

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2026-015

SUPPORTING THE AUTHORITY TO IMPOSE A LOCAL SALES TAX TO FUND SPECIFIC CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROVIDING REGIONAL BENEFIT, TO ESTABLISH THE DURATION OF THE TAX AND THE REVENUE TO BE RAISED BY THE TAX, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY TO ISSUE BONDS SUPPORTED BY SALES TAX REVENUE.

WHEREAS, the City of Northfield is a growing regional hub for education, tourism, government, industry, healthcare services, retail, dining, faith communities, nonprofits, arts and culture, historical resources, parks, and libraries; and

WHEREAS, the community is home to two highly regarded post-secondary institutions with a combined enrollment of 5,000 students from the region, around the country, and around the world; and

WHEREAS, the community is a growing regional center in the south metro, as evidenced by the following:

- Home to the Defeat of Jesse James Days annual celebration which draws an estimated 200,000 people to historic downtown in September, and which commemorates a significant historical event;
- Home to over 35 parks and open spaces totaling over 400 acres, pedestrian and bicycle paths, an arena, and outdoor pool managed by the City of Northfield alongside amenities offered by the colleges such as the St. Olaf Natural Lands and Carleton College's Cowling Arboretum;
- Offers year-round cultural activities and performances through the Public Library, Northfield Arts Guild, Fifty North, Carleton and St. Olaf Colleges, and other community cultural leaders; and
- Home to industry leaders such as Post Consumer Brands, Aurora Pharmaceuticals, Northfield Hospital and Clinics and many others;

WHEREAS, the City Council has identified three capital improvement projects of regional significance that will benefit residents of the City and surrounding areas, and seeks legislative authority to impose a local sales tax of 0.50% to finance these projects; and

WHEREAS, the proposed projects, anticipated costs, estimated local sales tax revenues, and estimated time needed to raise the revenues are as follows:

1. The City intends to pay for the capital costs of the acquisition and betterment of the Northfield Public Library interior and exterior safety, sustainability, and accessibility improvements plus cost of issuance and interest expense to ensure the longevity of the library's building and site and its role as a regional asset, community facility, and anchor to Northfield's historic downtown. The improvements include erosion control, replacing stairs and ramps, mitigating storm water, increasing outdoor community space, accessible route to the meeting room and patio, replacing turf with native plants, adding shaded gathering spaces and natural play areas, and replacing invasive plants. The total maximum estimated cost of these improvements is \$2,800,000 plus cost of issuance and interest expense supported by a sales and use tax over 20-years; and

The total maximum estimated cost of these improvements is \$2,800,000 plus cost of issuance and interest expense supported by a sales and use tax over 20-years; and

2. The City intends to pay for the capital cost of acquisition and betterment of necessary updates and repairs to the Northfield Community Resource Center plus cost of issuance and interest expense. The Northfield Community Resource Center is a vital regional hub for active older adults and home to multiple regional and countywide nonprofit human service providers. The necessary improvements include HVAC and mechanicals, energy investments, bathroom upgrades, and updates to the pool and locker rooms. The total maximum estimated cost of these improvements is \$2,800,000 plus cost of issuance and interest expense supported by a sales and use tax over 20-years years; and
3. The City intends to pay for the capital cost of acquisition and betterment of Northfield's interconnected Riverfront Parks plus cost of issuance and interest expense. These improvements will include capital projects that serve accessibility, river access, connecting trails networks, bathroom improvements, park amenities, along with aesthetic and functional betterments. The total maximum estimated cost of these improvements is \$7,500,000 plus cost of issuance and interest expense with supported by a sales and use tax over 20-years; and

WHEREAS, the City estimates that a local sales and use tax of one half of one percent would generate up to \$18,500,000 over 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the City estimates that the local sales and use tax would generate cash and a "par" bond (debt) funding of \$11.4 million with sales taxes to repay the principal and interest payments on the bonds;

WHEREAS, the City has provided documentation within Exhibit A of the regional significance of the identified projects, including the share of the economic benefit to or use of each project by people residing, or businesses located, outside of the jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 297A.99 authorizes the imposition of a general sales tax if permitted by special law of the Minnesota Legislature; and,

WHEREAS, Minn. Stat. § 297A.99 requires the City to pass a resolution authorizing such a local tax and to obtain Legislative approval prior to approval by the local voters to enact the local tax; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THAT:

1. The City Council supports a new imposition of a 0.5% local sales tax for up to 20 years to fund the listed projects.
2. Upon approval, the Council will submit this resolution and related documentation to Chairs and Ranking Minority Members of the House and Senate Taxes Committees by January 31.
3. Upon legislative authorization, the Council will adopt a resolution accepting the law and file a local approval certificate with the Secretary of State.

4. The Council will place detailed ballot questions before voters within two years of legislative authority.
5. Upon successful referendum, the Council will adopt an ordinance imposing the tax and notify the Minnesota Department of Revenue at least 90 days before the first calendar quarter in which the tax will be collected.
6. The local sales tax will commence and continue until the revenue obligation is satisfied or as otherwise provided.
7. These projects are hereby incorporated into the City's prioritized legislative policy.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Northfield on this 20th day of January, 2026.

ATTEST


City Clerk


Mayor

VOTE: Y ZWEIFEL Y BEUMER Y DAHLEN Y HOLMES
Y NESS Y PETERSON WHITE Y SOKUP

EXHIBIT A – ECONOMIC BENEFIT

[Documentation of how each project will provide an economic benefit to residents, businesses, and visitors from outside the jurisdiction]



Northfield, Minnesota

Northfield Community Resource Center

Project funding

\$2,500,000 in CIP costs

Benefits

- Enhances efficiency, accessibility, and long-term sustainability of public services
- Maximizes public benefit
- Supports community well-being
- Provides a safe, accessible and functional space for regional community and social service providers

Safety and security updates

- Improve point of contact safety barriers
- Increase in card access control system
- Install critical incident alert buttons Install privacy fencing where appropriate

Aesthetic updates

- Replace and refurbish flooring throughout facility
- Replace acoustic ceiling tiles throughout facility
- Update, patch and paint walls throughout facility Paint exterior Replace pool deck

Mechanical updates

- Replace HVAC equipment throughout facility
- Replace all pool mechanical equipment
- Refurbish restrooms

Tenants & regional services

The Northfield Community Resource Center houses critical government and nonprofit service providers.

- Community Action Center
- Health Community Initiative (HCI)
- FiftyNorth
- Northfield Community College Collaborative
- United Way
- Three Rivers Head Start
- Workforce Development
- Rice County Social Services
- Northfield Public Library satellite location

Northfield Community Resource Center Highlights

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Three Rivers Community Action

Operates more than 40 programs

- Housing development
- Early childhood
- Homeless assistance and prevention
- Transportation
- Older adult services

Work in 2024

- Prevented 33 households from experiencing homelessness with \$137,422 of support
- Served 86 older adults with 21,027 nutritious, home delivered meals
- Hired local contractors for 36 emergency repairs



FiftyNorth

- Keeping adults 50 and above active, engaged, and connected.
- Serves more than 2,200 members from 9 counties.
- Provides classes in fitness, arts, and lifelong learning.

Rice County United Way

Brings together families, businesses, schools and partner agencies to tackle: financial security and basic needs, healthy community, youth opportunity, and literacy.

Working with partners

- 42,738 free after-school and summer meals served to kids
- 7,004 individuals accessed clothing



- 3,500 attendances at recovery support group meetings
- 1,484 clients received safety, services and care

Community College Collaborative

- Partners with community colleges to offer accredited courses and career pathway programs in Northfield.
- Provides 1-on-1 individualized supports, from math tutoring to free childcare.
- Provides in-person and online courses at a variety of times that work for students' schedules.



Community Action Center

Promotes a healthy, caring, and just community for all people through resources, advocacy, and volunteer effort throughout the Rice County area

Regional resource hub:

CAC provides over 1,000,000 pounds of food per year to more than 9,000 individuals across Rice and southern Dakota County. 80-100 households access food, housing, or other essential needs at CAC each day.



Northfield Public Library Site Renewal

Project funding

\$2,500,000 in CIP costs

Project goals

Accessibility

- Install accessible walkway from Division St doors to patio and from patio to Washington St
- Improve access to entry from bus stop, ADA parking
- Improve condition of ramp access

Stewardship

- Decrease costs associated with snow removal, landscaping
- Replace high maintenance landscaping
- Improve site aesthetics and enhance Library's role as a destination for visitors
- Address significant erosion on west slope

Safety

- Remove and repair trip and slip hazards
- Safer egress from west entrance, Bunday Room emergency exit
- Replace damaged Division St stairs

Sustainability

- Replace fallen trees with combination of shade structures and planting for shade
- Reduce hardscaping around building to preserve structure from damage due to water pooling and chloride use
- Reduce heat accumulation around atrium
- Improve storm water handling
- Install rain garden with interpretive signage

Community

- Expand access to space for natural play and rest
- Increase utility of community spaces
- Maximize site capacity for regional library programming
- restore and enhance spaces and seating for workforce, meeting, community gathering



Data source: Minnesota Public Library Annual Report, collected and maintained by State Library Services in the Minnesota Department of Education.

Northfield Public Library

Site Renewal for Accessibility and Safety

Regional Benefits

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Site traffic

- Visits to the library exceeded 200,000 in 2025 reflecting the library as a resource far beyond the population of Northfield
- Nearly 17,000 library cards in use, a 10% increase over 2024
- 667 documents notarized in 2025

Programs

- More than 400 free and inclusive programs offered in 2025 with more than 15,000 attending from across the region

Passport services

- More than 1,500 passport applications and photos taken in 2025

Circulation

- More than 240,000 physical items checked out in 2025
- More than 53,000 digital checkouts in 2025
- E-resources accessed over 167,000 times in 2025
- Participate in regional and statewide resource sharing

Meeting room traffic

- Large capacity meeting room booked more than 700 times in 2025
- Frequent use of library meeting spaces by state government, regional and statewide nonprofits, community organizations, and area businesses
- Two small meeting rooms added in 2025

Recognition

- 2016 voted best library in Minnesota
- 2024 Best Small Library in America Award (honorable mention) from Library Journal
- 2025 Library Journal Mover and Shaker Awards to Library Director and Outreach Manager
- Awarded 2025 federal community Facility grant through MDE to support improvements for workforce, education, and health

Service area

- Service area including home delivery reaches populations of Northfield, Dundas, Nerstrand and surrounding townships



Annual regional celebrations hosted by the Library

Celebrate Asia Pacifica

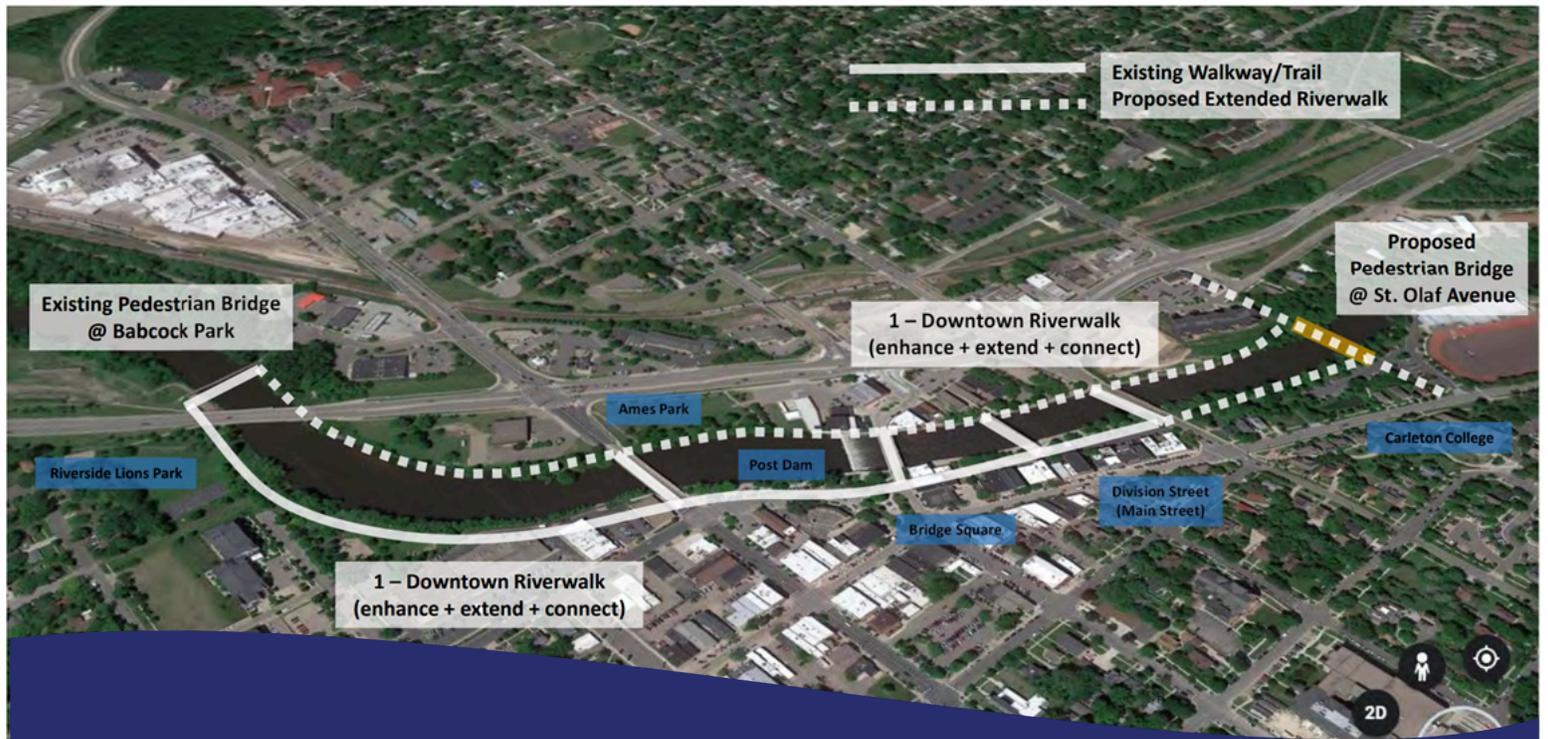
- Celebrating 3rd year in 2026
- Strong partnership with colleges
- Growing regional attendance

Hispanic Heritage Festival

- Celebrating 9th year in 2026
- Thousands attend from all over region
- Dozens of regional and local partners, global performers

Celebration of Somali Culture

- Hundreds from region attended 1st celebration in November 2025
- Regional partners from Rice County and beyond



Northfield, Minnesota

Riverfront Park Improvements

Project funding

\$6,400,000 in CIP costs

Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan

- The Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan, adopted in 2021, is a framework to guide improvements along the River and future design of park spaces. It is intended to create enthusiasm, and identify actions necessary to further enhance Northfield's riverfront parks as an exciting regional experience.

Key improvements

- Safety and Accessibility
- Aesthetic improvements and river access
- ADA-accessible bathroom improvements
- Repair/replace damaged steps, railings and walkways
- Age-friendly site furnishings
- Wayfinding

Connectivity and economic impact

- Enhance connections to the River by improving public spaces that connect to the commercial district
- Connect sidewalks and trails
- Create a series of pedestrian loops that extend to both sides of the River and connect to the urban historic core of the community

Riverfront Parks and amenities:

- Riverside Park
- Lions Park
- Sechler Park
- East Riverwalk stairs and railing
- Riverwalk "loop" trail
- Ames Park

Northfield Riverfront Parks

Regional significance

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Regional Assets

The City of Northfield Streets & Parks Division maintains publicly-owned places that offer many ways to enjoy an active life in Northfield, year-round. This includes over 35 parks and open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle paths, an arena, and outdoor pool.

Defeat of Jesse James Days

More than 200,000 people visit downtown Northfield and the riverfront each September to experience the Defeat of Jesse James Days Celebration, an annual commemoration of the historic bank raid of 1876

Historic features on the riverfront

- Ames Mill and Ames Mill dam
- Bridge Square
- The Northfield History Center
- Historic Downtown Northfield
- Northfield Arts Guild
- Carleton College's Cowling Arboretum

Fine Arts Festival

The Northfield Arts Guild hosts the Fine Arts Festival on the Riverwalk drawing more than 5,000 visitors from across the region to support local and visiting artists and craftspeople

Riverwalk Market Fair

Bridge Square is home to a seasonal weekly farmer's market and art fair which attracts thousands of visitors from all over to Northfield's historic riverfront every Saturday from May-October, supporting artisans and farmers from Rice County and the wider region

Winter Walk

Each December thousands visit Northfield's riverfront to attend Winter Walk, supporting local businesses

Recreation

The Cannon River is a scenic regional destination for river recreation and fishing

