



# The Avenue

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## **Proposed Special Assessment Lighting District** *Frequently Asked Questions*

Clinton Township's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) may soon be lighting the way along Gratiot. The DDA has approved the installation of new lights along the median with the proposed \$311,171 project to include 83 poles from 14 mile Road to north of Metro Parkway.

The project represents the single largest planned improvement the DDA will make along Gratiot Avenue. Construction of the project will be paid for through funds from the DDA. The DDA will also contribute \$15,000 a year toward the operation of the lights.

Property owners and business owners who own the property will be asked to contribute the remainder of the operational costs, about \$55,000 a year spread among some 300 parcels along the Gratiot corridor. Now here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about the proposed Special Assessment District.

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### *What is a Special Assessment District?*

The term Special Assessment describes a method of financing public improvements by distributing the cost of a project over those property owners who will reap a direct benefit. A special assessment can be made for any public improvement which is of such a nature as to directly benefit any property within a defined area. The most common types of improvements that are financed by the SAD process include road improvement, sanitary sewers, water mains, storm sewers sidewalks and street lighting.

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### *Who can start a Special Assessment project?*

Special Assessment Districts may be initiated (1) either through a resolution by the Township Board of Trustees or (2) at the request of a property owner (s) or organization representing the property owners. In the case of the township's proposed SAD, a request for the lighting improvement along Gratiot Avenue was made by the Downtown Development Authority to the Township Board of Trustees. The Township Board has given its approval for the DDA to petition property owners to establish the proposed SAD.

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### *What is the next step in creating the Special Assessment District?*

The Clinton Township Downtown Development Authority is now proceeding to petition property owners to approve the Special Assessment District. Property owners are being notified through the mail of the proposed Special Assessment District. In addition, a special informational meeting at the campus of Baker College is intended to solicit support for the project. Authorization forms to approve the project will be available at the meeting and will also be mailed to property owners.

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**A PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
AND THE GRATIOT BUSINESS OWNERS ASSOCIATION**

## **How much will the lighting project cost, and how much will I have to pay as a property owner?**

As stated earlier, the construction of the light poles along Gratiot will cost \$311, 171. The DDA will contribute \$103, 847 toward those costs with the remainder of the construction costs to be paid for through operating revenues (electrical costs).

The DDA will also contributed \$15,000 per year toward the estimated \$70,000 per year in electrical costs. The remainder of the electrical costs (\$55,000 per year) will be paid for by property owners. The cost to property owners will be \$2.13 per front lineal foot along Gratiot. For example, a property owner with 100 feet of frontage on Gratiot will pay \$213 per year. The smallest lots along Gratiot will pay less than \$100 per year, but there are some property owners with hundreds of feet of frontage that could pay up to \$2,500 per year for operational costs.

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## **How did the DDA come up with \$2.13 per linear foot?**

The annual \$70,000 in electrical costs was divided by the total number of linear feet owned by property owners along Gratiot. The DDA's annual \$15,000 was subtracted from the result in order to lower costs for property owners.

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## **Why light up Gratiot at all?**

Safety and a general welcoming atmosphere for shoppers are the two primary reasons for the lighting project. The Gratiot corridor in Clinton Township carries more than 80,000 vehicles a day, and at night the corridor is pretty dark compared to the business district south of the township. The Gratiot corridor in Roseville and East Detroit has been lighted for many years, and those communities have experienced significant improvements in the business corridor. It is thought that much of this revitalization can be attributed to municipal and business support of infrastructure improvements such as lighting, median development, sidewalks, etc. The lights would provide the corridor with a generally welcoming atmosphere for shoppers who will feel more secure in a well-lighted business community.

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## **What would be the timing of the project if approved?**

It is estimated that DTE would take between six and nine months to engineer and construct the project once the Special Assessment District is approved by property owners. That means the lights could be installed by the holiday season in 2008.