

ITEM: Public Hearing - Recommendation for an Amendment to the Future Land Use Plan Map for Property Located North of Wall Street Road

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Planning Commission is being asked to hold a public hearing and then make a recommendation to the City Council for a Future Land Use Map Amendment for property located north of Wall Street Road in Northfield Township. The request is to bring the property into the “Priority Growth Area” on the Future Land Use map and to change the future land use designation from “Residential Cluster” to “Lower Density Residential.” Below is a summary of what is being proposed:

- The property is currently vacant land, with no buildings, purchased by the applicant for future residential development. If the Future Land Use map is amended for this property, the applicant is also proposing to request that the property be annexed into the City (Agenda Item #4b). The applicant is proposing to create 100 single-family home lots on a 50-acre parcel of land (2 housing units per acre). If both the Future Land Use Map Amendment and Annexation are approved by the City Council, the applicant would rezone the property to a residential zoning classification, and then request a redrawing of the property lines through the subdivision application process.
- City Code Section 34-130 (a)(2) requires that if that a conceptual development plan for an annexation does not comply with the Comprehensive Plan, an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan must be pursued and granted prior to further consideration of the annexation request.
- The Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) has not identified any significant natural features on this property, nor has the Natural Wetland Inventory identified any wetlands on this property.

RELATED INFORMATION:

Existing and proposed land use categories:

The existing site is designated on the Future Land Use map as within the Urban Expansion Area”, but not within the “Priority Growth Area”. Also, currently the property is guided “Residential Cluster”, which allows for one housing unit per 40 acres of land. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the existing “Residential Cluster” land use designation is:

“...intended to serve as a holding zone for future development - beyond the 2020 time frame of this plan – served with municipal utilities. In order to discourage large lot rural residential developments, density would be limited to 1 unit per 40 acres. If residential development does occur in this area, the development pattern

should be clustered in a way that makes the future extension of urban services cost effective and environmentally responsible. Clustering residential development also preserves open space close to natural resources such as creeks, streams, wetlands, woodlands, and habitat areas. Clustering also reduces the amount of impervious cover by minimizing the need for roadways and other infrastructure needed to serve a development. Cluster housing would be implemented at the County or Township level.” (Pages 7-18).

The proposed “Lower Density Residential” land use designation for the site:

“...establishes a pattern of single-family detached housing mixed with some attached housing. The predominant type should be the single-family detached housing unit, but by using good design and creative planning, a limited amount of attached housing (duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes) can be integrated with single-family detached housing, thereby achieving a higher density without compromising the overall integrity of the low-density residential pattern. This integration strengthens neighborhoods by increasing housing choice and affordability beyond what is possible by today’s rules and regulations. Overall density within this category should range between 2 units per gross acre to 4 units per gross acre. By integrating attached and detached housing and allowing a variety of lot sizes, portions of a development plan may contain higher or lower densities, provided the development plan is consistent with the comprehensive plan and maintains an overall average density between 2 and 4 units per acre.” (Pages 7-18).

As stated previously, according to the Future Land Use Map, the property is located in the “Urban Expansion Area”, but not the “Priority Growth Area.” The Comprehensive Plan describes these two areas as follows:

- The Urban Expansion Area is a planning boundary, identified in the Rice County Zoning Ordinance, first established by Rice County in an attempt to direct growth to urban centers, thus preserving the rural, agricultural atmosphere of the County. The City of Northfield established a similar boundary in Dakota County in an effort to anticipate future urban growth (Pages 7-27).
- The Priority Growth Area is a 20-year supply of developable land, which will accommodate forecasted household growth as well as commercial and industrial demand based on historical absorption rates and regional market demand. During the process of estimating land needs to 2020, a 50% overage was calculated into the total land demand to allow for fluctuations in the market place and unanticipated spikes in land demand (Pages 7-27).

Description of “Priority Growth Area”:

The following is a description in the 2001 Comprehensive Plan of how the urban expansion area and priority growth area were established: “The urban expansion boundary was created to limit the growth of the City within this boundary. This line was

first drawn as an urban expansion boundary, essentially limiting growth to within this boundary according to a staging plan concept. However, as the planning process proceeded, it became evident that landowners in other areas of the community were showing development interest. The floating “Priority Growth Area” is intended to assure a growth pattern that balances the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan with the needs of private landowners.” (Pages 7-27).

It appears from this above statement that at least some properties were placed in the “Priority Growth Area” due to a request from the property owner. However, it is unclear how much of the “Priority Growth Area” was delineated in this way (the Plan does state that a 50% overage was calculated into the land demand within the “Priority Growth Area” to meet potential market demand). According to Rice County records, the applicant purchased the property in 2004. Staff is not aware as to whether or not the previous property owner requested that this property be kept out of the “Priority Growth Area.”

In discussions held as part of the updating of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission and City Staff have discussed that the “Priority Growth Area” should offer benefit to the City in the installation of public infrastructure such as sanitary sewer and transportation connections. Several detailed plans for potable water, sanitary sewer, and surface water, were completed in 2006 and 2007 to help determine where it is fiscally responsible for the City to focus its growth (the Transportation Plan is not due to be completed until 2008). In analyzing this property relating to public infrastructure, the property can be readily served by potable water, sanitary sewer and storm water. However, the site does not offer important potential transportation connections that the City desires as compared to other possible annexation areas. For example, other areas that could be annexed in Northfield Township would connect Maple Street and Spring Creek Road to County Road #1, or connect Jefferson Parkway near Erie Drive with Jefferson Parkway near Heywood Road. These connections would ease traffic congestion by offering connected roads and alternative routes. The applicant’s property merely offers an extension of Jefferson Parkway that would not ease congestion for the foreseeable future (the street would end, until further annexations, at the applicant’s northern property line).

2001 Comprehensive Plan Criteria:

Under the Priority Growth Area boundary, urban services (principally sewer and water) would be allowed to extend to any area within that boundary provided that the following criteria are met by the proposed development (Staff response to these criteria in relation to the subject property is shown in **bold**):

1. Each individual development will be built consistent with the densities and policies established in the Comprehensive Plan. This will ensure that projections are met without having to prematurely expand the Priority Growth Area, and that the general intent of the development is consistent with Northfield’s vision. **The 2001 Comprehensive Plan did not place this**

property in the “Priority Growth Area.” Since it is estimated that there are at least 1,000 acres of land still available in the “Priority Growth Area” (the draft 2008 Comprehensive Plan estimates there to be 1,602 acres), the approval of an amendment to the Future Land Use map would, in Staff’s opinion, prematurely expand the “Priority Growth Area.” However, if the amendment is approved by the City Council, the applicant would abide by the 2-4 units/acre minimum required residential density.

2. New development is contiguous to the urban areas already served by municipal infrastructure. Skipping over vacant undeveloped land is not a cost effective approach to extending urban services and makes the skipped over parcel less useable from an agriculture or development perspective. **This property is adjacent to the existing City limits and contiguous to urban areas already served by municipal infrastructure. Therefore, no undeveloped land would be skipped over.**
3. Development can be accommodated within the planned capacity of the sanitary sewer system. Adequate “trunk” pipe size for sanitary sewer and storm sewer must be available (or programmed for in the City’s Capital Improvement Program) to handle the demands of the development. **The recently adopted Comprehensive Sanitary Sewer Plan does include this property in the overall planning area of the City and it is anticipated to be served with an 8” pipe connection in Rosewood Road. Storm water improvements can also be readily made, regardless if this stretch of Wall Street Road is considered a rural or urban section.**
4. Utility improvements should adequately respond to environmental, health, safety and general welfare concerns. **The Comprehensive Water Plan, adopted in 2006, shows that there is sufficient water main infrastructure in Wall Street Road to service this development. There are no other utility improvements of concern.**
5. The development projects shall be contained within the limitations of the Priority Growth Area Boundary except where all criteria can be reasonably accomplished. **If the proposed Future Land Use Map Amendment is approved by the City Council, the entire property would be located within the City’s “Priority Growth Area.” The development is proposed outside of the current “Priority Growth Area.” These criteria suggest that if these eight criteria in this section are reasonably accomplished, the property may be developed.**
6. Connections to the existing and future Northfield transportation system are adequately studied and planned for. **If the property is annexed, it would be adjacent to and be accessed by Wall Street Road (County Road #79),**

which is an existing east-west roadway, and by an extension of Jefferson Parkway, which is a north-south roadway.

7. The development does not promote premature growth in areas beyond the Priority Growth Area Boundary. Development proposals should not lead into areas beyond the Priority Growth Area that may lack adequate storm water drainage capacity, road infrastructure, park facilities, or emergency services. **The property is currently located beyond the “Priority Growth Area.” It could be argued that if this property is brought into the “Priority Growth Area”, this could encourage neighboring parcels to the east and north to also request to be brought into the “Priority Growth Area.” This then defeats the purpose of designating an area where the City focuses its growth. As previously stated, serving this property with public infrastructure is not a concern.**
8. The development must be consistent with orderly annexation agreements. **If annexed, the City and the applicant will abide by the orderly annexation agreement between the City and Northfield Township. The agreement stipulates that no more than 160 acres be annexed from January 1, 2007, to December 31, 2011, with no more than 80 acres in one year. Therefore, if this annexation is approved, there would be 110 acres that could still be annexed until the end of 2011.**

2008 Draft Comprehensive Plan:

The Planning Commission is aware that the City is considering adopting an update to the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. This draft, which has not yet been adopted by the City Council, also does not identify this property as being in the “Priority Growth Area.” The draft Plan identifies this property as “Restricted Development”, which allows for development, but of a less intense, less dense, open space/clustered development pattern.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the change to the Future Land Use map to bring this 50-acre property into the “Priority Growth Area” for the following reasons:

- According to the 2001 Comprehensive Plan, there is more than enough property in the “Priority Growth Area” to meet land developments needs until at least 2020 (in fact, the Comprehensive Plan states on Pages 7-27 that “a 50% overage was calculated into the total land demand to allow for fluctuations in the market place and unanticipated spikes in land demand”). Also, Randy Gross of Development Economics completed a housing market analysis in 2007 (as part of the Comprehensive Plan update), and estimated there is up to a five-year supply of existing homes for sale and residential lots for development located within the current City limits (does not include the “Priority Growth Area”).

- The property does not offer the desired transportation connections the City seeks, such as connecting Maple Street and Spring Creek Road to County Road #1, or connecting Jefferson Parkway in the southeast area of the City. Since the City is limited by an agreement with Northfield Township in the number of acres that can be annexed between now and 2011, it seems wise to use our maximum acreage to those areas of Northfield Township that offer these desired transportation connections.
- The City is limited in its fiscal ability to assist in extending and maintaining various infrastructure improvements, such as sewer, water, and roadways. The addition of this development will most likely not result in initial costs by the City for these improvements. However, once constructed, the City is responsible for their upkeep and maintenance. Frankly, the City has identified through its infrastructure plans other areas, mainly in the southeast area of the City, which are more of a priority for infrastructure extensions and improvements than this property. For example, there have been residential developments approved by the City along Spring Creek Road, which in some areas is a rural section. The City is striving to prioritize that roadway for improvement since it provides a much needed transportation connection to County Road #1. By contrast, increased development along Wall Street Road would not only increase traffic in the area, but the improved roadway would basically only serve to benefit the residents of this 50-acre parcel, not the community as a whole. In other words, with limited fiscal abilities, the City should limit its growth to those areas defined as priorities.
- The potential exists that this development would not be of a great benefit to Northfield as a whole, but instead would be a “landlocked” neighborhood. Property owners adjacent to this property to the west, east and north have expressed a desire to not develop their land. Therefore, this property has the potential for street and trail connections ending at undeveloped land outside the City limits. Other areas of the City’s growth boundaries, such as the areas south and southeast of the City limits, have a much greater potential for connecting with existing and future development.
- The purpose of the “Priority Growth Area” boundary line is to encourage growth within that boundary. This is done for various reasons, such as being fiscally responsible with public infrastructure expansion, preserving agricultural land, and other reasons outlined in this Staff Report. If the Future Land Use map is amended for this property, the purpose of having a “Priority Growth Area” is defeated and the line tends to become just a graphic on a map rather than a boundary that defines City policy and preferences on growth and development.

However, if the Planning Commission recommends to the City Council that the applicant’s property be brought into the “Priority Growth Area”, then Staff recommends that the designation for the property on the Future Land Use map be amended to “Lower Density Residential” from “Residential Cluster.”

ALTERNATIVES:

The Planning Commission has the following alternatives in regard to the proposed Amendment to the Future Land Use map:

1. Deny the Amendment to the Future Land Use map to bring the property into the “Priority Growth Area” and designate the property as “Lower Density Residential.”
2. Approve the Amendment to the Future Land Use map to bring the property into the “Priority Growth Area” and designate the property as “Lower Density Residential.”
3. Deny bringing the property into the “Priority Growth Area”, but approve the designation to “Lower Density Residential.”
4. Table the Amendment application so that further information can be provided.

REQUESTED BY: Johnson–Reiland Construction, Inc., Burnsville, MN

SUBMITTED BY: Dan Olson, City Planner

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Site Location Map
2. Existing Future Land Use Plan Map
3. Proposed Future Land Use Plan Map
4. Narrative from applicant addressing Map amendment



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Dan Olson, City Planner
City of Northfield

FROM: Benjamin N. Bullert, P.E.

DATE: January 3, 2008

RE: Proposed Annexation
Johnson-Reiland Construction Property
50 acres (+/-) located north of Rosewood 5th Addition

This memo is regarding a 50 acre (+/-) parcel of land located on the northeast corner of Northfield which is owned by Johnson-Reiland Construction. More specifically, the property is bounded by Wall Street and lies immediately north of Rosewood 5th Addition and east of the Oaklawn Cemetery.

Community Partners submitted an application for annexation and comprehensive plan map amendment last November to the City of Northfield. The City staff also requested a sanitary sewer capacity study of the area and roadway improvement sketches of Wall Street to accommodate the proposed development, both of which have been previously provided. To date, I have not received any comments from staff that suggest that either infrastructure or road capacity are not sufficient to accommodate proposed development of the property. In addition, the Rice County Engineering Department has given preliminary approval to proposed changes to existing Wall Street.

Johnson-Reiland Construction is prepared to finance infrastructure and road improvement costs that are required to develop the property. If you have any questions relating to these comments, please be sure to call.

Thanks Dan!

ITEM: Public Hearing - Recommendation on Annexation Request for Property North of Wall Street Road in Northfield Township

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Planning Commission is being asked to make a recommendation to the City Council for an annexation request in Northfield Township. The following is a summary of what the applicant is proposing for this request:

- The annexation request is submitted simultaneously with a request to amend the Future Land Use map to bring the property into the City's "Priority Growth Area" and to amend the land use classification from "Cluster Residential" to "Lower Density Residential" (Agenda Item #4a).
- The applicant is proposing to construct 100 single-family homes on a 50-acre parcel of land. This plan is reflected in a Conceptual Development Plan submitted by the applicant.
- The Northfield Township board has reviewed the request and given preliminary approval to the annexation request. If the City Council approves the annexation request, the Board would sign a joint resolution with the City Council that would be sent to the Minnesota Municipal Boundary Adjustments office in St. Paul.
- If the annexation is approved by the City Council and the Minnesota Municipal Boundary Adjustments office, the applicant is proposing at some future time to submit an application to rezone the property to a residential zoning district classification and then subdivide the property into residential lots.

Conceptual Development Plan:

1. Location of Property

The parcel is located directly north of Wall Street Road and east of Oak Lawn cemetery, in Northfield Township. The property is adjacent to the City limits.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

The parcel is surrounded on the north and east by property designated by Rice County as being used for agricultural purposes, on the south by a single-family residential neighborhood that is under development, and to the west by a cemetery.

3. Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map

See Agenda Item #4a for detailed information about the Future Land use map designation.

4. Existing and Proposed Land Uses

The parcel is currently vacant land. The applicant is proposing to create 100 single-family home lots on this 50-acre parcel.

5. Public Utilities

The recently adopted Comprehensive Sanitary Sewer Plan does include this property in the overall planning area of the City and it is anticipated to be served by the sanitary sewer collection system with a 8” pipe in Rosewood Road. Storm water improvements can also be readily made, regardless if this stretch of Wall Street Road is considered a rural or urban section. The Comprehensive Water Plan, adopted in 2006, shows that there is sufficient water main infrastructure in Wall Street Road to service this development. There are no other utility improvements of concern.

6. Transportation Improvements

Wall Street Road is under Rice County jurisdiction. The County has reviewed this annexation proposal and has allowed for three access connections to this development: Jefferson Parkway, Rosewood Road, and at an unnamed access in the west area of the property across from an existing driveway. The applicant is also proposing to construct a continuous left turn lane in addition to the two driving lanes on either side (Attachment #3). The County has given preliminary approval to this concept plan.

7. Land Use Principles

As you are aware, the City is in the midst of updating its Comprehensive Plan and revising its Land Development Regulations. In completing these projects, there has been a considerable amount of discussion by the Planning Commission and City Staff, as well as input from the public, on what the character should be for residential development. This discussion eventually lead to the creation of 12 land use principles, which were endorsed by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2007. Some of these principles relating to residential development are:

a. The small town character will be enhanced.

- Future areas for growth and development will reflect the essential elements of “Old Northfield” with respect to the form and pattern of development.
- New development and redevelopment will be sensitive to pedestrians in terms of scale and walkability.

- b. **The preference for accommodating future growth is in infill locations, then redevelopment opportunities, and then on the edge of existing developed areas.**
- When new development occurs at the edge of the community through annexations, it will be done with great care by creating well defined residential neighborhoods, a green edge or a well designed place for commerce, so as not to compromise the rural landscape or the small town character.
 - When new growth occurs on the edge of the community through annexations, it will be done with a planned growth pattern, which minimizes infrastructure and community services.
- c. **New and redeveloped residential communities (areas) will have strong neighborhood qualities.**
- Neighborhoods will be walkable with pedestrian friendly streets containing sidewalks that accommodate automobiles at lower speeds and volumes that provide for bicycle mobility on the street and give priority to the pedestrian experience.
 - Community gathering areas will be integrated into new residential areas to promote opportunities for social interaction and public events.
- d. **Environmentally-sensitive and sustainable practices will be integrated into new developments and redeveloped areas.**
- New construction will employ context sensitive design to reduce impacts on the natural environment.
- e. **A wider range of housing choices will be encouraged – in the Community as well as in neighborhoods.**
- New residential development will offer a variety of housing types and prices, including affordable and workforce housing.
 - Housing diversity will be integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood.
- f. **Streets will create an attractive public realm and be exceptional places for people.**
- Roadways and streets are important elements of the built environment and will strengthen the character of the setting.

- Roadways and streets will be given greater consideration as part of future development to ensure they contribute to the neighborhood character and people-oriented functions.
- Buildings will be situated on their site to define a high quality streetscape.

g. Places will be better connected, in part to improve the function of the street network and also to better serve neighborhoods.

- The street pattern will be improved to keep local traffic off major arterials, and high-speed through traffic off local streets.
- A better connected grid or modified grid street system is the preferred network for future development and redevelopment.

h. Opportunities will be created to walk and bike throughout the Community.

- The design of local streets will encourage pedestrian and bicycle movement through features such as sidewalks, bike paths, narrower street widths, and quality planter and buffer strips to protect the pedestrian.

In Staff's opinion, the Conceptual Development Plan submitted by the applicant (Attachment #4) does not reflect the character of a neighborhood described in the land use principles (for example, the proposed street configuration is not grid-like in its layout).

The character of new residential neighborhoods envisioned with these principles is not possible under the current Land Development Regulations. Without regulatory authority, the City cannot require that the applicant build such a neighborhood. Therefore, Staff recommends that if the annexation is approved by the City Council, that the applicant sign an annexation agreement in which they consent to have this neighborhood designed under the new regulations, which are expected to become effective in 2008.

The annexation agreement would also make it clear that the Conceptual Development Plan submitted by the applicant is NOT approved at the time of the annexation approval. City Code Section 34-131 (b) requires that the Conceptual Development Plan be in substantial conformance with any subsequent plat filed by the applicant with the City. The applicant may agree in writing that the Conceptual Development Plan is not approved with the annexation request.

Annexation Approval Process:

The City Code does not have specific criteria for approval of an annexation request. However, City Code Section 34-130 (c), states:

“Approval of the request for annexation and the conceptual development plan by the City shall be limited to the general acceptability of the land uses proposed and their interrelationship and shall not be construed to endorse the precise location of

uses, arrangement of structures or site improvements; the economic or engineering feasibility of structures or site improvements; or the economic or engineering feasibility of the proposal. Final acceptance of the conceptual development plan shall be subject to applicable land development ordinances and policies of the City.”

After the Planning Commission makes a recommendation on the annexation request, the request is then forwarded to the City Council. If the Annexation is approved by the Northfield City Council, then a joint resolution signed by the City and the Township is submitted to the Minnesota Municipal Boundary Adjustments office in St. Paul, who have been given the responsibility to approve alterations to municipal boundaries. If both the Township and the City have approved the annexation, the request is considered a “non-contested proceeding”, and no public hearing on the request would be held by the Boundary Adjustments office.

RECOMMENDATION:

If the Planning Commission recommends denial to the City Council of the Amendment to the Future Land Use map (Agenda Item #4a), Staff recommends denial of the annexation request. Conversely, if the Planning Commission recommends approval of the Amendment to the Future Land Use map, then Staff recommends approval of the 50-acre annexation request north of Wall Street Road, with the following condition:

1. The applicant sign an annexation agreement with the City. The following shall be made a part of this agreement:
 - In annexing the property, the City is not committing to help fund any of the needed infrastructure improvements, including improvements to Wall Street Road.
 - The Conceptual Development Plan submitted by the applicant (Attachment #4) is NOT considered approved. Only the request to annex the property is approved.
 - The applicant may not submit rezoning and subdivision applications to the City for this property until the new land developments regulations are in effect for the City. It is anticipated that this is to occur by the end of 2008. If the applicant submits one or both of these applications before these regulations are in effect, the City Council shall adopt a moratorium on development of the property until the new land development regulations are in effect.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Planning Commission has the following alternatives in regard to the proposed annexation request:

1. Deny the annexation request.
2. Approve the annexation request with no conditions.
3. Approve the annexation request with the condition recommended by Staff.

4. Table the annexation application so that further information can be provided.

REQUESTED BY: Johnson – Reiland Construction, Inc., Burnsville, MN

SUBMITTED BY: Dan Olson, City Planner

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Narrative from applicant describing the proposed annexation request
2. Concept plan for improvements to Wall Street Road Conceptual Development Plan (2 sheets)

ITEM: Review and Report on Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)
Acquisition of Residential Land

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The Planning Commission is being asked to report to the City Council on whether the purchase of land for residential use in the Southbridge (1st) Addition is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. According to Minnesota Statute 462.356, Subd. 2:

“After a comprehensive municipal plan ...has been recommended by the planning agency and a copy filed with the governing body, no publicly owned interest in real property within the municipality shall be acquired or disposed of ... until after the planning agency has reviewed the proposed acquisition, disposal, ... and reported in writing to the governing body ... its findings as to compliance of the proposed acquisition, disposal with the comprehensive municipal plan.”

The following is a summary of what is being proposed:

- The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is proposing to purchase a 14.2 acre parcel of property in the Southbridge (1st) Addition (Attachment #3). The HRA is proposing at some future time to subdivide the property for a primarily single family residential neighborhood, with the possibility of some twinhomes. The HRA’s goal is to provide a mixture of for-sale market rate and affordably-priced units.
- At their meeting on January 8, 2008, (just prior to the Planning Commission meeting) the HRA will review the purchase agreement with Arcon Development, who owns the land.

RELATED INFORMATION:

The property to be purchased is designated as “Higher Density Residential” on the Future Land Use map. Currently, the property is zoned Low to Medium Density Residential (R-3). According to the Comprehensive Plan, the “Higher Density Residential” designation:

“...establishes a pattern consisting of multi-family housing types such as apartments, condominiums, and townhomes integrated with a limited amount of single-family detached housing. In this category, more emphasis is placed on multi-family housing options, which increase the density of housing choices within the community. Densities within this land use pattern should average between 4 and 6 units per gross acre. In this category, some pockets of higher density – 10 to 20 units per acre – multi-family apartments may exist along with other pockets of lower density single-family developments with densities of 3 to 6

units per acre. In addition, multi-family housing requires strategically located parks and open space areas that function in a similar fashion as the “yard” of a single-family home (Pages 7-18).

Chapter 9 (Housing) also establishes four goals for housing. One of these goals is to “increase the supply of affordable housing” (Pages 9-10). Several policies relating to providing affordable housing are also listed on Pages 9-11 of the Plan. These policies reflect a desire to assist non-profit organizations, such as the HRA, in providing affordable housing:

- 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.
- Work with the Rice County HRA, private developers and non-profit providers of affordable housing to ensure an adequate supply of high quality affordable housing in Northfield.
- Monitor the need for and development of low- and moderate-income rental units and senior market rate units in the City of Northfield and consider assisting in the creation of such units if the private market is not able to meet the demand for these units.

Therefore, the purchase of the property by the HRA for single family residential, with some twinhomes, is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission report to the City Council that the sale of property by Arcon Development to the HRA for the future site of single family residential market rate and affordable homes is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

REQUESTED BY: Dan Olson, City Planner
Michele Merxbauer, Housing Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Site Location Map
2. Existing Future Land Use Map for the Southbridge (1st) Addition
3. Map showing the area to be purchased

SEE PACKET ADDENDUM FOR ATTACHMENT #1

SEE PACKET ADDENDUM FOR ATTACHMENT #3