

A Report by the
Northfield Area Task
Force on Nonmotorized
Transportation

MAY 2008

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Executive Summary

The Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation was established by the Northfield City Council on May 7, 2007 and met monthly for one year. The Task Force was given the following mission: **“To enable and promote walking, cycling, and other human-powered activities as safe forms of transportation, thereby creating healthier, more vibrant, and more energy-efficient communities .”**

Major Task Force Accomplishments

- Coordinated the first Walk to School Day for the Northfield Public Schools on October 3, 2007
- Obtained \$30,000 Safe Routes to School grant for the Northfield Public Schools

Recommendations for Government Action

Non-infrastructure Recommendations

Education

Cooperate with education providers to promote pedestrian, cycling and driver education (all governments)

Encourage bicycle-oriented questions on drivers' tests (MnDOT)

Encouragement

Create walking and bicycle maps, possibly in public-private partnership (local governments)

Create bicycle-touring maps of country roads, possibly in public-private partnership (Rice County, Northfield)

Consider creation of a bicycle fleet for employees' workday use, perhaps using abandoned bikes collected by law enforcement (all governments)

Develop incentives for employees to walk, bike, or carpool to work (all governments)

Explore ways to make use of abandoned bikes collected by law enforcement, perhaps in partnerships with local non-profits

Explore creation of a community bicycle program, rental and/or free, possibly in public-private partnership (local governments)

Enforcement

Work with the police department on enforcement policy regarding traffic laws for cyclists, possibly with “informational” tickets (all governments)

Improve system for collecting statistics on pedestrian- and bicycle-related traffic accidents (all governments)

Evaluation

Work with community groups/volunteers to do traffic counts of pedestrians and cyclists; establish regular schedule for ped/bike counts each year (local governments)

Establish goals for shift to nonmotorized transportation modes (possibly recorded as percentage of trips in a community) (local governments)

Obtain and then upgrade Bicycle-Friendly Community designation from the League of

American Bicyclists (local governments)
Solicit ideas from communities already identified as pedestrian- or bike-friendly (all governments)

Infrastructure Recommendations

Adopt Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan; implement walkway and bikeway components of plan, including greenway corridors (Northfield and other local governments)

Expand bicycle parking (local governments)

Create an ordinance requiring bicycle parking in new commercial or public development projects (local governments)

I. Introduction

The Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation was established by Resolution 2007-051 of the Northfield City Council on May 7, 2007 (Appendix A). The Task Force was given the following mission: **“To enable and promote walking, cycling, and other human-powered activities as safe forms of transportation, thereby creating healthier, more vibrant, and more energy-efficient communities .”**

The Task Force met monthly from May 2007 to April 2008. In March of 2008 the Task Force voted to ask the Council for a one-year extension of its mission.

The resolution creating the Task Force specified that it would have from 9-15 members. For most of its existence, it has had 13 members. The Task Force reports to the Northfield Park and Recreation Advisory Board, which also appoints members to the Task Force. The following individuals have served on the task force:

Bruce Anderson
 Anne Bretts
 Betsey Buckheit
 Kirsten Cahoon
 Dan Kust
 Neil Lutsky
 Sean Hayford O’Leary
 Bill Ostrem, Chair
 Randy Perkins, Secretary
 John Stull, Vice Chair
 Greg Sumner
 John S. Thomas
 Rick Vanasek
 Peter Waskiw

Task Force members have represented the following groups:

St. Olaf College
 Friends of the Mill Towns State Trail
 Northfield Bike Club
 Northfield Park and Recreation Advisory Board
 Northfield Rotary
 RENew Northfield
 Northfield Public Schools
 Bridgewater Township
 General citizens

II. Summary of Task Force Accomplishments

Meeting Task Force Goals

The resolution creating the Task Force specified the following eight goals for the group. Below each goal is a summary of task force accomplishments related to it.

1. Hold public meetings to gather input from the community

The Task Force organized a public meeting on October 3, 2007, at the Northfield Middle School Library. Approximately 20 people attended. They filled out surveys and participated in a discussion about nonmotorized transportation in the Northfield Area. In addition, surveys were done at the Healthy Kids Day on April 12, 2008, at the Northfield Middle Schools; 26 surveys were collected.

2. Explore the establishment or expansion of a Safe Routes to Schools program, including possible application for grants

The Task Force and the Northfield Public Schools organized the first International Walk to School Day at the Northfield Middle School on October 3, 2007. Approximately 130 students participated.

In November the Task Force organized the completion of a Safe Routes to Schools non-infrastructure grant proposal of \$30,000 for the three elementary schools and the middle school of the Northfield Public Schools (see Appendix B). In March the Minnesota Department of Transportation announced that the Northfield Public Schools had won the grant. It was one of 27 projects in the state to win funding out of 105 proposals that were submitted.

3. Locate and apply for other funding opportunities, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield grants supporting “active living”

The Task Force sought other funding opportunities but did not locate any.

4. Provide input to the revisions of Comprehensive Plans; clarify what existing plans are in place (for example, Northfield’s Trail Master Plan)

The Chair of the Task Force met with the consultant preparing the Northfield Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan and submitted input, gathered from the Task Force, including recommendations for shared-use paths, bike lanes, and bike routes. In addition, the Park and Recreation Advisory Board appointed a Task Force member, Betsey Buckheit, to serve as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee of the Northfield Transportation Plan (still in process), which will be part of the Northfield Comprehensive Plan. Also, two Task Force members, Bill Ostrem and Bruce Anderson, served on the

advisory group for the Northfield Land Development Code revision; this also is still in process.

- 5. Identify locations for possible biking and walking routes that are not on existing plans and that will connect important destinations, including the library, swimming pool, Dundas Dukes playing field, and other sports fields; integrate a route system with existing or future regional and state trails, specifically the Mill Towns State Trail**

See description of #4 above.

- 6. Apply to the League of American Bicyclists for the Bicycle Friendly Community designation; pursue actions required to achieve the designation**

The Task Force has initiated this process with the City of Northfield. The City will complete the second portion of the application and results should be known by late summer 2008.

- 7. Create a report of other recommended actions for local governments, including possible recommendations for the Greenway Corridors project, education programs, signage, and maps. Specific actions may also be accomplished in these areas as well.**

See this report.

- 8. Work with local organizations and employers to encourage nonmotorized commuting**

The Task Force is working to have organizations participate in the 2008 Commuter Challenge and Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 16.

Other Task Force Accomplishments and Activities

June 2007: The chair of the Bike Edina Task Force, Steve Rusk, spoke to the Task Force about his group's activities and shared his knowledge about bicycle facilities, education, and encouragement.

July 2007: The Task Force prepared a report on the Woodley Street/CSAH 28 project. (Appendix C)

October 2007: The Task Force passed a resolution regarding the Highway 19 Access Management Safety Plan. (Appendix D)

January 2008: Northfield Community Development Director Brian O'Connell spoke to the Task Force and shared his experiences in Ames, Iowa, and his views on Northfield. Dundas Planning Commissioner Bruce Morlan spoke to the Task Force about a regional transportation task force. The Task force passed a resolution in favor of such a task force and another resolution endorsing

the Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan, with some recommendations for revision (Appendix E). The Task Force received a donation of \$400 from the Northfield Rotary. Chair Bill Ostrem spoke to the Northfield Rotary about the Task Force.

February 2008: Eric Johnson presented his pedestrian and bike accident study to the Task Force. The Task Force prepared a document on the laws pertaining to skateboarding for the Park and Recreation Advisory Board. (Appendix F)

April 2008: Officer Thad Monroe and Task Force members Dan Kust, Greg Sumner, and John Stull took the Road I cycling course in Rochester, Minnesota, taught by Steve Clark. This class is a prerequisite to become a Bike League Certified Instructor. The Task Force paid the tuition. Task Force members staffed a table at Healthy Kids Day. Members of the Task Force also attended the Minnesota Bike Summit on April 26.

III. Recommendations for Government Action

The recommendations below were compiled from comments made by local residents, including Task Force members; presentations by pedestrian/bike experts; and practices of other communities. While development of a detailed Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan for the City of Northfield was not adopted as a goal for the Task Force, the recommendations may be considered as a step towards such a plan.

The recommendations are aimed at local, county, and state governments—the authorities that govern the public rights-of-way through which we travel. However, government need not work on nonmotorized transportation issues alone. There is much that private entities—non-profits, community groups, clubs, businesses, and individuals—and other public entities such as schools can do as well, much of it in cooperation with government. The recommendations are categorized using 4 of the “5 E’s” of the Safe Routes to School and Bicycle-Friendly Community programs: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation. The fifth “E”—Engineering—is covered here in the “Infrastructure Recommendations.”

Non-infrastructure Recommendations

Education

- Cooperate with education providers to promote pedestrian, cycling and driver education (all governments)
- Encourage bicycle-oriented questions on drivers’ tests (MnDOT)

Encouragement

- Create walking and bicycle maps, possibly in public-private partnership (local governments)
- Create bicycle-touring maps of country roads, possibly in public-private partnership (Rice County, Northfield)
- Consider creation of a bicycle fleet for employees’ workday use, perhaps using confiscated bikes (all governments)
- Develop incentives for employees to walk, bike, or carpool to work (all governments)
- Explore ways to make use of abandoned bikes collected by law enforcement, perhaps in partnerships with local non-profits; see, for example, the Yellow Bike Program in Austin, Texas, which provides bikes to low-income children, along with bicycle education and maintenance programs, and the Recycled Bike Program in Ft. Collins, Colorado
- Explore creation of a community bicycle program, rental and/or free, perhaps similar to Paris, France, or Clear Channel’s Smart Bike program (smartbike.com), possibly in public-private partnership (local governments)

Enforcement

- Work with the police department on enforcement policy regarding traffic laws for cyclists, possibly with “informational” tickets; suggest using officers on bike patrol when possible (all governments)
- Improve system for collecting statistics on pedestrian- and bicycle-related traffic accidents (all governments)

Evaluation

- Work with community groups/volunteers to do traffic counts of pedestrians and cyclists; establish regular schedule for ped/bike counts each year (local governments)
- Establish goals for shift to nonmotorized transportation modes (possibly recorded as percentage of trips in a community) (local governments)
- Obtain and then upgrade Bicycle-Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists (local governments)
- Solicit ideas from communities already identified as pedestrian- or bike-friendly (all governments)

Infrastructure Recommendations

- Adopt Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan; implement walkway and bikeway components of plan, including greenway corridors (Northfield and other local governments)
- Expand bicycle parking (see “Additional Ideas for Action” below for specific bicycle parking ideas) (local governments)
- Create an ordinance requiring bicycle parking in new commercial or public development projects (local governments)

Prioritizing Development of the Northfield Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan

One criterion for guiding development of the walkways and bikeways in the Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan is to give high priority to the segments of bike routes, bike lanes, and linking trails that serve schools and athletics facilities. Those segments are identified below:

- Jefferson Parkway ‘core linking trail’ from Hwy 3 to the eastern City limits at Spring Creek Road.
- Division St. ‘core linking trail’ from 7th St. on the north, south to the Middle School.
- On-street bike lanes/bike route designation for Division St. from 6th St. south to the south City limits.
- The on-street bike lanes on Nevada St. and Maple St. from 1st St. on the north to Ford St. on the south.
- The on-street bike lanes/bike route designation on Woodley St. from Babcock Park on the west to the east City limits.
- The on-street bike route designation on Armstrong Rd, Lincoln St. and Lincoln Pkwy and Spring St; and the routes along Thye Pkwy serving Greenvale School.

Priority may also be given to those segments that serve high populations, including college students, to connect to downtown and to other routes:

- The on-street bike lanes on W. 5th St. from downtown to the entrance to St. Olaf College on Hwy 19, and the linking trail on Hwy 19.
- The linking trail along CSAH 1 from Jefferson Rd. east to the intersection with the “destination trail” which leads to the Spring Creek Athletic Complex.
- The on-street bike lanes on St. Olaf Ave. from Hwy 3 to the entrance to St. Olaf College.

Finally, priority may be given to “destination trails” or greenway corridors that link to schools:

Destination trails around Greenvale Park Elementary School and Northfield Middle School.

Additional Ideas for Infrastructure Improvements

This list is intended to be a resource for governments as they plan specific roadway and other improvements. While the Task Force views the development of the interconnected walkway and bikeway system of the Northfield Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan as the highest priority for Northfield, the ideas below are also worthy of consideration for future improvements. Some of these may be suitable for adoption in the Northfield Transportation Plan.

Sidewalks:

- Extend sidewalk network along Highway 3 north to Montessori School and businesses (MnDOT, Northfield?)
- Extend sidewalk network west along Highway 19 in western part of Northfield (MnDOT, Northfield?)
- Add benches along sidewalks in selected locations, particularly for elderly residents of nursing homes walking from their residences to downtown (local governments)
- In all urban areas where there are no sidewalks, there should be signs saying, Watch for Pedestrians, or, as an alternative, Share the Road.
- Add sidewalks to Roosevelt Drive horseshoe, a street that provides access from a lot of homes to Northfield High School. (Northfield)
- Add sidewalks to Woodley St. (Northfield)
- Add sidewalks to Lockwood Dr. (Northfield)

Shared-use paths (trails), including Greenway Corridors

- Create paths connecting Bridgewater and Dundas neighborhoods on Co. Rd. 1 to Northfield (currently part of Northfield Parks Master Plan) (Rice County, local governments)
- Require bike / pedestrian paths in all new developments (local governments)
- Create short path from Poplar St. to sidewalk on Highway 19 (near Kwik Trip and Walgreen’s) (Northfield)
- Extend shared-use path near Target (on east side of Hwy 3) across Community Bank property (Northfield)

Bike Lanes

- Add bike lanes to Roosevelt Drive horseshoe, a street that provides access from a lot of homes to Northfield High School. Currently a very wide road. (Northfield)
- Add bike lanes to Woodley St. (Northfield, Rice County)
- Physically separated bike lanes on Division St. in downtown (Northfield)
- Add bike lane to Cedar Ave. (Northfield, Rice Co., Dakota Co.)

Roads

Lower speed limit on Highway 246 near Middle School (MnDOT)

Study the intersection of 246 and Jefferson Parkway to increase efficiency of traffic flow and safety of non-motorized transportation during school start and finish times (MnDOT, Northfield)

Explore options for safe crossing of Highway 246 near Northfield Middle School

Widen travel lanes on Jefferson Parkway east and west of Highway 246 intersection (island currently makes it difficult for cars to pass cyclists) (Northfield)

Install road sensors for bicycles at traffic lights (loop or camera detection) (MnDOT, local governments)

Give prompt and serious consideration to constructing roundabouts (all governments)

Post “Share the Road” signs all over the county (counties)

Lower speed limits to 25 miles per hour on local roads (State of Minnesota)

Provide solution for lack of shoulders on Highway 19 between Northfield and Stanton (MnDOT)

Increase time allowed for pedestrian crossing of Highway 3 at traffic lights, possibly with a Leading Pedestrian Interval system (MnDOT)

Pedestrian/bike bridge over Highway 3 (MnDOT, Northfield)

4-way red light on Highway 3 for pedestrians (MnDOT)

Add shoulders to all country roads if and when such roads are resurfaced (Rice County)

Add shoulders to County Road 1 between Highway 246 and Highway 3 (Rice County)

Make speed limit consistent and appropriate on CSAH 1 between Hwys 3 and 246. Currently, going west toward 246 goes from 30 mph to 45 just after crossing Hwy 3, goes to 55 mph briefly, then 35, then 55 again at an unlabeled point. (Rice County)

Add signage and crosswalk on Maple St. at intersection with Sibley Swale Park trail (Northfield)

Bicycle Parking

Install additional bike posts and racks (suitable for locking up one’s bike) downtown, possibly by adding bicycle-parking attachment to parking meters (e.g. promorack.com) or sponsorship by businesses (“Racks with Plaques”) (Northfield)

Explore possibility of clustered bicycle parking downtown, on street or off (Northfield)

Clearance of snow, at least partially, from bicycle parking facilities in winter (currently cleared snow is often piled on bicycle parking) (all governments)

IV. Report on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents, 1997-2006, by Eric Johnson

Report on Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes in Northfield, Minnesota, 1997-2006

Completed by Eric Johnson in March 2008 for the Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation

Conclusions

In the ten-year period 1997-2006 there were 35 bicycle and pedestrian crash reports for Northfield. The number of bike crashes is double the number pedestrian crashes.

The two deadly crashes—one involving a bicyclist and the other a pedestrian—were caused by high-risk automobile drivers, one young and one old.

Other crashes most often happened at intersections and involved disregard of traffic signs or bikes ridden on the wrong side of the road where motorists were not expecting them. The most common type of bicycle crash involves bicycles running stop signs.

The MnDOT accident map shows clusters of bike and pedestrian crashes along Highways 3 and 246 and in the vicinity of schools. Almost all were along roadways posted at 30 mph.

Of the non-fatal crashes there were two examples of a cyclist and one of a pedestrian in which their chemical use likely contributed to the crash.

Two reported events were likely fabrications. One is probably a double reporting of a single event making a corrected total of 34 crashes in ten years.

The following quote from John Forester's book *Effective Cycling* (Sixth Edition, MIT Press, 1992) helps us to understand the complexity of bike and pedestrian accidents:

When you mention cycling accidents, most people assume that you mean car-bike collisions, because this is the only kind they worry about. This is wrong, because car-bike collisions account for only about 12% of cycling accidents. For children they account for only 10%.

To see if this pattern holds for Northfield I asked Ken Bank of the Northfield Hospital for their numbers. Searching their 2007 data under the 55057 zip code turned up bike accidents as the cause of the visit for 57 patients. Among these were 18 females and 39 males, 19 classified as pediatric (age 13 and younger) and 38 as adult. 52 of the 57 were

discharged to home while 5 patients were transferred or discharged to someplace other than home.

To a rough approximation Forester's ratio seems to apply to Northfield.

What I conclude is that our data is incomplete with little statistical significance.

What to do?

The deadly crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists over this ten-year period involved one driver under 18 and one over 80 years of age. Restricted licenses for those 16-18 have been talked about and retesting older drivers annually seems sensible.

A lack of safe street crossings puts pedestrians at risk. Use of streets by runners, especially when days are short, without light-colored clothing, adequate reflectors, or lights, is dangerous.

Increasing education on these hazards, issuing informational "tickets" to offenders, and perhaps working with running groups to encourage safer behaviors could be tested for their effectiveness.

Bicyclists disregarding traffic controls is common. Bike patrol officers seem a direct method of engaging offenders with suggestions for behaviors that increase safety.

School safety programs have the promise of engaging and educating cyclists before they develop bad habits. 4-H has had bicycle safety and riding rodeos while scout groups have cycling merit badges. Eagle scouts do major community projects to qualify and the word could go out that safety projects are needed.

College students come from all over the world including places where riding on the left side of the road is the norm. Including cycling safety, bike security, and suggested riding routes could be a part of new student orientation. There are schools with models in place for this type of initiative. Both Northfield colleges have bike clubs who might be enlisted to help in planning and delivering such a program.

Encourage parents to take an active part in teaching their children safe practices. A concrete method that has collateral benefits would be "walking school bus" or "biking school bus" programs organized by neighborhood and by age. Adults would be trained before qualifying to lead such groups. Use the walkinginfo.org site for suggestions.

Establish "best practices" guidelines for new commercial, industrial, and residential areas. Make each integrate with the existing network to encourage non-motorized solutions to transportation needs.

Create an education program for the entire community with the goal that each resident heads off on an errand with the assumption that walking or biking is the first choice. Only when distance or anticipated load is too great would other options be selected.

Appendix A
Northfield City Council
Resolution 2007-051
Establishing the Task
Force

City of Northfield Resolution 2007-051

A Resolution by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Northfield, Minnesota, Establishing a Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation

WHEREAS, increased use of nonmotorized transportation—which includes walking, cycling, skateboarding, inline skating, and other forms of human-powered transportation—can provide substantial benefits to the city, specifically:

- improved health of citizens through increased physical activity,
- improved economic vitality through the attraction of tourists and residents,
- reduced need for motor vehicle parking, providing more space for business and community development,
- reduced energy use,
- reduced pollution from motor vehicles, including greenhouse gas emissions,
- reduced wear on roads, and
- motor traffic calming due to the presence of nonmotorized transportation facilities;

WHEREAS, health care professionals, relying upon scientific research that links physical inactivity to conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, recommend that communities make changes to encourage and enable physical activity in everyday activities such as running errands or commuting;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Northfield, in cooperation with the City of Dundas and neighboring townships, establish a Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation with the following mission and goals:

Mission: To enable and promote walking, cycling, and other human-powered activities as safe forms of transportation, thereby creating healthier, more vibrant, and more energy-efficient communities.

Goals:

1. Hold public meetings to gather input from the community
2. Explore the establishment or expansion of a Safe Routes to Schools program, including possible application for grants
3. Locate and apply for other funding opportunities, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield grants supporting “active living”
4. Provide input to the revisions of Comprehensive Plans; clarify what existing plans are in place (for example, Northfield’s Trail Master Plan)

5. Identify locations for possible biking and walking routes that are not on existing plans and that will connect important destinations, including the library, swimming pool, Dundas Dukes playing field, and other sports fields; integrate a route system with existing or future regional and state trails, specifically the Mill Towns State Trail
6. Apply to the League of American Bicyclists for the Bicycle Friendly Community designation; pursue actions required to achieve the designation
7. Create a report of other recommended actions for local governments, including possible recommendations for the Greenway Corridors project, education programs, signage, and maps. Specific actions may also be accomplished in these areas as well.
8. Work with local organizations and employers to encourage nonmotorized commuting

Membership, Officers, and Meetings:

The task force shall exist for one year, from May, 8 2007, to May 7, 2008, and shall consist of 9-15 volunteer members and drawn from the following groups in the community, if possible:

- Northfield Public Schools
- Elected officials from Northfield, Dundas, and surrounding townships,
- City and township employees (Planning, Public Works, Police)
- Board and commission members (Planning, Park Board, etc.)
- Advocacy groups (such as Mill Towns State Trail Board, Northfield Bicycle Club, RENew Northfield, Center for Sustainable Living)
- Health care organizations (such as Allina Medical Clinic - Northfield, Cannon Valley Clinic-Mayo Health System, Northfield Hospital)
- Business organizations (such as the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce)
- Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges
- Community nonprofits (such as the Healthy Community Initiative)
- Community at large

The task force will report to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and will periodically present its findings to that body. The Park and Recreation Advisory Board will appoint members to the task force. Individual requesting appointment to the task force shall submit their name to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board.

At the first meeting, members of the task force shall select by majority vote a chair, vice chair, and secretary. The chair shall:

- set the agenda and preside at meetings of the task force,
- assign duties to task force members, and
- provide overall leadership to the task force in carrying out its purposes and responsibilities.

The task force shall meet at least monthly. In the absence of or at the request of the chair, the

duties of the chair shall be performed by the vice chair, and in the absence of both the chair and vice chair, by the secretary.

The secretary shall keep minutes and maintain permanent records of every meeting of the task force, and shall submit minutes for approval at each successive meeting. The secretary shall serve as correspondent for the task force. Copies of the minutes of all meetings shall be filed with the city or township clerk. The city shall provide incidental expenses for mailing and copying for the task force.

Passed by the City Council of Northfield on this 7th day of May 2007.

Appendix B
Outline of Northfield
Area Safe Routes to
School Grant Proposal

Northfield Area Proposal to the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program: Pathways to Healthier Students (PaTHS): Planning Enhanced Access to Northfield Schools

goal: \$30,000 non-infrastructure grant
deadline: November 16, 2007

Stakeholding Parties

Northfield Public Schools (ISD 659)	Northfield Area Nonmotorized
Northfield Middle School	Transportation Task Force
Bridgewater Elementary School	Northfield Police Department
Greenvale Park Elementary School	Benjamin Bus Company
Sibley Elementary School	Rice County
City of Northfield (fiscal agent)	Minnesota Department of Transportation
City of Dundas	District 6
Bridgewater Township	Healthy Community Initiative

Summary

The proposed project entails a range of activities to improve the safety of children who walk and bike to school in Northfield and to induce more children to get to school in those ways. A PaTHS steering committee will coordinate *enforcement* activities (training of crossing guards, a “speed wagon” near the schools); *educational* programs for bikers and walkers (cycling/walking safety, sharing the road; the health benefits of walking and biking) as well as drivers (crosswalk safety, sharing the road); *encouragement* via Walk to School Days and incentive programs for walkers/bikers; and *evaluation* of the impact and effectiveness of the project as a whole using surveys. With respect to *engineering*, the PaTHS project also includes a substantial planning/technical analysis effort aimed at identifying means to improve the routes used by bikers and walkers to reach the four K-8 schools in Northfield.

Proposed Goals for a SR2S Grant

Enforcement

Consult with police to identify safety needs for walkers, cyclists, and vehicular traffic
Offering crosswalk guard training at each school
Doing speed & safety enforcement (speed wagon, officers’ presence)

Engineering

Developing a comprehensive planning document for all four schools
Aligned with other city planning activities
Researching and planning possible safety improvements for routes to school, e.g.,
Improved signage and striping (Highway 246 and Jefferson Parkway)
Satellite drop-offs to reduce car traffic at schools and increase number of walkers
Reducing motor vehicle speeds
Walkway and bikeway planning
Studying known trouble spots and identifying others

High traffic/speeds on Hwy 246 at Middle School
Busy intersection at 246/Jefferson Parkway
Gaps in sidewalk network near Greenvale
Lack of paths from Dundas/Bridgewater northeast to Middle School
Lack of shoulder on Co. Road 1/Co. Road 1 as obstacle

Education

Driver education on crosswalk safety, sharing roads with bicycles and pedestrians
Bicyclist and pedestrian education on sharing sidewalks/paths with each other, roads with cars (expand current police program, establish school program, or combine?)
Student education on the health benefits of walking and biking
Training of instructors

Encouragement

Walk or Bike to School Day (Fall 2008? Spring 2009?)
Incentive programs for kids who walk or bike frequently
"Walking Schoolbus" program

Evaluation

Counts of bicycle, pedestrian, and auto traffic near schools
Student and parent surveys

Cost estimates:

Planning:	\$15,000
Education/Encouragement:	\$10,000
Enforcement:	\$5,000
Total:	\$30,000

Appendix C
Woodley Street (CSAH 28)
Roadway Improvement
Project Comments

Woodley Street (CSAH 28) Roadway Improvement Project Comments: Mayor's Nonmotorized Transportation Task Force

July 10, 2007

Introduction

The Northfield Mayor's Nonmotorized Transportation Task Force (NMTTF) was created by unanimous City Council resolution on May 7, 2007. The group's mission is to enable and promote walking, cycling, and other human-powered activities as safe forms of transportation, thereby creating healthier, more vibrant, and more energy-efficient communities. The NMTTF reports to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board. Task force members include Bill Ostrem (chair), John Stull (vice-chair), Randy Perkins (secretary), Bruce Anderson, Anne Bretts, Kirsten Cahoon, Dan Kust, Neil Lutsky, Richard Vanasek and Peter Waskiw.

The NMTTF has met only three times to date (on May 22nd, June 5th and July 3rd). However, several members of the NMTTF have met with nonmotorized transportation experts and attended related conferences and workshops over the past year or so and have thus developed a certain amount of expertise even though the NMTTF has only been in existence for a short time.

Several members of the NMTTF attended the June 20th neighborhood meeting hosted by the City to apprise the public of *Woodley Street (CSAH 28) Roadway Improvement Project* details and solicit public input. Members of the NMTTF appreciated the opportunity to learn about the project, and discussed issues affecting pedestrians and bicyclists and the mission of the NMTTF with City and Rice County staff and representatives of WSB & Associates, Inc.

Given our mission, we feel it is important and appropriate that the NMTTF comment on elements of the Woodley Street (CSAH 28) Roadway Improvement Project that affect pedestrians and bicyclists, and that could be altered to the public benefit.

Recommended project goals related to nonmotorized transportation

There is a significant amount of residential development along the stretch of Woodley Street affected by the project. Given that Woodley Street is the only transportation corridor to most of Northfield from these residential areas, it is critically important that the redesigned Woodley Street meet safe transportation needs not only for motorists, but also for the many pedestrians and bicyclists using this route recreationally and for utilitarian purposes. The last bicycle fatality in the Northfield area (in August 2000) occurred on Woodley Street between Heywood Road and Jefferson Parkway when a bicyclist riding legally in the eastbound lane was struck by the side view mirror of a passing motorist.

Based on information provided at the June 20th meeting, draft documents available from WSB & Associates, and research by NMTTF members, we feel the existing project design (<http://www.wsbeng.com/images/stories/Woodley/layout.pdf>) could be improved in the following areas:

Traffic calming

Safe crossings

Safe on-road facilities for cyclists

Safe off-road facilities for pedestrians.

Specific strategies to achieve these goals are discussed below.

1. Traffic calming and safe crossings

The speed limit as traffic approaches Jefferson Parkway from the east steps down from 55 mph to 40 mph a short distance east of Jefferson, then remains at 40 mph until it drops to 30 mph between Spring Creek Road and Prairie Street. Motor vehicles, both eastbound and westbound, frequently exceed the posted speed limits in this area, as shown by studies presented at the neighborhood meeting. Traffic calming, and safer crossings (for both nonmotorized and motorized traffic) could be achieved by the following:

Appropriate signage and landscaping leading to traffic calming and lower motor vehicle speeds as traffic approaches Jefferson Parkway from the east and continues to the west, and as vehicles proceed to the east, would greatly increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
Roundabouts at the Woodley/Spring Creek **and** Woodley/Prairie intersections.
Prominently marked crosswalks at Woodley and Prairie and at other points where sidewalks or shared-use paths cross streets.

An article from a June 2006 report from the Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota ("Roundabouts point to safer, less congested intersections"; <http://www.cts.umn.edu/Publications/CTSReport/2006/06/RoundaboutsPoint.html>) is just one of many recent studies indicating that roundabouts are an excellent approach to reducing traffic speed, reducing motor vehicle accidents (and injuries resulting from accidents), and providing safer passage for pedestrians and bicyclists. One sentence from the article, "Studies show that the number of crashes and serious injuries plunge when roundabouts are installed, and congestion, fuel consumption, and emissions fall significantly, too" summarizes the many benefits of roundabouts.

Project staff indicated that a roundabout had been considered for the Woodley/Spring Creek intersection, but had been rejected because of concerns about available space. However, the diagram below from "Roundabouts: An Informational Guide" (<http://www.tfhrc.gov/safety/00068.htm>) demonstrates that an inscribed circle range of 80 to 130 feet would be adequate. Examination of the intersections and detailed maps indicates that this amount of space could be available at both the Woodley/Spring Creek and Woodley/Prairie intersections, although it might require a minimal amount of roadway shifting.

Exhibit 1-3. Drawing of key roundabout dimensions.

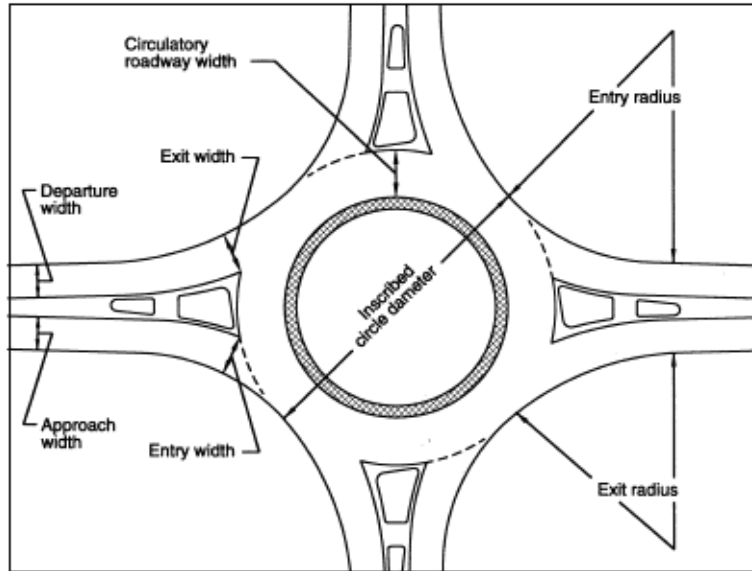


Exhibit 1-4. Description of key roundabout dimensions.

Dimension	Description
Inscribed circle diameter	The <i>inscribed circle diameter</i> is the basic parameter used to define the size of a roundabout. It is measured between the outer edges of the circulatory roadway.

Exhibit B-1. Typical inscribed circle diameter ranges by roundabout category.

Site Category	Inscribed Circle Diameter Range
Mini-roundabout	13–25 m (45–80 ft)
Urban compact	25–30 m (80–100 ft)
Urban single lane	30–40 m (100–130 ft)
Urban double lane	45–55 m (150–180 ft)
Rural single lane	35–40 m (115–130 ft)
Rural double lane	55–60 m (180–200 ft)

2. Safe on-road facilities for cyclists and safe off-road facilities for pedestrians

Based on NMTTF research and discussions with nonmotorized transportation experts, we suggest the following:

- An on-road bikeway on Woodley Street
- Pedestrian-only sidewalks on both sides of Woodley

Current research indicates that cyclists are safer and more visible to motorists when on the road rather than on a sidewalk or multi-use trail that parallels a road. Since there is no parking currently on this stretch of Woodley, this project represents an opportunity to add bike lanes without a need to remove parking. More advanced cyclists will be more likely to use the road and in doing so will be safer themselves and also pose less hazard to pedestrians who use sidewalks or trails. If bike lanes are used, painting them another color in their entirety to make them more visible is highly recommended.

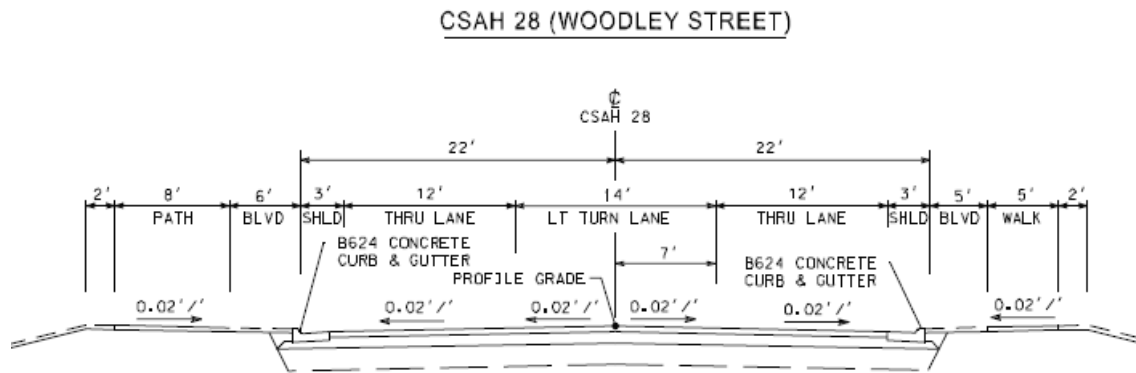
Using dimensions from the cross-section below (from <http://www.wsbeng.com/images/stories/Woodley/layout.pdf>), it should be possible to fit on-street bike

lanes and sidewalks on both north and south sides of Woodley without increasing overall project width by doing the following:

Reduce the 8' multi-use path on the north side to a 5' pedestrian-only sidewalk (which would remain suitable for use by very young bicyclists as well)

Reduce the 12' through lanes to 11' and the turn lane to 12' (which would have an added traffic calming effect, as well)

Add 5' bike lanes (6' in the 40 mph zone) both eastbound and westbound.



Some information to support these suggestions:

- excerpts from the Mn/DOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual

(<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/bikewaysdesignmanual.html>):

Tables 4-1 and 4-2 (p. 70) and the supporting text contain information on bikeway design selection for different road conditions; we ask that the staff and engineering firm consult these.

Section 5-4.2, "Path/Roadway Intersection Treatment Selection," contains good information on the challenges of designing safe shared-use path/roadway intersections. Here is one key excerpt: "Intersections between paths and roadways are among the most critical issues in bikeway design. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than half of all bicycle crashes nationwide occur at these intersections." Please consult this as well.

- "Bike Paths or Multi-Use Trails" (p. 27) from the "Glossary and Definitions" appendix to a document produced by Transit for Livable Communities' Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program: "Two-way trails adjacent to urban streets (side paths) are not recommended due to the high number of intersections and driveway crossings. Rather, one-way on-street bike lanes for bicyclists...and sidewalks for pedestrians are recommended."

(<http://tlcminnesota.org/Resources/NTP%20Program/solicitation/NTP%20RFA%20Instructions%20Mar%202013%20REVISED.pdf>)

- a June 5, 2007, column by Jane Brody, Personal Health columnist for the New York Times, "Cars and Bike Can Mix, When the Rules of the road are Clear." She writes, "Never ride [a bike] on the sidewalk -- sidewalk crashes are 25 times more frequent than crashes that occur on major streets. Safest are streets with bike lanes" (emphasis added).

Cost

Regarding the cost of the suggested facilities, please consider not only the dollar amount but also the percentage they represent of the entire project cost. It is our hope that the suggested changes in the project design could be made within the existing budget. While suggested facilities may seem expensive in themselves, they may be a small percentage of the overall cost. It is easier and cheaper to add such facilities when doing a large road project than it is to add them later.

Appendix D
Resolution on the
Highway 19 Access
Management Safety Plan

Highway 19 Access Management Safety Plan Resolution

October 25, 2007

Whereas the Minnesota Department of Transportation is currently conducting an access management safety plan for Highway 19 between Highway 3 and Interstate 35,

The Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation hereby recommends that the project

1. take into account the needs of pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists, including the needs of pedestrians who cross the highway
2. include bicycle lanes and sidewalks within Northfield city limits
3. follow MnDOT and AASHTO standards on bicycle lanes
4. include shoulders that accommodate cyclists outside of the city limits of Northfield
5. evaluate whether there are problems with motorists speeding when entering Northfield and consider methods of addressing the problems if they exist, including the use of dynamic speed signs.

Appendix E
Resolutions on a Regional
Transportation Task Force
and on the Northfield Parks,
Open Space, and Trail
System Master Plan

Resolutions of the Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation, _____
Jan. 24, 2008

Regional Transportation Task Force

WHEREAS the communities of Bridgewater Township, the City of Dundas, and the City of Northfield have common borders and common interests in fostering a safe, effective, and accessible transportation system,

WHEREAS the comprehensive plans of all three governments consider nonmotorized transportation to be integral to a well-designed transportation network,

WHEREAS the Greenway Corridors Plan encompasses each of these communities,

THEREFORE, the Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation joins the Dundas Planning Commission in asking that the three respective government units form a joint regional transportation task force. Further, the Task Force, as long as it is still in existence, is willing to appoint one or more members to this regional task force. It is recommended that this regional transportation task force be charged with producing a single transportation planning map suitable for insertion into all three comprehensive plans.

The Northfield Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan

WHEREAS the City of Northfield Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Master Plan envisions an interconnected system of walkway and bikeway facilities, including on-road facilities,

WHEREAS such facilities serve an important role in promoting healthy and enjoyable physical activity and useful transportation options among city residents and visitors,

WHEREAS the plan includes recommendations for a city “complete streets” policy that would improve planning for nonmotorized transportation options,

THEREFORE, the Northfield Area Task Force on Nonmotorized Transportation strongly endorses the general framework of the plan, and in addition we feel the plan would be strengthened by the following additions or revisions:

1. The “Linking Trails” described in Section 4 are proposed as being 8- or 10-foot asphalt shared-use paths located in road rights-of-way. Given the safety issues with these facilities—issues described in the *American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide to the Development of Bicycle Facilities* (1999, pages 33-35; attached)—it is recommended that this section be revised to include wording that mentions the safety concerns where trails intersect with roadways, to require engineering consideration of safe intersection design, to request the development of a standard for the number of street and driveway crossings per mile that is deemed safe,

and to suggest the option of sidewalks with on-street bike lanes in areas with a high density of road and driveway intersections. See the MnDOT Bicycle Modal Plan p. 62 for more guidance on this issue.

2. Recognizing that downtown is one of the premier destinations in the city, we recommend 1) continuous on-street bicycle access to Bridge Square via Water Street, 2) a continuous bicycle route on Washington Street from Woodley Steet to 2nd Street, 3) additional bicycle parking, including the possibility of clustered on-street bicycle parking.

3. Installing bicycle parking facilities at higher-use city parks.

References:

AASHTO Guide to the Development of Bicycle Facilities:
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Bike/PDF/Bikebook.pdf>

MnDOT Bicycle Modal Plan: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/pdfs/modal_plan.pdf

Appendix F
Laws of Minnesota
and Northfield Relating
to Skateboard Operation

Laws of Minnesota and Northfield Relating to Skateboard Operation

Submitted by Sean Hayford O'Leary, Nonmotorized Transportation Task Force, February 07, 2008.

Definition as vehicle

Minnesota's traffic regulation laws (MN §169) do not address skateboards, other than to restrict skateboarders clinging to moving vehicles (MN §169.222). Northfield's code defines skateboards as "play vehicles" (Nfld. §78) and does seem to allow them to be operated on the street, except "carelessly or heedlessly in disregard of the rights of others" (Nfld §78-138).

Use of sidewalks

Northfield code allows skateboards to be operated on sidewalks, except in the "central business district" (south of 2nd St., west of Washington St., north of 7th St., and east of Water St.) (Nfld §78-136, Nfld, §78-138).

Use of bike lanes

Minnesota state law allows local governments to designate which vehicles are allowed on bike lanes: "A governing body designating a bikeway under this section may [...] designate the type and character of vehicles or other modes of travel which may be operated on a bikeway, provided that the operation of such vehicle or other mode of travel is not inconsistent with the safe use and enjoyment of the bikeway by bicycle traffic" (MN § 160.264 subd.3).

Northfield city code does not address bicycle lanes.

Further information

The Minnesota statutes can be accessed at <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.asp>, with the relevant sections being 160 and 169. Northfield city code can be accessed at <http://municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=13439&sid=23>; the relevant section is 78.

Appendix G
Outline of Pedestrian
and Bicycle Facilities

Outline of Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian Facilities

Walkways

- Sidewalk

- Shared-use path (or Trail)

- Pedestrian path

- Pedestrian mall

Crosswalks

- Pedestrian signals

- etc.

Bicycle Facilities

Shared Roadway

Bikeways

- On-road Bikeways:

 - Bicycle Route (Signed Shared Roadways)

 - Bicycle Lane

- Off-road Bikeways

 - Shared-use Path (Multi-use Path or Trail)

 - Bicycle Path (or Trail)

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle Signals

- Sidewalks (in some locations)

- etc.

Definitions from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (1999):

Bicycle Facilities: A general term denoting improvements and provisions made by public agencies to accommodate or encourage bicycling, including parking and storage facilities, and shared roadways not specifically designated for bicycle use.

Bikeways: A generic term for any road, street, path or way which in some manner is specifically designated for bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes.