



To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
All city employees; city attorney; board and commission members

From: City of Northfield Leadership Team:

Ben Martig, City Administrator
Lynette Peterson, City Clerk
Risi Karim, Assistant to the City Administrator
Michelle Mahowald, Communications & Human Resources Director
Brenda Angelstad, Finance Director
Jake Reilly, Community Planning & Development Director
Natalie Draper, Director of Library Services
Jeff Schroepfer, Police Chief
Dave Bennett, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Date: July 25, 2025

RE: City Administrator Report for July 2025

Background

Northfield is an open, safe, and welcoming community, recognized for its world-class colleges and historic riverfront downtown, and is dedicated to sustainably enhancing and preserving its vibrant culture, celebrated arts, strong economy, and an excellent quality of life where all can thrive.

This memo is intended to provide a range of City operational reports from employee activity, project updates, community events, meetings and more.

Administrative Services Department

Submitted by Ben Martig, City Administrator

Program Services

Submitted by Risi Karim, Assistant to the City Administrator

Resident Energy Efficiency Rebate Program

Applications for the Energy Efficiency Rebate Program are now closed for the remainder of the year. All funds allocated for the 2025 program have been fully distributed. The rebate application will reopen in January 2026.

Environmental Quality Commission carryout bag engagement

The Northfield Environmental Quality Commission is seeking community input on the topic of charging a pass-through fee for the use of single-use carryout bags. As the City works toward the goals outlined in its Climate Action Plan and Zero Waste Plan, which focus on reducing waste and promoting environmental sustainability, Commissioners are reaching out to both residents and business owners to gather feedback on this potential policy.

To learn more and take the survey, please visit the city's website:

northfieldmn.gov/Bag

City Clerk

Submitted by Lynette Peterson, City Clerk

No report.

Communications & Human Resources Division

Submitted by Michelle Mahowald, Communications & Human Resources Director

Supporting city departments

We are supporting and creating materials for current and upcoming projects and events:

Transportation Network Town Hall (July 29, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.)

northfieldmn.gov/TownHall

- Central Park and Dresden Park Neighborhood Meetings (July 10 and July 23)
northfieldmn.gov/CentralParkProject
northfieldmn.gov/DresdenParkProject
- Night to Unite: Northfieldmn.gov/NightToUnite
- Neighborhood Flooding Improvements
- Ice Arena Groundbreaking (August 14, 4 p.m.)
- Rethink the bag (August 13,
- Rental ordinance
- Factory-made housing
- Business quick reference guide
- Loon Liquors celebration
- Special Services District
- Connecting Business and Community
- Drinking water
- Housing inspections and followup
- Budget Town Hall Meeting
- DJJD Grand parade (September 7, 2 p.m.): [Parade – Defeat of Jesse James Days](#)

Information Technology (IT) Services Division

Submitted by Kurt Wolf, IT Manager

Helpdesk tickets

- We are maintaining a 70.63% closure rate on tickets in less than 30 days.
- 84 new tickets have been opened in the last month.
- We successfully closed 92 tickets in the last month.

New virtual servers

We worked with Marco to have new servers installed in the City Hall server room. They will be replacing older servers that host the city's virtual environment.

Finance Division

Submitted by Brenda Angelstad, Finance Director

No report.

Motor Vehicle Division

Submitted by Brenda Angelstad, Finance Director

No report.

Northfield Liquor Store

Submitted by Brian Whitt, Liquor Operations Manager

Events and promotions

The Northfield Liquor Store was proud to partner once again with the Northfield Rotary Club to present the 7th Annual Taste of Summer Fest at the Red Barn Farm in Northfield on July 10! Beverage vendors from all over the state of Minnesota sampled their products, with live music, pizza, silent auction, and tons of raffle items! We had a record number of attendees (more than 400!) that purchased tickets to the event, a great time was had by all!



Northfield
LIQUOR STORE
Putting profits back into the community since 1948.

TASTE OF SUMMER FEST
NORTHFIELD ROTARY

Thursday, July 10 • 5-8pm • Red Barn Pizza Farm
Craft Beers • Wine • Cider • N.A. Beverages • Pizza • Music
Purchase tickets at northfieldrotary.org

Store Hours: Mon-Th 10am-9pm • Fri & Sat 10am-10pm • Sun 11am-6pm ~ 116 5th St. W.  Find us on Facebook

Library Department

Submitted by Natalie Draper, Director of Library Services



Vision Planning Open House

Help us craft a vision plan for a more accessible and sustainable future of the library's grounds on July 31 and August 25. Both sessions will take place at 5 p.m. at the library.

We are working with TEN x TEN, a landscape architecture and urban design studio in Minneapolis. TEN x TEN will be on site to facilitate input from the community on opportunities and priorities from the library's exterior spaces.

Impacts of climate change can be seen on the library's site, most notably in the loss of three trees in the past year. Added to that, an ash tree at the bottom of the steps on Division Street is being treated for emerald ash borer, which may eventually need to be removed. Evidence of considerable erosion can be seen in the amount of soil washed down the Division Street steps with each rainfall. Frost heaving has already

caused the concrete walkways leading from Washington Street to the library to crack and shift.

In addition to addressing these impacts, the vision plan seeks to reduce labor expenses and water use by minimizing or eliminating lawn, reducing pavement where feasible, and shading the space as much as possible to diminish summer heat accumulation. Additional goals include increasing access to outdoor spaces to gather for work, learning, play, and rest, improving access to and from the building, increasing ADA-accessible patio spaces to accommodate visitors of all ages and abilities, and addressing stormwater handling on site to reduce the amount of stormwater running into the river.


Summer Reading Program

There is still time to join the summer reading challenge! This year's Summer Reading Challenge is for EVERYONE—including adults! [Register for Summer Reading Program](#)

For more information, visit <https://mynpl.org/summerreading>

INSTRUCTIONS



- 1) SIGN UP for Summer Reading at the library or on the library website.
- 2) Starting in Northfield at , move along the path, completing the starred challenges as you go. Each star represents reading for 20 min, OR completing a challenge listed in the Legend.
- 3) When you get to a numbered road sign, come to the library to get a limited edition Summer Reading button!
- 4) When you reach the final road sign, come to the library for your final button or sticker, a free book, and a raffle ticket into our grand prize entry.
- 5) Done with the summer reading challenge but summer isn't over? Come to the library to explore the Land of 10,000 reads PASSPORT, full of more challenges and opportunities to get raffle tickets!

*The final day to claim buttons and submit raffle entries is **August 15** and prize winners will be drawn **August 18!**

Everett Smithson Band

The Everett Smithson Band on July 30 at 6:00 p.m. in Way Park.

Expect Zydeco, Swamp rock, American roots, Blues, Soul, and more. The Everett Smithson Band has put out five records available on CD through Simmon Tree Records.

Come early for a special storytime in the park at 5:30 p.m. and visit the bookmobile. Bring the whole family to enjoy a free weekly concert Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in Way Park. Seating provided by the Red Chair Project.

Our free summer concerts are made possible by the Friends and Foundation of Northfield Public Library, with additional support by Frandsen Bank & Trust. [Learn more about the Friends and Foundation.](#)

Memoir Writing Workshop with Käethe Schwehn



The very best memoirs engage the reader from the very first pages—but as writers, those first few pages can be some of the toughest to write. In this workshop, we'll spend one week looking at a few memoir openings to see how published writers introduce craft elements like character and tension and setting. In the following two sessions, we will workshop up to ten "first pages" of each participant's memoir. Writers in this class will be encouraged to carefully read the work of their peers and to offer thoughtful and compassionate verbal feedback.

Kaethe Schwehn is the author of *Tailings: a Memoir*, which won the Minnesota Book Award for Creative Nonfiction. She is also the author of a post-apocalyptic novel and a chapbook of poems. She teaches creative writing at St. Olaf College.

The workshop will meet in the library meeting room for three sessions:

- Wednesday, August 6, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 13, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 20, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Workshop is free and limited to 12 participants. [Register for the Memoir Writing Workshop.](#)

The workshop is funded by the Friends and Foundation of the Northfield Public Library, from the Orlo Otteson memorial fund.

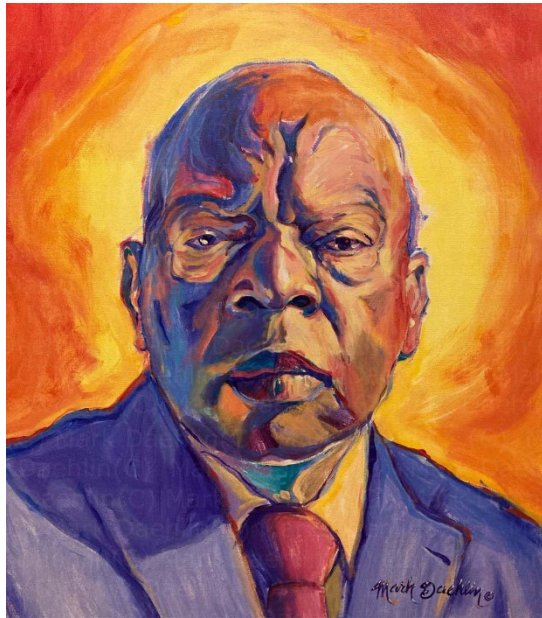
Photo Exhibit: Birding in the Colombian Amazon

Photo exhibit is August 4 through 18. Presentation is on August 7 at 6:30 p.m.

The Amazon has many colorful birds, as well as many endemics—birds unique to that habitat. On a birding trip into a remote area of the Colombian Amazon with a guide and a few other birders, Gerry Hoekstra was able to see and photograph many of them.

Gerald Hoekstra is a resident of Northfield. Before retiring to a life of birding and photography, he was professor of music at St. Olaf College. As a photographer, he focuses primarily on wildlife, especially birds and insects, but also landscapes and architecture. Hoekstra has birded and photographed wildlife in South America, Central America, Europe, and South Africa, as well as throughout the U.S. and Canada. His photographs appear in Bob Janssen's *Birds in Minnesota*, Kim Eckert's *A Birders' Guide to Minnesota*, *The Hummingbird Handbook*, and the recently released monumental volume *The Breeding Birds of Minnesota* (University of Minnesota Press), as well as in several birding apps. They can often be seen on the home page of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (moumn.org) and in *Minnesota Birding*, the newsletter of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.

Freedom Road Heroes: Live Painting Demo



August 14, 15, and 16 from 9 a.m. to 1p.m.

Local artist Mark Daehlin will be painting a portrait in his "Freedom Road Heroes" series live in the Library Atrium over the course of 3 days. Daehlin's bold, brightly colored portraits celebrate the legacy of leaders who have shaped the ongoing struggle for justice and equality. "Freedom Road Heroes" honors their courage and invites reflection on the journey toward civil rights. Prints of the portraits can be viewed on the first floor of City Hall until the end of August. For more information about the

artist and his project, visit: <https://www.freedomroadheroes.com/about>.

Community Development Department

Submitted by Jake Reilly, Community Development Director

General

Five interns have been working in Community Development these last few weeks. They have been working on projects associated with community engagement in English and Spanish, grant and loan programs for the Economic Development Authority, housing quality and affordability for the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and planning and zoning work. They have completed a variety of projects including a cost-benefit/economic impact analysis of a larger-scale housing development, a draft concept for a community engagement event for "Parking Day," and a draft of an incentive or subsidy program for residents to add an accessory dwelling unit.

Building and Inspections

- Building and Inspections staff continue to work to ensure safe conditions at all properties within the City of Northfield.

- The City Council approved a Joint Powers Agreement on July 22 between the cities of Northfield and Dundas, providing building and inspection services for Dundas. Inspection and plan review services will begin for Dundas on August 1, 2025.
- The new Student Housing and Counseling Center (SHAC) at Carleton College is nearly completed. The old space inside of Davis Hall is being converted back to dormitory rooms. Four other Carleton properties are beginning the remodel process.
- Morton Buildings, the contractor responsible for the storage buildings on Windy Lane on the St. Olaf campus is preparing to apply for permit to build the next building in the project.

Economic Development Authority (EDA)

- The street front development team will present an update to their schedule and budget on the 5th and Washington liquor store project at the July EDA meeting.
- On July 23, the Connecting Business and Community steering committee hosted the team from University of Minnesota Extension for a working session to hear about the results of the survey, the proposed solutions created by the Extension team and to set the stage for a fall meeting with the broader business community.

Heritage Preservation

- Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant application responses are delayed by decisions outside the city's control associated with the executive branch of the federal government.
- Staff has participated in educational opportunities offered by the National Association of Preservation Commissions regarding preservation planning and ordinances.

Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)

- The next HRA Board meeting is August 7.
 - HRA will consider Rice County Habitat for Humanity's request for assistance to purchase 315 Poplar Street North.

- HRA will consider an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) tax abatement strategy.
 - 2025-2026 budget update.
- Community Development and HRA staff worked with the Community Action Center to apply to Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for infrastructure funds for the extension of Abbey Road, near Meadows Park, for a possible affordable housing project for up to 36 units. Grant award recipients will be notified in November.
- Sumner Street is moving forward with 2 administrative lot splits for a total of 4 lots – 2 twin homes. Staff recently received the new addresses for the properties and have drafted the corresponding purchase agreements. Staff and Rice County Habitat for Humanity will be hosting a meeting on August 17 for local real estate agents regarding the Sumner project.
- HRA and Community Development staff are exploring partnerships with Minnesota Housing Partnership and Greater Minnesota Housing Fund for gap funding for the development of affordable housing in Northfield.
- HRA staff in partnership with Faribault HRA will be meeting with Three Rivers Community Action (TRCA) during the 2nd week of August to talk through a potential housing program. High level idea: TRCA purchases 10 manufactured homes, place 5 in Northfield and 5 in Faribault. TRCA would require the families to participate in a 5-year financial literacy plan to take over the loan for the manufactured home. More info to come.
- Survey completed for Meadows Park Outlot D. Geotechnical bids have been received. Working also with Johnson-Reiland for geotechnical assistance for Phase 2 of Bluffview.
- HRA staff processed 24 Energy Efficiency Rebates totaling \$16,954 from the Carbon Reduction Fund. The program is closed until 2026.
- Through the 4D program, the HRA helped Northfield Estates install Knox Boxes for emergency access to each of the buildings at the property. The HRA is also assisting with repairing and replacing of the first story windows to improve emergency egress. Staff continue to work with owners on a playground for Northfield Estates.
- Staff are working on a list of local banks with direct contact information to people who can assist manufactured home residents with replacing their

existing manufactured home. Staff are also coordinating with property management on a cost sharing agreement for removing old homes.

- The HRA entered into a contract with Edina Realty for the sale of the last HRA-owned rental unit at 2330 Elianna Drive. Based on market analysis, the list price will start at \$315,000 with an anticipated net of \$248,769 after repairs, replacements, commissions and various fees.

Planning and Zoning

Planning staff are busy revising the code, soliciting a consultant for the land development code update, reviewing site plan applications, annexation applications and sign applications, and other development related initiatives.

Public Works Department

Submitted by David Bennett, PE, Public Works Director/City Engineer

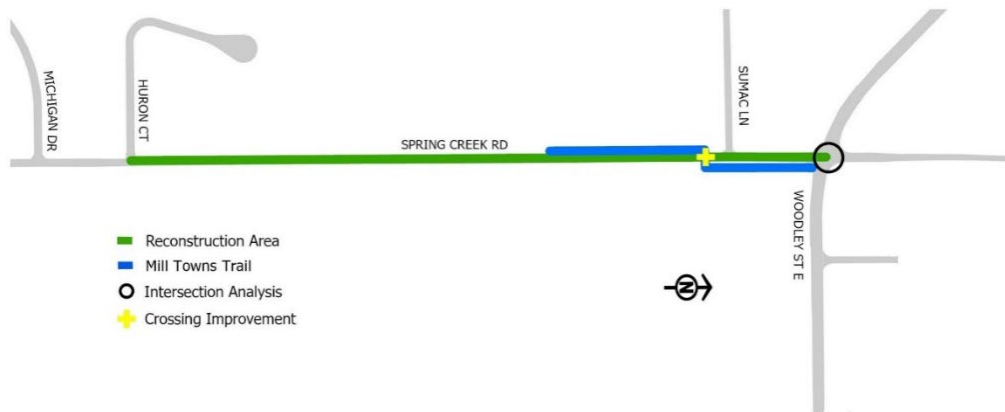
Engineering Division

Mill Towns State Trail (Woodley Street to Waterford Bridge)

The contractor for the project, Icon LLC, is planning to start construction late August or early September on the trail construction. Key dates for the community to be aware of and more information will come as we get closer to the closure of Highway 19 for the installation of the pedestrian underpass. This is tentatively scheduled for early October.

2026 Spring Creek Road Reconstruction and Mill Towns State Trail Improvements Project

Design engineers are busy working on the final design for the project. Staff will be contacting adjoining property owners in the coming weeks to begin easement discussions along the project corridor. Final design approval is scheduled for early 2026.



For additional information, visit the project website:

<https://www.northfieldmn.gov/1640/Spring-Creek-Road-Reconstruction-Mill-To>

2026 Mill and Overlay & Mill Towns State Trail Improvements

Staff will be bringing the final feasibility report to City Council on August 4, 2025. A few notable changes that are being recommended include lessening the protected bikeway on Prairie Street to be installed from Prospect Court/Drive to Pleasant View Court. Originally, we proposed it to be installed from Woodley Street to Jefferson Parkway. Another change is we are eliminating the proposed bike access ramps along the Jefferson Parkway portion of the project. Staff will be presenting these changes and other additional proposed improvements for the project at the City Council meeting.

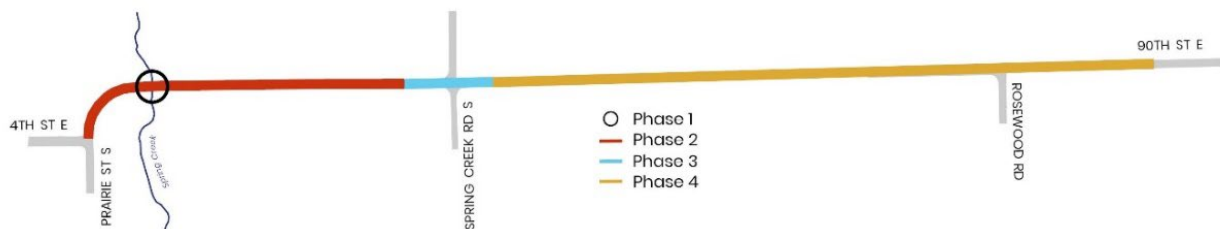


For additional information, visit the project website:

<https://www.northfieldmn.gov/1638/2026-Mill-and-Overlay-Mill-Towns-State-T>

Wall Street Road Improvements Project

Crews have been busy installing new sanitary sewer, watermain and storm sewer on phase 4 despite all the rain. Crews are expected to complete the remaining utility installations by early August and then begin building the new road base and trail along phase 4. Concrete crews completed most of the concrete work on phases 2 and 3, including the plazas located at the intersection of Spring Creek Road and Wall Street. Trail paving crews are expected to be onsite early next week to pave the new trail on phase 2 and complete the final restoration. Phase 2 and 3 are expected to be fully open to traffic by mid-August.





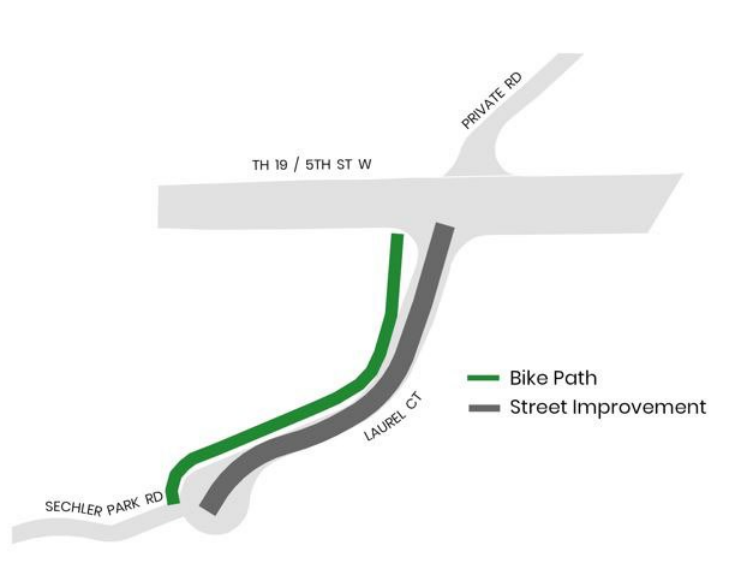
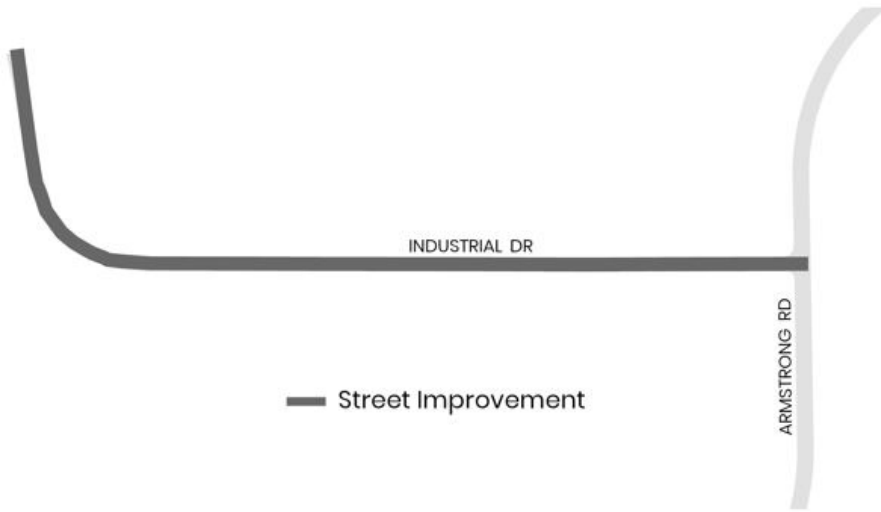
For additional information, visit the project website:

<https://www.northfieldmn.gov/1568/Wall-Street-Road-Improvements-Project>

2025 Reclamation and Overlay Project

Phase 1

Paving crews completed the final lift of asphalt pavement on phase 1 last week. Restoration crews also completed most of the seeding on phase 1 as well. The remaining work on phase 1 includes minor restoration and some minor trail paving that is yet to be completed.

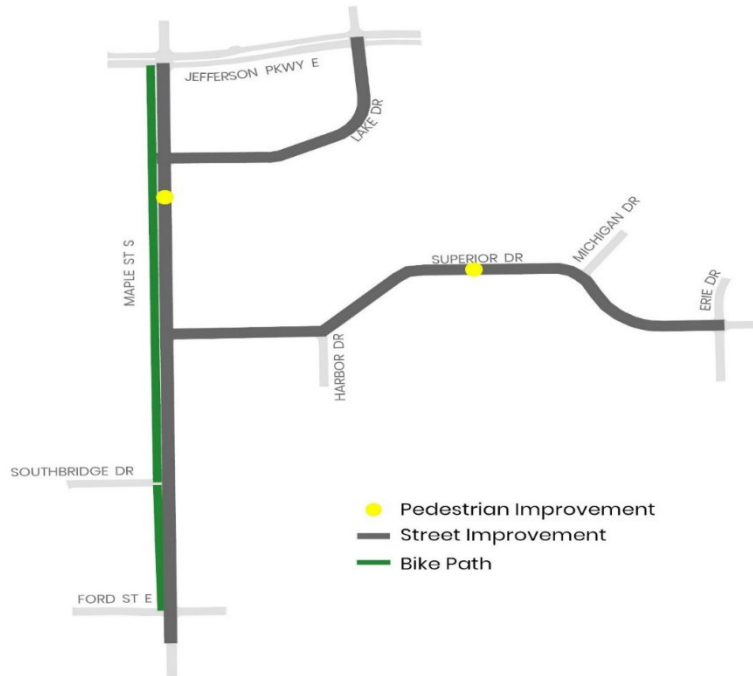




Phase 2

Concrete crews completed much of the concrete work on all of phase 2 last week including the new raised crossing on Maple Street. Utility crews also finished installing the new drain tile on phase 2. Patching crews have been busy between the numerous rain showers patching the road where new curb and gutter were installed. Milling crews were onsite this week as well to mill the asphalt pavement on all of phase 2.

Next week, grading crews are expected to be onsite to do some trail repairs on the trail that circumferences the storm pond to the east and south of Harbor Drive and Superior Drive respectively. Paving crews are also expected to be onsite late next week to pave the new trail on Maple Street, and begin the pavement overlay on Superior Drive, Lake Drive, and Maple Street.



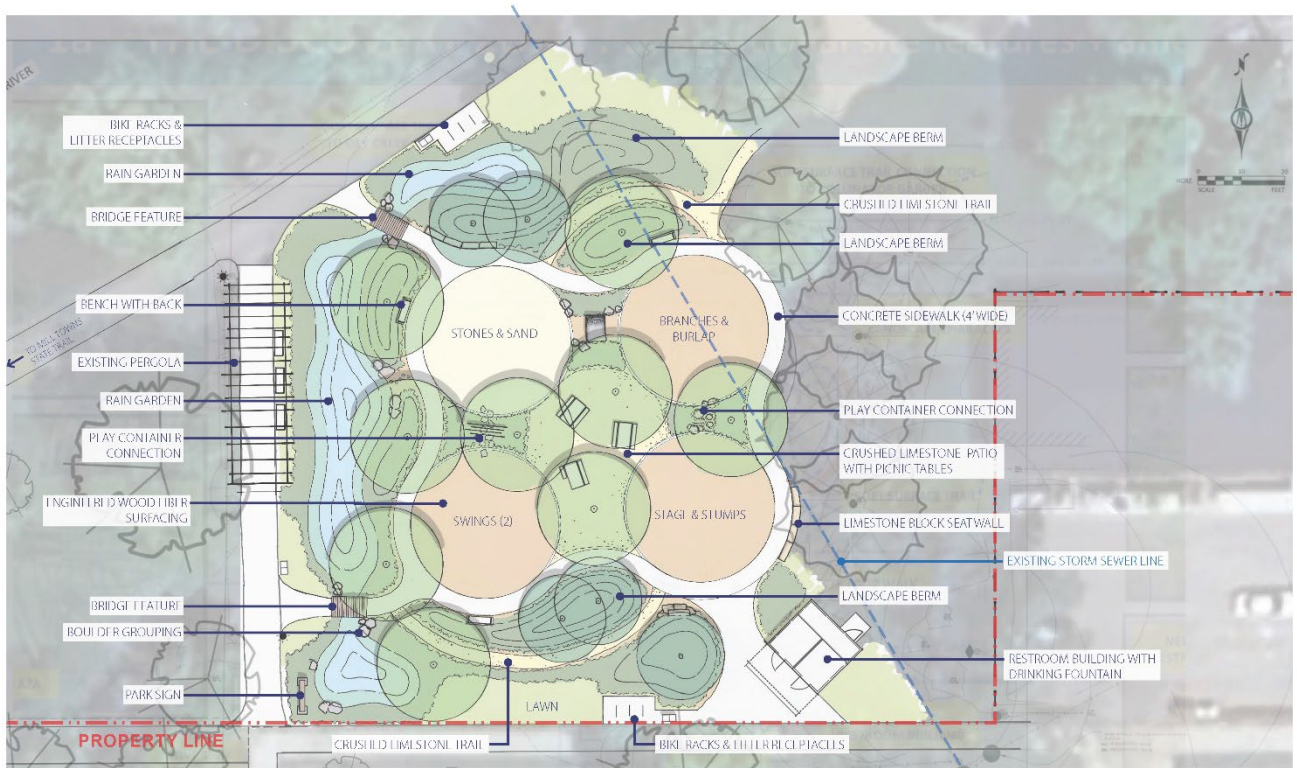
For additional information, visit the project website:

<https://www.northfieldmn.gov/1631/2025-Reclamation-and-Overlay-Project>

Streets and Parks Division

Riverside Park (7th Street Playground)

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board approved the Riverside Park Playground Improvement plan. The failing equipment at the playground will be replaced with nature-based play equipment. The improvements are expected to go to the City Council in August for approval.



Dresden Hills Park Improvements (2026)

Staff started the community engagement process to gather input on improvements for updates throughout the park. Dresden Hills Park replacement/improvement project is set to take place in 2026.



Central Park Playground Improvements (2026)

Staff have held 3 different community engagement events and are moving on to the design phase of the project. Staff will be sharing the recommendations for improvement with the community and the Park and Recreation Advisory Board in September. With Central Parks' historical designation, only changes being made are around the playground area.



Emerald ash borer (EAB) efforts

Staff continue to work on replacing the infected trees with the DNR grants we have received. With the grant money, we expect to remove and replace around 500 trees.

Sidewalk repairs

Contractors will be in town over the next few weeks saw-cutting trip hazards in the downtown area and neighborhoods.

Weekly maintenance

Full-time and seasonal staff remain busy with recurring maintenance tasks. Weekly mowing routes of boulevards and parks, upkeeping and maintaining athletic fields, cleaning park shelters, and assisting with community events.

Utilities Division

No report.

Facilities Division

No report.

Police Department

Submitted by Jeff Schroepfer, Chief of Police

Officer swearing-in ceremony



Officer Kyle Sladek was sworn in as Northfield's newest police officer at the July 22 city council meeting. Welcome Officer Sladek!

Annual awards

On July 2, Chief Schroepfer held an all-department meeting for the police department. Part of the meeting included annual awards. Congratulations and great work to the award recipients.

Lifesaving awards:

- Officer Alex Klobe
- Officer Mindy Bravo
- Officer Michael Murphy Smith
- Officer Christian Kelling
- Officer Thad Monroe

Letter of Commendation

- Officer Isaac Dahl (not pictured)



Dog recoveries

Community Service Officer Michelle Oaxaca has kept busy with many duties, but lately recovering dogs at large has been a consistent job. These 2 recent recoveries were returned to their owners the same day thanks to the work of staff but also the owner microchipping their dogs and keeping the information current.

