



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Minutes - Draft Northfield Transportation Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

1:00 PM

2nd Floor Training Room

1:00 PM - CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Also Present: Dave Bennett, PW Director/City Engineer; Tracy Borgschatz, Transportation Co-Director, Hiawathaland Transit; Glen Castore, Supervisor, Bridgewater Township; Dianne Ford, Transportation Co-Director, Hiawathaland Transit; Emery John, Program Associate; Jenny Larson, Executive Director, Three Rivers (CAP); Ben Martig, City Administrator; Cindy Stock, Administrative Associate; Scott Wopata, Community Development Director

Chair Schroeer called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. and introductions were made, with Associate Stock taking Roll Call.

Present: 5 - Committee Member Galen Malecha, Committee Member Jessica Peterson White, Chair William Schroeer, Committee Member Foster Transburg and Committee Member Ashton Macklin

Absent: 6 - Committee Member Jane Bartho, Committee Member Brandon Cash, Committee Member Jesse Cashman, Committee Member Jim Purfeerst, Committee Member Mike Slavik and Committee Member Jennelle Teppen

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There was no Quorum for Approval of the Meeting Agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was no Quorum for Approval of the January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes.

1. [26-189](#) January 21, 2026 NTAC Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [01-21-2026 NTAC Meeting Minutes DRAFT](#)

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

There was no Board Member & Commissioner Reports.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. [26-190](#) Hiawathaland Transit - Expanding/Improving Transit Service in Northfield.

Attachments: [1 - NFLD TAC Presentation April 2026](#)
[2- Hiawathaland Transportation Services Northfield](#)
[Hiawathaland Transportation Services Northfield-Express](#)

Dianne Ford, Jenny Larson and Tracy Borgschatz presented on the Hiawathaland Transit in relation to its need to expand and improve its services in the Northfield community. It currently services Rice, Wabasha and Goodhue counties.

KEY TAKE AWAYS

1. Services Offered: (a) Deviated Routes - MnDOT standards = 8 rides/hour
(b) Dial-A-Ride - MnDOT standards = 3 rides/hour
2. Northfield Ridership - all routes declined in 2025
3. 2027 MnDOT transitioning to Formula-Based Funding
(a) Rural transit systems projection is 2-6% funding decrease
(b) Hiawatha Transit need to adjust services to absorb funding decrease
(c) Service expansion will require additional investment MnDOT
4. (d) Transit Route Redesign key considerations: ridership & demand, equity & access, service efficiency & productivity, community engagement, operational feasibility, connectivity & integration, financial impacts, phasing & implementation, communication strategy and performance monitoring
5. City & Hiawatha Partnership Opportunities: marketing & outreach collaboration, community events & promotions, communications support, employer & economic development partnerships and equity & accessibility initiatives

Miscellaneous Considerations:

- (a) a 3rd route viable (b) add hospital to existing route? (c) extend service beyond 6:00 p.m.
- (d) City of Dundas contribute financially (e) gaps exist on Express Route? (f) provide payment technology

DISCUSSION

1. Why MnDOT responsible for funding all Greater MN transit?
2. After COVID - no buses 2024 into 2025. Acquisition of buses. Prices doubled. Create memorandum of understanding with each community.
3. MnDOT can pull funding if not operating at efficiency standard.
3. How far in advance can person request ride? Depends on availability & time
5. Where ridership is at in 2025 versus 2022? Decrease in Express Routes possibly due to Kraewood Flats.
6. Demographic numbers are reported monthly to Carleton & St. Olaf colleges.
7. Decline in Hispanic ridership during ICE raids.
8. Target (store) route - expect increase in ridership numbers.
9. Currently nation-wide shortage of bus drivers.
10. Hiawatha is open to outside funding other than MnDOT - what available in area? Can NTAC help?
11. Hiawatha have routes want to launch but lack of bus drivers & funding.
12. 2% decrease is about \$200,000 in Hiawatha's budget.
13. Rochester looking at creating "hub" for connecting routes.
14. Partner with City to accommodate youth riders i.e. Northfield pool/summer day programs/camps (Dial-A-Ride) but can't be a charter bus (Three Rivers Head Start set a program up?) - based on availability so many days/week; some communities donate funding.
15. Need to get transit service information to Townships. Lack of information in Twp's.

NTAC members supported to bring outreach support resolution to Council.

3. [26-191](#) Electric Vehicle Car Share Study Update and Startup Funding Models.

Attachments: [1 - Carshare Project One-Pager](#)

Community Development Director, Scott Wopata, shared an update on the EV Car Share Study and startup Funding Models, which is supported in the City's 2045 Comprehensive, Transportation & Strategic Plans. The City is coordinating with RMI (Rocky Mountain Institute), who received a grant from GM to assist with a study for EV car share program, and would like to collaborate with the City in developing strategies to bring clean, affordable and shared mobility to under served communities with gaps in public transportation.

KEY TAKE AWAYS

1. *The Goal: reduce transportation costs and improve access to jobs, healthcare and education*
2. *The Challenge: to make rural transportation efficient and cost effective due to low density and bus ridership, scale challenges, and dual need within the community and to the region (Twin Cities etc)*
3. *Study aligns well with Northfield's characteristics of:*
 - a. *Need for occasional car access for college students*
 - b. *Need for 1.2 cars/household for senior couples*
 - c. *Amenity in high-density multi-family*
 - d. *No available alternatives such as Uber/Lyft*
 - e. *Dual purpose within the community and region*
4. *Current Timeline Process:*
 - 2024: *City not awarded Federal Funding to plan/implement pilot car share program*
 - 2025: *(a) St. Olaf/Carleton pilot a small ZipCar car share program with immediate success (b) RMI secured private funding to work with City*
 - 2026: *RMI & City reviewing similar models nationally that focus on colleges, rural, EV, scalable and local feasibility sites*
 - Current: *Pending: (a) presentation to colleges (b) applied for \$50K grant to offset vehicle acquisition (c) presentation to NTAC*
5. *Model Proposed: (a) HourCar as nonprofit operator (b) Phase 1 Launch in August 2026 at both colleges (c) Phase 2 Launch in 2027 at 3rd location in Northfield*
6. *Concerns with Model Proposed: (a) high upfront cost (b) risk mitigation/sharing (c) marketing (d) maintenance (e) right-sizing the scale*

NTAC ACTION

Seeking NTAC's support and feedback. Due to lack of meeting time remaining, there was no discussion with committee members; forward questions and comments to Scott Wopata.

4. [26-192](#) NTAC receives an update on Southeast Minnesota Transit Management Organization Implementation Phase.

Attachments: [1 - Resolution 2026-020](#)

[2 - Appendix G SE MN TMO Implementation Plan DRAFT 6-16-25](#)

[3 - RFQ with Dates](#)

NTAC did not receive the SE MN Transit update due to lack of meeting time remaining. This item will be moved to the July 15th meeting, along with the January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes for Approval.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m. by Chair Schroeer.