



Legislation Text

File #: Res. 2024-078, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: July 9, 2024

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: David E. Bennett, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer

Consider approval of a Resolution Supporting and Requesting the Turnback of Trunk Highway 246 from County Road 1 to Trunk Highway 3 from MnDOT to the City of Northfield.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council consider a motion to approve of Resolution Supporting and Requesting the Turnback of Trunk Highway 246 from County Road 1 to Trunk Highway 3 from MnDOT to the City of Northfield.

Summary Report:

MnDOT and Rice County had been in discussions to consider a potential turnback of TH246 dating back to at least 2018. In 2021, Rice County more formally informed the City of Northfield that they were considering the potential turnback of TH 246 in Rice County. To respond to this, the City of Northfield initiated a Corridor Study to determine the future vision for the corridor from County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 1/County Road 81 to TH 3 to help understand the needs along this segment.

In December of 2022, the City hired Bolton and Menk to prepare a Trunk Highway 246 Corridor Study. The goals of the study include:

1. Corridor vision, what are the transportation needs on TH 246 now and into the future.
2. Utilize adopted plans and policies to inform corridor needs.
3. Improve safety and mobility for all roadway users.
4. Provide opportunity for stakeholder input.
5. Develop guide for implementing corridor vision.
6. Develop cost and opportunities related to the turnback.

The study reviewed the existing corridor performance and found that TH 246 serves motor vehicles well except during peak times at the intersection of Woodley Street/Division Street and at accesses for Northfield High School, Northfield Middle School, and Bridgewater Elementary. While vehicle traffic delays are limited to peak hours, there are other corridor deficiencies related to:

- The incomplete walking and biking network
- Lack of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible facilities
- Challenging pedestrian crossing locations across TH 246

- Elevated crash rate at the intersection of TH 246 and CSAH 1/CR 81 (above the critical crash rate)
- History of bicycle and pedestrian crashes (four bicycle crashes and four pedestrian crashes since 2018)

The final report has been prepared and is attached. The Northfield Transportation Advisory Committee spent additional time with multiple meetings arriving at their recommendation for the City to pursue the turnback. The NTAC resolution is attached and as part of their resolution they attached general commentary to highlight the concerns from the townships and cities of Dennison and Nerstrand.

Through this process Rice County and Goodhue County have indicated they aren't pursuing a turnback of TH 246 at this time or may not due to townships concerns and City of Dennison and City of Nerstrand. However, Rice and Goodhue County are supportive of the City pursuing the segment from CSAH 1/CR 81 to TH 3.

It is recommended for the City to pursue the Turnback of TH 246 because the preferred corridor improvements best reflect the goals identified above, and reflect the interest of the Community Input and will foster safer roadway for all roadway users.

Alternative Options:

Council could elect not to pursue the turnback, however, MnDOT doesn't have TH 246 in its 10-year plan for roadway improvements.

Financial Impacts:

Outlined in Final Report.

Tentative Timelines:

- ✓ May 15 - July 15 Online Public Input Map is Open to Collect Issues/Concerns from Public
- ✓ July 19, 2023 NTAC Meeting
 - Present to Committee; traffic data, intersection capacity analysis, Public Input Summary on Corridor Issues, approach to corridor Ped/Bike/Crossing Facilities
- ✓ Aug 1 - Sept 15 Online Public Input on Corridor Concepts
- ✓ Sept. 19, 2023 City Council update on project
- ✓ Sept 20, 2023 High School youth on boards workshop
- ✓ Oct 18, 2023 NTAC Meeting
 - Present to the Committee; public input on corridor concepts layouts, intersection recommendations, concept evaluation criteria, costs and 20-year operation cost
- ✓ Dec 20, 2023 Public Meeting Share corridor study recommendations
- ✓ Jan 17, 2024 NTAC Final Corridor/Turnback Study Discussion
- ✓ April 17, 2024 NTAC Final Corridor/Turnback Study Discussion
- ✓ June 26, 2024 NTAC Final Corridor/Turnback Study Recommendation
- July 7, 2024 Council Accepts Corridor/Turnback Study