



Woodland Avenue in Duluth: A missed opportunity

In 2009, the City of Duluth Department of Public Works rebuilt a section of this arterial road adjacent to the University of MN Duluth campus. This section of Woodland, which carries 15,000 to 18,000 vehicles each day, was reconstructed as a four-lane road with 12-foot lanes with a center turn lane and sidewalks directly adjacent to the roadway. As redesigned, traffic on the road is now traveling well above the posted speed of 30 mph, placing pedestrians just feet from fast moving traffic since the grass boulevard has been eliminated. This winter, the new sidewalks are often blocked by snow since there is no longer a place for snow storage. Woodland was designed with few designated pedestrian crossings, even though it serves the University campus, a shopping center, and a middle school.

Public concern and disappointment about the timing of the public process, the lack of openness to consider alternative designs, and the new configuration of Woodland Avenue led the Mayor to create a Complete Streets Task Force. This task force plans to ensure that in the future the needs of all road users are considered and that public involvement happens much earlier. The City Public Works staff said they adhered to State Aid Standards calling for four travel lanes each 12 feet wide.



Woodland before (above) and Woodland after (below)



Mn/DOT TH 41 in Chaska: Complete streets retrofit after pedestrian death

Traffic often travels above the posted speed limit of 30 mph on Chestnut Street, also known as Mn/DOT's 41 in historic downtown Chaska. Like many Mn/DOT roads, Chestnut doubles as a city main street and as a principal arterial connecting small towns and regional centers. In 2008, an elderly pedestrian was hit and killed in a crosswalk crossing Chestnut on his daily walk to church. Another person was hit earlier that year. Chestnut Street has four travel lanes, few signalized crossings, and no parking on one side of the street. In addition, the sidewalks are narrow and lack trees, which can help to define a pedestrian street.

After the two crashes, business, local churches, and the City came together and proposed that a new traffic signal and three center pedestrian medians be installed. In 2009, the City of Chaska was awarded \$540,000 in federal Stimulus money for the improvements. If a complete streets design process had been used initially, the road would likely have been designed differently and would have been safer for pedestrians, better able to support local economic vitality, and this costly retrofit would not have been necessary.



TH 41/Chestnut today (above and below)



TH 169 in St. Peter: A complete street success story

In November 2009, Trunk Highway 169 in historic downtown St. Peter re-opened to traffic after a major reconstruction. TH 169 is the city's main street and a major north-south route in central Minnesota. The reconstruction resulted in improved pavement, traffic traveling at or below posted speeds through the downtown area, better access to downtown businesses, and improved pedestrian safety. There was significant public involvement in project planning and Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) worked in close partnership with the City.

According to Lew Giesking, St. Peter's Director of Public Works, before reconstruction crossing the highway on foot was "risky at best, even at the signals." After reconstruction, the original crossing distance of up to 90 feet was reduced to between 54 and 66 feet total depending on the intersection, with a center median and bump-outs installed. Accessible Pedestrian Signals were added to address accessibility needs. Bicycle lanes were not included, but a trail loop runs 1½ blocks to the east of the roadway.



TH 169 before (above) and rendering of completion (below) shown without all elements depicted



TH 96 between White Bear Lake and Stillwater: A model for partnership

Several popular attractions, including access to the Gateway Trail and local beaches, are located along Trunk Highway 96 in the cities of White Bear Lake and Dellwood, and the townships of Grant and White Bear. In the fall of 2009, when Mn/DOT announced a mill and overlay for Highway 96 between Highway 61 and Stillwater, community members and the City of White Bear Lake Bike/Walk Task Force wanted to use the opportunity to create a safer road for pedestrians and bicyclists. Currently, stretches of the roadway shoulder are used by both pedestrians and bicyclists.

Community members, local government bodies, Mn/DOT and several other organizations collaborated on project planning. The current road has 12 foot travel lanes with paved shoulders varying between 2 feet and 6 feet, with no sidewalk. Mn/DOT is considering narrowing the travel lanes to 11 feet to widen the paved shoulders along the entire road to more safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. When completed, this project could be a great example of what can be accomplished through collaboration and use of complete streets principles.



TH 96 today (before resurfacing)