

City Of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee 2021 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

Due to the pandemic, all 2021 Committee meetings were held online using a Zoom format. This, at times, also resulted in Committee meeting dates being moved in 2021. The Committee met, with the exception of August and December, every month of 2021.

2021 members of the Committee through the year were as follows...

- Jenny Connolly (Resigned June 11, 2021, due to moving out of the area)
- Marc Arthur (also a City Of Ypsilanti Planning Commission member)
- Mike Davis Jr. (also a City Of Ypsilanti Planning Commission member)
- Renee Echols
- Dylan Goings
- Bob Krzewinski
- Helen Schulte

Non-Motorized Advisory Committee 2021 Actions

During 2021 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.
- Committee Priorities – Every October and November, the Committee reviews possible priorities for the coming calendar year and finalizing the list at its December meeting. The Committee priorities are then forwarded to the Planning Department and City Council.
- City Non-Motorized Plan – Committee member Mike Davis worked with Bonnie Wessler (Public Services Department) and Andy Aamodt (Planning Department) to update the City’s Non-Motorized Plan. The draft Plan was approved by the Committee at its May 2021 meeting, forwarded to the Planning Commission, who after a 30 day comment period, approved the plan at their June meeting, and forwarded it to City Council, who approved the Plan at its July 2021 meeting. During September through November the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee discussed what items should be a priority for action and these were incorporated into the Committee’s 2022 priorities. The updated City Non-Motorized Plan can be viewed at https://cityofypsilanti.com/DocumentCenter/View/3068/Adopted-Non-Motorized-Plan-Update-2021-07-13_Website
- 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 late December 2021, there were 602 “followers” on the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Facebook page (www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC). The Committee’s City web page address is <https://www.cityofypsilanti.com/296/Non-Motorized-Advisory-Committee>

In early August (8/7/2021), the Committee had an information table at the EMU Bike Rodeo at the Convocation Center. Next, the Committee had an information table at the annual Parkridge Festival (8/28/2021) where safe bicycling and walking information was distributed. While the annual downtown Halloween Festival was cancelled due to the pandemic, items meant for distribution (lighted wristbands courtesy of the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority, safe trick-or-treating handouts) were distributed to the public in October courtesy of the downtown Ypsilanti District Library. The Committee also continues to work with the County-wide advocacy group, the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (www.wbwc.org) with Committee members Davis and Krzewinski taking part in a meeting June 15th called by the WBWC to seek bicycle improvements between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti using West Cross Street and Packard Road.

Related to Committee communications, the Committee started publishing a quarterly Non-Motorized Advisory Committee newsletter with Spring 2021 and Summer 2021 editions. In addition, the Committee has had items published or highlighted in the City monthly Newsletter.

- City Meetings – Members of the Committee met, or had telephone conversations, with Planning Department staff prior to most Committee meetings for input and updates. Also, Committee members attended numerous City Council and Planning Commission meetings throughout 2021 to support non-motorized projects. City Council member (and Ypsi Bike Co-Op volunteer). Steve Wilcoxon, continued to serve as 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 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.
- Sidewalk curb cut inventory & improvements – During 2021, the Committee continued work on a priority list for curb cuts with a list assembled from input from the disabled community, Committee member input, public input through social media and also site visits. The priority list was forwarded by June 1st to the Public Services Department, as well as the Planning Commission and City Council.
- 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 worked in 2021 to apply for a renewal of its Bike Friendly Community award, and learned in early December that the City of Ypsilanti was again awarded a “Bronze” level Bike Friendly Community status - https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/bfareportcards/BFC_Fall_2021_ReportCard_Ypsilanti_MI.pdf . The Committee also submitted a Walk Friendly Community application in December 2021 and expects to learn the results in April 2022.
- 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 – Committee members did a spring 2021 inspection of all existing bike lanes within the City and forwarded their findings to the City Public Services Department.
- 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 2021, the Committee placed basic information on 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 and support 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.
- The Committee supported and publicized the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) Tactical Urbanism Project (TUP) which involves implementing short term traffic calming ideas. More on this project can be found at <http://www.miwats.org/route-ypsilanti>
- Bike Bus-Walk Week – Ordinarily this mid-May event is held with the intent to have individuals try alternative transit in the hope that such modes of transportation would become a habit. Due to an increase in pandemic activity, the event was cancelled for 2021 but is planned for May 2022.
- 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.