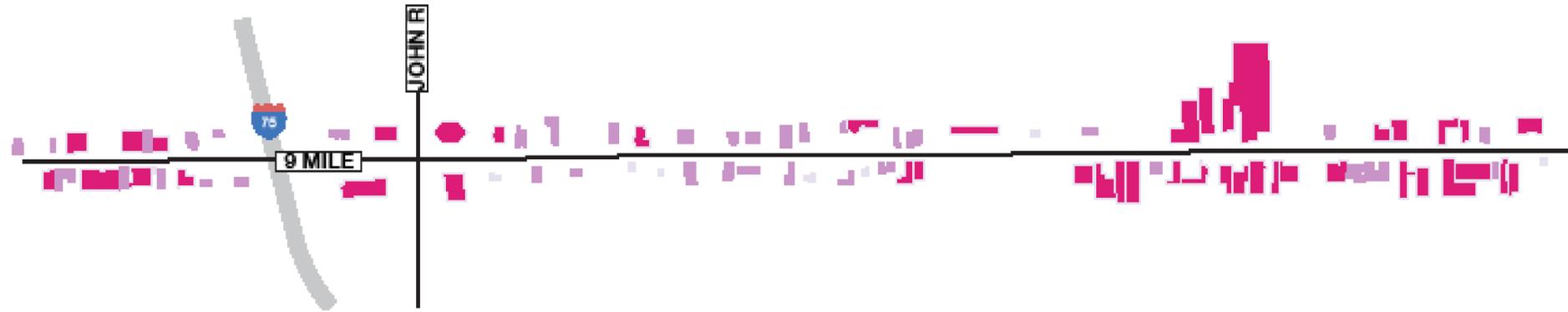
The City of Hazel Park is comprised of 7,777 parcels. One of the most important aspects to understand about the City of Hazel Park is that nearly all of it's land is solely dedicated to residential land uses - 91% to be exact. The remaining 9% of land is divided up between industrial, commercial and dedicated park. With such a small amount of space available for non-residential use, we must ensure that the it's commercial and industrial land uses are both strictly directed at creating character as well as provided flexibility to landowners for property reuse.



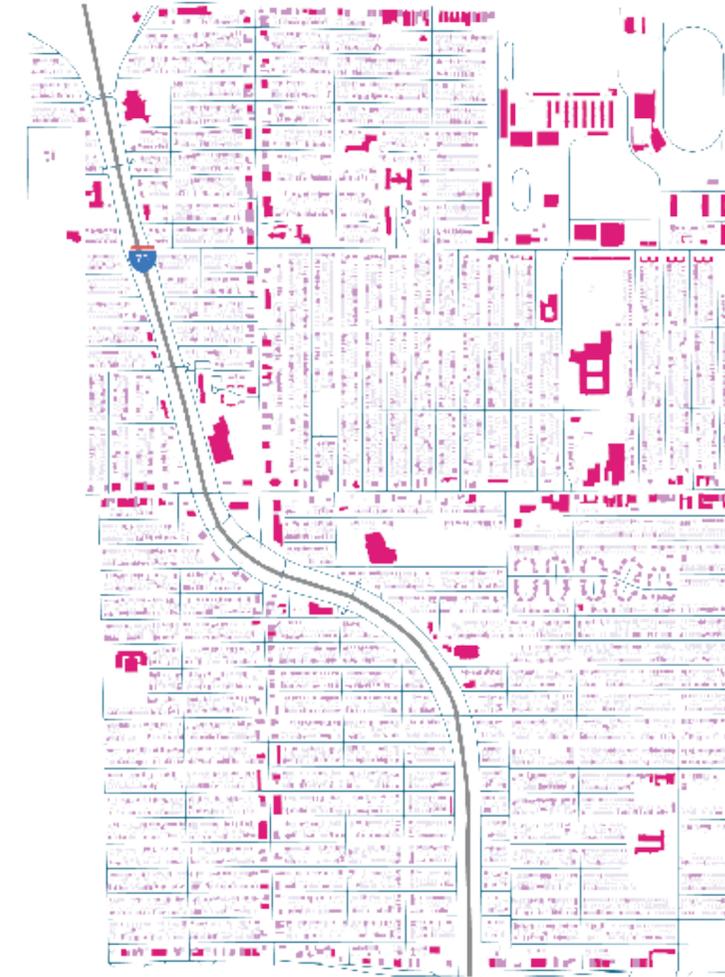
# PUBLIC FACILITIES



# NINE MILE



# HAZEL PARK



As of 2012, according to SEMCOG, there were 11,986 structures in the City of Hazel Park - 8,756 of which were less than 1,000 square feet. The Nine Mile corridor is home to 100 of these structures that vary widely in size. In the zoning overlay districts that we have proposed, each district has been developed based on each designated areas building square footage.

# BUILDING SQUARE FOOTAGE

While Hazel Park bills itself as the “friendly city,” the Nine Mile Corridor currently lacks the pedestrian accessibility that goes hand in hand with this welcoming reputation. Historically an industrial corridor, Nine Mile has struggled in the last twenty years to modernize itself and attract a variety of occupants. The city of Hazel Park has a total of 11,986 buildings – this includes residential housing, commercial, industrial and mixed-use structures. Of this total number, 98 of them sit directly on Nine Mile, with only two being residential. The average size of these buildings is just over 900 square feet. As of 2012, the businesses along Nine Mile employed 495 people. The corridor is surrounded by a large amount of close-knit residential housing. Hazel Park is the most densely populated city in Oakland County: of the total number of buildings within the city, over fifty-five percent are residential. Hazel Park

is a middle-class suburb with hard-working residents; the Nine Mile corridor paints a vivid representation of this. This industrial character of the corridor does not have to be abandoned to transform the area into an accessible and walkable destination. On the contrary, preserving the industrial culture while encouraging inviting business facades with appropriate setbacks, glazing and height requirements would serve to improve current business volume along the corridor. Eliminating excess surface parking lots and adding pedestrian crosswalks, landscaping and implementing new and innovative zoning regulations will help transform the character of the corridor. It is extremely possible for the corridor to retain its industrial and commercial businesses if they are accompanied by successful zoning and aesthetic design practices.

# THE NINE MILE CORRIDOR

## THE CHARACTER



## LIVE+WORK DISTRICT

Like its name suggests, a live-work district offers options for both living and working within the same space. This concept was born organically from a desire to be within close proximity to a work space or studio. Live-work spaces add to the diversity of a neighborhood's housing options, respond to the changing face of the national workforce and fill a natural niche in a city's landscape.

## COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

A commercial district is often tied to a city's downtown or central business district, though this is not always the case. This zone is comprised of businesses designated for commercial use including restaurants, retail shops, theaters and offices. Successful commercial zones draw residents and visitors, increase and strengthen a city's tax base and have a positive impact on surrounding areas.



A mixed-use district is comprised of buildings or structures that offer multiple uses in the same space. These uses can include residential, commercial, cultural and institutional and are often integrated physically and functionally. Mixed-use districts offer a unique alternative to typical single-use zones by increasing average density, creating a walkable environment and strengthening the area's character.

## MIXED USE DISTRICT

## INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

An industrial zone is a concentrated area of a city that is comprised of businesses zoned for industrial use. These zones are typically located on the edges of a city, away from residential areas and adjacent to transportation access points. Examples of industrial businesses include manufacturing facilities, warehouses, distribution centers and chemical plants. Strong industrial zones contribute to a city's overall production quotient and limit their impact on the surrounding environment.

# THE FUTURE ZONING

## THE PLANNING ELEMENTS



The City of Hazel park is an overwhelmingly automobile-centric town and is, at present, not overly conducive to pedestrian activity. The Nile Mile Corridor follows this same pattern. However, creating a welcoming and comfortable environment for those on foot is utterly essential. There are quite a few navigational issues for pedestrians that transcend the corridor: when taking into account accessibility, walkability and connectivity, there are several areas to be improved upon.

# LIVE+WORK DISTRICT

## THE WHY

Hazel Park has already started to attract the beginnings of a live-work district to the Nine Mile Corridor. Nine Mile has several large vacant buildings with adjacent surface parking lots apt for redevelopment and reuse. While these lots offer several possibilities for future use, live-work spaces ensure vital, long-term sustainability. Allowing tenants to both live and work in these buildings, the corridor will benefit from both a diversified tax base and an increased commercial output. Live-work spaces have surged in popularity in neighboring Detroit and have attracted young and creative professionals to newly renovated loft spaces. Offering competitively low living costs, Hazel Park's proposed live-work district can capture a similar demographic, bringing new residents to an inviting small town.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

**A** Promote a variety of new and innovative business models that are compatible with diversified residential densities.

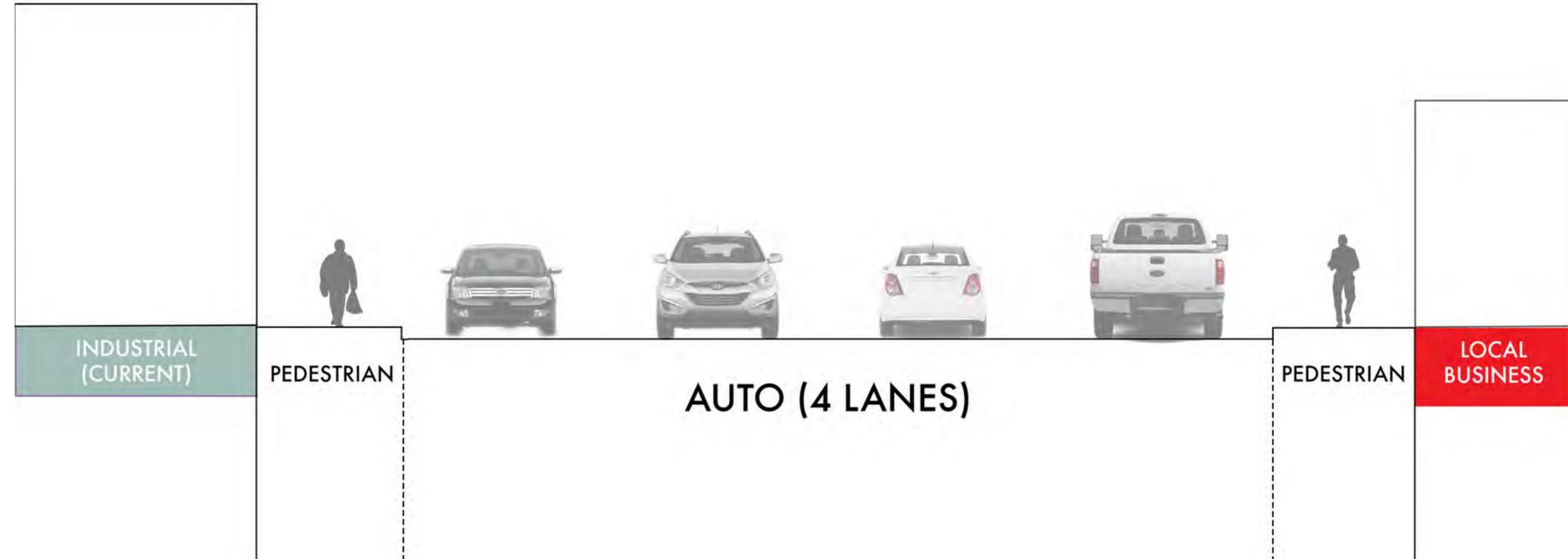
**B** Enforce a strategic road diet to decrease vehicular speeds and crash rates, increase pedestrian safety and create a welcoming sense of place.

**C** Maintain current and extend new connections to the neighboring community of Ferndale in accordance with their "Ferndale Moves" initiative.

**D** Encourage local businesses to take advantage of widened public spaces by offering amenities to pedestrians.

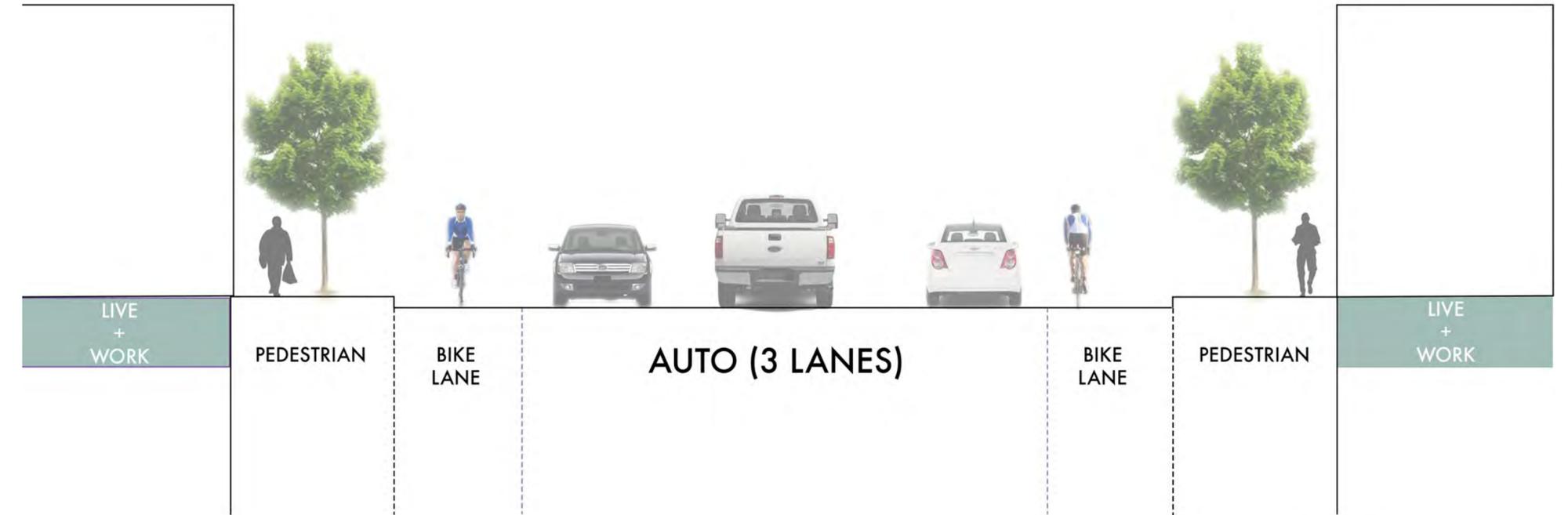
# LIVE+WORK DISTRICT

In the Live-Work area, there are no crosswalks. This makes the accessibility to both sides of the street extremely difficult for residents. Jaywalking is extremely common in this district: walkability is compromised when there is a lack of safe access to northern and southern parts of the Nine Mile Corridor.



# LIVE+WORK DISTRICT

Installation of a crosswalk at the intersection of Pilgrim Avenue and Nine Mile will increase the accessibility and walkability of the live-work area. Consideration of improvements to sidewalks would also enhance the long term walkability of the corridor





NINE MILE: connected

# COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

## THE WHY

Taking inspiration from the 5th Street Bridge on Atlanta's Georgia Tech campus, the proposed final product would be the first of its kind in Michigan. The lack of entry point signs indicating the boundaries of Hazel Park would be remedied on the westernmost portion of the city: the bridge would mark a distinguished break in the landscape. Complete with widened and defined sidewalks, inviting benches and lighting and a significant amount of green space, the bridge would serve as a connective point to surrounding amenities for motorists, cyclists and walkers alike. Reducing the amount of traffic lanes with a road diet ensures fewer accidents and slower automobile speeds. Extending this theme of a welcoming and walkable atmosphere throughout the commercial area of the corridor is the absolutely vital. This area, part of Hazel Park's central business district, would captivate and inspire residents and visitors.

NINE MILE: connected

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

**A** Foster consistency in functional and aesthetic connections with surrounding communities.

**B** Demonstrate principles of successful urban design to create a welcoming sense of place.

**C** Emphasize accessibility by establishing pedestrian pathways to local amenities.

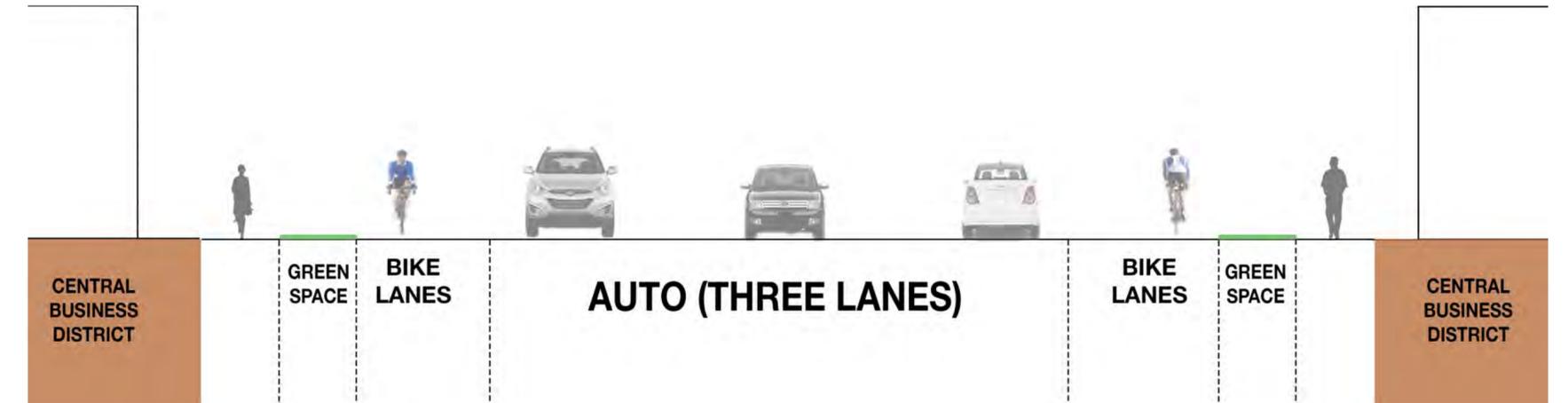
**D** Redevelop the I-75 overpass bridge into a one-of-a-kind walkable destination by supplementing the north and south sides with an additional twenty-five feet.

# COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

When examining the Commercial district overlay, the major issue for pedestrians is the ability to safely navigate the I-75 bridge. It is an extremely overwhelming and unpleasant experience for residents of all ages to cross the bridge safely.

# COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Excess noise, thin and crumbling sidewalks and chain link fencing send unwelcoming non-verbal cues to residents and visitors. Creating a destination bridge with benches, green space, bike lanes and other amenities would make the overpass a unique, enjoyable and safe experience.



**COMMERCIAL DISTRICT**

**Fifth Street Bridge  
Atlanta Georgia**

**CASE STUDY**

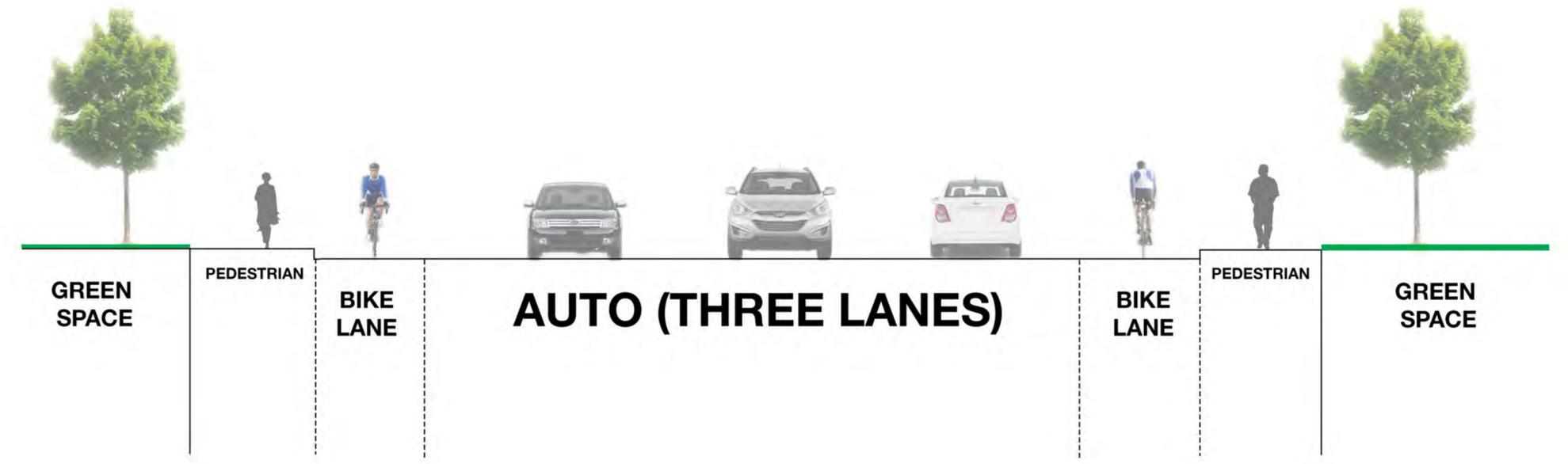
**COMMERCIAL DISTRICT**

**Fifth Street  
Aerial**

**CASE STUDY**

© 2013

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NINE MILE: connected

# MIXED-USE DISTRICT

## THE WHY

A mixed use section of a central business district is perhaps one of the biggest signs that a downtown is healthy and vibrant. Cultivating first floor commercial businesses with additional second and third floor offices, residential spaces and studios allows for a variety of uses within each space. Because Hazel Park is so residentially dense, offering housing on top of retail spaces provides additional options to those looking to rent or buy. This density means that mixed use districts have more space to be used by additional businesses or pedestrians. The Nine Mile Corridor struggles with inconsistent setbacks, vacant lots, an unhealthy amount of surface parking, inhospitable business facades and an abundance of one-story, single use buildings. Enforcing a minimum glazing requirement for the first floor of buildings within the district will create a friendly, approachable area. In addition, allowing the construction of three story buildings and enforcing consistent setbacks along the corridor will create a cohesive and dense ambiance.

NINE MILE: connected

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

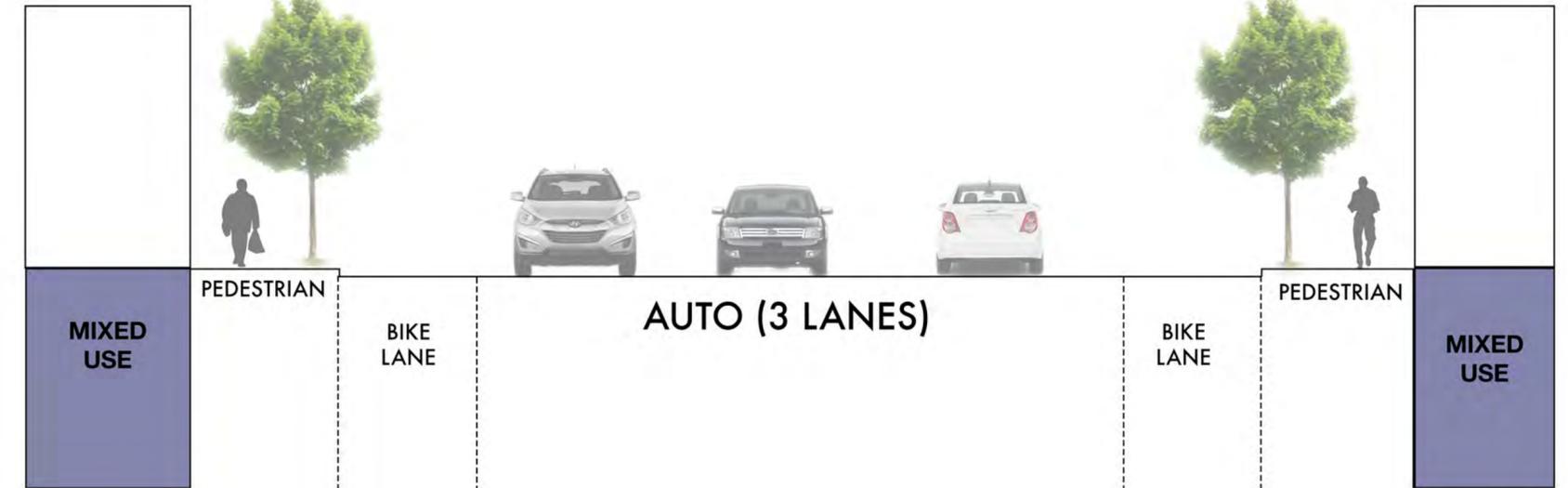
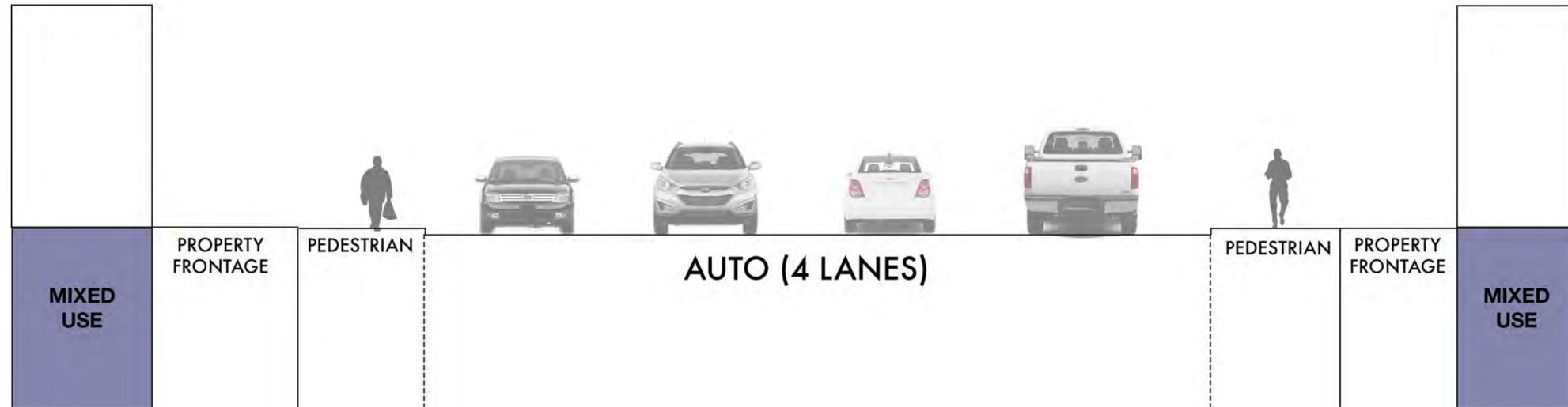
- A** Increase current sidewalk width from eight feet to twelve feet to allow for an optimal pedestrian experience.
- B** Use the excess space from the road diet to allow for convenient on-street parking.
- C** Implement principles of good design in an inviting streetscape that provides safe and efficient routes to schools within the district.
- D** Encourage businesses to contribute to the corridor's approachability by enforcing window, height and setback requirements.

# MIXED-USE DISTRICT

The Mixed Use district is another section of Nine Mile that should be much more accommodating to the pedestrians trying to reach both sides of the corridor. Creating safe routes for children to cross Nine Mile is vital to the city of Hazel park.

# MIXED-USE DISTRICT

As children leave Hazel Park Junior High School and approach the intersection at Nine Mile, they should feel comfortable and secure crossing the street. The possibility of growth around several prominent intersections along Nine Mile, including Vassar and Battelle, is strong if the intersections continue to remain busy with residents their children walking to and from school.





NINE MILE: connected

# LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

## THE WHY

The Nine Mile Corridor has long been Hazel Park's primary industrial corridor. The industrial zone has been extremely profitable for the city and continues to bring in substantial yearly revenue. Without losing this character, the industrial section can be updated to be a comfortable and welcoming spot that maintains the continuity between the corridor's zones. The extension of bike lanes and modern streetscaping would allow to area to be used by everyone including industrial business. Additionally, altering the definition for industrial zone would allow non-traditional and innovative businesses to occupy the corridor. Attracting pioneers in growing industrial fields would make the corridor attractive to potential visitors, customers and tenants.

NINE MILE: connected

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

**A** Maintain the unique heritage of the Nine Mile Corridor by sustaining current industrial businesses.

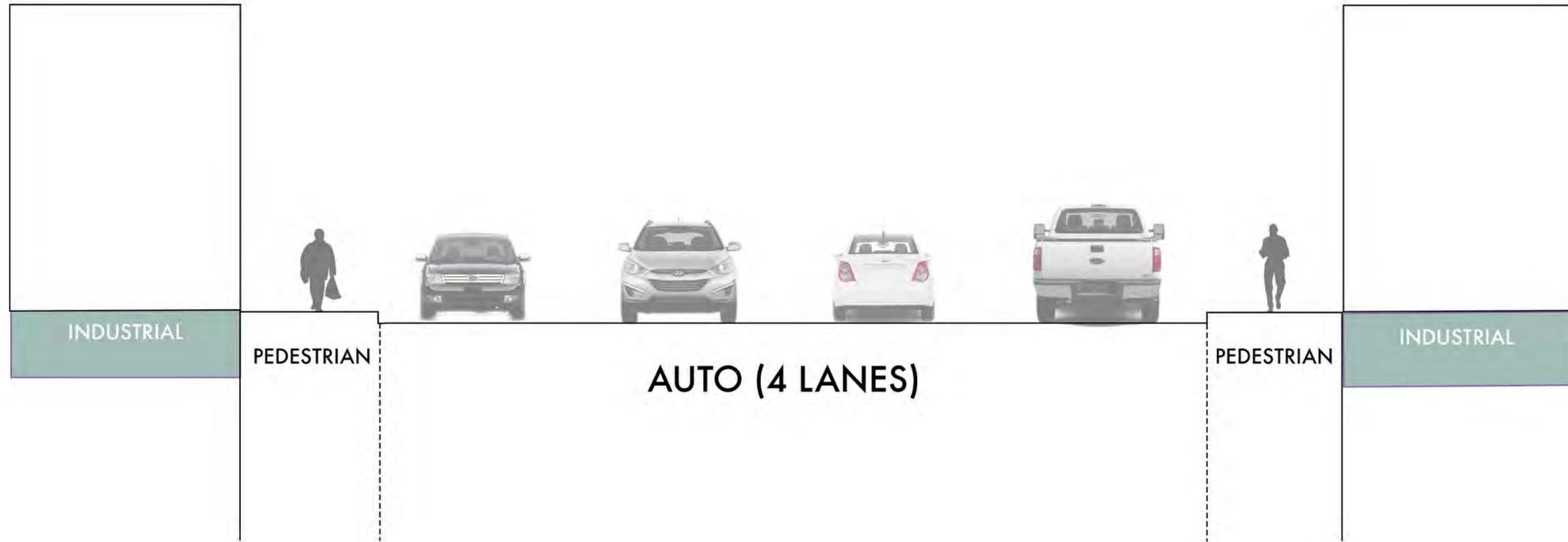
**B** Encourage and foster new industrial businesses with high earning potentials to increase citywide output and revenue and strengthen the corridor's tax base.

**C** Preserve and expand connections to other sections of the corridor and neighboring communities.

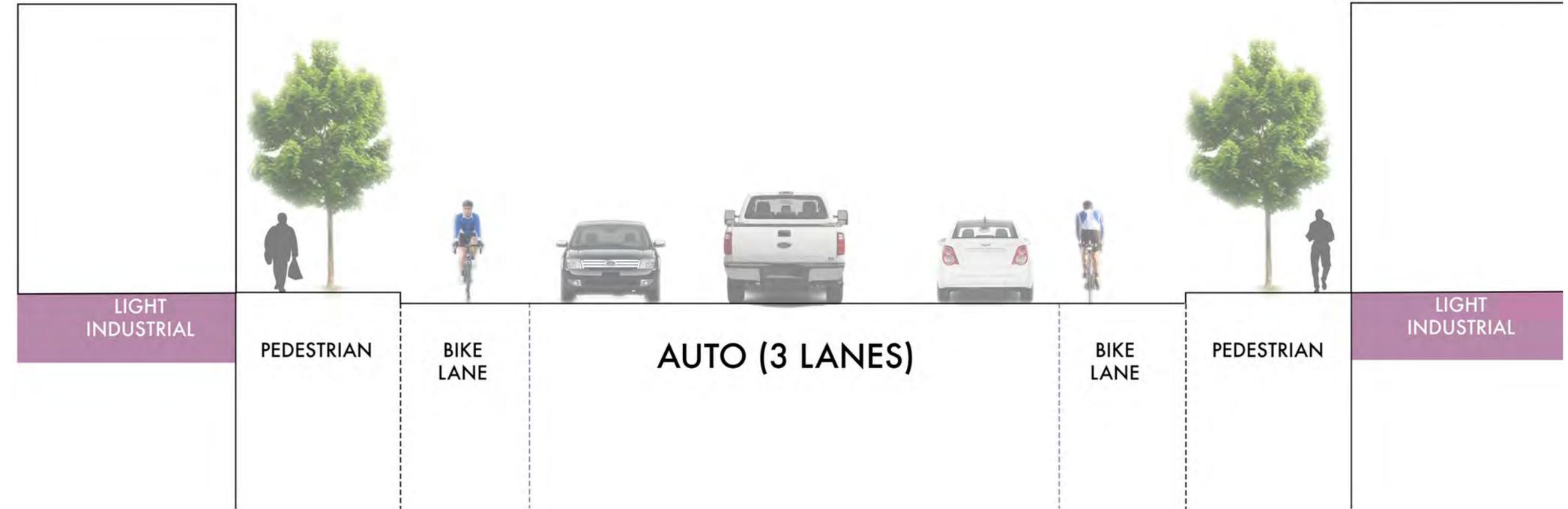
**D** Increase flexibility in industrial zoning attract innovative and cutting-edge specialty businesses.



The Light Industrial portion of the corridor represents an area where pedestrian travel will likely be significantly lighter, but will be supplemented by additional business activity.



Regardless, the area should still be accommodating to residents and visitors and encourage the continuance of bike lanes and slower traffic speeds. The residential portion of the corridor is expected to grow significantly and the neighboring areas will benefit from the additional traffic from workers and residential overflow.



## PHASE 1

Reduce traffic lanes from 4 to 3 with a center turn lane between Pilgrim and Dequindre  
Adopt new zoning ordinance with Live+Work, Commercial and Muced-Use Zones  
Add crosswalks at Pilgrim and Vassar with paint stripes, yield signage and pedestrian buoys  
Improve crosswalk conditions at Highland and Russell with Paint signage  
Decorate I-75 bridge with nicer fencing, lights, greenery, public art and seasonal themes  
Improve wayfinding to public parks  
"Wecolme to Hazel Park" signs at Pilgrim and Dequindre

## PHASE 2

Pave sidewalks to be all concrete material from building edge to curb  
Extend sidewalks in Miced-Use zone from 8ft out to 10-12 ft  
Paint sharrows in areas where sidewalk expansion extends into bike lane space  
Create sidewalk bumpouts at Pilgrim, John R, Highland, Vassar and Russell crosswalks  
Sidewalk improvments, greenery, trees, and planting strips

## PHASE 3

Extend pedestrian space by 25ft on north and south side of I-75 bridge  
Create a street parking with metering system in Mixed Use Zone  
Extend pedestrian space by 25ft on north and south side of I-75 bridge  
Sidewalk improvements, greenery, trees, and planting strips

# PHASING PROCESS

# AFTERWORD

## HAZEL PARK IN 2030

The intention of the Nine Mile Corridor plan is to help Hazel Park utilize its full potential by capitalizing on its existing assets – and establish a timeframe for doing so. With three strategically planned phases, this plan is apt to transform the Nine Mile Corridor into a functional space that offers a diverse range of uses. It’s proximity to major arterials and thriving communities, historic commitment to industry and dense urban fabric insinuates that Hazel Park already the resources necessary to succeed. Using these resources as building blocks, we have outlined a methodology that will, in time, generate both a vibrant corridor and an alluring regional destination.

If the Nine Mile Corridor Plan is implemented, Hazel Park will look much different in 2030 than it does at present. Underutilized surface parking lots will be transformed into dense spaces used for living, working, eating, walking, shopping and playing. Streets, lined with green space, welcoming benches and sidewalk cafes, will comfortably accommodate everyone who uses the space, including pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. A variety of commercial, industrial, live-work and mixed used spaces inhabit the corridor, providing extensive options to residents and visitors. The I-75 bridge will serve as a bold entry point to the community, providing those passing through – as well as those driving underneath – a resolute impression of the city’s character and strength. Poised for redevelopment, the Nine Mile Corridor now stands at a dire crossroads: implementing the this plan requires a great deal of funding to make turn these recommendations into brick and mortar. This should not deter the city of Hazel Park: on the contrary, it should feed its desire for a flourishing corridor in the heart of its central business district. An investment in the Nine Mile Corridor today by the City of Hazel Park is absolutely crucial to its survival – and it will likely be one of great return tomorrow.

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