



WALKABLE NOVI COMMITTEE

Minutes

June 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Zoom Online Meeting Platform

(248) 347-0475

In accordance with Executive Order 2020-48, this meeting was held remotely.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm.

ROLL CALL

Present: David Dismondy (joined late)- *City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan*; Justin Fischer- *City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan*; Andrew Mutch- *City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan*, Salene Riggins- *City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan*, and Brian Smith- *City of Novi, Oakland County, Michigan*

Absent: John Avdoulos (excused)

Staff Support: Lindsay Bell, Senior Planner, Community Development; Barbara McBeth, City Planner, Community Development; Madeleine Daniels, Planning Assistant, Community Development; Jeff Muck, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services; Rebecca Runkel, Project Engineer, Public Works

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Fischer made a motion to approve the agenda. Member Mutch seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

No one in the audience wished to speak.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- a. [ParkServe](#) walkability: Walk time estimates for City parks

Chair Smith said Andrew shared this with me and I thought it was a very interesting document. It basically shows times to walk to parks from different areas in Novi. The light green is less than 10 minutes. The light purple and darker purple are further walks. It's not complete yet, some private parks are not shown. With Lakeshore, the biggest park in Novi, there's nothing walkable on the south and north side of it. This program is just something to keep in mind as we prioritize more development.

Member Mutch said one thing I discovered looking at this is that they marked

some of our parks as closed, which may affect some of the data. Maybe that was due to some construction that someone saw and thought because of that it wasn't accessible to the public, so that might be one of the factors. Also, I know Jeff was working on making sure that all our park properties were properly located, they're close, there were some boundaries that were off, but overall, it's interesting because it does highlight some areas outside of Novi, like in the northeast corner, we don't own any park areas up there. From a public park perspective there's nothing in those areas.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director Muck said we really look at a 2-mile radius for our boundary for walkability and we don't have some target areas that's pretty much aligned with what's shown. I think what's interesting is that it looks like on this map they were taking it from the park entrance whereas we look at it from the park center because in a lot of our parks you can enter by foot from multiple points. Rotary Park is a prime example, you can get into Rotary all sorts of ways so when we look at radius, we look at the center of the park. Member Mutch has asked where they were pulling the data from, and our GIS department has tried to work with Google and sent them some updated information in February. They got an email back about 3 weeks ago that Google has received the information.

Member Mutch said one thing they don't consider is how the ITC Trail really serves as both a linear park and a connector park and so if you look at that area it shown as light purple and yet as were getting those sidewalks in, anyone who can access that trail really has access to those parks and it's just not reflected here. It is a nice tool and if you aware of some of the limitations it is kind of helpful. The other one that I think they do get right, and we have talked about is Willowbrook over in the Ten Mile and Meadowbrook area. There's a section of Willowbrook that's right next to the park but there's no direct connection to the park so they made it purple saying there's no access, which is true. They are right next to Brookfarm Park, but there's a stream that runs on the southside and there's no footpath that gets you from that purple area that would allow you to get to the green area.

b. 2021-2022 Adopted Budget: Non-Motorized Capital Improvement Projects

Planner Bell said I just thought we would highlight what was approved in the budget this year. I included all the CIP items, but I just wanted to highlight some of the items that pertained to sidewalks and parks. Some of these connections are to different road projects including the Ten Mile reconstruction which is being done by RCOC. Would anyone like to discuss any of the items?

Member Fischer said I think everyone is familiar with that program especially what we're trying to accomplish. When the proposed budget came through there was talk of using tree fund money, which was not recommended, and the other recommendation was to put \$400,000 into the current year budget and \$200,000 in the next year, but Council decided to go ahead with a full commitment of \$400,000 as a placeholder each year for that neighborhood sidewalk repair program. I was really happy that this Committee and the CIP Committee supported all of that and obviously Andrew and everyone else on Council as well. I think it's going to be a big win especially for some of the neighborhoods like Village Oaks all the way up to Roma Ridge and everything in between.

Member Mutch said Rebecca would you happen to know what the timeline is for implementing the program?

Rebeca Runkel said they started a pilot program in Meadowbrook Glens. They met with the HOA last week to get an idea of how receptive the HOA would be to reviewing the whole neighborhood at once and the HOA stated they did not want to go that route, they wanted to go by individual homeowner. Field operations was going to have OHM do more of an official inspection and survey and identify every sidewalk and flag ones that need repair and then it would be optional to that homeowner if they want to participate in the program or not.

Member Fischer said I think that's the best case I can think of. The funding doesn't start for another 20 days or so, but it sounds like City Staff is able to do some of that footwork and that's really great work on their part.

c. 3-11-2021 Walkable Novi Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Member Mutch and seconded by Member Fischer to approve the 3-11-2021 meeting minutes. Voice vote taken, all in favor.

STAFF UPDATES

1. Planning Update

a. Corner Clearance and Enforcement

Planner Bell said in last meeting we had talked about corner clearance and stop bars and Rebecca provided the memo from Ben Croy and so I included it in the packet about how we review in the site plan approval process. There's also a brief mention of how our Ordinance Enforcement Officers as well as DPW either maintain or try to get enforcement completed when on private property.

b. Master Plan & Non-Motorized Plan Updates

The other thing I wanted to mention that was in the budget City Council approved funding for the update for the Master Plan, which was last updated, officially, in 2017. We should be getting started on that shortly. They also approved the funding for the Non-Motorized Master Plan so that will be coming later this year and I'm sure we will be talking about it in this group.

2. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Service Update

a. Parks and Trails Wayfinding Signage Plan

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Service Director Muck said in your packet you have a draft proposal from Spalding DeDecker, one of our consultants, to develop a plan to improve our wayfinding signage across the city. You may have noticed, as you work your way around the city, we have a mix of signage, some parks have it and some do not. We've taken this forward and put together a rough proposal, but what we really wanted to talk about was prior to my arrival, I understand that something like this was proposed and there was push back from neighborhoods that did not want the wayfinding signage directing people into the neighborhoods or into their parks and that's really what my main concern about this is. I believe this should go to Council for approval when you're talking about a plan for the entire city, but as you can see, we've identified all the parks and municipal buildings that would be part of this plan. It does not include the construction or the printing of the signage,

that would be done in house, we have a sign shop in our DPW that they would be able to generate the signage and install as needed. I would just like to open it up to the Committee and see where we stand and if you think there needs to be any changes to the proposal.

Member Mutch said I think the main issue that came up wasn't signage on main roads, it was inside the actual neighborhoods. There could have been an element of extra traffic, but it could have been seen as unnecessary because the residents know where the parks are.

Chair Smith said from a cyclist standpoint I will come across people on more dangerous streets, and they don't know there's an alternate route.

Jeff Muck said the proposal is to add signage with an out-of-town mentality and I can take that back and Rebecca has helped, and we can easily take some of those off. Are we still interested in putting signs on the main roads?

Member Mutch said I think that's a good idea to maybe use the destination parks as a starting point and pull out those smaller parks where it may not make sense. Maybe it needs wayfinding more at a pedestrian level, but I think that makes sense and it addresses the neighborhood concern

Jeff Muck said we can get the proposal revised when Council sees it.

Member Fisher said I would vote for an off-week packet.

3. Engineering Update

a. Active Non-Motorized Public Projects

Rebecca Runkel said we have a few sidewalks under construction, we need Comcast to relocate one underground line on Haggerty north of Orchard Hill Place. We are also waiting for utility relocations on 11 Mile. You may have heard about the Ten Mile. Also new is the safe routes to school and that contractor is Marlow. They are the company doing the pathway gap and the Ten Mile gap that just got completed. Cranbrook Road you saw at City Council that sidewalk has been approved starting July 6, the ITC Trail Connector we are hung up on the row approval that MDOT required. Ten Mile north side west of Wixom that's the last small gap remaining unfortunately we didn't receive any bids on that in April and we will rebid late this summer.

Member Fischer asked why no bids?

Rebecca said contractors too busy and they're looking for big projects.

RCOC is still working on preliminary plan, and I included a table of the current CIP to give summary of where budget is at. RCOC ate up budget for next 2 years.

COMMUNICATIONS

Rebecca gave an update on Nine Mile Road sanitary sewer project.

Two other letters were regarding Nine Mile and getting to the trail from Nine Mile. Just as the meeting was starting today another comment was submitted on Aberdeen Dr and he thanks the committee for the efforts. Then in the packet we had a letter from Emma Kate Stewart who lives on the west side of Napier which is Lyon Township and asks for a sidewalk along Nine Mile to ITC park and I think that's somewhat in the works. The one other message is from Sharon and Tom Stewart, and they mention Nine Mile and Taft Road so those are on our priority list - I know the north side segments are in our Top 20 list.

Chair Smith said in that north side of Nine Mile section, the hills are dangerous – not a lot of heads up.

Member Mutch said I wasn't going to comment on Lyon Township, but I had communication with one of the trustees and he has expressed an interest at looking at whether Lyon Township and Novi would work together and coordinate. A lot of the residents who live in that area are interested since they don't have township parks nearby. Especially on the Ten Mile corridor they have paths completed that would cross through where pedestrians have an interest.

Chair Smith asked on that section of Nine Mile there's no sidewalk budget after the sewer project?

Planner Bell said correct.

Chair Smith asked is that high priority?

Member Mutch said I'm sure it's pretty low because low density and low traffic ITC probably helps.

Planner Bell said it's not in top 20. Those are ranked 61 with two segments.

Jeff Muck said this is a heavy wetland area, and you've seen how much board walk costs to construct. Since what we had to put in was going to be costly, we had to go back to Council because we had to request EGLE approval.

ADJOURN

Member Mutch made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Fischer.

Motion to adjourn the June 10, 2021 Walkable Novi Committee Meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 PM.