

Bloomington SR-37/I-69 Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge

SR-37 serves as a bicycle-pedestrian barrier separating the west side of Bloomington from the rest of the city. It is so difficult to bicycle from the west side into the central city that most people would not do it. Those that do usually take a long way around using Vernal Pike on the north side or That Rd on the south side.

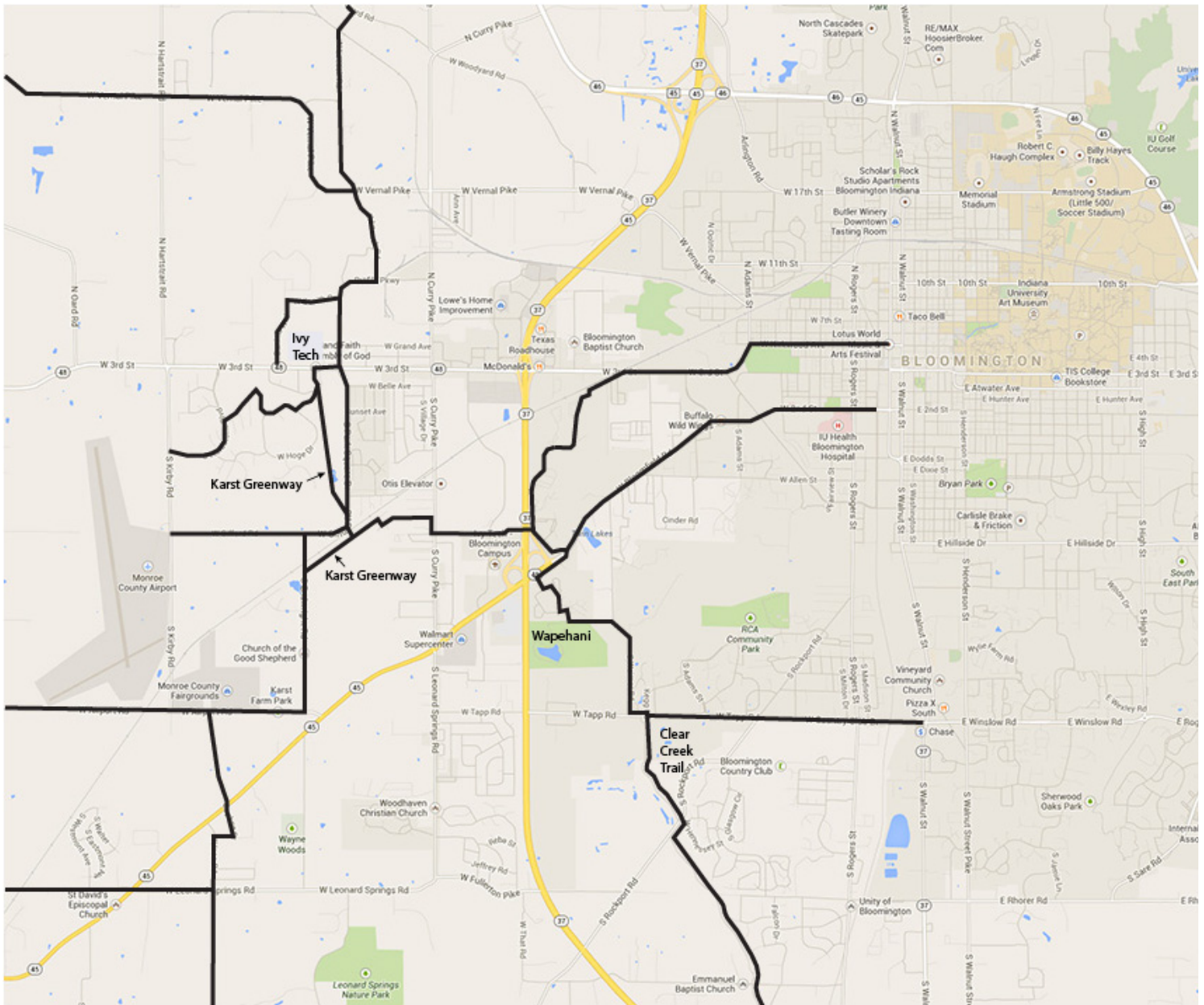
There is actually a second bicycle-pedestrian barrier, Curry Pike, which is a very busy highway running parallel to and west of SR-37. Except for Second St and Third St, with heavy traffic, there are no roads that cross Curry Pike. Between these two barriers is a business district traversed by Liberty Dr. and Gates Dr. When the Karst Trail is completed there will be a good way of connecting to the low volume roads and large residential neighborhoods west of Bloomington. The Karst Trail will connect to Sierra Dr., which will lead to Liberty Dr.

The solution to connecting this region west of Bloomington to central Bloomington is to route bicycles and pedestrians from the west to a properly placed bicycle-pedestrian bridge. The only good route from the west will be to take Sierra Dr. and Constitution Way to Liberty Dr. and beyond to SR-37 where there should be a bicycle-pedestrian bridge. The other side of the bridge would connect to Basswood Dr. From there a cyclist can easily get to central Bloomington. There is a good route from the bridge to Third St now. There also now exists a route from Basswood Dr. to Wapehani Park and beyond to the Clear Creek Trail. Future plans call for a bicycle-pedestrian sidepath along Second St from Basswood Dr. This will give another good route into central Bloomington.

The greatest utilization of a bicycle-pedestrian route that crosses SR-37/I-69 would come from people who live in the many of homes west of Bloomington. Another large group of users would be people who want to get from central Bloomington to the low volume roads west of Bloomington. I designed the bicycle-pedestrian route and bridge with these purposes in mind. For a project to be worth doing it has to be one that these people will use.

Sierra Dr. and Constitution Way will be the only good roads for bicycling from the west to the Liberty-Gates commercial corridor. By connecting these roads to Basswood Dr. with a bicycle-pedestrian trail and bridge, people living in the residential neighborhoods west of Bloomington will be provided with a fairly direct route into central Bloomington with no or low traffic.

This map shows how these many residential neighborhoods will be connected to the route into Bloomington:



The above map also shows how cyclists and pedestrians in central Bloomington would be connected to the many low volume roads west of Bloomington. These roads include Leonard Springs Rd, Airport Rd, Vernal Pike and Woodyard Rd. Very importantly; it would provide reasonable bicycle-pedestrian access to Ivy Tech College. In addition, people living near the bridge could walk to Menards.

Even though Third St has bicycle lanes, it should be pointed out that there is no safe design that will get a bicycle past the curved entrance and exit ramps on the Third St Bridge (or the Second St Bridge). These ramps are nonstop with no seeing around the corner. A car will turn into a cyclist on an exit ramp. An entrance ramp places a cyclist between lanes of traffic.

On the west side of the Third St Bridge; (or the Second St Bridge) you are not where you want to be on a bicycle. You are not in a good position to get to the low volume routes west of the city. To put the bicycle-pedestrian crossing of SR-37/I-69 anywhere other than where suggested here would mean that the cyclist or pedestrian would have to go a considerable distance through traffic to connect the crossing with a west side residential neighborhood.

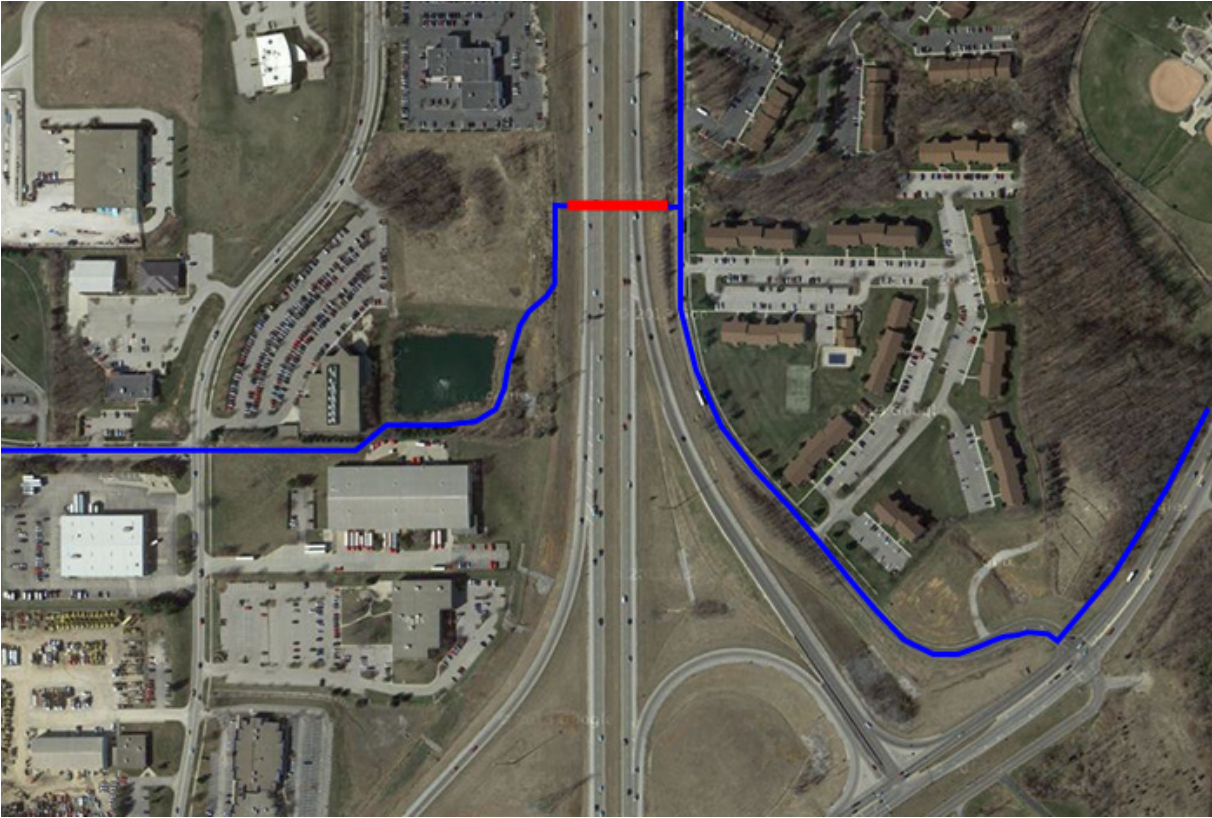
FROM SIERRA DR TO SR-37/I-69

The Figure shows the route from Sierra Dr. to the SR-37/I-69 Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge site using Curry Pike and Constitution Way. Proposed new facilities are shown in blue. Where the route uses existing infrastructure it is show in purple. The plan calls for a bicycle-pedestrian side path along the west side of Curry Pike. There is a sidewalk there now. To cross Curry Pike a traffic signal and a refuge island is placed at Constitution Way. Along Constitution Way bicycles could ride in the quiet street while pedestrians could use the existing sidewalk. A traffic light is placed at the intersection of Constitution Way with Liberty Dr. The route to the bridge goes straight across Liberty Dr. and continues on a path placed along the north edge of Coca-Cola property. Along the way it veers to the left onto Author House property as it continues on to the bridge site. The path goes a little ways north so that the bridge does not have to span the SR-37/I-69 ramps.



THE I-69 BICYCLE-PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

INDOT should put a bicycle-pedestrian bridge across I-69 connecting the proposed bicycle-pedestrian trail west of the highway to Basswood Dr. east of the highway. The bridge is located so that at its east end the INDOT and Basswood Dr. properties are in direct contact.



Once on Basswood Dr. there will be no problem bicycling or walking the rest of the way to downtown Bloomington.