

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES AND APPROACH

The City of Northfield has identified priorities in the areas of connectivity, capacity and safety, modal integration, development driven initiatives, and regional transportation initiatives. The purpose of these priorities is to

- Ensure adequate infrastructure is available for existing and future pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists
- Support planned residential and non-residential growth and economic development initiatives
- Provide a system of roadways that allow for efficient emergency and civil service accessibility throughout the City
- Identify potential funding sources for completing necessary improvements

For each priority area, recommendations are provided for initiating the study or improvement in the short, mid, or long-term. Short-term improvements are recommended to be included in the City's capital improvement planning (CIP) within the next 5 years (2008 – 2013 years). Mid-term improvements are recommended to be programmed for improvement in 2014 to 2018, and long-term improvements are recommended to be programmed for improvement thereafter (2019 – 2030).

Transportation improvement costs vary, but for planning purposes, Table 5.0-1 provides average planning level cost estimates for the year 2008 for various transportation improvements.

TABLE 5.0-1 – 2008 PLANNING LEVEL COST ESTIMATES

Improvement	Cost Estimate
10' Bituminous Trail	\$150,000 per mile
2-Lane/3-Lane Urban Street	\$1.8 to \$2.2 million per mile
4-Lane Urban Street/Highway	\$2.2 to \$3.0 million per mile
Right Turn Lane	\$25,000 each
Left Turn Lanes	\$250,000 per pair
Traffic Signal	\$250,000 to \$300,000 per intersection (signal only)
Roundabout Intersection	\$600,000 to \$900,000 per intersection
Bridges	\$100 to \$115/sq ft of deck
Retaining Walls	\$30 to \$50/sq ft of face

Following is a summary of the recommended short-term, mid-term, and long-term, and development driven improvements

SHORT TERM (2008 – 2013) PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- TH 19 Scoping Study – I-35 to TH 56 (Mn/DOT lead, City participate)
- Safe Route to School Improvements Feasibility Study (City initiated)
- Pavement Preservation Projects in City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Intersection Control Evaluations (City initiated)
 - TH 246 at CSAH 28 (Division Street & Woodley Street)
 - TH 246 at Jefferson Parkway
 - Division Street at TH 19/2nd Street
- Jefferson Parkway Expansion Feasibility Study – TH 3 to TH 246 (City initiated)
- TH 246 Jurisdictional Transfer Discussions (City initiated)
 - Pavement Rehabilitation
 - Bikeway Integration
 - Intersection Improvements
- CSAH 1/Cannon River Bridge Environmental Review – (Rice County lead, City participate)
- TH 19/TH 3 Modal Integration Subarea Study (City initiated)
- Jefferson Parkway Extension between Hall Avenue and CSAH 28 (development driven)
- Northwest Highway Corridor between TH 19 and CSAH 23 (development driven)

MID TERM (2014 – 2018) PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- TH 19 Improvements – I-35 to TH 3
- Pavement Preservation Projects in City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Downtown Modal Integration Subarea Study
- Intersection Control Evaluations
 - 80th Street/North Avenue at CSAH 23/43 and at Dresden Avenue
 - Lincoln Parkway/Lockwood Drive
 - Greenvale Avenue and Spring Street
 - 4th Street at Division Street and at Washington Street
 - 5th Street at Water Street, at Division Street, and at Washington Street
 - Woodley Street/TH 246 at Jefferson Road and at Water Street
 - Woodley Street/CSAH 28 at Washington Street
 - Jefferson Parkway at Jefferson Road
- Hall Avenue/Spring Creek Road Improvement Feasibility Study
- Local and Commuter Transit Needs Study (City initiated)
- Thye Parkway Extension between Lockwood Drive and TH 3 (development driven)
- Ford Street Extension between Fillmore Street and Hall Avenue (development driven)

LONG TERM (2019 - 2030) PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pavement Preservation Projects in City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Future Intersection Control Needs
 - CSAH 43 at Greenvale Avenue and at Forest Avenue
 - CSAH 78 at 2 Future Major Collector Roadways Located between 100th Street and TH 19
 - CSAH 28/Prairie Street
 - Jefferson Road/Cannon Lane
 - CSAH 1 at Jefferson Road and at TH 246
- CSAH 1/Cannon River Bridge

5.1 CONNECTIVITY, CAPACITY, AND SAFETY PRIORITIES

Recommendations for improved roadway connectivity, capacity expansion, and safety improvements are provided for the City street system. The recommendations are based on needs identified in the transportation planning process to support existing and future development. These improvements will not be completed as growth occurs. Rather, the City of Northfield will need to program necessary improvements in their capital improvement plan and champion these projects. Additional studies will be necessary to determine the feasibility of these improvements.

5.1.1 NORTH AVENUE EXTENSION FEASIBILITY STUDY (ZANMILLER DRIVE TO TH 3)

North Avenue is constructed to Zanmiller Drive on the east. As this corridor extends west into Bridgewater Township it is known as 80th Street. Right-of-way 70' in width for the corridor was platted in the area between Zanmiller Drive and the Progressive Rail railroad line, but was vacated by the City Council back in 1993. It is recommended that this corridor be extended east across the railroad tracks to TH 3 by means of Fremouw Avenue as illustrated below.



Completion of this corridor is important to distribute local traffic through the northwest part of the City. Without the corridor's extension to TH 3, additional traffic and travel demand on Lincoln Parkway and Greenvale Avenue would be expected. A feasibility study should be initiated by the City of Northfield. This feasibility study would determine design elements, project costs, environmental and property impacts, the specific corridor alignment necessary to be preserved for the construction of North Avenue, as well as public acceptance for a future corridor. As development in the area is proposed, right-of-way should be obtained and the road constructed. For the area between Zanmiller Drive and the Progressive Rail railroad line, the City will need to lead right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction of the roadway segment. Given the current traffic concerns in the Greenvale neighborhood and the anticipated concerns of adjacent property owners, a feasibility study is recommended. The challenges of extending the corridor through the existing developed area will require careful consideration to prioritize the study at the appropriate time.

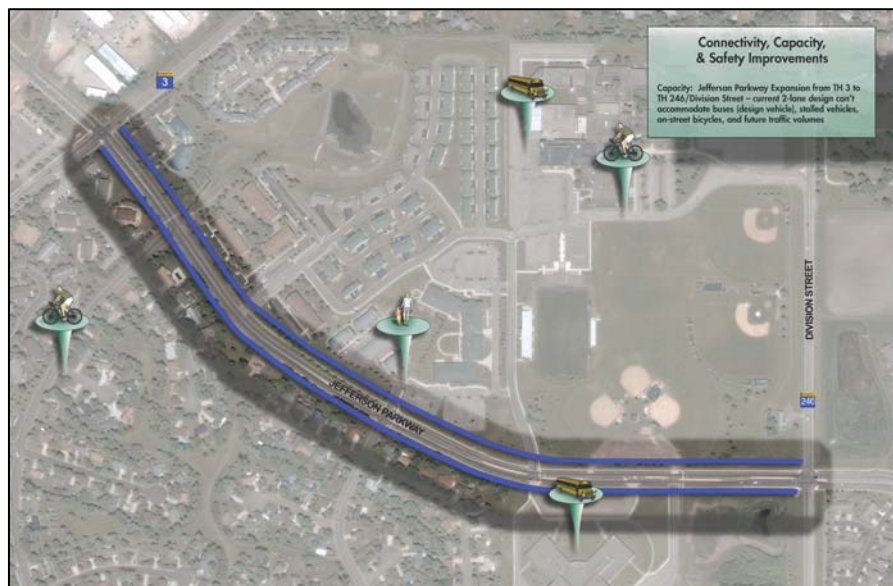
5.1.2 JEFFERSON PARKWAY FEASIBILITY STUDY (TH 3 TO TH 246)

Jefferson Parkway is an example of a Major Collector roadway corridor that the City of Northfield has done a good job in obtaining right-of-way and constructing a continuous roadway. This corridor provides a continuous route on the southeast side of the City and provides access to and from schools, the community center, and homes in the area.

A challenge with the current design of Jefferson Parkway west of TH 246/Division Street is that it under serves existing traffic volumes and bicycle mobility and has an inadequate design for school bus traffic. As a result, the corridor is currently near congested. Additionally, the TH 3/Jefferson Parkway intersection has been identified as one of the highest crash frequency locations in the City.

By 2030, Jefferson Parkway is forecasted to become very congested between TH 3 and TH 246/Division Street. If a bridge is constructed across the Cannon River at Jefferson Parkway, this corridor segment is anticipated to have even higher congestion levels. With no mobility improvements to Jefferson Parkway from TH 3 to TH 246/Division Street, traffic is forecasted to divert along Division Street to Woodley Street and CSAH 1. Without improvements to CSAH 1 and TH 246, demand will be such that a 4-lane divided roadway segment will be necessary to provide safe and efficient mobility.

For this roadway to function in the role it is intended to provide as a Major Collector, design operational and safety improvements will be necessary. Given the importance of this corridor in accommodating school traffic and accessibility to and from residential areas on the east side of the City, improving this corridor is recommended to be considered in the short term. Improvements should be designed to accommodate the design vehicle, a school bus, include a linking trail, and meet the standards identified in Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 for a Major Collector roadway.



5.1.3 HALL AVENUE/SPRING CREEK ROAD IMPROVEMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY

Hall Avenue/Spring Creek Road is identified as a Major Collector roadway. It provides the opportunity for north-south travel through eastern Northfield between TH 19 on the north and CSAH 81 on the south. Part of the area adjacent to the corridor has converted from agricultural to urban and recreational land uses. Some of the corridor has been overlaid with bituminous, while some of the corridor remains a gravel surface. The City will need to lead initiatives to reconstruct the corridor with a typical section identified in Section 2.4 that is compatible with the surrounding land uses and environment so vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles can travel safely through the area. This study is recommended to be completed in the short-term.

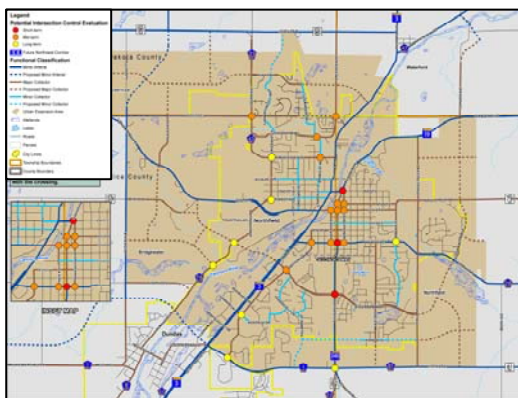


Hall Avenue/Spring Road

5.1.4 FUTURE INTERSECTION CONTROL NEEDS

The traffic control and lane arrangements at roadway intersections are controlling factors for roadway system capacity and safety. Based on estimated vehicular traffic volumes, several intersections have been identified for future study of traffic control and lane needs. In nearly all cases, these intersections are in primarily developed areas.

Figure 4.3-1 identifies intersections that are recommended to have intersection control evaluation studies completed. The purpose of the study would be to identify the safety, capacity, and traffic control needs necessary to provide safe and efficient operation on the intersecting roadways.



Study areas were identified based on known existing problem areas and where through-stop conditions are likely to not function well based on forecasted traffic volumes on the roadways approaching the intersection. Intersections were prioritized as to which are recommended to be completed in the short term, mid-term, and long-term. Three intersections are recommended to be studied in the short term, including Division Street/2nd Street (TH 19)/Washington Street, Woodley Street/Division Street (TH 246/CSAH 28), and Jefferson Parkway/Division Street (TH 246).

Division Street at TH 19//2nd Street has unusual geometry that leads to user confusion and hesitation due to the intersection skew/angle, through movement of TH 19, and the close proximity of Washington Street. This intersection provides important connectivity between downtown and Carlton College. Congestion levels at this intersection are expected to become unacceptable in the short-term.

TH 246 at CSAH 28 (Division Street and Woodley Street) is currently an all-way stop intersection with periodic congestion. Levels of congestion in this area are expected to become unacceptable in the short-term. This intersection is particularly important relative to providing connectivity to the downtown, public school campus, and rural agricultural areas east of town. While there is very limited right-of-way in this area, potential future improvements need to better accommodate pedestrians, bikes, and the design vehicle.

TH 246 at Jefferson Parkway is currently an all-way stop intersection with periodic congestion. This intersection provides accessibility to the public school campus and rural agricultural areas south and east of town. There has been a history of pedestrian safety issues in proximity of the intersection and the design vehicle needs to be accommodated. Levels of congestion in this location are expected to become unacceptable in the short-term.

Other intersections identified for future study of traffic control and lane needs in the mid and long-term include

MID TERM (2014-2018)

- 80th Street/North Avenue at CSAH 23/43 and at Dresden Avenue
- Lincoln Parkway/Lockwood Drive
- Greenvale Avenue and Spring Street
- 4th Street at Division Street and at Washington Street
- 5th Street at Water Street, at Division Street, and at Washington Street
- Woodley Street/TH 246 at Jefferson Road and at Water Street
- Woodley Street/CSAH 28 at Washington Street
- Jefferson Parkway at Jefferson Road

LONG TERM (2019 - 2030)

- CSAH 43 at Greenvale Avenue and at Forest Avenue
- CSAH 78 at 2 Future Major Collector Roadways Located between 100th Street and TH 19
- CSAH 28/Prairie Street
- Jefferson Road/Cannon Lane
- CSAH 1 at Jefferson Road and at TH 246

Based on the jurisdictional authority of the intersecting roadways, Rice County, Dakota County, and Mn/DOT may also need to be study participants.

5.1.5 PAVEMENT PRESERVATION PROJECTS IN CITY'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The City of Northfield will be prioritizing roadway candidates for reconstruction or renovation to be completed in the short, mid, and long-term. Priorities will be based on the City's targeted roadway pavement condition index rating goal of 70, together with other factors outlined in Section 2.8. This strategy provides a systematic approach to plan for and prioritize pavement management that is consistent over time. Developing and preserving a consistent funding source will be imperative to effectively manage future overall pavement maintenance costs, because inconsistent funding levels can result in increased costs and declining pavement conditions. Specific projects will be identified in the City's annual capital improvement planning process.

5.2 MODAL INTEGRATION PRIORITIES

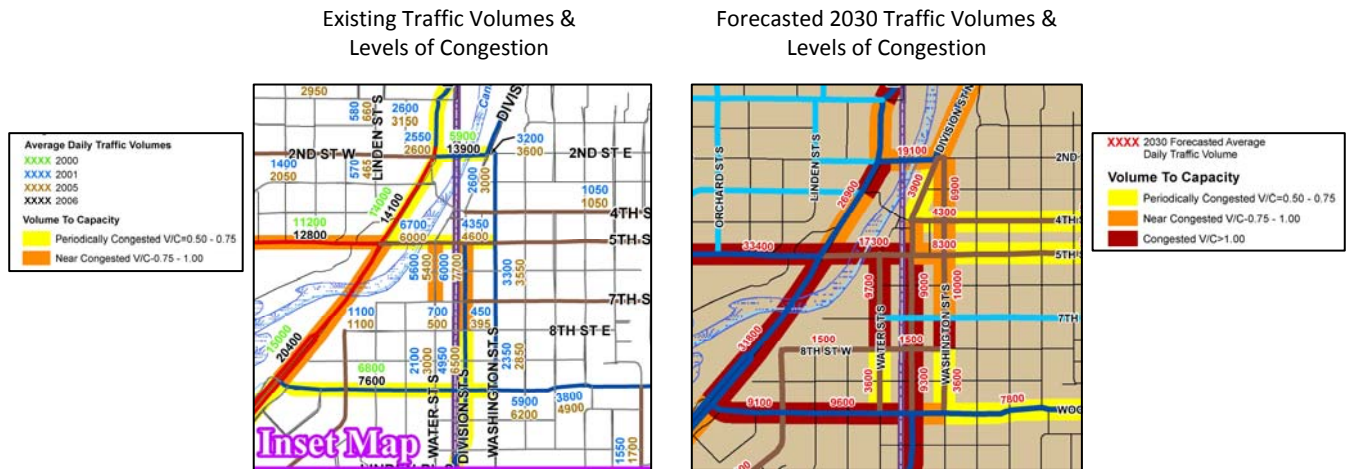
Enabling motorized and non-motorized users to share the roadway environment safely and efficiently is not an easy task. The characteristics of these modes of travel are vastly different, and yet, they compete for the same space. Unfortunately, motorized transportation, such as passenger cars and commercial vehicles, can often dominate the transportation infrastructure due to their disproportionate size and numbers.

Modal integration priority projects must comprehensively consider the problems and improvement options relative to all modes of transportation and types of transportation users. This approach is imperative to avoid identifying a solution for one mode or user, at the sacrifice or to the detriment of another mode or user. This approach should integrate the needs of bicyclists, pedestrians, delivery vehicles, consider routes for emergency vehicles and transit, and provide for convenient downtown parking opportunities. Astute planning and design of transportation infrastructure are important components that are necessary to achieve an integrated motorized and non-motorized transportation system that is relatively safe and efficient for all users.

Two critical areas are recommended for more detailed planning of modal integration. These include a Downtown Subarea Study and TH 3/TH 19 Subarea Study.

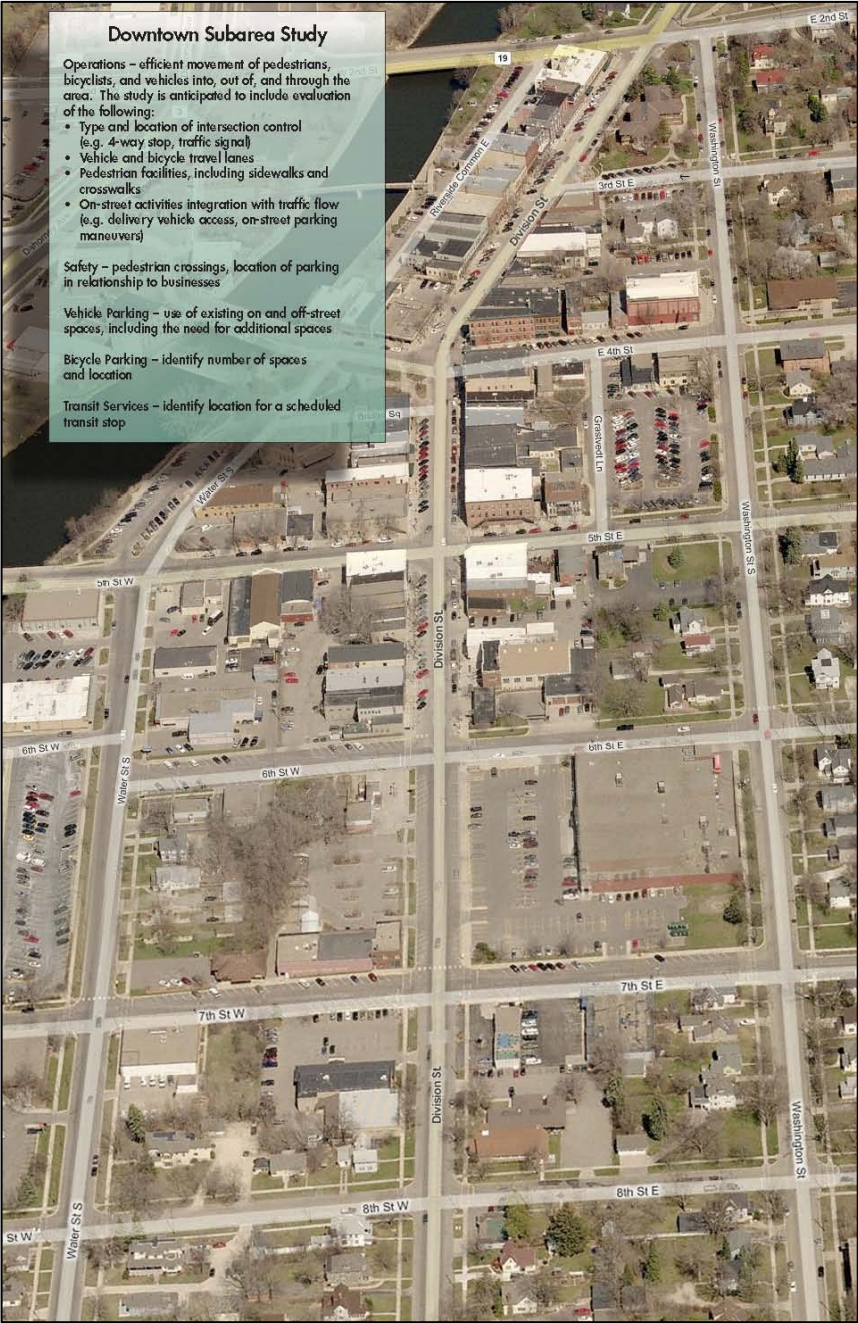
5.2.1 DOWNTOWN MODAL INTEGRATION SUBAREA STUDY

Downtown Northfield provides a thriving commercial and retail environment in a setting with historic charm. Vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians bustle through the area. Trucks stopping in the travel lane to make a delivery are not uncommon and contribute to congestion. As the community grows and residents desire to access important destinations downtown or reach TH 3 or TH 19, congestion in the downtown will continue to grow. This congestion will detract from the area and has the potential to divert traffic to other adjacent residential roadways, such as Union Street. The graphics below display the changes in traffic volumes and levels of congestion that are forecasted between current and 2030 conditions.



Important downtown destinations, together with planned growth in the City, will contribute to increased congestion in downtown Northfield.

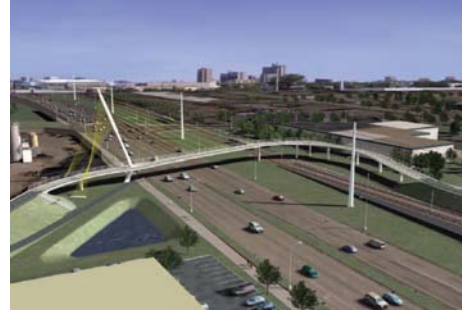
Several challenges exist to manage traffic volumes and congestion, without deteriorating the charm that makes the area so attractive. These challenges relate to all modes of traffic in the downtown area as described in Section 5.2, and include traffic operations and safety components. Existing land uses are close to the right-of-way, and improvement options may result in right-of-way impacts to adjacent properties.



When considering modifying one transportation aspect of downtown Northfield, it is necessary to consider the potential influence a given solution may have on other modes of transportation. Due to the multi-faceted, interconnected nature of downtown Northfield, the scope of a downtown subarea study should include an analysis of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle operations, pedestrian crossings, delivery vehicle accessibility, vehicle and bicycle parking, and include identification of a transit stop location. It is anticipated that this initiative will need to be completed in the mid-term.

5.2.2 TH 19/TH 3 MODAL INTEGRATION SUBAREA STUDY

TH 19 and TH 3 present various transportation challenges to travelers in the Northfield area. The expanse of the highways and speed of vehicles moving through the area create obstacles in connecting pedestrians and bicyclists to and from different parts of the City. In particular, non-motorized mobility needs to be improved to connect northwest Northfield and St. Olaf to the downtown, as well as across TH 19. Given the traffic volumes and width of highway to cross, a grade-separated, non-motorized crossing is recommended. To the right is an example of a grade separated crossing for the use of pedestrians and bicyclists.¹



Example of a grade separated crossing for the use of pedestrians and bicyclists.



Additionally, the north and south junction intersections of TH 19 and TH 3 are currently near congested or congested during the morning and evening peak travel periods of the day and are forecasted to be congested in the future. The City is planning for a future transit hub to be potentially located near the southwest quadrant of the south junction intersection to be in close proximity to the Mill Towns Trail and existing rail line. The study will need to carefully consider how all modes of traffic and transportation users will be able to safely and

efficiently access TH 19 from the future transit station. This is especially important given the high traffic volumes on TH 19, short distance between the railroad tracks and the TH 19/TH 3 intersection, and heavy truck traffic in the area. Additional challenges for moving all modes of traffic around and through this area include the proximity of the Union Pacific railroad line and Cannon River.

A multifaceted study considering the challenges and potential solutions relative to the needs of all travel modes and transportation users should be initiated prior to or part of the initial investment in the transit hub. This study is anticipated in the short term.

5.2.3 BIKEWAY DEVELOPMENT

It is anticipated that bikeways identified on the City's Parks, Open Space, and Trails System Plan would be achieved when pavement rehabilitation occurs on existing corridors, or as new development is proposed. Specific bikeway improvements will be prioritized based on pavement management needs.

¹ City of Minneapolis, MN, Midtown Greenway Brochure. <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles/MidtownGreenwayBrochure.pdf>. Accessed June 13, 2008.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT DRIVEN PRIORITIES

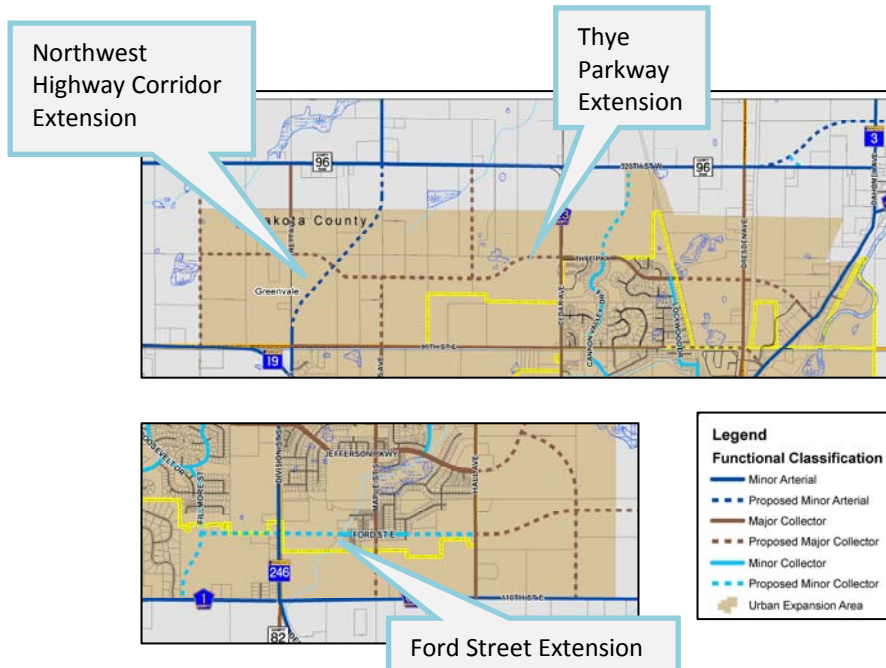
As the City of Northfield continues to grow, so does its transportation needs. Through cooperation with land owners and land developers, the City can achieve many of its transportation goals, while creating attractive neighborhoods and thriving business areas. By coordinating land use and transportation system development, community values can be attained and integrated into development and redevelopment plans with limited public investment.

Changes in land use are key opportunities to integrate transportation improvements resulting from the demand associated with the new development, as well as address additional deficiencies in a manner that results in a win-win situation for the developer and the community. Public and private partnerships in the development of local roadways, trails, and transit facilities results in growth helping to pay for itself.

This is particularly important as governments and private entities work to prioritize and make the most of their financial investments. Without growth driving the need for additional facilities and those facilities being constructed at the time of development, it is unlikely that the City would have the financial resources to prioritize these improvements. As a result, development is a partner in achieving the overall multimodal transportation vision.



In addition to Local streets and trails, Northfield plans to continue to develop Major Collector street corridors in developing areas. An example of the extension of a Major Collector corridor is Jefferson Parkway between Hall Avenue and CSAH 28/100th Street.



As existing land uses change with the demand for urban growth, the Northwest Highway Corridor (between TH 19 and Dakota County CSAH 23), Thye Parkway (between Lockwood Drive and TH 3), and Ford Street (between Fillmore Street and Hall Avenue) are anticipated to be achieved through development driven initiatives.

5.3.1 STRATEGIES FOR REVIEWING DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Various strategies can be utilized to ensure proper transportation improvements are made to provide and protect the City's investment in transportation infrastructure. Astute land use planning, site plan review, and subdivision plat review are key to ensuring the long-term multimodal transportation vision is developed and future transportation issues are avoided. To accomplish this, each development proposal (e.g. redevelopment of a single parcel, plat review, change of land use, expansion of a business or operation, etc.) should be evaluated for consistency with the following policies/standards.

1. Work with property owners and/or developers to remove and/or relocate existing driveway and field approaches off non-local roads.
2. Provide road and trail connectivity between adjacent neighborhoods and retail areas through Minor Collector and select Local roadways consistent with access spacing standards identified in Section 2.4.
3. Review/require access spacing that is consistent with this Transportation Plan.
4. Connect residential and non-residential areas.
5. Require turn lane on non-Local roads impacted by new development, including those that are not immediately adjacent.
6. Require off-site improvements, including those in other jurisdictions, where the existing transportation network will be directly impacted by new development, including where the development is not immediately adjacent. This could include but is not limited to paving roads, repairing surfaces, fixing sub-standard drainage, improving sight distances, etc.
7. Require the dedication of right-of-way for all required future transportation improvements identified in this Transportation Plan including trails, roads, bridges, transit facilities, drainage, utilities, and any other related improvement requiring use of a corridor/location.
8. Require the equitable participation in the construction of collector and arterial roads.
9. Review probable neighborhood traffic patterns, areas where excessive speed is possible, and the potential for pedestrian conflicts.
10. Require Minor Collector and select Local roadways to be constructed to property lines, or the corresponding amounts of money be escrowed, where stub streets are proposed to adjacent properties, but are not immediately warranted.

11. Require fees, construction participation, and/or cost participation proportionately to future required infrastructure such as overpasses, roundabouts, traffic signals, and other local, county, and/or state responsibilities as afforded by law and justifiable.
12. Require traffic impact studies, including the analysis of intersections to determine the need for and contribution to intersection improvements.
13. Incorporate into local ordinances land use and access strategies of the TH 19 Safety and Access Management Plan.

5.3.2 STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING TRANSIT ORIENTATED DEVELOPMENT

Several principles, objectives, and strategies identified in the Land Use Chapter of the Northfield Comprehensive Plan provide an interrelated web of relationships between creating the City's desired land use pattern and offering transportation choices and efficiency. This guidance includes encouraging a compact development pattern (Objective 3), creating residential areas with strong neighborhood qualities (Objective 4), guiding new commercial retail and office developments in a mixed use pattern (Objective 5), and improving transportation choices and efficiency (Objective 9). Goal 2 of the Transportation Plan states "Facilitate the movement of people goods, and services within and through the City on a safe, convenient, coordinated, and fiscally responsible network of routes using a variety of transportation modes." These guiding documents together provide a framework to promote a transit-oriented development (TOD) pattern and ultimately a more efficient and cost effective transit system.

To achieve the vision identified, it is recommended that the City pursue a study to identify specific criteria to guide development and evaluate if a proposed development meets transit-supportive criteria (e.g. density, road design, access, etc.). Criteria should be oriented toward the future, but based in reality and financially feasible, responsive to City goals and market forces, while reflective of TOD principles.

It is recommended that a study be conducted to identify and develop specific TOD development criteria. This study should include the partnership of Northfield Transit, as well as transit representatives from Mn/DOT and Rice and Dakota Counties.

5.4 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

Over the years, the City of Northfield has partnered with other transportation agencies on several regional transportation initiatives. Each of these initiatives is vital to the transportation system in Northfield and the region. It is recognized that the City of Northfield has a role in contributing to identifying and potentially participating in funding solutions, and that the City cannot independently address these opportunities and challenges. The following are the regional roadway, transit, and trail transportation initiatives or studies that should be undertaken in and around the City of Northfield in the upcoming years.

5.4.1 TH 19 SCOPING STUDY & TH 19 IMPROVEMENTS

As described in Section 3.5.2, a scoping study to evaluate corridor alignment options and environmental considerations is anticipated to be initiated by Mn/DOT in approximately 2009 between approximately Rice County CSAH 46 and 1.5 miles east of TH 56 in Goodhue County.

Local representatives continue to have ongoing discussions with legislators to raise awareness of this priority at the state level. While some funding is identified in Mn/DOT's Transportation Plan, it is not anticipated to meet the needs that will be identified in the study to be initiated in 2009/2010. Alternative forms of funding may be necessary to achieve the study findings and needed improvements in the Northfield area.

The City's role will be to continue to raise awareness of TH 19's condition and the need for improvements to the corridor from TH 3 to I-35, participate in the study, and incorporate findings as may be necessary. Additionally, it would be anticipated that future development and/or redevelopment along the corridor would be completed consistent with the approved study.

5.4.2 TH 246 JURISDICTIONAL TRANSFER

TH 246 north of CSAH 1 is identified in Section 4.2.4 as a corridor study that should be conducted with Mn/DOT and Rice County to discuss a potential jurisdictional transfer. This roadway is significant locally and perhaps for western Goodhue and eastern Rice County, but due to its lack of continuity it is not significant statewide. There is also local need and desire for multimodal infrastructure and urban design elements, both of which are not consistent with the rural highway design that currently exists. The proximity of adjacent residential land uses and schools present challenges to expand this corridor to provide more mobility. However, transferring the corridor to the City could allow the City to prioritize and complete necessary and desired improvements in a timeline that would likely occur sooner than Mn/DOT could prioritize the corridor for improvements. These types of improvements could include pavement rehabilitation, bikeway integration, and intersection improvements. It could also address other City priorities of improving multimodal accessibility between the school campuses, downtown, and residential areas. The study may need to consider how a potential jurisdictional transfer would impact county state aid rules and system continuity.

5.4.3 SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS FEASIBILITY STUDY

The City of Northfield has received a Safe Routes to School grant to develop a range of activities to improve the safety of children who walk and bike to three kindergarten through grade 5 schools and one middle school in Northfield and to introduce more children to get to school in those ways. The four schools targeted are the Northfield Middle, Greenvale Elementary, Sibley Elementary, and Bridgewater Elementary schools. The grant will assist in planning and developing improvements to existing facilities such as crosswalks and bike paths, identifying possible alternative facilities such as crossings at other locations, filling in gaps in the sidewalk/path network, and identifying other necessary improvements. Non-infrastructure activities will include strategies relating to enforcement, engineering, education, encouragement, and evaluation.

5.4.4 NORTHWEST NORTHFIELD HIGHWAY CORRIDOR BETWEEN TH 19 AND CSAH 23

This study is described in Section 3.5.3. It is anticipated that, at a minimum, the City's role will be to acquire right-of-way for the corridor through the platting process, manage access consistent with Minor Arterial standards, and require construction of roadway segments as development occurs. As outlined in Section 4.2.4, it is expected that upon completion of construction, Dakota County CSAH 23, between 320th and 80th Streets, and Rice County CSAH 43, between 80th Street and Forest Avenue, would transfer to the City's jurisdiction. The northwest corridor would become Rice and Dakota Counties' jurisdictional responsibility upon completion of construction.

5.4.5 LOCAL AND COMMUTER TRANSIT NEEDS STUDY

To achieve expanded transit service in the City of Northfield, including bus or potential future commuter rail, the City will need to lead the initiative to study and identify unmet local and commuter rider needs.

As described in Section 3.5.4, Dakota County's Draft Transit Plan does not envision extending transit service into the City of Northfield. The City will continue to work with the County to explore opportunities to expand routes to link with existing services to the north. Additionally, the City of Northfield approved Resolution 2007-131 requesting the following items be incorporated into the Dakota County Transit Plan

- Community service needs in the Northfield area that include intercity, regional, commuter and reverse commuter service, and service to the regional medical facility
- Transit connections to/from Northfield to existing public transit services in the metro area
- Recognition of the Northfield Transit multimodal hub as an opportunity to provide regional connections across county and city borders to enhance the transit network

- Partner with the City of Northfield to support the development of transit and transit-related infrastructure to provide integrated transit systems²

The Rice County Transit Study summarized in Section 3.5.7 describes the following study recommendations for the Northfield area

- Continue to manage the transit service within its urban area (City Service Option N2)
- Expand demand response service in terms of service hours and territory
- Provide service into the early evening on Monday through Saturday, operating between 6 AM to 8 PM
- Provide service on Sundays between 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
- Provide service into Dundas and perhaps to other outlying areas surrounding Northfield
- Establish a link to Jefferson Lines service, with Northfield Transit operating a connecting route to the Big Steer Travel Center located at the junction of TH 19 and I-35 (service is currently provided)
- Review current marketing efforts. Revise and reprint Northfield Transit brochure to include information on any new services instituted, including the link to Jefferson Lines. Materials should be available in both English and Spanish language editions. Look to expand marketing to reach broader markets through media advertising, such as the local newspaper and radio station, and the City web site and local cable access channel
- Implement a computer aided dispatch system for trip reservations
- Rural service of one round trip per day be provided between Lonsdale and Northfield and between Faribault and Northfield³

² City of Northfield. 2007. Northfield City Council Resolution 2007-131, December 17, 2007.

³ Rice County Transit Study. 2001. SRF Consulting Group, Inc. Pages 1, 57-59.

5.4.6 CSAH 1/NEW CANNON RIVER BRIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This Transportation Plan identifies two potential Cannon River crossing locations consistent with the CSAH 1 Corridor Preservation Study described in Section 3.5.4. One alternative is located at Jefferson Parkway and the other alternative follows the east leg of CSAH 1 at approximately 110th Street. The future environmental review to be completed for the corridor will identify one alignment to be pursued based on having the least impacts and being the most feasible to achieve. Prior to completion of the environmental review, the City will preserve right-of-way along both corridors. It is also anticipated that the City will have a role in participating in the funding of the design and construction of the bridge and some improvements.

5.4.7 MILL TOWNS TRAIL

The City's role in completing the Mill Towns Trail includes incorporating the trail into area development or redevelopment plans. Additionally, the Mill Towns Trail website states that the trail will be a gateway into the downtown so travelers have the option to experience the arts, cuisine, and shops before they pass on through. Dundas currently connects to Northfield with a city trail that runs along Armstrong Road/CSAH 78 and ends at Laurel Court.

From Laurel Court, the route passes over the Cannon River and under TH 3 along the east bank to the Fifth Street bridge and Water Street intersection. The City of Northfield will be constructing a transit station in 2009. The design will incorporate elements for the trailhead, including parking, bathroom facilities, and drinking fountain.

To assist trail users through town, "Share the Road" street signage will mark three blocks along Fifth Street between Water Street and Union Streets and along Union Street for one block between Fifth and Fourth Streets. Bike lanes have been painted on Fourth Street between Union and Prairie Streets."⁴

The City's Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan discusses that a significant planning issue will be identifying the most advantageous alignment for the trail through Northfield. Currently, the adopted alignment includes use of a bike lane/sidewalk from the downtown east along 4th Street. Given the perceived safety and lower recreational value of this segment, an alternate alignment providing the highest quality experience through the City was recommended to be explored. Three alternate alignment options are illustrated in the Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan. A preferred alignment is identified following the existing Union Pacific railroad line on the west side of the Cannon River, if it were ever abandoned, or locating the trail between the tracks and river.⁵

⁴ <http://www.milltownstrail.org/>. Retrieved on June 10, 2008.

⁵ Northfield Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan, 2008. Brauer & Associates, LTD. Page 4.18-4.19.

5.5 EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The City of Northfield receives regular requests to address transportation issues. While the City has a responsibility to provide transportation infrastructure and enforce traffic laws, it may not be feasible to accommodate every request. With limited financial resources, the City has a responsibility to its citizens to prioritize transportation investments relative to the benefit they provide. In addition, many transportation issues can not be addressed through infrastructure improvements. Issues such as motorist inattentiveness, disregard for traffic laws, and lack of awareness for pedestrian and bicycle user rights and responsibilities are some examples of issues the City is not able to engineer solution to resolve.

Education of the user is a key component to a successful transportation system. Drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians have a personal responsibility to make informed decisions while traveling on public infrastructure. All users are responsible for maintaining their alertness, exercising good judgment, and managing various situations within the roadway corridor. While each traveler has an objective to reach a certain destination safely and efficiently, they also have the responsibility to respect other travelers by obeying traffic laws and using transportation infrastructure as it was intended.

The City has a limited role in education of the transportation users. Individual traveler education has historically been the responsibility of individual user. Basic driver education required to become a licensed driver is available the Northfield Public Schools Community Education. More advanced driver education is available privately. Expansion of education opportunities through Community Education or other organizations is encouraged to build awareness for and better integrate the various transportation users.

The City does have a responsibility to provide reasonable enforcement of traffic laws. Enforcement is an effective method of encouraging safe travel for all modes of transportation. In addition, the City has a responsibility to provide reasonable traffic signing as a means to better communicate the type of service the corridor is intended to provide. A comprehensive traffic signing review is recommended to identify signing needs, confirm compliance with the MMUTCD, and remove conflicting and/or confusing signing.

The Northfield Area Task Force on Non-Motorized Transportation is a valuable volunteer organization that can be used to help promote and achieve many of the non-motorize transportation priorities. Building awareness, creating and providing educational materials and maps, and organizing non-motorized transportation events are all examples of the task force's on-going role in the community. City engineering and planning staff should work with the taskforce to identify annual goals that can be accomplished through a staff-task force partnership. Examples may include

- Obtain a "Bicycle Friendly Community" designation from the League of American Bicycles
- Organize an annual fundraiser to build awareness for and raise funds for necessary infrastructure improvements that enable non-motorized transportation (i.e., Share the Road signs, sidewalk extensions, bicycle parking/lockers)

5.6 POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING SOURCES

It is recommended in the short-term that the City of Northfield conduct a study to estimate funding contributions to complete identified improvements. This information could be used for capital improvement planning or assigning a development's proportionate fair share of roadway infrastructure improvement costs through an annexation agreement and/or development agreement.

Additionally, there are a number of various funding mechanisms available to support transportation projects these include the following.

1. **Federal Funding.** Northfield may apply for federal funds for highways through the Surface Transportation Program of the Federal Highway Trust Fund, through Mn/DOT's Areas Transportation Partnership (ATP). Solicitation occurs approximately every two years, with federal funding covering 80% of a project's cost. Types of projects funded include highway reconstruction, safety projects, trails which are part of projects, transit and park-and-ride projects. Obtaining this funding is highly competitive and selections are based on project costs and benefits provided.
2. **MSAS System.** The State of Minnesota, through the gas tax and license fees, collects funds to be used to construct and maintain the State's transportation system. Most of the funds collected are distributed for use on the State's Trunk Highway (TH) system, the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) system and the Municipal State Aid Street (MSAS) system. Of the funds available they are distributed 62% TH, 29% CSAH and 9% MSAS. Cities with a population above 5,000 are eligible to receive a portion of the MSAS funding.
3. **Mn/DOT Cooperative Funds.** The State of Minnesota has funds available to assist locally initiated cooperative projects that improve regional safety and mobility. Solicitations are due in September for project requests located in Dakota County and Mn/DOT Metro District of each year for construction the following year. For project requests located in Rice County and Mn/DOT District 6, the City is encouraged to set up a meeting with District 6 staff early in the planning process to discuss the potential project, including anticipated costs, proposed cost share split, and benefits to the state highway system.
4. **Minnesota Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program.** This program is available to increase the safety at at-grade railroad crossings. Funds may be used for the installation of warning devices, signal installation and upgrades, signs and pavement markings, crossing closures, roadway relocations, lighting, crossing alignments and grade improvements and grade separations.

5. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Grants. Various federal and state grants are available for the development or reconstruction of trails. Typically grants require a 50% match and illustration that the trail is not only of local importance but also of regional significance. Grant programs through the DNR for trail projects include the Federal Recreational Trail Grant Program, Regional Trail Grant Program, Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, and Local Trail Connections Program.
6. Collector and Local Streets. Developers may be required to fund the entire cost of Minor and Major Collector Roadways, as well as local streets as a part of their development fees.