



Berkley Parking Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

August 14, 2023

Berkley has a history of strong neighborhoods and vibrant commercial corridors. Major vehicle routes such as Woodward Avenue, 12 Mile Road, 11 Mile Road, and Coolidge Highway create corridors that outline walkable neighborhoods of single-family homes and multi-family residences. The corridors are lined with a variety of commercial and institutional land uses with varying parking needs. Zoning requirements have largely managed the parking supply in Berkley, with many organizations having on-site parking while there are several municipal parking lots providing public parking. The municipal parking lots are largely located along 12 Mile Road and Coolidge Highway in the DDA Downtown District.



The businesses and institutions along the corridors create highly active areas. While distinctly different than downtown areas such as Detroit or a suburban city center like Royal Oak, Berkley is still an urban environment facing issues that come with density. Even with changing attitudes and improved infrastructure, Berkley is still overwhelmingly a driving city with over 90% of residents using a vehicle to commute. Correspondingly, the entities along the corridors require a certain amount of parking to be viable and accessible to their patrons.

Berkley is undertaking a thorough review of city-wide zoning code and policies, including parking requirements, as well as developing a parking strategy to protect existing neighborhoods and enhance the corridors. The parking study team, with the guidance of a Steering Committee, developed updated parking zoning recommendations along with parking policy options. The Committee consisted of City staff, council members, planning commission members, business owners and citizens. The study team hosted a public open house in January of 2023, with over sixty members of the community participating in-person, and over 400 hundred participating via online input.

The updated parking zoning recommendations consolidate several land uses and apply parking ratios based on current land use patterns, including a maximum parking provision of 120% (of parking minimums) to reduce unnecessary impervious surfaces. The recommended Useable Floor Area (UFA) percentage was changed from 70% to 80% to reflect greater efficiency of space. The recommendations also increase flexibility for administrative staff and the Planning Commission including provisions such as:

- Eliminating same side of the street requirements for the 500-foot Municipal Parking waiver.
- Allowing on-street parking to count towards the total number of parking spaces required.
- Administration and Planning Commission waivers, up to a total waiver threshold of 20%.

The zoning recommendations should be considered in the broader context of the comprehensive zoning update currently being undertaken by Berkley. Included in this report is a complete chart of the recommendations for updated parking requirements by land use, the most applicable and notable changes included:

	Current Standard	Proposed Standard
• Multiple-family:	2 per unit	0.85 per bedroom
• Restaurant (sit down):	1 per 60 UFA	2 per 100 UFA, plus 1 per employee
• Retail sales:	1 per 225 UFA	1 per 500 UFA, plus 1 per employee
• Professional office:	1 per 225 UFA	1 per 300 UFA
• Manufacturing facility:	1 per 250 UFA + company vehicles	1 per 750 UFA

- Nursery/Garden Center: 1 per 300 UFA + 1 per 800 UFA, +
 1 per 300 outdoor 1 per employee

Parking policy applications were considered in the context of current conditions, the 2021 Master Plan, and input from the Steering Committee and community. Several current policies were studied to determine if policy was consistent with identified goals, with the following recommendations:

- The overnight parking prohibition on public streets should continue. The residential overnight permit system should be upgraded for online access. Enforcement of the prohibition should be consistent.
- The off-street Municipal Parking Lots should allow overnight parking but have a 48-hour maximum parking duration. Ordinance changes and enforcement policy will need further consideration.
- Free parking should continue in the Municipal Parking Lots and on-street.
- Public parking on the streets should continue, including vehicles associated with businesses or organizations on the corridors parking along the neighborhood side streets in the vicinity. The overnight parking prohibition requires that vehicles are moved often and are not permanently parked along those streets.
- The City should seek to bring more parking into the public domain through additional “Municipal Parking Lots” and greater sharing of parking assets among private parking owners. The goal is greater utilization of all parking along the corridors to avoid overbuilding of parking supply resulting in the loss of housing and underutilized paved surfaces.

Each of the above policies will need to be evaluated on a regular basis. Berkley will continue to change, and at some point one or all of these policies may need to be modified to best serve the community.

As the corridors continue to develop density and more transportation and parking related issues arise, it is important to have leadership to address the needs. The responsibility for parking policy and application is spread across numerous City departments. While each department completes their tasks, no entity is responsible for providing leadership, developing operational goals, or looking toward future parking and mobility opportunities.

Effective parking programs support many aspects of the community; economic development and vitality, neighborhood cohesion, safety, access, and sustainability to name a few. Berkley does not need a heavy investment in staff to have an effective parking program. Parking policy and leadership should reside in a single department that communicates effectively with all other City departments having parking responsibility or impacted by policy. Parking leadership should develop and communicate a thorough parking strategy that supports the residents and vision of Berkley.

Alternative transportation options should be encouraged with a long-term focus on increasing access and assets. Berkley will continue to be a predominately driving city for the foreseeable future. However, leveraging strong pedestrian connectivity with additional bicycle and transit options can increase alternative transportation use. Promotional programs and advertising will increase community awareness and build a desire for non-passenger vehicle options.

Parking issues and complaints can be frustrating and distract focus on other needs in Berkley. Updated zoning, streamlined approval processes, and effective leadership can mitigate issues and turn parking into a positive. Parking can be a vital support service that increases opportunities for economic development, maintains neighborhood charm, augments public safety, and entices residents and businesses to locate in Berkley.