Acknowledgments

The accomplishments highlighted in this report are thanks to the collaboration and dedication of numerous departments across Hennepin County Public Works, partner agencies, advocates and others.

More information

For questions or comments about this report, or to learn more about Hennepin County’s pedestrian and bicycle projects and programs, contact Jordan Kocak, Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator, at jordan.kocak@hennepin.us or 612-543-3377.

hennepin.us/bike
hennepin.us/walk
hennepin.us/ride
Executive summary

Hennepin County recognizes the importance of building more comfortable bikeway connections and closing gaps across the network. Our work is guided by Hennepin County’s Complete Streets Policy (adopted in 2009), Pedestrian Plan (adopted in 2013), and Bicycle Transportation Plan (adopted in 2015). In 2018, we made progress toward fulfilling the goals outlined in these plans.

There is an expanding safe and comfortable network to explore Hennepin County by bike or by foot. We added nearly 16 new miles in 2018, to reach 259 miles of on-street and 500 miles of off-street bikeways.

Building on that robust network, we took another step toward improving the comfort and safety of people biking in urban and suburban areas in 2018 by completing an enhanced bikeway network study. This study puts forth recommendations for evaluating 48 miles of county roadways for protected bikeways that may be built as retrofit and reconstruction opportunities arise in the coming years. You can find examples of enhanced or protected bikeways already constructed on county roadways in the form of cycle tracks along Washington Avenue (County Road 152) in Minneapolis and the new 66th Street (County Road 53) in Richfield.

Road construction projects that include features for biking can take a significant amount of time to complete, which is why we are investigating new ways to make your walk or bike ride more comfortable sooner. For example this year, the county purchased equipment to make temporary pedestrian improvements, which we installed at Franklin Avenue and 24th Avenue South in Minneapolis, to make crossing the street easier and safer. While permanent improvements are coming in the next few years, this temporary infrastructure addresses the immediate need for improved walkability and safety in the Seward Neighborhood.

We continue to find ways to better understand who is walking and biking in Hennepin County. Through the help of volunteers and the purchase of additional counters, we expanded our bicycle and pedestrian count program. This data allow us to make strategic investments in biking and walking across all Hennepin County communities based on use and need.

Since 2014, the county has invested more than $7.5 million in more than 100 standalone bicycle and pedestrian projects. In 2018, through our Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Improvement Program, we invested more than $500,000 across eight projects, leveraging more than $8.5 million in improvements for people walking, biking and rolling.

In 2019, we will continue to expand the bicycle and pedestrian network. Our goal is to make walking, biking and rolling a safe and comfortable way for everyone to get around.
2018 overview

- Collected pedestrian and bicycle counting data at 81 sites
- Built 15.6 miles of dedicated bikeways
- 450 pedestrian ramps installed
- Added 32 accessible pedestrian signals (APS) on county roadways
- Invested more than $500,000 to leverage more than $8.5 million in walking and biking improvements

Source: American Community Survey—Table S0801 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
Guiding principles and goals

Hennepin County’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation plans aim to make walking and biking for transportation, recreation and health a comfortable, fun, routine part of daily life for people of all ages and abilities.

2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan

The Hennepin County 2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan was adopted in 2015 and lays out a vision that emphasizes ways to make bicycling safe and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities.

- Quadruple the number of bicycle commuters from 2010’s 12,000 people to 48,000
- Halve bicycle crashes per capita from 2010 levels and move toward zero deaths on bicycles
- Bring the ratio of bike commuters who are women to half
- Complete an average of 20 miles of the bikeway system each year
- Build a bikeway within a ½ mile of 90 percent of homes in Hennepin County

Ridership goal

Promote the bicycle as a mode of transportation that is practical, convenient and pleasant for commuting, health and exercise, and outdoor recreation.

Bikeway system goal

Collaboratively build an integrated county bicycle system that allows bicyclists of varying skills to safely, efficiently and comfortably connect to and between all destinations within the county.

Safety and comfort goal

Create a safe and comfortable county bikeway system.

Sustainability goal

Implement bikeways and support facilities as an essential tool in realizing environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Maintenance goal

Protect the county’s and the park district’s investments in the bikeway system and reduce seasonal hazards through partnership.
Hennepin County Pedestrian Plan

Pedestrian safety goal
Increase the safety of walking by decreasing the number and severity of pedestrian/vehicle crashes.

Walking for transportation goal
• Add more miles of sidewalk and trail along county roadways
• Increase percent of county residents who walk to work and other destinations
• Conduct annual pedestrian counts

Health goal
Improve the health of county residents by decreasing the percent of county residents who are overweight or obese.
Collaboration

Bicycle Advisory Committee

Pictured above, the Hennepin County Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) provides feedback and recommendations on bicycling issues to county staff, project partners and the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners.

Each county commissioner appoints one member and one alternate to a three-year term. The committee typically meets once a month at locations throughout the county.

2018 BAC accomplishments

• The BAC passed six resolutions in support of various county projects:
  - Add bicycle facilities along Mill Street (County Road 82) as part of a mill and overlay (repaving) project
  - Study improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Lowry Avenue (County Road 153)
  - Apply for regional solicitation funding to improve bicycle facilities along Marshall Street (County Road 23)
  - Add protected bike lanes on University Avenue and 4th Street Southeast (County roads 36 and 37)
  - Fill a key gap in the bicycle and pedestrian network along Portland Avenue (County Road 35) in Minneapolis and Richfield
  - Add dedicated bicycle facilities along Golden Valley Road (County Road 66) as part of an upcoming mill and overlay (repaving) project

• The BAC helped shape nine projects, six studies, and various programs, most notably the Portland Avenue (County Road 35) project in Minneapolis and Richfield and the 46th Street (County Road 46) bicycle and pedestrian study in Minneapolis

In 2018, the BAC welcomed two new members: Erin Daly (District 3) and Duane Hookom (District 6).

Learn more about the Bicycle Advisory Committee: www.hennepin.us/bikeadvisory
Safe Routes to School

Hennepin County recognizes the importance of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) planning and programming so that children are equipped to develop safe walking and biking habits from an early age.

We participate in the Minneapolis Public School District’s monthly Safe Routes to School Working Group, along with periodic site visits and school workshops. Our staff then evaluate and may implement infrastructure improvements that make county roadways safer for people of all ages, and connect schools with the regional trail system.

In 2018, Hennepin County continued work at Northrop Elementary and Whittier International Elementary, both in Minneapolis. Additionally, our staff participated in the Edison High School SRTS workshop in Minneapolis.

Safety and Operations Committee

Hennepin County's Safety and Operations Committee (SOC) is a multidisciplinary committee that evaluates safety concerns on the county road system.

If analysis leads toward crossing improvements, the group identifies potential opportunities for funding and implementation.

In 2018, the Safety and Operations Committee:

• Met weekly to review intersection and roadway safety concerns, providing committee resolution or next steps to the inquiring party
• At 65 locations of concern identified by internal and external sources, collected pedestrian and/or bicycle observations; observation provides count data and insights into the behavior of people walking, biking and driving
• Reviewed and provided comments for county and partner-led plans and projects including various regional trail crossings

Plat Review Committee

Hennepin County’s multidisciplinary Plat Review Committee provides both formal and informal feedback on development proposals along the county road system. County staff evaluate proposed development for several items that could affect county roads. One component of plat review is pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
Enhanced bikeway network study

In fall 2017, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners tasked the pedestrian and bicycle team to “undertake a comprehensive review of the county roadways that may support bikeways that provide physical separation from motor vehicles” (Resolution 17-0381 R1).

These physically separated or enhanced bikeways differ from traditional bike lanes in that they go beyond striping the roadway and are constructed with a physical barrier, such as bollards or delineators, planters, parked cars, curbs or medians.

To determine which roadways could be suitable for an enhanced bikeway, the team started with a level of traffic stress (LTS) analysis. This analysis takes into account multiple roadway attributes to score the comfort of a roadway for people biking. The criteria used to assess comfort as part of this analysis include motor vehicle volume, motor vehicle speed, bicycle facility and parking lane width, number of through lanes and average bicycle crashes per mile 2009-2015.

LTS scores range from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most comfortable for people biking and 4 being the least. Of the nearly 130 miles examined as part of this analysis, 0.9% of roadways correspond with LTS 1, 2.7% to LTS 2, 14.9% to LTS 3, and 4.2% to LTS 4.

Upon completion of the LTS analysis, additional criteria were used to refine the list of potential enhanced bikeways to better reflect county priorities. For each segment, the following additional criteria were applied: bikeway network connections, existing demand and bicycle volume, equity and demand, and future project coordination.

The analysis led to the identification of 48 miles of enhanced bikeways that are recommended to be further evaluated for construction on Hennepin County roadways in coordination with retrofit and reconstruction opportunities as they arise over the next 10 years and beyond.
Next steps include

- Continue studies, plans and projects involving protected bikeways
- Engage partner agencies, stakeholders and the public on a project-by-project basis
- Clarify real costs of maintenance to the county and explore possible funding strategies
- Determine pedestrian and bicycle volumes that may be used to calculate crash rates
66th Street (County Road 53) in Richfield

The second year of reconstruction for 66th Street in Richfield, from Humboldt Avenue to 5th Avenue South, was completed in 2018, providing a continuous corridor for people walking, biking, and rolling from Xerxes Avenue South to 16th Avenue South. The improvements make 66th Street a safer, more livable, and more comfortable road for everyone, no matter their mode of transportation. Specific improvements for people walking, biking, and rolling include accessibility upgrades, a dedicated cycle track for people biking, and new sidewalks with a boulevard buffer. Crews will return in 2019 to complete construction, primarily to finish roadway paving and striping and to landscape the area.

Portland Avenue (County Road 35) in Bloomington

In partnership with the City of Bloomington, Hennepin County implemented a variety of safety improvements along Portland Avenue between American Boulevard East and Old Shakopee Road (County Road 1). The general lanes were reduced from four lanes to three, including a center turn lane. As a result of this conversion, there is now space for dedicated bicycle lanes throughout the corridor. The county also installed an enhanced pedestrian crossing and lighting at East 82nd Street.

Minnetonka Boulevard (County Road 5) in St. Louis Park

In preparation for the upcoming closure and detour of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail as part of the METRO Green Line extension project, Minnetonka Boulevard from Highway 100 to Highway 169 was repaved to include dedicated bike lanes and bike-friendly catch basins. The new bike lanes will serve as an integral section of the east-west detour route during construction of the Green Line extension along the Cedar Lake Trail.
Accessibility

Hennepin County strives to be a place where people of all ages and abilities can walk and roll. We released our Americans with Disabilities Act Program Access and Transition Plan (ADA Transition Plan) in August 2015. The plan reviewed current county policies and evaluated the extent to which county transportation facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). About 55% of the county’s 13,000 pedestrian ramps were found to be fully ADA compliant.

In 2018, the county took the following steps toward being more accessible:

• Reconstructed 450 ADA pedestrian ramps along county roadways
• Added 32 new accessible pedestrian signals (APS) to county intersections

More information related to the Americans with Disabilities Act and Hennepin County is available at: www.hennepin.us/adaplan

Pedestrian and Bicycle Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

In 2018, the county solicited sidewalk and bikeway applications for its annual CIP. Funds are awarded to independent park districts and municipalities for the study and construction of sidewalk and bikeway projects in the county bicycle plan. The county awarded more than $500,000 and leveraged more than $8.5 million for the following projects to be studied or constructed over the next three years:

• France Avenue (County Road 17) multiuse trail construction in Bloomington
• Feasibility study to close a regional trail gap in West Mississippi River Regional Trail along Willow Lane in Brooklyn Center (Three Rivers Park District)
• Mill Street (County Road 82) pedestrian and bikeway study in Excelsior
• Design and construction of bike and pedestrian access at the railroad bridge south of Highway 12 in Maple Plain (Three Rivers Park District)
• Boone Avenue bike lanes and a multiuse trail construction in New Hope
• Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) multiuse trail construction in Hopkins — Top 25 Gap
• Multiuse trail and enhanced crossing construction at East Hennepin Avenue (County Road 52) from 5th Avenue Southeast to Pierce Street Northeast in Minneapolis
• Plymouth Road (County Road 61) multiuse trail construction in Minnetonka
Bikeway additions and improvements

The Hennepin County bicycle network is unique, as it recognizes and includes bikeways under the jurisdiction of other agencies, including independent park districts and municipalities. By leveraging road construction, repaving, and restriping projects, and implementing standalone bikeway projects, Hennepin County and its partner agencies added nearly 16 new miles of bikeways to the county network in 2018. Of the 16 miles, about nine miles are on-street bikeways including bikeable shoulders, standard bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, and on-street protected bike lanes. The remaining roughly six miles are off-street bikeways, such as multiuse trails and cycle tracks.

County-led projects

- Portland Avenue (County Road 35) from American Boulevard to Old Shakopee Road in Bloomington
- Bottineau Boulevard (County Road 81) from 63rd Avenue North to West Broadway in Brooklyn Park
- Flying Cloud Drive (County Road 61) from Spring Road to Charlson Road in Eden Prairie
- Wayzata Boulevard (County Road 112) from Willow Drive to Wolf Pointe Road in Long Lake and Orono
- Plymouth Road (County Road 61) from Hilloway Road to Amy Lane in Minnetonka
- 66th Street (County Road 53) from Humboldt Avenue South to 5th Avenue South in Richfield
- County Road 50 from CP Railroad to Highway 55 in Rockford
- Minnetonka Boulevard (County Road 5) from Highway 100 to Highway 169 in St. Louis Park

Partner-led projects

- 63rd Avenue North from Hampshire Avenue North to Vera Cruz Lane in Brooklyn Park
- Valley View Road from West 74th Street to Washington Avenue in Eden Prairie
- Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail 9th Avenue South and 7th Street South connection in Hopkins
- Pinto Drive (County Roads 115 and 116) Bikeway from Hamel Road to Clydesdale Trail in Medina
- Bloomington Avenue South from East Minnehaha Parkway to 54th Street East in Minneapolis
- 11th Avenue South from 6th Street South to West River Parkway in Minneapolis
- Boone Avenue from 49th Avenue North to Medicine Lake Road in New Hope
Automated bicycle counting

Each year, Hennepin County conducts automated bicycle counts, rotating between the northern and southern halves of the county. In 2018, 48-hour bicycle count data was collected at 46 locations across the northern half. These 48-hour counts are then extrapolated and used to calculate Average Annual Daily Bicyclists (AADB) volumes at each location.

Manual bicycle and pedestrian counting

2018 marked the county’s third annual volunteer pedestrian and bicycle count initiative. These short-term counts rely on volunteers collecting data from 4 to 6 p.m. on three days in the second week of September. Volunteers counted at 35 locations across the county outside Minneapolis (counts in Minneapolis are led by city staff). This data was then used to calculate estimated daily traffic at each site, which means that the two-hour counts are extrapolated to understand larger trends in walking and biking. The data collection and analysis process is consistent with the City of Minneapolis, and data can be easily compared across jurisdictions.

To view data from both the automated and manual counts, check out the county’s multi modal counts map online.

Why count?

The pedestrian and bicycle counting initiatives enable the county to:
- Evaluate ridership changes seasonally and annually
- Provide data to inform and support planning and engineering decisions and identify where additional data is needed
- Determine pedestrian and bicycle volumes that may be used to calculate crash rates
- Track pedestrian and bicycle usage before and after county projects
- Report pedestrian and bicycle data to elected officials, local government agencies and the general public

For additional details, visit: hennepin.us/bike
2019 preview

The county has several notable pedestrian and bicycle projects scheduled in 2019, including:

• Restriping University Avenue (County Road 36) and 4th Street (County Road 37) in Minneapolis

• Pedestrian safety improvements at Lake Street (County Road 25) and Excelsior Boulevard (County Road 3) in Minneapolis to add buffered bike lanes

• New trail along Wayzata Boulevard (County Road 112) in Long Lake and Orono

• New trail along Flying Cloud Drive (County Road 61) in Eden Prairie

• Bike lanes on Nicollet Avenue (County Road 52) in Bloomington

We’re continuing to expand our automated and volunteer pedestrian and bicycle count programs, closing gaps in our bikeway and sidewalk network, and looking for new ways to make Hennepin County roadways safer and more comfortable for everyone.
Hennepin County
Public Works

hennepin.us

Jordan Kocak
Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator
jordan.kocak@hennepin.us
612-543-3377

hennepin.us/bike
hennepin.us/walk
hennepin.us/ride