

12. Implementation

Chapter 12 is organized into the following sections:

- A. Overview
- B. How to Use the Plan
- C. Actions
- D. Implementation Matrix

Purpose:

The purpose of the Implementation Chapter is to provide guidance for maintaining accountability, monitoring activities, creating appropriate development regulations and procedures, and involving the community in implementation of the Plan.

A. Overview

The Northfield Comprehensive Plan process engaged hundreds of residents and businesses in a broad, collaborative effort to develop a Comprehensive Plan. Once the Plan is finalized the community will need to shift its energies towards successful implementation of the strategies it has identified.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for maintaining accountability, monitoring activities, creating appropriate development regulations and procedures, and involving the community in implementation of the Plan.

A total of 53 key objectives and 279 strategies have been identified to support implementation. This chapter recommends a number of actions to support effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Northfield. Following this Introduction it is divided into the following sections.

B. How to Use this Plan summarizes the basic steps for how the Plan should be used to affect public and private decision-making in Northfield.

C. Actions outlines six objectives and a series of supporting actions that will facilitate implementation of the Plan. The objectives touch upon six broad implementation considerations:

- Involve a wide variety of stakeholders in implementation. Residents and other stakeholders must be actively involved with implementing the Plan.
- Monitor and evaluate implementation. Implementation will be monitored on a regular basis, including evaluating, reporting results, promoting successes, and maintaining public and media relations.
- Provide resources for implementing the Plan. The City will to the greatest extent possible secure and allocate the necessary funding to implement priorities, especially through updating the Capital Improvement Plan and annual departmental budgets.
- Develop appropriate regulatory tools to implement the Plan. The City will update key development regulations and processes for plan review.
- Require concurrence with the Plan. The City will require concurrence with the Comprehensive Plan in rezoning or development approvals, and call for written

interpretations of decisions in order to create a public record for consistency.

- Since the Plan is an active document that is to be referred to on a continual basis, the City will amend, modify and update the Plan as necessary. The Planning Commission will review the Plan as necessary to accomplish this objective.

D. Implementation Matrix organizes the Comprehensive Plan strategies into a simplified chart format.

B. How to Use the Plan

The Plan is to be used on a regular basis as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, land intensification, capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting the community. The following is a summary of how it should be used.

1. Annual Work Programs and Budgets

Individual departments and administrators should be cognizant of the recommendations of the Plan when preparing annual work programs and budgets. Several strategies can be implemented in this way.

2. Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals, including rezoning and subdivision plats, should be a central means of implementing the Plan.

3. Capital Improvement Plan

The annual, five-year, and 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should be consistent with the Plan's land use policies and infrastructure recommendations. New improvements that are not reflected in the Plan – and which could dramatically impact the Plan's land use recommendations – should necessitate at least a minor update to the Plan.

4. Economic Incentives

Economic incentives should be reviewed in light of recommendations of the Plan. These incentives should be integrated with other Plan policies to ensure consistency, particularly with the Plan's land use recommendations.

5. Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the recommendations of the Plan in their planning and

investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their development-related deliberations, such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. Property owners and developers should have an understanding of the Comprehensive Plan when submitting proposals to public bodies.

6. Future Interpretation

The City Council should call upon the Planning Commission to provide a written interpretation of major items that are unclear or which are not fully addressed in the Plan. The Planning Commission may call upon outside experts and other groups for advice.

C. Actions

Outlined below are the actions to support the implementation of the Plan.

Objective 1:

IM1. Involve a wide variety of stakeholders in implementation.

As implementation of the Comprehensive Plan gets underway, the City will collaborate with a host of stakeholders. This will include local boards and commissions, community organizations, other units of government, and other parties with particular interest in specific objectives and strategies. Such partnerships will be critical to successful implementation of the Plan.

IM1.A Establish a program to provide ongoing public education on the Plan.

Residents can also play an important role in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Public participation has been a significant component in the development of the Plan. A public outreach and education program should be created to provide residents with ongoing opportunities to become familiar with the Plan, and to understand their role in achieving the goals in the Plan. The City's website will be an important source of information and interaction.

IM1.B Provide ongoing educational opportunities on innovative planning and development practices for the Planning Commission and other officials.

The Plan calls for some innovative development concepts. City staff should organize educational programs and materials that provide examples from other

communities. Staff, the Planning Commission, and elected officials should conduct site visits to other communities to observe firsthand development projects that may serve as appropriate examples for Northfield.

IM1.C Provide final copies of the Comprehensive Plan on the City’s website and at the Public Library.

Upon completion and approval, final copies of the Comprehensive Plan will be made available via the City website. The purpose of this strategy is to make the Plan available to residents as part of the education and outreach process. Making these documents available on the website will also allow developers and property owners to become familiar with the Plan and its development recommendations.

IMI.D Design and implement a site plan review procedure for the administration and implementation of the new hybrid form-based code regulations.

Implementation of a hybrid code will initially require a review process that includes City staff and the Planning Commission, but also could include public participation through a charette process, for example. The public process elicits design controls that are supported and desired by the community, and creates a code understood and trusted by residents.

Objective 2:

IM2. Monitor and Evaluate Implementation.

Implementation of the Plan will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis. This will ensure that the Plan is successfully followed and will result in desired changes in the community. Specific activities will include issuing an annual report and publicizing examples of successful implementation.

IM2.A Prepare annual report that summarizes the status of all actions.

An annual report will be prepared by the City Planner that summarizes the status of implementation of all strategies. It will highlight key strategies that have been completed over the course of the year. It will also identify any delays in implementation that need to be addressed by the community. Changes or additions to the Plan will also be highlighted in the report.

IM2.B Issue summary of annual report to the media and public.

The annual report will be issued to the media and general public in a summary form. This may include preparing promotional brochures and information packets. Any material that is produced should be made available on the City’s website.

IM2.C Present the annual report at a public meeting.

The annual report will be presented by the City Planner at a Planning Commission meeting. The meeting will focus on Plan accomplishments, as well as any changes and additions that have been made to the Plan.

IM2.D Issue news releases that promote significant accomplishments relative to a specific strategy.

As significant accomplishments occur relative to a specific strategy, news releases will be issued to publicize successes.

Objective 3:

IM3. Provide Resources for Implementing the Plan.

The Plan identifies the need for resources to implement certain strategies. For some strategies new resources will need to be identified; for others it may be an issue of reallocating existing resources.

IM3.A Update the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) based on the Plan.

The CIP will be updated in line with the Comprehensive Plan. A CIP is a fundamental management document that outlines projected capital needs, funding estimates and sources and timeframes for completion. In updating the CIP, the City should monitor implementation to ensure that they are consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

IM3.B Prepare annual departmental work programs and budgets with awareness of the Plan.

Departmental work programs and budgets will demonstrate consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

IM3.C Identify and secure funds for prioritized initiatives. (This could include grants, tax measures, bonds, and private investments)

Funding efforts should focus specifically on those strategies that the community has identified as being high priority. Funding may come from the City, other governmental sources (state, federal), tax measures, private sector investment, or a combination thereof. The community should seek to maximize the use of non-municipal resources. This strategy should occur in line with annual budget cycles.

IM3.D Award economic and regulatory incentives based on consistency with the Plan.

The City will determine appropriate economic and regulatory incentives that could be instituted to achieve critical development, redevelopment, and land intensification objectives, as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

IM3.E Monitor and ensure fiscal accountability.

The City will monitor and ensure fiscal accountability in undertaking all of its responsibilities, including those associated with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 4:

IM4. Develop appropriate regulatory tools to implement the Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan has identified the need for updated development regulations that are aligned with the community's land use objectives. Adopting new regulatory tools will facilitate plan implementation.

IM4.A Update the regulations as recommended in the Plan.

Northfield's development regulations will be updated as recommended in the Plan. Concurrent to preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, the City is reviewing their development regulations.

IM4.B Monitor the implementation of new regulations and correct as needed.

As new regulations are used, the outcomes will be monitored to determine if the regulations are achieving the expected results as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. If the outcomes are not as expected, the regulations will be modified as appropriate.

Objective 5:

IM5. Require Concurrence with the Plan.

Future decisions in the community regarding development, capital improvements, and budgeting will concur with the applicable provisions of the CIP and the Comprehensive Plan.

IM5.A Require concurrence in rezonings and other major development approvals.

Major development approvals and rezonings will concur with the applicable policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Actions by boards, commissions and staff will document such concurrence in all decisions. A summary will be prepared at the end of each year.

IM5.B Require interpretation of Plan to be in writing.

Upon request, interpretation of the policies of the Plan should be prepared in writing to create a public record. This will ensure consistency in applying these planning documents in day-to-day situations. Such interpretations made by the Planning Commission or City Council will be shared with other entities to determine concurrence on the interpretation. This may be coordinated by staff or addressed at a joint work session.

IM5.C Require staff reports to reference the Plan.

All staff reports related to policy recommendations, annual work programs and budgets shall reference relevant Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

IM5.D Establish a procedure to promote productive and full communications between the Planning Commission and the City Council regarding interpretation of the Plan.

Systematic communications between the two bodies regarding their respective interpretations of the Plan and regulations must be clear and frequent, particularly in the initial period. A procedure to determine similarities and differences in interpretation as applied to individual cases will be critical to a productive, constructive implementation.

Objective 6:**IM6. Update the Plan as necessary**

Since the Plan is an active document that is to be referred to on a continual basis, the City will amend, modify and update the Plan as necessary. The Planning Commission will review the Plan as necessary to accomplish this objective.

IM6.A Design the Planning process.

The Planning Commission, with City staff assistance, will design the Planning process. They will also work with staff to determine the necessary resources for undertaking the update and recommending it to the City Council. The City Council will allocate the resources as necessary.

IM6.B Prepare an updated Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Commission will lead the process to update the Comprehensive Plan. The process should incorporate public involvement similar to the effort to prepare this Plan. Other aspects of the process shall be defined as well. The total process for completing and adopting the update should take less than 18 months.

D. Implementation Matrix

Community Identity	Objective / Strategy
CI 1	Continue to preserve Northfield’s rural heritage.
CI 1.1	Preserve the scenic quality of the rural landscape by defining the edge of the community and maintain the rural character of roadways on the edges of the community.
CI 1.2	Preserve, protect and enhance rural heritage preservation sites in collaboration with surrounding jurisdictions.
CI 1.3	Support small-scale, farm-to-table programs (such as a farmers’ market) to promote the health of the local agricultural economy.
CI 1.4	Ensure that all development, redevelopment and expansion be compatible with the desirable features of the natural and man-made environment.
CI 2	Strengthen downtown as an historical and cultural center of the community.
CI 2.1	Maintain and enhance existing public spaces and create new public gathering places for social interaction.
CI 2.2	Identify strategic locations to more effectively integrate the Cannon River into the fabric of the downtown, while also protecting its environmental quality and enhancing its visual appearance.
CI 2.3	Create new educational, artistic, cultural and recreational activities along the Cannon River in and around the downtown.
CI 2.4	Identify and designate an arts and cultural district in the downtown.
CI 2.5	Support existing and new local businesses that provide dining, retail, arts and entertainment.
CI 3	Preserve historic sites and structures.
CI 3.1	Work with the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission to create a priority list for designating buildings (those that aren’t already listed), structures and districts on local, state and or national historic registers.
CI 3.2	Provide economic incentives and design flexibility to aid in the restoration and long-term economic vitality of historically significant buildings in the Downtown.
CI 3.3	Consider becoming an officially designated Mainstreet program by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, or incorporating Mainstreet’s principles into existing economic development, historic preservation, or community planning programs.
CI 3.4	Cooperate with appropriate community groups, such as the Northfield Historical Society, in protecting and enhancing structures in the historic neighborhoods, and improving the general appearance of these areas.
CI 4	Encourage a traditional development pattern.
CI 4.1	Guide new development to be compatible with, and/or expand, on the existing grid network (see Figure 3.3).
CI 4.2	Provide for a mix of uses to create new neighborhood centers as new development occurs (see Figure 4.6).
CI 4.3	Ensure new development provides for areas that contribute to the public realm, such as plazas and other public gathering places.
CI 4.4	Require new neighborhoods to create neighborhood-scaled streets, with street trees and sidewalks (see Figure 4.4).

CI 4.5	Regulate the placement of buildings onsite by regulating short front yard setbacks to orient buildings to the street/public realm (see Figure 4.4).
CI 4.6	Encourage architectural styles and scales that contain a relationship to the overall community identity.
CI 5	Improve the entry points (gateways) into the community.
CI 5.1	Create gateways at the north and south Hwy 3 entryways near city limits.
CI 5.2	When appropriate, include attractive landscaping and public art at identified gateways.
CI 5.3	Modify the overlying zoning districts at targeted gateways to create a defined streetscape with building fronts oriented to the street and parking to the rear of the structure.
CI 5.4	Work with the State transportation department to implement traffic calming techniques and pedestrian-friendly crossings on Hwy 3 and Hwy 19.
CI 6	Continue to host and sponsor local arts and cultural activities and festivals.
CI 6.1	Develop initiatives in collaboration with the Arts and Culture Commission to promote the arts and cultural qualities of Northfield.
CI 6.2	Solicit input from members of the local design community when building or renovating public facilities to enhance the quality of these facilities and grounds.
CI 6.3	Create opportunities, in collaboration with local students and Northfield arts organizations, for the public to contribute to sense of place (e.g., public art, landscaping, and outdoor activity areas).
CI 6.4	Create a community seal to be used in a wide range of public improvements.
CI 6.5	Explore regulations to implement a “percent-for-arts” requirement in community-funded projects.
CI 6.6	Develop an “artist in residence” program in the public works department.
CI 6.7	Incorporate public art into the design of existing and public places including community buildings and infrastructure.
CI 7	Continue to support local schools and colleges.
CI 7.1	Coordinate with the school district on population growth and residential development trends in order to reserve sites for future school facilities as population growth may require.
CI 7.2	Cooperate with the local colleges to minimize negative impacts of parking and traffic on Northfield neighborhoods.
CI 7.3	Collaborate with the local colleges to provide the overall community with quality public programs and quality open spaces.
Land Use	Objective / Strategy
LU 1	Protect and enhance the small town character.
LU 1.1	Create regulations that yield commercial and office structures that reflect local vernacular (and minimize franchise/corporate structures).
LU 1.2	Create regulations that require coordination and blending of public realm/streetscape with new developments.
LU 1.3	Encourage the development of identifiable neighborhood districts within the community.
LU 1.4	Create regulations that allow for and encourage appropriately-scaled places for structured and casual interaction.
LU 1.5	Maintain the rural character of selected roads (see “Road” graphic in Figure 4.3). A road is typically a local slow movement thoroughfare for rural areas with rural characteristics including no curb and gutter.
LU 1.6	Annually monitor the land use of residential as compared to commercial and industrial land uses as shown in Table 4.1 and Map 4.1, as a means to accomplish the overall planning objectives of the city.

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LU 1.7	The City Council should determine, through a process involving the Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority, and citizens, what would constitute an acceptable balance between residential and commercial/industrial uses. This balance could be measured by analyzing tax revenues, jobs in Northfield versus commuters, and other factors. Once the definition of acceptable balance is determined, the City Council should prepare policies and ordinances to bring about the desired balance.
LU 2	The downtown core is an important aspect of community life.
LU 2.1	Promote general merchandise retailers, financial institutions, office developments and entertainment uses within the downtown core. Create new opportunities for businesses by reinvesting in the infrastructure and public spaces in and around the downtown.
LU 2.2	Provide and support new opportunities for residents to live in or near the downtown.
LU 2.3	Adopt a shared parking ordinance to facilitate new development in the downtown.
LU 2.4	Encourage pedestrian paths and trail connections from commercial uses to adjoining residential developments and places of employment.
LU 2.5	Encourage more compact housing as a component of infill, redevelopment or land intensification projects.
LU 2.6	Integrate the Cannon River, where feasible, into downtown development.
LU 3	Encourage a compact development pattern, and support infill, redevelopment and land intensification.
LU 3.1	Create incentives to encourage infill, redevelopment, and land intensification.
LU 3.2	Work collaboratively to identify structures and sites for redevelopment, intensification or reuse.
LU 3.3	The Economic Development Authority (EDA), with the assistance of City staff, will prepare a marketing program for targeted structures and/or sites for infill, redevelopment, and land intensification.
LU 3.4	Establish priorities for capital improvements that are directed toward infill sites and mature neighborhoods.
LU 3.5	Facilitate redevelopment of uses that do not fit the development pattern of downtown (i.e. single story uses surrounded by parking), but which with better design could increase density and provide more commercial, office or housing opportunities.
LU 4	Facilitate the creation of residential areas with strong neighborhood qualities.
LU 4.1	Require major subdivisions to complete a master plan, which incorporates the principles of traditional neighborhood design and addresses the environment, transportation system, park and open space system, and provision of municipal utilities.
LU 4.2	Permit small-scale neighborhood commercial services as part of master plan developments.
LU 4.3	Create standards for developments with neighborhood qualities.
LU 4.4	Create regulations that require high-quality pedestrian streets with sidewalks, street trees, and adequate lighting, where appropriate.
LU 4.5	Create regulations that allow for or require a mix of housing types within new and existing neighborhoods that are also compatible with development patterns in these neighborhoods.
LU 4.6	Permit accessory structures as residential housing units (granny flats or mother-in-law apartments) within existing neighborhoods, especially near downtown.
LU 4.7	Encourage connections among neighborhoods via roads, sidewalks and multi-use paths.
LU 5	Guide new commercial/retail and office developments in a mixed use pattern.
LU 5.1	Encourage small-scale retail and service commercial uses to locate in the downtown area.
LU 5.2	Create regulations that allow for mixed-use commercial developments.
LU 5.3	Create regulations that require future commercial developments to provide public space.

LU 5.4	Create design standards that orient commercial buildings in a way that helps to define the streetscape.
LU 5.5	Regulate additional “big box” and other large-format retail establishments to minimize their fiscal, transportation and infrastructure impacts. “Big box” establishments should also be compatible with the form and context of the area in which it is located.
LU 6	Be a good steward of the natural environment.
LU 6.1	When appropriate, establish development patterns that respect the natural environment by mandating conservation subdivisions.
LU 6.2	Prepare educational material on alternative development choices for protecting natural areas — for the public and development community.
LU 6.3	Modify existing regulations and create new policies that mandate environmentally-sensitive and sustainable planning and building practices, as identified and defined in the City’s Natural Resources Inventory Final Report adopted in 2005.
LU 6.4	Identify and prioritize land for open space preservation.
LU 6.5	Create a program to acquire open space and environmentally significant lands.
LU 6.6	Require dedication of existing significant tree stands and critical riparian habitat as part of the subdivision process for major subdivisions as identified in the Natural Resources Inventory.
LU 6.7	Conduct coordination meetings with neighboring jurisdictions on protecting and linking open space, especially as pertains to Rice Creek with Dundas and Bridgewater Township.
LU 6.8	Improve buffers along the Cannon River to enhance the natural qualities of the river. For the areas in and around downtown, care should be taken to improve the natural qualities of the river, while still respecting the existing built environment.
LU 7	Support local agriculture.
LU 7.1	Support and create opportunities for cooperative agricultural production to provide local residents with quality local foods by creating areas for farmers’ markets and community foods festivals.
LU 7.2	Encourage and/or support the dedication of underutilized or vacant sites that are not developable for community gardens.
LU 7.3	As part of the subdivision approval process, require new developments on the fringe to educate future residents of that neighborhood about the impacts of nearby agricultural operations to avoid future conflicts among uses. Examples of impacts from agricultural operations that may affect residents include: noxious odors from livestock, noise from the use of heavy machinery and stormwater issues.
LU 7.4	Encourage the use of conservation easements as a means to preserve productive agricultural land, greenways and environmentally significant areas.
LU 7.5	Work with other units of government, including Rice and Dakota Counties, to preserve agricultural land uses.
LU 8	Provide locations that facilitate economic development opportunities.
LU 8.1	Identify sites for commercial and industrial development.
LU 8.2	Identify sites for new office development.
LU 8.3	Facilitate the development of new business parks.
LU 8.4	Ensure land served by public infrastructure is available to accommodate future economic growth.
LU 8.5	Create architectural and site controls for development on Hwy 19 and Hwy 3, in order to present a high quality image for the character of the city.
LU 9	Improve transportation choices and efficiency.
LU 9.1	Incorporate “park once” site design requirements in areas that call for mixed use development.
LU 9.2	Expand the multi-use path system to connect neighborhoods, districts and corridors.
LU 9.3	Require site design principles that encourage the use of public transit (i.e., on street sidewalks and trails, parking lots at side or rear of buildings, sidewalk connections from the street to the building entrances). Sources of public transit include bus or vanpools from colleges, nearby towns, a possible future commuter rail station, taxi service, or the Northfield Transit service.

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LU 9.4	Improve walking and biking travel patterns by improving connections to the Northfield trail system, improved street crossings and foot-bridges.
LU 10	Improve the development review process.
LU 10.1	Improve the clarity and efficiency of the development review process.
LU 10.2	Seek acknowledgement and support of the Plan and its implementation strategies from counties and townships.
LU 10.3	Support multi-jurisdictional review of policy decisions affecting land-use, especially with Dundas.
LU 10.4	Streamline the development review process for projects that incorporate high-quality environmental and neighborhood standards.
LU 11	Monitor the effectiveness of the development regulations.
LU 11.1	Update the development regulations to be consistent with the recommendations in the Plan.
LU 11.2	Create new development regulations that are based on form and are prescriptive in nature, stating what is desired by the city.
LU 11.3	Periodically interview members of the development community to identify short falls in the regulations.
Environmental Resources	Objective / Strategy
ER 1	Develop and approve a city-wide sustainability plan.
ER 1.1	Promote education about energy and resource conservation in the community.
ER 1.2	Incentives should be developed to promote energy efficiency in the design, construction and operation of residential, commercial and industrial buildings.
ER 1.3	Natural resource conservation will be incorporated into the design and construction of residential, commercial and industrial development.
ER 1.4	New development will enhance conservation of surface water resources, including management of storm water runoff.
ER 2	Protect and enhance environmentally significant areas.
ER 2.1	Maintain standards and regulations to control development on steep slopes (generally those over 12 percent) to control soil erosion and sedimentation and to minimize the removal of natural vegetation.
ER 2.2	Preserve sufficient natural open space and greenway corridors, as identified in the 2008 Park System Plan and the Natural Resources Inventory, in order to provide habitat for wildlife and provide scenic and recreational qualities for the community.
ER 2.3	Encourage planting of native vegetation and development of habitat (such as native species, trees and grasses with deep root structures) within buffer areas and along streams and waterways as identified in the Greater Northfield Greenway System Action Plan and the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI), and educate residents about the benefits of using native plant species in residential landscaping.
ER 2.4	The NRI should be consulted when development is proposed to verify the presence of any significant natural resources. Also, land use decisions in natural areas should consider the connectivity of a given natural area to other nearby areas. The loss of lower quality natural areas can affect the ecological function of other nearby natural areas, including higher-quality areas. For this reason, the criteria for protecting or restoring a natural area should not be limited to the quality rank or restoration potential, but should also consider the location of a natural area in the local landscape and the potential utilization of the area by local wildlife.

ER 3	Protect and enhance water quality.
ER 3.1	As the City looks at infiltration practices in stormwater management, care will be taken to locate these features away from shallow bedrock areas that could increase the risk of groundwater contamination.
ER 3.2	Protect and enhance the quality of groundwater to minimize the potential of contamination to the drinking water supply.
ER 3.3	Protect and enhance the quality of surface waters including the Cannon River and its creek tributaries. The Surface Water Management Plan identifies current strategies that should be updated periodically to remain current with regulations and acceptable practices. The City may consult with other educational and technical agencies and/or organizations to achieve this strategy.
ER 3.4	The City will cooperate with Bridgewater Township, the City of Dundas, the Minnesota DNR and any other regulatory agency to manage the regional creeks, especially Rice Creek, which is a trout stream.
ER 4	Conserve energy in public and private sector development efforts.
ER 4.1	Encourage the use of energy conservation technologies and techniques, and promote the exploration and innovation of new methods to conserve energy.
ER 4.2	Strive to build or renovate city-owned buildings to meet LEED standards.
ER 4.3	Building design standards will allow for and accommodate changing solar technologies.
ER 4.4	Evaluate the recommendations of the Energy Task Force and promote implementation of the strategies as appropriate.
ER 5	Promote the reduction of solid waste generated.
ER 5.1	Promote programs to reduce the amount of solid waste generated in the City and to increase the use of recyclable, reusable or biodegradable materials.
ER 5.2	The City will work with its contracted waste haulers to provide volume pricing that encourages the reduction of waste.
ER 5.3	The City will develop programs that promote and facilitate the reuse of building and construction materials in demolition, remodeling and new construction projects in Northfield in consultation with regional conservation groups such as the Green Institute's Re-Use Center in Minneapolis.
ER 6	Minimize the negative consequences of hazardous materials.
ER 6.1	The City will review its use of hazardous materials and substitute safer alternatives wherever possible.
ER 6.2	Educate Northfield businesses and residents on the storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials.
ER 6.3	Promote organic pest management policies and objectives, including establishing a baseline inventory and reduction in the use of synthetic chemicals on City-owned properties.
ER 7	Work toward the goal of maintaining or improving air quality in the community.
ER 7.1	City will evaluate its current ordinances and policies that affect air quality and adopt ordinances and policies, as applicable.
ER 7.2	Plan and implement a multi-faceted program of education and regulation regarding the use of indoor fireplaces and wood and pellet burning stoves, and outdoor wood fired boilers, to protect residents from pollutants and unhealthy emissions from airborne toxins and fine particulate matter.
ER 7.3	Explore the possibility of incentives to encourage the use of high efficiency carbon neutral stoves.
ER 7.4	Educate businesses and residents on alternatives that can provide better air quality, such as encouraging the planting of perennials and groundcover or reducing lawn size, which leads to less frequency of use of gasoline-powered lawn mowers.
ER 8	Minimize negative noise impacts within the community.
ER 8.1	City will review ordinances and policies related to noise to see if improvements can be made.

ER 9	Increase the density of the community's urban forest.
ER 9.1	The City will develop an urban forest management policy that addresses protection or replacement of significant trees on developed property and all land scheduled for development. This management policy will also establish standards for tree species and location within and near public right-of-way and easements.
ER 10	The City will remain responsive to issues of climate change and will act to reduce Northfield's contribution to climate change.
ER 10.1	Continue to act on its commitment to the Cities for Climate Protection campaign begun in 2005.
ER 10.2	Develop land use policies to manage and reduce urban heat island effects, including promoting shading of streets and parking lots with more trees.
ER 10.3	Promote the reduction of green house gas emissions at residential, industrial and commercial scales.
ER 10.4	Encourage conservation standards at residential, industrial and commercial scales.
Sewer & Water Resources	Objective / Strategy
SW 1	Provide potable water, sanitary waste collection and treatment, and surface water management to existing and future development areas in the city in an environmentally sensitive, financially equitable and fiscally responsible manner.
SW 1.1	Provide a Level of Service to existing and future areas as defined in the Public Water and Sanitary Sewer sections above.
SW 1.2	Maintain an infrastructure replacement program for the city, as detailed in the Capital Improvement Plan.
SW 1.3	For orderly expansion of public services, new developments will be located in areas contiguous to existing development within the city limits.
SW 1.4	Address legal limitations, fairness, property benefits, and responsible use of public funds when financing public utility extensions that reinforce the City's growth and redevelopment objectives. Priority will be given to infill and redevelopment of the existing urbanized area to maximize efficiency of the existing water and sewer infrastructure systems.
SW 1.5	Provide the full range of public services to subdivisions at the time of development, including storm sewer, sanitary sewer, public water, sidewalks, parks and streets.
SW 1.6	Continue to implement and update, where necessary, the City's Well Head Protection program.
SW 1.7	Carefully evaluate and limit development in areas that require private sewer and water systems.
SW 1.8	Undertake a sewer capacity study for the Wastewater Treatment Plant sometime between 2011 and 2015.
SW 1.9	Carefully evaluate development that requires high levels of water and sewer services.
SW 1.10	Periodically review agreements with sewer system partners for any needed updating.
SW 2	Manage water resources so that the beneficial uses of wetlands, ponds and streams remain available to the existing and future community (sustainability).
SW 2.1	Require Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Plans, as described in the 2007 Surface Water Management Plan, for projects that may have an impact on local surface water.
SW 2.2	Work with the counties, townships, watershed organizations, citizens and upstream landowners (outside the city's jurisdiction) to encourage upstream pollutant reduction similar to those being used within city limits.
SW 2.3	In new developments, redevelopments, and expansion projects encourage creative stormwater management solutions that make use of the most current stormwater management strategies including the use of Best Management Practices and Low Impact Development techniques.
SW 2.4	Give special attention to surface water management runoff controls in projects that might affect Rice Creek and the Rice Creek Watersheds.

SW 2.5	Evaluate and update current storm water fees and consider other funding mechanisms such as a trunk sewer fee, pond fee, and/or a sewer availability charge.
SW 3	Heighten community awareness of sustainability issues through education and training.
SW 3.1	Educate the public and business community on the use of potable water conservation practices (such as water saver faucets, yard watering bans and strategic landscaping).
SW 3.2	Develop and implement a public education and outreach program for all ages for stormwater in accordance to the requirements of Phase II of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).
Transportation	Objective / Strategy
TR 1	Complete the revision of the Transportation Plan in 2008. Effectively manage the transportation needs of a vibrant, growing town and the surrounding area for residents, businesses and visitors.
TR 1.1	Develop and implement corridor design guidelines that enable safe and efficient travel for all modes of transportation within the context of the natural and developed environment.
TR 1.2	Ensure adequate access into the downtown area for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles to support public activities and events, private business uses and residences.
TR 1.3	Maintain and, where possible, improve access to business concentrations that enable successful business practices while managing safe traffic operations.
TR 1.4	Promote multi-modal transportation uses and principles throughout the city.
TR 1.5	Establish bicycling as a sustainable, safe and convenient, year-round mode of transportation in Northfield.
TR 1.6	Enhance and expand public transit services to ensure mobility for all residents and visitors.
TR 1.7	Require local street and trail connectivity between adjacent residential neighborhoods and other land uses for newly developing areas.
TR 1.8	Create opportunities to improve existing local street and trail connectivity between adjacent residential neighborhoods and other land uses.
TR 2	Facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services within and through the city on a safe, convenient, coordinated, and fiscally-responsible network of routes using a variety of transportation modes.
TR 2.1	Provide a transportation system for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians balancing safety and fiscal resources.
TR 2.2	Establish a balanced roadway network based on the principal of roadway functional classification.
TR 2.3	Provide adequate roadway and intersection capacity to accommodate anticipated growth of the community and resulting forecasted traffic volumes.
TR 2.4	Establish a pedestrian walkway system connecting residential, educational, commercial/retail, employment and recreational destinations throughout the city.
TR 2.5	Establish trails and on-street routes for the use of bicycles as a year-round mode of transportation.
TR 2.6	Determine and enhance designated public service routes to provide priorities to emergency, civil and transit services.
TR 3	Balance transportation needs with the Land Use Principles identified in Chapter 4 of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation

TR 3.1	Establish a transportation system vision to provide the necessary transportation network to support the density and type of existing and future land uses.
TR 3.2	Enhance the small-town character of the city through multi-modal transportation choice and context-sensitive corridor design.
TR 3.3	Balance the transportation system needs with the potential impacts and affects upon the natural features of the community.
TR 3.4	Enhance the community by providing convenient access to natural features and opportunities to support active and healthy lifestyles.
TR 3.5	Encourage interconnected development patterns to create more convenient travel options for residents, foster a sense of neighborhood and maintain acceptable traffic volume levels.
TR 4	Implement the transportation vision through strategic funding, and objective and definitive decision making, with the collaboration of surrounding jurisdictions.
TR 4.1	Establish concentrated and consistent support for local and regional political leadership to achieve components of the transportation system vision.
TR 4.2	Empower City staff to pursue state and federal transportation funding and evaluate non-traditional transportation funding mechanisms.
TR 4.3	Establish an area transportation advisory committee with the state, Rice and Dakota Counties, the City of Dundas and surrounding townships to coordinate and strategize regional transportation planning initiatives. (Hwy 19 between Northfield and I-35, Cannon River Crossing/CSAH I Preservation, NW Corridor).
TR 4.4	Plan for and preserve opportunities for necessary transportation system improvements.
TR 4.5	Achieve necessary transportation system improvements in a cost-effective, timely fashion.
TR 4.6	Establish momentum in the pursuit of the transportation system vision by periodic recognition of basic accomplishments and celebration of milestone achievements.
TR 4.7	Encourage business owners, residents and community groups to be active participants in seeking funding by contacting local, state and federal decision makers in support of transportation funding
Parks & Recreation	Objective / Strategy
PR 1	Implement a cohesive, effective and efficient comprehensive system plan.
PR 1.1	Routinely evaluate and update the 2008 Park System Plan and recreational needs of the community to ensure adequate parks, athletic facilities, open space and trails are provided.
PR 1.2	Use the 2008 Park System Plan for the purpose of guiding implementation.
PR 2	Provide residents with parks and natural areas for recreational uses, protection of the natural environment, and visual/physical buffering of land development as a means to maintain the sense of place, ambiance, appearance and history of the community.
PR 2.1	Enhance the quality of life within the city by providing adequate parkland and natural areas to fulfill the present and future needs of residents.
PR 2.2	Use the parks, natural areas and interconnecting trail corridors as a major factor in shaping development.
PR 2.3	Maintain and enhance the natural character of the community by providing parks and natural areas.
PR 2.4	Encourage sequential growth within the city in harmony with the natural environment.
PR 3	Provide residents with a high-quality interconnected trail system for recreation and transportation as a means to tie parks and open space together.
PR 3.1	Provide a trail system that emphasizes harmony with the natural environment.

PR 3.2	Allow for relatively uninterrupted pleasure hiking, biking, and other uses to and through the City's park and open space system and developed areas.
PR 3.3	Effectively tie the various parks together into an interconnected, high-quality system and effectively tie the City trail system with those of the adjacent townships and regional park and trail system.
PR 3.4	Protect trails from future development and from vehicular traffic.
PR 4	Provide for the preservation and conservation of ecological systems and natural resources within the city.
PR 4.1	Preserve significant natural resources as open space and a highly-valued aspect of the overall open space system.
PR 4.2	Maintain and enhance the character or appeal of the community through interconnected natural open spaces.
PR 4.3	Encourage orderly and sequential growth within the community and in harmony with the natural environment.
PR 4.4	Ensure sustainable and desirable natural resource areas and ecological systems are protected and managed within the city.
PR 5	Establish an effective, ongoing means of communicating and interacting with residents about issues related to parks and recreation facilities, programs, and future development. Provide residents with opportunities to participate in recreational activities and programs throughout the City and various civic and volunteer organizations.
PR 5.1	Promote active and ongoing interaction between the City and its constituents to ensure effective recreational programming and facility development.
PR 5.2	Promote ongoing communication between the Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) and residents.
PR 5.3	Promote ongoing volunteer programs and civic and athletic/youth organizations to encourage residents and community organizations to assist in park improvements, maintenance and providing recreation programs.
PR 6	Maximize the park and recreational opportunities available to residents through the development of fair and equitable working partnerships between the City and the local recreational program providers, local school district, adjacent cities and townships, counties, churches, and civic organizations.
PR 6.1	Fairly and equitably integrate the City's park and recreation facilities with those of the other partners.
PR 6.2	Fairly and equitably integrate the City's programs with those of the other partners.
PR 7	Secure the funding necessary to carry out the mission of the 2008 Park System Plan.
PR 7.1	Define the funding options available for implementation of the 2008 Park System Plan, and to maximize the use of each source.
PR 7.2	Prepare an implementation plan that defines the relative timing and extent of acquisition and development of system components.
PR 8	Working with local recreational program providers, the City will strive to provide residents with the opportunity to participate in recreation activities and programs through well-designed, effective, and interesting recreation programs.
PR 8.1	Support local recreational providers' efforts to meet local needs, including those of children, teens, adults, elderly and the disabled.
PR 8.2	Support and encourage a wide diversity of recreation interests within the community.
PR 8.3	Work with program providers to provide adequate facilities for programmed use on a fair and equitable basis to ensure that all individuals receive reasonable access to facilities.
Community Facilities	Objective / Strategy

Implementation

CF 1	Provide key facilities that reflect the community's values and needs, and support the functioning of those who serve the public.
CF 1.1	The City's Capital Improvement Plan should include funding for future building renovations and/or new construction.
CF 1.2	The City should prioritize which facilities will be renovated and/or replaced.
CF 1.3	City-owned facilities will add to the community's sense of place through high-quality architectural design and site orientation that follows the land use principles of Chapter 4.
CF 2	For those community facilities considering expansion or relocation, ensure that new facilities have a positive impact on surrounding neighborhoods.
CF 2.1	Expansion of such facilities should be closely monitored so that facilities do not negatively impact (with excessive parking, traffic, and noise) the character of a neighborhood. New facilities should reflect, whenever possible, the character of the existing neighborhood.
CF 2.2	Locate and retain community facilities within the downtown area where appropriate and possible.
CF 2.3	Construction or renovation of publicly-owned buildings should be environmentally responsible and energy efficient.
CF 2.4	Whenever possible, the City should encourage civic uses such as schools and houses of worship to locate as part of a residential neighborhood.
Economic Development	Objective / Strategy
ED 1	The City will support existing businesses.
ED 1.1	Seek opportunities to address barriers to retention and expansion of existing businesses.
ED 1.2	Assure availability of key informational resources to support decision-making of existing businesses.
ED 1.3	Offer leveraging financial tools to strengthen businesses and promote business expansions.
ED 1.4	Adopt a regulating policy that accommodates and provides incentives for infill and redevelopment opportunities.
ED 2	The City will make sufficient land resources available for the needs of existing and future businesses in line with the strategies outlined in the 2006 Economic Development Plan.
ED 2.1	Land resources within the community that are served or can be easily served by infrastructure and are suited for commercial and industrial intensification and redevelopment will be zoned appropriately to enable full and efficient utilization.
ED 2.2	Land resources that are adjacent to the city limits of Northfield and are relatively easy to serve with the extension of infrastructure should be pursued for future commercial and industrial development.
ED 2.3	The City will support strategies of annexation that are designed to provide additional land resources for commercial and industrial development, and that are in compliance with the overall objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
ED 2.4	The areas that have been identified west of the Northfield Hospital, west of the existing industrial area and south of Hwy 19, and north of the city limits in Waterford Township along the Thye Parkway corridor should be viewed as priority areas for additional evaluation and possible annexation into the city. When these areas are considered for annexation, the City will review the requests with a Master Plan for the area.
ED 3	Expanding and revitalizing the Cannon River corridor will be a pivotal part of the strategy to maintain the historic character that is Northfield.
ED 3.1	Sites that are suitable for land infill and redevelopment/intensification along the Cannon River south of 5th Street should be identified, and strategies to encourage new investment in these areas should be pursued.
ED 3.2	Any infill and redevelopment/intensification along the Cannon River corridor should be oriented to maximize the advantage that the river corridor creates for such opportunities.

ED 3.3	<p>Development design along the Cannon River should incorporate the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A distinctive pattern of architectural and urban design elements that includes many of the design concepts that have been developed from the Downtown Streetscape Framework Plan. * Link existing pedestrian improvements, including walks and trails, with similar improvements that are required as infill and redevelopment/intensification occurs along the corridor. * A development pattern that emphasizes pedestrian scale, minimizes building setbacks, ensures the public's health and safety by protecting the floodplain, and discourages large parking areas in front of buildings.
ED 3.4	Encourage further redevelopment/intensification in downtown as a means to maintain and add to the vitality of this area. Downtown redevelopment/intensification should focus on retail uses, professional services, arts activities including opportunities for live-work development, businesses that support other businesses, and downtown housing.
ED 3.5	Establish regulations for locating neighborhood serving commercial nodes. These regulations will address the viability of the commercial node, the relation of the commercial node to the surrounding neighborhood, and strategies to prevent commercial nodes from competing with other commercial areas.
ED 4	Support the economic vitality of the community through business retention and recruitment and enhancement of tourism opportunities.
ED 4.1	Target the retention and recruitment of those industries having the highest potential for success in Northfield, as outlined in the Economic Development Plan, such as logistics, specialty manufacturing, environmental technologies, healthcare and medical, professional and technical services and information technology.
ED 4.2	Seek opportunities for the Northfield Hospital to be a stimulus for economic development.
ED 4.3	Promote economic development opportunities that arise from the development of intellectual capital at Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges.
ED 4.4	Seek ways to better integrate the economically-challenged into the economic life of Northfield, such as providing for affordable housing and targeting small business incentive programs to this segment of the economy.
ED 4.5	Generate the type of economic growth that preserves the small-town character and is consistent with the overall objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
ED 4.6	Support programming efforts to further tourism in Northfield, e.g., Historic and Festival Programs, Arts and Cultural Programs and Tours.
Housing	Objective / Strategy
HS 1	Housing will strengthen the unique physical character of the community.
HS 1.1	For new developments, establish standards for creating a rich diversity of architectural housing styles appropriate for Northfield in order to avoid monotony.
HS 1.2	Revise zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure opportunities for development of alternative housing types and styles, including mixed-use neighborhoods, accessory or mother-in-law apartments, modular homes, manufactured home parks and other innovative approaches to housing.
HS 1.3	Establish development regulations that provide for a greater degree of connection between neighborhoods through efficient street design and use of pedestrian trails and sidewalks.
HS 1.4	Establish standards for creative mixed-use development that integrates housing with public places, retail and service commercial.
HS 1.5	As determined necessary, conduct a city-wide housing analysis to identify current housing types, densities, values, vacancy rates and locations for use as a guide to future housing development and as a measure of affordable housing.
HS 1.6	Establish standards for compact residential development and intensified land uses.

Implementation

HS 1.7	The preference for new residential development should be for infill, then redevelopment, and then greenfields within the city limits, and then within in the Priority Growth Area.
HS 1.8	The needed balance between housing and commercial/industry and the current supply of housing will be important factors in consideration of annexation requests for additional housing.
HS 2	Preserve the character and style of existing neighborhoods that have created Northfield's sense of place.
HS 2.1	Establish standards for replacement of homes in existing neighborhoods to ensure new homes are compatible with the design and scale of the neighborhood.
HS 2.2	Encourage the preservation of existing neighborhoods by rehabilitating deteriorating houses where practical, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and construction of new homes on infill lots and redevelopment sites.
HS 2.3	Establish regulations for the demolition or moving of buildings in neighborhoods.
HS 2.4	Consider establishing a review board to determine if infill housing is compatible with the design and scale of the existing neighborhood.
HS 2.5	Encourage the preservation of historically-significant structures, business and commercial areas and neighborhoods. Historical significance includes architectural features as well as significant historical and cultural events.
HS 2.6	Consider creating historic neighborhood conservation overlay district(s).
HS 3	The City should assist in providing affordable housing.
HS 3.1	Encourage private developers to provide a variety of housing options by providing financial assistance, and assistance in planning, building and renovation, and by reducing right-of-way and street widths, waiving various City fees, reducing minimum lot sizes and increasing densities, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
HS 3.2	Encourage joint public and private participation through local, state and federal programs to help cover the financial gap between affordable housing and the actual cost of developing housing.
HS 3.3	Encourage developments with a mix of housing price ranges and incomes. Options should be considered for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units.
HS 3.4	Continue to utilize community organizations and area agencies that promote affordable housing, such as the Rice County HRA, and land trust organizations, non-profit organizations familiar with affordable housing, and Habitat for Humanity, to plan and develop affordable housing.
HS 3.5	Provide housing that is accessible to community resources such as jobs, commercial districts, and bike and pedestrian paths.
HS 3.6	Research available funding for programs that rehab existing rental or single-family homeowner properties.
HS 3.7	Provide public education of various federal, state, county and local financial assistance programs for first time homebuyers.
HS 3.8	Work with local lending institutions, real estate professionals and government agencies to provide homebuyer and seller education seminars, and to provide a publication identifying local resources for homebuyer assistance.
HS 3.9	Strive to identify and subsequently eliminate or reduce the impact of various factors that increase housing prices.
HS 3.10	Encourage the availability and upgrading of manufactured home parks for affordable housing.
HS 3.11	Encourage local employers to identify and meet the housing needs of their workforce by providing opportunities for local government and employers to cooperate in the provision of housing. Cooperation could occur through low-interest loans, employee-buyer programs and other housing-related benefits.
HS 4	The City will encourage homes to be well-maintained, environmentally friendly and energy efficient.
HS 4.1	Establish standards for and encourage the use of "green" building techniques to provide housing that is energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.
HS 4.2	Investigate "green" practices that would reduce the costs of housing.

HS 4.3	Review the City's non-conforming structures ordinance for mechanisms to allow homeowners to intensify, rehabilitate and maintain nonconforming structures.
HS 4.4	Enforce rental ordinances that provide for minimums in housing maintenance.
HS 4.5	Enforce blight standards for all city residences.
HS 4.6	Revise City zoning and other applicable ordinances to ensure implementation of these Objectives and Strategies.