

# The Woodward Avenue Corridor Study

- A COMMUNITY BASED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

## WOODWARD AVENUE - EARLY BEGINNINGS

The Woodward Avenue Corridor is rich in history. In its early days it served as an Indian commerce route known as the "Saginaw Trail". Later it was the first highway in the country to be paved. In the 1950's and 60's it became the new model "test track" for the big three auto manufacturers.

## A COMMUNITY THOROUGHFARE

Woodward Avenue has touched the lives of millions, not only in the communities of Ferndale, Pleasant Ridge, Huntington Woods, Berkley, Royal Oak and Birmingham but also in the region and the state of Michigan. Woodward is "M-1", Michigan's #1 highway, and it passes through the heart of Oakland County.

## FOUNDATION FOR OUR FUTURE

It is through an understanding of our past that we can learn and use what we have learned to help mold our future. It is for this reason that the Woodward Avenue Steering Committee has created this timeline and gathered additional historical information.

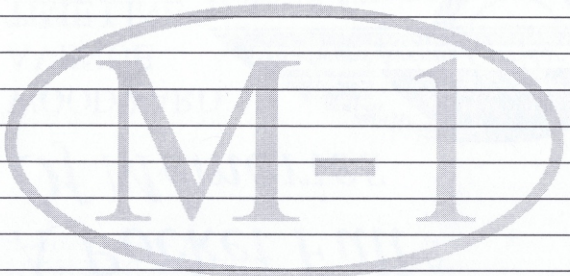
The mission of the Woodward Steering Committee formed in late 1993, is to put together a "Master Plan" for the corridor to ensure a premium quality of life for the Avenue into the 21st century.

## GET INVOLVED

For more information on the Woodward Avenue Steering Committee's work, call or write: Oakland County Development & Planning Division, 1200 North Telegraph Rd., Department 412, Pontiac, MI 48341-0412. (810) 858-0720.

## IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS?

If you have any ideas for improving the Woodward Avenue Corridor please fill out this card, place it in an envelope, and mail it to the address listed to the left.




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### The Future



2000

1995 **Woodward Dream Cruise - 1995**

1993 Woodward Avenue Corridor Study begins.

1992 Ferndale streetscape improvements.

Gulf War

1990 1990 - I-696 completed, linking east and west segments.

"Cold War Ends"  
Challenger disaster

1985

1983 - SEMTA ends rail commuter service between Detroit and Pontiac.

1980

1980 - Auto Industry begins massive reorganization to combat imports

Personal computers

1977 - Beaumont Hospital expands to 940 beds. Renaissance Center dedicated.

1975

1975 - 555 building constructed in Birmingham.

Oil embargo

Michigan Lottery

Man on moon 1970

1970 - Ferndale population - 32,000. Red Run Creek enclosed. 12 Mile widened from Woodward to Gardner in Berkley.

King Assassinated

Kennedy Assassinated

Woodstock

Vietnam War

Detroit riots

1966 - Beaumont Hospital expands to 700 beds.

Minicomputer 1965

The Beatles

Kennedy Assassinated

1st K-Mart

Cuban missile crisis

1960

1960 - Urban renewal starts in Ferndale.

St. Lawrence seaway opens

1959 - I-75 proposed.

Soupy Sales

1955

1955 - Beaumont Hospital opens (238 beds)

1954 - Northland Mall opens, world's first shopping mall

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Rock-n-Roll Music

1955

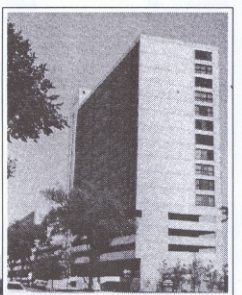
1955 - Beaumont Hospital opens (238 beds)

1954 - Northland Mall opens, world's first shopping mall


First business computer developed

Korean War begins

1950



555 Building - Birmingham



Cruising Woodward Era

Hot cars, warm nights and cold drinks.

**TIME LINE 1950-2000**  
Woodward Avenue Corridor Study Background Report

1950

Channel 4 TV

1947 - Buses replace interurban street cars.

1945

1943 - Ferndale population - 31,000

1942 - Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority organized.

1940

World War II begins

1939 - Hunter bypass completed.

1935

1936 - "New" Shrine of the Little Flower constructed.

1934 - Detroit Urban Railway shuts down.

1933 - Birmingham becomes a city

1932 - Berkley and Huntington Woods incorporate as cities. Woodward widened. Zoning laws adopted in Royal Oak.

1931 - Grand Trunk Railroad relocated. Hunter Blvd. constructed. Interurban to Flint and Pontiac abandoned.

1930

Great Depression

1928 - Detroit Zoo opens. Woodward completed - 8 lane super highway. Electric traffic signals installed at 9 mile and Woodward.

1927 - Ferndale becomes a city - population, 14,407

1926 - Woodward becomes federal highway.

1925 - Thirty homes in Huntington Woods. Widening of Woodward virtually completed

1923 - Woodward Ave widened. Berkley village charter adopted.

1921 - Wider Woodward Bill initiates highway widening. Royal Oak becomes a city.

1920

WWJ Radio

1920 - Automobile begins to replace the interurban.

1919 - Electric service provided to Berkley. Pleasant Ridge incorporated as a village.

1918 - Ferndale incorporated as a village - population, 1,600

1916 - Sixteen foot wide pavement extended from Detroit to Pontiac.

1915

1915 - Highland Park Ford plant opens. Ford begins assembly line.

1915

World War I begins

Gasoline stations

1912 - Woodward paved to Royal Oak.

1910

Between 1910 and 1919 nearly 8,000 acres were platted in Royal Oak Township.

Electricity becomes available

1908 - Woodward paved, 6 to 7 mile road Michigan's first traffic fatality. Durant forms General Motors.


1905

1905 - First street lighting in Royal Oak. Ford's Model T.

1906 - Pleasant Ridge platted.


1900

1900 - Royal Oak population, 468



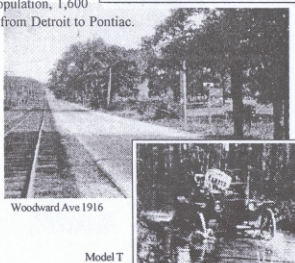
Shrine of the Little Flower

After the Rochester-Lake Orion-Flint interurban line closed down in 1934, the City of Royal Oak salvaged its public transportation by purchasing the D.U.R. tracks from eight mile to main and catalpa and leased them to the Detroit Street Railways which provided service to the Detroit Zoo from 1931 to 1947.




DETROIT ZOO

Between 1910 and 1920, the United States' urban population rose 29%, but Michigan's jumped 68.9% and Oakland's soared 238.3%. Although Oakland's population increased 40,474 from 1910 to 1920 there was little "urban sprawl", with two thirds of the growth occurring in incorporated villages.



Woodward Ave 1916



Model T

**TIME LINE 1900-1950**  
Woodward Avenue Corridor Study Background Report

1900

First light bulb

1899 - Addition of Rochester line to interurban.

American/Spanish War

1897 - Interurban service extended to Pontiac from Royal Oak.

1895

1895 - Detroit urban railway established between Royal Oak and Birmingham.

1893 - Pontiac buggy company becomes city's leading employer.

1892 - Henry Ford develops two cylinder automobile.

1891 - Royal Oak Village is incorporated, first wood plank sidewalk.

1890

1890 - Detroit urban railway opens.

First Phones

1887 - Hudson's opens store in Detroit.

1886 - First electric street car began operating on Woodward Ave.

1885

1885 - Birmingham village charter adopted.

1883 - Six rail lines cross county

1880

State Capitol dedicated.

1875

Panic of 1873

Between 1910 and 1920, the United States' urban population rose 29%, but Michigan's jumped 68.9% and Oakland's soared 238.3%. Although Oakland's population increased 40,474 from 1910 to 1920 there was little "urban sprawl", with two thirds of the growth occurring in incorporated villages.

1870

1870 - Town Hall constructed in Royal Oak

1868 - First streetcars in Mich. (Detroit).

1868 - First stagecoach runs from Detroit to Pontiac and beyond provides settlers with supplies and mail.

1865

1863 - One railroad crossed Oakland County.

1860


1860 - Pontiac's population - 2,575

1855

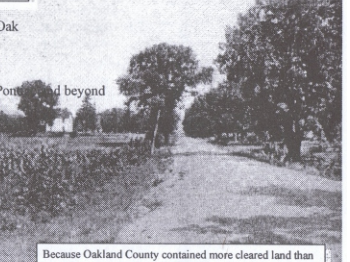
1855 - Steam railroad serves Royal Oak

1854 - Woodward planked from Detroit to Pontiac.

1851 - Only 15% of the state's population lived in places of 2,500 or more.



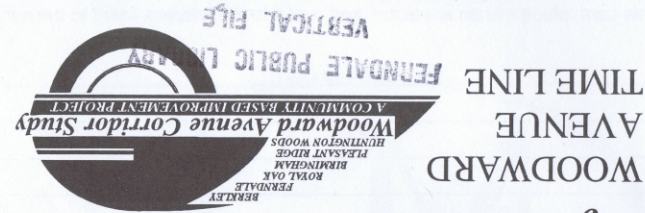
Interurban Railway extends to Pontiac - 1897



Because Oakland County contained more cleared land than any other county in Michigan and was one of the first to be settled and cleared, it led the state in farming for thirty years.

**TIME LINE 1850-1900**  
Woodward Avenue Corridor Study Background Report

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# A Pocket Full Of Memories

SHEETS

**1850** - 22,000 residents in Detroit. (1840 - 1854 first boom)  
 - 1848 - Plank road laid from Royal Oak to Rochester  
 - 1847 - State Capitol moves from Detroit to Lansing

**1845** - 1st high school in state (Detroit).  
 - 1844 - Railroad line completed to Pontiac

**1840** - Worldwide economic depression  
 - 1840 - 50 Mills dotted Oakland County Michigan pop. exceeds 200,000.  
 - 1838 - Horse drawn railroad from Royal Oak to Detroit built and Royal Oak Village platted.  
 - 1937 - Michigan becomes 26th state.

**1835** - Walk-in-the-Water, the first steamboat on the upper Great Lakes.

**1833** - First store established in Birmingham, first settler in Huntington Woods.  
 - 1832 - Virgil Rose Tavern established (Pleasant Ridge).

**1830** - Indian tribes fragmented and dispersed.  
 - 1828 - Detroit to Saginaw Turnpike built.

**1826** - Chase corner's: first general store and Post Office (Royal Oak)

**1825** - Erie Canal opens

**1821** - First settler in Ferndale  
 - Tavern opens in Birmingham.  
 - 1820 - Oakland County organized with fewer than 50 families.

**1818** - County gov't. officially opens Woodward Ave. surveyed, first settler in Birmingham.  
 - 1817 - First settler in Oakland County  
 - 1816 - Eight Mile Road established  
 - 1815 - First survey sets Eight Mile baseline

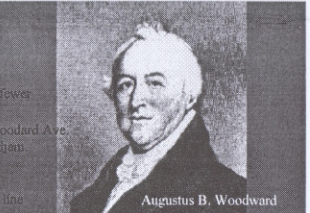
**War of 1812**

**1812** - Survey of Oakland County ordered by U.S. Government. Depicted area as an "interminable swamp".  
 - 1810 - Michigan Population passes 4,000.

**1805** - Territory of Michigan Established. Woodward Plan for Detroit developed by Augustus B. Woodward.

**1802** - Detroit population - 500

**1800**



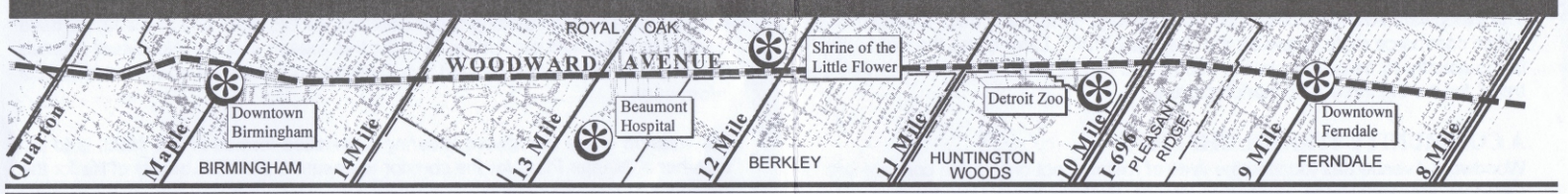
Augustus B. Woodward

The Woodward Plan called for a system of interlocking hexagons, bisected by broad avenues and studded with plazas. Lots of no less than 5,000 square feet each would provide for spaciousness. Actually these large lots established a traditional characteristic of Detroit, with plenty of land available, it became a city of single family homes. For years in fact Detroit led the nation's major cities in the number of single owner-occupied houses. On the other hand, no row houses, which would have led to a greater concentration of population, were ever built.

**TIME LINE 1800-1850**  
 Woodward Avenue Corridor Study Background Report

## The Woodward Avenue Corridor Study - A COMMUNITY BASED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

City of Birmingham • City of Berkley • City of Royal Oak • City of Huntington Woods • City of Pleasant Ridge • City of Ferndale



### WOODWARD AVENUE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

**City Representatives:** Berkley - Mayor Jerold Durst, Al Sanom; Birmingham - Patricia McCullough, Gordon Thorsby; Ferndale - Mayor Pamela McCullough, George Peek; Huntington Woods - Bonnie Cook, Harry Howes; Pleasant Ridge - Mayor Ralph Castelli, Joseph Merucci; Royal Oak - Susan Carter, Laura Harrison.  
**Business Representatives:** James Barrett - Beaumont Hospital, Dennis Brinker - Sign of the Beefcarver, Paul DelGiudice (Chair) - Pasquale's, Loretta Foldessy - Immediate Past President Berkley Chamber of Commerce, Willis Hicks (Vice-Chair) - First of America, Todd Johnson - National Bank of Detroit, Rick Levitt - Attorney, Robert Merline - Comerica, Robert Paul - Les Siasons, Greg Umstead - Beaumont Hospital, Donald Wolcott - self. **Other:** Robert Blanchard - Road Commission for Oakland County, David Geiger - Michigan Department of Transportation.

**1800**

**1795**

**1790**

**1787** - Act creating the Northwest Territory.

**1785**

**1779** - New fort built by British in Detroit.  
 The British had a new fort built as a defense against an American attack which never came. Completed in 1779, it would carry the names of Fort Lemoult, Detroit and Shelby until it was finally torn down in 1827.

**1776** - The United States becomes a nation.

**1775** - Revolutionary War

**1770**

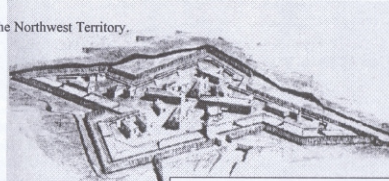

**1763** - Chief Pontiac's siege of Detroit.

**1760** - French rule of Detroit comes to an end, British begins.

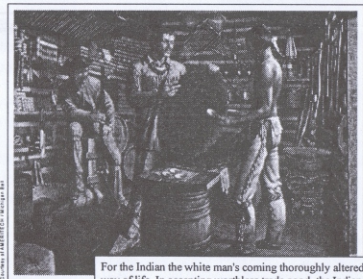
**1755**

**1750**

**French and Indian Wars**

Treaties with Michigan's territorial and state government's slowly moved the Indian westward and northward. Some lived for a time on reservations in Oakland County.



For the Indian the white man's coming thoroughly altered their way of life. In accepting worthless trade goods, the Indian sold away their tribal customs, particularly the conservation of wildlife. Game grew scarce, hunger widespread. Some starved while many fell victim to smallpox and other imported diseases.

**TIME LINE 1750-1800**  
 Woodward Avenue Corridor Study Background Report

**1750**

**1745**

**1740**

**1735**

**1730**

**1725**

**1720**

**1712** - Siege of Detroit by Sauk and Fox Indians.

**1701** - Fort Pontchartrain established by French on the Detroit River.

**1700**

**Antoine Cadillac**  
 1699 - 1730

Fort Pontchartrain was established on the Detroit River in 1701 by Antoine Cadillac. Indian trails criss-crossed the county. The Saginaw Trail (Woodward Avenue) became a major artery of commerce as the Indian carried furs to Detroit and returned to their villages with trade goods.

When the French explorers reached the shores of Michigan, they found a number of well established tribes with varying social structures, local customs and modes of subsistence.

12,000 years ago the Paleo Indians became the first Michigianians, these proficient hunters followed the trail of the mastodon and mammoth, caribou, deer and elk to the shores of the many lakes that dotted the landscape.

**TIME LINE 1700-1750**  
 Woodward Avenue Corridor Study Background Report

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