

AGENDA  
WYOMING PLANNING COMMISSION  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016  
7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER:

ROLL CALL:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA ITEMS:

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Request to amend the Zoning Ordinance to a new format. (Wyoming Planning Department)

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Request for Site Plan Approval for an expansion of David's House Ministries. The property is located on Huizen Avenue extended, south of Belfield Street. (Section 11) (David Gage)
3. Request for consideration of an amendment to the City of Wyoming Land Use Plan 2020 – Bikeway Plan. (Wyoming Engineering and Planning Departments)
4. Request to approve the Wyoming Planning Commission 2015 Annual Report. (Wyoming Planning Department)

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

5. 28West Place (crescent street) development.
6. FBC Division Avenue update.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

ADJOURNMENT:

WYOMING PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA ITEM  
NO. 1

DATE DISTRIBUTED: February 4, 2016  
PLANNING COMMISSION DATE: February 16, 2016  
ACTION REQUESTED: Request to adopt a reformatted Zoning Ordinance.  
REQUESTED BY: Wyoming Planning Department  
REPORT PREPARED BY: Timothy Cochran, City Planner

PROJECT INFORMATION:

The main purpose of the Zoning Ordinance reformat is to modernize, reorganize, and make user friendly the existing zoning laws. The City's current Zoning Ordinance primarily dates from 1983. Through the years, it has been amended extensively, with little format restructuring. These major amendments included site plan review, definitions, parking, signage, and renewable energies, with the additional zoning districts R-7, PUD-2, PUD-3 and Form Based Code created. The existing Zoning Ordinance is outdated and has been amended to the extent that a substantial rewrite was necessary to more appropriately and clearly identify the City's development and land use requirements to both professional and citizen users. Where ever possible, sections have been re-written into tables and communication improved through the use of graphics. For over one year, staff has been working with the internationally known consulting firm of Wade-Trim to create an appropriate reformatted Zoning Ordinance for your consideration.

The reformatted Zoning Ordinance accomplishes the following:

1. Reorganizes and bundles companion requirements for the individual zoning districts.
2. Provides color charts to identify where particular land uses are appropriate.
3. Provides the extensive use of graphics that illustrate regulations and makes the Zoning Ordinance easy to understand.
4. Successfully integrates the Form Based Code into the Zoning Ordinance.
5. Provides text changes to the Zoning Ordinance to maintain concurrency with applicable State Laws.
6. Provides a smooth integration and cross-reference with other land use codes/ordinances such as the Building Code and Subdivision Ordinance.

7. In electronic form, hyper-links are provided for a smooth and quick connect to the various Zoning Ordinance sections, including the companion Form Based Code.
8. Identifies the City of Wyoming as a professional and modern community.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

The Development Review Team suggests the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council the adoption of the reformatted Zoning Ordinance.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW TEAM:

Heidi Isakson, Deputy City Manager  
Rebecca Rynbrandt, Director of Community Services  
William Dooley, Director of Public Works  
Jeff Keppel, Building Official  
James Carmody, Director of Police and Fire Services  
Tim Cochran, City Planner

WYOMING PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA ITEM  
NO. 2

DATE DISTRIBUTED: February 4, 2016  
PLANNING COMMISSION DATE: February 4, 2016  
ACTION REQUESTED: Request for Site Plan Approval for an expansion of David's House Ministries  
REQUESTED BY: David Gage  
REPORT PREPARED BY: Timothy Cochran, City Planner

GENERAL LOCATION DESCRIPTION:

The property is located on Huizen Avenue extended, south of Belfield Street, SW. (Section 11)

PROJECT INFORMATION:

EXISTING ZONING CHARACTERISTICS:

This site is zoned R-4 Multiple Family. Zoning surrounding the property follows:

North: R-2 Single Family Residential  
South: R-4 Multiple Family  
East: R-4 Multiple Family  
West: R-3 Two Family Residential (across Antwerp Avenue)

EXISTING LAND USE:

The overall site has one single family residence. The surrounding land uses are as follows:

North: Bikeway  
South: Undeveloped  
East: David's House Ministries and single family residences  
West: Single family residences (across Antwerp Avenue)

PROPOSED LAND USE:

David's House Ministries provides housing, assistance and care to adults with disabilities. Their facilities have been in operation for a considerable time along Banner Drive to the east of this site. The request is to expand the complex to the west, by providing six single family home-style

residences, each accommodating six residents. An office building serving the complex is also planned. The site would be accessed by the extension of Huizen Avenue from the north, and by connecting to Banner Drive to the east. This connection serving the expansion area will be a private road. Antwerp Avenue to the west is a dirt road and there is no intention by the City to improve it.

Staff has the following added site plan comments:

1. Final site grading, storm water and utility plans shall be approved by the Engineering Department. Storm water calculations shall be provided.
2. The proposed dumpster shall be located out of the watermain easement.
3. Sidewalk to be constructed from the proposed office building to the existing sidewalk to the east.
4. A variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals is required to allow this design. The required rear yard setback (from the east property line) is 35 feet, with 20 feet proposed. The adjoining property is 28 feet wide and is undevelopable. Staff supports the request.
5. The proposed landscape plan exceeds City requirements meets City requirements for quantity. Additional planting detail shall be provided to the Planning Department for review and approval prior to installation.
6. The proposed façade plans incorporates a single family residence style with sloping roofs, garages and vinyl siding. The façade plans are acceptable and are adopted as part of this Site Plan approval.
7. The Assessing Department requires a property combination request.

#### CONFORMANCE WITH THE CITY OF WYOMING SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES:

Sustainability: The advancement and promotion, with equal priority, of environmental quality, economic strength, and social equity so that a stable and vibrant community can be assured for current and future generations.

The proposed David's House Ministries expansion will provide quality housing and care for the disabled. This is a needed service in this region and promotes social equity. Substantial employment will also occur short term with construction. The proposed David's House Ministries expansion conforms to the City of Wyoming sustainability principals.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

The Development Review Team recommends the Planning Commission grant Site Plan Approval for David's House Ministries expansion subject to conditions 1-7 noted.

**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW TEAM:**

Heidi Isakson, Deputy City Manager  
Rebecca Rynbrandt, Director of Community Services  
William Dooley, Director of Public Works  
Jim DeLange, Chief Building Official  
James Carmody, Director of Police and Fire Services  
Jeff Keppel, Building Official  
Tim Cochran, City Planner



DENWOOD AVE

OAKWOOD AVE

David's House Expansion

BANNER DR

WISCONSIN ST

**CITY OF WYOMING - SITE PLAN DATA WAIVER REVIEW**

<b>Project:</b> DAVID'S HOUSE	<b>Reviewed By:</b> TIM COCHRAN		
	<b>Date:</b> 1/21/15		
<b>Required Site Plan Data:</b>	<b>Waiver Requested</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
<b>(a) Application Form:</b> The application form provided by the Planning Department shall be completed in full with the following information:			
Name, address and phone number of the applicant and property owner			
Address and property identification number of all properties			
Name, address and phone number of firm or individual who prepared the site plan			
Description of proposed project or use, type of building or structures, and name of proposed development, if applicable			
Date of application			
<b>(b) Site Plan Descriptive and Identification Data:</b>			
Site plans shall consist of a plan for the entire development, drawn to an engineer's scale of not less than 1 inch = 50 feet for property less than 3 acres, or 1 inch = 100 feet for property 3 acres or more in size.			
Sheet size shall be a maximum of 24 x 36 inches and collated according to sheet number. If a large development is shown in sections on multiple sheets, then one overall composite sheet shall be included			
Title block with sheet number/title; name, professional seal, address and telephone number of the applicant and firm or individual who prepared the plans; and date(s) of submission and any revisions (month, day, year)			
Scale and north-point			

**CITY OF WYOMING - SITE PLAN DATA WAIVER REVIEW**

<b>Project:</b> DAVID'S HOUSE	<b>Reviewed By:</b> TIM COCHRAN <b>Date:</b> 1/21/15		
<b>Required Site Plan Data:</b>	<b>Waiver Requested</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Location map drawn to a separate scale with north-point, showing surrounding land, and streets, within a quarter mile			
Dimensions of land and total acreage, with boundary survey and improvements			
Zoning classification of petitioner's parcel and all abutting parcels			
Proximity to section corner and Major Thoroughfare			
Net acreage (minus rights-of-way) and total acreage			
Proposed number of employees, if applicable			
<b>(c) Site Data:</b>			
Existing lot lines, building lines, structures, parking areas and other improvements on the site			
Building footprints			
Finished floor elevation of all proposed buildings			
On parcels of more than one (1) acre, topography on the site and within 100 feet of the site at two-foot contour intervals			
Proposed lot lines, lot dimensions, property lines, required and proposed setback dimensions, structures, and other improvements on the site			
Location of existing drainage courses, floodplains, lakes and streams, wetlands with elevations, and woodlands			
All existing and proposed easements			

**CITY OF WYOMING - SITE PLAN DATA WAIVER REVIEW**

<b>Project:</b> DAVID'S HOUSE	<b>Reviewed By:</b> TIM COCHRAN <b>Date:</b> 1/21/15		
<b>Required Site Plan Data:</b>	<b>Waiver Requested</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Location of waste receptacle(s), transformer pad(s), ground mounted mechanical equipment, and method of screening			
Dimensions and area of any outdoor sales display or storage area			
<b>(d) Access and Circulation:</b>			
Existing and planned right-of-way for all streets			
Dimensions, curve radii and centerlines of existing and proposed access points, road rights-of-way, private roads or access easements			
Opposing driveways and intersections within 100 feet of site			
Dimensions and location of existing and proposed driveways, parking lots, sidewalks and non-motorized paths			
Dimensions of acceleration, deceleration, and passing lanes			
Dimensions of parking spaces including barrier free, islands, circulation aisles and loading zones (including loading dock/door orientation and screening)			
Dimension and location of all clear vision areas			
Calculations for required number of parking and loading spaces			
Access easements, if shared access is proposed			
Designation of fire lanes			
Truck circulation plan showing turning templates for delivery trucks and emergency vehicles			

**CITY OF WYOMING - SITE PLAN DATA WAIVER REVIEW**

<b>Project:</b> DAVID'S HOUSE		<b>Reviewed By:</b> TIM COCHRAN	
		<b>Date:</b> 1/21/15	
<b>Required Site Plan Data:</b>	<b>Waiver Requested</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Traffic impact analysis meeting the requirements of Section 90-1003 (3), if applicable			
<b>(e) Landscape Plans:</b>			
General location of existing plant materials, with an identification of materials to be removed and materials to be preserved			
Calculations of all landscape requirements, as set forth in Section 90-64			
Landscape plan, including location and type of all existing and proposed shrubs, trees, and other live plant material			
Location, size, height and material of construction for all obscuring wall(s) or berm(s) with cross-sections, where required			
Planting list for proposed landscape materials with container size, caliper size or height of material, botanical and common names, and quantity	✓	To be provided with more detail	
<b>(f) Building and Structure Details:</b>			
Building elevations for all facades. Elevation drawings shall indicate the height of building, materials, and architectural quality, and shall detail any rooftop or building mounted screening.			
Location, height, and outside dimensions of all proposed buildings or structures			
Building floor plans for multiple-family buildings and gross floor area			

**CITY OF WYOMING - SITE PLAN DATA WAIVER REVIEW**

<b>Project:</b> DAVID'S HOUSE	<b>Reviewed By:</b> TIM COCHRAN		
	<b>Date:</b> 1/21/15		
<b>Required Site Plan Data:</b>	<b>Waiver Requested</b>	<b>Reviewer Comments:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Details on accessory structures and any screening			
<b>(g) Information Concerning Existing and Proposed Utilities, Drainage and Related Issues:</b>			
Location of existing and proposed sanitary sewers, water mains, fire hydrants, storm sewers and other utilities that are proposed to serve the project			
Location of existing above and below ground gas, electric and telephone lines			
Storm water retention and detention ponds, including grading, side slopes, depth, high water elevation, volume and outfalls with calculations (for details refer to Wyoming's storm water ordinance Sec.86-351 through 436)			
Indication of site grading, drainage patterns and other storm water management			
<b>(h) Additional information required for Residential Development</b>			
The number and location of each type of residential unit			
Density calculations by type of residential unit (dwelling units per acre)			
Garage or carport locations and details, if proposed			
Location and design of mailbox clusters, if applicable			
Location, dimensions, and elevations of common building(s), if applicable			
Location, size and facilities within, of recreation and open space areas, if applicable			
<b>(i) Other Requirements</b>			
Applicable fees, as set by the City Council			

WYOMING PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA ITEM  
NO. 3

DATE DISTRIBUTED: February 4, 2016

PLANNING COMMISSION DATE: February 16, 2016

ACTION REQUESTED: Request for consideration of an amendment to the Wyoming Land Use Plan 2020 – Bikeway Plan

REQUESTED BY: Wyoming Engineering and Planning Departments

REPORT PREPARED BY: Timothy Cochran, City Planner

PROJECT INFORMATION:

In March 2012 the City Council, with approval and recommendation by the Planning Commission, adopted the 2035 Thoroughfare Plan as an amendment to the Land Use Plan 2020. The Thoroughfare Plan acknowledged that further consideration of the thoroughfare network was needed to incorporate nonmotorized users (see attached).

Since that time, city staff has been working regionally through the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council with area transportation, land use, and recreation planners to develop a comprehensive Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. This Plan was adopted in 2014. Pertinent excerpts from the Plan are attached, with the full document accessible at [gvmc.org/transportation/documents/nonmotorized/2014](http://gvmc.org/transportation/documents/nonmotorized/2014). Federal and state funding for all transportation projects now require consideration of bicyclists and pedestrians. Our area Metropolitan Planning Organization receives over \$10 million per year of such funding and is committed to the full capture of all available monies for the betterment of the region.

In addition to the Federal and State funding requirements to consider nonmotorized transportation, the public benefits are numerous. The development of a viable regional nonmotorized network provides increased mobility to certain populations, improves air quality, supports transit, reduces congestion, reduces the number and severity of traffic accidents, provides cost savings to residents and communities, enhances economic development, improves public health and provides quality of life benefits.

With an emphasis on Wyoming, the Engineering Department contracted with the Progressive AE, a local multidisciplinary firm with specialization in transportation engineering, to conduct a nonmotorized analysis of the City. The existing nonmotorized facilities, potential regional connectivity, and capacities / constraints of local streets were analyzed. The resulting analysis is the Bikeway Plan. The adoption of this Plan will provide the guide for development of the system. It will also serve to inform the public of intended facilities and provide opportunities for

grant monies for implementation. The proposed Bikeway Plan was presented to the Wyoming Parks & Recreation Commission on January 13 for informational purposes.

**ADOPTION PROCESS:**

The Bikeway Plan is an amendment to the City of Wyoming Land Use Plan 2020. The process for adopting this Plan is established by State Law – The Michigan Planning Enabling Act No. 33 of 2008. The Planning Commission is required to submit the Plan amendment to the City Council for review and comment. The City Council must then approve the Plan for distribution to adjoining communities, utilities and area transportation and planning agencies for their review and comment. After 63 days, a public hearing will be scheduled before the Planning Commission for consideration of adopting the Plan. The City Council, through resolution, may assert the right to approve, or reject, the Plan amendment.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

The Development Review Team suggests the Planning Commission submit the Bikeway Plan to the City Council.

---

## 4.2 Non-Motorized Considerations

Non-motorized planning is particularly important along major corridors where the right-of-way is limited and in high-speed environments. A conscious and deliberate effort to either incorporate non-motorized users within a corridor or to provide an alternative parallel route is important to ultimately provide a practical, safe, comfortable, and functional non-motorized transportation network.

Providing adequate non-motorized facilities will reduce the need for non-motorized users to use traffic-oriented facilities which were not intended to support non-motorized users, particularly in high-speed environments. Pedestrian and bicycle safety varies based on a number of factors, including non-motorized user compliance with the rules of the road and situations when driver expectancy is violated. While the perception of user safety is a critical part of non-motorized facility planning and implementation, user comfort and convenience are equally important aspects of how and why the community may choose to use non-motorized facilities.

### Non-Motorized Benefits

A well-conceived non-motorized transportation system may provide the community with the following benefits:

- Improved community sustainability by enhancing transportation options beyond the automobile, particularly for the population segment which is eligible to drive an automobile.
- A transportation network that provides improved connections to common destinations, such as employment, shopping, schools, and places of worship.
- Improved connections to local and regional recreational facilities, which promote healthy lifestyle opportunities.
- Improved walkability and neighborhood connectivity, which increases social interaction and strengthens sense of community.
- Reduced need for parking spaces and vehicle-oriented roadway improvements.
- Reduced air pollution, stormwater pollution, and carbon emissions.

### Non-Motorized Planning

Due to the discretionary nature of many non-motorized trips, it is challenging to estimate the latent demand for non-motorized facilities. Adding non-motorized facilities will almost always increase the number of non-motorized users, particularly if the facilities meet specific needs.

A planning process is recommended to identify the corridors that would best serve the non-motorized needs of the community. Once these corridors are identified, then appropriate improvements can be considered with future roadway improvement projects. In general, a non-motorized planning process should include the following steps:

- Engage community stakeholders to determine the destinations and areas that should be particularly served by non-motorized facilities.
- Conduct a field survey to inventory the available right-of-way, existing street width, and evidence of non-motorized users.
- Gauge community preferences about non-motorized facility options, such as on-street bike lanes, shared lanes, and off-street paths.
- Identify corridors that best match the travel paths between destinations that are likely to be accessed by non-motorized users.
- Identify corridors that connect with existing and future recreational paths, such as the Kent Trails.
- Review other non-motorized plans developed by other peer communities and the standard non-motorized design practices.

- 
- Identify standard applications for a range of non-motorized facilities that might apply to future projects, such as those projects identified in Section 4.1.

### **Areas for Consideration**

Based on the existing network of non-motorized facilities, the following areas are likely to be the subject of future non-motorized planning:

- Routes to schools.
- Routes to fixed transit routes such as Bus Rapid Transit along Division Avenue.
- North-south connectivity north of 44<sup>th</sup> Street, which is currently limited to the far east and west edges of the City.
- East-west connectivity across US-131, which is primarily limited to the interchange bridges (there is only one US-131 crossing that is not an interchange—at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street).
- Connectivity between Prairie Parkway and Chicago Drive.
- Connectivity between 44<sup>th</sup> Street and Prairie Parkway.

## Introduction

### Purpose of the Plan

The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for all of Kent County and five communities in eastern Ottawa County—Allendale, Tallmadge, Georgetown, and Jamestown townships and the City of Hudsonville. In this capacity, the GVMC must maintain a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to facilitate collaboration between local jurisdictions and determine investment priorities for federal transportation funds. Map 1 depicts the MPO planning boundary and Urban Area.

Metropolitan areas, those areas with populations of more than 50,000, are required to plan for the “development and integrated management and operation of transportation facilities (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) that will function as an intermodal transportation system...” (23 U.S.C 134(c)(2) and 135(a)(2)) (see Appendix D for 23 U.S.C.). Indeed, 23 U.S.C. 217 calls for the planning for bicyclists and pedestrians to be an integral part of the ongoing transportation planning process, and that projects and programs identified in the planning process should be implemented:

“Bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by each metropolitan planning organization and State.”

“Bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction and transportation facilities, except where bicycle and pedestrian use are not permitted.”

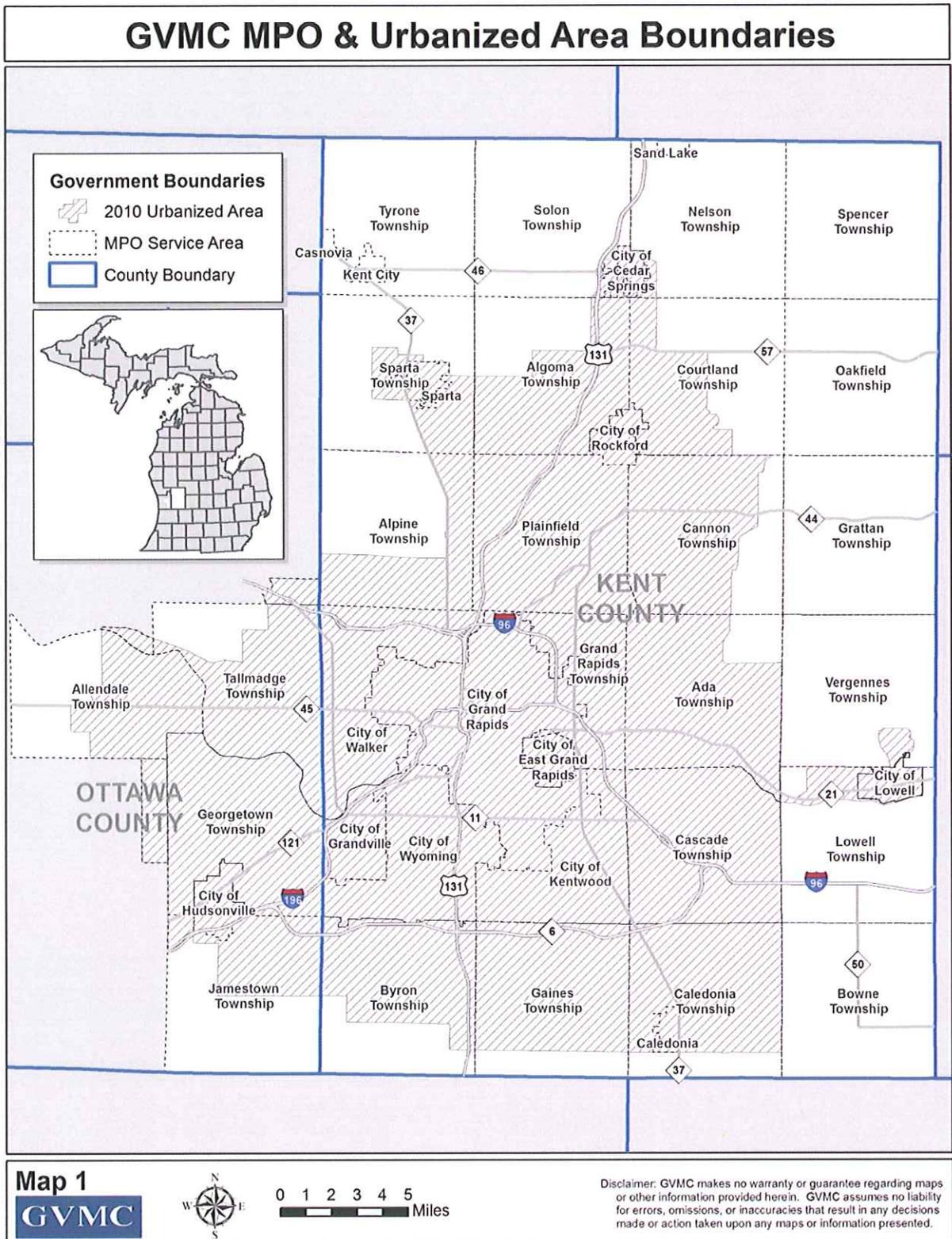
“Transportation plans and projects shall provide due consideration for safety and contiguous routes for bicyclists and pedestrians.”

In essence, the development of a MTP requires consideration of all modes of transportation as part of this planning process. The GVMC is therefore responsible for developing a non-motorized transportation plan element for non-motorized travel.

Bicycle and pedestrian projects may be on-road or off-road facilities. For off-road trails, all such facilities that serve a transportation function must be incorporated into the MPO planning process. In particular, bicycle and pedestrian projects using Federal-aid transportation funds must be included in the MPO Transportation Improvement Program.

The Non-Motorized element of the MTP contains information about existing non-motorized facilities as well as recommended projects and funding for improving pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. The primary focus being threefold: to identify regionally significant projects, to enhance cooperation and coordination between jurisdictions for non-motorized facility development, and to address some of the challenges to non-motorized transportation facility development.

Map 1 – GVMC MPO and Urbanized Area



## 2014 NON-MOTORIZED PLAN ELEMENT

### Plan History

The Grand Valley Metropolitan Council originally developed a Bicycle Plan and Pedestrian Plan approved in 1996 and 1997 respectively. These plans were used as guides to integrate non-motorized transportation issues into one comprehensive document. In 2006 and 2009, Draft Non-Motorized Transportation Plans were completed with the guidance of the GVMC Non-Motorized Transportation Committee. While these documents were never formally adopted; several of the identified projects were successfully completed.

In 2009 a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan element of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was developed in conjunction with the Rails-to-Trails 2010 Campaign effort which encouraged lawmakers to better fund non-motorized projects in the next federal transportation bill. This document is an update of the 2009 plan and will serve as an element to the 2040 MTP and also as a revised inventory of the region's existing and proposed non-motorized improvement projects.

---

### Plan Organization

The Non-Motorized element of the GVMC Metropolitan Transportation Plan identifies existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, reviews improvements for a future network, and provides prioritization guidelines and funding information. The non-motorized system is envisioned as a single unit and therefore it should be noted that these plans and project recommendations are macro in nature. Prior to proceeding with any of the recommendations, a corridor level assessment should be completed in order to fully investigate the appropriateness of the proposed roadway, bicycle, or pedestrian facility modification. Further project refinement and precise alignments will be determined as projects are implemented.

This Plan document is split into four sections:

#### Existing Non-Motorized Transportation Network

An inventory of non-motorized facilities that are currently on the ground were documented and mapped to aid in the identification of network deficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

#### Non-Motorized Transportation Improvements

The GVMC Non-Motorized Transportation Committee worked to develop a selection methodology and project list in order to provide a basis for future investment.

#### Non-Motorized Transportation Funding Options

Research into the various opportunities for non-motorized transportation resources was conducted as a resource to those striving to increase these types of transportation investments.

#### Study Recommendations

In addition to funding options for non-motorized facilities, there exist related policy decisions that may enhance the accessibility and development of pedestrian and bicycle transportation options.

## Benefits of Non-Motorized Transportation



Transportation is the act of delivering goods or people from location to location. Non-motorized transportation consists of pedestrian (ex. walking and running) and bicycle travel, and is the oldest form of transportation—physically moving from location to location with “human” power. As technology has changed, an increasing array of options for movement of people and goods have presented themselves and non-motorized or “active” transportation has simply become one of many options.

Interestingly, according to the Bicycle Encyclopedia, bicycling evolved from the velocipede during the 1800s and it still has a strong presence and purpose in transportation. In fact, bicyclists in the United

States formed the League of American Wheelman (LAW) in 1880 and lobbied for the construction of roads. Michigan’s own Horatio “Good Roads” Earle is quoted: “I often hear now-a-days, the automobile instigated good roads; that the automobile is the parent of good roads. Well, the truth is, the bicycle is the father of the good roads movement in this country.” The efforts of the LAW at the turn of the twentieth century would form the foundation of a national road network that would eventually stretch across the country and be overtaken by the automobile in the early 1900s.



Source: GVMC Staff

### Transportation and Accessibility Options

Non-motorized facilities give people the option to walk, bike, or use public transit if they choose. With more than 50% of older Americans who do not drive staying home on a given day because they lack transportation options, a comprehensive non-motorized network is crucial to the mobility of some segments of the population.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2025, the portion of the population over the age of 65 will increase by 8%, totaling 62 million persons. As these individuals age, many will give up driving for safety’s sake, so nearly 20% of the population will rely



Source: Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org

<sup>1</sup> Complete Streets: Improve Mobility for Older Americans, 2007

## 2014 NON-MOTORIZED PLAN ELEMENT

upon alternative forms of transportation, particularly walking.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the aging populace, there is a social equity component to the provision of alternate forms of transportation. According to the National Household Transportation Survey, urban households without cars bicycle to work nearly three-and-a-half times more than households with one car.<sup>3</sup> There are fewer recreational facilities such as parks and trails available in areas where low-income or minority populations live, while the demand for such free facilities may be greater.<sup>4</sup> The disabled community is also in dire need of pedestrian accommodation. A study in Houston found that three out of five disabled and elderly Americans do not have sidewalks between their home and the nearest bus stop. Fewer than 10% of this segment of the population use public transportation, even though 50% live less than two blocks from the nearest bus stop.<sup>5</sup> If additional non-motorized connections to transit stops are provided, the accessibility options for disabled and elderly populations would be expanded. A more complete non-motorized network will increase the viability of pedestrian and bicycle transportation as options and provide a mode for those that are unable or unwilling to use motorized vehicles.

### Supports Transit



Source: ITP/The Rapid

For people who choose to use transit as their preferred mode of travel and those for which it is the only option, non-motorized facilities support the transit system by providing access to transit stops. Walking and biking facilities that tie into the transit network are critical for optimal efficiency of the transit system. Locally, The Rapid's main-line bus routes provision of bicycle racks emphasizes the connection between transit and non-motorized transportation. See Appendix A for more information about the Rapid's bus routes.

### Air Quality

Regional air quality is an issue for West Michigan, especially as the region has previously been in "non-attainment" with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for ground-level ozone pollution. The majority of this ozone pollution is caused by motor vehicles, which account for 72% of nitrogen oxides and 52% of reactive hydrocarbons, which are principal components of ozone smog.<sup>6</sup> Poor air quality due to motorized vehicle emissions contributes to respiratory problems, especially for the very young and elderly. Since 1996, Kent and eastern Ottawa counties have been considered in "attainment" for air quality, according to the EPA, which monitors levels of various pollutants at stations across West Mich-

For simple steps you can take to improve West Michigan's Air Quality, visit the **West Michigan Clean Air Coalition** website:

[www.wmcac.org](http://www.wmcac.org)

<sup>2</sup> Complete Streets: Improve Mobility for Older Americans, 2007

<sup>3</sup> NHITS, 2001

<sup>4</sup> American Journal of Health Promotion, March/April 2007

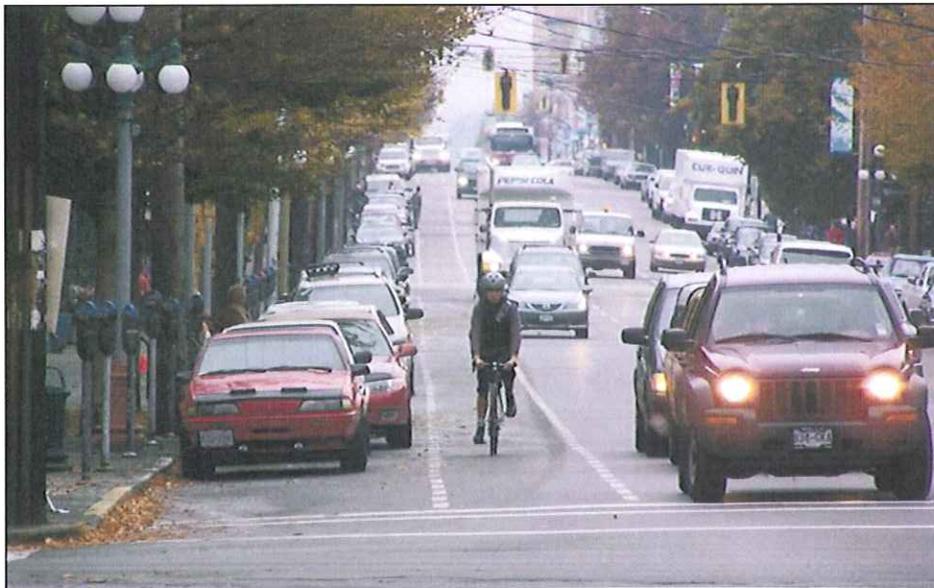
<sup>5</sup> International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 1998

<sup>6</sup> 30 Simple Energy Things You Can Do to Save the Earth, 1990

igan. But as ozone air quality standards become more stringent and as additional pollutants, such as particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), are included in air quality analyses, maintaining attainment status will become more difficult.

An additional environmental concern that relates to air quality is global warming and continued greenhouse gas emissions, of which car exhaust—CO<sub>2</sub> particularly—is a major contributor. About 28% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from the burning of fossil fuel for cars, trucks, ships, trains, and planes.<sup>7</sup> Leaving your car at home just two days a week will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of two tons per year. We can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce our dependence on oil, save money, and improve regional air quality by using alternative forms of transportation such as bicycling and walking.

Each gallon of gas burned produces 19.6 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>, nearly a pound per mile driving on average. Automobiles, the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions, are responsible for about 20 percent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the U.S.  
—<http://www.epa.gov/oms/climate>



Source: John Luton

## Economic

### Reduced Congestion

Traffic congestion creates an annual \$121 billion cost to the U.S. economy in the form of 5.5 billion lost hours and 2.9 billion gallons of wasted fuel. In Grand Rapids, the estimated annual cost per traveler for traffic congestion is \$501 every year.<sup>8</sup> While some trips are not suited to non-motorized transportation, many trips could be diverted to this mode, and it doesn't take large reductions in driving to see dramatic improvements in traffic congestion. In 2012, total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the United States rose 1.9% compared to 2011. Every private automobile that is removed from the road reduces the traffic congestion.

<sup>7</sup> <http://epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/sources.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/report/>

### Cost Savings

According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), owning and operating a new sedan in 2012 costs an average of 59.6 cents per mile, or \$8,946 per year, when driving 15,000 miles annually.<sup>8</sup> The cost of ownership accounts for more than 15% of a typical household's income.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, the cost of operating a bicycle for a year is \$155.<sup>10</sup>

Aside from the personal cost savings of non-motorized options, building and maintaining non-motorized infrastructure is also less expensive. In West Michigan, constructing about 1 mile of M-6 urban freeway cost an average of \$25-35 million dollars. Comparatively, the M-6 trail in the same corridor cost about \$340,000.

In Michigan, one mile of 4-foot wide concrete sidewalk costs approximately \$63,400 while one mile of 10-foot wide asphalt shared-use path costs about \$160,000. Materials for installing a bicycle lane on both sides of the street \$1,700 per mile and four-foot wide asphalt wide shoulders on existing roads run about \$100,000 per mile.<sup>11</sup> The inclusion of bike lanes and shared use paths in the initial development and redevelopment of the road networks could save money in the long run by avoiding expensive retrofitting of these facilities later.



Source: Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org

### Economic Development

There is an economic development component to expanding non-motorized transportation that relates to the bicycle industry, as well as property value, tourism, and the overall quality of life of communities. The U.S. bicycle industry generated \$6 billion in sales in 2010 and approximately 4,200 specialty bike dealers do business across the nation.<sup>12</sup> These independent shops are community hubs, providing personalized service, sponsoring local events, and spearheading efforts to build bike facilities. In 2009, American consumers bought 2.6 million bicycles compared to 2.5 million cars and trucks.<sup>13</sup>



Source: GVMC Staff

Non-motorized transportation facilities have been used as a centerpiece to attract home buyers. According to the Bureau of

Transportation Statistics, 79.1 million, or 38%, of all Americans feel the availability of bikeways, walk-

<sup>9</sup> Consumer Expenditure Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistic, 2010

<sup>10</sup> The League of American Bicyclists, 2011

<sup>11</sup> Michigan Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Planning, Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator

<sup>12</sup> National Bicycle Dealers Association. <http://nbda.com/articles/industry-overview-2010-pg34.htm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.energyboom.com/us-bike-sales-higher-car-sales-2009>

ing paths, and sidewalks for getting to work, shopping, and recreation is very important in choosing where to live.<sup>14</sup> These housing preferences are translated to property values. Real estate market research has consistently shown that people are willing to pay more for homes and property within close proximity to recreational parks and facilities. Research done for the 23 mile long Capital Connector Trail in Ingham County, Michigan revealed that trails are one of the top amenities considered when purchasing a home. A 2005 study of home sales new two rail-trails in Massachusetts showed that homes near the trails sold at 99.3% of the list price, while homes further away from the trails sold at 98.1% of the list price. The study also showed that homes near the trails sold in 29.3 days while homes further away from the trails sold in 50.4 days. A 2011 study of the Little Miami Scenic Trail in Cincinnati revealed that homeowners were willing to pay a \$9,000 premium to be located one thousand feet closer to the trail.<sup>15</sup> In fact, it is not uncommon in some western U.S. communities to see "Trail Front Property" advertised in the same way "Lake Front Property" is advertised in Michigan.

With over 1,300 designated mountain bike and bicycle trails, a great deal of tourism in the State of Michigan is derived from the value of our trail systems. While the focus of this planning document is



Source: GVMC Staff

bicycle transportation, recreational use of non-motorized facilities in our state is an important revenue generator for tourism.<sup>16</sup> Above all, non-motorized options promote the connections that offer access to the jobs and shopping that make a community more attractive to both business and prospective employees.

### Health

In 2012, 31.1 % of the Michigan population was considered obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>17</sup> Obesity is expensive, in terms of health care costs, and it is preventable

for the most part. Health care costs in 2008 dollars associated with obesity alone were estimated at \$147 billion.<sup>18</sup> Land use and transportation planning that encourages and supports physical activity can battle the inactivity associated with obesity and help lower these costs.<sup>19</sup> By offering non-motorized transportation options, physical activity can be incorporated into everyday activities. With fewer and fewer Americans achieving the minimal exercise goals, the provision of a system of transportation that not only connects them with destinations but also is a means of achieving a healthier lifestyle is paramount. In fact, an estimated 32% to 35% of all deaths

<sup>14</sup> Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2000

<sup>15</sup> University of Cincinnati, <http://www.uc.edu/news/NR.aspx?id=14300>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.michigan.org/News/Detail.aspx?ContentId=588D02B3-E6B6-4566-B22B-CF1CFDEA152F>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/causes/index.html>

<sup>19</sup> Active Living Leadership; New online calculator estimates financial cost of physical inactivity, Biotech Week, 2004

## 2014 NON-MOTORIZED PLAN ELEMENT

in the United States attributable to coronary heart disease, colon cancer, and diabetes could have been prevented if all persons were highly active.<sup>20</sup>

The United States Surgeon General has recommended at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise every day to overcome weight problems in Americans, according to information published by the Department of Health and Human Services. The Centers for Disease Control handbook, *Promoting Physical Activity Among Adults*, praises the dual benefits of cycling and walking for improving health and serving a transportation function:

“the most effective activity regimens may be those that are moderate in intensity, individualized, and incorporated into daily activity. Bicycling and walking are healthy modes of transportation that incorporate these components. Bicycling or walking to work, school, shopping, or elsewhere as part of one’s regular day-to-day routine can be both a sustainable and a time-efficient exercise regimen for maintaining an acceptable level of fitness.”

Walking or bicycling to work, school, church, or for pleasure is a convenient way people can incorporate exercise into their daily lives and improve their health.

The American Community Survey estimated that in 2012, 91,536 people indicated that they walked to work in Michigan.  
—U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey

### Quality of Life

The benefits of a comprehensive non-motorized transportation system go beyond the direct benefits to users of the system to the public as a whole. In addition to the air quality, health, and economic benefits, an improved non-motorized system reduces water and noise pollution associated with automobile use by shifting short trips from automobiles to pedestrian options. Also, more non-motorized transportation options could reduce the need for parking spaces, improve safety for current users—especially the young, old, and disabled, foster community connection and interaction, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Non-motorized transportation, in addition to being an alternative to the automobile, indirectly enhances the quality of life for a community.

---

## Challenges to Non-Motorized Transportation

While pedestrian and bicycle trips are a viable option, a number of challengers deter people from utilizing non-motorized modes of transportation.

### Cross Jurisdictional Cooperation

Just as road networks are often constructed, maintained, and funded by several different entities, non-motorized facilities cross jurisdictional boundaries while simultaneously varying in form and type of user served. In order to ensure compatible facilities a great deal of cooperation must take place between adjoining jurisdictions and among all the municipalities in a region. The complexity of building and maintaining a network of this sort requires partnerships between various state and local departments such as:

---

<sup>20</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007

- Cities, Villages, Towns, Transportation, Engineering, and Parks and Recreation Departments
- Kent and Ottawa County Road Commissions
- Kent County Parks Department
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Development
- Michigan State Police
- Michigan's Universities and Colleges
- Non-profit Organizations and Advocacy Groups such as:
  - Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance
  - West Michigan Strategic Alliance
  - Friends of the White Pine Trail
  - League of Michigan Bicyclists
  - Disability Advocates
  - Michigan Mountain Bicycling Association

There is three to four times more bike commuting in cities with the most combined path and lane mileage compared to those cities with the least.

—*Ralph Buehler and John Pucher, journal Transportation, March 2012*

### Coordination Among Multiple Users

Another major impediment to planning for non-motorized transportation is the lack of unified public sentiment for a particular form of facility. Bicycle enthusiasts, the disabled community, rails-to-trails advocates, and others each petition for “their” type of non-motorized facility. Indeed, those in favor of bicycle lanes are generally opposed to spending limited financial resources on shared-use paths or sidewalks. Those who rely on sidewalks for mobility, on the other hand, cannot justify preferential spending on either bicycle lanes or the perceived more recreational shared-use paths while there remains a decidedly incomplete sidewalk network for accessing destinations and transit.

The non-motorized advocacy community lacks a single voice, a single organization, and for this reason there is competition not just between road advocates and non-motorized groups but between non-motorized groups. The variety of non-motorized forms demanded by different groups can be daunting to municipalities as they choose where to prioritize limited resources. The divided non-motorized lobby weakens its overall impact and ability to secure transportation dollars for projects.

### Lack of Adequate Facilities

Perhaps the principal deterrent to the public choosing non-motorized transportation is the lack of adequate facilities. This includes such facilities as sidewalks, safe intersections, transit accessibility, bicycle lanes, bicycle parking and storage, and shared-use paths. In particular, bridge crossings in key areas, especially over and beneath freeways and other limited-access thoroughfares, are a significant impediment. Many bridges were constructed during the 1950s and ‘60s and are not yet in need of replacement. However, they do not offer the width, shoulder, or railings necessary for pedestrians and bicyclists to traverse safely and create bottlenecks in an otherwise strong non-motorized network. An excellent example is the Burton Street overpass at I-96 in Cascade Township.

WYOMING PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA ITEM  
NO. 4

DATE DISTRIBUTED: February 4, 2016

PLANNING COMMISSION DATE: February 16, 2016

ACTION REQUESTED: Request to approve the Wyoming Planning Commission - 2015 Annual Report.

REQUESTED BY: Wyoming Planning Department

REPORT PREPARED BY: Timothy Cochran, City Planner

PROJECT INFORMATION:

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008) stipulates that:

“The Planning Commission shall make an annual written report to the legislative body concerning its operations and the status of planning activities, including recommendations regarding actions by the legislative body related to planning and development.”

Attached is a synopsis of the Planning Commission’s reviews and actions for 2015. It is our recommendation that the Commission review the report and amend where appropriate. The final report must then be approved and forwarded to the City Council.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

Planning staff suggests the Planning Commission approve the Wyoming Planning Commission – 2015 Annual Report and forward it to the City Council.