

City Speed Limit Study

City Council

July 21, 2026



A safe transportation network for all

Speed Limits



- Statutory speed limits based on roadway classification
 - Current default on local roads is 30 mph
- Effective August 1, 2019, Minnesota Statute changes allow cities increased authority to set speed limits on streets under the city's jurisdiction without conducting an engineering and traffic investigation.
- Prior to statute change the local authorities requested the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation to authorize any speed limit changes

City Compliance with New State Statute



1. **Develop a Speed Limit Policy to define procedures to set speed limits**
 - Speed limit Policy to be based on city's safety, engineering, and traffic analysis
 - Recommended Speed limits to be based on national urban speed limit guidance
2. **Implement speed limit changes in consistent and understandable manner**

Speed Limit Policy Goals



- Create a rational means for setting speed limits on local roads that effectively balance the need for public safety and transportation mobility
- Provide a consistent procedure for changing speed limits

National Urban Speed Limit Guidance



- **NCHRP (National Cooperative Highway Research Program) Report 966 – Posted Speed Limit Setting Procedure and Tool: User Guide (2021)**
 - Speed limit setting procedure for any roadway type with an increased emphasis on designing for the context of the road.
 - Multiple variables such as roadway classification, adjacent land uses, and surface type are considered.
- **NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) – City Limits (2020)**
 - NACTO's City Limits (2020) promotes lower urban speed limits, highlighting speed as a key factor in fatal and serious crashes.
 - The report recommends replacing the 85th-percentile method with safety-based speed setting, supported by evidence that lower speed limits reduce crashes and injuries.
- **Smart Growth America – Dangerous by Design (2021)**
 - Number of people struck and killed annually has grown by 75 percent between 2010 and 2022.
 - Policies continued to be made that prioritize speedy movement of vehicles at the expense of the safety of all people who use the streets

NCHRP 966 Posted Speed Limit Setting Procedure and Tool



– Tool created for transportation professionals for setting speed limits focused on roadway context

- Crash history including severity consequences.
- Available roadside elements.
- Horizontal curvature characteristics including radius, superelevation, and friction.
- Roadway lighting.
- Adjacent pedestrian and bicycle activity.
- Roadway facility type and context.
- Number of signals.
- Number of access points.
- Type of median.
- Presence of sidewalk.
- Presence of bicyclist facilities.

City of Northfield Existing Conditions



- City roadways in Northfield contain a variety of:
 - Daily traffic volume
 - Cross section
 - Pedestrian/bicycle uses and facilities
 - Proximity to schools
 - Access/driveway spacing
 - Surrounding land use

Legend

Speed Limits

- 20 mph
- 30 mph
- 35 mph
- 45 mph
- 55+ Mph

College/University

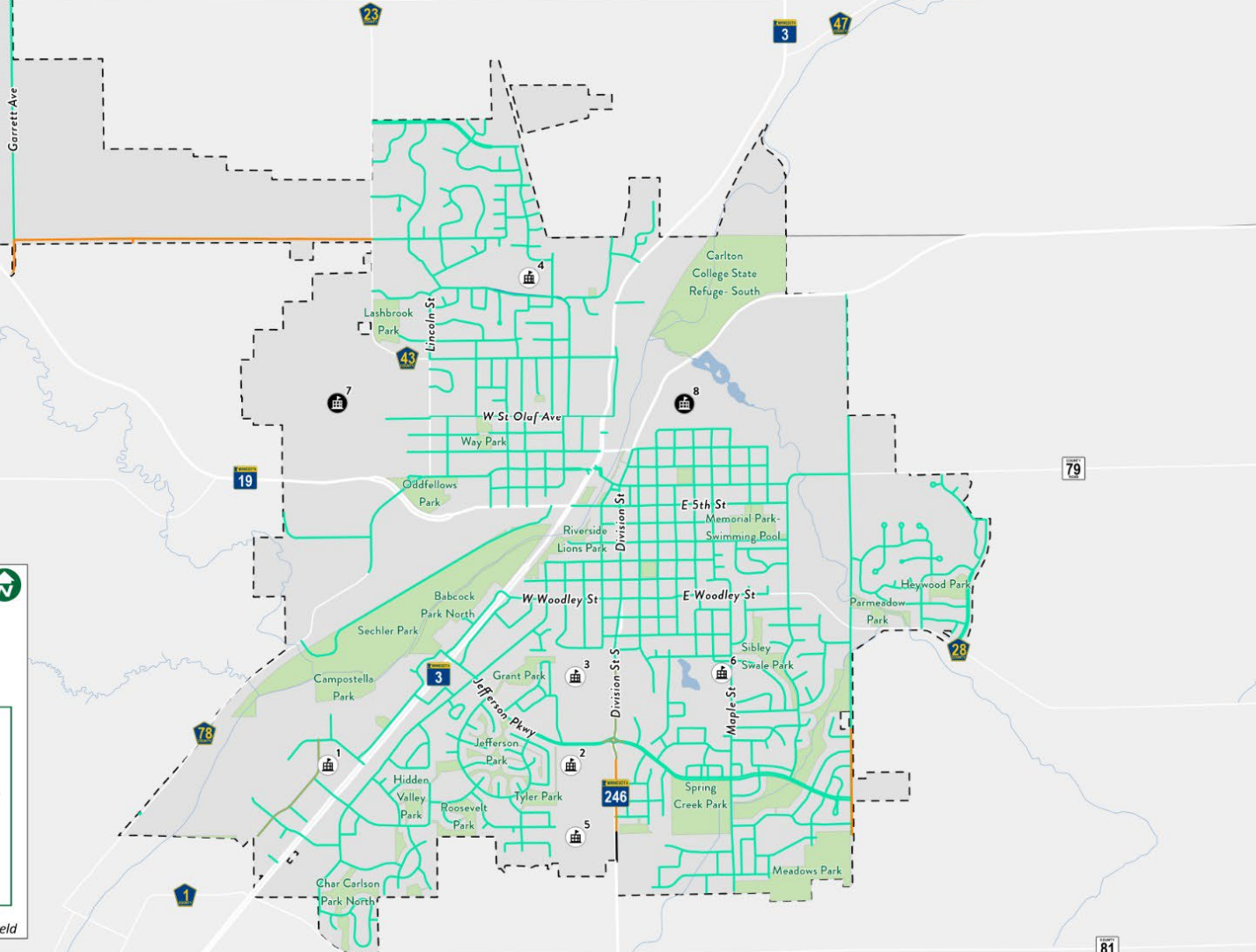
Schools

Northfield City Limits

1. Acadia Charter School
2. Bridgewater Elementary School
3. Northfield High School
4. Greenvale Park Elementary School
5. Northfield Middle School
6. Spring Creek Elementary
7. St. Olaf College
8. Carleton College

0 2,300 Feet

Source: QSM, MnDOT, Dakota County, Rice County, City of Northfield



Crash Analysis – City



- 48 reported crashes in on City Roads in 2025
- 218 Total Reported Collisions in last 5 years (2021-2025)
 - 7 Pedestrian Crashes
 - 7 Bicycle Crashes (2 fatal)

Fatal	4
Serious Injury	5
Minor Injury	27
Possible Injury	30
Property Damage Only	152
Total	218

Speed Data Collection



- Radar Data Collection to take place on variety of roadways
- Data will be used to summarize representative roadway group behaviors
 - Speed by time of day
 - Confirmation of ADT and Heavy Vehicle percentages
 - Average, 85th percentile speeds recorded
- Data to be used with NCHRP 966 to produce proposed speed limits

Public Input



- Two Open House Phases
 - Existing Conditions
 - Proposed Conditions
 - Online Platform Available for Each



Speed Limit Study Timeline



August–September

- Existing Conditions
 - Review of existing network and safety history
 - Data collection of representative locations
 - Open house #1

October–November

- Proposed Conditions
 - Analysis of representative locations (NCHRP 966)
 - First drafts of policy document and proposed speed limits
 - Open house #2

December

- Completion
 - Final drafts of policy document and proposed speed limits
 - Council Presentation #2

Local Speed Limit Study



Council Kickoff
Local Speed Limit
Study
July 21, 2026

Sept-Oct. 2026
Policy
Development &
Draft
Recommendations

Spring-Summer
2027
Implementation

August-Sept 2026
Public Engagement
and Data
Gathering

Nov-Dec. 2026
Final
Recommendations
& Policy

Council Input/ Questions?

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