

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2024-009

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL FOR A ZONING
MAP AMENDMENT AT MULTIPLE PROPERTIES IN THE NORTHWEST
DEVELOPMENT AREA

WHEREAS, City of Northfield (the “applicant”), seeks a Zoning Map Amendment, pursuant to Northfield City Code, Ch. 34, Sec. 8.5.14, to amend the zoning map from A-S: Agricultural to I1-B: Industrial for PID 430270029010, PID 430270005011, PID 430270008010, PID 430270051010, PID 430270053010, 32811 Garrett Ave. (PID 430270052010), 32840 Garrett Ave. (PID 430270075010), PID 430270076010, PID 430270078010, 2300 North Ave. (PID 430270079010), and PID 430260053010 located in Dakota County, Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the above-referenced property is described and depicted on Exhibit A, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference (the “property”); and

WHEREAS, an error was made in the original public hearing notice mailing for the October 30th, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, where the public hearing notice mailing had the wrong day listed for the correct date; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on October 30, 2024, and received public testimony regarding the proposed Zoning Map Amendment; and,

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on November 21, 2024, and received public testimony regarding the proposed Zoning Map Amendment; and

WHEREAS, testimony was taken until Noon on Friday, November 22, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission found that the application meets the standards in Northfield City Code, Chapter 34, the Land Development Code, for a zoning map amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed and recommended approval to the City Council of the Zoning Map Amendment; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION THAT:

1. The Planning Commission’s findings from its November 21, 2024 meeting, which are attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit B, are hereby recommended for adoption.
2. The Zoning Map Amendment to amend the zoning map for the property from A-S: Agricultural to I1-B: Industrial is recommended to City Council for approval.

PASSED by the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield on this 21st day of November 2024.

Ben Buckheit
Chair

J. Menard
Member

VOTE: Y BUCKHEIT A HEISLER Y KUHLMANN
 Y MENARD Y NOWAK Y SCHROEER Y STAGER

EXHIBIT A

PID 430270029010, PID 430270005011, PID 430270008010, PID 430270051010, PID 430270053010, 32811 Garrett Ave. (PID 430270052010), 32840 Garrett Ave. (PID 430270075010), PID 430270076010, PID 430270078010, 2300 North Ave. (PID 430270079010), and PID 430260053010 located in Dakota County, Minnesota.

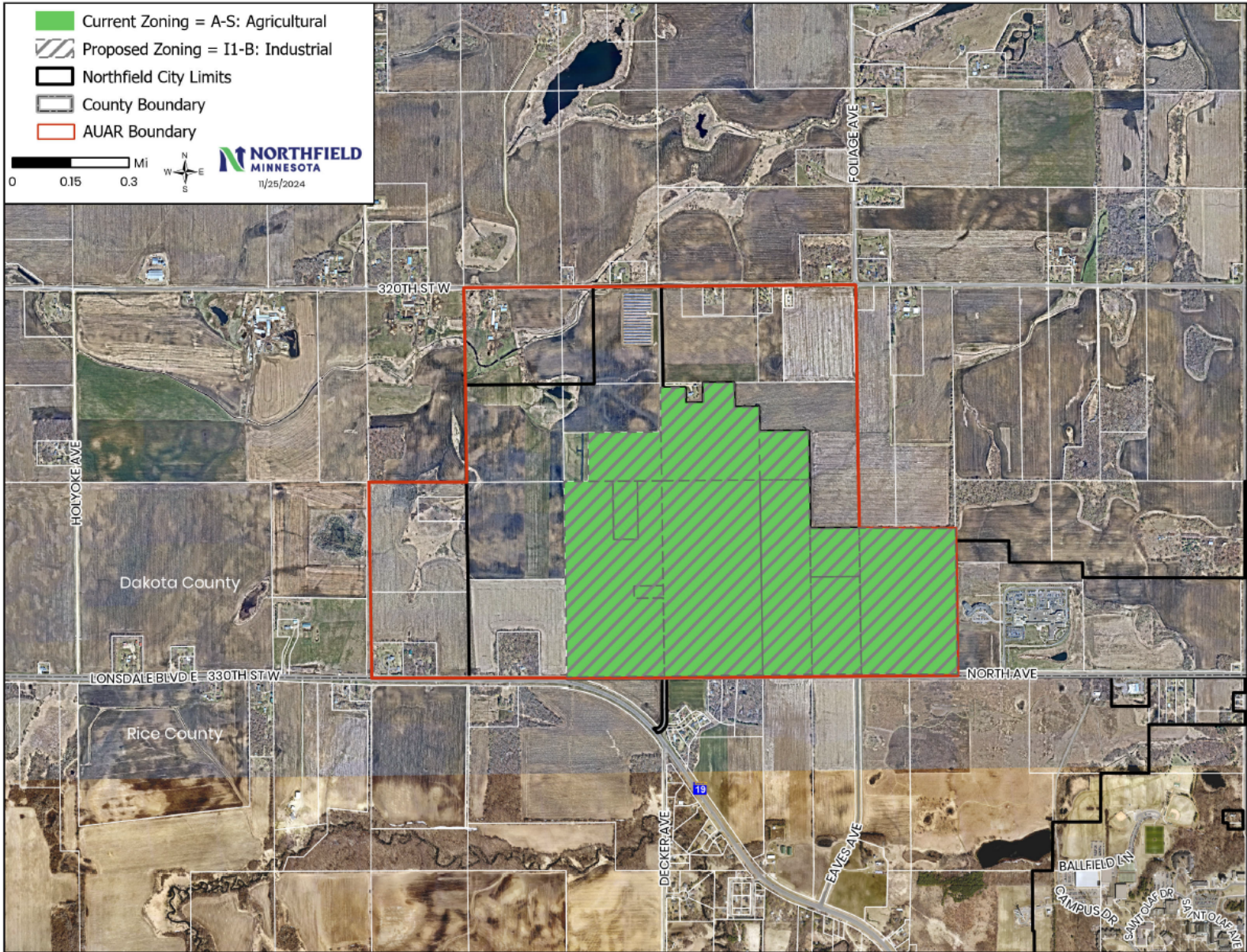


EXHIBIT B

Planning Commission Findings

Land Development Code Approval Criteria

When reviewing a zoning map amendment, the Planning Commission and City Council is to consider several criteria as established in Article 8 of the Land Development Code (8.5.14.C). The Planning Commission and City Council shall review the necessary submittal requirements, facts, and circumstances of the proposed amendment and make a recommendation and decision on the application based on, but not limited to, consideration of the following criteria:

(1) The specific policies, goals, objectives, and recommendations of the comprehensive plan and other city plans, including public facilities and the capital improvement plans.

In the Comprehensive Plan, there are two main maps, the Conservation and Development Map and the Framework Map. The Conservation and Development Map illustrates, in graphic form, where the Principles of the Land Use Chapter could be implemented and illustrates areas to be conserved as open space and areas to be developed, redeveloped, intensified or infilled. The Framework Map shows two complimentary components of the land use plan. First, it includes the anticipated street network within the urban expansion area and the bike paths that are planned for the community's natural and man-made (e.g., railway and roadway) corridors. The spacing of intersections in the network is generally based on the neighborhood dimension (pedestrian shed) of a one-quarter mile radius from center to edge (See Map 4.4 and Illustration 4.1). The second component of the Framework map is the form and character of existing and future development represented through the nine context zones outlined below. As the community develops, it is the intent of this map to guide the pattern of development.

The Conservation and Development Map denotes the parcel as a "Managed Growth" which are areas supportive of mixed-use development because of their proximity to planned or existing roadways and utilities. They include both a traditional neighborhood pattern (walkable with a distinct center and edge) and an open space development pattern. Districts (industrial, university, etc.) because of their size, function and configuration are not expected to conform to the neighborhood or open space/clustered pattern of development. Care should be taken to ensure that new development is compatible with existing development patterns in the area. (See "Context Zone" descriptions in the next section.).

The Framework Map shows the form and character of existing and future development represented through the nine context zones. As the community develops, it is the intent of this map to guide the pattern of development. The parcel is denoted as "District" which are generally special use areas found within the city. The districts within Northfield are typically of a single use; in this case composed of large business or industrial structures. Districts are located along collectors and arterial roadways.

Amending the zoning from A-S: Agricultural to I1-B: Industrial supports the following Principles in the Comp. Plan:

Land Use Principle 3 – The preference for accommodating future growth is in infill locations, then redevelopment/land intensification opportunities and then on the edge of existing developed areas.

The change in zoning will allow for development of property along the edge of city limits. Given its proximity to water and sewer infrastructure, transit networks and vacant land it creates an ideal location for development.

The preference for accommodating future growth is in infill locations, then redevelopment/ land intensification opportunities, and then on the edge of existing developed areas. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan notes the existing pattern of development has been to grow outward at the edge of the city or fringe areas (especially for residential development). Priority areas for future development are identified for all three areas (infill, redevelopment/intensification and greenfield), but that does not imply infill and redevelopment/intensification capacity must be completed prior to support for any greenfield development. There are few vacant infill properties within city limits for new construction. There are also no infill locations large enough for industrial type users who need a larger footprint for their business type.

The parcels to be rezoned represent a priority greenfield area for redevelopment. The rezoning from an agricultural use zone to and industrial use zone, while intensifying the potential uses, minimizes the need for infrastructure and community services. While additional water and wastewater infrastructure will need to be extended to the area in order to adequately serve it, industrial uses are more likely than other uses to minimize impacts to existing infrastructure and community services, as stated as the desired outcome for the Principle.

Land Use Principle 5 – Environmentally-sensitive and sustainable practices will be integrated into new developments and redeveloped areas.

Following the adoption of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) in 2019 and an in-process update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, there has been careful attention to ensuring the implementation of the CAP and other related sustainability initiatives in new developments. Language updating the existing I1-B industrial zone to include specific parameters for uses known to have potential negative effects on the environment are included in the code language.

Land Use Principle 6 – Places with a mix of uses that are distinctive and contribute to increasing the city's overall vitality are preferred.

The local identity defined as "Old Northfield", which includes a variety of uses mixed together on the same block, or same building, reflects positively on the

community. Over the last fifty years land uses have been segregated from one another, which detracts from this identity.

Districts are designated for commercial and industrial uses that are not appropriate in a mixed-use setting. Commercial and industrial development is vital to distinguish Northfield in the larger regional context. The creation of jobs and the expansion of the tax base will continue to set Northfield apart from the suburban residential communities of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Land Use Principle 6 (d) – Districts will be designated for commercial and industrial uses that are not appropriate in a mixed-use setting.

As stated in the 2008 plan, commercial and industrial development is vital to distinguish Northfield in the larger regional context. The creation of jobs and the expansion of the tax base will continue to set Northfield apart from the suburban residential communities of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. This will also support the City’s economic development agenda as outlined in the 2006 Economic Development Plan. Designating this area specifically as an industrial area has the potential to allow for a complementary mix of uses providing additional tax base and family-sustaining wages.

Amending the zoning of this parcel helps facilitate Priority Strategy 1 in the 2006 Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CED Plan)—increase the availability of business and industrial land. This zoning map amendment will allow for industrial users to develop the area and increase the availability of industrial land for business recruitment, expansion, and retention. The economic development plan specifically calls out six different target industries, including information technology, environmental technologies and specialty manufacturing, all of which are uses contemplated in the I1-B industrial district.

The zoning map amendment also meets the objective of “Opportunity 1” in the CED Plan which is to diversify the economic base and is likely to help achieve Opportunity 3: attracting and retaining talent.

Amending the zoning of this parcel helps facilitate the Economic Vitality – A community that’s economically thriving – strategic initiatives of the current Strategic Plan. Economic Vitality calls out that the city needs to implement economic stabilization, recovery & growth strategy and implement infill & redevelopment strategies. This zoning map amendment allows these properties to be readied for development which assists in economic growth and incentivizes development in this area long planned for industry.

(2) The purpose and intent of this LDC, or in the case of a map amendment, whether it meets the purpose and intent of the individual district.

The purpose of the I1-B: Industrial zoning district is to:

(1) The I1 district should generally apply to those areas designated as "District" on the Framework map of the comprehensive plan.

(2) The purpose of the Industrial (I1) district is to provide an area to accommodate manufacturing uses, general businesses, offices, service and repair businesses, warehousing and office showroom uses in a functional, attractive manner that does not unduly affect the development or use of nearby property. Limited and incidental retailing shall be allowed in this district. The portion of the district that abuts the Cannon River shall be developed in a manner that enhances, restores, augments and maintains the ecology and beauty of this natural corridor.

(3) Amendments to the Official Zoning Map to expand the I1 district shall be limited to areas immediately adjacent to an area currently zoned I1. Expansion into areas not currently abutting the I1 district shall be prohibited.

This parcel supports the intent or purpose of the I1-B: Industrial zoning district. This area is designated as District on the Framework map and would function well for manufacturing, warehouse, and other general businesses. Item (3) is contradictive because the Northwest Development area is not directly adjacent to existing Industrial-zoned property but has been planned and designated as District since 2008 in the Comprehensive Plan. The Land Development Code implements the adopted Comprehensive Plan therefore allowing the rezoning to Industrial as outlined in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

(3) The adequacy of infrastructure available to serve the proposed action.

There is existing sewer and water infrastructure in North Ave., with a planned new water tower to the northwest of the Northfield Hospital. Road infrastructure exists and would need further construction to serve new development, which would likely be a cost share between the city, developer, and Counties. The greenway corridor loops around this entire area and would be required to be preserved and constructed as part of any development.

(4) The adequacy of a buffer or transition provided between potentially incompatible districts.

Changing the zoning from A-S: Agricultural to I1-B: Industrial will make future development have to adhere to buffering standards between zoning districts at the time of development. Additionally, the 2022 Northwest Development Alternative Urban Areawide Review outlines several requirements to negate any potential incompatible uses.

Adopting revised text in the Land Development Code related to industrial uses that is being recommended at this same meeting and includes additional guidelines and standards for industrial users in order to ensure an adequate buffer or transition area between industrial uses inside the city limits and the more agricultural uses outside the city limits in the surrounding townships.