

CITY OF BERKLEY

MULTI MODAL

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Adopted
May 22, 2012



Planning Commission

David Barnett, Chairperson
Martin Smith, Vice Chairperson
Michael Alef
Jennifer Baranski
Tim Murad
Eric Murrell
Dottie Popp
Mark Richardson
Dean Smith

Past Members

Michael Reinholm
David Sabbagh

Amy M. Vansen, AICP, City Planner

A RESOLUTION

**of the Planning Commission of the City of Berkley, Michigan
adopting *the Multi Modal Transportation Plan Amendment***

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, Public Act 33 of 2008 was recently amended to provide that the transportation component of a master plan include all components of a transportation system and their interconnectivity including streets and bridges, public transit, bicycle facilities, pedestrian ways, freight facilities and routes, port facilities, railroad facilities, and airports, to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in a manner that is appropriate to the context of the community and, as applicable, considers all legal users of the public right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the Berkley City Council passed Resolution 48-10 directing the Planning Commission to begin preparing a master plan amendment to include an expanded section on multimodal transportation in accordance with the Planning Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held numerous public meetings to gain input from residents and businesses on transportation issues in the City; and

WHEREAS, a plan has been developed outlining specific projects and policies that will make Berkley even more multi modal; 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 *City of Berkley, Michigan Multi Modal Transportation Plan Amendment* 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, May 22, 2012.



David Barnett
Chairperson

Attest:



Amy M. Vansen, AICP
City Planner

BACKGROUND

In October 2010, the Council of the City of Berkley adopted Resolution R-48-10 declaring its support of "Complete Streets" policies and directed the Planning Commission to begin preparing a master plan amendment to include an expanded section on multimodal transportation in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act.

Pursuant to R-48-10, the Planning Commission began working on an amendment to the Master Plan regarding multimodal transportation policies and projects.

According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, "Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations."

The Complete Streets initiative is the latest in a long line of urban design initiatives including Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), *A Pattern Language* by Christopher Alexander et al (1977), and *Suburban Nation* by Andres Duany et al (2000). All of these concepts argue that desirable communities include mixed use neighborhoods and walkable streets. Complete Streets differs because it looks directly at the design of the public right of way rather than the design and use of the buildings that abut the right of way.

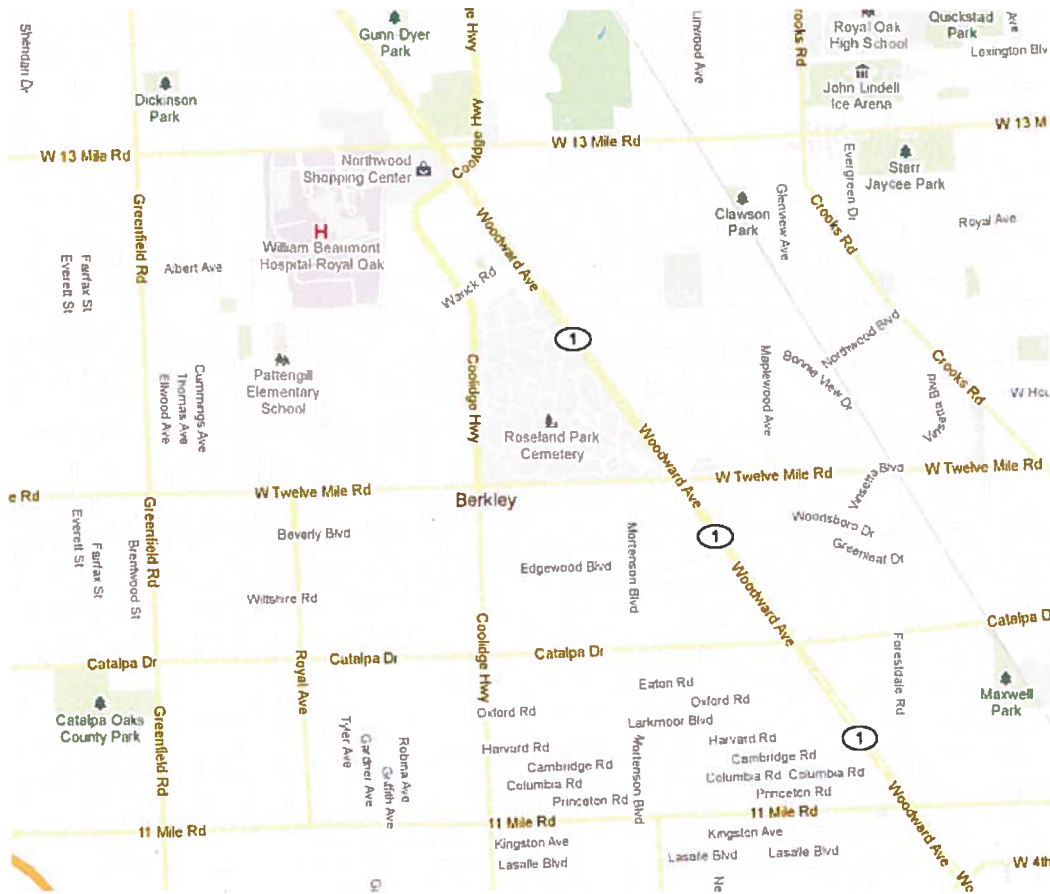
The Planning Commission's process began with a presentation by Brad Strader of LSL Planning regarding Complete Streets legislation. Since that first meeting in November, the Planning Commissioners have attended outside sessions regarding Complete Streets; the City has hosted a session sponsored by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) regarding on road bicycle facilities; and the Planning Commission hosted traffic engineer, Jeffrey Bagdade, who discussed various traffic control options. Todd Scott of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance also attended a meeting.

The Public Safety Director and Public Works Director attended Planning Commission work sessions. The Planning Commission reviewed various articles on Complete Streets, transit and bicycle facilities. The Planning Commission attended Winterfest and attended the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings at Pattengill, Angell, and Rogers Elementary Schools to gain public input. As part of their regular duties, Planning Commissioners attend Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and City Council meetings and have kept those members apprised of the Planning Commission's work.

The City Planner reviewed the Downtown Development Authority Parking Plan completed in May 2009. Wayfinding, Coolidge Highway awkwardness, and snow removal were listed as barriers to pedestrian activity in that plan.

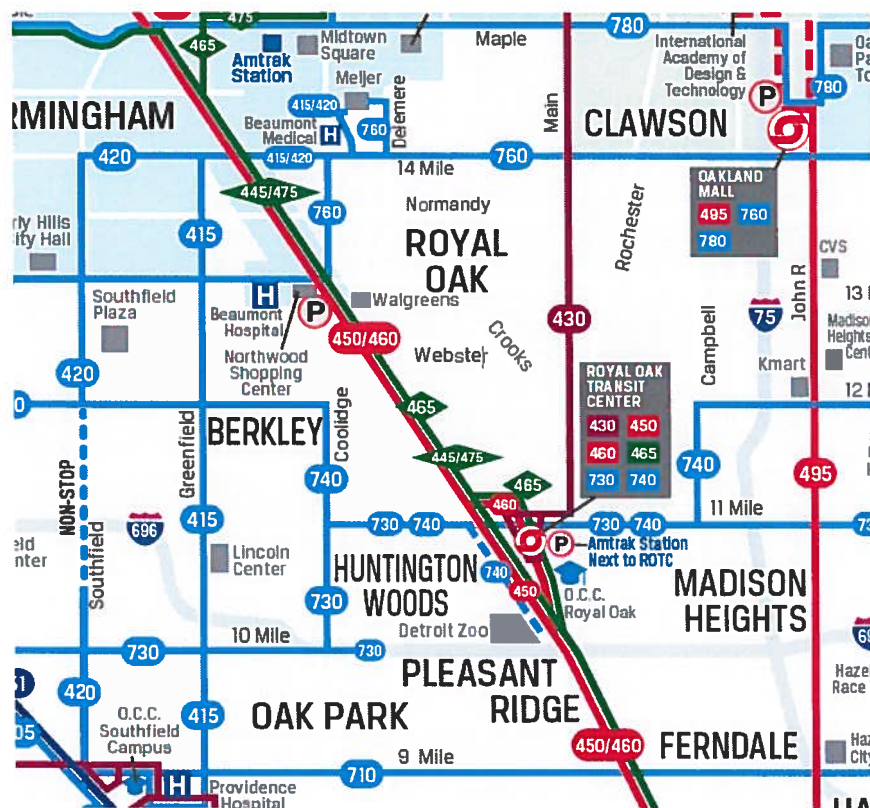
FINDINGS

- Berkley is already very multi-modal. Berkley was platted in a grid system providing many alternative routes throughout the City. This provides connectivity from the neighborhoods to the downtown and Woodward corridor. The business corridors are at most within one-half mile of all residences. The grid system of streets, the density and the mix of uses all make Berkley multi-modal.



Source: www.googlemaps.com

- All streets in Berkley have a sidewalk abutting one side of the street. Most streets in Berkley have sidewalks abutting both sides of the street.
- Speed limits on streets range from Woodward Avenue being 45 miles per hour to Eleven Mile Road being 35 miles per hour to Coolidge Highway and Twelve Mile Road both being 30 miles per hour.
- Berkley is serviced by SMART bus service along Woodward, Twelve Mile, Eleven Mile, and Coolidge.



Source: www.smartbus.org

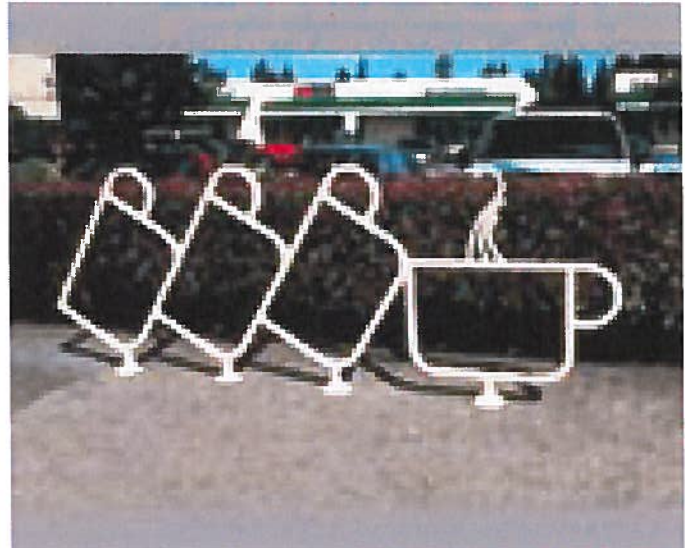
- Getting Berkley’s youngest residents to walk to school will be a more difficult problem to solve. The Berkley School District has never offered bus service to students. Schools of Choice means that Berkley schools are attended by students that live outside the district. Parents’ schedules, anxieties about abductions, and the amount of traffic around the schools were all cited as hindrances to children walking. Changing these behaviors will involve commitment from the school district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Commission has prepared a list of recommendations that will make Berkley's streets even friendlier to all users. The items have been broken down into categories relative to cost.

Ordinance Amendments / Changes in City Policies

1. Adopt a bicycle parking ordinance. In 2009, the Planning Commission recommended an ordinance to City Council that was not approved. Berkley already allows businesses to install bicycle racks. An ordinance that requires bicycle racks for businesses over a certain size will result in more bicycle racks being installed in the City. Allowing businesses to count some of the bicycle parking toward their required parking will also result in more businesses installing bicycle racks and will not necessarily result in fewer parking spaces for cars.
2. Adopt a parking lot setback requirement so that parking spaces do not abut directly to the sidewalk. Requiring a fence or hedge which would provide an edge to the sidewalk will make sidewalks more pleasant to walk along. The more pleasant the walk, the more people will choose to walk.
3. The narrow right of way along the portion of Twelve Mile between Greenfield and Tyler results in a narrow sidewalk directly abutting 30 mile per hour traffic. This situation is uncomfortable for pedestrians. Given the limited opportunity for on street parking and street furniture, the City should consider adopting different standards and setback requirements for buildings along this portion of Twelve Mile. The City's ordinance already allows a setback if the area is developed as a defined plaza, outdoor eating area, or other pedestrian space. An ordinance amendment would simply require it. The result over time would be larger areas for pedestrians along Twelve Mile.
4. Increasing the density in the business districts would result in more people being around and therefore more people walking and biking. Berkley's ordinance allows buildings much taller than what have been built. Allowing taller, multi-story buildings is clearly not



enough to make the taller buildings happen. The legality of requiring multi-story buildings in certain districts has not been tested.

With regard to residential development, new economic realities have halted many loft and townhouse projects. However even during the building boom, Berkley did not see any of townhouse or loft development which its neighbor Royal Oak did. There are two reasons that may account for the differences between Berkley and Royal Oak's development. One is the depth of the parcels and the other is the prohibition of overnight parking.

In Royal Oak, on street parking is allowed all night. Berkley prohibits on street parking on all streets between the hours of 2 AM and 6 AM. Currently, if a developer wanted to build lofts over the top of, for example, McCourt Music and City Style, he can, but he must supply his own off-street parking for the residential uses (2 per unit). That changes the economics of the project. Overnight parking is not permitted in the municipal parking lots. If the City wants to more strongly encourage residential uses in the downtown area, then the City should consider permitting residential parking in the municipal parking lots.

Given the depth of Berkley's parcels, a large loft or townhouse development would more than likely involve the demolition of houses. Homeowners would need to be willing to sell. The City would need to be willing to move the line between residential and nonresidential uses. The decision to move that line can be very difficult; but is necessary if the City wants townhouse or loft developments.

A relatively easy change would be to decrease the parking requirement for apartments and townhouses from 2 per unit to 1 ½ per unit. It isn't clear if that change alone would increase development.

5. While Berkley is fortunate to have been developed with a grid system, compact lots and a downtown, the residential building type did not include houses with large front porches. Like much of all single family house development around World War Two, most of Berkley's houses were developed with stoops rather than large covered front porches. There is a school of thought that larger covered, front porches promote a sense of community. A properly proportioned porch will be utilized as a room and if people are using their porches, then more people will feel more comfortable walking in neighborhoods.



Berkley City Code currently limits the size of front porches. Porches cannot be closer than 15 feet from the front property line, but also cannot exceed 8 feet in depth. The Code does not set a minimum depth. It does not require that a front porch be covered with a roof. It does stipulate that a front porch cannot be screened or otherwise enclosed. The Code as written can result in shallow porches, deck style porches, or stoops that can't be used as a room. The Planning Commission should review the City's porch requirements and make recommendations on changes.

- 6. The City should adopt standards to determine where bike racks should be located on the public right of way. The presence of on street parking, the width of the sidewalk, the necessary distance from fire hydrants, corner sight distances, distances from lamp posts, and the like all must be considered. Once these standards are adopted, it will be easier to accommodate requests for bicycle racks. Administration including the Public Works Department, Public Safety Department and Building Department should develop these standards.



- 7. The Planning Commission should determine a hierarchy of improvements at bus stops along Coolidge, Twelve Mile, Eleven Mile and Woodward. The Planning Commission should determine which stops need a bench, a shelter, a bike rack or just a paved path and paved pad to stand on. No grant money currently exists for the purchase of bus shelters.

- 8. For all new development in the business districts, Berkley City Code requires doors and windows on facades facing streets. It also requires for all new buildings in the business districts that a minimum of 40% of the wall abutting a major thoroughfare must be windows. However 40% on the façade of a 10 foot tall building can mean that the windows are only along the top 4 feet—6 feet above the sidewalk. The bottom 6 feet can remain solid wall.

In the Downtown District, a maximum sill height of 36 inches is required in addition to the window and door requirement. The Downtown District consists of both sides of Twelve Mile between Wakefield and Tyler and the east side of Coolidge between Wiltshire and Catalpa. The City should consider expanding the maximum sill height requirement beyond the Downtown District to all the business districts.

Engineering Studies

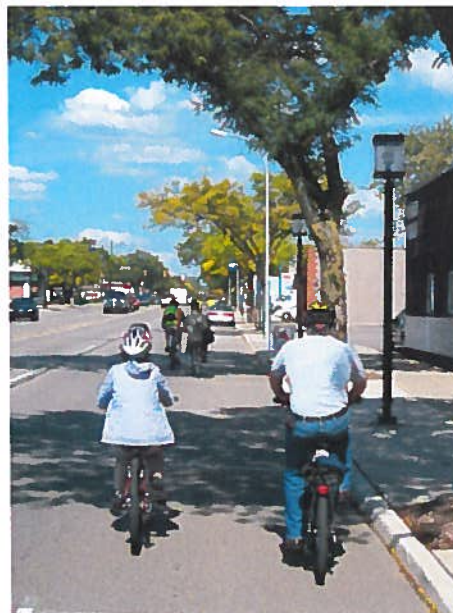
1. There has recently been much discussion about Coolidge Highway. Coolidge Highway is entirely under the City of Berkley's jurisdiction. Ideas have included narrowing the street to three lanes, adding bike lanes, eliminating turn lanes, adding more on street parking, making the on street parking angled parking, and adding bump outs.

The Michigan Department of Transportation provides traffic counts to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. The counts are provided by consultants specializing in traffic data collection; and by counties, cities, and villages in Southeast Michigan. Each count is taken during a continuous 24-hour period, beginning on a date certain. The Adjusted Average Daily Trips for Coolidge Highway in 2011 were 10,060 for north bound traffic and 10,538 for south bound traffic.

At the MDOT-sponsored Training Wheels session, Transportation Engineer and national expert John LaPlante agreed with the Berkley Public Safety Director that the Average Daily Trips that Coolidge was experiencing was appropriate for a four- lane road. He advised that any changes that consider narrowing Coolidge must be carefully studied. The character of Coolidge varies widely with some sections having on street parking, others having driveways and still others having turn lanes. Coolidge also has a lot of pedestrian (student) traffic on it during certain time periods as well.

The City should engage the expertise of a traffic engineer to carefully review traffic volumes, lane widths and street cross sections to determine what changes, if any, can be made to slow traffic down, ensure that ambulances can quickly traverse the road, ensure that pedestrians are safe, and on street parking can occur without damage. The Downtown Development Authority has been discussing this issue as well. This study would cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

2. Before any road resurfacing project is imminent, Administration should review cross sections of major streets and determine if restriping with a bike lane or a wide right lane can be done. These changes should be adopted by City Council as part of the Capital Improvements Plan, so that when any resurfacing is to be completed, the restriping plan has already been adopted by the City Council. Waiting until a road is resurfaced will result in bike lane improvements being a zero cost improvement.



Capital Improvements

1. The City should begin a sidewalk replacement program for properties along Coolidge, properties along Twelve Mile between Tyler and Greenfield as well as the sidewalks on local streets that also flank businesses. The condition of some areas is a particular issue. There would be engineering costs to design the sidewalks. City Council would need to make the final decision to move forward with the project and special assessment. Transportation enhancement money can be used for downtown areas (Coolidge and Twelve Mile). The City should plan on a 40% local match in order to be funded. A bond may also be needed to pay for needed renovations.

2. The City was successful working with Royal Oak and the WA3 to make pedestrian friendly changes to the intersection at Twelve Mile and Woodward. After successfully lobbying MDOT, MDOT doubled the width of the median and added countdown signals. Pursuant to the Woodward Avenue Public Spaces Framework Plan decorative crosswalks were also included in the project. The City should work with Royal Oak, Huntington Woods, and the WA3 to pursue a similar, safer crosswalk at Eleven Mile and Woodward. The cost would be \$5,000 - \$10,000 for the engineering study to analyze traffic and turning lanes. More local funds would be necessary if the project was to be constructed.

3. The City should pursue alternative funding sources for bicycle racks. The Recreation Department was recently successful receiving a grant through SMART to install several bike racks throughout the City.

4. The City has a bike route that wraps around the City on local streets linking various city facilities and parks. Berkley is fortunate to have a large network of well paved local streets from which bicyclists can choose. The Planning Commission has established that certain streets are already well utilized by bicyclists within Berkley and those that are riding through the City. An entire wayfinding system should be established that connects Berkley with other cities. The City should coordinate this effort with the neighboring cities. An official bicycle route would also include signing the route with the traditional bike route signs and determining which points of interest should be called out on directional signs such as the downtown, library, community center, schools, or SMART bus stops. Once the points of interest are determined, the City would then establish where the directional signs should be placed. Development of a basic wayfinding system could be done in house for no cost. Sign installation would be approximately \$120 per sign.



City Program Changes

1. Snow removal in the business districts is problematic. The plowing results in on street parking being relatively unusable. It also results in bus stops being plowed over. Change of snow removal technique will cost money. The Director of Public Works is reviewing this matter, but it isn't an easy fix. The handling of snow removal is dependent upon the size of the snow event. There are issues with disposing of snow off-site. If the City dumps the snow on a paved surface, it is probably a parking lot that someone needs. If the City dumps the snow on an unpaved surface, the snow may be contaminating the soil. In addition, there are issues with coordinating snow removal among various entities and agencies so they don't undo what the other one just did.
2. The Planning Commission observed that while there are four bus routes that run through Berkley, it is not apparent where these buses go or how often they run. While SMART's website is easy to navigate, information such as the cost of the fare and if there is a charge for a transfer, is not apparent when you are at the bus stop. Asking SMART to install additional signs would be difficult. However, the City of Berkley could conduct its own public information campaign on bus routes in City. The program would air on the City's channel and on the City's website.
3. The City should offer a Bicycling 101 course at the Berkley Community Center on bike safety and rules of the road. A qualified and interested individual would need to complete an interview with the Recreation Department before being allowed to teach the course. The City would need to identify and recruit the instructor(s).
4. Street furniture makes sidewalks more interesting. If sidewalks are more interesting, people are more likely to use them. Berkley permits benches on city sidewalks without a permit being required. Berkley permits sidewalk cafés with an annual permit. Even basic street furniture in good repair makes the street more user friendly. Street furniture can also double as public art. If they are designed or embellished, benches, sidewalk cafés, garbage cans, bike racks, fire hydrants could all become public art. The cities of Ann Arbor and Cleveland allow the fire hydrants in the business districts to be "adopted" by artists or art classes and painted. The city of Key West has garbage dumpsters that are also painted. In 2008, the city of Ferndale received a grant through the Michigan Council for the Arts to install artful bicycle racks. The city of Norfolk, Virginia also has artistic bicycle racks.



Other Observations

1. With regard to school children walking and biking to school, there is not a simple solution that will result in more children walking to school. The meetings with the PTA's did not yield easy solutions such as more stop signs, more crossing guards, or keeping the sidewalks clear after it snows. The installation of signs around the schools this summer has helped with traffic movement and with children not being dropped off mid-block and therefore crossing in front of traffic. Addressing traffic safety is one thing, but actually getting people out of their cars is a more difficult task.

Rogers Elementary School was the most successful with regard to traffic movement. Parental involvement at Rogers has helped parents feel safe dropping off children and then leaving the area, thus mitigating traffic problems. Rogers Elementary School had a walking school bus at one point as well. The Safe Routes to Schools program has non matching federal money available to help implement programs or improvements that would increase the number of children walking. Cities are eligible to apply; however the school district is required to create a Safe Routes to School Action Plan before either the City or School District would be eligible to apply.

2. In reviewing the DDA Parking Plan, it is interesting to note the drop off between parking lots that are 100% full and the next block over or on street parking within the same block being 60-70% full at their peak. Depending upon how one looks at it, maybe the City doesn't need more parking; maybe people just need to be willing to walk two blocks or park on street on Twelve Mile or Coolidge. The "How to Promote Walking" problem may be a cheaper, but more difficult problem to solve.
3. The connection between downtown Berkley and the major bus stop at Twelve Mile and Woodward is tenuous. In other words, it is a long, boring walk. Roseland Park Cemetery is a landmark. The office zoning and development along Twelve Mile between Coolidge and Woodward doesn't lend itself to window shopping or interesting street furniture. The Planning Commission should study this matter and determine if any improvements can be made to help increase the connection between Woodward and downtown Berkley. Alternatively, the City should work with SMART to extend bus service along this section of Twelve Mile Road.