

# Northwest Northfield Highway Corridor Draft Problem Statement and Intended Goals of Study

## *Background*

The population of the City of Northfield and surrounding communities is anticipated to grow by 50 percent by 2030. Northfield has identified the Northwest area of the City as a major growth area. This section of Northfield, located primarily in Rice County and Dakota County, has been identified for growth based on available land, proximity to major highways (Interstate 35 and TH 19), proximity to the Twin Cities, and preliminary annexation discussions with landowners.

## *Problem Statement*

Dakota and Rice Counties, the City of Northfield, and the surrounding communities, recognize that the transportation network in the Northwest Northfield Study Area has limited ability to meet the needs of residents at this time.

The transportation system in this area is made up of highways basically spaced at 1-mile intervals, and was built for traffic volumes associated with rural land uses. This rural road network is segmented, and does not provide continuous routes for longer, regional trips. Those traveling through the area must use local roads to make connections to other highways. This can lead to conflicts between those making longer trips and local residents.

Growth in this area, including the new Northfield hospital, the replacement of farmland with residential land uses, and planned industrial growth will place increasing demands on the transportation network in Northwest Northfield.

As this area continues to develop, the transportation system will not provide residents of the area's communities or those traveling through these communities with adequate levels of mobility, based on planned future land uses. If not addressed, this will negatively impact the mobility of Rice County and Dakota County residents and the ability to accommodate the traffic characteristics associate with a more intense style of urban development.

## *Goals*

The goal of this study is to develop a plan for a future transportation network to link dis-connected parts of the road system, thereby improving the mobility for those traveling in and through the Northwest Northfield area. These changes are needed to adequately support the increased intensity of development and increased commuting levels expected as a result of population growth and land use changes through the year 2030.

To achieve this goal, the existing transportation system will need to be enhanced from a system that was developed to support rural land uses, to a system that will support more urbanized land uses. These enhancements will result in a more dense, complete, connective, and continuous road network.