

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 2025-001

RECOMMENDATION OF TEXT AMENDMENTS TO ADDRESS SHORT TERM
RENTALS, 20% DENSITY LIMITATION AND UPDATES TO THE PERMITTED USE
TABLE

- WHEREAS, In 2019, it was determined that policies related to the Rental program warranted review and updating to include modern language, current best practices, and more structure to manage non-compliant properties. Hiring a consultant to carry out the bulk of this work was identified as a need, and the HRA Board sponsored funds to assist with consultant services; and
- WHEREAS, the first phase of recommended policies and procedures was adopted by the City Council via a series of Ordinances including Ord. 1031 through Ord. 1033 in June 2022; and
- WHEREAS, to respond to further recommendations by the consultant, staff developed amendments to Chapters 30 and 34 for rental license provisions related to short-term rental licensing and rental license densities to ensure the general health, safety and welfare of the population; and
- WHEREAS, the Northfield Land Development Code, found in chapter 34 of the Northfield Legislative Code, is established to classify all property in such manner as to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the city; and
- WHEREAS, all required notices regarding the public hearing were properly made; and
- WHEREAS, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on March 20, 2025, and received public testimony regarding the proposed land development code amendments; and,
- WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommends a rationale for amending the Land Development Code related to rental licensing, specifically short-term rentals and density restrictions; and
- WHEREAS, the Planning Commission found that the proposed amendments meet the standards in Northfield City Code, Chapter 34, the Land Development Code, for a text amendment; and
- WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed and recommended approval to the City Council of the text amendments; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission hereby recommends to the Mayor and City Council the following amendments to Chapter 34 of the City Legislative Code.

PASSED by the Planning Commission of the City of Northfield on this 17th day of April 2025.

Chair

Member

VOTE: ___ KUHLMANN ___ SCHROEER ___ BUCKHEIT
 ___ HOLLERAN ___ HOLMES ___ NOWAK ___ SCHMIDT

EXHIBIT A

Planning Commission Findings

Land Development Code Approval Criteria

When reviewing a zoning text 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.

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Criterion met:

Strategic Plan (2021-2024):

- Housing Availability
 - Increase availability of housing at all levels and increase affordability for cost-burdened households.
 - Improved housing quality throughout the city.

Comprehensive Plan (2008):

- Housing Objective 1- Housing will strengthen the unique physical character of the community.
- HS 4.4 Enforce rental ordinances that provide for minimums in housing maintenance.
- HS 4.5 Enforce blight standards for all city residences.
- HS 4.6 Revise City zoning and other applicable ordinances to ensure implementation of these Objectives and Strategies.
- LU4 Facilitate the creation of residential areas with strong neighborhood qualities.

Legislative Code in general:

These proposed amendments respond to the stated purpose and scope for a rental licensing program:

The city recognizes the need for an organized, systematic inspection program of residential housing within the city to ensure rental housing meet city and state housing safety, health, fire, building, and zoning codes, and to provide a more effective system for compelling the correction of code violations and the proper maintenance of rental property within the city. Further, the most effective system to provide for rental inspections is the creation of a program requiring the licensing of all residential rental housing within the city to ensure properties meet applicable requirements and to facilitate an orderly inspection schedule. This rental licensing program is intended to protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the entire community.

(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 City of Northfield carries out the policies of the comprehensive plan by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the city. This Land Development Code is adopted to protect and promote the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the city.

The LDC lists sixteen purposes for similar regulations. All of the proposed ordinance recommendations meet the following:

- Maintain and enhance the community's distinct small-town character.
- Encourage growth in infill locations as the desired location of development with expansion on the edge of the city a secondary priority.
- Create residential community areas with strong neighborhood qualities including pedestrian-friendly streets, community gathering spaces, and basic commercial needs within walking distance.
- Encourage the development of neighborhoods that incorporate a variety of housing types to serve the needs of a diverse population.
- Allow for places with a mixture of uses that are distinctive and contribute to the city's overall vitality.
- Promote an ethic of sustainability in all activities to ensure that proposed development and redevelopment will, at a minimum, conserve energy and natural resources.
- Minimize vehicle traffic by providing for a mixture of land uses, pedestrian-oriented development, compact community form, safe and effective multi-modal traffic circulation (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular), and adequate on- and off-street parking facilities.
- Encourage vibrancy in the downtown core and fringe areas.

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

Criterion met: The provision does not necessarily anticipate additional units or users of the wastewater, water, or transportation systems. The system has sufficient capacity for growth.

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

Criterion met: No buffer or transition required between residential uses.