

Comp plan editing rubric

This is a guide which highlights aspects of the plan or places in the text which need your special attention and suggests a strategy for reviewing a large document. It shouldn't prevent you from making any other comments or corrections you believe are necessary.

1. Read the plan all the way through before trying to evaluate and edit. The goal is to get an overall impression of the organization and contents before diving into details.

2. Read Chapters 1 and 2

Chapter 1: Introduction. The introduction previews the plan and the intention of building equity, environmental sustainability/climate, and economic health into *how* the city does its work. This framework asks Northfield to really do things differently and it's a big ask. A very few examples:

For example, **equity** is not an extra something we do, rather Northfield tries to do all its work equitably. The City should seek out many voices, fill gaps in infrastructure or services which currently exist, make government itself more accessible to everyone, ensures decisions to not perpetuate problems or create new disparities, and budgets to enable this work.

For **economic sustainability**, the City looks to the long-term economic health of the community. The CIP should plan projects in conjunction with likely available resources, seek grant funding (with plans for how we maintain what is funded externally or whether we do projects if grants are not successful), and think ahead about the life cycle of its facilities. Development decisions should consider the fiscal impact of the growth as well as projected tax base expansion and consider how development of one kind (or in a particular location) affect what else can be done.

Climate and environment should be deeply embedded in infrastructure planning and design, for example, to promote shifting our dependence on cars and fossil fuels, improving stormwater management, and considering whether the system can manage extreme weather events. City planning and budgeting should be flexible and resilient enough to plan for the costs of climate change and mitigation.

Questions for Chapter 1:

- How clear is this framework (and will it be clear to the public and city staff)?
- Is this framework adequately reflected in the Strategies and Actions contained in the Plan?
- Is there any other introductory material or statements you believe are needed?

Chapter 2: Vision and Values plus decision-making framework. The Plan should realize this vision by making decisions congruent with the values. The Vision and Values section is the one part of the plan where you should resist suggesting major changes because these statements were developed from community input (which we can't change) and framed by you, the Steering

Committee and boards and commissions (again, this is what the community told us and helped us shape). Suggestions for greater clarity or emphasis are welcome.

Decision-making framework: The inspiration for this feature came from Stantec’s [Roseville, MN Comprehensive Plan](#) (starting on page 14). However, staff and your chair and vice chair have struggled with Stantec’s draft of this section which mixed outcomes and measurables (these are goal-less metrics, if you will) and lacked coherence. We worked to have guiding questions and clearer outcomes which you see in this draft but removed the measurables information for the time being. For you:

- Is a decision-making framework something you would like to include at all? If the subject chapters of the Plan are good, this could be unnecessary. Or, it could be a quick intro to how the plan works which is helpful for the public as well as “insiders.”
- If you would like to see this included, think about how it is tied to the Vision and Values, then:
 - what other questions could be asked? These questions should be easily generalizable examples rather than an attempt at an exhaustive list.
 - Same question for outcomes: are there better examples which can illustrate the concepts?
 - what measurables could we include and/or can you suggest ways to help the Council use their strategic planning process to develop tools to help make this plan part of their decision-making?

Chapter 3 Access: This chapter tries to reunite land use and transportation by focusing on access and accessibility to opportunities and destinations (see, for example, SSTI’s [Measuring Accessibility](#) or VTPI’s [Evaluating Accessibility](#)). Stantec interpreted “access” as “more sidewalks and bike lanes;” we have tried to redraft materials to reflect the original and much broader intent to link how and where we build with enabling multiple ways for people to get from one place to another. Suggested plan for review:

Strategies and Actions: although located at the end of each chapter, I recommend starting with these because the preceding text needs to lead to and support these recommendations.

- Are they clear for a variety of audiences?
- Are they clearly tied to vision and values?
- Are important ideas missing or are some not important enough to include?
- Extra credit: what actions could be flagged for possible inclusion in the City’s next strategic plan to do in the next 3-5 years?

Preceding text:

- *Definitions:* Steering committee members found having definitions in the plan very helpful but the definitions included need review for completeness (what was missed?) and relevance (are these terms actually used in the plan? And, if they aren’t specifically used does having a definition help or confuse things?)
- *Narrative:* Does the description and analysis of existing conditions tell a good story in a logical order about how we got to Northfield 2024?

- *Are the strategies supported and suggested by the text?* Ideally, every strategy will have clear links in explanatory text. What needs additional information and what could be considered extraneous?
- *Plan and appendices:* Is more or less information needed in the text? Generally, the intent has been to keep the Plan document short and easy to use with technical information, additional studies, etc. in the appendices. The line between plan and appendix is fluid, however, so consider what should be in the body of the plan and what should be in an appendix.

Future Land Use Map and descriptions of land use types: Land use refers to the general type of activity on the land - residential, commercial, mixed use, etc. distinguished from zoning which regulates how uses are built, sited, etc.

- *Review designations:* Are there any areas you believe should be changed to a different land use in the future? Where and why?
- *Proofread:* Are there any mistakes? A previous version included Central Park in the campus classification, for example, and other small errors.
- *Campus boundaries:* Northfield has struggled with both colleges creeping into residential neighborhoods; this Plan will recommend a clear boundary for campus buildings and guidance for colleges to develop more intensely on their property rather than continuing to use former single-family homes for offices or college-related housing.
- *Downtown expansion:* Can/should downtown expand and, if so, in what direction(s) and how far?

STEP analysis: This section is still under construction with multiple questions still unanswered. Review and consider what you think it's trying to accomplish and what changes are needed.

Chapter 4: Sustainable and secure economic future. This is another silo-bashing chapter. The plan intends to recommend strategies and actions which integrate important subjects; here the focus is on housing and economic development. The recommendations are the same as for Chapter 3:

Strategies and Actions: although located at the end of each chapter, I recommend starting with these because the preceding text needs to lead to and support these recommendations.

- Are they clear for a variety of audiences?
- Are they clearly tied to vision and values?
- Are important ideas missing or are some not important enough to include?
- Extra credit: what actions could be flagged for possible inclusion in the City's next strategic plan to do in the next 3-5 years?

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- *Narrative*: Does the description and analysis of existing conditions tell a good story in a logical order about how we got to Northfield 2024?
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Heat Island effect: should this strategy be included in this part of the plan or incorporated in other locations? Climate/environment issues are important to the Access chapter and also infrastructure. How would you address these ideas?

Chapter 5: Infrastructure. This chapter is unfinished. **Some questions:**

- *What's infrastructure?* What's included so far is certainly infrastructure, but we could think much more broadly and **include** (or repeat) information about streets and street design, consider [social infrastructure](#) (like the library, schools, community organizations) and/or lean into climate and [blue/green infrastructure](#).
- *What else can infrastructure be?* There's been some consideration of "organizational" infrastructure as well. What does that mean? Many have suggested – including staff past and present– that the way the City is organized internally is too siloed to be effective. These issues pop up in many places, including when discussing communication between "the City" and "the People," coordinating public works, planning and housing/economic development initiatives and in the internal evaluation of departmental effectiveness. Dependign upon what you think of this concept or these concerns, tell us what's needed in the 20 years (consistent with the rest of the plan). For extra credit, think about short-term and long-term solutions (or low-hanging/stretch goals for organizational effectiveness) that might play into the strategic plan process.
- *How should we guide infrastructure development?* Depending on what you think about what infrastructure is, tell us what's needed for the next 20 years (which is consistent with the rest of the plan)?

Chapter 6: Implementation: This chapter is also incomplete. The table of "other plans" is important; what else can help the city carry out this plan?