Chapter 6
Transportation Plan

6.0 Introduction

Many issues were identified through the neighborhood planning meetings held in 2007. The issues focused generally on future maintenance of roads after the street reconstruction projects are complete; traffic control along many of the major north-south corridors; affect of the Northstar commuter rail transit station on transit options; connectivity of walking paths and sidewalks; and better east-west routes within the City.

Purpose

The purpose of the Fridley transportation system is to provide a safe, cost effective, convenient and efficient means of moving both people and goods within and through the community and region. The primary emphasis of Fridley's transportation plan will be to manage, preserve and maintain the existing roadway network and expand the mobility alternatives available to the community.

The principal elements of Fridley's transportation plan include descriptions of the existing system, analysis of the existing system, and the future system. The Existing system covers the roadway, railway, transit facilities and services, transportation cycling routes, and sidewalks and trails. The analysis section includes the traffic analysis zone projections and trip type and impacts. The future transportation system section covers future multimodal plans. This chapter concludes with goals and objectives, implementation steps, and a summary.

Highway 65 and 73rd Avenue NE

Regional Setting

Throughout the Metropolitan Region, transportation has become an extremely important topic of conversation and debate. It will continue to be at the planning forefront for many years to come as the region and its communities deal with urban growth and development. Impacts caused by increasing traffic congestion at the regional level (interstates and major highways) are spilling onto the local street networks of local communities and neighborhoods and affecting the quality of life of the entire metropolitan area.

A well-funded transit system must be a critical element of the Twin Cities region's strategic plan for economic competition. Traffic congestion is one of the problems that can most quickly diminish a region's quality of life, but transit can provide additional choices for individuals who need to get around but do not want to spend time stuck in traffic. Transit is also important because it can support more compact and mixed-use forms of development that protect natural areas, reduce air and water pollution, and promote a sense of community and civic engagement.

As the region continues to grow, pressures for an expanded roadway system also increase. However, the ability of the region to expand the roadway system is fiscally (and spatially) limited. In addition, the effectiveness of reducing traffic congestion by expanding the physical roadway is highly debatable. Therefore, the region and its communities are challenged to provide alternative strategies that minimize traffic congestion, improve mobility and safety and enhance the overall quality of life.

6.1 Existing Roadways

The City of Fridley, being a fully developed community, has a mature roadway system. Transportation demand occurs strongly in a north-south direction. This daily demand is highlighted by commuter trips to and from the Minneapolis central business district by Fridley residents and residents to the north and east of Fridley. The City has three arterial north-south roadway corridors, TH 65, University Avenue (TH 47), and East River Road (CSAH 1). East-west travel is sub-regional and local in nature with the exception of Interstate Highway 694 located in the southern part of Fridley.

Collector road, 53rd Avenue NE, connects neighborhoods to business and commercial centers

Typically, roadways are identified by what "role" they play in the transportation system. This role is defined according to a roadway's physical design, traffic load and capacity, land use patterns served by the roadway and the roadway's local and regional function.

Functional Classification

The Metropolitan Council uses a "functional classification" system for various roadways to assist in metropolitan area transportation planning. The Metropolitan Council uses a roadway's functional class to determine roadway design, speed limits, and access guidelines. Criteria important in the selection of a roadways functional classification include land use, accessibility, trip types, roadway spacing, and system connections. The functional classification system of the Fridley roadway system follows the Metropolitan Council guidelines and characteristics.

Descriptions of functional classifications for the roadway system:

Principal Arterials are comprised of the major roadways that make up the metropolitan highway system. These roadways typically consist of interstates or freeways and in some cases divided highways such as TH 65. The main role of the principal arterial roadway is to connect the region with other intrastate and interstate attractions and to connect major trip generators and receivers such as major business concentrations, central business districts, and Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. The emphasis on Principal Arterials is on mobility rather than accessibility. Access to Principal Arterials is limited to interchanges and intersections with other arterials or major collector roadways. Non-freeway Principal Arterial routes are eligible for federal funding.

A and B Minor Arterials are the other categories of arterial roadways in the highway system. "A" Minor Arterials are more regionally significant and support mobility at the sub-regional level thus qualifying as a federally fundable roadway. An example of an A Minor roadway is University Avenue (TH 47). B Minor Arterials on the other hand are less significant on the regional level but still serve an important role in regional mobility. An example of a B Minor Arterial is Osborne Road (CSAH 8). The emphasis on Minor Arterials is still primarily on mobility, however, some access is allowed at major business concentrations.

Collectors are primarily made up of the streets that connect neighborhoods to other neighborhoods and to major business and commercial concentrations. Collectors usually connect to major or minor arterials and are allowed greater levels of access than arterial roadways; however, access should still be limited to major development concentrations. A good example of a collector street is 73rd Avenue.

Local streets generally are the feeders to the collectors providing the greatest level of accessibility from residential and business areas to the roadway system. They generally serve short trips at low speeds and for the most part are City owned with some privately owned streets.

Jurisdiction

Roadways are organized according to their jurisdictional responsibility (federal, state, county, city or private). Jurisdiction is determined by characteristics such as roadway length, function, design, and daily traffic volumes. Table 6.1 illustrates the relationship between functional classification and jurisdiction of roadways in Fridley. Most arterial roadways fall under the jurisdiction of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) or Anoka County while most local roadways are the responsibility of the City.

Table 6.1: Existing 2006 Roadway Functional Classification and Jurisdiction

Roadway Segment	Functional Classification	Jurisdiction	Thru Lanes
Interstate 694	Principal Arterial	Federal	6*
US Trunk Highway 65 (from I-694 north)	Principal Arterial	State	4
Central Ave (US Trunk Highway 65)(from I-694 south)	"A" Minor Arterial	State	4
University Ave (US TH 47)	"A" Minor Arterial	State	4
East River Road (CSAH 1)	"A" Minor Arterial	County	4
Mississippi Street (CSAH 6) (from E. River Rd to Central Ave)	"B" Minor Arterial	County	4
Main Street (County Road 102)(from 57th south to County Road 2)	"B" Minor Arterial	County	2
Osborne Road (CSAH 8)	"B" Minor Arterial	County	4
Rice Creek Road (CSAH 6)	"B" Minor Arterial	County	2
57th Ave (CR 102) (Main St to University Ave)	"B" Minor Arterial	County	4
44th Ave (CSAH 2) (E. River Rd to Main St)	"B" Minor Arterial	County	4
49th Ave (CR 104) from Main St to TH 47	"B" Minor Arterial	County	2
Central Ave (CSAH 35 from I-694 north)	Collector	County	2
73rd Ave	Collector	City	4
69th Ave	Collector	City	2
Mississippi Street (County Road 106)(from Central to New Brighton Border)	Collector	County	2
61st Ave	Collector	City	2
Gardena Ave	Collector	City	2
53rd Ave	Collector	City	2
Main Street (from 57th Ave to 61st Ave)	Collector	City	2
7th Street NE (from Mississippi Street South)	Collector	City	2
West Moore Lake Drive	Collector	City	2
Other Roads	Local	City or Private	2

Source: Anoka County 2015 Transportation Plan July 1998, BRA Inc., and field inspections

* I-694 west of TH 65 has 3 through-lanes in each direction, plus additional auxiliary lanes.

Figures for Existing Roadways

Inserted below are the following figures:

Figure 6.1 Existing 2007 Roadway Functional Classification;

Figure 6.2 Existing 2007 Roadway Jurisdiction; and

Figure 6.3 Existing 2007 Roadway Traffic Lanes.

Figure 6.1: Existing 2007 Roadway Functional Classifications

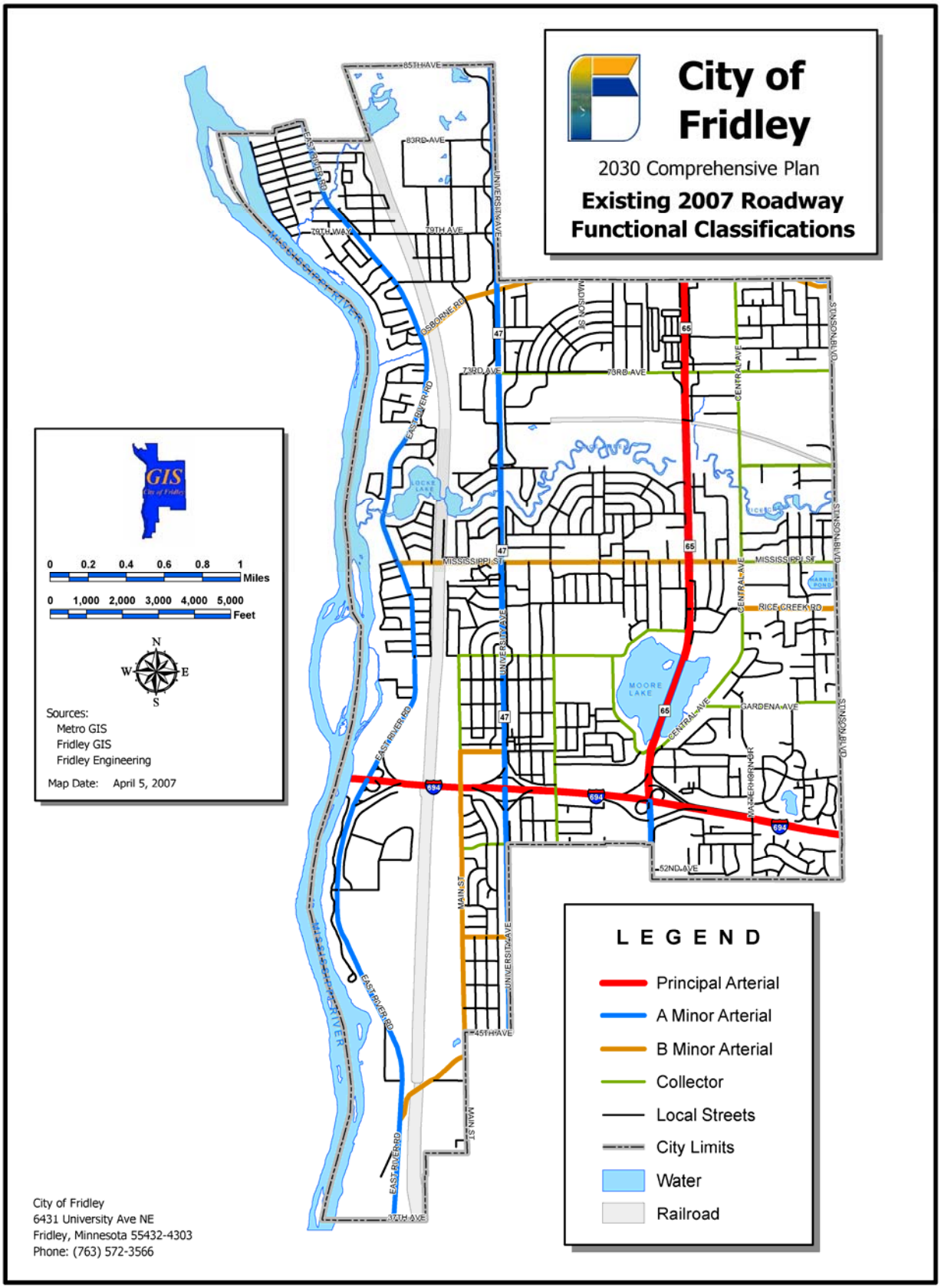


Figure 6.2: Existing 2007 Roadway Jurisdiction

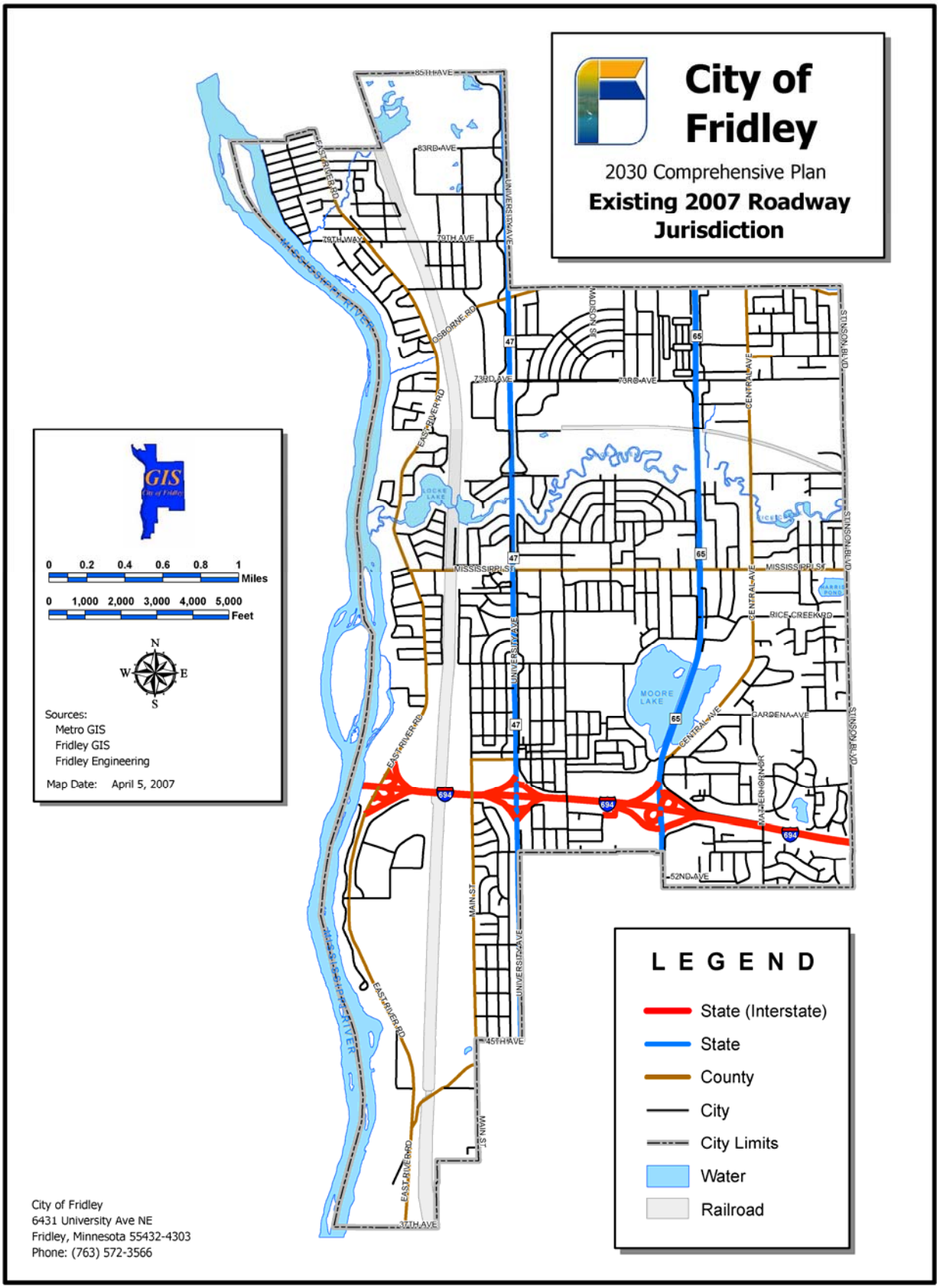
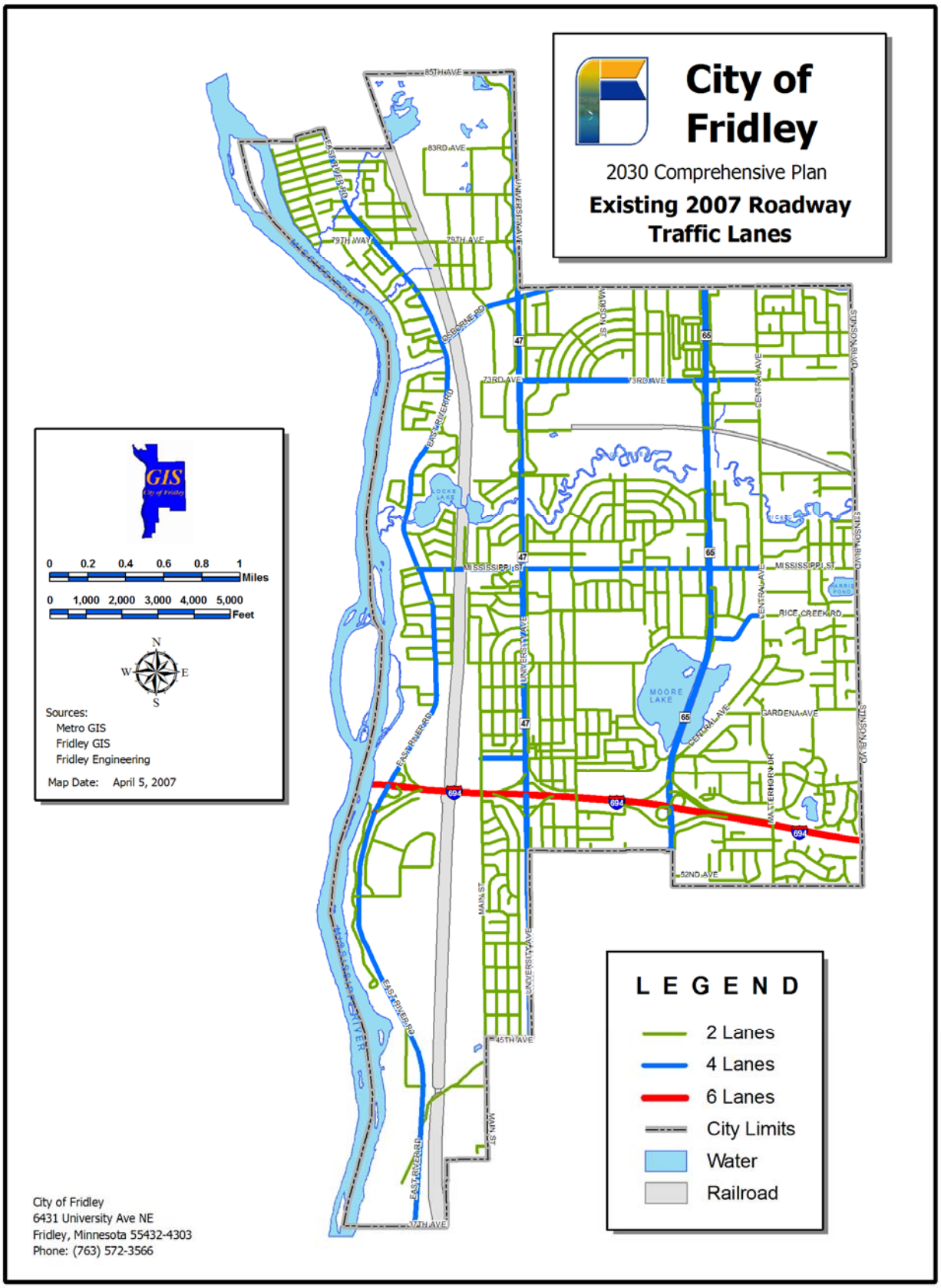


Figure 6.3: Existing 2007 Roadway Traffic Lanes



6.2 Rail Transportation and Aviation

Rail has historically played a significant role in the Fridley transportation system primarily as a mover of goods. The railroads were originally built in the middle to late 1800s connecting parts of the Midwest to a growing center of commerce and trade in Minneapolis. Located along the Mississippi River, Minneapolis became a milling town and the railroads were built to move the goods from the river cities further inland. At that time railroads were also used as a means of moving people from villages in and out of the city, however, the use of automobiles and buses has virtually eliminated passenger trains. Today, freight traffic remains heavy and railroad companies have made significant investments in infrastructure to support rail use. Recent pressures and investments have re-ignited the prospective use of railroads as passenger trains carrying commuters into and out of the Twin Cities central business district. Both commuter rail and light rail are being discussed and planned for within the City of Fridley, Anoka County and the region.

Descriptions of the different rail transportation components are as follow:

The Movement of Goods

Class I - The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company owns and operates a major railroad (Class I as defined in the Metropolitan Council's *Transportation Policy Plan*) with a railway switching yard within the City of Fridley. The switching yard facility is located between Main Street and East River Road in the southwest quadrant of the City with tracks running in a north-south direction through the entire length of the City. Spurs branch off of this railway to serve industrial companies along Fridley's industrial corridor.

Class III - The Minnesota Commercial Railway Company maintains a regional rail line into the City of Fridley, primarily to serve the shipping needs of Cummins Corporation. This is a short track that originates from a junction with the Canadian Pacific Railway in New Brighton and terminates in the central portion of Fridley at Minnesota Rail Transfer near University Avenue. This railway is designated as a Class III railway by the Metropolitan Council's *Transportation Policy Plan* due to its limited use and duration.

The Movement of People

Currently, the Class I railways in Fridley are used primarily for freight travel. There is an Amtrak passenger train route that uses the BNSF tracks through Fridley for the *Empire Builder* route from Chicago to Seattle. This line runs from St. Paul to St. Cloud once per day and southbound once daily also.

Commuter Rail - This type of passenger rail service involves a passenger train running on the same tracks as the existing freight trains. Commuter trains run essentially into a City during the morning rush hours and depart from the city in the evening rush hours. This commuter rail service would cater primarily to workday commuters, but, reverse commuting is being established in many cities throughout the U.S.

The Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail Project

The BNSF lines running through Fridley will be used for commuter rail service. This type of passenger rail service will involve a passenger train running on the same BNSF tracks as existing freight trains. Commuter trains would run weekdays into the City during the morning rush hours into downtown Minneapolis and depart from downtown in the evening rush hours heading northward through the City of Fridley. There will also be one reverse commute train during the morning and evening rush hours. Occasional weekend services may also be provided at a later date upon approval by BNSF. The Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA), including representation from the City of Fridley, has studied this project. The Northstar Corridor is a 40-mile transportation corridor, which runs along TH 10/47 from downtown Minneapolis to the Big Lake area. The commuter rail will stop in six cities: Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Fridley and Minneapolis. With the exception of the downtown Minneapolis station, all of the stations will have park and ride facilities. According to MN DOT, the commuter rail service is expected to begin in Late 2009.

Figure 6.4 Northstar Corridor Route

Source: Northstar Corridor Development Association

This is the fastest growing corridor in the state and has been identified by MnDOT as one of the corridors with the highest potential for successful commuter rail service. The Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail will have intermodal connections to other transit services, such as light rail, busing, biking or car pooling, within the rail corridor and to future transit corridors in the metropolitan area.

The commuter rail service will potentially serve as another means for residents to commute to Minneapolis, or more importantly, will allow commuters who live in outlying suburbs to

commute to their workplaces in Fridley. For example, Medtronic Inc. has already filed a letter of support with the NCDA for this type of service based on the location of their employees.

Fridley's station site is designated to be located near of 61st Avenue and 61st Way. The station site is planned to be accessed from both sides of the rail tracks form East River Road and University Avenue. The site is planned to include a 595 vehicle park and ride facility. Due to the increased cost of securing use of BNSF train tracks for the entire life of the Northstar Commuter Rail project, the NCDA currently does not have all of the funding necessary to complete the Fridley station. The NCDA is working with local, state and federal officials to secure the remaining funding for the Fridley station, and still hopes to complete the station in time for Northstar's planned launch in late 2009.

Aviation

The Metropolitan Land Planning Act requires local governments to include policies for land use encompassing and surrounding airports within the seven county metropolitan area. The Aviation Policy Plan, an element of the Metropolitan Development Guide, establishes policy for local communities to incorporate into local compressive plans. At the regional level, these policies are intended to:

- Resolve airport/community land-use compatibility issues around all airports in the regional system.
- Promote economic renewal and competitiveness of the region in the international market.

  The City is not within the influence area of any metro system airport; however it is within the region's general airspace that needs to be protected from potential obstructions to air navigation.

The Aviation Chapter of the Metropolitan Development Guide (MDG) includes policies on protection of the region's airspace. These policies support the need to include both Federal and State safety standards, which must be a major consideration in the planning, design, maintenance and operation of air transportation facilities and services.

The City will apply the following policy in order to protect the region's general air space:

- Ensure its local codes and ordinances are consistent with state laws that regulate height of structures that may obstruct general airspace. The current statutory language is found within Minnesota State Statutes 360 and Aeronautics Rules and Regulations 8800.1200 *Criteria for Determining Air Navigation Obstructions.*
- Notify the State Commissioner of Transportation 30 days in advance of any proposal involving the construction or alteration that would exceed a height of 200 feet above ground level, or any construction or alteration of greater height than an imaginary surface extending upward and outward at a slope of 100:1 from the nearest point of the nearest runway of a public airport.

  The City has one heliport located at Unity Hospital, 500 Osborne Road. The landing pad is on the north side of the building.

6.3 Public Transit Facilities and Services

Public transit provides the community with an alternative means of travel to automobile or pedestrian travel. Transit services in the City of Fridley include local and regional bus services. The primary provider of transit services is the Metropolitan Council through its Metro Transit division. Fridley is within Market Area II. Metro Transit provides both express and non-express bus services to Fridley and

the metropolitan region. Metro Transit is funded by regional taxes levied on cities that fall within the Transit Taxing District, which the City of Fridley is entirely within. The Anoka County Traveler and Anoka County Transit also provide bus services on a more local level. Metro Mobility and the Anoka County Traveler together provide paratransit services to those of the public that are unable to use the fixed route system as required by the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Agencies

Anoka County Transit has established limited fixed routes, which generally connect major transit hubs with major trip generators such as County facilities, major employers, educational institutions and retail hubs. Routes 805 and 831 serve the City of Fridley through the Northtown Shopping Center and are scheduled to provide timed transfers to Metro Transit bus routes.

Anoka County Traveler *(Dial-a-Ride)* provides transit services based upon demand primarily through dial-a-ride services where the consumer calls in advance for a ride and an Anoka County Traveler vehicle is dispatched. The Anoka County Traveler has limited service hours and can provide coordinated transfers to Anoka County Transit and Metro Transit bus routes. The entire City of Fridley is within the dial-a-ride service area.

Metro Transit Services Options for market Area II include regular-route locals, all-day express, small vehicle circulators, special needs paratransit (ADA, seniors), and ridesharing. Metro Transit provides bus service to Fridley through several routes and the use of Park and Ride lots.

The following are the major bus service routes serving Fridley (see **Figure 6.5**):

- Route 10 loops through the City of Fridley traveling northbound on TH 65 then to Old Central Avenue through Northtown shopping center and returning southbound on University Avenue. Route 10 runs continually throughout the day providing hourly transit services to downtown Minneapolis.

- Route 25 provides services to Fridley through adjacent communities of New Brighton and Spring Lake Park. This route also eventually connects with downtown Minneapolis and Northtown Shopping Center. This route runs throughout the day with a focus on peak periods.

- Route 824 is a limited stop express route that runs on weekdays only from the Northtown Transit Station to downtown Minneapolis along University Avenue through Fridley at 30 minute intervals during rush hour. It services Unity Hospital in Fridley as one of its stops.

- Route 829 follows TH 65 southbound in the morning peak period carrying commuters into downtown Minneapolis and returning during the evening peak period. Services are provided to the park and ride lot at St. Phillips Church north of Moore Lake. This route only runs during peak periods.

- Route 852 follows East River Road through Fridley serving Anoka County and downtown Minneapolis Monday-Saturday. This route primarily is a northbound route originating in downtown Minneapolis in the morning and acting as a reverse commute to Fridley. Fridley residents can utilize this route to travel to suburban destinations north of Fridley. Once this route

gets to Anoka, it returns to downtown Minneapolis hourly as an express route. Route 852 also operates on holidays and weekends. It only stops at major park-n-ride lots and does not stop in Fridley south of I-694.

- Route 854 follows University Avenue northbound from downtown Minneapolis and returns to Minneapolis via I-94 express during a.m. and runs the same route in reverse order during p.m. peak periods. Primary users of Route 854 are commuters destined to Minneapolis Central Business District. Route 854 connects to Northtown Shopping Center and to destinations further north in Blaine and Coon Rapids.

Figure 6.5 shows the Existing Transit Services and Facilities in Fridley. Existing park and ride lots are located at St. Phillips Church, TH 65 at West Moore Lake Drive, 20 parking spaces reserved by Metro Transit; and St. Williams Church, TH 47 at 61st Avenue NE, 20 parking spaces reserved by Metro Transit. Unauthorized *hide and ride* lots are located at some religious institutions or commercial shopping centers close to major bus lines. Other park and ride sites outside the city limits, but serving Fridley residents, are Foley Boulevard Park and Ride and Northtown Transit Hub. Two future park and ride sites are proposed at the Fridley Northstar Station.

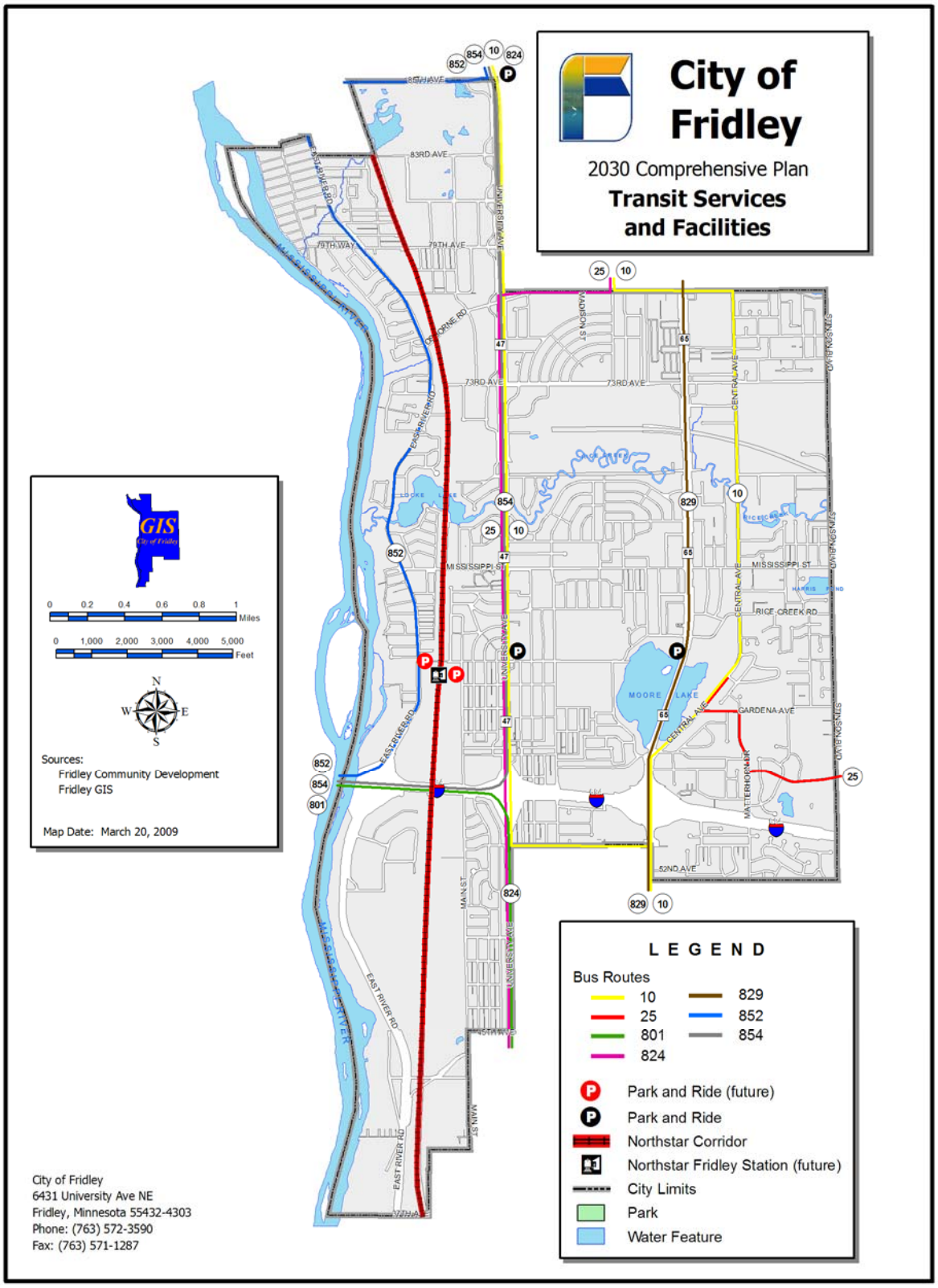
The revised *Transportation Policy Plan* adopted by the Metropolitan Council in 2004 envisions significant improvements in the bus system. Improvements are to aid their goal to increase transit ridership 50 percent by 2020 and double it by 2030. Improvements could include new express bus routes, arterial corridor enhancements, suburb-to-suburb service, transit stations, park and ride lots, and other features. Metropolitan Council's plans for transit support facilities show plans for future bus shoulder lanes on both sides of Highway 65 through Fridley like those which already exist on University Avenue.

While the City of Fridley would welcome added bus service to the community, we see a more pressing need of enhancing the transit stops we have in place for existing service. Metro Transit provides bus shelters and benches along major bus routes such as TH 65, University Avenue and East River Road (See **Figure 6.6**). Many bus stops, however, lack a bench or a raised paved separation from traffic areas. Some bus stops require a rider to stand in the street while they wait for a bus. Other bus stops have no paved access leading to them, requiring riders to hike through highway ditches and snow banks to access the stop.

Private Transit

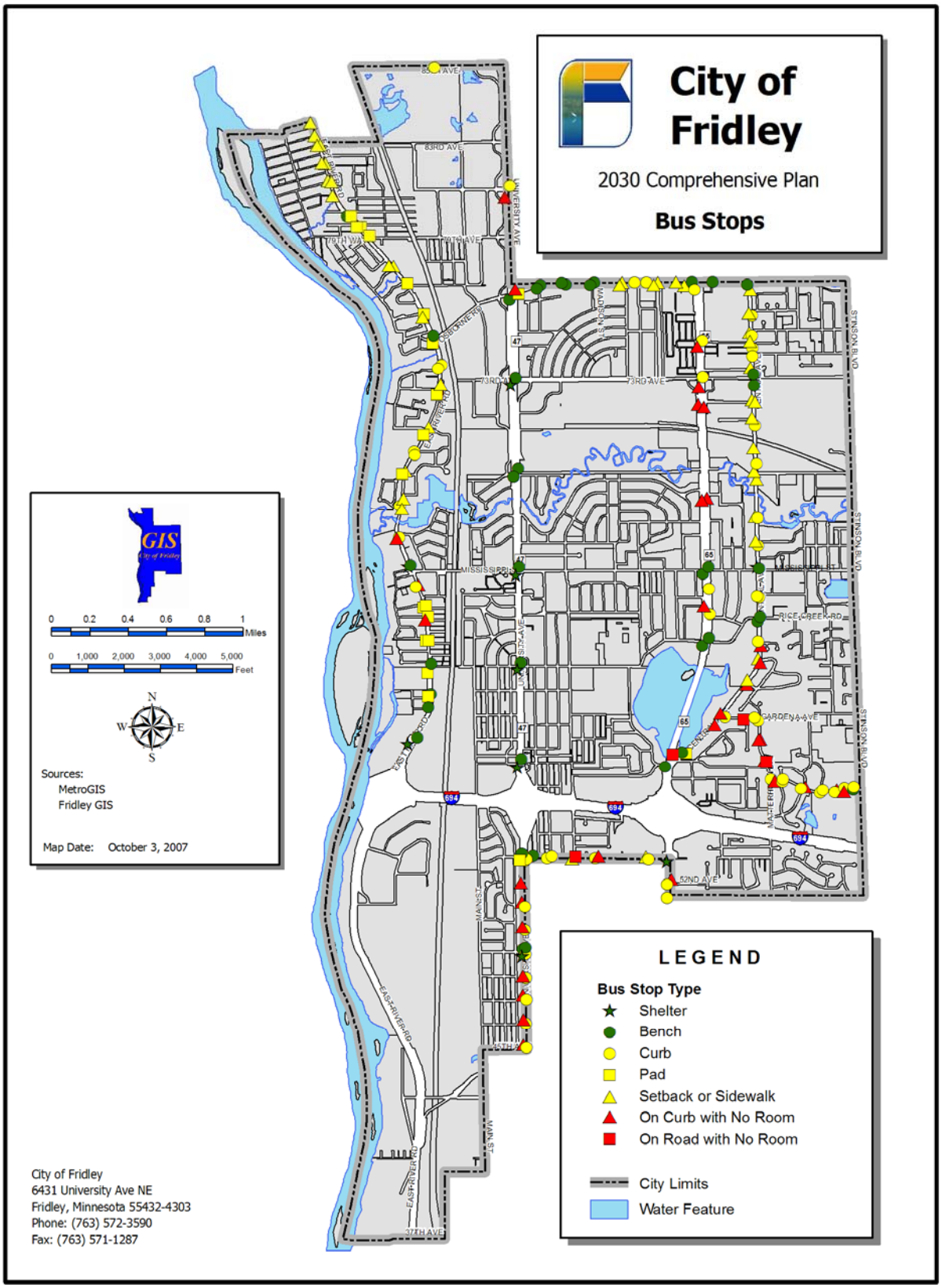
The private sector also provides a limited amount of transit services, primarily through taxi and bus/van charter companies. The operation and capital expenditures of these local transit services are generally small, producing a minimal impact on citywide transportation patterns.

Figure 6.5 Existing Transit Services and Facilities



Source: *Metro Transit*. July 2007, Metro Transit.

Figure 6.6 Existing Bus Stop Facilities



6.4 Transportation Bicycling, Recreational Trails, and Pedestrian Walkways

Transportation Bicycling

Bicycling and mass transit are both antidotes to the congestion and pollution caused by automobile use. However, for many travelers, neither form of transport alone can compete with the auto's combination of range, flexibility and convenience. However, if bikes and transit work as a team, they make a formidable alternative to the car—just as flexible and convenient; cheaper, more relaxing and often faster; and without the automobile's environmental damage.

Bicycling and walking are some of the least expensive, most healthy forms of transportation we have today. Many people who take transit walk or bicycle to their transit stop. Yet, just like the rest of Americans, only about 9 percent of all of our trips in the Twin Cities metro area are completed by foot or bicycle. Ninety percent of trips by children today are made as a passenger in a car. This low level of walking and biking affects children's health, independence and ability to learn walking and bicycling skills, as reported by Transit for Livable Community (TLC) of Minnesota. We could easily bicycle or walk more: half the trips we take are less than three miles, 40 percent are less than two miles, and 28 percent are less than one mile—yet 75 percent of trips less than one mile are made by car.

With the increase of gasoline prices, the need for fitness, and the global warming discussion, many are beginning to see bicycling as a viable means of transportation. Within the metropolitan area, support is growing for cyclists to have safer and faster routes. Almost all metropolitan buses have bike racks and several Minnesota cities are accessing federal funds for improving and expanding bikeways.

Bicycle Transportation Definitions

Bike Lane - A portion of a street reserved for use by bikes, usually separated from general purpose lanes by a stripe of paint and signage.

Bike Path - Path segregated from motorized traffic for the use of bikes, sometimes shared with pedestrians.

Bike Route - Any combination of signed Bike Paths, Bikeways, Bike Lanes, Greenways and other streets which provide cyclists with a suggested route alternative between destinations.

Bikeway - A street specially treated to provide a bicycle-friendly environment.

Overview of Transportation Bicycling in Fridley

In Fridley, there are two main types of bicycling usage: Recreation and Transportation. The focus of this section is Transportation Bicycling. A typical transportation cyclist could be commuting and/or running errands.

Transportation cyclists have two main concerns when choosing a route: safety and speed. These factors are used to evaluate any particular route's suitability to transportation cycling, whether it is a street, highway, or even dedicated bicycling path.

Safety

Cyclists are very concerned about their own personal safety -- in an accident involving an automobile and a bicycle, the cyclist is more likely to suffer greater harm. Cyclists choose routes that are safer than other possible routes that are quicker to get to the same destination. They consider the volume of traffic, widths of shoulders, widths of driving lanes, and speed of traffic.

Travel Speed

Travel by bicycle takes longer than driving a vehicle, as bicycle speed is limited to the strength of the rider. Terrain, roughness of pavement, directness of a bike route and a number of stops, also affect the trip speed.

Fridley Bicycling Plan

The City's approach is not to make cars stop using roads, or diminish the importance of automobiles in our community, but is rather to acknowledge that cyclists also have needs for their transportation choice. The bicycling plan is consistent with the desire to make Fridley an accessible community for all; as well as, being consistent with Mn/DOT's Bikeway Facility Design Manual. Federal and State Policies in the Mn/DOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual, Section 1-3, (March 2007), include the goal to "promote and increase cycling as an energy-efficient, non-polluting and healthful transportation alternative". The overall aim of the city's cycling plan is to improve bike route suitability for transportation cyclists and to aid in creating a sustainable community.

First, the plan evaluates the existing bike paths, lanes, and the road system for bicycling suitability. This will identify and create an inventory of feasible cycling routes in a city and address shortfalls within the cycling transportation system. (See Figure 6.7 Suitability Rating for Transportation Biking.) Based on this inventory, the city will take measures to design a safer and direct bikeway system for cycling commuters and recreational users.

The intent is not to simply designate routes as "bike routes" or even to concentrate on "bike routes", but rather to look at all reasonable cycling transportation routes, make improvements as needed and to create a cycling transportation map. That grid would consist of roads, streets and paths suitable for transportation bicycling. Individual cyclists could then create a route of their own from point A to point B accessing safe and fast cycle commutes.

Since many of Fridley's streets have been designed with ample width, creating a transportation cycling system is not expected to require major construction, such as repaving or widening streets. Creating a bikeway system in Fridley will likely require some additional roadway striping, designated signage, and awareness programs. One significant capital investment needed, however, may be creating separate access over I-694. Presently there are several funding options available to Minnesota cities to create and improve safe bikeways.

Legend for Suitability Rating for Transportation Biking Map

Excellent Routes are rare to find. They represent the pinnacle of bicycle transportation for safety and speed.

Very Good Routes are considered very safe and very fast.

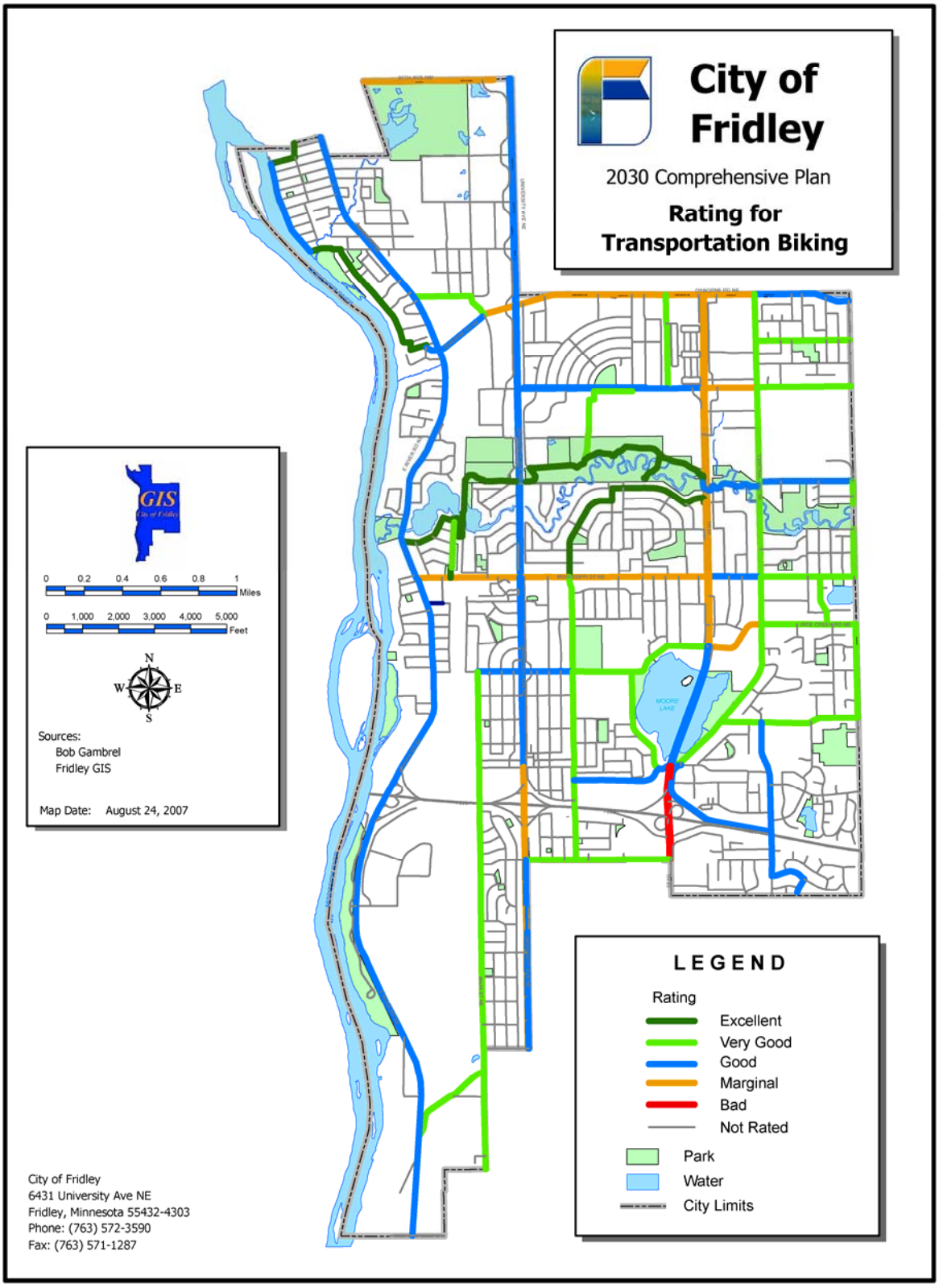
Good Route is deemed safe enough to be used by most transportation bicyclists. Usually not as safe or as fast as "very good" or "excellent" routes.

Marginal Route that is probably avoided by most bicyclists. Usually safer than a "bad" route, but is perceived to be unsafe enough that most bicyclists will avoid it.

Bad Route should be avoided by bicyclists if at all possible. It is judged to be unsafe for cycling of any sort.

Figure 6.7 Suitability Rating for Transportation Biking

The map in **Figure 6.7** is provided as a tool for identifying and evaluating transportation cycling routes in the future. This information will be considered along with other factors such as physical geometry and roadway speed.



Pedestrian Walkways and Recreational Trails

Recreational trails and sidewalks serve multiple purposes depending upon the character of the community. In urban communities, bikeways and walkways (or trails and sidewalks) serve as a travel route for residents who do not rely on the automobile for travel. Paved pedestrian access routes are essential for the mobility of the handicapped. Sidewalks and trails are also a place for children to play.

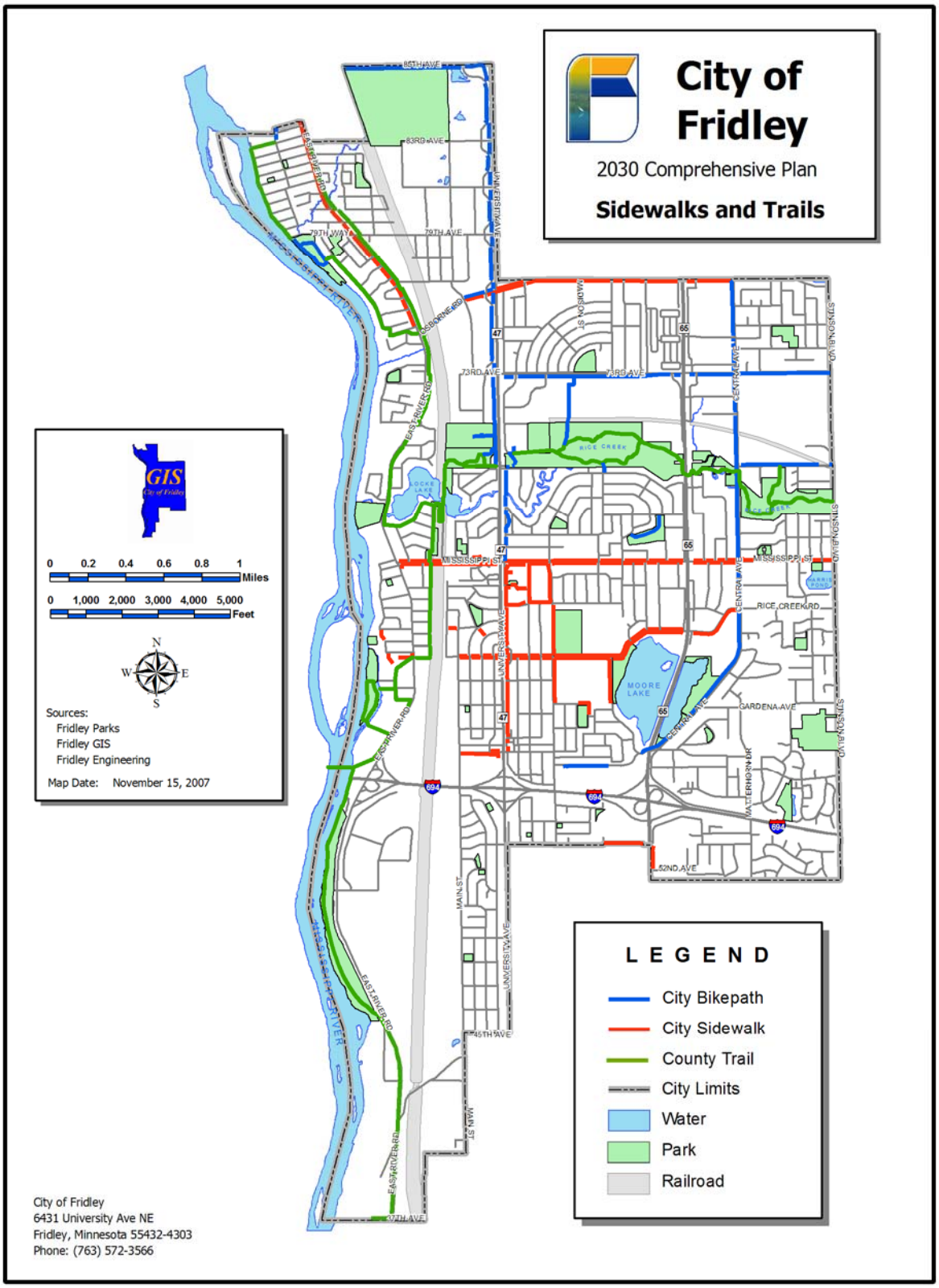
In suburban communities, bikeways and walkways were frequently not included in development plans and are therefore almost non-existent in many neighborhoods. In many suburban residential neighborhoods, pedestrian travel is mixed with automobile travel on less busy and typically wider suburban neighborhood streets and children often play in driveways that are located in the front yards instead of on sidewalks. This latter description typifies trail and sidewalk development in Fridley.

Recent bikeway and walkway development links neighborhoods to schools, parks, churches, the Community Center, City offices and the regional trail system. Today, recreational trails are most often used for bicycling, walking, running, roller-blading or recreational activities.

Existing Sidewalks and Trails System

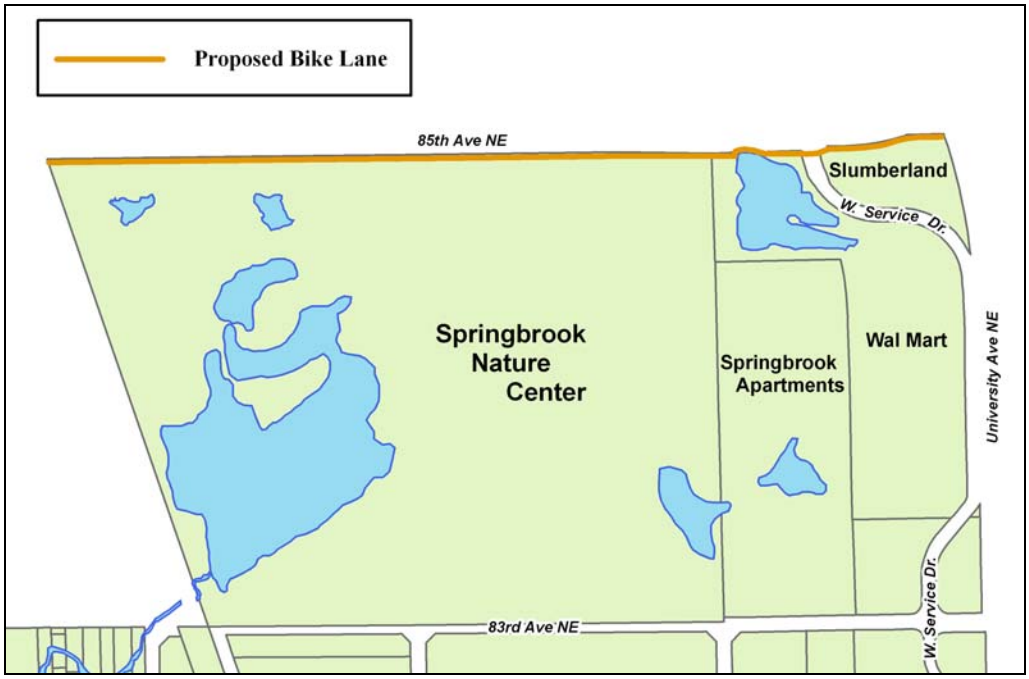
Fridley's existing trails consist of two types: the designated bicycling route and the multi-purpose trail designed for both bicycle and pedestrian traffic. The designated bicycling routes are most often found along collector and B Minor Arterial roadways such as Main Street or 7th Street. Off street bicycling trails are located along stretches of TH 47, TH 65, East River Road and Central Avenue. The multi-purpose trails are primarily found along the Mississippi River and the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor. **Figure 6.8** reflects the existing sidewalk and trail system in Fridley.

Figure 6.8 Sidewalks and Trails



In 2008, the City is planning on building an 8' wide bike trail along 85th Avenue at a cost of approximately $1.15 million dollars. The trail will connect to the existing bike trail network along Highway 47 and traverse westerly along the south side of 85th Avenue. The trail will terminate at the railroad tracks, which is also the Coon Rapids city limits. The length of the trail is 0.81 miles.

Figure 6.9 85th Avenue Trail



The trail will be mostly located on Springbrook Nature Center property. The project also calls for kiosks and trail connections to the interior Springbrook Nature Center trail system. The City has received funding through a Federal enhancements grant. Approximately $950,000 in Federal funds is available and the City will provide the required 20% local match.

In Fridley, trails are owned and maintained by either Anoka County or the City of Fridley. The County maintains park land along Rice Creek and within that area maintains the Rice Creek Regional Trail which extends from the Mississippi River into and beyond New Brighton. The County also maintains various segments of trails along the Mississippi River as well.

The City frequently considers locations for trail additions. These locations are based on making logical connections between pedestrian destinations such as schools, parks, or employment centers to the city trail system and the regional trail system thus providing alternatives to driving. The specifics of the trail (design, use, and signage for example) should be established at the neighborhood planning level. Additional information on trails can be found in the Parks, Trails and Open Space section of this plan.

Land Use and Transportation

Fridley's transportation system should be used as an element of linkage rather than serving as a barrier. Roads, sidewalks, trails and mass transit should be used in creative and attractive ways to provide safe, convenient connections between neighborhoods throughout the community as well as providing connections to other local and regional points of interest.

6.5 Traffic Analysis Zones

The Metropolitan Council provides communities with projections for Population, Household and Employment by Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). TAZs are geographic areas that help planners understand development impacts on the regional roadway by determining how many trips may be generated from a particular zone.

Traffic volumes in Fridley are expected to have minimal changes. Traffic patterns will be impacted by changes in land use and redevelopment. It should be noted that the population and employment are projected to remain stable. The following tables and figure illustrate Fridley's population, household and employment projections by TAZ (see **Table 6.2** and **Figure 6.10**).

Table 6.2 Traffic Analysis Tables

TAZ	Population			
	2000	2010	2020	2030
114	0	0	0	0
2115	6	6	6	6
2116	43	42	42	43
2117	843	829	826	845
2118	1318	1296	1292	1321
2119	486	478	476	487
2120	326	321	319	327
2121	1329	1307	1302	1332
2122	44	43	43	44
2123	23	23	23	23
2124	19	19	19	19
2125	0	0	0	0
2126	529	521	518	530
2127	1452	1428	1423	1455
2128	798	785	782	800
2129	168	165	165	168
2130	574	565	563	575
2131	650	639	637	651
2132	246	242	241	246
2133	684	673	670	685
2134	0	0	0	0
2135	0	0	0	0
2136	135	133	132	135
2137	75	74	74	75
2138	0	0	0	0
2139	502	494	492	503
2140	536	527	525	537
2141	752	740	737	753
2142	842	828	825	844
2143	1858	1828	1821	1862
2144	462	454	453	463
2145	0	0	0	0
2146	0	0	0	0
2147	0	0	0	0
2148	0	0	0	0
2149	825	812	809	827
2150	837	823	820	839
2151	280	275	274	281
2167	626	616	614	627
2168	836	822	819	838
2169	630	620	617	631
2170	906	891	888	908
2171	267	263	262	268
2172	1123	1105	1101	1125
2173	1403	1380	1375	1406
2174	1429	1406	1400	1432
2175	0	0	0	0
2176	1605	1579	1573	1608
2177	498	490	488	499
2180	234	230	229	234
2181	878	864	860	880
2184	328	323	321	329
2185	43	42	42	43
TOTAL	**27448**	**27000**	**26900**	**27500**

TAZ	Households			
	2000	2010	2020	2030
114	0	0	0	0
2115	2	2	2	2
2116	17	17	18	18
2117	338	346	355	367
2118	549	562	577	596
2119	189	194	199	205
2120	125	128	131	136
2121	554	567	582	602
2122	18	18	19	20
2123	9	9	9	10
2124	7	7	7	8
2125	0	0	0	0
2126	200	204	210	217
2127	501	513	526	544
2128	311	318	327	338
2129	84	86	88	91
2130	221	226	232	240
2131	223	228	234	242
2132	129	132	136	140
2133	191	196	201	207
2134	0	0	0	0
2135	0	0	0	0
2136	50	51	53	54
2137	25	26	26	27
2138	0	0	0	0
2139	206	211	216	224
2140	192	197	202	208
2141	302	309	317	328
2142	324	332	340	352
2143	932	954	979	1012
2144	174	178	183	189
2145	0	0	0	0
2146	0	0	0	0
2147	0	0	0	0
2148	0	0	0	0
2149	338	346	355	367
2150	350	358	368	380
2151	115	118	121	125
2167	346	354	364	376
2168	343	351	360	372
2169	253	259	266	275
2170	368	377	387	400
2171	110	113	116	119
2172	454	465	477	493
2173	756	774	794	821
2174	516	528	542	560
2175	0	0	0	0
2176	739	757	776	802
2177	215	220	226	233
2180	98	100	103	106
2181	301	308	316	327
2184	136	139	143	148
2185	17	17	18	18
TOTAL	**11327**	**11600**	**11900**	**12300**

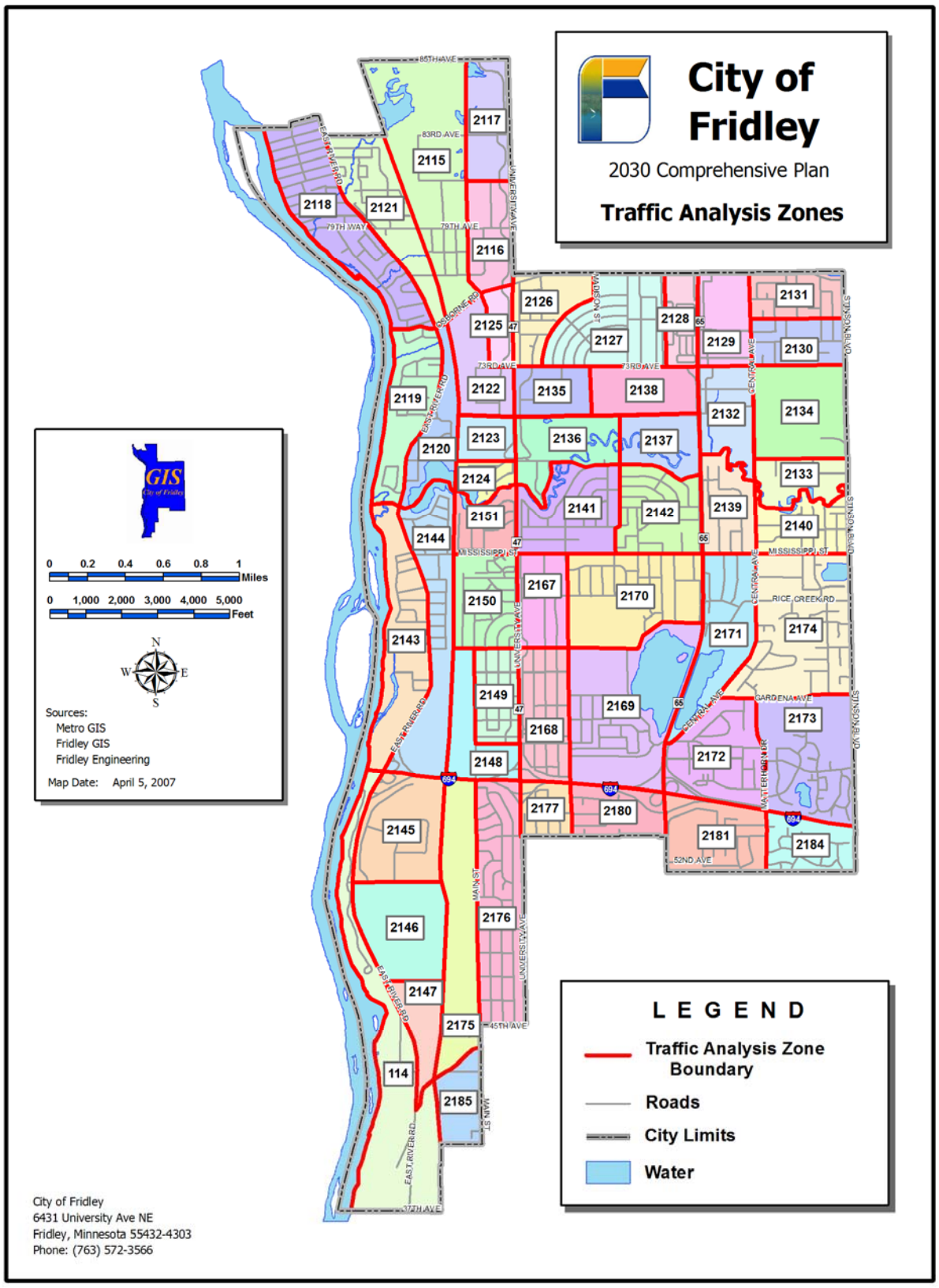
Source: US Census Bureau, Metropolitan Council

TAZ	Total Employment			
	2004	2010	2020	2030
114	1632	1312	1392	1424
2115	1216	977	1037	1061
2116	892	717	761	778
2117	354	285	302	309
2118	38	31	32	33
2119	19	15	16	17
2120	9	7	8	8
2121	91	73	78	79
2122	1102	886	940	962
2123	496	399	423	433
2124	0	0	0	0
2125	545	438	465	476
2126	1672	1344	1426	1459
2127	234	188	200	204
2128	326	262	278	284
2129	655	526	559	572
2130	32	26	27	28
2131	31	25	26	27
2132	5104	4102	4354	4454
2133	4	3	3	3
2134	1559	1253	1330	1360
2135	133	107	113	116
2136	156	125	133	136
2137	66	53	56	58
2138	837	673	714	730
2139	164	132	140	143
2140	33	27	28	29
2141	205	165	175	179
2142	26	21	22	23
2143	153	123	131	134
2144	137	110	117	120
2145	1326	1066	1131	1157
2146	162	130	138	141
2147	84	68	72	73
2148	5754	4625	4908	5021
2149	876	704	747	764
2150	113	91	96	99
2151	245	197	209	214
2167	505	406	431	441
2168	64	51	55	56
2169	446	358	380	389
2170	91	73	78	79
2171	431	346	368	376
2172	194	156	165	169
2173	36	29	31	31
2174	94	76	80	82
2175	1079	867	920	942
2176	44	35	38	38
2177	37	30	32	32
2180	609	489	519	531
2181	188	151	160	164
2184	0	0	0	0
2185	183	147	156	160
TOTAL	**30482**	**24500**	**26000**	**26600**

TAZ	Retail Employment			
	2000	2010	2020	2030
114	0	0	0	0
2115	0	0	0	0
2116	209	168	178	182
2117	34	27	29	30
2118	3	2	3	3
2119	0	0	0	0
2120	0	0	0	0
2121	5	4	4	4
2122	28	23	24	24
2123	10	8	9	9
2124	0	0	0	0
2125	52	42	44	45
2126	11	9	9	10
2127	0	0	0	0
2128	92	74	78	80
2129	213	171	182	186
2130	10	8	9	9
2131	0	0	0	0
2132	12	10	10	10
2133	0	0	0	0
2134	12	10	10	10
2135	7	6	6	6
2136	5	4	4	4
2137	0	0	0	0
2138	5	4	4	4
2139	0	0	0	0
2140	6	5	5	5
2141	39	31	33	34
2142	5	4	4	4
2143	0	0	0	0
2144	6	5	5	5
2145	255	205	218	223
2146	0	0	0	0
2147	0	0	0	0
2148	4864	3909	4149	4245
2149	0	0	0	0
2150	0	0	0	0
2151	44	35	38	38
2167	9	7	8	8
2168	43	35	37	38
2169	0	0	0	0
2170	4	3	3	3
2171	47	38	40	41
2172	1	1	1	1
2173	0	0	0	0
2174	0	0	0	0
2175	40	32	34	35
2176	1	1	1	1
2177	11	9	9	10
2180	185	149	158	161
2181	126	101	107	110
2184	0	0	0	0
2185	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	**6382**	**5130**	**5444**	**5569**

Source: US Census Bureau, Metropolitan Council

Figure 6.10 Traffic Analysis Zones



6.6 Trip Types and Impact

Three general types of trips generate bicycle, single occupant vehicle, and mass transit traffic volumes in the community.

Vehicles drive along Riverview Terrace, the County Bicycle Route follows it, and people walk and jog beside it.

Local trip or the internal to internal destination trip. These trips are usually generated by a resident who is traveling to a local destination such as to school, the grocery store, library, City Hall, gas/convenience store or some other typical errand. The local trip generates the greatest volume on the Fridley system.

Regional trip with the internal-external trip. This trip can originate or end at a Fridley location. Trips typically include workday commuting or regional shopping trips and use a combination of local, sub-regional and regional roadways to complete the trips.

Regional "through" trip with description of being an external-external trip. This type of trip typically uses the major roadways to travel through the community with neither an origination nor a destination point in Fridley. Many of these trips originate in greater Anoka County or beyond and many have the Minneapolis Central Business District or other suburban attraction as their final destination. TH 65, TH 47, East River Road, and I-694 are the primary recipients of through trips, however, when these corridors become congested, many of these trips may look for shortcuts using the local street system.

Traffic Volumes/Capacity

Existing and past traffic volume data was obtained from traffic flow maps provided by the MnDOT. Data concerning daily volumes along roadways in Fridley were obtained back to the year 1986. The most recent available data, consisting of 2005 volumes, is shown in **Table 6.3** and on **Figure 6.11**.

The 20 year historic trend of daily volumes on the arterial/collector roadways in Fridley has been tabulated in **Table 6.3**. It can be concluded from the data in **Table 6.3** that north-south travel corridors have seen a minimal increase in traffic from 1986 to 2001. These increases measure about one percent. But in the last 5 years, it should also be pointed out that traffic has decreased approximately 1%. The data shows that today's traffic volume is stable and very close to the same level as 20 years ago. This is likely due to the fact that TH 65 and TH 47 are both close to capacity – especially during peak periods. The east – west traffic volumes have also stabilized with minor variations. With the exception of roadways in the vicinity of the completed Medtronic's campus, growth in traffic will be a product of land use changes in communities to the north of Fridley. This may cause the north-south corridors to grow at approximately one-half to one percent per year.

Table 6.3: Traffic Volumes Trends (1986-2005)

Roadway Segment	Daily Volumes[1]						
	1986	**1991**	**1993**	**1997**	**2001**	**2005**	**Annual % Change 1986-2005**
I-694							
@ Bridge	97,000	118,000	129,000	146,000	160,000	142,000	+2.4
East of TH 47	85,000	108,000	118,000	131,000	134,000	123,000	+2.4
TH 65							
@Moore Lake	37,800	36,000	35,000	36,000	35,000	30,000	-1.1
North of Mississippi St	34,000	34,000	35,000	37,000	35,500	35,000	+0.2
South of Osborne Rd	32,000	32,000	36,000	37,000	35,500	35,000	+0.5
University Avenue (TH 47)							
South of Mississippi St	32,500	35,000	33,000	35,500	36,000	34,500	+0.3
South of 73rd Avenue	35,500	34,800	35,000	38,000	37,000	34,000	-0.2
North of Osborne Road	32,000	33,000	35,000	37,000	38,000	34,500	+0.4
East River Road (CSAH 1)							
North of Osborne Road	22,700	16,500	16,700	17,700	19,500	18,600	-1.0
South of Osborne Road	26,300	18,500	18,000	18,000	20,000	18,700	-1.5
South of Mississippi Street	29,000	23,500	21,000	21,000	25,000	22,000	-1.3
Osborne Road							
West of University	12,800	11,500	11,000	11,000	11,600	11,500	-0.5
East of University	10,700	12,000	12,800	13,000	11,700	11,500	+0.9
East of TH 65	5,900	6,100	6,100	5,600	6,400	6,700	+0.7
73rd Avenue							
East of University	7,700	10,000	10,000	11,000	5,300	4,750	-2.0
East of TH 65	5,900	6,700	7,100	8,000	7,600	9,000	+2.8
Mississippi Street							
West of University	9,400	9,700	9,000	9,000	8,300	7,800	-0.9
West of TH 65	6,500	9,600	5,700	6,300	6,900	6,000	-0.4
East of Central	4,400	4,600	4,400	4,800	4,700	4,600	+0.2
Central Avenue							
Northeast of TH 65	8,300	8,600	8,200	8,300	8,500	8,900	+0.4
Rice Creek Road							
East of Central	3,900	4,300	4,600	4,600	4,300	4,050	+0.2
		1991	**1993**	**1997**	**2001**	**2005**	**Annual % Change 1991-2005**
61st Avenue							
East of 7th Street	NA	3,900	4,100	4,600	4,500	5,300	+1.9
West of 7th Street	NA	4,400	6,500	6,700	4,500	5,100	+0.8
Moore Lake Drive							
West of TH 65	NA	4,000	3,500	3,850	3,700	4,200	+0.3
East of TH 65	NA	8,400	9,000	11,000	10,100	9,600	+0.8
Matterhorn							
@I-694	NA	2,900	2,900	3,100	2,500	2,600	-0.5
North of Mississippi St.	7,900	8,400	7,400	8,800	9,000	8,600	+0.5

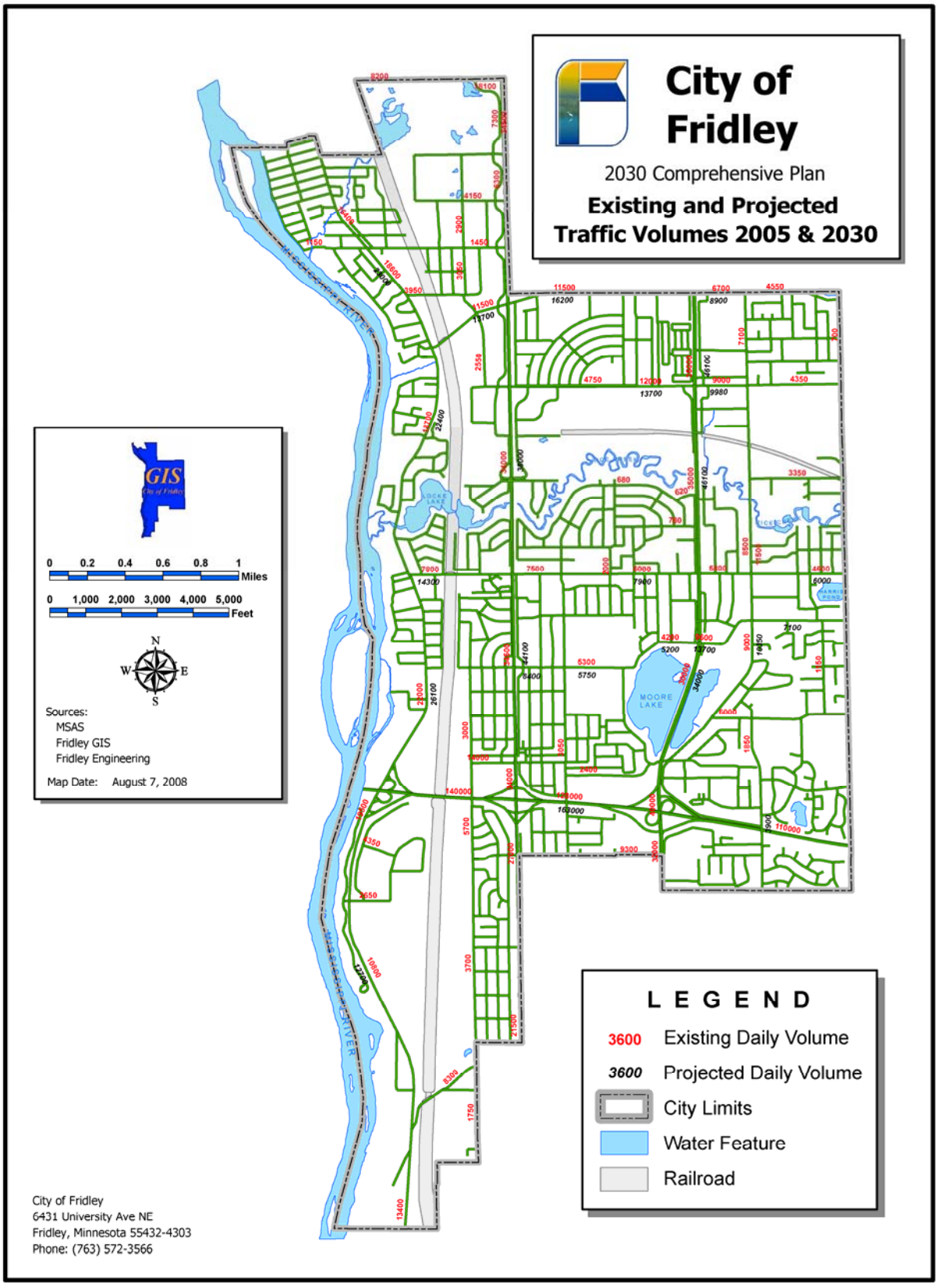
[1] Daily traffic volumes from MnDOT Traffic Flow Maps

Traffic volumes on the regional and local roadway system throughout the metropolitan region are expected to rise. Increased traffic volumes on the Fridley system will primarily be a result of urban growth in greater Anoka County, regional trips deviating from the highway system, and trips that are a result of future redevelopment. Table 6.4 projects future traffic volumes based on a trend analysis of the current roadway system.

Table 6.4 2030 Traffic Volume Projections

Roadway Segment	***Existing Daily Traffic Volumes -2005***	***Estimated Daily Traffic Volumes-2030***
I-694 (between TH47 and TH 65)	128,000	163,000
TH 65		
@Moore Lake	30,000	34,000
North of Mississippi St	35,000	46,100
South of Osborne Rd	35,000	46,100
University Avenue (TH 47)		
South of Mississippi St	34,500	44,100
South of 73rd Avenue	34,000	38,000
North of Osborne Road	34,500	46,100
East River Road (CSAH 1)		
North of Osborne Road	18,600	23,000
South of Osborne Road	18,700	22,400
South of Mississippi Street	22,000	26,100
Osborne Road		
West of University	11,500	13,700
East of University	11,500	16,200
East of TH 65	6,700	8,900
73rd Avenue		
East of University	12,000	13,700
East of TH 65	9,000	9,980
Mississippi Street		
West of University	7,800	14,300
West of TH 65	6,000	7,900
East of Central	4,600	6,000
61st Avenue		
East of 7th Street	5,300	5,750
West of 7th Street	6,900	8,400
Moore Lake Drive		
West of TH 65	4,200	5,200
East of TH 65	9,600	13,700
Rice Creek Drive East of Central	4,200	7,100
Matterhorn @I-694	3,200	3,900
Central Avenue		
Northeast of TH 65	9,000	10,350
North of Mississippi St.	8,500	11,500

Figure 6.11 Existing and Projected Traffic Volumes—2005 & 2030



The ability of a roadway to accommodate the volumes of traffic using the roadway involves the calculation of the capacity of that roadway. The capacity of a roadway is dependent upon many variables. The Metropolitan Council, in their Transportation Policy Plan, December 2005, has provided a set of capacity values that can be used for planning purposes. The values stated are lane capacities per hour for divided and undivided arterial roadways. Peak hour daily traffic assumptions and directional split values are also provided in that document. The lane capacity of arterial roadways is stated as follows:

- Divided Arterial – 700 - 1,000 vehicles per lane per hour
- Undivided Arterial – 600 to 900 vehicles per lane per hour

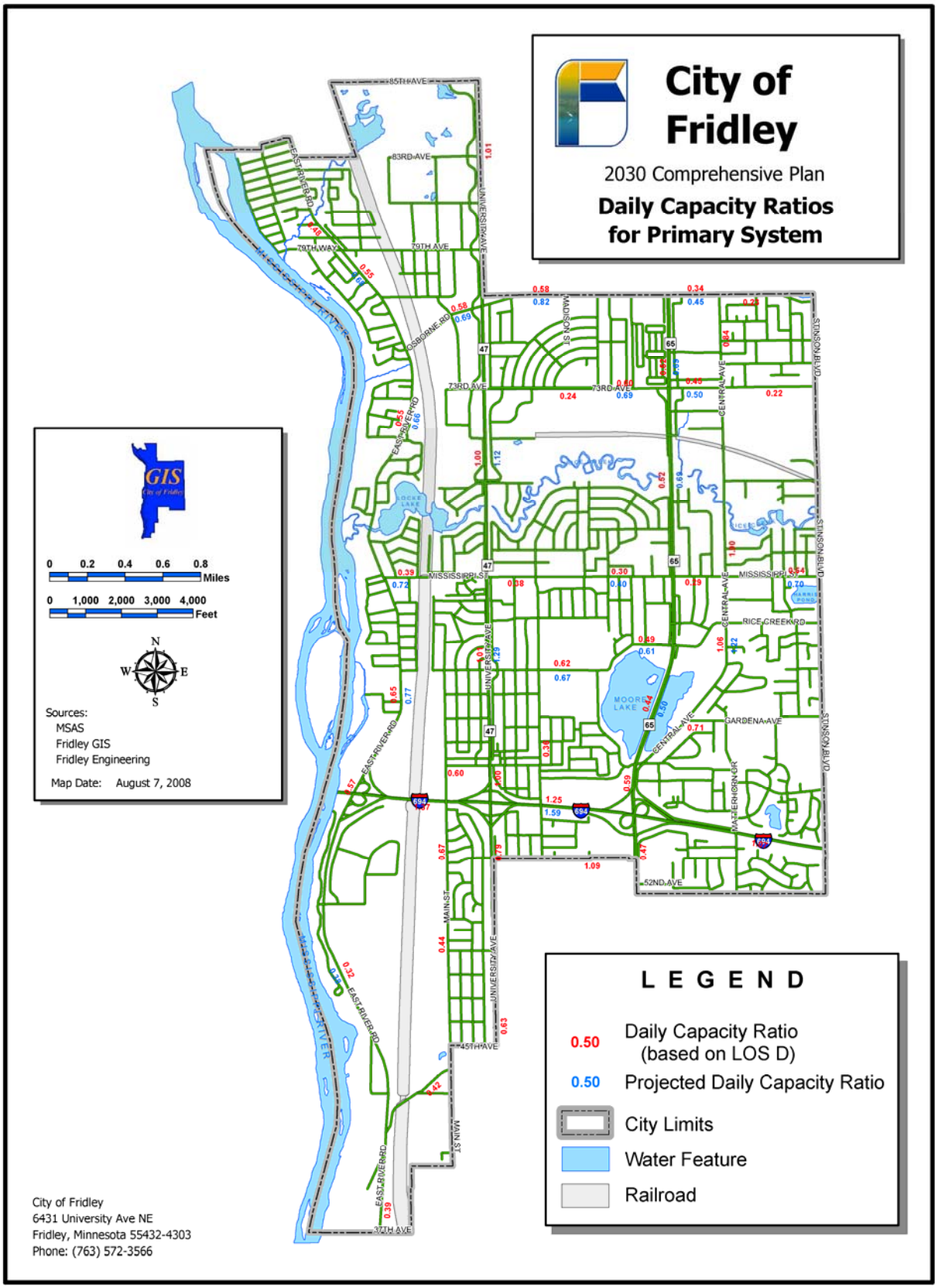
Using various data sources and capacity calculation methods, a set of planning values can be established that provides the daily capacity of various roadway types. The daily capacities used for this transportation element are as follows:

Table 6.5 Daily Traffic Capacities for Level of Service D Operation

Roadway Type	Planning Capacity (LOS D)
6-Lane Freeway	95,000 to 110,000
4-Lane Freeway	65,0000 to 70,000
6-Lane Divided	55,000 to 61,000
4-Lane Divided	31,000 to 37,000
4-Lane Undivided	18,000 to 22,000
2-Lane Undivided	8,000 to 9,000

The above values can be used as planning guidelines for judging whether the daily volumes on a specific roadway are at or above level of service D capacity. The daily planning capacities have been utilized to test the capabilities of the primary roadways in Fridley to accommodate the existing daily volumes. Using the mid-range capacity values listed previously, the daily volume/daily capacity ratios for the primary systems are shown on **Figure 6.12**.

Figure 6.12 Daily Volume/Daily Capacity Ratios for the Primary Systems



The previous discussion concerned daily volume/daily capacity analysis. A more detailed capacity analysis can be provided for peak traffic hours along major roadways given the ability of more detailed traffic volume data. Such data is available along TH 65 as a result of the analyses that have been provided for the Medtronic development west of TH 65 on the north side of I-694. According to analyses contained in the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for the Medtronic Corporate Campus project, improvements to TH 65 are needed to accommodate existing and future volumes.

The key issues of concern to the City along TH 65 are the impacts from the volume of regional and local traffic, especially from the intersection just south of Moore Lake to about 63rd Avenue. Congestion along the corridor has negative impacts on adjacent supporting streets and neighborhoods, be they commercial or residential. The City actively supports transit alternatives because they will help reduce the through traffic demand on highways like TH 65. Transit alternatives, however, cannot solve or eliminate the congestion on TH 65. The City supports legitimate public improvement projects that enhance operations and improve the safety of TH 65.

6.7 Maintenance

The roadways in Fridley are maintained by MNDOT, Anoka County, or the City. The City Street Department maintains approximately 110 miles of city streets. Major maintenance activities include snowplowing, street sweeping, sealcoating, pavement marking, sign repair, and street light repairs.

The City also rehabilitates selected streets using mill/overlay or full-depth reconstruction. Annual street condition ratings and field observations are used to identify streets in need of rehabilitation. The type of rehabilitation is determined through a feasibility study performed by the Engineering Department. By the end of 2008, the City will have completed reconstruction of all streets under their jurisdiction.

6.8 Opportunities for Improvement

The City has a relatively good transportation system; however, some areas of the transportation system will become inadequate over the years as changes in consumers behavior occurs and as urban growth continues. This section summarizes the key transportation problems facing Fridley.

TH 65 Capacity

Existing roadway capacity problems in Fridley are evident along TH 65. This is supported by the volume/capacity ratios reported earlier. In addition, the TH 65 corridor was analyzed by MnDOT Metro Division through a TH 65 Traffic Operations Study a draft of which was completed in June of 1999. Generally, the analyses revealed capacity deficiencies along the corridor and supported the addition of a third through lane in each direction to help serve the high through traffic volumes in the morning and afternoon peak hours.

The recent improvements to the TH 65/I-694 interchange area have increased the capacity and safety of that segment of TH 65. Specifically, the improvements to the TH 65/Central/ Medtronic Parkway intersection help to solve the immediate and some of the long term problems that have been envisioned for that intersection. The problem that continues to exist concerns the absence of sufficient northbound and southbound through traffic lanes from the TH 65/Central/Medtronic Parkway intersection, proceeding northerly through the City. The lack of an additional though lane in each direction causes peak period congestion along TH 65 and at the signalized intersections along this corridor.

TH 47 Capacity

The TH 47 corridor has problems that are similar to the TH 65 corridor. The through traffic volumes are quite high and congestion occurs during the peak periods at signalized intersections along the corridor. The land uses along TH 47 are more residential in nature than the land uses along TH 65, which cause concerns regarding noise and air pollution.

East-West Transit Services

Transit services in the City are oriented along the major roadways through Fridley, which happen to be north/south roadways. One problem facing the community as roadway congestion increases is accessibility to transit services. Little east west transit service is available in the community, forcing residents to drive to transit facilities rather than catching a bus on a local collector roadway.

Another trend that has revealed a problem for Fridley residents is the emergence of major "suburban" employment hubs. Because of the metropolitan highway systems orientation to and from the major Central Business Districts and because of the physical barriers (Mississippi River, wetlands, creeks, railroads and County boundaries) inter-suburban mobility in an east west fashion among Northern suburbs is limited.

Recently, the City has been discussing the possibility of extending 57th Avenue from Main Street westerly to East River Road. This crossing would likely be spurred by commercial development in the adjacent area and provide an alternative route to cross the railroad. Due to limited bridges over or under the BNSF railroad tracks and congestion levels on I-694, an additional emergency access over the railroad tracks is needed in the community.

Pedestrian Crossings of Major Highways

Over the years, several citizens have voiced concern about safely crossing TH 65 and TH 47. Overpass construction is an expensive undertaking, and the right sub-surface conditions need to exist for underpass construction. TH 65 and TH 47 are significant barriers for east-west pedestrian and bike traffic, and pose costly design challenges for creating a safe and continuous trail system.

Two projects were completed in 1999 that provide vital links in the trail system. The Mississippi River Regional Trail was extended over Mississippi Street by Anoka County. The overpass provides safe passage for bicyclists and pedestrians for this north-south segment. This link is even more critical for connection to the proposed Northstar Commuter Rail station further to the south at 61st Avenue. The second project was the Anoka County TH 65 underpass at Rice Creek. The Rice Creek Trail is a major east-west trail and the underpass provides safe, direct access to the system east of the community.

The Northstar Commuter Rail station will contain a tunnel below the railroad tracks at 61st Avenue, which will provide pedestrians and bicyclist another east/west connection. Despite much attention in this plan on Northstar, the need to create safer crossings over TH 65 and I-694 should not be ignored. While many believe a safe crossing at TH 65 and I-694 is not possible, the fact remains that people (some of them children) are often making that crossing as the photo here proves. As Fridley's population ages, it is even more important to create a means of safe and direct access across all areas of the City.

Path created by pedestrians on Hwy. 65

Mass Transit Accessibility

While Fridley is serviced by several Metro Transit bus routes, pedestrian connections to many bus stops are inadequate. An analysis of existing bus stops in Fridley, as shown in **Figure 6.6**, demonstrates the need for improved safety at many bus stops and the lack of benches for our aging population. The

analysis also revealed that many bus stops do not have paved paths leading to them. Some people using bus stops are parents using strollers or elderly people using rolling carts to carry purchases. Therefore, rolling accessibility to bus stops is critical for ease of use by many users besides the physically handicapped.

Commuter Rail

The Northstar Commuter Rail Authority has negotiated use of the BNSF rail line through Fridley as a commuter rail corridor, the Northstar Corridor. Establishment of this commuter rail service will help relieve some of the north-south rush hour congestion through Fridley. Once a station stop is established in Fridley, it will not only serve as another transit options for Fridley residents who work downtown Minneapolis, it will also serve as a great asset to Fridley businesses seeking mass transit options for their employees. Mass transit options help Fridley businesses meet employee parking demands, which are a problem in many areas of the City.

Other Safety Improvements

Fridley may have opportunity for other safety improvements, including on at-grade railroad crossings, upgrading signal operations and vehicle pre-emption, and signage. Projects such as railroad quiet zone improvements, and replacement of street signage at major intersections can provide improved roadway safety as a primary or secondary benefit. In addition, improvements should be made to consider an older driving population, and develop and implement feasible safety measures that are directed toward this demographic change, through the use of standards such as those developed in the **Federal Highway Administration** HIGHWAY DESIGN HANDBOOK FOR OLDER DRIVERS AND PEDESTRIANS (http://www.tfhrc.gov/humanfac/01103/coverfront.htm).

6.9 Future Transportation System

Future System

Transit plays a crucial role in making a region economically competitive. Transit makes living and working in a region more efficient and lowers the region's costs of production. Transit provides mobility for individuals who need help gaining access to employment. It also offers travel options for those who do not wish to bear the economic, social, and environmental effects of congestion. And, it supports more compact and mixed-use forms of development for individuals who want to live close to their jobs and the social and cultural opportunities a region affords. Although each function is important, a region earns its highest rate of return through its influence on urban form. By supporting a mix of uses and connecting origins and destinations, transit can help provide access to the region's economic opportunities, protect its natural assets, reduce the costs of regional growth, and establish appealing and livable neighborhoods.

Transit's functions can help meet needs for improving livability, dealing with population growth, and expanding economic opportunities for all.

Future Needs

Relative to transportation planning, the City of Fridley will focus its efforts in the following general areas:

- Maintain the existing local street system;
- Improve safety and traffic flow;
- Relieve local and regional traffic congestion;
- Enhance pedestrian movement;
- Connect existing trails and sidewalks;
- Promote transportation cycling;
- Assist with development of new transit services and facilities;
- Promote enhancements to existing transit facilities; and
- Facilitate east/west mobility within the City.

6.10 Goals and Objectives

There were four primary goals and several underlying objectives that emerged from the 2007 neighborhood planning meetings. Transportation affects all four of the primary goals and the following objectives.

Goal #1: Maintain Fridley as a desirable place to live

Objectives

1. Maintain adequate roadway capacity; avoid increases in trip times
2. Provide recreational opportunities for all ages
3. Create a walkable downtown area
4. Make Fridley a place where the aged can stay
5. Keep Fridley's welcoming, small town feel

Goal #2: Maintain Fridley as a desirable place to invest in business

Objectives

1. Provide more public transportation/reduce congestion/support Northstar Rail Station in Fridley
2. Maintain and improve transportation network for commercial/industrial users; provide access to commercial/industrial properties while maintaining roadway capacities

Goal #3: Keep Fridley a safe community for all to enjoy

Objectives

1. Improve traffic safety at certain intersections in City
2. Provide more East/West vehicular and pedestrian connections in City across railroad tracks
3. Provide more bike/walk paths and secure funding to keep them maintained in winter
4. Improve and maintain City streets, including addressing lighting and litter problems

Goal #4: Protect Fridley's natural environment

Objectives

1. Control air and noise pollution at levels acceptable to adjoining land uses

6.11 Conclusions and Action Steps

1. Anoka County reports that neither they nor MnDOT have any plans to expand or conduct major changes to roadways in Fridley in the next 20 years. There are some highway improvements scheduled for Highway 65 north of Fridley with the intent of directing traffic to Highway 10. Yet, Highway 65 and Highway 47 (University Avenue) in Fridley are operating at capacity during rush hour. Metropolitan Area traffic data demonstrates that there is a great deal of commuting through traffic on Highway 65 and 47. There are currently several Hide and Ride sites in Fridley that will disappear when anticipated future redevelopment of certain commercial sites along these highways occurs. The natural development of these parking locations that service bus stops along Fridley's highways demonstrates

a clear need for this service. In order to maintain Fridley as a desirable place to live and do business, the City highways need to be functional. One way to alleviate traffic congestion is to support mass transit. Traffic would be less congested in Fridley if we could get more commuters out of their cars and into mass transit north of Fridley's borders.

Action Step: City staff needs to meet with the Metropolitan Council transit facility staff to discuss park and ride locations in Fridley that focus on relieving rush hour congestion.

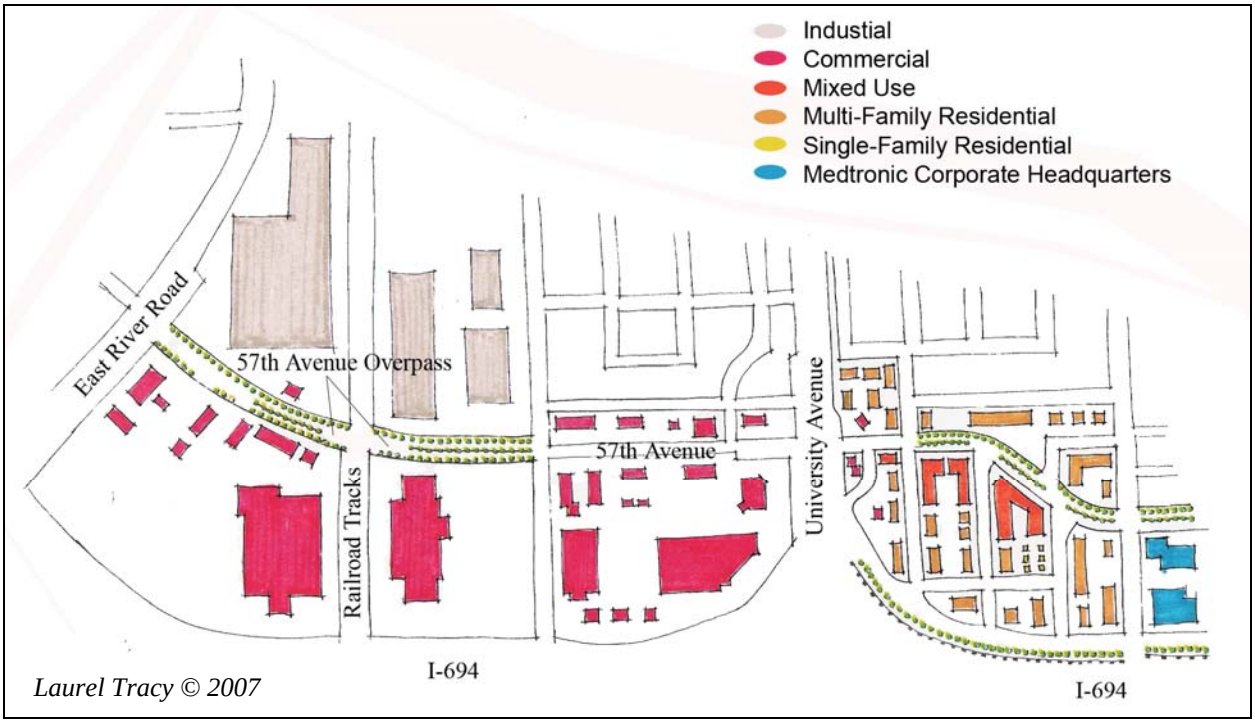
2. It will continue to be difficult for Fridley to attract quality redevelopment projects until the appearance of State and County right of ways is improved. The City has long been battling for improved maintenance of road right of ways on roads that are outside the City's jurisdiction. For several years, the City has been mowing the right of way along University Avenue, a State highway, without compensation from the State, for example. The City cannot afford to maintain other jurisdiction's roadways as available funding is falling short of covering the cost of maintaining City-owned streets.

   Action Step: The City of Fridley needs to discontinue maintenance of County and State roadways without compensation. The City needs to reach maintenance agreements with MnDOT and Anoka County. If the City is unsuccessful in reaching such agreements, the City should consider treating the lack of maintenance as a code violation – either abating the violation after routine notification or citing the responsible jurisdiction for litter and tall grass code violations as we do with other property owners in the City.

   In addition, the City needs to make its concerns known regarding the negative effects of minimum maintenance. For example, the condition of the stop light pole in the picture above is aesthetically unpleasing. The growth of weeds in the median and severe ongoing litter problems negatively impact property values in Fridley.

3. Emergency personnel have expressed a need for another east-west route through Fridley in order to be able to respond to emergencies. During rush hour, it is difficult to use I-694 due to traffic jams. The only other options over the railroad tracks are 44th Avenue, at the southern tip of the City, and Mississippi Street. During rain storm events, Mississippi Street is not a reliable alternative, because it floods. The best alternative staff has been able to find is creating a bridge over the BNSF railroad tracks at 57th Avenue. The City hired an engineering consultant to study and design this transportation option. This solution is feasible with some redesign to Home Depot's interior traffic design. The replatting of the vacant parcel of land at I-694 and East River Road gives the City the opportunity to require dedicated easement for purposes of creating this transportation connection, which is not only vital to public safety, but will also further economic development in the 57th Avenue retail area.

Figure 6.13 City View Corridor Master Plan



Laurel Tracy © 2007

Creating a bridge over the BNSF railroad tracks would strengthen the longstanding need to connect Medtronic Parkway as a continuous roadway from 7th Street west to University. Once fully developed, this site will house the largest employee base of any site in the City. Economically, it would greatly increase the value of the 57th Avenue retail area if this site were connected by a walkable/bikeable parkway. In addition, a bridge at 57th Avenue would provide additional east/west pedestrian/bicycling access for the City's largest apartment complex, Georgetown Apartments (462 apartments) to the Northstar Commuter Rail Station.

Action Step: The City should require dedication of necessary easements on any associated plats that are submitted for approval in this proposed project area. City staff should communicate the City's interest in connecting 57th Avenue to East River Road to representatives of associated retail property owners as an effort to begin site redesign plans for their retail site. As other redevelopment proposals in the 57th Avenue area materialize, staff needs to work closely with the developer early in the process to ensure attention to pedestrian and bicycle access in this area.

Laurel Tracy © 2007

4. The City View plan would develop increased bicycle and pedestrian access to the existing retail area on 57th Avenue near University Avenue. Plans for on-street bike lanes and sidewalks for pedestrians to the east of the existing retail area provides much needed connections to the bus stops at this intersection. Creating this area as a walkable downtown, however, is expected to require modifications to the 57th Avenue and University Avenue intersection for increased pedestrian safety.

Action Step: The City needs to conduct a multi-modal traffic impact study of the 57th/University Avenue intersection in order to determine the impacts of the City View plan on the intersection and what appropriate safety modifications are needed to protect pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition, the City needs to evaluate the traffic impacts of the proposed 57th Avenue connection to the intersections on 57th Avenue at Main Street and 7th Street.

5. The City of Fridley owes its success in commercial and industrial development to the rail and highway system through the community. The City needs to preserve these existing transportation systems to support commerce. One way the City can reduce vehicular trips on our roadways is to promote public transit (bus and commuter rail) use and commuter cycling. The manner in which many of the City's roadways have been designed to only accommodate automobile traffic, however, creates serious challenges to providing safe and efficient transportation cycling routes and pedestrian access to mass transit stops in the community.

Litter at bus stop on University Avenue


People wait in snow bank for bus on University Avenue

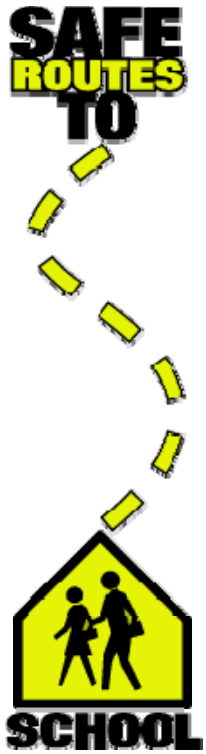
Staff believes that increased use of bus ridership is dependent upon infrastructure and maintenance improvements to Fridley's existing bus stops. Currently, many bus stops do not 'have a paved area leading to or surrounding the bus stop. There is no program for litter clean up at bus stops, leaving those which have not been adopted by a neighboring property owner chronically looking unsightly. There are many bus stop locations in Fridley where a user needs to stand in the drive area of the street or in the street shoulder in high speed areas with no elevated separation for the user to stand upon.

Action Step: The City will initiate a discussion with Metropolitan Council, Anoka County, and MnDOT about pedestrian and cycling route accesses to Commuter Rail and Fridley's bus stops. The intent will be to improve the accessibility and safety of the bus stop sites notated with red symbols on major highways on **Figure 6.6** by pursuing appropriate funding for feasible improvements.

Action Step: The City's existing bike route system was designed for *recreational* biking. *Transportation* bicycling is very different in that cyclist commuting to work desire the shortest, quickest route possible to their destination. Existing bike routes in the City instead focus on taking bikers past scenic views, which are often hilly and on winding pathways. The City needs to develop a separate transportation bike route map, which could assist cyclists in maneuvering through the City in the safest manner possible. The City may chose to change existing designated bike routes to accommodate this new trend. The City may also consider creation of painted bike lanes to create a safe transportation cyclist route through the community. The City should also consider applying for State/Federal funds for a separated pedestrian/bike bridge over I-694 at Matterhorn Drive and at Main Street. While applying for funding, the City could post "Share the Road" signs on the existing bridges over I-694 at Matterhorn Drive and Main Street.

6. There is a strong national initiative to provide safer walking and biking access to school as an effort to not only address traffic concerns but to reduce childhood obesity. There are limited sidewalks or trails within a one-mile radius of schools in Fridley, which is the distance where children are not provided bus transportation.

   Action Step: The City of Fridley should partner with the community's school districts to pursue Federal, State, or Regional grant funds to allow for the expansion of trails, bike lanes, or sidewalks near schools. In addition, the City will initiate a discussion with the school districts and Anoka County to analyze the possibility of reduced speed school zones at all of Fridley's school sites like those that other communities throughout the metropolitan area have in place.



7. There was concern raised at the neighborhood planning meetings about the danger of the intersection of 53rd Avenue and University Avenue. This danger is a result of the short distance for drivers exiting eastbound I-694 at University to go southbound on University and immediately needing to cross traffic to make a left turn at 53rd.

   Action Step: The City needs to work with MnDOT to consider revisions to the eastbound University Avenue freeway exit. City staff believes a solution is to eliminate the bypass right turn lane that currently exists on the eastbound University exit. The exit could be redesigned with a third lane added to the northbound lanes for a right turn lane that is regulated at the existing stop light. This will result in a need to reposition the stop lights also, but it would allow for a longer distance for drivers to merge into the east turn lane at the 53rd Avenue intersection.

8. The creation of the Northstar Commuter Rail Station is going to significantly change traffic flow at 61st and University Avenue and at East River Road and 61st Way. MTC Buses will be routing off of the main highway into and out of these park and ride sites. In addition, these intersections are expected to see a significant increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic from people traveling to the station site or using the tunnel to get across the railroad track. In response to this concern, MnDOT analyzed the traffic accident data for this intersection. Current accident history does not warrant a change to the exit according to MnDOT criteria.

   Action Step: A multi-modal traffic impact study of the 61st/University Avenue intersection and the East River Road/61st Way intersection should be completed and again when the traffic signals are scheduled for replacement. The study should review possible impacts the Northstar Commuter Rail Station Site will have on these intersections and what appropriate modifications are needed to maintain automobile traffic flow and at the same time provide safe pedestrians and cyclist crossing.

9. There are many areas of the City of Fridley which are inadequately served by sidewalks or trails. In addition, folks who use cycling as a major source of transportation have pointed out that the City lacks good cycling routes consistently through the City. Since there are infrastructure maintenance and environmental advantages to getting folks using bikes or walking instead of cars for transportation, the City needs to seek ways to economically provide walking and biking access across the city.

   Action Step: Besides multi-modal studies of certain intersections stated previously, an analysis of all bike/pedestrian connection needs in the City should be completed. This study should rank needs, giving priority for providing safe routes to schools, public facilities, and mass transit. The ranking of need could then be compared to the feasibility of a particular solution, the cost to implement the

solution, and the availability of funding to correct the problem. In addition, new future problem areas could be avoided if the City ensures that plans for any future road reconstruction projects are reviewed with pedestrians in mind in addition to vehicles to ensure that the proposed plans do not worsen pedestrian or cycling safety at an intersection.

10. Another traffic safety concern in Fridley is the need for additional vehicular lanes and a pedestrian/bike trail on Highway 65 across Moore Lake. The City has completed engineered drawings for this lane expansion, however, until MnDOT budgets for the highway expansion, construction of this project is not feasible.

    Action Step: The City needs to continue to support State funding of the Highway 65 Causeway expansion over Moore Lake.

Moore Lake Causeway

11. In general, the City of Fridley needs to work with agencies to maintain current and future capacity and safety of its roadways for the benefit of businesses, residents, and commuters.

    Action Step: The City will work with MNDOT and Anoka County to establish and maintain access control to maintain capacity of its roadways. This includes review and incorporation of access spacing guidelines into development and zoning ordinances.

    Action Step: The City will assist in developing plans with the Metropolitan Council, MNDOT, and Anoka County to establish future right-of-way needs for transportation and coordinate with these agencies to secure and preserve future right-of-way needs.

    Action Step: The City will work with the Metropolitan Council, MNDOT, and Anoka County to fund safety improvements and upgrades where such work is feasible. Consideration should be given to older drivers in design and implementation.

6.12 Summary

Transportation planning for the future of Fridley and the region in general is critical to maintaining the desired quality of life. Transportation plays an important role in attaining the community's collective vision by linking neighborhoods in a creative, safe, convenient and attractive manner. While the projected growth in the region will likely bring added congestion to Fridley's major roadways, this plan strives to improve the safety of major roadway intersections and increase the use of public transportation.

Fridley's transportation plan will continue to manage, preserve, and maintain the existing roadway network and expand the mobility alternatives available to the community.