Chapter 2. Existing Conditions

This chapter describes the current walkway and bikeway network in Normal. The first section is an inventory and assessment of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, intersections, shared use paths, accessways, and bike parking. The second section discusses important destinations for bicyclists and pedestrians, in particular connections to transit and schools. An analysis of system strengths and weaknesses follows, which highlights key areas where improvements may be needed.

Walkways

Pedestrian travel is accommodated and enhanced primarily by sidewalks, intersection treatments such as crosswalks and curb ramps, shared use paths, and accessways. These facility types comprise the majority of Normal’s existing walkway network, described below.

Map 1 shows the existing walkway network in Normal and previously-proposed shared use path projects.

Sidewalks

**Uptown Normal**

A fairly complete sidewalk system (with sidewalks on both sides of streets) exists in Uptown Normal and in nearby older residential neighborhoods. Uptown Normal’s sidewalk environment includes a variety of complementary pedestrian facilities such as ADA-compliant curb ramps, pedestrian-scale lighting, and amenities like benches and trash receptacles. Sidewalk widths vary by location, with the narrowest sidewalks measuring four feet wide (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Portions of Main Street north of College Avenue have four-foot wide sidewalks](image)
Sidewalk widths in and near Uptown vary by location. Just south of Illinois State University, sidewalks on the west side of Main Street are four feet wide, while sidewalks on the east side of the street widen to six feet. North of the University and south of Gregory Street, these widths switch, such that sidewalks on the west side are six feet wide and sidewalks on the east are four feet wide. In the ISU area, sidewalks are as wide as 14 to 18 feet, on W College Avenue and University Street. South of Uptown Normal, sidewalks on Linden Street are four feet wide (Figure 3).

**Western Normal**

Most major streets in western Normal include sidewalks on both sides, while minor streets generally have sidewalks on one side only (with some segments lacking sidewalks altogether). Sidewalk and planter strip widths also vary depending on location. For instance, Adelaide Street includes four-foot wide sidewalks with four- to six-foot wide planter strips, while planter strips on Dale Street west of Main Street measure as much as 14 feet wide, see Figure 4. Parkside Road near Normal Community West High School also provides four-foot wide sidewalks with five-foot wide planter strips.

**Eastern Normal**

The inner portions of eastern Normal benefit from a relatively complete sidewalk system, with sidewalks present on both sides of most major and minor streets. With the exception of several recently-constructed residential subdivisions Normal’s far northeastern areas, the sidewalk system in outlying areas is somewhat fragmented. Notable major streets lacking sidewalks include Veterans Parkway and segments of Towanda Avenue and Raab Road. Similar to Uptown and western Normal, the presence and width of planter strips also varies. Willow Street east of Main Street for instance, includes a ten-foot wide planter strip (see Figure 5).
The quality of intersections from a pedestrian perspective varies widely by location. The following sections describe general intersection conditions in Normal.

**Crosswalks**

Marked crosswalks exist at most intersections of major streets in Normal. The Town uses transverse markings, longitudinal markings, and combinations of both marking types. Transverse markings consist of two painted lines running parallel to a pedestrian’s route of travel while crossing the street. The majority of transverse crosswalks in Normal are six feet wide. Longitudinal markings, also known as zebra markings, consist of lines perpendicular to a pedestrian’s travel path and are typically used near schools or at mid-block locations.

**Crosswalks Near Schools**

Mentioned above, marked crosswalks near Normal schools typically include longitudinal markings providing higher-visibility cues to approaching motorists (see Figure 4). Crosswalk widths range from six to 12 feet wide.

**Constitution Trail Crossings**

Marked crosswalks, often consisting of longitudinal markings, also exist where the Constitution Trail crosses major streets. Where the Constitution Trail crosses Vernon Avenue, for instance, a longitudinal crosswalk is provided with high visibility coloration (Figure 5). This crosswalk also includes pavement markings warning pedestrians to “look” before crossing Vernon Avenue. A similar crosswalk is also provided for trail users at Willow Street.

**Curb Ramps**

Curb ramps represent a fundamental element of an accessible public realm. A sidewalk without a curb ramp can be useless to someone in a wheelchair, forcing them back to a driveway and out into the street for access.
Curb ramps with detectable warning strips exist at many intersection corners (Figure 6). However, some intersections provide ramps on a few corners only or lack ramps entirely. It should be noted that the Town of Normal often integrates curb ramp upgrades and retrofits into larger sidewalk reconstruction projects and street resurfacing projects.

**Signals and Other Pedestrian Crossing Elements**

Most signalized intersections in Normal include pedestrian-activated signals or have pre-timed signal phasing allowing pedestrian crossing movements concurrent with parallel vehicle movements. Additional signal technologies, such as pedestrian countdown signals, exist in areas with more intense pedestrian activity such as the intersection of College Avenue and University Street near ISU.

Pedestrians also benefit from grade-separated crossings, such as an undercrossing passing beneath the Main Street at College Avenue intersection. This feature provides a seamless pedestrian connection between ISU and Uptown Normal.

**Shared Use Paths**

The Constitution Trail runs through the heart of Normal and provides the backbone for a potential network of off-street shared use paths (see Figure 7). A joint venture of the Town of Normal and City of Bloomington, the original trail was developed in 1989. In 2000, the White House Millennium Council designated the Constitution Trail a “Millennium Trail” as it serves to celebrate the history and character of the Bloomington-Normal area.

The trail is now 24 miles long, with 13 miles in Normal. It runs east-west from south of the Normal Parks and Recreation Annex to Towanda Barnes Road in Bloomington, and north-south along the abandoned 1850 Union Pacific (formerly Illinois Central Gulf) railroad from Kerrick Road, through Uptown Normal, to just south of Oakland Avenue in Bloomington. Several additions have been made, including a trail segment from Normal Town Hall to Heartland Community College through the Illinois State University (ISU) campus and Fairview Park, approximately 3.3 miles in length.

A 10-foot wide hard-surface facility, the Constitution Trail is designed to accommodate walking, jogging, biking and cross-country skiing. Serving both commuters and recreationists, the trail offers a safe, enjoyable way to travel through Normal, contributing to the town's goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.
users, the trail provides amenities such as trash receptacles, picnic tables, shelters, restrooms, and benches. The trail is officially closed one hour after sunset and snow is not cleared in the winter.

The Uptown Normal segment of the Constitution Trail is currently under re-construction. It will be located within the median of Constitution Boulevard between Beaufort and Mulberry streets (Figure 8). The 3.5 mile section of trail from Kerrick Road to Uptown Normal is two feet wider than other portions of the trail.

**Accessways**

Accessways are short sidewalk or shared use path segments providing direct pedestrian and bicycle connections to destinations that would otherwise require out-of-direction travel on the surrounding street system. Accessways commonly connect cul-de-sac streets with paths, schools or nearby streets to minimize pedestrian and bicycle travel distance in areas with limited street system connectivity.

Numerous accessways provide connections between local streets and the Constitution Trail (see Figure 9). Accessways also provide pedestrian routes to school, such as:

- The bridge linking Oakdale Avenue and Ruston Avenue with Oakdale Elementary
- A route to Chiddix Junior High School from the west end of Karin Drive (Figure 10).

Accessways also connect cul-de-sacs, such as:

- The accessway between Basswood Lane and Beechwood Court
- Several streets in Eagles Landing
- Collie Ridge at Shelbourne Drive
CHAPTER 2

Bikeways

Several types of “bikeways” exist, as defined by federal and state bicycle planning and design guides and manuals. Bikeways generally are distinguished as preferential roadways accommodating bicycle travel, with accommodation taking the form of bicycle route designation, bike lane striping, or shared use paths to physically separate cyclists from motorists. Map 2 shows the existing bikeway network in Normal.

The Constitution Trail is Normal’s primary designated bikeway. Aside from the trail, Normal currently lacks a formalized on-street bikeway system. Rather, bicyclists share streets with motorists. Most lower-order streets in Normal can be classified as “shared roadways.” Typically the most common type of bikeway, shared roadways accommodate vehicles and bicycles in the same travel lane. The most suitable roadways for shared vehicle/bicycle use are those with lower posted speeds (25 MPH or less) or lower traffic volumes (3,000 Average Daily Traffic volumes or less).

The League of Illinois Bicyclists (LIB) has prepared a map showing “more comfortable on-road routes.” These streets include:

- Beech Street
- Henry Street
- Locust Street/Old Fort Jesse Road
- Blair Drive
- Jersey Avenue
- Adelaide Street

Although bicyclists and motorists can satisfactorily share travel lanes on most streets, higher vehicle volumes and speeds on other corridors indicate a potential need for enhanced bicyclist accommodations (for example, separation from motorists or traffic calming). Some of Normal’s major roads provide shoulders to accommodate bicycle travel, such as eight-foot wide shoulders on Main Street near Interstate 55 (Figure 11).

Many regions use striped bike lanes to designate bicyclists’ space in the roadway. They have been shown to increase ridership and appeal to commuters, who desire a direct route to major destinations. The 2007 Main Street: A Call for Investment Plan recommends bike lanes for much of the length of Main Street.

Figure 11. Eight-foot wide shoulders exist on Main Street near Interstate 55, which could accommodate bicycle travel.
**Bike Parking**

Bike parking is a critical component of a community’s bikeway network and can strongly influence one’s decision whether to complete a trip via bicycle. Some bike racks are provided in Uptown Normal along Beaufort Street (see Figure 12), in a few other sidewalk locations, and at local schools. Bike parking is otherwise lacking in most other parts of the community.

The quality of existing bike parking facilities varies by location, particularly due to the style of rack chosen and/or placement of the rack. Some existing racks near commercial areas are considered substandard because they do not provide sufficient points of contact to support a bicycle at two points. In other words, they do not allow a bicycle frame and at least one wheel to be locked to the rack without the use of a long bicycle cable or mounting the bicycle over the rack.

Informal bike parking (bikes being locked to hand rails, street signs, light poles and other objects) indicates where there is a demand for additional bike parking supply. Some bikes have been informally parked on Beaufort Street in Uptown Normal (Figure 13), suggesting that insufficient formal bike parking is being provided or that it is not conveniently located in close proximity to a storefront or building entrance.

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**Normal’s Municipal Code requires that new developments provide:**

- One bike parking space per 50 vehicle parking spaces (min. 1; max. 20)
- In Traditional Neighborhood Districts, “all nonresidential buildings shall include an area for parking bicycles … [that] must include at least one bike rack with locking area.”

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Figure 12. Bike rack on Beaufort Street in Uptown Normal
Figure 13. Bicycle locked to a lamp post on Beaufort Street in Uptown Normal
Pedestrian and Bicyclist Destinations

It is particularly important for the walkway and bikeway networks to provide access to destinations popular among pedestrians and bicyclists. Within Normal, popular destinations include:

- Educational facilities including ISU, Heartland College, elementary, junior high and high schools
- Employment centers including: BroMenn Medical Center, Unit 5 schools and the Mitsubishi Motors North America manufacturing facility
- Commercial areas including those along Veterans Parkway, near Raab Road at Main Street, College Hills Mall and neighborhood commercial areas
- Normal Public Library
- Uptown Normal
- Rural roadways on the community’s outskirts for recreational cyclists
- Nearby communities (e.g., Bloomington)
- Major employers (e.g., State Farm, Country Insurance, Eastland Mall)
- Natural areas outside Normal including Tipton Park, Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake

Transit Connections

Ensuring a strong pedestrian and bicycle link to transit is an important part of making non-motorized transportation a part of daily life in Normal. There are several main components of bicycle and pedestrian-transit integration:

- Allowing bicycles on transit
- Providing benches, shelters, posted schedules, bicycle parking and other features at transit stops
- Improving connections between walkways, bikeways and transit

The quantity and quality of pedestrian infrastructure along bus routes varies by location. Streets along some routes have sidewalks on both sides, such as Parkside Road and Main Street. Streets along other routes have sidewalks on one side only, including segments of Adelaide Street and Raab Road. Most stops only include a bus route sign and lack other passenger infrastructure such as shelters, posted maps and schedules.
Most Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (BNPTS) buses include bike racks (Figure 14). Fare is $1.00 for an adult, and there is no additional charge for bicycles. Buses are authorized to pick up passengers at non-designated stops. Between 9:30 PM and 1:00 AM Monday through Saturday, buses run an after-hours program, providing a curb-to-curb shared ride service to all locations within the Bloomington-Normal city limits. After-hours buses do not have bicycle racks.

The Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System (BNPTS) operates eleven fixed bus routes providing connections to intermodal transfer centers and other communities. In Normal, routes include:

- School Street to just north of Raab Road
- Main Street to ISU and turning west on Raab Road to Heartland College
- College Avenue to Parkside Road, turning around north of Parkside Elementary and Junior High Schools
- Adelaide Street to Hovey Avenue, White Oak Road and points south
- Vernon Avenue eastward into Bloomington
- Linden Street/Beech Street to Raab Road and Lindbergh Boulevard
- Willow Street to Fort Jesse Road, Shepard Road and south on Hershey Road

BNPTS also operates the Redbird Campus Express bus system for ISU students. The service is free and runs from 7:30 AM to 7:00 PM Monday through Friday. It serves the immediate campus area and is available during the school year. Buses are not equipped with bicycle racks.

The Bloomington-Normal Amtrak station is located in Uptown Normal and connects to the BNPTS system. The station is situated on Amtrak’s Texas Eagle line, providing direct service between Chicago and Los Angeles, and more-frequent service between Chicago and St. Louis. The station also serves airport shuttles and interstate and regional buses.

The Town plans to build a multi-modal center west of the Children’s Discovery Museum and north of the Union Pacific Railroad. The center will serve Amtrak High Speed Rail, interstate and regional buses, airport shuttles, BNPTS buses, taxis and bicycles. The facility will also serve as a park-and-ride, with 280 vehicle parking places. Specific bicycle accommodations are undetermined, however bike racks, lockers, and shower facilities have been proposed.

**Connections to Schools**

Students, whether in elementary school, high school, or at the university level, traditionally are more likely to walk or bike than other populations. It is therefore critical for the walkway and bikeway networks to provide safe and convenient access to schools. The following sections briefly describe the existing walking and bicycling environment near Normal schools.
**Northern Normal**

Praireland Elementary School, Fairview Elementary School, and Calvary Baptist Academy are located in northern Normal. Sidewalks on E Raab Road lead to Praireland Elementary School, and a signalized transverse crosswalk aids pedestrians along the route. In addition, a ten-foot wide path runs along the north side of Raab Road leading to the school, and an accessway runs from Pfitzer Road through the parking lot. Fairview Elementary School is located within a residential neighborhood with low-volume streets. Main Street has sidewalks on both sides, and the signalized intersection of Main Street at Orlando Avenue facilitates east-west crossings for students at nearby schools. School Street, which provides direct access to Calvary Baptist Academy, includes sidewalks on both sides.

**Eastern Normal**

In eastern Normal, students attending Normal Community High School most likely travel on Raab Road, which lacks sidewalks and pedestrian crossing treatments. Near Grove Elementary School, Airport Road has a sidewalk on one side and a pedestrian accessway connecting to the residential area on Meadow Lark Road. Sugar Creek Elementary School is in a predominantly residential and commercial area, with both sides of nearby Towanda Avenue providing sidewalks. In addition, an accessway through Sugar Creek Elementary School’s parking lot leads to a signalized crossing on Towanda Avenue.

**Western Normal**

In western Normal, Parkside Elementary and Junior High Schools are located on major streets with sidewalks. Streets in nearby residential neighborhoods have sidewalks on one or both sides, while most intersections provide marked crosswalks.

**Uptown Normal**

Epiphany Catholic School is located along E College Avenue, which has sidewalks; however there are no direct connections to the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the school to the northwest (which is separated by a creek). A crosswalk is provided at the signalized intersection of College Avenue at Grandview Drive. Within the center of town, schools are generally located in residential neighborhoods with crosswalks and signals to aid pedestrian crossings at major streets. Accessways also link neighborhoods with walkable, low-volume streets and schools.

**Illinois State University Campus**

The ISU campus benefits from a generally-complete bikeway and walkway network, with sidewalks and paths providing direct connections between campus buildings (Figure 15). Crosswalks are located at most major street crossings, and a pedestrian/bicycle under-crossing passes beneath the Main Street at College Avenue intersection, connecting the campus’s east...
and west sides. Sidewalks along College Avenue are fairly wide through the University area.

Additionally, bike parking is located adjacent to most building entrances (Figure 16).

**System Strengths and Weaknesses**

This section provides an analysis of the existing conditions for walkways and bikeways in Normal, and outlines improvement opportunities. The section also identifies some potential barriers to accommodating and encouraging bicycle and pedestrian trips, which this Plan seeks to overcome.

**System Strengths**

Various characteristics foster an environment where bicycling and walking is safe and enjoyable in Normal. These system strengths are described below.

**Topography**

The topography of Normal is relatively flat, with few challenging hills to deter bicycling or walking. In addition, the flat terrain allows for long sight distances and allows motorists time to react to obstructions on the road.

**Uptown Normal Land Use Characteristics**

Land use characteristics, particularly along North and Beaufort streets in Uptown Normal, foster a pedestrian-friendly environment. For instance, buildings fronting the sidewalk edge create a sense of tight urban form and an inviting pedestrian atmosphere. The presence of angled on-street parking on Beaufort Street also buffers foot traffic from adjacent motor vehicle traffic, although that is soon to be replaced with parallel parking. Walking and bicycling as a means for running errands are also encouraged through the grouping of diverse land uses in the Uptown area.

**Presence of Walk- and Bike-Friendly Streets**

Most residential areas benefit from a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly environment. As most homes in Normal are located on low-volume streets with relatively complete sidewalks, bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and skills can get around most neighborhoods comfortably and safely.
Towanda Avenue north of Interstate 55 serves as an “urban escape route” for bicyclists. This relatively low-volume street provides a connection between Normal and surrounding rural areas. School Street and Broadway are also low-volume streets popular with bicyclists (Figure 17).

Accessways also provide convenient walking and bicycling connections in areas with limited street system connectivity. Accessways exist throughout Normal, connecting pedestrians and bicyclists with trails, parks, schools, neighborhoods and other destinations.

**Recent Walkway/Bikeway Improvements**

The recently-constructed Constitution Trail segment along Raab Road has improved non-motorized connections to Heartland College (Figure 18). Additionally, the existing sidewalk environment on Towanda Avenue north of Vernon Avenue is excellent, with signalized crossings and curb ramps at the crossing with Van Maur Drive.

Sidewalks have generally been built in conjunction with newer residential neighborhoods, particularly subdivisions in Northeast Normal. Also, the ongoing Uptown revitalization project has and will continue to dramatically improve the walkability of the Town’s center.

**Use of Warning Signage at Trail/Roadway Crossings**

Most streets approaching the Constitution Trail include warning signage alerting motorists to the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians (Figure 19).

**Presence of Grade-Separated Trail Crossings**

In several locations, the Constitution Trail travels over or under major streets, providing safe and comfortable crossing conditions for trail users (see Figure 20).
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Presence of Pedestrian Crossing Treatments

Mid-Block Crossings

Mid-block crossings exist in several locations (e.g., along Main Street). Several schools have nearby mid-block crossings such as Towanda Avenue at Sugar Creek Elementary School, Adelaide Street at Oakdale Elementary School, and Kingsley Street at Kingsley Junior High School.

Pedestrian Countdown Signals

A pedestrian countdown signal shows the amount of time a pedestrian has to cross a street before the light changes. This aids pedestrians in deciding whether to start a crossing movement, and is an important accommodation at intersections where pedestrians cannot see traffic signals oriented toward motorists. The intersection of College Avenue and University Street provides a pedestrian countdown signal (Figure 21). Additional pedestrian countdown signals are currently being installed throughout the Town.

Presence of Available Right-of-Way for Future Bikeways and Walkways

Normal has a significant opportunity to develop additional bikeways and walkways in the future, including along the community’s waterway corridors. For instance, Sugar Creek in western Normal is a potential shared use path opportunity. However, an agreement with the Bloomington and Normal Reclamation District (BNWRD) would be necessary as much of the creek land is within BNWRD right-of-way.

Utility corridors (for example the north side of College Avenue west of Interstate 55/74) are an additional potential area for walkway and bikeway facility development. The future extension of Cottage Avenue between Gregory Street and Raab Road also presents an excellent opportunity to develop a walking and bicycling environment along this new roadway.

Opportunities to Better Utilize Existing Roadway Space

Several roadways in Normal appear to have more vehicle capacity than is currently needed. This excess roadway space could be better utilized to enhance multi-modal access and mobility. Bicycle facilities on these streets could be developed through relatively simple treatments, such as roadway re-striping. These treatments are very cost-effective, as they require only pavement re-striping.

System Weaknesses

Described below, pedestrians and bicyclists in and around Normal face a variety of challenges.
Barriers

Residents of Normal cite major roads as barriers to bicycling and walking. This is particularly due to higher vehicle speeds and volumes, which create uncomfortable and potentially unsafe crossing conditions.

Veterans Parkway serves as a major barrier due to the lack of bicycle or pedestrian facilities along and across the highway. Interstate 55/74 is also a barrier to bicycle and pedestrian movement, as there are few available crossings on Normal’s north and west sides.

The Union Pacific Railroad represents another significant barrier to non-motorized transportation in Normal, as at-grade railroad crossing opportunities are limited to major roads that currently have minimal pedestrian or bicycle facilities (see Figure 22).

Limited Street System Connectivity

Although streets are well-connected in Uptown Normal, there is minimal east-west connectivity in other areas of the town, particularly for bicyclists. In both directions, roads providing the most connectivity and covering longer distances tend to be high-volume streets lacking bicycle facilities. Some of these major streets include Vernon Avenue, College Avenue, Hovey Avenue, Fort Jesse Road, Raab Road, and Shepard Road. Schools tend to be located along these major streets, and where no accessways are provided, students must travel out-of-direction and along major streets to access the school.

Certain parts of town are also less-connected to the central area. Northeastern Normal is separated from Uptown by Veterans Parkway, Old Route 66 and the Union Pacific Railroad. Similarly, western Normal is separated by White Oak Road, the Norfolk Southern Railroad, and Interstate 55/74.

Lack of Wayfinding Tools

Normal's walkway and bikeway system could benefit from signage and other wayfinding tools to orient users and direct them to and through major destinations like Uptown, ISU, surrounding schools, parks, and commercial areas.

As it travels through ISU campus, the Constitution Trail lacks clear wayfinding signage to help trail users navigate through the area.
**Discontinuous Shared Use Path System**

Although the Town of Normal has made significant progress toward completing a comprehensive shared use path system, several major gaps remain. One notably discontinuous area includes the Constitution Trail at Vernon Avenue (Figure 23). Through these areas, non-motorized users must negotiate major roadways with high vehicle speeds and volumes. In some places, crossings are not provided, and in others marked crosswalks require path users to wait for long periods until cross-traffic has stopped to allow them to pass.

**User Conflicts on Trails**

Conflicts often arise between faster-moving cyclists and slower-moving pedestrians along the Constitution Trail, particularly where it passes through ISU and areas where it will receive more use. Normal should consider implementing programs to address “trail etiquette” by educating trail users about where they should be located and how to safely pass other trail users.

**Maintenance Issues**

Described below, several maintenance issues complicate pedestrian and bicycle travel on the existing walkway and bikeway networks in Normal. These issues include faded crosswalks, snow and ice removal, and damaged or deteriorated sidewalks and trails.

**Crosswalk Issues**

At many intersections, crosswalks are difficult to see for approaching motorists. Crosswalk bars on many of the town’s longitudinal (also known as “ladder style”) crosswalks are fairly narrow. Furthermore, crosswalk bars have faded or have been worn out by vehicle tires in several locations.

**Snow and Ice Accumulation**

Snow and ice represent major challenges to walking and bicycling. When snowplows remove snow and ice from
roadways, it is usually deposited on roadway edges and on sidewalks. This creates a very difficult walking environment, forcing many pedestrians to walk in the road.

Trails are not plowed in the winter, often forcing walkers and cyclists to use roadways (many of which lack pedestrian or bicycle facilities). Snow and ice occasionally render the Constitution Trail impassable for cyclists while also creating hazardous walking conditions for pedestrians (Figure 24).

**Damaged/Deteriorated Sidewalks**

Existing sidewalks in some parts of the community suffer from cracking, heaving, and/or vegetation growing between pavement seams (e.g., the north side of Willow Street east of Main Street, see Figure 25). Uneven pavement joints (often caused by tree roots below the sidewalk) create tripping hazards and complicate travel for wheelchair users. Water ponding on sidewalk surfaces can further challenge walking, especially when ponding water freezes in cold weather.

**Damaged/Deteriorated Trails**

Pavement cracking and heaving is occurring in some locations on the Constitution Trail, breaking the smoothness of the pavement.

**Driver Behavior**

In Normal, motorists often disregard marked crosswalks and other warning devices. The fact that motorists often ignore marked crosswalks and warning signs is particularly evident where the Constitution Trail crosses major and minor streets, and requires that trail users wait until the road is clear before proceeding across the street.

Motorists’ lack of compliance with posted speeds is another safety concern, particularly to bicyclists riding on the shoulder of major roads.

**Demonstrated Demand for More Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

The presence of informal paths (also known as “demand paths”) in some areas indicates a demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities where they currently do not exist, or where formalized facilities require users to follow circuitous routes to overcome relatively short
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Distances. This is particularly evident near schools and across open spaces, where pedestrians take short-cuts to access shopping centers or bus stops (Figure 26).

Demand paths can also be found where the Constitution Trail passes within close proximity of nearby streets or commercial areas, but where accessways or other connections do not exist. An example of this is west of Veterans Parkway, where trail users take short cuts to nearby commercial areas.

**Uncomfortable Walking and Bicycling Environment along High-Volume Roadways**

Large vehicles (e.g., trucks, buses, and recreational vehicles) and high vehicle speeds and volumes create challenging, uncomfortable, and potentially unsafe walking and bicycling conditions on major streets. These conditions present additional challenges on major roads with minimal or no bicycle or pedestrian facilities. Example corridors include Raab Road, Vernon Avenue, and White Oak Road. Airport Road is heavily congested near Normal Community High School and does not provide sidewalks on its entire length. Fort Jesse Road similarly has sidewalks on only one side, with few crossing opportunities.

Streets without paved roadway shoulders present challenging bicycling conditions, as cyclists must ride in the roadway with motorists. White Oak Road (Figure 27) and Old Route 66 in northeast Normal (under McLean County and IDOT jurisdiction) are examples of roadways lacking shoulders of sufficient width for bicycling.

**Uncomfortable Sidewalk Environment in Some Areas**

Pedestrians experience an uncomfortable environment on streets with narrow sidewalks and on high-volume streets lacking buffers between sidewalks and vehicle traffic. Most sidewalks in Normal are relatively narrow (four feet wide). Many communities have a standard width of six feet and allow five feet where it is deemed appropriate in physically-constrained locations. Wider sidewalks enable two people (including wheelchair users) to walk side-by-side or pass each other comfortably, creating a more attractive and user-friendly walking environment.

**Fragmented Sidewalk Network in Some Areas**

Discussed earlier, some areas of Normal benefit from a fairly complete sidewalk network while in other areas the system is fragmented. Generally, a relatively complete sidewalk system exists in Uptown Normal, while many streets in outer areas do not have sidewalks.
CHAPTER 2

Sidewalk Obstructions

Although sidewalks exist on numerous streets, their use is occasionally hindered by obstructions such as vegetation, utility poles, fire hydrants and other items. An example of this is on Adelaide Street south of Bryan Street (Figure 28). Additionally, overgrown vegetation obstructs sidewalks and paths in some areas, forcing pedestrians to walk in the planter strip or the road.

Difficult Crossings

Pedestrians face a variety of difficult street crossing conditions, including high-volume streets and interchange areas.

High-Volume Streets

Crossing Veterans Parkway and other major roadways is challenging for pedestrians and bicyclists due to relatively long distances between signalized intersections and marked crossings. This creates challenges for pedestrians traveling east-west across the roadway corridor. High vehicle speeds and lengthy distances between signalized intersections discourage pedestrians from walking to services along this corridor. In some cases, pedestrians choose to dart across the roadway to reach their desired destinations.

Difficulties for Disabled Pedestrians

Pedestrians with disabilities experience crossing difficulties in some parts of Normal. Curb ramps at some intersections are in poor condition or disrepair, while other intersections lack curb ramps altogether. In some cases, marked crosswalks lead to sidewalks with no curb ramps, or are not aligned with existing curb ramps (e.g., the northwest corner of Main Street at Willow Street, see Figure 29). This can make traveling by wheelchair or motorized mobility device challenging, if not impossible. Visually- and mobility-impaired pedestrians also experience difficulty navigating through intersections with curb ramps oriented diagonally toward the intersection’s center rather than toward a crosswalk.

Interchange Areas

Pedestrians face crossing difficulties at highway interchange areas. Channelized right turns at these intersections induce higher vehicle turning speeds, especially for motorists entering

Figure 28. Utility pole obstructing the sidewalk on Adelaide Street south of Bryan Street

Figure 29. The northern crosswalk on Main Street at Willow Street does not align with the curb ramp, creating difficulties for mobility-impaired pedestrians
freeway on-ramps from the local street network. Broad vehicle turning radii at ramp termini also create excessively long vehicle/pedestrian conflict zones, as in the case of the Interstate 55 ramps at Main Street and at Veterans Parkway.

**Lack of On-Street Bikeways**

Mentioned earlier, Normal lacks a formalized on-street bikeway system. The town has an extensive shared use path system, but there are no formal on-street bikeway connections to the trails. This creates difficulties for people who do not live directly adjacent to a trail.

**Review of Existing Plans and Legislation**

Current legislation and policies in the Town of Normal, McLean County, the State of Illinois, and other relevant agencies and jurisdictions informed the recommendations presented in this Plan. The legislation and policy review also considered whether existing policies adequately provide for the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Project Team reviewed following plans:

- Bloomington-Normal Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan (1997)
- Main Street: A Call for Investment (2007)
- Uptown Redevelopment Plan (2008)
- Town of Normal Community Investment Plan (2008-2013)
- Town of Normal Parks & Open Space Master Plan (2005)
- Town of Normal Comprehensive Plan (2006)
- Long-Range Transportation Plan 2035 for the Bloomington-Normal Urbanized Area (2007)
- McLean County Regional Greenways Plan (1997)
- MCRPC Transportation Improvement Program FY 2009-2010

A detailed description of existing planning and legislation guidance relevant to this Plan is provided in Appendix B. Specific recommendations for ensuring that policies and legislation in Normal are supportive of walking and bicycling can be found in Chapter 7.
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