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Existing Conditions Report Proctor Transportation Plan

City of Proctor, MN



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OVERVIEW

The Transportation Existing Conditions Report is intended to provide a baseline snapshot to inform the Proctor Transportation Plan. A clear understanding of existing conditions is an important element of crafting and implementing a robust, effective, and integrated transportation plan.

This chapter is organized into the following sections:

- Demographics Snapshot
- Land Use
- Roadway Conditions
- Rail Conditions
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Conditions
- Public Transit Conditions
- Transportation Existing Conditions Maps (Appendix)

I. Demographics Snapshot

Proctor's population is approximately 3,045 persons and has remained stable over the last several years according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2017 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates). About 97% of city residents are white and the median age of 46 years old. The largest age groups come from the age ranges 0 – 19 (~23%), and 50 – 64 (~22%). Proctor's median household income rests at \$57,327 with 8.75% of area residents living below the poverty line.

For comparison, Minnesota and St. Louis County's median ages are 38 / 41 years old, median household income is \$65,699 / \$50,936, and 9.6% / 14.8% of residents live below the poverty line (also 2017 ACS estimates). This comparison demonstrates that Proctor trends substantially older than St. Louis County and the state as a whole, but fewer residents live in poverty than both. Median income lags behind statewide values, but is substantially greater than St. Louis County. It is likely that Proctor's lower median household income as compared to Minnesota is not reflected in poverty rate due to the relatively lower cost in Proctor.

In terms of work commute habits, Proctor residents drive for 90.2% of work trips. Of these, about 77.8% are drive-alone car trips, and 12.5% are carpools. Public transportation accounts for 0.7% of trips, walking for 0.3% and bicycling for 1.0%. About 4.6% of Proctor residents work from home. Proctor residents overwhelmingly work outside of the City of Proctor (88% of workers). The 12% of workers who live and work in the city computes to about 175 people. Commuters are not travelling far for work – the mean commute time is less than 20 minutes. For reference, a 20-minute travel time in a vehicle generally encompasses all nearby employment centers, including Duluth, Superior, Hermantown and Cloquet. In summary, Proctor workers typically drive to work alone to jobs mainly outside of the City of Proctor.

II. Land Use

Land use influences transportation system usage, patterns, and future transportation needs. Where various land uses are located and planned and the transportation routes to and between them should inform transportation improvement decisions.

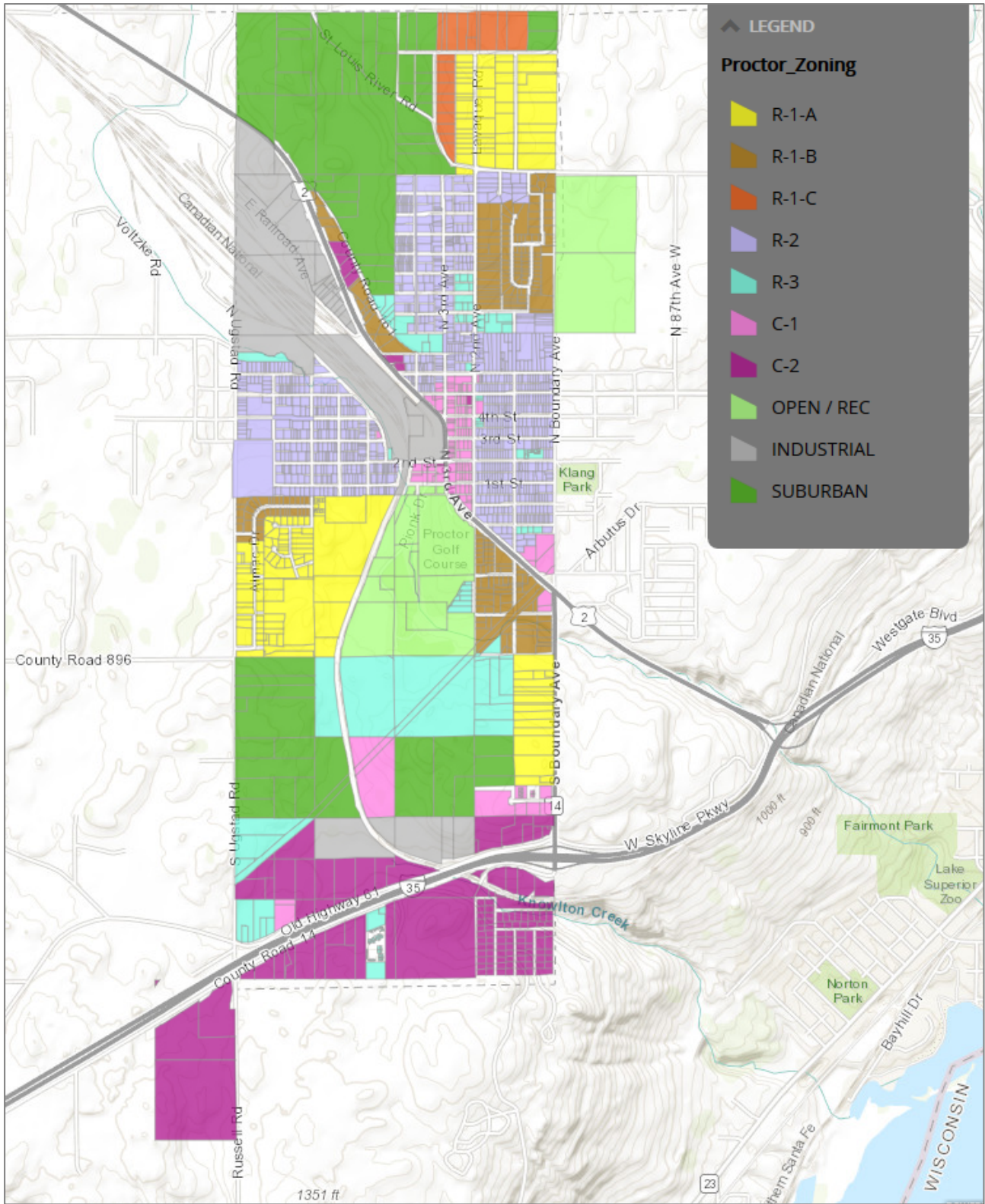
Like many cities, Proctor is anchored by a central commercial and industrial district, with surrounding areas of residential, institutional, and recreational uses. Further away from the central commercial district, land is less intensively developed, and more open space is present. Non-residential uses outside of downtown are generally located at major intersections and along the major roadways of the city (e.g. Highway 2 and Boundary Avenue; St. Louis County Fairgrounds). Some commercial development is associated with frontage roads and access points to I-35. The areas north and south of I-35 represent the largest zone designated for commercial use in the city.

Much of central Proctor is dominated by the existing Canadian Northern Rail Yards just west of Highway 2 and north of 2nd Street. This industrial use effectively bisects eastern and western halves of the city. There are six crossings of the rail corridor – St. Louis River Road (County Highway 19, grade separated), 2nd Street (at grade crossing, adjacent to downtown Proctor), Kirkus Street (grade separated), Old Highway 61, I-35, and W. Skyline Parkway. The largest zone without connectivity across the rail yards is north of downtown Proctor, with a distance of more than 2 miles from 2nd Street to St. Louis River Road (via Highway 2).

Nearly all of Proctor's residential areas are located within an area less than 1 square mile from the central commercial district. These areas are traditional urban neighborhoods with a grid street pattern and narrow streets. Blocks and urban design characteristics offer a very walkable scale for residents, though the presence and condition of sidewalks varies.

Figure 1 depicts existing Proctor land use.

Figure 1: Existing Proctor Land Use



Source: City of Proctor Comprehensive Plan (2015)

III. Roadway Conditions

Jurisdictional and Functional Classification

Functional Classification

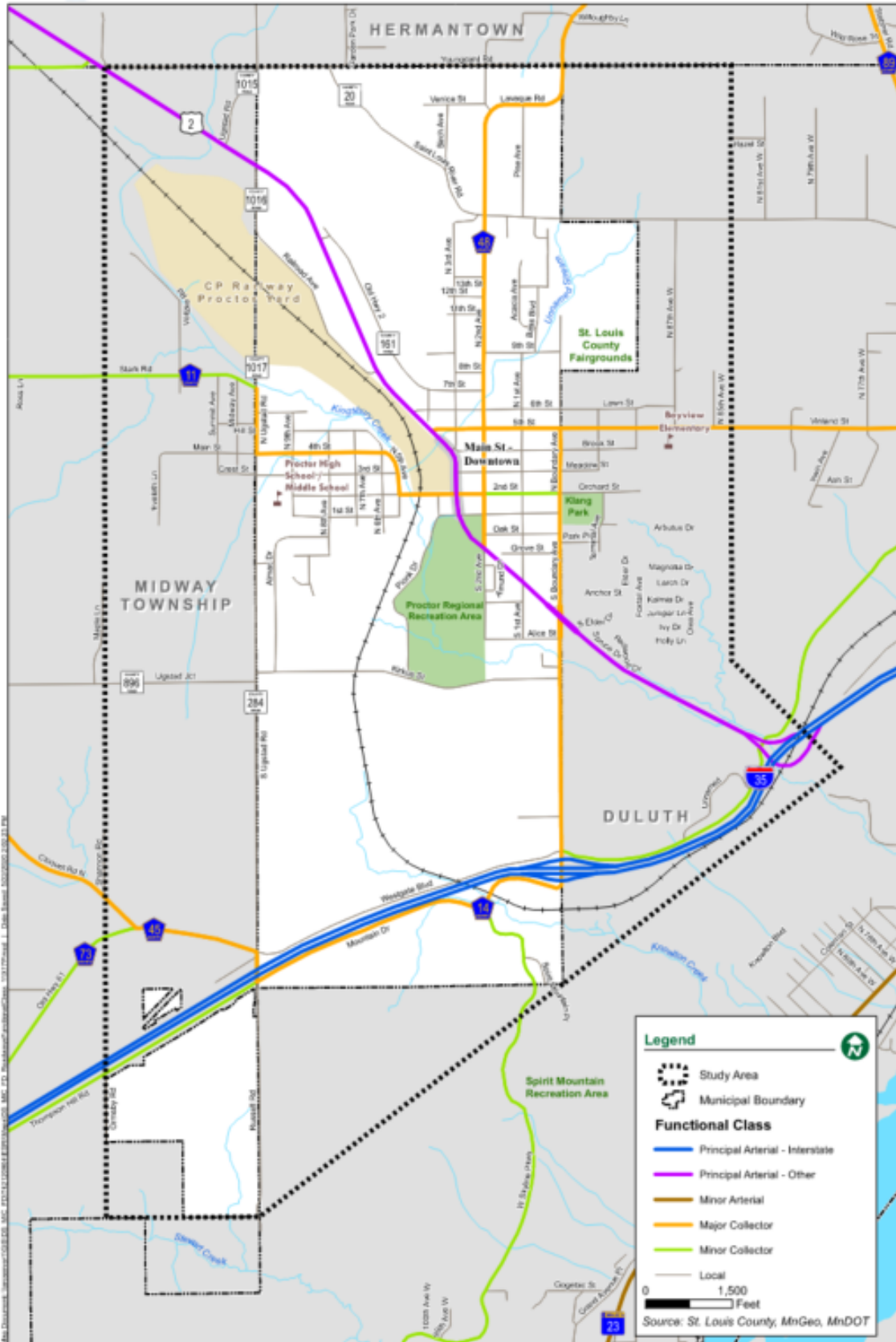
Because roads and streets typically do not operate independently of each other, functional classification is a cornerstone of transportation assessment and planning. Through this approach, roads are located and designed to perform their specific functions within a defined hierarchy. This hierarchy places roads within a network to distribute traffic from local access routes all the way up to major mobility corridors such as interstate highways. A typical system connects neighborhood streets to collector roadways, then to minor arterials, major arterials and ultimately the Freeway/Interstate System. Roads are classified based on the degree to which they provide access to adjacent land uses, versus providing higher-speed mobility with less frequent access for “through” traffic.

Proctor’s roadway system consists of five functional classifications:

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street

Figure 2 depicts the current roadway functional classification for Proctor.

Figure 2: Roadway Functional Classification



Jurisdictional Classification

Roadways are classified based on the level of government that has ownership and operational jurisdiction over them. Roadways with higher mobility functions typically fall under the jurisdiction of a county, regional, state, or federal government. Likewise, roads focusing on local circulation and access generally are under the jurisdiction of the local government. In the City of Proctor, three jurisdictions have responsibility for the overall road network: MnDOT (I-35 and US Hwy 2), St. Louis County (CSAH 14, CSAH 11, CSAH 48, CR 161, CR 284, CR 1017, CR 1016, and CR 20), and the City of Proctor (all remaining roadways within the City border). Note that the County jurisdiction includes several roads bordering Proctor, including Boundary Ave and Ugstad Rd.

Figure 3 depicts the existing roadway jurisdictional classification system in Proctor.

Interstate

Interstates are the highest functional classification providing inter-state mobility. No direct land access is offered by interstates, as they connect major population centers across the country with high speed, high volume roadways. In Proctor, Interstate I-35 crosses the southern portion of the city, connecting and terminating at Duluth to the east and to the west and south to the Twin Cities and beyond.

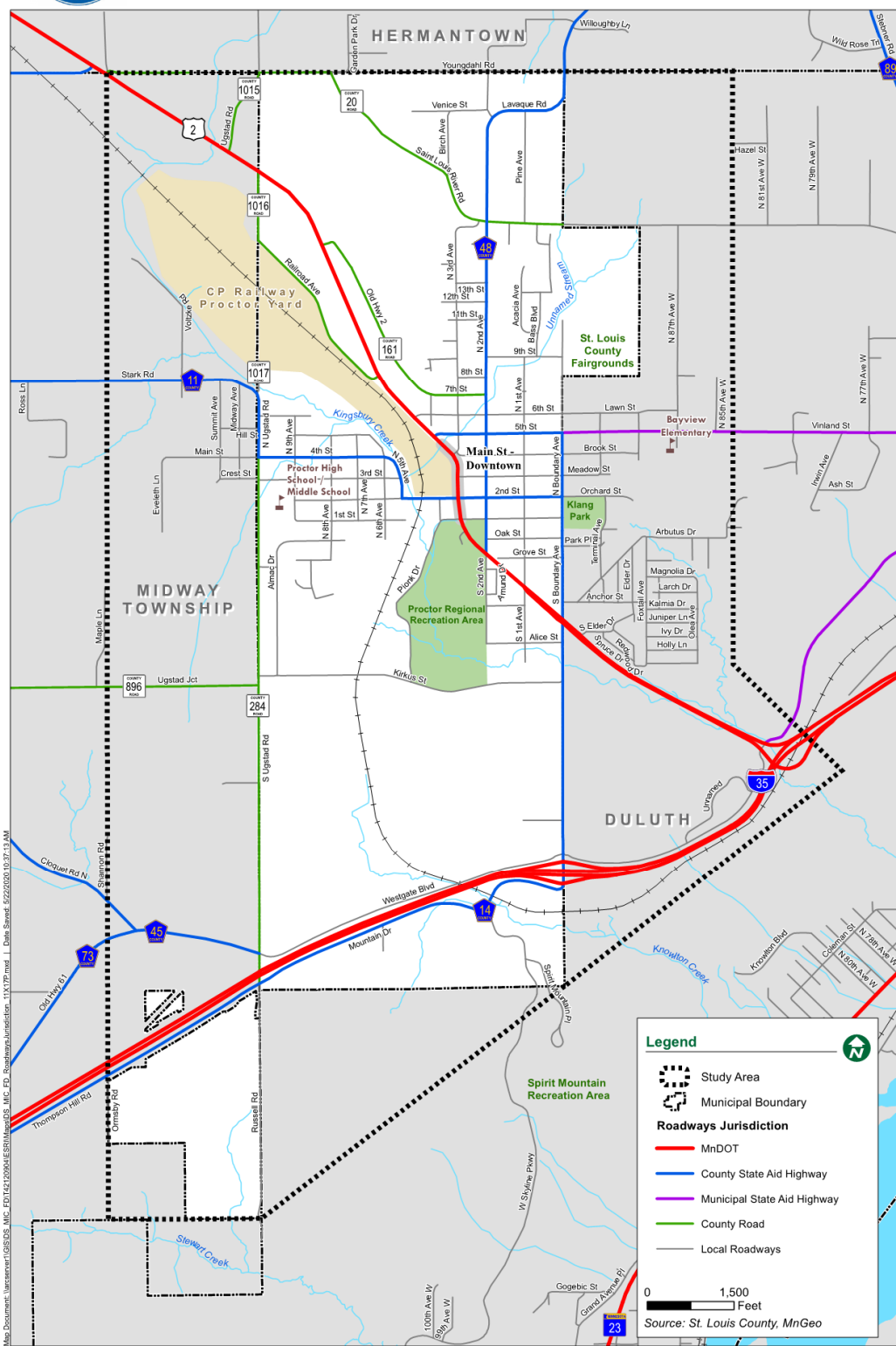
Table 1 - Interstate Highways				
Roadway	From	To	Travel Lanes (Total)	Posted Speed Limit
I-35	Western Study Area Boundary (I-35 at Ormsby Rd)	Southeastern Study Area Boundary (Hwy 2 / I-35)	4	55mph

Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are the highest non-interstate/freeway roadway classification. The primary function of these roadways is to provide for regional mobility. They are intended to connect communities across a region, particularly central business districts. Highway 2 in Proctor connects from I-35W near the south side of the city and crosses the city in a northwesterly direction. Highway 2 is also Proctor's Main Street, passing through the small central business district. It continues to the northwest, ultimately serving as a major east-west connection linking to Grand Rapids, Bemidji and west to the North Dakota state line.

Table 2 - Principal Arterials				
Roadway	From	To	Travel Lanes (Total)	Posted Speed Limit
US Hwy 2	Northwestern study area boundary (Hwy 2 / St. Louis River Rd)	Southeastern study area boundary (Hwy 2 / I-35)	2-3 depending on location	30mph (Transitions to 60mph after E Railroad Ave)

Figure 3: Existing Roadway Jurisdiction



Major and Minor Collectors

Collector roadways provide a balance of the mobility and land access functions. They generally serve trips that are within the city, connecting neighborhoods and smaller commercial areas to the arterial network.

Table 3 – Major and Minor Collector Roadways				
Roadway	From	To	Number of Travel Lanes (Total)	Posted Speed Limit
Major Collectors				
CSAH 11 (Stark Rd / Ugstad Rd / 4 th St / 5 th Ave / 2 nd St)	Western study area boundary (Stark Rd west of Volzke Rd)	US Hwy 2 / 2 nd St	2	30mph
CSAH 48 (N 2 nd Ave / Lavaque Rd)	US Hwy 2	Northeast city limit	2	30mph
CSAH 14 (Thompson Hill Rd / Mountain Dr / W Skyline Pkwy / Boundary Ave)	Western study area boundary (Thompson Hill Rd / Ormsby Rd)	Boundary Ave / Finland St	2	50mph
CR 161 (Old Hwy 2)	US Hwy 2	N 2 nd Ave	2	30mph
Minor Collectors				
CSAH 11 (2 nd St)	US Hwy 2	Boundary Ave	2	30mph

Existing Traffic Volumes and Crash Data

One of the most basic roadway characteristics is its traffic volume. Existing and forecasted traffic volumes are used to determine roads that are approaching or exceeding their designed capacity. Similarly, identifying the type of traffic traveling on each road is important to better understand what types of vehicles use a given roadway, and potential impacts should the roadway be altered.

Proctor’s average daily traffic (ADT) volumes are presented in **Figure 4** and average daily truck traffic volume is shown in **Figure 5**. These numbers are based on the most current MnDOT data available for traffic on these roads. For general traffic volume, Highway 2 is the busiest non-interstate road in Proctor, carrying 6,200-8,000 vehicles daily. Most Highway 2 trips are present on the road north of downtown Proctor, indicating that many of these are regional trips to destinations northwest of the city along Highway 2 and connecting roads. Other main roads include Boundary Ave (3,400-3,500 ADT), 2nd Ave (1,600 ADT near downtown and 3,000 ADT north of downtown and where Lavaque Rd enters Hermantown), 2nd St (1,900 ADT east of Highway 2; 3,450 ADT west of Highway 2).

Highway 2 is the only road for which truck data is currently available. Between 1,150 and 1,250 trucks use this road daily, and counts indicate that most of those trips are present north of downtown Proctor, again representing regional truck trips. Truck trips comprise between 15.6 and 18.5 percent of all traffic on Highway 2.

Crash statistics are used to identify traffic safety problems for a roadway network and the types of improvements that might eliminate or mitigate particular crash types. Recent 10-year crash data for roadways are depicted in **Figure 6**. Highway 2 is by far the most notable corridor for crashes, and the

Highway 2 intersections at Boundary Avenue (23 crashes) and 2nd Street (21 crashes) are the most prominent in the city. The Highway 2 / 2nd Street intersection is the location of the only fatal crash in Proctor during the past ten years.

Figure 4: Proctor Traffic Volume (2014-2018)

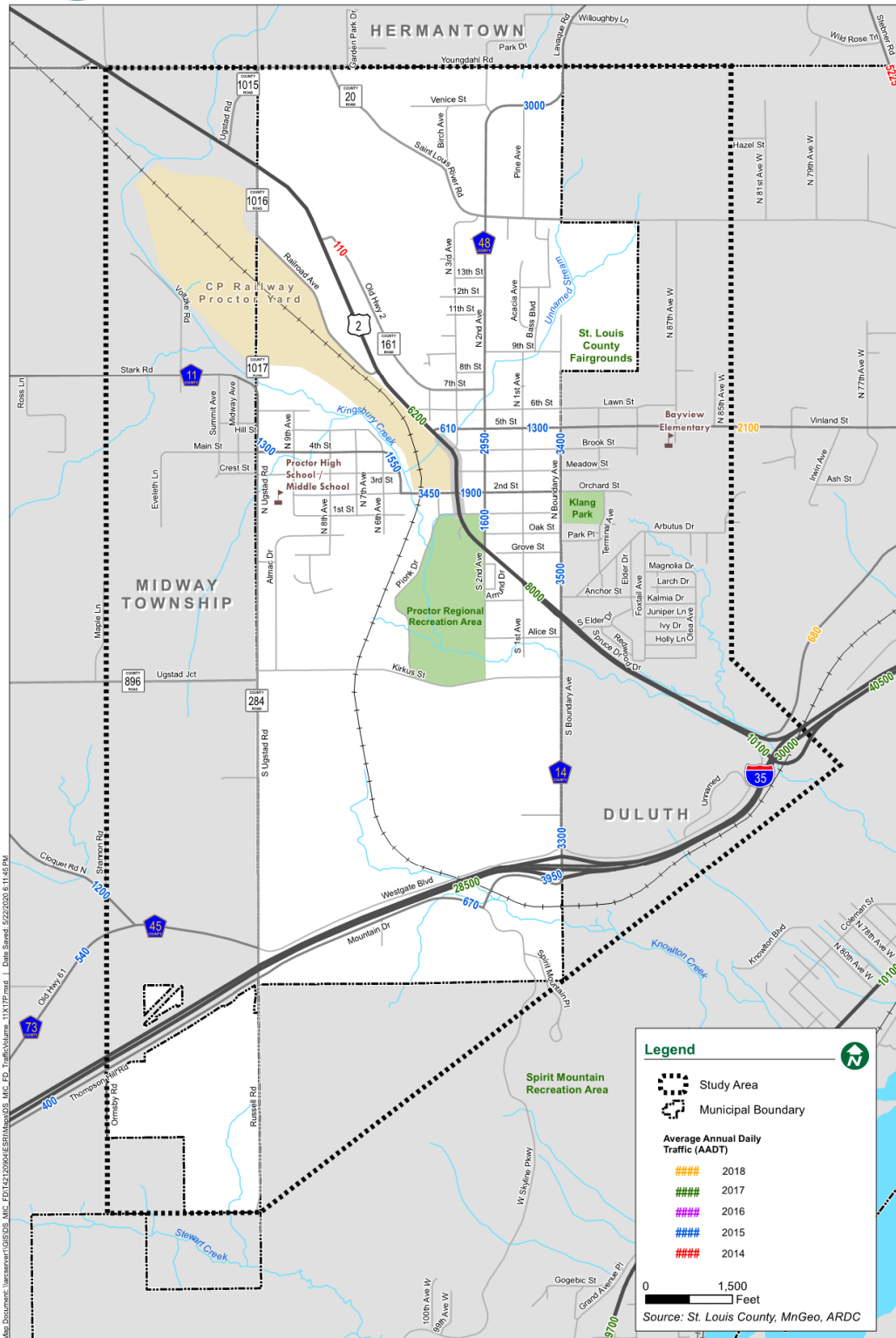


Figure 5: Average Daily Truck Traffic

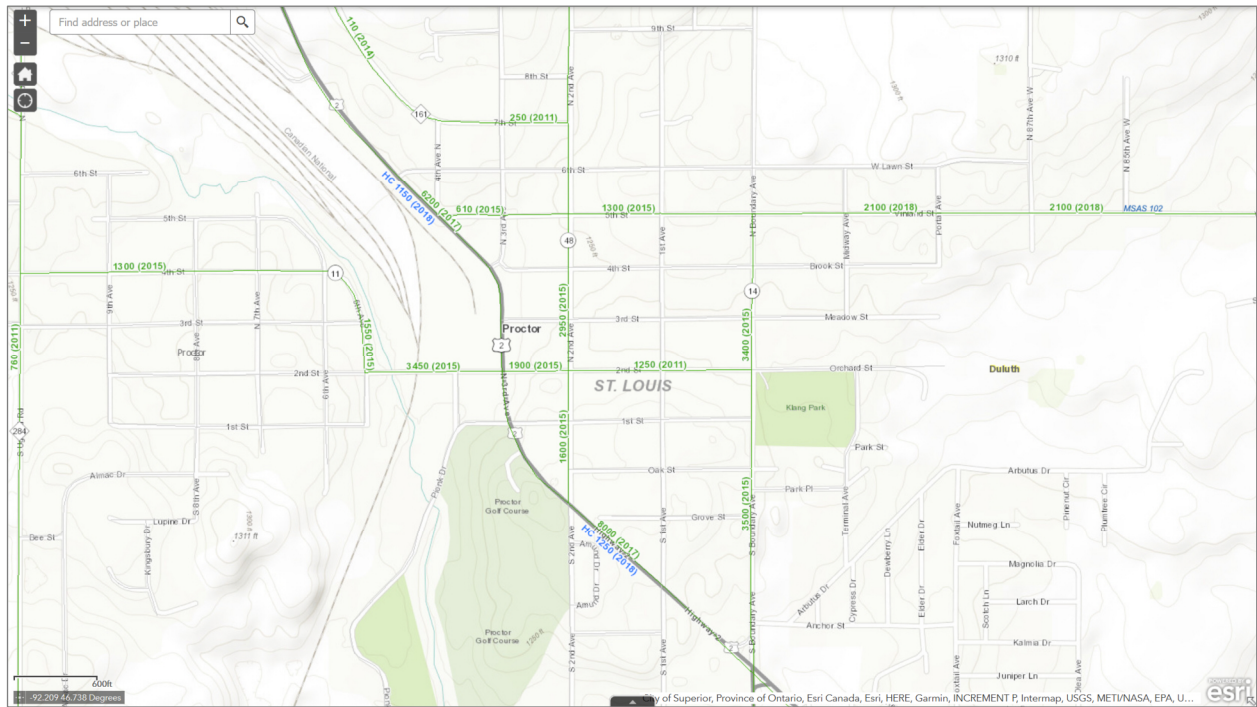
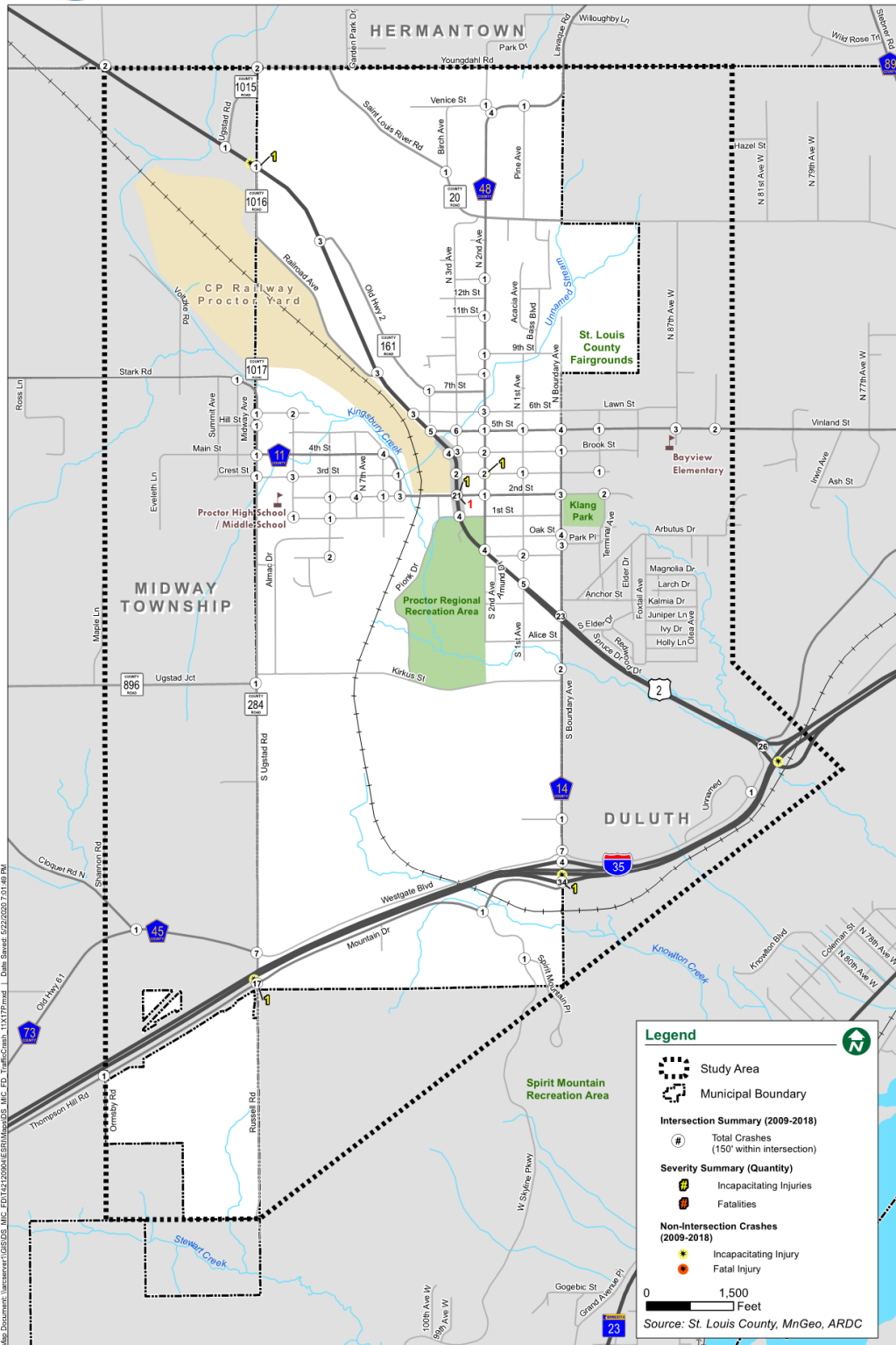


Figure 6: Ten-Year Crash History



Traffic Strengths and Issues

- Average daily traffic volumes are well within parameters of roadway design capacity resulting in an effective existing street network with appropriately functioning roadways.
- A comprehensive physical conditions analysis was not conducted for this study; however, field observations indicate that there are locations where pavement condition, curb and gutter and drainage need repair. A more comprehensive review is recommended to help prioritize maintenance and reconstruction investment.
- Almost all roads in Proctor are two-lane, with occasional turn lanes. Many have wide shoulders, providing 8 feet or more of additional space on either side of the road. While almost all state and county roads included painted centerlines, lanes and shoulders, most local streets do not.
- Nearly every road in Proctor averaged less than 1 crash per year in the 10-year span from 2009 to 2018. During this time, there were five incapacitating crash injuries and one fatal crash within Proctor city limits. These crash numbers are low.
- Major intersections on higher traffic-volume roadways saw the greatest number of crashes over the 10-year study period:
 - I-35 exit ramp onto Boundary Ave – 34 crashes, 1 incapacitating (avg. 1.7 crashes per year)
 - US Hwy 2 & Boundary Ave – 23 crashes (avg. 2.3 crashes per year)
 - US Hwy 2 & 2nd St – 21 crashes, 1 incapacitating, 1 fatal (avg. 2.1 crashes per year)
 - Mountain Dr & Russel Rd – 17 crashes, 1 incapacitating (avg. 1.7 crashes per year)
- Roadway ownership includes the State, County, and Local governments, and therefore requires multi-level coordination and cooperation to ensure roadway maintenance and repair.

IV. Rail Conditions

Industrial rail is a primary means for shipping and moving materials long distances along fixed rail lines. Proctor's Canadian Northern Rail Yard features prominently in the city's history and remains a significant feature within the city's transportation network, connecting the Duluth shipping yards to Northern and Greater Minnesota. While bisecting the city west of downtown Proctor, the yards continue to provide regular freight traffic and rail car staging and represent an employment center in Proctor.

Strengths and Issues

- The rail yards provide vital rail access from the Duluth shipping yards to regional and international destinations.
- The rail line crosses 2nd St in downtown, severing the primary access route between the eastern and western sides of the city when long trains traverse the area. Bypassing the train would require a trip north to St. Louis River Road, or south to Kirkus St to reach a grade separated crossing.



Taconite pellets dropped from trains are hazardous for pedestrians walking on 2nd Street sidewalks.

- The 2nd St crossing is controlled with gate arms, including shorter arms for sidewalks. Both sidewalks lack detectable warning devices east and west of the rail crossing.
- Trains crossing 2nd St drop many taconite pellets on the roadway and sidewalks. These are a significant slip hazard for pedestrians.
- The at-grade 2nd St crossing is a safety hazard for all vehicles or persons crossing the tracks, however the crossing is not mentioned as a priority in MnDOT's *Rail Grade Crossing Safety Project Selection Report*.
- The rail corridor south of downtown Proctor is a single track with an adjacent service road. The service road may be actively in use, but this rail grade right-of-way may also provide some possibilities for adjacent non-motorized uses (rail-with-trail).

V. Pedestrian & Bicycling Conditions

Proctor is at a scale amenable to biking and walking. The city is one mile wide by three miles north to south, and much of the population lives within a two-mile north-to-south zone and within a mile of downtown Proctor. A person walking an average walking speed can cross Proctor in about 20 minutes or travel from the northern to southern boundary in an hour. A bicyclist can cross in 6 minutes and travel north-to-south in 18. Realistically, many trips within Proctor may be shorter. For example, a walk from the Highway 2 / 2nd St intersection to Proctor High School would take about 10 minutes. Bicycling from Klang Park to Bayview Elementary School via a path through Bayview School Forest could be covered in less than 2 minutes. Bicycling and walking offer a lot of possibilities in the context of a city the size of Proctor.



Proctor sidewalks in a state of broken disrepair.

Topography poses some difficulties for bicycling in Proctor, with the landscape rising and falling across the city in places. The Kingsbury Creek Valley and grading performed for the rail corridor and rail yard operations generally form a low point in central Proctor, though travel in any direction is likely to encounter hilly terrain. The landscape falls precipitously toward the southern side of the city in the direction of the St. Louis River Valley.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the primary component of a community's pedestrian infrastructure, and the backbone of pedestrian connectivity. Sidewalks also serve a vital role in multi-modal transportation, as most trips begin or end with walking. Appropriately designed and constructed sidewalks, with space for additional streetscaping features, promote walkability and pedestrian access. Most Proctor sidewalks are in or around downtown and central Proctor. Missing or partial sidewalks within Proctor are noted in **Figure 7**, as are the condition of existing sidewalks. There are numerous locations where sidewalks are in significant states of disrepair and need replacement.

St. Louis County has recently conducted curb ramp replacement on some county roads within Proctor (see **Figure 3** for a map of roadway jurisdiction). This includes most ramps along Boundary Ave, 5th St,

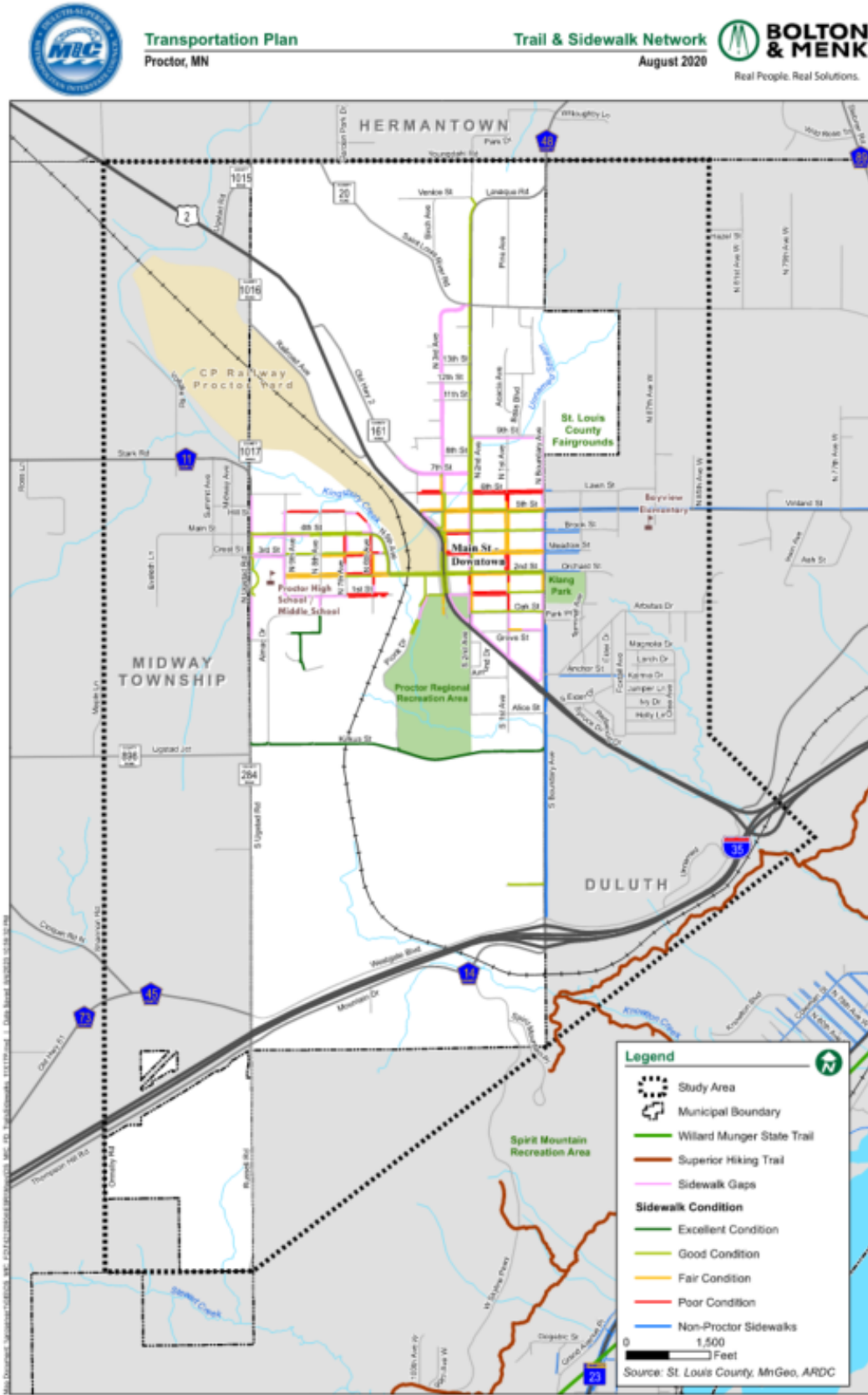
and 4th St. Field observations found that some recently constructed curb ramps may not meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) guidelines.

The ADA is an important piece of civil rights legislation that works to increase inclusion for persons of all abilities in a wide variety of areas pertaining to the provision of public goods and services. For public streets and sidewalks, ADA includes standards for accessible transportation options. Wherever public agencies provide pedestrian facilities, those facilities must be accessible to persons with disabilities. The accessibility of pedestrian facilities is required by the ADA and is independent of funding sources.

In Minnesota, all public entities which employ more than 50 employees are required to complete an ADA transition plan, which identifies the ADA need and draws up a plan to bring public rights-of-way into compliance with the act. Proctor – with fewer than 50 employees – is required to conduct an ADA-self-evaluation for the same purpose. MnDOT has stated that all applicable agencies must have an ADA Transition Plan (or self-evaluation) completed by September 30, 2020 or demonstrate significant progress toward this goal to remain eligible for federal transportation funding in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Proctor does not have an ADA Transition Plan or equivalent, and this could jeopardize its ability to compete for and secure funding from the Duluth Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council. MnDOT and St. Louis County both have ADA Transition Plans in place, which would cover the roadways within Proctor that are under State and County jurisdiction.

Figure 7: Trail / Sidewalk Network and Condition



Pedestrian Crashes

Pedestrians are considered the most vulnerable road users. In the last 10 years, there have been three pedestrian crashes in Proctor.

Table 4 – Pedestrian Crashes		
Year	Location	Age of Pedestrian
2010	US Hwy 2 & Boundary Ave	28 years old
2010	Ugstad Rd & 3 rd St	12 years old
2015	2 nd Ave & 3 rd St	65 years old

Strengths and Issues

- Significant sidewalk network inconsistency in terms of both existence and condition of sidewalks. Existing sidewalks are most prevalent in and around downtown Proctor; most other parts of the city are unconnected to the sidewalk network.
- Pedestrian-involved crashes are very low over the last 10 years, despite the relative lack of pedestrian infrastructure.
- Few of Proctor’s existing sidewalks are in *excellent* condition. Most are classified as either in *Good* or *Fair* condition. Only Kirkus St and a small section of south of the Middle & High School are considered to have *Excellent* condition sidewalks. Sidewalks along Kirkus St are well-positioned to support future development connectivity.
- Several roadways connecting Proctor High School/Middle School to surrounding residential areas need new or repaired sidewalks, including 3rd St, portions of 2nd St, 1st St, N 9th Ave, and N 8th Ave.
- The condition of sidewalks along Vinland St within the study area (inside the City of Duluth boundary) is not indicated on Figure 7, but there are sections of sidewalks in need of new or repaired sidewalks. Vinland Street provides direct access to Bay View Elementary School.
- While sidewalks are present at most bus stops, some stops are missing sidewalks and many lack adequately designed sidewalk infrastructure to provide safe and reliable access to public transportation.

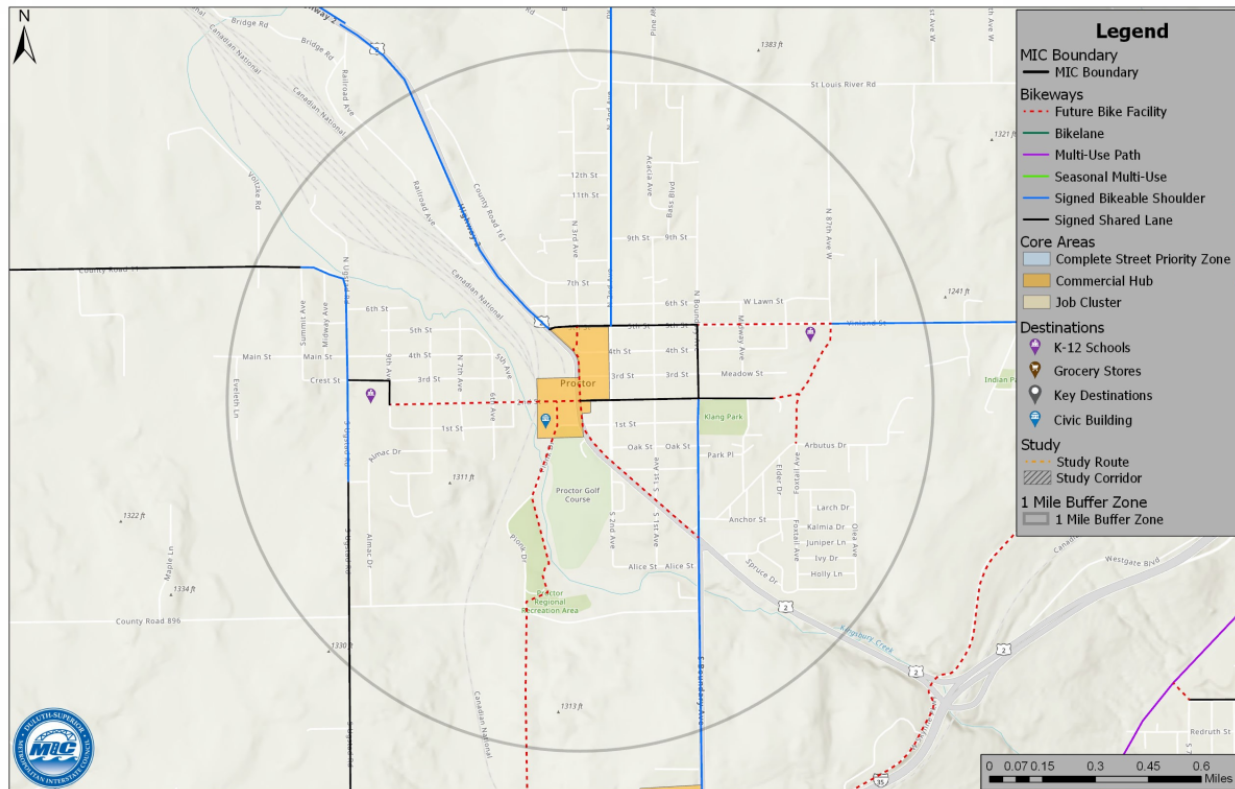
Bike Facilities and Routes

Bicycle facilities provide the foundational infrastructure of a community’s bike network. Bike facilities include bike lanes, multi-use trails, signed shoulders, and signed shared lanes. Some bicycle facilities are *bicycle routes* – designated road networks intended for a bicycle to use, shared with motor vehicles.

The 2019 Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Bikeways Plan identified and inventoried the existing bikeways through Proctor. These routes were identified as on-street signed routes, however no specific dedicated or off-street trail facilities for bicycle use have yet been provided in Proctor. **Table 5** describes existing bicycle routes in Proctor. **Figure 8** depicts existing and planned bicycle facilities in the Proctor area, per the MIC.

Table 5 – Existing Proctor Bike Routes			
Roadway	From	To	Facility Type
Boundary Ave	I-35	Vinland St.	Signed Bikeable Shoulder, Signed Shared Lane (north of 2 nd St.)
2 nd St /Orchard St	US Hwy 2	Terminal Ave	Signed Shared Lane
5 th St	US Hwy 2	Boundary Ave	Signed Shared Lane
Ugstad Rd	Mountain Dr	Stark Rd	Signed Shared Lane (Mountain Dr to Bee St), Signed Bikeable Shoulder (Bee St to Stark Rd)
US Hwy 2	Northwest Study Area Boundary	5 th St	Signed Bikeable Shoulder
2 nd Ave / Lavaque Rd	5 th St	Proctor City Line	Signed Bikeable Shoulder
Stark Rd	Ugstad Rd	Western Study Area Boundary	Signed Shared Lane (Western boundary to Summit Ave), Signed Bikeable Shoulder (Summit Ave to Ugstad Rd)
9 th Ave	2 nd St	3 rd St	Signed Shared Lane
3 rd St	9 th Ave	Ugstad Rd	Signed Shared Lane

Figure 8: Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities



Bicycle Crashes

Over the last 10 years, there have been two bike-related crashes in Proctor, both involving children.

Table 6 – Bicycle Crashes		
Year	Location	Bicyclist Age
2011	5 th St & 2 nd Ave intersection	6 years old
2017	2 nd St & Pionk Dr	14 years old

Strengths and Issues

- While signed bike routes exist within Proctor and along several other streets, there are no exclusively dedicated bike facilities or off-street trail facilities.
- Reported bicyclist-involved crashes are very few over the last 10 years.
- Boundary Ave, 2nd St., and Vinland St. provide access to the larger regional bike system, though without any direct connections at present.
- A key identified bicycle gap exists along 2nd St. from US Hwy 2 to N 9th Ave (downtown Proctor to Proctor High School and Middle School).
- Plans have been identified by the Metropolitan Interstate Council (MIC) to expand bike routes in Proctor, further improving regional and local connectivity. These new/expanded routes are located along US Hwy 2, Vinland St, 3rd Ave, 2nd St, and Pionk Dr.
- Proctor’s hilly topography can be a challenge for bicycling and should be considered when planning or expanding future bicycle facilities.

Trails

Trails consist of either paved or unpaved shared use paths, designated for walking, hiking, and/or biking through park or natural areas. Proctor has no existing trails within City limits. The Willard Munger State Trail lies to the south of Proctor along the St. Louis River, stretching 70 miles from Hinckley to Duluth. The Munger Trail is a significant recreational resource, and the City of Duluth is working to connect the Munger to Downtown Duluth via its Crosstown Trail Project (currently under construction). There are plans for a Proctor Hermantown Munger Trail Spur to connect Proctor and nearby Hermantown with the Munger Trail system to the south, along the St. Louis River. To date, no segments of the Munger Trail Spur have yet been designed or constructed in Proctor.

Hiking trails (not for bicycle use) also feature prominently in the area. The Superior Hiking Trail is an extensive cross-country walking path that connects the St. Louis River Valley past Duluth and along the north shore of Lake Superior. It passes to the south of Proctor and has no direct pedestrian connection to the city.

A system of trails provides access within Bay View School Forest, adjacent to Bay View Elementary School. These unpaved footpaths appear regularly used and are relatively well-maintained. The school has an outdoor classroom within Bay View School Forest accessible via these paths. The full extent and connectivity of the trail system is unknown at this time, but they appear to provide some access to the elementary school and to adjacent neighborhoods. These paths are not ADA accessible.

Figure 9: Bay View School Forest Trails

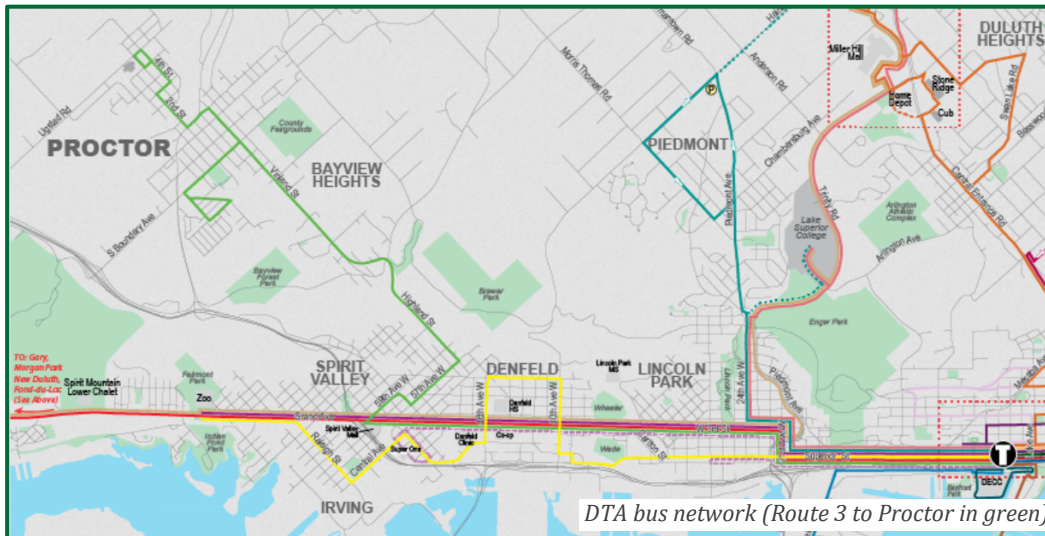


Strengths and Issues

- Aside from the Bay View School Forest Trails, there are currently no other trails located within Proctor, and limited access from the city to nearby regional trails.
- Plans for the Proctor Hermantown Trail Spur represent a significant opportunity to connect the city to major regional trails while providing new forms of connectivity and recreational activity. With the future completion of Duluth's Crosstown Trail, making the connection from Proctor to the Munger Trail would also provide Proctor residents with a multi-use route to downtown Duluth.
- The existing access road adjacent to the single active CN rail track may be a potential rail-with-trail opportunity while still allowing for rail operations and maintenance. This would require significant negotiation with the railway.

VI. Public Transportation

Proctor is serviced by the Duluth Transit Authority (DTA), which provides bus access to downtown Duluth via the Route 3 and 3X. Bus service is every hour off-peak with more frequent half-hourly service during the morning and evening commutes. The route includes approximately 250 daily boardings. Route 3 accesses Proctor via Vinland St and takes a circuitous route through Proctor to include stops near Proctor High School, north of downtown, along Boundary Ave and in the Zenith Terrace community. Peak fare is \$1.50 one-way; off-peak fare is \$0.75. A monthly adult pass is \$40, and DTA also offers \$90, \$180 and annual adult and teen passes.



STRIDE paratransit provides dial-a-ride transportation in Proctor within ¼ mile of DTA's regular routes. Eligible riders include individuals whose disabilities prevent them from boarding, riding on, or deboarding regular DTA buses. Persons with temporary disabilities are eligible while the condition exists. Inability to get to a DTA bus stop is not considered a major factor in determining eligibility for STRIDE.

There are very few bus shelters at designated stops. Most stops are marked with a bus stop sign, and access to stops varies depending on the condition of adjacent sidewalks and boulevard spaces. Some bus stops are not located on accessible walkways, and in some instances no sidewalk is present.

Strengths and Issues

- Stops are located within downtown Proctor and some residential areas. The circuitous route and general lack of marking other than bus stop signs give the route low visibility.
- Hourly service during off-peak can result in long passenger wait times.
- Route 3 is one of the stronger ridership lines for DTA.
- Stop conditions vary, and some have very few or no supportive features such as sidewalks or pads to ease boarding. Only two shelters were noted.
- The City of Proctor does not currently share the cost of operating DTA Route 3.



Anchor St. bus shelter