

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OTTAWA COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPERATIONAL POLICY</b> PERMITTING</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NUMBER: 6</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>EFFECTIVE DATE: 08/19/14</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>REVISION NUMBER:</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUBJECT: NON-MOTORIZED PATH, PAVED SHOULDER &amp; SIDEWALK FACILITIES</b></p>	

This policy provides guidelines for non-motorized transportation facilities when located on a county road or right-of-way in Ottawa County. The specific facilities covered under this policy include:

- A. Non-Motorized Paths (separated from the roadway)
- B. Paved Shoulders (along existing roads)
- C. Sidewalks
- D. Sidewalk Ramps

Providing these facilities is generally considered a responsibility of the local unit of government wherein it will be located. This policy is intended primarily to assist and provide for those local efforts to which they apply.

**A: NON-MOTORIZED PATHS**

Non-Motorized Paths (NMP) are considered to be a facility that is separated from the vehicular traveled portion of the roadway. It is also considered to be different than a sidewalk in that sidewalks have specific statutory status, especially as it pertains to construction and liability matters.

Such NMPs will not be signed or designated as “exclusive” bike paths because they are intended for various non-motorized uses, and all users should be encouraged to use the facility rather than the roadway.

The following gives guidance for designing a facility to be constructed on County road right-of-way.

Width and Clearance

The paved width and operating width are primary considerations. A facility intended for two-way traffic should have a minimum paved width of 8 ft., or a minimum of 5 ft. for one-way traffic, in order to accommodate bicyclists as well as other non-motorized uses such as walking, running, wheelchairs, wagons, and roller blades.

A 2 ft. wide (minimum) clear graded area is recommended along both sides of pavement, and vertical clearance to overhead obstructions should be a minimum of 8.5 ft. All bridges, culverts, etc. needed to accommodate these facilities should provide for these same minimum standards.

A wide separation between the facility and the roadway is desirable for safety reasons. The facility should typically be located 1 ft. off the property line and provide minimum clearances of: 6 ft. from back of curb on roads with curb and gutter; 10 ft. from edge of roadway pavement (where there is no ditch) or 20 ft. from centerline of right-of-way (where there is no ditch) or 1 ft. behind the top of drainage backslope (where ditch exists), whichever is greater. These clearances shall also be used as a guide for allowing deviations from the location of 1 ft. off the property line.

Where these minimum requirements cannot be obtained in the right-of-way, or where it is apparent that a roadway will require widening beyond two lanes, consideration must be given to acquiring additional right-of-way or easement to accommodate the proposed roadway, the facility, and the minimum clearances and widths stated above.

Only under very unique circumstances will it be allowed to use a road shoulder to connect sections of the facility, especially on a two-way path where opposing movements would create a potential hazard to both roadway motorists and NMP users.

### Pavement & Structures

The type and thickness of materials are of primary importance, as well as the proper design of all structures needed to accommodate the facility.

These designs should be determined by engineers after an analysis of soils, wheel loads and other site-specific requirements are considered.

Normally, however, the pavement should be a minimum of 4" concrete or 2 ½" bituminous surface over 6" of processed road gravel. A cross slope of 2% should be provided to allow for proper drainage.

### Signing & Marking

Adequate signing and marking can be important safety considerations. General guidance is provided in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. However, unless it is necessary for safety, extensive signing is not encouraged since it may cause driver confusion or restrict vision.

### Design Speed, Grades and Alignment

Many other factors must be considered in the design of the facility. A design speed for of 20 MPH for bicyclist is normally considered adequate, except for steep grades where a higher design speed should be used.

Grades and pavement elevations should be given special consideration in relation to the roadway facility and adjoining properties so as to cause minimal concern for safety, drainage, driveways, yards, etc. Profiles of the curbs and/or roadway should be utilized as a guide for such determination.

Alignment and curve design to accommodate such changes should be adequate to provide for the design speed selected and the safety to users of the facility.

### Intersections

Where the facility crosses a roadway, special consideration for selecting the proper location and placing adequate controls must be given. Ideally, it is preferred to locate the road crossing further from the intersection rather than closer.

### Operation & Maintenance

The local unit of government is responsible for the control, maintenance and policing of NMPs.

The Road Commission will be responsible only for reviewing plans to insure conformance to the guidelines set forth above relative to geometrics within the right-of-way, and for issuance of a construction permit.

## **B: PAVED SHOULDERS**

The demand for pedestrian and bicycle facilities adjacent to public roadways has increased within Ottawa County communities. In particular, the public has shown an interest in utilizing and/or constructing paved shoulders for a shared use. The Road Commission will continue to recommend the construction of separated sidewalks and non-motorized facilities to safely accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic with respect to motorized traffic.

When the Road Commission allows for the construction of a paved shoulder, it shall be their policy that:

1. The cost for constructing the paved shoulder shall be the responsibility of the requesting party or parties, unless otherwise agreed.
2. If additional paved shoulder width is requested as part of a Road Commission improvement project, then the cost of constructing the additional paved shoulder width shall be the responsibility of the requesting party or parties, unless otherwise agreed.
3. The paved shoulder will not be designated as any special facility, such as a bicycle lane or path, but shall be treated as a normal road shoulder.
4. Both shoulders shall be paved along a section of roadway-as opposed to only paving one

side.

5. All construction shall be done by or under the direct supervision of the Road Commission in accordance with its current standards of construction and design.
6. The Road Commission will assume maintenance of the shoulders subsequent to completion of construction.

**C: SIDEWALKS**

Sidewalks constructed by local units of government on County roads shall conform to the following general guidelines and receive the approval of the Ottawa County Road Commission before construction begins.

1. The sidewalk shall be 5 ft. in width and be generally located 1 ft. off the property line. Only under very unique circumstances will it be allowed to deviate the alignment from 1 ft. off property line location.
2. Current construction standards of the Michigan Department of Transportation shall be used for the design and construction of all sidewalks.
3. Sidewalk elevations shall be approved by the Ottawa County Road Commission for uniformity in relation to the profile or proposed profile of curbs and/or roadway.

**D: SIDEWALK RAMPS**

Sidewalk ramps shall be provided in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) as amended. Sidewalk ramps shall conform to the current MDOT Standard Plan (or Special Detail R-28 for sidewalk ramps), and shall be required for all sidewalks or non-motorized facilities crossing, private roadways and public roadways (except intersections internal to a plat). Commercial driveways will be determined by the Road Commission on a case-by-case basis.

Adopted by the Board of County Road Commissioners: August 19, 2014

This policy supersedes and rescinds the previous Paved Shoulders Policy of January 22, 2009 and Non-Motorized Facilities on County Roads & Transportation Plan Policy of October 1, 2007.