

Obstacle #2: Sidewalks in Poor Condition

Area Example:

Main Street, from the Ship Street to Broad Street in St. Joseph

Evidence of Need:

- Identification in public surveys
- Lack of curb cuts, making navigation extremely difficult for many users
- Sidewalks following the angle sharply slanted driveway ramps
- The presence of obstacles within sidewalk, restricting mobility and significantly reducing the effect width of the sidewalk in many places
- Instances of cracked and uneven surfaces
- No buffer between sidewalk and traffic

Potential Design Fixes:

As noted in for design fixes for the above design obstacle, sidewalk improvements should be sufficiently wide, set back from the roadway, well lit, free from obstacles, and possess curb cuts and a smooth, flat grad. Sidewalks should be easily navigable by all users, regardless of ability. Again, for reference to more detailed design guidance, see Section 3 of this document.

Other Area Examples:

Many sidewalks throughout Benton Harbor, Niles Avenue in St. Joseph



Absent curb cuts and lack of street buffers on east side of Main St., between Port St. and Ship St.



Obstacles in sidewalk and rough grading on east side of Main St., between Ship and Pleasant

Obstacle #3: Absence of Marked Bike Paths

Area Example:

Pipestone Road, between M-139 Highway and Napier Avenue in Benton Township

Evidence of Need:

- No existing shoulders or bicycle lanes
- Frequent observation of bicyclists riding in roadway
- Swiftly moving traffic, often in excess of the 35 mile-per-hour posted speed limit
- Numerous potential bicycle trip generators, including an adjacent school, a major shopping and employment center to the south, and a dense residential area with low rates of car access surrounding and to the north
- Other potential signs of the need for bike paths
 - Public input
 - A history of bike crashes
 - The existence of unused right-of-way



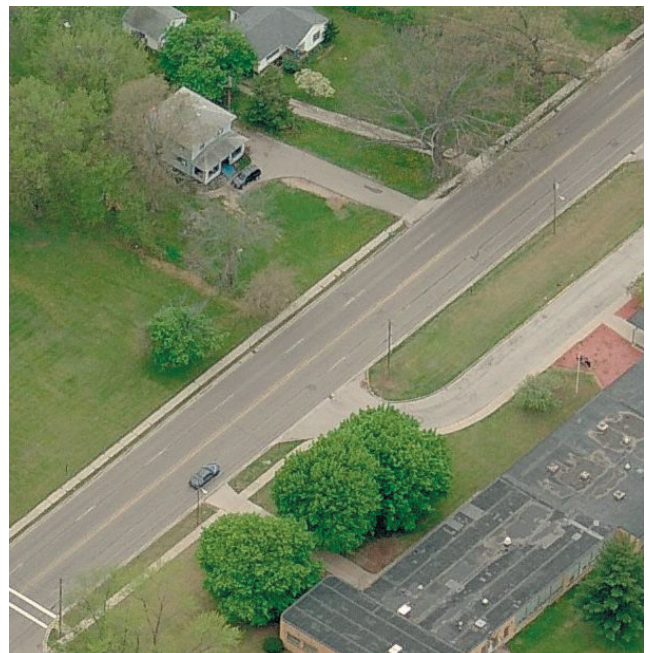
Street view of Pipestone Rd., between M-139 and Napier Ave., showing four travel lanes with no space for a shoulder or full bike lanes (photo from Google Maps)

Potential Design Fixes:

In the case of this section of Pipestone Rd., one potential design fix would be to undertake a “road diet,” converting the existing four travel lanes to two travel lanes, a center turn lane, and two bike lanes. Such road diets require sufficiently low traffic rates (Average Annual Daily Traffic counts for dieted roads are typically below 10,000-15,000) and may be seen as unpopular, but they offer a number of benefits, including a much more amenable biking environment, a reduction in excessive traffic speeds, and reductions in certain crash types. For both road diets and the standard addition of bike lanes to existing traffic lanes, bike lanes should have a minimum width of 4 feet, with 5 or more feet often preferable.

Other Area Examples:

Portions of Empire Ave., M-139, Paw Paw Ave., Klock Dr., Napier Ave. Britain Ave., Crystal Ave., Fairplain Dr., Mall Dr., and other roads in Benton Harbor and Benton Township; Hilltop Rd. in St. Joseph; portions of Cleveland Ave., Washington Ave., Lincoln Ave., Hollywood Rd., Marquette Woods Rd., and St. Joseph Ave. in Lincoln Township, Royalton Township, and Stevensville; Gast Rd. and Shawnee Rd. in Bridgman and Lake Township; sections of Red Arrow Hwy.



Aerial view of Pipestone Rd., between M-139 and Napier Ave. (photo from Bing Maps)