

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2024 -

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT
AN INTERIM ORDINANCE FOR THE NORTHWEST AREA

- WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Northfield, Minnesota, pursuant to its authority under the 1965 Municipal Planning Act. (Minn. Stat. §§ 462.357 – .365) previously adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2008 guiding land uses and municipal services and developments; and
- WHEREAS, Minnesota Statute Chapter 462.355, Subdivision 4 allows municipalities to “regulate, restrict, or prohibit any use, development, or subdivision within the jurisdiction” if certain conditions are met including conducting or authorizing studies or for protecting the planning process for new territory for which regulations have not yet been developed; and
- WHEREAS, the City of Northfield annexed 530 acres of land in Greenvale Township in 2009 for the purpose of commercial and industrial development in accordance with the 2006 Comprehensive Economic Development Plan; and
- WHEREAS, a Master Plan for said 530 acres of land was developed in 2011, but not adopted due to stated concerns about unresolved concerns about infrastructure costs, connectivity and lack of agreement about viable development of potential uses in the area; and
- WHEREAS, revisions to Northfield’s Land Development Regulations in 2011 included a zoning district classification for the annexed land, but did not develop further land use controls for this area; and
- WHEREAS, further revisions to Northfield’s Land Development Code were adopted by Ordinance No. 968 in 2015; and
- WHEREAS, the City of Northfield adopted a Climate Action Plan in 2019 which creates policy for agricultural preservation and support; and
- WHEREAS, the City of Northfield acting as the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) adopted a Final Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) in 2023 for a total of 787 acres, 530 of which are currently within the City Limits, identifying two potential scenarios for development in the area; and
- WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield is currently preparing an updated Comprehensive Plan which will be followed by necessary revisions to the official controls known as the Land Development Code (Chapter 34 of the City’s Code of Ordinances); and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission, recognizing a need for a moratorium, acted at its meeting on February 15, 2024 to impose a moratorium on new or expanded development, planning, and zoning applications and permissions and the establishment of any uses and recommends that the City Council adopt an interim ordinance to formalize that recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that placing a moratorium on new or expanded development, planning, and zoning applications and permissions and the establishment of any uses is needed to protect the planning process as well as the health, safety and welfare of the public, and is in the public's best interests. The moratorium will allow the Planning Commission and the City Council sufficient time to develop and adopt the 2045-horizon citywide Comprehensive Plan and subsequently complete any study potential changes to the city's related official controls, including the LDC and to determine whether it is necessary or advisable for the City to amend its regulations.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield hereby recommends the City Council adopt an interim ordinance in accordance with Minnesota Statute Chapter 462.355, Subd. 4 to prohibit development in the AUAR area to protect the planning process as well as the health, safety and welfare of the public, while the Comprehensive Plan and official controls are revised; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission direct Community and Economic Development staff to review the Climate Action Plan, study the climate and environmental impacts of development in this area including any increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and/or greenhouse gas emissions, evaluate potential feasible development opportunities based upon the values and desired outcomes stated in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan, once adopted, and develop realistic fiscal impact analysis for this area.

PASSED by the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield on this ____ day of _____, 2024.

Betsey Buckheit, Chair

Member

VOTE: ____ BUCKHEIT ____ HEISLER ____ KUHLMANN
 ____ MENARD ____ NOWAK ____ SCHROEER ____ STAGER