



## Downtown Chaska Subarea FINDINGS OF FACTS FINAL

### DOWNTOWN CHASKA:

Chaska was founded in 1852 and provides a historic setting, containing many 19<sup>th</sup> century structures. It continues to be an active and evolving economic center and regional attraction. Today, Downtown Chaska is home to more than 175 businesses.

Two major roadways traverse Downtown Chaska, Trunk Highway (TH) 41 (Chestnut Street) and County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 61 (Chaska Boulevard). These provide local access and circulation as well as connections to the greater Twin Cities metro area and beyond. The existing transportation network needs multimodal improvements in order to continue to serve both the local and regional demands.

The City of Chaska is acting to strengthen its downtown as a destination based on the traditional and historic character of the area. As summarized in the City's 2012 *Downtown Master Plan*, the City's downtown vision includes "revitalizing downtown Chaska as the hub of community destinations and gathering places that reflect and celebrate its historic character, traditional small town atmosphere and values". Key elements of the plan include redevelopment strategies, an enhanced walking and biking environment, and ensuring sufficient parking is available.



# County Highway 61 / Highway 41 Improvements

Carver County, Minnesota

April 18, 2016

## **PURPOSE:**

The CSAH 61 / TH 41 Improvements Project will identify corridor improvements meeting the local and regional goals. These improvements will consider the overall roadway network serving downtown, not just the TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) corridors themselves. This evaluation will include downtown access, circulation, and parking. There is also a need to plan for pedestrian and bicycle accommodations through downtown. Recommendations will be sensitive to the built environment, space limitations, economic development goals, maintaining an inviting downtown, and natural and historic considerations. Improvements identified will be constructed as soon as 2017 on CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) west of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and in 2019 on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) south of CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd).

The project seeks to broadly understand the needs and opportunities, establish goals and objectives, develop and evaluate alternatives, reach a consensus on a recommended concept, and develop an implementation plan allowing the plan to be achieved in increments. As such, a higher level of understanding is required to include measurements of land use, pedestrian and bicycle usage, environmental and cultural resources, and traffic and safety operations. The analysis has uncovered several key findings that are discussed below. This Findings of Fact will serve as the basis for guiding the development of goals and objectives as well as the development and evaluation of alternatives.

## **CORRIDOR IMPORTANCE / FUNCTION:**

### **1. TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is an important transportation corridor for the region and for the City of Chaska.**

- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is a principal arterial roadway providing a connection between two other principal arterials, TH 212 on the north and TH 169 on the south. Typically, principal arterial roadways are intended to serve high traffic volumes and carry a major portion of vehicular trips throughout the region. These roadways typically are characterized by limited access and higher mobility.
- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is a unique principal arterial as it also serves a local function by providing the primary access through Chaska's downtown with a connection to CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd). Due to the Minnesota River crossing, TH 41 (Chestnut Street) through downtown Chaska is just one of a few low speed principal arterial roadways directly traversing a downtown in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Region.
- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) provides one of four Minnesota River crossings in the southwestern metro area which increases its importance from a regional standpoint. Currently, the TH 41 river crossing carries an average of 18,400 vehicles per day. Other river crossings are located on CSAH 9 in Jordan (9 miles south – 4,750 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)), TH 101 (4 miles east – 18,900 AADT) and TH 169 (8 miles east – 89,000 AADT) in Shakopee. Note: all AADTs noted are from years 2012-2014.
- In 2014, MnDOT completed a Tier I Final Environmental Impact Statement identifying a corridor of a future Minnesota River crossing. The crossing will connect TH 169 and TH 212,



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near TH 41. The preferred alignment crosses the river near existing TH 41 and travels west, south of downtown Chaska, to connect to TH 212 at CSAH 11, north of the City of Carver. This would allow regional connections between these two highways to occur outside of downtown Chaska.

- The construction of the new Minnesota River crossing remains a priority for the City of Chaska, Carver County, Scott County and MnDOT; however, funding is not included in MnDOT's 20-year fiscally-constrained transportation plan. It is unlikely this new crossing would be built in the next 20 years. Therefore, this project assumes the existing TH 41 Minnesota River crossing will be the only river crossing in this area within the current planning timeframe. Project partners will continue to look for opportunities to be consistent with the Minnesota River Crossing Tier I Final Environmental Impact Statement working towards a new river crossing in this area.
- Heavy traffic volumes on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) are identified in the City of Chaska's Downtown Master Plan as one of the downtown's strongest assets and biggest challenges. The Master Plan identifies the importance of maintaining local and destination-oriented trips in the downtown to support the local economy. The Plan also supports the premise of relocating regional trips out of the downtown to the new Minnesota River crossing. Without a new river crossing outside of downtown Chaska, TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is going to continue to serve high regional volumes of traffic into the future.
- An interchange is programmed for 2018 construction at TH 41/TH 169 which will remove the signal from TH 169. Although not a system-to-system (free-flow) interchange, this project will enhance the connection between these two principal arterials, 1.5 miles south of downtown Chaska. The TH 41/TH 169 interchange location is inconsistent with the Minnesota River crossing FEIS; however, it will not preclude a new Minnesota River crossing in the future. MnDOT and Scott County are currently looking at completing right-of-way preservation that could occur with the TH 41/TH 169 interchange project to support a future Minnesota River crossing.
- In late 2015, a new four-lane CSAH 101 river bridge was completed between CSAH 101 in Shakopee and CSAH 61 in Chanhassen. This project increased the capacity of the CSAH 101 river bridge, elevated the roadway above the 100-year floodplain and realigned its intersection with CSAH 61 with a new multi-lane roundabout. In addition, an official map has been adopted for a future project to realign TH 101 from CSAH 61 to CSAH 14 (Pioneer Trail). This project would continue the 4-lane section from the new CSAH 101 river bridge to CSAH 14, providing a continuous 4-lane roadway from CSAH 101 in Shakopee, across the Minnesota River and up the river bluff to TH 212 in Chanhassen.
- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) serves significant trucking movements accommodating over 1,300 trucks per day. The majority of truck movements on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) are a result of the river crossing, regional freight demands, gravel and sand mining, landfill, and seasonal grain deliveries from western Minnesota to the Ports of Savage.



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- In 2012, the Chaska Downtown Master Plan identified the city's vision for TH 41 (Chestnut Street) in the future. The vision in this plan is to "Revitalize downtown Chaska as the hub of community destinations and gathering places that reflect and celebrate our historic character, traditional small town atmosphere and values." This vision included a complete streets approach to better accommodate walkers, bicyclists and drivers visiting downtown Chaska; aesthetic/streetscape improvements, and a 3-lane TH 41 (Chestnut Street) facility with parking on both sides. The Downtown Master Plan states "the desired future Chestnut Street/MN Highway 41 is contingent upon many factors, including MnDOT approval, a reduction in projected traffic counts due to a new MN Highway 41 river crossing, and a change in the type of traffic from regional (through traffic) to downtown destination type traffic."
- The City of Chaska and MnDOT convened a TH 41 (Chestnut Street) Task Force in 2005-2007 to create a corridor vision for the roadway through downtown. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was adopted by both agencies in 2009 identifying the intentions of each agency to implement the corridor vision. MnDOT and the City negotiated Phase I of the improvements to include the installation of an unwarranted traffic signal on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in exchange for a raised median along TH 41 (Chestnut Street) to prohibit left turns to and from the highway at 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets. Phase I improvements were constructed in 2010. Phase II improvements were planned to be completed in 2014, but have not yet been constructed. The CSAH 61/TH 41 Improvements Project will identify improvements to TH 41 (Chestnut Street) through downtown for implementation in conjunction with MnDOT's 2019 pavement project.

## 2. CSAH 61 (Chaska Boulevard) is an important transportation corridor for the region and for the City of Chaska.

- In 2008, TH 212 was relocated approximately two miles north as it was converted to a freeway. This relocation had major impacts to the businesses that fronted the original alignment, now known as CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd), as traffic volumes dropped from approximately 12,000-19,000 ADT in the year 2000 to 7,000 to 9,000 ADT in 2012.
- Today, CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) is an A-Minor Arterial roadway with an average daily traffic in the range of 8,300 and 13,600 in the downtown subarea. CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) is a four-lane undivided highway with turn lanes in this area from the bridge over West Chaska Creek through Yellow Brick Road where it then transitions to three lanes.
- CSAH 61 (Chaska Boulevard) is also an important regional freight corridor serving gravel and sand mining and seasonal grain deliveries from western Minnesota to the Ports of Savage through connections to both the TH 41 and CSAH 101 river crossings. Within the downtown subarea, approximately 1,350 trucks per day use CSAH 61 (Chaska Boulevard) west of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and over 800 trucks per day use CSAH 61 (Chaska Boulevard) east of TH 41 (Chestnut Street).
- CSAH 61 (Chaska Boulevard) is a turnback corridor eligible for MnDOT turnback funds. Turnback funds may be used on released trunk highway routes that have been added to a county's state aid system. Turnback funds may pay for any costs that are eligible for regular



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state aid funding including: road or bridge construction, right-of-way (ROW), engineering, and utility relocation.

- Approval of plans for the construction of a turnback project is limited to a period of 15 years from the date of reversion. The CSAH 61 turnback was initiated in 2010; therefore, all eligible turnback projects must be completed by 2025.
- CSAH 61 (Chaska Boulevard) provides the only full movement access to the northerly edge of downtown Chaska.

## **OPERATIONS AND SAFETY:**

### **1. TH 41 (Chestnut Street) operations and safety within downtown Chaska:**

- From the Minnesota River Bridge to CSAH 61, TH 41 currently carries an average of 18,400 vehicles per day. In 2010, the TH 41 median project through Chaska removed full accesses at many locations. Full accesses remain at the existing signals at CSAH 61, 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- The directional distribution of daily vehicle movements on TH 41 (Chestnut Street), south of CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd), is nearly an even 50-50 split between northbound and southbound traffic. This directional split is also represented throughout the day with the difference in northbound/southbound trips never varying by more than 10% in a given hour.
- Today, the four-lane divided roadway acts similarly to a four-lane undivided section due to the lack of turn lanes. The lack of turn-lanes is a safety concern as vehicles stop in the through lane to wait to make a turn.
- The medians installed in the Phase I improvements block access across TH 41 (Chestnut Street) at 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets. The lack of access to those streets has had negative financial consequences for the businesses and property owners located on those streets. These streets have the highest long-term vacancy rates in the downtown.
- The intersections on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) currently operate at an acceptable Level of Service (LOS) per commonly accepted engineering guidance. This means there is a reasonably stable flow on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) but at major intersections, such as the TH 41/CSAH 61 intersection, the ability to maneuver through lanes is noticeably restricted and lane changes require more driver awareness. Because of the traffic volumes on TH 41 (Chestnut Street), the side streets intersecting with it in the downtown experience delays during the heaviest traffic periods of the day. These side street delays are considered unacceptable per engineering guidance on LOS.
- 49 crashes occurred along the TH 41 (Chestnut Street) corridor from CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) and the river between 2010 and 2014. The majority of these crashes occurred at the existing traffic signals at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. None of the crash locations exceed statewide averages. The critical crash index for this segment of road is 0.91 which is near the threshold of 1.0. The critical crash rate provides an indication of the statistical significance of crashes occurring at a given location. It accounts for the design of the facility, type of intersection control, amount of exposure, and the random nature of



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crashes. Additional study is recommended for intersections or segments with critical crash rates greater than 1.0 since it is likely a geometric change could improve safety.

- One fatal pedestrian crash occurred in 2008 at the intersection of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street prior to the traffic signal installation. Two non-incapacitating injury crashes involving a pedestrian/bicycle occurred at 4<sup>th</sup> Street in 2009 and 2015 with a traffic signal in-place.
- The existing right-of-way on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) through the downtown area is limited to 80 feet. There are no setbacks from buildings to the roadway in the downtown commercial area, therefore limiting the potential for additional right-of-way acquisition.
- From CSAH 61 to CSAH 10 (Engler Blvd), TH 41 currently carries an average of 19,500 vehicles per day. Today, TH 41 has two northbound through lanes and one southbound lane for the majority of this segment. A trail/sidewalk is provided along both sides of the roadway and boulevards vary in width where ROW is available. ROW is limited where TH 41 navigates between Fireman's Clayhole Lake and Brickyard Clayhole Lake.

## 2. The CSAH 61/TH 41 intersection is a limiting factor when considering overall mobility through the downtown Chaska subarea.

- The intersections on CSAH 61(Chaska Blvd) currently operate at an acceptable LOS according to commonly accepted engineering standards. During the heaviest travel periods of the day, vehicle delays are observed for both the eastbound and westbound CSAH 61 approaches to the TH 41 traffic signal. Backups at the TH 41 and CSAH 61 intersection occasionally extend into adjacent intersections on the east, west, and south legs of approach.
- Traffic volumes through the TH 41/CSAH 61 intersection are relatively stable throughout all hours of a typical weekday (6 am to 7 pm). The morning (7-9 am) and evening (3-6 pm) hours are the heaviest traffic periods of the day with traffic volumes increasing by 60 to 100 percent through the intersection compared with off-peak conditions.
- There were 20 crashes at the TH 41 and CSAH 61 intersection between 2010 and 2014. The majority of crashes were rear end and right angle crashes. One crash involved a bicycle. Crash rates were below statewide averages at this intersection.
- At the intersection of TH 41, CSAH 61 is a four-lane undivided highway with eastbound and westbound left turn lanes and a westbound right turn lane. The existing ROW on CSAH 61 at the intersection of TH 41 is 84' on the west approach and varies from 84-90' on the east side.
- The TH 41/CSAH 61 intersection services the highest entering traffic volumes of all intersections in the downtown subarea. Constraints on all four quadrants of this intersection will make it a challenge to address operational issues without impacts to existing buildings and a historic property (Dolce Vita Wine Shop).



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## PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION:

### 1. Both TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) are challenges to pedestrians and bicyclists in downtown Chaska.

- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) in downtown Chaska are high volume corridors with four-lanes of traffic creating challenges to east-west and north-south movements of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Land use within downtown Chaska is conducive to pedestrian trips. The close proximity of multiple businesses, services and residential complexes encourage foot traffic along and across the business district and both TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd).
- Both TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) have two-lanes in each direction within the downtown area which requires vehicles in both lanes to stop for pedestrians to cross at unsignalized locations. This is a safety concern if the first vehicle stops to wait for the pedestrian to cross and the vehicle in the second lane does not stop.
- Pedestrian crosswalks on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) are located at each of the traffic signals (CSAH 61, 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) and at the following unsignalized locations: 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The unsignalized locations do not provide the necessary 6-feet of width between the back of curb and back of curb as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for a safe pedestrian refuge within the roadway median.
- Sidewalks are located along both sides of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) in downtown Chaska. The width of these existing sidewalks varies between 6 and 9 feet. The parking lane serves as a buffer to the sidewalk on the east side of the roadway between 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets. There is no parking or buffer to the sidewalk on the west side of TH 41 (Chestnut Street).
- Chaska's Downtown Master Plan recommends parking on both sides of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) which also serves as a buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalks.
- The Downtown Master Plan recommends development of paseos, or walkways along current mid-block alleys, to provide north-south connections in the downtown area off of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) linking parking with alternative business entrances.
- The City of Chaska does not allow bicycles on sidewalks. Their policy discourages bicycles on concrete (sidewalks) and encourages their use on city paths/trails to separate bicycles from pedestrians. There are no separated bicycle facilities on TH 41 (Chestnut Street).
- There were 7 crashes involving pedestrians and/or bicyclist between 2010 and 2014 in the downtown subarea.
- The Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center redevelopment has increased pedestrian crossings of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) due to overflow parking areas located across these roadways. The City has requested MnDOT consider a HAWK (high intensity activated cross walk) system on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) near Walnut Street to accommodate pedestrians crossing in that area. The CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) RRFB (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon) that was recently installed has



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raised concern as some vehicles have been observed not stopping. This location will continue to be monitored and evaluated in this study.

### 2. Several local and regional trails converge in downtown Chaska.

- Carver County Regional Rail Authority owns the former railroad that runs parallel to CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) through the downtown Chaska subarea. The City has plans to pursue a local trail connection on this right-of-way in the future if a logical connection across TH 41 (Chestnut Street) can be identified. Currently, this former railroad right-of-way crosses TH 41 150' south of the CSAH 61/TH 41 intersection. Both the City and MnDOT agree this location is not desirable for a future at-grade trail crossing due to its proximity to the CSAH 61/TH 41 signalized intersection.
- TH 41 is designated as a proposed Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) - Tier 2 Alignment in the Metropolitan Council's Regional Bicycle System Study. Regional bikeways are corridors that serve as the backbone arterial system connecting city and county bikeways with regional destinations. The Metropolitan Council notes that due to the physical constraints of TH 41 right of way through downtown Chaska, a parallel alternative alignment for the bikeway may be desired in the downtown area. Proposed changes to the RBTN through downtown Chaska would be eligible for consideration during the next update to the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan. That process is scheduled to begin in 2017.
- TH 41 and CSAH 61 form the nexus of three RBTN corridors (where alignments have not been designated). A Tier 1 corridor connection downtown Chaska to the Southwest Regional Trail (to the northeast); a Tier 2 corridor connects downtown Chaska to Scott County via the future Minnesota River crossing (to the southwest); and a Tier 2 corridor connects downtown Chaska to Waconia (to the northwest).
- Carver County's goal is to identify a north-south connection in downtown Chaska to connect the Southwest Regional Trail to the Levee Trail. The County recognizes this future connection does not need to be on TH 41 (Chestnut Street).

### **DOWNTOWN CHASKA CONTEXT:**

#### 1. Land use and redevelopment context:

- Chaska was founded in 1852 as a free-standing City. It continues to be an active and evolving economic center and regional attraction. Chaska is home to more than 175 businesses.
- Chaska has experienced strong population growth over the past two decades. The city grew from a population of 11,513 in 1990 to 24,749 in 2010. The city's population is expected to continue to grow into the future.
- The Chaska Downtown Master Plan set a vision for future downtown Chaska to "revitalize downtown Chaska as the hub of community destinations and gathering places that reflect and celebrate the city's historic character, traditional small town atmosphere and values."





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- Existing land uses along TH 41 (Chestnut Street) within the downtown subarea include commercial/retail, residential, mixed-use, and institutional. Existing land use on CSAH 61 in the downtown subarea is a mix of commercial/retail, industrial, recreational, and residential.
- The Downtown Master Plan includes future downtown land use patterns dominated by mixed-use blocks along TH 41 (Chestnut Street), business/industrial employment redevelopment on downtown's edges, and additional higher density residential along the riverfront and near the downtown core.
- There are several properties that are intended for redevelopment within the downtown subarea. These include:
  - a. City Square West Site – planned as mixed-use “Main Street” block including a potential public library, public parking structure, retail, office, residential, Brick City Paseo connection and transit park and ride facility.
  - b. Previous Lumber Yard Site – a potential industrial development is currently under consideration
  - c. School Bus Garage Redevelopment Site – future office space and multi-family residential
  - d. Total Loss Redevelopment Site – future high density residential
- The Firemen's Park location is the site of a recent redevelopment including large municipal recreation building housing a banquet center, restaurant, and a curling facility. Since its recent opening, this facility has been highly successful in attracting both daily business and large events.

## 2. The historic context is important in downtown Chaska.

- Downtown Chaska provides a historic setting containing many 19<sup>th</sup> century structures.
- The Walnut Street National Historic District is located along the east side of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and contains several properties listed on the National Register, eligible for the National Register and locally designated as historic.
- Several properties surrounding TH 41 (Chestnut Street) in the downtown are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This includes the former railroad depot in the southeast corner of the TH 41/CSAH 61 intersection.
- City Square Park, part of the Walnut Street National Historic District, is located east of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets and contains burial mounds.
- The City of Chaska's Historic Preservation Committee has identified several other properties within the downtown Chaska subarea as locally significant. These include several properties along TH 41 (Chestnut Street) in downtown, outside of the Walnut Street National Historic District, as well as the Clayhole Lakes along TH 41 north of CSAH 61.

## 3. The ambience of a small town downtown is challenging in Chaska due to vehicular traffic on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd).



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- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is Chaska's Main Street. Generally, Main Streets are characterized by:
  - Compact mixed-use buildings which are spaced closely together;
  - Buildings which are historic or have unique character;
  - Short block lengths with access every block;
  - Interconnected local street networks;
  - Wide sidewalks;
  - Convenient on-street parking; and
  - Pedestrian friendly (particularly the young and the elderly)
- The City of Chaska has concerns with truck traffic having a negative impact on downtown Chaska. These concerns relate to: safety, traffic congestion, noise, odor and dust and particulate matter.
- The air quality in the TH 41 (Chestnut Street) corridor is a concern to the City of Chaska. The City has had difficulty growing flowers adjacent to the corridor. The City has identified a noticeable difference between the wear and color of historic brick buildings on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) compared to those off of the corridor. "Chaska" brick is a relatively soft cream colored brick, indigenous to the Chaska area. The City suspects exhaust and particulate matter from truck and vehicle traffic on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) has had a negative impact on the historic brick. Their concerns with air quality also extend to City Square Park (including its Native American Burial Mounds), Firemen's Park/Veteran's Park, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, and adjacent sidewalks where large groups congregate.
- MnDOT's Cultural Resource Unit (CRU) reports that air quality is generally not something they take into account when assessing historic effects because there are multiple other factors that may contribute to degrading brick such as acid rain, water infiltration, freeze/thaw cycles and improper maintenance.
- The noise in the TH 41 (Chestnut Street) corridor is a concern to the City of Chaska. The City identifies noise negatively impacts the downtown pedestrian setting and the ability of downtown to effectively function as an outdoor gathering space.

## **DOWNTOWN VEHICULAR CIRCULATION, ACCESS, AND PARKING:**

### **1. Downtown Subarea Circulation and Access:**

- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is a major barrier to east-west movements of local traffic in downtown Chaska. Existing full access intersections on TH 41 are located at CSAH 61, 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Access into downtown Chaska from CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) is provided at Walnut Street, Pine Street and Cedar Street.
- Chaska's Downtown Master Plan identifies potential roadway alignments and connections to enhance the permeability of access into and out of downtown on roads other than TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd). These include joining Oak Street to Yellow



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Brick Road; Stoughton Avenue with Fire Lane and extending Fire Lane to Yellow Brick Road; Cedar Street to Creek Road; and a direct connection of Hickory Street to West 4<sup>th</sup> Street; and eliminating the median on TH 41 (Chestnut Street).

- The addition of roadway connections into and out of downtown Chaska, along with continued use of the in-place grid network, is important for both circulation through downtown, supporting efficient traffic operations on TH 41 and in order to access the downtown businesses.
- The Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center has two access points onto CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) which align with both the Pine Street and Cedar Street intersections. The eastern access aligns with Pine Street where eastbound vehicle queues at TH 41 (Chestnut Street) frequently extend through the intersection during peak traffic periods. Pedestrians are generally most prevalent between the Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center and overflow parking areas south of CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) during non-peak periods. The number of crossing, turning and through vehicle and pedestrian movements occurring on CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) between Cedar Street and TH 41 (Chestnut Street) is substantial.

## 2. Parking:

- Parallel parking spaces are located on the east side of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street. There is no parking on CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) in the downtown sub-area.
- Many of the downtown streets offer diagonal on-street parking while the rest of the streets offer parallel parking. In total, there are approximately 620 public on-street parking spaces today in the downtown core area (defined by the Downtown Master Plan).
- Off-street parking in downtown is provided by both public and private surface parking lots. There are approximately 100 public parking spaces between two public surface lots downtown and 450 parking spaces provided by the private sector.
- As part of the Downtown Master Planning process, a high-level parking analysis was undertaken that looked at four quadrants in the downtown core, with TH 41 (Chestnut Street) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as the dividing lines. The analysis found all four quadrants have sufficient parking available to meet the needs of existing development. The City notes convenient on-street parking is important for downtown retail businesses and is currently in short supply, but in high demand. Other findings were issues with business owner/employee vs. customer parking needs, inadequate signage/enforcement of the 2-hour parking program, additional diagonal parking opportunities, and lack of parking on the west side of TH 41 (Chestnut Street).
- The Downtown Master Plan recommends development of a Downtown Parking Management Plan to manage parking to ensure adequate quantity, convenience, and quality of parking areas. The Downtown Master Plan also recommends negotiating with MnDOT to redesign TH 41 (Chestnut Street) with on-street parking on both sides through downtown.



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- The City of Chaska's Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center opened in late 2015 in the northwest quadrant of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) /CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd). This development has an off-street parking lot on site; however, large events require use of nearby on-street parking for overflow, typically during evening events outside of peak traffic hours. Common overflow parking areas are located south of CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) on Pine Street, Cedar Street, and in the public parking lot adjacent to City Hall. Recently it has been observed some are using Cooper's Country Market parking lot, east of TH 41 (Chestnut Street), for overflow parking.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITION:**

### **1. Infrastructure Condition:**

- Due to the aging pavements on TH 41 (Chestnut Street), MnDOT has programmed a pavement improvement project on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) from CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) to the Minnesota River in 2019. The last bituminous overlay was completed in 1998 and is now requiring more than routine maintenance to repair cracks, potholes and rutting issues.
- MnDOT anticipates the 2019 pavement improvements on TH 41 (Chestnut Street) will be adequate for 15-17 years with regular mill and overlays planned every 17 years.
- The CSAH 61 (Chaska Blvd) pavement condition is serviceable, but is beginning to show wear and minor deterioration throughout the project area. MnDOT last completed a mill and overlay project on this segment of the CSAH 61 corridor in 2007.
- The City of Chaska has both sanitary sewer and main water within the TH 41 and CSAH 61 corridors. The condition of these utilities will be evaluated to identify improvement needs.
- The CSAH 61 Bridge (Bridge No. 10002) spanning Chaska Creek was initially designed and installed by MnDOT in 1975. The channel underneath the roadway was constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers in 1996 as part of a flood control project. The roadway was turned over to Carver County in 2010. Today the bridge is classified as structurally deficient. Factors in this rating include cracks in the bridge deck, moisture leakage causing slab panels to rust, broken and rusted prestressing strands, and lack of load transfer between joints.
- Due to the bridge condition, in 2014 Carver County implemented interim safety measures by eliminating traffic over the north side of the structure and reducing lanes across the structure. This measure will remain in place until a replacement structure can be planned and constructed unless the bridge condition degrades further and requires load posting to reduce further wear on the structure. Project partners are working together to identify a replacement project in 2017 while the bridge continues to be closely monitored.
- The condition of the sidewalks along both sides of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) was recently evaluated by MnDOT during an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) field walk. This revealed deteriorated sidewalk conditions in some locations with inconsistencies in the pedestrian access route caused by heaving of existing pavers. Many curb ramps throughout the corridor also require replacement due to lack of an adequate landing area or presence of attributes (slope, trip hazards, etc.) not in compliance with ADA requirements.



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# County Highway 61 / Highway 41 Improvements

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## TRANSIT CONSIDERATIONS:

### 1. Transit Considerations:

- SouthWest Transit provides an on-demand service called SouthWest Prime within Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie. Users may request a shared ride to/from any location within these communities.
- There are currently two SouthWest Transit routes that go through Downtown Chaska including the 691 and 699D routes. These routes travel on Stoughton Avenue to Beech Street, on to E 4<sup>th</sup> Street and north on Walnut Street to Yellow Brick Road.
- Transit stops are located at the following locations along these routes within the downtown:
  - a. Audubon Road and Stoughton Avenue
  - b. Zemble Street and Stoughton Avenue
  - c. Ringenbach Street and Stoughton Avenue
  - d. Boldt Street and Stoughton Avenue
  - e. E 7th Street and Stoughton
  - f. E 6th Street and Stoughton
  - g. Beech Street and E 4th Street
  - h. Maple Street and E 4th Street
  - i. Ash Street and E 4th Street
  - j. Walnut Street and E 4th Street
  - k. Oak Street and E 4th Street
  - l. Walnut Street and CSAH 61
  - m. CSAH 61 and Yellow Brick Road.
- A transit park and ride facility is located between 5<sup>th</sup> Street and CSAH 61 on N Walnut Street. This is a surface lot with parking for 40 vehicles.
- The City of Chaska's Downtown Master Plan proposes a future transit park and ride facility on the City Square West redevelopment site.
- SouthWest Transit does not have current plans to expand transit service within Chaska. The only exception to this is current discussions between the City and SouthWest Transit to provide shuttle service between the East Creek Transit Station and the Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center during events.
- There are currently no bus pull-off areas located on CSAH 61 near the Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center. If traffic on CSAH 61 increases and transit



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ridership increases and/or shuttle service to the Firemen's Park/Chaska Curling Center/Chaska Event Center becomes real, bus pull-offs may need to be considered.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **1. Environmental considerations in the downtown subarea:**

- The majority of the downtown subarea is located within the Lower Minnesota Watershed District. Areas north of CSAH 61 and west of TH 41 (Chestnut Street) are located within Carver County Watershed Management Organization.
- There is currently no stormwater treatment along CSAH 61. Existing CSAH 61 stormwater primarily includes ditches draining from the road system to the Minnesota River.
- TH 41 (Chestnut Street) stormwater is collected and is directed to the Minnesota River (an impaired waterway) untreated.
- A thorough investigation of stormwater issues and opportunities has not been completed for the project area. As roadway improvement alternatives are developed, an analysis of stormwater treatment options and opportunities will be discussed with the watershed management organizations, watershed districts, and local agencies.
- Roadway improvements will need to meet or exceed stormwater management requirements. Next steps in the project include a meeting with the project's water resources team to discuss resources, jurisdiction, requirements, and opportunities. All stormwater related discussions including jurisdiction and requirements will be documented through meeting minutes, goals and objectives, and in the final project documentation.



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