

City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee

Spring 2020 Newsletter

Please note that any opinion stated in this newsletter is the opinion of the author of the item and not necessarily the opinion or policy of the City of Ypsilanti

Welcome To The Quarterly Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Committee Newsletter

This quarterly (Spring/Summer/Fall/Winter) newsletter is not only about 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.

Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Meetings

Meetings of the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized are scheduled normally for the 1st Thursday of every month, 7pm, at the Ypsilanti District Library downtown branch at 229 West Michigan Avenue. Meeting agenda's and past meeting minutes are posted on the City website at <http://www.cityofypsilanti.com/AgendaCenter/NonMotorized-Advisory-Committee-9>. Anyone interested in making Ypsilanti a better place to walk, use a wheelchair, and bicycle is invited to attend. Interested in serving on the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee? Visit our [Committee Member Duties and General Information sheet](#), attend a Committee meeting or contact Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com or 734-487-9058.

Bike To Work Day & Week Moved To September

For a number of years, the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee has been promoting in mid-May Bike To Work Week along with Bike To Work Day. But with the virus pandemic, a prime national organizer of the event, the League of American Bicyclists, is postponing Bike to Work Week until September 21-27, 2020, with Bike to Work Day coinciding with [Car Free Day](#) on Tuesday, September 22, 2020.

But May Is Still National Bike Month!

While Bike To Work Week/Day has moved this year from May to September, the League of American Bicyclists is still celebrating May as National Bike Month, because not only can bikes be used for recreation and transportation, they also give us some "bike-ride-joy" to look forward to in some trying times. We hope that those who participated in Bike Month events in typical years continue to do so through solo, or safely distanced events in May 2020, and beyond.

Ride Of Silence Change For 2020 – Still On For May 20th (And May 23rd) But No Ypsilanti Group Rides (From Bike Ypsi)

Keeping in mind the virus pandemic, and the danger of groups spreading the virus, the organizers for the international Ride Of Silence, (a silent bike ride meant to commemorate cyclists killed or injured while riding) are encouraging individuals to ride solo, with their family or same household members or "virtually" (on a trainer).

Participants doing their own ride are reminded to...

1. Ride in silence
2. Remember and honor those who've been hit & killed while riding or seriously injured
3. Ride slowly and a relatively short distance - this is not a race
4. Wear a helmet & obey road laws for bicyclists

In consideration of the safety and security of individuals and small groups of riders who may not feel comfortable riding in the evening on a weekday on the traditional time of the Ride Of Silence (ROS), the international ROS organizers encourage participants to ride on the following Saturday, May 23, at 10 am, which is also the official rain date and date/time for S. Hemisphere events. Please remember to use the hashtag #RideofSilence2020 on all your social media posts after your rides on the 20th and/or 23rd. Don't forget to also submit your reports the old fashioned way so your ride is officially recorded: <http://www.rideofsilence.org/reports/>. For more information about the Ride Of Silence visit www.rideofsilence.org.

Additional Bicycle Repair Stations Planned For Ypsilanti

The City of Ypsilanti over the winter obtained funding for three additional bicycle repair stations around the City. These stations will be installed at the Parkridge Community Center, the Senior Center in Recreation Park, and along the Border To Border Trail at the north end of Frog Island Park.

Border To Border Trail Work To Start In Ypsilanti

Construction is expected to begin in June on two sections of the Border To Border (B2B) Trail in the City of Ypsilanti. One segment would be in Frog Island Park, where the Trail will be improved by lowering the dike and dramatically widening the path next to the Huron River. At the south end of the Park, the B2B Trail will take users around the amphitheater area, up the paved ramp to meet up with Cross Street, go west across the bridge then turn north into Riverside Park. The reason that the “tridge” (three-way-bridge) is not being used as a B2B route is that the structure is too narrow to allow safe mixing of pedestrian, bicycle and disabled users.

The second Border To Border Trail project will be improvements from where the Water Street development B2B segment meets Grove Road south to where Grove Road crosses I-94. Specifically, plans call for replacing the sidewalks along the west side of Grove Road with a wider non-motorized paved path that will also take users safely over I-94. While the Frog Island B2B improvements are expected to be completed in 2020, the non-motorized improvements to the Grove Road bridge over I-94 may extend the completion time to 2021 since this bridge is in the control of the Michigan Department of Transportation and has more complex construction requirements.

Also, it has been recommended by the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee that due to a number of events that take place at Riverside Park through the year (i.e. Color Run, car shows, beer festival, etc.), an “event-alternative” Border To Border Trail segment be signed and maintained that Trail users can use to safely by-pass Riverside Park during Park events.

West Cross Street Rebuild Work

Starting by early June, West Cross Street will see a rebuilding of the road from Courtland Street to Wallace Boulevard that will include traffic calming and non-motorized improvements. This work will include a number of new or improved sidewalk ramps, a signaled (flashing beacon) pedestrian crossing near Marion Street, new bike lanes (with motor vehicle parking only on the south side of the road), and a center turn lane centering on the Cross/Mansfield intersection. For more information on the project visit <https://cityofypsilanti.com/DocumentCenter/View/2439/West-Cross-Street-Presentation-PDF>.

It should also be noted that this rebuilding of West Cross Street fell under the City of Ypsilanti “Complete Streets” ordinance where if a new street is constructed, on an existing street is rebuilt, in the planning process the needs of all users, including pedestrians, the disabled and bicyclists, must be taken in account. For more on the City’s Complete Streets ordinance, visit <https://cityofypsilanti.com/DocumentCenter/View/285/Complete-Streets-Ordinance-PDF>.

And Other Non-Motorized Improvements On The Horizon

- Huron, Hamilton and Washtenaw – In 2022, portions of these roads that fall under Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) control will see repaving along with pedestrian, disabled and bicycle improvements including sidewalk ramps, bike lanes, safety signage and traffic calming. This MDOT project will also address the need for a safe non-motorized crossing of Huron Street over the I-94 bridge. For more on these planned improvements (including how the Huron/I-94 crossing will be handled), please refer to the document presented at the public input sessions at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse in December 2019 at <https://cityofypsilanti.com/DocumentCenter/View/2282/M-17-Lane-Reduction-Presentation?bidId=>
- “Gateway” Treatment – With a goal of increasing pedestrian safety, the Michigan Department of Transportation is supporting “Gateway” treatment for roads that include yield signs (installed both at the edge of the roadway and between travel lanes), road markings and traffic islands. In studies, these relatively inexpensive (and quick) treatments resulted in yield rates increased to more than 90 percent in some circumstances. The gateway treatment also had a traffic-calming effect, leading to speed reductions of between 4 and 10 mph, even when pedestrians were not present. MDOT is working with the City to identify where “gateway” treatments can be installed in the City with some examples being northbound Huron Street at Pearl, and along westbound Cross Street at Adams Street. For more on gateway treatments, including photos, visit https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdot/Spotlight_SPR_1638_1643_560921_7.pdf and http://mdotcf.state.mi.us/public/tands/Details_Web/mdot_user_guide_gateway_treatment.pdf

Keeping Sidewalks Open In Ypsilanti

City ordinances require property owners to keep sidewalks not only in good condition, but accessible as well. This means that sidewalks should be cleared of snow in the winter and free of vegetation in the warm months. This means trimming back shrubbery, trees, branches or other obstructions. In addition, items should not block sidewalks, such as motor vehicles or motorcycles.

While some property owners may think that those who encounter sidewalk obstructions can just go around them, if you are in a wheelchair, such obstructions may stop you in your tracks. So please, keep your sidewalks open all year. And for wheelchair users in particular, if you encounter a blocked sidewalk and are unable to talk with the property owner about correcting the problem, please file a report with the City at “Report An Issue” - www.cityofypsilanti.com/506/Report-an-Issue.

Neighborhood Connectors

The City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee is exploring establishing a small number of streets in the City that would be known as “Neighborhood Connectors” for use by pedestrians, bicycles and the disabled. These would be streets that have lower traffic volumes, are quiet, have direct access to destinations, have signs/pavement directional markings that are easy to find & follow and are above all, are safe and convenient. The only cost to the City of a Neighborhood Connectors would be some paint and signs, along with perhaps some sidewalk maintenance so a disabled person can use a wheelchair without a problem as well as parents with baby strollers.

The concept of Neighborhood Connectors began years ago with Bike Boulevards, which as the name implies, were meant just for cyclists. But the guidelines for a Bike Boulevard (as seen in this [design manual](#)) also are used in Neighborhood Connectors, or [whatever other name used](#) (Quietways, Neighborways, Calmways, Local Street Greenway. Namely a quiet and safe place to walk or ride a bike.

Lock Those Bikes Up!

With warm weather finally coming back, more and more people will be using their bikes, often to run errands or to work. To make sure your bike is always around waiting for you, here are a few stories on how to lock your bike safely...

- [The Right And Wrong Ways To Lock Your Bike](#) How to lock your bike up to prevent bike theft – riding home without a seat is embarrassing, riding home without a wheel is impossible.
- [Who's Trying To Steal Your Bike \(And What Tools Are They Using\)?](#) – This story looks at the two different types of bike thief, the eight most popular tools they're using, and videos of real thieves stealing bikes with these tools along with advice on how to counter bike theft.

Basically, in the world of bike locks, inexpensive locks can be easily “opened”, so before you buy a lock look up reviews of that lock. Also, thieves will often target unlocked bikes in open garages. A good way to counter these “grab and run (or pedal)” thieves is to use a cable to lock your bike to another bulky device, like a lawn mower or snow blower.

How Many People Use This Trail?

The official transportation planning agency for the County, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) has been gathering use studies of bike lanes, non-motorized paths and Border To Border Trail segments. While some of the reports are “manual” (a person actually counting users), most are done using automatic sensors that are installed for a short or extended period and count pedestrians, bicyclists and wheelchairs. The interactive map of these reports is at <http://www.miwats.org/nonmotorized-count-program> and count locations are indicated by small circles on a map.

An example would be if you click on the circle of the Border To Border Trail in the northwest segment of the Water Street area just south of Michigan Avenue. There you will find that from March 12 to March 21 of 2019, there were 664 users of that segment averaging 74 per day. The sensor there was “mobile” (short term) so the count could not indicate if the users were pedestrians or cyclists.

City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Facebook Page

Please consider “Liking” the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee page at <https://www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC>. The page is constantly updated with local news about non-motorized issues that relate to pedestrians, bicyclists and the disabled.

Online Reads...

More People Are Cycling During COVID-19. That Matters - Cleaner air, quieter streets, more people riding—there's an opportunity here for cities and cycling advocates willing to grasp it...

<https://www.outsideonline.com/2412755/more-people-cycling-coronavirus-pandemic>

The Pedestrian Strikes Back - Officials in several countries are getting the message: Cities are about people, not cars... www.nytimes.com/2018/12/15/opinion/sunday/cars-pedestrians-cities.html

Road Diets Fact Sheet - The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) published a new fact sheet on road diets. The fact sheet can be used by policy makers, transportation planners, community leaders and citizen activists to educate themselves and others about the neighborhood benefits of having narrower roadways and can be viewed at <http://smartgrowth.org/road-diets-fact-sheet>

Giving Pedestrians a Head Start Crossing Streets - New signals, called leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs), display the walk symbol for three to seven seconds for pedestrians crossing the street before drivers are given the green light to move forward or turn. The head start is intended to make pedestrians more visible and to encourage drivers to yield the right of way. More at http://www.pedbikesafe.org/pedsafe/countermeasures_detail.cfm?CM_NUM=12.

Local Resources

City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee - www.cityofypsilanti.com/296/Non-Motorized-Advisory-Committee

Bike Ypsi – Weekly Friday rides along with other special events – www.bikeypsi.org

Ypsilanti Wolfpack Cruiserz– Local social bicycle group, many with some very classy bikes! - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/853886304774216/>

Washtenaw Bicycling & Walking Coalition – Countywide bicycling & walking advocacy group – www.wbwc.org

Huron-Waterloo Pathways Initiative – Border To Border Trail advocacy and information - <http://huron-waterloo-pathways.org>

Ypsi Bike Co-Op – Free bike repairs, and low-cost good used bikes at every Saturday Ypsilanti Farmers Market - <https://www.facebook.com/ypsibikecoop>

Program To Educate All Cyclists – Giving mobility to the disabled through bicycle transportation – www.bikeprogram.org

League of Michigan Bicyclists – Statewide bicycle advocacy group - www.lmb.org