



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1179, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: November 12, 2019

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: David Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Subject:

Discuss Jefferson Parkway & Trunk Highway (TH) 246 Roundabout Final Landscape Design and Provide Direction on High School Pedestrian Crossing Options.

Action Requested:

Staff recommends that Council share individual reaction and input on the Roundabout Landscaping and give direction on the preferred High School Crossing Option and Crossing Location.

Summary Report:

City staff and the project engineer SEH are preparing the final plans for the Jefferson Parkway and TH 246 Roundabout. As part of that process, staff will present the draft landscape plan and receive feedback from Council on what is proposed. SEH Landscape Architect Karl Weissenborn will discuss the landscape plan. A summary of the landscape plan is below.

Landscape Overview

The Northfield TH246 and Jefferson Parkway Roundabout landscaping plan proposes themes derived from the previous Gateway Corridor Improvement Plan (Gateway Plan). These themes comprise the qualities found in native prairies, natural woodlands and cultural influences of past agricultural uses in the region. Features that exhibit these qualities include areas of native upland prairie grasses and wildflowers, small groupings of native overstory and understory trees, massings of native shrubs, intentionally placed plantings of perennials and low shrubs, boulevard trees planted in linear form and hints of evergreen wind rows. Additional features for enhancing the project area include public art, wayfinding signage, trailhead amenities, site furnishings and pedestrian scale lighting.

Plantings

The landscape plan further defines the experiential quality of the Gateway Plan themes by the placement of the naturalized prairie, shrub and tree groupings on the slopes between the proposed roadways and trails. This provides a quality experience for trail users as well as reducing the need for regular and costly mowing maintenance. These plantings are proposed in all four quadrants of the project area. Linear canopy tree plantings are found along the proposed Mill Towns Regional Trail alignment running parallel to Jefferson Parkway and in the medians of Jefferson Parkway to extend the existing landscape quality of that parkway. Other formalized plantings beds are proposed at trail junctions and at a potential trailhead to enhance the experience by trail users and to create a sense of welcoming in these grade-separated spaces.

Site Features

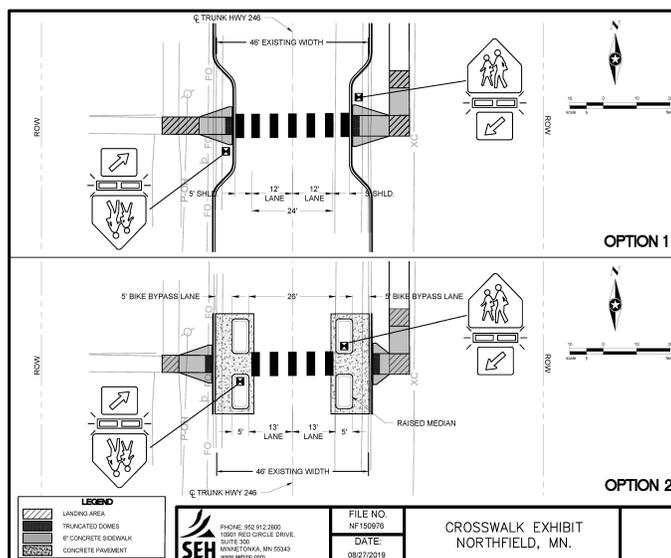
As this project area is a gateway node into the City of Northfield, the center roundabout area displays intentional landscape plantings in concert with a large public art or natural stone amenity feature. A well-designed family of wayfinding signage will be important for navigating the trails and trail tunnels. Especially as a regional trail running east-west meets the north-south local trail connecting downtown to the north, as well as spur trails to nearby schools and neighborhoods.

Pedestrian-scale lighting along the trails will give a greater sense of security for trail users, expand daily and seasonal use and build upon a ‘level of care’ sense for the spaces. The trail tunnels themselves provide opportunities for special lighting and public art. Community-created murals in the interior walls, for example, may help foster a sense of ownership by the community, reduce unwanted graffiti and provide opportunities for the people of Northfield to come together in new ways.

After feedback from Council, staff will share the plan with the Northfield Garden Club to receive their input and then finalize the plan with MnDOT.

High School Crosswalk

As part of the project, it is proposed to install a crosswalk on TH 246 just north of the entrance into the High School. On September 3, two options shown below were brought forward for Council consideration.



The recommendation was to continue to review this in more detail. Those options have been further developed and are shown in the attached presentation.

TH 246 is designated as a bikeway in the City’s Pedestrian, Bike, and Trail System Plan. To better understand what the bikeway could look like on TH-246 and how it would integrate with the crossing, staff worked with both Toole Design and SEH to develop a concept bikeway plan. The concepts are attached as attachment 1.

Staff met with the Mayor’s Youth Council (MYC) on October 23 on the site to share the pedestrian crossing options and review the proposed crossing locations. The Mayor’s Youth Council and All Youth Board and Commission group provided responses. 35 youth responded, about 2/3 of the group was in favor of Option 2.

Additionally, we asked about the location of the crosswalk, preference of the location was split nearly 50/50 for location A or B as shown below.



One of the concerns that we have heard is about reducing the length of the right turn lane into the high school. From the 2016 traffic impact study, even with projected 2040 traffic volumes, the right turn lanes will have adequate stacking length if the Location B is selected for the crossing.

Staff is recommending that we vote and provide general consensus on the location and option for the bumpout. Staff is meeting with MnDOT on November 13 to provide them with the preferred crossing option and location.

Currently, the cycle track is not included in the project and will be built in the future. If Option 2 is identified as the preferred option, it could be setup in a way to incorporate the cycle track in the future.

Alternative Options:

Bumpout or Median Option

An alternative would be to just mark and sign the crosswalk location and install the pedestrian Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon without the bumpouts or median.

Financial Impacts:

A financing summary is below along with levy impacts. The High School crosswalk with bumpouts or medians is included in the costs below.

Alternative 2

Project Cost (uses)

Total Cost	\$3,325,000
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Project Funding (sources)

MnDOT's Local Partnership Program (LPP)	\$ 483,480
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MnDOT's Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)	900,000
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City Municipal State Aid	500,000
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<u>*Bond Debt Issuance Proceeds</u>	<u>1,441,520</u>
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Total	<u>\$3,325,000</u>
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* Preliminary Estimate Levy Impact of 1.87%

Tentative Timelines:

September 3, 2019	Council Approves Preferred Alternative
September -November	MnDOT Level 1 Design Approval (pending approval)
November 12, 2019	Council Update Landscaping and High School Crosswalk Options
November-December	Final Design
January/February 2020	Bidding
May/June 2020	Construction Start