



CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL MARCH 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Resolution to Adopt the City of Novi 2023 Active Mobility Plan.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department - Planning

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Encouraging health through active lifestyles has been a focus for the City of Novi for many years. The Non-Motorized Master Plan adopted in 2011 served as a foundation for the past 13 years for providing an interconnected and comprehensive system of pathways, sidewalks and other facilities. The implementation of that plan was tracked annually, and the prioritization of new investments in missing segments was built on that foundation. Many of the strategies recommended were implemented throughout the years, with a total of 16.25 miles of trails/sidewalks completed between 2011 and 2022 by public and private funding in Novi.

Recognizing the success of the 2011 plan, and the realization that standards continue to adapt to new technologies and awareness, the City Council contracted with The Greenway Collaborative in November 2022 to produce a comprehensive update to the Non-Motorized Plan. That process kicked off in December of 2022, and continued through 2023.

Work on the new plan, now updated with the name Active Mobility Plan (AMP), is near completion. Drafts of the Plan were reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee and the Walkable Novi Committee. At the Walkable Novi Committee's December meeting, the members gave comments and offered some feedback. The Plan was also presented to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commission. The consultant has reviewed all staff and committee comments and addressed those in the latest draft.

The Active Mobility Plan is organized into different focus areas. The **Near-Term Network**, starting on page 99 of the plan, contains the recommended priority projects for the next five years, and is a set of projects within public areas, requiring minimal road changes, aimed at creating a continuous network for reaching key destinations and trails in the city. The recommended near-term projects are

summarized on the map on page 123 of the plan and listed in the spreadsheet on pages 124-127. This focus area emphasizes walking and cycling using existing facilities, and consists of three main components:

1. **Neighborhood Greenway Network:** A seamless walking and biking route with added features for a better experience.
2. **Connecting to Transit:** Making it safe and easy for pedestrians and cyclists to reach the new transit stops in the city.
3. **Improved Access to Shopping and Dining:** Creating a friendly environment that lets people easily walk or bike to businesses from the street or sidewalk.

The **Regional Trail Network** section focuses on strategies to connect Novi to the broader network of existing infrastructure in surrounding communities, potentially creating a 30-mile loop. These connections include creating a trail link across the I-96 interchange at Beck Road, closing sidepath gaps along 12 Mile Road and West Park Drive to Pontiac Trail, and collaborating with Walled Lake to connect to the Michigan Air Line Trail. Additionally, coordination with Maybury State Park and support for connections to Northville are emphasized. Such connections would provide not only an attractive amenity for Novi residents, but also an opportunity for economic development, health and wellness, and alternative transportation options.

The **Major Corridor Classifications** serve as a framework for applying current best practices to enhance safety and promote bicycle and pedestrian mobility. These classifications should be consulted when a road is undergoing reconstruction or widening to ensure that all road users are taken into account in the design of improvements, and result in a more efficient investment than if projects are implemented separately.

While the Active Mobility Plan provides the long-term vision for the network in Novi, individual projects would need to be designed and evaluated for costs of investment as they are proposed. The AMP includes a section on current resources for design best practices for various facilities, as well as funding strategies such as grant programs. Both seasonal and scheduled maintenance tasks are also provided in the plan.

As the various plan elements are implemented over time, it is anticipated that a greater number of individuals will have the option of walking and bicycling for local trips, or for health and enjoyment. Having these choices can lead to healthier lifestyles, improved air and water quality, contribute to a stronger sense of community, and a more energy efficient and sustainable transportation system.

The draft documents have been posted online at <https://walkbike.info/novi/> for public review with a feedback form to receive comments since January 18, 2024. Following the review and feedback from the Walkable Novi Committee, the Planning Commission held a public hearing, received comments, and recommended adoption of the Plan.

In the interim, modifications that have been made to the Plan include the following:

- On page 41, questions have been raised about the validity of "Equity Focus" data presented, and what it means in the context of Novi. The explanation of this section has been rewritten to provide more clarity about the data, and the source of the data. The reported data from the Census has highlighted the northeast quadrant of the City largely based on having a high older adult population and relatively more households being "transit dependent," which is defined as having no vehicle or fewer vehicles than number of workers in a household.
- On page 50, the Sidewalk description has been edited to include a notation that providing sidewalks is a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Proven Safety Countermeasure, consistent with other facility descriptions.
- On pages 86-87, the text has been revised to add "wherever feasible" in a few locations in order to recognize that each road has its own character and constraints that will be taken into consideration during the design process. The "sidepaths" figure is revised to say, "Typically 8' to 10' wide." The widths in the legend on page 87 will also be removed since the recommended widths are discussed on the previous page. A reference to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines will also be included. This change also corrects an inconsistency with the Crosstown Corridor improvements that are detailed on page 68.
- On page 87, the following statement has been added: On some road segments, limited ROW and the desire to preserve natural features will make the construction of a proposed facility with the recommend buffer unlikely even in the long-term. In such cases, the gap should be completed whenever possible with a narrower facility and/or a narrower buffer. If that proves to be not possible, mid-block crossings should be provided where a sidewalk dead-ends.
- On page 129, in the Specific Areas section, the following statement has been included to clarify the purpose: These areas are highlighted because additional coordination and further study are required."

The City Council is asked to consider approval of the Resolution to Adopt the Active Mobility Plan, as presented, or with any changes or additions identified.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval of the Resolution to Adopt the City of Novi 2023 Active Mobility Plan.