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Refusing to settle for “good enough”

The City of Byron, MN is feistier than it seems. Like a kid brother living in the shadow of a popular sibling, it wants to shine a little brighter, strut a little prouder than neighboring Rochester. With words like “flourishing,” “vigorous” and “thriving” near the head of its website, it’s certainly talking the talk.

But Byron can walk the walk too, as it showed with a recent upgrade to 13th Street NW. An old-fashioned gravel road that frustrated travelers for years, the road also coated nearby new homes with a layer of prairie dust that just didn’t match the image that Byron and its residents have for themselves.

While paving an old gravel road is easy, Byron sets the bar higher than that. This new link in the transportation chain includes concrete curbs and gutters, modern street lighting and a 10-foot wide bike path that gives kids a safe route to school and provides a vital connection in a growing pedestrian network.



The old gravel road had simply been laid across the gently rolling hills of southern Minnesota, probably not long after the town was originally platted in 1864. But the 13th Street hill, just ahead of the bus depot for the school district, caused sight lines to be dangerously limited for the traffic that turns in and out through the day. After comparing the existing angles to safe sight lines, WHKS engineers decided to shave almost five feet off the crest of the hill, making the street and access to the bus barn safe for everyone.



Byron isn’t just feisty, it’s fast growing and progressive and it considers improved street and pedestrian networks to be important. The 13th Street improvements are the next link in the transportation backbone of this flourishing city.

