

Zeeland council asked to consider 'complete streets' ordinance

Published: Tuesday, October 04, 2011, 1:40 PM Updated: Tuesday, October 04, 2011, 1:51 PM



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By

ZEELAND – The City Council is being asked to support a proposed ordinance intended to make Zeeland more accommodating for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Disability Network/Lakeshore and the **Ottawa County Health Department** are proposing a “**complete streets**” ordinance. If passed, it would make Zeeland the first West Michigan community to pass such a measure, which calls for local leaders to plan and renovate streets to accommodate people who ride bikes, walk or use wheelchairs.

“There is a collective recognition that the system we have now does not fully meet our current needs,” said Kathryn Gray, a public policy specialist for Disability Network.

She said Zeeland has already taken steps to improve accessibility by developing sidewalks and bike paths. The complete streets ordinance is the next step in that process, she said.

“As we reconstruct streets, we have tried to account for all modes of users on a street,” City Manager Tim Klunder wrote in a memo to the council. “In some cases, maybe there is more we can do.”

Gray said one relatively low-cost thing the city could do is establish dedicated bike



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One relatively low-cost suggestion to improve bike safety is dedicated lanes on streets with striping to separate bicycles and cars.

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Disability Network and the Health Department have received a \$4,000 grant from the state Department of Community Health to work with Zeeland on developing the ordinance. But some council members questioned whether it's need — and whether there might be additional taxpayer cost to implement it.

"There's a cost for the staff; there's a cost for the Planning Commission; there's a cost for the city attorney to draw up an ordinance," Mayor Pro Tem Sally Gruppen said.

A total of 55 communities have passed complete streets ordinances or resolutions. Grand Rapids' City Commission approved a resolution of support in March, with Holland passing a resolution in April and Grand Haven in July. Nine communities have passed ordinances, none west of Lansing, Gray said.

The council is expected to take up the proposal again in two weeks.

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