

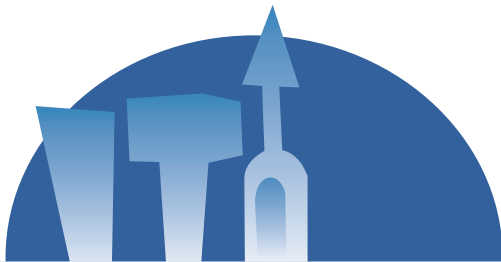
# Woodward Avenue: a Road to the Heart and Soul of America

On June 13, 2002, Woodward Avenue (M-1) – from the Detroit River to the city of Pontiac – became one of America’s 99 National Byways, and the only urban route so designated.

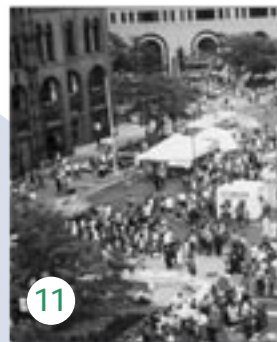
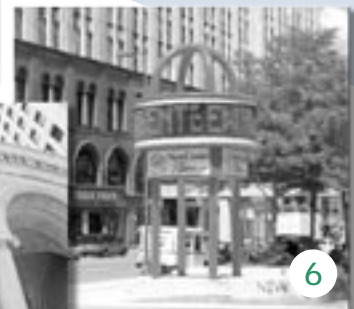
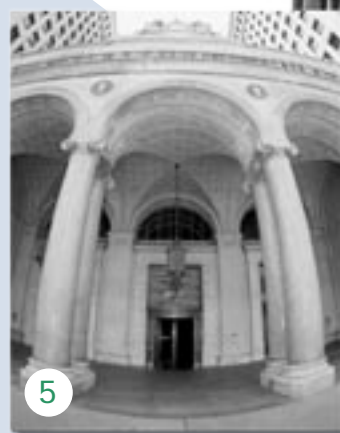
As former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta noted in his announcement, “...Byways are roads to the heart and soul of America. They create a sense of pride and connect us to the nation’s history and culture. Woodward Avenue put the world on wheels, and America’s automobile heritage is represented along this corridor.”

Welcome to Detroit’s main drag...Woodward Avenue. Stretching out from the base of Detroit at the Detroit River, Woodward follows the pathway of growth from the heart of the city. Lined with history, cultural institutions and beautiful architecture, Woodward Avenue travels through downtown Detroit, past the Detroit Zoo, the Cranbrook Educational Community in Bloomfield Hills, and on to the city of Pontiac. Nearly every mile of this byway includes historical sites that have shaped the industrial life of our nation.

Hop in the car and enjoy the sights while you cruise down Woodward Avenue!



1. Royal Oak’s Shrine of the Little Flower Church
2. Pontiac’s Commercial Historic District
3. Ferndale’s Magic Bag Theater
4. The Woodward Dream Cruise  
COURTESY OF THE WOODWARD DREAM CRUISE, INC.
5. General Motors Building in Detroit
6. Fisher Theater/New Center
7. Detroit Zoo and Water Tower
8. Palmer Park in Detroit
9. Museum of African American History
10. Detroit Institute of Arts
11. Comerica Tastefest crowd  
COURTESY OF NEW CENTER COUNCIL, INC.
12. America’s Thanksgiving Parade on Woodward (second largest in the nation)  
COURTESY OF THE PARADE COMPANY
13. City of Detroit Municipal Building and the “Spirit of Detroit”



## A Brief History

Long before Detroit was incorporated as a city in 1815, Woodward Avenue was established as a primary transportation path by Native Americans. It was known as the Saginaw Trail and later became a wood planked "corduroy road" for wagon travel. In the 1820s, Woodward included toll booths, and a road composed of gravel, mud and cedar blocks. In 1909, the first mile of concrete highway in the world was built between Six and Seven Mile roads by Wayne County. In 1916, the 27-mile length to Pontiac was paved, and in 1919 the nation's first three-color traffic light appeared on the thoroughfare.

The auto industry grew up along Woodward. Henry Ford built his first car at his home there, just four blocks west of Woodward. The Model T was built in 1910 in Highland Park. Chrysler was founded three blocks east of Woodward, and GM introduced its new Pontiac line and GMC truck and coach lines in 1926 in Pontiac.

"Woodwarding" became the craze in the 1950s and 1960s. Cruisers gathered at drive-in restaurants. Muscle car competition hit its heyday in the mid-1960s. The Woodward Dream Cruise, staged from Ferndale to Pontiac, is one of Metro Detroit's most exciting annual events. It attracts more than 1.5 million people from around the world and shows off 30,000 classic cars.

Woodward remains the spine of vitality in the Motor City. General Motors moved its headquarters to the Renaissance Center. Comerica Park, the new playing field for the Detroit Tigers, opened on Woodward. Compuware will soon open its headquarters in the new Campus Martius project. Interest in landmark buildings and historic preservation has polished some of Detroit's jewels including The Fox and Gem theaters.

(Information supplied by Woodward Heritage.)

# Woodward Heritage

## Quick Facts

Length: 27 miles

Time to allow for tour: at least five hours

Named for: Supreme Court Judge Augustus B. Woodward, an early leader in the city's history

Designations:

Designated as Automobile National Heritage Area by National Park Service (1998)

Designated as Michigan Heritage Route by MDOT (1999)

Designated as National Byway by FHWA (2002)

For more information about Woodward Avenue, visit [www.woodwardheritage.com](http://www.woodwardheritage.com) or [www.byways.org/](http://www.byways.org/).

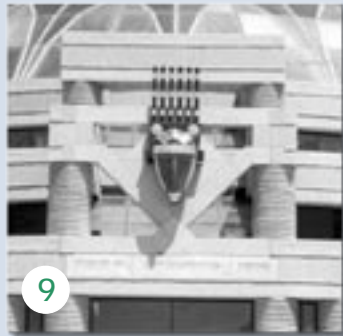
MDOT staff involved in the Woodward Avenue designation as a National Byway: Pete Hanses, Heritage Route Program manager; Paul McAllister, Planning; Ernie Savas, Metro Region Engineer; Jeff Edwards, Metro Region Planning; Mike Eustice, Oakland TSC; Margaret Barondess, Planning; and Jose Lopez, Planning.



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