

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2024-008

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL FOR A ZONING
MAP AMENDMENT 113 LINDEN ST. S.

WHEREAS, The Masonic Temple Association (the “applicant”), seeks a Zoning Map Amendment, pursuant to Northfield City Code, Ch. 34, Sec. 8.5.14, to amend the zoning map from R1-B: Low Density Residential to C1-B: Downtown for 113 Linden St. S., Northfield, MN 55057 (PID 2236451008) located in Rice 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, all required notices regarding the public hearing were properly made; 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, 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 R1-B: Low Density Residential to C1-B: Downtown is recommended to City Council for approval.

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

Chair

Member

VOTE:

___ BUCKHEIT

___ HEISLER

___ KUHLMANN

___ MENARD

___ NOWAK

___ SCHROEER

___ STAGER

EXHIBIT A

113 Linden St. S. (PID 2236451008) located in Rice County, Minnesota.

That part of the West 138 Feet of Lots 9 and 10, in Block 5, in the State Subdivision of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 36, Township 112, Range 20, City of Northfield, Rice County, Minnesota, described as follows: Beginning at the Southeast Corner of the West 138 Feet of said Lot 10; thence West, along the South line of said Lot 10, a distance of 62.78 Feet; thence North 0°28'41" West, parallel with the West line of said Lot 10, a distance of 59.67 Feet; thence North 53°36'30" East, a distance of 16.36 Feet; thence North 0°28'41" West, a distance of 62.62 Feet to the North line of said Lot 9; thence East, along the North line of said Lot 9, a distance of 49.53 Feet to the Northeast Corner of the West 138 Feet of said Lot 9; thence South 0°28'41" East, a distance of 132.00 Feet to the point of beginning.

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.

The Conservation and Development Map and the Framework Map “are intended to be general guidelines, which may change over time as growth occurs.” Both identify the parcel as a civic use located within the Neighborhood Conservation and Neighborhood Central districts respectively. Both maps also identify the property directly across 2nd St. W. as Redevelopment/Intensification Sites and Corridor respectively, priming property adjacent to the site for redevelopment. Because the site is not consistent with the residential uses that the Neighbor Conservation and Neighborhood Central designations exist to protect, and because of the proximity to areas designated for redevelopment, the rezoning of the property is not inconsistent with the general guidance provided by these maps.

The proposed rezoning meets objective 3 in the Land Use Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. *LU 3 - Encourage a compact development pattern, and support infill, redevelopment and land intensification.* The rezoning allows for an intensification of uses on a site well-equipped to accommodate moderate intensification. The site has a small off-street parking lot, is well served by sidewalks, streets, and other infrastructure, and the current occupant uses the site on a limited basis.

The proposed rezoning meets strategy 5.1 in the Land Use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. *LU 5.1 - Encourage small-scale retail and service commercial uses to locate in the downtown area.* The parcel is adjacent to properties currently zoned C1-B: Downtown, and is not used, and was not constructed to serve the residential use directed by the current zoning. Allowing additional potential commercial uses, including service or small-scale retail on the site would increase economic activity around the area identified for redevelopment by the Comprehensive Plan and zoned C1-B.

The economic development goal established in the Comprehensive Plan includes “increasing the availability of commercial and industrial land.” Rezoning the currently underutilized parcel to C1-B: Downtown directly meets this goal, adding the property to commercially zoned land, and allowing for intensification. The proposed rezoning is also consistent with maintaining Northfield’s sense of place by utilizing an existing building.

The rezoning also supports the following strategies from the Economic Development chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

ED 1.4 Adopt a regulating policy that accommodates and provides incentives for infill and redevelopment and land intensification opportunities.

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 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.

(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 R1-B: Low Density Residential zoning district is to:

- (1) The R1 district should generally apply to those areas designated as "Neighborhood Central" on the framework map of the comprehensive plan.
- (2) The Residential (R1) district generally includes the established neighborhoods surrounding downtown Northfield that are characterized by traditional urban development qualities such as a grid pattern street network, sidewalks, and a range of single-family, two-family, and some multi-family dwellings on smaller lots. The purpose of the R-1B district is to continue to support single-family, two-family, and three-family attached and detached dwellings within the existing character of the city's older neighborhoods. The essential, existing character of the R1 district should be reinforced with any infill or redevelopment of properties. The primary intent of this zone is to strengthen the character of existing historic neighborhoods within Northfield and to protect and enhance the unique character of those existing neighborhoods, particularly in locations where this character may be most susceptible to change.

The parcel does not serve a residential use, and does not meet the intent of the R1 district in this regard. The existing use is a legal non-conforming use as a Private Club, as the Masonic Temple has been located on the site for several decades predating the adoption of the existing LDC. The small lot size will remain and is consistent with the existing character of the neighborhood. The existing zoning is poorly equipped to deal with non-residential uses outside of those permitted via a Conditional Use Permit. The rezoning of this site will bring the Private Club use into legal conforming status, and guide any future development in a manner compatible with properties adjacent to historically residential areas.

The purpose of the C1-B: Downtown zoning district is to:

- (1) The C1 district applies to those areas designated as "Core," "Center" and, in part, "Corridor" on the Framework map of the Comprehensive Plan.
- (2) The C1 district, which includes Northfield's historic town square, the Cannon River, Northfield's original flour mill, and historically preserved commercial center, creates Northfield's brand and a unique sense of place.

(3) The purpose of the Downtown (C1) district is to sustain the historic central business district, make the Highway 3 corridor a more integral and attractive part of Downtown, provide design transitions to surrounding zoning districts, provide a strong relationship to the Cannon River and thus enhance the beauty, appreciation and benefits of the river, and to augment and increase Downtown viability and prosperity.

(4) The C1 District aims to provide a compact, pedestrian friendly, active mix of land uses including business, hospitality, offices and services, housing, arts and culture, government, public gathering places and points of interest for residents and visitors alike.

(5) The design standards of this district reflect the character of the historic downtown and will help create a sense of arrival and center by locating buildings close to the sidewalk or road, providing compatible facades along the Cannon River, building intimate places for people to gather outdoors, or minimizing negative effects on residential neighborhoods.

This parcel supports the intent or purpose of the C1-B district. It is directly adjacent to parcels identified as Redevelopment/Intensification Sites on the Conservation and Development map of the comprehensive plan (south across 2nd St. W). That map also identifies the site as a Civic Use. The parcel is located two blocks from Highway 3 and commercial uses along it, and one block from the new Transit Station, connected to these destinations by sidewalks which reinforces the compact, pedestrian friendly, and active mix of land uses intended for the C1-B district. The parcel is identified as a civic use on the Framework map,

The structure features a brick facade and is one story tall with an exposed basement on the south side, the front of the building faces Linden Street and is connected by pedestrian access consistent with the design standards of the district. The size of the building is relatively small, comparable to, or smaller than the residential uses adjacent to it, providing an appropriate transition between the existing residential uses and any future redevelopment on adjacent sites.

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

There is existing sewer and water infrastructure on Linden St. S. and 2nd St. W. Road infrastructure exists and the sidewalk network is complete in this area of town, providing connections between St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges, Downtown, the Transit Station, and other local amenities.

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

Changing the zoning from R1-B: Residential to C1-B: Downtown will require future development to adhere to buffering standards between zoning districts at the time of redevelopment. The parcel is a corner parcel, and there is a landscape buffer along the eastern side of the property and the existing building is located along the north side of the property