



# PRELIMINARY REPORT

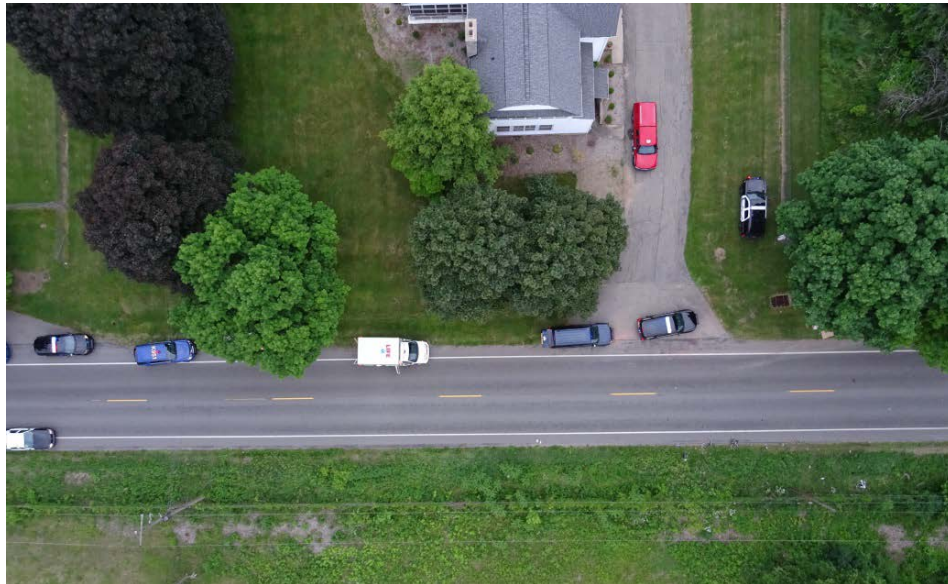
## HIGHWAY

### HWY16MH014

*The information in this preliminary report is subject to change and may contain errors. It will be supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation.*

About 6:29 p.m. (local time) on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, a 1996 Chevrolet pickup truck operated by a 50-year-old male was traveling northbound on North Westnedge Avenue in Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County, Michigan. While in the 5500 block of North Westnedge Avenue, the pickup truck approached a northbound group of nine bicyclists traveling in single file on the 4-foot-wide shoulder adjacent to the travel lane. The bicyclists were part of the “Chain Gang,” a private bicycle club that was on a planned 28.5-mile recreational ride. For unknown reasons, the pickup truck departed the travel lane and went onto the shoulder, where it struck all nine cyclists from the rear. The pickup truck continued off the roadway and came to rest across a drainage ditch facing west. The pickup truck driver fled the scene; police found him nearby and took him into custody. Prior to the crash, local police received multiple notifications of a pickup truck matching the accident vehicle’s description being operated in an erratic manner. The first call was received about 22 minutes before the crash. Preliminary findings indicated that the driver of the pickup truck had used medications and illicit drugs before the crash.

North Westnedge Avenue in the area of the crash consists of two lanes, one southbound and one northbound, each with an adjoining 4-foot-wide paved shoulder to its right. There were no rumble strips or pavement markings designating a bicycle lane. The posted speed limit was 35 mph, and the roadway in the northbound direction of travel had a slight upgrade. At the time of the crash, visibility was clear and unobstructed in both directions.



**Figure 1.** Overhead view of the roadway area where the pickup truck struck the cyclists.

As a result of the crash, five of the cyclists were fatally injured, and the other four sustained serious injuries. The driver of the pickup truck was hospitalized for evaluation of his impaired condition.



**Figure 2.** Front view of the pickup truck, showing damage from impacts. (Note that some of the damage resulted from two previous crashes in which the pickup truck was involved immediately prior to the subject crash involving the bicyclists.)

NTSB investigators documented the crash scene, the pickup truck, and the bicycles destroyed in the crash. The investigation is ongoing, and issues related to highway design, human performance, and citizen reports about the pickup truck driver’s erratic driving are being examined. Additionally, investigation of the driver’s reported substance impairment continues. “End Substance Impairment in Transportation” is a safety issue on the NTSB’s Most Wanted List.