

The Benefits of the Collaborative Process of Compromise: A Case Study from Alexandria, MN

by

Jack Forslund, PTP

Reuben Collins, EIT

Jessica Peterson, Health Educator,
Douglas County Public Health



Presentation Outline

- Project Background
- Geographic Context
- Project Partners
 - City of Alexandria
 - Douglas County
 - Mn/DOT District 4
- Alternatives Development Process
 - Iterative, Collaborative Effort
- Identification of Improvement Measure
- Benefits of Collaborative Compromise

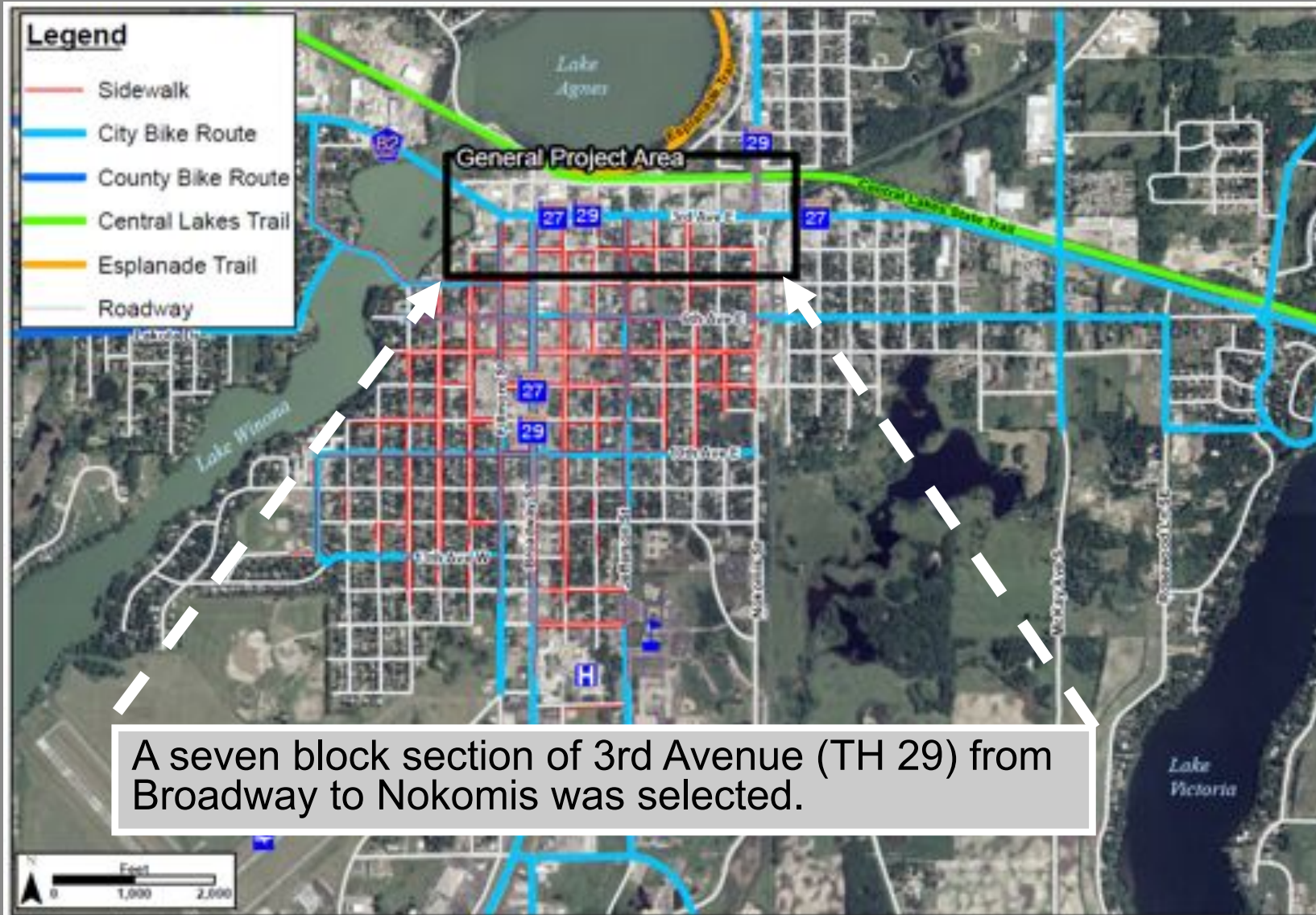
Project Background

- Mission of Active Living Douglas County & Douglas County Safe Communities and strengths of each organization
- Each organization independently identified a stretch of roadway in downtown Alexandria as unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross through community assessment
- A Technical Committee, comprised of representation from both organizations and other key stakeholders, was established to provide direction

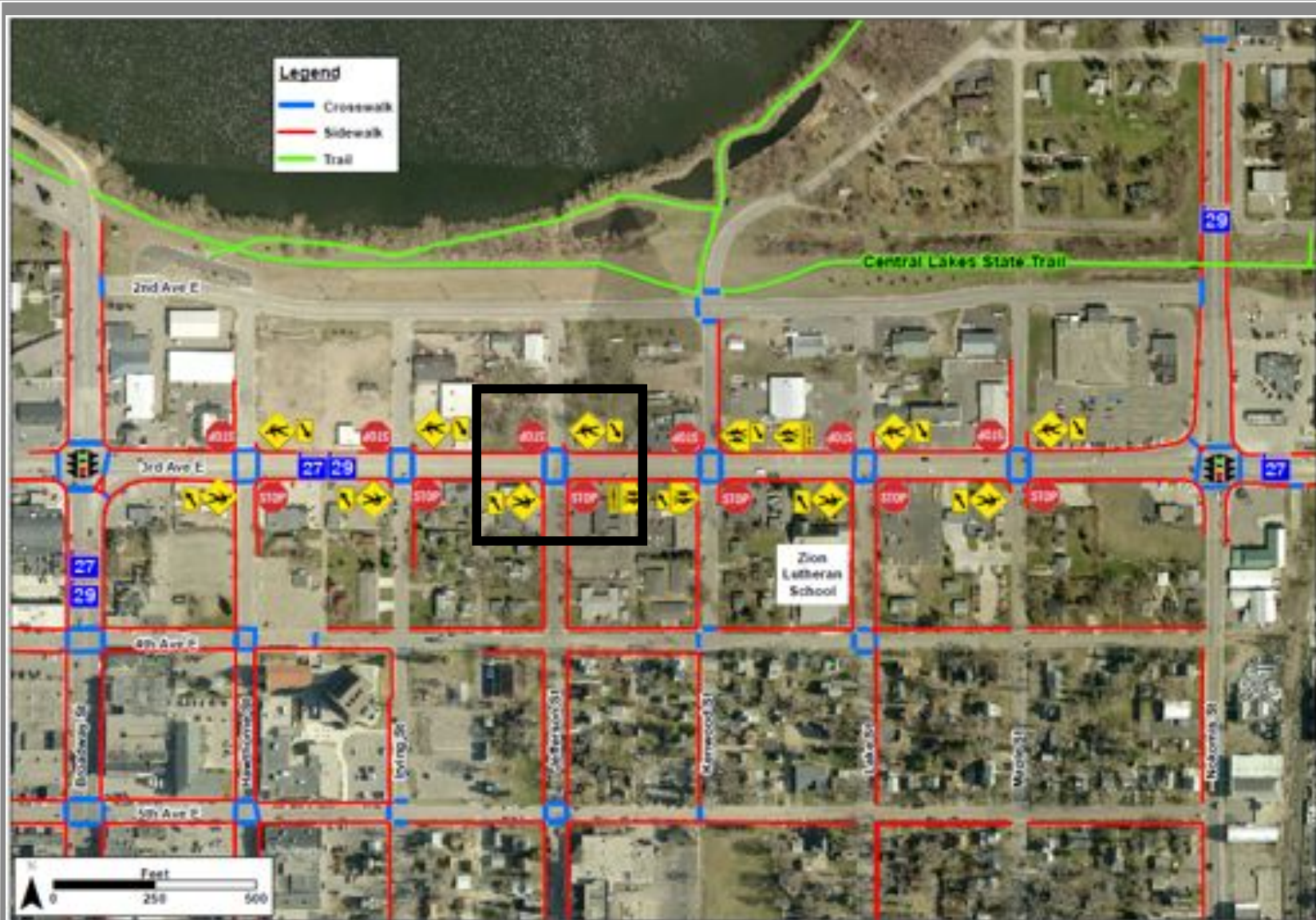
Technical Committee

- Comprised representatives from:
 - Douglas County
 - City of Alexandria
 - Mn/DOT
 - Business Representatives
 - Citizens
- All partners shared the overall objective of improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists
- Each project partner had unique objectives for the corridor

Existing Pedestrian & Bicycle Network



Location Characteristics



3rd Avenue (TH 29) Characteristics

- 17,000 vehicles per day
- 7 blocks between signalized pedestrian crossings
- 5 traffic lanes
- 60' curb to curb distance
- 68' effective crosswalk distance
- 19 second crossing time
- Acceptable crossing gaps are infrequent
- Community indicated that crossing 3rd Avenue is difficult



Central Lakes Trail

- 55 miles long scenic paved trail between Fergus Falls and Osakis
- Valuable asset for residents and visitors
- Walking, Biking, Running, In-Line Skating
- ADA / Wheelchair Accessible
- Free



Objectives - Douglas County

- Promote active living and healthy lifestyles
- Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience
- Connect downtown Alexandria with Central Lakes Trail

Objectives - City of Alexandria

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle safety across 3rd Avenue (TH 29)
- Connect downtown Alexandria with Central Lakes Trail
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to destinations and attractions
- Connect the two sides of 3rd Avenue

Objectives - Mn/DOT

- Maintain or improve mobility on 3rd Avenue (TH 29)
- Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing 3rd Avenue (TH 29)
- Adhere to established engineering standards
- Promote alternative modes of transportation

Alternatives Development

- Developed catalog of bicycle, pedestrian, and traffic calming techniques
- Discussed applicability to project objectives
- Discussed applicability to project area
- Identified primary measures to employ

Concept Characteristics

- Collaborative process to develop three concepts
- Common elements include:
 - Pedestrian refuge island
 - Pedestrian signal or beacon
 - High visibility crosswalk
 - Signage
 - Removing one or more turning movement

Comprehensive Concept



- Best accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Eliminates 6 turning movements
- Highest cost
- City concerned about reduced property access
- Mn/DOT concerned about maintenance

Concept Refinement



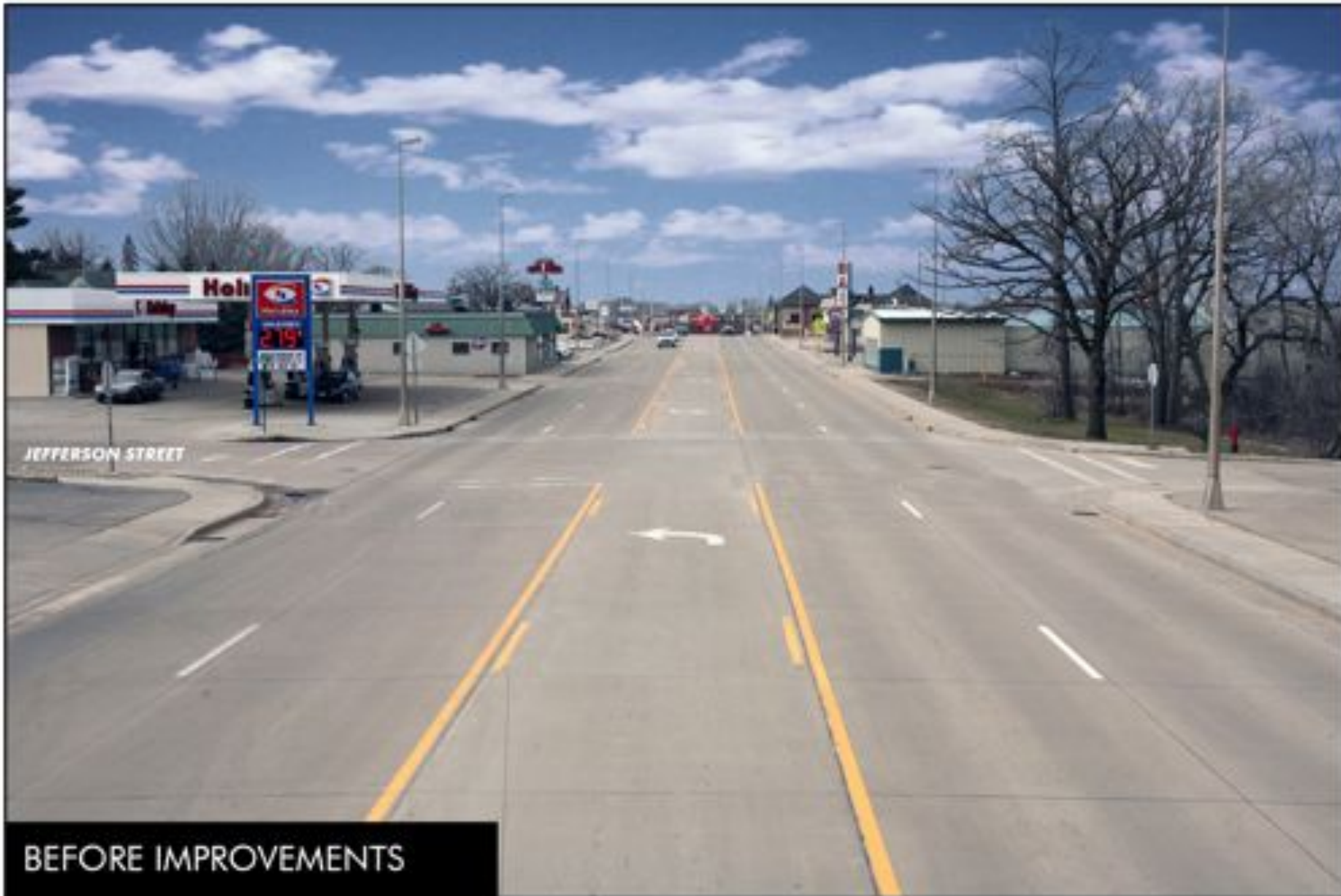
- Eliminates one enhanced crosswalk and pedestrian refuge
- Eliminates bicycle pass-through
- Eliminates 5 turning movements
- Allows greater automobile mobility
- Mn/DOT concerned about maintenance
- City concerned about reduced property access
- Mid-Range cost

Final Concept



- Eliminates 1 turning movement
- Least impact on automobile mobility
- Incorporates signage, enhanced crosswalks, and pedestrian refuge island
- Provides substantial improvement for pedestrians
- Lowest cost, easiest to implement

Before Improvements



After Improvements



Benefits of the Iterative Compromise Process

- Established an increased level of communication between agencies
- Fostered a greater understanding between agencies of the priorities and objectives of each agency
- Resulted in a concept that all agencies helped create
- Set the stage for funding administered by Mn/DOT
- Resulted in on-the-ground improvements (scheduled 2014)
- Established a working relationship for future projects, including the Broadway Streetscape project through downtown Alexandria

Thank you!

