

City Of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee 2016 Annual Report

Introduction

The City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee was created out of a recommendation in the City Non-Motorized Plan and serves under the City Of Ypsilanti Planning Commission. The Committee was created in September 2010.

The Statement of Purpose of the Committee is as follows... “The City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee, working through the Planning Commission, will work to enact recommendations of the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Plan so as to offer residents increased non-motorized transportation and recreation options as well as having the Plan creating economic and quality of life incentives to the City”.

Operations

The Committee met every month of 2016 generally on the first Thursday of the month at the Ypsilanti District Library, 229 West Michigan Avenue.

2015 members of the Committee through the year (some terms ended, others began) were as follows...

- Tony Bedogne (also City Of Ypsilanti Planning Commission member)
- Bob Krzewinski
- Cheryl Weber (Full Circle Community Center & AAATA Local Advisory Council)
- Lena Reeves
- Cathie Kinzel
- Kelly Cowatch
- Martha Cleary
- Sarah Walsh

Non-Motorized Advisory Committee 2016 Actions

During 2016 the Committee actively worked to complete many of the goals of the Non-Motorized Plan, as listed below.

- Public Input – The Committee’s meetings always start with a public input session on the City’s Non-Motorized Plan and the work of the Committee. The Committee also maintains a Facebook page offering an opportunity for additional public input.
- Publicity/Outreach – Committee meetings are publicized though an official City notice though the City Clerks office as well as announcements over the Committee’s Facebook page as well as through other email/Facebook pages (i.e. Bike Ypsi, Bike-Bus-Walk Ypsilanti, etc.). For the second year, the Committee also had a table at the Parkridge Festival (8/27) with free bike helmet giveaways donated by the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society and free bicycle repairs given by Common Cycle. The Committee also had a table at the annual downtown Halloween Festival (10/27) where lighted wristbands were distributed (courtesy of the AAATA) and safe trick-or-treating handouts were distributed. A cold weather cycling talk was given in early December sponsored by the Committee.
- Committee Priorities – The Committee started work on a list of Committee priorities for the upcoming calendar year in October 2016 and completed the list at it’s December meeting.
- Monthly Planning Department meeting – Members of the Committee met, or had telephone conversations, with Planning Department staff prior to most Committee meetings for input and updates.
- Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition - The Committee continues to work with this county-wide advocacy group.

- Snow Removal – In the winter months the Committee mounted a campaign to educate area residents, thorough social media and its Facebook page, about the need to shovel sidewalks as required by City ordinance and how to report problems using ClickFix – Ypsi Connect. The Committee timed media actions to that of just prior to major snowfalls with information sent to all City neighborhood groups on Facebook and NextDoor. Information was also sent out about snow removal for elderly/disabled residents through the Sheriffs Department Community Work Program.
- Curb Cuts – The Committee, with the support of the Planning Commission, sent a letter to MDOT asking for the installation of curb cuts on Hamilton and Ferris Streets as there are many disabled residents living nearby (Towne Centre Place) and the lack of curb cuts can be a safety hazard. Committee members also made a short YouTube video about the curb cut problems featuring a wheelchair user - https://youtu.be/dWc2z95A_Z8.
- Border To Border Trail – The Committee held a meeting early in 2016 between the City Planning Department and the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission on re-routing the B2B Trail through Riverside Park to meet up with new Trail construction in Riverside Park and the Water Street area with follow-up conversations throughout 2016. Committee members also gave verbal comments at City Council meetings supporting the funding of the Michigan Avenue Trail crossing and incorporation of the Trail in to any plans for redeveloping the Rice Street parking lot in association with a passenger railroad station. The Committee also gave on-street Trail rerouting recommendations due to the Park Street railroad crossing being closed to traffic
- Bike Friendly Community & Walk Friendly Community applications – For the Bike Friendly Community, the City received an “Honorable Mention” award in 2014 to which the Committee continued work in 2016 to obtain a higher status in a follow-up application. A staff member of the League of American Bicyclist that works on the Bike Friendly Community program visited Ypsilanti for a site visit on May 17th and met with Committee members and City staff.

The City learned in 2015 it did not receive a Walk Friendly award but the report given by the organization running the Walk Friendly awards will be useful for improvements to be worked on for the next application. Both Walk Friendly and Bike Friendly Community applications are expected to be resubmitted in 2017 pending the completion and opening of additional non-motorized facilities (i.e. the Water Street Border To Border Trail and the associated Michigan Avenue crossing).

- Bike Friendly Business program – The Committee, with the support of the Downtown Association of Ypsilanti, continued to sign up participants for a local Bike Friendly Business (BFB) program as a way to promote active and healthy lifestyles for employees and customers in the Ypsilanti area. The campaign will honor corporations, organizations, associations, government agencies or non-profit groups located in Ypsilanti that actively promotes bicycling for transportation, recreation, exercise and sport. Business participants receive a BFB window sticker and are listed on the Bike-Bus-Walk Ypsi (www.bbwypsi.org) web site.
- Traffic Calming - The Committee sent a letter to the City Manager concerning traffic calming on Congress Street between Summit with suggested improvements.
- Police Chief Meeting – In May 2016 the Committee had a meeting with the Ypsilanti Police Chief on non-motorized issues and possible areas of coordination
- AAATA Transit Center – The Committee had email correspondence with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority about the need for additional bicycle parking at the Ypsilanti Transit Center. By the end of 2016 a larger bike parking stand was moved from the southeast corner of West Cross Street and College Place to the Transit Center.
- Bike Lanes – The Committee participated in an April meeting at the Freighthouse on a Forest Avenue bike lane gap completion between Prospect Road and Norris Street, and spoke in favor of such a project at subsequent Planning Commission and City Council meetings, ultimately resulting in City Council approval later in 2016.

- Pedestrian Safety Signage – Early in 2016 the Committee sent a letter to the Michigan Department of Transportation office indicating the need for additional pedestrian safety signage and pavement markings on City MDOT controlled streets. MDOT acknowledged the letter and indicated it will take action in the future.
- I-94/Huron – Hamilton Streets non-motorized projects - The Committee continued to follow these items closely as there are a fair number of pedestrians and bicyclists using Huron Street over I-94 with no dedicated non-motorized facilities. In July, the Committee also passed the following resolution – *“The City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee urges the City Planning Commission, Mayor and City Council to support overdue and needed non-motorized improvements to the Huron Street overpass of I-94.”*
- Bike Bus-Walk Week (May 15-21) – With the intent to have individuals try alternative transit in the hope that such modes of transportation would become a habit, the Committee coordinated events during this week (also known as national Bike To Work Week), holding a “Walk And Talk” with the Mayor, a “Ghost Bikes” display (white bikes where cyclists have been hit in Ypsilanti meant to be a simple message to motorists and bicyclists to “share the road” with courtesy to each other), a “Bike Basics” talk at the downtown library and on Bike To Work Day (May 20) ran a bike commuting station (free bike maps, literature, snacks, etc.) in front of Beezy’s Café.
- Safe Routes To School Training – Two Committee members attended SRTS training in Ann Arbor on 8/23.
- Bike repair Stations – A meeting was held in November to explore bike repair stations (theft-proof bicycle repair tools on a stand with an associated air pump) at the downtown library and Parkridge Community Center.
- Other Items – Committee members attended City Council meetings to support non-motorized issues such as truck routes (9/6) and road diet reaffirmation (9/20) and a City Council roads working session (10/11). The City of Saline is interested in setting up a non-motorized committee and met with a Committee member in November for advice. A City of Ypsilanti specific bicycle map was placed on the Bike-Bus-Walk Ypsilanti website – www.bbwypsi.org.