

City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee

Spring 2021 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 (a Committee of the City of Ypsilanti Planning Commission), but non-motorized activities in general of interest to those who walk, bicycle or use a wheelchair in Ypsilanti. 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 and on social media through Nextdoor and Facebook (on the Committee's page there - www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC).

Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Meetings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, regular monthly face-to-face of the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee have been suspended and are being replaced with Zoom online teleconferences. These online meetings are held approximately every month with varying dates. Please check the City of Ypsilanti News section - www.cityofypsilanti.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?CID=1,10,5, and the Committee's Facebook page - www.facebook.com/YpsilantiNMAC for meeting announcements. Meeting agendas and minutes can be viewed at <http://www.cityofypsilanti.com/AgendaCenter/NonMotorized-Advisory-Committee-9>.

Once COVID-19 restrictions are raised and face-to-face meetings allowed, future Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee meetings will again be held generally held on the first Thursday of every month, unless a holiday falls on, or close to, that date. Meetings are ordinarily held at the disabled-accessible Ypsilanti District Library, 229 West Michigan Avenue starting at 7pm.

Anyone interested in making Ypsilanti a better place to walk, use a wheelchair, and bicycle is invited to attend Committee meetings. 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.

City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Plan Update

For the past few months, a major goal of the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee has been to complete an update of the City's Non-Motorized Plan. The current Non-Motorized Plan (available at <https://cityofypsilanti.com/256/Non-Motorized-Transportation-Plan-2010>) was completed and approved in 2010 and really in need of a revision.

The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is a policy document, identifying the means to establish a cultural environment that supports and encourages safe, accessible, comfortable, and convenient non-motorized and multimodal transportation options for both people and goods throughout the City and into the surrounding communities. A multimodal transportation system will result in a greater number of individuals choosing alternative transportation modes, including not only walking and bicycling, but also taking public transportation. This increase will lead to a safer transportation system, a more environmentally sustainable City, an increased quality of life of residents and visitors, and neighborhoods and business districts that are more attractive

As of mid-April 2021, the Non-Motorized Plan update was nearing completion and is expected to be voted on by the members of the Non-Motorized Advisor Committee at their May 13th, 2021 meeting and then forwarded to the City Planning Commission for their review at their May 19th meeting. The Planning Commission is expected to have a thirty-day public comment period on the draft Plan after which the Commission will vote on the document and if approved, forward it on to City Council for their approval.

Ypsilanti Bike Lane Maintenance



A survey was done in March by the Non-Motorized Advisory Committee on the status of Ypsilanti's bicycle lanes and while most bike lanes had good to fair markings, there were some that definitely needed work such as West Cross from Washtenaw to Wallace, Cornell and sections of Forest. The City of Ypsilanti Public Services is aware of the bike Lane situation and will have this work done by a contractor. Also, Public Services is presently doing an annual spring street sweeping cleaning which does include the bike lane surfaces.

Speed Bump Installations



For those residents living on streets that have seasonal speed bumps installed, the city Public Services Department should be starting the installation of these devices in May. For residents that are interested in having speed bumps installed to help lower traffic speeds, the City has a set procedure which can be viewed at <https://cityofypsilanti.com/699/Speeding-Concerns>. It should be noted that speed bumps are installed in the spring and removed by early November as the bumps are made of a rubber-like material that could be damaged by snow plows.

Bike Friendly Communities



You may have seen the signs entering town that the City is a “Bike Friendly Community” but what does that mean? The Bike Friendly Community (BFC - www.bikeleague.org/community) program is run by the League of American Bicyclists (www.lab.org) and a BFC welcomes bicyclists by providing safe accommodations for bicycling and encouraging people to bike for transportation and recreation. Making bicycling safe and convenient are keys to improving public health, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality and improving quality of life.

Since the creation of the Bicycle Friendly Community program in 1995, the League has analyzed more than 1500 applications by communities. Currently, there are 485 recognized Bicycle Friendly Communities and almost 50 others that have earned Honorable Mentions in the last year. There are also different levels of a BFC, starting off with Bronze (this is what the City of Ypsilanti was awarded in 2017), then upwards with a Silver, Gold and the highest, Platinum level, with all awards lasting four years and then needs to be reapplied for. Michigan currently has 13 Bike Friendly Communities.

The application for a Bike Friendly Community is fairly extensive and each applicant is issued a “report card” that rates various rating categories as well as recommendations on how an applicant can reach the next higher level. The “2017 report card” for Ypsilanti can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/BFC-Ypsilanti-Fall2017>.

The City of Ypsilanti’s Bike Friendly Community award expires in November 2021 and the City’s Non-Motorized Advisory Committee is working on a renewal application that must be submitted by August 5th of 2021. While the work is not complicated, help is needed with the application and if you can help out for a few hours, please contact Bob Krzewinski at wolverbob@gmail.com or at 734-487-9048.

Walk Friendly Communities



Another program that the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will be working on this autumn will be a request for Ypsilanti to become a “Walk Friendly Community”, a program operated by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center - www.hsrrc.unc.edu - and supported by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC - www.pedbikeinfo.org) which in turn funded by the US Department of Transportation (with FedEx being a major corporate donor).

A Walk Friendly Community is a city or town that has shown a commitment to improving and sustaining walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans, and policies. Communities apply to the program to receive recognition in the form of a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum designation. Ypsilanti has previously applied for a Walk Friendly Community but was awarded an honorable mention status. For more on the Walk Friendly Community program visit <http://walkfriendly.org>.

Route Ypsilanti - Safer Streets ~ Safer Ypsilanti

Non-Motorized Transportation Improvements Coming to City Streets This Summer



The City of Ypsilanti is collaborating with St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor and the County’s official transportation planning agency, the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS) to explore traffic -calming measures to reduce speeds on city streets and improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Ypsilanti and partner agencies will be testing low-cost design concepts aimed at walking and bicycling improvements. The design concepts are being informed by NACTO, (the National Association of City Transportation Officials) and the MMUTCD (Michigan Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices). The following streets are part of this City effort:

- Second Avenue, from Michigan Avenue to Monroe Street
- Cross, from Prospect Road to River Street

- Prospect Road, from Cross Street to City Limits
- North Mansfield Street, from Washtenaw Avenue to Congress Street

“The City of Ypsilanti is committed to creating an environment that supports the health, safety, and welfare of all of our residents and visitors. By enabling people to bike and walk to work, for errands, for exercise, and for recreation, and by encouraging drivers to drive more safely within the City, we can help everyone lead longer, healthier, and more fulfilling lives,” stated Frances McMullan, City Manager. “As we recover from the effects of coronavirus, it’s more important than ever to support healthy living.”

“St. Joe’s is focused on community efforts aimed at positively influencing the social determinants that influence one’s health to reduce the health disparities we know exist in our community, ” said Alonzo Lewis, president, St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor, and Livingston hospitals. “Supporting the city of Ypsilanti and WATS to create safer streets and promote pedestrian and bicycle use is a great example where we can influence our community’s broader health and wellbeing.”

The project areas were chosen for this project due to recent and recurring complaints about driver behavior, including speeding, as well as requests to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities in these areas. For more on the “Route Ypsilanti” project, visit www.miwats.org/route-ypsilanti.

Bike Repair In Ypsilanti

When it came to having your bicycle repaired within the Ypsilanti city limits, in June 2016, after 34 years, Ypsilanti Cycle closed in downtown Ypsilanti. H.E.H Cycles moved it’s operation to Huron Street in August 2017 but then moved to Ann Arbor in July 2020. Also, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ypsi Bike Co-Op repair service did not operate in 2020. For 2021, the Ypsi Bike Co-Op hopes to hold at least monthly pop-up booths on some Saturdays over the summer at the Depot Town Farmers Market. Check their Facebook page - www.facebook.com/ypsibikecoop - to find the dates as they are announced.

While if you have a way to transport a broken bike, or use the AAATA bus bike racks, there still remains a few bike shops outside the City limits (the closest being Tree Fort on Whittaker Road in Ypsilanti Township, Motor City Bikes on Packard and Wheels In Motion on Washtenaw across from Arbor Land. But there are two low-key, local, bike repair services that can help Ypsilanti residents out. These are...

In The Garage Bike Repair

Originally called Depot Town Bikes, In The Garage Bike Repair specializes in tune-ups, a la carte repairs, installation of new parts, and maintenance classes. To arrange service, call 734-474-5311 or send a personal message through their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/inthegaragebikerepair.

Allrounder

Monica and Omar operated a bicycle shop in the California until COVID-19 started up when they were forced to close down the business. They then moved back to Monica’s home state of Michigan and now operate a bike repair service out of their basement in Ypsilanti. They never operated with a classic “tune up” pricing model. Omar will assess your bike for what it needs, and will not charge for anything it doesn’t. If you have a budget we can help you prioritize the work it needs if the estimate goes beyond that number. To schedule a tune-up or repair, send a personal message through their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/allrounderbicycles or call 510-833-6839.

Ypsilanti To Ann Arbor Cross/Packard Bike Lane Update

In 2020 the Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (www.wbwc.org) began to explore bicycle route improvements along Cross Street-Packard Road between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. While the current Border To Border Trail allows for a safe off-road bike route between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, a Cross-Packard route would also be very useful to those living south of Washtenaw Avenue.

In mid-November a teleconference was held with a gathering of people that could make an Ypsilanti – Ann Arbor bike routes happen, including representatives from the City of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Township, Pittsfield Township, the Washtenaw Area Traffic Study (WATS - the official County transportation planning agency), Michigan Department of Transportation, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the Program to Educate All Cyclists the Washtenaw County Road Commission, The Ride (AAATA), and Reimagine Washtenaw (a drive by the County to open up Washtenaw Avenue to all users - www.washtenawavenue.org). The City of Ypsilanti was represented by Bonnie Wessler of City Public Services and Bob Krzewinski of the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee.

This April, the City of Ann Arbor announced a “Healthy Streets” program that helps immensely complete a Cross/Packard bike lane between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. This plan calls for Packard to have lane width reductions from the Eisenhower Y to near the U.S. 23 underpass (just west of Carpenter Road) in order to place bike lanes throughout the corridor. The City of Ann Arbor is planning to reduce travel lanes to 10' as well as reduce the center lane to 9.5' to accommodate bike lanes. Granted, protected bike lanes would have been better, but the Ann Arbor improvements would only leave a bike lane gap along Cross/Packard from U.S. 23 to the western Ypsilanti city limit, property that is in the control of Pittsfield and Ypsilanti Township .

For more on the Packard “Healthy Streets” plan, visit

<http://a2gov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9320964&GUID1EFE9BBC-3DF6-425C-871D-738B4AD75C8B>,

Input 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.

Last year the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee solicited public input to come up with a list of sidewalk street crossings where the curb cut was either missing altogether (i.e. just a curb), was an older curb cut that is too narrow, or just a curb cut in need of repair. This list was then sent to the City Public Services Department for consideration into a City curb cut improvement master list.

While installing curb cuts might seem simple, due to funding requirements of the grants the City receives, each proposed location has to go through a federal environmental review process. This environmental clearance takes a fair amount of time to get and is good for five years. Also to get the most “bang for the buck”, the City likes to choose some “easier” ramps to do, not ones with significant grade changes, for instance. Also the City likes to batch them closely together to help keep costs down (if contractors have to pick up and move their equipment across town, they'll charge more than if they only have to move it down the block).

In addition, the City generally wants to prioritize mobility near, and access to, parks, schools, the AAATA Transit Center, EMU, and the central business districts (West Cross, Downtown, Depot Town). And as improved pedestrian facilities can sometimes help to counteract speeding, the City prioritized areas where they had received petitions/complaints regarding speeding.

With all of those factors in mind, the City came up with this list of intersections for 2021 ramp construction and have begun the environmental review process:

- Bellevue/Whittier
- Mansfield/Collegewood
- Kewanee/Roosevelt
- Kewanee/Witmire
- Collegewood/University Court

In future years (2022-26), the City is planning the following batches:

Batch 1 (4 corners + midblock):

Ferris/Washington, Ferris/Adams, Adams/Pearl,
Catherine Midblock (between Huron and Chidester)

Batch 2 (8 corners)

Second/Small, Hart/Small, Hilyard Robinson/First, Armstrong/First, Brooks/Monroe, Monroe/Hawkins
Madison/Hawkins, Monroe/Perry

Batch 3 (4-5)

Hill/Worden; Orchard/Short, Orchard/Frederick; Woods/Linden; Woods/Pleasant; (Pleasant/Pleasant Curve (south west entrance to Rec Park))

Batch 4 (5)

Garland/Vinewood, Garland/Miles, Martin/Miles/Young (2 Corners-Offset), High/Park, Park/Locust

Batch 5 (7 ramps)

Towner/Center, Towner/Arnet, Ford/Arnet, Mildred/Arnet, Davis/Arnet, Emerick/Davis (west), Emerick/Maus (west)

Please note that the above lists are only for curb cuts on “City” streets, meaning funding for projects that mainly rely on City funds. These lists then do not list curb cuts that would be eligible for State or Federal funding and have their own review and approval process. This would mean for instance that curb cuts on State routes that go through the City (such as Huron, Washtenaw, Hamilton) would not be on the list above.

The City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee encourages the public to review the curb cut project list above and if they have any comments, to forward them, before June 1st, 2021, to the City Non-Motorized Advisory Committee Chair at wolverbob@gmail.com or call 734-487-9058. The Committee is especially interested in comments from the disabled community, including those who regularly use a wheelchair or other assistive device. Specifically, the Committee is interested in comments such as should intersections in Batch’s 2 through 5 be moved up in priority due to regular use by those disabled.

Local Bike To Work Day Moved To September

For a number of years, the City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee has been promoting a mid-May Bike To Work Week along with Bike To Work Day. In Washtenaw County, the Ann Arbor getDowntown organization also sponsored events in association with Bike To Work Day, such as “Commuter Stations” where cyclists could stop for free coffee, snacks, handouts and for some locations, minor repairs. The Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee sponsored a Commuter Station at Beezy’s Café on Washington Street.

With the virus pandemic spiking up in Michigan during April, and many bicycling clubs cancelling rides for health safety reasons, the Ann Arbor getDowntown program is tentatively planning on holding a Bike To Work Day on Friday, September 17th, 2021 and if this takes place, the Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will again have a Commuter Station at Beezys.

But May Is Still National Bike Month!

While Bike To Work Week/Day has moved locally 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 2021.

Border To Border Trail Update For Ypsilanti

Construction is expected to begin this year on a Border To Border Trail project that will offer substantial improvements for Trail users on the Grove Road segment that crosses I-94. This work will include non-motorized improvements on the west side of the Grove Road bridge over I-94 but are taking longer to complete since this bridge is in the control of the Michigan Department of Transportation and has more complex construction requirements. Last year, the sidewalks along the west side of Grove Road, from just north of the I-94 bridge to where the Trail turns west into the Water Street development area, were replaced with a wider, concrete, non-motorized paved path.

Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail Signage & Wayfinding Survey



The Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission (WCPARC) is redesigning and expanding its B2B Trail navigational wayfinding system. The organization is wanting to know where and how you access the B2B and where you find it confusing so we can place the right signs in the right places. The survey begins with a brief introduction to the new wayfinding system and then proceeds to two map-based questions, one multiple-choice, and a comments box. Please review the instructions before interacting with the maps. We recommend taking this survey on a computer but if you are on a mobile phone, some features will open in a new tab. Take the survey at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/40a4f7381d534f4b80e23380503182a8>.

Eastern Michigan University Bicycle Rodeo – August 7th

The Eastern Michigan University Police Department will be holding its fourth annual Bike Rodeo, Saturday, August 7th, from 9am to noon at the EMU Convocation Center, 799 Hewitt Road. The event will feature free refreshments, free bicycle repairs and tune-ups, free helmets and bike safety checks and giveaways. The City of Ypsilanti Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will also have an information table at this event.

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 has worked with the City to identify where “gateway” treatments can be installed 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 with sidewalks 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. P.S – The photo used in this news item is not in the Ypsilanti area but shows how vegetation can obstruct passage for wheelchair users in particular.

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](#) (Community Connector, 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.

Ride Of Silence (From Bike Ypsi)



Keeping in mind the virus pandemic, a spring spike of COVID-19 cases, and the danger of groups spreading the virus, Bike Ypsi will not be holding its annual Ride Of Silence in May of 2021. The Ride Of Silence is an international event where silent bicyclists ride to commemorate cyclists killed or injured while riding and urge bicyclists and motorists to safely share the roads. If pandemic conditions subside by September 2021, a late summer/early fall Ride Of Silence may take place in September and if it does posts will be done on the Bike Ypsi web (www.bikeypsi.org) and Facebook pages. Otherwise, the ride will be planned for May 2022.

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.

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 – Ypsilanti-based organization giving mobility to the disabled through bicycle transportation – www.bikeprogram.org

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