

Bike & Hike Events Set for May, June and August; ‘Slow Down Town’ Aims to Raise Safety Awareness

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EDWARDSVILLE – The City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has mapped out a series of Bike & Hike events for 2024, offering three times as many opportunities to connect and learn about all the options for hitting the roads and trails in Edwardsville. The Bike & Hike events also will help kick off “Slow Down Town,” a safety-focused initiative for everyone who spends time downtown – whether you walk there, roll there or travel by vehicle.

The Bike & Hike will be back at the Land of Goshen Community Market on three Saturdays: May 18, June 8 and August 17. Similar to last year's Bike & Hike to Breakfast event, the focus is on showing how easy it can be to blaze a trail to the Goshen market by a means other than a vehicle. What's different is the format – no pancakes this time – but there will still be plenty of fun giveaways as part of a smaller, sustained effort to get everyone safely walking or rolling throughout the community. At the Bike & Hike table on each scheduled date, the committee will give away bananas as well as oranges that are courtesy of the Edwardsville Rotary Club, and fun, free items and trail maps courtesy of Madison County Transit; group walks and rides to the market also are planned. In June and August, children's bike helmets will be given away and fitted while supplies last, plus there will be bike safety and maintenance tips. Find details at: www.cityofedwardsville.com/bikehike

“We're committed to moving the needle on safety within our community by focusing on policy and educational events,” said Jo Gibson, the chairman of the City's volunteer-led Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

“We hope to raise awareness that everyone has a right to traverse Edwardsville safely, that we all have a responsibility to make that happen (drivers, cyclists and pedestrians), and that getting to the market from various locations is possible and fun without a car.”

The Bike & Hike's return coincides with the debut of a new committee initiative – “Slow Down Town” – that aims to remind everyone of the life-saving importance of driving, walking and rolling carefully, within the speed limit and without distractions. It will be featured on social media, downtown street banners and at various events. The campaign is focused on downtown Edwardsville, with its vibrant and busy assortment of shops, restaurants, attractions and events, but the message is an important one throughout the community.

“We are in full support of anything that can get drivers to slow down and pay more attention for the safety of all our walkers and bikers,” said Edwardsville Police Lt. Brandn Whittaker, noting that a statewide safety awareness campaign is underway in April as part of Distracted Driving Month. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, pedestrians and cyclists make up nearly 20% of all state roadway deaths.

Details on “Slow Down Town” and upcoming events will be listed here: www.cityofedwardsville.com/slowdown

May is National Bike Month, making it a great time to emphasize a bike-and-hike-friendly message ahead of the active summer season. National Bike Month is promoted by the League of American Bicyclists, which in 2022 awarded Edwardsville bronze level status for its bike-friendly efforts and initiatives.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee was created in 2021 to address issues related to biking,

walking, safety and accessibility in Edwardsville. Learn about it here: www.cityofedwardsville.com/bpac