



# WALKABLE NOVI COMMITTEE

Discussion Notes

February 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Novi Civic Center

Council Conference Room

45175 W. Ten Mile, Novi, MI 48375

(248) 347-0475

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM.

## ROLL CALL

**Present:** Brent Ferrell, Justin Fischer, Julie Maday, Andrew Mutch, Salene Riggins and Brian Smith

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Sri Ravali Komaragiri, Senior Planner, Community Development  
Barbara McBeth, City Planner, Community Development  
Madeleine Kopko, Planning Assistant, Community Development  
Jeff Muck, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Rebecca Runkel, Staff Engineer

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Maday made a motion to approve the agenda. Member Ferrell seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

## INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Member Mutch introduced the newest committee members. Member Fischer and Member Riggins introduced themselves. They explained they have not served on this Committee before and are excited to be joining. Everyone around the table introduced themselves.

## AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Carol MacDonell, 24236 Bashian Drive, explained why she would like a sidewalk gap filled on Grand River Avenue.

- I live in Applegate II Condominiums and I am trying to be healthy and walk more.
- There is a section between Diamond Castle Jewelers and in front of the Scuba Shop on Grand River Avenue where the sidewalk ends and there is always mud in the wet seasons I have to walk through.
- Many people walk near Grand River Avenue where it is 45 miles per hour and the traffic pulls you in.
- Young children ride bikes through there to get to the gas station to buy candy and snacks and it's very dangerous.
- Currently, it is a vacant plot and the Scuba Shop that do not have sidewalks.
- When it snowed, only the sides were plowed and you had to climb over the snow banks if you wanted to get through there.
- All ages walk here and it's such a safety issue. If we could carve out the time and money for those two sections to put in the sidewalk, it would be so appreciated.

Member Mutch said thank you and we do have your correspondence on record, it was included in our packets.

Planner Komaragiri said we do have the right-of-way for that section. The section is about 217 feet long and is currently ranked 85 on our prioritization list. No wetland or wood impacts would occur. Engineering estimates it would be about \$70,000 to construct.

Member Mutch asked if the category for 'small segments' are 400 feet or less and Planner Komaragiri confirmed.

Member Fisher asked who owns the vacant lot and City Planner McBeth said the jewelry store owner owns it. Planner Komaragiri said we usually wait for a developer to build and we ask them to also construct the missing sidewalk connections, but we have not got any plans for that lot recently.

## **MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the Committee**

Member Mutch explained that since it is a new year, the Committee shall vote on a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to help run the meetings. Member Mutch asked if there were any volunteers.

Member Maday nominated Member Mutch for chairperson.

Member Mutch declined and said he would like someone else to have the experience.

Member Ferrell nominated Member Maday for chairperson. Member Fischer seconded.

Member Smith volunteered for Vice Chair and Member Fischer seconded.

Motion to elect Member Maday as Chairperson and Member Smith as Vice Chairperson. Motion passed 6-0.

### **2. 2020 Tentative Meeting Schedule**

Planner Komaragiri said every year there are two major items the Committee discusses. The implementation update of the Non-Motorized Master Plan, which we completed last in 2011. That Master Plan provided us with implementation strategies and we update that on an annual basis. The other one is the Non-Motorized Prioritization where we rank the top 20 segments and recommend to the CIP to see what they can build for the upcoming years. We will keep up with the same schedule and have penciled in dates, but they may change due to the current staff work load and we may combine meeting dates as needed. We have tentatively scheduled back to back meetings for those prioritization decisions. We also have penciled in other dates in case residents would to make comments, like tonight.

Motion to approve the tentative meeting schedule made by Member Ferrell and seconded by Member Mutch. Motion passed 6-0.

### **3. SEMCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan for Southeast Michigan: Input Gathering**

Planner Komaragiri summarized main points from the updated SEMCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Plan.

- The last plan was from 2014 and they just updated it for 2020.
- They are asking for community comments before putting the plan in place. We are headed for our own update of the Non-Motorized Master Plan and thought this would be a good thing to look at.

- Two items stood out the most from the SEMCOG Plan:
  - To continue “to promote healthy lifestyles and vibrant communities with expanded options for pedestrian and bicycle mobility, recreations, and tourism.” Local agencies can partner with recreation organizations, health-care providers, or aging agencies to help promote walking and biking. We could possibly team up with the hospital.
  - The other item that stood out is “ensure the sustainability of the bicycle and pedestrian network with collaborative planning and adequate funding for development and maintenance.” That item was aligned with a recent council goal to replace concrete panels.
- Local agencies should “[inventory and] analyze current conditions to prioritization development of critical gaps for a connected regional network.” They showed that 10 Mile Road and Meadowbrook Road are Novi’s major connectivity networks for people outside of Novi coming in to the City.
- A survey was done on mobility patterns by trip purpose where they found that walking and biking was mostly used for recreation or fun rather than commute trips.
  - 33% of people indicated they could walk to restaurants or shopping activities while 27% said they wished they could.
  - 22% of people said they could walk or bike to school while 33% said they wished they could.
  - Protected bikes lanes were highly ranked as infrastructure to plan for. The STRAVA mobile app is used to collect data on physical activity like walking and biking. While it is mostly used on professional bikers, it is helpful to understand route selection.
- There has been an overall increase in bicycle networks in South East Michigan. The network has grown to over 200 miles. General infrastructure upgrades have increased by 33% in the last 6 years. The majority increase is in the shared-lane markings to make the lanes more usable to everyone.
- Novi is in a low to moderate demand area for bike networks.
- SEMCOG had a good list for local implementation resources. Novi has already identified many of the strategies, but in our Non-Motorized Master Plan there are two things we haven’t touched:
  - The effect of automated vehicles on sidewalk and infrastructure
    - these features are expected to increase safety but we still need to watch out for bikers and pedestrian safety and E-bikes (electric bikes) is an up and coming feature where you rent a bike from a kiosk, if your city is headed that way, so we would need to keep that in mind when designing plans.
  - Land use and zoning for bike regulations
    - There was a good focus on education and enforcement such as, ‘bike to work day’ or ‘walk to school day,’ those kind of services and possibly close down roads to encourage walking for a day.
- They also recommended keeping track of maintaining sidewalk networks by using a PASER-like system.
  - St. Clair County Transportation Study developed a rating system based off of PASER to collect trail infrastructure issues using a mobile app with GPS. Canton Township, Ann Arbor, Sterling Heights, and Royal Oak all currently have programs that help with sidewalk repair and maintenance.

Director Muck said e-bikes are a big topic of discussion along with the automated skateboards and One-wheel’s.

Member Fischer asked about the cost of the PASER system and Planner Komaragiri said we would have to start looking into that.

Planner Komaragiri mentioned that a majority of people walk or bike for recreational uses. It's a good idea to make all parks connected, like how ITC Trail has and has also increased the parks usage. Overall, I think were in the right place to update, but the automated cars was something new I think we should start to look into.

Chair Maday questioned how the PASER-like system would work and Member Fischer clarified that PASER is about the maintenance of the infrastructure and not how many people are using it.

City Planner McBeth said I'm not sure anyone has used that yet and it is just an idea for a future program, but we can look into it. Member Fischer agreed that the City should look into it.

Member Mutch said I imagine the upfront costs would be expensive the first time around, but sidewalks usually have a good life span and it would help to fill in the gaps on an as needed basis and wouldn't need to be done every 2 years like PASER.

Member Fischer said I would rather have resident eyes and ears looking at it and telling us what needs to be done.

Member Smith asked if there is measurement on how to get traffic counts on sidewalks.

Member Mutch said I think SEMCOG does something like that with the ropes you see in the roads but with a sensor. They did a pilot program on The University of Michigan's campus so there are ways to do it, but I don't know if any communities have it in practice right now.

Member Maday questioned how the City would know where the gaps in the networks are.

Member Mutch said I think they look at infrastructure needed such as, crosswalks and how many people use them. When they apply for grants they have to address how many people are going to use the infrastructure and the STRAVA maps are informative because you can see where people are making their own paths.

#### **4. 08-14-19 WNC Meeting Minutes Approval**

Motion to approve the August 14, 2019 meeting minutes made by Member Mutch and seconded by Member Fischer. Motion carried 6-0.

#### **STAFF UPDATES**

##### **1. Planning Update**

There were no planning updates.

##### **2. Engineering Update**

###### **a. Active Non-Motorized Project Portfolio for Engineering Division**

Staff Engineer Runkel explained some of the current engineering updates.

- Currently we are trying to bid out last year's non-motorized project. We got held up by some easements on Haggerty Road and Wixom Road.
- We would like to add a segment that wasn't part of the Safe Routes to School Plan on Willowbrook Drive and Guilford Road because Catholic Central High School is now partially paying for their own sidewalk which freed up some of the budget.
- A development on Haggerty Road is stepping in to add a sidewalk.
- The engineering department started a design on Segment 51 across from Echo Valley, it goes by the ITC Trail and we're hoping to construct this summer but we need to get the right-of-way first because we don't currently have it.
- The Water Department is constructing a water main by Oak Pointe Church and we'll construct a sidewalk there as well.

- MDOT has plans for constructing non-motorized crossings on the west side including connecting to existing sidewalks, lighting, and crossing signals to be completed sometime between April and October.
- The City received a 1.2 million grant for Safe Routes to School; there are 6 different schools where they will add ADA mats, crosswalks, and fill gaps, to be constructed in 2021.
- The City has decided to pay for network construction on Haggerty and Meadowbrook in 2022.
- The Road Commission for Oakland County is planning on widening 12 Mile, not soon, but in the next 8 years potentially.
- The next thing would be to determine which segments to construct after the 10 Mile Road project.

Member Mutch asked about a segment west of Novi Road that is going through a Wetland. Staff Engineer Runkel confirmed that was the new boardwalk that just started getting constructed.

Member Mutch also referenced a grant for the ITC Trail in which Staff Engineer Runkel replied that she was supposed to get results this week, but have not heard anything yet.

Member Mutch asked about the resident that talked in tonight's meeting about the particular segment she wanted filled in. Is that something, once we check off all the marks, we can build? Staff Engineer Runkel replied potentially, if it fits in the budget.

Chair Maday said if a resident takes the time and energy to come and talk about it, I think that goes a long way.

Planner Komaragiri said it is possible to pull a low-ranked segment up to a higher one, if it gains enough attention.

Member Smith asked about the 10 Mile Road and Haggerty Road project.

Staff Engineer Runkel said they're filling in the south side. Member Smith commented on some of the bad experiences he's had with cars as a pedestrian there.

Chair Maday asked about the widening that is happening there.

Member Mutch said they're planning on adding a center turn lane. It went from a simple repaving to this and the City Engineers have been looking at this and want to do it at the same time in 2022.

Planner Komaragiri explained the top 20 segments to be completed by showing a spreadsheet.

### **3. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Service Update**

Director Muck gave an update on the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services.

- This spring and summer is going to be key for ITC Trail. We're excited to see it being used, but we will also have to see what exactly is going to be used and where we can add mile markers, but all that will have to be approved.
- We know we will be wanting to have events like 'Fun Run's' and 5k's, so we have some planning going into that currently.
- We have been working with our forester and park maintenance team about cleaning up Chase Farms and that has been done and were going to add signs this summer.
- Park maintenance team and the forester want to reclaim the nature trail. It's really small but gets used.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- 1. Pedestrian Sidewalk East of Old Orchard on Grand River**
- 2. Sidewalk connection from Park place south to ITC park**
- 3. Echo Valley HOA meeting update**

Planner Komaragiri said she was invited to an Echo Valley HOA meeting where there was discussion about recreation users cutting through yards by the ITC Trail where it curves and gets close to home's backyards. It's also become a hazard for bikers who can't see walkers because of the shrubbery. Shrubby should be able to be cut or signs can go up. The HOA also had concerns about pet owner's not cleaning up after their pets and we have added signs enforcing that.

Director Muck said we had this issue on a previous agenda but it's basically up to pet owners to follow the rules.

## **ADJOURN**

Member Fisher made a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.