

City of Northfield, Minnesota	Policy Number:
PUBLIC WORKS (ENGINEERING)	Adopted: 11/18/2002 – Resolution 2002-329
RECONSTRUCTION SIDEWALK POLICY	Revised:

ITEM: Sidewalk Policy Review

SUMMARY: The current City Sidewalk Policy for Street Reconstruction Projects was adopted by the Council on November 18, 2002. The adopted resolution is attached. The policy was based on satisfying the transportation goals and objectives related to pedestrian traffic and connectivity.

As additional history, in 1996 the City Council proposed a sidewalk construction program for implementation throughout the city. A referendum establishing a sidewalk assessment district necessary to fund the improvements associated with the program was defeated. There is still some misconception among residents that the defeat of the referendum removed sidewalks from being included in any street reconstruction projects. One reason for adopting the Sidewalk Policy in 2002 was to clarify this misunderstanding.

Currently, the new land use ordinances being developed as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan will identify the requirements for the building of sidewalks in new subdivisions. The current design standards for new construction require both sides of collector streets and at least one side of residential streets except for cul-de-sacs.

Submitted By: Joel Walinski, Director of Public Services

**CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION #2002-329**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD,
MINNESOTA ADOPTING A SIDEWALK POLICY FOR RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

WHEREAS, The City's Comprehensive Plan identifies goals and objectives related to the development of a pedestrian walkway system throughout the City of Northfield; and,

WHEREAS, It is most cost-effective to include additional sidewalks as part of roadway reconstruction projects; and,

WHEREAS, Each street reconstruction project is unique and requires retrofitting for sidewalks with some flexibility; and,

WHEREAS, The proposed policy provides for a consistent approach to including sidewalks for the current and future health and safety of the community's pedestrians.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THAT:

The City Council of the City of Northfield hereby approves the following Sidewalk Policy for Reconstruction Projects, stating that sidewalks shall be:

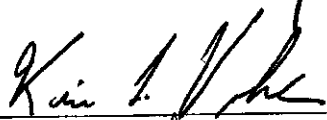
1. Located on at least one side of the street in infrastructure reconstruction projects to accommodate the pedestrian safety needs of the greater Northfield community. The side of the street selected for the sidewalk will be determined based upon the best access points as well as design criteria such as location of existing right of way, sun exposure, and adequate boulevard width as determined by the City Engineer.
2. Located with priority given to school walking routes identified by the Northfield School District and to sidewalks identified in the Transportation plan.
3. Placed on both sides of a street where existing sidewalk is located on both sides of the street.
4. Placed at least 25 feet from existing homes, except where existing sidewalk is being replaced that is located less than 25 feet from an existing home.
5. Placed with minimal impact to significant trees and landscaping.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Northfield on this 18th day of November 2002.



Mayor


ATTEST:



Council Member



Finance Director/City Clerk



Council Member

VOTE: Y BOND Y COVEY A GRAHAM Y POKORNEY
Y LINSTROTH Y MALECHA Y VOHS

ITEM: Consideration of Sidewalk Installation Policy for Street Reconstruction Projects

SUBMITTED BY: Randy Peterson, Director of Public Works/City Engineer

REVIEWED BY: Susan Hoyt, City Administrator
Maren Swanson, City Attorney (underway)

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The city council is being asked to consider adopting a sidewalk policy that provides for sidewalks to be included on at least one side of the street for streets being reconstructed. New subdivisions are required to include sidewalks. A sidewalk policy is being proposed for the city's infrastructure replacement projects because sidewalks provide for the health and safety of pedestrians throughout the community. The proposed location of the sidewalk would account for current and future pedestrian travel throughout the area being reconstructed. Sidewalks are consistent with the city's comprehensive plan. Costs for retrofitting sidewalks into existing neighborhoods are included in the infrastructure reconstruction costs. The abutting property owner is responsible for snow removal on new sidewalks. Prompt action on this policy is recommended because the Greenvale reconstruction project's design is nearing; including a sidewalk impacts to the design of the street project. If the policy is adopted a 4,000 foot sidewalk on the north side of the street from Lincoln Street to the bridge over the railroad tracks is planned (see Attachment 1- map). Although the cost varies, it is estimated that it adds about 5% to the total project cost for Greenvale Avenue. Since assessment amounts are based on a pre-established rate independent of the total construction cost, the cost for sidewalks does not affect the assessment amount for a reconstruction project.

INFORMATION:

History. In 1996 the city council proposed a sidewalk construction program for implementation throughout the city. A referendum establishing sidewalk assessment districts necessary to fund this effort was defeated. Since that time sidewalks on reconstruction projects are discussed on an individual project basis. Retrofitting sidewalks to a neighborhood is always challenging. Adding to this challenge is the misperception of the public that the referendum defeated sidewalks from being included in street reconstruction projects. Every effort is made to clarify this misunderstanding.

Proposed policy:

The proposed policy satisfies the transportation goals and objectives related to pedestrian flow and safety in the city's 2000 comprehensive plan (see Attachment 2). Sidewalks shall be:

1. Located on at least one side of the street in infrastructure reconstruction projects to accommodate the pedestrian safety needs of the greater Northfield community. The side of the street selected for the sidewalk will be determined based upon the best access points as well as design criteria such as location of existing right of way, sun exposure, and adequate boulevard width as determined by the City Engineer.
2. Located with priority given to school walking routes identified by the Northfield School District and to sidewalks identified in the Transportation plan.
3. Placed at least 25 feet from existing homes.
4. Placed with minimal impact to significant trees and landscaping.
5. Placed noting that snow removal and long-term maintenance of sidewalks shall be the responsibility of the abutting property owner, unless the sidewalk is identified as a city trail for city snow removal or abuts City property.

Application of policy: Each street reconstruction project is unique and requires retrofitting for sidewalks with some flexibility. The proposed policy provides for a consistent approach to including sidewalks for the current and future health and safety of the community's pedestrians.

Future Decisions:

Staff will also be exploring the financial feasibility of reinstating a 50/50 cost share program into this policy. We will report back to the Council after we have determined the estimated annual costs and proposed funding source for such a program.

RECOMMENDATION: The staff recommends adoption of the sidewalk policy for street reconstruction projects to assure that the health and safety of pedestrians in the Northfield community will be addressed on a routine basis. The policy would

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

Report from Randy Peterson, Public Works Director

Questions from City Council to staff

Discussion among City Council

Consider adopting a sidewalk policy (Resolution 2002-329)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Greenvale Avenue Project Area
2. Transportation goals and objectives related to pedestrian travel and sidewalks (Chapter 8, 2001 Comprehensive Plan)

The cost vs. benefit of a commuter rail line to a community is often debated, but one indisputable fact is that commuter rail provides another way for Northfield residents to get to jobs outside of the community while expanding Northfield's labor force. Although commuter rail service to Northfield is several years away, the potential of service beginning within the next 20 years is not out of the realm of possibility. At the public meetings in Spring of 2000, the majority of the participants indicated their belief that Northfield should encourage commuter rail as an alternative travel mode connecting jobs and housing to the greater region.

Regional bus service to the Twin Cities area and other Midwest destinations used to be provided to the City of Northfield via TH19 and I-35 but has been eliminated. This service provided a valuable alternative for regional travel to the City of Northfield. Reinstating its service to the City of Northfield would be an asset to the community.

Transportation Goals

The City of Northfield's Transportation Goals include the following:

1. Effectively manage the transportation needs of a vibrant, growing town and complement the attractive and livable qualities its residents, businesses and visitors currently enjoy.
2. Facilitate the movement of people and goods within and through the City on a safe, convenient, coordinated and affordable network of routes using a variety of transportation modes.
3. Provide self-sufficient mobility for all Northfield citizens.
4. Balance transportation needs with significant environmental factors, desired land uses, and other goals as identified in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions including Rice and Dakota Counties, adjacent townships, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation for regional transportation planning initiatives.
6. Continue to develop an extensive network of trails and pedestrian walkways that provide accessibility to all residences, connect important gathering places and provide passage and enjoyment through natural resource areas.

Transportation Objectives

The City of Northfield's Transportation Objectives include the following:

Pedestrian walkways

1. Develop a pedestrian walkway system throughout the City to provide pedestrian access to residential, educational, commercial, employment, and recreational destinations in the community, especially within the downtown area.
2. Develop a plan for construction of pedestrian walkways in areas where pedestrian walkways are lacking.
3. Construct pedestrian walkways in all new developments.
4. Incorporate pedestrian walkway policies into development, site plans, and infrastructure improvements in existing developments.

Bicycle Routes and Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails

5. Provide a trail system, which will connect bicycle and pedestrian traffic generators, such as schools, colleges, parks, residential areas, etc.
6. Include multi-purpose trail planning when planning pedestrian walkways and road systems.
7. Designate and implement bike routes on City streets to promote the use of bicycles as an appropriate local, albeit seasonal, mode of transportation within the City.
8. Designate recreational bicycle and pedestrian trails to and through parks, along scenic waterways and other passive park and natural areas, and to the Mill Towns Trail as that is developed.
9. Incorporate bicycle parking facilities into development plans.
10. Follow the design guidelines as established in the 1998 Northfield Trail Master Plan for the design and installation of future trails.

Parking

11. Ensure adequate parking in the downtown area to support public activities and events, private business uses and residences.
12. Work with the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation, Heritage Preservation Commission, downtown businesses, and the Chamber of Commerce to identify and evaluate cost effective, long-term solutions to parking problems in the downtown while maintaining its historic character.