Zoning Ordinance Update

CITY OF EASTPOINTE, MICHIGAN

Eastpointe is a community located just outside of the eastside of Detroit with a population of over 30,000 people. Like many communities in Michigan, Eastpointe experienced the pains of an outdated, non-user and non-business friendly zoning ordinance. However, Eastpointe's visionary and guiding documents like the Master Plan and the 9 Mile Strategic Corridor Plan represent their true core values such as creating a more walkable, accessible, business friendly and retail diverse city. In order to meet these goals and implement their visionary documents, the city of Eastpointe called upon McKenna to perform a holistic update of the zoning ordinance.

McKenna created a work plan that prioritized community engagement and Redevelopment Ready Community Best Practices. Along with city administration, McKenna created a steering committee that consisted of members from the Planning Commission, City Council, Downtown Development Authority, Zoning Board of Appeals, City leaders and the Redevelopment Ready Community Planner. In order to make the process interactive, McKenna created worksheets for each Steering Committee meeting. Worksheets contained creative and educational material to guide the committee members in not only understanding complex planning and zoning policy, but also leading them to make the best decisions for their future growth and development needs. One concept that McKenna helped cultivate was the Central Business District Overlay, which is a zoning tool that helps preserve the iconic four corners of the city's downtown: Gratiot and 9 Mile. Even though this major intersection, or major node, sees a lot of vehicle traffic, it is the heart of the city's downtown. Therefore, the committee created the overlay, which requires elevated design standards and edited business uses for these specific four corners. With the new zoning ordinance, the city designed its community to be the community they always knew it could be but didn't quite have the tools.