

Updated Northfield Preservation Plan

FY25 SHPO Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Pre-Application

City of Northfield

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Application Form

Project Narrative

Application Information

- The application saves automatically. Grantees may log out and log back in at any time without data loss.
- Collaborate with others on this request by clicking the blue “Collaborate” button in the upper-right corner of this page. Type in their email addresses, add a personalized message, and choose level of permissions. “Can Edit” will allow them to answer questions without submitting the final version of the application. “Can Submit” will allow them to answer questions AND submit the application. Click here to learn more about Collaborating.
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Project Categories*

Please indicate which one of the following categories your project falls under.

1. Comprehensive Planning

Project Selection (10 points)*

Describe why you have selected this project and why it is a priority for your CLG.

The goal of this project is to produce a preservation plan to guide the City and its Heritage Preservation Commission in preserving the unique cultural heritage of the city, including appropriate application of design guidelines, regular assessments of properties, and ongoing education and outreach activities. The city is well known for its nationally listed Historic Downtown Commercial District, but is operating with a preservation plan from 1992 and has a need for an updated plan that will address current challenges and previous shortcomings.

In 2016, the City of Northfield ("City") completed its Northfield Commercial Historic District Survey Revision Project, an effort funded in part by a CLG grant from SHPO. The consultants documented their reevaluation of the buildings that had been included in the original National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Downtown Commercial District in 1979 and reviewed 38 adjacent properties for potential inclusion. Evaluation of the existing and additional properties was based on information in the “Northfield Historic District National Register Form” (1978), the Northfield Downtown Guidebook (1982), the Northfield Preservation Plan (1992), Northfield: The History and Architecture of a Community (1999), and the City of Northfield Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines (2004) and records contained at the Northfield Historical Society and in the archives of St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges. The updated 2016 survey focused on the Downtown Commercial District, and did not include a reexamination of residential, industrial, or civic areas. As a result of the 2016 resurvey, the Downtown Commercial District was expanded to include several new additional buildings.

The HPC continues to review applications for Certificates of Appropriateness in the Historic-Overlay district and works with property owners to find cost-effective and historically appropriate solutions to maintenance and façade improvement. In partnership with the Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Economic Development Authority, the City has made various forms of financial incentives and assistance available to fund a variety of restoration and rehabilitation projects. However, the buildings continue to age, and the cost of maintaining, rehabilitating, and retrofitting buildings continues to increase, and economic conditions and climate change exacerbate certain challenges associated with owning historic buildings. With a goal of

becoming a carbon-neutral city, navigating these challenges while preserving historic buildings is a high priority for our community.

On November 12, 2020, the Archer House, a building from 1877, burned down. An integral part of Historic Downtown Northfield, it hosted multiple businesses, including a hotel, multiple restaurants and several retail operations. The approval process was fraught with controversy surrounding the COA to demolish the damaged building and approval of the new building. The City has been pursuing an update to Bridge Square, a contributing property, but one which has undergone substantial changes from its days as a wagon turn-around and horse-watering area. The City is also working with the Post Company and MN DNR to reconstruct the historic dam on the Cannon River into a rock rapids for economic and ecological reasons. It is also important to note that the City's Riverwalk is aging and nearing potential historic status, but is also in need of investment due to the increased intensity and frequency of flooding in the historic district. All of these projects have significant potential to alter the course of preservation in Northfield and having a well-developed plan that incorporates best practices from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings to navigate these and other issues will be vital to successful preservation in the city.

The City and the HPC want to ensure that with the adoption of a new comprehensive plan and Land Development Code, changes to the city are guided in a way that retains and strengthens the historic characteristics for which the city is known.

Project Description (20 points)*

Please provide a detailed description of the project by describing what you propose to do in the sequence it will be done and how it will be done.

Provide all information requested for the project category checked above as outlined in the CLG Grants Manual.

1. Ensure the project has sufficient funding to go forward. In order for it to have widespread support, multiple funding streams will be needed. Along with the City's contribution, the City may pursue additional applicable grants.
2. Hire a qualified organization to research the historical context of the City, including the Commercial Historic District ("the District"). Evaluate the Northfield Preservation Plan (1992), assess what remains pertinent and what needs to be updated based on community and stakeholder engagement. The results of this step will become the foundation for strategies for the identification, evaluation, and preservation of historic resources in the city.
3. Based upon the findings of the historical context research, develop goals and priorities for the District as a whole, and for each of the properties and sites within the District. Solicit and incorporate input from stakeholders, including but not limited to residents, City staff, current and former members of the HPC, the Northfield Historical Society, Friends of Downtown Northfield, property owners, Northfield Chamber of Commerce, local business owners, and others.
4. Adopt and incorporate the Preservation Plan as supplemental to the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Project Team (10 points)*

List project participants, their qualifications, and what roles and responsibilities they will have in this project.

City of Northfield: Ben Martig, City Administrator; Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner; Jake Reilly, Community Development Director; Mathias Hughey, Associate City Planner; Emery John, Community Development Program Associate

City of Northfield staff will co-guide the plan with the HPC and selected consultants, ensuring that the historical context is fully developed and that the goals and strategies- are meaningful, descriptive, equitable, actionable, and limit the need for interpretation.

Heritage Preservation Commission board members (current):

Sarah Beimers
 Cliff Clark
 Baird Jarman
 Amy Machacek Shonka
 Michael Meehan
 Robert Stangler
 Aaron Street
 Anna Forbord
 Cameron McMillan

HPC members will co-guide the plan with the City of Northfield staff, ensuring that historical context is fully developed and that the goals and priorities - for the District and for its properties - are meaningful, descriptive, fair, applicable and limit the need for interpretation. HPC members will volunteer their time as appropriate to provide feedback on plan drafts

Northfield Historical Society:
 Executive Director – Sean Allen
 President – Aaron Street

Will provide historical context

Consultant (to be identified)

Conduct stakeholder engagement including the general public, city boards and commissions, city staff, colleges, students/youth, building & business owners, etc.

Timeline (10 points)*

List key milestones, in the order they will be completed, and target dates for completion.

April, 2025 - Communicate grant reception, goals and objectives to project participants

April, 2025 - July, 2025 - research qualified Preservation Plan organizations and begin first phase of plan (historical context).

June, 2025 - June, 2026 - throughout plan development, seek input from project participants, through meetings, surveys and other methods to ensure voices are heard and ideas vetted. City staff and HPC to guide project, verify that ideas and recommendations align with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and the Historic and Architectural Survey Manual.

July, 2026-December, 2026 - finalize Northfield's Preservation Plan document, presenting to City Council for approval.

Community Impact, Public Benefit and Outreach (15 points)*

Include who will benefit and how they will benefit, describe how you will inform others about the project and share its results, and summarize community support for the project.

The Northfield Commercial Historic District has long been a vibrant part of residents' daily life. When so many smaller town downtowns struggle to keep businesses afloat, Northfield's storefronts and residences have generally been occupied and at least modestly successful, and vacancy rates remain low. People seeking to open businesses recognize the natural draw - for both residents and visitors - of the charm of the District, with its façades reminiscent of the days of horses and buggies. It is also important to preserve tangible evidence of the shared cultural heritage of Northfield, a city with a long association with progressive social movements including the suffragist and temperance movements, both of which were physically tied to the Lyceum Building, Northfield's oldest building. Building owners understand that when they consider exterior changes to their buildings, the changes must be reviewed for conformance to the Historic Overlay District's guidelines so that the District retains its historical integrity and continues to appeal to shoppers and residents. When new structures are proposed, those with a stake in the District rightfully expect that they will support the ambiance, charm and vitality that make downtown Northfield attractive.

The City will benefit by retaining qualities - among which are the charm of the Northfield Commercial Historic District - that make it attractive for people to live, work and visit Northfield. The Defeat of Jesse James Days is successful in no small part due to the downtown core appearing similar to what it did in September, 1876 when the James-Younger Gang attacked, serving as a convincing backdrop for the re-enactment that draws visitors from all over the world. It is unlikely that even many locals would attend if the event was held in a shopping center parking lot. Those witnessing the re-enactment are transported in no small part due to the visual congruence of the attack, the appearance and behavior of the actors and buildings in the District.

The HPC will benefit as they will have a Preservation Plan to guide them when questions and concerns inevitably arise about what can and should be done for buildings contained in the locally designated Northfield Historic District. Their ability to recommend actions will be able to be made from an informed, unbiased document. It should reduce their workload, since they will not need to research each new request on an adhoc basis (i.e. they will not need to "reinvent the wheel" with each modification inquiry).

The District business owners will have had input into both the plan creation process and the final document. Their buy-in of the process and the plan is critical to being able to maintain the NRHP designation. It also means that the owners will better understand what can and cannot be done with their buildings and recognize that such a plan levels the playing field among the business in the District. They will have had a voice in describing how the District can continue to develop and attract vibrant businesses and to be a destination for residents and visitors alike. Preserving the existing buildings also provides affordable commercial spaces at a time when brick-and-mortar retail is struggling nationally, and construction costs continue to rise.

Northfield residents take pride in living here. They recognize that among many things, the District contributes to the quality of life. A safe, walkable downtown area with charming, fashionable stores and convenient living are desirable attributes for its residents.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Defeat of Jesse James Days committee would both benefit from having a plan. Knowing that the City and the HPC are committed to retaining the vibrancy of the District allows them to plan accordingly.

Final Product

Provide a concise description of products that will result from the project. You may upload any documentation you think is necessary.

Northfield Historic Preservation Plan

We envision a document that guides preservation in the city for the next 20 years, setting priorities, identifying strategies, and a timeline for ongoing preservation activities, including re-surveys, potential designations, and managing inevitable changes to historic resources including the Downtown Commercial District.

The Plan will be composed of the following suggested sections:

1. Introduction – a narrative description of the role of the HPC, the value of preservation to the community, and the purpose of the plan.
2. History and Context – A narrative chapter including a timeline of the development of Northfield from 1855 to present, describing unique characteristics of Northfield's development and establishing a baseline for historical significance. Will include an overview of the results of the public engagement process.
3. Analysis – a narrative chapter tying the Preservation Plan to the updated Comprehensive Plan by identifying goals and actions preservation is best situated to accomplish or support, and goals specific to the Preservation Plan.
4. Goals, Strategies, and Actions – a chapter composed of actionable recommendations nested under relevant goals to provide clear, measurable actions and outcomes to stakeholders including elected and appointed officials and city staff.
5. Appendices – including documentation of the public engagement process, additional research, and resources.

Statewide Preservation Plan (15 points)*

Indicate at least **two objectives and their corresponding goal(s)** of the 2022-2032 Statewide Preservation Plan stated below that your project supports, and discuss how the project reflects each goal and objective indicated. (Grantees may choose two objectives from multiple goals)

Goal 1: Facilitate Connections and Cultivate Partnerships

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. Foster, strengthen, and expand relationships among and with communities and groups throughout MN
2. Increase knowledge of and build support for historic preservation among government officials
3. Clarify and coordinate roles to improve preservation outcomes

Goal 2: Expand and Share Information, Skills, and Access**Goal 2 Objectives:**

1. Increase capacity for the identification, evaluation, and designation of historic resources
2. Improve and expand delivery of preservation information
3. Develop public outreach methods to reach new participants and nontraditional audiences
4. Increase awareness and understanding of historic preservation programs, activities, and benefits for new and existing audiences

Goal 3: Develop Proactive Strategies That Advance Equity, Expand Access, Increase Diversity, and Foster Inclusion**Goal 3 Objectives:**

1. Focus on inclusive preservation planning that reflects diverse communities and experiences and respects all communities' goals and visions for their future so that all can share in the benefits
2. Increase representation and recognition of places important to diverse communities
3. Work to better understand, measure, document, and address inequities in the preservation field, education, and hiring practices
4. Engage a more diverse audience; listen to better identify, understand, and address broader perspectives
5. Acknowledge that achieving equity and diversity goals will require transformation, responsiveness to change, and a recognition of the role of unconscious bias

Goal 4: Promote Economic Benefits and Inspire Innovative Financial Opportunities**Goal 4 Objectives:**

1. Identify and recognize community needs and gaps to inform development of funding tools that address those needs
2. Document program outcomes and publicize economic benefits, incentives, and funding mechanisms
3. Improve access and functionality of existing funding opportunities
4. Work to safeguard existing funding tools and organizations that make preservation happen in Minnesota

Goal 5: Strengthen Links Between Preservation, Sustainability, and Resiliency**Goal 5 Objectives:**

1. Understand potential risks to historic and cultural resources; identify threats and possible solutions
2. Rethink large collective issues by adopting whole-system approaches with new and existing partners
3. Prioritize resiliency and disaster preparedness planning
4. Improve the state's ability to respond to emergencies and predicted environmental changes that will impact historic and cultural resources

Goal 3: Develop Proactive Strategies That Advance Equity, Expand Access, Increase Diversity, and Foster Inclusion**Goal 3 Objectives:**

1. Focus on inclusive preservation planning that reflects diverse communities and experiences and respects all communities' goals and visions for their future so that all can share in the benefits
2. Increase representation and recognition of places important to diverse communities
3. Work to better understand, measure, document, and address inequities in the preservation field, education, and hiring practices

4. Engage a more diverse audience; listen to better identify, understand, and address broader perspectives
5. Acknowledge that achieving equity and diversity goals will require transformation, responsiveness to change, and a recognition of the role of unconscious bias

The city of Northfield has consistently adopted goals and strategies to address equity concerns. The updated Comprehensive Plan moves from treating equity as a separate issue to one that is integrated throughout the plan. The proposed Preservation Plan would be consistent with this ethos. As the demographics in Northfield shift, it is imperative that the story of the city, including the contributions of marginalized groups, be told in a way that is relevant to younger generations, and that the case for and actions of preservation resonate with the shifting demographics. Like many communities with strong preservation traditions, many of the original preservationists in Northfield are reaching an advanced age and looking to younger generations to pick up the mantle. An updated Preservation Plan can engage with these prospective preservationists to ensure that preservation in the city moves forward in a way that increases access, equity, and representation.

Goal 4: Promote Economic Benefits and Inspire Innovative Financial Opportunities

The City recognizes that preserving the District's character is paramount to preserving the quality of life and attractiveness to residents and businesses. To quote the Minnesota Statewide Preservation Plan 2022-2023, "historic preservation leads to significant positive economic impacts, including job creation, increased property values, and heritage tourism." In Northfield, our historic downtown properties vastly outperform other properties in the city and county on a value-per-acre basis. This speaks to the efficient use of land and resources of these properties, but may also indicate a disproportionate tax burden, complicating the economics of preservation in the city. It also indicates how valuable to the city the historic downtown is. An updated preservation plan would explore financial incentives, that would improve the economic proposition of owning an historic property.

Applicant Information/Project Summary/Budget Information

Application Information

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Name and Address of CLG*

City of Northfield
 Attn: Mathias Hughey
 801 Washington St
 Northfield, MN 55057

Project Name*

Please provide a succinct title for the project.

Updated Northfield Preservation Plan

Amount Requested*

\$43,000.00

Match Offered*

Must be at least 30% of total costs. If you are unsure of how much of a match is needed for your project, check your budget template.

\$12,900

Budget and Budget Justification (20 points)*

Please download the budget template provided to save, fill out, and upload when completed.

In addition to completing and uploading the budget template:

Clearly describe each line item/category indicated on the budget template and the costs associated with each line item/category indicated on the budget template.

FY25 CLG Grant Budget Template.xlsx Consultant Fee - The City has received an estimate of \$30,000 to \$43,000 for the development of a preservation plan. The consultant fee includes two in-person workshops with City staff at strategic points in the development of the preservation plan, up to five in-person public meetings/workshops with stakeholders, and up to two in-person dedicated meetings with specific stakeholder groups (e.g. business owners, residents, other neighborhoods). The City is planning for the full project cost of \$43,000, resulting in a request of \$30,100 with a 30% match of \$12,900 coming primarily from in-kind and donated services.

Volunteer - We anticipate that approximately 80 hours of volunteer work would be required over the course of developing the plan. This would include even coordination and outreach, and editing and revisions to plan drafts, and potentially research. Volunteer contribution was calculated at a value of \$36.31 per hour for a total donated services contribution of \$2,900.

Staff - We anticipate that staff will contribute a minimum of 100 hours to the development of a draft plan. This would include event coordination, coordinating with the consultant, providing outreach and volunteer coordination, report generation, staff salary starts at \$100 per hour, for a total in-kind match of \$10,000.

Authorized Representative*

City's Authorized Representative.

Mathias Hughey

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- CH5-HistoricResources - Stillwater.pdf
- FY25 CLG Grant Budget Template.xlsx