

# Perspective-Aware Road Obstacle Detection

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**Abstract**—While road obstacle detection techniques have become increasingly effective, they typically ignore the fact that, in practice, the apparent size of the obstacles decreases as their distance to the vehicle increases. In this paper, we account for this by computing a scale map according the apparent size of a hypothetical object at every image location. We then leverage this perspective map to (i) generate training data by labeling synthetic objects onto the road in a more realistic fashion than existing methods, and (ii) incorporate perspective information in the decoding part of the detection network to guide the detection. Our results are standard benchmarks show that, together, these two strategies significantly boost the obstacle detection performance, allowing our approach to consistently outperform state-of-the-art methods in terms of instance-level obstacle detection.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vehicle-based driving assistance is more commercially available [1] and enables vehicles to plan a path within the predicted obstacle space while avoiding other traffic. However, missed and unexpected obstacles lying on the road remain a potential danger. Since not every vehicle has access to a LiDAR sensor to detect them in 3D, much effort has recently been made to achieve detection in a monocular fashion via learning-based strategies. Such road obstacle detection can also be beneficial for vehicles in rural environments. Given that such objects are under-represented obtaining sufficient datasets of real images associated with such obstacles for training purposes is impractical. Hence, many state-of-the-art deep learning approaches [2], [3], [4], [5] rely on synthetically generated training data, for example by creating real objects and inserting them into rendered scenes of the Cityscapes dataset.

However, these methods fail to leverage the wealth of generating training data and performing the actual detection, the ground-truth perspective back-projecting in images captured by cameras’ front-facing cameras. It is a standard practice [6]–[8], [7] to insert objects of arbitrary sizes at any image location in the training data used to detect objects at multiple scales irrespective of where they appear in the image. This does not exploit the well-known fact that more distant objects need to be smaller and thus, given a calibrated camera, the relationship between real and perceived sizes in images.

In this work, we show that leveraging the perspective information substantially increases performance. To this end, as shown in Fig. 1, we compute a scale map, where pixel values denote the apparent size of pixels of a hypothetical meter-wide object placed at that point on the road. We then exploit this information in two straightforward steps:

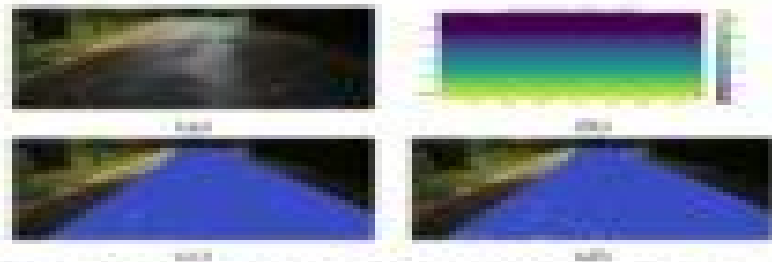


Fig. 1: **Real and virtual in close and faraway, car (green) and truck (red)**—Obstacle is real obstacle (the image, neither red nor green) reference depicts how faraway it is. (i) The perspective map indicates, at each point, the size in pixels of a hypothetical meter-wide object at that location. (ii) Our approach scale the generated map to distribute virtual objects from faraway areas. It correctly depicts smaller pixels of the real obstacle while ignoring the faraway car. Without the perspective aware insertion, (iii) is covered with a similar distribution large than (ii).

1. **Perspective-Aware Synthetic Object Injection.** Instead of uniformly inserting synthetic objects into road scenes to synthesized training data, as in [4], [6], [7], we use the perspective map to appropriately set the projected size of the objects in scene.
2. **Perspective-Aware Architecture.** We feed the perspective map at multiple levels of a feature pyramid network, enabling it to learn the relation inferring between distance and size perceived in our training set and in real road scenes.

The bottom portion of Fig. 1 illustrates the benefits of our approach. It not only detects small faraway obstacles but also avoids false alarms arising from small irregularities near the road, such as the fence here. Because there are at this image location there are much less of real objects in the image. Our results show that these strategies together contribute to significantly improving the accuracy of road obstacle detection, particularly in terms of instance-level detection, which is critical for a self-driving car that need to identify all potential hazards on the road.

We evaluate our approach on the largest 300 000 of FarCam [9] benchmark’s obstacle task and the LocalForest [6] test subset. We demonstrate that it significantly outperforms most of the art techniques that use architectures similar to ours, but without explicit perspective handling. The code of our method will be made publicly available.

# Obstacle Detection Answer Keys

**Daniel F McAuley**



## **Obstacle Detection Answer Keys:**

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### **Table of Contents Obstacle Detection Answer Keys**

1. Understanding the eBook Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - The Rise of Digital Reading Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Exploring Different Genres
  - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
  - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
  - Popular eBook Platforms
  - Features to Look for in an Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Personalized Recommendations
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys User Reviews and Ratings
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys and Bestseller Lists

5. Accessing Obstacle Detection Answer Keys Free and Paid eBooks
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys Public Domain eBooks
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys eBook Subscription Services
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Obstacle Detection Answer Keys eBook Formats
  - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys Compatibility with Devices
  - Obstacle Detection Answer Keys Enhanced eBook Features
7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
  - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Highlighting and Note-Taking Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Interactive Elements Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
8. Staying Engaged with Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Joining Online Reading Communities
  - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
  - Following Authors and Publishers Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Benefits of a Digital Library
  - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
  - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
  - Minimizing Distractions
  - Managing Screen Time
11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Setting Reading Goals Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Obstacle Detection Answer Keys
  - Distinguishing Credible Sources
13. Promoting Lifelong Learning

- Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
- Exploring Educational eBooks

### 14. Embracing eBook Trends

- Integration of Multimedia Elements
- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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