



MOBILITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Brian Smith (Chair), Justin Fischer, Ericka Thomas, Ed Roney

Absent: Gary Becker, Jay Dooley, Joe Tolkacz (excused)

Staff Present: Jeff Herczeg, Director of Public Works, DPW
Rebecca Runkel, Project Engineer, DPW
Barb McBeth, City Planner, Community Development
Lindsay Bell, Senior Planner, Community Development

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There was a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed 4-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a motion to approve the minutes from December 19, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed 4-0.

DISCUSSION

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and made a motion to approve the agenda and minutes, both of which were supported. Chair Smith brought up the first matter for discussion, the Northville non-motorized connection, and stated he would touch base with their team.

Chair Smith moved to the second matter for discussion, e-bike classifications and use on pathways. Chair Smith presented his research on the classifications, which includes 3 categories: Class 1 - pedal assisted up to 20 miles per hour, no throttle, Class 2 - throttle and pedal assisted, up to 20 miles per hour, and Class 3 - pedal assisted up to 28 miles per hour. Currently, only Class 1 e-bikes are allowed on state pathways, which includes improved surface trails, linear trails, natural surface, non-motorized bike paths, trails and state park/recreation areas, state forest pathways and roads. Class 2 e-bikes are allowed if there are mobility issues for the rider. Class 3 aren't allowed on any state managed non-motorized trail. There are some mountain bike trails they are allowed. Chair Smith noted that there's no mention of e-bikes in City Ordinances, just mini bikes and mopeds with gas motors, so he would like to refer that part to the Ordinance Review Committee and take it out and match what the state does. So Class 3 wouldn't be allowed on any City non-

motorized trails or pathways, like ITC Trail. They would only be allowed on the road. Engineer Runkel mentioned that she looked at Wixom's ordinance. They have a section for the Airline Trail where they mention speed, saying it has to be reasonable and prudent, you have to give right-of-way to pedestrians and announce your presence, which is also state law, but not everyone follows it. Engineer Runkel agreed it should be considered for addition to the Ordinance. Chair Smith moved to pass this item to the Ordinance Review Committee.

Chair Smith moved to the next agenda item, the ICC-IMS sidewalk survey. Engineer Runkel stated that staff came across a company that provides a service for surveying roads and sidewalks. DPW staff met with the company virtually and they provided a quote for their basic deliverable. The survey will identify anything over 0.25" deflections and all kinds of surface distress. Engineer Runkel referred the committee members to the brochure in the packet. The survey is done with an all-terrain vehicle that rides down the sidewalk, they can do 15-20 miles per day. It should take 2-3 weeks to collect data on all the neighborhood sidewalks and major road sidewalks. They will provide lots of data and pictures that will help with moving forward with the districting.

Director Herczeg stated they are located in Florida, currently working with one of our consultants on a project in Florida, but that's not how we came across them. We've been doing the surveys manually, which is a large undertaking, and we can only do sections at a time. So this technology is out there and they seem to have been in the game for a long time. We thought it was a great idea which will give us a bunch of information we can put into our GIS. Director Herczeg continued that it will also give us video, which picks up the periphery, so it'll pick up trees, structures. And then we have access to that video for 90 days, after that it is \$2,000 per year if we want it. We may or may not need to, we have to see if we can host the data. Director Herczeg stated that this will save a ton of time and effort from both staff and consultants, and we can do it every 5-7 years, or we may find we don't need to do it again after a 7 or 10-year program. Chair Smith commented that it's probably less expensive than paying our people to go out. Director Herczeg replied that, yes, we were a little surprised. It's \$70,000, but it's reasonable for the information we get, so we definitely want to try it. We put it on the agenda for Monday's City Council meeting. So hopefully everyone on the committee thinks it's a good idea to save a lot of effort on both ends. Mayor Fischer asked what the process is now. Director Herczeg replied that we have the consultants walking it and measuring. We have a spreadsheet with some pictures and it needs to be the same person, too. Mayor Fischer commented on the usability of the data in the future, as opposed to digging through the manually collected data. Mayor Fischer asked if we have any concerns that if we survey the entire city, and we now have information about every 2-inch or greater deflection, that we have liability and have to fix all those in a reasonable amount of time per the law. Director Herczeg replied that if there's a goodwill effort to address those than it's not a concern. Just because you know about them doesn't mean you have the means to get there in certain amount of time. If we know about the 2-inch deflections, we can go out and get them. Mayor Fischer clarified that he's concerned about the amount of funding that's been provided if all of a sudden you need a million dollars in the first year to do all the 2-inch deflections at once. But it sounds like if you come up with a reasonable plan and address those first within some of the budget constraints, then you'll be protected. Director Herczeg replied yes, I don't think we're going to find that many 2-inch deflections that we're blowing half of our budget just addressing those.

Planner Bell asked if this group would be putting map together of the different zones. Director Herczeg replied that we will use the data to construct and prioritize the zones. We might do regional zones, however we decide to, but the data will provide where we should start or direct those dollars to first. Mayor Fischer reiterated that the data should give a better depiction of what you're going to need per district. Director Herczeg agreed and stated that it will give us all the condition data, cracks and everything, will show up on the video and then it will be points on a sidewalk grid in GIS. Director Herczeg said he is curious to see how much effort will be needed when they're done. Mayor Fischer asked if they have references. Director Herczeg confirmed that they do and they are working for AECOM in Florida. AECOM reached out to a couple of other companies with similar technology and thought they fell short. Councilwoman Thomas asked if there was an effort to find alternatives or to get other quotes. Director Herczeg stated that they're part of a government cooperative purchasing agreement, so it's a guaranteed low price. But, yes, we reached out to other vendors with similar technology and similar claims and most of them aren't regional. Councilwoman Thomas expressed concern about data ownership, so we don't have to subscribe to their online viewer. Director Herczeg replied that the online viewer is for the video, so if we can figure out a way to dump the video on another server, which we talked through with them. But it's a modest fee per year, \$2,000, if we want to keep it. We may only need it for one year. Director Herczeg and Councilwoman Thomas continued to discuss the costs and benefits of owning the video versus paying the annual fee to use it.

Chair Smith asked if we could use the information to determine higher work areas versus lower work areas to spread out the cost more. Director Herczeg confirmed that is why we're getting the data, to figure that out. Director Herczeg noted that we've already addressed at least two of the worst locations, and that the effort of having consultants walk the sections each year would likely cost more than \$60,000. Mayor Fischer agreed that it will give all the data we need and we should move forward with the proposal.

Chair Smith moved to the next agenda topic, the Active Mobility Plan discussion and how it will merge with our build schedule. Chair Smith acknowledged some of the more challenging locations, such as Nine Mile between Novi Rd and Taft and South Lake/East Lake Dr. Chair Smith suggested we take a 1000-ft view of where we want to connect and where we can pull some of it off, and that a separate meeting occur before the next committee meeting so he can get caught up on the construction schedule. Engineer Runkel said she made a list today, and the South Lake/East Lake location will be added to the next CIP cycle for road rehab, likely for FY 29. Director Herczeg said we will scope out cost for that and what it will include. Other projects that stuck out in the existing CIP are the 12 Mile segments west of Novi Road and Beck Road. Chair Smith suggested that as we start doing road design, that we look at if it's possible to add bike lanes or sidewalk. Chair Smith mentioned some of the hazards associated with bike lanes being too close to cars, and bikes traveling at fast speeds, and emphasized the need for safe bike facilities.

Member Thomas asked about the plan for bike lanes in the mobility plan and if we are incorporating them into road projects. Director Herczeg replied that we had them in West Park Dr but it was another million dollars so they got pulled. Director Herczeg continued, bike lanes, every foot we go out, means we're chasing grade into people's front yards or into the drainage. Specifically, on Taft, we put them in on the first phase, but between 10 and 11 (Mile Roads) we had to chase into front yards and turns into more than just throw a bike lane into the design. You're readjusting the drainage, you're battling for right-of-

way, you're eating into someone's front yard. So it might look great on paper but not when you get into the constructability of it. Director Herczeg said he's not suggesting don't do it, just those are some of the things you think about and the cost, it can jack up the cost of road projects because of more pavement. Chair Smith stated that I think that's what we have to look at in this committee, look at the plan and say, okay, this is where we think they should go, this is the reality of where we can put them and where we can afford to put them. Member Thomas added that there's that prioritization of where the areas that you can't get through are, or where a nearby path exists. But there are some areas that are almost devoid of good biking space, and there are some areas that you can reasonably get from place to place safely. Member Thomas continued by asking what's the most important thing to do for that to fit that need, so that everyone can get where they're going and that we can connect where possible. Chair Smith suggested maybe some of it is signage, like around north and south of 9 Mile, you can pretty much get through there. Signs are much cheaper than roads. Engineer Runkel asked if shared use paths are sufficient. Chair Smith replied that they're better than nothing, better than a shoulder. A shared use path would be the next step up, the gold standard is a four foot lane that you can ride in, it doesn't have to be separated from traffic necessarily. Chair Smith continued that if you have (designated) bike routes you can get through, you don't need them on every single road. Chair Smith and Member Thomas then discussed bike routes from Hines Park. Chair Smith added that signage could also direct cyclists to destinations like breweries and restaurants, which would be good for businesses. Mayor Fischer added that overall, some of my issue with the plan is that there are a lot of things that would be nice in an ideal world with unlimited resources and land and drainage configurations, and I would've hoped that the consultant would have done more to bring it to the Novi ideal, but it sounds like we're going to have to do some of that work.

Mayor Fischer asked so what is the next step to identify which ones are realistic. Chair Smith replied you can think of what's on the CIP for the next few years, find out how that matches up to what's on the plan. Mayor Fischer responded but the first person I want to turn to is (staff) to say which ones are just not realistic from your perspective, which ones are we going to need to acquire a bunch of right-of-way, it's going to triple the cost. That's what I think we need feedback on, and we have to connect it all together with, where do we really want things to go, where might it make sense to invest the money. Member Thomas replied that we want to focus on where do we want them rather than trying to evaluate what actually makes sense in these areas, determine what areas we need to cover and narrow down the scope so that we're only looking at the areas we need to cover. Mayor Fischer agreed and said if there are practically impossible ones then we can cross those off. Member Thomas asked if those are easy to identify. Director Herczeg replied yes, there are things that are obvious, like 12 Mile has segments that will be filled. In the current CIP, there's not a lot of non-motorized in there, the reason is we have \$650K a year for the neighborhood sidewalk program, and \$3M to rebuild boardwalks, and the ITC connection next summer. So those four things there are \$4-5M of projects, so there's just not room to put more. We haven't made a lot of changes in the 5 year plan in terms of roads, a lot of things have been obligated with federal funding and stuck in the year that they're in. We've just now shifted a bit, so instead of reconstructing Beck Rd, we laid a PPO on it, 11 Mile, we laid PPO on it. We're shifting gears in terms of recons, so if we're not reconstructing it doesn't make sense to do bike lanes or non-motorized at that time. So we have to look at what is feasible and match it up with the road projects that we have. And there's other small segments that are probably doable,

but then when you have one offs like that, you pay out the door, For example, 2019, 2020, 202, we did a bunch of segments and we kept change ordering it because it's the only way to get a good price. Director Herczeg continued describing the past process for completing prioritized segments through the Walkable Novi committee and how bike lanes/trails are part of a larger picture and separate conversation with neighboring communities. Mayor Fischer reiterated that we need to focus on figuring out what the routes are and start where we did 20 years ago with the non-motorized prioritization, but with bike lanes. The committee continued discussing what is practical and cost-effective when filling the gaps that are left, such as combining segments or collaborating with other agencies like the RCOC. Member Thomas asked about funding opportunities for regional trails. Engineer Runkel replied that we haven't pursued regional trail funding recently but we could pursue that with Northville. Chair Smith continued that we could work with Northville and Walled Lake for a Hines Park connection, and that he would look at setting up a task force with Northville.

Planner Bell asked if any sidewalk gaps were included with the West Park project. Engineer Runkel replied no they weren't because there is continuous sidewalk on the east side of West Park and adding more would have involved right-of-way, bike lanes would have added \$1M to the project.

The meeting concluded with a summary of action items and a discussion on the future meeting schedule.

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Action items were reviewed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.