



Date of City Council Meeting: July 17, 2012

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Complete Streets Task Force
Rhonda Pownell, City Council
Betsey Buckheit, City Council
Steve Rhol, Planning Commission
Joey Robison, Planning Commission
Joe Gransee-Bowman, Environmental Quality Commission
George Kinney, Environmental Quality Commission
Joe Stapf, Public Works Director

RE: Complete Streets Draft Policy

Action Requested:

The City Council is being asked to approve Resolution #2012-064, which will adopt the proposed City of Northfield Complete Streets Policy.

Update:

The Complete Streets Task Force was initiated through Resolution 2012-017 on February 12, 2012. The Complete Streets Task Force met three times with Public Works Director Joe Stapf. We reviewed Complete Streets policies from other communities, policy elements identified by the national Complete Streets Coalition, and looked at some images of Northfield's streets to better understand what might be possible.

Other City's policies varied considerably from one paragraph statements to large documents with detailed design guidelines. The Task Force quickly determined that Northfield's policy should be a concise statement to direct the project design process rather than attempting to provide design details.

The draft policy attempts to be concise, yet also clear and comprehensive. The policy applies to all streets within the City limits, including those under County or MNDot jurisdiction, includes stormwater management, anticipates how any exceptions to the policy could be made, and recognizes the significance of Northfield's street network to transportation, public health, and sense of place.

Future work:

In addition to adopting this policy, there are two items which still need attention to make implementing the policy easier and ensure consistency with other City documents.

Revise current plans and regulations:

For most purposes, incorporating this policy by reference into Northfield's Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Plan, and Surface Water Management Plan will be sufficient. Several more specific updates are needed for the Land Development Code. Pedestrian access requirements and subdivision design standards in Article 3 of the Land Development Code should be revised to refer to this policy and to provide flexibility and context-sensitive planning for new streets.

Performance measures:

In order to be able to determine the success of this policy and quantify our accomplishments, national Complete Streets policy analysts recommend including performance measures. Examples of simple performance measures could include:

- annual increase in total miles of on-street bicycle routes defined by streets with marked bicycle lanes or bike route signage
- linear feet of new pedestrian accommodations (sidewalk, multi-use trail, crossings, etc.)
- number of new street trees planted
- reduction in sidewalk gaps
- completion of Safe Routes to School Projects
- completion of GreenStep Cities action steps

Many of these performance measures would benefit from having current data – such as total miles of on-street bicycle routes Northfield has established up to 2012 - from which to measure improvement, but the City could also start benchmarking now and measure success from 2012 forward. Having benchmarks could also help the City set goals for annual improvement and allocate resources efficiently.

Attachments:

1. Resolution 2012-064
2. Complete Streets Policy