



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
northfieldmn.gov

Meeting Agenda

Environmental Quality Commission

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA

The proposed consent agenda is included on the Council Chamber screens. The purpose of a consent agenda is to allow for routine motions, resolutions, and ordinances, or those previously discussed with consensus made, to be passed with one motion. These are still important and necessary considerations and full background memo and materials are publicly available on the website and a copy on the table in the room. Board/Commission Members may ask questions for clarification of an item. If a Member wants to discuss an item, our rules request it be made by advance notice by noon on the Monday immediately prior to the meeting date to the Chair and Staff Liaison, or without said prior notice, during the approval of the agenda. The agenda was passed earlier including the consent agenda.

1. [26-140](#) February 18, 2026 EQC Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [1 - February 18, 2026 EQC Meeting Minutes](#)

2. [Res. 2026-030](#) Consider a Motion of Support for Resolution Proclaiming April 25, 2026 as Earth Day in Northfield.

Attachments: [2026 Earth Day Resolution](#)

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

Persons may take one opportunity to address the Board/Commission for two (2) minutes (not including interpreter's time) on any topic, even if on the agenda, with the condition that they may not speak on the same item later in the meeting. No notification of the Chair is required. However, speakers are asked to complete a sign up card. Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the recording secretary. Questions must include name and information on how to contact. You may use the back side of the comment cards available in the meeting room. Persons cannot gift their 2 minute speaking time to other members of the public.

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

REGULAR AGENDA

Persons that wish to speak on a regular agenda item must provide name and address by completing & submitting a sign up card. Persons may also contact the staff liaison via the City's website no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the meeting. The Chair will call up individuals to speak, based on preregistration and cards submitted, after the staff report on an item. Please be respectful of the public's and the Commission's time. Members of the public wishing to speak must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Speak only once for no more than two minutes (not including interpreter's time) on the topic unless the speaker is addressed by the Commission;
- Identify your relationship to the topic;
- Have a spokesperson or two for your group to present your comments;
- Persons wanting a response to a question must submit the question in writing to the recording secretary, including name and how you would like to be contacted.

3. [26-141](#) Update on Amendments to the Sustainable Building Policy (Section 8.06)

- Attachments:** [1 - Resolution Amending 8.06 Sustainable Building Policy](#)
[2 - 8.06 Sustainable Building Policy Amendment \(Redline\)](#)
[3 - 8.06 Sustainable Building Policy Amendment \(Clean\)](#)
[4 - EQC SBP Presentation](#)

4. [26-142](#) 2026-2027 Work Plan Updates

- Attachments:** [1 - 2026-2027 Work Plan Tracker](#)
[2 - 2026-2027 Work Plan Final Initiatives](#)

STAFF UPDATES

5. [26-143](#) Staff Update

ADJOURNMENT



Legislation Text

File #: 26-140, Version: 1

Environmental Quality Commission Meeting Date: March 18, 2026

To: Members of the Environmental Quality Commission

From: Matt Bailey, Meeting Associate

February 18, 2026 EQC Meeting Minutes

Action Requested:

Please review the February 18, 2026 EQC Meeting Minutes and approve or approve with amendments.

Summary Report:

N/A

City Plans & Policies Relevance:

N/A

Alternative Options:

N/A

Financial Impacts:

N/A

Tentative Timelines:

N/A



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Meeting Minutes - Draft Environmental Quality Commission

Wednesday, February 18, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Provancha called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: 8 - Chair Michael Provancha, Commissioner Bruce Anderson, Commissioner Janet Petri, Commissioner George Kinney, Commissioner Susannah Shmurak, Vice Chair Rob Hanson, Commissioner Ava Podracky and Commissioner Kimberly Haroldson

Also present: Erica Zweifel, Mayor of the City of Northfield; Sara Pabich, Sustainability Coordinator; Risi Karim, Assistant to the City Administrator; Matt Bailey, Meeting Associate; Alex Halverson, Youth Representative (non-voting)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Petri, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Chair Provancha, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Kinney, Commissioner Shmurak, Vice Chair Hanson, Commissioner Podracky and Commissioner Haroldson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [26-077](#) January 21, 2026 EQC Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Shmurak, seconded by Commissioner Petri, to approve the January 21, 2026 EQC Meeting Minutes. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Chair Provancha, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Kinney, Commissioner Shmurak, Vice Chair Hanson, Commissioner Podracky and Commissioner Haroldson

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS

- Commissioner Petri asked about interest among Commissioners in tabling during Riverwalk during the 2026 season. Petri also informed the Commission about an upcoming presentation on Sunday, February 22 at noon at 512 Washington Street regarding climate change and food choices; about the most recent Citizens Climate Lobby chapter meeting at which Beth Kallestad of MnDOT spoke on building out the

electric vehicle network in the state; and about a recent article on Canary News Network concerning Xcel's bid to reinvent the virtual power plant.

- Commissioner Anderson reported on the lack of updates from the Minnesota Department of Commerce on the Save Energy Minnesota rebate and incentive program rollout, noting that they are still awaiting final approval from the U.S. Department of Energy. Anderson also reported on a recent news article saying that 24 states, including Minnesota, have legislation in the works to allow residential installation of small, plug-in solar. Anderson also reported that his term as Commissioner will end in April.

- Chair Provancha requested an update from staff on the possibility of citywide organics composting.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. [26-078](#) Sustainable Building Policy

Sustainability Coordinator Sara Pabich delivered a presentation on the limitations of City's current Sustainable Building Policy that prevent any new building projects receiving financial assistance from the City to be able to comply with the policy. The EQC discussed the limitations, and Pabich responded to questions and comments from the EQC.

3. [26-079](#) 2026-2027 Work Plan

The EQC discussed the initiatives proposed for the 2026-27 Work Plan with Sustainability Coordinator Sara Pabich. Members of the Commission volunteered to work on each initiative.

1. Energy Efficiency Education for Residents: Commissioners Petri and Podracky
2. Electric Vehicle Community Showcase: Vice Chair Hanson and Youth Representative Halverson
3. Active Transportation Awareness Campaign: Chair Provancha, Vice Chair Hanson, and Youth Representative Podracky
4. Landscaping & Native Planting Research: Commissioners Petri, Shmurak, and Halverson
5. Waste Reduction Library Research: Chair Provancha, Commissioners Shmurak and Haroldson
6. Zero Waste: Recycling and Compost Education Toolkit: Commissioner Haroldson

A motion was made by Commissioner Kinney, seconded by Commissioner Shmurak, to approve the adoption of the six 2026-2027 EQC Work Plan initiatives as discussed. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Chair Provancha, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Kinney, Commissioner Shmurak, Vice Chair Hanson, Commissioner Podracky and Commissioner Haroldson

4. [26-081](#) Consider Motion of Support for Resolution Proclaiming April 24, 2026 as Arbor Day in Northfield.

Sustainability Coordinator Sara Pabich proposed that the EQC consider a Motion of Support for Resolution Proclaiming April 24, 2026 as Arbor Day in Northfield.

A motion was made by Commissioner Anderson, seconded by Commissioner Kinney, to approve a Motion of Support for Resolution Proclaiming April 24, 2026 as Arbor Day in Northfield. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Chair Provancha, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Kinney, Commissioner Shmurak, Vice Chair Hanson, Commissioner Podracky and Commissioner Haroldson

STAFF UPDATES

5. [26-080](#) Staff Update

Sustainability Coordinator Sara Pabich presented updates from City staff. Pabich and Mayor Zweifel responded to questions and comments from the EQC.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Kinney, seconded by Commissioner Shmurak, to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Chair Provancha, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Petri, Commissioner Kinney, Commissioner Shmurak, Vice Chair Hanson, Commissioner Podracky and Commissioner Haroldson



Legislation Text

File #: Res. 2026-030, **Version:** 2

EQC Meeting Date: March 18, 2026

To: Members of the Environmental Quality Commission

From: Sara Pabich, Sustainability Coordinator

Consider a Motion of Support for Resolution Proclaiming April 25, 2026 as Earth Day in Northfield.

Action Requested:

The Environmental Quality Commission is asked to approve a motion to send the attached resolution proclaiming April 25, 2026 as Earth Day in Northfield to the City Council for consideration.

Summary Report:

The City of Northfield's Earth Day aims to inspire awareness of, and appreciation for, the Earth's environment. It is currently observed in more than 140 countries around the world. Earth Day, founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson, was first organized in 1970 to promote ecology and respect for life on the planet as well as to encourage awareness of the growing problems of air, water, and soil pollution.

Northfield will celebrate Earth Day on Saturday, April 25, 2026. The Environmental Quality Commission will have members at the annual Northfield Earth Day Celebration being held at Armory Square Event Center in Northfield.

Alternative Options:

N/A

Financial Impacts:

The City sponsors the Earth Day Celebration. \$500 has been budgeted in the Carbon Reduction Fund for the event.

Tentative Timelines:

Earth Day will be celebrated on April 25, 2026.

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2026-XXX
PROCLAIMING APRIL 25, 2026 AS
EARTH DAY IN NORTHFIELD

WHEREAS, Earth Day is Saturday, April 25, 2026; and,

WHEREAS, Earth Day is celebrated annually to recommit to the goals of a healthy environment and a peaceful, just and sustainable world; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Northfield and our citizens are committed, through the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action Plan, ordinances, policies and our actions, to the preservation and stewardship of our natural landscape, open space and sensitive environmental areas; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Northfield and our citizens are committed to preserve agricultural land and encourage activities that support locally grown food; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Northfield fosters and encourages environmentally-sound businesses and promotes the use of non-motorized transportation; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Northfield acknowledges our collective responsibility for environmental education, stewardship and community sustainability; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Northfield acknowledges that, to "Protect Our Home" - our Town *and* our Earth – we must provide leadership, tap into the expertise and talent of our community and engage the hearts and minds of all citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THAT:

The City Council of the City of Northfield does hereby proclaim the City of Northfield's commitment to the goals and principles of Earth Day.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

That in recognition of Earth Day 2026, and in keeping with our mission to protect and enhance the long-term health of Northfield's natural environment, economy and community, the City of Northfield supports Earth Day by declaring Saturday, April 25, 2026 as Earth Day in Northfield, Minnesota.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Northfield on this first day of April, 2026.

ATTEST

City Clerk

Mayor

VOTE: ___ ZWEIFEL ___ BEUMER ___ DAHLEN ___ HOLMES
___ NESS ___ PETERSON WHITE ___ SOKUP



Legislation Text

File #: 26-141, **Version:** 1

Environmental Quality Commission: March 18, 2026

To: Members of the Environmental Quality Commission

From: Sara Pabich, Sustainability Coordinator

Update on Amendments to the Sustainable Building Policy (Section 8.06)

Action Requested:

The Environmental Quality Commission will receive an update on recent amendments approved by the City Council to the Sustainable Building Policy (Section 8.06).

Summary Report:

The City's Sustainable Building Policy was adopted to support Northfield's Climate Action Plan and its goal of becoming carbon free by 2040, with a focus on reducing emissions from new construction and major renovations that receive City financial assistance. The policy's Northfield Green Requirements (NGR) include calculating greenhouse gas emissions, meeting energy efficiency standards, and evaluating or installing on-site renewable energy when cost effective. These requirements are established by Council and cannot otherwise be modified administratively.

Due to implementation constraints encountered, staff brought forward a proposed amendment to provide short-term administrative flexibility within the Northfield Green Requirements section. On March 3, 2026, the City Council approved an amendment inserting the following language into the policy: "Beginning March 3, 2026, and continuing through an interim period pending a future revision of the Sustainable Building Policy, the Sustainability Coordinator may approve alternative compliance methods, updated modeling standards, or equivalent performance pathways when strict application of the Northfield Green Requirements would prevent implementation of the policy's intent."

Placing this provision within the Northfield Green Requirements section clarifies that the temporary flexibility applies specifically to those requirements. The amendment grants limited, short-term administrative discretion to address implementation challenges and to work directly with developers when strict application of the listed standards is not feasible. The intent is to maintain progress toward meaningful energy performance and greenhouse gas reductions while allowing projects to proceed with clearer expectations and more predictable review timelines.

Over the longer term, staff will undertake a broader revision of the Sustainable Building Policy and anticipate returning to City Council with proposed amendments for consideration in 2026, with a potential effective date of January 1, 2027. These future revisions will be informed by stakeholder input and community engagement to ensure alignment with broader community goals and the Northfield Climate Action Plan.

City Plans & Policies Relevance:

8.06 Sustainable Building Policy
Climate Action Plan

Alternative Options:

N/A

Financial Impacts:

N/A

Tentative Timelines:

N/A

CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MN
CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2026-028
APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO 8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY

WHEREAS, the City Council is authorized to adopt, amend, and repeal policies to advance the health, safety, and general welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, City policies are periodically reviewed and updated to ensure they remain effective, practical, and aligned with adopted plans and community priorities; and

WHEREAS, on November 5, 2019, the City Council adopted the Climate Action Plan, which establishes two primary goals: (1) reducing greenhouse gas emissions through mitigation strategies, including achieving a 100% carbon-free community by 2040; and (2) strengthening community resilience to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the City Council adopted Section 8.06 – Sustainable Building Policy to support implementation of the Climate Action Plan by establishing sustainability requirements for developments receiving City funding; and

WHEREAS, staff has identified opportunities to improve the practical application and administrative implementation of certain provisions of the Sustainable Building Policy to better advance its purpose and intent; and

WHEREAS, providing limited, interim administrative flexibility will allow projects to continue moving forward while broader policy updates are evaluated and considered; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THAT:

1. The City Council approves amendments to the *8.06 Sustainable Building Policy*.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Northfield on this 3rd day of March 2026.

ATTEST


City Clerk


Mayor

VOTE: Y ZWEIFEL Y BEUMER Y DAHLEN Y HOLMES
Y NESS Y PETERSON WHITE *absent* SOKUP

8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Legislation: R2022-001

Date Adopted: 01/04/22

Revised: 05/21/24

VISION AND PURPOSE

The Northfield community is dedicated to building a sustainable environment where current and future generations benefit from climate and community resiliency as reflected in the City's Climate Action Plan. In particular, the City recognizes the risks of climate change and has set a goal of being a carbon free city by 2040. Since the built environment is a significant contributor to Northfield's carbon footprint, it is important that new developments are built to minimize emissions and environmental impact during construction as well as the operation of buildings. For developments that seek City funding incentives, it is reasonable that they meet set sustainability requirements in service to those goals. As such, the City of Northfield adopts the following Sustainable Building Policy.

DEFINITIONS

FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS POLICY, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

- "Coordinator" means the Sustainability Coordinator or their designee.
- "Developer" means the entity, whether public or private, that undertakes New Construction or Major Renovation projects, and to whom the provisions of this policy apply.
- "Facilities" means physical buildings or structures either conditioned or non-conditioned including but not limited to offices, retail stores, parking garages, maintenance buildings, warehouses, apartments, townhomes, single family homes, schools, and park recreational buildings.
- "Financial Assistance" means funds provided for New Construction or Major Renovations projects provided by agreement from the City of Northfield, Northfield Economic Development Authority (EDA), and/or the Northfield Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), including:
 - Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
 - HRA grants and loans, including forgivable loans.
 - EDA grants and loans, including forgivable loans
 - Land write-downs
 - Bonds

8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Legislation: R2022-001

Date Adopted: 01/04/22

Revised: 05/21/24

- Tax abatement
- Low-income housing tax credits
- MIF
- Conduit-bond financing
- Other funds requiring approval by the City of Northfield, Northfield EDA, and/or Northfield HRA

Notwithstanding the above, Financial Assistance does not include environmental remediation pass-through funds, including but not limited to, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Cleanup and Investigation Grants.

- “Financial Tier 1” means any combination of Financial Assistance totaling between \$150,000 and \$300,000.
- –“Financial Tier 2” means any combination of Financial Assistance totaling more than \$300,000
- “Major Renovation Project” means renovation work performed on an existing building or portion thereof consisting of at least 10,000 square feet for non-municipal buildings and 2,500 square feet for municipal buildings, and requiring installation of new mechanical, ventilation, or cooling systems, or the replacement of such systems.
- “New Construction Project” means the planning, design, construction and commissioning of a new building, or an addition of at least 10,000 square feet to an existing building if such addition requires installation of new mechanical, ventilation, or cooling systems.
- “Sustainable Building Rating System” means any of the following:
 - LEED; minimum Silver Certified
 - State of Minnesota B3 Guidelines; Certified Compliant
 - Green Communities; Certified
 - MN Green Communities, if receiving MN Housing funds
 - Parksmart (formerly Green Garage Certification); minimum Silver Certified
 - Equivalent substitute standards may be used at the discretion of the Coordinator.

8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Legislation: R2022-001

Date Adopted: 01/04/22

Revised: 05/21/24

“Northfield Green Requirement” (NGR) means specific measurable standards that New Construction and Major Renovations must meet regardless of sustainable rating system, and which are to be communicated by the Coordinator to the applicant.

Beginning March 3, 2026, and continuing through an interim period pending a future revision of the Sustainable Building Policy, the Sustainability Coordinator may approve alternative compliance methods, updated modeling standards, or equivalent performance pathways when strict application of the Northfield Green Requirements would prevent implementation of the policy’s intent. The NGR includes the following ~~and cannot be altered without Council approval:~~

1. Predicted greenhouse gas emissions: Calculated based on predicted energy use, as ascertained through the sustainability rating system modeling, using utility emissions factors and reported to the City in metric tons of CO₂e
2. Energy efficiency standard: Projects must comply with one of the listed standards for the appropriate sector:
 - a) For residential New Construction and Major Renovation projects:
 1. US Department of Energy Zero Energy Ready Homes or higher within the US Department of Energy’s family of standards or;
 2. Passive House Institute US (PHIUS) or;
 3. Passive House standard.
 - b) For all commercial New Construction and Major Renovation projects:
 1. Sustainable Buildings 2030 standard through design and operation with a payback period of 15 years or;
 2. Demonstrate an improvement of 50% in the proposed building performance rating compared with the baseline building performance rating. Calculate the baseline building performance according to ANSI/ASHRAE/IESNA Standard 90.1–2010, Appendix G using a simulation model.

3. Renewable energy standard

- a) Conduct economic and technical evaluation of providing 2% of building energy load with on-site renewables;
- b) Install if cost-effective using the B3 Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis.

DIRECTIVES

This policy applies to all of the following new construction and major renovation projects:

- Facilities owned or operated by the City of Northfield or the HRA.
- Facilities of which the City or HRA are, or will become, the sole tenant.
- Facilities within the City of Northfield receiving Financial Assistance given the following:
 - Financial Tier 1 – must comply with the policy, unless the applicant can prove that it is not feasible to comply. Facilities must approach design in a good faith attempt to comply with the policy and complete pro forma to prove when not feasible to comply.
 - Financial Tier 2 – must comply with the policy

This policy applies to projects with development applications received after the policy adoption date.

THE POLICY

- New Construction or Major Renovations to which this Policy applies are required to be certified under an eligible Sustainable Building Rating System at the listed rating level and must meet the standards set forth in the NGR. Applicable versions of Sustainable Rating Systems and NGR standards include the most recent or current iteration of a rating system in existence at the time of Financial Assistance application.
- For any projects to which this Policy applies, compliance must be a condition of receipt of Financial Assistance.



8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Legislation: R2022-001

Date Adopted: 01/04/22

Revised: 05/21/24

- Buildings will not advance to the next stage of construction or operation, including necessary permit issuance or certificates of occupancy, without demonstrated, ongoing compliance with this Policy.

8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Legislation: R2022-001

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Revised: 05/21/24

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 1. Sustainable Buildings 2030 standard through design and operation with a payback period of 15 years or;
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- Facilities of which the City or HRA are, or will become, the sole tenant.
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This policy applies to projects with development applications received after the policy adoption date.

THE POLICY

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- For any projects to which this Policy applies, compliance must be a condition of receipt of Financial Assistance.



8.06 SUSTAINABLE BUILDING POLICY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Enabling Legislation: R2022-001

Date Adopted: 01/04/22

Revised: 05/21/24

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Sustainable Building Policy

March 18, 2026

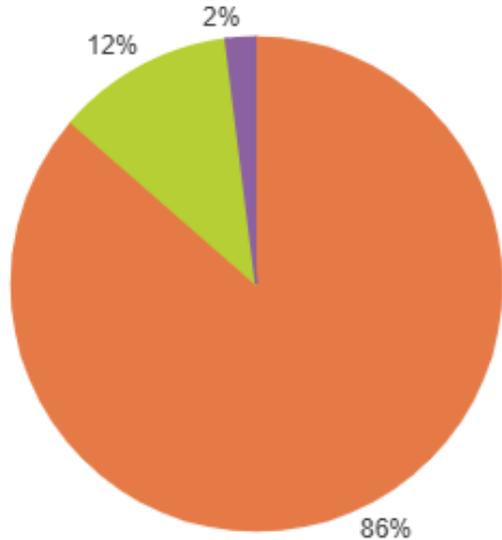
Climate Action Plan



The plan has two main components:

- Decreasing our greenhouse gas emissions through mitigation strategies.
 - 100% carbon-free community by 2040
- Becoming more resilient to prepare for a changing climate

Greenhouse Gas Emission



- In 2020, 86% of the Northfield's greenhouse gas footprint is from the energy used in buildings

Prioritize building strategies



Sustainable Building Projects



- Projects who have complied with the Sustainable Building Policy
 - Kraewood Flats
 - Transit Hub
 - Babcock Park
 - Northfield Ice Arena*



Sustainable Building



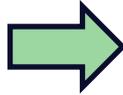
- Incremental construction costs associated with this policy are estimated to be between 5%-7% based on most recent data available

| Passive House Multifamily Projects | # of Units | Cost Year | Cost Baseline | Incremental % |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Large Multifamily | 59 | 2017 | Energy Star | 13.0% |
| Small Multifamily | 17 | 2022 | Conventional Construction | 7.0% |
| Medium Multifamily | 23 | 2023 | Energy Star | 7.5% |
| Large Multifamily (study) | 43 | 2025 | Energy Star | 4.9% |

SBP: Policy Summary

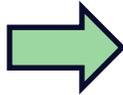


Calculate Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculation



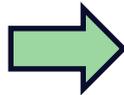
No requirement for greenhouse gas emission reduction or standard

Energy Efficiency Standard



Energy efficiency standards are not clearly achievable by current policy

Renewable Energy Standard



Renewable energy not feasible within the next 3–5 years

Result: Policy does not effectively support energy, emissions reduction, or climate resilience goals.

Short Term: Amendment



“Northfield Green Requirement” (NGR) means specific measurable standards that New Construction and Major Renovations must meet regardless of sustainable rating system, and which are to be communicated by the Coordinator to the applicant. The NGR includes the following and cannot be altered without Council approval: ...”

- Predicted Greenhouse gas emissions
- Energy efficiency Standard
- Renewable Energy Standard

Short Term: Amendment



“Northfield Green Requirement” (NGR) means specific measurable standards that New Construction and Major Renovations must meet regardless of sustainable rating system, and which are to be communicated by the Coordinator to the applicant. **Beginning March 3, 2026, and continuing through an interim period pending a future revision of the Sustainable Building Policy, the Sustainability Coordinator may approve alternative compliance methods, updated modeling standards, or equivalent performance pathways when strict application of the Northfield Green Requirements would prevent implementation of the policy’s intent.** The NGR includes the following and cannot be altered without Council approval:...”

- Predicted Greenhouse gas emissions
- Energy efficiency Standard
- Renewable Energy Standard

Short Term Solution



To Northfield Green Requirements Section Add: **Beginning March 3, 2026, and continuing through an interim period pending a future revision of the Sustainable Building Policy, the Sustainability Coordinator may approve alternative compliance methods, updated modeling standards, or equivalent performance pathways when strict application of the Northfield Green Requirements would prevent implementation of the policy's intent.**

- Provides administrative flexibility in the short term
- Maintains intent of energy performance and emission reductions
- Enables projects to provide forward practically in a realistic timeline

Solutions



Long Term

- i. Conduct a full review and update of the Sustainable Building Policy to create a clear, achievable, and locally appropriate framework that still advances Northfield's carbon-free 2040 goals, with final adoption by Council.

**Sara Pabich,
Sustainability
Coordinator**

Sara.Pabich@northfieldmn.gov





Legislation Text

File #: 26-142, **Version:** 1

EQC Meeting Date: March 18, 2026

To: Members of the Environmental Quality Commission

From: Sara Pabich, Sustainability Coordinator

2026-2027 Work Plan Updates

Action Requested:

EQC Commissioners provide updates of priority items for the 2026-2027 Work Plan.

Summary Report:

EQC members provide work plan updates and progress. The 2026-2027 EQC work plan is attached for reference.

Alternative Options:

N/A

Financial Impacts:

N/A

Tentative Timelines:



Commission: Environmental Quality Commission 2026 Annual Work Plan

| Initiative # 1 | Initiative Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing / Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Event | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Initiative Title: Energy Efficiency Education for Residents | Commissioners: Petri Podracky Anderson – until April 2026 | Target Completion Date April 2027 |
| Progress Q1 January-March: | | |
| Progress Q2 April-June: | | |
| Progress Q3 July-September: | | |
| Progress Q4 October-December: | | |
| Progress Q5 January-March: | | |

| Initiative # 2 | Initiative Type <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing / Annual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Event | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Initiative Title: Electric Vehicle Community Showcase | Commissioners: Hason Halverson | Target Completion Date April 2027 |
| Progress Q1 January-March: | | |
| Progress Q2 April-June: | | |
| Progress Q3 July- September: | | |
| Progress Q4 October -December: | | |
| Progress Q5 January-March: | | |



| Initiative # 3 Initiative Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing / Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Event | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Initiative Title: Active Transportation Awareness Campaign | Commissioners: Hason Provancha Podracky | Target Completion Date April 2027 |
| Progress Q1 January-March: | | |
| Progress Q2 April-June: | | |
| Progress Q3 July- September: | | |
| Progress Q4 October -December: | | |
| Progress Q5 January-March: | | |

| Initiative # 4 Initiative Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing / Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Event | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Initiative Title: Landscaping & Native Planting Research | Commissioners: Petri Haverson Shmurak | Target Completion Date April 2027 |
| Progress Q1 January-March: | | |
| Progress Q2 April-June: | | |
| Progress Q3 July- September: | | |
| Progress Q4 October -December: | | |
| Progress Q5 January-March: | | |

| Initiative # 5 | Initiative Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing / Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Event | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Initiative Title: Waste Reduction Library Research | Commissioners: Shmurak Haroldson Provancha | Target Completion Date April 2027 |
| Progress Q1 January-March: | | |
| Progress Q2 April-June: | | |
| Progress Q3 July-September: | | |
| Progress Q4 October-December: | | |
| Progress Q5 January-March: | | |

| Initiative # 6 | Initiative Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing / Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Event | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Zero Waste: Recycling and Compost Education Toolkit | Commissioners: Haroldson | Target Completion Date April 2027 |
| Progress Q1 January-March: | | |
| Progress Q2 April-June: | | |
| Progress Q3 July-September: | | |
| Progress Q4 October-December: | | |
| Progress Q5 January-March: | | |

Parking Lot: (These items have been considered by the Commission, but not proposed as part of this year’s work plan. If the Commission decides they would like to work on them in the current year, it would need to be approved by a Majority vote of the Commission.)

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1. Energy Efficiency Education for Residents

Goal: Help residents understand cost savings and energy-efficient HVAC practices.

- Collaborate with partners to coordinate educational outreach and materials.
- Research and summarize current incentives, rebates, and best practices.
- Develop a short handout highlighting cost savings and upgrades.

2. Electric Vehicle Community Showcase

Goal: Educate the public about EV adoption, charging infrastructure, and cost savings.

- Organize a showcase event featuring local EV owners, dealerships, and informational displays.
- Prepare a one-page summary or talking points outlining EV adoption, available rebates, and charging options.
- Provide volunteer support to assist with event coordination and engagement on the day of the event.

3. Active Transportation Awareness Campaign

Goal: Increase safety and visibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Create a public education campaign promoting active transportation.
- Support and promote initiatives such as Bike to School Day through volunteering to encourage safe, active travel among youth and families.
- Educate community stakeholders on upcoming and ongoing pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements to support and promote active transportation.
- Focus on low-cost awareness strategies: social media posts, flyers, and research of low cost solutions such as visibility (lights, reflective vests).

4. Landscaping & Native Planting Research

Goal: Promote better use of city parks and private lands through native planting.

- Support and promote native planting initiatives through programs like Lawns to Legumes, increasing pollinator-friendly plants, and encouraging community gardens with partner organizations.
- Research best practices for native planting and community gardens, including pollinator gardens, rain gardens, native grasses and flowers, and shared food-growing spaces.
- Develop resources for residents, including one-pagers on invasive species and recommended native plants, to encourage native gardening and biodiversity.

5. Waste Reduction Library Research

Goal: Explore opportunities for community lending libraries for sustainable items.

- Research what current waste reduction spaces exist in the community (i.e. Carleton Maker Space, Library Repair desk, Swap events happening, etc.)
- Research models like toy libraries, tool libraries, diaper banks, and other reusable item programs.
- Analyze potential benefits and challenges for the community.
- Written summary documenting current community initiatives, ongoing research efforts, and identified best practices to support continued waste reduction (2 pages max)

6. Zero Waste: Recycling and Compost Education Toolkit

Goal: Provide resources to improve household recycling and organics management.

- Develop a draft educational toolkit for recycling and organics outreach, including short handouts, example visuals, and a basic presentation.
- Conduct an internal pilot with City staff or volunteers to gather feedback and identify gaps.
- Finalize the toolkit and produce a brief summary report with findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for potential future expansion or implementation.



Legislation Text

File #: 26-143, **Version:** 1

EQC Meeting Date: March 18, 2026

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Sara Pabich, Sustainability Coordinator

Staff Update

Action Requested:

The EQC receives an update regarding staff activities.

Summary Report:

This update includes items not included as agenda items for this meeting.

Solar on Northfield Community Resource Center:

Solar panels have been installed on the rooftop of the Northfield Community Resource Center. The project was supported by a \$72,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Commerce Solar on Public Buildings Program, covering about 60% of the installation costs. The system is now complete and operational!

Staff are coordinating with the Communications team to create a webpage on the City's website to highlight the solar project and help inform and educate community members about the benefits of installing solar at City facilities, including the potential for reduced utility costs.

For more information on Minnesota Department of Commerce, [click here](https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumer/energy-programs/solar-public-buildings.jsp) [<https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumer/energy-programs/solar-public-buildings.jsp>](https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/consumer/energy-programs/solar-public-buildings.jsp).

Slow Mow Summer:

The City is rebranding *Less Mow May* to *Slow Mow Summer* [<https://beelab.umn.edu/slow-mow-summer>](https://beelab.umn.edu/slow-mow-summer). Recent guidance from the [University of Minnesota Bee Lab](https://beelab.umn.edu/) [<https://beelab.umn.edu/>](https://beelab.umn.edu/) shows that supporting pollinators throughout the growing season is more effective than focusing on May alone. Residents are encouraged to adopt pro-pollinator gardening practices year-round, and the City will expand summer education to share tips and resources to help maximize pollinator benefits.

After reviewing updated scientific information, the City has decided not to adopt a resolution allowing residents to forgo mowing in May. In Minnesota, May is typically a rainy month when turf grass grows rapidly, and letting it grow excessively can stress the lawn if cut too short later. For pollinators, continuous habitat and blooming plants throughout the season are more important than a single-month mowing reduction. For more information, watch this [presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgFMINFJDj0) [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgFMINFJDj0>](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgFMINFJDj0) from the University of Minnesota Bee Lab. Residents are encouraged to focus on [planting pollinator-friendly species and maintaining gardens](https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/planting-and-maintaining-bee-lawn) [<https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/planting-and-maintaining-bee-lawn>](https://extension.umn.edu/landscape-design/planting-and-maintaining-bee-lawn) that provide habitat and forage throughout the summer.

Ice Arena:

Dave Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer presented an update on the Ice Arena to the City Council on March 3. Should you like a “deeper dive” into this update please see the meeting recording is available [here](https://northfield.granicus.com/player/clip/2231?view_id=2&redirect=true) <https://northfield.granicus.com/player/clip/2231?view_id=2&redirect=true>; the Ice Arena presentation begins at approximately the 30-minute mark.

Here are some notable highlights from the update:

Conclusion of Process Review

- Staff followed the appropriate and standard industry process; and
- All required information was submitted in a timely manner; and
- Final solar approval occurs only upon Xcel’s interconnection agreement.

Lessons Learned

- Future project information updates should more clearly communicate that solar is not final until Xcel formally approves interconnection; and
- Grid capacity conditions can change between initial review and formal application; and
- Interconnection approvals can be subject to system upgrade charges, which may affect cost and timing.

Where we Stand with Ice Arena (we are poised well for future and investment was appropriate)

- The ice arena expected life is 75-100 years; and
- Facility is fully “solar ready”
- No redesign is required for future installation
- Full reimbursement for solar panels the City returned
- A short term delay (up to 5-years estimated) does not conflict with our 2040 climate goals.

Designing the facility to be solar ready remains a wise long-term investment

- Xcel is continuing to analyze potential solutions. We expect additional details in the near future

Tree Related Policy and Information:

Shelly Evanson presented to City Council around the current tree related policies, how grants are supporting the removal of diseased trees and about the upcoming tree sale. The meeting recording is available on the [City website](https://northfield.granicus.com/player/clip/2238?view_id=2&redirect=true) <https://northfield.granicus.com/player/clip/2238?view_id=2&redirect=true>.

EQC Tabling Events:

Staff emailed the Commission a volunteer sign-up form for tabling opportunities at the Earth Day event and the Riverwalk Market. Staff request that EQC members sign up by March 23, 2026.

Alternative Options:

NA

Financial Impacts:

NA

Tentative Timelines:

NA