

Welcome To The Quarterly Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Committee Newsletter

This is the first edition of what we plan to be a quarterly (Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter) newsletter about not only the activities of the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee, but non-motorized activities in general of interest to those who walk, bicycle or use a wheelchair. We also may report issues dealing with bus transit as to use such a service a person has to walk, bicycle or use a wheelchair to or from the bus stop.

We will try and keep news items in a brief format, devoid of hyper-technical language and also spelling out any abbreviations. Notice of the Newsletter being published will be done through City communications outlets, the Mayor's newsletter and on social media through Facebook on the Committee's page there - www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC.

History Of The City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee

The story of the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee (NMAC) begins when the City's Non-Motorized Plan was being finalized (the Plan was formally approved by City Council in March 2009). With all the work that went into the Non-Motorized Plan, there was a general feeling that it should not end up as a document on the shelf that was reviewed occasionally. Instead, the Plan should be an active document with an official City group working to enact provisions in the Plan.

After the City Council approved the Non-Motorized Plan, there was debate on the Council of where a non-motorized group should sit in the City government structure. In the end it was decided that a Non-Motorized Advisory Committee would be formed, and it would be a Committee of the Planning Commission. The official duties were to *"help enact recommendations of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan through recommendations to the Planning Commission, outreach, and promotional activities."*

On December 2nd, 2010, the first official meeting of the new Non-Motorized Advisory Committee made up of members of the City Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority and Bike Ypsi. Initial projects centered around snow removal, an updated bicycle map, City adoption of a Complete Streets ordinance (where when a street is rebuilt, it takes in account all users and not just motorists), sidewalk repair, the completion of the Border To Border Trail and non-motorized improvements to the Huron Street crossing of I-94.

Over the years, the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee has been meeting on the 1st Thursday of every month at the downtown Ypsilanti District Library (229 West Michigan Avenue) at 7pm. The Committee also has a set of [bylaws](#), publishes meeting agendas and minutes on it's [web site](#) and also issues [year-end reports](#). The Committee also has a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC. All meetings are open to the public and the Committee is always interested in new members and volunteers.

Huron/Hamilton/Washtenaw Lane Reduction & Bike Lanes

When Huron Street, Hamilton Street, and Washtenaw Avenue were last designed, the City was seeing an increase in traffic; a decrease in people walking, biking, and taking transit; and the majority of people who lives and worked in Ypsilanti worked regular 9-5 jobs (or other standard shifts), which led to predictable traffic jams as people left work and shifts changed. Today, these same roads are seeing more bicyclists and walkers, and fewer "shift change" pressures, leading to roads that are wide open- leading drivers to greater speeds, despite more pedestrians attempting to cross and the same number of driveways and side streets. In order to improve the safety of these roads, the City is working with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to evaluate the potential to change one of these streets' three lanes to a bicycle lane. Please spread the word to your friends, and join us at an upcoming public input session (time, date and location to be announced)!

Related to the possible Huron-Hamilton-Washtenaw lane reduction, on September 10th, Ypsilanti City Council reviewed an update on a technical feasibility study on the project of which the presentation document can be viewed by [clicking here](#). The next step in the process would be a public meeting in October or November followed by a public comment period. Then the proposed project would go back to City Council for final action and if approved, implementation could happen in 2022 in combination with street repaving projects.

Keeping Sidewalks Barrier Free – All Year

When it comes to sidewalks, City ordinance (Section 110-45) requires that there shall be a clear space of at least ten feet above a sidewalk. So please, especially for the sake of disabled people using wheelchairs, keep sidewalks on your property well-trimmed during the “green” months. Thanks!

Input Still Needed On Sidewalk Street Crossings In Ypsilanti



Mention the words “curb cut” (the little ramp where a sidewalk starts to cross the street) and to most people it doesn’t mean that much. But to a person in a wheelchair, uses a walker or someone who just walks at a slow rate, the lack of a safe curb cut can mean either a long, unsafe, detour or simply not being able to travel to your destination.

The City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee is trying to identify a “top 10” list of sidewalk street crossings where the curb cut is either missing altogether (i.e. just a curb), is an older curb cut that is too narrow, or just a curb cut in need of repair. Once this list is formulated, it will be forwarded through City channels for action.

Earlier this year, the Committee received (and appreciated!) a number of suggestions for curb cuts that involved Huron Street, Hamilton Street or Washtenaw Avenue. With this follow up request, we are looking for suggested curb cut improvements on City streets that **do not** involve Huron, Hamilton or Washtenaw. The reason being is that every year the City is mandated to improve a number of curb cuts that are on City-controlled streets (see the article right below this one). For the most part, Huron, Hamilton and Washtenaw are State routes controlled by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and while curb cut work will happen on these State routes, it goes through a slower MDOT process rather than a City process. .

So if you notice a curb cut that needs to be improved, and the location does not involve Huron, Hamilton or Washtenaw, please send an email to the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Chair at wolverbob@gmail.com with the location of curb cut (i.e. “northwest corner of X and Y streets”) along with your email address and/or phone number in case we have any questions. Also, if you have a photo of the problem area that would be a real plus. If you want to phone in a problem curb cut area, call 734-487-9058. Thank you in advance for improving the mobility of all residents or visitors to our City.

2019 Curb Cut Work



As part of a lawsuit consent decree entered into by the City of Ypsilanti in 2005, the City is required to spend \$100,000 each year retrofitting existing sidewalk ramps to federal American With Disability Act (ADA) standards until all of the sidewalk ramps in the City have been retrofitted. This is accomplished by utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and METRO Act funds that the City of Ypsilanti receives from the State of Michigan. The City Department of

Public Services administers these as two (2) separate contracts and at its September 10th meeting, the Ypsilanti City Council approved a contract to fund the following curb cuts in 2019 with construction planned for completion this year.

- Jarvis St. @ N. Adams St. – Northeast Corner – 1 Ramps
- Jarvis St. @ N. Adams St. – Northwest Corner – 1 Ramps
- Jarvis St. @ N. Adams St. – Southeast Corner – 2 Ramps
- Jarvis St. @ N. Adams St. – Southwest Corner – 2 Ramps
- Jarvis St @ Jenness St – Northeast Corner – 2 Ramps
- Jarvis St @ Jenness St – Northwest Corner – 2 Ramps
- Jarvis St @ Jenness St – Southeast Corner – 1 Ramps
- Jarvis St @ Jenness St – Southwest Corner – 1 Ramps
- Lowell St @ Jarvis St. – Northeast Corner – 2 Ramps
- Lowell St @ Jarvis St. – Southeast Corner – 2 Ramps
- Jenness St. @ Saint Johns St. – Southeast Corner – 1 Ramps
- Jenness St @ Saint Johns St. – Southwest Corner – 1 Ramps

2019 City Major Roads Program

The City of Ypsilanti has been awarded \$405,834 in federal funds and has approved \$182,000 in local funds to perform a pavement resurfacing project on the following streets within the City:

- Eastbound Harriet Street between South Huron Street and South Hamilton Street
- North Huron Street between West Cross Street and West Forest Avenue
- Congress/South Congress Street between Elm Street and South Mansfield Street

The work will consist of repairing damaged curb, installation of pedestrian-friendly curb bump-outs at strategic locations to separate parking lanes from travel lanes and provide improved pedestrian routes, milling the existing asphalt pavement, and resurfacing with new asphalt

Pedestrian Gateway Treatment for Huron & West Cross Streets



At its August 27th meeting, Ypsilanti City Council approved a contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to perform certain pedestrian “gateway” treatments within the City. These improvements include installing a pedestrian yield sign on each side of the street and a flexible delineator post or an in-street yield sign between the travel lanes at the following intersections...

Huron Street and Pearl Street
Cross Street and N. Washington Street
Cross Street and N. Adams Street
Cross Street and Perrin Street
Cross Street and College Place Street
Cross Street and Normal Street

The contract defines that the work will be performed by the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) and administered by MDOT at no cost to the City. The City, however, will agree to accept the signs and delineators as constructed by WCRC and assume responsibility for all operation and maintenance of the installed signs and delineators.

Border To Border Trail Improvements In Ypsilanti



In 2020 construction work is expected to begin in Ypsilanti on two sections of the Border To Border (B2B) Trail...

- Frog Island Segment – Plans are to route the Trail next to the Huron River using an existing dike, but lower the height of the dike which would give enough width so as to construct a 10-foot-wide hard surface B2B Trail.
- Grove Road – Plans are to replace the sidewalk along the west side of Grove Road, from the I-94 bridge north to where the “Water Street” trail segment intersects Grove Road, with at least a 10-foot asphalt path.

Previously, the City agreed to pay \$20,000 from a State grant for Trail planning that has already been awarded to the City and in return the Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission pledged \$850,000 to \$900,000 for this project. Construction funds come primarily from a four-year County road and trails millage approved by 71% of the voters in 2016. For more information about the Border To Border Trail, visit the Friends of the Border To Border Trail at www.bordertoborder.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/B2BTrail.

Non-Motorized Committee News Bits

Additional City Pedestrian Improvements

The Committee is working on the following projects...

- Permanent radar speed signs at key locations in the City. These signs would be preferably be solar-powered, have a sign with the posted speed limit and also have a radar readout of the motorists speed. The battery-powered temporary signs would continue to be moved around the City.

- A speed limit sign on eastbound Cross Street approaching Depot Town. This sign has been installed.
- Mid-block pedestrian crossing signage of the Border To Border Trail on Cornell Street between Collegewood Street and Mayhew Street. This is considered a City “mid-block crossing” and would require motorists to give way and stop for pedestrians. These signs have been ordered.

Bike Lanes

- West Cross Street – In 2021 West Cross Street, from Wallace to the western City limit, is planned to be rebuilt. Using guidance from the City’s Complete Streets ordinance (where when a street is rebuilt, all users, including pedestrians, the disabled and cyclists), bike lanes on both sides of the street are planned, with motorist parking on the south side. Also, at the Mansfield intersection, a center turn lane is planned with two (vs. the four now) traffic lanes.
- Repainting – The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee has a request in with City Public Services to repaint bicycle lanes in the City.

Communications

Mayor Beth Bashert attended the Committee’s January meeting and City Council member Steve Wilcoxon has been attending Committee meetings taking over a role of “unofficial” City Council liaison to the Committee, a task that the late Pete Murdock helped with for many, many years.

Events



The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee had an information table at the 2nd annual Eastern Michigan University Bike Rodeo on August 3rd, giving away bicycle lights, lighted wrist bands for night walks, bicycle maps and safe walking/biking handouts.

Also, the Committee had a table at the annual Parkridge Festival on August 24th where the Committee, through a generous grant from the [Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition](#), also gave away 50 bicycle helmets to some very happy cyclists and their parents.

Full Bike Racks On AAATA Buses



[Bicycle racks](#) on Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA – “The Ride”) busses continue to be very popular to the point that bike racks are often filled in the early morning and early evening, especially in inclement weather. Current bike racks can only fit two bikes per bus and the Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition (a County-wide non-motorized advocacy group – www.wbwc.org) is communicating with the AAATA to install three-bicycle racks on new busses and retrofit existing busses.

Give Input To The City’s First Sustainability Plan

The City has established a formal Sustainability Commission but what is “sustainability? The local Commission, on their web page states that “Sustainability is achieving a balance of ecological, social, and economic considerations to provide for an equitable path for the growth and improvement of our community in the uses of our resources, remaining conscious of the historical context, while ensuring the availability and vitality of those resources for future generations.” In many ways, sustainability also includes non-motorized activities and to that end, the Sustainability Commission and the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee have pledged to work together.

In creating a City Sustainability Plan, the Sustainability Commission recently concluded a series of public input sessions, but your input is still valued. Look for "suggestion boxes" around the City at EMU's Student Center, in Depot Town (location to be announced), in downtown at City Hall, and at Parkridge Community Center from the end of August through September!

For more on the City of Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission (it meets at City Hall on the 2nd Monday of every month, 7pm) visit <https://www.cityofypsilanti.com/642/Sustainability-Commission> (you can sign up to be on the Commission’s email news there) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sustain.ypsi.

Have A Disability Or A Senior And Need Help Clearing Snow Off Your Sidewalk?



The Washtenaw County Sheriff Department's Community Work Program has a program that offers snow removal for seniors & people with disabilities. Every year the Work Program assists in clearing snow for approximately 170 households throughout the county. If you are interested in receiving assistance with snow removal from the Community Work Program please call 734-973-4867. This services is VERY popular so the earlier in the autumn you call, the better.

City Seeks Input on Master Plan Update & Sustainability Plan

The City of Ypsilanti is updating its 2013 master plan "Shape Ypsi," and including a sustainability plan. As a part of the community engagement process, a survey was launched to solicit input from residents on ways that the City can advance land use and environmentally-themed goals and strategies with the public's support. To take the survey, please click on the link below. The survey will close on September 30...

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ypsi2019>

Residents, visitors, and other stakeholders can also participate through "living walls" which are exercises mounted on large boards and scattered throughout the city to reach a wider group of people. The boards will be installed at five locations citywide to ask of people their priorities regarding sustainability-focused action. Visit the EMU Student Center (900 Oakwood), City Hall (1 S Huron), a in Depot Town, and the Parkridge Community Center (591 Armstrong) before September 30th to submit your input!

Ypsilanti has been at the forefront of thinking about and planning for climate change with its 2018 Energy Plan, 2012 Climate Action Plan, 2010 Alternative Fuel Policy, and its *impending update to the 2010 Nonmotorized Plan*. Folding a sustainability chapter into the master plan gives the proposed actions greater weight as the document is statutorily required to be reviewed every five years, unlike other plans, and because the zoning ordinance and future development must comply with what is set forth in the master plan. This update is an important step in achieving sustainability goals.

The Ypsilanti Planning Commission and Sustainability Commission will be hearing updates about the plan, and holding public hearings regarding the draft plan, in the month of November. To stay informed about these public hearings and other input opportunities, please visit the city's site <https://cityofypsilanti.com/plan2019>.

Coming Up

City Council Meetings – Generally held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at City Hall starting at 7pm (for a list of meeting dates, [click here](#)) with agendas generally posted the Friday afternoon before each meeting at <https://www.cityofypsilanti.com/AgendaCenter>. The public has an opportunity to give their comments (3-minute limit) at the beginning, and again at the end, of every meeting. Meetings can be viewed online at <https://cityofypsilanti.civicweb.net>.

Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Meetings – September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5 – downtown Ypsilanti District Library, 229 West Michigan Avenue, 7pm. Everyone welcome to attend.

Ypsi Bike Co-op – Free bike repairs (donations accepted) and quality used bikes for sale every Saturday through the end of October at the Depot Town Farmers Market from 9am to 1pm. Details at www.facebook.com/ypsibikecoop.

Downtown Halloween Festival - As in past years, the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee is planning on having a table at the annual [Downtown Halloween Festival](#) on October 25, from 5:30pm to 7pm, where lighted wristbands (courtesy of the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority) will be given away along with safe trick-or-treating flyers.

Bike Ypsi Fall Ride – Details soon on this popular October ride at www.bikeypsi.org or www.facebook.com/bikeypsi.

Cold Weather Bicycling Talks – The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will hold talks in the local area on how to safely, and comfortably, continue to ride your bicycle during the winter months. Time, date and location is to be announced.

Sidewalk Snow Removal Promotion – The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will post on the Committee's Facebook page, as well as share with neighborhood groups, information about the City's sidewalk snow removal ordinance once a snow event takes place that will result in more than 1-2 inches of snow.

The Winter 2019-2020 Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will be published in mid-December 2019.