Woodward Avenue

Transit-Oriented Development Corridor Study for South Oakland County

January 1, 2012

LSL Planning, Inc.
Community Planning Consultants

R-02-12

A RESOLUTION

of the Planning Commission of the City of Berkley, Michigan adopting *the Introduction, Project Overview and Building on Past Efforts chapters of the Woodward Avenue Transit Oriented Development Corridor Study for South Oakland County*

WHEREAS, the City of Berkley Planning Commission, is authorized by Public Act 33 of 2008 to adopt a master plan for the City's development; and

WHEREAS, the Woodward Avenue Action Association in conjunction with several southeast Oakland County communities developed the *Woodward Avenue Transit Oriented Development Corridor Study for South Oakland County;* and

WHEREAS, the Berkley Planning Commission has reviewed and discussed the Study and strongly agrees with the development principles outlined therein including transit oriented development and Complete Streets; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission believes Bus Rapid Transit and upgraded bus service along Woodward will greatly benefit the Woodward Avenue communities and the region as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission further believes that upgraded bus service should include loops into various economic centers, such as Oakland County Community College and Beaumont Hospital as well as downtowns including downtown Berkley; and

WHEREAS, the Alternative Analysis being conducted through a Federal Transportation Grant will provide a process where such opinions can be addressed; and

WHEREAS, once transit stops have been determined through the Alterative Analysis, the Planning Commission will begin reviewing and possibly amending the zoning requirements near those stops; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has notified the surrounding communities and underlying agencies throughout the process in accordance with Public Act 33 of 2008.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF BERKLEY PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLVES:

SECTION 1: That the *Introduction*, *Project Overview* and *Building on Past Efforts* chapters of the *Woodward Avenue Transit Oriented Development Corridor Study for South Oakland County* be adopted as part of the Master Plan for the City of Berkley.

SECTION 2: That the City Planner be authorized and directed to distribute the adopted document to the City Council, Oakland County, surrounding communities and underlying agencies.

Introduced and Passed at the Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, October 23, 2012.

David Barnett
Chairperson

Attest:

Amy M. Vansen, AICP
City Planner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WOODWARD AVENUE TOD CORRIDOR STUDY FOR SOUTH OAKLAND COUNTY

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to improve planning along the Woodward corridor utilizing Complete Streets methodology and to maximize development associated with potential future transit.

WHAT DOES THE STUDY RECOMMEND?

SAFETY:

- Consistent speed limit of 35 mph along Woodward
- Elimination of unnecessary driveways and improved driveway design
- Adopt multi-modal traffic impact study requirements
- Consider a road diet to create dedicated bus lanes

ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT:

- Zero lot lines
- Development centered around transit stops
- Building design and placement regulations that will improve walkability

PARKING:

- Implement parking restrictions and/or incentives to encourage more walking/biking and transit use
- Consider city-driven parking programs

TRANSIT FRAMEWORK:

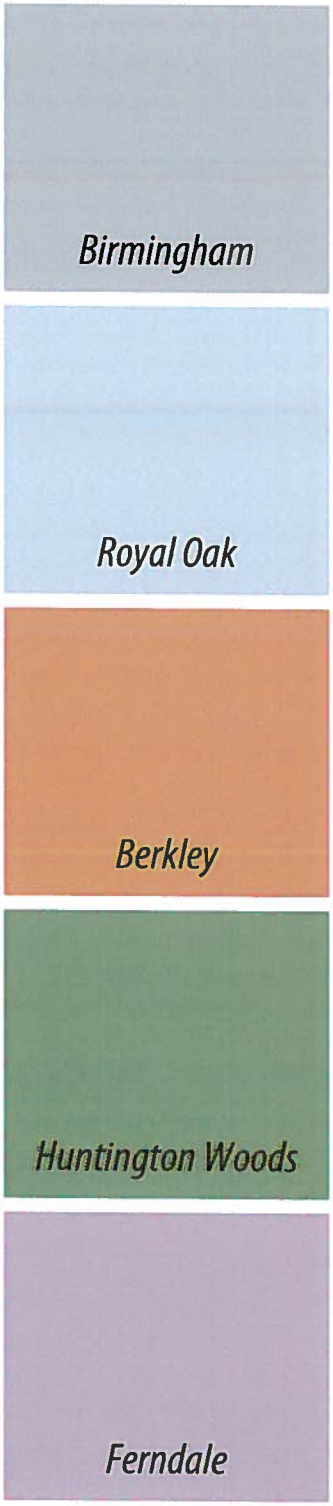
- Locate transit stops each ½ to 1 mile
- Key stop locations at Maple Road, 13 Mile Road, I-696, and 8 Mile
- Improve non-motorized crossings so the pedestrian is more visible and comfortable

FUTURE COORDINATION:

- Consider a Corridor Improvement Authority to leverage funds
- Refine zoning regulations and maps at the city level

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

The Woodward Avenue Action Association was awarded a Complete Streets grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and has assisted cities secure additional New Starts funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). WA3 will be presenting this document and their goals for the future to the public, City Councils and commissions, and planning staff, and will pursue continued funding to encourage a consistent strategy for the Woodward Corridor that will invigorate businesses, encourage walking, biking and transit use, and improve the quality of life in South Oakland County.



Introduction

What is Transit-Oriented Development?

Transit-oriented development (TOD) uses land use to encourage use of public transportation sytems through directing certain types of development to transit corridors or nodes and compact site design. It involves pedestrian-friendly development that includes mixed-use land forms and increased accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. TOD is an attempt to provide compact, walkable communities with a heightened sense of place. TODs typically involve uses that best support transit, transit-friendly site/building design, a mixture of uses clustered around a transit stop or transit corridor, and a walkable environment.

DENSITIES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT TRANSIT

Supports:	Residential (units)	Business (employees)
▶ High Capacity Service ▶ Rail Service	15 to 24+	150+
▶ Local Bus Service	7+	40+
▶ Cars ▶ Carpools ▶ Vanpools	1 to 6	2+

Source: Planning for Transit-Friendly Land Use, USDOT & FTA

TRANSIT OPTIONS

While this project is not evaluating transit alternatives, an understanding of possible future transit options can help recognize why TOD is important for Woodward Avenue. The right mix and design of land uses can help make different types of "premium" transit more feasible. The following are the key transit types being studied to serve South Oakland County's Woodward Avenue communities in the future:

ENHANCED LOCAL BUS SERVICE

SMART currently operates buses along Woodward as part of its regional transit system. This effort will help identify how to improve pedestrian connections to stops and crossing Woodward. Future improvement could include more frequent buses, express buses, park and ride lots and additional bus stop amenities.

BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)

Depending on what occurs south of 8 Mile, a possible mode of transit in Oakland County could be BRT with dedicated bus lanes and express buses with fewer stops. BRT has similar characteristics of light rail transit, including stations, pre-boarding ticketing and level loading. But because BRT does not require rails, routes are more flexible, which typically costs about 50% less than light rail. BRT however, may not generate the same level of economic development as rail.

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT)

Light rail service was recently explored south of 8 Mile. At the time this study was being completed, the light rail option was being converted to bus rapid transit, primarily for cost reasons. BRT could later be converted to light rail since the station planning is similar. If light rail were introduced in Detroit, extending the line into Oakland County is one possibility.

Why are We Planning for TOD?

TOD development can improve the local economy along Woodward Avenue in South Oakland County and increase transit ridership by making the environment, especially around transit stops, attractive to pedestrians and bicyclists. This typically involves inviting building design, careful interface between public and private land, and thoughtful placement of vehicular parking lots. It often results in more pleasing aesthetic environments and reduced auto-dependency, which then can lead to a host of secondary benefits:

- Safer pedestrian and bicycle environments
- Improved accessibility for those less able
- Increased walk-by traffic for local businesses
- More convenient access to businesses for local residents
- Less congestion and associated fuel emissions
- Creation of a "sense of place" for the community

Woodward Avenue TOD Goals

The Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3) is a not-for-profit collaboration of public, private, local and regional partners working to enhance and promote Michigan's iconic 27-mile Woodward Avenuel All American Road®, one of the most significant roadways in the country.

The WA3 represents 27 miles from the Detroit River north through the Woodward Loop in Pontiac. The WA3 works closely with the communities of Berkley, Birmingham, Bloomfield Township, Detroit, Ferndale, Highland Park, Huntington Woods, Pontiac, Royal Oak, and Oakland and Wayne counties.

The WA3 works to bring business people, residents, community leaders, elected officials and stakeholders together to identify opportunities to strengthen and enhance Woodward's economic and historic potential.

WA3's VISION FOR WOODWARD:

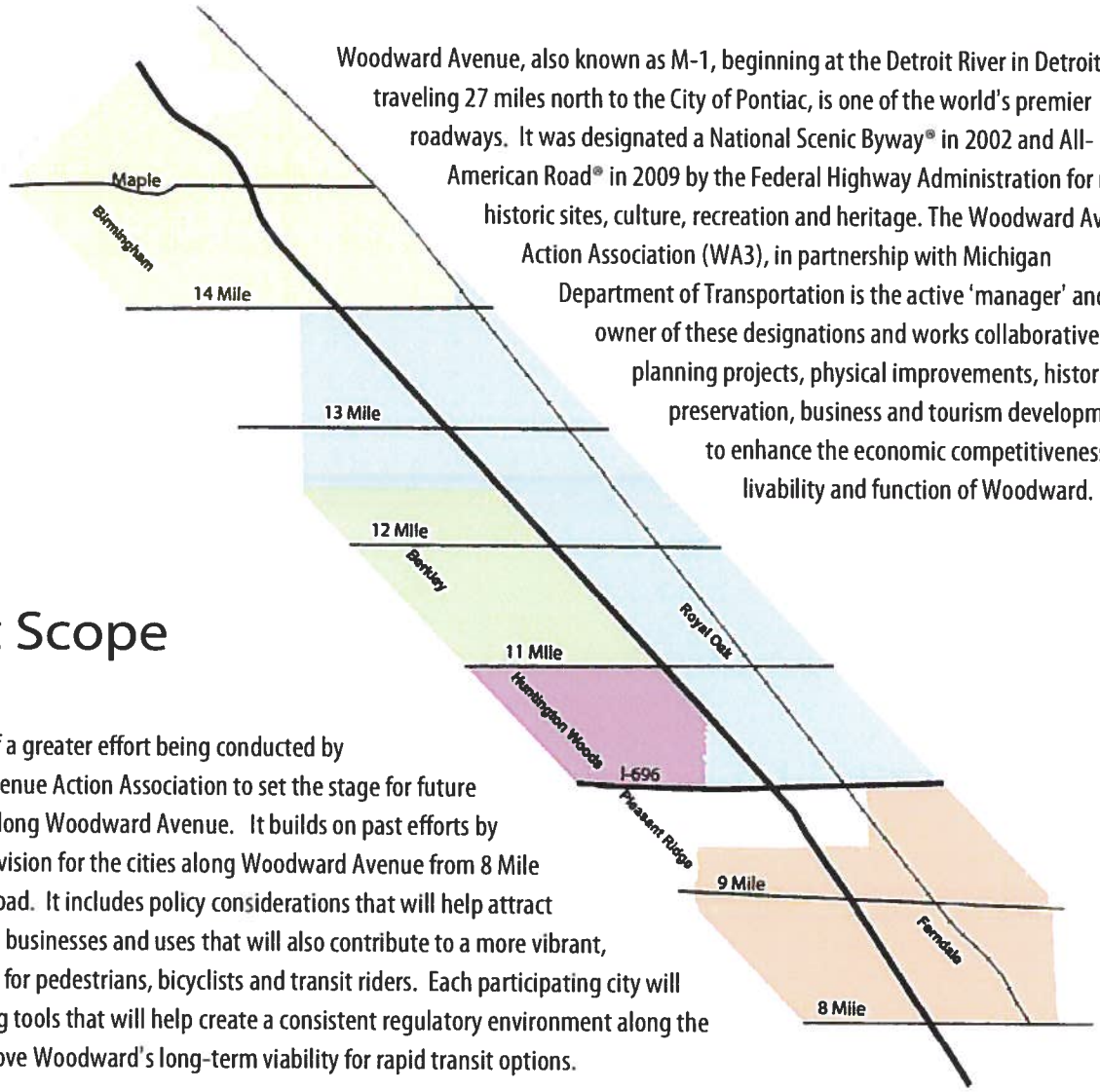
Woodward Avenue is one of the world's premier business, recreational, entertainment and cultural destinations. This All-American Road is a vital connector among communities, were people identify with its heritage and aspire to maintain its importance into the future. It is globally recognized as 'the place' to experience and enjoy automobile heritage and as a magnet for innovative businesses and creative talent. A vibrant, sustainable and livable corridor, Woodward links thriving downtowns and urban districts which are alive with activity and excitement and serves as a gateway for vibrant neighborhoods.

WA3's Vision will be achieved by:

- A walkable, "complete street" harmoniously shared by transit, bicycles and automobiles.
- Inspiring great architecture, quality streetscaping and beautiful, clean, safe, welcoming public spaces.
- A variety of robust retail and residential uses.
- Increased patronage of businesses, cultural attractions, sporting and entertainment events.
- Recognition as a national model of public/private collaborations and strategic alliances.

Project Overview

Woodward Avenue, also known as M-1, beginning at the Detroit River in Detroit traveling 27 miles north to the City of Pontiac, is one of the world's premier roadways. It was designated a National Scenic Byway® in 2002 and All-American Road® in 2009 by the Federal Highway Administration for its historic sites, culture, recreation and heritage. The Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3), in partnership with Michigan Department of Transportation is the active 'manager' and owner of these designations and works collaboratively on planning projects, physical improvements, historic preservation, business and tourism development to enhance the economic competitiveness, livability and function of Woodward.



Project Scope

This plan is part of a greater effort being conducted by the Woodward Avenue Action Association to set the stage for future transit planning along Woodward Avenue. It builds on past efforts by creating a shared vision for the cities along Woodward Avenue from 8 Mile Road to 15 Mile Road. It includes policy considerations that will help attract transit-supportive businesses and uses that will also contribute to a more vibrant, attractive corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. Each participating city will also receive zoning tools that will help create a consistent regulatory environment along the corridor and improve Woodward's long-term viability for rapid transit options.

PATH TO SUCCESS The following suggests the tasks needed to implement the vision for transit:

RESEARCH
- I.D. needed studies
- Build-out analysis
- Transit alternatives analysis

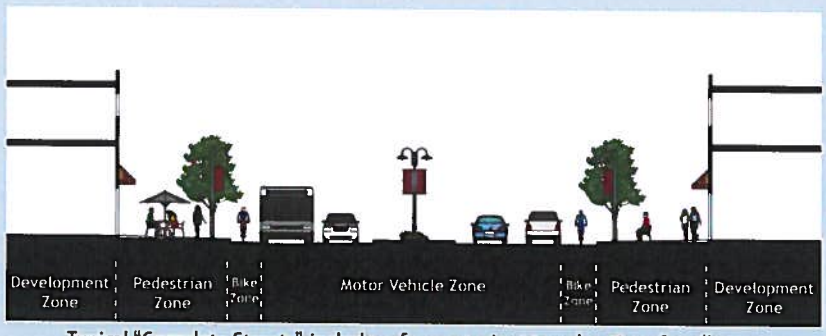
BUILD MOMENTUM
- Build on current efforts
- Educate officials and constituents
- Continue to seek funding

TRANSIT VISIONING
- Transit Framework Plan
- Consistent regulatory framework
- Road Design

IMPLEMENT
- Public/private partnerships
- Regional / Multi-jurisdictional cooperation

Complete Streets

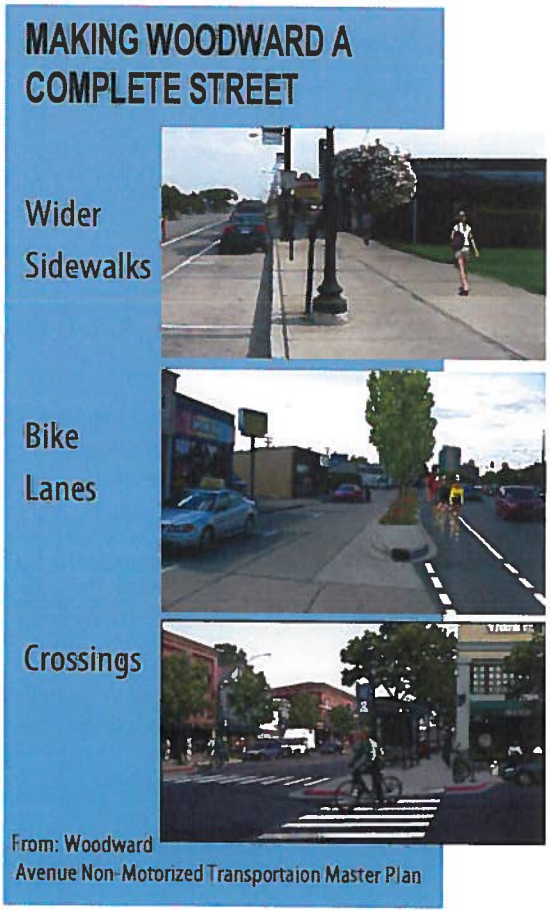
Transportation practices in the past 50 years or so tended to focus on the efficiency and safety of automobile travel. And, while design applications and engineering have made our roadways much safer to travel by vehicle, it has also resulted in designs that increase vehicle speeds while discouraging walking, biking and transit use.



Typical "Complete Streets" include safe, convenient travel options for *all* users

Complete Streets presents a shift in attitude about transportation planning that focuses more on equality for all users of the roadway. Recent legislative changes (the Michigan Planning Enabling Act and Michigan Transportation Fund Act) now lend more weight to road design that considers motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and users of all ages and ability. Not surprisingly, increasing fuel costs, desires to improve air quality, concerns about community health, coupled with campaigns to end obesity, especially among children and teens, have all contributed to a demand for travel alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle. Complete Streets seeks to meet that demand through policy and regulatory changes at the local, regional, state and federal levels.

The following key principles of Complete Streets should be applied to the Woodward corridor to enhance the road's functionality for all users, and to create an active and dynamic corridor that will support transit:



From: Woodward Avenue Non-Motorized Transportaion Master Plan

1. **Accommodate all roadway travelers**, which includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, public transit and automobiles.
2. **Emphasize interconnected road and sidewalk networks** to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes. Such networks are needed to provide shorter, more direct routes that will reduce walking time (including across Woodward). A typical citizen will walk up to five minutes, or a quarter-mile before seeking other travel alternatives.
3. **Integrate into all project types**, including planning, road and development design, maintenance, traffic signals, and operations for the entire right of way.
4. **Integrate best practices for design** while recognizing the need for flexibility in balancing user needs.
5. **Select designs** that will complement the character of the Woodward Avenue district and the context of each different community.
6. **Create plans** that seek to link transportation and land use planning.
7. **Develop realistic expectations** for walking and biking, and apply design tools where appropriate along Woodward. This does not mean that every tool must be applied to every block. It may involve creation of alternate bike routes or improvements on side streets to ensure bicycle safety.
8. **Develop an implementation plan** that includes specific next steps.

TOD Principles

This Plan focuses on incorporating the following key principles in the future development of the Woodward Avenue corridor:

Plan around Transit Stations

- Allow the highest commercial intensity in areas within ¼ mile of locations that seem most suitable for transit stations. Expand maximum building heights, encourage high floor-to-area ratios, or minimize lot coverage limitations to provide greater development potential.
- Consider increased residential densities within ½ mile area from station locations (see page 4 for density suggestions).
- Allow for intensification of uses over time, such as increased building heights or allowing surface parking lots to be gradually replaced by buildings and parking structures.
- Consider revisions to the master plan and zoning map to allow deepening of commercial lots along Woodward Avenue, especially at TOD nodes and where taller buildings are allowed. This may involve rezoning of some residential lots to accommodate redevelopment or additional parking needs. Where such changes will advance the goals of this Plan, they should be carefully considered by each city to ensure proper transitions to the residential areas, screening and other site design elements are included to protect the integrity of nearby neighborhoods.

Birmingham's Triangle District Urban Design Plan is an example of a transit-oriented subarea plan that, when realized, will result in added activity along Woodward, and better transitions into neighborhoods. Elements of the Plan:

- **Create a Sense of Enclosure.** Use landscaping in the median and along the street edge with taller building heights along Woodward that gradually step down in height closer to neighborhoods.
- **Access Management.** Eliminate driveways and intersecting streets along Woodward that create conflict points.
- **Road Design.** Revisions to median crossover locations, right-turn lanes, and travel lanes were recommended to provide safer traffic interactions between motorists, non-motorized and transit systems.
- **Road Crossings.** Signalization, timing, signage, and pavement treatments are intended to improve the visual character of the area and make pedestrian zones more visible. Recommended shelters and other pedestrian amenities will also improve the transit environment.

Use Regulations

- Encourage transit-supporting uses, especially within ¼ to ½ mile of transit stops. This includes commercial and mixed uses that provide activity throughout the day and into the evening, such as retail, restaurants, personal and business services, high-density residential (including senior housing), universities, civic centers, and upper-story office and residential.
- Discourage uses that will either dilute the concentration of residents or employees, or those which, by nature of the business will create activity likely to disrupt the pedestrian and transit-friendly environment. These include uses such as drive-through facilities, automobile dealerships, regional "big box" retailers, and other uses with large front yard surface parking lots.

Bulk, Setback and Area Controls

- Encourage land to be used for buildings rather than surface parking or expansive yards. This includes reducing the amount of parking allowed or required, and increasing the amount of building that may or must be built.
- Locate buildings close to the street and sidewalk so those on foot, bike or transit can easily reach building entrances.
- Remove maximum lot coverage requirements in core TOD areas.
- Encourage building design that will engage passersby. First floor uses should include active storefronts that attract customers, pedestrian-scale design, with the primary operable pedestrian entrance oriented to Woodward Avenue.

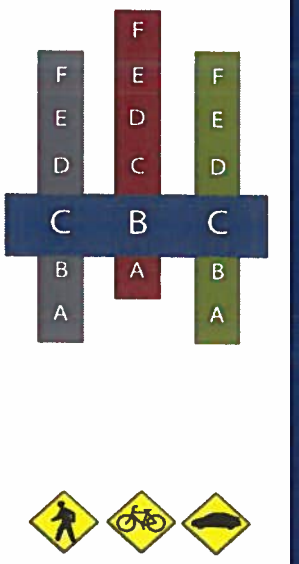
Impact Studies

- Require study of potential development impacts on the entire transportation system. Where already required, modify *Traffic Impact Study* standards into *Transportation Impact Studies* that evaluate development impacts to all modes of travel.
- Shift transportation planning priorities in core and transitional areas from improving the speed and efficiency of automobile travel, to one that emphasizes safety for pedestrians, bikers and transit users.
- Apply access management to minimize the number of driveways that pedestrians must cross using access management techniques.

TRANSPORTATION IMPACT STUDIES

Former Traffic Impact Studies are being expanded to include consideration for all modes of travel (i.e. walking, biking, transit). They key is to match the road design with the desired Levels of Service for all users.

In core TOD areas, Levels of Service for non-motorized modes should be given equal or higher consideration as vehicular modes.



PARKING FUNDS

To support transit, parking programs require a careful balance of supply and demand. Cities should ensure their parking requirements are not excessive, and may also consider the following options to help maintain control over future parking location and design:

- **Municipal Programs.** Cities can collect one-time cash payments from developers in an amount equal to the cost to construct on-site parking. These funds can then be used to develop Park and Ride and shared municipal parking facilities in the most ideal locations. The cities of Birmingham and Ferndale currently use programs for this purpose, administered through cash payments or special assessment districts.
- **Corridor Improvement Authorities.** A CIA can use tax increment financing captured from increases in property values over time. Funds collected may be used for any capital improvements located within the district created by the CIA.

Parking Management

- Implement standards to limit parking in core TOD areas. Regulations like maximum parking standards, parking space reductions, shared parking, payment-in-lieu of parking programs, floor-to-area ratios (or requiring them where they do not exist) can be applied for this purpose.
- Provide incentives in core TOD areas to reduce parking, or encourage structured lots over surface lots.
- Include amenities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders, including wider sidewalks, bike storage facilities, bus shelters, lighting and landscaping in the standards for site plan review.
- Arrange parking in the rear yard (or side only if necessary) to provide safer pedestrian access to store fronts. The Woodward Avenu profile also lends itself to other options, such as on-street or median parking, if allowed by MDOT.
- Recognize the variables contributing to parking demand, and match local policies to individual geographic factors such as density, transit access, income, and household size.