

Executive Summary

East Genesee Avenue Corridor is located in the community of Saginaw, Michigan. Over time, it has experienced economic hardships that are reflected by its physical and socio-economic profiles. It has not received much focus from community, county, or state leaders; thus, it has been chosen as a site location of study for the Michigan State University Urban and Regional Planning program's practicum class of 2003.

East Genesee Avenue is primarily a commercial corridor, inclusive of many businesses that serve the local community. Although it is a major thoroughfare that provides access into and out of the city of Saginaw, it does not influence the regional market. This created the initiative to conduct a trade area analysis for the region that identified the correlation of where people live and the types of businesses they patronize. In order to evaluate the East Genesee Avenue market, extensive data was utilized from sources such as the United States Census Bureau and Consolidated Analysis Center Incorporated (CACI). Business owners in the corridor recognized the need for improvements, but the overall opinion regarding East Genesee Avenue appeared to be contentment.

Upon the examination of the study area, the practicum team identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that might have effects on the corridor. The results of this analysis, as well as facade characteristics and site exterior conditions are included in the report on aesthetics. Another important factor considered within the commercial corridor was the condition of the road surface, traffic conditions and trends, and pedestrian/automobile conflicts.

The aforementioned elements and their analysis are then compared to other business districts in the Comparative Corridor Analysis section. The practicum team chose four corridors that could provide clear examples of successful revitalization strategies that the East Genesee corridor can potentially implement. The four locations are West Vernor Avenue in Detroit, South Portage Street in Kalamazoo, Plainfield Avenue in Grand Rapids, and Gravois Road in metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri. All of these locations were chosen because they are traditional commercial corridors that have felt the effects of a struggling economy, but are currently in the process of discovering ways to improve their overall economic output and effectiveness on the communities that they serve.

Conducting a comparative analysis of these cities has introduced some positive thoughts on what East Genesee Avenue could use to begin revitalization efforts. Among these are to take advantage of the traffic flow throughout the corridor. East Genesee serves as a major route that carries substantial volumes of traffic that would be an existing opportunity for commerce to grow in the area. Another identifiable opportunity would be to consolidate interests between those who live and work in the corridor and city, county, and state officials. An example of this would be to extend the Downtown Development Authority boundaries to include a wider area of East Genesee Avenue. This would allow for all members of the community to focus on the development of the commercial area.