



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan for the Napier Avenue Corridor



NAPIER AVENUE
PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE PLAN

A plan is currently underway to make Napier Avenue in Benton Harbor, Benton Charter Township and St. Joseph Township into a more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly street. The corridor currently lacks adequate sidewalks, crosswalks, or any type of bicycle infrastructure to allow for safe travel for non-motorized users along the roadway.

The Napier Avenue corridor is an important east-west transportation route, providing connectivity from the I-94 expressway into the core cities, access to major shopping and medical destinations, and serving a number of

neighborhoods. While it may function well for vehicular travel, it is not a "complete street" that comfortably and safely accommodates all users.

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is working with Benton Charter Township, St. Joseph Township, Berrien County Road Department, and others, along with consultants AECOM and Williams & Works to help produce the Napier Avenue Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan.

The Napier Avenue Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan was initiated in late 2017 and is a community-driven effort to study how pedestrian and bicycle facilities can be implemented along Napier Avenue. This study will consider the stretch of Napier Avenue from the St. Joseph River on the west end to the I-94 interchange on the east end. The physical roadway, public rights-of-way, and adjacent properties will be also considered in the plan.

The goal of the plan is to address the gaps in the pedestrian and bike network, promote safety for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists), and create a Napier Avenue that better fulfills its role as a regional connector for all users.

Speaking to the purpose and goals of the project, Denise Cook, St. Joseph Charter Township Manager and Napier Steering Committee member, stated; *"Napier Avenue is a major connector between St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, as well as being an important route for people to get to school, work, shopping, and health services. Napier is very heavily traveled by cars at relatively high speeds, and with very few segments of sidewalks, safe crossings, or bike lanes, it is an unsafe situation for those traveling along Napier who do not drive. If we are able to create continuous and safe walkways and bikeways it will benefit everyone from both a safety and an economic development perspective. Public transit options become more feasible too, if you have a safe place to walk once the bus drops you off."*



Napier Ave. Walking Audit

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