



City of Fridley Active Transportation Plan



“Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life — transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.”

-U.S. Department of Transportation

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Fridley enjoys its location on the East bank of the Mississippi River. The City is a first ring suburb of Minneapolis-St. Paul.



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Overview

Vision and Purpose: Active Living in Fridley through Active Transportation

Vision

Our vision is to provide safe transportation opportunities for all citizens of Fridley. We will move toward mobility equity for residents as they travel around the community of Fridley—going to work, to school, to shop or as they use city services and institutions.

Since walking, bicycling and using other modes of non-auto transit as transportation choices improves health when other safety factors are in place, we join other Minnesota communities in the adoption of an Active Transportation Plan. Designing for active living reduces the barriers to routine physical activity and enhances community connectivity and safety for those who bicycle, walk and use the bus in our community. The City notes that, although “Not all modes on all roads” will be appropriate, safe and convenient navigation of the community should be available to young and old, fit and mobility-challenged independent of income.

Development should be based on priority routes and projects that function to encourage the use of non-auto transit. Well-designed, constructed and maintained facilities will help Fridley obtain maximum utility from these projects.

Purpose

The plan’s purpose is to safely accommodate all modes of transportation in the right locations for each. This includes pedestrians, cars, trucks, bicyclists, buses, commuter train users, skateboarders and users of personal mobility devices like wheelchairs—even Segways! Our plan is to move forward with improvements to the linkages between many of these modes, fill in gaps in existing systems and provide a higher level of maintenance for existing and any new additions to the network. Priority areas have been distilled through a process that included public participation. Volunteers and citizen input identified streets or routes, maintenance challenges and areas of concern.

The Active Transportation plan seeks to improve vital non-auto transit-oriented connections to foster safe travel to work, school and for recreation. By establishing a clear plan and incorporating it into the Zoning Code, improvements necessary to create safe ped/bike routes will be financed by private

redevelopment over time in partnership with the improvements installed by local governments. Having an established plan better enables local government’s ability to qualify for various State and Federal funds that will stretch the use of City funds dedicated to trail and sidewalk improvements.

Particular emphasis is placed on pedestrian safety and improved walking routes because other non-auto transit modes often include a walking segment. City staff is forging partnerships to improve or add facilities/devices like stoplight countdown timers, creating shorter cycle lengths on north/south major streets. Longer walk intervals will encourage better signal compliance and aid those who are less able to move quickly through intersections. The City of Fridley is trying to reduce preventable on-road pedestrian and bicycle accidents and casualties, which have been on the rise in Minnesota.

Policies which support economic development and represent thrifty use of tax revenues will receive special emphasis. The City’s goal is to provide efficient and accountable services.

The policies and procedures associated with this plan involve those of street trail design, bike racks and walks and especially,

maintenance levels of existing and future facilities added. Increasing the presence of sidewalks and multi-use trails in key areas and future consideration of adoption of Complete Streets State Law into Fridley City code to mesh with State and MnDOT directives/initiatives are also part of the recommendations of the Active Transportation plan.

The plan moves forward directives in the Transportation Chapter of the City of Fridley 2030 Comprehensive Plan. It was informed by recent research findings from the 2010-2012 Bicycle/Pedestrian Study (which the Council accepted in September of 2012) and the 2010 U.S. Census. Input from Anoka County agencies, stakeholders, residents, the City Council, the Active Transportation Committee and City staff provided guidance in moving the community toward increasing multi-modal transportation opportunities in Fridley, Minnesota.

The Active Transportation Plan of 2013 will augment the 2030 Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Chapter transit goals by showing the action plans and progress made in the four year intervening period, updating the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Fridley 2030 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Statements

The Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2009, (<http://www.ci.fridley.mn.us/2030-comprehensive-plan-final>) states in *Chapter Six, Transportation* that safe and convenient transportation options and expanded mobility alternatives to automobile use should be planned. In addition, the Plan emphasized that, "Transit is 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." *Section 6.4* states that the City will "improve routes suitable for transportation cyclists..." (City of Fridley 2030 Comp Plan).

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan Transportation list placed the spotlight on operations, maintenance and future construction of non-automobile systems.

2009-2013 Progress on Comprehensive Plan Transportation Goals

Although few of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Goals have been achieved in their entirety four years after approval, several have seen progress, even during a major recession.

Goal: Create a well-connected bikeway and walkway system

Progress:

Gaps in system have been identified. Changes in bike routes to improve connectivity have been identified and mapped. A new Bike and Pedestrian map has been produced in summer of 2013. Transit for Livable Communities grant funds will provide new bike lanes and sidewalk on Main Street. A TE grant will fund a pedestrian crossing over 694 at Main Street in 2015 and SRTS funds are resulting in safer routes to Stevenson and Hayes Elementary schools and Fridley Middle school.

Goal: Create a network of bike routes for transportation cycling.

Progress:

Transportation cyclists will not always follow the new, more efficient bike routes, but news maps designating streets for trails and sidewalks will result in a network of safer bike routes and walkways.



Goal: Connect sidewalk concrete pads to make sidewalks contiguous

Progress:

This Plan contains a map which will be used by the City in conjunction with a Zoning Code

text amendment to ensure that gaps in the current bike route system are improved as new development occurs. City staff is forging partnerships with MnDOT and Metro Transit staff to work together to make ADA compliance on bus stops a reality over time. The East River Road Corridor Study implementation plan addresses a plan for needed improvements on ERR. Staff and citizens who attended advisory meetings have worked with MnDOT to develop trail/crossing solutions for the upcoming surfacing project on Hwy. 65.

Goal: Provide safe routes to transit

Progress:

The Transit-Oriented Overlay Zoning District was created to ensure safe access to the Northstar commuter train station and surrounding areas as redevelopment occurs. The adoption of this Active Transportation Plan based on the recommended map routes will address safety needs over the rest of the City. Partnership with the ISD 14 Wellness Committee and SHIP staff will explore grant opportunities with City Planning staff.

Goals: Improve safety of streets and crossings for accessibility for all

Progress:

Since the development of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the following street improvements toward ADA compliance have been effected: Truncated pads/domes for handicapped crossing safety have been installed on many streets. Funding for a safe

bike and pedestrian crossing over 694 at Main Street has been obtained and will be done in 2015. Also, a new timed signal was added for the road crossing at 61st and East River Road.

Goal: Create an environment that fosters biking and walking

Progress:

Bike/Pedestrian Study of 2010-2012 was presented and accepted by Fridley City Council, Sept. 2012. New bike racks installed in City Parks, Municipal Center, 2012. New bike map produced 2013.

This Plan contains a map which will be used by the City in conjunction with a zoning code text amendment to ensure that gaps in the current bike route system are improved as new development occurs. The Active Transportation Plan creates priority routes to receive emphasis and improve non-auto transit.

Goal: Connect sidewalks for recreational walking loops

Progress:

Applied for several DNR Trail Enhancement grants and supported City of Coon Rapids application for 85th Ave. connection to the Springbrook Nature Center.

Goal: Connect trails in Fridley to those in adjacent cities

Progress:

The new bike trail map of 2013 indicates border connections. Active interaction with other cities to compare trail connections will happen in late 2013-early 2014.

Goal: Make Fridley a desirable place to work

Progress:

Providing additional transportation options helps the employees of Fridley companies-by saving them money on car expense and increasing their concentration and levels of fitness. Employers see positive benefits of fit employees through a reduction in employee absenteeism. A recent City of Fridley, SHIP and Commute Solutions of Anoka County business survey administered through the North Chamber of Commerce revealed that there is an education gap and opportunities to improve in this category. Employers who help employees commute without using a car can expand without the need for additional parking lot space if the business expands.

Although staff worked with Metro Transit on a Northstar shuttle service, it was discontinued due to last of ridership. It could be revisited in future.

Goal: Connect the Northstar train station and Fridley bus stops to a system of sidewalks and bike lanes to encourage employees of Fridley businesses to commute via train.

Progress:

The City has promoted the tunnel under the Northstar train station as a means for pedestrians and bicyclist to quickly access

either side of the station. Bike racks and a bike locker are available on either platform. A recent Active Transportation Committee sponsored citizen ride of the Mississippi River Trail emanated from the Northstar train station to illustrate the ease of use.

TLC and TE grants collectively are being used to fund bike/ped connections on Main St. to the train station.

Goal: Provide an alternative to motor vehicle travel by accommodating non-motorized transportation in right-of-way reconstruction plans.

Progress:

City staff and citizen participation workshops provided input and worked with MnDOT on Hwy. 65 reconstruction to include pedestrian and bicycling improvement plans in the zone near 694. Safety improvements at many bus stops along Highway 65 will also occur.

Also, East River Road Corridor Study accomplished the creation of an implementation plan for bike/ped connections on ERR from 694 to Coon Rapids border and north to 610.

Goal: Buses—Enhance existing transit stops with paved access to them; add benches, add raised paved areas to create separation from traffic areas. Add new express bus routes,

arterial corridor enhancements and suburb to suburb service

Progress:

This is a complex goal involving multiple jurisdictions. Meetings in 2012 with Metro Transit discussed paved and unpaved stops and shared development plans along East River Road with the objective of providing bus stops near expanding employment centers. Benches are further discussed in the body of this document.

Goal: Encourage clean air quality

Progress:

Any time someone chooses to run an errand on foot or by bicycle within a 2 mile radius of their home, that is one less car on the road producing emissions. The goal of the Active Transportation Plan is to help the citizens of Fridley simultaneously improve air quality and get a half-hour of daily exercise in this manner.

Another component for air quality improvement involves street tree replacement or programming for new trees to augment the urban tree canopy of Fridley, which faces Emerald Ash borer and a lack of species diversity. An inventory of Fridley trees is being done in summer of 2013 and those results will be analyzed toward making recommendations to achieve this goal.

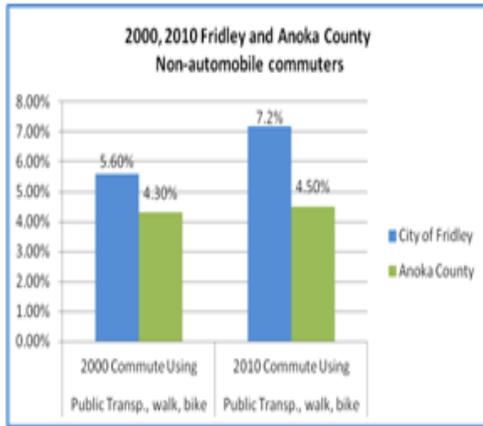
Shading and cooling of walking and biking routes is an important component to increase the likelihood that the citizenry will use trails and sidewalks. If they are built and well-maintained—if people feel safe and comfortable using the walks and trails, planning goals to increase exercise through a reduction in short auto trips can be achieved.

Areas used by pedestrians or bicyclists to access food and essential services will be ranked as priorities during trail and sidewalk analysis for Active Transportation.



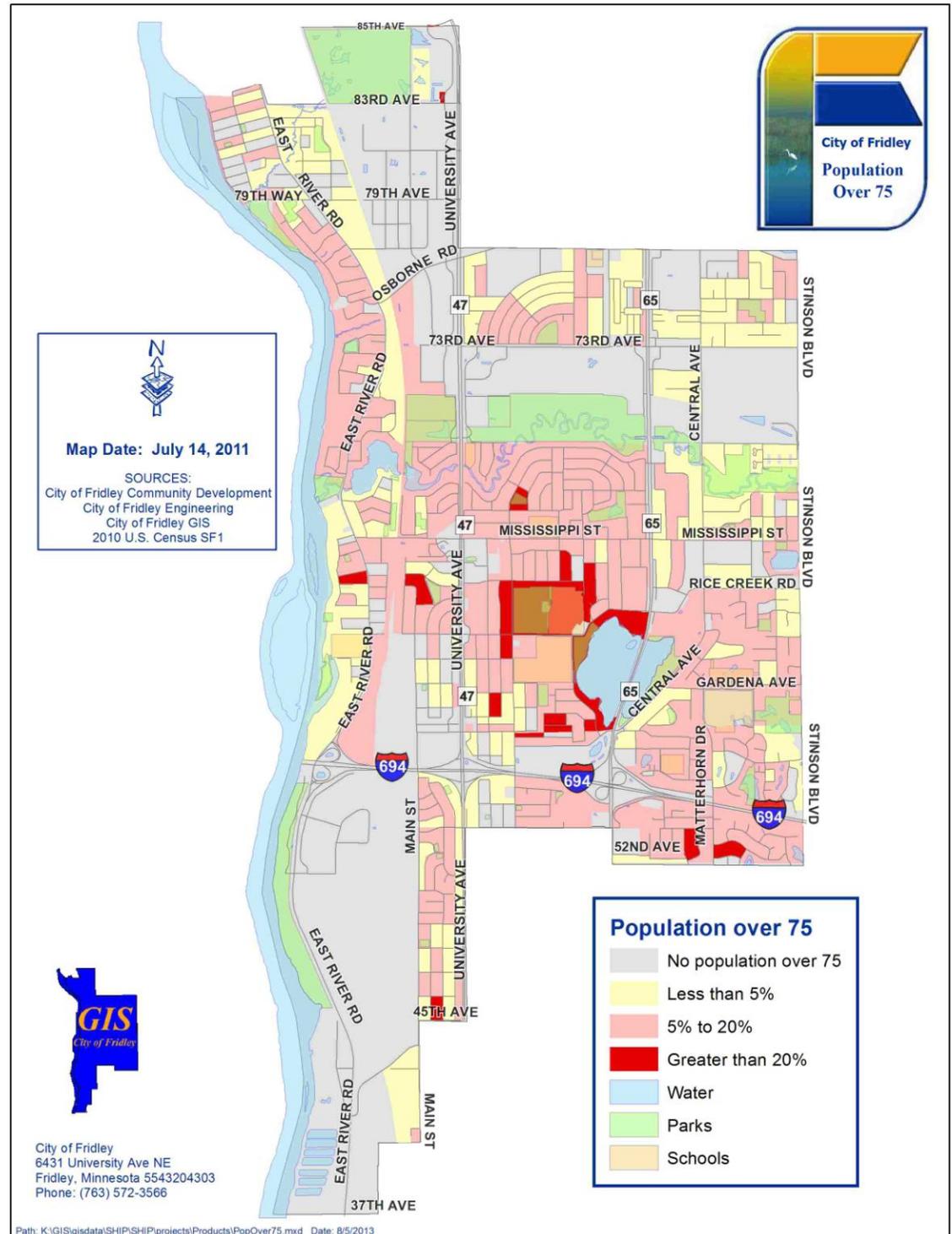
Above: Self-made dirt path from the Hyde Park Neighborhood to area retail and commercial center on 57th Ave. near University Ave.

Additional Background



City Demographics Changing

The City of Fridley’s rental unit occupation percentage and elderly population have both increased significantly between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census counts. The number of non-automobile commuters and the percentage of those below the poverty level in Fridley in the same period also rose.

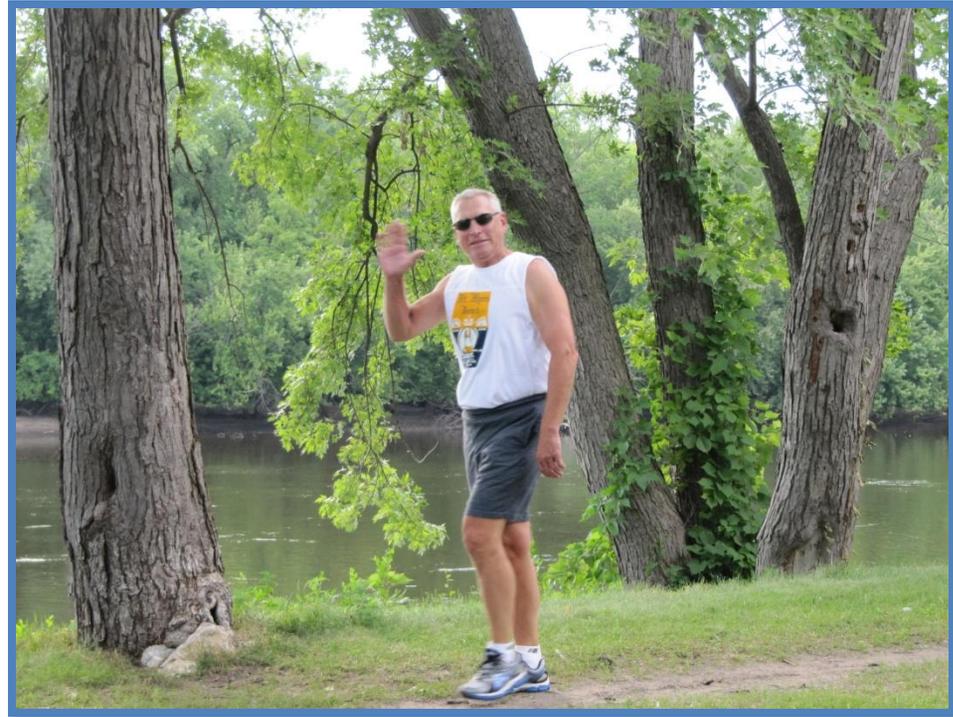


As indicated by the 2011 Community Survey census information, a large percentage of Fridley residents have one or fewer cars per household.

This creates a greater impetus for improving low-cost transport options in order to reduce pressure on the percentage of income a family spends on the combination of housing and transportation. For details on these findings please see the Fridley Bicycle/Pedestrian Study, 2010-2012 at http://www.ci.fridley.mn.us/images/article-files/commdev/SHIP/City_of_Fridley_2010_Pedestrian_and_Bicycle_Safety.pdf

Overall, less reliance upon automobiles will improve residents' health by promoting active lifestyles and cleaner air.

Commuters who walk, bike and use public transportation and trails are increasingly doing so year-round *if* walks, trails, bus stops and bus shelters are accessible.



Fridley resident enjoying the view of the Mississippi from the mud trail on the west side of Riverview Terrace.



Evolving transportation strategies: State and Metro

The following National, State and Metro-area initiatives have been evaluated and the principles incorporated into the Fridley Active Transportation Plan with an emphasis on Safety, Health, Accessibility & Equity, and responsible Funding.

Metropolitan Council

The *Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan* initiatives have emphasized that cities under its jurisdiction should plan to meet the daily needs of residents by assisting them in their efforts to live or work without reliance on an automobile. The use of alternate transit like buses, train, walking and bicycling will reduce both auto ownership and parking needs for new, higher density construction projects. Their *Policy 15: Develop and Maintain Efficient Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel Systems* dictates that safe, high-quality pedestrian and bicycle facilities must be developed and maintained. The Council itself is working on a Regional Bicycling project to improve corridor connections between cities, over bridges and the river.

State of Minnesota and MnDOT adopt Complete Streets

The State of Minnesota passed Complete Streets legislation; Chapter 351 of the 2010 Session was signed by the governor on May 14 of that year (see appendix for document). MnDOT has adopted these principles. New roadway projects will more closely reflect Complete Streets and ADA-accessibility principles over time, recognizing that trade-offs will be involved when the structure of projects is changed to accommodate multi-modal transportation, as seen in the recent Hwy. 65 resurfacing project.



State Department of Health Initiatives

Minnesota's health reform centers around prevention activities, designed to improve residents' health by reducing risk factors and health care costs relating to chronic disease—like obesity. Grants have been issued in two cycles through the MN Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP). The City of Fridley was one of 18 communities statewide awarded a grant during 2012-2013. One of the chief impediments to achieving 30 minutes of exercise daily can be the design of communities: walkable neighborhoods and opportunities to safely walk to work, school and shopping. As a community, we recognize that a healthier Fridley reduces health care costs, job absenteeism and can slow childhood obesity trends.

One of the goals in Fridley was to promote more active lifestyles through future improvements in walking and biking conditions like connectivity and proximity. Making route changes and providing an up-to-date map for bicyclists and walkers was one project achieved through this recent SHIP grant. Despite an increase in State Health funds for SHIP 2014, Anoka County has not chosen to pursue SHIP funding for 2014. Accomplishments from SHIP funding to Fridley from 2010-2013 follows:

What Fridley has accomplished with SHIP funding:

2010-2012 (\$73,327)

- Conducted a walk audit in Sept 2010
- Hired a consultant to study University Ave/61st and University Ave/57th intersections and design solutions (used info in 2013 to apply for SRTS grant, but did not receive)
- Created partnership with Fridley Schools and Allina Health Systems
- Received consultant assistance to apply for several DNR trail grants (unsuccessful in funding, however, base maps and data still being used)
- Completed a park user survey
- Created a bike safety brochure for Night to Unite distribution
- Created a SHIP Advisory Committee to review bike/walk issues
- Created several maps that have been used in other grant application projects
- Completed Bike/Walk Study
- Received consultant assistance, which helped City obtain \$1 million TE grant funds to construct ped bridge over I-694 in 2015
- Completed bike/ped traffic counts for MnDOT at key intersections fall 2012
- City went tobacco free in City parks and posted signs
- Provided \$29,000 in matching funds for County's East River Road Corridor Study

2012-2013 (\$18,000)

- Created an Active Transportation Committee (some were SHIP Committee members)
- Completed bike/ped traffic counts for MnDOT at key intersections spring 2013
- Designed and printed 1,500 copies of a bike trail map
- Completed an Active Transportation Plan

U.S. Department of Transportation: Policy Statement

“The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems. Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide — including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life — transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.”

Authority for U.S. DOT Policy on Active Transportation

“This policy is based on various sections in the United States Code (U.S.C.) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in Title 23—Highways, Title 49—Transportation, and Title 42—The Public Health and Welfare. These sections, provided in the Appendix, describe how bicyclists and pedestrians of all abilities should be involved throughout the planning process, should not be adversely affected by other transportation projects, and should be able to track annual obligations and expenditures on non-motorized transportation facilities.

Recommended Actions

The DOT encourages States, local governments, professional associations, community organizations, public transportation agencies, and other government agencies, to adopt similar policy statements on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation as an indication of their commitment to accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians as an integral element of the transportation system. In support of this commitment, transportation agencies and local communities should go beyond minimum design standards and requirements to create safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient bicycling and walking networks. Such actions should include:

- Considering walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes: The primary goal of a transportation system is to safely and efficiently move people and goods. Walking and bicycling are efficient transportation modes for most short trips and, where convenient intermodal systems exist, these non-motorized trips can easily be linked with transit to significantly increase trip distance. Because of the benefits they provide, transportation agencies should give the same priority to walking and bicycling as is given to other transportation modes. Walking and bicycling should not be an afterthought in roadway design.
- Ensuring that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should meet accessibility requirements and provide safe, convenient, and interconnected transportation networks.

For example, children should have safe and convenient options for walking or bicycling to school and parks. People who cannot or prefer not to drive should have safe and efficient transportation choices. Collecting data on walking and biking trips: The best way to improve transportation networks for any mode is to collect and analyze trip data to optimize investments. Walking and bicycling trip data for many communities is lacking. This data gap can be overcome by establishing routine collection of nonmotorized trip information. Communities that routinely collect walking and bicycling data are able to track trends and prioritize investments to ensure the success of new facilities. This data is also valuable in linking walking and bicycling with transit.

- Setting mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time: A byproduct of improved data collection is that communities can establish targets for increasing the percentage of trips made by walking and bicycling.
- Removing snow from sidewalks and shared-use paths: Current maintenance provisions require pedestrian facilities built with Federal funds to be maintained in the same manner as other roadway assets. State Agencies have generally established levels of service on various routes especially as related to snow and ice events.

•Improving non motorized facilities during maintenance projects: Many transportation agencies spend most of their transportation funding on maintenance rather than on constructing new facilities. Transportation agencies should find ways to make facility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists during resurfacing and other maintenance projects.” Quoted from United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations, signed on March 11, 2010.

2013 Poll: Minnesota supports investments in transit, bicycling, and walking

A statewide poll conducted in January 2013 by the bipartisan team of Fairbanks, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) shows public transportation is broadly supported and that a majority favor including bicycle and pedestrian projects in transportation funding proposals.

More than 90% surveyed agree that public transportation is a good investment for the state.

Over two-thirds (69%) of those surveyed indicated that they wanted bicycle and pedestrian funding included in transportation proposals.

A majority of respondents support paying more in taxes to expand and improve public transportation. The top reasons for this support were creating jobs, reducing traffic

congestion and making sure transit options are available to all, according to this poll.

Transportation systems are evolving to meet the needs of the changing demographics and preferences of residents. Changing the existing transportation structure will be incremental in nature and take some time but this Active Transportation plan provides direction.



From former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood:

Increased commitment to and investment in bicycle facilities and walking networks can help meet goals for cleaner, healthier air; less congested roadways; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities. Walking and bicycling provide low-cost mobility options that place fewer demands on local roads and highways. DOT recognizes that safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities may look different depending on the context. However, regardless of regional, climate, and population density differences, it is important that pedestrian and bicycle facilities be integrated into transportation systems. While DOT leads the effort to provide safe and convenient accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists, success will ultimately depend on transportation agencies across the country embracing and implementing this policy.



Active Transportation Planning-Citizen Participation

Business Surveys

One of the Transportation goals from the 2030 Comp Plan, the Active Transportation Plan states that connecting routes and walks to employment centers is a key priority. The other side of the coin is participation and encouragement by employers.

The Anoka County SHIP coordinator and Anoka Commute Solutions with City of Fridley Planning Department staff developed a survey about the level of participation business' have with non-auto commuting practices and whether they have any programs to induce employees to use bicycling or walking or the bus as a way to get to work.

The survey was sent to businesses in early 2013 in cooperation with North Chamber of Commerce and its membership. The employers who responded said that 90% of employees drove alone, although bus/train and biking has significant responses. Although employers had employees along with customers, volunteers and visitors to many of their locations, few bike racks, changing facilities or accommodations for bicycle commuters exist. Factors like the condition/availability of sidewalks, trails, bus stop locations and perceived traffic volumes were also incorporated into the survey.

To move forward after this baseline survey, staff will work with Commute Solutions to increase education about bike racks for businesses and create programming for Employee Trip Reduction. Programs which have been successful with businesses around the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area have included helmet give-aways, incentive packages that encourage alternate commuting (like subsidizing bus passes), bike locker facilities, on-site commuter fairs or bag lunch information sessions.

School Surveys

Parents of School Children Polled

Safe Routes to Schools interviewed parents in 2012 about why they drove their children to school. The overwhelming response was concern about traffic speeds, crossing busy highways and general safety.

North Park Elementary

Part of a SHIP grant project which included an assessment by the consulting firm Community Design Partners involved a Walkability Checklist for North Park Elementary School. Located in Fridley, it is primarily a school population of Columbia Heights students. It ranked lowest on the national walkability survey: "It's a disaster for walking" was one comment. Other comments included the following: no sidewalks, no stop sign near

school, needed striped crosswalks or signals, needed curb ramps, no lighting at all.

Hayes Walking Audit

The expanded Active Transportation Committee conducted a walking audit of Hayes Elementary on Mississippi Street. They also, in conjunction with MnDOT, completed a second Bicycle/Pedestrian Count in April, 2013. Bicycling members reviewed the existing bicycle map for routes accuracy, efficacy and made recommendations.

Active Transportation Committee

The Active Transportation group conducted bike pedestrian counts in association with a Minnesota Department of Transportation initiative to obtain baseline statistics about pedestrian and bicycle use and behaviors at key highway intersections. This project started during the Bike/Pedestrian Study of 2010-2012 and continued in Spring 2013 with a goal of further refining recommendations for MnDOT, Anoka County Transportation and City of Fridley Public Works in regard to street modifications for ped/bike safety.

Input from Residents

The 2013 Home and Garden show was another venue for Fridley residents to comment and map areas of the city which are difficult to access without a car. They identified trails in poor condition and mentioned desired amenities for the City.



Fridley Active Transportation Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths

- Active Transportation Committee established, new partnerships forged, plan moves Comp. Plan forward
- New commercial/industrial development advancing
- TOD district created
- Strong regional employment: net gain of commuters
- Forward-thinking Council
- Mississippi River town, have regional trails & parks
- HRA poised areas like University Ave. between 57th and 61st for higher-density development by parcel assembly
- Northstar Train stop, easy travel to downtown Mpls.

Weaknesses

- Plan and policy changes dependent on city financial condition improving
- MnDOT and Anoka Cty Transportation may not allow the recommended changes on roadways they control
- Numbers of elderly increasing
- Few bus shelters exist on busiest roadways
- City originally formatted without walks
- ADA compliance advancing slowly

SWOT

Opportunities

- Housing is affordable
- TOD District includes ready-to-develop parcels
- Development and project interest along East River Road and University Ave. is moving forward

Threats

- Safety on shared roads
- Development in TOD will worsen current non-auto problems
- Plan to aid children, elderly and those without cars can be easily side-lined by lack of easement permissions or a few vocal individual residents
- Lack of ability to provide maintenance funds may not allow us to accept grants to add trails and walks in priority areas

Seniors: Safe and Active

A city map was used to jump start discussions about routes and methods and issues surrounding “getting around without a car” in Fridley. This listening session took place with active seniors at the Fridley Senior Center in March of 2013, through coordination between City Planning and the Senior Center Director Connie Thompson. Seniors expressed their concerns and made suggestions about how to mitigate the challenges of moving around the city (see Appendix). This group of seniors stated that they did not walk because:

- Walking in the road seems unsafe and few sidewalks exist where we want to walk
- Interesting stores and restaurants that could be neighborhood destinations do not exist
- Many seniors would like to ride a bike again but don't have skills or feel comfortable on two-wheels
- Speed of traffic and length of crossing time intimidates
- Don't want to walk alone

Seniors represent a growing segment of the population of Fridley.

Census and Met Council: senior population in the Twin Cities will double between 2010 and 2030.

Minnesota has a high percentage of future seniors who have indicated their preference through aging in place, in existing housing. Studies have shown that after age 55, people seldom move away from their primary residence. In our region in 2010, senior citizens were 11 % of population, but in Fridley 65+ seniors are 14 % of the population, or 20.8% of Householders. Seniors living alone or with a spouse have a need for senior-friendly housing and walkability and safe routes to stores and appointments. In addition, recent Complete Streets initiatives from MnDOT include recommendations that cities should create Safe Routes for seniors and keep senior citizens in mind when designing crossings and count-down timers.

While our HRA and other programs are actively engaged in making these housing modifications a reality for Fridley seniors, the ability to move around without a car is very important. As finances, eyesight and other factors limit a senior's ability to drive a car, mobility is severely curtailed in a city that is not walkable. Biking skills may be a thing of the past, even if, for some seniors, this could be a solution for both short errands and increasing the amount of exercise each day by the requisite 30 minutes.

Through a commitment to Active Transportation for seniors, Fridley will

Fridley Seniors Try Bikes:

Connie Thompson, Fridley Senior Program Supervisor: “I thought it was a great opportunity for seniors to try new and alternative forms of transportation. I was pleasantly surprised at the response.”



Seniors at the Fridley Community Center in winter of 2013 said, “We try to keep active. I’d walk to the bank, dentist, beauty shop, bus stop, except they (*sidewalks*) aren’t shoveled.” Questions were asked about bicycling. Those who responded indicated that while they once rode a two-wheel bike and would like to again, balance issues prevent them. Older walkers mentioned the need for longer count-down times on designated routes to help them cross busy roads.

provide consistent planning design and programming that reaches seniors to increase mobility. Expanding on the existing Happy Hikers Club with a Bicycling Club, obtaining practice bikes designed for seniors in order to conduct skill classes on operation and rules of the road, bike and helmet use, the city is committed to senior safety facilities. Including education about equipment, rules of the road and obtaining the best information and input to create designated routes for seniors has become a goal for Fridley’s Active Transportation Plan.

The following streets are designated as Safe Routes for Seniors: 61st Ave. NE, 7th St., 57th.

St., Mississippi, 5th St., Osborne Rd. In addition, the University Ave. NE west frontage road connecting Community Park to the trails system is used by ambulatory seniors to get to pharmacies and retail shopping when they live in the north neighborhoods of the city.





Increasing Transportation Options in Fridley

Improving community access for those with disabilities



The 2013 Minnesota legislative session examined the delivery of more transportation options for people with disabilities—and all residents of the state. For people with disabilities, the bill and the new funding that it would bring, would make a difference in three key ways: The bill would provide \$50 million per year to metro-area cities and counties to address local needs, including ADA enhancements, safer sidewalks, bicycle routes, and other transit investments, such as shuttles. By law, all new facilities must be ADA compliant. These funds could help cities and counties retrofit existing facilities or fund system enhancements for which funds are never available.

“For instance, Metro Mobility could add text messaging to users that their ride is approaching, just like taxicabs currently have,” said Ken Rodgers, chair of the

Minneapolis Disability Committee. “Or, cities or counties could upgrade telephone systems for paratransit so waiting queues aren’t so long.” Whether all aspects of this particular bill pass, the impetus for change and improvement to achieve more inclusive transportation systems is clear.

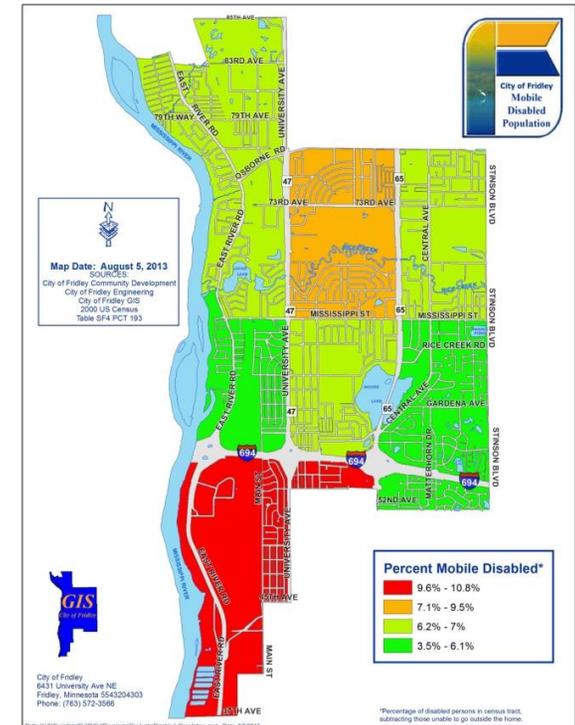
Some state plans call for a modest expansion of bus service in the metro, which means more routes and longer service hours, including weekends and non-peak hours. Expanded service means improved access for persons with disabilities, both on regular route service and via paratransit, a service for people with disabilities who are unable to use regular public transit.

By law, paratransit service is tied to regular transit service routes and hours so an expansion means that more people with disabilities will have transit availability.

Fridley will make regular route transit service work for more people by modifying bus stop access in the following ways:

- Adding curb cuts/ramping to make streets more accessible
- Improving snow removal techniques and clarifying timetables for said removals
- Adding sidewalks or trails make better/safer connections to key bus stops

People with disabilities in communities across the country continue to face barriers such as inaccessible bus stops, intersections without curb ramps, street crossings and pedestrian signals that are not audible to individuals with visual disabilities, and barriers such as telephone poles blocking sidewalks. If people with disabilities cannot even get down their streets, they will be unable to connect to other forms of transportation. [American Association of People with Disabilities](#)





Getting to Schools



Studies in Canada and Denmark have shown that children who walk or bike to school receive more than just physical activity—their level of concentration receives a boost as well. Since 1 in 3 children (information courtesy of MDH) in Minnesota is obese, changes in routine and the physical activity level is hugely important.

One of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan goals was that the City 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 was to initiate a discussion with the Fridley school district and Anoka County to get reduced speed school zones installed at Fridley’s elementary school sites, as other

communities throughout the metropolitan area have done. The timeline on this was 2008-2010.

A walking Audit of Hayes Elementary school on Mississippi Street was conducted in May of 2013 by the Active Transportation Committee and City of Fridley staff and City of Fridley Schools Transportation Department staff. The recommendation put forth is to eliminate parent parking on the south side of Mississippi St. directly opposite the school and to enlarge the east side entry apron at the curb to better accommodate school buses entering the driveway.

Safe Routes to Schools

Movement on the 2030 Comp Plan goal has occurred through grant funding from MnDOT’s Safe Routes to Schools programs of 2009-2012. Fridley obtained grant funding for electronic speed monitors which will be installed on both sides of Mississippi at Hays elementary school as part of the SRTS grant project and new sidewalks along East River Road, near Stevenson Elementary School. Modifications are also being implemented at Fridley Middle School to encourage more biking.





Metro Transit and Fridley Bus Stops



Fridley 2030 Comprehensive Plan and Metro Transit

One of the 2030 City of Fridley Comprehensive

Plan goals was to improve the accessibility and safety of the bus stop sites on major highways. Hwy. 65 re-construction in 2013 will greatly improve the safety of bus stops there. The map (at right) prepared for the 2010-2012 Bike/Pedestrian study shows that most bus stops remain unpaved and that connecting sidewalks are often absent. Funding availability has been limited for these projects and questions of how to make these stops ADA compliant have also arisen.

Expansion of Metro Transit bus service to respond to recent economic development

New business park developments along East River Road on either side of the 694 freeway will dictate changes in bus stops, bus shelters and benches to fulfill Transit-Oriented Development goals and objectives.

Bench Accessibility and Locations

Policy to explore options to license benches and non-Metro Transit bus shelters annually or regulate by franchise to ensure year-round maintenance and safety has been researched. Staff intends to bring forth a suggested annual bus bench permitting process for City Council

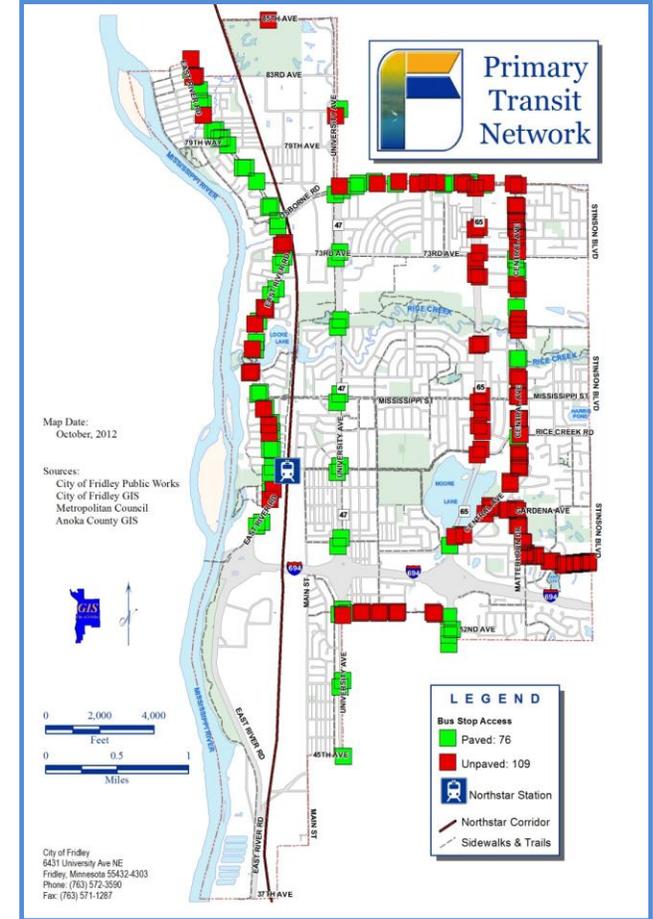
consideration later this year. The current bench and shelter situation has created a situation where many benches are placed in unsafe locations, unlicensed by MnDOT, by multiple vendors. The structure of licensing will help to place more benches on priority routes where they are needed and to ensure that inspections and company maintenance and snow removal takes place in a timely manner. See Bus bench and shelter map in appendix.

Bus Rapid Transit Service

The Central BRT line is planned for 53rd and University Ave. with a stop at 61st and University. Future redevelopment of the former gas station at this location will be designed to function with the future improved bus stop.

Winter Maintenance

The Fridley City Code will be modified after new recommendations are approved.





Maintaining Public Non-auto Transportation Infrastructure



Walk and Trail Winter Maintenance

City will clear snow on walks and trails as a secondary priority to streets (for purposes of staging efficiency) according to priority map.

City will codify requirements for adjoining property owners to monitor and correct any snow and ice or hazardous conditions on sidewalks and trail.





Filling in the Gaps



Closing the gaps in the existing walk and trail structure is a first priority after maintenance of existing facilities. Making the connections will be pursued through private redevelopment and public grants.

The map shows priorities for connecting active transportation routes. Streets that parallel or are major auto routes will be given a higher priority for the addition of walks and trails. Walks near pharmacies, grocery stores, schools, major employers and schools will also be emphasized. Major roadways, where practicable will be included in the priority routes. Re-alignment of bike routes to improve connectivity has been studied for signed on-street routes.

Additional bike racks will be added to complete the City Parks program started with TLC funding in 2012 and as new funding sources are identified, will move into locations recommended by staff and the Active Transportation Committee.

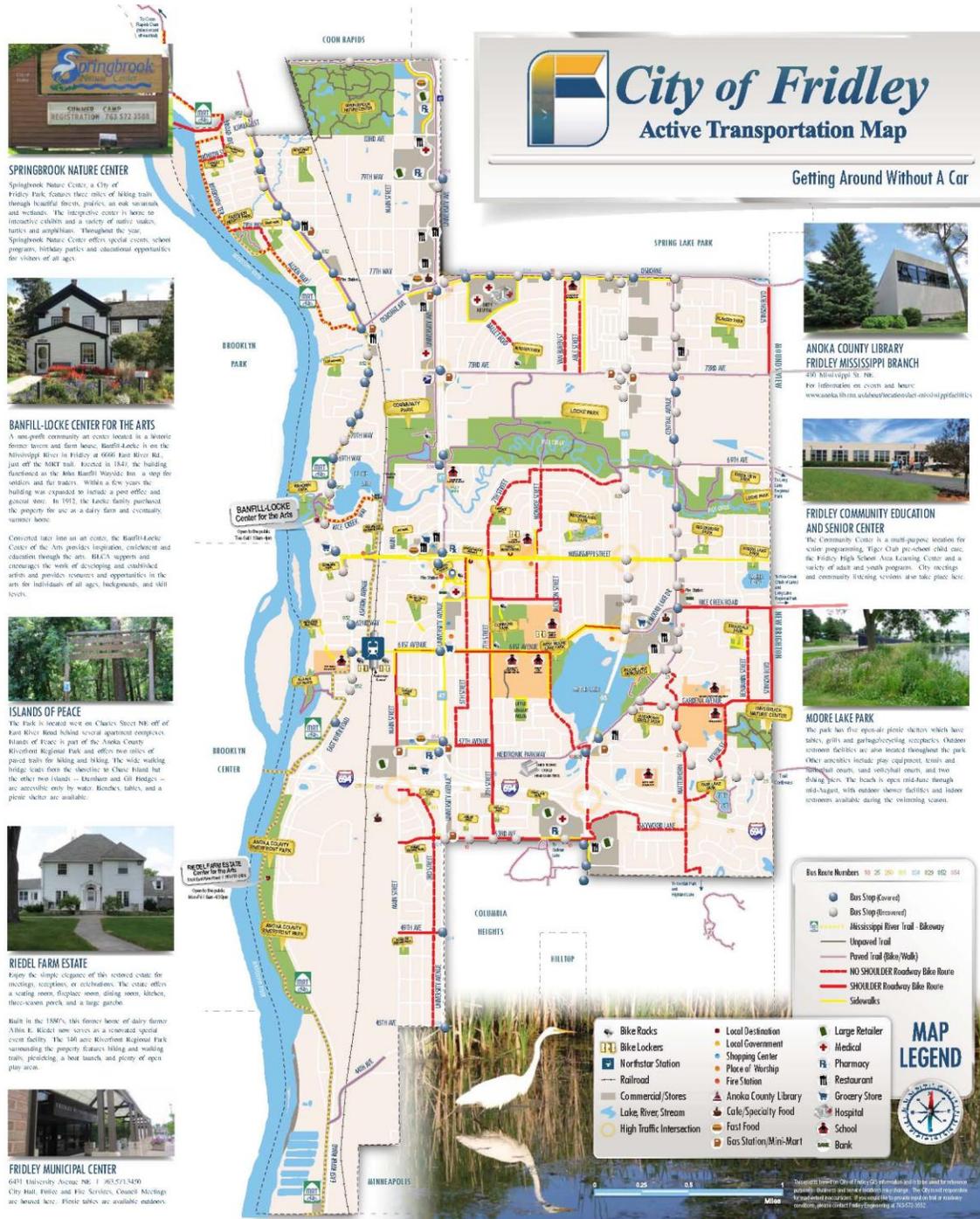
City staff will bring forth recommendations for code changes with requirements for

property owners adjoining sidewalks and trails to monitor ice and snow and correct any hazardous conditions.





Bike Audits and 2013 Active Transportation Bike Map



The completion of the Bike/Walk Study of 2012, yielded recommendations which were used to pinpoint the most important and realistic goals for Active Transportation. Since that time, a school walk audit, a second bike audit (in association with Mn DOT) and trail evaluations by the resident volunteer group, the *Active Transportation Committee* yielded additional information and provided input for the Active Transportation map.

One project which involved bicyclists and city staff field work made slight changes to existing bike routes. Changes are reflected on the 2013 Fridley Active Transportation Map at left. Reviews by the City Planning and Public Works Departments will continue with goal of improving the safety of bike/pedestrian crossings on University Ave. and Hwy 65.

A 2012-2013 State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant to promote Active Transportation provided funding for the research and development of a map of Fridley bicycle routes (on and off-road) and sidewalks). This map is an improvement upon the scale of Anoka County trail maps and has more detail than some on-line sources like Google Maps. It was designed to highlight the Mississippi River Trail, suggest the safest and most direct bicycling routes for running errands and getting to work and school. Important safety date and rules of the road are included along with key interest points.



Improving Health through Community Design and Education



May, 2013: Fridley bicyclists looking for on-line routes or consulting a county map, showing need for local map.

Better Health through Design Modifications

Why are we concentrating on the health benefits of walking and bicycling for errands and to get to work? Fridley is not immune from the burgeoning obesity epidemic. Those communities that design their streets and developments to create safer walking environments find that more people walk!

According to the Federal Highway Administration's 2009 National Household

Transportation Survey, 68 percent of the trips taken by U.S. residents between ½ and 2 miles in distance were made by vehicle. Only 23 percent of such trips were made on foot. One-third of respondents reported no walking trips whatsoever in the previous week.

The greatest barrier to walking more is the perception of too much traffic, not enough street lighting, or wide road crossings, according to the FHWA, citing, "People are also concerned about crime, had no nearby paths or sidewalks, and were too busy to walk more often."

Design modifications for road diets, gradually inserting sidewalks on one or both sides of key streets and increasing the quantity and quality of bike routes is the goal.

Education

Opportunities for bike/walk safety include:

- Senior clinics for routes, bike riding demos
- Bike helmet clinics
- Maps, signage, share the road promotions
- Website info about Active Transportation and benefits of exercise. Walking and wheeling tips.
- Staffing public events (Police Dept. open house, wellness fair, etc.) to promote bike safety education
- Safety camp

Improvements

1) City will continue to partner with Metro Transit on bus and bench year-round

maintenance assistance. By necessity, this is secondary to street snow removal because of sequencing.

2) Establish a trail condition measurement standard, similar to what is used for streets. Routinely review trail/sidewalk conditions (again, as was done with the street program).

3) Make recommendations for priority improvement projects and budget in Capital Improvement Plan accordingly.

4) Meet with Active Transportation committee or Citizen Advisory four times annually to review citizen objectives and input.



Conclusion

Changes in the census have shown that our community is increasingly turning to non-auto forms of transportation. The average age of the community is growing but we maintain a strong population of school age children. Fridley residents, along with the rest of the country, don't walk to school or run errands on foot or by bicycle as we once did and obesity as a disease, has jumped alarmingly in the last 30 years, slowed only recently by initiatives generated from the Minnesota State Health Department's County grants like the State Health Improvement Program.

For Fridley residents who want to walk or bike in the city—safety concerns have emerged as a top priority. Walkers and bicyclists who move east and west in the community experience the wide high volume and high speed highways which slice through the community. Changing speeds or coordinating maintenance often involves jurisdictional challenges and can be at odds with the necessity of moving cars and trucks efficiently.

Many communities in Minnesota have created Active Transportation strategies in partnership with the Minnesota State and County Departments of Health and Transportation.

In order to create this plan, City of Fridley Departments of Community Development, Engineering and Public Works and Recreation coordinated input received from the public at participation events, with volunteer committees in order to coordinate timetables for priority routes and other plans.

The action plans and policies contained herein are designed to foster the ability to safely move throughout the community in all seasons without the use of a car. Whether residents are combining exercise with errands—to access goods and services or are walking, biking or using the bus to to get to jobs and school, our community promotes the use of low-cost and low-input transportation options.

Incorporating errands and exercise into daily routines has been found to be easier for most people than trying to find time for a workout in a busy day. Walking to the bus stop or bicycling to run an errand inserts activity and a de-stressor into our daily routines and reduces our community's expenditures for health care.

Budgets don't necessarily permit gym memberships and walking is inexpensive—

throw on a comfortable pair of shoes and you are ready to go.

Andrew R. Cline, associate professor of media and journalism at Missouri State University, has a blog in which he advocates what he calls "the 1-mile solution." People use a simple tool such as Walk Score to assess what services are within a one-mile radius of their homes, and then simply walk or ride a bike to make those trips. Cline writes, "I'm ... suggesting that we ... put effort into an idea that is sustainable and could grow the numbers by creating a habit. It is, after all, mostly a habit that puts us behind the wheel of a car to travel one mile. It's habit that makes the risk and expense of a 1-mile car ride seem normal. If people do try their own "one-mile solution," they may discover exactly what the FHWA was talking about: a pedestrian environment unpleasant or downright hostile to travelers on foot. Maybe then we'll finally have the political capital we need to lobby for real infrastructure improvements that allow people can get the activity they need in a natural human way."

Walkers, bicyclists and other non-auto transit users contribute feedback at the smaller, more intimate scale than the observations made from a car. Problem properties are watched, neighbors meet or are recognized which then identifies who belongs or doesn't belong in a neighborhood on a particular day—the "eyes on the street" idea. These interactions with the area immediately surrounding one's home can help City police with enforcement and provide

City planners and engineers with valuable input about how to improve bike and pedestrian safety. An added benefit to more trips without a car may create a necessity for more neighborhood accessible goods, services and amenities.

Toward the goal of improving pedestrian and biking safety and experiences, the following design or wayfinding elements or projects have been added:

- Active Transportation City map produced, 1500 printed by Sept. 1, 2013
- On-line maps and tips will be posted on the Fridley City website with information and links to Commute Solutions, Metro Transit schedules for buses and trains will be in place by October, 2013.
- Loops and connectivity points will be emphasized as budget and grant availability permits (see Connectivity map)
- Development projects in or outside of the Transit-oriented development area will be reviewed for accessibility/connectivity on site for employees to commute without an auto.
- Zoning code will be amended by January 2014 to refer to designated streets that must have sidewalk and trail easements in redevelopment projects

The City of Fridley is gradually transitioning from a more suburban auto-oriented city into a community that is physically denser, demographically older and may increasingly rely on the quality and safety of walks and trails in the community to access shops, jobs, schools, clinics and the necessities of everyday life.

