

City Of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee 2020 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 formed 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

While 2020 began with the Committee meeting in January at it’s regular time and location (1st Thursday of the month, 7pm, Ypsilanti District Library Michigan Avenue), the February meeting was not held due to Committee member availability, followed by a March Committee meeting. April saw the COVID-19 pandemic explode and the next meeting was held, by teleconference in June, followed by teleconference meetings in August, September and October.

2020 members of the Committee through the year (some terms ended, others began) were as follows (Committee members as of 1/1/2021 in italics)...

- *Jenny Connolly*
- *Mike Davis Jr. (also a City Of Ypsilanti Planning Commission member)*
- *Renee Echols*
- *Dylan Goings*
- *Bob Krzewinski*
- *Helen Schulte*
- Lee Stimson
- Jared Talaga (also a City Of Ypsilanti Planning Commission member)
- Sarah Walsh
- Jared Walfish

Non-Motorized Advisory Committee 2020 Actions

While the Committee worked to complete goals of the Non-Motorized Plan, as listed below, work was hampered by the pandemic.

- 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.
- Committee Priorities – Normally every October and November, the Committee reviews possible priorities for the coming calendar year and finalize the list at its December meeting. The Committee priorities are then forwarded to the Planning Department and City Council. This year, due to the pandemic, when meetings were held they were on an abbreviated agenda and for the 2021 Committee priorities, the Committee voted at its October 2020 meeting to change the Committee’s 2020 Priorities to read “2020-2021 Committee Priorities” with the only change being to add “Sharrows” to item 4 (Bike Lanes).
- Publicity/Outreach/Communications – Committee meetings are publicized though an official City notice by 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.). As of early December 2020, there are 433 “Likes” on the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Facebook late (www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC).

While the Committee did have an information table on August 1st at annual Eastern Michigan University Bike Rodeo with bike maps and safe bicycling/walking handouts, other events that the

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Committee usually appeared at were cancelled due to the pandemic. These cancellations included the Ypsilanti Earth Day Festival (April), Bike Ypsi Spring Ride (May), Parkridge Festival (August) and the downtown Halloween Festival (October). Also, besides sending reminders to neighborhood groups over social media about the City's sidewalk snow removal ordinance requirements, reminders are also sent indicating vegetation must be trimmed back so as to not block sidewalks during summer weather.

- City Meetings – Members of the Committee met with, had telephone conversations with, or had as guests at Committee meetings, staff from the Planning Department (Andy Aamodt) and Public Services (Ron Akers, Bonnie Wessler) for input and updates. Also, Committee members attended numerous City Council and Planning Commission meetings throughout 2020 to support non-motorized projects. City Council member (and Ypsi Bike Co-Op volunteer). Steve Wilcoxon, volunteered to be a City Council member liaison to the Committee.
- 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 “Report An Issue” (ClickFix) on the City web page. 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.
- City Non-Motorized Plan – The Committee continued to work with the City Planning Department to update the City's Non-Motorized Plan and expects the process to be complete in mid-2021.
- Sidewalk curb cut inventory & improvements – In June 2020, the Committee completed an initial priority list for curb cuts assembled from Committee member input, public input through social media and also site visits. The priority list was forwarded to the Public Services Department as well as the Planning Commission and City Council. The Committee is planning on updating the curb cut list annually with a deadline of June 1st.
- Bike Friendly Community & Walk Friendly Community status – The City officially became a League of American Cyclists “Bike Friendly Community” at the Bronze level in late 2017 with the award being for a four-year period. The Committee plans to start work in 2021 to apply for a renewal of its Bike Friendly Community award. The Committee plans to resubmit the Walk Friendly Community once the Non-Motorized Plan is updated.
- 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.
- Bike Lanes – With the completion of bike lanes along Cross Street from the water tower west to the western City limit, the Committee has been a party in an effort initiated with the Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition to improve bicycle facilities along Cross/Prospect from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor. An initial online meeting was held on November 16th with more meetings planned for the future.
- The Committee continues to promote, through social media to neighborhood groups, the City's “Speeding Concerns” web page - <https://cityofypsilanti.com/699/Speeding-Concerns> - that gives the process for citizen petitioning to have traffic calming (such as signage, pavement markings, speed bumps) on a specific street section.
- Three-Foot Passing Law – In the spring of 2020, the Committee placed basic information on the Mayors Newsletter and the Committee Facebook page about the Michigan 3-foot bicycle passing law that took effect in September 2018. The Committee plans to conduct a safe biking drive every upcoming April and May.

- 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.
- Bike Bus-Walk Week (Third week of May) – With the intent to have individuals try alternative transit in the hope that such modes of transportation would become a habit, in the past the Committee coordinated events during this week which included a “Ride Of Silence” (sponsored by Bike Ypsi, the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society and the Ypsilanti- headquartered Program To Educate All Cyclists) starting from Recreation Park to memorialize cyclists injured or killed and urging motorists and cyclists show respect for each other. The Friday of Bike-Bus-Walk Week is also known nationally at Bike To Work Day and in the past a bike commuting station was set up that morning at Beezy’s Café by the Committee offering free bike maps, literature, coffee snacks, etc. Due to the pandemic, the local Bike-Bus-Walk Week was cancelled for 2020.
- Neighborhood Connectors (also known as “Bike Boulevards”) – The Committee is exploring designating a small number of local streets, with lower traffic volume, which pedestrians, the disabled and bicyclists are encouraged to use to travel within the City. These would be a low cost project consisting of signage and road markings.
- The Committee has pledged to work with the City Sustainably Commission on projects and areas of concern.